

# The BRIDGE

Maynooth Alumni  
Magazine 2014

## A MORNING AT THE OPERA

*Is it a Fad or a Format?*

## MAYNOOTH TO PARIS

*The French Chapter*



*'What is here, and I find almost extraordinary, is an engagement between staff and students, a warmth between staff and students, together with high-level research activity.'*

**Baroness Nuala O'Loan, in a conversation  
with Professor Mary P. Corcoran**

### *Plus*

More than a Degree  
Love on Campus 1974  
New Colours for GAA  
Four New Research Institutes  
The Culture of Motherhood

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## A chairde,

I'm delighted to share with you the 2014 edition of *The Bridge*, our re-designed alumni magazine and the first edition under our new "Maynooth University" identity. Our alumni network is multiplying every year at an astounding rate and *The Bridge* is growing to match that demand.

Plenty has happened in alumni circles this year, and we're not finished yet. In this, the second year since we instituted our Alumni Scholarship programme, the Maynooth alumni community has continued its generous support of our graduates by taking out the Alumni Affinity Credit Card. Read about how June, Sorcha and Kieran have become the latest beneficiaries of your support on page 28 and how you can help us reach even more students next year.

Do keep in touch over the year ahead. There is no shortage of ways to keep your affiliation with Maynooth University alive. Sponsor a work placement, partner with us on research, or share your opinion with us on the direction of the University. And of course, attend one of the exciting events in

2015 that we are lining up both on campus and internationally. In fact, we kick-off these efforts at the end of January with the launch of our first-ever European chapter of the Maynooth Alumni Association with an event at the Irish Embassy in Paris.

Remember you can also view *The Bridge* magazine online at: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/alumni-office>

Finally, I'd like welcome Rebecca Doolin to the Maynooth University Alumni team. Rebecca has joined the University in a new role, Director of External Relations, which will oversee the Alumni, Fundraising, Communications and Marketing functions for the University.

Is mór againn bhur gcairdeas buan,

**Karen Kelly**  
Alumni Officer







# President's Message

**Welcome to the 2014 edition of *The Bridge*, our first publication under our new Maynooth University identity.**

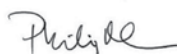
When I'm asked why we made the decision to make the change, I tell people something I hope you'll find rings true: the affection that our students, and our alumni in particular, feel for their time here is incredibly strong—they're as proud of Maynooth as we are of them. We wanted to celebrate that feeling with a name that is as clear and succinct as that pride, and to confidently assert that we are Maynooth University. I hope you agree it's a positive step forward for our university.

The name change is a small matter, however, in the scope of the momentum that's been generated on campus over the last year. New research opportunities, construction of a new Information and Communications Technology (ICT) building, new social events, and, most notably—the launch of a new curriculum that combines the strongest assets of a Maynooth degree with the subject combination options and communications skills that the careers of tomorrow will demand.

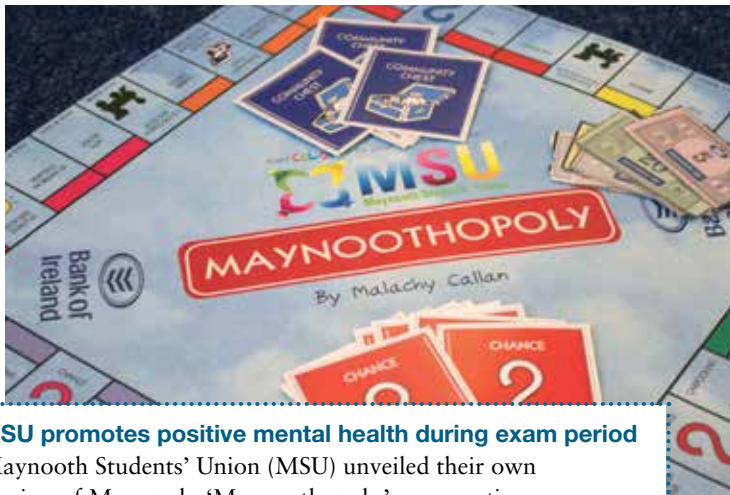
Yes, there's significant change afoot, but rest assured that along with every new endeavour is a commitment to remain a place that fosters the tightly-knit, personal connections between staff and students that have come to define a Maynooth education. In fact, the chair of our Governing Authority, the inimitable public servant Baroness Nuala O'Loan (about whom you can read on page 16), has provided a pivotal voice in ensuring the Maynooth student experience is as rich and as well-rounded as ever.

I invite you to read about what we've been up to in the pages ahead, and also to be a part of the path we're on. Stay in touch with us through the Alumni Office—share your opinion, sponsor a student work placement, or attend an event. Thank you for your continued support and engagement with Maynooth University and I hope to see you in person soon.

Warm regards,



**Professor Philip Nolan**  
*President, Maynooth University*



#### MSU promotes positive mental health during exam period

Maynooth Students' Union (MSU) unveiled their own version of Monopoly, 'Maynoothopoly,' as a creative way to relieve students' stress levels during exams last May.

#### Challenging Climate Change & Hunger in Africa

Maynooth University launched an innovative new master's degree in 'Transformative Community Development' this year. The new programme, established as part of the TEN-Hunger Project (Transformative Engagement Network), is funded by Irish Aid and the Higher Education Authority and will bring together over 30 academics across disciplines to focus on issues of climate change and food security in vulnerable communities of Zambia and Malawi. As part of the TEN Hunger Project, Maynooth University has collaborated with the University of Mzuzu in Malawi, Mulungushi University and the Zambian Open University to design a master's programme that will enrol 36 students across the three universities.

# Events *in the* Spotlight

#### Maynooth Chamber Choir win gold

The Maynooth Chamber Choir, conducted by alumnus Michael Dawson (2011), was awarded two gold diplomas by the international jury of Interkultur at Canta en Primavera 2014 in Malaga. The Chamber Choir competed in two categories: 'Youth Choirs of Mixed Voices' and 'Sacred Choir Music,' winning gold in both. The competition featured 16 choirs from 12 countries, including Germany, USA, Russia, Sweden and Venezuela.

#### Former President Mary Robinson opens International Mediation Conference

Hosted by the Edward M Kennedy Institute for Conflict Intervention, the three-day, 21st Anniversary International Mediation Conference at Maynooth University was formally opened by Former Irish President and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson. Among the topics covered was the important role that mediation continues to play in navigating the world of business and as an invaluable tool in problem-solving in the broader society.



**President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins launches Maynooth Social Justice Week with a riveting speech on campus in October**





### **Knight of Glin archive shines light inside Ireland's great houses**

The Glin archive donated to Maynooth University and the Office of Public Works by the family of the late Desmond FitzGerald, the 29th and last Knight of Glin, includes the most comprehensive and insightful history of furniture, crystal, textiles and other artefacts from Ireland's great houses.

Launched in December 2014 at Castletown House, the archive consists of over 4,500 items, including a unique collection of personal papers, articles and photographs demonstrating FitzGerald's passion for the conservation and preservation of the contents of country homes across Ireland. As one of the foremost authorities on Irish furniture, FitzGerald's work identifies and traces pieces around the world which were previously considered lost.

### **First graduates of Erasmus Mundus Double Master's in Dependable Systems Software Systems**

The first graduates of the Erasmus Mundus Double Masters in Dependable Software Systems (DESEM) were conferred in October at Maynooth University. Each of the graduates earned their double degrees through a partnership lead by Maynooth University in association with University of St. Andrews (Scotland) and Université de Lorraine (France). Graduates have secured positions in companies such as SAP, Cigna, JP Morgan and Active Mind Technology Inc. Other graduates have been granted PhD positions at University of St Andrews, Bournemouth University (UK) and The Technical University Munich (Germany).

Awarded 'Best New Course 2013' at the Grad Ireland Postgraduate Course of the Year Awards, the programme's objective is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and in-depth technical understanding of the key concepts required to design and build dependable software systems.

### **Second Maynooth Education Forum addresses the escalating focus on data, exam results and league tables in education policy**

Irish and international education leaders gathered at Maynooth University last summer for the second annual *Maynooth Education Forum*. The theme of this year's forum: 'Transforming Curricula: Empowering Learners.' The forum attracted education thought-leaders, strategists, policy makers, researchers, practitioners in education and interested parties from all parts of the system to debate some of today's most fundamental issues in education and work. One presentation by Professor Bob Lingard (University of Queensland, Australia) stressed the need for policy makers to move away from evidence-based policy to evidence-informed policy. He cited a negative global impact on education caused by an escalating focus on data, exam results and league tables.



### **Garret FitzGerald Memorial Lecture delivers at Maynooth University**

The Honourable Mr Justice John Mac Menamin delivered the Garret FitzGerald Memorial Lecture at Maynooth University in September on the topic, 'From Nightmares and Dreams to Reality: Citizens, Judges and Democracy in the New Europe.' Responding to his lecture, Baroness Nuala O'Loan, chair of the Maynooth University Governing Authority (see page 16) said, 'Mr Justice Mac Menamin has again raised very important questions about relationships and processes of law which will impact on governments for decades to come. The potential is enormous. The challenges are significant.'



**Taoiseach Enda Kenny presents the Royal Irish Academy Gold Medal to Maynooth University Geographer, Professor Rob Kitchin, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Social Sciences**

### **Centre for Entrepreneurship, Design and Innovation (EDEN) takes the brakes off student innovation**

The final of the Maynooth University Student Enterprise Competition, in which the top four aspiring entrepreneurs competed in front of an expert panel for a share of the €10,000 prize, took place in May. First place in the 2014 tournament, which included 90 entries, went to *Brake 4 Kids* by mature student, Paddy Devine, who graduated from this year's Product Design BSc programme. Paddy, a father of three, noticed that when learning to ride a bicycle, each of his children lacked the finger dexterity to operate conventional handlebar brakes. His solution impressed the judges, including Conor Boyce, one of the country's leading patent attorneys, saying it had worldwide potential. Paddy will use the prize money to incorporate a company and intends to devote himself full-time to commercialization of his idea.

# Graduations 2014

**The sun shone brightly for September's conferring ceremonies at Maynooth University, brightening the colour of the campus to match the smiles of proud parents and family members who gathered to celebrate their graduate's academic achievements.**

This year's class boasted more graduates than any previous year in the history of the University—more than 1,900 graduates received their degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including 74 PhD recipients.

Seven degrees were awarded for the first time, including the BA in Digital Media, the BA in International Finance and Economics and the Bachelor of Laws. The Department of Chemistry had a departmental record number of 12 PhD students graduating in a single ceremony.

The University conferred a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees to another 1,000 students in October's autumn conferring. Among the graduates were Dr David Begg, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), who graduated

with a PhD from the Department of Sociology; and Sinead Nolan, sister of Maynooth University President, Professor Philip Nolan. She received a master's in education (School Leadership).

