

BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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Following custom, Enda Kenny presents a bowl of fresh living shamrocks to President Obama. AP photo

President and Taoiseach Celebrate Ireland's Day

Ireland's new prime minister, Enda Kenny, met up with President Barack Obama and Vice President Joseph Biden on March 17 at the White House reception in honor of St. Patrick's Day where greetings were delivered with charm and eloquence as their wives and invited guests looked on.

In his welcome, Obama detailed the story of how

Frederick Douglass escaped slave catchers in 1845 by fleeing across the Atlantic to Ireland. For his part, Kenny compared the slave trade between Africa and America to the flight from death and starvation of the Irish who came on the coffin ships. "Together we built America," he said.

Excerpts from their addresses follow:

OBAMA: I am not going to stand up here very long because, as the old Irish saying goes, everyone is wise until he speaks. And I know we've got some entertainment to get to. But the Irish also tell us that what fills the eye fills the heart. And tonight, in this room filled with so many friends both old and new, I can't imagine a better place to be than right here with the sons and daughters of Ireland – and those who wish they were.

I want to start by welcoming Taoiseach Kenny and his lovely wife, Fionnuala. Please give them a big round of applause. (Applause.) Now, poor Taoiseach, he's only been in office for a little over a week. He's already jetlagged. But I'm honored that he agreed to leave the unpacking for another day and fly across the ocean to be with us here tonight.

Every year at this time, we're reminded of just how many strands of green are woven into our American story. And even though St. Patrick's Day has perhaps been better known for revelry than reflection, it's also a chance for us to remember how the journey to America began for so many of our ancestors – including, as I discovered as I was running for office, one of mine; how millions of Irish boarded dank and crowded ships with a promise to send for their families later, often with no friends, no money, and nothing but hope waiting for them on the other side.

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KENNY: Mr. President, thank you for your warm invitation to join you here this evening. Fionnuala and I are honored on behalf of the Irish people and delighted to accept your invitation.

On St. Patrick's Day, sometimes we remember some of our leaders – Michael Davitt, who began one of the great agrarian movements throughout Europe; the great Ulster clans of the O'Neills and the O'Donnells; the O'Connells of Munster -- I've left a book on Daniel O'Connell for your protocol section, Mr. President. And dare I say it, the Obamas of Leinster.

Certainly if that's the case, I can tell you that in the history of the English language, never has a single apostrophe meant so much to so many. And may I say, sir, Mr. President, they're queuing up in the thousands to tell you that in Moneygall when you visit us in May of this year.

I'd like to echo the words of the President, because as we gather here in the White House this evening, we do remember the various ways and the different journeys that people took to get here. The Irish, driven out by what we called an Gorta Mór, or the Great Hunger, when the potato crop from the New World failed. As the writers said, in scattered lines they made for the quayside, their only sound the slow slap of their souls on the immigrant flagstones. But, you see, ours was

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New Bailout Needed to Avoid Collapse of Irish Banking

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBLIN — The Central Bank of Ireland now says the nation's cash-strapped banks need another loan of 24-billion euro (\$34 billion U.S. dollars) in coming months to ensure they won't collapse in the face of future crises. The new figure would take the estimated total cost of Ireland's bank-bailout efforts since 2009 to 70-billion euro, or some \$110 billion.

On the last day of March, Central Bank Governor Patrick Honohan unveiled the results of new stress tests on four Irish banks, a condition of Ireland's international bailout last November. Analysts expect the results to force all of them to come under majority state control and perhaps even shove the country into an eventual default.

Regulators released numbers on two banks that are already majority state-owned — Allied Irish Banks and the Educational Building Society — and two others expected to join that club soon: the Bank of Ireland, and Irish Life & Permanent.

The results showed that last year's estimated potential losses for Irish banks — \$76 billion — were far too low. Economists said the new total would likely approach \$110 billion or more, about half of Ireland's entire economy.

"The government is trying to remove uncertainty. But if we are going to spend up to 80 billion euro to recapitalize our banks, that's just too big for us to manage. It will not work," said Jim Power, chief economist at Friends First, a Dutch-owned insurance company in Ireland. "We need a major European initiative quickly, otherwise the future of the euro is under serious threat."

Echoing Across Millennia, Irish Harp Shapes a Land

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

It's arguably the most iconic of Irish musical instruments, depicted in both classical and commercial art — and, yes, it's even the namesake for a popular beer.

So, with another year of St. Patrick's Day events in Boston and elsewhere having brought a focus to traditional Irish music, the Irish harp has once again enjoyed its fair share of attention.

And that's just fine with Aine Minogue, Kathleen Guilday, and Regina Delaney, three Irish harpists with ties to the Greater Boston area. As much as they might respect other instruments common to Irish music, they feel the harp's physical, tonal, and even symbolic characteristics give it a dimension all its own.

"You can walk into a crowded, noisy pub with a harp, and silence everyone," says Minogue, a Tipperary native who has several recordings and numerous concerts to her credit. "Instinctively, people seem to feel this connection to the harp, even if they're not sure why."

"There are so many aspects to the harp," says Delaney, who teaches harp at the Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann Boston branch music school and directs the New England Harp Orchestra. "It's the way it rings, and resonates. When you play it, you're practically hugging it, and you can feel the vibrations through your body. The harp has a calming effect."

Guilday, an All-Ireland harp champion who has performed with the Chieftains, Seamus Connolly, and



When Kathleen Guilday first saw an Irish harp, she recalls, "all I wanted to do was play it."

Sean Smith photo

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Searching For Answers

In Ireland Unhinged, the author David Monaghan, right, who left Connecticut for Co. Cork, reports and writes in search of Ireland's heart and soul in the shadow of the "Celtic Tiger."



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Just Follow The Signs?

The Irish, good folks that they are, know that not everyone driving the island's roads speaks English, so they have designed signs like the one at right that leave little doubt about their messages.



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ON THE TOWN WITH THE BIR

Winnie Henry is One with Haiti

By GREG O'BRIEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Winnie Henry, a single mother of seven, the widow of the late Irish singer Noel Henry, has adopted a country of young children with the help of her many friends.

Co-founder with **Pat "Doc" Walsh** of Irish Hearts For Haiti, the Milton mother—along with a brigade of more than 30 devoted volunteers—has spent months coordinating the organization's Second Annual Benefit Dance for Haiti, which will be held on Sunday (April 3) at the Marriott Boston Quincy, raising money for earthquake devastated Haiti and for the care of orphaned, abandoned, and disabled children.

Winnie has devoted herself to the cause, her persona becoming one with Haiti. Over the last few weeks, her living room has resembled the office of a Haitian relief center with its reams of fund-raising materials, fliers, and event handouts, as she works on final event preparations.

With her all the way have been Walsh, a Galway native, and her 28-year-old daughter, Monica, newly appointed regional manager in Boston for special events for Friends of the Orphans, an international non-profit dedicated to the care of needy children in the Caribbean and Latin America.

All proceeds from the event will benefit Friends of the Orphans (friendsoftheorphans.org) or the Saint Rock Haiti Foundation (saintrock.org), an outreach mission of Saint Agatha's Parish in Milton and Quincy. Checks, in advance or at the door, are to be made out to the Haitian beneficiary of choice.

Friends of the Orphans supports Nuestrs Pequeños Hermanos (in Haitian French: Nos Petit Freres et Soeurs), translated "Our Little Brothers and Sisters. NPH/NPFS, the acronym, is home to 350 orphans, and is a critical support system to more than 30,000 Haitians for medical assistance, food, water, education and essential services for the disabled. Led by Father Philip Cleary, president of NPH International, NPH/NPFS has rescued and raised nearly 16,000 boys and girls throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. In the past year, under the supervision of physician and priest **Rick Frechette**—the organization's national director in Haiti, with medical training from New York City College of Osteopathic Medicine—NPH/NPFS has expanded its mission. It now includes two



Winnie Henry and her daughter Monica.

orphanages, St. Damien's Premier Pediatric Hospital, two new schools, child protection camps, cholera medical clinics and emergency response programs. These works of mercy have supported more than a million people since January 2010, when a 7.0 earthquake devastated Haiti, one of the world's poorest countries and one struggling in recent years from health crisis, political upheaval and a spate of bruising hurricanes.

The Saint Rock Foundation provides funding for housing, health care, clean water and education in the rural mountain village of Saint Rock, Haiti.

"The cry for help is extraordinary," says Winnie Henry. "There is so much need in the world, and it's only going to grow. You have to do what you can. We all have a calling. Often it comes unannounced."

She is quick to credit others in the coordination of Irish Hearts For Haiti (irishheartsforhaiti.com)—a benefit co-sponsored by the Boston Irish Reporter,

Courier Corporation, Ireland on the Move, The Irish Emigrant, Marriott Boston Quincy, the Sean Folan Show, WROL 950 AM, Irish Hit Parade, The Bailey Ceili, The Feast of Irish Music, and WUNR/1600 AM. The event's working committee alone includes close to 30 people, and last year raised about \$50,000 for the cause with about 700 attending the event.

The suggested donation is \$20, and comes with a full afternoon of Irish entertainment from Erin's Melody, Kevin Doherty, the Andy Healy Band, Brendan Bulger & Friends (traditional set dancing), and Noel Henry's Irish Showband.

The late Irish singer **Noel Henry**, an immeasurably talented and loving man, died in 1995 of bone cancer, leaving Winnie and seven children behind. In memory, he is as much the driving force behind Irish Hearts For Haiti as anyone.

Five years ago Milton resident and Cambridge Police Lieutenant **Pauline Wells** teamed up with several friends to host a St. Patrick's concert to benefit the Jimmy Fund and Dana Farber cancer Institute.

Each year, sold out crowds have come to Milton High School Auditorium to attend this splendid event, known today as "A Celtic Crossing". This performance has caught the attention of many, mainly because of the bright voice of Pauline Wells, who founded this effort after losing a second parent to cancer in 2002.

Her efforts have raised thousands for Dana Farber. In addition she has used her singing talent and the relationship she has developed with many musicians, especially members of the band DEVRI led by Donegal native and Braintree resident **Declan Houton** to bring awareness and money to several worthy charities.

Dozens of musicians and dancers have taken part in this show including international artist **Finbar Furey** and local comedian **Jimmy Tingle**.

Her efforts have also caught the eye to the legendary Irish Tenor, **Dr. Ronan Tynan**—so much so that Wells performed as a special guest with Tynan during his March 27th show in Boston—his first since moving to Boston last year.

On Saturday, April 16, 2010, the fifth production of "A Celtic Crossing" will return to the Milton High School Auditorium. This year's show once again promises to highlight the Boston Police Gaelic Column, the Odwyer School of Irish dance and several musical guests. This year we bring you back to our beginning five years ago, with an inspirational lineup of traditional classics as well as several new numbers. Tickets are \$25 and may be obtained by calling 617-696-7172 or e-mailing Pauline@paulinewells.com

All proceeds to benefit the Jimmy Fund and Dana Farber. For more information see paulinewells.com.



Deirdre Ni Fhalluin, Vice Consul of Ireland; Ed Merritt, president of Mt. Washington Bank; Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis; and Martin McDonagh, president of the BPD Emerald Society celebrate the memory of Boston's first Irish police officer, Barney McGinniskin.

President Obama Plans May Visit to Ireland

President Barack Obama used his annual St. Patrick's Day reception at the White House to announce big news: He will visit Ireland in May and make a special visit to his ancestral hometown of Moneygall in County Offaly.

The exact dates of the visit have not been finalized. The president is scheduled to travel to the UK in late May ahead of a G8 summit in France. That would place his likely visit between May 22-24.

The president is not expected to visit Northern Ireland, according to Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

"The problem actually is that the president, under existing protocol, is not allowed to go to Northern Ireland without first having to go to Britain," Kenny told the BBC.



Belfast author Kyle Darcy was at the State House on March 30 as a guest of Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor, Tim Murray. The two talked about Darcy's novel *Under Current Conditions*, which is set in Massachusetts. The story chronicles a lucrative business opportunity, but an innocuous change in circumstances leads to kidnapping and FBI stings, culminating with an international murder trial.



Publisher's Notebook

All Green, All the Way

By ED FORRY

The Irish were in charge at the White House on St. Patrick's Day last month – or so it seemed. Even as the fountain on the north lawn was filled with green dye, and the colors of the Emerald Isle adorned the East Room, several hundred Irish and Irish Americans gathered for a celebration with President and Mrs. Obama and the new Taoiseach Enda Kenny and his wife Fionnuala, and a truly festive night it was.

It is a long presidential tradition to receive for Irish government leaders at the White House on the Saint's day, going back as least as far as the Bush, Clinton, and Reagan years. As is the custom, President Obama received a bowl of fresh living shamrocks from the Irish prime minister. The ceremonies, including brief speeches by Vice President Biden, Kenny, and the president lasted just about 25 minutes – but it was a true Irish party throughout the evening.

The night was filled with five-star Irish performances. Arriving guests were greeted by a choral performance by the National Chamber Choir of Ireland, some 20 singers who sang an original piece written by Riverdance composer Bill Whelan. Upstairs, the brilliant Academy Award-winning singer-songwriter Glen Hansard warmed up the crowd. The



Ed Forry

White House reverberated Irish music as Hansard had everyone singing a beery, raucous rendition of The Old Triangle ("... Went Jing-le Jan-gle, All arooooouuund the baaaaaanks, of the Ro-yaal Caa-nal.) Then out stepped Vice President Joe Biden, an Irish American born in Scranton to an Irish American mother, and he soon had the gathering roaring with his good humor.

"You know, all of you Irishmen out there, they talk about the luck of the Irish," Biden said. "My grandfather, Ambrose Finnegan, didn't like that expression as much. He liked the expression, he used to say, if you're lucky enough to be Irish, well, you're lucky enough. And I think we're all pretty lucky in here tonight – lucky to be here at the White House, lucky to be here about to hear the two people I'm about to introduce.

"We're here to celebrate friendship between two great nations, Ireland and the United States, and two nations that define me the most, and I expect define most of you. There's an old Irish proverb – there's a million of them – but there's [one] that says there is no strength without unity. And one of the things that has been the case for a long time is we celebrate in this house the unity derived from all of the Irish that have peopled this great country, 40 million of us claim it, and that beautiful Ireland.

"And actually, since the birth of America on – we have on March 17th, 1776, when the British forces under Sir William Howe evacuated Boston, literally there was a password to get to George Washington's encampment, and it was 'Saint Patrick.' That was the password. Well, ladies and gentlemen, that still works here in the White House. Just ask Bill Daley or Tom Donilon or McDonough or Brennan, the entire national security team – it's still Saint Patrick. The president is surrounded by us. "You know, my mom Catherine Eugenia Finnegan Biden used to say, 'To be Irish is about family, it's about faith, and it's about courage. She said, without courage you can't love with abandon. Well, ladies and gentlemen, that's why she liked Barack Obama so much. I think he got used to her calling him 'honey' – but she thought that he embodied all those virtues. And I can tell you from experience of working with him side by side these last two years, he abounds in courage. There's also another Irish expression that says a good friend is like a four-leaf clover -- hard to find and lucky to have. I consider myself extremely lucky to have two good friends in Michelle and Barack Obama. And after spending the morning with the Taoiseach and his wife, I hope I found two more friends. "

(The remarks of the President and the Taoiseach begin on Page One.)



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Mary C. Forry, President (1983-2004)

Edward W. Forry, Publisher

Thomas F. Mulvoy Jr., Managing Editor

William P. Forry, Contributing Editor

Peter F. Stevens, Contributing Editor

News Room: (617) 436-1222 Ads : (617) 436-1222

Fax: (617) 825-5516 news@bostonirish.com

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Commentary

A Look on the Bright Side for the Future of Ireland

By JOE LEARY
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Even before the recent elections, there were abundant signs that the people of Ireland are surviving and doing well. Media stories in Europe and the United States portray Ireland as a stricken country. It isn't!



Joe Leary

A recent trip to Dublin found the city streets full of busy people hurrying along, getting on with their normal lives.

The Aer Lingus flight from Boston to Dublin with 322 seats was crowded with, among others, a group of 90 teenagers and their 15 counselors from the Larne Grammar School in Northern Ireland. They were returning from a ski trip to New Hampshire. And we landed in Dublin's sparkling new airport terminal, as modern a facility as found anywhere in the world.

Hardly the activity of a depressed economy.

The elections held last month installed new energetic leadership and a revitalized Irish Parliament to deal with the problems the country faces. Among those chosen, the voters elected three young men who symbolize the new energy and enthusiasm Parliament will enjoy. From Donegal, Pearse Doherty TD of Sinn Fein; from Mayo, Dara Calleary TD of Fianna Fail; and from Galway, Sean Kyne TD of Fine Gael. Kyne is the nephew of Mike O'Connor, President of the Irish Cultural Centre in Canton. We will be hearing from these men as they develop their careers and become the new leaders of Ireland.

It is true that the Irish were very angry with the Fianna Fail political party and Taoiseach Brian Cowen, but democracy works and they are no longer in power. It is also true that the Dublin skyline has many fewer cranes helping to build new homes and businesses, and unemployment is seriously high at 14.7 percent. But the major corporations of the world still have great faith in investing in Ireland.

According to the American Chamber of Commerce in Dublin, United States investment in Ireland (\$156 billion) is greater than US investments in China, Russia, Brazil, and India combined. Ireland is an ideal stepping-off point for doing business in Europe and the Middle East.

But it is in the streets, the retail stores, the restaurants, and the hotels where the visitor sees the resolute and positive attitudes of the average working man and woman. Walk from Parnell Square down O'Connell Street to the post office

and Henry Street to experience the pace of life and the happy smiling faces.

Continue across the Liffey to Grafton Street and St. Stephen's Green. Hundreds, then thousands of people at every hour of the day walking briskly to and from their homes and jobs. This is an active working citizenry moving forward.

The brightly colored flower stands are still on Grafton Street. The "busker" entertainers are still singing and dancing for the crowds. St. Stephen's Green is as crowded as ever – the benches are mostly filled, and passersby either walked quickly or were out for a leisurely stroll.

The better restaurants fill up early in the evening. One in particular, "La Maison" on Castle Market Street, which specializes in French cuisine, starts to turn away customers as early as 6 p.m. in the middle of the week. Two luxury hotels, The Merrion and The Conrad, are busy with active lunch time restaurants and long black limousines parked outside.

Ireland's secondary schools and its universities are doing business as usual with tens of thousands of students preparing for their working lives. Walking through Trinity College campus with hustling students carrying heavy knapsacks gives the impression that, for these boys and girls at least, the biggest problem they have is the next exam.

At Dublin City University, on the outskirts of Dublin to the North, the development staff is concentrating on financing their Access program, which offers less privileged students free tuition and fees with a personal counseling service for any problems arising. The program is specifically designed for students with proven secondary school ability from families where no one has ever been to college or has had any thought of going. Currently more than 400 students are involved. Another example of why Ireland's future is so bright.

There are three reasons why Ireland will return to its past success in the short term:

(1) During the past two decades the infrastructure in Ireland has been transformed. Super-highways were created, new buildings arose, sports stadiums were built. It can be said that Ireland today is a modern country, the investments have been made.

(2) The same is true of Ireland's university system. The seven major campuses – University College Dublin, University College Cork, University College Galway, Trinity, Dublin City University, Limerick University, and Maynooth – all offer world class educations. Their grounds are superb, their professors are among the best in the world, and their leadership is as professional as the best colleges anywhere.

(3) Finally, it is the spirit, intelligence, and resilience of the Irish themselves that will get Ireland going again. The advance has started already.

Off the Bench

As the lingering winter eases off ...

By JAMES W. DOLAN
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

The snow lingers. Will this winter ever end?

