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Eire Society's Mackey now knows what Famine Way marchers endured



Some 20 runners were lined up and ready to run in the "National Famine Way Ultramarathon" in August. Only 16 completed the 24-hour course, running overnight from the Famine Statues in Dublin to the National Famine Museum in Strokestown, County Roscommon. *Courtesy photos*

CASSIDY MCNEELEY
BOSTON IRISH STAFF

Most of the time it seems like there aren't enough hours in the day, but for President of the Eire Society of Boston, Tom Mackey, 24 hours seems plenty. In fact, earlier this month, from 9 a.m. on August 1 to around the same time the following morning, Mackey ran 105 miles from Dublin to Strokestown for the second-ever Famine Way Ultra.

But before this summer's race, there was a springtime dinner. On a Friday night in April, Mackey sat with 100 guests at the Omni Parker House for the 81st Annual Gold Medal Dinner and Award Ceremony.

"[The Eire Society of Boston] has this incredible Gold Medal Dinner we've hosted since 1945," said Mackey, 33. "Each year we have honored people who we feel have contributed profoundly to civilization. This past year was the Callery family, who founded the Famine

Museum as well as the Famine Way."

Between bites of food, Mackey learned about the Famine Ultra Way, and by the time his plates were cleared, he had committed to competing.

"I'm sitting at the head table; on one side of me, I have Carolín Callery, the honoree and the person who helped found all this. I lean over to her, and I go, 'I heard that there is this ultra marathon; I'm a runner, so I think I might want to do that at some point,'" Mackey told the Boston Irish. "On the other side of me I had the master of ceremonies for the occasion, and I guess he had overheard this conversation and went up and said to this room full of 100 Irish folks, 'I just heard our president is going to be running an ultra marathon.' I lean over to my girlfriend and said, 'Well, I guess we're going to Ireland in August.'"

Soon after, Mackey, who ran competitively at Adrian College in Minnesota and then competed in the Boston, Chi-

cago, New York, and Detroit Marathons, got right back into training. Over four months, he built up his weekly mileage.

While he mastered 26.2 miles, an additional 78.8 would prove to be quite the test.

The Famine Way follows the footsteps of the Strokestown tenants, men, women, and children who were marched from Roscommon to Dublin in 1847 after they failed to pay their rent. The 2026 race followed the path in reverse, beginning at the Famine Statues in Dublin and ending at the Strokestown Park Estate.

Twenty participants competed in the race, but only 16 completed the course in the allotted 30 hours. Mackey finished in the top half, placing seventh with a time of 24:46:07.

Earlier this summer, Mackey told the Boston Irish his goal was to finish the race between 16 and 18 hours. To do so, he planned to run for 30 minutes

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Seasoned marathoner Tom Mackey finished his 105-mile trek in seventh place, in 24 hours, 46 minutes, 7 seconds.

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A Time of Transition, and a Time to Celebrate

Fall has a way of arriving in Boston before you're ready for it. One week you're still catching the last of the summer light at Castle Island, and the next week, you're pulling a sweater on and noticing the leaves starting to turn in the Blue Hills. It happens every year, and yet every year it still catches us a little off guard.

For Boston's Irish, the change of season means something more than weather. Spring brought St. Patrick's Day, the parades, the parties, and the busiest stretch of our publishing calendar. Fall brings something quieter but just as important to us: Boston Irish Honors.

This year marks our 16th annual luncheon, and it has become one of the events I look forward to most all year long. On Friday, Oct. 23, we'll gather for lunch at the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum in Dorchester to recognize four people who represent the very best of what our community stands for.

- Martina Curtin, president of the Irish Cultural Centre of Greater Boston, has spent years building a home away from home for so many who came here from Ireland, the way her own family did from Clare.

- US Army Brig. Gen. Jack Hammond has devoted his post-military career to Home Base, caring for veterans and military families when they need it most.

- The Rev. Tom Kennedy has been a steady, familiar presence in our community for more than 50 years, as a churchman, a banker, and a philanthropist.

- Sam Kennedy, Tom's son and president of the Boston Red Sox, has shown what it means to lead one of the city's most beloved institutions while staying connected to people in the community.

Each of them has earned this recognition, and I hope you'll join us to celebrate them in person.

Some fifty individuals and families have been inducted into the "Boston Irish Hall of Honors" at our October luncheons since the Hall was founded in 2010. Proceeds benefit the Forry Foundation for



Brig. General Jack Hammond,
US Army (Retired)
CEO,
Home Base Institute



Martina Curtin
President,
Irish Cultural Centre
of Greater Boston



Rev. Thomas B. Kennedy
Chair Emeritus,
Sherrill House;
Episcopal Priest
(Retired)



Sam Kennedy
President & CEO,
Boston Red Sox;
CEO,
Fenway Sports Group

Boston Irish Magazine proudly
announces our distinguished inductees.

2026 Boston Irish Hall of Honors

Community Journalism, the nonprofit our family sponsors to keep independent, community-based local news alive at a time when so many newsrooms are disappearing.

Every ticket purchased, and every sponsorship pledged, goes directly toward that mission, keeping publications like Boston Irish Magazine and BostonIrish.com, and the stories we tell, strong and meaningful now, and for years to come.

Tickets are available now at bostonirishhonors.org, and I'd encourage you not to wait. This is one of the

few times each year when our whole community – families, business owners, elected officials, and old friends – gets to sit together at this beautiful setting on the shores of Dorchester Bay and celebrate our shared Irish heritage.

I hope to see you there on Oct. 23. Thank you, as always, for reading, and for supporting the work that we do.

Maureen Forry-Sorrell
Associate Publisher

Trump says united Ireland 'inevitable' during visit to Clare

By BOSTON IRISH STAFF

President Donald Trump caused a political uproar during a two-day visit to Dublin and County Clare (Sept. 12-13) when he said that a united Ireland was "inevitable" and "may as well happen now."

His remarks in response to a reporter's question prompted sharp reactions in the Republic, Britain, and Northern Ireland. They constitute the most explicit support for the reunification of the island made by a sitting US president since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

Trump was primarily in the country to attend the Irish Open, which was held at his golf course in Doonbeg, Co. Clare

"I don't want to cause any problems, but I will tell you, I'd love to see it unified," he said on Sept. 12 during a joint appearance with Taoiseach

Micheál Martin in Dublin.

"I've always loved the people of Ireland and it just seems to me that you have Northern Ireland and you have Ireland and it would seem to me that one of the naturals [of] all time is put them together," Trump said the next day at Doonbeg, according to The Irish Times. "Many people agree."

Asked later whether he understood that there was a backlash caused by his comments, Trump replied: "I love my comments." Asked for a timeline, he said: "I think it should happen."

Unionist leader Gavin Robinson of the DUP said: "Northern Ireland's constitutional future will be decided by the people of Northern Ireland, not by commentary in London, Dublin, or Washington."

A spokesperson for British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said that his government would "stick to the Good Friday Agreement 100 percent," adding that a border poll should be considered only if public opinion shifts sufficiently to warrant one.

During an Aug. 27 visit to Belfast, Burnham declared such a referendum "off the table," saying all parties should instead concentrate on the cost of living and public services rather than another potentially divisive ballot question.

Former Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams, while noting the party's strong



President Trump and Irish President Catherine Connolly met for a chat on Sept. 12. Earlier, opponents of Trump's visit left a message in the sand on a beach in Dublin Bay.

President Connolly office photo; RTE News photo

differences with Trump on many other issues, welcomed the remarks. He told RTE that the US president's position reflected broad North American sentiment toward unity, particularly among the Irish diaspora.

Trump's visit also included a closely watched meeting on Sept. 12 with Irish President Catherine Connolly. In an official statement issued by her office, Connolly said Ireland's long-standing relationship with the United States "allows us to speak openly to one another."

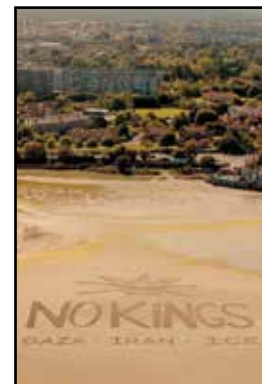
"We are in a world facing the existential threat posed by war and climate change, both of which are inextricably interlinked," Connolly said. "I conveyed the strong view of the Irish people that the normalisation of war and genocide can never be accepted," she said.

Connolly presented Trump with a St.

Brigid's Cross and a collection of poems by the late Irish poet Michael Longley that includes his sonnet "Cease-fire."

Trump returned to County Clare for much of Sunday, attending the final round of the Irish Open with Martin. The Trump visit drew thousands of protesters in Dublin and County Clare, while Irish authorities mounted a major security operation involving Gardaí, the Irish Defence Forces and the US Secret Service.

—REPORTER STAFF



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Gradually then suddenly: A Belfast Summer

Earnest Hemingway described bankruptcy as happening two ways: 'gradually then suddenly.'

So, too, with societal change.

Consider Belfast. Over the last few months, Belfast has experienced a type of time travel. First the city went on a frightening trip back to the bad old days of violence and hatred. Then, just weeks later, a historic music festival provided a vision of a long-imagined future of peace, harmony, and prosperity.

Bad old days revisited

In early June, images of organized pogroms of a neighborhood populated by Sudanese and other Belfast residents of color flashed across our screens. The spark for the systematic assault on the neighborhoods was a knife attack by a Sudanese man that left a victim with life-altering wounds. The event was exploited by race baiters inside and outside of Northern Ireland, notably Tommy Robinson in the UK and Elon Musk of the USA. The burning of homes of ethnic minorities looked uncannily like Belfast in 1969, when loyalists burned Catholic families from their homes. The only difference seemed to be that sectarian hatred had been repurposed and packaged as racial hatred.

The June outrages were followed by the annual loyalist marching season that celebrates King William of Orange, culminating on the 12th of July with massive bonfires in unionist/loyalist enclaves. Over the years the bonfires have added certain hateful embellishments to their towers of wooden pallets collected for this purpose throughout the year. Images and effigies of the enemy du jour are affixed to the pyres. In the recent past, Irish Republicans, the pope, the Irish Tricolor, Irish and EU politicians (especially during Brexit) were set ablaze.

Last year, bonfires in Tyrone included models of small zodiac boats with black and brown mannequins seated aboard. Scrawled on the zodiac was the slogan of far right Nigel Farage and other British hate merchants: 'Stop the Boats.' To parody the suffering of migrants and refugees is ghoulish but is somehow both shocking and unsurprising.

This year's Tyrone bonfires included the torching of models of mosques perched atop the stacks of wooden pallets that stretch into the sky.

Crosswinds: When we first moved to Dublin, I was amazed that oftentimes when I looked skyward, I could see clouds moving quickly in one direction and then, higher up, another layer of clouds rushing in the opposite direction. It can feel like being on the deck of a ship in a swirling squall. Hatreds can work that way, too: for at least a decade there have been confusing crosswinds of animosities and allegiances among northern unionists and loyalists.

Irish Republicans support the cause of the Palestinian people and identify with their painful history of murder, dispossession, and colonization. Irish republicans display Palestinian flags prominently in their neighborhood and at their rallies. In response to this,



loyalists began to reflexively display Israeli flags in counter-protest, not because they care necessarily about Israel but because they want to do the opposite of Irish Republicans.

Today, you can see Israeli flags flying from Belfast to Derry. Concurrently, loyalist groups in Northern Ireland have been increasing their cooperation with nativist, anti-immigrant, pro-Brexit groups on "the mainland" (Britain). This unholy alliance has resulted in some confusion when the groups come together.

When English nativists join Northern Irish Loyalists for rallies in Belfast, the English are horrified to find themselves marching under Israeli flags.

Apparently no one explained to the loyalists in Northern Ireland that English bigots, whether they are anti-Catholic, anti-Muslim or just run-of-the-mill racists, are usually also deeply antisemitic. Being photographed under the star of David flags is not something they relish.

In a way it is humorous to see their hatreds run past each other like clouds in the sky. Even the hatred can't agree with itself anymore.

Seeing homes and vehicles burned out and ever-larger bonfires on the 12th of July, one could be forgiven for thinking that 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.' But that would be incorrect. There are positive societal changes happening in the six counties, evidence that things are changing for the better. One shining example is the Fleadh (pronounced flah).

The Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann music festival

After the spasm of racially motivated violence and annual displays of sectarian hatred, Belfast hosted the Fleadh Cheoil. It was a spectacular success and restores hope that a future of love and music is possible and might be arriving to Belfast faster than most dared to hope.

The Fleadh was started in 1951 in Mullingar to celebrate and promote Irish culture and music, specifically

Irish traditional music. Every year, a new location is chosen for this multi-day event of fiddles, banjos, harps, concertinas, guitars, and sing-a-longs. In 2026, for the very first time, Belfast was chosen to host the festival. After the early summer turmoil it was exactly what the community needed.

The annual event is explicitly non-political but as we all know, in Northern Ireland everything has the potential to be political, even breakfast. It took me a couple of years to learn that Protestants keep their toasters in their cupboards while Catholics keep them on their kitchen counters. I am not sure why that is or what the advantage to either approach is. I also wonder what that means for new appliances like air fryers?

