



# IRISH TIMES

Newsletter of the  
Irish-American Society of New Mexico  
[www.irishamericansociety-nm.com](http://www.irishamericansociety-nm.com)

JULY 2009

## Next Event: Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:00PM

Note: Irish-American Society meetings are usually held on the second Friday of each month, except during July and August (and for special events). The usual meeting location is the Edelweiss Am Rio Grande German-American Club (GAC), 4821 Menaul, NE (west of San Mateo).

### Flowers of the Forest: Farewell to CFPNI's Ian Young

It's hard to believe that it's been two years since the IAS was involved with the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland (CFPNI). It was a wonderful program that paired two Northern Ireland teens—one Protestant, one Catholic—and placed them with host families in the US for a month of violence-free interaction and understanding. Myself (Ellen) as former Southwest Coordinator (and Chuck Keady before me and John Brown before him) had the honor of being directly involved with the movers and shakers of CFPNI, including founder Peggy Barrett (here in the U.S. but originally from Ireland), and Ian Young, vice-chairman of CFPNI in Northern Ireland. Sadly, Ian passed away recently in NI. Here is his obituary, as published in the *Irish Times* of Ireland:

Ian Young, who has died after a prolonged illness, lived according to a principle he inherited from his late father: the family business had got so much out of the city, he had a duty to put something back in. Young's contribution was most public in the 1990s on the thorny issue of parades by the Loyal Orders, and the nationalist objections they provoked. In Derry, the violence and stand-offs were causing major difficulties for businesses in the city centre. "Ian was a very successful businessman, he didn't need to be involved," Northern Ireland Assembly's Speaker, William Hay, said. "He saw that if the controversy continued the business life of the city would wind down. Those were difficult years. We had the Drumcree situation. [See "The Orange Order," p. 7.] With Ian's initiative, the city's at a better place than it was in those years."

His civic responsibility was reflected in charity work. He was vice-chairman of the Children's Friendship Project NI, which brought teenagers from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds to America.

Ian was born in 1946 on Derry's Cityside, the ninth of 10 children, to James Young, an electrician from Donegal, and Martha (née Doherty) from the working-class Protestant area of the Fountain. He was educated at Templemore Secondary Intermediate School and Londonderry Technical College (now the Northwest Regional College). He is survived by his wife Margaret, son Mark, daughter Tracey (Sweeney), and grandchildren Patrick and Graeme, his four sisters and two brothers.

Ian Young: born April 1st, 1946; died May 29th, 2009.



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The Irish-American Society is a non-profit, non-political, and non-sectarian organization devoted to furthering Irish-American relations through education, travel, recreation, charity, music, and dance.

Membership is open to everyone and we encourage your support and participation. Dues are \$20.00 for an individual and \$25.00 for a family. For more information, please call Members Chair Norita Callahan at 298-2708.

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## President's Message

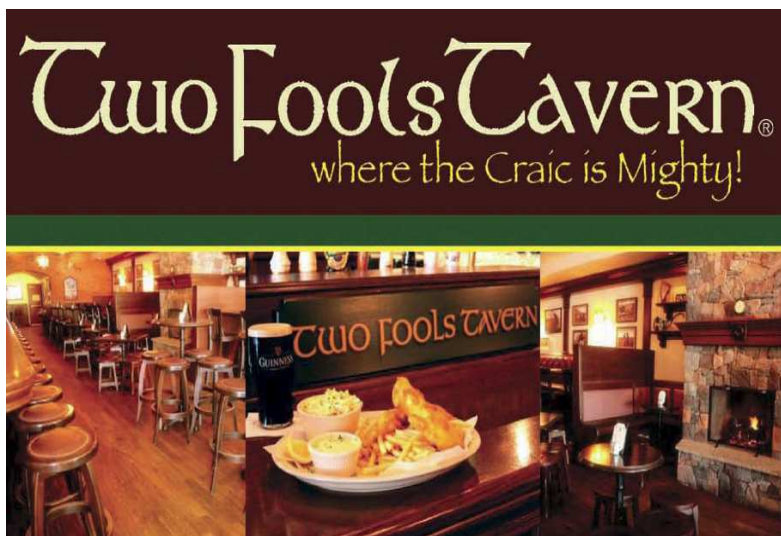
Thanks to all the IAS members who have both renewed their membership and participated in meetings and events this year. We will not be meeting in July or August but will meet again in September for a meeting on the second Friday (September 11<sup>th</sup>) and our annual picnic on September 20<sup>th</sup> so please mark your calendars.

It was a busy year and we have approved the new bylaws. We will be having board elections in November and will be looking for volunteers to serve on the board—you have plenty of time to think about running for a board position.

I recently met a young woman who was traveling to Ireland for a cousin's wedding, and she was excited and promised to bring back stories and pictures to share. Also a compliment was given regarding the IAS community and other Celtic Societies that we are a group that is viewed as strong in the community and one that follows through with supporting cultural events. This is a compliment to our members and all the years of putting out the individual and group effort to promote awareness for the Irish culture and embracing our friends of other societies and groups.


In fact, our annual picnic will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> year the IAS will co-organize our picnic with our friends from the St. Andrew's Scottish Society. Hope to see you all there.