This year Mother Nature took a swipe at global warming by sending us a blast from the past. Winter wrapped around us with an intensity that shouted: "Not so soon, I'm still around."



James W. Dolan

Over time what first appeared to be a winter wonderland became a white shroud enveloping nature and our souls in a suffocating embrace that seemed endless. The lucky ones fled to warmer climes while the rest endured.

Winter is the "make the best of it" season. It reminds us of mortality, the time when things die and are buried. The elderly are particularly affected; they see it as the final season – the end.

Going to Florida for the winter is an understandable form of denial. There have been a few times this winter when denial looked good to me.

Spring is the season of hope and rebirth. It is youth, vitality, curiosity, and energy; a time to look ahead. It is a precursor of salvation for those who did not survive the winter and longed for an eternal spring.

Spring is a promise. It is the young season, full of children, laughter, and love. Winter is a debt that all must eventually honor, the price we pay

for spring.

As harsh as it sometimes is, those who annually face winter's rigors at least have the opportunity to confront a reality that others seek to escape. Winter will come in one form or another; better prepare for it. The seasons are locked in our DNA; there is no escape.

I am now in the early winter of my life. The trees are bare, the wind cool, and gray days appear more often. I had a grand spring, summer, and fall. The love, laughter, and joy I shared still warms the winter nights when the wind howls and the snow flies.

Spring is the first season; it begins the cycle. Its youth blends seamlessly into the warmth of summer when it matures into adulthood, marriage, and children. Fall is the season of middle age, maturity, and perspective. Winter is wisdom, infirmity, and resignation.

The older we get, the more we look forward to another spring. Having survived another winter, we begin the cycle anew although spring, summer, and fall appear to be getting shorter and winter longer.

I suspect more people die in the winter than at other times of the year. Winter is a clock winding down; the tempo slows, the chimes grow faint, time slips by reluctant to surrender its remaining minutes. Finally it stops.

Will the final winter open into a glorious spring? That is the hope of many, but there is only one way to find out. When, with a final gust, the flame is extinguished, does the sun rise on a new dawn? I'll take that bet. After all, what have I got to lose?

Maybe the seasons are trying to tell us something.

James W. Dolan is a retired Dorchester District Court judge who now practices law.

Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By BILL O'DONNELL

Libyan Fighting Threatens IRA Victims' Claims



Bill O'Donnell

War, even the no-fly-zone type of war being waged today against Colonel Khadafy's brutal regime, has many casualties. One of the probable losers of the conflict in Libya is a secret deal between the British government and Khadafy to win compensation from Libya for British victims (including Northern Ireland) of IRA bombs and violence. The agreement, hammered out in secret negotiations but possibly incomplete, would compensate UK citizens for loss of life and property from Provisional IRA operations during the Troubles using armaments, semtex explosives, surface-to-air missiles, AK47 rifles, ammunition, etc. supplied by Khadafy. The dimensions of the deal, fueled by Libyan oil profits, was projected to be as high as \$15 billion.

The possibility of such a compensation agreement came about when Khadafy, taking heed of the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, abandoned his nuclear weapons program and after years of wrangling finally settled for \$2 billion with the families of the Lockerbie plane-bombing victims. The long simmering US-Khadafy imbroglio cooled down and the Colonel and the West moved closer and began speaking to each another.

During the 30-year conflict in the North, there existed a close and continuing relationship between the Provos and Khadafy. That friendship blossomed when Margaret Thatcher's government decided to allow the United States Air Force to use British bases to bomb Tripoli. Khadafy, in a retaliatory move against Thatcher, decided to aid Britain's enemies by supplying war materials to the Provisional IRA. This infusion of weaponry allowed the Provos to accelerate the campaign of violence in the North and in English cities as well.

The big question, obviously for the victims is this: If Khadafy survives or if he is removed and a new government in Libya takes over, what would be the status of the compensation agreement?

High Profile Visits Set for Ireland – May could be a busy month in the old Sod with a trio of top-level visitors set to visit Ireland. President Obama will squeeze in a likely visit to Moneygall in County Offaly around a planned European economic summit in France. Former President Bill Clinton is also scheduled for a return to Ireland for a separate event there and Hillary Clinton might well be accompanying her boss, the president.

Queen Elizabeth is also scheduled to be in Ireland in May, departing coincidentally the day before Obama arrives. The queen's state visit will be her first ever to Ireland and the first by any British monarch since King George V spent six days in Dublin in 1911. She was invited by President Mary McAleese.

Another rather well-known head of state won't be in Ireland this year, but Pope Benedict XVI is rumored to be planning a pilgrimage of sorts to Ireland in 2012 as a way to show the Vatican's concern for the Irish Church amidst the clerical abuse scandal that has rocked Catholicism in the country.

Boston 'Hack Holidays' Have Irish Counterpart – Here in Boston the effort to abolish two of the traditional holidays that are nearest and dearest to the State House and area city halls continues with somewhat mixed results. The Evacuation Day (Okay, St. Patrick's Day) and Bunker Hill Day (June 17) holidays have been iced, but most workers are off with skeleton crews meeting the letter of the new law with offices barely open.

Boston is not alone in observing specialized holidays for public employees. Something called "Privilege Days" began in the early years of the British civil service. Like Boston there were two of these holidays, the King's Birthday and Empire Day. In 1922 when the Irish Free State was established the two British holidays became a part of the Irish civil service. One Privilege Day was to be taken at Easter, the other at Christmas.

Times have changed and public budgets have dramatically slimmed down,

but Privilege Days in Ireland have hung in there and are now incorporated into the 30-day annual leave. It's hard, it seems, to keep a good holiday down.

Police Recruiting at 50/50 Ends – The Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Owen Paterson, announced last month that the 50-50 Catholic-Protestant recruitment to the Police Service of Northern Ireland was ending. The even-handed recruiting policy was a reform recommended by the Patten Report a decade ago and had been successful in radically altering the makeup of the PSNI. When introduced in 2001, Catholics made up just 8 percent of the former RUC. Today the level of Catholics in the police service is a shade under 30 percent (29.76).

Many Northern unionists and the politicians who represent them have been critical of the police quota system, calling it "institutionalized discrimination" and urging a return to "natural recruitment." Nationalists generally believe that the 50-50 policy should be in force longer (maybe until 40 percent Catholics is reached) but have been relatively mute in response to the secretary of state's decision.

Did You Know ... that the unique Irish concoction "Riverdance" is now in its 16th year since it first opened to raves at Dublin's Point Theatre in 1995? It has been performed over 10,000 times and seen by 22 million people in 350 venues in 40 countries and 4 continents. Some 2 billion people have seen "Riverdance" on television and it has sold 3 million CDs and 10 million videos and DVDs.

Irish American Museum Eyes Washington Site – The planning is still in the very preliminary stages but it seems that with the help of an Irish-born Connecticut businessman an Irish-American museum could become a reality in the nation's capital. There had been talk at one time of organizing an Irish-American museum in Boston somewhere within or near the Rose Kennedy Conservancy acreage, but that possibility has suffered from inertia, a grim economy, the still unsettled questions of what will eventually go into the Rose Kennedy Park area, and, as always, the scarcity of a deep-pocket source of funding.

The Connecticut businessman Carl Shanahan is a native of County Limerick and has been active in the Irish-American Cultural Institute, the Ireland-US Council and a number of successful businesses. Shanahan and an organizing committee have spoken longingly about a brick and mortar museum to celebrate Ireland's contribution to America but thus far there has been little hard information available about financing, a time table for development, or similar details about any Washington, D.C. facility.

It is a shame, it says here, that the call for a Boston-based Irish American Museum seems lost amidst the recession. Boston, quite realistically, would be an ideal venue for such an enterprise. As a port city and gateway with a heavy Irish population it would appeal to both area residents as well as the large numbers of Irish and European visitors who annually trek to the Hub. It would add critical mass to an already rich list of tourist attractions and might even have found a home within or near the emerging Kennedy Senate Institute at Columbia Point or at UMass-Boston.

A Post-Election Economic Snapshot – In Ireland at the moment it is difficult – maybe next to impossible – to provide any detailed analysis of the situation economically or politically. In the simplest of terms, Ireland is a messy work in progress, but there are several points that might be made:

First, Taoiseach Enda Kenny and his government will not bend on the 12.5 percent corporate tax rate. That stays as is, non-negotiable. Secondly, many of Ireland's EU neighbors are upset with Ireland for varying good reasons, but the Irish can still look with optimism at the real possibility it will win a one percent reduction in the bailout interest rate, saving \$600 million a year of taxpayer euros.

Thirdly, it looks as though bank bondholders will finally have to pony up some serious money if the upcoming bank stress tests are as bad as feared. Finally, a serious and sober Fine Gael government will not any time soon be

listening to, and certainly not implementing, Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein's unprincipled suggestion that Ireland could default on its IMF obligation or put the bailout question to a national referendum. More posturing/pandering from a minority party that seems to have forgotten that the election is over. Time, fellas, to start acting like adults!

Cancer Centre Ruling Raises Coleraine Spectre – "Here we go again" could be the cry in Derry with the stunning news of the decision by the unionist Minister of Health to shelve plans for Derry's long-awaited cancer centre. There is a lot of bitter history here going back to the late 1960s when Derry was the logical location for the new University of Ulster, but Protestant Coleraine was chosen by the unionist government because of the high proportion of Catholics in Derry.

It seems to be deja vu all over again for the cancer centre! The decision to scrap the Derry facility has come as a shock to the people of Derry and the leadership of Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party. Many felt that it repeats the Coleraine Ulster U. decision again long after the Good Friday Agreement had seemingly put a stop to most sectarian-based decisions. The Derry Cancer Centre location was to be one-third funded by the Republic of Ireland because the facility was to be available to patients from Sligo, Donegal, and Leitrim.

Both the DUP and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness lambasted the decision, with McGuinness calling it "blatantly sectarian." Both pledged to reverse the decision, if possible, following the Northern local elections in May.

Chairman Peter King Unarmed In Muslim Hunt – The Republican congressman from Long Island has been called our worst congressman and after watching him on TV last month indict (or at least try to indict) every Muslim in America, I think he has earned his sobriquet. What a thundering disgrace Rep. King is to the Irish. Throughout his public life he has been an outspoken fan of whatever atrocity the Provisional IRA was engaged in. He defended the IRA because, he said, "The fact is that the IRA never attacked the United States and my loyalty is to the United States." But he never cared about the British civilians and hundreds of Northern Catholics who were killed and maimed by IRA-Libyan bombs and bullets. Ah yes, clearly another patriot in the mold of someone like serial adulterer Newt Gingrich.

As one journalist noted, the hearings of Chairman King's Homeland Security subcommittee took place in a room once used by the House Un-American Activities Committee. King and his white Republican cohort tried desperately to cast doubts on the loyalty of the entire Muslim population but some unscripted congressional colleagues put the publicity-seeking King in his place.

My question is whether King is thinking of becoming candidate for New York mayor? Are his quasi-McCarthyite hearings part of a grand plan and a not so subtle public political appeal to the nativist fringe in the New York suburbs. With his "credentials" King just might win a primary in a crowded mayor's race. God forbid!

It Is April. What Has Bertie Cost Us Now – The results are in and the bottom line that former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern refers to in his patented banking strategies, is fixed and undeniable: A major independent review of Ireland's Department of Finance clearly shows that the department repeatedly warned the Ahern government and Ahern's handpicked successor, Brian Cowen, about the dangers of its economic policies over the last ten years. To no avail, as current circumstances now suggest.

Every year, save one, over the decade each government (Taoiseachs Ahern & Cowen & cabinet) added hundreds of millions of euros to every budget in direct reversal of prudent budget recommendations and reasonable spending limits. There was always a few hundred million more to hand out during the run-up to elections. Fourteen years of FF rule can get to be expensive.

A Fond Farewell to James "Bibber" Bradley (Nov. 24, 1933 - March 1, 2011) – He was the best of all of us. He had no enemies except maybe deceit and meanness. I never in almost 50 years

heard him criticize anybody, never a bad word unless you outdrew him with a gut straight. He had his priorities in order: family, faith, country. He was a Marine grunt in Korea during the heavy going there, a forward observer (God bless the mark) who had no war stories to share.

He was never famous except at home. The life he lived was full – his family, his Catholicism, and being a caring friend; no bluster, no bluff, but with a determined taste for gentle whimsy and his favorite Marsh Wheeling cigars. He died as he lived – at home with his Polly and their three children, at peace with himself, the world and God. We should all be so blessed when that time comes.

RANDOM CLIPPINGS

Strangely enough given the financial chaos that is Ireland today, the Green Isle in 2010 had its "best year ever" for Irish exports. Great news but still 30 percent under the target number needed to meet EU bailout numbers. ... New Taoiseach Enda Kenny is tough. He and French President Sarkozy had a big tiff at the economic summit over the Irish tax rate but Kenny never blinked. ... The North's First Minister and former Ian Paisley associate, Peter Robinson, raised Unionist eyebrows when he said he could attend Catholic funeral Masses. Meanwhile Robinson and wife Iris, who resigned her multiple political jobs, are hanging in and it is being said that neither will face any charges over financial questions. ... Irish incomes have fallen 8 percent below the EU average and are now near the bottom with Portugal, Greece, Spain, and Italy. ... Ma Bell in all her dotage is back and AT&T and T-Mobile are planning a marriage. One certain outcome of that is higher rates as they will control 71 percent of the US mobile phone business.

March marked the 20th anniversary of the release of the Birmingham Six from Old Bailey in London after 15 years in British captivity. ... Final Irish Bank stress tests are still to come but early indications are that there's a \$34 billion black hole the new government has to contend with. ... Blood is thicker: Former Fianna Fail TD Mary O'Rourke, took her nephew Brian Linehan's side against her former party leader, Brian Cowen. ... New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a pretty savvy guy, told a stupid Irish drunk story and paid for it with catcalls during the St. Pat's festivities. ... A well-deserved honor for Belfast's Inez McCormack, women and labor activist, who was named by Newsweek as one of the 150 women "who shake the world." ... The US is the favorite travel destination of the Irish. They like Orlando, Las Vegas, and New York the best. Where's Boston? ... Isn't sad Charlie Sheen just the latest bad Irish drunk joke. I know his dad is Ramon Estevez but his grandmother was Irish, so please don't write.

Sign of hard times: the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which already has 20 branches in Co. Galway, is opening two more. ... With what's going on in Wisconsin and other assaults on American trade unionism, what is Jesse Jackson doing in Ireland? ... Maybe I'm just slow but when Mass Lottery scratch tickets partner up with the likes of the Red Sox and Patriots, and the sports teams get paid for their involvement, which part of the cut do the teams get paid from? ... Thanks to the Globe's Kevin Culen for revisiting the tale of Dorchester crossing guard Marie Conley whose heroism saved a young girl from death at the cost of Marie's life. Greater Love ...! Ireland lost a great journalist and republican patriot with the death last month of Sean Cronin at 90 in Washington, D.C. Good man! ... The new chief of staff of the US Army is General Martin Dempsey. His grandfather, John Og Devenney, left Donegal for America 85 years ago. Dempsey will command 600,000 army troops in 135 countries. ... In 2013 Boston will host the World Irish Dancing Championships (March 24-31) at the Hynes Memorial Auditorium in the Back Bay. ... This year marks the 75th anniversary of Aer Lingus. That first flight by Ireland's national airline was from Dublin to Bristol, England in May, 1936. Thirty years ago this month, Bobby Sands, on a hunger strike in Long Kesh, was elected to the British Parliament in the Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election.

New Deal for Waterford – and Its Crystal

BY ED FORRY
BIR PUBLISHER

Last summer marked the opening the “House of Waterford Crystal,” a new facility in Waterford city center, a place where the legendary crystal will be designed and manufactured, while allowing tourists to visit and see the original pieces being made. The event ended an 18-month period of troubled times for the historic crystal-making firm, and perhaps signals the start of a new and promising era.

The BIR met with David McCoy, the company's commercial director, when he visited Boston last month with representatives of other Irish companies on a US business trip sponsored by Tourism Ireland.

“We opened a brand new state of the art facility last June,” McCoy said. “It's over 24,000 square feet; we produce 45,000 pieces a year there. It's an opportunity to see how crystal is

produced, at 1,300 degrees Celsius.” McCoy said that the facility has become a major attraction in Waterford city. “On average, a quarter of a million people tour every year.”

The new resource, which comprises a manufacturing facility, visitor centre, and retail outlet, restores a history of over 200 years of heritage in the city of Waterford.

Founded in 1783, the Waterford Crystal Co. had struggled on hard times in the last decade, leading to a filing for bankruptcy in 2009.

In January 2010, a New York firm, KPS Capital Partners, known for its expertise in “turnaround investing,” purchased the name and assets of the crystal company out of receivership, and, working in a partnership with the Waterford City Council, established a new venture, WWRD Group Holdings Limited. It is that company, a luxury goods group, that



David McCoy

owns and operates the Waterford Crystal, Wedgwood, and Royal Doulton brands. The new venture immediately made plans to open the Waterford city facility, calling it “a new beginning for Waterford Crystal.”

“The craftsmen learn their craft over eight years,” McCoy says. “The secret of Waterford crystal is the sparkle, from many different cuts.” He said daily guided personalized tours show the evolution of crystal. While only a small portion of Waterford is actually manufactured at the new plant, he says “Everything is designed in Waterford.”

“We look forward to welcoming visitors from all over the world to our new centre, and to continuing the city

of Waterford's extraordinary tradition of producing crystal of the very highest quality.”

It was two brothers William and George Penrose, who founded the company,

naming it after their hometown. In the mid-1850s the company fell on hard times, and ceased manufacturing for almost 100 years. The crystal production resumed in the mid-20th century, and became well known when the Irish government started a tradition of giving Waterford gifts to American presidents from Dwight Eisenhower to Ronald Reagan. It was Reagan who famously kept a supply of jelly beans in the Oval Office, prominently displayed in a Waterford dish.

Visitors to the centre will learn about the history of crystal production in Waterford and the manufacturing process, while the retail centre has the largest display of Waterford Crystal anywhere in the world.

For information on tours and dates and tickets, see waterfordvisitorcentre.com.

Difficult Subject, Difficult Questions at BC Forum

BY PATRICK GALLAGHER
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

“I'm here to talk about a very difficult subject for an Irishman,” said Patsy McGarry. “It is difficult not to ask whether there is something uniquely Irish about this.”

McGarry, religious affairs columnist for the *Irish Times*, was speaking to a packed house at Boston College last month, and the title of

his presentation said it all: “Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: An Irish Disease and/or Global Phenomenon?”

McGarry, religious affairs correspondent for *The Irish Times*, was addressing remarks made by a senior Vatican official last year that seemed to suggest that the Irish culture may have had a particular influence on perpetuating the scandal.

In a 2010 interview that took place shortly after the release of the Ryan and Murphy reports about abuse by Irish churchmen, Cardinal Claudio Hummes said, “The painful Irish happenings ... simply do not relate to the entire Episcopal ministry.”

McGarry contends that one of the parties at fault is Hummes himself, noting that the Congregation

for the Clergy, which he leads, refused to recognize the child protection guidelines that were introduced by the Irish bishops in a 1996 “Framework Document,” which was updated in 2005.

The Vatican's failure to recognize either document, said McGarry, meant that a priest accused of sexually abusing a child could appeal to the Vatican if action was pending against him, which often led to the priest winning his case when it came before Church leadership.

The Murphy Report took on the Congregation's decision, “It is clear Rome itself has profound questions to answer concerning the painful Irish happenings.”

McGarry, like so many others in the follow-up to the scandal that first broke over the archdiocese of Boston in 2002, insisted that a key problem has been the cover-up by the Irish Church, in particular those bishops who knowingly transferred priests who had been accused of abuse from one parish to another without taking punitive action.