Which brings to mind the old saw about a Belfast man meeting a stranger in the city. "What are ye, a Protestant or a Catholic? Neither, I'm an atheist." Fair enough but are you a Protestant atheist or a Catholic atheist?

The organizers of the Fleadh did a brilliant job of enlisting the support of community leaders and politicians across the political spectrum. DUP politician Emma Little Pengelly spoke at the Fleadh of the need to embrace all traditions in Northern Ireland, adding that the festival is for everyone who calls this place their home. This was amazing considering DUP resistance to a different Trad event, The Feile an Phobail, a West Belfast Trad festival.

In 2021 a DUP politician accused the festival of 'pro-IRA singing.' While the Fleadh is a showcase for Irish Traditional music (Trad) the organizers also made room for loyalist pipe and drum bands for the first time. This sensitive approach to the unionist community, encouraging them to share their musical traditions rather than excluding them is a credit to the organizers.

The relative beauty of each tradition is in the eyes (and ears) of the beholders, but before I dismiss the loyalist marching bands that sometimes use music to justify and glorify foreign planters

asserting dominance over the native Irish, consider Ivan (Van) Morrison. I only learned that "Van the Man" came from a Protestant background when we moved to Ireland.

On March 7 of this year, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (the group that has organized and managed the Fleadh for the last 75 years) confirmed that Belfast will host the Fleadh again in 2027. Another first. In all the years of the Fleadh, it has never been in the same location two years in a row. Book your tickets!

It turns out that the decision to hold the festival in Belfast again next year was taken before the first note was played or the first crowds counted. The growth of interest in Irish Traditional music - as measured by increased enrolment in music classes, dance classes and the like - moved the governing body behind the Fleadh to make the two-year bet on Belfast based on anticipatory success not post 2026 success.

Can the arts really lead the way to a brighter future?

"When power corrupts, poetry cleanses. For art establishes the basic human truths, which must serve as the touch stone for our judgment." -JFK at Amherst on Oct. 26, 1963

Believing that the power of music can bring people together, transcend division, and heal the wounds of the past might seem like naive, 'hippie-dippie' idealism but the Fleadh Cheoil in Belfast was a runaway success. Optimistic projections by the organizers predicted between 750,000-800,000 thousand of footfall, but the actual number recorded was nearly 1.7 million as people flocked to Belfast for the 8-day festival. Even after one accounts for repeat visitors, it is an astounding total especially when you consider that there are only 1.9 million people who live in the 6 counties.

John Hume frequently quoted his father saying that 'You can't eat a flag' when explaining the limitations of patriotic fervor and the importance of 'spilling sweat not blood together.' The economic benefit to Northern Ireland of 1.7 million visitors in Belfast City for 8 days was significant. In addition to its social and cultural benefits, a huge infusion of tourism dollars to Belfast was very much welcome. It is estimated that 60 million pounds were injected into the local economy in one week, roughly 10 percent of the yearly tourism industry to Northern Ireland.

More exciting still is that with the tourism trade, most of the money stays in the local economy. Multinationals like Pfizer, Google, and Meta headquarter their European operations in Ireland but most of the money they earn does not stay in Ireland. They benefit the Irish economy by paying corporate taxes, employing Irish people, and investing in real estate, but these corporations might be bullied by an American president to repatriate to the US.

By contrast, Irish music belongs to the people of Ireland. In addition,

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An amazing Irish summer; Steve Lynch hangs on; the tragic consequences of ‘joyriding’ and youthful malaise

“I’d love to promise that the sun will shine on you, but I can’t!” This was my sign-off on this page in my last dispatch at the start of the summer, a message to all readers intending to make the trip “home” in July or August. As it turns out, I shouldn’t have been so negative and I couldn’t have been more wrong.

For we had the most amazing, dry, and warm stretch of weather in the quarter of a century I have lived here. Temperatures climbed to circa 90 degrees Fahrenheit on several occasions; it was “Boston hot.” July was the second hottest month since 1900 and reportedly the driest on record.

Many of the renowned lush green fields and golf courses morphed into dry, baked, brown, rock-hard surfaces. It was easy to bounce a basketball on the fairways of Wicklow Golf Club and on the typically sodden grassy field in our housing estate.

I often scoff at Irish people who go to the beach and swim when the air is pretty brisk and virtually no American would dream of getting into the icy cold sea, but there was good reason to of late.

The beaches were thronged daily. For once, I could completely understand. I was tempted enough to take the plunge myself a couple of times. Above all, the collective spirits of the entire country were lifted; it may have been unusual, yet we swiftly got accustomed to the sun. Our gang barbecued constantly, save for when we wanted a break from meat. And the tropical weather was a perfect justification for us to eat loads of ice cream and drink plenty of beer and cider – to cool off, of course.

With disclaimers that they weren’t trying to spoil everyone’s fun, forecasters and scientists did warn repeatedly that the very pleasant conditions had to be seen in the context of climate change. While we in Ireland felt all the benefits, the European continent experienced dangerously high temperatures, well in excess of 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Wildfires and thousands of deaths



A golf ball goes a long way when it lands on a baked-out fairway. Here at Wicklow Golf Club, a bounced ball would soar off the turf. *Larry Donnelly photo*

attributable to heat followed.

This deeply problematic, man-made phenomenon can no longer be dismissed or wished away, despite what the president of the United States and his acolytes say. It is an existential crisis. Climate chaos is on our doorstep and

serious measures, not mere gestures, are needed.

It may, therefore, be somewhat hypocritical to celebrate the Irish summer of 2026. Nevertheless, it was glorious. And I’m wistfully recalling those lazy, hazy days as I type these words, staring

out my office window at the rain and listening to the wind whistling on an early September afternoon in Galway.

...

I monitored Patrick Roath’s primary challenge to incumbent US Representative Stephen Lynch in Massachusetts 8th Congressional District avidly. It is my home turf and my uncle, Brian Donnelly, served much of this territory on Capitol Hill for seven terms. Roath is an intelligent and articulate young attorney who posed a genuine threat to the former ironworker from South Boston who succeeded the late Joe Moakley in 2001. We all know that the environs have changed dramatically in the intervening years.

Each death notice of a long-time resident with an Irish surname and every real estate transaction in the city and close-in suburbs arguably translated into a further erosion of Lynch’s base. Gentrification has had a transformative effect. By way of example, it is unlikely that my or any of my pals’ parents could have afforded to buy houses in East Milton, where we are so proud to be from. Generally speaking, the newcomers are well-educated and well-paid.

Their politics tend to be to the left of those who they purchased their properties from. Progressive Democrats have slowly but surely been replacing moderate and conservative Democrats. In this milieu, it appeared that Lynch could potentially be defeated. Wisely, Lynch and his team recognised their electoral peril and took nothing for granted. Even though his vote share dropped in numerous municipalities and he lost the sections of Boston in the district to Roath, the 71-year-old won the contest by approximately 10 percentage points.

Two quick points in the aftermath. First, it is notable that Lynch’s biggest margin of victory was in Brockton. This replicates a national trend: white leftists

(Continued page 6)

Another successful Kennedy Summer School

One of the highlights of the Irish political calendar, the Kennedy Summer School, was held over the last weekend of August in New Ross, Co. Wexford, from where the storied Kennedy family emigrated to Boston.

The school is an annual celebration of Irish and American history, culture, and politics. It attracts high-profile speakers from Ireland, the US, and farther afield.

This year, audiences heard from, among others, the young astronaut Abigail Mizzi, Brad Setser, an economist in the Obama and Biden administrations, the Democratic strategist and media pundit

Maria Cardona, and the legendary Irish broadcaster Pat Kenny.

Panel discussions covered everything from hurling, Ireland’s national sport, to new Irish writing, to transatlantic relations at a fraught juncture, to the domestic political state of play in Ireland and the US and plenty more besides.

The summer school was officially opened by the Irish Ambassador to the US, Geraldine Byrne Nason, who discussed her work to deepen and expand the ties that bind our two countries at a complex moment in time during her conversation with Professor

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Larry Donnelly, Pat Kenny and Eileen Dunne.

Courtesy Larry Donnelly

Another successful Summer School



Dancers cavort inside the Kennedy Summer School premises while outside revelers enjoy the sun. *Courtesy photos*



An amazing Irish summer; Steve Lynch hangs on; the consequences of ‘joyriding’

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don't fare as well as one might expect with working class women and men or with communities of colour. I believe this is largely down to relatability. They can relate to Lynch, born and raised in a blue-collar family in public housing in South Boston, more readily than to Roath, who grew up in a wealthy town in Connecticut and graduated from an Ivy League law school.

Second, as an unrepentant Democrat of the old school variety who is dismayed by my party's ideological trajectory – the legislation recently enacted at the State House to remove all restrictions on abortion is an appalling nadir, in my estimation – I am grateful that Steve Lynch prevailed. There are few Democratic politicians remaining who I can muster up any enthusiasm for. He is one.

...

In August, three sisters and a young child travelling in the wee hours to Dublin Airport to make a flight to England for a wedding suffered serious, possibly life-altering injuries when

their car was struck by another vehicle being driven at extraordinary speed in the wrong direction on the M9 in Co. Kildare. All five of its occupants, teenagers wearing masks, were killed.

This awful crash dominated news headlines, probably because we have all headed to the airport early to catch a plane and cannot fathom that such a fate could befall us. There was abundant anger at the young persons responsible. It was also suggested that their parents should be punished.

Many professed to having no sympathy for the deceased and the, frankly, vulgar scenes from the funerals provoked additional outrage. Politicians pledged to create new criminal offences carrying severe penalties to deal with “joyriders.” “Death-riders” is a more apt description.

Evidently, this has been happening for some time. These boys were loosely affiliated with the “Lucky Dip” gang, who steal cars and drive them extremely recklessly, daring Gardaí (Irish police) to pursue them and posting videos of their exploits on social media. One

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Mary Murphy of Boston College on stage in St. Michael's Theatre.

A particularly memorable event in 2026 was the speakers' lunch in the lush JFK arboretum outside of New Ross. The featured guest at the lunch was the American-born journalist Lara Marlowe, who has covered global conflicts and reported from war-torn regions for decades. She commenced her remarks by citing President Kennedy's example and his book dedicated to showcasing profiles in courage.

Marlowe went on to hail the brave people she has encountered in Ukraine and elsewhere, but she also condemned the cowardice that all too often is on display as the world seeks to get to grips with malevolent actors. It was a tour de force, and she received a lengthy standing ovation for her powerful, thought provoking words. And it was a great privilege for yours truly to get her to expand upon these themes in a public interview afterward.

My co-directors and I – led by former RTÉ newscaster Eileen Dunne and anchored by our *de facto* CEO, Sharon Doyle – are already planning for 2027. It would be wonderful to see some *Boston Irish* readers in New Ross next year. I promise that you will enjoy it because, as we are fond of saying to those who ask, there is something for everyone at the Kennedy Summer School. See kennedysummerschool.ie, for more details.

–LARRY DONNELLY



Facebook photo

Gradually and then suddenly: A Belfast Summer

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music festivals do not require energy and water-hogging data centers to be built. The arts are a renewable resource. Building on the success of the Fleadh, the possibilities are endless: hosting more music festivals, theater, food, cinema, and other visual arts festivals.

Music and the arts will not solve every problem in Northern Ireland but the success of the Fleadh is evidence that people are ready for change, and perhaps have already changed. Change is often sparked by the arts, led by the people and the politicians follow.

Darkness and Light

The darkness of violence that broke out in early summer was different from the grinding violence of the Troubles in one important respect: Violence today is not supported by the majority of the people of Northern Ireland or by the main political parties. The mainstream unionist parties, the UUP and DUP, as well as Sinn Féin, SDLP and the Alliance party were united in their condemnation of the attacks. Violence – sectarian, racial or political – has been pushed by the people to the edges of society and that is a monumental shift. The light of the cross community music festival is an expression of broad-based desire to get along. The arts have inspired the people of Northern, and the politicians will follow to craft a society beyond mere tolerance and towards love.

Gradually then suddenly.

Vincent Crotty and his community team key their work on two local art displays

BY CASSIDY MCNEELEY
REPORTER STAFF

The highly regarded portrait and landscape artist Vincent Crotty has shared his talents with the Dorchester community since settling down in the neighborhood in the 1990s, and this summer has been no exception.

For the last few months, Crotty, a native of Kanturk, Co. Cork, has split his time between Adams Village and the Neponset River Greenway, working on projects that will add color and character to the neighborhood. But he's not doing it alone.

In his work helping to beautify the Neponset River Greenway Trail, Crotty, who is married to the Boston-based Irish dancer Kieran Jordan, has invited community members to join in on the fun. "It's been an amazing experience working with volunteers that show up," he says. "Some of them have zero talent, some of them have loads of talent [but] they don't need talent. I'll draw out shapes with a huge brush, and I mix the colors, and they just fill in the shape."

