

IRISH CATHOLIC MEMORIALS IN SOUTHEAST QUEENSLAND¹

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Introduction

In the nineteenth century large numbers of predominantly Catholic Irish immigrants arrived in Queensland, making it, by 1911, one of the most Irish and Catholic areas of Australia. Regional centres, such as Gympie, Ipswich, Roma and Warwick, sometimes had a higher concentration of Irish Catholics than the capital, Brisbane.² A legacy of this influx was a tradition of graveside commemoration and heroic public statuary, initiated in Ireland in the 1870s.³ The Irish-Catholic imprint on Southeast Queensland's cultural landscape exceeded that of any other ethno-denominational group.⁴ Among the 1988 Australian bi-centenary publications was *Memorials to the Irish in Queensland*, which aimed to be 'a small reminder of the part played by the IRISH people in ... colonisation and settlement.' Sharing the Irish passion for commemoration and 'their lavish regard and respect for the deceased', the contributors examined over sixty cemeteries and sites, photographing and recording

monumental inscriptions and biographical data on approximately one thousand subjects of Irish birth or descent.⁵

Irish memorialisation in Australia was an extension, and adaptation, of cultural memory practices in nationalist Ireland. Almost in tandem, the Irish at home and in Queensland, used memory to shape identity, encourage solidarity and assert claims in the public sphere. In both places, new monumental ventures were launched to these ends in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was an era of what Jay Winter termed ‘a rush towards memory’, in which national, ethnic and religious groups turned to the past, seeking solidarity through connection and continuity with ancestral origins.⁶ This contributed to a reciprocal memory flow between Ireland and Australia, though each followed its own distinctive trajectory.⁷

This paper focusses on surviving funerary sculptures, in Warwick, Roma, Ipswich, Brisbane and Gympie, distinguished by Celtic iconography. It concludes with the appearance of two late twentieth century Celtic Crosses in Brisbane, demonstrating the durability and adaptability of this symbol as a carrier of both memory and history.

The Celtic Revival in Queensland

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Irish immigrants and their descendants in Southeast

Queensland embarked on their own versions of the Celtic Revival underway in Ireland and other parts of the Irish world. The Revival was a form of cultural nationalism, which, from the 1870s gave the Irish Catholic community an appreciation of the antiquity of their civilisation and its achievements in religion, literature, the arts and sport. It was transmitted through a variety of means, including monuments, oratory, parades and other performances, literature, architecture, and symbols.⁸ Symbols figured most prominently in the language of monuments. Celtic Revival monuments spoke of an Ireland pre-dating the English conquest in the twelfth century, peopled by Celts, who made a rich contribution to the restoration of Christian civilisation in Europe after the barbarian invasions. The Celtic Cross, that most vital and durable of Celtic Revival symbols, captured the imagination of Irish nationalists through nineteenth-century efforts of antiquarians and archaeologists to resurrect the largely forgotten civilisations of ancient and medieval Ireland. In part, this turn to the past was a response to sustained British stereotyping of the Irish as racially inferior to Anglo-Saxons and unfit for self-government. The colonised Irish found solace in the knowledge they were heirs to an ancient and gifted civilisation. Some of the most influential products of this endeavour were images of a surviving early tenth century round tower and ringed crosses at Monasterboice in County Louth. Possibly the finest in Ireland, Muiredach's High Cross, with its

intricately engraved biblical and historical narratives, stood over five metres high. Another important discovery, in County Longford, was the 1,000-year-old Ardagh chalice. Exquisitely wrought from gold, silver and bronze, it was patterned with Celtic designs and names of the Apostles in Gaelic. Discovered by potato diggers in 1868, it was evidence of both the antiquity and sophistication of pre-invasion Celtic Ireland. It was also an enduring symbol of Catholic Ireland, preserved in Dublin's National Museum. These remnants, material evidence of a sophisticated and cultured Christian Ireland at the forefront of European civilisation, provided mobile and adaptable symbols of a rediscovered heritage that travelled throughout the Irish world and maintain their vitality to this day.

