



All along the Banks of the Royal Canal

Traditional Singing Walking Tour
Frank Harte Festival 2017
Sunday 24th September 2017

Starts at Cross Guns Bridge, Phibsborough, at 11am.

Introduction

DUBLIN CITY has many waterways; the rivers Liffey, Tolka, Dodder, Camac and Poddle feature in her many songs. The city is also endowed with two canals built two centuries ago, the Grand and the Royal Canals one of which enters the city through Clondalkin and Inchicore, and the latter through Ashtown and Cabra. Each is associated with a great writer – Patrick Kavanagh’s park bench statue haunts the precincts of the Grand Canal near Baggot Street Bridge, and Brendan Behan’s equally fitting memorial casts a melancholic shadow “all along the banks of the Royal Canal” at Binns Bridge.

The Royal Canal (*An Chanáil Ríoga*) was built to carry freight and passenger transportation from the River Liffey to Longford. Work started in 1790 and twenty-seven years later it reached the Shannon in 1817. The system is 145 Kilometres (90 miles) long, with 46 locks. The Canal is fed by Lough Owel which enters the canal at Mullingar. It passes through Maynooth, Kilcock, Enfield, Mullingar, and Ballymahon with a spur to Longford. It cost one and a half million pounds to build and, four years after its completion, the Royal Canal Company was declared bankrupt.

Our walk today focuses on the Royal Canal and its history as told in song and story, as it flows slowly from the fourth lock below Cross Guns Bridge in Phiborough to Russell Street Bridge under the shadow of Croke Park.

Paul Russell, Pipe Major of the Black Raven Pipe band, will pipe walkers to the fourth lock from Cross Guns Bridge to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the death of Tomas Ashe on 25th September 1917. Ashe was a founding member of the Black Raven pipe band and an accomplished piper. Ashe, who was on hunger strike, died at the nearby Mater Hospital after being force-fed by prison authorities in Mountjoy Jail.



Thomas Ashe (1885-1917), a founding member of the Black Raven Pipe Band, at Lusk, County Dublin in 1910.

STOP 1: The 4th Lock at the rear of Mountjoy Gaol.

Songs and poems performed here will focus on the memory of Thomas Ashe and Mountjoy Jail:

Tune 1: “Lament for Thomas Ashe”

Played on the warpipes by Pipe Major Paul Russell. This is a recently composed lament for Thomas Ashe who died on 25 September 1917.

Song 1: “Thomas Ashe” (Sean O’Casey)

Sung by Dave O’Connor

Thomas Ashe was commander of the Fingal Brigade of The Irish Volunteers during Easter week of 1916, which included a battle at Ashbourne against a force of about eighty armed RIC. This action was by far the most successful individual military action of the rising, and the guerrilla warfare tactics employed by Ashe and Richard Mulcahy, his second-in-command, would provide the role model for those involved in the War of Independence. Following the general surrender in 1916 Ashe was tried by court-martial and like the other 1916 leaders, he was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life which he served in a number of English jails including Dartmoor, Lewes and Portland prisons. While in Lewes, Sussex, he wrote a prophetic poem ‘Let Me Carry Your Cross for Ireland Lord’ maintaining that, as a single man, he had less to lose and was more prepared than many of his comrades to die for Ireland. The poem strongly echoes the blood sacrifice ethos of Padraig Pearse.

Ashe was released on general amnesty in June 1917. Following a speech he made at Ballinalea, County Longford on the 25th of July and an oration delivered at Casements Fort, Ardfer, County Kerry on August 5th, he was arrested on August 18th and charged with ‘attempting to cause disaffection among the civil population.’ On September 11th he was found guilty by court-martial of this charge and sentenced to one year with hard labour to Mountjoy Jail, where many other Sinn Féin prisoners were confined. When the prison authorities turned down the request by the prisoners for political or POW status they declared they would go on hunger strike on October 1st. In retaliation the prison authorities had the prisoner’s beds, bedding and boots removed, leaving them to sleep on the cold bare floors. They immediately went on hunger strike. Ashe, cold and alone in his cell, was bound and forcibly fed by a tube forced down his throat on a number of occasions and was brought dying to the Mater Hospital on September 25th, just five days after he had started his fast. He died five hours later from the effects of force feeding and his maltreatment.

The death of Thomas Ashe inspired the first published writings by Sean O’Casey the dramatist, who brought working class Dublin and the Irish rebellion to the world stage with *Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars*. O’Casey was a friend of Ashe and a fellow member of the Gaelic League, and was also a piper. He had changed his name to Seán Ó Cathasaigh and was a founding member and secretary of the Laurence O’Toole Pipe Band. He was very moved by his friend’s sacrifice and wrote two published works – one a propaganda pamphlet titled *The Story of Thomas Ashe* and the other a poem titled ‘Lament for Thomas Ashe’ – in response to Ashe’s death. O’Casey conveys the thought in both documents that Thomas Ashe, nourished by the sweep of the Kerry skies, the boldness of her mountains and the untrammelled surge of the sea, came out of Gaelic Kerry to sow the seeds of human liberty in the hearts of the Irish people.

The breasts of the mountains with anger are heaving,
Swift rivers of tears down their rugged cheeks flow;
Their mantle of heather the wild wind is reaving,
And their proud heads are capp’d with a storm-cloud of woe
Why gathers the gloom in a manner appalling –
What causes the sunshine in terror to flee?
The mountains of Eirinn are plaintively calling –
Thomas Ashe, Thomas Ashe, we are mourning for thee

The wild mountain glens are now silent and lonely,
And grief on their bosom has laid her poor Head.
Here thoughts of new life have no place, for now only
The green woods are wrapped in dear thoughts of the dead!
The leaves from the trees, sadly sighing, are falling
And form a bronze pall for the once flowered lea,
The winds rustling thro' them, are plaintively calling-
Thomas Ashe, Thomas Ashe, we are mourning for thee.

