



Queensland Irish Association

Newsletter

August 2023

125th Anniversary Lunch at City Hall to top off the year

As you know, Queensland Irish Association is marking 125 years since its formation in 1898. It has been a year of wonderful highs for the QIA and we are delighted to announce the highlight of our year of celebrations - a 125th Anniversary Lunch at Brisbane City Hall.

You are invited to join us at the Ithaca Auditorium at Brisbane City Hall on King George Square, on Friday, 6th October from 12 noon.

There will be a two-course meal and welcome drink, Irish entertainment, and a sing-along, as well as raffle prizes.

Also, the QIA history book, *A Hundred Thousand Welcomes*, will be available to purchase.

Dress is smart-casual.

A table of ten costs \$800 and places are limited so don't delay with booking. Email your RSVP to irisheventsbn@hotmail.com. Bookings close Thursday, 28th September if not filled earlier.

We had a very enjoyable Happy Hour Drinks at The Normanby Hotel on August 4.

The next drinks get-together is at the same venue, The Normanby, with entertainment once again by talented multi-instrumentalist Brendan Williams. It will take place on Thursday, 7th September at 5pm.

One to mark on your diaries, we will



HAPPY HOUR DRINKS: Queensland Irish Association held Happy Hour Drinks at The Normanby Hotel on August 4. More pictures on page 2. *Pics: Mary Allen*

have our AGM on Saturday, 18th November at 11am at Wests Rugby Union Club, Sylvan Road, Toowong.

There is an open invite for family members to attend as afterwards we will have a family day, with meals available at the clubhouse.

Our screening of *The Quiet Man* at Elizabeth Picture Theatre was a huge success.

We had to move the screening to a bigger theatre as it had sold out, and then the bigger theatre sold out too.

You'll be glad to hear that we are in the early stages of planning our next cinema outing.

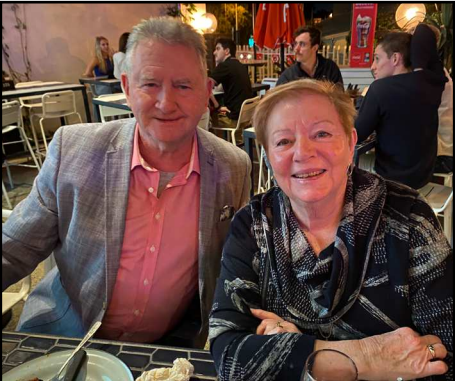
We will keep you posted in this newsletter when we have final arrangements in place.

See our calendar on page 5 for a list of upcoming events. Keep in touch with our social media pages and [website](#) and join our [Facebook group](#).

*Jeff Spender,
President,*

Queensland Irish Association.

QIA Happy Hour Drinks at The Normanby Hotel





QIA125



Queensland Irish Association

125th Anniversary Celebration Lunch



Brisbane City Hall

Friday, 6th October, 2023 at 12 noon

Join us in the beautiful Ithaca Auditorium
for a two-course meal and welcome drink
Irish entertainment and sing-along

Raffle prizes

Dress smart-casual
\$800 for table of ten

Bookings are limited, reserve without delay
RSVP to irisheventsbrisbane@hotmail.com





Queensland Irish Association

Drinks and Irish entertainment



Join us on Thursday, September 7th
from 5pm at

The Normanby Hotel, Red Hill, Brisbane

for social drinks &
Irish entertainment
by Brendan Williams

Queensland Irish Choir presents A Celtic Winter



Queensland Irish Choir at their A Celtic Winter concert in Chermside on July 23rd. Special guests were the talented Trio Bellissimo. Pics: Mary Allen



Calendar

Tuesday, 22nd August, 6.30pm.
Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, University of Queensland will give an online talk on their book on the history of Queensland Irish Association. This free public seminar, titled A Hundred Thousand Welcomes: Opening Windows on Irish Queensland, will be streamed via Zoom only. RSVP to Dianne.hall@vu.edu.au if you would like the zoom link.

Saturday, 26th August, 12pm.
Our Public Relations Officer Mary Allen will be the guest on the Irish Program, Radio 4EB, 98.1FM.

Thursday, 7th September, 5pm.
Queensland Irish Association Drinks at the Normanby Hotel.

Friday, 6th October, 12 noon.
Queensland Irish Association 125th Anniversary Lunch at Brisbane City Hall.

