



## The Richmond Claddagh

<http://richmondias.org/>

The Richmond Irish American Society

[Click for the Calendar of Events](#)

FEBRUARY 2014

"Ireland is where strange tales begin and happy endings are possible."

Charles Haughey, (Taoiseach. 1987-1992)



### MEET YOUR NEW IAS PUBMASTER – MIKE KANE!

Mike has stepped into the position of Pubmaster for the IAS & is off to a great start! There was a big turnout on Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> at Rare Olde Times for Mary Smith and Greg Kimball. It was great to see Colleen Callahan & Joe, Kathryn O'Meara, Pat & Helen Burke, Jim & Patsy McGroarty, Karen Ides, Bernie Farrell, Gina Venn, Ray & Linda Gallagher, Pam & Frank Hardy, Carroll Graham, Judy Moore Garrett, Carmel Miney, Dan Begley, Bill & Debbie Swackhammer & their guest (?Name? – my bad!) & Mike & Judy Kane and me! Also Pat Naughton & Tom Murphy with the AOH, but we claim 'em too! It was a full house and great fun!! See you next time.

**Planning for the March 29<sup>th</sup>** ceremony at Hollywood Cemetery to dedicate the Brown's Island Explosion commemorative marker is almost complete. **Please mark your calendars to join the IAS at Hollywood Cemetery** for this program. The memorial, highlighting this sad piece of Richmond/Irish history was funded by the donations of our members – both cash and also Silent Auction donations. All of you are the reason that the IAS was able to accomplish this. So please take pride in this IAS accomplishment and let's make an effort to produce a big turnout of members to honor the memory of all who perished – and especially those Irish who perished. \*For our new members, please see the article in this issue explaining the event & the memorial. Karon Bell

### **IRISH EMBASSY TOUR –**

There has been some discussion on the possibility of setting up a bus tour to Washington when the Irish Embassy & others are open to the public. The event date has not been published, but from what we can find – it is generally in May.

**If you would be interested in a bus trip to DC as a group, please contact Dan Begley at 804-740-5631 or <mailto:dbegley55@hotmail.com>** - Depending on the response from our members, we will pursue information on pricing, times, events available, etc.

This would surely be a memorable event for the IAS, so if you are interested – please call Dan as soon as possible. You won't be obligated for anything, but we need to get an idea of interest before we spend the time to check into the possibility of a trip. Thanks!

### **From Karon Bell – IAS Events Chair –**

\* **The St. Patrick's Festival on Church Hill** is slated for March 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>. If it is an Irish event – you know we are looking for volunteers! We can use helping hands for set up on Friday the 21<sup>st</sup> – starting at 5 pm. We also need tent volunteers to work in our IAS tent Saturday and Sunday. This weekend is a great opportunity to showcase the IAS and hopefully add to our membership. If you can help us out with set up or "tent duties", please call me at 804-982-7835 or email at <mailto:Irishmom1958@gmail.com>

### **THANKS TO ALL OF YOU...**

Who participated in the great turn out for the Brunch/Irish Music Session at Rosie's on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Not just Irish Music, but Irish dancers too! How cool! It was such a success – that more are planned. Nothing planned for February, but a date in March is in the works for the next Brunch. It is wonderful to see the support for local Irish events. That includes the events and programs that the Irish American Society tries to hold or promote. Not only are you supporting the IAS, the Irish Pubs and our Irish Musicians in Richmond – you are also promoting a positive image of the Irish.

We have a great and proud history and the more we do to promote it – the more other people will see and learn about the wonderful aspects of our Irish heritage.

Thanks to all for making the efforts that you do! Let's make 2014 an "I Wish I Was Irish" year for everyone else!

**READ. READ. READ. READ. READ.**

**\*\*\*Newest IAS Members** – Michael Regan-Waugh and Trish O'Donnell-Jenkins, co-owners of "Wild West Irish Tours" have put together a fantastic Irish program at Rare Olde Times. See all the details below – and mark your calendars and make plans to join your fellow IAS members at this really exciting Irish event in Richmond. This event is open to all!

