

# Tinteán

THE AUSTRALIAN IRISH HERITAGE NETWORK

No 5, September 2008

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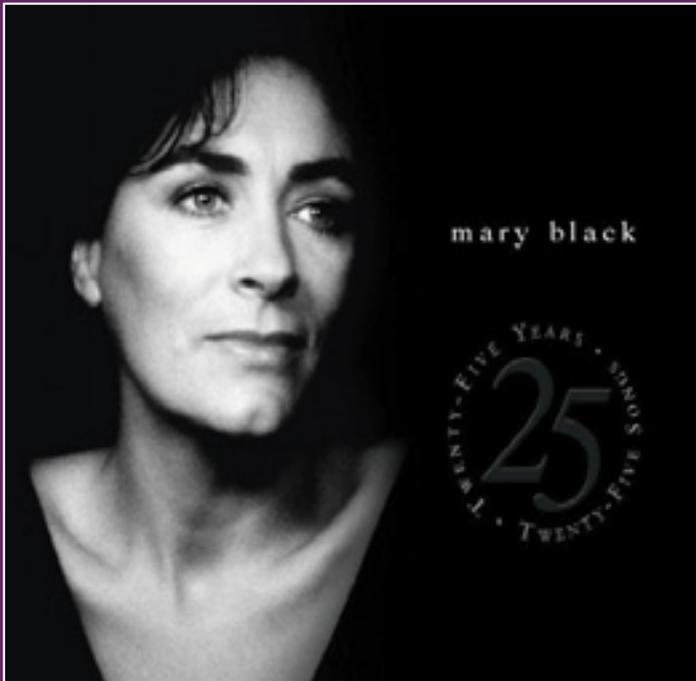
**Aran Isles' currachs**

Elizabeth Malcolm

**Dying for land**

Val Noone and Frances Devlin-Glass

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  10. Babes In The Wood (1991)
  11. Wonder Child (1995)
  12. Summer Sent You (1993)
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- Bonus Track**
14. Sweet Love (2008)

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  2. Still Believing (1991)
  3. Once In A Very Blue Moon (1987)
  4. Only A Woman's Heart (1992) – with Eleanor McEvoy
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  6. As I Leave Behind Neidin (1986)
  7. Your Love (2005)
  8. Columbus (1989)
  9. Bless The Road (1999)
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13. If I Have To Go (2008)

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## **Tinteán No 5, September 2008**

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# Contents

## Regulars

- 2 **Letters:** *The Lass of Aughrim returns; American Indians; Irish or Celtic Studies*
- 3 **Editorial:** Wither democracy, Robert J F Butler
- 4 **News**
- 7 *Bolg an tSolatháir/Odds and Ends*, Val Noone
- 8 **Financials:** *More of the same & then some*, Simon Good
- 9 **Obituaries:** *Brian Keenan, Nuala O'Faolain*
- 10 *Word Watch*, Felicity Allen
- 11 **Irish Language:** *What's in a name?* Bearnáí Ó Doibhlin
- 12 **Profile:** *Thomas Vincent O'Connor, Baritone*, Catherine Arthur

## Features

- 16 *Aran Isles' Currachs*, Elizabeth Malcolm
- 20 **Poetry**

## Reviews

- 22 *Irish in New Zealand*, Liz Rushen
- 24 *Rulers and Culture in Co. Cork*, Felicity Allen
- 26 *Dying for Land*, Val Noone, Frances Devlin-Glass
- 29 *Divine Celtic light*, Meg McNena
- 30 *An arcade show for Bloomsday*, Peter Kiernan
- 31 *New Zealand's gold fields*, Bernadette O'Connor; *Barry & Clarke*, Frances Devlin-Glass
- 32 *Coming to terms*, Frances Devlin-Glass
- 33 *Nell's stories*, Renee Huish
- 34 *Living the faith*, Felicity Allen
- 35 *Young Ireland*, Peter Kiernan
- 36 *Feed the heart on emnity*, Perry McIntyre

## Travellers' Tales

- 36 *Scattered showers and sunny spells*, Liz McKenzie

## The Australian Irish Heritage Network

Membership is open to all with an identification with Irish heritage. It was founded in 2007 to continue the spirit and work of Val Noone and Mary Doyle.

One of its activities is to publish the magazine Tinteán (meaning hearth in Gaelic and pronounced 'Tintoyne' – the fada on the final á giving the syllable the dominant stress and the "augh" sound).

The AIHN office is in the basement of the Celtic Club, 316 Queen St, Melbourne. We express our thanks to the Club for its generosity. People are welcome to drop in. However we are only there parttime so check first.

## Objectives of the AIHN

This Association, as its primary objective, will produce a literary magazine called Tinteán. The focus of the magazine will be

to build and explore the Irish Australian identity. The magazine will welcome material which explores the big themes of exile, diaspora and settlement. It will also encourage the telling of the micro-stories that express narratives of individuals and families. There will be a continual study of the political and economic evolution of Ireland, and of the contribution which Irish-Australians have made to Australia. The intention is to explore and celebrate the playing out of the Irish heritage in Australia, past, present and future.

## Activities

As well as the magazine, we hope to put on social and educational events; disseminate news and information via the internet to disseminate news and information; offer recognition for service to literary and historical endeavours; issue cultural and political comment, and research and record our heritage.

# Letters

## Lass of Aughrim

Might I add a few details to Associate Professor Frances Devlin-Glass's notes on 'The Lass of Aughrim' in *Tinteán*, No. 4, June 2008? The song is a version of the ballad 'Lord Gregory' memorably rendered by traditional singer Elizabeth Cronin of Ballyvourney, in west Cork.

The text and air of the song is given in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín's (her grandson) book, *The Songs of Elizabeth Cronin, Irish Traditional Singer: The Complete Song Collection* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp 138-9. The book has 2 CDs of her songs and includes 'Lord Gregory'.

For an important study of the song see Hugh Shields, 'A History of *The Lass of Aughrim*', in Gerard Gillen & Harry White (eds), *Musical Studies 1 Musicology in Ireland* (Dublin:1990), pp 58-73. See also George I. Geckle, 'The "Dead Lass of Aughrim"', *Éire-Ireland* 9:3 (Autumn 1974), pp 86-96.

Wishing *Tinteán* a long and prosperous life!

**Tadhg Foley (Professor)**

*Department of English, National University of Ireland, Galway Ireland*

## Monument to American Indians

Last year my family were 'discovered' by one of our clan from America. This member of the family, now residing in Australia informed me that one of her forebears had married a native American Indian of the Cherokee tribe.

In a conversation with Val Noone, he recalled seeing a monument – Val thought it was in Co Clare – to recognise the contributions made to people living there by American Indians during the famine.

I would be more than pleased to hear from any of your readers who could give me information about this monument.

**Jack Sheridan**

**284 Sunshine Ave, Kealba, 3021**

*(A donation from the Cherokee Indian nation is recorded in *The Great Hunger* by Cecil Woodham Smith, though I can't help on the monument. Ed)*

## Irish or Celtic Studies

Sir, Having examined the brochures put out by adult education centres over recent years, one is struck by the lack of courses pertaining to Irish or Celtic studies. They seem to offer little in terms

of liberal studies, history, literature, and philosophy but are full of information on the inevitable computer courses, VCAL courses and even basic literacy (not literary! ) courses. It is a shame that adults who wish to learn more about their Irish and /or Celtic world are deprived of this rich storehouse of knowledge. I see Irish and /or Celtic clubs and organisations needing to step into this breach.

I have presented Irish and Celtic Studies courses over the past five years and will continue. They encompass history, music, literature, drama, introduction to Irish and Celtic languages and genealogy. My next such course is at Bendigo Neighbourhood House in November, with the support of the Bendigo Irish Association. It will run over three Saturday afternoons, each session of about four and a half hours. Any reader who wishes to contact me directly may do so by email [ovens.town@hotmail.com](mailto:ovens.town@hotmail.com) or by phoning me on 54426649 (after 8pm is best).

Mise le meas,

**John Clancy, Bendigo.**



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# Whither Democracy?

Free and open elections to establish governments and direct consequent national policies are the ideal espoused by all free-thinking people. However, democratic processes, even where part of a nation's Constitution, can be distorted by many different forms of obstruction and manipulation. Observation of systems of government amongst the nations of the world provides a panorama of the absence, emergence or consolidation of true democracy or degrees of interference with this process.

Condemnation rightfully follows any corruption of the electoral process or prevention of a population exercising its right to a free vote. Some of these abuses are obvious while others are less clearly seen. In other cases, the democratic process is conducted free of interference and corruption but still arouses concerns regarding the result and the reasons behind the vote.

It is incorrect to assume that "free world" nations which espouse democracy as part of their Constitutions are without fault in the exercise of this essential right. Indeed, most people now accept that Australia has been involved in wars whose major justifications have depended on misinformation from her leaders, either deliberate or based on incompetent assessments. Other nations have conducted what would seem to be free and fair elections, only to have the process revealed later as subject to corruption. One might even include, in discussion of how the democratic process is crippled, the deliberate lies and false promises of those seeking election. However, consideration of the latter abuses might well cast too large a net!

Two recent national votes exhibit quite different examples of the presence or absence of democracy. In one, a presidential election has been exposed as an obvious sham, with a predetermined outcome and brutal interference with any opposition. In the other, the population has been given the right to determine national policy, via a single issue referendum.

The first example is an extreme one. The world has been shocked by the situation in Zimbabwe where there were violent attacks on supporters and officials of the major opposition party, whose leader had gained the largest vote in the first round of the presidential election. In the subsequent run-off election for the presidency, people were threatened, bashed and murdered in order to frustrate and stifle any opposition. The leader of the major opposition party, favoured to become President, sought shelter in a foreign embassy for his own safety and then withdrew his candidature in order to protect electors from further violence. Nevertheless voters were forced to attend the polling booths and threatened in a far-from-secret ballot process to enable a show of "support" to be gained for the incumbent. Widespread condemnation has followed this brutal response to the will of the people and the subsequent "re-election" of Robert Mugabe as President lacks any credibility.

In complete contrast, the recent referendum decision of

the Irish people to reject the changes to the Constitution of the European Union proposed in the Lisbon Treaty is a good example of a free and democratic decision. Governments of other member nations of the European Union are making the necessary determination to ratify the Treaty without needing to consult their citizens. In contrast, a 1987 decision of the Irish Supreme Court determined that any such automatic ratification might conflict with the national Constitution and thus require its amendment. Consequently, Ireland put this issue to the people in a referendum.

Unfettered by any corruption or interference with their voting rights, the Irish people rejected the Treaty and the European Union must now live with this result. Similar proposals were also rejected by the Dutch and French populations in 2005 when those two nations were allowed to vote on proposed changes to the European Constitution. Their governments were neither required nor tempted to pursue this route again in ratifying the Treaty and it has been accomplished at government level. Most European members have now ratified it by governmental fiat.

Prior to the poll, the Lisbon Treaty had been criticised by Sinn Fein and a number of lobby groups, although it was supported by the major parties. In general, opponents of the Treaty raised concerns about issues such as: the loss of a permanent Commissioner and consequent possible lack of Irish participation in decision making; perceived threats to the Irish health system through privatisation; and, concerns about possible European interference in local decisions about moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia and gay marriage. Some proponents of the Lisbon Treaty attribute the Irish result to paranoia and unfounded fears of threats to the Irish way of life, but this belief proved untrue. Remarkably, a post poll survey showed that, when asked to give a single reason for voting "No", 40 percent replied that they did not understand the Treaty. The Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, has admitted that his Government may have been deficient in selling the message in favour of the Treaty. This, of course, begs the question of the responsibility of Governments to inform voters adequately before any poll. Nevertheless, whatever one's view on the Treaty and its implications for Ireland, the will of the people has been given free reign and their decision has been accepted.

The two extremes illustrated in recent months in Zimbabwe and Ireland shows that we should not allow complacency to surround other democratic exercises. Governments have a responsibility to ensure that voters are not deliberately misinformed and that the people are given access to all information necessary to assist them in formulating their votes. Manipulation of information rather than interference with the electoral process is the greatest threat to democracy in the so-called free world.

*Robert J F Butler*

“One might even include, in discussion of how the democratic process is crippled, the deliberate lies and false promises of those seeking election.”

# News



## Untimely death of *Táin/Tinteán* Editor

The editorial team at *Tinteán* is devastated by the loss of Terry Monagle and extends its sincerest sympathy to his family. In addition to his funeral which featured many heartfelt tributes to his many talents, there was a moving memorial service and an interment ritual at Taradale; a peaceful site under the gum trees among the Irish pioneers thoughtfully selected by Terry himself; a process eloquently described in *Táin* no. 38, Aug/Sept 2005 'Buying a plot, finding a community'. Meg McNena, a long standing member of the editorial team, has written two poems for Terry which appear in this issue. An obituary will be included in the next edition.

The death notice from *The Age* is reproduced below:

*On July 10, 2008 aged 61. Proudly but critically "Catholic, Labor and Colingwood", as he once wrote. We salute a devoted family man, friend, teacher, trade-union organiser, Australian and Irish republican, diligent author and seeker after truth. With treasured memories of discussions and laughter in our work together.*

*From all at Táin and Tinteán magazines.*

## Irish reject Lisbon Treaty

A big question mark hangs over the Lisbon Treaty – the reforms to streamline the work of the enlarged European Union. Signed in Lisbon in December

2007, it was to replace the draft European constitution, which had been thrown out by French and Dutch voters in 2005. The Treaty was rejected by Irish voters in a referendum on 12 June and, under EU rules, it cannot enter into force if any of the 27 member states fail to ratify it.

Since then, the Czechs have suspended their parliamentary ratification vote pending a constitutional ruling, and ratification by the UK parliament is delayed until a court rules on a legal challenge.

The EU has several options but none of them are easy:

- The countries that have not yet ratified the Treaty could press on with ratification despite Ireland's vote. By the time that process ends, a solution for the Irish "exception" may have been negotiated, with possible Irish opt-outs and guarantees on sensitive issues such as abortion and neutrality.

- The EU could put the ratification process on hold, abandon hopes of the Treaty coming into force in January 2009 and continue according to the rules laid down in the Nice Treaty. Negotiations on a new treaty could resume in the future.

- The EU could scrap the Lisbon Treaty, cherry-pick key parts of it and repackage them in a shorter and more comprehensible version. The ratification process would start again and Ireland would have to hold another referendum. Ireland voted against the Nice Treaty in 2001 but approved it in 2002. However, the constitutional debacle of 2005 makes this option more difficult now.

- Countries keen on further EU integration could form an informal club inside the EU and a "two-tier" Europe would result. This idea has been mooted by Luxembourg's Prime Minister. Ireland, the UK and other countries which prefer a looser union would stick to various opt-outs, without formally ratifying Lisbon.

EU leaders met in Brussels on 19-20 June and decided to delay any decision until their next summit in mid-October. The Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, said that he could not speculate on whether Ireland would hold a second referendum.

*From BBC News*

## *Tinteán* in Brazil

John Clancy, President of the Bendigo Irish Association, made a trip to Brazil in April/May. Part of the reason for John's visit was to undertake some initial research into the role of the Irish in Brazil during the previous four centuries.

John spent a few days in Brasilia, the capital, and, while there, had a private meeting with His Excellency, the Irish Ambassador to Brazil, Mr Michael Hoey, a Derry man. The Ambassador gave John some very reliable information and, as a result, John met Peter O'Neill, originally from County Cork, but now living in Rio de Janeiro. Peter is an authority on the role of the Irish in Brazil. As a gesture of thanks for his help, John presented the Ambassador with a recent copy of *Tinteán* and, apparently, His Excellency was most impressed with the quality of the magazine.

So, who knows, visitors to the Irish Embassy in Brasilia may have the chance to read our journal while waiting for meetings.

*From John Clancy*

## Famine to feast

The Irish are the wealthiest people in Europe and the second richest in the world, thanks to exceptional gains in property values and aggressive savings rates, according to the Bank of Ireland. The Bank's annual "Wealth of the Nation" report estimated that Ireland has at least 33,000 millionaires in the country of 4.2 million people, an increase of 10 percent since 2005. In 2006, the average individual net wealth of the population had risen 19 percent to €196,000 (\$312,000). In terms of wealth per capita, Ireland remained ahead of the UK, USA, Italy, France, Germany and Canada but behind Japan. After the past 13 years of rapid economic growth, the top one percent of the population holds 20 percent of the nation's wealth, and the top five percent about 40 percent.