Saturday 18th November, 11am
AGM, Wests Rugby Club, Toowong.

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.

Another great way to interact with QIA is by joining our Facebook group, Queensland Irish Association Friends and Supporters.

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

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Strange hidden history of former Irish Club building

by John Prpic

Amateur local historian John Prpic recently compiled this fascinating history of the building that used to house the Irish Club on Elizabeth Street. He posted it to his popular Facebook page *Passing Time*. He kindly gave us permission to reproduce it here. Please support John by liking his Facebook page here: [Passing Time Qld](#)

Queensland Irish Association Building, 179 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane.

Today, we are in Elizabeth Street looking at the former Queensland Irish Association building in 1928 (pictured right), which is also known as Tara House. Today, the site is home to the Elizabeth Picture Theatre.

This site was originally acquired in 1877 by boot manufacturer, Mr James Hunter, for £2,250.

He contracted local architect, Mr Richard Gailey, to erect two stores on the site and by 1879, he was advertising his warehouse for let for £200.

The property was then leased by produce merchants, Unmack & Heussler, who remained at the site until 1884.

The site was acquired by wealthy London merchant Mr Alexander McArthur in 1884, who used the building as the Brisbane branch for his warehousing firm.

He owned the site until 1899, when architect, newspaper proprietor, company director and politician, Mr James Cowlishaw acquired the building.

Fast forward to 1920 - Mr Cowlishaw assisted in financing the Queensland Irish Association's purchase of the site for their club building, with the



“Here they found that the building had been ransacked... gelegnite and fuses were left behind after an unsuccessful attempt to blow open the safes”

purchase price being £11,000 and their mortgage being only £8,000.

Prior to the acquisition of this building, the Queensland Irish Association was located in the Courier Buildings on the corner of Edward Street and Queen Street, which I followed until at least May 1920.

From at least February 1921, Mr F.W. Mole, and until at least July 1921, the Public Curator of Queensland held their offices in this building, while between September 1922 and June 1923 tailors Hooper & Harrison were also located at this site.

Then, between at least May 1924 and

at least May 1925, Watson & Canavan Ltd had their offices in this building, while from at least April 1925 until at least May 1925, City Welding World were also located here.

In 1927, the building commenced major structural and interior alterations with help from architectural firm Cananagh & Cavanagh and R. Coutts & Son.

I believe that these works likely resulted in the installation of the cantilevered awning added to the facade, but I have not been able to confirm the date. I can confirm that it was in existence by 1937.

They also included the demolition of the original rear wall and the construction of a reinforced concrete and steel extension.

By January 1928, reports on the extensions indicated that they were

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 7

making good progress which, when completed, the billiard room accommodation would be greatly increased and improved.

By 1928, the building had been tenanted by Crawshaw Wilcox & Co. Ltd - Soft Goods Warehousemen, Harry Jones & Co. and J.W. Newington.

I was able to follow Crawshaw Wilcox & Co. Ltd until at least September 1929.

By at least July 1932, the building had been tenanted by Barnes & Hill, who I was able to follow until at least June 1933, while Hoare & Son appear to have occupied space here between at least August 1932 and at least March 1935.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, November 12th, 1933, pedestrians in the street heard a dull explosion coming from the Queensland Irish Association building, however, it went unnoticed until later in the day when the night watchmen and two club officials walked into the office.

Here they found that the building had been ransacked, with papers strewn all over the floor, most of the bar stock scattered around, while gelignite and fuses were left behind after an unsuccessful attempt to blow open the safes.

