



RESEARCH GUIDE TO IRISH LITERATURE

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STARTING OUT

The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature. Edited by Robert Welch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
[St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area -PR8706 .O88 1996]

This all-purpose A-Z one-volume companion covers authors (native Irish and Anglo-Irish), works, topics, styles, forms, genres, literary themes, and terms in Irish literature. With more than 2,000 entries, this guide covers sixteen hundred years of Irish writing.

A Companion to Irish Literature. Edited by Julia M. Wright. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
[St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area -PR8711 .C65 2010]

Themes such as religion, the cultural history of gender, translation, and nationhood shape this 2-volume set in its coverage of nearly 1,500 years of Irish literature. Organized chronologically—from *The Middle Ages* to *Contemporary Literature: Print, Stage, and Screen*—the lengthy entries contain substantial bibliographies.

Dictionary of Irish Literature. Edited by Robert Hogan. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979.
[St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area - PR8706 .D5 1979]

Covering about 500 Irish authors, this dictionary includes critical and biographical articles on literary genres such as folklore, literary organizations and publications, and foreign authors who have greatly contributed to Irish literature. The work also includes a bibliography, a chronology, an index, and an introductory article on Gaelic literature.

Modern Irish Literature and Culture: A Chronology. By James M. Cahalan. New York: G.K. Hall, 1992.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR8718 .C35 1993]

Providing an historical and political context to Irish writing from 1600 to the early 1990s, this volume identifies, explains, and interrelates events in Irish literature and culture. Each year is arranged into such categories as fiction, drama, poetry, art, prose, non-fiction, and periodicals. The chronology includes a biographical details and a map, as well as indexes for persons, titles and subjects.

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Literature Criticism Online. By James M. Cahalan. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1978 -.
[Available online for UofT use only: www.library.utoronto.ca/.
Search “e-resources” for *Literature Criticism Online*.]

This series provides detailed critical essays—often by well-known critics—on a wide range of authors. Works by anonymous authors (e.g. *Táin Bó Cúailnge*) are listed in the title section. Most essays are available online in **Literature Criticism Online**, a database comprising 10 print series and consisting of more than 250 volumes compiled over the past 30 years. Using this online collection, you can search individual series titles (e.g. *Contemporary Literature Criticism*) all together, in a selected combination, or individually. You can find articles on such topics as Irish nationalism in literature, the Irish novel, and the Irish literary renaissance. Arranged alphabetically, the entries provide in-depth critical essays on an author’s work, along with biographical facts, a list of major works, and related sources. Usually, the essays give an overview of a writer’s work or themes.

BIOGRAPHY

Dictionary of Irish Biography: from the Earliest Times to the Year 2002. Edited by James McGuire and James Quinn. Cambridge: Royal Irish Academy and Cambridge University Press, 2009. 9 volumes.
[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – CT862 .D53 2009]

With more than 9,000 articles on subjects ranging from politics, law, engineering and religion to literature, painting, medicine and sport, this widely-praised encyclopedia is the place to start for Irish biography. Articles are signed and contain bibliographies. So detailed is the 9-volume set that you get thorough articles on a wide range of people, from internationally-famous figures such as the poet W.B. Yeats to lesser-known persons such as Denis Kilbride, a 19th Century agrarian campaigner and MP.

Biography Resource Centre. Gale Group, 2003-.
[Available online for UofT use only: www.library.utoronto.ca/.
Search “e-resources” for *Literature Resource Centre*.]

Similar to Gale’s *Literature Resource Centre*, and just as good, this database is a great starting place for literary biography. While many of the entries overlap with the *Literature Resource Centre*, not all of them do, so looking at both resources is worthwhile.

Literature Resource Centre. Gale Group, 2003-.
[Available online for UofT use only: www.library.utoronto.ca/.
Search “e-resources” for *Literature Resource Centre*.]

Probably this source is the most detailed—and convenient—biography database available for literature students. You can search by author on the main page or try other searches by clicking “literary-historical timeline” underneath the search box. Choosing the second option should bring up a horizontal menu offering a title search, a keyword search and an “encyclopedia of literature”. The database organizes entries into biography, criticism and “additional resources”. *Contemporary Authors* covers fiction writers, poets, dramatists, non-fiction writers, journalists, editors, screenwriters, television scriptwriters and other authors.

