Northern Star
by Stewart Parker

TINDERBOX THEATRE COMPANY AND FIELD DAY THEATRE COMPANY PRESENT

A BELFAST FESTIVAL AT QUEEN'S CO-PRODUCTION
Tinderbox is grateful to its main funding partner, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Tinderbox and Field Day would like to thank Belfast City Council, The Ireland Funds, the Community Relations Council, the Equity Trust Fund and the Unity Theatre Trust for their support of this production.

Tinderbox and Field Day would like to thank Bewley’s Oriental Cafés and Nicholson and Bass for their generous sponsorship of Northern Star and ABSA Northern Ireland. The Northern Star workshop programme has received funding from the National Lottery Arts Fund.

Tinderbox would like to thank the McCadden Design Group for its continued and generous design sponsorship package, producing promotional material for all recent and forthcoming seasons of events.

Tinderbox and Field Day would like to thank their co-production partner for Northern Star, the Belfast Festival at Queen’s.

Both companies would like to thank Bill Lapping at Clow Group Ltd., manufacturers of quality access equipment.

Both companies would also like to thank The Arts Theatre, Basil Blackshaw, Lesley Bruce, Alexandra Cann and the Stewart Parker Estate, Prontious Byrne, Cosprop, Debenhams, Donnell Deeney, Delivery Services, Mark Doman, Ewart Liddle, Executive Marquees, The Ground Floor, Imelda Foley, Hanson and White, Infotronic Display Systems, Tim Loane, the Lyric Theatre, Paul McLean, Nambiaré, Roger Nicholson and the Old Museum arts centre, Quintin Oliver, Bill Porter, J. Sainsbury, Shanakie Productions, Siemen Nixdorf, Smurfit Corrugated Cases, and everyone else who helped with this production.

Tinderbox and Field Day would like to thank the volunteers working on Front of House for giving freely of their time.

Tinderbox and Field Day would like to express their special thanks to the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church for their support, generosity and co-operation in the staging of this production.
Northern Star

TINDERBOX THEATRE COMPANY AND FIELD DAY THEATRE COMPANY PRESENT

Northern Star
by Stewart Parker

A BELFAST FESTIVAL AT QUEEN'S CO-PRODUCTION

Cast
Henry Joy McCracken
Mary Bodle
Mary-Anne McCracken, Peggy Barclay, and Prisoner 2
Samuel Neilson, Edward Bunting, Serjeant of Dragoons, Teeling, McFadden, and Interrogator 3
Jimmy Hope, Second Orangeman, Warden, and Interrogator 1
Wolfe Tone, Gorman, Shanahan, and Prisoner 3
Thomas Russell, Girvan, Haslett, and Prisoner 1
Belle Martin, Cecily Hamill, Phantom Bride, and Interrogator 2

Musicians
Musical Director, viola and fiddle
Tenor Saxophone and clarinet
Harp

CONLETH HILL
ANNE FARR
PAULA McFETRIDGE
PETER BALLANCE
SIMON MAGILL
SEAN CAMPION
MICHE DOHERTY
MAGGIE HAYES

Director
Designer
Composer
Lighting Designer
Costume Designer
Artist
Choreography
Production Manager
Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Workshop Director
Assistant Producer
Banner made by
Set Construction
Scenic Artist
Photography
Technical Support
Programme Editor
Co-Producer
Co-Producer

STEPHEN REA
BOB CROWLEY
NEIL MARTIN
CONLETH WHITE
SHERRIE SCOTT-KEEGAN
BASIL BLACKSHAW
ANNE FARR
MARIANNE CROSSLÉ
SALLY McKENNA
STEPHEN MAGUIRE
MICHAEL DRAINE
DAVID McFETRIDGE
JO WILLIAMS
HOUSTON MARSHALL
FRANCIS MORGAN Snr
STUART MARSHALL
PHIL SMYTH
JOHN RIDDELL
KEVIN WHELAN
EAMON QUINN
STEPHEN WRIGHT

Front of House Volunteers
ROGER ARNGILL, EWAN ATCHINSON, LAUREN BEGGS, DORIN BICKERSTAFF, FAY BRANNON, KERRY CLELAND, SUSAN CROTHERS,
CONNOR DECODTS, ALAN FITZSIMMONS, STEPHEN GILLES, DAVID GRAY, GEMMA HALLGAN, JANE HASTINGS, ANDREW IRWIN,
RICHARD LAVERY, ANNA LOGAN, SUSAN O'DOHERTY, CHRISTOPHER OSBORNE, CHRISTOPHER MCCOMBE, AIDEN MCGAVOCK,
LAURA MCGUIGGAN, DECLAN MCKEOWN, CONNOR MCVARNOCK, MICHAEL MAGEE, CONNOR MORRISON, PETER QUINN, THOMAS SCOTT, CLAIRE
SHEPHERD, MATTHEW TORNEY and STEFANIE WHITE.
Northern Star

TINDERBOX THEATRE COMPANY

Board of Directors
Mark Carruthers Chairman, Jennifer Johnston, Tim Loane, Fiona MacMillan, Glenn Patterson, Siobhán Stewart.

Artistic Director Stephen Wright
Administrator Eamon Quinn

Tinderbox Chronology
May 1988 One For The Road and The Dumb Writer by Harold Pinter (As Theatre 101)
Nov 1988 Stone by Edward Bond at the Belfast Festival
March 1989 Howard Brenton Triple Bill: Gum & God, The Education of Skinny Spew and Christie in Love
Sept 1989 Festival of New Writing I
Nov 1989 Theatre of Paranoia by Miché Doherty and Fingerprint by Thomas McColoughlan at the Belfast Festival
April 1990 Catchpenny Twist by Stewart Parker
Sept 1990 Festival of New Writing II
Nov 1990 Catchpenny Twist for the Belfast Festival and on tour
Feb 1991 This Love Thing by Marina Carr
March 1991 The Writing of Thomas Carnduff
Oct 1991 Donnyboy by Robin Glendinning
March 1992 Festival of New Writing III
Sept 1992 Can’t Pay? Won’t Pay! by Dario Fo
March 1993 Independent Voice by Gary Mitchell
June 1993 Festival of New Writing IV
Oct 1993 A Bright Light Shining by David Ashton
March 1994 Galloping Buck Jones by Ken Bourke
April 1994 April Sundays IV (previously Festival of New Writing)
July 1994 Galloping Buck Jones revival
Oct 1994 Pentecost by Stewart Parker
April 1995 April Sundays V
August 1995 Someone Who’ll Watch Over Me by Frank McGuiness
April 1996 April Sundays VI
May 1996 Language Roulette by Daraagh Carville
Oct 1996 Faith Healer by Brian Friel
Feb 1997 Language Roulette revival
March 1997 The Last of the MacEachans by John McGrath
April 1997 April Sundays VII
Oct 1997 Dumped by Daraagh Carville
Jan 1998 Into the Heartland by John McClelland
April 1998 April Sundays VIII
May 1998 Second-Hand Thunder by Joseph Crilly

