

BOSTON IRISH

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BostonIrish.com

Amb. Cronin embraces her paternal roots



US Envoy to Ireland Claire Cronin with students from Scoil Eoghain National School.

Irish American Partnership gives \$10,000 to school in grandfather's hometown

It was a homecoming of sorts for the US Ambassador Claire Cronin, who spent a celebratory morning on May 14 in Moville, Co. Donegal alongside Principal Liam McDermott of Scoil Eoghain National School. She was delighted to meet with 240 pupils and the teaching staff, as part of a presentation by the Boston-based charity the Irish American

Partnership. Cronin's grandfather, Hugh McLaughlin, was born on the Inishowen peninsula in 1886 and emigrated to the United States in 1912.

Partnership President and CEO Mary Sugrue said of the occasion, "Our mission is to connect our members directly to their heritage through grassroots, targeted giving,

and we are proud to partner with our friend Ambassador Cronin in giving back to her homeland of Moville, and to help with resources for Scoil Eoghain." Cronin toured the school, enjoying Irish dance, choral, and poetry recitations by the school's pupils.

"It is wonderful to be back on the Inishowen peninsula, the home of my

grandfather," Cronin said. "The Irish American Partnership builds upon the vital connections between the United States and Ireland through generous donations that empower Ireland's young people. I am delighted to see the partnership's impact across the island, and today in Donegal with this grant to Scoil Eoghain in Moville."

A Stellar Lineup Awaits Induction into the Boston Irish Hall of Honors

A committee planning the 14th annual Boston Irish Honors luncheon – scheduled for Fri., Oct. 25, 2024, at the John F. Kennedy Library on Dorchester’s Columbia Point – has finalized its slate of honorees. Four outstanding people with deep Boston Irish legacies will be inducted into the Boston Irish Hall of Honors:

Bill Cleary Jr., a 1960 Winter Olympics gold medalist in hockey and the longtime

coach of Harvard’s men’s hockey team; Regina Quinlan Doherty, retired Superior Court Judge; Marty Meehan, president of the University of Massachusetts and a former congressman; and William M. Bulger, the legendary president of the state Senate and Meehan’s predecessor as head of the UMass system.

The Irish Honor event offers a platform to acknowledge exemplary individuals who embrace our cultural heritage and

customs. This unique event, celebrating the history of Boston’s Irish people and their families, has become a popular annual tradition for our city’s Irish community.

The October 25 luncheon celebrates the 14th anniversary of Boston Irish Honors, which has taken place since 2010 at Boston’s World Trade Center/Seaport Hotel. In that time, more than 40 exemplary families and individuals

have been inducted into the Boston Irish Hall of Honors. This year’s luncheon will take place at a new venue, the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum in Dorchester.

An event committee co-chaired by Katherine P. Craven and Paul Haley is now in formation. More details on the luncheon and sponsorship opportunities can be found at BostonIrish.com.

STAFF REPORT

Salute to Bill Bulger is long overdue

BY ED FORRY

It was a warm day this spring when I visited Bill Bulger at his home in South Boston. He’s a 90-year-old man now, not quite as lively as we remember him over the years at the St. Patrick Day breakfasts, at the rostrum of the state Senate or in his role bringing new life to the University of Massachusetts.

He has been back in private life for almost two decades now, and after the death in 2020 of Mary, his wife of 60 years, he has settled into his home in City Point under the watchful care of his 9 children and more than 30 grandchildren I joined him and his sons, Bill Jr and Jim, for a wonderful 90-minute session recollecting an assortment of old tales and stories that we had shared over the years.

One favorite memory for me is the night in 1971 that my Mary (Casey) and I “double-dated” with him and his Mary (Foley) and set out for Cleveland Circle to see the movie “Love Story.” When we arrived, the show had been as sold out, but we agreed to wait for the next screening, and as we joined the queue with a half hundred others, the then-first term state senator amused us – and, indeed, much of the gathering in the lobby – with a performance that pre-figured the St Patrick breakfast shows that he, as emcee, made so entertaining.

Some friends heard about my recent visit and asked me how Bill is doing. I tell them that for the bit of time I sat with him, he is still the man we grew to know and admire.

He spent almost 45 years in public service, and his accomplishments in the Legislature and at UMass deserve to be remembered, and publicly recognized.

Bill Bulger followed the great Joe Moakley out of South Boston to the Massachusetts House in 1961, and, ten years later, to the state Senate. He sponsored legislation that championed education, the protection of children, funding for public libraries, and state support of anti-poverty community action programs. He was an architect of a groundbreaking education reform law that reduced the



He spent almost 45 years in public service. ... He sponsored legislation that championed education, the protection of children, funding for public libraries, and state support of anti-poverty community action programs. He was an architect of a groundbreaking education reform law that reduced the funding inequities between rich and poor communities, and was a strong environmentalist, championing the effort that resulted in the cleanup of Boston Harbor.

funding inequities between rich and poor communities, and was a strong environmentalist, championing the effort that resulted in the cleanup of Boston Harbor.

Convinced that Massachusetts deserved a world-class public research university, as Senate president he strongly supported the bill that in 1991 created the five-campus UMass system. He led the Senate through its 1995 debate on changes to the state’s welfare system and argued for less punitive revisions: “After we have eaten, we forget there is such a thing as hunger,” he said.

During his time as UMass President beginning in 1996, his accomplishments included attracting top students to the university, increas-

ing private and public financial support, stressing the importance of access and affordability, and winning new appreciation for the system’s impact and quality. And he was credited with significantly strengthening and elevating what had only recently (1991) become a five-campus system with the addition of institutions in Dartmouth and Lowell.

Under his leadership, UMass Medical School recruited Dr. Craig C. Mello, who was awarded the 2006 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Andrew Z. Fire, a colleague from Stanford. UMass has created the William M. Bulger Presidential Scholarship, describing it this way: “During President Bulger’s tenure as leader of UMass from 1996–2003, he pursued the dual mission of excellence and educational opportunity. High-profile donors and corporations contributed generously to his mission through the William M. Bulger Scholarship Fund. Over one million dollars was raised in honor of his 70th birthday in 2004. President Bulger directed these gifts to UMass for the purpose of providing financial assistance to motivated students who are serious about their education.”

Former governor Michael Dukakis credited Bill with playing a key role in bringing reform to governance in Massachusetts. “The state government that he and I entered in 1960 and 1962 as young state legislators was one of the three or four most corrupt in America,” Dukakis has said. “Bill Bulger was the guy that brought integrity to the Massachusetts State Senate ... and we’re benefitting from that now” ... he is “one of the most effective presidents of the University of Massachusetts we’d ever had.”

It is right and fitting and just that the Boston Irish community will recognize the accomplishments and lifelong public service of William M. Bulger. We are proud to welcome him into the Boston Irish Hall of Honors.

Ed Forry is the co-founder and publisher of Boston Irish.

BOSTON IRISH HONORS
14TH ANNUAL LUNCHEON

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2024 | 11:30 AM
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
Dorchester, Massachusetts

2024 Boston Irish Hall of Honors



Bill Cleary



Marty Meehan



Bill Bulger



Regina Quinlan

2024 Boston Irish Co-Chairs

Katherine P. Craven

Chief Administrative & Financial Officer, Babson College

Paul Haley

Managing Director, Barclays Capital

Please make plan to join us at this inspiring event, as we recognize and celebrate these exemplary individuals who share our culture and traditions - by telling the stories of their special achievements in public service, business, philanthropy and community leadership.
Details: BostonIrish.com/Honors

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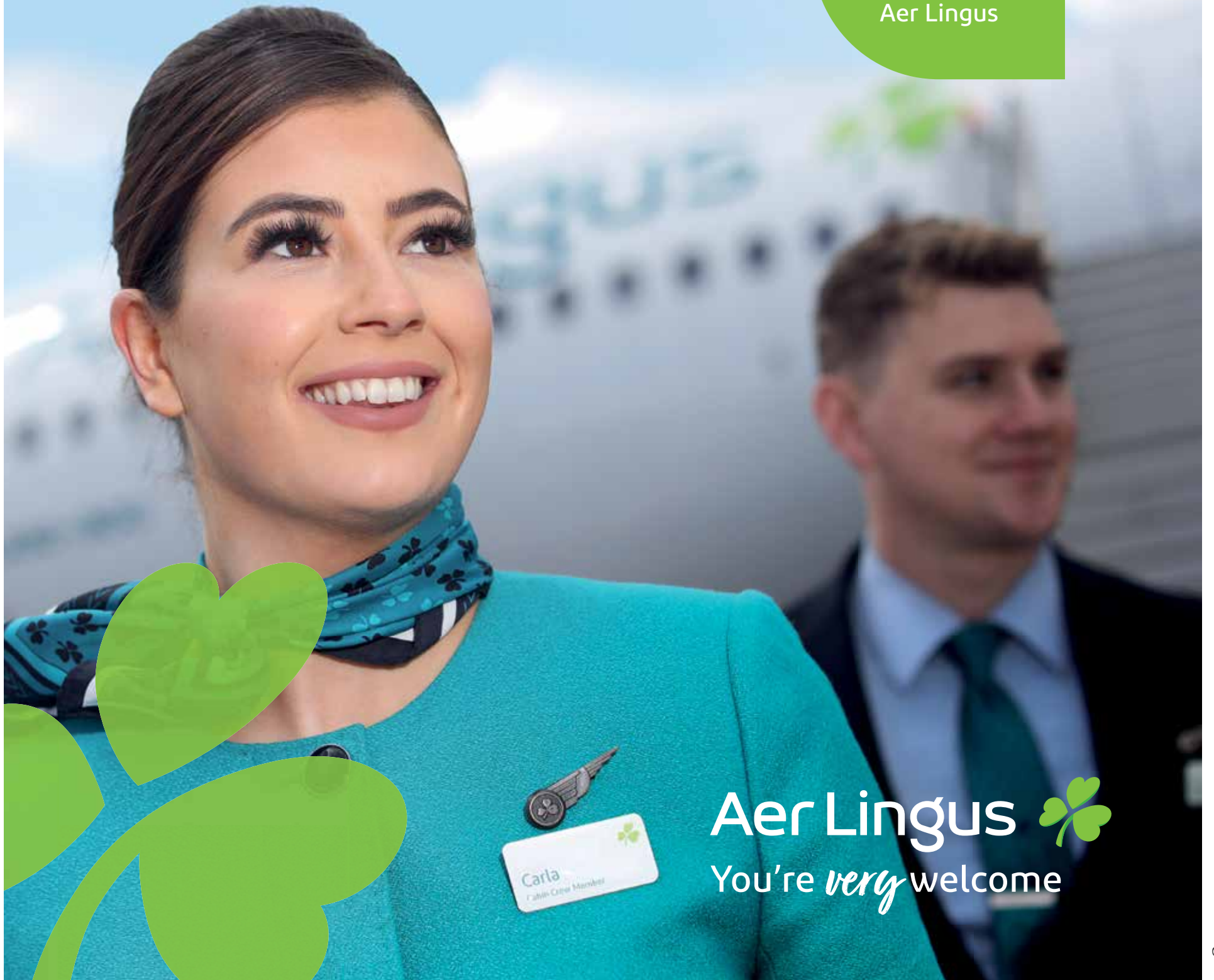
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Recognizing Palestine ... Karen Read trial from afar

The massive gulf in outlook separating the governments of the United States and Ireland on the Middle East has been alluded previously in this space. The divergence has never been more palpable than in the aftermath of the announcement by An Taoiseach, Simon Harris, that Ireland, together with Spain and Norway, will officially recognize the state of Palestine. It comes at a fraught moment, as Israel continues the bombardment of Gaza in its ongoing retaliation for Hamas's terrorist attack last Oct. 7, but Ireland had intended to do so for some time.

There is uncertainty as to what exactly recognition means. The Taoiseach says the territory of the nation lies within "internationally recognized borders" as of 1967, prior to Israeli occupation of sections of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Ireland is recognizing the state, not the government; it deems the Palestinian Authority the legitimate government of the state, not Hamas, which is still judged a terrorist organisation.

The latter grouping has nonetheless cheered the move as has the former, with the Palestinian Authority saying that it demonstrates Ireland's "unwavering commitment" to "delivering the long overdue justice to the Palestinian people." Israel's livid foreign minister has asserted that it sends a clear message - "terrorism pays" - to the world, warned of dire consequences for Ireland, and immediately recalled his ambassador from Dublin for consultations as to next steps.

The Biden administration has not publicly decried Ireland, Spain, and Norway. It did respond that a Palestinian state should be established via "direct negotiations" between the two entities involved. Conversely, one avowedly "Zionist" Florida legislator has pledged to introduce a bill including the three on a list of "scrutinized countries."



Appearing on Newstalk radio here, Donald Trump's ex-chief of staff and special envoy to Northern Ireland, Mick Mulvaney, was obviously ticked off. The three-term South Carolina congressman ventured that the snub of a close ally, as it fights to secure its very existence, could lead to the suspension of the shamrock ceremony at the White House and lunch on Capitol Hill with the congressional leadership on St. Patrick's Day, especially if his erstwhile boss is returned to power. Others have speculated that it could damage present and deter future investment in Ireland by US corporations.

My own belief is that these assessments are off the mark. At the highest levels, whether in politics or in business, there is an acceptance that the US and Ireland, for a host of historical and contemporary reasons, are poles apart and that they will have to "agree to disagree" on this one without imperilling a mutually beneficial relationship that is so cherished by so many of us on each side of the Atlantic.

That said, make no mistake: There are lots of Irish people, primarily on the left of the political spectrum, who are furious with Joe Biden and America more broadly at their support for what they see as a genocide. For instance, Secretary of State Antony Blinken's characterization of the International Criminal Court's issuance of an arrest warrant for Benjamin Netanyahu as a "profoundly wrong-headed decision," in tandem with the threat of imposing

sanctions on the ICC, triggered near universal rage - from moderate, typically pro-US commentators in addition to the usual suspects.

Of course, decent individuals everywhere have been horrified both by the revolting images of the death and suffering inflicted first by Hamas and then, grossly disproportionately, by Israel's military. We pray for an end to hostility and an enduring peace. In the interim, American visitors to Ireland this summer would be well-advised to be mindful that things are perceived radically differently on this island than they are at home. They are always welcome and will be treated to the same unique hospitality. With respect to Gaza, though, there is abundant disappointment in Uncle Sam.

Of immigrants and elections

Since 2022, Ireland has taken in 100,000 + Ukrainians fleeing Vladimir Putin's war of aggression. Tens of thousands of international protection seekers escaping myriad unfortunate circumstances have also arrived. They have entered a jurisdiction in the midst of a pre-existing, seemingly intractable housing crisis. This has tested already stretched resources. It is a sorry reality right now that scores of refugees are living in tents in Dublin city centre and locations farther afield with slightly better amenities.

There has been warranted and unwarranted criticism of the government for how it has handled an unprecedented surge of newcomers to these shores. A common complaint that has been aired is the extent to which the government has relied upon hotel and other accommodation providers to house Ukrainians and others on a longer-term basis, hence enriching owners of those premises and harming the vital tourism industry by reducing the availability of badly needed beds.

Protesters in urban neighbourhoods, towns, and villages have railed at the impact on school class sizes, access to health care, and to other pressurized services. While a minority has embraced racism and hate, stirred up by a motley crew of malevolent agitators, polls show that a solid majority simply think that Ireland has allowed too many people in, and much too quickly. In short, and just like the rest of the West, immigration is finally a big political hot potato here.

Elections to city and county councils and to the European Parliament loom on the horizon at the time of writing. It is a pretty sure thing that some self-described "community-based" candidates for local office, who are

touting their skepticism about and/or outright opposition to immigration, will prevail when ballots are cast on June 7. Which of the three most popular parties - Sinn Féin, Fianna, minor party aspirants - is an open question. It could well be Sinn Féin, given that opposition to immigration is strongest among the working class voters the party has traditionally depended on.