Cambridge History of Irish Literature. Edited by Margaret Kelleher and Philip O’Leary. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor - PB1306 .C36 2006]

This 2-volume history of Irish literature provides a chronological survey—in both Irish and English—of the Irish literary tradition spanning fifteen centuries.

A Dictionary of Irish Biography. By Henry Boylan. Niwot, Colorado: Roberts Rinehart, 1998.
[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area - CT862 .B69 1998]

Though it does not include any entries on living writers, this single-volume work is a good, basic source for biographical information on major Irish writers.

MIDDLE AND OLD IRISH WRITING

Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism in ***Literature Criticism Online***. By James M. Cahalan. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1978 -.
[Available online for UofT use only: www.library.utoronto.ca/. Search “e-resources” for *Literature Criticism Online*.]

For more about this Gale series, please see the **Starting Out** section on p. 2 of this guide.

This series provides detailed critical essays—often by well-known critics—on a wide range of authors. The online version is a scan of the print copy. *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism* (CMLC) contains a lengthy article on the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (volume 30, p. 145-240).

Dictionary of the Middle Ages. Edited by Joseph R. Strayer. New York: Scribner's, 1982. 13 Volumes.
[St. Michael's Library 1st Floor Reference Area – D114 .D5]

Although a little dated, this 13-volume set is the major scholarly encyclopedia for medieval studies. Including more than 5,000 signed articles ranging in length from 100 to 10,000 words, the set is intended for all levels, from the high school student to the scholar. It contains a substantial introduction to medieval Irish literature (30 pages), as well as entries on Irish bardic literature and the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.

Encyclopedia of Irish History and Culture. Edited by James S. Donnelly, Jr. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2004. 2 volumes.
[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – DA912 .E53 2004]

More than 400 articles on periods of Irish history, social institutions, organisations and important people fill this 2-volume set, including substantial articles on both medieval Irish literature and the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. Each article includes a bibliography. The set contains the full-text of more than 150 primary documents.

Medieval Ireland: An Encyclopedia. Edited by Sean Duffy. London: Routledge, 2005.

[Available online for UofT use: www.library.utoronto.ca/

Search E-resources for “*medieval Ireland*”]

[St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area – DA933 .M43 2005]

This volume has a 2-page article on medieval Irish poetry under *Poetry, Irish*.

Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia. John T. Koch, editor. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2006. 5 volumes.

[Available online for UofT use: www.library.utoronto.ca/

Search E-resources for “*Celtic culture*”]

[St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area – CB206 .C45 2006]

This central encyclopedia for Celtic studies contains more than 1,500 articles, including entries on *Cath Maige Tuired*, the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, and Irish literature.

Progress in Medieval Irish Studies. Edited by Kim McCone and Katharine Simms. Maynooth: Dept. of Old Irish, St. Patrick's College, 1996.

[St. Michael's College 2nd Floor - PB1213 .P76 1996 SMC]

Seanchas: Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne. Edited by Alfred P. Smyth. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000.

[St. Michael's College 2nd Floor - D119 .S42 2000 SMC]

20TH CENTURY WRITING

A Dictionary and Glossary for the Irish Literary Revival. By Richard Wall. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1995.

[Robarts Library PE2406 .W35 1995]

Look up vocabulary and idioms—whether unusual words and phrases or familiar words used unconventionally—to dig up their meanings. This glossary is handy, not just for works written during the Irish Literary Revival, but also for the entire history of Irish literature in English from its origins in the seventeenth century.

A Concordance to the Collected Poems of James Joyce. By Paul A. Doyle. New York: Scarecrow Press, 1966.

[St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area - PR6019 .O9 Z459]

A Concordance to the Poems of Jonathan Swift. Edited by Michael Shinagel. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972.

