



Queensland Irish Association

# Newsletter

April 2024

## Don't miss Michael Collins film afternoon **THIS SATURDAY!**

Members and Friends are urgently asked to seize the opportunity of attending the QIA-sponsored screening of the classic film 'Michael Collins' on Saturday next, 27th April, at 3pm in the Elizabeth Street Picture House, Brisbane.

The screening has been extensively advertised on the QIA Facebook page and the QIA Friends and Supporters Facebook group but numbers of tickets sold are currently disappointing.

It really is a great opportunity to visit, or revisit, a great film, starring Liam Neeson as the revolutionary hero.

Cost is only \$15 per person, and you are urged to book [here](#).

After the screening, arrangements have been made so that patrons can go to Gilhooley's Irish Pub & Restaurant for a meal and refreshments if they wish.

Buy your tickets to see 'Michael Collins' NOW.

### St Patrick's Eve Dinner

Those lucky enough to attend the sold-out 2024 St Patrick's Eve Dinner in the Main Auditorium of Brisbane City Hall shared the most wonderful Dinner of the modern era.

The venue was spectacular, the QIA Dancers and the Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band enthralled on the big stage, guest speakers Father Frank Brennan and Irish Health Minister Stephen Donnelly were entertaining and on point, the food provided by Epicure was excellent, and the singing of Irish favourites by the audience, aided by the spectacular slide show on the big screen, was



**Queensland Irish Association's stilt walkers and leprechauns enjoy a break in the park after the Brisbane Saint Patrick's Day parade. Picture: Mary Allen**

a roaring success. All in all, it was a great night. I am sure the Guinness helped.

Many thanks to the Saint Patrick's Eve Dinner Organising Committee, particularly Paul Hogan and Bob Ward.

### Irish summer festival gathering

To celebrate the Irish summer festival of Bealtaine, we will be having a family-friendly get together in Finn

McCool's Fortitude Valley Irish pub and restaurant, from 12pm to 4pm on Saturday, May 11th.

Bealtaine is the Irish May Day festival, marking the beginning of summer. It is celebrated with bonfires, collecting wildflowers and dancing. There will be a flower theme so think Hawaiian shirts, flower accessories and flowery clothing. There will be

*Continued on page 2*





**QIA board and committee members with distinguished guests at the St Patrick's Eve Dinner, including Queensland Governor Jeanette Young and Irish Health Minister Stephen Donnelly. Picture: Good Times Photography**

*Continued from page 1*

Celtic-themed colouring pages for children. We will crown the King and Queen of May, to be chosen from among the best-dressed children.

We will also have a very special guest - cultural and dance historian Dr Heather Blasdale Clarke.

Dr Heather Blasdale Clarke is a cultural historian who has dedicated her career to studying and understanding the rich cultural heritage of European dance in Australia. In 2018, she expanded her expertise by conducting doctoral research on the culture of early Australian convicts, further enhancing her knowledge in the field and leading to the development of the hugely successful museum exhibition *Dancing in Fetters: the culture of convict dance*, which toured across

Australia. She also delves into the Anglo and Celtic traditions of step dancing in Australia. Dr Blasdale Clarke will be bringing musician and dancer friends along.

All are welcome at Bealtaine!

### **Celtic Council Awards**

We are proud to announce that greatly dedicated QIA Members, Life Member Garry Burke and Director Paul Hogan were each honoured with the award title of D. Urr (Noble Person) at the recent Celtic Council of Australia Queensland Awards lunch.

Both have been long standing and enthusiastic contributors to the QIA and the awards are much deserved.

