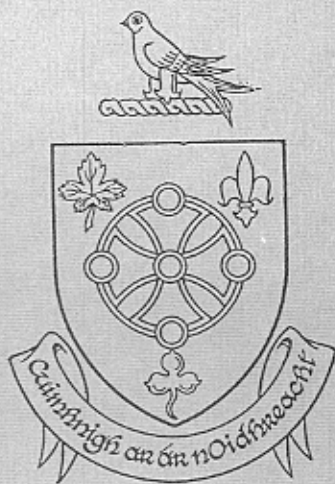
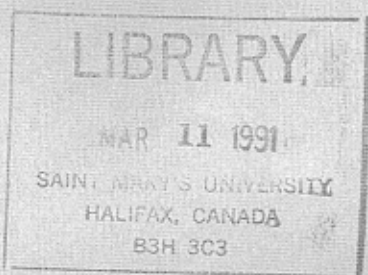


# AN NASC

Chair of Irish Studies  
Saint Mary's University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia



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AN NASC is the newsletter of the D'Arcy McGee Chair of Irish Studies at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

AN NASC was established as a link between the Chair of Irish Studies and those who are involved or interested in promoting Irish studies and heritage in Canada and abroad. It also seeks to develop an awareness of the shared culture of Ireland, Gaelic Scotland and those of Irish and Gaelic descent in Canada.

AN NASC is provided free of charge. However, we welcome financial contributions which will allow us to extend the activities of the Chair of Irish Studies. A tax receipt will be issued for all contributions over \$5.00.

We welcome letters and comments from our readers.

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AN NASC

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### An Irish Studies' Cure for those long winter nights

Two one-half credit courses

#### Modern Gaelic Literature in Translation

IRS 450.2 — Pádraig Ó Siadhail  
Each Tuesday evening from  
January 2 to March 27, 1990  
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

#### Contemporary Ireland

IRS 390.2 — Guy Chauvin  
Each Thursday evening from  
January 4 to March 29, 1990  
7:00-9:30 p.m.

## CELTIC CONGRESS SUCCESS

It was a cause of great satisfaction for the organizing committee of the Second North American Congress of Celtic Studies that participants expressed *their* satisfaction with its smooth, efficient running and the quality of the papers presented. The Congress, held at Saint Mary's under the auspices of the Chair of Irish Studies, from the 16th to 19th August, attracted well over 100 participants. Sixty papers on topics from linguistics to the Celtic languages in North America were presented. Scholars from the Celtic homelands of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall travelled to Halifax for the Congress, many using the opportunity to visit Cape Breton afterwards. Celticists from Vancouver to St. John's, from California to Florida as well as from throughout Atlantic Canada also attended.

Apart from the formal academic sessions, the Congress gave the participants the opportunity to discuss Celtic studies (and matters non-academic) on informal occasions. At a reception in the Tower at Saint Mary's on the evening of Wednesday, 16 August the Congress was officially opened by the Ambassador of the Republic of Ireland in Canada, Mr. Edward Brennan. On the Thursday evening, participants attended a concert given by Welsh harpist, Mirain Ellis, at Saint George's Church in Halifax. The Congress Banquet, held on Saturday evening, at the Nova Scotian Hilton International Hotel, and featuring entertainment by Irish harpist, Siobhán McDonnell, and Gaelic entertainers from Cape Breton was a fitting finish to the Congress. The banquet concert, entirely in Gaelic, clearly demonstrated the emphasis during the Congress on the living Celtic languages. This was again clear from the fact that over twenty Irish speakers were in Halifax for the Congress. Indeed, one was as likely to hear Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and Irish spoken at Saint Mary's as English or French.



Don Keleher, Director of University Advancement and Mr. Edward Brennan, Ambassador of the Republic of Ireland to Canada at the Congress.

The work of the Congress organizers is not over yet, however. At present, the proceedings of the Second North American Congress are being prepared for publication.

**Proceedings of the  
First  
North American  
Congress of Celtic Studies  
held in Ottawa, March 1986**

Edited by  
Gordon W. MacLennan

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## NEWS FROM THE CHAIR

### New Literature Course at Saint Mary's

The Chair of Irish Studies introduces a new course into its program in January 1990. The course, 'Modern Gaelic Literature in Translation' (IRS 450.2) will look at literature, originally written in Irish, but which has now been translated into English. Emphasis will be placed on works by the Blasket Island writers, the short stories of Pádraic Ó Conaire and Máirtín Ó Cadhain, the satirical works of Flann O'Brien (Myles na Gopaleen) and contemporary poetry. Through the English translations, participants who do not read Irish, will be given an insight into the 'Hidden Ireland' of literature in the Irish language.

This half-credit course to be taught by Pádraig Ó Siadhail will be held every Tuesday evening from January 2 to March 27, 1990 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. For further information please contact the Chair of Irish Studies' Office (420-5782) or the Registrar's Office at Saint Mary's (420-5582).

### Ulster-Irish Genealogical Seminar

Dr. Brian Trainor, retired Director of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and the current Director of the Ulster Historical Foundation, paid a recent visit to Halifax as part of his four-week North American lecture tour. Dr. Trainor conducted a workshop at the Provincial Archives of Nova Scotia on Sunday, October 1. The session, which was attended by over 100 people, was jointly sponsored by the Chair of Irish Studies and The Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia. Topics covered included Irish emigration to North America 1700-1900; sources for genealogical research in Ireland; and a practical

demonstration of a successful search in Irish sources where only the county of origin is known.

### Fundraising Dinner for the Chair

A fundraising dinner on behalf of the Chair of Irish Studies was held in Newfoundland on 29 September. Craig Dobbin, a member of the Board of Governors of Saint Mary's University, hosted the dinner at his home at Beachy Cove. Guests included the Right Honourable James MacGrath, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland, Mr. Edward Brennan, the Irish Ambassador in Canada, Dr. Kenneth Ozmon, President of Saint Mary's, Mr. Jack Keith and Mr. David Sobey, from the Board of Governors of the University, Don Keleher, Development Officer, and Cyril Byrne and Pádraig Ó Siadhail from the Chair of Irish Studies. Eighty people attended the dinner which proved enormously successful both as a social occasion and fundraising event.

### Irish Studies in Calgary

As part of its mandate to promote Irish Studies throughout Canada, the Chair of Irish Studies has accepted an invitation from the Irish Cultural Society in Calgary, Alberta, to give a series of lectures there in February. Pádraig Ó Siadhail, representing the Chair, will lecture on folklore, Irish literature, and sociolinguistic history of Ireland, and give several Irish language workshops.

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### Irish Radicals in the U.S.

Dr. Richard Twomey, a member of the History Department at Saint Mary's and a member of the Irish Studies' Committee is the author of the recently published book *Jacobins and Jeffersonians: Anglo-American Radicalism in the United States, 1790-1820*. The book is published by Garland of New York and London, and is part of a series of outstanding studies in Early American History, edited by John Murrin of Princeton University.

Dr. Twomey's book includes a study of some of the leading Irish radicals of the 1790s who had emigrated to America — figures such as, Thomas Addis Emmet, Dr. James Reynolds, William Sampson and William James MacNeven, all members of the executive of the United Irishmen.

### Contemporary Ireland

Irish Studies will be offering a half-credit course, "Selected Readings on Contemporary Ireland" (IRS 390.2) from January to the end of March 1990. This course, taught by Dr. Guy Chauvin, a member of the Saint Mary's Political Science Department and of the Irish Studies' Committee, will place emphasis on the political and social movements which led to the present Republic of Ireland. The politics of repeal, the Home Rule Movement, the growth of extreme Republicanism and the transition to independence will all be discussed.

The course will be held on Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m., starting 4 January 1990. Participants may register for the course at the Registrar's Office at Saint Mary's.

### OIDEAS GAEL: AN IRISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Dominic Larkin

To an earlier generation travel often equalled travail — the word is essentially the same — and even today the traveler in Ireland may encounter some unhappy surprises. One such surprise for me this past summer involved the bus which carried me from Dublin to Donegal (no great distance). It suffered three successive breakdowns and had to be replaced each time. Though amusing the first time, the joke soon wore thin and I didn't arrive at my destination until after midnight — too late to book into the Bed and Breakfast I had reserved. In spite of the unanticipated expense of a hotel room things began to look up from then on, however. The next day another bus took me without incident to Glencolmcille, there to enroll in the Irish Language Summer School conducted by Oideas Gael, an organization which caters to adult students ranging from beginners to fluent speakers, through classes held in the *Gaeltachtaí* (or Irish-speaking districts) of Donegal.

