

# BOSTON IRISH

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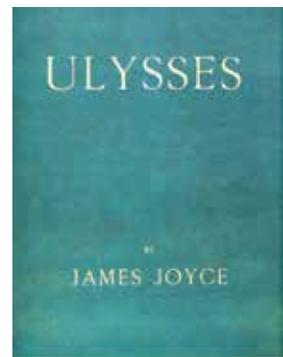
Summer 2022

BostonIrish.com

## 'Ulysses' at 100

### Dublin sends up a heady mix to celebrate 'Ulysses' at 100

Ireland is not being shy this month with its commemoration of the publication of James Joyce's masterpiece, "Ulysses" 100 years ago.



The original 1922 book.

Dublin's Bloomsday 2022 six-day program (June 11-16) is meant to be the highlight of the year-long and international celebration of one of the most iconic works of English literature.

"Ulysses" follows the footsteps of Leopold Bloom around Dublin on Thurs., June 16, 1904. For almost 70 years the Bloomsday

Festival, named after the lead character, has celebrated the genius of Joyce and the wit and character of the people of Dublin.

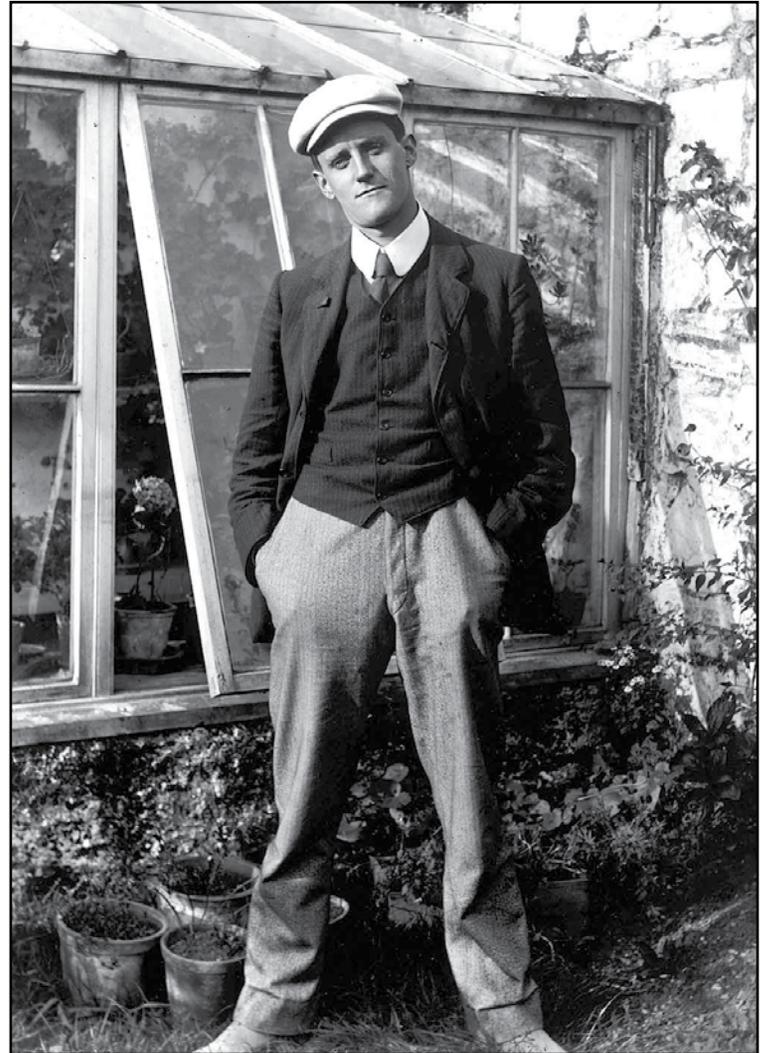
This month's festival features readings, musical concerts, tours, theatre, talks, art, and food and drink events. Highlights include the staging of Joyce's "Dubliners" in the Smock Alley Theatre; the reading of a new play, "The United States v. Ulysses," the story of one of the great literary trials of the twentieth century; and "Bloominaushwitz," a flamboyant, playful investigation of identity and belonging, which sees Bloom escape from the boundaries of the novel and set off to explore his Jewish heritage.

Also in the mix are two world premieres: A one-woman show celebrating the life of Joyce's wife Nora, and a suite for guitar and strings composed by multi-award nominated musician Joe Chester as tribute to Joyce's daughter Lucia, a talented but troubled dancer and illustrator.

Among the tours on offer are 'To Heaven by Water: Exploring the Royal Canal through "Ulysses."' This walking tour along Dublin's

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## The author, Mr. Joyce



A picture of an artist as a young man – James Joyce. 'Reproduced from the original glass negative in UCD Special Collections by kind permission of Professor Helen Solterer. From the Constantine Curran Collection.'



## ICC to hail Bloomsday

The Irish Cultural Centre in Canton and the Irish Consulate in Boston will present a "special commemorative performance to celebrate Bloomsday and the 100th anniversary of the publication of "Ulysses" featuring The Here Comes Everyday Players on Sun., June 19, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Additionally, Maureen McNally will discuss the life and times of Nora Barnacle. For more information, see Page 8.

## Ambassador Cronin hits the ground running

By TOM MULVOY  
MANAGING EDITOR

When Claire (McLaughlin) Cronin, the majority leader in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, was sworn in as US ambassador to Ireland on January 19 of this year, she told the gathering in the House

chamber that her leave-taking to represent her country in the land of her heritage had a tint of sadness to it: "I have always been better at saying hello than saying goodbye."

Shortly after she presented her credentials to Ireland President Michael D. Higgins

in Dublin three weeks later and formally became chief of mission at the US Embassy there, she began planning her "Hello" campaign with embassy staff members. "After about a month of getting to learn first-hand about how things worked here and of

meeting the people who made them happen," Cronin said in an interview with Boston Irish in mid-June, "I knew I had to get out and about. It was time."

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Claire Cronin's ancestral hometown, Carrowmenagh, gives her a hearty welcome.



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# Straight talk from Ireland's minister for foreign affairs

## Coveney takes up Irish progressivism

BY ED FORRY

BOSTON IRISH PUBLISHER

Simon Coveney, TD, Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense was among the first guests at the John F. Kennedy Library & Museum when public gatherings were resumed on April 29, participating in a one-hour discussion with Dr. Bob Mauro, director of the Boston College Irish Institute and founding director of BC's Global Leadership Institute.

The minister was accompanied by Joe Hackett, the secretary general of the Department of Foreign Affairs whose first DFA assignment was as Deputy Consul General in Boston in 1995.

In early April, Coveney had visited Ukraine, where he pledged his country's support. "Even though Ireland is a militarily neutral country, let me be clear: We are not neutral on this war," the BBC reported he said in a news conference in Kiev. "We are also not neutral on the future of your country."

Coveney was in Boston after a visit to Washington D.C. and a speech to the United Nations Security Council in New York.

In his conversation with Mauro, the minister spoke in detail about his trip to the war zone, and discussed the continuing border dispute in Northern Ireland,

In a Q&A session later that morning, an audience member asked Coveney: "In the past ten years or so we have seen a progressive trajectory in Ireland in terms of reproductive rights, of gay rights, a sort of marginalization of church authority. How does a progressive Ireland inform your job in your position on the world stage?"

Coveney's lengthy comments offer a revealing perspective into contemporary Ireland. Here is what he said in response:

"Good question, and that allows me to talk about something outside of Northern Ireland and Ukraine. ... You know, we ask ourselves the question all the time in the Irish foreign ministry: What can we bring to international



Shane Caffrey, Ireland's Deputy Consul General in Boston, introduced Simon Coveney, TD, Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense, seated at right, and Dr. Bob Mauro, director of the Boston College Irish Institute and founding director of BC's Global Leadership Institute, for a discussion of international issues at the John F. Kennedy Library & Museum on Columbia Point on April 29. At right, below, Boston Irish Publisher Edward Forry and Joe Hackett, secretary general of Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs whose first diplomatic assignment was as Ireland's Deputy Consul General in Boston in 1995.

Top photo, courtesy of the JFK Library & Museum; photo at right, courtesy of the Irish Consulate in Boston.

debates that can add value from an Irish perspective? We're not a big military power, but we are very active when it comes to peacekeeping. We're not a big political system, but we try to have a say in global debates on lots of the big issues.

"But to answer your question directly: Foreign policy for us is very much driven by gender equality, by sexual and reproductive rights now. And we both fund that and advocate for that through the UN system primarily, but also within the EU.

"So we try to talk about the journey that Ireland has been on in terms of how it is in Ireland, the debates around divorce, abortion, reproductive rights, gender equality, marriage equality - all of those things have evolved over time in Ireland. And many other countries are at different stages of that journey. We try to use our own mistakes and our own successes in some ways as a case study, to encourage others to make a similar journey.

"I do that all the time when I'm in different countries from a foreign policy perspective. So, I think if you're not leading by example, you're not very credible; in truth, you know, if we're calling for change in other parts of the world, but we haven't managed to deliver it in our own home patch in Ireland, then I think there's a pretty serious credibility problem.

"So the fact that much of the change that you refer to - if you want to call it a liberal journey, or a liberalization journey that Ireland has been on - I hope that that provides a pathway and an inspiration for other countries to follow. Our relationship with the church has changed, but it's still very important in many people's lives. But I think the relationship between the church and state in Ireland now is more appropriate than it has been decades ago. So, yes, I think it's important that we recognize

the mistakes that Ireland has made as well as the successes, because we've made many mistakes in that space in the past. But I think if you're honest about that and honest about the journey that you're on and the value system that drives that change well, then you can be credible and, hopefully, influential.

"One of your previous presidents talked in a number of speeches about the soft bigotry of low expectations, which is a quote that I often use when I'm talking to students in schools and universities. It's around this idea that some people grow up with a perceived label on their back where, even though people might be nice to them, they don't really expect them to achieve very much because of their skin color or because of the school they've gone to, or because of the address that they come from or because of their family history or whatever.

"I often think about that quote in the context of global politics, too, around a sort of soft bigotry of low expectations coming from small countries that don't really matter. And that actually it's the superpowers that decide everything.

"And I find that as sort of a motivation to force the argument by strength of argument, as opposed to by military might or economic scale, or population size or whatever. And that's the beauty of the European Union, by the way; it makes decisions by and large on the basis of the strength of argument. And there's no reason why Ireland can't be as influential as Germany on that argument or France or Spain or Italy, countries that are multiples of our size. That is why, of course, the UN system for us is really the centerpiece of our foreign policy, because we believe we can win the argument. We don't always succeed, but we can certainly try to influence things for the better.

"So, in the areas that you talk about,



actually a lot of it has happened in my political lifetime in the last two decades. I think we have an interesting story to tell, that for other countries, hopefully, can be both inspiring and reassuring in terms of how you build a more tolerant, diverse society.

"You know about close to 20 percent of the population living in Ireland today were not born in Ireland. A decade or two decades ago, that number would have been much, much smaller. Between now and 2040, we are planning to add a million people to the population of our country and 50 percent of that million extra won't have been born in the island of Ireland. So we're planning for a more international, more multicultural, more diverse population, which, of course, is the story of this country, and is a big part of its success. So that's the journey we're on. And hopefully for other countries that are trying to forge a way forward, it can be a case study that can help in political decision making."

The complete program at the JFK Library may be seen online at [jfklibrary.org/events-and-awardsforums04-29-coveney](http://jfklibrary.org/events-and-awardsforums04-29-coveney)

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# Ambassador Cronin hits the ground running

(Continued from page 1)

## Per usual, Covid-19 intrudes on a big event

Time, yes, to launch the “Hello” drive, but not before dealing with a bout of Covid-19 in March that saw her in quarantine in Dublin while a cadre of Irish officialdom led by Prime Minister Micheál Martin was hailing Saint Patrick in Washington, D.C. “I was determined to visit all of the republic’s 26 counties before some scheduled time off in August,” she said. On the day of the interview, she reported that she had given countless hellos to residents and interviews with officials in 20 counties, one of them being Donegal where her family roots are deep. “I’ll make the 26 easily,” she said, “and have time to revisit a number of them.”

Making her rounds across the island while keeping close tabs on embassy affairs is heady stuff for the gregarious ambassador. “The Irish people show an intense interest in American politics. They are well informed, and quick with questions. And, of course, a congenial, welcoming manner is straight from the population’s DNA.”

For those interested in following what Cronin is about at any given time, it’s likely to be available in text and living color on the embassy’s prolific Twitter account, @USambireland, which captures her every move, it seems.

Day-to-day life at the Embassy can be fast-paced and exciting, she said. “There’s lots for all of us to keep an eye on, with each day different in its own way. Five months into my time here, the teamwork approach in place is working well.”

## Issues large and smaller dominate the days and nights

As to issues that demand constant attention, Cronin points to the now 24-year-old Good Friday Agreement as first in line. “The gains from that historic diplomacy must be preserved at all costs,” she said. “There’s no question about that.”

As ambassador, Cronin is an interlocutor between business interests in both the US and on the island of Ireland, a task that mandates everyday attention. “More than 900 United States firms operate in Ireland, which is the ninth largest investor in the US economy,” she notes in describing her role in that exchange as “promoting the United States as an investment and exchange destination for Irish companies while advocating for the free flow of trade and investment in both directions.”

For all that, smaller-picture matters keep the ambassador and the embassy on the go. One such is the J1 visa program that first was put in place in 1966 and has been reinstated this year after two years of cancellations due to pandemic restrictions. It will enable students from Ireland to travel to and work as interns in the United States this summer.



## Visiting Tremone, land of her ancestors

Ambassador Cronin was greeted with welcoming arms, signs, and umbrellas when she stopped by the County Donegal village of Carrowmenagh in the town of Tremone, which her family left for a different life in America ages ago.

*Photos from the US Embassy in Ireland’s Twitter collection.*



The idea is that students will follow their occupational hopes while learning about the US firsthand, then return to use what they have experienced in benefit to the homeland’s culture and economy.

## The J-1 program provides all sorts of benefits

“These visas help to strengthening trans-Atlantic ties,” said Cronin, who noted via Twitter in early June that “she had met with some J1 Summer Work and Travel applicants and that the embassy had processed more than



4,300 visas already for this season.”

In the interview, the ambassador mused that the J1 program and others like it have many times “served those who are looking for love,” noting that after Brian Donnelly, a one-time Massachusetts legislator and later a congressman, had successfully sponsored a program similar to the J1 effort known as the Donnelly Visas, “my brother Hugh married an Irish woman who had come to the US on that basis.” The ambassador clearly takes delight in describing how the embassy’s “open door policy” is playing out. “Every

week,” she said, “we invite groups of people – students or a cross-section of citizens from all walks of life – who as a matter of course do not interact with the embassy and what happens there and with the ambassador’s Deerfield Residence in Phoenix Park to come and see things for themselves.”

