



St Mary's
University College **125**
A College of Queen's University Belfast

International Summer School

www.smucb.ac.uk



St Mary's University College Belfast | Féile an Phobail

There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind.

CS Lewis



The Giant's Causeway

Welcome to Belfast

St Mary's University College is delighted to welcome students and faculty from our partner universities in the United States of America to the 2025 International Summer School in the city of Belfast.

At our Summer school we are proud to provide a unique platform for exploring the integration of politics, culture and evolving international relationships, 27 years after the signing of the Belfast - Good Friday Agreement. Our theme, "Building Peace through Dialogue," reflects both the progress which has been made and the work still required to foster peace, reconciliation and mutual understanding in our world.

At St Mary's, we are deeply committed to nurturing dialogue at local, national and international levels. As a faith-based institution, our mission is grounded in a values-driven approach to education which seeks to promote mutual respect and the dignity of every person.

For over thirty years, our College has proudly partnered with a local organisation Féile an Phobail (Ireland's biggest community arts festival and summer school). Together, we share a vision of education as a powerful force for democracy, pluralism and community empowerment. In an increasingly interconnected world, we believe that genuine dialogue, rooted in listening and learning, is essential in our lives.



The 2025 International Summer School offers our visitors an enriching educational and cultural journey in Belfast and across the island of Ireland. It is our hope that the experience will not only deepen your knowledge but also strengthen transatlantic friendships and enduring partnerships between our institutions, communities and peoples.

Creidimid go gcumasaíonn foghlaim siorfheabhsu.

We believe that learning empowers development and peace.

Professor Peter Finn KSG

College Principal & Ex-Officio Governor

Belfast

A City of Learning

Belfast is a city of characters, culture with a rich history of industrial development. After years of conflict Belfast now has a new confidence to share with visitors

Belfast has it all: traditional markets, tourist-friendly pubs, funky street food and fancy restaurants, affordable accommodation, and a story that means visitors return again and again.

St Mary's University College is located on the Falls Road, an area rich in history,

right in the heart of west Belfast. Visitors find local people friendly and enthusiastic; you will feel at home here. It's a small, close-knit community.

St Mary's has built its reputation on over a century of high standards of teacher education and liberal arts degree programmes and the pastoral care we provide for our students.

Things to do and see in Belfast on your day off...

1. Tour of West Belfast. Our programme includes a scheduled walking tour, and local taxis will also bring you around.
2. St George's Market for delicious food, market stalls, jewellery, and clothes.
3. Traditional music session. The life and soul of pubs down the years, fiddle, accordion, banjo, bodhran, pipes and pints!
4. The Cathedral Quarter in the city centre for a taste of bohemian Belfast.
5. Watch some hurling or Gaelic football at a GAA club in the city.
6. The Opera House, the Lyric Theatre, Waterfront Hall. Ulster Museum. Culture.
7. The Titanic Quarter, visit the historical xsite where Harland and Wolff built the doomed ocean liner.

Seamus Heaney & Brian Friel

Seamus Heaney is a graduate of St Mary's, and he returned to teach here for three years after studying for a teaching qualification.

Brian Friel, one of Ireland's greatest playwrights, is also one of our distinguished alumni.



