

FRIENDSHIP, Unity and Christian Charity



## GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

<http://www.aohfredericksburg.org/>

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**President:** Shawn Lenahan    **Chaplain:** Father Jerry Wooton    **Vice President:** John Tracy  
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**Standing Committee:** Dave McLaughlin    **Marshal:** Paul O'Brien    **Sentinel:** Jack Grey; **Webmaster:** John Hogan    **Newsletter Editor:** Bill Halpin (sisconsulting@comcast.net)



*“You’re not a true Hibernian until you’ve received the Major Degrees”* says AOH legend and Life Member, Pat Troy. The next opportunity to receive the Major Degrees will be during the VAAOH Quarterly State meeting scheduled for **21 January** immediately following the quarterly state meeting at **St Theresa Church in Ashburn**. *All eligible Gen. Meagher Division brothers should take advantage of this opportunity to fulfill the pledge to do so when they joined the division.*

### President's Corner

Dear Brothers:

Happy New Year!

I can't express how grateful and humbled I am to be chosen as the 17th President of the General Thomas F Meagher Division. This year marks our 30th year as a growing and dynamic Irish-Catholic organization in the greater Fredericksburg area and I owe a debt of gratitude to the officers and members that came before me.

From our humble beginnings on December 12, 1987 our Division has grown to more than 70 members representing four parishes in the greater Fredericksburg area. Through your involvement, Irish culture and unity is on public display at ceremonies, parades, outings, and church events. We demonstrate Christian charity by donating our time and providing financial support to churches, local charities, seminarians and students. The Ancient Order of Hibernians is the preeminent organization responsible for increasing awareness of the Irish in our community and continuing the work of St. Patrick, the Glorious Apostle of Ireland. It is with this in mind that the priority of my tenure will be to create an environment where we can increase awareness of Irish heritage amongst ourselves and in the community.

2017 will not be without its' challenges. I am, however, confident that with your prayers and support we will meet them head on and be ready for our next thirty years!

In Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity,

Shawn Lenahan



***“The Celt would forfeit his title to the respect of the civilized world, did he not fight with all his heart and all his soul and all his cunning against the empire which has despoiled him and murdered his kin, now with arms, now with artificial famine. There can be no peace between the two people until either Ireland is a desert or is free. It is war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt. There can be neither truce nor compromise.”***

The annual **Division Christmas Party** was another tremendous success with more than 50 brothers and family members attending. Again this year Pat Fogarty and Danny Tryon took the lead in organizing and preparing the St Michael the Archangel High School gymnasium. Santa was there to delight the children along with plenty of food and song. At left, Sentinel Jack Grey and Jill Lenahan are celebrating the Christmas spirit.



## Ten Things You Might Not Know About Irish Pubs

Posted by Kevin Martin on *Wild Geese* on November 16, 2016

### 1. Ancient Irish law decreed 24-hour opening.

Under Brehon Law – first codified in the sixth and seventh centuries – each local king was required to have his own *bruigu* (also sometimes spelled *brughaid*), or brewer. A *bruigu* was obliged to have “a never-dry cauldron, a dwelling on a public road and a welcome to every face.” He had to provide hospitality to all comers in his *bruidean* (usually translated as “hostel”). The *bruidean* had to be located at a crossroads; have four doors, one on each of the approaching routes; have torch-bearing greeters on a lawn outside so nobody would pass by unwelcomed; and stay open 24 hours a day. There were strict rules on provisions: The *bruigu* had to stock three uncooked red meats, butchered and ready to cook; three stewed meats cooked and kept heated; and three types of live animals, ready to slaughter at short notice. Three different cheering sounds had to be heard in the *bruidean* simultaneously: the cheers of the ale-makers going happily about their work, the cheers of the servers bringing alcohol from the cauldron, and the cheers of young men playing chess.

### 2. The oldest pub and the oldest graffiti in Ireland.

After a dispute had rumbled on for many years, the owners of Sean’s Bar in Athlone, Co Westmeath, and The Brazen Head in Dublin agreed to go on national radio to decide which of their establishments should be recognized as the oldest pub in Ireland. The late DJ Gerry Ryan hosted the debate. The owner of Sean’s Bar provided evidence – verified by archaeologists and historians from the National Museum – that strongly suggested the presence of a retail premises on the site dating back to AD900. During renovations in 1970, the walls, parts of which are now on display at the National Museum, were found to be made of wattle and daub. The builders also found coins dating from the period, minted by local landlords and probably used as beer tokens.

