Craving National Identity: Irish Diplomatic Dining since 1922
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Abstract
This paper will provide an overview of a new research project in Irish gastronomic history: Irish Diplomatic Dining.

For centuries, food has been used by nations to display wealth, cement alliances, reinforce power hierarchies and to impress, not only the local population but in particular, foreign visitors. From medieval times to the warring factions of Renaissance Italy, through the gargantuan feasts of Louis XIV and Catherine de Medici, the coronation of Charles I and the French banqueting campaign of 1847, food has defined the social, cultural and political position of a nation’s leaders (Baughman, 1959; Young, 2002; Strong, 2003; Albala, 2007, 2011; De Vooght and Scholliers, 2011).

After centuries of British rule, the Irish Free State emerged in 1922 as a new constitutional being and entered a political landscape which had undergone significant transformation as a result of revolutions in agriculture, social structure, transport and politics. Starting in the 1920s, the project aims to discover how the Irish government has entertained visiting dignitaries over the past century. The research will begin by looking at how Irish leaders started establishing diplomatic protocol for visiting Heads of State. It will examine how meals were devised and how issues such as venue, invitations, menus and table arrangements were decided. It will also examine how hierarchy and rank affected orders of procession and seating. The research will further examine the material culture of Irish State dining in terms of the tableware, linen, silver and glassware used and the transmission of Irish material culture to Irish missions abroad.

This paper will present some of the preliminary findings and place them within the context of three official visits: Frank B. Kellogg, US Secretary of State (1928), John F. Kennedy (JFK), US President (1963) and Queen Elizabeth II (2011).
Introduction

Historically, food has been shown to demonstrate power and convey status. Mintz (1985, 1996) showed how ownership of food was directly proportionate to the occupation of the most important positions in society. De Vooght and Scholliers (2011) describe how the consumption of costly food expressed not only a kind of power but also a *quest* for power and status while Albala (2011) writes that dining preferences denote a conscious way of behaving with the intended consequence of setting an individual or group apart from others.

Some of the most sumptuous banquets recorded during the Italian Renaissance took place in the smaller States who were conscious of their vulnerability due to their small size and set out to establish relationships as a means of survival (Albala, 2007). Mennell (1996) and Lair (2011) have described the banqueting which took place at Versailles, although it appears that sixteenth to early eighteenth century French court dining was known more for the gargantuan quantities of food consumed rather than refinement.

Young (2002) studied twelve historic feasts which took place between 1132 and 1932 and says that because dining engages the senses, the event must be considered in its entirety. Strong (2002) adds that the minutiae of the event contribute to the success or failure of an occasion and convey a message from the host to participants and onlookers. Feasting, says Strong (2002) has always been about the manipulation of one group by another for sociopolitical aims.

Food in Politics

At the 2012 launch of the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership Initiative, Hilary Clinton said ‘Food is the oldest diplomatic tool in the book. Sharing a meal can help people transcend boundaries and build bridges in a way that nothing else can’ (US Department of State, 2012). Paul Rockower of the Centre for Public Diplomacy explains that nations are now exploring the fields of gastrodiplomacy (the communication of culture through nationally emphasised food to a foreign public) and culinary diplomacy (increasing bilateral ties and strengthening relationships with visiting dignitaries through the use of food and dining experiences) as a means of developing relationships with other nations (Rockower, 2010; 2011; 2012).

Several historical figures are considered to have long understood the soft power of food in negotiations: Charles Talleyrand-Périgord (Rose, 1985; Lawday, 2006; Bobot, 2011); Charles
Manners, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1784 to 1787 (McDowell, 2003) and Winston Churchill (Stelzer, 2011).

The food which is emphasised by a nation’s people, places and institutions becomes part of that nation’s culinary discourse (Parkhurst Ferguson, 2004; 2008). Cultural expression through food was studied by Tellström et al (2008) and showed how the smörgåsbord shaped the national food profile. Swedish authorities were also found to have transformed the concept of a local and regional food into a political tool during their chairmanship of the EU Presidency in 2001 (Tellström et al, 2003). Study of the meal within political life concluded that sharing a political meal had political purpose and that the food and setting could be used as a gesture of friendship demonstrating a willingness to continue discussions regardless of opposing opinions (Tellström, 2004, p.31).

