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*Erie to Eire: Michael Lavelle  
from Achill, piping from  
Cleveland's Lake Erie shore*

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## Editor's Corner



**John O'Brien, Jr.**

Well, it is done; our 8th year is complete, our 9th begun with last month's issue. Next issue will be our 99th. I have also finished my new book, 99 Years from Freedom. Dreams always seem to come in bunches.

Up until near the Easter Rising of 1916, there was no TV, no widespread radio in Ireland. There was only the oral tradition of song and story to preserve and present the history of our people. The Bards carried the headlines, in their heads. Our only flicker of roots, of resistance to euthanasia, was to sing from the Hedge School and hone in to the songs and stories of the Bard.

Easter Rising, Soloheadbeg, Upton, Robert Emmett, Bobby Sands, The Fools, the heroes of 16,

The National Anthem, The Plunketts, Patriot Games, Hunger Strike, Kilmainham Jail, Brendan and Dominic Behan, W.B. Yeats, Kevin Barry, The Proclamation, There Were Roses, Canon O'Neill, the Dublin Lockout, Paul McCartney, A Soldier's Song, Michael Collins, Joe MacDonnell, Tommy Makem, we know the pivotal names in song and places, but what people and events birthed the song? The Troubles did run on the airwaves though, and the power of the people found and forged its own bards out of pure necessity and the Bard in their blood. Their only choice for a voice, was to sing.

Those who write, sing, and star in the songs and stories of Ireland's freedom are ordinary people doing extraordinary things; people like you and me. Yet, they gave up liberty, health, or the ultimate sacrifice, life, for a dream spanning generations, and 800 years. At times it was quietly nurtured and at times briefly burned bright, the blood of patriots its main fuel.

We can only know our full selves in the seminal songs and stories of our past. We hope you will find them, and so much

more, in this issue.

I was able to attend the swearing in ceremony for new Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Shannon Gallagher on Thursday. She is bright, energetic and insightful, and not jaded or encumbered by political chits or allegiances. She has collaborative ideas and knows the current system is NOT working. She will have to work her way up, but I am excited about what she will do. She has taken the first step winning election, and will work for a better system of productivity, best practices and most of all, justice for all.

Slán, John

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## About Our Cover

Michael Lavelle from Achill piping on the Cleveland shore. Photo by Marianne Mangan

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## MILESTONES

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Batt Burns family, on the loss of the beautiful Maura. The kindest, most welcoming woman, her passion for sharing our culture is the standard for giving.

Congratulations to Joanie Madden, Mary Coogan, Mirella Murray, Graine Murphy and Katherine Boyle of Cherish the Ladies, celebrating 30 years together this month! Can't wait to see them again at Cleveland Irish Cultural festival in July.

Congratulations to Mary Jo Graves, whose Sea of Blue grass roots effort for



100 people to come together to show their support of Police, brought thousands to Public Square; Sea of Blue has spread across the city, is spreading across the nation, in similar show of support.



FEBRUARY 2015 Vol. 9 Issue 2

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IAN Ohio Inc. is published monthly (12 issues a year) on the first day of each month. Subscription is by first class mail. 1 year \$30, 2 years at \$55 3 years \$80. To subscribe go online at [www.ianohio.com](http://www.ianohio.com), or Email us at [subs@ianohio.com](mailto:subs@ianohio.com), or call us at 708-445-0700 or mail to address below.

IAN Ohio is available for free at over 240 locations throughout Ohio. For information on the locations go to [www.ianohio.com](http://www.ianohio.com) and click on the Ohio Distribution button.

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## The Noble Potato

by Katherine Stewart

Childhood memories are both mysterious and revealing. What Kevin Thornton remembers are the potatoes. One of nine children in a Cashel, County Tipperary family, he spent summers at his uncle's house in the village of Dualla, where potatoes were frequently on the menu. When they pulled the potatoes out of the oven, the pale brown tubers would split their jackets like flower-shaped volcanoes and fog up the windows. Thornton's uncle topped them with Kerrygold butter and mint from the garden, producing steam-powered explosions of flavor. Now that was a potato.

The potato has long been Ireland's signature food-stuff. But in recent years, in the hands of creative chefs like Thornton, it has undergone a serious makeover. It has become the stuff of art.

Thornton, the first Irish chef to receive two Michelin stars, is one of the country's most prominent culinary heroes. A slim, energetic grandfather, Thornton is also an accomplished photographer. Images of the Irish landscape and his culinary creations decorate the earth-toned walls of his restaurant, Thornton's, which is located in the elegant Fitzwilliam Hotel of St. Stephen's Park in Dublin. Thornton's approach to his menu reflects his ebullient aesthetic sensibility. Every dish is like a chapter in an illustrated story about Ireland: lamb from Bere Island, off the coast of Cork, is served on a forest of herbs sitting on a slab that looks like, well, an island; cod fritters on a bed of seaweed and rounded pebbles from the shore; and, of course, potatoes in a variety of extraordinary and unexpected forms.

Ireland's affair with the potato dates from the 18th century, when the hearty characteristics of the spud, combined with economic oppression, led the Irish to embrace it as the staple of their diet. In the 19th century, however, excessive dependency on this single crop proved disastrous. From 1845-1852, the potato blight ravaged potato crops, leading to mass starvation and emigration. The famine is thought to have caused the population in Ireland to drop by over 25 per cent.

The potato of today hardly bears resemblance to yesteryear's bulwark against famine. Today the spud is embraced by a new generation, eager not only to explore the potato's place in the story of Irish identity, but also to celebrate its multiplicity of forms. Ireland produces a large number of regional potato varieties, reflecting the country's natural biodiversity.

The work of chefs like Thornton, who demonstrate the wondrous potential of this once-humble ingredient night after night, has no doubt contributed to the potato's renaissance in all quarters. Urban Farm, a Dublin-based nonprofit organization that supports artisanal agriculture, has launched a



project called Thank Potato, which seeks to educate the public about the large number of potato varieties in Eire. Urban Farm maintains a collection of 160 different heritage potato varieties, dating from 1768 to the present day. A traveling display reveals the breadth of the varieties – purple, red, yellow and white, whose shapes resemble golf balls, twisty tubes, and short, thick braids.

When I visit Kevin Thornton at his eponymous restaurant one afternoon, our conversation quickly turns to potatoes. He tells me of his plan for a potato soufflé, combining coconut yogurt with eggs to explore variations in that flowery-fragrant potato steam from his childhood. Above all, he is interested in exploring the different properties of the many potato varieties he works with: Ratt, Chinese Truffle, Rooster, Golden Wonder, Queen, Black Bog, Maris Piper. As we chat, sous-chefs bring out one exquisitely composed dish after another.

In the same way that an oil painter takes pigments from a few simple compounds and creates a work that inspires and delights, Kevin Thornton does the same with food. His work is closely connected with nature and its cycles. Each potato varietal has special

properties of moisture and flavor that make it optimal for different seasons. In the fall, Thornton alternates slices of potato with truffle for a luxuriously savory treat. In winter, he combines potatoes with salt cod to create a beignet. In spring, he uses sweet potato to craft gnocchi, which is then smoked in hay. Summer is the optimal season for new potatoes; in an homage to his childhood, he dresses them with mint.

Thornton's Restaurant is on the leading edge of potato innovation, but others are giving a strong showing. At Fade Street Social, one of Dublin's best

new restaurants, purple potatoes are combined with beetroot mousse and dressed with a dollop of crème fraîche flavored with citrus zest; the effect is fresh and so sweet it could almost work as a dessert. At Pearl Brasserie on Merrion Street Upper, baked potato gnocchi is inventively paired with sweet corn, poblano peppers, buffalo mozzarella and basil.

Those who like their tradition with a twist should head to Padraic Og Gallagher's award-winning Boxty House, which serves up variations on the time-honored Irish dish of Boxty – a light potato

pancake. Memorable dishes include their Famous Gaelic Boxty, a hearty concoction of Irish beef medallions in a whiskey and mushroom cream sauce, wrapped in the traditional Leitrim boxty pancake. The restaurant's motto: "The Humble Spud Made Beautiful."

Thornton himself is fond of many traditional Irish potato dishes, but there is one doesn't seem to care for much: French fries, or "chips." While he'll prepare a mean basket of fries for the kids, he expects adults to savor flavors that are more pure and complex. "Putting butter on potatoes is fine for home cooking, but at the restaurant we don't use that much of it," he says. "The potato itself should taste good."

### Pomme Maxime

Makes 6 portions approx

#### Ingredients

4-6 Rooster Potatoes

1 packet of butter, see note 1

#### Method

Core the centre of the potatoes with a potato cutter. The cutter should be 30mm in diameter. Slice the top and bottom of the core with a knife to remove any of the skin. Slice the core with a meat slicer to a thickness of 2mm. Drop



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the slices into warm clarified butter.

Take a 100mm metal tartlet mould and line the mould with the potato slices. Pack them close together, otherwise they will fall apart during cooking, don't forget to season between each layer. When you have 2-3 layers built up you can pour a small bit of the clarified butter over the potatoes.

Cook the moulds over a medium heat until you can see that the potato is golden brown on the bottom. Turn the mould upside down and re-insert the pomme maxime. Cook the other side exactly the same as the first. When the potatoes are golden brown on both sides, take out of the mould and set on a baking tray. Cook in an oven at 180°C for 10-15 minutes to cook fully through. Set aside in a warm place.

#### To make clarified Butter

Heat a packet of unsalted butter until the butter has melted. Take off the heat and skim off the top foamy layer and discard. Pour the remaining clear layer into a separate container. This is the clarified butter. Stop pouring just before the solids come to the surface. The solids are white in colour and can be discarded.

Pomme Maxime © Kevin Thornton



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## Old Wounds

As the old year died and the new one began, I met a quiet hero. A man who fought for his country, was seriously wounded, lost his beloved younger brother, and then had to live on into a future fraught with memories, sadness and pride. As I so often used to do in Dublin's Kilmainham Prison, I met this man through his wonderful family. His name is Harold Slade Mills; he was English.

During the last two days of 2014 I embarked upon a deeply personal journey, both physical and emotional. I like to joke that the sole person responsible for this is Queen Elizabeth II of England. I experienced no interest in her 2011 Irish visit, beyond wishing her well and hoping she would remain safe. Then, vaguely aware of the time she was scheduled to pay her respects to the Irish patriot dead in Dublin's Garden Of Remembrance, curiosity getting the better of me, I reluctantly tuned into the coverage.

Against every expectation, I was stunned. I felt she awarded more respect to our patriots than do some of our own people; her deferential manner and her utter sincerity changed forever my perception of her – her tribute was one accorded like to like. Then I received a warm, gracious invitation to see in the recent New Year with an old friend and her English husband, Rick. Gillian had worked with me in Kilmainham in the mid-90s, and now lives with Rick and little Anna in Guildford. It would be my first ever trip to England; beginning rather anxiously, it concluded with quiet exhilaration.