The owners highlighted written evidence of a rest stop for pilgrims on their way to nearby Clonmacnoise. The Brazen Head had no answers and graciously admitted defeat. They may have taken some small consolation when a signature etched on one of their windows was confirmed to be from 1726 and was awarded the title of the oldest piece of graffiti in the country. The writing – in a whorl on a bottle-glass pane – is so small it cannot be read with the naked eye, but with the aid of a magnifying glass it is possible to decipher the spidery writing: “John Langan halted here 7th August 1726”.

### **3. The Normans brought wine bars and the term “vintners” to Ireland.**

The word tavern – originally from the Latin *taberna*, meaning hut – was first used when the Normans occupied parts of Ireland in the twelfth century. The Normans were wine lovers and imported the best wines from their homeland. At first, the alcohol was managed by wine merchants, or vintners, and delivered to the cellars of the castles of the Norman lords, who largely resided inside the Pale. Occasionally, they held wine-tasting events when new stock was imported, and over time began to sell the surplus at the point of storage. These taverns became meeting places for important members of society where alcohol and food were served and issues of the day discussed. Dublin’s Winetavern Street, referred to as *vicus tabernariorum vini* in Latin – “the street of the wine taverners” – was the main center of distribution and retail. In 1979, while excavating the controversial Wood Quay site nearby, archaeologists found over 2,000 pewter tavern tokens dumped in a refuse pit.

### **4. Pubs were once allowed to store dead bodies.**

The Coroners Act of 1846 decreed a dead body had to be brought to the nearest public house for storage until further arrangements were made. The beer cellars were cool and slowed decomposition, and it became common for publicans to have marble tables in their cellars for autopsies. This legislation was not removed from the statute books until 1962, and the dual role of publican and undertaker is still common in Ireland. The *Freeman’s Journal* of April 9th, 1869, carried a story of a bus crash in Dublin. The injured were brought to Lawler’s pub to be treated, instead of to the nearby St Mary’s Asylum where nurses and doctors were in attendance. The editor complained the choice was inappropriate because the publican had no beds. Patrick Lawler saw fit to write to the paper to defend his actions:

“I beg to say that the body of Mrs. Byrne was brought into my house by the direction of Dr Monks, and laid on the table of the taproom, where a large fire was burning. Blankets were at once brought down from the bed of my own family and wrapped round the body. Every possible effort was made to resuscitate her. My house was closed and business suspended while she remained there; everything required by the doctor and those in attendance were supplied by me.”

### **5. Why Irish pubs have family names over the doors.**

It became a legal requirement to display the proprietor's name over the front door of the premises after legislation passed in 1872. The legacy of this law is often cited as one of the unique features of the Irish pub. Often, a public house operates under a long-obsolete family name – a signature feature in the boom of “Irish pubs” outside Ireland. This change in legislation limited the previous inventive array of names: in Dublin, The Sots Hole in Essex Street, The Wandering Jew in Castle Street, Three Candlesticks in King Street, House of Blazes in Aston Quay, The Blue Leg in High Street, The Holy Lamb in Cornmarket and The Golden Sugar Loaf in Abbey Street are all long since defunct. Some pubs, such as The Bleeding Horse and The Brazen Head, kept both a family name and original title.

#### **6. Travelers used to be legally entitled to a drink.**

Bona fide houses utilized a legal loophole – a hangover from the days of coach travel – that allowed a genuine traveler three miles from his place of residence to partake of alcohol outside normal hours. If you lived in Dublin city, the limit extended to five miles from your habitual residence. According to the law, the customer had to have “travelled in good faith”, not for the purposes of taking refreshment; travelers could go into an inn for “refreshment in the course of a journey, whether of business or pleasure”. It was a legally fraught area. In order to prove a public house was taking advantage of it, the court had to prove the publican did not believe his customer was a bona fide traveler when serving outside normal hours. Famous Dublin bona fides included Lamb Doyle's in the foothills of the Dublin Mountains, Walsh's Sandyford House – then known as the Widow Flavin's – and the Dropping Well in Dartry. The law was finally changed in 1943. Bona fide travelers could no longer be served between midnight and 6am, and the pubs were eventually abolished in 1963. The widespread use of cars brought the curtains down on a unique phase of the Irish pub.

