



## Ireland

### Celebrating Peace, Embracing Change

Leeds Civic Hall 18th November 2007 - Picture by Max Farrar



A fascinating and engaging event was held in Leeds Civic Hall on a wet and miserable Sunday evening bringing together politicians and academics from both traditions in Ireland to discuss the peace process.

The event – 'Ireland: Celebrating Peace, Embracing Change' was part of the Leeds Together for Peace Festival. The event was organised by Leeds City Council in co-operation with Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds Irish Health and Homes and the Irish Arts Foundation.

Speakers included the Sinn Fein MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) Paul Maskey and the Fianna Fail TD Martin Mansergh who was Special Adviser to the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern on the peace process, with Professor Jim McAuley of Huddersfield University, and Professor David Cooper of Leeds University Music department.

The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councilor Brian Cleasby, who is the first Lord Mayor to welcome a Sinn Fein representative to the city, formally opened the event. This was followed by an excellent address by Anna McGillicuddy the Press and Media Officer from the Irish embassy in London. Each speaker gave fifteen minute presentations and then took questions from the floor. Following a lively question and answer session Ant Hanlon, Chief Executive of Irish Health and Homes, presented all speakers with a copy of the book *Roisín Bán*, which profiles the history of the Leeds Irish community. The event concluded with traditional Irish music from the Irish Arts Foundation.

This event was well attended and was an excellent example of co-operation between Leeds Irish groups, the Council and Leeds Metropolitan University. It is hoped to follow this up with other similar events in the future to give an opportunity to show how vibrant, inclusive and welcoming the City of Leeds is to the many diverse groups within its boundaries.





# Hi Everyone,

Well, another year has gone by and we are busier than ever. We are expanding our area of work to cater for more people and to provide an ever improving and wider range of services to the Irish community. This reflects a greater need identified as the profile of our service has been raised across the city. It also shows the changing nature of the problems experienced by an aging Irish population in Leeds. We will soon be asking your views on what services you might want, in addition to what you are already getting. We are embarking upon a consultation process which will help direct our future service provision.

There is an ever increasing number of events being held in Leeds, highlighting Irish cultural, political and historic affairs. We look forward to working with the new team at the Irish Embassy in London led by a second generation Irish Ambassador, David Cooney.

Once again we have a packed edition with the usual mixture of history, humour, poem, recipes and profiles of new staff as well as items of local and national interest.

Could I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year on behalf of the staff and management. Could I remind you that this newsletter is yours? Please feel free to contribute articles, stories or poems, particularly anything of interest to the local Irish community.

Nollaig Shona Daoibh,

*Eddie Mulligan.*

Editor.



## Trip to Bretton Park

November 2007

The walking group gave a positive verdict recently when they had a great day out at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Set within 500 acres of beautiful, 18th century parkland, it is an international centre for modern and contemporary art, toured by thousands of visitors each year, including students and members of the public.

On a lovely autumn day in September, Adrian O'Reilly and Teresa O'Driscoll accompanied the group stroll around Bretton

Country Park. All involved expressed strong opinions on the various sculptures lining the route.

On display were many Andy Goldsworthy works including those involving animal dung "meant to connect us with nature", and many works by Henry Moore and others.





# Irish Professionals plan Inaugural Gala Ball

for March 2008



The Leeds Irish Professionals Network (IPN) was established in December 2006 to facilitate business and social opportunities for Irish professional people and their associates and to support local Irish charities. The group meet on a monthly basis at venues provided by host organisations wishing to establish links with the Irish business sector. These have included Ford and Warren Solicitors, Bewley's Hotel, Eversheds Solicitors, Search Consultancy, Leeds Met University, Allied Irish Bank and the Queen's Hotel.

Our members come from many professions including Legal, Banking, Recruitment, Financial, Regeneration, Local Government and the Voluntary and Charitable Sectors. The administration of the network is facilitated through Leeds Irish Health & Homes.

The Leeds IPN is one of a number of IPN's established throughout Britain. These became connected as the national Irish Professionals Network ([www.irishprofessionalnetwork.org](http://www.irishprofessionalnetwork.org)) and was launched at events in London and Manchester on the 28th November. Facilitated through a partnership between the Federation of Irish Societies and Enterprise Ireland the network offers a fantastic opportunity for Irish professionals and businesses to showcase their talents and share their expertise and knowledge as well as learning about the opportunities to support the Irish voluntary sector in the UK.

The Leeds IPN, as part of its development strategy is organising its Inaugural St Patrick's Gala Ball on Saturday March 8th 2008 at the Queen's Hotel, City Square, Leeds. The ball was organised by Mary-Kate Fallon and Bronagh Campbell from Search Consultancy and Tabrona Consultancy respectively. They hope that this event will be the first of many annual Gala Balls which will enable Irish professionals in Leeds and beyond to meet together, develop business links and support good causes. They are delighted that the guest of honour for their first endeavour is the Irish Ambassador to Britain, David Cooney. David is the first second-generation holder of this prestigious post. Jamesons are generously sponsoring and hosting the event. The organisers hope that it will be a night to remember.

Individual tickets are £50 and table packages are also available; tickets and a full list of the sponsorship deals are also available from Ant Hanlon on 0113 2625614 or by emailing [ant@lihh.org](mailto:ant@lihh.org)

## British Military withdraw from the North

In what was claimed as yet another historic milestone in the Northern peace process Britain withdrew some of its troops from the Province. The troops arrived in 1969 as part of 'Operation Banner', the longest running operation in British military history. Over 30,000 British troops served in the North with 763 killed. Although announced with great fanfare and publicity as a withdrawal, 5000 troops will remain there which is more than are currently in Iraq.