For further information on Tinderbox please contact:
Eamon Quinn at Tinderbox, McAvoy House, 17a Ormeau Avenue, Belfast BT2 8HD
Tel: 01232 439313 Fax: 01232 329420
Email: tinder@dircon.co.uk
Field Day Chronology 1980 - 1998

Theatre Productions

1980 Translations by Brian Friel
1981 Three Sisters by Chekhov (adapted by Brian Friel)
1982 The Communication Cord by Brian Friel
1983 Boseman and Lena by Arthol Fugard
1984 The Riot Act by Tom Paulin
1985 High Time by Derek Mahon
1986 Double Cross by Thomas Kilroy
1987 Pentecost by Stewart Parker
1988 Making History by Brian Friel
1989 Saint Oscar by Terry Eagleton
1990 The Cure At Troy by Seamus Heaney
1991 Madame Macadam's Travelling Theatre by Thomas Kilroy
1992 Uncle Vanya by Chekov (adapted by Frank McGuinness)

Stage Events

1986 Poetry and Music by Seamus Deane, Tom Paulin, Seamus Heaney, David Hammond, Arty McGlynn and Nollaig O'Casey, at the Guildhall Derry
1987 Narratives by Field Day Directors, at the Royal Festival Hall, London
1988 Yeats: A Fifty Year Salute, a public lecture by Seamus Heaney, at the Guildhall, Derry
1989 Speaking of Translations, poetry readings by Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin and Carol Ann Duffy at the Royal Festival Hall, London
1990 Poetry Reading by Ted Hughes, sponsored by Field Day, Impact '92 Festival at the Guildhall Derry

Publications

1987 Forthcoming: A. Bourke et al. (eds.), The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing Volume IV
1988 M. Ni Dhonnacahda and T. Dorgan (eds.), Revising the Rising

Critical Conditions Series

1985 Kevin Whelan, The Tree of Liberty
1986 Luke Gibbons, Transformations in Irish Culture
1987 Joep Leerssen, Mere Irish and Fior-Gaels
1988 Joep Leerssen, Remembrance and Imagination
1989 Terry Eagleton, Crazy John and the Bishop
1990 Harry White, The Keeper's Recital
1991 Francis Mulhern, The Present Lasts a Long Time
1992 Marc Caball, Poets and Politics

Pamphlet Series

Stewart Parker was born in Belfast in 1941. His other plays for the theatre include *Spokesong* (Evening Standard Most Promising Playwright Award, 1976); *Catchpenny Twist, Nightshade, Heavenly Bodies* and *Pentecost* which he wrote for the Field Day Theatre Company in 1987 and which won Harvey's Irish Theatre Award for that year. His extensive television work includes *I'm a Dreamer Montreal, Iris in the Traffic, Ruby In the Rain, Joyce in June, Radio Pictures, Blue Money* and *Lost Belongings*, the series of six films about Ireland made by Thames Television and Euston Films in 1987. He also wrote many radio plays, including *The Iceberg, The Traveller* and *The Kamikaze Ground Staff Reunion Dinner*. Stewart Parker died in 1988 and the Stewart Parker Trust was formed in his honour for the encouragement of new writing in Ireland.
Northern Star

STARLIGHT by DEREK MAHON

Ancestral voices bicker; ghosts
Wrestle and dance; indignant hosts
Of all persuasions dander down
To throng the lanes of Antrim, Down,
Burnished pikes unsheathed from thatch,
Sabre and flintlock quick to catch;
Still the inspired conspirators
Make history in Kelly’s Cellars

Or at McArt’s Fort on Cave Hill,
Their music above politics still
as starlight shines above a bog
- Weaver and printer, ideologue,
Children of nature, natural sons
And daughters, trenchant resolutions
Echoing in that whin-scented air,
Adrift like thistledown elsewhere.

Red dawn, white tide and starry night
Dissolve to chaos, heartbreak, ‘shite
And lunacy’, the severed head,
Townlands put to torch and sword,
Leaving our souls still incomplete
And white noise of sectarian hate
Echoing down the continuous past
In the loved entries of Belfast.

White noise of gulls at rubbish-dumps,
Killers and victims both at once,
Each blow a self-inflicted wound;
And always the holistic sound
Of blackbirds on a summer night
In a world transfigured by starlight
- Till all fade oblivionwards
‘Drowning out any further words’. 
Here is another example of the division in our cultural history: our theatrical tradition is, at the very least, bi-furcated. There are profound differences between the drama of Protestant Anglo-Irish and the drama of what might be called Catholic, nationalist Ireland.

The Anglo-Irish came first, dominating the English-speaking theatre from the eighteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth. Anglo-Irish theatre is usually summed up in a familiar list, Farquhar, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Boucicault, Wilde, Shaw, Yeats, Synge, O'Casey with Beckett as an enlarged appendix.

The drama of Catholic Ireland didn't really exist before this century. Prior to the eighteen nineties we had no indigenous Irish theatre. It was created, then, by Yeats and a group of largely Anglo-Irish writers and intellectuals. This opened the way to plays from Catholic Ireland in our own century. But the surprising thing (or, perhaps, not) is that the Anglo-Irish had so little influence upon this new drama.

In his own time even Yeats had problems with some of the plays emerging from the newly articulate playwrights of Catholic background. He found the plays too realistic, too literal, too much 'dominated' by their subject matter. He saw his fellow Anglo-Irish playwrights, by contrast, as being 'free', able to stand back from their subject-matter, playing with it as upon an instrument. The social realism which so bothered Yeats continues to be a central ingredient of much of Irish drama today. This is a highly verbal theatre and this orality accounts for its frequent use of narrative voices and the dramatised story. As drama it has little of the cool remove from its subject matter which is so typical of Anglo-Irish theatricality. Its strengths are elsewhere, in its passionate intimacy and its quest for transformation and miracle through stage events.