Conjecture remains widespread that a few of Ireland's 14 seats in the European Parliament could go to candidates appealing to that swath of the citizenry angered by the pro-immigration stance of the political mainstream. An *Irish Times* survey, however, cuts against the theorizing. The results, which carry a health warning in that there is a ways to go before a volatile electorate has its say, and because those questioned may have been reticent to admit backing an anti-immigrant candidate, suggest that this vote is diffuse, scattered among a large number of contenders with a similar message in the three constituencies. I am not entirely convinced that it will play out accordingly.

At any rate, it will be fascinating to consider the outcomes and what the implications may be for the general election that must be held by March 2025 at the latest.

Of the Karen Read trial circus

Donald Trump's criminal trial in New York has been the focus of daily coverage and analysis in the Irish media. Yet scanning Boston news outlets online from 3,000 miles away, as well as scrolling through Twitter/X, it is decidedly second fiddle in eastern Massachusetts to the prosecution of Karen Read, who is charged with the second-degree murder of her boyfriend, Boston Police Officer John O'Keefe.

The intensity with which cultish devotees monitor every second of the trial, shouting loudly that minuscule inconsistencies or oversights in witness testimony constitute conclusive proof of Ms. Read's guilt or innocence, is extremely disconcerting. We who weren't there in Canton on that snowy January night don't know what happened. I have no idea if the case is as relatively straightforward as the Norfolk County District Attorney's office is arguing, or if there is a grand conspiracy as Ms. Read's defense lawyers insist, or if the truth can be found in the murky middle.

Naturally, I hope the jurors follow the evidence and the law to where it leads and settle on the correct verdict. But even from this remove, I am sick of the circus sideshow surrounding a very serious criminal proceeding in which a woman's liberty is at stake. May the trial swiftly reach a just conclusion. And may John O'Keefe, a good man by all accounts, at last get to rest in peace.

Larry Donnelly is a Boston born and educated attorney, a Law Lecturer at the University of Galway and a regular media contributor on politics, current affairs and the law in Ireland and the US. @LarryPDonnelly

Catholicism in Ireland: An assessment

Back in early 2020, we had tickets to see Christy Dignam, the legendary lead singer of the '80s and '90s band Aslan, play at the Olympia. Then the pandemic hit, and everything everywhere was canceled. We were still hoping to have the chance to see him after the shutdown but, sadly, Christy's rare blood cancer that had been in remission came back with a vengeance. He canceled his comeback shows and entered palliative care before passing away on June 13, 2023, at 63, joining Shane McGowan and Sinead O'Connor on a grim honor roll of beloved Irish musicians lost during the year.

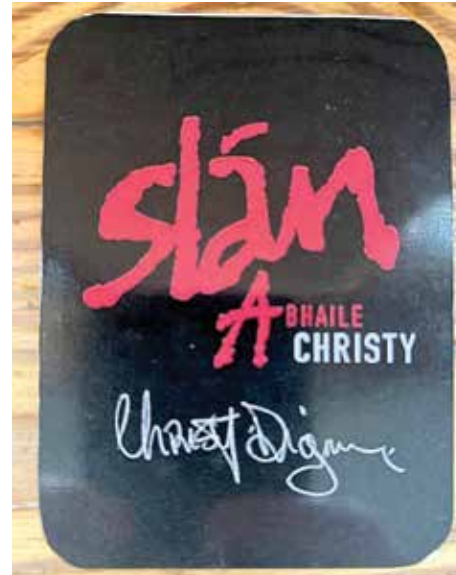
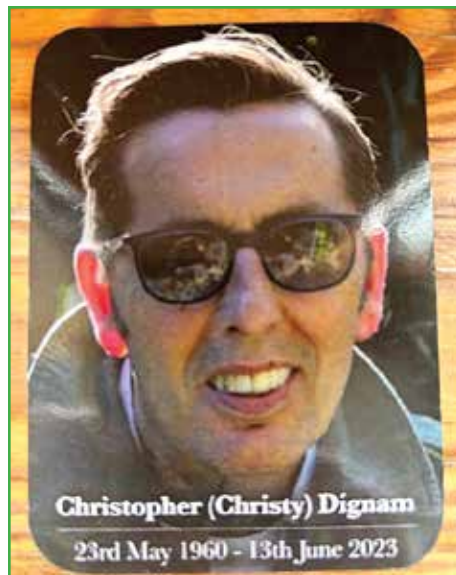
Christy's relatives and friends organized a tribute concert for last month. The Vicar Street venue was already fairly packed when we arrived and as we entered, we were handed a small card with Christy's face, the dates of his birth and death, and a short inscription on the reverse side.

Holding this secular prayer card, I was reminded yet again that even though Ireland has moved beyond Catholicism as the central animating and organizing way of life with astonishing speed, cultural Catholicism still expresses itself daily in large, small, and sometimes surprising ways.

The evening news ("The Six-one news") starts one minute after the daily "People's Angelus," also played by the national broadcaster. Bus patrons of a certain age reflexively cross themselves when the bus passes in front of a church. Irish friends sprinkle acronyms like 'TG' or 'PG' into text messages: 'It's a fine day TG'... 'See you Tuesday PG.' TG and PG are short for 'Thank God' and 'Please God.' Someone knowledgeable about a particular subject area might say 'I am familiar with the Parish.' Depending on the age of the person with whom you are talking, a conversation might end with 'God bless.'

References to faith in modern, secular Ireland are tiny portals into Ireland's recent past of near universal religious practice. Attending single gender Catholic schools, reciting daily rosaries as a family, walking to town on 'Mass paths' (shortcuts through fields and townlands established by the people to get to Mass quickly) are part of the living memories of most Irish people over 50. I find these mini-gratitudes and supplications to a higher power comforting. There is a kindness and humbleness in giving thanks and asking for divine intervention on trivial matters like the weather or the traffic, as well as serious topics like a visit to the clinical oncologist. In a world full of bravado, avarice, and the relentless pursuit of power and dominance, these expressions of gratitude and humility are a relief.

Priests are more visible in Dublin than in Boston, accessible for the 'Hello Father' nod and wave. Priests are also frequently quoted in the newspapers or interviewed on TV in times of tragedy, serving as community spokesmen to express collective sorrow and rally the solidarity of the community.



The zenith of Irish Catholicism is usually remembered as the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1979. Over a million of the faithful attended an open air Mass in Phoenix Park, when he famously called the Irish people the 'best Catholics in the world.' Many Boston Irish readers will remember that period of time well because after his visit to Ireland, the Pope's next destination was Boston. Our mother loaded her five sons into the station wagon and we stood along the path of the Pope's motorcade underneath the Fitzgerald Expressway to greet the pontiff. Later that day our dad attended the rain-soaked Mass on Boston Common while we watched on TV. Dad's attendance was somewhat of a surprise. While he did attend weekly Mass, he frequently critiqued the content of the homily or quality of the service on the drive home. The Monsignor in our home parish insisted on singing even those elements of the liturgy that doctrine permitted to be spoken. He vastly overestimated his singing talent, inspiring my father's assessment: "He sounded like a pig being slaughtered." Dad went to the Pope's Mass on the Common as an expression of his faith and of his culture.

In Ireland, with priests on the Six-one news and everyone sending PG and TG dappled texts to each other, it can appear to American eyes that things are much the same as the stereotypical Catholic Ireland of the American imagination, but that would be misleading. So much has changed since the '70s. The collapse of rates of mass attendance (from 92 percent in 1975 to 27 percent in 2022), collections, and vocations (from 1,400 seminarians in 1965 to just 20 this year) is dramatic. In Co. Dublin, the number of seminarians this year is exactly zero. The average age of priests in Ireland is well over 70 years; the average age of women religious is over 80. In April, a popular documentary entitled "The Last Priests of Ireland" and hosted by Ardal O'Hanlon (who played Fr. Dougal McGuire on the hit comedy show 'Father Ted') explored the prospect of an Ireland without clergy.

People disagree on the reasons for the existential decline. Many point to Ireland's modernization enabled by economic development and integration

into the EU, which led to major cultural changes most notably advancing the rights of women. Others cite the rightward lurch of Popes John Paul II and Benedict that dashed hopes for anticipated reforms of married clergy and women priests after the Second Vatican Council. Still others lay responsibility on the reprehensible crimes of forced adoptions, institutionalized violence, sexual abuse, and coverups.

I will not use this space to either pile on or engage in nostalgia for the old days of Holy Catholic Ireland.

Putting the reasons to one side, it is startling that a half century ago, Ireland produced so many priests and women religious that there were long waiting lists for parish or school assignments. The decline over the last 50 years has been so fast as to be disorienting. In response to these trends, many parishes in Ireland are being combined, more responsibility is being delegated to lay people and more visiting priests from as far afield as Indonesia, Africa, Romania, Poland, and South America have arrived. These phenomena are familiar to Bostonians. Our own Dad received last rites in 2003 from an African priest on loan to the Archdiocese of Boston.

The spiritual, practical, and communal impacts of this shift to a post-religious Ireland are already starting to appear.

Social justice campaigners from Mother Jones to Bernadette Devlin McAliskey credit Irish Catholicism with inspiring them to devote their lives to pursuing justice and equality. Without the structure and education provided by the church, where will that call to service that drove missionaries to venture all over the world - building and staffing churches, schools and hospitals - be directed? We see some answers in Dublin with the street protests for peace, at soup kitchens, political activism, and NGO's like Trocaire and Concern.

The Catholic churches in Ireland served not just as spiritual gathering places but also as community centers. The churches were/are where second collections for missionaries in Peru are passed. Parish halls were/are hubs for organizing bake sales to raise money for children in Africa or other causes.

Communities have also used these spaces to meet to discuss non-religious issues like a proposed bypass road or whether a new GAA pitch should be built. The opinion of the Church was valued and sought out. At a practical level, where will Irish people gather in times of adversity, celebration, or common purpose? One alternative for community gatherings and a sense of shared cause are the GAA clubs. The clubs are in every county and when Russia invaded Ukraine, bake sales, raffles, canned goods or clothing drives to help Ukraine were often held at GAA clubs.

According to some historians, Ireland is returning to pre-famine levels of religious devotion. In the 1830s, weekly Mass attendance was approximately 30 percent. After the great famine and the introduction of aggressive, Roman-style rules-based clericalism and required piety after the 1850 Council of Thurles, Mass attendance surged to over 90 percent by the 1870s and stayed there until the 1970s. The number and percentage of clergy of the population soared. After independence in 1922, the government's coffers were so empty that the Guinneses, the richest family in the world at the time, would occasionally intercede to pay the wages of public sector workers (police, bus drivers and garbage collectors) to keep Dublin functioning. In that context, country-wide basic services like hospitals, schools, care homes, food pantries, homeless shelters, and orphanages were provided by the Catholic Church. Eamonn de Valera's 1937 constitution enshrined the Church's special status within the Irish State.

As Ireland developed economically, on entering the EEC in 1973 and by direct foreign investment particularly from the USA, the country began to behave more like a modern European administrative state by funding and staffing more of these institutions, a transition that will continue. Even so, the Catholic legacy endures. Single gender education with a Catholic ethos is still the norm, more than in any EU country except Malta and in hospitals the "Nursing Manager" is still known as "The House Sister."

The faith provides a road map for spiritual practice and a connection to the transcendent, the metaphysical "everything else." The sacraments sanctify weddings, welcome newborn babies, and commemorate final farewells to loved ones. These rituals will not be simply deleted from the culture. The Irish have been marking them in ceremony for millennia. Many non-practicing "cultural Catholics" still celebrate the sacraments in the church. Is it hypocritical? I don't think so. They are the tools the people have to connect with the mysterious, the unknown, and unknowable.

Without the institutional church, many will find entirely new spiritual paths or combine their Catholicism with other belief systems or practices

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‘These thoughtless, head-strong, imprudent people’

In June 1847, the mass arrival of Famine Irish ignited Nativist resistance in cold-roast Boston

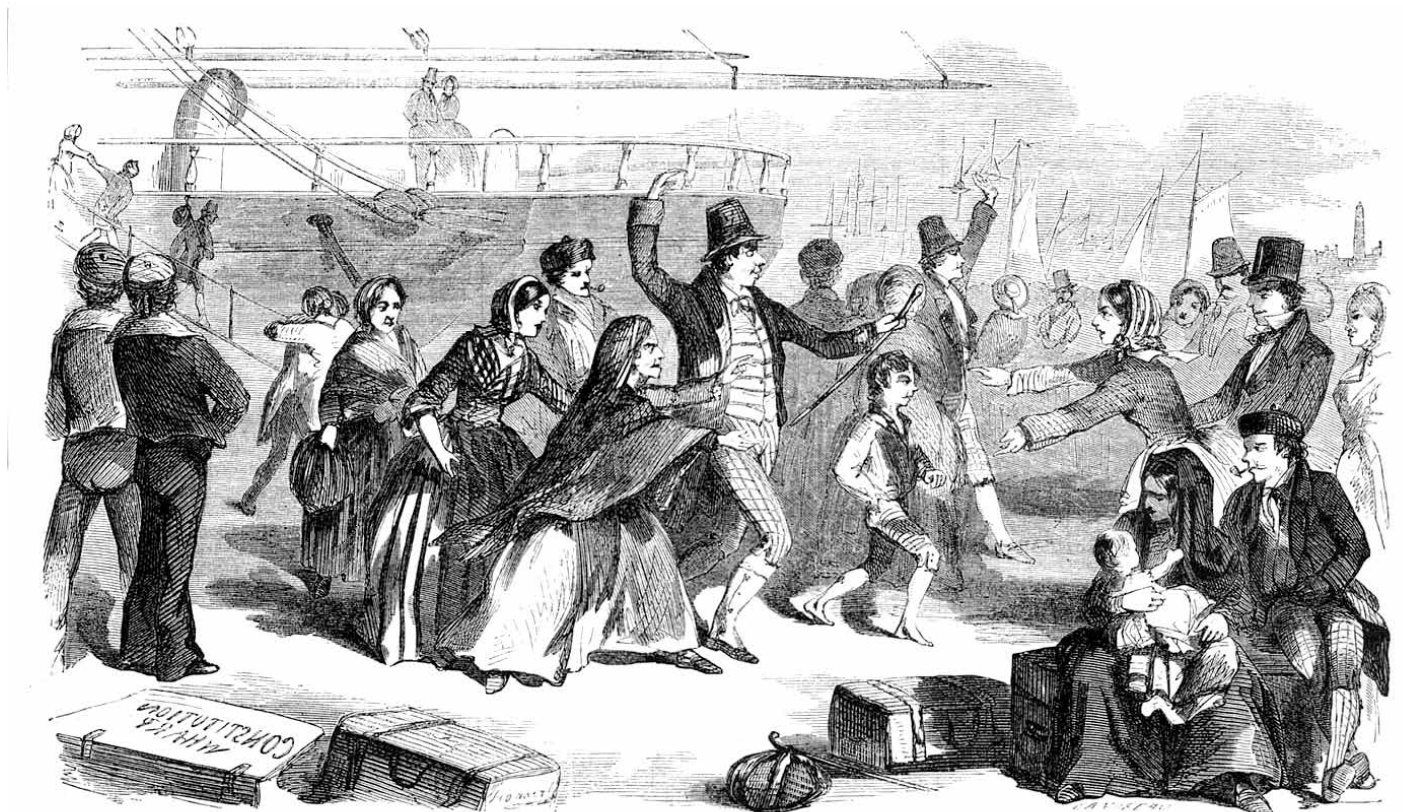
By PETER F. STEVENS
SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH

In June 1847, Boston simmered with political, cultural, and religious unrest. A crisis was unfolding along Boston’s docks. Leaking, lurching vessels aptly dubbed “coffin ships” unloaded hordes of Irish refugees fleeing the Great Famine, *An Gorta Mor*. Some 25,000 arrived in “Black ‘47,” and with thousands wracked by “ship fever,” likely a form of typhus, the city of Boston set up the Deer Island Quarantine Hospital on May 29, 1847, as “the place of quarantine” for ailing immigrants. Just twelve days earlier, May 17, 1847, the British brig *Mary*, with 46 Famine refugees was refused entry to Boston, and a Revenue Cutter quelled a passenger mutiny.