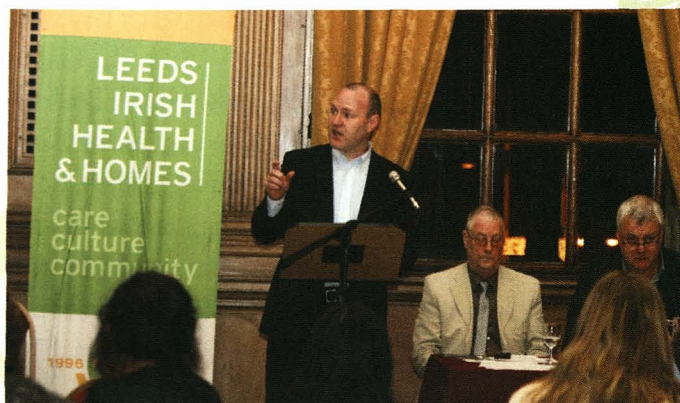


# Ireland, Celebrating Peace, Embracing Change

Leeds Civic Hall 18th November 2007 - Pictures by Max Farrar



In Leeds Civic Hall, 18th November 2007, as part of the Together for Peace festival a seminar was held to celebrate the peace process that has allowed an assembly to be formed to govern the north of Ireland after years of direct rule from Westminster. Among the keynote speakers was the Sinn Fein MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) Paul Maskey. This was the first time that a lord Mayor of Leeds had welcomed a member of the Sinn Fein party. Mr. Maskey gave an impassioned speech stating that Sinn Fein's aim remained a united Ireland, but that would be achieved now by consent and co-operation rather than by violence. He noted that he had the mobile numbers of many leading Unionist politicians and worked closely with them now for the benefits of the whole community. He was proud that Belfast was now becoming a multi-cultural city welcoming to all and believed such changes will bring the sort of tolerance and unity for long-lasting peace.



Martin Mansergh talked of his role over the past 20 years in bringing a historic agreement between the nationalist and Unionist traditions in the island of Ireland. He had a personal interest in the process as an Irish nationalist from a Protestant Anglo-Irish background. He had made contact with Sinn Fein in the 1980s through the intercession of Fr Alec Reid and how this led to meaningful discussions between all the political parties and the UK government. He said there was still much to do to positively engage with the legacy of distrust between the two traditions. Much positive work continues and there must now be real hope for the people of the island of Ireland.

Professor Jim McAuley, an expert on the Unionist and Loyalist traditions in Northern Ireland, talked about the sense of turmoil and nervousness within the Unionist community and how its response within the peace process remains complex and multi-layered. He talked about 'New Unionism' and 'New Loyalism' which sought to constructively engage with the nationalist tradition.

This progressive work foundered on deep fears in the Unionist community fostered by Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party that Irish republicanism has gained more from the peace process than Unionism. The DUP's growing political success led them to negotiate from a standpoint of 'Peace through Strength' – that by being strong defenders of the Union they can go into government with Sinn Fein as protectors of that Union. There is still much division within the DUP and Unionism in general over this decision but the strong support in the Protestant community for the DUP is its 'insurance policy' to protect the Union.

Finally, Professor David Cooper of Leeds University's Music Department talked about the traditional music traditions in Ulster. He particularly looked at the recent tradition of 'Ulster Scots' music which has been important in trying to separate itself from 'Irish' music. This contradicts earlier generations of traditional musicians in Northern Ireland, Protestant and Catholic, who have 'largely shared a common repertoire that incorporated material from Irish and Scottish sources.'

Professor Cooper said he feared that Ulster Scots music would play in opposition to Irish music. He argued though 'that there are not two, but multiple musical traditions on the island of Ireland, and that these traditions creatively interact, and interface with others found in Scotland, Wales, England and further afield, from northern Europe to the Mediterranean, and from Australia to North America.'

A lively question and answer session then followed, chaired by Eddie Mulligan of Leeds Irish Health and Homes. The event will be followed up with the 2008 Leeds International Olof Palme Peace Lecture, which will be given by Senator George Mitchell, who was the chair of the inter-party talks in Northern Ireland.

The lecture will take place in April in Leeds Civic Hall.





# The Harp; Symbol of Ireland

“Voice of the days of old, let me hear you.  
Awake the soul of song.” *Ossian*.

It once graced the flag of the Republic; it still appears on official government documents as well as the Presidential flag, and is displayed on Irish coins. For centuries, the harp has been a beloved emblem of Ireland. In fact, it is said that the Irish concentrated so much of their musical ability into playing the harp, that for many years, the development of music in Ireland was brought to a relative standstill. Folklore says that the first harp was owned by Dagda, a chief among the Tuatha De Danaan. The De Danaan were at war with the Fomorians and the harp was taken from Dagda by the gods of cold and darkness.

Two other gods, Lugh representing light, and Ogma representing art, penetrated the Fomorian fortress, recovered the harp and restored it to Dagda. The gods in returning the harp to him, pronounced two secret names for the instrument and, at the same time, called forth summer and winter. From that point on, when Dagda played, he could produce a melody so poignant, it would make his audience weep, an air so jubilant it would make everyone smile, or a sound so tranquil, it would lull all who listened to sleep. Thus, with its secret or magical names, the instrument became the dispenser of Sorrow, Gladness and Rest.

