**The Cambridge History of Ireland Launched by President Higgins**

***NUI Galway academics contribute to a landmark survey of Irish history in the newly launched book ‘The Cambridge History of Ireland’ from circa 600 to the present day***

**Tuesday May 15 2018:** President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins officially launched the book, *The Cambridge History of Ireland* in Dublin Castle recently. Written by a team of more than 100 leading historians from around the world, it includes contributions from Drs Sarah-Anne Buckley, Caitriona Clear and Pádraig Lenihan, and retired professors Nicholas Canny and Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh from the Department of History at NUI Galway, and from Dr Lesa Ní Mhunghaile from Roinn na Gaeilge. The general editor, Professor Thomas Bartlett, retired from Aberdeen, lectured in UCG/NUIG History department from 1976 to 1995.

The work benefits from a strong political narrative framework, and includes essays that address the full range of social, economic, religious, linguistic, military, cultural, artistic and gender history. The arrangement of the volumes challenges traditional chronological boundaries in a manner that offers new perspectives and insights.

Volume 1, edited by Professor Brendan Smith of Bristol, presents the latest thinking on key aspects of the medieval Irish experience, focusing on the extent to which developments were unique to Ireland. The openness of Ireland to outside influences, and its capacity to influence the world beyond its shores, are recurring themes. Underpinning the book is a comparative, outward-looking approach that sees Ireland as an integral but exceptional component of medieval Christian Europe.

Volume II, edited by Professor Jane Ohlmeyer of TCD, looks at the transformative and tumultuous years between 1550 and 1730, offering fresh perspectives on the political, military, religious, social, cultural, intellectual, economic, and environmental history of early modern Ireland. Drs Pádraig Lenihan and John J.Cronin jointly contribute a chapter on warfare in seventeenth century Ireland with reference to its unpleasant impact on the civilian population, strategy, tactics and weaponry, while Professor Nicholas Canny gives a sweeping narrative of this turbulent period.

Volume III, edited by Professor James Kelly of St Patrick’s, DCU, moves into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley’s chapter on women, men and the family from 1730-1880, engages with themes of marriage, gender, mortality, infanticide, abduction, domestic violence, divorce, celibacy, arguing that this was a time of significant change in the lives of middle- and upper- class women. Dr Lesa Ní Mhunghaile looks at cultural and intellectual innovation in Ireland in this century and, along with her co-writer Dr Michael Brown, pointing out that commentators on the Irish condition at this time produced ‘a sustained reflection….forming grand narratives of the possible pasts and futures the country might inhabit’. (p.380)

The final volume, Volume IV, edited by Tom Bartlett, covers the period from the 1880s to the present, and in this volume Professor Gearóid O Tuathaigh provides an overview of political and social change in the years 1880 to 2016. Dr Caitríona Clear’s chapter on social conditions in Ireland from 1880 to the First World War tells of rail networks which extended all over the country to stimulate trade and facilitate leisure, and shops multiplying in number, while new employment patterns and educational regulations brought more and more men and women, boys and girls, than ever before, out of their homes and into contact with each other on a daily basis.

The volumes are copioulsy illustrated with special features on images of the ‘Troubles’ and on Irish art and sculpture in the twentieth century.

For a full list of contributors to each volume, visit [www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

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