I was one of the men who grew up in the night. This is how Rick's grandfather, Harold S Mills, described himself in the

years after the Great War – a man who in 1918, at age 20, was the oldest in his platoon fighting in the trenches in France. In moving letters written from the front to his fiancée, he played down the dangers he faced personally. As the war ended he wrote about his near drowning in the mud



of a shell-hole. He remembered hearing the bells of a tiny French village sound out the Armistice. An Armistice necessarily accepted with great restraint – dared the men believe it was over? Finally? The family's joy was muted by the death of Harold's beloved brother Charlie in the final months of the war.

And then came Part Two. Where was Harold when Chamberlain articulated his famous We are at war with Germany speech? In his Post Office Stores and Bakery in the peaceful hamlet of Kingsley Green, West Sussex, where he lived? Surrounded by his family in their cottage next door? With memories and sufferings of that War to End all Wars still vivid in his mind, he simply must have thought: Again?

Anguish descended once more as immediate neighbours feared their naval son dead, throughout the war. Harold, in his shop – the life and soul of the community – ultimately received the news of the man's survival in a Japanese POW camp. As Rick's melodic English voice related this story, what moved me most was a mental image I received of Grandad, or Harold. Occasionally, he would simply put down whatever he was holding in the shop, and without further fuss would walk silently through the front door, heading slowly up the hillside opposite, where he would seek healing in the soothing beauty of the English countryside for those torments which would flood his great, injured soul.

Gillian and Rick showed me picturesque Shere, where myself and my Kilmainham friend, unashamedly biased, loved The Old Prison House. We strolled around Guildford, taking in the graveyard of The Holy Trinity St Mary's. As we stood studying the Memorial to the British War Dead, a rather eccentric gentleman approached from the High Street side, and nearing us, exclaimed: I am so glad you are looking at that. Having passed on by, he turned back to wish us Happy New Year. It felt right. Rick and Gillian pointed out the tragic Guildford pub, where the fatal 1974 bombing took place, with its terrible consequences.

At the small gathering we enjoyed later that last night of 2014, I toasted the coming year with the dual Cheers / Sláinte. A man beside me was curious; Sláinte? Upon hearing the translation, he happily repeated it to us. After a Mass for the new year, the priest, a former Anglican vicar with a polished British accent, wished me a safe journey home and I met a friendly woman named Mary, who discovered this was my first visit. She gave me a big hug whispering mischievously: A Scottish lassie welcomes you to British soil! Smiling banter, an exchange of proud cultures, equal to equal.

I needed to hear more about Harold next morning. Rick told me he was a member of a Lewis Gun team, and in words so familiar to me from relatives of Kilmainham prisoners, added with that universal human yearning: I hope he only held the ammunition belt. Whilst Harold never shared any of these experiences, he did retain a great sense of fun and he loved books. On one occasion in later life, browsing through old volumes, he selected one on Irish history, which his family still possess. Charlie, Harold's brother who did not survive that War to End all Wars, had started the fighting in an English regiment, but with the heavy losses they sustained, was amalgamated towards the end with a London Irish regiment.

Growing sentiment abounds calling for forgiveness, perhaps, and a moving on in friendship between our two countries. It does not mean we can no longer tell our stories or continue our search for truth. Finding this affection for England and her people has added a rich, wonderful texture to the story for me. It has proved a stimulating journey; this has been a challenging article to write. But as those final days of 2014 melted into 2015, I felt honoured and proud to be an Irish guest in an honourable, proud and welcoming English household. Ireland, present and future – Cheers and Sláinte!







# Terry From Derry

by Terry Boyle



## The Habits of a Lifetime

My usual Christmas trip back to Derry was delayed this year until after the holiday. Since my mother's 80th birthday was in January, a time when I'd normally be back in the U.S, I planned to return to Ireland later than usual.

In the months leading up to my departure, my sisters and I worked on what sort of party to throw this amazing lady. Coming from a family of 8, she had 8 children of her own, over 30 grandchildren, followed by a smattering of great grandchildren. With such a legacy, we were eager to celebrate with friends and family the matriarch's finest hour, or at least one of them, with a big party. When the idea was suggested to mother, it was crushingly deflated by the honoured one. The large affair was instead to become a small intimate dinner with family members. An easy compromise you might think, but location became almost as problematic as size had earlier. One place deemed too expensive, the other too cheap, and middle option just right.

With the hard work of negotiations over, I flew into Dublin, intent to make this a memorable trip. Arriving in homeland with gigantic expectations of the holiday, I was, within a day or two, reduced to a weakling by a cold in the chest. Most of my time was spent buying over the counter medications, and bed rest. I had, it seemed, caught something that was going around. And, lucky me, I was chosen to be one the sickly elite.

I tried to minimize my time around family members, especially my mother, since this bug might be the very thing to do her in before her birthday. The few brave individuals who

ferried me around in their cars seemed unperturbed by the invisible assailant as though bravery were enough to ward off its effects. A foolhardy decision as time would tell.

On the actual day of the party, my fever had reached a pitch that made it almost impossible for me to attend, but I was determined to be there no matter what happened. Mother was greeted with cards, gifts, and attention. She lapped up the hugs and kisses (none from the infected one), and indulged us with a hearty smile of contentment. She was in her element. Throughout the meal others would wish her well, dropping off flowers and gifts. Everyone ate and drank heartily, except me.

From my vantage point, the whole thing felt as though someone kept turning the heat up. Sweating profusely, I was finding it hard to not want to rush out into the winter's night to cool down. Try as I might to engage in conversation, I was just not myself. Feeling miserable when all around you are partying does not make a dull man happy, so I left. I justified my early departure to my mother from afar (a pointless effort since she's become increasingly deaf and my sentiment was echoed by more than one voice as it was carried closer to her), I had to go and get more medication. She nodded, and that was it. Some brave soul again offered to take me home despite the danger. The months of planning had ended in a weak cough of exhaustion.

My guilty, and depressed state was quickly lifted the next day when I found out that having gathered, immediate family, grandchildren, and friends together to continue the party after dinner, mother also went AWOL. Her illness, not detect-

able thorough the evening, had surfaced at the climax of the night after the blowing out of the candles. And, while everyone drank her health, she got up with my sister and disappeared. Gone, like Bilbo Baggins at the beginning of the Lord of the Rings, without a trace.

It's hard, if not impossible to imagine how a woman who cannot walk without the aid of a three-wheeler walker rushing away into the night without someone catching a glimpse of her. Gone she was, and the party continued, undeterred by the missing guest of honour. There was no search party sent out. No raised eyebrows. It was as if she was never there.

Why, you might wonder would there be such a blatant lack of concern? It's quite simple. Everyone one at that party knew the cause of mother's disappearance. There was nothing suspicious about the escapee. No foul play at work. And, once I had been told of her leaving five letters lit up in my mind like an Irish menorah: BINGO.

Having dispensed of her duty, mother was ready to leave her gift at the gambling altar. Never a slave to convention, this 80-year-old woman was going to her usual place of worship. She had dined, mingled, and entertained with us enough, now it was 'her' time. It was a life long tradition each of us knew well.

Mother, a confirmed devotee of the numbers game with its funny litanies of: two fat ladies 88, key of the door 21, legs 11, top of the house 90, two little ducks 22 etc., was gone in search of bigger gains. It all made sense to me now. The dismissal of the big party, the location of the dinner etc. had been carefully selected to accommodate the bingo gods and their acolyte.

## Traditional Music in Review

By Bill Margeson

Oh, there is mighty stuff aplenty this time! Very diverse lot for you. First, a wonderful new singer to us.

Kate Crossan is out with *Away*. Lovely. Ontario, Canada to now living in Derry for a good while, we believe. She has released other albums, but this one is the deal, all right. Great variety in the songs. Here it is: My, how her voice grows on you! Very interpretive. A great deal of depth of understanding here. Excellent side musicians include former Male Musician of the Year here, Kieran Munnelly on flute and bodhran, and Matt Griffin on guitar. Lots of others. This is all about Kate's taste in songs, styles, musicians and production values. First rate. We listen to this one. A lot. So should you. *Away*. Find it. Find her. Lovely.

Speaking of talented gals come from away, here is Anna Falkenau with *Feileacan na Saoirse* (The Butterfly of Freedom). She is a wonderful fiddle and viola player. Very traditional in approach, with a real modern day feel to her stylings and own compositions. She is one of thousands over the years who have come to Irish music from outside Ireland, become conversant in it and really become a part of it. She is part of the German contingent that has made Ireland home in reality and musically. Ged Foley is a great addition to the album on guitar, and along with others—Ringo McDonagh on bodhran—really nails it. A bright new musician on the international scene with a terrific new album!

JigJam has an album, *Oh Boy!*, out. At first, we simply thought this new group was *We Banjo 3* from Tullamore, as groups try to pile on the express train created by the Galway group. Well, it is and it isn't. First, let there be no doubt. These three are talented. VERY. They do the full mix of Irish and Americana—very popular lately. To this they add

a terrific touch of bluegrass! Blessed bluegrass! They are the only Irish group we know that is really employing Scruggs-style banjo in their work. They are very, very good vocally, and the best Irish group so far in bluegrass. Along with *Socks in the Frying Pan* and *We Banjo*, this group earns a place in your collection. They are really young, and really good. We like this more and more. And more. (Listening to this for the 14th time as I write this.) Superior. Wow! Oh Boy!



We want to remind you of a wonderful blast of songs on tunes in an album entitled, *The Ultimate Guide to Irish Folk*. ARC Music apparently linked up with one of our two favorite writers on Irish music, John O'Regan, and asked for a collection. Here it all is! It has been a long time since we could really, truly recommend a compendium album. There are VERY complete and authoritative notes here, written by Johnny himself. Fab. A great selection of music. Like all compendiums, we like some of the selections more than others. But, that is the point of a compendium album. These kinds of albums serve as an excellent introduction for those just coming into Irish music, if they are excellently done. This one is. The liner notes alone are worth the price of admission. If you have been in the music a while, you will probably still find some new treasures here. Two cd's full, ranging from Luke Kelly to John Spillane. Great work, Mr. O'Regan! A must have, really.

The album is *Life Is All Checkered*.

*Continued on Next Page*



## View From Ireland

By Maurice Fitzpatrick



### In Praise of Peter Taylor

Last year, the veteran BBC television journalist, Peter Taylor, returned to Northern Ireland, where he has made dozens of documentaries about the Troubles. His objective was to film a documentary about the North of Ireland in a more personal style this time, as seen through four decades of his film-making experience.

An Englishman by birth, Taylor became enthralled, in the late 1960s at the outset of his career, by the Northern Troubles in all its pity and terror, and stayed with events in the North from that point through to the Peace Process. Others of his ilk tended to gain the limelight in the North and travel back to England for a more sedate life

once they had made their names. Instead, Taylor stayed the course and cut a compassionate figure, forming extraordinarily close relationships both with senior figures in Northern politics and in the armed struggle, and with civilian victims of violence. He regularly met those people, listened to them and responsibly gave them their



Peter Taylor

voices through his documentaries; the body of work he recorded constitutes an important source for an understanding of recent Northern Irish history.