#### **7. A computer algorithm solved James Joyce's Dublin pub puzzle.**

Leopold Bloom, the central character in James Joyce's modernist masterpiece *Ulysses*, famously said it would be a good puzzle to walk across Dublin without passing a pub. The problem was only solved in 2011 by software developer Rory McCann, using a computer algorithm. There are fewer pubs now than on Bloomsday, June 16th, 1904. On his first attempt, McCann could not find a route that did not pass a hotel. He did, however, rule out restaurants with licenses to serve alcohol. McCann's route runs from Blackhorse Avenue to Baggot Street. It goes through Stoneybatter, past St James's Gate – the home of Guinness – down Bride Street, across York Street, past St Stephen's Green, detouring through the Iveagh Gardens, and down Adelaide Road. He modified this route in 2014 to avoid passing any hotels. Fittingly, it now crosses the James Joyce Bridge.

#### **8. Cocktail bars are nothing new.**

In 1932, *The Irish Times* denounced the cocktail, warning readers: “It is supposed by the many to induce an appetite and to stimulate intelligent conversation; in fact, it absorbs the pancreatic

juices and encourages cheap wit.” At the annual meeting of the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance in 1936, it was noted that “appalling revelations have been made in the press lately about cocktail and sherry parties even among business girls in their own apartments”. At the meeting, held in Bewley’s on Grafton Street in Dublin, calls were made for “the discontinuance of cocktails and the elimination of drinking clubs’, as well as ‘the elimination of drinking at public dances”. Later in 1937, The Irish Times reported the belief of a doctor from Clare Mental Hospital that “now that women have taken with avidity to tobacco and cocktails, one can visualize the most appalling results for the human race at a not far distant date”.

#### **9. Until 1973, the only way to get a drink on St Patrick’s Day was to go to the dogs.**

St Patrick’s Day, falling as it does in the middle of Lent, was once a day of abstinence. The only place alcohol was sold was in the members’ lounge at the Royal Dublin Dog Show. High attendance figures were guaranteed. Patrick Kavanagh reputedly once rented a dog to get in, while his arch-nemesis Brendan Behan stole a poodle on another occasion. The law did not change until 1973. The celebrations now associated with the national holiday were born in the United States. The first parade took place in 1762, when Irish soldiers serving in the British Army marched through Manhattan to a tavern. It was 1931 before a parade took place in Ireland. There was a major change in 1995 when the Government introduced the St Patrick’s Day festival. According to Diageo, St Patrick’s Day now sees over 13 million pints of Guinness being sold around the world - nearly four times the amount sold on an average day.

#### **10. There are strange things in Dublin pubs.**

Some of Dublin’s hostelrys harbor strange things. One such is The Clock on Thomas Street, which has an aviary in the beer garden. In Toner’s pub of Baggot Street, the beer garden utilizes predator bird noises to keep away seagulls. It goes off every 18 minutes or so. In Fallon’s in The Coombe, there is a photo of a couple on their wedding day on the ceiling. A local punter given to excessive drinking sometimes fell from his chair. He would see his wife looking down at him, feel suitably admonished, and make his way home. Billy Brooks Carter from Texas loved Mulligan’s of Poolbeg Street so much he requested some of his ashes be kept in the grandfather clock. Every eight days, the staff ‘winds up Billy’.

### *Irish Heritage*



# The Destruction of the Kingdom of Brega

Edited from *Wild Geese*, posted by John Anthony Brennan on September 14, 2016

*Ask most people who they believe were the first group of foreigners to launch highly organized, violent raids in Ireland, and more often than not, they will say it was the Vikings, who raided Lambay Island in 795 A.D. What many people are not aware of is the fact that a century before the Vikings, an equally violent group, not from the fjords of Norway, but from a place much closer to home, beat them to it.\**

In 686 A.D., a determined individual set sail from a jagged, windswept island on the westernmost edge of the Inner Hebrides, in the wild, North Atlantic Ocean. His long, hazardous journey would take him down the rugged west coastline of Scotland and then inland to the kingdom of Northumbria. If he survived the dangerous trek, he planned to enter negotiations with Egfrid the Saxon king and arrange for the release of 60 men, women, and children who had been taken as hostages from Ireland two years earlier.