A welcome surprise indeed for this traveler was the stunning beauty of Glencolmcille itself. Oideas Gael arranges accommodation for its students with local Irish-speaking families and my lodging — in a modern bungalow (thatched cottages are not as common as one might think — even here) — was on the brow of a slope, with a breathtaking prospect down into the narrow valley and out to the Atlantic, just visible between the magnificent headlands. The kindness of the O'Flaherties, our hosts, was beyond praise, as was the affability of my fellow-boarders, students at the School also, whose backgrounds were typical (in their variety!) of those attending the Course, and a proof of its wide appeal. One guest was a young woman from New York (of

Newfoundland extraction, though); another, a Dublin woman who had lived in Nigeria for some fifteen years; while the third was a retired instructor from an Australian teachers' college, whose wit and good nature, however, betrayed his Belfast origins.

Classes for the sixty or more students were held daily in the local National School and took up most of the day from breakfast to supper. The students proved to be mostly Irish or of Irish extraction, and included many Britons and Americans, and even a few Canadians. A slightly more exotic note was added by a Swede and a Japanese (introduced to Irish by a missionary priest from Derry!). We were divided into three groups: those with little or no Irish (the "*Bunrang*"); those with a fair amount of it (the "*Meánrang*"); and the fluent speakers (the "*Ardrang*"). I myself started off in the *Meánrang*, but thanks, I'm sure, to the praiseworthy ground I received in the language at Saint Mary's under Dr. Pádraig Ó Siadhail, the second week saw me promoted to the *Ardrang*.

The instruction itself I was happy to note, was carried on after the most enlightened and modern principles of pedagogy (or andragogy?), the teachers being unfailingly good-humoured and encouraging, with never a hint of censure. (What a contrast with my school days as a child!) The versatility and enthusiasm of the teachers also ensured that, though the classes were long, not a hint of tedium was permitted to intrude. For example, points of grammar and additions to our slender vocabulary might be made through the medium of songs (traditional and contemporary), which we learned to sing and also to understand. Or we might be taught some stock phrases to enable us to engage quickly in simple conversations, however limited our store of words. Irish was the sole medium of discourse, and the teachers displayed astonishing ingenuity in getting points across to the uncomprehending, often

ransacking their fund of synonyms and antonyms, and frequently resorting to mime.

For all the teachers' diligence, though, the chat, in English and broken Irish, at "Teach Biddy", the pub across the road, revealed some feelings of frustration among the less fluent (including myself!) at the end of the first week. Though comprehension came more easily than speech, communication with the locals and the advanced students alike (with their diverse accents and greater fluency) was sometimes a baffling experience. But we didn't succumb, and by the second week, both confidence and competence were growing apace in all of us; and even erstwhile beginners were showing signs of modest fluency.

The second week, classes were held in Commeen, a remote spot at the foot of the Bluestack Mountains in the interior of Donegal, an area of remarkable and somewhat gloomy beauty (the gloom owing to a change in the hitherto brilliant weather). Commeen is a "*Fíorghaeltacht*", a thoroughly Irish-speaking district, in contrast with Glencolmcille, a "*Breacghaeltacht*", where both Irish and English are native languages. There was no distinction with regard to hospitality, however: our new hosts were as indulgent as the old and the cooking of my "*Bean a' Tí*" (Woman of the house), Mrs. Scanlon, was especially memorable.

We received an introduction to each locality on our first afternoon there by Dr. Seosamh Watson, one of the instructors at the School. In Glencolmcille, this consisted of a tour of some of the stations on the Turas Cholmcille, the old Pilgrim's Way, still marked by ancient standing stones with inscribed crosses. In Commeen, he revealed in his scholarly but soft-spoken way some of the mysteries of the pre-Christian cult of Holy Wells — still venerated today — and their association with the acquisition of supernatural knowledge and

power. Then we visited one. A short walk along a narrow road took us to the well, in a sloping field behind a thatched farmhouse. Primed as I was by his eloquent little talk, the experience was for me — in these homely and unremarkable surroundings — a strangely moving one.

In the evenings, when school was out, our education took a less formal turn. But Oideas Gael didn't throw us upon our own meagre resources! Far from it. Events and

entertainments were laid on for us every evening, to describe even one of which would take another article. All were aimed at giving the student a deeper appreciation of traditional and contemporary Irish-language culture. The highlights for me include a talk by the eminent young Donegal poet Cathal Ó Searcaigh on contemporary Irish poetry; a lecture by Séamas Ó Catháin on the work of the Irish Folklore Commission; an evening of *sean-nós* ("old-style") singing by a trio of singers out of Rinn na Feirste in Donegal;



Margaret M. Fallona presented the Irish Studies Bursary which bears her name to Pádraig Ó Siadhail, holder of the Chair of Irish Studies, who accepted it on behalf of the winner Dominic Larkin. Air Canada Public Affairs Manager David Pember (L) looks on.

readings from modern Irish poets by Liam Ó Cuinneagáin, one of our teachers (a performance both deeply moving and hilarious!). We finished off on the last night of the Course in Commeen with an evening of entertainment in which both the students and our hosts in the community participated: songs, skits, recitations and céilí dancing.

Liam Ó Cuinneagáin and Dr. Seosamh Watson of Oideas Gael and their dedicated staff deserve the highest commendation for all this good work *ar son na cúise. Mo sheacht mbeannacht orthu!* I was highly privileged in being part of the Course, thanks to a scholarship from the Chair of Irish Studies at Saint Mary's, and to the generosity of Margaret M. Fallona of London, Ontario and Air Canada. I would recommend this Course without hesitation to those interested in furthering their knowledge of Irish language and culture. A great experience! (And, yes, my Irish has improved noticeably — I'm told!)

**THIRD ANNUAL  
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**For Residents of Canada and  
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The 1989 "Writing in Irish" Competition will have 3 categories, and the Chair of Irish Studies at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, joins with Irish Books & Graphics, New York, in sponsoring the event.

The categories will be:

- a) a short story
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- c) an essay

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**Cardinal McGuigan's Irish Ancestry**

Peter McGuigan

Located just inside the border of Ulster, County Monaghan was the source of the single largest group of Irish coming to Prince Edward Island during its immigration period (1758-1850). This fact alone makes Prince Edward Island unique in Canada. Among those who had his ancestry in Monaghan was James Charles McGuigan the first Canadian cardinal from outside Quebec. Born in Hunter River on November 26, 1894, his mother was Annie Monaghan of Kelly's Cross while his father was George McGuigan of St. Patrick's, Lot 22. The Monaghans (whose name is derived from the Irish for monk, not from the county) were from Donagh, County Monaghan, while the McGuigans who also came from that county, have yet to be assigned to a specific place.

Both families had left due to deteriorating conditions, both political and physical, and were attracted by the large land grants being available in far distant British North America as well as the active encouragement by priests such as the Reverend Patrick Moynagh of Donagh and the Reverend John MacDonald of Prince Edward Island. But little did they know how difficult it would be to clear the woods or how much landlord conditions paralleled those in Ireland. However, at least the danger of famine seemed less and although the Orange Order would become a force to be reckoned with, it was much more benign than back home.

The family of "Big Pat" Monaghan and Catherine Johnston sailed from Belfast on the *Margaret Pollock* and arrived in Charlottetown on May 17, 1841. An outbreak of measles had killed 20 small children and would eliminate 4 more in the next few days, but the rest of the 685 passengers survived. Shortly thereafter the family settled in Kelly's Cross probably on



the advice of Reverend Malachy Reynolds who often met the boats at the dock.

The Monaghans may have had another reason for leaving Donagh as Catherine Johnston's Protestant grandfather, David, had contributed 30 gold Sovereigns to the building of a Catholic church there and then brought his family into that despised organization and, according to stories handed down in the family, the local bishop predicted that many religious would follow and they would learn easily.

Patrick and Catherine's Monaghan's Irish born son, Charles, married Kelly's Cross native Mary Kiggins in 1863 and three years later their Annie was born. In 1889 she would marry George McGuigan, a Hunter River merchant, and become the mother of Cardinal McGuigan five years later.

The McGuigans first appear in Prince Edward Island on May 1, 1844 when George's grandfather Hugh leased land on St. Patrick's Road. Apparently a widower, McGuigan brought his surviving family over, including James who married Margaret McKenna at Rustico on February 23, 1852. Three years later George was born to this couple and he would move to booming Hunter River as a clerk after the railway passed through and eventually would buy the store over which the cardinal was born 95 years ago.

The family names of the cardinal's paternal ancestors, the McGuigans and Smiths, also tell something of the Anglicization of Ireland. Back in Ulster, the McGuigans were arbitrarily called Goodwin by their repressors and the Smiths had their sobriquet translated from McGowan or O'Gowan (son of or descendant of a smith). However, almost all McGuigan/Goodwins who came to Prince Edward Island eventually dropped the English name, although they sometimes went through the strange intermediate form of

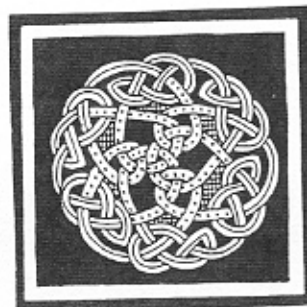
McGoodwin. However the Smiths don't seem in general to have reverted to the more Irish form.

