



Tinteán

THE AUSTRALIAN IRISH HERITAGE NETWORK

No 18, December 2011

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Scribes and manuscripts

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Tinteán

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Cover

The Japanese Gardens at Tully Co Kildare were created between the years 1906-1910. They are located on the grounds of the Irish National Stud. Photo Chris Hill, Tourism Ireland

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The Australian Irish Heritage Network

Objectives

The Australian Irish Heritage Network aims to build the social, cultural, sporting, historical and literary consciousness of Irish Australians and to explore and celebrate the development of Irish heritage and culture in Australia.

Principal Activity

As its first priority, AIHN produces the literary magazine *Tinteán* (meaning hearth in Gaelic and pronounced 'Tintawne' – the fada on the á giving the syllable the dominant stress and the 'augh' sound, as in 'taught').

The focus of the magazine is to build and explore the Australian Irish identity. The magazine welcomes material which explores the big themes of exile, diaspora and settlement. It also encourages 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-Aus-

tralian 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, AIHN plans to conduct social and educational events; disseminate news and information via the internet; offer recognition for service to literary and historical endeavours; issue cultural and political comment; and research and record our heritage.

Membership

Anyone identifying with Irish heritage is welcome to join.

AIHN Committee

President: Frances Devlin-Glass

Vice-President: Peter Kiernan

Secretary: Bob Glass

Treasurer: Rob Butler

Committee Members: Felicity Allen, Liz McKenzie

Letters

Life and death decisions

Philip Moore's article: 'The Irish as Champions of reform at Eureka' (Tinteán September 2011) once again raises the issue of Peter Lalor's ideas on democracy.

Moore highlights Lalor's vote in favour of an electoral bill that maintained property qualifications for voting rights and Lalor's famous quoted response (which Thomas Keneally attributes incorrectly to Raffaello Carboni in his recent history of Eureka).

Many politicians, past and present during their careers make statements that appear out of character with their personal values. Lalor is no exception.

However, a close study of the man both in Ireland and Australia by my family and the strong tradition carried down through five generations of the Australian Lalor family clearly demonstrates that Peter Lalor strongly believed in the creation and maintenance of a democratic system run by or elected by the people.

Like the majority of reformers, Lalor did not identify with 'isms' because as history abundantly confirms many of these movements frequently start out ablaze with promises of justice and democratic reform but are quickly transformed into self interest, corruption and disappointment.

Moore quotes Patrick O' Farrell who says "Lalor's passion was for justice, not democracy." There is no doubt that Peter Lalor's passion was for justice - something shared by his father Honest Patt and a majority of his brothers including James Fintan and Richard. That passion led a number of Lalors to make life and death decisions for their belief.

Therefore, I would suggest that that passion extended to democracy, which without compromise, was grounded in justice.

However what is most important about this whole debate is: That passion for justice has been passed down and today is practised by Peter Lalor's great-great-grand children who almost daily confront democratic but often unjust systems that constantly neglect Australia's most vulnerable.

Peter Lalor Philp

Peter is the great-great grand-son of the Eureka leader.

Ireland's Antarctic Explorers

How interesting it was to read, in your issue No. 17, John Hagan's review of Michael Smith's 'Great Endeavour:

Ireland's Antarctic Explorers'. The first sighting and the first mapping and naming of that great white continent were both by Irish men! How many of us would have known that? But my greatest interest is in the most famous of open-boat voyages, that of the 23' James Caird, rivalling Bligh's 3600 nautical miles over 47 days in tropical waters in the Bounty's 23' launch. I was proud to view and touch the James Caird in its then home at the Greenwich Maritime Museum in 1980 (it is now at Shackleton's alma mater Dulwich College). It was sailed from Elephant Island to South Georgia, over 750 nautical miles of the most treacherous and freezing seas on the globe. As Hagan notes, three of that crew of six were Irish born: Ernest Shackleton, Co Kildare, Tom Crean, Co Kerry and Tim McCarthy, Co Cork. However, the review is in error when it attributes the miraculous pin-point navigation to The Boss, Shackleton, whereas it was in fact done by Captain Frank Worsley of New Zealand. Worsley was only able to take four sextant sightings in those sixteen days of horrendous conditions and only then whilst being bolstered and stabilised by two crew mates. His brilliance resulted in the James Caird making the landfall of South Georgia spot-on. The next stop was the bottom of the Southern Ocean.

Hagan explains why the Irish contribution to the Antarctic story has not received its due notoriety, 'because the 100 year era of Antarctic exploration was done under a British flag and it was unwise to be associated with the British in the new Ireland'. But now in Ireland all those heroes listed have not been forgotten; only recently, one of the leading restaurants in Kenmare, Co Kerry, has been renamed The Tom Crean (incidentally, a close relative of our Minister for the Arts).

We owe Smith and Hagan and *Tinteán* many thanks for recording this proud history of those Irish explorers.

Peter Kiernan, Malvern

Girt by sea

My enjoyment of watching football finals is marred, yet again, by having to cringe while the appalling lyrics of our national anthem are played. We all laugh at such everyday language as 'girt by sea' but there are much worse examples in the words of our national song.

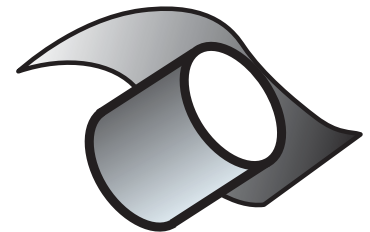
'For we are young!' Colonisation may be relatively recent but our heritage is far from 'young' and this is an insult to our indigenous people. How about 'For those who've come across the seas, we've boundless plains to share'? These lyrics in the third verse, sung on national occasions, fail to recognize that we are actually a nation of racists who reject assistance to acceptance of a quota of less than 0.1% of the world's refugees.

It is customary to use only verses 1 and 3 for occasions when the anthem is played and for good reason! In the second verse, we extol the virtue of 'true British courage', commemorate the raising of 'Old England's flag' and are urged to 'love her still' with 'Britannia rules the wave!' In the fifth and last verse, we are told that 'Britannia then shall surely know ...her sons in fair Australia's land still keep a British soul.'

When are we going to grow up as a nation and remove the traces of our colonisation?

And, don't start me on the bloody flag!

Robert O'Byrne, Shoreham



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What's on

Lake School of Celtic Music, Song and Dance

The 13th Lake School

2-7 January 2012, Koroit, Victoria

The summer home of Celtic music in Australia

Tuition: Fiddle, flute, uilleann pipes, button accordion, tin whistle, bodhran, finger-style guitar and song accompaniment, DADGAD guitar, guitar basics, ukulele, mandolin, harp, five-string banjo, singing, Irish set and sean nos dancing, songwriting, Irish language, slow session, Maity Swallow Ceildhe Band, kids' program, youth program (Lake School newspaper and animations) and James Joyce Reading Group

Featuring: Paddy O'Neill Award Band, Grand Ceilidhe, Song Writers Concert, Singers Concert, Blackboard Concert, House Parties, Spud Poets Award, Kids Concert, Crossley ball, Illowa Ceilidhe, Billy Moran Memorial Welcome Session and Art Exhibition Launch.

Introducing: Kevin Kelly (bodhran), Eamon Naughton (Irish language), Fiona McAlinden (Fiona's Kitchen Rules), Brian Mooney (art exhibition)

Contact: Felix Meagher 0413 801 294
felix@bushwahzee.com
www.bushwahzee.com

17th Annual Daonscoil

8-15 January 2012, Lake Dewar Lodge, Myrniog (near Bacchus Marsh).

A one week residential course in the Irish language catering for all levels from beginners to fluent speakers.

Weekly rate: \$550 (adult); \$275 (child under 15)

Daily rate: \$100 per day – includes meals and accommodation

Contact: Deirdre 0405 210 149
or feedback@gaeilgesanastrail.com

Jindabyne Irish Festival

27-29 January 2012

Gaelic football, Hurling, Dancing, Theatre, Music

Contact: Harry Cummins 0413 737 567 or
jindabyneirishfestival.com

Brigidfest 2012

5 February 2012,
12 noon for 12.30 lunch

Guest speaker is Professor Elizabeth Malcolm who will present "A cartoon history of Brigid in Australia".

Bookings will open, through the Celtic Club,
closer to the date.

Online Bookings at www.trybooking.com.au

Daniel O'Donnell Tour

Ireland's most popular 'easy listening' singer, Daniel O'Donnell returns to Australia in March 2012, appearing in 10 venues in all States.

For details, see advertisement in this issue.

Bloomsday in Melbourne

2012 season

A New Course on Joyce for beginners
Penetrating the 'Impenetrable':
A Beginner's Guide to reading *Ulysses*.

Begun to read Joyce's masterpiece and given up in despair?
Believed the myths that circulate in the press
that it is beyond you?

This may be the course that sets you going: it will focus on the structure of the novel, the simpler chapters of *Ulysses*, and Joyce's magnificent characters, as well as dispel some myths and set up helpful expectations.

Presented by Frances Devlin-Glass
(who has taught *Ulysses* for 30 years,
even to second-language learners)

10am-5pm, 19 February 2012
2nd floor, Celtic Club,
Latrobe and Queen Streets, Melbourne.

\$60 (\$40 for students, health-card holders)

Class size is restricted to 25, so please book as early as possible.

www.trybooking.com/ZSC or Phone Bob on 03 98982900

For inclusion in the *What's On* column, please submit items to editorial@tintean.org.au

The Irish Presidential election

At the time of going to press, citizens of the Irish State are going to the polls to elect the 9th President of the Republic. Given the backdrop of the Euro crisis, bank bailouts and austerity cuts, the presidential election campaign could have been a platform for a real discussion about what kind of country we want, a conversation about values and priorities in our current crisis. At worst, it could have been a harmless distraction. Who could have imagined one of the nastiest campaigns ever staged, damaging the reputations of four candidates and turning the contest into a two horse race between Michael D Higgins and Sean Gallagher with the transfers of Martin McGuinness casting the ex-IRA leader into the role of kingmaker?

DAVID NORRIS was the first casualty. Initially a firm favourite before he secured a nomination, his fall from grace was dramatic. As a leading gay rights Joycean scholar who single handedly forced the state to decriminalise homosexuality, his contentious views on pederasty and assisted suicide, revealed from decade old interviews, caused consternation. However, the extravagance of his letters to Israeli officials on behalf of his former partner on a statutory rape charge was more damaging than the representations themselves and led to his withdrawal from the race, along with allegations of political interference by Mossad. The frenzy of his response to questions about those Israeli letters sealed his fate. If Norris had remained outside, he could have spent the rest of his life luxuriating in victimhood ('the best president Ireland never had, cruelly denied by narrow minded homophobes'). Instead he re-entered, whereupon a closer inspection of the victim ensued, and sympathy vanished like snow off a ditch.

DANA ROSEMARY SCALLON'S campaign has been bruising. The Eurovision song contest winner and former member of the European Parliament dwindled from a self-imagined Joan of Arc, saviour of the Irish people from European damnation, into an inconsequential Sarah Palin- type figure at the bottom of the polls. Allegations by her sister of sexual abuse against a close family member, threats of libel proceedings against her and allegations that an attempt was made to murder her by tampering with her campaign car

brought her election campaign into John Le Carre territory.

As the Fine Gael candidate, GAY MITCHELL was expected to ride on the popularity wave his party enjoyed in the last general election. His performance has been abysmal and an embarrassment for the main government party. The FG leadership's perceived lack of support for their man plus his abrasive manner have alienated him from the electorate. MARY DAVIS started with promise but her star has faded also. Allegations of cronyism where contracts were awarded to her husband's PR firm while she was on the board were a reminder of the old ways. The term 'Quango Queen' was coined and she never lost the tag, which is perhaps a disservice given her Trojan work for people with disabilities.

The MARTIN MCGUINNESS factor ensured that this would be no run of the mill election campaign. Broad shots were fired early by elements of the media: that McGuinness had invented the suicide bomb and was a huge influence on the Hezbollah and the Taliban. Then questions closer to home, like who murdered Garda Michael Clerkin, blown up in an IRA booby trap; Detective Garda Frank Hand, murdered by the IRA during a robbery; Private Patrick Kelly and a trainee Garda, Gary Sheehan, killed in an IRA shootout while attempting to rescue kidnapped businessman, Don Tidey, and Brian Stack, Chief Prison Officer at Portlaoise Prison. His ability to deflect these questions by promoting his role as peacemaker, Minister for Education and Deputy First Minister showed his skills as a politician but his claims that he left the IRA in 1974 were met with derision. The partitionist attitude of many in the Republic probably surprised McGuinness, but his candidature demonstrated not only how far the people of Northern Ireland have moved post-conflict to accept Sinn Fein and the DUP into their political mainstream, but also the partitionists' lack of understanding of the extent of that political shift.

Whatever the outcome of this election, Sinn Fein are the long game victors. Just as they absorbed most of the SDLP vote in post conflict Northern Ireland, they recognised Fianna Fail's post-Celtic Tiger vulnerability and saw an opportunity to pounce on public revulsion and secure the floating republican vote. Martin

McGuinness's move into the race caught most pundits by surprise but as a means of raising Sinn Fein's profile it was a political masterstroke that placed them as the second largest party in the country.

SEAN GALLAGHER has been the surprise package of the campaign. The electoral craving for a non-establishment independent saw Gallagher surge to 40% in the polls as other independents floundered. However, a disastrous performance in the last televised debate swung the campaign wide open again. Gallagher's reputation took a hammering in this debate. Allegations were made of his rorting the legal and financial and real estate systems. He was also accused of collecting a sum of €5,000 for a Fianna Fail fundraiser in 2008 from a convicted fuel smuggler. That Gallagher appeared to be telling porkies on national TV was exacerbated by his use of the corrupt Fianna Fail language of the Tiger years, that he had '*no recollection*' of picking up the cheque and that if he did he may have been given a '*brown envelope*' with a cheque in it. All this from a candidate claiming to have no ties with Fianna Fail. It was compelling TV, and a throwback to Brian Lenihan's '*mature recollection*' moment in the 1990 election.

The person most to gain from Gallagher's debate faux pas is MICHAEL D HIGGINS; the most statesmanlike of the candidates. His political CV is impressive also. As former Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, his achievements include establishing TG4 (Teilifis na Gaeilge), reinvigorating the Irish film industry, ending the Section 31 censorship regime, investing in new museums such as Collins Barracks, setting up a network of local arts venues and theatres across Ireland and revitalising our waterways, including reconnection of the Royal and Grand Canals. In an election campaign full of mud slinging, the only dirt on Michael D is his advanced age of 70 and his dodgy leg which he broke last year.

So the dirtiest, most divisive, chaotic and scandal-driven election campaign in the history of the Presidency was heading for a photo finish between Sean Gallagher and Michael D Higgins. We now know that the Irish people have chosen an intellectual poet with a legacy of human rights campaigns and cultural achievements.

Mark Quinn

A fond farewell

Patrick McNamara has retired as treasurer of the Australian Irish Heritage Network, the publisher of this magazine. Although we can fully understand the reasons he has presented for this serious blow to *Tinteán*, we cannot deny our sincere regret at this loss. He claims that his advanced studies, family commitments, serious historical research and much more, have persuaded him to sacrifice something in his busy life. (There was also some talk of the travails of following the baggy green caps around the globe).

Patrick was involved in the closing issues of *Táin* with Val Noone in 2007 and fortunately continued on with the establishment of this publication, now completing its eighteenth issue. With Terry Monagle, he was responsible for all the formalities and legal requirements for the Network's foundation and indeed, that was a demanding and exhaustive process. With Terry's advancing illness and sad passing, Patrick had to set up the office systems singlehandedly, seek advertising and establish the database of subscribers. In these early months, this involved a very heavy commitment to office duties but his hard work and administrative skills ensured that *Tinteán* got off to a flying start during its first year of operation from August 2007. He has always continued to keep a fatherly eye on things and, since those times, he has acted as treasurer and committeeman with skill and diligence for which we are most grateful.

In addition to his bean-counting talents, Patrick has been an extremely efficient proof-reader, author and editorial assistant. His computer skills and knowledge of setting up a publication



Patrick McNamara and *Tinteán* Editor Liz McKenzie

were invaluable. He was meticulous, always aiming to achieve excellence and we feel proud that in this he was largely successful. His book reviews were perceptive and penetrating but perhaps a major contribution was his studious assessment in *Tinteán* No.16 of the *Not Just Ned* Exhibition in the National Museum this year. It comprised a detailed and appreciative review of the Richard Reid book to accompany that wonderful display.

He will be sorely missed but we can anticipate a continuing contact with him and the benefit of his helpful advice. When do the Ashes come up again ?

Irish Economic News

The news that Greece will be allowed to 'write-down' (translation: walk away from) 60% of its debts was much better received in the rest of the world than in Ireland. It's most unlikely that the Irish banks' bailout will be reopened so that the Irish people could get access to the same level of largesse and forgiveness offered to the Greeks. The Irish national debt is €170 billion so that a 60% write-down would reduce that to €68 billion. There appears to be no chance of equal treatment for Ireland and Greece. In fact, the Irish Government is humbly hoping that they might at least receive comparable treatment to France, vastly reducing their current debt burden even so and giving them a much better chance to return to solvency within our children's lifetimes. If Ireland were to access only France's opportunities, the European Financial Stability Fund (EFSF) would take over the government's €20 billion investment in AIB and its €2.7 billion stake in Irish Life and Permanent, but do not hold your breath. Unnamed 'European sources' have replied that the deal with the French had not yet been agreed and that it would be 'technically difficult' for

unspecified reasons to re-open the Irish bailout and make it more generous.

A stern program of self denial has meant that some progress has been made on reducing the interest rates on Irish bonds from 14% to 8%. This is an important index because it shows how much it costs for the government to borrow money to maintain (no more talk of expansion, please) the Irish State. Morgan Stanley has given Ireland an assessment described as 'remarkably upbeat' – of course, the last time a foreign investment company (Merrill Lynch) were upbeat about the Irish banks in 2008, the bottom fell out of the Irish economic system within weeks!

David McWilliams of The Independent is scornful about the changes in the bond rate and dismisses them as part of an 'invented Ireland' where the economy has turned the corner, 'the skies are blue and Ireland is the star pupil of the EU. McWilliams points out that this is hardly the case in a country where retail sales have collapsed, no credit is available and the unemployment rate (14%) is the second highest in Europe. Many ordinary Irish people have responded to their

personal financial crises by changing to 'interest only' mortgages, but these only last for 5 to 7 years. As a result, many buyers at the top of the boom will have to go onto interest plus capital mortgages which they will be unable to afford. Irish banks expect a second wave of mortgage defaults when customers cannot manage the higher repayments.

The difference in treatment of the debt may reflect the extraordinary calm and restraint with the Irish people have greeted disaster. Iceland and Greece both evicted their business friendly political parties, and the Greeks followed that up with some meaningful riots when austerity was thrust on them. While Fianna Fáil was voted out of power and there was a run of suicides, the Irish settled for a solitary rotten egg thrower (grandfather Gary Keogh) and a lone property developer (Joe McNamara) driving his cement mixer against the gates of parliament. In economics, as in life, the squeaky wheels get the write-downs.

Felicity Allen

*Deputy Editor, Tinteán
Compiled from: The Financial Times,
The Independent, VanityFair.com*

News

Urgent message from the Irish Embassy

Planning to go to Ireland for Christmas? Please make sure that you have your passport and that it is valid until July 2012. This is the busiest time of year for passport applications which may take longer than the usual 6 weeks to process in the Christmas rush. It is vital to ensure that your passport has 6 months validity remaining *after the scheduled date of return*. Many airlines insist on this before they will accept you as a passenger..

If you want to apply for residency or a new visa here, make sure that your Irish passport is in order before you start the paper work.

When you receive a new passport make sure that you contact the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship and request that your visa is linked to the new passport. It's a simple procedure but do not delay (and forget) it. Do it straight away by calling 131881.

If you live in New South Wales, send passport applications to: Consulate-General of Ireland, Level 26/1 Market St., Sydney, NSW, 2000. People living anywhere else in Australia should apply to Passport Office: Embassy of Ireland, 20 Arkana St., Yarralumla, ACT, 2600.

Have a lovely trip and safe home!

They have learned nothing and forgotten nothing

RTE One has exposed new scandals about the care provided in the Mothers and Babies' homes with claims that the children were used for medical experiments without their mothers' consent. Glaxo, Smith, Kline and Burroughs-Wellcome are both known to have recruited children into trials of vaccines during the 1950s and 1960s. Attempts to investigate these actions were initiated by Micheál Martin TD who noted the lack of consent and referred the matter to the LaFoy Commission in 1990. The Commission was advised that the reputations of the academics involved – Professors Patrick Meenan and Eileen Hillary – would be damaged by a public investigation and ultimately shut down their investigation in 2006.

Despite the well known existence of extensive archives, the adults involved are being denied access to their own

medical records. Others have inadvertently discovered that siblings were dissected, causing them great distress. The bodies of children who died in care, in scenes reminiscent of Burke and Hare, were regularly sent to Irish Medical Schools for use in dissection; a decision that saved the authorities the cost of a funeral. Failing to obtain the parents' consent to this contravenes the Nuremberg guidelines on medical research. These guidelines were very much in force throughout the 1950s and 60s but were ignored. RTE One legal experts commented that the mothers were essentially treated as though they had no rights in the matter.

For secrecy, cover-ups and kow-towing to authority figures, the new scandal is highly reminiscent of the old ones. All the same mistakes are being made and the same heartache is being caused.

The full program can be seen at <http://www.rte.ie/player/#!/v=1115764>

Mt. Vernon gang show-down

The largest trial to take place in the Six Counties in more than 25 years has received very little, if any, publicity in the Australian media. It involves 14 unionist paramilitaries on 97 charges ranging from murder to blackmail. All of those accused belong to the Mt Vernon branch of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Members of this UVF branch, based in a housing estate in North Belfast, have been blamed for a string of killings over the past 15 years, with 7 victims named in the Dublin parliament in 2005. Belfast sources claim that the true number reached 19 over 10 years of cover-ups. Although the UVF has been on ceasefire since 1994, its Mt Vernon unit was trying to murder people as recently as 2006.

The current investigation began when the father of a victim asked former Police Ombudswoman Nuala O'Loan to find out whether Special Branch officers had covered up the 1997 murder of his son Raymond McCord junior to protect their informants in the gang. Raymond was beaten to death with breeze blocks because gang leaders suspected that he might reveal how much cash the gang was making from the sale of ecstasy and cannabis. Defying death threats, Raymond's father then met with every political party leader on the island of

Ireland to draw attention to his son's case and his first big breakthrough came when Irish Labour leader Pat Rabbitte used parliamentary privilege to name in the Dáil those allegedly involved in Raymond junior's murder.

