Frances Sheridan née Chamberlaine
(1724-1766)
Novelist/Playwright.
Born in Dublin. Her brother taught her to read and write in secret, but her father disapproved of education for women. She married Thomas Sheridan, a stage manager, in 1747 and lived in Dublin and London. Richard Brinsley Sheridan was their son. She wrote several plays but is mostly remembered for her novel, Memoirs of Miss Sidney Russell, published in 1761.

Maria Edgeworth
(1767-1849)
Novelist/Essayist.
One of 22 children born to Richard Lovell Edgeworth. Born in England, she came to live in Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford, in 1782. She became her father's assistant and under his guidance wrote numerous stories for children and novels. She is most famous for Castle Rackrent (1800), which dealt with the evils of landlordism in Ireland but used humour to great effect. Other tales dealing with Irish life include Essie (1809), and The Orphan (1812).

Lady Sydney Morgan née Owenson
(1776-1859)
Novelist/Travel Writer.
Born in Dublin, daughter of an Irish father and English mother. Supported herself from an early age as a governess but was deterred from becoming a writer and finally achieved fame with the success of The Wild Irish Girl (1806). A very popular writer in her lifetime. She used her work to highlight the problems of English rule in Ireland e.g. O'Donnel: A National Tale (1814), Ireland, Macarthy an Irish Tale (1818), The O'Brien's and The O'Sheares (1827).

Emily Lawless
(1845-1913)
Novelist/Poet.
Born into a landowning family in County Kildare. Though her father was conservative in his politics, her grandfather had been a supporter of the 1798 Rebellion. Lawless concluded poetry, short stories, a novel, a history of Ireland and a biography of Maria Edgeworth. Her first novel, Fionnuala, (1860), dealt with Midland unrest and tenant landlord relations. Others include: With Eire in Ireland, (1890); Evangeline, the Story of an Island, (1892); Malachi: a Sixteenth-Century Narrative, (1894).

Lady Augusta Gregory
née Perse
(1852-1932)
Playwright.
Born into a Galway landowning family. She married Sir William Gregory, a man much older than her, in 1880. Her writing career began after her death in 1892. Patron to W.B. Yeats, she was intimately involved in the foundation of the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899. Her dramas were mostly comic and drawn from Irish life and folklore (Collected Plays, (1970), ed. Ann Sadoff). She has been remembered for her poetry. (The Poems of Katherine Tynan, (1963)).

Katharine Tynan
(1861-1913)
Poet/Novelist.
Born in Dublin. Her first volume of poetry was published in 1882. Acting as homes for her father, she met many literary people, including Yeats, and was an early participant in the Literary Revival. After her marriage to Henry Hinkson in 1893, she moved to England where she developed her journalistic career. She wrote extensively in many fields: poetry, fiction, journalism, autobiography. She is mostly remembered for her poetry. (The Poems of Katherine Tynan, (1963)).

Elizabeth Bowen
(1899-1973)
Novelist/Short Story Writer.
Born into a Cork aristocratic family. She wrote ten novels, numerous short stories and a history of her family, Bowen's (1942). Only two of her novels have wholly Irish settings, but the Anglo-Irish perspective is reflected throughout her work. Her novels include: The Last September (1929), The Heat of the Day (1924), The House in Paris (1935), The Death of the Heart (1938), The Heat of the Day (1945), Eva Trout (1969).

Mary Keane née Mary Nesta Skrine
(1904-1996)
Novelist/Playwright.
Born in Co. Kildare into an Anglo-Irish family. Her last novel, famed for their black comic efficacy, skillfully portrayed this background. She won her first novel at seventeen under the pen name M.J. Ferval. She wrote several plays and children's books but her husband's death in 1956, stopped writing. Her career revived with the publications of Good Omens (1959), Two more novels. Time after Time (1983), and Living and Giving (1988), followed. At least of her earlier novels have been republished.

Mary Lavin
(1912-1996)
Short Story Writer/Novelist.
Born in Massachusetts. Moved to Ireland with her mother when she was nine. During a study at Virginia Woolf for a doctoral dissertation, she wrote her first story. Thus began the writing career of one of Ireland's most distinguished short story writers. Numerous collections have been published, including her first, Tales from Beyond Bridge (1943). In a Cafe, a selection of her stories, was published in 1979. She also wrote three novels.

Elia Dillon
(1920-1994)
Novelist/Children's Writer.
Born in Galway. Her early life was shaped by the Irish War of Independence and the subsequent civil war. She was to select one of her latest novels, The Blind Glass (1958), in this turbulent period. Her first book of adult fiction was a detective story that she wrote extensively in many genres: short stories, plays, poetry, children's books and novels. Other novels include: Across the Bridge of Sea (1973), Blood Relations, (1977), The China Blues, (1984).