Best to all,  
Kate Nash



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## IAS Meeting Minutes Friday 06/12/2009

Rose Marie Keating passed out copies of the revisions of the IAS by-laws that she and Mike Briody recently revised. The revisions were read and discussed, and a motion was passed by the members to accept and approve the revised By-laws.

Cathy Lybrand gave a breakdown of the Treasurer's report, reporting a previous balance of \$7740.56 and the end balance this month of \$6838.98.

The IAS is in need of a volunteer to assist in the yearly audit to work with our Treasurer Cathy Lybrand.

The IAS annual picnic will be held on Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup> along with the St. Andrew Scottish Society. Details in the September newsletter; please RSVP.

Jay Vandersloot passed out information about The Storehouse, the largest food bank in the southwest, located at 106 Broadway (Central & Broadway) in Albuquerque (505-842-6491).

The Storehouse provides free food and clothing to needy families. Jay informed the members of a charity fundraiser by The New Mexico Works Culinary/Hospitality program, given in conjunction with New Mexico State University and Central New Mexico Community College to collect non-perishable goods and funds for

The Storehouse. The IAS board has agreed to donate \$100 to the project; IAS members themselves started a collection at the meeting.

The IAS needs help staffing the info booth at the Albuquerque Folk Festival, Friday and Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned by our own John Murray, and the members then enjoyed the evening's entertainment. Special thanks to the "IAS Performers": Ellen Dowling, Kathy Wimmer, Edie Henderson, Kate Nash, and Ken Wimmer for their production of "Riders to the Sea." Bravo!

Maureen Canavan, Secretary

## IAS Treasurer's Report – May 2009

Cathy Lybrand, Treasurer

Category	Income	Category	Expenses
Celtic Kick-off	170.00	ABQ Folk Festival Donation	300.00
Newsletter adds	55.00	Honorarium – Celtic Kick-off	290.00
		Membership Supplies	137.63
		Print Express	305.95
		Cash box	100.00
Total Income	225.00	Total Expenses	1133.58
	May 1	Beginning Balance	7740.56
		Income	225.00
		Expenses	1133.58
	May 31	Ending Balance	6831.98

## Céad Mile Fáilte

*A 100,000 welcomes to our newest members:* Candice Marsters and a welcome back to Ken Davidson!

As of June 12<sup>th</sup>, the Irish-American Society has 124 family members (times 2) and 122 single members. This is a total of 370 members for the 2009 membership year.

Norita Callahan  
[noraabq@yahoo.com](mailto:noraabq@yahoo.com) 298-2708

### *The IAS is looking for performers for our Fall programs:*

If you (or someone you know) would be interested in presenting a talk, or giving a musical or dramatic performance on something of general Celtic interest, please contact the Editor, Ellen Dowling, at [edowling@standuptrainer.com](mailto:edowling@standuptrainer.com) (307-1700).

The IAS offers performers a \$50 honorarium.

## The Reel Thing

By Tom Quinn (The Dancer)



*Céad mile fáilte from Dundalk!*

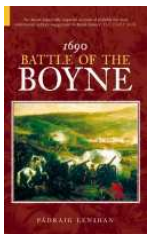
### News and Notes

The St Vincent de Paul Society is spending more than €1m a week responding to appeals from families in financial difficulty. Most are looking for help with food and energy bills. The Society's national vice president, John Monaghan, told an Oireachtas Committee that the organisation has set up 13 regional panels of financial, legal and other experts to help the newly poor. "We will work to do deals with the banks. We will work to do deals and hard nose them if necessary into court," he told the committee. "We will work with the Money Advice and Budgeting Service, and we will also provide financial support. So we will keep the bread on the table, the lights on, the home warm and we will keep the children in school."



One aspect of the ongoing recession that may yet have a positive effect is the reduction in the use of alcohol. The Drinks Industry Group of Ireland has stated that 2008 was the worst year for its business in 25 years, with alcohol consumption reduced by nearly 6% in 2008 alone. For the first time the amount of alcohol sold in off-licences has exceeded that sold in pubs and clubs, which is a further blow to the rural pub trade. (A recent report indicates that alcohol consumption is now back to 1998 levels.)

### The Bookshelf



*The Battle of the Boyne, 1690*, by Padraig Lenihan

On 1 July 1690, some 23,000 soldiers of the deposed King James II peered anxiously through morning mist towards the River Boyne below them. These Jacobites were mostly Irish Catholics reinforced by grumbling Frenchmen sent by the Sun King, Louis XIV. But William of Orange's much larger army of English, Dutch, Huguenots, Scots, and Germans was already stirring. Beset by plots in Britain and reverses on land and sea, William needed to crush the Jacobite army on the spot. Why, then, after he sent part of his army to cross the river upstream, didn't William trap and annihilate the Jacobites? Does the fact that James fled from the battlefield, and Ireland, make the Boyne consequential and decisive? His flight was in sharp contrast to the carefully crafted image of William as a fearless and inspirational warrior-king. The Boyne was, and is, politically potent: how many other battles are commemorated every year? Yet it was militarily indecisive. The largest battle in Irish history, it concluded the English War of Succession: The Irish and French-backed James II were defeated by William III, thus securing a Protestant monarchy in England.