Whichever way the harp became Ireland's own unique instrument, and subsequently, its national emblem, history tells us that the people who played it were highly trained professionals who usually

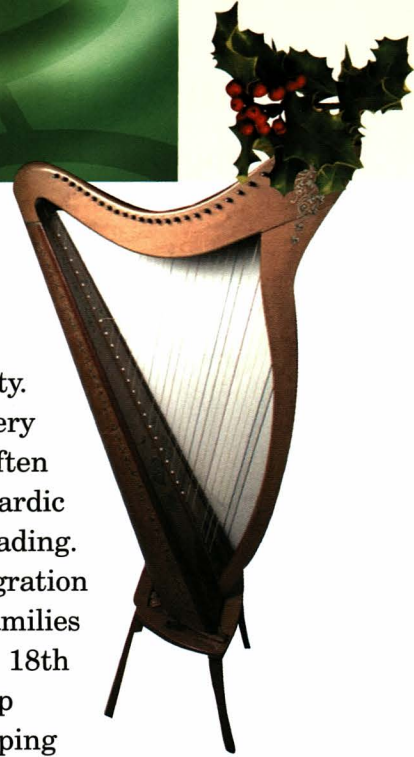
performed for the nobility. They were held in very high regard and were often asked to accompany a bardic poet who was giving a reading. However, with the emigration of Ireland's leading families in the 17th and early 18th century, there was a steep decline in the harping tradition and the last traditionally trained harpist died in the mid-19th century. Interestingly, these superb musicians played with their fingernails and not with the flesh of the fingertips as is done today.

It's also interesting to note that new families of English descent were hospitable to well-known harpists such as O'Carolan, and it was a man from the north, Dr. Michael MacDonnell, and an Englishman, Edward Bunting, who assembled the last harpers in Belfast in 1792. Even though very generous fees were offered, they were able to attract only eleven players from the whole country.

Bunting attempted to write down as much of the music as he could. His collection is incredibly important because it contains the only remaining remnants of what the ancient tradition must have been like.

So, while this oldest emblem of Ireland is still very much apparent - even appearing on the Guinness label - most of the ancient airs and melodies it once produced are long gone. Perhaps the first verse of a famous poem by Thomas Moore says it best:

The harp that once through Tara's halls, the soul of music shed,  
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls, as if that soul were fled.  
So sleeps the pride of former days, so glory's thrill is o'er,  
And hearts that once beat high for praise, now feel that pulse no more.





# Remembering Revelry & Showcasing Shindigs:

Preserving the history of St. Patrick's Day in West Yorkshire



West Yorkshire Archive Service is creating and supporting digital community archive projects to record and preserve the history of St Patrick's Day Celebrations in Leeds and West Yorkshire, and it needs your memories to do it!

West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS) exists to preserve the county's heritage of historical documents and to help members of the public make use of them. As part of its on-going outreach work, WYAS recently received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to work on four projects, creating online

community archives for different groups in West Yorkshire. One of these projects will focus on the history of St Patrick's Day celebrations in West Yorkshire.

WYAS wants to record, preserve, and digitise the history, experience and impact of Irish celebrations in Leeds and West Yorkshire; the beliefs, culture and traditions behind them, the Irish community's own experiences and opinions of these festivities, and how such celebrations have shaped the county as a whole.

West Yorkshire Archive Service is looking for people to be interviewed to record their memories for the archive and perhaps share their photos and other treasures. Your stories and experiences of St Patrick's Day in West Yorkshire are vital to the project.



*West Yorkshire  
Archive Service*

So if you have tales of St Patrick's Day over the years, from your memories of days off school to family sing-songs, from marches to modern-day parades, politics to paddywhackery, then the archive needs your story!

If you would like more information about the project's activities in Leeds or if you are interested in participating, please contact Fiona Cosson, Archive Project Worker, on email [fcosson@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:fcosson@wyjs.org.uk) or telephone 0113 2898 223.

## Students Reject Education for Trades

Recent research has highlighted that some of Ireland's brightest young people are rejecting the idea of attending University and opting instead for a trade. Among the benefits available to plumbers, carpenters and bricklayers is that they can earn up to twice the average industrial wage of €600 per week. €932 is the average earned by workers engaged in a trade but some bricklayers can earn over €1300 per week in what was a booming Irish construction industry. Approximately two thirds of apprentices in the various trades are educated up to Leaving Certificate standard (equivalent to an A level), which is traditionally seen as the springboard to a University Degree. Paradoxically, a shrinking in the construction industry and global pressure from cheaper labour markets has resulted in an increase in unemployment to 163,000 people. The average rate of unemployment now stands at 4.6% which is a three year high.



# Recipe: Boiled Bacon and Cabbage

Serves 4

- 2 1/2 pounds of bacon joint ( a large 'collar' or 'hock piece')
- about 4 or 5 inches cubed
- 1 good-sized cabbage

Place the meat in a pot, cover with cold water and bring to the boil. Add salt if required. Remove the surface sediment and simmer for 30 minutes per pound of meat.

Quarter the cabbage and add to the pot. Cook gently for about 1/2 hour, or until cabbage is cooked to your liking - do not overcook! Drain and serve with new boiled potatoes and mustard or brown (HP) sauce.



# Recipe: Irish Roast Pork with Potato Stuffing

- 2 pounds pork tenderloin, or 6 to 8 boneless lean pork chops
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons hard cider (apple wine) or water
- Salt and pepper

## Stuffing

- 4 1/2 cups potatoes, coarsely mashed
- 4 ounces butter
- 1 large onion
- 2 large cooking apples, chopped
- handful chopped fresh sage and thyme
- Salt and pepper

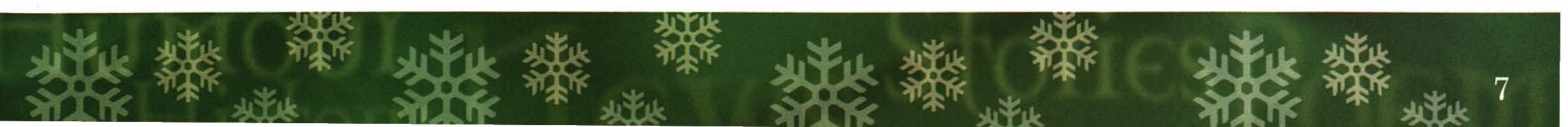


## Make stuffing:

To potatoes, add butter, onion, apples, herbs, salt and pepper. Mix well. Rub meat with salt, pepper and butter. Pour cider or water into 3 -quart casserole dish. Place meat along edges of dish. Cover loosely with foil and bake 1 hour at 350 degrees (F).

