

# National Famine Commemoration 2009

Thank you for downloading the programme for the National Famine Commemoration events which will take place in Skibbereen, West Cork, from the 10th to the 17th of May.

Please note that there may be updates and additional information added to this online programme so please review on [www.skibbheritage.com](http://www.skibbheritage.com).



## SUNDAY THE 10TH OF MAY

### Radio Programme

**Organiser:** Sunday Miscellany, RTÉ Radio 1

**9.10am**, RTE Radio 1, 90FM and live on the web

#### **Sunday Miscellany**

Special edition of the renowned RTE Radio 1 programme **Sunday Miscellany** featuring specially related audio essays from Skibbereen and Canadian contributors and produced by Clíodhna Ní Anluain.

Contact: [Sundaymiscellany@rte.ie](mailto:Sundaymiscellany@rte.ie)

### Sponsored Walk

**Organiser:** Skibbereen Business Association

Depart Caheragh Church at **2pm** to arrive Skibbereen Playground at approx. 4.00pm. Performance by local Musicians at the Playground 4-5pm.

A BUS SERVICE WILL BE IN OPERATION TO TRANSPORT WALKERS TO CAHERAGH. THE BUS WILL DEPART FROM THE PLAYGROUND AT CORK ROAD AT 1.30PM.

#### **Caheragh to Skibbereen Protest Walk**

On the 30th of September 1846 between 800 and 1000 desperate men, working on the Road Relief scheme at Caheragh, walked to Skibbereen to protest about late payment of wages. Sadly, just a few weeks later, one of the early deaths of the Famine was of a man working on the Caheragh Relief Scheme. His inquest found that he had died of starvation due to the negligence of the Board of Works. The sponsored walk will finish at the playground at Skibbereen where there will be more information about this tragic episode of Skibbereen's history and performances by local musicians.

CONTACT: Michael Thornhill 086 8521025 Sponsorship forms available from Thornhill Electrical, Bridge St, Skibbereen. Contact No. 028 22316.

### Silver Band

**Organiser:** St. Fachtna's Silver Band.

**7pm** Skibbereen Heritage Centre Courtyard

#### **St. Fachtna's Silver Band**

Skibbereen's Silver Band, which has been playing for 150 years, will give a musical recital from the general brass band repertoire.

### Talk

**ORGANISER:** Mercier Press

**8pm** at Skibbereen Heritage Centre

#### **William Henry**

William Henry is a historian, archaeologist and author from Galway City and is a committee member of the Galway Archaeological & Historical Society, a former committee member of the Old Galway Society also a former director of Galway Civic Trust. He was the recipient of a number of awards the latest being the Mayoral Award Winner for Heritage, Environment & Conservation in 2007. He is the author of 12 books on aspects of history. His latest book, **Coffin Ship; Wreck Of The St. John** follows the path that many victims of the Great Famine had to take to try and ensure their survival.

## MONDAY THE 11TH OF MAY

### Walk

**ORGANISER:** Margaret Murphy

**5.30pm** from the Cathedral

#### **Skibbereen Famine Walk**

Historical walking tour of Skibbereen town. Discover the hidden Skibbereen where the streets and buildings have direct links with the Great Famine. The walk will finish at Skibbereen Heritage Centre for the next event. Numbers limited so please call 028 40900 to reserve.

### Pageant

**ORGANISER:** Skibbereen Theatre Society

**7pm** Skibbereen Heritage Centre Courtyard

#### **The Boldest Fenian Man**

Skibbereen Theatre Society's acclaimed pageant **The Boldest Fenian Man**, devised and directed by Con Downing, charts how Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's singleminded radicalism stemmed from the horrors and degradations he witnessed as a young boy during the famine years in his native West Cork and led to the founding of the Phoenix Society in 1856 ...

### Illustrated talk

**ORGANISER:** West Cork Arts Centre

**8.30pm** at West Cork Arts Centre.

Contact West Cork Arts Centre 028 22090 to book.