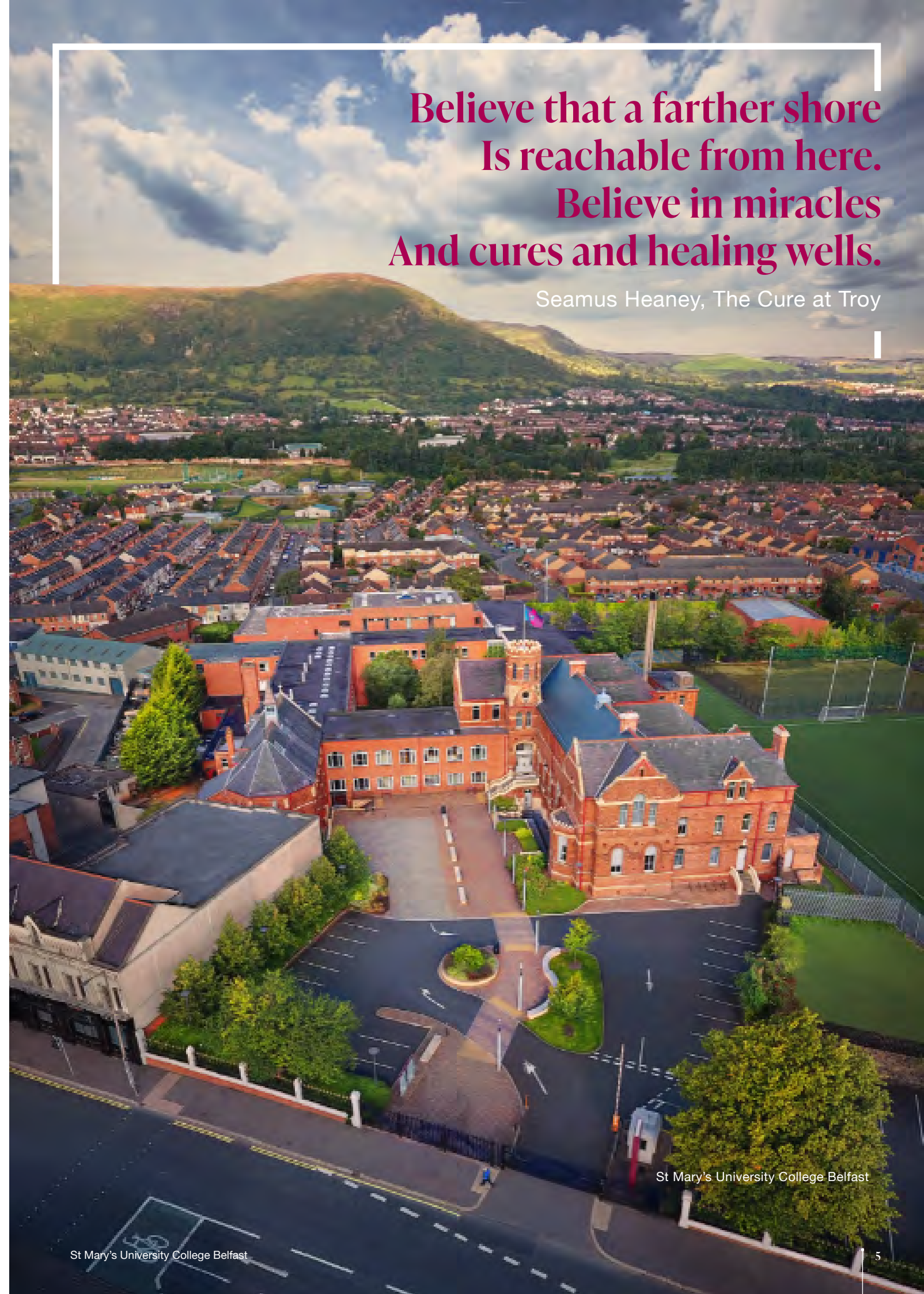
Belfast Walking Tour



McConnell's Distillery

**Believe that a farther shore
Is reachable from here.
Believe in miracles
And cures and healing wells.**

Seamus Heaney, The Cure at Troy



St Mary's University College Belfast

St Mary's University College Belfast



The Duke of York

I think of it as dancing.
Dancing with eyes half closed
because to open them would
break the spell.

Brian Friel, Dancing at Lughnasa
(St Mary's graduating class, 1950)

Talks & Activities

MONDAY

11:00am A President for All?

Over a decade on from the Constitutional Convention recommending extending Presidential voting rights to Irish citizens outside of the state, these rights have not been extended despite further commitments by the Irish Government. Join our panel in exploring the reasons behind the delay. Has there been a deliberate denial of rights?

1:00pm Strawberry Hill and Afterwards

Strawberry Hill and Afterwards by Jim O'Hagan, explores the history of the old Trench House (St Joseph's College) in Andersonstown, as well as St Mary's University College Belfast and Strawberry Hill College (St Mary's) in London, where students were sent between 1922 and 1939.

3:00pm Rebel Notes: Popular Music and Conflict in Ireland

Stan Erraught will discuss his recent book, Rebel Notes, which examines the revival of interest in rebel songs over the past few years and the rise to prominence of West Belfast rap collective Kneecap, situating these cultural manifestations



Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge

within the broader Irish political context, both north and south.

3:00pm Let's Talk Politics

Leading political commentators David McCann, Irish News columnist and commentator; Tim Cairns, former Head of Policy and Special Adviser to the DUP; Megan Fearon, former Sinn Féin MLA and Junior Minister; and Sarah Creighton, columnist and commentator, will discuss the political issues of the day.

