

# BOSTON Irish

Vol. 3, Issue 1

Spring 2022

BostonIrish.com

## The Ties Grow Stronger

Ambassador Cronin enhances age-old Bay State-Ireland connection



With her husband Ray and their daughters Kara and Kerry standing by proudly, US Ambassador to Ireland Claire Cronin presented her diplomatic credentials to Irish President Michael D. Higgins at his residence in Dublin on Thurs., Feb. 10.

*Photo courtesy US Embassy in Dublin*

The scene reflected a passage in time and memory for Claire Cronin as she stepped into Áras an Uachtaráin (Residence of the President) in Dublin on Thurs., Feb. 10, 2022, where, accompanied by her husband Ray and their two daughters, Kara and Kerry, she formally assumed her role as United States ambassador to Ireland in a ceremony with Ireland's president, Michael D. Higgins.

Some 100 years earlier, Claire McLaughlin Cronin's grandfather left the impoverished shores of Donegal's Inishowen Peninsula for the United States, where he was sure he would make a better life for his family.

His granddaughter has put an exclamation point on his expectations: Some 175 miles from her ancestors' villages in Ireland's far northwest, she is setting up house at Deerfield House, the American ambassadors' residence in Dublin's Phoenix Park.

In a video released that day by the US Embassy, Cronin, a Brockton, Massachusetts, native, said, "As a proud American with family ties to Ireland, I am excited to return to the land of my ancestors at a time of so many opportunities for both countries. My grandfather left Ireland for a future in America full of hope and promise. He would be thrilled to see his

**(Continued on page 4)**



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## A call for help from Galway diaspora in US

By ED FORRY

Our Galway correspondent, Larry Donnelly, contacted me this month to introduce Sharon Fitzpatrick, the development director for COPE Galway, a social services agency in that city. "She is eager to establish relationships with Irish Americans in Boston and New York," Donnelly told me, "Specifically those with ties to Galway and the west of Ireland – and to raise money for the good work that they do."

"Sharon is planning to travel over the next month and is keen to meet with as many potentially interested people as possible. I am not sure what might be possible, but it is a worthy cause."

Said Fitzpatrick: "COPE Galway has been providing homeless, domestic abuse and senior support services to the people of Galway since the 1970s. The demand for services has grown significantly over the past decade and this is likely to continue as we support our community in dealing with the social impacts of the pandemic."

As is the case with many non-profit organizations, Fitzpatrick said, "funding is an ongoing and ever-present challenge for us. We would like to reach out to Galway's diaspora in the US, focusing on Boston and New York initially, with a view to building relationships and finding ways in which Irish Americans could connect with and support our work."

"As a first step, we would like to establish a COPE Galway Boston Advisory Board of influential Irish Americans who would work in partnership with us in giving advice and making recommendations as to how best to approach this work."

Located on the Tuam Road in Galway, the agency can be contacted by phone, at 091778750, or by email at info@copegalway.ie. For a brief YouTube video about the agency, visit tinyurl.com/48ff5utr.

## A plea to Quinnipiac University to do the right thing by its Great Hunger Museum

By LYNN BUSHNELL

SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH

Last August, the President of Quinnipiac University, Judy Olian, announced plans to close the university's Ireland's Great Hunger Museum just shy of its 10th anniversary, citing expenses that far outweighed the benefits to its students and the community at large. I beg to differ.

By way of background, the museum consists primarily of fine art and sculpture devoted to the story of Ireland's Great Hunger (or the Potato Famine as it is aptly misnamed) in the years between 1845 and 1852 when approximately 1.5 million Irish died and 2.5 million more emigrated, mostly to North America, because of an indifferent British government under whose rule Ireland was at the time.

The museum tells the story through art of a tragic and deeply disturbing time in Ireland's history, widely recognized by historians as the worst humanitarian disaster in Europe of the 19th century.

The exhibition also serves a much larger purpose in that it serves as a platform to highlight social injustices, bad government policies, and food insecurity, all important topics in today's world. It also



The Vigil by Francis William Topham

provides a beacon of hope to current immigrants, as Irish Americans are largely a success story in today's America.

To close the museum after giving it only two years to become self-sustaining – during a pandemic – is unconscionable. To that end, a group of devoted individuals is doing everything in its power to overturn this decision.

This group, Save Ireland's Great Hunger Museum Inc., is eager to work with Quinnipiac University to find a path forward to reopen the museum. The mission, press coverage, and videos of support for the newly formed 501(c)3 Save Ireland's Great

Hunger Museum may be viewed at [saveighm.org/](http://saveighm.org/).

Support has come from highly regarded and influential Boston organizations, namely, The Charitable Irish Society of Boston and the Eire Society of Boston. The Irish Cultural Centre in Canton is also concerned.

US Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, and other state and local officials have expressed support for the museum's reopening.

People may recall the debacle of the proposed closure of the Rose Museum at Brandeis University: ultimately Brandeis trustees

decided not to close it or sell the collection.

While Quinnipiac originally planned to sell portions of the collection, it now maintains it only wishes to give the collection away. Why a university would give away \$2 million of its own assets remains an absolute mystery and is a stark example of trustees shirking their fiduciary responsibilities.

Finally, it is noteworthy that 2022 marks the 175th anniversary of Black '47, the worst year of the Great Hunger, which will be recognized by both the Irish government and the Irish American diaspora.

We hope the attorney general's investigation will result in an order for Quinnipiac to reverse its decision, and we call on the university to partner with our organization, reopen the museum, and let it shine as a beacon to all immigrants, especially refugees, about what success can look like in America in the face of terrible hardships.

*Lynn Bushnell is the former vice president for public affairs at Quinnipiac University where she oversaw Ireland's Great Hunger Museum from its opening in 2012 until her retirement in 2019.*

## As evolution enhances our capacities, our inner selves lag behind the curve

By JAMES W. DOLAN

SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

That mankind has made tremendous strides in science and technology is beyond dispute. The pace of progress since the Industrial Revolution validates the continuing development of our capacity to learn and apply skills previously thought to be confined to the imagination of science fiction writers.

Most such "progress" has been beneficial and has improved our standard of living. Often lost in the excitement are the downsides, the unanticipated problems that are the result of scientific and technological discoveries. Some have produced weapons of mass destruction capable of killing millions. Others have complicated how we relate to one another.

While these discoveries underscore the evolution of our intellectual capacity, do they also reflect a positive change in our values? Are we better? Are we more honest, more compassionate, more understanding, and more committed to the common good? Or are we the same as we have always been – self-absorbed, angry, and distrustful? It appears that the two paths of evolution do not occur in tandem.

The evidence strongly suggests our intellectual capabilities have steadily evolved over time while morally and emotionally we remain essentially the same as our ancestors. In fact, some of what we refer to as "progress" has created or exaggerated divisions within society. We have become more partisan, more antagonistic, and less able to either define or implement the common good.

Despite its history of mass annihilation, the threat of unimaginable nuclear war remains. Partisanship renders our national political processes almost incapable of constructive action. Despite the two-term election of our first black president, race relations remain fraught. His autocratic successor has split the nation in two and that fact threatens our democracy. Truth is no longer objective reality; it is whatever you imagine or want it to be. Freedom, too, is now subjective.

War is madness, as is defund the police and guns for everybody. Climate change is a global threat, yet we are unable to agree on sensible limitations. Regrettably, evolution is developing on two tracks: Science and technology are exacting disciplines, requiring patience,

experimentation, confirmation, and, eventually, consensus. Our humanity is subjective, emotional, impulsive, and dependent on guidance from parents, teachers, philosophy, and religion.

The spiritual (or humanistic) component of human nature has failed to keep pace with mankind's cerebral development. Without sensible restraints and clear directions, the balance between what we can do and should do is distorted as human nature improves slowly, incrementally, if at all. Unlike advances in science and technology, our progress is erratic, more variable, and more difficult to measure.

What does history teach us about evolution? That it is happening and will continue so long as we do not destroy ourselves. Evolution is much more pronounced in science and technology and promises, if used correctly, to substantially improve life on earth.

But for that to occur, we must continue the slower and more complex striving to become better human beings.

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

### BOSTON IRISH

is published quarterly by:

Boston Neighborhood News, Inc.,  
150 Mt. Vernon St., Suite 120, Dorchester, MA 02125  
newsroom@bostonirish.com www.bostonirish.com

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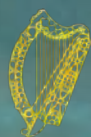
Date of Next Edition: Summer 2022

Deadline for Next Issue: Friday, May 20 2022 at noon

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2022

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# Cronin work in the Legislature called good prep for envoy post

The journey from Beacon Hill in Massachusetts was an odyssey for Claire Cronin, the new US Ambassador to Ireland.

Nominated to the highly visible diplomatic post by President Biden in the late winter of 2021, the then-majority leader in the Massachusetts House of Representatives waited almost a year as a few Republican senators in Congress put holds on dozens of envoy nominees.

After her nomination was approved, she held a series of farewells on Beacon Hill and beyond, with some 100 attendees in the House Chamber for Cronin's hail-and-goodbye event.

Emceeding the short ceremony, Speaker Ronald Mariano recounted working on that conference panel with Cronin.

"She referenced lived experiences from her district," Mariano continued, "things that she had seen in her time in the courtroom, all of them leading us to a solution to the problems that were facing the commonwealth then. You know, these are the traits that I'm sure when President Biden was looking for an ambassador to Ireland, Claire popped right into his mind, and here she is."

Ambassador Cronin, here enjoying a touch of Guinness, left, says she has met some J1 Summer Work and Travel visa applicants recently who are really excited about experiencing Boston and Massachusetts later this year. "Programs like these ensure that the close ties between Ireland and Boston will continue for generations to come." She noted that she will "be at the White House on St. Patrick's Day with President



Photo courtesy US Embassy in Dublin

Biden when he greets An Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Micheál Martin for their bilateral meeting, and adds: "As we celebrate that day and Irish American Heritage Month, I want to wish all my fellow Bostonians 'Lá Fhéile Pádraig Sona Daoibh' (Happy St. Patrick's Day) and say let us renew the bonds of friendship that will forever tie Ireland and the United States."



Claire Cronin takes her oath of office as US ambassador to Ireland at the Massachusetts House on Jan. 19 Her husband Ray and daughters Kara and Kerry look on at right. State House News Service photo

## Enhancing age-old ties across the sea

(Continued from page 1) granddaughter return to these shores as the US Ambassador. It is a dream come true."

She continued: "President Biden entrusted me as the US Ambassador to Ireland at a very important moment. As his eyes and ears here in Ireland, I plan to engage with politicians and other stakeholders. President Biden is unequivocal in his support for the Good Friday Agreement, a historic achievement that must be protected to ensure peace and stability in Northern Ireland."

Cronin added: "President Biden once recalled his grandmother's



Ambassador Cronin and Ireland Prime Minister Michael Martin have an introductory sitdown. Photo courtesy US Embassy in Dublin

words that "the best drop of blood in you is Irish." I have to agree with him. I will cherish every moment

here as US Ambassador to Ireland and I will always work to raise prosperity in both of our countries."



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1737

2022

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**With warmest and best wishes to all,**

**John D. Warner, Jr., President  
and  
the Board of Directors of the  
Charitable Irish Society**



# A Dublin Winter Journal

## January 2022

It has been a rocky road back to normality in Dublin. In early December, the city started to be itself again. Buskers were back on Grafton Street and live music returned to the pubs. Then the Omicron wave hit. The government was forced to tighten Covid restrictions on Dec. 20, just before Christmas. With 97 percent of the population vaccinated, demoralized Dubliners reacted with resignation: "Ach, sure we've done all that's been asked of us, but lookit, here we are."



Christy Moore in full flow at Vicar Street

### January 11:

#### Christy Moore Show Goes on

Before Omicron, we had started to get tickets for concerts and plays again, but most shows were canceled. One of our favorite artists, Christy Moore, went forward with his shows at Vicar Street. The new restrictions meant the gigs would start and end early, at 50 percent capacity, and with concert-goers required to wear N95 masks and have "Covid certs." Even so, we were excited and a bit nervous to get out again.

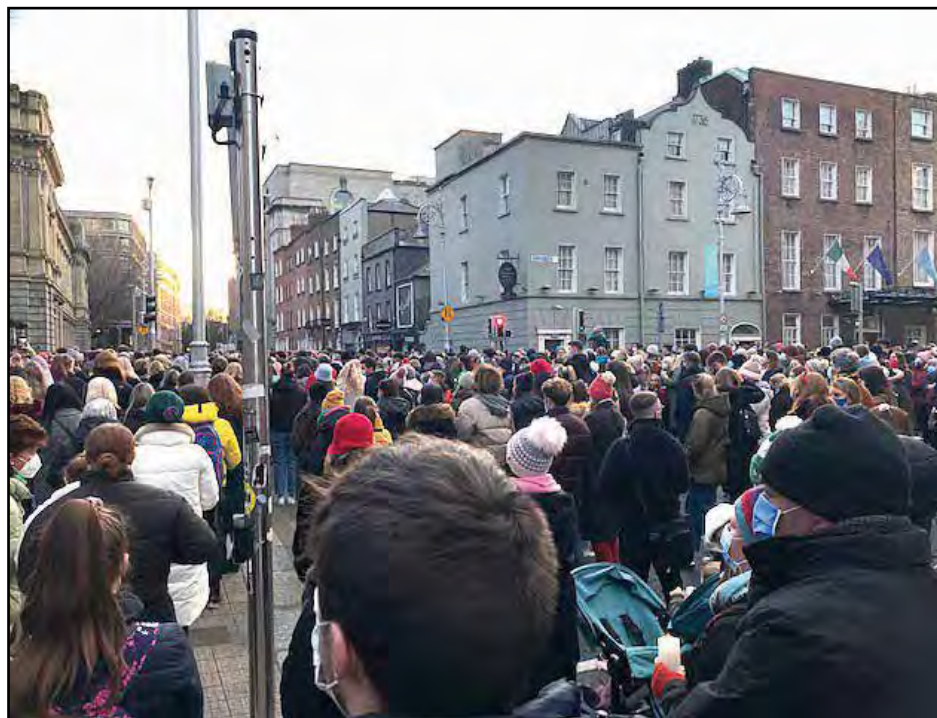
He brought the same passion and artistry to his craft that he has since his start in the 1960s. His concerts are transcendent voyages through Ireland and the world's tumultuous history, rich culture, and current events. Ballads about the great famine, emigration, Chile under Pinochet, and the Holocaust are blended with love songs, sing-a-longs about the joy of Ireland's world cup run of 1988, and working with a shovel in London. His repertoire of thousands of songs takes the crowd anywhere he chooses. Songs like "Michael Hatton" and "Back Home in Derry," (both written by Bobby Sands before his death by hunger strike in 1981) were intermingled with "North and South of the River," co-written with Bono, songs about Nelson Mandela, the nuclear freeze movement, the Stardust concert tragedy, and the looming disaster of climate breakdown.

