

## My Irish Heritage – July 5, 2015

Thank you xxxxxx for allowing me to speak about my Irish Heritage. I will briefly cover this from the vantage points of the land, the government, the culture, the food, history and music.

Behind me are the iconic views of Ireland.

Thru out the land there are stone walls separating the lush green fields of Ireland. Many if the walls date back 200 years, others to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The ones at Ceide Fields in Northern Mayo county were built 6,000 years ago. These walls are the oldest known walls in the world.



Beneath the wild boglands of North Mayo lies the Céide Fields, the most extensive Stone Age monument in the world, consisting of field systems, dwelling areas and megalithic tombs. The stone walled fields, extending over thousands of acres are almost 6,000 years old, the oldest known in the world. --

<http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/west/ceidefields/>

On the western shores of Ireland south of Galway are the cliffs of Mohr. These cliffs are Ireland's number one tourist attraction with over a million plus visitors per year. You can stand on the edge of the precipice with no guard rail or fence and with the strong salty Ocean wind in your face and peer down 700 feet to the crashing waves of the Atlantic Ocean.



The Giant's causeways is found in Northern Ireland. The causeway was created by an ancient lava flow which cracked into hexagonal columns, some 39 feet tall, when the lava cooled. This became a UN world heritage site in 1986.



The Giant's Causeway once connected from Ireland to an uninhabited Scottish Island Staffa. Irish legend states that it was created by 2 warring giants who built it to fight each other. The causeway was destroyed by Ireland giant when he was tricked to believe the Scottish giant was much taller and stronger.

If you spend any time behind the wheel in Ireland you'll notice 2 things. First, the steering wheel is on the right side of the car and secondly the Irish drive on the left side of the road.

Many of the 2 way Irish country roads were like this. Notice that 2 cars can't fit easily on the pavement. The tall vegetation prevents you from seeing cars coming around the bend. Once you see a glimmer of a car coming at you, you yank the wheel into the bushes hoping that there's not a hidden ditch.



Ireland is a divided island. 2 countries in one land.

Northern Ireland leans towards England. The religion is predominately Protestant and it associates the color of orange to itself.

The rest of the island is the republic of Ireland. The religion is predominately Roman Catholic and it associates itself with the color green.

Northern Ireland was embroiled in a three decade long civil war in which over 3,200 deaths are recorded – a lot of bombings and shootings. A historic peace agreement was approved by both sides in 1997 (Good Friday Peace Agreement) ending the conflict.



The Irish flag symbolizes this peace agreement with orange representing Northern Ireland on the right side of the flag and green representing the Republic of Ireland on the left side of the flag with white symbolizing a hope for peace in the middle.



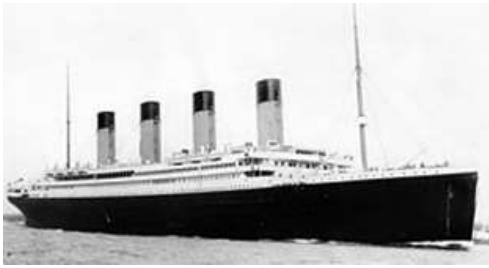
Ireland is encompassed by water on all sides. There are many historical water events that has shaped Ireland.

In 799 AD the Vikings began invading. They burned, kidnapped, robbed and destroyed the Irish way of life but they also built. Many of the major Irish cities began as Viking trading camps: Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Wexford... (circled above in the map)



On the west coast of Ireland you have my ancestral homeland shown by the box region. Rockfleet castle shown belonged to Grace O'Malley (1530 – 1603 AD), a distant relative. She commanded a group of men and proceeded to pirate on the west coast of Ireland. This shows that there were strong women capable of leadership in Ireland in the late 1500s.

in 1593, when her sons, Tibbot Burke and Murrough O'Flaherty, and her half-brother, Dónal na Píopa, were taken captive by the English governor of Connacht, Sir Richard Bingham, O'Malley sailed to England to petition [Queen] Elizabeth I for their release - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace\\_O'Malley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_O'Malley)



Ireland has always been connected to the sea and to be on the sea you have to have a ship. There is a large shipyard in Belfast in Northern Ireland. There is where the Titanic was built and launched.

**Whoa! Wait a minute**, I know what you are thinking but ...

**Don't blame the Irish** – they were just following Engineering specifications!

Some of the customs of Ireland that you might be familiar with is the tweed hat. The hat wasn't created in Ireland but it is widely worn and sold thru out the island



The Irish dance with the upper body motionless and the legs flying all over the place are well known – you've seen the dance in Lord of the Dance and River dance performers which tours the US. This dance began during the 400 years of penal laws which England passed in the 1500's when they ruled over Ireland. Traditional dancing was outlawed so they developed a dance where their upper body remained motionless and their legs danced. When the English inspectors would walk by on the road, they could see in the window people standing up but no one appeared to be dancing – but they were.