A 20 percent growth in the value of residential property underpinned last year's surge. While household debt rose 20 percent to €161 billion (\$257 billion), this was offset by a 15 percent increase in cash savings, a 26 percent gain in privately held stocks and an 11 percent

gain in the value of pensions. The Irish saved about 14 percent of their disposable income, the highest rate in Europe, comparing favourably with the UK on just five percent and the USA on a mere one percent.

Ireland's wealth was attributed to the rapidly increasing value of the family home and, for some, additional investment properties. Although the Irish housing market had fallen 2.1 percent this year, after some ten years of rapid gains, property still accounted for 72 percent of average household wealth last year. It was forecast that this wealth component would decrease in coming years as individuals invested in the share market. About 88,000 new homes were built last year in Ireland but the building boom is now over. House completions will fall by some 25 percent next year although the Bank of Ireland report projects low single digit rises towards 2010 and a "soft landing" for the Irish property market.

*From Irish News, AP, The Australian*

## Dingle dong battle

The town of Dingle, one of Ireland's best-known tourist destinations, has won its battle against a government edict to adopt the Irish language version of its name.

Under a 2004 court order, enacted by Irish Affairs Minister, Eamon O Cuiv, Dingle became 'Daingean' as part of a move requiring over 2300 towns to adopt Gaelic names. The order reversed a British mapping programme started 1824 and resulting in mainly anglicised names. But in a local plebiscite two years ago, 1005 of the 1222 residents of the town opted for the bilingual compromise of 'Dingle Daingean Ui Chuis'.

Minister O Cuiv said that the exercise in local democracy has created a legal quandary as the town is in a Gaeltacht area and his advice was that the law did not allow him to declare a bilingual name for a Gaeltacht area. The row has been referred to Environment Minister, John Gormley, who stated he intended to amend the law on the changing of place names to reach a satisfactory conclusion. He said that the move will "ensure that all future proposals for place name changes must specify the proposed

name in Irish and English, unless it is indicated that an Irish name only is to be adopted".

The town's revolt against the name change was prompted by fears that its thriving tourist industry could be damaged by visitors confused by the unfamiliar name of "Daingean" on road signs and maps. Residents felt that Dingle is a valuable brand name in Britain and the United States. Hundreds of thousands of tourists travel to picturesque western Ireland every year and the Dingle peninsula is a major attraction. Its dramatic coastline was the setting for the 1970 Oscar-winning film *Ryan's Daughter*, starring Robert Mitchum and John Mills. Another tourist magnet is the Dingle dolphin, named Fungie, who has appeared in waters outside the town's harbour since 1983. Every year, an estimated 250,000 people go on boat trips to see or swim with him.

*From Irish News*

## The gauntlet of British heritage

Sinn Fein claims that the overt Britishness of Stormont is hostile to republicans and nationalists. Barry McElduff, Chairman of the Assembly's Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee has described entering his workplace every morning as like "running a gauntlet of British heritage".

"There I am, an Irish republican from Tyrone and I first of all have to drive up the Royal Mile/Prince of Wales Avenue, pass a statue of Edward Carson and pass the tomb of another unionist leader, Craigavon. Then, when I enter the building confront a statue of Craigavon and that's as well as the two union flags which fly 12 days of the year," he said. A group of schoolchildren came to Stormont recently to play some football and they had to bring their own Gaelic goalposts because, when Stormont was designed, Gaelic games were not taken into account. There is a lot of work that needs to be done at Stormont to reflect both traditions".

*From Rebecca Black, Irish News*

## St. Patrick's Day

There was a St. Patrick's Festival meeting attended by the public in the Celtic Club on Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> May. The meet-

ing was called to relay the Committee members' progress in their quest to organise a 2009 St. Patrick's Festival in Melbourne.

Discussions began at 7.30pm and it was agreed by the committee that securing a venue was the most important factor, moreover that they had hoped that this would move on a more rapid timescale. However, securing suitable venues can be difficult and time consuming and this is what the committee had anticipated. The festival will be geared towards all ages and will cater for the family too. According to Sean Lavin, the President of the Committee, the day will be full of surprises and fun for young and old alike which he hopes will blossom over the years into something on a larger scale.

There was also a sense among the committee members that the issue of sponsorship was something that needed more attention. In order to generate attention to the festival much support is needed by the Irish Australian community themselves. Essentially, the committee is voluntary and any support is greatly appreciated. The committee would like to thank the public for their presence at the meeting and that a website should be in place in the coming months.

Please contact Denise at [denise@summitfw.com.au](mailto:denise@summitfw.com.au) if you have any queries or would like to make a donation

## Sea Stallion's Triumphant Epic Return trip from Dublin

Setting out from Dublin on 29 June 2008, after almost a year on show in Dublin, the massive 25-ton Viking warship is on its way back to Roskilde Fjord at present under the captainship of a woman skipper, Vibeke Bischoff. It went south down the Irish Sea from Dublin before turning east at Land's End where it weathered gale-force winds. It spent a few days on show in Portsmouth alongside the Maryrose (Henry VIII's pride and joy), Lord Nelson's flagship, HMS Victory, and Queen Victoria's warship, HMS Warrior, 1860. It bypassed London and the Thames estuary (but not without talking of ancient Viking victories there), and waited in Lowestoft for a new crew for 11 frustrating days for the

right winds to cross the North Sea back to Denmark. Once the winds arrived, it was a relatively quick trip to Holland and then to Denmark.

By the time you are reading *Tinteán*, it should have arrived back in Roskilde Fjord for a big Viking Festival (9-12 August) to celebrate its return. The boat is a reproduction of a wreck brought up from the bottom of Roskilde Fjord where it was sunk to snare hostile shipping. Significantly, it had been built originally in Ireland, at Glendalough. The ninth century Vikings probably did the journey in two weeks. All praise to the 60 bold sailors, many of them volunteers, who are conducting this romantic scientific study. This team will take 6 weeks

### King backs Brennan's bid for Texas bail

A leading member of the House Homeland Security Committee in Congress has become the first politician to back Maze escapee Pól Brennan's quest for bail from the Texas prison where he has been held since January 27.

King, formerly Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee based his support on the observations that Irish republicans do not jump bail in

America and that the IRA are committed to the peace process.

Brennan was initially detained over an expired US issued work permit in Texas while visiting friends. When a computer background check revealed his role in the mass IRA jailbreak of 38 prisoners in 1983, he was taken to Port Isabel Detention Centre in Los Fresnos where he remains. US authorities have known his whereabouts since the FBI arrested him in California in 1993. Although Britain dropped its seven year drive to extradite him in 2000, Department of Homeland Security prosecutors now want him deported because he entered the US using a false name months after the escape.

Brennan's lawyer has appealed the bail denial, arguing that Brennan's strict observance of bail terms when twice freed during the 1990s pending British extradition moves proves he isn't a flight risk.

The campaign for his release has been gathering steam in the US, Ireland and Australia. In the US the Ancient Order of Hibernians president Jack Meehan has called for him to be given bail and for deportation proceedings to be dropped. Over 600 people have signed an on line

petition at [www.polbrennan.com](http://www.polbrennan.com) which also calls on the US government to drop its deportation proceedings.

Joanna Voltz, Brennan's wife of 19 years said that the growing support has lifted his spirits. His next court date is August 12, when Judge Howard Actsam will decide whether to grant him a green card based on his marriage to Voltz.

*From Irish Echo, 30.06.2008*

*Kindly supplied by Paul Lynch, Sec. Brehon Law Society of Australia..*

### AIHN Foundation Members

In the second issue of *Tinteán*, we published a list of Foundation Members of the Australian Irish Heritage Network, without whose generous donations we would have been unable to get the publication of *Tinteán* started. Unfortunately, this list omitted the following names:

The Irish Australian Club, Wol-longong; Rosemary Benet; Robert Butler; Leo Kelly; Ben Kiernan; Maria Myers; Paddy O'Brien-Wright and M O'Sullivan.

We are most grateful to our Foundation Members and those who have subsequently made donations to AIHN and taken up subscriptions to the network and the magazine.

## THE LAKE SCHOOL OF CELTIC MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE



### Koroit January 4-9 2009

The Lake School of Celtic Music song and Dance January 4-9 2009 Koroit Vic - featuring daily tuition on flute, tin whistle, fiddle, guitar, DADGAD guitar. Irish language, Irish set dancing, singing, anglo concertina, kids program, bodhran, slow session, songwriting, uilleann pipes, as well as the

Billy Moran Memorial Welcome Session, The Spud Poets Award, the Songwriters Concert, the Blackboard Concert, Singers Night and the Grand Ceilidhe. New to the Lake School this year are tutors Danny Bourke (Irish music masterclass Jan 9), Youth Performance night, Oral History Project with Teresa O'Brien. Also Ray Argall from Sydney continues the Youth Program begun last year by Gary Egan, and Lou Hesterman will continue with the Events Recording.

Tickets \$165/95 Contact Felix 0413-801294 [felix@bushwahzee.com](mailto:felix@bushwahzee.com) [www.bushwahzee.com](http://www.bushwahzee.com)

# Bolg an tSoláthair/Odds & Ends

## Kapunda and other Irish in South Australia

On Friday 16 May 2008, Dymphna Lonergan, Margaret and Richie Walsh, Terry Denny and others organised a one-day Oireachtas/ Conference on the history of the Irish in South Australia. On the Sunday, there was a booked-out bus tour of selected Adelaide sites of Irish Australian interest.

There were ten speakers: Chad Habel, Peter Moore, Pam O'Connor, Stephanie James, Simon O'Reilly, Peter Cahalan, Dymphna Lonergan, Gay Lynch, Pat Roberts and me. Topics included place names, famous officials such as Torrens and Kingston, settlers in Kapunda, Irish around Mount Gambier, the absence of Irish features in local tourism, extracts from a forthcoming novel, a possible biographical index and the state of Irish Australian studies.

Those present drew up a list of possible future activities such as forming an Irish history association, a website, a blog, regular meetings and a possible book.

The Oireachtas was a test run regarding resources and level of interest. It was very successful. Further details from dymphna.lonergan@flinders.edu.au.

## Finnish scholar addresses Sydney language school

Anders Ahlqvist, the new professor of Celtic Studies at Sydney university, was born into a Swedish-speaking family in Finland. On Friday night, 6 June, three days after arriving in Australia, he gave a rivetting talk at the opening of the Irish language winter school at Kensington, NSW. The appointment of Anders Ahlqvist as professor in Sydney is a big step forward for the study of Celtic culture in Australia. He is a researcher and writer with an outstanding international reputation.

His topic was the history of the Celtic languages. He spoke in both English and Irish, and answered a German-speaking questioner in that tongue. He said that he felt "upside down" after his plane trip but you would never have known it. Ahlqvist became interested in Celtic languages from coming across Gaelic phrases in stories such as *Whisky Galore* and *Monarch of the Glen* by the English-born Scottish novelist Compton McKenzie.

Celtic Studies goes beyond the Celtic countries and is extremely international, Ahlqvist said. Harvard in the USA has a most important centre but there are others in Holland, Sweden, Italy and Germany. He recently met a Japanese PhD student in Galway who spoke better Irish than English; and there is a Japanese journal of Celtic Studies.

Remarking that histories of the English language tend to ignore the influence of the Celtic languages, Ahlqvist argued that it is precisely the interaction with Irish, Scots Gaelic and Welsh that makes English different from other Germanic languages. The American custom of responding to a Thank you with the words, "You're welcome" comes from the Irish custom of saying "Tá fáilte romhat/ You're welcome", he said.

## What's in a name?

Last month I was preparing a research paper on how Nicholas O'Donnell (1862-1920), son of selectors from Bullengarook near Gisborne, became Australia's leading Gaelic scholar in his day. This meant I had to read up on some of the history of the Irish language.

One of the things I found was that in radical Belfast, in the heady days before the attempted revolution of 1798, Patrick Lynch from Clare published a magazine called *Bolg an tSoláthair*

At Kingston House, Adelaide, a tribute to Tjilbruke, a creator hero of the Kurna Aboriginal people: sculptor John Dowie has given it an uncanny similarity to an Irish neolithic tomb



Some of those who enjoyed a bus tour of Irish Australian sites around Adelaide

(meaning a Miscellany). Lynch took an important step in getting the poems and songs of the oral Gaelic culture into print.

When Eamon Naughton helped me choose the Irish title for this column, I did not realise it was such a historic name.

## More about Mick

Mick McEwan from Good Shepherd Hostel in Abbotsford continues to surprise me. You'll remember that Ambassador Máirtín Ó Fainín visited him earlier this year in honour of Mick's father's work for the cause of Ireland back in the early 1920s (*Tinteán* no 4, p 7).

From Mary Hennessy at the Irish National Association library in Sydney, I learned that Mick's parents have stronger republican credentials than we realised. His father, Prionsias, was one of two Victorians interned with Albert Dryer and four others in Darlinghurst jail in NSW by the Billy Hughes government in 1918 for their support for Ireland's independence.

And from conversations around Melbourne, it turns out that Mick's mother, Fodhla McKeown, was arrested as late as March 1961 for handing out Irish republican publicity in Melbourne city. No wonder Collingwood-born Mick has a strong Irish Australian identity.

Moreover, he told me that his parents gave him the name Conor Mac Nessa after a famous king in Irish mythology but that didn't work at school so he took the name Mick. Ita Collard remembers that his friends used to call him Nessa.

Val Noone

# More of the same, & then some

**The second quarter of 2008 did not provide any lasting signs of relief for financial markets, with the global credit crisis continuing to unravel. Further, record oil prices compounded negative market sentiment, and put central banks' inflationary policies and credibility to the test.**

## 3 Month Review to 30 June

"More of the same" probably best sums up the financial markets' experience in the latest three-month period. At the beginning of the second quarter, there was a sense that the worst of the credit crunch was over as the world's central banks appeared to have eased concerns about the global banking system. The collapse and rescue of Bear Stearns in March appeared to mark a trough for stock markets as equities generally enjoyed a strong run from that point through May. Unfortunately, this recovery proved to be relatively short-lived and those strong gains were eroded by heightened worries about the health of the global economy amid escalating inflationary pressures and the ongoing unavailability of credit. The acceleration in the oil price beyond most expectations has been a significant factor in the decline in economic and market outlooks.

After recording double-digit declines in the first quarter of the year, many markets extended those losses in this quarter. The US S&P 500 Index recorded a drop of 3.2%, while the UK FTSE 100 fell by a relatively modest 1.3%. With the German Dax Index falling 1.8% it appeared as if smaller European stock markets were most out of favour with investors; Sweden (-9.9%), Spain (-9.2%), and Ireland (-15.7%). There was a notable divergence within the Emerging Market bracket as well, with China's Shanghai Composite Index dropping 21.2% while the commodity-rich economy of Brazil spurred its market on to a 6.6% gain. Among developed markets, Japan, not for the first time, generated a return in

stark contrast to its counterparts as the Topix Index climbed 8.8%.

Banks fell further out of favour as a greater number than expected returned to shareholders for funds to replenish balance sheets wracked by credit-related write-downs and evidence of deteriorating asset quality. The issue of funding remained topical amid ongoing liquidity shortages and high inter-bank lending rates. Market rates rose in June as interest rate expectations shifted towards a tightening bias.

Increasing evidence that leakage from the original sub-prime mortgage/housing market/credit crisis was resulting in a broad slowdown in economic activity began to weigh heavily on markets. Business sentiment in Europe dropped to a two-year low, while consumer confidence in the United States has fallen to levels not seen in 16 years. Although unemployment in Europe as a whole has not shifted higher, the sustained strength of the euro and crumbling housing market prospects has unnerved businesses and consumers alike. Retail sales have come under pressure as rising fuel prices and staple goods have steered many people away from discretionary purchases.