The Cardinal had fond memories of his boyhood in Hunter River, but the picture was not quite as bright as he painted it. Hunter River was an Orange village and the McGuigans being one of three or four Catholic families were discriminated against on occasion, such as when the Lieutenant-Governor visited and the local citizens drew up a letter of appreciation. George McGuigan was the only Catholic listed, but in the official reply he was put among the "and others." And when the cardinal applied for the priesthood at the start of the Great War, there was gumbling in his

home area that he was shirking his duty to be "cannon fodder" for the Crown.

However, the situation had changed considerably thirty-two years later for when McGuigan was elevated to the princely level, the Hunter River Protestants were proud enough to send him a message of congratulations and the cardinal said the most delightful felicitation he received was that from his old Hunter River classmate, Lou MacLeod, then a resident of Boston.

Such is the ancestry of Cardinal McGuigan and this represents some of the information from the first chapter of my upcoming biography of this great, but largely forgotten, Canadian.





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*Céad Míle Fáilte*

## DISPORTING ONESELF ON THE TREETOPS

Dineen, Other Deviants and Dictionaries

Alan Titley

*Alan Titley, Head of the Department of Irish in Saint Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin, is a noted Irish novelist, shortstory writer and critic. He was the guest of the Chair of Irish Studies in April 1989.*

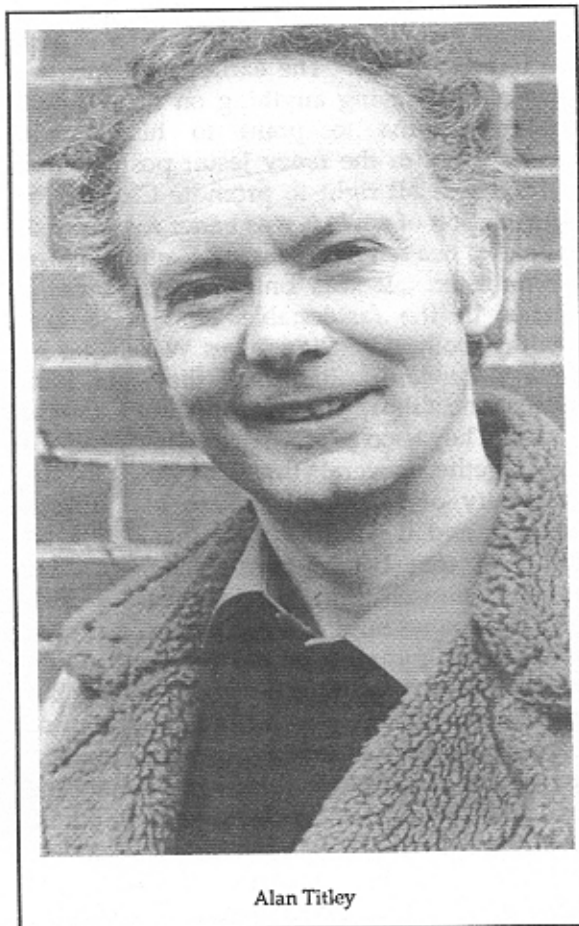
Like most other lexicographers Patrick S. Dineen probably thought he was normal. Although to be born in the County of Kerry usually militates against any perception of being just like other men there was little in Dineen's upbringing to suppose that he would be the author of one of the greatest works of modern Irish literature. It is true that his mother was particularly saintly (or at least holy, which might not be the same thing), and that her shopping trips to Killarney usually amounted to prolonged praying in the Cathedral punctuated with very brief interludes at the market. It is also true that Irish was the spoken language of the home for the older children of the family of ten, while English was predominant for the younger. This reflected exactly the language change that was taking place in parts of rural Ireland in the latter half of the nineteenth century when Dineen was growing up, at least physically. There is plenty of evidence to show that it took him longer to grow up intellectually as he joined the Jesuits at a very young age and showed a flair for mathematics from which he did not recover for many years. Although he was a student at the Catholic University of Dublin whilst Gerald Manley Hopkins taught there, we have no evidence that Glasnevin Cemetery's greatest poet had even a smidgen of influence on him. If he had we can be sure that he would not have written some of the most execrable verse in any language in later

years when he fancied that the muse had visited itself upon him.

It seems to have been only by a quirk of happenstance that his interest in the Irish language took fire. The earliest evidence we have of him saying anything on the national question seems to point to his general agreement with the fancy Jesuit position that while it was all right to promote Chinese for the salvation of souls it was better for the Irish to go to heaven by way of Canterbury or Westminster. It was only while he was a teacher in the fashionable (that is to say, wealthy) college of Clongowes Wood that he came under the influence of the great Irish scholar and fellow Jesuit, John Caulfield Mac Erlean. They used to walk over twenty miles a day together several times a week to the University of Maynooth where Mac Erlean lectured, and it would appear that it was on this road that Dineen was converted. He plunged himself into the business of Irish scholarship without any training, without preparation, and without the due caution that makes people great necrophilologists but indifferent scholars. The working motto of so many of the learned that it was better to reign among the duller pards than serve among the higher arts was never his. And yet for all that, his more sober scholarship still stands today, in particular, his editions of the great eighteenth century poets Aogán Ó Rathaille, Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin and Séafra Ó Donnchadha an Ghleanna which have not been bested in the game yet. He also completed the editing of Keating's *History of Ireland* in a volume which contained the genealogies, synchronisms, index and

annotations of the massive work begun earlier by other scholars. All this in itself would be enough to ensure that Dineen would be always remembered as a great and prodigious scholar, doing within a short few years what it would take others several lifetimes to complete.

At the end of the nineteenth century Irish scholarship was beginning to grow respectable



Alan Titley

due to its undoubted antiquity and the prestige of many German professors. Dineen, however, was in the forefront of those who saw the language and its study as part of the general national struggle of revalidation. To this end, he also wrote poetry, plays,

travelogues, pious miscellanies and the first Irish novel, along with his whirlwind scholarly output. The many Irish scholars of today who justify their positions by the editing of a single poem each year, and consider their reputations unblemished by the reproduction of one faultless line rather than by a thousand which might be marred by the occasional slip, are now scandalised by his profligacy. Dineen himself would have had no time for those for whom the writing of a book was an invitation to a gutting rather than a cause for celebration.

And it is his dictionary which is the single greatest celebration of the Irish language and a monument to his own genius. Since the beginning of the Irish revival in the 1880s, the need for an authoritative dictionary was sorely felt. There had been, of course, dictionaries previous to his, notably *Foclóir Mhichíl Uí Chléirigh* (1643, Louvain) which dealt only with the explanation of difficult words, Risteárd Fluincéad's Latin-Irish (1662), Edward Llyud's Irish-English at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Mac Cuirtín and Ó Beaglaioich's English-Irish (1732, Paris), Tadhg Ua Neachtain's Irish-English (Dublin, 1739), Bishop Seán Ó Briain's Irish-English (18th c., Paris) and O'Reilly's and Peadar Ó Conaill's during the nineteenth century. These were either unavailable, unpublished or unsuitable at the beginning of the revival period and it was obvious that a new dictionary would be required to guide and to standardise the language during the new era then seemingly about to dawn. While many articles were being written setting out what would be desirable in such a dictionary, and plans and schemes and programs were being set afoot to prepare the groundwork for the initiation of proceedings which would eventually lead to the formation of policy whose business it might be to make recommendations regarding the principles on which such work might be founded Pádraig Ua Duinnín got onto his arse and did the job. Having the good fortune and the courage to

leave the Jesuits in 1900, between then and 1904 he wrote or edited fifteen books including the great scholarly editions of poetry already alluded to, and his first Irish-English dictionary which ran to eight hundred pages in manuscript. This was not the final enlarged dictionary which was not published until 1927 and with which many Irish people are now familiar from the beginners to the professors, but it was an amazing achievement nonetheless. It is not clear why he left the Jesuits but it is suspected that it may have had something to do with discipline and obedience, and it would be difficult to imagine Dineen doing anything else than following his own genius. It has also been suggested that he may have left in order to be able to live fully the life of a scholar in the service of the Irish language which he might not have been as free to do while encumbered with priestly duties. What is true is that from then until his death he lived as a professional scholar from the proceeds of his work, which seems an extraordinary performance compared with the schoolmen of today who cadge their living from colleges, grants, endowments and the philanthropy of guilty capital. His reputation as an eccentric partly obscures his learning for everyone loves a 'character' even if they don't give a squish for his work. It is said that he had to be searched every day when leaving the National Library in case he was smuggling valuable manuscripts out under his cloth; he was often seen walking the streets of Dublin reading proofs; he had an arrangement with a newspaper vendor whereby he could read the paper and then return it without paying; he never paid for bus or train ticket but prevailed upon some other passenger to do so for him; he was as likely to produce a piece of seaweed or pig's trotter from his pocket as a snack as he was to put jam as sauce on his fish; he was known to write on the table-cloth when a word or phrase came to him during a meal; he entered a writing competition for children under the son of a friend's name in order to

win some money, which he did and promptly kept for himself.

