



DÚCAS

Irish American Cultural Institute Newsletter

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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.

Sincerely,

Carol Buck
Irish American Cultural Institute

The Irish Way

Monday, June 30th, marked the departure of the Irish Way. Students from all corners of the country met at Boston Logan Airport to begin their month long journey to the Emerald Isle. To break up the 3-hour journey from Dublin Airport to Waterford, the students stopped at Glendalough (Valley of the Two Lakes) in Wicklow.

The students have been very busy attending classes such as the History of Ancient Irish Literature and Irish American History. Students had their first drama and dance workshops, where they were put into their groups and asked to write a limerick about an assigned historical Irish figure. They also participated in a scone making workshop.

"The Irish Way has certainly changed my life in such an amazing way..."-Mary Clare

"The Irish Way has touched my heart, opened my mind, and provided the most memorable experience..."

-Molly F.



IW Students attended a hurling match and tried their hand at the game.

To date, there have been tours of Waterford Crystal Factory, Guinness Brewery, Cahir Castle, Kilkenny Castle, Croke park, Kinsale and Cork City.



The Children of Lir

By Brian O'Connor

The Children of Lir is one of the three great 'tragedy' narratives of ancient Ireland (the other two being The Fate of the Sons of Tuirenn and Deirdre of the Sorrows). It's a tale that pretty much everyone in Ireland knows, primarily from school but also through a number of other routes (plays, television, books). Because of its popularity back in our ancestor's time, it was relatively common for storytellers to link the tale to places near to where their audience were located. This not only helped to provide an explanation or rationale for key topographical features in the local environment but also made the story that much more relevant for people who were hearing it for the first time. This is why, we find the final resting place for the children of Lir in Beara.

For those who are unfamiliar with the story, a local sign erected by Beara Tourism summarises the most commonly known version of the story as follows:



“The story of the children of Lir is a well known legend in Ireland. Many areas in Ireland claim to be the landing spot of the swans after their 900 year journey on the seas and lakes of Ireland. The children were the sons and daughters of Lir, a member of the Tuatha de Danaan clan, who married

Eve daughter of King Bov the Red, King of the Tuatha de Danaan. Eve and Lir were blissfully married and had a set of twins-Aed and Finola, and after a short period there followed another set of twins, 2 boys, Conn and Fiara. Unfortunately Eve died soon after and Lir, not wanting his children growing up without the love of a mother, married Eva, King Bov's second daughter. This was a happy marriage until Eva became jealous of Lir's devotion of his children. Overcome with hatred she brought the children to Lough Darravagh near their home and transformed them into swans. Realising what she had done and overcome with remorse, she attempted to release the spell but could only ease their distress by enabling them to speak and sing and to remain as swans for 900 years until Christianity was introduced into Ireland.

The swans spent the first 300 years on Lough Darravagh close to their home. The next 300 years was spent on the Sea of Moyle, a cold and desolate area between Scotland and the north of Ireland. The last 300 years they endured on the Atlantic sea. When their time was over the swans attracted by the ringing of a bell rung by a monk living in Allihies village in the Beara Peninsula, came ashore and immediately were changed back into their human form. The children were by now old men and women (and) were baptised by the monk. A short time later they died and were buried under these large white boulders.

In fact, the story that we all know today, is believed to originally have come from a tale told in the Netherlands around the 12th century. In Ireland, this was the period when Norman knights had established a firm foothold in Ireland and it seems likely that they brought the tale over with them. Subsequently, a local author incorporated it into local legend.

Sometimes, though, the story is actually more important or more valuable than the reality. In the past, in Beara, people use to do the rounds at this stone, firmly believing in the story. I've often walked past this particular spot myself and gazed down at that coin-coated rock and wondered what lay beneath. I'm sure, like me, countless others have been tempted to try digging under the stone just out of sheer curiosity. Possibly, someone has. I suspect, however, that most of them have simply walked on, sufficiently satisfied with the richness of the story itself.

Brian O'Sullivan is an Irish folklorist and author of 'Beara: Dark Legends' and other Irish fiction novels. Further information on Brian and his writing can be obtained at his website © Brian O'Sullivan

The Power of Irish Wisdom

By Renee' Gatz, Author of Wise Words & Witty Expressions

www.reneegatz.com

Faith is not for the faint of heart. Faith is for those that freely choose to trust God, who sees what we cannot, that all will be well. Faith is accepting that you have no control and being unafraid because fear is a useless emotion when one is designed for success. Faith understands that the outcome to a challenge may not be what you expected but is the perfect outcome for you. Faith recognizes that sometimes we are part of a difficult period not just for our own growth but for what we bring to others sharing our burden. Those with faith understand that through challenge a lesson is learned, character is strengthened, confidence is built--all in an effort to equip you with the grace, tools and experience necessary to rise higher. Faith reminds the essence of your soul that your journey is not one of failure and suffering but one of success, peace and joy, for this too shall pass. When the season of struggle comes to its natural end, a new season of prosperity is ushered in. This new period brings with it greater joy than you have known in the past because faith is the catalyst for heightened gratitude and gratitude is where joy is born.