“Just this week,” she noted, “75 students were given extensive tours of both places, and afterwards they attended a town hall where embassy staff and I took questions from the group. Letting the Irish people know that these doors are open to them means a lot to me and to the embassy.”

## Domestically speaking, the family embraces Ireland

The ambassador’s home away from the family home in Easton, Mass., the Deerfield Residence, continues to leave her in awe. “It has so much history and majesty,” she said. “It’s the people’s house.” The Georgian-style mansion, the centerpiece of 62 verdant acres across from the Irish president’s home, was finished under the English in 1776, a year whose mention rings all manner of bells for her constituents in Ireland and at home. It served as the US embassy until 1927.

Cronin’s “you’re all welcome” approach has widespread application and she constantly encourages her friends and colleagues in Ireland and from home to drop by and say hello. It doesn’t take much prompting for her to reflect on the history of her Irish American family and to wonder what her grandfather, who left Donegal for work in America and found it in a shoe factory in Brockton, would think of his granddaughter’s place in Irish life and society today.

Deerfield Residence is where the bustle of diplomacy recedes for the ambassador and her family. Her husband Ray, the founder of Benchmarking, the leading business intelligence firm for private clubs, continues to work his side of the domestic equation from the residence – flying to and from where he needs to be on business.

He reports: “Our daughters Kara and Kerry continue to live and work in Massachusetts. They were here and involved the first week to see Claire present her credentials and they’ll visit throughout the tenure. Both have fallen in love with Dublin and Ireland. We also see them on our various trips back to Massachusetts. For my part as her husband, it’s inspiring to support Claire as she discharges her duties and I love participating as the circumstances warrant.”

As summer days and nights time beckons, the Cronins will maintain their pace in Ireland while anticipating some respite time in August on Cape Cod where yet another home awaits them.

*This story has been updated to correct an erroneous reference.*

# On a trip to Belfast, facing up to a still-festering wound

“Better an hour early than a minute late,” my Dad used to say.

My principal concern in planning a day trip to Belfast on March 25 was that I arrive at the inaugural in-person event of the John and Pat Hume Foundation on time. I prefer the train, but the buses from Dublin run earlier and they delivered me to the Belfast Europa Center at 8:45, early enough that I could walk from Belfast’s grand city center to Crumlin Road.

The Europa Hotel was the most-bombed target of the Troubles – hit 36 times. Across the street is the Crown Tavern, reputedly the birthplace of the Society of United Irishmen in the 1790s, whose rebellion failed in 1798.

A couple of blocks north is the “Royal Belfast Academical Institution,” known as “the Inst.” It was founded in 1806 with the motto *Quaerere Verum* [To Seek the Truth] by some of the same Irish Republican Presbyterians who had founded the Society of United Irishmen. Among the radical-for-the-time concepts of the school was that it would be open to boys and to girls of all denominations and would not use corporal punishment. Over time it became an all-boys school with an overwhelmingly Presbyterian student body and ethos. In addition to prejudice against Catholics, the Catholic Church itself forbade its faithful from attending what they considered a “Godless institution.” To attend “the Inst.” would have been worse than Catholics choosing Harvard over Holy Cross or BC during the reigns of Cardinals O’Connell and Cushing in Boston. Today, the school is for boys between 11 and 18 years of age and is 40 percent Protestant, 30 percent Catholic, and 30 percent other.

### An elevation to city status per the queen

Belfast grew rapidly in the 19th century with the linen industry, shipbuilding (both Harlan and Wolff attended “the Inst.”) as well as the tobacco industry. The great famine in Ireland drove many Irish to migrate within the island to Belfast in search of work. In recognition of Belfast’s growth, Queen Victoria elevated Belfast to city status in 1888.

Across the street from the school sits the Assembly Building, once the seat of the Presbyterian Assembly in Northern Ireland. Completed in 1905, it is used today as a convention center. One block away is the magnificent Belfast City Hall, completed in 1906. Among the important events to take place there were the signing of the Ulster Covenant (resisting home rule in Ireland) in 1912, and the first meeting of Northern Ireland’s Parliament after partition in 1921.

The Belfast Public Library is built with Glasgow’s distinctive red sandstone, City Hall with the light gray ‘Portland Stone’ quarried in Dorset and transported from the west of Britain rather than using the darker gray granite found in Ireland. In Belfast, it seems, even stones have to pick a side. I walked north until I came to Clifton Street, turned northwest onto Crumlin Road, and checked Google maps to make sure that I was still on course.

### Crumlin Road: Neither This Nor That

Crumlin Road is known as an “interface area,” meaning an area that is neither predominantly Catholic nor Protestant and that has no Peace Wall separating the two groups. I walked by a baptismal party posing for photos on the steps of a Catholic Church, the modern Mater Hospital, the ruin of an Orange Hall, one portion of which has been saved and repurposed as a community center for Indian immigrants. Farther up, I encountered The Crumlin Road Gaol [Jail], built in 1846 and closed in 1996. Gaol alumni include Eamonn DeValera, Bobby Sands, and Martin McGuinness. It is now a museum where you can buy tickets for a “Troubles Tour” of Belfast’s

last 50 years from conflict to a peace architected by, more than any one person, John Hume. Across the road from the gaol, and connected to it by a tunnel under Crumlin Road, stands the condemned ruins of the neoclassical Crumlin Road Courthouse, built in 1850, 4 years after the gaol. Many Troubles-related trials took place in the courthouse, which now awaits demolition and a hoped-for redevelopment as a hotel. No buyers yet. On Crumlin Road, ruins and vacant lots are interspersed with urban renewal projects (some funded by the European Union). It looks like Detroit.

### A gathering at the



The Houben Center

### “Epicenter of Pain” during The Troubles

I arrived at the Houben Center, a cross-community center on the grounds of Holy Cross Catholic Church, situated between the Ardoyne neighborhood, which is Catholic, and the Nationalist and the Shankill Road section, which is Protestant and Unionist. Father Gary Donegan greeted me and the other guests with a hearty handshake. Up until now, the meetings of the new John and Pat Hume Foundation have been virtual because of the pandemic.

After coffee and a bacon bap outside in the fine weather, we entered the hall and took our seats. Father Gary welcomed us and explained that this neighborhood had been the “epicenter of pain” during the Troubles. More people died here during that period than any other neighborhood in Northern Ireland. As a percentage of the population, the death toll would have been equivalent to 4 million people being killed in the United States, or 50 thousand people in L.A. Those days seem long ago, before the 1998 peace agreement began an era dedicated to, in the words of John Hume, “spilling sweat, not blood, together.”

Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney was scheduled to give the keynote address, “Building Common Ground,” followed by a panel discussion with members of both communities. Minister Coveney began by paying tribute to the Humes, acknowledging how wonderful it was to be meeting in person, and addressing the situation in Ukraine, noting that in the first two years of the Syrian conflict, one million people were made refugees. Four million Ukrainian refugees had fled that country in just four weeks. Unfortunately, we never heard the rest of his speech.

### Dark Suits, Earpieces Interrupt a Minister’s Keynote Address

Suddenly, a bulky bald man in a dark suit and an earpiece approached the minister and whispered in his ear. The minister apologized for having to leave, said he hoped to return, and then collected the pages of his speech while a phalanx of other big bald men with earpieces hustled him out the door and into a waiting vehicle.

The 50 of us seated were left wondering what was happening. After a couple of minutes, we were told

that there had been a credible threat to the meeting. We were instructed to move to the center of the building. Later, we were told to go down a hallway to another room. Then we were moved through a backdoor into a courtyard. By then, numerous members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) had arrived and had cordoned off the area. A helicopter hovered overhead. We were moved across the street, then down the road. As we milled around trying not to crack any jokes that might seem awful later, depending on how this episode concluded, I had the chance to speak with other attendees, peace activists, members of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and elected officials. Most had long experience in navigating bomb threats, but not recently.

I spoke with a youth worker from a Unionist background who, at 25, has grown up in a relatively peaceful Belfast. He had been part of the panel, so I asked him what he had intended to say. He related that he worries that the generation after him is far enough away from the Troubles that they do not appreciate how bad it was before the Belfast Agreement. Side note: like Derry and Londonderry, the names for everything are determined by the community you represent, including The Good Friday Agreement which is known as the Belfast Agreement to Unionists. Those seeking common ground call it ‘The Belfast - Good Friday Agreement.’ Conor continued: “I am a product of the peace but I worry that the young lads don’t get it.”

### Down Shankill Road Where Union Jacks, Ulster Murals Rule

A story circulated that an electrician off the Shankill Road had been car-jacked at gunpoint. At least two devices had been placed in his van, which he was ordered to park outside the Houben Center at 9:45. He was told that his family was being held hostage and would be harmed if he did not obey. We were eventually informed that the event had been cancelled and people started to say goodbye. With Crumlin Road blocked, the police recommended that my shortest route to the city center, and my bus back to Dublin, was down the Shankill Road.

The Shankill Road is a different world of Union Jacks, murals that celebrate the Ulster Covenant of 1912 and demonize the Northern Ireland Protocol, the EU, and the Irish Republic. A graveyard honoring the Ulstermen who died at the Battle of the Somme in WWI is next to a mural that accuses Irish Republicans, President Biden, the EU, and the Irish Government of committing genocide against Protestants. Shocking misinformation seems to work in today’s confused world. Putin calls Zelensky a Nazi, and many Russians believe him. Ted Cruz implies Ketanji Brown Jackson is a racist, and his fans cheer and, more to Cruz’s actual point, donate. Hateful lies are useful to the cynical.

Why did this happen? Is this a reaction to the upcoming May elections in Northern Ireland, or is there something larger behind the bomb scare? As the election approaches, Unionism is in disarray and the Orange Card, first used by Lord Randolph Churchill, is being played to rally Unionism. If Sinn Fein wins, as is expected, some wonder if the Unionists will accept the results. Or are the Russians involved in exploiting the historic cleavage in Northern Irish society to create conflict among the coalition Biden has built? The Russians manipulated social media in the UK to get Brexit passed and to interfere in the US presidential election in 2016. The chaos from both electoral outcomes has left the US and the UK deeply divided internally.

Ireland has a seat on the UN Security Council and is a center of the tech industry in Europe. The diplomatic staff of the Russian embassy in Dublin is the largest foreign delegation in Ireland except for that of the USA and it has long been believed that they are taking advantage of Ireland’s common travel area with the UK

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## Plumbing a ‘seismic’ election ...lamenting ‘culture wars’

WICKLOW – In the run-up to and following the May 5 Northern Ireland Assembly elections, the word “seismic” was employed repeatedly. There was some justification for its widespread usage in that, as forecast, Sinn Féin has become the largest party and has more seats than its chief rival, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

Consequently, the former political wing of the IRA can nominate its leader in the north, Michelle O’Neill, to be the assembly’s first nationalist First Minister.

Regrettably, for a variety of reasons – mainly having to do with the Northern Ireland protocol that was agreed upon to prevent the reintroduction of a hard border on this island – the DUP is not playing ball and refuses to put forward a deputy first minister. The historically dysfunctional assembly faces into an uncertain future.

A striking aspect of the campaign was the extent to which a broad swath of the electorate, young people especially, declined to define themselves as either “green” or “orange” and did not cast ballots based on their religious or community background. This partly explains the very strong showing of the Alliance Party, which captured an unprecedented 17 seats in the 90-member assembly.

Once aptly described as a “soft unionist” voice, Alliance is now neutral on the topic that has forever been to the fore in the politics of the six counties. It espouses socially liberal views, champions integrated education, and focuses on “bread and butter” issues, like improving the health service. They lament the power-sharing structure of the assembly that is predicated upon an inevitable, intractable nationalist vs. unionist divide. This impressive performance suggests that plenty in Northern Ireland are coming around to Alliance’s guiding principles.

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A leaked draft opinion written by Justice Samuel Alito and apparently endorsed by a bare majority of his colleagues on the United States Supreme Court would overturn the seminal *Roe v. Wade* decision, which created a constitutional right to abortion. The reaction of Irish pro-choice activists, who succeeded in repealing the 8th Amendment prohibition on abortion here, has been one of shock and dismay.

Ironically, though, the case they made persuasively ahead of the 2018 referendum – abortion should be taken out of the judicial/constitutional realm and instead legislated for by elected representatives – is precisely the argument abortion foes in the US have articulated for decades. Indeed, it underpins Justice Alito’s analysis.

Word of the impending demise of *Roe* came just as serious controversy erupted in Ireland regarding ownership of a badly needed new National Mater-

nity Hospital (NMH). A 300-year lease agreement between the state and the Sisters of Charity at a nominal fee has been attacked because the state would not own the land the hospital is to be built on, and because of language in the new hospital’s constitution that only “clinically appropriate” medical procedures would be carried out in it.

Understandably, those who object have cited the Irish Catholic Church’s track record of malfeasance when it comes to women and children and allege that access to abortion and other treatment could ultimately be denied at the facility.

Conversely, medical professionals, lawyers, and politicians robustly assert that the long lease is akin to ownership and that the scrutinized phrase is offset by wording to the effect that all “legally permissible” services will be provided.

Notwithstanding the opposition, the cabinet has approved the movement of the NMH to the land owned by the Sisters of Charity.

That element of American politics so disdained in Western Europe – the “culture wars” – animated much of the public discourse, particularly on social media. Speaking personally as a practicing (yet very imperfect) Catholic, it was disheartening to see protesters holding signs that said “\*\*\*\* the pope” and more.

Additionally, the openly left-of-centre *Irish Independent* journalist and supporter of the removal of the 8th Amendment, Ellen Coyne, was subjected to vicious abuse from ex-fans when she opined that their concerns about the NMH lease were misplaced. Much of the invective concentrated on the fact that, despite her profound misgivings about lots of its teachings, Coyne remains a Catholic. That is apparently a crime per se, in the eyes of a vocal minority.

I get why so many in Ireland loathe my Church. But witnessing their hatred in full flow during the debate on the NMH still saddened me, deeply.

•••

The Irish people greeted the news of the most recent mass shooting in Buffalo with horror and with anger, but without surprise. Two burning questions are in our collective consciousness. How could 18-year-old Payton Gendron be so consumed with hate that he would shoot 13 innocent individuals, killing 10? And how could he get his hands so easily on an assault-style rifle in a state with relatively strict gun laws, at least by American standards?