It is not surprising, therefore, that this singular personality should find itself surfacing in what should be the most sober of all scholarly pursuits — the production of a dictionary. When Dr. Johnson defined a lexicographer as 'a harmless drudge', and Ambrose Bierce as 'a pestilent fellow who, under the pretense of recording some particular stage in the development of a language, does what he can to arrest its growth, stiffen its flexibility and mechanize its methods' they could not have had the ilk of Dineen in mind. By any yank of imagination he was neither a drudge nor a stiffener of flexibility. His dictionary is much more than either merely descriptive or prescriptive, it is a thesaurus of living Irish speech which shows the possibilities, the glories, the quirks and the creativity of the language. While it is certainly not as accurate or as organised or as authoritative as Niall Ó Dónaill's and Tomás de Bhaldraithe's *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* of 1977, it will never be superseded as a storehouse of phrase, idiom and the native imagination. What it lacks in scientific rigor it makes up for in richness and diversity of example which prompted Máirtín Ó Cadhain to remark that no Irish writer should go to bed without it. Myles na gCopaleen or Flann O'Brien derived great fun and wisdom from its copiousness and its sometimes looseness of definition and admitted that while we might generally accept that the Irish word for 'sun' was *grian*, in Dineen's dictionary it could also mean 'the bottom' (of a lake, well); and as for *gealach*, while it certainly meant moon, it also contained the meaning 'the white circle in a slice of a half-boiled potato, turnip, etc.' He claimed that the reason he no longer wrote in Irish was because he didn't wish to be caught for libel if he wrote 'last Tuesday was very wet' he didn't want it to be construed as 'Mr. So-and-So is a thief and a drunkard'. All

exaggerated, no doubt, but part of the entertainment value of Dineen's dictionary derives from the ancillary meanings or examples he gives for his headwords. Thus *sagairtín* can mean 'a little priest' but also 'a small inedible periwinkle'; *fásach* can be both a desert and a place of much vegetation; *feirbín* gives us the useful information that in County Mayo it means 'a slender sod turned over along the side of a ridge in tilling lea'; Tadhg is, of course, a boy's name but of the plebeian type; *iarmhaireacht* is the wonderful, otherwise undecipherable meaning of 'loneliness felt at cockcrow'; *maide fóir* should be of particular interest to those in the poultry trade being 'a stick swathed round with straw-ropes used as a gangway by hens to reach the roost'; and under *piollardaíocht* along with the definition of 'strolling and amusing oneself' we find the example, *ag piollardaíocht ar ard na gcrann* which means 'disporting oneself on the treetops', an old Irish custom, no doubt. This should not discourage anyone from learning the language, of course, but rather alert them to the poetry of the unexpected and the untranslatable which lie in store for them behind the official standard.

There are some analogies between Dineen and the great Scottish lexicographer Edward Dwelly whose *Faclair Gàidhlig gu Beurla/Gaelic to English Dictionary* stands in much the same relationship to the northern form of Gaelic as Dineen's does to Irish. Those interested could begin under the letter 'S' with such examples as *struileag*, *siug* and *siteag* which might be useful on a visit to Cape Breton or to Lewis. Dwelly showed, no less than Dineen and at a great personal sacrifice, that language is the wonder of the world even if those who speak it do not have many guns to back them up.

## METRO IRISH DANCERS BRING HOME GOLD

Rose Marie Paul

Two dancers from the Halifax and Dartmouth Metro School of Irish Dancing, which opened its doors just last year, travelled to Ontario to compete and returned with an unexpected surprise — nine gold medals! Eight-year-old Sinéad Greene and twelve-year-old Joanne Delaney, both of Dartmouth, did not expect to fare so well in their first competition. The two-day *feis* was held in Toronto over the Labour Day weekend.

Contending with experienced dancers from across Canada and the United States, the girls were anxious to see where they stood. A great deal of hard work went into preparing for the big event, and in the end it all paid off. Hours of practising reels, jigs and slip jigs saw Joanne walk away with five gold medals, while Sinéad won an equally impressive four golds and one silver. One of Sinéad's victories was shared with her mother, Beth, an instructor at the dancing school. They won the parent/child two-hand competition.

Along with the great experience the young dancers have gained, they have brought home fond memories and new friendships. The girls are looking forward to participating in many more *feiseanna* in the future.



## A CANADIAN IRISH PILGRIMAGE

Pat Curran

Sunday, August 20, 1989 was a cool, threatening day on Grosse Ile, an island in the middle of the St. Lawrence River about forty miles downstream from Quebec City. The weather suited the place and the occasion.

For decades Grosse Ile was a quarantine station for European immigrants whose ships came up the St. Lawrence. For the Irish in Quebec whose ancestors arrived at the time of the Potato Famine, Grosse Ile is like a shrine.

When the great waves of Irish peasants fled their homeland in the late 1840s, they were not only poor and hungry, but also ravaged by disease. They were jammed together in their misery, without cleanliness or privacy, during voyages of several weeks on ships ill suited for the task. Many died before sighting North America. Of those who arrived, thousands suffered from typhus and cholera. Although many of the names are unknown and the numbers are not precise, perhaps as many as ten thousand of them died on Grosse Ile. Many others succumbed after leaving the island for Quebec City and Montreal. Many of the dead were parents who left orphans forced to make their own way in what must have seemed a frightening new land.

Courageous laymen and clergymen, both Catholic and Anglican, risked their lives by attending to the sick and dying on Grosse Ile. Several were stricken and died themselves.

In 1908 the Quebec City branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians decided to erect a Celtic cross on Grosse Ile in memory of all the Irish who had perished there. Not only the Irish in Quebec, but also members of the Order throughout North America contributed to the project. The forty-six foot high cross was built on the highest point on the island and



Joanne Delaney and Sinéad Green, Dartmouth, gold medalists in Irish Dancing.

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dedicated in August of 1909. The beautiful granite monument contains an inscription, in Irish, English and French, honouring those who had died.

Knowing a little of the history of Grosse Ile, I expected to find a very somber group when I arrived at the docks in Quebec City at 7:00 a.m. on August 20, the 80th anniversary of the dedication of the cross. Hundreds of us were to gather on the docks for the three and one-half hour ferry ride downriver. To my delight and surprise, however, I did not find mournfulness. There were moments of reflection and sadness at times during the day, particularly when we gathered around the cemetery and the cross on the island. Those moments aside, however, the day was a celebration of Ireland, its people and their descendants who have contributed so much to this country and continent. Most of all, the day was a party. There was music and laughter and the cementing of friendships. It was a pilgrimage, but the pilgrims certainly enjoyed themselves.

The significance of the event was not lost on either Church or State. There was a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Vachon, the Archbishop of Quebec, and several other bishops and priests. The Mass had been scheduled to take place on the island, but it started raining, so it was held in the bar of the ferry instead. The bar was put to more traditional use later. After Mass and before the buffet dinner, there was a round of short speeches. The official party included the Irish Ambassador to Canada, two federal cabinet ministers and several M.P.s, one Quebec cabinet minister, Cardinal Vachon, Rt. Rev. Allen Goodings, the Anglican Bishop of Quebec, and the current president of the A.O.H. in Montreal.

Several television crews were present, including one from Ireland. CBC-TV carried

the story on its national news that evening. There was a reporter for an Irish newspaper. Farrell McCarthy, President of the Irish Canadian Cultural Association of New Brunswick, took photos and wrote a story for the *Irish Echo*, the leading American Irish newspaper.

I spent most of the time with the family and friends of Marianna O Gallagher, the principal organizer of the commemoration. Marianna is one of the leading figures in the preservation of Irish history and culture in Canada. She has written a book on the history of the Irish in Quebec and lectured at many Canadian Irish events, including the Irish Festival in New Brunswick and the 1988 summer session sponsored by the Saint Mary's Chair. She is also the granddaughter of Jeremiah O Gallagher, the President of the Quebec branch of the A.O.H. in 1908 and 1909 and the driving force behind the erection of the cross at Grosse Ile.

