

## May at the Museum!



### Thank You Museum Community.

As we enter our second month in "pause" mode, we want to thank all of our members, sponsors, friends, and neighbors for reading our newsletter, commenting on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, and calling the museum to see how we are doing. It is at times like these that communities must pull together, so even though we are apart, we all feel a little less alone I hope.

This coming together has reminded me of the old Irish tradition of a "Meitheal." Meitheal is the Irish word for a work team, gang, or party and denotes the co-operative labor system in Ireland where groups of neighbors helped each other with farming work, such as harvesting crops or footing turf. Neighbors who give their work to others are helped in turn with their own heavy seasonal tasks. At the heart of the concept is community unity through cooperative work and mutually reciprocal support. Meitheal is the Irish expression of the ancient and universal appliance of cooperation to social need.

So while restaurants and bars, galleries and museums all around the world have been closed since mid-March,

there has been an overwhelming response online, with performances and shows being offered and shared daily. This celebration of culture and the Arts has been very uplifting and there is a sense of solidarity when watching something together while apart!

In case you missed it, the museum has been active online throughout the closure and we encourage you to check Facebook daily to see the various events we share and host. Each Monday, Elizabeth posts a video to social media describing some of the treasures that are housed in the museum, giving you a little historical context for the objects. We are collaborating with Irish Centers in Minnesota and New England to bring you concerts, lectures, and other news. Our local "Friends of the Museum," Don Kelly, Rick Bedrosian, and Triskele have all held concerts which we share on our Facebook page, and other previous performers, including Brian Conway, the Dublin City Ramblers, Maire Ni Chathasaigh, and Derek Warfield and the Young Wolfe Tones have also held virtual concerts which we have shared. We are also able to partner at this time with the Irish Repertory Theater; the Abbey Theatre in Dublin; Culture Ireland; and Other Voices, to bring you a range of short performances and free concerts from the best in Irish and Irish American talent every day. Please check us on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram to catch these live performances, or the recorded performances if you missed them the first time around.

We have also been working with Strokestown Park, and sharing their Great Famine Voices Roadshow each Sunday. The Famine Voices Roadshow was supposed to be with us in May - and we are hoping they will be able to reschedule in September - but in the meantime, each week they share a documentary on their website and then host a Zoom conference on Sunday to discuss the film. We have shared this on our Facebook page too and all our members are invited to join in.

We do hope that the Museum will reopen some time during the Summer, and while events might be curtailed for a while, we are very excited to show you our new space and the new content which will highlight the contributions Irish immigrants and their descendants have made to every facet of life in America.

To those of you who became members or donated last month, we thank you sincerely for your support and really appreciate it, especially as we know there are so many deserving causes out there at this time. Your sponsorship makes all the difference to us here while our doors are closed. If you would like to become a member or donate to the museum, the links are below! Stay safe everyone and hopefully we will all come through this together.

[Become a Member](#) [Donate to the Museum](#)

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**Famine Heroes Digital Event:  
The Famine Irish in Liverpool  
Hosted by the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool  
Sunday May 2nd. 2 pm (EST)**

Short documentaries, online lectures, and online discussion about the Famine Irish in Liverpool by Professor Christine Kinealy and Professor Rebecca Abbott (Quinnipiac University), Professor John Belchem (University of Liverpool), Greg Quiery and Roger Appleton (Liverpool Great Hunger Commemoration Committee), and Liverpool Family Ties: The Irish Connection, a documentary produced by the Liverpool Irish Festival that asks interviewees to consider their heritage, Irish migration and lived-experience of Liverpool. We will share the link on our Facebook page too.

