

Oidhreacht Feirste An Ghaeilge i mBéal Feirste

Belfast Heritage
Irish in Belfast



Foras na Gaeilge



FORBAIRT
FEIRSTE

Ag fíorú na
Ceathrún
Gaeltachta



Réamhró



San am i láthair, tá stair agus íomhá idirnáisiúnta Bhéal Feirste á n-athshamhlú agus á n-athmhúnlú leis an chathair a dhéanamh inaitheanta agus indíolta ag margaí an domhain. Is tráthúil, mar sin, oidhreacht Ghaelach Bhéal Feirste a fhógairt agus a cheiliúradh go neamhbhalbh nó ní féidir stair na cathrach seo cois cuain a aithris go beacht gan stair na Gaeilge a lua. Tá pearsana agus imeachtaí na staire greanta in ainmneacha Gaeilge na mbailte fearainn, agus tá lorg na Gaeilge ar chanúint Bhéarla na cathrach. Le corradh le dhá chéad bhliain tá an teanga Ghaeilge á hathshealbhú agus á hathbheochan agus is i mBéal Feirste a rinneadh an chéad irisleabhar Gaeilge, *Bolg an tSolair*, sa bhliain 1795. Bhí macasamhail Robert MacAdam (1808-95), an tionsclaí Preispitéireach, chomh tiomanta céanna don athbheochan chultúrtha agus a bhí sé do shaothrú na tionsclaíochta. Ar a gcostas féin a bhunaigh an chosmhuintir Cumann Chluain Ard i mblianta ocracha na 1930í agus ba é an toradh a bhí ar an obair cheannródaíoch sin gur gineadh an iliomad tionscnamh ina diaidh: Gaeltacht Bhóthar Seoigh, gaelscoileanna, *Cultúrlann MacAdam-Ó Fiaich*, an Cheathrú Gaeltachta agus go leor eile. Is mithid an stair shaibhir sin a insint.

At the present time, the history and international image of Belfast are being reimagined and reworked so that the city can be presented to the markets of the world. There is no better time, therefore, to proclaim and celebrate Belfast's rich Irish language heritage, without which any history of the city is incomplete. The people and events of the city's history are encoded in the many names of its old townlands and the Irish language permeates the type of English spoken there. For over two hundred years Belfast has been at the hub of the Irish language revival and it was in the city that the first 'magazine' in Irish, *Bolg an tSolair*, was published in 1795. The likes of Robert MacAdam (1808-95), the Presbyterian industrialist, devoted equal energy to the preservation and revival of Irish as he did to the cause of industry. In the hard years of the 1930s the unemployed and working-class of the Falls Road founded Cumann Chluain Ard on their own money, and in so doing generated a wealth of cultural activity for many years to come - Shaws Road urban Gaeltacht, Irish-medium schools, *Cultúrlann MacAdam-Ó Fiaich*, the Gaeltacht Quarter and many other projects. This history deserves to be told.

Gaeil Bhéal Feirste ag ceiliúradh na Gaeilge sa Chathair

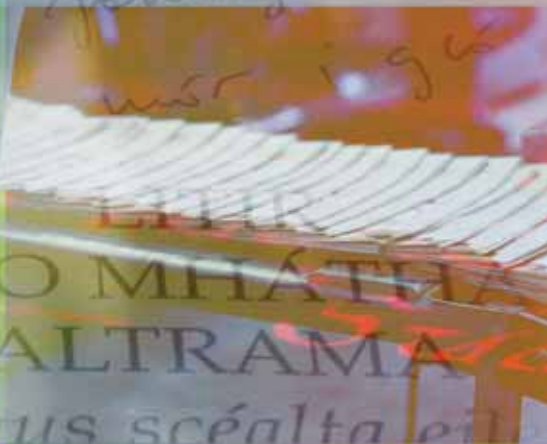
Int é'n bec
ro léic feit
do rinn guip
glanbuidi:
fo-ceird faid
ós Loch Laig,
lon do chraib
charnbuidi.

Belfast Irish speakers Celebrating Irish in the city

the little bird
that whistled shrill
from the nib of
its yellow bill:

a note let go
o'er Belfast Lough -
a blackbird from
a yellow whin

Anonymous
(ninth century)
(Translated by Ciaran Carson)





An Ghaeilge i mBéal Feirste ón luathstair go dtí an 17ú haois

Is dócha nach raibh am ar bith gan an Ghaeilge a bheith á labhairt i mBéal Feirste. Is í nGhaeilge atá ainm an bhaile, Béal Feirste/Béal na Fearsaide. Tá an fhearsaid ar Abhainn an Lagáin san áit ar bunaíodh an baile ina dhiaidh sin.

Ba í an Ghaeilge an lingua franca, nó an teanga choiteann, a bhí idir na Gaeil agus na hAngla-Normannaigh a bhí ag cur fúthu idir cnoic Aontroma agus cnoic an Chaisleáin Riabhaigh anuas go dtí Plandáil Uladh, tráth a bunaíodh baile Bhéal Feirste i 1610. Is iomaí ionad eaglasta a bhí ann, roimh an Phlandáil, sa dúiche sin ina bhfuil cathair Bhéal Feirste anois inti. Ba í an tSeanchill (Shankill) an t-ionad ba mhó orthu uile agus baisteadh 'an tseanchill' ar an pharóiste shibhialta (civil parish) níos faide anonn.

Irish in Belfast from the earliest times until the 1700's

It is most probable that there was never a time when Irish wasn't spoken in Belfast. It is in Irish that the town was named Béal Feirste/The mouth of the sandbank ford. The Farset is at the Lagan where the town was established.

Irish was the Lingua Franca, the common language, between the Native Irish and the Anglo-Normans who were settling in the area between the Antrim and the Castlereagh Hills up until the Plantation of Ulster, when the Town of Belfast was established in 1610. There were many ecclesiastical sites here before the Plantation in the area in which Belfast city is now situated. The Shankill (literally Old Church) was one of the most important of these centres and Shankill was the name given to the later Civil Parish.

Is i gcoillte dlútha na Cromóige (Cromac Wood), ag an Sruthán Milis, a bhí Cill Phádraig, mar a bhfuil Reilig Bhaile na mBráthar (Friars' Bush Graveyard) anois ann. Bhí séipéil eile ann sa Mhéanaois mar a bhfuil an tSráid Mhór (High Street): capella de Vado nó Séipéal na Fearsaide agus, lena chois sin, bhí séipéil ag Cnoc na Bréadaí (Knockbreda), ag Cnoc Cholm Cille (Knock) agus ag Maigh Bhloisce (Mallusk).

Albanaigh den chuid is mó a bhí i lucht na Plandála agus choinnigh siad ainmneacha na mbailte fearainn mar a bhí siad. Is mar sin a mhair oidhreacht Ghaelach Bhéal Feirste sna logainmneacha:

Ard Eoghain - Ardoyne

Baile na Saileán - Ballysillan

Baile Dhún Fionn – Ballydownfine

Baile Mhic Airt - Ballymacarrett
(ba dhuine de mhuintir Uí Néill, Clann Aodha Búí é Art)

An Chromóg - Cromac
(áit a bhfuil casadh in Abhainn an Lagáin).

Cnoc na gCoiníní – Knocknagoney

Lios na Searrach - Lisnasharragh

Tuath na bhFál - Falls

An Cnoc – Knock

Sceitheog an Iarla - Skegoneill

An Sruthán Milis - Stranmillis

In the thick glades of Cromac Wood at Stranmillis stood the church of Patrick where Friars' Bush Cemetery now stands. There was also another church there in medieval times where High Street now stands the Capella De Vado or the Chapel of Ford and as well as these there was the church at Knockbreda, one at Knock and the one at Mallusk.

Most of the planters in this area were Scots and they retained the names of the townlands as they were. Thus did Belfast's heritage of placenames survive:

Ardoyne - Eoghan's Heights

Ballysillan (Literally Town of the Willow Groves)

Ballydownfine (Literally Town of the White Fort)

Ballymacarrett (Literally Town of the son of Art) (Art was one of the O'Neill Clan of Clandeboy).

- Cromac (Literally the little bend) (The place where there is a turn in the Lagan River)

Knocknagoney (Literally hill of the rabbits)

Lisnasharragh (Literally Town of the steeds)

Falls (Literally district of the enclosures)

Knock (Literally the hill)

Skegoneill (Literally Earl's thornbush)

Stranmillis (Literally the sweet or pleasant stream)

An Ghaeilge i mBéal Feirste i ndiaidh na Plandála

Chuir an Phlandáil deireadh le réimeas Uí Néill ach, má chuir, fágadh fianaise bhuan againn ar na Niallaigh i Leabhar Cloinne Aodha Buidhe. I dtrátha 1680 a tionscnaiodh an leabhar agus is ann atá ginealach Uí Néill chomh maith le dánta molta a scriobh filí de mhuintir Uí Ghnímh agus Uí Eachagáin, go háirithe, dá gcuid pátrún. Foinse staire ríthábhachtach é Leabhar Cloinne Aodha Buidhe a thugann léargas dúinn ar shochai na nGael roimh aimsir na Plandála.

Seanmóireacht i nGaeilge

Ba é mian Shasana an Ghaeilge a úsáid leis an phobal Chaitliceach a iompú ina bProtastúnaigh. I measc na cléire a thugadh seanmóirí i nGaeilge i lár na 1600í bhí an tUrramach Jeremiah O'Quinn (Ó Coinn), cainteoir dúchais a d'iompaigh ina Phreispitéireach. Ba mhór an crann taca ag lucht an iompúcháin é foilsíú an Bhíobla Gaeilge. Foilsíodh an Nua-Thiomna i 1602 agus foilsíodh aistriúchán ar an Sean-Thiomna le hEaspag agus scoláire Gaeilge de bhunadh Shasana, William Bedell, sa bhliain 1685.

Irish in Belfast after the Plantation

The plantation put an end to the rule of the O'Neills but even if it did we are left with ample testimony of the O'Neills in the Book of Cladeboye. The book was compiled around 1680 and it contains the genealogy of the O'Neills as well as praise poetry composed by their hereditary poets of the Ó Gnímh and Ó hEachagáin families, particularly about their patrons. The book is an exceptionally important historical text which gives us an insight into Gaelic society before the plantation.

Preaching in Irish

It was England's desire that Irish be used to convert the Catholic community to Protestantism. Amongst the clerics who preached in Irish in the mid 1600s was the Reverend Jeremiah O'Quinn, a native speaker who had converted to Presbyterianism. The publication of the bible in Irish was a great boon to the proselytisers. The new testament was published in 1602 and a translation of the old testament was made by the English-born Gaelic schola, Bishop William Bedell in the year 1685.



An Ghaeilge i mBéal Feirste i ndiaidh 1700

Tá go leor fianaise ann go mbíodh an Ghaeilge á labhairt ar imeall Bhéal Feirste go dtí an 18ú haois.

I 1724, le linn aimsir na bPéindlithe, gabhadh seisear fear, a raibh ainmneacha Gaeilge orthu, nuair a rinneadh ruathar míleata ar shearmanas Caitliceach (tionól neamhdhleathach san am) ag Baile na mBráthar. Lena chois sin, bhí an Ghaeilge á labhairt i measc cuid de na pobail Phreispitéireacha a bhí taobh amuigh de Bhéal Feirste.

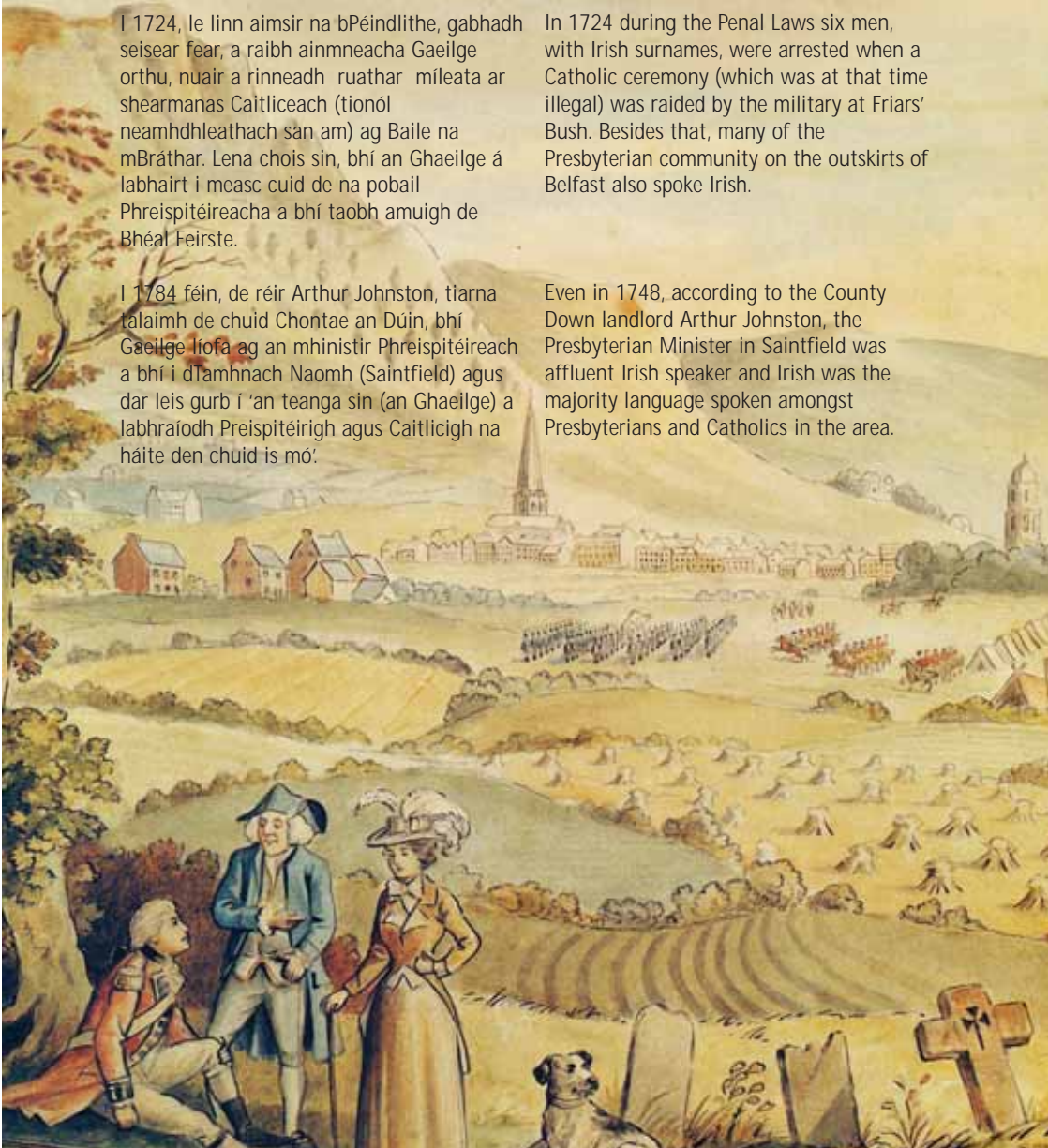
I 1784 féin, de réir Arthur Johnston, tiarna talaimh de chuid Chontae an Duín, bhí Gaeilge líofa ag an mhinistir Phreispitéireach a bhí i dTamhnach Naomh (Saintfield) agus dar leis gurb í 'an teanga sin (an Ghaeilge) a labhraíodh Preispitéirigh agus Caitlicigh na háite den chuid is mó'.