4:00pm Flirtations or Commitments?

Dr Alan Sandry, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Swansea University considers Wittgenstein's radical beliefs, including his fascination with the Soviet Union. He will also look at Martin Heidegger's Nazi Party membership and Jean-Paul Sartre's defence of Maoism in a discussion of philosophers challenging the status quo, through revolution or reformist rhetoric.

4:00pm 1842 Journal of a Passage from Belfast to New York

Seán Corr, Senior Library Assistant at the Linen Hall Library will give an illustrated talk focusing on the 1842 Journal of a Passage From Belfast to New York. This fascinating handwritten journal

from the Linen Hall archives provides a detailed account of a six-week journey aboard the passenger ship New Zealand.

5:00pm The Poisonous Legacy of British Colonialism

A presentation by Paul O'Connor of the Pat Finucane Centre and a guest, that examines the global impact of centuries of British Colonialism and explores options for memorialization and learning.

5:00pm Gerry Adams Versus the BBC

Following his legal victory, Gerry Adams said he'd taken the case to put manners on the BBC. The director of the BBC in Belfast said the impact of losing the case would "hinder freedom of expression." Is the British Broadcasting Corporation unable to learn lessons and out of step with its license payers? Discussion with Trevor Birney, Robin Livingstone and Allison Morris.

7:00pm The Road to Damascus: Stories from the Frontlines of Human Rights

As UN Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin visited Kurdish-controlled camps and prisons in North-



Kelly's Cellars

What really put us on the map?
The world viewed through
the prism of eggs and bacon
in a bap.

Paul Muldoon, Belfast Hymn

Talks & Activities

Continued

East Syria where thousands of people – men, women and children – from over 63 countries have been detained without trial since 2017. Her talk will address human rights violations in Syria, which span several decades, the ongoing inhumanity of detention in North-East Syria in the aftermath of the proclaimed defeat of ISIS, and the failure of states to bring their nationals home.

7:00pm Memories of Others: Belfast Premiere

Memories of Others is a short documentary film uncovering Japanese photographer Akihiko Okamura’s extraordinary work in Ireland during the conflict, and the artistic and emotional impact of its recent rediscovery. Many of the photographs included in the film were taken in Belfast in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This film was made in collaboration with Photo Museum Ireland, Dublin, and the Akihiko Okamura Archive, Tokyo. The photographs of Akihiko Okamura are on view at the Ulster Museum from June to October 2025.

TUESDAY

12 Noon: Impact of the Troubles on Our Communities. Rev Dr Bill Shaw and Fr Gary Donegan

1:00pm Creativity and Steadfastness in the West Bank

Trócaire is hosting a special event looking at the humanitarian situation in Gaza. We will be joined by Dr Nick Maynard, a gastrointestinal surgeon,



Introduction to Gaelic Games

who will share his experiences of volunteering his life-saving skills in Gazan hospitals, working with the brave Palestinian medical staff during several visits since October 7 2023.

1:00pm Precursor to the H-Blocks

The Gardiner Report was presented to the British Parliament in January 1975. It was commissioned by Merlyn Rees, on behalf of the Labour Government “to consider what provisions and powers... are required to deal with terrorism and subversion in the North of Ireland”. In effect, it was the launch of the British Government’s Criminalisation Policy that included the creation of the H Blocks. Sean Murray, Carál ní Chuilín and Kieron McEvoy will discuss its consequences.

3:00pm The Holocaust and Identity – A Family Story: The Story of Helen and Harry Lewis

Helen’s story as a Holocaust survivor is well-known through her memoir A Time to Speak. Harry’s story as a Holocaust refugee is now told for the first time in the book Flight from Prague. Michael Lewis, Helen and Harry’s son will give an Illustrated talk on the subject.

WEDNESDAY

11:00pm Riding the Crime Wave

Comedian Tim McGarry and Historian Cormac Moore select the stories from the archives of the Irish News that bring Irish history to life in enlightening and amusing ways. The podcast, which launched in April 2025, will take to the stage at Féile 25 for a live discussion and audience Q&A, hosted by journalist Jim Fitzpatrick.

