

March at the Museum!





St. Patrick's Day is the holiday when even the most recalcitrant American feels tempted to don green clothing or sip on some green beer. But what if everyone wore blue on March 17 each year instead? After all, the earliest depictions of St. Patrick show him clothed in blue garments, not green, and that when George III created a new order of chivalry for the Kingdom of Ireland, the Order of St. Patrick, its official color was a sky blue, known as "St. Patrick's Blue."

The significance of blue dates back to early Irish mythology when the sovereignty of Ireland, *Flaitheas Éireann*, was often represented by a woman dressed in a blue robe. According to legend, the depiction was based on the 10th-century queen named *Gormfhlaith*, a portmanteau of the ancient Irish words for blue (*gorm*) and sovereign (*flaith*). But John T. Koch, in his *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, argues that this legend has little basis in truth, writing that "*Gormfhlaith* should not be seen as a sort of living representative of the mythic literary sovereignty goddess, as previously suggested."

When Henry VIII assumed the throne, after more than 300 years of English rule over Ireland, he took steps to strengthen his hold on the isle, declaring himself King of Ireland in 1541, making it a part of the England and giving it its own coat of arms. This was the first official instance of connecting the color blue with Ireland, using a golden harp on a blue background;

the same symbol can be seen today on the Constitution of Ireland and the Presidential flag.

But because of the Tudor King's interference, and its continuance on through the 18th century with George III's creation of the Order of St. Patrick, blue as a color associated with Ireland became tainted. From the late 18th to the 20th century, as the divide between the Irish population and the British crown deepened, the color green and St. Patrick's shamrock became a symbol of identity and rebellion for the Irish.

The Order quickly disintegrated after the establishment of the Irish Free State. Technically, the Order is still in existence today but without any remaining Knights. Its only two remaining members are the head, Queen Elizabeth II, and one officer, the Ulster King of Arms. The seats of the Order are now filled by members of Ireland's St. Patrick's Cathedral Choir, still wearing robes of St. Patrick's blue.

The coat of arms of Ireland and the Standard of the President of Ireland are a gold (*or*) Irish harp with silver (*argent*) strings on a field of blue (*azure*).

The earliest use of green for nationalistic reasons was seen during the violent Great Irish Rebellion of 1641, in which displaced Catholic landowners and bishops rebelled against the authority of the English crown, which had established a large plantation in the north of Ireland under King James I in the early 17th century. Military commander Owen Roe O'Neill helped lead the rebellion and used a green flag with a harp to represent the Confederation of Kilkenny, a group that sought to govern Ireland and kick out the Protestants who had taken control of that land in the north of Ireland. They were ultimately defeated by Oliver Cromwell.

The color green cropped up again during an effort in the 1790s to bring nonsectarian, republican ideas to Ireland, inspired by the American revolution and the French revolution. The main society that promoted this idea, the Society of United Irishmen, wore green, especially an Irish version of the "liberty caps" worn during the French Revolution. One police report described their uniform as comprised of a dark green shirt cloth coat, green and white striped trousers, and a felt hat turned up on one side with a green emblematic cockade.

Though the rest of the uniform eventually faded from popular wear, the importance of the color green spread, thanks in part to the poems and ballads written during this time, most famously "The Wearing of the Green." The origins of the wearing of green clothing in the U.S. on St. Patrick's Day and for St. Patrick's Day celebrations in general date back to the 19th century, when waves of Irish immigrants came to America looking for better job opportunities, especially after the Great Famine of the 1840s-50s, and began wearing green and carrying Irish flags along with American flags as a point of pride for their home country.

The Irish flag as we know it today is relatively new. Presented as a gift in 1848 to Thomas Francis Meagher from a small group of French women sympathetic to the Irish cause, it was intended to symbolize the inclusion and hoped-for union between Roman Catholics and Protestants, the significance of the colors outlined by Meagher was, "*The white in the center signifies a lasting truce between Orange and Green and I trust that beneath its folds the hands of Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics may be clasped in generous and heroic brotherhood.*"

It was not until the Easter Rising of 1916, when it was raised above Dublin's General Post Office by Gearóid O'Sullivan, that the tricolor came to be regarded as the national flag.

And now, the Man himself - this essay is an extract from the work of Dr. Philip Freeman, author of

The World of St. Patrick.

