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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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Beannachtaí na Nollag Christmas Blessings by Mary McSweeney

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Acclaimed Boston photographer Bill Brett returns with *Boston, Irish*, a collection of more than 260 black-and-white photographs of the people and the city he loves. It is his most personal book yet.

Building on his four previous books, *Boston, Irish* turns the lens on Bill's own community, the city's Irish Americans. Dedicated to his mother, Mary Ann Brett, *Boston, Irish* chronicles — and crystallizes — a unique period in the city's Irish history, a time inhabited by newly-arrived immigrants and second- and third-generation Irish-Americans. *Boston, Irish* covers the wide spectrum of the Irish-American community with portraits and stories ranging from a 99-year-old nun to a colorful funeral home director to an Irish tenor to a New York Times best-selling novelist.

The Brett family was a 2010 of Boston Irish Honors. To all those who knew her, their mother Mary Ann Brett was the embodiment of grit, heart, and faith. For her and those of her immigrant generation, Boston's sense of Irish community didn't stop with one family or a single neighborhood. It was felt grandly, holding in its embrace the Irish Americans from Beacon Hill and City Hall to the very last street in the city. When the world thinks of Boston, they think of the Irish as the city's bulwark community. What Bill Brett thinks of Boston runs much deeper and can be found on each and every page of *Boston, Irish*.

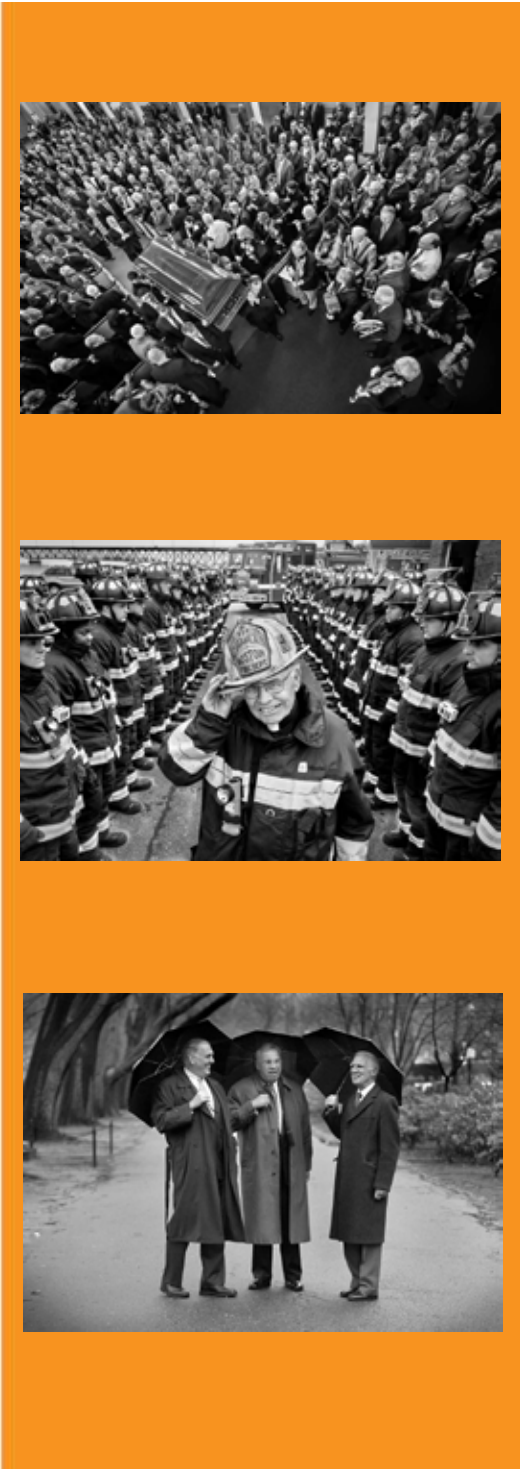
BOSTON
IRISH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL BRETT

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WRITTEN BY CAROL BEGGY

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The Irish Pastoral Centre held its annual fundraising banquet on Sat., Nov. 15, at Florian Hall in Dorchester. Nearly 400 people were on hand as Eugene O’Flaherty, corporation counsel for the city of Boston, was honored with the organization’s first Community Award for his exemplary leadership. O’Flaherty, a former state representative, then spoke of the personal ties he has to the Irish Pastoral Centre and Father John McCarthy. Back, from left: Anne Byrne, Pamela O’Brien, Mai Gallagher, Kathleen Rohan, Neil Hurley, Louise Coyne, Mark Porter, Audrey Larkin, Jim Gallagher, Kieran O’Sullivan. Front, from left: Megan Carroll, Mickey Harte, Sister Marguerite Kelly, Sheila Gleeson.

BIBA hears Barros on development

John Barros, the chief of economic development for the city of Boston, spoke to the November meeting of the Boston Irish Business Association (BIBA) at the Algonquin Club in Boston’s Back Bay. After speaking, he answered questions for almost an hour on a range of topics, from the prospects of hosting the Olympics in 2024 to developing stronger ties with Irish-based companies.

Barros is pictured at right center with BIBA president Ryan McDermott, left, and Patrick Bench, who facilitated the evening’s program.

BIBA is a non-profit organization comprised mainly of small and medium size business owners, government officials,



as well as executives from multi-national corporations. The group will hold its annual holiday party on Dec. 17 at MJ O’Connors at the Park Plaza, Boston.



The Irish International Immigrant Center capped its 25th anniversary celebration on Oct. 30 with the conferring of its annual Solas Awards, citations that honor the contributions of immigrants in the state’s Irish American communities and recognize the good work of the center’s chosen honorees. This year, the IIIC cited, from left: Susan J. Cohen, Esq., member of Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo, P.C.; IIIC founder Sister Lena Deevy, LSA; and Richard E. Holbrook, chairman and CEO of Eastern Bank.

American Ireland Fund salutes philanthropist, adman Jack Connors

Some 1175 guests gathered on Thurs., Nov. 20, for The American Ireland Fund’s 33rd Annual Boston Dinner Gala at the Westin Boston Waterfront. A record-breaking \$2.55 million – the largest amount ever achieved at the Boston Gala – was raised for The Worldwide Ireland Funds *Promising Ireland* Campaign to support nonprofit organizations across the island of Ireland and around the world.

The Gala honored Jack Connors, Boston business and community leader, and National Director of AIF. The event was chaired by Scott Powers, president and CEO of State Street Global Advisors. The Vice Chairmen were Andrew Arnott, president and CEO of John Hancock Investments, and John Hailer, president and CEO, Natixis Global Asset Management.

Reflecting on the wit, resolve, and optimism of the Irish, honoree Connors spoke about his storied career, attributing his success to his Irish gifts, including the value the Irish put on friendships and relationships, his family, his strong faith – and luck.

Curran is charting ambitious course for College Bound program

A change in leadership at College Bound Dorchester, one of the city’s leading organizations targeting at-risk kids and teens, will soon elevate a veteran volunteer and seasoned fundraiser into a key role. Sean Curran, who has served on the CBD board since 2001, will take over as principal chairman for the group’s board of directors this month.



Sean Curran

Curran, 44, is a Sudbury resident with roots in the city’s South End. A BC High and Boston College graduate, Curran runs Waterville Consulting, a lobbying and fundraising firm. He has been a key advisor to Governor Deval Patrick’s political committee and is wired to many of the Commonwealth’s biggest donors – an asset that will help Curran achieve his chief goal: helping College Bound Dorchester grow its capacity to reach more kids in neighborhoods like Bowdoin-Geneva.

“While there have been a lot of positive changes made to College Bound Dorchester, a lot of challenges remain,” says Catherine Donaher, a Dorchester native who has led the CBD board for the last seven years. “Sean is the right chair at this time to grow and meet CBD’s goals as he has all the qualities needed to succeed: determination, dedication and devotion to the students of Dorchester.”

Donaher – and the CBD’s present executive director Mark Culliton – are widely credited for leading the organization through a harrowing transformation over the last decade. Known as Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses since its launch in 1965, the non-profit once teetered on the brink of outright financial collapse. The group rebranded itself as College Bound Dorchester in 2009 and has set out to focus its mission on targeting underserved kids from the most troubled neighborhoods of Boston by putting them on a track to complete college.

– BILL FORRY

UN Ambassador Donoghue to speak in Boston

Ambassador David Donoghue will be the keynote speaker at the 15th annual United Nations Day Luncheon on Monday, Dec. 8 at Boston Harbor Hotel. The event is hosted by the United Nations Association of Greater Boston. Dublin-born Ambassador Donoghue is the permanent representative of Ireland to the UN. For more information about sponsoring or attending the luncheon, please contact Fiona Creed at 617-482-4587.

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Yeats2015: Time to honor his life

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

– W. B. Yeats



The great Irish poet William Butler Yeats was born on June 13, 1865, and as the new year 2015 approaches, plans are well underway to celebrate Yeats's life and his magnificent body of work with a series of events, in Sligo, Dublin, London, and all across the world.

Yeats2015 is a part of the Irish government's commemoration, and observances will take place at Coole Park, IT Sligo, the National Library of Ireland, and the National Concert Hall. The British Library also plans to host an event.

Paula Meehan, the Chair of Irish Poetry (Ireland's current poet laureate), launched Yeats2015 in Sligo earlier this year, saying, "We have, I think, an unavoidable responsibility to Yeats here: let us by all means celebrate the many aspects of that myriad-minded man, but let us above all, in 2015, agree to celebrate the indomitable, indefatigable, joyous dreamer."

According to information released by the organizers of the observances, there's a specific vision for the year-long activities: "Yeats2015 will celebrate and commemorate the life, work, influence, and achievements of W.B. Yeats. Through an engaging, celebratory and cultural program, it will showcase Ireland as a dynamic, inspiring, and creative place.

"It will be a year-long national and international celebration of the life and works of the Nobel Prize winning poet William Butler Yeats. It will mark 150 years since his birth on June 13, 1865.

The celebrations will be rooted in Sligo – Yeats's "spiritual home" and connect with every county across Ireland. "The celebrations will draw people to Ireland to begin to understand what inspired him and to share that experience. It is intended that institutions and organizations from around Ireland and the world will partner with Yeats 2015 to celebrate this important event.

The initiative was formally launched on Yeats's birthday last June by former Minister for the Arts Jimmy Deenihan. "Yeats was an international figure and it is fitting," said Dennihan, that "Yeats2015 will have an international theme to its proceedings." Drawing on the popularity of Tourism Ireland's highly successful initiative of this year, "The Wild Atlantic Way," the organizers have taken to referring to Yeats as "The Wild Atlantic Poet."

At the launch of Yeats2015, Paula Meehan said, "He believed that the land he loved so intensely had power and force of and in itself. The Irish historical trope is so often, in poetry as well as in other modes of documentation, one where the land fails us, delivers us to famine, emigration, and sorrow. For some reason, it often goes unspoken that the land has nurtured millions of us in the century and a half since Yeats came wide-eyed into the world. I hope this coming commemorative year might integrate ideas of sustainability and reverence for our great mother back into the conversation about this island of Ireland. It would be a fitting acknowledgement of the reverence and love that Yeats had always for the very land itself."

More information about plans for Yeats2015 are available on line at yeatsday.com; the Yeats Society may be accessed at yeatsociety.com.



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Things are looking up for people in the North this holiday season

BY JOE LEARY
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

With a Catholic majority looming in the near future and the British government cutting back on funds to run the Northern Ireland government, rather profound changes are coming to this small province. One change may arrive before Christmas.



Joe Leary

For all the attention it gets, Northern Ireland, with its population of 1.8 million, has fewer people than the three medium-size Massachusetts counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Plymouth. In fact the distance between the two largest cities on either side of Northern Ireland is about the same as between Boston and Hyannis.

Though a troublesome, unyielding, and sometimes violent Protestant faction still insists on insulting parades and the flying of British flags everywhere every day as a way of trying to preserve the old one-sided culture, in general the men and women of Northern Ireland have grown beyond the riots and thuggery to build a healing society.

When Charles Flanagan, the Irish minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Boston last month he urged Bostonians to stay involved with Northern Ireland, noting that Irish American awareness and support can be of great help to the people living in such a divided society.

But with a few exceptions, Boston's Irish-American attention to the problems facing the people of Northern Ireland is much less today than it was in the 1990's. We no longer receive visits from Northern Ireland secretaries of state. Former leaders like Peter Hain, Paul Murphy, and "Mo" Mowlam each were here multiple times. The British government and its local Consul General have evidently decided to dramatically reduce their involvement with Boston's Irish-American community. Rare was it when St. Patrick's Day did not feature a visit from a Northern Ireland minister or two. And consulate personnel were frequent attendees to Irish events throughout the area. That has changed over the last several years.

We have never seen current Secretary of State Teresa Villiers.

But Boston and Belfast have reached out to each other over these last six months to initiate the Boston/Belfast Sister City agreement. Boston's Mayor Marty Walsh and the then mayor of Belfast, Máirtín Ó'Muilleoir, were responsible for the agreement. The new mayor of Belfast, Nichola Mallon, came to Boston last month to further strengthen ties. British consular personnel were not it attendance.