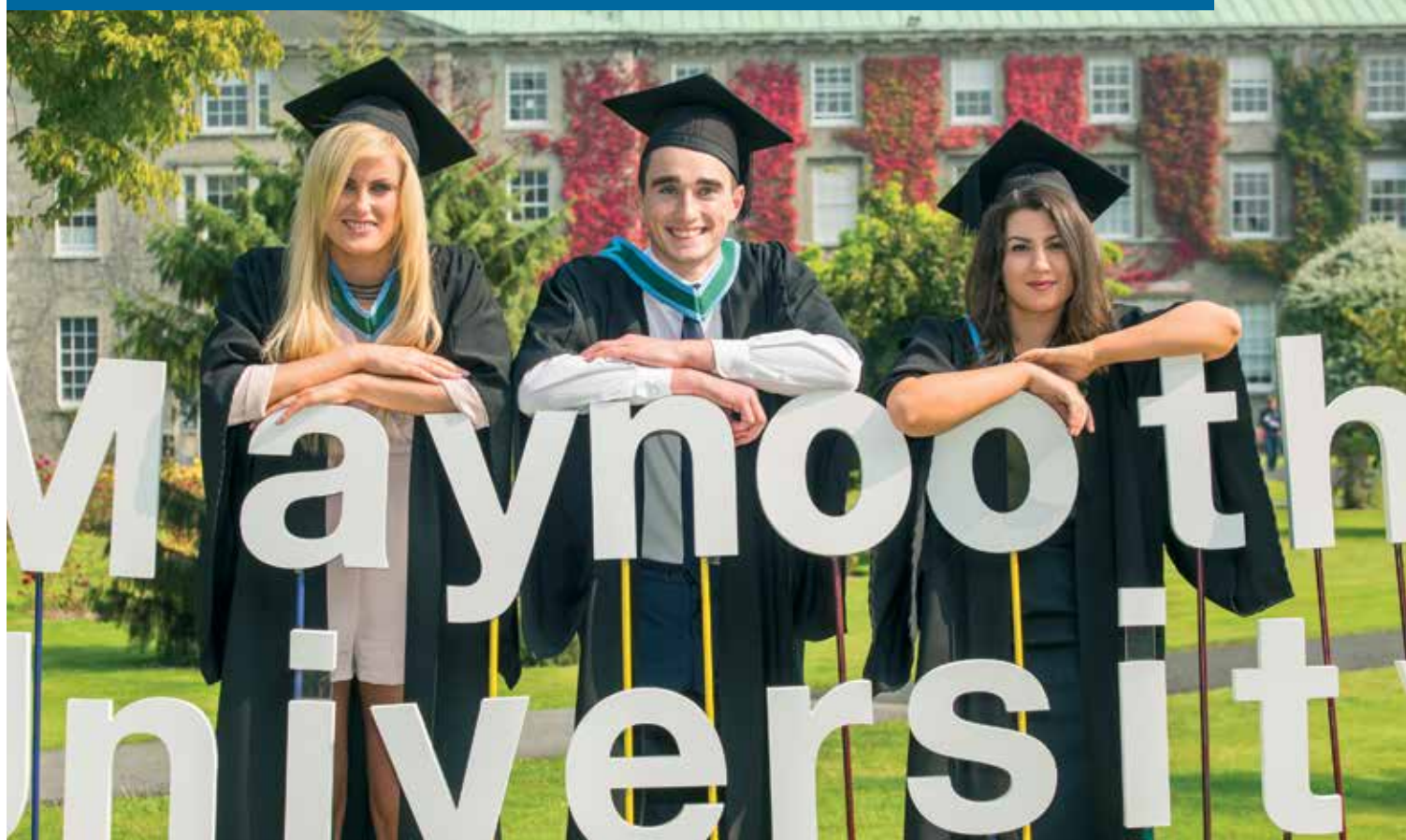
This year for the first time 19 officer cadets from the Defence Forces earned Higher Diplomas in Leadership, Defence and Contemporary Security (Army), a diploma course run in conjunction with the Department of History and the Cadet School at the Military College.

Also awarded for the first time were the H Dip in Science (Humanitarian Logistics and Emergency Management) and MSc (Humanitarian Logistics and Emergency Management), a joint programme between Maynooth University and Dublin City University (DCU) under the 3U Partnership and the Erasmus Mundus Double MSc in Dependable Software Systems, a joint programme between Maynooth University, the University of St. Andrews, Scotland and Université de Lorraine, France.

Dr Keeley Baker and Dr Niamh Dolan, Dept of Chemistry PhD graduates



Louise Devitt (BSc Double Hons), Eoin Rigney (BSc Single Hons, Chemistry), and Colleen Butler (BSc, Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Chemistry)







# University to launch 4 new research institutes in 2015

**Maynooth University's ability to shed light on some of the world's most puzzling scientific, social and historical questions is about to get even stronger.**

Over the first half of 2015, the University will launch at least four new research institutes, clustering teams of interdisciplinary researchers around the university's existing scholarly strengths. The goal: to maximize the impact of the university's research findings both within the university and around the world.

"It is very simple," explained Professor Bernard Mahon, Vice-President Research. "Evidence shows that Maynooth University is home to genuinely world-leading researchers. We are putting in place the structures that foster collaboration between our researchers, industry and civil society and also to manage our resources most efficiently. With these four revitalised Institutes, and perhaps others, we are building on our strengths and will only become more recognised internationally for our research in tackling the key questions of our age."

The first major change will occur in January 2015 with the launch the **Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute**. The Institute is host to two European Research Council awards, and will focus on two of the University's research priorities: People, Place & Environment and Social & Economic Transformations.

Director of the Institute, Professor Mark Boyle, explains, "We are renowned for our research in the Social Sciences. In fact, by a number of measures we could be regarded as among the top five centres in Europe. However, the landscape is changing, and our researchers will need to be able to interact across traditional disciplines and even across faculties if we are to maintain our leadership. This new Institute will facilitate this."

The **Maynooth University Humanities Research Institute**, An Foras Feasa, will take on a broader remit and serve as a research hub for all humanities activities within the University.

Director and Professor Susan Schreibman described how the Institute will change. "From 2015, the new Institute will have a much broader role in promoting and mentoring research across the disciplines, positioning Maynooth University at the heart of national conversations in the arts and humanities."

For example, the new Institute will include a new Digital Collaboratory that will promote projects such as "Letters of 1916," (see page 24); lead bids for European infrastructure

funding; and develop postgraduate training to make Maynooth University the most vibrant humanities centre in Ireland.

The **Maynooth University Institute of Health** will draw together health and biomedical research across the faculties and integrate the former Institute of Immunology. Researchers in these areas have prominent research profiles, recently publishing in Journals such as *Science* and *Nature*. The new structure will enable teams to access shared infrastructures and better absorb industrial funding. The goal: Link the basic and applied scientists at Maynooth with their clinical and industrial colleagues in Ireland and internationally—thereby bringing discoveries to a broader community more quickly.

Prof. Mahon said the prospects for the new **Maynooth University Hamilton Institute** "are perhaps the most exciting" due to a major expansion of staff and research funding, as well as moving into the purpose-built Eolas Information and Computer Technology (ICT) Building. Eolas is currently under construction on the North Campus and is slated to open in June 2015.

"The new building is a remarkable addition to the campus, housing dedicated teaching, research and business space all under one roof," he said. "From next year, students will be able to attend lectures, be part of pioneering research projects and meet future employers from the major ICT industries."

The Institute will build on its track record in applied mathematics research and further expand into the communications and computation fields, incorporating work from the former Callan Institute. And if students decide to turn their own research projects into start-up companies, the Maynooth University Hamilton Institute will be there to help them.

Together, the four new research institutes represent the University's concerted decision to build its research capacity, Prof. Mahon said.

"It's a promising and visionary time to be a researcher at Maynooth, and I think the launch of these new institutes captures and promotes the truly important work being done right now across the university."

Alumni can follow the launches of the institutes on Twitter: @MU\_VPRResearch and email [vicepresident.research@nuim.ie](mailto:vicepresident.research@nuim.ie) if they envisage opportunities for industry/organizational partnerships.



Make sure you're registered on <https://alumni-network.maynoothuniversity.ie> so we can ensure you don't miss out on events like these.

## Carol Service *December 2013*

The Carol Service on 16th December saw the return of 60 alumni and friends to campus as guests of the Alumni Office.

Enjoying a stunning repertoire of musical performances by the University's choirs, who were accompanied by the newly restored great organ of the College Chapel, alumni also reconnected at a mulled wine reception afterwards in Renehan Hall. Speaking at the event, Flor Madden, alumnus from 1988 and recently nominated chairperson of the Maynooth Alumni Advisory Board (MAAB), encouraged alumni to embrace the Maynooth Alumni network and spread the word to other graduates.

# Alumni *Events*

*Alumni return to campus to listen, learn, and oh yeah, party*



Stephen Stewart (1978) with alumnus and emeritus professor of Modern History, Vincent Comerford

## Inaugural History Alumni Lecture *March 2014*

Speaking to a packed Renehan Hall on 12th March, alumni and friends had the pleasure of an insightful and thought-provoking lecture from one of the University's longest serving academics as Professor Colm Lennon delivered the first in a new annual lecture series specifically for alumni.

Entitled, *'Tread softly? History, Commemoration and Popular Beliefs about the Past,'*

Professor Lennon's lecture began with reminiscences of student life in Maynooth.

With a number of humorous anecdotes, including a millennium milk bottle delivered by his milkman last Christmas as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations of Dublin's Millennium, and manhole covers in Donegal which celebrated the Flight of the Earls, the lecture entertained as much as it questioned. Given Professor Lennon's involvement in the Battle of Clontarf commemorations, this talk also included a spotlight on the role of Brian Boru and the debate concerning the location of the battle itself. Former colleagues also attended the evening, including emeritus professor of Modern History, Vincent Comerford.

If you would like to listen to this lecture, it is available on Youtube. ▶




If you'd like to organise a class reunion, do contact the Alumni Office for assistance.



## Electronic Engineering 10-Year Anniversary

### October 2014

Alumni together with current and former EENG staff celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the first BE graduates in Phoenix and later in the MSU. Speaking at the event, Professor John Ringwood, who launched the BE degree, regaled attendees with departmental and student memories over the years. President Philip Nolan, who also attended the evening, encouraged alumni to keep connected with the University and to continue to be proud of the journey the University has taken and continues to take. Alumni were encouraged to assist Alumni Office initiatives to contribute to the University with regard to their time and expertise with career talks to students, to assist financially with key projects or to consider work placements for our graduates. Plans for another reunion in five years time were on everyone's lips due to the success of the first ever alumni reunion for EENG graduates.

Photos from this event are available on Flickr. 

## Spring Concert April 2014

Invited as guests of the Alumni Office, alumni enjoyed a performance of Antonín Dvorák's *Requiem* by the Maynooth University Choral Society with the Orchestra of St Cecilia on Sunday 6th April in the College Chapel. International alumni soloists, Paul Brady (1993), Eoin Hynes (2007), Edel O'Brien (1993) and Regina Nathan (1982), graced the chapel with immaculate performances under the baton of alumnus, John O'Keeffe (2008), on a beautiful spring afternoon at Maynooth.

Listen to Paul Brady's Maynooth Memories on Youtube. 



(l-r) Paul Brady, Eoin Hynes, John O'Keeffe, Edel O'Brien, Regina Nathan

Like to attend the 2015 Summer Soiree? Just register on <https://alumni-network.maynoothuniversity.ie>



Winning Collingwood Cup team players and alumni enjoying the Summer Soiree

## Summer Soiree May 2014

Following the successful 2013 soiree, over 170 alumni were treated to an evening of memories and song from alumni Mary O'Rourke (1967) and Emmanuel Lawler (1988) in the beautiful setting of the University library.

Former TD and Minister Mary O'Rourke regaled alumni and university staff with her often humorous anecdotes, from her student days at Maynooth to her exploits in the Irish political arena. Following Mary onto the Soiree stage, Emmanuel entranced the audience with a polished performance of old favourites, *O Sole Mio*, *Nessun Dorma* and *Phil the Fluter's Ball*.

Many alumni took advantage of this event to return to campus and reunite with former classmates and lecturers. Alumni from every decade since the 1960s attended including alumni who had travelled as far afield as Boston and Cork! Returning alums who took advantage of the University tours on offer before the Soiree (provided by MAAB members Ciarán Mac an Bhaire and Derek Maher) saw firsthand the vast changes at Maynooth over the decades – a point which was highlighted further by university president, Professor Philip Nolan, in his welcoming address.

## Events in 2015

Keep an eye on our website for more details about these great alumni events we're planning for next year

- Paris Chapter Launch (22st January)
- Inaugural Alumni Geography (6th May)
- History Alumni Lecture (March)
- Summer Soiree (TBD May)



# More than A Degree

## Maynooth leads Irish universities in stemming the 'CAO points race' with overhaul of undergraduate curriculum

Maynooth University launched a sweeping overhaul of its undergraduate curriculum this year that its President, Professor Philip Nolan, has called “the single most transformative change ever in the Irish higher education system.”

The university-wide initiative is two-fold: It will create fewer but broader entry routes for first-year students. It also will include a comprehensive and systematic redesign of the university's degree offerings and teaching, learning and assessment models.

The reason for the distinct yet related changes is simple, Prof. Nolan said.

“The careers of tomorrow require graduates to be nimble, to be able to communicate effectively, to work well in teams and on their own, and to be able to work across borders, boundaries and disciplines,” he said. “Our current model of higher education in this country allows very little recognition of that reality. The new Maynooth undergraduate curriculum will include new and innovative subjects, elective and language options, and co-curricular components, such as work placements and volunteering, for every student.”

“We also are confronting a core flaw in the CAO points system head-on: The perception that points equates to program quality, when, in fact, it does not,” he added. “All Irish universities are trapped in an internal competition among ourselves because of a public misperception that a 500-point course is better than a 400-point course. Maynooth University is taking a brave and laudable step to change that, and we are

working with the other Irish universities to achieve wider systemic change.”

The president said the university intends to reduce the number of entry routes for students from 50 to 15-20 by 2017. Students will select broader subject choices and specialise either immediately or over

*“The careers of tomorrow require graduates to be nimble, to be able to communicate effectively, to work well in teams and on their own, and to be able to work across borders, boundaries and disciplines.”*

– Prof Philip Nolan, President

time, with the option to graduate through more than 50 different degree pathways.

