

NOTTINGHAM IRISH STUDIES GROUP

An Introduction to Modern Irish History

Monday 6th September – Monday 11th October 2010

8.00pm – 9.30pm

Boothys Club

2, West Hill Drive,

Mansfield,

NG18 1PJ

It is impossible to understand Ireland or the Irish without some knowledge of the course of Irish history, especially over the last 400 years. This short introduction will look at six key periods from the defeat of the Gaelic Chieftains to the present day. No previous knowledge of Irish history is necessary and there will be plenty of time for discussion.

Tutor: **Pat Murphy**

Monday September 6th at 8pm

The Death of Gaelic Ireland

The defeat of the Gaelic Chieftains at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601 marked not only the consolidation of English power in Ireland, but also the end of an ancient way of life. The native Irish lost most of their land, power and influence. Many of the Gaelic chieftains fled to Europe and an enforced political settlement that was to last for over 300 years was put in place. Was the death of Gaelic Ireland inevitable given the Reformation? Or did the nature of Gaelic society itself hasten its end?

Monday 13th September at 8pm

The Year of the French

By the end of the eighteenth century the position of the native Irish was desperate. They had lost political influence after the defeat of the Gaelic chieftains. As Catholics they were not allowed to vote or take any part in the governance of their country and Penal Laws had all but driven the Catholic Church underground. In addition many at the bottom of the social order existed on the brink of destitution and hunger. The 1798 Rebellion was in part a response of this dire situation, but was also inspired by the American and French revolutions. It ended in defeat for the United Irishmen who led the rebellion, but what has been the influence of the republican ideology from which the rebels drew their inspiration? And how has it influenced the course of Irish history since then?

Monday 20th September at 8pm

"This Great Calamity

The Famine of 1847-8 was the single greatest catastrophe to befall Ireland and the Irish people in modern times. Up to a million died and another million migrated. In 1840 the population of Ireland was eight million. By the end of the nineteenth century it had halved. Is the old adage "God sent the blight but the English caused the Famine" a fair assessment? How did the Famine change the course of Irish history?

Monday 27th September at 8pm

"A Terrible Beauty"

Parnell's downfall was seen as the final failure of constitutional nationalism to bring Home Rule to Ireland. As the twentieth century dawned so too did a build up of frustration at the lack of political progress and a growing sentiment that Ireland's freedom could only be achieved by armed rebellion. 1916 and the War of Independence that followed, led to a Free

State but was armed conflict necessary? Could Home Rule have been achieved by peaceful means?

Monday 4th October at 8pm

From Free State to Celtic Tiger

□ In 1921 Britain withdrew from 26 of Ireland's 32 counties and the new Free State was immediately engulfed in civil war. The kind of state that emerged was in many ways a very different one to that envisaged by the 1916 Proclamation and a bitter disappointment to many who had fought in the War of Independence. For many years it was marked by economic stagnation, high levels of emigration and two conservative political parties with little to divide them apart from their positions on the Civil War. Was the Irish state a betrayal of 1916? And, following the present economic crisis and the crisis in confidence in the Catholic Church, what are the prospects for the Irish Republic?

Monday 11th October at 8pm

The Troubles

Many Irish nationalists both north and south of the border saw the Treaty of 1921, which allowed the six counties of Northern Ireland to remain in British hands, as a betrayal. Their views were reinforced by the nature of the sectarian Stormont government which favoured the unionist majority. This institutional discrimination inevitably led to conflict, at first through the peaceful Civil Rights movement, but after 1969, through the campaign of the Provisional IRA which was to last for over 25 years. Was the treaty a sell-out? Could armed conflict have been avoided? And what are the prospects for continuing peace in Northern Ireland?