Neither question is amenable to a straightforward answer. But it is tough to push back against a succinct assessment once offered to me by a man in a Wicklow pub – “yYur country is completely messed up” – when prominent political and media figures won’t condemn white supremacists, subscribe to the

great replacement theory, and balk at even modest gun control measures. They should be ashamed of themselves.

•••

One of my favourite things about summer in my adopted home is that the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is in full swing. Weekends in our house are dominated by Galway football, hurling, and camogie matches, and, to a lesser degree, by the hurling fortunes of my wife’s native Limerick (the top team right now). GAA sports are played by an extraordinary cross-section of women and men, boys and girls in Ireland and everywhere else where the Irish have gone. Given its amateur ethos, it is refreshing to see participants competing at the highest level – the All-Ireland Championships – for the love of the games and community, rather than the almighty buck.

The situation is fairly promising for Galway at the moment. Larry Óg has inherited his father’s passion for the Tribesmen that was bequeathed to me by my cousin, Paddy Murphy, shortly after I relocated to my ancestral county many moons ago. The maroon and white have already delivered us some thrills in 2022. Fingers crossed that my namesake and I get to enjoy several glorious afternoons this June and July at Croke Park, the GAA’s magnificent headquarters on the north side of Dublin. Gaillimh Abú!

•••

Lastly, seemingly everyone I know has itchy feet and is planning an overdue break in the sun after Covid-19 restrictions stopped us from leaving this island. We have booked a family holiday in Spain in late June. I am also getting to spend ten days in Boston in August.

It is directly at odds with what might euphemistically be termed my penchant for frugality, but I have been perusing websites and pricing flights and hotels to return with my wife to what I believe is a slice of heaven on earth: Italy’s Amalfi Coast, where we honeymooned and later commemorated our tenth anniversary. We marked in subdued fashion our lucky 13th anniversary on May 7.

A weekend in Amalfi to celebrate properly should be doable. We were locked in and/or kept on guard by the pandemic for long enough. That’s my excuse and I am sticking to it. I hope *Boston Irish* readers make the most of their summers, too.

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



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## US Rep. Neal and House delegation visit his ancestral home in Co. Kerry



Congressman Neal, left, met up with Simon Coveney, TD, Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense, and US Ambassador to Ireland Claire Cronin on his recent trip to his ancestral island.

In May, US House Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal "came home" to Ireland, when he returned with a Congressional delegation to the Blasket Island, Co. Kerry, the home of his ancestors. His family emigrated to Springfield, Massachusetts, a place where many Blasket Islanders landed to make a new life in the United States.

"A very special day on the Blasket Island yesterday," he said in a tweet. "So many of my constituents left this place and emigrated to the next parish over, he added. On the trip, the delegation also visited Northern Ireland and walked the momentous Peace Bridge in Derry.

"This symbol of hope continues to serve as a reminder of a time we never want to return, and of the optimism we share for one community built on many traditions," the congressman said.



US Rep. Neal and an associate stand in front of what is left of the family residence on Blasket Island in Co. Kerry

## Galway's DEC employees recall 50th year of setup



The plaque in Galway's Quincennial Park, which the Digital Equipment Corp. sponsored in 1984, mentions Digital Founder and longtime CEO Ken Olsen under whose watch his company laid the foundation for Ireland's emergence as a globe-wide force in the high-tech industry.

The long-defunct Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) set up a manufacturing operation in Galway in 1971. Plans to mark the 50th anniversary were put on hold due to Covid, but there finally was a celebration in May, with 240 former employees attending a reunion dinner and the unveiling of a plaque in Salthill that is mounted on a large granite stone covering a time capsule to be opened in 2484.

The marker is set in the beautiful surroundings of Quincennial Park, which Digital sponsored back in 1984.

In recent years, Denis and Martina Goggin created the Circle of Life garden in the front half of the park. It is now a peaceful oasis of trees, shrubs, flowers, stone, and water.

LIAM FERRIE  
Galway



## Golf champion Harrington signs up with Irish American Partnership

Three-time Major winner and European Ryder Cup Captain Pádraig Harrington was recently named a patron of the Irish American Partnership at a reception the US Ambassador's residence in Dublin. The designation honors his roots and reflects his belief in using sport to bring people from different backgrounds and communities together; bolstering support of Irish schools and community organizations. To mark the patronage, the Partnership, in collaboration with Ireland's Department of Education, will launch the Outdoor Play & Learning program, providing \$250,000 funding for primary schools to purchase resources that enhance outdoor play and learning. Harrington is shown above here on the grounds of the residence of the American ambassador to Ireland, Claire Cronin, center, along with Irish American Partnership Chief Executive Mary Sugrue, and Ireland's Minister for Education, Norma Foley, TD

## On a trip to Belfast, facing up to a still-festering wound



(Continued from page 4) to spy on the UK, the EU, and the USA. Four Russian diplomats have been expelled from Ireland since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine. Have Ireland and Northern Ireland become targets for Russian-backed misinformation to destabilize the UK, the EU, and to

stoke conflict between Joe Biden and Boris Johnson? Biden is committed to preserving the Good Friday Agreement and the Northern Ireland Protocol. Boris is committed to preserving Boris.

### A Nod to Irony Where Threat Turns on Itsel

Footage on the BBC and RTE later showed the PSNI explosive unit removing the devices from the electrician's van with robots, then blowing them up. The forensics team later determined that they were hoaxes. Two men and a woman, aged 33, 41 and 38, who are associated with the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force, have since been arrested and the men were charged under the Terrorism Act.

The trio would have been 9, 14, and 17 years old when the Good Friday Agreement was signed, compelling evidence that the trauma of the conflict will take generations to truly heal and that the healing

will not just happen on its own. Any wound needs to be cleaned, medicated, and the dressing changed, or it will become infected.

The purpose of the John and Pat Hume Foundation and groups like it is to keep the work of peace moving forward, a healing balm that must be consistently applied.

The threat disrupted the event, which is frustrating, but, as Father Gary said to me as we were awaiting instructions from the police, "Whatever those responsible hoped to accomplish, they have achieved the opposite."

James Joyce's character Leopold Bloom said something similar:

"Force, hatred, history, all that, that's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life... Love... I mean the opposite of hatred."



Fr Dan in the Fall.

In planning for the celebration, I came across this quote in an old article in the Boston Irish Reporter that featured Fr Dan:

*“Fr Dan has brought to his pastoral duties a resume that reflects an immigrant’s pluck and a drive to succeed. He has never forgotten his roots or his emigrant experience”.*

Those words ring true for all of us who know this kindest man and priest who holds the wellbeing of the Boston Irish Community in the palm of his hand. He’s off to his beloved Cork for a well-deserved break and we wish him the gift of time with family and friends and wonderful sunshine. Thank you to all who have reached out to Fr Dan with blessings and best wishes!  
Mary Swanton, Executive Director



IPC was delighted to welcome Katie Flannery, Global Executive Director at National University of Ireland Galway. Katie met with local students in the Dorchester area who are heading off to Galway in September. What a great experience!

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE A FREE COPY OF OUR 28 PAGE, FULL COLOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER—CALL THE IPC AT 617-265-5300**

**Irish Pastoral Centre Newsletter**  
*“We are a Parish without Boundaries.”*  
**Serving the Greater Boston Irish Community since 1987**

**Ireland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs visits Boston**

The Irish Consulate welcomed Ireland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs & Defence Simon Coveney TD to Boston on Friday April 29. The Minister also visited Washington D.C where he stated that: “Ireland and the United States have deep and warm relationships built on historic ties and shared values. Further strengthening this relationship is a priority for the Government. “This visit to Washington D.C and Boston is an important opportunity to discuss shared approaches to meeting global challenges and to re-engage with our diaspora community and other friends of Ireland in the United States as we emerge from the pandemic”. The Irish Pastoral Centre was honored to participate in a round table discussion at the Irish Consulate along with the Irish Cultural Center of New England, Rian Immigrant Center, Irish Network Boston and The Irish Cultural Centre of Western New England.

**Celebrating 50 Years**

May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1972, a young Fr. Dan began his life in the priesthood. Our Boston Irish Shepherd has reached 50 years! Congratulations Fr. Dan!

You are cordially invited to attend  
**Ordination to the Priesthood**  
 May 20, 1972  
 nine o'clock  
 Cathedral of the Holy Cross  
 Boston, Massachusetts

**Welcome back J1 Students**

**J-1 VISA**  
 EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

J1 students are finally returning to Boston and the IPC is preparing to welcome them. If you know of housing resources, please call our office at 617 265 5300. Our J1 student guide can be found at: [ipcoston.org/j1](http://ipcoston.org/j1)

Government of Ireland  
 Emigrant Support Programme



## Irish Pastoral Centre

# J1 Summer Orientation Program

FÁILTE ROMHAIBH GO LÉIR GO mBOSTÚN - WELCOME TO BOSTON!

Join us on: Friday, June 17th 512 Gallivan Blvd, Ste. 201  
 11:30 AM Dorchester MA 02124

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- Onsite social work services available throughout the summer

ANSEO LE CHEILE - HERE TOGETHER



Please register in advance by scanning QR Code or by visiting:  
<https://bit.ly/J1signup>



Presented at the Irish Pastoral Centre in Conjunction with:



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The Irish Pastoral Centre is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Irish community resource organization and recipient of the Government of Ireland's Emigrant Support Programme

THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE  
& IRISH CONSULATE, BOSTON



**Presents**

"A Special Commemorative performance  
to celebrate Bloomsday and the 100th  
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**Special guest:** Laoise Moore, Consul General of Ireland, Boston

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Ard-Chonsalacht na hÉireann | Bostún  
Consulate General of Ireland | Boston

## From ‘Ulysses,’ Joycean prose

“The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit.”

...

“I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.”

...

“Love loves to love love.”

...

“A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery.”

...

“Every life is in many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves.”

...

“Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed.”

...

“Her antiquity in preceding and surviving succeeding tellurian generations: her nocturnal predominance: her satellitic dependence: her luminary reflection: her constancy under all her phases, rising and setting by her appointed times, waxing and waning: the forced invariability of her aspect: her indeterminate response to inaffirmative interrogation: her potency over effluent and reffluent waters: her power to enamour, to mortify, to invest with beauty, to render insane, to incite to and aid delinquency: the tranquil inscrutability of her visage: the terribility of her isolated dominant resplendent propinquity: her omens of tempest and of calm: the stimulation of her light, her motion and her presence: the admonition of her craters, her arid seas, her silence: her splendour, when visible: her attraction, when invisible.”

## About taking on ‘Ulysses’ with an Irish ambassador as tutor

*Ireland’s Ambassador to the US Daniel Mulhall authored a guide to James Joyce’s Ulysses, published in January, 2022 for the 100th anniversary of Joyce’s masterpiece. His conversation with Boston Irish publisher Ed Forry appeared in our Winter 2021 edition. Here’s a portion of that discussion.*



Daniel Mulhall

**BI** - What was your motivation in writing this book?

**Mulhall** - I blogged on each episode of the novel. It was a series- there were 18 episodes to Ulysses and I have one blog on each episode. Now, when I was preparing the book for publication, I rewrote all the blogs, I did a lot of extra work to get the blog ready for publication as a book.

**BI** - Does your interest in Irish literature goes beyond Joyce?

**Mulhall** - Our literature is a real asset for Ireland, in that people all over the world know about Ireland. Even if they have no ancestral connection with our country, even if they’ve never been there, they often know about it because of our literature- in particular, W B Yeats, James Joyce, Sean O’Casey, Samuel Beckett, Seamus Heaney in more recent times and many other writers as well.

So I use our literature as a way of telling Ireland’s story. And I’ve done that for 40 years now, all over the world. And I

tended to use Yeats more than Joyce, because Yeats is more accessible. His poetry is more readily relatable to; Joyce’s work is a little more complicated, a little more more forbidding in many ways.

**BI** - How do you view Ulysses?

**Mulhall** - Joyce’s Ulysses has a reputation for being forbidding, for being impenetrable. And I decided after long years of talking about Joyce around the world, that that wasn’t quite true. And I decided to use my book to prove that it actually isn’t true, that this is a book you can read and understand and can benefit from reading.

I’ve done things in my book that academics won’t approve of -- but I do. For example, in a number of places, I say if you find this chapter difficult, skip it, don’t get bogged down in it.

Most people who start Ulysses, the first episode is very easy to understand. So is the

second episode. And the third one kills them because it all takes place within the mind of Stephen Dedalus, Joyce’s alter ego, walking down a beach in Sandymount, and it’s difficult.

Now, you can enjoy it, and I say to people read through it, but don’t be put off by it. If you find it difficult, just move through, just skip off, go to the next chapter because chapter four is a very good read. So is chapter five. So is chapter six. Chapter seven is difficult, I think, and then it gets easier again. And then the last five chapters are very difficult.

**BI** - What was your approach to an understanding of Ulysses?

**Amb Mulhall** - If I had to describe my approach to Ulysses it would be Ulysses as part of Irish history, because I focus very heavily on the history that is embedded in the novel. Most people don’t recognize the fact that Joyce himself was actually fascinated with the minutiae of Irish politics at the beginning of the 20th century, His father was a great supporter of Charles Stuart Parnell. Joyce himself was an admirer of Parnell. He was also an admirer of Arthur Griffith, who was the founder of the original Sinn Fein party, very different from the party that, that came into being after the rising of 1916 and very different from today’s party.

## Dublin sends up a heady mix to celebrate ‘Ulysses’ at 100

(Continued from page 1)

beautiful Royal Canal, guided by three performers, will bring to life some of the key episodes in Joyce’s epic tale.

Beyond the programmed events there will be the usual madcap and impromptu readings of “Ulysses” in pubs, cafes, and even on the streets of the city, while Joyce fans will take the opportunity to dress up in Edwardian garb and visit some of the places

mentioned in the novel. These include the James Joyce Tower in Sandycove (now a Joyce museum), Davy Byrnes’s pub, and Sweny’s Pharmacy.

Even after 100 years, Joyce’s most famous book is still the perfect guidebook to Dublin city. By the time it was published, Joyce was 40, had lived and travelled all over the world, and was already known for writing “Dubliners” and “The Portrait of the Artist as a

Young Man.” But it is his modernist retelling of Homer’s Odyssey that has left the most lasting legacy. With its own annual festival and fans from Salman Rushdie to Jack Kerouac and George Orwell, “Ulysses” changed the literary world forever. Now, a century on, Dublin celebrates 100 years of Joycean genius.

