



Down by the Liffey Side

Traditional Singing and Walking Tour
Sunday September 27th 2015, 11am,
The Croppy Acre Memorial Park, Heuston Bridge.

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at the The Croppy Acre Memorial Park, Heuston Bridge

‘All songs are living ghosts and long for a living voice’ — Brendan Kennelly

Introduction

THE RIVER LIFFEY, whose source rises on Kippure mountain in County Wicklow, flows for 135 kilometres to reach the Irish Sea at Dublin Bay. The river divides Dubliners into north- or south-siders and has provided a constant backdrop to much of its history in song and story as Brendan Kennelly—a Kerryman long resident in Dublin—famously observed: ‘To stroll through its streets is to stroll through history.’

The first bridge over the Liffey was built from timber in the eleventh century and known as Dubhghall’s Bridge. That bridge was located at the site of a ford named the Ford of Hurdles. Remarkably for the city whose busiest tourist destination is the Guinness brewery, the current bridge on that site is named after the Tipperary born temperance advocate Father Matthew.

Our route today will descend the Liffey taking in eight of its city bridges from Sean Heuston Bridge to Grattan or Capel Street Bridge stopping to recall songs and words of Robert Emmet, Sean O’Casey, Peadar Kearney, Dominic Behan, James Joyce, Pete St John, Liam Weldon and many others. From there we will saunter up Capel Street, famous for its musical instrument shops, Paddy Slattery’s pub (home to the Tradition Club in the late sixties and seventies), many pawnbrokers and latterly adult shops. We will then turn into Parnell Street to reach Parnell Square and our last stop at the Garden of Remembrance.

STARTING PLACE AND STOP 1: At the Anna Livia Plurabelle statue in the Croppies Memorial Park, Parkgate Street, near Heuston Train Station.



The statue created by sculptor Eamonn O'Doherty was inspired by James Joyce's character Anna Livia Plurabella who featured in *Finnegans Wake* as a personification of the river that flows through Dublin city centre. When it was originally located in O'Connell Street it was subject to drunken revellers and washing liquid being emptied into it. It was variously nicknamed the 'Floozie in the Jacuzzi' or 'the Hoor in the Sewer'.

It was at the nearby Croppies' Acre where the bodies of insurgents executed in 1798 were interred, the following words were written there by the patriot Robert Emmet:

No rising column marks the spot,
Where many a victim lies;
But oh! The blood which here has streamed,
To Heaven for justice cries.

And those who here are laid to rest,
Oh! Hallowed be each name;
Their memories are forever blest –
Consigned to endless fame.

Looking across the Liffey, we see both the Seán Heuston Bridge and Heuston Railway Station; they are named after one of the executed 1916 leaders; both are still referred to as Kingsbridge by most native Dubliners. The cast iron bridge which now hosts the Luas red line tram traffic was produced in the Royal Phoenix Iron Works in Parkgate Street in 1828. It was first named King's Bridge to commemorate the visit in 1821 of King George IV. Interestingly, the name was first changed after Irish independence in 1923 to Sarsfield Bridge to commemorate Patrick Sarsfield, Lord Lucan, who commanded the Irish forces during the Williamite wars. The bridge was changed to its present name in 1941. The song and air "Seán Ó Duibhir a' Ghleanna" refers to Sarsfield's retreat following the Battle of Aughrim, which culminated in the Treaty of Limerick and Sarsfield and his army—the first of the 'Wild Geese'—departing these shores. Our tour will start with a slow air.

Song 1: "Seán Ó Duibhir a' Ghleanna" (air)

Played by Terry Moylan on the uilleann pipes

Parkgate Street leads to the main entrance to the Phoenix Park, the scene of the murder of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish and the under-secretary T.H. Bourke. The pair were assassinated on the main road of the Phoenix Park by a group of breakaway members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood called "The Invincibles" on May 6th 1882. They escaped but were later captured because of the information supplied by one of their number James Carey.

Frank Harte commemorated this incident every year and last visited the site just six weeks before his death on 6th May 2005. He was in the company of Jerry O'Reilly. Our first song "Dan Curley", which tells that tale, will be sung by Jerry.

Dan Curley was one of "The Invincibles" who was hanged in Kilmainham Jail. Frank Harte wrote about the song: "Jimmy McBride of Inishowen heard me sing another song about the incident and very kindly gave me the words of this song, which he had gotten from his father who learnt it in Glasgow in his youth. I am indebted to Jimmy for entrusting the song to me. I hope I do it justice".

Song 2: “Dan Curley “

Sung by Jerry O’Reilly

On the eighteenth of May for my recreation,
By the banks of the Liffey I chanced for to stray,
The green fields and meadows with flowers were spangled,
The birds sweetly sang and the lambs they did play.

I ’spied a young woman all dressed in deep mourning,
A babe by her bosom she tenderly bore,
She cried with emotion alas your dear father,
“My husband Dan Curley I'll see him no more”.

I stepped right up to her, says “I My dear woman,
You seem overburdened with sorrow and woe,
Has some nasty landlord to you been cruel?
The cause of your sorrow I'd like for to know.”

“Kind sir” she replied “the truth I will tell you,
My bosom is wrecked and my head almost bored,
For the Phoenix Park murders my husband has suffered,
And now in this wide world I'll see him no more”.

“James Carey that false hearted traitor of Ireland,
To gain a reward informer he turned,
By informing on others he escaped from the gallows,
My husband Dan Curley I'll see him no more”.

“On the eighteenth of May by the Phoenix Park murders,
Lord Cavendish and Bourke lay all in their gore,
'Twas by Carey's advice these crimes were committed,
My husband Dan Curley I'll see him no more”.

“May he be evicted may his wife be a widow,
May his children turn wanderers from Erin's green shore,
May the curse of the widow and orphan stay on him,
My husband Dan Curley I'll see him no more”.

“He's gone from this world just a short while before me,
I hope we'll rejoin on the next happy shore,
Where the angels of glory they sing God's praises,
And I'll meet my Dan Curley and we'll part no more”.

Pat Burke has written a song to commemorate 250 insurgents buried at Croppies’ Acre between 1798 and 1803. One of those buried there is Wolfe Tones’s brother Matthew. Poetic licence suggests the old woman visiting the grave was Sarah Curran who was Robert Emmet’s sweet-heart. Some people think his body was also buried there.

Song 3: “Croppies’ Acre” by Pat Burke

Sung by Pat Burke

’Twas down by the Liffey`’s banks,
Two hours after the dawn,
I heard an old woman lament
As she shuffled along,
A tear in her eye she wept
From Kingsbridge she made her way,
And by Croppies Acre, she knelt
With her beads for to pray.

’Tis five and two score year
Since I were a fair young maid,
When brave men did set forth,
With pike and with green cockade
The rights of old Ireland
They sought that day to restore,
And in this unhallowed ground,
They laid them in their gore.

It was May the twenty third,
The year seventeen ninety eight,
Our men they were gathering
That day to determine their fate,
At Newmarket and Smithfield
Our pikes were to be raised as one,
But spies they were well informed
And our boys were forced for to run.

From there unto Wicklow`’s hills
Some comrades bold did repair,
While many another was out
On the Plains of old Kildare,
Awaiting a second French fleet
By their side we`d surely prevail,
When they landed in numbers few,
Our Rising was then doomed to fail.