Food and Power

While research has been carried out on the role of food and power in medieval courts right through to the mid-eighteenth century, De Vooght and Scholliers (2011) point to the lack of research into court society after 1800. Court society changed dramatically during this time, transformed by the industrial, agricultural and political revolutions. Absolutist European monarchies disappeared or continued as constitutional monarchies, with little real influence. New courts, says the authors, such as the presidential houses of France and the United States or international organisations such as the European Union emerged as new loci of power but remain relatively unexplored in terms of the role of food and power (De Vooght and Scholliers, 2011).

In the case of Ireland, there has been no formal research into the role of food and power in Ireland’s modern court as that described by De Vooght and Scholliers (2011). Nor does there appear to exist any of the type described by Bobot (2011) and Rockower (2012) or of that carried out by Tellström (2003) and Tellström et al (2004; 2008). The long tradition of Irish hospitality in the form of guesting and feasting since the time of the Brehon Laws is noted (Simms, 1978, p.67; Mac Con Iomaire, 2009) and hospitality as a characteristic of Irish society throughout the ages is described by Cullen (1981).

Mac Con Iomaire and Maher (2014) reflect on the considerable growth in scholarship on the topic of food globally, particularly in Ireland, yet there remains a widely held belief that there is no such
thing as Irish national cuisine (Cotter, 1999; Myers, 2002; Zubaida, 2014). While autobiographical accounts, monographs and anthologies of life in Ireland’s diplomatic service exist (Browne, 1986; Delaney, 2001; Cruise O’Brien, 2004; Muleany and O’Brien, 2011) there is a lack of documented research noted and confirmed by Kennedy (1999, 2012) on the topic of Irish State dining.

The aim of this project is to add to the growing body of scholarship around Irish gastronomic history and ultimately, contribute to the discourse on the existence of a national cuisine as described by Parkhurst Ferguson (1998; 2004), Tellström (2003) and Tellström et al (2004; 2008). If, as Professor Zubaida (2014) says, a nation’s cuisine is its court’s cuisine, then perhaps it is time to ‘research the feasts as well as the famines’ (Mac Con Iomaire and Cashman, 2011).

In order to place Ireland within the framework of the modern court as proposed by De Vooght and Scholliers (2011) we must define a date when Ireland entered the new political landscape described by the authors. It is suggested to start the research in 1922 when the Irish Free State emerged as a new constitutional being after centuries of British rule.

**A new locus of power: Dublin, 1922**

Ireland’s Department of Foreign Affairs was established during a turbulent period in Irish history. For the several years prior to 6 December 1922 when the Irish Free State came into being, Ireland was marked by conflict against British rule, the partition of the country through the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, a negotiated settlement giving Southern Ireland dominion status via the 1921 Treaty and a Civil War which began in June 1922 and ended in May 1923 (Royal Irish Academy, 1998).

With no precursor department existing from the time of British administration, the Department of Foreign Affairs was created in 1922 and put into an organised and systematic format by its first Secretary General, Robert Brennan. Conscious of the difficulties diplomats had faced abroad, the Irish government was also dealing with the aftermath of the Civil War coupled with the fact that a sizeable portion of the population contested the legitimacy of the Irish Free State. Entertaining foreign dignitaries was, perhaps understandably, not at the forefront of State matters (Kennedy, 2013a).

