



# Dane County Shamrock Club, Inc.

## Newsletter

Volume 18, Issue 4  
October 2020

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### ~ Message from the President by Ryan Dunn

**Now this is fall!** And this is the weather I was referring to in our last newsletter. A little cooler in the morning and evening, gorgeous during the day, yet another reason why we live in this fine state! I don't know about you, but this is by far my favorite time of the year. Football season, leaves changing, a nip to the air, fall beers...I love it.

**Thankfully**, there is some semblance of normalcy with football here as well (mostly). I'm sure we all (at least most of us) enjoyed watching the Packers do their thing to the Vikings and Lions; and talk about normal . . . Aaron Rodgers looked like, Aaron Rodgers! But I digress.

**Apologies** to all for having to cancel the Halfway to St. Patrick's Day Party, but it seems we're just not quite out of the woods yet. I'm assuming we all know someone who has tested positive for COVID. I myself know a handful of people and their symptoms have ranged from zero side-effects, to loss of smell for a week, to the worst sickness ever (that person always gets sick though, we call her patient zero). Regardless, I do hope everyone continues to be vigilant and smart about what you are doing and who you are around.

**In club news**, we are in the planning stages of our Christmas Party. It's planned for Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> and will be held at Rex's Innkeeper in Waunakee. I am cautiously optimistic we'll be able to have our party, please look for more information to come. We are still checking out other online entertainment options for us to be involved in though. There has been some talk of enlisting an Irish storyteller, so please, stay tuned for more information on that, hopefully we can make that

happen and hopefully everyone can join! If you have any in mind, please drop us a line and let us know, we are always eager to hear other members' ideas.

**In personal news**, Natalie, Patrick and I are 4 weeks out from welcoming another member of the family (or gaining a fourth roommate, if you'd like to look at it like that). I've only met a couple people who "enjoy" being pregnant...my wife is not one of them and I don't blame her as this baby is ACTIVE. The baby doesn't necessarily seem to kick or punch but it sure does like to stretch. My hats off to her and certainly anyone else who has gone through the whole rigamarole of childbirth. We don't know if it's a girl or a boy, yet, but we have a couple names picked out, so we're set in that department. People say it's a girl, myself included, but then again that's what people said about #1 as well, so who knows?

**As always**, please feel free to think about/submit different articles for our newsletter. A friend of mine recently sent me some info on Ireland's National lacrosse team giving up its spot in the 2022 World Games to the Iroquois National lacrosse team. He also sent me an article citing the relationship between Ireland and the Choctaw Nation as well as the Navajo and Hopi Reservation, all stemming from Native Americans assisting the Irish during the Potato Famine. For more reading, I highly recommend looking it up.

**Please continue to stay safe, smart...  
yet have a little fun as well;  
we're Irish after all.**

**Best, Ryan**



## ~ *What's in a Name?* **Moynahan**



The name Moynahan is a common surname in the province of Munster. It can be found primarily in counties Cork and Kerry. A majority of Moynahans came to the US during the famine years. Many came traveling on the ship Hampden which sailed from Liverpool to New York in December 1846. The name was first found on written records of the 1659 census. The name was in existence before that. Michael and Mortimer Moynihan of Skibbereen were famous rebels.

- ♣ Maurice G Moynihan (1902-1999) was a drafter of the Irish Constitution in 1937.
- ♣ Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1927-2003) was a US senator from New York.
- ♣ Brian Moynihan is a high level officer for Bank of America.
- ♣ Bridget Moynahan is a model/actress who appeared in films with Will Smith and Nicolas Cage.
- ♣ Bobby Moynahan is an actor who joined Saturday Night Live as a sketch comedian.



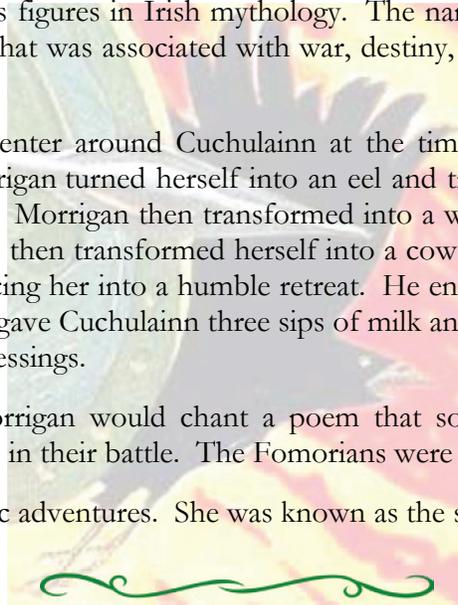
## ~ *Morrigan – Phantom Queen*

Morrigan is one of the most mysterious figures in Irish mythology. The name Morrigan means phantom queen and describes a Goddess from old Ireland that was associated with war, destiny, fate and death. She frequently appeared as a black crow.