In the ears of the coast Erin's grey waves are beating,
A curse on the Power that his life would not spare,
And mingle a prayer in their gloomy retreating,
With a caoine for the soul that had courage to dare!
The grey restless waves are all rising and falling –
Oh! A sorrowful breast is the Breast of the Sea –
And her waters, uneasy, are plaintively calling
Thomas Ashe, Thomas Ashe, we are mourning for thee.

Shall we then to Nature's sad, heart-broken grieving,
Our own Gaelic nature in apathy close?
Ah! No! To our hearts this dear sorrow receiving,
We'll send in a shout to our circle of foes!
Your thoughts, Thomas Ashe, now, shall shortly be ours –
As you fought the good fight so we'll fight to be free,
'Gainst all the vain pomp of their princes and powers,
Made strong by the thought of dear vengeance for thee.

Song 2 : “Kevin Barry”

Sung by Barry Gleeson

Kevin Gerard Barry was aged 18 when he was hanged on November 1st 1920 in Mountjoy Jail. He was the first Irish Volunteer to be executed since the leaders of the 1916 rising. His execution by hanging, following only days after the death from hunger strike of Terence McSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, precipitated a sharp rise in violence in the Irish War of Independence. Barry had participated in an attack on British Forces in Nth. King Street, Dublin, which resulted in the deaths of three British soldiers. A popular ballad written shortly after his death was famously recorded by Paul Robeson and much later by Leonard Cohen.

In Mountjoy jail one Monday morning,
High upon the gallows tree ,
Kevin Barry gave his young life
For the cause of liberty .
But a lad of eighteen summers,
Yet no one can deny,
As he walked to death that morning
He proudly held his head on high.

Just before he faced the hangman
 In his dreary prison cell,
 British soldiers tortured Barry
 Just because he would not tell
 The names of his brave companions,
 And other things they wished to know.
 “Turn informer or we'll kill you”
 Kevin Barry answered, “no”.

Calmly standing to attention,
 While he bade his last farewell,
 To his broken hearted mother
 Whose grief no one can tell.
 For the cause he proudly cherished
 This sad parting had to be.
 Then to death walked softly smiling
 That old Ireland might be free.

Another martyr for old Ireland.
 Another murder for the crown.
 Whose brutal laws may kill the Irish
 But can't keep their spirit down.
 Lads like Barry are no cowards,
 From the foe they will not fly.
 Lads like Barry will free Ireland,
 For her cause they'll live and die.



Kevin Barry (1902-1920)

Song 3: “The Mountjoy Hotel” (Phil O’Neill, words adapted by Dominic Behan)
Sung by Anne Buckley. This witty prison song is set to the tune of “The Mountains of Mourne”.

In Dublin's big town there are first class hotels
 Where they give board and lodgings to all the big swells.
 They've blinds on the windows and bells on the doors,
 And beautiful carpets laid down on the floor.
 It's in such a spot that you get a great view
 Of the Royal Canal and the ships that pass thru.
 I was there once myself so I'm able to tell
 That there's no digs in Dublin like the Mountjoy Hotel.

One stipulation of this fine resort –
 All lodgers must first be presented at Court,
 And there recommended as suited and right
 To sleep in this mansion by day and by night.
 For there, I can say, are the cream of our land,
 Doctors and lawyers and men of that band.
 In the next suite to me, I remember full well
 A duke spent nine months in the Mountjoy Hotel.

For the entrance they've built up three beautiful gates
And once past the third one there's no need to wait.
The butler just waves and he calls for the boots,
“Fill a bath for this guest and prepare him a suit.”
Without bye or lave ye he makes you at home,
And sends for a barber to trim up your dome,
And then, when he's finished, the clerk rings a bell;
The manager meets all at the Mountjoy Hotel.

One thing about this, all the service is free,
Be ye higher or lower or middle degree.
When ye feel like a change, never reck the amount,
You'll never be given a bill or account.
I stopped there myself for close to five years,
And when I was leaving the staff were in tears.
“I wish you were spending,” the manager said
“The rest of your life at the Mountjoy Hotel.”

Song 4: “The Lag’s Song” (Ewan McColl)

Sung by Fergus Russell

This powerful song, written in 1956, was the musical theme for *In Prison*, a documentary made in Strangeways Prison, Manchester, by British television film maker, Dennis Mitchell.

When I was a young lad sometimes I'd wonder
What happened to time when it passed.
Then one day I found out that time just lands in prison,
And there it is held fast

When I was a young man I used to go courting
And dream of the moon and the stars.
The moon is still shining the dreams they are all broken
On these hard iron bars.

Look out of the window over the roofs there
And over the walls see the sky.
Just one flying leap and you could make your getaway,
If only you could fly.

The prison is sleeping the night watch is keeping
Its watch over seven hundred men,
And behind every cell door a sleeping lag is dreaming,
Oh to be free again.

Go write me a letter addressed to my number,
But say you remember my name,
So I'll be reminded of how the world outside goes
And feel a man again.

Got time on my hands, I've got time on my shoulder,
Got plenty of time on my mind.
There's no summer or winter when once you land inside here,
Just that old prison grind.



The Brendan Behan Statue by sculptor Brian Coll at Binns Bridge

Stop 2: Brendan Behan Statue - Binns Bridge

The next canal bridge is named after John Binns who was a director of the Royal Canal Company and previously was a director of the Grand Canal Company. Binns has the unique distinction of having a bridge over both canals named in his memory. The Grand Canal bridge bearing his name is at Robertstown in County Kildare.