Wild West Irish Tours is based in Sligo, Ireland and has recently shifted USA operations to Richmond!

**Wild West Irish Tours  
Of Richmond, VA & Sligo, Ireland  
Present  
"AN IRISH AFTERNOON"**

**Free Admission  
February 23<sup>rd</sup>. 12 Noon – 4 pm –**

Ireland's "Fleadh Cheoil" (Festival of Music), will be held in the town of Sligo, Ireland in August 2014. (Click to visit website - <http://fleadhcheoil.ie/> )

**Irish Traditional Music!** To promote the Festival & Ireland - Michael & Trish have invited well known Irish musicians, Mai Hernon and Mick McEvilly of "Celtic Font" to perform and celebrate Irish music and dance with the traditions of Mai's hometown of Gurteen, County Sligo. (Click for [Mai Hernon website](#) ) Mai has performed with some legends of Irish music including Dervish, Cathy Jordan, Dolores Keane and Seamie O'Dowd

**Irish Video!** Also during this great Irish Afternoon, "Wild West Irish Tours" will also present a dynamic visual presentation of the West of Ireland. (I personally think this area of Ireland is the much heralded, "Little Piece of Heaven Right Here on Earth" ☺ Nancy)

**THEN TO TOP OFF THE DAY**– Michael and Trish have added a very special item. There will be a \*Charity Drawing of a **FREE Wild West Irish Tour** (value \$2,150) to benefit **The Irish Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Project**. The Irish Viet Nam Veterans memorial Project has been established to erect a memorial in the Town of Ennis, County Clare, Ireland. The memorial will list the names of those Irish citizens who lost their lives in the Vietnam War. (Click to visit the memorial website.) (<http://www.theirishvietnamveteransmemorialproject.org/>)

**The Program will start at 12 Noon on  
February 23<sup>rd</sup> and is expected to finish by 4 P.M.**

A full lunch menu will be available and Rare Olde Times Restaurant and Pub will also debut a talented new chef direct from the west of Ireland. Chef Connor Cleary from Galway, Ireland, spent many years as chef in Galway's renowned Latin Quarter. Con's menu at Rare Olde Times will include many traditional Irish recipes, which he has updated in order to incorporate today's fresh tastes while maintaining the integrity of the ingredients and continuing to showcase Ireland's culinary heritage.

Michael Regan-Waugh, co-owner of Wild West Irish tours said: "We are delighted to be in Richmond and are new members of the Richmond Irish-American Society. We are looking forward to our afternoon at the Rare Olde Times, celebrating the world's best and biggest festival of music sharing the beauty of the West of Ireland."

For more information or questions, please contact Michael Waugh at [info@wildwestirishtours.com](mailto:info@wildwestirishtours.com), phone 571-236-9650. With questions on the menu or location contact the Rare Olde Times at 804-750-1346.

**TO RECAP:**

**Most Important Note: --- FREE!**

**What:** USA Launch and Celebration of the world's biggest Irish music festival & Video presentation on the West of Ireland.

**Who:** Mai Hernon, Irish singer from Sligo, Ireland will perform with "Celtic Font".

**Where:** The Rare Olde Times Restaurant & Pub

**Address:** 10602 Patterson Ave, Henrico, VA 23238

**ROT Phone:** (804) 750-1346

**When:** Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> 12 noon-4 P.M.

**How:** Event produced by Wild West Irish Tours of Richmond, Va and Sligo, Ireland.



Web: [www.wildwestirishtours.com](http://www.wildwestirishtours.com)

Video: [vimeo.com/49328821](https://vimeo.com/49328821)

Tel: 571-236-9650

Email: <mailto:info@wildwestirishtours.com>

**!!!!!!!!!! I CAN'T WAIT!!!!!!!!!!**

## OUR PROUD IRISH HERITAGE

### The Catholic Order of Foresters What's The Irish Connection?



During the last half of the 19th century, as wave after wave of immigrants came to the United States, the urban areas of the Northeast became home to heavy concentrations of Catholics, especially those from Ireland. The vast majority of these immigrants were poor, having left their homeland due to famine and lack of jobs. These were days of adverse working conditions, miserably low wages, and discriminatory employment practices in the United States—the sign **“IRISH NEED NOT APPLY”** was frequently seen in store windows.