Creative distancing is the mark of Anglo-Irish drama from Farquhar to Beckett (O'Casey is the exception for reasons of background and personal temperament). For
Northern Star

the others, whether the subject-matter was English
manners, Conmeara mythmaking or the fiercely
reduced circumstances of the figures on Beckett's stage,
style is a way of creating a distancing perspective. It is
accompanied by an utterly unselfconscious, intellectual
quality. The Anglo-Irish plays celebrate the intelligence
of the playwrights themselves, usually in the form of wit
and verbal elegance but often in the dramatising of ideas.

One of the important things about Stewart Parker is
that he has helped to restore the creative distancing and
the play of intelligence to our contemporary theatre. In
doing so he connects directly with the Anglo-Irish
tradition. Nowhere is this connection more specific than
in Northern Star. In this play an Anglo-Irish sensibility is
seen at full stretch in pursuit of a major Anglo-Irish pre-
occupation: a sense of identity in a fractured culture,
what Parker himself called "multiplying dualities: two
islands (the 'British Isles'), two Irelands, two Ulsters, two
men fighting over a field."

The central spine of the play consists of seven scenes
written in pastiche of the different styles of Farquhar,
Boucicault, Wilde, Shaw, Synge, O'Casey, Behan and
Beckett. The odd one out is Behan but otherwise this is a
series of benign parodies of some of the great Anglo-Irish
playwrights. Audiences of this play always have to ask
themselves: Why does Parker do this? What does it add
to McCracken's potted history of the United Irishmen?

Parker himself gives two reasons. One, in his
programme note to the play's first production, comments
on the difficulty in trying to write "an Ulster history
play." Ulster history refuses to offer any single, coherent
story, any one "convincing tone of voice." So, the playwright
resorts to multiple voices, a "theatrical ventriloquism."

The other reason is to be found at the beginning of
the play itself. Both Mary and McCracken embrace the
notion of the revolutionaries as actors and revolution as
a staged event with McCracken in the lead role ("Oh,
aye, I could always be relied upon for the funny voices").
The seven stages of the United Irishmen take on a
Shakespearean unity. By literally "acting out" the doomed
uprising Parker is able to subject its hopes, its courage,
its failure to a brilliant, contemporary irony. A deeply
political writer, he writes his historical play out of the
present tense of his own life in which he suffered the
contemporary tragedy of Northern Ireland.

The late historian F.S.L. Lyons, in commenting upon
the term Anglo-Irish and the way it came to be applied to
the Irish born Protestants of his own background,
remarked: "The name was not of their seeking, though it
expresses very precisely the schizophrenia that was their
natural condition." Severe words, perhaps but they do
identify a culture in suspension between two other
historically, irreconcilable cultures, the parent English
and the native Irish, a see-saw condition which involved
ingenious strategies for survival and adaptation, of
masking, mimicry and rhetorical finesse - all skills, it has
to be said, that are peculiarly suited to both politics and
the stage. In the condition there is always a struggle
towards a wholeness of expression, towards a
harmonising of divided allegiances.

Stewart Parker inherited the great gifts of Anglo-Irish
theatricality as well as this journey towards the resolution
of differences. In the last great speech of the play, he
addresses us directly through the voice of McCracken:

We never made a nation. Our brainchild.
Stillborn. Our own fault. We botched the birth.
So what if the English do bequeath us to one
another some day? What then? When there's
nobody else to blame except ourselves?
Northern Star

STEWART PARKER AND NORTHERN STAR by MARILYN RICHTARIK

Stewart Parker was born in East Belfast in 1941 and educated there and at Queen's University during a period of relative peace or, as he might have termed it at the time, stultifying boredom. In 1976 he looked back on his youth in Northern Ireland:

We were supposed to be British, but when you visited 'the mainland' (an insult in itself) they took you for a Canadian or a Scot. We were also supposed to be Irish, but when you went over the border to Dundalk or Dublin, they treated you humorously, as an exotic alien.

We didn't have any country, we just had a Province. A very, very provincial Province - politically corrupt, culturally bankrupt, full of aggressive inferiority, sectarian, self-obsessed, and unutterably dreary.

Naturally, he fled at the first opportunity - to the United States, where he lived for five years. There he found some of what he was looking for, "an immense, noisy, rich, cosmopolitan culture, bursting at the seams with vitality and madness. Instant gratification." Yet, "inexplicably," in the middle of all this he found himself "ruminating about Belfast." Northern Star has its origins in this period of Parker's life, in the intersection between his Northern Irish and American experiences.

In 1967, when he was teaching at Cornell University, Parker decided to write a play about Henry Joy McCracken. He was drawn to the egalitarian, non-sectarian vision of the United Irishmen and particularly intrigued by McCracken - as any liberal Northern Protestant would be by one of the most radical leaders of the United Irishmen who also happened to be a Belfast Presbyterian. Although the action of the play he wished to write would centre on Ireland, Parker originally intended it to be a more general exploration of issues of political commitment. As he explained in his proposal for a radio play on the subject addressed to the BBC in 1970, "I conceived the play while living in America and engaging in the struggle against the Vietnam war and for Black liberation." Indeed, despite stirrings of political activism in the Northern Ireland of the mid-1960's, the United States in 1967 seemed a much more likely setting for social and political revolution. As Parker researched and worked on the play sporadically throughout 1967-69, his host country was convulsed by events that included ghetto riots, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy, the disruption of the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago, campus unrest, and escalating protests against American involvement in Vietnam.

On 17 May 1968, nine anti-war protesters set fire to two large bins of draft records stolen from the Selective Service System office in Cantonsville, Maryland. All of the demonstrators were practising Catholics; two, Philip and Daniel Berrigan, were priests. The trial of the "Cantonsville Nine" was held in Baltimore Federal court in October 1968, and the defendants were found guilty on three counts. Parker watched avidly, fascinated by the spectacle of compassionate, reform-minded individuals driven by their spiritual and social convictions to extreme, extralegal acts.