[Robarts Library PR3726 .S45 1972]

A Concordance to the Plays and Prefaces of Bernard Shaw. Compiled by E. Dean Bevan. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1971
[Robarts Library PR5366 .A22]

A Concordance to the Plays of W.B. Yeats. Edited by Eric Domville. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972.
[Victoria Reference PR5906 .A24]

A Concordance to the Poems of W.B. Yeats. By James Allan Painter. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR5906 .A26]

A KWIC Concordance to Samuel Beckett's Trilogy: Molloy, Malone Dies, and The Unnamable. By Michèle Aina Barale and Rubin Rabinovitz. New York: Garland Pub., 1988.
[Robarts Library PQ2603 .E378M644 1988]

BLASKET ISLANDS WRITING

The Blaskets: People and Literature. By Muiris Mac Conghail. Dublin: Town House, 2001.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – DA990 .B65 M33 2001]

For a primer on the Blasket Islands—along with colour pictures—try this title. The book contains introductory chapters on the Islands' history, essays on Tomás O'Crohan, Morris O'Sullivan, and Peig Sayers, an index and genealogical charts, and a substantial bibliography.

Blasket Memories: The Life of an Irish Island Community. Edited by Pádraig Tyers. Dublin: Mercier Press, 1998.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – DA990 .B65 L4613 1998]

Use this book to get a basic introduction to the history of the Blasket Islands.

The Islandman: The Hidden Life of Tomás O'Crohan. By Irene Lucchitti. Re-imagining Ireland vol. 3. Bern: Peter Lang, 2009.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – DA990 .B65 L83 2009]

Lucchitti's book is thorough, clearly written, and buttressed with a 12-page bibliography, as well as an index. From a chapter on oral tradition in the Blasket Islands generally to chapters on O'Crohan's work specifically, this is a comprehensive work useful for anyone studying the literature of the Blasket Islands.

Blasket Island Reflections: RTÉ Radio's acclaimed documentary series about the life and literature of the Great Blasket Island. Dublin: RTÉ Radio, 2003.
[St. Michael's Ground Floor Audio-Visual Section – DA990 .B65 B4 2003 s.d. SMC]

This introductory CD covers Tomás O'Crohan's The Islandman, Peig Sayers's autobiography *Peig: Reflections of an Old Woman*, and Maurice O'Sullivan's *Twenty Years a-Growing*.

WOMEN'S WRITING

Guides

Irish Women Writers: An A-to-Z Guide. Edited by Alexander G. Gonzalez. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2006.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8733 .I75 2006]

Dictionary of Munster Women Writers 1800-2000. Edited by Tina O'Toole. Cork: Cork University Press, 2005.
[St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area – PR8706 .D53 2005]

In Their Own Words: Irish Women's Writing and Interviews with Irish Women Writers

The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing. General editor, Seamus Deane. Derry, Northern Ireland: Field Day Publications, 1991. Volumes 4 and 5.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PB1345 .F546 1991]

Volumes 4 and 5 of this title cover writing by Irish women.

Sleeping with Monsters: Conversations with Scottish and Irish Women Poets. Research and Interviews by Rebecca E. Wilson. Edited by Gillean Somerville-Arjat and Rebecca E. Wilson. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1990.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8533 .W5 1990]

Criticism on Irish Women Writers and Gender in Irish Writing

Women in Irish Drama: A Century of Authorship and Representation. Edited by Melissa Sihra. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8789 .W58 2007]

Object Lessons: The Life of the Woman and the Poet in Our Time. By Eavan Boland. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR6052 .O35 Z47 1996]

Opening the Field: Irish Women, Texts and Contexts. Co-edited by Patricia Boyle Haberstroh and Christine St Peter. Cork: Cork University Press, 2007.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8733 .O64 2007]

Women Creating Women: Contemporary Irish Women Poets. By Patricia Boyle Haberstroh. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8733 .H33 1996]

Changing Ireland: Strategies in Contemporary Women's Fiction. By Christine St. Peter. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 2000.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8807 .W6 S7 2000]

Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women: Nation and Gender. By Heather Ingman. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2007.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8807 .W6 I54 2006]

New Contexts: Re-Framing Nineteenth-Century Irish Women's Prose. Edited by Heidi Hansson. Cork: Cork University Press, 2008.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8733 .N49 2008]

Irish Women Writers: An Uncharted Tradition. By Ann Owens Weekes. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8733 .W44 1990]

Gender in Irish Writing. Edited by Toni O'Brien Johnson and David Cairns. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR8723 .W6 G46 1991]