**Who was James Joyce?**

Born in Dublin in 1882, James Augustine Aloysius Joyce became one

of the most influential, innovative, and best-known writers of the 20th century. After graduating from University College Dublin, he met his muse (and eventual wife), Nora Barnacle. So central was she to his life and writing that 16 June, the anniversary of their first date, is when Bloomsday is celebrated each year in Dublin.



## Boston Irish Honors Awards Luncheon set for Oct. 28 At Boston Seaport Hotel

Boston Irish Honors is a unique annual program acclaimed as one of Boston’s premiere celebratory Irish events. Each October since 2010, some 400 Boston business, political and social leaders have gathered for a festive luncheon to honor exemplary persons & families who share a Boston Irish heritage, and recognize their admirable endeavors in public service, business and community leadership.

The 2022 host committee is in formation. Additional details at honors@

BostonIrish.com

Boston Irish Honorees over the years: 2021- Mary Sugrue, Joseph R Nolan Jr.

2019- James M. Carmody, Kathleen & John Drew, Grace Cotter Regan; 2018- Trevor McGill M.D., Rev. Richard “Doc” Conway, Bob Scannell and Mary (Kinsella) Scannell; 2017- Tom Tinlin, Kevin Cullen, Anne Marie, Nora & Bill Kennedy family; 2016 - Jim & Mary (Cahill) Judge, Senator Paul G Kirk Jr, Kevin & Joe Leary & family; 2015 - Margaret Stapleton, Mike Sheehan, BPD Commissioner William Evans family;

2014 - Katherine Craven, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, the Burke family of South Boston; 2013 - Senate President Therese Murray, Gerry & Bob Mulligan family, John P. Driscoll Jr.(posthumous); 2012 - Congressman Richard Neal, Brendan & Greg Feeney, family of Mary & Bob Muse; 2011 - Kathleen O’Toole, Senator Tom Kennedy, & families of Joseph Corcoran, James Hunt, & Mark & Tom Mulvoy; 2010 - US Rep. Ed Markey, John Donohue, and families of Jim Brett, Tom & Peg Geraghty, & Mayor John B. Hynes

# ‘Riverdance’ at 27: It’s right for the times, still larger than life, but perhaps closer to us

## Dancers parse message: ‘Unity’ ... ‘A journey’ ... ‘A love story, too’

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Among the many millions of people who watched the original “Riverdance” – the seven-minute performance piece broadcast during the intermission of the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest – was one Sharon Fitzpatrick of Navan in Co. Meath. Active in ballet and gymnastics before marriage and motherhood, Fitzpatrick was instantly smitten by the grace, power, and artistry she saw on her TV screen.

Although she likely never imagined that two of her children – one of whom wasn’t born yet – might someday both be part of this groundbreaking, innovative production, the possibility was certainly an appealing one, recalls her daughter, Anna Mai.

“Mom didn’t know what she was watching, but she was just overwhelmed by it,” said Fitzpatrick, 24, who arrived four years after that memorable event, by which time “Riverdance” had been expanded and developed into a full-length stage show and worldwide phenomenon. “The feelings she had about it stayed with her. So when I was four, she signed up my brother Fergus [then eight years old] and me for Irish dance. We were at the age when you’re told, ‘You need to start focusing on one thing.’”

Two years after that, Anna Mai got her first in-person glimpse of “Riverdance.” Her mother, she recalls, pointed to the stage and told her, “Someday, you’ll be up there.”

Last month, the Fitzpatrick siblings came to Boston’s Wang Theatre as part of the “Riverdance” 25th anniversary tour, originally slated for 2020 but delayed by Covid-19. The quarter-century milestone has provided a natural impetus for a look back at the show and the cultural and social as well as artistic impact it has had, in Ireland and well beyond.

The 25-year mark also is a significant demarcation point for Anna Mai and Fergus Fitzpatrick and their contemporaries who are part of what might be called “the Riverdance generation”: Irish dancers – professional and amateur – born during the show’s lifespan, their development inspired and informed by its pioneering choreography and staging, and the star power of Michael Flatley, Jean Butler, Colin Dunne, Joanne Doyle, and others who, like both Fitzpatricks, have played lead roles. It bears mentioning, too, that there are children of past “Riverdance” performers in the company now.

The day before the show opened, Anna Mai and another lead dancer, 27-year-old Australian Will Bryant, relaxed in the Wang’s lobby and mused about “Riverdance” and its place in their lives, and in the larger world of art and culture. On the one hand, they feel a connection – one for which they are grateful – with those who have trod the boards before them. Yet they also exhibit confidence that the roles are theirs to mold in their own images, and according to their own talents and personalities.

“What I remember from that first time seeing ‘Riverdance’ is the faces of the dancers,” said Fitzpatrick, who first joined the show in 2018 and moved into the lead role on its 2020 North American tour. “Everyone up on the stage looked so happy, so energized, and the feeling they gave me, at age six, was thrilling and exciting. I still get that feeling now. I consider myself very lucky to be part of this legacy, and so for me, doing the best I can is a way of giving back to ‘Riverdance.’”

Bryant was born around the time “Riverdance” transitioned into a full-fledged stage show; he first saw it at age 10, six years after he had started Irish dance (he also trained in ballet, contemporary, and tap dance). Like Fitzpatrick, he was struck as much



Will Bryant and Anna Mai Fitzpatrick, two of the lead dancers in the “Riverdance” 25th anniversary tour that came to Boston last month. Sean Smith photo

by the pure emotionality as the dancing.

“The part I remember in particular is the lament, ‘Caoineadh Cú Chulainn,’ played on the uilleann pipes,” said Bryant, a seven-year “Riverdance” veteran who has toured in more than 10 countries. “The music was so emotional, and it had a big impact on me. I thought, ‘I’d like to be part of this someday.’”

“Now that I am, one of the most important things I do is to experience the show as part of the audience. You really want to be aware of the impact it has on the people watching it, because that helps you better appreciate the show and the part you play in it.”

Once they joined the show, Fitzpatrick and Bryant – both of whom have also performed in “Heartbeat of Home” (a show by “Riverdance” producers Moya Doherty and John McColgan that blends Irish, Latin, and Afro-Cuban music and dance) – were able to appreciate why it made such an impression on them and so many others.

“I have never been around so many people with such an incredibly good work ethic,” said Fitzpatrick. “Collectively, there’s this incredible desire to put on the best show possible. I’ve learned so much just by being around them.”

“What you learn in a show like ‘Riverdance’ is that it’s not only about you, it’s also about the other person,” said Bryant. “I see that attitude on stage but also behind the scenes everywhere, whether it’s the crews handling sound, lighting, costumes, stage – anyone and everyone. You develop a real admiration for the way people put their various skills and know-how together, and make things work.”

One of the more challenging aspects of becoming a “Riverdance” performer, according to Fitzpatrick, who like Bryant competed in Irish dance for many years, is that technical excellence – being able to move your legs and feet the right way at the right time, and hit those rhythms – isn’t enough.

“Yes, you need to be a good dancer, and I feel competition helps you do that: You develop the mindset as well as the skills,” she explained. “At the same time, in this show, you have to remember you’re playing a character. It’s totally different than dancing at a fleadh or feis. You have to have a good sense of yourself and what you’re trying to project as you’re going through the choreography, or

interacting with other dancers. Everybody has to do that their own way, but one of the great things about ‘Riverdance’ has been that there are people you can talk to, and who will help you, so you can look in the mirror and see the character you’re trying to be.”

As both appreciative viewers and cast members, Fitzpatrick and Bryant have seen the accumulation of changes to “Riverdance” over time, whether new or revamped scenes, advances in audio or stage technology, or transitions in the cast and creative team. But there are some constants to the show that resonate even after 25-plus years, and the pair unhesitatingly cited one in particular: the score by Bill Whelan.

“The music, absolutely,” said Fitzpatrick. “It’s been remastered for the 25th anniversary tour, and there are some slight variations from earlier, but you just get that timeless feeling when you hear it. There’s just nothing like it – it’s a celebration of culture and experience.”

“The different moods [Whelan] creates, the way the music builds and releases, the energy it brings – that’s always been a constant,” agreed Bryant.

What is “Riverdance” about? There are any number of views on that, of course: a collection of set pieces that attest to the Irish love of music, dance, and story-telling, perhaps, or a comingling of great, universal humanistic and literary themes. Bryant and Fitzpatrick contemplated the question and gave answers that were slightly different from one another yet not all that dissimilar.

“I think the message of ‘Riverdance’ is unity,” said Bryant. “You have different styles of dance, different rhythms – Irish, American, Latin, tap – that encounter and collide with one another, sometimes forcefully, and in the end there’s a common bond formed.”

“It’s about a journey, one that shaped Irish culture but also where Irish culture shaped others,” said Fitzpatrick. “In ‘Riverdance,’ we go around the world, and share and learn elements of one another’s lives, and it changes us all.”

“But I see ‘Riverdance’ as a love story, too, one that transcends time and distance. There are many things going on, and it gives you a lot to think about, even as you watch and listen.”

A short while later, Fitzpatrick and Bryant headed off, the hours counting down for the curtain to rise and the story to begin once again, as it has for a generation.

•••

A few thoughts on “Riverdance” 25 (actually 27) years on:

- The adjective “reimagined” has often been used to describe the current production, and part of that reimagining entailed scaling it down. The set was more compact, and so the action took place in a proportionately condensed area. That might have been a function of the Wang’s dimensions, at least in part, but there was other streamlining: The cast was smaller, with some members taking on multiple roles and certain segments featuring fewer performers than in earlier incarnations (“Morning in Macedonia/Russian Dervish” had two couples instead of three, for example).

Part of what made “Riverdance” so compelling at the outset was its expansiveness: the sheer size of the cast, what with lead and featured dancers as well as the troupe, plus singers and musicians; that long, long line of stepdancers in the finale; the wide-open spaces in which Butler, Flatley et al cavorted – in the process mapping out this broad new territory for Irish dance. The current show acknowledges this, in

(Continued next page)



Cast members lead a young group of dancers through a rigorous lesson

Maureen Forry-Sorrell Photo

## ‘Riverdance’ masterclass dazzles at the ICC

BY MAUREEN FORRY-SORRELL  
BOSTON IRISH STAFF

Not content to sleep in on Saturday morning after a blockbuster first-week run at Boston’s Boch Center/Wang Theater, members of the cast of *Riverdance* took a trip to the Irish Culture Centre in Canton on May 14 to give young students a masterclass that proved to be both thrilling and educational.

Irish dance students from various academies around

the Boston area laced up their gillies and enthusiastically strutted their stuff, while cast members taught the iconic “*Riverdance*” routine that has captured hearts around the world since originally performed at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1994. The routine launched the live show that has become a worldwide sensation

Maudy Dooher, deputy executive director and director of programming at the ICC, oversaw the activities while Pdraic Moyles, executive producer and

director of the 25th Anniversary tour of *Riverdance*, applauded and encouraged the young students as the eponymous music rang out through the ICC grounds.

Note: Irish dance students who would like to take their studies to a higher level can apply to attend the *Riverdance* Summer Camp at Boston University this July. [visir.academy.riverdance.com/explore-location-boston](http://visir.academy.riverdance.com/explore-location-boston).

## ‘Riverdance’ at 27: It’s right for the times

(Continued from page 10)

the brief video tribute screened on stage at the very beginning.

But none of the recent alterations, or those that have been implemented over time, diminished the show’s power or intensity. The scaling down serves to center and focus your attention, and there’s less possibility of some detail getting lost at the margins. (The outstanding high-definition visual projections also enhance the experience.) Ultimately, of course, the strength of “*Riverdance*” is in the performers, and these folks are clearly at the top of their game.

Over the course of the pandemic, there have been musings about Covid’s long-term impact on live entertainment. One scenario goes like this: After all these months – years – of taking precautions, many people will find they prefer smaller, socially distanced outings, which means a general diminution in the staging of concerts, theatrical productions, and other events. And this is related to a more general reckoning about the whole concept of extravagance and excessiveness, and their presence in our lives.

That all remains to be seen, especially because there is such a debate about defining the “normalcy” for which we’re supposedly yearning – and concerns about inflation and other economic indicators undoubtedly factor in our leisure-time and entertainment activities, too. But whatever combination of financial- or artistic-based considerations might have gone into reimagining the show, something about this (relatively) smaller incarnation of “*Riverdance*” felt right for the times. It’s still larger than life, but perhaps closer to us.

•Whatever the size of the stage or the production,

sometimes it’s the little things which often stand out, and “*Riverdance*” is no exception. For example, there’s been a noticeable trend toward more vocalizing by the dancers. The all-male a cappella-step “*Thunderstorm*” segment has been full of roaring and shouting for several years now. You also could hear spontaneous whooping during the “*American Wake*” and the “*Heartland*” grand finale.

None of this comes off as contrived. In fact, it serves as a reminder that much of traditional dance, Irish or otherwise, has a social rather than performative context, where you express the joy of the moment. You wouldn’t want them doing this a *lot*, mind you, but the whoops and hollers give a bit more of an animated, informal feel at some junctures of the show than one might have noted in the past.

•Over time, “*Riverdance*” has given its musicians more of a visible presence in the show, instead of having them sit off to the side of the stage. They are integral to the action in the “*Trading Taps*” sequence, of course, in helping contrast and then unite the Irish stepdance and American tap dance partisans. Now there are a couple of scenes in which the musicians have the spotlight all to themselves, and they don’t exactly stay rooted to the spot, either; they strut, walk around, give one another a how-do-you-do, sometimes acknowledge the audience with a quick nod and wink. Therefore, the musicians – much like the dancers – have to be more than technically adept: They have to display charisma and showmanship.

The US tour features an ensemble of three melody players (fiddle, sax, and uilleann pipes/whistles) and a percussionist, and the aforementioned trio all

are women – a welcome development considering the concerns raised via the #FairPlé (“Fair Play”) campaign a few years ago about gender balance in the Irish traditional and folk music scene. Playing fiddle is Haley Richardson, familiar to many in Greater Boston through her appearances at the Burren Backroom series and the Christmas and St. Patrick’s Day “*Celtic Sojourn*” shows. A former student of Brian Conway, Richardson has been with “*Riverdance*” since 2019, and to say she seems entirely suited to the role is putting it mildly.

It’s not just a matter of playing the Whelan score and the occasional traditional tune: During her solo, Richardson improvises, slides in a few jazzy licks, and – in one particularly enjoyable sequence – trades riffs with the percussionist, employing some atonal bowing or plucking of the strings. She pulls it all off with aplomb.