Brendan Behan (1923-1964) was an Irish poet, novelist and playwright who wrote in both Irish and English. Born in Russell Street into a republican family, he joined Fianna Éireann at the age of fourteen and became a member of the IRA at sixteen years. He spent time in Borstal institutions in Britain, and in Mountjoy Jail for his IRA activities. His plays *The Quare Fellow*, *An Ghiall* (later translated to English as *The Hostage*) were both internationally successful as was his autobiographical novel *Borstal Boy*.

The Behan Statue on the canal bank above Binns Bridge by the sculptor John Coll has a twin on the banks of the Grand Canal at Baggot Street Bridge to his friend and rival poet Patrick Kavanagh. Behan once commented that “Kavanagh’s flat on Pembroke Road was the only place in Dublin where you had to wipe your feet after leaving. ‘The Auld Triangle’ which was first performed publicly as part of Behan’s play *The Quare Fellow* was attributed by Behan to his friend Dicky Shannon.

Song 5: “The Auld Triangle” (Dicky Shannon)

Sung by Andreas Shultz

A hungry feeling came o'er me stealing,
And the mice they were squealing in my prison cell,
And that auld triangle, went jingle jangle
All along the banks of the Royal Canal

Oh, to begin the morning, the warden bawling
Get up you bowsey and clean out your cell,
And that auld triangle went jingle jangle
All along the banks of the Royal Canal

Oh, the screw was peeping and the lag was sleeping
As he lay weeping for his girl Sal,
And that auld triangle went jingle jangle
All along the banks of the Royal Canal

In the female prison there are seventy women,
And I wish it was with them that I did dwell,
And that auld triangle went jingle jangle
All along the banks of the Royal Canal

Song 6: “The Captains and the Kings” (Brendan Behan)

Sung by Luke Cheevers

I remember in September, when the final stumps were drawn,
And the shouts of crowds now silent when the boys to tea had gone.
Let us, oh Lord above us, remember simple things,
When all are dead who love us, Oh, the Captains and the Kings,
When all are dead who love us, Oh, the Captains and the Kings.

We have many goods for export, Christian ethics and old port,
But our greatest boast is that the Anglo-Saxon is a sport.
When the darts game they are finished, and the boys their game of rings,
And the drafts and chess relinquished, Oh, the captains and the Kings,
And the drafts and chess relinquished, Oh, the captains and the Kings.

Far away in dear old Cyprus, or in Kenya's dusty land,
We bear the white man's burden in many a strange land.
As we look across our shoulder, in West Belfast the school bell rings,
And we sigh for dear old England, and the Captains and the Kings.
And we sigh for dear old England, and the Captains and the Kings.

In our dreams we see old Harrow, and we hear the crow's loud caw.
At the flower show our big marrow takes the prize from Evelyn Waugh.
Cups of tea and some dry Sherry, vintage cars, these simple things,
So let's drink up and be merry, for the captains and the Kings,
So let's drink up and be merry, for the captains and the Kings

As I wandered in a nightmare all around Great Windsor Park,
Now what did you think I found there as I wandered in the dark?
It was an apple half-bitten, and sweetest of all things,
Five baby teeth had written of the Captains and the Kings.
Five baby teeth had written of the Captains and the Kings.

By the moon that shines above us in the misty morning light
Let us cease to run ourselves down and praise God that we are white,
And, better still, are English, tea and toast and muffin rings,
And old ladies with stern faces and the captains and the Kings,
And old ladies with stern faces and the captains and the Kings

Song 7: "D'Ya Remember Jem?" (Heno McGee)

Recited by Philip Breen

Heno Magee (1936-2016) was born in Dublin. He left school at fourteen to become a messenger boy. Later he joined the R.A.F. and travelled widely for five years before returning to Dublin to work in a factory. In 1972 he retired to devote himself entirely to writing. In 1976 he received an Abbey Theatre bursary and the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature. His five plays include *I'm Getting Out of This Kip*, *Hatchet* and *Red Biddy* which have been produced on stage and television. Frank Harte recited this recitation before each production of *Red Biddy* at the Abbey or Peacock

Do you remember Jem when we first stepped out,
You'd a pin striped suit and you wouldn't open your mouth.
But you really looked lovely, 'cept you shirt was sticking out.
Do you remember Jem? Do I remember, will I ever forget?

And the day picking winkles on Dollymount Strand.
The tide came in and nearly drowned our Gran.
And we had to push her home in a three-wheel pram.
Do you remember Jem? Do I remember, will I ever forget?

And the day we went to the Phoenix Park
To look at the deer and sit in the grass.
And you held my hand and asked for a kiss
But I wouldn't give in, cause I knew it was a mortal sin.
And then you said you loved me and promised a ring.
Do you remember Jem? Do I remember, will I ever forget?

And the hooley in the house Stephen's night.
You met all the relations, and nothing went right.
And everybody thought you were my little brother, cause you looked like Stan.
'Cept he never ever got sick over Gran.
Do you remember Jem? Do I remember, will I ever forget?

And do you remember you changed my name?
You couldn't find the ring and Gran started praying.
And she looked in your waistcoat and poked you around.
And when she looked through your pockets your trousers fell down.
Do you remember Jem? Do I remember, will I ever forget?

And the singing and dancing back at the house.
Come to think of it now you were quiet as a mouse.
But you shouldn't have poured the whiskey in Gran's bottle of stout.
I thought she was dead when we found her asleep in the wedding bed.
But it was gas, it was grand. And you had to sleep with me brother Stan.
Do you remember Jem? Do I remember, will I ever forget?

