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Welcome to the latest edition of the IACI e-news.

Founded in 1962, the IACI is the leading Irish American cultural organization. The IACI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national organization devoted to promoting an intelligent appreciation of Ireland and the role and contributions of the Irish in America.

Guest contributors are always welcome! Please note, the IACI is an apolitical, non-sectarian organization and requests that contributors consider that when submitting articles. The IACI reserves the right to refuse or edit submissions. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of the IACI or any/all contributors to this site. Please submit articles for consideration to cbuck@iaci-usa.org.

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November 30, 2016

The holiday season is upon us and I hope that yours is filled with family, friends, and traditional holiday joy. Because we share an enthusiasm for Irish culture, I also hope that you will join me during this season of giving and consider contributing to the Irish American Cultural Institute.

The Irish American Cultural Institute has served as a leader in the Irish cultural community for more than five decades, and continues to be the only Irish American organization that has as its patron, The President of Ireland. Through the years, the financial support of individuals like you has enabled the Institute to accomplish great things, and your support is needed to continue its fine work on behalf of the artistic and cultural communities of Ireland and Irish America.

Programs such as the Irish Way and Irish Perceptions (annually supported tours of performers and lecturers from Ireland presenting to our chapters and local community programs); awards and grants such as the Muriel Gahan Arts award, O'Malley Art Award, NUI-Galway Fellowship and the Irish Research Fund; and initiatives such as Irish American Kids, would not be possible without the generosity of individuals like you.

Each year we receive countless requests for funding to support worthy and deserving projects. We regret that too many of these requests go unfulfilled for a lack of available funding. One hundred percent of your year-end donation will be used to fund programming and projects.

How will your tax-free contribution be used?

- Educational initiatives that will provide teachers, students, and parents the tools necessary to better understand the culture and history of Ireland and Irish America.
- Expanded financial support for the work and presentations of historians, artists, musicians, local community groups and institutions that actively promote, preserve, and enhance our cultural legacy.
- Scholarships and financial aid for Irish Way students that might otherwise never have the opportunity to experience studying abroad.
- The expansion of our national network of organizations and institutions working together to promote and celebrate Irish culture at a local community level.

When you encounter the music, theatre, language, art, and history of Ireland and Irish America, you can take comfort in knowing that your gift has directly contributed to the preservation and promotion of our culture. Your donation is fully tax-deductible, as we are a 501(c) (3) charitable organization. We must continue to preserve the cultural traditions of Ireland for the coming generations.

Please make a gift today in support of the Irish American Cultural Institute.

Happy Holidays,

F. Peter Halas, MD
Chairman

Please visit www.iaci-usa.org to make your donation, or mail to: IACI, PO Box 1716, Morristown, NJ 07962

A Virtual Tour of Ireland

Part Three

By

Raymond D. Aumack

The road from Dunglow is apparently the only entrance into or exit from the town. It is the one I remember from a cover photo of the book, Memories of Dunglow, written in 1948 and that I read while in high school. We turned left onto the main road and almost immediately drove through a very picturesque mountain range. These mountains were different from the mountains in the South. The starkness of the rock face of the mountains contrasted sharply with the perpetual Irish green. Sheep grazed on most of the mountains and an occasional isolated farmhouse was visible on the hillsides. I marveled at the almost hermit-like loneliness of the families in those homes.

We were on our way to Londonderry, popularly called Derry, the second largest city of the North with an urban population of over 90,000. Passing through the border gates was an adventure. I couldn't help but remember the story of a friend, a prominent international attorney, who was passing through that same checkpoint as an IRA representative on his way to oversee security issues for the July marches and celebrations. He overheard one of the soldiers say, "That is the yank we are watching for. His name is Lalley." Nobody recognized us and I was very happy with our anonymity.

On the practical side, the roads in the North were better. They were wider, better maintained and generally safer than the roads in the Republic, with the exception of the newer causeways.

The City of Derry was a pleasant surprise. It is a walled city, though parts of the city have spread well beyond the walls. I was impressed with the vibrant life of the city. People were walking around, talking with each other in groups, shopping at the stores that lined the streets. The walled city part lies on the west bank of the picturesque river Foyle. The city now covers both banks of the river and is spanned by two road bridges and one footbridge.

It is said that the city was founded by St. Colmcille, a monk from Tir Chonaill, an ancient name for the territory known now as County Donegal. The name, Derry comes from an Irish word meaning, Oak Grove. The City was granted a Royal Charter in 1613. London was added to its name from the funding and construction expertise of the London guilds.