### The Orange Order



The Orange Order is the largest Protestant organisation in Northern Ireland, with at least 100,000 members. Its origins date from the seventeenth century battle for supremacy between Protestantism and Catholicism. William of Orange, originally of the Netherlands, led the fight against Catholic King James. He took the throne in England and his final victory over James at the Battle of the

Boyne, just outside Drogheda in 1690, sealed the religion's supremacy in the British Isles. In 1795, a clash between Protestants and Catholics at the "Battle of the Diamond" near Portadown, Co. Armagh, led to some of those involved to swear a new oath to uphold the Protestant faith and be loyal to the King and his heirs, giving birth to the Orange Order.

The Order was founded in Dan Winter's house, Loughgall, Co. Armagh in 1795; its name is a tribute to the Dutch-born Protestant King of Britain, William III of England (William II of Scotland), of the House of Orange-Nassau. Since then, the Order's principles and aims have changed little. It regards itself as defending civil and religious liberties of Protestants and seeks to uphold the rule and ascendancy of a Protestant monarch in the United Kingdom. The only membership criteria is that an applicant be Protestant.

Observers have accused the Orange Institution of being a sectarian organisation, due to its goals and its exclusion of Roman Catholics as members. Some denominations of Protestants, however, are also ineligible for membership. Orangeism is also active in former British colonies—principally Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the two West African countries of Togo and Ghana. Today, the annual 12 July events across Northern Ireland, the most important date in the Orange calendar, commemorate that victory (regarded by the order as a victory for liberty) and the Protestant faith. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, "Eleventh Night" bonfires are lit at midnight in staunchly Protestant areas. Many are massive constructions of wooden pallettes, old sofas and rubber tyres topped with Irish flags or effigies of pro-Nationalist or religious figures. Bonfire architects battle it out to see who can build the biggest, and shifts of young guardians ensure rival builders don't steal their burnable booty.

At the heart of Orangeism is the right to parade (and the argument about what those parades stand for). Orangemen and women say that the parades are intrinsically linked to their culture and community, be it a public statement of faith, a commemoration of those who gave their lives in war, or the annual colour and festivities of the Twelfth of July. They stress that for decades there was no dispute from the Catholic community over routes and timings of parades. Opponents of the organisation say the parades stand for bigotry and sectarianism and symbolise a Northern Ireland organised to uphold the rights of only one part of the population. They argue that opposition to parades has grown as the Catholic community has asserted its right not to be subjected to the whims of one section of the community.



The Orange Order has never been simply a religious organisation. When the Home Rule movement emerged in the nineteenth century, the Orange Order steadily moved towards the unionist position. The organisation opposed Home Rule and partition but concluded that the newly created Northern Ireland would be the defender of its cultural, civil, and religious rights. The first unionist Members of Parliament were drawn from the ranks of the loyal orders. Almost every minister in the Northern Ireland government from 1921 until the imposition of Direct Rule in 1972 was an Orangeman. As the violence of the Troubles deepened, the Orange Order supported the security forces against what they perceived as Republican terrorism and its members opposed any political agreement ceding ground to Republicans or giving Dublin a say in Northern Ireland affairs. During the early 1990s, Republicans began attacking rural Orange halls, particularly in County Armagh, raising fears among the organisation that its members were threatened with being forced out of areas.

But at the same time, the Orange Order has faced its own fair share of scrutiny, with some members displaying an ambiguous relationship towards loyalist paramilitaries and their activities. Early in the 1992, loyalist gunmen killed five Catholics in a betting shop on Ormeau Road in Belfast. Months later, a parade along the road sparked fury when some of the Orangemen present made "five-nil" hand gestures as they passed the murder scene. The then Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, accused those responsible for the taunts of behaving like "cannibals." The decision to reject the Good Friday Agreement placed the organisation closer to the Democratic Unionists than the pro-agreement Ulster Unionists and led to some members questioning whether or not the institution had become too political.

Nowhere has this polarisation been seen more than at Drumcree in Portadown. The route of the march, one of the oldest annual parades by the Order, has taken on a symbolic meaning for both communities out of all proportion with its actual importance. The now annual stand-off over the route has not only put the organisation at loggerheads with the Catholic community, but also with the forces of law and order which it, ironically, formerly saw as one of its closest allies. The Orange Order, however, has accused the authorities of bad faith. It says that in many areas where a route has proved contentious (generally because of demographic changes), it has modified marches to take into account the wishes of local residents. This, it says, includes playing hymns also known to Catholics or even stopping the music at certain points. But in 2000, one senior figure said that the Orange Order was losing moderate members because it was

increasingly dominated by politics, “ignorance and malevolence.” Images of protesters blocking traffic while brandishing Orange regalia with loyalist paramilitary figures in the background are causing a drift away from the Order, he said.

Other members have traced the change to the summer of 1998 that witnessed some of the worst violence associated with Drumcree. At the march held in 2000, Portadown district lodge master Harold Gracey sparked controversy among members when he said that he would not condemn any violence linked to Drumcree protests because Sinn Fein’s Gerry Adams never condemned Republican violence. When the loyalist paramilitary, Johnny Adair, turned up at the protests, it did little to dispel the accusation from Catholic critics that the organisation was flirting with the paramilitaries.