Well its forty years now we've been knocking about.
You're much the same, and I haven't changed.
'Cept me teeth aren't me own and you've got gout.
But you really look lovely, 'cept your shirt's sticking out.
Do you remember Jem? Do I remember, will I ever forget?

Song 8: "My Laughing Boy" (Brendan Behan)

Sung by Eamonn Hunt

It was Kathleen Behan, (Brendan Behan's mother) who found a wonderful name for Michael Collins. She called him 'My Laughing Boy'. This inspired her son Brendan to write this superb ballad which he used to sing with enthusiasm and passion in McDaid's and other pubs in Dublin.



Wildlife on the Royal Canal (Photo: Frank Nugent)

'Twas on an August morning, all in the dawning hours,
I went to take the warming air, all in the Mouth of Flowers,
And there I saw a maiden, and mournful was her cry,
'Ah what will mend my broken heart, I've lost my Laughing Boy'.

So strong, so wild, and brave he was, I'll mourn his loss too sore,
When thinking that I'll hear the laugh or springing step no more.
Ah, curse the times and sad the loss my heart to crucify,
That an Irish son with a rebel gun shot down my Laughing Boy.

Oh had he died by Pearse's side or in the GPO,
Killed by an English bullet from the rifle of the foe,
Or forcibly fed with Ashe lay dead in the dungeons of Mountjoy,
I'd have cried with pride for the way he died, my own dear Laughing Boy.

My princely love, can ageless love do more than tell to you,
Go raibh mile maith agat for all you tried to do,
For all you did, and would have done, my enemies to destroy,
I'll mourn your name and praise your fame, forever, my Laughing Boy.'

Song 9. "The Bugaboo" (Anonymous)

Sung by Mick Keeley

This is one of the best known traditional Irish canal songs set on the Grand Canal in the late nineteenth century. Richmond Barracks mentioned in the song was a British Military Barracks for 108 years located at Inchicore, where many Irishmen were trained before going overseas on military campaigns. It was also where those who fought in 1916 were held and court-martialled, and where their fate was decided.

Come all ye tender hearted boys,
Wherever you may be,
And I'll tell you of the dangers
Upon the dark blue sea –
Of the dangers and the hardships, my hoys,
That I went through,
When I shipped as cook and steward, my boys,
On board of the Bugaboo.

The day when I first joined her,
She lay in James's Street canal;
She was large and stout and beautiful –
Forget her shape I never shall;
The captain wore a large straw hat,
Knee breeches and a body coat so blue,
Arrah! boys, he made a fine figurehead
For to ornament the Bugaboo

We soon weighed anchor and set sail
To plough the raging surf.
We were bound for the Bog of Allen
To get a load of turf;
We sailed until we passed the back
Of Richmond Barracks so true,
When the gallant 84th fired a royal salute of bricks
At the captain of the Bugaboo.

We sailed three years when a storm arose,
And the sea ran mountains high,
The thunder rolled, the lightning flashed,
And lit the dark blue sky.
So the second mate gave orders
To lower the sails and crew.
While the captain down below was smoking in his bed –
He set fire to the Bugaboo.

When the captain found what he had done,
He loud for help did shout,
He called up through the chimney top
For the helmsman to come and put it out;
But the helmsman was fast asleep,
And to his post untrue.
And the fire burned so hard through the middle of the turf,
They couldn't save the Bugaboo.

When fifteen thousand miles from land,
In latitude fifty-four,
The fire burned so hard one night
That it couldn't burn any more;
So the captain he gave orders
To lower the boats and save the crew,
While 1,000 sods of turf and 50,000 men
Were smothered in the Bugaboo.

Stop 3: Russell Street/Croke Park

Song 10: The Mary Anne McHugh (Percy French)

Sung by Máire Ní Chróinín

This Royal Canal song was composed by Percy French (1854-1920). It was recorded in 1960 by Séamus Ennis on an album titled *A Pinch of Salt – British sea songs old and new* by various artists (HMV CLP 1362).

Come all ye lads who plough the seas and also seize the plough,
The cruise of a canal boat I am telling to ye now.
It was the Mary Ann McHugh that braved the angry surf
And bore away from Mullingar with a terrible load of turf.
 And the captain's name was Duff,
 His manners they were rough,
But every cape and headland by its Christian name he knew,
 And he issued his command –
 “Keep her well in sight of land!
Till we make the port of Dublin in the Mary Ann McHugh.”

The engine was of one horse-power, propelled wid a blackthorn stick,
Wid the wind astarn, and filled with corn, the horse went a terrible lick.
We worked her roun' the Hill o' Down, and then Kilcock we passed,
And when we seen John Flynn's shebeen, we cried out “Land at last.”
 But the captain, Jamesy Duff,
 Cried “Luff! Ye lubbers, luff!
And don't put in near Johnny Flynn whatever else ye do.
 Last time we passed his door
 We forgot to pay his score,
So he's got the polis watching for the Mary Ann McHugh.

Then up an spake an old sailor who had sailed the Irish Sea.
“I pray thee put into yonder port or the crew will mutinee;
To put to sea with the boy and me is a cruel thing, I think,
With water, water everywhere, and never a drop o' drink!”
 But the captain, Jamesy Duff,
 Said, “Enough, my lad, enough!
No man before mast shall ever tell me what to do.
 Clap on the sail at wance,
 For that's our only chance,
To keep from debt and danger in the Mary Ann McHugh.”