For students who know exactly what they want to do in life, Maynooth will offer a clear path for them to reach their goals, with a more rounded intellectual experience getting there. For students who have strong interests and aspirations in more than one subject area, they will be able to explore different paths during a revamped first-year experience. After first year, students will be able to pursue two academic subjects or select a major and a minor thanks to the university's decision to break down traditional boundaries between arts and social sciences and science and engineering.

“There is a strong demand for graduates with such skill combinations, and we want our students to be ready for those pursuits,” said Vice-President Academic and Registrar Aidan Mulkeen.

He emphasized that shifts in teaching and assessment as part of the change will ensure graduates are leaving with the necessary analytical and communications skills to take them down a less-linear career path than those taken by previous generations.

“Our ultimate goal is to produce graduates who are better equipped to handle the unexpected opportunities that await them – both in their careers and in all aspects of their lives,” he said. “We believe the educational quality that Maynooth University students receive is the best in Ireland. By loosening a very regimented degree path system, we will enable students to better take advantage of all that Maynooth has to offer.”

Change of this scale involves widespread collaboration from all corners of the university. Currently, a Curriculum Project Coordination Group is managing the myriad logistics of the initiative, which include overhauling degree offerings and requirements; implementing inter-department collaboration; altering funding streams; making changes to teaching and assessment, course timetables and credit structures; formalizing co-curricular offerings as part of student transcripts; and soliciting input from inside and outside the university – among many other steps.

The project will be phased in over at least three years. Students entering in September 2015 will be able to avail of many of the changes, with co-curricular options in place and opportunities in second year for new minors, majors and course electives. By 2016, the new first-year curriculum will take effect, with further additions coming in subsequent years.



# From Cowboys & Indians to Teaching Heroes

In September 2014 Dr Kevin Kavanagh from the Department of Biology and Dr Frank Mulligan from the Department of Experimental Physics received *Teaching Hero Awards* in a new award programme that recognises excellence in third-level teaching.

Dr Kavanagh and Dr Mulligan were among 53 academics from higher education institutions across Ireland identified by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education, in partnership with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and other student bodies, to celebrate students' perspectives of great teaching.



*As both recipients are alumni, The Bridge asked these Teaching Heroes to share some of their Maynooth memories:*

**Kevin:** My main memories of life as an undergraduate student were the sense of knowing (almost) everybody on campus and the incredible friendliness. I think this is still a feature of life on campus even though we are almost 10 times bigger than when I arrived!! The lecturers who really impressed me (and who are now my colleagues) were Peter and Lynne Whittaker, Martin Downes in biology, John Briody and Malachy McCann in chemistry, and Dave Redmond in maths.

**Frank:** As an alumnus of the University, I was delighted to receive, along with Dr Kevin Kavanagh from the Biology Department, one of the inaugural *Teaching Hero Awards* from former President of Ireland, Professor Mary McAleese. It brought to mind the following story of one of my own teaching heroes.

During my undergraduate years at Maynooth (1974–1978), I played soccer with a group of friends in the life-threatening internal leagues. A problem arose when we began second year because soccer matches often clashed with chemistry laboratories, at which attendance was mandatory. Three of us—Michael Halton, Vincent McCarvill and I—were taking chemistry, and since we were serious students we didn't want to miss the laboratories. Nevertheless, we were very keen to play in the soccer matches. Both quantum mechanics (the 'many worlds' interpretation) and special relativity (simultaneity and different inertial frames of reference) appeared to hold solutions to this problem, but attractive as these theories were, we couldn't see any immediate way to implement them.

In the end we employed perturbation theory and found a quasi-solution. We realised that much of the three-hour chemistry practical was spent waiting for reactions to reach completion. This enabled us to start the laboratory in person, enlist the assistance of a good colleague to 'keep an eye on our experiment' while we disappeared to play the match, and then complete the laboratory on our return from the game. Despite the savage nature of many of these games, we had a working assumption that our injuries would not be so severe as to prevent us from completing a chemistry practical. Our scheme worked perfectly for the first three weeks. We had attended (at least some of the time) and completed all chemistry laboratories and we had won all our games up to that point. In the fourth week, the lecturer responsible for the laboratory, Professor Peter Carr called the three of us aside for a quiet word. His exact words to us were, 'Lads, this is NOT a game of cowboys and Indians!' We got the message. Although we missed a few matches after that, we had amassed enough points to leave us leading the league and we eventually won our division.



Dr Kevin Kavanagh and Dr Frank Mulligan, Maynooth University (centre) receive their awards in the presence of USI President Laura Harmon, Minister for Education & Skills Ms Jan O'Sullivan TD, the Patron of the National Forum Prof Mary McAleese and Chair of the Forum Prof Sarah Moore

# Love on Campus

## 1974

One couple share their individual memories of Maynooth, and finding one another.



Mary Hosty (1974)

Mary Hosty agus  
Pádraic Ó Ciardha,  
Berlin, October 2014

## The damp & draughty Aula

If a person is lucky, there comes a time in life when an invitation to reminisce arrives in the mailbox. This can be a double-edged sword: While it suggests you may have interesting anecdotes and observations about ‘the past,’ it also implies—or rather, baldly states—that you are now in the ranks of those who are expected to spend more time looking backwards than forwards. Then you start thinking about Lot’s wife and what happened to her when against all the best available advice at the time (her husband, God and an angel) she looked back and was turned rather alarmingly into a pillar of salt.

Hopefully I won’t turn into a pillar of salt when I reflect on Maynooth in the 1970s.

Then it was a bright and hopeful place. Though student numbers were small and the 66 bus was almost the only lifeline into the city, college life was largely fun – oh, and educational. Inspiring lecturers encouraged us to develop the capacity to think for ourselves. Their classes sent us scurrying into the works of James Joyce, TS Eliot and young Seamus Heaney. The occasional uninspiring lecturer would send us scurrying in another direction: to the Leinster Arms, where we drank coffee (occasionally laced with whiskey) and figured out the *Irish Times* crossword and other weighty matters.

As any cursory glance at the history books will show, Ireland in the 1970s had its dark and disturbing moments, when rights and freedoms that we take for granted today were hard fought and harder won. Revolution was in the air and Maynooth was no exception.

Outside of the lecture theatre, we learned about human rights, civil rights, about the importance of a just and fair society. Maynooth then was a place of great minds and great ideas, full of people so brainy you would freeze up at the mere sight of them. It is small wonder that the college has gone on to build on its fine academic reputation over the years, becoming the university of first choice for so many people.

*‘Revolution was in the air and Maynooth was no exception.’*

My happiest days in Maynooth were spent in the damp and draughty Aula Maxima, where I learned about writers who hadn’t yet made it onto the BA syllabus. Until I shuffled and shivered onto the Aula Stage to audition for a play, I had never heard of Eugene Ionesco, Henrik Ibsen or Jean Anouilh. Many talented actors and directors of that time went on to become key figures in politics, arts and media, and it was fun treading the boards with them. Overseeing all of our theatrical endeavours was someone who had the measure of our fragile undergraduate egos—the warm and benevolent Professor Ronan Drury. He coaxed the poetry of Dylan Thomas and JM Synge out of us, and we learned not to take ourselves too seriously.

When I was asked to direct ‘Endgame’ by Samuel Beckett, I thought I would die with the fright, especially with the late poet and philosopher John O Donoghue in the central



role of Hamm. But there was no escape, and unravelling the complexities and perplexities of Beckett with John's philosophical rigour turned out to be a great adventure and one of my fondest Maynooth memories. I can still hear his rich County Clare voice beginning, 'Me to play.'

The Aula Maxima also played a more lasting role in my life as I met a man called Pádhraic Ó Ciardha there. He had a charming smile and he was very clever and funny and kind. He could play the tin whistle and talk *as Gaeilge* and was a handy footballer. Neither of us had the faintest idea that we might end up married to each other, let alone celebrate a joyful wedding anniversary in Rome 35 years later (September, 2014). But that's another great thing about Maynooth – it was then, and

remains to this day, full of delightful surprises. The world has changed, and mostly for the better I hope. But I can still feel the cold, damp breeze that whistled through the Aula Maxima, curdling the mashed-up sticks of orange greasepaint. I can still hear Fr Pete Connolly reading from Joyce's 'The Dead' to a hall of spellbound 18 year olds and the rich, resonant voice of Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich as he reflected on the Revolution in France. And of course, John O Donoghue: 'Old endgame, lost of old, play and lose and have done with losing...'

I'm still not at all sure what Beckett meant – but it was plenty of fun trying to figure him out with one of the great philosophers of the age.

# Heading East to Kildare

**Pádhraic Ó Ciardha (1974), Mary's husband  
of 35 years, and also Leascheannasaí TG4**

Baile beag ab ea Má Nuad ar chuile bhealach nuair a tháinig mé ann i dtosach, 3 Meán Fómhair 1971. Bhí an sráidbhaile sách codlatach an uair sin – fothrach caisleáin, leathdhosaen siopa, 4 teach tábhairne agus oifig an phoist, de réir mar is cuimhin liom, cé gur beag cead amach chucu a bhí againne, ábhair sagairt ag an am.

Bhí peileadóir óg as Maigh Eo John O'Mahony in aon rang liom agus a aird sa gcéad choicís sin ar Chluiche Ceannais Mionúir na hÉireann ina raibh sé le himirt. Chaitheamar roinnt

Dioplóma san Oideachas slua eile mac léinn nach dtagadh go Má Nuad ach le clapholas agus a bhíodh imithe arís roimh am codlata. Dream aduain ab ea iad sin dúinne a chónaigh san áit, go dtí go raibh cuid againn féin sa rang céanna taobh istigh de chúpla bliain.

Bhí Raidió na Gaeltachta ag ullmhú dá bhreith le craoladh trialach (a tharla Domhnach Cásca 1972) agus bhí ceol Gaelach go barr aeir ar an ard-mhinicíocht raidió agam ó mhaidin go hoíche. Bhaineas féin agus Art Ó Dufaigh, ceoltóir binn

a bhí ar fáil. Is iomaí díospóireacht theasaí a bhí againn faoi cheisteanna nár thuig muid – ach níor laghdaigh sin an paisean ná ár suim dul in iomaíocht le hOllscoileanna eile le drámaí agus le díospóireachtaí Gaeilge. Ba bheag campus ollscoile nach bhfaca muid agus muid páirteach i gcomórtais éagsúla, gréasán eile cairde a bunaíodh agus atá fós láidir.

B'eol dom ag teacht chun na háite go raibh ceantar beag 'Gaeltachta' in aice le Má Nuad. Ba chuimhin liom agus mé i mo ghasúr an fuadar agus an cumha a bhain le haistriú roinnt teaghlach as Cois Fharraige soir go Cill Michríodóg i 1959. Chuir mé aithne (den dara uair) ar chuid acu agus mé i mo mhacléinn – Na Fáthartaigh agus na Féinneadhá - go gairid ina dhiaidh sin agus ba dheas bheith in ann dul ar cuairt chucu agus Gaeilge bhinn mo dhúchais a chloisteáil i gcistin feirme.

Pléisiúr eile ab ea an chomaoín a chuir na hOllúna Gaelacha orainne – ba mhinic cuireadh chuig ócáidí (agus síob freisin) ar fáil ó Phádraig Ó Fiannachta, Cathal Ó Háinle, Pádraig Ó Héalaí, Tomás Ó Fiaich agus Breandán Ó Doibhlin. Oideachas iontu féin ab ea na turais sin, go háirithe go Ráth Cairn i nGaeltacht na Mí le hAifreann an Domhnaigh a éisteacht i gcuideachta na ndeoraithe eile aniar ansin, a chuir oiread sin fáilte romhainn agus a choinnigh tae agus ceapairí linn go gnaoiúil.

Tháinig mé in aois fir i Má Nuad agus níl agam ach cuimhní geanúla ar an áit, ar an gliarscoil agus ar an Ollscoil. D'fhág sé a rian orm agus is ann a casadh go leor cairde liom den chéad uair, bean amháin acu atá ag cur suas liom le fada.

*'D'fhág sé a rian orm agus is ann a casadh go leor cairde liom den chéad uair, bean amháin acu atá ag cur suas liom le fada.'*

mhaith ama ar High Field – mise im íobartach lena ais agus é dom mharcáil (ar go leor bealach). Castar dom go rialta an Teachta Dála as Maigh Eo i dTeach Laighean anois agus is minic muid ag gáire faoi sin agus mé fós ag éagaoin na an leonadh sin.