#### **Visualizing the Unspeakable; An Unresolved Dilemma for Irish Artists.**

Art historian Catherine Marshall will present an illustrated lecture addressing the scarcity of images of the Famine in Ireland, the reasons for that and the possibility of redressing the situation now. Drawing on contemporary paintings, images from the Illustrated London News, comparative material from France and Britain and some recent attempts to find closure for the Irish in a world where Famine is still prevalent, Catherine will look at the shortcomings of visual representation and issues around patronage, as well as inherited feelings of guilt, repression, outrage and sorrow. Catherine Marshall is an art historian. Currently Joint-Editor of Volume V of the Royal Irish Academy's Irish Art and Architecture Project, she is on a three-year secondment from the Irish Museum of Modern Art where she has been Head of Collections since 1995. She has lectured in the History of Art at Trinity College, Dublin, U.C.D. and the National College of Art and Design and was recently responsible for the Visual Art and Architecture projects within the Arts Council's Touring Experiment.

## TUESDAY THE 12TH OF MAY

### Pageant as Gaeilge,

**ORGANISER:** Gaelscoil Dr. Uí Shuilleabháin Sciobairín.

**7pm** Skibbereen Heritage Centre Courtyard

**Cleas Mhic Gearalt** is a drama performed by the 3rd-6th class pupils of Gaelscoil Dr. Uí Shuilleabháin, An Sciobairín. They recently won an award at the Comórtas Gael Linn in Fermoy. The drama tells the story of a family forced to 'Down-size' residence during the Famine due to inability to pay the rent. A nine- year contract is drawn up for this new residence but Tomás Mac Gearalt comes up with a way of extending the duration of the lease by bending the law rather than breaking it. Features music and singing as well as excellent acting by the young cast.

### Talk

**ORGANISER:** Dr David Butler

**8pm** at Abbeystrewery Church

#### **Rev. Richard Boyle Townshend, His Life and Times**

Rev. R.B. Townshend served as Vicar of Abbeystrewery Parish during the Famine and was active in agitating for relief and aid to the area. He died of typhus during the Famine years. Dr David Butler is a geographer of religions and is a lecturer at UCC. His doctoral thesis, completed in 2003, has been published as South Tipperary, 1570-1841: Religion, Land and Rivalry (Dublin, 2005: reissued 2007 as paperback)

### Choir

**ORGANISER:** Chairde Choir

**8.30pm** Abbeystrewery Church to follow Dr. Butler's talk.

#### **Chairde Choir**

Chairde is a group of friends from the West Cork Choral Singers who will sing a short programme of light Irish music with piano and harp accompaniment. Guest Conductor.

## WEDNESDAY THE 13TH OF MAY

### Talk

**ORGANISER:** Gary White Deer

**7pm** West Cork Hotel

#### **The Choctaw Nation and the Irish Famine**

When the Choctaw of Oklahoma heard of mass eviction and starvation in Ireland, echoes of their own suffering opened their hearts. Although new to American money, they donated \$179, an amount worth €68,500 in today's terms. Newspapers of the day reported the donation as "a widow's mite from the Choctaw, the children of the forest" It was an act of one poor, dispossessed people reaching out to help another and so the Irish-Choctaw Famine link was forged.

### Award- winning play

**ORGANISER:** Skibbereen Theatre Society

**8.00pm** Town Hall Skibbereen

#### **Flight to Grosse Ile**

Skibbereen Theatre Society presents Jim Minogue's award-winning play Flight to Grosse Ile about an Irish family forced to emigrate to Canada at the height of the Great Famine. It focusses on the journey of Catherine Kennedy and includes a love story, with plenty of music, song and dance as they look forward to a better life abroad ...  
Tickets at Thornhill Electrical, Skibbereen Tel: 028 22316

## THURSDAY THE 14TH OF MAY

### Walk

**ORGANISER:** Philip O'Regan

**5.30pm** at the Cathedral

#### **Famine Walk**

Historical walking tour of Skibbereen town. Discover the hidden Skibbereen where the streets and buildings have direct links with the Great Famine. The walk will finish at Skibbereen Heritage Centre for the next event. Numbers limited so please call 028 40900 to reserve.

### Pageant

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### Talk

**ORGANISER:** Skibbereen and District Historical Society

**8pm**, West Cork Hotel

#### **The Great Irish Famine, 1845-1852: An Overview**

Dr. Larry Geary is Senior Lecturer in History at University College Cork. He has published extensively on the social, political and medical history of nineteenth-century Ireland, and on Irish-Australian history. His latest book, which he co-edited with Dr Andrew McCarthy, is **Ireland, Australia and New Zealand: History, Politics and Culture** (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2008). He has written extensively on the Famine period.