Having faith does not mean that you will never waiver in your confidence that all will be well. It does not mean that you won't get angry, feel cheated, feel as if you are being treated unfairly or become weary from an extend period of challenge. Faith is a grace that steps in despite these feelings and reminds you to breathe and trust that all will be well. The power of faith, however, requires practice. It is a spiritual muscle that needs to be exercised daily to grow in strength. Some days faith will come easily and other days you will have to work very hard to feel its peace. On those harder days, ask yourself, "What is the alternative to having faith?" You may find that as you contemplate that question that without faith one would become ground up and feel as if there is no meaning to our struggles. One could begin to believe that there is no point to fulfilling their gifts because there are too many obstacles to overcome. One may even ask what the point is at all and fall into a bitter pit of despair. As hard as faith may be, it is far better to put effort and emotion into believing that our struggles do have meaning, that our gifts are worth working hard to share and that life is full of opportunity for victories made only sweeter by our efforts, sacrifices and setbacks.

When you have done all you can do and circumstances are out of your control, or when despite the best evidence; you believe that a way can be made where you do not see one, allow faith to take over. It begins to work when you speak optimistically over your life, especially during your darkest days. God hears your prayers, sees your actions and helps those that help themselves. Things may not turn out as you expected or when you wished but remember that God has our best interests at heart. Trust that there is a bigger picture that we are not privy to and that the pieces of our life's puzzle fall into place for our highest good in God's due time, which is at exactly the right moment. Certain challenges will be far more painful than others, but take heart, remain in faith and keep repeating the mantra, "my best days are ahead of me." With that belief ever present in your mind, you will more easily move through life's challenges.

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IACI Chapter News

Central NY Chapter

The Board of Directors of the Central New York Chapter-IACI greeted new board member Marcia Hayden-Horan at its first meeting of the 2014-15 year on July 8. Marcia was elected as the 8th member of the board at the annual meeting and picnic at Marcellus Park on June 24. A retired educator, member of the selection committee for the Central Library's Rosamond Gifford Lecture Series, and faithful member of CNY-IACI's Rang Gaeilge, Marcia is a very welcome addition.

Comhrá, the Irish language conversation group, has a new home at Pop's Media Café in Shoppingtown Dewitt, thanks to the hospitality of owner David Sorenson. We met there on July 7th, and plan to continue meeting there on the first Monday of the month at 7 PM.

Rochester Chapter

Attorney Ed Hourihan earns Eoin McKiernan award

Attorney Edward P. Hourihan Jr., a litigation lawyer and managing attorney of Bond, Schoeneck and King's Rochester office, received the Eoin McKiernan Achievement Award for service to the Irish American Cultural Institute and the broader Irish community at the Rochester chapter of the IACI's annual meeting May 14.



Through his own personal generosity and that of his firm, along with being a liaison to the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and to the Farash Foundation, Hourihan has been instrumental in arranging financial support for several important Irish community projects. These include helping to fund featured speakers at the Irish Gathering held in May 2013 at St. John Fisher College and to fund the purchase of projection equipment used in the IACI's monthly film and discussion program that is one of the organization's most popular activities.

In addition to being a member of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and a trustee for the Max and Marian Farash Foundation, Hourihan serves on Seton Catholic School Foundation, is a past president of the Literacy Volunteers, serves on the boards of directors for the Community Child Care Center, the House of Mercy, Volunteer Legal Services Project, Norman Howard School and YMCA of Greater Rochester.

Previous recipients of the award have been Dr. Donald Bain, president of St. John Fisher College, and Noel Kilkenny, consul general for Ireland in the United States. The award is named for Eoin McKiernan, who founded the Irish American Cultural Institute national organization in 1962.

Two New Board Members Elected to Local Board

Two new board members, Ted McGraw and Danny Barry were elected to the Chapter's board of advisor, replacing two long time members, Peggy Ervin and Maureen Scahill, who stepped down after many years of devoted service.

Ted McGraw is no stranger to the Rochester Chapter. In the early days of the chapter, McGraw was one of its dedicated members helping to see it through changing times. He's glad to be back again. He gladly keeps the Irish community aware of upcoming events through his popular radio show, <http://www.tedmcgraw.com>

Danny Barry is delighted with the opportunity to be a part of an organization that promotes the same authentic Irish culture he's nurturing at this pub.