A Woman's Words: Emer and Female Speech in the Ulster Cycle. By Joanne Findon. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PB1397 .C8 F55 1997]

SEAMUS HEANEY

In His Own Words: Heaney Essays and Interviews

Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney. By Dennis O'Driscoll. London: Faber and Faber, 2008.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR6058 .E2 Z82 2008]

Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001. By Seamus Heaney. London: Faber and Faber, 2002.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PR6058 .E2 F56 2002]

The Government of the Tongue: Selected Prose. By Seamus Heaney. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor – PN1271 .H43 A6 1988]

Seamus Heaney: An Interview and Essay on the Poetry. By Helen Vendler, et al. From Salmagundi, no. 80 (Fall 1988): 4-101.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z795 1988]

Criticism on Heaney's Work

These books analyze Heaney's work. They all contain bibliographies and indexes.

The Cambridge Companion to Seamus Heaney. Edited by Bernard O'Donoghue. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z5745 2009]

Seamus Heaney and Medieval Poetry. By Conor McCarthy. Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 2008.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z72 2008]

Seamus Heaney: Creating Irelands of the Mind. By Eugene O'Brien. Dublin: Liffey Press, 2002.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z797 2002]

Seamus Heaney. By Helen Vendler. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z94 2000]

Seamus Heaney. Edited by Michael Allen. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z874 1997]

Critical Essays on Seamus Heaney. Edited by Robert F. Garratt. New York: G.K. Hall, 1995.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z63 1995]

The Art of Seamus Heaney. Edited by Tony Curtis. Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan: Poetry Wales Press, 1994.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z55 1994]

Seamus Heaney: Poet of Contrary Progressions. By Henry Hart. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z69 1992]

Seamus Heaney. Edited and with an introduction by Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1986.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z87 1986]

Seamus Heaney. By Blake Morrison. London: Methuen, 1982.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z78 1982]

Bibliography

Seamus Heaney: A Bibliography 1959-2003. By Rand Brandes and Michael J. Durkan. London: Faber and Faber, 2008.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR6058 .E2 Z459 2008]

CONTEMPORARY WRITING

Contemporary Irish Literature: Transforming Tradition. By Christina Hunt Mahony. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR8753 .M34 1998]

Organized into 3 sections—*poetry*, *theatre* and *fiction*—this book contains comprehensive introductory essays on major contemporary Irish writers. With a biographical background, as well as an overview of key works, themes, and motifs, each essay evaluates the author's significance in the context of contemporary Irish writing.

The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing. General editor, Seamus Deane. Derry, Northern Ireland: Field Day Publications, 1991. 5 volumes.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PB1345 .F546 1991]

This 5-volume set covers Irish writing, by both men and women, from 600 AD to the 1990s and offers a comprehensive collection of poetry, fiction, folklore, and political writing.

CELT -- Corpus of Electronic Texts
[<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/index.html>]

This website gives you access to fully-searchable texts in translation and is a key online resource for contemporary and historical Irish documents in literature, history, politics and the arts. The site provides fully searchable texts in translation and originals in Irish, French, Latin, and Anglo-Norman.

Literature Resource Center

[Available online for UofT use only: www.library.utoronto.ca/.
Search "E-resources" for "*Literature Resource Centre*".]

This database brings together three author databases: *Contemporary Authors Online*, covers more than 100,000 writers; *Contemporary Literary Criticism Select* features entries on all authors appearing since 1997 and provides complete profiles of the 266 most studied authors from editions prior to vol. 95; finally, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Online*, offers more than 10,000 biocritical essays on authors and their work, all written by scholars.

International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures
[<http://www.iasil.org/links/index.html>]

Links to authors, newspapers, publishers, theatre, libraries, archives and associations.

FICTION

A Guide to Irish Fiction 1650-1900. edited by Rolf Loeber and Magda Loeber. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006.

[St. Michael's 1st Floor Reference Area - PR8706 .L64 2006]

This guide is an annotated bibliography of all known books of fiction, both by Irish authors and by foreign authors writing about Ireland and the Irish. It approaches Irish fiction as an historical rather than a literary phenomenon and thereby unearths hundreds of previously unknown or forgotten Irish authors and works. The guide sketches the life of each author, summarizes stories, and documents each book's printing history.

