



Sept. 2004

Emigrant Days 2001

Tom McAndrew is the cousin of Shamrock Club member Mary McAndrews. This piece was originally published in “Project Ireland 2001, Mayo Branch the Irish Emigrant Liason Committee – Ireland in Exile” presented in September 2001. Tom lived in Manchester for over three decades.

by Tom McAndrew

June 1964 Mayo. A late evening sun dipped over Slievemore, a gentle breeze ruffled the windrows of hay that had just been made in the Big Field near the Glen. A dog's bark echoed across the waters of Carramore Lake from Glencullen and the honeybees hummed, sang and waltzed from cherry blossom to rhododendron.

The mother seemed a little too stooped, a little too silent for her 63 years. As she raked she seemed oblivious to all around her – the spirit gone from her – overcome by the news that her lone remaining offspring would be leaving in the morning. The youngest from the nest ... born when she was 44 and father 53 ... the last shake of the bag! Like all the others taking the Holyhead boat ... not one of the fourteen she had given birth to, would remain.

The father had withdrawn to a distant corner of the field... the sweeping movements of the hayfork a mere therapy to his thoughts... full of confusion ... uncertain how to deal with the situation... no longer in control. Unable to find the words... the questions that needed asking... the explanations that were required... the feelings that waited to be expressed. Only the silence spoke of the anger and the disappointment and the sadness and the inevitability of the road to England.

All change! All change! The CIE guard repeated his well worn

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instructions. Did he really understand the significance of those words for his departing passengers. All change! Indeed, all would be changed from now on.

The train rattled on towards Dublin while inner thoughts refused to let go of the West. Two weary and aged figures stood in the hayfield, staring into the distance, looking for the meaning that would never come. The Angelus painting by Millet but in a Mayo field!

All change for Dun Laoghaire! All change!

The mist over Holyhead seemed to bathe this new and strange land. New colors of redbrick and tile. New sounds... of street and accent. New smells... of coalfire and traffic as the Manchester train blared its impatience. The stooped line of emigrants with their tied up suitcases shuffled towards their new lives in the English smog. The subdued tones of Achill, of Aughamore and of Erris drifted on a Welsh breeze but were soon stifled by the whistle of the departing train.

Spring 1965. The trench is deep, the sewer pipes heavy and cumbersome but Pack Gibbons insists the job must be finished before dark. Unlike many other “subbies” this Westport native is a kindly man prepared to endure, himself, all he expects from his men. He lifts, carries, hauls and encourages as he and his men beaver away to complete the ground work of this new shopping centre at Cheadle Hulme. Soon to be a bustling commercial centre with large stores and busy boutiques the strain and sweat of the Irish navvies would soon be a memory. As the Manchester rain drives even harder over the line of Irish workers stretched out along the trench Pack leads a chorus of the Mayo anthem... “so boys pull together in all kinds of weather...”

September 1965 Manchester. The happy excited voices of the students dulled as the lecturer took his place at the podium. A cough, a few muffled words as our introduction to the Life and Works of Thomas Hardy. Thomas Hardy with his novels and stories of Wessex.

Wessex – somewhere in England. The man at the podium tried to enthuse us into the author’s stories... stories of rural England... Dorchester... the flight of the people from the land to the towns, the depopulation of the countryside, the loss of old country skills and values, but also the barbarity of the countryside. The Mayor of Casterbridge selling his wife at the fair... that would never happen in Belmullet on the 15th of August!

Only 14 months since leaving Mayo... it seemed longer... a lifetime away... new experiences... new challenges... and now University. The milling students in their hundreds around the campus, busy with talk of politics, music and Che Guevara. Racing to catch lectures on sonnets, psychology and science. The confidence and optimism of this new generation contrasted sharply with the innate shyness and emotional confusion that was borne out in the West. And in the West... another hay harvest would have been raked from the Big Field, another year of drudgery would be etched even deeper into the lined faces of the old couple as they gazed occasionally toward the winding road from Bangor.

...And the 14 months raced to become five years... ten... twenty... thirty years... bringing joy and sorrow, achievement and failure, great hopes and occasional despair. But always the Irish emigrant... with links to home... family bonds and support.

Summer 2001 Mayo. After 30 years of Manchester traffic the journey over the Windy Gap is as inspiring as ever. Coming over the brow beyond Burren the whole panorama stretches out like a painting on canvas. The small white cottages being dwarfed by the huge mass of Nephin, the spiralling smoke from the chimneys, the winding road leading your eye to Bofeenaun, Lahardane and Crossmolina.

And further on, there is Erris. All much changed now, only the mountains and the Musical Bridge have remained the same. The roads are smoother, the cars are newer, the houses are larger. Nobody works in the fields now. The haymaking has disappeared with the corncrake and the sound of the scythe stone on blade is long gone. There are no vegetable gardens by the houses or the tied donkey at the gable. The man in the bog throwing sods from his slane is no more. Gone too is the meitheal in the haggard and the laughter of the children as they played in the fields and at the crossroads.

