

IN FRIENDSHIP, UNITY AND CHRISTIAN CHARITY



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

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President: Jim O'Donnell **Chaplain:** Father Kevin Fimian **Vice President:** Bob Stevens
Financial Secretary: Bill Gilhooly **Treasurer:** Dick Dowd **Recording Secretary:** Kevin Doyle
Standing Committee: Jim McMorro **Marshal:** Neil Mulcahy **Sentinel:** Rusty O'Brien
Organizer: Bill Halpin

ATHBHLIAIN FAOI MHAISE (HAPPY NEW YEAR)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy and Blessed New Year;

On behalf of your 2015 leadership team I would like to thank you for your continued dedication to the principles of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and our local General Thomas F. Meagher Division endeavors.

Under the leadership of my predecessor, President Bill McCarthy, the Division reached all-time highs in membership and revenues this past year. There are currently sixty-nine brothers in our membership and we were able to expand assistance to new and varied efforts that mirror what it means to be a Hibernian.

We started the New Year off with the initiation of your officers on January 20th. Each of these men is dedicated to the continued success of the Division. Special thanks go out to the worthy Virginia AOH Vice President Gene Bransfield who officiated at our installation of officers. Gene travelled from Northern Virginia in the famous I 95 rush hour traffic to be with us. He did a wonderful job and made the ceremony most meaningful.

Finally, it was my distinct honor to present the Division's Hibernian of the Year Award to Brother John Hogan and to be able to announce the selection of Brother Jeff Fitzpatrick as the Virginia state

recipient of the prestigious St. Columcille award for sustained performance in supporting AOH objectives for more than 15 years.

I look forward to serving you as President this year. I ask for assistance as we move our division towards those goals that make us all proud Irishmen. I also ask for your prayers that I might lead you well. May St. Patrick watch over you and yours.

In Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,
Jim O'Donnell

OUR 2015 OFFICERS



(L to R) Treasurer Dick Dowd, Sentinel Rusty O'Brien, Financial Secretary Bill Gilhooly, President Jim O'Donnell, Installing Officer, State Vice President Gene Bransfield, Vice President Bob Stevens, Marshal Neil Mulcahy, Recording Secretary Kevin Doyle, Standing Committee Jim McMorrow



ST. BRIGID: THE SECOND PATRON SAINT OF IRELAND

Edited from Wildgeese, January 30, 2015

St. Brigid (450-525) is the second patron saint of Ireland, whose feast day is her birthday -- the first day of spring, 1st February (Lá Fhéile Bhride). Brigid is also known as *Muire na nGael* or "Mary of the Gael," which means Our Lady of the Irish.

Brigid lived at the time of St. Patrick, who inspired her to convert to Christianity and she wanted to serve her life looking after the poor and the sick in the name of God. This angered her father, but Brigid was so generous in giving his wealth away to the poor, he finally conceded when she gave away his most precious jewel encrusted sword to a leper. At 18 years of age Brigid entered religious life at the convent of St. Macaille and she inspired many other young girls to join her.

Brigid founded many convents, the most famous of which in Kildare and she became known as Brigid of Kildare. In ca 470 she founded a double monastery for nuns and monks in Kildare and became Abbess. The Abbey of Kildare became famous throughout Europe as Irish missionaries spread the story of the kind and generous St. Brigid. It is said that St. Brigid went to the King of Leinster requesting land for the Abbey; she had found the perfect spot - near a forest for firewood and a lake for water and fertile land. The King refused and Brigid prayed that he might change his mind. She asked the king "will you give me as much land as my cloak will cover?" The King, looking at Brigid's small cloak, laughed and agreed. Brigid began to spread her cloak on the ground, four friends held a corner of the cloak and started walking north, south, east and west. The cloak grew and grew and covered acres of land. When the King saw this he realized Brigid was indeed a holy woman and he offered her food and supplies. The King converted to Christianity and began to help the poor. The

miracle of the cloak was the first of Brigid's many miracles.

St. Brigid's Cross



The belief still holds true to this day that the St. Brigid's cross protects a house from fire and evil. Traditionally, a new cross is made each year on St. Brigid's feast day, and the old one burned to ward off fire, although many homes in olden days kept all their crosses preserved in the thatched roofs, as fire would have been a huge concern for houses that had thatch and wooden roofs. The Brigid's Cross is usually made from rushes and reeds or straw and is a woven centre square with four spokes, which are tied at their ends. Hung near the front door, the St. Brigid's Cross is traditionally an Irish gift for a new home.

St. Brigid died aged 75 in A.D. 525 on the same day she was born, 1st February. She was placed in a jeweled casket and buried in a tomb at the High Altar of her Abbey church. As protection from Norse invaders her remains were exhumed in 835 and placed to rest at Downpatrick with St. Patrick and St. Columcille. Although her skull was extracted and taken by three knights to the Holy land, however, they perished near Lisbon, Portugal, and St.