Team Crotty has already worked on murals along the trail and are currently creating a new one by the Butler Street trolley stop.

"We started my mural four weeks ago," said Crotty. "It's a triptych, which means three murals. The central mural is 45 feet wide by 9 feet tall in this tunnel that goes beneath the trolley on the bike path. There's a 22-foot by 9-foot extra landscape on each side, all salt marsh, all sharing the same water level. The mural honors the beauty of the salt marsh and local flora and fauna, featuring coyotes, foxes, and chipmunks," he noted.

Crotty is no stranger to landscape or seascape pieces and has been recognized for such work with awards from Massachusetts Cultural Council, the John Stobart Foundation, Plein Air Magazine, and plein air competitions internationally.

"Even on the first day I was amazed by the amount that got done," he added. "All these different people ranging from three-year-olds who show up with their parents begging to paint, and we put them to work. There are people in their 80s and every age in between. It has been amazing to see how much gets done."

In the middle of that group is Crotty's summer intern, 24-year-old Joshua King, whom he calls his "right-hand man." He said he's passionate about passing his skills down to the next generation of artists.

"I became a teacher at Mass Art three years ago. I don't have kids, but once I started teaching, all these artistic young people came into my life, and it has been a complete revelation to me," he told The Reporter.

"The talents and the enthusiasm of these people who are 40 years younger than I am - they're great company, and I feel like this is a great place to give people an outlet for their talent."

"I've a lot of optimistic feelings



Portrait and landscape artist Vincent Crotty (right) with Massachusetts College of Art and Design graduate Yanelis Ortiz (center) and current senior Joshua King inside Session House. *Cassidy McNeeley photo*

about painting, and I'm trying to teach old-style things I learned in the trade school," said Crotty, who studied under instructors Noel McKenna and Gerry Fitzgibbon at Fás in Cork City, Ireland. "Time passes very quickly. I'm 61, and I'm trying to teach sign painting and decorative painting and all that stuff to younger people while I can because people did that for me when I was 22 and it completely changed my life."

Once in the US, Crotty studied painting intensively with artist John Kilroy. He also learned from Paul Rahilly at Massachusetts College of Art and attended Scottsdale Artists School in Arizona, where he studied with Mark Daily and David Leffel.

"Right-hand man" King has also joined Crotty on his second big summer project: transforming the former Scobies in Adams Village into Session House, an Irish pub that will focus on live music run by Frank Delaney, owner of the Broadside Tavern, who said that Crotty is the only person who could bring his vision for the new space to life.

Delaney imagines a dark, music-centric restaurant, and while the musicians will bring the sound, it's up to Crotty to curate the perfect environment.

"Vincent is a master at what he does," said Delaney, who has worked with Crotty for more than 35 years. "He's just brilliant at what he does. For me, it's just throwing out ideas; he has that ability to take a dream and put it on canvas."

In this case, the canvas just happens to be an entire restaurant setting, with plans to open in mid-October. And once again, Crotty isn't working alone. In addition to King, he has the help of recent Massachusetts College of Art and Design graduate Yanelis Ortiz, 22, and her boyfriend, Eddie Vargas.

"I started working with Vincent two years ago at the Irish Pastoral Centre. He wasn't even my teacher; it was through a friend that I met Vincent, and I've just kept working with him," said Ortiz.

Notes Crotty: "I need their opinions. Yanelis has her art degree, Joshua is close. I'm trying to replicate what happened to me when I was 22."

"I went to trade school, just for a year,



Vincent Crotty called on the community to help complete a mural on the Neponset River Greenway Trail. *Courtesy photo*



Session House owner Frank Delaney, left, and Vincent Crotty. *Cassidy McNeeley photo*

and it changed my life. I was a factory worker, and I was miserable. All of a sudden, this guy got me into trade school to learn sign painting, wood graining, and painting techniques, and it gave me enough confidence.

"After a year of that, I was able to

make a living without getting a job. I never wanted a job again. Obviously, I had to work, but I wanted my work to be creative and involving paint."

Now, through local projects, Crotty is showing young artists they can do the same.

The Brothers Gillen of Charlestown: a missionary, a naval commander, and a 'simple meter reader'

By SETH DANIEL
FOR BOSTON IRISH

The Charlestown neighborhood in 1950s Boston featured so many Irish American families from Donegal with the same last name that residents resorted to nicknames to differentiate between the many McLaughlins and Dohertys. But there were three brothers in one family who didn't need nicknames: The Gillen boys made names for themselves.

George (aka "Brother"), Bob, and Maurice ("Moe") all left St. Mary's School and parish and found high achievement that was grounded in their Irish American values, and a shared commitment to helping others.

"We were the old European traditional family where one went to the church, one went to the military and one stayed home," says Moe, now 87 and the lone remaining brother. "We were not encouraged to be followers. We had our own Irish-Catholic values. We also had the stubbornness of the Irish."

"We each in our own right exhibited different kinds of leadership. The three Gillen boys always moved ahead, and they didn't wait to see who was behind them...I'm not saying we were always right but we were always ready to fight."

Posthumous accolades continue to fall on the family. George, who died in 2017, became a Catholic missionary, taking the name Brother Francis Joseph. He is in early consideration for canonization by the Catholic Church for his deeply committed work over 71 years with the poor in the Philippines.

The late US Navy Commander Bob Gillen, Sr.'s decorated career including working in crypto communications decoding secure messages as a member of an elite security group and his posting as the 59th Commander of the USS Constitution. His service continues to shine eight years after his passing. He was honored last week (Sept. 9) in the Charlestown Navy Yard with a play boat named in his honor for kids on the HarborWalk.

And the ever-busy Moe remains highly connected in Charlestown and Boston politically and civically.

Bob Gillen Jr., a retired US Navy Commander with his own impressive resume, says his dad and his two uncles were remarkable for how they applied their Irish American values in the interest of others.

"Each one of them had a passion, and obviously the oldest brother chose the church, the middle brother chose the military, and Moe chose civic duties," he said. "Each was deeply involved in all of it. So, all three brothers somehow instantiated into them this ethos of wanting to live a life of service, and each one of them did it in his own particular fashion. And I think the 'Town' gave my father that background and the Navy gave him the canvas to paint things on."

With immigrant grandparents from Donegal and Cork, the brothers were indoctrinated into politics and community early on. George and Mary Gillen were close with prominent politicians like the former mayor of Boston, governor of Massachusetts, and US Labor Secretary Maurice Tobin.

Moe recalls his father, a City of Boston employee, was a "kind of advance man" for political people, but "more of a tough guy." Steeped in community activism and political aura, he and his associates used their access to help others whenever possible. That never changed, but family prospects did when their George Sr. died at age 47 when Moe was in grammar school and the other two sons had recently set off on their own pursuits in the church and the military.

"It was tough to go from the top to the bottom so fast" in terms of influence, says Moe, who as a kid caddied at Hatherly Golf Club in Scituate for Tobin and James Michael Curley.

"All of that clout pretty much disappeared," he notes, "but my mother impressed upon us to help others,



The missionary: Brother Francis Joseph, FM



The commander: Robert Gillen, Sr.



The meter reader: Morris "Moe" Gillen.

and we were obligated to do something."

It wasn't long before they found their footing in Charlestown, and around the world.

The Missionary

Brother Francis - known in the family as "Brother" - was the quiet one, who, Moe and his older sister, Irene Moffat, say, was born to serve others. He did so as a member of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God in a remote part of the Philippines for seven full decades, serving the sick and indigent in a psychiatric hospital that he founded - the Hospicio de San Juan de Dios in Bulacan, Philippines.

Moffat was closest to him, but she still was surprised to learn this summer that the Brothers of Mercy were seeking testimony to support his potential cause for canonization, i.e., sainthood, in the Catholic Church.

"They're investigating for canonization. Can you believe it?" she said during the ceremony for her brother Robert, on Sept. 9. "Oh God, they were awful growing up, though. They were aggravators, boys aggravating the girls. But Brother Francis and I were close. We all thought he was a saint anyway and the brothers in the Philippines did, too."

She recalled how she and Brother would tease their older sister, Barbara, early on Saturday mornings in the home. "He played the piano, and the piano was up against the wall of my sister's bedroom," she recalled. "I'd say to Brother on a Saturday morning, 'Brother, play Glow Worm.' If you know that song, then you know why my sister would come out screaming, 'Mom!'"

Moe recalls how at age 12, Brother collected unused medications from family physicians in Charlestown, and gave them to the Little Sisters of the Poor convent to use with indigent patients at their hospital in Somerville.

So, it wasn't a surprise when, at 16 and only a sophomore, Brother Gillen left the former Commerce High School in the Fenway to join the church - eventually leaving for Rome and then the Philippines and rarely coming back. He was so devoted to the poor that he refused to take a vacation. His last visit to Boston was in 1988.

"Brother never took off the collar," recalls Moe, who was often his driver. "He was always a brother and always doing God's work even when they forced him to take a vacation. He never took a vacation from his vows."

The Commander

Bob Gillen, Sr. grew up hanging out at the Monument in Charlestown "pointing tourists in the right direction" - giving them "information" - in exchange for coins. He was known as a great talker, a charmer, but also the tough one of the family - a hockey player who was a fine skater and attended English High School. With service embedded in his character, and military service on his mind, he left high school in February of his senior year to join the Navy.

"We grew up on a battlefield in Charlestown and it was drilled into us support for service of country and what sacrifice meant," says Moe. "The first veterans and KIAs of the American army were under our feet at Bunker Hill."

Bob, Jr., said his father was unique in his abilities from a young age. "Each one of the brothers had the background of their father and how things had worked in Charlestown and in Massachusetts," he said. "When my father looked at it, I think he wanted to see if he could do something on his own."

"He went in the Navy and he was tested and because of his brain, he was able to test into a very elite part of the Navy security group using codes and ciphers. Then ultimately being selected as special duty crypto

officer, and on up through the ranks he went.”

During his time in the Navy, Bob Sr.’s Irish roots came into the picture, eventually producing the love of his life, his wife “Paula,” during a visit to Dublin. She lived right next to the Guinness factory, where her father worked.

“That’s probably what drew him to Ireland - to go look for the roots, and then he met my mother,” says his daughter, Eileen Dannemiller. “He met her in Ireland, so he had to keep enlisting to keep going back until she would marry him. After six years, he finally convinced her to marry him, and we were all over the world growing up in the Navy.”

After an elite career, Commander Gillen had that final posting – Charlestown, and the USS Constitution’s 59th leader. He didn’t just take the position; he revolutionized it, organizing “Old Ironsides” as a functioning ship that sailed out into the Harbor. In 1980, he was at the helm when, for the first time, it led a historic parade of ‘Tall Ships’ into Boston Harbor.

“He immediately took the things that the Navy has, and he said, ‘Look, the Constitution’s a regular ship. It needs the power of a ship,’” said Gillen, Jr. “He pulled back from administrative duties, and he empowered the ship. He helped the Constitution do things that it could never do.”

In his retirement, Bob Sr. was the leader of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program at the former West Roxbury High School, where thousands of kids from all over Boston would come to know and respect him.

“Bob had to learn to keep his mouth shut because he got sensitive information even before the big shots,” said Moe. “Brother was a simple, quiet man who did God’s work. Two of the three brothers learned to keep their mouths shut but the baby brother, Moe, didn’t quite get that lesson – although I can keep my mouth shut sometimes.” He smiled, then laughed.

The ‘Simple Meter Reader’

The Gillen kitchen table on St. Martin Street in Charlestown is a familiar gathering place for many politicians, family members, friends, and a host of “troublemakers,” as Moe noted. He recalled that the kitchen setting was where Irish families in Charlestown sorted out life. “We’d sit there and settle whatever world crisis, and everyone got their say,” he said.

Earlier this month, while eating potato salad and wearing a shirt reading, ‘Charlestown – God’s Country,’ that bore a Celtic cross flanked by American and Irish flags, he thumbed through text messages from Mayor Michelle Wu, state Sen. Lydia Edwards, members of the Lions Club, residents looking for help, and an email with unsolicited advice to Republican gubernatorial candidate Mike Minogue.

“Moe has always been known for his sense of humor,” said Moffat. “Everyone knows him in Charlestown and if they need something, they’ll call him. He’s actually named after Maurice Tobin, but nobody knows that.”

As the baby of the family, Moe stayed home and built a blue-collar career with Boston Gas while raising



Commander Bob Gillen, Sr. (right) on the USS Constitution was photographed by Bill Brett for his book, ‘Boston Irish.’



The Gillen family gathers in the play boat on the Charlestown Navy Yard Harborwalk on Sept. 9. The boat was placed by Chuck and Ann Lagasse of Charlestown Marina in honor of Cmdr. Bob Gillen, Sr.

a family and remaining fully in the soup when it came to current affairs. Gifted with an edgy humor and wit, he was a prominent activist in the 1970s busing era – he still refers to it as “forced busing” – trying to mediate between the sides and working behind the scenes to advance the Charlestown agenda of keeping Charlestown kids in Charlestown schools using the US Constitution as a basis for his argument.