Intertwined with Bostonians’ legitimate fears of a disease outbreak was a long-running and growing tide of nationwide antipathy toward all things foreign and Catholic. Anti-Irish bigotry was already rampant in Boston, and the mass arrival of desperate Irish Catholics sparked newspaper screeds against them and mass “Native American” – Yankee and Brahmin – rallies against the influx of immigrants.

The ranks of the Native Americans, later dubbed the Know Nothing movement, were swelling in Boston with a platform of “Temperance, Liberty, and Protestantism.” They held a mass gathering on Boston Common in early June 1847 to address the “Pauper Immigrants,” denunciations of the Irish pealing in the sultry air. On June 10, 1847, the *Boston Daily Evening Transcript* announced: “THE NATIVE AMERICANS held a meeting on the Common last evening. Their next meeting is to be on Fort Hill.” Fort Hill, along with Hope and Ann streets, teemed with tenements for the Boston Irish. For city leaders and the Catholic clergy, the news stoked genuine fears of widespread violence if the local Irish spilled into the streets to take on the Native Americans, the specter of a repeat of the 1837 Broad Street Riot between Yankee firemen and workers and the Irish looming.

Boston’s newspapers were rife with anti-Irish diatribes, the *Transcript*



EMIGRANT ARRIVAL AT CONSTITUTION WHARF, BOSTON.

contending that “had these thoughtless, head-strong, imprudent people [Irish] one ray of discretion when they get on land, their sufferings would be less than they are.”

Long before Bostonians grappled with the health hazard posed by Famine ships clotted with direly ill passengers, the Irish were not welcomed. The city in 1847 was changing – and its Yankee population did not welcome that change. As the shiploads of Famine Irish arrived almost daily, Anglo-Protestant families who had ruled over the city since their Puritan ancestors set foot in the region in the 1620s embraced still the anti-Irish, anti-Catholic prejudice of Boston’s founders. Ephraim Peabody, whose ancestors ranked among the city’s founders, lamented that the Irish were infesting “proper Bostonians” turf with a horrific “social revolution.” With the city’s population soaring from some 115,000 to over 150,000 in 1847, the newcomers quickly found themselves

confronting the very same age-old prejudices that the Irish had faced on the “old sod.” Typical was the *Transcript’s* comment that the Famine Irish elicited “the disgust of all who see them.”

A *Transcript* editorial could easily take its place amid today’s MAGA bromides: “The tide of immigration which is increasing daily to a most alarming extent, bringing with it...poverty, sickness, and crime, has excited as it ought, the attention of the whole community, and the people in all parts of the country have at last become aroused, and are turning about to decide means to check an evil which has reached such a height that the very vitality of our country has become endangered by it.”

As the Native American march on Fort Hill neared, Bishop John B. Fitzpatrick, his priests, and the *Boston Pilot’s* early incarnation pleaded with the Irish of the North End and Fort Hill to remain inside their tenements, “rookeries,” and not provoke the throng of Native

American protestors into a full-fledged riot. To the relief of the Archdiocese, Mayor Josiah Quincy, Jr., City Marshal Turkey, and other officials, the Boston Irish complied. They stayed indoors, refraining from pouring outside to battle the Nativists.

Today, the tenets of Nativism course through the nation’s bloodstream again – if they ever really ebbed. Call it Nativism, America First, Know-Nothings, MAGA. They are one and the same. Different era, same hatreds. On the same June day that the *Transcript* inveighed against Irish immigrants, the paper ran the following brief: “We learn that an Irishman at work on...the Water Works died yesterday afternoon, from previous illness and the heat. He had been in the country only about a week.” The unfortunate man had simply wanted to come to America to work and earn his way. His story has a familiar ring in 2024.

Catholicism in Ireland: An assessment

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just as St. Patrick grafted Catholicism onto the spirituality of pre-Christian Ireland, layering Christianity on top of the religious observances and rituals that have existed since neolithic times. Every fairy well or magical local god was given a saint’s name. Festivals marking the seasons and movements of celestial bodies were renamed and fitted to the Christian calendar. More layers will surely be added.

I met a Jesuit-educated Dubliner who describes himself as a “Zen Catholic.” He sees no contradiction in his religious

journey. While on a solo motorcycle adventure across India 40 years ago, he met the man who became his Zen master. That Dubliner, who happens to be a Jesuit priest, is now over 90 and believes that without his Zen practice, he would likely not still be a priest. More Irish people will continue to turn to meditation, volunteering, music, poetry, or visual arts to fill spiritual gaps as the traditional religious scaffolding for their lives is dismantled.

Back at the tribute concert, the crowd sang along to every Aslan song, includ-

ing “Crazy World,” a song written by Christy Dignam in 1993 after his only daughter was born. His plaintive lyrics ask what many new parents ask: “How can I protect you in this crazy world?”

Christy’s singer daughter, Kiera Dignam, was on the Vicar Street bill that night to sing this anthem that is also a prayer for a more peaceful, safe and just world... PG

Eamonn de Valera’s 1937 constitution enshrined the Church’s special status within the Irish State.



An update on changes to USCIS filing fees

Costs are, on the whole, going to increase; some compromises noted

By RIAN IMMIGRANT CENTER

Early last year, we summarized the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services' Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to announce adjustments in the agency's fee schedule. On the last day of January this year, USCIS published its Final Rule to lay out all changes to filing fees associated with immigration benefit requests charged by the agency. Starting on April 1, individuals must comply and pay the new amount or the benefit request will be rejected due to an incorrect fee.

Here, we will focus on the material impacts of these changes. Filing fees are, on the whole, going to increase. USCIS includes a chart on its Filing Fee Final Rule FAQ webpage that details exactly how much it will cost as of April 1, 2024 to file a certain form, but a few examples demonstrate that certain immigration benefit requests will not cost substantially more than before.

In order to persuade individuals to file electronically, a paper filing will now cost \$50 more than filing the same form through USCIS's website. To update information that we previously provided, the application to become a permanent resident (I-485) has increased by \$215, and the application to remove conditions on permanent residence (I-751) with biometric services is up by \$70.

Applicants for permanent residence will now need to pay the half the filing fee for the work permit application and/or the entire filing fee for the travel document application should they desire to request those benefits as well.

The application for naturalization increases by \$35 if you file by paper or decrease by \$15 if you file online. USCIS acknowledged that many commenters expressed concerns about these fee increases, and the agency chose to expand the number of forms eligible for fee waivers as a compromise.

USCIS used this final rule to codify the fee waiver definition and offer fee exemptions to individuals seeking humanitarian-related immigration benefits. Naturalization applicants who earn between 150 percent and 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines are now eligible to pay only half of the filing fee. All U-visa applicants, T-visa applicants, VAWA applicants, and Special Immigrant Juveniles do not have to pay any filing fees on any associated forms for the sought immigration benefit, including the application for permanent residence.

Ensuring a proper filing fee is an essential part of preparing any immigration forms application. If you have any questions about how these fee adjustments will impact you, please contact the Rian Immigrant Center to request a legal consultation at 617-984-6542.

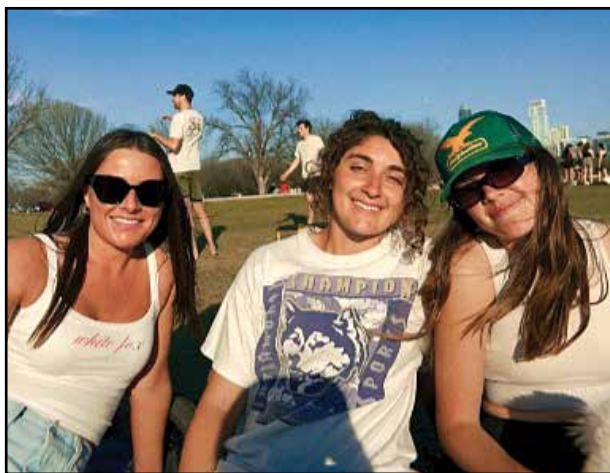
University of Limerick business grad takes on Austin

By RIAN IMMIGRANT CENTER

Rachel Gleeson's foray into the J-1 visa world brought her to the city of Austin, Texas, an up-and-coming tech and business hub where many applicants from Rian are now choosing to venture. Rachel shared with us that her visa experience was smooth, with a straightforward application process, and that she received excellent support from Rian ahead of her travel, including answering her questions promptly and connecting her with other J-1 graduates heading to Austin.

When she applied for her visa, Rachel aimed to broaden her professional skills, gain international experience, and expand her network. Her goal was to apply these experiences to her future career in business and human resources. As the Head of Customer Success at Klimt & Design, an organization founded by fellow Rian J-1 visa alum Hugh Gibbons, she found her internship incredibly rewarding. The variety in her tasks and the freedom to use her initiative made the experience fulfilling. Supportive colleagues and the company's emphasis on work-life balance added to her positive experience.

In Austin, Rachel's day-to-day life was diverse and fulfilling. After work, she'd hit the gym, meet friends



Rachel Gleeson, pictured with some friends. Her advice for J-1 grads: Start looking for jobs in advance.

for food and drinks, or simply unwind. Weekends were filled with outdoor activities like hiking, paddleboarding, and exploring new restaurants. Austin's vibrant nightlife was also a highlight. She described Austin as a fantastic city for young professionals, with friendly people, a diverse food scene, and a vibrant

music culture. There was always something to do, whether it was outdoor activities, exploring food trucks, or enjoying live music. One standout memory was attending Austin City Limits (ACL), a music festival in Austin. It was an incredible experience, made even more special when one of Rachel's friends from Ireland traveled over to attend it with her.

Her advice to future J-1 visa holders is to start looking for jobs in advance, use LinkedIn to make connections, say yes to every opportunity, and make the most of your time, as it flies by. She emphasized the exceptional support from Rian, encouraging other J-1 visa participants to utilize their support on anything from the application process to their time in the US. Their assistance was invaluable throughout her journey.

Reflecting on her time in the US, Rachel noted that she had gained valuable skills and insights that she planned to apply to her professional life in Ireland. Personally, she had developed lifelong friendships and improved her cultural awareness. As she plans to visit more cities in the US before returning to Ireland, she's excited to see how her experiences will continue to shape her, both personally and professionally.

About medical exams when applying for a green card

By RIAN IMMIGRANT CENTER

Q. I am intending to apply for legal permanent resident status, and I understand that a medical examination is part of the application process. Why is that necessary? Can my primary care provider write a letter that I am in good health?

A. US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires medical examinations in order to determine whether there are any public health-related issues that would affect a prospective immigrant's admissibility to the United States. The exam can identify medical conditions that require follow-up care. As part of the exam, the physician also will ensure that required vaccinations have been administered. Applicants for permanent residence who came to the US on a K fiancé or K spousal visa will have had a medical examination as part of the visa application process at home, so they will not need to repeat the full procedure when applying for adjustment of status here in the US, but rather they will only need to demonstrate that they meet the vaccination requirements.

All medical examinations include a physical examination, a mental health status evaluation, a skin test for tuberculosis, and a blood test. Generally speaking, the results of the examination are valid for

two years from the date of the civil surgeon's signature.

As discussed above, applicants need to show that they are current with all vaccinations recommended by US public health officials. To find the complete list of such vaccinations, you should visit this webpage, uscis.gov/tools/designated-civil-surgeons/vaccination-requirements. Since the pandemic, immunization against Covid-19 is now a requirement. The physician can administer any vaccinations necessary, or the physician can refer an applicant to another location to receive the missing vaccinations. If a particular vaccination is not "medically appropriate," then the civil surgeon can certify that fact and make a note on the Form I-693.

You cannot have the medical examination done by your primary care physician or family doctor. You need to choose a doctor from the USCIS list of government-approved physicians known as "Civil Surgeons" in your area, and you must pay the cost of the exam. You can find an approved physician in your area on the USCIS website at uscis.gov/tools/find-a-civil-surgeon. If you enter your zip code or state, the screen will display a list of approved physicians in your area. You can also sort by the civil surgeon's language and gender. The doctor will charge a fee

for the exam, which will vary by medical practice, and will then fill out the Form I-693 and the required vaccination supplement. The results from the examination are placed in a sealed envelope; you must not open the envelope as that invalidates the exam. You should be given a copy of the exam for your records, and if you are not, then contact the civil surgeon and request the copy.

If you have any questions about the medical exam, especially if you have a physical or mental condition that you believe could affect your eligibility to become a legal permanent resident, visit one of Rian's legal clinics across the Boston Public Library system or call us to schedule a consultation over the phone.

Disclaimer: These articles are published to inform the general public, not to advise in individual cases. All law, including immigration law, is always subject to change. If you seek legal advice, you can contact Rian's immigration legal staff at 617-984-6542.

Rian Immigrant Center
One State Street, Suite 800
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone (617) 542-7654
Website: riancenter.org

‘Democracy is never guaranteed ... we must defend it, fight for it’

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. made the following remarks in Normandy’s American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, France, on June 6, the 80th anniversary of D-Day, the Allied assault on Nazi-occupied France.

The hour had nearly come. Monday, June 5th, 1944. The evil of the Third Reich was devastating the world. Nazi Germany had subjugated the once-free nations of Europe through brute force, lies, and twisted ideology of racial superiority. Millions of Jews murdered in the Holocaust. Millions of others killed by bombs, bullets, bloody warfare. Hitler and those with him thought democracies were weak, that the future belonged to dictators.

Here, on the coast of Normandy, the battle between freedom and tyranny would be joined. Here, on that June morning, the testing was at hand. Winston Churchill called what happened here “the greatest, most complicated operation ever. After years of planning, Operation Overlord was ready to launch just as soon as the weather turned. Across the choppy English Channel, the Supreme Commander of the Allies, Dwight D. Eisenhower, waited. The largest force ever of its kind, built by 12 nations – men, guns, planes, naval craft of every description – waited. The world, captive and free, waited. Finally, Eisenhower’s forecasters said there was a window in the weather. It would open briefly on Tuesday the 6th of June. The general weighed the options and gave the order: At dawn, the Allies would strike. The “Great Crusade” to free Europe from tyranny would begin.

That night, General Eisenhower drove to the English town of Newbury to visit paratroopers of the 101st Airborne. They were men from all over America. It was estimated that 80 percent of them would be killed within hours. That was the estimate. But they were brave, they were resolute, and they were ready. One soldier told General Eisenhower, “Don’t worry, sir. The 101st is on the job. Everything will be taken care of”... and because of their courage and their resolve, because of the courage and resolve of their allies, it was taken care of. From the sea and sky, nearly 160,000 Allied troops descended on Normandy. Many, to state the obvious, never came home. Many survived that “longest day,” kept on fighting for months until victory was finally won. And a few, a noble band of brothers, are here with us today.

Kenneth Blaine Smith is here. On that day, under heavy artillery fire, he operated a range finder and radar on the first American ship to arrive at Normandy’s coast, providing direct gunfire support for the Rangers scaling the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc on their daring mission to take out the German batteries.

Bob Gibson is here. He landed on Utah Beach about 10 hours after the invasion began. Bullets flying everywhere. Tracers lighting up the sky. Bob drove an M4 tractor with an anti-aircraft gun mounted on top, providing critical protection for the infantry against the German air force. On that day and for many days after, he continued.

Ben Miller is here. A medic with the 82nd Airborne. At 3 a.m. on June 6th, he and 13 other medics flew over the Channel in a rickety glider. Its wings were ripped off by giant poles that the Germans buried halfway in the ground to stop them from landing. They crashed, but they survived. And they did their duty: dragging injured soldiers to safety, treating wounds, saving lives while the battle raged. Every soldier who stormed the beach, who dropped by parachute or landed by glider; every sailor who manned the thousands of ships and landing craft; every aviator who destroyed German-controlled airfields, bridges, and railroads – all – all were backed by other brave Americans, including hundreds of thousands

of people of color and women who courageously served despite unjust limitations on what they could do for their nation.