[Editor’s Note: It seems there’s still a need a few more Ian Youngs in Northern Ireland.]

## What’s in a Name?



The name Lynch in Ireland is derived from the native Gaelic Sept *O’Loinsigh*, which was based in the Province of Connaught and was one of the 14 Tribes of Galway. There were at least three unrelated families of this name in Gaelic Ireland, located in what is now County Clare, Cork, and south-east Ulster. Some descendants derive from the Norman de Lynch family, who adopted Lynch as their name. The majority of the descendants can still be found in the Galway area.

Lynch is also a city in Harlan County, Kentucky. It was plotted in 1917 by the US Coal and Coke Company as a company town to house workers at the company’s nearby coal mines. (It was named for the head of the company at that time, Thomas Lynch.) By the 1940s, Lynch had a population of over 10,000 and had such amenities as a hospital and movie theatre. The population declined dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s as mining techniques shifted to less labor-intensive methods. In the 2000 census, the city population was 900. The 2007 population estimate had Lynch’s at 828. Lynch is the nearest city to Kentucky’s highest point, Black Mountain, elevation 4145. Sitting at an elevation of 1600 feet above sea level, Lynch is Kentucky’s highest incorporated city.

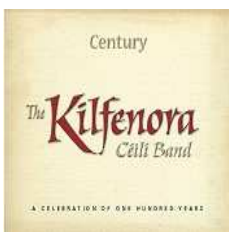
## Irish Slang

If you visit Ireland, you might like to learn the language of the *culchies* (people from rural Ireland). Here are some common expressions:

- ♣ Admiring any type of vehicle: “Datz some yoke hi!”
- ♣ No car parking near Croke Park when the country folk come up for a hurling match: “Yeh won’t get any parkin near Croker with all the culchies up for the hoorlin.”
- ♣ My mother would kill me if she knew I misbehaved: “Me ma wud crease me if she knew I done tha!!!”

More to follow in the coming months . . . .

## The Music Rack



### *The Kilfenora Céilí Band*

To generations of music lovers, the village of Kilfenora is known as the birthplace and home of the Kilfenora Céilí Band. Winners of a host of awards since their formation in 1909, along with numerous recordings, concerts, and television appearances both at home and abroad, this group of musicians have managed, many times against the odds, to keep a tradition alive and kicking. The Kilfenora Ceili Band celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, 2009. In their 100 years as a village Céilí band, the Kilfenora have made a relatively small number of recordings, indeed it took fifty years for them to make their debut. Each album has been a marker for the musicians playing in the band at the time and also a reminder of the repertoire of both tunes and dances that are inextricably linked to this most social of art forms in County Clare. This album could have been a series of re-

issues of older archive material (now that would have been fascinating of course), but that would have missed the point of the Kilfenora. Like their friends the Tulla, they are a living culture.

Past musicians are fondly remembered in the titles of some of the tracks on *Century*, opening with “Kitty’s Reels” (after Kitty Linnane, the leader of the band from 1960 to 1975), then followed by “Ward’s Marches (for the dynasty who have been with the band for the past century). “Sexton’s Reels” is a tribute to Michael Sexton, the box player who died at the young age of 62. (He played with the Kilfenora in the 1970s.)

The band has a history beyond a dance band back to its marching band roots in the 1880s and there are echoes of this in the choice of tracks here (“O’Mahoney’s Military Two Steps”). This album offers not only a glimpse of the past but of a possible future where the seemingly endless parade of jigs and reels are tempered by a wider cache of melodies. Who other than a Céilí band would include Jimmy Shand’s “Primrose Polka”?

## The Site



### *Tully Castle*

Tully Castle lies on a hill overlooking the west shore of Lower Lough Erne, north of the village of Derrygonnelly, in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. The Castle was built between 1612 and 1615 for Sir John Hume of North Berwick. It is a Plantation castle with a typically Scottish T-shaped plan, with a square wing projecting from the centre of the south side containing the entrance and a former scale-and-platt timber stair.

The hall and parlour lie on the first floor, while the attics above contained the bedrooms, approached by a spiral stair in a Scottish-style quarter-round turret projection. The ground floor consists of a large barrel-vaulted chamber, used as the kitchen and storeroom, which has a huge fireplace and cooking recesses. (There are no windows, so light must have been provided by the fire and hanging lanterns.) The castle had a thatched roof and was surrounded by a bawn with four rectangular flankers.

During the 1641 Rebellion, Tully Castle was attacked by Rory Maguire. It surrendered on Christmas Eve on condition of safe conduct for the Hume family and the local Protestant settlers who had sought refuge in the castle. The Maguires imprisoned everyone in the vaults of the castle. On Christmas Day, they massacred all the men, women and children, sparing only the Hume family. They then pillaged and burnt the castle. After that the castle was never rebuilt.

And to conclude: What you think about yourself is more important than what others think of you.

Well that’s all folks. Always speak well of your enemies—remember, you made them!!

Until the next time, “Keep the faith!”

Tom Quinn

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## Who were the Black Irish?

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The term “Black Irish” has commonly been in circulation among Irish emigrants and their descendants for centuries. As a subject of historical discussion, the subject is almost never referred to in Ireland. There are a number of different claims as to the origin of the term, none of which are possible to prove or disprove.