“Our grandparents came from a depressed area in an oppressed country,” he says. “It was impressed on us in the ‘Town’ how important it was that we lived in a country with so much freedom and we cherished that freedom. That’s one reason we fought forced busing, but we fought it within the frameworks of the Constitution. We had our own rights and we were going to exercise them.”

Well before that, though, Moe had been an advance man like his father, but without the “tough guy” aspect. He remains so today – an unlikely political

operative from a blue-collar background dealing with highly placed and formally educated people with his only pedigree item being a Charlestown High School diploma.

Often, when things would happen behind the scenes and Moe was the suspected antagonist, his response was, “I’m just a simple meter reader.”

The name stuck among his friends and family.

“No one ever saw my hand at work,” he explained. “What ‘simple meter reader’ says is I give credence to the blue collar guy like me; that we can think for ourselves and don’t have to depend on these alleged experts. We are quite capable of running a family and having good social values.”

Moe remains adept at picking a winner and finding political allies to advance his ability to help others in Charlestown and beyond. One of those unlikely allies was state Sen. Jarret Barrios – an openly gay legislator from Cambridge who

represented Charlestown from 2003 to 2007. Moe not only supported him, but he also took a position on his staff – far from Barrios in political thought, but close to him in service.

For Moe Gillen, that dichotomy shows that the world is just one big kitchen table, where anyone is welcome to sit and hash things out – no matter what their opinions might be. And particularly if the result is the common goal central to the Gillen brothers: supporting those in need.

“When I worked for Barrios, helping people wasn’t a learned skill because I had that going in and we helped all sorts of people,” he said.

“If nothing else,” he added, “the three Gillen boys had the ability to work with people on common issues, even if they disagreed with them, and at the same time, respect people for who they are regardless of their political views.”

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Chris Muse, teacher, justice, author, lays out culture of courthouse justice in Massachusetts

‘The Murder on Brewster Flats’ features ‘Billy Boston,’ defense attorney

By Ed Forry

For 50 years, Chris Muse maintained an active career, serving for several years as a Boston schoolteacher, and after Suffolk Law School becoming a public defender, a labor attorney, and a Superior Court judge, serving for 17 years until his mandatory retirement from the bench several years ago.

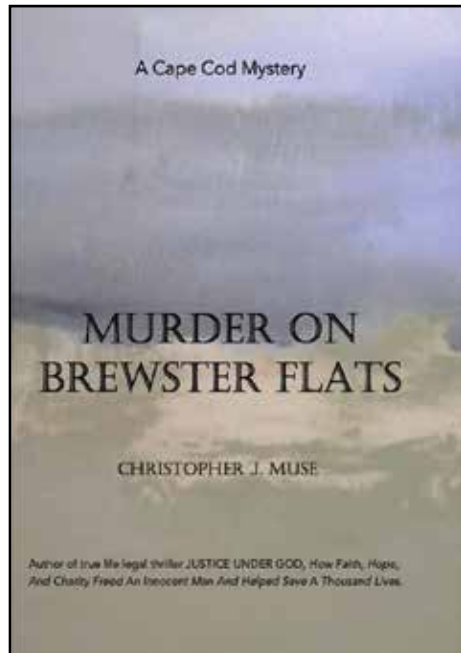
He continues his legal work as an adjunct professor teaching trial practice at Boston College while living peacefully on Cape Cod. In semi-retirement, he has turned his mind to fiction and produced a self-published book – “The Murder on Brewster Flats,” the story of a fictional Boston defense attorney known as “Boston Billy,” who takes on a complicated murder case on the Cape.

In many ways, the character appears to be a self-portrait painted with the author’s words. Early this month, we had a question and answer conversation about his book.

What’s “The Murder on Brewster Flats” all about?

Well, it’s a fun novel that I wrote because I wrote the serious novel, “Justice Under God,” and found out that I really like writing and decided to keep doing it. This is a book about Massachusetts courthouse justice. It’s been described as being a fun read by some, and others have told me it’s very, very instructive on what the law is and how it’s applied.

The lead attorney, William “Boston Billy” O’Neill, grew up in Savin Hill, went to English High and Boston State and Suffolk Law School, and then put his feet into the business of trying cases and has become very successful. His cases are always interesting, and in this one, he’s defending a guy that he used to fish with on Cape Cod who was charged with the murder of a very prominent businessman.



So where did the name Boston Billy come from?

Billy is actually the name of a fella that I’ve known for years. His name is Billy Doherty and he worked on Wall Street. And people downtown found this guy who was one of the nicest human beings in the world, one of the most engaging people in the world. And people know him as Boston Billy, so I stole that name from him.

Does the name relate to being a defense attorney?

No. It means everything to a friend of mine, and I just love the name Boston Billy. There isn’t a person, an event, or a description of a courthouse or a court person that is not a composite of many others that I’ve known for 40 years. I was a defense lawyer. I was a Boston schoolteacher. I defended the Boston detectives. I defended court employees as a labor attorney.

And I had a hundred thousand stories

that I that I saw or heard when I was wandering through courthouses in Massachusetts, and later on as a judge in the Superior Court. I was a labor attorney and a public defender. So I kind of lived the life and saw all the things that I wrote about in this book.

So it’s a work of fiction, but drawn on real life. Do you plan to do a series of these books?

I’ve already started it. I’ve got a murder that I’m gonna solve pretty soon that happened in a fictitious park and also a murder that happened in Harvard Square. And it’s the same guy, Boston Billy, doing the same kind of really dogged work to defend the innocent. And also to have a lot of fun representing some people that are guilty, but not bad people.

Are you surprised that people are buying your book?

I’m delighted with the response. I spoke to a trial lawyer this morning, and she said she loved it. It’s a fun book. I’ve got great responses from my colleagues at BC Law. And you know, it’s meant to be fun. I would say this is the twilight of my life, where I want to remain engaged and I’m doing stuff that’s all law related, whether it’s mediating cases or teaching law students or writing about the trial court.

I dedicated the book to all of the people that I know that have worked in the courthouses, thousands of police and prosecutors and judges, because they do the yeoman’s work to provide for social justice, and that’s my dedication to them.

And it’s about courthouse justice. It’s about what happens in the courts all across the state that I’ve been privileged to work in whether it’s representing employees or trying cases or judging cases.



“The Murder on Brewster Flats” by Christopher J. Muse

An excerpt

“No one was looking at me except the sign that forbade swimming across the hundred feet of the narrows of the harbor.

As no boats were in sight, I took the plunge and continued on Cold Storage Beach for a mile until I came to Quivett Creek, which because of the early morning low tide was just a three foot deep short crossing to the other side.

“A few minutes later, I was standing at the beginning of the Brewster Flats. It stretched at least ten miles in front of me, and from the shoreline to the low tide ocean, it was at least a half mile, maybe in some spots a mile of sand, that would get swallowed up by the change of tides. It was magnificent.

In the morning there were walkers. In a few hours, it would be beach umbrellas and blankets set out in small colonies separated by swaths of sand. Little kids would sit in tidal pools as the older ones past rubber footballs and frisbees. Moms and dads would roll up the carpet, so to speak, in late afternoon, and return the near-empty Flats to walkers and a few who found a quiet spot with beach chairs to watch the sunset.

This was when I fell in love with Brewster Flats.”

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Session House sets fall timeline for debut at Adams Corner site

By Bill Forry
Executive Editor

A new pub with hearty lineup of traditional Irish and other live music will open under new management in Adams Village in a space left vacant by the abrupt closure of Scobie’s earlier this year.

Session House, a new concept from Esteemed Hospitality, LLC, is expected to open this fall, according to managing partner Teresa Murphy. Her partner, Frank Delaney, is currently supervising renovations to the space. The restaurant will put a strong emphasis on live music, including traditional Irish music as well as contemporary performers. Murphy said the owners hope to bring a new music format to Adams Village while creating a destination for dining, drinks, and gatherings.

“Along with great food, craft beer and cocktails, we will have live musical guests and performers that will make this the premier spot for social gatherings in Dorchester,” Murphy said.

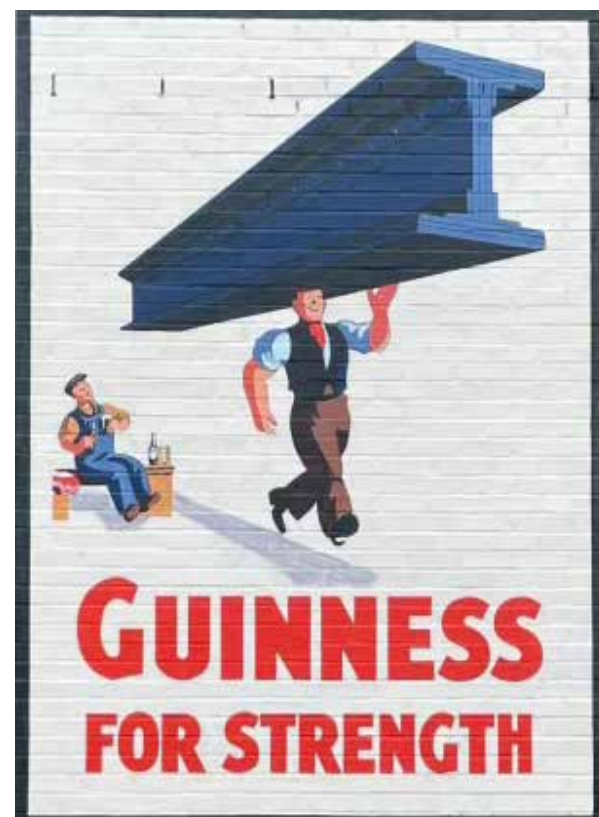
Its food program will feature an elevated take on pub fare, Murphy said, drawing inspiration from

both Irish and New England traditions. The bar will offer whiskey, cocktails, wine, and a selection of beers.

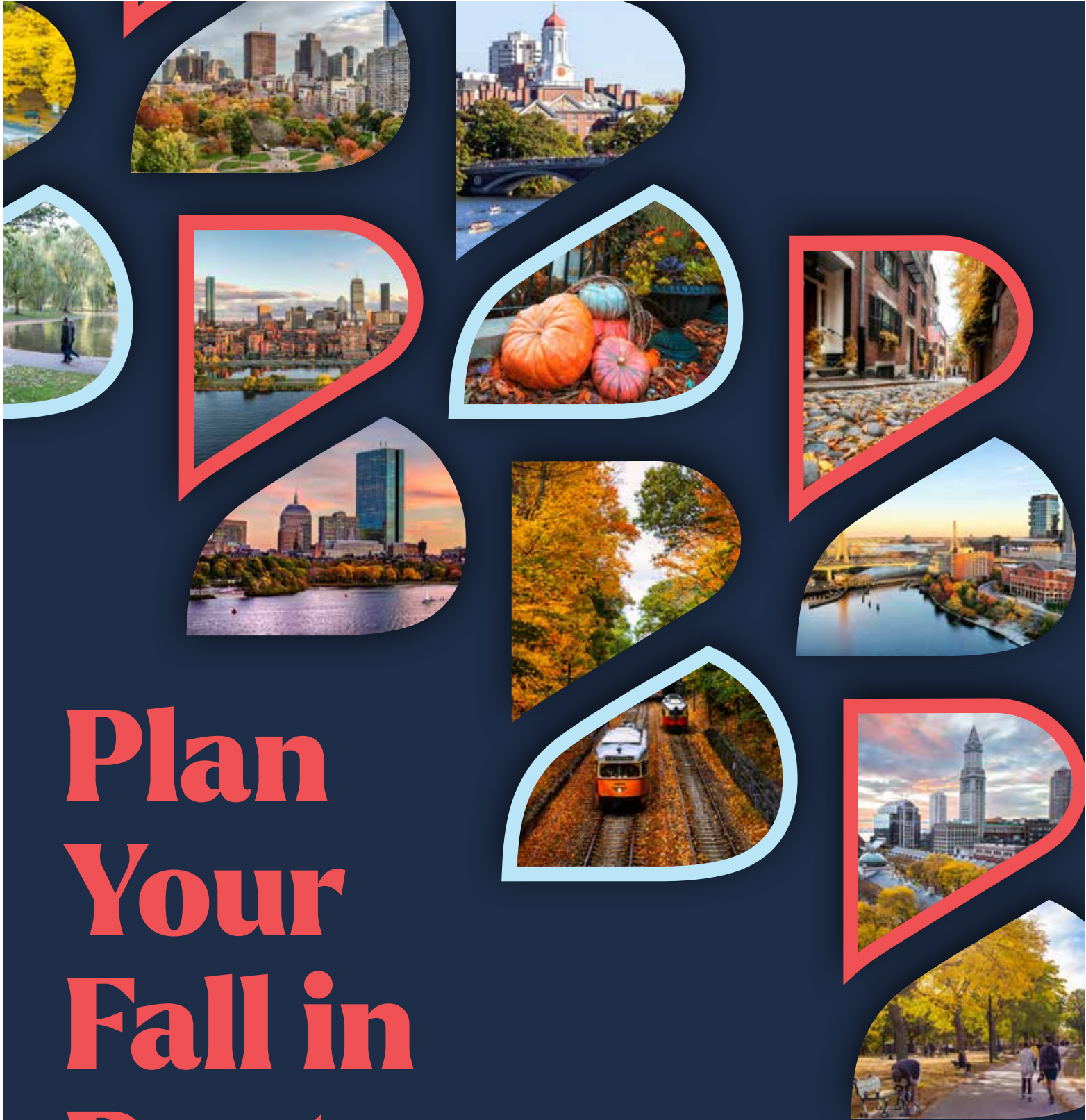
Live music will be central to the operation. The owners are building the concept around what they call “SOUL CEÓL,” or “soul music,” with traditional Irish sessions sharing the calendar with contemporary performances.