As leading member of the BBC's Panorama team, Taylor had enormous influence in conveying a fresh message about the Northern crisis. Panorama's impact reverberates across the UK, Ireland and beyond: its viewership numbers more people than the readership of all of English broadsheet newspapers combined. Thus Taylor came to be widely perceived, in England especially, as a reliable interpreter of the North of Ireland. His particular strength is in illustrating the complexities of the situation and steeling his audience against easy one-sided formulations about the cause of and solution to the Troubles, keeping each of the protagonists—Republicans, Loyalists and the British—in focus.

The personal documentary he made last year, filming for four months in Belfast, is entitled *Who Won the War?* It is clear from the beginning that the title itself poses an unsatisfactory question since, with over three thousand people dead, countless more maimed and psychologically scarred on all sides, what could possibly constitute a victory?

From a loyalist perspective, with the structures now in place for a Northern majority to vote to secede from the United Kingdom, there is the loss

of their union guarantee: the status quo upon which unionist politics traditionally fixed its focus to avoid any constitutional reform is gone.

The Republican side is more nuanced in its response to the question of victory. Those who joined the IRA claimed a mandate to fight for a United Ireland and settled for an agreement that comes far short of that. To use a phrase immortalised by Michael Collins, the current accommodation could be a "stepping stone" towards that goal. Yet it should never be forgotten that such a deal was on the table, and signed by British and Irish governments, in 1973. The power-sharing Northern government established then was sabotaged by, among others, people who today hold high office in Ireland North and South. The vigour with which those who now have absorbed the concepts of gradualism and accommodation, as they revise their original ambitions and deny self-evident facts about their own involvement in "the struggle" down the years, is remarkable.

Another Republican perspective is bitter: we lost the war, our side betrayed the cause by agreeing to a power-sharing arrangement in the state they vowed to dismantle. Or, to adopt a slogan painted today on the gable ends in Derry's working class Bogside area: "Sinn Féin Touts."

Because Taylor has filmed in the North over such a lengthy period, he can use, and did use adeptly in this documentary, his old footage as a storytelling device. After showing testimonies to former terrorists turned politicians, or simply older heads looking back at their inglorious youth, Taylor seeks the views of his interviewees on how they conducted their lives. It is compelling to listen to some participants express contrition on the one hand, and predictable yet disappointing to observe politicians avoid facing the full consequences of their past actions.

One of the sorrows of a depiction of Northern Ireland in recent decades is how little there is to admire in the political protagonists who now hold office. If Progressive Unionist Party leader David Ervine had lived and had the chance to participate in a power-sharing arrangement, say for ten years, it seems likely that his leadership would have given Northern Ireland's unionist community the stability it required. Shortly before his death, Ervine stated that what he and his PUP colleagues strove to do, which was made difficult by the continuation of the Ulster Volunteer Force's massacres, was "an exploration of the

future." His thinking was a necessary and highly desirable manifestation of a new form of unionism capable of balancing the North politically.

Standing at the hustings during his 1983 electoral success in West Belfast, Gerry Adams proudly announced: "Tíocfaidh ár Lá" (Our day will come), a slogan as closely associated with the IRA and its United Ireland objectives as "In God We Trust" is with the US dollar bill. Yet Adams, again in this documentary, denies ever being a member of the IRA. Martin McGuinness, who admits that he was an IRA volunteer until 1974, can be seen in archival footage chanting "the IRA" in Derry's Guildhall after votes were counted in an election in the 1980s. Electorally, even in the warped environment of Northern Ireland, that position was difficult to sustain. That is why John Hume outpolled McGuinness again and again in Derry and, after his historic electoral success in 1983, Adams failed to consistently hold his seat in West Belfast.

During one of Taylor's earliest visits to Derry, John Hume pointed out Martin McGuinness to him, saying that that was a man to watch. All these years later, Peter Taylor surmises that, with McGuinness having embraced parliamentarianism, the shift towards a new politics is so profound that there may indeed be, in some distant future, a United Ireland. If that means winning the war and if that was, in the estimation of some people, worth the lives lost, then it nevertheless must be conceded that constitutional politics ultimately succeeded where violence failed.

For a survey of the past two generations in the North of Ireland, Peter Taylor's book and film trilogy—Republicans, Loyalists and Brits—all three essential panels in the triptych, is an excellent place to start. Though it is a galling picture to behold.

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### Traditional Music in Review

*Continued from Previous Page*

The main musicians are fiddlers Laura Feddersen and Nathan Gourley. Brian Miller is on guitar, and as soon as we see Brian Miller involved in anything new, we figure it is quality.



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## Forever, Valentine

When I was senior at John Carroll University, Valentine's Day came rushing in on the arctic winds of a blizzard. Classes were canceled. The studious bravely set forth across the tundra to nestle into library corners. The weary stayed tucked into bed in darkened dorm rooms. The jaded lamented lost loves over cold cups of coffee.

Studious, but neither weary nor jaded, I felt restless. At the time, I was dating my future husband, so I felt secure enough that I did indeed have a valentine, but he was among the weary. My valentine wished to



Surely, Beachwood Place could provide us with a box of chocolate. Call it desperation or youthful "joie de vivre," but this snow capped outing proved to be a won-

derful valentine retreat.

At the risk of sounding too cheerful, I, admittedly, have always loved this holiday. As a little girl, my dad was my first and best valentine. Every year he surprised me on Valentine's Day with a frilly, heart-shaped box of chocolates. When my children were small, I continued the tradition. Each of my young valentines is greeted with a small gift at the breakfast table.

My teen-age daughter feels as though Valentine's Day and romance is overrated, a waste of a holiday. Certainly, others must share that viewpoint. My counterpoint, however, is that Valentine's

Day is not just a day to celebrate romance, but rather to celebrate love of self. If you are among those who have a partner with which to share the day, fabulous, if not, seek out a way to be good to yourself.

Truffles and chocolate Linzer hearts are festive, but other treats abound. Take an hour thumbing through that book of art on your coffee table. Discover the transcendent music

of Bach. Stir up a decadent cup of peppermint cocoa and whip fresh cream into your favorite oversized mug. Read or re-read for the hundredth time your favorite poem by William Butler Yeats.

If the love of Yeats and his muse Maud Gonne had lasted, eternity would not be graced with his words, "When you are old and grey and full of sleep . . . dream of the soft look your eyes had once and of their shadows deep." Sometimes, when longing is quenched, passion can melt like snow under a March sun.

I consider myself quite blessed; not only do I have a multitude of valentines, I have a deep appreciation, arguably love, of the arts and letters. A carefully placed word of my own crafting, the turn of a phrase in a Shakespearean sonnet, the use of light in a painting – things such as these bring me immense joy.

I have to thank my first valentines, my mother and father, for passing down their love of art and literature to me. Our shelves were filled with books.

Before I could read, my mother would share with me her favorite fairytales. At night, my imagination tended to run wild. My mother would collect me from my bed and hold me in her favorite chair, whispering stories of the Three Bears and the wayward Goldilocks until I settled back into sleep.

Though my parents mutually enjoyed literature, card games, art, and classical music, they also had their own interests and careers, independent of one another. My father enjoyed long bike rides through the city streets of Chicago. My mother enjoyed ceramics and jigsaw puzzles.

Though my parents respect and love one another deeply, they understand that to truly give yourself to another, you must have a deep understanding of self. In raising my brother and me, one thing, however, is certain – they are selfless.

I have always thought it a great gift to be able to write about one whom you love, whether a parent, spouse, child, or special friend. In some small way, when one pens a poem, composes a song, or paints a portrait, a moment, a love, is immortalized.

For my parents' fiftieth anniversary, I wrote a poem for them. Seven years later, the honesty in their relationship still rings true. To anyone who reads these words, may you find beauty

in your day, promise in nature, and hope in the many facets of love.

\*Susan holds a Master's degree in English from John Carroll University and a Master's degree in Education from Baldwin-Wallace University. She may be contacted at [suemangan@yahoo.com](mailto:suemangan@yahoo.com)

## Among the Autumn Leaves

"Sweetheart, be still  
We have visitors."

Tawny sycamore leaves Crunch  
While a buck joins his doe.

The lake, placid  
and oh, so blue  
reflects an image of the lovers,  
Huddled in fleece  
carefree eyes  
Dancing in the sun.

"Dear, remember hot, summer  
days  
when we sunbathed in the city?  
I wore a white bikini  
And your muscles were so  
sleek."

"Yes, but I prefer Autumn  
as each day  
Feels  
like  
Spring."



sleep the day away in his den.

In my heart, I knew he was as delighted to have me as I was thrilled to have him, but I wanted to celebrate. A free day that happened to fall on a holiday devoted to chocolate and love – my world was colored in pastel pink. My celebratory fervor dimmed when my penniless valentine admitted that, alas, he did not have a valentine for his beloved. Even my Shakespeare professor, Father Smith, gleefully passed out chocolate hearts to the clever students who could answer his most obscure questions about the famous bard during class the previous night.

Feeling glum, I sought out my friend who was less fortunate than I. Not only did she long for a valentine sweet, but moreover, a valentine with whom to share the treat. Rather than lament our unfortunate situations, we pooled together our babysitting money, tugged on our L.L.Bean boots and headed for the Fairmont bus stop.



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**The Forever Seven**  
*The Seven Men Who Signed the Proclamation*  
 By Anne Waters



## Sean Mac Diarmada

All seven Signatories on the Irish Proclamation were unique, none more so than Sean MacDiarmada, described as Passionate and dedicated, tirelessly committed to the pursuit of Irish Freedom. Gerard MacAtasney described Sean MacDiarmada as 'the mind of the revolution'. He is considered to have been one of the key architects and Michael Collins, a central figure in later years, described

him as 'a central transformative figure, spreading the Fenian gospel' (Ref 1)

Sean Mac Diarmada was born in County Leitrim in 1883. He was the third youngest of 10 children and lost his mother when he was nine years old. He was considered exceptionally clever in school, yet, despite two attempts, failed to achieve entry to college to study primary school teaching. A local teacher, P. McGauran, assisted him with his studies and is understood to



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have nurtured his love of Irish history.

The commemoration of the 1798 rebellion reportedly inspired his sense of nationalism. The spread of the GAA and the impact of witnessing the eviction of neighbouring families by Lord Tottenham from their land in County Leitrim, politicized Sean MacDiarmada long before he moved to Belfast for employment in 1905.

He secured work as a conductor on the city trams, a somewhat different career to the one he had visualized as a teacher. His earlier determination to obtain a college place was replaced by a nationalistic fervour. He joined the Dunganon Clubs organized by Denis McCullough and Bulmer Hobson and initiated a circuit of public meetings to entice new members.

Consequently, he lost his position on the trams but was soon in paid employment by the Dungannon Clubs.