Subsequently Police Ombudswoman Nuala O'Loan determined that there was a case to answer, not only for Raymond McCord junior but for several other murders and the prosecution was finally launched in 2010. At least two members of the gang who killed Raymond junior were Special Branch informers. There are also allegations that some of those charged with the murder on Halloween evening 2000 of a rival paramilitary leader, Tommy English, were PSNI agents at the time of the killing.

The prosecution is relying heavily on the evidence of two brothers, both members of the UVF, who have turned state's evidence against the accused. The brothers are giving evidence against Mark Haddock, one time leader of the Mt Vernon UVF, who is a well-known police informant himself and believed to have been working for Special Branch at the time of the killing. The degree of knowledge among Special Branch staff about what was going on remains unclear, though allegations have been made by former PSNI detectives that they effectively granted their informants a 'licence to kill'..

UVF anger at the trial has already emerged in the three day attack on the Catholic enclave of the Short Strand in June.

Compiled from: North Belfast News, 19th January, 2006. The Irish Times 7th September, 2011, Irish Republican News 6th September, 2011

Viking Burial in Scotland

The UK mainland's first fully intact Viking boat burial site has been discovered on the remote Ardnamurchan peninsula on the Scottish West Coast. The 16 foot long site includes the remains of a Viking chief buried with boat, axe, sword and spear. The 1,000 year old find may prove to be Britain's most exciting Viking site. Dr. Hannah Cobb, leading the project, said "A Viking boat burial is an incredible discovery but in addition to that, the artefacts and preservation make this one of the

most important Norse graves excavated in Britain.” The site is also the first intact pagan Norse grave of its kind to have been excavated in Scotland for 30 years.

Compiled from: ScienceNews 20th October, 2011.

A Tentative Welcome to Catholics at the Highest Level?

The Queen of Australia headed CHOGM at Perth and our Prime Minister was the host. Led by the UK PM, the meeting approved of the submission of two amendments to the Act of Settlement 1701, an English statute.

Firstly, the male priority in the succession to the throne is to be repealed and females are to have equal rights in that regard. Mr. Cameron stated the obvious: ‘We espouse gender equality in all other aspects of life’. What this means in simple terms is that if William and Kate’s first child is a girl, she will remain heir to the throne even if their next child is a boy.

Secondly, another prescription in that Act proposed to be repealed is its entrenchment of religious discrimination where the spouse of an English monarch is concerned. Specifically, this spouse cannot be a Roman Catholic or else the monarch is not entitled to hold the Crown. Any other denomination or persuasion of the spouse is acceptable.

This decision should also see the repeal of the Act’s colourful 17th century language, namely:

‘It was thereby further enacted that all or any person or persons that then were, or afterwards should be reconciled to or shall hold communion with the see or Church of Rome, or should profess the popish religion, or marry a papist, should be excluded...to inherit, possess or enjoy the Crown and government of this realm, and Ireland, and the dominions thereunto belonging’.

Notwithstanding these overdue considerations, many would agree with *The Age* newspaper which, in its leading article of 14 October 2011 stated: ‘The act should not be amended to remove gender discrimination. It should be repealed in its entirety....Australia’s prime minister should at least insist that this discriminatory statute be consigned to history’.

A Key to Character?

Alan Joyce was profiled in a recent article in *The Age* and reported as quoting approvingly from Yeats’ (1919) poem ‘*An Irish Airman Foresees His Death*’. While he only referred to the ‘..lonely impulse of delight..’, poetry lovers will recognise that the full text of the poem depicts the airman as a mercenary fighter with no interest at all in the country that pays his wages. Specifically ‘Those that I fight I do not hate/ Those that I guard I do not love’. A comforting thought for those about to board a QANTAS flight.

Running True To Form

Given the chance, the Irish people have elected yet another poet to the Presidency; Michael Higgins. We wish him well.

The Presidency has little formal power, but influences perceptions of Ireland especially as it prepares to commemorate major historical events such as the Easter Rising. Mr Higgins trailed his rival Sean Gallagher for most of the campaign, until Gallagher’s campaign collapsed when he was accused of accepting a donation from a convicted criminal. Over a quarter of the voters (28%) changed their minds during the last week of the campaign.

After winning more than a million votes, Higgins promised to transform Ireland into a nation of values and ideas. He has spoken of social dislocation and the need to reject materialism and selfishness and is seen as having potential to contribute to national unity. He has pledged to hold a presidential seminar on youth and to stimulate a national debate on youth emigration, hopefully with a view to stemming the outflow so that the country has some kind of reasonable hope for a future. Something of an all-rounder, Mr Higgins is a fluent Gaelic speaker, president of the Galway soccer club and the author of three published volumes of verse.

Compiled from: The Australian, The Irish Times

The Irish Experiment

This experiment was launched by Ron Barassi at Melbourne and consisted of importing outstanding players in Irish

codes and recruiting them to AFL football teams. This initiative was based on the similarity between the Australian and Gaelic football codes and the supposed ease with which an Irish player could learn Australia’s game. Sufficient time has now elapsed to see the results of the experiment and they are not as impressive as was originally hoped. The pioneering pair; Jim Stynes and the late Sean Wight, plus Tadhg Kennelly remain the three most successful Irish imports to the game. They are the only Gaelic graduates to have played more than 100 games of VFL/AFL from a migration program that has now run for about 25 years. The AFL’s figures list 34 players as recruits from Ireland since 1984 and of that group 19 have not played a single game of top level football. Several other recruits have played less than 5 games. Last week Setanta O’hAilpin was cut by Carlton and Essendon delisted Michael Quinn. O’hAilpin, who graduated from hurling, was one of the more successful incomers, having played 80 games for the Blues and it is thought that his versatility and size will mean that he will find another club.

Time constraints are believed to be a major problem in the transition. Few of the Irish players arrive before they are 20 or older so that the window for learning to be very, very good at a new sport is very narrow. The experiment may soon have to be abandoned if the cause of the problem cannot be located and fixed very shortly.

Compiled from: The Age 23 October, 2011.

Back issues for sale

Readers are advised that back issues of the magazine are available from the Tinteán office at a cost of \$5 per copy, which includes postage within Australia. Overseas rates can be supplied on request.

All you need to do is to specify the number or date of the issue/issues desired and enclose a cheque or Mastercard/Visa details to cover the above cost. Requests can be directed to AIHN PO Box 13095, Law Courts, Vic, 8010; info@tintean.org.au; or by telephone message to 03 9670 8865.

Corn na hÉireann/The Ireland Cup

In this article Bearnáí Ó Doibhlin writes about a little known sporting trophy, The Ireland Cup. He was part of a golf team which won the cup earlier this year, but has been unable to find out much about its history. He would love to hear from any reader, in Irish or in English, who can provide further information about the trophy.

Mar is eol do chách, bhí an taispeántas ollmhór, *Not Just Ned*, ar siúl san Iarsmalann Náisiúnta in Canberra ní ba luaithe i mbliana, inar baineadh feidhm as tuairim is 550 réad éagsúla le léargas a thabhairt ar scéal na nÉireannach san Astráil. D'oscail an taispeántas i mí an Mhárta agus mar chomhtharlú tháinig mé ar réad iontach sa mhí chéanna a bheadh an-oiriúnach don taispeántas, *The Ireland Cup*, nó Corn na hÉireann.

Bhronn an chéad ambasadóir Éireannach san Astráil, an Dochtúir TJ Kiernan, an corn ar an gClub Gailf Ríoga in Canberra le linn a thréimhse sa phríomhchathair. Bhí an cúrsa suite taobh leis an Abhainn Molonglo, a rith trí lár na cathrach ag an am. Nuair a fódaíodh an abhainn le Loch Burley Griffin a dhéanamh sna seascaidí, tógadh cúrsa nua ar bhruach an locha in Yarralumla, achar gairid ón Ambasáid Éireannach. Bhronn an tAmbasadóir an corn ar an gclub ar an gcuntar go réachtálfaí comórtas bliantúil idir foirne ón gclub agus ón gcomhphobal Éireannach san Astráil leis an trófaí a bhuachan.

Ní fios cén fáth, ach níor réachtáladh an comórtas don chorn go dtí an bhliain 1996. Níl aon eolas le fáil san ambasáid i dtaca leis an gcorn, ach is féidir go bhfuil cáipéisí oifigiúla bainteach leis sa Chartlann Náisiúnta ar ais in Éirinn. Tá an méid atá ar eolas agamsa faoi ag brath go hiomlán ar chuimhní agus bharúlacha na daoine a eagraíonn na comórtais bhliantúla. Ag brath ar bhéaloideas, más mian leat.

De réir na bhfear seo, tháinig duine éigin ar an gcorn sa smionagar a bhí fágtha nuair a chuaigh clubtheach an chlub gailf



Bearnáí Ó Doibhlin with The Ireland Cup

trí thine i 1996. Is iontach an scéal é gur tháinig an corn slán as an tubaiste a rinne léirscris ar an gclubtheach. Nuair a chuala baill áirithe faoin gcorn, ba chuimhin le cuid de na seanfhir an dóigh ar bronnadh an trófaí ar an gclub. Ní raibh sé i bhfad ina dhiaidh sin gur cuireadh tús leis an gcomórtas bliantúil a luaigh Kiernan i dtús báire.

Is corn álainn é, gan aon agó, agus tagann foirne ó Sydney chomh maith le foirne ón gClub Gaelach in Canberra le

bheith páirteach sa chomórtas bliantúil. Tá inscibhinn ar an gcorn atá beagán aisteach: Presented by TJ Kiernan, Minister for Ireland. Insíodh dom tráth go raibh leisce ar rialtas na hAstráile aitheantas a thabhairt don dochtúir mar ambasadóir i dtús báire. Ní fheadar an é sin an fáth a bhfuil an teideal aisteach thuas aige?

Bheadh sé go deas fíorscéal an choirn a fháil agus bheinn thar barr buíoch d'éinne a bheadh in inmhe eolas faoi a thabhairt dom.

Bearnáí Ó Doibhlin

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Bolg an tSoláthair/ Odds & Ends

Renovation of Gaelic revival church in East Melbourne

On the church block at the busy corner of Hoddle Street and Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, but back at the southwest corner, builders are erecting a multi-million dollar Catholic Leadership Centre, a project of the archdiocese and Catholic education in Victoria. As part of the works, the construction team are conserving and renovating the exceptional 1900 church of St John on the southeast corner of the site, right on Hoddle Street. Since a larger church building was opened in 1927, it has been used as a hall.

The former church is unique: let me explain. In 1893, when Douglas Hyde and the others began the Gaelic League, which was a movement to promote the Irish language, de-anglicise Ireland and restore Irish culture, and produce a modern literature in Irish, that movement reached Victoria and found a definite if spasmodic response in Melbourne.

In 1901, eight years after the Gaelic League was founded in Ireland, Nicholas O'Donnell along with his teacher Thomas Cunningham Curran and long-time acquaintance Morgan Jageurs formed a Melbourne branch. P J O'Loughlen took on a secretarial role. The group organised lessons in Irish taught by Curran in his rooms and those of W P Linehan, a bookseller. Curran, judged by O'Donnell and Jageurs a very competent teacher, taught every night, charging one guinea per quarter for gentlemen and half a guinea for ladies.

In the same year in which the Gaelic League began in Melbourne, the parish of St John's East Melbourne erected a new building which embodied features of the Revival more than any other in the state. Dean Patrick Phelan played a leading role in having this church built. For a time he had been parish priest of neighbouring Collingwood but moved to the cathedral parish to take charge of the East Melbourne area, later becoming bishop of Sale. Native Irish speaker Archbishop Thomas Carr who had a reputation as an authority of ancient Celtic art was also deeply involved in planning and financing the new building.

There is a 28-metre-high round tower in the Irish style on the northeast corner. The entrance to the tower is a copy of the entrance to King Cormac's chapel on the Rock of Cashel, Tipperary. The

church was built by McCrae and Toole in a Romanesque Revival style in red brick with bands of dark-liver tiles in an Australian Queen Anne or Federation architectural style. The clerk of works was John Nugent and the building contractor Mr Full. Margaret Gurry has written a good account of other aspects of St John's parish history on the St Patrick's Cathedral website.

The eastern gable has a southern cross pattern in tiles while the stained glass windows have the motifs of a Celtic Cross and are divided by a stone high cross which includes symbols of the four evangelists. On the 21-ton 10-metre-high Celtic Cross of Stawell stone there are interlace ornaments together with images of St Patrick, St John (the patron of the parish) and St Ita (an early Irish nun of Munster).

For a decade or so starting from around 1996 the Irish Language Association held classes in the adjoining school rooms, taking an image from the Celtic knot work on the door hinges as a logo for the association. However, in a sign of how fragile the links are between generations of Irish Australians, I who attended Cumann classes at East Melbourne in those years learned most of the details recorded in the preceding paragraphs not from class but from subsequent research. Nonetheless, by choosing that venue and by using an historic logo designed by Greg Wold, the association kept alive a connection with the earlier revival.

For twenty or thirty years around 1880 to 1910, a minority of Irish Australians strove to revive the use of the Irish language while a bigger percentage used Celtic symbols in their printed materials, on gravestones and in churches. St John's East Melbourne is a striking testament to that.

The above paragraphs are based on the section of the Gaelic Revival from my forthcoming book on Gaelic culture in Victoria.

Celtic Odyssey concert in Bendigo

On Sunday 4 September, my wife Mary and I enjoyed the Celtic Odyssey concert by the Bendigo Studio of Vocal Art and Music at the Old Fire Station. The director was John Clancy. As usual with John's concerts, we came to know and



appreciate some emerging young artists from among his pupils.

Songs and poems from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany and Galicia featured in the program, linked by a rousing narrative of the Celts' distinctive and tragic history. Funds raised will go towards a commemorative concert planned for 2012 to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of William Vincent Wallace, a Waterford-born composer and sometime Australian resident.

As the show was about to begin, the fire alarms went off and everyone had to vacate the auditorium. It turned out that the urn for the tea and coffee at interval had been placed immediately under a smoke detector. This hiccup was a symptom of the night.

There were beautiful photographs of Celtic countrysides running on a screen behind the performers but, because they were not connected to the texts being sung and recited, I found them distracting. Moreover, the volume of the altogether excellent music by the O'Carolan quartet, used as accompaniment to the poems and stories, was too loud and swamped the readings.

On this occasion, John was director, narrator, conductor, accompanist, publicist and stage hand. Finding a way of sharing responsibilities is crucial if this series is to go ahead. I have enjoyed John Clancy's series of Celtic concerts in Bendigo but the organisation and production this year were the weakest so far.

That said, the performers brought to life an exciting range of Celtic music and poetry. They reminded an appreciative audience that the repertoire of Celtic music is rich and extensive.

Val Noone

Making A Man

It's two days to the summer holidays and Mary will not return to teach in September? A clairvoyant told her this. Mary believes it. But how? From where would the escape from teaching come? Perhaps some accident? An illness? A windfall? She feels in her heart that this summer goodbye to her colleagues is a forever goodbye, but she holds herself together.

Her great hobby is walking on the tow-path by the canal, always against the flow of the water, sometimes stopping to listen to it, but often it's inaudible, stagnant. She feels safe here, meets village people to nod to, and people generally don't stop for a chat. Mary likes that.

When her son was small he walked here with her. She kept an eye on his movements, calling him back when he played too near the edge. His father wanted the boy to go to her school. Mary didn't. 'What, are you ashamed of him or something,' his father said, 'he mightn't be that bright, but he'd do well. He can do well.' Mary liked to recall times when her husband would take a stand on *something*, would have an opinion, when there was joy in him.

Mary worked throughout her son's life, but this, he assured her at sixteen, made him more independent. His friends with 'stay at home' mothers were indifferent to them. He appreciated her more, he said. He was seventeen now, had behaved at school, had been a good boy, until now. Now there was a lot for her and his father to deal with. That was harder now that he was seventeen.

It's the day of the holidays and all the usual teacher-talk. Mary just listens. Some have interesting plans, but didn't they have every year? It was all down to energy. Mary wished someone could propose a seminar to the next TU Congress on something like Energy for the Teacher in Summer. When her boy was small she would make no plans for the two months, just devotion to him. But he turned fourteen and wanted to go camping with another boy's family. They had a big car, and a boat on a pier. The last few summers were all to herself, but still she'd done nothing much with the time.

The perspective she brought to her son's homework the year *he* was in fifth class, kept the texts fresh for her job that

year, a new lease on the tired syllabi. They were bringing new books in next year. That puts fear in Mary. The opinions she has on the syllabi English, Irish and History were formed in confidence fresh from college. Safe. New syllabi were frightening. But then she would be gone in September!

Mary is terrified that her school will find out about her boy's scrape with the

Now there was a lot for her and his father to deal with

law. The school was fifteen miles away in a neighbouring town, but bad news travelled fast. People loved to judge. The fall of a teacher's child into crime was a major sin.

It was with his best friend, the son of an industrial worker that her boy had done 'the deed'. She'd arrived home off the tow-path one Sunday evening and the police had been. Her husband was raving on about 'catching the little bastard' and 'after all we've done for him'. Mary just calmly demanded: 'But what did they say? What did you say?' He had told the police to call back when his wife got home. When the police came back Mary did the talking. They agreed to let his parents deal with it, but warned that the boy wouldn't get another chance.

Her son didn't come home that night. He arrived unshaven, vulnerable, the following morning. She asked him to walk the tow-path with her, to talk it over: 'Yes, we will talk with Daddy too, love, but before Daddy gets home, why not just you and I?' But he refused, saying the pain was too great to get out twice.

His Dad calmed. The boy wasn't repentant: 'I wanted to do it. It was a conscious decision. I've always been so... good...it was a release to do something out of the way for a change. George has it all from his parents, anything he wants. He thinks we should live life...like... free, bohemians until we are at least

twenty-five, then settle down... make real money.'

'Real money?' His dad asked him what he meant by 'real money', ranted about the boy having everything he wanted, always. Mary ran to the tow-path, slowed herself on it, cried there and later too in her bedroom. Her husband and son went drinking, separately. They moved awkwardly around the kitchen, each waiting for the other to make an exit. Mary wished she could go with them, either one, but couldn't bring herself to ask or make it seem like she was 'taking sides'. She rarely drank, although glasses of wine at home were sometimes inviting, calming.

A few nights later an agreement was reached: the boy would 'cool off' working in London for the summer. Mary had heard horror stories of the building sites, how unsafe they were. Men, especially young men had died in horrible building accidents and workers were often treated badly, and men on building sites started to smoke. No building man Mary had ever seen had not smoked and the boy had asthma. His father scoffed at her fears. The boy insists he wants London.

The tow-path again. The water high. A local building man – a self-made man – passing in a Mercedes. Maybe he could give the boy a job here? If the building was what he really wanted to do. She'd met the man socially once, had taught his children. But what if she asked and he agreed and then her son refused to take up the position? It wouldn't do to look pathetic in the eyes of a parent of a pupil, albeit a former pupil.

The boy leaves; promises to write, phone for anything, not to touch drugs, to ring the aunt, Mary's sister, living in London – that he refuses to stay with – if he needs anything. He texts his safe arrival. She texts him made-up news from home, daily. He replies with short 'ok's' and 'dats cool' but no information. Mary phones her sister after a week. The boy had been to visit, came for Sunday lunch, seemed happy, relaxed, settling into the job.

Mary begins to arrange the boy's photographs chronologically. It bothers her when she can't know what came before what. The baby ones, the first

communions and the confirmations were obvious, but the in-betweens not so defined.

July. Apples ripen in her garden. Her father had given them the tree when they married. She was glad it carried the variety of her childhood but they had never tasted the same here. Perhaps saplings changed in growth, bred a new brand in a different soil.

The tow-path at night-time. Fewer people walking it. Sometimes no-one at all. Going at night took from those special hours to herself in the house when her husband was at the pub, but she couldn't face the path during the day any more. She has a fantasy about bringing all her teaching books here and flinging them one by one from the tow-path into the deep-set mud bank. She will do that. She chuckles into a loud laugh that echoes back to her. But, she must wait until September, just in case.

A trip to London becomes Mary's priority but she is terrified that her husband will want to go too. She chooses a weekend when he'll be following an important football fixture, takes the boy some apples in her hand luggage, books a hotel near Marble Arch, sits up late with a bottle of cheap wine. In the morning she catches the bus to the building site, wearing dark glasses, her hair up. He is not there. They had finished the job. She wanders around, looks at the skies, window shops and sees a clairvoyant, one that she had read about in a magazine, one who 'charged a fortune' for just five minutes. Later she takes The Tube back to Heathrow with her luggage, and pretending she's just arrived, meets her sister.

He returns and takes her and his aunt to dinner and brings a girlfriend. The boy looked fit, had lost weight: 'It's just all the exercise, Mum, and pure muscle, pure muscle Mum, that's all. The job's grand, the money's good.' Mary is passive, can't keep her smile real, hates the girl's London accent. The girl finds her difficult too. Mary knows, but the more she tries to be sociable and the more her sister helps, the worse it gets. She wants to warn the boy that the police in London are not as kind as the village gardaí at home, that they hate the Irish especially. But no, not now, she would write all this later in a letter.

Her boy is a man now. A new man. Another man, just like his father, her brothers, her father, the male teachers at the school, the former pupils she sees sometimes with their women and young children.

She goes home. He kissed her goodbye. He will ring soon, might come home for Halloween, wishes her luck for going back to school. School! She wants to say: 'but I won't be going back, love', but she can't, not until it was official. Then, her son would know before her husband, would help her find the courage to tell his father.

He does phone, often. Then this one time he asks to speak to his Dad. After putting the phone down her husband seems uneasy but says nothing. She initiates sex with her husband that night, the first time in a long time, deliberately close, but he is still silent on what his son had talked about. So she asks over breakfast. And then the tunnelling began. 'He just... um... told a few stories, the girlfriend and stuff.'

It went on, other secrets between son and father. Why? Was something up? This tunnel even follows her over the tow-path. She hasn't spoken to the boy since. Worry. It's a tunnel of worry. She goes out of the house – deliberately – for three successive calls from the boy, going to the tow-path before his phoning time. She wants to be able to talk to him, but the 'tunnel' held her. She sends him an email, giving no explanation why she wasn't home for his phoning time, and telling him she was thinking of visiting again in late August. He replies that he's going to Spain for a week with that girl.