You like to see good things happen to good people – especially promising young musicians – and Richardson, who turns all of 20 this summer, has clearly reaped all manner of benefits from her “*Riverdance*” experience.

•You don’t necessarily have to know Irish dance lingo to speak to an Irish dancer, but a little basic orientation can be useful in broadening one’s knowledge of things. So, talking with Anna Mai Fitzpatrick about specific “*Riverdance*” scenes, I asked if there was some technical term – quadruple-batter, perhaps? – for the rapid four-beat flourish the dancers step in the introduction to “*Reel Around the Sun*.”

“Ah, yes,” she said, “the diddily-stomp.”

# BYRNE and KELLY



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JULY 7TH, 2022



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## CHILDREN'S SUMMER WORKSHOPS



@ The ICC

JULY 11-15, 2022

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Introduction to: Rugby, Gaelic Football, Hurling, Soccer, Rounders, What time is it Mr. Wolf, Red Rover Red Rover etc.  
Fee: \$145 | ICC member \$120 - 5 days / 2 hours per day

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### 2:30-3:15PM: INTRODUCTION TO SEAN NÓS DANCING

A fun-filled introduction to traditional/sean-nós jigs & reels! Using dance & exercises, students will work on rhythm and technique, and develop an appreciation of Irish music with Aoife Griffin.  
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Children who sign up for 2 or 3 workshops will be supervised by the program leader and can move from program to program. Discounts available for multiple workshops



For more details on any of our events please visit our website [www.irishculture.org](http://www.irishculture.org)

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Summer 2022

Boston Irish

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CANTON PARKS & RECREATION



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# Irish Cultural Centre announces new name, new logo, new website

Seeking to signal its substantial reach into the greater Boston area and promote the connection between its 46-acre campus in Canton and the large Irish and Irish American community in the city of Boston, the Irish Cultural Centre (ICC) has announced a new name - 'The Irish Cultural Centre - Greater Boston' - the rebranding of its logo, and the introduction of a new website.

The new logo, shown with this story, was developed after many hours of spirited discussion among the members of the centre's newly formed marketing committee. It maintains the symbol of



the shamrock, which has been part of the ICC's logo for many years, while reintroducing the Celtic knots that were a feature of the original logo designed back in 1998 by Vincent Crotty.

This latest version ties the new with the old and gives the centre a crisp, clean, and modern image. The introduction of navy blue and gold into the logo is a subtle nod toward the official flag of the government of Ireland - these colors were directly extracted from the presidential flag of Ireland and tied in with an emerald green to represent the Irish American association with the colors. The introduction of the Celtic

font into the logo brings about a sense of true Irish heritage.

The new website ([irishculture.org](http://irishculture.org)) is expected to be up and running in coming weeks. It is a welcome addition and will be very accessible to all members of the public who can sign up for memberships, book classes and concerts and stay in touch with everything that is going on at the Irish Cultural Centre - Greater Boston. Follow the centre on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn to stay up to date with its news, events and more!



## Set Dancing

Every Monday in the 1st floor function room at 6:30pm.

Beginners welcome. No sign-up needed. Masks required inside. \$5 donation suggested

## CLASS LISTINGS



### Cupla Focail le Aoife

An Irish Language Conversation Class on Zoom!  
Monday Evenings on Zoom 5-6pm  
New term starting on 6/20/2022 for 4 weeks.  
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with Sean Murphy - virtual classes  
History of Co. Wicklow / Contae Chill Mhantáin  
Thursdays 6pm - 7pm - June 9, 15, 23 & 30

### The Irish Free State/ 26-Counties 1922 - 1937

Thursdays June 9, 16, 23, 30: 7:30 to 9pm  
To register click here

### Traditional Music Masterclass with David Healy @ The ICC!

Join us for a three hour Irish Traditional Music Masterclass with All Ireland Champion David Healy on June 18th in the ICC Cottage at 1:15pm - NEW TIME  
Click here for more information.

### Summer Workshops for Kids

July 11th - July 15th:  
ICC Children's workshops. Sign up for 1 or all 3. On the last day of the Immersive Workshop in Irish Culture we step back in time and have a tea party in the ICC Cottage. Suitable for children aged 6 - 14.  
For more information email: [mduoher@irishculture.org](mailto:mduoher@irishculture.org)



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# A recipe for good music, and good times

## The Heatons savor the opportunity to re-engage with their community

BY SEAN SMITH  
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Above all, Boston-area Irish music-playing spouses Matt and Shannon Heaton are quite happy to be back performing in person.

After a handful of live events in 2021, the duo's recent and upcoming schedule by comparison is fairly dotted with in-person gigs, including June 22 at the Burren Backroom series in Somerville's Davis Square, where they'll be appearing with the duo of local fiddler Hanneke Cassel and Vermont-based guitarist/vocalist Keith Murphy, along with dancer Kieran Jordan. [Details, tickets available through [burren.com/music.html](http://burren.com/music.html)]

"It's been fascinating, fun, and kind of weird," says Matt (guitar, bouzouki, vocals) of being on stage again. "So many events are still getting cancelled, postponed or moved online, so things are not fully back to what we might consider 'normal.' But we're super excited to be playing at the Burren: [Burren owners Tommy McCarthy and Louise Costello] have been very creative in finding ways to keep the music flowing. Everyone knows what a wonderful place it is, so the idea of being in the Backroom again – and with Hanneke, Keith, and Kieran – makes us very happy."

"Sharing a night with dear friends, in a place that is a home for our Irish music community, one which two musicians, Tommy and Louise, have built and sustained through challenging times, even before Covid – that to me feels like it's really meeting the moment in the right way," says Shannon (flute, whistle, accordion, vocals). "I think that's a better way of looking at it than 'The Heatons are going back out there and doing a bunch of formal concerts.' We're grateful to have the pleasure and privilege of sharing traditional music with our community."

Known for stellar musicianship, an extensive knowledge of Irish traditional music, and an engaging stage presence, the Heatons have five albums to their credit and a distinguished resumé of concert and festival appearances around and well beyond the US. An emphasis on fostering and maintaining community also has been a staple of the Heatons' modus operandi over the years, through teaching, a healthy social media presence, and projects such as Shannon's "Irish Music Stories" podcast as well as leading regular jam sessions at the Somerville Armory aimed at encouraging less experienced musicians.

Covid has made keeping up that community connection challenging, and thus even more vital for the Heatons, who among other pandemic activities started a weekly virtual guided session on YouTube and, more recently, published "In Harmony," a "tune cookbook" for melody and rhythm players.

A return to live performances, welcome though it may be, shouldn't distract from reflecting on and acknowledging the full, varied impact of the pandemic, according to the Heatons.

"So many people are ready to just move on and pretend nothing happened in these past two-plus years," explains Shannon, "but we've all been through something so vast, something we're still trying to understand, and it seems crazy to ignore it. For a brief moment, we gave the planet a break: We stopped driving, and instead we were walking, saying 'Hi' to our neighbors, trying to keep one another safe and healthy. Public health and ecological awareness, the idea of living simpler lives, thinking local – all that was forced on us, and it was challenging, but we took it on. Do we really have to just forget all of that?"

"Instead of touring all over the place and returning to big gatherings, I like the idea of keeping things small, informal and local, with the focus on sharing music, connecting with people, and encouraging them to be creative – not a one-way performance, but a night of community."



Matt and Shannon Heaton, who are performing at The Burren in Somerville on June 22 with Hanneke Cassel, Keith Murphy, and Kieran Jordan.

The pandemic has brought tragedy and hardship, Matt says, but also has inspired musicians and other artists to re-think what they do, including how to stay in touch with, and build, their audiences.

"It's been kind of like a flower growing out of a concrete sidewalk: The music somehow emerges. You'd see people trying out all kinds of ideas and collaborations, and then sharing them on video and social media. So, we thought, 'Why not try putting together a guided session online? I think you can livestream on YouTube.' And sure enough, it wound up becoming this big community of musicians from around the world – we weren't sure what would happen, but we were able to make an important connection."

"The people who've taken part in the livestream have been amazing," says Shannon. "They've tuned in every week, they say 'Hello' to each other, they encourage one another – it's wonderful to see how they've made such good use of these opportunities. We wound up creating a private Facebook page where people could share practice videos and offer suggestions and thoughts. They'd give tune requests during the livestream, so everyone would vote for the 'tune of the week,' and I'd make a practice video and break the tune down so that everyone could learn it for the next livestream."

"Yes, it's Matt and Shannon playing on YouTube, but it's also people playing in their houses – they'd send up pictures and videos of themselves playing along with us. And these were musicians on many different levels, like somebody starting on their second instrument or just wanting to learn more tunes, others who were brand new."

The YouTube session was the basis for "In Harmony," which comprises an e-book of tunes from the session repertoire with an accompanying CD of the Heatons playing each one (the project was a true family affair; their son Nigel designed the e-book cover). It draws on the metaphor of cooking, which, like playing Irish music, can be a solitary activity but also a communal and social one; by the same token, throughout history the kitchen has frequently been a place for people to gather for making music.

"This is not a complete collection of Irish tunes: It's a quality selection of standard jigs, reels, hornpipes, and slip jigs, presented with care and consistency," reads the introduction, "from our kitchen to yours."

"In Harmony" includes some thoughts from the Heatons on key aspects of playing Irish music, such as the merits of learning tunes by ear versus sheet music.

Those who are adept at reading music may more be inclined to go that route than learning aurally, which the Heatons acknowledge takes time and focus.

"But," they add, "it's such a nourishing experience. Really getting to know a tune before you even try it on your instrument is very different than just reading it." The Heatons counsel patience in learning by ear ("There's no rush"), perhaps just by focusing on one tune and learning to sing it along with the recording. "Digest the melody, the rhythmic life, the ornamentation, and the phrasing of the tune by listening, which will be more accurate than looking."

The Heatons also muse on the importance – and enjoyment – of being in synch with other musicians as you play, and to collectively home in on the distinctive elements of a tune rather than trying to go for speed or ornamentation: "Listening to the tunes and the people around you is what guarantees the most savory experience."

"In Harmony" is really a love letter to all the people who've joined us in the past couple of years, taking a crummy situation and making the best of it," says Shannon. "We don't think of it as 'Oh, Matt and Shannon made a new CD' – or, to use the cooking metaphor, that we've served everyone a 12-course dinner: Instead, we came up with 'recipes' that people can make in their own way."

"We're all different, and we all learn differently. I don't know, it's kind of like public health: It's important to set a tone and to have some buy-in from people. The idea of public health is that we build it together, and we do that by establishing and following some guidelines. So, our feeling is, hey, learn the tunes the way that you need to learn the tunes – but you know, this is an aural tradition, a social tradition, so at least listen to the recordings, get it in your heart, and give it a go."

The Heatons have long supplemented their traditional music repertoire with their own compositions, and during the pandemic have come up with new material, some of which they've shared during their virtual guided sessions. In the past couple of years, Shannon has written "a lot" of tunes, a process she says typically begins with a non-musical prompt, in which a person, situation, or event that strikes her a certain way "and something comes."

In one recent case, Shannon was reflecting on a dear friend, Pastelle LeBlanc of the Prince Edward Island trio Vishtèn, whose death had reverberated throughout the traditional music community. After having concluded a conversation with LeBlanc's sister and bandmate, Shannon happened to glance out her window and saw two cardinals in the yard.

"They were there for a long time, and it felt like a real visitation, so I just thought, 'OK, I'm not going to get up or do anything, I'm just going to sit here with the cardinals,'" she recalls. "Finally, one of them flew away. And after an hour, this tune just came to me: So I call it 'The Two Cardinals.'"

"This sort of experience is not all that unusual for me. But it's been stronger these last few years, where we haven't had a regular schedule of gigs to prepare for. So I was writing these tunes just for the sake of writing them, and you know what? That's good for me. I don't feel as if I need to get on the stage and perform them. I like the whole process of writing these tunes and then arranging them with Matt. If nobody else ever heard them, it wouldn't be so bad."

"That said, I am more than happy to share this music, because I find it often leads to people sharing back. For instance, members of our guided-session community have written their own tunes and felt inspired to play them for everyone. And I see that and think, 'Oh, yeah – I've accomplished something.'"

Learn more about the Heatons and In Harmony at [mattandshannonheaton.com](http://mattandshannonheaton.com)

# A CALENDAR OF IRISH/CELTIC EVENTS

## Late June 2022

By SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

*Subject to change pending COVID-related developments.*

• In addition to the June 22 show with Matt and Shannon Heaton (see separate story in this edition), Hanneke Cassel, and Keith Murphy, the Burren Backroom series will present the duo of **John Doyle and Mick McAuley** on June 29 at 7:30 p.m. Dubliner Doyle is one of the more influential and ubiquitous guitarists in Irish/Celtic music of the past couple of decades, having played (along with McAuley) in Solas and active in current collaborations like The Alt with Nuala Kennedy and Eamon O'Leary, and Usher's Island with Andy Irvine, Donal Lunny, Michael McGoldrick, and Paddy Glackin. He also has emerged as a quite experienced and celebrated songwriter. Kilkenny native McAuley has likewise been a familiar figure in the landscape, and a fine accordion and melodeon player (along with whistle and guitar) in the Irish tradition, but also has

branched out into his own compositions and songwriting. He even had a stint on Broadway, as a melodeon player in Sting's musical "The Last Ship."

Opening for Doyle and McAuley will be Philadelphia trio **Poor Man's Gambit**, which combines the diverse musical styles and interests of Corey Purcell (button accordion, cittern, bodhran, vocals, dance), Deirdre Lockman (fiddle, vocals), and Federico Betti (guitar, fiddle). Although much of the band's repertoire is traditional Irish-based, they pull in other influences, including English, Breton and Scottish, while also performing contemporary material – such as Richard Thompson's "Beeswing" – and their own.

Go to [burren.com/music.html](http://burren.com/music.html) for tickets and details.

Sliabh Luachra is a vibrant and enduring Irish music tradition, and Limerick-born accordionist **David Healy** will give a three-hour master class on the topic at the Irish Cultural Centre at noon on June 18. Healy, currently a Boston

resident, is an All-Ireland champion who has toured internationally with such collaborations and productions as Celtic piper Carlos Núñez, Siamsa Tire National Folk Theatre of Ireland, Celtic Legends, Rhythm of the Dance, Celtic Steps, and Gaelforce. This workshop, which focuses on the repertoire of Sliabh Luachra polkas and slides, is suitable for both intermediate and advanced musicians of any age on any instrument.

More information at [irishculture.org](http://irishculture.org).