Living just above subsistence level, these new Americans had little, if any, money to rely on in the event of family catastrophe. Not only was life insurance far beyond their reach financially but also at the time, immigrants were discriminated against by most commercial insurance companies, which refused to insure them. Should death strike the wage earner of the household, there were no resources to help the rest of the family survive. It was common practice for neighbors to go from door to door, in an attempt to collect sufficient money to bury the deceased and raise what little they could for those who remained. As there were no Social Security benefits, Aid to Dependent Children, or other governmental welfare assistance at that time, the death of a breadwinner often meant financial ruin and resulted in the dissolution of the family.

To combat this, a small group of Irish Catholic Bostonians began looking for ways to band together to protect their families on their own. On March 12, 1879, they inaugurated a fraternal benefit society composed exclusively of Roman Catholic men, which they called the Massachusetts Catholic Order of Foresters. This society, the first Catholic fraternal insurance organization in Massachusetts, was officially chartered on July 31, 1879, and was the first to provide much needed life insurance protection to struggling Catholic families.

Of course, many of these Catholic immigrants were also finding it difficult to assimilate into a primarily Anglo-Saxon Protestant industrial society, especially those from agricultural -based economies. So in addition to insurance benefits, the Catholic Order of Foresters also established regional lodges, called Courts.

These fostered a friendly and supportive social environment where Catholics could congregate. By the turn of the century, the Society's membership was growing rapidly. Subordinate courts were springing up throughout the state. In 1894, women were permitted to become Foresters and in later years, the Foresters admitted children as junior members, resulting in a larger and more enthusiastic, family-oriented organization.

Being legally permitted to insure anyone who qualified, in 1961, the Society expanded its membership to include the other New England states and Florida. At that time, the name was changed to the Catholic Association of Foresters. Soon the ideals and purposes of the Catholic Foresters were copied by other newly established fraternal groups.

Today, the Catholic Association of Foresters is a benevolent society of members who are insurance policy holders as well as benefactors in their communities. The monies that are raised through dues and policy sales enable the Society to annually award scholastic grants for college education.

Members also support charity fundraisers in addition to the countless charitable deeds performed by individuals. The permanent charity fund provides for donations to the Bishop, for religious educational programs, as well as other charitable needs.

(\*Note – these items are meant to only highlight some of the groups that were so helpful and important to struggling Irish immigrants. I am continuing to look for more examples, so anyone with suggestions – please send them on to me. Thanks – Nancy)

**Did You Know?** It takes three years and a day to make Irish whiskey. For example, Scotch is distilled twice while Irish is distilled three times, giving it a lighter and mellower flavor. The spelling of the word Whiskey (as opposed to Whisky) originated in the 19th century when Scotch whisky was of very low quality. When exporting to America, the Irish distillers wanted to differentiate their product from the poorer Scotch whisky, and added the 'e' to mark the crucial distinction.



\*\*\*\* **Please check you membership** to make sure you are up to date! If you're not sure, you can call Denis Maguire our Membership Chairman to check on your status. We need our members to keep going!



## IRISH PRIDE!

Here is yet another reason for you to be oh so proud that you are Irish!

(You don't have to read like this)

Do you know what is the Greatest Irish invention ever? Every literate person in the western world and beyond uses it every day! In fact you are using this invention to read this piece now?