Irish in Belfast after 1700

There is plenty of evidence for the use of Irish on the outskirts of Belfast up until the 18th Century.

In 1724 during the Penal Laws six men, with Irish surnames, were arrested when a Catholic ceremony (which was at that time illegal) was raided by the military at Friars' Bush. Besides that, many of the Presbyterian community on the outskirts of Belfast also spoke Irish.

Even in 1748, according to the County Down landlord Arthur Johnston, the Presbyterian Minister in Saintfield was affluent Irish speaker and Irish was the majority language spoken amongst Presbyterians and Catholics in the area.





Ré órga Bhéal Feirste agus athbheochan na Gaeilge

Is sna 1780í agus na 1790í a bhí ré órga Bhéal Feirste ann, tráth a bhí an pholaitíocht radacach agus an athbheochan chultúrtha faoi bhláth. Bhí an-tionchar ag na réabhlóidí a bhí i Meiriceá agus sa Fhrainc ar mheánaicme Phreispitéireach an bhaile, an aicme ba thréine ar an 20,000 a bhí ag cur fúthu i mBéal Feirste san am. Is san am seo a bunaíodh Óglaigh na hÉireann agus ina dhiaidh sin na hÉireannaigh Aontaithe. Bhí muintir Bhéal Feirste ag cur suim faoi leith sa Ghaeilge agus sa cheol Ghaelach i rith na tréimhse sin.

Is é The Northern Star, nuachtán na nÉireannach Aontaithe, ba thúisce a thug tús áite don Ghaeilge nuair a d'fhoilsigh siad an chéad irisleabhar Gaeilge, Bolg an tSolair, i 1795. Ábhar ar ghramadach agus ar fhilíocht na Gaeilge a bhí san irisleabhar agus ba é cuspóir lucht a fhoilsithe é, 'to prevent in some measure the total neglect and to diffuse the beauties of this ancient and much-acclaimed language'.

I mí Iúil 1792 tionóladh Féile na gCláirseoirí i mBéal Feirste ionas go ndéanfaí iarracht, 'to revive and perpetuate the ancient music and poetry of Ireland'. Deichniúr cláirseoirí a bhí páirteach san Fhéile agus Gaeilge ó dhúchas acu uilig.

Belfast's Golden Age and the revival of Irish

The 1780s and 1790s were Belfast's Golden Age, when radical politics and the cultural revival blossomed. The French and American revolutionaries had a great impact on the Presbyterian middle class of the city, the largest class among the 20,000 who then inhabited Belfast. It was in this period that the Irish Volunteers were established and after them the United Irishmen. Belfast citizens were also displaying a great interest in Irish language and music at that time.

The Northern Star, the newspaper of the United Irishmen, was the first to give prominence to Irish when they produced the first ever Irish magazine called Bolg an tSolair in 1795. Irish grammar and poetry were the main features of the magazine and its aim was 'to prevent in some measure the total neglect and to diffuse the beauties of this ancient and much-acclaimed language'.

In July 1792 the Belfast Harpers Festival was held so as 'to revive and perpetuate the ancient music and poetry of Ireland'. Ten Harpers participated in the festival

Bhí baint lárnach ag clann Mhic Reachtain (McCracken) agus ag Edward Bunting, as Ard Mhacha, leis an athbheochan chultúrtha seo agus is é Bunting a chuaigh thart ar Ghaeltachtaí na hÉireann ag bailiú ceol tradiúnta.

An Ghaeilge san Acadamh

Sna 1790í bhí go leor de mhuintir Bhéal Feirste ag iarraidh an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim agus is chuide sin a bhí ranganna ag Pádraig Ó Loingsigh as Loch an Oileáin, Contae an Dúin, san acadamh mórluachach sin, Acadamh Bhéal Feirste. I measc na mac léinn a bhí ag an Loingseach bhí Tomás Ruiséil ('The Man from God Knows Where') a cuireadh chun báis ina dhiaidh sin mar gheall ar an pháirt a bhí aige i ngnóthaí na nÉireannach Aontaithe. Tá an fógra seo a leanas in The Northern Star, 16 Aibreán 1795, faoi ranganna Uí Loingsigh:

'The merchant and artist would reap great benefit from the knowledge of it. They would then be qualified for carrying on Trade and Manufactures in every part of their native country ...'

and all were native Irish speakers. The McCracken family played a prominent role in the cultural revival along with Edward Bunting of Armagh and it was Bunting himself who went round the Irish Gaeltacht areas collecting traditional music.

Irish in the Belfast Academy

In the 1790s many inhabitants of Belfast were seeking to learn Irish and with this in mind Pádraig Ó Loingsigh, from Loughinisland in County Down, held classes in the illustrious Belfast Academy. Among O'Loingsigh's students was Tomas Russell (The man from God knows where) who was hanged for his part in the activities of the United Irishmen. The following advertisement appeared in the Northern Star on April 16th 1795 about Ó Loingsigh's classes:

'The merchant and artist would reap great benefit from the knowledge of it (Irish). They would then be qualified for carrying on Trade and Manufactures in every part of their native country..'





An Ghaeilge i mBéal Feirste sa 19ú haois

An Ghaeilge agus Béal Feirste i ré na tionsclaíochta

Bhí cathair Bhéal Feirste ar sheála bheith ina cathair thionsclaíoch faoi na 1820í agus mheall sí lucht oibre ar bheagán tuarastail ó na ceantair máguaird. Thosaigh an mhuintir sin a phlódú isteach sa chathair i ndiaidh an Ghorta Mhóir (1845-51) agus ba í an Ghaeilge an teanga a bhí ag go leor acu.

Cuideacht Gaedhilge Uladh (1828)

Ba í 'Cuideacht Gaedhilge Uladh', faoi phátrúnacht the Marquis of Downshire, ba mhó a bhí ag obair ar son na Gaeilge sa tréimhse a lean Acht an Aontais. Preispitéirigh a bhí i dtromlach na mball a bhí gníomhach sa chumann, ina measc sin, An Dr Séamas Mac Domhnaill (cathaoirleach), an Dr Reuben Bryce agus Robert Shipboy MacAdam. Ba é obair an chumainn ranganna Gaeilge a reáchtáil, leabhair Ghaeilge a fhoilsiú, sean-lámhscríbhinní a bhailiú agus coimisiúin a thabhairt do scríobhaithe Gaeilge chun béaloideas a bhailiú sna ceantair Ghaeltachta. Bhí rún acu fosta scoileanna a bhunú sa Ghaeltacht cé gur fhógair siad go poiblí nach gcuirfeadh siad a ladar isteach ar dhóigh ar bith i gcúrsaí creidimh. Bhí an Ghaeilge ag titim siar san Acadamh go dtí gur tosaíodh ranganna arís i 1833 nuair a ceapadh Tomás Ó Fiannachta ina mhúinteoir ag na hábhair ministrí Preispitéireacha.

Robert Shipboy MacAdam (1808-95)

Sa tréimhse sin idir bunú Cuidheacht Ghaeilge Uladh agus dara leath an 19ú haois ní raibh aon duine a chuir athbheochan na Gaeilge chun tosaigh a oiread le Robert MacAdam, Preispitéireach saibhir a raibh Teilgchearta Soho aige féin agus a dheartháir, James, i Sráid Townsend. Is le linn dó bheith ag dul thart ar larthar na hÉireann,

Irish in Belfast in the Nineteenth Century

Irish and Belfast in the industrial age

Belfast was a city on the cusp of industrialisation by the 1820s and was attracting low wage workers from the surrounding areas. These people began flooding into the city after the Great Hunger (1845-1851) and Irish was the first language of many of them.

The Ulster Gaelic Society (1828)

After the Act of Union (1801) the Ulster Gaelic Society under the patronship of the Marquis of Downshire was the most important body working on behalf of the Irish Language. Presbyterians made up the majority of the society's members, among them were Dr Séamus MacDomhnaill (chair), Dr Reuben Bryce and Robert Shipboy MacAdam. The society's work included running Irish classes, publishing books in Irish, collecting manuscripts and commissioning the collection of oral history from around the Gaeltacht areas. They also had the aim of opening schools in the Gaeltacht areas although they publicly proclaimed their intention to stay away from religious instruction or affairs. Irish was in decline in the Belfast Academy until classes were begun again in 1833 when Tomás Ó Fiannachta was appointed teacher to the trainee Presbyterian ministers.

Robert Shipboy MacAdam (1808-95)

In the period between the founding of the Ulster Gaelic Society and the second half of the nineteenth Century no other individual did as much for the Irish language as Robert MacAdam, a wealthy Presbyterian who, along with his brother John, owned the Soho Foundry in Townsend Street. It was while

ar ghnó crua-earraí a athar, a fuair Robert máistreacht ar an Ghaeilge.

Cainteoirí Gaeilge i mBéal Feirste ag tús an 19ú haois

An Dr Séamas Mac Domhnaill (1763-1845), cainteoir dúchais as Cois Abhann Dalla, bhí sé ar dhuine de na dochtúirí ba chlúití sa bhaile agus bhí páirt mhór aige i gcúrsaí cultúrtha chomh maith. Cara de chuid Henry Joy McCracken agus Wolfe Tone a bhí ann cé go raibh sé dílis do Rí Shasana. Scríobh Aodh Mac Domhnaill, file, dán molta ar ócáid a bháis.

Dr Samuel Bryson (1771-1853), poltigéir a raibh cónaí air ar an tSráid Mhór. Ministir Preispitéireach, a raibh Gaeilge aige, a bhí ina athair. Bhí an Dr Samuel Bryson eolach go maith ar an Ghaeilge agus rinne sé taighde ar logainmneacha chomh maith le hobair thábhachtach ar lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge. Bhí cnuasach maith lámhscríbhinní aige atá anois i Leabharlann Láir Bhéal Feirste. Ghabh Aodh Mac Domhnaill a bhuíochas leis as tinneas uchta a leigheas dó sa dán 'Moladh an Dochtúir Bríse'.

Rev William Neilson (1774-1821) Rugadh i Ráth Éamainn (Rademon), Contae an Dúin, bhí sé ina mhinistir Phreispitéireach i nDún Dealgan agus ina dhiaidh sin ina ollamh le teangacha ag Institiúid Acadúil Bhéal Feirste (Inst) i 1818. Scoláire maith Gaeilge a bhí ann agus tuairiscítear gur thug sé seanmóir Ghaeilge 'in the Donegall Street Meeting House...to a numerous respectable audience' ar an 11 Iúil 1805. Tá clú air fosta as a leabhar iomráiteach An Introduction to the Irish Language (1808), foinse rithábhachtach ar Ghaeilge Chontae an Dúin.

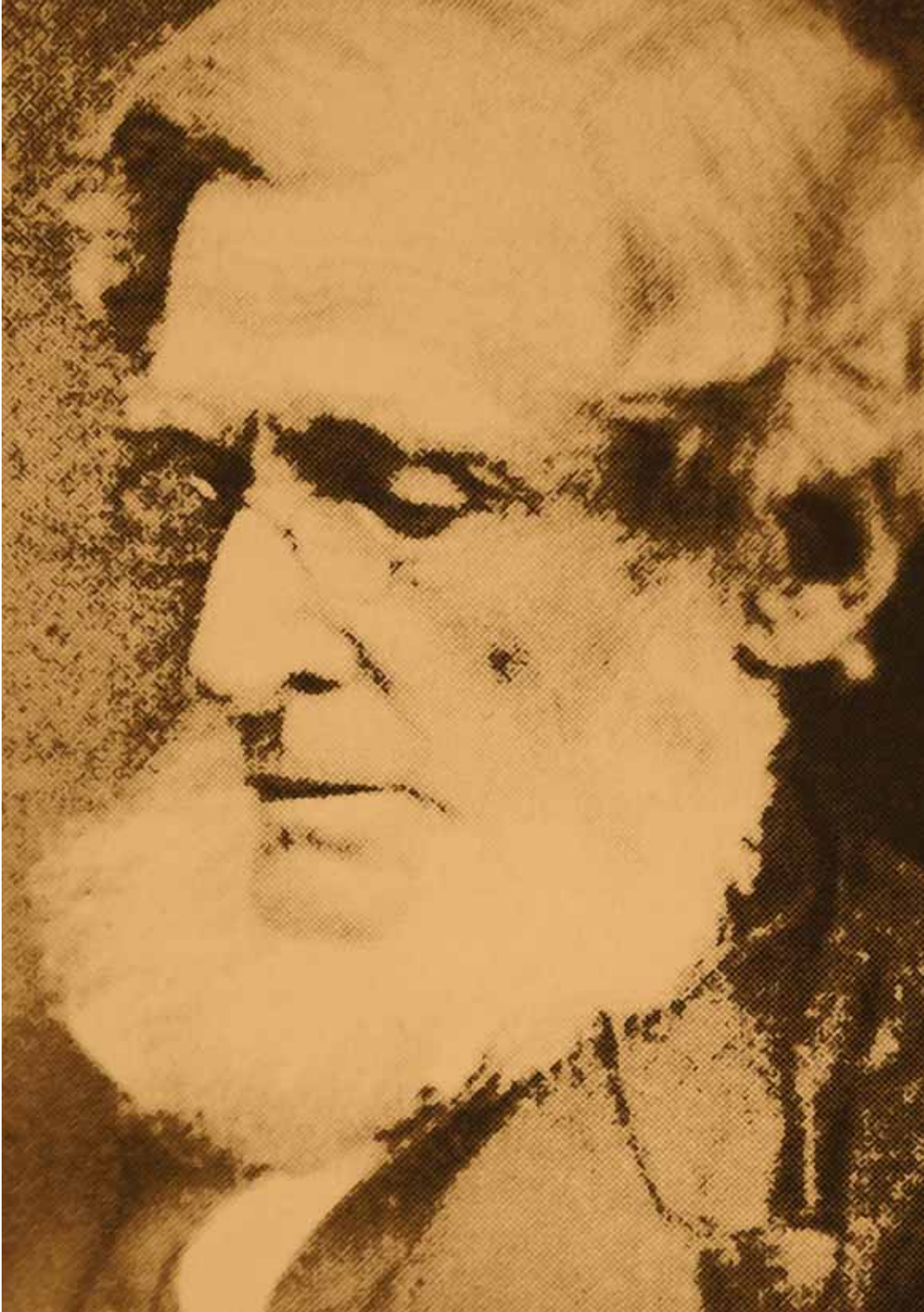
travelling in the west of Ireland for his father's business that Robert gained his mastery of the Irish language.