<https://www.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events/gfvr/>

# GREAT FAMINE Voices ROADSHOW 2020

**April 19** – Ireland's Great Hunger and the Irish Diaspora

**April 26** – The Famine Irish and Canada's First Responders

**May 2** – The Famine Irish in Liverpool

**May 10** – The Famine Irish Legacy in Buffalo

**May 17** – (National Famine Commemoration Day)  
– Honouring Famine Heroes Online Discussion

**May 24** – Following in the Footsteps of Strokestown's Famine Emigrants

**May 31** – The Story of the Choctaw Gift

For more information visit [www.strokestownpark.ie/famine/roadshow/](http://www.strokestownpark.ie/famine/roadshow/)



Government of Ireland  
Emigrant Support Programme  
An Bóinn Gairbhí Eagraíochas agus Trádáil  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO



Quinipiac  
Ireland's Great  
Hunger Institute



Parks Canada  
Parcs Canada

**Helena Byrne in Zoom Concert!**  
**Friday May 8th. 7pm (EST) \$20 per household.**

*An Evening of  
Irish Stories & Music'  
With Storyteller & Singer, Helena Byrne*



*In association with the  
Irish American Heritage Museum, Albany*

*'You are cordially invited to Helena's home in Dublin via Zoom  
for a magical evening of Irish Stories & Songs by candlelight'*

**Friday May 8th at 7pm ET  
Only \$20 Per Household Available at**

*www.Irish-US.org*

Storyteller & Singer, Helena Byrne cordially invites you to her home in Ireland via Zoom for a magical evening of Ireland's best loved stories and songs by candlelight.

This is far more special than 'live streaming'. You are invited to join Helena via Zoom for this interactive, unique experience and we encourage you to engage with the stories, ask Helena questions along the way, even sing along to your heart's content, just as you would at a traditional Irish sing-along by the fireside.

Helena has performed at the museum several times, the last time in May 2018. She had been booked to come back this May before the Covid 19 crisis changed all our plans, so we are delighted she has been able to arrange to hold the concert from her home. There is a PayPal link to the event on our Facebook page, or call the Museum to book your tickets now and Helena will share the Zoom invitation with you.

We hope to see you there!

**A Moment of Respite.**







While we are waiting to come off pause and get back into hosting events and having visitors to the Museum, we are very busy behind the scenes. And this is a stressful time for everyone - people working from home and trying to balance childcare and homeschooling; first responders who are working around the clock in terrible circumstances; people who are isolated and feeling stir-crazy. We encourage you at this time to be gentle with yourself, as John O' Donohue wrote in the poem below.

John O' Donohue (1 January 1956 - 4 January 2008) was an Irish poet, author, priest, and Hegelian philosopher. He was a native Irish speaker, and as an author is best known for popularizing Celtic spirituality. He wrote several books, *Anam Cara* and *Benedictus* among them, and all are best sellers not just in Ireland but across the world. I wanted to share one of his poems from *Benedictus (To Bless The Space Between Us* as it was published in the States.)

### **For One Who Is Exhausted, a Blessing**

When the rhythm of the heart becomes hectic,  
Time takes on the strain until it breaks;  
Then all the unattended stress falls in  
On the mind like an endless, increasing weight.

The light in the mind becomes dim.  
Things you could take in your stride before  
Now become laborsome events of will.

Weariness invades your spirit.

Gravity begins falling inside you,  
Dragging down every bone.

The tide you never valued has gone out.  
And you are marooned on unsure ground.  
Something within you has closed down;  
And you cannot push yourself back to life.

You have been forced to enter empty time.  
The desire that drove you has relinquished.  
There is nothing else to do now but rest  
And patiently learn to receive the self  
You have forsaken in the race of days.

At first your thinking will darken  
And sadness take over like listless weather.  
The flow of unwept tears will frighten you.

You have traveled too fast over false ground;  
Now your soul has come to take you back.

Take refuge in your senses, open up  
To all the small miracles you rushed through.  
Become inclined to watch the way of rain  
When it falls slow and free.

Imitate the habit of twilight,  
Taking time to open the well of color  
That fostered the brightness of day.

Draw alongside the silence of stone  
Until its calmness can claim you.  
Be excessively gentle with yourself.

Stay clear of those vexed in spirit.  
Learn to linger around someone of ease  
Who feels they have all the time in the world.

Gradually, you will return to yourself,  
Having learned a new respect for your heart  
And the joy that dwells far within slow time.

John O' Donoghue, Benedictus (Europe) / To Bless the Space Between Us (US)