Christy calls out powerful hypocrites, from Margaret Thatcher and Catholic bishops to Boris Johnson in a style that is both biting and fun. He praises the Irish who fought against fascism in Spain in the '30s while his haunting "Go, Move, Shift" shines a light on the treatment of Irish Travelers and morphs into a call for compassion for today's refugees from Iraq, Syria, Yemen, or El Salvador. His music asks all of us to answer questions: Who are we? Where are we going? What does our experience call us to do in the world? It is an expression of values and an invitation to share them. Christy's authentic Irish traditional music gives voice to the downtrodden, laborers, and rebels who resist injustice in all its forms. "Ordinary Man" and "The Time Has Come" (which he also sang at Martin McGuinness's funeral in 2017) are woven in with love songs like "Nancy Spain."

To do all this without sounding holier than thou, especially in Ireland where someone on a pedestal is soon toppled, is not an easy task. Somehow, Christy Moore became a living legend without inspiring too many hard feelings. By contrast, Bono is acknowledged as a star, but is not truly beloved in Ireland. Maybe his massive global success and infamous tax avoidance, his born-again-Christian-inspired (and well-publicized) humanitarian efforts, combined with Ireland's tradition of begrudgery, make him appear a self-serving "Goodie two shoes."

Despite his fame, Christy has remained "one of the lads." Perhaps his openness about his own journey with alcohol from "A Weekend in Amsterdam" to "Delirium Tremens" humanizes him. While he has been sober for many years, he is not a scold. Although, it must be said, he has been known to tell the odd overserved loudmouth in the crowd to "Shut up!" usually to cheers.

Memory is nonlinear. Anyone who has fallen in love or lost a loved one knows that joys and sorrows can be retrieved from our memories in an instant by the sight of a photograph, a few bars of a song, or the smell of a leaf fire on a bright fall day. "The past is never dead. It's not even past," wrote William Faulkner. Christy's Moore's music has the ability to transport concertgoers, who on this particular night ranged in age from teenagers to octogenarians, across time and space. Respectful of this power, he has stopped singing some of his more stridently republican songs that might encourage the nurturing of old grievances. He gave thanks to the roadies, other songwriters, listeners, and to his inspirations like the late Liam Clancy. Musically speaking, Christy is still great, and at 76 years of age, he seems to be getting even better. His new album, "Flying into Mystery," is outstanding (my favorite track is "Johnny Boy"). Toward the end of the show, he thanked long-dead Scottish songwriter Hamish Imlach, pointing heavenward and saying "See you soon, Hamish." We all hope that day never



Leinster House Vigil for Ashling Murphy

comes. Christy Moore is like a national druid connecting our time to all time.

### January 12:

#### Ashling Murphy's Murder

The following day, Ireland was shocked by the news of the murder of Ashling Murphy, a 23-year-old schoolteacher, Gaelic games athlete, and traditional fiddle player who was out for a run along the Grand Canal at 3 pm in her hometown of Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Her murder has inspired an enormous expression of grief, anger, and resolve. Vigils of remembrance and protests of violence against women were held across the country as well as in Boston, New York, London, and Australia. Organizers were encouraged by the presence of many men at the vigils. For far too long, violence against women has been blamed on the victims. The insinuation that the victim was "out too late at night, alone, had been drinking, was in a dangerous part of town" is always wrong, and in this case obviously so. The tragic case puts to lie previous assumptions that women are responsible for their own attacks. The vigil outside Leinster House in Dublin was beautiful and poignant. A traditional music band played before a crowd of thousands without an amplifier. The song "Only a Woman" by Eleanor McEvoy was difficult to hear at first, but the crowd began to sing along softly and the song rippled through the rows of the crowd outward like a mournfully chanted prayer. Ireland honors its dead in a caring and empathetic way without going too far into the maudlin or exploitative.

Since Ashling Murphy's murder, there have been renewed calls to combat violence against women. Ireland has been here before, but there is a sense that society has finally internalized that it is not a question of women changing their behavior; it is a societal imperative to eliminate violence against them.



Dublin Castle Commemoration

### January 16

#### Dublin Castle Commemoration

A ceremony was held at Dublin Castle, known as the Bastille of Ireland, to commemorate the centenary of the official transfer of power from the British Empire to the Irish Free State 100 years ago. Michael Collins and his team arrived by taxi, over an hour late, to a brief meeting where Viceroy Lord Fitzalan transferred authority to the Irish. The British described the event as an administrative formality, but Collins described the event as "British surrender."

The ceremony included President Michael D. Higgins, Prime Minister Micheál Martin, past presidents and past prime ministers. A military honor guard marched, the Army's Number 1 Band played the national anthem, and the tricolor was raised. The actor

(Continued on page 8)



# A bid to welcome Irish Americans ‘home’ as inflation is biting hard across the USA

Tired of digging out in the wake of horrible winter storms? Disgusted with a poisoned political culture and a divided citizenry? Is it about time you finally scratched that itch you’ve had for so long? Well, if Charlie Flanagan, an ex-government minister and long-serving TD (Teachta Dála) from the Laois-Offaly constituency, gets his way, some Irish Americans may find themselves pondering these questions.

Flanagan wants to revive a proposal that would permit Americans who have a demonstrable affinity for Ireland and are aged between 55 and 75 to live, work, and retire in the land of their ancestors. Those interested would have to have an annual income of between €40,000 (circa \$45,000) and €100,000 (circa \$113,000) in net assets. They would be eligible to work 20 hours per week and their spouses/partners would have the same rights.

Flanagan’s plan surfaces at a crucial juncture when advocates are trying to re-engage on Capitol Hill on behalf of the undocumented Irish in the United States. There is likely to be another push to allow Irish people to obtain thousands of E-3 visas for skilled workers that go unused every year.

It will not be a revelation to *Boston Irish* readers that the slowing to a trickle in historic terms of Irish emigration to the US poses a threat to the sacred relationship between our two countries. Allowing for more Irish Americans to move “home,” as well as a scheme here that will allow undocumented people resident in Ireland to regularize their status, are propitious initiatives. Neither will precipitate an immediate reset in US immigration policy, yet they are positive developments that Irish politicians and diplomats can refer to in meetings with their counterparts in Washington this month – when this tiny island enjoys access to the corridors of power that is the envy of the rest of the world.

Charlie Flanagan’s reboot of a concept mooted in 2018 was not greeted warmly by everyone, however. Una Mullally of *The Irish Times*, in a column entitled “State prefers rich Americans to struggling Irish,” lambastes Flanagan and his Fine Gael party for favouring older women and men from 3,000 miles away over young Irish people who see no future in their birthplace because of an intractable housing crisis that has been detailed in this space previously.



Charlie Flanagan has an idea for Americans who might be looking to go “home.”



Boston Globe metro columnist Kevin Cullen, at left, and former Massachusetts Congressman Brian Donnelly, at right, flank Brian’s nephew, Larry Donnelly, at a Jan. 7 signing event at the Irish Cultural Centre for Larry’s new book, “*The Bostonian: Life in an Irish American Political Family*.”

Mullally has a legitimate point about the plight of the often well-educated and high-earning 20-30-40 somethings in an awful position at present. But it strikes me as extremely improbable that a small number of older Irish Americans relocating here – in many cases, I suspect, to the sparsely populated rural areas where they have family connections – will exacerbate an undeniably serious problem. If Flanagan’s idea does get across the line, I would encourage those who are tempted to go for it. Take it from one who knows: you won’t regret it. And you won’t miss the snow!

The recent arrival of the new US Ambassador to Ireland, Claire Cronin, has been feted on both sides of the Atlantic. The appointment of the Brockton native and former majority leader in the state House of Representative has been celebrated with particular gusto by those of us who also hail from eastern Massachusetts. Cronin, as a widely respected lawyer and savvy political operator, brings a different skillset to the job than the typically very wealthy businesspeople who are now selected to be ambassadors.

The granddaughter of a native of Donegal’s Inishowen Peninsula, Cronin’s delight in her new assignment shines through. She endorsed Joe Biden’s presidential bid early and is close to the

equally proud Irish American. While there are diplomatic protocols and obvious constraints on what an ambassador can say and do, I believe Claire Cronin can be a conduit to progress on a range of key issues. It is wonderful to have her in the Phoenix Park.

Without wanting to sound like a Covid-denier or to politicize what has been tragic for millions, I really did get sick of the doom and gloom over here that has been incessant since March 2020. Conversations with people in Boston, in tandem with my daily study of current affairs and opinion pieces online, revealed that there was far less dwelling on the pandemic in the US than in Ireland. As one Boston-based friend from Donegal sarcastically remarked to me, clearly disgruntled with a steady diet of coronavirus tales and conjecture fed her from home: “We have no Covid here, you know. Because we sometimes actually talk about other things, that must mean we don’t have it.”

She had a point. There was absolutely no escaping it. When most restrictions were at last lifted, the country basked in one celebratory “freedom weekend.” Then, another, perhaps grimmer narrative took hold. The inflation that has been afflicting the US has hit us, badly. In addition to the aforementioned housing crunch, the cost of petrol and

diesel – already outlandish by American standards – is up 30 percent over a year ago. In the same period, electricity (+22 percent), gas (+28 percent), heating oil (+50 percent) and alcohol (+9 percent) have skyrocketed. At the supermarket, nearly everything is more expensive, even if by 5 or 10 cents.

Accordingly, the news is currently dominated by a further depressing story, with no respite for the weary. While for lots of us, it is annoying and a source of domestic squabbles as to which expenses warrant reducing, for those who had been scraping by before the onset of inflation, it is devastating. There are reports of two-income families seeking necessities from charities and having to choose between turning on the heat in the house and filling up the car to get to work or school. I wish I had the answers, but I don’t. It’s unfair to put all of the blame on politicians when many of the factors that have led to the first bout with rampant inflation in decades lie beyond their control. To be blunt, though, it’s just not good enough in a country as prosperous as this.

On a brighter note, one sign of a return to normality is that 33 prominent Irish politicians will again be jetting off around the world this month to maximize the unique potency of March 17th and build on the good will it generates globally. Unfortunately, there are vocal naysayers who are perpetually aggrieved by the relatively trifling expenditure of taxpayers’ money on flights and hotel rooms and allege that it all amounts to a big junket. Rubbish. The politicians would be crazy not to travel, and the opportunities engendered by what has become an international holiday are incalculable.

For parochial reasons, I am always keen to see who is heading to Boston, and this year it is the Kerry TD and Minister for Education, Norma Foley. Only elected to Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament) in 2020, she has, as you might imagine from her title, had the very difficult task of endeavouring to ensure that Ireland’s school-aged children are having the best possible teaching and learning experience in an unprecedented climate. Minister Foley has her critics, but most would agree that as a rookie TD in a ministerial role that is tricky at the best of times, she has risen to the occasion. I have no doubt that she will get a hearty welcome from the Boston Irish.

Happy St. Patrick’s Day!

Larry Donnelly is a Boston born and educated attorney, a Law Lecturer at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and a regular media commentator on politics, current affairs and law in Ireland and the US. Follow him on Twitter: @LarryPDonnelly. His critically acclaimed book – “*The Bostonian: Life in an Irish American Political Family*” – can be purchased at [easons.com/bostonian-larry-donnelly-9780717190423](http://easons.com/bostonian-larry-donnelly-9780717190423).



# St. Patrick's Day breakfast returns to South Boston – with all in person

## Sen. Collins will host the renewal

By GINTAUTAS DUMCIUS  
BOSTON IRISH STAFF

The St. Patrick's Day breakfast, an annual political tradition that features elected officials and candidates trading light-hearted barbs in South Boston, is set to return this month as a live and in-person event.

State Sen. Nick Collins, a South Boston Democrat, will host the event, which is scheduled for Sun., March 20, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

The event will be livestreamed on CBS Boston and broadcast locally on Boston Neighborhood Network (BNN), according to a Collins spokesman.

The parade, a separate event held on the same day that takes marchers through the heart of South Boston, is also now scheduled to take place after the easing of pandemic-driven limits on large gatherings.