The man's name was Adomnan, the abbot of a monastery on the small isle of Iona, founded by the Irish scholar monk Colmcille in 563 A.D. Colmcille had been expelled from Ireland as a result of his involvement in the Battle of Cul Dreimhne (Battle of the Book) and he, along with 12 followers, went into exile on Iona and built a monastery there. The monastery was hugely successful, and would play a vital part in the religious conversion of the Picts during the late 6th century and of the Anglo-Saxons in 635 A.D. Iona went on to take its place as one of the most important monastic centers in Europe.

In the 7th century, the islands of Ireland and Britain were made up of a series of conflicting dynasties and warring kingdoms. It was not uncommon for a king, who felt that he was all powerful, to invade his neighbors and demand fealty. In Ireland those in the O'Neill clan were the dominant rulers while in Anglo-Saxon Britain the

most powerful kingdom was Northumbria, ruled by the ruthless king Egfrid. The kingdom of Northumbria was a kingdom in what is now northern England and south-east Scotland and was reportedly founded by a Saxon leader named Ethelfrith. Ethelfrith, it is believed, defeated the armies of the Britons in approximately 600 A.D. at the Battle of Catraeth (Catterick). The Britons gave him the name *Flesaur*, which translates to "the twister."

The Saxons were a Germanic tribe that lived close to the North Sea coast of what is now Germany. They amalgamated with another, equally ruthless tribe known as the Angles and immediately started to invade their neighbors. As raiders and vicious plunderers, they were perfectly positioned geographically to send raiding parties to ravage the British Isles. Significant numbers of them settled in large areas of Britain in the early Middle Ages and formed part of a large group known as the Anglo-Saxons. Eventually, they became the dominant force and formed what we know today as the United Kingdom.

In 684 A.D., a large disciplined and well-armed military force, commanded by king Egfrid's top *ealdorman*, Berht, sailed out from the settlements on the western edge of Northumbria and made its way to the isle of Manx. The Anglo-Saxons had plunder, pillage and death on their minds.



The target on this night was the royal Irish kingdom of Brega at Mide (Meath), the seat of Irish power. Their oft-used methods were highly successful and had always worked perfectly in the past. It would be no different this time. Move fast, use the night shroud of darkness to surprise, unearthly noise to scare and bewilder, and the sword and axe to subdue. Spare no-one, save the hostages, as they could be used as barter later on.

The name Brega translates as the “fair plain” a reference to the large, wide, fertile expanse of land that today straddles the modern counties of Louth, Meath and Dublin. To the east of Brega lay the Irish Sea and to the south, the River Liffey. The kingdom ran all the way north across the Boyne Valley and stretched as far as the mountains in Louth. The king of Brega at that time was Fínsnechta *Fledach* mac Dunchada.

The term *fledach* was added to his name as a tribute to the personality of the new king and means “the bountiful.” He had been crowned as the king of Brega and also as the *Ard Ri* (high king) on the nearby Hill of Tara. Two important supporters of his were the king of Fir Rois and the abbot Adomnan. He belonged to a branch of the southern O’Neill clan. When they were sated, the invaders retreated; in their wake, a bare, devastated wasteland from horizon to horizon. Smoke from still smoldering fires in the fields and storehouses hung heavy on the air, choking and stinging the eyes of the

few remaining survivors, creating permanent night. Butchered corpses -- human and animal -- lay strewn in grotesque indifference where they fell. The churches, which once sang the praises of both king and creator, now reduced to piles of scorched, scattered stones, forlorn. The houses usually filled with love, laughter and joyous celebration, now razed with violent hatred, a pitiful sight. Everything of value, including surviving livestock, religious artifacts and hostages were taken to the Saxon ships for transport back to Northumbria.

The Venerable Bede, a scholar monk and author, from the kingdom of Northumbria, called the action ‘an unwarranted attack on innocent, Christian people,’ and criticized Egfrid, king of Northumbria, who planned and authorized the raid. Bede goes on to tell how clerics, including the Saxon bishop Egbert, repeatedly warned against such actions and that God would punish the Saxon king for such a terrible act.

Abbot Adomnan’s mission was ultimately a success, and he returned the hostages safely back to their families in Ireland.

**\* In 688 A.D., Fínsnechta, defeated and demoralized, abdicated his throne and entered a monastery to become a monk. In late 689 A.D., he left the clerical life and resumed the kingship.**



In July 2016 Pope Francis declared “*We are living in a moment of annihilation of man as image of God*”. He recalled Pope emeritus Benedict’s pronouncement: “*It’s the epoch of sin against God, the Creator.*”



**Say a Prayer of Thanks** to Mary Immaculate, Patroness of the United States, for delivering us from progressive secularism and the threat to our religious freedoms and sacred beliefs.