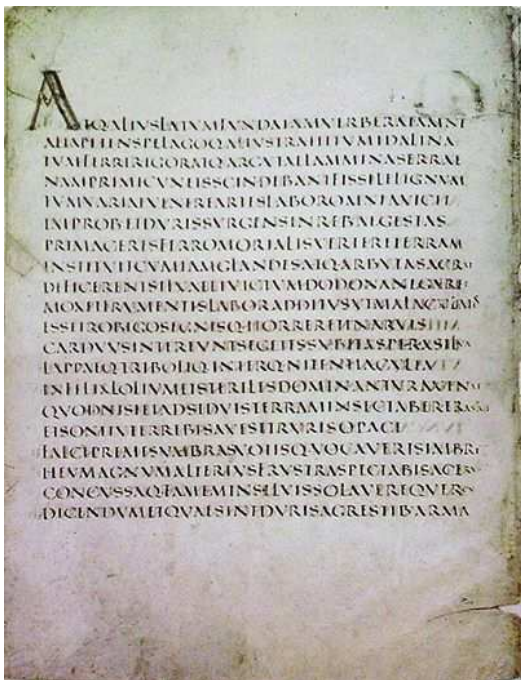
What is it? It is the space between words! That's right, ancient texts were written without spaces.

However, Ireland was never part of the Roman Empire and the Latin language was foreign to the Irish. Accordingly when Latin texts arrived with Christianity, words needed to be separated to allow for their translation into Irish and empower the native speakers to learn the Latin language. Scriptio continua (continuous text) as it is known was written as an aide-memoire therefore the writers did not need word separators as these writings contained information that was already known to them.

The earliest Greek inscriptions used interpuncts (dots between words), which was common in the writing systems that preceded it. The practice waned however and scriptio continua became commonplace.

(References "It Was The Irish That Invented Spaces Between Words" – Melvyn Bragg BBC Radio Documentary.)

And this little article has explained why we are not forced to read in the manner below. ☺



FEEL THE PRIDE!

(Did ya figure out that weird title at the start?)

## IRISH CITIZENSHIP

Are you **Entitled to claim Irish Citizenship?**

### Citizenship by Descent:

A person whose father or mother was **born on the island of Ireland is automatically an Irish citizen.**

A child whose non-Irish-born father or mother was an Irish citizen **at the time of the child's birth** may become an Irish citizen by registering in the Foreign Births Register at the nearest Irish Consulate.

A person who has **at least one grandparent who was born in Ireland** may become an Irish citizen by registering in the Foreign Births Register at the nearest Irish Consulate.

A person whose **great-grandfather or great-grandmother** was born in Ireland may claim Irish citizenship **provided** that the person's parents had registered in the Foreign Births Register (i.e., received their Irish citizenship) **before the person's birth.**

**NOTE: The process of applying for Irish Citizenship by Descent is also called Foreign Births Registration or FBR.**

How about [Claiming Irish Citizenship through Marriage?](#) (\*\*Click on link for more Information.) Since 2005, residence in Ireland is required in order for spouses of Irish citizens to apply for Irish citizenship.

Order state-certified Irish BMD (Birth/Marriage/Death) Certificates at [www.Certificates.ie](http://www.Certificates.ie). (\*\*Click on link for more Information.) The cost is about \$30 each including postage, and assuming you have all the necessary ordering details, takes about 2 weeks. If the BMD happened in Northern Ireland after 1921, order those certificates at [nidirect.gov.uk](http://nidirect.gov.uk) (\*\*Click on link for more Information.)



**FEB 9<sup>th</sup> - 4 pm –Irish Music Concert.**

IAS and Richmond Favorite, Sue Tarr and the local group, "Pugsy Malone" will present live Irish music at St. Mathias Episcopal Church at 11300 W. Huguenot Road Midlothian, VA 23113. This Church is on Huguenot Road – at the Shoppes at Bellgrade - easy to get to -. And lots of fun!!!