The most famous tales of Morrigan center around Cuchulainn at the time he defended Ulster from the army of Connaught led by Queen Maeve. Morrigan turned herself into an eel and tripped Cuchulainn as he crossed a fjord. He recovered and lashed out at the eel. Morrigan then transformed into a wolf. Cuchulainn responded with a sling-shot blinding Morrigan in one eye. She then transformed herself into a cow and charged Cuchulainn who fired away with his sling-shot breaking her leg forcing her into a humble retreat. He encountered an old woman milking a cow. The old woman had only one eye. She gave Cuchulainn three sips of milk and he blessed her after each sip. Morrigan wounds were healed by his blessings.

In the battle with the Fomorians, Morrigan would chant a poem that so terrified the enemy. She promised to summon the magicians of Ireland to aid in their battle. The Fomorians were driven back into the sea.

Morrigan appeared in many other mystic adventures. She was known as the shape-shifting Phantom Queen.



## ~ *The Tragic Fate of Oscar Wilde's Sisters*

Oscar Wilde was one of Ireland's greatest literary figures. He had two half-sisters, Mary and Emily. Ireland was not a welcoming place for illegitimate children. Even though they were illegitimate, they were invited to high society events. In 1871, the sisters were invited to a Halloween party at Drumacon House in County Monaghan. Towards the end of the evening, Mary was asked to dance by the host. As she laughed and danced to the music, her dress brushed against a candlestick. Her clothes caught fire. Screaming, she dashed toward her sister for help.

The guests all fled. Emily's own dress caught on fire. The fire was put out but the sisters both were suffering in agony. Mary died on November 8 and Emily on November 21. They were 22 and 24 years old respectively. Now, if the story had died there, it would have merely been a gruesome tale of an unfortunate incident as thousands of women died because of the highly flammable nature of crinoline skirts. But the accident was hushed and kept in obscurity for around 70 years, covering it with an irresistible shroud of mystery.

While Oscar Wilde was probably regarded as 'the greatest talker of his age' and is universally acclaimed as one of the great writers of the 19th century. His tragic, less-known half-sisters go unremembered, but lie at rest in the small country graveyard at Dumsnatt, little more than three miles south west of Monaghan town.



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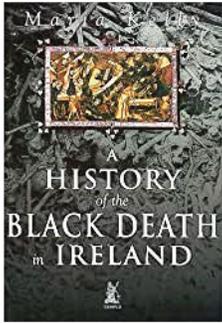
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To our Members with  
October Birthdays!

- 2 Donna Hellenbrand
- 4 Margaret Ryan
- 5 Phyllis Nelson
- 8 Paul Buckalew
- 19 William Rafterty  
Don Shillinglaw
- 20 Michael Heinrichs  
Chris Ogden
- 24 Brian Nemoir
- 25 Ann Walsh
- 27 Joan Bernstein
- 29 Kathleen Blake



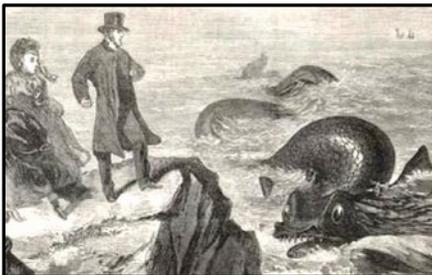
### ~ The Black Death in Ireland

The continuous warfare and economic decline were already underway long before the arrival of the plague in 1348. The outbreaks of the Black Death (bubonic plague) had lasting effect in Ireland. The oak forests regenerated in the 14th century indicating a reduction in population. The Anglo-Irish area was affected more extensively than Gaelic Ireland. The ports of Ireland were struck first, carried there by rats and fleas in the holds of trading vessels. It first appeared in Howth and Dalkey and spread to Dublin and Drogheda. The transmission of the disease to the rest of the country was along overland routes between ports and market towns. The disease in the south was introduced directly from England through busy ports of Waterford, Youghal and Cork.