I had the good fortune to attend the commemoration as the representative of the Chair of Irish Studies at Saint Mary's. The commemoration, the Celtic conference at Saint Mary's and my own French immersion program in Quebec all coincided. When Pádraig Ó Siadhail asked me to attend on behalf of the Chair, I jumped at the chance. Although my own ancestors came directly from Ireland to Halifax, I was born in Quebec City and feel an affinity for the Irish of that province. I heard at least as much French as English spoken during the day, as well as a little Irish. It seems that many of the Quebec Irish have made their peace with the French fact.

Because of Marianna O Gallagher and La Corporation Pour la Mise en Valeur de Grosse Ile, the story of the island, its dead, its survivors and its preservers will continue to attract and fascinate those of Irish descent.



## CÚINNE AN CHEOIL

ANTOINE Ó MÁILLE

— Seóirse Brabston —

(a typical variation on measures 5, 6, 7)

*A Sheóirse Brabston, go maire tú saolach slán,  
Grá gach duine a's a linbh ba aoibhntí cáil,  
Lámh an éinne dhár bhfuairéas dúinn fion a sháil,  
Is gártha an chuideacht san ionad a mbíonn do ghrá.*

*Hi-Hó! Siúd é an preabaire,  
Hóm-Bó! Plúr na scafairí,  
Spóirt, gleo, cóisir naicidí,  
Feoil, beoir, ceol, agus ceapairí.*

*Cláirseach fideléir, gar ag píobairí,  
'Sé báire conairte é lár a tíre 'stigh,  
Bárshlat Ghailiann é, grá mo chroí-sa leis,  
Sármhac dathúil é, carthannach, fírinneach.*

*Hi-Hó! Siúd é an siollaire,  
Hóm-Bó! Dúshlán duine faoi,  
Him-Jam! Plancstaí, merriment,  
Sing, dance, drink his health about.*

In the last issue of AN NASC, I made a number of allusions to O'Carolan's life as an itinerant Irish bard of the 18th century. The musical piece I have chosen for this issue — known usually by its anglicized version "George Brabazon" — illuminates, both in its style,

content, and occasion of composition, the many dimensions of what was an arduous, all be it romantic life.

In our modern times we tend to think of musicians as being amateur or professional. Amateurs are those who do not earn their living through their playing; this prepares our judgement about the perfection of their technique or interpretation. Namely, that they work at something else for a living — and hence do not have a great amount of time to practice or play — and, furthermore, are not subject to the pressures of competition (as musicians) to earn this living. Having one's livelihood depend upon the impressive effect of one's technique, or upon the popularity of one's interpretation, is a sure inducement to unremitting practice and performance. The division between professional and amateur is revealed not only in our more common judgements about what we hear, but is also present in our judgements about the very instruments themselves, as when an instrument is sold on the basis of its being a "professional quality" instrument.

It is sometimes difficult for us, then, to appreciate a time when the professional/amateur distinction was in its infancy — as it was during O'Carolan's time. By our standards, he was, as an itinerant bard, a professional musician. But by all accounts, he was not a particularly deft player of his instrument; nor was he a particularly gifted singer. His poetry is occasionally brilliant, often pleasing, and occasionally tawdry. His position, and acclaim, did not issue from his being a high-respected professional musician; rather it arose from his occupying a particular social position of ancient standing within Ireland, a position that in his day had become almost extinct. He was, so it is often said, the last of the Irish bards.

The bards depended on the patronage of the old Irish aristocracy, from whence their living was secured. The social position of the bard — and the culture which determined his high status, the nature of his rewards, the spectrum of his obligations, etc. — were all tied to the old Irish social system. That system disintegrated at the turn of the 17th century, to be replaced by the English system of landed gentry and an increasingly powerful mercantile and professional class. By being called a "bard" by his contemporaries, O'Carolan's activities harkened back to an older, even ancient, society. The power of his reputation — his legend — is, in part, derived from this association.

O'Carolan's patrons — a number of whom were mentioned last time — were not insensitive to this, by then romantic, association. He did, after all, flourish in a time during which Italian music and professional musicianship were in full sway on the Continent; in the latter region he would have seemed quaint, but hardly someone to rival those Europeans who were becoming masters of their instrument. However, he flourished in Ireland, a country habitually inclined to identify with its past, and thus what in other

circumstances would have been merely folkloric and provincial, became, in his case, heroic and legendary. Then, too, it gave his wealthy patrons — usually landed gentry whose tastes, habits and cultivation were becoming more middle class and less aristocratic — the opportunity to exercise themselves in a role associated with the old Irish aristocracy, and thereby increase their self-esteem and prestige.

It is in this context that "George Brabazon" must be understood. It is a pretty tune, especially the descending melodic line of the second part. Its harmony and style are Italianate; that is to say, "modern" for O'Carolan's epoch. There is no suggestion, harmonically or melodically, of the ancient adjacent tone system or modal harmonies. You may hear this for yourself if you were to try playing the tune with a drone (for example, on the pipes); modern "tonal" harmonies are not pleasing with a drone, a device arising out of, and most pleasantly associated with tunes written in the former, older systems.

The text is pure "bard/patron" fare. O'Carolan extols the hospitality and generosity of Brabazon — drawing attention, of course, by implication, to the wealth that constitutes his ability to underwrite these virtues. He describes the parties, the characters who participate in them, the food, the music, the merriment, and finally, the virtuous company his host keeps as one of a group of patrons firmly connected to the glorious, high aristocracy of ancient Ireland. In the second stanza, he refers to "Norail Mac Raghail"; that is, the illustrious Reynolds family of Co. Leitrim, whose hospitality occasioned *Sí Bheag agus Sí Mhór*, our last O'Carolan piece. The following translation of the first chorus (sung with the second part of the melody referred to above) gives the tenor of the song:

Hi! Ho! There are the [bouncing] dancers,  
 Hom! Bo! The flower of strapping fellows,  
 Sport, ruckus, great feasting,  
 Meat, bear, song and sandwiches.

There are a number of versions of this tune. The Chieftains play a somewhat complicated version; what I have written above is a version based on that of O'Neill, and which appears in his *MUSIC OF IRELAND*. A local Halifax group appearing often at the Pub Flamingo, "Swallow's Tale", does a very appealing rendition of the piece using traditional instruments. The text is taken, as usual, more or less *verbatim* from the Ó Máille work cited last time; I have only altered it by providing more modern Irish spellings of the words.

#### PUBLIC LECTURE

Dr. Peter Toner  
 Department of History  
 University of New Brunswick,  
 Saint John

Origins and Impact of  
 Irish Immigration in  
 Nineteenth Century New Brunswick

24 January 1990

8:00 p.m.

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#### "QUICK AND DIRTY" IRISH

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 for use and abuse

Antoine Ó Máille

1. Diabhal a mbacfaidh mé leis!  
 (\*jyaul a mac-hee may lesh)  
 Indeed I won't bother with it! (i.e., To hell with it).
2. Déanfaidh sin!  
 (\*jayn-hee shin)  
 OK, will do!
3. Go sábhála Dia sinn!  
 (\*ga saw-vaw-la jia shing)  
 God save us!
4. A stór!  
 (\*ah store)  
 Oh, darling!
5. A bhéal mhór!  
 (\*ah veel vore)  
 You big mouth!
6. A dheabhail bhraidaigh!  
 (\*ah yah-ull vra-dee)  
 You sly devil!
7. Grásta ó Dhia ar a anam!  
 (\*graw-sta oh yia air a ah-nah-m)  
 God rest his soul!
8. Fainic a chluasánaf!  
 (\*fawn-ik a hlu-a-sawn-ee)  
 Watch out, you meathead!

## Aighneas an Pheacaigh leis an gCigire

Dominic Ó Lorcáin

**Múinteoir.** Ó! cnagadh ar an doras. Níl suaimhneas ar bith le fáil sa scoil seo. Cé atá ansin?

**Cigire.** Is mise an Cigire.

**Múinteoir.** Go bhfóire Dia orainn! Rinne mé dearmad ar a chuairt. Níl mé réidh! Amach as an bhfuinneog lem thoitín: tá dianchosc ar an tobac na laethanta seo sa scoil.

Tar isteach, a Chigire! Fáilte romhat. Go luath atá tú!

**Cigire.** Is ea cinnte. Is maith liom am go leor a bheith agam chun scrúdú ceart a dhéanamh ar na múinteoirí. Ní fhaca mé tusa riamh. An múinteoir nua thú?

**Múinteoir.** Sea, a Chigire. Níor thosaigh mé ach cúpla mí ó shin. Jams Ó Domhnaill is ainm dom. Ar mhaith leat siúl liom chun mo ranga anois? Tosóidh sé i gceann cúpla nóiméad.