## FRIDAY THE 15TH OF MAY

### Presentations/Talks

**ORGANISER:** West Cork Community Partnership

**2-3.30pm** at Co-Action Building, Mardyke.

### Food & The Famine

A set of presentations examining our ability to feed ourselves in extreme circumstances, both here in Ireland and around the globe. Declan Waugh from Partnership for Change will explore the impact of Climate Change on world famine and will present a number of projects that have set out to combat its effect. Ivan McCutcheon from West Cork Development Partnership will look at our ability to feed ourselves in Ireland in a crisis situation, asking for how many days we could stock the supermarket shelves with anything other than meat and dairy products. You will have an opportunity to taste the infamous Soyer's soup (by all accounts a mis-guided 19th century Jamie Oliver) and consider what would we eat and cook on a euro a day.

CONTACT: 023 8834035 or charmaine@wcdp.ie

### Exhibition

**ORGANISER:** Fairtrade

**4.30** Venue to be Confirmed

**Fairtrade exhibition** on what it does to combat famine today featuring a talk, DVD and exhibition and reading of poems and writing from a competition. (The competition is open to adults and children and to submit an entry please send to [isoldaoconnor@hotmail.com](mailto:isoldaoconnor@hotmail.com) marked 'Fairtrade' or to Fairtrade c/o Isolda O'Connor Rock cottage, Kilnaclasha, Skibbereen, Co Cork.) A speaker from within the Fairtrade organization will share his experience from visiting third world countries and there will be a simple famine plate of rice etc. available. Skibbereen's shops will also feature a display of Fairtrade products. The Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross is a Fairtrade Diocese and Fairtrade Skibbereen is a joint-Churches venture.

### Musical Performance

**ORGANISER:** Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

**7.30pm**, West Cork Hotel

### Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

An hour of lively traditional music, song and dance celebrating our cultural heritage performed by the Seisiún group of CCÉ Craobh an Sciobairín.

### Talk

**ORGANISER:** Professor Mark McGowan, Principal of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto.

**8.30pm**, West Cork Hotel

### The Canada-Munster Connection

Professor Mark McGowan of Toronto University is a specialist in the religious, migration, and educational history of Canada and has edited three collections of essays and written several award winning books including **Death or Canada: The Irish Famine Migration to Toronto, 1847**, which is a companion to the docudrama **Death or Canada** which premiered on RTE in December 2008. His talk will focus on the role Canada played during the Famine and particularly the Munster-Canada connections.

## SATURDAY THE 16TH OF MAY

### Talk

**ORGANISER:** Bridget O'Donnell

**12 noon**, West Cork Arts Centre

### Homeopathy and Medicine in West Cork During the Great Famine

Bridget O'Donnell is a Community Midwife and Homeopath practising in Skibbereen and has an MSc Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin. She has given several training and informational talks and lectures on Homeopathy in Ireland and the UK as well as contributing to many publications, periodicals and magazines. Bridget's talk will focus on the fascinating story of Joseph Kidd who travelled from London to Bantry to be close to the centres of suffering in Schull and Skibbereen. Dr Kidd, a surgeon, was an Irish volunteer in the famine who, in 1847, was using Homeopathic remedies effectively in the most adverse of conditions.

### Talk

**ORGANISER:** Skibbereen Library

**3pm** at Skibbereen Library

**Marita Conlon-McKenna** is one of Ireland's most popular, best-selling authors. Her first book for children Under the **Hawthorn Tree**, which is part of the **Children of the Famine** series was published to great acclaim throughout the world and has won a number of prestigious international and Irish book awards including The International Reading Association Award in the US. The book is used by schools not only in Ireland but around the world and is enjoyed by readers of all ages across the globe. The book was filmed by Young Filmmakers Ireland and the film was shown on RTE and Channel 4. Recently a stage musical version of **'Under the Hawthorn Tree'** opened in Vancouver, Canada. Contact: Skibbereen Library 028 22400

### Talk

**ORGANISER:** Declan Waugh

**4.30pm** Gorta Shop Market Street

### Climate change and its implications for world famine

The 21st century will likely be defined by three overarching forces: climate change, peak oil and famine. December of this year will be a defining moment in human history: either progress is made at the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen on tackling climate change or humanity will enter a disastrous period of decline ending in famine and environmental collapse.

Either of these two realities are available to humanity at this time. As we commemorate those lost and the survivors of the great famine of Ireland of 1845-1852 we know only too clearly how famine can devastate a country and its people. This talk and short presentation will show how Partnership for Change a new initiative established by Declan Waugh Environmental Scientist and native of Skibbereen is attempting to address the issue head on and will give examples of innovative programmes it has sponsored in developing countries in 2009.