With anxious heats the vessel starts upon her altered course,
The wind and waves they lashed the shore, and the pilot lashed his horse,
But all in vain – beneath the strain the rope began to part,
And she ran aground on a lump of coal that wasn't put down in the chart!
 And the captain, Jamesy Duff,
 He caught me such a cuff,
And then he said, “Go heave the lead,” while the flag at half-mast flew,
 But I had had enough
 Of the tyrant, Jamesy Duff,
So I heaved the lead at his head and fled from the Mary Ann McHugh.

Song 11: Johnny Seoighe (Traditional)

Sung by Antaine Ó Faracháin

This famine song is sung to commemorate the 1,490 starving tenants of Major Denis Mahon of Stroketown County Roscommon, who walked the Royal Canal tow-path in 1847 en route to Liverpool and Canada on “Assisted Passage” provided by Mahon. They were accompanied by the bailiff John Robinson who was instructed to stay with them to Liverpool and ensure that they boarded the ships. They left Liverpool on four ships: the *Virginus*, *Naomi*, *John Munn* and the *Erin’s Queen*. When the ships arrived in Quebec 158 of the 469 passengers of the *Virginus* were dead. 78 were dead on *Erin’s Queen*, 59 died on *John Munn* and 78 of those on *Naomi* died. In all 372 were dead before reaching Canada. A further 384 were recorded on landing as sick from cholera and typhus. The Mahon tenants who travelled this tow-path were amongst the first to be characterised as sailing on coffin ships during the famine. Mahon was murdered about four miles from his home on November 4th 1847.

Johnny Seoighe tuig mo ghlór
 Is mé a’ tíocht le dóchas faoi do dhéin,
 Mar is tú an réalt eolais is deise lóchrainn
 As mo shúil ag teampall Dé.
 Is tú bláth na hóige is deise ghlortaí
 Dhearc mo shúil ó rugadh mé,
 Agus as ucht Chríost is tabhair dhom *relief*
 Nó go gcaitear Oíche Nollag féin.

Agus lá arna mhárach fuair mé an páipéar,
 Is nach mé bhí sásta agus chuaigh mé ’un siúil.
 Is ní bhfuair mé freagra bith an lá sin
 Ach mé féin ’s mo pháistí bheith amuigh faoin drúcht.
 Tá mé tuirseach, sciúrtha, feannta
 Oibrithe, gearrthaí ó neart a’ tsiúil,
 Is a *Mhister Joyce*, tá an *workhouse* lán
 Is ní ghlacfar ann isteach níos mó.

Is nach mór an clú dho bhaile Charna
 An fhad ’s tá an lanúin seo dhul thrí,
 Mar is deise ’s breáichte dreach na mná
 Ná ’n *morning star* nuair a éiríonn sí.
 Tá ’n bhanríon tinn is í go lag ’na luí,
 Is deir dochtúirí go bhfaighidh sí bás,
 Is é fios a húdair léir mar deir siad liomsa
 Nuair nach bhfuil sí pósta ag *Mister Joyce*.



The “Canal End” Croke Park from the outside at Russell Street Bridge. (Photo: Frank Nugent)

Song 12: Song “Cúchullain’s Son” (Tom Williams)
Sung by Frank Nugent

This well crafted song about Wexford hurling legend Nicky Rackard refers to “Blackstair’s men” watching Rackard on “September fields” which of course in hurling meant the first Sunday in September at Croke Park for the All-Ireland final. Wexford beat Galway in the 1955 final and denied Christy Ring his ninth all-Ireland medal in 1956 when they defeated Cork in that year’s final. Under the shadow of the stand at “the canal end” we honour a true hero of the “ancient game.”

I see them still on meadows green
 Where hurlers came together,
With hands held high midst clashing ash,
 To catch the spinning leather.
Cork had Ring and Tipp had Doyle
 And Clare and the Cats had others,
But we held our heads up proud and high
 For we had the Rackard brothers.

The challenge of an ancient game
 Brought glory, glory to your name
 Though March winds blew the crowds still
 came
 To watch you gentle hero.
 In life's long march you made us proud
 And many a voice from out the crowd
 Called out your name aloud, aloud,
 An echo still resounding

Chorus
 And Blackstairs men who saw you then
 Still speak of you in awe,
 On Carman's green where you had been
 They tell of what they saw.
 We watched you on September fields,
 And lightning was the drive,
 You were the one Cuchulainn's son
 In 1955.

The hand that held the stick of ash,
 And the man who led with style and dash,
 Oh! Carrigtwohill once felt the crash
 And Bennettsbridge and Thurles.
 And when in later life you beat
 The devil on that lonely street,
 You showed us how to take defeat
 With dignity and courage.

The last parade was sad and slow,
 The last oration spoken low,
 And as, on green fields long ago
 The Diamond stood beside you.
 Old friends they flanked you side by side,
 And the tears they shed were tears of pride.
 An ash tree toppled when you died
 And scattered seeds at random.



Wexford's hurling great -Nicky Rackard (1922-1976)

Song 13: “Dicey Riley” (Traditional) *Sung by Siobhán Harte*

Our route back to the Garden of Remembrance passes along Fitzgibbon Street mentioned in this rollicking Dublin traditional song. Many additional verses have been added over the years by singers including Dominic Behan and Tom Munnely. The words can be found in Frank Harte's *Songs of Dublin*.

Poor aul' Dicey Reilly she has taken to the sup,
Poor aul' Dicey Reilly she will never give it up,
It's off each morning to the pop,
And she goes in for another little drop.
Ah, the heart of the rowl is Dicey Reilly.