**Cigire.** Á, ná bac leis go fóill. Suigh síos! Glac do shuaimhneas. Is maith liom, uaireanta, a bheith ag caint leis na buachaillí nua. Eh ... níl toitín agat, ar aon seans?

**Múinteoir.** Eh ... tá, a Chigire, ach níl cead againn a bheith ag caitheamh.

**Cigire.** Go raibh maith agat, a Jams! Tabhair ceann dom: níl néaróga ró-mhaith agam na laethanta seo. Is ró-ghnóthach atáim. Leis an fhírinne a dhéanamh, a Jams, táim bréan den obair seo. Uaireanta, ní féidir leat duine ar bith a shásamh; go mór mór an dream damanta sin sa Roinn Oideachais.

A leithéid de lá! Thug mé cuairt ar scoil amháin ar maidin agus ní raibh bun ná barr air: bhí na múinteoirí agus na páistí freisin trí chéile — agus an tArdmháistir; bhuel, ní raibh

ann ach leathdhuine.

Eh ... níl deoch ar bith le fáil anseo, ar aon seans?

**Múinteoir.** Um ... bhuel, a Chigire, níl a fhios agam, go deimhin. Féachfaidh mé sa chófra seo. Bhuel! Dia ár sábháil! Tá buidéal Jameson's i bhfolach taobh thiar de charn seanleabhar. Thar a bhfacas riamh!

**Cigire.** Feart de shaghas é, b' fheidir! Tabhair dom braon beag, a Jams.

**Múinteoir.** De dheoin, a Chigire. Ach, tá an t-am ag éirí déanach. Tá mo chuid scoláirí ag fanacht liom.

**Cigire.** Á! ná bac leis an dream sin! Glac do shuaimhneas agus faigh gloine duit féin. Seo duit steall bheag.

**Múinteoir.** Go raibh maith agat. Ach, a Chigire.

**Cigire.** Tabhair dom braon eile. Maith a' buachaill! Bhuel, bhí mé ag caint faoin áit a raibh mé inniu agus ... Ó, cnag ar an doras! Tar isteach!

**Múinteoir.** Ó an tArdmháistir! Tá leithscéal agam, a dhuine uasail...

**Ardmháistir.** Cén fáth nach bhfuil tú i do rang, a Mhic Uí Dhomhnaill? Tá do pháistí ag imeacht le craobhacha! Tá siad ... Ó, a Chigire, tá tú anseo cheana féin! Ó Domhnaill, bailigh leat anois!

**Cigire.** Á! cuir uait, a Shéamais! Bi ar do shaoimhneas, uair amháin i do shaol!

Tá agallamh breá ar siúl agam le do mhúinteoir nua Jams anseo, agus is fear cliste cneasta é, is dóigh liom. Tá an t-ádh ort múinteoir mar eisean a bheith ar d'fhoireann. Is fada an lá ó chonaic mé thú! Suigh síos agus bí ag caint linn. Jams! gloine eile do mo sheanchara Séamas anseo!

Múinteoir. Seo dhuit is sláinte, a  
Ardmháistir!

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#### BOOK REVIEW

Terrence M. Punch, F.R.S.A.I.

President, Royal Nova Scotia  
Historical Society

*The Norman People and Their Existing Descendants in the British Dominions and the United States of America*, published by Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1001 N. Calvert Street, Baltimore, Md. 21202-3897, for \$30.00 (U.S.) + postage.

This work, first published in 1874, offers considerable material concerning approximately 5,000 Norman surnames. Unlike similar compilations that the reviewer has seen, the present work gives surnames and derivations from the middle and lower classes of Normans who reached Great Britain. A good number of names may be noted which are perhaps not usually considered as having Norman derivations. To cite a few instances, consider Allison, Archdeacon, Cheevers, Cody or Corbett.

The book falls into two parts, the larger comprising 65% of the whole being an alphabetical listing of Norman surnames with some information about each. The smaller section has chapters which give the compiler's method and contain some still valid cautions about pedigrees and surnames. Whether one accepts all, most, some or none of the author's views, the book has a freshness which readers will appreciate. As a Fitz-Pons myself, I accept that Richard Fitz-Ponce is as far as we can go with confidence. Now if someone will help to get us back from 1523 to 1086, we can get ourselves back to 1523!

The book will invite speculation, stimulate imagination, and bring delight to those who enjoy the rather esoteric pleasures of antiquarian browsing and the study of

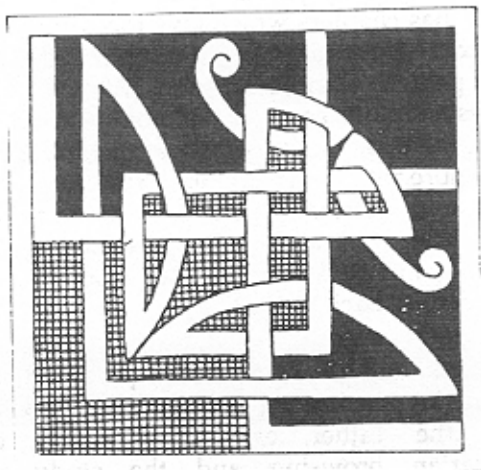
surname formation. It would be easy enough for a modern to sneer at the Victorian language of the author, who is un-named anywhere in the reprinted edition. Yet, upon reflection, the impartial reader will develop respect for the thoroughness and the care with which the author laboured above a century ago. I believe that this volume belongs on the shelves of all serious collectors of name lore or who wish to have something to tell people about name derivations before modern times. Even if we cannot connect modern people to a mediaeval family of the same surname, it is encouraging to know that one's surname has antiquity even when one's lineage may not be traced so far back.

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**THE POET IN THE FIELD:  
W. B. YEATS AS FOLKLORIST**

Dominic Larkin

It seems more than fortuitous that this year, the fiftieth anniversary of the great poet's death, a tape should have passed into my hands drawing attention to a little-known aspect of Yeats' work. The recording was made by a delegate to the recent Yeats Summer School in Sligo and was done in what folklorists term "the field". I should explain to those unfamiliar with specialist terminology that though the respondent, one Paddy Flynn, is indeed a farmer as well as a storyteller, the "field" in this case has few bucolic associations but would appear — to judge from background noises — to have been a public drinking place of some kind.

The tape virtually edited itself: all that was necessary for me, as editor, to do was to excise the odd profanity and — after legal advice — the occasional comment of a possibly actionable nature. Here it is, then.

**Interviewer:** Yeats is known the world over as a great poet, but not everyone knows that he also achieved some distinction as a folklorist. Could you tell me something about this, Mr. Flynn?

**P. Flynn:** Call me Paddy. I could indeed! Sure didn't he travel around here as a young man gathering stories and legends? (Jack! Bring us another pint here if you get a chance.)

**Interviewer:** You're speaking of the area around Drumcliff, Co. Sligo. Would you have met him yourself?

**P. Flynn:** Ah, no! I'm not that long in the tooth! But it would have been in my father's time or my grandfather's — I have the story from them.

**Interviewer:** That would have been when Yeats was picking up material for his *Celtic Twilight*, which came out in 1890?

**P. Flynn:** The very time. Of course he was keen on the old stories even before that, you know. The first book he ever brought out was on folklore, did you know that?

**Interviewer:** I did. That would have been *Irish Folk Stories and Fairy Tales*, 1888. But how much fieldwork would he have done on that?

**P. Flynn:** Not much, I'll warrant. (God bless you, Jack!) He got most of that book from ransacking other books. But he had his informants even then, and why wouldn't he? Sure, his family was from around here.

**Interviewer:** Yes. His grandfather was the Church of Ireland vicar at Drumcliff and his mother's people, the Pollexfens, hailed from Sligo town.

**P. Flynn:** Ah, sure you know your stuff, I'll give you that. (*Laughter.*) Anyway, his Uncle George's servant in Sligo, Mary Battle — an old May woman — had a big fund of stories. (Jack, when you have a minute!)

**Interviewer:** He said that "much of *The Celtic Twilight* was her speech."

**P. Flynn:** Did he now? Well, there was also a Paddy Flynn who gave him some stories — an ancestor of my own, to tell the truth.

**Interviewer:** He was hardly a scientific researcher, though. The information he gives on his informants is often too vague to satisfy a modern folklorist. For example, your own Paddy Flynn is sometimes referred to only as "Paddy F." It's also been suggested that he "combined the freedom of the artist with the accuracy of the folklorist." Whatever about the accuracy, that kind of subjective approach is not highly regarded by modern folklorists.

**P. Flynn:** Sure what do they know? (Thanks, Jack!) Anyway, wasn't the ... subject in its infancy in those days? He was only doing his best, I suppose. And, you know, he wasn't stinting in his praise for some other fellas who might have been a bit more serious. I mean the likes of Douglas Hyde, who got his stories from the Irish-speaking people; or Miss Letitia Maclintock.

