



Queensland Irish Association

Newsletter

July 2023

Embassy of Ireland chooses our building as pop-up base

Embassy of Ireland, Canberra has chosen to base its pop-up embassy for the FIFA Women's World Cup in Brisbane to be Queensland Irish Association's Building at 37 Baxter Street, Fortitude Valley.

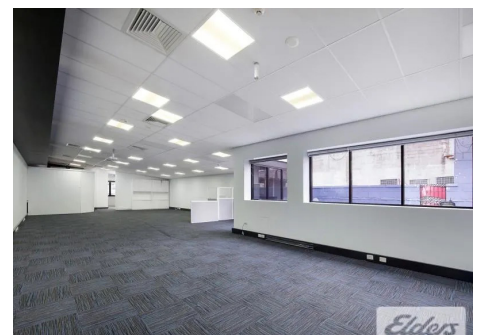
We are pleased that the upstairs of our bright, modern building was found to be the perfect location for the pop-up Irish embassy. We are honoured to be hosting Ambassador Tim Mawe and his staff during their time in Brisbane.

The building will be put to use preceeding and subsequent to Ireland's soccer match against Nigeria, which will take place at Lang Park on July 31st.

The Ireland women's national team will be based in Brisbane for the duration of their stay at the World Cup.

The squad will stay at the Emporium Hotel in Fortitude Valley and use Goodwin Park for training once they land in Brisbane in early July, ahead of the tournament kicking off.

The pop-up embassy will be there to help any travelling fans who find themselves in trouble and needing the assistance of embassy staff. The Fortitude Valley location of our building is perfect as not only is it central, but the team will be staying nearby and the fans will no doubt be celebrating in the Valley's busy pub and nightclub precinct.



EMBASSY: Queensland Irish Association's Baxter Street building is to be used at a pop-up Embassy of Ireland during the FIFA Women's World Cup. Pics: Elders

Embassy staff were given an online tour of the building by QIA volunteers, to ensure its suitability. Not only is it perfect location-wise, but it also offers the security features, private board-room area, and other facilities required.

The downstairs of 37 Baxter Street

is currently tenanted on a long-term lease. A new long-term tenant is being sought for the upstairs.

QIA volunteers will be busy over the

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Embassy of Ireland chooses our building as pop-up base

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coming weeks decorating the building with pictures and furniture that are currently in storage, to make it perfect for its tenure as an Irish embassy.

THE QUIET MAN

If anyone asks what is the quintessential Irish movie, the answer would have to be *The Quiet Man*.

The Quiet Man is a classic romantic comedy-drama film released in 1952. Directed by John Ford and starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara, the story follows an American ex-boxer named Sean Thornton (played by Wayne) who returns to his birthplace in Ireland. Seeking a peaceful life, he falls in love with a strong-willed Irish woman named Mary Kate Danaher (played by O'Hara). However, their romance faces obstacles, including Mary Kate's overprotective brother and the traditions and conflicts of the small Irish village.

This year, the movie celebrates the 70th anniversary of its Australian release, and to celebrate, we have organised a screening of the classic film at Elizabeth Picture House in Brisbane.

The screening takes place at 3pm on Saturday, July 22nd, and tickets cost \$18. You can make your booking at this [link](#).

Elizabeth Picture Theatre is based at the former home of Queensland Irish Association on Elizabeth Street in Brisbane. While we are all sad that we are no longer based in the building, it is wonderful that we have such a positive relationship with the Sourris brothers, who bought the building, and it is lovely to visit and see how beautifully they are maintaining it.

CONGRATS MAVIS AND BRUCE

Congratulations to our QIA Lifetime Members Mavis K. Williams C.y.C. and Bruce Williams, who were rec-



MP Corrine McMillan, left, presenting Mavis and Bruce Williams with the Southside Queenslander of the Year 2023 award, with Councillor for McGregor Steven Huang.

ognised in the Brisbane City Council Queensland Day 2023 awards. They were given the award Southside Queenslander of the Year 2023.

Mavis and Bruce were presented with the award by MP Corrine McMillan in The Southside Community Club on June 10th.