Louis Brown is here. Part of the “Red Ball Express,” a truck convoy made up mostly of African American drivers. They landed at Normandy in the wake of D-Day. They rushed supplies to the rapidly advancing frontlines. Woody Woodhouse is here. Members of the legendary Tuskegee Airmen, who flew over 15,000 sorties during the war. Marjorie Stone is here. Sheenlisted in the women’s branch of the Naval Reserve, became an aircraft mechanic, spent the war keeping American planes and pilots in the air. Theirs has always been the story of America. Just walk the rows of this cemetery, as I have. Nearly 10,000 heroes buried side by side, officers and enlisted, immigrants and native-born. Different races, different faiths, but all Americans.

All served with honor when America and the world needed them most. Millions back home did their part as well. From coast to coast, Americans found countless ways to pitch in. They understood our democracy is only as strong as all of us make it, together. The men who fought here became heroes not because they were the strongest or toughest or fiercest – although they were – but because they were given an audacious mission knowing – every one of them knew the probability of dying was real, but they did it anyway. They knew, beyond any doubt, there are things that are worth fighting and dying for. Freedom is worth it. Democracy is worth it. America is worth it. The world is worth it – then, now, and always.

The war in Europe didn’t end for another 11 months. But here the tide turned in our favor. Here we proved the forces of liberty are stronger than the forces of conquest. Here we proved that the ideals of our democracy are stronger than any army or combination of armies in the entire world.

We proved something else here as well: the unbreakable unity of the Allies. Here with us are men who served alongside the Americans that day, wearing different flags on their arms but fighting with the same courage, for the same purpose.

What the Allies did together 80 years ago far surpassed anything we could have done on our own. It was a powerful illustration of how alliances – real alliances – make us stronger – a lesson that I pray we Americans never forget.

Together, we won the war. We rebuilt Europe, including our former enemies. It was an investment in what became shared and a prosperous future. We established NATO, the greatest military alliance in the history of the world. And over time, we brought more nations into NATO – the NATO Alliance, including the newest members: Finland and Sweden.

Today, NATO stands at 32 countries strong. And NATO is more united than ever and even more prepared to keep the peace, deter aggression, defend freedom all around the world. America has invested in our alliances and forged new ones – not simply out of altruism but out of our own self-interest as well. America’s unique ability to bring countries together is an undeniable source of our strength and our power.

Isolationism was not the answer 80 years ago, and it is not the answer today. We know the dark forces that these heroes fought against 80 years ago. They never fade. Aggression and greed, the desire to dominate and control, to change borders by force – these are perennial. And the struggle between a dictatorship and freedom is unending. Here, in Europe, we see one stark example. Ukraine has been invaded by a tyrant bent on domination. Ukrainians are fighting with extraordinary courage, suffering great losses, but never backing down.



President Biden at Normandy.
White House photo

They’ve inflicted tremendous losses on Russia. The numbers are staggering – 350,000 Russian troops dead or wounded. Nearly 1 million people have left Russia because they can no longer see a future in Russia. The United States and NATO and a coalition of more than 50 countries standing strong with Ukraine. We will not walk away – because if we do, Ukraine will be subjugated.

And it will not end there. Ukraine’s neighbors will be threatened. All of Europe will be threatened. And make no mistake, the autocrats of the world are watching closely to see what happens in Ukraine, to see if we let this illegal aggression go unchecked. We cannot let that happen. To surrender to bullies, to bow down to dictators is simply unthinkable. Were we to do that, it means we’d be forgetting what happened here on these hallowed beaches. Make no mistake: We will not bow down. We will not forget.

Let me end with this. History tells us freedom is not free. If you want to know the price of freedom, come here to Normandy. Come to Normandy and look. Go to the other cemeteries in Europe where our fallen heroes rest. Go back home to Arlington Cemetery. Tomorrow, I will pay respects at Pointe du Hoc. Go there as well and remember: The price of unchecked tyranny is the blood of the young and the brave. In their generation, in their hour of trial, the Allied forces of D-Day did their duty. Now the question for us is: In our hour of trial, will we do ours? We’re living in a time when democracy is more at risk across the world than at any point since the end of the World War II – since these beaches were stormed in 1944.

Now, we have to ask ourselves: Will we stand against tyranny, against evil, against crushing brutality of the iron fist? Will we stand for freedom? Will we defend democracy? Will we stand together? My answer is yes. And it only can be yes. We’re not far off from the time when the last living voices of those who fought and bled on D-Day will no longer be with us. So, we have a special obligation. We cannot let what happened here be lost in the silence of the years to come. We must remember it, must honor it, and live it.

The fact that they were heroes here that day does not absolve us from what we have to do today. Democracy is never guaranteed. Every generation must preserve it, defend it, and fight for it. That’s the test of the ages. In memory of those who fought here, died here, literally saved the world here, let us be worthy of their sacrifice. Let us be the generation that when history is written about our time – in 10, 20, 30, 50, 80 years from now – it will be said: When the moment came, we met the moment. We stood strong. Our alliances were made stronger. And we saved democracy in our time as well.

Thank you very much. And may God bless you all. And may God protect our troops.

UPDATES FROM THE PASTORAL CENTRE



PLEASE NOTE: The IPC will be closed on Mondays for July and August 2024 for Admin work.

For emergencies you can contact at 617-265-5300



Deer Island Famine Memorial Mass

IPC Mass of Remembrance at the Deer Island Famine Memorial will take place on Sunday June 2 at 11am



Irish Community Walk for two Inspirational Irish Charities
We extend our thanks to the Boston Irish Community who raised an amazing \$6000 total in aid of Pieta House and the Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust, two major initiatives in Ireland that have a global impact. Many ex-pats in Boston have experienced this support service for loved ones back home. Both organizations have helped the Pastoral Centre with immediate and critical assistance and it is fitting that we gather each year with financial support. We are grateful to all who walked with us and donated on line.

Join the Here Comes Everybody Players at the Irish Pastoral Centre in celebrating Father's Day weekend and the work of James Joyce with a preview of their Bloomsday/Father's Day show!



Theatrical excerpts from Dubliners, a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses and Finnegans Wake and songs that Joyce sang with his father and with his son, Giorgio.



Fri. June 14th, 5:00pm

FREE EVENT - RSVP PREFERRED AT IPCBOSON.ORG/EVENTS

THE IRISH PASTORAL CENTRE WELCOMES 2024 J1 SUMMER STUDENTS

Thurs. June 2nd, 3-5PM

Join us at The IPC for our annual J1 Orientation. This will be a highly informative event where students can meet each other, get to learn about our culture, open bank accounts, switch phones to a USA network, and much more!

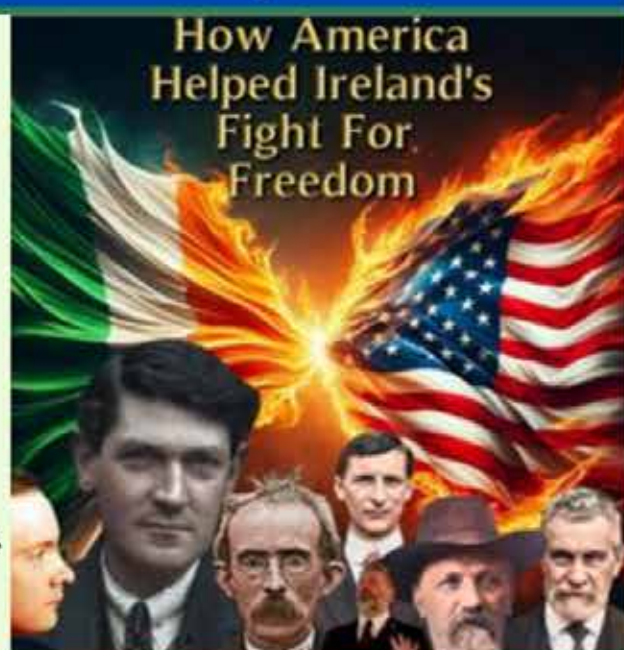
For more info/RSVP email J1@ipcboseon.org

The Irish Pastoral Center, 540 Gallivan Blvd, Rear, Dorchester, MA 02124

History Lecture by Independent Irish Historian and Film Maker Marcus Howard

Fri. June 21st 7PM

540 Gallivan Boulevard, Unit Rear, Dorchester, MA 02124



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Ard-Chonsalacht na hÉireann | Bostún
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ANSEO LE CHÉILE -
HERE TOGETHER

‘Voice of Celtics,’ Dot native Mike Gorman, sees greatness in the Green

BY BILL FORRY
EDITOR

Mike Gorman’s basketball journey began on the court at Dorchester’s Toohig Park, where he’d practice his roundball skills most days after class at St. Brendan School. Like a lot of Dot kids who dreamed of a pro career, the scrappy neighborhood kid had a crisp jump shot and was a defensive pest.

But this kid from Crockett Ave. couldn’t “go left” on his drives to the basket. “That was the end of my career,” he jokes.

Instead, the Boston Latin School alum’s hoop dreams led him to a remarkable 43-year career as a broadcaster and as the “voice of the Boston Celtics.”

On May 1, the 76-year-old grandfather called it a career and was saluted with a raucous ovation by the TD Garden faithful. It was time to put the microphone down, but Gorman has kept his courtside seat warm as the C’s have stormed through the NBA Playoffs to earn their spot in the finals, which begin with Game One tonight against the Dallas Mavericks.

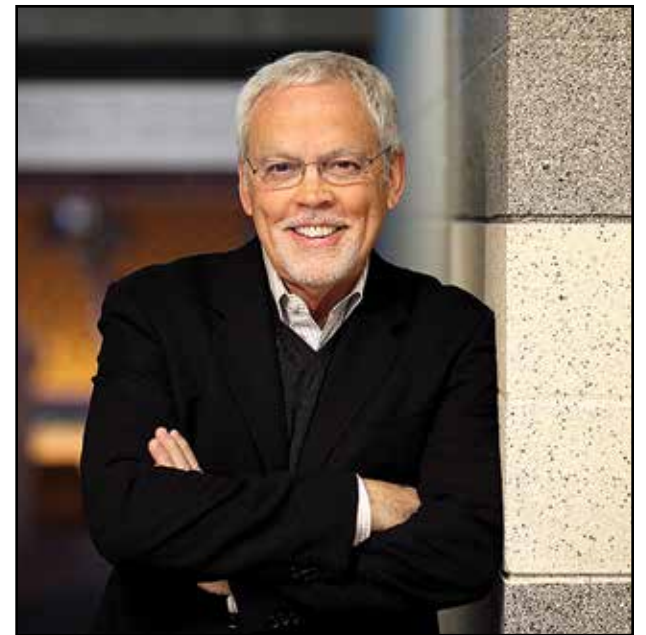
Like most close observers of the game, Gorman is bullish on Boston’s chances against Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving. He expects it to be a close series – and he isn’t making a specific prediction on the duration. But, he says, this Celtics roster has the experience and talent to seize Banner 18.

“I think it’s going to be very much like the Indiana [Pacers] series,” said Gorman, referring to the Eastern Conference match-up that saw the Celtics prevail in a four-game sweep. “Boston can win close games. This bunch now knows how to win.” (Editor’s note: At press time, the C’s were ahead in the finals, 1-0.)

Does Mike miss calling the games? Nope, not yet at least. “I don’t think I’m going to miss the games that much, because I’ll get to see any games I want. The Celtics always have a seat for me. I don’t miss all the prep work. It was beginning to get to be like Groundhog Day, the same thing over and over again.”

There’s also this: “I just felt it was time,” he said. “I didn’t want to be the guy that people said ‘get him out of here.’”

He’ll miss the people – his co-workers at NBC10 Boston, the Garden ushers, and staff like Jim at the



Mike Gorman still has a courtside seat at Celtics games. Image courtesy NBCUniversal

security desk, and the Celtics owners who have treated him like family.

“The Celtics didn’t want me to leave. NBC Sports didn’t want me to leave,” Gorman says.

It was his call, he said, motivated by “selfish reasons.”

One stormy night last winter, Gorman says he stepped off a bumpy charter plane ride into Hanscom Air Force base. As he scraped ice off his car to drive himself home at 2:30 a.m. and then tried to follow a snowplow home on I-95, he did some math in his head. “I’m almost 77 years old. I’m literally twice as old as everyone on the crew. I said to myself, ‘Why am I doing this?’”

The other calculus involves his seven-year-old granddaughter, who Gorman and his wife “are head-over-heels in love with,” but who lives in Arizona.

“I want to be a part of her life,” he says.

Gorman also factored in the probability of this Celtics squad making a Finals run – and him riding out on a Duck Boat as part of his own swan song. He rode one with the 2008 Paul Pierce-Kevin Garnett-Ray Allen championship team, and he can see himself on board “Dot Dottie” in a few weeks, if all goes well.

How does this Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown-led crew measure up to the Celtics teams that Gorman and the late, great Tommy Heinson followed in earlier eras?

“They’re right there with the teams in the 1980s. If they close the deal, they’d be in the top three or four since I’ve been covering them,” he said.

Of course, there’s no question in Mike’s head that the current crop of Celtics have the potential to crack into the elite ranks of legendary players. Gorman’s top five all-time Celtics greats, by the way, are Bill Russell, Bob Cousy, John Havlicek, Larry Bird, and Paul Pierce.

Could Tatum or Brown eventually break through into that lofty starting five? Given his youth and range, Tatum has the best shot at it, says Gorman.

“Jason used to catch the ball and dribble it for eight seconds. Now he catches it and it’s gone. He’s learned that the ball will go back to him eventually. I think he has a chance to be remembered for a long time,” says Gorman.

But the strength of this Celtics line-up means that virtually anyone could end up snatching a Finals MVP trophy. Derek White and Jrue Holiday are in the mix, he says. But Gorman is keeping an eye trained on the 38-year-old veteran Al Horford, the Dominican-born power forward who can drill three-pointers, defend the paint, and snatch big rebounds.

“He has shown tremendous leadership this season and he’s just a remarkable player for his age. He has a real chance to be a factor and has a chance to emerge and hit that big shot,” says Gorman.

Of White and Holiday, he adds: “We might have the best defensive backcourt in the game, and that’s the matchup to watch.”



Mayor Wu presented Mike Gorman, and his granddaughter, with a city proclamation that observed April 14 as “Mike Gorman Day” in his hometown.


Online at BostonIrish.com

Summer 2024

Boston Irish

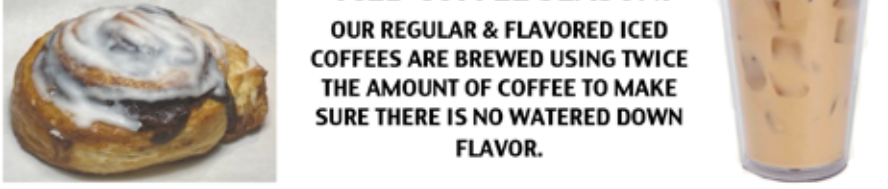
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Bloomsday is upon us: the annual celebration of James Joyce's heritage

Bloomsday celebrates Thursday, June 16, 1904, the day immortalized in James Joyce's 1922 novel "Ulysses." It's an annual commemoration and celebration of the life of Irish writer James Joyce. The day is named after Leopold Bloom, the central character in Joyce's novel, and the novel's events are set on the same date in 1904. Bloomsday is a tribute to Joyce's contribution to literature and a celebration of Irish culture and heritage.