**Interviewer:** Yes, he admired the way she captured the flavour of the speech of the Donegal peasantry. Of course, he tried to do the same himself. Indeed, he was disdainful of earlier writers such as Crofton Croker for this reason: Croker always has his characters speaking in a ludicrous "Stage Irish" dialect, now justly condemned.

But what was he like as a collector? Would he have had trouble getting his informants to open up, do you think? He has the reputation, you know, of being rather aloof — even a bit of a poseur.

**P. Flynn:** Well, he was not so much stand-offish as shy, I think, the poor man. And — you see — he had his family connections to pave the way for him with the country people: "letters of introduction," you might say. He respected the people and they trusted him. He didn't like making them out to be a bunch of superstitious amadauns — not like some others of his ... class, God knows!

And he had a sense of humour. Sure, some of your folklore crowd would put years on you with their long faces and their tape-recorders and notebooks. You'll get a drink out of some of them, though — I'll give you that! *Ádh mór ort!* (Jack, if you get a chance!)

**Interviewer:** So you'd agree then that he was something of a folklore pioneer in some ways? I mean in his desire to approach his informants on their own terms and record their own words. And, indeed, even his

interest in their superstitions was not a condescending one: he was one of the first collectors to record what are now called "memorats".

P. Flynn: What in the name of God would they be now? (Thanks, Jack. You're a lovely man!)

Interviewer: Well, Paddy, you'll recognize the thing even if you don't know the word. A "memorat" is defined as a first- or second-hand account of a visionary supernatural experience.

P. Flynn: Well, you're right enough there, then. The *Celtic Twilight* is full of that class of stuff, to be sure. But that's how he came to be interested in the old stories in the first place do you see. He was mad after piseogs and visions and stories about the "Fairy World". All that started him off.

Interviewer: He never lost his interest or belief in the occult: never in his life. Indeed, he went to the people in the beginning, as you say, to seek confirmation of the existence of occult phenomena. The same interest, you know, drew him to Mme. Blavatsky and the Order of the Golden Dawn and séances and automatic writing and whatnot else. He thought Irish country people were more open than others to influences from the Other World. He truly believed in the Fairies.

P. Flynn: Indeed he did, now. I've heard there was an American sniffing around here in my father's time (God rest him) who was looking into that class of thing. He thought the fairies were there all the time if only people had eyes to see them. Some class of spiritualist he was, and didn't your man Yeats tell him where to go to get the best stories. He had a sort of German name — or may it was Welsh?

Interviewer: You must be referring, Paddy, to Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz. He travelled around looking for information on the fairies — "taking the evidence" he called it — not only in Ireland but in Wales, Scotland, and Brittany. He even wrote a book about it: *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, 1911. Indeed he dedicated the book to Yeats and to another observer of Irish fairies, George Russell or "A. E.".

P. Flynn: Well, if that don't beat the band! (Jack, the next time you're passing, a chara!)

Interviewer: Well, Paddy, you've certainly confirmed for me that Yeats' influence on and interest in folklore studies is beyond doubt. But, in spite of what we've talked about today, I still wonder how much real fieldwork the old poet did. You know, literary scholars have pointed out that Yeats was a great inventor of a certain myth of himself: the myth of Yeats the Poet and Seer. He was continually rewriting his Autobiography to show himself in a certain light. How do we really know he wasn't doing the same regarding his role as folklorist? Can we really take his own word for it? Literary critics have pointed out that every fact and figure he recorded about himself can hardly be taken at face value, but must be carefully checked against independent sources.

P. Flynn: Are you saying now that Yeats was a bit of a chancer? I suppose he was. Yerra, aren't we all? And divil a bit of harm in it most of the time? But, you know, you don't want to be too sceptical now, either.

I'm going to tell you something now. I'm only an old farmer so you may not believe this. But I've often wondered about that very matter myself and, what's more, I've taken the time to look into it. Did you know, now, that Yeats wrote to George Moore, that old ..., around the turn of the century, to say that he'd been gathering stories from the Sligo country people? He said that these stories had put him



on his legs as a writer! How about that now? I suppose that's an "independent source" for you if you like! You could look it up in old George there if you have a mind.

You see, before that time, Yeats was inclined towards a — well — foreign and Romantic class of material. Bags of stories about boys and girls meeting on rocks in the middle of the ocean and not a crust of bread to keep them going — that class of foolishness. Anyway, the folklore put him on another path entirely; he started to look for the old inspiration in Irish material — where better? And he held to that for the rest of his life — but sure, you know that anyway. And didn't he put the bit between other people's teeth as well? Sure didn't he tell Synge to go to the Aran Islands?

And look at Lady Gregory! She says herself — and you can look that one up, too — that Yeats gave her the idea of getting stories from the people — the way he was doing himself! Sure, didn't they go to the Gort Workhouse together to get the odd bit of a tale?

So, what do you have now by way of your "independent sources"? You have the likes of Moore and Lady Gregory giving credit to your man for his collecting. Sure, you can't say he was only making it up later on. He put in the work himself all right. And didn't my own father and grandfather say the same? So there you have it, if you want to be a Doubting Thomas!

Interviewer: (*Laughter.*) Well, Paddy, I must admit you can make a convincing argument as well as tell the odd story!

P. Flynn: Sure, why wouldn't I? (Thanks again, Jack!)

Interviewer: Well, thank you, too, Paddy!

P. Flynn: Ah, ná bac leis!

## IRISH SURNAMES

Terrence M. Punch, F. R. S. A. I.

President, Royal Nova Scotia  
Historical Society

It is simply stating the truth to say that Ireland in the nineteenth century was an agricultural country. Indeed the central demographic episode, the Great Famine of the late 1840s, befell in good part because of the exclusive dependence of so large a proportion of the population upon a subsistence potato crop.

In America one of the several parts of the rather complex explanation for the tendency of the Irish to cluster in urban centres was the unhappy memory of what life on the land had been for the great majority. The major concentration of "Famine Irish" in Atlantic Canada was to be found in Saint John, New Brunswick, whose bishop belonged to one of the surname groups being treated in this issue of *An Nasc*. The Rt. Rev. John Sweeney, Bishop of Saint John, came from Clones, County Monaghan, and held the view that the Irish in the Maritimes belonged, not in cities, but on the land. By persuasion, pressure and government cooperation in granting land, Sweeney brought about the relatively successful settlement of Irish Catholic families at Johnville, in Carleton County, New Brunswick. An incomplete list of families which went there includes the surnames Brennan, Burns, Cain, Casey, Colton, Conroy, Corbit, Crane, Cummins, Daly, Denny, Dineen, Duggan, Gallagher, Golden, Gorman, Higgins, Hurley, Keenan, Kilfoyle, Mahar, McAllister, McAuliffe, McCann, McCarty, McGinley, McGroarty, McGuire, McKim, McLaughlin, Mahoney, Murphy, O'Keefe, O'Neill, Power, Ready, Riley, Ryan, Shugrue, and Sullivan.

Whether they wanted a better life, "respectability", or were simply being themselves, the experiment shows that at least some of the Irish were not averse to leaving the teeming town tenements behind when the opportunity afforded itself. Perhaps, like many, non-Irish, groups, they were willing to try "a better way" when it was offered.

### FITZGERALD

Variants: *Barron, Giraldin, MacGearailt, and Gerald.*



Fitzgerald is a very numerous surname in Ireland and wherever the Irish have settled overseas. The "Fitz" prefix on a number of Irish names is merely the French "fils", meaning "son of". In the present case, the family derives from Maurice, son of Gerald, who was constable of Pembroke in Wales, in the twelfth century, and his wife, Nesta, a Welsh princess.

In Ireland the famous family divided into several branches, the two most notable being the Desmond earldom in the southwest, and the Kildare earldom in Leinster. Since nearly every holder reference works, I shall not reiterate their lives here.

One, Garrett Fitzgerald, eight Earl of Kildare (+ 1513) was a very powerful noble. The story runs that King Henry VII asked to know why the earl had burned the cathedral at Cashel, and that the Great Earl replied that he only did

so after being told that the archbishop was inside. Otherwise, he would not have thought of doing such a thing. Henry supposedly observed that since Ireland could not govern Gerald, that "let this man govern Ireland".

Lord Edward FitzGerald (1763-1798), son of the first Duke of Leinster, was a famous United Irishman implicated heavily in the 1798 Rebellion. A Hiberno-French group, the Regiment de FitzGerald, distinguished itself fighting in the service of Louis XIV of France. The family shield, a red "X" on a white field, forms the Cross of St. Patrick as used on the Union Jack.