In 1908, Tom Clarke, the oldest of the signatories, returned to Ireland from imprisonment in England. Meeting Tom Clarke had a profound effect on MacDiarmada and as the two became ever closer allies. Clarke began to see

the future of nationalism in the young Sean. Under Clarke's guidance MacDiarmada joined many groups, such as the IRB and the GAA as he continued his recruitment for Sinn Fein. According to Denis McCullough

'it was Mac Diarmada's energy and organising ability that was a significant factor in creating a group and guiding events to make the Rising possible.' (Ref 2)

The prime purpose of Clarke's newspaper, 'Irish Freedom', was the promotion of Republican and nationalist revolt. It preached that Ireland's future lay in separation from Britain. It fell to MacDiarmada to manage the paper and the demands reduced his travel throughout the country. Despite this he appeared on a platform protesting against George V visit to Ireland in 1911. Shortly af-

terwards, MacDiarmada became ill with polio, a disease that was potentially fatal in 1911. Months of recovery ensued and Sean, reputed to be as handsome as any film star, was left weakened and with a permanent limp. After recuperating for many months with relations of Kathleen Clarke, Tom Clarke's wife, he was back on the republican trail.

MacDiarmada's contribution to the Rising was an unceasing effort to gain recruits, which included travel to New Jersey to contact Irish Americans of like mind. He was instrumental in the formation of the Volunteers, the military wing of the Republican movement. His friendship with Bulmer Hobson subsequently became strained as Hobson wished to pursue a more political route to independence.

Mac Diarmada assisted in the gun-running operation in 1914 but in May 1915 he was arrested. His subsequent imprisonment caused him to miss the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa and the memorable oration at the graveside by Padraig Pearse. After his release, and by late 1915, MacDiarmada was Secretary of the Supreme Council of the IRB and part of the Military Council with Pearse, Plunkett and Ceannt. This necessitated MacDiarmada blending into the background and avoiding public speeches to ensure no attention was drawn to the planned Rising. He is understood to have believed that, 'It does not matter who gets the credit as long as the job is done to our liking.' (Ref 2)

Eoin McNeill was a powerful and influential nationalist figure and held sway over the actions of many Republicans. Arms were due to arrive from Germany on the ship The Aud. The pending consignment helped persuade Eoin McNeill to proceed with the Rising scheduled for Easter Sunday. The sinking of the Aud and the arrest of Roger Casement resulted in O'Neill cancelling his plans.

MacDiarmada was furious and, with the agreement of the other Signatories, insisted the Rising go ahead. It delayed by one day to Easter Monday, so volunteers could be notified. Communication being difficult, many failed to appear on the assigned day.

Due to his weak leg he was unable to march, but travelled to the GPO with Tom Clarke. Initially he was not involved in the actual fighting but as-

*Continued on next page*



Sean Mac Diarmada

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## Sean Mac Diarmada

*Continued from previous page*

sisted the injured. As the Rising progressed and, with Connolly wounded and Pearse exhausted, he increasingly took command. It was MacDiarmada who organized the evacuation of the

GPO to nearby Moore Street and who persuaded many of the rebels that surrender was the inevitable course of action. He knew most would be imprisoned but only a few would pay the ultimate sacrifice with their life.

'We who will be shot will die happy knowing there are still plenty of you

around who will finish the job. (Ref 2)' MacDiarmada almost escaped capture but it was not to be. His execution was delayed whilst Asquith, the British Prime minister, attempted to allay growing public disquiet over the executions.

MacDiarmada was not married but he did write that his girlfriend, Min Ryan, would 'in all probability have been my wife' (ref 2)

He was quite critical of the Church and their stance and is quoted as saying he faced death happily know-

ing that, 'The cause for which I die has been rebaptised during the past week by the blood of as good men as ever trod God's earth'. (Ref 2)

MacDiarmada worked unceasingly to ensure the Rising was successful. His commitment to Irish freedom was total and epitomized by his disdain for personal glory in that pursuit. He gave his life and his death unselfishly for Ireland. In one of his last letters he stated

'Posterity will judge us right from the effects of our action'.

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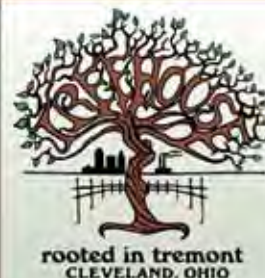
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**Six Nations Rugby:** Depending on when you are reading this, the annual European international tournament – The Six Nations Championship – has gotten under way. The tournament is contested between Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, France and Italy and typically runs during the months of February and March. This year's tournament kicks off on Friday February 6th, when England travels to Cardiff to take on Wales at the Millennium Stadium. Ireland plays their first game on Saturday February 7th, when they make the trip to Rome to play the Italians.

One thing that might hurt Ireland is the actual schedule. For a team renowned for having one of the most vocal home support, they will actually only play two of their five games at home this year. Importantly though, the potential title decider against the English is a home game on March 1st.

For those looking to watch the games, one of our long time sponsors, PJ McIntyre's Irish Pub on Cleveland's Westside, will be broadcasting all the games live. The schedule\*:

Italy v IRELAND, Saturday February 7th @ 9.30am EST  
IRELAND v France, Saturday February 14th @ noon EST  
IRELAND v England, Saturday March 1st @ 10am EST  
Wales v IRELAND, Saturday March 14th @ 9.30am EST  
Scotland v IRELAND, Saturday March 21st @ 9.30am EST

\*Be sure to visit [www.pjmcintyres.com](http://www.pjmcintyres.com) for full schedule.

**Rugby in Cleveland Area:** Rugby is growing immensely in the States, and in particular Northeast Ohio. The Cleveland Rovers are one of the most active and organized clubs in the region; they even have their own team bus – albeit a refurbished school bus. On Cleveland's east side, Cleveland Rugby Club (part of the old Eastern Suburb Rugby Club I believe) are a crosstown rival of the Rovers. On the ladies side there is the Iron Maidens, based on the west side.

In my years of involvement recruiting

players for Gaelic Football at high schools, I always came up against the old 'sorry you are too late, we already have rugby here'. In the Cleveland area, St Ignatius, St Edwards, Strongsville, Hudson, Avon and Brunswick all have HS teams playing the Northern Region of Ohio School Rugby (boys). On the girls side St Joseph's Academy, Lakewood, Hudson and Parma all have active programs.

**Rugby Facts:** #1 The sport is named after Rugby School, where the game was first played. The game is said to have been invented in 1823 when William Webb Ellis caught the ball while playing



a game of football (soccer) at school, and ran to the goal with it. Although there is doubt about whether this actually happened, Webb Ellis is still remembered as the sport's inventor; the winner of the Rugby Union World Cup, held every four years, receives the Webb Ellis Cup.

#2 Rugby is known for the use of an oval-shaped ball. However, this hasn't always been the case. Initially, the balls were plum-shaped, due to the shape of pigs' bladders that they were made from. They became more spherical towards the end of the 19th Century when they began being made using rubber inner tubes.

However, to distinguish the balls used in rugby from the balls used for soccer, Rugby School requested that their balls remained slightly egg-shaped. Over time, they have become more and more flattened to the shape that they are now. Oval balls are more suited to rugby than spherical balls as they are easier to catch, hold and run with and don't roll as far, so don't go out of play as often.

#3 As rugby balls and footballs were made from pigs' bladders and they had to be blown up by breath alone, it was possible to become ill if blowing up a diseased

bladder, and the wife of Richard Lindon, a man who made balls for Rugby School in the 19th Century, died after breathing in the air from too many bad bladders.

#4 The reigning Rugby Olympic champion is surprisingly the United States! The game of rugby has only been an Olympic sport four times and made its first and last Olympic Games appearances in Paris. The first time it was played was in 1900 during the Paris Olympics. It was played in the London Olympics of 1908, the 1920 Antwerp Olympics and the 1924 Paris Olympics.

As well as being the current Olympic champion, the United States is also the most successful nation, winning gold in both the 1920 and 1924 Olympic Games. A seven-a-side version of Rugby will make an appearance in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

#5 The first time a national anthem was sung before a sporting event happened, spontaneously, before a rugby game. New Zealand famously dances the Haka before the start of a game of rugby, a traditional war-dance which is sometimes seen as an attempt to intimidate their opposition. On 16th November 1905, they played Wales at Cardiff Arms Park. After New Zealand danced the Haka before the match, Wales responded by beginning to sing the Welsh national

anthem. The crowd picked up on this and joined in. Nowadays, before major sporting events, it is traditional for the national anthems of the countries being represented to be sung beforehand.

#6 Rugby Union World Cup tournaments are held every four years. The first tournament took place in 1987. It was hosted by Australia and New Zealand and was won by New Zealand.

#7 Rugby players mostly earn points by scoring tries, achieved by a player crossing the touchline with a ball and touching in to the ground. A try in rugby union is worth 5 points. However, a try was once worth nothing, instead it gave the player who achieved when the opportunity to "try" to score a goal, hence its name.

Goals were scored by placing the ball on the ground and kicking it over the crossbar between the two posts, therefore converting the try into a goal; a goal being worth 1 point. Nowadays, an attempt at a conversion still follows a successful try and gives players the opportunity to score an extra 2 points.

#8 The same whistle is used to kick off the opening game of every Rugby World Cup tournament. It is the Gil Evans

whistle and was first blown by Gil Evans, the Welsh referee overseeing a match between England and New Zealand in 1905.

Trivia: Last month's question: Robbie Keane's has had a highly successful career with the Republic of Ireland. He is currently the top goal scorer for his country with 65 goals in 138 appearances. Who is the 2nd top goal scorer? Niall Quinn scored 21 goals in 91 appearances. This month's question: Ireland currently plays their home rugby games at the newly renovated Aviva Stadium in Dublin; what was the stadium more commonly known as prior to the naming rights being sold?

\*Mark Owens is originally from Derry City, Ireland and has resided in the Cleveland area since 2001. Mark is the Director of Marketing for Skylight Financial Group in Cleveland. Send questions, comments or suggestions for future articles to Mark at: [markfromderry@gmail.com](mailto:markfromderry@gmail.com)

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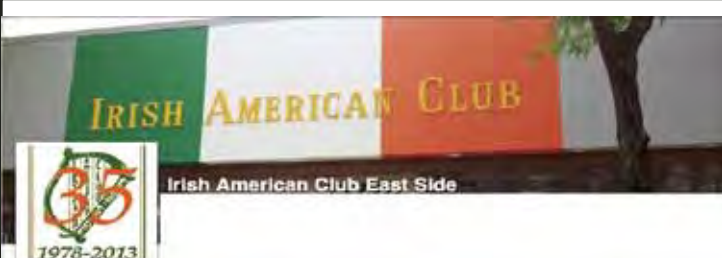
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## The Feast of St. Patrick, Part I

St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland; Cleveland Irish have been publicly celebrating his feast day since 1867. We were not the first Irish folk to have such a celebration; in 1607 St. Patrick's Feast Day was first listed on the Irish legal calendar, the beginning of a historical relationship between the Irish people and March 17th.

This relationship in its early construction contained an inherent contradiction of elements; the combination of the divine and the secular. It was destined to manifest in the tensions within the Irish people and define the collective and individual position within Irish and Irish American society. It is a social and historical indicator of the Irish people at home and of the Diaspora. It is St. Patrick's Day.