He cited numerous cases, including that of the notorious Brendan Smith,

who abused children for 40 years in both the US and Ireland, and that of Tony Walsh, who was described by the investigators behind the Murphy Report as being one of the most notorious child sexual abusers in Ireland from 1975 to 2004.

Getting to the point of his presentation, McGarry conceded that certain historical trends in Ireland likely played a role in the high number of Irish clergymen who were found to have abused children throughout the twentieth century.

“I have to acknowledge, however painful it might be, that while it is manifest throughout [the world] ... this clerical child abuse problem does have a peculiar and significant Irish tinge,” McGarry said.

He traced the root of the problem to the effects of the Irish potato famine of the 1840s, which he said resulted in the ending of the subdivision of land holdings and a situation where there were far fewer landowners in post-famine Ireland.

With less land to go around that fathers could bequeath to their sons, greater numbers of men began to enter the clergy,

McGarry said. This pattern was continued under Paul Cullen, who in 1866 became Ireland's first cardinal and who was known for preaching that celibacy was superior to married life.

A century later, according to McGarry, there were nearly 5,500 priests in Ireland – so many, in fact, that between a third and a half were not needed in parishes and instead were sent on Catholic missions abroad.

“It was said of Irish seminaries that they were full of young men whose mothers had vocations to the priesthood,” McGarry said. One tragic effect of this surge of clergymen was that problems with Irish sexual issues were driven to places where it would go unnoticed, he added.

Many of the priests who were found to have abused children worked in parochial schools where no one would question a young boy or girl being with a member of the clergy.

“With boys, there was no risk of pregnancy and there was even less risk that they would talk,” McGarry said. “In single-sex institutions – schools, for example – boys were even more accessible.”

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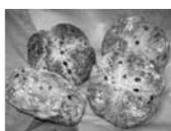
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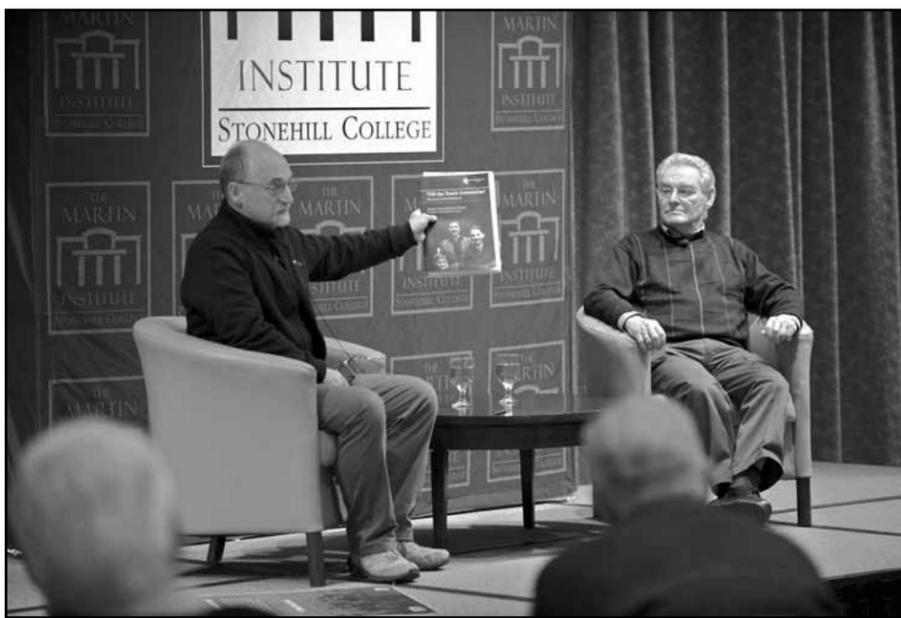
Putting a Human Face on a Holocaust Remembrance

One of Ireland's few Holocaust survivors Tomi Reichental brought his message of remembrance to Boston in late March with three successful area screenings of the documentary *Till The Tenth Generation*, which tells the story of how he was sent to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as a nine-year old school boy and how he could not address or discuss that experience until very recently.

While Reichental, now an Irish citizen, survived the Holocaust, 35 members of his Slovakian Jewish family did not.

The documentary, is the first major Irish documentary about the Holocaust and had its North America premier at the Boston Irish Film Festival on Sunday, March 27 in the Somerville Theatre before a full house, which gave Reichental a standing ovation at the end of the post-film conversation.

In the days following the Boston Irish Film Festi-



Director Gerry Gregg and Holocaust survivor Tomi Reichental speaking at Stonehill after a screening of *Till The Tenth Generation*, the first major Irish documentary about the Holocaust.

val, Reichental, along with producer Gerry Gregg, visited Stonehill College and Brandeis University, receiving warm welcomes at both locations.

In the documentary and

in person, Reichental puts a human face on this tragic event in European and world history. Retracing his wartime story and revisiting Bergen-Belsen, the film provides a moving

and informative account of the Holocaust as experienced by one survivor and his family.

"During the document-

ary and afterwards with questions and answers, you could hear a pin drop in Stonehill's Martin Institute. Speaking softly as he told his harrowing story, Tomi showed himself not just to be a survivor of the Holocaust, but someone who has no bitterness and who understands the meaning of tolerance," said Stonehill employee Steve Muzrall.

"For 55 years, I did not talk about it, I could not talk about it. And now I am fulfilling a mission that I speak and lecture in schools. It is something

that I owe to the victims, that their memory is not forgotten," is how Reichental explains his mission of remembrance.

Ireland's Department of Integration has sent copies of *Till the Tenth Generation* to every post primary school in the country to assist with education on the Holocaust.

In America, the National Center for Jewish Film at Brandeis University is the distributor. For information, contact www.jewishfilm.org or call 781-899-7044.

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Sandy Walter, at 63; Cultural Activist

Chrysandra (Sandy) Walter passed away on Mon., March 21, after a lengthy and brave battle with cancer. She was 63 and leaves her loving husband, the famed fiddler Seamus Connolly, and three stepchildren, Ronan, Darragh, and Keelin Connolly.

Sandy was respected as a caring, honest, dedicated leader in the National Park Service, where her 38-year career took her all over the country before she settled in as deputy regional director for NPS's Northeast Region. She retired from the NPS in



Chrysandra Walter
 Park Service veteran

2007 and moved to North Yarmouth, Maine with Seamus.

Sandy was beloved in the Irish-American community as a genuine enthusiast for Celtic music and for folk music gener-

ally. She was instrumental, along with Joe Wilson, in hosting the National Folk Festival in Lowell Massachusetts (1987-89), which today continues as the Lowell Folk Festival. She was also with her husband the central organizer of the acclaimed Gaelic Roots Summer School and Festival held at Boston College each June between 1993 and 2003.

In addition to her husband and children, she leaves her mother and stepfather, Winnie and Larry Moore, and her sisters, Diane Evers and Debbie Contro.

Born in a pub in County Galyway Ireland, Mick Morgan was destined to be the proprietor of Mick Morgan's pub. Mick teamed up with his partner Finbar Griffin, owner of Tommy Doyle's and the Farragut House, and opened Mick Morgan's of Sharon in March 2011. Following in the tradition of friendly service and great food. Mick Morgan's has quickly become a local favorite. Mick Morgan's menu gives a traditional Irish flare to your favorite American dishes. We are a family orientated pub that offers genuine hospitality, charming Irish decor and much more. Come by for a pint, entertainment or just great food. Either way, Mick Morgans is sure to leave you smiling.



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Matters Of Substance

Buying a Round at Holiday Time: It Can Be Fun, or Frustrating

BY DANIELLE OWEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

"I'm not able to get much work at the moment and have almost no money right now. With St. Patrick's Day around the corner, I told myself I would only spend a certain amount when I go out with the lads for that weekend. I just don't know how to handle when it comes to my turn to buy a round. I feel mean by not buying it, even though I know I might not have enough for all my bills. I enjoy being out with my friends but I just can't afford to buy rounds anymore. What should I do?"

You are not alone! If you drink here, or in Ireland, the "round" system is very much the norm. Sometimes we feel our only choices are to either not go out at all or drink and have little money

left over for our bills. We've all seen "Father Ted" and found ourselves in the "Mrs Doyle" syndrome – when someone won't take no for an answer. "Ah, you will, you will" have another drink! When we surveyed members of the Boston Irish community, asking what happens when people say "no" when offered an unwanted drink, one in three said that they had taken it, when they didn't want to, but felt so pressured they believed they couldn't refuse.

We may be driving or on medication or just not want to drink anymore that night. The person offering may not understand why we are saying no. The person who is saying, "Ah, go on..." may actually have a drink problem himself/herself. As long as you are drinking with them, no one notices how much they are drinking.

There are other choices:

Mention your concern to one of your friends before going out. If they really care, they will support your decision.

Try saying no to an offered drink early on and quietly go buy your own. There is less expectation of you to buy for others if you are outside the round.

Maybe we could say, "I won't just now, thanks," leaving the impression you might have another drink later even though you know you won't.

It is hard but the key to saying "no" is practice. You are right to act responsibly, not to spend more than you've budgeted for, and to say "no" if you don't want another, for whatever reason. It does not mean you are a "killjoy" or don't know how to have fun. It means you're an adult and acting in your own best interests. This difficulty in



Danielle Owen

saying "no" doesn't mean you have a problem with drink. But if you do find yourself drinking and/or spending more than planned more and more often, it may be a symptom of a larger problem.

If you are concerned, there is someone you can chat with: Contact Danielle, either via phone or e-mail, in complete confidence, at the IIC: Phone: 617-542-7654, Ext.14; e-mail: dowen@iicenter.org

BC to Get Archive of 'Troubles' Era

Boston College will be the repository for the archive of documents representing the oversight proceedings relating to the voluntary surrender of arms by paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland during the past decade.

Thomas Hachey, executive director of The Center for Irish Programs at Boston College, expressed appreciation for the persistent efforts of Sean Aylward, Secretary General of Ireland's Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to get the archive.

Hachey, who is also University Professor of History at Boston College, described the documents as an incredibly valuable collection for future studies on the era of "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland. Under Irish and British law the archive could be inaccessible for a period of 30 years, a provision that comports with the embargo on government archives in much of the world at present. There will, however, be periodic review that may grant notably earlier access if approved by the appropriate Anglo-Irish authorities.

The archive will be housed in the Special Collections at the Burns Library where Burns Librarian Dr. Robert O'Neill has already compiled an impressive array of valuable Northern Ireland collections.

The collection, which contains both Commission deliberations, as well as a few personal notebooks kept by Commission members, will be curated over time.



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Q. What are the basic requirements for a visa that would allow me to study at a university in the United States?

A. US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) applies a number of criteria in determining whether a prospective international student is eligible for an F-1 student visa. The most basic requirement is acceptance for enrollment in an "academic" education program, not a vocational-type program. Enrollment in an accredited college, university, seminary, conservatory, or language training program qualifies as academic study. An academic student can be seeking a bachelor's, master's, PhD, or other graduate-level degree, or can be engaged in post-doctoral studies. Programs not considered to be "academic," such as those offered by technical and vocational schools, would require the issuance of an M-1 visa instead of an F-1 visa. The M-1 visa requirements are similar but not identical to those for the F-1 visa.

Once you have been accepted by an accredited school, the institution will issue appropriate documentation for you to include in your visa application at the US Embassy.

In addition:

– The applicant must intend to enroll in a school approved by the US Attorney General for attendance by foreign students.

– The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) put into place after the September 11, 2001 attacks introduced a number of changes in the process by which the Department of Homeland Security ensures that a school is eligible to participate in the F-1 process. Schools must demonstrate that they are legitimate educational institutions and appoint a designated school official (DSO) who will sign all necessary forms.

– The international student must be intending to enroll in a "full course of study" at the school, which generally means at least 12 credit hours each semester.

– The international student must provide proof of proficiency in English or be enrolled in English language courses leading to proficiency.

– The international student must have sufficient funds available for full support during the entire proposed course of study.

– The international student must maintain a residence abroad that he or she has no intention of abandoning and must intend to leave the US upon completion of the course of study.

Issues of non-immigrant intent and finance: One of the most important issues in obtaining a student visa involves "non-immigrant intent." This is probably the most closely scrutinized element of the application process. USCIS and the US Embassy in your home country will need to be satisfied that you do not have the intention of immigrating to the US, of failing to maintain full-time student status, or of overstaying your student visa. To prove non-immigrant intent, you will need to show ongoing ties to your home country. These could include having immediate relatives, home ownership, apartment leases, ongoing affiliation with community/church groups, or an offer of employment or plans for further academic study or training upon your return home.

Another major issue in obtaining a student visa involves finances. You need to be prepared to prove that you have the means to support yourself and pay tuition and fees while studying in the US. Some US colleges are very expensive (including even public colleges with respect to the tuition charged to "out-of-state" residents), and you would need to be able to demonstrate access to considerable funds to apply for a visa to attend them.

Once you enter the USA on the F-1 visa: Be aware that at the end of your course of study it may be possible to apply for a period of Optional Practical Training (OPT) in the US employing the skills that you have acquired, and allowing you to be paid during the training. This maximum time allowed usually is one year, with some exceptions, but if you work full-time during school vacations, that time will be subtracted from the one year available to you at the end of your course of study.

Study on a J-1 Visa: A J-1 exchange visa for academic study (administered by the US State Department rather than USCIS) may be appropriate in some situations instead of an F-1 visa. Many of the requirements are comparable, but there are differences depending on the circumstances of each individual case.

International Student Advisors may assist you: US colleges and universities that admit international students typically have advisers and files of information to assist you in your application, including determining whether the F-1 or J-1 visa is a better fit for you. All colleges have websites, and typically they contain a section with very detailed information for prospective international students.

For a free, confidential consultation on this or any other immigration issue, visit one of our weekly legal clinics advertised in The Boston Irish Reporter.

Disclaimer: These articles are published to inform generally, not to

advise in individual cases. Areas of law are rapidly changing. US Citizenship and Immigration Services and the US Department of State regularly amend regulations and alter processing and filing procedures. For legal advice seek the assistance of an IIC immigration specialist or an immigration lawyer.



BRETT'S BOSTON
 By Margaret Brett Hastings
 Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The County Sligo Association of Boston held its third annual St. Patrick's dinner dance on Sunday, March 13 at Florian Hall. The group presented its Sligo "Men of the Year" awards to Jim Brett and Seamus Healy, both with deep ancestral roots in county Sligo. Music and merriment was provided by the Andy Healy Band.

1.) Award Recipients Seamus Healy and Jim Brett pictured with State Senator Steven Tolman (center); 2.) Joan and Herbert Gray, Braintree; 3.) Bridget Ryan, Brighton; Monica Healy and her daughter Ciara of Newton; 4.) Sr. Marguerite Kelly, Irish Pastoral Center; Andy Healy, President, Sligo Association of Boston; Marion Quinn, Treasurer of the Sligo Association of Boston; 5.) Sr. Marguerite Kelly, Deirdre NiFhalluin, Vice Consul General and her husband Paul Brandon; Fiona Healy; 6.) Raymond McVeigh, Dover; Marie Burns, Quincy; 7.) Hugh McKay and wife Elizabeth Gray McKay, Cambridge; 8.) Mary Ellen McCarthy and mother Mary of Quincy; 9.) Marge and Mike Joyce of Dorchester; 10.) Diane Colleary of Wareham; 11.) Seamus Johnston, Norwood; Ann Marie McVeigh, Dover; George Boulger (standing) W. Roxbury; Mary Ford, W. Roxbury; Kevin Johnston, W. Roxbury.



'My home away from home'

John McDermott Talks of His Roots and Family

By ED FORRY
REPORTER PUBLISHER

Singer John McDermott was in Boston during the St. Patrick's activities last month, a brief overnight stay at the Seaport Hotel- "My home away from home"- between gigs in Salisbury and Scituate.

A native of Glasgow, McDermott's mom and dad are Scotland natives with deep roots to Ireland: his father Peter's family are Donegal, his mother Hope's family (Griffin) are Ballymena in Antrim, just north of Belfast. The family relocated to Ontario Canada in 1965, when the singer was just 10 years old.

John McDermott burst on the music scene in the early 1990's, when EMI Music issued McDermott's "Danny Boy." In those early years, he toured with the Chieftains, and had early success as a solo performer in Australia, New Zealand and the UK. As his popularity grew, in 1998 he headed up a singing trio, The Irish Tenors, and together with Anthony Kearns and Ronan Tynan, the group became hugely popular around the US.

He left the group and returned to solo performing in 2000, and has toured extensively since that time. He developed a special dedication to the plight of veterans, and supports a transitional home for homeless veterans in Washington DC, and has helped raise funds for Fisher House Boston, a facility on the grounds of the VA hospital in West Roxbury that provides a temporary home for families of hospitalized veterans. The BIR spoke with him during his stay at the Seaport Hotel, where he spoke about his parents and the 12 McDermott siblings.

"I'm number nine, three younger than me. It was a tough time," McDermott says. The weak economy of the mid 60s left his father looking for work in Glasgow, and he made the decision to uproot the family and come to North America.

"We had family in Long Island, family in the states and my father would have gone to the states, but he couldn't find a job. A guy in Toronto offered a job," working in coal and ore mines in northern Quebec, about ten hours north of Toronto, he says, so it was off to Canada for them.

The family arrived by ship, and as it sailed up the St Lawrence River in early November 1965, "It was the night of the Eastern Seaboard blackout. The ship hit another ship, and was delayed, and we had to return to Quebec.

"We were a day late getting to Toronto and the guys he was supposed to meet had left, they were gone.

"In Toronto, my father got in touch with a priest and he hooked him up with St Vincent DePaul Church. And they found us an apartment, it was sandwiched between St Vincent DePaul school and St Vincent DePaul church. Several hundred yards down the road was a place called Hyde park, a place where we could go and play, so my father said, "There are three reasons you should never be in the apartment- you have three places to go."

"A guy in Toronto offered him a job the night we arrived. He got the job- he was a glazer by trade.

"God acts in mysterious ways."

The job that he missed was in McIntyre Mines, ten hours north of Toronto. "Life would've been very different because it's a very French-Canadian area, still is to this day. But six months after that job was offered, the mine closed, so we would've been a family of 12 up in northern Ontario.

"As it turned out we all ended up at school, and all the siblings got jobs. We were a family of trades and my father believed in the trades; if you want to continue and get education you can do that but get a trade. So we have electricians, carpenters, pipe fitters. Everyone worked."

Growing up, the 12 siblings would turn in their paychecks to their father each week, he says. "If there was something left after the bills were paid the boys got something to go buy a pint or two or go on a date- whatever. Today the kids would just spend it, but that was just the way it was. He was a clever man, my dad"

Eight months after settling into the one bedroom apartment, McDermott says his dad found a house to buy, and he went to the bank for a mortgage loan.

"I'd like to borrow \$27,500, enough to buy a house," and the bank manager at the time- he later became a great friend- said to him, "I admire your fortitude but you don't have any collateral."

At that, McDermott says his dad opened the bank manager's door, and in marched five McDermott sons- each of them with a letter from their employer.

"They said, if my father ever failed to make a payment on that loan that the bank can have the salaries. And the guy says, 'you've got the loan.'

"My brother lives in that house today."

In the new neighborhood, McDermott says his dad went out and walked up and down one side of

the street, introducing himself and inviting his new neighbors to come visit on the next Friday or Saturday nights.

"The first Friday, no one came; on Saturday four or five came, and three of those people had never met each other and they had lived there for years."

The next week, he says his dad went down the other side of the street, extending the same invitation. That next Friday and Saturday nights there were even more neighbors coming to the house.

"We had a great time, and after that first week the place was jammed every Friday night and Saturday in the basement of my house, with chairs all way around the room and we got to know each other."