# July was the Wettest in Irish History

The relentless rain that fell on Ireland during July has marked that month as the wettest since records began 170 years ago. Almost the whole country was affected but the records show that Dublin received more than three times the amount of rain it normally does during July.





# Wonderful World of Words! Picture by Daniel Lyons



The recently held annual Irish festival of culture and the arts, known as The Gathering (8th—18th November), was enormously successful. A major contributor to that success was the literary event Wonderful World of Words, which took place at both The Citrus Café, Headingley and the Headingley Public Library on Sunday 11th of November. This was

a celebration of the written word, combining poetry, song and story and was organised by Lucht Focail Irish Writer's Group, Leeds Irish Health and Homes, and Leeds Travellers Education Service, under the umbrella of the Irish Arts Foundation.

The day commenced with readings of original poetry written by members of the acclaimed local Writer's Group, Lucht Focail, and was followed by some beautiful singing by Teresa O'Driscoll's vocal group, Anima. This was, in turn, followed by Leeds-based Dublin poet Siobhán McMahon reading and performing an extract from her tremendous new work *The Mouth of the Cave*, ably assisted by a stunning young musician from Cork, Sabrina Piggot. Limerick-born poet

and former Leeds teacher Michael Reeves read extracts from his new novel by second-generation Irish writer Ray French and a reading by the widely acclaimed poet Ian Duhig, who is short-listed for the TS Eliot Award. Music was also provided by Des Hurley and friends, which was well-appreciated, not least by Ian Duhig, who said, "I always like being part of an event which features traditional Irish music, as it feels natural and intimate, and underscores the music of the language surrounding it."

Events in the Library included a creative writing workshop hosted by Ray French; a fun Irish language session by Joe Sheerin; a discussion of the successful play *Mobile* by the traveller/actor Michael Collins, and a story-telling session run by Teresa O'Driscoll, featuring story-teller Kerry McMullen.

One of the highlights of the day was an exhibition of Irish Dancing by some very young dancers from the Joyce O'Donnell School of Irish Dancing. The audience was very responsive and showed their enthusiasm for both the written and musical performances and it was gratifying to see so many people, Irish and non-Irish alike, enjoy this remarkable event. The day, indeed, was an unqualified success!



## Signs of The Times

### Humorous Signs from Various Locations!

Seen in a watch shop:

Please wait patiently to be served. I only have two hands

Notice in the window of a fabric shop:

Repairs and alterations done here. Dying arranged

Sign outside pet shop:

No dogs allowed

Notice in a dry cleaner's window:

Anyone leaving their garments here for more than 30 days will be disposed of

Spotted in a Blackpool guest house:

Hot and cold running in all rooms

Seen outside a fire station:

Fire Station - No Smoking

Notice on Norfolk village shop:

Half-day closing all day Wednesday

Sign in London pizza parlour:

Open 24 hours - except 2 a.m. - 8 a.m.

Seen outside dancing academy:

Please mind the steps

Sign on motorway garage:

Please do not smoke near our petrol pumps.

Your life may not be worth much but our petrol is





# Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Bereavement Service

## Development Work at Leeds Hospices



My name is Jane Driver and I'm very happy to have this opportunity to share with you all the news of the Black Minority Ethnic Bereavement Service Development post at Sue Ryder Care Wheatfield's Hospice and St Gemma's Hospice in Leeds.

In 2006, as part of a joint initiative between St Gemma's Hospice and Sue Ryder Care Wheatfield's Hospice, the Hospices were granted funding from Halifax Bank of Scotland (HBoS) and Help the Hospices (HtH). The grant has enabled the Hospices to employ a Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Bereavement Worker. This project began in June 2006 and is funded until June 2008. The primary aims are to develop bereavement outreach work to BME service users in Leeds via the two Hospices, to establish the bereavement needs of those communities and how best they can be met and to recruit and train BME bereavement volunteers.

Both hospices serve vibrant and diverse communities and provide specialised palliative care for all of Leeds. St Gemma's provide 32 beds on their two wards and Sue Ryder Care provide an 18 bed ward. Both hospices impart community nursing teams to all of Leeds as well as day care, social work support, and bereavement support.

Between 2001 and 2003 a previous joint Leeds Hospice Black Minority Ethnic project was funded by Health Action Zone (HAZ). It focussed on the palliative care needs of BME communities within Leeds to address the perceived inequalities these groups experience within existing hospice services.

Though the HAZ project ended in 2003 we are able to use the lessons learned from that project in our current practice. The hospices appreciate the need to continue to develop upon existing networking with BME groups and our understanding of their needs.

Though this post exists specifically to explore the bereavement needs of BME communities we understand and appreciate that the issue of loss or grief can occur before a death. Examples such as a

loved one becoming ill and their health deteriorates so that they can no longer do the things they used to. People's appearances and bodies change which can be distressing for family members to begin to take on board that a family member is dying. Some people have good support networks while others may really struggle at this time.