And in Bangor the greyness of the Sixties has lifted from the street. The brightly painted shops speak of a new vibrancy and confidence. Now there is "chicken chasseur" in Sizzlers instead of the fresh chops at Katie Maughan's and the Fair Day sheep have long since been untethered from Maggie Reilly's gate. The accents too have changed in line with a new generation that is educated and well informed. No longer the rich dialects from Muiningaun or Muighnabo but now the measured speech of a younger Erris. The memories of the emigrant boat are now fading into history with a turning tide. The faces mostly unfamiliar as the young of the Sixties are now

middle aged and middle aged grown old. And in the Big Field the old pair have long since raked their last harvest, cast one final glance at the winding road to Bangor and gone to their final reward.

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Rock County

UPCOMING EVENTS

- SEPTEMBER 21 – Regular Membership Meeting, 7 p.m.
- OCTOBER 19 – Will give you time and details next month

September meeting will be at the Janesville Senior Center, 69 S. Water St. at 7 p.m. Come and support your club officers and help us make plans for the coming year. If you have any suggestions for programs, bring those up at the September meeting.

Bring a friend to the next meeting. Guests are always welcome.

– **Tom Kennedy**

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Dane County

The Madison Feis competition on July 24 was a great success. Over 1300 Irish dancers competed. They came from a number of countries and states. This was the first year it was held and it looks like it will be an annual event. The Feis was developed by the Trinity Booster Club in association with a number of sponsors, donors and friends of the feis. American Family Insurance was a major contributor. The Dane County Shamrock Club sponsored a stage for the competitors.

There was no meeting in August with all members urged to attend Milwaukee Irish Fest. The next Board/General Meeting will be held at the Coliseum Bar on Tuesday, September 14, 2004, with the Board Meeting starting at 6 p.m. and the General Meeting starting at 7:15 p.m. Hope to see you all at the meeting.

– **Bob Kerans, President**

Milwaukee President's Message

We are still thinking of August with enough memories to last through the years. We wish all our young members heading back to school to remember the tradition of your heritage. If you are a descendant of the Island of Saints and Scholars, we want you to continue the good work. The five winners of our scholarship awards are encouraged to do well, and keep us posted as to your progress. If you were fortunate enough to participate or volunteer at the Irish Fest Summer School, you are probably still talking about it. The ICHC is offering a Celtic cooking class in September. For anyone interested in doing so, call (414) 345-8800 for details. It's so great to see this emphasis in Milwaukee, we are unique in all the offerings and opportunities open for all.

One hundred thousand thanks to all our volunteers in August, who ran a fabulous picnic, did their work all over Irish Fest, and another memorable golf outing. The state Advisory Board meeting was held August 21, and will be reported on shortly. We will soon be looking for everyone's assistance for the fund raising in the Bradley Center and elsewhere. We had many participants in the Milwaukee Feis, and saw the talented music and dance students show us that Irish tradition is alive and well. Thanks to members Jim and Lynda Murphy for their work on the Ad book. Congratulations to member Marianne Fisher for creating the maps for visitors to Irish Fest in the Cultural Tent, it was a hit.

Please take a look at our new improved web site, Emerald Reflections editor Brian Witt along with Gail Coss have labored to make our site more user friendly. You will be glad you did, and then thank them for their creativity. The URL is www.shamrockclubwisc.com. Use this to find out where every Irish thing is happening.

This month our speaker will be our member Jim Sanfilippo. Jim is the President of the Wisconsin Emerald Society, and a national vice-president. Please have questions for Jim if you would like to do so. He is a member of the Milwaukee Police Department and we are pleased to have him make this presentation.

If you have been waiting to come to a Celtic Women's lecture,

do so on September 3 at the ICHC. There will be Highland games at the Waukesha Expo Center on September 3-5.

The Shamrock Club Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of each month. The meetings begin at 7 p.m. and are open to all members. If you have a proposal or an idea for the agenda, please let me know in advance so it may be included and you will not be disappointed. We thank all of you who have given us your ideas and comments and want you to continue. This is your club, and we look forward to the future.

Remember to call our advertisers and use their products or services. Let them know where you saw their ad.

See you at the next meeting.

– Julie Smith

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Milwaukee October Meeting

The October 7, 2004 meeting will be held at the Irish Fest Office. Our evening's guest speaker will be club member Barry Stapleton, the director of the Irish Music Archives. Tours will be provided. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.

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Milwaukee Honoree Dinner

The Honoree Dinner is to be held on Sunday October 10, 2004. Cocktails at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. Meyers Restaurant at 76th and Forest Home will be the venue for this family style dinner. Cost is \$15 per person. See Kristine Pluskota for sign up and details (414) 768-8876 or dkplus@tds.net.

