

Report on the 22nd Biennial Conference of The Association of Canadian Studies in Ireland (ACSI), *Canadian Crossings and Belongings: Entrecroisements et Appartenances au Canada*. Dublin, 7-9 May 2026.



The 22nd Biennial Conference of The Association of Canadian Studies in Ireland (ACSI) took place at the architecturally imposing and scenic venue of the Lexlcon library and cultural centre, in Dún Laoghaire, Dublin from 07-09 May 2026. Conference organisers were ACSI Council members Dervila Cooke (ACSI President, Dublin City University) and Kieran Cronin (ACSI Secretary, South East Technological University), with Financial Convenor Edward Murphy (ACSI Treasurer, South East Technological University). The theme of the conference was “Canadian Crossings and Belongings: Entrecroisements et Appartenances au Canada”.

The event was opened by Ambassador from Canada to Ireland H.E. Dennis King, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council chairperson Cathaoirleach Jim Gildea, County Librarian Catherine Gallagher, and Senior Librarian Domitilla Fagan. The event included a successful “Taster Day” on Day One, designed to provide prospective members with a flavour of Canadian Studies. Delegates who chose this option included scholars from Dublin City University and local politician John Kennedy. Former Ambassador from Ireland to Canada Ray Bassett delivered an informative and entertaining keynote speech about Canada-Ireland relations, with insights from his time as government advisor during the Northern Ireland Peace Process with General de

Chastelain. Our second keynote speaker, Tracie Lea Scott, a joint ACSI and BACS member, spoke on Indigenous agency in an era of trade transformation. Our keynote speaker on Day Two, Catherine Khordoc of Carleton University, Ottawa, discussed “Mondes et mondification” (worlding of literature) in the writings of Wajdi Mouawad.

The conference presenters included 30 delegates from across Canada, 20 delegates from all over continental Europe and the Nordic countries, a speaker from the US, 10 colleagues drawn from five Irish universities and a keynote speaker from the British Association of Canadian Studies (BACS) in the UK. There was one panel entirely in French on Québec, alongside two French-English bilingual panels. Four Indigenous scholars (First Nations and Métis) presented papers on important legal and cultural aspects. Other papers on Indigenous studies were delivered across a range of sessions. The programme included papers on Black and Inuit studies, discussing both literary and sociopolitical concerns.

Many former ACSI Presidents were in attendance, including founding member David Parris, who had recently celebrated his 80th birthday, Maeve Conrick, Julie Rodgers, and John Maher. We were joined on Day One by Jane Koustas of the ICCS. Another longstanding ACSI supporter Raymond Blake sent wishes of support in his absence, as he was launching his most recent book in Newfoundland. We congratulate Professor Blake on this recent addition to his important work and we thank him for his continued support of ACSI. Former ACSI President Helen O’Neill and current BACS President Tony McCulloch were present in spirit, after last-minute obstacles to attendance.

Social events included a “get to know you” session after Day One in a local bar with views of scenic Dún Laoghaire harbour. On Day Two, the Conference Dinner saw excellent food provided by the Royal Marine Hotel, and entertainment for several hours by the newly formed ACSI Trio (Edward Murphy, David Newland, and Robert Burke), who were soon joined on the stage by several other ACSI delegates, with renditions of The Pogues, Snow Patrol, Neil Young, Hank Williams and Canadian sea shanties, along with some Arctic-inspired original compositions by delegate and bursary recipient David Newland. Post-conference leisure was offered in the form of a bracing walk on the East pier at Dún Laoghaire or a visit to the adjacent National Maritime Museum. Bookending the conference, delegates could travel by commuter train line to Dublin city centre in less than half an hour, and could easily access many further points of interest in the city and suburbs with this train (DART). The kindly May sunshine was present throughout.

Conference sessions were as follows:

Plenary session: SOVEREIGNTIES, MARGINALITIES, NATIONAL INITIATIVES, AND CONTESTATIONS: CANADA AND BEYOND

Parallel sessions:

- a) INDIGENOUS BELONGINGS AND AFFIRMATIONS
- b) TRANSITIONS ET REPRÉSENTATIONS AU QUÉBEC
- c) BLACK AND INDIGENOUS CONTESTATIONS AND CREATIVITY IN LITERATURE IN CANADA
- d) THE BRITISH ARMY, IRELAND, & CANADA
- e) INDIGENOUS SPACES: LANGUAGE, MAPPINGS, TRACES
- f) CULTURAL TRANSMISSION: ARTEFACTS & LANGUAGES
- g) VISIONS OF QUÉBEC, NEW FRANCE, & THE NORTH
- h) WRITING WAR BEYOND BORDERS
- i) SOCIAL RELATIONS & TENSIONS
- j) FORGING LEGAL MODELS: COLONIAL & DECOLONIAL TIMES

- k) DISRUPTING OTHERED IDENTITIES
- l) MINORITÉS, ESPACES PARTAGÉS, CONTESTATIONS/MINORITIES, SHARED SPACES, CONTESTATIONS
- m) HOME, SPIRIT & PLACE IN LITERATURE
- n) MOBILITIES AND MEMORY

Keynote papers were as noted above.

Our outreach within Europe was made possible by the networking facilities and contact details provided by the ICCS website. We thank the ICCS for providing this facility to assist our outreach, thus enabling us to support and extend the vibrancy of Canadian Studies internationally. We especially thank our delegates, who travelled to be with us, and who, without exception, provided top-quality papers and discussions on important and often cutting-edge aspects of Canadian Studies, often from leaders in the field. We were delighted to see four delegates were inspired to attend our conference on foot of the scholarly discussions and networking that took place at the recent conference of the Associazione Italiana di Studi Canadesi (AISC), “Bridges and Barriers: “Ponti et barriero” in Naples in November 2025, at which the ACSI President was present.

Our speakers included several early career scholars at Masters or pre-doctoral level – all exceptionally promising – along with established and upcoming scholars. As a not-for-profit organisation, ACSI also worked hard to be able to offer some financial support towards presenting at the conference to three early career delegates who were successful in their application for a partial bursary. We were delighted to be able to do so, and we are particularly grateful to one of the conference delegates for her generous assistance in this matter.

Delegates are encouraged to submit their reworked papers as articles to the *British Journal of Canadian Studies* (BJCS). We thank the BJCS for this initiative. Full details on how to submit can be retrieved from the BACS website and from BJCS co-editor and 2026 ACSI keynote speaker Dr Tracie Lea Scott, at tracie.Scott@hw.ac.uk.

The book of abstracts is planned to be published on the ACSI website in the coming months: <https://canadianstudiesireland.com/>.

Un grand merci, de tout cœur. Tá súil againn go bhfeicimid arís sibh gan mhoill, in Éirinn, thar lear nó ar líne. (We hope we will see our new ACSI members and new colleagues in Canadian Studies again soon, in Ireland, abroad or online). ACSI was formed in 1982 and has organised a conference every two years since that date. We look forward to seeing many of our delegates at our next Biennial conference, which is currently planned for Spring 2028.



ACSI President, Dervila Cooke, on behalf of ACSI council.