Perhaps as a result of his sympathy for the Catonsville Nine, Parker stepped up his involvement in the anti-war effort the following winter. Several Cornell professors were demonstrating their support for draft resisters by offering classes at Allenwood Prison Camp, aimed at political prisoners but open to any who were interested. Parker and a friend taught a creative writing class there every two weeks from February until July 1969. To their surprise, the 'ordinary' prisoners attended in greater numbers than the draft resisters. Moreover, since many of these were poor and black, the experience
constituted, for Parker, a crash course in American race relations. He was struck by the "passionate political commitment" of the black prisoners, writing later, "no matter how the classes started out, they nearly always resolved into a noisy, volatile debate about Black oppression." (In 1973, Parker would apply this experience at home when he taught a class at Long Kesh Internment Camp where his brightest student was a young man named Gerry Adams.)

Parker returned to Ireland on the Queen Elizabeth II in August 1969, but his voyage was marred by the news from Northern Ireland relayed to the ship as it proceeded towards its destination. This was the week of the Battle of the Bogside in Derry and sectarian disturbances in Belfast so severe that British troops were sent in. As the first, confused reports of this reached him, Parker confided in his journal, "The whole brutal historical nightmare of 1641 and 1798 and 1916 lurching through the streets again and across the breezy countryside. Approaching it with a deep sense of dread."

Back in Belfast, Parker visited family, friends, and the new barricades, and life gradually settled down to what then passed for normal. He wrote for the BBC's Schools programmes and followed political developments, attending People's Democracy meetings at Queen's and canvassing for the Northern Ireland Labour Party before the Westminster general election of June 1970. In company with most other Northern intellectuals, he was also interrogating his own past, his family's past, and the history of the province in an attempt to make sense of the upheaval taking place around him. In conjunction with this, he found time for projects that united his political and artistic interests: studying the Irish language, editing Over the Bridge (Sam Thompson's play about sectarianism in the shipyards), and writing a series of personal articles for The Irish Times.

In 1970 Parker made an unsuccessful attempt to sell the McCracken idea to the BBC for a radio play, after which the United Irishmen retreated to the back of his mind. He was not one to let a play fall by the wayside indefinitely, however, and eventually he persuaded the Lyric Theatre to commission it. (Northern Star had its first performance there in November 1984.) In describing his proposed play to the Lyric, Parker had explained that, in focusing on McCracken, "I am primarily concerned with his human predicament, but then also with a critical moment in the course of Irish history, a moment which can encapsulate the quandaries and contradictions which continue to confound us." "For obvious reasons," he wrote, "I would very much like this play to open in Belfast."

Nothing could be more appropriate than a new production in this anniversary year in the city that meant so much to Stewart Parker and to Henry Joy McCracken.

Henry Joy McCracken, pictured above.
Northern Star

THE HARP RE-STRUNG: THE UNITED IRISHMEN AND CULTURAL POLITICS

by LUKE GIBBONS

During the Bastille Day celebrations in July 1792, ten infirm harpers - seven of them blind, one almost a hundred years of age - appeared at the Belfast Harp Festival, a display of longevity on stage not perhaps emulated until the Rolling Stones took to the road in recent years. "Have you got the Irish Music", Martha McTeir wrote excitedly to her brother, William Drennan, "it is the rage here".

That the harp had already moved centre stage to the United Irishmen's cultural politics was clear from its adoption as the emblem of the new movement in October, 1791, with the rousing motto: 'It is new strung and shall be heard'. According to the manifesto for the Harp Festival, "the spirit and character of a people are [intimately] connected with their national poetry and music", and the harp was a resonant image of such national sentiment. According to the Scottish Enlightenment, societies were held together at the deepest level by ties of sympathy and sentiment, and the reverberation of strings in an instrument perfectly conveyed the mutual transfer of "fellow-feeling" among kindred souls: "As in strings equally wound up," wrote the philosopher David Hume, "the motion of one communicates itself to the rest; so all the affections readily pass from one person to another, and beget correspondent movements in every human creature."

Though the harp figured in Enlightenment thought as an image of unison and solidarity, its use as an icon of Ireland had a longer pedigree. It featured as a heraldic device on coinage during the reign of Henry VIII, and on flags representing the three kingdoms under James I as early as 1603. The subjection to the monarchy, however, even in the more patriotic variants used by the Volunteers, was clearly signalled by the placing of a
crown above the harp. The removal of this badge of conquest laid the basis for the emergence of the harp as a separatist symbol, and the significance of this was not lost on figures such as William Drennan, who warned of the danger of even removing the crown from the harp on the uniforms of Volunteer uniforms worn by United Irishmen.

It was, in fact, Drennan who added the other crucial elements to the iconography of the harp: its association with green and with the female body as tropes of resurgence. This received its most powerful literary expression in his poem, 'Erin', published in 1797, which first introduced the "emerald isle" as an epithet for Ireland:

... Erin stands proudly insular, in her steep shore
And strikes her high harp, 'midst the ocean's deep roar...

Arm of Erin, be strong! but be gentle as brave,
And uplifted to strike, be ready to save.
Nor the feeling of vengeance presume to defile
The cause of the men of the emerald isle...

This anthem was initially set to an original tune, but as it percolated into popular culture, it was accompanied by one of O'Carolan's airs which, Martha McTeir informed Drennan, "command the attention of even the servants in the family."

Green was the colour of regeneration, but the figure of the 'maid harp' - a bare female torso forming the front of the harp - was also bound up with prospects of renewal. In Thomas Moore's poem "The Origin of the Harp", based on a drawing made in Kilmainham Jail by the United Irishman Edward Hudson, the harp is depicted as a female body, a "siren of old", emerging from water in a powerful image of (re-)birth. More than any other aspect of the United Irishmen, it was perhaps this emphasis on revival, even in the aftermath of defeat and disaster, which constituted their most enduring legacy. Though the 1798 Rebellion ended in catastrophe, it was no Culloden where Irish culture was concerned.

The evocative associations of the harp saw to it that notions of mourning and irretrievable loss were tinged with hopes for the future. Thus, on the eve of Wolfe Tone's departure for America in 1795, his friends, among them Thomas Russell, Henry Joy McCracken, and Samuel Neilson, gathered on the banks of Lough Neagh for what was to be, in effect, an American wake. As R. R. Madden describes the occasion on their return to Belfast:

Everything that good taste and kind feeling could suggest to shew civility to Tone and his family was done. The celebrated Dr. Bunting, who has accomplished so much for his country, was present, and played... one of the most touching of his own mournful and powerful airs - [O'Carolan's] "The Parting of Friends" - when the wife of Tone, one "albeit unused to the melting mood", burst into tears.