The interior is planned with dark tones, gold detailing, and traditional musical imagery, according to a press release shared with The Reporter.

The name “Session House” is also intended to reflect the concept: “Session” refers to the Irish tradition of musicians gathering informally to play together, while “House” evokes the idea of a welcoming neighborhood home. “Come for the music. Stay for the soul,” reads the venue’s tagline. Session House will replace Scobie’s Cafe & Bar, which opened in September 2024. The family-run eatery and bar, owned by Anne and John Lydon, announced in January that its Adams Village location would temporarily close beginning Feb. 2 for renovations, with plans at the time to reopen in the spring.



A mural outside the former Scobie’s. Bill Forry photo



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LEND AN EAR

New/recent music releases of note

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

• Caitlin Finley and Will Woodson [<http://woodsonfinley.com>], "Once Through the Hall"

Principal Personnel: Caitlin Finley (fiddle), Will Woodson (uilleann pipes, flute)

Distinctive Tracks: "The Geese in the Bog"; "The Blackbird"; "The Plains of Boyle/Lawson's"; "Willie Taylor's March/The Harp That Once Through Tara's Hall"; "Kiss the Maid Behind the Barrel/Trim the Velvet"

Arguably, anyone who plays traditional music helps to preserve and promote history, but the Maine-based duo of Finley and Woodson makes a point of upholding the legacy of Irish-American music from the 1920s and '30s, drawing on recordings from the likes of Sligo-born New York fiddlers Michael Coleman, Paddy Killoran, and James Morrison, as well as Donegal fiddlers Mickey and John Doherty, and Leitrim-born flute player John McKenna, among others. Their previous album, "The Glory Reel," with accordionist-pianist Chris "Junior" Stevens, evoked the music of dance halls, vaudeville theaters, and house sessions from that era.

On "Once Through the Hall," Woodson and Finley again showcase this storied brand of Irish traditional music while imbuing it with a freshness and immediacy. As before, they play in unison and – for most of the tracks – very up-tempo, but never sound frenzied or out of control. While their arrangements are basic and straightforward, each uses elements of their respective instruments to add texture: Finley's periodic switch to the low octave makes for a pleasing contrast, while Woodson employs his pipes' regulators judiciously for rhythm as well as harmony, and his flute-playing often has an almost percussive quality to it.

They start off with a blazing pair of reels, "Peeler's Jacket/Duke of Leinster," which serves as homage to a 1929 recording of that medley by the celebrated fiddle-pipes duo of Morrison and Mayo's Michael Carney. Woodson and Finley also find nuggets from other sources, perhaps not as well-known but no less venerable – notably a delightful trio of flings ("Pride of Clyde No. 1/Drummer Boy/Pride of Clyde No. 2") credited to recordings by the Four Provinces Orchestra of Philadelphia. (They also provide informative and interesting liner notes for each track.)

Those who like hearing, and learning, different versions or settings of familiar tunes will enjoy the duo's performance of "Geese in the Bog" as played by Carney – earlier in the album they include a more well-known iteration as part of a medley with



Caitlin Finley and Will Woodson – "Once Through the Hall"

"Tom Busby's," named for a student of Carney – and a set by piper Tom Ennis that combines "Kiss the Maid Behind the Barrel" and "Trim the Velvet" into one eight-part reel.

When it comes to sheer expressiveness and emotionality, Finley and Woodson excel on a pair of marches, combining "Willie Taylor's March" (which has an intriguing alternate title of "I Won't Be a Nun") with "The Harp That Once Through Tara's Hall," a popular tune in New York City dance halls during the 1920s and '30s. While marches – no matter their origin – tend to have a strong martial element, obviously, it's also true that they are meant to evoke pride and camaraderie, and Finley and Woodson mine those characteristics to great effect.

As a change of pace, there are also solo tracks: Finley on the reels "Rakish Paddy/Sweeney's Dream," while Woodson's piping is spotlighted on "The Blackbird" (the air, not the hornpipe) and his flute on the reels "McKenna's Fermoy Lasses/Bloom of Youth."

One of the best things about this album, and Woodson and Finley's body of work in general, is how it reminds us that there have always been innovators and tinkerers who put their own stamp on the Irish/Irish-American music tradition, and helped it to thrive and endure.

• Arise & Go [<http://ariseandgo.org>], "Moments of Light"

Principal Personnel: Ellie Goud (fiddle); Tim Ball (guitar, foot percussion,

harmony fiddle);

Michael Roddy (uilleann pipes, border pipes, small pipes, whistles)

Notable Guests: Cara Wildman (bodhran), Nicholas Williams (accordion), Joey Arcuri (bass, cello)

Distinctive Tracks: "Bonnie Ellen Owen/Samuel the Weaver/Pat & Al's/Chloe's Passion"; "Jos Cormier/Jock Broon's 70th"; "Munlochy Bridge/The Editor's Favourite/Portencross Castle/Mackinnon's Other Rant/Attwood O'Connor's/Dr. Alasdair MacKenzie's/The Lassie's Fashion/The Primrose Lass"

Arise & Go connects the Irish and Scottish instrumental traditions with those of Atlantic/French Canada in inspired, cohesive and often inventive fashion. This much-anticipated follow-up to the trio's 2019 debut, "Meeting Place," displays a band that has, if anything, upped its game: the musicianship is solid; the selection of material – both traditional and contemporary – is canny; and their arrangements entertain without overshadowing the music. Roddy tends to command most of the attention by his mastery of three different varieties of bagpipes (his collection of reeds must warrant a room all its own), but there's no overlooking Goud's exuberant fiddling or Ball's adroit rhythmic turns.

All these virtues are well represented on the track which opens with Roddy playing small pipes on a 2/4 quickstep march, "Bonnie Ellen Owen," over a swirling fiddle riff and steady guitar in back. Fiddle and guitar take the lead

second time through, and then Ball triggers the transition into the festive A-mixolydian jig "Samuel the Weaver" followed by the equally jovial Liz Carroll composition "Pat & Al's" – led by Goud – before a dramatic turn into a 9/8 Angus MacDonald jig, "Chloe's Passion," jumpstarted by Roddy's highland pipes and Cara Wildman's bodhran.

After pulling together such a diversity of moods and textures, the next track feels more sedate, but certainly not lacking for vitality: Roddy's "Voices Late at Night" and a pair of Acadian/French Canadian tunes ("Avila LeBlanc" and "Cos Reel") with him switching to low whistle and Ball doubling on foot percussion, while Goud's fiddling provides that characteristic Maritimes lift; an appearance by Nicholas Williams, accordionist for Quebecois trio Genticorum, adds to the north-of-the-border ambiance.

Another set comprises a trio of tried-and-true Irish reels that Bothy Band aficionados in particular will appreciate (all three tunes were stalwarts of the group's repertoire). The track opens with a lovely uilleann pipes-led moderate-tempo overture segueing into Junior Crehan's "Otter's Holt"; Goud joins in on a reprise of the opening passage the second time through, and then the band heads into the A-dorian "Curragh Races" and the D-mixolydian "Road to Lisdoonvarna."

The band's talent for creative, just-plain-fun arrangements is particularly notable on "Jos Cormier/Jock Broon's 70th." Ball's pulsing rock-star strumming and foot percussion sets up Goud's entry on the first reel (widely known as "MacDonald's March"), composed by fiddler Joe Cormier, a Waltham resident with Acadian roots who grew up playing Cape Breton style. After Roddy joins in on highland pipes for a couple of run-throughs, they return to the build-up, adding Goud's and Ball's fiddles to enhance the verve, until Roddy takes off on an up-tempo version of "Jock Broon's," a piece by talented, tragic Gordon Duncan.

Capping the album is a mammoth set of – count 'em – eight different tunes, including two from the Prince Edward Island tradition ("Portencross Castle" and "Attwood O'Connor's"), a Cape Breton strathspey ("Editor's Favourite") and a Scottish reel, "Lassie's Fashions," that swings between A major and F-sharp minor. They pull it off with aplomb, and in less than six minutes to boot.

Although mainly based in New York state, all available information (in other words, a Google search) indicates Arise & Go has not yet appeared in the Greater Boston area. Seems like it's high time to remedy that.

What's Happening Onstage This Fall

BY R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH



"Eleanor"

Through Oct. 11,
Central Square Theater

Elliot Norton Award-winner Paula Plum stars in an intimate one-woman portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt, the most consequential First Lady in American history. Audiences have a front row seat to her reflections on love, loss, politics, and purpose as Eleanor revisits her marriage to Franklin, her activism, and her stunning role in shaping modern human rights. Centralsquaretheater.org



King Richards' Faire

Weekends through Oct. 25,
Edaville Entertainment Venue

Offering 70 daily liveshows, 11 stages and 110 artisans, King Richards Faire returns for its 45th royal season of fun and tomfoolery. With knights, jesters, swordplay, whip-cracking marksmen, jousting on horseback, sharp-tongued jugglers, and comical Broadway parodies, the scenic kingdom is ruled with merriment by a majestic King and Queen. Huzzah, huzzah! Kingrichardsfaire.net



"All My Sons"

Sept. 18 - Oct. 18, Lyric Stage

In the Arthur Miller classic, it's summer, 1947. Joe Keller, a self-made businessman and respected pillar of the community, lives with his wife Kate in an idyllic neighborhood. Their younger son, Larry, is still missing after the war. When their oldest son announces his intention to marry Larry's childhood sweetheart, deeply buried truths find their way to the surface. Lyricstage.com



"Wicked"

Sept. 23 - Nov. 15,
Citizens Opera House

Is anyone really all bad or all good? What happened in the Land of Oz before Dorothy dropped from the sky? The untold story of the Witches of Oz continues to transfix audiences with its tale of two young women - one born emerald-green and misunderstood. And the other, bubbly and exceptionally popular. Their initial rivalry grows into the most unlikely of friendships. Like a handprint on your heart. boston.broadway.com



"William Tell"

Sept. 25 - Oct. 4,
Emerson Colonial

William Tell, the legendary archer best known for successfully shooting an apple off his son's head, heads a vibrant cast of characters who prove that ordinary people can be revolutionary together, and that love anchors us when the world turns upside-down. Rossini's final opera is as an epic ode to resistance, freedom, and the triumph of a united people over a tyrannical ruler. Boston Lyric Opera presents this heroic masterpiece in a fully staged Boston production for the first time ever. Sung in French with English supertitles. Blo.org



"Shear Madness"

Sept. 25 - Oct 11,
Greater Boston Stage Company

Boston's madcap hair salon returns with juicy gossip, razor-sharp laughs, and a MURDER! This record-breaking interactive whodunit comedy puts you in the barber's chair to count the clues, interrogate the suspects, and help crack the case. No two performances are ever the same, based

on the audience's sleuthing skills. Walk-ins welcome! Greaterbostonstage.com



"Covenant"

Sept. 25 - Oct. 17,
SpeakEasy Stage Company
"Covenant" is a Southern Gothic thriller about myth-making, moral panic, and the stories people choose when the truth is too inconvenient. Johnny "Honeycomb" James returns home famous, changed, and impossible to explain. In a town that remembers everything and forgives nothing, a good myth might as well be the truth. Speakeasystage.com



"Bat Boy: The Musical"

Sept. 25 - Nov. 8,
Umbrella Arts Center

It's an offbeat fable ripped from the tabloids! He's half-bat, half-boy, and he's thrust into the spotlight! In this camp horror comedy, a misunderstood monster seeks a place to belong. Taken in by a veterinarian and reviled by the locals, mild-mannered "Edgar" searches fiercely for a place he can truly be himself. The wild journey is a hilarious satire for the outsider in all of us. theumbrellaarts.org/



"Hamilton" Karaoke & Sing-Along Brunch

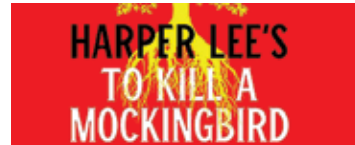
Sept. 26, City Winery

Get ready for a spirited Broadway Brunch where audience members take the stage and the whole room sings their favorites from "Hamilton!" You can sing live on stage or just join in from your seat. Don't throw away your shot . . . 'cuz this is the room where it happens! citywinery.com

