



Report on Curran Fellowship 2015-16
Elizabeth Tilley

Dear Patrick,

I am writing to report on the progress of my research project, a monograph entitled *Nineteenth Century Irish Periodicals: New Perspectives*, for which I received a Curran Fellowship in 2015. The Fellowship enabled essential primary research on a number of representative titles held by the British Library, the National Library of Ireland, and the Royal Irish Academy.

My home institution, The National University of Ireland, Galway, has a good collection of 19C Irish periodicals, but the material I required is available only in Dublin or at the British Library, so I used the bulk of the fellowship to support time away from Galway. In the process I discovered how the policies of individual libraries can have a profound effect on the nature and outcome of the research that we do. For instance, the National Library of Ireland in Dublin has print copies of a late nineteenth century Dublin-published magazine for women entitled *The Lady of the House*. However, because they also have microfilmed copies of the title, I was refused permission to examine (even without touching) the print copies. By contrast, the British Library holds both print copies and digitized copies of another Dublin magazine—*Today's Woman*—and their relatively open policy meant that I was allowed unlimited access to both versions. In examining the print copies I could see variations (in text block colour, in quality of printing) that would have been invisible otherwise. The Library of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin holds print copies of another Irish title for women—*The Emerald*—and again the experience of being able to turn actual pages rather than images, and in an atmosphere of calm and beauty (the Library is an oasis in a very busy city), was wonderful.

While in the British Library I read copies of the *Irish Farmer's Gazette and Weekly Intelligencer* (1812-1826), and decided to add the title to my monograph chapter on trade periodicals. The *IFG* supplied news, stock prices, market information, and advertising to the gentleman farmer, and the items it chose to print provide a fascinating window into the concerns of the Irish agricultural community during the Napoleonic wars and after. In fact, I became so interested in the *IFG* that I decided to apply for an Irish Research Council grant in order to examine further the connections between 'trade' journals in Ireland and elsewhere in Britain. I wrote a proposal with Andrew King, and we were awarded funding for this year. I should mention that I would not have been eligible to apply for the grant had I not been able to point to the Curran Fellowship as evidence of recent success in such applications.

I have listed below the libraries and particular items that turned out to be of greatest importance to my project:

- Minute book of the Royal Irish Academy Committee of Publication (1832-1836) held in the Library of the RIA, Dublin, for information about George Petrie (Chair of the Committee) and the decisions surrounding the publication of

Academy *Transactions* and *Proceedings*. These decisions influenced the way that scientific and antiquarian material was disseminated in the early 19th century; form—expensive folio vs cheap quarto formats and penny magazines—at once determined impact on both specialist and a new cohort of general readers in Ireland.

- *The Illustrated Dublin Journal* (1861-1862), held at the National Library of Ireland, Dublin, and one of a number of popular titles all published by the same firm and espousing traditional, domestic values.
- *Pat* (1879-1880; 1881-1883), held (part) at the Royal Irish Academy and (part) at the National Library of Ireland, Dublin. *Pat* was a stand-alone graphic paper, but was intimately connected with other text-only Dublin nationalist newspapers. Readers would be expected to understand this and were referred from one to the other and back again in a largely wordless cycle of audience-created meaning.
- *Today's Woman* (1894-1896), held at the British Library and as part of the Gerritsen Collection (ProQuest). No library in Ireland has hard copies, nor do I have access to the database from Galway. The British Library also holds some issues in print (see above). The title is one of the very few examples of material for a new class of female reader in Ireland. Its attempts to navigate the divide between emancipation and conservatism are played out around the margins of pages heavy with advertising.
- *The Lady of the House* (1890-1924 (under various titles)) (see above)
- *Irish Farmer's Journal and Weekly Gazette* (1812-1826) (see above)

I am happy to say that my monograph has been accepted for publication and will appear in 2018.

The Irish Research Council grant, together with funding that Andrew King secured from the University of Greenwich, will be used to host a symposium in Galway next year on trade periodicals.

I am very grateful to RSVP for the opportunity to complete this research and thank the committee again for their assistance.

Sincerely,
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