It was the beginning of a McDermott family ritual- on the weekend nights, the family would welcome their neighbors, and gathering up chairs in the basement, everyone would be asked to sing their favorite song. Each child would perform a favorite song- "Danny Boy was mine, my brothers was the "Green Fields of France", Elizabeth was "The Dutchman." I remember my sisters would sing pop songs," he says.

For his part, McDermott attributes his musicality in part to those weekly in-home singing sessions in his father's basement, as well as to the two years he spent in a boy's choir at St. Michael's Choir School in Toronto. To this day, he says his best friends are old friends from that boys choir.

At school, the boys would spend two hours every day on the music, and each were assigned four days at week at the daily mass- either as altar servers, or in the smaller daily choirs. Every Sunday, the choir would sing at three masses at the Toronto Cathedral: "The ten-fifteen, the 11-fifteen and the twelve-ten masses," McDermott recalls.

Even as music was an important part of his family life, McDermott simply reveres the memory of his mother and father and the family life they had in Toronto.

"I am discovering that I am starting to write music. I've written some things and I'm surprised when I come up with; I found that it's really easy if you're honest with yourself and you write what you're feeling, if you write what happened, if you just tell the story.

"You know, (my Dad) he always had a line: you never know where the road is going but just keep going to the end of the road; if you come to some hurdles move them over. So this end of the road basically is the story of his life- you leave the shore onto the sea, and you don't know where you're going and that's exactly what you did, you put yourself in his position.

"They were both in their early 50s when they left Scotland, with 12 children, and they leave everything they know- their friends, their lifestyle, everything- for us. It can't be for another reason- they certainly didn't do it for themselves. They did it for us and they did it without question. I can remember people coming to the house in the weeks leading up to our departure and my mother giving everything away. She sold nothing, she gave everything away. To those that need it you know. And I think that's why most of us turned out pretty good."

McDermott recalled with some emotion that his dad had seen him perform in concert just once, in Toronto, two months before he died. "My dad saw at least the potential for (my) success. In November of 1994, there was a sold out Christmas tour show in Toronto at a place for the Royal Alexandra Theatre, one of the oldest and finest theaters in the country. And it was jammed. And that night, as he stepped out of the car at the front door, he slipped and he struck his head. I had no idea that happened, and the ambulance came and took him away.



John McDermott: One of 12 siblings who emigrated with his parents.

"I had a plan in the second half of the show to make my mother and father stand up and be acknowledged. My manager at the time is running around wildly, trying to find someone who looked like my dad. At the hospital, my mother and my brother Tony- he's the reincarnation of my dad- they said everything is ok, and they stitched him up and put a bandage on him.

"And he got up. And the doctor said 'Where are you going?' and he said 'I'm going to the show.' And my mother says 'No, Peter, you lie down.' My father said 'You and Anthony can stay here if you like but I'm going to go out and get a taxi and go to the Royal Alexandra.' And in the second half, when the lights went up, he stood up as proud as hell with that white bandage around his head, and he took his bow. He was very theatrical, and you know... a highlight, it was a highlight..."

He passed away less than two months later, in January, 1995, at the age of 80. Peter McDermott was a World War 2 veteran of the RAF and John remembers he had said to him in 1993, "If you get some success, promise me you will give back and look after the veterans."

"I never forget him, because he's on stage with me every night," the 55 year old singer says fondly. "I have his hat and cane -- his bonnet --and my mother's scarf."

On his latest CD, McDermott says there are two tracks dedicated to veterans. "It's called Journey- this is what the families are going through. He's never coming home. Bringing Buddy home.

"I see myself wanting to help those that can't help themselves for no other reason than they have had a lousy break. I find myself trying to help those who I know have the ability but need a break and aren't in a position to ask for it. I like to do that with young musicians and I've done it with a number of them. It's almost instinct now you know, we are so lucky in having the people who brought us here. You still learn from them.

"My father had a philosophy that he would never tell you what to do, but he was a bugger with this line: he'd say, 'If I were you, that's what I would do.'

"I made the mistake of not doing it once and it backfired on me."

McDermott says he feels especially comfortable in Boston: "I feel Boston is my second home. From day one in 1995 when I did my first show in Boston- after the show we shuffled off to Doyle's in Jamaica Plain- and it's a memory that will stay with me until my death.

"That was a night to remember. The only thing they closed at night were the curtains."

BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

BOSTON IRISH ARTS,
ENTERTAINMENT,
TRAVEL & MORE

inSESSION/Sean Smith

A Rejuvenation at ICCNE

Another in the occasional series, "inSession," which profiles the wealth and diversity of regularly occurring Irish and Celtic music sessions in, or reasonably near, the Greater Boston area.

The Irish Cultural Centre of New England
Where: 200 New Boston Drive, Canton
When: Saturdays at 8 p.m.
Began: 2005

Good sessions – and dearly loved ones – never die, at least not completely. Sometimes they just take root in a different patch of ground, while retaining much of the character that drew people in the first place.

Such is the case with the weekly session at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton. The core group that populates and animates the Saturday night gathering had for some years been the driving force behind a storied session at the Blackthorne Tavern in Easton. That session ended following a change in ownership, but for the better part of five years now has found rejuvenation at the ICC pub.

It's not just that names and faces have moved to a new address, however, according to ICC session regulars. The Blackthorne spirit and vibe also lives on, they say: Like its predecessor, the ICC session is inclusive, family-oriented, and with little distinction between participants and onlookers.

"It's the most welcoming session I know of," says fiddler and singer Amy Basse, a Blackthorne veteran who leads the session with guitarist-mandolinist-vocalist Michael Kelleher. "My fiddle students come here a lot, because they know they'll get support and encouragement, and it's a great opportunity for them to get used to playing in public. A lot of people, whether they can play an instrument, or sing, or dance – or do none of those things – really make the session a regular part of their week."

For all the similarities that remain from the Blackthorne era, the ICC session does have its own persona, starting with the venue itself. Regulars note a symbiosis at work – the center gives the session a home, while the session provides the center with a regular means of public outreach, as well as a chance to affirm the social component of its mission. Even if you don't formally join the ICC – and the session-goers reiterate that membership is not required for you to come out on Saturday night – you at least know that it's there, and that it's one of the Boston area's most active sources for things Irish.

Although you can certainly enjoy the ICC session throughout the year, it's during the warm-weather months that the center's charms are most in evidence (once you drive a few hundred yards through the industrial park that acts as a buffer between it and Route 138). On a fine spring or summer's evening, for instance, it's hard not to be impressed by the play of sunset on the center's extensive greenery as you make your way from the parking lot to the ICC headquarters; you might even find yourself walking past a group of youngsters finishing up soccer or Gaelic football practice on one of the ICC athletic fields.

In many settings, a session – however much it might be appreciated – tends not to alter the overall routine at its host pub. While some customers may pay attention to the music, even to the point of applauding, plenty of others are apt to treat it as ambience, on a par with a jukebox or televised sporting event. But at the ICC, the session is the main event, and while conversations do take place sotto voce and a Red Sox, Bruins, or Celtics broadcast might be screening on the TV (with sound down, of course), the pub collectively turns its focus on the center of the room where Basse, Kelleher, and the night's other musicians are holding forth.

The ICC session's "family" dynamic can also be described as multigenerational, with just about every age demographic represented. Children are most definitely seen and sometimes heard: Infants and toddlers snore in carriers, or loll in a parent's arms as they take in the scene around them with wide-eyed amazement or mellow serenity; pre-school and early elementary school-age youngsters fidget as they sit, or give into their curiosity and restlessness to roam around the room, often taking interest in some of the musical instruments (and occasionally earning a "don't touch!" reprove from a parent or friendly adult); middle-schoolers evince early-onset maturity, chatting politely with a solicitous senior citizen while keeping cell phone at the ready for an urgent burst of texting.

"We love that there are kids here," says Melissa Foley, lightly bouncing nine-month-old daughter Wren in her arms. "I've been coming to this session since the Blackthorne days, and it feels wonderful to be a Mom and have it still be part of my life."

Basse and Kelleher usually alternate a set of tunes with a song, whether a traditional ballad, a popular

(Continued on page 17)



"Instinctively, people seem to feel this connection to the harp," says Aine Minogue, "even if they're not sure why."

Echoing Across Millennia, the Irish Harp Shapes a Land

(Continued from page 1)

Laurel Martin, among others, is intrigued by the literal and metaphorical properties found in the harp's presence.

"If you look at the harp, what's one of the first things you notice? That between each string is a space. Each string, of course, represents a note. And when I play, it's the 'space' between the notes that really interests me. That space is so stark, it accentuates the melody."

Minogue agrees that there's something visually and aurally compelling about the harp, in large part because it suggests historical connotations stretching back centuries.

"The original harp came

from the concept of the bow and arrow, a very basic part of many cultures, so there's that hint of the ancient to it. But think about the harp's sheer physicality: It has the shape of a triangle – three parts. There is, again, something ancient at work here: the idea that a triangle consists of two elements different from one another, plus a third element representing a mixture of those two.

"Well, when you play a harp, you actually produce three sounds. With one hand you play the melody, with the other you play the bass. And this creates the third voice, that combination of overtones the other two voices produce. Even

as you listen to the two voices, the melody and the bass, you're aware of that third voice – it's subtle, but it's there."

Of course, it's one thing to appreciate the instrument, and quite another to play it. Minogue, Delaney, and Guilday each took very different paths to become harpists, and at different stages of their lives. Minogue was a young girl in boarding school when she "became besotted" by the sound of the Irish harp, which she heard in the unlikely setting of her school's 112-piece orchestra. Delaney came to the harp as a middle-aged mother drawn to Irish music sessions, but as a singer rather than

an instrumentalist. Her children's piano teacher had a small harp that he lent to Delaney, and she was smitten – in fact, she wound up studying with Minogue.

"It's so much easier when you have a teacher," says Delaney. "That's one important piece of advice as far as learning harp goes: Find someone you can connect with – you don't have to like them, just be able to work with them."

"The other piece of advice is, don't run out and buy a harp at the beginning. You have to find out first if you really want to do this, and if you find out that you don't want to, (Continued on page 15)

Another Opening, Another Show For Boston Publicist Sheehan

BY R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The lobby of The Colonial Theatre is a sea of faces. It's Opening Night for the musical "Hair," and anticipation is in the air. As people crowd the box office to pick up their tickets, a smartly dressed young woman with long dark hair and a dazzling smile is on the opposite side of the lobby, greeting members of the media, many of whom will be reviewing

the night's performance. This is Ann Sheehan, Director of Public Relations & Community Relations for Broadway Across America-Boston.

Ann's work is a maze of negotiating interviews, television coverage, photo shoots and personal appearances, all to spread the word about a show. There's advance publicity to coordinate for productions yet to come, while simultaneously dealing with

the demands of the show that's currently running. Juggling becomes both a talent and a necessity.

She has publicized the Boston engagements of some of Broadway's biggest hits, from "The Producers" and "Movin' Out" to "Hairspray," "Mamma Mia!" and "Wicked." She also handled publicity, not only for the reopening of Boston's magnificent Opera House, but for its inaugural production of Disney's "The Lion



ANN SHEEHAN
Promoter on the go.

King." Along the way she has rubbed elbows (Continued on page 15)

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The White House presents a touch of green for St. Patrick's Day.

AP photo

President and Taoiseach Celebrate Ireland

Obama: Nights Like This Show Us How Much We Share

(Continued from page 1)

Like so many immigrants who came to call this country home, these men and women were guided by a deep faith and an unwavering belief that here in America a better life is available for anybody who's willing to try. And even though they weren't always welcomed in their new land, they persevered. They built and led and defended our country while still holding fast to their heritage. And in many ways, what it means to be Irish helped to define to what it means to be American.

That's why today when we think about a Tip O'Neill – whose daughter, by the way, is here tonight and his granddaughter, and it was wonderful to meet them – or a Ronald Reagan, we see an example of how it's possible to argue over policy without sacrificing friendship; how it's easy to disagree without being disagreeable, if you make the effort. When we think about a Henry Ford or a Cyrus McCormick, we see the ingenuity that has driven generations of Americans to build the businesses and create the inventions that have helped make a nation an engine of prosperity.

When we think about an Audie Murphy or a John King, two of the hundreds of Irish Americans who have won the Medal of Honor, we see the heroism and bravery that comes with risking your own life for your country.

When we think about a family like the Kennedys, we see a steadfast belief in the importance of service and the duty each of us has to stand up for those who can't stand up for themselves.

In so many ways, the Irish and their descendants have set an example for us as a people. But they've also set an example for us as a nation struggling to be more just and more free.

In 1845, Frederick Douglass, the great fighter for freedom here in this country, had just published his *Narrative of a Life*

of an American Slave. And even as the book was a bestseller, Douglass began receiving steady streams of threats to his life. So he decided to embark on a two-year lecture tour of the British Isles until things cooled down. He began by spending four months in Ireland, far from the threat of slave catchers, where he quickly found common ground with the people locked in their struggle against oppression. As Douglass wrote, "I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life since landing in this country. I seem to have undergone a transformation. I live a new life."

It was at a Dublin rally that Douglass met the Irish nationalist Daniel O'Connell. And soon, the two struck up an unlikely friendship. O'Connell was a fierce opponent of slavery, and he began calling Douglass "the black O'Connell of the United States."

For his part, Douglass drew inspiration from the Irishman's courage and intelligence, ultimately modeling his own struggle for justice on O'Connell's belief that change could be achieved peacefully through rule of law. Daniel O'Connell never lived to see another great emancipator named Abraham Lincoln put pen to paper and bring slavery to an end. But the two men shared a universal desire for freedom – one that cannot be contained by language or culture or even the span of an ocean. And stories like this remind us just how deeply intertwined our two nations are. Nights like this remind us how much we share.

And so as we celebrate together, let us take a moment to appreciate all that Ireland has given to America -- the faith we keep, the family we hold close, the laughter and song and warmth we feel when surrounded by the ones we love. On behalf of the American people I want to thank the people of Ireland. In the years ahead, may our sons and daughters only grow closer."

Kenny: Mr. President, Our Destiny Is A Shared Prospect

(Continued from page 1)

not a self-contained journey, because on another Atlantic coast other people were waiting – waiting to be herded into ships; mothers soothing children, perhaps not even their own; husbands calling for wives; wives calling for husbands. Two peoples on the far coasts of one ocean, where in the words of Seamus Heaney, tireless waves came glinting, sifting from the Americas. And that was Africa's Cape Coast, and Ireland's Cape Clear.

Two peoples who would cross that single dividing ocean – the Irish to freedom; the Africans to slavery. Though they didn't know it, in time theirs were the genes that would build this great country of the United States of America. They actually are the genes that unite us this evening in the White House, designed by an Irish architect: to claim and to celebrate Saint Patrick, who came himself to redeem the soul of a people. And he was slave. Mr. President, at Cape Coast Clear you said it seemed as if the walls were talking. They might well have said: respect, mercy, obligation – never again. Because I, too, believe in the intense, unyielding, but compassionate Patrick; that his life unites us here today not only in our Irish ancestry but also in our common heredity.

As President Kennedy said about his Family of Man two weeks before he passed away, "If our society is to promote the Family of Man, then let us realize the magnitude of our task." And in the places around the world, nobody knows that more than the man standing behind me, the President of the United States.

Whether the Family of Man has to be promoted across the valleys of Kenya, or the mountains of Ireland, or the scattered islands of Indonesia, or in the wreckage of Japan with that country's difficulties at the moment, or whether, Mr. President, we have to take it to places that are still forgotten around the world, this

is our task.

This is the task of political leaders, because not only are we leaders but also fathers and parents teaching our children, our countries' children, about duty and about obligation, the need to fight cruelty, the need to fight injustice and inhumanity, wherever it happens. Our stories, indeed, might be singular but we do know that our destiny, our children's destiny, is a shared prospect. Mr. President, we meet here in this historic building almost at the spring equinox, when new light returns to our lives. You will come to us in May, the start of what was known as the Celtic summer -- or as we call it in the Gaelic language, in the Irish language, Bealtaine, the feast of the bright fires. And when you do, sir, you will return to your own people, your own place. Mr. President, you will come, in a way, home to Ireland. So tonight, let me paraphrase the words of one more famous than I: "Let the world go forth from this time and place. Let it go forth high and clear into the eves of this great city; that the bonds between Ireland and America as warm and as strong as they've ever been in the history of our two great countries – warm and strong and vigorous, and so they shall remain. Because we are united, inspired, sustained by our faith -- our faith, I might say, in the audacity of hope. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you. And God bless you and the people of America and the work you do for the oppressed and the disadvantaged around the world. And thank you on behalf of the people of Ireland. My concluding words are these: I know now that miracles do happen. The fountain is green and I've arrived in the East Room here in the White House. One week in office: enough to build the world – that's what the creator had. If we keep this up, Ireland will be great again inside a very short time.

BIR Music CD REVIEWS

BY SEAN SMITH

Andy Irvine, "Abocurragh" – Welcome back, Andy, we've missed you.

OK, it's not as if Irvine's been invisible in the 10 years since he released "Way Out Yonder," having recorded two albums with Mozaik and another with Planxty as part of their regularly occurring reunion tour. But his solo albums truly give the measure of the man and his gifts, as a pioneering instrumentalist on bouzouki, mandola, mandolin, and harmonica, as a foremost interpreter of traditional songs – not to mention contemporary ones – and as a songwriter of seemingly boundless depth and creativity.

What's particularly delightful about "Abocurragh" is how, even as Irvine gathers now-familiar elements of his musical career around him, notably his mates from Planxty and Mozaik, he explores new dimensions via collaborations with Norwegian musician Annebjorg Lien, adding to the rich mix of Irish, American, and Eastern European influences that have marked his work through the years. Lien's hardanger fiddle and nyckelharpa, with their exotic, resonant tonal qualities, bring a special plaintiveness to Irvine's rendition of "Emptyhanded," George Papavgeris's lament for the Australian farmers – those who came over with the first wave of convicts, as well as later immigrants – battling severe weather and equally severe financial constraints (mention also must be made of the fine backing vocals by Kate Burke and Ruth Hazleton). Lien and fellow Norwegian Lillebjorn Nilsen join Irvine on "Oslo," an Irvine memoir in the spirit of "O'Donoghues" that marries comical lyrics to a stately, spare Norwegian mazurka – and makes it all the more hilarious.

Donal Lunny and Liam O'Flynn help evoke the halcyon Planxty days on the traditional ballads "Three Huntsmen," a cautionary tale for would-be good samaritans, and "Willy of Winsbury," with its famously poignant melody that Richard Thompson adapted for his "Farewell, Farewell." (Lunny is in fact a constant here, since he turns up on just about every track and is the album's producer to boot.) Mozaik gets its turn in the spotlight on the Fermanagh ballad "James Magee" – which in particular showcases

Irvine's distinctive accompaniment style – with guest appearances by fiddlers Bruce Molsky and Rens van der Zalm, and then on "The Demon Lover," with Molsky, Lunny, and Nikola Parov; the latter is easily one of the album's highlights, with the shifting time signature and Balkan instrumentation helping create an aptly suspenseful, supernatural atmosphere.

But it's the Irvine compositions "Mother Jones," an appreciation of legendary labor agitator Mary Harris, and "Victory at Lawrence" – recalling the 1912 strike in that Massachusetts city's woolen mills – that are especially noteworthy, even if it's a matter of timing. Irvine has never been shy about manifesting his pro-worker, left-of-center views ala Woody Guthrie, and the arrival of these songs comes as the US is in the midst of intense debate over the role of labor unions. Whether or not you agree with Irvine's political views, at the very least he encourages listeners to put the recent controversy in Wisconsin into a greater historical context. And that's the mark of a good songwriter.