If your children get cavities and you gain weight by the piles of Halloween candy then you can blame the Irish. The Irish brought over the holiday when they immigrated to this country.

Over here it's celebrated on October 31 but in Ireland there are 2 weeks of events in the county of Meath where it was born.



The birthplace of Halloween is located about an hour or so northwesterly of Dublin. The place is not well marked with signs but you can find it if you search for it. The hill is broken down and there is not too much to see.

I would caution you about visiting the site as you very well might have a visitor come back with you.

**Not a joke** – we prayed in the car before visiting the site, we prayed at the site to break the demonic curses the have flowed out from the site worldwide and we prayed for protection after we got back into the car but there was a chink in the armor. Something came back with us and caused havoc. Only thru a multitude of people praying did the demonic spirit leave – Praise Jesus, All the glory goes to Him. **Lesson learned:** When you go up against a demonic force then prepare for that demonic force to fight back.



March 17 is St. Patrick's day here in the states but in Ireland the celebration is extended to 4 days. The day is to honor St Patrick. St. Patrick was kidnapped as a youth in England and brought to work as a slave in Northern Ireland for 7 years as a shepherd. St Patrick was finally able to escape the island and return home. At home he became a monk and then was sent back to Ireland.

In Ireland he went to the high king Laoghaire to request his permission to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ across the island. St. Patrick used the shamrock which is the national flower of Ireland. St Patrick described the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, using the Shamrock. The king consented, St Patrick did and 1400 years later we are celebrating the accomplishments of his work..... However, it does seem to be that the focus these days on St Patrick's day to be on leprechauns and beer drinking.



You gotta eat if you visit Ireland and here is some of the typical food and drink that you'll experience.

Soda bread is comprised of very simple ingredients – I believe that the buttermilk gives it its distinctive taste.



If you eat bread then you are going to get thirsty. Why not quench that thirst with some traditional Irish drinks. Irish coffee, Irish whisky and the national beer of Ireland: Guinness. I believe that it tastes much better sitting in a pub in Ireland than over here in the states.

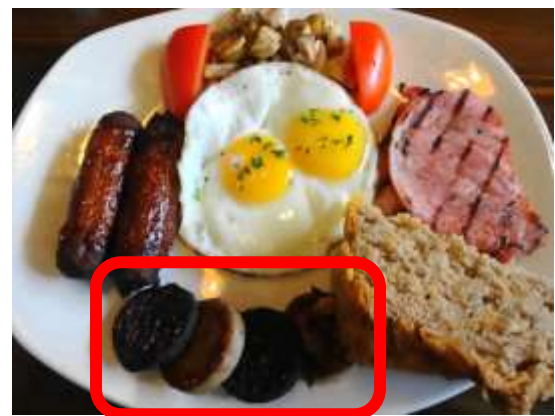


A few of the Irish food dishes is Irish stew (pictured to the right) made with lamb. Other dishes are shepherd's pie & bangers and mash which are just hotdogs and potatoes.

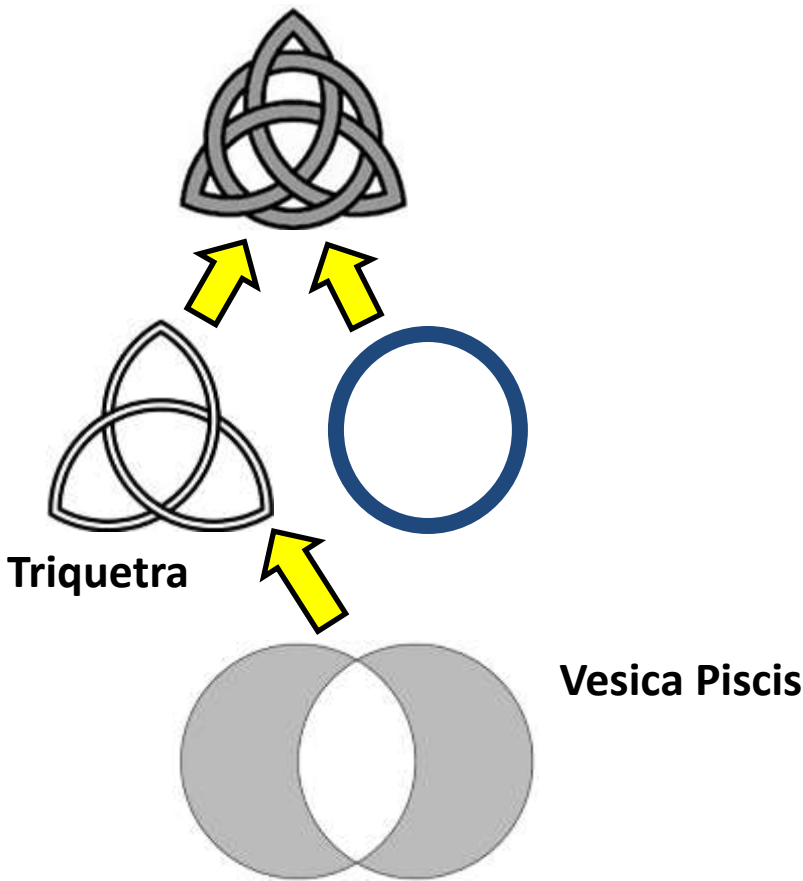
If you are up for a full traditional Irish breakfast then you will get eggs, potatoes, bread, ham, sausage and blood pudding.