Ó tharla gur oscail an Ollscoil Náisiúnta do thuataigh cúpla bliain roimhe sin, bhí meascán maith mac léinn á mhealladh chuige faoin am seo – clann mhac agus iníonacha na bhfeirmeoirí lártíre (agus na múinteoirí) go líonmhar ina measc. Mheall an tArd

as Doire, barr taitnimh as bheith ag éisteacht leis an gceol draíochta sin. Nach beag a cheapas go mbeinn ar fhoireann an Raidió chéanna taobh istigh de chúpla bliain!

B'é Cuallacht Cholmcille mo chéad-theagmháil le heagras Gaeilge d'aon chineál agus le cainteoirí dúchais as Gaeltachtaí eile – oscailt súl agus cluas a bhí ann go cinnte. Bhíodh cailíní dathúla binn-bhriathrach ag freastal ar na himeachtaí agus muid ar fad faoi gheasa ag an ardchaighdeán díospóireachta agus ceoil

*'In modern society, where time is such a valuable commodity, research suggested that people appreciate the fact that internet dating allows them to be more efficient with the time they spend looking for a partner.'*

—Nicola Reynolds, BA (Single Hons, Anthropology) 2013, MA (Anthropology) 2014

# Love M@ynooth

## *A 21st century way of finding love*

**Nicola Reynolds said her decision to focus her master's thesis research on internet dating was an easy one.**

The 2014 anthropology postgrad had observed a shift in ideology surrounding the practice in Irish society over the past several years. Where once it was something people talked about in whispers, she said it is now a socially normal and acceptable practice. People talk openly and honestly about their experiences and compare notes on different sites.

When friends or classmates asked her about her thesis topic, the conversation leaped to a discussion about a certain friend of family member's experience at finding love online, or their general opinion on the topic.

So Reynolds delved into the world of online communities and how online interactions spill over into the users' everyday lives, with a hope of gaining insight about modern Irish life.

She said that although online dating has been a hot topic in popular culture in recent years, the discussions seem to concentrate on the positive and negative attributes of specific sites, coupled with humorous anecdotes, stories of people who found love online or advice on the dangers and pitfalls of online dating.

Reynolds interviewed over twenty people ranging in age from 25 to 45 and worked closely with eight of those participants using an ethnographic

method of data collection. This group consisted of people who were married or in long-term committed relationships and had met online or people who were active users of one or more sites during the research period.

She chose to hone in on the fact that many of those she interviewed described dating sites as venues in which they could be more honest about their feelings, desires, and traits they were looking for in a potential partner than in their off-line interactions with potential partners.

By virtue of removing the face-to-face element of the interaction, people experience a significantly reduced fear of rejection or disapproval, enabling them to forge deeper connections more quickly through traditional forms of dating, she said. In modern society, where time is such a valuable commodity, people appreciate the fact that internet dating allows them to be more efficient with the time they spend looking for a partner.

Reynolds also crunched the numbers. She examined the algorithms that dating companies purportedly use to 'match' people and the extent to which users rely on these matches when deciding with whom they will interact. She found that with physical chemistry and body language signals notably absent, people rely heavily on these match statistics, as well as profile information and photographs, to form an opinion.

Reynolds said the heavy reliance on match statistics is quite concerning, considering that some online dating companies have admitted to experimenting with algorithms and being less than experts at how they're doing it.

In fact she cited, Christia Rudder, CEO of online dating site OkCupid, recently stated in theguardian.com, "We experiment on human beings. OkCupid doesn't really know what it's doing. Neither does any other website. It's not like we have been building these things for very long. Most ideas are bad. Even the good ones could be better. Experiments are how you sort all this out." Thus, Reynolds warns against putting too much trust in these sites, citing their relative infancy.

However, she also refers to anthropologist Daniel Miller, who says, "People have always been social networking sites." She added that many of the participants in her study are well-aware of the shortcomings of these sites and have, in fact, developed ways to work around the algorithms and parameters of certain dating sites to successfully form relationships.

Reynolds thinks research on online dating as an element of modern Irish society should continue, to determine how the vehicles shape interactions and the quest for love in the future.





# The Culture of Motherhood

**There's a puzzling anomaly at work in European fertility rate figures. Virtually every country in the EU is experiencing worrying decline in population except for Ireland and France.**

At just under the ideal average of 2.1 live births per woman, Ireland has no concerns regarding population stability. However, in Germany, where standards of living are higher and supports such as childcare and maternity benefits are more robust, the fertility rate is far lower.

In fact, at 1.38 (as of 2012), it is dangerously near to the red line figure of 1.3, which indicates a halving of the stable population size every 45 years.

So why are German women turning away from motherhood? Dr Valerie Heffernan, Head of the Maynooth University Department of German, along with two fellow researchers, is about to embark on a study that may offer new insight. "Policy makers in Germany are aware of the economic and social factors that come into play when deciding to become a parent," Heffernan said. "In response to these they have introduced measures such as universal kindergarten and better maternity and paternity benefits."

However, these new measures have not yet had a significant impact on Germany's fertility rate.

This study will examine a previously underexplored element in a woman's decision-making process: culture. What is the image of the mother in German cultural expression? What kinds of mothers are we seeing on television and reading about in books? And, if those expressions of motherhood are negative, is that feeding into women's decisions around parenthood?"

The study, funded by the Irish Research Council, will examine cultural transmission of motherhood in Germany, with an eye to broadening the investigation to the rest of Europe. Latvia has one of the lowest fertility rates in Europe, and Dr Heffernan and her team are keen to look more closely at the birth rate among Latvians living in Ireland and elsewhere to see if exposure to other cultures makes a difference.

Perhaps they will determine why Ireland is continuing to buck all trends, a phenomenon for which demographic research to date has been unable to account.

"We have a significantly higher birth rate than countries like Sweden, which is regarded as a very supportive environment for parenthood; or Spain, which shares our Catholic history and culture of the family. We have been through a recession and supports for parents here are not considered particularly progressive. And yet we are having more babies than any other country in the EU. It would be very interesting to explore why that is."



Christopher Morris  
Professor and Head of the  
Department of Music

# A Morning *at the Opera*

**The conductor enters the pit, the lights go down and an expectant hush descends over the auditorium of the Metropolitan Opera as the overture begins.**

But I'm not at the Met or even in New York; I'm in Screen 1 of the Odeon, Stillorgan.

Welcome to The Met: Live in HD, a hugely successful 21st-century phenomenon that is transforming the way we watch opera. Ten times a year the Met broadcasts a Saturday matinee performance live via satellite to 1,600 cinemas worldwide. In Ireland, where the screenings can be seen in 19 cinemas, the 1pm New York matinee becomes—thanks to the time difference—a traditional evening performance. For audiences on the US west coast, however, that means a 10am performance (undaunted, they've embraced what they dub a 'morning at the opera').

So successful has the format been that other opera companies and arts providers have begun offering their own 'cincasts' (Bolshoi Ballet Live, National Theatre Live and so on). Meanwhile, Peter Gelb, General Manager of the Met, has even begun to worry that the phenomenon is 'cannibalising' the Met's own live audience.

It was with this and other striking recent developments in mind that directors, media producers and researchers gathered recently at the celebrated Glyndebourne opera house for the launch event of 'Opera and the Media of the Future' (<http://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/omf/web-opera/>), a partnership between Glyndebourne and the University of Sussex.

As a musicologist with research interests in opera, cinema and media technology, I was invited to present the opening keynote. Keen to develop dialogue between practitioners and academics, the organising committee tasked me with setting the tone for the event. The specialist language that academics might typically share amongst themselves would be inappropriate in this setting, but so would anything that patronised delegates from outside academia.

My response was to try to identify themes and problems that we all might share by posing some key questions, particularly around the one word that features in all the cinecast branding: 'live.'

What, I asked, does 'live' mean when the audience gathers at the same time but in remote locations? What do audiences believe they gain and lose when the performance is mediated by a screen and speakers? And is this merely a fad, or a format with future?

I'm pleased to say that feedback suggests I found the right balance. Just as recent Music graduates Patrick McGlynn (PhD, 2014) and Simon Kenny (BA, Music Technology, 2014) have applied their research to music/technology interfaces (their Maynooth University spinout company Surface Tension Ltd. develops music apps for tablets), so I hope my continued dialogue with the arts community facilitates a productive exchange on the potential and limits of media technology as an interface between audiences and live performance.

*'What, I asked, does 'live' mean when the audience gathers at the same time but in remote locations? What do audiences believe they gain and lose when the performance is mediated by a screen and speakers? And is this merely a fad, or a format with future?' – Prof Christopher Morris*





# GREAT WORK IN THE GREAT WAR

*Commemorating the role of Maynooth graduates in World War I, an exhibition at the Russell Library marks the centenary of the First World War by exploring the role of Irish Catholic army chaplains at the front.*

A display of letters, photographs, and records relating to Maynooth College during the years 1914–1918 is on display at Maynooth University. The exhibition marks the anniversary of the First World War and commemorates the work of Maynooth graduates working as army chaplains.

During the war large numbers of Irish priests—many of them ordained at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth—enlisted as army chaplains to provide spiritual guidance and support to Catholic troops. These chaplains worked in the trenches and on the battlefields, ministering to the sick and dying while providing pastoral care and spiritual guidance to weary and frightened soldiers. Several of them made the ultimate sacrifice and died while carrying out their work.

One such graduate was Stephen Clarke from the diocese of Kilmore, who volunteered to work as an army chaplain in 1915, having been ordained just three years previously at Maynooth College. Rev. Clarke was involved with the Shropshire Light Infantry and the Lancashire Fusiliers and according to a report in *The Tablet* was admired by both officers and men for his 'unsparing devotion to duty.' He died on the 4th October, 1917 at the age of 29 while ministering to the sick and dying on the battlefield.

Ordained in Maynooth College in 1908 for the diocese of Waterford and Lismore, Matthew Prendergast died on the 16th September 1918 while serving with the Army Chaplains' Department. Rev. Prendergast died at the age of 37 and is buried in the Cairo War Memorial Cemetery.

Perhaps the most well-known Irish chaplain during the First World War was Francis Gleeson. Rev. Gleeson was ordained at Maynooth College for the diocese of Dublin in 1910 and volunteered for service shortly after the outbreak of the War. Gleeson served with the Royal Munster Fusiliers in 1914–15 and again in 1917–19. He is famously depicted addressing the Munster Fusiliers in the painting, 'The Last General Absolution of the Munsters at Rue du Bois.' Rev. Gleeson later served as army chaplain for the Irish Free State before working as a priest in Bray and Dublin.



*'As you have no Fourth Divines to volunteer this year, we thought there could be no harm in offering ourselves for ordination as soon as you may deem fit.'* – Thomas Gallagher, third year divinity student at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth

The exhibition also looks at the impact of World War I on Maynooth College. The rising costs of food, fuel and other supplies coupled with a loss of income led to financial difficulties during this period. Student fees increased and the number of free slots curtailed. Increasing pressure from the media and the British Government resulted in several early ordinations to meet the demand for army chaplains at the front.

One such individual was third year divinity student Thomas Gallagher, who in a letter dated 21st April 1917 writes:

"As you have no Fourth Divines to volunteer this year, we thought there could be no harm in offering ourselves for ordination as soon as you may deem fit. It would be much more convenient for us to prepare, if we were to be ordained here in June at the usual time."

Meanwhile, the threat of conscription loomed over students and staff, actually prompting the College to close for a short period in April 1918.

The display includes an anti-conscription petition signed by a total of 279 staff and students of Maynooth College, including the College President Monsignor John Hogan and Vice-President James MacCaffrey. The pledge contains the following

resolution:

"Denying the right of the British Government to enforce compulsory service in this country, we pledge ourselves solemnly to one another to resist Conscription by the most effective means at our disposal."

The exhibition 'Maynooth College 1914–1918' is a collaborative endeavour between St. Patrick's College, Maynooth and Maynooth University, with support from Kildare County Council. It is running at the Russell Library until early 2015 and can be viewed on a drop-in basis during normal opening hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10am–1pm and 2pm–5pm.