She walks along Fitzgibbon Street with an independent air,
And then it's down by Summerhill and as the people stare.
She says it's nearly half past one
And it's time I had another little one.
Ah, the heart of the rule is Dicey Reilly

At two, pubs close and out she goes as happy as a lark.
She'll find a bench to sleep it off down in St. Patrick's Park.
She'll wake at five feeling in the pink
And say, "Tis time for another little drink.
Ah, the heart of the rowl is Dicey Riley

Stop 4: The Garden of Remembrance

Tune 2: A medley of tunes associated with Margaret Barry

Played by musicians John Kelly, family and friends.



Margaret Barry (1911-1966) with Frank Harte in the Brazen Head Pub. (Photo: Colm Keating)

Song 14: “Hand me down my Petticoat” (Traditional)

Sung by Rosie Davis

This is a World War One song set in Dublin. The disused Dublin Linen Hall (on part of the current site of DIT Bolton Street, incidentally where Frank Harte worked as a lecturer) was used by the British Army as a temporary Barracks from 1870, and was used by the Army Pay Corps during the Great War. It was set alight on the Wednesday of Easter Week 1916.

Oh hand me down me petticoat
And hand me down me shawl,
Oh hand me down me buttoned boots
For I'm off to the Linen Hall.

A'ra he was a quare one
Fa de liddle yodle da
He was a quare one and I'll tell you.

If you go down to the Curragh Camp
Called in at number nine,
You'll see three squaddies standing there
Now the good-looking one is mine.

A'ra he was a quare one
Fa de liddle yodle da
He was a quare one and I'll tell you.

Oh, me love has joined the army
All under a false name,
Oh, he's done me on me pension,
And his ould wan is all to blame.

Song 15: “The Blackbird of Slane” (T. Smith)

Sung by Robert Kelly

Francis Edward Ledwidge (1887–1917) was an Irish war poet and soldier from County Meath. Sometimes known as the “poet of the blackbirds”, he was killed in action at the battle of Passchendaele in 1917.

I was walking one day by the banks of the Boyne
By a long leafy wall and a castle so fine
When I heard a small bird singing high on a tree
And it seamed at the time she was singng to me

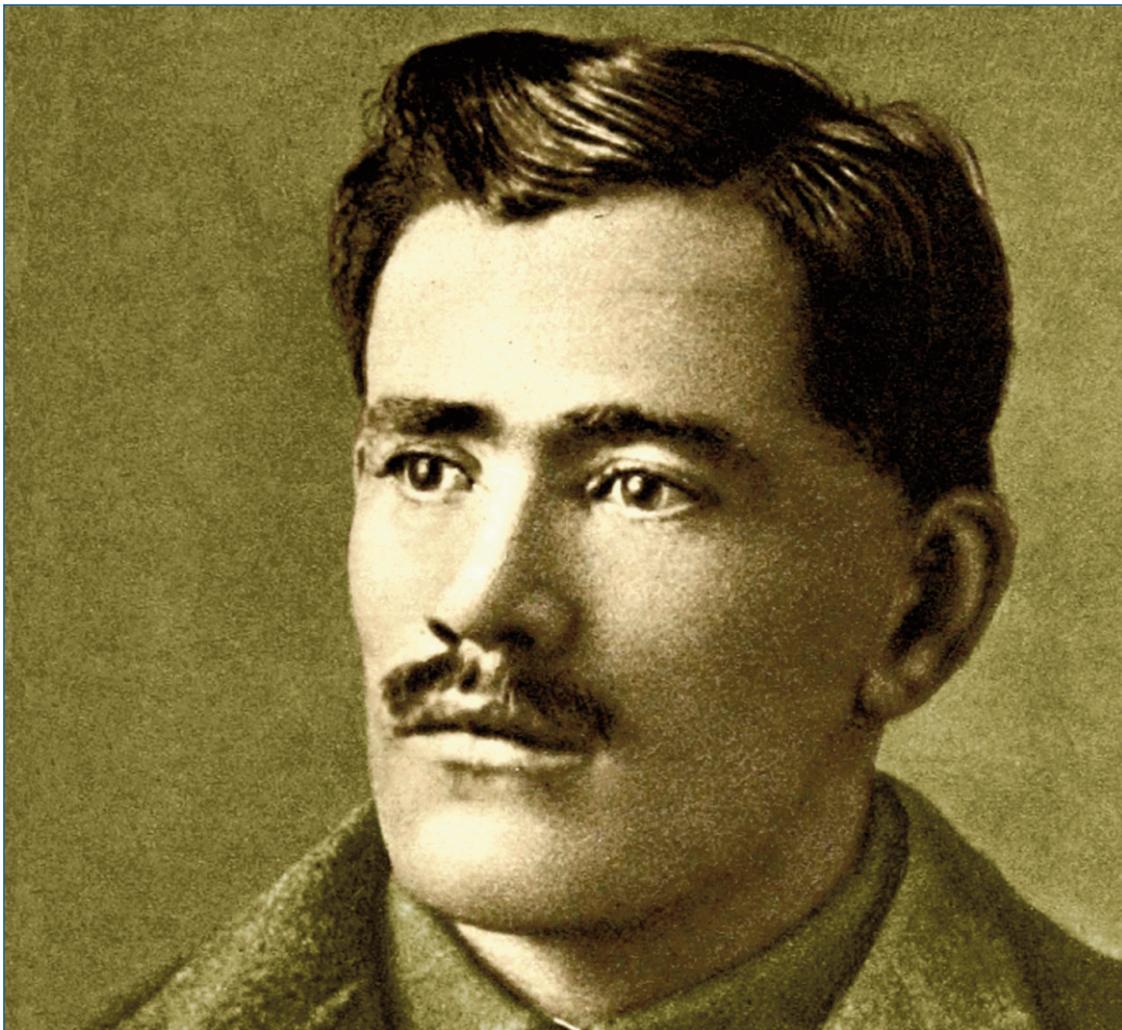
And I thought she sang ‘Traveller, where have you come from?
Have you been near the green grassy place called The Somme?
Or on Flander’s fair fields or that long lonely plain
Where they laid my young Ledwidge, my Blackbird of Slane’

On wild Connemara, the breezes blow free,
And they hold many heartaches and memories for me.
Oh my prince and my poet, he perished in vain,
My beautiful Francis, my Blackbird of Slane.