Off the Bench

Political patronage is here to stay; let's talk about ways to do it right

BY JAMES W. DOLAN
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

The judge got it right in sentencing former Probation Commissioner John O'Brien and two of his top aides. They were instruments for others who formulated a plan to facilitate patronage. Under the circumstances, severe sentences were unwarranted.



James W. Dolan

A former legal counsel to Gov. Francis Sargent, Federal District Court Judge William Young is certainly familiar with the role patronage plays in state government. As old as human institutions, patronage has been, and will continue to be, a factor in the hiring process. People need jobs, and politicians need to do favors. Most people who contribute to or work in political campaigns hope to realize some benefit.

There is nothing wrong with sponsoring or recommending a candidate for a position. Many sponsored candidates are highly qualified, but just being "connected" should not be enough. The problem is one of degree, involving the creation of unnecessary jobs; the rigging of the selection process to exclude unsponsored applicants; and the hiring or promoting unqualified candidates.

O'Brien himself was a patronage appointment. He was placed in charge of the probation department to do precisely what he did: Provide direct access to well paying jobs for powerful politicians. Most judges knew what was happening, and some participated in it.

Judicial leaders were reluctant to confront legislative leaders, who controlled judicial salaries and budgets. Rather than rock the boat, they tolerated a system that was patently unfair. While those responsible for the administration of justice viewed fairness as essential in the courtroom, they failed to assure its application in the management of the court system.

In a visit to Northern Ireland last August, an observer saw a renewed spirit rising there. New housing, new confidence, younger people enthusiastically dealing with schools and education, the creation of skills and learning centers, and the dealing with the many problems of all modern cities. It was a city moving forward.

Two initiatives, both long overdue, are close to becoming a reality. The economic success enjoyed in Dublin and the rest of Ireland was due in some measure to the low corporate tax rate of 12.5 percent. Northern Ireland suffered by comparison with the British corporate tax rate of 21 percent. After much urging by Belfast senior business leaders, it appears that London will allow a new rate of 12.5 percent in Northern Ireland. Both Unionist First Minister Peter Robinson and British Prime Minister David Cameron have predicted the reduced rate will be a reality soon, maybe even before Christmas.

This will not only make Northern Ireland more competitive, but it also will increase compatibility between North and South.

The second major initiative is the restructuring of government in the North. Much of this is already under way. The local governing councils are being reduced from 26 to 11 super councils who are supposed to assume responsibilities sometime in 2015. It is assumed this will save money and make decisions easier.

Recently there has been talk of reducing the number of members in the legislative Assembly from 108 to 90, along with a reduction in the number of executive departments. All in the name of efficiency. The assembly was set up by the Good Friday agreement and changing that will take a lot of compromise that will be very difficult.

The current system was the product of a desire for peace. This correspondent once asked then Northern Ireland Secretary of State Peter Hain how such a system could work with so many checks and balances delaying, and perhaps preventing, agreement on anything. Hain answered that he knew there could be problems and the system could be changed if conditions settled down between the Unionists and Nationalists.

According to Mark Davenport, writing for BBC News on Nov. 6, in 2006, Hain had already prepared a new system to be considered should the Good Friday system need improving.

Change is a constant in all forms of life's endeavors. Current leadership could change anytime, (Peter Robinson told his party conference that he may be gone before the 2016 elections), current problems will vary in intensity, sectarianism will be fact of life for many years, and the Catholic /Protestant population ratios will change. But after many brutal years, the people of Belfast are enjoying a better life this Christmas.

A handful of judges led by the late Springfield District Court First Justice Robert Kumor and the late Clerk-Magistrate of Dorchester District Court Richard Dwyer took it upon themselves to expose the scheme. Knowing the powers that be would only act when they had to, they cooperated with the Globe Spotlight Team's investigation

Early on, the problem should have been addressed administratively. Had O'Brien been forcefully confronted by judicial administrators, he could have explained to sponsors that his power of appointment was restricted by a selection process that had been designed to at least control patronage by limiting his authority. The best he could do was assure that sponsored candidates would be considered, not that they would be selected.

Instead, he involved others in corrupting the process, not for personal gain but because he believed that is what he was there for. His budget was increased, not in exchange for his compliance, but to create more jobs that would be accessible to legislative leaders. The selection process provided O'Brien with a way out, but he didn't take it.

By channeling all probation appointments through O'Brien, legislative leaders made a diffuse problem more visible with O'Brien failing to realize he would be the fall guy if and when the system was exposed. It was not the patronage that did him in; it was the rigging of a system designed to foster merit-based appointments.

Patronage is not going away. The only way to control it is to establish selection procedures that restrict the appointing authority to candidates approved by an impartial panel charged with interviewing and rating candidates based on their qualifications. Such a panel existed within the probation department; O'Brien's crime was in subverting it.

This case should encourage such panels. Among other things they would provide cover to administrators who feel pressured to make appointments based solely on the recommendations of powerful sponsors.

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

OF POLICY AND PARODY

Irish-American history lessons are ignored; Northern Irishman defends a tarnished Tiger

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

No matter what an Irish Americans’s political persuasion might be, the public and political fallout of President Obama’s executive order on immigration should engender some personal and historical soul-searching. From the trenches of the Tea Party and the ultra-conservatives come the mutters and outcries of those who “want their country back.” The term is coda for many who want to stem the immigrant tide. People in their right minds grasp the dire need for control of the nation’s borders, but those who believe that deporting some 5 million to 11 million undocumented immigrants is either a moral or practical matter are delusional. Irish Americans need to remember that not so long ago, historically speaking, “real Americans” wanted to close the doors to Irish immigration.

Before anyone pontificates that all Irish immigrants came here legally through Castle Garden (New York City’s precursor to Ellis Island), Ellis Island, Deer Island, and other processing centers or quarantine stations, he or she should stop and consider that in the 1840s, when “hordes of ragged Irish” fled the Famine to America, our Canadian border was at least somewhat akin to today’s southern border. Many Irish simply walked across from Canada. One of the 1840s’ most controversial Irish immigrants, John Riley, organized and commanded the St. Patrick’s Battalion, to which many Irishmen deserted from the US Army and subsequently fought against their former regiments as members of the Mexican Army.

Another reason that Irish Americans should want immigration reform is that it still affects many men, women, and children from the “old sod.” Shortly after the president’s Nov. 20 announcement of his executive action on immigration, the Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC) endorsed his move as “much needed for the many immigrant families who contribute so much to our communities.” While the order indisputably helps more people from Mexico, Central America,

the Caribbean, and Latin America than other regions, the action also impacts undocumented immigrants from other spots – including Ireland.

The order is undeniably steeped in bare-knuckle politics, but despite the rantings of some in the media, it provides neither a “free ride” nor a “blank check” for anyone. The order also does not provide “amnesty.” The latter is a term that ripples downward into shameless and lazy media from anti-immigrant demagogues such as Congressman Steve King (Iowa) and the egregious Senator Ted Cruz (is it me or does he physically resemble a dark Irish American blast from the past – Senator Joe McCarthy?).

Regardless what one thinks of the president, all of this could have been avoided if the Tea Party-infected House of Representatives had not held Speaker Boehner hostage to his own caucus and prevented a vote to pass that most ephemeral thing in D.C. – a bipartisan immigration bill approved by the Senate. One historical fact is certain: America was built by immigrants, and not just those from the Emerald Isle.

Prejudice toward immigrants – “the other” – has run deep through America’s bloodlines from the earliest days of colonization, and there’s a harsh lesson that the GOP, besotted with its blowout victory in the 2014 midterm, will ignore at its peril in the 2016 national elections. In the post-election glow, a number of party leaders are publicly and privately persuading themselves that they can hold the Senate and win the White House without winning over more of the Latino vote. History shows that to be a delusion. Just ask the Brahmins of old how all that worked out when the Boston Irish finally exercised their collective muscle at the ballot.

...

Northern Irish golf great David Feherty exercised a different type of muscle, as well as spine, in recent days when he had the temerity to castigate golf Hall of Fame writer Dan Jenkins for a “satirical interview with Tiger Woods” that was penned or typed by the octogenarian Jenkins for Golf Digest. Touted by the

magazine as “parody,” the piece was expressly labeled as fiction, so no harm, no foul there. Woods, however, fired off an angry missive to the publication and the famed author, decrying the piece as a “grudge-fueled piece of character assassination.”

There’s no mistaking the fact that Tiger Woods has never been one of the sport’s most lovable figures. Aloof and arrogant were terms the media and a large segment of the public tossed his way from his earliest days on the Tour. Still, gauging from the reactions from Tiger-haters – including many scribes who leaped to Jenkins’s defense with something between viciousness or worse toward Woods, one might have thought that Tiger had committed a capital crime. His fall from golfing and public grace has been chronicled ad nauseam, so why the sudden need for the estimable Jenkins to dredge up yesterday’s news?

That is exactly what Feherty asked on Dan Patrick’s popular ESPN show. The Northern Irishman offered that “it’s always been open season” on Tiger Woods and then committed “heresy” by stating that Jenkins and Golf Digest strayed from integrity by delving back into Woods’ crumbled marriage, the employees he sacked, and such old “gems” as his aversion to tipping.

Feherty mused, “I think I would be upset. It was mean-spirited and not particularly funny.” From a man who is a fine writer himself, Feherty’s dig at how badly Jenkins’s words failed as satire was a verbal drive ripped dead center down the fairway. He went on to note that few, if any, golfers have given more actual interviews than Woods, who, Feherty said, has answered a lifetime of questions from “forest of idiots,” himself [Feherty] included.

“I didn’t think I ever would, but I’ve kind of felt sorry for him, certainly on occasions,” Feherty said. “This latest thing, ringing up the fire hydrant and the divorce, like, really? Have we not heard enough of that?”

Amen to that. The Northern Irishman is correct that Jenkins’s satire was far from Dr. Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal” and that we – some of us, at least – “have heard enough of that.”

President’s actions on immigration speak to nation’s values

By JOE BIDEN

WASHINGTON, DC – My grandfather, Ambrose Finnegan, always told me, “Never forget where you came from, Joey.”



He wasn’t merely reminding me that I’m from Scranton, Pennsylvania. He was telling me not to forget the journey of my family, and the dreams that inspired them to take on the perilous voyage from Ireland to these shores in the 1840s and 1850s.

The history of the journey of this country has always been the promise

that anything is possible. That’s what has attracted wave after wave of immigrants for centuries. And every generation of immigrants has infused this country with new blood, new ideas, a new determination, a new certainty that we will continue to be the land of possibilities.

But right now, our system is broken, and it needs to be fixed. It needs to continue to hold out the promise of possibilities. There are 11 million undocumented people living in the shadows. They hail from across the globe, including an estimated 50,000 from Ireland.

They want what we all want: a decent life for our children, the chance to contribute to a free society, the chance to put down roots and help build the next great American century.

It is long past time to bring these families out of the shadows, to eliminate the daily fear of separation and restore opportunity - and accountability – to millions of people living in our midst.

Over 500 days ago, the United States Senate passed legislation with bipartisan support to improve border security, streamline the immigration process, and establish a firm but fair path to citizenship. It would be an absolute game-changer for our economy, adding \$1.4 trillion to our economy and reducing the deficit by nearly \$850 billion over 20 years, and extending the solvency of Social Security by another two years.

Unfortunately, Republican leadership in the House of Representative has refused to allow a fair vote on this legislation, despite support on both sides of the aisle.

That left President Obama with a choice – sit by as families are torn apart and our economic horizons are diminished, or take action within the power granted his office by our Constitution.

As the president announced last month, he has chosen action. Following in the tradition of every Republican and Democratic president over the past five decades, President Obama announced that he is

using his executive authority to address the nation’s broken immigration system.

The actions he announced will crack down on illegal immigration at the border, prioritize the deportation of felons instead of families, and streamline our legal immigration system to boost our economy and promote naturalization.

The actions also will provide an opportunity for millions of undocumented individuals who have been in this country for at least five years to come out of the shadows.

This opportunity is not available to everyone. It is for DREAMers, those who were brought to this country as children. And it is for the parents of children who are US citizens or lawful permanent residents.

These parents will have the opportunity to request work authorization and temporary relief from deportation if they come forward and pay their taxes, submit

biometric data, pass background checks, pay fees, and show that their child was born on or before the date of the president’s announcement.

The president’s actions will help grow the economy and reduce the deficit, as more workers come out of the shadows and contribute to our economic growth and tax base, and entrepreneurs gain a greater opportunity to innovate and create jobs in the United States.

It remains my fervent hope that Congress will allow a fair vote on a comprehensive immigration reform bill to permanently address our nation’s broken immigration system. That is the only long-term solution.

But the president’s actions are a strong step forward, consistent with the values that built this nation – opportunity, responsibility, family. These actions are an affirmation that we as a people will never forget where we came from.

Joe Biden is Vice President of the United States.