Twenty-First Century British and Irish Novelists. Detroit: Gale Group, 2003.

[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR889 .T86 2003]

This title lists each author's works with a biographical essay, critical analysis, and a bibliography.

The Modern Irish Novel: Irish Novelists After 1945. by Rüdiger Imhof. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 2002.

[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR8803 .I44 2002]

Imhof explores the lives and works of 12 postwar Irish writers.

POETRY

Modern Irish Poetry: An Anthology. Edited by Patrick Crotty. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2001.

[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR8858 .M63 1995]

This major collection of modern Irish poetry contains more than 250 poems from 47 different poets. Each poet's entry has a short biographical essay. Women and lesser-known poets are well represented.

Cambridge Companion to Contemporary Irish Poetry. Edited by Matthew Campbell.

Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR8771 .C36 2003]

This companion introduces major figures such as Seamus Heaney while providing an overview of precursors like Louis MacNeice and Patrick Kavanagh and more recent writers such as Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and Paul Muldoon. The volume contains a chronology, as well as a guide to further reading.

DRAMA

Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Irish Drama. Edited by Shaun Richards.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
[St. Michael's College 2nd Floor - PR8789 .C28 2004]

This examination of the relationship between the theatre and its political context includes a chronology and a bibliography.

Irish Playwrights, 1880-1995: A Research and Production Sourcebook. Edited by Bernice Schrank and William W. Demastes. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997.
[Robarts Reference PR8789 .I67 1997X]

Irish Playwrights provides detailed entries for 32 Irish playwrights writing between 1880 and 1995. Each entry includes a biographical sketch, a summary of productions, a critical assessment of the dramatist's work, and a thorough bibliography. The volume concludes with a selected, general bibliography.

British and Irish Dramatists Since World War II. Edited by John Bull. Detroit: Gale Group, 2001.
[St. Michael's 2nd Floor - PR736 .B68 2001]

This A-Z book covering all genres from the classical to the avant-garde lists each author's works with a biographical essay, critical analysis, and a bibliography. The entries list play productions, books, and scripts. They also briefly sketch the dramatists' education, careers, and major productions.

History of Irish Theatre, 1601-2000. by Chris Morash. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
[St. Michael's College 2nd Floor - PN2601 .M64 2002]

This guide provides an historical and cultural context to Irish theatre.

Irish Playography
[<http://www.irishplayography.com/>]

This database of Irish plays produced since 1904 contains key facts about plays (such as author, setting and synopsis) along with details about when they were first produced, who was in the cast, and scripts and rights.

FINDING JOURNAL ARTICLES

To find articles in scholarly journals, magazines, newspapers, anthologies, collections and conference proceedings, the best place to go is an article database. Go to www.library.utoronto.ca/, click the *Subjects A to Z* link at the bottom-left of the search box, scroll down to your subject area—i.e. *Celtic Studies*—and click GO. You'll find a list of online databases containing relevant articles, as well as other online resources such as encyclopedias, dictionaries and research guides.

MLA International Bibliography.

[Available online for UofT use only: www.library.utoronto.ca/.
Search "E-resources" for "*MLA International Bibliography*".]

The database indexes international scholarly materials on modern language, literature, linguistics, and folklore. Covering 1921 to the present, the MLA International Bibliography offers more than one million citations from more than 3,000 journals, series, monographs, working papers and conference proceedings.

Literature Online.

[Available online for UofT use only: www.library.utoronto.ca/.
Search "E-resources" for "*Literature Online*".]

You can find criticism as well as more than 330,000 works of poetry, drama and prose in this database. While the focus is on English and American writing, Irish literature is covered too.

Humanities Abstracts.

[Available online for UofT use only: www.library.utoronto.ca/.
Search "E-resources" for "*Humanities Abstracts*".]

Humanities Abstracts provides comprehensive abstracting and indexing of 400 English-language periodicals covering the areas of archaeology, classical studies, art, performing arts, philosophy, history, music, linguistics, literature, and religion.

This research guide, originally created by Todie Winter and Richard Carter, is now maintained by Richard Carter (richard.carter@utoronto.ca). It was last updated November 2013. The most recent version can be found online: <http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/kellyirishliterature>