The Celtic Revival changed Irish-Catholic life in Queensland and left enduring traces, including statues and monuments. Graveside memorials used the Celtic Cross as a symbol of Irishness and Catholicism. In Ireland, from the ninth to the twelfth century, their precursors, high crosses, were used to mark important Christian sites, and as instructional aids for an illiterate peasantry. Their deployment to mark the graves of individuals was a nineteenth and twentieth century phenomenon, popular in Ireland and diasporic communities.⁹

In 1890s Ireland, the Celtic Cross assumed even greater prominence through its use in memorials constructed to

commemorate the centenary of the 1798 rebellion. It was also the most prominent feature of the 1798 monument in Sydney's Waverley Cemetery. The memorial committee included notable Irish Queenslander, and former Fenian, John Flood of Gympie. Also involved in the Australian 1798 memorial movement were Queensland Irish Association foundation members: Thomas Charles (TC) Beirne, James Carroll, Frank McDonnell, Peter Murphy, Thomas O'Sullivan, Anthony St Ledger and Patrick Stephens. Indeed, founded in the centenary year of the 1798 uprising, the Queensland Irish Association was itself an expression of the surge in Irish memory triggered by the rebellion's anniversary.¹⁰

The Celtic Cross, as a symbol of Ireland's antiquity and Catholicism, was transmitted throughout Queensland in the early twentieth century by print media, images and oratory. Father Michael O'Flynn typified Irish clerical orators. Born in County Waterford in 1872 he was ordained in 1896 and emigrated to Australia, becoming fellow curate with Father James Duhig, in Ipswich.¹¹ With compelling eloquence, and the aid of the Irish Catholic press, he propagated Celtic Revival concepts of a Golden Age in Christian Ireland, prior to English invasion, and of the Celtic Cross as one of its principal symbols.¹² In 1907 he attracted a capacity audience to Brisbane's Centennial Hall for a lecture entitled 'Ireland's Golden Age'. Buttressing him on the stage were five diocesan priests and five foundation members of the Queensland Irish

Association. He presented a vision of an Ireland entering an era of unprecedented artistic, religious and cultural creativity following its conversion to Christianity by St Patrick in the fifth century. Material evidence of that Golden Age still abounded on the Irish landscape: high crosses, ruined abbeys and round towers.¹³ Father O'Flynn selected a Monasterboice high cross for special attention. This cross, he argued, bore the achievements and tragedies of Ireland. It contained the nation's history. Even as a ruin, it spoke far more eloquently than any words of Ireland's glories and sorrows. He recited lines from Thomas Moore's immensely popular mid-nineteenth century *Irish Melodies*, to capture the evocative power of surviving high crosses and round towers:

The sorrows, the joys, of which once they were part,
Still round them, like visions of yesterday, throng.¹⁴

Images of this persuasive physical testimony were widely circulated in Queensland. They appeared in the Irish Catholic press, books such as the extremely popular *Ireland in Pictures*, and through lectures, illustrated with lantern slides, by priests recently returned from visits to their Irish homes.¹⁵

Celtic Revival Iconography in Warwick and Roma, 1888-1894

Warwick's Irish Catholicism has bequeathed a valuable local historiography. Religious women and men who have

enriched our knowledge of the district's Irish Catholic community include Sister Mary Xaverius, and Fathers Joseph McKey, Denis Martin and Peter Murphy.¹⁶ Such works are supplemented by monumental evidence. One of the Celtic Revival's more remarkable material legacies in Southeast Queensland is an 1888 funerary monument in the Warwick cemetery, commemorating early Hibernian Australasian Catholic Society official, Henry Conway.¹⁷ Standing over three and a half metres, crowned by a chalice, the work was sculpted free-of-charge from local freestone by monumental sculptor and fellow-Hibernian James McMahan.¹⁸ Son of a farmer, McMahan was born in Clovis, County Fermanagh in the late 1820s, and arrived in Queensland in the early 1860s. He established himself as a Warwick monumental mason in 1863.¹⁹ The Hibernian-inscribed memorial is the earliest Celtic Revival funerary sculpture we have located in Southeast Queensland, and, we believe, among the earliest in Australia. The monument was engraved with the Hibernian crest, proclaiming a hybrid Irish-Australian identity. Ireland's Celtic Cross, round tower, harp, wolfhound, and shamrocks were balanced by the Australian coat of arms complete with emu and kangaroo. The elevated chalice symbolised both the Catholic mass and the Celtic Revival.²⁰