Well, it happened one evening late
In the year of eighteen and three,
When once more we took a chance,
Our land`’s shackles to break free,
For to take the Castle then,
It was Bould Emmet`’s plan,
Bad luck found us scattered as chaff
Before the fight proper began.

To Kilmainham we all were dragged
As the city was all astir,
Given unto the tender care
Of Doctor Trevor and Major Sirr,
No equal has yet been found
For them in Hades so deep,
For the things done in that dark place,
Would cause your flesh for to creep.

God's curse on you, Francis Higgins
A blight upon all of your crew,
Leonard McNally, Sam Sproule,
Tom Reynolds, Francis Magan too,
For a solemn oath ye swore
Liberty's flag to unfold
Then bartered your souls away
For a purse of King George's gold.

The old woman rose at length,
Her prayers unanswered from high,
I thought all those men
Who fell 'neath an Irish sky,
That wrong might one day cease
And the Rights of Man then hold sway,
Remember those patriots
Who lie in Croppies' Acre this day.

The Phoenix Park is also the setting for a humorously vulgar song "The Zoological Gardens" with many double-meaning phrases, which was a favourite of Brendan Behan who famously recorded the song.

Song 4: "The Zoological Gardens"

Sung by Ann Buckley

Ah thunder and lightning is no lark,
When Dublin City is in the dark!
If you've any money go up to the park
And view the Zoological Gardens

I took me moth up to the a-Zoo,
To show her the lions and the kangaroo,
There was he-males and she-males of every hue,
Up in the Zoological Gardens!

Chorus

We went out there by Castleknock,
Says she to me “Sure, we'll court on the Lough!”
Then I knew she was one of the quare old stock
From outside the Zoological Gardens.

Chorus

We went up there on our honeymoon,
Says she to me, “If you don't come soon
I'll have to get in with the hairy baboon,
Inside the Zoological Gardens!”

Chorus

Says she to me “It's seven o'clock
And time for me to be changin' me frock,
For I long to see the old cockatoo,
Up in the Zoological Gardens!”

Chorus

Says she to me “Me lovely Jack,
Sure I'd love a ride on the elephant's back,
If you don't go with that I'll give you such a crack,
Outside the Zoological Gardens!”

The next song has become embedded among great Dublin street ballads. The chorus of the song is included in *Red Roses for Me* by Seán O'Casey. Verses are also attributed to Dominic Behan. Regardless of who wrote it, it is a great song that evokes this part of Dublin City.

Song 5: “Easy and Slow”

Sung by Eugene McEldowney

It was down by Christ Church that I first met with Annie
A neat little girl and not a bit shy
She told me her father had come from Dungannon
And would take her back home in the sweet bye and bye.

Chorus:

And what's that to any man, whether or no,
Whether I'm easy, or whether I'm true
As I lifted her petticoat, easy and slow
And I tied up my sleeve for to buckle her shoe.

Be she city or country, a girl is a jewel
And well made for gripping as most of them are,

But any young fellow is the most of a fool
If he tries on the first time to go a bit far

Chorus

Down along Thomas Street, on to the Liffey
The sunlight was gone, and the evening was dark
Along by Kingsbridge, and begob in a jiffy
My arms were around her, beyond in the park.

Chorus

If you should go the town of Dungannon
You can search till your eyeballs are empty and blind
Be you sitting or walking or sporting or standing
A girl like Annie you never will find.

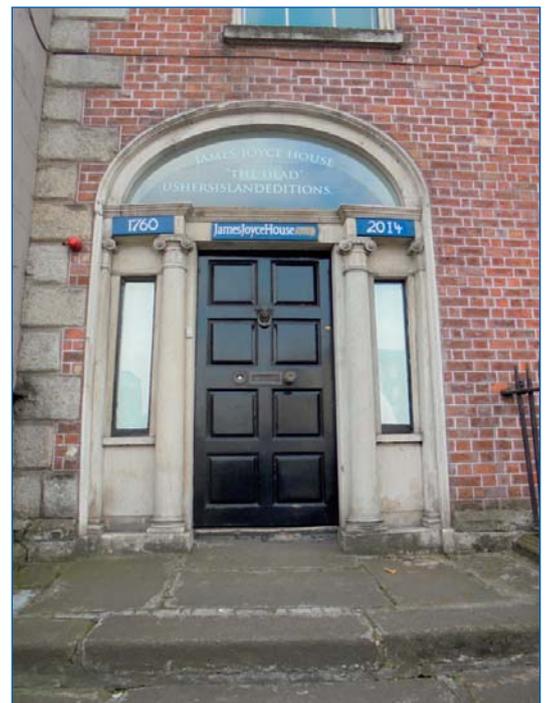
The Frank Sherwin Bridge, the next bridge down the Liffey, was built in 1982 to remove road traffic from the narrower Seán Heuston Bridge. It is named after the colourful Independent TD Frank Sherwin (1905-1981) who represented Dublin North Central for eight years and who once suggested in a Dáil debate that “while [female Garda] recruits should not actually be horse faced, they should not be too good looking. They should be plain women and not targets for marriage.” The next bridge down-stream is the Rory O’More Bridge built first as the Victoria and Albert Bridge in 1863 and renamed in 1939. It was designed by George Halpin, fabricated from cast iron in St Helens, Lancaster and erected by John Killen of Malahide.

As we pass downstream along the quays we see on the south quay the famous Guinness Brewery. Barrels of the black stuff used to be brought down to Dublin port for export to Britain by motorised barges. The barges were a familiar sight in Dublin before road transport and aluminium kegs replaced the wooden barrels and the trade of the cooper. On the north quays we pass the National Museum on the old Collin’s Barracks site and in the foreground we pass Croppies Acre where many of Dublin 1798 insurgents lie.

Stop 2: James Joyce Bridge

This bridge was designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava and built by Irishenco Construction using prefabricated steel sections from Harland and Wolf of Belfast. It was opened in June 2003. It was much admired by Frank Harte who was an architect himself.

“The Lass of Aughrim” is a traditional Irish song sung in James Joyce’s acclaimed short story “The Dead” by his character Bartell D’Arcy. It is included in his collection of short stories titled *Dubliners*. It is a haunting love song sung by a tenor at a party which reflected Joyce’s love of song and singing. The story is set in 15 Usher’s Island which is located opposite the bridge named to honour the great Dublin novelist.



Song 6: “The Lass of Aughrim”

Sung by Sean O’Harain

If you'll be the lass of Aughrim
As I'll take you to be
Tell me that first token
That passed between you and me

Oh don't you remember
That night on yon lean hill
When we both met together
I am sorry now to tell

Oh the rain falls on my yellow locks
And the dew soaks my skin;
My babe lies cold in my arms;
Lord Gregory, let me in

Oh the rain falls on my heavy locks
And the dew soaks my skin;
My babe lies cold in my arms;
But none will let me in

This song of domestic bliss in Dublin starts in the Liffey, sails the seven seas and ends up happy ever after “back in sweet Ringsend – that gem that sparkles on the Dodder”.

Song 7: “Georges Quay” or “The Forgetful Sailor” by Jimmy Montgomery

Sung by Mick Keeley

You son's of Dan O'Connell's guard,
Give ear unto my doleful ditty,
'Tis all about a sailor lad
Whose birth-place was in Dublin City.
My song is for to demonstrate
A story with a pious moral
Beginning close to Carlisle Bridge
And ending on the Isles of Coral.