Mavis was previously honoured by receiving a D.U.a. meaning 'Honoured Person', and C.y.C. meaning 'Friend of the Celts', from the Celtic Council of Australia, Queensland. Bruce has also received a D.U.a. Award from The Celtic Council of Australia, Queensland.

Mavis was chosen as Southside Queenslander of the Year, in recognition of her contribution to the Brisbane community and her efforts to make Brisbane even better than it is today.

Mavis has always been available at anytime when called upon and has contributed to the community in many different ways, over the course of more than 47 years. She has done this through voluntary service, support, help and organising of events and functions, like Friendship Days, that welcome everyone in the community to attend.

Mavis said that one of her proud-

est achievements is that she was the founder and instigator of the first workshop for people with multiple disabilities in Australia. It opened in 1976 at Burleigh Heads. She added: "It is still running today, with 50 people attending every day."

Mavis has also organised and trained debutantes for 33 years of Debutante Balls, with all profits going to pipe band associations.

And, of course, we are all grateful to both Bruce and Mavis here at QIA, not only for Mavis's work on the Board of Directors but also for the couple's huge talent as part of the Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band. Both Bruce and Mavis had been playing members of the band for 42 years.

Bruce has served within the community for more than four decades in different capacities, such as with pipe bands and assisting President Mavis in admin duties within Celtic Council of Australia, Queensland, Inc.

Bruce performed his side drumming at Domestic Violence Awareness Days, ANZAC Day Parades and dawn services, Armistice Day and community functions.

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Queensland Irish Association

Happy Hour Drinks!



Friends and Supporters of
Queensland Irish Association

Join us on Friday, August 4th
from 5pm at

The Normanby Hotel, Red Hill, Brisbane

for cocktails and craic at
Happy Hour Drinks!

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Well done to them both from all us here at Queensland Irish Association.

QIA HAPPY HOUR DRINKS

We have even more exciting news. We will be having a Happy Hour Drinks function in the Normanby Hotel, Red Hill, on Friday, August 4th, starting at 5pm.

This a new venue for us, a new function for us and we would be delighted to see some new, young faces in attendance.

We will be extending invitations to our youth group, headed up by Brian Cuffe, to the members of our Facebook group 'Queensland Irish Association Friends and Supporters', and to our friends at University of Queensland (UQ) Irish Society.

Our public relations officer Mary Allen recently reached out to UQ's Irish Society to further develop links between our two Associations and we look forward to working more closely with these students, who are the rising stars of the Queensland Irish community.

If our members have young people in their lives who they would like to see take an active part in the social life of the QIA, this is the perfect opportunity to get them involved. We see so many young people at our annual St Patrick's Eve Dinner and we would love to see them at our other social meet-ups throughout the year too.

DIVAS AT QPAC

Irish-Australian singer and actor Bernadette Robinson is set to make her return to Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC) this July, with her latest show DIVAS.

Playing from 20-23 July, Robinson's show will light up the Playhouse Theatre with a celebration of the most beloved female performers of all time.

Robinson, who has performed in a number of successful shows including

QIA members supporting Irish family day



Queensland Irish Association members enjoying a day out at the Queensland Family History Society Irish Family Celebration on June 25th. The day featured live music, Irish dancing and a performance by Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band.

Songs for Nobodies, Pennsylvania Avenue and The Show Goes On, will take the audience on a musical journey through the greatest hits of 10 of the most iconic divas in popular music history.

These will include performances from Edith Piaf, Shirley Bassey, Barbra Streisand, Dolly Parton, Karen Carpenter and Judy Garland. Tickets [here](#).

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Your annual membership of QIA expired on June 30th and it is now necessary to renew.

To do so, go to [this link](#) on our website or you can email us on enquiries@queenslandirish.com, stating your membership number, so we can send you a renewal link.

We ask that senior members who do not pay a membership fee consider donating \$20 to Queensland Irish Heritage Trust Fund BSB 084-009 ACCT 68-613-1442. This donation is tax deductible.

Jeff Spender,
President,

Queensland Irish Association

Calendar

Saturday, 22nd July, 3pm
The Quiet Man Screening

Monday, 31st July
Ireland v Nigeria – FIFA Women's World Cup, Lang Park, Brisbane

Friday, 4th August, 5pm
QIA Happy Hour Drinks - Normanby Hotel, Red Hill.