This post is not specific to one BME community, but has a remit to work with as many BME communities as possible which presents challenges, given the amount of diverse groups living in Leeds and time limitations on the project.

We welcome contact from people who are in touch with or are part of BME communities, particularly groups and professionals who offer skills and information we can not obtain or become aware of otherwise.

Alongside fellow BME colleagues from other Leeds organisations we are developing a bereavement and loss training course/pack for people who are interested in the subject and possibly wish to become BME bereavement volunteers for the services.

Also we are currently surveying BME bereavement users of the Hospices to ascertain their views on the existing services. The feedback will deepen our understanding of peoples needs and inform our future service development.

Early next year the Hospices will be holding an open afternoon to promote the work of the Hospices in BME communities and with professionals who have close links to those communities and individuals within them.

Please feel free to contact me at either St Gemma's Hospice, 0113, 2185500 or Wheatfields Hospice, 0113 2787249 if you wish to offer suggestions or information as to how we could develop culturally appropriate support for the Irish community in Leeds. I look forward to hearing from you.



# Poem. Brigid's Mantel



I will make me a fabric of your life -  
a magic of colours.

Warm duns and bog browns  
Honey, gorse yellow.

I will dip it in the lapis lazuli  
of the depths.

Weave the golden thread  
of a child's birth through.

Seep it in your story.

I will make me a cloak  
from your frayed threads

spangle it with stars  
snatched from the velvet skies,

weave your sorrow through -  
a shimmer of raw silk.

I will make me a fabric of your life  
a mantle of protection and delight

and I will nestle you, new born  
in its folds,

shroud you, death like  
in its embrace.

(Brigid ; a Celtic triple Goddess.  
Goddess of Poetry, healing  
and smithcraft)

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## Saint Oliver Plunkett

Archbishop and Martyr, 1625-1681



Plunkett (or Plunket) was born into an influential Anglo-Norman family on 1 November 1625 at Loughcrew, near Oldcastle, Co Meath. In 1647, he travelled to the Irish College in Rome, and was ordained a priest in 1654. To avoid Cromwellian persecution, Plunkett petitioned to remain in Rome, and in 1657 became a professor of theology.

In time anti-Catholicism eased, and in 1669 Plunkett was appointed archbishop of Armagh. He set about reorganising the ravaged Church, and built schools both for the young and for clergy whom he found 'ignorant in moral theology and controversies'. He tackled drunkenness among the clergy, writing 'Let us remove this defect from an Irish priest, and he will be a saint.'

In 1670, he summoned an Episcopal conference in Dublin, and later held numerous synods in his own archdiocese. However, he had a long-standing difference with the archbishop of Dublin, Peter Talbot, over their rival claims to be primate of Ireland. He also antagonised the Franciscans, particularly when he favoured the Dominicans in a property dispute.

With the onset of new persecution in 1673, Plunkett went into hiding for a time, refusing a government edict to register at a seaport and await passage into exile. In 1678, the so-called Popish Plot concocted in England by Titus Oates led to further anti-Catholicism. Archbishop Talbot was arrested, and Plunkett again went into hiding; the Privy Council in London was told he had plotted a French invasion.

In December 1679, Plunkett was imprisoned in Dublin Castle, where he gave absolution to the dying Talbot. Taken to London, he was found guilty in June 1681 of high treason, largely on perjured evidence from two disaffected Franciscans. On 1 July 1681, Plunkett became the last Catholic martyr in England when he was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn. He was beatified in 1920 and canonised in 1975, the first new Irish saint for almost seven hundred years. Plunkett's head is preserved in a shrine at St Peter's Church, West Street, Drogheda, Co Louth.





# An Gorta Mór

## The Great Hunger



Much has been written on the so-called Great Famine of 1845-47, but nothing could convey the extent of the trauma and tragedy that befell Ireland during those three dreadful years. The true death toll will never be known as so many deaths went unrecorded. It is estimated that more than a million died of starvation and fever in the years of hunger. This should never have been allowed to occur, since there was so much food in the country at that time.

John Mitchell wrote: - "During all the famine years, Ireland was actually producing sufficient food and wool and flax to feed and clothe, not nine, but eighteen millions of people. Wheat export figures for 1845 were almost double those of 1844 while the Parliamentary Papers for 1849 show that well over 3 million tons of wheat, barley, oats and corn were still being exported to England in 1846. Yet Ireland starved."

Sir Shane Leslie in his book "The Irish Tangle for English Readers" wrote: - "The Great Irish Famine calls England to the judgement bar of history. It is not enough to find a scapegoat in Adam Smith or to shuffle the blame upon his School of Economics. The facts remain that the potato rotted, but the corn-crop did not, and the corn was exported." In addition to this there was an abundance of cattle, sheep, pigs and fowl of all sorts. William Cobbett the English chronicler while travelling through Ireland a

decade earlier wrote that his carriage was constantly prevented from moving with any speed due to the number of fat hogs, geese and ducks on the roads. He also stated that the quality of the land was better than that in his home county of Suffolk and in his letters back home he described how the people in Ireland were living in conditions that he would not keep his animals in. He blamed this situation firmly upon the political elite in his native land.

Besides the million who perished, thousands left Ireland on the emigrant ships to be scattered worldwide. The population in 1845 was more than eight million but, following the three years of starvation, that had been reduced to six million and the decline was set to continue at an alarming rate so that by the census of 1861 that 8.5 million of 1845 had been cut almost by half. Shane Leslie, again in his "Irish Tangle", wrote: - "The great Irish dispersion had begun, and the British Ascendancy breathed again. Docile cattle took the place of the agitating peasants. Rents and hunting reached record heights. Distant corners of British occupied territory received their pioneers and settlers. In North America and Australia the Irish began to thrive, first as convicts, then as statesmen."