Everyone knows about Saint Patrick - the man who drove the snakes out of Ireland, defeated fierce Druids in contests of magic, and used the shamrock to explain the Christian Trinity to the pagan Irish. It's a great story, but none of it is true. The shamrock legend came along centuries after Patrick's death, as did the miraculous battles against the Druids. Forget about the snakes - Ireland never had any to begin with. No snakes, no shamrocks - and he wasn't even Irish. The real story of St. Patrick is much more interesting than the myths. What we know of

Patrick's life comes only through the chance survival of two remarkable letters which he wrote in Latin in his old age. In them, Patrick tells the story of his tumultuous life and allows us to look intimately inside the mind and soul of a man who lived over fifteen hundred years ago. We may know more biographical details about Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great, but nothing else from ancient times opens the door into the heart of a man more than Patrick's letters. They tell the story of an amazing life of pain and suffering, self-doubt and struggle, but ultimately of faith and hope in a world which was falling apart around him.

The historical Patrick was not Irish at all, but a spoiled and rebellious young Roman citizen living a life of luxury in fifth-century Britain when he was suddenly kidnapped from his family's estate as a teenager and sold into slavery across the sea in Ireland. For six years he endured brutal conditions as he watched over his master's (Milchu) sheep on a lonely mountain in a strange land. He went to Ireland an atheist, but there heard what he believed was the voice of God. One day he escaped and risked his life to make a perilous journey across Ireland, finding passage back to Britain on a ship of reluctant pirates. His family welcomed back their long-lost son and assumed he would take up his life of privilege, but Patrick heard a different call. He returned to Ireland to bring a new way of life to a people who had once enslaved him. He constantly faced opposition, threats of violence, kidnapping, and even criticism from jealous church officials, while his Irish followers faced abuse, murder, and enslavement themselves by mercenary raiders. But through all the difficulties Patrick maintained his faith and persevered in his Irish mission.

The Ireland that Patrick lived and worked in was utterly unlike the Roman province of Britain in which he was born and raised. Dozens of petty Irish kings ruled the countryside with the help of head-hunting warriors while Druids guided their followers in a religion filled with countless gods and perhaps an occasional human sacrifice. Irish women were nothing like those Patrick knew at home. Early Ireland was not a world of perfect equality by any means, but the Brehon Laws ensured that an Irish wife could at least control her own property and divorce her husband for any number of reasons, including if he became too fat for sexual intercourse! But Irish women who were slaves faced a cruel life. Again and again in his letters, Patrick writes of his concern for the many enslaved women of Ireland who faced beatings and abuse on a daily basis.

Patrick came face to face with the chieftains and their druid priests. The showdown came on the morning of his first Easter in Ireland. At a monastery on the hill of Slane, Patrick - in direct defiance of the high king of Tara - lit a forbidden fire. He was summoned before the king, and he explained that he wasn't a threat, because he was bringing the new light, the light of Christ, the Savior of the world, the Light of the world. The first light of Easter day was dawning. Patrick brought the hope of Easter day to Ireland. In 432 A.D., Patrick built a church on the site of the present-day St. Patrick's Memorial Church in Saul, Downpatrick, the first ever Christian church in all of Ireland. It's considered the cradle of Irish Christianity. Patrick's ministry lasted 29 years. He baptized over 120,000 Irishmen and planted 300 churches. He died on March 17th 461.

Patrick wasn't the first Christian to reach Ireland; he wasn't even the first bishop. What made Patrick successful was his dogged determination and the courage to face whatever dangers lay ahead, as well as the compassion and forgiveness to work among a people who had brought nothing but pain to his life. None of this came naturally to him, however. He was a man of great insecurities who constantly wondered if he was really cut out for the task he had been given. He had missed years of education while he was enslaved in Ireland and carried a tremendous chip on his shoulder when anyone sneered, as they frequently did, at his simple, schoolboy Latin. He was also given to fits of depression, self-pity, and violent anger. Patrick was not a storybook saint, meek and mild, who wandered Ireland with a beatific smile and a life free from petty faults. He was very much a human being who constantly made mistakes and frequently failed to live up to his own Christian ideals, but he was honest enough to recognize his shortcomings and never allow defeat to rule his life.

You don't have to be Irish to admire Patrick. His is a story of inspiration for anyone struggling through hard times public or private in a world with unknown terrors lurking around the corner.

So raise a glass to the patron saint of Ireland, but remember the man behind the myth.

Beannachtaí Lá Fhéile Phádraig! Happy St. Patrick's Day.

Traditional Music in the Rambling House at the Museum with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Thursday March 7th 7pm. Donations Appreciated.

Join us at the museum for our own rambling house and an informal music and song session by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (the Irish Musicians' Association). This is a monthly event at the museum and very popular. Bring your party piece or instrument! Audience participation welcome and encouraged by our friendly group. Hear traditional Irish music, and old songs, stories and poems in a traditional format that still happens in many Irish homes (and bars) today.