Some prominent Irish speakers in Belfast at the beginning of the 19th Century

Dr Séamus Mac Domhnaill (1763-1845) a native speaker from Cushendall, was one of the most famous doctors in the city and played a huge part in cultural life as well. A friend of Henry Joy McCracken and Wolfe Tone, he was also loyal to the British Monarch. Aodh Mac Domhnaill, the poet, composed a eulogy on the occasion of his death.

Dr Samuel Bryson (1771-1853) a chemist from High street. His father, a Presbyterian minister, was an Irish speaker. Dr Samuel Bryson had a great knowledge of Irish and conducted research in Irish townland names as well as conducting important work on Irish manuscripts. He possessed a fine collection of such manuscripts which are now housed in Belfast Central Library. Aodh Mac Domhnaill, the poet, thanked him in verse for curing a chest complaint in the Poem 'Praise for the Doctor Bryson.'

Rev William Neilson (1774-1821) born in Rademon County Down, was a Presbyterian minister in Dundalk and afterwards professor of languages at the Belfast Academical Institution (Inst) in 1818. He was an accomplished Irish scholar and it is reported that he gave an Irish sermon 'in the Donegall Street Meeting House... to a numerous respectable audience.' on the 11 July 1805. He is also renowned for his famous book An Introduction to the Irish Language (1808), an extremely important source for County Down Irish.



San am sin (1820i) bhí 141,000 cainteoir dúchais i dTír Eoghain agus bhí Gaeltachtaí láidre i gContae an Dúin, i gContae Dhoire, i gContae Aontroma agus i nDeisceart Ard Mhacha. Thosaigh MacAdam a bhailiú lámhscríbhinní agus seanchais i ndúichí nach raibh Béarla ar bith iontu go fóill. Murabh ionann, b'fhéidir, agus Seán Ó Donnabháin (an chéad Ollamh le Léann Ceilteach i gColáiste na Banríona), thóg MacAdam le caint bheo na ndaoine nó mar a dúradh faoi '[He was] excited by the living, spoken and written tradition on his doorstep'. Ba é a shaothar mór é an Foclóir Béarla-Gaeilge a chríochnaigh sé sa bhliain 1850.

Scríobhaithe Gaeilge i mBéal Feirste sa 19ú haois

D'fhostaigh MacAdam roinnt scríobhaithe Gaeilge chun cuidiú le hobair an tiomsaithe. Bhí Aodh Mac Domhnaill, file as Contae na Mí, ar dhuine de na daoine ab iomráití acu sin. Bhí sé ag obair ag an Presbyterian Home Mission, tionscadal a bhí conspóideach go leor, sular thosaigh sé ag obair ag MacAdam nó gurbh é a 'threoraí agus a ghníomhaí' é. Bhí ardmheas ag Aodh ar a phátrún, rud a mhaígh sé i ndán molta leis:

'Is fear fearúil an Mac Ádhaimh sin a thug grá mór don Ghaeilge,
A bhíos cumannach dáimhiúil le bard agus éigse.'

Lena shúile féin a chonaic MacDomhnaill an slua daoine a tháinig isteach go Béal Feirste i 1847 ag lorg faoisimh ón ocras agus cháin sé an dóigh bhrúidiúil ar chaith údarais an bhaile leo sa dán 'Ceol na mBacach'. Fuair 800 de na daoine seo bás leis an fhiabhras agus cuireadh in uaigh mhór amháin iad ag Baile na mBráthar taobh amuigh de limistéar an bhaile - ba chainteoirí Gaeilge a mbunús.

At that time (1820s) there were 141,000 native Irish speakers in Tyrone and there were strong Gaeltacht areas in County Down, in County Derry, in County Antrim and in South Armagh. MacAdam started collecting manuscripts and folklore in those districts which still had no English. Unlike the first professor of Celtic Studies in Queen's College, John O' Donovan, MacAdam took a strong interest in the living language of the people. It was said of him that '(he was) excited by the living, spoken and written tradition on his doorstep'. His greatest work was his English-Irish dictionary which he completed in 1850.

Irish writers in Belfast in the 19th Century

MacAdam employed a number of Irish writers to help in the work of compiling manuscripts. One of the most famous of these was Aodh MacDomhnaill, a county Meath poet. He worked at the Presbyterian Home Mission, a controversial enterprise, before he went to work for MacAdam, and was to be his 'guide and his agent'. Aodh had great respect for his patron, which he declared in this poem of praise for him:

'He is a manly man that MacÁdaimh who has a great love of Irish
who provides amiable, generous company for bard and learned.'

MacDomhnaill witnessed at first hand the throng of people who flooded into Belfast in 1847 seeking respite from hunger and he criticised the way the authorities in the city treated them in his poem 'Ceol na mBacach'. 800 of these people, most of them native Irish speakers, died of fever and were buried in a communal grave in Friars' Bush cemetery beyond the city limits.



No 'Pháidithe'

Thiar i lár an 19ú haois, i ndiaidh an Ghorta Mhoir, tháinig díoltóirí éisc agus torthaí as Gaeltacht Oméith a chónaí i gceantar Smithfield. Bhí tithe acu sna sráideanna céanna agus bhíodh an obair chéanna acu uilig. Bhaist muintir Bhéal Feirste na 'Fadgies' ('Pháidithe') orthu as siocair iad bheith ag tabhairt 'a Pháidí' ar a chéile, is cosúil. Is mar seo a chuir Cathal Ó'Byrne údar, síos orthu:

D'fhoghlaim Seán Mac Maoláin, scríbhneoir agus Gaeilgeoir clúiteach, cuid mhór dá chuid Gaeilge ó na Pháidithe. Gach Satharn, ba ghnách le Mac Maoláin dul go Margadh Naomh Seoirse le hamhráin a fhoghlaim ó bhean de na Pháidithe, Ailí Uí Mhuireagáin. Satharn amháin, agus Mac Maoláin ina shuí ag éisteacht le hAilí ag ceol amhrán Gaeilge, mhothaigh sé go raibh cuid de na daoine a bhí sa mhargadh ag amharc go drochmheasúil ar Ailí. Nuair a dúirt sé sin le hAilí ba chuma léi. Thiontaigh sí chuige agus dúirt i mBéarla 'I'm not in a bother about them. I could thatch St George's Market with five-pound notes!'

The Fadgies

Back in the middle of the 19th century, after the Great Hunger, fish and fruit merchants from the Omeath Gaeltacht came to live in the Smithfield area. They lived in the same streets and plied the same trade. The people of Belfast christened them the 'Fadgies' most likely because of their habit of calling each other by the Irish version of Paddy 'A Pháidí (pronounced Fadgie). This is how the author Cathal Ó Byrne spoke of them.

Seán Mac Maoláin a renowned writer and Irish speaker learned much of his Irish from the Fadgies. Every Saturday Mac Maoláin would go to St George's Market to learn Irish songs from a Fadgie woman Ailí Uí Mhuireagáin from Omeath. One Saturday as Mac Maoláin sat listening to Ailí singing in Irish he noticed that some of those in the market were looking contemptuously at Ailí. When he told her this she was unperturbed. She turned to him and said in English 'I'm not in a bother about them. I could thatch George's Market with five pound notes'.



De réir a chéile, ag deireadh an 19ú haois, nuair a cartadh cuid mhór de na sráideanna beaga bhí i gceantar Smithfield ar shiúl, bhog na Pháidithe amach chuig ceantair eile, mar shampla, Cnoc Charraig Fhearghusa (Carrick Hill), Bóthar na bhFál agus Baile Mhic Airt. Bhí siopaí torthaí agus éisc acu uilig agus, ag am amháin, deirtear gur beag duine a bhí ag díol torthaí agus éisc i mBéal Feirste nár de bhunadh Oméith iad.

Nan O'Hara

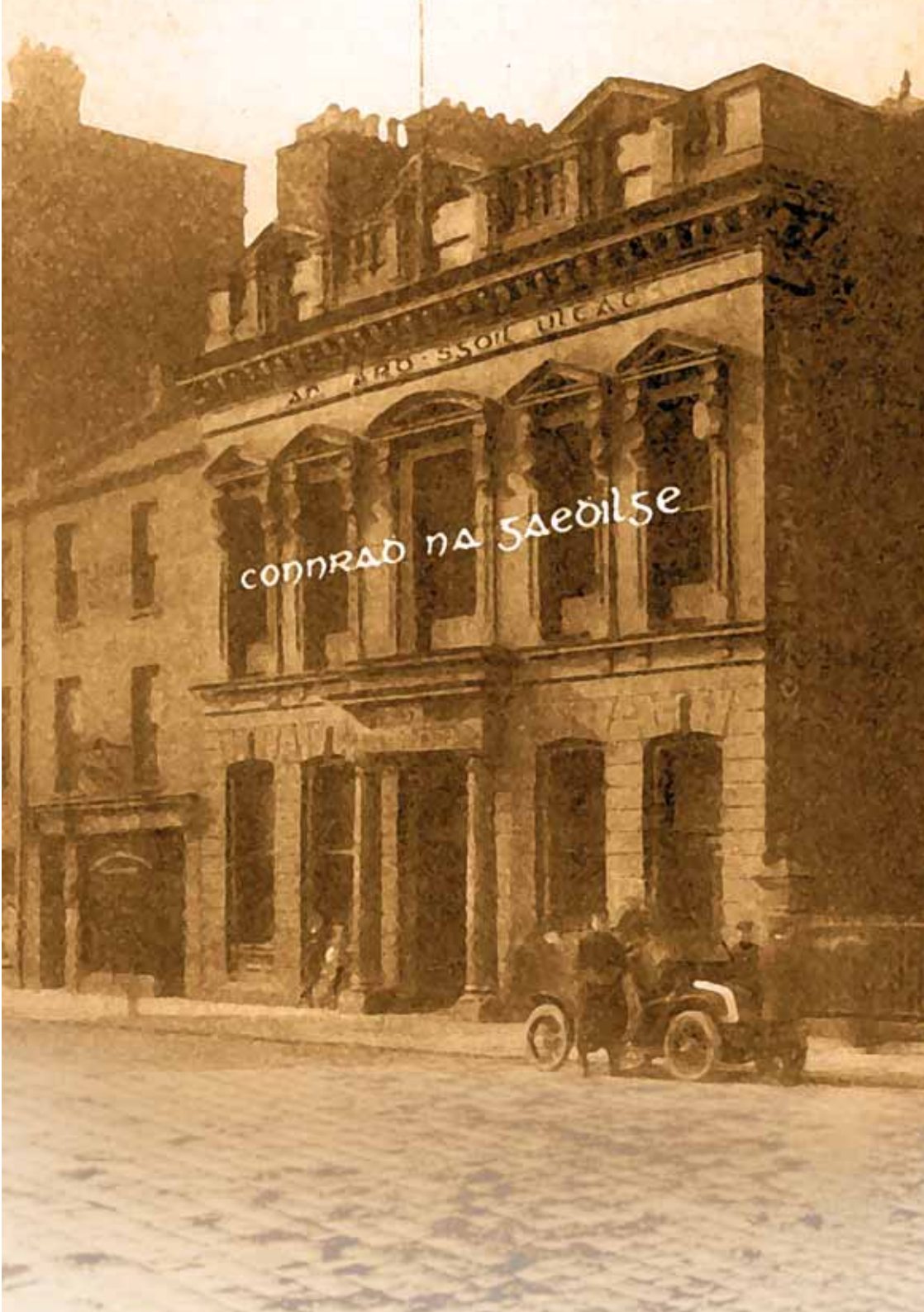
Pháidithe a bhí in athair mór agus máthair mhór Nan O'Hara, bean a raibh siopa torthaí aici ar Bóthar na bhFál (Meleady's) go dtí go bhfuair sí bás i Márta 2006. Dúirt Nan gur chaith sí gach samhradh in Oméith nuair a bhí sí óg. Cé nach raibh Gaeilge ar bith ag Nan d'fhoghlaim sí go leor le brothladh a chur ar pháistí Ghaelscoil na bhFál a thagadh isteach chuici i ndiaidh na scoile!

Gradually as the 19th century drew to a close and the small streets around Smithfield were swept away the Fadgies moved to other areas, for example, Carrick Hill, the Falls Road and Short Strand. They all had fish and fruit shops and, at one time, it was said that there was hardly a person in Belfast selling fish or fruit that wasn't connected to Omeath.

Nan O'Hara

Nan O'Hara, who owned Meleady's fruit shop on the Falls Road, until her death in March 2006, was the granddaughter of Fadgies. Nan said that she spent every summer in Omeath when she was young. Although Nan wasn't an Irish speaker she said that she had enough Irish to ask the children, who used to come into her shop from Gaelscoil na bhFál, to mind their manners.

CONRAD NA SAEÖILSE



An Ardscoil Ultach

An Ardscoil Ultach agus 'Cogadh na gCanúintí'

Le linn athbheochan mhór na Gaeilge sna 1890í ba as Cúige Mumhan bunús na múinteoirí a bhí ag teagasc na Gaeilge i mBéal Feirste. Ar an ábhar sin, Gaeilge na Mumhan a bhí ag na foghlaimeoirí don chuid is mó. Nuair a ceapadh an tAthair Gearóid Ó Nualláin ina 'ollamh' le Gaeilge i gColáiste Mhuire i 1902, ba í canúint na Mumhan a d'fhoghlaim agus a chleacht na hábhair oidí a bhí faoina chúram. Cé gur tógadh an tAthair Ó Nualláin i dTír Eoghain agus i mBéal Feirste, Gaeilge na Mumhan a bhí aige riamh. Ba é an míniú a thug sé ar an scéal ina dhírbeathaisnéis, *Beatha Dhuine a Thoil*, nach raibh litríocht ar bith le fáil i nGaeilge Chúige Uladh ach go raibh leabhair ar nós *Séadna*, le fáil i nGaeilge na Mumhan.