A schooner sailed from Georges Quay
For foreign parts one sultry saison
And on the shore a maiden stood and
Cried like one bereft of raison.
“Och Johnny Doyle, me love for you
Is true but full of deep contrition.
For what will all the neighbours say
About me and my condition.”

The capstan turned and, sails unfurled,
The schooner scudded down the Liffey.
The damsel gave a pitching shriek,
She was a mother in a jiffy.
The vessel crossed the harbour bar,
Her course was set for foreign waters,
To China where they're very wise and
Drown at birth their surplus daughters.

Now years and years are past and gone
And Mary's child is self-supporting.
And Mary's heart is fit to break when
That young buck goes out a-courting.
And so says she on one fine day
He'll leave me lone and melancholy
I'll dress me up in sailors' clothes
And scour the seven seas for Johnny.

She shipped aboard a pirate bold,
Which raided on the hot equator
And with these hairy buccaneers
There sailed this sweet and verchus crathur.
The Captain thought her name was Bill
His character was most nefarious,
Consorting with this hainous baste,
Her situation most precarious

'Twas in the Saragossa sea
Two rakish barques were idly rolling
And Mary on the middle watch
The quarter-deck she was patrolling.
She calmly watched the neighbouring ship
Then suddenly became exclamant.
For there upon the gilded poop
Stood Mr. Doyle in gorgeous raiment.

And now they're back in sweet Ringsend
That gem that sparkles on the Dodder
He lives a peaceful merchant's life
And does a trade in oats and fodder.
By marriage lines she's Mrs. Doyle,
She runs a stall of perrywinkles
And when he hears "She's that a-way"
His single eye with joy it twinkles.

Their family now it numbers ten
And Mary's heart sings like a linnet,
And Johnny's tamed that wild young buck,
That stretched her patience to the limit.

They are happy there in sweet Ringsend,
They will sail no more for foreign waters,
For Johnny Doyle his hands are full,
With five strong sons and five sweet daughters.

James Joyce's modern classic novel *Ulysses* based on Homer's epic poem still inspires art as this lovely love song by Scottish folk singer Robin Laing illustrates. Luke Cheevers will first perform "Helen of Troy" a short poem written by Simon Armitage to complement the song.

Song 8: "Ulysses" by Robin Laing

Sung by Luke Cheevers

Across the wine dark sea spreads the rosy fingered dawn
It lights your eyes with longing, but still you linger on
Day after day Ulysses, the sands of time run true
Go back to sea it's in your heart, I will wait for you.

By the sandy cove your black ship rests from year to year
With white sails always ready and the rowing gear
Day after day Ulysses, the lotus blooms for you,
The siren's silken singing, shadows everything you do.

In the warm clear night I hear you pacing in the hall
I know your mind is flying where the long waves rise and fall
Day after day Ulysses, I feel you slipping away
In my eyes the sting of tears, in yours the salt sea-spray.

You're not the kind of man to be content with what you've done
Others seek for guidance, you reach for the sun
Day after day Ulysses, you study the changing sky
Watching for the Goddess, who smiles with flashing eyes.

In all the songs and tales you are the undefeated man
But growing old is not a game of catch me if you can
Day after day Ulysses, our days slip by so fast
Their finest colours fade, into the landscape of the past.

Across the wine dark sea spreads the rosy fingered dawn
It lights your eyes with longing, but still you linger on
Day after day Ulysses, the sands of time run true
Go back to sea it's in your heart, I will wait for you.

At Usher's Island on the south quay The Mendicity Institution, one of Ireland's oldest charities (established in 1818) used to stand. It was established at a time when there was no system of public welfare. It provided food clothing and lodgings for the poor of Dublin before moving from this site in 1954. Father Matthew Bridge is situated close to where the ancient Ford of the

Hurdles which was the original crossing point on the River Liffey and gives it's name to the City of Dublin: Baile Átha Cliath meaning Town of the Hurdled Ford. Formerly known as Whitworth Bridge after a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, its name was changed to Dublin Bridge in 1923. It was re-named to its present name in 1938 to commemorate Tipperary-born Father Theobald Mathew who campaigned vigorously for temperance in Ireland.

Stop 3: Arran Quay – Pavement below Heathers' shoe shop

Mellows Bridge is the oldest of all the Dublin City bridges still in use; it was built between 1764 and 1768 and was designed by a military engineer Charles Vallancey. It was originally named Queens Bridge and renamed after the legendary Queen Meave in 1922 by the Municipal Council. The present name is in honour of Lieutenant General Liam Mellows who was executed during the Irish Civil War. To most Dubliners it is still referred to as Queen Street Bridge.

As we passed down the South bank of the river we passed the railings and entrance to the Mendicity Institute on Usher's Quay. During its lifespan it has always worked towards the relief of poverty in the city. Moira House was home of the Mendicity Institute for 130 years 1824-1954. In famine times the Institute responded quickly as the numbers relying on aid climbed to almost 3,000 per day.

During those hungry years the grief and trauma of the event often left the voice of the people silent. Róisín Gaffney's new song echoes the words of T.S. Elliotts in *The Four Quartets*. He wrote:

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Will not stay still.



Song 9: “The Hungry Cry” by Róisín Gaffney

Sung by Róisín Gaffney

It came so fast to our native soil
The silent blight as the poor did toil
Potato food was their sole supply
O who will listen to the hungry cry.

From field to field as black as shrouds
To the workhouse dark did the people crowd
That cursed blight it spread far and nigh
O who will listen to the hungry cry.

Kept from their husbands the wives so dear
No one to ease their sad lonely fears
To workhouse rules they did comply
No one to listen to their children cry

Without music song or funeral bell
Their birth and death no tombstones tell
From hinged coffins with fever high
They piled their bodies in graves awry

For the destitute they were asked to toil
To pile stone on stone on the mountainside
Our ships they sailed with our food supplies
O who will listen to the hungry cry

In that great hunger the words we lacked
For depth of grief made our voice to crack
To sing their song now their pain draws nigh
We have listened to the hungry cry
We have listened to the hungry cry.

Song 10: “Down by the Liffeside” by Peadar Kearney.

Sung by Angela Murray

Peadar Kearney who wrote this song also refers to another of his compositions (“The Soldier’s Song” now the Irish National Anthem) in this popular Dublin ballad. It was one of Ronnie Drew’s great standards. Kearney’s song “The Row in the Town” is perhaps culturally the most Dublin of all the 1916 rebellion songs. We’ll have that next year.

’Twas down by Anna Liffey my love and I did stray,
Where in the good old Liffey mud the seagulls sport and play.
We got the whiff of ray and chips and Mary softly sighed “yerra,
John come a-long for a one and one down by the Liffeside.”

And up to Rabiotti's together we did go
And the rapture that filled our hearts no poet e'er could know
We started eating one and ones and Mary softly sighed,
"Oh! I'd live forever eating chips down by the Liffey side."