‘We’re not a nation that kicks out strivers’

Remarks by President Obama on the executive order on immigration that he signed on Nov. 21. He was speaking at Del Sol High School in Las Vegas, Nevada:

“So we’ve offered the following deal: If you’ve been in America for more than five years; if you have children who are American citizens or legal residents; if you register, you pass a background check, you are willing to pay your fair share of taxes – then you’re going to be able to apply to stay in this country temporarily without fear of deportation. You can come out of the shadows, get right with the law.

“Now, let’s be clear on what this deal is, and what it isn’t. This action doesn’t apply to anybody who has come to this country recently. You can’t show up for a week and then suddenly apply – “you can’t. Because borders mean something. It doesn’t apply to anybody



President Obama speaking at Del Sol High School in Las Vegas on Nov. 21.
White House photo

who might come illegally in the future. While I support a path to citizenship, this action doesn’t grant citizenship, or the right to stay permanently, or receive the same benefits that citizens receive – only Congress can do that. All

we’re saying is we’re not going to deport you and separate you from your kids. ...

“We’re not a nation that kicks out strivers and dreamers who want to earn their piece of the American Dream. We’re

a nation that finds a way to welcome them. We make them earn it, but we welcome them in as fellow human beings, fellow children of God. And we harness their talents to make the future brighter for everybody.”

IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER



Experiencing Boston on the J-1 Work and Travel Program

By CARA HENDERSON

The vibrant Irish immigrant community in Boston was a major factor that influenced Peter Murray to choose this city for his twelve months on the J-1 Irish Work and Travel visa.

Originally from County Limerick, Peter has a degree in Business Studies with a concentration in Accounting and Finance from the University of Limerick. After graduation, he looked for an opportunity to work in the United States for a year. "I wanted to gain valuable work experience and to be able to get to know a new culture," he said in an interview. "And the staff at the Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC) was extremely helpful to me in securing the right position."

Peter found work in Boston just a short time after arriving, a position with Synergy Investments, a real estate investment and portfolio company located in the heart of downtown Boston where he works on the accounting management of two restaurant properties that the company oversees.

"I am learning a lot," he said, "especially about how to work in a team, and I know that my experience will help me with future career possibilities when I return to Ireland."

Besides work, Peter is involved with a rugby team in Malden. He



Peter Murray at work at Synergy Investments

played rugby in Ireland for some time and wanted to stay active in the game when he came to the United States. "This city's love of sports is one thing that definitely drew me to Boston when I was choosing where to go. On my first day here, I went to a Red Sox-Yankees game."

Peter has also enjoyed the history, the people, and the overall environment of the city. "Boston has a much more rich culture and history than other cities in the United States. The people here have also been incredibly friendly and welcoming."

Although he enjoys living in Boston, Peter knows there is much more of the country to see and explore. "When the weather gets nicer, I hope to visit other areas of the country, like Chicago or the West Coast."

Peter has an exciting year ahead of him, and we wish him all the best!

To learn more about hosting a J-1IWT intern at your company, call Kim Jorgensen at 617-542-7654, Ext. 23



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Upcoming Clinic Schedule

Tuesday, December 2nd
IIIC, 100 Franklin St. Lower Level, Downtown Boston
Entrance is at 201 Devonshire Street

Monday, December 8th
Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington Street, Brighton

Tuesday, December 16th
IIIC, 100 Franklin St. Lower Level, Downtown Boston
Entrance is at 201 Devonshire Street

Phone: 617.542.7654 | Fax: 617.542.7655 | www.iiicenter.org

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Website: iiicenter.org Email: immigration@iiicenter.org

An Evening of Irish Theatre and Music

On Dec. 12 and 13, the Here Comes Everybody Players and the Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC) will present our third annual collaboration celebrating Irish culture, with proceeds benefitting IIIC's legal, wellness, and education services for immigrants from Ireland and around the world. Through drama and music, "Out of Bounds" will delve into Irish history, exploring the internal struggles between the constraints of society and the desire to break free of those conventions.

In addition to musical arrangements, "Out of Bounds" will include two theatrical pieces by Irish authors. In "A Christmas Dinner," adapted from "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," by James Joyce, we see the effect of a toxic mix of sex, religion, and politics through the eyes of a boy at his first family holiday celebration as a young man. "The Rising of the Moon," by Augusta Gregory, one of



The Here Comes Everybody Players at the IIIC in 2013.
Photo courtesy James Cryan

the founders of Dublin's Abbey Theatre, portrays the conflict of divided loyalties at the time of Ireland's struggle for independence from Britain through the tale of two men who share an unexpected history.

The Here Comes Everybody Players is a Boston-based theater group focusing on dramatizing the work of James Joyce and other Irish authors.

Over the past five years, the group has performed in several Boston-area venues including Boston College, Framingham State University and the Davis Square Theater and was recently sponsored by the Dublin's James Joyce Centre to travel to Ireland for the 2014 Bloomsday Festival, celebrating Joyce's work.

"Out of Bounds" will be held at 8 p.m. on Fri., Dec.

The Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC) applauds President Obama's announcement of wide-reaching executive action on immigration on Nov. 20. This action is much needed for the many immigrant families who contribute so much to our communities.

"For the past 25 years, the Irish International Immigrant Center has helped immigrant families and individuals from Ireland and from around the world. We are pleased with the president's plan, and will provide quality legal services, accurate information, and caring support," said executive director Ronnie Millar. "There are many people

who will not benefit from the announcement, and we stand alongside them at this time, and will continue to work for comprehensive immigration reform."

The IIIC provides free and low-cost legal support and representation to the immigrant community. In response to President Obama's executive action plan, we are holding information sessions and look forward to helping the many families who may be eligible.

More information and a full press release can be found at IIIC's executive action webpage: iiicenter.org/executive-action/.

...

Our managing attorney,



IIIC Legal Team is ready to help.

Jeannie Kain, was interviewed about the executive by NPR on "All Things Considered" on Nov. 21. To

Matters Of Substance

A Letter to Santa

Dear Santa,

I don't know if I still believe in you 'cos my brother Billy said you don't exist. I think he's a "doofus" anyway. I was going to ask you for the "Frozen" movie 'cos I saw it at my friend Katie's and we love singing the songs. I asked my Mum if she thought you could help us have my Dad home for Christmas. He has been staying with my Auntie Nora since Halloween and I don't know why he won't come home. Billy says, "Dad's an 'alkie' – whatever that means. I asked Mum and she got very sad so I don't ask her questions like that anymore."

I wanted to ask Dad but he doesn't always hear me when I'm talking to him. When he lived with us, he was usually in bed when I went to school and stayed late in work. I see him on Saturdays but most times,

he meets with his pal Harry in the pub first, so when I see him, he smells funny. I miss hanging out with him. We used to go ice-skating in the park and I loved watching movies like "Finding Nemo" and "Monsters" with him, just the two of us. I wanted to see "Frozen" but he couldn't take me so I had to wait for the DVD. He and Mum used to always give each other hugs, and Billy and I used to joke and groan, pretending to hate it when they kissed. Maybe they would still do it if we hadn't laughed.

I remember the night Dad left. He had picked me up from karate class and when we came in the front door, he tripped on the carpet. Mum saw him fall and started screaming at him, telling him he can't drive like that, risking Billy and me and that he needs to leave. I tried to

tell Mum I was sorry but all she did was cry and shout at Dad. He just kept saying, "I wasn't drinking, I wasn't. Annie was safe, I promise." He moved out that night.

I really miss Dad. I miss how we used to all have fun playing charades after Christmas dinner but it won't be any fun if he is not there to guess what movie I am trying to be. Santa, if you exist, could you please let him come home on Christmas Day? I want to watch "Frozen" with him after dinner.

Thanks,
Annie

The holidays are a tough time for families when alcohol or drugs are affecting your home. If this family picture sounds familiar or you feel you need help and support, for yourself or someone you care about, contact Danielle via email



Danielle Bowles

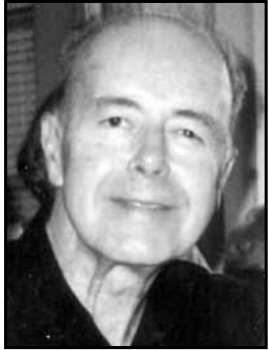
at downen@iiicenter.org or call 617-542-7654, Ext. 14.

We are proud to be collaborating again with "Recovering Connections" and RFK Corps at La-boure Health Center to run another four-week series of Family Healing workshops from Feb. 3 to Feb. 24 in South Boston, offering information about how substance use problems occur and what practical resources are available for families to heal and find recovery.

Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

BY BILL O'DONNELL

We Reap What We Sow – In the years since the Irish bailout following the recession that hit Ireland and much of the world a staggering blow, Irish taxpayers have involuntarily contributed over 29 billion euros (roughly \$389 billion US dollars) to the Irish exchequer. Given the crowd scenes and protests in the news from Greece, Spain, and other similarly hard-hit EU constituencies, the Irish people have been relative paragons of restraint.



Bill O'Donnell

They have been largely civil, that is, until the very recent rowdy mob scenes in the streets of Dublin and beyond protesting the introduction of water charges that impact every Irish household regardless of income. The announcement and the political handling by the government has left much to be desired, and the Irish working men and women, sensing a hesitant but cash-strapped government, have exploded in previously unseen ugly scenarios. The result has been a succession of unruly and threatening protests that have confronted **Tánaiste Joan Burton and Taoiseach Enda Kenny** in up close and scary confrontations.

The amount of the newly imposed water charges is roughly \$200 a year but coming after an extended period of personal hardship and national “austerity,” the new fees have touched a sensitive spot in the psyche of working-class Irish. Given the severity of the Irish economic crunch, the moderate water charges were likely not envisioned as the latest straw on the camel's back. And it is clear that Kenny's government was not prepared for the public backlash and is badly in need of a regrouping, or even a step-down of the charges.

Shadowing the water charges issue is the widespread belief among many working-class Irish that they and their families and friends are being exploited and driven into poverty solely to service the special interests of bankers, the European Union, bondholders, and global capitalism.

That's More Like It – It may not appear to be a seminal move by the Vatican, but given the common-man approach by Pope Francis, the announcement that Vatican public restrooms will include showers where the homeless can wash is indeed significant. In several visits in recent years to the Vatican, I have never used the restrooms but even from afar the announcement inviting the homeless to use the facilities is a very Christ-like action, if mind-boggling. And it is also very **Pope Francis**-like, as he has eschewed gilded surroundings and warmly embraced the poor.

In a more prosaic development, the Irish government, after a period of dicey relations with the Vatican, has appointed a new ambassador to the Holy See: **Emma Madigan**, a career Foreign Affairs department official and former assistant chief of Protocol. She succeeds **David Cooney**, who is now Ireland's Ambassador to Spain.

There is some movement but no hard news about a possible visit by the pontiff to Ireland in 2015. Pope Francis has expressed interest in such a trip, but only if he is invited by both the Republic and the North and only if he can visit both sides of the border, with a visit to Armagh described “as a must.”

Obama Strikes a Chord with the Irish – The president's action authorizing temporary immigration reform, outlined in his Nov. 20 speech, was welcomed by the Irish media. The Obama agenda, aimed at some five million undocumented immigrants in the US, would temper strict rules with a degree of compassion, allowing a relaxation of restrictions that would allow qualifying immigrants to travel between the US and Ireland, effectively ending years of isolation between Irish immigrants in the US and their families at home.

After several years of toxic and historic alienation between the Obama-led White House and elements of Congress, the president has decided to turn to executive authority to bring forward something on a short-term basis that would help immigrants come out of the shadows, or as he noted in his speech, “accountability – a commonsense, middle-ground approach.”

The major concern of the Irish is that the thousands of so-called illegal immigrants in the United States will be able to live and work in the US and not be liable to deportation. This concern has continually been expressed by the Irish government and its political parties when in contact with Congress and succeeding administrations officials.

The president has made it clear that new regulations under executive authority would direct ICE enforcement agents to focus on deporting “felons, not families; criminals, not children.” The executive order would overlook the illegal status of some four million immigrants who are parents of US-born citizen children or legal permanent residents.

In the absence of comprehensive immigration reform such as was passed by the Senate but barred from a House vote by the Republican speaker of the House, the president has opted to provide relief to a segment of worthy but disadvantaged immigrants. Republican lawmakers and right wing media personalities have labeled the president's move as “unconstitutional,”

despite executive order use by previous presidents from both parties.

Facts Shed New light on DeLorean Car Demise – A Queens University academic claims that the failure 32 years ago of the DeLorean Motor Company and its gull-wing model car was the result of DeLorean's gaming of the British government and a scheme the automaker had to elevate profit while salting the company with excess workers to prolong a doomed enterprise.

Inward investment had dramatically declined in Northern Ireland after violence erupted there in the early '70s. The British government, in an attempt to jump-start the flagging economy, increased government subsidies to increase employment and ease civil unrest. This led to weaker official monitoring, especially of promising new enterprises. And it also led **John DeLorean** in Belfast to figure out a way to beat the system and keep his troubled company afloat regardless of the internal situation or the manufacturing problems with his innovative car model.

