



County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

Newsletter December, 2018

Organize July 16, 1931. Charter issued October 30, 1931 reading County Roscommon Social & Welfare League, Inc. Name changed to County Roscommon Society, Inc., by charter dated November 4, 1946. Certificate of Amendment of Certificate of Incorporation of County Roscommon Society, Inc., dated December 22, 2014 changed name to County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

The next meeting of the County Roscomon Society will take place in January. Time and place to be determined. Stay tuned.

Thank you Terry Connaughton and staff at the Riverdale Steakhouse for hosting our November meeting.

At our November meeting the following were appointed officers for 2019:

Chaplain:	Msgr. Kevin Flanagan
President:	Mary C. Montgomery
Vice President:	Bernie Sharkey
Treasurer:	John Kenny
Financial Secretary:	Bill Montgomery
Recording Secretary:	Katie Kenny
Corresponding Secretary	Bernadette Connor
Sergeant-at-Arms:	Rosaleen Gormley

Two of our long time committee members Mary Scally O'Brien and Geraldine O'Brien Massey, due to family commitments, will not be continuing on the board. Thank you Mary and Geraldine for your many, many years of service to the Society. Good health and prosperity to you both.

Birthday wishes to Mary Scally O'Brien and to Mike Lyons who both celebrated milestone birthdays recently. I think they're twins !!

While we're on the subject of celebrations, Kilbride player Alice Kelly's goal against Meath at Dr. Hyde Park earlier this year was named as the Goal of the Year at the TG4 Ladies Football All Star awards. The Roscommon wing-forward collected her award at the Citywest Hotel alongside the 15 All Stars and the various Player of the Year winners.

Our **90th Anniversary** St. Patrick's Celebration will take place **on Friday, March 1 2019**. We are delighted to announce our Guest of Honor for 2019 will be **P. Christopher Tully**, commonly known as Chris. A resident of Bergenfield he has represented the 38th Legislative District in the New Jersey Assembly since 2018. Chris is involved in several Irish organizations in New Jersey. His mother is a native of Boyle, County Roscommon.

The 2019 Distinguished Service Award will be presented to **Aoife Elizabeth Butler**. Aoife is from Keoghville in South Roscommon, was educated at St. Joseph's College, Summerhill, Athlone in County Roscommon before pursuing a Master's in Chemistry at the University of Dublin, Trinity College and reading for a law degree at the University of London. While Aoife is an intellectual property attorney in New York City, she has devoted countless hours to helping others, for example, Board of Directors of the Emerald Isle Immigration Center; co-founder and inaugural President of Irish Network USA; Board of Directors and Emerging Leaders Board of the Children's Medical Research Foundation; Irish American Leadership Council; Chair of the U.S. All-Ireland Pan-Alumni Association.

Also the following past chairs of the Society will be acknowledged for their dedication to the Society over the years: **Patrick Leyden, T. Vincent Geelan, Alfred Sharkey, Meta Brady** in memory of her husband **Kevin Brady** and brother-in-law of our deceased **Chaplain Fr. Coman Brady, Stephen P. Groarke, Thomas P. Giblin, Michael A. Lyons** and **Kevin P. O'Connor**.

Thanks to Jim Abrams, here is the fourth article on Dr. Douglas Hyde:



County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

Newsletter December, 2018

Organize July 16, 1931. Charter issued October 30, 1931 reading County Roscommon Social & Welfare League, Inc. Name changed to County Roscommon Society, Inc., by charter dated November 4, 1946. Certificate of Amendment of Certificate of Incorporation of County Roscommon Society, Inc., dated December 22, 2014 changed name to County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

In the winter of 1898, Douglas Hyde was among kindred spirits when he attended Lady Gregory's annual children's Christmas party at her Coole Park estate in Co. Galway. Like Hyde, Lady Augusta Gregory came from a well-to-do Protestant family. She was tutored at home and also enjoyed early exposure to the Irish language through contacts with country people in her locality. At the Coole Park festivities that Christmastide, Hyde, along with another Gaelic-speaking guest, presented a light-hearted Punch and Judy show in Irish. Lady Gregory observed Douglas Hyde in action. He demonstrated a clear talent for the stage and he would seize any opportunity to display and promote the Irish language, which impressed his host. Two years later Lady Gregory and the celebrated poet W. B. Yeats urged Hyde to write plays in Irish for a new theatre project they were initiating. Hyde joined the patroness and the poet again at Coole where the three explored possibilities for staging drama in Irish. Yeats, the primary poetic force animating the Irish Literary Renaissance, and Hyde, the dynamo rousing advocates on behalf of the Gaelic Revival, discussed mutually known folktales from the west of Ireland that could become storylines for plays.

They settled on a well-known tale, *Casadh an tSugain* (*The Twisting of the Rope*), elements of which Yeats already had incorporated into verse, and variants of which Hyde had encountered during his earlier folklore collecting days in Roscommon. While at Coole in 1900, Hyde adapted the tale as a script for the stage. His one-act play centers on the legendary powers of a poet, Hanrahan, who with his curses (or "ranns") could bring ruin to whoever would dare inhibit his lusty

appetites. The story's dramatic conflict centers on Hanrahan's attempts to charm the daughter of a peasant householder and her family's equally urgent desire to be rid of him without incurring his rann. In desperation, the family decides to concoct a story about needing to fashion a rope to assist the occupants of a damaged carriage stranded in lane nearby. They cajole Hanrahan into twisting a rope until he has stepped backwards out of their cottage. The door slams in his face. Once removed from the family's immediate presence Hanrahan's curses become impotent.