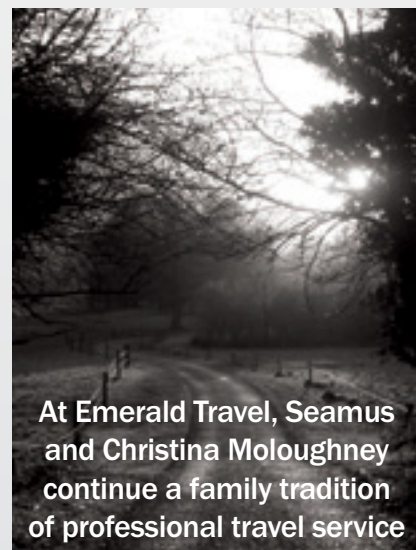
August 15. September looms, just fifteen days away. Mary walks fast on the tow-path, to breathlessness, feels her feet burn on the tow-path. Men. Men. Men. She was surrounded by men, always. Would she return? Make a twenty-sixth year start in the classroom in September after all? Full retirement was eight cycles of this ritual away. Eight years. Eight long years. Could she face other people's children again? Apply herself to the new syllabi? But then another cycle of boys to be taught to become men awaited. Cute little boys, eleven-year-olds for her to mould.

Noel King



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Miscellany meets Maria Wallace and Mervyn Ennis

On 26th September Miscellany had the pleasure of presenting a poetry reading in the south County Dublin suburb of Foxrock. The poets Maria Wallace and Mervyn Ennis were previously introduced to *Tinteán* readers through Miscellany interviews. On each occasion the interviews were accompanied by the publication of some of their poems in the poetry section of the magazine. Maria read a selection from her book *Second Shadow*, a book of poems published in English and Catalan, recently launched in Barcelona and in NUI Maynooth. The first two poems below are from *Second Shadow*.

Evening in Cleggan

A crisscrossing of
seagulls' loud squall
overhead
as we watch wind pushed
fine mist drift in the bay.

Time casts anchor.
Low sun wraps
liquid honeycomb
round each stone,
gauzes cinnamon sea.

On hold, forms diffuse,
sharpen our knowledge
we are an intrusion.

No Death In The Afternoon

i.m E. Hemingway
Sunday, July 2nd 1961

You woke before the sun
showed over the mountains
east of Ketchum, before it had time to touch
a greeting on your window.

With bathrobe and slippers, ghostly silent
walking by your wife's bedroom door.
In the storeroom familiar gun oil and leather smells
reaffirming your decision.

Were you, that day, the old man of the sea trailing behind
nothing but fishbones, a defeated carcass unable to feel
the unloving contact of cold metal? Or, in that padlocked
plaza de toros, did you battle with,
run away from the beast? Heat like embers,
hot even the sand under your feet, faced
with a raging bull, black back glistening with blood
that would be repaid with blood. No spectators
to applaud last *faena* for bull and matador.

No death in the afternoon. Crisp dawn.

and the bell tolls for you.



Turlough

It was early, early in the spring,
the birds did whistle and sweetly sing
and I was sixteen, the youngest that day in May.
The sun shone on the west side of the yard,
while we prisoners, hands cord-tied
at our back, stood in the shadow of the barracks.

*Barefoot in my land,
cold cobblestones under my feet,
I shivered, but it was from fear,
a fear I did not show to our captors.*

... from tree to tree
the song they sang was old Ireland free.

'Turlough. What name is that?'
my tongue a whip on their faces.
'The one my parents gave me,' I replied.

*They said I was an insolent brat, a rebel,
good for nothing. I wasn't.*
No one would give me work.

It was early, early in the spring,
the birds did whistle and sweetly sing,
and it was said my father called me
The Croppie Boy. *He didn't. How could he*
from the early grave they had sent him to?

*With anger, a pitchfork, sticks
and stones I faced their might.*
Please, remember me, say
a prayer for my soul,

for all that heard
... from tree to tree
the song they sang was old Ireland free.

Friction of feathers

Silent, four majestic swans
glide on the lake,
water shivers in their wake.

They face the mountainside
where amid brambles
and shadows a castle

crumbles in the overgrowth;
trail of other times, flecks
of incomprehension within

fragment their peace,
stretch life in repetitive patterns.
They question the stars.

Unaccustomed to shore scree,
they long to feel
bog and grass underfoot.

Water surface reflects purest
white. Their body bears
the unnatural friction of feathers.

Mervyn Ennis

There is a perception that poetry doesn't connect with the world we live in or even if it does connect that it is written in such an obscure and pretentious manner that no one wants to read it. This is definitely not the case with Mervyn's poetry.

Christmas 2009

From behind the Christmas tree
she peers smiling mischievously
the shimmy of the Christmas lights
radiate the room
cosied by the scent of a log/turf fire
casting shadows
among the presents mounded at its base
All is calm, all is bright.

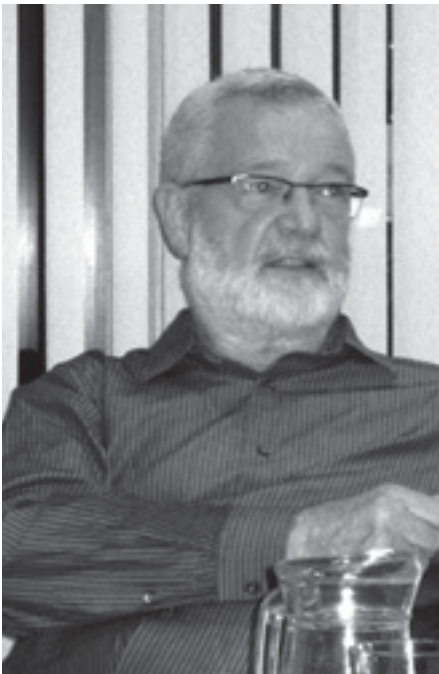
The TV's late news
calls for Bishops,
princes and wise men of the Church
to resign
for mishandling the sexual abuse investigations
of children
whose age and innocence
is evident in her childlike smile.
All is calm, all is bright.

RTE's economics reporter
warns that the green shoots of recovery
may yet be frosted by further cut backs
as the recession deepens
Irish emigration is beginning to soar
foreign immigrants returning
to the rising boats of the European labour market
Where all is calm all is bright.

Our children's Christmas cards
take pride of place on the mantelpiece
with Mary and Joseph
complying with the census
set the first Christmas scene.
They now peer from the wall
behind the Christmas tree
no longer listed among us
swept away by the tide of Emigration
to be undocumented in the USA
where they, like the new born infant
remain on the run, until,
all is calm, all is bright

Magdalene Lady

Pain etched she left
and never returned.
Died alone
on alien soil
without her own around her,
passed into the night
without candle
priest or prayer.
Only a forbidden memory
in vague stories remain
of who she was
what happened her
her bravery and courage
and what she achieved.
Unsupported she fought
crossier, wig and gown
named it,
called it for what it was
and who they were
and broke free,
died alone
in drink
without wake or
Church welcome
a Magdalene Lady



The poetry reading came to a close with book signings by Maria of her book *Second Shadow* and by Mervyn of his book *Once Upon A Time In Tallagh – Tinker Tales and Traveller Stories*.

Sin a bhfuil go fóill ó Sheosamh Ó Murchú. Slán agaibh go léir.
Happy Christmas everyone.

Joseph Murphy, Dublin

Portal to the Past

It was the clothes line
that gave a portal to the past.
He saw a flotilla of nappies
from a pre-pamper age
announce to neighbours
another new arrival.
He recalled them stiff as canvas
on frosty mornings
as he primed his lorry for icy roads
heard her 'desperate' lament
on how to get them dry.
He saw their kids troop
reluctantly to school
reared up at them
on the dangers of bikes on busy roads.
He enjoyed their laughter
on the swing he made
peered with them
at the tumbler pigeons' clutch.
They too have tumbled out of the nest,
alone,
he anxiously watches their flight.

Yes, it was the clothes line
that gave a portal to the past
but where was he to gain a glimpse
of a future without her
as another month
closes on her passing.

Night

When night came
it came black as ink,
swift as flight,
bled into every crevice
of life and soul
stole her bloom
banished like sin
every graceful moment
shrouded her
in the bleak uncertainty
of being alone
without embrace
kiss or caress.

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Pestilence on the Portland, 1833

County Clare was in open rebellion during 1831. The violence which erupted was fuelled by secret societies namely the Terry Alts and Lady Clares, both Whiteboy organizations. Their motives were disputes over access to land. The disturbances were viewed by the people as fights for their livelihood rather than offences against the law. Some 420 attacks on houses occurred. Illegal meetings and the administration of oaths were nightly events. Burglary and robbery were extensive. Fences were levelled so that cattle strayed from one gentleman's domain to another. Homicides were also committed. The Lord Lieutenant, the Marquis of Anglesey, toured the county accompanied by magistrates and a display of military strength. An expanded police force was posted to Clare but the violence was not immediately suppressed. Meanwhile members of the gentry had fled for their lives to neighbouring counties.

At the time it was well known that the Irish poor did not fear imprisonment. By 1831 it had also become clear to government authorities that Irish labourers dreaded transportation more than the death penalty which, in many cases was not carried out.

Parliament had been dissolved in the Spring of 1831 so, in response to the upheaval in Clare, a Special Commission was issued in June to try those apprehended. In consultation with Judges and the Attorney General it was resolved to amend the Act 15 and 16 Geo III, to substitute transportation for the death penalty (except for murder). The legislation prescribed that the convictions by juries were to be carried out immediately from the Dock.

The result of the amended legislation was that 75 men convicted in Clare were sentenced to transportation. The penalties were predominantly for assault with intent to rob of firearms, administering oaths and larceny. Thirty men were sentenced to death for murder, burglary, robbery, riotous assembly and attacking dwelling houses. The male transportees were conveyed to the hulk, *Surprise* already laying at the Cove of Cork or to the *Essex* hulk moored in Dublin harbour.

The *Portland* (2), a ship of 385 tons chartered as a prisoner transport, sailed from Deptford naval base on the 28 December 1832 carrying a guard accompanied by six wives and eleven children.

The vessel was on route to Cork to embark male prisoners from the *Surprise* which lay in the harbour holding Irish male prisoners sentenced to transportation. On arrival at Cove the *Portland* (2) was detained for six weeks awaiting documents such as assignment lists and sailing orders from the dilatory Irish prison officials. By 9 February 1833 the full complement of 191 prisoners was embarked in irons. They were mostly young men of ages 19 to 30 with the exception of one man who was 75 years of age.

While held on board the hulk the men had been closely confined without work or exercise. Their food had been sparse, limited to 20 oz. of meat a week per man. As the prisoners were marched on board the *Portland* (2) the surgeon, Charles Inches,

At the time it
was well known that
the Irish poor did not
fear imprisonment

observed that they were much inferior in health and vigour to that presented by English convicts. The Irishmen wore clothing that was generally bad; being worn and thin and affording little warmth against the bitter cold of a winter departure.

Shortly after putting to sea the weather became tempestuous and remained so for ten days which necessitated the prisoners being confined under hatches. Heavy gales from the SW and W buffeted the ship without intermission causing it considerable damage. Although the hatches were battened down the tarpaulin covers were unable to hold back the sea water which poured down the ladders soaking the prison. Almost all hands were prostrated with seasickness which made it impossible to keep the fouled prison in a tolerable state of cleanliness.

On the 1 March 1833, following a night of storms, a case of malignant cholera was presented at the ship's hospital. On the following day seven further cases were diagnosed. Several of the prisoners who saw the first fatality instantly recognised what they had previously witnessed a short time before at home during the cholera epidemic which visited Ireland

during 1832. There was universal panic among the prisoners who realised that they had no means of escape from this dreadful scourge. Within days there were upwards of 20 cholera cases on the Sick List. The surgeon had never before witnessed cholera and had no knowledge of its transmission which was actually by human touch, contaminated water and food, but this was unknown.

One of the first victims was a soldier's wife. Before her death she lay the whole time of her illness in her husband's arms with her children most of the time about her on the bed. Astonishingly none of the surviving family suffered an attack. Three prisoners died in quick succession.

The hospital was crowded and Surgeon Inches and his two assistants were fatigued due to lack of sleep. He recommended to the master that the *Portland* (2) call at the nearest port. This was the Tagus on the coast of Portugal where the ship was cleaned and fumigated. Meanwhile the cholera had claimed its final victim and abated. Five additional deaths occurred on the voyage but they were from diarrhoea, fever, anascarca and phthisis (TB).

Upon leaving the Tagus the weather became fine and mild which lifted the spirits of the prisoners until the *Portland* (2) reached the equator. Here bowel complaints occurred caused by the lengthy exposure to salt provisions. By this time too the oatmeal, one of the principal articles of diet, had gone bad due to age and long keeping. This contaminated food acted as a laxative adding to the men's discomfort. They also suffered a low fever the cause of which was unknown but was actually due to body lice.

After passing the Tropic of Capricorn the *Portland* (2) sailed deep into the South Atlantic Ocean. In these southern latitudes colds and catarrh showed themselves, aggravated by the inferior quality of the men's clothing. Their garments were in rags. However by procuring patches of old canvas and sewing them onto the remnants they were able to almost keep themselves covered in the freezing temperature. It was in this state that the *Portland* (2) finally reached Port Jackson on 26 June 1833 after a voyage of 125 days.

Anne McMahon

Anne is a retired academic living in Canberra

Irishness and the Kelly Outbreak

Ned Kelly and the Kelly Outbreak hold a unique place in the history of Irish-Australia. The Australian born son of Irish immigrants is one of the most well known figures since the white invasion. This article explores some specifically Irish issues of the time which may have influenced Ned and his companions in the course of action they took.

Irish rural rebels such as the 'White Boys' can be traced back to 1761. They claimed to act on behalf of the majority the Catholic peasantry. For 80 years they terrified landlords and their agents, as they aimed to redress rural injustice such as evictions, and excessive Church of Ireland dues. Their actions included levelling of ditches which closed off common grazing land, destruction of fences, houghing of stock, entering towns at night to fire guns and taunt the local troops, and marching along to 'rebel tunes'. Similar groupings of rural rebels followed them, including the 'Defenders' and the 'Ribbonmen'. They usually appeared on nights of a full moon, attacking landlords and their properties, before disappearing into the night. Tipperary, where a high level of recorded crime and 'outrage' was prevalent was the home county of John Kelly, Ned's father. We are aware that John Kelly, the father of Ned and Dan, was convicted of an 'agrarian outrage' and transported to Van Diemens land. He was a resident of Cashel Diocese, Co Tipperary and was sentenced to seven years transportation in 1841 for stealing two pigs, an 'agrarian outrage' not uncommon in the Ireland of this period. 'Agrarian outrages', in which poor Irish sought retribution against the wealthy landowners, included stock theft, burning of fences and a range of activities including the maiming and houghing of stock (although this particularly Irish method of settling accounts with an unpopular farmer or landlord was rare in the Australian context). However, by the early 1870's, conflict between selectors and squatters became prevalent in North Eastern Victoria. The burning of squatters' fences and haystacks, impounded selectors' stock illegally released under the cover of night, and the Irish-influenced stock houghing and maiming appeared, indicating discontent with access to land, and who controlled its use:

These stories of Irish rebelliousness were no doubt told to Ned Kelly, his siblings and their young companions. The full moon was a feature in the Kelly Outbreak. During their period of outlawry, from late 1878 until their demise at Glenrowan in June 1880, events including the robbery at Jerilderie and the shooting of Aaron Sherrit, coinciding with the final tragedy at Glenrowan, were all conducted under a full moon.

His mother, Ellen Quinn's family, (parents and eight children) migrated to Australia as bounty migrants from Co Antrim, arriving in Melbourne on 17 July 1841. Coming from Antrim, dominated by a large Presbyterian population, James Quinn saw a limited future for his family and by migrating to Australia

They claimed to act on behalf of the majority, the Catholic peasantry

sought a brighter future for them. The Ireland they had left was a rural society where a small number of predominantly Protestants landlords, monopolised 90% of the land, which was worked by Catholic peasants who tried to survive as tenant farmers. A growing population and growing awareness of such marked inequality resulted in many Irish migrating to Australia to build a better life in the new land, apart from those who didn't leave of their own volition!

Ned Kelly with his three partners, younger brother Dan, Joe Byrne, and Steve Hart were Australian born sons of Irish selectors. Their Outbreak occurred in rural nineteenth century Australia, with its specific Australian grievances and experiences: Their issue of access to land was not the traditional Irish protest of clashes between tenant farmers and their landlords. They had a different agenda where access to owning their own land would lead to a better life in a new world.

Land use in Victoria had been influenced by Irish immigrants Nineteenth century Victoria was considered to be the most Irish of the colonies, with over

10% of the population in 1881 being Irish born. In this period, the North East of Victoria, an area now colloquially known as Kelly Country, 12% of the population were Irish born and of course there were their native born children. Irish born leaders, like Charles Gavan Duffy and John Joseph Walsh, tried to make Victoria an attractive option for new settlers. Educated and articulate, these men were 'schooled', and influenced by the Young Ireland movement. All were influenced by Irish nationalism.

Many Irish-born tried their hand on the land. Not all achieved success. Although the problems were different to those they had experienced in Ireland, they still existed. By the 1840's the agricultural system experienced great problems, as an increasing population, rising rents, and crop failures saw many farms divided into smaller and smaller units, making them unviable, with the constant threat of eviction and starvation. In Australia and specifically Victoria, the difference related to the way in which wealthy squatters, who had first taken the land, were unwilling to share with the new smaller farmers, also known as selectors. This took a number of forms as the Squatters manipulated loopholes in the laws to maintain their control. They used processes such as dummifying where they would arrange for friends and relations to purchase land for them. Or they divided their land in a way the unusable land, which was either flood prone, or barren, was made available for selectors to buy whilst the squatters retained the prime farming land. They also established strong links with local authorities, including the judiciary and the police.

Other influences in the Kelly Outbreak can be seen in the vision for a 'Republic of the North-East', which was very much influenced by the idea of the Republic of America.

The symbolic Republic of the North East, with its alleged document written in Joe Byrne's handwriting, is a matter of conjecture. The existence of this document is in many ways speculative, with no copy of it being in existence; though it was allegedly sighted in the 1960's its whereabouts and its very existence are in need of confirmation. The Republic of America, unfettered by the hierarchical British system, was an emotional



Mrs Kelly and family group: Alice Kelly, Kate Kelly (seated), Grace Kelly with Faith, the Kelly cattle dog, Mrs Kelly (seated), Jack Kelly, Ellen Kelly feeding a lamb from a bottle, Rev. William Gould (who had presided at Ellen's marriage to George King in 1874) *State Library of Victoria*

symbol for many Irish. A republic free of the English yoke was seen as a symbol of liberty and freedom and was a noble goal. This symbolism would have been heightened by the news of the daring rescue and escape to America of the Fenians incarcerated in Fremantle Gaol, by the whaler, Catalpa in 1874. As the boat sailed into international waters, outrunning its British pursuers, it raised the star spangled banner and became a powerful symbol of freedom from British colonial rule: In the Jerilderie Letter, Ned refers to the possibility of what would happen if England attacked the Republic of America. If this occurred, he talks of how the Green flag would be hoisted as the emigrant Irish rallied against the imperial oppressor. Of course some of these ideas can be explained by the influence of his American step-father George King.

The Jerilderie Letter includes regular reference to both the injustice and oppression experienced in Ireland, with the resultant struggles for justice, this

being set in the Australian context. The letter dictated by Ned, written in Joe Byrnes hand writing, articulates in its own rough way the factors Ned considers have led him to taking up arms, due to the injustices and oppression he, his family, and others from a similar background experienced. Throughout the letter, Ned combines Irish rhetoric and symbolism but in an Australian context, as he talks of the horrors endured by exiled Irish convicts, including being rolled down the hill in barrels, as well as being flogged. Despite its vicious denunciation of Irish born police, it is important to recall that all four police present at Stringybark Creek were Irish born, and in the 1870's, 82% of the Victorian Police were Irish born. There is the dialogue at Stringybark Creek between Ned and the sole survivor, Thomas McIntyre, who reminded Ned that all the police were Irish, but McIntyre felt this fell on deaf ears as Kelly prided himself more on his being Australian born rather than

on his Irishness. In the letter we see the issues confronting the exiled Irish and their presence appearing against an Australian backdrop, as injustice and the struggle against it continues, albeit in new and slightly different forms.

The Kelly Outbreak with its specific Australian grievances and experiences drew upon traditional Irish symbolism and rhetoric. In a region with a large percentage of the Irish born, and their native off spring, this struck a resonance. The desire for land was not the traditional Irish tenant farmers desire for secure tenure of land, but land ownership as a basis of economic prosperity and security. The Kelly Outbreak, in its own rough way, is a marvellous tale of struggling against oppression in the hope of building a better world.

Glen Davis

This article is drawn from Glen's honours thesis. His family, who has an Irish background, lived in the region during the 'Kelly Outbreak'.

Irish language Sources at the State Library of Victoria

On 4 October 2011, under the auspices of the Melbourne Celtic Club, the State Library of Victoria presented a seminar on Irish language sources in the Library's Manuscripts and Rare Printed Collections. The focus of the talks by Dr Kevin Molloy and Dr Julia Kühns were three scribal manuscripts, plus first edition texts in English that document linguistic and historical developments in Ireland over the last four centuries.

Despite the involvement of prominent colonial Irish with the institution, the Melbourne Public Library – later the State Library of Victoria – did not actively collect material on the development of the Irish community or Irish history generally. In 1872 the Library acquired its first significant Australian manuscripts when letters written by Victorian pioneers were deposited by Victoria's first former governor, Charles Joseph La Trobe. This collection of letters included a substantial number by Irish merchant, penal administrator, Peninsular War veteran, and Victorian migrant Foster Fyans. The La Trobe Pioneers' collection was one of the earliest collections of its type in Australia. In 1874, the records of the Burke and Wills Expedition were donated by the Royal Society of Victoria. This was the first major Victorian collection acquired by the Library about a group of colonial Irish involved in an event of major significance. However, within the first sixty years of the Library's opening it acquired a number of important books and scribal manuscripts, all sourced within Victoria.