Contact us

We welcome content from members and friends in this newsletter.

If you have news or an article you would like to see included, email the editor, our public relations officer Mary Allen, at mary@queenslandirish.com.au

You can also reach us through our website, www.queenslandirish.com.au, and on our social media pages.

Editor and designer: Mary Allen.
With thanks to all our contributors.

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Queensland Irish Association

presents The Quiet Man
70th anniversary screening



Join us on Saturday, July 22nd from 3pm at

The Elizabeth Picture Theatre, Brisbane

Tickets \$18. Book [here](#)

Kind-hearted Imogen picked as our 2023 Queensland Rose

by Jess Logan

The 2023 Queensland Rose of Tralee Selection was a huge success, and we now have our new Queensland Rose!

The Selection was a night full of anticipation for the Entrants, fuelled by energetic music from The Barelyshakes and the supportive crowd. The night kicked off with the entrants being piped in to 'The Rose of Tralee' by piper Stuart McLeod from the Queensland Irish Pipe Band. There was a poignant moment when MC Samantha Andrew acknowledged the passing of Noela McCormick and recognised her enormous impact on the Queensland Rose.

It is believed that this year, we had the highest number of Queensland Roses in attendance, at 15 out of 32!

The judges had the hard job of the evening selecting the 2023 Queensland Rose. Thank you to Tara Henry, the 2011 International Rose of Tralee and 2011 Queensland Rose, Angela Martin, the 1999 Queensland Rose, and Nicola Holly, President of IASAQ.

Thank you to all our sponsors and supporters, and especially to our Entrants for a fantastic experience this year.

We will be selecting the next Queensland Rose in 2025, so we look forward to sharing this wonderful event with the support of the Queensland Irish community then!

**2023 Queensland Fundraiser Rose –
Anika Nickolls**
*Sponsored by the Darling Downs
Irish Club*

Anika is an 18-year-old retail sales assistant from Dalby, with a strong



Queensland Rose of Tralee 2023 is Imogen Weston-Kelly, who was sponsored by Murphy's Pigs.

Pictures: Katherine O'Malley

interest in health and fitness. In her spare time, she enjoys going to the gym, drawing, reading, and dancing. Anika's Irish connection is through ancestry in Co. Limerick, and she has recently returned from her first visit to Ireland in March 2023. Anika aims to ultimately obtain work experience in a beauty salon before owning her own with an adjoining florist, which will combine two of her favourite things.

**2023 Queensland Rose –
Imogen Weston-Kelly**
Sponsored by Murphy's Pigs

At 22 years of age, Imogen was born in London and her Irish connection is from her father, who was born in Co. Kildare. Imogen is employed as a social worker at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and enjoys empowering people by providing appropriate

resources for them to change their narrative. She has previously volunteered for a number of organisations working towards dignifying lived experiences and fortifying supportive connections for vulnerable people, including Orange Sky Laundry, SONY Camp, as well as a homework tutoring program for those seeking refuge and asylum. Imogen loves spending time with her cavoodle Harvey, reading, watching live theatre, and cooking for loved ones. Imogen would like to continue to challenge her own comfort zones in the future and work in Ireland, specifically within the cancer or palliative care space.

To support and follow Imogen's journey to Tralee, or see more photos from the Selection, please follow the Queensland Rose of Tralee [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages. You can contact us at any time!



The escorts on the night, above, and, right, Stuart McLeod from the Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band piping in the 2022 Queensland Rose and the 2023 Entrants.



Anika Nickolls was the 2023 Fundraising Rose and she had plenty of support from her sponsors, Darling Downs Irish Club, below.



ANGLO&CELTIC

Introducing the Ultimate Irish, British & Celtic Magazine for Aussies

Discover the vibrant world of Irish, British and Celtic culture in Australia like never before with our new online magazine. Packed with entertainment features, gig listings, and news from both sides of the world, this is your go-to source for all things Irish, British and Celtic.

Why choose us?

Exclusive Content: Get the latest updates on Irish, British and Celtic artists touring Australia. From legendary acts to emerging talents, we'll keep you in the know about the hottest gigs and events near you.