Ulysses begins at 8 a.m. on June 16, 1904 when we meet Stephen Dedalus at the Martello Tower in Sandycove, south of Dublin. A later episode introduces Leopold Bloom at breakfast at his home in Eccles Street, Dublin, also at 8 a.m. The novel ends at 2 a.m. the next day with the celebrated 24,000-word soliloquy of Molly Bloom, the wife of Leopold Bloom. Between the opening and closing pages of the book, 18 episodes, loosely based on Homer's "Odyssey," record many details, some fictional, some based on historical and geographical facts, of life in Dublin on that day. In doing so, the book traces the activities, various conversations, and, through the use of the inner monologue, the thoughts of Bloom and Dedalus throughout the day, up to and including their eventual meeting in the red-light district and subsequent late-night conversations in various other locations in the city.



Here Comes Everybody players have celebrated Bloomsday in the Boston area for many years, with performances, readings, and music, all derived from Joyce's works. This year, HCE will celebrate both Bloomsday and Fathers' Day with selected adaptations from Joyce's work in drama and music related to fathers and fatherhood, on June 15 and 16 at the Mosesian Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal St., Watertown MA, 02472
Photograph, David Costa



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

The Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme is now open for applications.

The Payment Scheme provides financial payments and health supports to eligible people in acknowledgement of circumstances experienced while in Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions in Ireland.

The application process is straightforward, and there is support available for those who wish to apply.

**To apply to the Payment Scheme, or for further information,
please visit gov.ie/paymentscheme or call our helpline on +353 1 522 9992.**





UPCOMING EVENTS

**JUNE
28**

GOLF TOURNAMENT

ICC's 34th Annual Golf Fundraising Tournament is still seeking sponsors & participants! Please email jmcdermott@irishculture.org for information and to sign up.

MEADHBH WALSH CONCERT

Meadhbh Walsh, straight from Co.Cork Ireland, will be at ICC for a one night only performance, live!

**JULY
10**

**JULY
27**

GALWAY RACES GALA

4th annual dinner with live music, raffles, racing & more hosted by the ICC Young Professionals Committee.

IRISH 5K ROAD RACE

ICC's 12th Annual 5K Road Race and Fitness Walk offers options for a children's fun run, stroller or wheelchair participants.

**SEPT
14**

**TICKETS ON
SALE NOW**

SEPT 19

Brian J. Donnelly
Award presented to
Kathleen O'Toole

OCTOBER

"Wild Atlantic Way"
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MORE INFO: IRISHCULTURE.ORG

What's Happening Onstage This Summer

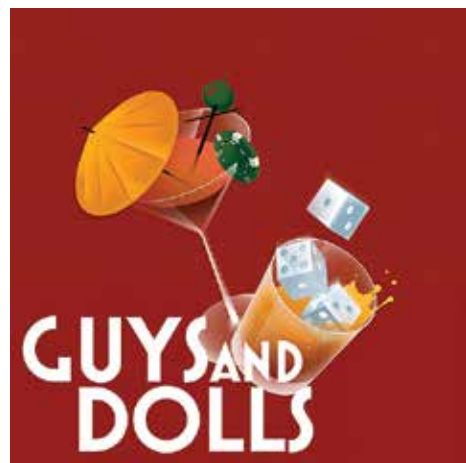
By R.J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH



"Yellow Face"

Through June 23, Lyric Stage

Pulitzer Prize finalist David Henry Hwang muddles truth and fiction in this satiric semi-autobiographical memoir about a playwright plunged into a swirl of hypocrisy following his protest of the star casting of Jonathan Pryce as the Eurasian hustler in Broadway's "Miss Saigon." When he later misidentifies a Caucasian actor as mixed-race and casts him as the Asian lead in his own comedy, the controversy comes back to bite him. This comical sideways glance at race and assimilation questions who has the ownership of a culture? lyricstage.com



"Guys & Dolls"

Through June 30, Greater Boston Stage

Set in Damon Runyon's mythical Manhattan, "G&D" brings to life the bustling world of Broadway's ne'er-do-well gamblers, glamorous showgirls, and determined missionaries. Nathan Detroit is desperate to set up the biggest craps game in town as the authorities breathe down his neck. Meanwhile, his girlfriend laments they've been engaged for 14 years. Enough already! Throw the dice and go for broke! greaterbostonstage.com



"Gatsby: An American Myth"
Through Aug. 3, American Rep

The Jazz Age glamor of F. Scott Fitzgerald's legendary novel, "The Great Gatsby," comes to life in this world-premiere musical with a score

by international rock star Florence Welch and Oscar and Grammy Award nominee Thomas Bartlett. Millionaire Jay Gatsby woos his former love, Daisy Buchanan, as the '20s roar and the gin flows freely through glittering parties in the mega-mansions of Long Island. Can The American Dream be realized? Of course, Old Sport! americanrepertorytheater.org



"Rodgers and Hammerstein's South Pacific"

June 14 - 23, Reagle Music Theatre

Based on James A. Michener's Pulitzer Prize-winning short stories set on a tropical island during World War II, "South Pacific" centers on two Americans - U.S. Navy nurse Nellie Forbush (Jennifer Ellis) and French plantation owner Emile De Becque (Christopher Chew) - as they fall in love and learn what it means to confront their own prejudices. The score is one of R&H's most glorious, featuring "Some Enchanted Evening," "Bali Ha'i" and "Younger Than Springtime." (Upcoming Reagle shows include "All Shook Up," July 12 - 21, and "An American in Paris," Aug. 9 - 18). reaglemusictheatre.org



"MJ The Musical"

June 18 - July 7, Citizens Opera House

The music. The icon. And the unparalleled artistry of one of the most popular entertainers of all time. "MJ" delves beyond the singular moves and signature sound to deliver a rare look into the creative mind and spirit that catapulted Michael Jackson into legendary status. Who's Bad? BroadwayinBoston.com



John McDaniel's Broadway Series
June 23 - Aug. 30, Post Office Cafe & Tin Pan Alley

If you're on the Cape this summer, head over to Provincetown to take in one

of several intimate concerts from some of Broadway's best talents. McDaniel is a Grammy and Emmy Award-winning music director, composer and producer (and former musical director of Rosie O'Donnell's daytime talk show). The series features: Tony winner Betty Buckley, June 23; Max Clayton ("The Music Man"), July 6; Tony winner Alice Ripley, July 19-20; Emmy winner Darren Criss, July 21; and Tony nominee Liz Callaway, Aug. 30 - 31, among others. PostOfficeCafe.net, tinpanalleytown.com



Boston Pops July 4 Spectacular
July 4, Hatch Shell

Celebrating a Boston holiday tradition along The Charles, Conductor Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops are joined this year by Tony winner Kelli O'Hara, one of Broadway's most beloved leading ladies. Other guests: Darlene Love, The Mavericks, and the Singing Sergeants from the US Air Force Band. Fireworks await! And it's free! bso.org



"Wipe Out"

July 5 - 28
Gloucester Stage Company

Three 70+ year-old friends decide to learn to surf. Taking place on surfboards in the middle of the Pacific, the ladies are guided by their friendship and a hotrod teenage surf instructor. Catch the wave to this septuagenarian comedy! gloucesterstage.com



"Disney's Frozen"
July 9 - 28, North Shore Music Theatre

Royal sisters Elsa and Anna are torn apart by Elsa's icy powers. When Elsa sets their homeland into eternal winter, Anna sets off to save her sister and find the meaning of true love. "Let It Go" and enjoy the entire "Frozen" gang, including Olaf, Prince Hans, Kristoff, Sven and more. (Look for "Tootsie" later this summer, Aug. 13-25). nsmt.org

"The Winter's Tale"
July 16 - August 4, Boston Common

King Leontes, his wife and his son appear to be the perfect family. Until he

suspects his lady of adultery. Boston's Free Shakespeare on the Common celebrates summer under the stars with this mesmerizing tale of love, loss, betrayal and forgiveness. commshakes.org



"The Queen of Versailles,"
Emerson Colonial
July 16 - August 25

This highly-anticipated pre-Broadway tryout, based on the documentary of the same name, reunites Oscar-winning "Wicked" composer Stephen Schwartz with Tony Award winner Kristin Chenoweth. From computer engineer to Mrs. Florida to billionaireess, Jackie Siegel saw herself as the embodiment of The American Dream. Her most grandiose venture? Building the largest private home in America, modestly inspired by the Palace of Versailles. But when the dream begins to crumble, so does her lavish lifestyle. This world premiere explores the true cost of fame, fortune, and family. emersoncolonialtheatre.com



Cirque du Soleil's OVO
July 19 - 28, Agganis Arena

OVO is a headlong rush into a colorful ecosystem, where insects work, eat, flutter, and look for love in a non-stop evening of noisy energy and movement. The awestruck insects are intensely curious when a mysterious egg appears, representing the enigma and cycles of their lives. This is classic Cirque! cirquedusoleil.com



"Les Miserables"
Aug. 13 - 25, Citizens Opera House

Set against the backdrop of 19th century France, "Les Miz" tells a sweeping story of broken dreams, unrequited love, sacrifice, and redemption. This is a timeless testament to the survival of the human spirit. The epic tale's soaring score, experienced by more than 130 million people in 53 countries, includes: "I Dreamed a Dream," "One Day More," "Bring Him Home," and more. Do you hear the people sing? BroadwayInBoston.com

All programming subject to change.

Pine Tree Flyers shine a light on New England music

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTONIRISH CONTRIBUTOR

There are bands – whether Irish, pan-Celtic, rock-n-roll, jazz, pop, funk, death-metal, or any other genre – that come together by circumstance or by accident, or even just for laughs.

Then there are bands like the Maine-based Pine Tree Flyers, a quartet formed with a purpose and a desire: to uphold the virtues of New England traditional music, and perhaps change some less than hospitable attitudes about it along the way. PTF, which comes to Club Passim in Harvard Square on May 5 to launch its debut album, has appeared at Celtic Connections in Glasgow, Celtic Colours in Cape Breton, the Festival of Small Halls in Prince Edward Island, the Ossipee Valley Music Festival, and at this past January's Boston Celtic Music Fest.

Of course, PTF also was envisioned as a focal point of fun by its members, Owen Marshall (guitar), Katie McNally (fiddle), Neil Pearlman (piano), and Emily Troll (piano accordion), all of whom have been in and around Portland for some years now but have various ties to the Boston area and its traditional music scene.

Marshall (who sat in with Irish group Dervish during its recent US tour) was a frequent member of the house band for "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn," and has played in collaborations with, among others, Joey Abarta, Nathan Gourley, and Lindsay Straw; McNally, who grew up in Westford, has appeared numerous times at BCMFest and been a mainstay in Scottish and Cape Breton music locally; Pearlman – who has long played with McNally as a duo and as part of her trio – also is a BCMFest regular and directs the Boston Scottish Fiddle Club and Orchestra; Troll, a Lynnfield native, was involved in numerous folk and traditional music activities from childhood on and is a member of contra dance trio Anadama.

One notable experience for all the PTF members during their youth was taking part in community bands that played, and sometimes provided, music for contra dances – long a cornerstone of the New England folk tradition. These were opportunities to sample tunes found in Irish, Scottish, French-Canadian as well as American traditional music, along with others from more recent decades composed by New England musicians like Dudley Laufman, Bob McQuillen, Lissa Schneckenger and Keith Murphy. As the PTF members note, these community bands and contra dances helped make the point that this kind of music is not a solitary exercise, but something to be shared and enjoyed in a social context.

Most of all, each of the four got to know and appreciate the qualities that give New England traditional music – especially that of the fiddle – its uniqueness. Tunes like "Lady Ann Montgomery" or "Out on the Ocean" played in the New England way might, on the one hand, sound pretty much as they do in a traditional Irish vein – yet at the same time, they don't. The same



The Pine Tree Flyers, from left: Emily Troll, Neil Pearlman, Katie McNally, Owen Marshall, will officially launch their debut album on May 5 at Club Passim.

Photo by Dylan Ladds

holds true for, say, a French-Canadian reel or an Appalachian tune.

"There's a twist, a style, a special personality to the New England tradition," Troll says. "Tunes are played with big rhythm, clear phrasing, and a bit of drama."

But as they made the rounds of the wider folk and traditional music community, McNally, Troll, Pearlman, and Marshall found little acknowledgement, or even awareness, of the New England fiddle style. In fact, some musicians regard New England more as a pilferer of other traditions, as WBUR arts and culture writer Amelia Mason (an accomplished New England musician herself and Troll's Anadama bandmate) writes in her superb foreword for the PTF album: "An Irish or Scottish tune that becomes popular among dance musicians in the Northeast will usually remain an 'Irish' or 'Scottish' tune – an artifact perpetually on loan. The New England tradition itself never quite transcends its influences."

McNally says PTF was in the back of her mind for a long time, especially when she began attending the Maine Fiddle Camp several years ago and was elated to hear dance bands "absolutely ripping these tunes from my childhood and to see a bunch of folks in their 20s and 30s who also love this music."

"It made me think long and hard about why folks outside of New England don't know that we have an amazingly vibrant scene here and our own thriving tradition," she says. "There are even plenty of bluegrass, old-time, and Americana musicians who live in New England who have no idea that there is local, American music going on. So I wanted to have a band that shredded the old chestnuts on concert and festival stages and elevated New England music to a national and international level."

To be clear: While New England contra dance figures prominently in the collective and individual experience of Pine Tree Flyers, and while they've

played for a few contra dances, they are not a contra dance band.

"That's not what this project is about," McNally explains. "We are actively making a point of playing New England tunes at festivals and concerts for listening audiences. A lot of other trad and roots genres have crossed over into listening or art music, but music from New England has not really made that leap. We've actually had some trouble convincing concert promoters that we know how to put on a concert and at times have had to really muscle our way into a mainstage slot at a festival instead of just a dance tent slot. We've had more success playing at international festivals, where there aren't preconceived notions of what we are, than at American festivals."

The PTF album fulfills the band's mission, offering an encapsulation of New England music over a period of decades: from earlier times, when foundational figures like Laufman and McQuillen helped revive and popularize contra dances, to the more recent era, in which bands such as Wild Asparagus, Airdance, Nightingale, and Elixir championed innovative, more complex arrangements of the music – in fact, making it as appropriate for a concert setting as a dance hall.

One track starts off with "Smith's Reel," composed by Rhode Islander George Sanders more than 175 years ago but a staple of Irish and Cape Breton repertoires, the quartet all in from the beginning as McNally and Troll glide along in unison to the rock-steady rhythm by Pearlman and Marshall. Then McNally takes the lead on a major/minor Québécois tune, "Pointe-Au-Pic," and Troll shifts to chords, until the second time through when she switches to melody while McNally plays exquisite harmonies on the A part.

By contrast, a pair of Irish jigs – often played as a medley by Laufman's legendary Canterbury Country Dance Orchestra – starts off with a lighter touch, McNally and Marshall holding

forth on "Haste to the Wedding," Pearlman and Troll gradually joining in, then all transitioning to "Coleraine," which features some particularly stellar rhythm from Marshall and Pearlman through some astutely devised chord changes.

A medley with a more contemporary vintage to it encompasses "Shadows on the Lawn" by Doug Feeney (who has played with prominent contra dance bands like Fourgone Conclusions and Moving Violations) – ushered in with a compelling solo by Pearlman – followed by the Irish jig "Banks of Lough Gowna," featuring Marshall's flatpicking alongside Troll, and then a riveting Troll-McNally interlude segues into a Marshall original, "The Prince of Seals."

One particularly striking track involves Marshall's slower-paced, tender reworking of Bob McQuillen's "Echoes of Scotty O'Neill," which gradually picks up speed until Troll breaks into a Scottish march, "The 79th's Farewell to Gibraltar," which completely resets the momentum in stirring fashion. As with "Scotty O'Neill," the band takes a similar approach to "Glise de Sherbrooke" by slowing it down a bit; McNally and Troll take the melody first, with the drone from the accordion's bass notes resembling a parlor organ, adding an almost meditative quality.