The Library's three Irish scribal manuscripts were acquired between 1863 and

1888. The contents in prose and verse include 17th and 18th century Irish poetry from Munster and Ulster; original 18th and 19th century compositions; stories on the life of Oisín, the Irish warrior-poet of the Fenian Cycle; and the Children of Lir. The first scribal work, MS 10595, was written in 1833 by a well-known poet, scribe and prolific writer, Dáibhidh de Barra (1758-1851), of Dungourney in east Co Cork. It was given to the Library by de Barra's relative, the Rev Dr John Barry on 12 May 1863. Barry was known for his teaching in Ireland, and association with St Patrick's School in East Melbourne. The Library's second scribal work, MS 10357, is dated to the 1820s by an unknown scribe. It was purchased by the Library in 1867 from the Melbourne antiquarian bookseller and publisher Henry Tolman Dwight. The final manuscript, RARES 091 C76, (dated 1822) is a collection of Irish poems and songs and given to the Library by Matthew O'Shanassy, son of the Tipperary born Premier of Victoria, Sir John O'Shanassy (1818-1883).

Speculation exists as to whether the latter two manuscripts, by the same unknown scribe, reached Melbourne via Edward Hayes, author of *Ballads of Ireland*. Hayes' collection of over 3000 volumes was auctioned in Melbourne in 1864. The catalogue was prepared by Henry Tolman Dwight, who acquired many unsold works from the Hayes auction; the Library purchased at least one Irish scribal manuscript from Dwight.

Together with the three manuscripts other important texts held by the Library

were discussed. This included the first edition of Hugh MacCurtin and Conor O'Begly, *English Irish Dictionary*, the very first English-Irish dictionary, published in Paris, 1732; a first edition of Fynes Moryson's 1617 *Itinerary, written by Fynnes Moryson Gent...containing 10 years of his travels*; and the first English edition of Geoffrey Keating's, *A General History of Ireland, Foras feasa ar Eirinn... translated from original Irish language, with many curious amendments, taken from the Psalters of Tara and Cashel, and other authentic records by Dermo'd O'Connor*, published in England in 1723.

MacCurtin was a poet, scholar and teacher, who left Ireland for France with Patrick Sarsfield in 1691. Returning to Ireland in 1714, he was imprisoned in 1717 and returned to France and Belgium, settling in Ireland in 1738 where he ran a traditional Irish school in Co Clare. This volume is annotated with the signature of Charles Vallancey, co-founder of the Royal Irish Academy. Vallancey initiated scholarship on Ogham, collected Irish manuscripts and formerly owned the Book of Lecan now in the Royal Irish Academy. Moryson's *Itinerary* is a primary source for 17th century Irish affairs and the demise of the native Irish leadership. Moryson was private secretary to Charles Blount (Lord Mountjoy), and this volume contains his first-hand account of the battle of Kinsale (1601), where he was present on the field, plus an account of Hugh O'Neill's submission at Mellifont in 1603. Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa* (1634), written in Early

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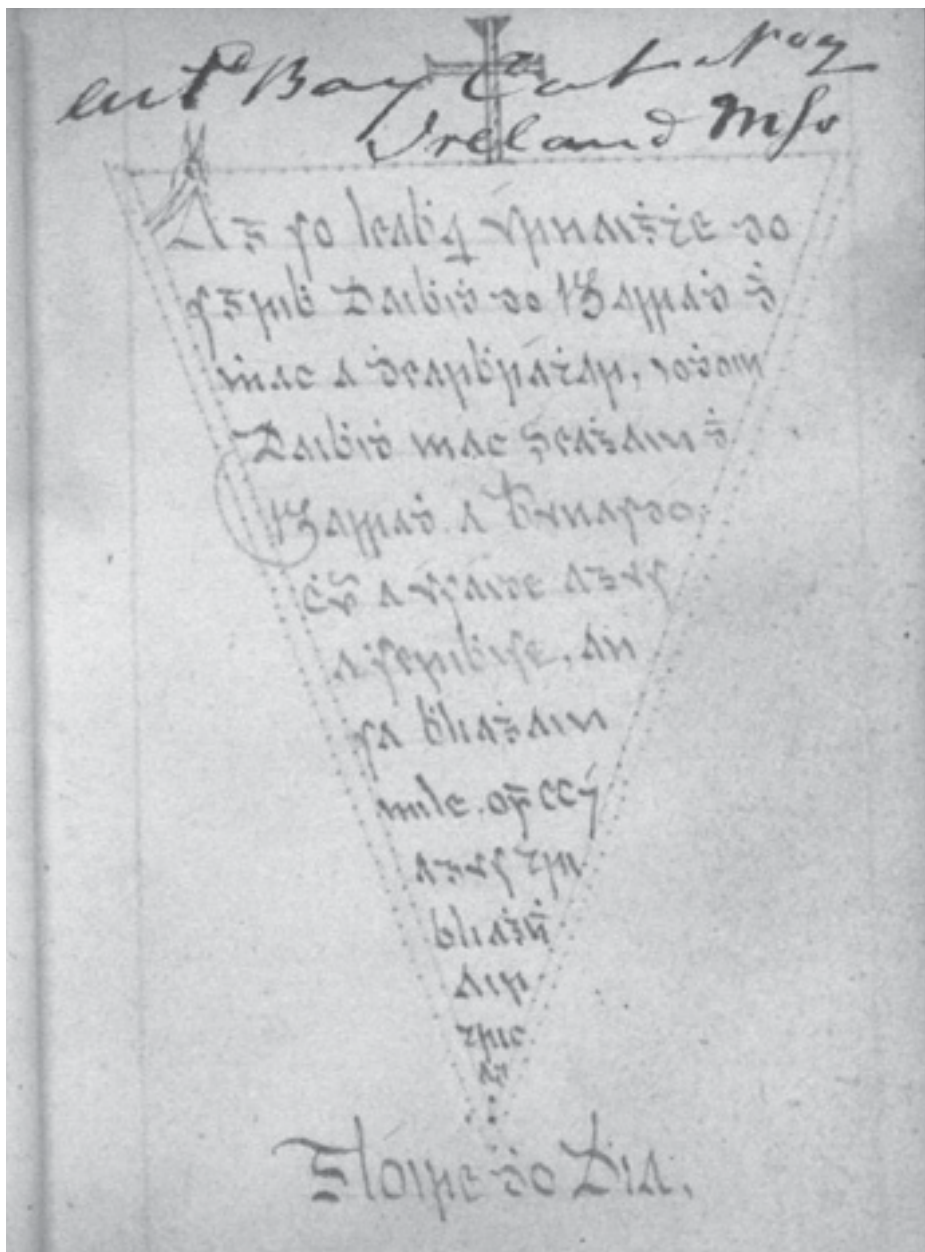
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 Daibhidh mac Seaghain do
 Barradh a mBunasdó,
 chum a úsáide agus
 a sheribhise, an
 sa bhliaghain míle ocht ccéad
 agus trí
 bliaghna
 air
 tric
 ad
 Glóire do Dhia

This is the prayer book that
 Daibhidh do Barradh wrote for
 the son of his brother, namely
 Daibhidh son of Seaghain do
 Barradh from Bunasdó,
 [Woodstock, Dungourney, Co. Cork]
 for his use and his service
 in the year eighteen-hundred
 and thirty
 three
 Glory be to God

Modern Irish, and drawing on extant
 Irish language texts, traces the history
 of Ireland from the creation of the world
 to the invasion of the Normans. A Latin
 translation was made in 1660, and the
 first English translation in 1723.

Other texts viewed included Irish-
 English dictionaries by Edward O'Reilly
 (1817) and William Neilson (1808).
 O'Reilly was noted as being the first
 toponymic field worker for the Irish
 Ordnance Survey in the 1830s, and was
 responsible for assigning names and
 translating Irish names into English.



The Library's *Facsimiles of the National Manuscripts of Ireland*, published by the British Ordnance Survey Office, 1874-1884 and under the editorial control of Irish historian William Gilbert, were also on display. These colour reproductions of

Irish documents and maps were state of the art when acquired by the Library at the end of the 19th century and were used extensively by the Victorian Irish scholar Nicholas O'Donnell.

Kevin Molloy

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A Scribal family

In addition to the three Irish scribal manuscripts in the State Library there are a further two manuscripts in Melbourne. These are part of the collection of Nicholas Michael O'Donnell, now kept at Newman College and St Mary's College, University of Melbourne. Nicholas O'Donnell, of course, was Melbourne's foremost Gaelic scholar in the late 19th and early 20th century. Born in 1862 near Gisborne, Victoria, to Irish parents, O'Donnell never visited Ireland but was a fluent Irish speaker, an avid collector of books and promoter of the Irish language, culture and history. He was also the co-founder of *Conradh na Gaeilge* (The Gaelic League) in Melbourne, and had contact with scholars from Ireland including Douglas Hyde, the first President of Ireland.

O'Donnell's collection comprises over 800 books and pamphlets, of these over 400 items are identifiable as having belonged to O'Donnell as they bear inscriptions, glosses or annotations in his hand. O'Donnell's habit of annotating his books is of great advantage to us. It tells us how the MSS came to be in his possession as in one of them is the following note in O'Donnell's hand:

Bought by me from Mr John Casey Elizabeth St Melbourne 22/1/[19]03 – who informs me that it was written by Longan Co Cork who belonged to a race of Irish writers. N.M. O'Donnell, North Melbourne Casey lived in Elizabeth St Carlton near the intersection of Queensbury St & was a fair Gaelic scholar I fancy he brought it from Ireland.

There seems to have been a third MS in O'Donnell's possession which he mentions in an article in the *Advocate* in May 1904.

The Ó Longáin scribal family from Munster spans four generations of professional scribes from the 17th to the late 18th century who were immensely productive as scribes. Over 450 MSS from the Ó Longáin scribal family survive, and many other MSS may have been lost over the years. While they moved around Counties Cork, Limerick and Kerry, the family is most closely associated with the parish of Carraig na bhFear (Carrignavar), near Cork City, which was a hub of scribal activity in the 17th, 18th and into the 19th century.

Mícheál mac Peattair (1693-1770)

The first of the Ó Longáin scribes, Mícheál mac Peattair, was born in 1693 in Co Limerick as the eldest of three sons. He completed his first transcript in 1711 but there is no second date for Ó Longáin's work until 29 years later, in 1740. He transcribed an MS in Dublin in 1752 for Dr. John Fergus, a Catholic doctor and MS collector. Ó Longáin's subsequent work for the Re. Seán Ó Briain, Bishop of Cloyne and Ross, introduced him to other Gaelic scribes and scholars in Co Cork, amongst them Conchubhar Bán Ó Dálaigh. He settled in Carraig na bhFear in the 1760s where he formed close contacts with other scribes such as Ribeard Breatnach, who would look after Ó Longáin's manuscripts after his death and pass them on to his son.

Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin (1766-1837)

This son, Mícheál Óg, was born in 1766, when his father was 73 years old. He was probably the most prolific scribe of his generation, and to this day the best-known member of the Ó Longáin scribal family and the one about whom we have most information. His career spanned over fifty years; we have seventy manuscripts in his own hand, about sixty of which he co-wrote, and there are about three hundred poems that he composed. His early scribal years were spent in the parish of Carraig na bhFear; we have an autobiographical account he wrote in 1791 as a 25-year-old. Here he tells us that he was orphaned at the age of 8, lived in the parish of Caheragh in South-West Cork for two years before returning to Carraig na bhFear. His schooling was interrupted and he worked as a cow herd and milk deliverer but was unhappy about this as no-one from his family had done that sort of work – which he considered menial – before him. He returned to school aged 18 and studied Arithmetic and Latin. In 1795 Mícheál Óg contemplated emigrating to America but remained in Ireland, joining the United Irishmen in Cork city in 1797. Around 1800 he married and had seven children, 2 daughters and five sons. The family moved around quite a bit, until Mícheál Óg once again settled in Carraig na bhFear in 1822. Mícheál Óg could not make a living from his scribal activities alone, however, and a certain

degree of mobility was required to maintain a scribal career, as was willingness to take up supplementary employment as a teacher or even labourer – this of course applied to other scribes at the time.

Mícheál Óg's lifetime, especially his later years, coincided with a time that saw an awareness of Gaelic scholarship and a beginning interest in antiquarian matters. He was a member of the *Gaelic Society*, and scribes like Ó Longáin would be commissioned by English-speaking patrons to translate and transcribe Gaelic source material. For Mícheál Óg, transcribing material was a way of securing the future of the Irish language and literature and the identity of the Irish people. This necessitated the translation of Irish material into English.

In the line of the Ó Longáin scribes, three of Mícheál Óg's sons followed in their father's footsteps; his oldest sons, the twins Pól and Peattair, and Seosamh, the youngest child.

Pól Ó Longáin (1801-1866)

Pól was introduced early to scribal matters when at the age of 12 he was sent, together with his twin brother, to collect a book from North Cork which Mícheál Óg had loaned to Art Ó Laoighaire. Pól supplemented his scribal work, which he began at the age of 15 or 16, by working as a teacher and labourer. Later in life he was employed as Official Scribe for the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. Notably, here he worked on the *Index to Initial Lines of the Manuscript Catalogues in the Royal Irish Academy* alongside his brother Seosamh.

Peattair (1801-?)

Peattair Ó Longáin, like his brother, completed his first transcription at about 15; like his brother and father he taught throughout his life and described himself as a schoolmaster. A feature of his scribal work is that he frequently neglects to sign or date his work, which makes it difficult to trace his movements. His hand resembles his brother's, which again makes it difficult to attribute some of his work. He transcribed for patrons for whom his father had worked already. We can glimpse his perception of his work and role as a scribe from an address he left in a MS for one of his patrons, Aindrias Ó Súilleabhain, written in 1827-8, where

he praises that the commissioning of the MS happened – to quote Méidhbhín Ní Úrdail’s translation of the Irish – out of ‘love and affection for the Irish language, and in order to keep it alive for a little longer and not let it die completely.’ This of course echoes the sentiments expressed by his father.

Seosamh Ó Longáin (1817-1880)

Seosamh was born in 1817 in Cork City. By the age of 10 Seosamh was proficient in writing, as we know from his listing of family members which survives in NLI G 154. Seosamh, too, would work as a teacher within the national system of education established in 1831. In fact, a *Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland* from 1854, notes on Seosamh’s teaching skills at the boys’ school at An Teampall Geall in Co Cork: ‘Teacher appears deficient in energy. He is pretty constantly employed in transcribing Irish manuscripts which may interfere with his proper vocation of schoolmaster.’ In 1865 Seosamh settled in Dublin and followed his brother Pól by taking up an appointment as scribe at the Royal Irish Academy, succeeding Eugene O’Curry. He also became active in the Irish language movement and was a founding member of the *Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language* launched in 1877. At his death, Seosamh’s reputation was such that he was referred to in his obituary by the Royal Irish Academy in 1880 as

he was amongst the most distinguished of Irish scribes.

Mícheál mac Seosaimh (fl. 1870)

To complete our survey of the Ó Longáin scribal family, Seosamh’s son, Mícheál remains. Not much is known about him other than that he, too, worked as a scribe at the Royal Irish Academy where we have 10 MSS in his hand, completed between 1870 and 1876. A further MS was a collaborative work between Mícheál and his father. He was a member of *Conradh na Gaeilge* (The Gaelic League), and Douglas Hyde mentions in his book *Mise agus an Conradh* a Mícheál mac Seosaimh Ó Longáin who was a particularly competent Irish native speaker.

The scribal manuscripts in the O’Donnell collection are the work of

Peattair and Seosamh Ó Longáin. The first manuscript is *Táin Bó Cuailgne*. The tale is the centre-piece of Irish tales referred to as the Ulster Cycle, and probably one of the most famous Irish tales; in fact, Myles Dillon suggested that it ‘may be classified as a prose epic’. A colophon following the text identifies the scribe and date:

Le Ioseph mac Mhichil óig Ui Longain an chead la do Mharta san mblíadhain daois Chriost MDCCCLXII [‘By Joseph son of Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin, the first day of March in the year of the age of Christ, 1862.’]

The second of O’Donnell’s Irish manuscripts is the *Brisleach mór Mhaighe Mhuirtheimhne*, the ‘Great Defeat on the Plain of Muirtheimhne’, the death-tale of the hero Cú Chulainn. All three parts of the tale are represented here, and appear to be in the hand of Peattair Ó Longáin. The remainder of the MS is in the hand of Seosamh Ó Longáin. The latter part contains tales from a slightly different genre than the first tale and includes a tale from the Finn Cycle (*Eachtra Lomnachtáin*), a Munster propaganda tale (*Caithréim Cheallacháin Chaisil*) and another tale by the name *Eachtra Léithin*.

Finally, the MS contains an item added to it by its owner, Nicholas O’Donnell: this is ‘The Battle of Cnucha’, transliterated into the Gaelic script – from Hennessy’s edition of the tale. This is a great example of O’Donnell’s dedication, involvement and interest in Irish literature and tradition, as he clearly reproduced and followed the example of copying texts in the tradition of the Ó Longáins, and other scribes.

We are fortunate that these manuscripts survive, not only from a perspective of manuscript studies but also as testament to the endeavours of O’Donnell and the interaction between scholars in Europe and Australia at the turn of the century.

For detailed accounts of the lives and works of the Ó Longáin scribes, see Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, *The Scribe in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Münster: Nodus, 2000)

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Irish Monastic Scribes

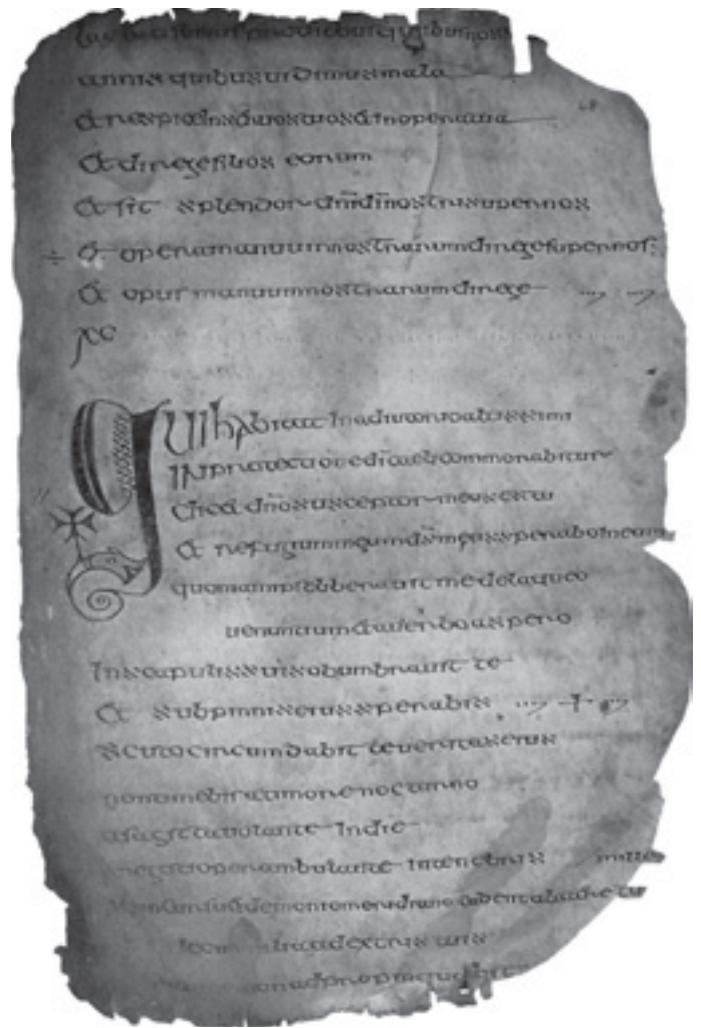
The Roman alphabet came to Ireland with Christianity in the 5th century. The new religion relied heavily on the authority of religious books – Bibles, commentary on theology, sacred music and psalms. The only way to produce such materials was to copy them by hand. So groups of religious men and women set about borrowing, or persuading, wealthy patrons to subsidise the purchase of copies of the required religious materials. The 5th to 9th centuries in Ireland saw the creation of such wonders of the manuscript art as the *Book of Kells* and the *Book of Durrow*. However, for all the evidence of a vibrant learned culture in early medieval Ireland, very few manuscripts survive from this period. The few that do, like the *Book of Kells*, owe their survival to the belief that they were relics of the saints. A good example of this is the book known as the *Cathach*, part of a psalm book, written in Latin and believed to have been written by St Columba himself. The manuscript dates from the mid 7th century and, in the 11th century the king of the Northern Uí Néill commissioned a shrine for it made of wood faced with silver places. Then it was kept by the MacRobhartaigh family of Co Donegal who carried it three times sunwise around the O'Donnell army before going into battle. It was this that gave the book and case its name – *Cathach* means Battler. After travelling around Ireland and France in the 18th century, it returned to Ireland in 1813 and the manuscript was discovered inside the shrine – damaged by damp but salvageable.

While we do not have many survivals in Ireland from this early monastic manuscript production, we do have manuscripts written by Irish monks who travelled to the continent. Some of the earliest written Irish is preserved in the margins of these manuscripts. The St Gall Priscian Grammar (St Gall MS 904) was written in Ireland in the mid 9th century and taken to the continent. At one point, an exasperated scribe wrote 'New Vellum, bad ink, Oh I say nothing more' in Irish in the margin. Another marginal note records the monastic scribe's relief that bad weather would deter Viking attackers.

Irish monastic scribes in Ireland preserved the wonderful secular literature in Irish. *Lebor nUidre* was written in the monastic scriptorium at Clonmacnoise around 1106 and contains the oldest version of the famous *Táin Bó Cuailgne* and other religious, mythical and historical literature. This manuscript was preserved after the break up of the scriptorium by the O'Donnell family of scribes and historians in Donegal.

After the 13th century, lay scribes started to copy and write manuscripts. They usually came from learned families, such as the O'Donnells, who preserved manuscripts for centuries. There were families of historians, poets and legal scholars. The *Senchas Már* for example, a 14th century manuscript containing some of the earliest legal texts in the Irish tradition, was compiled by the Mac Aodhogáin (MacEgan) family of legal scholars. In legal manuscripts, the Old Irish original text was copied well after the use of this form of the language had faded. The old Irish text was written in large letters with a contemporary Irish commentary in smaller letters. Again scribes livened up their labours with marginal notes – on one page of this manuscript a scribe wrote 'Cairbre, who wrote this of a dark evening' to which a later reader had added 'Do not insert such dark declarations O Cairbre'.

These marginal notes give an insight into the readership of these manuscripts long after they were written. They show the



Cathach of St Columba

manuscripts used by the great 17th century Irish annalists known as the Four Masters – Franciscans Michael O'Clery, Peregrine O'Clery, Fearfeasa O'Mulconry and Cúcoigríche O'Duigenan, who assembled materials for a new history of Ireland between 1632 and 1634 in Co Donegal. The manuscripts they accessed and the families they consulted indicates a vibrant Irish intellectual culture in the 17th century.