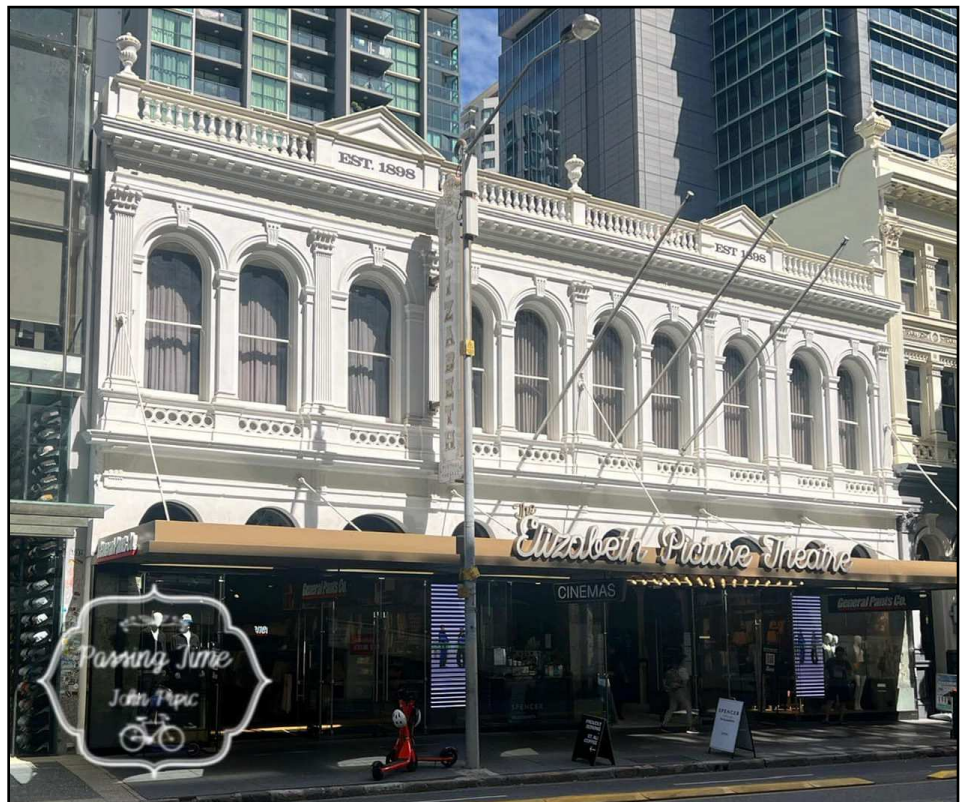
On Thursday, May 14th, 1936, the Brisbane Canary Improvement Society held their annual young bird show at Queensland Irish Association's building with over 300 birds on show, however, it did not go without controversy.

The winning bird was Mr. T. Rees's Norwich cock, which went before the judges three times, however, by the end of the day, the bird was looking off colour and died two days later.

Mr Rees took the bird to a veterinary surgeon where it was discovered it had died of cyanide poisoning.

As a result, the Criminal Investigation Branch were called in to discover who was responsible for its death.

It was stated that there had been



179 Elizabeth Street in 1928, left, and today in 2023, housing the Elizabeth Picture Theatre. Pics: Courtesy of Passing Time Qld

“The winning bird was Mr. T. Rees’s Norwich cock... however by the end of the day the bird was looking off colour and died two days later. Mr Rees took the bird to a veterinary surgeon where it was discovered it had died of cyanide poisoning.”

issues in previous years that resulted in birds being stolen and, as a result, they had to employ a night watchman.

By July 1936, Greyhound Cycle Works had relocated from a site in Elizabeth Street, opposite Perry House, as their Greyhound bike was experiencing a high demand.

The bicycles and motor bicycles had been made in Brisbane for over 30 years by the firm W.H. Russell and Son.

Now, at their new site, they had established a showroom, assembling, enamelling and construction departments

to meet city and country demand.

However, in late September 1937, they relocated to a site in Elizabeth Street which was closer to George Street.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, September 28th, 1937, Cyril Windrum & Company were relocating to the Queensland Irish Association building due to the need for a larger premises, which they celebrated with an opening sale.

Their business appears to have been an auction house and due to this, I was able to follow their many listings over the following years.

I noted from an image in 1938 that by at least this stage, an opening had been made in the ground floor to the right of the the main entrance to the Queensland Irish Association which saw vehicular access for parking inside the building.

On March 17th, 1940, 44-year-old clerk Mr Thomas Henry Clark had fallen down the lift shaft in the Queensland Irish Association building,

Continued on page 8

Strange hidden history of former Irish Club building

Continued from page 8

which he was rushed to the General Hospital and died three days later on March 20th, 1940.

An inquest was then held into his death, with the inspector of the Machinery Department stating that the goods lift at the building would not have been dangerous if used correctly.

Then, in March 1942, the Queensland Irish Association announced that they would not be holding their annual dinner due to the prevailing war conditions.

Instead, they announced that they would be holding a Patriotic Fair at their QIA building in Elizabeth Street from Saturday, March 14th, 1942 until Tuesday, March 17th, 1942.