1:00pm The Miami Showband Massacre Survivor, Stephen Travers, in Conversation with Professor Bill Rolston

“I sometimes question if I would have joined The Miami Showband had I known where that blue and white VW minibus would take me! Maybe that 24 year-old needed to be reconstructed and, while the cost has been enormous, I sometimes wonder if it has been my saving grace.”

1:00pm The Role of Crime & Security Journalism in our Democracy

Dr Cian Ó Concubhair, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Maynooth University and



Traditional Session, Belfast

journalist Allison Morris will discuss a number of high-profile incidents involving police in Ireland having employed significant surveillance tactics against journalists. Cian’s research examines the legal implications of such practices by policing, and looks at the broader impact on the role of crime and security journalism on Irish democracy.

3:00pm Kincora: Britain’s Shame

Chris Moore in conversation about his new book exposing the involvement of a leading member of the British royal family, MI5 agent and leading Orangeman, William McGrath, and their roles in a paedophile ring trafficking and abusing boys at Kincora Boys Home, Belfast, where McGrath was housemaster. A shocking scandal that has been covered up for decades by MI5.

3:00pm Can we Debate Well and Ensure Culture Wars don’t Weaken the Irish Unity Project?

From immigration to Trans Rights. From ‘Cancel Culture’ to Pro-life/Pro-choice or Free Speech. Could Culture Wars weaken the Unity project? Or, can we debate well? Can United Irelanders no matter their persuasion, rise above political and cultural differences with generosity and keep focused on the prize of Unity?

5:00 pm Dealing with the Legacy of the Conflict: Accountability and Information Recovery Deirdre Hargey MLA in Conversation with Prof. Kieran McAvoy and Gráinne Teggart Amnesty International

Our panel have been working on legacy issues for many years. Kieran will provide insight on how an information retrieval mechanism can

be established, similar to what was agreed at Stormont House. Additionally, Gráinne Teggart from Amnesty will address “where we are now and where to next” on legacy.

5:00pm Whose Victory is it Anyway? Why the UK Supreme Court Ruling is Not a Victory for the Feminist Movement

This panel will dispute the media portrayal of the UK Supreme Court ruling that, for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, ‘sex’ refers to ‘biological sex’, is a victory for the feminist movement, arguing it is regressive. Speakers include Elaine Crory and Alexa Moore.

7:00 pm West Belfast Talks Back

Féile an Phobail’s flagship event where the audience gets an opportunity to ask questions on topical issues from a panel which will include John Finucane, North Belfast MP and Dan Lambert, Kneecap Manager.

THURSDAY

11:00am Political Posters Talk
(See page 11)



Belfast Murals

11:00am Weathering the Storm: Turning the Tide on Homelessness in Belfast

Explore Belfast’s homelessness crisis with Ark Housing. Discover how their floating support service helps families navigate the rising numbers in temporary accommodation. We’ll discuss effective strategies for homelessness prevention and the urgent need for social housing solutions, seeking to ‘Weather the Storm’ and create lasting change.

11:00am Palestine Day

Culture, cuisine and conversation focused on Palestine. Speakers include Dr. Shahd Hammouri, academic and lawyer, Fellow at Al-Haq who recently acted as a legal consultant on the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Israeli Occupation of Palestine; and Saleh Hijazi, Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) co-author Amnesty International’s report Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime Against Humanity and is now Policy Co-Ordinator for the Palestinian BDS National Committee.



The Big Fish



Ohio Northern University participants 2024



Belfast Black Cab Tour

Talks & Activities

Continued

1:00pm The Root of All Evil

This exhibition explores the themes of place, presence, identity, and belonging through printmaking. Featuring diverse artistic interpretations, it reflects on landscape, memory, community, and personal experience.

1:00pm Shoot to Kill

A presentation and discussion by the Pat Finucane Centre on the background to and details of controversial killings during the conflict under a ‘Shoot to-Kill’ policy sanctioned by the British Government

3:00pm The Development of Secularism in Ireland

Daltun O’Ceallagh a writer on history, politics, humanist philosophy, an Honorary Associate of the Rationalist international and the current editor of the quarterly magazine Irish Freethinker will give a talk on The Development of Secularism in Ireland.”

3:00pm Museums, Difficult Legacies and Future Possibilities

Around the world, museums are dealing with legacy issues rooted in division,

conflict and colonialism. William Blair and William Crawley will discuss how museums address these challenges in our own context, including initiatives to promote dialogue and reconciliation on this island.

