

Pensar y expresarse en inglés

La Comisión de Idioma Inglés está desarrollando una agenda de actividades entre las que se han destacado las charlas sobre Borges y la literatura inglesa, cine y el inglés que se habla en Sudáfrica, entre otras. Todos los encuentros cuentan con invitados especiales y especialistas en su tema.

Por la **Comisión de Idioma Inglés**

During the last few months, the *Comisión de Idioma Inglés* has organized several talks. Language and literature; Britain, Ireland and South Africa have been present in activities that catered for the different needs and interests of colleagues.

Jorge Luis Borges once said that the best English writers were Irish. This witty remark typical of one of the most important writers in Argentine literature shows the great importance he attached to Ireland and its literature. Professor Juan José Delaney gave a talk in the Tanoue Auditorium on 26th August about "Borges and Irish Writing". Professor Delaney teaches Argentine literature at the *Universidad del Salvador*, where he is also the coordinator of the Irish Studies Program.

The influence of the authors from Ireland started very early in Borges' life: he translated into Spanish "The Happy Prince", a story by Oscar Wilde, when he was 9 years old. Professor Delaney went on to explain how Borges appreciated the importance of Irish authors like George B. Shaw, Jonathan Swift, W. B. Yeats and Flann O'Brien. There is also the case of *The Informer*, by Liam O'Flaherty, and its film version by John Ford, which influenced Borges regarding themes such as betrayal and redemption. Some Irish philosophers were also important in his life, like George Berkeley and John Scotus Erigena. The importance of James Joyce was particularly highlighted: young Borges turned to the *Ulysses* and its author in search of his own voice in the context of an attempt to find new ways for Argentine literature.

On 9th September, Susan Walsh visited us to speak about "The Winslow Boy: Facts and Fiction". One part of the audience chose to watch first the 1999 film version by David Mamet before the

talk on the play by Terence Rattigan. Then Professor Walsh explained the differences and similarities between the play and the real story it is based on. The historical and legal context was also analysed, including the struggle between the less privileged members of society and the Establishment, the suffragette movement, and the Home Rule for Ireland.

Professor Walsh has taught English language and literature at the *Universidad Católica Argentina*, at the *Universidad del Salvador* and at the *CONSUDEC*.

South African English was the topic of our last talk, which took place on 4th October. Nadia Volonté, Translator of the South African Embassy in Buenos Aires, and also a member of the Colegio de Traductores, explained the origin and influences of the different languages in the history of the country. Although English is the mother tongue of only 8 per cent of the population, it is in fact a lingua franca for all the inhabitants regardless of their cultural traditions. That accounts for the fact that South African English borrows widely from Afrikaans and indigenous languages such as isiZulu and isiXhosa. The issue of the different attitudes towards English, Afrikaans and the Bantu (indigenous African) languages was also addressed, as well as their changes during the past years.

Ms Lorato Legotlo, Consular Attaché of the Embassy, was also present at the talk. She gave her testimony as someone who learnt English as a second language. She also gave many examples of the use and pronunciation of English words (*robots, just now, now-now*, among others), and of contributions to South African English by African languages (*ja, eish, bru*, etc.) and Afrikaans (*ag, lekker, braai*, etc.). ■