Homegrown Insights: Our Irish editor, with extensive experience in publishing and having lived in Ireland, England, Scotland, and currently in Australia, brings a unique perspective and insider knowledge. Benefit from her deep understanding of the cultures, communities, and music scenes.

Community Connection: Stay connected with the Irish, British and Celtic communities in Australia through our dedicated news features. Discover inspiring stories, events, and initiatives that celebrate the vibrant heritage and contributions of these cultures.

Free Online Access: Enjoy the convenience of accessing our magazine anytime, anywhere, completely free of charge. Dive into captivating articles, interviews, and reviews from the comfort of your own device.

Low Advertising Rates: Promote your business to a highly engaged audience without breaking the bank. Take advantage of our affordable advertising rates and reach a niche market passionate about Irish, British and Celtic cultures.

Join us as we bridge the distance between Australia, Ireland, Britain, and the Celtic lands. Be part of the only national British and Irish magazine catering to these cultures produced within Australia.

Don't miss out—visit our website today and start immersing yourself in the best of Irish, British and Celtic magic down under!

www.angloandceltic.com
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email: editor@angloandceltic.com

ANGLO&CELTIC

Entertainment

Book review

Fintan O'Toole, *We Don't Know Ourselves*

Fintan O'Toole is an Irish writer, columnist, and literary critic. He was born on February 16, 1958, in Dublin, Ireland. O'Toole is known for his insightful commentary and analysis of politics, culture, and society in Ireland and beyond.

The year was 1958, and the Irish government — in despair, because all the young people were leaving — opened the country to foreign investment and popular culture. So began a decades-long, ongoing experiment with Irish national identity. In *We Don't Know Ourselves*, O'Toole, one of the Anglophone world's most consummate stylists, weaves his own experiences into Irish social, cultural, and economic change, showing how Ireland, in just one lifetime, has gone from a reactionary "backwater" to an almost totally open society—perhaps the most astonishing national transformation in modern history.

Born to a working-class family in the Dublin suburbs, O'Toole served as an altar boy and attended a Christian Brothers school, much as his forebears did. He was enthralled by American Westerns suddenly appearing on Irish television, which were not that far from his own experience, given that Ireland's main export was beef and it was still not unknown for herds of cattle to clatter down Dublin's streets. Yet the Westerns were a sign of what was to come. O'Toole narrates the once unthinkable collapse of the all-powerful Catholic Church, brought down by scandal and by the activism of ordinary Irish, women in particular. He relates the horrific violence of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, which led most Irish to reject violent nationalism. In O'Toole's telling, America



FINTAN O'TOOLE

We Don't Know Ourselves

A Personal History of Ireland Since 1958



became a lodestar, from John F. Kennedy's 1963 visit, when the soon-to-be martyred American president was welcomed as a native son, to the emergence of the Irish technology sector in the late 1990s, driven by American corporations, which set Ireland on the path toward particular disaster during the 2008 financial crisis.

A remarkably compassionate yet exacting observer, O'Toole captures the peculiar Irish habit of "deliberate unknowing," which allowed myths of national greatness to persist even as the foundations were crumbling.

Forty years in the making, *We Don't Know Ourselves* is a landmark work, a memoir and a national history that ultimately reveals how the two modes are entwined for all of us.

Podcast review David McWilliams

David McWilliams, pictured above, is an Irish economist, writer, and journalist, broadcaster and documentary maker. He has written five books, *The Pope's Children*, *The Generation Game*, *Follow the Money*, *The Good Room* and *Renaissance Nation*, and written regular columns for the *Irish Times*, *Irish Independent* and *Financial Times*.

We're regular listeners to his weekly Podcast, the aim of which is to make economics easy, uncomplicated and accessible. With the world at a political, technological and financial tipping point, economics has never been so important to all of us.

Each week McWilliams teases out some big economic or political issue facing us, not just in Ireland but in Europe and further afield.

www.patreon.com/DavidMcWilliams

If you would like to share a book or artist you are listening to, please contact us at newsletter@queenslandirish.com.au

Irish choir shares enchanting melodies in two concerts

by Mary Allen

mary@queenslandirish.com.au

Calling all music enthusiasts and lovers of Celtic culture!