The motto of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is "ceol agus gaol" (music and kinship). Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, headquartered in Ireland, is the primary Irish organization dedicated to the promotion of the music, song, dance and the language of Ireland. There are branches of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann all over the world.

Light refreshments will be provided.



7th Annual Soda Bread Competition and Irish Festival Saturday March 9th, 10a.m. - 4pm.

It's a Great Day (or month) for the Irish! Join us for our popular Irish Soda Bread Competition and Irish cultural presentations by Three Irish Voices, Bethlehem School of Dance, and St. Patrick himself! We will have a craft market with handmade gifts made by local artists, and our gift shop has been replenished with Irish jewelry, quilts, and food. Entrance is \$5 and the bakers must be amateur and can enter into both the Traditional recipe category and the Family recipe. Call the museum for a registration form and we will email it to you. Prizes include Galway Crystal, Donegal Porcelain, and Museum swag. This is a great day out for all the family, with music, history, and culture on offer as well as tasty Shepherd's Pie ... and all the

bread you can eat!



The Irish American Heritage Museum's

St. Patrick's Day Festival and the

7th Annual

Maureen Farrell McCarthy

Irish Soda Bread Competition

March 9, 2019

Activities throughout the day include:

Music by The Three Irish Voices

Dancing by Bethlehem Traditional Irish Dance

History Lecture

Irish Craft Market

Visit www.irish-us.org or call 518-427-1916 for more information



Seanchai Series at the Museum continues!

Sunday March 10th 3pm.

\$5 members, family discount available.

Join us to celebrate the Irish month of March with Tales of the Irish Spirit! Storytelling is an ancient Irish tradition, and kids of all ages will love to hear these stories of days gone by. \$5 for members, \$10 for non members.



Seanachie Series

NEW DATE & NEW TIME: Second Sunday of the Month, 3-5 pm

370 Broadway, Albany, NY (518) 427-1916 irish-us.org

Tales of the Irish Spirit

with The Tale Tell Trio

(Jane Ainslie, Mary Murphy and Barbara Palumbo)

March 10, 3 pm

Three storytellers who will warm your heart and lift your spirit!

\$5 Museum Members, \$10 others, \$25 family four pack

REPEAT SCREENING: The Irish Pub
Tuesday March 12th at 2pm. \$5.

This is a charming and touching documentary about some of the more traditional pubs in Ireland and the role they play in local community. It focuses on the friendships and "craic" provided in these pubs and the lives of the families who run them - often for generations - in a changing Ireland.

The Irish Pub, a lovingly laid-back documentary about the charms, liquid and otherwise, of the traditional Irish watering hole."

The Washington Post

"If you love Ireland or if you love pubs, and I'm guessing that covers just about everyone, you're going to want to see Alex Fegan's disarmingly modest documentary "The Irish Pub."

The Boston Herald

"The Irish Pub is a picturesque yet realistic documentary about life in Ireland's drinking establishments." "...might bring a tear to your eye." The Boston Globe

THE IRISH PUB



EVENING ECHO

"DELIGHTFUL"

THE IRISH TIMES



RTÉ GUIDE



Irish Genealogy Lecture Series at the Museum Session III: Your Irish DNA. Tuesday March 12th, 6.30pm.

Whether you are satisfied or disappointed with the amount of Irish DNA your genetic test has revealed, you probably have lots of questions. How is the amount determined? Why am I less Irish than my sibling? Can I use these results to find cousins in Ireland? Professional genealogist Lisa Dougherty will answer those questions and more in this presentation designed to set you on the right path toward getting the most from your DNA test.



Annual St. Patrick's Day Green Tie Luncheon
Thursday March 14th 12 noon. \$20.
CDIAA, 375 Ontario Street, Albany 12208.

Join us for a "State of the Museum" luncheon - a chance to get together and review the year, celebrate friendships, and share our common culture and heritage. Lunch will be served and the bar will be serving. We want to celebrate the month of March with our friends and members and honor two of our biggest supporters, Ed Collins and Harold Qualters. There will also be a raffle with fantastic prizes, including tickets to see *Celtic Women* at the Palace.

Please call the museum at 518 427 1916 for tickets because we will need to confirm numbers with our chef!



The Irish American Heritage Museum

Invites you to our Annual Green Tie Luncheon

Thursday March 14th @ 12:00 PM

**Capital District Irish American Association
375 Ontario Street
Albany, NY**

**Join us for an afternoon of friendship, music, food,
and raffles.**

**All proceeds benefit the educational and
cultural programs offered at the Museum.
Tickets \$20. Call the Museum to Reserve.
518 427 1916.**

**Irish Sweat-er 5K Run/ St. Patrick's Day Parade/Family Cultural
Festival**

Saturday March 16th 12 noon - 6pm.