In 1631 Pope Urban VII officially added the Feast of St. Patrick to the calendar of the Catholic Church. Some scholars view this as an attempt to expand the Catholic Church by using the patron saint of Ireland to attract more parishioners. If that is correct, the Church amplified that attempt by increasing the stature of March 17th. Pope Innocent XI raised the Feast Day of St. Patrick to the rank of a double rite in 1687, thereby augmenting its liturgical importance. Outside of the pews, St. Patrick's Day was soon integrated into Irish custom and practice. Early celebrations were amalgamated with the custom of convening local fairs and markets. The religious observation was followed with dance, music, food, drink and sport. The hierarchy of the Church supported these festivals which could last three days. The Feast of St. Patrick was an established day of celebration for the Irish people by the end of the 17th century.

However, as go the Irish, so goes St. Patrick's Day. In 1695, following the victory of William

of Orange, the British Parliament banned the majority of the Catholic Saints' Days and St. Patrick's Day was not officially recognized. That did not eliminate the veneration of Ireland's patron saint. It did alter the cognitive and expressive nature of March

17th. St. Patrick was now becoming the symbolic figure of Irish identity and Irish nationalism in response to British oppression. Celebration, although unsanctioned, became more public. It shifted in part to a rite recognized and legitimized by

the people. St. Patrick's Day became a space that reaffirmed the dominant world view and power of the British Parliament while it simultaneously embraced the ethos of the Irish people. It was both banned and celebrated. This increased the participants of the Irish community who venerated the saint, crossing economic and religious boundaries. St. Patrick was Irish. However, the Irish people were not as homogenous as March 17th made them appear. Wolfe Tone would soon enough expose these contradictions for the Irish people.

The 18th century celebrations of St. Patrick's Day illustrate the transformation of St. Patrick to a national figure for Irish nationalism. This did not negate the established connection to the Catholic Church. However, Irish Protestants began to celebrate the Catholic Feast Day. Official governmental events were held at Dublin Castle and attended by the Anglo-Irish elite. Protestant representatives of the government would don shamrocks while dancing under the British flag. That apparent contradiction was surmountable by the general sense of nationalism shared by the Irish people. Irish fraternal societies would hold formal functions. The masses

would commemorate the day as well, focusing on Church and family gatherings. March 17th had become a cultural universal in Ireland. It was interwoven into every fabric of Irish society and re-affirmed an Irish identity. The Rebellion of 1798 was an expression of the nationalism that was the Irish identity. It was the convergence of sentiment from various spheres within Irish society.

The retaliation for the yearning for freedom was the Act of Union in 1801, which splintered



any chance at a collective Irish self. British Prime Minister William Pitt attempted to resolve the "Irish Question" with purchased legislation written in religious terms. The Irish Parliament was abolished and Irish Catholics experienced a denial of liberty. The religious divide was permanently injected into the conceptualization of Irishness. St. Patrick and his feast day became a part of the battle for the Irish identity.

The Anglican Church of Ireland and its followers attempted to adopt the patron saint and the Irish Catholic Church and its followers fought to maintain its sacred connection to the saint that had existed legally since 1607. Irish societies of both faiths held dinners and the Irish people continued to have family and public gatherings on March 17th. This separate veneration continued in the years preceding the Famine.

During the Great Hunger, over a million died in Ireland and just as many immigrated. St. Patrick's Day celebrations also ceased for the majority of the Irish people. The religious and legal schism that exacerbated the death and disease amongst the Irish Catholic population made Feast Days an absurdity for the majority of the population. However, St.

*Continued on Page 16*




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## P.S., I Love Leap Year

Oh, the very romantic Irish man and his silly, but fun-loving Yankee girlfriend! It is the stuff that movies are made of! Being Valentine's

Day this month, it is a fine moment to look at love and courting Irish style; as an added bonus, get an Irish romantic comedy guide as well, just in time for the big day!

So, the Irish do not have the reputation of the French or Ital-

ian men as romantics. Yet, the American films do not feature those European types as the love interests of the American woman. What is it that they see that we really want?

Is it the humorous storyteller instead of the amorous Latin?

Movies would have you believe that is the case, from "High Spirits", where a ghostly Liam Neeson seduces an American hotel guest, to the latest Irish-American romantic comedy that I have seen, "Leap Year". In speaking of the Irish-American romance genre, the one film that should never be left without mention is "The Quiet Man", which paired John Wayne and the fiery Irish woman, Maureen O'Hara. It is a long tradition.

As a participant in this cultural experiment, I can tell you that there are real differences in the courtship style of the Irish man as compared to the American one. However, it is difficult to speak in broad generalities since there are a few distinct types of available men in Ireland.

One type that is very popular is the bachelor farmer. He is usually beyond the typical age for marriage and has acquired some rough habits in his solitude, like using baling twine for a belt. This type is a tricky one to consider. Those previously mentioned rough habits can be hard to break, even when the heart is willing. He is also very unlikely to give up the farm. The local ladies are very well aware of this and that is why Ireland still hosts the largest and one of the few remaining matchmaking festivals. The Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival is held every September in Co. Clare, attracting many bachelor farmers and potential dates.

The type of Irish man that you are more likely to encounter is a little more urban than his farming counterpart. You will see that immediately, because he will be in a city pub. The bachelor farmer only leaves his village under great duress.

The type that could endure a city is also the type that might have even immigrated. Sure, they might want to take a girl back to the "old sod" and see if she is able to bale hay. But that should not be a big deterrent, after all, they left the farm once; they are open to change. These city types are also far more



Don't  
Forget  
Us!



likely to help with the laundry.

The culture of Ireland has changed so much in the twenty some years, and in that, so have the ways of romance and marriage. Divorce did not become legal in Ireland until 1995, think of that! Gender equality is coming slowly but surely to the country. It is still not uncommon to see the men at the pub while the women are back at home getting the dinner. That is why it is so important that anyone considering an endeavor, such as a cross-cultural relationship, needs to go and spend time in the potential partner's habitat. It will explain a lot. Not only will it explain things, but it will show the way things are. Don't expect them to change too much; they won't.

With all that said, what is the attraction? I seem to have encountered quite a few movies that feature an Irish man and an American woman as the leads. "P.S. I Love You", a very popular book in Ireland before it became a film, was written by the former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern's daughter, Cecelia Ahern. Add to that list "The Matchmaker", "Laws of Attraction" and "Leap Year" and there are more movies that feature the Irish Romeo than his other European counterparts.

The Irish in those films are first of all, charming. They are down-to-earth, good listeners, relaxed and see what is really important in life. The accent and ability to turn a phrase do not do them any harm either. They are also always funny and good storytellers.

A few years ago, an article examined what traits couples around the world valued most in a partner. Americans value traits like kindness the most. For the Irish, the most important was that their partner be someone with a good sense of humor, that they could have a laugh with.

A sense of humor is definitely important, especially if you intend to stay married. While divorce is legal, it is still not the "done" thing. The Irish have become more

tolerant of the formerly unheard of practice of living together before marriage. Many think that it is in the hope that couples know each other and can make a commitment.

The seriousness of the commitment itself also shows up in the age that they do marry. They marry later than American couples. The average age of the Irish bride is 32 and the American average is 27 years old. The Irish groom's average age is 34 and the American man is an average of 29 years old. It is a serious commitment undertaken by people with a good sense of humor. This fact certainly shows in the weddings themselves. There are few occasions more fun and filled with craic than a good Irish wedding.

So yes, the Irish are known for whisky, songs and stories. But they need to pay attention to the message that Hollywood is sending; they have a sense of romance. Don't be shy on Valentine's Day, it is a day for the Irish too! You will always have the movies.

## Cleveland Irish

*Continued from page 14*

Patrick's Day festivities did not disappear. Indicative of the economic disparities connected to religious affiliation, more affluent individuals were able to continue to have lush gatherings on March 17th. The elite government affairs held at Dublin Castle and attended by Anglo-Irish society did not pause in deference to the last rites of the impoverished. It was a tale of two cities, one Catholic and the other Protestant.

Next Month, we'll talk about the celebration crossing the ocean to America.

\*Francis McGarry is the President of the Irish American Club East Side and the Bluestone Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. He can be reached at w.francis.mcgarry@gmail.com

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# Things to Do and See in County Armagh

by Linda Fulton Burke



Answers on Page 26

## ACROSS

- 1 Have \_\_\_ or dinner at the elegant Brownlow House in Lurgan Park.  
 2 Spend a day exploring the outdoors at the \_\_\_ Neagh Discovery Centre in Craigavon.  
 5 Take the kids to C J's \_\_\_ Park in Portadown where they can touch or hold a lot of the animals, including many reptiles.  
 8 Visit the Benburb Heritage \_\_\_ to discover history of the area.  
 10 Stop by the \_\_\_ of the Armagh Franciscan Friary which was founded in 1263.  
 12 Visit St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Armagh and look for St. Patrick's \_\_\_\_.  
 13 Go bird \_\_\_ at RSPB Portmore Lough near Craigavon.  
 15 Do some walking, running, orienteering in Markethill's Gosford Forest \_\_\_\_.  
 17 Watch a short movie in the

domed \_\_\_ at the Armagh Observatory, a scientific research institute in Armagh Astropark.

18 Explore Edenvilla Park and Secret \_\_\_ in Portadown.

19 Research your \_\_\_ history using millions of records from Armagh Ancestry.

22 Armagh's Royal Irish Fusiliers \_\_\_ celebrates the history of the Royal Irish Fusiliers since 1793.

23 Spend some time browsing through the medieval book collections at the Armagh Public \_\_\_\_.

25 Explore the great \_\_\_ at Wetlands Way in Portadown.

26 Archbishop Robinson commissioned The Obelisk to celebrate his association with the Duke of Northumberland on Knox's Hill with stunning \_\_\_ of the countryside.

## DOWN

1 Stop in at the Navan Centre for a living history presentation of Ulster.

3 Tour the Ring of Gullion near Crossmaglen to see dolmens, cairns, chambered \_\_\_, ancient churches, etc.

4 Take a guided \_\_\_ of No. 5 Vicar's Hill, a gem of a museum, in Armagh.

6 Take a guided tour or see and enactment at the Palace Stables Heritage Centre, the former home of the Archbishop of the Church of \_\_\_\_.

7 Make the climb to Armagh's Navan \_\_\_, site of the historical structure, Emain Macha, the seat of the ancient kings of Ulster.

8 Explore the \_\_\_ in the Annaghmare Court Tomb at Crossmaglen.

9 Take the children for a \_\_\_ lunch with a day at the play park or go for a lovely walk in Loughgall Country Park.

11 Armagh County Museum, designed like a small Greek temple, reveals the rich and varied history of the county from \_\_\_ times to present-day.

14 Attend a mass at cozy St. Malachy's \_\_\_ in Armagh.

15 Discover the mysteries of the Universe when you visit Armagh's Astronomy Centre and \_\_\_\_.

16 Get some Holy Water from St. Mochua's \_\_\_ in Keady.

18 Have a family picnic in The Mall, a fabulous \_\_\_ space right in the center of the city of Armagh.

19 Visit The Church of Ireland's St. Patrick's Cathedral \_\_\_ by St. Patrick in 445 AD in Armagh.

20 Take in dinner and a show at Armagh's Market \_\_\_ Theatre.

21 Complete a Treasure Trail following the directions with \_\_\_ to solve around the best historic and scenic sights of a location.