The official opening would take place by the Governor, Sir Leslie Wilson, on Monday, March 16th, 1942.

The proceeds of this event would be allocated amongst the Australian Red Cross Society (Queensland) and St George's Services Club.

At a ceremony on June 28th, 1948, the Queensland Irish Association building was officially named Tara House.

Then, on the evening of Thursday August 24th, 1950, Queensland Premier Edward (Ned) Michael Hanlon, was honoured at a special unveiling of a photograph.

Mr Hanlon was a member of the association and a former member of the executive committee.

Sadly, not even a year and a half later, he would die in office after a long illness, for which the last five months were spent in the Mater Private Hospital.

Meanwhile, I followed tenants, Cyril Windrum & Company, to this building until December 1954 when the online newspaper archives cease.

Fast forward to April 1988, and while checking the property records, I found a transaction which suggests that the

“On March 17th, 1940, 44-year-old clerk Mr Thomas Henry Clark had fallen down the lift shaft in the Queensland Irish Association building. He was rushed to the General Hospital and died three days later.”

building was sold for \$2.75 million.

I am told that this may be when the QIA sold the air rights to the site to the neighbouring parking garage.

The building then sold a second time, in September 1991, for \$2.4 million.

Again, I am unsure of what this sale may relate to.

I thought that it could mean that the Queensland Irish Association may have sold the site off in 1988 then bought it back three years later?

Or, if perhaps there may have been surplus land that was sold off during these periods.

Otherwise, I cannot explain the sales listed.

The building was added to the State Heritage Register on October 12th, 1992.

By 1997, the building was occupied by Christian Supplies, a TAB and an American Book Store, then by 2006 the ground floor retailers were Christian Supplies, TAB and a book, art and gift clearance store.

Meanwhile, in 2003, the Queensland Irish Association had celebrated its 100th anniversary, with Irish President Mary McAleese visiting Tara House that year.

Sadly, in October 2015, the Queensland Irish Association announced that they had been placed into liquidation, with David Clout and Associates being appointed as the liquidator.

It was hoped that the sale of their clubhouse would pay off outstanding

debts, with remaining funds to be made available for other Queensland Irish groups.

An article at the time pointed out to the fact that the Brisbane Polo Club had sold their then Naldham House site for \$10 million, while stating that Tara House could fetch as much as \$20 million.

Then, in October 2015, the Queensland Irish Association sold Tara House to the Sourris brothers of Five Star Cinemas for \$8.91 million.

Mr Stephen Sourris and Mr Peter Sourris then employed architects JDA Co. to convert the site into the Elizabeth Picture Theatre, while also taking special care in respecting the building's heritage.

With this in mind, JDA Co. used special laser scanning technology to document the building and its heritage, which was done to ensure its features were well preserved.

Their plans were unveiled in September 2016 when lodged with Brisbane City Council and by February 2017, received overwhelming support from LNP, Labor and Greens councillors.

These works also uncovered the original ground-level archways which had been covered up by the installation of the cantilevered awning, which now flood the lobby with much-needed natural light.

The former Irish Club had now been converted into a five-theatre complex, with a 150-seat theatre being located in the former ballroom.

The remaining four cinemas range in sizes from 22 seats to 57 seats, with the total capacity being 350 patrons.

Now I struggled to find an exact opening date for the new theatre, but did note that an article from September 30th, 2017, spoke about the Elizabeth Picture Theatre in future tense while a flood of local articles on October 5th, 2017, were stating that it was now open.

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Bloomsday fun as Brisbane celebrates the joys of Joyce

The Queensland Irish Association shared in the international celebrations of Bloomsday again this year on Friday, June 16th. The wonderful sounds of the pipes and drums commenced the presentation in Brisbane's Queen Street Mall, and set the scene for the citizens of Brisbane to share some excerpts from James Joyce's Ulysses, joining Leopold Bloom through his day in Dublin.

Our MC, Matt Foley, introduced QIA Librarian Cyril Kennedy, who provided information about Joyce and the background to the novel, which is described as the greatest of the 20th century. Cyril's wonderful speech is reproduced below.

And then it was on to our readers.... Matt and the unforgettable scene of breakfast - a vegetarian's nightmare!; Mary Crawford and the 'bloody mangy mongrel dog' Garryowen; Dan O'Neil, ending with the great line... "Could a swim duck?"; and Monica Norris, Penelope... well, just watch the video! Tom Kimmet, as always, entertained with his beautiful voice, encouraging people to sing along. The Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band's pipes and drums completed the programme, and the celebrations continued at Gilhooleys Irish Pub and Restaurant.