The huge reduction in population figures and the massive land clearances were just two of the evil effects of the Great Hunger. There were many others, including the fact that the Irish language ceased to be the spoken in vast areas of the country, particularly so in the West where the native-speaking areas lost most of their inhabitants. These emigrants, who suffered so much, also carried with them a resentment of England's indifference to their plight to their adopted countries. This had a major impact on later Irish history. But what Ireland lost, their adopted countries gained, as the emigrants contributed greatly to the development of both America and Australia.





# Leeds Garthering Festival



Without doubt, 2007 is the year in which the Leeds Gathering festival established itself as one of the premier Irish festivals outside Ireland itself. Celebrating a wide range of Irish culture and arts, The Gathering took place over eleven days in front of capacity crowds in venues across Leeds.

The event was launched at the Leeds Irish Centre with guest speakers Derek Hannon (Embassy of Ireland), Sean Stowell (BBC Leeds), Professor David Cooper (University of Leeds), Rehana Mihnisi (Education Leeds) and Stephen Harrison MBE (Director, Manx National Heritage).

Following the launch there were two lectures from Dr Frank Sweeney who looked at changing life in Donegal in the last century and Stephen Harrison who took us on a journey of reminiscence of the music scene in Leeds in the 60's & 70's. These took place to a full auditorium at the newly established SEVEN arts centre in Chapel Allerton.

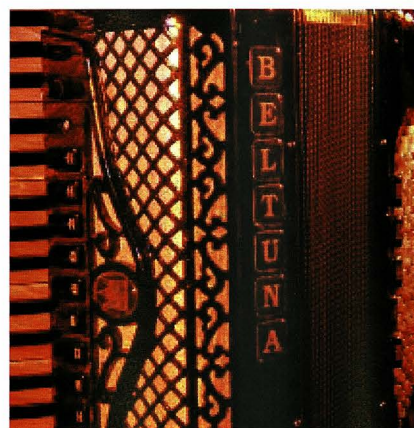
A packed weekend of events was highlighted by Jim Doody's launch of some fine artwork in the relaxed

atmosphere of the Flux Gallery in Hyde Park. Jim also starred with Vincent Brady at the singers session at Dare Café on Sunday afternoon followed by the traditional sessions at Trio. Also on Sunday, The Wonderful World of Words featured an impressive line up of literary artists celebrating Ireland through the spoken word.

The following week featured a wide range of event styles from the chart topping Irish band The Aftermath to an album launch from Sam Proctor and Chris O'Malley and the sell out concert on Friday starring Lunasa & The Luke Daniels Band where over 350 people enjoyed the finest of traditional Irish music on offer.

Other highlights of the festival included the screening of the film about the popular Irish Folk singer, Liam Clancy; the many traditional Irish music sessions around the city as well the landmark Ireland: Celebrating Peace, Embracing Change conference which took place at the Civic Hall.

The Leeds Gathering exists to celebrate Irish Arts in general and to introduce the vibrancy of this artistic heritage to new audiences in particular. Few could argue that this year's events did not deliver on both levels.



## Thankyou...

Leeds Irish Health and Homes would like to thank all our suppliers that have helped us over this year:

Edward Buckle Property Maintenance  
Marshalls Property Services  
Stanton's Locksmith  
Tommy Gibbons the carpet man  
Bells Electrical Supplier  
Compton's Furniture  
StyleDecs Decorators

Domestic Cleaning Company  
Leeds Furniture Stores Partnership  
North Leeds Property Services  
TM West Plumbers  
PJ& C Walkers Electricians  
Andy Beaumont Cleaning Services  
J & C Decorators

Lord of the Linens  
Baileys of Morley Removals  
Easy Move Removals  
Robinson's Removals  
Handleys Aerials  
Perfume Gardens  
Argos... and many more





# 'I Could Read The Sky'

Book By Timothy O'Grady and Steve Pike - Review by Tony Mullen



This is a beautifully written, sad and melancholic book. It is about emigration and the pain of exile. An old man lies in his Kentish Town lodgings and remembers the past. The short Chapter 9 imaginatively describes his youth in Ireland:

'What I could do.

I could mend nets. Thatch a roof. Build stairs. Make a basket from reeds. Splint the leg of a cow. Cut turf. Build a wall. Go three rounds with Joe in the ring Da put up in the barn. I could dance sets. Read the sky. Make a barrel for mackerel. Mend roads. Make a boat. Stuff a saddle. Put a wheel on a cart. Strike a deal. Make a field. Work the swarth turner, the float and the thresher. I could read the sea. Shoot straight. Make a shoe. Shear sheep. Remember poems. Set potatoes. Plough and harrow. Read the wind. Tend bees. Bind wyndes. Make a coffin. Take a drink. I could frighten you with stories. I knew the song to sing to a cow when milking. I could play twenty-seven tunes on my accordion.'

But economic need meant he and many others had to leave home, leave behind their culture and move to a foreign land. After spending years all over England working on farms and building sites he poignantly describes his adulthood:

'What I couldn't do.

Eat a meal lacking potatoes. Trust banks. Wear a watch. Ask a woman to go for a walk. Work with drains or with objects smaller than a nail. Drive a motor car.

Eat tomatoes. Remember the routes of buses. Wear a collar in comfort. Win at cards. Acknowledge the Queen. Abide loud voices. Perform the manners of greeting and leaving. Save money. Take pleasure in work carried out in a factory. Drink coffee. Look in to a wound. Follow cricket. Understand the speech of a man from west Kerry. Wear shoes or boots made from rubber. Best P.J. in an argument. Speak with men wearing collars. Stay afloat in water. Understand their jokes. Face the dentist. Kill a Sunday. Stop remembering.'