• The Lowell Summer Series welcomes Celtic rockers **Gaelic Storm** – forever known, perhaps, for its cameo appearance in "Titanic" 25 years ago – on June 24 at 7:30 p.m. But whatever the impact of that James Cameron film, the band has built a solid, loyal following through more than two decades of constant touring, the release of 13 albums and, most of all, a crowd-rousing mix of Celtic, country, and rock/pop. The group – Steve Twigger, Patrick Murphy, Ryan Lacey, Pete Purvis, and Katie Grennan – has regularly placed

at number one in the Billboard World Music albums chart and appeared on the same bill with such acts as the Zac Brown Band, the Goo Goo Dolls, Emmylou Harris, and Lyle Lovett, and at various events and venues including the Telluride Bluegrass Festival, and Milwaukee's Summerfest.

Details at [lowellsummermusic.org](http://lowellsummermusic.org).

• The **Milton Music Fest** will take place on June 25 and 26 at Hutchinson Field, and as befitting a community with such a high percentage of Irish ancestry, the event will have a significant Hibernian tint to it: The "Celtic Sunday" portion of the festival will include performances by local favorites such as the **Fenian Sons, the Dooley Brothers, and Erin's Melody**. The festival grew out of Milton's 350th anniversary bash in 2011, and over the years has hosted internationally renowned acts such as De Dannan as well as local performers. The schedule was still coming together as of press time, so go to [wearemilton.org](http://wearemilton.org) for updates and other details.

## Summertime festivals on the island of Ireland

DUBLIN – A summertime trip to Ireland isn't complete until you take in at least one of the many kinds of music, arts and culture festivals the island is renowned for. From the quintessentially Irish to the quirky and the downright unforgettable, Ireland's festivals bring fun and good times.

Among the key dates to look out for this summer is the Galway International Arts Festival from July 11 to the 24th. It has been described as "the biggest, most exciting, most imaginative explosion of arts activity" on the island of Ireland. This year it features artists from Africa, America, Asia, Australia, Europe, and, of course, Ireland and Galway, in a major programme of theatre, music, comedy, visual art, dance, and literary events.

There will be concerts from the likes of the Pixies, The Flaming Lips and The Stunners, with theatrical highlights including a production of Sam Shepard's *True West*, by the Chicago based Steppenwolf Company. Among the many other events is 'Lifeline', an ambitious project from Galway's time as a European Capital of Culture, which will see 150 locals perform on a high wire over the River Corrib.

For a taste the salt air, try Derry-Londonderry's magical Foyle Maritime Festival (July 20-24), where Northern Ireland's famous Walled City will welcome the sailors taking part in the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race. Look out for street theatre, firework displays, water activities and delicious foodie delights aplenty. Surrounded by the fascinating history of the city walls and a fleet of 70-foot ocean liners, this is a festival that you'll have to make room in your schedule for.

Held on the stunning Causeway Coastal Route and surrounding areas in Northern Ireland, SuperCup NI (July 24-29) is a world-renowned international youth football tournament. With teams



A scene from the Galway International Arts Festival.

from Mexico, Bermuda and the English Premier League, including Man Utd, taking part, it offers a unique opportunity for fans to spot some of soccer's most promising talent and future stars in the making.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann (Music Festival of Ireland) is the biggest traditional Irish music festival on the planet. This year it takes place in Mullingar, County Westmeath, in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands (July 31-Siug./ 7. The week-long jamboree of Irish music, song and dance, not to mention late nights and family fun, is the ultimate summer highlight for music fans and culture seekers alike.

Set in buzzing Belfast, the August Féile

(Aug. 4-14) is part of Féile an Phobail, the island's largest community festival. A celebration of diversity, passion and creativity, it draws people from around the world to west Belfast. Head here to see the carnival parade on Saturday 6 August, and to take in concerts, comedy, talks, tours, theatre, debate, family, and above all, great community craic.

Integral to an Irish summer is one of the greatest show-jumping events in the world, the Dublin International Horse Show (Aug. 17-21). A celebration of Ireland's affinity with the horse and all things equine, it lights up August and welcomes competitors and visitors from around the globe. Over 1,000

superb horses and ponies are involved in this magical show, but it is also renowned for lots of style, shopping and socialising.

Running since 1959, the Rose of Tralee International Festival (Aug. 19-23) is another ever-present Irish festival must-do. It sees the streets of Tralee transform into a feast of parades, music, circus, funfair, markets and traditional Irish entertainment. The five days of events culminate in two evenings, where Roses of Irish descent from around the world come together to celebrate the Irish diaspora.

IRELAND.COM

# About musicianship and band members' chemistry

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

**Trip, "A Drop for Neptune"** • So, an Irishman, an Englishman, and a Manxwoman walk into the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland – and wind up forming a band with three Scotsmen. Thus was born Trip some four years ago, whose debut album here (crowd-funded and recorded during the Covid lockdown) takes as its unifying theme the commonality of the sea to the band members' native grounds, as reflected in the titles for several tracks, e.g., "September Sea," "The Ninth Wave" and "Towards the Storm."

Trip's melody players are Tiernan Courell from Sligo on flute, Michael Biggins from Northumberland on accordion, and Isla Callister from Peel on the Isle of Man on fiddle; their Scots cohorts are Alasdair Mackenzie on guitar and vocals, Rory Matheson on piano, and Craig Baxter on bodhran.

Trip is in similar territory as Scottish-based bands like Talisk and Imar, sporting a muscular, energetic, and tight ensemble sound and a repertoire of mainly original or contemporary tunes in a traditional vein but with sometimes unconventional time signatures, syncopation, distinctive accents, and repeating phrases-cum-riffs. None of which is meant to imply that "A Drop for Neptune" is overly derivative: It's



bright and powerful, but also with plenty of space to appreciate individual musicianship and the chemistry between the band members.

The first track, "September Sea," comprises traditional Irish and Scottish reels – "Eamon Coyne's" and "Square da Mizzen," respectively – wrapped around Callister's "Mean Fouyir." She, Courell, and Biggins burst out of the gate together, and the other three join them the second time through the A part, Mackenzie and Matheson holding onto a single chord throughout, creating tension and anticipation until the B part arrives. They let up a little during "Mean Fouyir," with the spotlight on Callister and Courell and some quiet, sparse chording by Mackenzie, but gradually reconstruct the momentum for the final

reel, with Biggins returning; there's also a marvelous build-up, again through Mackenzie and Matheson's accompaniment, on the next-to-last A part. Of a similar nature is "The Ninth Wave," which is highlighted by an absolutely rocking "1.2 Twinport" (composed by Matheson).

A pair of jigs – Biggins' "Madeleine's," which serves as the track's title (plus an introduction to his nimble box playing), and "Rufus' Request" by Madeleine Stewart – is a somewhat more sedate affair by comparison, but no less ear-catching. There's a little interlude in "Rufus," introduced by Matheson, that gathers strength and revs the engine back up in very pleasing fashion.

Trip evokes its trad roots on "McKay's," with a fiddle-piano duet on the strathspey "Morair Sim" that Courell eventually joins on the way to the second tune, Matheson's "Mairi and Ewen's," which features Mackenzie's nifty flat-picking towards the end.

An outlier, but a spellbindingly lovely one, is Courell's solo of his "Flaich Na Faiche' (Prince of The Lawn)," which has to be one of the most sublime pieces of music ever written about a dog; his tone, phrasing, and control are all masterful, heightened by Matheson's shrewd, spare accompaniment.

The two songs led by Mackenzie are «Turning Tides,» Callister's reflections on visiting her home island after the

first Covid lockdown; and a powerful take on John Doyle's saga "The Arabic" – based on his grandfather's harrowing experiences on board a ship sunk by a German submarine in World War I – that benefits from a recurring, suitably dramatic, and storm-tossed interlude.

The album's final track, "Towards the Storm," is an everything-including-the-kitchen-sink affair, segueing from hop jig (Courell's "She Has Locks") to a 12/8 traditional Manx jig ("Hie Mee Stiagh") to reel ("Eye of the Storm" by Courell and Matheson). It's simply an excellent example of arranging a set to showcase the various sounds and textures within an ensemble: a cheery duet between Matheson and Courell (on whistle) at the very beginning, for example; a bracing surge anchored by Biggins and Baxter to kick off the middle tune; and Matheson's fleet-fingered solo at the outset of "Eye of the Storm," with rugged, rocking rhythm from Baxter and Mackenzie (Mackenzie also gets a bit of a guitar solo to set the stage for the band's last run-through).

The pandemic, not surprisingly, was a significant interruption in Trip's growth and development as a band, but as demonstrated on "A Drop for Neptune" – which they officially debuted at the Celtic Connections festival in January – these six are more than ready to set sail. [trip-music.com]

## 'Sing Street' coming to long run at Calderwood

BY R. J. DONOVAN

SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH

Enda Walsh knows a thing or two about creating a hit musical.

The multi award-winning Irish playwright and director previously spent time in Boston writing the stage adaptation of the musical "Once," which went on to win a Tony Award as Best Musical. Now, he's returning to Boston to work on the new musical, "Sing Street." Based on the 2016 indie film of the same name, "Sing Street" will play the Huntington Theatre's Calderwood Pavilion from August 26 to October 2.

"Sing Street" is a coming-of-age tale set in 1982 Dublin. Unemployment has struck every home, and the masses are seeking bluer skies across the Irish Sea. Sixteen-year-old Conor and his schoolmates are awash in dysfunction. However, with the sensitive Conor leading the way, they find an escape from their worries by forming a band to impress a girl.

With an original score embracing the sounds of the '80s, "Sing Street" ultimately celebrates the joy of first love and the power of music. It's also about family tensions, the badgering of an older brother, suffering a school bully, and the potency of music videos, which Conor and his mates dive into with a frenzy.

An initial production of "Sing Street" played to sold-out houses at New York Theatre Workshop in 2019. That production, with revisions realized during the workshop, was set to move uptown to Broadway's Lyceum Theatre in March of 2020. Sadly, its journey was short-circuited when the Covid lockdown struck.

During the resulting two-year hiatus, the creative team continued to explore and fine-tune its work. The Huntington production is "Sing Street's" next step back to Broadway.

Music and lyrics are by John Carney ("Once") and Gary Clark ('80s band, Danny Wilson). **Rebecca Taichman, (Tony Award, "Indecent")** will direct, with choreography by **Sonya Tayeh** (Tony Award, "Moulin Rouge!").

Enda and I chatted recently about the show. Here's an edited look at our conversation.

**Q. You have a long friendship with John Carney. What brought you to "Sing Street."**

**A.** It's my daughter's favorite film . . . I think she was like 12 or something when I was driving around Iceland, of all places, with my wife and my daughter and her friend, and we were just singing all the songs. Around that time, [producer] Barbara Broccoli got in touch with me and said "Have you seen it?" . . . I grew up here in Dublin -- the other side of Dublin, the north side of Dublin, the rougher side of Dublin -- and the film referenced a time that I knew, economically, in terms of what was happening in the city, but also culturally at the time, what was happening to the country. And Barbara asked "Do you have any interest in doing it?" And I said I'd love to. I think it would be great for me to spend some time with my 13-14-year-old self.

**Q. And what did that 13-year-old connect with?**

**A:** There were a lot of things that I remembered from that time . . . Walking down by the bay. The first girl I went out with. Walking back from her house . . . The evenings feel really long, you're outdoors, chatting to people, and I thought, oh I know what that's like. Then the idea of what it is to be around a group of boys at that time and the posturing and the peacocking that goes on.

**Q. But there were also financial difficulties.**

**A.** The 80s in Ireland were really, really tough. Every decade has had its problems. Every few years we were hit by recession. That time was particularly sad . . . The generation in front of me, even those people even a few years in front of me, they did their last exam at school, then they were in the boat immediately, getting out of Ireland. In my area -- I came from a mid-class area but I went to a working-class area school -- there was 40 percent unemployment. It was brutal.

The idea of kids getting together to express something outside of themselves, but something of themselves as well, is more the story that I'm interested in.

**Q. What are you hoping audiences take away from the show?**

**A.** There's something about the joy of this and the crazy expression of these kids trying to be new romantic stars in 1982 Dublin . . . The awkwardness of falling in love and trying to articulate where you are at that time -- to yourself and to the person you're falling in love with. I really hope it ultimately feels joyful. That's the big thing . . . You're watching kids making something out of nothing. The celebration of these creative spirits.

**Q. Is there a moment in the musical that touches you personally?**

**A:** There's a lot of the story that does resonate with me. The role of the older brother is a large role in this piece. And I find it really touching that this brother [Brendan] is looking at a younger brother [Conor], and realizing that actually, it's Conor, the younger brother, and his energy that's fulfilling dreams he had himself. For some reason, he cannot unlock himself . . . The fact that he's afraid to leave the house -- he can't leave the house -- and he doesn't understand why. I find that moving. There's a piece of choreography that [Rebecca and Sonya] unlocked directly after the New York workshop, and it's poetic and heartbreaking.

**Q. As with "Once," Boston is your final preparation for New York?**

**A.** We're going to get this right. We're going to Broadway with it . . . What happened directly afterward the workshop was we went back into the (rehearsal) room for about three and a half weeks . . . We reframed it . . . and then the pandemic happened . . . So I'm tremendously excited to see it in Boston, on that great stage at the Huntington. I think we've cracked it. Big time. It's exciting.

•••

"Sing Street," Huntington Theatre, Aug. 26 to Oct. 2. Visit: [huntingtontheatre.org](http://huntingtontheatre.org).

# Summer BCMFest is set for live show on July 3

## Club Passim to feature in-person performances

By SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Summer BCMFest - the warm-weather version of the Boston Celtic Music Fest (BCMFest) - will return to its in-person on-stage format this year on July 3, with a slate of afternoon and evening performances at Club Passim in Harvard Square featuring some of Greater Boston's best Celtic musicians.

The event is tailored after the annual BCMFest, held each January to celebrate Greater Boston's richness of music, song, and dance from the Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, and other Celtic traditions. Like its winter counterpart, Summer BCMFest showcases the diversity of sounds and styles found in Boston's Celtic music community. [The 20th BCMFest will take place next January of 2023.]

Summer BCMFest opens with a pair of free performances outside Club Passim on Palmer Street: Glenville, one of the area's hot new traditional Irish/Scottish groups, at 2 p.m.; and longtime festival favorite Scottish Fish at 3 p.m.

The festival shifts indoors for a ticketed evening concert beginning at 7 p.m. with Copley Street, the duo of uilleann piper Joey Abarta and fiddler Nathan Gourley; Louise Bichan and Ethan Setiawan, who blend Scottish and Appalachian musical styles; and fiddler-vocalist Jenna Moynihan.