Then out along by Georges Street the loving pairs to view,
While Mary swanked it like a queen in a skirt of royal blue.
Her hat was lately turned and her blouse was newly dyed
And you couldn't match her amber locks down by the Liffey side

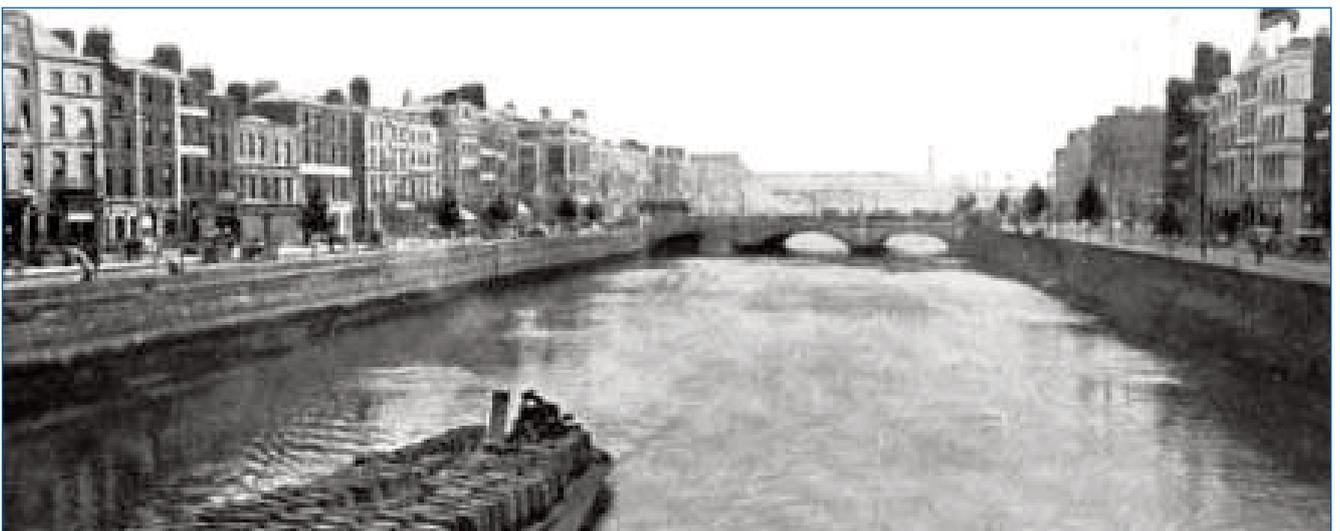
And it on her old melodian so sweetly she did play
"Goodbye and Don't sigh" and eke "Down Texas Way"
But when she turned Sinn Féiner sure me heart near burst with pride
For to hear her sing the Soldier's Song down by the Liffey side.

Next Sunday morning to Meath Street together we will go
And it's up to father Murphy we both will make our vow,
He'll join our hands in wedlock bands and soon we'll be outside
For the whole afternoon on our honeymoon down by the Liffey side.

Song 11: "Two Hundred Years a-Brewing" by Joseph O'Grady *Sung by Barry Gleeson*

The sight of the Guinness barges bringing the vital supplies of black stuff in barrels down the Liffey for export to our emigrants in the UK is a part of old Dublin which vanished with the trade of the cooper in the nineteen fifties. The barrels were loaded on the MV Miranda Guinness at Sir John Rogerson's Quay. This song was written to celebrate the Guinness bicentenary in 1959 by Joseph O'Grady who was a shipyard worker and balladmaker from the city's East Wall area.

Come all you thirsty tourists and travellers everywhere,
Till I sing for you a verse or two in a grand old Irish air.
It's all about our famous stout that's known the world wide,
And it's made for you, this lovely brew, down by the Liffey side.



If you want to see our grand brewery at the top of James's Street,
Don't make a fuss, just take a bus or travel on your feet.
That powerful known site is on the right; at the door there stands a guide,
Who will point out to you where the stout we brew down by the Liffeside.

Our barges neat nigh Watling Street rock gently to and fro,
While winch and sling the barrels swing into the hatch below.
With hold and decks full of Double X they sail down with the tide.
All specially made for the foreign trade down by the Liffeside.

And if you stray Glasnevin way when some old friend is dead,
The mourners stand, with hats in hand, as the funeral prayers are said.
The graves are filled, the tears are spilled, their eyes they quickly dried
With a pint or two in the oul' Brien Boru goin' back down to the Liffeside.

Come fill your glasses to the brim and drink a toast with me,
To the noble house of Guinness's and their world famed brewery.
We Irishmen (and women) are proud of them, their products true and tried,
Long may they live and employment give down by the Liffeside

Stop 4: Four Courts – Pavement at Chancery Lane

O'Donovan Rossa Bridge joins Chancery Place on the north side of the Liffey to Winetavern Street on the south side. The first masonry bridge on this site Ormonde Bridge with five spans was built in 1684 was swept away in a storm in 1802, it was replaced by the current bridge in 1816 and renamed Richmond Bridge after the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. It was renamed in 1923 after the veteran Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa whose funeral and burial in 1915 was considered a significant pre 1916 rising event. The sculptured heads on the keystones of each arch represent Plenty, the Liffey and Industry on one side with Commerce, Hibernia and Peace on the other. The Four Courts of Dublin is one of Dublin's most iconic buildings designed by Gandon. Here we will sing songs of a court case, the condemned and the law as an ass.





Song 12: “The Connerys”

Sung by Frank Nugent

This is one of the great songs of transportation from County Waterford. The story relates to the murder of a land agent and the prosecution of the Connery brothers charged with the offence, the court proceedings, perjury and transportation to New South Wales. The original song in Gaelic was translated by the eminent piper and Irish music collector Seamus Ennis.

O Comyn, I'm cursing you, and praying hurt on you, and hate down from on high.
 And all the people near to you, may it never leave them, but, stay close by their side.
 You committed perjury, to damn us brothers three as you told false tales
 And send the Connery's across the foreign seas to the New South Wales

O, he who's standing there, and does his thinking clear, on our case being tried.
 From early seven morn 'till the hour of nine was done, hope was denied.
 The ground shook under us, as lies came thunderous, to decide our fate,
 I fear their very souls, lie in the darkest holes, so the holy clergy state.

A jacket short being sewn, and trousers coarse and worn, for us they are being made.
 A seaman's suit of blue, the likes we never knew in both Dún na gCraobh
 Were it not for friends at home, our lives we would not own, We'd have lain in quicklime
 graves.
 But we were sent away, to spend our time and stay in the New South Wales.

O, queen of heavens bright, and king of all world's might, give aid unto us all.
 And to our sister young, now alone and in her home, and to her child so small
 When the mass you are reading, be you pleading, that our spirits ne'er fails.
 And the Connery's to come, all safe and honour home, from the New South Wales.

The next humorous Dublin song was written about the time when Dublin Castle issued instructions to the Dublin Metropolitan policemen to learn Irish so they could gather evidence against those making speeches in Irish against conscription and for Irish independence. Frank Harte attributes the song to Brian O'Higgins

Song 13: “The Limb of the Law”

Sung by Mick Dunne

You can tell by my feet I’m a limb of the law,
The people of Dublin for me have no grá,
They hiss and they boo me when I pass them by,
‘Sinn Féin’, ‘up the rebels’, you’ll hear them all cry.
Now you may think that’s bad but there’s one thing that’s worse,
This grand Irish language on my soul is a curse,
With their yibbering and jabbering like an old ass’s bray,
The Castle expects me to know what they say.

Chorus:

With ‘Ochone’ ‘Mo bhrón’ you’ll hear them all say
‘An Dtuigeann tú mé’ and ‘Sinn Féin hooray’
‘Is dóigh liom go bhfuil is dóigh liom nach e’
Ach tá mé ag foghlaim an Gaeilge.