The parade and breakfast typically have drawn elected officials like Gov. Charlie Baker and Attorney General Maura Healey, and that is surely the case this busy election year, with major offices up for grabs.

Baker isn't running for a third term; Healey and state Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz are two candidates running for the Democratic nomination, hoping to place the office back in Democratic hands. Former state Rep. Geoff Diehl and Wrentham businessman Chris Doughty are facing off for the Republican nod.

After a cancellation in 2020, just as the pandemic hit, the breakfast went virtual in 2021, and was broadcast on NESN and WROL Irish radio. Collins ran the show from his living room, joined by his wife, Dr. Olivia Liff, and the breakfast featured remarks from President Joe Biden.



Sen. Nick Collins and his wife, Dr. Olivia Liff, at the 2021 online virtual broadcast of the St. Patrick's Day breakfast. Photo courtesy Collins campaign

Marty Walsh, who was about to step down as mayor of Boston and take the job of Biden's labor chief in Washington, D.C., noted how during the pandemic there were "tough decisions and hard sacrifices. And we endured a crisis by focusing on how we can help each other," he said. "That's a core value of the Irish community and our entire city."

He also joked about how the candidates running to succeed him, including soon-to-be Acting Mayor Kim Janey, were offering to escort him to Logan Airport. "She'll be walking me to a Silver Line stop and waving goodbye," he quipped during the broadcast.

## A Dublin Winter Journal

(Continued from page 7)

Phelim Drew read a brief narrative of the original event with the distinctive voice, face, and beard that he inherited from his late father, the great Ronnie Drew of the Dubliners who used to perform with Christy Moore. The younger Drew is "the stamp of his father."

It was a reverent observance, but considering it was the celebration marking Ireland's first 100 years of independence, the 45-minute event seemed remarkably low key to my American eyes. There is a discomfort with pomp and circumstance in Ireland. An attempt at the grandeur of a military parade one might see in Paris would seem out of place in Dublin.

### January 21

"And just like that, it's over"\*

On Friday, January 21, at 6 p.m., in a formal address to the nation, the Taoiseach announced that on the following day, nearly all Covid restrictions – the 8 p.m. closing time, the vaccine certificates, limitations on the number of people in restaurants, pubs, concert halls, and sporting venues – will be lifted. The rapid spread and lower lethality of Omicron, combined with a 97 percent vaccination rate, meant there

was no longer a public health rationale for continued restrictions. Almost two years of heavy regulation was coming to an abrupt end. Listening to the speech, I was convinced that the pubs and restaurants would stay open late that next night, but I was wrong. In a stroll through the Temple Bar neighborhood, we were surprised that all the pubs and restaurants had closed their doors by 8 p.m. While the Irish have a well-deserved reputation for rebellion, they also have a keen sense of fairness and follow reasonable rules. The dots on sidewalks and in stores indicating recommended spacing and the omnipresent plexiglass screens began to disappear.

\*T Greenwood: The Reopening of Ireland

### An Aside: Observing corruption and instability in the UK

"Across the water" in Britain, Boris Johnson and his Tory government have been a parade of sleaze, corruption, lies, investigations, and clownish incompetence. From the parties held at Downing Street during the Covid restrictions, sweetheart deals for the well connected, and the botched implementation of Brexit, their performance has

been appalling. Irish people remember past shadiness in their own government and are surprised to see that in this era, Ireland is demonstrably less corrupt than the UK. In previous generations, Irish politics involved cash-stuffed brown envelopes given to ministers in exchange for favors. Today, it is the British government making a mockery of their own cherished rule of law. The schadenfreude in Ireland for England's distress is mixed with the fear that a drowning man is dangerous to those close by. Will an embattled Johnson lash out at Ireland and the EU by suspending the Northern Ireland protocol by invoking Article 16, scrapping the agreement altogether as new Brexit grace periods end in February, or worse? Time will tell.

### January 26

The Boom is back

In the meantime, Ireland's economy is booming. Late in the month it was announced that since Brexit's passage in 2016, over \$200 billion has been moved from financial services firms based in London to Ireland. With the broader economy now reopening, Ireland is poised for robust growth. On Jan. 26, it was projected that Ireland's economy

will grow at 7 percent in 2022, that 167,000 jobs will be added over the next two years, approaching "full employment," and that the tax haul in 2021 was the highest in the history of the state. The North's economic growth far outstrips anywhere else in the (barely) United Kingdom, thanks to the Northern Irish Protocol. With Brexit and Covid receding in the rearview mirror, Ireland will return to the problems that dominated politics prior to those twin crises: building more affordable housing, improving the health service, pursuing climate-friendly policies, and eliminating homelessness.

### February 1 St Brigid's Day

One of the best parts of living through the dark Irish winter is that the first day of spring is Feb. 1. Imbolc is the Gaelic celebration of spring that was grafted to Christianity as St. Brigid's Day, just as Samhain became Halloween. St. Brigid's day is a celebration of fertility, generosity, and new beginnings. With the economy humming, peace prevailing, and the bands performing again, there is every reason to be hopeful for the spring in Ireland.





Marching up East Broadway in 2015

Chris Lovett file photo

# PARADE SCHEDULES

<b>Sat., March 5</b> – In Yarmouth on Cape Cod; 11 a.m.; Info:508 362- 7239; capecodstpatrick-sparade.com	<b>Sun., March 20</b> – Town of Abington; 1 p.m.; 781-878-1570 or 781-878-7785	downtown Front St. in Scituate Harbor
<b>Sat., March 12</b> – 65th Annual Newport, RI, Parade; 11 a.m., rain or shine; 401-846-5081	<b>Sun., March 20</b> – South Boston; 1p.m.; 617 268-7955	<b>Date to be announced</b> by City of Lawrence. Will start at 1 p.m. at Essex and Amesbury Street; info: mcheco@cityoflawrence.com
<b>Sun., March 13</b> – City of Worcester; Noon; 508 753-7197	<b>Sun., March 20</b> – City of Holyoke; Noon; 413 533-1700	<b>Thurs., March 17</b> – Festival: March 16-20 in Dublin, Ireland; stpatricksfestival.ie
<b>Sat., March 19</b> – City of Providence; Noon	<b>Sun., March 20</b> – Town of Scituate; 1p.m.; 781 545-6671. The parade runs from the old Gate's Middle School on First Parish Rd. through	Listing courtesy of Boston Irish Tourism Association (irishmassachusetts.com).

## Parade marshals named for Cape, Southie parades

The 2022 Cape Cod St. Patrick's Parade Grand Marshal will be US Navy Commander Billie J. Farrell, the 77th commanding officer of Old Ironsides/ USS Constitution. Farrell is the first woman to serve as its commanding officer in the ship's 224-year history. She is a native of Paducah, Kentucky and a 2004 graduate of the US Naval Academy. The parade will take place on Sat., March 5, beginning at 11 am.

In South Boston, Southie native Susan McDonough, at right, will be Chief Marshal for Boston's 2022 St. Patrick's/Evacuation Day Parade. A veteran of the US Army and the Mass National Guard, she is currently coordinator of the Women Veterans' Network in the state Department of Veterans Services. The South Boston parade takes place on Sun., March 20, beginning at 1 pm.





# First Rian J-1 Exchange Visitor finds herself in awe of her Tampa experience

Ewa Gillan was the first Rian J-1 Exchange Visitors applicant when the US travel ban lifted, and she was the first to land in the States this year. A Dublin City University student, she is completing a six-month placement to support her degree in global business and her student placement as a sales and marketing intern at Marcus & Millichap is allowing her to do just that.

When Ewa found out that she had been offered an internship in Tampa, she quickly got connected with the Rian Immigrant Center. She shared that “the visa application process with Rian was really easy and accommodating the whole way.” With Rian’s support, she got her visa in time to make it to start her Internship in early January of this year.

Since then, she has settled in Tampa quite well, especially thanks to her internship supervisor’s support in finding temporary accommodations upon her arrival, in making sure she felt welcome in her role, and in focusing on relationship and team building during her first few weeks on the job. Ewa shared that from her very first day, she felt “a family like atmosphere with the team” and she is quickly getting to know the systems.



Ewa Gillan working the outdoors in Tampa.

Rian photo

She has found community, and housemates, with Tampa University students. During the interview, Ewa was fresh off a trip to the beach in Clearwater, where she said she had “never seen a

beach like that, with sand so white and sea is lovely temperature year round, not like in Ireland!”

One of her favorite experiences thus far has been exploring Tampa, a city, she

said, that is revitalizing old industrial areas on the water with new restaurants, artisan markets, and community events, all for free! Ewa said she frequents these spots for an ice cream or an evening out for dinner!

She is excited that she has until July to work toward her goals and have the chance to experience many different pieces of American culture. She is eager to attend a sports event, travel to Miami, and have a chance to lean into the marketing aspect of her internship, hoping to reach a milestone of sending a national flier out to the entire Marcus & Millichap community across the US in the next few months (something her supervisor is confident she will achieve!)

She shares that she has seen a change in herself already, in just a short month, that she definitely wants to hold onto when she returns to Ireland... her comfort trying things on her own. “I came here all on my own, not knowing anyone, and it has shown me I can meet new people” she said, “and that has given me the energy to go for things, and avail of any opportunity that comes my way.”

## Rian and Brookline Booksmith partner in hailing Irish culture

Join Rian and Brookline Booksmith to celebrate Irish culture this St. Patrick’s Day with the poet Damian Gorman, Ronnie Millar, and Laura Tavares, accompanied by live harp music from Regina Delaney. To learn more about the event and to register see [brooklinebooksmith.com](http://brooklinebooksmith.com)

Throughout March, the Brookline Booksmith will also show support for Rian by featuring a collection of migrant stories in their store, and on their website, newsletter, and social media.

Stop by the bookstore between March 1 and March 17 for an opportunity to learn more about our work and to show your support.



Saying “Rian needs a new leader to take our work forward,” Ronnie Millar, above, the executive director of Rian (formerly the Irish Immigration Center), announced that he will be leaving his post as soon as his successor is in place. See story, Page 12





# Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig Oraibh gach duine! Happy St Patrick's day to you all!

As Boston's Irish Community Resource Organization,  
we would like to thank all of our wonderful staff,  
volunteers, and the Board of Directors who have kept the  
Irish Pastoral Centre in operation over the last 35 years to  
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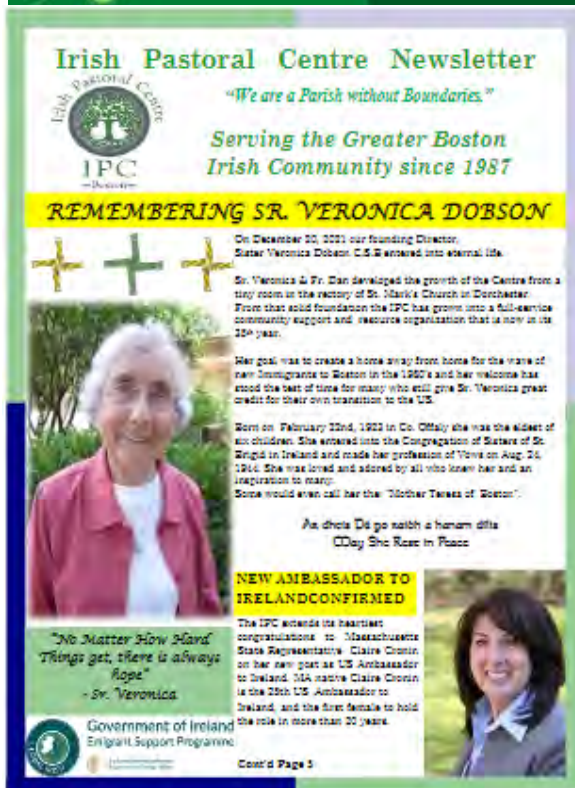
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**Do You Know a Student in Ireland?**  
The annual J1 summer program, a rite of passage for Irish college students is returning this year! The J1 Program allows Irish students to obtain a SSN and work legally for up to one year. We have published a comprehensive J1 Guide accessible at [ipcboston.org/j1](http://ipcboston.org/j1). If you would like to be added to our database for potential employers and student-friendly accommodation please email us: [info@ipcboston.org](mailto:info@ipcboston.org)

### Irish Pastoral Centre Proudly Presents: IPC Nostalgia Nite! TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE

Join us on Saturday, April 9th at 07:30 PM in Florian Hall for the Ultimate night out!  
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# St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn shows are set at 5 venues, with virtual options

Two years after the ill-fated 2020 "A St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" tour, which had the misfortune to coincide with the beginning of the Covid lockdowns, the show – presented in virtual format last year – is set for an in-person theatrical run.

Created, produced and hosted by GBH broadcaster Brian O'Donovan, "A St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" has performances scheduled for Shalin Liu Performance Center, Rockport (March 16); Hanover Theatre, Worcester (March 17); Zeiterion Theatre, New Bedford (March 18); Somerville Theatre (March 19, two shows); and The Cabot Theatre, Beverly (March 20). There is also an option to watch performances in virtual format.

"A St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" has similarities to that other O'Donovan creation, "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn," in that both productions typically feature music, dance, songs, and spoken word associated with Ireland, Scotland, and other Celtic-related traditions. But as O'Donovan explained in a past interview with Boston Irish, the St. Patrick's Day edition has its own identity and purpose.

"St. Patrick's Day is a largely American phenomenon, after all, so that gives the show a different kind of perspective to begin with. For me, 'St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn' is intended as a journey, constantly looking at where the Irish have travelled, how the Irish have influenced others – and in turn, been influenced by others."