Producing manuscripts was expensive and learned men sought patrons to support them. While most were from the elite of Gaelic Irish society, poets and scribes also produced manuscripts for Anglo-Irish lords. While much changed in Ireland during the 17th century and lay patrons such as Fergal O'Gara lost their power and wealth, successors to the great learned families kept their manuscripts for years even when they were reduced to poverty, eventually selling them or giving them to Anglo-Irish antiquarians such as Sir James Ware or Archbishop Ussher in the 19th century. These men valued the learning of the Irish scribes, poets and historians and it was through them that the manuscripts entered the libraries where they are kept today. The long journeys of the great medieval manuscripts after their production often show us as much about Irish history as the manuscripts themselves.

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**Dianne Hall,
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Irish Horse Racing: an ancient tradition

Race-goers flocked early August, 2010 to the premier thoroughbred horse racing centre in the Republic of Ireland at Curragh, Co Kildare. The antiquity of a horse-racing tradition at Curragh was shown by recent archaeological investigations. These indicate that horse races on level ground at the location, spreading over a week, were given pride of place among sporting events at a ceremonial event dating back at least 2,400 years. Racing was held at the Lughnasa Festival celebrating the beginning of the summer harvest. Races were dedicated variously to kings, princes and 'the multitudes of Erin', while pasturing was provided for horses. Areas were set aside for the women and for cooking, other sports, markets, story-telling, music and feasting. The name, Curragh, derives from an early Irish word for race course.

Radio-carbon dating of Iron Age phases at the adjacent Dun Ailinne site gives a date of 580 BC for the founding of this event, says American archaeologist Ronald Hicks. His article, *The Sacred Landscape of Ancient Ireland*, featured in this year's *Archaeology*. Human settlement in the vicinity has been continuous since about 7000 BC. Seasonal ceremonial gatherings (or assemblies, from the Irish *oenach*) combining economic, social and cultural functions evolved from the sixth century BC. The tradition then morphed into Christian feast days after the fifth century AD.

Hicks, who specialises in landscape and cognitive archaeology, regards Dun Ailinne as similar to Emain Macha due north, near the city of Armagh, and Cruachan in Roscommon, ten kilometres south-east of Boyle. The three sites form an almost perfect equilateral triangle, he comments. Tara, the most renowned site in ancient Ireland, is half-way between

Dun Ailinne and Emain Macha.

Although all these imposing sites are located in commanding positions, none seems to have served a defensive purpose, according to Hicks, but all might be seen as sanctuaries, and described as royal, in that each is a complex of monuments pertaining to provincial kings or chieftains elected from a kinship network and marrying a local earth goddess, hinting at the place being a *sid* (dwelling place of the ancient gods).

Abundant colourful detail about the interacting realms and the mythical leading families and divinities is found in the wonderfully embroidered oral accounts relayed down the ages by bards and written in Old Irish in the 10th to 12th centuries. Homeric epics similarly immortalised Hellenic Bronze Age sites and figures which 19th and 20th century archaeological excavations suggest had a certain historical reality.

At Tara, remains survive of mounds, standing stones, wells possibly used for ritual ceremonies and graves of legendary characters. Lesser kings visited Tara in early November, at Samhain, marking the end of the harvest and the return of herds from summer pastures, timed to fall on a 'cross-quarter' day between the autumn equinox in September and the winter solstice in December. Christianised as All Saints' Day on November 1 and All Souls' Day on November 2, Samhain is marked in the 21st century as Hallowe'en.

Emain Macha commemorated the king's daughter Macha who aspired to rule after her father's death and vanquished rivals in battle, but died giving birth to twins after being forced to show her horse-riding prowess while pregnant. Cruachan was the seat of a formidable queen of Connacht, Medh (Maev), protagonist in

the cattle-raiding epic, *The Táin*. Like Dun Ailinne, Emain Macha and Cruachan were venues for Lughnasa held on the 'cross-quarter' days between the summer solstice in June and the autumn equinox.

Hicks had field experience at Dun Ailinne in an excavation team during a 1971 archaeological season in a project commissioned by the Office of Public Works. On subsequent visits while researching his PhD, he learnt that the place is mentioned in medieval Irish manuscripts and was associated with the kings of Leinster. He became convinced that Dun Ailinne and Curragh 'may have been a single complex, as neither seems a coherent whole'. He was impressed with the way remaining stones and earthworks are oriented to the north-west along a line towards the setting of the sun at the summer solstice in a gap of the hills known as the Chair of Kildare, continuing to Emain Macha through Uisneagh, the theoretical navel or centre of Ireland, possibly seat of the Chief Druid of ancient Ireland.

A magisterial account of Iron Age Ireland and its hallowed royal sites has been given by Barry Raftery, professor emeritus of Celtic archaeology at University College Dublin. To the satisfaction of anyone espousing celebrated French historian Fernand Braudel's *longue duree*, Raftery suggests that 'many aspects of an archaic Irish Iron Age tradition lasted well into medieval times. Some, perhaps, may be dimly discernible to the present day'. Horse racing is among the surviving Irish traditions so beloved of our immigrant ancestors to Australia and New Zealand in the mid 19th century, that makeshift race courses and horse race meetings were established almost as soon as churches.

Ann Elder



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John Betjeman in Dublin during WWII

Frank O'Shea, the Canberra writer, addressed a Melbourne Irish Studies Seminar at Newman College, Melbourne, on 7 June 2011. He opened by commenting that it took courage then as it would now to write a poem that had rhyme and metre. Showing similar courage, Frank opened by reciting two of Betjeman's poems, 'Death in Leamington' and 'The Arrest of Oscar Wilde at the Cadogan Hotel'. This is an edited extract of his address.

In 1939 John Betjeman (1906-1984) was appointed to the films division of the UK Ministry of Information. In January 1941, he was posted to Ireland as Press Attaché to the United Kingdom Representative in Eire. The office of the representative was in Upper Mount Street, a few doors from the Fianna Fail headquarters. During his time in Dublin, Betjeman reported to his opposite number at the Ministry of Information in London – as it happened, the distinguished historian, Nicholas Mansergh, an Irishman whose son, Martin, was a Fianna Fail TD in 2007-2011.

Betjeman was no stranger to Ireland, having spent holidays with a number of more-than-privileged people there, notably the Pakenhams in Westmeath. Before the war, he had been interested in buying a place in Ireland and moving his family there.

In 1941, when the rest of the world was at war, there was the 'emergency' in Ireland because the Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, had decided that Ireland would be neutral in the conflict, not the least of his reasons being that anti-British feeling was still strong in Ireland and that Ireland was completely unprepared for any type of war. de Valera regarded Ireland's neutrality as a positive, not negative, stand. Some 43,000 men and women from the Free State enlisted to be part of the war effort (cf 38,000 from Northern Ireland). There was cooperation in intelligence matters and weather reporting. The USA used Irish diplomats in Europe in their dark trade, and did so with the knowledge of de Valera.

There was rationing and it was a generally miserable time for the country. de Valera stuck to his guns in the face of constant sniping from his old adversary, Churchill, who was particularly incensed that Chamberlain handed back the Irish ports and gave dark hints that he might have to re-take them. The Irish were in some fear of invasion by the Germans but were also unsure about British intentions.

But there was also a life away from war and the fear of war. Betjeman mixed in literary circles and with influential families. Among these were the Brownes,

originally of Tipperary, who had three prominent priest sons. Pdraig de Brún, a genius of the first order, earned a doctorate in mathematics from the Sorbonne and was Professor of Mathematics at Maynooth, before becoming President of UCG and Vice-Chancellor of NUI. He and Betjeman became friends, sparking off each other in good-humoured debates about religion. A sister, Margaret Browne, married Sean McEntee who was sentenced to death in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising. McEntee, a close friend of de Valera, was a Minister in the

Betjeman was no stranger to Ireland

Fianna Fail government at the time. He was from Belfast and was judged by the British Representative as an Anglophobe, although the German ambassador told his masters in Berlin that McEntee was pro-British. The Betjeman and McEntee families were frequent visitors to each other's homes.

The Betjemans also had close associations with the Childers family. Erskine Childers, who would later serve as President of Ireland, was the son of the English-born novelist who organised the Howth gun running and who was subsequently executed by the Free State as a reprisal for the killing of Michael Collins. Childers' daughter tells the story of a party at their home in honour of the son of a Nigerian chief, to which John and Penelope Betjeman were invited. Next morning early, John was startled to see a portion of the front lawn dug up in the shape of a huge swastika. Erskine Childers, the future President of Ireland, and John Betjeman, the future poet laureate, set to work to repair the damage.

A later poem of W B Yeats speaks of a man who had a good fly fisher's wrist and turned into a drunken jour-

nalist. Many think that this refers to RM Smyllie, the larger-than-life editor of *The Irish Times*. Around the corner from *The Irish Times* offices, on Fleet Street, is the Palace Bar. Here was the central literary centre of Dublin and it was here that Smyllie held court, surrounded by his literary neophytes. New Zealander Alan Reeve's cartoon shows many of the Palace Bar regulars, writers like Francis MacManus, Brinsley MacNamara, Donagh MacDonagh, Austin Clarke, Maurice Walsh, Pdraic Fallon and Smyllie himself. Also there is the one-legged raconteur G J C Tynan-O'Mahony. One of only two men standing is the giant literary figure, the poet, Patrick Kavanagh, while sitting quietly with morose expression is another giant, Flann O'Brien (Brian O'Nolan). Betjeman knew most of these writers and most likely visited the Palace Bar.

It is worth examining Betjeman's relationship with Patrick Kavanagh, in the days before Kavanagh had his column in the *Catholic Standard* and when he was but a moderate drinker. Kavanagh was usually broke. In his poem 'I Had a Future', he wrote:

Show me the stretcher-bed I slept on
In a room on Drumcondra Road,
Let John Betjeman call for me in a car.

In a time of petrol rationing, to be chauffeured around in a diplomatic car to fashionable parties, receptions and exhibitions was the height of glamour for the farmer-poet. Betjeman was two years younger than Kavanagh. It appears that their Dublin friendship was a genuine one, based on Betjeman's recognition of the fact that he was dealing with a talented poet.

When Kavanagh had finished his long 759-line poem, *The Great Hunger*, the first two to whom he showed it were Frank O'Connor and John Betjeman who each immediately recognised it as a major work. Betjeman was responsible for the first publication of an extract from the poem, sending it to Cyril Connolly as part of an edition of the magazine *Horizon* devoted to showing the English that Ireland was also suffering during the war. In his covering letter to Connolly,



John Betjeman statue at St Pancras railway station, London paul-simpson.org

Betjeman wrote, 'I'm so glad you are printing Paddy's poem. It's very good, I think. He'll be delighted if you can use some of it. The more he is paid, the better. He is dirt poor.'

Kavanagh wrote a light lyric to celebrate the first birthday of Candida Betjeman and he seems to have been affected by the good humour of his English friend. After Betjeman's return to England, Kavanagh wrote to him asking him for help with employment. Betjeman donated £10 to a fund established to help Kavanagh's appeal against a legal judgement.

Betjeman was also friendly with Brian O'Nolan, who wrote novels under his pseudonym, Flann O'Brien, and also an *Irish Times* column as Myles na gCopaleen. This column occasionally mentioned the avuncular press attaché. In 1940, de Valera persuaded Erwin Schrödinger to head the School of Theoretical Physics in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. An Austrian, but not a Jew, he fled the country, happy to find a place for his thinking. In his 'Cruiskeen Lawn' column, Myles loved to take a swipe at the enthusiasts for the Irish language, de Valera in particular. Referring to the Institute's star recruit, the atheist Schrödinger, and also to the work being done on the legend of St Patrick, which suggested that the St Patrick we know is probably an amalgam of a number of missionaries, Myles

na gCopaleen wrote that the Institute so far had proved that there was no God and there were two St Patricks.

Other figures with whom Betjeman associated were Sean O'Faolain and his mistress Elizabeth Bowen, who was a real British spy, and Frank O'Connor whose writing he greatly admired. He supported Micheál Mac Liammóir and Hilton Edwards. He brought Laurence Olivier to Dublin and arranged for filming of *Henry V* in Powerscourt. During the filming, he entertained people like Sean T O'Kelly and later, de Valera himself.

Another hugely influential figure in Dublin was Archbishop John Charles McQuaid who had found a job for Patrick Kavanagh as film critic of the *Catholic Standard*. Betjeman tried to persuade McQuaid that as Catholics were being persecuted, particularly in Poland, the Catholic media in Ireland should condemn the Nazis.

One whom Betjeman brought to Dublin was Fr John Heenan who wrote four articles that McQuaid described as 'a scandalously offensive calumny' because he referred to beggars, teenage drinking and late night dancing in Dublin. Heenan recovered from that savaging to become Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

In August 1943, John Betjeman returned to England with some regrets, but also glad to be away from Irish politics and wartime hardships. The McEntees gave a going-away party for

him, at which he sang 'Dark Rosaleen' in Irish – all 16 verses – with tears running down his cheeks. Betjeman went on to fame as a poet, broadcaster and television personality. The family's time in Ireland and John's frequent absences put a strain on his marriage. He was shocked when in 1948 his wife, Penelope, converted to Catholicism. Created a Knight Bachelor in 1969, Betjeman was appointed UK poet laureate in 1972.

Was Betjeman really a British spy? Or an intelligence officer? Some of his duties encroached into that area and certainly the largely moribund IRA at the time regarded him as a British agent. In 1967, he received a letter suggesting that in 1942 he had been marked for assassination. Apart from the IRA, it seems likely that in his time in Ireland Betjeman may have been involved in gathering intelligence. Whether he was effective in that role we may never know; what we do know is that he was an extremely good representative, mixing socially with the literary and artistic elite of the country and making a good impression on them and on politicians also. In 1982, in an interview with Frank Delaney, he recalled, 'I think I was a spy.'

Frank O'Shea

Frank O'Shea is a Kerry man and a retired Canberra teacher, contributes regularly to The Canberra Times and Eureka Street.

A Call to Vision and Co-Responsibility in a Time of Crisis

Gerry O'Hanlon: *A New Vision for the Catholic Church: A View from Ireland*
The Columba Press, Dublin, 2011. 116 pages.
ISBN: 9781856077293; RRP: €9.99

Gerry O'Hanlon is an Irish Jesuit theologian attempting to understand how the moral monopoly of the Irish hierarchy came to be turned on its head by a succession of state-commissioned reports into clerical sexual abuse, and how the 1960s vision of the 2nd Vatican Council failed to be fully implemented.

The *leitmotif* of his book is 'vision', highlighted with two quotes from the Old Testament: 'where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18) and 'Yahweh answered and said. "Write the vision down, inscribe it on tablets, to be easily read, since this vision is for its own time only: eager for its own fulfilment, it does not deceive; if it comes slowly, wait, for come it will, without fail"' (Habakkuk 2:2-3).

For O'Hanlon, the vision for our times is that of the church as the People of God, inscribed and easily read in Vatican II's Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*).

Theologians were long aware that the 1st Vatican Council's teaching on papal primacy and infallibility was an unbalanced and inadequate doctrinal understanding of the church. It had led to the autonomy of local churches being weakened, the appearance of other bishops as vicars of the pope rather than vicars of Christ, and a strengthening of the centralist power of the Roman Curia. Pius X's 1907 anti-Modernist encyclical *Pascendi* had also attempted to consolidate Roman authority by outlawing 'that most pernicious doctrine which would make of the laity a factor of progress in the Church' and had tried to ensure that for the first half of the 20th century there would be no talk of de-centralized ecclesiastical government 'reformed in all its branches', or any share in government being given to the lower ranks of the clergy or the laity. The Catholic Church was hierarchical, not a democracy. The 1917 Code of Canon Law also augmented the Pope's authority, giving him control over councils and the appointment of bishops.

Nevertheless, tensions between the centralizing, static and monarchical model of Vatican I and a more modern theology of church based on a critical historical approach which tested classicist assumptions about the *status quo*, slowly emerged. By 1944 Pius XII was prepared to accept that democracy as a form of government 'compatible with the dignity and liberty due to citizens' was appropriate for the time.

Hence, by the first session of Vatican II in 1962 a majority of the 2500 bishops present were primed to redress the imbalance of power caused by Vatican I, and eager to introduce new forms of collegial governance more in tune with the times, and more closely related to earlier church practice.

Vatican II's vision of the church as the People of God was the key to restoring the balance. The People of God would have priority over the hierarchy, and *communio* or collegiality would define relationships within the church. Though the council's treatment of collegiality focused mainly on the relationships among the bishops and between the bishops and the Pope, it clearly implied that others in the church, including the laity, rightly had a voice in decision-making. In consequence, one of the council's most important tasks became how to recognize the dignity of lay man and woman and empower them to fulfill their vocation in the church.

While the vision was clear, the problem was implementing it. During the Council there were huge struggles between a powerful minority with vested and ideological interests in the *status quo*, and

the majority who wanted a better balance between papal primacy and collegiality. Structural change was called for, but the contest was unequal: the Council was held at Rome, organized by Rome, and was to be implemented by Rome. And with the aid of Paul VI who forbade the Council to discuss reform of the Roman Curia, the minority group never really lost control. They held firm and steady and, in the decades since Vatican II, have become even stronger.

For O'Hanlon it was not just the failure of implementation which led to the present crisis, but also the lack of clarity in the vision, or more precisely, the Council's failure to define the Roman primacy in such a way as to offer strong central leadership but without stifling local autonomy. As a result, key outstanding questions remain: how can the church function as a more 'open' organization; how can its leadership at all levels – episcopal, presbyteral, lay – be empowered; and how can its doctrine and dogma be more balanced with today's pastoral needs?

O'Hanlon believes that, more than anything else, the failure has been in not empowering real co-responsibility and not allowing a real sharing in church governance. He sees an urgent need for a new culture and new structures, but without losing the unity which enables the church to offer global leadership. Many of the problems, he believes, could be addressed by implementing the principle of subsidiarity, empowering and supporting local churches to act more effectively and carry out their mission. But that would require reform of the Roman Curia, which is still off the agenda.

Resistance to change and renewal is guaranteed, despite the obvious need and a church in crisis. But O'Hanlon sees no future in just trying to 'ride out the crisis.' To turn the vision into a reality there must be a plan, and O'Hanlon proposes seven ways forward: placing prayer – the type that leads to discernment and motivates action – at the centre of renewal; getting more lay Catholics to speak up with responsible freedom and ensuring their voice is heard; getting bishops to exercise real leadership, acting as a group, and taking a more adult, assertive role *vis-à-vis* Rome; having Episcopal Conferences act and communicate more effectively; having a more robust, adult, and responsible engagement between local churches and Rome on the role of the laity, the authority of Conferences and some of the more controversial issues; recruiting the skills of varied disciplines to handle the more complex issues of church governance; and making the church an authentic 'light to the world'.

Finally, O'Hanlon proposes an Irish National Consultation of the Faithful, preceded by parish and diocesan consultations. He sees this as a real sign of hope in a time of despair, and a major step towards a program of ecclesial and individual renewal.

For anyone with a serious interest in contemporary Catholicism, this book will prove a stimulating read.

Peter J Wilkinson

Peter is the author of the recently published Catholic Parish Ministry in Australia: Facing disaster? A missiologist and former Columban missionary priest, he has worked as Director of the Clearing House on Migration Issues (CHOMI) at the Ecumenical Migration Centre. In 2001 he was awarded the Centenary Medal for his work in advocacy. He is a member of Catholics for Renewal.

The Cloyne Report – the aftermath

In July 2011 the *Report of the Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Diocese of Cloyne* was published. It found that Bishop John Magee had misled civil authorities in relation to reporting of abuse allegations in 2008, and that Monsignor Denis O’Callaghan, Diocesan Child Protection delegate, had ignored the Church’s own guidelines for reporting because he disagreed with them.

On 20 July, in an outraged response in *The Dail*, Taoiseach Enda Kenny, a practising Catholic, identified the feature that sets Cloyne apart from its predecessor reports – Ferns (Diocese, 2005), Ryan (Industrial Schools and Orphanages, 2009) and Murphy (Dublin Diocese, 2009). Noting that Ireland has become almost ‘unshockable when it comes to the abuse of children,’ he decried that the institutional manoeuvrings laid bare were not ‘historical’ but contemporary, and undertaken *in the face of* contemporary demands for transparency and accountability.

Cloyne has proved to be of a different order. Because for the first time in Ireland a report into child sexual abuse exposes an attempt by the Holy See to frustrate an inquiry in a sovereign, democratic republic as little as three years ago, not three decades ago.....this is not Rome. Nor is it industrial school or Magdalene Ireland, where the swish of the soutane smothered conscience and humanity and the swing of the thurible ruled the Irish Catholic world. This is the Republic of Ireland 2011. A Republic of laws, of rights and responsibilities, of proper civic order, where the delinquency and arrogance of a particular version of a particular kind of ‘morality’ will no longer be tolerated or ignored. (Enda Kenny, *Dail Debate*, 20 July 2011)

The Taoiseach’s statement – a declaration of independence and an unprecedented moment of clarity in the national history – predictably drew criticism for its alleged ‘populism’ and uncompromising tone. Some confusion followed as to the specifics of his charges, the papal nuncio was recalled to the Vatican, and the Vatican prepared a response.

None of that, however, obscures the central point: the Taoiseach’s watershed speech places the issue of clerical child abuse within the sphere of civil oversight in an independent state, freed from its historical enmeshment with the Church. If Enda Kenny’s rhetoric means anything

it is that Home Rule, not Rome Rule, is the future.

Amnesty International Ireland

Amnesty International Ireland subsequently commissioned a review of the four State-ordered reports combined – Ferns, Ryan, Murphy and Cloyne. Entitled *In Plain Sight*, the Amnesty report was released on 25 September 2011.

It found that much of the abuse identified in the Ryan Report ‘meets the legal definition of torture under international human rights law’ (Colm O’Gorman, Executive Director, Amnesty International Ireland), and identified those who failed in their duty to children as guardians, civil servants, clergy and members of religious orders. ‘Deep veins’ of knowledge of the situation existed across Irish society and those in positions of responsibility failed to act, according to its findings. The Report also revealed that accountability in general was lacking, with children abandoned to a chaotic system which was, in effect, no system at all.

It is no answer to charges against the Church in this context that the State was also complicit when, as history clearly shows, the State was culturally in thrall to the Church from its foundation. Additionally, the ‘special relationship’ of the State with the Catholic Church was enshrined in the Constitution for many years until its removal by referendum in 1973, though the mindset behind the thrall proved harder to dispense with.