*Thanks to Barbara McCormack, Special Collections & Archives: Russell Library and John Paul II Library for her contribution to this article.*



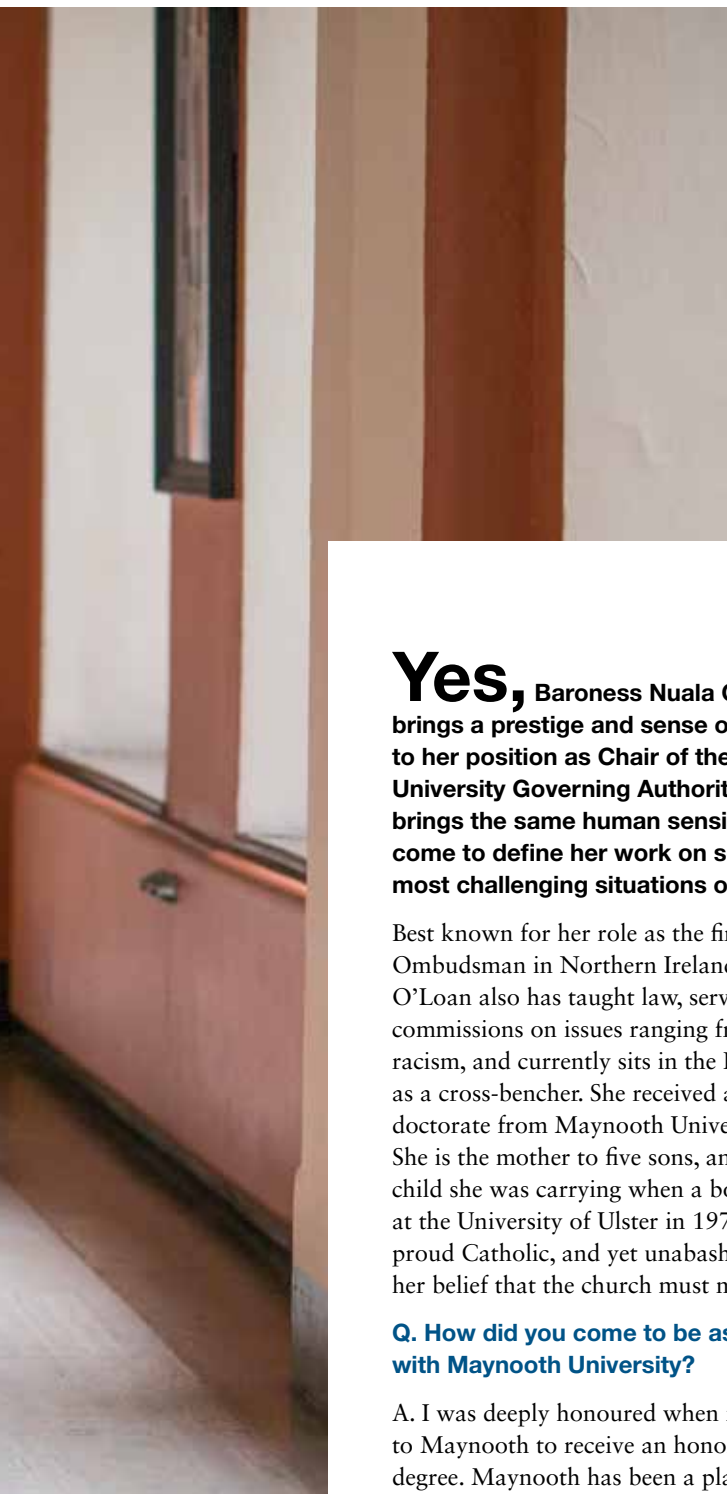
# From Omagh to Africa,

Baroness Nuala O'Loan looks  
back, while still blazing forward

*In this special interview for The Bridge,  
**Baroness Nuala O'Loan** sits down in the historic  
Russell Library with her friend and co-member  
of the Maynooth University Governing Authority,  
Professor of Sociology **Mary P. Corcoran**.*

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*'I think it's an institution that is redolent of history and yet a new university, and there is such scholarship, so it was a huge privilege.'*

– Baroness O'Loan on being appointed chair of the Maynooth University Governing Authority

**Yes,** Baroness Nuala O'Loan brings a prestige and sense of purpose to her position as Chair of the Maynooth University Governing Authority, but she also brings the same human sensibility that has come to define her work on some of the most challenging situations of our time.

Best known for her role as the first Police Ombudsman in Northern Ireland, Baroness Nuala O'Loan also has taught law, served on public commissions on issues ranging from electricity to racism, and currently sits in the House of Lords as a cross-bencher. She received an honorary doctorate from Maynooth University in 2008. She is the mother to five sons, and also lost a child she was carrying when a bomb exploded at the University of Ulster in 1977. She is a proud Catholic, and yet unabashed in voicing her belief that the church must modernize.

**Q. How did you come to be associated with Maynooth University?**

A. I was deeply honoured when invited to Maynooth to receive an honorary degree. Maynooth has been a place that's always interested me. A year or so later the Governing Authority needed a new chair and I was pleased to be elected. I think it's an institution that is redolent of history and yet a new university, and there is such scholarship, so it was a huge privilege.

**Q. Your term as chairperson will come to an end next year, can you reflect on your experience?**

A. Oh, it's been wonderful. There are 30 of us and they're all highly skilled individuals. You yourself sit on it Mary, so...

**Q. Opinionated as well.**

A. That's what we need. We need to be able to gather the collective wisdom in the interest of the university. The role of the authority is really to call the president to account, to ensure things are done in accordance with the law. It is a role which I think has the capacity to be hugely supportive of the university.

Of course in my time we have had a new president, Professor Philip Nolan. He is an extraordinary character—very, very hard-working, and he has come in at a time of great economic difficulty and yet he's moving the university ahead despite that. He's using every possible talent, skill, whatever it is to move it, so I've really enjoyed it.

**Q. Some of the things President Nolan has been spearheading—new curriculum, new buildings—are very expansionist policies. Do you think that's the right way to go?**

A. Oh, I do – definitely. The curriculum must change, but it's very hard for universities to change their curricula. And to do it across a whole university, to almost go back to the drawing board to try to recreate your curriculum to meet the needs of the modern day—it's courageous, but it's not foolhardy. I think it's very exciting.

**Q. You've said Maynooth brings together tradition and modernity. Do you think that's the unique thing about Maynooth or does anything else strike you?**

A. What is here, and I find almost extraordinary, is an engagement between staff and students, a warmth between staff and students, together with high-level research activity. The research is not compromising, as far as I can see, the teaching experience of the students. In a lot of universities that has been the consequence of the development of research.

**Q. ...where professors don't teach anymore? Whereas at Maynooth it's still a priority?**

A. Yes, and I think that's profoundly important. I think that's where the English education system went wrong. Classes got bigger, and there are ways of coping with that; but if students aren't being exposed to the way people think and the minds that enable and conduct research then I think their experience is diminished. So this capacity that Maynooth seems to have retained for staff to engage with students must be a profoundly enriching experience for them.

**Q. You're a very public Catholic and have used your voice to raise questions about the Church's treatment of women. What do you think is the next step for the church given the sort of paroxysms it has been through in recent times?**

A. I think that's probably one of the most profound and difficult questions you could ask, Mary, because the church, although it's one church, has so many manifestations across the world. Pope Francis has said it will find a way of engaging more women at senior levels in decision-making. Now there is a problem: Canon law says decisions can only be made by people who are ordained. The Church has never changed canon law overnight so the way to do this is to put women in at the very top of the pontifical commissions, universities etc. I also think women have to engage in a constructive way and I think they need to—and I know I need to—understand why the church is that way, because only if you do can you really change it.

**Q. So you think the church will survive?**

A. Oh, yes. I do. If you think back over history you've had situations in which the church has been repressed, like the penal laws here and in England, and still it survives. So I don't think secularism and the march of time will just destroy the church. I think it's young people who will make the church in the future.

**Q. You are well-known for the crucial role you played as ombudsman for Northern Ireland, overseeing an impartial system for handling complaints against the police force. How can what you learned then be applied today, where the past still haunts the present and there remain so many unanswered questions?**

A. It's been said to me that in the South, in the Civil War, there was no truth or reconciliation process and the South got on with it. The reality is there are still families who are divided decades later. So in the North I think we have to do something, but the politicians are terrified.

We're actually seeing that in things like the Máiría Cahill issue, this girl who was raped and the Sinn Féin/IRA thesis was: Policing was unacceptable; you couldn't go to the police so if something went wrong you went to your local Sinn Féin office and they sorted it out. They kneecapped their own people, they shot people dead, and they did all sorts of terrible things. And there must

be many Máiría Cahills. There must be many children who were abused. Something has to be done. The longer you put it off, the longer you perpetuate our sectarianism. We do need a process, which will be multi-faced, by which such truth as can be recovered should be recovered and as much information as possible shared.

**Q. You've suggested this recovery process requires telling the story, but is there any situation in which you would have to say, 'It isn't going to benefit the public good to go there' or is transparency a fundamental principle?**

A. It was Lord Acton who said, 'Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' I can't recall the exact words but he went on to say, 'An administration that is not held to account will become corrupt.' When I did the Omagh investigation people said

to me, 'You'll destroy the peace process. You'll destroy your office. People are going to be killed,'—all sorts of things and none of it happened. The world didn't fall down.

**Q. But it took tremendous courage to be able to stand up against that sort of fear.**

A. Kind of scary.

**Q. You've had a lot of different jobs and responsibilities – what was the single toughest one?**

A. I think Omagh was the toughest because I was very new to the job and so much hung on it and there were so many people involved. There were 29 people and two unborn children killed but there were hundreds of people injured. There were all the families of those people to think about. There was all this pressure from various directions telling me I should not do it. The chief constable announced he would commit suicide if I was right in my findings.





**Q. He actually said that?**

A. He said it on television. He said, 'If she's right, I'll commit suicide.' He didn't, but there was huge pressure there. The other time I had huge pressure was during the UVF paramilitary investigation. We had this group of paramilitaries who had been running riot, murdering, arson, intimidation, attempted murder, GBH [grievous bodily harm], hundreds and hundreds of crimes and never brought to account because they were police informants, so that was actually quite a dangerous investigation. But we got there.

**Q. Before the Northern Ireland job, you spent some time in Africa with your husband [Declan O'Loan, Social Democratic and Labour Party councillor and former North Antrim MLA]. What did that experience mean to you?**

A. You could say we were mad and young. We thought we would go and give something back because we were young enough and didn't want to get too settled. I was seven months pregnant with a second child and couldn't envisage a world in which there were no hospitals. We got to Kenya and there were no hospitals to which I could go, so it was kind of scary.

When delivering my third child there was no electricity, no water. Declan left me torches, but the batteries went within a couple of hours so it was just me and the baby in the pitch blackness. I remember before the baby was born the young nurse producing a plastic bowl and I said, 'What's that?' and she said, 'That's your baby's crib.' Ten minutes later she's back with a hot water bottle and she said, 'That's your baby's incubator.' It was tough, but we had a wonderful three years. You're very much thrown back on your own resources. When you travel you experience a depth of life which was wonderful.

**Q. As the mother of five sons, what do you think you've taught them about women?**

A. It's funny. One of them said to me he had this vision that women were very strong, but he said, 'Not all of them are like that.' I said, 'No, but they have inner strengths that you just don't know about yet.' I hope I've taught them to have respect for women, taught them that they have to play their part, that they can't expect to be looked after.

**Q. Your husband doesn't expect to be looked after?**

A. I do try and look after them. They're all good cooks, but they do know how to look after themselves. I remember one boy saying to me, 'You don't know how to iron my shirts properly,' so that was the end of my ironing shirts.

**Q. How do you manage to maintain your mental and physical health?**

A. Over the years I have learned to deal with today's problems today. If it's something that I can't deal with today that really concerns me and may keep me awake at night, then I try to say

myself, 'You can't do anything about it. You're just wasting your energy.' The children and Declan come first so that is a very clear priority. I think it's profoundly important that somehow there's a little space for me, and very often that may be just a cup of coffee with a friend.

**Q. You obviously have a very public profile, but is there ever any tension in trying to retain a private self?**

A. For the most part it just works. I remember when I was doing Omagh I was really frightened that something might happen to me. I was almost too frightened to go outside but I said, 'You have to do this,' and I walked out of the door to get a sandwich for lunch. A little old lady came up to me (she was about five-feet nothing) and put her hand on my arm and said, 'You're Nuala, aren't you?' I said, 'I am.' She said, 'Well don't

you worry, we're praying for you.' And then she was gone. It was really, really nice.

**Q. If you could choose a dining companion, living or dead, who would that be?**

A. At the moment I'd quite like to have dinner with the Pope because I'd like to know how he really thinks. I'd love to know more about him and where his energy is coming from. He has this determination to move the church forward, so he's the one I'd like to have dinner with.