DeLorean took advantage of a London government that badly wanted his company to succeed. In turn, DeLorean negotiated a favorable agreement that allowed him to control employment levels and thus increase the British financial subsidy to him and his firm. DeLorean also assumed that with employment levels remaining high that would make it more politically difficult for the authorities to close down the project, regardless of how poorly production was going.

In the final analysis “legal factors and political commitments rather than any serious economic arguments kept the company in business as long as it did.” And the last word from Dr. **Graham Brownlow** of Queens is that DeLorean “eventually overplayed his hand and it was this that closed the plant.”

Irish to Adopt New Postal Code System – The United States survived the new wrinkle, and virtually all of Europe has met the change mandated by a digital world, so it seems probable that Ireland will go with the flow and institute a new “Eircode” for its mail. Beginning next spring some 2.2 million addresses in Ireland will each be assigned a seven-digit post code that officials organizing the change say will finally modernize the way envelopes and packages are addressed, and put Ireland in sync with its neighbors. Anyway, that's what they say.

The new coding will comprise seven characters: a 3-digit routing key followed by a 4-character unique identifier. The Irish, inured as they are to a time-tested simple name, address and maybe something like Dublin 2 and perhaps adding the county, are finding the thought of change at least mildly daunting.

Depending on who is speaking at a given time, the overall cost of initiating the new system over ten years varies from 25 million euros (a code enforcer), to 15-16 million euros (the CEO of Eircode) to 9 million euros (the Irish government's budget).

But one line on the official website brings a sigh of relief to many: “There is no legal obligation to use Eircode on mail.”

O'Malley's 'Cities In Transition' – Many in the Boston-Cambridge Area are familiar with Professor **Padraig O'Malley**, as are leaders in Ireland, north and south, and in out-of-the-way locales from Baghdad to Kosovo to Nigeria. O'Malley, who has made peace and reconciliation his life's work, and his team organized and hosted the fifth Forum for Cities in Transition in Belfast in late October.

O'Malley's core philosophy is that divided cities have shared patterns and political and social traits that perpetuate conflict and so they have much to learn from each other. He believes the best way to overcome these patterns and traits is through an intervention by those who have experienced them and have learned how to break the cycle of conflict.

One of the encouraging outcomes of the three-day event at Belfast's City Hall was that this latest forum was covered by former *Boston Globe* reporter **Charles Sennott**, one of the founders of *Global Post*, an award-winning world news site with outstanding original international reporting. Widely respected in the news business, Sennott and *Global Post* coverage will broaden the awareness of Padraig O'Malley's important work. The path to peace is long, hard, and uncertain, but with the attention and reporting of a widely known news site with Boston roots like *Global Post*, the message is getting out and gaining momentum.

Irish Tighten Rules on Payday Lenders – One of the dark holes of those having financial hard times or living precariously from paycheck to paycheck is that they rarely have good bank services, or any access at all to traditional banks. This is true whether you live in a city in Ireland or one in America.

For those in situations like that there is usually a handy, inner-city storefront that offers what have come to be called “payday loans,” advertising its willingness to lend you money based on nothing more than a pay stub from your place of employment. Sounds fair enough until you hear the conditions: When not paid promptly, interest rates on these weekly loans can range up to 240 percent. Yes, 240 percent! And as many of half the loan-takers extend their loans and their added interest charges. These storefronts are often chains from out of town who prey on needy folks who plan to repay the loan on time, but don't, and that brings the outrageous interest to a boil.

In places like High Street in Belfast and the Liberties in Dublin, the Irish have more than their share of

payday lenders and the practices are so smarmy, much as the same here, that the government's Financial Conduct Authority has set new price caps on interest charges. The dramatic action, coming after a concerted study of the payday lenders, is about to be implemented and the feeling is that many, and maybe most of the predator chains will decide to go elsewhere.

Maybe the Irish FCA can induce banks to establish adjunct offices to handle small, low-interest loans where banks can charge up to 8 percent, much less than payday lenders but more than the bank can usually get for a standard small loan. Starve the predators!

Galway's Salthill Beautification Planned – Salthill, cheek to jowl with the city of Galway, was one of the earliest places we visited some four and a half decades ago. We landed in Galway, which offered considerably fewer hotel rooms than is the case today. After we got out into the city someone suggested we drive on into Salthill, where we might find a room at the Hotel Eglinton. We presented ourselves around ten at night and got the last vacant room. In wasn't until the next morning when we awoke to discover the white sand beach across the street and the water beyond. It was a revelation I've not forgotten.

As part of a rebranding of Galway city, Salthill is due for an overhaul, or a “rejuvenation” as the chief executive of the city, **Brendan McGrath**, describes it. Yet another warm memory of Salthill was a walk, or as locals call it, a prom along the 3 kilometers of coastline overlooking Galway Bay. My companion that day was **Tom O'Connor**, a successful local merchant who was a leader of Galway Boston Ventures linked with us in Boston. Good times, great memories.

RANDOM CLIPPINGS

The Irish government plans to spend some \$35 million commemorating the 1916 Rising. Funds will come from the state, but also from sponsors around the country. The hope is to attract 300,000 next year and in the centenary year. ... German Cardinal **Reinhard Marx**, a Vatican insider, was quoted recently as saying that Pope Francis has opened the doors of the Holy See wider than they have been since the Second Vatican Council. ... Almost 200 children have been shot or maimed, mostly for punishment, by loyalist and republican paramilitaries over the past 20 years. ... It is 25 years since the passing of the beloved **Michael Joyce**. Mike was the immigrant's best friend and his fans marked the occasion at the Michael Joyce Playground in South Boston late last month. ... Belfast's Christmas Market has opened and it marks the beginning of the holiday season. The market near city hall is expected to attract some 800,000 visitors this season. Helping celebrate was Belfast's Lord **Mayor Nichola Mallon**.

President Obama's nominee for US Attorney General, **Loretta Lynch**, was a star as US Attorney in Brooklyn. One of her successes was extracting \$7 billion from lawbreaking Citi Bank. ... **Howie Carr** is no more at WRKO Radio, and as this is being written is not on air except for a couple of low wattage stations. He will likely turn up on the air somewhere, but, as usual, I will make it a point not to tune in. ... Big time Wall Streeter and former Treasury Secretary **Tim Geithner** has a nerve calling Ireland “stupid” for guaranteeing that the banks would be made whole in case they failed. This is the same fat cat who gave AIG, the creator of the derivatives scandal (which was a huge part of the cause of the recession), \$185 billion. ... It was very satisfying to hear Boston's Cardinal **Sean O'Malley** say on CBS's “60 Minutes” that the treatment by the bishops of the good nuns was a disaster. Sure was. The apostolic visits were, and remain, a disgrace.

Did **Harry Reid**, Democratic majority leader in the US Senate, actually think he was doing **Elizabeth Warren** a favor by bringing her into the leadership? Please. And while we are at it, are leaders in Congress assured of lifetime posts? Isn't it time for some rotation in House and Senate minority leader positions? ... **Gerry Adams** sounded like a thug when he reprised the old image of **Michael Collins** holding a newspaper editor at gunpoint. Was that a teachable moment for an unruly Irish media? ... The last days of **Brian Lenihan's** life during Ireland's financial meltdown leading to the recession was one of the most painful tales of courage by him and greed by the European Central Bank and others that I have ever read. ... The main exhibit galleries of the JFK Presidential Library will be closed next year for design upgrades from Jan. 2 to mid-March. The rest of the library/museum was be open to the public during that period with free admission.

Trina Vargo of the US-Ireland Alliance reports that despite the strong support of 50 members of Congress urging Secretary of State **John F. Kerry** to fund the alliance, the money for the alliance and the Mitchell Scholarships is not there. ... There is a new Librarian at the Burns Library at Boston College: **Dr. Christain Yves Dupont**, who has two degrees in theology. He may need them following the departure under a cloud of **Bob O'Neill** to Arizona for a “new chapter in his life.” ... The Republicans may not like the cut of Obama's jib, but with the stock market more than doubling during his six years in office, unemployment steadily going down, the budget deficit spiraling downward, and the US dollar riding high internationally after misguided dire predictions proved wrong, the term-limited president's scorecard is looking pretty good. All this while he has been cleaning up after the economic crash and the two wars left behind by his predecessor.

A forward step for Famine-era memorial on Deer Island

MWRA joins plan for marker where 900 Irish pilgrims died

By Ed Forry
PUBLISHER

There has been some progress in developing a plan to establish a memorial in remembrance of the hundreds of Irish Famine-era emigrants who lost their lives before reaching the mainland of Boston.

In 1847, the city of Boston opened a quarantine station on Deer Island in Boston Harbor in 1847 for the treatment and cure of thousands of Irish who had made the long ocean journey to escape the Great Hunger. While many survived, some 900 died and were buried in graves on the island, located just off the town of Winthrop. The island is now accessible by a causeway, and currently houses Boston's huge wastewater treatment facility.

Some twenty years ago, as Ireland approached the 150th anniversary of the Famine, a Duxbury couple, Dr. Bill O'Connell and Rita O'Connell, gathered with some friends plan a memorial to those interred on the island. Forming an ad hoc committee named the Deer Island Famine Memorial Committee, they began a long-term and as-yet unfulfilled quest to establish a permanent remembrance there.

Dr. Bill passed away in January 2014, less than two years after Rita had lost her long fight with cancer. In tribute to them, some of their friends in the Boston Irish community have resolved to revive their plans and move them toward completion.

Currently, I have joined with the attorney John Philip Foley, the historian Catherine Shannon and Irish Consul General Breandán Ó Caollaí to review the plans and find a way to move forward. Our group has been aided greatly by the staff of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), which has jurisdiction over Deer Island, where it operates the wastewater facility.

On Thurs., Oct. 30, John Foley and I joined with MWRA staff for a site visit to the island. There, we found that

the graveyard where the Irish rest is on the easternmost tip of the island, and that the MWRA has identified a site closer to the city, high atop a berm that overlooks the harbor and affords a spectacular view of the Boston skyline.

Standing at that site on that mild, sunny, late fall morning, watching airplane after airplane cruising in on their final approaches to Logan Airport – the daily Aer Lingus planes fly in right overhead – it was chilling to pause and imagine just how close those poor souls had come to their dream of starting their new lives in America.

There were no skyscrapers to be seen back in the days of the quarantine, but almost certainly those sick and dying in their holding pens would have been able to see the lanterns in the bell tower of Old North Church in Boston's North End, the same lights that illuminated the night for Paul Revere and the patriots who had ensured freedom for all who would live here on American shores.

The organizers of this renewed effort to fulfill Bill and Rita O'Connell's vision have recognized that it is a dream most worthy to complete. The thinking now is to establish a marker high on that island hill in the harbor, and also to add a more prominent display somewhere on the shoreline, in South Boston or Dorchester. For example, the thousands who visit Castle Island and the Kennedy Library can easily look across the brief expanse of the harbor and see that Deer Island berm, and when they do, maybe they will pause to consider just how close those souls now interred came to fulfill their dream.

A display on Deer Island, coupled with a memorial marker along Boston's shoreline, could well be a fitting way to memorialize the famine's history in Boston Harbor – and it would be a wonderful way to fulfill the cherished hopes of the O'Connells and the others whose dreams, one day soon, could be realized.



Pictured on an October 30 site visit to Deer Island are, from left: John Philip Foley; Marianne Connolly, MWRA Senior Program Manager; Ria Convery, Special Assistant to the MWRA Executive Director; and Dave Duest, Director, Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. The MWRA has been supporting plans for an appropriate way to commemorate the Irish immigrants who lost their lives during the Great Famine before reaching Boston.

Ed Forry photo



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Bridget Fitzgerald moves into CCE Hall

Bridget Fitzgerald, an acclaimed singer in sean-nos and other traditional styles, was inducted into the Northeast Region Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann Hall of Fame last month at the CCE Sean O'Riada Branch in Albany, NY.

A native of Lochán Beag, Inverin, in Connemara, Fitzgerald was a founding member of the legendary all-female band Cherish the Ladies, and appeared on their first album. She also worked with the Women's Singing Traditions of New England and the traditional Irish band Fourin a Feire, of which she was an original member.

Fitzgerald has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, Mass. Cultural Council, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, and the Southern New England Arts Council. A performer at festivals and concerts throughout North America and Ireland – including the Augusta Irish Week, Swannanoa Gathering, Milwaukee Irish Fest, Willie Clancy Week, Catskills Irish Arts Week, BCMFest and WGBH's "St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" – she has given numerous workshops on Irish language and singing.

Fitzgerald will be honored for her achievement by Boston's CCE Hanafin-Cooley-Reynolds Branch at its Larry Reynolds Scholarship Fund Ceili Mor, on December 7 from 3-7 p.m. at the Canadian-American Club in Watertown.

For many famine Irish, Deer Island was their first and last stop in America

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

In 1847, a crisis unfolded nearly daily along Boston's docks. Leaking, lurching vessels aptly dubbed "coffin ships" unloaded hordes of ragged Irish passengers who had fled the Great Famine, An Gorta Mor. Some 25,000 arrived in "Black '47," and with thousands wracked by "ship fever," likely a form of typhus, Boston officials so feared a city-wide epidemic that they ordered a medical receiving room erected on Long Wharf. As overwhelmed physicians dispatched the gravely ill to hospitals, the city of Boston frantically made emergency preparations to set up Deer Island as "the place of quarantine for the Port of Boston."