Accompanying the words are some arresting black and white photographs, which complement the melancholy tone of the story. But it is the words that move me to highly recommend this book. They encapsulate real feelings and emotions, for example, after the death of his Da.....'A sadness reaches like a clawed hand into my bones and organs. It fills the spaces between. It is heavy and strong. I believe that this sadness can never leave me', or when gathering for work.....'I wait with the others in the early morning darkness along the railings in Camden Town. Men who would live in your ear in a bar hold back from speech. They look serious.'

It's not all darkness however. Our man did find love in London, if short-lived. And he had a love of music that is poetically described throughout the narrative.

It is a lovely and relatively short read and can be purchased from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) for £6.99+postage.





# Willie wins the Prize!



The small, sparsely populated farming community of Rosspport in North Mayo is a beautiful, unspoiled part of Ireland's western seaboard. Since the discovery in 1996, of the Corrib gas field off the coast, a group of committed activists from Rosspport have opposed the construction of Shell Oil's pipeline through their land.

Leading this fight is Willie Corduff who lives on the farm passed down to him by his father. The proposed pipeline would cut directly through Corduff's land, jeopardizing the delicate bog ecosystem and threatening both the safety of Rosspport's citizens and the local farmers' way of life.

Shell Oil planned to start production in 2003, bringing unrefined gas ashore at Rosspport via a six mile, high-pressure pipeline to a proposed refinery at Bellanaboy. Despite the local objections, Shell got permission from the government to construct the pipeline. In response, Corduff and his neighbors began a direct action campaign to challenge the pipeline. In June 2005, after refusing Shell access to their property, Willie Corduff and four other men were jailed. Known as the "Rosspport Five," they were released after spending 94 days in prison. The incarceration of the Rosspport Five garnered international attention. The campaign grew from a local issue on environmental protection and safety

to a national issue of the democratic rights of local communities. The Shell to Sea campaign, founded by the residents, has demanded that the gas be processed at an offshore terminal, thereby eliminating the need for the pipeline and preventing environmental harm to the region. Shell has refused to consider this alternative on the grounds of cost.

## Energy Independence?

Ireland relies on the UK for 85 percent of its gas needs. In 1996 when the gas field was discovered, Shell Oil, in partnership with the Irish government, Statoil Exploration and Marathon International Petroleum, planned to develop it and supply 60 percent of Ireland's natural gas demand.

It is reported that the Corrib and surrounding gas fields could earn profits for Shell and its partners in excess of US\$60 billion. However, the community of Rosspport would receive no royalties and have to pay full market price for the gas. To attract future development, the Irish government turned over all rights for the Corrib gas fields to Shell and its partners, with apparently, no tax dollars going to the state.

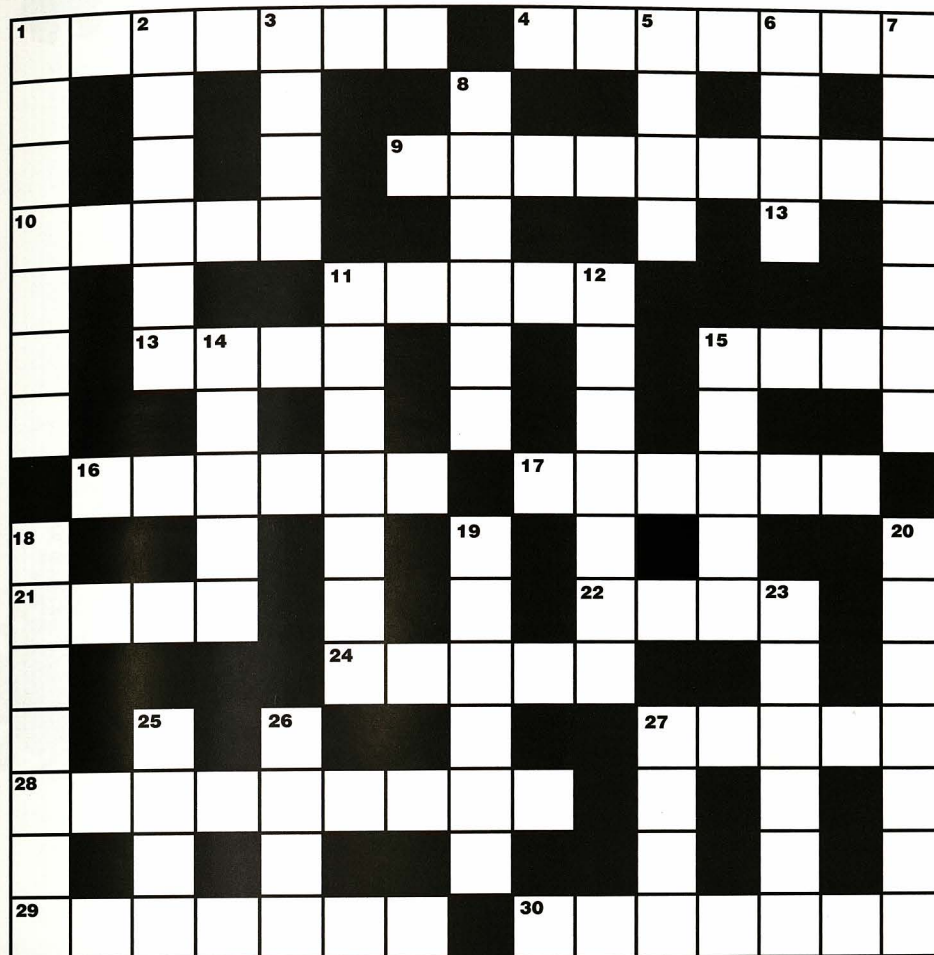
In recognition for his contribution to the defense of the environment during this dispute, Willie Corduff was awarded the prestigious Goldman prize.