*Jeff Spender,  
President,*

*Queensland Irish Association.*



**QIA President Jeff Spender and Queensland Governor Jeanette Young making their entrance at the Saint Patrick's Eve Dinner.**

## **Calendar**

**Saturday, 27th April, 3pm**

*Michael Collins screening, Elizabeth Picture House, Brisbane.*

*Drinks/food afterwards at Gilhoolley's Irish Pub and Restaurant, Albert Street, Brisbane.*

**Saturday, 11th May, 12pm to 4pm**

*Bealtaine Irish Summer Festival Family-friendly get together,*

*Finn McCool's Irish Pub and Restaurant, Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley.*

## **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](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.**

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

**Editor and designer: Mary Allen.**

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# 2024 Brisbane Saint Patrick's Day Parade

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# Bealtaine welcomes Irish summer with festival fun

The festival of Bealtaine in May marks the beginning of summer in the Celtic calendar and, since it's Ireland, it's a good excuse for a party.

Falling midway between the spring equinox and the summer solstice, Bealtaine is one of Ireland's four fire festivals, the others being Imbolc (February), Lughnasa (August) and the best known one, Samhain (October), which is the origin of Halloween.

Bealtaine welcomes the new season of summer and is now often linked to May Day celebrations. In ancient Ireland, Bealtaine was marked with the lighting of bonfires, a sign of purification and a symbol of rekindling the sun.

The festival was particularly associated with the Hill of Uisneach in County Westmeath, where the borders of Ireland's five ancient provinces met at the Stone of the Divisions, which still stands there. For hundreds of years the Hill of Uisneach was regarded as the ceremonial and sacred centre of Ireland and at Bealtaine people gathered to watch the high king light the great fire which was said to be visible across most of the island.

Today the Hill of Uisneach is the location of the Bealtaine Fire Festival which this year takes place on 11 May. The festival presents music, arts, craft and traditional workshops, craft stalls, talks and demonstrations, games for children, yoga, and healing and mindfulness sessions. And as the sun sets the great Bealtaine fire will be lit.

Across the island of Ireland lots of other Bealtaine celebrations will also take place in May. In picturesque Dingle, County Kerry, on the Wild Atlantic Way, Feile na Bealtaine runs 2–6 May. A community-based music and arts festival, it has an impressive



**Main picture: Performers welcome the new season in Dingle, top left, Feile na Bealtaine Dingle and, top right, Festival of Fires in County Westmeath.**

programme of over 100 events spanning multiple genres of musical and literary performances, discussions, film, theatre and visual art exhibitions.

And Bealtaine Festival is a national festival throughout the month of May to celebrate the arts and creativity of older people. Events range from music and choral performances to visual art, theatre, writing workshops,

dance, literature, circus, discussions, film screenings, storytelling and more and will take place in cities and towns across Ireland.

There will be also be plenty of May Day celebrations across the island including the Merry May Day (6 May) in Holywood, County Down, where traditional maypole dancing is the highlight of the day.

[www.ireland.com](http://www.ireland.com)





# Queensland Irish Association

## *Bealtaine gathering*



Queensland Irish Association  
invites Members and friends to

## *Bealtaine family-friendly gathering*

on Saturday, 11th May from 12pm to 4pm  
at

The Causeway Bar,  
Finn McCool's Fortitude Valley

*Great Irish food and drinks available to purchase*  
*Flower theme to celebrate Ireland's May Day/summer festival*

*Wear a flowery dress/shirt/shorts*

*Admission is free*

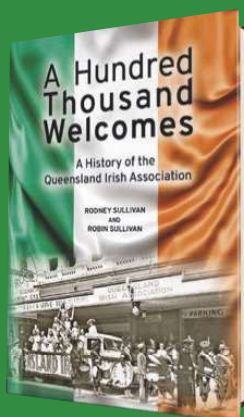
*Enquiries/RSVP to [mary@queenslandirish.com.au](mailto:mary@queenslandirish.com.au)*



# St Patrick's Day Lunch in Wests Rugby Club



The Association's annual Saint Patrick's Day Lunch, which was held at Wests Rugby Club in Toowong, was a hit with families.  
Pictures: Mary Allen