I’ve a friend in the force and he’s courting a cook,
And what do you think she has bought him a book.
With the Irish on this side and the English on that,
So small I could carry it round in my hat.
First learn the letters and then learn the whole phrase
I’ll have it all off in a couple of days.
Then their yibbering and yabbering I’ll soon understand
Such larnification will stagger the land.

Chorus

This book I procured and to learn I must try
“An bhfuil mé?” means “Are you?”, “An Bhfuil tú?” means “Am I?”
“Is dóigh liom,” I think that I do understand.
“Mo lámh” is my foot and “Mo chluas” is my hand.
“Tá me ag foghlaim”, I’m learning you see,
If I keep on like this, an inspector I’ll be.
I’m getting so big that I don’t know the cat.
My head is two sizes too large for my hat.

Chorus

With larnification I’m bloody near dead
I lie on the floor ‘cause I can’t lie in bed.
I am walking and talking when I’m fast asleep.
When I hear “Up the rebels!” my flesh starts to creep
My friends all have left me, I’ve now just a few,
I’m walking around like a wandering Jew.

Song 14: “The Night before Larry was stretched”

Sung by Pádraig Ó Nualáin

Frank Harte wrote that this song was one of a group of Dublin execution songs written in Newgate cant and that the song was attributed to “Hurlfoot” Billy Meagher in the songbook he first came across the song.

The night before Larry was stretched,
Well the boys they all paid him a visit;
A bit in their sacks too they fetched,
For they sweated their duds till they ris it:
For Larry was ever the lad
When a boy was condemned to the squeezer,
Would fence all the duds that he had
To help a poor friend to a sneezer,
AND WARM HIS GOB 'FORE HE DIED

The boys they came crowding in fast,
They drew all their stools round about him;
Six glims round his trap-case were placed,
He couldn't be well waked without them.
When one of us asked could he die
Without having duly repented?
Says Larry, that's all in my eye,
And first by the clergy invented
FOR TO GET A FAT BIT FOR THEMSELVES

“Oh I'm sorry, dear Larry, says I,
For to see you in this situation;
And blister my limbs if I lie,
I'd as lief it had been my own station.”
“Ochone! it's all over,” says he.
“For the neck-cloth I'm forced to put on,
And this time tomorrow you'll see
Your poor Larry as dead as a mutton
BECAUSE WHY, HIS COURAGE WAS GOOD.

“And I'll be cut up like a pie,
And my nob from my body be parted.”
“You're in the wrong box,” then, says I,
“For blast me if they're so hard-hearted;
A chalk on the back of your neck
Is all that Jack Ketch dares to give you;
Then mind not such trifles a feck,
For why should the likes of them grieve you?
AND NOW BOYS COME TIP US THE DECK

Well the cards then being called for, they played,
Until Larry found one of them cheated;

A dart at his napper he made
 Fot the boy, he being easily heated.
“Oh, by the hokey, you thief,
 I'll scuttle your nob with my daddle!
You cheat me because I'm in grief,
 But soon I'll demolish your noddle
 AND LEAVE YOU YOUR CLARET TO DRINK”

Then the clergy came in with his book,
 He spoke him so smooth and so civil;
Larry tipped him a Kilmainham look,
 And pitched his big wig to the devil;
Then, sighing, he threw back his head
 To get a sweet drop of the bottle,
And, pitiful sighing, he said,
 “Oh the hemp will be soon round my throttle,
 AND CHOKE MY POOR WINDPIPE TO DEATH”

“Oh then sure it's the best way to die,
 Oh the devil a better a living
For when the gallows is high
 Then your journey is shorter to heaven;
But what harasses Larry the most,
 And makes his poor soul melancholy
Is he thinks of the time when his ghost
 It will come in a sheet to sweet Molly.
 OH! SURE 'TWILL KILL HER ALIVE

So moving, these last words he spoke,
 We vented our tears in a shower;
For my own self, I thought my heart broke,
 To see him cut down like a flower.
On his travels we watched him next day;
 The throttlar, I thought I could kill him;
But Larry not one word would did say,
 Nor change till he come to King William,
 THEN MUSHA HIS COLOUR TURNED WHITE

When he came to the old nubbing chit,
 He was tucked up, so neat and so pretty;
The rumbler chugged off from his feet,
 And he died with his face to the city.
He kicked too but that was all pride,
 For soon you might see 'twas all over.
Soon after the noose was untied,
 And at darkee we waked him in clover,
 AND SENT HIM TO TAKE HIS GROUND SWEAT

Stop 5: Smock Alley Theatre

Smock Alley Theatre was the second ever purpose built theatre in Ireland. It was built in 1662 on the present site. The Werburgh Street Theatre was the first but it only presented plays from approximately 1637 to 1641. A recent archeological dig (2009) showed that the Smock Alley Theatre was not demolished as originally thought to build a church but was modified with a new roof and stained glass windows.

Falling numbers at the church caused it to be deconsecrated and converted back to its original use. In 2012, after a €3.5 million investment, a new theatre opened on the original foundations and with a lot of the original superstructure.

Grattan Bridge joins Capel Street to Parliament Street. The present bridge replaced Essex bridge first built in 1676, (named after Arthur Capell 1st Earl of Essex), rebuilt 1753 and remodelled on London's Westminster Bridge in 1872 and widened with cast Iron Supports to carry the pavement. It was then named after Henry Grattan MP (1746 - 1820) the speaker of the Irish Parliament.

We can see and are hearing about the ever changing face of Dublin as we walk down the Liffey. Those changes are wonderfully reflected in the modern classic Dublin in "Dublin in the Rare Old Times" written by Pete St. John. Let's all join in the chorus of this modern Dublin anthem.

Song 15: "Dublin in the Rare Old Times" by Pete St John

Sung by Radie Peat

Chorus:

Ring a ring a rosie, as the light declines
I remember Dublin City in the rare ould times





“Where in the good old Liffey mud the seagulls sport and play.”

Song 16: “The 18th of June”

Sung by Fergus Russell

Looking up the Liffey from Mellows and Fr Matthew Bridges, the 203 feet tall Wellington Monument situated in the Phoenix Park is clearly visible on the skyline. The Battle of Waterloo took place on the 18th June 1815, two hundred years ago this year. While it might not be fashionable in republican circles to celebrate that the Duke of Wellington - Arthur Wellesley, was a Dubliner (born on Merrion Street), it is a fact that this great obelisk was built from subscriptions collected from the Dublin public. This song reflects on the sad end to “Boney’s” career and the consequences for the families of the 60,000 dead.

All you people who live at home easy
And are far from the trials of war
Never knowing the dangers of battle
But safe with your families secure
Know you the long scythe of destruction
Has been sweeping the nations all round
But it never yet cut with the keenness
That it did on the eighteenth of June

Chorus:

And what a sad heart had poor Boney
To carry instead of the crown
As he cantered from Brussels to Paris
Lamenting the eighteenth of June

It began about five in the morning,
It lasted till seven at night.
All the people stood round in amazement
They had never yet seen such a sight.
And the thunder of five hundred cannons
Proclaimed that the battle was joined,
And the moon and the stars over-shone all
Proclaiming the eighteenth of June .