All those words left unwritten, those songs left unsung,
Dunsany's bright star from the heavens has gone,
And the cruel war raging far over the sea
Has stolen my Ledwidge, my Blackbird from me.

Oh these are the words and the waters below,
And here lies a stone on the hillside above,
And along in each field and each green country lane
Beats the heart of my hero, my Blackbird of Slane.

On wild Connemara, the breezes blow free
And they hold many heartaches and memories for me.
Oh my prince and my poet, you'll always remain
My beautiful Francis, my Blackbird of Slane.



Francis Ledwidge – Irish War Poet



Brian O'Nolan (1911-1966) pen names Flann O'Brien and Myles na gCopaleen was an Irish novelist, playwright and satirist. 2017 is the 50th anniversary of the posthumous publication of his acclaimed novel The Third Policeman.

Song 18: "Is it about a Bicycle?"

Written and sung by Andrew Basquille

It's thanks to Val O'Donnell who suggested to me that a song was required to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of Flann O'Brien's classic novel *The Third Policeman*. It was to be ready for Mylesday, April 1st 2017. You can't beat a deadline! The tune is that of 'Cúnlá'. – *Andrew Basquille*.

Who is that nameless man with a wooden leg?
Cé hé an fear le cos maide?

Mathers was worth a pack of potato-meal,
Pacáiste min phráta.

The smash of a spade and that was the end of him,
's buille theannaire rothair.

Is it about a bicycle – is it a?
An faoi rothar atá sé?

Who'll ever know what's in that box at all?
Cad 'tá istigh insan bhosca?

A voice from inside for convenience he called him Joe,
Seosamh ab ainm a anama.

What was inside but four ounces of omnium,
Níorbh ann ach ceithre unsa.

Is it about a bicycle – is it a?
An faoi rothar atá sé?

Did you ever hear tell of the Atomic Theory?
Cad é an teoiric adamhach?

Particles lively as leprechauns doing a jig,
Ag damhsa ar bharr leac tuama.

Is it about a bicycle – is it a?
An faoi rothar atá sé?

Would you believe he's half man and half bicycle?
Is leath fhear is leath rothar é.

He made his escape on the loveliest saddle.
Suas ar an diallat is áille.

Is it about a bicycle – is it a?
An faoi rothar atá sé?

Margaret Barry Remembered

Margaret Barry (1917-1989) was an Irish traditional singer and zither banjo player from a Traveller family. She was born Margaret Cleary in Cork and, at the age of fifteen, after a family dispute, she left home and started performing as a street musician. In the early fifties she moved to London where, with her unique singing and banjo style, and in the company of Sligo fiddle player Michael Gorman, she became well known in the Irish Pubs in Candel Town.

Following several album releases she headlined concerts at the Royal Albert Hall in London and the Carnegie Hall in New York, and appeared with Bob Dylan at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival. She famously drank Brendan Behan under the table in the Brazen Head pub and, disappointed with the quality of American beer, she confronted President Gerald Ford telling him: "I don't like your Guinness ...'tis very, very weak." Christy Moore met her in London where she requested him to sing 'The Wild Colonial Boy'. He sings it here today in memory of the great Irish troubadour.



Brendan Behan with Margaret Barry in 1961 (Photo: Gordon Standing)

Song 19: “The Wild Colonial Boy” (Traditional)

Sung by Christy Moore

There was a wild colonial boy, Jack Duggan was his name.
He was born and raised in Ireland in a place called Castlemaine.
He was his father's only son, his mother's pride and joy,
And dearly did his parents love the wild colonial boy.

At the early age of sixteen years, he left his native home,
And to Australia's sunny shore he was inclined to roam.
He robbed the rich, he helped the poor, he shot James McAvoy.
A terror to Australia was the wild colonial boy.

One morning on the prairie as Jack he rode along,
A-listening to the mockingbird a-singing a cheerful song,
Out stepped a band of troopers, Kelly, Davis and Fitzroy.
They all set out to capture him, the wild colonial boy.

“Surrender now Jack Duggan for you see we're three to one.
Surrender in the Queen's high name for you're a plundering son”.
Jack pulled two pistols from his belt and he proudly waved them high.
“I'll fight, but not surrender”, said the wild colonial boy.

He fired a shot at Kelly, which brought him to the ground,
And turning 'round to Davis, he received a fatal wound.,
A bullet pierced his proud young heart from the pistol of Fitzroy
And that was how they captured him, the wild colonial boy.

Song 20: “Her Mantle So Green” (Traditional)

Sung by Jerry O’Reilly

This is a classic broken token ballad with a ‘big’ tune that was printed extensively on broad-sheets in the 19th century. It was published in *Irish Street Ballads* by Colm O Lochlainn and recorded in 1965 on her classic album *Her Mantle So Green* (with Michael Gorman) Topic 12T123.

As I went a walking one morning in June
To view the fine spots and the meadows in
bloom,
I spied a fair damsel with hair like a Queen
In her costly fine robes and her Mantle so
Green.