**Q. I can just picture two of you having dinner over a nice bottle of Italian wine and I'm sure you'd just sort him out. No better woman, Nuala... Thank you for your time.**

*'There must be many Máiría Cahills. There must be many children who were abused. Something has to be done.'*





1



2



3

## Maynooth

### *Memories & Memorabilia*

When graduates are asked to recall their time in University and the memories it conjures up, fellow classmates, former lecturers and social occasions are top of mind.

If you recognise anyone not named in these photos, do let us know. Sincere thanks to all alumni who sent in material for this article. Keep them coming by emailing [alumni@nuim.ie](mailto:alumni@nuim.ie).



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

Thanks to Sean Mc Cool for updating The Bridge on the names of the students in this photo; he believes they were pupils from the Raphoe & Derry Diocese in or around 1956.

Back row: (l-r); Dan Doherty, M. Mc Ateer (?), Austin Laverty, Sean Mc Cool, Billy Sharkey  
Front row: (l-r); Michael Sweeney, John Hume, Denis Mc Conellogue (R.I.P.), Con Cunningham

**1** Galway Cycle 1999 – Martin Doran, Theology student; Paddy O'Brien, Louis Fitzgerald Group; Eamon Coughlan; Eamonn Carroll, SU Vice President and Tomas Cronin, H Dip Education.

**2** GAA Finals 1955–56 BA's versus Fourth Divines.

**3** 1969 – Soccer Clerics Front row: Dermot Bennett, Dan Daly (RIP), Micky Doherty, Noel Keating  
Back row: John Lawless, Brendan Leahy.

**4** John Hume (front row, second from left) toggged out for Maynooth.

**5** 1998 First MBNA – GAA scholars at Maynooth including Seaghan Kearney.

**6** Helen Carey, Ann-Marie Whelan, Ann Kehoe, Sara Drea.

**7** BATH alumni 1979–1982.

**8** Micheál Ó Dochartaigh, Elizabeth Higgins and Margaret Horan.

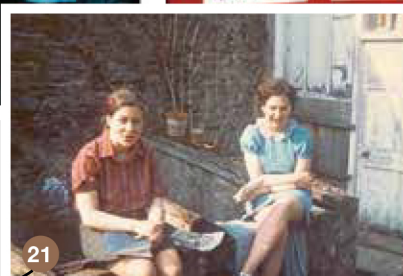
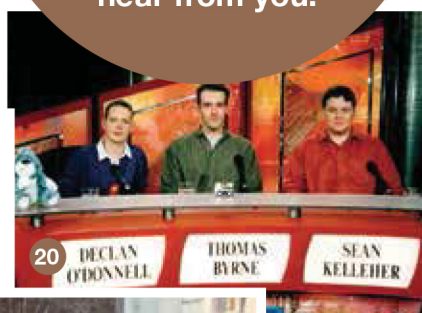
**9** GAA Legend Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh with GAA scholars, Donna Dunnion and Barry Moyles in 1998.

**10** Prof Danny Heffernan, Dept of Experimental Physics; Mark Daly, Linda Murphy, Derek Stynes and Bill Hanan pictured at Cambridge University in 1997.





If you have any memorabilia (photos, concert tickets, videos etc) that you think would be interesting or fun for this feature, **the Alumni Office** would love to hear from you.



Thanks to Patrick Brennan for updating The Bridge on the names of these ladies. He said it brought back many happy memories of persuading the girls to let him take the photo!

Ann Hartnett on the left with Margaret Horan (R.I.P)

11 1958 BA Graduates; Front Row (l-r); P Campbell, Rev T Fee (Lecturer), John Hume. Back Row (l-r); R Murray, I Murphy, P Murphy and L Swords.

12 Honours history graduation class 1971.

13 Graduation Day 1971.

14 At the Conferring Ceremonies in September 1999 are Sharleen McMahon, BA Finance; David Drury, BA Arts and Naomi Doherty, BA Arts

15 Peter Carr (third from right), with Dr WJ Smyth to his left and Brian Gormley (Student Services Officer).

16 Brian Gormley, Student Services Officer, Rev Stephen Faragher, SPCM; Eimear Quinn; Ann Marie Brennan, Maynooth Alumni Association; Dr WJ Smyth at the launch of the Bridge in April 2000.

17 At the Bi-Centenary celebrations in April 1995 are graduate Jim Aiken and Marie-Therese Kilmartin.

18 BATH graduates 1993.

19 Maynooth Alumni Association in 2000; Gillian Herbert, Paula Murray, David Casey, Ann Marie Brennan, Fergus Heneghan, Eamon Carroll.

20 The Maynooth team that won the 1999 Irish Times/RTE 'Challenging Times' Television Quiz series: Declan O'Donnell (BATH) Thomas Byrne (BA) and Sean Kelleher (BSc).

21 "Taking a break in the Junior Gardens" - circa 1970 - Margaret Horan (r). Photo supplied by Margaret Stafford..

22 Frank Mulligan's Student Card from 1974.



# Our Research Fuels Our Teaching

*From landing on a comet to mapping the Irish sea floor, Maynooth University faculty, students and alumni were there—and everywhere in between—in 2014*



## Maynooth University scientists play vital roles in historic Rosetta comet mission

What's been called one of the most important achievements in the history of space exploration—the Rosetta Mission, which in November landed a probe on a comet—included critical contributions from individuals with Maynooth University credentials.

As if having an asteroid named after you wasn't enough, Laurence O'Rourke, who graduated from Maynooth in 1992 with a degree in experimental physics and mathematics, has been regularly featured in media coverage of the Rosetta Mission for his pivotal role as the European Space Agency (ESA) Lander systems engineer.

Meanwhile, Susan McKenna-Lawlor, Professor Emeritus, is a director of the company Space Technology Ireland Ltd, which designed, constructed and tested the on-board

Electrical Support System processor unit. The system is deemed to be 'mission critical' hardware, as it facilitates the passing of streams of commands and data between the Rosetta spacecraft and the instruments on the Lander.

Having successfully landed on the comet, the probe was tasked with taking pictures and analysing surface chemical composition to test several hypotheses about questions as thought-provoking as the origins of life and the universe—more specifically, whether comets delivered water to Earth and/or whether they could have 'seeded' Earth with the chemistry needed to help kick-start life. Despite a shorter than planned mission due to battery failure, the lander managed to deliver a full set of results that are now being analysed by scientists across Europe.







### Could music research lead to a treatment for Parkinson's?

Researchers from the Maynooth University think so. Professors Joe Timoney (Computer Science), Victor Lazzarini (Music), Rudi Villing and Tomas Ward (Electronic Engineering) are part of an EU-funded research consortium that is looking more closely at how rhythmic stimulation can adjust a musical track in real-time, allowing movement and a musical beat to be synchronised. Scholars on the project, known as BeatHealth, envision a way in which this knowledge could lead to new, drug-free therapies to treat Parkinson's, a disease of the central nervous system.



### Computer Science students advance to global finals of Microsoft Imagine Cup in Seattle

A team of Maynooth Computer Science students travelled to Seattle, Washington in the US earlier this year and came home with a \$5,000 prize, having placed in the global finals of the Microsoft Imagine Cup, an international student technology competition. Matthew McCann, KC Grant and Jack Gallagher won third place in the 'World Citizenship' category of the event for an app they designed called AccessEarth. The technology provides information on a building's accessibility for those with mobility impairments. It allows users to inspect a facility's ramps, toilets, counters, and more, and also provides a rating of that facility's accessibility. Using a volunteer network, the team hope the app will make it into the hands of anyone who needs it, from elderly people to wheelchair users and their friends and family.

## Maynooth conference tackles the global economic collapse

Experts on finance and economics from Ireland, US, UK, Australia, Spain, Denmark gathered in Maynooth in September to dissect the differences in countries' individual recessions following the banking crisis, among other topics. The one-day conference called, 'Financial Crises: Transmission and Recovery,' was hosted by the Maynooth Department of Economics, Finance and Accounting, in association with FMC2 (Maynooth's Financial Mathematics and Computation Research Cluster).

Professors Gerald Dwyer (Clemson University, South Carolina) and John Devereux (Queens College, New York) presented a paper titled, 'Why do recessions' severity differ after banking crises?' It explored the characteristics of countries who had recessions of different depths and whose recoveries were of varying duration.



Mulroy Bay, Co. Donegal (left: from a commercial satellite; right: a bathymetric map using satellite images.)

## LÉ Maynooth University?

If you wanted to work in Irish coastal waters you could be forgiven for thinking you might need a specially equipped vessel from the Irish Naval Service, like their latest, the LÉ Samuel Beckett. Or you might think that never leaving a university that is 30km from the nearest coastline might present a problem. In both cases you'd be wrong, because at Maynooth University, researchers use satellites.

Dr Conor Cahalane from Maynooth's National Centre for Geocomputation (NCG) has used funds from a Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Industrial Fellowship to collaborate with TechWorks Marine Ltd, a Dun Laoghaire-based marine company, and the Geological Survey of Ireland on a seafloor mapping study of Dublin Bay.

The team aims to address problems with existing seafloor mapping methods, which require either boat-mounted, multi-beam sonar or airborne surveys using lasers, or aerial surveys, which are time-consuming and extremely costly.

Dr Cahalane and his partners are using satellite imagery to create these maps. They take advantage of the fact that different wavelengths of light can penetrate the water to different depths, with energy in the blue portion of the spectrum penetrating furthest. By measuring the amount of natural light that reflects off the sea floor and returns to the sensors on the satellite, they can calculate the water's depth.

Dr Cahalane anticipates that with more European Space Agency satellites going into orbit in 2015, the researchers could see a flood of free data land on their doorstep—not to mention a flood of new targets for their technology.

Maynooth's Dr Thomas Flavin presented, 'A regime switching analysis of contagion from the US subprime mortgage-backed securities market,' which concluded that contagious effects have been overestimated and that market interdependencies due to the highly integrated nature of the US financial system played a greater role in transmitting the crisis across different markets.

Discussion on the timely topic was fostered by a panel comprised of Dr Peter Dunne from the Central Bank of Ireland, Professor Gregory Connor and Dr Thomas O'Connor from Maynooth University, along with participants from other Irish universities, industry and recent graduates.

## Dr Inventor: Your computerized research assistant?

The idea that technologies have great potential to supplement human pursuits of scientific discovery is nothing new. Dr Inventor is.

Thanks to funding from an EU research consortia, the Maynooth University Department of Computer Science is part of a collaborative project known as Dr Inventor, which will act as a personal research assistant of sorts. Dr Inventor will help scientists overcome their limitations as humans in such ways as identifying research objects with enough similarity to their work that commonalities can be perceived, but with enough novelty to drive new and challenging hypotheses that can be explored.



## Troll your attics and contribute to the 'Letters of 1916' digital archive

The 'Letters of 1916 Project' is calling on the public to search their attics, empty out their sock drawers, and pick apart their library shelves in the search for old letters and photographs from around the time of the Easter Rising. The goal of the project, led by Professor Susan Schreibman of Maynooth University, is to create a crowd-sourced digital collection of letters written in the period 1 November, 1915–31 October, 1916. The collection will include letters by private individuals, soldiers, and officials—be they letters that comment on the Easter Rising, literature and art, the Great War, politics, business, or ordinary life. You can support the project by adding your letters to the virtual collection or by helping to transcribe previously uploaded letters. For more information, email [letters1916@gmail.com](mailto:letters1916@gmail.com)



# A CUT ABOVE

*The Golf Scholarship Programme at Maynooth goes from strength to strength*

Gary Hurley with Barry Fennelly

Such has been the success of the golf programme at Maynooth, that golf scholar and alumnus Gary Hurley was placed as the top Irish amateur at the 2014 Irish Open at Fota Island. Interestingly, the Irish Open brought together three of Maynooth University's honorary conferees in recent years: three time majors champion Pádraig Harrington (2006), 2014 winning Ryder Cup captain Paul McGinley (2006) and Chief Executive of the European Tour, George O'Grady (2013).

Named in honour of his late father, Paddy, Pádraig Harrington played a huge part in the setup of the Golf Scholarship scheme at Maynooth University which is now viewed as one of the leading high performance University golf programmes in Europe. This scholarship scheme offers student golfers of international standard a unique opportunity to combine study for an internationally recognised degree course with a high performance training and competition programme and is viewed by players as a strong alternative to US golf scholarships. Backed also by the generous sponsorship of Carton House, JP McManus and the Oceanico Group among others, the Harrington scholarships were introduced in 2006 with the intention of building on the success of that year's Ryder Cup at the K Club.