## Exhibition/ Talk

**ORGANISER:** Gorta

**All Day Exhibition/Talk at 5pm** - Gorta Shop, Market Street, Skibbereen

### **A reflection on Famine**

Meet Gorta Programmes staff and learn about their work in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1965 at a special information point above the Gorta shop in Market Street, Skibbereen on Saturday 16th May. Voice of the People [Vox Pops] - Help Gorta 'make hunger history' by giving your opinion on hunger at the Gorta Shop in Market Street Skibbereen. Vox pops filmed will be used on a special website [www.makehungerhistory.org](http://www.makehungerhistory.org). Richard Flockhart will give a talk on famine today at 5pm.

## Walk

**ORGANISER:** Philip O'Regan

**6pm** Skibbereen Heritage Centre

### **Famine Walk**

Historical walking tour of Skibbereen town. Discover the hidden Skibbereen where the streets and buildings have direct links with the Great Famine. Numbers limited so please call 028 40900 to reserve.

## Talk

**ORGANISER:** Professor Mark McGowan

**8.00pm**, Town Hall Skibbereen

### **Introduction to Grosse Ile Quarantine Station**

Professor Mark McGowan of Toronto University will give a brief talk on Grosse Ile Quarantine Station and its significance during the Famine period.

## Award- winning play

**ORGANISER:** Skibbereen Theatre Society

**8.10pm** Town Hall Skibbereen

### **Flight to Grosse Ile**

Skibbereen Theatre Society presents Jim Minogue's award-winning play Flight to Grosse Ile about an Irish family forced to emigrate to Canada at the height of the Great Famine. It focusses on the journey of Catherine Kennedy and includes a love story, with plenty of music, song and dance as they look forward to a better life abroad ...

CONTACT: Tickets at Thornhill Electrical, Skibbereen Tel: 028 22316

## SUNDAY THE 17TH OF MAY

## National Famine Commemoration Day

**ORGANISER:** The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

**11.15 am** Start at at O'Donovan-Rossa Park  
[www.pobail.ie](http://www.pobail.ie)

**The National Famine Commemoration Day** on 17th May is one of only three national days of commemoration in Ireland. The ceremony will be a solemn, State occasion and it will involve two parts. The programme will open on Sunday morning with a commemoration ceremony at O'Donovan Rossa Park, following which Minister Éamon Ó Cuív T.D., Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will lead a short walk to Abbeystrewery Cemetery where the ceremony will be concluded. The ceremonies will include music, readings and prayers, tree planting, wreath laying, unveiling of a plaque and a minute of silent reflection.

CONTACT: [www.pobail.ie](http://www.pobail.ie)

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CONTACT: Tickets at Thornhill Electrical, Skibbereen Tel: 028 22316



# Skibbereen Famine Committee

Skibbereen Famine Committee is organising a number of events to commemorate the National Famine Memorial 2009:

## **Commemorative Medallions**

Bronze Commemorative Medallions, limited edition, sponsored by Skibbereen Famine Commemoration Committee are available at Cathal O Donovan's Bookshop, Main St. or from Denis O Sullivan, phone 028-21704, or any other Famine Committee member.

## **Skibbereen Historical Trail**

Information/Street Map panels, sponsored by Skibbereen Famine Commemoration Committee will be erected in the town at sites designated by the Town Council Engineer.

## **Abbeybrewery Cemetery**

Skibbereen Famine Commemoration Committee will ensure that a high standard of maintenance and overall presentation of the Famine Plot and its environs within the Cemetery will be evident on Memorial Day and will be maintained on a continuing basis as heretofore.

## **Primary Schools Awareness Programme**

Skibbereen Famine Commemoration Committee in co-operation with the Principals of the four local Primary schools and the assistance of Heritage Centre staff, have organised conducted tours of the Famine Exhibition at the Heritage Centre.

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**For further information on any of the events,  
please contact the co-ordinator:**

Skibbereen Heritage Centre  
Old Gasworks Building  
Skibbereen  
Co Cork  
Tel: + 353 28 40900  
email: [info@skibbheritage.com](mailto:info@skibbheritage.com)



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The West Cork Hotel is offering special rates for Famine Commemoration week. Contact: 028 21277 or go to [www.westcorkhotel.com](http://www.westcorkhotel.com) for details

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