Demand from the Far East and other emerging economies for the raw materials of growth pushed commodity prices to new highs, but the 'decoupling' thesis has been largely debunked as the re-pricing of risk that was increasingly evident elsewhere did not bypass Asia. With inflation rising rapidly, concerns about overheating economies intensified and this has seen emerging stock markets tumble and government bond spreads widening significantly. At the same time, rising food prices have become a serious issue in many emerging markets, where the average income is still very low. Many emerging countries subsidise fuel costs, but the scale of oil price inflation means this is becoming a highly expensive practice.

Inflation was a dominant macro story

this quarter as Europe and the US experienced headline inflation of about 4%. The post-March 17 equity rally faltered as the Federal Reserve first indicated it would take a pause from its series of interest rate cuts, followed by similar rhetoric from the Bank of England. With the European Central Bank flagging a likely interest rate hike in early July, markets began to price in a series of increases. Fragile stock markets were then hit by a sharp pick-up in oil prices from about US\$122 per barrel in early June to US\$140 by the end of the quarter, with plenty of forecasters predicting oil at US\$170, US\$200, US\$250 within a year. Even though Saudi Arabia stated that it would increase production, there was no noticeable softening of the oil price. Metals such as copper and aluminium also trended higher after falling back from earlier highs. It wasn't all one way traffic however, as metals such as zinc, nickel and lead all experienced significant price declines as demand levelled off.

## Outlook

Equity markets have been under intense pressure for some weeks now as the myriad problems confronting the global economy have intensified. Growth continues to slow across the developed world economies, yet inflation remains stubbornly high ruling out the prospect of any near-term cuts in interest rates. Oil hitting US\$145 underlines the monetary policy dilemma. US consumers have been bailed out temporarily by the tax rebate package but that will very shortly have run its course meaning that US growth will be heavily dependant on a continued strong export performance. Despite the public rhetoric behind the desirability of a strong US dollar it is easy to appreciate why the US authorities would not be too displeased if the dollar was to lose a bit more value to reinforce the export drive. European companies are finding it difficult to compete with

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**Simon Good**  
Client Services Manager  
BIAM Australia Pty Limited

the lower dollar so, not surprisingly, the feel-good factor behind European companies earlier this year has largely evaporated. European consumers are unlikely to take up the slack in the face of big cost of living increases and lower job security.

It's clearly not a positive environment for equities so despite the sharp falls seen over recent weeks, which have taken most markets into bear territory, it is hard to muster enthusiasm for equities at this point. Even the previously strongly performing materials and oil sectors have succumbed to the fear of a sharp contraction in demand. We've been saying for some time now that the key to a market rebound has to be the financial sector. Financials have yet to find a floor despite trading on extremely low valuations. Investors remain highly sceptical of the health of the financial system, currently highlighted by the unfolding 'rescue' of the US Government Sponsored Entities, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The fear is that we will see more dilutive equity raising and more bailouts that protect debt holders.

It is hard to envisage a set of favourable developments which would turn things around quickly for economies and markets. It is far easier to envisage that the global slowdown will persist until well into next year. For equity markets it's a battle between breaking news, which continues to be overwhelmingly negative, and valuations which, for the most part, look attractive on a longer-term perspective. This is an extremely testing time for investors, calling for very strong nerves and a willingness to endure possibly even more near-term pain.

*Simon Good*

# Obituaries

## Marxist quartermaster

Brian Keenan (1942 – 2008), a leading Irish Republican and guerrilla strategist has died of cancer. Fluent in four languages, one of them Arabic, he established contacts in East Germany, Lebanon and Syria, particularly Colonel Gadaffi in 1972. As the IRA's quartermaster general, he was a major organiser of the bombing campaign in London in the mid-1970s. His main responsibility was directing and supplying the IRA unit involved in the Balcombe St. siege of December 1975. After an 18 month campaign, the work of this unit left nine people dead and over 100 injured. After his release from prison in 1993, he persuaded the IRA high command to accept the peace process. It was Keenan who acted as the intermediary with John de Chastelain, the Canadian general who oversaw the decommissioning of IRA and loyalist weapons dumps in Ireland.

Little is known about Keenan's philosophy or reasons for involvement in the Republican cause, but he was inspired by revolutionary Marxism and saw himself as a disciple of James Connolly. Working in a Belfast electronics factory in his youth, he was a militant trade unionist. This may have been why he decided that the best way to reach his goal of a socialist united Ireland lay in a political solution and support for the peace process. He also believed that conditions for the republican and nationalist community could be improved by participation in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

He is survived by his wife and six children.

*From The Age, 24.5.2008, p. 11*

## Somebody Indeed

**Nuala O'Faolain**

**1 March 1940–9 May 2008**

Born in Dublin, the second of nine children, Nuala O'Faolain was a best-selling writer, reviewer, broadcaster, commentator and teacher, who lived in Co Clare and Manhattan. She died of lung cancer in Dublin and is survived by six siblings. Her father, Tomas, wrote the *Dubliners Diary* for the *Dublin Evening Press* under the pen name, Terry O'Sullivan. Educated at University College Dublin and the Universities of Hull and Oxford (both on scholarships), she won Journalist of the Year in 1986 as an *Irish Times* opinion columnist. When a publisher wanted to collate some of her columns into a memoir, she agreed to write a personal introduction to the international best-seller, *Are You Somebody?* (1996). In this she explains, 'The world changed around Ireland, and even Ireland changed, and I was to be both an agent of change and a beneficiary of it. I didn't see that till I wrote out my story.' She considers the legacy of a grandmother, who sewed shrouds, and an emigrant grandfather. Chronicling a chaotic childhood with a philandering father and an alcoholic, bookworm mother; her romantic struggles and bisexuality; the writing is strikingly honest, insightful and witty.

A second volume of memoir *Almost There* (2003) and a novel, *My Dream of You* (2001), followed and featured on the New York Times Best Seller List. In 2006 she won the Prix Femina for *The Story of Chicago May*.

*Frances Devlin-Glass*



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# Word Watch: mondegreen

A 'mondegreen' is a genuine mis-hearing of a song or common phrase; many of which can be weirdly creative. Mondegreens are distinct from deliberately altering the words and often make believers vulnerable to a sense of loss when the truth is revealed to them. The term arose from the *Bonny Earl of Murray*, rendered as "They have slain the Earl of Murray and Lady Mondegreen." When the real wording was explained to Sylvia Wright, who originated the term in a 1954 Harper's Magazine article, she was quite disappointed at being robbed of her romantic vision of the pale but lovely Lady Mondegreen lying beside her slain lover.

Mondegreens are probably particularly common with religious texts, given the archaic language used to audiences of all education levels and ages combined with people's unwillingness to reveal ignorance by asking a question. One member of the

editorial team confessed to a childhood belief in "Our Father, the wart in heaven" while another had wondered about the "constipated cross eyed bear" that apparently awaited Christians. My mother's childhood

"Surely good  
Mrs. Murphy will  
follow me all  
the days of my life."

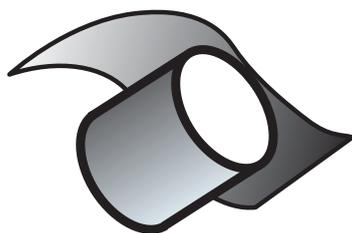
was haunted by a common mondegreen; "Surely good Mrs. Murphy will follow me all the days of my life." Like Sylvia Wright, she had a vivid vision of the heroine; brisk, bustling and rosy cheeked, wearing a respectable widow's hat and carrying a rolled up

umbrella as she marched along in my mother's wake. When I asked my mother why that had worried her so much about this everyday vision, she replied "But what could she want?"

Dialect songs hold other challenges. For years I felt sorry for the small, shy hero of 'Donald, where's your trousers?' as he walked grimly through the howling winds on the streets of that bleak Scots town 'Mckintyrelo'. Clearly, I thought, economic necessity had driven him to some soul less oil town near Lerwick where he toiled to support the struggling croft and uphold Scots culture by wearing his kilt despite mindless ridicule. Recently, listening to a better recording, I suddenly realised that he was actually affirming a decision that "Through the streets in mah kilt I'll go!"

If you have a favourite mondegreen, share it with us.

*Felicity Allen*



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# What's in a name?

In this article Bearnáí Ó Doibhlin writes about his surprise to learn that the town of Ballina, on the northern NSW coast, was not named after the Irish towns of the same name. He also discovered that the nearby village of Bangalow does have a distinctively Irish history. The meanings of the words in bold listed below the article.

Thall sa bhliain 1972 thug mé mo chéad chuairt ar an gceantar álainn ar chósta thuaidh NSW, beagán ó dheas ón teorainn le Queensland, agus is minic ó shin i leith a chaith mé saoirí taitneamhacha ann. Tá Ballina ar an mbaile is mó sa cheantar agus, **dála** go leor daoine eile, bhí mé den tuairim gur **logainm** Éireannach a bhí i gceist ann.

Ní hionadh é gur cheap mé amhlaidh, de bharr go bhfuil cúpla baile in Éirinn leis an logainm céanna. Béal an Átha an logainm a bhí orthu sular **galldaíodh** iad agus tugadh an logainm seo orthu de bharr go raibh siad lonnaithe in aice le háthanna. Mar a scríobh Deirdre agus Laurence Flanagan ina leabhar, *Irish Place Names*:

[Béal]... basically means 'mouth' but in place names often has a more generalized sense of 'approach', 'opening' or 'access'... Very frequently 'béal' is coupled with 'átha', ford.

Tá Ballina ar chósta thuaidh NSW lonnaithe ar bhéal abhann agus mheas mé go raibh áth ann tráth den saol. Freisin, gan aon agó, bhí an-bhaint ag go leor Éireannach le **luathstair** Eorpach an cheantair.

Ach, mar a deir an seanfhocal, ní mar a shíltear a bítear.

Sula a théim níos faide, caithfidh mé admháil nach **staraí** mé. B'fhearr liom i dtólamh ficsean ná fíricí – sin a ba chúis leis an gcinneadh a rinne mé fadó mo shaol oibre a chaitheamh mar mheánmhúinteoir Béarla, is dócha.

Anuraidh, áfach, nuair bhí mé ag scríobh ailt maidir leis an gceantar don iris *Beo!*, rinne mé beagán taighde ar stair Eorpach an cheantair. B'ionadh liom a fhoghlaim nach logainm Éireannach é Ballina ar chor ar bith. Tagann an t-ainm ón bhfocal 'bullenah', arbh é is brí leis ná 'áit ina bhfuil go leor **oisrí**' i dteanga na mBundúchasach áitiúil.

Mar a scríobh mé thuas, bhí an-bhaint ag Éireannaigh le luathstair Eorpach an cheantair, go háirithe, de réir cosúlachta, leis an sráidbhaile ar a thugtar Bangalow sa lá atá inniu ann. I dtús báire tugadh 'Granuaile' ar an sráidbhaile. Thug fear darbh ainm Robert Campbell, as Fear Manach, an t-ainm sin air.

Nuair a tháinig an chéad **fhiontraí**, William Barby, don sráidbhaile sa bhliain 1881 bhí cónaí air in 'Granuaile House'. Chomh maith leis sin, tugadh 'Granuaile Hotel' ar an gcéad teach tábhairne sa sráidbhaile, a bhí ar an láithreán céanna atá an Bangalow Hotel ann faoi láthair. Agus go díreach trasna na sráide ón teach tábhairne bhí halla mór ar a tugadh 'Tara'. Nuair a tháinig an líne traenach tríd an baile tugadh 'Granuaile' ar an stáisiún.

Deich mbliana roimh dheireadh na naoú aoise déag, cheannaigh fear darbh ainm JJ Garvan píosa talún ar chnocán in aice le Bangalow. Rugadh athair JJ Gavan i gContae Luimnigh sa bhliain 1843 agus tháinig sé chun na hAstráile ceithre bliana ní ba dhéanaí lena theaghlach. Thug JJ Garvan 'Granuaile' ar an bhfeirm a bhunaigh sé ar an chnocán. Sa lá atá inniu ann tá an t-ainm 'Granuaile' ar an mbóthar a ritheann ón sráidbhaile go dtí an cnocán.

Mar a dúirt mé cheana, ní staraí mé agus theip orm eolas sa bhreis a fháil ar na daoine thuasluaite a bhain an-úsáid as an ainm 'Granuaile', agus ar na fáthanna a roghnaigh siad é. Feictear dom, ámh, gur cinnte gur **d'aon ghnó** a roghnaíodh an t-ainm seo.

Tá clú agus cáil ar an mbean a ainmníodh Granuaile ach nílim chun a scéal a phlé anseo. Is leor a rá go raibh sí mar **shamhailchomhartha** ag na hÉireannaigh a bhí ag lorg saoirse dá dtír fhéin. Bhain Pádraig Mac Piarais, a bhí ina cheannaire ar an éirí amach sa bhliain 1916, úsáid aisti ina amhrán cáiliúil 'Óró sé do bheatha 'bhaile':

Tá Gráinne Mhaol ag teacht thar sáile,  
Óglaigh armtha léi mar gharda,  
Gaeil iad féin is ní Gaill ná Spáinnigh...

Is cuirfidh siad ruaig ar Ghallaibh!

Bheadh a fhios ag na daoine Éireannacha thuasluaite a bhain úsáid as a hainm go raibh baint ag an ainm leis an ngluaiseacht ar son saoirse in Éirinn. Creidim go raibh siadsan ag cur in iúl dóibh siúd a thuig cúrsaí Éireannacha go raibh siad fós báuil leis an gcúis, cé go raibh cónaí orthu in áit iargúlta in **Impireacht** na Breataine.

Ós ag plé cúrsaí fantaisaíochta atáim, b'fhéidir freisin gur thuig daoine áirithe sna údaráis ag an am cad a bhí i gceist leis

an ainm 'Granuaile', agus chinn siadsan go n-aistreofaí ainm bunúsach an tsráidbhaile go hainm gan an **fhorchiall** a bhaineann le 'Granuaile'.

Is dócha, ámh, go bhfuil go leor ficsean scríofa agam – is cóir go bhfuil an t-am istigh do na staraíthe a bheith ag lorg na bhfíricí!

## Gluais

dála	like
logainm	place name
galldaíodh	Anglicized
luathstair	early history
staraí	historian
oisre	oyster
fiontraí	entrepreneur
d'aon ghnó	deliberately
samhailchomhartha	symbol
Impireacht	Empire
Forchiall	connotation

Bearnáí Ó Doibhlin

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# Profile

## Thomas Vincent O'Connor, Baritone

### **Vincent, tell me about your family**

I was born in Crumlin, Dublin and have a twin sister still living there and two brothers and three other sisters. My mother came from Co. Meath and my father from Co. Clare. Both of my parents were involved in music. My mother played fiddle and button accordion and my Dad the piano. He had a deep bass voice and there was always plenty of music and singing in the family.

My father was in the old IRA and escaped from the Black and Tans once by fleeing to a convent and hiding under a nun's bed in Co. Cork where she was sleeping! I don't know who got the biggest fright! The old IRA fired a volley at his grave as a tribute. He was involved in the Easter Rising.

### **Tell me about yourself**

Shortly after leaving school I spent 4 and a half years with the Christian Brothers. After leaving, I performed with the Dublin Grand Operatic Society and the Rathmines and Rathgar Musical Society. I also did some commercials with Brendan O'Reilly at RTE. Once we were doing one for Beamish Stout and after several takes, couldn't get a head on it, so we had to use Guinness for the ad. for Beamish! No problems with getting a head on the glass then!

After moving to England I won a scholarship to study and later sang leading roles including 'Scorpio' in 'Tosca' and the Count in the 'Marriage of Figaro'.

Since moving to Melbourne I have taken part in the international production of Verdi's Aida and Bizet's 'Carmen' with the Victoria State Opera and played

the role of the thief in Merrotti's 'The Old Man and the Thief' with the Melbourne Opera Company.

I forgot to tell you one of my first jobs was singing at Butlin's holiday camp as a Red Coat in Co. Meath which was an interesting experience to say the least!

### **Why did you come to Australia?**

There were better opportunities for my family especially my twin children, Kieran and Colleen, who has just completed an Economics degree. Kieran is in his last semester at La Trobe University in the Law faculty.

### **What do you miss about Ireland?**

I miss seeing my family and the Irish sense of humour and camaraderie. I don't miss the weather. I especially miss my twin sister Angela.