[Click here for directions to St. Mathias](#)

**Click below to hear their music!**

[Pugsy Malone at the Irish Festival 2013](#)

### **The Subject of the Brown's Island Memorial**

The first blast lifted Mary Ryan off the floor. The second blew her to the ceiling.

The Confederate munitions factory on Brown's Island exploded with a fury that killed more than 40 of its female workers, an event that shocked the city on March 13, 1863, and inspired an outpouring of sympathy. The home front disaster was Richmond's worst during the Civil War.

Ryan, an Irish teenager like many of the other workers at the Confederate States Laboratory, accepted blame for the explosion during the several days she lingered in pain.

She confessed to Col. Josiah Gorgas, chief of ordinance, that she had banged a perforated wooden board containing friction primers against a table to knock them loose. The jostling was strong enough to ignite at least one of the primers, which set off an explosion that demolished most of the 70-foot building. Between 80 and 100 workers, mostly women, were in the room either at their jobs or warming themselves at a coal stove. An official report counted 69 casualties, of whom at least 44 died.

Only a few of the victims died instantly. Others suffered "the most horrible agonies, blind from burns, with the hair burned from their heads, and the clothing hanging in burning shreds," the Examiner wrote. A few jumped in the river to extinguish the flames.

For the rest of the month, deaths from the accident mounted. Mary Ryan, age 18, died March 16 at the home of her father, Michael Ryan, who also worked at the arsenal.

Later investigation showed that even though Mary Ryan got the blame for the spark, the severity of the accident was not her fault. Because black powder dust was in the air from some of the other activities, she said, "When you have a spark, it's going to ignite. It's airborne. It makes it understandable how there was such an explosion and immediate fire."

By the end of March, the Daily Dispatch reported that work had resumed at Brown's Island. There was no shortage of new workers, Barber said.

"There were women waiting outside to apply for the vacancies. They were paid so well for working-class women." It was a horrible event, one of the worst explosions, certainly was the worst one in Richmond."

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Many IAS "Thank You's" to Karon Bell, Ann McGehee and Kathryn O'Meara for their efforts in bringing this monument dedication and placement to fruition. Their efforts have brought to the forefront – a very sad story about the Irish in Richmond, their hardships and sacrifice. For myself, it was a total eye-opener.

**Photo of 2 Young Employees at Brown's Island  
(Not identified, Not dated)**



### **Another Notable Richmond Irish – Buried in Hollywood**

**WILLIAM BURKE**, and his wife **CHRISTIANA**, were both Richmond schoolteachers. Edgar Allen Poe entered Burke's "Seminary" for boys on 1 April 1823, during the session that had begun on 2 January. In June 1824 (or 1825) Burke was one of the bystanders who witnessed Poe's feat of swimming 6 miles – against the current - in the James River. It was an event that Poe often referred to. Along with John Hartwell Cocke, at whose Bremono Academy he had formerly taught, Burke may have persuaded John Allan to send Poe to the University of Virginia. Burke wrote two books, **The Rudiments of Latin Grammar** (1832) and **The Mineral Springs of Western Virginia** (1842); he translated parts of Virgil's **Aeneid** for the **Southern Literary Messenger**.

Please make every effort to join your fellow IAS members for the Dedication Ceremonies. It is the mission of our Irish American Society to promote Irish culture and heritage through educational and public forums. The Society is proud to be able to commemorate the victims of one of the most tragic events for both the City of Richmond and also its community of Irish immigrants.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS – IRISH FUN IS COMING UP!!**