Ba chainteoir dúchais as Tír Chonaill é P.T. Mac Fhionnlaoiach ('Cú Uladh'), fear a raibh baint mhor aige le bunú chraobh Bhéal Feirste de Chonradh na Gaeilge. Níor thaitin sé leis féin ná le daoine eile nach mbíodh Gaeilge Chúige Uladh á teagasc i mBéal Feirste. Rinneadh iarracht tabhairt ar na múinteoirí a bhí ag Coláiste Chomhghaill (Sráid an Bhainc) Gaeilge Chúige Uladh a chur chun tosaigh. Ba é an cúram a bhí ar Cholaíste Chomhghaill oiliúint a thabhairt do mhúinteoirí óga i gcomhair teastais i dteagasc na Gaeilge [féach grianghraf]. Dar le Mac Fhionnlaoiach agus lucht Ghaeilge Chúige Uladh nach bhfuair siad sásamh ar bith ó údaráis Cholaíste Chomhghaill. I 1911 bhunaigh Mac Fhionnlaoiach agus a chomhghleacaithe a gcolaíste féin, áit a dtiocfadh leo Gaeilge Chúige Uladh a chur cinn ar a dtail féin.

The Ulster high school

The Ulster high school and the 'war of the Dialects'

During the great Irish revival of the 1890s most of the teachers of Irish in Belfast were from Munster. Learners of Irish, therefore mostly learned the Munster dialect. When Father Gearóid Ó Nualláin was 'professor' of Irish in St Mary's College in 1902, the Munster dialect was the one which trainee teachers under his care both learned and practised. Although Father Ó Nualláin was reared in Tyrone and in Belfast he always spoke Munster Irish. His explanation for this in his autobiography, *'Beatha Dhuine a Thoil'*, was that there was no literature in the Ulster dialect but that there were books, such as *'Séadna'* were in Munster Irish.

P.T. Mac Fhionnlaoiach (Cú Uladh) was a native speaker of Donegal Irish and he had a central role in the establishment of the Belfast branch of the Gaelic League. Neither he, nor others of like mind, were happy that Ulster Irish was not being taught in Belfast. An effort was made to persuade the teachers at St Comgall's College in Bank Street to promote Ulster Irish. It was the responsibility of the St Comgall's staff to train young teachers for the certificate of Irish (see picture). According to Mac Fhionnlaoiach and his Ulster Irish supporters they got no satisfaction from the authorities at St Comgall's. In 1911 Mac Fhionnlaoiach and his allies established their own college, where Ulster Irish could be taught in line with their own wishes.



Gabháil de Valera agus foirgneamh nua na hArdcoile 1929

I mí Feabhra 1929 bhí sé socraithe ag Conradh na Gaeilge agus ag Cumann Lúthchleas Gael go mbeadh aonach mór acu le hairgead a bhailiú. Ba é an rún a bhí ag an Chonradh foirgneamh a thógáil don Ardscoil. Tugadh cuireadh d'Eamon de Valera labhairt ag an aonach ach thoirmisc rialtas an Tuaiscirt ar de Valera dul thar an teorainn. Nuair a tháinig lá an aonaigh, tháinig na péas isteach sa traein mar a raibh de Valera ina shuí agus ghabh siad é. Cuireadh mí príosúnachta air as an dlí a bhriseadh. Ba i nGaeilge a labhair de Valera sa chúirt. Chuidigh cás de Valera go mór leis na daoine a spreagadh, bailíodh an oiread airgid is gur tógadh foirgneamh don Ardscoil i Sráid Dhubhaise, áit a raibh sí ar feadh na mblianta nó gur dódh go talamh í i 1985.

The arrest of de Valera and the new high school building 1929

In February 1929 the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association had plans to hold a great fundraising fair. The intention of the Gaelic League was to erect a building for an Irish college. Eamon de Valera was invited to address the gathering but was banned from crossing the border by the Northern authorities. When the day of the fair arrived the police entered the train on which de Valera was travelling and arrested him. De Valera, who addressed the court in Irish, was sentenced to a month imprisonment. His case did a lot to inspire people and enough money was raised to build the High School in Divis Street where it remained in operation until it was destroyed by fire in 1985.

Béal Feirste agus athbheochan na Gaeilge 1893-1916

Faoi dheireadh an 19ú haois bhí meath mór tagtha ar líon na gcainteoirí Gaeilge taobh amuigh d'iarthar na hÉireann agus corráit eile. I 1893 bhunaigh Dúghlas de Híde agus Eoin Mac Néill Conradh na Gaeilge d'fhonn an Ghaeilge a chur in athréim mar theanga labhartha. Ba i an athbheochan Ghaelach a bhí in uachtar go cionn tríocha bliain ina dhiaidh sin.

Bunaíodh craobh Bhéal Feirste de Chonradh na Gaeilge ar an 19 Lúnasa 1895 ag 32 Bóthar Beersbridge, teach cónaithe P.T. Mag Fhionnlaoich, cainteoir dúchais as Tír Chonaill. Is as ranganna Gaeilge an Belfast Naturalists' Field Club a d'eascair craobh an Chonartha agus ba chainteoir dúchais as Contae Chiarraí, P.J. Ó Sé, an múinteoir a bhí acu sin. Ba mháinlia in Ospidéal na Samarách (Samaritan) é an chéad chathaoirleach a bhí ar Chraobh Bhéal Feirste, an Dr John St Clair Boyd (1858-1918), fear a bhí ina aontachtaí go smíor agus a chreid gur chóir 'teanga uasal álainn' na Gaeilge a chaomhnú.

Bhí go leor pátrún ag an Chonradh i mBéal Feirste agus orthu sin bhí an Canónach Crozier, Eaglais na hÉireann, An tUrr. R.R. Kane, Ardmháistir an Oird Oráistigh, An tEaspag Mac Éinrí (easpag Caitliceach an Dúin agus Choinnire) agus Francis Joseph Bigger.

FJ Bigger (1864-1926), dlíodóir agus ársaitheoir cailiúil de chuid Bhéal Feirste, bhí sé ar athbheochanóirí móra thús an 20ú haois. Náisiúnaí Protastúnach a bhí ann agus ba gheall le hollscoil bheag a theach cónaithe ar Bhóthar Aontroma ('Ard Righ') ag an dream líonmhar éirimiúil a bhí ag saothrú na hathbheochana sa tréimhse sin go dtí 1916. Ina measc sin bhí Joseph Campbell, file, agus a dheartháir John, ealaíontóir, Alice

Belfast and the Irish Revival 1893-1916

By the end of the 19th Century a huge decline in the numbers of Irish speakers had taken place in all but the West of Ireland and a few other places. In 1893 Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill founded the Gaelic League to reestablish Irish as a spoken language. The Irish revival was predominant for the next thirty years.

The Belfast branch of the Gaelic League was founded on August 19 1895 at 32 Beersbridge Road, the residence of P.T. McGinley, a native speaker from Donegal. It was from the Irish classes of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club that the Belfast branch of the Gaelic League grew and their teacher was a native speaker from County Kerry P.J. Ó Sé. Dr John St Clair Boyd, a surgeon in the Samaritan Hospital, was the first chair of the Belfast Branch, a truly remarkable man who fervently believed that the 'noble and beautiful language' Irish should be preserved.

There were many patrons for the Gaelic League in Belfast among them Canon Crozier of the Church of Ireland, The Rev R.R. Kane, Grandmaster of the Orange Lodge, Bishop Henry (the Catholic bishop of Down and Connor) and Francis Joseph Bigger.

FJ Bigger (1864-1926) a solicitor and famous antiquarian from Belfast was among the most prominent revivalists of Irish at the beginning of the 20th Century. He was a Protestant Nationalist and his residence Ard Righ on the Antrim Road was akin to a mini-university for the galaxy of talent associated with the Irish revival in the pre-1916 period. Among those was Joseph Campbell, a poet, Alice

Milligan, banfhile, ceannairí an IRB Denis McCullough agus Bulmer Hobson agus Roger Casement. Bhí na daoine seo ar an mhuintir ba mhó a chuidigh le bunú Fheis na nGleann (Co Aontroma) i 1904.

I measc na ndaoine is mó a bhí gníomhach i ngluaiseacht na Gaeilge ag tús an 20ú haois bhí an tAthair Dónall Ó Tuathail agus an tUrr. Feardorcha Ó Conaill (Frederick O'Connell), léachtóir le Gaeilge in Ollscoil na Banríona. Ba chainteoir dúchais as Conamara é Ó Conaill agus bhí sé ina shagart de chuid Eaglais na hÉireann. Bhíodh seirbhís eaglasta éacúiméineach Ghaeilge aige in Eaglais Naomh Eoin, Maigh Lón idir 1911-14.

Is é an tAthair Ó Tuathail (1882-1922) a thionscain 'Modh na Ráite' i dteagasc na Gaeilge.

Mrs Margaret Hutton (1862-1953), Gaeilgeoir Protastúnach díograiseach ar ghobharnóir de chuid Ollscoil na Banríona í. D'fhoilsigh sí leagan de 'Táin Bó Cuailnge' i 1907 agus bhíodh cailíní aimsire ar fostú aici as an Ghaeltacht ina teach cónaithe ar Bhóthar Mhaigh Lón.

Alec Wilson (c1870-1940), as Páirc Belvoir, cuntasóir mór le rá agus ball de chuid Eaglais na hÉireann. Bhí sé gníomhach in 'An Chraobh Rua', craobh de chuid an Chonartha sa chathair. Bhí sé ar dhuine de stiúrthóirí Scoil Éanna, an scoil dhátheangach a bhí ag Pádraig Mac Piarais i mBaile Átha Cliath, agus bhíodh sé ina chomhairleoir airgeadais ag an scoil. Bhí sé go mór i bhfách le gluaiseacht an tionscail Éireannaigh agus is é a dhear lógó clúiteach na gluaiseachta sin ar a raibh an mana 'Déanta in Éirinn'.

brother of the artist John, the poet Alice Milligan, Denis McCullough the head of the IRB as well as Bulmer Hobson and Roger Casement. These were the principal figures in the establishment of the Glens Feis (Antrim) 1904.

Numbered among the most active in the Irish revival movement at the start of the 20th Century were Father Dónall Ó Tuathail and the Reverend Frederick O'Connell, a lecturer in Irish in Queen's University. O'Connell was a native speaker from Connemara and he was a minister in the Church of Ireland. He held an ecumenical Irish language service in Saint John's Church Malone during 1911 and 1914.

Father O Tuathail(1882-1922) pioneered the 'phrase method' in the teaching of Irish.

Mrs Margaret Hutton (1862-1953) a Protestant Irish enthusiast who was a governor of Queen's University. She produced a version of the Cattle Raid of Cooley in 1907 and employed maidservants from the Donegal Gaeltacht in her home at Malone Road.

Alec Wilson (c1870-1940), from Belvoir Park, a leading accountant and a member of the Church of Ireland. He was active in the Red Branch, a branch of Conradh na Gaeilge in the city. He was a director of Scoil Éanna, Pádraig Pearse's bilingual school in Dublin, and was a financial adviser to the school. He was a key figure in the movement for Irish industries and designed their famous logo which bore the legend 'Made in Ireland'.

Pádraig Mac Piarais i mBéal Feirste
Ba mhinic an Piarasach ag caint ag cruinnithe
de chuid an Conartha i mBéal Feirste roimh
Éirí Amach 1916. Thug sé a chuairt
dheireanach ar an chathair i Márta 1916, mí
roimh an Éirí Amach. Bhí sé de nós aige
riamh, agus é i mBéal Feirste, cuairt a
thabhairt ar Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colm
Cille i mBaile Hacamar, scoil ina mbíodh
polasaí dátheangach ag an mháistreás, Iníon
Mhic Néill.

Pádraig Pearse in Belfast
Pearse often spoke at meetings of the Gaelic
League in Belfast before the Easter Rising of
1916. He made his last visit to the city in
March 1916, one month before the Rising.
When in Belfast he always made a point of
visiting St Colmcille's National School in
Ballyhackamore where the teacher, a Miss
MacNeill operated a bi-lingual policy.





Cumann Chluain Ard

Tá Cumann Chluain Ard ar cheann de na heagrais Ghaeilge is tábhachtaí i scéal na Gaeilge i mBéal Feirste. Is geall le hollscoil Ghaeilge í nach bhfuair tacaíocht ón stát ach ó na daoine. Ba sa chumann a d'fhoghlaim na mílte an Ghaeilge.

Bunú an Chumainn

Thosaigh Cumann Chluain Ard amach mar chraobh de chuid Chonradh na Gaeilge a bunaíodh i 1936. Bhí bochtaineacht agus cruatan mór i mBéal Feirste sna blianta sin mar gheall ar an líon mór daoine a bhí dífhostaithe. In ainneoin na bochtaineachta, bhí beirt fhear óga dhífhostaithe ag smaoineamh ar chúis na Gaeilge. Bhunaigh Liam Ó Rúnaí agus Séamus Maxwell 'Craobh Pheadair Uí Néill Uí Chruaíoch' i Sráid

Cumann Chluain Ard

Cumann Chluain Ard is one of the most important organisations in the story of the Irish language in Belfast. It can be likened to a university of Irish which was never supported by the state but always supported by the people. In CCA thousands learned Irish.

The establishment of CCA

Cumann Chluain Ard established in 1936 began life as a branch of the Gaelic League. There was poverty and hardship in Belfast in those years due to high unemployment. Despite the poverty there were two young unemployed men were thinking of the cause of Irish. Liam Rooney and Seamus Maxwell established the O'Neill/Crowley branch of the Gaelic League in Kane Street off the Kashmir Road. A native speaker from Donegal, Prionsias



Kane, Bóthar Kashmir. Luaitear cainteoir dúchais as Tír Chonaill, Proinsias Mac a' tSeachlainn, le bunú an chumainn fosta. I ndiaidh cúpla bliain bhog an cumann go Sráid Phort Láirge agus uaithi sin go Sráid na Sceiche i 1944. Seangharáiste a bhí san fhoirgneamh a fuarthas i Sráid na Sceiche. Tháinig oibrithe deonacha le chéile gur cóiríodh an seangharáiste agus go ndearnadh halla ceart de. Osclaíodh an cumann úr ag an Nollaig 1944 agus is ann atá sé ó shin.

1950í agus 1960í

Bhí an Cumann ina chrann taca mór ag an Ghaeilge sna 1950í agus na 1960í. Ba é seo ré na cumann sóisialta: cumainn drámaíochta, cumainn rothaíochta, cumainn ealaíne srl. Ba ghluaiseacht mhór shóisialta í gluaisceacht na Gaeilge agus gan maoiniú ar bith ar fáil aici ón stát. Ina áit sin, chuir an stát cúl ar an Ghaeilge sna scoileanna. Mar sin féin, d'fhan go leor daoine dílis don teanga agus bhain siad tairbhe as an Ghaeilge nuair a bhí siad saor ón obair nó ón scoil.