### **What do you enjoy about Australia?**

People here are very friendly, and similar to the Irish. The weather is much better and it's a great country with so many opportunities. I lived in England for just over 20 years before coming here and the quality of life is so much richer here. I have a lovely house here and enjoy my work in local government. There are also so many avenues for my singing which is the light of my life.

### **Tell me about your music and singing**

I sang at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin when I was younger and singing has always been an important part of my life. I have always been involved in light opera and am performing in 'The Man of La Mancha' in Yorkshire in August. There is a huge interest in Irish music in

Melbourne so there's never any shortage of gigs. Each St. Patrick's day I perform at Parliament House and at various other venues. There are naturalisation ceremonies, weddings, funerals, concerts and all kinds of special occasions.

### **Tell me about your repertoire**

Depending on the function, I sing songs from musicals, light opera, popular music and I have a collection of about 165 Irish songs. I try to make my singing entertaining and amusing and people seem to enjoy. Sometimes I visit hostels and nursing homes to entertain the old people and I am in the local parish choir. I sing at the annual Irish Mass. I have also opened the Cox Plate and prominent race meetings with the Australian national anthem. The Irish national anthem is also very much in demand at Irish functions as is the rousing 'Ireland's Call'. I also include Scottish and Welsh songs in my line up and sometimes finish off the Irish ones with a little Irish jig, much to the amusement of the audience to see a six foot five man dancing – I don't claim to be a great dancer!

### **Would you return to live in Ireland?**

No, Ireland will always be home and I can visit family every other year, but I have made my home here and I appreciate all the opportunities Australia gives me. I could never imagine living away from my children and there is such much music and singing going on here. I have made many friends and it's a great place to live. I'm glad I made the change, but I will always be an Irishman, because that's where I was born.

*Catherine Arthur*

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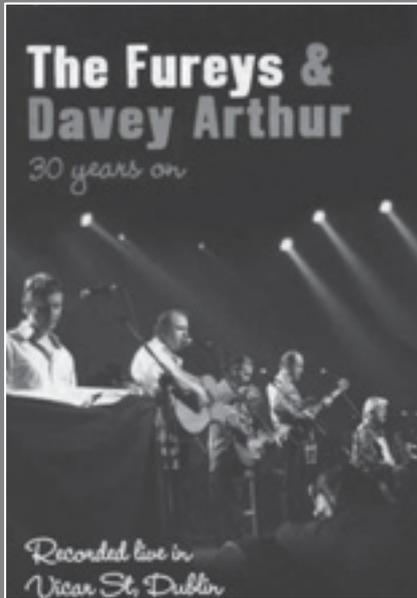
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# THE FUREYS & DAVEY ARTHUR

## 30 Years On – Live at St Dublin



RV0928

**The Fureys & Davey Arthur** have come a long way since 1978 when the band (including all four brothers - George, Eddie, Finbar & Paul) was formed, literally on the back of a road accident. There have been a number of lineup changes over the years (Finbar left the band in 1996, Paul died in 2002 and Davey Arthur rejoined the band in 2003 after a 10 year absence), but this has never stopped the essence of the band, who are renowned for some of the most stirring music ever to capture the public imagination.

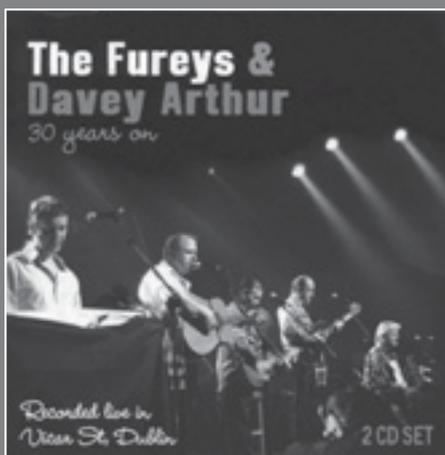
Even today their mix of traditional Irish music roots with mainstream Anglo-American pop still receives standing ovations in some of the biggest concert halls of the world, and this DVD is a testament to their craft.

Released this year to celebrate the Furey's **30th Anniversary**, this full-length concert was recorded live in Vicar Street, Dublin and features 30 tracks of classics and some new material.

Lineup includes George & Eddie Furey, Davey Arthur, Luke Crowley & Dominic Leech.

**DVD Tracklist:** 1. Clare To Here 2. Reels: Sally Gardens / The Old Blackthorn / The Highlanders 3. The Old Man 4. Her Father Didn't Like Me Anyway 5. Rattle For The Gypsy / Within A Mile of Dublin 6. Steal Away 7. Mad Lady And Me 8. The Grande Affair 9. Reels: The Bolton / The Bridge of Malin 10. Leaving Nancy 11. Leezie Lindsay 12. This One's For You 13. Waltz Of The Years 14. I'll Be There 15. First Leaves Of Autumn 16. More Than I Can Say 17. Absent Friends 18. Lonesome Boatman 19. My Father's House 20. Gallipoli 21. Tennessee Waltz 22. I Will Love You 23. Geraldine's Thinking Of Galway 24. Reels: Father Kellys / The Clumsy Lover 25. Will You Dance With Me 26. Mason's Apron 27. When You Were Sweet Sixteen 28. Red Rose Café 29. The Green Fields Of France 30. Goodnight Irene

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# Aran Isles' currachs

Currach Folk Exhibition Opening,  
Public Records Office of Victoria, 17 July 2008

The islands of Ireland, particularly the western isles like the Aran islands off Galway and the Blaskets off Kerry, are certainly impressive and evocative places. But I don't think we can even begin to understand them until we look, not so much at the land, but at the sea. The three Aran islands are small, rocky, exposed outcrops in the Atlantic Ocean – exposed that is to the full force of the storms and gales for which the north Atlantic is notorious. But, for many centuries, those living on these islands relied on the sea in order to survive—most were fishermen. Farming certainly went on, but it was difficult due to the barren nature of the limestone rock of which the islands are composed – the same type of rock that makes up the Burren, nearby on the mainland.

Instead men ventured out in small, flimsy rowing boats to fish. These boats are the famous currachs, illustrated by the photographs in this exhibition. They were made of light wooden frames covered originally with animal hides, and later with tarred canvas. Even today, when large fishing boats with the modern equipment are still too often lost off the west coast of Ireland, it's hard for us to conceive of venturing out in such seemingly inadequate and dangerous crafts. Clearly others have felt the same – and, apparently, for a long time.

In his wonderful book, *Stones of Aran*, published in 1986, Tim Robinson recounts the folklore surrounding some of the stones on Inishmore, the largest of the islands. Those shaped like boats are known as currach stones and are associated locally with St Enda. The medieval lives of this saint tell us that he travelled to Aran in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, to spread Christianity, in a boat made of stone, because it was so difficult to find any conventional boats willing or able to make the crossing from Connacht. Obviously this saint didn't put much faith in the currach – and one can well understand why when reading accounts of the boat, watching films of it or seeing photographs of it.

You will see photographs in this exhibition taken by the distinguished Irish photographer Bill Doyle in the early 1960s. And on 30 August the famous drama/documentary film 'Man of Aran', made in the early 1930s, will be shown, which includes many scenes of Aran fishing and especially of its hazards.

For written accounts that vividly capture the perils and, also the thrills, of the currach, I don't think one can go much past the work of the playwright, J.M. Synge. In the 1890s, when he was in his 20s, he studied Irish as a student in Dublin and then went to Aran, like many others at that time and since, to improve his language skills. His accounts of the visits he paid most summers from 1898 onwards were published as a book in 1907, accompanied by a number of evocative photographs. Fascinated by the perilous lives of the Aran fishermen, Synge at the same time wrote a well-known short play, 'Riders to the Sea', about an island woman whose husband and five sons have all



been drowned and who unsuccessfully begs her only surviving son not to go to sea in bad weather.

I think I can do no better, finally, than to read to you two short extracts from Synge's book, *The Aran Islands*, because they capture very powerfully what it was like to watch a currach and its crew and also to travel in one in bad weather. Synge's words, it seems to me, are well worth keeping in mind while you are looking at Bill Doyle's photographs. They lend movement and urgency to his pictures.

The first extract describes boat crews waiting for the steamer, which came two or three times a week from the mainland, because they had to go out to pick up the passengers and goods needing to be landed. This is of course around 1900:

In bad weather four men will stand for nearly an hour at the top of the slip with a curagh in their hands, watching a point of rock towards the south where they can see the strength of the waves that are coming in.



The instant a break is seen they swoop down to the surf, launch their curagh, and pull out to sea with incredible speed. Coming to land is attended with the same difficulty, and, if their moment is badly chosen, they are likely to be washed sideways and swamped among the rocks.

This continual danger, which can only be escaped by extraordinary personal dexterity, has had considerable influence on the local character, as the waves have made it impossible for clumsy, foolhardy, or timid men to live on these islands.

Syngé also describes many trips he made in currachs himself, some, like the following, obviously dangerous, and yet exciting for a young man. He is talking about the crew trying to prevent the fragile craft being swamped or overturned by high waves in stormy weather:

When one came in sight, the first effort was to

get beyond its reach. The steersman began crying out in Gaelic “Siubhal, siubhal” (“Run, run”), and sometimes, when the mass was gliding towards us with horrible speed, his voice rose to a shriek. Then the rowers themselves took up the cry, and the curagh seemed to leap and quiver with the frantic terror of a beast till the wave passed behind or fell with a crash beside the stern...

Our lives depended upon the skill and courage of the men...

I enjoyed the passage. Down in this shallow trough of canvas that bent and trembled with the motion of the men, I had a far more intimate feeling of the glory and power of the waves than I have ever known in a steamer.

I hope that you enjoy the exhibition.

*Elizabeth Malcolm*



Bill Boyle.  
Disbeek, Aug. '64.

### Fishermen waiting for the tide

Inis Oírr (Inisheer) 1964

The Aran currach's upturned bow lifts it over steep waves and reduces the amount of water washing into the boat. Nets are used for catching ronnach (mackerel) which swim closer to the shore from August to December.

### Ferryman with dog and currach

Inis Oírr (Inisheer) 1964

Bill Doyle travelled to Inis Oírr on the ferry steamer Naomh Eanna and was rowed to shore in a currach.

This is one of the first photographs he took during his two week stay on the island. Máirtín Folan, Páraic Choillí Pheadí Ó Conghaile and a third ferryman all dressed in homespun tweeds watch the new arrivals off the ferry.



### Getting ready

Inis Oírr (Inisheer) 1964

Men prepare their currachs in the early morning for the day's fishing. Aran currachs are built in a variety of sizes to accommodate crews of two (4.6 m -5.0 m x 0.9 m), three (5.8 m x 1.0 m) or four (6.75 m- 7.6 m x 1.1m).

### Walking boat

Inis Oírr (Inisheer) 1964

Currachs are carried like giant beetles beyond the high tide mark and stored overnight in gardens or boat yards.



### Johnny Mhary Ó Donnchadha and Aindhí Ó Conghaile

Inis Oírr (Inisheer) 1964

All images © Bill Doyle-Photographer

### Currach Folk Photographs by Bill Doyle

14 July – 8 November 2008

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# Poetry

## Lament of the Wandering Worker

Of waterfalls and still clear water -  
somewhere on the banks of the Murray River  
we search the night sky of the Southern Hemisphere  
for stars that are familiar.

There by chance, I meet someone like him  
and once again my heart is torn  
like a page carefully ripped at a fold in its centre –  
once again the ‘nays’ find favour.

### **Olive Broderick**

*Two months travel in Australia began Olive's year of writing and back-packing. This poem was submitted as part of a Creative Writing MA at Queen's University Belfast.*

## friendly fire

fear is a suitcase with changing labels  
if I fear men I will be fatherless  
houses can be realigned rebuilt  
and they are still windows in walls  
rivers can be straightened  
seas pierced with tunnels  
and time is still clamped like a skull  
you punch the wheel unseeing  
as the car drifts off the road  
the enemy isn't where you think it is  
I open the promise of words  
and the losses follow me  
too many vows and resolutions  
too much marriage too little relationship  
each word could break away from its surface  
each life could add to another's  
but fear  
you can bury it dump it build a house over it  
and it will just come back

### **Alana Kelsall**

*Born in Western Victoria, she has a degree in languages and has worked as a teacher of Japanese and English. She completed the Professional Writing and Editing course at RMIT and lives in Melbourne with her husband and children. This poem was first published in 'Melbourne Poets Live.'*

## Freeing Lir's Children

*(Inspired by the monument in Parnell Square, Dublin)*

I see pain, anguish in your faces.  
Desperation is in your bodies,  
seeming as though  
youth has learned  
the curse age teaches –  
that life is such a sentence.

And what could curse you  
more than that,  
I wonder,  
raising my eyes to the swans  
taking flight from your backs,  
endless sky behind their spread wings.

The story I remember  
reading as a child  
put you in prisons  
of three hundred years each,  
but seeing you now, like this,  
the only sentence surely  
is freedom,  
no wings ever having been chains.

### **Edward O'Dwyer**

*A member of the Whitehouse Poets in Limerick, Edward is a trainee teacher. Prior publications include a chapbook from Revival Press and poems in the journals The Shop, Southword, Revival and The Stony Thursday Book.*

# Evergreen

(IM Terry Monagle)

Though sky has let the winter in,  
red gum blooms white from July  
to soften salty eyes till summer.  
This keep of scent and sweetness  
lengthens days and nuzzles shadows;  
the would, the where and the why  
that leaving brings, the downing  
of mattock and spade lets earth  
fashion sense between the breaths.  
Birds give way to bees, snakes  
remodel skin, the sun inflates,  
limbs stretch from grey to blue.  
Evergreen, the shade of these  
arms upon the changeling land.

*Meg McNena 14-7-08*

# The Good Life

(IM Terry Monagle)

*'A man's memory does not age.'* (Celtic proverb)

Bards gather lifetimes to sing of you:  
Man of Inishowen granite and Atlantic swell,  
of Donagh and Carrowmore high crosses,  
of Republican farmlands and freeways,  
of Kensington steeples and a treasury of girls;  
Man of papers, desk and open doors, of armchairs  
and stories, strong handshakes and gentle eyes;  
Man of fire spirit and curiosity, man of earth and nurture,  
a guide scripted in a marathon of trials kindles us yet  
And we thank you for your kindness  
We praise you for your dignity  
We draw from your courage  
We let go your hands so angels may lead you  
to the Isles of the Blessed, font of wisdom and grace  
And we write your name with the Celts  
who knew a good life in the trinity of giving:  
-honouring the gods who give us presence and call it back  
-doing no evil so that sticks become stakes to grow upon  
-grasping the battle sword to write verses of truth and dare.  
Safe home from the Fort of the Foreigner, through the lands  
of your proud reputation. The voices of loved ones tarred  
in a curragh cradle your way West beyond the setting sun

*Meg McNena 15-7-08*

*Poet's Note: A tribute to the wonder and possibilities our friend bequeaths.*

# Irish in New Zealand

*Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, History, Politics and Culture*  
Laurence M. Geary and Andrew J. Mccarthy (Eds),  
Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2008

This collection of essays is the fifth publication in the *Irish Abroad Series* whose aim is to publish short biographies and collected writings studying Irish men and women who made their mark outside their native country. This volume contains seventeen papers delivered at the fourteenth Irish-Australian conference, University College Cork, June 2005. The papers are divided into four sections: 'Ireland and the Pacific World'; 'Cultural Transmission'; 'Citizenship'; and 'Politics, War and Remembrance' and as such is the broadest-ranging volume in the series: the first three focused on particular men, while the fourth considered Irish Republicanism in Scotland.

In the first essay, Malcolm Campbell develops his contention that a transnational webbing of Irish people spanned the Pacific World in a similar way to the Irish presence within the Atlantic World. He touches on the Irish participation in the creation of the British Empire, religious connections, nationalism and radical causes, and the transmission of culture. Lyndon Fraser undertakes the difficult task of tracking Irishmen in goldfield communities in nineteenth-century New Zealand. By their nature, goldfields are transient places and Fraser probes the extensive correspondence between Patrick and Michael Flanagan to explore the extent their Irish ethnicity contributed to their advancement. Fraser next considers the fortunes of a selection

of Irishmen, concluding that the Irish were well represented in all sectors of the region's economy.