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1 TCD/UCD Public Lecture Series (2013-2014) *Imagining National Cuisines* by Professor Sami Zubaida. 5th March 2014 - Discussion during Question and Answer Session
During the first years of the Irish Free State, there was no official entertainment on the part of the Irish government although the Department of External Affairs (DEA) did keep track of those who visited. The DEA would receive notice from the Office of the High Commissioner (OHC) in London that a certain person (usually distinguished in some manner, by title or by profession) would be visiting Ireland on a particular date. In 1924, in response to a query from the OHC on procedure for notifying government departments in Dublin of upcoming visits to the Saorstat, the DEA replied:

‘notification of the visit of foreign diplomats and government representatives should always be given to this Ministry so that instructions may be issued through the Castle to Customs authorities. There is always danger that the stupidity of an individual Customs Officer might leave room for mistakes unless orders are given from Headquarters […] a note of recommendation is usually given to some Minister or Head of Department according to the importance of the individual as is the usual custom abroad. Open letters are only given by the home government of the visitor.’

The motives for the visits varied. The first, noted when the records began in 1924, was by two university professors who were giving a series of lectures at Trinity College Dublin. Others came on holiday - usually tagged on to a holiday in England or Europe, others came to attend the Horse Show. Some came to research specific aspects of Ireland such as the effects of the Land Commission. Lt Colonel Manalotti of Hungary was sent by his Ministry for Home-Defence with instructions to purchase horses for the Hungarian Military Team. Others, like as the Sultan of Muscat who was visiting Britain in 1928, also wished to purchase two Irish Terriers during his holiday and requested that they be brought for inspection to the Shelbourne Hotel where he was staying.

Internal correspondence within the DEA refers to preparations for the Sultan’s visit and ‘whether there are any food prejudices to be avoided’. The issue of dietary requirements raised some confusion. The OHC initially wrote to the DEA saying ‘it is to be borne in mind that His Highness is a strict Moslem and as such will not touch any kind of meat’ which was rectified the following

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2 NAI DFA GR 256 Correspondence dated 24 October 1924 regarding visit of Signor Ciubranovic
3 NAI DFA GR 256 Professors Poulson (Oxford) and Gardiner (British Museum), June 1924
4 NAI DFA GR 256 Viscount Akira Toki, Member of the House of Peers in Japan, 1929
5 NAI DFA GR 256 Lt Colonel Manalotti, August 1926
6 NAI DFA GR 256 Telegram from Beare (British Government Hospitality) 24 September 1928
7 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from S. Lester (DEA) to Minister of External Affairs, 11 September 1928
8 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from T. Kiernan (OHC), 19 September 1928
day by ‘apart from anything porkish, he eats meat of all kinds.’ This is the first reference to dietary requirements in the findings.

Notification by the OHC generally concluded with asking the DEA to ensure that facilities and courtesies in passage to and through the Saorstat be afforded to the visitor. The DEA would in turn instruct the Office of the Revenue Commissioner at Dublin Castle. For the most part, this meant that customs inspections would be dispensed with. Facilities were also sometimes requested in relation to luggage which needed to be treated with special care, as in 1925 when Monsieur Heifetz, a Hungarian Violinist was travelling with a Guarneri Violin worth £11,000. In a personal letter to Michael MacWhite, Irish delegate to the League of Nations in November 1925, Mr Butler of the International Labour Office (Geneva) said it wasn’t that he was going to do any smuggling, but that customs formalities were ‘always rather a nuisance’.

The Department of External Affairs started to record the arrival of distinguished visitors in 1924. Visits were recorded by provenance and by year. Thirty four visits were recorded for the period 1924-1926. Twenty eight visits were recorded between 1927 and 1929. Visitors came from Australia, Canada, mainland Europe, Africa, Scandinavia, India, Southwest Asia and Japan.

Separate files were kept for visitors from the US and Canada. Between 1925 and 1926, forty seven visitors came to Ireland and one hundred visitors were recorded for the period 1927 to 1929.