Brigid's skull is enshrined in a special chapel in the church at Lumier. It is reported that a tunic belonging to St. Brigid is kept at St Donatian's, Bruges, Belgium, and a jeweled shoe made of silver and brass is displayed at the National Museum in Dublin.

Apart from being the second patron saint of Ireland, St. Brigid is also the patron saint for

babies; blacksmiths; boatmen; cattle; chicken farmers; children whose parents are not married; dairymaids; dairy workers; fugitives; infants; mariners; midwives; milk maids; poultry raisers; printing presses; sailors; scholars; travelers; watermen; creativity scholars and poets.

FIRST IN THE OCCASIONAL SERIES ON IRISH HEROES

Ruairí Óg Ó Mórdha (Rory Oge O'Moore)

The History of the Ancient Order of Hibernians is practically the history of Ireland, as its members took an active part in all the struggles and efforts of the old Celtic Chiefs to throw off the hated Saxon yoke. According to such authorities as MacGeoghegan's and Mitchell's, Wright's, Leekey's, O'Holleran's, and Robinson's History of Ireland, the Ancient Order of Hibernians was organized in 1565 by Rory Oge O'Moore in the county of Kildare, Province of Leinster, Ireland.

In 1565 Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd earl of Sussex, established a penalty of death for any priest found in the Province of Leinster. Responding to this proclamation, Rory Oge O'Moore organized a resistance group called the Defenders. Defenders declared purpose was the defense of Faith and Fatherland - its motto is familiar to all present day AOH brothers - ***Friendship, Unity and True Christian Charity.***

The Defenders met in the mountains -- strong hands grasped in friendship they resolved to resist every encroachment of

despotism upon the liberties and rights of people and pledged eternal friendship. They worked with the Catholic clergy to erect crude altars in the mountains for the people to attend the Holy Mass. Rory sent out trusted men to inform the Catholics where the priest would hold the next Mass. He placed sentinels on the hilltops to give warning of approaching sacrilegious intruders. Those sentinels stood on the hills and mountains while the winter winds howled and moaned around them, with the sleet cutting into their unprotected faces. The Defenders also found a place to shelter hunted priests. Sometimes it would be in an isolated cabin in the mountain's glens regardless of the danger incurred for a harboring a priest.

In 1577 Sir Francis Cosby, commander of Queen Elizabeth's troops in Leix (Laois) and Offaly, concocted a plot to murder the chief families of the Irish clans. With full knowledge and approval of Sir Henry Sidney, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Cosby feigned friendship and invited the Irish chiefs to a grand feast in Mullaghmast. As

they arrived, the Irish were seized and butchered by the blood-thirsty English. One hundred and eighty of O'Moore's kinsmen were massacred that day.

Rory Oge O'Moore tracked Cosby and his minions and when they least expected, Rory swooped down upon them with fire and sword and exacted a terrible revenge. Cosby was slain at the Yellow Ford near Armagh during the bloody battle of Glenmalur. The Defenders swiftly sent Cosby before his God to answer for his crimes. With the red flag of England in the dust, the Saxon army fled from the Irish charge.

In June 1578, Rory O'Moore was killed and his head was set up on Dublin Castle. Owen O'Moore, son of Rory, continued in the same line as his father. He also assisted the old Celtic chiefs in their efforts to drive the British tyrants out of Ireland. He fought with Hugh O'Neil at the siege of Armagh on

August 10, 1595, when the Defenders distinguished themselves by their bravery at the battle of Clontribet and continued with him until he drove the English and Scotch from the north and west of Ireland. The people of the north and west enjoyed two years of peace and prosperity under O'Neil's government.

England offered large rewards for the capture of Owen O'Moore, dead or alive. He continued to defy them until he was captured through the treachery of the traitor on the night of May 12th. Owen and Captain O'Brien were returning to their rendezvous after leaving Father O'Roarke. British soldiers ambushed them; O'Brien was killed instantly, while Owen was wounded and taken prisoner. Two days later he was a hurried trial and sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered. He was executed on the morning of May 16, 1619.

AN INTRODUCTION TO CELTIC HISTORY



The lands occupied by Celtic peoples, whose existence can be traced over more than 25 centuries, were vast. Celts occupied land in modern day Eastern Europe, Greece, Spain, Northern Italy, Western Europe, England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The

Celtic people have mystified anthropologists and historians for generations. They were a non-literate culture whose history and literature was preserved through oral tradition. The only written records of their civilization are the texts left by classical

authors, the first of which appear circa 500 BC. These accounts, inaccurate as they may be, are important in that they demonstrate that the Celts came into cultural contact, and sometimes competition, with the Greeks as well as the Romans.

In recent years, modern archeology has been successful in reconstructing an echo of the `voice_ of the ancient Celts. Facets of Celtic society, economy, and religion completely ignored by Classical texts have been brought

to light. The classical image of Celtic life describes barbaric men and women dressed in uncured animal skins in primitive villages, people who worshipped strange deities and whose lives were consumed in blood feuds. Because of the authority of the classical authors, these ancient misconceptions were pervasive. They are visible, for example, hundreds of years later in some of the Shakespearean characters that people Cymbeline and King Lear.