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Hallamor Fall Concert #1: Kíla

“Only once in a decade does a truly innovative band such as Ireland’s Kíla come along,” says The Boston Globe. This group of seven multi-instrumentalists has a truly unique sound based on their practice of blending musical influences from all corners of the globe into the melodic rhythms of traditional Irish music.

This Dublin based group was founded in 1988 has recently won two very impressive awards: Meteor Award, equivalent to the Grammy, and the Hot Press Reader’s Award in 2002. Both awards were for the best Irish Traditional Group.

Group Members are: Ronan, Rossa and Colm O Snodaigh, Lance and Brian Hogan, Dee Armstrong, and Eoin Dillon.

Some of their 28 instruments they play are: guitar, bodhran, tin whistle, low whistle, djembe, conga, bongo, hammered dulcimer, bass, fiddle, didgeridoo, dumbeg, viola, uilleann pipes, mandolin, flute and accordion.

This concert is sponsored by Beamish Irish Stout.

Friday, September 24, 2004 • 8 p.m.

Opening Act 7 p.m.

Irish Cultural and Heritage Center of WI

2133 W. Wisconsin Avenue • Milwaukee, WI 53233

(414) 345-8800

Tickets: \$19 Advance/reserved, \$21 Door

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ICHC Irish Stew

Donations needed, buyers wanted! Both greatly appreciated! New and used IRISH items are needed to continue the in-house “garage sale” and raffles that take place at the ICHC concerts and other special events.

Multiple copies of books that are donated to the ICHC Lending Library become part of the IRISH STEW. Please bring all donations to the concerts or to the ICHC desk from 9-4 on weekdays. All proceeds support the ICHC!

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Color Guard News and Notes

Traditionally, July and August are the most jammed packed, challenging and busiest months for the Shamrock Club of Wisconsin's Color Guard, Pipes and Drums — and the “2004” Parade/Event scheduled is carrying on the tradition!

The 4th of July saw the Unit display its honor and patriotism to America with stirring performances at the Glendale and Butler Independence Day Parades. The Color Guard Pipes and Drums made their annual appearance in the South Shore Water Frolics (July 10), the South Milwaukee Heritage Days (July 24) parades and finished off the month of July with a return visit, after a brief hiatus, to the Random Lake Heritage Days parade on July 25; deserving of Special Mention, the Color Guard received the “1st Place Award” for “Marching Honor Guards” out of over 150 participating units. This marks the 3rd award the Color Guard, Pipes and Drums has brought home to the Shamrock Club of Wisconsin in their first nine parades.

By the time this issue of Emerald Reflections is published and you, the members of the Shamrock Club of Wisconsin receive your issue, the Unit will have represented you at Dousman Derby Days (Aug. 1), Sheboygan Brat Days (Aug. 7), the Wisconsin State Fair (Aug. 15) — Irish Fest (Aug. 20, 21, 22) and Muskego Fest (Aug. 29). We, the Unit, hope you were proud of our performances!

SPECIAL THANK YOUS

To Ms. Joanne Nois – your thoughtfulness and kindness in helping the Shamrock Club of Wisconsin Color Guard, Pipes and Drums continue the legacy of the Unit's motto – “Pride & Honor” is truly appreciated! We are grateful and we, the Unit, say “Thank you!”

To Kris Pluskota – in 2003 you made 20 of the orange ascots which the Color Guard wore at the Mass during Irish Fest. In 2004 you made additional orange ascots for the remainder of the entire Color Guard, Pipes and Drums! What can we say but – “Thank you, again!”

To Craig Glaser – for those who may not know, Craig is a member of your Color Guard, Pipes and Drums and is responsible for “developing, putting together and bringing to life the Shamrock Club of Wisconsin's Color Guard, Pipes and Drums very own web site!! So, if you want the most accurate, up-to-date information, on your Color Guard, Pipes

and Drums log on to: “www.SCCGPD.org”. Craig, thanks a lot for all of your hard work!

PARADE/EVENT SCHEDULE

- SEPTEMBER 5 – St. Francis Labor Day Parade, 10 a.m.
- OCTOBER 2 – A.O.H. Mass and Dinner, 4 p.m.
- OCTOBER 16 – Door County Sister Bay Festival, 10:30 a.m.

If you would like to have the Shamrock Club Color Guard, Pipes and Drums appear in a parade, special event or family occasion – or you would like to join the Unit as a banner carrier, color guard, piper or drummer, please contact:

Richard Pfeiffer, Director
Shamrock Club Color Guard, Pipes and Drums
Telephone: (414) 769-1250
E-mail: milwpiper@cs.com

– **Richard Stover**

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Tax Deductible Donations

A reminder to everyone that a donation to the Shamrock Club is tax deductible and is very much welcomed. The club’s tax id number is ES045898.