Vermont guitarist-pianist-vocalist **Keith Murphy** will once again take on the role as music director, in addition to providing some of the music himself. Also scheduled to appear are:

- **Ye Vagabonds**, the duo of Carlow brothers Brian and Diarmuid Mac Gloinn, known for their subtle, pastoral take on folk music (both traditional and contemporary, including their own material).

- Harpist and vocalist **Dominique Dodge**, a native New Englander who recently released a gorgeous album of Scottish Gaelic songs.

- Boston-based traditional Irish quartet **Ship in the Clouds**, whose sound is fueled by the melodic



The duo Ye Vagabonds will make its "A St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" debut this year. Patrick Glennon photo

chemistry between fiddler Laura Feddersen and accordionist Natasha Sheehy, with spot-on rhythmic accompaniment by guitarist Nathan Gourley and Anna Colliton on bodhran.

- Attleboro native **Torin Ryan**, an uilleann piper (also plays flute and whistle) who has competed – and won – in the All-Ireland Fleadh.

- Three-time World Irish Step Dancing Championships winner **Ashley Smith-Wallace**, from Boston, who brings a theatrical mien to her Irish step dancing. Tickets and updates are available at [celticsojournlive.com](http://celticsojournlive.com).

SEAN SMITH

## A CALENDAR OF IRISH/CELTIC EVENTS MARCH 2022

BY SEAN SMITH  
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

*A look at some upcoming Irish/Celtic events in the Boston/Eastern Massachusetts area (subject to change pending COVID-related developments)*

Considering how barren the landscape has been for live, in-person events the last two years during St. Patrick's Month – that historically heady period for Irish/Celtic performers, who could land a multiplicity of gigs practically just by breathing – the 2022 edition promises to be a big step toward some kind of normalcy.

• Let's start with The Burren, which is reviving its Backroom series, a popular showcase for Irish, Scottish, and other Celtic acts – especially from abroad – curated and emceed by GBH broadcaster Brian O'Donovan and managed by Tom Bianchi.

First up, on March 6 at 7:30 p.m., is **The Seamus Egan Project**, the most recent venture of The Solas co-founder, a master of multiple instruments and an esteemed composer and arranger (for "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn," among other things), as well as interpreter of traditional music. For his Project, Egan gathers assorted musical friends and acquaintances to perform his original works, which were highlighted on his 2020 album "Early Bright." Joining Egan here

will be Boston-area fiddler Jenna Moynihan, guitarist Kyle Sanna, and bouzouki/harmonium player Owen Marshall.

**Téada**, one of Ireland's most acclaimed bands of the 21st century, known for its energetic, expressive combination of traditional Irish music – especially rare tunes – with contemporary-minded arrangements, takes the Backroom stage on March 9 at 7:30 p.m. Their core five features Oisín Mac Diarmada, a Sligo-style fiddler; accordionist Paul Finn; flutist Damien Stenson; guitarist Seán McElwain; and Tristan Rosenstock on bodhran; they're also frequently joined by singer Seamus Begley, and piano/step dancer Samantha Harvey.

Another Backroom guest this month will be **The Murphy Beds** (March 10, 7:30 p.m.), the duo of Jefferson Hamer and Eamon O'Leary, who recently released their second album, "Easy Way Down." With an often-mesmerizing sound built on the intricate interplay of guitars, bouzouki, and mandolin, and equally sterling vocal harmonies, Hamer and O'Leary have increasingly branched out from their renditions of Irish, American, Scottish, and English folk traditions to contemporary material, including their own songs. You can read more about "Easy Way Down" at [bit.ly/murphy-beds-easy-way-down](http://bit.ly/murphy-beds-easy-way-down).

ly/murphy-beds-easy-way-down.

Venerable Scottish band **The Tannahill Weavers** stops by the Backroom on March 23 at 7:30 p.m. A key part of the modern Scottish folk music revival, the "Tannies" – the first professional Scots group to incorporate full-sized Highland bagpipes in performance – are now in their sixth decade, having celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2018 with the release of the album "Órach," with appearances by past members including Dougie MacLean and special guests like Alison Brown and Aaron Jones. Co-founders Roy Gullane (vocals, guitar) and Phil Smillie (flute, whistles, bodhran, vocals) continue to hold forth, along with Iain MacGillivray (Highland bagpipes, fiddle, whistles) and Malcolm Bushby (fiddle, bouzouki, harmony vocals).

On the non-Backroom series front, March 17 will see The Burren's St. Patrick's Day Variety Dinner Show marathon, featuring the pub's owners and guiding spirits, **Tommy McCarthy** and **Louise Costello**, accompanied by **Seamus Noonan** and **Robert Elliott** (not surprisingly, special guests are likely to appear). Performances take place at 9 and 11 a.m., and 1, 3, 5, and 7 p.m.

(Continued on page 19)



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# Sure enough, there is an intimacy and immediacy in the room when Paudie Walsh begins to perform

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Playing music, or talking about it, brings back a lot of memories for Quincy resident Paudie Walsh. Memories of growing up in Leitir Móir na Coille, a village in Camus, Connemara; of hearing his father play the melodeon, either by himself or with other musicians who dropped in for a “kitchen racket” – full of tunes, songs and dancing; of taking up the instrument himself in his teens; of the Connemara musicians he encountered while living in Boston during the 1980s and ’90s; of moving back to Connemara in 1995 with his wife and two sons and getting to know the lay of the musical land all over again.

But Walsh has memories that are far more recent, from the decade he has spent during his second sojourn in the Boston area – and best of all, he’s continuing to make new memories, even during the pandemic years.

One is the album he recently released, “Ceol on Teaghlach (Music from the Fireside),” 20 tracks of reels, jigs, hornpipes, and other varieties of tunes he has played at gatherings large and small, or simply for his own contentment, in Ireland and the US. Joining Walsh on assorted tracks are Liam Hart (piano), Stuart Peak (tenor banjo, guitar), and Kieran Jordan (step dancing); there is also a “live” track from a memorable event at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton.

“Like most everyone in 2020, I got locked down, and wasn’t able to work for a while,” says Walsh. “I said to myself, ‘Well, I have to do *something*.’ I thought it would be a nice idea to record all these tunes that have been part of my life, and I wanted to give the feel of how it was to just sit down and play for the fun of it – by a lovely, warming fire. That’s why I thought it was appropriate to give the album that title.”

Sure enough, there is an intimacy and immediacy to “Ceol on Teaghlach,” and nothing in the way of artifice, as if Walsh was sitting right next to you, ticking off tune after tune – many of them likely to be familiar to most Irish music listeners. Even the pause between tracks is significantly shorter than what you may be used to, so the album builds a most enjoyable momentum.

While Hart, Peak, and Jordan are all together, or in some combination, with Walsh on a few tracks, for the most part each is individually paired with Walsh for most of the album. This makes for some distinctive contrasts: Hart’s robust piano accompaniment on, for example, “Cooley’s Reel/The Wise Maid” and “Lark in the Morning,” and Peak’s banjo briskly doubling the melody on “Joe Bane’s Barn Dance” and “Sally Gardens/Bucks of Oranmore.” The combination of Walsh’s melodeon and Jordan’s stepping on, among others, “Devaney’s Goat” and “Swallow’s Tail/ Miss McLeod,” represents traditional Irish music – music primarily used, after all, to accompany dancing – at



**‘It’s as if he were sitting right next to you, ticking off tune after tune’**

Paudie Walsh’s music has been shaped by friendships and experiences in Boston as well as his native Connemara. *Sara Piazza photo*

its most basic, core elements: melody and rhythm.

“It’s really going back to the old music,” says Walsh, “where you’d just hear the melodeon and the steps.”

Ensnared in the Gaeltacht, Walsh’s hometown of Leitir Móir na Coille (“Great Hillside of the Wood”) is about an hour northwest of Galway City and east of Loughs Ahalia, the Twelve Bens mountain range farther to the northwest. When not listening to the music being played in his house by his father and visitors, the young Walsh would catch the RTÉ show, “Mo Cheol Thú,” where he could hear the likes of Joe Burke, Joe Cooley, and Finbarr Dwyer. He could also go to nearby Carraroe, where box players like Kevin Coyne and Willie Brennan were regulars. And it was in Flaherty’s Bar in Costelloe, also close by, where he first played in public – where the legendary dancer Mairtin Beag O’Griofa also happened to be, which gave Walsh his first opportunity to play for dancing.

Yet Walsh says it wasn’t until he first came to Boston, settling in Dorchester, when he really started to hit his stride as a musician. Over the years, he encountered others from his neck of the woods, like the Gannons – John

and sons Colm and Sean, all dynamic accordion players – Joe O’Malley and Frank McDonagh, and would play in storied places like the Green Briar, Blarney Stone, and Purple Shamrock.

His return to Connemara – to Cor Na Rón, a little west of Spiddal – with Maggie, Tomás, and Eoin, enabled him to get further involved in the music. He made the acquaintance of Johnny (“King of the Melodeon”) Connolly and other eminent musicians like Charlie Lennon, Johnny Óg, and Steve Sweeney, and formed a partnership with Mike McGrath that took them to pubs, festivals, and other venues throughout Galway and the Aran Islands.

All the while, Walsh had been gaining experience playing for dancers in competitions and special events, including an appearance before Irish President Mary McAleese. Among the dancers he accompanied while in Ireland was Kieran Jordan, whom he would meet again after he returned to the Boston area in 2012. It was then he made a whole new round of musical friends and acquaintances, including Hart and Peak, and became a familiar figure at sessions, festivals, and other events in Greater Boston.

“Paudie’s commitment to his culture,

and particularly to the Irish language, is virtually unmatched in my experience,” says Hart, now living in Vermont. “To play a gig with Paudie is to be part of the living, breathing Gaelic nation for a few hours – a nation that has existed continuously for at least 2,000 years, through famine and oppression, and still lives on.”

Adds Peak, “Paudie has a great authenticity, power, and drive to his playing. He’s the real deal from Connemara. He always has a kind word and he’s mad about the music.”

As much as Walsh enjoys a good session or performance, he is keenly attuned to the music’s social component, as something that people can participate in even if they’re not musicians or step dancers. This mindset is particularly reflected in two tracks on “Ceol on Teaghlach”: a medley of two well-known songs, “My Dear Old Galway Bay” and “A Mother’s Love Is a Blessing,” that have long served as waltzes at ceilis, parties, and other gatherings; and a track devoted to that uniquely Irish variation on “jive,” which are couple dances done to swing, country, or rockabilly, usually in 2/4 time (“If you go to an Irish wedding,” notes Peak, “you’re sure to see some Irish jive”).

The album’s third track, meanwhile, is a salute to spontaneity and good fortune. A few years ago, Walsh was at the Irish Cultural Centre, which was hosting the Cunninghams, a trio of dancers from Ireland whom Walsh had known “since they were kids.” On a spur of the moment, the three decided to move the action outside, so they could dance on top of barrels. They told Walsh, “Go get your box!” Walsh happened to have his iPad with him, so he gave it to a friend to record the action, and the audio turned out to be of sufficient quality that it could be included on the album: Walsh tearing into “The Maid Behind the Bar” and “The Old Concertina Reel,” in synch with the Cunninghams’ stepping, with whoops of encouragement from an onlooker.

“The music, the dancing, it’s all good fun,” says Walsh. “That’s how it’s supposed to be.”

Having lived in both places, Walsh says Boston has a lot of similar qualities to Galway when it comes to Irish music. “It’s a friendly place, and you can get to know a lot of people if you get out and about enough. Lots of good places to play, of course, and some good radio shows. And some of the people you meet, they have a very strong background in the music, and they can tell you a lot more about it than I can.

“But the great thing is, it’s all Irish music: Anyone can walk in off the street and play with you. When you get down to it, we’re all equals. We love the music.”

To get a copy of “Ceol on Teaghlach,” contact Paudie Walsh at Paudiebreathnach56@Gmail.com or at eolas@cic.ie.



# Upcoming Events

@ The Irish Cultural Centre Of New England



IRISH  
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CENTRE

03/06 - Monthly Mass @ 11am

03/12 - Paul Byrom Live in Concert @ 7:30PM

03/17 - St. Patrick's Day Festivities ALL Day Long

03/17 - St. Patrick's Day Virtual Show.

03/19 - Family St. Patrick's Day Celebrations @ 9:30am

03/20 - Pre Parade Trad Session - Live Music & The Harney Academy of Irish Dance at the **South Boston Parade** from 11:30 AM.  
TD Bank Parking Lot, 306 West Broadway, South Boston.

03/26 - The Leitrim Association Dinner Dance with Erins Melody

04/03 - "Escaping Poverty and in search of Posterity: The James Hack Tuke Assisted Emigrants from the West of Ireland in New England in the 1880s" - A lecture by Gerard Moran

04/16 - Easter Bunny Scavenger Hunt

For more details on any of our events please visit our website  
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# Celtic Woman

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<b>MARCH 24<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>CHEVALIER THEATRE</b> BOSTON, MA	<b>MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>MERILL AUDITORIUM</b> PORTLAND, ME	<b>MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>FLYN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS</b> BURLINGTON, VT	<b>MARCH 31<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>CAPITOL CENTER FOR THE ARTS</b> CONCORD, NH
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March 17, 7:30PM	March 16, 8PM	Shalin Liu Performance Center
March 18, 7:30PM	March 17, 7:30PM	Hanover Theatre
March 19, 7:30PM	March 18, 7:30PM	Zeiterion Performing Arts Center
March 20, 5PM	March 19, 3PM & 7:30PM	Somerville Theatre
	March 20, 5PM	The Cabot

This year, we will be offering a combination of in-person shows, with virtual options. Because of ongoing circumstances, venue and other changes in specific details are possible, please visit us at [gbh.org/celtic](http://gbh.org/celtic) for the latest information. As always, thanks for your support.