5:00pm Moving on from partition

Feminist economist Ursula Barry and author Paul Gosling will discuss the possibilities of creating a progressive and equal future in a unified Ireland against the background of economic inequality in the present, North and South.

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm Faith and Belief in Schools

Northern Ireland is becoming more diverse, so how can we ensure schools are inclusive in their Faith and Belief policies and practices? Building on recent research on Faith and Belief in Integrated schools, the event will promote discussion among key stakeholders, parents and communities.

FRIDAY

11:00 am Launch of the Inaugural Issue of An Clogán

An Clogán (The Little Bell), is a new independent, politically unaligned Irish socialist republican magazine. The debut issue, ‘The Republic’, explores how republicanism is rooted in the radical idea of self-rule. Contributors include Gerry Adams, Clare Daly, Vincent Bevins, Claire Mitchell, Robbie McVeigh, Phillip Pettit, Martina Anderson and Margaret Ward.



1:00pm Rebel Women of Belfast 1920 – 1924

The early years of the twentieth century saw nationalists in the north of Ireland fighting for their survival. Throughout, the women of Cumann na mBan played an essential role. Feminist historian Margaret Ward uses new archival sources and information from relatives to recall the courageous contributions of Belfast Women.

3:00pm Understanding the Significance of Christian Zionism in the North of Ireland: Veronique Altglass

Drawing from her latest book, Judaizing Christianity and Christian Zionism in Northern Ireland: For God, Israel, and Ulster, the author along with Robbie McVeigh, explores the striking resonance of Zionism in Northern Ireland, where support for Israel is perhaps the most pronounced in Europe.

3:00pm Dr Eamon Phoenix Lecture in Association with St Mary’s University College

This lecture examines the historian’s role in communicating history to a broad public audience. It offers reflections on the difficulties and opportunities associated with commemorating key historical events, the relationship between current affairs and history and the uses and abuses of history in the modern era.

5:00 pm Neutrality, Partition and the Fight Against Imperialism in Ireland

The Communist Party of Ireland believes that sovereignty and neutrality have become central to the struggle between those forces who want a united, sovereign, socialist Republic and the political heirs to Redmondism, north and south, who want ever greater integration with US, British and EU imperialism.

International Summer School



Political Posters Talk

The Political Collection at the Linen Hall began in 1968 with one civil rights leaflet and today contains some 350,000 items. It is the definitive archive of the ‘troubles’ and beyond, charting from the emergence of the civil rights movement, through the peace process to our post conflict society. Encompassing political, social and economic history, it elucidates the lived experience, is the people’s history and our collective memory. As material was collected contemporaneously, the collection contains a significant number of items which exist in no other collections. Linen Hall Librarian Samantha McCombe will discuss the several thousand political posters in the collection. These posters give real insight into this momentous period – they are the physical remnants of the times in which they were collected and serve as historical documents that help us to better understand those times; conveying the messages of the moment, stirring emotions, encouraging reflection or in many cases prompting action.

St Mary’s University College Belfast



Speakers and Panellists

Jim O'Hagan	Author
Stan Erraught	School of Music, University of Leeds
David McCann	Irish News columnist and commentator
Tim Cairns	Former Head of Policy and Special Adviser to DUP
Megan Fearon	Former Sinn Féin MLA and Junior Minister
Sarah Creighton	Columnist
Dr Alan Sandry	Senior Lecturer in Philosophy and Strategy at Swansea University, Wales
Seán Corr	Senior Library Assistant at the Linen Hall Library
Paul O'Connor	Pat Finucane Centre
Trevor Birney	Journalist, Film Director and Producer
Robin Livingstone	Group Editor of the Belfast Media Group
Allison Morris	Journalist
Professor Fionnuala Ní Aoláin	UN Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights
Dr Nick Maynard	Surgeon
Sean Murray	Springfield Road Residents Group
Carál ní Chuilín MLA	Principal Deputy Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly
Kieron McEvoy	Queen's University School of Law
Michael Lewis	Author
Emma Dunn	Advanced Practitioner Level 2 Occupational Therapist
Mary Lou McDonald	President Sinn Féin
Andrée Murphy	Deputy Director of Relatives for Justice
James Murphy	Crime Fiction Writer
Tim McGarry	Comedian
Cormac Moore	Historian
Stephen Travers	Miami Band Showband
Dr Cian Ó Concubhair	Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice in Maynooth University School of Law
Chris Moore	Journalist
Deirdre Hargey	MLA
Gráinne Teggart	Amnesty International
Elaine Crory	Women's Sector Lobbyist
Alexa Moore	Campaigns and Communications Manager at the Rainbow Project
John Finucane	North Belfast MP
Dan Lambert	Kneecap Manager
Daltun O'Ceallagh	Writer
William Blair	Director of Collections at National Museums NI
William Crawley	Journalist and Broadcaster
Ursula Barry	Associate Professor, UCD
Paul Gosling	Author
Margaret Ward	Feminist historian
Veronique Altglass	Author
Rev Dr Gary Donegan CP	Director Passionate Peace and Reconciliation Office