## The Goldman Environmental Prize

In 1990 San Francisco civic leaders and philanthropists Richard N. Goldman and his late wife, Rhoda H. Goldman (1924-1996) created the Goldman Environmental Prize. Its original mission was to annually honor grassroots environmental heroes from the six inhabited continental regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Islands and Island Nations, North America, and South and Central America. The Prize recognizes individuals for sustained and significant efforts to protect and enhance the natural environment, often at great personal risk. Each winner receives an award of \$125,000, the largest award in the world for grassroots environmentalists. The Goldman Prize views "grassroots" leaders as those involved in local efforts, where positive change is created through community or citizen participation in the issues that affect them. Through recognizing these individual leaders, the Prize seeks to inspire other ordinary people to take extraordinary actions to protect the natural world.







## ACROSS

1. Moor up behind Mac on the Sullane River in Cork town which once had a castle owned by William Penn, whose son founded Pennsylvania. (7)
4. Dog bone about in Clare village near Kilkee where the Clooraclare river enters the sea. (7)
9. Or table I'm shifting in West Cork boat building town, a stronghold of the O'Driscolls. (9)
10. Dilly goes out into the picturesque countryside. (5)
11. Forgeries are safe around the king. (5)
13. Veil disturbed in a very bad way. (4)
15. Spoon around on the way back through Ballyferriter it's claimed. (4)
16. Longed to be over in Tipperary village near Thomastown, on the Suir, home to the de Burghs. (6)
17. One try up in Ulster county with no coastline except for Lough Neagh, where the O'Neills held sway. (6)
21. Push hard suddenly with a soft stick. (4)
22. Note well there's some hesitation inside showing a lack of feeling. (4)
24. Lug back the silver to the Russian place of detention. (5)

leave its mark. (4)

7. Angel, Mr., over Antrim village north of Larne, named for one of the nine Glens of Antrim. (7)
8. Elk wandering in the day in Co. Dublin resort where Shaw lived in Torca Cottage from 1866-74. (6)
11. Running away from strong Cork water on top of mixed gin. (7)
12. Remaining and supporting? (7)
14. Mr. Doonican I'd say is genuine. (5)
15. "Pity the man drowned in the ----, for after the rain comes the sunshine." Irish Proverb. (5)
18. Did laps around picturesque Galway resort in the Gaeltacht with a sandy beach on Galway Bay. (7)
19. Way lag went out to Connacht city with much Spanish architecture, due to past trading links. (6)
20. Och, clan uprising in ancient Irish beehive shaped drystone hut. (7)
23. Ulster Unionist leaders in mix-up over bare office. (6)
25. Christina is finally up against it. (4)
26. Honest place to buy and sell cattle? (4)
27. Fifty one on ship going to ancient Irish fort. (4)

27. Cyril is confused about the poetic description. (5)

28. Ann, mud is dispersed on the way to small Cork town in wild rocky countryside beyond Bandon. (9)

29. Tile rim broken in Connacht village naming its county. (7)

30. Blurs in another way in busy Antrim linen town which was rebuilt after a fire in 1707. (7)

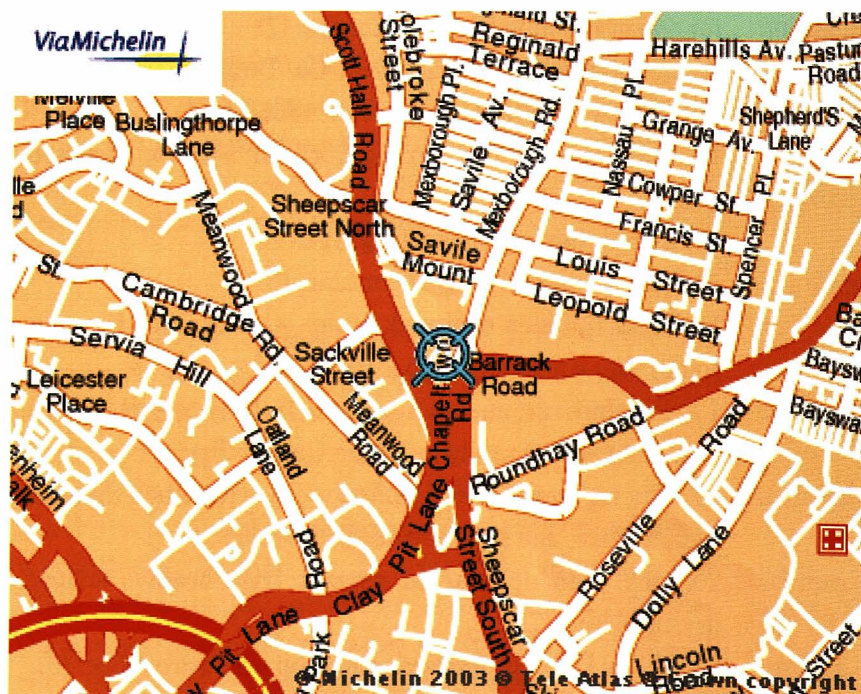
## DOWN

1. Six fifty surrounded by a furry digger in Donegal resort on Lough Foyle, near Greencastle. (7)
2. Only European Community leaders get confused about Cork village with a 14th century Cathedral. (6)
3. Alternatively, Mr. Capone, by word of mouth. (4)
5. Leave it out, there's nothing before a thousand get it. (4)
6. Second class item in the auction will





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