



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY

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VOLUME 38

SUMMER 2014

SPRING AND SUMMERTIME EVENTS YIELD FUNDS & FRIENDS

The fifth annual benefit for the Museum's Interpretive Center was held Saturday evening, May 10, 2014, at beautiful and historic Ochre Court, Salve Regina University. Approximately 130 Museum members and friends attended "The Gathering on Bellevue" and enjoyed Irish-inspired savory and sweet specialties and libations and the musical talents of acclaimed Irish singer/songwriter, Robbie O'Connell. Guests bid enthusiastically on the many silent auction packages, which included such items as a stay in Kinsale, Newport's sister city in Ireland, watercolor paintings by members of the Grosvenor family, and Red Sox tickets. The theme for the evening was, appropriately, "Ceol, Caint Agus Craic" (music, talk and fun). The event generated \$14,750, 80% of which was allocated directly to ongoing operational costs of the Interpretive Center, including exhibit updates. The remaining 20% was allocated to the Center Endowment Fund to sustain the Center in the future. Photos from the event may be seen on page 2 and a complete list of our generous event sponsors and donors, including our many silent auction donors, may be seen on page 3.

The start-of-summer "Sunset Train Ride," a perennial favorite of the membership, returned on Monday, June 30. Attendees enjoyed a 10-mile roundtrip train ride along the east shore of Narragansett Bay in the vintage cars of the Old Colony & Newport Railway. Museum board members supplied the tasty hors d'oeuvres. Guests enjoyed a great view and pleasant company during this fun and social BYOB event, while raising funds for the Museum.

In collaboration with the Newport Public Library, the Museum presented a 96-minute film of Irish historical interest on Monday, August 4. Film writer/director Alan Brown, introduced his film, "The Minnits of Anabeg," based on the true story of his ancestors, the Minnitt Family. The dramatic film was shot in County Tipperary and in London, with the central story taking place during the potato famine of the 1850s. Due to overwhelming response, two screenings of this film were held, one at 3:00 p.m., the other at 5:30 p.m., with a wine and cheese social between the two. DVDs of the film were available for sale. One hundred and forty Museum members, Friends of Newport Library, and members of the community at large enjoyed this free event, and numerous new members joined the Museum that afternoon. If you were unable to attend the screening and would like to learn more about the film please visit www.TheMinnittsofAnabeg.com.

To cap off the spring/summer schedule of activities, the 12th Annual "Steak Fry" Fundraiser for the Museum was held on Saturday, September 6 at Ancient Order of Hibernian Hall. Approximately 100 Museum members, AOH friends and others guests enjoyed grilled steak, corn on the cob, salad and other tasty sides. A 50/50 raffle contributed to the event's proceeds, which are being tallied at press time.



Debbi and Harry Winthrop



Bagpiper Joe Mone and Ann Arnold May



Donna McCarthy and Deanna Conheeny Casey



Donal and Mary Lehane



Tim May and Robbie O'Connell

Photos by Jen Carter

The Gathering on Bellevue

5th Annual Benefit for

Museum of Newport Irish History Interpretive Center

Saturday, May 10, 2014

Ochre Court, Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island

Many Thanks to our Attendees and to the Following Generous Donors:

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Sea Star Collection
Set the Stage with Flowers, Anne Huot
The White House Kinsale, The Frawley Family

as of 6/2/14



Vincent Arnold on opening day of the Interpretive Center, June 11, 2011
Photo by David Hanson, courtesy of Newport Daily News

§ IN MEMORIAM §

The founding president of the Museum of Newport Irish History, Vincent J. Arnold, passed away April 14, 2014 at age 83 following a period of declining health. He retained the title of president of MNIH until his death and remained involved in Museum activities even as his health declined. Vince's passion for Irish history and culture inspired the founding of the Museum, which was established in 1996. Under his leadership the organization's Board and countless other volunteers restored the historic Irish cemetery at the corner of Barney and Mt. Vernon Streets in 1999 and developed and opened an Interpretive Center on Lower Thames Street after many years of planning and fundraising. The

popular Crowley Lecture Series was Vince's brainchild, and it remains a highly valued benefit of membership and the number one source of new members for our organization, which is now nearly 700 members strong. The vision and leadership of Vince Arnold remain an inspiration to our Board of Directors and all members who knew him. The 2015 St. Patrick's Day Parade has been dedicated by the Parade Committee to the memory of Vincent Arnold, recognizing his many contributions to Newport County's Irish-American community, the most prominent being the establishment of the Museum of Newport Irish History.