I was absolutely charmed by the surprise character of the city, especially knowing that it was "The Town I loved so Well," made famous by musician, Phil Coulter. The city is set on a plain as you come down out of the stark and rugged mountains. The city was alive with many people walking about and patronizing the shops and restaurants. Across from the Cathedral the large parking lot was filled with caravan vans. I thought there might be a convention of "The Travelling People." However, I was not able to identify their purpose. No one with whom I spoke was interested in discussing it.

After touring the city by auto, we moved on toward our destination of the Giant's Causeway.

We changed our EU currency into British pounds and drove east toward Bushmills. We had made arrangements to stay at a bed and breakfast between Bushmills and the Giant's Causeway. The B & B turned out to be the main house of a delightful farm that raised sheep and had rows and rows of vegetables spread out over a large expanse of land.

Our first visit to the Giant's Causeway was in late afternoon after we settled in the farmhouse. I had read about the Giant's Causeway and even saw photos of it, but certainly did not prepare for the experience of seeing it first-hand.

The Giant's Causeway is located on the northeast coast of County Antrim. It is made up of over 40,000 columns of black, grey Basalt rock that was the result of a volcanic eruption that occurred 50 to 60 million years ago. The phenomenon is that the rock formations are mostly columns with a very sharply defined hexagonal shape, though some have an octagonal shape. Standing in front of the column I had the sense that they were pipes in a giant organ. They were neat, straight, and ran from relatively small to up to forty feet in height. Actually there were columns underwater as well. It was exciting to see and I immediately climbed up the rock (very easy since they were in step-like formation) so my wife could take a photo.

The Giant's Causeway was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986, and a national nature reserve in 1987 by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland. In a 2005 poll of *Radio Times* readers, the Giant's Causeway was named as the fourth greatest natural wonder in the United Kingdom. Much of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site is today owned and managed by the National Trust and it is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Northern Ireland- The remainder of the site is owned by the Crown Estate and a number of private landowners.

I love legends because they tell the stories that may not be historical (also called myth) but they do speak to the imagination of the people who first made up those stories. I always take us tours of the cities I visit because I want to hear the stories.

According to legend, the columns are the remains of a causeway built by a giant. The story goes that the Irish giant Fionn mac Cumhail (Finn MacCool), from the Fenian Cycle of Gaelic mythology, was challenged to a fight by the Scottish giant Benandonner. Fionn accepted the challenge and built the causeway across the North Channel so that the two giants could meet. In one version of the story, Fionn defeats Benandonner. In another, Fionn hides from Benandonner when he realises that his foe is much bigger than he. Fionn's wife, Oonagh, disguises Fionn as a baby and tucks him in a cradle. When Benandonner sees the size of the 'baby', he reckons that its father, Fionn, must be a giant among giants. He flees back to Scotland in fright, destroying the causeway behind him so that Fionn could not follow. Across the sea, there are identical basalt columns (a part of the same ancient lava flow) at Fingal's Cave on the Scottish isle of Staffa, and it is possible that the story was influenced by this. Finally, I heard yet another legend. It states that Fionn had a girlfriend in Scotland. So enamored was he that he built the causeway to court her.

This paragraph is a final note for my Italian friends who will not visit Ireland because you can't get a good meal there. There is a small restaurant on the main road leading to Bushmills within

site of the Giant's Causeway that served us a meal that is on my personal list of the great meals of my life. Another of those memorable meals was served at an Italian Restaurant in Dublin on one of the side streets off the north side of Grafton Street. Another great meal is available at the Whitehouse Restaurant at Kinsale. You can get good meals all over the country and I also enjoyed the pub food throughout the country that was outstanding.

Bushmills, a quaint village of about 1400 people, is just a few miles down the road from the Giants Causeway. The famous distillery was founded about 400 years ago. They worked hard for a long time to get it right and connoisseurs assure us that they have found the formula.

I am not an expert. I have love Irish whiskey, "the water of life." My favorites are Bushmills Black, Tullamore Dew, and Jamesons. Each has slightly different taste. Tullamore Dew and Bushmills products have an ever so slight tinge of sweetness that Jameson does not have. A river runs past the distillery and through the town. The town is surrounded by real woods reminiscent of the Connemara region. It is said that part of the difference that Bushmills enjoys is because of the purity of the water as it runs over the rocks in the river.