24 Take a peaceful walk along the canal at Money Penny \_\_\_ in Portadown.



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## Living With Lardie

by Richard Lardie



## Lardie's Going Golfing Part 2

In last month's issue we had our dubious hero about to tee off in the tournament to determine the champion golfer of The US Armed Forces Europe. I know you all have been holding your breath. Take a deep breath, here we go.

When I stepped up to the tee the captain from Hanau looked at me like I had somehow besmirched the reputation of the Army and the game of golf at the same time. He wanted to know if I had any golf clothes or civies to wear. "Nothing appropriate," I said.

"You think what you are wearing is appropriate." He snapped

I decided I did not like him.

We were off next so I quit talking to him. I had to be careful because I only had 3 balls. My first drive went right down the middle and the spoon put the next shot near the green. I chipped on and 2 putted for a bogey. Wow, I was overjoyed. The Captain had a little trouble and conceded the hole picking up while he was laying 6 and still not on the green. I found a ball while we were looking for the Captains ball and now had 4 balls. I won't bore you with the round but I played decent golf and when we finished the 12th hole the match was over. I beat him, 7 and 6 (I was seven holes up with 6 to play).

The Captain was fit to be tied. He stammered something about cheating and wouldn't even shake the hand I offered. Too bad for him. He was going home and I was playing tomorrow. He was a horrible golfer and did not belong in the flight we were in. I signed my card, received my info for the next day's match and headed out to find my ride. They wouldn't let me walk back through the club so I walked around the

side and found my deuce and a half waiting for me. I was beginning to feel important. I just might win this thing.

The next morning was better. The truck to division only had the driver so I got to ride in the front. Still bouncy but at least I was on a seat and not a bench. He dropped me at the course and I walked around back and headed for the snacks. I had a little time before my match. An officer came up and asked me if I was specialist Lardie. He told me to report to the tournament office. I went and was informed that a complaint had been filed against me by the Captain. He said I had lied about my skill level. I was informed that I had been reassigned to the Championship flight. I took a look at my scorecard and if I had finished the round I would probably have had a 97 or so. The complaint meant the Captain won our match by default and was playing in our old flight today. I protested the complaint but if you are an enlisted man and it's your word against a Captain, it's a non-starter.

My next match was against the returning USAFEUR Champion. He was an enlisted man and great golfer who had played at Ohio State with Jack Nicklaus before he was drafted. He took one look at me and asked what I shot yesterday. "It would have been about a 97" I said. "But I won my match 7 and 6."

"Why are you in championship flight?" He asked. Then he got this wide eyed look. "Are you the guy who beat Captain so and so."

"Yup, that's me." I responded.

He started laughing so hard I thought he would fall over. He then told me that the Captain was the biggest jerk this side of the Atlantic. All the golfers in Germany had gotten the biggest kick out of the fact that I had walked up,

in combat gear, with an old set of raggedy clubs and beat him silly. The tale of his loss had already reached the states and his old school friends. I have a feeling the more that story got told, the more raggedy I looked.

He asked what I did in the Army and I said I was a Morse code radio operator in the 12 Cavalry. "How about you, what do you do?" I asked.



'Oh, I'm a private first class. I just play golf with top brass, mostly colonels and generals. They all want to try to beat me.' He was dressed to the 9's and I was in my combat gear but we had a good time and the match was over on the 12th hole again. I lost. 7 and 6. I saw the Captain as I walked to the parking lot. He had lost his match that day also. He didn't look happy. I thought he was going to chase us down for not saluting him.

Then I figured he was probably mad because I had a driver and he didn't. I waved to him as my driver ground the gears and pulled my deuce and a half out of that private club. I was living the life.





IT'S 2015...February, a time of promise, hope, renewal, resolution...a time to remember Saint Brigid [1 February] and the celebration of Imbolc, the Celtic advent of spring, with its thoughts of warmer days ahead.

As you might remember, St. Brigid of Ireland or Kildare, [Cill-Dara/the church of the oak], was born in c. 451 AD in Faughart, Co. Louth near Dundalk. She lived to the fine old age of seventy-plus years. Famous for founding several convents, Brigid, along with Pádraig and Colmcille, is part of Ireland's great holy troika of saints.

Traditionally, there's hardly an Irish home that doesn't have a Brigid cross hanging over a doorway. Often pictured with a heifer or holding a lamb, Brigid, supposedly influenced by St. Pádraig himself, is remembered as the 'goddess' of fire, knowledge, and kindness, especially to animals. Even today, the ritual of burning last year's simple reed cross(es), of making new ones and then of blessing them with Holy Water, is still a custom honoured in many Irish homes.

Beside Brigid, however, my thoughts flash back to February, 1916. I wonder what Pádraig Pearse and Éamonn Ceannt were thinking, as both played key roles in events soon to unfold in just a handful of weeks.

These two men were dedicated revolutionaries, fearless adherents to an Irish-Ireland, leaders of a group of burgeoning Irish Volunteers and avant-garde political activists. Most know of Pearse. He was an innovative schoolmaster, a poet & writer, a Gaelic-language proponent, newspaper editor, gifted orator, and frequently called the Father of the 1916 Revolution.

Ceannt, on the other hand, though as intimately involved in the Easter Rising as Pearse,

played a less visible public role. Like Pearse, the Galwegian cum Dubliner was also a dedicated Gaelic Leaguer and member of the secret, oath-bound Irish Republican Brotherhood. As a member of the IRB's covert, three-man military council [along with Pearse and Joe Plunkett], he helped map out the Rising's military strategy, was a fluent Irish speaker, nationalist writer and talented musician. Tragically, though, both men, while still in their mid-thirties, were executed by the British government for their roles in the 1916 Revolt.

The two, both signatories of the Irish Proclamation, were exceptional leaders and great heroic Irish historical personalities. As you might guess, Pearse was familiar to me, but it wasn't until I began researching the life of Tom Cullen, the subject of my latest book, that I became better acquainted with Ceannt.

Éamonn, serving as Tom's commanding officer, was the OC of the Dublin Brigade's 4th Battalion, headquartered at South Dublin Union on the western side of the city during Easter Week. Though greatly outnumbered by occupying British Forces, Ceannt and his men fought tenaciously during the six days of the Rebellion. But eventually, on Sunday, 30 April, the 4th Battalion surrendered to the English after receiving written orders to do so by Pearse and James Connolly, the Rebellion's two principle leaders.

Mary Gallagher, in her recently published biography on Ceannt, quotes from several letters he wrote while imprisoned during his final hours of life on the evening of 7 May and the early morning of 8 May, 1916. From these, the reader gains valuable insights into Ceannt's thinking, the mind of a determined revolutionary and resolute Irish republican.

"I leave for the guidance of other Irish revolutionaries who may tread the path which I have trod this advice, never to treat with the enemy, never to surrender at his mercy but to fight to a finish. I see nothing gained but grave disaster caused by the surrender which has marked the end of the Irish Insurrection of 1916 — so far at least as Dublin is concerned."

But the quote of his that I cherish flies in the face of those present-day Irish politicians arrogant enough to think that the men and women of '16 were 'traitors to their own cause', and participants in events that were 'completely unnecessary.' Ceannt unconditionally hoped, "...in the years to come, Ireland will honour those who risked all for her honour at Easter in 1916."

So, stop your dithering Mr. Kenny. All these prevarications and mindless delays of your current coalition government in organising a fitting, heartfelt tribute to the events and individuals surrounding Ireland's thrust for freedom is a clear betrayal to those, like Éamonn Ceannt, who fought for Ireland's independence back almost one-hundred years ago.

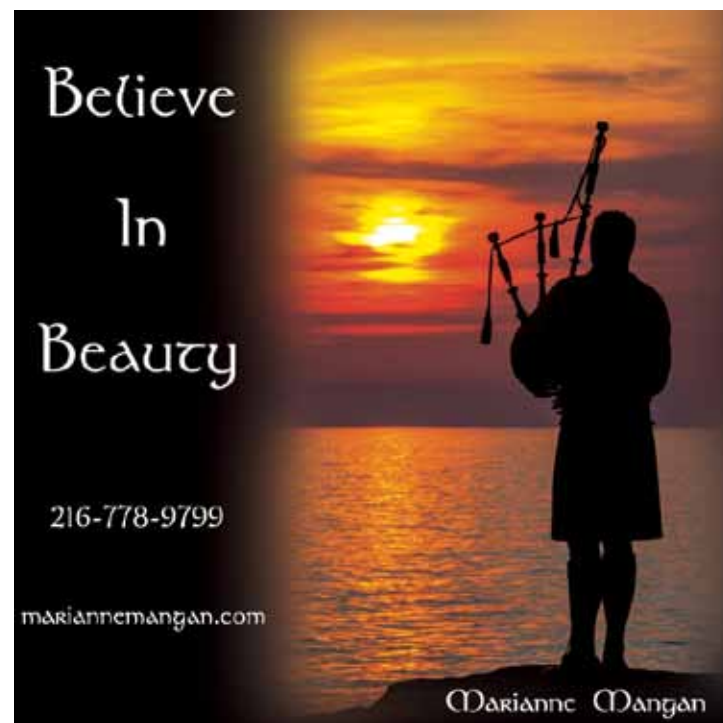
As I recently stated in a letter published in The Irish Echo: "Though it may be too late, I'd propose several Easter, 2016 amendments. Bring the 1916

Relatives Association into the fold with honour and importance. Finish the Moore Street revitalisation for an educational/historical centre. Complete a commemorative statue featuring the seven signatories and position it outside the GPO. Retract any invitation to British royals to attend Dublin ceremonies. If they are so keen on honouring Irish independence, suggest they stage their own ceremony in London. I'm sure one or two Irish might attend."

Finally, to quote an earlier piece of Ceannt's writing taken

from The Irish Volunteer's [newspaper] inaugural edition of 7 February 1914, "Be skilled in the art of war so that there may be no war. Live plainly so that you may be strong and hardy. Be not given to vain boasting. Do not tarry long in taverns, nor take counsel with those who would wish you ill. Keep your own counsel. Be simple, be efficient, be noble, and the world of Ireland is yours...."

Up '16, no royals and Éire Abú, Cathal



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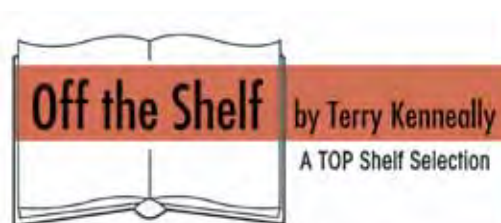


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## Nora Webster

By Colm Toibin  
Scribner ISBN 978-1-4391-3833-5 373 pp 2014

Colm Toibin is regarded as one of Ireland's most gifted writers. Nora Webster is his eighth novel. Previously reviewed in this space was his highly praised Brooklyn, soon to be released as a motion picture. Nora Webster is the story of a woman's struggle to find herself after her husband's premature death from cancer.

The setting is Enniscorthy, a town in southeastern Ireland, in County Wexford. Her husband of 21 years, Maurice, was a well-respected schoolmaster in the town. The couple had four children, Nora is a simple woman who never accomplished anything unusual in her life. She raised a family but never achieved any position of importance, factors which make the story that much more believable and appealing to the reader. She has no savings, receives a small pension, and lives in a very quiet town. The town folk all know Nora's story and attempt to allay her grieving by calling on her with expressions of sympathy. Nora becomes uncomfortable because she wants no one's pity.

