

The Ireland Fund of Monaco Residential Bursaries

Dr. Mary Pierse



What an honour

and privilege it was, thanks to The Ireland Fund of Monaco, to be Academic-in-Residence at the Princess Grace Irish Library. That memorable residency month granted me valuable weeks of literary research and, as a glorious bonus, it also provided cultural exchange, history, glamour, some unforgettable weather and much fun.

My previous and very wonderful 2014 experience at the library (directing the George Moore Symposium and lecturing on Irish Feminisms) had given me a glimpse of the splendid Moore collection there. Now I revelled in instant, simultaneous access to numerous Moore texts—that's not possible elsewhere today, even in Ireland's National Library. In peaceful surroundings, I read and thought, made copious notes, argued with myself and critical commentators, and realigned plans for my writing. The truly incomparable Judith Gantley anticipated all possible requests in connection with my research, as well as assisting with material for the two classes I gave to students of Lycée Albert I, and for the public lecture that I gave on Moore at the fin-de-siècle period.

She and Géraldine Lance make the Princess Grace Irish Library a most hospitable and pleasant place for an academic. They provided great tours of the library's treasures on Journée du Patrimoine, combining knowledge of valuable books and artefacts with Irish and local history. On that long, busy day, Sile Jackson joined them for one session—a trio of committed Sunday workers!

To my surprise, I was not immersed in Moore studies 24/7. During the Annual Ireland Fund of Monaco Weekend Celebrations, I had the unexpected pleasure of describing my project to The Ireland Fund of Monaco donors and staff at the Yacht Club and, on the following evening, a kind invitation to the Fund's glittering Gala at the Salle des Étoiles-Sporting d'Été. That latter event was one to remember, a night when not even the dramatic hours of electrical storm outside could compete with the sparkle inside. It was a thoroughly enjoyable affair during which the Princess Grace Humanitarian Award was given to Adi Roche and Ali Hewson for their longstanding commitment to Chernobyl Children

Awarded biannually, The Ireland Fund of Monaco Residential Bursaries were established to enable writers born or living in Ireland to pursue a current project during a one-month residency at the Princess Grace Irish Library in Monaco. We are pleased to present this personal reflection written by author Dr. Mary Pierse on her experience in Monaco

About the Author:

Dr. Mary Pierse has recently taught on the MA course in Women's Studies at University College Cork (UCC) where, since 1999, she has also taught Victorian and fin-de-siècle literature, colonial literature, seventeenth—and eighteenth-century poetry. She has held Research Fellowships (including an Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences Fellowship) at UCC. She compiled and edited *Irish Feminisms 1810-1930* (Routledge Major Works Series, 2010), a five-volume facsimile set incorporating novels, short stories, poetry, essays and news material, most of which had been difficult for scholars to locate previously. She is author of the George Moore entry in *The Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* (Wiley Blackwell, 2015) and editor of *George Moore: Artistic Visions and Literary Worlds* (2006). Her ongoing research interests relate to artistic synaesthesia and to Irish women writers.

International. There was brilliant entertainment by the Riverdance troupe and Imelda May amongst others. Congratulations and thanks must go to The Ireland Fund of Monaco President Olivia Gaynor-Long and the team for successful fundraising and for the night's gaiety.

The third feature of my Monaco sojourn was encountering Monegasque history and culture. Thanks to Judith Gantley's assistance, I was able to visit the Musée du Vieux Monaco (although it had just closed due to imminent commencement of a 2-year renovation programme) and also to see the library and archives at the Palace. In both places, the rich, complex history and traditions of the Principality were apparent, as was the strong commitment to preserving diverse aspects of distinct identity. That latter dedication struck a chord with this native of another small country.

The three aspects of my stay—fruitful research (article material successfully gathered), social engagements, and Monaco culture—interconnected and fused. For that tremendous experience, I am deeply grateful to The Ireland Fund of Monaco.