Brendan Begley & Caoimhin O Raghallaigh, "A Moment of Madness" –

Anyone who's seen accordionist Begley and fiddler O Raghallaigh perform together (as they did last fall at Boston College) knows that, visually, they make for a study in contrasts: Begley, with clean-shaven head, large frame and jocular bearing; O Raghallaigh, of a slighter build and nature, sometimes shaggy-haired and bearded and sometimes less so. They've also traversed Irish music in different ways: Begley, a



member of the Boys of the Lough, is steeped in the Kerry tradition of slides and polkas, and possessed of a striking voice suited to both Irish and English songs; O Raghallaigh, who drew acclaim for his collaborations with Mick O'Brien, Catherine McEvoy, Peadar O Riada, and Martin

Hayes, among others, is known as much for his experimentation, whether through use of non-standard tunings and instruments or electronic enhancements, as for his playing.

On this, their first CD as a duo, Begley and O Raghallaigh very effectively merge their musical as well as personal characters to create a body of work that is by turns propulsive, mesmerizing, occasionally irreverent, and even a little outrageous. The 12 tracks were recorded in six different locations, one of them in a concert setting, which lends the album a vagabondish feel; whatever the location, the two are able to find their individual and shared groove.

"A Moment of Madness" is a decided departure from the conventional presentation of traditional Irish instrumental music as set upon set of reels and little or no embellishments or cross-hatching; polkas, marches, jigs and slides are plentiful here, with ear-catching modulations and harmonies. For instance, there's the live track, a set of three polkas in which Begley and O Raghallaigh build the tension through the first two tunes – especially the second, where harmony seems to teeter on the

edge of dissonance – until it is resolved in "Julia's Norwegian Polka," where Begley, as O Raghallaigh relates in the sleeve notes, "takes to the chair and belts the boards with his bare-toed sandals." On "O'Sullivan's March," Begley sets mood and pace by first establishing the rhythm through aspirating his accordion's bellows (it sounds like some fearsome beast in the midst of great labors) and then launching into the tune, he and O Raghallaigh trading off octaves. O Raghallaigh breaks out a hardanger fiddle for a solo polka set, and the result is breathtaking – something not quite of Ireland nor of Scandinavia, but with the best qualities of both.

Don't get the idea that it's all quirks and oddities. The two musicians are acutely aware of the tradition in which they toil, and the album's hornpipe set reflects this. It's played fairly straightforwardly, and brilliantly – listen for the turns on "The Chancellor" and "The Frisco," credited to the repertoires of no less than Denis Murphy and Johnny Leary. Begley's treatment of the air "An Chead Mhairt den Fhomhair" is stirring and dignified, and the most steadfast traddie surely will have no complaints about their "Humours of Lisheen/Munster Jig/Sean Coughlin's" medley.

The album ends with Christy Leahy's "P&O Polka," which Begley introduces slowly and deliberately (and with sumptuous bass) until O Raghallaigh helps him bring it up to a more familiar tempo, and then the two take turns pushing the tune along until the track fades out – as if to say that the tune will never really end. Or that they'll never stop playing it. Either eventuality would be fine indeed.

Lucy Foley, "Copenhagen" – Clare native Foley spent three years in Copenhagen working as a street performer and photographer, and, evidently, finding her singer-songwriter muse. This seven-track CD is full of the sort of vivid imagery and flights of fancy nurtured by an existence devoted to pursuit of both the visual and the dramatic arts, with the mysteries of relationships seen through the prism of the natural/primal world one minute, or in the context of a carnival or fairy tale the next. In "Making Circles," two people trying to find their comfort zone with each other are "like punch-drunk October flies in pointless rapture/dancing one final dance before the capture"; the brassy, hard-edged "That Pleasant Smile" is all about impatience, doubt and incompatibility ("Your smile is made of chain mail, baby/it fixes your mood at smug with no swing/your defenses are strong now, don't you worry/I'm not planning to mount an uprising").



Stylistically, Foley's songs run the gamut from grunge to Motown to klezmer, as well as rock and pop; vocally, she has

that Kate Bush combination of child-like wonder and occasionally disconcerting other-worldliness, which she shows on "It's a Tangle," a waltz-tempo bit of frothiness pumped up by multi-instrumentalist Ross Bonadonna's keyboards that are suggestive of a slightly off-kilter calliope -- in fact, when Foley climbs to her voice's upper register on the final chorus, you have the sensation of being on a merry-go-round that may be about to swirl out of control. Control -- as in asserting it -- is at the core of "Mister Bogeyman," a wickedly absurd cabaret set to klezmer.

On the one hand, Foley may sound very far-removed from her native land, but her love of literary whimsy and regard for the mythical and supernatural perhaps indicate she knows her roots very well.





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Regina Delaney says finding a good teacher—“Someone you can connect with”—is vital in learning the Irish harp. *Sean Smith photo*

The Irish Harp Shapes a Land

(Continued from page 11)

you're stuck with a harp gathering dust in the corner. So find one to borrow.”

Guilday's route was even more unlikely. Her childhood included a relatively short-lived brush with traditional music via the Scottish bagpipes, but her harp epiphany didn't occur until near the end of her college years, when she read a newspaper article about New York City Uilleann piper Bill Ochs. Never having heard of the Uilleann pipes, she arranged to visit him so she could satisfy her curiosity. In the middle of the visit, Ochs' roommate happened by, and at Ochs' urging, brought out an Irish harp to show Guilday.

“All I wanted to do,” she recalls, “was play it.”

Getting someone to help her do that, however, was no easy task. The only harpists Guilday knew of were those who played the concert, or orchestral, harp. Finally, she found a teacher in Nellie Zimmer, a retired concert harpist who had enough interest and experience in Irish-style harp to give Guilday a solid foundation. Guilday wound up moving to Ireland for a year to further her harp education. “I met my husband during that year in Ireland,” she adds with a smile. “So I really owe the harp a lot of gratitude.”

It's fair to say that these three women have been part of a modern-day harp revival that has inexorably gathered momentum over the past few decades, with a number of high-profile performers helping create interest in, and awareness of, the instrument. They include (but are by no means limited to): Mary O'Hara, whose career reaches back to the 1950s; the late Derek Bell, a mainstay of The Chieftains for many years; Clannad's Moya Brennan; Loreena McKennitt; Máire Ní Chathasaigh; Patrick Ball; Antoinette McKenna; and Ann Heymann.

Delaney, for one, can bear witness to the uptick in the harp's popularity through her activities with the New England Harp Orchestra, whose membership stretches from Boston to southern Maine. She notes that the NEHO players demographic encompasses 20-somethings and an 84-year-old — who started taking lessons at age 81.

Yet Minogue sees a paradox in contemporary harp-playing. Harpists by and large are showcasing the instrument's versatility to a great degree, especially by integrating jazz and world music influences. But she feels the older, and most distinctive, facets of traditional harp music are being overlooked, even neglected.

“The younger players are emulating the fiddlers, and playing a lot of reels and jigs,” she explains. “While it's intriguing to watch the harpists enlarge styles, they seem to be narrowing their choices. There just doesn't seem to be as much interest in playing slip jigs, hornpipes, and especially airs. So a vast trove of harp music has been slimmed down — it's as if one went from a size 22 to a size 4.”

Says Guilday, “There are some great things you can do with dance tunes — the jigs and reels — but the slow airs bring out the best features of the harp. That's where I've been putting a lot of my interest.”

Inevitably, as Minogue and Guilday say, it's almost impossible to speak of the harp as “just” a musical instrument. They note the harp's symbolism has a political context as well, through its association with Irish nationalism; in fact, as Guilday points out, the Society of United Irishmen used the image of a harp in their emblem. And, of course, Cromwell made a point of targeting the Irish harp for destruction in his efforts to subdue Ireland.

In fact, Minogue says, the fortunes of Ireland and the Irish harp seem inextricably linked. “To tell the history of the harp is to tell the history of Ireland. Ireland was at its highest peak when the harp was at its height, and the greatest period of oppression in Ireland coincided with a time when the harp was all but dying out. So the harp creates the sense of hope that we — as Ireland — are emerging from dark times.”

“You can hear great beauty in a fiddle, or a flute, or the pipes, obviously. But I think of the harp as not just an instrument of music, but an instrument of transportation, that takes you back through the ages. Because when you play, or hear, the harp, you are really hearing the story of Ireland.”

Another Opening, Another Show for Boston Publicist Sheehan

(Continued from page 11)

with everybody from Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft to Kelsey Grammer, Kathleen Turner, and Judith Light, among others.

While some might see the job as glamorous, Ann often puts in marathon days that don't end until well after a show's final curtain. But that's par for the course.

“It's not 9 to 5,” she says when we chat. “I haven't seen my wonderful husband [Michael] all week. You have your daytime responsibilities and then there's the evening responsibilities. Getting the show up and running and doing what you have to do. But entertainment is like that. You know what you're getting into. It's a lot of long hours.” Still, she loves her job and the diversity of promoting live theater.

Although the current season for BAA is not yet over (a revival of “West Side Story” opens at the Colonial on June 14), Ann is already busy publicizing the company's stellar 2011-2012 season, set to include “South Pacific,” “La Cage Aux Folles,” “American Idiot,” “The Addams Family,” “Les Miserables,” “Disney's Beauty & The Beast,” and “Billy Elliot.”

She has been on staff at BAA-B (originally called Broadway in Boston) since 1997, having previously worked at The Boston Ballet. And prior to that, she worked for the Red Sox. Starting at Fenway Park when she was just 16 (“I was a wee one”) and continuing on through her studies at Suffolk University, she worked everywhere from the grounds crew to the box office, marketing and

community relations.

Even though she's been in the theater for 14 years, the girl who grew up in Dorchester (“St. Brendan's—it's very important to note the parish”) maintains the same sense of enthusiasm she had the day she started the job.

“I remember my first trip to New York for work,” she said. “We went for an advertising meeting, ironically for [a show called] ‘The Irish and How They Got That Way.’ I'll never forget sitting in the offices of Grey Advertising and looking out the window. We were just above the Cup of Noodle Soup (billboard display in Times Square). It was exhilarating.”

Although she once considered an on-air career in sportscasting, Ann has never had a desire to be on the stage herself. But her love of the arts can be traced back to ballet lessons as a child. “My parents had five kids (including Lee, Jackie, Paul and the late Darlene) . . . Sunday nights were as a family, at home, 7 o'clock, watching Disney together. When they could, they would take us to the theater. My earliest memory with my Mom is at the Shubert, the first touring production of ‘Annie,’ which was like ‘79. I remember walking into the Shubert and being ‘Wow.’ “

These days, her niece Brianna is the performer in the Sheehan family, achieving great success in step-dancing competitions around the world. “She just came back from the All Irelands in Dublin. She placed 31 out of 125 and she's going back to Worlds in April. She dances with The O'Shea

Chaplin Academy. I'm just so impressed with her. Here she is, 17, she's so committed . . . She's grounded. She's adorable. She's a great kid.”

If there's one constant in Ann's life, it's her sense of family. “I think that's one of the great things about being Irish.” Of her own history, she said, “My grandparents left Ireland when they were really young. And when they got here, they never really looked back . . . There was so much poverty . . . They came here for the dream . . . They were from Cork and Kerry and they came over, like everyone, through Ellis Island.”

Her grandfather was an elevator operator in addition to working for John Hancock. And her grandmother was a chambermaid at the Kenmore Hotel. Her father, Leo, who worked for Boston Edison and later as a national rep for the AFL-CIO, was originally from South Boston while her mother Marie was from Mission Hill. Once the couple married there was a debate over where to settle. “My mother said, ‘I'm not going to Southie,’ and my father said ‘I'm not going to Mission Hill,’ so they compromised on good old Dorchester.”

Her face lights up when she speaks of her parents. “I don't have

children, but if I did, boy I would raise my kids exactly like my parents raised us . . . We were taught, ‘Be a good person. Put yourself in other people's shoes before you make a judgment. Be a leader not a follower. Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself or for someone else’ — those types of things. And remember, ‘Family first. Your best, best, best friends are the ones that sit around your dinner table.’ “

“That's how we all grew up — ‘don't get a big head,’” she says with a laugh. “My father would say, ‘Just because you're so great doesn't mean you're better than anyone else in this family.’ But behind your back they're bragging about you.”

Famous folk have come and gone in Ann's life. But so many years later, Leo and Marie Sheehan would take great pride to hear their daughter beam, “I'm so lucky to have the family and friends I have.”

“Hair” continues at The Colonial Theatre through April 10. For tickets, call 800-982-2787. For information on the 2011-2012 Broadway Across America season, visit broadwayacrossamerica.com/boston/.

R. J. Donovan is publisher of *OnStageBoston.com*.

Heetons to Join Fraser and Haas in Concert

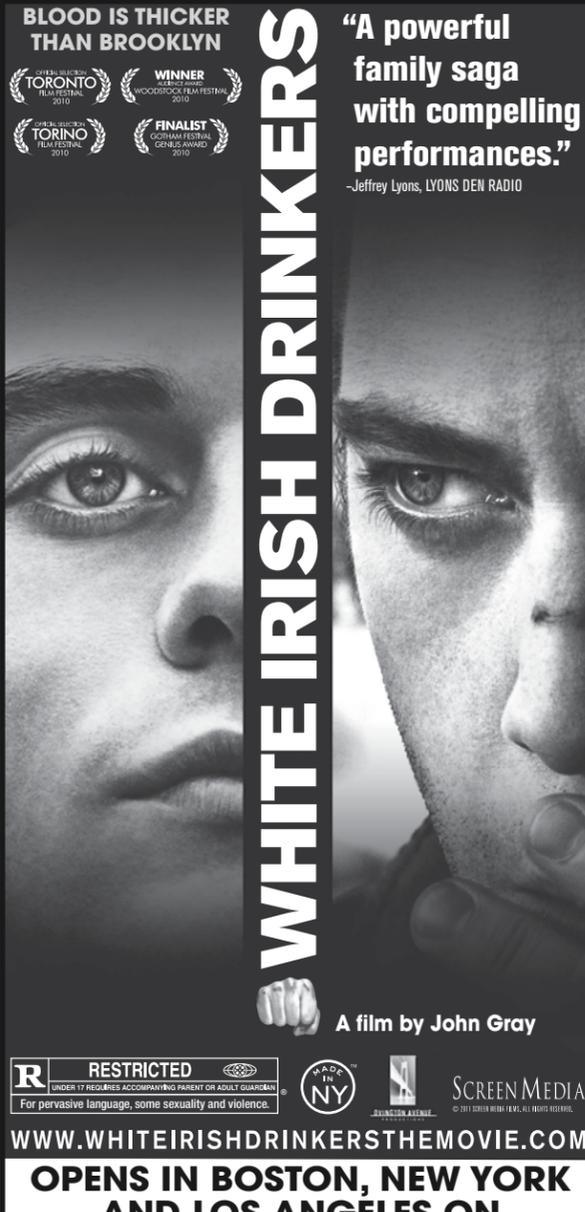
Two of America's most popular, and personable, Celtic duos will be on hand at First Parish Church Cambridge on April 8, when local husband-and-wife team Matt and Shannon Heaton join fiddler Alasdair Fraser and cellist Natalie Haas for a concert featuring music that draws on Irish and Scottish traditions as well as contemporary influences.

Fraser, regarded as one of Scotland's most eminent performers and teachers, and Haas, who has helped spark interest in the cello's Celtic capabilities, have recorded two albums together and appeared at festivals and concerts world-wide, including Celtic Connections in Scotland, the New Hampshire Highland Games, Somerville Theater, and Celtic Colors in Nova Scotia. The Heaton's combination of Irish flute, whistle, guitar, bouzouki, and vocals has elicited praise for its strength, sweetness and sophistication, and earned them a following that stretches from the US to Thailand, and beyond.

For more information on the concert, which begins at 8 p.m., see mktix.com/heptunes.

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A column of news and updates of the Boston Celtic Music Fest (BCM Fest), which celebrates the Boston area's rich heritage of Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton music and dance with a grassroots, musician-run winter music festival and other events during the year.

— Sean Smith

Music not just for dancing — The contra dance tradition is as venerable a New England institution as fall foliage, snowy winters and Red Sox pennant fever. The tradition, with connections to Irish, Scottish, and other Celtic music, not only survives but thrives, thanks to many creative and energetic young musicians — including a number in the Greater Boston area.

This month's BCM Fest Celtic Music Monday concert, "BIDAwhile: Contra and Celtic," which takes place April 11 at Harvard Square's Club Passim, will feature two local bands, Murphy's Shadow and Nor'easter, culled from this new generation of contra dance musicians.

The members of both bands are active in the Boston Intergenerational Dance Advocates (BIDA), a recent addition to the roster of organizations supporting contra and other traditional dance. BIDA holds a monthly contra dance at Cambridge's Masonic Hall as well as workshops and other events. [Information on BIDA is available at www.bidadance.org]

Since forming in 2008, Nor'easter — which is comprised of fiddler Cedar Stanistreet, guitarist/mandolinist Max Newman and pianist Julie Vallimont — has become a fixture in the contra dance circuit, playing at dances throughout and outside New England, as well as at other venues including BCM Fest.

Vallimont also supplies the piano for Murphy's Shadow, which includes fiddler Brendan Carey Block (of Annalivia) and guitarist/mandolinist/vocalist Eric McDonald, who also plays with Block in another contra dance band, Matching Orange.

"There's definitely a big Celtic component to contra," says Vallimont. "It's not surprising if you think about how the Irish, Scottish, and Cape Breton communities have taken root in New England down through the years. Contra dance music reflects so many influences in New England, whether traditional or contemporary."

Contra dance music, and the performance of it, has changed significantly in the past few decades, Vallimont says. Where once community "orchestra"-type



Nor'easter (above) and Murphy's Shadow will show the Celtic side of contra dance music when they perform at the April 11 Celtic Music Monday show in Club Passim.

ensembles or local musicians might have provided the music, pioneering groups such as Wild Asparagus and Nightingale paved the way for progressive contra music bands using more complex arrangements.

"There are different ways of thinking about the music now, and even the instrumentation," she says. "When I play piano with Murphy's Shadow, for instance, I don't feel completely like an accompanist; I can interact in other ways with the other instruments."

Vallimont, despite her considerable involvement in contra dance and BIDA — she serves on the association's board — is a relative newcomer to the scene, having only started playing about six years ago. She credits BIDA for aiding her immersion into the music.

"One of the things BIDA seeks to do is to offer opportunities for musicians as well as dancers to mingle, to pass along what they know to one another — transmitting this information is what helps keep the tradition alive and well."

"BIDAwhile: Contra and Celtic" begins at 8 p.m. in Club Passim, which is located at 47 Palmer Street in Harvard Square. Admission is \$12, \$6 for members of Passim, WGBH and WUMB. See clubpassim.org for reservations and other information.

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'THE NEWS GREW SO BAD YOU COULD LAUGH FOR CRYING'

In Ireland Unhinged, the Author Searches for Ireland's Heart and Soul in the Shadow of the 'Celtic Tiger'

BY PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

In 2000, the author David Monagan did something many Irish Americans dream of, but never get around to doing for countless reasons personal and professional. He and his family sold their home in Connecticut and moved the proverbial "lock, stock, and barrel" to Cork where he embarked upon a self-avowed search for "Ireland's soul," the Ireland he remembered and cherished from a year spent in Dublin in the early 1970s.

What he, his wife, and his children found when they set foot in Ireland was a nation grappling with the tenets and traditions of the past in the face of the spreading sweep of the economic force dubbed the "Celtic Tiger." Monagan's incisive, witty, and compelling account of his first few years in Ireland was *Jaywalking with the Irish* (2004), which established him as a unique and uniquely gifted observer of his adopted home.