The swelling influx of Irish crowding Boston-bound famine ships posed such a health risk that local leaders deemed it "a settled matter that the City must support a Physician at Deer Island, and that that is the suitable and proper place to attend to all the nuisance and sickness accompanying navigation..."

The Deer Island Quarantine Hospital and Almshouse was established in 1847. All famine ships plodding into Boston Harbor and judged by port officials to be "foul and infected with any malignant or contagious disease" moored at Deer Island until the port physician quarantined Irish men, woman, and children suffering from typhus, cholera, and an array of fevers and oversaw the "cleaning and purification" of ships. Only then could the healthier immigrants set foot in Boston.

From 1847 to 1849, approximately 4,186 people were quarantined at Deer Island "as a precautionary measure to ward off a pestilence that would have been ruinous to the public health and business of the city." Not all were to make it off the island.

Even before Bostonians grasped the health hazard posed by Famine ships clotted with direly ill passengers, the Irish newcomers were not welcomed. In 1847, the city was changing – and its Yankee population did not welcome that change. As the shiploads of Famine Irish arrived almost daily, Anglo-Protestant families who had ruled over the city since their Puritan ancestors set foot in the region in the 1620s embraced still the anti-Irish, anti-Catholic prejudice of Boston's founders. Ephraim Peabody, whose family ranked high among Boston's founding fathers, lamented that the Irish

were infesting "proper Bostonians' " turf with a horrific "social revolution." As the city's population swelled from some 115,000 to over 150,000 in just 1847, the newcomers quickly discovered that they were not welcome. They had escaped the Famine only to find themselves in a new battle for survival among what historian George S. Potter dubbed "the chilly Yankee icicles." The age-old prejudices that the Irish had encountered on the "ould sod" now confronted them in the New World, and even though some one million Irish poured into America from 1845-1850, the roughest reception awaited them in Boston. For many, the first and last site they would see in America was the Deer Island Quarantine Station.

It was scant surprise that so many Irish reaching Boston were sick after the perilous six-to-eight-week Atlantic crossing from Famine-ravaged Ireland. During the Great Hunger, over a million people perished in Ireland from starvation and associated diseases between 1845 and 1852. Over two million emigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia, and other sites, and roughly six percent of the Irish emigrants fleeing to Boston and other North American cities died at sea from disease or went down with vessels ill-suited to the crossing.

Before Boston-bound Irish caught their first glimpse of the city or Deer Island, they endured physical and emotional nightmares that few had ever dreamed to encounter. The logs and records of Famine ships sailing to Boston and elsewhere recorded unforgettable scenes of human fear and misery. In an 1848 letter penned by British official Stephen E. De Vere, the description of the berths is chilling: "The passengers have not more [room] than their coffins."

A Parliamentary Report of the Select Committee to Investigate the Operation of the Passengers Acts related: "I have known cases of females who had to sit up all night upon their boxes in the steerage," said one eyewitness, "because they could think not of going into bed with a strange man." With men and women packed into steerage so tightly, there were scant or no means to preserve even a semblance of privacy or modesty. Fevers spread rapidly and lethally.

Irish men, women, and children, all thrashing with sickness, crying out in their fitful sleep, and dazed by the growing

realization that no matter whether their ship went down in a storm or disgorged them at Deer Island, they had probably had their final glimpse of Ireland, of home. The desperate enormity of each step and every Famine refugee gathered at a ship's gunwales had taken materialized as Ireland faded in the distance. An elderly woman slumped against the rail of a coffin ship and exclaimed, "God save me. Old as I am, I should never have left Ireland. Who knows where I'll be buried now."

For some 721 to 850 Irish – various sources place the number as high as 1,000 – the burial place proved to be Deer Island's old Rest Haven Cemetery between 1847 to 1850. Of 4,816 persons admitted to the hospital from its opening, in June 1847, to January 1, 1850, 4,069 were ailing; At least 759 (15.8 per cent) died on the island. Figures as to how many were buried in an unmarked grave vary because a number of bodies were claimed by family members and buried elsewhere in or around Boston. Those who were unclaimed – literally dying alone – were laid to rest on the island at the city of Boston's expense.

Many immigrants who were not weak enough for quarantine on Deer Island did not last long in Boston's North End Irish tenements and rooming houses where conditions were little better than the crowded coffin ships. A Boston Committee of Internal Health study of the slums related that the Irish languished in "a perfect hive of human beings, without comforts and mostly without common necessities; in many cases huddled together like brutes, without regard to age or sex or

sense of decency. Under such circumstances self-respect, forethought, all the high and noble virtues soon die out, and sullen indifference and despair

or disorder, intemperance and utter degradation reign supreme."

The lack of sanitation in the slums, or "rookeries," unleashed a wide array of

disease, cholera proving the most lethal. Of Irish children born in Boston during the Famine years, approximately 60 percent died before the age of six.



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BIR ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Listen for the touch of Appalachian at 12th part of ‘Celtic Sojourn’ book

**BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR**

Back for its 12th year, “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn” will once again turn to new faces and sounds as well as familiar favorites in celebrating the Christmas holiday season through music, song, dance, and storytelling from Irish, Scottish, and other, related Celtic traditions.

The annual production, hosted as always by its creator and guiding spirit, WGBH radio host Brian O’Donovan, will be on stage at the Cutler Majestic Theatre in Boston for a slate of performances from Dec. 12 to Dec. 21, and also at venues in Worcester (Dec. 17) and New Bedford (Dec. 14); the Dec. 15 show at Rockport is already sold out.

This year will feature an exploration of the ties between Irish and Appalachian music with the presence of the Foghorn Stringband, a highly acclaimed old-time quartet from Portland, Ore. Fiddler Kevin Burke, a former member of the pioneering Irish group The Bothy Band, also will make his “Christmas Celtic Sojourn” debut, as will Lumiere, the duo of vocalists Pauline Scanlon and Eilis Kennedy.

The show’s music director, talented multi-instrumentalist Seamus Egan, and his renowned band Solas return with a slightly different line-up: In addition to Egan, fiddler Winifred Horan, guitarist Eamon McElholm and long-time collaborator Chico Huff on bass, Solas will have Connemara accordionist Johnny Connolly sitting in for Mick McAuley, who is in the Broadway musical “The Last Ship,” composed by the pop star Sting. The Sojourn Horns, a brass trio led by Dietrich Strausse that premiered last year, also will be back.

A quartet of featured dancers will further enliven the proceedings: Cara Butler and Nathan Pilatzke, members of The StepCrew, rejoin the cast; also present will be Matt Gordon – who also plays fiddle and harmonica – and Sarah Jacobson, a former student of the Walpole-based Harney Academy of Irish Dance, whose youthful representatives will make their traditional, always well-received appearance at the show.

Reflecting on the evolution of “A Christmas Celtic

Sojourn,” O’Donovan says, “Last year, we officially began our second decade, and so we changed up a few things: We introduced a new stage design and lighting, and included as part of the set a painting by local artist Vincent Crotty – there’ll be another panel added this year. It was our way of saying, ‘OK, we’ve reached this milestone, let’s have a new beginning.’ So this year we’re holding onto that new look, even as we continue to uphold the qualities on which the show has always been based, those things we love about the Christmas season: shared family memories, the warmth of friends, and music to lift the spirit.”

The word “family” has a musical connotation in the show, explains O’Donovan, hence this year’s performance by the Foghorn Stringband, whose members are Caleb Klauder, Stephen “Sammy” Lind, Nadine Landry, and Reeb Willms.

“I’ve always liked the idea of having a Christmas gathering with ‘cousins,’ bringing in more of the kin,” he says. “In the past, we’ve had Appalachian and American music in the show, and this year we will affirm the connection between both sides of the Atlantic with the Foghorn Stringband.

“What’s special about them is, they really get to the heart of old-time music and the way it was played in bygone eras. They have that old Southern radio vibe, where they gather around one microphone, so there’s a very folksy, homespun dimension to their sound.”

Burke, meanwhile, represents another version of the Irish-American bond.

“What people may not realize is, while Kevin grew up playing Irish music, and of course was part of a legendary Irish band, he actually started his career playing with Arlo Guthrie,” says O’Donovan. “So Kevin was steeped in Americana, and it’s something he’s kept up with even as he went on to play with Patrick Street, Celtic Fiddle Festival and in various other collaborations.”

Solas, of course, has its own Irish-American character: The band’s core members are either Irish natives or of Irish descent, and its music frequently makes the journey between Ireland and America, as evidenced



This year’s “Christmas Celtic Sojourn” features the Foghorn Stringband.

by its most recent release, “Shamrock City,” inspired by the life of Egan’s great-great uncle, an Irish émigré who made his way to Montana in the early 20th century. O’Donovan – who credits Egan and artistic director Paula Plum as two mainstays whose contributions have been integral to the show’s success – says Connolly’s temporary stint with the band, especially in the context of “Christmas Celtic Sojourn,” will make for fascinating listening.

“Johnny is real rock-solid trad, and brings that pure-drop sensitivity to his playing. He’ll certainly work very well with Seamus, Winifred, Eamon and Chico, as well as the other musicians in the show.”

Lumiere’s introduction to “Christmas Celtic Sojourn” is a reflection of O’Donovan’s penchant for giving the show a distinctive female voice, or in this case, two of

(Continued on page 12)

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‘Christmas Carol’ is Cheryl McMahon’s holiday specialty

**By R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR**

In Charles Dickens’s “A Christmas Carol,” miserly Ebenezer Scrooge forsakes capitalism to discover the true spirit of Christmas after crossing paths with Ghosts Past, Present, and Future. Since it was published in 1843, the story has stood as a holiday classic, whether in print, on the screen, or on stage.

In 1989, the North Shore Music Theatre was preparing a production of the timeless tale, adapted by the theater’s then artistic director, Jon Kimball, and his staff.

Like most productions at North Shore, the show was scheduled to run just that one season. However, when audiences experienced the show, filled with ghostly special effects, spectacular costumes, traditional carols, and original songs, they immediately embraced Kimball’s adaptation, such that the theater has revived the production year after year, establishing it as an honored holiday tradition. In turn, the audience has grown multi-generationally season after season.

Cheryl McMahon auditioned for that first production and subsequently became a member of the initial cast. So many Christmases later, she’s still a part of it all, celebrating her 21st season with the show. Also returning once again is the production’s perennial Scrooge, David Coffee.

In a remarkable career, Cheryl has performed on virtually every stage in town. From The Huntington to SpeakEasy Stage, New Rep and Lyric, she has played everything from Sondheim to Tennessee Williams, picking up two Independent Reviewers of New England Awards along the way.

Her Irish roots go back to her father’s family in County Clare. Of her Dad, she says, “He was the one who was gifted with a sense of humor and innate comic timing. And how to judge a room – Quick! . . . That’s what encompasses what my Dad brought to the table. Family stories. And keep everyone smiling.”

As an actress, Cheryl continues that legacy of telling stories and “judging the room.” No matter where her career has taken her, North Shore’s “A Christmas Carol” holds a special place in her heart. Here’s a condensed look at our conversation about the show.

Q. Thinking back to 1989, what do you remember about auditioning for that first production?

A. It was groundbreaking in so far as the opportunity was afforded to us – the Boston people. Usually the shows at North Shore were completely cast in New York and rehearsed in New York and very few of us were ever invited to participate, to audition. To have the opportunity to throw your hat in the ring and be considered was groundbreaking. And to be cast was just, you know, miracle of miracles . . . But we never



Cheryl McMahon is Mrs. Dilbur, Scrooge’s housekeeper, in “A Christmas Carol,” playing December 5 - 21 at North Shore Music Theatre in Beverly. *Paul Lyden photo*

thought the show would last this long, I don’t think anybody did . . . The audiences made that happen.

Q. The story is certainly well known and loved. What makes it special for you as an actor?

A. Dickens paints pictures for us in the novel that are indelible and speak volumes of the society at large, the British hierarchy, and the classes, et cetera. And because of those images in the novel, we’re given a gift as actors to be able to draw those portraits to come to life on a stage as grand as North Shore’s. And in the round! It’s a gift. An opportunity of a lifetime. And that’s why I continue to go back every year.

Q. Has your cast remained the same through the years?

A. Oh that’s the extra bonus. First of all, David Coffee. He is a remarkable gentleman. Certainly audiences know his talent from coming to see the show year after year, as well as many other shows – I can’t even count how many shows David has done at North Shore. They consider him a gem and that’s the truth . . . He is generous of heart and spirit and funny and engaging and kind. He’s just a great guy, and to be able to be in his company professionally or personally. A total gift.

Q. You play two roles in the show: Mrs. Fezziwig and Scrooge’s housekeeper, Mrs. Dilbur. Have those always been your roles?