In recent years famous bearers of the name included Barry Fitzgerald (1888-1961), the Oscar-winning actor in "Going My Way". He was born William Joseph Shields, in Dublin. The American author of "The Great Gatsby" was Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (1896-1940). Garret FitzGerald has twice been prime minister of the Republic of Ireland since 1980. Those who have taken Classics will perhaps have some appreciation for the memory of Robert Stuart Fitzgerald who gave us such lively translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Denis Fitzgerald, a fisherman, was in St. John's, Newfoundland, by about 1748, and a Maurice Fitzgerald was in Western Bay by 1771, and a family of the name were established as butchers and victuallers on Cochrane Street, St. John's, during much of the last century. The Fitzgeralds rank seventy-third on a list of Newfoundland surnames about thirty years ago, with large numbers at St. John's and at Keels in Bonavista Bay.

A scattering of Fitzgeralds reached Prince Edward Island, with family groups around Kildare Cape and Wellington in Prince County, and east Souris, Kings County. Rev. D. Fitzgerald was an Anglican clergyman in

Charlottetown just over a century ago. A post office named Fitzgerald Station once existed in Lot 14, at Richmond, Prince Edward Island.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, had above a dozen households of Fitzgeralds in 1871, with other families nearby at Portuguese Cove. Kings County, Little River in Yarmouth County, and Saint John, New Brunswick were home to others. In the early 1840s, J. R. Fitzgerald was editor of the *Register*, a newspaper in Halifax which was "devoted to the affairs of Ireland and her national faith." Two Fitzgeralds — Walter R., and Gordon H. — have served in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, one as Minister of Labour, the other briefly as Speaker.

### SWEENEY

Variants: *MacSweeney*, *McSwiney*, *Sweeny*, and *MacSuibhne*.



It is interesting to reflect that while the name in Gaelic is Suibhne, meaning "pleasant", the family came into Ireland from Scotland as hired warriors (in Irish *gallóglaich*) during the Middle Ages. Other gallowglass families include McCabe and McDowell. Three septs of MacSuibhnes were established in Tirconnell (Donegal): MacSuibhne Fanad, a branch of which removed to Muskerry, Co. Cork, in the

service of The McCarty More; MacSuibhne Banagh, and MacSuibhne na dTuath, commonly called MacSweeney of the Battleaxe, though "na dTuath" actually means "of the districts." The family arms, quite evidently the product of a herald whose language was English, is in part a pun on the word "swine". Battleaxes form the other notable feature on the shield.

Terence MacSwiney (1879-1920) was Lord Mayor of Cork. He drew international attention to the struggle for Irish independence by his hunger strike which lasted over two months and which ended only with MacSwiney's death in prison. Another Irish patriot was Thomas William Sweeney (1820-1892) from County Cork, who led the Fenian raid into Canada in 1866.

Cornelius Sweeney had reached St. John's, Newfoundland, by 1796, but the earliest person of the name to settle in the region seems to have been Roger Sweeney, a shipwright, who was in Halifax ten years before that. A James Sweeney from Ireland had established himself at Bell Isle about 1804, and people of the surname are found there yet. The family has given its name to Sweeney Island and Sweeneys Pond, further evidence of their early presence, if not of great numbers.

Few Sweeneys reached Prince Edward Island, though several have lived in or near Charlottetown. One line, represented now by Captain R. Mingo Sweeney of River John, Nova Scotia, takes its territorial designation from Bolger's Park, Prince Edward Island. This legitimate right to be known by a territorial title rather than by surname is perhaps unique in Canada.

Both Sweeneys and McSweeneys immigrated into New Brunswick, with McSweeney being prominent in Moncton thanks to the brothers, Peter and Edward McSweeney, merchants late

in the last century. William B. McSweeney was a distinguished barrister of that era and practised in Saint John, where the form Sweeny was more numerous otherwise. Sweeneys settled at Belledune, Petit Rocher and Pokeshaw, all in Gloucester County, at Newcastle and in Westmorland County. As mentioned in the preamble to this instalment, Bishop John Sweeney (1821-1901), was long Catholic Bishop of Saint John (1860-1901). Apart from the rural settlement of his compatriots, the bishop fought long and hard for Catholic education in New Brunswick, and was a stout opponent of Canadian Confederation.

In Nova Scotia, Sweeneys were found scattered in Halifax City; East Rawdon, Hants County; Yarmouth Town; Kemptville, Kings County. A few families names McSweeney have been associated for above a century with Halifax City, being connected particularly to the educational field.

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### THE SULLIVANS OF PORTUGUESE COVE, N. S.

Patricia McManus (nee Sullivan)  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

I have always been interested in family connections. For a winter project I gathered together bits and pieces of information which I had inherited over time. I began tracing back over 200 years of Sullivan family history. Having no expertise in this matter, I began with the original ancestor's inscription on their headstone. I checked at the Nova Scotia Provincial Archives and found my great, great grandfather's record of death at age 98 years. The following is a record of what I found out about my "family tree".

I am a fifth generation descendent of Catherine O'Sullivan (nee Harrington) and Timothy O'Sullivan both natives of Berehaven, County Cork. They emigrated to Canada around 1820. Timothy arrived first and then sent for Catherine and their two small children. These children were born in Ireland. Michael was born in 1815 and Catherine was born in 1819. Mrs. O'Sullivan travelled to Nova Scotia in a barque. When she arrived in Portuguese Cove she was transported from ship to shore via rope and tackle in a large wooden bucket. They had two other children after her arrival here. John (my branch) was born 24 May 1824 and Timothy who was born in 1828.

Timothy O'Sullivan along with Daniel Gallagher petitioned for land in 1832. These two fishermen received their land grant for 15 acres evenly divided between them in 1846. The spot is known as SULLIVAN'S HILL to this day in the Cove.

Of note I must mention here that Catherine besides looking after her own family was a mid-wife and she helped deliver babies as far as Prospect. She was of short stature and

because she could not manage the huge snow banks a stretcher (made of the finest feathers) was hastily procured in order to visit her patients. Catherine lived to be 102 years of age and her husband, Timothy was 98 years of age when he died of old age. This is recorded in death records at the Public Archives. Their headstone is at Ketch Harbour Cemetery.

Besides being a fisherman, Timothy was a postal "Way Officer". On the A. F. Church Halifax County Church Map 1865 in the Public Archives we see a listing for T. SULLIVAN WAY OFFICE. The next lot of land on this 1865 church map shows ownership as P. Harrington. Catherine's maiden name was Harrington. This person was no doubt a relative of hers. Other names in Portuguese Cove at that time were: Bowers, White, Burke, Purcell, O'Neill, Quan, Power, Munroe, Martins, Fitzgerald and Sadlers. Many descendents still are there.

The Sullivans worked hard, loved their church (they walked to Ketch Harbour to attend St. Peter's) and loved music. They contributed much to their new land. Their eldest son, Michael married Margaret Scallion (from Herring Cove/Halibut Bay area) on 26 November 1839 and they had seven children. This branch of the family is affectionately known as the "Herring Cove Sullivans". Michael was drowned in 1854 on a return fishing trip from Halifax. This is recorded in the *Gazette*.

Catherine their daughter (Timothy and Catherine's second child) married James Welcher on 23 November 1837 and they had nine children. There are several Welcher relatives around Ketch Harbour and Halifax presently.

The second son, John (my branch of the family) married Ann Scallion. We think two brothers married two sisters. John's wife had a nickname, Nancy. John and Nancy had nine

children. In the 1871 census, John was 46 years of age, was head of the household and was a fisherman. His wife Ann (Nancy) was 40 years of age and the children were listed as follows: Timothy (junior) fisherman age 21, Catherine-age 18, Michael-age 16, Andrew-age 14, Alice-age 12, Mary-age 10, Jasper-age 7 and John (my grandfather) age 2. Catherine and Timothy's son Timothy died early in life and had no issue. Ann (Nancy) stood 6 feet tall and was very strong. It is said she could do the work of any man. She occasionally took a puff from a clay pipe! John died age 70 years in 1894 and his wife Ann(Nancy) lived to age 86 and she died in 1914. They are both buried in Holy Cross Cemetery, Halifax under one of the "umbrella trees".

My grandfather John P. Sullivan loved music. He met my grandmother at the Ketch Harbour Picnic. He sold pianos for Phinney Music Company and he and Maggie Alice Patton were married on 14 April 1896. They had 6 children. My father Kenneth P. Sullivan was their second youngest. There are 3 children from my parents' marriage...myself, Patricia; my brother, Keith; and my sister, Carol.

Remember each contact you make when doing your "roots" helps you with another link in your story. Catherine and Timothy O'Sullivan made the first journey across the Atlantic and their saga continues through all the Sullivan descendants. I hope anyone who attempts their own family tree enjoys doing so as much as I did.



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