Continuing the theme of Irish migration to New Zealand, Ciara Breathnach chronicles the recruitment of European migrants under the assisted passage schemes introduced in 1869. Breathnach explores the exclusion of the Irish, particularly the Catholic Irish, and the reports in the New Zealand media on

Overall this collection provides a rich source of some of the myriad issues in the relationship, similarities, differences and reactions of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand

the deliberate exclusion of Ireland in the recruitment efforts. In his essay, Brad Patterson assesses the historiography of the role of the Loyal Orange lodge in the settlement of Katikati. Patterson identifies those who have written about the Orange Order at Katikati, and assesses the extent to which their backgrounds may have influenced their expositions, concluding that 'the place of Katikati in the history of Irish Protestant migration has yet to be fully established' (p56).

The second part of the volume considers 'Cultural Transmission', commencing

with David Grant's assessment of the impact of the extended Wallace family in Australian music circles, focusing on William Vincent Wallace's residence in the period 1835-38. Grant outlines the colonial career, under Governor Richard Bourke's patronage, of this Irish-born violinist, pianist and composer, described as 'the Australian Paganini'. While not widely known, Wallace's music was recently celebrated in a concert at Australia House, London, organised by the Tait Memorial Trust, under the baton of Richard Bonyngé.

In a change of pace, Brega Webb considers the life and verse of Mary Anne Kelly, known as 'Eva of the Nation'. Webb traces the highs and lows of Eva's career: from her close association with the Young Ireland movement in the 1840s, her melancholy during the seven years' transportation of her fiancé Kevin Izod O'Doherty, Eva's translations of poems from 'Old Irish' while settling in Queensland with her young family, her rise in fortunes as O'Doherty established a successful medical career, and her death in straitened circumstances at Toowong in 1910.

Peter Kuch's essay focuses on another element of cultural life in Queensland: the 'Abbey Irish Players' who performed Lennox Robinson's *The White-Headed Boy* in a tour of Queensland in 1922. This play provided a counterpoint to the stereotype of Ireland as a place of murderers. In contrast to the poor reception in the southern states where sectarianism was rife, Kuch outlines the reasons for the success of the Queensland tour.

The cultural theme is expanded in Frances Devlin-Glass' re-reading of Mary

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Durack's iconic work, *Kings in Grass Castles* (first edition 1959). Devlin-Glass posits that while Durack draws on her Irishness to create a leitmotif of vigour in the face of adversity, there is little compassion for, or recognition of, the role of the disinherited Aborigines in her works. In this analysis, Devlin-Glass questions Durack's adoption of Irish victim tropes in her family's complicity in atrocities and land-grabs of vast tracts of land in north-west Australia and reveals that there is much to disturb a contemporary reader in the Durack story of the pioneer hero of the pastoral class.

In the final essay in this chapter, Pamela O'Neill examines funerary monuments, particularly those of the monumental mason Morgan Jageurs, and evaluates the incidence of representations of Irish monastic landscape scenes.

'Citizenship' is the concern of the third part of this volume. To commence, Richard Davis examines the Irish impact on Tasmanian life, from the formation of Van Diemen's Land to the present time. He reflects on such diverse issues as the lives of Irish bushrangers and eminent citizens, battles over education, support for Irish independence, the formation of an Irish-led Labor Party, to the impact of the 'Celtic tiger' economy on Tasmania. Laurence Geary's paper on the O'Connor family traces their fortunes from Connerville, Co. Cork to their home, 'Connerville' in Van Diemen's Land. Geary contrasts the life of the eccentric Roger O'Connor with that of his emigrant son, Roderic, who established a considerable estate in his new home and wrote the two-volume *Chronicles of Eri*. Tony Earls' study of the influence of Daniel

O'Connell on John Hubert Plunkett and his securing for the young Plunkett the plum role of Solicitor General in New South Wales is the focus of the next essay. Earls discusses the impact of Plunkett, the first Catholic appointed to high office in Australia.

Part Four deals with issues of Politics, War and Remembrance and contains five essays. Carla King considers Michael Davitt's experiences during his tour to Australia in the 1890s, focusing on mining communities and the Murray River settlements in South Australia. Michael Hopkinson outlines the attempt by Archbishop Joseph Clune, Perth's first archbishop, to bring about a truce and settlement in the Irish War of Independence following a visit to Rome in 1920. Rory O'Dwyer considers Eamon de Valera's visit to Australia and New Zealand, in 1948, when 20,000 people crammed into the Melbourne Exhibition Hall to hear de Valera's 'roof-raising' speech against the continuing partition of Ireland. Ruan O'Donnell assesses the Australian newspaper reaction to Irish republican activity, particularly the IRA Border Campaign of 1956-62. In the final essay of this collection, Jeff Kildea explores commemorations of the First World War in Ireland and Australia against the evolution of nationalism in each country.

Overall this collection provides a rich source of some of the myriad issues in the relationship, similarities, differences and reactions of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. Despite the Melbourne focus of the images on the front cover, this collection of well-argued and well-written essays has a broad canvas.

*Liz Rushen*

**Peter McCrossin**  
RFD, MAPS, PCDA

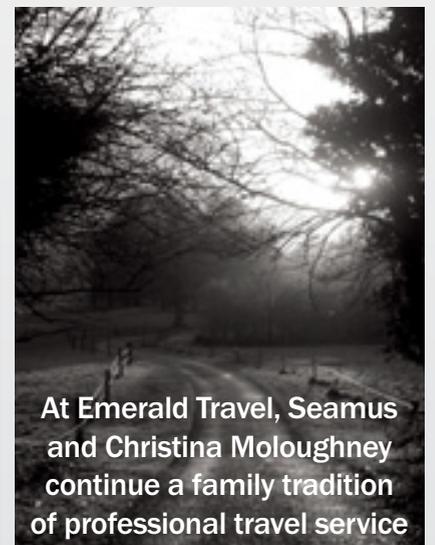
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# Rulers and culture in Co Cork

*The Lie of the Land: Journeys through Literary Cork*  
Mary Leland  
Cork University Press: Cork

Organised geographically as five chapters (East, West, South-West, North and Cork City), this book offers a rich account of the interaction of the history and literature of Ireland within the bounds of the county Cork. The author has decided that the 'literary landscape' includes visitors to and refugees in Cork as well as those born and bred there, she has also included living writers as well as dead ones, those who feature in ballads or novels and those better known for writing letters (that lost art!) as well as newspaper articles, prose and poetry. So detailed and extensive are the accounts of the literary connections of the many villages, towns, monuments and ruined noble houses of county Cork that a reviewer can only offer a small selection to give an impression of the complexity of the whole.

Mary Leland is one of those historians whose specialty is telling you 'what happened next' particularly to the women in the text who normally appear only briefly in a supporting role to the male heroes. Once all the shouting and uproar had died down, the lover's uprising had failed, the lover himself had been executed – what happened to the betrothed? Sarah Curran, better known to history as the heroine of *She Is Far From The Land*, is one example of Leland's ability to continue the story. Sarah enters the book when she took refuge with the Quaker Penroses at Glanmire in East Cork from the ongoing fallout of the 1798 Rising. In 1805, two years after Emmett's death, she married Captain Henry Sturgeon at the parish church. He was described by several observers as devoted to her. She did indeed go on a long voyage far from the land, but it is described in her letters to Anne Penrose rather less romantically than in the ballad:

"I was not frightened much .. on board a ship there are certainly a thousand ridiculous circumstances to counteract fear. Oh how you would have laughed could you have peeped in

on us in the Cabin while we dined all sitting on the floor, every moment inclining all at the same time to one side or other as the ship rolled." (p.21)

Further letters to Anne discuss the emotional legacy of her association with Emmet and the events of 1798. Defeated uprisings certainly bring overt and terrible losses of life, culture and property for both winners and losers, but Sarah talked about the more subtle psychic impacts and lost opportunities for all of those involved in national struggles when she wrote:

"a long succession of violent griefs and strong emotions are as likely to corrode as to correct the heart. .. It creates a leaven of bitterness in our nature which breaks out now and again in spite of ourselves [...] What was our portion, to bear tyranny and injustice, to submit [...] for myself I think all the better traits of my disposition were stifled and lost." (p.21)

In a final series of letters, she recounts the appalling circumstances of her only son's premature birth and death at 5 days during another terrible storm at sea in 1808. Sarah did not survive him long dying at 26 years of age. Sadly, Anne Penrose did not respond to Sarah's desperate pleas for comfort in her hour of need.

While the emphasis on literacy means that much of the book is by or about the wealthier or more cultured (not always the same thing) inhabitants of county Cork, Leland does not omit some truly shocking accounts of the poverty that prevailed throughout most of Cork's history among the majority of its people. Nobody could yearn for the revival of 'romantic Ireland' if it meant the return of living conditions like those described by the radical English reformer, politician and journalist William Cobbett (1763-1835) after a visit to Middleton in East Cork. Cobbett wrote about "...a sort of hamlet.." he had visited near Middleton, which had contained about 40 hovels. Among the few outsiders to have entered them, he described their

construction and furnishings as follows:

"They all consisted of mud walls, with a covering of rafters and straw. .. The floor, the bare ground. [...] No table, no chair. There was a mud wall about 4 feet high to separate off the end of the shed for the family to sleep, lest the hog should kill and eat the little children when the father and mother were both out, and when the hog was shut in. No bed: no mattress; some large flat stones laid on other stones, to keep the bodies from the damp ground; some dirty straw and a bundle of rags were all the bedding. *All built their own hovels..* and yet have to pay this rent." (p.30)

The desperate, humiliating poverty that Cobbett described here was not the result of famine; it was just normal running. Famine conditions were even worse.

West Cork, described in the next chapter, contains the town of Macroom, famous for more than one generation of warriors. Leland describes the short and tragic life of Art O'Leary, killed in an ambush near Macroom after his famous mare outran the entrant of the high sheriff of Cork in a race organised by the Muskerry hunt. These events were the basis of the extraordinary lament for her husband composed by Eibhlín Dhubh Ní Chonaill, though to be the greatest poet in the Irish language, which is quoted at length and its preservation and transformation among the professional keeners of the countryside is discussed. Surprisingly for such a detailed account of the doings of County Cork, the early 20th century activities "Not far from the town of Macroom" in the course of another notorious ambush celebrated in song two centuries later have not been included.

Leland acknowledges that literature, even in Irish, did not always fare well under de Valera's government. She recounts the story of Tadhg Ó Buachalla, resident of Inchigeela, and author of *The Tailor and Ansty*. His unvarnished presentation of the facts of 20<sup>th</sup> century

Irish rural life drew a group of literary friends towards him who encouraged him to publish the originally orally transmitted stories. When the book first came out, they were all delighted and went to the Ó Buachalla cottage to read them the enthusiastic reviews. As Frank O'Connor related:

"But we were all too innocent to anticipate the effect the book would have on Mr. de Valera's well educated government. It was banned as being 'in its general tendency indecent'. I didn't mind their saying that about my own work. After all, you don't take up a dangerous trade like literature in Ireland without developing the hide of a rhinoceros and renting a house in a strategic spot with direct access to the sea. What alarmed me was that the Tailor and Ansty lived in a mountain townland where people still believed in the fairies. It wasn't only an unpleasant situation, it could be a dangerous one." (p.81)

Indeed so it quickly became, with rural youths barring the doors to the Taylor's house - people that they had known all their lives, other villagers boycotting them and local priests demanding that the old couple burn a copy of their own book - 8/6<sup>d</sup> - worth! Their loyal friends, and Garda Hoare on his bicycle, went to see them regularly to discourage mischief but the stoic old couple commented that 'At our age, there is little the world can do to us'.

The link between the tastes and culture of the ruling regime and the life chances and experiences of literary people and hence the literature they produce is a strongly developed theme in this book. At several points, Leland alludes to the collapse of Gaelic society after the Battle of Kinsale. This social breakdown presaged the Flight of Earls, and the symbolic shattering of the crowning stone of the O'Neills, but more importantly for literature within a decade of the defeat 85% of Irish land was in English hands. The great Gaelic

patrons of literature, learning and poetry were no more and it's no exaggeration on Leland's part to describe that civilisation as "obliterated". She quotes many Gaelic poets mourning for the loss of the world which understood their gifts, notably Aodhagan Ó Rathaille (?1670 - 1729) who spent a sleepless night in Glandore in South West Cork composing his great poem about the sound of the waves. The real waves that beat on the Cork coastline symbolise the waves of tragedy that have swept away his patrons and his culture leaving him who "...ate no winkles or dogfish in my youth" (p.119) to lament not only poverty but utter loss of relevance in his old age. An Australian reader cannot help thinking of the loss of the Aboriginal 'songlines' and dreamtime stories now that there are very few people left who can really appreciate them.

Not far from Glandore lived Edith Somerville and Violet Martin, leading members of the culture that succeeded that of Aodhagan Ó Rathaille. Despite high social status, their gender meant that they had their own struggles to contend with in finding a culturally accessible niche to pursue their literary joint career as Somerville and Ross. Somerville noted in 1915 that the doctrine that "...sincere friendship is only possible between men dies hard." (p.122) and she was absolutely right in that observation given that her relationship with Martin is still analysed for latent lesbian overtones. While they successfully created comic masterpieces about Ascendancy life in the late 19th century, they did so under very difficult conditions which were likely to discourage any cultural output as Somerville commented

"To attempt anything serious or demanding work is just simply impossible here, and I feel sickened of even trying. ... whatever is done must be done by everyone in the whole place and as the majority prefer wasting their time that is the prevalent amusement." (p.122)

These comments, considered with those of Sarah Curran, make the reader wonder what might have been achieved if these people had enjoyed just the

most basic encouragement and support. In addition to literary stardom, both women pioneered different forms of farming in Ireland as they were motivated to attempt to restore great estates beggared by the Famine.

Glandore is close to Skibbereen - a name still synonymous with starvation. If the owners of the Ascendancy estates were still left impoverished fifty years later by the potato blight, the ordinary people had simply died of starvation and were often left unburied for days or weeks. Francis Webb rector of Caheragh wrote to the newspapers:

"I saw the bodies of Kate Barry and her two children very lightly covered with earth.... the flesh completely eaten by dogs.. two most wretched looking old houses with two dead bodies in each.. all dead about a fortnight and not yet interred." (p.125)

Leland quotes the plays, letters and poems written about the shattering impact of the starvation on Irish society. With her typically broad definition of the literary, she also quotes the appalling regulations that denied relief at the workhouse to people who owned a quarter acre of land to grow what amounts of food that they could. Survival on these pocket handkerchief holdings was possible, just, when the potato crop succeeded. When it did not, families could be driven off the land by starvation. Rather than surrender their tiny holdings, the men usually surrendered their families instead, who went to the workhouse claiming to be widows and orphans. If their true status was discovered, they were ejected from the workhouse to starve by the roadside.

At first the geographic organisation of the book is disconcerting, because an historical structure is more usual, but the rich and varied sources of literature supplied and the fascinating background detail on the lives of many figures in Irish history will draw you in. As you read on, you suddenly realise that this is a theme (e.g., the Battle of Kinsale) that you have encountered previously and that here is something more about it in a different part of the county by a different author. A beautifully written, and very well indexed book, with a wealth of information and detail.

*Felicity Allen*

# Dying for land

*Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur*  
**Ben Kiernan**  
Melbourne University Press, 2008 (first published by Yale UP in 2007).

Ben Kiernan's impressive 700-page book is made up of 14 case studies of genocide linked by the proposition that there are at least four features of the genocides studied: an appeal to antiquity, a proclaimed superiority in patterns of land use, racist views and a drive to territorial expansion.

While a thorough review of this book is beyond my resources at the moment, here are some introductory comments. I will consider one of his case studies, namely his important, powerful and dense chapter on the English conquest of Ireland during the reign of Elizabeth I. He begins in 1565, seven years after Elizabeth became queen, and takes the story through to her death in 1603.

In 1500 most of Ireland was unconquered, as Kiernan points out, but, in the following century, the builders of a new English empire took the island to their west as their first target. Henry VIII who reigned from 1508 to 1547 contributed to this process with his coercive policies.