But as in Yeat's poem - "Mourn - and Then Onward!" - even lamentation did not relapse into doom. Ever hopeful, Martha McTeir wrote to William Drennan that if O'Carolan's air was supplied with words it might bring about a change of heart in British attitudes towards Ireland: "To me they are sounds might make Pitt melt for the poor Irish... Miss Clarke perhaps can do them justice, and if when she plays "The Parting of Friends", you should be inspired with words as tender as the tune, you might be immortal."

Wolfe Tone was not so optimistic. Preparing for a French invasion of Ireland, he wrote that if the United Irishmen did not get it right this time, it would set Ireland back for the next two hundred years. It has, perhaps, taken that long for the harp to be re-strung, albeit in a different key.
The First Presbyterian congregation of Belfast was founded in 1644, through the offices of the Scottish Chaplains of General Robert Munro's army, sent to Ulster in the wake of the 1641 Rebellion. The congregation erected a meeting house in Rosemary Lane before the end of the seventeenth century, and has remained there ever since. The present church building was erected in 1783 and (minus memorials and the 1908 Lewis Organ) is substantially as it would have been in 1798. It is built to the design of the leading Belfast architect of the time, Roger Mulholland (1704 - 1818) and it is elliptical in shape, inside and outside. The original classical facade was modified by the addition of the present portico in 1833. The beautifully carved pulpit was a gift to the new meeting house by "The ladies of Belfast" of various denominations. It was from this pulpit that John Wesley preached in 1789 when refused permission elsewhere in the city.

The commercial, political and intellectual history of Belfast is reflected on the walls and in the history of First Church. Thomas Drennan ministered here (1736 - 68); William Drennan and his sister Martha were born in the Manse (on the site of the present Central Hall). The Belfast Academy (later Belfast Royal Academy) was founded in 1785 by another minister of the congregation, James Crombie. Notable members of the congregation included Francis Joy, who founded the Belfast News Letter; James Blow, the printer; David Manson, who opened the first school in the town; George Benn, philanthropist and historian of Belfast; E.J. Harland, of Harland & Wolff; and Thomas Andrews, of Titanic fame.

Members of the congregation were prominent in the Volunteer movement and, later, on both sides of the United Irish rebellion. The memorials of William Tennant (imprisoned for his United Irish connections) and William Bruce (famously excoriated by Thomas Russell for his opposition to the rebellion) adorn the same wall of the meeting house - a recognition that while intellectual freedom may entail the expression of diametrically opposed opinions, yet it is possible that, with a spirit of Christian magnanimity and forbearance,
such differences may be contained, and entertained, within the same household of faith.

By the end of the seventeenth century, Presbyterians had become too numerous for accommodation in one building and so a second congregation was formed in 1708, with its meeting house erected at the rear of First Church (on the site of the present Ewarts Car Park). This congregation, now All Souls, moved to its present site in Elmwood Avenue in 1895. Both congregations are members of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, a denomination that developed from a long period of theological controversy within Presbyterianism in Ireland. That controversy centred upon the issue of subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, a rigorous, lengthy, theologically explicit, high Calvinist creed. It was as a consequence of this very bitter controversy that the Third - subscribing - Congregation was formed, also in Rosemary Lane.

For the non-subscribers, influenced by some of the intellectual currents of the European Enlightenment, the Bible alone was sufficient guidance for a Christian and the imposition of a 'man-made' creed was an illicit restriction upon Christian intellectual freedom, what they called "the sacred right of private judgement". Their opponents interpreted this privileging of freedom of conscience as a device for cloaking dangerous, heretical beliefs. The theological position of the first Congregation has been for almost three centuries, and remains today, reasonably unorthodox! In the last century, and for much of this century, the radical predilection of the congregation took the quite distinctive form of unitarianism - a denial of the divinity of Christ and hence of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity. Actually, the congregation recognises no official, dogmatic creed but emphasises the God-given freedom of the individual to exercise conscience and reason in the quest for life's meaning, believing that religion is wider than creed and should unite, not divide, humanity.
Northern Star

THE POLITICS OF MEMORY by KEVIN WHELAN

The United Irishmen remain intellectually vibrant, because they never flinched from facing the real question of politics - the creation of a society fit to live in, a human home for ourselves but more crucially for our children. The 1790s was an extraordinary decade in Irish history, when the opportunity presented itself to transcend the age-old sectarian, ethnic and political system rooted in sectarian privilege and its replacement with a secular democratic politics, founded on universal ideas of equality and justice. The United Irish project of creating a secular republic, recasting political participation on inclusive lines, was deliberately blocked by the British state, using the weapons of sectarianism, military terror in 1798 and the suppression of the Irish parliament.

We are still living with the consequence of that defeat. Two centuries later, after the loss of the one realistic opportunity Ireland has had to benefit from the advances of the European Enlightenment, the sectarian alternative forced upon it in the crucial decade of the 1790s still survives, as a distorting feature of British-Irish and internal Irish relations. Witness the last four years at Drumcree - archaic images broadcast to a world at once horrified and fascinated by them.

With the blockage of the United Irish project, Irish politics split into two fragments - nationalism and unionism - which still dominate the political landscape two centuries later. Like the United Irishmen, we face the task today of negotiating an agreed political structure, capable of representing Irish people in all their inherited complexities. While at one level 1798 is about history, at another it is equally about the present.

If the 1790s can be seen as the pivotal decade in the evolution of modern Ireland, then an honest and accurate understanding of it is not just of scholarly interest, but has serious implications for current political and cultural thinking. It is precisely because of its enduring relevance that 1798 has never truly passed out of politics and into history. The United Irishmen's ideas did not die with the events of 1798, but are still potent, valid and unrealised. In the sense that they faced the same problems which bedevil modern Ireland, the United Irishmen are very much our contemporaries. We need to stress their enduring legacy - their political vision, not the physical defeat of the revolution on the bloody battlefields of '98. As Milan Kundera has noted, "the struggle for power is the struggle of memory against forgetting". In the case of 1798 it is not what we remember that is the problem, but what we have forgotten: it is not what we 'know', but what we ‘know’ that just ain’t so.

