

1923 ~ 2023 THEN & NOW

Ireland in 1923 – the Bloody Dawn of a New Era

I asked noted Mid-Cork author and historian **Michael Galvin** to give us an insight into the physical and political landscape of Ireland a hundred years ago.



The World was Watching On

"In the spring of 1923, the whole country was in a dire state of destruction following the War of Independence and then the Civil War. There were railways broken, bridges blown up, roads trenched and damaged. There were mills burned, post offices burned and police barracks destroyed; in other words, the degradation of the entire countryside infrastructure.

"The Civil War in reality was over by August of 1922. Following the death of Michael Collins, things got nasty and the Anti-Treatyites knew that they were in trouble. The war got more violent with atrocities on both sides.

"Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Justice, realised rightly or wrongly, probably rightly, that if there wasn't a rapid clamp down, the new Free State would be stifled at birth. So he was under intense pressure to act, and the world was watching on. The British – and many others further afield – thought that the new government would not survive, that they were not mature enough, that they were still 'the wild men' of the War of Independence. The government here was conscious of that too. The only way they could see of getting the country going, so to speak, was to swiftly end the Civil War by violence, executions and internment.

"We must understand that we shouldn't look at this through a modern lens. Society all over Europe at that time was militaristic and violent. There was very little diplomacy or talks - it was a militaristic society, a violent society. The only way to restore order, as they saw it,

was by harsh measures that would not be countenanced nowadays. We need to understand the context of the time, the constraints they were under, and the mentalité that prevailed.....



Image Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

Scan this code for the full interview with historian Michael Galvin



ROGER CASEMENT [1864-1916]:

“Remember that a nation is a very complex thing - it never does consist, it never has consisted solely of one blood or of one simple race. It is like a river, which rises far off in the hills and has many sources, many converging streams before it becomes one great stream.”



Roger Casement, depicted here in a 1914 portrait by Sarah Purser, was executed in August 1916, having been found guilty of treason for his involvement in the Easter Rising. Image: Sarah Henrietta Purser (1848-1943), 'Portrait of Roger Casement', 1914. © National Gallery of Ireland



Image Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland



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FINE GAEL

....& NOW



Dear Resident

I recently read a book that gave me a lot of food for thought. It's called 'In Fact: An Optimist's Guide to Ireland at 100' by Mark Henry (Gill Books, 2021).

The author says that Ireland has been completely transformed since the early days of the Free State in 1923. The statistics show that we live longer, eat healthier, have more educational opportunities, and are global leaders in innovation and attracting foreign investment. Irish people now rate themselves as among the happiest people on the planet.

But we are slow to acknowledge our success. You don't hear about it on the radio or television. Despite our incredible achievements, it's the areas where we have not succeeded yet that get the airtime.

I agree with Mark Henry when he says that when we are told (by media or others) that there is a 'crisis', we begin to believe it – even if our own experience is different.

I know there is a lot to be done in areas like housing, healthcare and environmental issues. But we've come a long way. I want to highlight some of the progress we've made as a nation in the last 100 years: the differences between 1923 and 2023. I'd also like to update you on some key development projects here in Cork North West.

If at any stage you think I might be able to help you or your family, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Kind regards,

Michael

Michael Creed

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS PAST 100 YEAR

On average, we live 25 years longer than those alive in 1923

Half the population has completed higher education – a figure that has doubled in just 20 years

The likelihood of a child surviving their first year has improved 25-fold

More Irish people than ever are employed at high-skilled jobs

We have eliminated (or hugely reduced) nearly all the leading diseases of 1923

We are working 20 per cent fewer hours than the last generation

We are taller than ever

Our houses have never been bigger, and the number of people in each has never been fewer

We are leaders in food and drink exports

The number of children at second-level school has soared

Our exports travel further than ever before

More pupils than ever are being taught in Irish

The cost of travelling to and from Ireland has plummeted

Pupil:teacher ratios have never been better

Our media are amongst the world's freest

Ireland's economic wealth exceeds that of most countries

Air pollution is decreasing significantly



Author Mark Henry trained as a psychologist and worked in Irish (leading research and strategy) before turning to work in tourism decades telling people all over the world what a great country Ireland is about sharing the progress we have made



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We are the most generous people in Europe when it comes to helping those in need – both in Ireland and in developing countries

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Our forested land is increasing

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Waste water treatment has substantially improved

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Our use of renewable energy sources is growing emphatically

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Our homes are more energy efficient

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Our quality of life is ranked as the second-highest in the world (second only to Norway)

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We have never had greater equality of opportunity

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N22 Baile Bhúirne Macroom Bypass

Work is continuing on the new road, the biggest-ever infrastructural project in County Cork with a total cost of over €300m. The eastern section, which opened on Dec 9th 2022, has made a huge difference already to the town of Macroom. Business people and town users alike are benefitting from the removal of heavy traffic from the town centre. The next section of the road between Carrigaphooca and Toonlane is due to open in July 2023, with the rest of the road scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. Getting this road built has been a major priority of mine throughout my career and I'm delighted that I was able to secure the funding for it in 2019 when I was a Government Minister.