“Black Irish” is often a description of people of Irish origin who had dark features, black hair, dark complexion and eyes.

A quick review of Irish history reveals that the island was subject to a number of influxes of foreign people. The Celts arrived on the island about the year 500 B.C. Whether or not this was an actual invasion or rather a more gradual migration and assimilation of their culture by the natives is open to conjecture, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this later explanation is more likely. The next great influx came from Northern Europe with Viking raids occurring as early as 795 A.D. The defeat of the Vikings at the Battle of Clontarf in the year 1014 by Brian Boru marked the end of the struggle with the invaders and saw the subsequent integration of the Vikings into Irish society. The migrants became “Gaelicized” and formed septs (a kind of clan) along Gaelic lines.

The Norman invasions of 1170 and 1172 led by Strongbow saw yet another wave of immigrants settle in the country, many of whom fiercely resisted English dominance of the island in the centuries that followed. The Plantation of Ulster in the seventeenth century saw the arrival of English and Scottish colonists in Ulster after the “Flight of the Earls.”

Each of these immigrant groups had their own physical characteristics, and all, with the exception of the Ulster Planters, assimilated to some degree into Irish society, many claiming to be “more Irish than the Irish themselves!”

The Vikings were often referred to as the “dark invaders” or “black foreigners.” The Gaelic word for foreigner is “gall” and for black (or dark) is “dubh.” Many of the invaders’ families took Gaelic names that utilized these two descriptive words. The name Doyle is in Irish “O’Dubhghaill,” which literally means “dark foreigner,” which reveals their heritage as an invading force with dark intentions. The name Gallagher is “O Gallchobhair” which translates as “foreign help.” The traditional image of Vikings is of pale-skinned blond-haired invaders, but their description as “dark foreigners” may lead us to conclude that their memory in folklore does not just depend on their physical description.

The Normans were invited into Ireland by Dermot McMurrough and were led by the famous Strongbow. The Normans were ultimately of French origin where black haired people are not uncommon. As with the Vikings, these were viewed as a people of “dark intentions” who ultimately colonized much of the Eastern part of the country and several larger towns. Many families, however, integrated into Gaelic society and changed their Norman name to Gaelic and then Anglo equivalents: the Powers, Fitzpatricks, Fitzgeralds, Devereuxs, and Redmonds, for example. It is possible that the term “Black Irish” may have referred to some of these immigrant groups as a way of distinguishing them from the “Gaels,” the people of ultimately Celtic origin.

Another theory of the origin of the term “Black Irish” is that these people were descendants of Spanish traders who settled in Ireland and even descendants of the few Spanish sailors who were washed up on the west coast of Ireland after the disaster that was the Spanish Armada of 1588. It is claimed that the Spanish married into Irish society and created a new class of Irish who were immediately recognizable by their dark hair and complexion. There is little evidence to support this theory, and it is unlikely that any significant number of Spanish soldiers would have survived long in the war-torn place that was sixteenth century Ireland. It is striking, though, how this tale is very similar to the ancient Irish legend of the Milesians who settled in Ireland having travelled from Spain.

The theory that the “Black Irish” are descendants of any small foreign group that integrated with the Irish and survived is unlikely. It seems more likely that “Black Irish” is a descriptive term rather than an

inherited characteristic, which has been applied to various categories of Irish people over the centuries.

One such example is that of the hundreds of thousands of Irish peasants who immigrated to America after the Great Famine of 1845 to 1849. (1847 was known as “black 47.” The potato blight which destroyed the main source of sustenance turned the vital food black.) It is possible that the arrival of large numbers of Irish after the famine into America, Canada, Australia, and beyond resulted in their being labeled as “black” in that they escaped from this new kind of black death.

Immigrant groups throughout history have generally been treated poorly by the indigenous population (or by those who simply settled first). Derogatory names for immigrant groups are legion and in the case of those who left Ireland include “Shanty Irish” and almost certainly “Black Irish.” It is also possible that within the various Irish cultures that became established in America there was a pecking order, a class system that saw some of their countrymen labeled as “black.”

The term “Black Irish” has also been applied to the descendants of Irish immigrants who settled in the West Indies. It was used in Ireland by Catholics in Ulster Province as a derogatory term to describe the Protestant Planters.

While it at various stages was almost certainly used as an insult, the term “Black Irish” has emerged in recent times as a virtual badge of honour among some descendants of immigrants. It is unlikely that the exact origin of the term will ever be known and it is also likely that it has had a number of different creations depending on the historical context. It remains therefore a descriptive term used for many purposes, rather than a reference to an actual class of people who may have survived the centuries.

[Editor’s Note: My Catholic grandmother, Catherine McCarthy McGovern, who was born outside Killarney, Co. Kerry, and who immigrated to the US in 1919, always referred to the Protestants in Ireland as “Black Irish.”]



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### **To all civic-minded people who like to contribute to the community:**

The New Mexico Works Culinary/Hospitality Technology program, given in conjunction with New Mexico State University and Central New Mexico Community College, is participating in a charity fundraiser to collect cans and funds for The Storehouse Food Bank, located at 106 Broadway (on the corner of Central and Broadway), Albuquerque, NM 87102. Their phone number is 505-842-6491, their website is <http://www.thestorehouseabq.org> and the community relations liaison is Doug Burley. The event will take place July 13 through July 17, and they are looking to collect 15,000 cans for the facility.