The Celts impressed the Greeks and Romans with their bold dress and powerful appearance. Generally characterized by classical observers as a people of fair hair, of red or gold, and fair complexions, (although the people of the British Isles were described as small and dark-haired) most Celtic women apparently stood taller than the average Roman citizen. Celtic women, upon reaching maturity, adopted a complex braided style for their hair, and

wore dyed and embroidered dresses. Plaids, or wrapped woven cloaks, were common for men and women alike, and gold and silver torques and arm rills, as well as rings, adorned wealthy Celts. Brooches that held closed the openings of dresses and plaids were another common feature of Celtic dress. Gallic men commonly spiked their hair and bleached it to an almost white color with chalky water, and wore their beards long, while the Bretons and Picts tattooed their arms and faces with blue.

Many Danish and English bogs have yielded archeological evidence of cloth and dress, and Roman historians such as Tacitus also document some of the customs of everyday Celtic life.

Some features of Celtic life were not as closely chronicled in classical sources. The quality of Celtic metal-work was technically and artistically advanced. Most Celtic people lived in well-populated farming villages, with larger towns linking smaller settlements and acting as meeting sites for economic and cultural activity. Fortified cities and shrines were erected along well-travelled roadways. This evidence of a more complex society in pre-Roman Europe has led some scholars to rethink conclusions drawn from classical texts by such authors as Caesar, Polybius, and Strabo. Celtic societies, once considered `barbaric_ as seen through the lens of classical observers, are now looked upon as advanced cultures

networked through the bond of a common linguistic heritage.

Piecing together the culture and lives of the ancient Celts, in the absence of clear archeological or textual record, is not an easy task. No one is even sure where the term `Celtic_ comes from. With a great deal of inconsistency, classical sources provide tantalizing but incomplete information about the peoples called Keltoi and Galatea by the

Greeks, and Celtae or Galli by the Romans. Two thousand years ago, the term Celt was used specifically for peoples inhabiting continental Europe; the denizens of England and Ireland were not to be called `Celts_ until seventeenth and eighteenth-century linguistic scholarship began to identify the inhabitants of the pre-Roman British Isles as Celtic people. (*Celtic Life International*, Melanie Laird, Nov 2014)



Genealogist's Visit: Ms. Shannon Bennett will speak on Irish research and DNA testing at our April meeting. Information on Ms. Bennett can be found at (tntfamilyhistory.blogspot.com/)

Irish Historian: Looking forward to September, we're planning on Kevin Donleavy of Charlottesville. Kevin is author of *The Irish in Early Virginia 1600-1860*, a past Fellow at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, a retired Latin teacher, and he plays in an Irish band. His commitment to Irish cultural history spans forty years. He also has an Irish radio program heard on WTJU.net.



SOLD OUT!

ST JUDE CHURCH FUND RAISER

February 7, 2015 -- Seamus Kennedy in Fredericksburg

SOLD OUT!



OUR PRAYER LIST

Please keep in your prayers Brothers Bill McCarthy, Jim O'Donnell, Des Flanigan, Joe O'Connor, Pete Needham, Mike Lenihan, David Lee Chichester, Larry Pratt, and spouses Joan McCarthy, Patty O'Brien, Connie Buttimer, and Dolores Stevens. Also, Mike Cregan, VAAOH webmaster, and Matthew Carroll, the inspiration for the Irish Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Project.

Pray to Mary Immaculate Patroness of the United States for the strength of mind and heart to defend our religious freedoms, for national moral guidance, and that this country will always be 'one nation, under God'. This is critically important in this time of contrary moral agendas and the threats from patently evil elements.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

February 1: St Brigid's Day and St. Matthew's Ministry Fair after Masses on Sunday morning.

February 7: Seamus Kennedy at the Fredericksburg Square (St Jude Parish Fund Raiser) **Sold Out!**

February 17: Division Meeting

March 1-31: Irish-American Heritage Month

March 7: Ballyshaners Alexandria St. Patrick's Day parade. The theme of this year's parade is "Women of Irish Heritage." Our Grand Marshal is Laureen O'Neill James, head of the O'Neill-James School of Irish Dance.

March 12: Annual St Patrick Dinner at Holy Cross Academy (*tentative*)

March 14: Twelfth Annual St Patrick Day Parade /Kick-off Seventh Annual Trip for Two to Ireland Raffle

March 16: Annual Gaelic Mass: 7:30 PM, Holy Family Church, 14160 Ferndale Road, Dale City, Virginia 22193

March 17: Second Annual Meagher Division St Patrick Day Mass at St Patrick Church (*tentative*) and Division Meeting

April 20: Second Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Classic, Meadows Farms Golf Course, Locust Grove, VA

April 21: Genealogist, Ms. Shannon Bennett, will speak at our meeting about Irish Research and DNA Analysis.

Editor: Bill Halpin