Leaving the area, we took the road through **the Glens of Antrim**. This was a spectacular drive on winding roads that wove in and out of the forest. We saw three waterfalls and I believe we duplicated the experience of Adam and Eve when they first drove through the Garden of Eden.

We will conclude this tour in the December issue.

The Bold Fenian Men

*'Twas down by the glenside, I met an old woman
A-plucking young nettles, she ne'er saw me coming
I listened a while to the song she was humming
Glory O, Glory O, to the bold Fenian men...*

'Tis nearly a hundred years since Peadar Kearney wrote those words about **The Bold Fenian Men**, and a century-and-a-half since seven Irish exiles, in **New York City**, got together to do something which was revolutionary from the start. The United Irishmen of **1798** had begun as reformers. Daniel O'Connell's movement to Repeal the "Act of Union," though emphatically non-violent, was confronted by the threat to visit slaughter upon those unarmed Irish people who might show up at his "Monster Meeting" at Clontarf. The Young Ireland movement, which took up arms in 1848, had its roots in reform. After the failure of the Rising in **1848**, the locus of Irish revolutionary activity had shifted from Dublin to New York. For the men who gathered in the law office of Michael Doheny of Tipperary (Chairman, **Emmet Monument Association**), as it would later be articulated by Brian O'Higgins in the Wolfe Tone Annual, the lesson of history was clear: **Ireland had made progress toward freedom only through physical force, or the threat of physical force. This was the cornerstone of the purpose of The Bold Fenian Men – The Fenian Faith.**

An Gorta Mór, the Great Hunger of mid-19th century Ireland, which saw the population reduced by a half, was proof positive of the necessity, as Wolfe Tone had said in the 18th century, to **break the connection with England**. Archbishop "Dagger John" Hughes of New York stated that the food, which could have fed the Irish, was "exported to a better market, and left the people to die of famine..." The "Famine" period would take on, for the Irish of the mid-19th century, the same psychological significance as the Nazi period has for the Jews of the 20th and 21st centuries.

A conspiratorial élite of Irish exiles would seek to create an Irish Republican military force. The **69th Regiment of New York** came into existence on 12th October 1851 (with Michael Doheny as its first Lieutenant Colonel) for the purpose of training exiles for the future liberation of Ireland. Nor was the 69th the only such Irish regiment in the organized militias of the several States. Realizing that any activity in America would be futile without cooperation in Ireland, these exiles, Michael Doheny, John O'Mahony, Michael Corcoran, Thomas J. Kelly, James Roche, Oliver Byrne and Patrick O'Rourke, meeting in New York, reached out to their former comrades-in-arms at home, with the result that Joseph Denieffe, Thomas Clark Luby and James Stephens brought **the Irish Revolutionary/Republican Brotherhood (the IRB) – the Fenians - into existence in Dublin on Saint Patrick's Day 1858.**

The IRB, which brought about the Rising in Dublin and the Proclamation of the Irish Republic during Easter Week 1916, can trace its origin to this band of 1848 exiles, meeting first at 6 Centre Street, and then often in the Hibernian Hall managed by Michael Corcoran (of the 69th NYSM), near Saint Patrick's old Cathedral on Prince Street in New York City.

Professor Eoin McKiernan, founder of the Irish American Cultural Institute, felt that Ireland's best chance for freedom was probably the Fenians – **The Bold Fenian Men**. At the grave of O'Donovan Rossa in 1915, Pádraig Pearse would say, **"They have left us our Fenian dead, ..."**

Glory O, Glory O, to the bold Fenian men

Do You Know?
Christmas Trivia

The ilex and the hedera. Better known as ?????? & ???	Holly and Ivy
What specific type of plant is mistletoe?	Parasitic
The three wise men (or three Kings) were traditionally Kaspar, Balthazar and	Melchior
What present is traditionally given at Chanukah to children?	A dreidl, or spinning top
On the 12th day of Christmas there were 12 what?	Drummers, drumming
Who sang Fairytale of New York?	Shane McGowan and Kirsty MacColl
"Nadolig Llawen" is "Happy Christmas" in	Welsh
Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and ??	Blitzen
Name a religion that celebrates Diwali.	Hinduism, Sikhism or Jainism
What is the name given to the patterns drawn outside homes at Diwali?	Rangoli
Which carol is this? "Lullay, lullay thou little tiny child, Bye bye, lullay, lullay"	The Coventry Carol
On December 13th, girls in Sweden dress as which saint?	St Lucia
What is Happy Christmas in Irish?	Nollaig Shona
Whose Christmas song is A Spaceman Came Travelling?	Chris De Burgh
What bird was once hunted on St Stephen's Day in Ireland?	The wren
The German cake eaten at Christmas is called a	Stollen
Black bun is eaten at New Year in?	Scotland
Befana brings presents in which European country?	Italy
The feast day of St Nicholas is what date in Dec?	December 6th
St Nicholas was Bishop of Myra. Where is Myra? (country).	Turkey
Who wrote the poem The Night Before Christmas?	Clement Clarke Moore

