

IFA Friday Lectures: November 16th 6pm, room 601A

Prof. Diarmuid Johnson

The Celtic Languages And Their Speech Communities In The Post-Revival Era

This paper will seek to offer a description of Irish, Welsh and Breton speech communities from the 19th to 21st century. The modern histories of these languages will be charted through four distinct periods: stability, decline, revivalism, and post-revival reality. Language vitality will be considered in terms of territorial distribution and population, but also of discourse, and of levels of proficiency amongst speakers of the languages. Attention will be given to the weakening of community and the increase of state involvement in the dynamics of language use, and to wider questions of statehood *versus* statelessness. Finally, a tentative prognosis will be made regarding the future of each of the three languages in a generation's time.