The injection of international standards into the context – such as the ‘torture’ finding in the Amnesty Report – reinforces the Taoiseach’s point viz. that the standards to be applied must be *externally* determined by reference to recognised civil norms and not by the institution itself. *Nemo iudex in causa sua*. (*No man may be judge in his own case*).

as Taoiseach, I am making it absolutely clear that, when it comes to the protection of the children of this State, the standards of conduct which the Church deems appropriate to itself cannot, and will not, be applied to the workings of democracy and civil society in this republic. Not purely, or simply, or otherwise. CHILDREN...FIRST. (Enda Kenny, *Dail Debate*, 20 July 2011.)

Viewed through that prism, canon law is as irrelevant to the conduct of national affairs as, e.g., the rules of a national or even an international Tennis Association.

Not relevant at all. Not purely, or simply, or otherwise.

SNAP and the Center for Constitutional Rights

The international accountability dimension to the issue is further highlighted by a recent development at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Two American advocacy groups – SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests) and the Center for Constitutional Rights – have lodged a complaint against the current Pope. Their submission contains the four Irish reports and the Taoiseach’s remarks in *The Dail*, and calls on the court to investigate the Vatican for ‘crimes against humanity’. (Also included are materials from Canada, Germany and the U.S.A.)

After lodging their complaint, representatives visited Dublin where they praised the Irish inquiries and reports as models for understanding Church policies and practices internationally, and thanked the Taoiseach and Irish ‘survivors’ who contributed their experiences to the process.

Considered quixotic by some, their application to the court nevertheless makes an important contribution to the debate: an international or global organisation such as the Church needs the oversight of a body with a similar reach. An international court may be the only body of sufficient stature to counter the international dimensions of the issue and the institutional perpetrator.

The Implications

Post-Cloyne, the culture of deference to the Church which so compromised the Irish State for ninety years appears to have been consigned to the dustbin of history. To translate the cultural shift into action and meaningful protections for children requires political will. The Irish Government is currently attempting to legislate mandatory reporting in relation to knowledge of child abuse. This first step has already encountered difficulties in so far as it relates to the seal of confession and other ‘privileged’ communications.

The test of the Taoiseach’s rhetoric is to come. The €133.8 million spent on the four statutory inquiries may yet yield something priceless – the safety, security and nurture of ‘all the children of the nation equally’.

Genevieve Rogers

William Vincent Wallace (1812-1865)

A Bicentenary in 2012

An editorial article in *The Weekend Australian* in July 2010 for the great Australian conductor Sir Charles Mackerras stated quite correctly that he was the great-great-grandson of Nathan Isaacs, the first European composer to settle permanently in Australia and to build his career here. While Isaacs does undoubtedly deserve this accolade, he was not the first European composer to live in Australia for a period of time. Isaacs arrived in Australia in 1841. Most music history scholars agree that the first notable European composer to live and work in Australia (from 1835) was the Irish born William Vincent Wallace. Next year is the bicentenary of Wallace's birth and it should be celebrated in some special way in Australia.

William Vincent Wallace was born in Waterford City on 11 March 1812 to William Spencer and Elizabeth Wallace. His father was a sergeant bandmaster in the royal 29th Regiment. After a period in Ballina, Co Mayo, the family returned to Waterford in 1825. As a boy William had learned to play the piano, all the brass band instruments, and had written some compositions. In 1827 the Wallace family moved to Dublin, where William Spencer, who had bought himself out of the army, and his sons William and Wellington, all played in the Adelphi theatre orchestra, young William playing second violin.

The first important post which William Wallace secured was that of Professor of Music at the Ursuline Convent and organist at the Cathedral in Thurles, Co Tipperary. William fell in love with one of his students, Isabella Kelly. In order to placate her family, William, who was a Protestant, converted to Catholicism and took the second name Vincent, and he and Isabella married, both aged eighteen.

The young Wallace couple moved back to Dublin, where William became established as an orchestral violinist, a composer, and a music critic and was appointed Professor of Music at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. When William played in a concert in Dublin at which the soloist was the great virtuoso violinist Paganini, he was fired with enthusiasm to emulate him. His incessant practice paid off, for later he was to be given the title

of 'the Australian Paganini'. Wallace, however, overtaxed his abilities and his health suffered. Threatened with consumption, and assisted by a small legacy from Isabella's recently deceased mother, he and his wife decided to go abroad to the warmer climate of Australia.

With their son Willy and Isabella's sister Anna, they arrived in Hobart in October 1835. They stayed in Tasmania for a few months, giving rise to one of the legends surrounding Wallace's career - that he composed part of his most popular and enduring opera 'Maritana' at the Old Bush Inn, New Norfolk. When I presented the Amy Sherwin Commemorative Concert in 2009, (Sherwin, 'The Tasmanian Nightingale,' was one of operatic history's great Maritanas) her great-great nieces told me that, when they drove past the Bush

He and his wife decided to go abroad to the warmer climate of Australia

Inn, their parents told them that that was where 'Maritana' was composed. The serene and beautiful surroundings of New Norfolk could have inspired Wallace to compose some timeless music and so 'Maritana' has an embryonic connection with Tasmania.

Wallace's arrival in Sydney coincided with the governorship by the Dublin born Richard Bourke, a benevolent and cultured man. Music and the arts began to blossom in Sydney. In April 1836 Wallace and his family opened the colony's first ever music academy at Bridge Street under the patronage of Governor Bourke. John P Deane, a friendly rival, opened another academy in Sydney shortly afterwards, but Wallace's was the first. He performed both his piano concerto and his violin concerto there and, in the words of the press critic Beedel, Wallace 'was Sydney's undisputed musical emperor' as well as becoming known as 'the Australian Paganini.' He conducted the Grand Oratorio concert in Sydney's

Roman Catholic Cathedral, described by Holmer as 'the greatest musical triumph of pre gold-rush Australia.'

Some of Wallace's biographers state that he engaged in farming while resident in New South Wales. The Mulligan family described how late in 1836 he took over a farm in the Hawkesbury district, while its owner was in Sydney for medical treatment. Claims have also been made that Wallace abandoned his wife and child in Sydney when he left Australia. The more credible and authoritative sources state that Isabella wanted to return to Ireland due to the ill-health of her father and sister and this, combined with concern for his own health, caused him and Isabella to separate, she taking her sister Anna and her son back to Ireland. William promised to support them and he honoured this promise for the rest of his life. His lack of business acumen and the resultant failure of his academy, the demise of Governor Bourke, a failing economy and his own thirst for adventure caused him to leave Australia early in 1838. It cannot be disputed, however, that in terms of the development of the early musical and cultural life of Australia, William Vincent Wallace occupies pride of place.

The next major stage of his travels saw him sailing across the Pacific to Chile whose liberator was the Irish born Bernardo O'Higgins, and where they would have greatly welcomed any Irish impresario. A journey across the Andes by mule brought him to Buenos Aires and then to Jamaica, Cuba and Mexico and finally to North America, where he established a brilliant career as an impresario in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. 1845 saw Wallace returning to Europe where he established life long friendships with composers Rossini and Berlioz.

William Vincent Wallace's fame as a composer of opera dates from his years in Europe. With the influence of Spanish South American music, Wallace completed his first and most successful opera 'Maritana' in 1845. His other opera, which enjoyed great fame, was 'Lurline.' Between 1853 and 1864 he composed 'The Amber Witch', 'Love's Triumph', 'Matilda of Hungary', and 'Desert Flower', all of which had varying successes.



SCENE FROM THE NEW OPERA OF "MARITANA," AT DRURY LANE THEATRE.

The wedding of Don Cæsar and Maritana, from Wallace's *Maritana*

Wallace's attempts at reconciliation with Isabella in Dublin were unsuccessful. On a trip to New York in 1850 he met Helene Stoepel, a lady of German origin. Wallace took American citizenship to marry her. They had two sons, Clarence and Vincent. Through the introduction by the Waterford Wallace Society, I have been able to establish communication with Mary Grimes of Maryland, USA, Wallace's great granddaughter from this marriage. Mary has attended Wallace commemorations in Waterford in the past, but does not think she will be able to join us for the Australian commemorations.

In 1865 Wallace's health and eyesight began to deteriorate. He moved to Vieuzos, Haute-Pyrenees in France, where he died on 12 October 1865 at the early age of fifty-three. His body was brought back to Kensal Green Cemetery for burial, which is also the resting place of the great Irish soprano Catherine Hayes. There rests the man whom many authorities regard as Ireland's greatest ever composer and one whom we can be proud to say had such a strong bond with Australia.

A note on my own connection with 'Maritana' is appropriate here. I first saw this delightful opera as a young boy in Kilkenny (Ireland) with Veronica Dunne in the title role in the early 1960s. About ten years later I saw a production by the Waterford Grand Opera Society, the secretary of this organisation being Larry Fanning, uncle of Ireland's former Ambassador to Australia. In the early 1980s I was called to sing the role of the King of Spain in a production of 'Maritana' by the Cork School of Music

Opera Group, with Mary Hegarty in the title role. I believe that that opera group may later have evolved into the Cork Opera Company.

The more lasting connection of 'Maritana' with Australia can be seen by the fact that the Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe included a number from the opera in the original draft of his Australian bicentennial composition 'Child of Australia.' As mentioned, Amy Sherwin was one of the great Maritanas par excellence. In 1932 Melba made an historic recording of excerpts from the opera at the Bush Inn, New Norfolk. Surely in 2012, Wallace's bicentennial year, 'Maritana' is due for some form of revival.

It is very pleasing to note that the memory of Wallace is being kept alive in particular by 'The Friends of Wallace,' an organisation based in Waterford. His grave in Kensal Green Cemetery had deteriorated. In September 2007 'The Friends of Wallace' had a headstone erected on his grave. The unveiling was by no less a personage than Sir Richard Bonyngé MBE, another eminent Australian. CDs have been fairly recently made of 'Maritana,' 'Lurline', and some of his piano music. Thomas' Music, 31 Bourke Street, Melbourne Tel. 03-96509111 can obtain these CDs for Wallace enthusiasts.

John Clancy

(A legend in the Kiernan family is that Peter Kiernan's grandfather John Joseph Kiernan, born Dublin 1826, was nursed by Wallace in Dublin on his knee! Wallace sailed for Tasmania in 1835 and JJK in 1854 but Wallace left Sydney in 1838).



The Wallace Bicentenary

I am in the early stages of formulating some planned activities to commemorate the Wallace Bicentenary. These include my presenting a paper on the composer at Newman College, Melbourne University, in April 2012. I am planning two bicentenary concerts for September, one in Bendigo, and one to take place at the Celtic Club, Melbourne. The broad plan of the concert is to relate Wallace's life in narrative poetry, music and song in the first half, and in the second to feature excerpts from 'Maritana'. A sub-committee/ production team is being formed for the Bendigo Wallace concert. However, I feel that a similar sub-committee needs to be formed for the Melbourne one. Any interested Melbourne person who would like to be on this sub-committee should contact me on 03-54426649 or email me on ovens.town@hotmail.com. The recent 'A Celtic Odyssey' concerts in Bendigo, and the more recent performance of a segment of this at the 'Celtic at the Boilerhouse' concert in Sunbury, raised about \$1200 towards the Wallace commemorative concerts. The bicentenary of the birth of William Vincent Wallace is one in which all Australians, who value their cultural history, Irish or not, should take eminent pride. The opportunity to honour an Irish person of such exalted rank in the cultural sphere, and one with such strong ties to Australia, will not occur again for many years.

St Kilda: Death of a Communal Republic

The St Kilda archipelago, the remotest part of the British Isles, lies 66 kilometres west of Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides. Its islands with their exceptional cliffs and sea stacks form the most important seabird breeding station in north-west Europe. The evacuation of its human population in 1930 closed an extraordinary story of survival. This article tells that story.

St Kilda is the most spectacular of all Britain's off-shore Islands. In fact it resembles Ireland's Skellig Michael, in Co Kerry and the monks' survival might be explained by how the St Kildans adapted to their isolated terrain. It was inhabited for over two thousand years and evolved a unique way of life. Like most of their Scottish neighbours they were crofters but experienced extreme difficulty in accessing the basic necessities, materials, clothing, medical and food supplies. St Kildans rose to the challenge by becoming self sufficient. They fed themselves upon sea birds that returned annually to nest on the crags. Indeed, it could have been described as a little Gaelic republic within Britain having adhering to the principle of *Sínn Féin Amhain*. Down the centuries the people lived well, one Skye man insisted "they are the best fed people in creation."

The island was owned by the MacLeods of Dunvegan in Skye. They rented it out to the St Kildans through a middleman, known as a factor. They paid him rent in kind (barley, oats, fish, sea birds and fulmar oil). The factor in turn supplied the islanders with imported goods.

St Kildans were cragsmen first, crofters second, as they were essentially bird people. Without sea birds they could never have survived. Sea fowl supported them from March to November. Puffins in thousands gave the islanders their first fresh meat. Birds' eggs were also plentiful, except for fulmars which lay only one egg. Gannets and guillemots replace stolen eggs so they provided the island with a ready supply of fresh eggs. The fulmars had a range of other benefits. The meat is white and tastes like roast beef. It is tasty, tough and good for teeth and gums. The amber oils from the solan goose, petrels and fulmar were highly thought of as medicine in Victorian Britain. Rich in vitamin A and D, they were used for rheumatic pains, as lighting oil and for greasing metal. The stom-

achs of adult gannets caught earlier in the year were preserved. Then inflated they were utilised to store the precious oils of the petrels and fulmars. Each bird could yield up to a half pint of oil. Stored in the gannets' stomachs, it was bartered on the mainland when the opportunity arose.

The gannet and fulmar feathers were another valuable commodity. Fumigated they were impervious to lice and bed bugs and much sought after for bedding. The fulmar provided oil for their lamps, feathery down for the bed, food, and healing ointment. The oil was also used as a remedy for toothache. Coating wool with fulmar oil prior to knitting or weaving made it more pliable and water proof. However, fulmar oil was also a factor in the demise of the Island. Every part of a bird was used. The meat was preserved, while the feet, head and entrails acted as fertiliser for the following year's crops. The beaks of the solan geese were used as pegs to keep

St Kildans rose to the challenge by becoming self sufficient

down the thatch straw on their roofs. Even footwear was made out of gannets. Using the natural bend of the neck for the heel, a pair of light shoes could be crafted from the skin; the St Kildans had nothing to learn from the Greens.

Breakfast normally consisted of porridge and milk, with a puffin boiled in the oats for flavour. The fulmar was the lunch time meal. When boiling a fulmar, oatmeal was poured over the juice and made into a gruel. Ling, cod, bream, were also a regular part of the diet and on feast days, free range mutton from their own Soay sheep graced the table with scones and oatcakes. A variety of cheeses from goats, ewes and cows was also made.

The men met every morning at the St Kilda parliament to prioritise the day's work. Women took care of the day-to-day work of the community. Skilled in the art of climbing, and trained in it from an early age, the men were responsible

for harvesting the seabirds. Working in pairs they lowered themselves down from the cliff tops on ropes, in their bare feet to get a better grip on the cliffs. It was falsely rumoured on the mainland that St Kildans had evolved an extra toe for better climbing, but it is true that their ankles were three times as thick as those of mainlanders. Birds were thrown below to the women and children, gathered into a central location and shared out amongst the entire group. The birds were plucked and preserved for the long winter months. This would have been impossible without the Cleits: Beehive huts, ideal for storing and drying as they allowed the wind to pass over the food but repelled the moisture. Up to the 1860s when the village was redesigned on a cottage format, the community lived in stone built corbelled structures similar to the beehive huts. They were circular and when fitted out were warm, draft proof and greatly reduced the sound of the ever present Atlantic wind. (Another insight into life on Ireland's Skellig Michael?)

By the middle of the 19th century a series of events quickly led to the evacuation of the island. The traditional wealth of the community depended on selling the fulmar oil gathered annually. Now paraffin was a cheaper and more efficient fuel for lamps and medical advance relegated the remedy in fulmar oil to old wives' tales. The market for fulmar products collapsed. The fishing industry was never developed to its potential even though the waters around the island abounded with fish, due to the lack of a safe harbour.

The St Kildans produced tweed but on the mainland cloth was produced in small factories using modern looms which wove more tweed better and cheaper than on the St Kildans' ancient looms. Adapting to new market forces would have required investment in new looms and technical skills but St Kilda lacked the population for it. The people's destiny depended on the landowner and he saw greater profit from sheep grazing the island than depending on an income from the varied livelihoods of his tenants.

The effects of emigration were lasting. In 1852 thirty six islanders left St Kilda aboard the barque *Priscilla*, bound for Melbourne, which proved to be a coffin ship. Arriving in 1853 the trip had taken 17 weeks. The ship was becalmed and



Village Bay and Conachair in Hirta, St Kilda [flickr.com/gajtalbot](https://www.flickr.com/photos/gajtalbot/)

the passengers endured sickness. Out of 261 passengers, 42 died on the voyage. Only sixteen St Kildans survived; a death rate of 54% compared to the mainlanders' 9%. During the 1920s the island population declined rapidly and by 1930 there were only 36 people left. They were largely a community of elderly people. The St Kildans began wonder if their way of life was worth the struggle. Their morale declined further as their newborn infants died.

A major cause of the deaths of island newborns was the inappropriate use of fulmar oil. In remote areas of Scotland traditions associated with childbirth lasted into the 20th century. Trained midwives were rare so the islanders used a *Bean gluine*, or 'knee woman'. She attended the birth and carried out time honoured rites upon the severed umbilical cord. One such rite saw the 'knee woman' dress the cord of the newborn with fulmar oil traditionally stored in the gannets' dried stomachs. "Such a jar" wrote Dr George Gibson in the *Caledonian Medical Journal* in 1926, 'frequently refilled, and never properly cleaned out would be a suitable nidus for the tetanus bacillus.' So at the instant of birth on St Kilda tetanus was contracted. One woman gave birth to twelve chil-

dren but only one survived, another had thirteen but only four survived. Tetanus robbed St Kilda of its future.

On 29 September 1930, HMS Harebell took the last St Kildans to the mainland. Their future would surely resonate with other disenfranchised indigenous people be they native American Indians, South American Indians, Aboriginals or tribal Island peoples of the world, 'that white man speak with forked tongue.' The host community saw them as a burden on the community. No longer self – supporting, local authorities begrudged allocating them relief and appropriate housing. The promised jobs, houses and a better way of life with future prospects and increased life chances never materialised.

Up to the evacuation, the British establishment argued for the St Kildans moving to the mainland. Unlike mainlanders. however, the St Kildans had no resistance to diseases such as tuberculosis. Within six years, TB devastated the community. Four of the children who, it had been argued, would gain most from the new way of life, died. The authorities appear to have washed their hands of any responsibility to provide aftercare following the evacuation.

In 1931, some St Kildans revisited the island to find their former homes looted

by trawler men. That year, the MacLeod family, who had owned the island for six centuries, sold it to the Earl of Dumfries, a keen ornithologist. He bequeathed it to The National Trust for Scotland in 1957. While this was a boon for the bird community it meant the St Kildans could never return to their island home.

Britain, in the fifties, found an interest in St Kilda in particular in the development of their missile technology. The death of St Kilda and its development as a military range led to the interest in Rockall; in a direct line with St Kilda's high – powered weaponry. This led to the last land grab of the British Empire in 1957 when the British claimed Rockall. Both St Kilda and Rockall were catapulted into the 20th Century of radar and big brother surveillance but that is another story.

In 1986 St Kilda was inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in recognition of its Natural Heritage. In July 2004 this was extended to include the surrounding marine environment. In July 2005 further recognition gave it Dual World Heritage Status for both its natural and cultural significance.

Mervyn Ennis

Mervyn is a writer and poet from Saggart Co Dublin Ireland.

'Not an Irishman but a Blasket Islander'

'On the 28 of April I shook my feathers, made ready my mind, washed and cleaned my body till I had the salt rubbed out of my skin, and with the sea-tan gone from my face and the look of the city swell upon me, I set out for the Depot in Phoenix Park, myself and my friend beside me.'

Muiris Ó Súilleabháin's account of his arrival at Garda Headquarters. It was a Tuesday morning in 1927. According to Garda records, he joined as member 7561 – Maurice Sullivan with a height of 5 feet 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. His occupation was Fisherman and he was recommended by 'An Seabhac' (Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha, another Kerryman.)

On 15 March he had left his native Blaskets not having up to then ever been 'beyond Dingle to the east'. He had left behind pipe-smoking women, match-making, weddings in Ballyferriter, the Ventry races and 'pictures of Springfield' on the walls.

Muiris Ó Súilleabháin was born on the Great Blasket island on Friday 19 February 1904 into an Irish-speaking community. His mother died when he was 'only half a year old' and he was reared, in an orphanage, in Dingle and returned to the Great Blasket in 1911. He was enrolled in the Blasket National School on Tuesday 22 August 1911. Poet, Micheal Ó Súilleabháin, was his great-grandfather and Tomás Ó Criomthain was his uncle. One commentator wrote of Muiris that he, 'saw things through the eyes of a poet' and had '(T)he poets ability to concentrate his focus and to avoid generalised descriptions.' While an island woman described him as, 'Great sport and a nice rogue, a breaker of hearts among the girls who were mad about him'. Linguist, scholar (and later Professor of Greek), George Derwent Thomson visited the Blaskets first on 27 August 1923 attracted by the way of life and to learn Irish and ended that first visit on September 30. The Englishman struck up a friendship with Muiris who was now bi-lingual. Thompson, who was only a year older than Ó Súilleabháin, had almost complete fluency in the Irish language within a few weeks. He urged Muiris to join the police force of the Irish State (the Garda Síochána) and later to write.

While stationed, as a Garda, in Indreabhán, in the Conemara Gaeltacht he wrote *Fiche Bliain ag Fás* (and the translation *Twenty Years A-Growing*). The pair were published in 1933.

Thomson edited and assembled the memoir, and arranged for its translation into English with the help of Moya Llewelyn Davies. The translation is true to the rhythm of the Irish language. 'The month of Samhain is the time when there does be a rush for pollock in the island.'

'Musha, the killing of the castle on you if you haven't a noisy windpipe and it is no lie for the man who first called you Junie of the Scroggle . . .' It is too much of the pipe you have had. Throw up, and nothing will be on you.'

Fiche Bliain ag Fás was published by Talbot Press where 'An Seabhac' was reader. Sean O' Faoláin described it as 'the first piece of literature in Irish since the eighteenth century.' It became a bestseller in Ireland and the USA and was translated into German.

The work gave a detailed account of island life from the inside. A childhood and adolescence spent in the most westerly point in Europe is vividly described. Every nuance of the storyteller and the most minute detail of a day mackerel-fishing was recorded in the mind of the young Muiris. From the midnight visit of a matchmaker to the pattern of a wild bird's egg, it's all there. The reader is brought on a journey from 1908 when Muiris was four-year old to his time as a Garda in Conemara. It was written for his 'own pleasure and the entertainment of his friends, without any thought of a wider public.'