The power of political memory, which links past and present dynamically, needs to be a central interpretive focus in any understanding of 1798. Almost as they were happening, the events of 1798 were being recast in terms of memory. As with the politics, the memory also split into fragments. In the Unionist one, 1798 was figured as a sectarian bloodbath, yet another chapter in the Protestant Book of Martyrs. In the Catholic Nationalist
one, 1798 became a struggle for faith and fatherland, in which the United Irishmen and Presbyterians were airbrushed out of a picture increasingly dominated by the clerical collar of ‘Father Murphy’. This partisan confiscation of the memory of 1798 by the Catholics erased a distinguished moment in the history of Ulster Presbyterianism. Today the global image of Ulster Protestants is dominated by apocalyptic footage from places like Drumcree and they are often presented as reactionaries, lost in the mists of sectarian bigotry.

Yet in the 1790s, Belfast, the ‘Athens of the North’, was the birthplace of Irish separatism and the cradle of the United Irish movement. The Ulster Presbyterians were at the cutting edge of the emerging radical movement and provided many of its most talented leaders. Their generosity of spirit, political vision, imaginative inclusiveness and commitment to the principles of justice remain to this day an adornment to the tradition from which they sprang, even though this distinguished period in their evolution does not figure prominently in their current self-image. Flickering hesitantly behind the obscuring smoke of the ‘Twelfth’, there is another, more generous history of Ulster Presbyterianism.

While the past cannot be restored, memory can. We need a process of rememoration - a retrieving of memory which has been deliberately suppressed. Restoring this enabling memory can help release the blockage; the endless calendrical cycle of Protestant memory - the mythic circle of repetition - can be redirected into historical and linear time, in which the possibility of progress again becomes available. By elevating politics out of the sectarian rut in which it has been deliberately confined since 1798, the dead weight of the continuous past can be lifted and political buoyancy restored.

The United Irish project of an inclusive, democratic, non-sectarian Ireland remains uncompleted. The 1798 rebellion remains buried under an oppressive weight of misrepresentation. By excavating its hidden meanings, 1798 can be made available in an entirely fresh way, opening an invigorating and generous space in which to consider it. 1798 cannot be claimed by any single political tradition in Ireland. The Catholic Nationalist version which dominated the centenary, 1938 and 1948 commemorations created the 1798 which people think they know. By getting behind these commemorations, we reopen 1798 as an event in the history of Presbyterians as much as in the history of the Catholics. We restore the international perspective which informed the United Irish project, rather than seeing it as merely a set of cabbage-patch skirmishes.

We must also generously acknowledge the Ulster dimension to 1798, especially the Presbyterian contribution, with its enlightened emphasis on justice, equality and civil liberty. In so doing, we restore a proud episode in their history which has been confiscated from them by a partisan historiography and their own complicity in convenient amnesia. We strive to liberate 1798 from the straitjacket in which historians have sought to confine it. The 1790s remain as a vision and an inspiration for the 1990s. As Walter Benjamin understood, to be forgotten is to die again:

Only the historian will have the gift of fanning the spark in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins and this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.
Northern Star

Peter Ballance

Peter is from Newry. His theatre work includes Howling Moon, Silent Sons (Pig'sback Theatre Company); Love and a Bottle (Rough Magic); Justice (Pointfields), Don't Look Down (Replay); Ceasea's Ear (Diehard Productions); Philadelphia, Here I Come!, Brothers of The Brush, After Easter, Pictures of Tomorrow, Joy Riders (Lyrical); Language Roulette (Tinderbox); Brilliant Traces (Prime Cut). TV includes Out of the Deep Pan, Paddy Tat (BBC Northern Ireland); The Big O (RTÉ and Channel 4); The Bill (Carlton TV). Film includes Crossmaharet, Titanic Town, Sunset Heights, Old, New, Borrowed, Blue and Wash Cut and Dry.

Sean Campion

Sean was born in County Kilkenny. His theatre work includes Tarry Flynn, The Importance of Being Earnest, Macbeth, Big Maggie, Rozencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead and Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme all at the Abbey Theatre; Good Evening Mr Collins, Hubert Murray's Widow, Antigone, Calvary, Resurrection, Cuir an Mhéan Oiche, Mandragola all at the Peacock Theatre; Translations, Bent (Red Kettle Theatre Company); Equus, Canaries (Gaiety Theatre); Mutabilitie (Royal National Theatre); A Moon for the Misbegotten (Doublejoint Theatre Co) and Poor Superman (Muted Cupid Theatre Company). T.V. includes Glenroe, Fair City (RTÉ); Echoes (Channel 4); Most Important (Parzivall Productions).

Bob Crowley

Theatre includes co-directed Seamus Heaney's The Cure at Troy with Stephen Rea for Field Day; for the Almeida: No Man's Land; Moonlight, The Judas Kiss (Playhouse), The Iceman Cometh; for the RSC: Henry IV Parts 1 & 2, King Lear, Measure for Measure, Henry V, Love's Labours Lost, As you Like It, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Macbeth, The Plantagenets, Hamlet, Othello. He is an associate of the RSC. For the RSC: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Hedda Gabler, Ghetto, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Racing Demon, Richard III, White Chameleon, Murmuring Judges, The Night of the Iguana, Carousel, The Prince's Play, The Designated Mourners, The Cripple of Inishmaan, King Lear and Amy's View, New York: Carousel, Paul Simon's Capeman and Twelfth Night (Lincoln Centre). Opera: includes The King Goes Forth to France, The Knot Garden, La Traviata (ROH), The Cunning Little Vixen (Chatelet, Paris), The Magic Flute (ENO). Ballet: Anastasia, Pavane Pour Une Infante Defunte (ROH). Bob has been awarded the title of Royal Designer for Industry by the RSA and is both a Tony Award and Olivier Award winner.

Marianne Crossley

Production Manager

From Co. Tyrone, Marianne trained in Stage Management in Repertory Theatre in England, where work included a season as sound technician at the Swan Theatre, Worcester, four seasons as Stage Manager and one season as Master Props Maker for the Library Theatre Company, Manchester. She lived for a time in Cyprus, managing an international vocal group. As a Production Manager she has worked extensively for the Ulster Theatre Company and Tinderbox. She is a founder member and administrator of Shankake Productions.

