



Queensland Irish Association

# Newsletter

May 2023

## QIA Dancers kicking with world's best in Montreal

This May Newsletter commences with the sad news of the passing of our much-loved Life Member of the QIA, Noela McCormick, D.Ua.

Noela was a Committee Member of Tigh Gaelach Dining Club for a number of years and was a founding member of St Brigid's annual dinner, first woman board member of the Queensland Irish Association, Life Member of the Queensland Irish Association, Queensland Rose of Tralee first convenor, in fact, Noela was a woman who was involved in many groups of the Queensland Irish Association.

Noela was so active within the QIA that she features very prominently in our book, *A Hundred Thousand Welcomes*. She is referred to in 11 separate passages, and her photograph appears as well.

Noela passed away peacefully on Wednesday, 3rd May, after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease and other health issues.

Noela's funeral is being held at Mt Thompson, Holland Park on Thursday, 11th May at 10.30am.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Noela, her family and friends. May she rest in peace. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam.

We were also very saddened to hear of the passing of David Booth, ex Drum Major of the Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band. We offer our



**CANADA CHAMPS: QIA Dancers Declan McMahon, Kathleen Downey, teacher Kate Hartley, Tara McMahon and Daniel McMahon at the World Championships in Montreal.**

condolences to David's family and friends. You'll find a special tribute to David on page 7 of this newsletter.

April has been another busy month across the community.

Congratulations to QIA Dancers who excelled in Montreal at the World Dance Championships. Through your membership, the QIA Board was able

to provide financial assistance to the dance troupe towards the significant cost of travel to the event.

The Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band also did Queensland Irish proud at the Maclean Highland Gathering in New South Wales. The band finished third in the band contest

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# Vale Noela McCormick, our first woman board member

*Continued from page 1*

Grade 4B Marches category. Again, through your membership fee, the Association can provide financial assistance to the band through practice and storage facilities in Morningside.

Don't forget that donations to The Queensland Irish Heritage Fund are tax deductible. By contributing to the fund, you are not only gaining a tax benefit but also supporting Irish culture in Queensland.

The success of our Saint Patrick's Eve Dinner has been demonstrated by the extent of social media coverage of the event. This includes a photograph of Andrew Slack taken during his brilliant speech, which found its way to the Wanderers Rugby Union Club in Dublin, where Andrew had played during his celebrated career. Andrew was made a member of the Order of Australia for his services to rugby and was inducted into the Wallaby Hall of Fame.

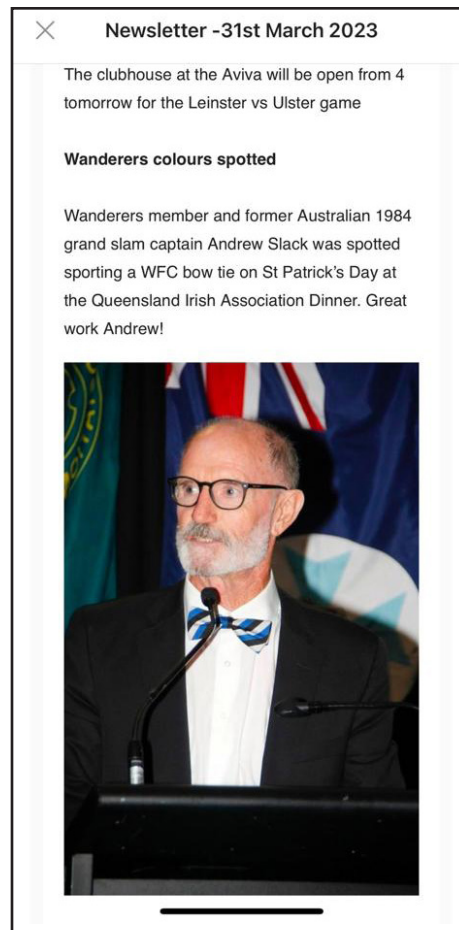
In its letter to members, Wanderers said they were very pleased to see Andrew wearing his Wanderers tie during the Saint Patrick's Eve dinner in Brisbane. Well done Andrew!

We are in advanced stages of preparation for an Irish gathering, which will be held at The Normanby Hotel, Musgrave Road, Red Hill.

We hope to hold the function towards the end of May or possibly start of June. It will be similar to recent functions we held at the Grand Central Hotel.

The Normanby Hotel is now run by Sam and Nick Ingham-Myers of the the Ingham-Myers Hotel group, who have taken it over from Jaz Mooney.