Other highlights include the rip-roaring "Opera Reel/Golden Wedding Reel" set, which gets off to quite the exhilarating start with Marshall joining McNally on the melody; the latter tune was written by New Brunswick fiddler Don Messer, notes McNally ("I think it perfectly illustrates how the fiddle scene in the Northeast of the US is simultaneously a distinct tradition and in conversation with music from just over the border"). PTF also has a ball with a classic Québécois pairing, "La Bastringue" and the aptly named "Joys of Québec," during which Pearlman dives into some south-of-the-equator-style syncopation.

"Digging into the drama and expressiveness of these tunes was really special, and it feels good to be part of the living tradition that is growing and developing as we speak," says Troll.

"This whole project to me has been meaningful as an opportunity to reflect and acknowledge some of the folks who got me on the path of traditional music," says Marshall. "People like Sarah Blair, Jeremiah McLane, Pete Sutherland, and David Surette were all present and active in my adolescence and early adulthood and they all invested a wealth of energy into both my musical and personal growth."

"Not to put words in anyone else's mouth, but I think the rest of the band would agree that going back and drawing from this familiar well of material reactivates the memory of some of the very first informative and extremely exciting moments we experienced as teens in the music scene."

For more on the Pine Tree Flyers, see their website at pinetreeflyers.com.

Tickets for their May 4 Club Passim show are available via passim.org.

BostonIrish Arts Calendar

June 2024

A look at some upcoming Irish/Celtic-related music events in Greater Boston

• Usually, when **Keith Murphy** appears in performance, he plays a supporting role, but he'll be front and center on June 19 at the Burren Backroom Brian O'Donovan Legacy Series. Murphy is one of New England's more accomplished folk/traditional musicians on guitar, mandolin and piano - accompanying artists like Hanneke Cassel, Lissa Schneckenburger, Liz Carroll and Brian Conway, among others - and has an equally exalted reputation as a singer of mainly traditional songs from the British Isles, Ireland, France, Canada and New England, which he delivers in a clear, resonant, unpretentious voice. His 2023 solo album, "Bright Amber," saw him go in a new direction, teaming with electric guitar, double bass drums for a sound reminiscent of the 1960s/'70s folk-blues-jazz fusion. Murphy's solo concerts also are an opportunity for him to unleash a quite witty stage patter.

See burren.com/music.html for details on this and other Brian O'Donovan Legacy Series events.

Boston fiddler/violinist **Mari Black** teams up with Cape Breton fiddler/pianist **Troy MacGillivray** at Passim on June 20. Read more about the event, and Black, in an interview on page 18.

• Speaking of maritime music: **The Wellermen** - an exponent of what might legitimately be called the "shanty craze" of 2021 - will be at City Winery Boston on June 12 and 13, as they mark their first anniversary as an actual-in-the-flesh performing band. A 21st-century origin story if there ever was one, the quartet of Jonny Stewart, Sam Pope, Luke Taylor and Bobby Waters only interacted online for the better part of two years, first combining their vocals in close harmony via TikTok on the sea shanty "The Wellerman," that had originally been posted by Scotsman Nathan Evans. The four went on to make a slew of other recordings: other maritime songs like



Viral sensation The Wellermen are at City Winery Boston June 12 and 13.

"Old Maui," "Drunken Sailor" and Stan Rogers' "Northwest Passage," covers of Ed Sheeran's "Nancy Mulligan," Merle Travis's "Sixteen Tons" and "Misty Mountains" from Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, and even "The Parting Glass." They finally met in person last June for their debut show in the UK.

citywinery.com/boston/events/the-wellermen-555s4x

• **Sina Theil**, who will play at the Irish Cultural Center of Greater Boston on June 13, would seem to embody the word "multi-tasker": German-born and Irish-based, Theil is a social media influencer, psychologist, a contributing health-and-wellness writer for *Irish Runner Magazine*, a motivational speaker and a TV and radio presenter. And she also happens to be a singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who's won a bunch of Irish music awards. Theil draws on country and acoustic pop styles for her own material, such as the tender, wistful "Wishing Well" and a playful holiday number, "Mistletoe Rock," and covers of traditional and contemporary songs like "The Parting Glass," "Fields of Athenry," Dougie MacLean's "Caledonia" and the Saw Doctors' anthemic "Green and Red of



Mari Black will team with Cape Breton fiddler Troy MacGillivray at Club Passim on June 20.

Mayo." She recently collaborated with Meadhbh Walsh to record Frank and Seán O'Meara's heartstrings-tugging "Grace," an evocation of artist Grace Gifford's marriage to 1916 martyr Joseph Mary Plunkett hours before his execution.

irishculture.org/events

• A couple of local duos will present "One Summer Night," an evening of Celtic and chamber music on June 21

at the Lilypad in Cambridge's Inman Square. **Mrs. Wilberforce** (Kyra Davies, fiddle, viola, vocals; Sean Smith, guitar, bouzouki, tenor banjo, vocals) features a repertoire from Ireland, Scotland and Cape Breton - but also further afield, like Shetland, Brittany and Galicia, among other places. Although their sound is rooted in tradition, they readily draw upon classical and contemporary folk/folk-rock domains. The pair have appeared at BCMFest, Newton PorchFest and The BeBop. **Room to Spare** is the union of Julia Connor, a classically trained violinist with a penchant for Irish fiddling, and David Leach, a jazz pianist with a heavy-metal habit. Their improvisation-rich compositions blend evocative, virtuosic instrumentalism with introspective lyricism, while drawing on vocabularies of classical, jazz, traditional Irish, rock, and new music. Room to Spare, which released an album in 2019, was recognized by WBUR as one of the top entries from Massachusetts in NPR's "Tiny Desk" Contest.

Details will be available at mrswilberforce.com, roomtosparemusic.com, and lilypadinman.com.



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New album is the latest step in Louise Bichan's journey

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTONIRISH CONTRIBUTOR

New England-based Scottish fiddler Louise Bichan seems to have a thing about journeys of discovery.

The epic travels of her grandmother, Margaret Tait, through Canada as a young woman provided the inspiration and the basis for Bichan's 2016 debut album, "Out of My Own Light." As part of the project, which also included a photographic retrospective, Bichan – a visual as well as a musical artist – retraced her grandmother's trip so that she could get recollections and anecdotes from surviving family members.

Not long afterwards, Bichan embarked on a quite different odyssey, leaving her native Orkney islands north of Scotland to attend Boston's Berklee College of Music, and eventually settle in Maine.

Now, with her new album, "The Lost Summer," Bichan is showcasing her musical journey of these past several years, thanks to the many friends and acquaintances she has made during her time in Boston and elsewhere.

Bichan will celebrate the album's release on May 8 at The Burren as part of the Brian O'Donovan Legacy Series.

"The Lost Summer" includes Bichan originals and tunes from the Scottish, Orcadian, Shetland, and American traditions, as well as compositions by musicians such as late Cape Breton legend Jerry Holland, Irish uilleann piper John McSherry, and Bichan's fellow Orcadian fiddler Jennifer Wrigley.

Accompanying Bichan on the album at various times are people who have had a significant impact on her music, not to mention other aspects of her life. They include Ethan Setiawan (mandolin, octave mandolin, tenor guitar), with whom she plays in the duo Hildaland, and as part of the quartet Corner House, which began life in Boston's Brighton neighborhood.

There's an atmosphere of ebullience on "The Lost Summer," as Bichan exhibits a range of music styles and genres, from Orcadian to Appalachian to jazz and newgrass. Which is not to say that her work on Hildaland's 2023 CD "Sule Skerry" or recordings with Corner House and other collaborations was lacking in spirit. Far from it, emphasizes Bichan.

"I've loved all those opportunities to get together and record, whether it's a few tracks or a whole album," she explains. "But there is something special when the project, the vision, is completely your own, and you pick the tunes and the people you want to play with you."

"Most of all, I'm just very excited about where I've come since 'Out of My Own Light,' which really set me on a new path to being a diverse musician; and



I'm so happy to involve some of the people who've been there with me on this musical journey."

Bichan says her time at Berklee, and in Boston, unquestionably helped put her on the path to becoming a confident, well-rounded musician.

"Berklee played a huge part, and so did the New England fiddle world," she says. "It's not that I hadn't encountered other kinds of fiddle playing before, but when I came over here I had so much exposure to all these other styles and I had the freedom – and the encouragement – to experiment."

"What made a difference was finding people to play with, and not being scared to mess up occasionally."

She points to fellow students like Galen Fraser (Berklee) and Conor Hearn (Tufts) as among those whose friendship and shared interest in exploring the spectrum of music was invaluable ("We just used to go on these musical tangents; it felt good to have that spirit").

Berklee faculty such as Mimi Rabson, who helped Bichan find her way into playing jazz, and Joe Walsh, who worked with her on newgrass, were among her mentors.

"Joe was great because he gave me confidence to explore other kinds of music. He said, 'Look, you're good at what you do. And it's OK to be not quite as good at some of the other stuff you're playing.' It's hard to be that vulnerable sometimes, so to hear him say that was very important."

Living in the US also brought Bichan in contact with Bruce Molsky, a prominent old-time/Appalachian musician who helped steer her toward learning clawhammer banjo.

"What's made this all such a great experience was not only being able to become familiar with other kinds of music, but to develop more of a grounding as a musician," she says. "I wrote 'Out of My Own Light' without knowing a lot about chords; now, I am able to approach composition and arrangements from a stronger position."

"The Lost Summer," however, is not simply all about Bichan's American experience. There are plenty of references and reminiscences among the 10 tracks that evoke her bonds – familial and otherwise – with Orkney and the Scottish music tradition. In fact, the title tune serves as a thematic crossroads and focal point. As Bichan explains, she wrote the piece in 2020, when a hoped-for trip home was scuttled by the pandemic and visa complications. "I was rather melodramatic, as you might understand. In retrospect, it was actually a great summer," she says, although her return to Scotland had to wait a couple of more years.

Far from a lugubrious lament, "The Lost Summer" comes across as an expression of inner resilience. Entering to a blues/rock-slide riff by Setiawan, Bichan establishes a grittily majestic groove, Dan Klingberg's double bass lending support and Conor Hearn's electric guitar helping to build momentum. Abruptly, it all falls away, and amidst the sudden decrescendo, Klingberg switches to an eight-note motif while clearing the way for Bichan to improvise. Gradually, the rest of the ensemble rebuilds the earlier theme, leading to another break in which Ali Levack delivers a flourish on whistle worthy of an Ian Anderson flute solo, until Bichan and the other musicians return for the denouement.

Arguably the most ambitious track combines two similar tunes from different traditions: "Deltingside" (Shetland) and "Squirrel Hunters" (American). The former is propelled by Bichan's duet with cellist Brendan Hearn, but the highlight here is a solo by Simon Chrisman on hammered dulcimer, which sets up the segue to the latter tune, introduced by Bichan and the clawhammer banjo of Brad Kolodner, who gets his turn in the spotlight – as does Setiawan on mandolin – during a sequence that draws on newgrass style before a brief encore of "Deltingside." "Adam and Eric's" (a Bichan original) also toggles between Celtic and Americana, as Bichan and Brendan Hearn play off one another in a series of improv breaks.

Jennifer Austin's gentle piano settles in behind Bichan and her cousin, fiddler Alice Tait, on Jennifer Wrigley's easy-going, laidback "The Watch Stone," and then falls away as the pair harmonize, returning again when they transition into "Arnie's 80th," a jig Bichan and Tait wrote for Bichan's great uncle. It's an altogether sublime track that locates Bichan comfortably within her roots, and hearth and home, amidst her musical and personal travels. So does "The Little Cowpig," which Bichan composed in honor of a beloved neighbors' dog. Played solo by Bichan, it's a quirky yet somewhat haunting medium-tempo tune, with hints of Shetland or perhaps Scandinavia.

Hallowed traditional tunes serve as the finishing touch for two sets: "Little Donald in the Pigpen," a reel with Cape Breton and Scottish connections, which follows "Pinnacle Ridge" by Northumbrian musician Roger Peppé and Jerry Holland's "Musical Chisholm Household"; and "The Holm Band Tune" from Orkney, after "The Auch Jig" – written by Bichan's friend Siobhan Anderson – and John McSherry's "Skipping Over the Bogs."

While "The Lost Summer" is vastly different than "Out of My Own Light," the albums do share a common feature: A photo of an old pier not far from where Bichan grew up adorns the front cover. But for "Lost Summer," Bichan elected to render a portion of the photo in black and white, in stark contrast to the vibrant hues in the other part. It's suggestive of constancy amidst change (or vice versa), or perhaps more relevantly, how a place where journeys begin has simultaneously existed as a place where journeys end.

Bichan has been on a musical as well as a literal journey, one she feels is still in its early stages, but as she says, "I still feel a strong connection, in many ways, to where the journey started from."

For tickets and other information regarding Bichan's May 8 concert at Club Passim, see passim.org. Her website is at louisebichan.co.uk.

Online at BostonIrish.com

Summer 2024

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WRENTHAM MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON IRISH Album Reviews - JUNE 2024

BY SEAN SMITH
BOSTONIRISH CONTRIBUTOR



Reverie Road • When these folks formed up about two years ago, you knew the result was going to be pretty darn good: accordionist/flutist John Williams and fiddler Winnie Horan – two of the co-founders of Solas – along with fiddler Katie Grennan (formerly of Gaelic Storm) and Utsav Lal, the oft-described “raga pianist” and one-time New England Conservatory student. Suffice it to say, “pretty darn good” doesn’t begin to do justice to their work: This album is brimming with imagination, passion, grit, and fun, and governed by a fundamentally good sense of how to fit together these splendid individual talents. There is, of course, a strong traditional Irish component to Reverie Road’s sound, but other influences and interests are evident, including French, Shetland, and chamber music, among others.

Horan and Grennan are often the quartet’s linchpins, in unison or in harmony, whether playing the melody – such as “Hardiman’s Fancy” on the “Gap of Dreams” track, and the blazing “Flooded Road” medley (Jimmy McHugh’s “Flooded Road to Glenties,” Ed Reavy’s relentless “House of Hamill” and “New Mown Meadow”) – or giving rhythm or providing textures and ambience. Which is not to downplay Williams’s contributions on box, such as on “Megan McCann’s” at the end of the “Emma’s Reel” set or Joe Carey’s “An Siocán Sneachta” in the middle of the “Snowy Drifts” track. Those previously unaware

of his prowess on flute (raises hand meekly) will be especially impressed to hear it during, for example, “Snowy Drifts” and “Flooded Road.” It also bears mentioning that Grennan plays mandolin on two tracks and tenor banjo on a third.

Which brings us to Lal, who has often remarked on the connections and commonalities he sees between Celtic and Indian musical forms, notably the “blurred lines” between composition and improvisation in those traditions. Even as he’s played with Celtic performers such as Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill, Jarlath Henderson and Adam Sutherland, Lal has continued to refine the Indian, jazz, and classical elements of his music, all to great effect here.

His pensive solo take on the air/song “The Rocks of Bawn,” with Horan’s subtle backing, is easily a highlight of the album, while also serving as a prelude of sorts to the track that follows, “The Calico Set”: As the piano’s resonance slowly ebbs, the fiddles hold a long note, then Horan eases into the reel “Tear the Calico” (known in some versions as “The Fair Wind”), Lal re-entering quietly, followed by Grennan’s banjo. At length, the fiddles do a slow swell again, this time into a crescendo, and then tear into a pair of masterful Horan originals, “Joe Horan’s” and “Molly Mae’s.”

For good measure and contrast, the album also includes a slowed-down Shetland jig, “Naked and Bare”; a pair of waltzes, “Très Élégante,” by Pennsylvania contra dance pianist Bob Paquarella, and “Valse pour Yvette” by Sébastien Lagrange; and the mazurka “Le Femme De Marbre” by the late highly regarded French diatonic accordionist Stéphane Delicq (known in some circles as “The King of The Asymmetrical Waltz”).

The Reverie Road roster is bolstered by guest appearances from Donogh Hennessy (guitar), Chico Huff (bass), and Steve Morrow (bodhran).