The Storehouse offers free food and clothing to needy families, serving up to 120 people per day. They are the largest food bank in the southwest, having served over 2.4 million meals last year. They are fairly unknown in the community, and are looking to raise the level of awareness in the Greater Albuquerque area. While they currently have a warehouse full of food, their current supplies will be gone in 30 days without further assistance and awareness.

The IAS has donated \$100 to this worthy cause. If anyone wants to donate to this drive on their own, they should contact The Storehouse Food Bank at 505-842-6491 for directions on how to go about it.

## Bog Butter found in Donegal

*Apparently, the Celtic gods liked their bodies buttered . . . .*

*By Brenna Briggs*



My New Year's Resolution for 2009 was to become an expert on 'bog butter.'

For starters (no pun intended), I have already heard of bog butter. This is very important if you are going to become an expert on any subject. And even more importantly, I think the bog butter topic is actually interesting. There are miles and miles of brown bog land on top of the Ox Mountains behind my house, so I already know what bog looks like, which is essential if you are going to become a bog butter expert. I will develop interesting theories and ideas about butter found in the bog as I work my way up the

expert ladder. There's no big rush. Some of it has been buried in the bog for thousands of years already.

If the truth were to be told though, I am not sure I would ever want to actually taste bog butter. It's not that it looks particularly unappealing. In photos, it could be white cheddar cheese and sometimes it resembles paraffin wax. The information I have seen posted at museum bog butter displays, says that bog butter is often found packed in wood such as wicker, or animal skin containers, which are sometimes dug up when turf or peat is being harvested for fuel. The school of thought is that when this butter was made, it was put into a hole down in the bog to preserve it and maybe even flavor it.

The first time I saw bog butter was in the tiny County Sligo museum. I observed what appeared to be a big butter churn in a glass case. Upon inspection, I discovered that it was actually petrified bog butter that weighed 123 lbs.! It is thought that the ancient Celts used to offer big butter balls to their gods by burying them in the bogs as sacrificial offerings, often on borderlands between rival clans. Sometimes they offered human sacrifices too, and well-preserved bog bodies do turn up near bog butter from time to time. Apparently, the Celtic gods liked their bodies buttered!

Institutions such as The Royal Society of Chemistry in Scotland and the University of Bristol in the UK interpreted the bog body experiments that a Professor Evershed conducted several years ago. Apparently, this professor buried modern fatty foods to find out how long the bog butter stuff takes to form. The obvious problem I see with this kind of experiment is that the results will not be available for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years from now. In my opinion, this seems pointless. Who wants to perform experiments if you don't get to find out how they turn out because you would already be long dead?

A local farmer here in County Sligo dug up bog butter in 2007 when he was cutting turf on his property. He took it to a Connacht Gold creamery, which is where a brand of butter is made locally, and they later determined that that his bog butter was only 52% fat content compared with an 82% fat content in today's standard butter. 30% less fat! Why is that? Were cows skinnier a long time ago? This is a serious question for a future bog butter expert like me to contemplate.

Like bottled water, perhaps bog butter could become the butter of choice in 2009 for the discerning, health-conscious individual? It would certainly, unlike some of the pork here in Ireland lately, be dioxin-free. And as far as entrepreneurship goes, if you think about it, this stuff is a gold mine. First, like spring water, it is already there. And, like spring water, it just has to be dug up. Of course it is a totally hit-or-miss kind of thing because there is no way of telling where bog butter is buried without actually bumping into it. Also, you cannot just go around digging in bogs looking for bog butter because bogs are protected by the Irish government. Maybe bog-butter sniffing dogs could be trained to smell it hundreds of feet under the turf? And then there are all the spin-off industries this ancient bog butter could create. I cannot think of any at this time, but I am sure someone will eventually.

Bog butter marketing would be tricky. Selling the idea of eating something that is at least hundreds, and possibly thousands of years old, would require some really sophisticated advertising. Certainly no taste tests, as

the oldest bog butter goes back to the Bronze Age, 3,000 years ago. Taking into account the fact that milk products were the main source of food for the Irish until the flight of the Earls and the collapse of the Gaelic order around 1700, butter was quite likely buried all over the bogs up until the end of the 17th century.

Just to let you know, I will be available for lectures and conferences as soon as my research is completed and I have been declared a bog butter expert by somebody somewhere. After that, you can contact me any time to schedule a bog butter talk. Please give me a few weeks notice though, because I have to read a few more articles about bog butter first.

[Brenna Briggs is the author of the Liffey Rivers Irish Dancer Mystery Series ([www.liffeyrivers.com](http://www.liffeyrivers.com)). She lives in Sligo, Ireland, with her family and bog dog Cooga.]

## National Trust to Renew Tourism in Northern Ireland

By Cahir O'Doherty, *Irish Voice* Staff Writer  
Published Thursday, June 11, 2009

For decades now, Northern Ireland has hardly been known as a tourist hotspot, but now the new National Trust director for Northern Ireland, Hilary McGrady, plans to change all that.

This week McGrady was in New York on a mission to promote the trust's signature project—the proposed new World Heritage Center to be built at the Giants Causeway in Co. Antrim between 2010 and 2012.