I had discussions with Brian Cuffe and we plan to have this function not only for QIA members but also for members of our [Queensland Irish Association Friends and Supporters](#) Facebook group, and others interested



in joining or supporting Queensland Irish Association. Once the details and date are finalised, we will let everybody know. If you have not yet joined our Queensland Irish Association Friends and Supporters group on Facebook, we encourage you to do so.

We encourage members with families to bring their adult children along to our function so that they can see what we're about and consider joining. Membership of QIA has long been a tradition that passed down through families.

Happy 70th birthday to The Quiet Man. This iconic Irish movie, starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara, was released on 9th April, 1953 in Australia. To mark this anniversary, we are arranging a special screening of the movie for members. We will publicise all the details once they are finalised.

Also save the date for Bloomsday



**Vale Noela McCormick. QIA is mourning the passing of our first woman board member and Life Member.**

2023, on Friday, 16th June at 11.30am on Queen Street Mall stage. Join us and the rest of the world in celebrating the literary masterpiece that is Ulysses.

We are looking for an additional reader for Molly Bloom's soliloquy. If you are interested, please call 0419 673 126.

*Jeff Spender,  
President,*

*Queensland Irish Association*

## Upcoming events

**16 June 2023**

*11.30am - Bloomsday in Brisbane,  
Queen Street Mall Stage.*

**Date TBC**

*Friends and Supporters of QIA  
Gathering - Normanby Hotel,  
Musgrave Road, Red Hill.*

**Date and venue TBC**

*The Quiet Man Screening*

**31 July 2023**

*Ireland v Nigeria - FIFA Women's  
World Cup, Lang Park, Brisbane*

# Unmasking Mary by Pat Ryan



Unmasking Mary at Queensland Council of Trade Unions in South Brisbane.  
Picture: Claire Moore

A public talk and presentation, Unmasking Mary, was given by Pat Ryan about her grandmother Mary Deeney and her family's part in the fight for Ireland's freedom.

Easter Monday 2023 marked the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, bringing an end to 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland. It was a fitting occasion to mark another anniversary, that of the 1916 Easter Rising and one woman's role in that event.

People gathered at the premises of the Queensland Council of Trade Unions in Peel Street, South Brisbane to hear how family history, oral history and military records

combined to recover an unknown story of a family's determination to secure independence for Ireland.

Mary Deeney's story, as told by her granddaughter, Pat Ryan, traced the involvement of one family in those tumultuous times, from Derry to Dublin and Cork, across the Easter Rising, War of Independence and Civil War.

A question-and-answer session followed the presentation and led to a lively and interesting discussion about Irish history over the last century.

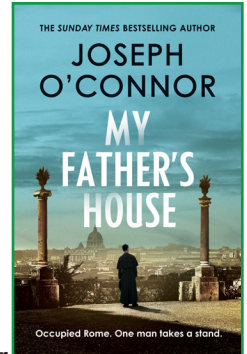
Thank you to Pat Ryan and Pauline Peel for their efforts to make this event happen.

## Competition

We have a copy of My Father's House by Joseph O'Connor to give away.

To be in with a chance to win, just answer this simple question: My Father's House is set in Rome, but in which European country is Rome?

Email your answer to [newsletter@queenslandirish.com.au](mailto:newsletter@queenslandirish.com.au). Draw will take place on June 1.



## Contact us

Queensland Irish Association is entirely volunteer-run and can always use a helping hand.

We welcome content from members and friends in this newsletter.

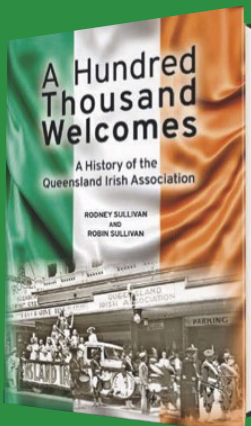
If you have news or an article you would like to see included, email the editor, our public relations officer Mary Allen, at [mary@queenslandirish.com.au](mailto:mary@queenslandirish.com.au)

You can also reach us through our website, [www.queenslandirish.com.au](http://www.queenslandirish.com.au), and on our social media pages.

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# QIA 125



To celebrate 125 years of Queensland Irish Association in 2023, we have released a book which traces the history of one of the most successful ethnic organisations in Australia. The paperback edition is \$39.99 (plus postage). The limited-edition hardback edition is \$100 (plus postage).