REGISTRATION OPEN NOW: □□◆◆ The Irish American Heritage Museum, in partnership with Downtown Albany, New York and ARE Event Productions, presents the second annual Irish Sweat-er 5K in downtown Albany.

This fun run for all ages takes place along the route of the 69th Annual Albany St. Patrick's Day Parade, just before the parade steps off at 2:00 PM.

Online registration for the 5K is now open at zippyreg.com. Early-bird registration is just \$25, with fees increasing to \$30 on March 5 and \$35 day-of-race.

Come and march with the Museum! Call us to let us know if you will march with us in the Parade. And then end the day back at the Museum with fun activities for all the family, including St. Patrick, entertainment, and food! It's going to be a busy weekend!



St. Patrick's Day at the Musuem
March 17th, 12 - 4pm. All welcome.

Join us at the museum for even more Irish events and culture with Chris Gil to serenade you! Find out the real story of St. Patrick and even meet the man himself. Admire our new exhibit on Celtic Art too! This will be the second weekend of Irish celebrations at the Museum so take the opportunity to celebrate your heritage - and "pass it on!"



Granuaile: Ireland's Pirate Queen, by Marni Gillard.

Thursday March 21st, 7pm

\$7 members, \$10 non-members. Families welcome.

In celebration of Women's History Month.

Come join us for the true tale of *Granuaile*, (Grainne Mhaol) Ireland's Pirate Queen as told by storyteller, Marni Gillard.

We'll watch young Grainne O'Malley, age 12, claim her right to go to sea with her chieftain father. We'll follow her into O'Flaherty territory after marrying another clan's chieftain-to-be who proves himself a poor political ally. When her children are "fostered away" Grainne reclaims her true calling as sea captain. With men from many clans she stands against England's administrators and generals sent by Elizabeth I to lure Ireland's chieftains into trading lands and treasuries for titles such as Duke, Earl and Viscount. When her son Tibbot is captured and jailed, she dares to sail up the Thames to meet the aging queen, and the two find common ground as caretakers of their people.

'Tis a tale you may not know, but will never forget.



Film Club: Guns and Chiffon (Women in the Irish Revolution)
Tuesday 26th March 7pm, \$5
In celebration of Women's History Month.

Until recently, few women were given prominence in the long list of Kilmainham Gaol's political prisoners. However, after the 1916 Rising, seventy-seven women were held prisoner in Kilmainham for their part in the rebellion, and at the height of the Civil War in 1923 over three-hundred women, aged between twelve and seventy, were imprisoned there. This film is about

those women. Made to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the interment of over 500 women in the Free State because of their commitment to the ideals of the Republic, the film tells the story of the fight for national independence, from the 1916 rising, through to the War of Independence, the Civil War and the struggle for the rights of workers and votes for women. With amazing historic film footage, it includes the original voices of Teresa O'Carroll, Maud Gonne McBride, Helena Moloney, Nora Connolly-O'Brien, Louise Gavan Duffy, Margaret Skinnider, Sighle Humphries, Maire Comerford, Nora O'Connor. There is a surprising and poignant New York connection to - and it's not James Connolly!



**Museum Trip to the Irish Repertory Theater, Manhattan
The Shadow of a Gunman by Sean O' Casey,
Saturday March 30th 3pm show; leave Albany 10.30 a.m.
Tickets, including bus travel, \$90.
Please call or email the museum to reserve seats. They are limited!**

It's 1920, and the Irish War of Independence rages on the streets of Dublin as Irish revolutionaries clash with British auxiliary forces. Aspiring poet Donal Davoren tries to avoid the conflict, but when Donal learns of a rumor that he is a gunman on the run, he cannot resist the curiosity it stirs in beautiful young Minnie Powers ... and he cannot escape the attention of his other neighbors. As the rumor grows, the war outside moves closer to home with tragic consequences.

The Shadow of a Gunman premiered at The Abbey Theatre in 1923 to immediate success, selling out tickets for the first time in Abbey history, and establishing Sean O'Casey's career as a playwright at age 43. The first of The Dublin Plays, this two-act work is written in O'Casey's characteristic tragicomic style. Although it is widely considered a masterpiece, it is lesser-known than the later two Dublin Plays. Irish Rep is proud to open the O'Casey Season with this compelling work, last seen in the Irish Rep theater in 1999.



**THE SHADOW
OF A GUNMAN**

JAN 30 – MAY 25, 2019

Irish American Heritage Museum | 518-427-1916 | info@irish-us.org | www.irish-us.org