The first Christmas crib (Nativity scene) was made in Assisi by ????	St. Francis
Who sang The Christmas Song?	Nat King Cole
Where did The Carol of the Bells originate?	Ukraine
What is the English name of the Irish carol, Carúl Loch Garman?	The Wexford Carol
What is the winter treat, Gluehwein?	Mulled, or spiced wine
Carols from which Cambridge college are a Christmas tradition?	Kings
Which James Joyce short story is set at a snowy Christmas time?	The Dead
Who is credited with bringing the Christmas tree to Britain and Ireland?	Queen Victoria
What date is the winter solstice, usually?	December 21st
Which famous actor (The African Queen, Casablanca) was born on Christmas Day?	Humphrey Bogart
On what day are Christmas presents traditionally given in Germany?	Christmas Eve
Complete the line "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem how .."	"... still we see thee lie"
Star lights, or 'parols' are a feature of Christmas in which country?	The Philippines
What is the more common name of Picea abies, a Christmas feature?	The Norway Spruce (Christmas tree)
Loy Krathong is a festival of light from which country?	Thailand
What is myrrh?	A bitter-smelling ointment
The poinsettia is native to which country?	Mexico
Carp is a Christmas dish in which country?	Poland
Who established the Christmas tree as a counterpoint to the Catholic Nativity scene?	Martin Luther
What winter festival honours African-American culture?	Kwanzaa
Nos Galan' are New Year races held in which country	Wales
The first written record of a Christmas tree is from what Baltic state?	Estonia

One of Jesus' presents was gold. What is the chemical symbol for gold?	Au
Tom Smith invented what Christmas tradition	Christmas crackers
What is the chief filling of Christmas mince pies?	Dried fruit
"The Toy Show" is a special seasonal edition of which Irish TV programme?	The Late Late Show
Which German cathedral contains a shrine to the Three Kings?	Koeln (Cologne)
Which of the Gospels contain the Christmas story?	Matthew and Luke
When was the Christmas card invented?	1843
Where did turkeys first come from?	North America
What sauce is usually served with Christmas pudding?	Brandy or rum
When was Christmas banned in England?	1647
What coin was once placed in Christmas puddings?	A silver sixpence
Which company is said to have popularised Santa's red coat?	Coca Cola
What name do Pagans give to the Winter solstice?	Yule
What is New Year called in Scotland?	Hogmanay
Who sang "A Christmas Dream"?	Perry Como
Who was visited by the Ghost of Christmas Past?	Ebenezer Scrooge
James Stewart starred in which Christmas film?	It's A Wonderful Life

God with a Face, Christmas 2016

*It takes centuries, this royal birth
This new life cosmic in scope;
Celestial dimensions enlighten earth
This newborn child is a story of hope.*

*This child is special, expected long in history
He is part of every nation, every race
His life a paradox enshrouded with mystery
Our royal child is literally God with a face.*

*Even today, we feel the anticipation
Of the ancient reality, His incarnation.*

*God is in our world, part of our history.
Forgiveness, mercy, healing, his ministry.*

*We celebrate Christ continuously born,
That through us the world is transformed.*

*Hope and mercy are revealed with Jesus
The unconditional love of God is with us.*

*The surprise of faith for Joseph and Mary
From dreams that defy logic and law
Share love with the infant that inspires awe
Grace flows into our lives, its cosmic destiny
Unexpected blessings granted beyond imagery
A great adventure of the unexpected is formed
Through God's grace, in Jesus' name, the world is reborn.*

Each year our Christmas gift to you is an original poem for your reflection. We wish each and every one of you all the blessings of Christmas. We thank you for the blessing of your friendship. We also pray for all the blessings of a New Year. We pray that the New Year, 2017, will bring you the awareness of love in your life. May this generate a transformative experience that will delight you and everyone whose life you touch.

With much love,

Ruth and Ray