Blood pudding? What's blood pudding?

Blood pudding is a sausage made from oatmeal, pig's blood, pig fat and pork... mmmmmm mmmmm good



The Irish love their pig, so, if you believe that pig is not healthy (which it's not) then expect a reduced menu selection if you visit the island.



If you have seen any Irish piece of clothing or art work then you will find interwoven designs on them. One of the more widely used of them is the trinity knot.

This symbol is actually 2 in one. One is a interwoven circle representing unity and the other is a triquetra – and ancient symbol that has taken on many meanings.

The triquetra isn't an Irish symbol but was brought to Ireland by the Vikings. The Vikings used this sign to represent their god Odin. The Irish used the sign to represent many things in a trio (birth-death-rebirth, land-sea-air, maiden-mother-crone...). The Irish Catholics use it to represent the Trinity.

The Triquetra is composed of three Vesica Piscis. This symbol is much older and is still in used today. This sign is form by taking 2 circles at one of their quadrant points (the north, south, east or west points on the circle) and placing it in the other circle's center point. The overlapping region is the Vesica Piscis.

This shows that the Irish has the number 3 reoccur in their fabric of everyday life. The number 3 was integral in passing down history. The Irish Triad is a compilation of topics such as nature, geography, law, custom and behavior. There are 3 main points in each triad.

The number 3 shows up in a more ancient symbol called the triskele or triple swirl. The triskele is found on kerb stones circling an ancient monument called Newgrange located and hour northwest of Dublin. Each kerb stone weighs 2 to 5 tons each and had engravings on front and back. No one knows what this symbol meant or what all the other symbols represent.



Newgrange dates back to 3,200 BC and to a culture that spanned across Europe based on similar stone structures. All that is left of that culture are the stone structures. It seems their remembrance was washed off the face of the earth.

Just a reminder that Noah's flood occurred between the time that Newgrange was built and present day. Seems like Noah's flood may have contributed to their demise.

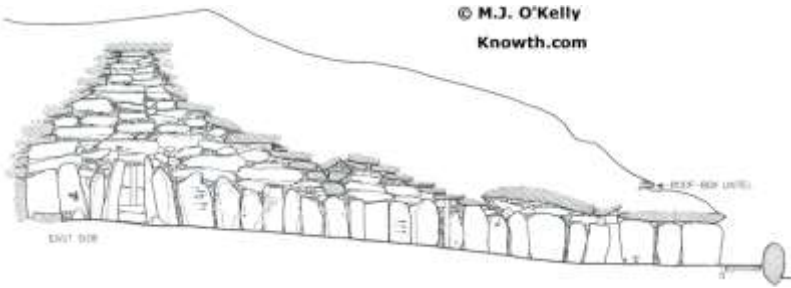


Newgrange is 250 feet wide in diameter, 50 feet tall and contains a 70 foot passage leading to a cathedral chamber.

Newgrange is one of 320 structures in Ireland that is aligned with the sun or moon. On the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year (December 21) there is an alignment of the rising sun.

As the sun rises above the horizon a beam of light shines thru a window box opening above the door, down the passage way and illuminates a bowl in the middle of the chamber for 17 minutes.

The Chamber is interesting. It has withstood the pressure of the weight of rock and earth above it for over 5,000 years. It has a ceiling that reduces in width as it rises with sloping rocks away from the center of the room. Any rain reaching the rocks will be diverted away from the chamber. No rain has entered the room since it was built. The relieving structure is very much similar to how the King's chamber in the great pyramid in Egypt was built however Newgrange is 600 years older than the Great Pyramid of Egypt and 1,000 years older than Stonehenge.



Not many ancient monuments of this age can you enter. Being inside made me reflect that you better be working for an everlasting reward than some monument to your name here on earth.



You can't talk about Ireland without talking about music and you can't speak about Irish music without talking about the harp. The Irish harp is the key piece in traditional Irish music and it was almost lost. England tried to destroy the Irish spirit. They gathered up all the harps they could find and burned them and they executed the harpist they found. Playing the harp was banned and for about 200 years the Irish were without the harp. When England finally lifted the ban only 10 persons on the Island knew how to play the harp.



The harpist had to be able to play three types of songs: one to make you weep, one to make you sleep and one to make you to get up and dance.

Ireland is rich in music, culture, food, customs, history and natural wonders and I would like to thank xxxx for allowing me to speak about my Irish heritage.

[Link to the Presentation \(converted to pdf\)](#)