A little place with a lot of heart." <http://www.barrysoldschoolirish.com/pub.php>

He and his wife Jess are pleased to bring his children up in a close knit Irish community.

Love's Promises

by Ray Aumack

Chapter 38 The Wedding Day

The morning of December 28 was absolutely brilliant. It was clear and cold with a gentle breeze blowing in off the bay. Katie awakened at her apartment at seven after a peaceful night's sleep, and sat in a chair in her sitting room to relax and pray. She thought she might be nervous but this day had been a possibility for the past almost seven years and then a shared goal for the past ten months.

She prayed for love and then for wisdom. She put her future in the hands of God. "Whatever you ask of me, I will do. You know that." She prayed for Shane. She prayed for her future children should she be so blessed. Thoroughly relaxed, she straightened up her room and then showered. Her honeymoon bags were already packed and stored in Shane's cottage. She made some tea and toasted some brown bread. Her mom would be there any minute. Peadar would drive them to the church for the 10:00 AM Mass.

Shane also awakened around seven. He went out for his morning walk along the strand. He also prayed while he walked trying to visualize the future. He prayed for Katie, he prayed for their children. He prayed for himself to be up to the task of being a husband and father. He, too, prayed for love and wisdom.

He returned to his cottage and showered after which he turned on the TV and watched the mindless weekend morning shows, all of which were repeats because of the holiday schedule. He had a strange thought. If he could repeat any of his life, what would he leave out? The answer was easy...nothing. He enjoyed pursuing Katie all these seven years. There were many times when he abandoned all hope of reaching this moment. It all changed through the capable work of Fr. O'Malley. Both he and Katie matured more in six months than they did in the previous six years. God placed him on the cusp of life and death three times and gave him the opportunity to directly save ten lives. And what adventures they had! What a foundation to build a life on! What an opportunity for a poor fisherman's son to make and give away one hundred million pounds. He went from being desperately poor to becoming the richest man in Ireland. He gave away all the money and still is the richest man in Ireland, rich in love, not cash. After dressing he would walk up to the Lantern and Chris and Liam would drive him the two blocks uphill to the church to arrive there at half nine. He and Katie had signed the marriage license the week before. Fr. O'Malley reminded them that this document was merely a learner's permit and their virtues of patience and forgiveness would be challenged often. He told them that that he thought that they were as well prepared for marriage as anyone with whom he worked.

He took his rental tuxedo out of the bag and slowly dressed. He looked at the finished product in the mirror. "Now if I can only remember to comb my hair, I will have cleaned up pretty well."

He walked up to the Lantern just before nine, thinking he could squeeze in a cup of coffee before going up to the church.

Angela arrived at about half eight. She and Katie had their hair done the day before. Katie did not change her hair style. She still had the hair style given to her by Gay Byrne's staff. He would be at the church today. She thought that they prepared people to look their best to be exposed to millions of viewers. Besides, she received a number of compliments on the hair style. The stylist trimmed her hair and renewed the soft red highlights in her curly hair.

Angela looked lovely in her soft yellow gown. She did not sweep her hair up in a formal style, but let it hang just like Katie's.

Before dressing she helped Katie into her gown. It was very plain but cut beautifully. It clung to every curve of her body. The veil was also made from the soft satin but framed with chiffon. Katie did not want a train. She thought of herself as a klutzy dancer and did not want to trip and fall. The sleeves were short with unpadded shoulders and extended slightly and hung freely. She would wear a Galway shawl around her shoulders to ward off the winter cold. Maeve would meet them at the door of the church and make any necessary adjustments.

Peadar reminded them of the time. The trip to Rosseville should take only ten minutes on a Saturday but if they pushed the deadline, this would be the day the road would be clogged with sheep. They were ready and they set off for the church.

They arrived at the church ten minutes before the Wedding Mass was scheduled to begin.

"They're going to think I'm too anxious, especially since on Irish time everything starts late," said Katie. "Look around and see if you can see any paparazzi." There were no photographers except the one that Shane had engaged.

Peadar escorted Angela up the few stairs to the entrance of the church. He then returned to escort Katie. Maeve was in the lobby of the church just to make certain that everything was perfect with the gowns.

"You've got the gown on backwards."

"What?"

"Just kidding; a little fashion joke. You look absolutely beautiful. Don't trip and fall on the runner."

"I am not going to call you a bitch in the lobby of the holy church." The friends laughed together and hugged.