BARNEY STREET CEMETERY NEWS

Our annual "spring cleanup" at the historic St. Joseph/Barney Street Cemetery was held the morning of Saturday, April 19. Volunteers returned to the cemetery for two summer weeding sessions on July 1 and July 29, in the early evening. We wish to thank the Museum members and friends, below, who generously donated their time in this way at one or more of these work sessions. The maintenance and beautification of this, the oldest Irish cemetery in R.I., is an ongoing initiative of the Museum and takes place under the direction of Board members John Booth and Jack McCormack. If you are interested in helping out, please write NewportIrishHistory@gmail.com or phone Jack at (401) 423-2922 to learn more.

John Booth	John Guilfoyle	Ann Arnold May	Pat Shea
Mary Ellen Bronson	Mary Guilfoyle	Jack McCormack	Kathleen Shinnors
Tom Bronson	Jan Gump	Dan Oakley	Mike Slein
Carolyn Evans-Carbery	Martha Koziara	Martha Parker	Bonnie Slein
Pat Cawley	Art Leonard	John Reed	Jerry Sullivan
Jon Davies	Steve Marino	Dave Roderick	

MUSEUM 2014 ANNUAL MEETING & SUPPER HELD APRIL 21

Our Annual Meeting and supper social, attended by 43 members, including Board, was held on Sunday, April 21, shortly after the passing of MNIH president, Vince Arnold. Vice President, Mike Slein, opened the meeting with reflections on Vince and a moment of silence. Following a call for the approval of the 2013 Annual Meeting minutes, the treasurer, Deanna Conheeny Casey, presented an overview of the 2013-2014 financial results and a proposed budget for the fiscal year 2014-15 (The fiscal year runs from April 1 – March 31). The reports were accepted and the proposed budget approved. Vice president Slein then discussed “The Road Ahead,” the important next steps in identifying a new slate of officers, including a new president of MNIH.

A search committee to identify a new slate of officers, including a new president, was formed following the April 21 Annual Meeting. The full Board subsequently met and reviewed the recommendations of the search committee. A vote was taken and the officer slate for 2014-2015 was approved. Please see the below box, which includes a full listing of all Museum officers and board. New additions to the Board in 2014 are noted. We welcome them to their new roles in the organization. We also wish to thank Ron Moore who has stepped down from the Board, for his valuable service and commitment to the Museum.

2014-2015 BOARD

Officers

Michael Slein, President

Maeve Sheehan,
1st Vice President

Jack McCormack,
2nd Vice President

Deanna Conheeny Casey,
Treasurer

Maria Carroll, Secretary

Christopher Behan, Esq.,
Counsel

Board of Directors

John Booth

Joseph Brady

Michael Brennan

Louis Burns

Elliott “Skip” Carter

Jack Curran

Arthur Leonard (*new*)

Stephen Lepley

Steve Marino (*new*)

Peter Martin

Ann Arnold May

Patrick Murphy

Rick O’Neill

Kathleen Papp

Donna McCarthy

John Quinn (*new*)

Harry Winthrop

Director Emeritus

Margaret Ahearn

Ex-Officio Board Members

President, Ancient Order of
Hibernians Div. #1, Newport
(Ryan Kirwin)

President, Ladies Ancient
Order of Hibernians, Newport
(Kathy Semenchuk)

President, Newport Irish
Heritage Association
(Donal Lehane)

Honorary Board Members

The Hon. Kathleen Connell

Mrs. Diana Crowley

The Hon. David Roderick



INTERPRETIVE CENTER NEWS

The Interpretive Center at 648 Lower Thames Street opened for the 2014 Season on Saturday, May 24. Public hours are Thursday through Sunday from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m., through the last Sunday in October. In its fourth season of operation, attendance is up strongly vs. a year-ago and enhancements have been made to the displays (see related article.). The Center will accommodate private and group tours upon request given reasonable lead time. The Center is staffed entirely with volunteer docents from among our membership with training provided by Mike Slein, MNIH president. Board member, Steve Marino, assists Mike in overseeing Center operations. Should you be interested in volunteering at the Center please write NewportIrishHistory@gmail.com or phone Mike at (401) 847-7201 or Steve at (401) 849-1658.