Based at the excellent facilities at GUI National Academy and Carton House Golf Club, golf scholars get the opportunity to work with an expert support team of coaches who specialise in key areas of golf performance including: technical development, strength and conditioning, sports psychology, performance analysis, nutrition and lifestyle management.

Scholarship players get the opportunity to travel to Portugal for warm weather training in January and compete in up to 10 university tournaments throughout Ireland and the UK during the academic year.

In December 2013, Gary Hurley was invited to compete in the Patriot All America Tournament in Phoenix, Arizona on the back of his selection for the European Palmer Cup Team in 2012. The tournament brings together the leading All American players from each division in college golf in the US. Hurley boasted a top 15 result against the best collegiate players in the US. Impressive summer performances ensured Hurley and Maynooth teammate, Robin Dawson (2013 Irish Boys Champion), received invitations to play in Arizona again this December.

Sinead Sexton, the leading female player in the programme of recent years, earned her first cap for the Irish Women's Team in the Home Internationals just two weeks prior to her 2014 graduation. Sinead entered the programme in 2011 with a handicap of 3 and graduated playing off a handicap of +1.

In 2011, Barry Fennelly was appointed manager of the golf programme with the goal of bringing the programme to a higher level. A Maynooth alumnus and former Harrington golf scholar, Fennelly returned

from Texas on a golf scholarship himself to take up a place on the scheme in 2007. In 2010, he was one of the first players to graduate from the scheme and his graduation from bachelor to master coincided with his elevation from player to manager. Since his transition, Fennelly has brought on board an expert coaching team and has established a better environment in which players can nurture their skills.



*The scheme is now viewed as one of the leading high performance University golf programmes in Europe.*

*As you well know, the 'Maynooth Experience' is not all about the books. For many, the social and sporting aspects of college life are just as engrained in their memories. Over the years, the University has increased its investment in sport and developed key strategic partnerships in rugby (NUI Maynooth Barnhall), in soccer (St Patrick's Athletic F.C.) and in golf (GUI and Carton House Golf Club). The array of sports scholarships also go a long way in assisting many students who select Maynooth as their university and sporting home.*

# University Sport

If you played with or were involved in any way with either the University soccer or GAA clubs over the years, we'd love to hear from you. Please email [alumni.sport@nuim.ie](mailto:alumni.sport@nuim.ie)

New Maynooth University colours for 2014



**GAA** Maynooth University GAA Club has made significant strides in recent seasons, reaching the latter stages of the Sigerson Cup, enjoying a return to the Fitzgibbon Cup for 2014-2015, and waging formidable challenges in all Ladies Football and Camogie competitions. This may trigger vivid memories among alumni of the 1975 Sigerson win!

One of the key strengths of the club has always been the close-knit community of players involved in teams from freshers upwards. That sense of community does not dry up after graduation. The GAA club has plans to establish an Alumni Association of former students and would love to hear from those who have worn the Maynooth colours with distinction over the years. Details will be revealed over the coming months, but be sure to keep an eye on Twitter @MaynoothUniGAA and in *The Bridge* for more on this exciting development.

From left, Westmeath footballer Karen Hegarty, Kildare footballer Fergal Conway, Kate Whyte and Galway minor hurler Éanna Burke.  
Photo credit: Barry Cregg / Sportsfile





**Barry Prenderville with winning 2014 Collingwood Team members**

(l-r) Karl Cleary, Seamus Doherty, Cian Gorman, Jamie Airey, Eoghan Markey, Daniel Campbell) and tournament players from the 1970s, Seamus Dwyer (1972), Pádhraic Ó Ciardha (1975) and Michael Kealy (1975).

## Soccer boasts most successful season ever with Collingwood Cup Win

Maynooth University Soccer Club enjoyed its most successful year ever in 2014, as the club finally captured the previously elusive Collingwood Cup, Ireland's premier inter-varsity tournament for soccer.

Acknowledging this win last April at UCD, and the involvement of former Collingwood players over the years, the Cup had pride of place at this year's Alumni Summer Soirée, where the 2014 team met face to face with players from the 1970s.

In the last five years, the University has expanded its program rapidly, now offering four men's teams and two women's sides. Success has followed with the Crowley, Harding and of course, the Collingwood Cups, all won in recent years.

Part of the success of the club undoubtedly is due to the groundwork laid over the years by players from years past. With this in mind, the soccer club, under the guidance of FAI Facilitator Barry Prenderville, are looking to set up an Alumni Association to bring together past members of the club.

The goal of the Association would be to maintain the strong friendships that players develop during their time at Maynooth, as well as keep them up to date on the current team and indeed, activities at the University more broadly.



**Argentinians! (1978/79)**

Front Row (l-r) Pat 'The Guru' McHugh, John McCarthy, Conor McGirr, Paul Fiorentini, Hilary Barr, Gerry Bennett, Tony Maher, Mickey O'Kane, Josh Squire.

Back Row (l-r) Barney Brady, Aidan Crowley, Gerry McElhinney, John Friel, Michael Cannon, Declan Nee, Colm Doherty, Paddy McGovern, Mark Shaw, Liam Monagle, Unknown.



**Reds with trophies (between 1975 and 1979):**

Front Row (l-r) Packie Lafferty, Steve Ashton, Hilary Barr, Philip 'Skip' Mone, Paul Fiorentini, Mickey O'Kane, Johnny McPartland, Mick Murtagh.

Back Row (l-r) Francie Henry, Fachtna O'Driscoll, Colm Doherty, Dessie Doherty, Jack Fitzgerald, Liam Monagle, Mick Marren, Noel 'Sheriff' Clarke.



## Rugby

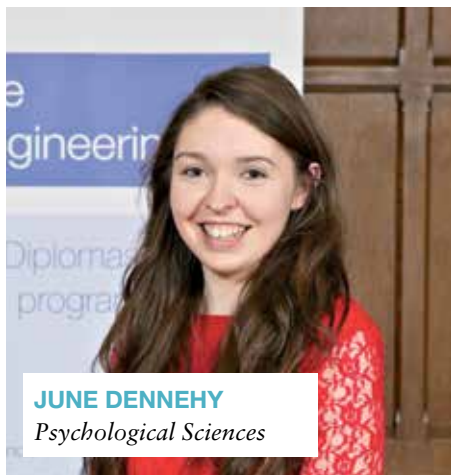
NUI Maynooth Barnhall RFC was named the Canterbury NZ Senior Club of the Year after a successful season from Mini's to Youths to the Senior Men's and Women's teams. It was the first time the Club has been awarded this honour and it reflects how the Club is growing. The Senior team also recently won the Leinster Senior Shield by defeating Naas RFC 48-0.

# Support for Alumni by Alumni

Help us  
**award more  
scholarships  
next year** by taking  
out an Affinity  
Credit Card.

**In the second year of the Alumni Scholarship Programme, Maynooth University awarded another three scholarships for post-graduate study here on campus. Funded by revenues generated from the Maynooth Alumni Affinity Credit Card, card holders are helping 2014 graduates June, Sorcha and Kieran further their educations. Why not take out a card and help us expand the number of scholarships we award next year? Visit [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/alumni-affinity-card](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/alumni-affinity-card) and make a difference.**

Speaking to *The Bridge*, these graduates shared the impact these scholarships have had on their lives:



**JUNE DENNEHY**  
*Psychological Sciences*

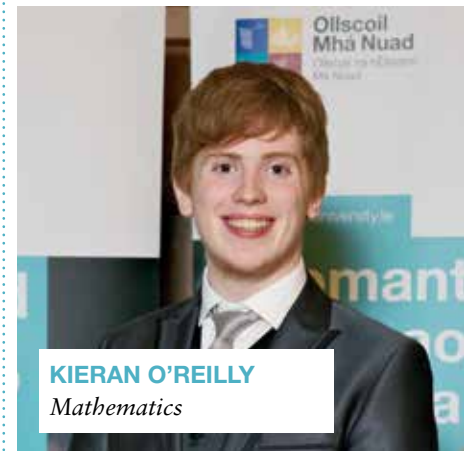
I first heard about the Alumni Scholarship in my final year from posters around the college. Éilis Murray of the Graduate Studies office, was more than helpful in providing me with additional information about the application process. To be selected for this scholarship is truly a great privilege. I am hugely grateful to Maynooth University not only for the financial benefit, but for the acknowledgment of my hard work to date. My postgraduate studies are already going very well, which I would not have been able to do without this scholarship.



**SORCHA RUSSELL**  
*Music Composition*

When I applied for the Taught Master's Alumni Scholarship I was coming close to the end of my Bachelor of Music degree at Maynooth University. Throughout my degree I developed an increasing interest in composition, choosing it as my major specialisation in final year. While examining my options for further study I decided that pursuing a taught MA in Music Composition would allow me to further explore my compositional output while working in a structured environment under the supervision of two renowned composers from the Music Department. Having already had an extremely positive and rewarding experience studying at Maynooth University I knew that this was the ideal place to continue my studies. I first became aware of the Alumni Scholarship through Éilis Murray from the Graduate Studies Office and decided to submit an application. The process was straightforward and gave applicants the opportunity to present their academic results along with other skills or achievements through the inclusion of a personal statement. I was absolutely delighted to be chosen as one of the scholarship recipients this year. This scholarship covers my fees for the duration of my course and as a result I am now able to commit myself fully to my master's program without the

added burden of financial pressures. I would like to thank both the Graduate Studies Office and the Alumni Office for this wonderful opportunity and hope many other students can benefit from this scholarship in the future also.



**KIERAN O'REILLY**  
*Mathematics*

The scholarship has been invaluable to me. It made my study in Maynooth possible. It gave me the financial security I needed to pursue the master's. Otherwise, I would have had to leave college, get a job and come back when I had the money saved. Being able to transition from Undergrad to Master's is invaluable, especially seeing that I am studying in the same field.

I would have had to work ridiculous hours in order to afford the master's, while now I can comfortably work in the college while completing my master's.



Apply now on [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/maynooth-affinity-card](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/maynooth-affinity-card)





# Another Chapter for Maynooth Alumni

*When two or three Maynooth University alumni come together they are quick to search for some overlap in their time spent at Maynooth. Memories flood back. The conversation turns to questions:*

*Which subjects did you study?*

*Which pubs did you go to?*

*Do you remember walking across the bridge?*

*Did you take the bus into Dublin?*

*Did you have Prof. Lennon?*

*When did you graduate?*

Next? Do you know of any other Maynooth graduates living in the area?

The area could be Rathgar or Galway or London or Toronto. It could also be Paris.

This was the case in April 2014 when Sean Ryan, Roísín Dockery and Fr Dwayne Gavin (Chaplain to the Irish community in Paris) met up and recalled their days in Maynooth.

Each realised they didn't know anyone else in Paris or indeed, France, who had been to Maynooth University. Both long-term residents in Paris, Sean (BA Hons, 1989) and Roísín (BA, 1987) knew that there wasn't an alumni chapter in Paris so they set out to create one.

Sean, whom *The Bridge* profiled in 2013, renewed his contact with Alumni Officer Karen Kelly to find out how to establish a chapter. In the alumni newsletter and through the Maynooth University LinkedIn group, Karen put out a call for alumni living

in France to contact Sean. Sean also conducted his own searches on LinkedIn and sent invitations to graduates, Erasmus students, researchers and lecturers who had been in Maynooth at some point in time.

"I asked them to connect with me if they wished to be on the distribution list" he said. "In October I was able to put together a spreadsheet of over 30 names, mainly from Paris but also from other parts of France—from Lille, Nantes to Toulouse, Lyon—and even from Luxembourg."

The France chapter also has been fortunate to have the patronage of Ireland's new ambassador to France, Geraldine Byrne Nason (BA Hons, 1980; MA, 1981). Ambassador Byrne Nason is the most recent addition to the Maynooth Alumni Advisory Board (MAAB), which was formed in 2011 to assist the Alumni Office in raising the profile and increasing the reach of Maynooth alumni nationally and internationally.

Sean and Roísín worked closely with Karen to see about getting greater visibility for the chapter on the website, newsletter, LinkedIn and other social media channels. They also met with the new ambassador to discuss their plans and get her support. The official launch of the chapter will take place in January 2015 with a reception hosted by Ambassador Byrne Nason at the Irish Embassy in Paris. Maynooth University President, Professor Philip Nolan, will attend as well to congratulate the alumni on the new Maynooth alumni outpost and provide an update on the strategic direction of the University.

If you are a graduate, Erasmus student or researcher living in France, do get in touch with Sean or Roísín to take part in this exciting event.