As the title of the file suggests, those listed in the files were considered ‘distinguished visitors’ meaning they had a specific title or role. Examples include the Archbishop of Sydney (1924), the Premier of Western Australia (1925), the Commissioner for Canada (1925), Professor Tinker of Yale University (1925), a group of Foreign Diplomats from Belgium (1926), the Maharajah of Rajpiple (1926), Sir Charles Coghlan of Rhodesia (1926) and Mr Carveth Wells, Lecturer (1926). Each came in a private capacity and while some did meet with government officials and others attended the Horse Show as guests of the Governor General, there was no officially recognised entertainment or

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9 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from T. Kiernan (OHC) to S. Lester (DEA), 20 September 1928
10 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from DEA to Revenue Commissioner, 3 November 1925
11 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from H. Butler to M. MacWhite, 10 November 1925
12 NAI DFA GR 256 List of Distinguished Visitors to the Irish Free State 1924-1926
13 NAI DFA GR 256 List of Distinguished Visitors to the Irish Free State 1927-1928-1929
14 NAI DFA GR 256 List of Distinguished Visitors to the Irish Free State from USA & Canada 1925-1925
15 NAI DFA GR 256 List of Distinguished Visitors to the Irish Free State from USA & Canada 1927-1928-1929
reception on the part of the President or the Executive Council. An extract from a DEA memo on the issue of diplomatic protocol reads:

‘Generally, policy is to keep State hospitality as exclusive as possible, and up to this only persons and bodies of a certain type have been looked after […] An unpretentious dinner or a luncheon given by the President or a Minister is all that has been done hereto.’

**The visit of Frank B. Kellogg, US Secretary of State - August 1928**

The first official visitor to the Irish Free State was Frank B. Kellogg, US Secretary of State in August 1928. Following the signature of the Kellogg International Peace Pact in Paris on 27th August 1928 President Cosgrave travelled from Le Havre to Ireland with Mr and Mrs Kellogg on board the USS Detroit.

A ‘Summary of Events’ in DEA files details the five day visit. Beginning with their arrival at Dun Laoghaire on Thursday 30th August 1928, President Cosgrave and Mr and Mrs Kellogg were

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16 NAI DFA GR 256 Reception of distinguished visitors in the Irish Free State - Procedure
17 NAI DFA GR 790 Visit of the Hon. Frank B. Kellogg, US Secretary of State and Mrs Kellogg to the Irish Free State
18 NAI TAOIS S5731 Kellogg Visit, Folio - Summary of Events
received with a full international salute of twenty one guns exchanged between the USS Detroit and the military battery on shore.

A State Dinner\textsuperscript{19} was given in Mr Kellogg’s honour by the President and the Executive Council on the 30th August at the Shelbourne Hotel. One hundred and eight guests were invited along with seven press representatives. The room used was deemed to be ‘not altogether satisfactory for the seating of 108 diners’ by a DEA official who recommended that no more than eighty to ninety diners ‘be accommodated at a State Banquet in this room.’\textsuperscript{20}

![Invitation to the State Dinner at the Shelbourne Hotel on 30th August 1928](NAI, TAOIS S5731)

The ten course menu\textsuperscript{21} began with a choice between \textit{Cantaloup Rafraichi} (Chilled Melon) and \textit{Caviar sur Canapé} (Caviar Canapés) as an amuse bouche. There then followed a \textit{Tortue Claire des Indes} (clear turtle soup), \textit{Délices de Sole aux Laitances} (filet of sole with roe), \textit{Grenadin de Veau au Risotto} (Veal Grenadine Risotto), \textit{Carré d’Agneau à la Clamart} (Rack of Lamb with peas) and \textit{Grouse Rôtie Salade Waldorf} (roast grouse with Waldorf Salad). The meal ended with \textit{Pêches Lucullus} and \textit{Mignardises} (peaches Lucullus and sweet petit fours), followed by \textit{Champignons sur Croûte} (mushrooms on toast) followed by Dessert (unspecified) and Coffee.

\textsuperscript{19} NAI TAOIS S5731 Kellogg Reception, Folio- Appendix II, State Functions. Dinner at Shelbourne Hotel
\textsuperscript{20} NAI TAOIS S5731 Letter from Fahy to Secretary, Executive Council, 19 September 1928
\textsuperscript{21} NAI TAOIS S5731 Kellogg Reception, Folio- Appendix II D, Kellogg Banquet, Shelbourne Hotel, Menu
As an aperitif, the diners enjoyed a sweet medium Amontillado sherry and the wine list offered Rudesheim (Deinhard) along with Mumm’s Cordon Rouge 1920 champagne. The dinner ended with a 1908 Taylor’s Vintage Port and liquers.