As one might imagine given the description of Nora's family, the struggles/

crisis, which she faces as a widow, make up a good portion of the story. These include her return to the working world after many years remaining at home and the impact it has on her family, the secrecy of Nora's older son who has developed a stutter since his father's

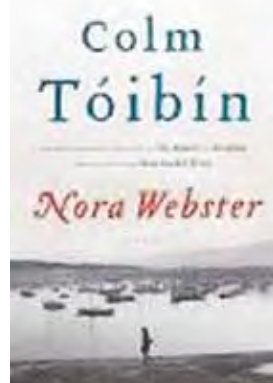
illness, and the disappearance of her activist daughter into the protests following the Bloody Sunday riots.

The turning point in her life is her discovery of a private passion for singing, which takes place after her meeting with a storied singing teacher in town. This elderly former nun awakens Nora's love of music.

The epiphany she experiences leads her away from the memory of Maurice and away from her life with him.

Nora Webster is an Irish love story that recommends itself to a wide audience. This writer rates it a TOP SHELF read.

\*Terrence J. Kenneally is an attorney and owner of Terrence J. Kenneally & Assoc. Co. in Rocky River, Ohio. He is an attorney who defends insurance companies and their clients throughout the state of Ohio. Terrence received his Masters Degree from John Carroll University and teaches Irish Studies at Holy Name High School.



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By J. Michael Finn



## Liam Mellows

Liam (William Joseph) Mellows is one of the lesser known members of the Irish republican movement. Although he died at the young age of 30, he managed to become a major player in republican politics.

Mellows was born May 25, 1892 at Hartshead Military Barracks, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire, England, to William Joseph Mellows, a British Army Sergeant and Sarah Jordan, of Inch, County Wexford, Ireland. Mellows grew up in Wexford. His family moved to County Dublin in 1895 when Sergeant Mellows was transferred there. Young Liam remained in Wexford with his grandfather due to ill health. As a youth he attended the military school in Wellington Barracks in Cork and the Portobello garrison school in Dublin, but ultimately refused a military career, much to his father's disappointment. Instead he worked as a clerk for several Dublin retail firms.

He was a nationalist from an early age. In 1911, at the age of 19, Mellows met Thomas Clarke, prominent member of the Irish

Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in Dublin. Clarke recruited him into Na Fianna Éireann, an organization of young republicans started by Bulmer Hobson and Countess de Markievicz. Given his military school training, Clarke thought he would make a good trainer for the younger boys in the organization. Mellows was proposed for the post of Organizer and traveling instructor. In this role, he rode his bicycle everywhere around Ireland. He was soon promoted to Captain in the Na Fianna. On April 7, 1911 he was sworn in as a member of the IRB.

Mellows was organizing Gaelic sports in Tuam, County Galway in September 1913 when he was introduced to James Connolly. He was deeply impressed by Mellows and told his daughter Nora, "I have found a real man." Mellows was called back to Dublin on November 25, 1913. He was active in the IRB and was a founding member of the Irish Volunteers, being brought onto its Organizing Committee to strengthen the Na Fianna representation.

He was arrested and jailed on

several occasions under the Defense of the Realm Act (DORA). He participated, as did other Na Fianna members, in the Howth gun-smuggling on July 26, 1914. His group, pulling a hand-cart full of rifles and ammunition, were involved in a confrontation with the British Army at Clontarf. They managed to escape to Dublin, stashing the arms at the home of the Countess de Markievicz. Several days later the guns were



Liam Mellows

loaded on a tour bus in Bray and then distributed in Dublin from a fleet of taxis.

Mellows was then sent to Galway, and made his base at Athenry.

He met Sean MacDiarmada there and was appointed as election scrutinizer at Tuam. Mellows started a training group at Kynoch's Fort, south Galway, recruiting men from miles around. He was with volunteers at Tullamore when they were attacked by machine-guns and he was again arrested. The British took him by train to Arbour Hill Prison, before he was shipped to Reading Jail in England.

Escaping from Reading Jail with the help of James Connolly's daughter Nora and his brother Barney, Mellows returned to Ireland disguised as a priest to command the Western Division of the IRA during the 1916 Easter Rising. Galway was the only county outside of Dublin to respond to the Rising. He led roughly 700

Volunteers in attacks on Royal Irish Constabulary stations at Oranmore, and Clarinbridge in County Galway, taking over the town of Athenry. However, his men were very badly armed and supplied and they dispersed after a week when British troops and the cruiser Gloucester were sent west to attack them.

On Christmas Day 1916, Mellows escaped to the United States aboard a British munitions ship sailing from Liverpool. In New York, Mellows went to work in the office of John Devoy's newspaper, Gaelic American, and served as an organizer for the Friends of Irish Freedom.

In the US, Mellows was under constant surveillance by the US Secret Service as they were attempting to prove an Irish conspiracy to aid Germany in the First World War. Mellows was arrested attempting to return to Ireland using forged seaman's papers. He was charged with conspiring to bring about a rebellion in Ireland.

Mellows was detained without trial in the Tombs Prison in New York. He was eventually released on bail. He then went to work on the docks as a casual laborer before getting a teaching job at the school run by Irish Carmelite nuns in Manhattan. His case was not resolved until May 1919, when Mellows was fined \$250 for using false seaman's papers.

He continued to work for Devoy and helped to organize Éamon de Valera's visit to America in 1919-1920, when Harry Boland became ill. He served as de Valera's advance man to promote the visit. In Ohio, he visited Cleveland, Youngstown, Columbus and Cincinnati in advance of de Valera.

He returned to Ireland to become the IRA's Director of Purchasing during the Irish War of Independence, responsible for buying arms. At the 1918 General Election, he was elected to the First Dáil as a Sinn Féin candidate for both Galway East and North Meath.

Mellows considered the Anglo-Irish Treaty to be a betrayal of the Irish Republic, saying, in the Dáil Treaty Debates of 1921-22: "We do not seek to make this country a materially great country at the

expense of its honor in any way whatsoever. We would rather have this country poor and indigent, we would rather have the people of Ireland eking out a poor existence on the soil; as long as they possessed their souls, their minds, and their honor."

Liam Mellows was one of the more strident republicans on the approach to the Irish Civil War. In June 1922, he and fellow republicans Rory O'Connor, Joe McKelvey and Richard Barrett (among others) entered the Four Courts, which had been occupied by anti-Treaty forces since April. They were bombarded by pro-Treaty Free State forces and surrendered after two days. Mellows had a chance to escape but did not take it. Imprisoned without trial by the Free State in Mountjoy Jail, Liam Mellows, Rory O'Connor, Joe McKelvey and Richard Barrett were taken from their cells and executed by firing squad on December 8, 1922, likely in reprisal for the shooting of Dáil member Sean Hales.

Mellows is buried in Castle town cemetery, County Wexford, a few miles from Arklow. An annual commemoration ceremony is held at his grave site. Mellows is remembered by statues in Eyre Square in Galway City, in the official name of the Irish Defense Forces army barracks at Renmore (Dún Uí Maoilíosa, that is, Mellows's Fort), and in the naming of Mellows Bridge in Dublin. He is also remembered in the names of two hurling clubs. Mellows Avenue in Arklow is named in his honor, as is Liam Mellows Street in Tuam, County Galway. He is quoted as saying, "The republic stands for truth and honor. For all that is noblest in our race. By truth and honor, principle and sacrifice alone will Ireland be free."

\*J. Michael Finn is the Ohio State Historian for the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Division Historian for the Patrick Pearse Division in Columbus, Ohio. He is also Chairman of the Catholic Record Society for the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio. He writes on Irish and Irish-American history; Ohio history and Ohio Catholic history. You may contact him at

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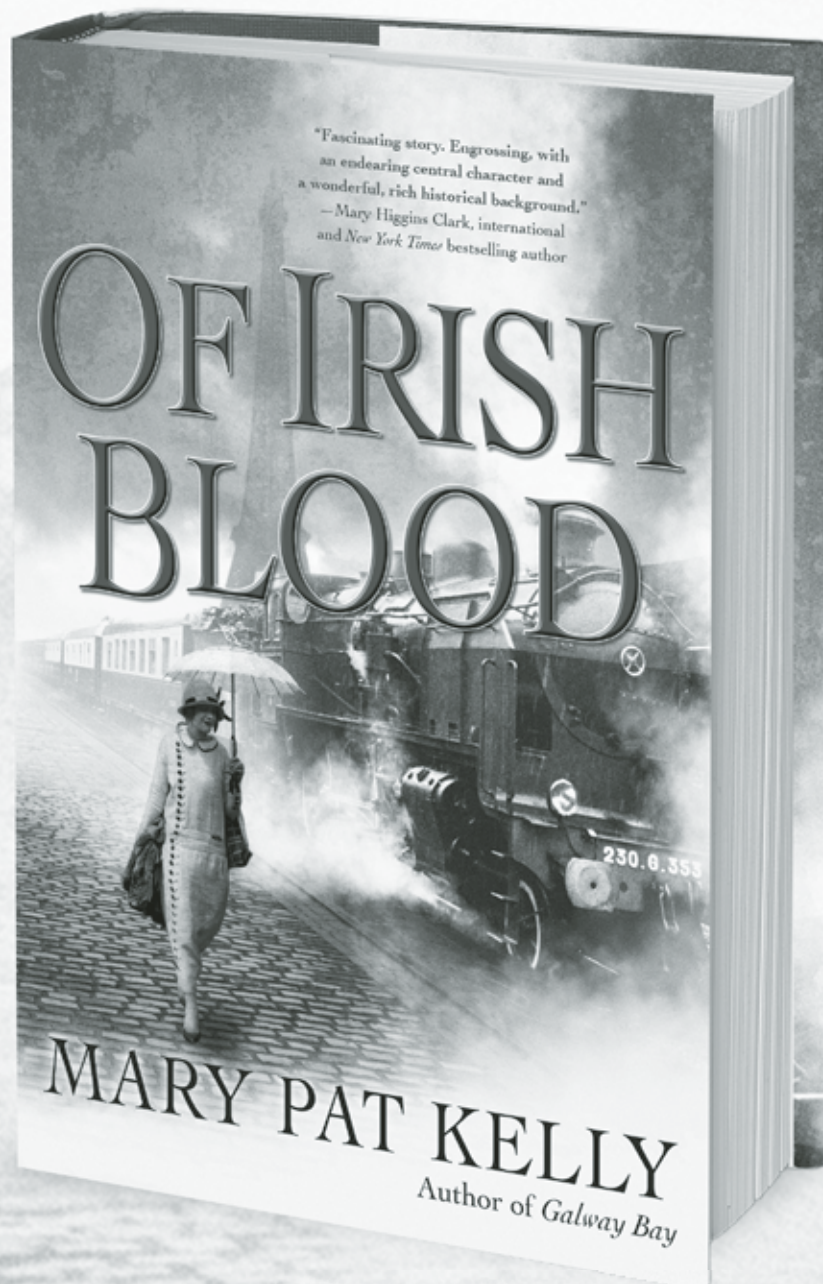
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Live music entertainment every Sunday. Traditional Irish Session 1st Sunday of ea/month, Happy Hour Monday-Friday 4 to 7. 1306 West 65th Street Cleveland 44102 216-281-6500