The plague raged in Dublin between August and December setting a pattern for the terror it would spread through the country. Men were seldom brave enough to visit the sick or bury the dead. Public functions were cancelled. Including parliamentary sessions between May 1348 and June 1350. Friars and Abbeys were hard hit. Many towns were left without any inhabitants. The transmission to the rest of the country depended on the density of the rat and flea population and the extent of trade.

By the end of 1348, the plague had reached into Louth, Meath, Kildare and Kilkenny which suggests it traveled along the River Barrow rather than overland. The plague spread across the southeast and the south. The coastal areas bore the brunt. The north and west did not escape the plague. A great destruction of people occurred in Ulster. The disease did not reach Mayo until 1350. The plague killed the English inhabitants in great numbers but the native Irish living in mountains and uplands were hardly touched. Many places were left vacant because the tenants had fled.

The plague had devastating effects on towns. Labor shortages caused disruptions in the rural economy and threatened the food supply to towns. Food shortages became frequent. There were outbreaks of the disease in 1370, 1383, 1390, 1392, 1393, 1398 and periodically thereafter. Those who suffered worse in the early years also suffered the most in later outbreaks. Individual religious houses suffered death rates of over 50%. For those alive in 1348, the Black Death was an inescapable disease and its aftershocks were felt long after the terror had been forgotten.



*The mystery of the sea serpent of County Clare has never been solved. A clipping from a September 1871 edition of The Day's*

### ~ Irish Lake Monsters

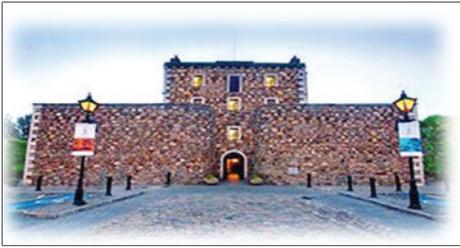
Deep down into the lakes and still waters of Ireland lie part of its mystery and magic. Irish lake monsters first appear in the 7th century in the "Life of St. Chua" of County Mayo. About 300 years later, the famous "Book of Lismore" tells of St. Seona's confrontation with a terrifying monster at Scatterry Island, County Clare. St. Coemgen is claimed to have subdued a serpent in the Upper Lake at Glendalough, County Wicklow.

More recent accounts occurred in the 19th century. A young woman was wading in Lough Muck picking beans when she was startled to see a strange creature coming across the water. She was able to flee. There were similar sightings over the next few years. Lakeside farmers claimed their mysterious sheep losses were the blame of the lake monster.

In the early 1900's, an enormous eel became trapped in a culvert between Lough Crolan and Lough Derrylea in County Galway. It was said that the creature was so repulsive that it was just allowed to rot away. Shortly thereafter, near Ballynahinch another monster became trapped. It was about 9 meters long and as thick as a horse, it became trapped under a bridge that spans the town's river near the castle. It was seen for the last time in 1961.

Three priests were fishing on Lough Ree in 1960 when they observed a strange object in the water. It had a serpentine head followed by a hump. It moved serenely past the priests. Their report brought forth a flood of reports of similar sightings which included boats being dragged by fishing lines and others being capsized.

Most countries with lakes have aquatic legends such as Scotland and Norway. Could they be creatures left behind from the Mesozoic period? The shark has been here for 300 million years.



~ **The Wicklow Gaol** (jail) is a historic prison in the town of Wicklow. It gained notoriety for the brutality of the prison inmates. The prison was closed in the twentieth century, but many inmates never left. The prison opened in 1702. During the early time, the prison was used to hold inmates who were sentenced under the Penal Laws. These were laws passed against Catholics which were aimed at penalizing those who continued to practice the Catholic religion.

In 1798, almost a century after the prison opened, there was an uprising that broke out. It ended in defeat of the rebels. The Wicklow Gaol was a major place used to imprison those rebels who were captured. Many of them were disposed of by throwing them into the waters offshore from fishing boats. One of those captured was William "Billy" Byrne who was one of the leaders of the rebellion. He was tried and executed.

Most of the prisoners which included men, women and children were shackled to the floor. John Tandy was imprisoned in 1801 which was several years after the rebellion of 1798. He was a shopkeeper in Dublin but had been agitating for political change in Ireland for several years. He was found guilty of treason, but he escaped execution because of his connections. Napoleon himself negotiated Tandy's release and he was sent to France in 1802. Many of the inmates of Wicklow Gaol had been sentenced to transportation which meant they would be shipped to Australia during the 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The prisoner would never see Ireland again. Many never arrived in Australia because they had to survive the lack of food on the long journey.