Invitation to the State Reception at the Plaza Hotel on 30th August 1928
NAI, TAOIS S5731

At approximately 9.30pm that evening, the dinner guests proceeded to The Plaza on Middle Abbey Street for a State Reception. Two thousand guests attended, twelve hundred were to be seated in the hall and the eight hundred other guests were to be divided between Balcony A and Balcony B. Guests were served tea, coffee and a variety of sandwiches (tongue, ham, tomato, egg and cress, cucumber). These were accompanied by buns, scones, Pastries, fruit and plain cakes, brown and white bread and butter, chocolate and plain biscuits. A soda fountain was laid on for guests too and offered a variety of iced desserts. Vanilla, Strawberry and Mixed ‘Cream Ices’ were proposed and a selection of ‘Phosphates’ (strawberry, lemon, pineapple, lime cream, orange and raspberry). There were ‘Ice Cream Sodas’ and ‘Frappes and Mixed Drinks’ (chocolate, strawberry, pineapple and mixed fruit). Guests could chose from a list of ‘Sundaes’ with flavours ranging from pineapple, chocolate, orange-pineapple and peach, to walnut, ‘Marshmallow Nut’ or ‘Boston Kiss’.

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22 NAI TAOIS S5731 Kellogg Reception, Folio- Appendix II, State Functions. Reception at Plaza
23 NAI TAOIS S5731 Letter from The Plaza Ltd to Mr McDumphy, 21 August 1928
24 NAI TAOIS S5731 Kellogg Reception, Folio - Appendix II H, Plaza Reception, Menu
The cost of the State Dinner at the Shelbourne Hotel was £196.17.6 for 116 persons at 32/6 each, plus £10 distributed amongst the waiters for service.\(^\text{25}\) The State Reception at The Plaza cost £200 (a cost of 2/- per person).\(^\text{26}\) Three dozen bottles of Mumm’s Cordon Rouge Champagne at 25/- per bottle and three bottles of Whiskey (type unspecified) at 3/- each were supplied by The Dolphin Hotel & Restaurant Ltd\(^\text{27}\) adding a further £53 to the total cost.

Mr and Mrs Kellogg left Dublin at 2.30pm on Monday 3rd September 1928 on board the USS Detroit. Several hours later, a telegram was received from Mr. and Mrs Kellogg, addressed to President Cosgrave expressing thanks to him and Mrs Cosgrave, the members of the cabinet and the people of Ireland for the splendid reception they had received.\(^\text{28}\)

**Diplomatic Protocol** \(^\text{29}\)

In September 1928, several weeks after Mr Kellogg’s visit, President Cosgrave requested a detailed memorandum from the Minister for Defence setting out the ceremony to be observed for receiving distinguished visitors to the Irish Free State. It was to cover details such as national anthems, flags, gun salutes, provision of escorts and entertainment. The President wished for the procedure to be established as soon as possible and that it cover different ‘classes of personages, such as Heads of States, royalty and Ministers of State including Prime Ministers and Diplomats as well as State representatives or civilians of distinction.’\(^\text{30}\)

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25 NAI TAOIS S5731 Letter from Fahy to Secretary, Executive Council, 11 September 1928  
26 NAI TAOIS S5731 Statement accompanying handwritten note from Fahy to McDunphy, 17 September 1928  
27 NAI TAOIS S5731 Appears to be a Statement of Account, certified by Rowan and initialed by McDunphy, undated  
28 NAI TAOIS S5731 Original telegram from the USS Detroit addressed to President Cosgrave Irish Free State  
29 NAI DFA GR 256 Reception of distinguished visitors in the Irish Free State - Procedure  
30 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter to Private Secretary, Minister for Defence from MacDonnchadha, 11 September 1928  
31 NAI DFA GR 256 Referred to as Minute n°S5746 in Letter to Secretary, unsigned, 23 March 1929  
32 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from Fahy to Secretary, Department of Defence, 13 September 1929
suggesting that the two Departments confer pending the result of these inquiries. The DEA sought examples of practices in Washington, Germany and France. The Irish Representative in Paris was recommended by his French counterpart to purchase a copy of ‘Honneurs et Préséances’ which was then forwarded to Dublin. The Irish Embassy in Washington replied giving details of protocol followed in the US, adding that it was not possible ‘in a Foreign house to invite the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of State’ at the same time. Both believed that they out-ranked the other and in the absence of a ruling on the subject, they were never invited to the same dinner.