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Jimmy-O, 27th - Becky Boyd & Claudia Schieve. 1114 Center St. Cleveland 44113-2406 216.696.6968. [www.flatironcafe.com](http://www.flatironcafe.com)

**Treehouse**  
8th - Chris Allen, 15th - Hip-pie Jukebox Flashback, 22nd - Walkin' Cane. 820 College Avenue, Cleveland, 44113 [www.treehousecleveland.com](http://www.treehousecleveland.com)

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## Columbus

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### Tara Hall

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17801 Detroit Avenue Lakewood 44107 (216) 521-2540 [www.beckcenter.org](http://www.beckcenter.org)

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## Medina

### Sully's

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**Hooley House Montrose** - Opening February 16th! 20th- Matt Johnson Piano Fiasco, 21st - Pop Culture, 27th - Almost Famous, 28th - Players Club. 145 Montrose West Avenue Copley, Oh 44321 [www.1funpub.com](http://www.1funpub.com)

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## Euclid

### Irish American Club East Side

6th - Smrdel's Luau, 13th - Shifty Drifters @ Stuffed Cabbage Dinner, 20th & 21st - Murphy's Irish Arts Hooley, 27th - Donegal Doggs @ Fish Fry. 28th - Kick-Off St. Pats w Whiskey Limerick. PUB: 7:30 - 10:30. IACES 22770 Lake Shore Blvd. Euclid, 44123. 216.731.4003 [www.eastsideirish.org](http://www.eastsideirish.org)

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## An Gorta Mor- A 'Comedy'?

by Terrence J. Kenneally

It was recently reported in the Irish Times that British television network Channel 4 had commissioned Irish scriptwriter Hugh Travers to write a comedy dealing with the Famine of 1845-51, probably the most horrific event in Irish history. Over 800,000 people died from starvation and related diseases during the famine. It is generally believed by most historians that the two most important causes of the famine were a potato blight, which affected the potato crop in Ireland during that period of time, and the inefficiency of the British government in dealing with the situation. The horrors of 1845-51 triggered mass emigration from the island that has still not recovered to pre-famine levels.

The announcement of the proposed comedy has evoked a strong negative response in Ireland. Historian Tim Pat Coogan, whose most recent book was "The Famine Plot", stated, "We could all be pleasantly surprised, but my initial reaction is one of dismay. Would they make a comedy series about the Holocaust? It really does

defeat your powers of comprehension."

The response has been swift and furious with politicians speaking out at the plans and a petition to stop its production having been signed by over 30,000 people as of this writing.

For his part, the script writer of the comedy, titled "Hungry", has stated, "They say comedy equals tragedy plus time. I don't want to do anything that denies the suffering that people went through, but Ireland has always been good at black humor".

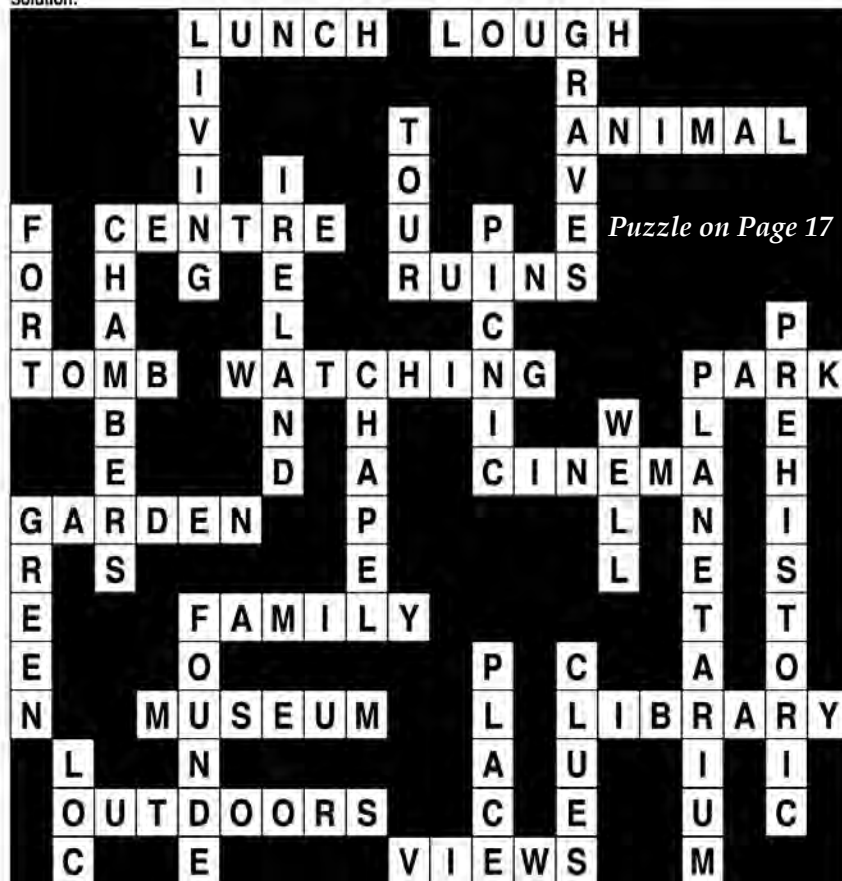
Historian Fin Dwyer, in a recent IrishHistory podcast, offered another perspective on the issue, "In terms of history, I find the idea that the famine is off-limits deeply problematic. It certainly does not bode well for the future of Irish history. The implications of saying the famine is off limits to comedy is that it should remain the preserve of historians."

It is uncertain whether the Channel 4 proposal will come to fruition. Even if it does, it may be a disaster. For one whose great grandparents emigrated to this country during the famine, the calamity holds a special significance. In my heart I feel that some events are so tragic because of the human suffering involved, that it is off limits to a comedic production.

## Things to Do and See in County Armagh

by Linda Fulton Burke

Solution:



Puzzle on Page 17

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# Johnny Kilbane

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99 years ago, on February 22, 1912, Johnny Kilbane, a son of Cleveland's "Angle" neighborhood, in a 20 round bout, became The Featherweight Champion of the World. A title held longer than any other featherweight in the history of boxing.

**The Old Angle Tavern**  
Ohio City 1848 West 25th  
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## Katherine Mary the V

By Katherine Boyd



## A Study In Black And White

My great great grandmother was able to bring her family to the United States thanks to fashion; she was a dressmaker. And through her craft, she cobbled together enough money to bring herself and three young daughters to Boston after her husband died and left her a widow.

Even though they were poor and lived in the Roxbury section of Boston, the daughters always looked stunning. What they wore-- dresses their mother made with her own hands-- was an advertisement for her business. Those dresses put food on the table and a roof over their heads.

I never knew why I cared so much about each outfit I put on. Or why my mother always dressed to the nines and pored over glossy fashion magazines to keep up on the latest trends. Sometimes I felt ashamed that I cared about something many consider frivolous and vain.

But when I recently learned that it was because of fashion that my ancestors were able to come to America, a huge weight lifted from my shoulders.

My great grandmother's photograph hung in my childhood bedroom for years. My mother hung it there when I turned 13.

"This is Catherine Mary Gillis," my mother explained. "She was my grandmother. So she's your great grandmother. She was a very stylish woman. My mother was named after her. And you are named after

my mother. So that makes you Katherine Mary the III."

I used to lie on my bed and study that photo. My great grandmother looked to be about 18. She had brilliant brown hair pinned-up in Gibson Girl style, which was all the rage at the turn of the 20th century.

Her face was pretty. But what really caught my eye



**Mary Gillis with daughter Catherine Gillis undated photo**

was the gown she was wearing. It was stunning. The photo was black and white, but still I could discern the gown was made of heavy, cream-colored silk satin. And it was trimmed in white fur. I loved the fur. It gave the gown a royal feel.

Sadly, that portrait is long gone. My mother left it on my bedroom wall when she sold

our house after my youngest sibling left the nest back in 2000. The only place I can gaze at that photo now is in my memory.

Year later, when I started researching my family's roots, I came across the name Catherine Mary Gillis. There she was in the 1900 U.S. census, listed as a 12-year-old girl living in Boston. The census revealed she was living with her two sisters, and her mother, Mary Gillis.

The census records list Mary as a widow, and her occupation as "dressmaker." At that moment, poring over that historical record, something clicked in my head. "Now I get it."

Through my genealogy research I learned that fashion is in my blood. It's officially part of my DNA. And it's now a source of pride because the female line of my family fed their children by using their hands to turn fabric into art.

A day after I made that discovery, photographer Kevin Richards asked me to pose for his portrait series. The series is shot in black and white film, showing different types of people, from different walks of life.

Immediately, I knew I wanted my photo to capture my heritage. My budget was tight. There was no way I could afford a heavy silk-satin gown

trimmed in fur like the one my great grandmother wore more than a hundred years ago when she posed for a portrait. But fashion doesn't have to cost a fortune to make a statement. My outfit for the photo shoot wasn't expensive: \$12 for the dress; \$10 for the hat. The shoes were on sale for \$25.

When I posed on West 6th



**Katherine Boyd for the Kevin Richards black and white portrait series (Courtesy Studio KMR)**

Street in downtown Cleveland, I tried to channel my great grandmother's pose. She did it so much more elegantly. I certainly didn't capture her elegance, but I believe I captured her moxie and eye-grabbing style.

A few weeks after the photo shoot, the photographer sent me a print. I nervously opened the bubble wrap mailer, afraid to look at the photo inside. And there it was. My great grandmother in black and white. Only it wasn't my great grandmother. It was me. I put the photo in an antique frame, and hung it up on my bedroom wall.

Now when I lie in my bed, I look up at it and think of my mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and great great grandmother, all women of incredible style who came from nothing, but made their living in the world by using their hands to turn fabric into wearable art.

So, I dedicate this photo to you, great great grandmother. Thank you, Mary McKinnon Gillis, for bringing your daughters to the U.S., and for passing on your passion for style.

I will no longer be embarrassed to say I care about style and what I wear. Because my great great grandmother was

able to bring her family to America, thanks to fashion.

Do you know your past? Have any idea who you have to thank for being in America? What sacrifice did your ancestors make to get you here today?

With some time and investigation, you can learn your ancestry. It's easier now than ever before thanks to the Internet and websites like Ancestry.com.

Each month in the Ohio Irish American News, I'm sharing stories about what I've uncovered during my past year of ancestral research. I've been blown away with what I've learned, and been embarrassed that I had no idea what my ancestors sacrificed to get me here today. My hope is that by sharing my stories, it will encourage you to explore your ancestral history, so that you can connect with your ancestors, and then pass on their stories to future generations.

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Katherine Boyd is an Emmy-award winning journalist. She's spent the past year poring over old records to learn her heritage. During her research she learned she's more than 50% Irish. Her goal now is to visit Ireland and truly connect with her Irish roots.



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