Most readers will know that during the 150th anniversary of the Great Famine (1847-1852), there was discussion about whether or not the English government's actions and omissions constituted genocide against the Irish people. Kiernan leaves aside discussion of that period and argues that the Elizabethan conquest was genocide. Throughout the book he is referring to genocide as it is defined by the United Nations. This means killing people because of their ethnic, religious or political affiliation: it does not mean killing all of them.

To apply genocide to the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland is a strong and apt description as you will see if you read what Kiernan has written. A group of us were fortunate to hear Kiernan deliver an early draft of this chapter in August 2003 to the Melbourne Irish Studies Seminar series run by Professor Elizabeth Malcolm and others.

Kiernan begins his chapter with two ideas which he says guided the English conquerors. The first was an apparent desire by key English leaders to imitate the ancient Roman empire builders. Kiernan calls this "the Anglicisation of antiquity".

For example, around the year 1570, key English officials met with poet and writer Gabriel Harvey, with the royal secretary Sir Thomas Smith and his son also Thomas, and with the lord deputy (governor) of Ireland Sir Henry Sidney to discuss Roman military strategy. They pondered the words of Cato and Livy and others to analyse Rome's wars and its vicious destruction of Carthage.

The second guiding idea Kiernan has identified among the Elizabethan conquerors was their conviction that theirs was the correct way to use the land and that Irish peasants were wasting the earth's resources.

Smith said that  
the Irish would need  
instruction in  
"the English manner  
of ploughing and  
saving the hay"

Sidney advised colonists moving to Ulster in 1568 to bring seed and implements "as if they should imagine to find nothing here but earth, and indeed little else shall they find". Smith said that the Irish would need instruction in "the English manner of ploughing and saving the hay".

While referring back to Henry VIII, Kiernan concentrates on the 1570s and 1580s and shows them to be "bloody decades of imperial adventures". One example is that at Christmas 1574 the earl of Essex surprised and slaughtered several hundred O'Neills at a Belfast feast. His evidence of English racism towards the Irish and territorial ambition is, as you would expect, overwhelming.

English commanders such as Colonel Humphrey Gilbert and Essex wrote frank accounts of their violent deeds. In 1580 Thomas Masterson, on behalf of the crown, ambushed a sept of Kavanaghs in Wexford and killed 60. From Munster, the English-Irish Earl of Ormond reported

killing "46 leaders, 800 notorious traitors and 4000 common people caught in cabin and field".

Arthur Grey de Wilton, lord deputy of Ireland, reported to Elizabeth that he, and his captain, Walter Raleigh, had overseen the execution of some 600 Spanish and Papal soldiers at Smerwick on the Dingle Peninsula. Edmund Spenser, poet of empire, "came down wholeheartedly on the side of extermination", says Kiernan. "Genocidal massacres targeted ever larger numbers of Irish", he argues, often quoting the perpetrators' own words.

Numbers of civilians killed in the Nine Years' War from 1594 to 1603 are high but unknown, Kiernan says. Of the soldiers, at least 2600 English and 6000 Irish were killed and wounded.

All those interested in Irish history will benefit from reading Kiernan's chapter on the Elizabethan conquest. In my view, Kiernan has studied carefully the best available authorities. He thus breaks new ground by producing a fresh overview and injecting into this his proposed four global tendencies.

I would like to read more about those who stood up to the Elizabethan conquest, both in England and in Ireland. For his next book I hope Kiernan considers the path taken by Henry Reynolds who, after several books about those settlers who violently attacked Aboriginal people, wrote a book called *Whispering in Our Hearts* about those who opposed genocide and mass killing.

In passing, I hope the publisher realises that Kiernan's chapter on Ireland would make an excellent small book on its own. By adding some paragraphs of explanation to make the topic accessible to the general reader, plus illustrations, statistical charts and a glossary of people and places, Kiernan's intense and extensive research could reach a very wide audience indeed.

Overall, Kiernan not only reports past genocides but tries to find out why genocides happen. He does this so that we might all learn to prevent future genocides. What a good thing to do.

Val Noone

**The Australian chapter ('Genocidal Violence in Nineteenth Century Australia', pp.249-309) of *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur***

*Blood and Soil* is a compendious tome, surveying genocide from Sparta's campaign against the helots to Darfur. It carefully sets up its terms of reference and definitions of genocide, and applies the UN 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. The term was invented in response to the holocaust, but 'intent to exterminate a people', whether in part or completely, had a long history before the term became current. Although events that happened before the promulgation of the convention are not actionable legally, the definition can certainly be employed retroactively historically, and that is precisely what this book does. Under the UN convention, genocide does not need to be murderous or violent, but if the intention is to eradicate a people, then the definition applies. So, in Australian terms, removal of children from parents with the expressed intention of 'breeding out the colour' qualifies as genocidal. But much more violent crimes against Aboriginal people happened on the frontier, and these are the ones most focused upon in a chapter that formally ends at the end of the 19th century. Ben Kiernan is insistent that genocides are not exclusively perpetrated by the colonialist west, and has chapters on Japanese, Chinese, Cambodian and Guatemalan atrocities, among others.

Australian nineteenth century history is given lavish treatment in this text ('more than Nazi atrocities', thunder its critics), but this is perfectly justifiable given that the case for an Australian genocide is less familiar in international circles, and needs to be built. And build it Kiernan does, in prose that is lucid and unflinching. His four criteria for genocide – ethno-religious enmity and superiority, territorial aggrandizement, romantic agrarianism and a fetishisation of agricultural practices (and refusal to acknowledge different forms of farming), and ancient models (e.g., Virgilian pastoral as a mechanism for unlocking the power of the squatters and pastoralists; and the ethnomythology of savagery in Spenser's writings about Ireland)– are systematically applied to the Australian experience (as they are in this book in other cultural contexts).

Ethnic and religious superiority and colonial land-hunger are familiar motives for genocidal activities in the Australian context, but they bear repetition. The disconnect between London policy-makers and their benign utterances and the actions of their agents on the ground on the frontier is strikingly recounted again, and even when the meliorists *in situ* (like Arthur Phillip) urged moderation, or even in the case of Gipps were proactive in securing hangings of white men for black slaughter at Myall Creek. Nonetheless the devastation of populations was large, even using the most conservative numbers. Much critical ink has been spilt on estimating how many Aboriginal deaths were due to disease (not genocidal *per se*, except for what we hope were rare cases of deliberate infection of blankets with small-pox spores) and what to violence, and it does not hurt to remind ourselves that murderers who may be hanged are not usually so indiscreet as to leave evidence, either in physical form, or in

'This is a formidable and important book.'  
Michael Ignatieff, *The New Republic*

# BLOOD AND SOIL

A WORLD HISTORY OF GENOCIDE AND EXTERMINATION FROM SPARTA TO DARFUR

BEN KIERNAN



the form of confessions or journals. Nonetheless, there is plenty on the European record, especially in newspapers that were not contested at the time, to attest to atrocities, as Tony Roberts discovered in his history of the Gulf of Carpentaria (*Frontier Justice*, 2005) – a book which conservatively tallies the numbers of dead on that frontier and to which Windschuttle has made no response. It is a recent source Kiernan uses in his footnotes. Power asymmetries abound: guns are pitted against spears; Aborigines were given the right to be tried for spearing a pig or ram, but no corresponding right to give sworn evidence, and so the courts effectively silenced them; one European death, or even killing of cattle, frequently occasioned indiscriminating retribution against a whole group, including women and children, regardless of guilt or innocence; and the tendency of Europeans to shoot rather than take Aborigines prisoners no doubt increased the numbers of Indigenous casualties.

Kiernan's maps are not as informative or well used as they might have been, but they do tell an eloquent story of control of waterways being a key issue in Aboriginal dispossession. This in itself is testimony to systematic genocidal intent in a country where water resources are as scant as they are. The Myall Creek massacre site, near Inverell in New South Wales (a visit to which I recommend strongly for readers of *Tinteán*) discloses immediately, just by being in that physical location, why the massacre happened. After traversing a moving track with 'stations' commemorating the massacre, one arrives at the

main memorial and it overlooks a magnificent cultivated plain hugging the creekside.

I found very insightful Kiernan's treatment of agrarian utopianism as the ideological justification for genocide. The ignorance of white settlers about Aboriginal landcare practices, given what we now know, is disturbing, as is the assumption that only European forms of agriculture were of any account.

What this book documents carefully (and again, it is material already covered in regional histories) is the incursion both pastoralism and agriculture made into Aboriginal amenity – the compromising of valuable water resources, the inadvertent poisoning of waterholes by stock; the loss of resources like native tobacco to munching cattle (and in the twentieth century of small marsupials and goanna eggs to cane-toads); and the loss of the freedom to burn off and its consequences for hunting small animals, and expressing affect for country well looked after. It is critically *de rigueur* to bag George Augustus Robinson, but his testimony and his real concern for his charges in Tasmania and Victoria gets good press in this book. However misguided his methods, his defence of his embattled charges against graziers in Gippsland and the Western District was at times nothing short of heroic, and he must have sometimes put himself in danger of assassination.

Ben Kiernan's book, predictably, has aroused the ire of the right-wing – most notably, the *Australian* and *Quadrant* history-

wars sceptics. What probably irks the right winger Mervyn Bendle most, not that he says so, is that their hero, Keith Windschuttle (whose terms of reference for his own work are exceedingly narrow and do not include oral testimony of Aboriginal descendants) is reduced to just one practitioner among many in the footnotes.

Kiernan's book even manages to rile the left wing because, from Patrick Wolfe's point of view, and he is generally sympathetic, it is too ambitious and too mild on the intent of those who perpetrated the Stolen Generations. To defend Kiernan, although he is not rigid about it, his study of Australian genocide stops at the end of the 19th century, and Stolen Generation phenomena (which he is alert to as genocidal in intent) comes significantly later.

The UN convention does not cover cultural extinction, which I think is lamentable, because that would strengthen the case for two-way education (in culture and languages) in Indigenous Australia, which I think is the most promising route for mending the damage done by colonialist practices. Aborigines say that cultural respect is important for their mental health.

Kiernan's is a timely book given the debates sparked by the Apology, and is a sober antidote to sentimental pioneering histories like those by Mary Durack.

*Frances Devlin-Glass*

# A reluctant hero

## *The story of Cornelius John Mahony Mahony Family*

The family celebration of the short life of Sergeant Cornelius Mahony (1894 – 1917) coincides with the exploration of the mass graves of Australian soldiers in Pheasant's Wood, Fromelles, where an estimated 5533 diggers were killed, wounded or taken prisoner on a single night of July 19-20, 1916. On the morning of the first dig, the archaeological team found a note which read 'We haven't forgotten, boys. We'll be back for you.' The Mahony family have prepared their tribute in the same spirit.

Born in Armidale, 1884, Cornelius Mahony, second of six children, grew up to marry one of the 'new women'; Angela Heagney, a graduate of the Conservatorium of Music. Unfortunately new women still suffered old problems and Angela died giving birth to their only son – Francis Joseph in 1915. Francis was looked after by his mother's family and Cornelius visited him whenever he could. Widowhood was common then

and people were expected to 'get on with it', so a chance remark that Cornelius was feeling sorry for himself when other men were fighting led him to enlist in the 17th Battalion, one of the four Battalions making up the 5th Brigade of 2 Anzac. Cornelius fought at Pozieres, the Ypres and the Somme, surviving with only minor wounds until June – October 1917 and the Third Battle of Ypres.

The battle began well, if you can call 20,000 casualties 'well' (Broodseinde, 4th October, 1917). Unfortunately for Cornelius, and 240,000 others, the weather was bad and General Haig was in a hurry. Earlier fighting had destroyed the drainage systems and heavy rain made it impossible to move artillery into position, but the assault went on. For five days after the fighting at Broodseinde, the men had done heavy labouring work laying cables and extending duck boards. Without greatcoats to protect them against the cold and wet, they had slept in water filled shell holes. Nevertheless Cornelius' battalion advanced into the deep mud between the trenches and made

the slope just below Passchaendale. They were unsupported and driven back by ferocious enemy fire. Cornelius went missing and probably died at this point.

His mother, Mary, refused to accept that he was dead until a squad mate of his visited Wee Waa and spoke to her about it. Cornelius' aunt made several enquiries of the Army and the Red Cross about what had become of him, but the accounts provided by his exhausted mates are, not surprisingly, conflicting. One claimed that he had been hit by a shell, another that he had been taken prisoner and a third that he had been wounded and left behind in the retreat. Whatever happened to him, an unmarked grave was the fate of many; of the 12,000 war graves in the nearby cemetery, 8,366 of them have no names.

On the 24th March 2007, descendants of Cornelius Mahony visited Ypres where they were given permission to say a prayer and lay a wreath as part of the town's nightly ceremony to remember the fallen.

*Felicity Allen*

# Divine Celtic light

*To Bless the Space Between Us – A book of Invocations and Blessings*  
John O'Donohue  
Doubleday, New York, 2008

“And if you listen,  
You will hear  
What your heart would  
Love to say”

John O'Donohue, recently deceased Irish poet, author and philosopher, bequeathed an atlas of the heart and soul in his books: *Beauty, Anam Cara: Spiritual Wisdom from the Celtic World, Eternal Echoes: Exploring our Hunger to Belong, Conamara Blues, and Divine Beauty*. The subject of this review; *To Bless the Space Between Us* took years to create. The blessings embrace broad shades of life and death to invoke “our power to bless, heal, and renew one another.”

His introduction states that the reflections are not poems but the simple, poetic language renders the breadth and depth of concepts they express more evocative yet accessible. It also dresses them for ritual, where eloquence (prized by the Celts) is traditionally used. “The blessing has an eye to the outside in order to embrace and elevate.” Automatically I read them aloud like incantations, as if the power in these words sought air as well as light.

Modern lives acquire many things including deeper loneliness and disconnection. Attuned to the past in scholarship and to the present in a generous curiosity, O'Donohue's original and diverse thought and breadth of learning enables him to compare the Rolling Stones' “I can't get no Satisfaction” to Saint Augustine's, “Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.” He considers our desires “the messengers of our un-lived life” and warns us against the false hungers provoked by advertising. To explore our spiritual inheritance more deeply he refers to Goethe, the ancient Greeks, the Bible, linguistics, Maya Angelou, Russian literature, Auden, and the Jewish tradition.

This book charts the co-ordinates of meaning and desire. It promotes grace in the passage from birth to death, passion, family, puberty, suffering, work, addiction, suicide, departures and leadership.

The rare praise of menstruation found in the blessing, ‘At the Threshold of Womanhood,’ contrasts sharply with my childhood experience when girls were barred from the altar. The order from Matins to Vespers gives an ecclesiastical resonance but also a refrain to *Eternal Echoes*, which began and ended with these invocations. The third blessing, “Beannacht,” invites elemental and ancestral endowment. I have treasured and used it at difficult thresholds since its prelude to *Anam Cara*. “A Mirror of Questions” examines the day at its end. However, O'Donohue rejects the modern psychology of “closure” because experience is open-ended.

“This beautiful piece suggests that we should not allow the visible and the empirical, the lived experience, to defeat the undelivered possibilities of the imagination, with its profound capacity for what was ethical”

There are seven sections to the book: Beginnings, Desires, Thresholds, Homecomings, States of Heart, Callings, Beyond Endings and an Afterword, To Retrieve the Lost Art of Blessing. The humility of water, the cleansing power of fire, memory of air and the kindness of clay are revealed in them. Round his home-place in Clare, he walks with us to ocean rhythms by mountains and lakes or past swallows nesting in a shed. As with the Celts, his idea of the Divine is near at hand, and focused on the glorious potential in the everyday. I will return to this book over and over to set my sights. High expectations of this leading exponent of Celtic spirituality were not disappointed. This final tribute to his generous wisdom comes from his reflection, “Entering Death:”

“May your going be sheltered  
And your welcome assured”

John O'Donohue was an Irish poet, author, and Catholic scholar who lived in the solitude of a cottage in the West of Ireland and spoke Gaelic as his daily language. His acclaimed writings revealed an original thinker rooted in an unorthodox blend of Irish heritage, German philosophy, western theology, and an intimate relationship with the wild, luminous landscape of his home.