This is the beginning of a specific Irish diplomatic protocol by government officials. Its development would continue over the following decades and cover issues such as Orders of Precedence in Ireland and abroad, toasts, and garden parties at Áras an Uachtaráin.

The largest event held in the 1930s was the State Reception for three thousand seven hundred guests at Dublin Castle in honour of Cardinal Lauri during the Eucharistic Congress of 1932. Several other visits took place during this decade also but not on the scale seen for the Eucharistic Congress. It was the largest of that decade and nothing similar took place prior to World War II.

Entertainment by Ministries began again in the 1940s and the supply of tableware, silver service items and glassware to Irish missions began in earnest. It was also decided to purchase tableware specifically for use at official functions held in Iveagh House (home to the Department of Foreign Affairs following its donation to the State by Lord Iveagh) and housekeeping procedures were set up to account for broken delph at functions.

33 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from Fahy to Minister Plenipotentiary, Washington, 14 September 1929
34 NAI DFA GR 256 Handwritten note on file dated 15 September 1929, signature unknown
35 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from Fahy to Irish Free State Representative, Paris, 21 September 1929
36 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from Bailly to An Runaidhe, Department of External Affairs, 25 September 1929
37 NAI DFA GR 256 Letter from Saorstat Eireann Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, 23 September 1929
38 NAI DFA GR 335 57 A, B, C and 57/12 Orders of Precedence in Ireland 1924-1971
39 NAI DFA GR 335 57/1,2,4,10 and 11 Orders of Precedence in Canada, Berne, Italy, Portugal and Spain 1946-1961
40 NAI DFA 335 139 Protocol Practice as regards toasts on formal State occasions 1948
41 NAI DFA 301 66 Garden Parties etc. at Áras an Uachtaráin - General 1952
42 NAI DFA 335 69 Lanches given by Minister for External Affairs 1947
43 NAI DFA 335 178 Entertainment by and on behalf of Dept. of Agriculture 1945
44 NAI DFA 335 259 Entertainment on behalf of Dept. of Posts and Telegraphs 1951
45 NAI DFA 353 49 Chinaware, Silverware, Glassware and Cutlery in use at Foreign Missions Abroad
46 NAI DFA 335 53 Purchase of Dinner Service, Linen, Cutlery, Glasswear for use at Official Functions at Iveagh House
47 NAI TSCH S9885 Lord Iveagh’s House - Gift to State
48 NAI DFA 335 41 Breakage of Delph, Glassware etc and losses of Tableware at Dinners, Lunches etc
Initial research into tableware for Iveagh House uncovered a series of original watercolours which had previously gone unnoticed. On closer inspection, it consisted of a set of drawings, in real size, of silver trays, tea and coffee sets, serving dishes and sauciers, porcelain dishes with clôches and glass condiment sets which were considered for purchase by Iveagh House. Confirmation of their purchase has not yet been identified although there was a corresponding list of required serving items drawn up. The set is currently with the archives’ team of conservationists.