During the Famine Years, there was an increase in crime. Stealing food was a common crime. Many committed crimes to be placed in the gaol where they would be fed regular meals. Prior to prison reform in Ireland, there was no difference between adults and children when it came to their sentencing. Children were treated as harshly as adults. Most children were imprisoned for petty theft. The prisoners suffered severe torture.

The Wicklow Gaol continued to be used until 1924 when it was abandoned. It was gradually restored due to its historical significance and is now open to the public for tours.



~ **Mysterious Skellig Michael** and its monastic remains remained a place of pilgrimage into the 18th century. It is a small uninhabited rocky island eight miles from the small fishing village of Portmagee, County Kerry. It is getting worldwide attention after it was featured in the film "Star Wars: The Force Awakens." It rises 230 meters above the sea and the mystic island holds the ruins of an ancient monastery which was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. Skellig means "steep rock."

The first reference to monks on the Skelligs dates to the 8th century although the monastery may have been founded as early as the 6th century. The island was dedicated to Saint Michael the Archangel around 1040 and was celebrated with the building of St. Michael's church in the monastery. Climatic deterioration and colder weather and more storms led to the community of monks to move to Bailinskelligs on the mainland. Skellig Michael continued to be a place of pilgrimage.

Skellig Michael passed to the Butler family in 1578. In the early 19th century, it was purchased in order to erect two lighthouses. The Office of Public Works took the monastic remains under guardianship in 1889 and began to repair and conserve the site. The island is known for its seabird colonies and the two Skellig islands comprise one of the most important seabird sites in Ireland.



~ **Humpback Whales . . .** Two whales were first photographed in Irish waters about 20 years ago off the Cork coast. The whales were cataloged, and these same two whales were spotted again almost 20 years later west of Inishtooskert. The whales circled the boat and some bottlenose dolphins swam between the whales and

the boat. Sightings of humpback whales became more common and, in addition, there were sightings of dolphins and leatherback turtles. The fact that they have stayed together for 20 years in treacherous waters with busy shipping lanes, drifting fishing nets and plastic pollution is remarkable. The peaceful southern coast and abundance of food must be what attracts them year after year.

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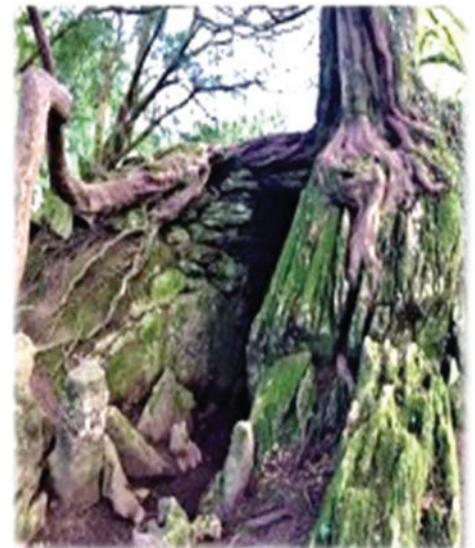
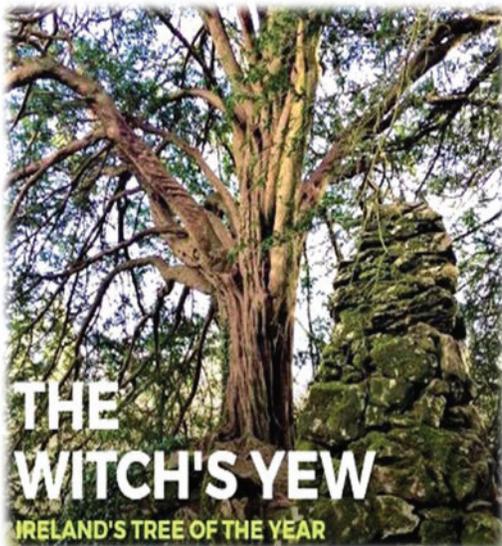
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The Witches Yew is a magical tree at Blarney Castle. The tree is believed to be about 600 years old. The tree is situated in the Rock Close on the Blarney Castle Estate.

Legend has it that the area is the home of the Blarney Witch. The Witch was the one who first told mortals of the Blarney Stone's magical powers of the gift of eloquence. The Witch is imprisoned by day in the Witch Stone. She is released at nightfall and imprisoned again at dawn in the Witch Stone. Some early morning visitors have claimed to have seen embers of a fire in her kitchen.

Tourists can visit the Witches Yew at Blarney Castle. The tree was named Ireland's Tree of the Year for 2019.