# qia125



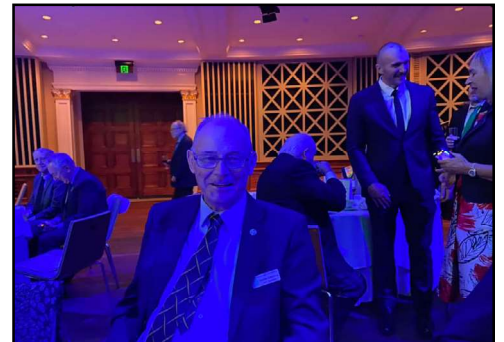
To celebrate 125 years of Queensland Irish Association in 2023, we have released a book which traces the history of one of the most successful ethnic organisations in Australia. The paperback edition is \$39.99 (plus postage). The limited-edition hardback edition is \$100 (plus postage). You can order a copy by contacting Michele Bourke, by phone on 0438 763 439, or by email to [sales@queenslandirish.com](mailto:sales@queenslandirish.com)



# St Patrick's Eve Dinner at Brisbane City Hall



The spectacular St Patrick's Eve Dinner at Brisbane City Hall. Pictures: Mary Allen





# Toast to Australia Our Nation by Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO

*Toast to 'Australia Our Nation'*

*Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO*

*St Patrick's Eve Dinner  
City Hall  
Brisbane  
16 March 2024*

Listen at <https://soundcloud.com/frank-brennan-6/st-patricks-toast-to-australia>

Your Excellency, Governor Jeanette Young, Your Excellency, Ambassador Tim Mawe, Ireland's Minister for Health, the Honourable Stephen Donnelly, Chief Justice Helen Bowskill, retired Justices Jeff Spender and Martin Daubney, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Having just returned to Queensland at the biblical age of three score and ten, I am honoured to be invited to propose the toast to 'Australia Our Nation' on the eve of St Patrick's Day under the auspices of the Queensland Irish Association. Your president Jeff Spender in his typical no nonsense style told me: 'Keep it short – no religion, no politics, and no law, just lots of humour.' Given that my life consists of little more than religion, law and politics, I take Jeff's injunction as the first joke of the night at my expense.

I left Brisbane almost 50 years ago when many of my friends at university were starting out as articled clerks. Now they're retiring as judges. My ancestors first arrived in Queensland 161 years ago. My great great grandmother Annie Doyle came from Muckalee

Frank Brennan is a Jesuit priest and Rector of Newman College at the University of Melbourne.

He is a Distinguished Fellow of the PM Glynn Institute at Australian Catholic University, an Adjunct Professor at the Thomas More Law School at ACU and research professor at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

He chaired the National Human Rights Consultation for the Rudd Government and was a member of the Turnbull Government's expert panel which conducted the Religious Freedom Review. The Morrison Government appointed him to the Voice Co-Design Senior Advisory Group to help guide the Co-Design process to develop options for an Indigenous voice to government.

An Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for services to Aboriginal Australians, particularly as an advocate in the areas of law, social justice and reconciliation, he was the recipient of the Migration Institute of Australia's 2013 Distinguished Service to Immigration Award and of the 2015 Eureka Democracy Award in recognition of his endeavours which have

contributed to strengthening democratic traditions in Australia. He is also a recipient of the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal for his work in Timor Leste

when Director of the local Jesuit Refugee Service, and a recipient of the Australian Centenary Medal for service with refugees and human rights work in the Asia Pacific Region.

He has been awarded honorary doctorates by the University of New South Wales and the Queensland University of Technology.

In 1994, the National Australia Day Council named him an Australian Achiever. Frank serves on the boards of Jesuit Social Services and the National Apology Foundation for Indigenous Australians and on the Advisory Council of the Global Foundation.

Source: [Australian Catholic University](https://www.acu.edu.au/frank-brennan)



in County Kilkenny. Widowed she probably had no option but to leave the farm she had shared with her husband. She and her five children including my great grandfather arrived at Hervey Bay on the David McIvor in July 1863. I am one of those many Australians who is a descendant from Irish migrants who came to Australia in search of a better life. Their dreams became our reality.