Miche Doherty

Miche's work with Tinderbox as actor, director and writer includes Catchpenny Twist, Christie in Love and Theatre of Paranoia. The theatre work includes Lady Windermere's Fan, Northern Star, Hallowen Night and The School For Scandal (Rough Magic); The Comedy of Errors and Hubert Murray's Widow (Abbey); The Double Dealer and Tartuffe (Gate); Conquest of the South Pole (Theatre Depot); The Silver Tassie (Almeida), Our Country's Good (Theatre Clwyd) and The Importance of Being Earnest (West Yorkshire Playhouse). Film and TV includes The Run of the Country, December Bride, Valentine Falls, William's War, Upwardly Mobile and Father Ted. Most recently he appeared in Love Me?, a Corn Exchange CarShow, which played to packed houses in a parked Volvo in Temple Bar, Dublin.

Michael Draine

Assistant Stage Manager

Michael was born in Belfast and trained in Stage Management at the National Youth Theatre and the Ulster Theatre Company. He has worked on a wide range of productions with various companies. He has worked extensively in community arts with The Rainbow Factory and with many youth clubs. Recently Michael has been involved in the music industry rigging for Eastern Promise Electrics, U2, Suede, Texas and others. Earlier this year he helped build Green Dolphin Studios.

Annie Farr

Annie was born in Enniskeen, Her theatre work includes The Alchemist (Royal National Theatre); The Merchant of Venice, Jekyll and Hyde, Divine Right, The Way of the World, Macbeth (Birmingham Rep.); Juno and the Paycock, Seasons Greetings, A Life, After Easter (Lyric Theatre, Belfast); Pinochio and Nonsense (Arts Theatre Belfast); The Man in the Moon (Virtual Reality); Galloping Jack Jones (Tinderbox Theatre Company); I Can't Get Started (Centre Stage) and Antigone (Pentameters Theatre). TV and film includes S.U.S. (Ulster TV); Out of the Deep Pan (BBC, Northern Ireland) and High Boot Bunny (RTÉ).

John Fitzpatrick

Musical Director, Viola & Fiddle

John studied at he royal Northern College of Music, graduating in 1990. An experienced classical violinist, John is equally at home in traditional Irish, jazz and country music and has been working as a session musician in Ireland for 5 years. He has worked extensively in theatre and in live and recorded television and film as arranger and performer. He recently joined Celtic Jazz based quartet NightOwing touring Spain and USA with whom he is currently involved in recording projects.

Róisín Hambly

Harp

Róisín from Mayo-Abbey in County Mayo is an accomplished harp, concertina and piano player. She is a senior member of the Belfast Harp Orchestra under the direction of Janet Harbison. With the orchestra she has performed in many venues throughout Ireland and Britain including the Waterfront Hall and Birmingham Symphony Hall. She also performs with Comhaltas Ceoltóiri Eireann and in recent years has won many prizes for harp and accompaniment at the All-Ireland Feidh Cheoil and is the current Under-18 harp champion. Róisín is following in the footsteps of her sister Grainne who studied music at Queen's University and is now pursuing a career as a performer and teacher of the Irish harp.

Maggie Hayes

Maggie was born in Downpatrick, Her theatre work includes a tour of Europe (Theatre d'un Soir); Les Marie de la Tour Eiffel (Theatre Regional de Bretagne); Theatre (Theatre des 3 Quartiers); Poitiers, Le Declin de l'Empire (Epidaure); The Poet and his Double (Cafe Theatre); The Merchant of Venice (Tabard Theatre); The Conduct of Life (Regents Park); The Plough and the Stars, American and Irish Tour; The Evangelist, All My Sons (Arts Theatre); and Translations (Lyric Theatre).

Conleth Hill

Conleth was born in Ballinspittle. His theatre work includes The Suicide, Tall Tales, Playboys of the Western World (Communicado); Little Shop of Horrors, Over the Bridge, The Importance of Being Earnest, Midsomer Nights Dream, Xmas Eve Can Kill You (Lyric); The Government Inspector, Stones in his Pockets (Doublejoint); Juno and the Paycock (Royal Lyceum); Shining Souls (Old Vic); No Stars on Sunday, The Starving (The Old Museum Arts Centre); Dorian Gray, School for Wives, The Billy Plays (The Arts Theatre). His T.V. and film work includes Out of the Deep Pan, Clack, Jam Roll, A Man You Don't Meet Every Day, Crossmaharet, Trust Me, Blue Heaven, Boom, Casualty, The Bill, Medics, Lit by Love and Sunshine.
Northern Star

Kevin Lawless Saxophone/Clarinet
Kevin has been principal clarinette player in the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra for the past three years and is currently lead sax player in the Ulster Youth Jazz Orchestra. Aside from playing in Hit, shows in the Grand Opera House for the past couple of years, Kevin records with the BBC and also played in local composer Brian Irvine's last two compositions to critical acclaim.

Stephen Maguire Assistant Stage Manager
Stephen's work in stage management includes Twelfth Night (R.S.C); Errol (Paul Nicholas' Associates); Stone and Ashes (Prime Cut); Reverence (Abram Productions); Rock Hard and Beauty and the Beast (Arts Theatre); and Sleeping Beauty (Ulster Theatre Company). He has also worked as a rigger for U2 Popmart, Oceen Colour Scene, Brian Kennedy, Van Morrison, and Bob Dylan. Stephen is also pursuing a career in singing and song writing. His most recent engagement was supporting Kevin Goss on the first date of his new tour Worse Than Pride.

Simon Magill
Originally from Lurgan, Simon works as an actor and director. His theatre work includes Independent Voice, Metamorphosis, The Fall of the House of Usher, Rinty and The Natarena. TV and film includes Henri, Divorcing Jack, Love Lies Bleeding, Sailor Town and The Vikings as well as numerous radio credits. Directing credits include Death and the Maiden, Two, A Place with the Pigs, Lament, Loved Ones, Skylight and A Moon for the Misbegotten. Simon is Associate Director at the Lyric Theatre where he will direct Tom Murphy's A Whistle In The Dark in the new year.

Neil Martin Composer
Neil has worked with many leading musicians both on stage and in the studio, as producer, arranger and performer. His music has been heard throughout Europe and North America, including performances in Carnegie Hall and the Royal Festival Hall. Neil has composed and directed music for film, television, radio and theatre. Credits include Trevor Griffiths award winning film Food For Ravens; Women on the Verge of HRT (Dublin), St. Mary (Dublin) and St. Oscar (Field Day). He has also worked on numerous plays for Radio. He now divides his time between music and film making with Flying Fox Films in Belfast.