The Twisting of the Rope was the first play in Irish to open in one of Dublin's larger theatres, the Gaiety in 1901. Branch members of the Gaelic League served as performers in the play. Indeed, Hyde's primary motivation for writing for the stage was to open another venue for the presentation of Irish, thereby supporting the League's proselytizing mission. Not only did Hyde write the script but he also performed a starring role, to general acclaim. With his friendly, relaxed, and confident manner Hyde was a natural for the stage, as Lady Gregory had sensed years before. Between 1900 and 1914, Douglas Hyde wrote more than ten one-act plays for the Irish Literary Theatre Company and subsequently for the venerable Abbey Theatre. To be clear though, Hyde's reputation does not rest on his achievements as a creative writer for the stage or on his associations with any literary circle. He was first and last a scholar. Hyde devoted his immense talents and energies to erecting the intellectual scaffolding necessary to support the revival of Irish as a language worthy of respect and honor. While Hyde wrote for the stage he simultaneously presided over the Gaelic



County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

Newsletter December, 2018

Organize July 16, 1931. Charter issued October 30, 1931 reading County Roscommon Social & Welfare League, Inc. Name changed to County Roscommon Society, Inc., by charter dated November 4, 1946. Certificate of Amendment of Certificate of Incorporation of County Roscommon Society, Inc., dated December 22, 2014 changed name to County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

League, published texts of monumental scholarly significance (*A Literary History of Ireland* and *The Religious Songs of Connacht*, for example), embarked on an exhausting fundraising trip across the USA on behalf of the League, and laid the groundwork, or more precisely fought the good fight to establish Irish as a compulsory subject on all levels of education across the nation.

By the first decades of the twentieth century, thanks to the tireless efforts of Dr. Douglas Hyde and members of the Gaelic League, Irish had become an accepted program in the curriculum of many national and intermediate schools. Such was not the case on the university level. After years of being pressured for a higher education alternative to Trinity College, the British government passed an Act of Parliament to fund a new university for Irish students, mostly Catholics, who were not inclined to attend Trinity. Hyde was appointed to a commission to study the formation of this new "National University." The commission recommended three constituent branches, one each in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Both Hyde and his adherents in the Gaelic League assumed that the Irish language would be made a required subject in the new university's curriculum.

It was not. An influential academic also on the commission, Rev. Dr. Delaney, objected to the proposal to make Irish compulsory. He lambasted Irish as an "uncultured tongue" and asked why students should be forced to learn the language of uneducated peasants. Delaney's assault on the dignity of the language cut to the core of the nation's pride and prompted a counterattack from Gaelic Leaguers across the land. Hyde entered the fray. In 1908,

while addressing a large crowd gathered at the Rotunda in Dublin, he stated, "There will be a fight," and prophetic were his words. Hyde's supporters in the Gaelic League organized massive processions and public demonstrations to show their numbers and exert political influence. One Hyde biographer puts it this way: "The establishment of Irish as a compulsory subject in the National University was the crowning achievement of the Gaelic League." In 1909, Douglas Hyde was appointed to the chair of modern Irish in the new university, a position he held until retirement or what he thought would be his retirement back in Co. Roscommon.

Next month this series on Dr. Hyde will conclude with a brief review of Douglas Hyde's second career in political office and particularly with the role he played as Ireland's first modern president. I'll also make some suggestions for further reading and recommend organizations that continue to promote and sustain the legacy of Dr. Douglas Hyde. Wishing you all a very festive and Merry Christmas.

James Francis Abrams

Items of Interest:

Kitty Duignan former Roscommon County Councillor has passed away. Ms. Duignan became a county councillor for Fine Gael following the death of her husband Charlie, who was also a councillor, and assumed the role of Mayor in the early 2000's. She attended the Roscommon Society Dance in NY in 2002. May she rest in peace.

We are planning on putting a booklet together for our 90th Anniversary and need some information from you. Please share any memories you have of the society's



County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

Newsletter December, 2018

Organized July 16, 1931. Charter issued October 30, 1931 reading County Roscommon Social & Welfare League, Inc. Name changed to County Roscommon Society, Inc., by charter dated November 4, 1946. Certificate of Amendment of Certificate of Incorporation of County Roscommon Society, Inc., dated December 22, 2014 changed name to County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

annual dinner dance, parade, weddings, funerals, etc. Also photographs much appreciated. Please e-mail to me at roscommonsocietyofny@aol.com.

Membership Dues: It's time to renew your membership for 2019. Annual membership is \$20, for multiple years it's \$15. Senior membership is \$10.00. Please make check payable to County Roscommon Society of New York and mail to William Montgomery, Financial Secretary, 16-49 212 Street, Bayside, NY 11360. You can also pay online, via Pay Pal at <https://crsony.weebly.com/membership.html>

Upcoming Events:

Friday, January 25, 2019 – United Irish Counties Association of New York, Inc., Annual Dinner Dance at Antun's, Queens Village.

Friday, March 1, 2019 – 90th Anniversary County Roscommon Society Annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration. Cocktail hour 7:30pm followed by dinner and dancing. Music by Mary G. and Shamrock.

As always, if you have an item of interest for our future newsletters, please let me know.

Also, if you are receiving this newsletter by mail and have an e-mail address, please let us know what your e-mail address is. This will help us cut down on printing and postage costs. We can be reached at roscommonsocietyofny@aol.com



May you all have a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and a wonderful 2019.

Mary