Born in North Co. Clare, John's childhood alternated between studies at a local school and the seasonal farm chores. He studied English literature, philosophy, and theology at the University of Ireland in Maynooth, and earned a Ph.D. in philosophical theology from the University of Tübingen. He was working through the University of Tübingen on a post-doctoral dissertation on the German mystic and philosopher, Meister Eckhart.

Respecting memory and its riches in myth and folklore was a principle with him as was the importance that he attached to imagination. One of his most recent works was a speculation entitled *Towards a poetic of the possibility*, an early draft of which, he discussed with me in 2005 when he visited me in hospital. This beautiful piece suggests that we should not allow the visible and the empirical, the lived experience, to defeat the undelivered possibilities of the imagination, with its profound capacity for what was ethical. It was perhaps better to be remembered for the beauty, and the divine, suggested by the imagination through a life rather than any material achievements.

We are left with the books and for those of us who will peruse them there will be some solace in their wisdom, humour, mysticism, prophetic and utopian insights. However, his partner, his mother, brothers and sisters, his family, neighbours, friends and colleagues will feel an even greater sense of loss. John O'Donohue's work, however, tells us that physical death is not an end of anything. Rather it is but a stage, in the long journey that longing for a revelation of the divine in all life, creates. A new spirit is exploding among the stars that shine over Fanore. He has gone on and we will miss him for a while, but he has been lodged in us in a way that will always endure.

Meg McNena

# An arcade show for Bloomsday

*A Brave New World?*  
**Bloomsday, 6 June 2008**  
**Melbourne Museum, Carlton**

This fifteenth annual celebration of Bloomsday opened in brilliant late winter sunshine in the forecourt of the museum. A large gathering of Joyceans strolled around haphazardly to register and exchange greetings but were rudely interrupted by a museum guide (Anna Scheer) with a sergeant-major's voice and attitude. She was a parody of an efficient tourist guide, and set the tone of the day – there were no stragglers and no idle chatter. Bloomsday patrons were not permitted to be lax or ill-disciplined. She soon had people laughing at her antics as she sang her way around the museum, offering perspectives on the exhibits used for the show. The museum guide metamorphosed in a scene exploring the idea of Joyce's invention of avatars into a Germanic Bella/Bello, a novel angle on that provocative scene.

The opening was dramatic. Suddenly, up high on top of a leaning pediment, stood the quizzical figure of Leopold Bloom (David Adamson). Asking 'Where am I?',

he was put right by Stevie, his great, great, great grand-daughter (Jane McArthur) who, from then on, guided him through the themes of Melbourne, of the Antipodes, of science and modern technology and of prognostications as to mankind's future. They were dutifully trailed by the orderly and tightly controlled rabble which was spellbound by the rumbling and resonating words and language of the master, as the themes of chapter after chapter of his Ulysses were explored and expanded by a script brilliantly and very skillfully matched to the location by Frances Devlin-Glass, Graeme Anderson and Greg Rochlin.

The generous and varied spaces of the Melbourne Museum provided a perfect setting for this Joycean excursion. Memorable moments were spent listening to the rich and challenging language of Joyce in the beautiful Milarri Garden, in the Forest Gallery (remember it was a sparkling sunny day), in front of the Harry John's Boxing Troop Bus (Harry's bus was a reminder of imperial conflicts expressed through sport both in Australia and Ireland) and so on. Then we were taken into the scientific

and futuristic realms which truly confused Mr. Bloom. Perhaps the climax was in the Body Gallery when the Circe chapter was fully explored with the inspired help of Leopold's old grandfather (Bill Johnston). The naked full-sized models were lined up for close examination and the old man went into graphic lurid detail, a parody of male education in sexuality, pointing out the three prominent "protuberances" sticking out of the fully pregnant female exhibit. After trying to describe the two hidden protuberances in her rear, he went to move on to the nude male but Stevie grabbed Bloom and took him away hurriedly followed by the relieved audience.

The whole performance of this strolling theatre was professional and cleverly designed and scripted. Great credit is due to the director Brenda Addie who is so experienced and understanding in matters Joyce and in making theatre in museums. The actors excelled and used the efficient personal mikes effectively, their voices resounding across vast spaces. This annual event cannot fail and next year will be hard put to equal 2008.

*Peter Kiernan*

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# New Zealand's gold fields

*Castles of Gold: A History of New Zealand's West Coast Irish*  
Lyndon Fraser  
Otago University Press 2007

The West Coast of New Zealand's South Island is famous today for its isolation and wilderness but in 1864 following the discovery of gold, thousands migrated there. Among them were Irish migrants, largely from the goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales, and Otago (NZ). The West Coast was reputedly the most Irish part of New Zealand. Until the early twentieth century between a quarter and a third of the population was Irish-born. The boom finished in the 1860s but many of these newcomers stayed on as part of a community with its own distinctive character.

*Castles of Gold* covers the period of Irish migration to the West Coast from 1864, when the gold rushes began, until the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922. It is a lively and intelligent account of life on the goldfields and in the later community. The writing is vivid and evocative. Due to the scope of its scholarship it is also an excellent general introduction to Irish history and migration.

As the original household census schedules have been destroyed, Lyndon Fraser reconstructs the lives in this early settlement drawing from numerous civil registers, in particular death certificates (1876-1915), linking them with other materials such as probate files and cemetery transcripts, marriage registers (1881-1889) and other public records. To capture "the textures of people's everyday lives" he used many kinds of local and family records including church archives and personal letters. There is also an extensive bibliography and meticulous footnotes.

The book covers five principal themes: migrant pathways, work conditions, marriage, religion and nationalism. For each theme, Fraser details the relevant theory and research and draws comparison with Australia, parts of England and the United States. It is a book rich in information and interest. He documents the Irish migration to the diggings, gender differences in migration patterns, and the strong links with the Australian colonies.

*Castles of Gold* is a sociological account and Fraser's primary concern is ethnicity. He draws on Don Handelman's

"typology of ethnic incorporation" and concludes that the West Coast Irish-born were at the least incorporated level—"the *ethnic category* where groups are identified by perceived differences but cohesive networks or organisations based on ethnicity do not exist."

Irish-born men matched wider regional patterns of occupational differences and did not fit the popular image of "dispossessed proletarians." Similarly Irish-born women largely conformed to wider regional occupational patterns at least during the 1890s.

In terms of marriage patterns, Fraser found that "the matrimonial behaviour of these newcomers conformed to the wider colonial marriage pattern that developed in New Zealand between the 1840s and 1880s." As expected, there was a preponderance of men in the mining community. The majority of Irish-born men on the West Coast did not marry (57 per cent) whereas almost all of the women did. The median age at marriage (23.6 years for women and 33.3 for men) resembled the Scottish and English-born.

On religion, Fraser argues that the "fluid social structure, the absence of hostile native-born elites, the rough egalitarianism of the digging population and the small size of mining localities blurred the lines of social distinction and created an atmosphere of religious tolerance."

In his account of "diaspora politics" and the West Coast Irish, Fraser discusses the Fenian controversies of the late 1860s and the Irish nationalistic activities over the period. He concludes that, as was the case in the Australian colonies, Irish nationalism had a very "limited influence" in the region.

As a sociological historical study *Castles of Gold* is highly recommended. Its drawback is that the West Coast is an atypical community. Settlement in New Zealand more generally was neither as egalitarian nor as benign as the picture presented here. Furthermore, the sociological focus on the adaptive and rational individual, while appealing, tends to underplay the factors that operated against the Irish in the colonies. This is not so much a criticism of *Castles of Gold* as it is a desire for continued research and analysis of the construction of New Zealand society.

Bernadette O'Connor

# Barry & Clarke

*The Future Australian Race*  
Sue Gore and Bill Garner  
Performed in Queens Hall, State  
Library of Victoria, 19 May 2008

Redmond Barry has a string of civic contributions to his credit, but ignominy sticks to him as the judge who hanged Ned Kelly. This is at odds with the man who unpacked books at the State Library, had a long relationship with an Irish Catholic whom he could not marry but whose son he owned, or with the experimental horticulturalist. Sue Gore and Bill Garner's play picks up many aspects of a rather more faceted force of nature, and focuses on a relationship I had not known about: Barry's patronage of Marcus Clarke, not for his fiction, but because he gave himself the liberty to do and say the things Barry repressed. The two men were so different, a pompous ass and a giggling Bohemian, but capable of imaginative engagement with one another which could only have stimulated them.

The casting of these figures was a delight. Luke Ryan made an engaging young writer, swigging on his hip flask and finding time among his trivial library duties to write plays that threatened to unseat governments. His tenure at the Library was threatened by drink, insouciance, and incipient bankruptcy. His bohemianism was a foil to Jim Daly's four-square bombast and morning suits. With such a lot of history explored in detail, it's a shame that a cabbage-tree hat was that different animal, a boater, and that a proper winged collar was not found for the senior man whose rig otherwise was as impeccable as a dandy's.

The setting of the play in Queen's Hall was splendid. The lavish supply of old books was a boon to the production. Under Barry's stewardship the library was well endowed. Queen's Hall is one of the most beautiful rooms in Melbourne, and that this strange relationship blossomed there, where Furphy did research (and many others less known to history) gave the play an added frisson.

It is good to see history being treated so theatrically and so intelligently by director Peter Houghton. One could not but feel for both of these men and for the mysterious attractions that drew one to the other. If this one comes around again, don't miss it.

Frances Devlin-Glass

# Coming to terms

*Coming Out: Irish Gay Experiences,*  
with a foreword by Colm Tóibin  
Glen O'Brien (ed.)  
Currach Press, 2003

While I was reading this book, I happened to discover a young relative (aged 14) who wanted to know about homosexuality. It struck me that although the cultural context was different, this would be the ideal book to put in her hands. There are 46 chapters, most of them simply told life-stories of coming out. Sometimes they are told by the gay person (and they are young and old, male and female, and occasionally bisexual) and sometimes by the people they came out to (parents, siblings, children). Some of these are reconciled to the transformations of lifestyle involved, and some are still struggling with it.

It's a book that is remarkably real, and the experiences painful and testing. There is, for instance, one man who agonises about why it is that the gay men he meets are so promiscuous and relationships so fleeting. He does not have answers, but the speculations are intelligent and engrossing. Others talk of the difficulties of being known to be gay in very small communities. Many tell of dreading coming out, and finding unexpected support among people who either initially resisted knowing, or those who had known at some level all their lives. Many resistant parents seem to find ways of accommodating in time. Perhaps it's looking into the eyes of gay sons or daughters and knowing that they are exactly the same child they have always loved. There are few stories of radical rejection by parents, even the most religious and conservative ones.

In a country where the church has been so dominant, there are many stories of secrecy and shame, and the sense of the 'dirtiness' of sexuality itself, never mind gay sexuality. Inevitably, there are stories of searching for priests who will support decisions to come out. There are also accounts of gay priests, often celibate and still practising their calling, and, surprising to me, accounts of the kindness and respect of confessors. Questions arise in this context about whether lack of interest in the opposite sex was perhaps a key but unconscious issue in choosing a celibate lifestyle within the ministry.

The most intriguing narratives to me are those that negotiate identity issues and situate sexuality within that: for example, a deaf and gay woman, Sarah, for whom deafness is more of an identity issue than gayness and who reports easy acceptance within the deaf community, which she puts down to empathy with outsider positioning. I also enjoyed Beth and Sara's account of living out their lesbian choices after retirement and the ease being able to pass as simply friends gives them, and the joys of their late blossoming. These women are very different from the in-yer-face couple from Galway, Jay and Alex, who very publicly fronted for fertility treatments and had a baby boy, and only then discovered the unconscious heterosexism and narrowness of their lesbian sisters. Pádraig O'Brien, abused as a child by a paedophile (who ended up classed as a deviant and ostracised), successfully by contrast made a life with a male lover, eschewing hyper-camp behaviours, and wonders if human beings can be re-programmed to look beyond the established norms and the biases against gay culture, and understand that sexuality is only part of what human beings are about. It is intriguing how often the years of doubt and denial are succeeded, on coming out, by confidence about the 'rightness' of the identity choice. The need for certainty seems to be insistent, and there are no accounts of fluidity in choices at all, contrary to much postmodern theorising on the subject.

The most harrowing tales unfolded are, curiously, not those of the gay folk at all (perhaps because to have agreed to write for the book at all one probably needed to be somewhat comfortable with one's choices), but those of abandoned spouses and children, many of whom are still dealing with feelings of rejection and anger, but even these are not despairing. For the Irish reader, who might be wondering if s/he may be gay, there is an appendix featuring agencies who will support gays or their friends and families. Many of the writers report having used such services, especially telephone ones, and finding solace and support there.

The foreword, by one of Ireland's most famous gay novelists, Colm Tóibin, interestingly starts with the 21st



anniversary of Mardi Gras in Sydney in 1998 – a scene more different from the Irish gay experience would be hard to imagine. He writes as if gay and lesbian police participating in the parade (as happened that year) would be unthinkable in Ireland, but the book gives the lie to his incredulity, giving voice as it does to a police unit in Dublin designed to protect gays that is now two generations of leadership away from its founding. His point is that change in Australia has clearly been rapid (paraders were jailed in 1977 and lost jobs) but it is clear that a similar profound change in tolerance towards homosexuals may have been even more rapid in Ireland, and hopefully is becoming entrenched in policy and institutions. Tóibin hopes for the day when it will be as easy to say 'I am gay' as it is to say 'I am Irish', and more importantly, to live and love in freedom.

A variety of ways of being gay are unfolded in this book, and for that reason in particular it's a useful book to put in front of kids. It's not at all sensational, and there's not a hint of prurience, but neither does it airbrush the continuing difficulties of being in a minority subculture anywhere on the planet. Many of the writers talk about not feeling safe even after they have made momentous decisions to leave the closet, even in an era that postdates decriminalisation, but on the positive side, they talk of the relief and freedom when they act according to their natures. One unreconciled ex-wife, Louise, speaks more radically than she realises when she asks rhetorically: 'What did it all mean? Is sex all that matters? So many questions – no answers' (p.145). Are the outdated social taboos perhaps more painful than anything else?

*Frances Devlin-Glass*

# Nell's stories

*The Best of Nell,*  
Nell McCafferty  
Attic Press 1984, Reprinted 2004

Being a child of the Bogside, and having lived through some of the most turbulent years of the sectarian violence of the North, it is small wonder that Nell McCafferty grew up to become a celebrated journalist in whose writings indignation at injustice screamed out of every page. I regret that it has taken until its recent reprint for me to be able to savour her brilliance. 'The Best of Nell' is a selection of her early writings from 1970 to 1985, published variously in *Irish Times*, *Irish Press*, *In Dublin*, and other less well-known publications. It maps the turbulence of Ireland's relatively recent political, religious and social history.

From Catholic Bogside the adolescent Nell won herself a coveted scholarship to Queens University in Belfast. She was a left wing student activist from day one. On graduating, she worked as a teacher for a brief time until a job offer at the *Irish Times* necessitated a move to even more conservative Dublin. As well as the general social upheaval taking place around her, Nell had to contend with being a lesbian in homophobic Ireland. She writes about this experience in greater depth in her autobiography. She dedicated her autobiography to two nuns who 'blessed me, listened to me, showed me compassion, and made it possible for me to go on when I was discovering what it meant to be gay'. She was committed to telling the stories of voiceless women 'as we pick ourselves up from the ground and put forward our side of the story.'

Nell was no mealy-mouthed journalist. She was an activist, there at the barricades as a socially and politically committed citizen in the thick of all events that challenged the status quo, a voice for the ordinary voiceless people, particularly women. Who is more qualified to write with authority of the 'troubles' than this child of the Bogside who, on Bloody Sunday, lay on the street while people around her got shot?

The day in 1944 when Nell was born in Bogside, could well have been the day, as a five year old I crossed the

border from Donegal to Derry with my parents and an older brother and sister, for a much anticipated visit to stay with Derry friends.