**HAPPY SAMHAIN** - Over time, **Samhain** (Oct. 31) and

All Saints'/All Souls' (Nov. 1/Nov. 2) merged to create the modern **Halloween**.

Historians have used the name 'Samhain' to refer to Gaelic 'Halloween' customs up until the 19th century.



## News of Interest

- ♣ The Irish people have donated over \$5 million to Native Americans in Arizona and New Mexico who are struggling with COVID 19.
- ♣ A discovery of ancient bones was found under an Irish Pub on Rathlin Island off County Antrim. Three skeletons were found, and they date back to 3,000 BC
- ♣ Britain is set to renege on the Irish border deal. This may result in the return to a hard border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland.
- ♣ The Irish Lacrosse team has pulled out of the 2022 World Games in Birmingham, Alabama to allow a Native American team to take their place.
- ♣ "Game of Thrones" attraction is coming to Northern Ireland at a cost of \$32 million. It will open in Bainbridge, County Down - opening date is not set yet. The attraction is expected to draw 60,000 visitors annually.
- ♣ Lou Holtz, former Notre Dame coach, has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Trump.
- ♣ Strains of leprosy have been found in Irish skeletal remains. Vikings may have brought leprosy to Ireland. Five remains from Counties Dublin (3), Kildare (1) and Antrim (1) are being studied.
- ♣ Guinness announced plans to develop an urban center in 2017. "The Guinness Quarter" is to begin development at Dublin's St. James Gate. The site will include 500 residential units, office space and public areas.
- ♣ The Northern Ireland town in County Tyrone is thought to be sitting on \$3.8 billion worth of gold in the Sperrin Mountain range. Dalradium Gold of Canada has been exploring the site since 2009. The lifespan of the mine is estimated at 25 years. The mine will create 350 jobs.
- ♣ Roger Whittaker is a pop singer from Galway. His estate is for sale for \$3 million. The 55-acre estate is located near Banagher on the bank of the River Shannon.
- ♣ Matt Damon is returning to Ireland to continue filming the "Last Duel." Filming will take place around Dublin, Meath, Tipperary and Wicklow. The film is scheduled for release in 2021.
- ♣ A person with a metal detector was looking for a friend's lost wedding ring. He did not find the ring but did find 84 gold coins which date back to the early 1500's. The coins were valued at \$128,552.
- ♣ On August 22, 1922, one-fifth of Ireland's population attended the funeral of Michael Collins. An estimated 500,000 people lined the streets of Dublin to pay their respects to the Irish Revolutionary Hero.
- ♣ The Isle of Ireland is 302 miles long and 171 miles wide. It has 1970 miles of coastline. The North Channel separates Ireland from Scotland and the Irish Sea and St George Channel separate Ireland from England and Wales. Malin Head is the most northerly point and Mizen Head is the most southerly point. Ireland covers 32,595 square miles. It is about the size of Indiana.
- ♣ Nigeria consumes more Guinness than is consumed in Ireland. The largest market for Guinness is the United Kingdom.
- ♣ "Oh My God, What a Complete Aisling" by Sarah Breen and Emer Lysaght and "Room" by Emma Donoghue are Book of the Month titles.
- ♣ Congressman Brendan Boyle delivered the Keynote Address at the Democratic Convention. His father emigrated from County Donegal over 50 years ago.
- ♣ Current weather conditions are favorable for the spread of Potato Blight in Ireland.



## DANE COUNTY SHAMROCK CLUB, INC. – BOARD OF DIRECTORS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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**November Newsletter Deadline** ~ Newsletter articles are written by Harry McCarthy unless otherwise indicated and set-up by Pat McCarthy. We encourage members to submit articles on their Irish travels, special interests and photos. Please submit articles for the November newsletter to Harry McCarthy at [himac98@charter.net](mailto:himac98@charter.net) or mail to 2656 Mica Rd., Fitchburg, WI 53711 by Oct. 20, 2020.

### Classic Irish Books to Read During the Pandemic

**"Dracula"** (1897) by Bram Stoker - Book influenced the popularity of vampires.

**"Ulysses"** (1922) by James Joyce - Novel about the passage of Leopold Bloom through Dublin.

**"The Picture of Dorian Gray"** (1890) by Oscar Wilde - Considered a work of classic horror fiction.

**"Amongst Women"** (1990) by John McGahern - An aging IRA veteran and his tyranny over his family.

### October Calendar

**October 21** Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m., via Zoom



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