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# The firm of Clohessy, Conneely, and Coyne enlivens The Burren with launch of 'All Jokes Aside' album

A hearty bounce back from pandemic purgatory

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

It wasn't just a concert. It was catharsis. Late in the afternoon of a relatively mild early February day, the trio of Seán Clohessy (fiddle), Kathleen Conneely (whistle), and John Coyne (bouzouki, vocals) took the Backroom stage in The Burren, that Davis Square epicenter of Irish/Celtic music. They were there to formally launch their album, "All Jokes Aside," a 15-track delight of Irish tunes and songs that is as much a testament to friendship and collegiality as it is musical ability.

To say they had a friendly audience is putting it mildly: Most all the crowd were family and friends, quite a few of them musically inclined themselves. In fact, the concert started a little bit late, as Clohessy, Conneely, and Coyne accepted greetings, congratulations, and hugs from well-wishers. Of course, many of these same well-wishers were busy hailing one another as well – quite understandable when you haven't been in one place together for what seems like an eternity.

When the trio got around to the business of playing music, there was a palpable enthusiasm and affection all around the Backroom, with fervent expressions of praise and appreciation. Not that such a tableau wouldn't have taken place @ 2019, before the lengthy, pandemic-driven shutdowns and separations. But there was something extra to the approbation, as if the local Irish music community was giving a collective sigh of pent-up relief and contentment.

"You need a little more energy there, folks," quipped Clohessy at one point.

It was altogether fitting that Clohessy, Conneely, and Coyne, and "All Jokes Aside," would be on the receiving end of such acclamation. Immigrants all – Clohessy and Coyne are Limerick natives; Conneely, her parents from Galway and Longford, was born in Bedford, England – they have each become mainstays of Boston's vaunted Irish music scene, as performers, session regulars, organizers, teachers, mentors, or by just being present at the right time and place.

And, not so incidentally, they have become friends, which made the idea of recording an album together a really good idea, if not – as far as their friends and acquaintances were concerned – practically a necessity.

"I think that, whatever other reasons there may be, you make an album for posterity," said Conneely – who has been living in Chicago the past few years – while relaxing with Clohessy and Coyne before the Burren show. "It marks a point in time: the music that was around and that was part of your life. And it's a reminder of the fun and good times, and we three have had a lot of those."

Individually, collectively, or in some combination, the trio have unquestionably made their mark in Greater Boston, through appearances at Boston College's Gaelic Roots series, WGBH and BCMFest, or sessions at The Burren and The Druid, for example. They've also played a big part in helping and encouraging younger generations to take up traditional Irish music, through their work with the local Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ) music school and the Trad Youth Exchange, a partnership of young musicians from Boston and County Clare; Coyne and his wife Lisa – who was executive director of the CCÉ school and co-founded the Trad Youth Exchange – have organized sessions for under-18s, while nurturing their own children Josie and Rory (who plays with Coyne and Clohessy as The Treaty Trio) in their trad musical development.



(L-R) Seán Clohessy, Kathleen Conneely and John Coyne at The Burren for their album release concert. Sean Smith photo

"There have been a lot of shared experiences between us, so we've wound up spending a lot of time hanging out together," said Clohessy, who along with Conneely is a member of the CCÉ Northeast Region Hall of Fame. "Hanging out and cracking each other up," added Coyne. "And, of course, we have things in common, being from an Irish background and having immigrated to the States."

"When you hang around so much, playing music and talking, you find that you appreciate a lot of the same things about the music and how it's played," said Conneely. "The more you do that, the more you gel."

"And the more you crack each other up," Coyne noted. The bonhomie underlying "All Jokes Aside" is evident; even the album title is a reference to their propensity for having a lark with one another (Coyne and Clohessy insist that Conneely is the master comedian of the trio). What also stands out is the balance to their sound: Conneely's bright, lively whistle occupying the high end, Coyne's bouzouki supplying the bassier, warm tones, and Clohessy's fiddle comfortably right in

the middle. Put them together on stage, and on an album, and you get set after tastefully arranged set, performed with no lack of drive or vigor.

Sometimes, it's the little things: On the opening track of three reels, the way the trio crisply, seamlessly moves from the minor-key "Paddy O'Donoghue's" into the triumphant "Jackie Riordan's," that cool flourish in the B part superbly enhanced by Coyne. The middle of a set of jigs, in which they place "The Man from Clare" – with its conspicuous accidental in the A part – a Damien Connolly composition in honor of fiddler Patrick Ourceau. Charlie Lennon's masterful, dramatic reel "Road to Cashel" flowering into the jovial "Camber Lasses." Think you've heard "The Rights of Man" a few too many times? Conneely, Clohessy, and Coyne find about the most perfect pace for it, and extract even more gloriousness in so doing.

Some of the tunes have local, personal associations for the trio – shared at a Druid session, perhaps, or somebody's party – and one of special notice is another Lennon piece, "Planxty McCarthy," in tribute to Burren owner Tommy McCarthy and part of the "Seeking Sanctuary" suite that premiered in Boston four years ago. Another is a Clohessy original, "The Turraree Lass," named for his mother's birthplace.

Conneely and Clohessy both have a solo set – her, a pair of nimble jigs, "Eddie Corcoran's" (Corcoran, a Sligo whistle player, was a family friend of hers) and "The Matchmaker"; him, three slides, beginning with the venerable "Merry Kiss the Quaker's Wife" – that serves to sharply illustrate their command of their respective instruments and the personality with which they invest them. You also get a fuller appreciation for the way Coyne easily shifts between chording, duet, and harmony, all without sacrificing rhythm.

Coyne himself gets a turn in the spotlight on two tracks, singing Sean

Tyrell's "Sweet Ballyvaughan," the Clare locale which happened to be his father's birthplace – delivered with understated but observable tenderness; and Barney Rush's tales-of-wild-youth "The Craic Was 90 in the Isle of Man," which he sings in a more sedate manner that, especially in the pandemic era, gives it an almost nostalgic feel but doesn't detract from the humor.

Enhancing "All Jokes Aside" are guest spots by Anna Colliton (bodhran), Owen Marshall (guitar, bouzouki, harmonium), and Evangelos Stovel (concertina), notably on the final track: "The Old Bush/Larkin's Beehive/The Duke of Leinster's Wife," a medley of reels that is played with more of a session mindset, complete with the occasional "hup!" and other expressions of spontaneity.

At their Burren show, Clohessy, Conneely, and Coyne settled into their seats on stage as if in someone's living room – which, for all intents and purposes, it was. Early on, when Coyne made the obligatory "CDs are for sale" announcement, Clohessy interjected, "Well, they haven't heard the CD yet, John. They may not want to buy it." As if. The audience was alive and responsive from the beginning, often cheering the transitions within the tune sets (including the aforementioned "Paddy O'Donoghue's/Jackie Riordan's"), and singing along with Coyne on the chorus to "Sweet Ballyvaughan" and "The Craic Was 90."

It was getting toward the dinner hour when the trio began inviting up guest musicians – and a couple of guest dancers – until they formed a line all across the stage; a few perched on the edges as they played along. At one point, Clohessy remarked on "the great friendships and the great music we have here at The Burren," thanking owners McCarthy and Louise Costello – which, unsurprisingly, brought yet another ovation.

There was one more burst of tunes from the massive ensemble, and after the departures, the trio stayed on for a couple of encores. Coyne launched into the late John Prine's "Speed of the Sound of Loneliness" – a song about having to ask the questions you'd prefer not to – and once again, voices from the crowd joined him for the refrain: "What in the world has come over you?/ And what in heaven's name have you done?/ You've broken the speed of the sound of loneliness/ You're out there running just to be on the run."

And then there was a closing medley, and soon Conneely, Clohessy, and Coyne, along with most all of those who had come out, prepared to pack up and head home – no doubt heartened to see how much of a unifying force this music continues to be, and surely gratified that reunions like these are just beginning.

"All Jokes Aside" is available at [srslylike.bandcamp.com](https://srslylike.bandcamp.com)



## A CALENDAR OF IRISH/CELTIC EVENTS

(Continued from page 13)

Former Celtic Thunder member **Keith Harkin** will perform at The Burren on March 16 at 7 p.m. A native of Derry, Northern Ireland, now living in Los Angeles, Harkin was part of Celtic Thunder for almost 10 years before leaving to pursue a solo career. He has released six albums, the most recent being 2020's "Mercy Street," comprising mainly original songs delivered in his brand of folk-infused acoustic pop, with some elements of R&B, country and rock.

• In addition to hosting one of the "St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" shows [see separate story], the Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport will welcome Ireland's **Danú** on March 19 at 8 p.m. Representing the musical heritage of the counties of Waterford, Cork, Dublin, and Donegal, the band has, in its more than two decades and various iterations, released nine albums – including 2018's "Ten Thousand Miles" – and a DVD while touring Europe and North America (once playing at the Hollywood Bowl), and winning Best Traditional Group honors twice at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. Their current line-up is Benny McCarthy (accordion, melodeon), Nell Ní Chróinín (vocals), Massachusetts resident Oisín McAuley (fiddle), Éamon Doorley (fiddle, bouzouki), Tony Byrne (guitar), and Ivan Goff (uilleann pipes, flute, whistle).

See [rockportmusic.org](http://rockportmusic.org) for more.

• High-powered Scottish trio **Talisk** comes to Club Passim in Harvard Square on March 2 at 7 p.m. For more about the band, you can read an interview with their concertina player **Mohsen Amini** on page 24. Ticket information at [passim.org](http://passim.org).

• Four days before Keith Harkin's show at The Burren, another Celtic Thunder alum, **Paul Byrom**, will be at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton on March 12 at 7:30 p.m. A Dublin native who recorded his first album at age 14, Byrom – like Harkin – was an original member of Celtic Thunder. Going solo in 2010, he recorded the CD "This Is the Moment" and a DVD of his PBS special of the same name; his 2014 album "Thinking of Home" reached the top of the iTunes, Amazon, and World Billboard Charts. In 2020, he released "What I Did for Love," which included a 65-piece orchestra. Tickets and details at [irishculture.org](http://irishculture.org).

• Call it lilt by association: The mention of Celtic Thunder invariably conjures up **Celtic Woman**, which will be in concert at Medford's Chevalier Theater on March 24 at 7:30 p.m. The all-female group has revamped its line-up over the past few years, with charter member Chloe Agnew – who left in 2013 but returned two years ago – joined by Megan Walsh, fiddler Tara McNeill and newest recruit Muirgen O'Mahony. This tour will focus on their newest album, "Postcards from Ireland" (also the name of their most recent PBS special, which debuted last fall), with new arrangements of classic songs like "The Dawning of the Day," "Wild Mountain Thyme," "The Galway Shawl" and "Black is the Colour," as well as a cover of Richard Thompson's remembrance-of-lost-love "Beeswing," which has now become part of the Irish pub repertoire.

Go to [chevaliertheatre.com](http://chevaliertheatre.com) for information and reservations.

• The Boston College Gaelic Roots series will pay homage to an important, but sometimes overlooked figure in the Irish music revival with a concert of music and poetry, "**Remembering Seán Ó Riada and Ceoltóirí Chualann**," on March 31 at 6:30 p.m. in Gasson Hall on BC's Main Campus. Ó Riada (1931-1971) played a seminal role in the Irish folk music revival that emerged in the 1960s. Classically trained and with an interest in modern, avant garde techniques, Ó Riada incorporated traditional Irish music into his work – much as composers like Bela Bartók and Ralph Vaughn Williams did with the traditional folk music of their respective homelands – for theater, film, and performance. In 1960, he formed the ensemble Ceoltóirí Chualann, whose repertoire of traditional Irish tunes was arranged in non-traditional, orchestral fashion by Ó Riada. Some members of the band went on to form one of the most popular acts to come out of the Irish folk revival, The Chieftains, who promulgated Ó Riada's approach to Irish traditional music.

A host of Boston and Massachusetts-based musicians will be appearing, including fiddler and Gaelic Roots director **Sheila Falls**, fiddler **Oisín McAuley** (a member of the aforementioned Danú), uilleann piper **Joey Abarta**, and flutist **Jimmy Noonan**.

The event is free and open to the public. Information is available at the BC Irish Studies website, [bc.edu/irish](http://bc.edu/irish).

• Another Irish music legend, though of a different sort, is **Derek Warfield & The Young Wolfe Tones**, who will be at the Fiddlers' Green Pub/Worcester Hibernian Cultural Centre on March 11 at 7 p.m. Warfield was co-founder back in 1963 of the original Wolfe Tones, who over the next four decades went on to earn acclaim for their fiery Irish patriotic and traditional songs. That sound lives on, drawing a new generation of listeners as well as older fans, through Warfield – who continues to sing, compose, tell stories, and record – and his bandmates including Damaris Woods (tenor banjo), Fintan Warfield (vocals), and Dan Lowery (flute, tin whistle, guitar, vocals).

Details at [fiddlersgreenworchester.com](http://fiddlersgreenworchester.com).