About the school in Dingle he says, 'The schoolmistress teaching us was a woman who was as grey as a badger with two tusks of teeth hanging down over her lip, and if she wasn't cross, it isn't day yet'.

In July 1911 his father collected him and brought him home to the island. The teacher tried to dissuade the father, Shaun. 'In the first place he will lose his English, and so he will be a fool when he grows up a stripling, if he lives so long'.

When one man from Duinquin, who was visiting the Blasket, was asked about his travels in America and England he said, 'It is many a savage dog and a bad housewife the likes of me come across.'

In 1914, a man back from Dingle with a newspaper, predicted, 'The two sides of the world are likely to burst against each other any moment.'

We are given a vivid account of a ship that went aground off the Blaskets during the First World War. *The Quebra* going between New York and Britain was car-

rying a valuable cargo. Muiris describes the 'marvelous sight' of 'the sea covered by boxes and barrels of every description'.

It seems that almost every islander built a store beside their house to keep the salvage and some sold part of it to people on the mainland. There were rows between neighbours about the dividing of the spoils. "By God" one old man was heard to say, 'war is good'.

Muiris resigned from An Garda Síochána on 05 July 1934. He didn't relish the idea of prosecuting his neighbours under the Noxious Weed Act or for having no light on their bike or as George Thomson said, 'The task of enforcing the law was not congenial to him'. He was married on 10 July 1934 to Cait Ni Chatháin a Conemara woman, built a house in Carraroe and hoped to make his living from writing.

He would appear to have been somewhat of a loner. He wrote 'I believe it is in solitude that every machine and work of ingenuity was created.' He refers many times, in his writings to the solitary man, 'Many a thought comes to the man who goes alone, a thing which is not possible for the man who is fond of company.'

He translated *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary* and wrote a sequel to *Fiche Bliain ag Fás* titled *Fiche Bliain Faoi Bláth*. He didn't find a publisher for either and went on to write articles for the *Irish Press* and several periodicals.

He rejoined An Garda Síochána on Tuesday 14 Feb 1950. After a couple of days 'refresher course' at Garda Headquarters he was stationed for a short time at Oughterard. He was transferred to Galway on 21 June and on 25 June, while swimming at a place called 'Lovers' Strand' near Salthill he was drowned. He left a widow and two children, Eoghan (who went on to become an Abbey actor) and Máirín.

It is, I suppose, ironic that the Atlantic Ocean that he loved was to take his life. That great body of water which, in his own words, ' . . . beat without ceasing from end to end of the year and from generation to generation in and out of the coves where the seals make their homes to generation against the wrinkled rocks which stand above the waves and wash.'

The final resting place of the man who always claimed that he 'wasn't an Irishman but a Blasket Islander' is in a cemetery near Carraroe.

Mattie Lennon

'A rather Catholic outlook ...'

John Mann (ed.) *Edgar Turner at 90, A memoir by some friends*, The Columba Press, 2010.
ISBN: 978 1 85607 7163; RRP: €11.99

This delightful, happy book celebrates the ninety years (and continuing) of the life of Church of Ireland prelate, Edgar Turner, born in Derry in 1910. The editor has an introduction which apologises for his impertinence in publishing, which Turner himself would never have sanctioned. With the subject's wife, Joan, and daughter, Kate, he went to extraordinary lengths to conceal from them their plot to create this memoir.

There are thirteen contributors, each describing different facets of the man and his career. There is, however, a common thread running through those tributes: a universal admiration for Turner's intelligence, common sense, tolerance and his marked ability to weld a community into an effective unit. From bishops to social workers, from theologians to football clubs, these talents are witnessed with fondness and even wonder.

Edgar Turner stands as a solid foundation in the Church of Ireland. His influence has been immense and all pervasive, in an entirely good sense. The contributions all give evidence of this but Michael Davey's is a clear example of a detailed study. He describes Turner's hard work and expert scholarship in his contributions to various committees of Synod. In the case of the then vexing question of the remarriage of divorced members, he was the guiding light who persisted, over a period of twenty-three years, to achieve finally an enlightened and liberal solution to the Church's laws. When the Committee on the Ordination of Women got into difficulty over legislation to enable women to be ordained as Deacons, he was appointed to put things right and ensured that the legislation recognised women's place as equals in the church. Davey writes that Turner's integrity and commitment to causes was based on his conviction that people should not be deprived of their due because of prejudice and that those who opposed what was right had to be fought no matter how powerful they were.

There are many illustrations, in the various tributes, of Edgar Turner's 'catholicity' and 'his rather catholic outlook'. This explains his close friendship over fifty years with one contributor, Fr Michael Hurley SJ, which has continued, mainly in a courageous ecumenical activism. Hurley quotes his friend on the tremendous change brought about by the Oxford/Tractarian Movement which rediscovered that much

of pre-Reformation Catholic ceremonial was not illegal, nor excluded by the frugal provisions of the Book of Common Prayer. Of course, in some quarters of the Church of Ireland, this did not make Turner universally popular. Turner and Hurley were prominent in the Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association and Turner in particular encouraged two changes to Roman Catholic law: removal of the requirement that both partners promise to bring up the children as Catholics and permission for the marriage to take place in church with appropriate ceremony and celebration. Turner also urged the abbot of the Benedictine Glenstal Abbey, near Limerick, to allow his lay brothers the right, then restricted to ordained clergy, to receive the chalice, as that discrimination negated the concept of equality. That abbot took the suggestion to Rome, marking the beginning of the process that finally led to general permission for the Roman Catholic laity to receive the chalice.

The final commentary in this uplifting

memoir is by Edgar's daughter Kate. She is proud to claim that she and her brother Justin, share one characteristic – they challenge authority when it is in the wrong. Not a bad trait! But more: her father taught them from an early age to read maps (he was an expert in cartography), to treasure books (he was a trained bookbinder), to wire an electric current in series or parallel, he took them onto the roof of the church to replace slates, and down into the stormwater drains to clear blockages. (Oh my God! I hope my children don't read this). And yes, I have to report that Edgar Turner was an expert in woodwork!

However, one member of a parish choir trip once remarked: 'The Turners are great in a crisis; but be warned, if there is no crisis for them to be great in, they usually manage, albeit unintentionally, to create one!' A sheer delight.

Peter Kiernan

Peter is Vice-President of the Australian Irish Heritage Network and an indefatigable worker for Tinteán.



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Every cliff top in Ireland

Local TV viewers are set for a treat next year with the screening of a landmark five-part series *The Story Of Ireland*. Presented by Fergal Keane, the project is a co-production between BBC NI and RTÉ. Critics have in the past labelled such joint ventures as mere marriages of convenience, although my own view is that, convenient or not, the liaison has produced a string of top class offspring over the years, including *Long Journey Home*, *From a Whisper to a Scream* and *The Irish Empire*.

In *The Story Of Ireland*, the episode structure runs pretty much in chronological order throughout and each is named to reflect a phase in history, so we start with *The Age Of Invasions*, then *Conquest, Revolution, Union*, and finally *Nations*.

Anyone looking to pull off a feat of this magnitude has some serious decisions to make even before shooting begins. Where do you start - at Mount Sandel circa 7000 BC or jump ahead to the arrival of the Celts? Where do you end - Independence in 1922 and civil war or keep going right up to the Eurozone bailout? As for the bits in between, just how do you decide what's worth keeping and what can be left out? How much weight should be given to give each piece and each interview subject? Of course there's the big one - how do you separate fact from opinion in such a way that viewers are not misled or patronised?

To his credit Fergal does a magnificent job of steering us through the complex and often conflicting views of what has taken place during our history. There are fresh assessments by leading figures from academia in Ireland and overseas, as well as from the National Library and the National Museum. More than once we will hear something prefaced by 'now this is not what I was taught in school, but.....'

Visually it's a treat. Séamus McCracken, the director of photography has captured the light and landscape wonderfully. The maps and graphics are excellent and, to round it off, composer James McNally has provided a worthy soundtrack. Each episode runs for one hour so it would have to be edited by about nine minutes to even get shown here on SBS complete with the dreaded commercial breaks but, thankfully for us, they have passed up on the chance and the local rights are now in the hands of the ABC.

Part one commences with Fergal telling us that 'There is an Ireland shrouded in cliché' and he then explains how, over the full series these clichés will be examined and re-evaluated. Some of this series' introduction will be challenging enough for dyed-in-the-wool republicans, but stick with it and the rewards are there. Nonetheless we quickly move on and spend some time at Newgrange, then cover the arrival of Christianity, press on to the Vikings and then conclude with a surprising re-telling of Brian Boru's famous last battle. Part two starts with the events of 1169 and finishes with the Flight of the Earls. During this second episode we are introduced to the notion that Irish History is very much tied in with wider European events, a theme that is revisited periodically in later episodes but thankfully not mined to exhaustion.

Part three begins with the Plantation and some eloquent observations by Dr. Annaleigh Margey. This episode actually contained, for me anyway, both the best and worst of the

scripting choices referred to earlier. The rise of emigration from 1714 onwards, the background to it and the resulting input to the American War of Independence and then moving forward to 1798 are all gripping stuff and often overlooked or played down elsewhere. To do it all justice meant leaving out any mention of Grattan's Parliament or the Dungannon convention. Such is life we might say. By the end, Wolfe Tone is dead by his own hand while awaiting execution and the storm clouds of Union are brewing.

Part four opens with Fergal examining a dusty document in the archives of Parliament in Westminster. It turns out to be the Act of Union. This seemingly casual encounter quickly enlarges to become the twin themes of the episode, how both sides of the religious divide could exploit the failure of 1798 and then how emigration re-established itself - but this time for a very different reason. O'Connell, Cullen, Parnell and Hyde among others are all covered, albeit with a fresh look, and Fergal later gets to have a chat in Irish with some customers in a pub in Cahirciveen, Co Kerry (subtitles are provided here). The end comes not where you might expect but in a segment on the Boer war and its cost in Irish lives.

Part five thus contains all the events of the twentieth century and it runs right up to the present. Newsreel footage now makes an appearance, but look out for a mistake in a shot where Dev is addressing a crowd of supporters. The film editor should have looked more closely. But a minor flaw does not devalue the whole enterprise, rather it actually reminds us that what we are watching is a TV production with all the attendant difficulties of deadlines, decisions and details to be checked. These days many people will find it disconcerting to be watching a history on TV which includes events in their own lives. For one thing it can make you suddenly feel a lot older. Sometimes we like to consign history firmly to the past, only to be dug up and dusted off when it suits, but a good telling of history will cover some of the inconvenient aspects as well and it is to the credit of the series producers that they don't shy away from this. The killing of Oliver Tobias O'Sullivan in Listowel in 1921 is used to show how myth can be devised to hide an unpleasant truth, and the shocking story of Letterfrack Industrial School in Galway illustrates what happens when power and oversight are taken out of the hands of elected representatives.

The thirty-odd years of the troubles are dealt with in what may seem rather a brusque manner but there are good interviews with people affected and overall the main political arguments are laid out and given space. Again some minor events and figures get squeezed out to preserve the continuity, though in fairness a line always has to be drawn. Post 1998 events are covered in something more resembling a current affairs style format, while in the closing segments Dáithí Ó Ceallaigh from the Institute of International and European Affairs gives an upbeat assessment of Ireland now versus Ireland then, almost relishing the chance to refer in rather disparaging tones to the thirties and forties. There are also some words from the Irish president which neatly cuts to a classroom scene with schoolkids, many born of foreign parents, learning a nursery

To his credit
Fergal does
a magnificent job



rhyme in Irish. To conclude the episode and indeed the whole series Fergal is seen striding along a deserted beach, then pauses, turns to look straight at camera and offers this closing motto 'We are never entirely free of the claims of history, but neither are we its prisoners' Not quite up there with the best of Wilde but insightful enough in its own way.

My own assessment is that there exists very definitely a TV documentary style shrouded in cliché and we've experienced enough of it to see it a mile away. Presenter stands on rugged cliff top and addresses us above the roar of the wind, or sits in cosy study and probes a cardigan-wearing historian with careful questions. While these set pieces have been flogged to death in many a series and often used to cover up a less than sparkling script, the story here is quite different and viewers will arrive at pretty much a foregone conclusion. For my money Fergal can stand on every cliff top in Ireland if he wants to. He is giving us something so important and so well executed that most viewers

here would gladly scrape together the airfare just to be up there with him, feeling that wind in your face.

Details for a local transmission date are proving very elusive. ABC are tight lipped but insiders say the series could be shown around March next year to cash in on other events happening around that time. They are also said to be looking at a possible purchase of the companion two-part RTÉ series *Blood of the Irish* in which experts examine the DNA evidence linking the Irish population to various other parts of Europe and thus establishing patterns of mass migration in pre-history. This second series has already been broadcast in Ireland and plenty of reviews are available on the Internet, many of them critical because 'it doesn't tie in with what we were taught'. So the history debates continue while emigration, not surprisingly, is back in the news again prompting the obvious question - what type of story will we be telling in 2112?

Stuart Traill

Engaging Productively with the Trauma of NI

Double Sentence: life after prison with Gerry Conlon and Paddy Joe Hill

A Radio Documentary by Colm McNaughton for Radio National at goo.gl/uPPMZ, 24 Sep. 2011.

Listening to this programme brought back vividly to me all the old feelings of resentment, anger and despair of the young man I was, studying and working in Belfast in the late '60s and '70s. The stories of Gerry Conlon and Paul Hill are not new to me. They were two of many scandalous examples of how the British Government treated the Catholic minority population in Northern Ireland during the Troubles of 1970s and 80s.

Their story, in particular that of Conlon, became known to a wider audience through an award winning film drama, *In the Name of the Father* (1993), starring Daniel Day Lewis, Emma Thompson and Pete Postlethwaite. I watched the film in Melbourne and a colleague of mine, a university graduate, apologetically admitted to me that he did not know that this was happening in Ireland! This and similar responses would have been mirrored wherever the film was shown and underlines why it is still important that those who have the capacity to articulate their stories, such as Conlon and Hill, and now, Colm McNaughton, continue to do so.

The Troubles spanned more than thirty years in one form or another. Whilst this political unrest had its genesis in hundreds of years of Irish history, this modern round of extreme Republicanism, Loyalism and British rule began around 1966 and lasted, until a political settlement (the Good Friday Agreement of 1998) brought some semblance of peace to a worn-out province. Its beginning was reflected in the emergence of an educated Catholic middle class in the late 1960s and early '70s, of mostly schoolteachers and university lecturers recently graduated from Queen's University, which to my mind changed forever the political face of Northern Ireland.

Gerry Conlon and Paul Hill were not part of this political struggle. They were unemployed and poorly educated. Conlon admits he took off to London in the early '70s to avoid probable severe retribution from the IRA for his anti-social behaviour. In London they lived in squats and indulged in drugs and alcohol. They were an easy target for the British authorities looking for an obvious arrest. When the IRA changed tactics and began a strategy of planting bombs on the English mainland, initially in Guildford

and Birmingham, the dynamic of the British approach changed from one of outright victory to settling the sorry mess at all costs. The British public had to be appeased and Conlon and Hill fitted the bill exactly. They were arrested, abused and convicted on forced admissions that later were proven fraudulent. The forensic evidence was later proven to be wrong, incompetent and inadmissible.

It was disgraceful how keenly the highest authorities of British Justice supported and condoned these reprehensible corrupt uses of the legal process. In the case of the Birmingham Six, one of the longest serving and most respected appeal judges and Master of the Rolls, Lord Denning, when rejecting the claims of the accused men in 1980, cynically commented in his judgement: "If they won, it would mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence and threats,

They were unemployed and poorly educated

that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence and that the convictions were erroneous. That was such an appalling vista that every sensible person would say, 'It cannot be right that these actions should go any further'. The claims of the six appellants should be struck out". Later, after the quashing of the convictions of the Guildford Four after their 15 years incarceration, Denning publicly commented that if the convicted had been executed upon their convictions, all those legal proceedings and public turmoil would have been averted.

McNaughton deals empathetically with the personal suffering experienced by Conlon and Hill and places their stories accurately in the context of the times. Northern Ireland in the 1970s was a very dangerous place in which to live: in 1972 alone, 497 people were killed, 259 of whom were civilians (see D. McKittrick et al, *Lost Lives*, 1999, p.113). The normal niceties of life did not exist. Whilst Conlon and Hill were victims of a horrendous legal miscarriage on the part of the British authorities, their predicament was

not the worst to happen at the time. The warring factions in this conflict did not always use honourable methods. Ordinary citizens tried to get on with their lives as best they could but even normal things like taking a certain route to work too many times, going for a coffee in the city or shopping in a certain area could lead to one being blown to bits or murdered. This may be a harsh thing to say but though Conlon and Hill were casualties of the political situation at the time, they may be termed, in comparison, the fortunate victims. Certainly their incarceration for over 15 years for something they did not do is unimaginable to most people, but at least they are alive and able to do something about the terrible injustices inflicted on them. Ultimately, on the back of unstinting appeals by others on their behalf, they gained their release to great hurrahs, and I believe some compensation. Hill went on to marry into the Kennedy family of Boston This radio programme was a timely reminder of those terrible days and the awful injustices that were allowed to fester. Thankfully those days ended with The Good Friday Agreement.

The programme also clarifies that Gerry Conlon and Paul Hill are still arguing their case and, through their organisation MOJO, have now taken on the cases of others who have experienced miscarriages of justice. I am encouraged by that. Like others I was not aware of their continuing personal suffering. What comes across to me, in their articulate language, is a sense of optimism and, although they appear angry at times, I do not sense bitterness in their outlook. They have become potent and passionate voices for those who experienced injustice as they did. Let us not forget, though, the thousands of victims who did not survive those days nor had the opportunity or capacity to express their views. It is a great pity that programmes such as this were not available in Australia closer to the events.

What I take from this programme is the hope that, in the future, all of those who consider violence as a means of gaining political goals, will think again of the terrible legacy of despair and suffering that it will leave behind.

Danny Rooney was born in and lived in Belfast until 1986. He now lives in Melbourne.

Convicts at Sea

Anne McMahon: *Convicts at Sea*

Artemis Publishing Consultants ISBN:978 0 646 55551 5

The topic of convict transportation to Australia has been considered from many aspects and this book focuses on convict voyages from Ireland to Van Diemen's Land between 1840 to 1853. During those 13 years alone, 10,223 convicts tried in Ireland arrived in what is now Tasmania. This figure represented a dramatic rise from the early decades of the 19th century and accurately charts the results of the tragic collision between Ireland's rapidly rising population and its unreliable main food source. At first the poor Irish simply emigrated to neighbouring England seeking employment, but the British government were determined to discourage the boat people of their time and put the new Poor Laws in place in order to keep them at bay. Surprisingly to contemporary observers, some destitute Irish people preferred larceny, arson and unlawful assembly to slow death by starvation.

Anne McMahon has written a wonderfully detailed account of what the voyages were like for the people on the boats. While she has been able to access broadly descriptive data (how many people were involved, dietary provisions etc), her main source of observation has relied on the surgeons' journals because few of the convicts were either literate or in position to keep journals if they were. While the surgeons were often prejudiced, particularly against the women, their comments can often be very enlightening about the events aboard ship. Given the clearly important role played by clergy in the elaborate farewell ceremonies organised for the women (but not the men), it's surprising that they seem to have left little if any records of life on the convict ships. At least three clergy are mentioned as having been aboard a convict ship, yet no diaries appear to have been kept.

Perhaps the most startling message of this book is that, appalling as conditions aboard ship were, they were better in many instances than those prevailing in the prisons or workhouses housing the convicts. Take the children who were put on board for a voyage well known to those in charge of them to pass through the freezing Southern Ocean. For some reason 'Clothes were not issued to the children who embarked with their mothers' (p.23)

with the result that most arrived in filthy rags and some were nude or nearly so and the surgeons had to clothe them from whatever material came to hand. Despite what seem to modern eyes to be a very poor diet, insanitary conditions and inadequate clothing, the death rates among the adults were surprisingly low (2.3% of women and 0.8% of men). Considering that many of the adults '...came on board in an emaciated condition, having barely survived on a starvation diet in the Irish prisons.' (p 22), the convict transport system did well to keep so many alive. Accompanying children did worse than the adults; approximately 9.0% died on the voyage, but matters were very different for children born aboard ship. Even so, many children who came directly from workhouses '...became more robust under the improved diet at sea.' (p 38). The 37 accompanying children on the *Tasmania* (1845) actually gained an average of 7 ½ lbs during the voyage.

The experiences of the women and the men are handled in separate chapters and it's all too clear that the women suffered far worse. They had the reputation of being '... most difficult to manage of all the prisoners shipped to the colonies.' (p 35), possibly in reaction to being treated as objects of derision, and were often believed to be failed mothers. This view came partly from the rise in infanticide among the starving poor, but no questions seem to have been asked about the women's motives for this. As is usual with prejudice, the presence of devoted mothers among the convicts was not enough to change anyone's mind. These views could have very serious consequences for those subject to them. On at least one voyage; the *East London* (1843), the surgeon's antipathy towards the women and his policy of separating mothers and children led to 19 of the women and 12 of the children dying; the highest death rates recorded in that period. Surgeons rarely rejected women on health grounds, even if they were obviously old or ill, so that many were in poor condition. In contrast, some of the incorrigible women seemed capable of remarkable physical feats. Ellen Callaghan, punished for being 'boisterous', apparently ran up the mast head

'in a wild fit, while wearing a straight jacket' (p 40). There are hints at darker sexual politics when it emerges that one of Ellen's 'boisterous' crimes was striking the female pimp who arranged sexual services for the crew. The discussion of childbirth aboard is haunting and may be confronting for readers interested in tracing ancestors' voyages. Suffice to say that the surgeons had limited ideas of hygiene and were untrained in obstetrics yet the women could not refuse their frequently fatal interference. The women's best hope of survival was to give birth before the surgeon could reach them; even so the majority of infants born aboard ship died, in marked contrast to the relatively good survival chances of children accompanying their mothers.

While the women were viewed as hard to manage, the men were thought of as dangerous criminals with a propensity for violence despite the fact that few had followed criminal lives and had usually been convicted for attempting to feed themselves and their families by animal theft or larceny. A few of the convicts had been Ribbonmen and some were accused of planning mutinies, though the evidence against them is not very compelling; mainly based on informers. Some very old men were transported, in order to clear out the prisons of convicts in need of extra support or care. Like the women, the men were stoic in response to suffering but observers commented on their indifference to life when they became dispirited. Unlike the women, men could be, and were, flogged and the descriptions of these public episodes are horrifying. The more positive side of the male experience of transport was the possibility of dancing for exercise which was provided for the men, but denied the women.

