



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth



**Centre for Military
History & Strategic
Studies**

INVISIBLE LINES: INTERTWINED HISTORIES OF THE IRISH BORDER

Conveners: Dr Rory Finegan & Professor Roisin Higgins, Centre for Military History & Strategic Studies
History Department, Maynooth University (MU)

The ratification of the Irish border in December 1925 continues to have profound consequences. This Conference compares and analyses differences in the scale, type and evolution of different issues that have revolved around the Border. Topics discussed by speakers will include military policy, paramilitary violence, experiences of security/insecurity; the associated use of deterrent violence, investigate the political and security reasons for specific action or inaction by both states and paramilitary groups to improve our understanding (and challenge misinterpretations or myths) of past events and their contemporary legacies. Other themes that will be explored include inter alia the politics of memory, and consequences of an imposed land boundary.

Link to register: [Invisible lines: Intertwined Histories of the Irish Border - N.U.I. Maynooth](#)

Venue: Renehan Hall, Maynooth University

Registration from **09:00 a.m.** on **Thursday 26th February 2026.**

Conference Fee: €10 (€5 Students and OAPs)

Program of Events

09:00-09:30 — Registration
09:30-09:45 — Opening Address
09:45-11:00 — Panel A — Identity, Society & the Border (Chair: Prof Marian Lyons) Prof Mary Daly — Don't mention the Border: A History of Absence Dr Niall Cunningham — Understanding and Contextualising Long-Term Demographic change in the Irish Border Region Prof Marc Mulholland — Race, Religion, State: How was the divide in Northern Ireland defined? Dr Samuel Beckton — A Home from Home: The influence of Cavan, Donegal, and Monaghan Protestants within Northern Irish politics and Orangeism since 1920
11:00-11:30 — Coffee Break
11:30-12:45 — Panel B — State, Security & Settlement (Chair: Dr Alison Fitzgerald, Maynooth University) Dr Edward Burke — Spying on the Free State: The British Army, the RUC and cross-border intelligence operations, 1923-1927. Dr Donal Hall — Confronting the Border: Armagh and Louth in wartime 1920-23. Dr Gareth Prendergast — How and Why the British Establishment Facilitated the Generation of an Irish National Army Dr Michael Kennedy — Code Word 'North' Defending the Border Against a British Invasion 1939-45
12:45-13:30 — Lunch
13:30-14:45 — Panel C — Partition Politics & the Boundary Commission (Chair: Prof Filipe Riberio De Meneses) Dr Frank Costello — Genesis of the Boundary Commission: Backgrounds and Conduct of the Key Actors. Prof Donnacha Ó Beacháin — Assessing the Partition Issue in Irish Politics since 1922. Dr Eoin Magennis — Eyewash for a Deluded People: The Boundary Commission in South Down and Armagh, 1922-1925. Dr David McCullagh — Taking the Gun out of Irish Politics: John A. Costello, the Declaration of the Republic, and the Border
14:45-15:00 — Break / Reset
15:00-16:15 — Panel D — Liminality, Law & Civil Rights (Chair: Dr Rory Finegan) Dr Luke Moffett, Dr Ciarán O'Kelly & Dr Ciara Hackett — The Boundary Commission and Individuals Caught between Two States: Liminality, Identity and Border Violence Dr Brian McGilloway — No Man's Land: Liminality, Lawlessness and Crime Fiction on the Border. Dr Ivan Gibbons — The Irish Border in British Politics in the 1920s
16:30 — Closing Remarks