The Queensland Irish Choir is gearing up for a series of captivating concerts that will have you tapping your feet and singing along to the enchanting tunes of Ireland and other Celtic nations.

Led by the talented Musical Director David O'Keeffe and accompanied by the gifted Tim Li, this community choir has been delighting audiences since its inception in 2014.

With 47 members and a warm, welcoming spirit, the Queensland Irish Choir is always on the lookout for new voices to join their harmonious ranks. Whether you're an experienced singer or just starting your musical journey, there are no auditions required. All they ask for is a love of music, endless enthusiasm, a ready smile, and a commitment to regular rehearsals.

Every Tuesday evening from 7pm, the choir gathers at Toombul Shire Hall in Nundah, where their voices blend and soar under the guidance of David and Tim.

It's a joyful and supportive environment where friendships are forged and music is brought to life. But what truly sets the Queensland Irish Choir apart are their incredible concerts throughout the year. They usually perform three concerts per year.

In March, they kick off the season with a St Patrick's Day extravaganza, filled with traditional Irish songs that will transport you straight to the Emerald Isle. Joining them on stage



The Queensland Irish Choir Christmas Concert 2022 and, right, the St Patrick's Day Concert last March. Pics: Supplied

at these St Patrick's Day concerts are the Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band and the Queensland Irish Association Dancers.

In July, it's time for the Celtic Winter Concert. Then in November, it's showtime for the Christmas concert.

In August, the choir will start rehearsing for their Christmas Concert, which will be held on Sunday, 26th November, at 2pm, at Chermside-Kedron Community Church

In July, as the winter winds blow, the choir presents their Celtic Winter Concert. This year, they've decided to spread the magic across two venues.

Starting at Chermside-Kedron Community Church on Sunday, 23rd July, and then repeating the concert at St Thomas School Hall in Camp Hill on Sunday, 30th July.

Get ready to be captivated by the timeless melodies of songs like Star of

The County Down, The Foggy Dew, and Will Ye Go Lassie Go. And that's not all – the choir will also take you on a musical journey through the rich traditions of Scotland, Wales, and Nova Scotia.

But the magic doesn't stop there! The Queensland Irish Choir has invited some exceptional guest performers to make these concerts truly unforgettable. At the Chermside concert, get ready to be amazed by the Trio Bellissimo, a group of young prodigies who have won numerous accolades and made their debut at QPAC. Named after its member, Bella and the Li brothers, Trio Bellissimo was formed in 2018 when all three members were in primary school at Canterbury College. They have won first prizes in Brisbane, Redlands, Gold Coast and Beenleigh Quota Eisteddfods.

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Their talent and passion will leave you spellbound.

For the Camp Hill concert, the stage will come alive with the TimLi Trio, Panelo, Patrick, and Holly, a dynamic ensemble that formed as part of the University of Queensland's Chamber Music Academy. Having been selected to participate in the Strike A Chord Winter Workshop at Monash University, their performance promises to be an extraordinary display of musical prowess.

Don't miss your chance to experience the joy and enchantment of the Queensland Irish Choir's concerts. Tickets are now available for both the Chermside and Camp Hill events. Visit their website [here](#) to secure your spot and be prepared for an evening of magical melodies and heartfelt performances. For more information, you can follow them on [Facebook](#).

Join the Queensland Irish Choir on their musical journey as they celebrate the beauty of Irish and Celtic culture. Immerse yourself in the harmonies and let the music transport you to a world of warmth and tradition.

Thank you to Morag Wilson, President, Queensland Irish Choir, for her assistance with this article.

Queensland Irish Choir

presents

A Celtic Winter

An afternoon filled with Songs and Music

Guest Performers
Chermside Trio Bellissimo
Camp Hill Timli Trio

Musical Director: David O'Keeffe
Accompanist: Tim Li

<p>CHERMSIDE 2.00 pm Sunday 23 July 2023 Chermside-Kedron Community Church Cnr Gympie and Rode Roads Doors Open 1.30 pm</p>	<p>CAMP HILL 2.00 pm Sunday 30 July 2023 St Thomas Catholic Primary School Hall 10 Stephen Street Doors Open 1.30 pm</p>
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Tickets: \$20 \$10 u15yo
<https://www.qldirishchoir.org.au/events/>