Please pray for the repose of the soul Jeffrey Sean Fitzpatrick and all deceased General Meagher Division brothers and their families.

Please pray for the comfort and healing of our Brothers Neil Mulcahy (cancer), Dick Dowd (recovering from cancer), Jim McMorrow (recovering - cancer & knee replacement).

Keep in your prayers our family members and friends:

- Bill Phillips' brother Robert;
- Joe Monaghan's sister-in-law, Donna Maffeo (cancer) and his father Joseph Monaghan Sr. who is caring for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer);
- Hugh O'Brien's brother, John O'Brien (recovering from stroke);
- Rochelle Grey (hip surgery);
- Bob Doan's sister-in-law Latisha Horwath (Parkinson's disease);
- Barbara McCoy (cancer);
- Amy Whittaker (cancer),
- Eileen and Dick (Dick is Eileen's care giver),
- Matthew Carroll (IVNVMP)



**Multiple Dates: Bingo!** Every Thursday and Saturday evening 6:30PM at **St Michael the Archangel High School**, 6301 Campus Drive, Fredericksburg, VA 22407 (540) 548-8748). Bring the family!

**January 8, 2017: Religious Freedom March** -- Celebrates Thomas Jefferson's drafting of the Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom.

12:45 PM Assemble at Fredericksburg Train Station parking lot

1:30 PM Parade Begins

1:55 PM Parade Arrives at Religious Freedom Monument

2:00 PM Freedom Park on Washington Avenue for speeches/ceremony

3:00 PM Reception (Location TBD)

**January 17:** Division meeting 7:30PM -- **Charities Committee Report**

**January 21: VAAOH Quarterly State Board Meeting** hosted by Colonel Thomas J. Cunningham Division (LO01) in the St Theresa Parish Hall, Ashburn, VA.

**January 27: March for Life, Washington, DC**

- **9:00AM:** Pro-Life Mass at St. Mary Mother of God (5th Street NW) This Hibernian Mass will be celebrated immediately prior to our annual Pro-Life Breakfast. Collection will be donated to St. Mary's for use of the Church.
- **Following Mass:** Pro-Life Breakfast at Irish Channel DC (5th Street NW): Annual Pro-Life Breakfast will start at 9:30. Please beat the bushes for attendance; try to make this the best attended year to date. \$25/pp for this great hot buffet and pro-life speakers. Join us for the march after breakfast.

**September 22-24:** VAAOH Biennial State Convention, Virginia Beach Resort Hotel



*General Meagher Division Attire*

In a perfect world every brother would have these articles of clothing:

- For **semi-formal/formal occasions**, the AOH “uniform” is green sport coat, tri-color sash, white shirt, Irish theme tie, black trousers and optional ball cap. These occasions include AOH State and National conventions, Masses, funerals, AOH dinners, parades, and other public events.
- At **informal events** (i.e. Division outings (ball games, picnics, meetings, etc.) the division logo polo or sweatshirts (optional ball cap) are appropriate.

**Division Logo Items: The Point of Contact for Division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps is Shawn Lenahan ([s\\_lenahan@verizon.net](mailto:s_lenahan@verizon.net))**

**Green Jacket:** Brothers procure their own green jackets. One source: [http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens\\_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html](http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html). Visit the

website; call the 800 number. Tell them you're with AOH and the \$5.00 small order fee can be waived. Kelly green is the color.

**AOH Sash:** Brothers procure their own sashes. The AOH tri-color sash represents the national colors of Ireland and should be worn over the right shoulder (green closest to neck/collar) crossing to the left hip. Measure from right shoulder to left hip in inches; keep in mind the sash will normally be worn over a jacket, possibly a raincoat/overcoat (and maybe a growing waist line).

Tri-color AOH sashes are available from:

- LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom. Email Patricia at [traceysbydesign@aol.com](mailto:traceysbydesign@aol.com)  
She produces 7.5ft long sashes costing \$ 40.00 and guarantees satisfaction:  
if you're not satisfied send it back for a full refund.
- D & E Morrissey (954-426-3514) 1978 S.W. 17th Drive, Deerfield Beach,  
FL 33442