A. I play all the women over 40. (Laughing) I’m only taking roles I can do now ‘til I’m 100.

Q. This production is also special in that audiences not only keep returning, but they also bring new generations with them over time.

A. Talk about the opportunity to create a future audience for a theater. We do 10 a.m. shows pretty much every day during the week for school groups. And they pack the theater. That will be our very first audience. It’s usually the Wednesday before we have the public opening . . . The kids come from all over the place. As far away as Maine . . . I think the schools recognize that it’s a production that emphasizes the literature.

Q. Jon Kimball is returning this year to direct the production. That has to be very special.

A. Well, Jon -- this is his baby. It was his brainstorm . . . Jon gave me such an opportunity when he cast me in 1989. Of course he was a big mentor to trust me. He didn’t know me, and I was a lot younger then. But I’m still playing this role. And that’s a blessing when you’re a character person, in that you usually play “older.” Therefore you don’t lose opportunities when you get older, you *gain* them.

Q. Is there a moment in the show that holds special meaning to you personally.

A. Oh most definitely. It’s a moment you might not read in the script . . . It’s a moment we’ve built into the show, David and myself. It’s based on improvisation and our knowing each other and the timing . . . It’s when Scrooge awakens on Christmas morning and takes in the fact that he’s still alive and he has a chance to make his life different and to turn a corner. The moments where he interacts with his housekeeper, Mrs. Dilbur, are very special to me. They really make the show worth doing.

Q. This production is not only a tradition for local audiences, it’s become your personal holiday tradition as well.

A. I think the whole New England region is really lucky to have this production . . . Perhaps some people take it for granted because it’s been here for so many years. But for so many people it really punctuates their holiday. I know it does mine.

R. J. Donovan is Editor and Publisher of onstageboston.com.

Charles Dickens’s “A Christmas Carol,” Dec. 5-21, North Shore Music Theatre, 62 Dunham Road, Beverly. Tickets: nsmt.org or 978- 232-7200.

Listen for touch of Appalachian in ‘Celtic Sojourn’ book

(Continued from page 11)

them. “Eilis has a traditional, sean-nos Kerry style of singing, while Pauline is inclined to a kind of younger, more diverse sound,” he says. “But they blend so well together: They can do songs in Irish, songs from elsewhere in the folk tradition like ‘The Streets of Derry’ or ‘My Dearest Dear,’ and then they’ll go onto something contemporary, like Suzanne Vega’s ‘The Queen and the Soldier.’ And they pull it off, with some marvelous harmonies to boot.”

Add the versatile Gordon – a former member of the Fiddle Puppet Dancers, which took part in the London debut of “Riverdance” – and his clog-dancing and fiddling to the mix, says O’Donovan, “and there’ll be quite a few opportunities for some cross-over during the show. It’ll be a right big hooley: the Americans coming to Clare, or the Irish going to the Appalachians.”

Similarly, Butler and Pilatzke bring with them a mix of influences and styles, honed through their involvement in The StepCrew, the high-energy show that spotlights Irish and Ottawa Valley stepdance and tap.

“Cara, Nathan, Matt and Sarah will be featured in different ways, sometimes solo or as a quartet, and they will definitely make for an interesting combination,” says O’Donovan.

Jacobson’s roots as an alumnus of the Harney Academy not only speaks to her dancing pedigree, says O’Donovan, but also helps put in perspective the school’s long association with the show.

“The Harney kids started appearing back in 2008 – unbelievable to think that some of them from that year are getting close to college age now – and it’s become simply impossible to imagine the show without them. They are such a big hit, not only with the audience but the cast members as well. And there’s a good reason for that: Yes, you can’t argue with the cuteness factor, but what’s most important is that they are technically superb dancers, and they really work hard at what they do.”

One other thing to watch – or rather listen – for in this year’s show, adds O’Donovan, will be the Sojourn



Renowned fiddler Kevin Burke and the duo Lumiere.

Horns, who plan to add an extra dynamic twist.

“They were a little nervous last year, it being their first time,” he says. “But they absolutely loved the whole thing, and actively campaigned for getting invited back. So they will be playing an arrangement of a lovely O’Carolan piece, ‘Loftus Jones,’ and they also



are going to try their hand at a fast reel. The stakes are high, but if anyone can pull it off, these guys can.”

For ticket information and show times for “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn,” see wgbh.org/celtic.

TIARA is offering two research trips to Ireland in 2015

Many people are finding their family roots through genealogy trips. If a genealogical research trip to Ireland is in your plans The Irish Ancestral Research Association (TIARA), a non-profit organization headquartered

in Boston, is offering two trips to Ireland in 2015: One to Dublin from April 25 to May 2, and one to Belfast from May 2 to May 9. Those interested can attend one trip or both.

Knowledgeable people in the United States and

Ireland-based professionals personally work individually with TIARA participants to guide them in their quests to find their Irish ancestors. According to an article published in *The Wall Street Journal*, TIARA offers some of the

most reasonably priced research trips. It is wise to book trips at least six months in advance to allow time to research a family’s heritage.

If you are not sure you are ready to research in Ireland or have questions

about the trips contact Janis Duffy at j.duffy@tiara.ie or Marie Ahern at m.ahern@tiara.ie. Trips are open to TIARA members. Guests of members may also attend at the same discounted rate.

TIARA holds monthly

meetings to educate and foster interaction with other Irish researchers at Brandeis University, Mandel Center for the Humanities, Room G3, 415 South St., Waltham, MA. Meetings are free and open to the public.



The Trad Youth Exchange, a group of young musicians from Ireland, Boston, New York and Philadelphia, during their concert at The Burren early last month. *Sean Smith photos*

Trad Youth Exchange plays its message: Mutual enjoyment keeps the music going

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

There was absolutely no space in The Burren Backroom, certainly not on the stage: Twenty children in two rows occupied most of the platform, and a third row of eight sat along its front edge. The 28 kids – ranging in age from pre- to mid-teens – also held an assortment of instruments, including fiddles, concertinas, flutes, tin whistles, bodhrans, and the odd banjo, guitar and set of uilleann pipes. The audience in the Backroom, meanwhile, filled every seat and just about every spot on the floor.

What packed the Backroom to full capacity had been billed as a concert, yet that word seemed somehow an insufficient description. This had all the earmarks of a landmark event that spoke to the continuing legacy of Irish traditional music, and the spirit of community and fellowship it inspires, across great distances and generations.

Those three-and-then-some hours in The Burren on the afternoon of Nov. 9 represented a critical step in the progress of the Trad Youth Exchange (TYE), the brainchild of Melrose's Lisa Coyne, executive director of the Boston Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Music School, and Mary MacNamara, a concertina player from Tulla in County Clare who teaches Irish music to young people. TYE is an effort to build friendship and understanding between Irish and American children through traditional Irish music; a group of kids from or near Tulla in County Clare were matched up with an equal number of their peers, most from Greater Boston and also the New York City and Philadelphia areas, and learned some tunes from one another's repertoire.

Early last month, MacNamara and several parents led the Tulla contingent to Boston for a nearly weeklong visit, which culminated in The Burren performance; the two groups of musicians also played a sold-out concert in Melrose two nights before, and made an appearance at the Irish consulate in Boston. This coming February, the second leg of the exchange takes place, and the American kids will head off to Tulla.

TYE is meant to be fun for the participants, but its organizers and supporters hope the project imparts some deeper lessons. A musician herself, as is her husband John, and the mother of two TYE members, Coyne knows first-hand how music can be a centerpiece of family life. But she also knows that many young Irish musicians can find it difficult to build a community the way she and other adult musicians do.

"There's more to Irish music than lessons, practice, competitions and performances," she explains. "The music has a social component, and that's how it becomes a part of who you are. We want these kids, who work so hard at being musicians, to have the space and the opportunity to simply enjoy the music with one another, just like adults do. That's how the music keeps going."

"When I was with Mary in Clare, you could see how the music knit together children, families and adults. There was a hall in Tulla where everyone would gather for concerts or ceilidhs or other events, and in this way the music became a shared history for everyone, no matter their age. I thought that was a very worthwhile goal for us to pursue here, and Mary and I worked with other parents to try and make it happen."

Over a period of many months, the American and Irish groups held fundraising events and gratefully received donations from assorted friends and benefactors. Meanwhile, the TYE musicians kept practicing, and got to know each other a little better via social media before the Tulla group came to Boston.

"We felt that assigning 'buddies' was a good way to



Tin whistle players performed a medley as part of the Trad Youth Exchange concert.

set the table, and allow everyone to start building a rapport before the visit," says Coyne.

Their Boston hosts took the Clare visitors around town for various activities, including a duck boat ride and a trip to the Museum of Science, Fenway Park, and the Boston Tea Party, among other sites (and here's something to cheer the hearts of MBTA administrators – the Tulla kids loved riding the subway, even at rush hour). Naturally, the youngsters did plenty of rehearsing and jamming, too.

Inevitably, for all the involvement of the adults, it was up to the kids to make it happen, and perhaps the biggest test was how well they would interact with each other in person. Any concerns about that, according to Coyne, vanished quickly.

"They got along just fine. There was a lot of bonding that went on, and they were very gracious to one another and full of laughter."

As she warmed up prior to the Nov. 9 Burren show, 13-year-old Tulla concertina player Lilly O'Connor confirmed Coyne's observations. "The sessions were great, and it was lovely when everybody had a chance to play together. Sometimes, we'd give people the names of tunes, or they'd give us names; we exchanged styles – 'This is how I play it' – or showed different ornamentations. It's a fun way to learn."

Another visitor, 12-year-old fiddler Aine Murphy, said that – in addition to riding the subway – she liked learning some of the "Boston tunes," like "Cooley's Reel" and "The Wise Maid," and sharing popular tunes from Tulla.

The Tulla chaperones were equally happy about the exchange. "The ultimate, hugely important goal is not about improving standards or techniques," said Frances Custy, mother of Lilly and her 11-year-old sister Eve, another TYE participant, and herself part of a distinguished musical family. "We want the kids to be happy about playing, to love to play music. The fact they're improving is a bonus."

Custy said the TYE has been a means to broaden the

children's horizons, sometimes in unexpected ways: "In just the few days we've been in Boston, I've seen different sides to my girls. They're used to being out in the country, where it's not so hectic, but they've been walking around Boston as if they'd been doing it all their lives. I could definitely visualize either or both of them living in a city when they get older."

Although Lilly, Aine and the other TYE participants were clearly enjoying themselves, the excitement and activity of the previous days – and, in the case of the Irish children, the effects of jet lag – seemed to settle on them as they sat on the Backroom stage during their pre-show sound check, and as MacNamara and other adults went over the set list and logistics, made sure instruments were in tune, and did some troubleshooting where necessary. Some youthful faces showed traces of weariness, several yawns were in evidence, and now and then a musician seemed lost in thought.

But when emcees Brian O'Donovan of WGBH and ClareFM "West Wind" host Paula Carroll formally announced the start of the show, the switch went on and the youngsters rose to the occasion: Their playing sounded crisp, focused, and spirited (as did the occasional keyboard accompaniment by TYE supporter Sean Clohessy, sitting almost out of view off to the side of the stage). Just as impressively, the children did a fine job serving as their own roadies, rearranging the stage as necessary to spotlight solos, duets, trios, and other featured performances.

The concert quickly found its rhythm, with O'Donovan – who at the outset predicted the show to be "wonderfully magical and chaotic" – and Carroll introducing each piece, or providing insights and background on this tune or that, or commenting on some general aspects of Irish music (remarking on the relative sizes of the US and Ireland, Carroll quipped, "It's amazing the lengths American musicians have to go to in order to play together").

In various combinations and settings, the TYE gang

(Continued on page 14)



Boston area musician Tommy McCarthy, owner of The Burren, officially launched the “Trad Tune Challenge” in this YouTube video to promote awareness of mental health issues.

Think charity, take up the Trad Tune Challenge

Social media-driven challenges for charity have become all the rage, as evidenced by the popularity of this year’s “Ice Bucket Challenge” to spark awareness and raise funds for research into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). One of the latest memes has been sweeping its way through the Irish music world – and it has a Boston connection.

Early last month, fiddler Tommy McCarthy, co-founder and owner of The Burren pub in Somerville, launched the “Trad Tune Challenge” to muster support for the St. Patrick’s Mental Health Foundation, which raises funds for Ireland’s largest, independent not-for-profit mental health service provider.

McCarthy issued a challenge for musicians, singers and dancers to record themselves on video, and to nominate other musicians to do the same, while encouraging donations to St. Patrick’s via its “Walk in My Shoes” awareness-and-support campaign. In no time, the Trad Tune Challenge was all over Facebook, with the hash tag #trad tune, recruiting luminaries such as Damien Dempsey, Liz and Yvonne Kane, Kevin Crawford, Mairead Ni Mhaonaigh, John Faulkner, Siobhan Peoples, Brian Conway, as well as members of the band Beoga; Boston-area Trad Tune Challengers included Kieran Jordan, Nathan Gierney, Declan Houton, Sean Clohessy, Kathleen Conneely, Teddy Davis and Tina Lech.