"Monty Python's Spamalot"
Oct. 6 - 11, Wang Theatre



This Tony Award winning musical has killer rabbits, British nobility, French taunters, dancing girls, rubbery shrubbery, and of course, the Lady of the Lake. "Always look on the bright side," even when there's a cow flying past you. Bochcenter.org



"Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird"

Oct. 6 - Nov. 8,
The Huntington Theatre

Harper Lee's enduring, Pulitzer Prize-winning classic has been adapted for the stage by Aaron Sorkin ("The West Wing," "A Few Good Men"). When upstanding lawyer Atticus Finch seeks justice for a wrongfully accused man, he's tested by the limits of his virtue and the uneasy work of forgiveness in a world that's ruptured in two. Huntingdontheatre.org



"Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors"

Oct. 09 - Nov. 1,
Actor's Shakespeare Project

Award-winning Paul Melendy is The Prince of Darkness in this send-up of Bram Stoker's classic, described as a mash-up of Mel Brooks and Monty Python with just a dash of Rocky Horror. London's most naive real estate agent clashes with some of the most iconic characters in horror literature: Van Helsing, Renfield, Lucy, and of course, Count Dracula - a hunky, self-obsessed, pansexual, fitness-nut sex icon. Yup, just like Bram Stoker wrote. But don't sit there with your neck all exposed. actorsshakespeareproject.org

"Operation Mincemeat"

Oct. 13 - 25, Emerson Colonial
"Singin' in the Rain" meets "Strangers on a Train" in this



funny, fast-paced, and TRUE story of a secret mission in WWII. It's 1943 and the Allies are on the ropes. Luckily, they're about to gamble our futures on a stolen corpse. One of the best reviewed musicals in both London and New York, it's been called "A laugh-out-loud delight, with endless charm ... and an absolutely bonkers plot." boston.broadway.com



"Laura Benanti: Nobody Cares"

Oct 22 - 25,
The Huntington Theatre

She's known for her dazzling Broadway performances ("She Loves Me," "Gypsy," "My Fair Lady" and "Melania" for Stephen Colbert) and razor-sharp wit. Now, Tony Award-winning Laura Benanti takes centerstage to share her hilarious, heartfelt and sometimes brutally honest takes on motherhood, people pleasing and the joys of aging. Expect tasty storytelling and original songs. Huntingdontheatre.org



"An Evening with Aaron Tveit"

Nov. 1 - 2, Emerson Colonial

Broadway's Aaron Tveit returns to the Colonial where he headlined the world premiere of "Moulin Rouge." Star of stage and screen, he's renowned for his charismatic stage presence in "Chess," "Next to Normal" and "Catch Me If You Can." Later, the Colonial will present "An Evening with Jeremy Jordan" on Nov. 30-Dec. 1, showcasing one of the musical theater's most captivating leading men ("The Great Gatsby," "Just in Time," "Newsies" and "Bonnie & Clyde"). A rare opportunity to see each in concert. emersoncolonial.com

The making of his new album is an illuminating experience for Hendey

By Sean Smith

Boston Irish Contributor

If you want to see a key milestone in the life and career of Boston-area Celtic musician Adam Hendey, just go to his YouTube [www.youtube.com/@AdamHendey].

One day in 2020, Hendey and his then-fiancé Frannie Monahan took a little excursion to the Chestnut Hill Reservoir, found a pleasant spot overlooking the water, and – with the help of Monahan’s brother – recorded footage for a video to accompany Hendey’s rendition of the traditional song “Ten Thousand Miles.”

That video was, essentially, Hendey’s debut as a singer.

“Although I’ve always loved accompanying singers, I hadn’t put myself forward in that way,” he recalls. “But when I was home during the initial Covid lockdowns, I decided to pick up singing and just give it a go. I started making these recordings of arrangements of songs, and then I had the idea to make that video and post it on YouTube. I really think of it as an important first step.”

Almost exactly six years later, Hendey is set to hit another milestone: On Sept. 21 at Club Passim in Harvard Square [http://passim.org/live-music/events/adam-hendey], he’ll officially launch his new album, “Illuminate.” Joined by Monahan and numerous friends, Hendey fully leans into his vocalist persona on six of the album’s nine tracks, with interpretations of traditional ballads and songs as well as two Hendey originals that draw on folk tradition, and a cover of Rachel Anne Goodman’s “Elk River Blues.” The remaining tracks feature Hendey-composed instrumentals plus a rendition of the popular traditional Irish jig “Lark in the Morning.”

It’s been a rather eventful time for Hendey since that day at the Chestnut Hill Reservoir. On the personal side, he and Monahan – after having arrived in Boston in 2018 – left for Los Angeles in 2021, got married, returned to Boston in 2022 and, last January, became parents. Along the way, Hendey (who also now sports a distinctive mustache) settled in as one of the more active, high-profile figures in Boston’s Celtic music scene, performing at venues and events like Club Passim, BCMFest and the Burren’s Brian O’Donovan Legacy Series, and bringing his DADGAD-style guitar to sessions at The Burren, McCarthy’s, Emmet’s, the Irish Cultural Centre of Greater Boston, The Druid, and Bunratty Tavern, to name a few.

“Illuminate” represents a convergence of several threads in Hendey’s life, going back to his teenage years when he attended a summer Celtic music camp in California, which was where he first met Monahan. Finding his groove as a singer steeped in the folk music tradition has been gratifying for Hendey, who also plays whistle, bass, bouzouki, and mandolin, and has lately added sean-nos dancing to his talents. The album also showcases his aptitude for sound design – creating, acquiring, and manipulating audio elements for music recordings, films and other media – for which he carries the credential of a degree from the University of Oregon. At various points on “Illuminate,” Hendey stacks multiple layers of voices or instruments to widen and deepen the aural dimension. Elsewhere, he adds assorted sounds that unobtrusively complement the music: crows, church bells, cannons, and various birds including crows, seagulls, and – appropriate-

ly enough – blackbirds and thrushes; one song ends with a recording of his son’s in-utero heartbeat.

“I love folk ballads so much, and I’ve always kind of received them as a listener in a very cinematic way, as a movie-going experience,” says Hendey, whose first album in 2016 was all-instrumental. “I also love the idea that, through arrangement and instrumentation and orchestration, you can pull emotional levers – that’s something I’ve really enjoyed exploring. And for ‘Illuminate,’ because I produced it myself, there was no one to stop me from going crazy. No one could hold me back from adding four electric guitars to a track or including cannons or ocean sounds.”

Hendey’s voice has an acute warmth and gentleness to it, notably on the metaphor-heavy “Blackbirds and Thrushes” (which he learned as a graduate student at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) and “Handsome Blue,” his reimagining of the “Sweet Willie”/female-sailor storyline. But he can evoke drama and tension where appropriate, such as on his “Counting Game,” a call-and-response ditty in cantering 7/8 that verges between playful romance and something more ominous, or “Castle by the Sea,” a variant of “Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight” (a ballad in the my-boyfriend-is-a-serial-killer mold) that is set in Boston.

Yet another facet of “Illuminate” is that it pulls together a representative sample of the most recent generation to make its presence felt in Boston’s folk/acoustic community. The guest musicians include Hendey’s concert band of Elias Cardoso, Brendan Hearn, and Erin Shea Hogan – some of whom have their own bands that include Hendey and others



Adam Hendey will launch his new album “Illuminate” at Club Passim on Sept. 21 with his band, from left, Brendan Hearn, Erin Shea Hogan, and Elias Cardoso. Photo by Sasha Pedro

on the album (an organizational chart would be nearly illegible).

Hogan, who sings on five tracks, provides a most effective counterpart to Hendey, whether ratcheting up narrative intensity or enhancing the sheer emotionality of a verse or refrain – especially on the winsome “Blackbirds and Thrushes,” which also includes backing vocals by Monahan, Cardoso, Helen Kuhar (Hogan’s bandmate in the quartet Forsyth), and Conor Hearn (Brendan Hearn’s brother and half of the duo Rakish); another Forsyth member, Kate Knudsvig, contributes soulful fiddle.

But there’s no overlooking the instrumental/non-vocal aspects of “Illuminate.” Hendey’s skill on various guitars and whistles is evident (his rhythmic touch on “Handsome Blue,” for example), as are those of the contributing musicians, notably Cardoso (fiddle, accordion) and Hearn (cello). And rather than simply provide a continual wall of sound throughout, the instrumental backing surges and subsides relative to the individual character of each song – as demonstrated amply on “Castle by the Sea.”

The instrumental sets also show Hendey’s flair for composition and orchestration: The 7/8 “To the Moon and Back” leads with a supple whistle over chugging guitar and Hearn’s growling cello, then gets a charge from Cardoso’s

fiddle and Hendey’s step dancing before segueing into the fleet 4/4 “Mystic River.” “Chrysanthemum” is more pensive, a sharp-edged electric guitar and bass set against bowed strings and overdubbed whistles.

“Lark in the Morning,” which closes out the album, is an appropriate coda: While Hendey and crew don’t exactly present the four-part jig “session style,” there is a sense of a circle growing as other musicians join in – locals Simon Lace (tenor banjo) and Noah Kelly (fiddle), along with Oregon-based uilleann piper Eliot Grasso, a longtime friend and collaborator of Hendey.

“I’m very allergic to telling people what to do,” Hendey says. “I really try to just create a sound environment of people with similar instincts and similar tastes and just let it happen. On stage, there aren’t super-specific arranged lines that I’ve instructed people to play. But for the album, I got a little bit more specific with people. When Brendan and Elias, for instance, were in the studio with me tracking their string parts, I had a little talk mic in my control room and I would sing parts to them and then they would play them. We would just build up these big string arrangements line by line.”

For more about Adam Hendey and “Illuminate,” see adamhendey.com

MAKING THE ROUNDS

Upcoming Irish/Celtic-related music events in Greater Boston (and beyond)

– shares lead vocals with Seán Dagher (bouzouki, banjo), while cellist Amanda Keesmaat and Alex Kehler and Simon Alexandre (the two alternate on appearances with the group) provide a striking bowed-string presence on nyckelharpa and violin. Their repertoire includes a pairing of the French-Canadian song “Un Ivrogne à Table” with the Irish jig “Foxhunter’s”; a song in Swedish that

interpolates the Scottish tune “She’s Sweetest When She’s Naked” and references a Quebecois tune as well; a set of Shetland tunes; and familiar songs from the British Isles/Irish tradition like “Sam Hall” and “Blow the Windy Morning.”

Tickets and other details on all Club Passim shows available here [http://www.passim.org/live-music]

• **Celtic Thunder** will make stops at Memorial Hall in Plymouth (Sept. 18) and Medford’s Chevalier Theatre (Sept. 19) as part of its “Celebrate Your Favorite Songs” tour – spotlighting popular selections from its almost two decades of big-stage performances full of theatricality as well as sumptuous orchestration. Starting out as a quintet, the ensemble often tours now as a quartet with a rotating cast; original member Damian McGinty, Emmet Cahill, Neil Byrne and Ronan Scollard are the principals for Celtic Thunder’s 18th tour of North America. Tickets for both shows are available through this link. [http://www.celticthunder.com/2026tour]

When It Comes to Fiddling, The Bow Tides Are In



The Bow Tides – who play at The Burren July 26 – are, from left, Eric Thorin, Jessie Burns, Ellery Klein, Katie Grennan and Jeff Lindblade.

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTONIRISH CONTRIBUTOR

To paraphrase Douglas MacArthur, former Gaelic Storm fiddlers don't fade away – sometimes they form bands together.

That's the concept behind The Bow Tides, which features the fiddle trio of Ellery Klein, Jessie Burns and Katie Grennan, all of whom were members (though never at the same time) of widely popular Celtic folk-rock group Gaelic Storm: As Klein puts it, they represent a combined 16 years of fiddling for the band.

Offering a repertoire that includes traditional tunes and songs from Irish, Scottish, and Galician traditions, among others, as well as original compositions, The Bow Tides – whose other members are guitarist/singer Jeff Lindblade and double bassist Eric Thorin (who is married to Burns) – made their New England debut on July 26 as part of The Burren's Brian O'Donovan Legacy Series.

It was an event that Boston-area resident Klein has been looking forward to for a long time – ever since the three collaborated on a series of music videos in 2020, which led to their (virtual) debut at the Spanish Peaks International Celtic Music Festival in September of that year. Their first live, on-stage appearance was at the 2021 Pittsburgh Irish Festival, and since then they've managed to perform several times a year.

There's a considerable challenge in doing that, given individual time

limitations, distance – Grennan lives in Chicago, Burns in Colorado – and family commitments for Klein and Burns and Thorin. But the band has been able to make a go of it, and even recorded an album in 2022, "Sailing On." On "The Power of Three" – which they describe in the liner notes as "our most rockin' set" – the band essays a trio of original minor-key reels by Grennan ("Mike's Per Diem") and Klein, "Hills of Galena" and "Fragility of Memory." The three fiddles glide and slide together at a moderate but driving pace (Burns supplies harmonies and counterpoint and what Klein calls "disco beat chording"), with snappy rhythmic touches by Lindblade and Thorin as well as guest Steve Morrow on bodhran.