Mac a' tSeachlainn, is also mentioned as a founder of the branch. After several years the club moved to Waterford Street and from there to Hawthorn Street in 1944 where they had acquired an old garage. Voluntary workers came together and repaired and renovated the old garage making it into a serviceable hall. The club was officially opened at Christmas 1944 and has thrived ever since.

The 1950s and 1960s

The club was a well of support for Irish in the 1950s and 1960s. This was the era of the social clubs: the drama clubs, the bicycle clubs, the arts clubs etc. The Irish Language movement at the time was essentially a large social movement which was totally unfunded by the state. On the contrary, the state actually curtailed the position of Irish in the schools. All the same many people remained faithful to the language and indeed devoted themselves to it when they were free from work or school.



Cosc ar an Bhéarla

Sa bhliain 1953 cuireadh cosc ar labhairt an Bhéarla i gCumann Chluain Ard. Go dtí an t-am sin bhí cead an dá theanga a úsáid sa Chumann. Rinne an riail úr Gaeltacht bheag den chumann agus deirtear gur chuidigh sí go mór le caighdeán na Gaeilge a ardú san áit. D'éirigh le lucht an Chumainn múinteoirí as Tír Chonaill a fháil do na ranganna - orthu sin, bhí Dónall Ó Grianna as Rann na Feirste, deartháir na scríbhneoirí, Séamus agus Seosamh. Bhí cónaí ar Dhónall ag Sráid na Banríona Thuaidh (North Queen St) agus is ann a thóg sé a chlann. Bhí Bríd Nic Gaoithín, as an Cheann Gharbh, ag teagasc sna blianta sin fosta. Bhí Bríd ina cónaí i Sráid Hillman sa Lóiste Úr. Cuireadh béim mhór sa Chumann ar Ghaeilge Thír Chonaill, idir fhoclóir agus fhoghraíocht.

The ban on English

In 1953 the speaking of English was prohibited in the Cumann Chluain Ard. Until that time both Irish and English had been allowed in the club. The Irish-only rule created a mini-Gaeltacht in the club and it is said that the banning of English greatly improved the standard of Irish within the club. Members of the club were successful in attracting teachers of the language from Donegal to teach in the club - among them were Dónall Ó Grianna from Rann na Feirste, a brother of the writers Seamus and Seosamh. Dónall lived in North Queen Street where he raised his family. Bríd Nic Gaoithín from An Ceann Garbh was also teaching in those years. Bríd lived in Hillman Street in the New Lodge area. Great emphasis was placed on Donegal Irish in the club both in vocabulary and the pronunciation.



Gaeltacht Bhóthar Seoigh

Ar an deichiú lá de mhí Dheireadh Fómhair 1965 tháinig roinnt lánúineacha óga le chéile i gCumann Chluain Ard le labhairt faoi phlean a bhí acu títhe a thógáil ar Bhóthar Seoigh do theaghlaigh arbh í an Ghaeilge teanga an tí acu.

The Shows Road Gaeltacht

On the 10th of October 1965 a group of young couples came together in Cumann Chluain Ard to discuss a plan which they were considering for the building of houses for couples who had chosen Irish as the language of the family.



Bhí comharchumainn chreidmheasa bunaithe acu agus airgead á chruinniú acu le ceithre bliana roimhe sin, agus bhí dhá acra talaimh ceannaithe acu le tithe a chur suas. Bhí baint ag cuid acu leis an ghrúpa radacach 'Misneach', a bhunaigh an scríbhneoir, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, grúpa a bhí ag iarraidh tabhairt ar an rialtas sa deisceart a gcearta a thabhairt do chainteoirí Gaeilge. Sa litir a cuireadh amach chuig na teaghlacha ag fógairt thús scéim Bhóthar Seoigh, tá an méid seo inti:

'Gan pobal den sórt seo ní féidir linn ár gceart mar shaoránaigh a éileamh; nó ní thig le Bárdas, Comhairle Contae nó rialtas, riar do dhream atá scaipthe fríd dhaoine eile nach bhfuil an t-éileamh céanna acu.'

Ní deacair a aithint ón méid sin an bhéim a bhíodas a chur ar chearta a bhaint amach don phobal agus, ar ndóigh, ba é seo ré na gcearta sibhialta sna Stáit Aontaithe agus i dtuaisceart na hÉireann go háirithe.

De réir ailt a bhí ar an Irish Press sa bhliain chéanna, bhí 36 teaghlach Gaelach i mBéal Feirste. Críochnaíodh na tithe úra ar Bhóthar Seoigh i 1969 agus dhá bhliain ina dhiaidh sin, 1971, oscaíodh 'Scoil Ghaeilge Bhéal Feirste'. Níorbh é sin amháin é, áfach, nó chuidigh muintir Bhóthar Seoigh le hatógail na dtithe a dódh i Sráid Bombay, ag bun Bhóthar na bhFál.

They had established a credit union and had been gathering money together for around four years and had purchased two acres of land for the building of houses. Some were affiliated to the group "Misneach" which had been established by the writer Máirtín Ó Cadhain, the group was trying to persuade the Dublin government to give Irish speakers their full rights. In the letter which was sent to families announcing the Shaws Road scheme the following was written:

'Without a community like this we cannot demand our rights as citizens; for no corporation, county council or government can administer to a language community which is interspersed within communities that do not share their demands'

It is easy to see here the emphasis that was being placed on the achievement of rights for the people, of course this was the era of civil rights in North America and more importantly in the north of Ireland.

According to an article published in the Irish Press in that same year there were 36 Irish speaking households in Belfast. The new houses on Shaws Road were finished in 1969 and two years later in 1971 'The Belfast Irish School' was opened. That wasn't the end of their efforts, however, as the community of Shaws Road helped rebuild the houses in Bombay Street at the foot of the Falls Road which had been burned out by loyalists.



Is spéisiúil an teideal a bhí ar ghné-alt de chuid an Irish Times i 1971, 'Belfast: the strongest Gaeltacht'. Tá cur síos ann ar an obair a bhí ar siúl ag mná Bhóthar Seoigh – ag cur Gaeilge ar leabhair Bhéarla agus ag cruthú scéim léitheoireachta i measc rudaí eile. Tá agallamh san alt fosta le Séamus Mac Seáin, duine de bhunaitheoirí scéim Bhóthar Seoigh, tamall i ndiaidh a ghortaithe in ionsaí seicteach a rinneadh ar 'Gharáiste an Phobail' mar a raibh sé féin ina bhainisteoir. Labhair údar an ailt fosta le Seán Mac Aindreaa a bhí ina bhainisteoir ar 'Shiopa an Phobail', siopa leabhar Gaeilge a d'oscail muintir Bhóthar Seoigh.

Cuireadh le líon na dtithe ar Bhóthar Seoigh nuair a tógadh ceithre theach úra i bPáirc Ros Goill i 1993 agus arís i 2006 nuair a tógadh sé theach úra ar chúl thithe Bhóthar Seoigh. Tá an tríú glúin anois ag teacht i méadaíocht i nGaeltacht Bhóthar Seoigh.

The title of a feature piece in the Irish Times in 1971 is very interesting: 'Belfast: the strongest Gaeltacht'. There is a description in the article on the work which women in the Shaws Road community were engaged in - translating English books and inventing an Irish reading scheme among other things. There is an interview also in the article with Séamus MacSeáin, one of the founders of the Shaws Road Gaeltacht, shortly after he was shot and wounded in a sectarian attack at The People's Garage where he worked as manager. The author of the article also spoke with Seán MacAindreaa who was manager of the People's shop, an Irish language bookshop established by the Shaws Road community.

The housing scheme at Shaws Road was extended when four new homes were built at Ros Goill Park in 1993 and again in 2006 when six new homes were built to the rear of the original houses at Shaws Road. The third generation is now coming of age in the Shaws Road Gaeltacht.

An Ghaeilge i scoileanna Bhéal Feirste

Irish in the schools in Belfast



Ní raibh áit ar bith ag an Ghaeilge ar churaclam scoileanna na hÉireann go dtí 1897. Go fiú nuair a tugadh cead an Ghaeilge a theagasc le linn uaireanta na scoile, ba mar ábhar breise a bhí sí le bheith ann.

Mar sin féin, bhí borradh faoi chúrsaí Gaeilge san blianta céanna: bunaíodh craobh Bhéal Feirste de Chonradh na Gaeilge in 1895 agus bliain ina dhiaidh sin tharla cruinniú mór i Halla Uladh inar moladh go mbeadh an Ghaeilge á teagasc sna scoileanna uile. Ceapadh an tAthair Gearóid Ó Nualláin (1874-1942) ina 'ollamh' le Gaeilge i

There was no place for Irish on the school curriculum in Ireland until 1897. Even when permission was given for the teaching of Irish in schools it was as an additional subject only.

All the same there was a growing interest in Irish during the same period: the Belfast Branch of the Gaelic League was established in 1895 and in the following year a large meeting was held in the Ulster Hall where it was proposed that Irish be taught in all schools. Father Gearóid Ó Nualláin (1874-1942) was appointed Professor of Irish in Saint Malachy's College in 1900 and

gColáiste Maolmhaodhóg i 1900 agus ina dhiaidh sin i gColáiste Mhuire i 1902.

Ó shin i leith, ba iad na múinteoirí Gaeilge cnámh droma na hathbheochana sa chathair. Is liosta le háireamh anois iad: Muiris Ó Droighneáin, Colm Beckett, Fidelma Ní Bhroin agus an Bráthair Beausang, as measc go leor eile. Is minic a bhí ar mhúinteoirí an Ghaeilge a chosaint ar dhoicheall na n-údarás oideachais, mar a tharla ag deireadh na 1980í nuair a bhí an tAire Oideachais, an Dr Brian Mawhinney, ag iarraidh an Ghaeilge a fhágáil amach as na teangacha a bhí le bheith ar churaclam na meánscoileanna. Eagraíodh feachtas mór in éadan mholtaí an Aire agus, i measc imeachtaí eile, bhí mórshiúl go Páirc Mhic Easmainit ar an Fhéile Pádraig 1989. Ghéill na húdaráis don fheachtas sa deireadh.

Na Gaelscoileanna

Bunaíodh Scoil Ghaeilge Bhéal Feirste (Bunscoil Phobal Feirste) sa bhliain 1971. Ar feadh trí bliana déag, mhair an scoil gan maoiniú ar bith ón stát. Ba iad na tuismitheoirí, foireann na scoile agus an pobal máguaird a choinnigh an scoil beo sna blianta sin. Sa deireadh thiar, ghéill an stát d'fheachtas na dtuismitheoirí agus tugadh a ceart don scoil i 1984. Bunaíodh an dara gaelscoil i 1987 agus athbhunaíodh Meánscoil Feirste i 1991 (bunaíodh an chéad mheánscoil ar Bhóthar Seoigh i 1978 ach níor mhair sí ach seal gairid). San am i láthair, tá 11 naiscoil, 10 mbunscoil agus meánscoil lán-Ghaeilge amháin i mBéal Feirste. Tá oifig ag Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta i lár Bhéal Feirste agus tugtar oiliúint do mhúinteoirí san oideachas lán-Ghaeilge i gColáiste Ollscoile Naomh Mhuire. Is sa Cholaíste fosta atá an tÁisaonad Lán-Ghaeilge lonnaithe, an t-aonad a sholáthraíonn áiseanna do scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge.

afterwards in 1902 was appointed to Saint Mary's College.


From then on Irish teachers were the backbone of the language revival in the city. Among the many Irish teachers in the city were Muiris Ó Droighneáin, Colm Beckett, Fidelma Ní Bróin, Brother Beausang out of the many many more. Teachers often had to defend the position of Irish against the excesses of the education authorities, just as happened in the 1980s when the British Education minister Dr Brian Mawhinney, tried to exclude Irish from the list of languages which were to be included in the secondary school curriculum. A campaign was organised against the minister's proposals and among other protests a march was organised to Casement Park on Saint Patrick's day 1989. The authorities relented eventually in the face of the campaign.

Irish Medium Schools

The Belfast Irish School (Bunscoil Phobal Feirste) was established in 1971. For 13 years the school survived without any state assistance. The parents, the teachers and the community in the surrounding area kept it going throughout those years. Eventually the state gave in to the parents' campaign and gave the school its rights in 1984. The second Irish school was established in Belfast in 1987 and the Irish medium secondary school was reestablished in 1991 (the first was set up in 1978 but only lasted a number of years). Today there are eleven nursery schools, ten primary schools and one Secondary school in the Irish medium sector in Belfast. The Council For Irish-medium Schools is housed in Belfast City Centre and teachers receive their training in Irish-medium Education in Saint Mary's University College. In the College there is also an Irish-medium Resource Unit, which supplies resources to the Irish Schools.







Séipéal Mhuire agus Pobal an Aifrinn

Léitear aifreann Gaeilge i Séipéal Mhuire, Lána an tSéipéil gach Domhnach ag meánlae. Tá stair fhada ag an séipéal céanna, nó is é an chéad séipéal Caitliceach a tógadh i gcathair Bhéal Feirste. Sular tógadh an séipéal bhíodh an t-aifreann á léamh i dteach i lána beag taobh le Sráid an Chaisleáin, lána a dtugtaí 'Squeeze-gut Entry' air mar gheall ar a chaoile a bhí sé. Nuair a osclaíodh Séipéal Mhuire i mí Bealtaine 1784 bhí complacht d'Óglaigh Bhéal Feirste mar gharda onórach ag an sagart, an tAthair Aodh Ó Dónaill. Lena chois sin, d'íoc Protastúnaigh an bhaile leathchuid de chostas an tséipéil, timpeall £84.

Tháinig méadú mór ar líon na gCaitliceach sa 19ú haois, go háirithe ó aimsir an Ghorta anall, agus ba chainteoirí Gaeilge go leor acu sin. Faoin bhliain 1861 ba Chaitlicigh iad trian de phobal Bhéal Feirste. Go dtí gur tógadh Teach Pobail Naomh Peadar in 1866 ba ar Shéipéal Mhuire a bhí muintir uile Bhóthar na bhFál ag tarraingt.