While the attention to detail in the arrangements is impressive, nothing feels constrained or hemmed-in – there’s plenty of energy and effervescence throughout the album. Reverie Road is the avenue for an uncommonly enjoyable excursion. [www.reverieroad-music.com]



Lúnasa, “Live in Kyoto” • The first release in six years for this justifiably celebrated, continually innovative band, known for its layered, harmonically sophisticated, exquisitely arranged brand of Irish music, is something of a back-to-basics album. Following their 2013 live recording with the RTE Concert Orchestra, “Cas” (2018) saw them collaborate with five different guest vocalists – Daoirí Farrell, Natalie Merchant, Tim O’Brien, Eric Bibb, and Mary Chapin Carpenter. Here, it’s just the guys by themselves, and their version of “back to basics” is an absolute pleasure.

Part of the reason is the sense of immediacy conveyed via a live album, especially one recorded in a small venue – Taku Taku in Kyoto – and all the better when you’ve got folks like Ed Boyd (guitar), Kevin Crawford (flute, whistles), Trevor Hutchinson (double bass), Seán Smyth (fiddle, low whistle) and Cillian Vallely (uilleann pipes, low whistle) at the height of their individual and collective powers. Not only that, the material is all new for the band, even if a few tunes have appeared on members’ solo or duo recordings.

For starters, there’s the starter: The first track, “The Bull’s March,” begins with a slow-rocking intro by Boyd and Hutchinson, before Vallely’s pipes take up a traditional 4/4 mixolydian march from Donegal (and possibly elsewhere), “March of the Min na Toitean Bull” – conveying the boldness and swagger of the titular animal – as Smyth and then Crawford join in, the latter playing harmonies on the B part.

The quintet seamlessly shifts rhythm and tone in the segue to “40 March” by Niall Vallely (brother of Cillian), and then Boyd redirects the tempo and time signature to jumpstart another Niall Vallely piece, “40 Reel”; Boyd and Hutchinson drop out for the third and final turn through the A part, leaving bare the gorgeous harmony among Cillian Vallely, Smyth and Crawford, before returning for the last B part.

Cillian Vallely’s own credentials as a superior tunesmith, meanwhile, are evident on “Rock Road,” a trio of two intricate slip jigs and a reel (“Windmill Hill/The Seven Houses/Rock Road”). His “Drumcairn” is the middle part of a lengthy track, “John McGinley’s,” that showcases Crawford’s prodigious ability on whistle, as he starts off the proceedings with the haunting air “Liam O’Raghallaigh”; the accompaniment by Boyd and Hutchinson (who bows instead of plucks the bass here) is spare but elegant. Crawford, not so incidentally, displays his own compositional strengths on “Days Around Lahinch/Man from Moyasta,” in duet with Vallely’s low whistle.

No intent to overlook Smyth: He does an outstanding rendition of “The Blue Fiddle,” a 3/4 “slip polka” written by Steve Cooney, and he helps in no small way to rhythmically anchor a glorious set of three Breton tunes. Smyth also kicks off the last track – which highlights Lúnasa’s brilliance in putting together its sets – with “Union Street Session,” a reel written by Cape Breton fiddler, composer and retired lighthouse keeper Paul Cranford; this leads to “Boys of the 25” – a traditional tune particularly favored in Co. Fermanagh – then finishes up with Crawford’s “Cabin in the Woods.”

No telling yet what Lúnasa’s next recording might be, and whether it will involve guest performers or a particular theme or focus. But what “Live in Kyoto” demonstrates beyond any shadow of a doubt is that, wherever their explorations take this band, the pillars on which Lúnasa is built – superlative musicianship, taste and craft – remain as strong as ever, and are its defining assets. [www.lunasamusic.com]

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Local Fiddler Mari Black to show her Cape Breton side at Club Passim

In concert with Troy MacGillivray on Thurs., June 2

By SEAN SMITH
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Well-traveled and accomplished Boston-based fiddler Mari Black and Nova Scotian fiddler/pianist Troy MacGillivray – one of the leading lights in Cape Breton music for most of this century – team up on June 20 at Harvard Square’s Club Passim for a special collaborative concert, “From Highlands to Islands.”

Drawing on their deep roots in traditional music, Black and MacGillivray will present what they describe as a dynamic musical journey from the majestic highlands of Scotland to the shores of Cape Breton Island, and many other places where these musical styles have spread over the years. Also joining in on the festivities will be local guitarist Matt Heaton.

“There are so many beautiful similarities between Scottish and Cape Breton music,” says Black, a two-time US Scottish fiddle champion, “but both also have unique personalities that we love to highlight and celebrate. I think of Scottish as more ‘fiery,’ while Cape Breton is more ‘earthy.’ It’s music that speaks to your soul.”

Black first met MacGillivray in 2019, when both were teaching at the Acadia Festival of Traditional Music and Dance in Bar Harbor, Me. The two hit it off immediately and did a performance at the festival. “It was one of those situations where you play two bars of music together and you instantly feel the artistic connection,” Black says with a laugh.

During the pandemic, the pair arranged to do a virtual concert from their respective locations, aptly titled “Music & Mischief,” which involved them doing a lot of things one wouldn’t expect: step dancing, playing instruments they aren’t known for playing in public, and even showing some nostalgic baby pictures.

“We have the perfect chemistry of tomfoolery, humor, fun energy, and being rabble rousers at sessions,” says Black. “I love collaborating with Troy because it’s always a spontaneous adventure – you never know what we’re going to do next.”

Black has spent her musical life exploring a diverse array of musical styles, so it’s not surprising for her to hear the question: How does one musician get so caught up in so many different genres – Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, Quebec, American, jazz, tango, swing, klezmer, classical, contemporary?

The answer, she says, is deceptively simple.

“At the root, it’s all dance music. It’s built to make us move – in different ways, at different rhythms and speeds, on our own or with others. Dance is an incredible uniting force because everyone moves – it’s a human need. I love getting to play the music that invites and inspires people to dance along.”

Black, who refers to herself as “an enthusiastic collector of passport stamps,” has played music in many corners of the world and a variety of settings: fiddle competitions (she’s a multiple champion in American, Scottish, and Canadian Maritime styles); Celtic festivals; music camps and programs; and venues of just about every size, including Carnegie Hall. And she has been honored to study with, and eventually perform with, venerated artists in many styles, ranging from Liz Carroll to jazzman Willie Ruff, as well as four legendary jazz drummers at Yale School of Music’s Duke Ellington Fellowship concert series.

While the Passim concert will offer a glimpse of Black’s spectrum of sounds, her 2014 album “Flight” is even more stylistically wide-ranging. On one track, she combines a pair of traditional Irish jigs, “Cliffs of Mohr” and “Green Hills of Tyrol” with her own



Mari Black will team with Cape Breton fiddler Troy MacGillivray at Club Passim on June 20.

“Exhale,” and is joined by her mother Bonnie, an accomplished cellist and the album’s producer, for a sonorous take on a famous modern pipe melody, “The Highland Cathedral.” Her Scottish-style fiddling is in full bloom on “The MSR (Magnificent Scottish Revelry)” – the title is a spoof of the “MSR” acronym, which in Scottish music denotes “march, strathspey, reel” – with “Lord Huntly’s Cave/Craigellachie Bridge/The Bride’s Reel/The Gladstone.”

Additionally, “Flight” features a Québécois medley (“Le Tableau/Reel Du Chaloupier/Le Voyage/Reel Des Soucoupes Volantes”); a classic fiddle-piano pairing for a blast of Cape Breton tunes (“The Paps of Glencoe/Glen Grant/Glen Rinne’s/Reel for Melodie and Derrick/Tom Rae/Father Francis Cameron”); and the jazz-inflected “Hallucinations” and “Peepholes” with piano and drums backing.

Her 2020 duo recording with three-time world champion accordionist – and New England Conservatory alum – Cory Pesaturo, “Unscripted,” is a further demonstration of Black’s globe-trotting, cosmopolitan proclivities. The pair exhibit a chemistry that is at times breath-taking, through a veritable kaleidoscope of time signatures, tones, and timbres: a Sicilian tarantella here, an Italian mazurka “Migliavacca” there, a Balkanesque Pesaturo original (“Crankin’”), George Gershwin’s “But Not for Me,” a klezmer, a hora, and consecutive tracks of a Cape Breton air followed by a medley of dance tunes – both musicians wringing just about every possible mode of expressiveness from their instruments.

Black – born in New York and a resident of Portland,

Me., until she was eight – is fond of saying that it was the violin that chose her, rather than the contrary. “As a little kid, everything looked to me like a violin, whether it was a pair of chopsticks or a couple or garden trowels. I just felt very drawn to playing music, and the violin in particular.” Growing up with a mother who had taught herself to play music, with a superb ability on piano as well as cello and a keen interest in many genres, certainly helped spur Black’s development.

In addition to studying classical music, Black, along with her family, was “musically adopted” by members of the rich fiddling community in southern Maine, most notably by a group called the Maine French Fiddlers and celebrated fiddler Don Roy – a generous teacher and musician lovingly dubbed “the dean of Franco-American fiddling” – who was especially influential for Black. The family would make regular forays to fiddle events around New England, and Black found kindred souls in the Downeast fiddlers of all ages, who were playing in the Québécois, Irish, and Scottish traditions.

“The sounds they made would just grab you,” she recalls. “It was more than music; it was a musical language, one they wanted to pass on to the next generation.”

Black’s musical development continued when the family moved to Cambridge, very near Passim, where she was able to “drink from the well of folk music.” As a teen, she went to a fiddle camp run by fiddler Mark O’Connor, whose brand of new American classical music has earned him critical acclaim and three Grammy awards, not to mention a multitude of admirers and students. Her circle of music-related friends and acquaintances continued to grow, even as she also followed an academic path, earning a master of music degree and artist diploma in violin performance from the Yale School of Music and a doctorate in education from Columbia University Teachers College.

Black’s innate *joie de vivre* is evident in performance but also more informal settings, such as last fall, when she led a gathering of the Boston Scottish Fiddle Club’s monthly session at the Canadian American Club in Watertown. The occasion served as an opportunity for her to trot out her «Session Bingo» game, in which challenges are spelled out in the bingo card spaces like «Play a slip jig,» «A tune you learned at fiddle camp,» «A tune about the weather» and so on. She continually encouraged the session participants to put their best foot forward, even if their tune selection didn’t meet the bingo card criteria.

Black will be on the road this summer in her “Fiddling Around the World” trio, which includes a rotating cast of guitarists and bassists, and will teach at a few music camps, among them the Acadia Festival of Traditional Music and Dance, of which she now serves as music director. As always, she’ll be reaching into – and simultaneously expanding – that voluminous, diverse repertoire of hers.

Which leads to another question she’s used to contemplating: How do you move through and inhabit so many different kinds of music?

“You know, there’s probably a discussion to be had about the mindset in approaching one kind of music as opposed to another,” she says. “But I think that, if the music is just plain good, you don’t always have to be intellectual about it. You find what speaks to you in the music, and let it take you wherever it goes.”

Tickets and details about the Mari Black-Troy MacGillivray concert available via passim.org; Black’s website is mariblack.com

On his death, The Ireland Funds remember Sir Anthony O'Reilly

It is with profound sadness that we mark of the passing of Sir Anthony "Tony" O'Reilly, Co-Founder of The Ireland Funds. Together with the late Dan Rooney, Tony established our organization in 1976 at the height of the Troubles in Northern Ireland to provide support to peaceful initiatives that embodied the organization's original motto of "Peace, Culture, Charity."

Tony was known as an extraordinary businessman and Irish rugby player who achieved great success in both arenas. He was the youngest-ever player selected for the British Lions rugby team and set records throughout his career. He was the first international rugby player to be honored by the Rugby Hall of Fame.

His business career spanned the Irish Dairy Board, the Heinz Corporation, Independent News and Media, Waterford Wedgwood and the O'Reilly Foundation. He was knighted by the queen in 2001 for his "long and distinguished service" to Northern Ireland due in part to his philanthropic work with The Ireland Funds.

As his Ireland Funds' family, we knew Tony for his incredible contributions to the life of the orga-

nization. The value of his charismatic and visionary leadership and guidance in co-founding The Ireland Funds cannot be overstated. Not only did he and Dan envision and create this organization as a strategic way for the diaspora to do something positive and impactful, he personally donated millions of dollars to the causes and projects we support and touched the lives of countless people across the island.

In 2016 on the fortieth anniversary of The Ireland Funds, Dan Rooney reflected on his collaboration with Tony in 1976 saying, "Tony O'Reilly and I discussed the direction to take. He kept us on the right path. At first, many people thought we were just another group trying to get guns to fight the peace effort; but we carried on and the idea for peace came to the fore. We were for peace, and we were going to stay with it. It worked."

Tony's own words on the work of The Ireland Funds were prophetic and inspiring. "You are building a modern and peaceful Ireland. We will not achieve our goals of peace, culture and charity in our lifetimes, but we will have passed to future generations our visions of a truly noble and inspiring Ireland. We must continue."



Sir Anthony "Tony" O'Reilly: "He kept us on the right path."

The greatest tribute we offer is to continue the work he started. We are filled with gratitude for his life and for his friendship. We thank Tony for his vision, his commitment, his service, and his steadfast faith in our mission. His memory will live on in the legacy and active philanthropy of The Ireland Funds.

Our thoughts are with the entire O'Reilly family at this time.



The Boston Police Department has implemented innovative programs that prioritize mental health support for residents and employees alike. With a person-centered approach at their core, our initiatives offer compassionate responses and vital resources, all thanks to our strong collaborations and partnerships.



Scan here to learn more about the programs & initiatives or send an email to: mentalhealth@pd.boston.gov

Charitable Irish Harbor Cruise set for June 23

Catherine Shannon will speak on 1840s Deer Island quarantine

BY KATHLEEN WILLIAMS
SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH MAGAZINE

It is with gratitude and hope that the Charitable Irish Society of Boston begins the summer of 2024. We are grateful to our members near and far for their generosity in support of our charitable programs and for joining us at the various events we hosted this year. We are grateful to the Irish Government and the Consul General's Regional office for granting and facilitating the Emigrant Support Programme funds that have enabled cultural programs such as the Heaney Poetry night, which marked the 10th anniversary of his passing.

We look forward in hope as we plan future events. One such is a Boston

Harbor boat cruise on the afternoon of June 23 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. We will board at the Cambridge side Galleria, cruise historic Boston Harbor and pass by Deer Island to view the 16-foot tall Celtic Cross where we will hear from the historian Catherine Shannon about the timeframe when Irish immigrants fleeing the Great Famine of the 1840s were quarantined prior to entering the city of Boston. We hope to gain new members through such historic and enjoyable events!

Plans are also underway for our annual Silver Key Fundraiser in the early autumn, an event whose entire proceeds enable the society to make timely grants to immigrants in need and honor members of the community

who have excelled in aiding such immigrants.

Other plans include sponsoring, with the Eire Society, the 175th anniversary of the loss of at least 100 Irish immigrants when the Brig St. John went down off Cohasset. The Ancient Order of Hibernians plan a two-day event this year with a focus on education as well as commemoration. Following a very successful Seamus Heaney Poetry night, another such event coming in the fall will ask attendees to share a favorite poem or a story about the Irish poet Eavan Boland and possibly some of her contemporary poets.

Over the past two years, we have been fortunate to have new people join our board of directors. Jim Foley and

Molly Carey joined last year and Ellen Woods this year. They come with great experience and great ideas. Two such members would like to explore ways in which the Society might facilitate volunteer opportunities for young members. Organizations that forward requests for grants from our Silver Key fund may offer such opportunities. This year, interested board members will reach out to them, hoping to create a plan to start movement in this direction.

Finally, we have received great feedback on our poems that we share each month. Feel free to send one to us that we can post! Email: charitableirishsociety@gmail.com

Kathleen Williams is president of the Charitable Irish Society.