The renewed drive to promote the Causeway, which was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986, is a smart strategic move, because with its welcome to all visitors it takes the heat out of all the ongoing local squabbles between Nationalist and Unionist representatives, placing the emphasis on the natural wonder of the 60 million year old Causeway itself as an international tourist attraction above political point scoring. The proposed new Causeway Heritage Center tops a list of five key projects that signal Northern Ireland's renewed seriousness about promoting itself as an international tourist destination.

“The Causeway is by far and away the biggest natural attraction in Northern Ireland,” McGrady told the *Irish Voice* and *IrishCentral*. “It attracts over 600,000 visitors a year. In the past it has been fraught with political arguments. The visitor's facilities that were originally there in 2000 were burnt down. And there's been an argument going on for nine years now about what the solution is going to be. But by 2007 the National Trust took the lead in this project. We see this as much more than just a visitor's center. And we feel that short-term political point scoring really misses the point. This is Northern Ireland's only World Heritage Site, the place that people get excited about, and about all the myths and heritage that surrounded it. We have created a project that gathers all of that together.”

McGrady, who is clearly passionate about the mission to fund and complete the new heritage center, knows that the will and eventually all of the funding will be achieved.

“That's the primary reason I've come to the states to promote the center and the region. Obviously I don't expect to just find the £2.5 million we need to complete the project here right away,” she says. “But the Causeway is an international site and we would welcome international support for it. I really would welcome the Irish American connection to come through and say this is important to them too. It would be a hugely important vote of confidence in the new Northern Ireland. It's a neutral space, after all, one of the very few in Northern Ireland where everyone can say they have some ownership over it.”



Ellen and Don on the Giant's Causeway

## Culture All Around

### Dance Classes:

- ♣ **McTeggart School Irish Step Dancing.** Saturdays, 10 AM – noon. Call 866-5867.
- ♣ **Tir Conaill Irish Dance Academy,** Saturdays at The Elite Dance Studio, 701 Osuna. Call 379-3753 or visit [www.tirconailacademy.com](http://www.tirconailacademy.com) for further information.
- ♣ **Ceili dance classes** are held every Wednesday at the GAC at 7:30 PM, \$2.00. No experience necessary! Call Norita Callahan at 298-2708.



**Special Míni Ceilís**  
(friendly gatherings with live music and dance)  
will be held on the first Wednesday of each month.

- ♣ **Scottish Country Dancing,** Friday nights, 7:30 PM, at the Friends Meeting Hall (corner 5<sup>th</sup> and Bellamah, N.W.) First class free; \$5 per lesson after. Call Marcy 237-9039 for info.

### **Celtic Jam Session at Page One Bookstore (Juan Tabo and Montgomery):**

Every Thursday, 6:45 to 8:45 PM. Admission free. Everyone invited! For info, contact Chuck Butler ([chuckjacobbutler@msn.com](mailto:chuckjacobbutler@msn.com))

### **Celtic Music at O’Niell’s:**

Music every Sunday from 4 to 7 PM at the new O’Niell’s, 4310 Central Ave SE (Corner of Central & Washington in East Nob Hill). For more info, visit <http://www.oniells.com/>

### **Celtic Music at Two Fools Tavern:**

Celtic jam on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month, from 11 AM to 2 PM. Two Fools is located at 3211 Central NE ([www.twofoolstavern-nm.com](http://www.twofoolstavern-nm.com)). For jam info, contact Chuck Butler at 293-1421 ([chuckjacobbutler@msn.com](mailto:chuckjacobbutler@msn.com)). For all the news about what’s going on at Two Fools, visit [www.2foolstavern.com/blog](http://www.2foolstavern.com/blog), where you can read their monthly newsletter.

### **Celtic Music on the Radio and the Web**

- ♣ **The Thistle and Shamrock** program, featuring Fiona Ritchie, airs on KANW 89.1 FM, Mondays at 10:00 PM.

- ♣ **Celtic and Beyond,** with co-hosts Ellie Blair and Kelly Clement, 7:00 PM each Wednesday on KTAOS 101.9 FM. (Also broadcast on the Web at [www.ktao.com](http://www.ktao.com).)

- ♣ **Irish Music on the Web, All the Time**

<http://www.midwestirishradio.com/> Midwestirishradio.com is a brand new, fully dedicated Irish Radio service available on the net.

- ♣ **Celtic Crush,** Irish music (traditional and modern) Saturday mornings, 8 to 10 AM on Sirius Radio, channel 832. (This is only for dish network subscribers. If anyone knows if this is accessible by Cable TV, please let me know.)

**Celtic Connections:** For general information about Celtic events going on around the West, visit <http://www.celticconnection.com/>. Food, humor, books, sports, history and much more!