**Would you be interested in establishing a Maynooth Alumni Chapter in your part of the world—or your part of Ireland for that matter?** Become a Maynooth Alumni Ambassador by contacting Karen Kelly in the Alumni Office and she'll help set you on your way.

Creating a Maynooth Alumni Chapter is a great way for alumni to build valuable social and business networks. With visits from today's University staff and invitations to special events, it also keeps your connection to Maynooth University alive, while meeting new people in your local community or country.

One example came in December 2013, when the Maynooth Alumni China Chapter (established in 2010) gathered in Beijing to hear from the Irish Ambassador to China, resulting in follow-up invitations to embassy events.

As Maynooth alumni expand the global footprint of the University, we'd like to be along for the journey. Email Karen at [alumni@nuim.ie](mailto:alumni@nuim.ie) to find out how you can become a Maynooth Alumni Ambassador.

#### Contact

Sean Ryan at [ryan\\_sean@hotmail.com](mailto:ryan_sean@hotmail.com) or [www.linkedin.com/in/seanryanparis](https://www.linkedin.com/in/seanryanparis)

Róisín Dockery at [roisindockery@hotmail.com](mailto:roisindockery@hotmail.com) or [www.linkedin.com/pub/roisín-dockery](https://www.linkedin.com/pub/roisín-dockery)



Sean Ryan, Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason and Róisín Dockery  
Photo credit: Bernadette Martin



PARIS  
FRANCE

**Many alumni have children or family members who also attended the University—some were even taught by a parent at some stage. For each Maynooth family, the story is different. Here, father and son, Ron and Darren Healy, share their Maynooth memories with *THE BRIDGE*.**

If you or a family member would like to share your memories of Maynooth, we'd love to hear from you. Email: [alumni@nuim.ie](mailto:alumni@nuim.ie)

## How Maynooth changed his life – and his family's – forever

### Ron Healy (MSc, 2010)

I chose the Computer Science Department in Maynooth for a research-based MSc over a number of other institutions, mainly because of the immediate passion shown by my eventual Supervisor, Dr Joseph Timoney, for my research idea.

I had undertaken a BSc in Software Systems at NCI as a mature student, enrolling in 1999 (nearing the age of 33) without even a Leaving Cert. I studied in winter and worked every available hour in summer. After a few years back in the 'real world,' I enrolled at Maynooth with a specific idea to address a niche issue in a relatively specific part of the music industry (copyright administration). I didn't realise that – rather than make some monumental change within the music industry – that decision would change my life and that of my family. I graduated with an MSc (Research) in 2010, having become a Maynooth lecturer; published a range of papers; developed a couple of patent applications; and became involved in 'grassroots' commercialisation – arranging for student groups to attempt to solve technical problems for small local businesses.

After I left Maynooth in 2012, I moved into a role as a business analyst. I am now an independent consultant business analyst for large



*‘Our children grew up with the knowledge that university was a realistic option for them.’*

The Healy family – Ann, Darren and Ron

# Family Matters

public and private organisations in many different sectors. Apart from the radical career-change (from a part-time coach driver to lecturer to consultant business analyst in less than 10 years), the even more rewarding change was that our children grew up with the knowledge that university was a realistic option for them if they chose to pursue it (even, theoretically, if the Leaving Cert was a disaster!) One of my children (Darren) also chose to attend Maynooth and enrolled while I was still studying at the University – albeit at a different department. Not only were father and son students at Maynooth, but we were there at the same time!

## Just months after Maynooth and already applying his education – in China

**Darren Healy (BSc, Biological and Biomedical Sciences, 2014)**

Biological and Biomedical Sciences at Maynooth University was not my first choice. After enrolling, I even contacted the University and requested a transfer to ‘General Science.’ However, after a brief discussion with the person on the other end of the line (thank you, whoever you are!), I decided to give the course a chance,

and it was one of the best decisions I ever made.

In first year, I studied my required modules and elected mathematics and physics. In second semester, I started working as an Education Support Worker (ESW) on behalf of another student. This meant attending computer science modules – some of which were lectured by my father (yikes... awkward!) That year fostered an interest in both computer science and mathematics (which I hadn’t exactly enjoyed in the Leaving Certificate.) This resulted in me participating in research (in first year!) with two computer science students to analyse the cryptographic and steganographic properties of a newly developed covert communications technique. The team was invited to present our findings in a paper at the Undergraduate Awards Ceremony. It was a very enjoyable and enlightening experience.

In second year I dropped physics and decided to do some extracurricular learning in the form of a TESOL/TEFL certificate. The idea was that TEFL, plus a degree, would open doors after college. During this time I also became more interested in health and fitness, helped by the readily available facilities on campus. This was to be the trigger that altered my personal plans and ambitions. I decided

to undertake third year abroad as part of my degree, studying at the prestigious McMaster University in Canada. That year was the most amazing, insightful and fulfilling experience of my life. To experience my area of interest in another part of the world, to understand different processes and cultures, and to be made aware of how to better utilize my potential was eye-opening. Doing so without the support network of family and friends gave me the self-belief and confidence to chase my ambitions with conviction. After returning to Maynooth, my fourth-year project involved analysing a new compound to determine if it had the potential to be used in combating Type II Diabetes. I graduated in the class of 2014.

The months since finals have been hectic. After InterRailing around Europe, I returned home for conferring and a week later flew to Shanghai to develop the science department at one of the leading elementary schools in China. I am now involved in reformatting the science curriculum, helping the school properly equip their new science building/laboratory, teaching science to several hundred students aged 7–11 on a weekly basis and improving the overall education, performance and experience of science at the school. My time – and opportunities – in Maynooth helped shape the person I am today.

2011

Our most mature graduate of 2011, **Noel Hynes**, writes that he fondly remembers his classmates and lecturers, in particular sociology Professor Mary P. Corcoran. A former garda with more than 27 years experience, Noel goes ballroom dancing every Saturday night and is a lover of good vintage wine!

## Class Notes

New for 2014, *The Bridge* asked alumni to share a little taste of their lives today, a special student memory, or a thought about how their Maynooth education has helped them since leaving campus. Here are their responses:

1976

**Helen Wybrants** is Systems Librarian at IADT, Dun Laoghaire. A former SU Societies Officer and SU Vice President, Helen shared with *The Bridge* that her most recent 'Maynooth Experience' was at the Alumni Summer Soiree in May 2013. As she recalled her deep past over a key period of her life, she wrote of how she can count and chart many of her student peers who now grace the Irish literary landscape and those who have taken up key positions in national politics. At a time of deep political change, she was also witness to the very public sanctioning of two well-respected academics and to the deep and troubling times in the North. She describes Maynooth of the 1980s much as Dickens's, *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times."

1985

**Edmond Behan** has been teaching English since his graduation and writing school textbooks such as Fallons ('English Extra,' 'Branching Out 1' and 'Branching Out 2,' which is due in March 2015) for more than 15 years.

1987

Ghanaian **Rev. Fr. Francis Amonoo** was among the first economics graduates at Maynooth. He would like to catch up with any former classmates on Facebook, Skype (framonoo) or e-mail fraframonoo@gmail.com. "Maynooth has improved a lot and I am very proud to be part of it, especially as one of the pioneers in economics. I remember I had to get a written note from my Bishop before being allowed to do economics because I was a priest."

1997

**Florence Craven** remembers a time at Maynooth before mobiles and emails and no M4 or N4! – "I still remember the Students' Union building (then affectionately known as The Shed!) and the mystical reverence of Callan Hall, bathed in the glow of winter sunsets as Prof. Comerford told us about the Ancien Regime."

2000

Applied Social Studies graduate **Niall Hanson** is the author of 'Masculinities, Care and Equality: Identity and Nurture in Men's Lives' (Palgrave, 2012). Niall's book takes a critical view of the relationship between masculinities and caring.

2003

Dublin woman **Martin Langan** has spent over 10 years studying at the University. A graduate of Irish Medieval Studies and Anthropology, she has continued researching and reading and is a published poet and short story writer.

2008

Since her graduation with a Double Honours in history and music, **Nichola Egan** has pursued a career in accounts and administration and has commenced studies with Chartered Accountants Ireland. "I found that after studying history, and the emphasis that is placed on correct referencing, research skills and presentation, that these paved the way for my promotions through the years."



## 2009

**Grace Bermingham** is currently studying for her MA in Opera Performance and has performed extensively in Ireland and abroad. She graduated in English and music and sang with the Maynooth Chamber Choir as both a soloist and in ensembles for many university events. She said being a Young Artist Associate with the Opera Theatre Company in Ireland was a career highlight for her.



Dr Sarah Cassidy with Dr Bryan Roche and John Chambers with the pupils of Rathmore NS.

Since completing her PhD in Psychology, **Sarah Cassidy**, together with her PhD supervisor, Dr. Bryan Roche, launched a Maynooth University spin-out company called [www.RaiseYourIQ.com](http://www.RaiseYourIQ.com). The SMART training programme, which was launched at a primary school in Co. Meath, uses proprietary online brain training methods to yield an increase in point IQ over standardised methods. Sarah enjoys a career as an educational psychologist and behaviour therapist and writes for various online parenting and educational magazines.

## 2010

Mature student **Brenda Sharpe** graduated in 2010 and still pursues her love of reading the classics by running a Book Club in Blanchardstown Library and sharing her Maynooth education with others.

## 2011

**Richard O'Sullivan** completed two higher diplomas at Maynooth (Mathematical Studies and I.T.), which he believes played a significant role in helping him begin his career in software testing with a Dublin-based software quality firm.

**Terence Shanley** credits his education in geography and GIS in helping him greatly in his current role as a transport planner and logistics analyst in the supply chain department of Glanbia Consumer Foods.

**Carol Hunt** is now Recruitment Manager EMEA for Kerry Group and credits her PG Diploma in Adult Guidance and Counselling with her successes to date.

## 2012

**Barbara Sweeney** lectures in St. Francis Hospice and on a master's in palliative care at TCD. She reports that her Maynooth thesis has been instrumental in assisting palliative care teams do posthumous reviews, thereby improving care for future patients.

Legal eagles with BCL International degrees, **David Fitzmaurice** began a federal judicial clerkship in 2014 in the Southern District of New York, while **Sharon Pia Hickey** has taken up a position in Cornell Law School.

## 2013

**James Meehan** graduated as a mature student following his retirement. He has kept his study of history and classics alive by becoming a volunteer tour guide with the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin Castle.

Erasmus student **Joëlle Pérez** came to Maynooth in her 50s as a student from Aix Marseille Université (A.M.U.). A lover of Irish history, Celtic civilisation and its music, Joëlle chose to be an Erasmus student in Ireland, leaving her husband and children in France to pursue her dream of further education.

MSc graduate in Strategy and Innovation **Kenneth Hayes** was promoted shortly after graduation to a business operations analyst position for PayPal's London Business Unit. His dissertation examined digitisation as a means of competitive advantage with mobile as a key feature. Since completing his MSc, he's had colleagues reach out to him to discuss his course.

In her class note, English and music graduate **Christine Boyd** describes her cool job as Brand Editor for Hallmark Cards in the UK, which allows her to write cards amongst lots of other writing opportunities.

## In Memorium



**Roisín Lavery** (2000) remembers her friend **Ann Gough** (née Kenny) who passed away in 2013:

*It is with much fondness that I write about my memories of my good friend, Ann, and the great times we had together in Maynooth from 1997 to 2000. Ann was a gifted musician and German speaker, but above all, a beautiful person. We shared many 66 Bus journeys to Heuston Station, from where we took the train home together to Limerick and Tipperary. Ann was an easy-going, pleasant girl who was always up for the craic and a laugh, yet humble and unassuming.*

*We spent many Monday nights in Callan Hall rehearsing for Choir, cycling home afterwards, going to the weekly 'Stammtisch' in Caulfields and Platform Concerts in Riverstown Hall, which luckily coincided for a great night out! Attendance at a Mahler lecture the next morning, however, could be a bit arduous!*

*Some musical works that I associate with our time in Maynooth: Handel's Messiah, Bach's St. Matthew Passion, Vaughan-Williams Fantasia on a theme by Tallis, Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde.*

*Ann lost her battle with cancer on 16th May, 2013. I think of her daily.*

If you've a class note that you'd like to share – where your career has taken you or if you got married or met a significant other, travelled somewhere really interesting or just have a fun Maynooth memory to share with other classmates – we'd love to hear from you. Email [alumni@nuim.ie](mailto:alumni@nuim.ie)

[www.maynoothuniversity.ie/alumni-office](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/alumni-office)



**Pugin Buildings – St Patrick's House, Maynooth**  
**Photograph by Bart Busschots,**  
**Maynooth University**