Seamus O'Byrne at the organ and the University Chamber Ensemble were finishing the prelude. All in attendance had a booklet that Katie and Shane had assembled with the

outline of the ceremony and the lyrics for the hymns for communal singing. The bridal procession was an orchestral piece chosen by Katie with the help of Fr. O'Malley, A beautiful semi march by Thurlough O'Carolan, The Concerto. The harpist started the melody, gradually picking up the other instruments, with the organ building the crescendo. Angela started walking when the organist played. Angela was listed in the booklet along with Chris and Liam as the official witnesses. Liam and Chris stepped out to escort Angela to the kneeler set out for her in the sanctuary.

Katie processed down the aisle escorted by Peadar as the powerful concerto built to a crescendo.

Shane couldn't believe how beautiful Katie looked and she was smiling from ear to ear. No frightened bride, this one. He shook hands with Peadar, extended his arm and escorted her into the sanctuary.

Fr. O'Malley greeted them and made certain everyone was relaxed and in place. Before he started the Mass he greeted the guests and welcomed everyone to the Rossville Parish.

Katie's friend, Orla, from Leveegee, did the first reading from the Book of Wisdom, the story of the good wife and Aaron Quinn, the new Captain of the Sea Rescue, read Paul's panegyric on love from First Corinthians. Fr. Liam read the Gospel from the Marriage Feast at Cana. His homily was truly beautiful. He described love as if it were a diamond similar to the one on Katie's hand, comparing the many facets of love with the many facets of the diamond. He described the triumph and anguish of Katie and Shane's love story over the past eleven months emphasizing that love must be shared. "They have already shared much with each other and the world and their story is what we celebrate today. Yet the main part of the story has yet to be experienced over the next fifty or sixty years and we'll celebrate that many times along the way. Like the good wine at the wedding feast, their love would grow and spread to the rest of us."

He called them to the step of the altar where they first made their engagement commitment. They didn't need any prompting to say their marriage vows loud and clear for everyone to hear. They exchanged their rings, for Katie a simple gold band carved with Celtic love knots and a matching ring for Shane.

The congregation sang the parts of the Mass and the hymns very well but in the meditation time after Communion the silence was broken by the picking of an acoustical guitar. A deep hush came over the already quiet congregation. A single voice started to sing.

There they stand, hand in hand
They've exchanged wedding bands
Today is the day of all their dreams and their plans
All those who love them just wanted to say
May God bless this couple who marry today.

The second voice joined him in harmony for the chorus

CHORUS: In good times and hard times, in sickness and health
May they know that riches aren't needed for wealth
Help them face problems they'll meet on their way
Oh God bless this couple who marry today

And the second voice continued after an introduction with the violin.

May they find peace of mind comes to all who are kind
May the hard times ahead become triumphs behind
May their children be happy day after day
Oh God bless this family who started today

The two voices harmonized the chorus again. They changed keys and built up the crescendo.

As they go may they know a true love that will show
And as life it gets shorter may their feelings grow
Wherever they travel, wherever they stay
May God bless this couple who marry today.

The organ, the Ensemble, and the entire congregation encouraged by the Leader of Song picked up on the final chorus and sang out the familiar hymn.

CHORUS: In good times and hard times, in sickness and health
May they know that riches aren't needed for wealth
Help them face problems they'll meet on their way
Oh God bless this couple who marry today.

Father Liam was grinning from ear to ear. Katie could no longer resist. The music in the place was incredibly beautiful, She glanced back to look over her shoulder. Leading the congregation was Paul Hewson and David Evans, known to the world as Bono and Edge from U2. They finished the song and they were gone.

Fr. Liam brought the couple up to the altar step for the final blessing. He addressed the congregation. "We have never had music in this church like the music you have heard today. I thank Seamus O'Byrne, the University Chamber Ensemble, our leader of song, Richard Mulligan, from the University Chorus, and two more not listed in your programs who are friends of Katie and Shane. Katie is working a project with them, and they are called Bono and Edge, from the band, U2. They wouldn't stay for fear of upstaging Katie and Shane on their special day and are on their way back to Barcelona where they will sing in concert tonight."

Liam read the Church's special blessing for the newly married couple. He introduced them to the congregation as Mr. & Mrs. Shane Ryan and bade them to kiss. The congregation applauded enthusiastically.

"Shane and Katie, your love for each other and this congregation's love for you is truly inspiring. May the fire of that love ignite the entire world and burn for generations to come. Go forth to start your new life."

The Organ and the Ensemble struck the opening chords of Beethoven's Nine Symphony and Shane escorted Katie down the aisle to the lobby of the church.