• **The High Kings**, the epitome of a 21st-century Irish ballad group, will be at the Boch Center Shubert Theatre on March 18 – one of their few appearances in North America. Vocalists and musicians Finbarr Clancy, Darren Holden, Brian Dunphy, and Paul O' Brien derive their sound from the classic Irish ballad style that swept into popularity during the 1950s and '60s through such bands as the Clancy Brothers and The Dubliners. The band has toured extensively throughout the US and Europe, recorded four studio albums and two live albums, and released two live DVDs, combining modern songs in the folk idiom – and



Danú will be at the Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport on March 19.

John D. Kelly photo

even from other genres – with some of the classic ballad repertoire.

For tickets, go to [thecabot.org/event/high-kings](http://thecabot.org/event/high-kings).

• Boston-area band **Boxty** will be front and center for a night of music and dance at Plymouth Memorial Hall on March 11 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Led by Dublin-born singer Cormac Marnell, the group (whose members also include David Bowman, whistle, mandolin, octave mandolin, banjo; Mike Clarke, double bass; and Miles Kelly, guitar, banjo) presents a repertoire that includes songs from Irish and American traditions, from "The Bog Down in the Valley" to "Shenandoah" to "Whiskey in the Jar," to contemporary material: "From Clare to Here," "Raglan Road" and even a cover of Bruce Springsteen's "I'm On Fire." Besides the requisite clubs and pubs, they've played at Fenway Park and Gillette Stadium, and their music has been featured on the Hulu TV show "Castle Rock."

For more about the event, go to [castlehillmedia.ticketspice.com/celtic-night](http://castlehillmedia.ticketspice.com/celtic-night).

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# March in Ireland is newborn lambs, Mass, parades, pub gatherings, and hearty nods to spring and The Saint

Strike up the band and get ready for St. Patrick's Day festivities here and all across the Emerald Isle. Even if there were no annual celebrations, March would still be the most perfect time to visit there. Spring has sprung, daffodils have popped up everywhere, and newborn lambs leap and run through their pastures to celebrate the return of warm weather.

Of course, you can find March 17 celebrations everywhere in Ireland, but one of my favorites is on Achill Island in Co. Mayo. Residents attend church in the morning and then parade through the streets with local marching bands proudly displaying their colors. They then gather at local pubs or restaurants with family and friends. It's not so much a wild time there as it is a nod to spring and a time to recognize the country's patron saint.

## ATTRACTIONS

While you're in Ireland, take advantage of the glorious weather (but do remember to pack rain gear) and venture out to some of the country's fun and interesting places, including:

- Fota Wildlife Park (fotawildlife.ie) in **Co. Cork**. This is a wonderful place to take the family, walk around, learn about some of the animals there that are unfamiliar to us, enjoy lunch, shoot some great photos, and, in all, just have a different and interesting day. The park opened in 1983 and animals were chosen that can be cage-free, mix with other species, and thrive in this free-range environment.

While in Co. Cork, you might also enjoy the Cobh Heritage Centre, Jameson Distillery in Midleton, the Donkey Sanctuary in Liscarroll, and the lovely seaside town of Kinsale, the gourmet capital of Ireland where food choices abound and quality is superb. Be sure to tour through West Cork, too, for some truly beautiful scenery.

- In **Co. Offaly**, the Clonmacnoise monastic settlement, founded by St. Ciaran in 548, is well worth a visit. The settlement is on the River Shannon and, while you're there, you might want to add a Shannon River cruise to the itinerary. Of course, you might also want to visit Moneygall, a small town that Barack Obama visited when he was in Ireland because some of his family originated there.

- In **Co. Tipperary**, be sure to visit the Rock of Cashel, a well-preserved and fascinating attraction, and in Co. Meath, stop to see Newgrange, Knowth, the Hill of Tara, and Trim Castle.

- In **Northern Ireland**, don't miss the Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle, Ballintoy Harbor, the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, and the historic homes and gardens. One of our favorite places is Carnlough, and we enjoyed staying at the Londonderry Arms Hotel. Visit [discovernorthernireland.com](http://discovernorthernireland.com) for lots of tourist attractions, accommodations and more.

- In **Co. Donegal**, be sure to see the colorful fishing boats in the harbor town of Killybegs, drive down into the town of Glencolumbkille, and visit Glenveagh Castle and the magnificent grounds and gardens there. The scenery on the Inishowen Peninsula is also well worth seeing.

- In **Co. Kerry**, our favorite accommodation is Heaton's Guesthouse ([heatonsguesthouse.com](http://heatonsguesthouse.com)) in Dingle. Heaton's is spotlessly clean and welcoming and comfortable with beautifully appointed rooms and delicious breakfast in the dining room. We've stayed there a number of times and always had the most enjoyable visits.

- In **Connemara**, my favorite accommodation is Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel set in the pristine Inagh Valley. Rooms have that "old-world" elegant feel to them, food is great, and the staff acts as though you are family returning home – in short, it's a wonderful place to stay, dine, and visit – whatever you can manage.

- Favorite B&Bs include lovely family-owned Cahergal Farm (very near Shannon airport) and Riverfield House in Doolin, both in Co. Clare. Favorite castle accommodations are Dromoland (also very near Shannon in Co. Clare) and Ashford in Co. Mayo.

- Kylemore Abbey in Connemara is a wonderful place to visit, walk the grounds, and enjoy lunch.

- Great pubs abound in Ireland where food is usually very good and reasonable. A couple of West Coast favorites are the Granuaile in Newport and McDermott's in Doolin.

You can find quality Irish food products in stores across the country too. Irish crafts are outstanding and sold in many fine stores. Some of our favorites are The Beehive on Achill Island, Co. Mayo (which also serves delicious, fresh lunches); O'Reilly & Turpin in Westport (a fun town to walk around), and Cottage Handcrafts in Moyard, Co. Galway. There also are many stores in the cities where you'll find excellent Irish goods.

If touring and tourist attractions aren't for you, there are many other activities available all over the country. You can sign up for hill walking through the Burren, Glendalough, Kerry, or other areas of Ireland (many internet sites offer suggestions), biking or equestrian holidays, and for golf at some of the more than 300 golf courses. There really is something for everyone in the country no matter what time of year you go or where you travel.

## ASHFORD CASTLE

Ashford Castle is a well-known hotel in Cong, Co. Mayo, set on 365 acres overlooking Lough Corrib. It's a wonderful place to stay, have tea, eat, or just walk around the manicured grounds.

Ashford Castle dates back to the 13th century when it was founded by the



Lovely Cahergal Farm is a family-owned, spacious and comfortable B&B and working farm close to Shannon Airport and a perfect spot for weary travelers from Boston.



Marchers in the Achill Island, Co. Mayo, traditional St. Patrick's Day parade.

*Judy Enright photos*

Anglo-Norman de Burgo family and later owned by the Guinness family. Famous guests have included Ronald Reagan, who stayed there during his 1984 presidential visit; Britain's Prince Edward, and Hollywood actors Brad Pitt and Russell Crowe.

The hotel also became famous in 1951 when John Ford filmed much of his classic, "The Quiet Man," with Maureen O'Hara and John Wayne, on the castle grounds. "The Quiet Man" fan club meets there every year.

## TRAVEL PLANS

I hope your 2022 travel plans include a visit to the Emerald Isle. You couldn't choose a better place to enjoy vacation activities for one and all.

Travel deals are available from numerous internet sites and information about Ireland is always available at [discoverireland.com](http://discoverireland.com), through Tourism Ireland's informative website, as well as from Aer Lingus and other airlines that service the country from Boston.



# Curtains are Going Up All Over the Town

By R. J. DONOVAN  
SPECIAL TO BOSTON

Boston theaters were plunged into darkness and lay dormant during the pandemic. Happily, the joy of live performances has returned and the upcoming weeks and months – right up to the “Riverdance, 25th Anniversary Show” (May 10–15) at the Wang Theatre – promise compelling offerings that deserve both your attention and support. (Covid safety precautions may vary by venue.)

**“Incident at Our Lady of Perpetual Help” – March 3–20, Greater Boston Stage Company.**

It’s 1973 and the middle class, Irish Catholic O’Shea family faces a comedic crisis when a seemingly innocent birds-and-bees conversation between two sisters is accidentally overheard by the overbearing Father Lovett. As he spits fire and brimstone, and with the family’s reputation on the line, 19-year-old Linda anxiously tries to explain to the audience what happened. However, the rest of her family keeps butting in to tell their own side of things. This is “Catholic guilt – also known as Jewish guilt, Methodist guilt, Baptist guilt, Lutheran guilt, and atheist guilt.” (greaterbostonstage.org)

**The Irish Comedy Tour – March 16, Wilbur Theatre.**

Combine the party atmosphere of a Dublin pub with a boisterous band of hooligans. The comedians on the bill,

all with ancestors on the Emerald Isle, include Detroit native Derek Richards; Boston-born Mike McCarthy; Nova Scotia’s Damon Leibert; and from Inchicore, outside of Dublin, Derrick Keane. (thewilbur.com)

**The High Kings – March 18, Shubert Theatre.**

These Irish folk superstars – Finbarr Clancy, Darren Holden, Brian Dunphy, and Paul O’Brien – are heading to Boston for a celebration of traditional Irish music. Keep the St. Patrick’s Day celebration going with this rare North American engagement. (bochcenter.org)

**Foil Arms & Hog – March 19, Shubert Theatre**

Foil Arms & Hog – the Irish sketch comedy group featuring Sean Finegan, Conor McKenna, and Sean Flanagan – are best known for their online sketches, including the viral hits “Getting Past US Immigration” and “When Irish People Can’t Speak Irish.” However, it’s their live stage shows about which they’re most proud. Two hundred million online views can’t be wrong. Experience this one in person. (bochcenter.org)

**Revels Spring Sing – March 20, Somerville Center for the Arts.**

Say goodbye to winter with Revels’ annual musical celebration of spring. This family-friendly event features: Boston jazz legend Stan Strickland; Dr. Kathy Bullock; Claire Dickson;

Revels’ own resident (and resonant) baritone, song leader and all-around musician, David Coffin; with The Revels Singers and the Spring Revels Children’s Chorus. You can almost see the forsythias blooming. (revels.org/springsing)

**“Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder” – April 15 – May 22, Lyric Stage**

In this clever musical, low-born and seemingly innocent Monty Navarro sets out to knock off the eight unsuspecting members of the lofty family who stand between him and his ascension to becoming the ninth Earl of Highhurst. But then love enters the picture and murder isn’t the only thing on Monty’s diligent little mind. (lyricstage.com)

**“Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations” – April 19–May 1, Boston Opera House.**

Follow The Temptations’ extraordinary journey from the streets of Detroit to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. This moving story of brotherhood, family, loyalty, and betrayal is set to the beat of the group’s greatest hits, including “My Girl,” “Just My Imagination,” “Get Ready,” and more. (broadwayinboston.com)

**“The Inheritance” – April 22–June 11, SpeakEasy Stage.**

Award-winning playwright Matthew Lopez transposes E.M. Forster’s novel “Howards End” to 21st century New

York. A generation after the peak of the AIDS crisis, what’s it like to be a young gay man in the city? What’s the legacy left by previous generations? What does the current generation owe to those who came before? Profound, witty, and turbulent, “The Inheritance” won the 2020 Tony Award for Best Play. (speakeasystage.com)

**“Celtic Illusion: A Night of Dance and Magic” – May 7, Shubert Theatre.**

Experience a breathtaking fusion of modern Irish dance and spell-binding magic. With glittering Broadway imagery, the production is created and choreographed by star Anthony Street (the Australian lead in “Lord of the Dance”). (bochcenter.org)

**“Riverdance, 25th Anniversary Show” – May 10–15, Wang Theatre.**

“Riverdance” was set to open at the Wang in March of 2020. Just days before its premiere, Covid-19 changed everything. Now, with spectacular new sets, lighting and dazzling high-tech visuals, the energetic Irish dance phenomenon triumphantly returns. Be there for this Boston favorite! (bochcenter.org)

**Blue Man Group – Ongoing, Charles Playhouse.**

They’re bald, they’re blue, and they serve up a rocking night of music, comedy, and audience interaction – all without ever saying a word. Each performance is a sensory flight. (blueman.com)

## Poetry program March 10 in Newburyport

An evening of poetry, “Ireland, America and Writing Poetry” is planned in Newburyport at 7 p.m. on March 10, 2022, at the Emma Andrews Library and Community Center. Participants include Ellie O’Leary, poet laureate of Amesbury, MA, and Anne Mulvey, a member of the Powwow River Poets and professor emeritus, UMass Lowell. Irish-born author Áine Greaney, a

native of County Mayo, will host the event.