Enquiries 0493 455 487

Should be a compulsory read for all members of Irish clubs

by Frances Devlin-Glass

Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan: A Hundred Thousand Welcomes: The History of the Queensland Irish Association, Boolarong Press, Brisbane, 2023.
ISBN: 9781922643520
RRP: \$39.95

As one who grew up in Brisbane in a Catholic bubble (which, astonishingly, was rarely breached until the end of my undergraduate life in the late 1960s), I was keen to read this history of the Irish cultural life in my city. My day-to-day life was replete with Irish nuns and priests, sodalities and rituals like the massive Corpus Christi processions that happened at the Exhibition Grounds annually, and I had a short term as an Irish and Scottish dancer (my mother couldn't afford the Scottish socks, much less other regalia, which was simpler than it is today). And yet, until I'd left the city as an adult, I was unaware of the existence of the Queensland Irish Association. This book made me wonder why and whether or not my father, Hibernian Sodality member and a club-man, ever set foot in it. A brother, who is a bar-rister, certainly did, because that's the kind of club it was, but he was never a member.

The Queensland Irish Association (QIA) was indeed, in Rod and Robin Sullivan's superbly-documented account of it (drawn from personal archives and photos and memorabilia of memories and oral and professional histories), a major institution in the city. It invites comparison with Melbourne's Celtic Club of which I've been



Officers, Queensland Irish Volunteers, 1897. (State Library of Queensland)

a member for over 20 years, but in this review I'll diligently eschew comparisons, and focus instead on what the QIA offered members and on this remarkable history of it. This is a commissioned history by proud members who are professional academic historians, and although there are supplementary questions one would like to ask, and perhaps some air-brushing of the difficult bits of the history, one has to admire the richness of the sources they have at their fingertips and the adroit ways in which they map developments over the QIA's long history onto Irish and Irish-Australian historical developments.

Founded in March 1898, the QIA built on the work of the Catholic Bishop James Quinn who had responded to the Great Famine by making inducements to survivors to settle in Queensland. The first contingent was transported in a ship called Erin go

Bragh in 1862. The QIA incorporated the remnants of two earlier organisations – the Queensland Irish Volunteers and the Queensland Hibernian Society. The former (led by Irish parliamentarians) had a defensive military focus on protecting Queensland and recruited from the Scots and Irish, and all denominations (they were inclusive), though their loyalty was often questioned by their British overlords. There's a fascinating photo of a group of them on p.11, looking like a group off to fight the Boers with slouch hats and ceremonial (potentially combat?) swords prominently on display, but they did not see service. They were forced out of uniform after the St. Patrick's Day procession in 1897, and regrouped under the banner of the QIA. The Queensland Hibernian Society was founded by the redoubtable Kevin O'Doherty – convicted and transport-

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Eamon de Valera at QIA clubrooms, Brisbane 1948. (State Library of Queensland).

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ed to Tasmania for his role in the 1848 rebellion, a graduate of the Royal College of Surgeons (Dublin) and admired medic, and an elected representative to the Queensland Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. He and his wife Mary Eva Kelly, ‘Eva of the Nation’, a poet, were to become perhaps the most prominent and cherished of the Queensland Irish.

Already in the days of its establishment, the QIA was keen not to replicate the sectarianism they’d left in Ireland and to be inclusive. Most of all, in the face of rabid sectarianism, they intended to be respectable, aspirational, upwardly mobile. A persistent theme in this history is how very upper-crust the QIA was, how non-sectarian, how well-connected to the big end of town – to Lord Mayors, parliamentarians, bishops and archbishops (of different flavours), and the legal and medical fraternities – and how very upwardly mobile its members were. The date of the QIA’s foundation marked the centenary of the United Irishmen’s rebellion in 1798, and its inclusiveness of all denominations gave impetus in the QIA’s *modus operandi* to the conviction that nationality should override religious affiliations. The

“(Kevin O’Doherty) and his wife Mary Eva Kelly, ‘Eva of the Nation’, a poet, were to become perhaps the most prominent and cherished of the Queensland Irish”

Sullivans, however, point to the telling detail that Protestants failed to support the centenary celebrations in 1898, and comment that Protestant versions of history were often at odds with Catholic ones. Nonetheless, it seems not to have unduly threatened cohesiveness. Another thread of cohesion was the unquestioned assumption that piety to Ireland should not occlude a primary commitment to Australia, the new homeland. Tensions between these affiliations, the writers point out, would from time to time simmer, especially in periods when the QIA was run by native-born descendants of Irish (during the Depression) when the club became more Catholic in tenor than Irish and had to struggle to define itself as Irish. Its inclusiveness, however, made it the stand-out Club in 1908 in a city sporting seven such clubs.