An tAifreann Gaeilge

Sna 1940í a bunaíodh Cuallacht Mhuire agus bhíodhas ag teacht le chéile uair sa mhí go dtí na 1960í. Sa bhliain 1965 a athraíodh teanga an aifrinn ón Laidin go dtí teanga an phobail agus léadh an chéad aifreann Gaeilge i Séipéal

Saint Mary's Church and the Mass Community

The Irish Mass is read every Sunday at midday in St Mary's Church Chapel Lane. There is a long history associated with this church, the first Catholic church to have been built in Belfast. Before the church was built Mass was read in a house in a small lane off Castle Street which, on account of its narrowness, was called 'Squeeze-gut Entry'. When St Mary's was opened in May 1784 a company of the Belfast Volunteers turned out as a guard of honour for the priest, Father Aodh Ó Dónaill. Besides this, Protestants in Belfast paid half of the cost of bulding the church, aorund £84. The number of Catholics in the town greatly increased in the 19th Century, especially at the time of the Great Hunger and beyond, and many of these were Irish speakers. By the year 1861 Catholics made up one third of the town's population. Until the building of St Peter's in 1866 it was to St Mary's that the people of the Falls went.

The Irish Mass

In the 1940s the Legion of Mary was founded and they came together once a month until the 1960s. In 1965 the language of the Mass was changed from Latin to the vernacular and the first Irish Mass was read in St Mary's

Mhuire ar an seachtú lá de mhí an Mhárta 1965. A bhuíochas ag sagairt dhiograiseacha, macasamhail an Athar Breandán Mac Maoláin agus a dhearthár Caoimhín, chomh maith le pobal na Gaeilge, tá an tAifreann Gaeilge á léamh le corradh le daichead bliain. Le linn an ama sin, d'fhás traidisiún bisiúil ceoil thart ar an aifreann Gaeilge. Bunaíodh Cór an Aifrinn sa bhliain 1983 faoi stiúir Éamonn Uí Fhaogáin agus Gabrielle NigUidhir agus bíonn Éamonn anois ag ceol i gcuideachta mhuintir Uí Mhonacháin ag aifreann an Domhnaigh. In 2003 chum an píobaire iomráiteach, Paddy Davey, ceol speisialta bunaithe ar théama charraig an aifrinn agus bhí a oiread éilimh ar an cheol gur bunaíodh Ceolfhoireann Aifreann Feirste.

Seirbhís Phreispitéireach

Bunaíodh an grúpa 'An Tor ar lasadh' i 1997 agus bíonn seirbhís Ghaeilge acu gach tríú Domhnach den mhí in Eaglais Phreispitéireach Fitzroy leis an Urramach Bill Boyd. Tháinig an grúpa le chéile de chéaduair le seirbhís a bheith acu mar chuid d'Oireachtas na Gaeilge tráth a bhí sé i mBéal Feirste. Is minic a bhíonn aoisheanmóirithe acu agus bíonn idir Phrotastúnaigh agus Chaitlicigh ag freastal ar na seirbhísí.

on the seventh of March 1965. Thanks to dedicated priests like Father Brendan Mac Maoláin and his brother Caoimhín, as well as to the Irish community, the Irish Mass has now been read for over 40 years in St Mary's. During that period a vibrant musical tradition has also grown around the Irish Mass. The mass choir Cór an Aifrinn was set up in 1983 under the direction of Éamonn Ó Faogáin and Gabrielle NigUidhir and Eamonn regularly performs at the Mass with the Monaghan family. In 2003 the well known piper Paddy Davey composed a musical piece based on the theme of the Mass Rock and such was the response that a new group Ceolfhoireann Aifreann Feirste (The Orchestra of the Belfast Irish Mass) was set up.

Presbyterian Service

The Tor ar Lasadh (Burning Bush) group was established in 1997 and they hold an Irish language service every third Sunday in the Fitzroy Presbyterian Church with the Reverend Bill Boyd. The group first came together to organise a service during the Oireachtas when it was in Belfast. They often have guest preachers and the service is attended by both Catholics and Protestants.







Tús Na hAislinge – Scéal Choláiste Feirste

Is tréimhse fhada ama é fiche bliain ó ghiniúint go breith agus ní gan dua a bunaíodh an t-oideachas iarbhunscoile i mBéal Feirste. Ghlac sé fí, fuinneamh agus foighne a bheith ag lucht a bhunaithe le go n-éireodh leo.

Tá buíochas ar leith ag dul do na chéad tuismitheoirí a bhí sásta á gcuid páistí a chur ar scoil nach raibh stair oideachais ná aitheantas stáit taobh thiar di ag an am.

The Vision begins – The story of Coláiste Feirste

Twenty years is a long time from gestation to birth and it wasn't without struggle that post-primary Irish Medium Education was first established in Belfast. It took vision, energy and patience in abundance from the founders to ensure that they succeeded.

A special word of recognition and thanks is due to those parents who were prepared to send their children to a school which was at that time without any educational history or state funding.



Gidh nár mhair an chéad Mheánscoil ach ó 1979 go dtí 1981, chruthaigh sí go dtiocfadh gaeilídeachas maith a chur ar fáil ach go leor airgid agus áiseanna a bheith taobh thiar de.

Bhí an chéad iarracht sin ar iarbhunscolaíocht i mBéal Feirste ag brath go huile agus go hiomlán ar obair dheonach ach bhí sí tairbheach. Rinne Feargus Ó hÍr, Pádraig Ó Maolcraoibhe agus Fionnbar Dynan scoth oibre. Cuimhnimis gur daoine iad sin a raibh postanna lánaimseartha acu i scoileanna eile agus a tháinig isteach iná gcuid ama saor féin le hoibriú sa "Mheánscoil scairte" seo.

Chomh maith leis na múinteoirí sin ón taobh amuigh bhí daoine de chuid an phobail féin as Bóthar Seoighe a theagaisc sa scoil le go mbeadh réimse leathan ábhair ar fáil. Orthu sin bhí Áine Mhic Aindreasa, Máire Mhic Sheáin agus Brighid Mhic Sheáin a raibh ranganna rialta acu agus daoine eile ón phobal a theagasc corr-rang ar a seal. D'oibrigh an scoil go maith fad a mhair sí ach ó tharla go raibh bunscóil, nach raibh ag fáil maoiniú stait ag an am, le reáchtáil ag an phobal chomh maith d'éirigh an t-ualach róthrom agus b'éigean éirí as.

Chuaigh ocht mbliana eile thart sula dtug glúin eile de thuismitheoirí faoi scoil iarbhuinídeachais a bhunú i mBéal Feirste arís.

Although this first attempt at establishing a Second level Irish school only lasted from 1979 til 1981, it proved that Irish Medium Second level education was viable if only sufficient funding and resources were made available.

This first attempt at second level Irish education in Belfast was totally dependant on volunteer work but it was highly productive work. Feargus Ó hÍr, Pádraig Ó Maolcraoibhe and Fionnbar Dynan did sterling work. Let us also remember that these were people who had full-time teaching jobs in other schools but who came in during their free time to labour in this Belfast 'Secondary Hedge School'.

As well as these external teachers, many from within the Shaws Road Gaeltacht community also taught in the school to ensure that a wide range of subjects were available to pupils. Amongst these latter were, Áine Mhic Aindreasa, Máire Mhic Sheáin and Brighid Mhic Sheáin who taught regular classes and others from among the community who taught occasional lessons. The school worked well, for as long as it lasted, but considering that there was also a non-funded primary school to run the community felt overwhelmed by the pressure and the brave undertaking was brought to an end.

Eight years were to pass before a new generation of parents sought to establish post-primary Irish education in Belfast for their children.

Sa bhliain 1989 thug Gearóid Ó Cairealláin agus Aoife Ní Riain dream daoine le chéile 'féachaint le Meánscoil Ghaelach a bhunú arís i mBéal Feirste'.

D'iarr siad ar Séamus MacSeáin baint a bheith aige leis ó tharla baint a bheith aige leis an chéad iarracht. Áinneoín a theaghlach féin a bheith tógtha aige agus gan duine ar bith acu in aois mheánscoile níos mó bhí áthas air ciudiú leis an iarracht nó chuir sé isteach air go mór go mb'éigean an chéad mheánscoil a scor. Bhí barúil mhaith aige fosta faoi na rudaí a bhí le seachaint má bhí le héirí leis an dara hiarracht seo.

Bhí sé tabhachtach dar leis gan an iomarca buartha a bheith ar na tuismitheoirí faoi chúrsaí airgid agus ba ar an taobh sin de Mheánscoil Feirste a chaith sé a dhúthracht ag an tús.

In 1989 Gearóid Ó Cairealláin and Aoife Ní Riain brought together a group of people to explore 'the establishment of an Irish Medium Secondary School in Belfast'.

They asked Séamus MacSeáin, in light of his role in the first attempt, to assist in their efforts. Despite his own family being raised by this time and no longer requiring secondary education Séamus was, nonetheless, delighted to help since the need to end the first Irish Medium secondary school still rankled with him. Séamus also had a valuable insight of those things which should be avoided during this second attempt.

Séamus thought it important to avoid undue concern among prospective parents about funding and it was in this area that he devoted his energies at the start.





Chuir an coiste tuairisc ghairid le chéile ar na bunriachtanais a bhí ag teastáil leis an scoil a thosnú agus chuaigh i mbun airgid a bhailiú. Ag an am sin bhí crannchur 'á reáchtáil ag Comharchumann Ráth Cairn agus cheadaigh siad sin a úsáid le hairgead a bhailiú don scoil. Ba iad Malachy Duffin agus Pádraig Ó Maolchraoibhe a ba mhó a dhíol na ticéid don chranncur agus taobh istigh de shé mhí bhí £11,000 sa chiste.

Ag tús 1991 bhí go leor airgid sa chiste le beirt mhúinteoir a fhostú go cionn cúpla mí. Ní rabhtas cinnte cá has a dtiocfadh an tairgead ina dhiaidh sin ach bhí go leor muinín ag an choiste le fógra a chur ar an pháipéar ag iarraidh beirt mhúinteoir a fhostú.

Bhí an t-ádh orthu gur aimsigh siad Feargus Ó hÍr agus Cathal Ó Donghaile a bhí sásta tabhairt faoin obair chrua a bheadh de dhíth le scoil mar seo a choinneáil ag dul. Thuig Feargus ach go háirithe cad é mar a bheadh nó bhí sé ar dhuine de na múinteoirí a theagasc gan tuarastal sa chéad mheánsoil i 1979.

Bhí múinteoirí anois ag an choiste ach iad gan suíomh scoile go fóill. Mar a tharlaíonn go minic do dhaoine a bhfuil misneach acu sheol an chinniúint réiteach na faidhbe nuair a chuala siad gur dócha go mbeadh an tseánEaglais ag an Bhealach Leathan ar Bhóthar na Bhfál ar fáil ar léas ag dream a dtiocfadh leo £25,000 sa bhliain de chíos a íoc ar an fhoirgneamh.

The Committee compiled a small report on what was required to establish the school and set about fundraising immediately. At that time the Ráth Carn Cooperative were running a small lottery and they allowed the Belfast committee to use the lottery to raise funds for the school. Malachy Duffin and Pádraig Ó Maolchraoibhe were the principal sellers and within six months £11,000 was gathered in the kitty.

At the beginning of 1991 enough funding was in place to support two teachers for a period of months. There was no certainty about future funds but the committee were happy to advertise two teaching posts.

Luckily they managed to recruit Feargus Ó hÍr and Cathal Ó Donghaile who were satisfied to undertake the heavy workload that such a job would entail. Feargus, especially, was aware of just what was involved from his role in the first Irish Secondary school back in 1979.

The committee now had teachers but no place to teach and as often happens, with those daring enough to take the risk, fate itself supplied the solution. The committee learned that an old Presbyterian Church at Broadway on the Falls Road was on the market with a lease on offer for £25,000 per year.

Ní raibh pingin rua ag an choiste dar ndó ach d'iarr siad ar an Belfast Action Team an cíós a íoc don chéad bhliain, rud a thoiligh siad a dhéanamh.

Mar sin de cuireadh ainmneacha Séamus MacSeáin agus Gearóid Ó Cairealláin le léas trí bliana ar fhoirgneamh a bhí le bheith ina ionad cultúrtha ar tugadh Cultúrlann McAdam/Ó Fiaich air ach a bhí go fírinneach ina láthair scoile.

Bhí múinteoirí ag an phobal, bhí láthair scoile againn agus ní raibh ag teastáil anois ach na daltaí. Mar sin ag tús Mhí Mheán an Fómhair 1991 cuireadh tús le Meánscoil Feirste le 9 ndalta, beirt mhúinteoir ar tuarastal agus

The Committee were penniless of course, with funds committed to teachers salaries, so they applied to the Belfast Action Team to pay the lease for the first year, which they agreed to do.

So a three year lease was executed in the names of Séamus MacSeáin and Gearóid Ó Cairealláin for a building which was to become a cultural centre named Cultúrlann McAdam/Ó Fiaich but which would function mainly as a school.

The Committee had teachers, they had a school building now all that was needed were pupils. So in September 1991 Meánscoil Feirste opened its doors with nine pupils, two salaried teachers and two voluntary workers



beirt eile ag obair go deonach mar a bhí Nóirín Ní Chléirigh agus Ciarán Ó Dornáin. Sa dara bliain tháinig 18 dalta nua isteach agus sa tríú bliain tháinig 36 isteach.

Nóirín Ní Chléirigh and Ciarán Ó Dornáin. In the second year there were 18 pupils and by the third year 36 came on the rolls.

D'éirigh leis an fheachtas chun aitheantás a fháil don scoil i 1997. Bhog an scoil go Teach Ard na bhFeá i 1999 agus i 2005 athraíodh ainm na scoile go Coláiste Feirste. Ba ghairid in dhaidh sin gur shroic an scoil farasbarr ó thaobh uimhreacha de leis na céadtaí dalta ó gach cearn de Bhéal Feirste agus de na sé chondae ag déanamh a mbealach go Béal Feirste Cois Cuan le hoideachas den scoth a fháil trí mheán na Gaeilge.

A hard fought campaign for funding and recognition finally met with success by 1997. Two years later in 1999 the school moved to Beechmount House and by 2005 had changed its name from Meánscoil Feirste to Coláiste Feirste. Shortly thereafter the school reached capacity as far as enrolments were concerned with hundreds of pupils from all parts of Belfast and further afield throughout the Six Counties making their way to Belfast for Second level Irish Medium Education of the highest standard.

Aonaid na nGael i mBéal Feirste

Tá clú agus cáil ar Bhéal Feirste ar fud na hÉireann agus ar fud na cruinne mar Chathair ina bhfuil rath agus bláth tagtha ar an Ghaeilge le blianta beaga anuas. Tá réimse leathan d'éagraíochtaí, institiúidí agus eile ag obair leis an Ghaeilge a chur chun tosaigh in achan ghné den saol. Bhí ar ndóigh an tArd Scoil Ultach agus Cumann Cluain Ard ann le fada ach níor mhiste na nua-aonaid Cultúrtha, ar ghné an-tabhachtach den athbheochán iad, a lua.