I stood in amazement I was took by surprise.
She appeared like an angel that fell from the
skies.
Her eyes like the diamonds her cheeks like the
rose.
She’s one of the fairest that nature composed.

Says I, my fond creature one, will you come
with me,
We’ll join in wedlock and married we’ll be,
I’ll dress you in rich vestments, with your hair
like the queen,
In your costly fine robes and your mantle so
green.

She said my young man, you must be excused,
For I’ll wed no man, and you must be refused,
These green fields I’ll wander and shun all
men’s view,
Since the lad I love best lies in far Waterloo.

If you are not married, tell me your lover’s
name,
For I being in that battle, I might know the
same.
Draw near to my mantle and there you will
see
His letters embroidered in my mantle so green.

In the ribbon of her mantle it’s there I behold
His name and his surname in letters of gold,
Young Willie O’Reilly came into my view
He was my chief comrade at far Waterloo.

We fought so victorious where the bullets did
fly,
On a far field of battle your true love does lie.
We fought for three days ’til the fourth after-
noon,
He received his death summons on the eigh-
teenth of June.

As he was a-dying I heard his last cry,
If you were here lovely Nancy, I’m ready to
die.
And that is the truth and the truth I do swear
Here is his token this gold ring I wear.

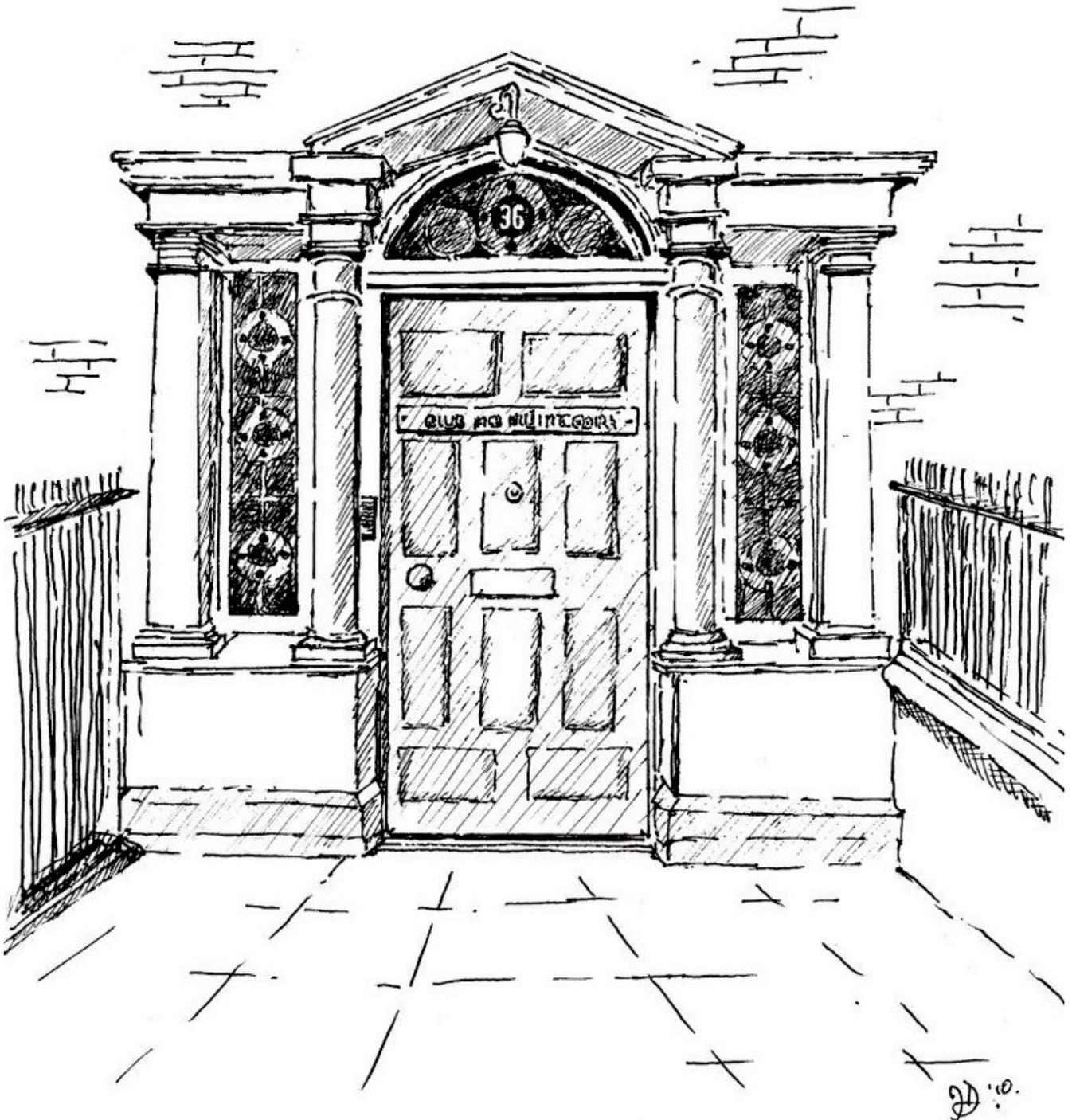
She stood in amazement how pale she did
grew,
She flew to my arms with a heart full of woe,
Rise up lovely Nancy you’ll wander no more.
Rise up, lovely Nancy, your grief I’ll remove.

An it’s Nancy, dearest Nancy, since I won your
heart,
In your father’s garden that day we did part,
Now the wars are all over, no trouble is seen
I’ll wed with my love in her mantle so green.

Tunes 3: The sixth figure of The Plain Set (reels)

John Kelly, family and friends end the proceedings with set dance music.

Last Stop - The Teacher's Club



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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