Thank you to Tony Robertson who took wonderful photographs on the day.

The video of the 2023 Bloomsday in Brisbane is at this [link](#), so please share the joy and come back again next year.

My name is Cyril Kennedy and as the librarian for the Queensland Irish Association, I have been asked once again to say a few words about James Joyce on this day we celebrate.



Last year, I gave a broad outline of Joyce and Ulysses, although I had not read the book for some decades.

Since then, I have reread the book and so I will attempt to give you my impression of what Joyce and his novel are trying to express.

First, a quick recap of the author.

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce was born on 2nd February 1882 at Rathgar, Dublin into a middleclass family.

With names like that, how could he not become famous, and yet he did so under the shorter James Joyce.

In the 1901 Census, John and Mary Joyce with their eight children were living in a large house in Clontarf West.

James Joyce was a brilliant student, and he had a classical education by the Jesuit Order.

He graduated from Trinity College Dublin and then moved to Paris but returned shortly afterwards because of his mother's declining health and

subsequent death.

By 1904, he had met Nora Barnacle and they fled what he saw as the intellectual and political paralysis of Dublin.

Thereafter they lived on the Continent. They first settled in Trieste, Italy where their two children were born.

He taught English at the Berlitz language school, while writing poetry and short stories. When he announced his engagement to Nora Barnacle, his father retorted "at least she will stick to him". And so, she did.

Now we get to Ulysses, first published in 1922 by the Shakespeare & Co bookshop in Paris.

The novel is divided into 18 episodes.

Based on Homer's epic poem The Odyssey about the journey home by Odysseus from the Trojan War to his faithful wife Penelope and their son.

Shakespeare's Hamlet is also used as

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

an analogy. We have King Hamlet and his unfaithful wife Queen Gertrude, while their son mourns the death of his parent.

The three main characters in order of appearance are, a young Stephen Dedalus, an older Leopold Bloom and his unfaithful wife Molly, while the setting is Dublin on 16th June 1904.

The first three episodes follow Stephen Dedalus starting out on his journey across Dublin.

The next three episodes follow Leopold Bloom as he starts his day too and travels across Dublin, more or less in the opposite direction.

For the following nine episodes, their itineraries are intermingled with a cast of colourful characters and events happening at different places, but often at the same times, which tends to complicate the narrative.

What struck me this time in reading the novel was these sudden shifts in place and time, which is replicated throughout the book.

Some events in the novel are purely in the minds of the characters while other events did actually happen on that day, such as:

The journey across Dublin by the Viceroy Lord Dudley and his entourage to attend a charity bazaar raising funds for the Mercy Hospital, climaxing in a fireworks display. In the novel, these events are witnessed by numerous characters at various places and times.

Secondly, a ferry disaster did happen on the river in New York on the previous day and was widely reported in that day's newspapers.

In the novel, Bloom tosses a crumpled religious flyer into the river where during the next few hours it is noticed floating down the Liffey. "Elijah is coming".

Thirdly, the Ascot Gold Cup horse race was run on that day and was won by a 20-1 outsider. In the novel, this is



a recurring theme as various characters speculate about the person who they suspect had money on the winner.

All these references are repeated across a number of episodes.

The episode titled Wandering Rocks moved the action in each paragraph to a different place, showing that these events were all happening at the same time.

The last three episodes relate what happens when Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom finally meet at the same place and time.

And Molly Bloom is definitely all about place and time. She just can't help herself remembering where and when.

Joyce blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction, between biography and the novel.

Stephen Dedalus can be viewed as the young James Joyce where the book is set.

Leopold Bloom as an older and more experienced James Joyce when he is actually writing the book 15 years later.

Bloom is portrayed as an alien in Dublin, traipsing across the city trying to sell advertising space for various newspapers.

While Joyce is an alien in Paris, traipsing across that city trying to sell

his manuscripts to various publishers.

The Bloom family fortune deteriorated over time in the novel, reflecting the Joyce family fortune dissipating in real life.

The young Dedalus sisters are reduced to poverty, while their father Simon sings for a free drink in the pub.

And so, Bloom reflects on the disintegration of the family unit after the mother dies.