There was much enthusiasm in the lobby of the church and all of their friends shared the excitement of the truly beautiful liturgy. It will be reported in the newspapers tomorrow just to inform the paparazzi that the secret was kept and they missed a terrific show. Everyone wanted to know about Katie's project with U2.

"Oh, it's no big deal. I'm just helping them write some songs."

It took over an hour for the congregation to clear through the lobby and all waited outside just to applaud the couple as they left the church. Peadar had ordered a limo to take the wedding party to the University and the Faculty Dining Room.

Fr. Liam joined them in the limo. He had never ridden in one. "Bono called me last week to make these arrangements. They got on a plane immediately after their concert last night to get here early to run through the music with Seamus and the Chamber Ensemble. Katie, I had no idea they were such terrific people. I love their music. And I love their sensitivity. They have nothing of the stereotypical arrogance of rock stars. They wanted to do this without upstaging you and Shane."

"You didn't tell them to wait for office hours?"

"How could you ever turn down Bono. He is Ireland's most visible Christian."

"It was beautiful. I think we are all stunned by it. And Liam, it was the most beautiful liturgy since the impromptu Mass at Emmaus. Thank you." said Shane.

The wedding party first went to Sean's studio for photos.

After that, Peadar's chauffeur drove them across the campus to the Faculty Dining Room.

They were greeted with thunderous applause. Much drink had already been taken and Shane noted that the waitresses were still walking around with trays of hors d'ouvres.

Shane and Katie walked around greeting their guests. Everyone was commenting on the beauty of the Mass. Katie quipped, "We've been planning for it on and off for six years."

Katie's gown had also received rave reviews. She said that she had a friend who was a designing genius and that Maeve was at the wedding. "Look for Dr. Coughlin. He is Maeve's escort."

The maitre d' called everyone to their seat. The bridal party was introduced. Angela danced halfway across the floor with Liam and the rest of the way with Chris.

The band leader announced, "It is with great pleasure that we introduce Mr. & Mrs. Shane Ryan. For their first dance as husband and wife, Shane and Katie have selected the beautiful, Dance with me."

They danced once around the floor and the guests started to join in. Seamus O'Byrne and his wife danced by them saying it is a rare treat we get a chance to dance. We are always providing the music.

"Well the music you provided this morning was spectacular."

"We all loved working with your friends. They are incredible musicians, especially Edge."

Maeve and Dr. Coughlin also danced by. "I hope you have business cards with you. I've been promoting your business all day."

Laughing, they pledged to get together after Katie and Shane returned from the honeymoon.

Archbishop Manning prayed a beautiful grace. He gave Shane and Katie a personal note from Pope John Paul II and blessed them with the Pope's Apostolic Blessing complete with a certificate verifying its authenticity. Shane placed the note in his inside pocket and handed off the certificate to be placed with the gifts.

The band was great. The guests danced and sang up a storm. The food was sumptuous.

Katie and Shane were having a wonderful time but looking forward to getting away by themselves.

The meal was served, the cake was cut, friends greeted. Angela was so proud and Peadar was the doting step-father/mentor.

Gay Byrne wanted to know if they could plan liturgies like theirs for television. He was going to be around the campus a lot now that he was retired. He would teach classes in the Communications Department and assist Sean with the television studio.

The winter sun had set, the music continued, people were dancing Irish sets and Irish jigs. They appreciated the Irish ballads for slow dancing, making love to music.

When the band took a break, Shane tapped a glass for the attention of their guests.

Katie spoke first, "I want to thank you, Mom. It was such a thrill for me to have you as my Matron of Honor. But most of all I want to thank you for imparting your love and wisdom to me. And to Dr. McDermott, Peadar, now my stepfather, it would have been a lot harder to do many of these things without your help."

Shane spoke, "To Chris and Liam, my partners, in many ways my brothers. Thank you for being my groomsmen. I treasure every moment I share with you."

"To you Father O'Malley, we both owe so much. For over six months you showed us the way to get here today, and even better, to get to wherever we're going to be sixty years from now. I can honestly say that we might not be here today if it wasn't for you."

"And to all of you, our friends," said Katie, "thank you. You are responsible for shaping our lives. We are born into a family that molds and shapes us and that stays with us forever. In life's next step, our friends become our family. Wherever we go in life, we will carry you with us."

Shane filled in, "We have to leave you now but we'll be back in a week. We are going away to get to know each other better." Everyone laughed. "Enjoy the music, the camaraderie, the dancing, and as my father-in-law once said, "shame on you if there is a drop of drink left in this place."

"Good night all. We love you."

The craic was mighty in Galway that night, just as mighty as it was in the church at Rosseville that morning.