What he observed over the past six years or so in Ireland infuses the pages of his new book, *Ireland Unhinged: Encounters with a Wildly Changing Country*, and he has crafted a work that is wildly entertaining, often disturbing, sometimes gut-wrenching, sometimes fall-down funny, and always an illuminating look at what remains of old Irish ways, what the new ways have wrought, and what the road beyond the fallen Tiger might hold.

From his conversations with such literary titans as Seamus Heaney and J.P. Donleavy, whose international 1955 best-seller *The Ginger Man* is often called the Irish *Catcher in the Rye*, to a Donegal witch, IRA gunmen, avaricious speculators, and myriad other memorable characters in travels throughout the island, Monagan has peered into his adopted country then and now with insights that are must reading for anyone interested in Ireland.

Monagan, who also wrote the critically acclaimed *Journey into the Heart* (Penguin, 2007), about pioneers of modern medicine, has contributed articles on Ireland to a wide array of publications including *Forbes Life*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Miami Herald*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Sunday Times*, *The Guardian*, and numerous Irish newspapers and magazines. In Boston to kick off his book tour for *Ireland Unhinged*, Monagan sat down with the BIR to talk about his work.

Q. What factor or factors compelled you to write *Ireland Unhinged*?

A. I started the book some three years ago – before the big crash. From almost the moment we arrived in Ireland, it felt like a Gold Rush coming everywhere, and in many ways traditional values were going out the window. It grew, and it became obvious that the Ireland we had moved to was changing radically. The sense was one of emotional weight.

Q. As a transplant, do

you believe that you were – are – able to view the economic blight through a different prism or viewpoint?

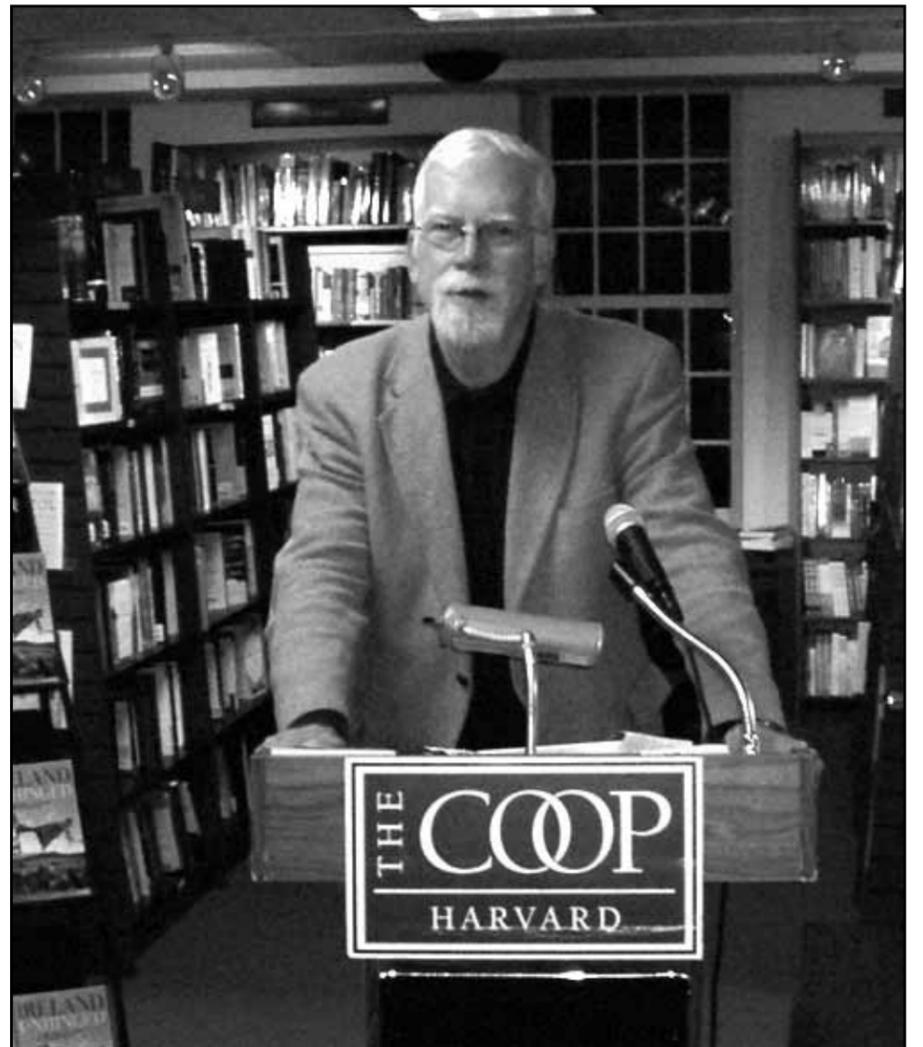
A. Perhaps because I'd relocated there seeking some inherent, immutable essence of Irish life, I could see how things were disappearing. I found myself thinking that I don't know what Ireland's becoming anymore. Still, in many areas, all that makes Ireland and the Irish such a unique people remains, always will, I believe.

What I did see was a nation that made a lot of bad choices, and while the bankers and speculators brought all to their knees, the fact is that the middle class bought into it all, bought into sheer speculation in real estate. Everyone was betting on the next pot of gold, on the idea that the boom would never end.

A neighbor told me, "You can never lose on Irish real estate." There was just this delirium about property in Ireland." As it was all happening – even before the bust – I was wondering what's the emotional and spiritual relevance here?

Q. Do you believe that at least in part, the real-estate "delirium" had some grounding in traditional Irish views of property – for example, the historical fact that for centuries, even owning a small plot was denied so many in Ireland?

A. I do think that there's some validity to the theme that land is historically *it* for the Irish. When you break Irish confidence in prop-



David Monagan shares his thoughts.

Peter Stevens photo

erty, you're hitting deep at the very spirit of the Irish. Still, I refuse to accept any so-called gospel truth about the so-called Irish character. I do believe that confidence doesn't come naturally to Ireland – for reasons historical, cultural, social, and religious. It's complicated stuff. I also believe that in Ireland there's still a sense of wonder, versus the weariness and outright cynicism in so many other places.

Q. Have you found that there are some in Ireland who blame the U.S. for the collapse?

A. Actually, I've found that there's very little blame on the U.S. Instead, the Irish have this national sense of

"what did *we* do wrong, where did *we* go wrong?" The middle-class understands that they bought into this. Many in Ireland believe that the U.S. is the only one that can lead everyone out of this mess.

Q. Do you still feel like a bit of an outsider and still somewhat impartial observer, or more someone with an Irish sensibility?

A. I'm a person between two worlds – not fully an outsider. I think that I grow more Irish every day, but will never be as Irish as someone born there. As a writer and observer, it perhaps allows a bit more acuity.

Ireland Unhinged: Encounters with a Wildly

Changing Country, by David Monagan; Council Oak Books; ISBN 978-1-57178-252-6; hardcover; 286 pages; \$28.

A Rejuvenation at ICCNE

(Continued from page 11)

contemporary one that might come from the repertoire of a Christy Moore or Sean Keane, or a singalong for everyone to join in. But they take the inclusive aspect of the session to heart, and Basse in particular makes a point of singling out a newcomer, or a regular on the periphery of the crowd, to take his or her turn in the spotlight, and hushing whatever background chatter there might be so everyone can hear.

And what might they hear? Anything and everything. "It's mostly Irish," says Basse, "but we branch out in a big way. People will do bluegrass, country, even gospel and Cajun. The biggest thing is that people should feel comfortable, and do whatever suits them. We're all out to have a good time here, and enjoy ourselves together."

Adds Kelleher, "We do make a conscious effort to

maintain balance between instrumentals and songs. Some people really like the tunes, and that's what they come psyched to play, so we definitely want to be sure to do that."

For Kelleher, the everyone-gets-a-turn element of the ICC session, and the diversity of the material that's often presented, ring true to him. "My parents are from Cork, and they always had nights like this where you'd get a whole bunch of people together to talk, sing, play music, and most of all to simply be in one place. Everyone had a 'party piece' they'd contribute, which meant that everyone really shared in the experience. That's how I grew up, and this is just like I remember it."

Perhaps the most meaningful endorsement of the ICC session comes from none other than former Blackthorne owner John O'Connor, who regularly makes his way to Canton



Children of all sizes are seen, and sometimes heard, at the ICC session.

Sean Smith photo

and sits in with Basse and Kelleher. On one recent

Saturday night, in the course of which he took

some strokes on bodhran, led a few songs, and for a little while loaned his lap to one of the younger visitors in attendance, O'Connor fondly recalled the camaraderie at the former Blackthorne session and expressed satisfaction that it has endured through the ICC.

"It's different than what some may be used to, what with all the singing, and the different kinds of songs," he said. "But when the Blackthorne session was going, we agreed we didn't want it to be a strict Irish session of tune after tune after tune. You want to keep the connection between everyone that's there, to make everyone feel welcome. I definitely see that same idea at work here."

As he finished speaking, a young man began belting out "Sweet Home Alabama," accompanied by clapping hands, singing voices, and a few whoops and cheers.

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Dublin Free Press

Saturday, April 16th
3rd Left

Thursday, April 21st
Sean McLaughlin

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Thursday, April 28th
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Friday, April 29th
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Saturday, April 30
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"Mrs. O'Brien"

Vincent CroTTY



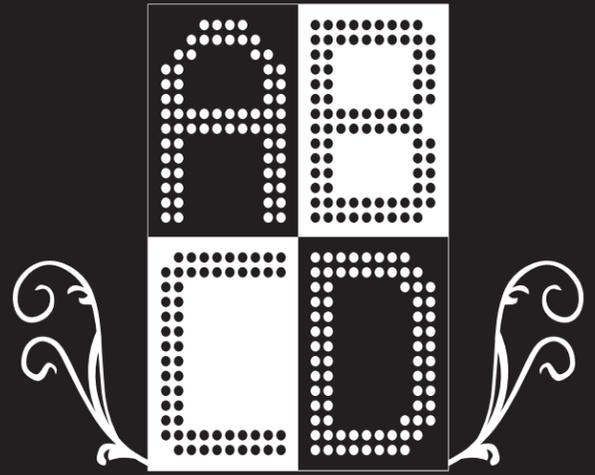
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Mrs. O'Brien, Oil 8" x 10, 2005

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Traveling People

As Springtime Beckons, Ireland Fixes on Tourist Lures

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Driving in Ireland might euphemistically be called a challenge for those of us accustomed to driving on the right.

But the Irish, good folks that they are, have accepted that not everyone driving the roads speaks English, so they have designed a series of signs that leave little doubt about their messages.

A zigzag line indicates that a road ahead is no doubt just as much of a zigzag as the sign and maybe more so and there are several signs that depict a car or person falling into the water from a ledge. A friend saw the sign with the car and asked, "Why would anyone want to do that?"

Some signs just make you laugh out loud, such as the sign my sister photographed in Dublin at a Surgery that said, underneath the surgery designation, "Bicycles will be removed."

Tourism Ireland

We were delighted to read a story recently in *The Irish Times* saying that Tourism Ireland, the body responsible for attracting visitors to Ireland, is "going back to basics." The article said Tourism Ireland would focus its efforts on Britain, the US, France, and Germany, which account for 75 percent of Ireland's tourism.

Niall Gibbons, the agency's chief executive, said tourism peaked in 2007 – at 9 million overseas visitors after growing from 7 million at the start of the decade. By 2009, when the last official figures were recorded, visitor numbers had dropped to 7.6 million. *The Times* said, "While not confirmed, last year it is estimated that the figure had fallen to 6.6 million."

Ireland's beauty hasn't changed over the years but the economy has changed a lot – both here and there – and travelers are looking to get the best value for money. And, airlines like Aer Lingus (my personal favorite) have cut flights in and out of Ireland – especially to Shannon, which is an airport I really like because it's so small and accommodating. *The Times* story says that the number of seats in and out of Ireland has fallen to 425,000 from 500,000 a week in 2008.

Gibbons said that value for money became the industry's achilles heel, particularly at the height of the boom when escalating domestic demand meant tourism operators forgot about overseas visitors. Some elements, such as exchange rates, are, of course, beyond anyone's control, but others are not. And, *The Times* story said, "It looks like the industry is addressing at least some of the issues and that Ireland now has the cheapest hotels in Europe – and restaurants are following fast."

Many British visitors are between 25-35, the story said, so Tourism Ireland has utilized Facebook



An Irish friend saw this sign in a harbor town in Co. Kerry and said, "Don't try this at home."



This is a Co. Galway road you probably wouldn't want to drive down - well, not at a high rate of speed anyway.

and Twitter messages to woo more of this age group and that approach has made an impact. The agency now has 230,000 friends on Facebook, and the number is growing by about 3,000 a day.

Focus group research says Ireland is fun, friendly, relaxed, beautiful, and photogenic. How true. It is a most beautiful island and we were happy to see that the tourist numbers seem to be on the rise.

Mayo's Greenway-Cycleway

Last spring, we attended the official opening of the Greenway-Cycleway that currently runs from Newport to Mulranny, so we were delighted to hear that the trail will be opened along its full length from Westport to Achill later this month

providing residents and tourists with a 42-km almost entirely off-road cycling and walking path.

The Greenway follows the abandoned railway line that once ran from Westport to the Achill Sound terminal, just before the Michael Davitt Bridge to the island and across the road from the O'stán Oileán Acla/Achill Island Hotel. The old railway was in place from 1894 to 1937 and its most famous feature is the viaduct over the Newport River at the bottom of the main street in Newport, near The Granuaile pub and Newport Post Office and across from the entryway to Newport House, a well-known manor house hotel.

Any energetic souls interested in taking a



An Irish sign in Liscannon, Co. Clare, inspired a visiting American to ask, "Why would anyone do that?"

spin along the Greenway-Cycleway can rent bicycles in Newport and Westport.

If you have never visited this area of Ireland, it is very highly recommended – especially Achill Island. I spend most of my time in this area and it is delightful as well as beautiful, has wonderful food, music, shopping, and much, much more.

Connemara

We recently received a booklet from DuVine Adventures that included a "moderately difficult" bike ride through magnificent Connemara. Trips are scheduled in May, throughout the summer months, September, and October.

The trip starts and ends in Galway and sites visited along the way include Kylemore Abbey, Round-

stone, Clifden, and Ireland's only fjord, Killary Harbour, which is a natural boundary between Counties Galway and

Mayo. The scenery along those routes is amazing and there's a great little sheep and wool museum in Leenane at the head of the harbor where it's fun to stop, enjoy the exhibits and homemade food – the quiche is great. Another very nice restaurant in Leenane that I've visited and enjoyed many times is The Blackberry Café and Restaurant right on the main route, the N59, just as you enter Leenane. There's ample parking across the street.

For more information about this and other tours offered by DuVine, visit their website at dುವine.com or call 888-396-5383. The company also offers tailor-made trips such as group or family travel, solo travel, yoga bike adventures, and a chef-on-wheels series where a chef joins your luxury bike tour. Guides, bikes, and van support are provided with all these DuVine tours.

Travel

Ireland is in bloom after a long, cold, snowy winter. Doors and windows have been flung open to welcome the fresh air of spring and Ireland is ready and waiting for visitors.

Enjoy your trip whenever and wherever you go and don't forget to check the internet for the latest travel specials, especially air and ground deals with Aer Lingus and other international carriers. Check also with your favorite travel agent.

And, when you're in Ireland, be sure to stop by the Fáilte Ireland tourist board offices (marked with a big green shamrock) for details about festivals and other activities, to secure accommodation and learn about the area in which you're traveling.

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Thirty-Two Counties

Antrim: Taxi driver Frank Ritchie from Newtownabbey recently picked up two passengers from Carnmoney to take them to the Royal Victoria Hospital, but by the time he reached his destination he had an extra passenger. Billy and Angela Fegan's son Isaac had decided to make an early appearance. Frank pulled his taxi on to the side of the Westlink and helped Billy deliver the little boy, who weighed in at a respectable nine pounds three ounces. The Fegans joked that they initially thought to call their son Francis Westlink.

Armagh: The subject of a designated rank for Lurgan's taxi-drivers has been discussed for the past 25 years, according to one taxi driver, but now it looks as though there might be a decision. Taxi drivers have been fined for parking in the town in places designated for buses, particularly at the old post office on Market Street, but a meeting between Lurgan Forward and the Chamber of Commerce has now taken place and Carnegie Lane has been chosen as a location for up to twelve taxi places.

Carlow: A television crew from NBC spent the national feast day at Duckett's Grove in an attempt to record any ghostly sounds or appearances. "Destination Truth" was filmed at the castle, the home of the Duckett family until 1916, by Josh Gates and a team of paranormal investigators, with the team and crew totalling more than 120. They were hoping to record the sound of the banshee for their American audience, and the visit was welcomed by Eileen O'Rourke of Carlow Tourism.

Cavan: Large numbers of local business people in Belturbet called on Tommy McMahon last month as his furniture business closed its doors. The shop first opened in 1932 when Tommy's parents, Jimmy and Julia, opened one half of the present premises as a grocery store. They gradually expanded their merchandise over the years until the early 1990s when Tommy took over. For the past ten years his daughter Tanya has been working alongside him. Some of the others employed in McMahon's included Willie Millar, Willie Howe, Richard Gibson and Vincent McDonald.

Clare: Martin O'Gorman, a member of Kilrush RNLI, had just completed a casualty care course a few days earlier when he was called upon to put his new skills into practice. He was enjoying a break in a cafe in Kilkee when his wife phoned him to say that a man had collapsed in the street in Kilkee. She collected him in the car and drove him to the place where the man had collapsed and he began full CPR. He was assisted by a nurse who had also stopped, and the Kilkee Marine Rescue Service were soon at the scene. Their public relations officer, Manual DiLucia, confirmed that Martin's actions had undoubtedly helped to save the man's life.

Cork: A collaboration between the City Council and Safefood will see the development of a community garden on waste ground at Harbour View Road in Knocknaheeny. The idea behind the garden is to teach people how to grow their own vegetables and to give them a sense of ownership of the land in a bid to eradicate anti-social behavior. According to Elaine O'Mahony of Safefood, it is the community that will decide how the space is used so that it will become a social area for everyone. Drainage pathways and a reed bed will contribute to the recycling of water, while

an oven made from clay will also be constructed.

Derry: Hannah Eastwood from Coleraine has been presented with the UK Young Scientist of the Year award. A former student of Loreto College, the eighteen-year-old won the award for her research into removing chromium from drinking water. Now studying veterinary science at Bristol University, Hannah was also overall runner-up in the BT Young Scientist competition for research into green rust. This was carried out under the direction of her teacher at Loreto College, Brian McKenna. Hannah is the first female winner of the award.

Donegal: The first-ever reunion was held recently in Lynch's Tavern in Castlefin for former employees of the old Porters factory, where shirts and pajamas were manufactured. More than seventy cutters and smoothers, machinists and delivery drivers gathered for the occasion, which was organized by Martina McClay and John O'Dowd; John drove a lorry for the company for fourteen years. The factory closed its doors twenty-four years ago and many of the former employees had lost touch with each other over the years. Proceeds from the night were donated to the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Down: George Bryans, Dennis Rice and Tony Megraw, who are all members of Banbridge Kayak and Canoe Club, have become the first people to travel the entire length of the Newry and Portadown Canal since 1937. The leading kayaker had to force a way through reeds and also had to hack at fallen branches to open up a passage. The trio were also hindered by a group of swans which steadfastly swam slowly in front of them before eventually taking flight. The expedition was supported by Councillor John Hanna who hopes that it will encourage others to use the canal and the towpath.

Dublin: Wayne Curtis from Rathcoole was quite relaxed when he set off with his fiancée, Niamh Fitzgerald, for Holles Street maternity hospital, as Niamh had experienced just a few cramps. However things turned out a bit differently when she told him the baby was on the way and, pulling into a side road near Bewley's Hotel, Wayne delivered his baby daughter, Ruby, before asking a passing motorist to call the emergency services. Mother and child, with the electronics engineer turned midwife Wayne, eventually made it to the hospital where Ruby was pronounced to be in good health.