According to St. Patrick’s Mental Health Foundation Project Manager Kate Moran, more than 500 people took part in the Trad Tune Challenge in the first two weeks after McCarthy started it. Certainly one of the more distinctive video responses came from Pat Power of Dingle in Co. Kerry, who appeared along with his “Stone Mad Ceili Band,” a group of mechanical puppet musicians he built.

McCarthy says the idea of doing something to support St. Patrick’s came from watching a TV appearance earlier this year by U2’s Adam

Clayton, a high-profile advocate for Walk in My Shoes, which is aimed at young adults – as St. Patrick’s notes, 75 percent of mental health difficulties begin before the age of 24. McCarthy had begun co-organizing a January 14 concert at the National Concert Hall in Dublin to mark the release of a CD of the Burren’s “Backroom” series, and decided to make it a fundraiser for Walk in My Shoes.

“But I began thinking more about how I could get the traditional music scene involved,” says McCarthy. “Then I thought about the Ice Bucket Challenge, and what a success that was, and would there be some way of going along the same lines with music. When I saw Sharon Shannon in October I said, ‘I’ve got this little idea...’ and explained what I was trying to accomplish, and she said, ‘That’s fantastic!’

“So when November came, I nominated Sharon, Martin Donohoe, and Enda Scahill to kick it all off by playing ‘The Sligo Maid’ reel, and Sharon reached out to people like Nathan Carter and Joannie Madden, and I was going through my contacts as well. And of course, once the younger people saw what was going on, they all wanted to join in.”

In fact, as McCarthy found, #trad tune quickly took on a life of its own: “At one point, I got in touch with the Killarney School of Music to see if they would get involved, and they said, ‘Oh, you’re too late – it’s been going on here since Tuesday!’”

McCarthy notes that the Trad Tune Challenge need not involve playing a tune: People can sing, dance, read poetry or give recitations as well.

“It was a simple thing, but it really took off, and I’ve been very glad to see how many people cared enough to take part.”

For more information on the Trad Tune Challenge, see walkinmyshoes.ie/walk-in-my-shoes-tradtune-challenge.

To see Tommy McCarthy’s original Trad Tune Challenge video, watch <http://youtu.be/KT-twZiCKlg>.

– SEAN SMITH

DECEMBER 2014 CALENDAR

Tues., Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m. – IPC Immigration & Citizenship Clinic, The Banshee, 934 Dorchester Ave. Dorchester, MA. Immigration attorneys meet with people on a one to one basis. No fee service; confidentiality assured.

Wed., Dec. 3, 6 p.m. – Irish Heroes of New England Awards 2014. Annual awards event hosted by The Irish Emigrant newspaper.

Thurs., Dec. 4, 6-9 p.m. – Annual Irish Network Boston Christmas Party, Faneuil Hall, Complimentary bar and hors d’oeuvres, free for members who have paid \$50 annual dues.

Fri., Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m. – Pauline Wells, “Home for Christmas” lineup of talented musicians and singers, including the band Devri. To benefit “Cops for Kids with Cancer,” Norwood Theatre, 109 Central St, Norwood. Tickets \$27 for adults and \$24 for seniors/students, 781-551-9000. ... Tony Kenny’s Christmas Time in Ireland, 7:30 p.m., Rogers Center for the Arts, Merrimack College. 978-837-5355 | merrimack.edu.

Fri., Dec. 5/6 – Cape Cod Christmas Shoppers Weekend, featuring The Tom Lannigan Band, Cape Cod Irish Village 822 Main St., South Yarmouth, MA 02664. 508-771-0100 to book or more information: capecod-IrishVillage.com.

Sat., Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. – Concern Worldwide Christmas Ball, Hyatt Regency Boston. Tickets \$150. boston-irish-christmas-ball.ticketleap.com/boston-ball/ ... Irish Cultural Centre presents “The Irish Pub” Film Documentary, 8 a.m. irishculture.org. \$10, (pre-booking advised), 781-821-8291.

Sun., Dec. 7 – County Donegal Association of Boston Christmas. Please call for more information: Colm McDaid, 617-698-7112, or Michael McCarron, 617-696-1702. ... Larry Reynolds Memorial Scholarship Fund Fundraiser Ceili, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., Canadian-American Hall, 202 Arlington St., Watertown, MA. Donation suggestion \$12 at the door. 781-664-4555, canadian-americanclub.com. ... Mary Coughlan Live, 8 p.m., The Burren, 247 Elm St., Somerville. Tickets \$20, 617-776-6896, burren.com.

Tues., Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m. – Gaelic Roots Christmas Concert. The Eire Society of Boston and The Charitable Irish Society celebrate the Christmas season, Cadigan Alumni Center, Brighton Center. After the concert, adjourn to The Green Briar pub for appetizers and a cash bar. Info: Connie Koutoujian, 781-899-3140.

Wed., Dec. 10, 7 p.m. – Tony Kenny Christmas Show, Irish Social Club, 119 Park St., W. Roxbury. Tickets \$20. 617-327-7306 or 617-549-9812.

Fri., Dec. 12, through Sun., Dec 21 – Christmas Celtic Sojourn with Brian O’Donovan. At multiple venues, including Boston, Rockport, and Worcester, and New Bedford. Tickets, info: WGBH.org/

celtic.

Sat., Dec. 13 – Brendan Grace - Live on Stage, Concannon’s Village, Norwood. Also featuring music by Erin’s Melody. 617-939-3744, brendangrace.com. ... Christmas Social dance with Fintan Stanley, Arlington K of C Hall, 15 Winslow St. Arlington. Info: 978-664-4652, 781-326-0388. ... New England Irish Harp Orchestra Concerts, at multiple locations: Concord, NH, Durham NH, Mattapoisett, MA. Times and locations at neiho.org. ... ICCNE’s 2014 Annual Drawing & Holiday Open House, 6 p.m., Irish Cultural Centre of New England, Canton, 781-821-8291, irishculture.org.

Sun., Dec 14, Noon – Irish Cultural Centre of New England’s Christmas Brunch with Santa, ICCNE campus, Canton, 781-821-8291, irishculture.org. ... Somerville Jingle Bell 5K Run & Walk, 11 a.m., Davis Square. baevents.com/jinglebell/.

Wed., Dec. 17, 6 p.m. – BIBA Christmas Party. Boston Irish Business Association after-work event, MJ O’Connor’s Park Plaza location. bibaboston.com.

Wed., Dec. 31, New Year’s Eve – Burren New Year’s Eve Party, featuring fiddler Helena Delaney and in the Back Room, cover band Red Square. The Burren Pub, 247 Elm Street, Davis Square, Somerville, 617-776-6896 | burren.com.



The Trad Youth Exchange show at The Burren also included a set with mainly Boston-area adult musicians, such as (L-R) John Coyne, Sean Clohessy, Jimmy Noonan and Tommy McCarthy. *Sean Smith photo*

Trad Youth Exchange plays its message: Mutual enjoyment keeps the music going

(Continued from page 13) delivered some memorable moments: a pair of fiddle-concertina duets, one by Coyne’s daughter Josie with her cousin (“My aunt,” Josie joked during the introduction) Alanna Wamsley, the other by Carroll’s daughter Rosa with Lilly O’Connor; a tin whistle ensemble by the Bostonians; a set of reels by fiddle-playing sisters Mary and Lizzy Kozachek and bodhran player Maeve O’Brien (the group’s nicknames for them, Carroll noted, were “The Angels and the Fireball”); step, sean-nos, and broom dance showcases, with Aisling MacMahon, Callum Beirne, Stephen Kennedy, Maeve and the Kozacheks valiantly maneuvering in the tight space; a fedora-adorned Naoise O’Sullivan (drawing inspiration from her storytelling grandfather), reciting a comic piece written by “Bard of Armagh” Jimmy Rafferty about his gastronomic misadventures; and a spellbinding rendition by fiddler Clodagh O’Farrell of the slow air, “Were You at the Rock?” a favorite of her late grandmother.

The middle of the concert’s “three halves” (as Carroll called

them) saw adults take the stage, notably among them MacNamara, who has just released her new CD, “Note for Note”; she performed a few sets with John Coyne and piper Pat Hutchinson. A veritable “who’s who” of Boston-area Irish music denizens also appeared during this portion: Jon Gannon, Kathleen Conneely, Tina Lech, John, Lisa and Josie Coyne, and a distinguished quartet of Clohessy, John Coyne, flutist Jimmy Noonan, and fiddler Tommy McCarthy, co-founder and owner of The Burren.

These accomplished musicians supplied a valuable and heartfelt perspective to the whole affair, representing “a passing of the torch,” as O’Donovan put it. This was an occasion for remembrance and fond nostalgia, not without a little emotion: Introducing one set of tunes, Noonan choked up as he reminisced about his stint 30 years ago with the famous Tulla Ceili Band – “probably the greatest summer of my life.” The message was unmistakable: This is the tradition we’ve preserved and loved, kids – take it and make it your own.

“I saw the Boston community pull together in so many ways I hadn’t

before,” says Lisa Coyne. “What you had that afternoon was one of those moments that link the past to the present, and to people and places, whether it was Jimmy remembering the Tulla Ceili Band, or when Lilly was playing a tune that made me think, ‘Oh, Jack Coen taught me that tune!’ This is part of what makes Irish music so special.

“What we want is for these kids to someday have their own experiences and memories to look back on, which they will accumulate through the music. And hopefully, this week of the Trad Youth Exchange will be one of them.”

* * *

The Trad Youth Exchange concert at The Burren will be broadcast on WGBH’s “A Celtic Sojourn” and the ClareFM “West Wind” show at a later date. For updates, see wghb.org/celtic.

More information about the Trad Youth Exchange Project is available at trad youthexchange.weebly.com. Donations, which are tax-deductible, in support of the project may be sent to Mike Hickey, 100 Woodpecker Road, Stoughton, MA 02072.

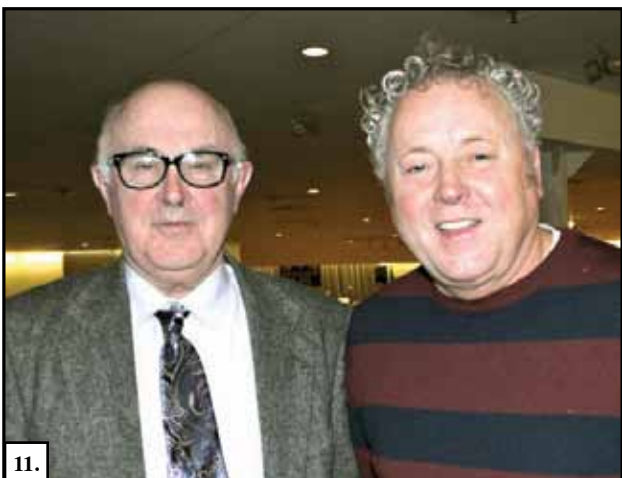
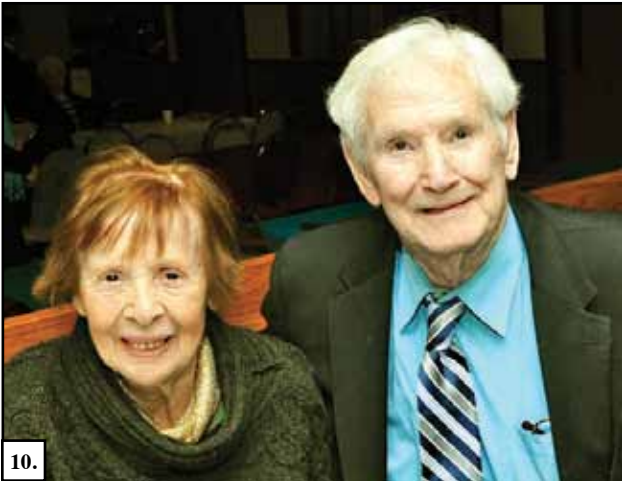
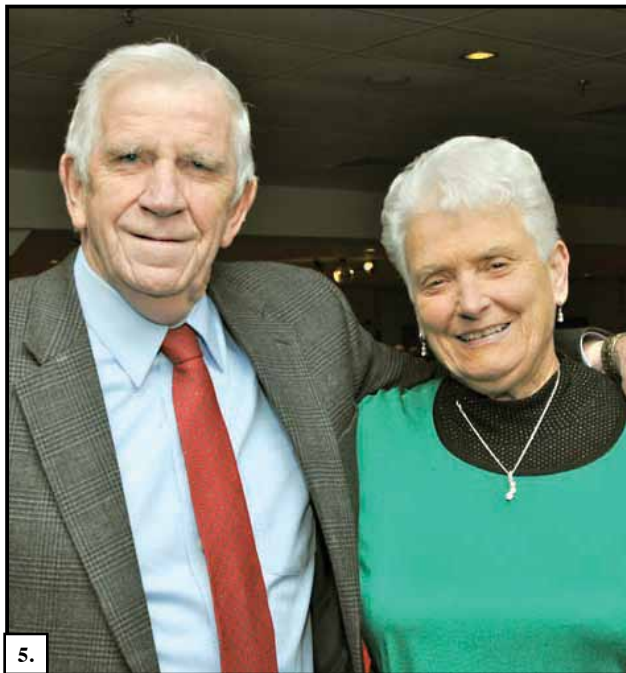
BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The County Sligo Association of Boston held its annual scholarship dance on November 22 at the Irish Social Club, and awards were presented to three college students: Timothy Tannian of North Reading, a grandson of Mary Tannian and a student at Merrimack College; Sean Fahy of Dedham, son of Francis Fahy and a student at Holy Cross College; and Kayleigh O'Leary of North Reading, granddaughter of Catherine Steele and a student at Westfield State College.