Poem of the Month hails summer's delights

The month of June heralds the beginning of the summer season, and all of the delights which come with it. For the Poem of the Month, we have selected "Welcome Dear Summer" by Geraldine Benson. It is an homage to all that nature offers us during this fleeting time of the year. If you would like to be a part of our monthly poetry selection, please submit

the name, author, and source for a poem, from any country of origin, to me at williakj7@gmail.com. We will share it as an email with our members and friends, and likely on our social media platforms as well. With best wishes for a memorable and enjoyable summer, and the hope that you will have a chance to make the most of it!

-KATHLEEN WILLIAMS

"Welcome Dear Summer" by Geraldine Benson

Welcome dear Summer,
Please come stay a while,
Long hours of sunshine,
And pure crystal blue skies,

Birds singing sweetly,
From dawn through to dusk,
The cuckoo calling loudly,
Although known to be brusque,

An array of vibrant flowers,
Arise from the warm earth below,
Bees buzzing around them,
Creating perfumed honey as blooms glow,

The sweet scent of the roses,
Wafting through the warm dusty air,
As sultry breezes hug our faces,
Painting gold upon skin laden bare,

Butterflies like fairies,
Flitting happily around,
Seeking sweet nectar from flowers,
Dancing & swirling without sound,

Fields covered with clover,
As cows graze through the day,
Surrounded by offspring,
As they skip and play.
Swallows are nesting,



On our barns and eaves,
And flitting through the skyline
Grabbing tiny insects like thieves.

It's that time of year,
Where we enjoy long hazy days,
It's a beautiful season,
That will never cease to amaze.

Eire Society elects officers; William J. Smith is acting president

The annual meeting of the Eire Society of Boston was convened on Sun., June 9, at the Aisling Gallery in Hingham. The main agenda item was the election of officers and board members.

Chosen as officers: William J Smith, Acting President, Tom Carty, Treasurer, Betsy Butler, Secretary & Finance/Membership and Shamus Hyland, Corresponding Secretary.

Board members reelected: Tom Carty, Paul Doyle, Christian DuPont, Barbara Fitzgerald, Margaret Flagg, Brian Frykenberg, Edris Kelly, Mimi McNealy Langenderfer, Paul Moran, Cate McGrail, Ronan Noone, Donal O'Sullivan, Catherine Shannon, William J. Smith, Margaret Stapleton, John

L. Sullivan, Ann Connolly Tolkoﬀ and Frank Waldron-Lynch, MD

Newly-elected to the board: Elizabeth Butler, Michael Collier, Tricia Griffin-Carty, Shamus Hyland, Tom Mackey and Victoria McCallion.

The Society honored Irish polemicist, literary editor, journalist, and writer Fintan O'Toole with the 2024 Gold Medal award at a dinner ceremony May 2 at the Parker House.

At right: Paul Doyle and William Smith escorted Gold Medalist Fintan O'Toole into the ceremony.
Kataram Studios photo





Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, the world's longest defined coastal touring route is 10!

Offering cinematic beauty, off-the-beaten-track experiences and transcendently beautiful coastal scenery, the Wild Atlantic Way has been one of the island of Ireland's most successful tourism stories. 10 years on, it is as compelling as ever.

An internationally acclaimed waymarked road trip stretching 1,550 miles along the contours of Ireland's great western seaboard, from County Cork in the south to County Donegal in the north. With 188 Discovery Points along the way, the Wild Atlantic Way route has guided intrepid travelers for the past decade to previously off-grid west of Ireland locations, bringing with it one million extra international visitors, helping to shape a thriving tourism industry which supports 80,000 jobs and delivering 3 billion euro to the economy.

Weaving through nine coastal counties, this epic route is studded with coves and cliffs, caves and craggy rock formations, all sculpted by the sea over millennia. With its cinematic beauty and otherworldly landscapes, it's a place that has attracted the attention of some of the world's top filmmakers and TV producers, with "Ryan's Daughter," "Star Wars," "The Banshees of Inisherin," and "Normal People" all shot on location here.

The Wild Atlantic Way can be explored on foot, bike or by car and on any timescale. From idling away afternoons on one of its 63 beaches to connecting with nature in one of its five national parks, it's a place of endless adventure, with 26 inhabited and hundreds of uninhabited islands, world-renowned golf courses, two Dark Sky Reserves and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Skellig Michael.

Places to go

Kinsale in County Cork marks the start of the Wild Atlantic Way and is a charming introduction to Cork's spectacular coastline, with its gorgeous little villages and dramatic locations, such as the Mizen Head Signal Station, Ireland's most southwesterly point, known for its bridge over a dramatic swirling seascape. County Kerry is famous for its

heavy-hitting attractions including the Ring of Kerry and the Dingle Peninsula – as well as dramatic Skellig Michael, a 6th-century monastic site and Star Wars film location.

The estuary-hugging N69 road leads to Foynes Flying Boat & Maritime Museum, birthplace of the Irish coffee! Limerick city boasts one of the finest Normancastles in the world, King John's Castle, as well as lively riverside pubs.

Once in Clare, the landscape changes dramatically, with Loop Head Peninsula offering edge-of-the-world road frontage and vertiginous views. Next come the Cliffs of Moher, goliath-like rock formations that tower over the Atlantic Ocean. Nearby, the scenic village of Doolin is a gateway to the beloved Aran Islands, as well as the limestone karst landscape of the Burren, a Special Area of Conservation. Clare is also famed for its traditional music scene, which can be enjoyed in the lively villages of Doolin, Ballyvaughan, and Lisdoonvarna.

Always arrive in Galway city with an appetite, because it's a top food destination along the Wild Atlantic Way. Beyond the city is Connemara, a wild, wind-scorched region once described by Oscar Wilde as a "savage beauty". Visitors have an overwhelming choice of places to see, such as the fairy-tale Kylemore Abbey, set on a glassy lake, and the pretty ocean-fringed village of Roundstone.

One of County Mayo's star attractions is the buzzing town of Westport on Clew Bay. Matt Malloy's Pub, owned by one of Ireland's leading musicians, is always game for a good trad session. Achill Island, one of the settings for the movie The Banshees of Inisherin, is spectacular with Keem Bay a star attraction. Or reach back into the past at Céide Fields, a 6,000-year-old Neolithic site with views over a 110-metre-high cliffside.

Ben Bulbin, the famous flattop mountain that features in the poetry of William Butler Yeats and the television series Normal People, heralds the route's passing into the northwest. Yeats's trail knits both Leitrim and Sligo together and the coastal trail moves from the shortest stretch of coastline on

the Wild Atlantic Way in County Leitrim to the shores of County Sligo. It's here you'll find Strandhill, home to one of Ireland's top surf schools.

Donegal's untamed landscape is fringed by miles of deserted beaches, but the showstoppers here are the towering cliffs at Slieve League. For those who prefer something a bit more down to

earth, Glenveagh National Park offers forests, exotic plant life and a castellated mansion with a fascinating backstory.

In fact, the entire Wild Atlantic Way tells a fascinating tale with one of the most beautiful backdrops in the world, and those who come to visit rarely leave unchanged.

–Submitted by Tourism Ireland

June 22&23
Governors Hutchinson's Field

MILTON MUSIC FESTIVAL

Saturday Line up	Celtic Sunday Lineup	Food Vendors
5:00pm Wayne Potash (special kids performance)	1:00 DJ Bob Brooks	Novara Abby Park Beer Garden Craft Cocktail's
6:15pm Veronica Lewis	1:20 Strawberry Hill	Fried Dough
8:15 pm Headlining the Night Direct from Santa Cruz CA Alex Lucero Band	2:10 Erin's Melody	Hotdogs
9:45 Fireworks Spectacular	3:05 Currighs Fancy	Burgers
	4:00 The Fenian Sons	Ice Cream
	5:00 The Dooley Brothers	Cheesy Chicks Gourmet Food Truck
	6:00 Derek Warfield and The Young Wolf Tones	

Trad Tent 2:45 Strawberry Hill (Local Traditional Artists Welcome)

Beacons of history: Explore Ireland's Great Lighthouses

The island of Ireland has 16 Great Lighthouses that are important keepers of maritime heritage and offer extraordinary visitor experiences.

There is something magical about a lighthouse. Set on a cliff-top location with breath-taking seascape views, every lighthouse has witnessed the dramas of seafarers over centuries and has a fascinating tale to tell.

Some of the designated Great Lighthouses on the island of Ireland offer accommodation and make for a memorable overnight stay, while others offer guided tours and fascinating, interactive exhibitions that explore the island's maritime history.

Fanad Head, County Donegal

Voted one of the most beautiful lighthouses in the world, Fanad Head was first lit in 1817. It stands on the windswept Fanad peninsula between Lough Swilly and sandy Mulroy Bay. Guided tours of the lighthouse give an authentic insight into its history and the people who worked there and from the top of its tower, whales, dolphins and porpoises can often be glimpsed. Overnight accommodation is available in the former lightkeepers' houses.

Blackhead Lighthouse, County Antrim

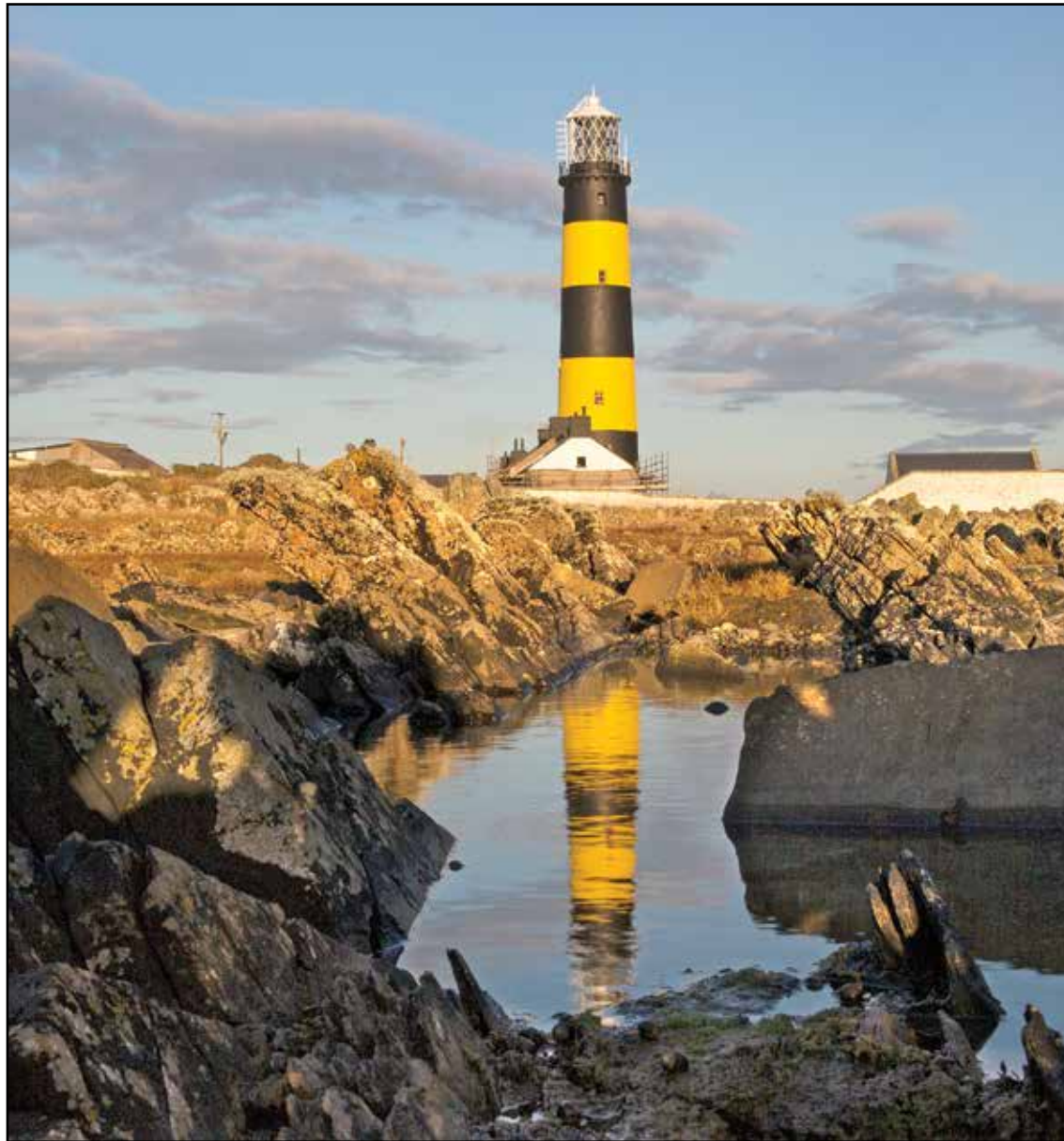
Overlooking Belfast Lough, Blackhead Lighthouse has guided many famous ships into and out of the lough including the Titanic and her sister ships. It was manned up until 1975 but now offers accommodation in three restored lightkeepers' houses beside the lighthouse. The houses contain interesting fragments of lighthouse paraphernalia, including the whistle pipe system used to wake up the next watch.

Loop Head, County Clare

Loop Head Lighthouse began life in 1670 as a coal-burning brazier on a platform and has been warning sailors about the dangers around the County Clare coast since then. There are interactive exhibits in the lightkeeper's cottage and you can climb to the top of the lighthouse tower for 360° views over the gorgeous landscape. A stay in one of the lightkeepers' cottages extends the amazing experience.

Rathlin West Light, County Antrim

The island's quirkiest lighthouse is the 'upside down' Rathlin West Light on tranquil Rathlin Island, just 25 minutes by ferry from Northern Ire-



St John's Point, County Down



Fanad Head, County Donegal

land's spectacular Causeway Coast. Built into the cliff face, the lighthouse rises above its beacon, which still plays an important role in maritime safety. Rathlin Island is also famous for its significant seabird colonies that include guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes, fulmars and puffins.

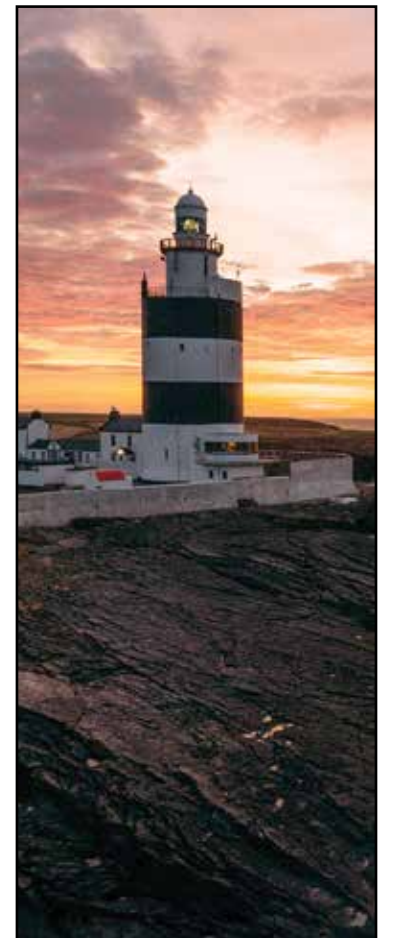
Hook Lighthouse, County Wexford

Sitting at the entrance to Waterford Harbour in Ireland's Ancient East, Hook is the oldest operational lighthouse in the world. An almost intact medieval lighthouse, it continues to serve its original function and also welcomes visitors for guided tours that reveal the secrets of its 800 years. As well as the daily tours, private sunrise and sunset tours are available.

St John's Point, County Down

The striking yellow and black stripes of St John's Point lighthouse make it an unmistakable landmark. It is also the tallest onshore lighthouse on the island's coastline. The two adjacent lightkeepers' cottages offer overnight accommodation and are a great base from which to explore the beautiful surroundings. The lighthouse is connected to two beacons of Irish culture. It is mentioned in Van Morrison's song *Coney Island*, and the playwright Brendan Behan helped his father to paint it!

www.ireland.com



Hook Lighthouse, County Wexford



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