Belfast's Gaelic Cultural Centres

Belfast has a growing reputation throughout Ireland and abroad as a city where the Irish Language and culture are flowering and flourishing. A wide range of organisations, companies and institutes are working to promote Irish in every aspect of life. Of course there have been long established institute like An Ard Scoil and Cumann Cluain Ard but specific mention needs to be made of the hugely important and role being played by Gaelic Cultural centres in this revival.





Cultúrlann MacAdam/Ó Fiaich

Cultúrlann MacAdam Ó Fiaich, i gcroílár na Ceathrún Gaeltachta ar Bhóthar na bhFál Bhéal Feirste, is í Eispéireas Gaeilge Bhéal Feirste í.

Teach aitheantais ina dtig leat teagmháil le muintir na háite agus dul i dtaithí ar chultúr na Gaeilge, ach fosta, ag brath ar an rud is spéis leat, is ionad fuinniúil ealaíon í, ionad don cheol traidisiúnta, pointe eolais turasóireachta, caifé, áit a gceannófaí obair cheardaíochta nó leabhair, áit a bhfoghlaimfeofaí Gaeilge nó a dtógfaí caithimh úra aimsire, a gcasfaí ort cairde úra nó a gcuirfeá focal ar thuras, áit a mbeifeá ag maíomh as d'oidhreacht nó a bhfiosrófaí cultúr na hÉireann.

Tá An Cultúrlann suite i sean-Eaglais Phreispitéireach an Bhealaigh Leathain. In 1896 a tógadh an foirgneamh, agus rinne sé freastal ar a phobal go dtí 1982. Bhí an eaglais ina háras fosta ag Lóiste Dílís Oráisteach uimh. 824.

Bunaíodh an Cultúrlann in 1991 agus ainmníodh é in ómós do bheirt de laochra móra na Gaeilge mar a bhí Roibeard McAdam (1808 -1895), fear gnó Preispitéireach agus duine an-tabhachtach in athbheochán an 19ú Aois, agus Tomás Cairdineál Ó Fiaich Scoláire Gaeilge, staraí agus Príomháidh na hÉireann 1923 – 1990.

Cultúrlann McAdam/Ó Fiaich

Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich, in the heart of the Gaeltacht Quarter, is truly the essence of the Belfast Gaelic experience.

A melting pot where one can where you can engage with the locals and experience Irish culture but depending on your interests, it is also a dynamic arts centre, a centre for traditional music, a tourist information point, a café, a place to buy crafts or books, a place to learn the Irish language or take up new hobbies, to meet friends or book a tour, a place to feel proud of your heritage or to explore Irish culture.

Cultúrlann is housed in the old Broadway Presbyterian Church. Built in 1896, this building served it's congregation until 1982. The church was also home to the Loyal Orange Lodge no. 824.

Established in 1991 Culturlann is named in honour of two giants of the Irish Language movement: Robert McAdam (1808-1895), a Presbyterian Businessman and key figure in the nineteenth century revival movement and Tomás Cairdineál Ó Fiaich (1923-1990) an Irish Scholar, historian and Catholic Primate of All-Ireland.

Ó bunaíodh é bhí polasaí 'Doras Oscailte' ag an Chultúrlann a chuireann fáilte roimh gaelphobal na tíre agus rompú siúd in Éireann agus i gcéin ar suim leo na Gaeilge nó an Chultúr Gaelach.

Tá clú ar an Chultúrlann fosta mar gheall ar a eispéreas iltíreach agus a bhia blásta a tarraingíonn áitritheoirí agus taisteálaithe idirnáisiúnta ar aon. Is iomaí cuairteoir cluíteach a chur cos thar an tairseach fosta ina measc siúd bhí lethéidí Bianca Jagger, mainicín agus taidhleoir na Náisiún Aontaithe agus Ken Loach, stiúrthóir scannánaíochta.

S'é an Chultúrlann Croílár na Ceathrún Gaeltachta

Since its foundation Culturlann has operated an 'open door' policy which welcomes Irish speakers and those from throughout Ireland and further afield who have an interest in Gaelic Language and culture.

Culturlann is also famed for its cosmopolitan atmosphere and its wonderful cuisine which attracts residents and visitors in equal measure. Many well known figures have graced Culturlann including such as Model and UN Diplomat Bianca Jagger and Film Director Ken Loach.

Culturlann really is the Belfast Gaelic experience.



An Droichead

I 1992, bhunaigh pobal na Gaeilge in oirthear agus deisceart Bhéal Feirste a n-eagraíocht féin chun athbheochan na Gaeilge a bhrú chun cinn. Tháinig said le chéile mar 'An Droichead', óir is ó shean-cheantair stairiúla cois Lagáin a tháinig siad – an Trá Ghearr, an Margadh, agus an Ormeau Íochtarach – áiteanna ina raibh dhá naiscoil bunaithe acu cheana féin sna hochtóidí.

Ba Gaeilgeoirí samhlaíocha iad a bhí ag iarraidh todhchaí na Gaeilge ina gceantar a chinntiú trí fhorbairt seirbhísí Gaeilge don phobal. Chuige sin, thóg siad Lárionad cultúrtha sa bhliain 2000.

Sa lárionad cultúrtha seo tá idir ranganna naiscoile, cumann iarscoile, cumann óige, ranganna Gaeilge d'fhoghlaimoírí ag gach leibhéal, ranganna rince, ranganna ealaíne, ranganna snoidóireachta agus ranganna ceoil.

An Droichead/The Bridge

In 1992 the Gaelic speaking community of South and East Belfast established their own organisation for promoting the Irish Language and Culture. They came together as An Droichead (The Bridge) recalling their origins in the historic Lagside area of the city where a bridge joins Short Strand in the East of the city with the Markets and Lower Ormeau in the South and where two Irish Nursery Schools already existed since the 1980s.

These were Gaels with drive and imagination seeking to secure the future of their communities through developing Irish Language services for the people. To that end they established an Irish Cultural Centre called an Droichead in the year 2000.

In An Droichead there a whole range of Irish language and cultural activities: nursery

Ar bharr sin uilig tá cumann siúlóide, drámaí Gaeilge agus ceolchoirmeacha traidisiúnta chun an Gael, an aitritheoir agus an cuairteoir a shásamh.

Bhain An Droichead príomhdhuais agus Trófaí Glór na nGael i 2005, chomh maith le Craobh Uladh an chomórtais i 2006.

Cumann Cultúrtha agus Teach Mhic Reachtáin

Bunaíodh Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain sa bhliain 2000 leis an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn i dtuaisceart Bhéal Feirste agus an ceantar máguaird. Bíonn réimse leathan imeachtaí ar siúl ag Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain i rith na bliana: ranganna laethúla/seachtainiúla Gaeilge ag gach leibhéal, scéim na mbunscoileanna Béarla, Scéim na bhFáinní, club óige do dhéagóirí, imeachtaí sóisialta, Scoil Samhraidh ar feadh seachtaine ag deireadh Mhí Iúil chomh maith le roinnt díanchúrsaí ar fud na bliana do gach aois ghruipa.

Baineann ainm Chumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain le sloinne an Éireannaigh Aontaithe, Anraí Seoighe Mac Reachtáin (1767-98) agus lena dheirfiúr Mary Anne (1770-1866). Tá Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain lonnaithe i dTeach Mhic Reachtáin, teach trí stóras ar Bhóthar Aontroma i dtuaisceart Bhéal Feirste. Ceannaigh Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain an teach seo sa bhliain 2004 agus is é sin an áit a mbíonn an chuid is mó de na himeachtaí agus na seirbhísí for-rochtain ar siúl againn.

classes, an after-schools club, a youth club, Irish classes for learners at all levels, dance classes, art classes, oak carving and craft classes as well as music classes. On top of all this there is a ramblers club, drama and traditional concerts to appeal to Irish speakers, residents and visitors alike. An Droichead were winners in 2005 of the Glór na nGael national trophy and the Ulster title in 2006.

McCracken House and the McCracken Cultural Association

The McCracken Cultural Association was established in the year 2000 to promote Irish in the North Belfast area and its environs. It hosts a wide range of activities throughout the year: daily and weekly Irish classes for all levels of learners, a primary schools Irish language scheme, the Fáinne scheme, a youth club as well as a range of social events and activities through the medium of Irish. It also hosts a Summer School each July as well as a range of intensive Irish Courses throughout the year for all age groups.

The name of the Association and its Cultural Centre derives from the McCracken Family, Belfast Presbyterians and United Irishmen particularly Henry Joy McCracken (1767-98) and his sister Mary Anne (1770-1866). The McCracken Cultural Association is housed in Teach Mhic Reachtáin (McCracken House) a three story house on the Antrim Road. The Association purchased this house in 2004 and it is here for the most part that its activities are housed.





'An Ghaeilge faoi ghlas'-Guth na gCimí

Focal Brollaigh

Chuir cimí Éireannacha ariamh spéis i bhfoghlaim na Gaeilge agus iad i ngéibheann. Téann an Gaelachas i bhfad siar i stair na gcimí sa chéad seo caite. I bhFrongoch, i Lewes, sa Churrach, i bpríosún Dhoire agus in Ard Mhacha, i Muinseo agus i bPort Laoise ar longa príosúin nó i gcampaí géibhinn, ar Bhóthar Chromghlinne nó sa Cheis Fhada: bhí an Ghaeilge ann mar bhunchloch i gcultúr na gcimí.

Frongoch

Bunaíodh 'ollscoil oideachais' i bhFrongoch i 1917. Cuireadh béim, beagnach éigeantach ar theagasc agus ar fhoghlaim na Gaeilge. Lonnaíodh Campa Frongoch i gceantar tuaithe sa Bhreatain Bheag áit a raibh an Bhreatainis iontach láidir. Eagraíodh craobh iontach gníomhach de Chonradh na Gaeilge sa champa faoi bhrat an ainm ghrinn 'Craobh na Sróine Deirge' os rud é gur mhínigh Liam Ó Briain [a chríochnaigh mar ollamh le teangacha rómánsúla in Ollscoil na Gaillimhe] gurb é seo an chiall a bhí ag an logainm 'Frongoch'.

Phlándáil éacht Frongoch siol a bheadh faoi bhláth i bpríosúin eile fud fad an fhichiú haois agus i mBéal Feirste ach go háirithe.



'Irish in Bondage'- The Prisoners' story/voices

Foreword

Irish political prisoners have always had an interest in learning the Irish language while incarcerated. This interest in their native tongue goes way back to the beginning of the last century. In Frongoch, in Lewes, in the Curragh, in Derry prison and in Armagh, in Mountjoy and in Portlaois, in prison ships and in prison camps, in Crumlin Road and in Long Kesh; the Irish language was a foundation-stone of the prisoners' culture.

Frongoch

Frongoch 'university of education' was formed in 1917. An almost compulsory focus was placed on the teaching and learning of the Irish language. Frongoch camp was based in a rural part of Wales where the Welsh language was very strong. A very active branch of the Gaelic League was formed under the auspices of the comic name 'The Branch of the Red Noses' because Liam Ó Briain (who later ended up a Professor for Romantic Languages at Galway University) explained that this was the meaning of the place name 'Frongoch'.

Frongoch planted a seed that would blossom throughout the twentieth century and in Belfast especially.

An Argenta

D'imir an teanga ról athghiniúna den chineál chéanna i measc braighdeanach sna fichidí i gcomhthéacs an tuaiscirt. Imtheorannáidh os cionn 700 náisiúntóir ar an long phríosúin, 'Argenta' i mBéal Feirste cois cuain idir 1922 agus 1925, múinteoirí ina measc. Chuir na péas áitiúla ina leith siúd gur 'ardent and active IRA propagandists at school' a bhí iontu. Spreag na múinteoirí seo, mar aon le seisear nó seachtar iarchimí agus céimithe de chuid Frongoch, 'spiorad agus intleacht' na gcimí araon, trí mheán an oideachais Ghaelaigh.

An Currach

D'fheidhmigh an teanga ar an bhealach chéanna seo i gcampa an Churraigh, Cill Dara. Cuireadh dhá bhóthán lánGhaeilge ar bun agus bhí an-rath orthu. Bhí na céadta fear, an scríbhneoir Máirtín Ó Cadhain ina measc, faoi ghlas sa Churrach. D'fhás an Ghaeilge ann faoi bhráid Uí Chadhain, cainteoir dúchais as Conamara a d'imir ról lárnach i saol na Gaeilge agus é ar an taobh amuigh arís.

Ní hé amháin go raibh gléasanna teagaisc in easnamh ach bhí coinníollacha síoctha ann sa Churrach agus bhí síorhanntanas bia ann.

Foinse spreagtha a bhí in Ó Cadhain dá chomhchimí agus é ag scaipeadh na teanga ar fud an champa. Bhain na céadta líofacht amach anseo, baicle bheag d'Fheirstigh iomráiteacha ina measc mar a bhí, Willie-John McCorry agus Eddie Ó Cianáin.

The Argenta

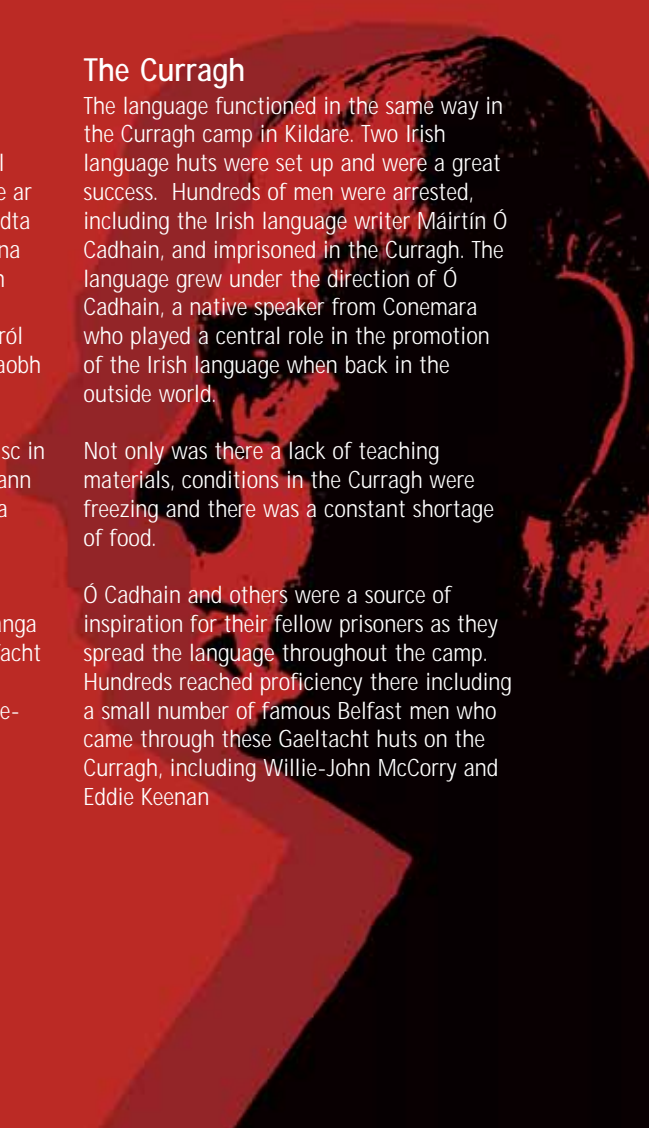
The language played a similar regenerative role amongst internees in the 1920's in the North. Over 700 nationalists, including teachers, were interned on the 'Argenta' prison ship on Belfast Lough from 1922 to 1925. The local police accused them of being 'ardent and active IRA propagandists at school'. These teachers, along with six or seven Frongoch graduates inspired 'a spirit and intellect' amongst the prisoners through the medium of Irish language education.