![Image of a watercolour of a condiment set considered for Iveagh House](NAI, DFA 335 53)

The DEA continued to record visits from guests after World War II. Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands came to Ireland several times between 1949 and 1958\(^49\) and stayed as a guest of the President at Áras an Uachtaráin\(^50\). No longer recorded as ‘distinguished guests’, the DEA started to refer to ‘visits of prominent people’.\(^51\) The Civil Service Dining Club\(^52\) located at 30 Earlsfort Terrace and whose kitchen connected directly to Iveagh House started tendering for and catering to functions held by the Department of External Affairs. It would do so over the next three decades (Mahon, 2013d). State entertainment started to increase in the late forties with dinners in honour of

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\(^49\) NAI TSCH 3 S14575 Visits to Dublin of Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands 1949-1958  
\(^50\) NAI PRES 1 P4314 Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands: guest of President’s at the Áras  
\(^51\) NAI DFA 6 434 27 to 41 Visits to Ireland of prominent people and various groups  
\(^52\) NAI DFA 335 259 Catering for receptions by Civil Service Dining Club 1952
the Apostolic Nuncio (1949), the Norwegian Minister (1950), Mr Tobin US Secretary of Labour (1950), the Turkish Minister (1951), the US Ambassador (1953). A whole series of lunches, dinners, receptions and entertainment for guests was recorded throughout the 1950s and garnered a touch of Hollywood glamour with the visit of Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco in 1961 closely followed by JFK in 1963.

**JFK in 1963 - Queen Elizabeth II in 2011**

In terms of symbolic journeys, the visit of US President John Fitzgerald Kennedy (JFK) in 1963 was without parallel in terms of what Irish officialdom had to deal with. At a time when Ireland was still encountering difficulty gaining recognition abroad, the visit was of huge significance (Kennedy, 2013a)

A State Dinner was held for JFK on 27th June 1963 at Iveagh House. The preparations at the venue during the weeks leading up to that evening, as well as the menu and the seating arrangements for the event have been discussed by Kennedy (2013b) and (Mahon, 2013a; b; c; d).

The final menu, served by The Russell Hotel’s Head Chef Pierre Rolland at Iveagh House that evening (Mac Con Iomaire, 2009) began with Irish smoked salmon, followed by a consommé with Parmesan shavings, tournedos with mushrooms, parslied new potatoes, fresh peas, fresh strawberries and cream, petits fours and coffee.

Almost fifty years later a State Banquet was held in 2011 at Dublin Castle for Queen Elizabeth II. According to Chef Ross Lewis (2013), the brief was simple: the menu had to be Irish and it had to represent the best of Irish produce. The main course was to showcase beef. There were no restrictions on how the meal was to be designed, the only exception was that shellfish could not be included. No dietary restrictions were given, shellfish is simply excluded from all State menus as a precautionary policy. The final menu was to be three courses long and had to serve one hundred and

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53 NAI DFA 335 183 Dinner in honour of Apostolic Nuncio 1949
54 NAI DFA 335 215 Dinner in honour of Norwegian Minister 1950
55 NAI DFA 335 307 Dinner in honour of M Tobin U.S. Sec. of Labour 1950
56 NAI DFA 335 252 Dinner in honour of Turkish Minister 1951
57 NAI DFA 335 331 Dinner in honour of the US Ambassador 1953
58 NAI DFA 335 656 Reception - Prince and Princess of Monaco 1961
59 NAI DFA 305 President Kennedy Visit
60 NAI DFA 434 Visit of President Kennedy - June 1963 - State Dinner - Iveagh House
seventy guests in no more than one hour and ten minutes. Lewis is proud of how the menu was received and says that the dishes reflected ‘Ireland on a plate’ (Lewis, 2013).

The Starter
The starter was wild Irish smoked salmon blended with creme fraîche set over a lemon balm jelly. Organic Clare Island salmon was cured in a sweet brine and laid on top. Horseradish cream, wild watercress and chive flowers were used for garnish. A little rapeseed oil was added along with a little Irish sea salt (Lewis, 2013).

Main Course
The ‘pillar stone’ of the menu was to be a main course of Irish beef. This was served with tongue and cheek with smoked colcannon wrapped in a fried cabbage leaf, with a little wild garlic leave and pickled garlic garnish (Lewis, 2013).
For dessert, fresh strawberries with a Glenilen cream set with carrageen, a strawberry jelly and strawberry sauce, Irish apple balsamic vinegar meringues and Irish soda bread tuile biscuits (Lewis, 2013).
Discussion

Several themes come to light when considering the menus for the three events highlighted in this paper: the French influence, a shift from French cuisine to Franco-Irish cuisine, seasonality and finally, the specific request to use Irish produce.