Paula McFetridge Paula was born in Dublin. Her theatre work includes Catchpenny Tartist, Independent Voice, Can't Pay? Won't Pay, Gibraltar Strait, Galloping Buck Jones (Tinderbox Theatre Company); Dancing at Lughnasa, A Midsummer Night's Dream, After Easter, Jane Eyre and The Taming of the Shrew (Lyric Theatre). She has also appeared in The Patriot Game (Peacock Theatre), The Government Inspector (Dublin); Bondagars and Frontline Cafe (Charabanc Theatre Company). Most recently she played Martha in To Hell With Faust; Big Telly Theatre Company), Television and film includes Crossmhbheart (Lexington Films), Baby Doll (Fillum Ltd), 81 (81 Films) and Force of Duty (BBC).

David McFetridge Workshop Programme Director
David is a freelance director based in Belfast. Previous work with Tinderbox includes readings of Baltic Exchange, Jack's Too Open and Between Two Circuses as part of the April Sundays Series. As Assistant Director at the Lyric Theatre Belfast he assisted on productions of A Life, Volunteers, The Cruible and The Visit. He also directed There Was an Old Woman, redirected Pygmalion for a Northern Irish tour and produced the popular Whose Line Is It Anyway? series.

Sally McKenna Stage Manager
Sally was born in Dublin. Her work includes Language Roulette, Pentecost (Tinderbox); Blue Heart, The Steward of Christendom (Out of Joint); The Care at Troy (Field Day); The Gig Concert (Lyric Theatre); Dance of Death (Tricycle Theatre) and various shows at Royal Court, Lyric Players Theatre, Crucible Theatre and tours to Australia, New Zealand, USA, Egypt, Sweden and Luxemburg.

Stephen Rea Director
Stephen is founder and Artistic Director of Field Day Theatre Company. Productions for Field Day include Translations by Brian Friel, Double Cross by Thomas Kilroy, Pentecost by Stewart Parker, Making History by Brian Friel, Saint Oscar by Terry Eagleton and The Care at Troy by Seamus Heaney. Film work includes Angel Michael Collins, The Butcher Boy, The Crying Game [Oscar Nomination for Best Actor]; Interview with the Vampire and Guinevere.

Sherrie Scott-Keegan Costume Designer
Sherrie trained at Central School of Fashion 1983 and later studied millinery at Kensington and Chelsea College, London. Sherrie returned to Ireland in 1996 after having her own millinery and costume business in London. Since then she has worked in theatre, film and TV. Theatre credits include, Forging Ahead and The Lost Child (Replay) and A Midsummer Night's Dream (at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast). TV includes Give My Head Peace (BBC NI) and United (BBC). Film work includes Space Truckers, Dancing at Lughnashe, Field of Bones and Fatal Extraction. Sherrie designed the costumes for Tinderbox's production of Second-Hand Thunder.

Eamon Quinn Co-Producer
Eamon started with Newpoint in Newry and first worked with Tinderbox on its inaugural production Stone by Edward Bond in 1988. Eamon has worked with Sightlines Theatre Company, the Simon Community, Phoenix Theatre Company, Galway and has been with Tinderbox since 1996. Eamon has produced all Tinderbox's productions and festivals since then.

Conleth White Lighting Designer
Conleth White has designed lighting for An Bharclann de hide, Andrew's Lane, Aisling Chief, Calypso, Dock Ward, Druid, Dublin, Bondage Joint, Everyman Palace, Field Day, Eakin Crane, Gaiety, Galloping Glass, Gate, Glasshouse, Groundworks, Hadi, Janus, Lyric, Passion Machine, Pigback, Playwrights & Actors, Point Field, Puckbag, Red Kettle, Rough Magic, Second Age, Smock Alley, Storytellers, Tinderbox and Wet Paint. For Field Day, Conleth toured with Double Cross, Making History and Uncle Vanya, designed the lighting for Pentecost and Madame Macadam's Travelling Theatre and with Rory Dempster co-designed the lighting for The Cure at Troy. For Tinderbox he lit Second-Hand Thunder.

Jo Williams Assistant Producer
Jo trained in circus skills and performance at SkyLight Circus in Education, Manchester and The Circus Space, London. She worked as Youth Circus Director for Belfast Circus School and has written and directed shows for Circus 1 to 3 as well as performing in her own double act for cabaret and street festivals.

Stephen Wright Co-Producer
Stephen is co-founder and Artistic Director of Tinderbox and has directed many of its productions including Dumped, Independence Day, Gibraltar Strait, A Bright Light Shining, Galloping Buck Jones, Someone Who'll Watch Over Me, Faith Healer, Into The Heartland and Pentecost, which won the 1994 EMA Award for Best Production. Stephen was Project Director for Replay Productions on its Special Needs project; and Assistant Director of the Bush Theatre, London. Stephen's last production for Tinderbox was Second-Hand Thunder by Joseph Grilly.
Programme Note by SEAMUS DEANE

It was a rebellion that might have been a Revolution. Even to call it a rebellion, reminds us of the defeat of the revolutionary principles that lay at its heart. But 1798 is not yet over. We are still the inheritors and victims of that moment, when the possibility of an enlightened future was crushed by a government and a system devoted to the preservation of sectarian privilege and to the repression of the new languages of freedom, equality, citizenship and justice.

In their place was instituted a more aggressive form of the sectarianism that had formed the legal basis of the Anglican elite’s position in Ireland. Extended to present a consolidated Anglican and Dissenting front against a politicised Catholicism, that sectarianism became the caricature of the ideal of shared and equal citizenship which was basic to the United Irish movement. The rebellion has been claimed as a Protestant triumph over a Catholic conspiracy and as a heroic Catholic rebellion against Protestant and British despotism. It was neither. It still has to be fought for; the thirty thousand who died in that fateful year still await their proper commemoration. Yet, despite (even because of) the success of the forces of bigotry and reaction, it is clearer than ever now that the principles of secular republicanism, most memorably formulated in Ireland by Tone and Russell, are the most effective antidote to the internecine ilnesses which have plagued this island for so long.

In the decade of the 1790s, some of the features of our present situation took their initial shape. Perhaps, in the 1990s, we can finally act to realised a possibility that was stillborn two hundred years ago, a possibility whose day may have come at last. The famous star of liberty may yet again have a northern birth.