Musaem nua do Bhéal Átha an Ghaorthaidh?



Le déanaí thug mé cuairt ar Bhéal Átha an Ghaorthaidh chun bualadh le comhaltaí den gCoiste Forbartha áitúil – tá togra speisiúil idir lámhaibh acu faoi láthair.

Tá sé i gceist acu musaem nua a chruthú sa tsráidbhaile – 'An Súgán - Iarsmalann Athbheochana na Gaeilge' – sa bhfoirgneamh céanna inar tionóladh na céad choláistí samhraidh sa tír i 1904. Tá iar-Choláiste na Mumhan suite taobh leis an séipéal. Thagadh alán múinteoirí ann gach samhradh chun

foghlaím conas an Ghaeilge a mhúineadh. Ina measc, bhí daoine móra-le-rá i ngluaiseacht neamhspleáchais na hÉireann – Toirdhealbhadh Mac Suibhne, mar shampla. Níos déanaí sa bhliain beidh an Coiste Forbartha ag lorg airgid chun an musaem a chruthú, agus cabhróidh mé leo in aon tslí gur féidir liom.

Progress on New School Buildings – Ballincollig



I'm delighted that Ballincollig's Le Chéile Secondary School now has its own temporary accommodation on the grounds of Ballincollig Community School. This will be home to the school until a permanent location is finalised. I understand that the Department of Education and Cork City Council are doing everything possible to acquire a site for a new education campus, where Le Chéile Secondary School and Gaelscoil an Chaisleáin will both be located. I've been working with these schools for some time now, trying to secure permanent accommodation for them, and I'll be continuing to support this project in any way I can.

Major Boost for Charleville Town Centre

Over €5m has been allocated to Charleville from the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund to renovate several vacant and derelict buildings in the heart of the town, including the old courthouse building which will be transformed into a remote working hub catering for up to 25 people. The project will also entail the re-purposing of the partially-vacant community hall on Chapel Street as an Arts and Community Centre, the creation of a public amenity space in the open area outside the library and the construction of a new town centre toilet facility.

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FINE GAEL



Briery Gap Update

It's been nearly seven years since a major fire damaged the Briery Gap in Macroom town centre in May 2016. Securing funding to refurbish it was something I prioritised during my time as a Government Minister. I'm happy to see that the reconstruction is well under way.

The external structure is nearing completion and the internal fit out will follow. It's expected to open to the public in the second quarter of 2024.



Comórtas Peile na Gaeltachta – Cill na Martra 2024

Tá ullmhúcháin faoi lán tseoil i gCill na Martra don Chomórtas Peile a bheidh ar siúl ón 31ú Bealtaine go dtí an 3ú Meithimh, 2024. Tá oibreacha feabhais á ndéanamh ar an bhfaiche imeartha agus ar charrchlós an chumainn, le cabhair mhaoiniú ó Chomhairle Chontae Chorcaí agus ó Roinn na Gaeltachta. Táthar ag súil go mbeidh

fiche foireann nó níos mó ag teacht go Gaeltacht Mhúscraí don chomórtas, agus slua mór lucht tacaíochta.

Bweeng Sports & Community Recreational Facility



This project will rejuvenate an unused piece of land at the back of the existing Bweeng Community Field grounds into a multipurpose recreational hub that can be used by all the community and the surrounding North Cork area. The development will extend the existing walkway from 600m to 1km which will be fully lit and provide a safe walkway for all ages to enjoy. The development will include a 200 metre all-weather floodlit running track. Within the centre of the track will be a level grass playing area for use by all organisations.

The first phase has begun in recent weeks. This will include extending the existing walkway around the track site with floodlighting, erecting the boundary fence and beginning work on the drainage system.



Ré nua do Choláiste Íosagáin, Baile Bhúirne

Le déanaí thug mé cuairt ar Choláiste Íosagáin i dteannta mo chomhleacaí Rialtais, an tAire Stáit Gaeltachta Patrick O'Donovan. Chuireamar beirt an-spéis san obair atá ar siúl ann chun ionad nua teicneolaíochta agus fiontraíochta a chruthú.

Cuireadh moill ar an dtogra de bharr go raibh iarratas breise cead pleanála ag teastáil chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar dheacrachtaí a bhaineann le leagan amach agus struchtúr an sean-fhoirgnimh. Anois tá tús curtha leis an bproiséas tairisceana maidir le conraitheoirí tógála a cheapadh.

Tá Údarás na Gaeltachta ag obair leis na páirtneirí atá páirteach sa dtogra chun teacht ar shocrú faoin maoiniú. Gan amhras, tá meadú thar a bheith suntasach tágtha ar chostas tógála go ginearálta.



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