Tickets are available at [passim.org/summer-bcmfest](http://passim.org/summer-bcmfest); the event also will be available via livestream at [passim.org/stream](http://passim.org/stream).

A look at the 2022 Summer BCMFest performers:

•Glenville is the high-octane quartet of Calum Bell, Elias Cardoso, Eamon Sefton, and Patrick Bowling, all of whom play multiple instruments including fiddle, flute, whistle, guitar, banjo, bouzouki and bodhran. The four have been impressing listeners (and fellow musicians) at Boston-area venues with their joyously energetic takes on traditional Irish and Scottish tunes, as well as their own compositions.

•When the Boston-based fiddle and cello group Scottish Fish (Ava Montesi, Caroline Dressler, Julia Homa, Maggie MacPhail, and Giulia Haible) first appeared at BCMFest 2014, its members were barely - or not even - in high school. Since then, they've become a highly experienced and assured ensemble, their performances of traditional and contemporary Scottish and Cape Breton reels, jigs, strathspeys, and the like woven together from years of fiddle camp and session music handed down from generations of the tradition's finest players. Whether it's traditional or contemporary tunes or their own material, "the Fish" play all with imaginative, engaging, and

downright fun arrangements.

•Copley Street's Joey Abarta and Nathan Gourley are two of the leading lights in the area's Irish music community, their knowledge of and devotion to the tradition equally wide and deep. A prize-winning uilleann piper - in 2014 - Abarta became the first American-born piper in four decades to win the An tOireachtas - He has honed his skills through continuing relationships with master pipers, and is dedicated to passing along his knowledge to the next generation. A musician since age five, Gourley took up fiddle in earnest during his teens and benefitted from playing with esteemed musicians such as Paddy O'Brian (of the band Chulrua), Dathi Sproule (Altan) Brian Miller (Bua), and Norah Rendell (The Outside Track).

In 2013, the two released the album "Copley Street" - named for the street in Boston where they were living at the time, but also a reference to a famous record label that featured local Irish musicians - to wide acclaim, and are at work on a sequel.

•Louise Bichan is native to Scotland's Orkney Islands and one of its most accomplished fiddlers, while Indiana-born Ethan Setiawan is a winner of national mandolin championships who also excels on mandola and bouzouki. The two met at the Berklee College



Louise Bichan and Ethan Setiawan

of Music, where they co-founded the quartet Corner House (which also has appeared at BCMFest), and have since begun performing on their own as well, exploring Scottish and American traditions along with those of Scandinavia and Canada - drawing inspiration from all to inform their own compositions.

•Since arriving in Boston more than a decade ago, Jenna Moynihan has found numerous outlets for her Scottish/Appalachian-influenced fiddling, including an acclaimed collaboration with Scottish harpist Mairi Chaimbeul and as a member of unique folk-roots-pop quartet Laura Cortese & The Dance Cards. In recent years, she has also focused on developing an equally diverse song repertoire, which she shared on her EP "Five Songs."



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- **Case Studies:** Discover how to apply new developments and techniques in Irish genealogy

# New eight-story hotel in Dublin celebrates Beckett legacy

The life and work of Nobel Laureate Samuel Beckett is being celebrated with the opening of a new four-star hotel in Dublin's Docklands. Rising eight stories and with over 200 bedrooms, The Samuel is a bold new addition to Dublin's accommodation sector. With its modern, best-in-class architecture and central location in the city's rejuvenated and dynamic docklands, it's the perfect base for a city break.

The hotel is named after one of Ireland's, and the world's, greatest writers, and one of the island's four winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Samuel Beckett. The twentieth-century, avant-garde literary master, probably best known for his play "Waiting for Godot," was born in Dublin.

The writer spent his formative years at Portora Royal school in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, the same school that Oscar Wilde attended 50 years previously, before returning to study at Trinity College, Dublin. A visit to the university is a must for book lovers. As well as the



A fine bedroom view of Dublin's Docklands and a bartender at the ready greet guests at Dublin's new Samuel Hotel, named in honor of Irish Nobel Literature laureate Samuel Beckett.



world-renowned, ninth-century Book of Kells, on show in the university's Treasury, Trinity also boasts The Long Room, regarded as one of the most impressive libraries on the world.

Commenting on the opening of the hotel, The Samuel's general manager, Ann-Marie Traynor, said, "In Dublin, we are proud of our people, culture, and history. We feel the connection between people and place is really reflected throughout The Samuel, whether that be the link to our literary legend in our name, or through the eye-catching art by local creatives visible throughout the Samuel Bar and Grill."

The hotel is located close to another Beckett landmark in the city, the Samuel Beckett Bridge, a modern and eye-catching construction that evokes the shape of the Irish harp.

With many of Dublin's biggest attractions nearby, including the award-winning EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum and the Jeannie Johnston Famine Ship, the Samuel offers a great base for exploring the city.

...

Dublin is a UNESCO City of Literature and those interested in its literary credentials should not miss the

MoLI (Museum of Literature Ireland). This year it has multiple events celebrating another of Ireland's greatest writers, James Joyce. Joyce's famous novel "Ulysses" marks its publication centenary this month.

There is also the opportunity to "hear" from some of the city's most famous writers by visiting their statues in the city and using a QR code to get a call from them. From James Joyce to Oscar Wilde to George Bernard Shaw, the genius of these writers is expressed in short monologues.

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# Let your feet enhance the delight of visiting Ireland

BY JUDY ENRIGHT

SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH

*When I am asked for advice about traveling around Ireland, I say this: Get out of the car or bus whenever possible! There is so much to see in the cities and countryside once you slow down and let your feet take over.*

## AILLWEE CAVE

If you have been to Co. Clare and haven't visited Aillwee Cave, you have missed a fascinating place. Some years ago, we visited the cave in the Burren in Ballyvaughan. The guided tour is so interesting and the children in our group marveled at the other-worldly shapes of spotlighted stalagmites and stalactites. The young boys loved the darkened passageways and the overall eeriness of being inside a cave, of course. The girls on the tour weren't quite so enthralled by the spookiness.

A few years ago, I went back – sans kids – to see if I was still a fan of the Aillwee Cave. Again, the guided tour and narrative were fascinating and informative. I enjoyed a homemade snack in the cozy tearoom and a stroll through the well-stocked craft shop in the Cave Access building as I waited for the tour to begin.

The story of the cave's discovery is so interesting. It seems that Jacko McGann, a Ballyvaughan native and herdsman, followed his dog and discovered the cave in 1940. He explored much of it over the ensuing years but didn't share his discovery until 1973 when he talked with a group of cavers from Bristol University.

In 1975, the Aillwee Cave Company bought the land and began to create a show cave that could be opened up and made safe to welcome the public. Blasting cleared much of the way through narrow caverns, handrails were installed as was extensive lighting, and a pathway was paved with locally quarried Liscannor flagstone. Parking lots, roads, and a mountain walk were added over the years.

In 1988, Aillwee Cave welcomed its one-millionth visitor!

Down the hill from the cave – and new since my last visit – is an outstanding Birds of Prey Center and a farm shop where you can try some of the award-winning Burren Gold cheeses. I bought two flavors: Nettle with Garlic and Oak Smoked, and both were much enjoyed back at my accommodation.

When you're at the farm shop, do enjoy the cheeses and check out local produce such as pickles, jams, pesto, oils and spiced vinegars, fudge, jams, and bread mixes. These make nice gifts to take home and I usually pack a jar or two of very well bubble-packed jam inside a shoe in my suitcase to keep it from breaking. I have to say that method has worked well so far.

The show presented at the Birds of Prey Center was well worth the price of admission. Mark Barrett, the presenter on the day I visited, put owls, hawks and an eagle through their paces and talked about the birds and their attributes, diets, and habits. After the show, you can walk through the center and see all



**Black Head Lighthouse in the Burren, Co. Clare, warns mariners to stay away from that rocky coast**



**Curious lamb checks out visitors to his rocky home in the Burren, Co. Clare.**



**Road hazard in Ireland.**

sorts of birds of prey – vultures, falcons and many types of owls – in cages that replicate their natural habitats.

Aillwee Cave and the Birds of Prey Center is a fun way to spend a day in Ireland with your family or on your own. For more information, go to [aillweecave.ie](http://aillweecave.ie)

## KILFENORA and THE BURREN

As I drove around the Burren that spring, I passed through the Co. Clare village of Kilfenora, called "The City of Crosses" for the medieval high crosses

at St. Fachtnan's 12th-century cathedral there. I stopped at The Burren Centre, which is open daily from mid-March to Oct. 31 and depicts and explains the Burren's flora, fauna, archeology, geology, and architecture. It is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

I have always been captivated by the magnificent and magical Burren landscape that resembles a moonscape, so an informational center was right up my alley. The center features a 12-minute comprehensive film (offered

in many languages) by the brilliant environmentalist and independent film producer Eamon de Buitlear that traces the formation of the Burren some 320 million years ago. The images are absolutely stunning.

After watching the film, I walked through the exhibition, had homemade soup and brown bread in the tearoom, and looked longingly at some of the wonderful items in the craft shop.

More information about the center is available at: [theburrencentre.ie](http://theburrencentre.ie)

Before you leave Kilfenora, be sure to walk around St. Fachtnan's Cathedral next door to The Burren Centre. The crosses are truly magnificent and the cathedral is well worth a visit.

## WHAT TO DO IN CO. CLARE

While you're in the area, be sure to:

- Stay at Riverfield House ([riverfield-doolin.com](http://riverfield-doolin.com)) in Doolin for a wonderful B&B experience with a charming and witty owner;
- Take a Cliffs of Moher or Aran Island cruise from the pier in Doolin;
- Listen to music at one of Doolin's many pubs;
- Stop for delicious fruit jams, marmalades, chutneys, and jellies at the Clare Jam Company just off the coast road in Doolin and try the smoked salmon or send some home from the Burren Smokehouse in nearby Lisdoonvarna;
- Drive the coast road from Doolin to Ballyvaughan to see some of Ireland's most magical coastal scenery;
- Listen to great jazz at the Doonbeg International Jazz Festival June 3-6. See [doonbegjazz.com](http://doonbegjazz.com) for details.

## ELSEWHERE

There's a lot to do in Ireland from all kinds of water sports to equestrian activities to cycling, walking, hiking to music and art, garden and museum visits.

The local tourist board (marked with a big green shamrock) is a great source of information about everything from accommodation to activities in the area you're visiting.

If you're in Dublin, the Dublin City Council has hundreds of bikes and many bike stands available around the city. Wouldn't it be fun to see Dublin by bike and not have to worry about finding a parking space or garage for your car?

More interesting things to do in Ireland include:

- A visit to The Glasnevin Cemetery museum in Dublin. The cemetery is the resting place of more than 1.5 million, including patriots Daniel O'Connell, Eamon de Valera, and Michael Collins.
- Achill Island hosts a half marathon and 10K run on July 2, which would be fun to watch. This marathon traditionally attracts thousands of runners. Find more information at: [achillmarathon.com](http://achillmarathon.com).

## TRAVEL PLANS

Enjoy your trip to Ireland whenever you go and don't forget to check the internet for the latest travel specials. Aer Lingus often offers web deals on flights and ground travel as do other airlines that service Ireland.

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KEEP CLIMBING



## Amy O'Carroll finds dream job 37 days after arriving on J-1 visa

Amy O'Carroll was the first Exchange Visitor to arrive on the J-1 Irish Work and Travel program following the shutdown of our program due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Amy showed up in Boston without work lined up, but we at Rian were confident in her from the beginning. She arrived with more than 100 employers researching in her field of study and wasted no time in reaching out to them for interviews.

When Amy applied for her visa, Covid restrictions were just beginning to lift. Amy did not have much time to obtain the visa and enter the states before the one-year mark of her graduation date (a requirement for the visa) so she was in a bit of a rush. However, she said "the Rian team was brilliant with getting things done." With their assistance, she was ready for her embassy appointment in Belfast ready.

Before arriving in the US, Amy conducted extensive research on employers in her area of study: graphic design. She felt lucky that her course was broad and applicable to many opportunities.

Amy knew she wanted to travel to Boston so she familiarized herself with what companies are in Boston. As she described it: "To be honest it can be daunting when you arrive." However, with the knowledge that she had to secure a job placement, she hit the ground running, attending events that the team at Rian suggested to her, like the first in-person Irish Network Boston St. Patrick's Day event in 2 years. She focused on networking and meeting new people. And within a month and a half after arriving, she secured a role at New Balance.

Amy attributes her success to a couple of things. She advises J-1 visitors to prepare and research as much as they can before they travel. "Know what job you would like to do, and what opportunities to look for," she said. "I chose Boston because there are lots of apparel companies here."

The second thing she attributes her success to was "an ounce of delusion." She said yes and went for everything. She did not hold back, she put herself out there, and contacted people via phone and LinkedIn.

Amy now works on the promotional unit at New Balance. Her team is tasked with doing promotions for different races, like the London and New York City marathons as well as those in Japan and Italy.

Working on a four-month contract, she contributes to the designs of the promotional garments, like the materials and colors. She said her new position is "literally perfect as it is a combination of both of my degrees."

She still has more personal goals to tackle. She would like to travel the East Coast, possibly skiing in the winter or visiting Vermont and New Hampshire. After attending her first hockey game (which she noted was her favorite cultural activity so far!), Amy looks forward to attending more sporting

events. She would also like to travel to New York City. And is excited about the American holidays she will experience over the next year, particularly the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving.

As she looks ahead to how her experience at New Balance will translate to apparel companies back home. She has several months before she returns to Ireland and is excited for what these months hold. Here's to her many adventures!

To the staff at Rian, Amy says, "Thank you, you have been so great!"



A collage of Amy's photos from her experience in Boston so far!

### Solas Awards Celebration | October 6, 2022 | Noon | 60 State Street, the State Room



The Rian Immigrant Center's Annual Solas Celebration will be an in-person luncheon event on October 6th, and all are invited to attend and sponsor the event!

Solas is the Irish word for light, and the Solas Award is presented to inspirational individuals and beacons of light, whose values resonate with Rian's mission to create a society where ALL are welcomed and valued and enjoy equal opportunities and protections.

It is our privilege to present **State Street's Chairman and CEO Ron O'Hanley** with the 2022 Solas Business Leader Award this year in appreciation of his bold leadership, commitment to inclusion, and his support for refugees, especially at this time of such global unrest. Rian recognizes State Street and Ron O'Hanley in advocating for all immigrants and refugees against any and all forms of violence and justice.