The Curragh

The language functioned in the same way in the Curragh camp in Kildare. Two Irish language huts were set up and were a great success. Hundreds of men were arrested, including the Irish language writer Máirtín Ó Cadhain, and imprisoned in the Curragh. The language grew under the direction of Ó Cadhain, a native speaker from Conemara who played a central role in the promotion of the Irish language when back in the outside world.

Not only was there a lack of teaching materials, conditions in the Curragh were freezing and there was a constant shortage of food.

Ó Cadhain and others were a source of inspiration for their fellow prisoners as they spread the language throughout the camp. Hundreds reached proficiency there including a small number of famous Belfast men who came through these Gaeltacht huts on the Curragh, including Willie-John McCorry and Eddie Keenan





Bóthar Cromghlinne

Sa tréimhse chéanna, sna daichidí bhí an rud céanna idir lámha sa Bhóthar Chromghlinne i mBéal Feirste i measc na gcéadta náisiúntóirí a bhí i mbraighdeanas ann. Ina measc, bhí na scríbhneoirí cáiliúla Gaeilge Tarlach Ó hUíid agus Liam Mhic Reachtain chomh maith le leithéidí an sóisialach clúiteach ‘Moscow’ Jack Brady a rinne iarracht shuntasach an teanga a scaipeadh, an príosún a Ghaelú agus athghiniúint a chur chun cinn.

D’fhán an struchtúr oideachais seo i bhfeidhm agus an bhéim ar an teanga i measc na bpríosúnach a imtheorannáidh athuair ar Bhóthar Chromghlinne i rith na mallchaogaidí agus luathseascaidí. Míníonn an gníomhaí Gaeilge Feirsteach Labhrás Mac Oirc an dóigh ar fhoghlaim sé an teanga

‘Bhí ranganna Gaeilge againn gach lá agus gach maidin sa halla mór seachas ar an Satharn agus ar an Domhnach. Bhí a lán múinteoirí cumasacha ann ar nós Tómas Ó hEanáin, Liam Mac Maoláin agus Paddy Joe McClean, Seán Ó Cearnaigh, Prionsias Ó Mianáin agus Art Mac Cathaigh’.

Crumlin Road

In the same period in the forties, a similar linguistic approach was being pioneered amongst hundreds of young nationalists who were interned in Belfast’s Crumlin Road Jail. Amongst these prisoners were famous Irish writers Tarlach Ó hUíid and Liam Mhic Reachtain as well as well-known socialist ‘Moscow Jack Brady’ who did their utmost to spread the language, Gaelicise the prison and develop an open revival.

The same educational structure remained in place again along with the emphasis on the language amongst prisoners who were interned again in Crumlin Road Jail in the late Fifties and early sixties. Belfast Irish language activist, Labhrás Mac Oirc, explains how he learned the language

‘We had Irish classes every day in the big hall and every morning apart from Saturday and Sunday. We had a lot of very capable teachers like Tómas Ó hEanáin, Liam Mac Maoláin and Paddy Joe McClean, Seán Ó Cearnaigh, Prionsíos Ó Mianáin and Art Mac Cathaigh’.



An Cheis Fhada - Na Cásanna

Ní aon ábhar iontais é gur lean an traidisiún oideachais seo sa Cheis Fhada, i Lios na gCearrbhach idir 1971 agus 2000. Nuair a tháinig ann d'imtheorannú arís i 1971, chríochnaigh na céadta náisiúntóirí óga sa phríosún in éineacht le neart seanfhondúirí a chaith sealanna i bpríosún sna caogaidí. Chuaigh cuid mhaith de na seanfhondúirí seo i bhfeidhm ar na daoine óga seo i gcúrsaí oideachais, go háirithe iad siúd a bhain líofacht sa Ghaeilge amach sna caogaidí ar nós Proinsias Mhic Airt.

Bhí leáids óga díograiseacha sa Cheis le suim sa teanga ar nós Bobby Sands, Géaróid Ó Ruanaí, Séanna Breathnach, Tom Louden, Liam Ó Maolchloiche, Diarmaid Mac an tSionnaigh, Sean Mag Uidhir agus a lán eile. Bhunaigh siad Gaeltacht sa deireadh.

Ní fada gur thosaigh na leáids óga seo ag cur díol spéise sna héachtaí a bhí á ndéanamh

Long Kesh - The Cages

It's no surprise that this educational tradition continued in Long Kesh, in Lisburn between 1971 and 2000. When internment occurred again in 1971, hundreds of young nationalists ended up in prison along with a few older activists who had spent time in prison in the Fifties. Many of these older prisoners had an educational influence on these younger prisoners especially those who had achieved fluency in the fifties like Proinsias Mac Airt.

There were committed young activists in the Kesh with an interest in the language like Bobby Sands, Géaróid Ó Ruanaí, Séanna Breathnach, Tom Louden, Liam Ó Maolchloiche, Diarmaid Mac an tSionnaigh, Sean Mag Uidhir and many more. They eventually formed a Gaeltacht.

Before long, these young lads began showing an interest in the achievements of Irish

ag gníomhairí na Gaeilge i mBéal Feirste agus iad siúd i nGaeltacht Bhóthar Seoisge ach go háirithe. Is mar thoradh air seo gur thosaigh siad ag gríosadh a gclann ar an taobh amuigh chun tacú leis na Gaeil sin ar an taobh amuigh agus sampla na bpríosúnach a leanúint agus an teanga a fhoghlaim.

I litir amháin a scríobh Bobby Sands in iris na bpríosúnach, *Ár nGuth féin* i 1975, tréaslaíonn sé le lucht Bhóthar Seoisge agus déanann se iarracht daoine eile a spreagadh le muinín chun sampla s'acu a leanúint:

"...silim go bhfuil thart fá cúig theach déag ann, (Bóthar Seoisge/Shaws Road) comh maith le sin tá naíscoil bheag acu, agus tá na páistí ag foghlaim gach rud trí Ghaeilge agus bíonn siad ag caint i nGaeilge i gcónaí agus a dtuismitheoirí freisin agus tá a gcultúr féin acu.....Cad tuige nach bhfuil níos mó ná Gaeltacht amháin i mBéal Feirste? Bhail leis an fhirinne a insint silim go bhfuil na Gaeilgeoirí rófhalsa, chuala mé a lán leithscéalta cosúil leis seo, níl na daoine le Gaeilge ábalta Gaeltacht a bhunú de thairbhe nach bhfuil aon airgead acu, ní fíor é agus ní leithscéal é..."

Rud eile spéisiúil a tharla sna cásanna sna seachtóidí ná gur thosaigh dream beag de chímí Aontachtacha, ón UVF, ag foghlaim na Gaeilge faoi stiúir a gceannaire Gustý Spence. D'éirigh le cuid acu Fáinne Airgid a bhaint amach agus tháinig timire de chuid Chonradh na Gaeilge isteach sa phríosún lena mbronnadh.

Sna blianta ina dhiaidh seo, athghabhadh dream beag de Ghaeilgeoirí na gcásanna, tamall gairid i ndiaidh daofa a bheith scaoilte saor, agus daoradh chun na mblocanna H iad nuair a osclaíodh iad i 1976.

language activists on the outside, especially those in the Shaws Road Gaeltacht. As a result of this, they began inspiring their families to support those language activists on the outside and to follow the prisoners' example and learn the language.

In a letter that Bobby Sands wrote for the prisoners' magazine, *Our Own Voice* in 1975, he praised the Shaws Road activists and tried to motivate others with the confidence to follow their example:

"...I think there is about 15 houses there as well as a nursery school where all the children are learning everything through Irish and they speak Irish all the time with their parents too and they have their own culture...Why isn't there more than one Gaeltacht in Belfast? Well, to tell you the truth, I think Irish speakers are too lazy, I've heard a lot of excuses like, people can't do it because they have no money; that isn't true nor is it an excuse.

Another interesting development that took place in the Cages in the Seventies was that a small batch of unionist prisoners, from the UVF, began learning Irish under the direction of their leader, Gustý Spence. Some of them achieved a silver fáinne and a Gaelic league organiser came into the prison to bestow it upon them.

In the years after this, a few Irish language activists from the Cages were re-arrested a short time after being released and were subsequently sentenced to the H-Blocks when they opened in 1976.

Na Blocanna

Sna Blocanna H, rinneadh iarracht caitheamh leis na cimirí mar ghnáthchoirpigh. Dhiúltaigh na céadta daofa géilleadh agus thosaigh 'Agóid na Pluide' inár bhéigean daofa fanacht sa chillín an lá ar fad. Bhí cosc ar leabhair, ar pháipeir nuachta, ar phinn, nó ar fhoinse léitheoireachta ar bith, seachas an Bíobla Naofa do na cimirí a bhí ar agóid. Ní raibh acu ach tocht, pluid agus crois choróin Mhuire. Sna coinníollacha seo, bhláthaigh an Ghaeilge, mar áis chumarsáide an phríosúin innéoin gach constaic.

Chríochnaigh agóid na bpríosúnach ina stailc ocrais sna blianta 1980-81 agus bhí feachtas náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta ar a son. Scríobh na cimirí na céadta litreacha mar chabhair ar fheachtasaíocht a dteaghlach ar an taobh amuigh agus mheall siad tacaíocht ó réimse leathan grúpaí, cuid mhaith de Ghaeilgeoirí ina measc.

Fuair deichniúr bás sa Stailc Ocrais seo i 1981, Bobby Sands; Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreesh, Patsy O'Hara, Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson, Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, Tom McElwee agus Mickey Devine agus bhí Gaeilge ar a dtoil acu uilig.

I ndiaidh stailc ocrais 1981, tháinig borradh faoin athbheochan chultúrtha i mBéal Feirste.

D'imir cuid mhaith de na hiarchimí Gaelacha seo ról lárnach i saol na Gaeilge agus i bhforbairt na Gaeilge agus an Ghaeloideachais agus iad ar an taobh amuigh arís. Bunaíodh naiscoil sa Trá Ghearr i 1982, dhá cheann eile in Ard Eoin agus i gCill Uaighe sa bhliain 1984 agus bunaíodh dara bunscoil, Gaelscoil na bhFál i 1986. Faoi dheireadh na nóchaidí, bhí deich mbunscoil Ghaeilge agus meánscoil Ghaeilge amháin sa chathair.


The Blocks

In the H-Block, an attempt was made to treat the prisoners like ordinary criminals. Hundreds refused to submit to this and thus began the 'Blanket protest' where prisoners had to remain in their cells all day. Books, newspapers, pens or reading materials were not permitted except for the Holy Bible for the prisoners who were on the protest. All they had was a mattress, blanket and rosary beads. In these conditions, the Irish language blossomed, becoming the prison medium for communication, in spite of all obstacles.

The prisoners' battle for political status finished with a Hunger Strike in 1980-81 and there was both a national and international campaign on their behalf. The prisoners wrote hundreds of letters in support of their families' campaign on the outside and attracted support from a wide variety of groups, including many Irish language activists.

Ten eventually died in this Hunger Strike in 1981, Bobby Sands; Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreesh, Patsy O'Hara, Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson, Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, Tom McElwee and Mickey Devine; all were fluent Irish speakers. After the 1981 Hunger strike, the cultural revival expanded in Belfast.

When many of these Gaelic speaking prisoners were released, they played a central role in the Irish language movement and its development as well as in the development of Irish language medium education. A nursery school was set up in the Short Strand in 1982, two more in Ardoyne and Twinbrook in 1984 and a second primary school, Gaelscoil na bhFál was formed in 1986. By the end of the nineties, there were ten Irish primary schools and one Irish medium secondary school in the city.



"...sílim go bhfuil thart fá cúig theach déag ann, (Bóthar Seoighe/Shaws Road) comh maith le sin tá naíscoil bheag acu, agus tá na páistí ag foghlaim gach rud trí Ghaeilge agus bíonn siad ag caint i nGaeilge i gcónaí agus a dtuismitheoirí freisin agus tá a gcultúr féin acu.....Cad tuige nach bhfuil níos mó ná Gaeltacht amháin i mBéal Feirste? Bhail leis an fhírinne a insint sílim go bhfuil na Gaeilgeoirí rófhalsa, chuala mé a lán leithscéalta cosúil leis seo, níl na daoine le Gaeilge ábalta Gaeltacht a bhunú de thairbhe nach bhfuil aon airgead acu, ní fíor é agus ní leithscéal é..."

DISSOLUTION OF

THE PARTNERSHIP hitherto
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on the First of May last. The De
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SAMUEL BRYSON, Apothecary,
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SAMUEL BR

DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP
THE PARTNERSHIP hitherto carried on by the DRUG,
OIL, and COLOUR BUSINESS, under the Firm of
SAMUEL BRYSON & CO. was dissolved by mutual consent
on the First of May last. The Debt due to the said Firm, in
consequence to be discharged immediately, and those to
whom they are indebted, will please to discharge the same to
SAMUEL BRYSON, Apothecary, No. 42, High Street, who
is duly authorised to receive and discharge the same.
Per him, July 26.

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TAKES the liberty of informing his Friends and the Pub
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SINESS in that general character, the DRUG, COLOUR, and
Paints, and from his designing to devote his whole time to
the PREPARATION and COMPOSITION of MEDICINE,
to merit a share of Public Notice.
Per him, July 26.

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