"The Baton Set" pays homage to two distinguished fiddlers. Klein solos at the beginning on "The Hop Down Reel," a traditional tune she learned from Kevin Burke, over Thorin's bowed bass drone. Gradually, the other band members pick up on the rhythm and widen the spectrum, before Grennan segues into Liz Carroll's "Lizzy in the Low Ground," over a deliciously jazzy backing from Lindblade.

The Burns original, "Beatrice's Waltz," accentuates the more emotive end of The Bow Tides' repertoire. "Jessie wrote it for her daughter," explains Klein. "There's something so contemplative and blissful about it, and we like how it contrasts with the more high-energy sets we do."

On the more exotic side is "Branle Des

Chevaux," an old Breton tune in five parts the band renders with a regal dignity, and the festive "Trip to Gaelicia," combining "Old John's Jig" from Ireland – led by Klein – with a pair of muñeiras from Galicia.

"Right from the start, it was a lot of fun to play with Jessie and Katie," says Klein. "Our styles and interests really mesh – we just get each other. Working together is satisfying on so many levels."

"And, of course, we had the connection through Gaelic Storm: We even had learned the same arrangements for most of their tunes and songs."

As Klein describes it, being part of Gaelic Storm (from 2003-07) was an enjoyable, if demanding experience. When she first joined, the band had become widely popular, partly on the strength of its cameo appearance in the film "Titanic" six years before. Gaelic Storm typically followed a rigorous and extensive touring schedule, bringing a sound and vibe more geared to arenas and big venues than folk clubs or listening rooms.

"Gaelic Storm was, and still is, a crowd-pleasing, high-energy band," says Klein. "Katie, Jessie and I all feel that we learned a lot about showmanship: playing to the audience, being in the moment, maybe even making a 'rock star'-type move here and there. And, of course, you would have to turn around and do it all over again the next day at the next show."

In time, other priorities arose. Klein

left the group several months before giving birth to her first child; Burns also departed in advance of parenthood; and Grennan exited in 2022 amidst a number of projects. (The current Gaelic Storm fiddler is Massachusetts native Natalya Kay, who succeeded Grennan.)

The three Gaelic Storm alumni went on to somewhat smaller scale but quite successful musical endeavors, even before Bow Tides. Klein co-founded the Boston-based, all-female quartet Long Time Courting that lasted for about eight years and is now a member of the trio Fódhla; she also teaches fiddle and organizes a monthly session through the Powers Music School in Belmont. Grennan – who has a whole other portfolio as an Irish dance performer and teacher – is a member of dynamic Celtic quartet Reverie Road and has recorded three solo albums. Burns runs a music school and teaches at camps and workshops nationwide; she also produced an online international fiddle school with Grennan and Klein for two years.

While The Bow Tides has a quite different aesthetic and presentation than Gaelic Storm, Klein says she and her bandmates bring a degree of flair and verve to their performances: "We don't just stand there; we do some high-energy moves. But we center our sets and arrangements to focus on the fiddle tradition and sound in a way we hope our audiences find creative and listenable."

An Irish treat: Immersive museums



Scene from the Mellon Homestead at the Ulster American Folk Park.

BY BOSTONIRISH
NEWSROOM

National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, Dublin

Explore 9,000 years of history through fascinating archaeological artefacts that include Irish bog bodies, the Ardagh Chalice, the ‘Tara’ Brooch and the famous Derrynaflan Hoard. The museum is housed in a beautiful Palladian-style building that is a Dublin landmark. Throughout May, free guided tours of the museum’s highlights are on offer.

Ulster Museum, Belfast

There is something for every interest in this award-winning museum with collections of art, natural science and history. Delve into the history of Northern Ireland, see Ireland’s only dinosaur bones, admire the many pieces of applied art and view the special collections of work by female artists and the LGBT+ community.

Galway City Museum

In this modern museum you can browse a fascinating collection of cultural heritage objects related to the city of Galway and its people. The oldest known Claddagh ring, war memorabilia, sports souvenirs and medieval gun money are just some of the wide variety of items on display.

Waterford Treasures

In Ireland’s oldest city you get not one museum but a whole quarter with four world-class museums – the

Medieval Museum, the Irish Silver Museum, the Irish Museum of Time and the Bishops Palace – within minutes of each other. Bookable on one ticket, they take you back to Waterford’s Viking roots, through the treasures of the medieval age and into Georgian and Victorian times.

Titanic Belfast

Belfast’s multi-award-winning visitor attraction, which tells the story of the tragic liner and the city that built her, recently reopened with four new galleries and a superb replica model of the ship. It also displays a number of extremely rare artefacts which are of great historical significance including the world-famous violin belonging to the ship’s hero musician.

National Famine Museum, Roscommon

Featuring a world-class multimedia exhibition, the museum tells the story of Ireland’s Great Famine through the personal tragedies of the tenants and landlords on the Strokestown Estate. It explains the events that led to the forced emigration of 1,490 people from the estate in 1847 and is also the starting point for the National Famine Way, a walking and cycling trail from Roscommon to Dublin.

Ulster American Folk Park, Tyrone

The Ulster American Folk Park tells the story of Ulster people’s emigration to North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this part outdoor, part indoor museum, you’ll learn about life

in rural Ireland, the hardships endured on the journey across the Atlantic and how migrants built new lives in a new land.

National Museum of Country Life, Mayo

Step back into daily life in rural Ireland in days gone by at the National Museum of Country Life. With exhibitions of household objects, trades and crafts, bicycles and more, you’ll discover how people lived, worked, celebrated and how their traditions sustained them.

Hunt Museum, Limerick

Housing over 2,000 works of art and antiquities from the estate of John and Gertrude Hunt, this museum exhibits ancient treasures, as well as paintings by Picasso, Renoir and Jack B Yeats. The collection spills into the outdoors continuing in the Museum in a Garden, where some of the museum’s key artefacts are reproduced at large scale.

Tower Museum, Londonderry

With two permanent exhibitions – The Story of Derry and An Armada Shipwreck – La Trinidad Valencera – and frequently updated temporary exhibitions, the Tower Museum in the walled city of Derry~Londonderry is a top visitor attraction. The museum also boasts an open-air viewing facility with panoramic views of the city and River Foyle.

It's more than a visa: J1 Paul O'Neill's year of personal and professional growth in Boston

Paul O'Neill knew the Rian J1 Graduate visa would provide the exact professional experience he was hoping to obtain after graduating. He first discovered the visa during a Queen's University Belfast career fair.

"Rian came to Queens and explained the program, and it sounded like something I really wanted to do," he says. Coupled with firsthand experiences from friends already on their J1 Graduate visas in Boston, Paul knew that the program would be "a great cultural experience alongside valuable career growth." Even though he knew the job search might be difficult, he simply couldn't pass up the opportunity.

Paul found the application process for the Rian J-1 Graduate visa very straightforward. "Even though the process seemed daunting, Rian was very accommodating with my questions, and it was smoother than I even thought it would be."

Before arriving in Boston, Paul was excited about the vibrant Irish community and culture in the city. Upon his arrival, his expectations were exceeded as he settled into the city with ease. He used the Boston Irish Business Association, the Boston Irish Facebook groups, the Gaelic football group, as well as the Rian J1

community to transition to his new life in the US.

He found a great apartment in Savin Hill living with other Irish roommates. When asked about his neighborhood, he said, "it's a brilliant area to live in, I felt at home right away." He especially loved how accessible Savin Hill is to the rest of the city, finding it convenient to use public transportation.

In general, Paul found Boston was very easy to adjust to. "Nothing has really surprised me, and I haven't experienced any culture shocks." He really enjoyed the diverse population of the city and found Boston natives to be very friendly.

A typical day in Boston for Paul starts with a run in the morning around the Savin Hill neighborhood before heading to his 9-to-5 job. While his afterwork routine varies, Paul often plays soccer at MIT, where "there is a good group of Irish people there that play." He has taken the time to enjoy all of the city has to offer but especially loves the sports culture in Boston between the Red Sox, Patriots, and Celtics teams.

In addition, he said "being here for the World Cup was very cool. I was able to go to the fan zone at Boston City Hall and catch some of the games."

Integrating himself into the city further, Paul landed his



Paul O'Neill is his role as a fiscal policy analyst working at the Massachusetts State House.

ideal job at the Massachusetts State House. As a fiscal policy analyst, his role focuses on the state budget for the House Committee on Ways and Means, which Paul describes as working within "the top echelon of the political sphere."

He found the job through a

LinkedIn posting but used his connections to help prepare him for the interview process. "Phil from Rian helped me greatly to prepare for a US style interview," he noted. In addition, he leveraged his relationship with the Boston Irish Business Association and was able to speak with a few professionals working within the State house who gave him some advice.

The job itself is "very hands on and busy" according to Paul. "It's been very rewarding; it's the best job I could have gotten." The position has given Paul the space to learn while also taking on increasing responsibility. He says it has been "a really good job for networking and it has broadened my communication skills especially by working with a diverse group of people."

One of Paul's favorite parts of the Rian J1 grad visa has been travelling around the US. "The travel has been amazing; the trips are really rewarding." He was able to catch up with friends currently living in New York. He also visited Washington DC, which was especially interesting to Paul as the political epicenter of the US. However, the highlight of his travels was going to Atlanta to see a World Cup game. Some of his friends from Ireland traveled with him for the occasion. He especially

enjoyed the history of Atlanta, calling it "really interesting."

Paul's traveling isn't over just yet. In a few weeks, he will head back to New York City with his family to see all of the iconic tourist attractions. In addition, he will be visiting a friend in Pittsburgh and attending a Steelers game!

As Paul nears the end of his visa time, he says: "Professionally, this experience will put me in a really good position for a governmental or policy job back home." Personally, he says, the visa has given him the unique opportunity to live away from home and meet new people. "I have made new American friends, and it's even been great to meet people from Ireland that I would never have met back home."

When asked if he had any advice for those considering the Rian J1 Graduate visa, Paul said, "Take every opportunity you can, reach out to anyone you think could help you, and begin the job search early."

He absolutely recommends the program for the way it gives participants an international perspective. "You can see how your career can be different in the US compared to Ireland," he notes.

Rian is delighted that Paul has had such an amazing experience and wishes him the best of luck for the remainder of his time in the US.

How you can File USCIS forms electronically

By RACHEL BENEDICT

On Aug. 10, 2026, USCIS published an announcement entitled "USCIS to Require Electronic Filing of Forms: Strengthening National Security," and confirmed that it may, in the next several months, require electronic filing of certain immigration forms.

Do you know how to file USCIS forms electronically? If not, now is a good time to learn!

The first step is to create a USCIS.gov account. Once you have an account, you can use it for filing forms. You can also use it for monitoring the status of your immigration cases, uploading evidence, replying to requests for evidence, and changing your address.

This USCIS webpage describes how to create an account: uscis.gov/file-online/how-to-create-a-uscis-online-account.

In brief, you must:

1. Go online to the Sign Up Page: myaccount.uscis.gov/create-account;
2. Enter your email address and click "Sign Up;"
3. Check your email account for a confirmation message, and click on the link to confirm your account;
4. Review and agree to the terms of use;
5. Create and submit a password;
6. Choose how you want to receive the verification code;
7. Enter the verification code;
8. Receive the two-step verification backup code, and save it in a secure place;

9. Select the password reset (security) questions and answers; and
10. Now you have created your account!

Rachel Benedict is an immigration attorney at Rian Immigration Center

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BOSTON IRISH Famine Way Run Eire Society's Mackey now knows what Famine Way marchers endured

(Continued from page 1)
and power walk for 5 minutes until he crossed the finish line.

But come race day, a new plan was put into motion. "Starting in Dublin, we had a great kind of solid pack. I was getting to know everybody from the line, and I quickly realized we had some fantastic athletes," said Mackey. "Kind of realizing that, I made the decision early on to not play it conservative and just compete."

He added, "I've been an athlete my entire life, and at 33 years old, I've kind of made my peace with making decisions like that, and one of two things happens. You're either a hero, or you look like a complete fool. You have to live with whatever the outcome is, but you know that when you're making the decision."

With one foot in front of the other, Mackey took charge of the race and led the group until he was finally passed at about mile 30. From there he held on to second place for another 10 to 20 miles, but then gradually fell to seventh place.

With over 50 miles behind him, the sunny summer day transitioned into a dark, cool night. "Basically, I ran by myself through the night. This is rural Ireland at this point; if I didn't have a headlight on, I wouldn't be able to see my hand in front of my face," explained Mackey. "Just completely silent, completely pitch black. I was just chugging along through the night on my own."

During those overnight hours, Mackey's only companion was himself, and with that came many fleeting thoughts. "It goes from the mundane of like 'it's really dark' or 'oh, what was that sound out there?'" Mackey said. "There's things like that, but then you think about the historical magnitude of this. I'm thinking of men, women, and children starving to death, barefoot, being shouted at by law enforcement marching along, and you're thinking,



A refreshed Tom Mackey had some time to see sites in the West. *Courtesy photos*

'wow, I'm running this, and I'm running exactly where they did.'"