I was reminded of this expedition, and later events, by her column from the *Irish Press*, 16 May 1983, 'The tragedy of Alice Purvis'. This is a heart-rending account of the death of a woman who, in the defence of her British soldier husband, was shot on the kitchen floor of her mother's house:

In another time and in the same place, Alice Purvis and her British soldier husband, home on a visit to Derry, would have been as welcome as the flowers in May. In another time and the same place, on the high Waterside hill overlooking the city of Derry, they would not have spent their homecoming hidden behind closed doors.

On my family visit Mammy and Daddy dropped us kids for a rare visit to the pictures. Our encounter with the British, sailors in this instance, was at the Marx Brothers, 'A Night at the Opera' where I dropped my much coveted one shilling and one sixpence and they rolled away in the dark under the seats. A host of sailors came to my aid to retrieve the money, and returned it to my hand. Imagine, when the lights went up at interval, my confusion, and the jubilation of my older siblings on discovering that I now had twelve shillings and sixpence in assorted coins. The sailors had all slipped away. In another time and the same place, on one of my visits home from London, an Irish boyfriend and I, on the way home from a dance, were held up on the border at gunpoint by the B Specials.

Other articles on the Ulster turmoil in this collection are; *The Accusing Finger of Raymond Gilmour*, which deals graphically with the far reaching results of Gilmour having turned informer, or as he perceived himself 'a converted terrorist'. 'Converted', like St Paul, 'on the road to Castlereagh'!

Then there is *Bronco Bradley is Dead. Who was he?* Aged 23, Bronco was shot in the head and chest by British soldiers while walking unarmed in

broad daylight. After reading Nell's short article we identify with Bronco and feel that he could have been any one of our young sons. *Stranger on Lone Moor Road* deals just as poignantly with the shooting of a twenty-one-year-old soldier of the British Army. A senseless political decision broadcast on the evening news, in this case to introduce power cuts, is deftly detailed by Nell in her sharp picture of the effect of the power cuts on the households and income of the Bogside people. The article is headlined with a quote from her mother at the time: 'Does he think we're all eejits: What was all that about?' The lampooning of male power decision-making, by intelligent women caught in the 'crossfire' of their decision, is well illustrated in this piece through the dialogue between the affected women.

As an avowed feminist, and a leading member of the feminist movement in Ireland, she did not skimp in devoting her pen to highlighting the injustices suffered by Irish women. In '*It is my belief that Armagh is a Feminist issue*', her haunting images of the treatment of Irish women political prisoners at the hands of male jailers, and the subsequent brave retaliation of the women against this treatment reminded me of the mind boggling stories that came out of Guantanamo Bay and Abu Graib.

Her outrage at treatment of women in Ireland was not confined to North of the Border.

The Establishment, trade unions, politics, the law and the church all get a serve. It is in these articles that her biting wit, wicked sense of humour, and a gift for coming up with wild lateral solutions to issues comes to the fore. Traditional Irish hypocrisy is exposed and mercilessly dissected, with more than a hint of humour.

There are many more thought-provoking articles in this small publication that document the social history of Ireland spanning the working life of this gifted journalist who stood up to hypocrisy and injustice and made a difference. It's a great read.

**Renee Huish**

*Renee Huish is Donegal-bred, and a committee member for Bloomsday in Melbourne.*

# Living the faith

*The Faiths of Ireland*  
Stephen Skuce  
The Columba Press: Dublin

This is a lovely book by an Irish Methodist Minister who maintains a strong focus on acceptance of change and promoting interfaith relations using a gentle humour and avoiding any po-faced political correctness. At times Skuce leaves you amazed at how stupid and unthinking you have been up until the moment you read his book! For example – we all know that when Muslims pray, they turn to face Mecca, but which way do they face when they are in Mecca? Do you know, I had never ever thought of that? The answer is they build circular mosques – because they are already in the closest possible place to heaven on earth. How clever!

Beginning his text with the great religious centre at Newgrange, Skuce remarks that, unlike Celtic religious beliefs, little is known about the practices of these Neolithic builders, though the abandonment of the vast monuments shows a major change in religious practice with the arrival of the Celts. We know far more about Celtic beliefs, although virtually nothing of what we know is from their viewpoint. Preserved in the monks' annals, the Cattle Raid of Cooley and related legends describes a culture where 'honour, strength in battle and glory appeared to have more appeal than even life itself' (p.13). This was the formidable culture that confronted the early Christian evangelists and there was a clear possibility of bloodshed on a grand scale, yet there was none. So how did the people of those times manage such a peaceful transition? On the one hand, small changes were required from the population by Christians and on the other, Celtic beliefs exerted influences traceable to the burning of Bridget Cleary in 1895 and the result was a distinct lack of Christian martyrs. Skuce's message is crystal clear, yet I suspect that he under-estimates the charm that martyrdom holds for some people, particularly when we recall the popularity of the Irish hermit tradition – 'the white martyrdom' which was sought out by so many because of the absence of opportunities for the 'red martyrdom' in Ireland.

After considering the contributions of

Irish people abroad to the spiritual experience of people around the world, Skuce returns to Ireland and systematically reviews the major tenets of all the diverse faiths that are now found there and their experiences in Irish society, beginning with the Jewish community. It's quite a relief to read that the archaeological efforts of the British-Israel Association to excavate the Hill of Tara in search of the Ark of the Covenant were firmly stopped by protests from Griffiths, Yeats and Gonne among others. Having always mistakenly believed, along with Daniel O'Connell I discovered, that Ireland is: 'the only country I know of, unsullied by one act of persecution of the Jews' (p.34). It was quite saddening to discover how wrong we both were, though what persecution did occur (famously in Limerick and Cork) appears to have been very mild compared to the dreadful attacks considered normal in other countries. Nor was it tolerated by contemporaries. Effective interventions on the side of fair play and tolerance by Parnell and Davitt against different outbreaks of anti-Semitism are recounted by Skuce, who also notes the indifference of others and the prejudices of St. John Gogarty and Eoin O'Duffy. Lack of acceptance of asylum seekers from the Nazi persecution has been the major failing of Irish society's interaction with the Jewish faith.

The account of Muslims in Ireland and the nature of their faith, particularly the Sunni/Shi'a distinction is very helpful if you have always wondered just what it was all about. Apparently the Qu'ran was translated into Irish in 2003 in an attempt to inculturate Islam into Irish life, but Skuce notes "It is not thought that an Ulster-Scots translation will soon be forthcoming" (p.85). Muslims are the main non-Christian group in Ireland at present as the Jewish community was always small and its numbers are falling.

Hindu beliefs, particularly in the form of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), have not been as successful as Islam in Ireland and Skuce suggests that the

essentials of ISKCON that do not make it obviously attractive to the Irish population include a prohibition on alcohol, gambling and sexual relations



for any other reason than conceiving a child. (p.90)

Indeed, I think I can see their problem. The three main Hindu traditions are described in detail and the essentially domestic nature of much of their practice is well conveyed. Again, it's saddening to discover that the Good Friday Agreement was followed by a rise in attacks on Hindu places of worship as the hatreds that used to be directed against the other major Christian community have been redirected against anyone seen as different.

Skuce ends with a strong plea for interfaith activity which acknowledges and explores, rather than ignores, religious differences. He makes the point that Ireland knows a lot about monologue, but not so much about dialogue. He gives the history of ecumenical movements, which began with the United Irishmen of 1798 and continued through the Pillar of Fire Society in 1942 which attempted to bring Jews and Christians closer together. The activities of the Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum (NIIFF) involve all faiths represented in Ireland today, are quite extensive, yet do not operate on an all-Ireland basis, in apparent contradiction to the way that most faiths are organized. Perhaps as a result NIIFF's influence has been minimal. In some ways, newcomers to Ireland with non-Christian religions have an advantage in fitting in. Muslim soccer players for Linfield have enjoyed staunch Protestant support on the ground that whatever they were, they were not Irish Catholics. It's an indication of Skuce's supreme faith in the betterment of humanity that he can see this as a sign of progress and an omen of better things to come.

Apart from being a most enlightening read, this book is an inspiring example of a man who lives his faith, and as such deserves to be widely enjoyed.

Felicity Allen

# Young Ireland

*All Our Yesterdays: Father Browne's Photographs of Children and Their Favourite Poems,*  
E.E.O'Donnell SJ.  
Currach Press, 2008

Fr. Frank Browne SJ, was born in Cork in 1880 and died in 1960. In the course of his eighty years, apart from a busy life as a member of the Jesuits, wide travel and a distinguished WW1 chaplaincy (his Colonel, later Field Marshall Lord Alexander, described him as "the bravest man I ever met"), he took 42,000 photographs, mostly on nitrate stock. Fr. O'Donnell is currently the curator of these historic materials and more than nineteen books of those photos have been published. This is the nineteenth publication and the seventeenth was also reviewed in *Táin* No.44 of 2006.

Before embarking on the review of the latest book, I feel that it is mandatory again to recount the episode of a precious and generous gift given to the young Frank Browne in 1912 by his uncle Bishop Browne of Cloyne, the present of a lifetime, a first-class ticket for the first two legs of the maiden voyage of the Titanic – Southampton to Cherbourg, Cherbourg to Cobh. Poor Frank was denied the Atlantic crossing because his uncle was unable to afford it.

There are some sixty photographs in this latest book, mostly portraits and human studies but there are also a few beautiful landscapes carefully and artistically composed. An arresting inclusion is a photograph dated 1912 taken on the deck of the Titanic. But facing each photographic page, the editor has selected poems that reflect in some way the essence or nuance of that picture. Some examples: for the photograph entitled 'Traveller mother and child, Dublin (1930); an excerpt from a poem by Francis Ledwidge has been given:

June, the nomad gypsy, laughs  
Above her widespread wares,  
the while she tells  
The farmers' fortunes in the  
fields, and quaffs  
The water from the spider-  
peopled wells.

And for 'Irish dancing, Emo, Co, Laois (1938)' the famous poem about Ireland's ancient connection to dancing (Anon. 14th Century) has been chosen:

I am of Ireland,  
And of the holy land  
Of Ireland.  
Good Sir, I pray thee  
Come and dance with me  
In Ireland.

And for the morning photo entitled 'Boat deck of R.M.S. Titanic (1912)': Reveille by A.E. Housman has been included:

Wake: the silver dusk returning  
Up the beach of darkness  
brims,  
And the ship of sunrise burning  
Strands upon the eastern rims.

The poems have been selected from a wonderfully diverse collection of poets, including 'anonymous', early Irish, Longfellow and Wordsworth, AE George Russell, Stevenson, Hopkins and Patmore, Browning and even Katherine Mansfield. For children and their favourite poems, 'Angels' by Emily Dickinson has been selected opposite Browne's photo of toddlers drawing on a Dublin pavement, taken in 1939. The poem's simplicity and exquisite selection of words and pulsating rhythm is just so charming and apt, reflecting the busy activity of the children in the photograph:

Angels, in the early morning  
Maybe seen the Dews among,  
Stooping, plucking, smiling,  
flying;  
Do the Buds to them belong?  
Angels, when the sun is hottest  
Maybe seen the sands among,  
Stooping, plucking, sighing,  
flying;  
Parched the flowers they bear  
along.

Fr. Browne had the marked talent not only to capture an instant, a fleeting moment of human emotion but also to create a studied and accurately composed landscape or building. This book is a sheer delight to handle and browse through and to balance the photos against the poems so expertly chosen and matched by Fr.O'Donnell.

*Peter Kiernan*

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# Scattered showers and sunny spells

Fuel costs undermining the standard of living! 'ubiquitous' broadband for all, including those in remote inaccessible areas! Gangland grenade attack in quiet suburban street! Clubs/pubs to close at 2.30 am to curb drunken brawls! Precipitous downturn in the economy! Traffic tailbacks on all major freeways! A top temperature today of 16C with scattered showers and sunny spells.

Sound familiar? Welcome to Ireland, Summer 2008!

Is this what globalisation is all about? – an uncanny similarity of concerns dominating two cultures at opposite ends of the globe? Added to this is the fact that as I write I'm listening to ABC Classical FM – or is it RTE Lyrical FM? – on my brother-in-law's laptop. I'll have to wait for the next 'voice' break to know where I am.

But some aspects of this Irish society are different from Australia and to this fond exile very specifically Irish. On our arrival in Dublin we were greeted not just by my sister and her husband, a leaden sky and icy wind (in the middle of summer!) but by a fierce debate raging in all media about the resounding (53%) 'NO' vote to the Lisbon Treaty in the referendum of the previous week. Every meal, every gathering, in the letters to the editor and opinion pages of every newspaper, talk-back radio, on buses, in queues, anywhere where two or three people were gathered together, the result of the referendum was being debated. Coming from the other side of Mars – i.e., Australia – it was hard to follow the various arguments for

and against but eventually a few trends appeared. Those who voted 'NO' did so:

a) because the treaty itself was incomprehensible – a view shared by several 'serious' current affairs magazines including 'The Economist',

b) why fix something when it ain't broke – the EU is working well as it is, why change it?

c) the Irish have never toed the conventional line and are not going to do so now!

The adherents of the 'YES' vote pointed tellingly to the consequence of a 'NO' result – can Ireland survive and prosper economically and even culturally if it is not in the EU? – one of the possible consequences of rejecting the Lisbon Treaty.

The Great Lisbon Treaty debate was eventually eclipsed by rumours of a recession, membership of the EU notwithstanding. This has not generated the doom and gloom one would have expected. Amongst family and friends it was greeted with an almost Gallic shrug – 'ah well, it had to happen'. A columnist in the *Irish Times* went so far as to predict that now Irish families, instead of getting sunburnt in Spain, could go back to exploring rock-pools in the West, clad in wet-weather gear, in the teeming rain, evoking a very happy memory of my own childhood doing just that. Bring on the scattered showers and (occasional) sunny spells!

*Elizabeth McKenzie*

## Feed the heart on enmity

*Ireland: The Politics of Enmity 1789-2006*, Paul Bew  
Oxford University Press, 2007, 613pp  
ISBN 978-0-19-820555-5

This large, dense academic tome opens with an examination of the influence of the French Revolution on attitudes, actions and reactions in Ireland to the politics of enmity for over 200 years. Enmity is an interesting choice of word for it is defined as a positive and mutual hatred or ill-will, either open or concealed, and more than a logical dislike. Thus, the word, like the topic under discussion, is complex.

Bew has an extensive record of work on politics and, like his other books, this interrogation of primary sources from archives as well as his evaluation and criticism of events in Ireland is breathtaking in its scope. He analyses actions and reactions in key periods of Irish history including the Act of Union, the influence of Daniel O'Connell and Parnell, the politics of the Famine, the Fenian movement and concludes with the 'Troubles' and its consequences

in current Irish history. Alongside his discussion of the leaders and issues in Irish politics Bew reassesses the place of British leaders such as Peel, Gladstone, Churchill and Blair. The social and economic conditions surrounding each era and their place and influence in the political area are also interrogated.

As an Australian who has long battled to understand some of these more complex issues of Irish history and politics, I found the book fascinating. It is heavily referenced throughout and I appreciated the footnotes being on the relevant page not hidden somewhere in the back of the book. The extent of the sources reflects an enormous breadth of reading but it is the intelligent and readable analysis of the material which provides a much better understanding of this very complex aspect of Irish history. The chapters are chronological, but the discussion of particular issues ranges backwards and forward through time to promote understanding of individual events and specific people at key periods.

Despite the complexity of the topic, Bew's language is easy to follow and

some may criticise him for apparently simple statements. For example, in analysing the 1798 rebellion he notes that 'sentimentality planted a hatred that was a chief obstacle to self-government' (p.47) and 'Both sides now believed the worst of each other, and not without justification' (p.48). Simple facts like these are rarely stated in a history but need to be enunciated in order to progress to a deeper analysis which Bew does not avoid. As well as past history, Bew engages the current situation, getting to grips with the political and religious relationship between Britain and Ireland.

While it is a long and deeply academic book, I recommend it, particularly to non-academic Australians who wish to gain a greater understanding of the complex issues of the relationship between Britain and Ireland and within Ireland itself over the past two centuries.

*Perry McIntyre*

*Perry McIntyre has co-authored several books on nineteenth century emigration – see [www.anchorbooksaustralia.com](http://www.anchorbooksaustralia.com) – and is the immediate past President of the History Council of NSW*



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