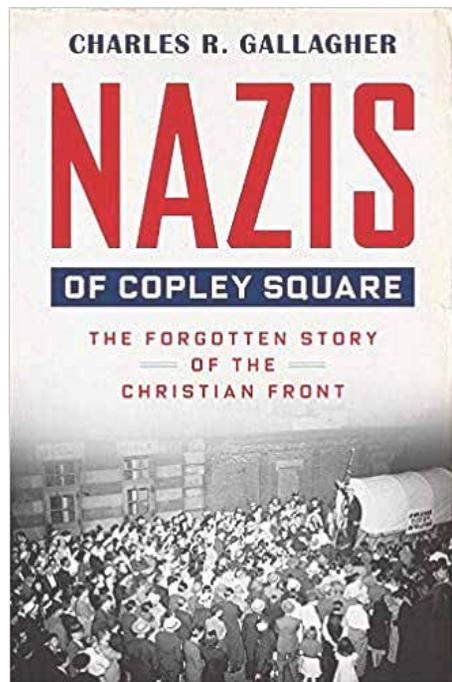
Rian is also honored to present the 2022 Solas Community Leader Award to **Lenita Reason, Executive Director of the Brazilian Worker Center (BWC) and Chrystal Murrieta Ruiz, Political Coordinator at SEIU Local 32BJ - New England District 615, Co-chairs of the Driving Families Forward Coalition** for their unfaltering leadership in advancing the Work and Family Mobility Act, a bill that will enable all qualified Massachusetts residents to apply for a standard state driver's license, regardless of immigrant status. Rian has been a proud supporter of the Bill for nearly two decades and we believe that having access to a driver's license will help many immigrants gain greater financial stability and access to critical resources.

# About a Dorchester man as Nazi agent in Copley Square

By THOMAS F. MULVOY JR.  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

During the late 1930s, a 30-something man who was living in Dorchester's Savin Hill neighborhood and worshipping at St. Margaret's Church, joined up with a German Schutzstaffel (SS) officer masquerading as an official in his country's consulate on Beacon Street in Boston in a sub rosa effort with others aimed at keeping the United States from getting involved in the preparations for war taking place across Europe in the face of Adolf Hitler's militaristic and diplomatic provocations.

That is the report from Charles R. Gallagher, a Jesuit historian at Boston College whose recently released book, "Nazis of Copley Square - The Forgotten Story of the Christian Front," covers a great deal of ground in giving an account of the short-lived but vital in its time and place Catholic-directed organization, which was formed in 1939 as a counterpoint entity to the Communist International's Popular Front.



Francis P. Moran was born in South Boston in 1909, the oldest of the 11 children of immigrant parents from

Ireland's County Mayo. He grew up as a committed Roman Catholic who had spent three of his teenage years in a Franciscan seminary, an experience that included discussions about the agency of the Jews in the crucifixion as Catholic doctrine that, the author suggests, enhanced his value to a foreign government whose deepest ideology centered on ridding Europe of the Jewish race.

Gallagher points out that the new organization, a phalanx of mostly Catholic individuals, saw itself "as the advance guard of a holy war against Communists and Jews - groups they saw as one and the same under the umbrella term Judeo-Bolshevism." He adds, "At its heart, the story of the Christian Front is one of priests who drew upon some of the most vibrant theological movements of the Catholic Church [the Mystical Body of Christ; Catholic Action] and used them to justify evil" as they readily rationalized the malign actions of the group's front men.

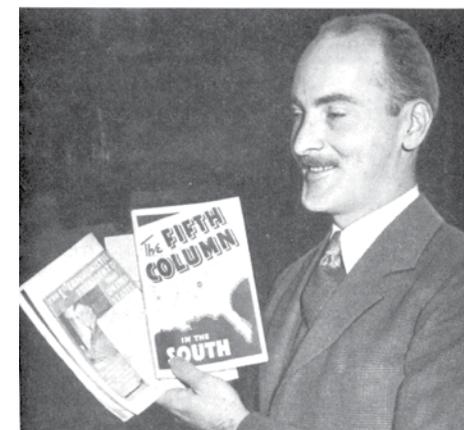
A discussion about how Catholic doctrine buttressed justifications for the Christian Front's more egregious representations takes up substantial space in the narrative as does a look back at the now mostly forgotten Holy Name Society, a men-only organization formed in the late 1800s and aimed "at addressing problems of modernity by curbing blasphemous speech and bringing men back to the regular attendance to the sacraments of the faith."

One point of this extended lesson in theology and Catholic mores seems to be that those who enlisted in the Christian Front, taking encouragement and support from their priests, used a deep devotion to their Catholicism and its doctrinal teachings as a defense of their statements and activities promoting depravities like anti-Semitism. In short, they were protecting their faith against "Judeo-Bolshevism" while the Nazis, with their assault on the Soviet Union in mid-1941 and their death wish for the Jewish race, were fighting the same fight.

Moran, who had taken on and left, or had been fired from, a number of jobs during the late '20s and early '30s, is presented in length as an exemplar of that point. By mid-1939, he was publicly known, mostly from his own writings and speechmaking, as the director of the isolationist Committee for the Defense of American Constitutional Rights with an office in the Copley Square Hotel.

Around that time, the author relates, he "fell into the arms" of the Nazi operative Herbert Scholz, who arrived in Boston in late 1938 to begin his exercises in espionage. Over the next few years, Moran, "who had no state secrets to reveal, dedicated countless hours to causes Scholz directed," among them "the defeat of FDR in 1940; and stirring up anti-Semitism in the city."

Egregious examples of the latter activity from the mouth and pen of Moran abound in this book, none of them worth recounting in this review. But the participation of officers in the



This photograph in the book, used courtesy of the Boston Herald-Traveler photo morgue in the Boston Public Library, shows Francis Moran displaying some of the Christian Front's pamphlets. In January 1942, police seized these and other materials from Hibernian Hall in Roxbury.

Catholic-dominated Boston Police force in the anti-Jewish violence in the Boston of those and later years does come in for some scrutiny here.

After his few years of notoriety, the Allies' war against the Nazis and the other Axis powers took precedence over everything else and Moran and his fire and brimstone personality faded out of public view. He enlisted in the Army in late 1943, got married, had a family, and died at age 62 in 1971 in West Roxbury, his last job a reference clerk's position with the Boston Public Library.

Notable players move this story along: Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, the originator of the Christian Front, was the pastor of a church in Detroit who organized a national broadcast apparatus that by the mid-1930s allowed him to deliver venomous anti-Jewish rhetoric directly to millions of listeners across the country on Sunday afternoons. And there was J. Edgar Hoover, who along with his cadre of FBI agents - and, from time to time, members of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's intelligence team - seemed bewildered as to how to deal with Christian Front activists like John F. Cassidy, a New Yorker whose militaristic approach to the realization of the Christian's Front goals landed him and his adherents in court in 1940 under an indictment for seditious conspiracy to upend the United States government and an assortment of weapons charges involving, among other items, the making of pipe bombs. The defendants ultimately were acquitted of all major charges, their "coup" seen as clownish.

Rev. Gallagher has resurrected a historical curiosity that has rarely found purchase in histories of the years when World War II turned from threat to catastrophe. In the large books of memory, the Christian Front is a footnote, but his scholarship reminds us that it was not so long ago that a band of Catholics - leaders and followers - openly disparaged Jews for being Jewish on the streets of Boston, and found doctrinal reason to justify what they said and did.

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# About the 'fightingest' ship, and 5 indomitable Navy men

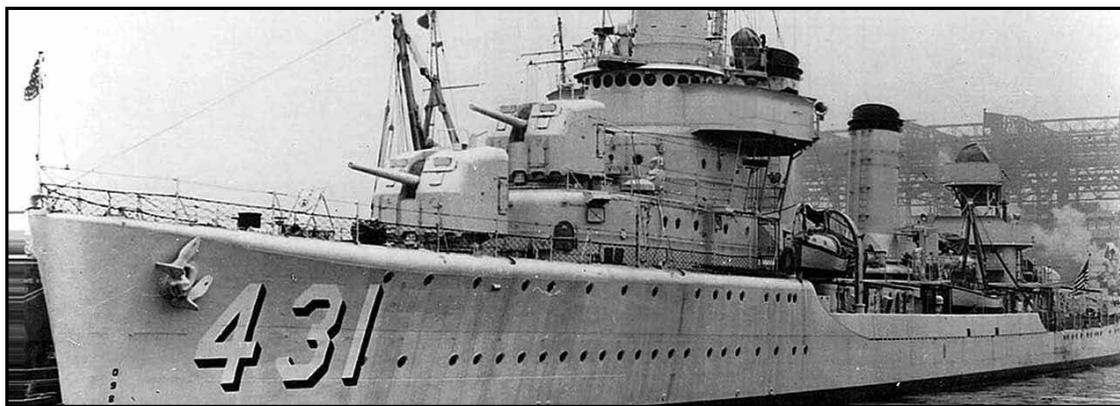
By THOMAS F. MULVOY JR.  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

On Sept. 2, 1945, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, presiding over the Japanese surrender on the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, formally closed the books on World War II with the words, "These proceedings are closed." They were hardly the last words to be said about what continues to be seen as the worst catastrophe precipitated by humans in the history of the world – as many as 85 million deaths among military and civilian populations during a conflict that many historians suggest started with the signing of the treaty at Versailles by the defeated Germans in 1919 that formally ended World War I, the so-called "war to end all wars."

Official military and diplomatic reports in the immediate aftermath detailed the who, what, where, and how of the sprawl of war centered on the months between September 1, 1939 and Aug. 15, 1945, when Japanese Emperor Hirohito called on his subjects to lay down their arms, an outlay that was followed by the second-guessing of historians, memoirs, novels, biographies, movies, television series, and other dispatches that have continued to attract substantial interest worldwide ever since.

Among those trillions of words and photographs and films is a book titled "Unsinkable," an account of the wartime service of the destroyer USS Plunkett, named for a World War I naval commander, and its hardy crew that takes deep dives into the private lives and service on shore and at sea of five of its sailors as their ship engaged with the Axis forces in every invasion of Europe from Casablanca in November 1942 to Gela in Sicily, then to Salerno and Anzio in Italy in January 1944, then on, after substantial repair, to Omaha Beach in Normandy in June 1944, and finally in the Allied invasion of Southern France two months later.

The author, James Sullivan, a Maine resident with strong roots in Dorchester, South Boston, and Quincy, is a gifted storyteller whose devotion to detail in every aspect of the story he is telling demands



The destroyer USS Plunkett: Always ready for the next assignment.

US Navy photo



Above, John Gallagher in the backyard on Oakton Avenue in early 1942. At midnight on Dec. 7, 1941, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he showed up at the federal building in Boston's Post Office Square, ready to enlist.

Photo courtesy Gallagher family

a reader's consideration. He also has, as they say, skin in the game: a great-uncle who, firing away from his gun tub, gave his life in service to his country off Anzio Beach in January 1944 as he was fending off German airplanes and submarines that brought the war specifically to the Plunkett with devastating consequences – and as his brother Frank was engaged in the fight as a medic with the US Fifth Army on the nearby shoreline.

Along with John "Johnny" Gallagher, of an Oakton Avenue, Dorchester, family that saw four of its men serve during the war, the author uses the reporter's tools to high effect – official papers, letters between home and sea, witness accounts from the heat of battle, phone calls, and, in three cases, nonagenarian memories stretching back 70 years to when the men reminiscing were young and everything was ahead of them. They were:

- Edward J. Burke, out of a

small town near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, the captain of "Plunkett," as its crew called their home on the high seas. An Annapolis man, Burke generally played things by the book, earning widespread acclaim for how he handled his ship in combat. He liked to box, and occasionally welcomed sparring partners on the ship's crew to swap punches with him on the fantail.

- Lieutenant Kenneth R. Brown, from Chicago, another Annapolis grad. He with some regularity gave the captain grief – at risk to his career at times – but attracted only superlatives for the job he did as the "gun boss" while perched atop the ship guiding the firing of the batteries below

- James D. Feltz, from Overland, Missouri, a water tender and a fire room operative at general quarters to whose life and marriage the author brings the zeal and insight of a society page reporter.
- John P. Simpson, a farm

boy from near Atlanta who was the Plunkett's damage control officer. His main goal, he told the captain early on, was to get transferred to the Pacific, where the Navy was in charge. He got his wish, after a while.

From late 1942 on, the narrative moves along to a rhythm set to the tune of constant calls to battle stations as the ship took on assignment after assignment, crisscrossing waters rife with German ships and the armored sharks of the U-Boat service. The author occasionally administers a taste of the tedium that can beset a warship between assignments and during back-and-forth trips to ports of call 1,500 miles and more apart, but he never allows his readers to lose the sense that everyone on the ship is always on high alert for the deadly patches ever in the offing.

The long keystone chapter on the battle at Anzio is a masterly chronicle of chaos, courage under fire, pathos, and unremitting death at sea.

In the late afternoon of Jan. 24, 1944, the Luftwaffe launched a dozen or more bombers against the Plunkett. As the continual strafing for 25 minutes against the defensive fire of the ship's crew, one bomb, a 550-pounder, cratered through the main deck and into the guts of the ship, setting off a horrendous fire that left bodies and body parts strewn about the vessel and survivors trying to help the wounded while taking stock of the catastrophe.

The early tally over the next days out of the 285 men listed as serving on the Plunkett that month was 24 identified as dead, among them Johnny Gallagher of Oakton Avenue, Dorchester, his back fatally bloodied by shrapnel. There were 29 sailors called missing, meaning presumed dead.

Amidst all this, the USS Plunkett, the US Navy's "fightingest" ship, a fire and a mangled wreck, escaped the depths of the Tyrrhenian Sea and as soon as the surviving crew members made things ready, she began to move slowly toward safe harbor at Palermo. More battle station calls lay ahead.

•••

The Dorchester element in the story – what the Gallaghers, especially Johnny, were up to during the war – flows in and out of the narrative. Four of the five boys – Tom and Johnny and Frank and Joey – were in the service. The fifth, Charlie, married to Bernice Meehan, was selected by the local draft board as the Gallagher man who would stay back and take care of things at home along with his widowed mother Martha and his sisters Helen and Gertrude.

For years after the war, Frank would regale family gatherings by sharing the story of how he managed while on the ground with the Army at Anzio in January 1944 to make his way on the eve of battle onto the Plunkett, harbored nearby, and greet his brother Johnny – but only after he was given a public chewing out on deck by Captain Burke that was loud enough to alert Johnny to the soldier standing in front of his captain who was asking for him. The commander let Frank stay until the last minute, where the brothers embraced for their final time together.



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