On 6 July 1863, the crew of the David McIvor spent the day searching for a channel through the shallow Hervey Bay. The boat anchored. Some of the crew then got into a small boat and made for the shore. They encountered two members of the Batjala (Butchulla) tribe who then willingly accompanied the crew showing them the way to Captain Jeffrey's Admiralty Survey Camp.

The David McIvor was only the second migrant ship ever to come into Hervey Bay and here were two Aboriginals happy to extend a helping hand to complete strangers who must have looked very strange indeed. One Aboriginal was then commissioned to send word to Maryborough 40 kilometres away. That man walked and ran all through the night to bring word of these new arrivals. Within 2 days, a steamer named Queensland arrived and transported everyone up the Mary River to Maryborough. I know nothing more about those Aboriginals who played their part in the safe arrival and settlement of my forebears. At my father's funeral where Senator Patrick Dodson performed an acknowledgment of country and William Barton played the didgeridoo, my sister



# Toast to Australia Our Nation by Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO

Madeline who is here this evening, said, 'We remain indebted for that early and critical welcome of our ancestral offshore arrival.'

Toasting our great country, we toast all those for whom this land is home, and especially those, whether First or recent Australians, who extend a welcome and a helping hand to those in need.

Within a year of my father and his judicial colleagues delivering the historic Mabo judgment, I was invited to address the senior partners of a large law firm at their annual retreat. At the end of my presentation, one the partners introduced himself with the surname Murphy and asked: 'Where will this all end? Why not special rights for the Irish?' I replied, 'Being a Brennan and my mother an O'Hara, I have considerable sympathy for the Irish. I think the relevant comparison is with the Irish in Ireland, not the Irish in Australia. I, with Irish heritage and living on the other side of the planet, take some delight in the thought that there is somewhere on God's earth where the Irish can be as Irish as they will - as selfishly or selflessly, as well or as badly as they might dare.' The unanswered question is: what's needed in 21st century Australia for the First Australians to be at home on their country?

Toasting modern Australia, we toast all those Australians who do the hard thinking and the hard work upholding the rights and entitlements of all, including those on the edges and those further down the ladder of opportunity. Some years ago I was visiting the



Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO delivering his Toast to 'Australia Our Nation' at the St Patrick's Eve Dinner at Brisbane City Hall. Picture: Mary Allen

Woorabinda Aboriginal community west of Rockhampton. Three young Irish nurses came for a visit. One of the Aboriginal elders challenged them: 'What are you doing here?' Without a second thought one of them replied: 'If you came to Ireland you'd want to visit the Irish; we came to Australia and we wanted to visit you the Australians.'

A couple of weeks later I was staying at the church in Mt Isa. A young Irish woman phoned: 'We're 3 Irish lasses who are travelling the country.' I interrupted, 'You're the three Irish nurses who were at Woorabinda.' She said, 'No we're three Irish teachers, and we're looking for a bed tonight.' So they came and bedded down and asked where they might go busking in the morning. I told them I would be celebrating a mass in the morning so I would ask the parishioners. They said, 'We'll come to the mass.' I said, 'Better still, I'll be celebrating mass in a creekbed with some of the Aboriginal people in the afternoon. Come to that.' They said, 'To be sure, we'll come to both.'

They came to the morning mass, got directions for where to do busking, and they made a small fortune. I needed to offer them a meal so I called the Mt Isa Irish Club to be told 'That's no problem at all Father. You're a visiting priest; we can make you an honorary member and then you can sign them in as your guests.' That evening they played the tin whistles in the creekbed and the Aboriginal people played the didgeridoo. The Irish then hit the road for Darwin.

Toasting Australia, we salute those who have the freedom and wit to find a way, those prepared to venture out and give something a go, those who delight in the freedoms and opportunities afforded us in this land, and those still to enjoy those freedoms and opportunities.

Toasting Australia, we commit ourselves to law, religion, politics and humour that serve the common good.