You can order a copy by contacting Michele Bourke, by phone on 0438 763 439, or by email to [sales@queenslandirish.com](mailto:sales@queenslandirish.com)



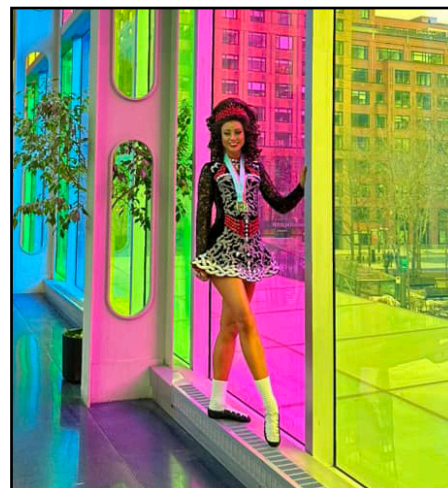
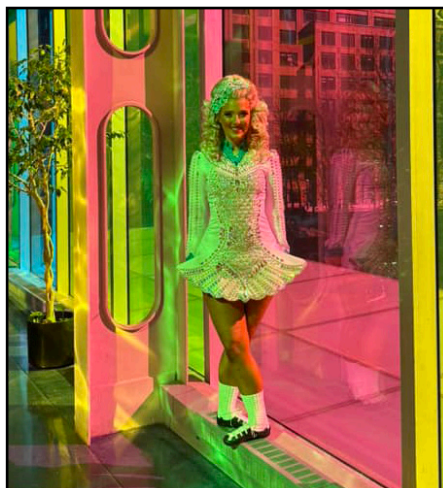
Kiriana McKay placed 35th in Senior Ladies.



Tara McMahon danced beautifully in the Senior Ladies event, and, below, Tara, left, and Kiriana McKay in the foyer of the Montreal Convention Centre, where the world championships were held.



Declan McMahon finished 16th in the Men's 20 to 21-year age group competition.



## About QIA Dancers

*QIA Dancers is a not-for-profit Irish Dancing school with locations in both the north and south of Brisbane.*

*Classes cater for boys and girls at all levels and all ages, from new beginners to advanced dancers, youngsters through to adults.*

*Classes are run over four terms, usually following the state school terms. The number of weeks in each term may vary, averaging 10 weeks per term.*

*QIA Dancers offers competitively priced fees that are charged at the start*

*of each term. Free trial classes run in the first two weeks and the last week of each term, with fees after that invoiced on a pro-rata basis.*

### **How to sign up:**

*All details are on their website, at [www.qiadancers.com](http://www.qiadancers.com).*

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# Mixed four-hand céilí group place eighth in the world

by Mary Allen

mary@queenslandirish.com.au

It is, of course, a lifelong dream of Irish dancers to take part in the world championships, but for these five dancers from QIA Dancers, they had to wait an extra three years for their dream to be fulfilled.

QIA Dancers teacher Kate Hartley explains: “These dancers were preparing to take part in the 50th World Championships that were to be held in Dublin in 2020, but unfortunately, Covid got in the way and the Championships were cancelled for two years.

“The dancers were unable to attend the 50th World Championships that were eventually held in 2022 for a number of reasons and later that year, they decided that they would like to go and they kept working over another long, hot summer to achieve their dream.”

The dancers had to qualify at the Queensland State Championships, held last August, to gain the right to enter the World Championships. Dancers from all over the globe convened in Montreal, Canada for eight days of championships, running from the 2nd to the 9th of April.

“We had three dancers that competed in solo events, two of them for the first time,” said Kate. “And a team representing QIA Dancers. The last team that competed at the World Championships from QIA was in 1994, at the 25th World Championships. It is a huge commitment not just physically but financially to compete at this level and the dancers were very appreciative of the financial support that they were given by the QIA.”



QIA Dancers Over 16 Mixed Four-Hand céilí placed eighth in the world.

All of the dancers have danced as QIA Dancers through all of their dancing journey and for at least three of them, this was their last dancing competition.

These dancers started dancing from the ages of three to seven years and have performed and competed at a local, state and national level throughout their time with QIA Dancers.

Daniel, Tara and Declan MacMahon are all from the same family, the youngest three children of seven siblings, all of whom have danced at one stage or another. Daniel and Tara have now retired from competition and are working towards becoming dancing teachers.