## Support Your Local Irish/Scottish/Celtic Musicians/Performers!

### ***The Next Chapter***

Celtic, Folk, Bluegrass, Original music on a variety of instruments, including vocals.  
Contact: Jeanne Page (553-8205)

### ***Emily Anslover***

Young fiddle player  
Contact: father, Frank Anslover (296-6484)

### ***Brad Fitzgerald***

Singer, guitar, and banjo (Celtic and folk)  
Contact: Brad Fitzgerald (869-1527)

### ***Three Leaf Shamrock***

Irish, Scottish, Welsh (no English!)  
Contact: Jack Russell (830-6924)

### ***Shennanigans***

Celtic and American Folk with a twist, variety of instruments and vocals. Contact: Kathy Wimmer (293-6403)

### ***Gerry Carthy***

Musician and singer from Ireland  
Contact: Gerry Carthy 505-424-1942 (Santa Fe)

### ***Blarneystone***

Traditional and contemporary Celtic Music  
Contact: Gerry (833-3456) or Andy (247-9867)

### ***Joe Brennan***

Highland bagpipes instruction and performance  
867-3628

### ***Mac-Tire of Skye Pipes and Drums***

Pipe Major Suzanne "Aden" Lumb  
Phone: (505) 977-0097  
Email: [desertpiper@yahoo.com](mailto:desertpiper@yahoo.com)

### ***Colonel Craig Chamberlain***

"Tunes of Glory" for funerals and weddings, etc.  
Bagpipes (293-2962)

### ***Saoirse*** ("seer shih," Irish for "freedom")

Celtic music from Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, and Galacia, spiced with jazz and world beat.  
Contact: IO (268-7303)

### ***Jamie Elizabeth Foster***

Soprano available for all events. Contact Jamie at 505-323-1309.

### ***Irish DJ***

Over 600 CDs of all varieties of Irish/Celtic music  
Contact: Mike Foley 858-1047 ([Aulsod@aol.com](mailto:Aulsod@aol.com))

### ***Fonn Sona*** ("Happy Melody")

Reels, jigs, waltzes, polkas, etc.  
Contact: Chuck Butler (293-1421)  
[chuckjacobbutler@msn.com](mailto:chuckjacobbutler@msn.com)

### ***Rye Creek***

Folk, Irish, western, and good old mountain music.  
Contact: Ron Trellue (292-7369) or Terry Axline (293-8924) [taxline@cabq.gov](mailto:taxline@cabq.gov).

### ***Michele Buchanan and Shanachie Harpers***

Michele's Harp  
765-1288 ([buchanan@cybermesa.com](mailto:buchanan@cybermesa.com))

### ***Celtic Coyotes***

Traditional music from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Brittany. Contact: Doug Cowan  
[celticcoyotes@yahoo.com](mailto:celticcoyotes@yahoo.com) (710-0583).

### ***Michael and Donna Coy***

Celtic, Folk, Bluegrass, International, Cowboy, and Traditional (296-2017)

### ***Irish Musician/Instrument Repair***

Guitar, bass, and mandolin. Repair and setup of guitar, bass, Appalachian dulcimer, hammer dulcimer, mandolin, and bouzouki. Contact: Keith Coleman, [keith@wckc.us](mailto:keith@wckc.us)

## Calendar of Events

### IAS/IHC Events

Date	Day	What
September 11	Friday	<i>IAS Monthly Meeting and Program</i> , 7 PM at the GAC. Program TBA.
September 20	Sunday	<i>IAS/St. Andrew Scottish Society Annual Picnic</i> , Elena Gallegos Picnic Area. Details in the September newsletter.

### Celtic/GAC Events

July 10-12	Friday – Sunday	<i>Colorado Irish Festival</i> , Clement Park, Littleton, CO. For info, visit <a href="http://www.ColoradoIrishFestival.org">www.ColoradoIrishFestival.org</a>
September 26	Saturday	<i>Celts for the Hungry</i> , a fundraiser for the Roadrunner Food Bank, presented by the Thistle Society of New Mexico, in Santa Fe. They are currently looking for sponsors, vendors, and advertisers. For more info, contact Lee Peters at <a href="mailto:petelee_1@yahoo.com">petelee_1@yahoo.com</a> (505-980-3265).

### Interested in Learning to Speak Irish?

Bettina Kimpton, PhD from Harvard in Celtic Languages and Literatures (with a focus on Old Irish), is looking for folks who would like to study medieval or modern Irish Gaelic. Bettina has also studied modern Irish language in Donegal and has taught Irish at both Harvard and UNM. For more information, contact her directly at [bkimpton@hotmail.com](mailto:bkimpton@hotmail.com) (821-8196).

### The Ronald McDonald House Fundraiser Project

We are still collecting the **pull-tabs** for the Ronald McDonald House here in Albuquerque (managed by IAS member Sharon Nolen). IAS members, please save the **pull-tabs** (any aluminum pull-tabs, from soup, cat/dog food, etc.) and bring them to meetings in a baggie or grocery bag. I'll take them to the collection area.



Norita



**The Welsh Society of New Mexico and The Welsh Choir**  
**Invite everyone of Welsh ancestry and anyone interested in the Welsh Culture or Language to contact us for information**

Patsy Gregory, 505-243-3174, email: [chilton@unme.du](mailto:chilton@unme.du)

Rhianwen Gerard, 505-344-6539, email: [pwtback@aol.com](mailto:pwtback@aol.com)

Gabrielle Rosen, 505-232-2024, email: [gabriellerosen@gmail.com](mailto:gabriellerosen@gmail.com)



**The Irish-American Society  
of New Mexico**

P.O. Box 13435  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87192-3435

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