The presence of foreign-born chefs working in Ireland in the mid to late twentieth century and their influence on the cuisine served in dining establishments has been clearly identified (Mac Con Iomaire, 2011). In 1928 the Head Chef at the Shelbourne Hotel was a Swiss named Otto Wuest (Mac Con Iomaire, 2009a) and the Belgian chef Zenon Geldof was Manager at The Plaza (Mac Con Iomaire 2005). Pierre Rolland, Head Chef at The Russell Hotel in 1963, was French (Mac Con Iomaire, 2009b). Evidence of the influence of foreign chefs on the food served in dining establishments found by Mac Con Iomaire (2011) can clearly be seen in the predominately classic French menu at the State Dinner for Kellogg in 1928 and on the two menus suggested by The Russell Hotel for JFK in 1963. The menus are written in French and some of the dishes (or their preparation) can be found in the *Larousse Gastronomique* (2009). Examples include rack of lamb à la Clamart, peaches Lucullus and tournedos Escoffier, clearly indicating their place in the French culinary repertoire (Gastronomic Committee, 2009, pp.269;413;624). Other than JFK’s starter of Saumon Fumé d’Irlande (Irish smoked salmon) and Irish Cottage with Petits Fours which did not make it onto the final menu\(^6\) there is no reference to the specific use of Irish ingredients on either of two menus.

Although they were separated by almost five decades, the 1963 and 2011 menus have striking similarities in content. Both start with smoked salmon, followed by a main course of beef and a dessert featuring strawberries and cream. The fact that both took place around the same time (June for JFK, May for Queen Elizabeth) means that the issue of seasonality cannot be overlooked. It should be noted also however, that the final menu served to JFK was very different to the two menus suggested by The Russell Hotel which, true to the findings above also proposed dishes such as *Le Foie Gras de Strasbourg Truffé* (truffled Strasbourg foie gras). The reason given for the final menu was that the President preferred lighter fare especially considering the busy schedule of the visit (Mahon, 2013b). This change might also have been an indication of the shift from French cuisine to Franco-Irish cuisine which was to be noted two years later by the Egon Ronay Guide (Mac Con Iomaire, 2011).

\(^6\) NAI DFA 343 682 20 Dinner Menu for 27th June 1963 from The Russell Hotel to Department of External Affairs,
Ross Lewis, on the other hand, received very clear direction as to the content of the menu for Queen Elizabeth in 2011: it was to be devised solely from Irish ingredients (Lewis, 2013). While this presented a challenge (Lewis observes this in particular in relation to the availability of fresh strawberries in May), the menu served was described afterwards by Irish President, Mary McAleese as being ‘amazingly articulate’ in terms of the story it told about Ireland and Irish food (Lewis, 2013).

**Conclusion**

It is clear that a greater number of official visits to Ireland took place after 1922 than hitherto believed and that the Irish government began the process of setting up diplomatic protocol and procedures for visiting Heads of State after this period.

The three official visits briefly described within this paper were chosen as a means to place Irish Diplomatic Dining within the context of the past one hundred years and while they have been discussed to some degree, much more remains to be explored on the subject of protocol, menus, invitations, material culture, food and wine in relation to these events.

The other State events which took place from 1922 but which were not included in this paper will be explored also. Some topics, such as a series of Saorstát dinners held at Dublin Castle by the Executive Council between 1935 and 1937 and dining at Áras an Uachtaráin from 1947 might be considered of special interest and are perhaps worth mentioning, as are a series of menus served at the government staff canteen starting in 1934. A new avenue of research which will also be included was the recent discovery of entertaining State guests at the private home of Joseph Walshe (DEA) during WWII (Kennedy, 2014).

Future chapters of the project will also research Ireland’s representations at the new ‘courts’ of the European Union and the United Nations, the relationship between gastronomy and negotiation and the themes of gastrodiplomacy and culinary diplomacy in Irish political life.

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