By the 1911 Census, the widower John Joyce and his two youngest daughters are merely lodgers in a boarding house.

Homer's Odyssey takes place after the Trojan War, while Shakespeare's plays often portray events as the result of war and James Joyce wrote Ulysses during the First World War.

History repeating itself.

Homer's epic poems were experimental and controversial when written in the 2nd Century BC.

While Shakespeare's plays brought a new style of writing to the English stage in the late 16th Century.

So, Joyce was trying to follow in their footsteps with a new and experimental style of writing to showcase the 20th Century.

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11

Was he perhaps grappling with that novel scientific theory of his era, “the time-space continuum”?

He probably did not set out to write the great novel, but a series of short stories which over time he saw could be brought together as one epic saga. This evolved into the greatest novel of the 20th Century.

Even in 1922, when the manuscript was being typeset by the printers, Joyce was still rearranging various passages to set the place and time.

Was it pure coincidence that while the novel has much to do about Shakespeare, it was actually published by the Shakespeare & Co bookshop in Paris?

James Joyce was a keen observer of human nature and a good teacher. He entices us to study people’s behaviour, to read history, to explore the classics of Homer and Shakespeare. To suggest that while time has moved on people have not really changed.

Ulysses should be read the first time as simply a novel about Dublin life at that time. Don’t try to understand all the weird references and strange passages. Just enjoy the story.

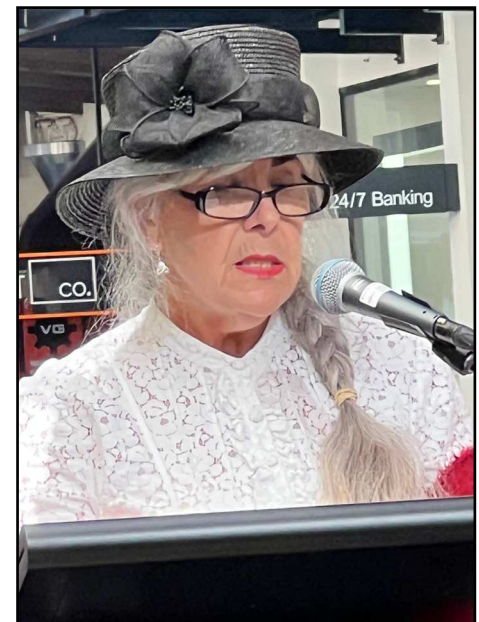
Someone said, “in order to read *Ulysses* for the first time you need to have read it already”. Don’t listen to them. They are suffering from déjà vu. You will return to it again.

Ulysses is one book of 18 episodes and over 260,000 words. Yet hundreds of books, thousands of articles and tens of millions of words have been written about it. It has endured the test of time.

When asked “what did you do during the war Mr Joyce?” he replied, “I wrote *Ulysses*”.

Joyce did not end the book with the words of Molly Bloom, but with the words “Trieste-Zurich-Paris 1914-1921”.

Life in Dublin in 1904 is not unlike life here today in this River City. We have hundreds of people around us, all going about their own business and



with their own inner thoughts. Each person different but all connected by place and time. The weather forecast for Dublin today is 16-24 degrees Celsius.

I wish to acknowledge those people whose works on this subject I have read and whose words I may have incidentally used.

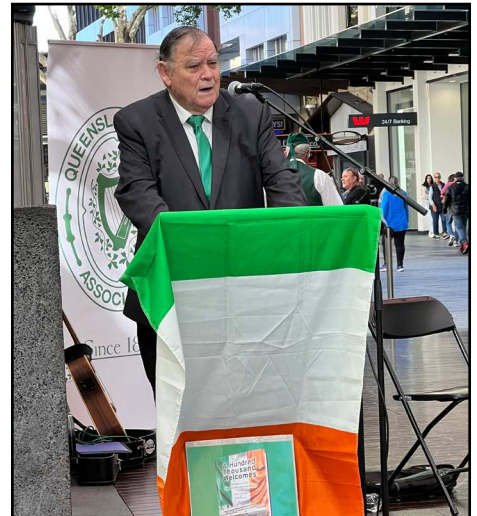
I would like to thank you for being

here today. I would especially like to thank that friend who gave me a centenary edition of *Ulysses* bought from Shakespeare & Co bookshop in Paris.

So let us move on to these players on this stage behind me who will transport you to that other place and back in time.