The writers will talk about writing, childhood and Irish-American family influences, and how that identity plays out within the larger, multicultural America. They will also focus on the link between family heritage and their creative writing. The event is free and open to the public. More details at emmaandrewslibrary.org



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State Senator  
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# The Rev. James T. O'Reilly OSA Division Eight Ancient Order of Hibernians Lawrence, Massachusetts



*"151 Years of Dedication to Religion,  
Heritage, Charity and Community"*



## Irish Heritage Month March 2022 Lawrence, Massachusetts

Preserving and Fostering our Heritage and Culture

### TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022 IRISH FLAG RAISING

Across from City Hall – Common St. @11 a.m.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2022

OPENING of the EXHIBIT "The Rev. James T. O'Reilly OSA, the Augustinians and their Contributions to Lawrence" – at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson St, Lawrence, MA Sponsored by Division 8 AOH (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

### SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2022

THE SESQUICENTENNIAL SAINT PATRICK'S DAY BANQUET AND DANCE at the Lawrence Lodge of Elks, 652 Andover Street, Lawrence, MA. Traditional Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner with dancing to the Silver Spears Irish Show Band from 6 pm – 11 pm – Awarding of the Richard Cardinal Cushing and Irishman & Irishwoman of the Year Awards. For more information contact Charles Breen at 508 328 0323. Sponsored by Division 8 AOH – Handicap Accessible

### SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 2022

28th ANNUAL CLADDAGH PUB 4 MILE Classic ROAD RACE - 11 am, 399 Canal Street, Lawrence, MA (rain or shine) - For more information contact 978 688 8337 the Barry Kara Foundation.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 2022

LECTURE by Professor Richard Padova of Northern Essex Community College on "Lawrence: The Immigrant City" at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson St, Lawrence, MA @ 2 pm Sponsored by Division 8 AOH (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022

AOH NATIONAL HUNGER MONTH FOOD DRIVE: Please consider donating canned goods and non-perishable food items. All food items received will be donated to a local food pantry. 6 pm – 7:00 pm Claddagh Pub, 399 Canal Street, Lawrence MA.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2022

51st ANNUAL SAINT PATRICK'S DAY LUNCHEON at the Lawrence Lodge of Elks, 652 Andover Street, Lawrence, MA Traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner with entertainment by the Silver Spears Irish Show Band at NOON. Awarding of the Honorable John E. Fenton Citizenship Award - For more information contact Jack Lahey @ 603 560 8192 Sponsored by Division 8 AOH – Handicap Accessible

### SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 2022

DIVISION 8 JOINT INSTALLATION of OFFICERS – Sacred Hearts Church, 165 South Main Street, Bradford, MA following the 4 pm. Handicap Accessible

### SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2022

WHITE FUND LECTURE – with JOSEPH BLANCHETTE – Mr. Blanchette will discuss his book, "The View from Shanty Pond" - at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson St., Lawrence, MA @ 2 pm (FREE) - Handicap Accessible

### THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2022

OPEN HOUSE – Music all day long at the Claddagh Pub and Restaurant, 399 Canal St, Lawrence, MA for further information call 978 688-8337

### SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2022

IRISH FILM FESTIVAL at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson St, Lawrence @ 10 am Sponsored by Division 8 AOH (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

### SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 2022

JOIN PIANIST TERRI KELLEY AND VOCALIST BILL DONELAN FOR AN ALL-NEW PROGRAM OF CELTIC MELODIES - FROM ANCIENT GAELIC AIRES TO CURRENT SONGS - A Musical Tribute to a Lawrence Legend – Tom Garvey - at the Lawrence Public Library, Sargent Auditorium, 51 Lawrence St., Lawrence, MA @ 2 pm Presented by Division 8 (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

### THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022 EXHIBIT CLOSES

"The Rev. James T. O'Reilly OSA, the Augustinians and their Contributions to Lawrence" at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson St, Lawrence (FREE) – Handicap Accessible.

**The Rev. James T. O'Reilly OSA Division Eight AOH** was founded on November 5, 1871. The Division yearly hosts numerous social events and activities, and has scholarship opportunities for the children of members, and in some cases grandchildren of members on the high school and college level, including a scholarship for study in Ireland. The Division maintains a collection of over 15,000 Irish books, media, and memorabilia at the South Lawrence Library. This collection is one of the largest Irish Collections on the east coast of the US. Locally, Division 8 meets at the Claddagh Pub ,399 Canal St in Lawrence on the second Wednesday of the month. For information on AOH Membership please write to: Division 8 AOH Organizer, PO Box 1407, Lawrence, MA

IRISH HERITAGE MONTH IS SPONSORED BY THE ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS DIVISION 8



Irish Heritage Month is supported in part by a grant from the Lawrence Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



# Amini talks about what Talisk is up to

Scottish trio Talisk plays with so much power and presence, it's sometimes hard to believe there are only three of them. Their tight, propulsive, and often downright raucous instrumental sets have their basis in, but are by no means confined to, the traditional music framework – such as when they get hold of a riff or a phrase and fold it back unto itself, turning it into a rhythmic device that grows in intensity, setting the stage for improvisation or to launch into a whole other tune. Their honors include Folk Band of the Year (BBC Alba Scots Trad Music Awards), BBC Radio 2 Folk Award, and a number one placement for their 2018 album "Beyond" on the iTunes world music charts.

Undeniably, Talisk's sparkplug is the astonishingly fleet-fingered and dynamic concertina player Mohsen Amini (a BBC Radio 2 Folk Musician of the Year), but there's no downplaying the canny guitar accompaniment of Graeme Armstrong and fiddle virtuosity of new member Benedict Morris (BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year). The trio recently embarked on a US tour that will bring them to Club Passim in Harvard Square on March 2 [tickets at [passim.org](http://passim.org)], and Amini took some time to answer questions about not only the band's new line-up but its just-released album, "Dawn."

**Q.** Your gig at Passim falls almost exactly two years after the start of your ill-fated last US tour, right as the lockdown began in earnest. What do you remember about that time?

**A.** I remember it coming from absolutely nowhere. We were only four gigs deep into the tour of 20 and had shot off to Nashville for a festival that had already been cancelled due to a tornado, never mind Covid. We basically had a few days of wondering what we should do and then we just made the executive

decision to fly home – we managed to get the second-to-last flight out of Nashville before the whole world closed down.

**Q.** One big change since 2020, of course, is that you have a new line-up, with Benedict Morris succeeding Hayley Keenan. Can you talk about how this transition came to be, and introduce us to Benedict?

**A.** Myself and Hayley created Talisk seven years ago and we never expected it to grow as big as it did. After so long in the band, Hayley was delighted with everything she had achieved and left on an absolute high to pursue her other dreams. Benedict had covered for the band a few times and he's one of my best mates, so it was a really easy transition. We hit the studio straight away and got working on the new album. A seamless transition for everyone.

**Q.** Yes, that new album, "Dawn," – it has a new, more expansive sound for the band, what with synthesizer, percussion, vocalizations, etc., and a sort of glossier feel to the recording. What was your thought process in going this direction? Do you see it as an "experiment," or as more of a long-term path for the band?

**A.** We have been slowly working toward the vibe we currently have and are in love with a heavily produced sound to the album. We basically just want to make the best music we can, and it just happens that this is where that lands.

Also, it might also surprise you that on stage we actually recreate the album pretty much exactly like it is recorded and play everything live – with no backing tracks! Graeme has octaves, vocal harmonizers, and stomps on his rig, whereas I play a synth pad and orchestra arrangements with my feet while also doing all the concertina parts and effects, and Benedict handles all the fiddle lines. So it's a pretty intense set but incredibly fun to play.



Mohsen Amini (center) – with Talisk bandmates Graeme Armstrong (left) and Benedict Morris – says of their new album, "We basically just want to make the best music we can and it just happens that this is where that lands."

**Q.** I'm guessing there aren't a lot of Anglo concertina players in Scotland. So, how has your approach to playing evolved and developed?

**A.** To be honest, in Scotland I'm literally the only person who professionally plays the Anglo concertina, so there is a definite gap in the market to make your mark – and when I say that, I definitely mean that there is the gap to be different. I would look over to Ireland to all the concertina players and learn what I could from watching them, and then after exhausting everything, I'd try and listen to every instrument and recreate what they would do, but on the concertina. So I suppose my style is a result of that. I would be inspired by everything and anything and more often than not it would be by the people I played with, week in week out. In a nutshell, my inspiration comes from home.

**Q.** It's been up and down for Boston's

folk and trad music scene: Last summer, everything seemed to be trending the right way, then backslid late in the year; now, the concert and session venues are slowly, carefully trying to open back up yet again. How are things where you are?

**A.** Back home, the scene is absolutely booming at the moment. People in the trad scene have been doing everything they can to hold on to existing venues but also creating new ones and new ways to present music. After Covid, everyone is putting their best foot forward. From what I've seen, it's pretty clear that we are going to end up with an even bigger scene than we had before. I will say that, on the flip side, we have been losing quite a lot of musicians to other jobs, just because it's taking a while to come back – but the path is clear and coming back hard.

For more about Talisk, see [taliskmusic.com](http://taliskmusic.com). Interview by Boston Irish Contributor Sean Smith.

## Boston Irish review: 'Star of the Brian Miller North'

Ian McKenna, Joe De Georgeo

We Irish music lovers here in Greater Boston often take comfort in the constant renewal of the tradition through local young musicians, their enthusiasm and interest nurtured by caring adults and organizations like Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. This album is a heartening reminder that such a scenario exists elsewhere in the US, and with equally positive results.

Nineteen-year-olds McKenna and De Georgeo are past Midwest Fleadh champions on, respectively, accordion and fiddle who are long-time students at the Center for Irish Music in St. Paul, Minnesota. They've recently taken part in the CIM's Taking Flight Collective, created to challenge and inspire young musicians during the pandemic and help them launch their music careers. The program includes weekly classes, a nine-month honors project, and two solo performances broadcast virtually. Miller, a guitar and bouzouki player

and singer known for his work with the group Bua and his wife Norah Rendell, has been the pair's mentor.

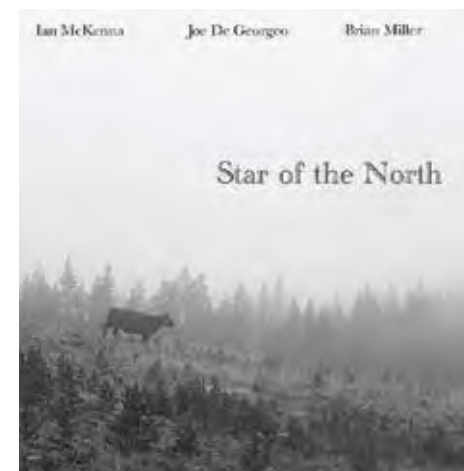
"Star of the North" comprises 14 tune sets, alternating between trios and McKenna or De Georgeo dueting with Miller; on one track, they are joined by flutist Adrienne O'Shea, another participant in the Taking Flight Collective. The arrangements put the focus squarely on the melody and, not surprisingly, on the skill and technique of these young musicians. Most of the tunes here are well known in the trad repertoire – "Pinch of Snuff," "Come West Along the Road," "Bunch of Keys," "Hughie Travers" – but hardly run of the mill, and in any case provide a point of reference for the progress of McKenna and De Georgeo.

That progress is beyond promising. Just listen, for example, to De Georgeo's handling of the cuts (grace notes) in "Seán Reid's Reel," particularly that minefield of an A part, and how this

stokes anticipation for the reels that follow, "Willie Clancy's" and "Kitty's Gone A-Milking." Or how McKenna aces "Gardiner's Daughter," a reel much favored by pipers; for the reel that follows, "Dillon's," he uses his bass notes intermittently just to add a bit of flavoring.

Among the McKenna-De Georgeo-Miller trios, there is an exuberant pair of jigs, "Strike the Gay Harp" and a cracking four-part version of "The Gold Ring" that may be unfamiliar to some; the track with O'Shea is a vivacious medley of reels buoyed by the wise placement of "Music in the Glen" between "Kitty's Gone A-Milking" and "Johnny McGreevy's." They also do a fine job on a pair of hornpipes associated with Willie Clancy – although in a different order than he recorded them – "The Plains of Boyle" and "The Faithful Friend."

Miller's guitar and bouzouki accompaniment – steady and engaging – is



an asset on its own terms, but also symbolic of his role as a mentor: He gives these two young musicians the space and support they need to flourish, and so on "Star of the North," they shine bright.

[[joedegeorgeoandianmckenna.bandcamp.com](http://joedegeorgeoandianmckenna.bandcamp.com)]

– SEAN SMITH



# My Road to Reading Recovery

By Martin McGovern  
Boston Irish Contributor

The last two years of my career in higher education coincided with the pandemic and during that period, reading for pleasure proved challenging if not impossible for me.

Even with a good book to look forward to at the end of the day, I inevitably lost interest in it or fell asleep after a few pages. And that was with some of my favorite authors or genres, a John Le Carré spy novel, a good memoir or biography, or a fresh take on history or politics, especially of the Irish variety.

Night after night, books lost out to the easy lure of mindlessly flicking through cable channels or checking social media. The challenge was focus, or more precisely, the absence of it. My ability to sustain long-form or deep attention on a specific theme had begun to wane. Both work and age had combined to chip away at my ability to concentrate.

During that period of the pandemic, I spent my work days, as well as many nights and weekends, with colleagues gathering facts, figures, details, perspectives, and insights in preparation for official college responses, statements, updates, and reports.

Linked almost permanently to screens both large and small, my brain operated on full alert, searching for risks and issues and how to address them. Ultimately, the intensity of that process, along with the prospect of endless crises, prompted me to re-think career and change priorities.

As much as I enjoyed my work, it had started to consume more of my life and too much of my energy and focus. An aside: Johann Hari's "Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention – and How to Think Deeply Again" is excellent on this topic.

Fortunately, I was in a position to retire and did so in



July 2021, becoming a part of The Great Resignation. Since then, with fewer structured work demands or deadlines, my brain fog has slowly been dissipating. My road to reading recovery began in earnest in early November. At Dublin airport waiting for a flight back to Boston, I spent my last few euros on a book called "The Monk."

Written by the ground-breaking investigative reporter and best-selling author Paul Williams, the book chronicles the life and crimes of Ireland's most enigmatic gang boss, Gary "The Monk" Hutch, and his deadly feud with rival Christy "The Dapper Don" Kinahan.