Fr Dr Gary Donegan CP and Rev Dr Bill Shaw OBE

Fr Gary Donegan CP has been based in the Passionist Community in Holy Cross, Ardoyne since 2001, and is currently acting parish priest. He is involved in peace-building initiatives at both parish and national levels, and is the director of the Passionist Peace and Reconciliation Office.

He has extensive experience in conflict resolution, including mediating with armed groups, police, and community groups. He has spoken at international conferences and was invited to the United Nations



and the White House for his work in peace-building.

Fr Gary also supports local residents in conflict resolution efforts and advocates for the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. He has firsthand experience with the effects of trauma, drug and alcohol dependency, and suicide in post-conflict areas of social deprivation. He has received honorary doctorates and the Sean MacBride Humanitarian Award for his peace-building and reconciliation work.

Rev Dr Bill Shaw OBE grew up in Belfast during the Troubles and later became a Presbyterian minister. He served in a church on the loyalist Shankill Road before becoming the Director of the 174 Trust, a Christian Community Development Project in a Nationalist/Republican area of North Belfast.

Bill has been in this role for over 24 years, working towards building peace and promoting reconciliation through



various projects and initiatives. He has received recognition for his efforts, including the Harry McKillop Irish Spirit Award and an O.B.E. for his services to the community. Bill has also delivered lectures on peace-building in Northern Ireland at universities in the United States.

He continues to be involved in interfaith chaplaincy and was awarded an honorary doctorate for his distinguished service to the community.

Celebrating 125 Years

Our purpose is to make a distinctive contribution of service and excellence, in the Catholic tradition, to higher education in Northern Ireland.

At St Mary's, we have been doing that since our doors opened over a century ago here on the Falls Road campus.

The College originated in 1900 with St Mary's Training College, enrolling 100 women students for primary teaching.

In 1948, four-year courses for post-primary teachers began, allowing some students to combine university study and professional training.

St Joseph's Training College for men was established at Trench House in 1961.

In 1968, Queen's University recognized St Mary's and St Joseph's for teaching matriculated students in Bachelor of Education courses.

The Trustees merged St Mary's and St Joseph's in 1985, with the Colleges combining at St Mary's Falls Road in 1996.

In 1999, the Privy Council granted University College status, allowing for Liberal Arts and other degree programs.

For 125 years St Mary's graduates have created an indelible mark teaching and Catholic goes in the primary and Post primary sector in Ireland and further afield. Our alumni have excelled in education, academia, politics, sport business and civic society.



A Real Community Spirit

Our flagship August Féile showcases the vibrant, creative and unique spirit at the heart of West Belfast.

People here have a love for the sounds of our city: the spoken word, the rhyme of poetry and the rhythm of song,

"The atmosphere and real sense of community spirit at Féile is unrivalled. In its 36th year, the Féile is the largest community festival and summer school in Ireland, a tribute to all that have made this possible."

For many visitors Belfast is an unopened book, each year we add a new chapter to engage and entertain friends old and new. Our visitors are stunned at the sheer breadth of activities, events and engagements. Through the celebrations at the core of

the Féile there are opportunities for learning and understanding.

The city is still emerging from years of conflict and new challenges await us all. Any means to understand each other is to be embraced. Féile provides a catalyst and a synergy through everything from pop-up theatre, children's events, concerts, sports, discussions, debates, visual arts, theatre, tours and walks, literature readings and film screenings are woven into the Féile programme.

We are delighted to welcome our Summer School participants, we can learn from one another through shared experiences and friendship.



St Mary's has been an integral part of the West Belfast community since it was founded and our students are part of city life.





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International Summer School

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