Bon voyage.

Pics: Tony Robertson



Entertainment

This month we share some of the radio we are listening to in Ireland and Australia.

RTE is Ireland's national TV & Radio network.

We are regular listeners to RTE Radio 1 and in particular to the music show Late Date (daily 9am Queensland time/11pm Irish time). Considered one of the best-known music shows in Ireland. It attracts a loyal audience of night owls, shift workers and overseas aficionados (like us!). The show mixes multiple music genres from country to pop to jazz. A perfect blend of music and good company each Queensland morning. RTE is available to stream via their website - [RTE Radio \(rte.ie\)](http://RTE Radio (rte.ie))

Late Night Live – ABC Radio

For Current affairs we like to listen to Late Night Live on ABC Radio National. Hosted by farmer, writer and public intellectual Phillip Adams. The show is often the setting for a serious and learned discussion of politics, science, philoso-



Eight-part Irish gangland drama Kin has come to SBS. The 2022 series stars Charlie Cox (Daredevil, Boardwalk Empire), Clare Dunne (Herself, Spider-Man: Far from Home), Aidan Gillen (Game of Thrones) and Ciarán Hinds (Game of Thrones, The Terror). A boy is killed and his family embarks on a gangland war with an international cartel: a war that is impossible to win. [Watch it on SBS On Demand](#)

phy and culture and aims to host cutting-edge discussion of public debate, and present ideas and issues not yet covered by other Australian media.

ABC Radio National Monday –

Thursday 10pm or on Podcast
[Late Night Live with Phillip Adams - ABC Radio National](#)

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

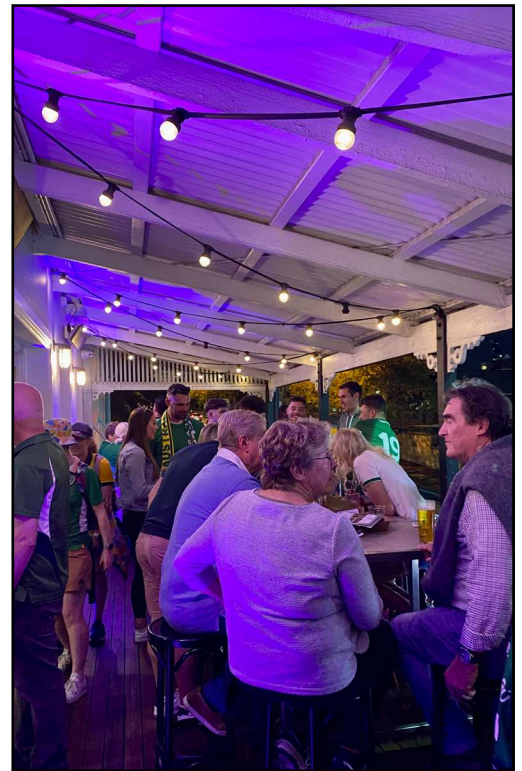
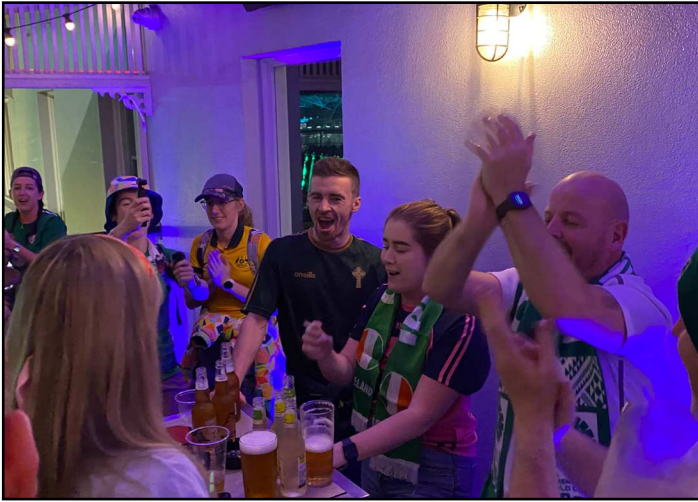


qia125



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

QIA Ireland Supporters Drinks at the Lord Alfred



There was a huge crowd at the Queensland Irish Association Ireland Supporters Drinks at the Lord Alfred on the night of the Ireland v Nigeria Women's World Cup match.
Pics: Mary Allen