1.) Maureen O'Donovan, Marshfield; Seamus Healy, Braintree; Breeda Ryan, Waltham; 2.) Peggy Willett, Woburn; Delia Connolly, Winchester; 3.) Kathy Sullivan, Dedham; Mary O'Toole Gorman, W. Roxbury; 4.) Jim Keenan, Weymouth; Martha Dunning, Quincy; 5.) Jim O'Leary, Dot Valenti, W. Roxbury; 6.) Maureen Quinn, Brighton; Sean Quinn, Westwood; 7.) Jim and Peg Roach, Westwood; 8.) Makayla Seldon, Everett; Mary Elizabeth Gallagher, Stoneham; 9.) Carl and Brigid OHara, Needham; 10.) Kathleen and Eugene Greenan, Milton; 11.) Matt McCarrick, Needham; Seamus Healy, Braintree.



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Traveling People

Enjoy Ireland, and a sense of royalty, at its castle hotels

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Have you always wanted to be a prince or princess? If not, you probably have at least dreamed about being treated like a member of the royal family!

We can't help with heredity, but we can suggest that you book into one of Ireland's many castle hotels where you can fulfill your fantasy and be treated like royalty.

CASTLE HOTELS

There are many elegant castle hotels across Ireland but probably the best known are Ashford in Cong, Co. Mayo, and Dromoland, in Co. Clare, just minutes from Shannon Airport.

Ashford had one of many glory days back in the 1950s when "The Quiet Man" with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara was filmed in and around the area and many of the stars stayed at the hotel.

Over the years, Ashford has changed hands many times and was actually owned by a group of American investors back in the 1980s. A Galway developer bought the property in 2008 and the hotel was sold again in 2013, this time to Red Carnation Hotels, a South African company that owns four- and five-star properties in London, Guernsey, Geneva, and even Palm Beach, FL.

When you book into Ashford, you can choose a room or suite and both promise elegance and comfort and afford views out over 350 acres of private woodlands or across Lough Corrib.

The food at Ashford is delicious and well prepared in the hotel and at "Cullen's at the Cottage," just a short walk away over the bridge. In The George V dining room you can enjoy classic Irish cuisine or dine in the specialty restaurant The Connaught Room, which offers classic French cuisine.

Accommodation and food isn't all you'll find at Ashford. There are many activities to enjoy there, ranging from catch-and-release fishing and golf to walking/hiking, lake cruising, horseback riding, and a visit to the falconry to take a hawk walk.

RENOVATION

There is currently a renovation, preservation, and enhancement program underway at Ashford, according to Niall Rochford, general manager for more than a decade. Some of the work includes new windows and rooves, moving and rebuilding the kitchens closer to the dining room, a new library, WiFi and air conditioning throughout, flat-screen TVs in guest rooms, and interior design coordinated by Beatrice Tollman, founder and president of Red Carnation Hotel Collection, and her daughter Toni.

The three-phase plan includes restoration and re-landscaping of Cullen's, drainage work so the nine-hole golf course can be enjoyed year-round, and plans to overhaul the old boathouse on the



Ashford Castle in Cong, Co. Mayo, was acquired in 2013 by the Red Carnation Hotel group and a three-phase project is underway to restore and enhance the property.



Beautiful Dromoland Castle in Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare, is one of Ireland's best known luxury castle hotels. The property boasts an 18-hole parkland golf course, originally designed by golf architect Brook L. Wigginton from the US, and redesigned and updated in 2003 by architect Ron Kirby and Irish golfing legend J.B.Carr.



The charming "Cullen's at the Cottage" pub at Ashford Castle in Cong, Co. Mayo, will be renovated and re-landscaped as part of the work being done on the property by Red Carnation Hotels, which bought Ashford in 2013.

Judy Enright photos

shores of Lough Corrib for future guest accommodation.

The third phase of the work, ongoing from now until March, will include completion of all guest rooms and, subject to planning approval, future installation of a 32-seat indoor cinema, billiard room and cigar terrace, children's game room, full service spa, and an indoor heated pool. Staff levels will also be increased.

For more information or to book, visit ashford-castle.com.

DROMOLAND

Dromoland in Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare, is another well-known castle hotel that is espe-

cially popular with those flying in or out of Shannon Airport.

The castle, built in the 16th century and the former royal seat of the O'Brien clan, was transformed into a hotel in 1962 and has since added a spa, golf course and country club, leisure center with an indoor swimming pool, sauna, steam room, Jacuzzi, and fully-equipped gym.

Guests can hunt, fish, ride, play golf or tennis, walk/hike, or visit Dromoland's School of Falconry, which is run by Dave Atkinson who is not only knowledgeable about the birds of prey but also about the history of the property

and area.

You can find formal or casual dining at Dromoland and enjoy excellent cuisine by Executive Chef David McCann and his staff. McCann's recently published Dromoland cookbook is available at the gift shop.

Dromoland management recently bought, refurbished, and reopened the former Clare Inn, which is now called The Inn at Dromoland. The Inn is an economical way to enjoy many of Dromoland Castle's shared activities.

For more information about Dromoland, contact: dromoland.ie or theinnatdromoland.ie

BALLYNAHINCH

Another favorite castle hotel with a storied history is Ballynahinch in Connemara. The property has been home over the centuries to an assortment of famous residents, including Humanity Dick Martin, credited with founding the society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and Maharajah Ranjitsinji, also known as 'Ranji', Prince of Cricketeers.

There are 40 bedrooms at Ballynahinch and guests may choose standard, superior, and luxury rooms, or splurge on a Riverside suite.

Ballynahinch is surrounded by 350 acres of woodlands for scenic walks. The hotel's fishery is world-renowned for being one of the finest in Ireland for salmon and sea trout. (Fishing is reserved for hotel guests.) Tennis, pony trekking, and hill climbing are available and the Connemara Golf Club, 17 miles away, offers a challenge for golfers. Ballynahinch is ideally located for visits to Connemara National Park as well as fun and interesting area towns like Roundstone and Clifden.

For more details, see ballynahinch-castle.com

OTHER CASTLE HOTELS

- Kinnitty, a Gothic revival castle hotel in Birr, Co. Offaly, stands in 20,000 acres of woodlands on the slopes of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The hotel, almost equidistant from Dublin, Limerick, and Galway, recently underwent major refurbishment and offers activities including shooting, fishing, tennis, equestrian sports, health and fitness facilities. Special offers are available. For more, see kinnittycastlehotel.com

- Markree Castle in Collooney, Co. Sligo, is a member of Manor House Hotels group and has been the Cooper family home for more than 370 years. Enjoy peace and quiet, good dining, wine, and old world charm on the 500-acre estate. Markree, which is closed for the winter, is the only castle hotel in Sligo and on the Wild Atlantic Way. For more information, see markreecastle.ie

- Cabra Castle Hotel in Kingscourt, Co. Cavan, is about an hour and a half from Dublin. Set in 88 acres of gardens and parkland, Cabra has its own nine-hole golf course. Guests can also enjoy horseback riding or fishing in one of Cavan's 365 lakes. The hotel has 80 bedrooms, a bar and restaurant. For more information, take a look at cabracastle.com

- Waterford Castle and Golf Resort, about two miles from Waterford City, is accessible by car-ferry travel to its private 310-acre island in the River Suir, surrounded by woodlands and an 18-hole championship golf course. There are 19 bedrooms available and seasonal menus are offered in the Munster Dining Room. See waterfordcastlere-sort.com for more information.

- Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Resort in Adare Village, Co. Limerick, has an 18-hole championship golf course, spa, world-class dining, equestrian center, fishing, shopping, sightseeing, and other estate activities. Adare is set in 840 acres of formal gardens and parkland and has a variety of accommodation, several restaurants and bars. See adaremanor.com for more.

- Ballyseede Castle Hotel in Tralee, Co. Kerry, claims to have a friendly resident ghost named Hilda. She might not appeal to every potential guest, but the luxury accommodation, location, scenery, food, and wine should. The hotel is set on 30 acres of gardens and woodland. For more information visit ballyseedecastle.com

HOLIDAYS

Enjoy the holidays wherever you are and whatever you do. We hope your gifts include a trip to the Emerald Isle and we wish our readers very happy holidays and a peaceful and happy New Year.

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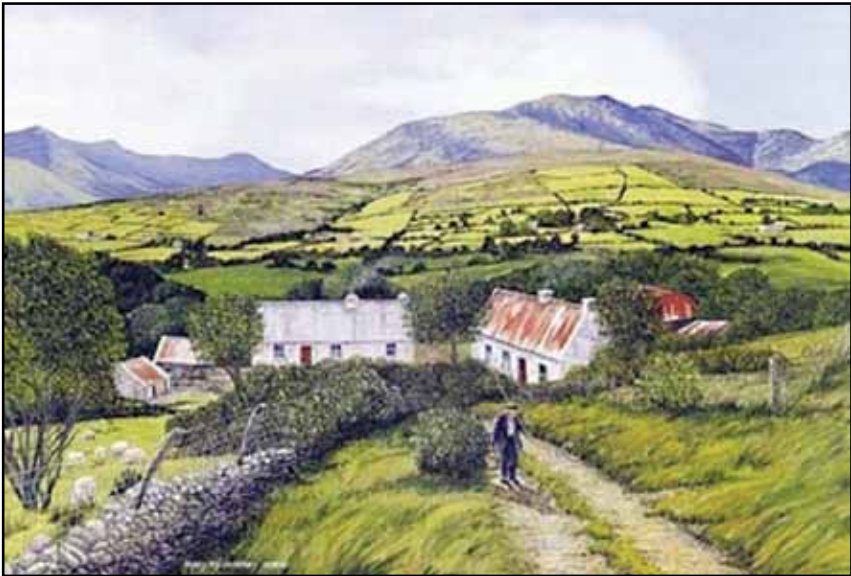
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JAMES E. ROONEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

In last month’s column you learned the word for “hair”, gruaig /GROO-ik/. Sometimes human hair may be referred to as folt, particularly in poetry. In “old Irish” hair was thought associated with “beauty”, as it is now but often on a man.

This is “hair on the head”, not on the human body nor the fur of an animal. This word in fionnadh /FEE-nuh/, both for animal fur and the hair elsewhere on a human -- under arm, legs, chest.

While we are at it, here are the words for what today is called “facial hair” but I still call “whiskers”--féasóg/FEY-sohk/. This word also is used for “beard.” A “moustache” is croiméal /KROH-meyl/.

Continuing with parts of the body, cos /kohs/ is both “leg” and “foot” just as lámh /lahv/ is both “hand” and “arm” and méar /mehr/ is both “finger” and “toe.” The “toe” may be referred to as ladhar /lahr/ to differentiate it from méar (finger) if necessary.

Here is a little practice: 1.) “She has black hair.” 2.) “Your hand is dirty.” 3.) “He had a red beard” 4.) “His moustache is white.” 5.) “Her hair is long..” 6.) “That cat has white hair/fur.”

Answers: 1.) Tá gruaig dubh aici. 2.) Tá do lámh salach. 3.) Bhí féasóg rua aige. 4.) Tá a chroiméal ban. 5.) Tá a gruaig fada. 6.) Tá fionnadh ban ag an gcat.

Whoops! I forgot to tell you that the colour “red” or a “bright red” is dearg but when something is the color of “red hair” the word for “red” is rua. The colour system of Irish is something we will deal with in the next column.

Meantime, let us review the basic structure of the Irish sentence.
The basic word order is ...

Sentence	Verb	Subject	Object	Extension(s)
What do I mean by “Extensions”?				These “Extensions” can be from one to as many as the speaker/ writer wants but generally they are what we would call “adverbs” or “prepositional phrases”. Many adverbs are in the form of Prepositional Phrases such as “in the morning”.
Irish (and English) “extensions” normally follow this order: First “direction” of an action: “John sent a letter <i>to Kate</i> ”;				
Second, “direction” or “location” “John sent a letter to Kate <i>in the Bahamas</i> ;				
Third, “Adverbs of manner”: “John sent a letter to Kate in the Bahamas <i>hurriedly</i> .”				
Fourth, an adverb of time” “John sent a letter to Kate in the Bahamas hurriedly <i>today</i> .”				
I know this sentence may not make sense but I use it as an example. You also may repeat on or more of these “extensions” such as “John wrote a letter to Kate and family” or “hurriedly and illegibly.”				
You have already seen that these rules can be broken such as the “Progressive “ sentences where part of the Irish verb can be separated around the subject.				

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12 Friday

14 Sunday
21 Sunday
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