**CHECK OUT ALL THE WAYS TO ENJOY YOUR IRISH HERITAGE!**

<b>Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> - 4 pm Irish Music Concert.</b>	Sue Tarr and the local group, “Pugsy Mahone” present live Irish music at St. Mathias Episcopal Church at 11300 W. Huguenot Road Midlothian, VA 23113. This Church is near the intersection of Huguenot and Robious Roads – easy to get to <a href="#">Click here for directions to St. Mathias</a>
<b>Feb 17<sup>th</sup> IAS Board Mtg 7 pm</b>	<b>At O'Tooles on Forest Hill Avenue. All members welcome and invited to attend. We meet in the back room, come early and have supper with us and then bring your ideas and suggestions to the meeting.</b>
<b>Feb 23 Starts at noon Free concert &amp; Video</b>	<b><u>Irish Afternoon – Rare Olde Times</u> – sponsored by Wild West Irish Tours. Featuring Mai Hernon Irish Singer from Sligo and Visual Presentation on the West of Ireland. Full Lunch Menu will be available – ROT – 10602 Patterson Avenue, 804-750-1346</b>
<b>Feb 12 &amp; 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Irish Music Session at Rosie Connolly's 1548 E Main St, Richmond, VA 23219. Phone: 804-343-1063</b>
<b>March 9<sup>th</sup> Irish Session Rosie Connolly's</b>	1-4 PM Early line up... Kelly, Andy, Bernard Farrell and Paul. 1548 E Main St, Richmond, VA 23219. <b>Phone: 804-343-1063</b> <a href="http://www.rosieconnollys.com/">http://www.rosieconnollys.com/</a> Click the link for directions and the menu!
<b>March 15, 2014 Sunday -7pm Celtibillies Glen Allen. VA</b>	<b>Celtibillies</b> - Formed in 1994 as a contra-dance band, Celtibillies began exploring the deep-rooted connections between Celtic music and the Appalachian music of their home region of southwest Virginia. Dancers from the Blue Ridge Irish Music School in Charlottesville join in on the fun giving a down-home twist to this St. Patrick's Day celebration. <b>Artist <a href="#">Video</a> The Cultural Arts Center in Glen Allen 804-261-2787</b> <a href="http://www.artsglenallen.com/facility-info/directions.php">http://www.artsglenallen.com/facility-info/directions.php</a>
<b>March 16<sup>th</sup> Irish Session Rosie Connolly's</b>	1-4- *** Early line up - The Sutor Twins ( Glen and Sean ) and Bernard Farrell. 1548 E Main St, Richmond, VA 23219. <b>Phone: 804-343-1063</b> <a href="http://www.rosieconnollys.com/">http://www.rosieconnollys.com/</a> Click the link for directions and the menu!
<b>March 20<sup>th</sup>, 7pm “Kinda Celtic” Free Concert</b>	<b>Music from Ireland, Scotland &amp; Appalachia– Free Concert at Central Library 9501 Chesterfield, VA -- <u>Kinda Celtic</u></b> is a trio with hammered dulcimer, fiddle, guitar and bodhran. Kinda Celtic focuses on precision harmonies, intricate melodies and haunting lyrics. Hammered Dulcimer - Judith Whitfield, Fiddle - Jim Melnick, & Guitar - James Brown <a href="http://kindaceltic.com/">http://kindaceltic.com/</a>
<b>March 22 &amp; 23<sup>rd</sup> St. Patrick's Festival – Church Hill</b>	<b>Our favorite time of year is just around the corner – The St. Pat's Festival on Church Hill!!! Again we are asking for help. Volunteers are needed for set up on Friday 03/21 – 5pm. Also Tent volunteers for Saturday and Sunday at the Festival. And Sunday tent take down at the close. Call Karon Bell – 804-982-7835. This is a great opportunity to get the word out about the IAS &amp; attract new members.</b>
<b>March 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Presentation of the Mary Ryan Marker at Hollywood Cemetery.</b>

\*\*\* **AS YOU FINISH THIS NEWSLETTER** ---Don't forget to CONTACT KARON BELL AT 804-982-7835 or email her at <mailto:irishmom1958@gmail.com> to volunteer time to help out at the St. Patrick's Festival on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Help us get the word out... and come and meet some of your fellow members. It's a great weekend for the Irish!! (And we really need your help.)