By Mile 90, the fatigue really began to hit, and Mackey focused on his family roots in County Tipperary and Roscommon. "You think about that journey. The story arc of being starving Irish people and now being this Irish American who can go back and have this experience. I'm the first person [in my family] who gets to go back and do these things that my family, and a lot of people, don't have the privilege to do. Those things are pushing me on."

He added, "The last 15 miles was the most physically painful and the most mentally and emotionally daunting I have ever felt. I had gone into the race with a strategy, and I threw that out the window from the jump, just trying to compete with all the studs I was racing with, and I paid for it."

But somehow, somehow Mackey pushed forward. His miles may have slowed, but he never stopped.

After crossing the finish line on the morning of August 2, he heard the winner, Paul Esler, had followed the plan he abandoned. "The big lesson from that is just how much 100 miles rewards patience more so than other kinds of

my first time. When it comes to racing, you see so many gains from your first time doing a distance to your second," said Mackey. "I feel very confident just from what I learned doing this. If I end up doing this race next year, which I would like to, I could see a similar sort of improvement just off of everything I learned and probably doing a few more 100 milers between now and then."

After the race, and some much-needed rest, Mackey spent the remainder of his trip exploring the area. The highlight was when the Callery family took him and his girlfriend on a tour of the Strokestown Park Grounds and Famine Museum.

He said that others should do the same. "I just cannot stress, people need to go see this. I think Irish American or American tourists often go to Dublin or Galway or Cork, or maybe they'll go to Dingle. People skip these places, and they really miss out."

Specifically, he encourages everyone, whether willing to run 105 miles or not, to learn more about the famine and its impact.

"People have a very simplified view of potato went bad, Irish people starved, some of them came here, a bunch of them died. It was such a complex thing. The potato blight happened in all of northern Europe. It happened in Belgium, Germany, Scotland. But for very clear and specific reasons it did not impact those places as badly as it did Ireland, and I really encourage people to explore that," said Mackey.

"These things are very relevant to the world we live in today. They were very controllable and foreseeable failures of society and government and private enterprise that led to that happening, and I think it's important we learn from those things to try to create a better world for ourselves and our children and our grandchildren."



Runners teamed up in parts of the course. Each had headlights for overnight darkness. racing," Mackey said. "This guy was patient; he stuck to his strategy, and he was rewarded for it, so I learned a big lesson from that."

Mackey also discovered that the year prior, Esler finished in around 24 hours. He was only able to shave off time by following this year's plan to a T.

"I didn't hit my primary goals, I didn't hit my secondary goals, I didn't even hit my tertiary goals. But it was



A pair of bronzed shoes symbolize Ireland's National Famine Museum founded by Jim Callery (at right). He bought and fully restored the Palladian Manor House and Gardens, Strokestown Park Estate in Co. Roscommon. It was opened by Ireland's then-President Mary Robinson in 1994.



‘Good Returns for Good Works’

At Catholic Investment Services, Tim D’Arcy and team marry religious faith and finance

By PETER F. STEVENS

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

For Tim D’Arcy, the Catholic and corporate worlds are not mutually exclusive. His role as CEO at Catholic Investment Services (CIS) is both a mission and a vocation. The nonprofit works to “deliver strong, long-term investment results for clients by creating portfolios with three” major cornerstones: Catholic principles, diversification, and manager selection.

D’Arcy relates that he “grew up in a big Catholic family in Brockton,” his father a high-school teacher and hockey coach, his mother a nurse. “I had a great childhood and loved caddying at Thorny Lea Golf Club.” To D’Arcy and his siblings, his parents instilled the concepts of faith and community service.

He went on to earn a Bachelor’s Degree in Finance from the University of Rhode Island and an MBA from the F.W. Olin Graduate School of Business at Babson College. Working at BlackRock and Hamilton Lane for over two decades, he crafted highly profitable investment portfolios; at Hamilton Lane, he developed a relationship with Catholic Investment Services and its clients to develop investment strategies targeting private markets tailored to the organization’s faith-based principles. He later came on board as CIS’s CEO with its headquarters at 200 State St. in Boston.

Key to D’Arcy’s work at CIS was—and is—Jack Brennan, and Scott Malpass. Brennan, a renowned investment expert and community stalwart, sits on the Board of Trustees for Catholic Investment Services, which he cofounded with Malpass.

Brennan, who grew up in Winchester, Mass., is chairman emeritus, former president, and senior advisor with the investment giant Vanguard. A graduate of Dartmouth College with an MBA from Harvard Business School, he worked with the University of Notre Dame as chairman of its Board of Trustees, and with other Catholic institutions to found CIS with Malpass.

Malpass, the longtime and now retired chief investment officer at Notre Dame, managed the university’s endowment for more than 30 years, delivering outstanding returns, and managing to Catholic values, before



At left, Catholic Investment Services CEO Tim D’Arcy takes an office moment to chat with Courtney Ghysels, of Hamilton Lane, CIS’s private markets investment partner.

Above, CEO D’Arcy opened the program at the 2026 CIS Catholic Investment Symposium for Catholic Fiduciaries in Chicago. While in Chicago for the symposium, D’Arcy met up with Sister Suzanne Brennan, of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in South Bend, Indiana. Photos courtesy of CIS



connecting with Brennan at Notre Dame to found CIS.

D’Arcy, who lives with his family in Bridgewater, MA, is proud that his wife, “Philly Catholic” Liz, and their children—Fairfield University grad Mary Kate, Fairfield sophomore Maggie, and BC High 9th-grader Jack—embrace the same credo of faith and family that drives him, Jack and Scott.

In explaining these principles in business, D’Arcy says that every client portfolio is shaped through core Catholic beliefs and that they follow investment guidelines of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. Human dignity, social and economic justice, climate, and the common good—all that and more infuse the nonprofit’s portfolios with entities that meet these precepts.

CIS’s clients listing comprises an array of schools, religious orders, foundations, healthcare organizations: portions of the

endowments for the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s College (South Bend, Indiana); Archbishop Williams High School (Braintree, MA); the Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend; Misericordia Heart of Mercy (Chicago, IL); Sisters of the Holy Cross (South Bend, IN); the Dominican Sisters Of Springfield, IL; and Saint John’s Health Center Foundation (Los Angeles).

The CEO took up CIS’s goals with *Boston Irish Magazine* and discussed how his faith and financial acumen brought him to seeding Catholic nonprofits based on a model that first took shape through the University of Notre Dame.

Q. What compelled you to focus on investments for Catholic nonprofit entities?

A. “In a lot of ways, my career path was pointing me that way, even if I didn’t immediately realize it. I found my way here after learning the investment

business and working with wonderful people at BlackRock and Hamilton Lane.

“One of the key people in my career has been Jack Brennan. His involvement with Catholic Investment Services and his commitment to charitable Catholic causes led me here.

“Jack showed me how to map faith and purpose and asked me to come over to CIS. I’ve now been here for a year and a half. For me, this move has been a home run.”

Q. What are the challenges in applying the tenets of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to the business and investment landscape?

A. “Every Catholic nonprofit deserves the best investment treatment. We rely on Wellington Management to manage our flagship portfolio targeting public market strategies, what we call the Catholic Endowment Fund, a diversified portfolio for Catholic institutions doing such

great work for the disabled, the mentally challenged, the elderly, the poor, the homeless, addicted, and the community.

“We’re only in the US, and working only with Catholic nonprofits, and working with Wellington has been a real blessing. They have delivered meaningful returns for CIS and our clients for many years.”

Q. Do CIS’s guidelines limit access to otherwise solid investments with companies whose beliefs and corporate systems run counter to CIS’s values?

A. “The beauty of our model and the creative and innovative investment skills of people such as Jack Brennan have allowed us to work with companies like Wellington to handle portfolios for us over a billion dollars. That money allows Catholic organizations to continue their incredible work.”

Q. “Have you found difficulties in navigating the intersection of social, religious, and political obstacles?”

A. “At the start, there were no other investment firms with the name ‘Catholic.’ We needed permission to use the name, and Cardinal Sean O’Malley in Boston was wonderful to us. He insisted on three conditions: Keep fees as low as possible; work exclusively with Catholic nonprofits; and follow the guidelines of the US Catholic Bishops. Archbishop Henning, his successor in Boston, has also supported us.

“Sometimes the guidelines can be vague, and you have to do your homework to ensure that portfolios don’t violate our moral, ethical, and religious guidelines.”

Q. What has your work at CIS meant to you personally?

A. “I grew up in a household where faith, family, and service meant everything. For a long time I felt that my investment success was somehow not enough. I wanted to give back with what I had learned at BlackRock and Hamilton Lane.

“Thanks to Jack Brennan, Scott Malpass, and so many others, I’ve had the opportunity to show that. You can do good with your investments. You can deliver good returns for good works. Catholic nonprofits should be able to secure investments that provide them a solid return while adhering to Catholic values.

“It doesn’t happen in a day, but we’ll get there.”



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The Taste of Ireland



Across the island, a new generation of producers is turning tradition into craft — one wheel, one loaf, one catch at a time.

Photo courtesy Tourism Ireland



Farmhouse cheese, fresh from the source.



The daily catch, ready to shuck.



A flight of Irish whiskey by the fire.

Photos courtesy Tourism Ireland

By **Brittany Gallagher**
TOURISM IRELAND

You arrive with a checklist, as travellers tend to do. You intend to see the Cliffs of Moher, to climb the stairs of Blarney Castle and kiss a stone upside down for the chance at the gift of gab, and drive along the scenic Causeway Coastal Route. Somewhere between the first village and the next, a shift occurs. It begins with a stranger who pauses long enough to point you in the right direction, then spends ten minutes telling you where else you should grab your next meal. In Ireland, those unexpected recommendations often become the highlight of the trip.

The island of Ireland has a way of short-circuiting the traveller’s instinct to keep moving. It doesn’t just show you landscapes; it sets the table, pulls out a chair, and asks you to stay awhile.

Across the island a quiet but ambitious culinary renaissance has taken root. It is fuelled by chefs, farmers, fishers, distillers, and producers who draw inspiration from the ingredients, traditions, and landscapes around them. The result is a food culture that feels deeply connected to place, where every meal tells a story about where you are.

Head north to Belfast, where the city’s food scene hums with a vibrant, unpretentious confidence. At The Muddlers Club, hidden down a cobbled alley in the Cathedral Quarter, locally sourced ingredients are transformed into inventive tasting menus that reflect Northern Ireland’s increasingly celebrated culinary identity. It’s sophisticated without ever feeling exclusive, a reflection of Belfast itself.

A short stroll away, the city’s industrial past finds new life at Titanic Distillers, nestled in the historic Titanic Quarter where the great ship was built. Here, the tradition of Belfast whiskey is triumphantly revived. Standing inside the historic brick pump house, you realize that history is something you can taste, rich with notes of vanilla and the lingering warmth of malt.

Head into County Louth, and you’ll find The Glyde Inn in Annagassan, a coastal gem where history stretches back a millennium to Viking times. Overlooking the sheltered waters of Dundalk Bay, they serve up local seafood alongside a pint of stout that feels practically mandatory. It is the kind of place where a quick lunch quietly becomes an afternoon, where locals and visitors find themselves swapping stories over bowls of seafood chowder and pints pulled at an easy pace.



Handmade, the old-fashioned way — Irish kitchens still favor the touch of a chef’s hands. Photo courtesy Tourism Ireland

Further along the Wild Atlantic Way in Galway’s vibrant West End, Kai captures the spirit of contemporary Irish cooking with warmth and authenticity. Chef Jess Murphy and her team build their menus around what is fresh, local, seasonal, and often organic, working closely with farmers, fishers, and producers from across the region.

“It doesn’t just show you landscapes; it sets the table, pulls out a chair, and asks you to stay awhile.”

The menu changes with the seasons, but the philosophy remains the same: let exceptional ingredients speak for themselves. The result is a restaurant that feels as much a reflection of the local community as it does a destination in its own right.

Further inland, Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands reveal a quieter side of the island. Along the winding River Shannon, the pace softens and meals become less about reservations and more about lingering. In towns like Athlone and Glasson, waterside restaurants and welcoming pubs celebrate the bounty of the surrounding countryside, from locally reared beef and artisan cheeses to seasonal produce grown just a few miles away.



Autumn’s harvest, close to home. Photo courtesy Tourism Ireland

And no journey through the island’s spirited heart is complete without a stop in Ireland’s medieval city of Kilkenny, home to breweries like Smithwick’s, where nine generations of the same family shaped a beer that became a household name.

This is what happens when you travel the island of Ireland. You stop looking at your watch. Somewhere, a fiddle starts up in the corner. Another round appears. Plans drift to tomorrow. No matter where you end up — a local restaurant, an oyster-shucking experience, or one of the island’s 24 Michelin-starred restaurants — long after you’ve gone home, it’s often the meals and the people you shared them with that you remember the most.



GOLDEN HOUR WITH CONNEMARA PONIES
ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY



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