Tara danced in the Senior Ladies event. Declan danced in the Men's 20 to 21-year age group and was placed 16th. And all three were part of the Mixed Four-Hand céilí, together with Kathleen Downey, and they placed eighth in the world.

Kiriana McKay danced in Senior Ladies section. She placed 35th overall. In paying tribute to the dancers, Kate said: “It was such an amazing journey to have all five dancers at the World Championships. It was fantastic, a testament to their hard work and determination to get there, with some help and guidance from the QIA Dancers teaching team.

“For me, it was an honour to be with them at the pinnacle of their dancing journey, having been there when they took their first steps on the dance floor at the Irish Club in Elizabeth Street many years ago.”

The future is bright for QIA Dancers with such inspiring role models for young, upcoming dancers.

Kate added: “Collectively, they have about 100 years of dancing at QIA Dancers. They are amazing mentors and role models to the next generations of dancers coming through.”

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# QIA Pipe Band marches to victory at Maclean Gathering



Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band taking part in the Maclean Highland Gathering. *Pictures: Mary Allen*

April was a busy month for Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band. Not only did they take part in the Anzac Day Parade in Brisbane, they also competed in the pipe band competitions at Maclean Highland Gathering in New South Wales.

Maclean Showgrounds has been home to Highland Gatherings for 128 years, and they provide the opportunity for high-level competition for pipers, drummers, dancers and sportsmen and women in their chosen cultural pursuit.

The gathering has grown to become one of Australia's pre-eminent Celtic cultural events.

Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band came third in the Band Contest Grade 4B Marches category.

They also took part in a street parade and Scottish ceilidh.



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# Vale David Booth, ex Drum Major of QIA Pipe Band

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of David Booth on Monday, 10th April, 2023.

David was a long-time member and former Drum Major of the Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band.

Originally from Maclean, New South Wales, David became a stalwart of the Queensland Irish community. His dedication to the band and his huge talent will be missed.

In paying tribute to David on their Facebook page, Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band said: "It was always an honour to march down the street behind him on many occasions. He was also a respected tutor and dress and drill judge.

"David's passion for music and leadership inspired many. His incredible talent and his unwavering dedication to the Pipe Band community will be sorely missed.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with David's family and friends during this difficult time."

Members of the Queensland Irish community have been paying tribute online to David's friendliness and his kind and gentle nature.

Pipe Bands Queensland also paid tribute to David on their website, at [www.pipebandsqld.com](http://www.pipebandsqld.com).

Details of a memorial service to be held in Brisbane will be advised on Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band's Facebook page, at [www.facebook.com/QIAPB](http://www.facebook.com/QIAPB), at a future date.

The thoughts and prayers of Queensland Irish Association members are with David's family and friends at this sad time.

Rest in peace, David Booth. Ar dheis Dé go raib a anam.



# 1916 Rebel William Ryan Commemoration at Nundah



Des Ryan, Margaret Stacey, and Séamus Sullivan, Vice-President, Queensland Irish Association, at the commemoration.

There was a great turnout for the commemoration at the grave of Irish rebel William Ryan in Nudgee Cemetery on Easter Monday.

The story of William Ryan was featured in the April edition of this newsletter.

It was wonderful to see Sister Angela Mary in

attendance on the day.

Pictured below, during the ceremony, standing is Joseph Thompson, who went to great effort to locate the unmarked grave of William Ryan when his family contacted the Irish Embassy in Canberra asking if they knew the whereabouts of his burial.







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# Entertainment

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This month's book is a revisit to an old favourite viewed through an Irish lens.

The Fatal Shore by Robert Hughes was first published in 1986. Recognised as an Australian literary classic, the book provides a history of the early years of British colonisation of Australia, and especially the history and social effects of Britain's convict transportation system. Considered one of the most definitive accounts of Australia's convict history, broadcaster Philip Adams has said that the book should be a staple on the school curriculum.