Skimming the paperback in the airport and sensing the pace and detail of its narrative, I wanted to plunge in right away, but I resisted that temptation because of the surrounding noise and distractions. The departure lounge and the plane were packed



with exuberant passengers finally getting to visit loved ones in America again with the lifting of Covid restrictions.

Back in Massachusetts, however, I lost myself in the book, underlining key sections, scribbling little notes on the margins, and checking references to other sources and publications.

In many ways, "The Monk" reads like Narcos Ireland, a terrifying tale of murder, fear, greed, lives ruined, and the threat that crime lords pose to the rule of law and democracy.

Williams captured my attention and held it while walking me through an alternative universe. It was an experience that prompted me to learn more about drug-related crime in Ireland and elsewhere. Although the topic was hardly uplifting, it kept my focus for 332 pages; finishing the book was pure satisfaction. I felt like a real reader again.

On my night stand and in my Kindle right now, there are more books than can be handled. In order of priority, the top five are:

"Between Two Hells: The Irish Civil War," by Diarmaid Ferriter.

"The Dope: The Real History of the Mexican Drug Trade," by Benjamin T. Smith.

"Taste: My Life Through Food," by Stanley Tucci,

"Orwell's Roses," by Rebecca Solint,

"The Lost Art of Losing: A Novel," by Alice Zender,

Instead of being distracted, I'm carving out dedicated reading time. I'm staying in bed on a cold morning to finish a book that can't be put down, retreating to a quiet corner in a local library with a serendipitous find, and stumbling on something on Kindle that needs to be devoured instantly. Amen to being in a reading groove again!

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**DR. CHRISTINE KINEALY**

Since completing her PhD at Trinity College in Ireland, Christine Kinealy has worked in educational and research institutes in Ireland, England and, more recently, in the U.S. In September 2013, Professor Kinealy was appointed the founding Director of Ireland's Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut. Professor Kinealy has published extensively on modern Ireland, her books including *This Great Calamity: The Great Famine in Ireland* (1995, 2007) and *Frederick Douglass and Ireland. In his own words* (2018).

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**DR. BRIAN KENNEDY**

Brian P. Kennedy completed his BA, MA and PhD degrees at University College Dublin. He has authored and edited many books, including *Irish Painting*, and an eight book series on the *Lives of Irish Artists*. He has been Assistant Director of the National Gallery of Ireland, and Director of the National Gallery of Australia, the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, the Toledo Museum Of Art, Ohio, and the Peabody Essex Museum, MA.

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# Rian's Millar announces his decision to 'step down'

BOSTON IRISH STAFF

In an email message to BostonIrish.com received Feb 1, Ronnie Millar said he plans to step down from his role as Executive Director of Rian (formerly Irish Immigration Center). "Rian needs a new leader to take our work forward," he said.

The text of his message read in part: "It has been one of the great privileges of my life to serve the Rian Immigrant Center for these past 11 years. I have worked alongside a brilliant team of staff, board members, supporters, and advisors; and it has been such an honor.

"Given the strength of our staff team, our solid financial position, and our dedicated board of directors, I believe this is the right time for me to announce my decision to step down as executive director after my successor is appointed. ... "I am forever grateful for your support, partnership, and friendship.

"Together we have accomplished so much as we worked towards creating a society where all are welcomed, and valued, and enjoy equitable opportunities and protections; and as we have established Rian as Boston's Welcome Center for immigrant families. Thank you!

"Throughout our history, we have sought to honor the Irish traditions of hospitality, human rights, and social justice. Our founder, Sister Lena Deevy LSA, modeled the anti-racist, inter-cultural bridge-building that we practice today. Our mission compels us onward.

"My single aim is to ensure a smooth transition, and I have been working with our board and staff to develop a thoughtful transition plan, and to ensure every aspect of Rian and the Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative continues smoothly. I am confident that



**Ronnie Millar**  
11 years at Rian's helm

Rian will find a leader who will build on our successes and momentum.

"I don't know what the future holds for me yet, but I am excited to think about my next adventure. Please accept my heartfelt appreciation for your commitment and support for Rian and the immigrant families we serve. It is my sincere hope that you will continue to support Rian's vision in the future. "In gratitude and solidarity, Ronnie."

## A vigil at Greenhills for slain Irish woman

Mourners gathered in chilly weather Jan. 16 in a prayer vigil for a young Irish woman, 23-year-old Ashling Murphy, at right, who had been brutally murdered in Tullamore, Co Offaly on Jan. 12 while she was out for a run on the Grand Canal Walk.

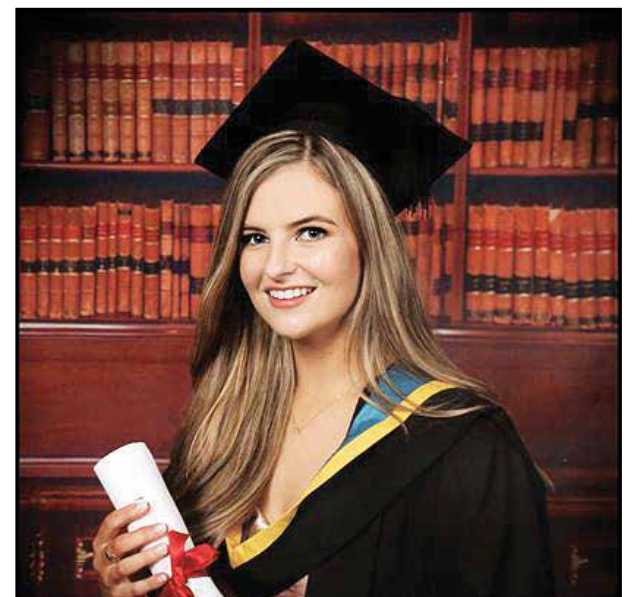
Vigilists met at Greenhills Bakery in Dorchester in an event organized by the Irish Pastoral Centre. The tragedy resonated for Greenhills owners Cindy & Dermot Quinn, as the murdered victim's sister Amy had worked one summer at the bakery.

"Amy and a friend of hers taught music to Dermot's niece," Cindy recalled. "That's how she connected with us when she had a J-1 visa to work in the US."

She recalled meeting Murphy's parents when they visited Boston.

"I hope they will take some comfort knowing that so many people here came out for the vigil," Cindy Quinn said.

- ED FORRY



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# Charting a Course of Service, Sacrifice

## Ensign Aidan Gallegos: A hometown standout

By PETER F. STEVENS  
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Aidan Gallegos was standing at a personal and professional crossroads. For the 2017 graduate of Catholic Memorial High School and 2021 graduate of Santa Clara University in California, a lucrative path in Silicon Valley beckoned. A different course, however, tugged at him, too. Imbued with a deep love of country and a desire to serve, he mulled commitment to a career as a US Navy Surface Warfare Officer.

Seeking guidance, he turned to his family and to his longtime counselor and friend, Rev. Sean Connor, pastor at Sacred Heart Church, in Weymouth, Massachusetts.

Gallegos's interest in Officer Candidate School, in Newport, Rhode Island, presented no small challenge. The intensive program runs 13 week, and, according to Captain Dave Hecht, public affairs officer for the chief of Naval Personnel in Washington, the course would "put Gallegos and his classmates to the test morally, mentally, and physically. If he passes and graduates with his class in late January [2022], he'll be commissioned as an ensign and join the ranks of our Navy's leadership."

Gallegos proved up to the task and he recently spoke with *Boston Irish Magazine* about his passion to serve his country and his love of the Navy. He discussed those who have always

supported him, citing not only his father, his mother, and his sister, but also Father Connor, who spoke with this writer about his long-running relationship with the Gallegos family and his admiration for and pride in Aidan.

The pastor was uniquely qualified to offer advice to Aidan Gallegos as the young man weighed his choices—the cleric had served as a Boston police officer before finding his vocation with the Catholic Church. He, too, had stood at the crossroads personally and professionally.

Following are excerpts from the conversation with Gallegos:

**Q.** *Your parents are both immigrants?*

**A.** Yes, my mom, Mary Linehan Gallegos, was born and raised in County Cork. She emigrated to the US in her 20s. My Dad is from Mexico and served in the US Air Force. We've always been a tightly knit family. My sister, Fiona, is a student in Chicago. While my parents live in Austin [Texas] now, I was raised on the Quincy-Weymouth line, and Sacred Heart in Weymouth was our parish.

**Q.** *How did you and your family come to know Father Connor?*

**A.** My mom worked for the archdiocese, in administration, and also with Father Connor at Sacred Heart. He became not only a great friend to all of us, but also a mentor for me. He always has had a way of pointing me in the right direction, so when I was thinking

about joining the Navy, he understood. He had been a Boston police officer for a long time and had seen just about everything. He has always been about service to others, and he had a tough choice to make when he thought about the priesthood. He knows me. My family supported my choice, too.

My original goal was Silicon Valley, but as I started thinking about how the military instills values that I will carry everywhere, I realized that now was the time to do this. Father Connor agreed, pointing me in the right direction.

**Q.** *What has Officer Candidate School been like for you?*

**A.** Really challenging. The training officer and drill instructors are demanding and expect your best all the time. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Connor, who came to Sacred Heart via St. Ann's in Dorchester, hailed from a law-enforcement family and now serves as chaplain to the Boston Police Department. At age 31, he said, Pope John Paul's visit to Dorchester in 1979 ignited his desire to swap a BPD badge for a priest's collar.

Of Aidan, he says, "His family's immigrant experience has shaped him. He has a brilliant mind, and like his father, he is an accomplished musician on both the piano and the guitar. I feel like a big brother to him. What really sets him apart and makes him stand out are



**Aidan Gallegos**  
Silicon Valley no; US Navy, yes, for sure

his moral center and his kindness. He's exactly the type of outstanding young man who will serve as an outstanding Naval officer. The country's fortunate to have him in its service."

After he graduated from Officer Candidate School, Gallegos was assigned to San Diego. "I'm hoping for deployment on a guided-missile cruiser to the South China Sea and the Pacific. I look forward to the chance to work with our allies and serve the country."

As Captain Hecht aptly notes, "Young men and women like this Officer Candidate [Aidan Gallegos] deserve to be recognized in their community for the service and sacrifice they are providing to our Navy and to our nation."

## Fund-raising for Deer Island Famine Memorial yields funds for Mass AOH, Pastoral Centre

Proceeds collected at fund-raising events over more than two decades for the Deer Island Famine Memorial have been distributed to two local Irish organizations. Checks in the amount of \$6161.11 each have been presented to the Massachusetts Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) and the Irish Pastoral Centre (IPC).

The money had been held in escrow by the Irish Cultural Centre under an August, 2013 fiscal agent agreement date. At that time, the funds totaled \$11,678.52,

and over the years had accrued some \$645.70 in interest.

"We have determined that it would be best to waive reimbursement for any out-of-pocket expenses and forward the funds to two charitable organizations who have agreed to host events at the Memorial in the future," said John Foley, who, with Boston Irish Magazine publisher Ed Forry, had worked on the ad hoc committee overseeing the funds.

Said IPC Executive Director Mary Swanton, "We were delighted for a wonderful donation in memory of Duxbury residents Bill and Rita O'Connell, who spent years advocating for a memorial on Deer Island to bestow dignity and reverence to the memory of the Irish immigrants who are buried there. Their dream was realized in 2019 with the unveiling of a 16-foot Celtic cross that memorializes refugees buried in unmarked graves. Both Bill and Rita passed away before the Celtic cross was placed at the site.

This donation will preserve their legacy by hosting annual events on the island. This is a privilege for the Irish Pastoral Centre, and we are delighted to honor all those who worked on creating this memorial."



**Sr Veronica Dobson**, a founder and long-time mainstay of the Irish Pastoral Centre, passed away on Dec. 29 in Texas. She is pictured with IPC chaplain Rev Dan Finn in this IPC file photo.



**Bill Sullivan** of the Lawrence Ancient Order of Hibernians (above, center) accepted the donation for the AOH; **Mary Swanton** (photo below) received the donation for the IPC. Others pictured are: (above) **John Foley**, **Martina Curtin**, president of Irish Cultural Centre, and **Ed Forry**; (below) **John Foley**, **Fr. Dan Finn**, IPC, **Martina Curtin**, and **Ed Forry**.





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**St. Patrick's Day**

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***The First Kennedys:***

***The Humble Roots of An American Dynasty***

**Wednesday, March 2, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**



Neal Thompson, journalist and author, discusses his forthcoming book *The First Kennedys: The Humble Roots of an American Dynasty*, which draws on previously unreleased records to explore the lives of Bridget and Patrick Kennedy, with Christine Kinealy, professor of history and director of Ireland's Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac University.

This program is supported in part through the Government of Ireland: Emigrant Support Programme.



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**Virtual Program Reservations and Information:** All Kennedy Library Forums are free and open to the public. Advance reservations are requested. Registrants will receive an e-mail reminder with a viewing link before the event. To register online, visit [jfklibrary.org/forums](http://jfklibrary.org/forums). Please check our website periodically for updates to our upcoming Forums.

***Rising Seas: Planning for the Future***

**Wednesday, March 9, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**

Baylor Fox-Kemper, professor of earth, environmental, and planetary sciences at Brown University; Courtney Humphries, journalist and author; Paul Kirshen, professor of climate adaptation at the University of Massachusetts Boston; Sanjay Seth, climate resilience program manager for the City of Boston; and the Rev. Vernon K. Walker, senior program manager at Communities Responding to Extreme Weather (CREW), explore sea level rise and its implications for coastal areas, including cities like Boston, with Barbara Moran, correspondent on WBUR's environmental team.



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**Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona duit!**

**Best wishes for a happy  
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