The story of Frank McDonnell (1862-1928), draper and politician, is emblematic of their ambition. Educated

by the Christian Brothers in Ennis, he lost his father at age 7 and was apprenticed as a draper in Ballina (Mayo) aged 13, alongside another Irishman, T.C. Beirne, who would also migrate to Brisbane and also build another major Emporium in Fortitude Valley. McDonnell built his capital on a farm as a rural labourer on the Darling Downs and founded another of the large emporia in Queensland, in George Street (not too far from the Roma Street Railway mecca). He employed my grandfather when he first migrated after the Easter Rising (his family had drapery, high-class millinery and dressmaking and jewelry-making interests in an emporium on Patrick St, Cork). McDonnell was to become an important supporter of education in the state, a social justice activist and philanthropist in Queensland and in Ireland.

The QIA was eager to support delegations from Ireland and continued to do so into the twentieth century with receptions for Presidents Patrick Hillery (1985), Mary Robinson (1993), Mary McAleese (1998) and Michael Higgins (2017). Beginning with the visits of Redmond (Irish Parliamentary Party – IPP) and later Joseph and John Donovan in 1911-12, the QIA gave impetus to enthusiasm for Home Rule in the decade before WWI. Redmond commented on how successful QIA members were in Australia and made comparisons with counterparts in Ireland who ‘would have had difficulty avoiding prison’ or ‘qualifying for jury service’. There may have been a touch of flattery in such descriptions, as Redmond was fundraising for Ireland, but certainly the QIA’s membership saw a stellar rise over the next century and a bit. In 1925, the delegations of two Republican women, Linda Kearns and Kathleen Barry, would continue the tradition of fundraising in the diaspora, collecting for victims of the Rising and the anti-partition cause, and managed not to be expelled from

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Queensland (unlike earlier delegations).

The Sullivans contest Patrick O'Farrell's notion that the Club was 'past-directed' and nostalgia-driven and point instead to the keen interest taken at the QIA in contemporary Irish affairs, especially Home Rule. The QIA's response to the Rising was initially hostile, not surprisingly as a Queensland Government delegation, led by Premier T J Ryan, was in London soon after the Rising and socialising with the IPP and with a depressed Redmond and his followers, and being told 'that the Kaiser was the real author of the rising'. All were alarmed at the impact on Home Rule, and at home, there was legitimate concern about the impact on Australian Irish troops in battle zones. Younger members of QIA had enlisted in the Australian army; 134 who were serving in Europe were kept on the membership roll of the club free of charge.

Although there were some who would vehemently support the Rising back in Brisbane (they would eventually be given Life Memberships in the QIA after being initially expelled for their views), in 1916, they were in the minority. QIA members were at the centre of a political firestorm and 'tarred with the disloyalty brush'. T C Beirne (emporium owner mentioned above) successfully prosecuted a Protestant weekly for discrimination as a Catholic when it accused him of undermining the war effort. Although he had not been named, details identified him, and record damages had to be paid. An acrimonious split within the QIA resulted in a splinter group, the Irish National Association of Queensland (INAQ) which supported the Rising, Sinn Féin, and republicanism. Later during the 1920s, INAQ brought controversial delegates from Ireland (some of whom were deported from New South Wales) to fundraise for the Republican cause and the



Billiards at the Queensland Irish Association, 1934. (State Library of Queensland)

"...dinners could seat up to 900 people, a scale of operation that was undoubtedly unrivalled by any other Irish clubs in Australia"

families of victims of the Rising. Another and even more significant split occurred after the Rising in the Labor Party in Queensland.