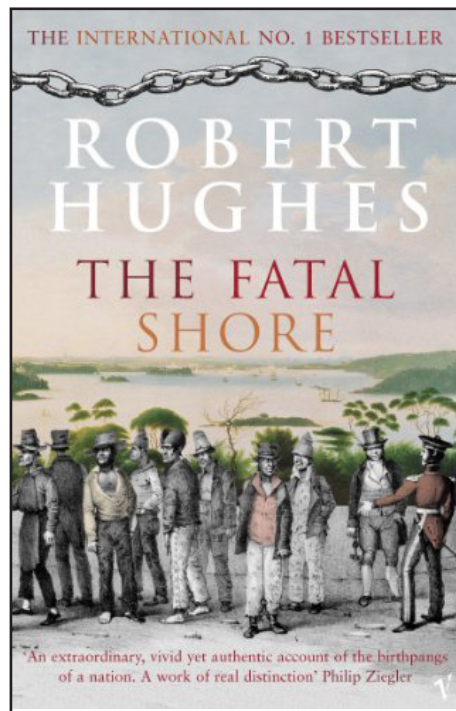
The book can broadly be seen as five sections:

- The historical, political and social reasons that led to transportation to Australia;
- The hardships of the voyage and of the early years of the colony;
- The make-up of the convict population;
- The secondary detention centres such as Norfolk Island;
- The established colonies and the moves toward abolition.

Over the course of eighty years, 40,000 Irish men and women were transported from Ireland into what Hughes describes as "this thinly disguised form of slavery". The book details stories of the harsh treatment of convict prisoners on transport ships, in particular the Irish prisoners who were especially ill-treated because many captains feared mutiny.

One of the many stories in the book details the story of The Britania, which sailed from Cork in 1796 and was Captained by Thomas Dennott. Dennott meted out over 7,900 lashes to suspected mutineers on this one voyage. One suspect, James Brannon, received an appalling 800 lashes over two days and died on the second day.

Almost 20 per cent of Irish convicts could be called social or political rebels. Hughes describes Australia as the "official Siberia" for the many Irish dissidents, "their presence caused the system acute strain and insecurity" and the Irish were "oppressed with special vigilance and unusually hard punish-



ments. They formed Australia's first white minority."

There is no denying that the Irish made a significant contribution to the development of Australia, both as convicts and as free settlers. In fact, the Irish were among the largest groups of convicts sent to Australia, and their influence can be seen in Australian culture today.

Irish convicts were involved in a range of activities, from building roads and bridges to farming and mining. They also played a key role in the development of Australia's political and social institutions, with many Irish convicts becoming active in the fight for workers' rights and other social justice causes.

In addition to convicts, many Irish immigrants arrived in Australia during the 19th century, seeking a better life. They brought with them a rich cultural heritage that has helped to shape modern Australia. Irish immigrants played a significant role in the development of the Catholic Church in Australia, as well as in the political and economic life of the country.

Overall, the Irish contribution to Australia is a complex one, shaped by the experiences of convicts, immigrants, and their descendants. While The Fatal Shore does not focus specifically on the Irish contribution to Australia, it is an

important work that provides valuable insights into the early history of this remarkable country.



## Music

### The Mary Wallopers

The Mary Wallopers are a folk group hailing from Dundalk, Ireland. The band is comprised of brothers Charles and Andrew Hendy and Sean McKenna. The trio is known for their unique blend of traditional Irish folk music with modern influences.

They have gained a strong following for their lively and energetic performances. The music is often described as a fusion of traditional Irish music with punk rock and other modern genres. Their sound is a reflection of their diverse musical influences, which include The Pogues, The Dubliners, and The Clash.

The band's rise to popularity has been rapid, and the band has already toured extensively in Ireland, USA and the UK (we're hopeful to see them Down Under). The group has received critical acclaim for their music, with reviewers praising their energy and authenticity. The Mary Wallopers' music is a celebration of Irish culture and a reflection of the changing face of Ireland in the 21st century.

In a time when many traditional forms of music are struggling to find new audiences, The Mary Wallopers' blend of old and new has resonated with listeners around the world. With their unique sound and irreverent approach, The Mary Wallopers are sure to continue making waves in the world of folk music for years to come. Their debut album The Mary Wallopers is out now [Marywallopers.com](http://Marywallopers.com)

*If you would like to share a book or artist you are listening to please contact us at [newsletter@queenslandirish.com.au](mailto:newsletter@queenslandirish.com.au)*

QUEENSLAND IRISH ASSOCIATION

# Bloomsday

"THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DAY IN THE IRISH LITERARY CALENDAR"

**FRIDAY 16TH JUNE**

A CELEBRATION OF MODERN IRISH LITERATURE

At the Queen Street Mall Stage 11:30AM



**FOR ENQUIRIES**

Call 0419673126 or email  
[enquiries@queenslandirish.com](mailto:enquiries@queenslandirish.com)

**READINGS | POETRY | MUSIC**

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