The Warwick Cemetery is rich in Irish Catholic memory. This reflects not only the numerical weight of the Irish but

also their social, economic and cultural power. In an era when Catholics faced discrimination, Warwick elected Irish Catholic mayors and, in 1896, when Thomas Joseph Byrnes lost his bid to win the North Brisbane Legislative Assembly seat in a viciously sectarian election, he was given refuge in Warwick. Two years later, he became Queensland's first Irish Catholic Premier. Today the main street is dominated by a statue of Byrnes, unveiled by the Governor in 1902.²¹ The secretary of the Byrnes memorial committee was Town Clerk, Francis Barron Woods, who died some two months before the statue's unveiling. Son of an Irish Catholic father and Italian mother, Woods was born in Florence, Italy, and arrived in 1864. He typified the successful careers open to Catholics in Warwick. He was a letter-carrier before his appointment as Town Clerk in 1868, holding the position under multiple mayors, Catholic and Protestant, for the next thirty-four years. A founder of the local branch of the Hibernian Society, his Irish ancestry and Catholicism were boldly materialised in his funerary monument, a Celtic Cross with encircled shamrocks surrounding the IHS²² monogram, (symbolising Jesus Christ), on the its intersection.²³ Not far from Woods' memorial are the clustered spires of the Higgins' extended family plot. The patriarch, Patrick Higgins, an immigrant from County Clare, pioneered wheat growing on the Darling Downs and founded Warwick's St Patrick's Society in 1871. He was buried in 1894, and matriarch, Margaret Higgins, his second wife,

joined him in 1929. The vitality of the Higgins' funerary monuments, and their capacity to maintain an Ireland-Australia nexus was demonstrated in 2017. On a state visit to Australia, President of Ireland, Michael Higgins, grandnephew of Patrick Higgins, joined other descendants at his funerary monument, paying homage to their ancestors and celebrating the Irish presence in Warwick.²⁴

The Roma Monumental Cemetery contains an arresting cluster of Celtic Revival monuments commemorating Catholic priests, crafted between 1894 and 1908. The first to be erected honoured an Irish-born Dominican, Father Richard Cranfield, who died in May 1894 at the age of thirty-five. He was recruited to Queensland in 1891 by Archbishop Robert Dunne who, meeting him in Ireland, was impressed with his scholarship, cross-denominational appeal in his Northern Ireland parish, and oratory. He was appointed to St Stephen's Cathedral, but, after contracting rheumatic fever, was posted to Roma in the hope its drier climate and the presence of his married sister in the district, would restore his health. In his short time in Roma Father Cranfield won such affection that 1,000 people, of all denominations, joined his funeral procession, which was led by school children and Hibernians in regalia carrying his coffin. He was commemorated with the most elaborate memorial in the cemetery.²⁵

With funds collected by the Hibernian Society, the monument was designed by local Irish Catholic architect Joseph Warren (de Warren) and constructed by A.L. Petrie and Son. It was massive, weighing some six and a half tons, with its Sicilian marble Celtic Cross towering well over three metres above ground level. The structure evoked an altar, in keeping with Richard Cranfield's vocation. It also evidenced Joseph Warren's faith: he had donated his architectural skills to the construction of Roma's new Catholic Church, blessed by Archbishop Dunne in 1893.²⁶

A verse on a small tablet, inserted in one of the pediments on the western side of the pedestal, testified to the power of the Celtic Cross to evoke both Ireland and Catholicism:

The Celtic Cross raise o'er me
And the ivy around it twine
'Twill tell to the land that bore me
The dear old faith was mine.