Chorus

All you widows whose loves died in battle
And who daily must don the black gown
Its a thousand to one I will venture
Your love died on the Eighteenth of June.
Sixty thousand stout hearted brave heroes
Were slain and their bodies lay strewn
Amid the ruin and destruction of the battle
That befell the eighteenth of June

And what a sad heart had poor Boney
For to carry instead of the crown
And there's many's a sad heart will remember
With great sorrow the eighteenth of June

Song 17: Song 10: “The Charladies’ Ball” by Harry O’Donovan

Sung by Siobhán Harte

Frank Harte wrote that this song was written for performing on the stage (by Jimmy O’Dea at the Gaiety Theatre), but had so much that is Dublin in it, that it has been accepted by the tradition. His grand-daughter Siobhán will perform it for us today outside Dublin’s oldest living theatre.

You may talk of your outings, you picnics and parties
Your dinners, your dances, and hoolies and all
But wait ’till I tell you of the gas that we had
On the night that we danced at the Charladies Ball
I went there as Queen Anne and I went me man
He was dressed as a monkey locked up in a cage
There was pirates and pirots and hottentots and whatnots
And stars you might see on the music hall stage

Chorus:

At the charladies ball people said one and all
You’re the bell of the ball Mrs. Mulligan
We had one steps and two steps and the divil knows what new steps
We swore that we never would be dull again, bedad

We had wine, porter and Jameson
 We had cocktails and cocoa and all
We had champagne that night but we'd real pain next morning
 The night that we danced at the charladies ball

There was cowboys and indians that came from Drumcondra
 Sweet Frances St. fairies all diamonds and stars
There was one of the Rooneys as a clock over Mooneys
 And a telegram boy with a message from Mars
Mary Moore from the Lotts was the Queen of the Scots
 With a crown out of Woolworths perched up on her dome
There was young Jimmy Whitehouse came dressed as a lighthouse
 And a Camden St. Garbo that should have stayed home

Mary Ellen O'Rourke was the Queen of the dawn
 By one thirty she looked like a real dirty night.
Mickey Farren the bester came dressed as a jester
 He burst his balloon and dropped dead at the fright.
Kevin Barr came as Bovril stops that sinking feeling,
 Astride of a bottle, pyjamas and all
But he bumped into Faust, who was gloriously soused
 And the two of them sunk to the end of the hall

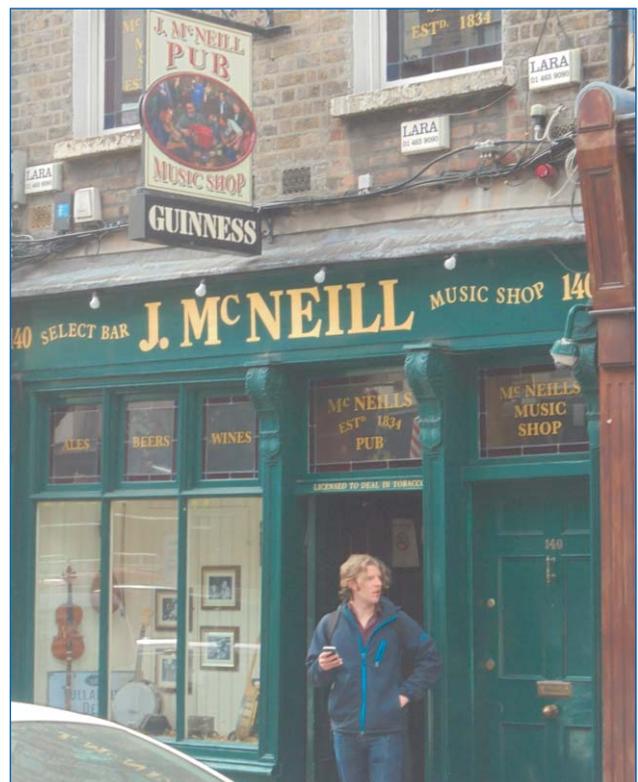
Chorus (with last two lines changed to)
We'd a real standup fight but we fell down to supper
 The night that we danced at the Charladies' Ball

Stop 6: Outside Slattery's of Capel Street

As we walk up Capel Street on the left hand side we pass McNeill's Music Shop. Nessa O'Mahony is a Dublin born poet and in this poem she captures the feel and intrinsic value of shops such as McNeills whose inherited skills and craft served generations of the city's musicians. McNeill's shop front remarkably reveals the establishment now operates as a licensed bar.

Song 18: "Flute Fixing in Mc Neill's of Capel Street" by Nessa O'Mahony *Recited by the poet Nessa O'Mahony*

I would have passed it by –
secreted between pound shops,
purveyors of pine
or fifty types of trainer.
But you knew the way,

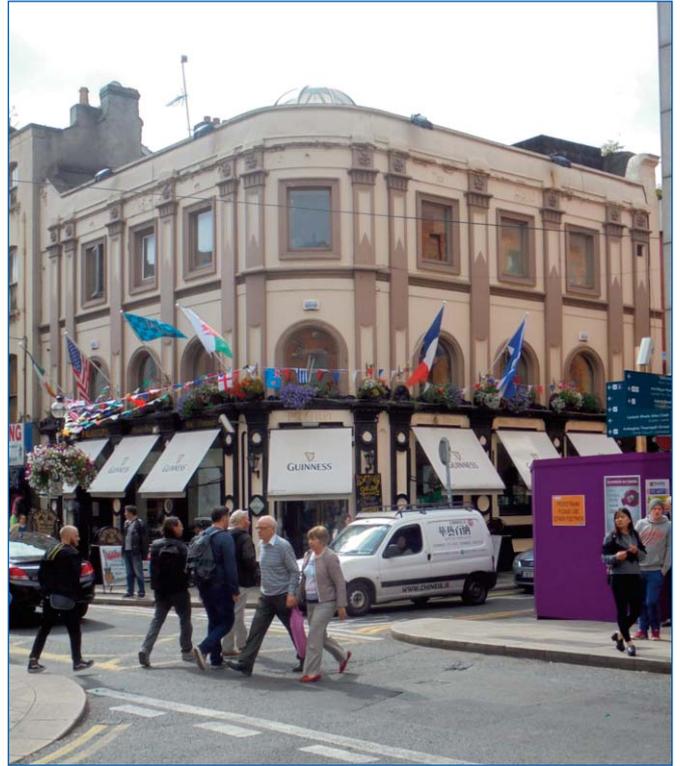


easing the heavy door,
leading me in.

Time was suspended
with the motes
as light slipped in
through timbered slats
and varnish teased our noses
till our breath
was pure mahogany

The job was not yet done.
He twined the hemp, unwound
and twined again around
the bevelled shaft, retouched
with beeswax so the cord
stayed moist and pliant
as he talked of sessions,
of bodhráins played in the Sligo style.

As he worked you browsed
from shelf to shelf, ear cocked
to some internal tune
among the lutes and mandolins
till a bouzouki's soundboard
curved to swell a song
you promised I might one day sing.



The Tradition Club at Slattery's Capel Street on Wednesday night's was the place to hear singers and musicians from all over Ireland in the sixties and seventies. It was there one could hear at weekly sessions traditional artists such as Frank Harte, Seamus Ennis, The Press Gang, Al O'Donnell, Mary Bergin, Matt Molloy, Sean Keane, Triona Ni Dhomhnaill, Liam Óg O' Floinn and Liam Weldon. Those behind the scenes included Sean Corcoran, Finbar Boyle and Kevin Conneff and of course the late An Góilín stalwart Tom Crean and his wife Mags. Here we will sing some of the songs associated with their singing.