This is a fascinating, richly detailed book about human experience under extraordinary conditions which should interest both historians and genealogists. My main issue with it is that the quality of the writing is so far removed from the usual hum-drum 'convict experience' book, that the reality of the suffering becomes uncomfortably vivid.

Felicity Allen Deputy Editor, Tinteán

'That Scale of Horror Has No Shape'

Frank McGuinness, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*, directed by Steven Dawson for Hoy Polloy Theatre, Brunswick Mechanics' Institute, seen on 18 August 2011.

One doesn't have to rely on the mainstream for top-notch theatre in Melbourne, and the artistic director of Hoy Polloy, Wayne Pearne, has a very soft spot for hard-hitting Irish drama, seeming to relish its characteristic blending of angst and comedy. Yet another Irish play, Frank McGuinness' daring and groundbreaking *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*, has been given a spectacular season by Hoy Polloy Theatre, a fringe professional theatre operating mainly out of Brunswick Mechanics' Institute. A profoundly moving account of the courage and loss of 5500 men of the 36th Ulster division during the first days of the Battle of the Somme in 1916, it's a committed anti-war play. Written by a Catholic about young Protestant Ulstermen who trade the most outrageous prejudices about Catholics, Fenians and the whole nationalist enterprise, it transgresses many cultural taboos. The play is set just after the Easter Rising, and one of the Ulstermen gives an hilarious and hostile account of it. Like the Irish Brigades so powerfully evoked in Sebastian Barry's novel, *A Long, Long Way*, the war was callously sold to the Ulster brigades, as it was to the nationalist ones who stampeded in surprisingly hefty numbers to defend Britain from the Hun, as designed both to protect the Union from the Fenians and the Pope on the one hand, and to win Home Rule on the other. Locating these sectarian issues within the larger canvas of Europe's hostilities makes for some intriguing recasting of the issues of sectarianism. It's somehow very cleansing when one lives in ideological ghettos to hear the other side's thinking, and that's precisely what this brave playwright gives us. Life and friendship are to him sacred and the Great War serves to put the sectarian issues into a larger perspective. McGuinness' view is a large one, which properly honours the foolhardiness/bravery of these men, while simultaneously registering a call for inclusiveness. Much is made of what it is to be an Ulsterman, living and fighting under the flag of Cúchulainn, which of course belongs to both communities.

The play focuses not on the grisly hopeless battle, but on four pairs of friends, often unlikely ones, drawn together in the extremity of their situations. The first half gives us each of the men in turn, and the second their four friendships. It's a strategic structural move on the playwright's part. These doomed men need one another for comfort (one relationship is homosexual and represented as able to transform a profoundly cynical man), but also to protect their sanity, and the dialogue cross-cuts between the four sets of men in non-naturalistic ways, never missing a beat. There is much humour and compassion in how these relationships unfold, and one cannot but feel for all of them, however benighted their politics or limited their cultural frameworks. They all seek love, understanding, their own version of manhood, and all are vulnerable even the one who enlists with suicidal intentions, and who ironically is the only survivor. Sometimes the survival strategies involve touch; other times, they were imaged as the release of energy on a lam-beg drum, or finding the courage to cross a bridge, or to pray at a time of radical loss of faith. The humanising of all eight men, with their frailties and vulnerabilities, was the guts of the



action and the ensemble cast was magnificent: Ian Rooney, Dan Walls, Nicholas Brien, Angus Brown, Tosh Greenslade, David Passmore, Mathew Gelsumini, Kevin Dee and Karl Cottee.

The play was staged superbly by director/designer, Steven Dawson, on a cruciform platform located in the middle of the auditorium, so that where you sat would have given you a different version of a rich play with many layers. Attention to detail was terrific, from field mattresses, to guns with bayonets, straps for leggings and lots of army-style business.

Having observed my own war-ravaged father's pacifism and being puzzled by what seemed to be an anomalous commitment to meeting with his former army friends on Anzac Day, I found this play really helped me understand why, even amongst those combatants implacably hostile to war, the bonds of comradeship are ferociously strong and enduring.

Hoy Polloy is really worth supporting and *Tinteán* aims to provide advance notice of Irish plays in general, but in particular from this group. Patrons are asked to help us in this endeavour.

Frances Devlin-Glass

Vernacular Poetry from the Bard of the O'Connor Clan

Tommy Frank O'Connor: *Meeting Mona Lisa, Doghouse, Tralee, 2011.*
ISBN: 978-0-9565280-8-7; RRP: €12

Doghouse Books is a remarkable not-for-profit regional press which specialises in poetry and publishes a profusion of collections. Nothing like it exists in Australia, where poets often lament the lack of publishing outlets for their work. The edition I'm reviewing, *Meeting Mona Lisa*, and apparently others published in 2011 (and there are many of them) are underwritten by Kerry Education Service, and printed in Tralee. It's a model that might recommend itself to philanthropists who care about how difficult it is for poets to find a forum. I've read and reviewed four collections this year, and quality control is an issue, but one that I hope will be addressed as the enterprise beds down.

The biography included in the volume proclaims Tommy Frank O'Connor as the Clan File [translation: Bard] of the O'Connor Kerry Clan, and he is much published in many literary disciplines – as a playwright, a novelist, and as a short story writer, and has won many awards. He also does much writing in residence at local schools and libraries. It is not surprising that his writing has a certain brio, the stamp of the public man, the orator in full flight. There's a confidence about his pronouncements, a sense of urgency about his meditations on contemporary life, but for this reader, there is a tension between what is poetic and what is undoubted political passion, sometimes wearing quite prosaic garments.

The collection is divided into two parts, and in the second, Tommy Frank O'Connor very much wants to be accounted a Catholic, not of the old school, but one who reserves the right to be critical of such matters as clerical abuse ('That would be a Sin') and of an institution which does not live up to its founder's standards. Sometimes the poems are quite like meditations: in 'Uni Verse Words', the creativity of God and the pain of the Saviour become explicit reasons for becoming a poet and using poetry for salvific ends, for example, by questioning the use of religion in defending the six counties or to justify hate-filled sloganeering. He is a man of his times, and one can imagine the nuns asking him to read 'Daughter of God' to the year ten girls, in the hope of raising consciousness of the bias towards men in institutional Catholicism:

If God had a Daughter when would She be born?
Would history be divided
as pre and post her dawn?
Would She face the world's problems
and challenge how they're caused?
Would her colour be a factor,
or the placed where She was born?

The poem ends on a hopeful note: he anticipates that women might add to the richness of Christendom their mirth and laughter, simple words, and also 'the soul of all who love', just waiting for the time to add their meaning to God's word.

This may not be eloquent poetry, with its clunky rhythms and preachiness. But one does shiver at the poignancy of the claims and their modesty and reasonableness. Its gender-conscious, open-ended, and simple yet penetrating questions recommend the poem, and it could provoke a wonderful discussion among the boys as well as the girls. I think it could be a potentially useful text in a Religious Education class.

You can love poems by this poet, and also baulk at their

descent into passionately held but unpoetic utterances. The title poem is a good example: you can go with him along a track which explores what the Mona Lisa means to him as muse – her invitation to insubordination, her knowing, ever-vigilant scepticism, her motherliness, but the bathos of the final lines with their (unwanted?) invoking of the stock market, break the spell:

Eternal voyeur alert, as mortals fail to heed
your evergreen, five-hundred-year perspective.
tomorrows revere maternal seed of yesterdays
that propagate a premium for hereafter.

There are other meditations that, while equally prosaic and spelling out their insistent message too obviously, do move the reader. 'Basilica' in eight lines gives some reasons for collective praying in church. There are simple praise poems about the quotidian beauties of the world: the pleasures afforded by the 'Dog Rose' with its fragile beauty and its remarkable resistance to cankers; nature's mistakes in 'Spectrum: A Tribute to Flower Arrangers' and 'Marvel'.

In the more secular, first half of the volume, there are some gems: 'Genesis', despite its title, is a little paean of praise for the unremarkable-pavement-crack-coloniser; 'Banking' is in a darker vein, and gives us the post-Celtic-Tiger Dublin eccentric, the banker fallen on hard times who works his beat outside the Bank of Ireland; while 'Mister' evokes the female counterpart in a sensitive vignette, and the embers of the alluring professional she was when she trod her own pavement stir into libidinous life. 'Alarm Call' is another poem about the ordinary, about waking up from a vivid dream and the struggle to readjust and rejoin the 'real' world.

Mortality seems to be very much on this poet's mind: 'Boots' is a quirky catalogue of footwear which is also a homely meditation on transience, as is 'Worrying Tide' on a similar theme using images of seashore erasure by mighty tides. I really enjoyed 'Rite' about a father's delighted but slowly dawning reluctance to discover that he has been superseded by a son, an 'arrant upstart', whom he is inured to thinking of as incompetent. The image chosen is a delicate one: that of catching salmon by tickling them. I've never known how it was done, but there it was in all its patience and discomfort, and skill, with its attendant learning: 'What you've just done is something that can't be/taught or learned'.

Another poem that bears tangentially on unusual occupations is 'Underdog' which juxtaposes two events in the life of a boxer: being best man at a wedding and an important boxing challenge. I thought the way O'Connor made the two events and the boxer's uncertainty about them speak to each other was very clever. We read it knowing that both marriage and boxing are chancy and full of anxiety. It's not easy to 'tap out dreams' from either.

One poem I found altogether too passionate, despite the worthiness of its subject matter, is 'Bandit Street'. Almost killing a passerby for his brand-name trainers, and other accoutrements, is indeed an act that can be called depraved and savage, but this poet needs to learn to trust his images and to cross out his underlinings and explicit judgments.

This collection of poems is designed to communicate directly, passionately, and in a robust, vernacular, understated language. Although they sometimes talk down to me, and are rather teacherly, I was often touched and moved.

Frances Devlin-Glass

An Eye on the Mustard-Jar

Terry McDonagh: *The Truth in Mustard*,
Arlen House, Galway, 2010 ISBN: KON0828494; RRP: €7.82
and

Terry McDonagh with Artwork by Sally McKenna:
Cill Aodain & Nowhere Else, Blaupause Books, Hamburg, 2010 ISBN: 9783933498335; RRP: €19.50

Exile and dislocation are familiar themes in Irish literature and *The Truth in Mustard* by Terry McDonagh explores these to the full. McDonagh has travelled far and wide. His poetic self continually reflects on journeying and crafts images to make sense of it all. Memory, alienation and longing are leitmotifs deep within him.

The title poem points the reader back to the poet's childhood fascination with the exotic ingredient of mustard his mother used to flavour the boiled bacon, 'or even beef, if she saw fit.' She used mustard for all sorts of things; hot and potent, it fired up life. Though herself 'quiet and assertive' she always had 'one eye never far from the mustard'; it was an ingredient that gave her power. But its unintended effect was to make the poet long 'for a thimbleful of wild mustard/ to blast me off to China.'

That's the way this collection of poems reads. It's a blast off into many different countries: Germany, Bali, Kuwait, Cambodia, Japan. Inside these countries the poet uses either his own voice or that of differing personae. There's Albert, who 'grew up in Hamburg/without a father,' and the tale of the taxi driver in Budapest. The Pit Bull 'used to be a hungry child in Nigeria' then 'made his way to Marseilles,' travelling 'easily, in leather,/from city to city, blood maddened,' until finally, 'The Pit Bull was washed up in the Seine.' These rarefied figures, living in foreign tales, are often bogged down in unfortunate, murky circumstances.

Just as the potential for the exotic is found overseas, its presence too is imagined in Ireland. On his 'Skoda perch' somewhere between Lanesboro and Ballymahon, in *Three Nuns in a Pickup* the poet's pushed onto the verge by 'three sister Graces on the road.' His fantasy moves between them being 'three Muslim wives/ escapees from a harem' or three Irish Sisters 'embalmed in their off-white crook,' with absolutely 'no hint of Arab women in a Mayo mosque.' Similarly, in *A Gypsy Woman in Ireland*, a Romanian in Dublin, called Sonya, hides behind candles in churches

... (living) in the singing of my ancestors:
homeless in Romania, homeless in Serbia;
homeless inland, homeless in Ireland.

So at home and abroad misfortune accompanies these figures. The exotic and the familiar, the strange and the ordinary co-exist. Estranged and lonely, they try to make sense of life.

These figures are extensions of the poet's own self. He is living out his own feelings of exile within and outside Ireland. McDonagh finishes the collection with an attempt at resolution; the hope that these personal 'demons' he lives with will, like his suitcase, 'be thrown away...my scream is done/Let everything have an end.' *Let Everything Have an End* is his final and longest poem. It's an 11-page series of couplets that feels endless and moves fast; 'hurry felt good.' This poem reads as a pastiche of the poet's own travels, 'central stations must be in my blood.' Some of the images are exquisite: 'We once planted a rose garden to circle a tiny/ cottage. The roses went round and round/ keeping the little house dizzy and smiling.' Sometimes, though,

the images become a blur, soporific and confusing; no doubt reflecting the dream-like feel of continual movement. Like the collection of poetry itself, this poem tumbles with imagery: earthy, particular, ordinary, foreign:

I'd like to wake to Atlantic madness in the city.
Let us be Ancients of Egypt for an hour,

handmade Persian rugs for a week,
dreamers for the length of a dream,

or foxes and badgers clinging
to every dark inch of a tongue.

These images cartwheel around the page and the reader is challenged to piece together the idea behind them. One senses the poet having to reign in the similes and metaphors himself – either by bringing the reader back to his original idea by repeating verses, or by directly telling the reader, 'Let everything have an end,' – in other words, I have to stop or I'll go off my head.

As his mother always had one eye on the mustard jar, McDonagh has one eye on home wherever he travels. The poems that work really well are those where McDonagh stops and reflects through the lens of that eye. The fire becomes refined by quietness. *An Address Somewhere in Pye* contains a whimsical reflection on some items he finds in his family home in the West of Ireland on a visit. He picks up his father's boots, plots 'their history':

They'd have walked
footsore
to the fair with cattle
to the market with pigs,
to the hill, the forge, the river
and, in this case, never
to or from the pub. My father
didn't drink. We did.
That's progress, isn't it?

It's a marvellous mixture of sensitivity, wry wit, dry humour. The old Pye radio is remembered as an object that brought the whole world into his childhood home. In this reflection his words also powerfully and simply evoke the spirit of his hometown:

I still don't know how waves work,
but like the mystery of good turf,
or the language of fairies, they kept
me company until I learned my own tune.

Again we experience this lovely balanced thinking in *By the Alster Pavilion in Hamburg*. Here the poet is 'exiled in a picture on a sunny Saturday/ in November with an Irish harp in my head.' The exotic Ostfriesien tea, the gardens of Schwanenwick, become blended with the earthiness of the West of Ireland. A beautiful

dance between nostalgia and present foreign place comes in to play. A breeze lifts his imagination homeward, 'a wild child's head, ready wings.' There is a sense of rising in the last verses: 'is that the same wind/that blew the roof off our granary?' It's a delicate balance, everything lifting up, but ultimately the 'steps up' only lead to rotting floorboards and the amusing possibility of falling down on top of cows. It's a poem that carefully blends together the exotic and the longing for home. But home becomes the bump of reality, and that's not something the poet wants to contemplate: 'now is the time to stop.'

Cill Aodain and Nowhere Else centres itself on the poet's hometown but through another lens: one of distance in time and travel. This picture book is a collection of 28 short reflective poems remembering growing up in the West of Ireland. They are lyrical, earthy, particular and vivid:

16
Men were real men of sin
and wrinkles
in and out of the rain
in and out of the sun
in and out of the bog
in and out of season
in and out of boat trains
in and out of alien labour
in and out
over and back
in out
back and over
for a decade or two
in and out of work
home for good
in the end.

There is a mirror poem to this for women. These poems have a dream-like surreal quality. In his afterword, McDonagh talks of a veil between the real world and the world of the imagina-

tion: 'It's a hazy world. Our lives of dreams, imaginings and creativity lurk in there behind the veil, coaxing, urging and calling out for expression.' These memories and imaginations are enhanced by the naïve quality of the artwork illustrated by Sally McKenna. At first these pictures and the visual simplicity of the poetry beckon to the child in our imagination. But the words themselves resonate with maturity and compassion for this small community of Cill Aodain. It's a land once inhabited by the little people, a land of bog, fishing, described by the blind bard Anthony Raftery. It's a place where religion pulled people apart, but not strongly enough to take away their deeper sense of poetic identity. It's a town now much changed but alive in imagination and we are privileged to have it remembered and shared in poetry:

27
The time has come when I can stand
beside Raftery's stone and bush; beside
the gravestone of
my great-grandfather, Thady Conlon,
and reel in a chunk of my own story.

History has left its mark: loud calls
from abroad gave hope, but they
left lone men and women behind
to dream
of grass that might come up greener.

I remember seeing an elderly man
weeping into a filthy Pollard bag
at the wheel of his abandoned tractor
in a leafy, secluded lane one Sunday.

His neighbours would have been at Mass.

Carol O'Connor

Carol is a Melbourne poet and bookseller.

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Writing for the Ear

Tony Curtis: *Folk*, Arc Publications, Todmorden (UK), 2011. ISBN: 978-1906570-74-3 (pbk); RRP £ 8.99

‘Write for the ear,’ urges Yeats in the opening inscription of *Folk*, the ninth poetry collection from Dublin-born, Tony Curtis. Well, this book certainly sings with world music, full of rhythm and surprise.

As in prior volumes, there is some variance in form from free verse to haiku and prose poetry. The evocative front cover photo of the poet’s parents ready for a motorbike jaunt from Roscrea in 1948 was published with an accompanying poem in the previous issue of *Tinteán*. In March 2011 those in attendance at the Irish Studies Seminar Series at Melbourne University’s Newman College and at Collected Works Bookshop in the Nicholas Building, were treated to the poet, performer, raconteur, but mostly the *seanachai*, Tony Curtis, reciting and telling how his works came to him in his travels. No suggestion of the Wandering Aengus here, as Tony Curtis has certainly not lost his heart, which pulses from the page.

Curious and empathetic, the poet engages with an Amish woman, a beekeeper, a girl in an asylum, an accordion player. With lucid originality he distils the everyday, showing how it is peopled and set, how objects are juxtaposed. As the title suggests, this book is about people, loved ones, friends, passersby, other poets like Elizabeth Bishop, Yeats and Walt Whitman. The collection brims with conversations, with questions, answers, impressions, ghosts, and what can be learnt from them about simplicity, nature, human endeavour and folly. Curtis studied

literature at Essex University and Trinity College Dublin and he is a member of Aosdána, the Irish cultural parliament. He brings poetry asylums and jails, to schools in Ireland, Britain and America.

His powerful lines can contain a whole story, a philosophy: ‘nothing bleeds as long as history’ or in *The Maiden’s Collar*, ‘The dry noose tightening around the promise of seventy more years of sorrow’. There is such mastery to allow for subtext and to leave spaces between the words for breath, as in a memorial poem about renovations of where his friend, Michael Hartnett, once lived, ‘Things were raked over, ready for the arrival of the instant lawn’.

There is a lively humour in the poems as when comparing the clutter where he writes to photographs in *The Guardian* of writers’ rooms: ‘each week/ there is a photograph of a room, neat as a grave./ My room is a bombed-out bunker/ and in it the poetry war goes on and on’. And a very able war correspondent he is – getting to the heart of the story, capturing emotions in fascinating sound bites from the roving reporter. Here is a personal view of global stories and each view, each corner, gives up its secrets to the poet’s scrutiny.

So, this collection has been my companion in trains and trams, in backyard mornings and armchair evenings. It has been a most enjoyable journey, one which I would highly recommend.

Meg McNena is Poetry Editor of Tinteán

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Jageurs Literary Award

A prize for writers, honouring the great nationalist, Morgan Jageurs

In 2005, the Celtic Club established the annual Jageurs Literary Award to honour Morgan Jageurs and his efforts in promoting Irish culture in Australia and in establishing the Celtic Club. In 2009, the Australian Irish Heritage Network joined with the Celtic Club in sponsoring the award, with the prize money increased to \$1,000.

For 2011, the Australian Irish Heritage Network and the Celtic Club have combined again to sponsor the award, again with total prize money of \$1,000.

Born in Ireland, Morgan Jageurs (1862-1932) was a prominent Melbourne monumental mason and was first to introduce the Celtic cross to Australia. His great memorials can be seen in cemeteries throughout Melbourne. With his knowledge of architecture he assisted in the building of St Patrick's Cathedral and St Mary's, West Melbourne.

Jageurs was a man of many enthusiasms, with many of them focussed on Ireland. As well as being a founding member and President of the Celtic Club and the Victorian Catholic Young Men's Society, he was also deeply involved in the Irish Land League, the Irish National League and, later, the United Irish League. He helped form the Melbourne Irish Pipers' Club. Jageurs was a fine orator and writer, especially on Irish history, art and culture. He hosted many notable Irish visitors to Australia, including the Redmond brothers. Michael Davitt, who visited Australia in the 1890s, was godfather to his eldest son. In *The Irish in Australia* Patrick O'Farrell says of Jageurs that he 'personally sustained virtually all Irish organisations in Melbourne during his active lifetime.'

The competition for the award aims to stimulate the production of new literary artefacts with a consciousness of the matter of Ireland or Irish-Australia – stories, one-act plays, poetry. Non-fiction is also eligible for consideration, but the judges are looking for it to demonstrate 'literariness', an awareness of the language arts for which Irish writers have justly become famous. Such writing needs to be self-conscious, artful, shaped, and hopefully innovative. Literary manuscripts that celebrate, or excoriate the culture, or take any position in between are welcome. Pieces that take risks in how they deal with the heritage have been among those that have won prizes in the past. The nominated maximum word count for manuscripts is 5,000 words. If the medium of the writing is poetry, the word-length can be much shorter than the nominated maximum.

There are few caveats on who can submit. Work that has been previously published is not eligible for submission, and contestants can submit no more than two entries per person. Winning entries will be published in *Tinteán*.

Information about entering the competition are to be found on www.celticclub.com.au and further information can be obtained by emailing info@celticclub.com.au

The closing date for entries to this year's competition is 19 December 2011.

If you know of closet writers who think and read about Ireland and have things to say about Irish-Australia, then please bring the competition to their attention. Or if you are one yourself, your entry will be most welcome.



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