Fermanagh: When florist Rachel Gibson from Irvinestown was invited to address a floristry class and give a demonstration at Greenmount College in Antrim, she decided to create a bridal bouquet. This turned out to be fortuitous as the most famous prospective bride of the moment turned up at the college. Rachel, who works at Clare Flowers in Irvinestown, was more than surprised when Prince William and Kate Middleton arrived at the class and the bride-to-be picked up the bouquet of orchids for closer examination.

Galway: Aoife O'Shea from Kinvara recently organized a fashion show in Gort to raise funds for the heart charity Croí. The sixteen-year-old, a student at Seamount College, has a special reason for supporting the charity, since her father Mike died from an undetected heart condition at the age of forty-nine last year. She ran



the event through her local No Name Club in Gort, to which she has belonged for the past two years. Mike O'Shea was a regular cyclist who had just returned from a charity cycle on the day of his death.

Kerry: Members of Killarney Rugby Club are to hold a teenage disco to raise funds for those stricken by the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and to help support a young Japanese man who lived in the town for some years. Satoshi Otsuka attended St. Brendan's College while his father worked in Alps Electrical, and stayed in the town for two years to complete his education after his family returned to Japan. A keen member of the rugby club, he stayed with the Purcell family in Coolcorcoran. Although his home was destroyed, Satoshi has survived the events in Japan and his friends are now keen to help his country.

Kildare: The Queally Group, one of the biggest employers in Naas, is working in collaboration with Naas Tidy Towns Committee to plant a total of 160 trees in the town. The project is ensuring the completion of the project by the Tidy Towns Committee to replant three roundabouts. The trees are to be planted on the perimeter of the Queally plant on the Dublin road side of the town, as well as on the roundabouts and in two local schools. A tree-planting ceremony also included a commendation for local woman Kay Hartigan, who has been appointed as chairwoman of the campaign.

Kilkenny: An Age-Friendly strategy was launched in Kilkenny at the end of March, making it the second Irish county after Louth to be an official Age-Friendly county. Regional programme manager Debra O'Neill invited the veteran actress Maureen O'Hara to launch the project, which has as one of its aims to encourage people to retire to Kilkenny. The county is also due to celebrate ageing later this year when Kilkenny city hosts the first global festival for older people, to be known as Greystock.

Laois: Sixteen-year-old Robbie Lyons from The Swan is due to take part in the World Transplant Games in Stockholm in June, competing in the 100m, 400m and indoor hockey. Robbie

had a kidney transplant at the age of fifteen but within twelve months he was playing in an under-sixteen football final and has also been selected for the Laois minor football panel. To finance his trip to Stockholm a fundraising event was held recently in Pedigree Corner, organised by St. Joseph's GAA, and Robbie is to do a sponsored climb of Croagh Patrick in April to raise the rest of the money he needs.

Leitrim: There was plenty of entertainment on offer last month at a variety concert to raise funds for Eslin Community Centre. During the evening a one-act play, "A Cure for Nerves", was performed by Eslin Drama Group. Meanwhile the Millennium Choir was giving a series of concerts featuring St. Manchan's choir, Mohill and St. Mary's Girls' choir from Carrick-on-Shannon. Music was provided by Fintan Farrelly on organ, violinist Niamh Crowley, and Sarah Moran on flute. The concerts took place in St. Patrick's Church in Mohill and St. Mary's Church in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Limerick: For the second time the metal Christmas tree located in the River Shannon in Limerick has come away from its moorings. Last year the tree was washed down as far as the Shannon Bridge before being rescued and reinstated, and this year a faulty pump saw it keeling over into the river once again. Plans were quickly put in place to reinstate the 100-foot-high tree in time for St. Patrick's Day, when it was to display green lights to mark the feast day. There are also plans to adorn it with red lights when Munster are playing at Thomond Park.

Longford: This year's Bealtaine Festival, to be held during the month of May to celebrate creativity in the older generation, has a line-up to sort all interests. The event involves a number of organizations including St. Joseph's Day Care Centre and Longford Older Persons' Network, and offers creative writing classes in Longford Library and a concert in Thomond Lodge Retirement Home, Ballymahon. An arts and crafts exhibition is to be held in St. Joseph's, while two inter-generational events will take place. There will be a bog walk in Ballinamuch and an event in

Currycahill Hall in Ballinallee. A tea dance in the Park House Hotel in Edgeworthstown will close the festival.

Louth: A motorbike with an unusual side car has been put up for sale by its owner, Peadar Byrne from Dundalk, since he no longer has time to keep a unique enterprise going. Peadar, a coachbuilder with his father, has built a hearse attached to a Yamaha B Max 1200, and the vehicle has been used by a number of bikers for their final journeys. According to Peadar, people who have little interest in motorbikes have also expressed an interest in having their final journey in the fibreglass vehicle.

Mayo: The holiday weekend saw a three-day walking festival taking place and finishing at the foot of Croagh Patrick. The Croagh Patrick Heritage Trail, initiated by the Tóchar Valley Rural Community Network, was led by experienced guides. The three stages are from Balla to Ballintubber, from Ballintubber to Aughagower, and from Aughagower to Murrisk, at the foot of the mountain. The festival was in its third year and participants can choose to do one, two, or three days' walking.

Monaghan: Moangan Mushrooms, which was founded thirty years ago in Tyholland by Ronnie Wilson, is planning to expand the company's business in Europe and North America, and is hoping to recruit up to twenty graduates to achieve this. The company, which already employs some 2,300 people, is looking for graduates in all branches of engineering as well as a range of science disciplines, business, finance, and marketing. Those taken on by the company will undergo an industry leading training program in conjunction with the Irish Management Institute.

Offaly: Two men have been chosen to share the title of 2010 Offaly Person of the Year by the Offaly Association in Dublin, and both are involved in the charity Goal. Darren Hanniffy is from Birr and was recently in charge of Goal's work in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake; he has also worked in Honduras and Uganda. Ronan Scully from Clara is preparing for a North Pole marathon run to raise money for Goal. He is now based in Galway. The men will be presented with their awards, sponsored by Noel Tynan of Coolderry, at the Offaly Association's annual dinner this month.

Roscommon: The sixth annual John Paul Corcoran memorial walk, organized by his wife Ann, took place on St. Patrick's Day, starting from Kenny's Rockfield Inn in Oran and covering a route of ten kilometres. This year's designated charity is Cancer Care West; last year the walk raised more than 11,000 euro for the Sacred Heart Hospital Comfort Fund. Immediately after the walk a raffle and auction took place in Kenny's, while refreshments were served, with music by Country Sundown.

Sligo: It has been confirmed that cyclist Seán Kelly will once again be in Sligo for the An Post Tour of Sligo 2011, which takes place in May. Last year more than 1,300 cyclists took part, including Seán Kelly, and this year a new route has been added. In addition to the ten-kilometre Hazelwood Spin, the sixty-kilometre Lough Gill Circuit and the one hundred and sixty-kilometre Ox Mountain Challenge, there will be an Innisfree tour of one hundred kilometres. The Lough Gill and Ox Mountain circuits have been reversed this year for safety

(Continued on page 35)

NEWS DIRECT FROM IRELAND

Sun shines on Ireland for St. Patrick's Day

The vast majority of the population put their economic concerns to one side to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and they were helped by the weather. As far as I am aware the rain stayed away until the day's parades were over and the sun shone in many parts of the country.

Parades were held in cities and towns throughout the country as well as in many villages. Someone came up with the figure of 120 parades in total. For size and spectacle the one in Dublin outshone them all. An estimated 500,000 spectators lined the streets of the capital for the two hours or so that it took the parade to pass. This is also the parade that attracts most of the overseas visitors, whether it is the marching band from Dearborn, Michigan, or the Hibernophile spectator from Denmark or Spain.

Limerick claimed to have the second largest parade this year but I suspect there wasn't a great deal to choose between the parades in Cork, Limerick, and Galway. Along with three of our grandchildren we were among the spectators in Galway for what I thought was one of the better parades of recent years.

The parades of today are much different from those that we took our own children to see. No longer do we have the big flat-bed trucks carrying industrial exhibits. We still, however, have the various community groups from hurling clubs represented by young members proudly carrying their first hurleys, to active retirement groups. Other sporting clubs, cultural groups and voluntary organisations also marched. Stilt walkers, jugglers, gymnasts, belly dancers and a group travelling on Segways also took part.

The bands this year were all from the locality except for the group of musicians and dancers from Lorient in Brittany; Lorient and Galway are twinned and this group is always one of the highlights of the parade.

Immigrant groups have become a feature of the parade although the nations that become involved seem to vary each year. This year we had entries from the Filipino community, India, Russia, Bangladesh, Cameroon and South Africa. There was also a small Japanese contingent asking that we remember their country in its current difficulty.

— LIAM FERRIE

Ireland Today: Taoiseach Welcomed Home to Mayo

With so much happening on the political front last week I neglected to include a few developments that were worthy of a mention. Up to 3,000 Fine Gael supporters were in the TF Royal Theatre in Castlebar last Saturday night to welcome Enda Kenny home as Taoiseach for the first time. It was a highly emotional occasion for all involved.

The Taoiseach was also in the news when a New York Times reporter, or perhaps an enthusiastic proofreader, became confused between Edna and Enda. The new Taoiseach's name was spelled correctly but he was referred to more than once as Ms Kenny. The online article was corrected fairly quickly.

Fine Gael press officer Feargal Purcell has been named Government press secretary, but he will not take up the post immediately. Eoghan Ó Neachtain, who carried out the role for the previous Government, has been asked to remain in his post to allow a smooth transition.

Unemployment rate jumps to 14.6 percent

— The Central Statistics Office has published the results of the Quarterly National Household Survey for the fourth quarter of 2010. This showed an annual increase of 31,600 in the number of people unemployed and a reduction of 33,000 in the labor force. The number of people in employment declined by 3.4 percent (-64,500) to 1,823,200 over the course of the year. This compares to an annual decrease of 3.7 percent in the previous quarter and a decrease of 8.1 percent in the year to the fourth quarter of 2009. As a result of the findings the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 13.7 percent to 14.7 percent over the quarter. Extrapolating this to the Live Register figures for the end of February, the official unemployment rate was now 14.6 percent.

Further divisions reported in Labour Party

It was reported in Monday's Irish Times that the expectation among Labour TDs had been that Róisín Shortall was to get the ministerial post that went to Ruairi Quinn. The newspaper's source claims that Ms Shortall was in line for a Cabinet post until Mr Quinn "threw a wobbly".

Mr Quinn, who will be 65 next month, is a former leader of the party and has Cabinet experience, but it was not explained why Eamon Gilmore should feel obliged to change his plans at the last minute to accommodate him.

Senator Norris launches

presidential campaign

Senator David Norris on Monday formally launched his campaign to become the next President of Ireland. His first hurdle is to receive a nomination. To appear on the ballot paper in the autumn he must be nominated by at least 20 members of the Oireachtas or by at least four county or city councils.

Senator Norris is one of the six university senators and has represented the University of Dublin constituency as an Independent since he was first elected in 1987.

Government limits availability of State cars

As expected, Tuesday's Cabinet meeting approved changes in the provision of State cars to Government ministers. Only the President, Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Justice will be provided with a car and two garda drivers. All the other gardaí will return to normal duties. Ministers will, in future, provide their own cars for which they will receive a mileage allowance. They will also be able to claim expenses for the provision of two civilian drivers.

The tradition of providing cars and drivers to former presidents and Taoisigh will also end. Cars will only be made available to them on State occasions.

It was also decided yesterday to cut the number of personnel normally provided to each minister. A minister had been entitled to 16 support staff, to man his or her private office and constituency office. This is

reduced with immediate effect to 12. Ministers of State had 12 staff and this is reduced to eight.

Taoiseach has his own emigration statistics — Professor James Wickham, director of the Employment Research Centre at TCD, was widely quoted recently when he claimed that, during the election campaign, politicians and the media wildly exaggerated emigration rates. Speaking at a conference, he argued that the 1,000 per week figure, forecast by the ESRI in January, included a large proportion of non-Irish people returning home. Prof. Wickham warned that the "panic" being generated in relation to emigration could become "a self-fulfilling prophecy." On Tuesday Taoiseach Enda Kenny, speaking in the Dáil on the Government Programme for National Recovery, said, "We are again facing the prospect of forced emigration — an estimated 2,000 people are set to leave every week over the next two years". No one has explained how the forecast rate of emigration has doubled in the space of two months.

Gormley to step down as leader of the Green Party

— John Gormley has sent an e-mail to Green Party members informing them that he plans to resign as their leader. The assumption is that he will remain in his position until May to allow an election to be organized. All 1,000 or so members of the party are entitled to vote and it is expected that the new leader will be elected by postal ballot. Each news bulletin that covered this story reminded us that the Green Party had six TDs going into the election and now they have none.

Publican ordered to remove banner barring queen

— Publican John Stokes of the Players Lounge in Fairview, Dublin has removed a controversial 40-foot banner barring Queen Elizabeth from his premises on her visit to Dublin in May. Mr Stokes, who says he will find a legal way of protesting against the visit, was warned that he would be putting in jeopardy the application for six late licenses due before the court soon. Stokes's action was of particular interest to the media in Scotland as he is the father of Celtic footballer Anthony Stokes.

McGuinness condemns lack of meeting with British PM — Following his visit to the US where he met both President Barack Obama and

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the North's Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, has condemned the decision by British Prime Minister David Cameron to reverse the "open door" policy of his predecessor. McGuinness reported on the surprise of Americans when he told them neither he nor First Minister Peter Robinson had met the prime minister for the past eight months. All dealings now have to go through Secretary of State Owen Paterson. He suggested that this led the US President's team to question the commitment of the British Government to maintaining relations with the North.

Dublin is where the locals are queuing up to welcome visitors

— A new scheme has been launched under which visitors to Dublin can, on request, have a personal guide to tell them about the city, over a cup of tea or pint of Guinness. The plan had been to have 1,000 volunteers with cityofathousandwelcomes.com when the scheme commences on Bloomsday, June 16, but by the launch date on Monday 1,026 had signed up. Visitors who request a guide can rest assured that the volunteer allocated to them will have been vetted by gardaí. They can also relax on the payment front — the service is free and the tea, coffee or Guinness will be supplied by one of the scheme's sponsors. Some of those who have volunteered to date are personalities in their own right and the organizers will try to assign guides who have something in common with their visitor(s).

Irish priest to be honoured by Partnership for Global Justice

— Father Seán McDonagh, a Columban father who spent many years working with tribal people in the Philippines, is to be honored by the Partnership for Global Justice at its annual meeting in New York on May 1. McDonagh is a lecturer and prolific writer in the field of Eco-Theology. Working in the Philippines in the 1970s and '80s he campaigned on behalf of the indigenous T'boli people on the island of Mindanao as their forest habitat was destroyed by logging. Partnership for Global Justice is a network of religious congregations, other groups and individuals committed to developing a global consciousness through educational programs, advocacy and participation with the United Nations.

THIRTY-TWO COUNTIES

(Continued from page 34)

Tipperary: A meeting of the North Tipperary County Council heard the concerns of Councillor Ger Darcy about the state of the seventeenth century Ardcroney Castle, situated beside the graveyard, from which large stones have started to fall. His concern was echoed by that of Councillor Jim Casey, who spoke of a similar problem with the fifteenth century Ballyfinboy Castle near Borrisokane, from which a large piece fell recently. This castle, while on private land, overlooks a public road. Area engineer Kieran Callanan said the council would first have to establish ownership before any remedial works could be carried out.

Tyrone: Two days at the end of April will see the holding of the Cookstown 100 road race, which will be accompanied by an exhibition, "King of the Roads", celebrating the life of road racer Joey Dunlop. This will be followed a few days later by the Northern Ireland competition for the Culcullen

Warrior Prince Trophy and the title of Ulster's Strongest Man 2011. The five top men in this event will qualify for this year's Ireland's Strongest Man contest from which one will qualify for the British competition, which is televised.

Waterford: Rosemary Nolan, the daughter of Waterford man Paul Nolan, will have her hands full for a good number of years after her Australian partner recently gave birth to quintuplets. Rosemary, a past pupil of St. Angela's and Yeats College and a twin herself, met her partner Melissa when she moved to Australia three years ago and they already have a daughter, Lily. Now the family has been joined in their Brisbane home by Noah, Charlie, Eireann, Evie, and Abby and they will be helped to care for them by a group of some sixty volunteers.

Westmeath: St. Aloysius College on the west side of Athlone first opened its doors in 1951 and is this year celebrating its golden anniversary. A day of events is planned for early in

May, beginning with Mass in SS Peter and Paul's Church after which a reception will be held in the school. In addition to refreshments, past pupils, former staff and friends will be able to enjoy a walk through the old house, the schoolyard and the new school. A commemorative book is also to be produced to mark the occasion.

Wexford: The contribution to Enniscorthy of the Sisters of Mercy, who this year left the town after some one hundred and sixty years, is to be marked by the unveiling of a commemorative plaque. The plaque is to be erected at the former home of the order in The Shannon by the Town Council, whose members gave their unanimous support to the proposal. Earlier in the year a special Mass was celebrated in St. Senan's Church at which one of the speakers was the present principal of St. Senan's Primary School, Henry Goff. He recalled that his grandfather, his father, himself, and his nine brothers and sisters had all been educated by the Mercy Sisters.

From Tipperary to Wicklow

Wicklow: Gary Redmond, who was previously student union president in University College Dublin, was elected as president of the Union of Students of Ireland in April of last year. This year, at the USI annual congress in Dunboyne, Co. Meath, the Arklow man was

returned unopposed to the position of president. Late last year, during his first term in office, Mr Redmond was instrumental in organizing a major student protest against the introduction of student fees proposed by the then government.



IRELAND'S WEATHER

REPORTED SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 2011

For March it was a quite glorious week with the sun shining from cloudless skies and temperatures in the mid to high teens. It reached 17C in many parts and 18C in Kerry. Thick fog delayed the appearance of the sun on a number of days and the fog lingered longer along northern coasts. By the weekend the temperatures had dropped a few degrees although the sun continued to shine.

We are promised a much different week. While Monday will be fine we should see rain later on Tuesday and it will become unsettled from Wednesday on, with heavy and persistent rain accompanied by strong winds.

Latest Temperatures:
Day 13C (55F) Night 4C (39F)

The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

Last month I promised that we would review the formation of **adjectives** from **verbs** – words taken from **verbs** that act as “descriptors”. This is similar to English

except that in English many such words end in **-en** or **-ed** if they already end in **-n**.

“The ice cream is **freezing**”
 “The ice cream is **frozen**.”
 “The **frozen** ice cream tastes good!”
 “The ice cream was **softened**.”

Remember that the majority of **adjectives** in Irish follow the **noun** they modify, describe or limit while in English the reverse is true.

Uachtar sioctha literally “ice cream frozen”
 “Frozen ice cream”

English **verbal adjectives** are the same form that follows the “helping verb” **have**.

“I have written the letter” “The written letter.”

The Irish form most of their **verbal adjectives** by **suffixing**, “adding on the back”, four different endings, **-tha** or **-the** and **-ta** or **-te** depending on the “quality” of the preceding vowel (“broad” **a, ao, o, u**; “slender” **e, i**) and whether the verb has one or two syllables.

Again, this is an important distinction and you must remember “broad” and “slender”.

We haven’t discussed the concept of “syllable” until now. A **syllable** is always centered around a **vowel**. Sometimes it can be just a **vowel**, at other times a **vowel** either preceded or followed by a **consonant**, or sometimes a **vowel** enclosed by **consonants**. Examples of these in Irish include:

Vowel alone:

A as in **A’ Nóra**.