Song 19: "Dark Horse on the Wind" by Liam Weldon

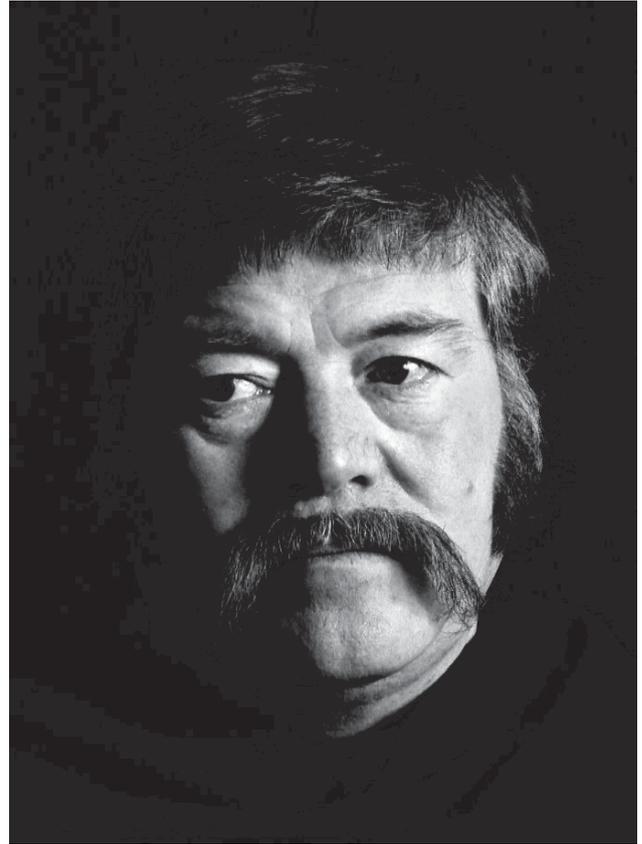
Sung by Antaine Ó Faracháin

Oh those who died for liberty
Have heard the eagle scream
All the ones who died for liberty
Have died but for a dream
Oh rise, rise, rise,
Dark horse on the wind
For in no nation on the earth
More broken hearts you'll find.

The flames leaped high, reached to the sky
And seared a nation's soul
In the ashes of our broken dreams
We've lost sight of our goal
O rise, rise, rise,
Dark horse on the wind
And help our hearts seek Róisín
Our soul again to find

Now charlatans wear dead men's shoes
Aye and rattle dead men's bones
'Ere the dust has settled on their tombs
They've sold the very stones
O rise, rise, rise,
Dark horse on the wind
For in no nation on the earth
More Pharisees you'll find

In grief and hate our motherland
Her dragon's teeth has sown
Now the warriors spring from the earth
To maim and kill their own
O rise, rise, rise,
Dark horse on the wind
For the one-eyed Balor still reigns king
In our nation of the blind.



Liam Weldon

Song 20: “Adieu Sweet Lovely Nancy” – a song made popular in Ireland by The Press Gang

Sung by Máire Ni Chróinín

Here's adieu sweet lovely Nancy, ten thousand times adieu.
I am going o'er the ocean love to seek for something new.
Come change a ring with me dear girl, come change a ring with me,
That it might be a token of true love when I am on the sea.

When I am on the sea dear girl and you know not where I am
Kind letters I will write to you from every foreign land
The secrets of your heart dear girl are the best of my goodwill
And let my body be where it might my heart is with you still.

There's a heavy storm arising see how it gathers around
While we poor souls on the ocean wide are fighting for the crown
Our officers commanding us and him we must obey
Expecting every moment for to be cast away.

There are tinkers, tailors and shoemakers a snoring in their sleep
While we poor boys on the ocean wide are ploughing through the deep
There's nothing to protect us love nor keep us from the cold
On the ocean wide where we must bide like jolly sailors bold.

And when the wars are over and there's peace on every shore
We'll return to our wives and families and the girls we do adore
We'll call for liquor merrily and we'll spend our money free
And when our money it is all gone we will boldly go to sea.

This song is synonymous with the singing of Al O'Donnell who died recently. Al was a great friend and often accompanied Frank Harte on guitar or banjo at concerts and gigs.

Song 21: "The Streets of Derry"

Sung by Eamonn Hunt

Oh after morning there comes an evening,
And after evening, another day,
And after false love, there comes a true love,
I'll have you listen now to what I say.



Al O'Donnell

My love he is as fair a young man,
As fair as any that the sun shines on,
But how to save him, I do not know it,
Since he's been sentenced all to be hung.

As he marched up through the streets of Derry
I'm sure he marched up right manfully;
Being much more like some commanding officer
Than a man to die upon the gallow's tree.

Now the very first step he took up that ladder
His bloom and colour began to fail
Then with heavy sighin' and bitter cryin'
"Is there no release from Derry Gaol?"

And the very next step he took up that ladder
His loving clergyman was standing by
Crying, "Stand you back, you false persecutors
I will make you see that he may not die"

"Yes, I will make you see that you may not hang him
Until his confession to me is done,
And then, you will see that you may not hang him
Till within ten minutes of the setting sun."

"What keeps my love? she's so long in coming,
And what detains her so long from me;
Oh does she think it some shame or scandal
For to see me hang upon the gallow's tree?"

He looked around and he saw her coming,
As she rode swifter than the wind;
"Oh come down, come down from those weary gallows,
For I bear your pardon, all from the Queen."

"Come down, come down from those weary gallows,
For I bear your pardon, all from the Queen."
I will let them see that they dare not hang you
And I'll crown my love with a bunch of Green."

The final stop of our tour is at the Garden of Remembrance where we will today remember Michael Ned Quinn and Frank Harte in song and poetry. First we will be entertained by the McKeon family of Dublin musicians. You are invited to join in a set dance.

Stop 7: Garden of Remembrance

Song 22: A slow air and set dance music

Played by The McKeon Family

An Góilín tribute to the late Micil Ned Quinn

Micil Ned Quinn of Mullaghbawn passed away since last year's Frank Harte Festival. He was one of those whose presence every year made this festival very special. He made us all feel important as he passed on his great skill as a traditional singer and his sublime storytelling. We have asked two of those who sat at his feet and learned his skills and songs to pay singing tributes to that wonderful gentleman who brought joy and happiness to all he met.

Song 23: "The Boys of Mullaghbawn"

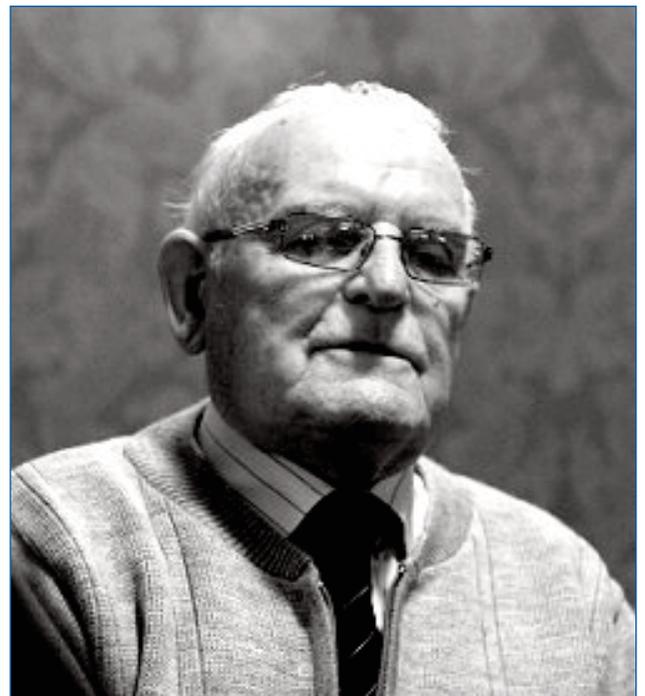
Sung by Andreas Shultz

On a Monday morning early
 As my wand'ring steps did lead me,
 Down by a farmer's station,
 Of meadow and green lawn,
 I heard great lamentation
 That the wee birds they were makin'
 Sayin' "We'll have no more engagements
 With the boys of Mullaghbawn."