Ladies and Gentlemen, will you please join me in a toast?

I give you the toast: 'Australia our Nation'.



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# Entertainment

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## Michael Collins screening to tell story of revolutionary hero

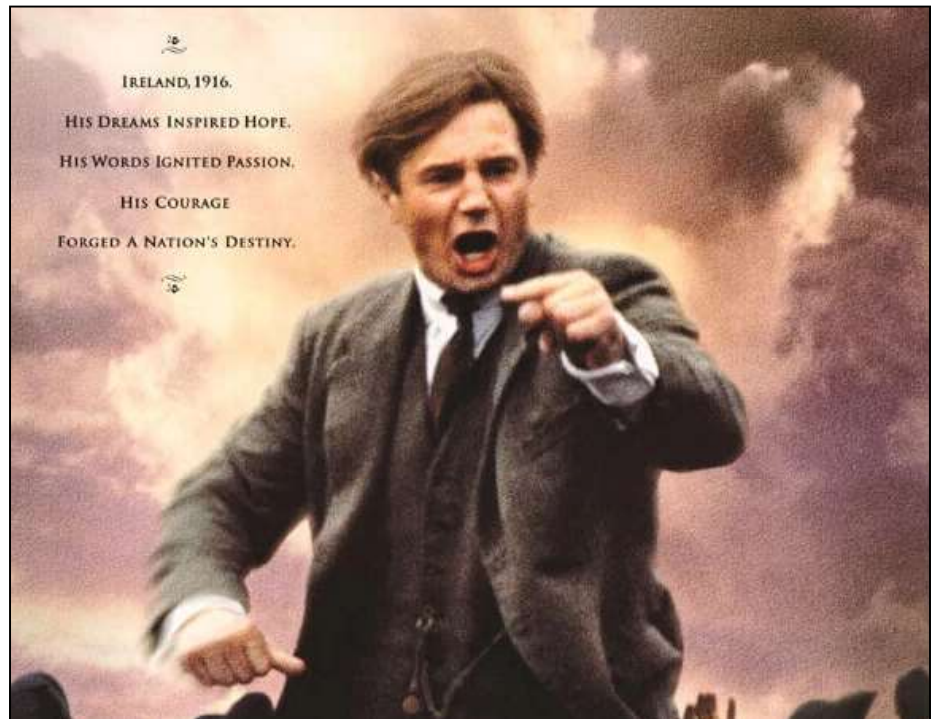
Michael Collins is a 1996 biographical period drama film written and directed by Neil Jordan and starring Liam Neeson as Michael Collins, who was a leading figure in the early-20th-century Irish struggle for independence against Britain. It won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival and was also nominated for Best Original Score and Best Cinematography at the 69th Academy Awards.

### PLOT

At the close of the Easter Rising in 1916, the besieged Irish republicans surrender to the British Army at the republicans' headquarters in Dublin. Several key figures of the Rising, including Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Tom Clarke and James Connolly, are executed by firing squad. Only Éamon de Valera is spared from execution due to his American citizenship, but is imprisoned alongside Michael Collins and Harry Boland.

The 1918 Irish general election results in the victorious Sinn Féin party unilaterally declaring Irish independence and in so doing beginning the Irish War of Independence. De Valera is elected President and Collins is appointed Director of Intelligence for the emerging IRA. Ned Broy, officially a member of the loyalist G Division, sympathises with the independence cause and tips Collins off that the Castle intends to arrest the entire Cabinet that evening. De Valera, sensing that the arrest will spark a worldwide outcry, dissuades his cabinet from going into hiding and persuades them to allow their arrests to take place. Collins and Boland evade arrest, though there is no response to the wider action.