Vowel preceded by a consonant: **Ca?** “What?”

Vowel followed by a consonant: **ag** “at”

Vowel enclosed by consonants: **cos** “foot”

Irish grammarians believe that the longest basic words have only two syllables. They ignore the “intrusive vowel” /uh/ as simply a repetition of the preceding vowel and don’t bother to write it. Recall that you must “intrude” the sound /uh/ between syllables ending in **-l, -r, -n** and when following syllables begin with **b-, ch-, f-, g-, and m-**. Examples are, **Albain** /AHL-uh-buhn/ “Scotland”, **dorcha** /DOR-uh-kuh/ “dark”, **dearfa** /JER-uh-fuh/ “positive”, **gorm** /GOHR-uhm/ “blue”, and **ainm** /AHN-uhm/ “name.”

Longer words are viewed as “compound” words – words made up of a “base word” plus **prefixes** and/or **suffixes**. An example is the plural of “letter” **leitir** /LEE-chur/ as **leitreacha** /LEECH-rah-kuh/.

Did you notice that Irish removes a **vowel** when making “letter” to “letters.” Compare again **leitir** : **leitreacha**. This is a fairly common occurrence in Irish as you will see. This is similar to the English practice of not pronouncing the **-t-** in “soften”, especially when we add the **suffix -ed** /SOF-end/.

Irish **verbs** then have either one or two syllables. We will study the rules for making **verbal adjectives** for one syllable **verbs** first. To make **verbal adjectives** from regular one-syllable **verbs** you have to make three decisions.

If the **verb** ends in **-b, -bh, -c, -g, -mh, -p, or -t**, simply add **-tha** or **-the**, depending on the “quality” (“broad” or “slender”) of the last vowel. Both **-tha** and **-the** are pronounced /hee/ in most dialects, /ee/ in some.

Scuab! /skuab/ “Sweep!” **scuabtha** “swept”

Scríobh! /skreev/ “Write!” **scríobhtha** “written”

If the verb ends in **-gh**, drop it and add **-ta** or **-te**, depending on the “quality” of the preceding vowel. **-ta** is pronounced /tuh/ and **-te** is /chuh/.

Nigh! /nee/ “Wash!”

nite /NEE-chuh/ “washed”

If the verb ends in **-c, ch, -d, -l, -m, -n, -r** or **-s**, just add **-ta** or **-te**.

Glan! /glahn/ “Clean !”

glanta /GLAN-tuh/ “cleaned”

Bris! /breesh/ “Break!”

briste /BREESH-chuh/ “broken”

Bhí am bpláta briste ach bhí an úrlar glanta. Literally, “Was the plate broken but was the floor cleaned” is in good English, “The plate was broken but the floor was cleaned.”

If the verb ends in **-t** it is dropped or the spelling **-d** becomes **-t** to reflect the true pronunciation.

Tit /teet/ “to fall” becomes

tite /TEE-chuh/ “fallen”

Goid /goyj/ “to steal” becomes

goite /GOY-chuh/ “stolen”

Now let us see if you can make **verbal adjectives** from the following **verbs**:

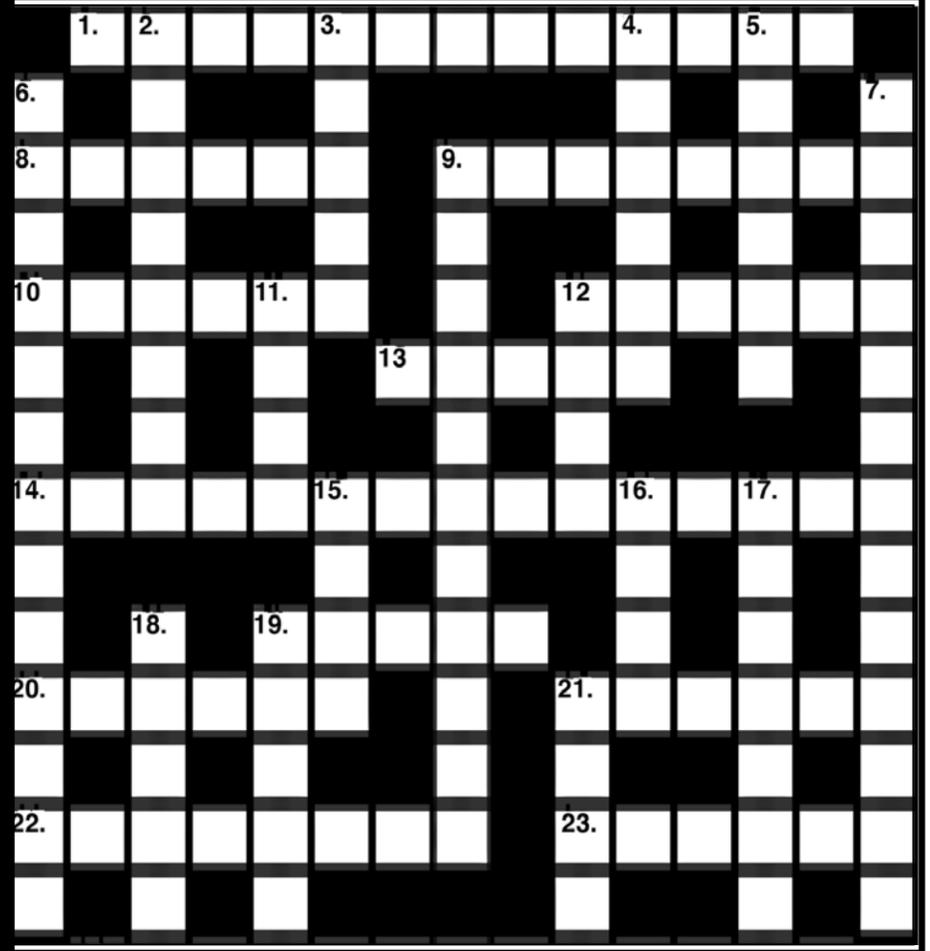
1. **Fag** “leave” 2. **Léigh** “read” 3. **Ól** “drink” 4. **Pioc** “pick” 5. **Measc** “mix” 6. **Léim** “jump” 7. **Leag** “lay down” 8. **Gabh** “go” 9. **Dúin** “close” 10. **Fan** “wait” 11. **Díol** “sell” 12. **Ceap** “think”

Answers: 1. **Fagtha** “left” 2. **Léite** “read” 3. **Ólta** “drunk” 4. **Pioctha** “picked” 5. **Measctha** “mixed” 6. **Léimthe** “jumped” 7. **Leagtha** “laid down” 8. **Gabhtha** “gone” 9. **Dúinte** “closed” 10. **Fanta** “waited” 11. **Díolta** “sold” 12. **Ceaptha** “thought”

More about verbal adjectives in following columns!

CELTIC CROSS WORDS

The Irish crosswords are a service of an Ireland-based website which provides Irish Family Coats of Arms by email. You are invited to visit www.bigwood.com/heraldry



IRELAND IN CROSSWORDS ©-bigwood.com

ACROSS

1. Or find chiller. (anag.) Stepchildren of Aoife whom she turned into Swans on Lough Derravaragh. (8,2,3)
8. Protection found in popular Mourne location. (6)
9. Pout face up until refreshment appears. (3,2,3)
10. Fry air? No, but reduce its pressure. (6)
12. Get up on hind legs about per can order. (6)
13. Impulses scrambled the last of the Carrickfergus letters. (5)
14. Then avoid by cute diversion around engineering work carrying the Dublin - Belfast rail line over Drogheda. (3,5,7)
19. Tree falls over after a century on Mediterranean island. (5)
20. Threw in at the Gaelic game? (6)
21. Make a quick grab for ants all over the small church. (6)
22. Stretch little Leonard starts, then finishes after note. (8)
23. Salty pool covered up back in Portnoo gallery. (6)
24. Sweet stew clan. (anag.) Limerick market town with a Knights Templars castle built in 1184. (9,4)

DOWN

2. Oh, lure me in disorder for Bill first proposed and lost by Gladstone in 1885 and passed in 1912. (4,4)
3. “Hail fellow, well met. All — — and wet: Find out, if you can, Who’s master, who’s man.” Swift. (5)
4. Storeys one knocks to the ground. (6)
5. Recite with a singing voice to nine others in Rosses Point one time. (6)
6. Hour train call. (anag.) Kerry mountain popularly ascended through the Hag’s Glen and up the Devil’s Ladder to the peak at 3,314 feet. (13)
7. Jests shame pen. (anag.) Irish writer and poet (1880-1950) who wrote ‘The Crock of Gold’. (5,8)
9. Owners latch up in neat Mayo village on the Sligo border. (11)
11. You must see the faithful dog in Glengarriff, I do insist. (4)
12. Ripe conversion of fairy on Greek roundabout. (4)
15. Squirrel’s home back in the American garden in pretty Ardmore. (4)

16. Last word in mean fashion. (4)
17. Greasy sun out over U.C. (8)
18. E.g. rang up Sligo village underneath Ben Bulbin on the Bundoran road opposite Inishmurray Island. (6)
19. “This goat-footed bard, this half-human visitor to our age from the hag-ridden magic and enchanted woods of — — — antiquity.” Baron Keynes - (describing Lloyd George) (6)
21. Soothe in the meandering vales. (5)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 23

Irish Sayings

- “Youth does not mind where it sets its foot.”
- “Both your friend and your enemy think you will never die.”
- “The well fed does not understand the lean.”
- “He who comes with a story to you brings two away from you”
- “Quiet people are well able to look after themselves.”
- “A friends eye is a good mirror.”
- “It is the good horse that draws its own cart.”
- “A lock is better than suspicion.”
- “Two thirds of the work is the semblance.”
- “He who gets a name for early rising can stay in bed until midday.”
- “If you do not sow in the spring you will not reap in the autumn.”
- “Put silk on a goat, and it’s still a goat.”
- “Listen to the sound of the river and you will get a trout.”
- “A persons heart is in his feet.”
- “It is a long road that has no turning.”
- “Necessity knows no law.”
- “The wearer best knows where the shoe pinches.”
- “There is no luck except where there is discipline.”
- “The man with the boots does not mind where he places his foot.”
- “The light heart lives long.”
- True greatness knows gentleness.
- When wrathful words arise a closed mouth is soothing.

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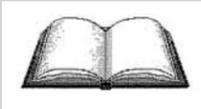
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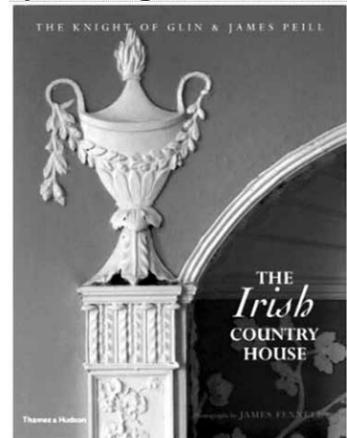
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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER BOOK BRIEFS

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Irish Country Houses by the Knight of Glin

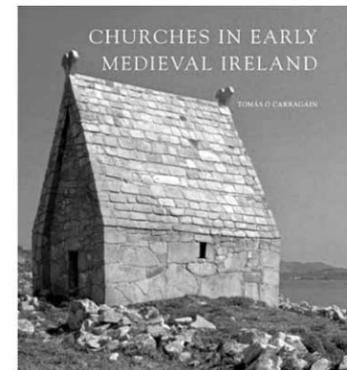


This book takes the reader on a tour of ten grand Irish country houses, still in the hands of their original families. The Knight of Glin and James Peill tell the tale of some of the more colorful inhabitants, whilst the specially commissioned photographs by James Fennell capture the distinctive personalities of the owners: a red silk bell-pull against green floral wallpaper, a drawer full of 200-year-old love letters, the curve of a wonderfully carved antique chair. This is a book for lovers of Ireland, history or decoration.

Churches in Early Medieval Ireland: Architecture, Ritual and Memory

By Tomas O Carragain

This is the first book devoted



to churches in Ireland from the arrival of Christianity in the fifth century to the early stages of the Romanesque around 1100, including those built to house treasures of the golden age of Irish art such as the Book of Kells and the Ardagh chalice. Carragain's comprehensive survey of the surviving examples forms the basis for a far-reaching analysis of why these buildings looked as they did, and what they meant in the context of early Irish society.

The most immediately striking feature of these buildings is their simplicity: virtually all are rectangular in plan with a single doorway in the west wall. This was not because of ignorance of architecture elsewhere in Europe, but the result

of an imperative to perpetuate a building form, derived largely from Romano-British and biblical exemplars, that had become associated with the saints who had Christianized Ireland and founded its great ecclesiastical centres. These churches were associative relics: permanent stone versions of wooden churches built by the founders, embodying memories about these saints and legitimizing the authority of their successors. It was primarily through rituals that these ideas were conveyed to the general population.

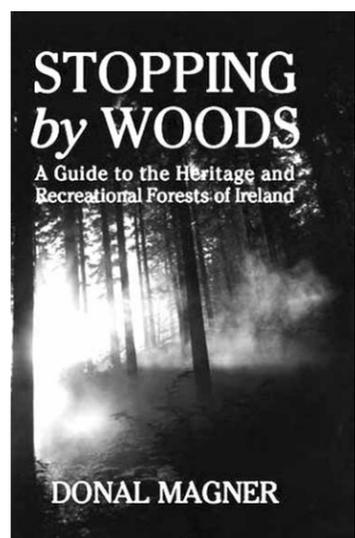
In this book, the Irish architectural context of early medieval rituals is analyzed for the first time. It also includes the most detailed analysis to date of the layout of the most important Irish ecclesiastical complexes, including Armagh, Clonmacnoise and Glendalough. At each of these sites there were ten or more churches, along with other monuments such as round towers and high crosses. O Carragain argues that some of these monumental schemes were intended to recall distant sacred topographies, especially Jerusalem and Rome. He also identifies a clear political and ideological context for the first Romanesque churches in Ireland and shows that, to a considerable extent, the Irish Romanesque represents the perpetuation of a long-established architectural tradition.

Stopping By Woods

By Donal Magner

Stopping by Woods is a fascinating guide to 340 forests and woodlands open to the public throughout Ireland. Donal Magner writes with a rare insight about forests he has worked in and visited over the years as a forester and journalist. The book is the first of its kind ever produced in Ireland and Europe, it is packed with information not only about forests and tree species, but their associated flora and fauna, history and heritage.

The book features all the forests featured in the State's open forest policy now enshrined



by Coillte, the Forest Service Northern Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. In his six-year journey the author has explored all our native and naturalized woodlands, and the State forests established since the beginning of the last century. Stopping by Woods is a celebration and record of this remarkable civic amenity.

His epic journey in discovering and writing about these forest and woodlands has been nothing short of heroic. This book will provide readers, including students, specialist groups, historians and the general public with a deep understanding of Irish forests and their heritage. It is a book for our times, for people who care about our tree culture and about sustainable development.

A quiet revolution is taking place in Irish forestry. Forest cover has doubled to 10 percent of the land mass within two generations, benefiting both woodland owners and the forest industry. Forests, however, are valued not only for their economic benefits, but for their enhancement of landscape, ecology, heritage and the soul.

"Stopping by Woods" addresses these issues but above all is concerned with how trees and woodlands meet the needs of society at a time when over 20 million visits are made annually to Ireland's forests. This is mainly because in the early twentieth century the State took an enlightened decision to become directly involved in restoring the country's woodland resource when Irish forests had been radically diminished by centuries of exploitation and neglect.

The State open forest policy, now enshrined by Coillte, the Forest Service Northern Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service is a generous invitation to all our citizens. A small but increasing number of forests are now managed by local authorities, private growers and agencies dedicated to woodland conservation.

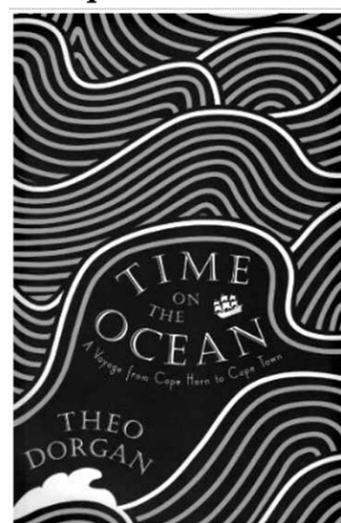
While the Forest Service in the Republic is no longer directly involved in forest establishment, it plays a significant role in shaping the forests of the future, through its support for afforestation, restoration of native woodlands and other schemes.

The book provides a comprehensive guide to 340 forests and woodlands open to the public throughout Ireland. Donal Magner writes with a rare insight about forests he has worked in and visited over the years as a forester and journalist. It is packed with information not only about forests and tree species, but their associated flora and fauna, history and heritage. "Stopping by Woods" is a celebration and record of

this remarkable civic amenity.

Thanks to those who helped create a woodland culture in Ireland, forestry is no longer the land use of last resort but a vibrant, wealth-creating rural resource, which the public are invited to share and enjoy.

Time on the Ocean: From Cape Horn to Cape Town



by Theo Dorgan

On one level, this is an exciting account of a journey under sail from Puntarenas in Chile to South Africa - around Cape Horn, on to the Malvinas/Falklands and, via Tristan da Cunha, to landfall in Cape Town. Under-scoring the narrative is Theo's great-grandmother's story: She died in childbirth off Cape Horn, and was buried at sea. As one would expect from Theo, this is a poetic and evocative account, but it is also an adventure. Will appeal, not only to sailing enthusiasts and those interested in the adventure aspect of the story, but to those who love an inspirational story, beautifully told.

From High Places: A Journey Through Ireland's Great Mountains

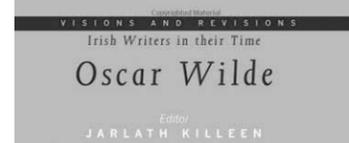
By Adrian Hendroff

From High Places is a photographic celebration of Ireland's great mountains, from the quartzite giants of Connemara to the towering peaks of Kerry. Adrian Hendroff, mountaineer and photographer, has taken these images from the trails and peaks, creating a vivid impression of exactly what it is like to visit Ireland's high places.

Oscar Wilde: Irish Writers in Their Time

By Jarlath Killeen

This collection of original articles on Oscar Wilde and his writings covers all as-



pects of his work, from his neglected poetry to his renowned "The Picture of Dorian Gray" and "The Importance of Being Earnest." Taken as a whole, the book represents a balanced view of contemporary Wilde Studies. Contributors range from internationally renowned expert Wildeans to new voices in the field, pointing the way forward for future research. The main focus is on the genres in which Wilde wrote, but there are also special chapters on Wilde's biography, Wilde as a Victorian, and Wilde on the Web. Killeen has provided an up-to-date and comprehensive profile of Wilde that will appeal to all those with an interest in him from general readers to sixth form students, from undergraduates to academics.

Ireland: A View from Above

By Kevin Dwyer

In 1989 a client asked Kevin Dwyer to submit a sample aerial photograph. He had never taken any so he sent one taken from a mountaintop. The result was a commission for an aerial photograph and his first helicopter flight; his new career "took off." In sunny weather, Ireland is one of the most beautiful places but Kevin sometimes waited a whole summer for suitable weather to be rewarded with a day from heaven. These photographs are gathered to share the beauty of Ireland as it unfolded on various flights over the years. They do not represent all of Ireland but are quite simply an aerial miscellany. Kevin's wife, Fie, also took photographs from the "other side of the helicopter." The result is this stunning collection inviting one to explore this beautiful island country for oneself. Kevin captures the spirit and color of Ireland, its varied landscape of rivers and lakes, coast and mountains, the tranquillity of ancient monasteries and vibrant cities and towns.

PUZZLE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 21



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