Squire Jackson was unequalled
 For honour or for reason,
 He never turned a traitor
 Or betrayed the rights of man,
 But now we are endangered
 By a vile deceiving stranger
 Who has ordered deportation
 For the boys of Mullaghbawn.

As those heroes crossed the ocean
 I'm told the ship in motion
 Did stand in wild commotion
 As if the seas ran dry,
 The trout and salmon gaping
 As the cuckoo left her station
 Sayin', "Farewell to lovely Erin
 And the hills of Mullaghbawn".

To end my lamentation
 We are all in consternation
 For the want of education
 I here must end my song;
 None cares for recreation
 Since without consideration
 We are sent for transportation
 From the hills of Mullaghbawn.



Micil Ned Quinn

Song 24: “Dobbin’s Flowery Vale”

Sung by Micheál Quinn

One morning fair as Phoebus bright her radiant smiles displayed
Whilst Flora in her verdant garb the green fields she arrayed.
Down yon green grove, there I did rove, no cares did me assail.
When a pair I espied by the river side in Dobbin’s flowery vale.

I sat down to rest a while beneath a spreading tree,
The gentle breeze that blew softly by conveyed these words to me;
Adieu fair maid, to you he said, for soon I must set sail
And bid adieu to Armagh and you and Dobbin's Flowery vale.

Forbear those thoughts and cruel words that wound a grieving heart
For is it true that we're met here alas so soon to part
Must I alone here sigh and moan to none my grief reveal.
But here lament my cause to vent in Dobbin's Flowery vale.

Oh do not think you are left alone or think my love untrue,
For where so ever that I roam my thoughts will be of you.
There not a flower in yonder bower or meadow, hill or dale
But will me remind of the maid behind in Dobbin’s flowery vale.

Now there's many a youth has left his home and steered for freedom's shore
That now lies in beneath the silent tomb where the foaming billows roar;
Take my advice, do not forsake or leave me to bewail,
But here remain with your own fond dame in Dobbin's flowery vale.

It was mutual love they together drew and they fondly did embrace,
Whilst the tears like drops of morning dew rolled down each other’s face
She tried in vain him to detain all the while she did bewail,
He bade adieu, and I withdrew from Dobbin's flowery vale.

Song 25: “Kilmainham Jail Dublin, Easter 1991 for Frank Harte”

by Theo Dorgan

Recited by the poet Theo Dorgan

This poem celebrates a concert titled “The Flaming Door” held in Kilmainham Gaol to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising in 1991. The concert comprised actors, poets, musicians and singers gathered to celebrate the memory of the men executed in the small yard within the prison. Frank Harte sang Patrick Galvin’s lament for James Connolly. He recalled how the echo came back from high up in the galleries and how in all the times he had previously sung that song, he never had experienced a feeling like he felt that night in Kilmainham. Theo Dorgan—a Cork born poet who has lived in Dublin for many years—was in the audience. He was also moved and his words are hauntingly profound.

Roadies in ponytails stringing lights and cables,
A beer can popped in the corner, echo of sound check.
Outside in the filling yard, hum of expectation.

We pour through the narrow gate under the gallows hook
in twos and threes, becoming an audience.
Before the lights go down we examine each other shyly.

The singer surveys his audience, heat rising
to the tricolour and Plough overhead.
As the first words of Galvin's lament climb to invoke
James Connolly's ghost, we are joined by the dead.

I say this as calmly as I can. The gaunt dead
crowded the catwalks, shirtsleeved, disbelieving.
The guards had long since vanished, but these
looked down on us, their faces pale.

I saw men there who had never made their peace,
men who had failed these many years to accept their fate,
still stunned by gunfire, wounds, fear for their families;
Paralysed until now by the long volleys of May so long ago.



Frank Harte

I think that we all felt it, their doubt and their new fear,
the emblems so familiar, the setting, our upturned faces,
so unreal. Only the dignity of the singer's art
had the power to release them. I felt it, I say this calmly.

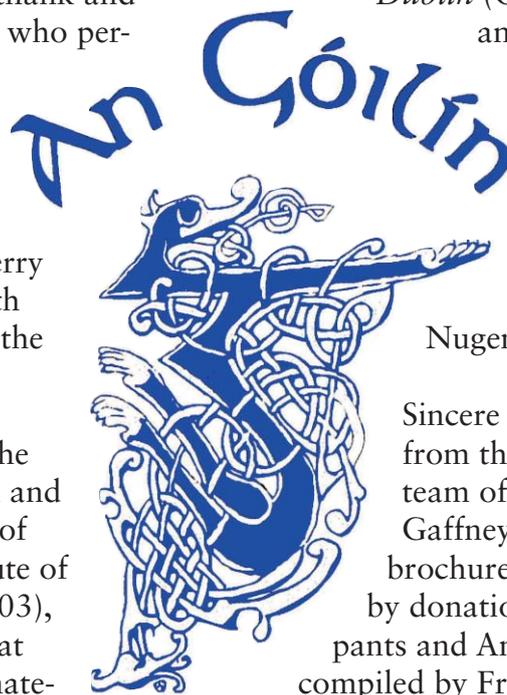
I saw them leave, in twos and threes, as the song ended.
I do not know that there is a heaven, but I saw their souls
fan upwards like leaves from a dry book, sped out into the night
by volleys of applause; sped out, I hope, into some light at last.

I do not know that I will ever be the same again.
That soft-footed gathering of the dead into their peace
Was like something out of a book. In Kilmainham Gaol
I saw this. I felt this. I say this calmly and as lovingly as I can.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AN GÓILÍN wishes to thank and acknowledge all those who performed and participated in the annual Frank Harte Festival walking tour and those who helped plan and organise this year's event. Particular thanks to Terry Moylan for his assistance with the formatting and layout of the tour brochure.

AN GÓILÍN acknowledges the following sources: Phillips M and Hamilton A. Project History of Dublin's River Bridges Institute of Civil Engineering (Dublin 2003), material available on Mud Cat Café, Wikipedia, copyright material in Harte Frank ed. *Songs of*



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Sincere thanks to all who helped from the AN GÓILÍN's Walking Tour team of Frank Nugent, Róisín Gaffney and Fergus Russell. This brochure is not for sale and is funded by donations from walking tour participants and An Góilín. This brochure was compiled by Frank Nugent. Special thanks to The Arts Council for their continued support.





STOPS: 1 - Croppies Acre Memorial Park; 2 - James Joyce Bridge; 3 - Heathers' Shoe Shop; 4 - Chancery Place; 5 - Smock Alley Theatre; 6 - Slattery's, Capel Street; 7 - Garden of Remembrance; 8 - The Teachers Club

LIFFEY BRIDGES: A - Seán Heuston; B - Frank Sherwin; C - Rory O'More; D - James Joyce; E - Liam Mellows; F - Father Matthew; G - O'Donovan Rossa; H - Grattan