What emerges from the Sullivans' history for me is how very multi-stranded the social activities in the QIA were – all manner of educational and recreational activities from literary and debating circles, a library that became a literary hub (attracting as guests and speakers both locals as well as luminaries like Maeve Binchy, Thomas Kenneally, Seamus Heaney and Frank and Malachy McCourt), pipe bands, a choir, dancing classes and competitions, St Patrick's Day parades (a public holiday, 'sacred to Irishmen', in Brisbane after 1903), Irish sports, annual dinners for men and women (in gendered groups until quite late

in the history of the Club much to the dismay of feminists). What made this possible was that from 1919, it had its own clubhouse, and it was continuously expanded, so that dinners could seat up to 900 people, a scale of operation that was undoubtedly unrivalled by any other Irish club in Australia.

One of the most intriguing aspects of this historical treatment is the account in the substantial chapter, 'Women: From Outside to Inside', that precedes the conclusion (suggesting its importance to the authors) of the Club belatedly bringing women into its orbit. They had been energetically doing the work for the signature balls behind the scenes, but excluded, shamefully, from men-only St Patrick's Eve dinners, the highlight of the social life of the club. The historians' moral stance is bluntly headlined by the comment early in the first paragraph that 'Masculinity pervaded its culture.' And further, that it was 'not perceived as unjust discrimination.' It had foregrounded men's sports, celebrated male Irish literary and legendary heroes (including their local heroine and poet, 'Eva

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Renovated Clubroom, ca. 1929. (State Library of Queensland)

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of the Nation' from consideration), and 'on occasion, indulged in patriotic Irish militarism' (p.235). Although they featured Linda Kearns in 1925, it was shamefully not by name, and Delia Murphy, a singer with a global reputation, was similarly occluded by being referred to as the wife of the ambassador. The club slowly responded to a more feminist zeitgeist, and by the 1980s was still ambivalent when in 1981, Michelle Grattan, and Anne Summers, senior political journalists, sought to attend when Malcolm Fraser was guest speaker at the St Patrick's Eve Dinner and were refused. The Human Rights Commission got involved, and membership law changes were made, making it possible for women to become full members. An even more embarrassing occasion was when Brisbane's first female Lord Mayor Sallyanne Atkinson was, as the custom dictated, invited to sit at High Table but 'only as Lord Mayor and not as a woman'. It took a phalanx of feminists (led by a friend and colleague, Northern Irish-born Rebecca Pelan) and

"Closure was averted, but the trauma was real until 2018, when memberships began to recover. The more confident acknowledgement and deployment of women were part of this metamorphosis."

protests to overturn the discrimination in the 1980s and '90s. The spectacularly successful visit of Mary McAleese permanently changed the culture of the club. The result was a resurgence of cultural activities in the 1990s – QIA scholarships rich enough to take students to Irish Studies courses at top UK universities, dinners boasting Irish Dancers and Pipe Bands, Debutante balls, theatre parties to see Irish plays at the Queensland Theatre Company, pipe bands visiting Ireland and Scotland, visits from Irish notables like Conor Cruise O'Brien and Máire Mhac an tSaoi, QIA collaborations with academics on projects, the revival of St

Patrick's Day parades, and much more.

The almost fatal collapse of the club after the brilliant decade of the 1990s was occasioned by many factors: an expensive refurbishment of the clubhouse, the loss of rental income on the ground floor, high levels of debt, and building compliance issues. To compound these difficulties, a major flood of the Brisbane River in 2011 seriously damaged the Tara House basement and its historical records. Membership plummeted from a high of nearly 1000 members in 1996 to 350 in 2011 with a generation less focussed on community involvement and cultural investment, and dealing with more demanding workplaces. Insolvency loomed with a debt of \$3.125 m. It is a minor miracle that the club's fortunes were successfully revived with the sale of Tara House in 2016 (the club retained just one floor of the building thus alleviating building maintenance costs significantly), more conservative financial management and a return to the wide variety of cultural activities which had always been the mainstay of the club in its vibrant periods. Closure was averted, but the trauma was real until 2018, when memberships began to recover. The more confident acknowledgement and deployment of women were part of this metamorphosis.

This is a fascinating history, about a world that, though it was contiguous with mine and my interests, sadly didn't overlap. It should be compulsory reading for members of Irish clubs wherever they occur.

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