As the last senior leader still free, Collins begins a counter-intelligence campaign with help from Broy. Numerous assassinations of agents and Irish collaborators are carried out by the IRA's Dublin Brigade. De Valera soon breaks out of Lincoln Prison, but announces on his return to Ireland that he will go to the United States to seek President Woodrow Wilson's official recognition of the Irish Republic. The war continues to intensify; the British assign SIS Officer Soames to counter the Irish Republican Army, though he and several of his agents are killed in an attack orchestrated by



Collins. To retaliate, the Black and Tans are sent to Dublin to brutally open fire on unarmed citizens who were in support of an independent Ireland; culminating in a massacre at Croke Park, in which 14 people are murdered during a peaceful Gaelic football game. Broy's assistance to Collins is also discovered by Soames, who subsequently has Broy tortured and killed.

De Valera returns from the USA having been unable to secure President Wilson's support. The British hint at direct communication with the Irish, though Collins' guerilla campaign has boded poorly for Ireland's image. De Valera therefore decrees that the Irish Republican Army must fight as a conventional military, though Collins knows that this will just lead to another defeat against the might of the British Empire. Adamant in his approach to securing peace, de Valera orders a siege on The Custom House, but the Irish Republican Army suffers heavy casualties and the attack fails catastrophically. Despite the desperate situation the Irish Republican Army now finds itself in, the British unexpectedly call for a cease to the conflict.

Collins is sent to London to negotiate

Irish interests as part of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which is signed in 1921. Though the Republic of Ireland is not immediately granted independence, the treaty enables Ireland to achieve it over time while remaining a British dominion during the interim as well as losing six of the nine Ulster counties, which will remain under British control. De Valera, who sought unconditional independence for the Republic of Ireland, is furious upon learning of this and he and his supporters, including Boland, resign in protest. The subsequent people's vote backs the terms of the treaty, but de Valera rejects the result and in 1922 leads an attack on the Four Courts in Dublin. The National Army, led by Collins, is ordered to recapture it. In the subsequent Battle of Dublin, Boland is murdered.

Devastated upon learning of his friend's death, Collins journeys to West Cork, where de Valera is in hiding, to mediate peace. Collins, however, is misdirected by de Valera's associates and is led into an ambush in which he is shot and killed. Kitty Kiernan, Collins' love interest, is informed of his death just as she tries on a wedding gown.

Words: [Wikipedia](#)





# Queensland Irish Association

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## *presents Michael Collins*



Join us on Saturday, April 27th at 3pm in

The Elizabeth Picture Theatre, Brisbane

Tickets \$15. Book [here](#)

Drinks after at Gilhooley's, Albert Street



# QIA Irish History Tour at Toowong Cemetery



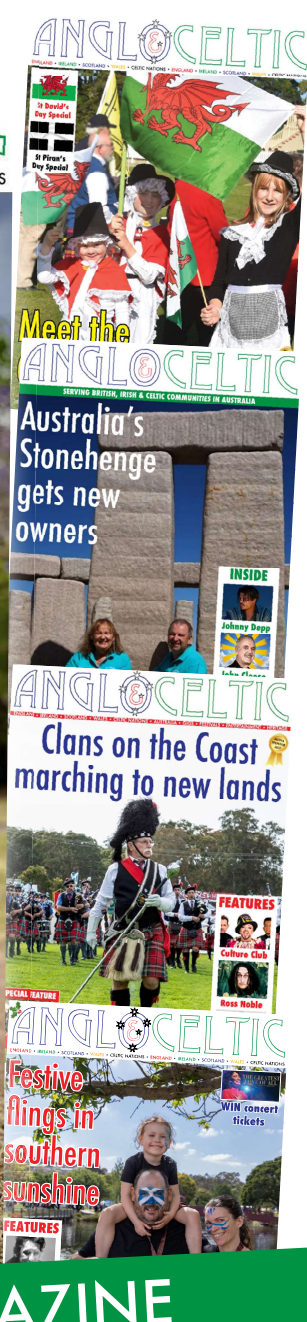
QIA, in association with Friends of Toowong Cemetery, held a very popular Irish History Tour of Toowong Cemetery in March. Pictures: Mary Allen





# ANGLOCELTIC

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