THE STORY BEHIND A RECENT DONATION TO THE MUSEUM

The following article by Professor John Quinn of Salve Regina University was occasioned by Robert T. Lehane, Sr.'s recent donation to the Museum of a marble plaque honoring Reverend Theobald Mathew (1790-1856), an Irish Catholic temperance reformer. The plaque, a photo of which appears below, is now on display at the Interpretive Center. It was carved by Mr. Lehane's Irish immigrant grandfather, Jeremiah Lehane, and it hung for many years in Father Mathew Hall, which stood on Thames Street.

— FATHER MATHEW'S NEWPORT FOLLOWERS —

Father Theobald Mathew began a phenomenally successful temperance campaign in Ireland in 1838, administering a pledge to abstain from alcohol to roughly five million people over the course of ten years. In 1849 he set off on an American tour that would bring him to more than three hundred cities and towns across the country. While he never reached Newport, he spent three days in Providence and appeared in Pawtucket and Woonsocket as well.¹ In 1851, he returned to Ireland having given the total abstinence pledge to 600,000.

After Fr. Mathew's death in 1856, the temperance movement faded for a time but revived in the 1870s as organizations were established throughout the United States in his memory. Newport's Father Mathew Total Abstinence Society was established in 1876 by Michael Butler, a prosperous gardener and landscaper who had emigrated from Ireland as a child. While the society met in a variety of places in its early years, Father Mathew Hall was established in 1906 at 398 Thames Street—the present site of the Admiral Fitzroy Inn.) This three story brick building included meeting rooms for the teetotalers and a gym and bowling alley for young men to use. For years the society fielded basketball teams that competed in Newport's City League.

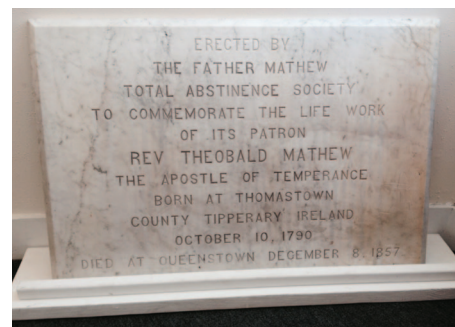
With the advent of Prohibition in 1919, temperance groups began to fade. While total abstinence societies favored voluntary abstinence and were not necessarily in favor of Prohibition, they were nonetheless popularly associated with the Prohibitionists. In 1926 when the society held its golden anniversary celebration, one of the speakers lamented the impact "a certain amendment" was having on their cause and stressed that intemperance "is not ended by a law."²

In 1942 the society sold Father Mathew Hall to the Carpenters and Joiners Union, which needed a bigger place for its meetings. The union allowed the temperance society to continue holding its monthly meetings in the Hall. The teetotalers' membership declined throughout the decade, however, and in 1951, Benjamin Carter, the longtime president, announced that it "was no more."³

The Carpenters Union held its meetings at the Hall until the late 1970s. In 1981 a suspicious fire badly damaged the building and led to its demolition.⁴ In 1986 the Mercy Sisters' former convent was moved from Spring Street to this site and converted into a bed and breakfast, the Admiral Fitzroy Inn.



A postcard view of Fr. Mathew Hall at 398 Thames St., circa 1909



The marble plaque honoring Fr. Mathew.

Photo by Steve Lepley

¹ *Newport Daily News*, September 13, 1849. ² *Newport Daily News*, January 26, 1926.

³ *Newport Daily News*, January 19, 1951. ⁴ *Newport Daily News*, July 6, 1981.

John F. Quinn is Professor of History at Salve Regina University. He would like to thank Patrick Murphy, the City Historian, for his assistance with this article.

SPEAKER PROGRAM NEWS

The 13th Annual Michael F. Crowley Lecture Series kicked off on Wednesday, September 6 at 6:00 p.m. with a talk by Rev. Robert W. Hayman, Ph.D., the historian of the Diocese of Providence and a retired Associate Professor of History at Providence College. Fr. Hayman's talk was entitled "Rhode Island's Struggle to Redeem its Promise to its Irish Civil War Volunteers." At the time of the Civil War, voting rights in R.I. were limited to those who owned a certain amount of taxable property, effectively denying many of R.I.'s Irish immigrants the right to vote.

Edward T. O'Donnell, Ph.D., of Holy Cross College, will present "Streets of Fire: The Irish and the Civil War Draft Riots of July, 1863," Monday, October 6 at 6:00 p.m. The draft riots of July, 1863 in New York City constitute the largest civil uprising in American history. While people of many backgrounds participated in the violence, the Irish played the most prominent role. We welcome back these two popular guest lecturers. Members will receive flyers with all the details in the mail; the information may also be found on our website, NewportIrishHistory.org (click "Lectures"). We are grateful to the La Forge Casino Restaurant and the Crowley Family for their continued support of the series by providing complimentary appetizers and catering the cash bar for the enjoyment of our lecture attendees.