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Dave Rowe Concert

Maine singer-songwriter and guitarist Dave Rowe will present a concert at the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center, 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, on Sept. 19 at 3 p.m. The show will include Irish songs, Rowe’s original folk ballads, and high-energy bluegrass music as well as some of the maritime masterpieces written by his dad, the late Tom Rowe, who died earlier this year.

Rowe recently released a second critically-acclaimed solo album which he dedicated to his dad and titled Big Shoes in reference to his musical legacy. Along with Irish tunes such as Four Green Fields and Fields of Athenry, Rowe covered his

dad's song John Cook on the recording.

Rowe grew up literally surrounded by music as he played under the soundboard while his dad mixed albums for his trio Schooner Fare. By age 15, Rowe was performing professionally with the Makem Brothers. As a young adult, he led Irish and bluegrass bands and toured with rising Maine country artist Don Campbell before forming Rowe by Rowe with his dad in 1992. They became Turkey Hollow with the addition of Denny Breau in 1998. In addition to continuing Turkey Hollow with Breau and performing solo, Rowe fronts a new Irish/maritime/bluegrass group, the Dave Rowe Trio.

Tickets for the September show are \$12. Order by sending a check payable to Cheshire Moon Studios to Kathy Schultz at 4830 N. Oakland Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53217. Ticket and concert information is also available by calling Kathy at (414) 332-8521.

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Celtic Women First Friday Lecture Series

The schedule for the coming year of Celtic Women lectures is set for September through June.

- SEP. 3 “Welsh Love Spoons” by Joe Whitmore
- OCT. 1 “Power Drinking in Iron Age Europe” by Dr. Bettina Arnold
- NOV. 5 “From the Script to the Stage” by Charlotte Brady
- DEC. 3 “Celtic Women Christmas Social” with Sreangan Binn psalter group
- JAN. 7, '05 “How to Avoid Becoming a Bag Lady” by June A. Schroeder, CFP.
- FEB. 4 “The Kinship of Cornwall, Brittany and Wales in Song” by Sheila Shigley (Navan)
- MAR. 4 “St. Patrick's Purgatory” by Seosaimhim Nic Rabhartaigh
- APR. 1 “The Official Wisconsin Tartan” by Bob McWilliam
- MAY 6 “The Ulster Project” by Terry Perry

- JUN. 3 To be announced.

All lectures are held in Parlor A of the ICHC at 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave. Milwaukee. \$5 admission for all. Everyone is welcome including men. Tea and biscuits are served. Join us for a delightful couple of cultural and educational hours. Please observe the posted signs for parking around the ICHC.

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Hurling Standings

Going into the playoffs, the Shamrock Club Griffins had the second best record overall, at 6-2-1, and were ensconced in 2nd place in the Harp Division. Playoffs were August 8 but results were not available at time of print.

Guinness Division

McBob's (5-3-1)

Derry's (4-4-1)

The Harp (4-4-1)

Axel's (0-8-1)

Harp Division

Ale House (8-0-1)

Shamrock Club (6-2-1)

County Clare (4-4-1)

Hanley's (1-7-1)

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St. Patrick's Help Fund

St. Patrick's Help Fund is in desperate need of school supplies and non-perishable foods. Please place in container at each meeting. However, donations can be brought to the ICHC any time during the week. It is not restricted to just meetings. A big thank you to everybody who has contributed to help the needy people at St. Patrick's. Questions? Call Katy Voss (414) 352-6479.

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New Members

NOTE: Please send your dues to your Membership Chairperson in your chapter. All names and addresses are listed in Emerald Reflections.

Milwaukee – Wes Briggs (referred by Pat Fitzgibbons); Ryan Conway (referred by Pat Fitzgibbons); Megan Fitzgibbons (referred by Pat Fitzgibbons); Thomas and Sharon Gleason (referred by self); Mark and Toni McBride (referred by Lupe Alba); Eileen Murphy (referred by Ed Heck); Darlene and Terry Smith (referred by Kyle Smith).

Membership Report Milwaukee Chapter:

- May: 40 memberships up for renewal, 26 paid, 14 dropped for nonpayment.
- June: 25 memberships up for renewal, 18 paid, 7 due.
- July: 26 memberships up for renewal, 19 paid, 7 due.
- Aug.: 94 memberships up for renewal.

Update: from January 2004 to July 2004 the Milwaukee Chapter had 82 people who did not renew.

From March 2004 to end of May 2004 we had 54 members drop their membership.

Last year August 2003 we had 112 up for renewal, 69 did renew, 43 did not renew. We signed 25 new members at Irish Fest 2003.

– **Tom Smith**

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