Two additional talks are planned before year-end 2014, when our wonderful lecture venue at the International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum closes for a major renovation of the property. When our 2014-15 series resumes in the New Year, any remaining talks in the series will be held at alternative venue(s). Details will be shared as plans are confirmed. In the meantime, please "Save the Dates" for our two remaining talks of calendar year 2014: Monday, October 27 and Monday, November 17.

NEWPORT'S 375TH ANNIVERSARY PARADE

A contingent of Museum Board members marched in Newport's 375th Anniversary Parade on Saturday, June 21. The parade started on Upper Broadway and ended at Washington Square, before a reviewing stand. A gathering with refreshments, to which the entire community was invited, took place immediately after the parade on the grounds of the Great Friends Meeting House. This was the Museum's first participation in a parade. Members carried a green and gold banner, produced for the occasion, which can be seen in the photo to the right. There was a strong Irish



Board members Donna McCarthy, Mike Slein and Maeve Sheehan carry the Museum's new banner.

Photo by Carmela Geer

presence in the parade including the following organizations: Newport Irish Heritage Association, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Div. #1, Newport, AOH Pipe Band, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians and Fort Adams Trust.

LEGISLATIVE GRANT RECEIVED

The Museum has received a \$2,000.00 legislative grant from the Rhode Island House of Representatives. The grant will be used to enhance the Museum's annual Michael F. Crowley Lectures series and for enhancements to the displays at the Interpretive Center. Representative Peter F. Martin presented the grant check to Museum president, Mike Slein, in the presence of other board members and visitors at the Interpretive Center on Saturday, June 14, 2014. We are grateful to Representative Martin for facilitating this generous grant.



Rep. Peter Martin presents grant check to Mike Slein. Left to right: Mayor Harry Winthrop, Mike Slein, Peter Martin, Anne Marie McNulty (visitor from Wallingford CT, originally of Fuerty, County Roscommon), and Board members Donna McCarthy and Maria Carroll.

Photo by Ann Arnold

WE WELCOME THESE RECENT NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following individuals and businesses, who joined since we last published a list of new members in our newsletter:

FROM NEWPORT:

Bob Beattie
Peter & Gretchen Bloom
John & Winnie Broughan
Agnes Cleary
Joan Coughlin
Billie Crawford
Lawrence Davis
Maureen & Tim Harrington
Richard H. Koziara
Doris Little
Ruth March
Maureen Cronin Marosits
& Mark Marosits
Amy & Melanie McKinney
Maura M. Rudd
William Shea
Joanna Sommerville
Gayen Thompson
Newport Council for
International Visitors
Nancy H. White

FROM MIDDLETOWN:

Pam Braman
John M. Finn
Kevin & Sally Healy
Anne Huot
William Leeman

Veronica T. Maher

Richard McCarthy

Judi & Joe McGinn

Dr. T. Gordon & Elizabeth M. McNabb

John Parrillo

Rene Shenosky

Bob & Sheila Sullivan

Paul & Sita Valentine

Kathleen & Donald Havey & Family

Donald G. Pfeiffer

FROM PORTSMOUTH:

Edward & Aldona Dowski

Barbara C. Earp

Frank Furtado

Carol & Ed Hannon

Eoin Howlett

Mary Doherty Lionette

Claire D. Murtaugh

Liz Paradise

Martin & Margo Sullivan

FROM JAMESTOWN:

Eileen, Steven, Rebekah, Kyle

& Christian Tiexiera

FROM ELSEWHERE IN RI:

Kevin F. Cafferty - Warwick
Dr. Patrick & Gail Cahalan Conley -
Bristol
Virginia M. Edes - Cumberland

A. Catherine Ferguson -

East Greenwich

Mary Flynn - Narragansett

Robert Flynn - Cranston

The Goglia Family - Narragansett

James F. Griffin - Wakefield

David & Nora Hawkins -

North Kingstown

James & Veronica Kearney - Bristol

David B. & Margaret M. Navin -

Wakefield

Christine & Stephen Sullivan -

Saunderstown

FROM ELSEWHERE:

Kathy Batchelor-Murphy - Patterson, NY

Katherine Costantino - Swansea, MA

Jim and Kathy Farley - Solomons, MD

Jane A. Koenig - Boca Raton, FL

Michael & Deborah Rottinger -

Wynnewood, PA

James Bowen - Ben Lomond, CA

& Eliot, ME

Eileen Russo - Glastonbury, CT

& Newport, RI

Roger & Susan Sullivan -

Alexandria, VA

Lucy & Joe Sweeney -

Manchester, CT

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As you all know, the passing of Vince Arnold was a loss of great proportions to each of us. We will all miss his smile, his calm demeanor, his integrity and, above all, his love of the Museum and its "Telling of the Irish Story." Vince was a friend and mentor to whom I looked up. Although it is truly an honor to assume the leadership of this fine organization, losing Vince is not the manner I would have chosen or envisioned to do so. One does not easily step into Vince's shoes; nevertheless, we all knew what he would have wanted: for all in the Museum to carry the torch and ensure, not only its survival, but its sound health and its growth. The Board Members have pledged to do just that. We should be thankful to each of them for their contribution to ensuring its future success.

The organization that I inherited is on sound footing. It is one of the few of its kind that has a record of steady, continual membership growth - and now numbers close to 700! It is financially sound and fiscally well managed, which has permitted the recent allocation of funding to future growth, an expanded speaker series, a new Interpretive Center computer, an endowment fund and improvements to existing displays.

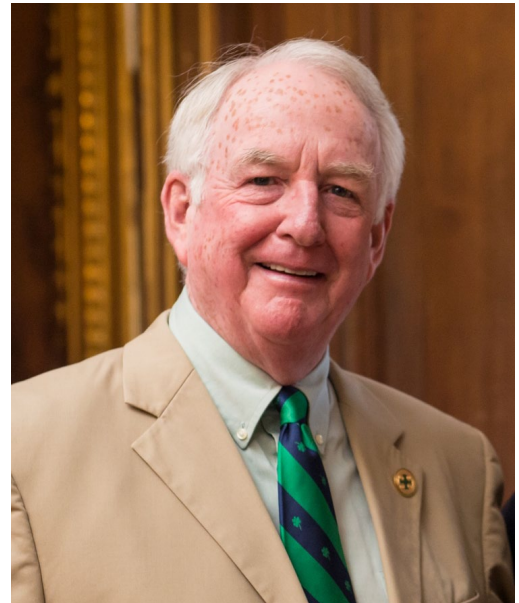
Our monthly events are nearly always sold out, a testament to the quality of the subject matter, the guest lecturers and the pleasant, collegial venue. From the annual train ride to the Crowley Lecture Series, to the ever popular "Steak Fry" and the March "Bus Tour of Irish Newport," each reaches capacity in short order. This is not by accident. The Board Members that lead and manage each of these events have my personal gratitude. I ask that you thank them and express your pleasure with the events and your constructive thoughts on where improvements could be made. Feedback is so very important to the vitality of the Museum. I assure you each of them listens well.

For future expansion, we are now reviewing options for day-long bus (and lunch) tours to other New England Irish Museums and, potentially, a replica cruise of the old Fall River Line boat passage from Fall

River to Newport. I encourage feedback from you because the Museum will succeed only on the strength of its membership and your input. If you wish to express your pleasure or provide constructive thoughts for future events and initiatives, I am always available and

welcome your input at farmags@cox.net or by phone at 401-855-5097.

Slainte, Mike



Mike Slein, President

Photo by Jen Carter

CALLING ALL SCRIBES!

We welcome your submissions to this newsletter which will enrich and supplement what our Board members are able to contribute. Of special interest are short articles reflecting your research and learning regarding Newport County Irish history, heritage and culture. Also of interest would be pieces related to your family genealogy and connections to our community's Irish history. If this is of interest, please contact Ann at 401-841-5493 or tpm1@earthlink.net.

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Deanna Conheeny Casey, Treasurer (401) 847-7156
Pat Murphy, Historian PtrckFMrphy@verizon.net
Ann Arnold May, Membership/Communications (401) 841-5493

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Amount enclosed \$ _____ (Donations are tax deductible—a 501(c)3 organization)

Mail to: The Museum of Newport Irish History, P.O. Box 1378, Newport, RI 02840

Interpretive Center: 648 Lower Thames Street, Newport (Thurs-Sun, Noon-5pm, Mem Day Weekend – Oct)

401-848-0661

www.NewportIrishHistory.org

NewportIrishHistory@gmail.com