The reference to ivy on Father Cranfield's memorial was poignant. His sister had brought an ivy vine with her from Ireland and transplanted it in Roma. She nursed her brother in his final days and he asked her to re-plant the ivy on his grave.²⁷ The inscribed verse enhanced the memorial's Irish Catholicism. It came from a mid-nineteenth century poem, 'My Testament', attributed to an Irish nationalist priest, Father William Cahill, who wrote under the pseudonym, 'Alpha'. It began with the lines:

The shamrock green above me,
Planted by friendly hand;
As, next to God, I loved thee,
Dear Erin, my native land!

The poem was a hymn to Catholicism and Ireland in equal measure, privileging a trio of Irish symbols: shamrock, harp and Celtic Cross. It exemplified the role of clerical writers in forging the Celtic Revival. In 1911, former Mayor of Dublin and parliamentarian, Timothy Sullivan, who, in 1867, wrote the Irish national hymn, *God Save Ireland*, celebrated the literary contribution of Catholic clergy. He collected their patriotic verse into a single impressive volume, *Irish National Poems by Irish Priests*.²⁸

Archbishop James Duhig, Timothy Wrafter, and the Australia-Ireland Memory Nexus

The most influential Queensland Irish Catholic of his generation, Archbishop James Duhig epitomised the Hibernian appetite for commemoration. Born in Ireland in 1871 at Killila in County Limerick, he emigrated to Brisbane in 1885 at the age of fourteen with his mother and two siblings. After attending St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace, he studied for the priesthood in Rome and was ordained in 1896. Returning to Queensland the following year he was appointed a curate in Ipswich. He wove himself into the history of Irish Catholic commemoration by contributing to a Hibernian project to

honour progressive Pope Leo XIII who died in 1903. He delivered a fund-raising lecture in Brisbane, under Hibernian auspices, on the late Pope's life and career, which not only drew on his first-hand experience of Rome and the Vatican, but also gave his home city a taste of his masterful oratory.²⁹ During the Pope Leo XIII memorial project, Duhig's life and career intersected with that of another significant figure in the history of Irish Catholic memorialisation in Queensland, Timothy Wrafter, who was commissioned to fashion the Carrara marble memorial tablet. Unveiled in St Stephen's Cathedral by Archbishop Robert Dunne in 1904, its inscription acknowledged the role of the Hibernian Society and the craftsmanship of its sculptor.

Timothy Wrafter was one of the most significant figures in Southeast Queensland's Celtic Revival, and an influential monumental sculptor from 1907 until his death in 1923. Son of a monumental mason, he was born in Tullamore, King's County (now Offaly), and worked as a stonemason in his home city and Dublin before emigrating to Australia in the mid-1880s. An Irish nationalist and Hibernian, he helped found a branch of the Brisbane Hurling Club in 1887. By the early 1890s he was sexton and stonemason at Nudgee Catholic Cemetery, living in an adjacent cottage. In 1896 he returned to Ireland to marry Anne Somers in Tullamore.³⁰

Archbishop James Duhig commissioned Timothy Wrafter to construct a Celtic Revival monument in Nudgee Catholic Cemetery over the grave of his mother, Margaret Duhig, in 1907. Its Celtic Revivalism was signalled by shamrocks engraved on the arms of the Celtic Cross and the harp and medieval Irish tracery on the panel. Its Catholicism was proclaimed not only by the cross but also by the monogram IHS on its intersection. His mother honoured with a memorial, James Duhig's thoughts turned to his father's unmarked grave in Ireland. Margaret's husband and James's father, John Duhig, died in a Limerick poor house in 1876. His death at 38, after a week-long fever, was linked to the recurrence of famine.³¹ He was buried in the Killeedy Cemetery, named St Ita's, after Limerick's patron saint. The family was subsequently evicted from their land holding. St Ita established the first church in Killeedy in the sixth century. It developed into a monastery devoted to scholarship and healing, catering to both nuns and monks. By the ninth century the monastery had succumbed to Viking attacks, though its ruins are still visible. During a visit to his homeland in 1909, Duhig arranged for the most imposing Celtic Revival monument in Killeedy cemetery to be constructed over the grave of his father.³² With Celtic art work on the Cross's intersection and panel, Catholic invocations (now barely decipherable) on the ring, an inscription spoke of family memory, premature death, emigration and New World achievement:



Of Your Charity
Pray For The
Repose Of The
Soul Of
John Duhig
Of Killila
Broadford
Who Died 5th
June 1876
Aged 38 Years
R.I.P.

Erected By His
Affectionate Son
Right Rev James
Duhig
Bishop of
Rockhampton, Q.
Australia
1909

Seven years later, as Archbishop of Brisbane, Duhig inscribed the memory of St Ita on Brisbane's townscape by establishing St Ita's Parish at Dutton Park.

Duhig's 1909 pilgrimage to his father's grave can be seen as a personal healing, a soothing of what Dipresh Chakrabarty described as a 'historical wound', an injury

inflicted by the powerful on those they oppress.³³ Such a wound, a fusion of history, memory and emotion, was carried by Irish Catholic emigrants to the New World, and helps explain their tenacious, multi-generational attachment to Ireland and Catholicism. In the nineteenth century the fate of the Duhig family in Limerick was a micro-metaphor for the history of England and Catholic Ireland, from the Anglo-Norman invasion in the twelfth century. Over the next eight hundred years the indigenous Irish were colonised and dispossessed. The Great Famine of the 1840s caused at least a million deaths and mass emigration, a demographic shock from which Ireland has never recovered. It also savaged what remained of Gaelic language and culture.³⁴ The Celtic Revival, at home and abroad, was, in part, an attempt to recover indigenous Irish identity and dignity. James Duhig's erection of Irish-themed monuments over his mother in Brisbane and his father in Killeedy were acts of remembrance, forging an enduring memory chain between Australia and Ireland. These links were reinforced after James Duhig's death in Brisbane in 1965. John Duhig's memorial was no longer the solitary marker of the Duhig family's connection with Limerick. His monument was now accompanied by a plaque honouring his son's distinguished life in Queensland. It also recorded the trauma that orphaned the children and drove the family into exile. The inscription, ending in an Irish language prayer, read:

Archbishop James Duhig Of
Brisbane Queensland
Died On The 10th April 1965
Aged 93 Years
And Is Buried in St
Stephens Cathedral.
At The Age Of Four
After His Father's Death
The Family Were Evicted From
Their Land His Mother With
Six Of Their Seven Children
Emigrated To Australia
And One To The U.S.A.

GO nDEANA DEA TROCAIRE ORTHU

[Lord Have Mercy On Them]

Monuments are memory containers. The Duhig memorials in Killeedy are as relevant to Queensland as they are to Ireland, just as the Irish have a reciprocal claim on the Margaret Duhig monument in the Nudgee Catholic Cemetery and her son's 2014 statue in St Brigid's Church, Red Hill. Memory ignores borders and the Irish are a global family.

Celtic Revival Iconography in Queensland, 1907-1912: the Wrafter Era

Timothy Wrafter's career as a Celtic Revival monumental sculptor accelerated after executing James Duhig's

commission to memorialise his mother. In the following two years Wrafter constructed at least three distinctive Irish Catholic funerary monuments in similar style. These were over the graves of Father Peter Capra in Roma Monumental Cemetery and Michael Kerwin in Ipswich General Cemetery, both erected in 1908, and, in the following year, that of Patrick Hernon in Nudgee Catholic Cemetery.

Father Peter Capra was born in Piedmont, Italy and came to Queensland at Bishop Quinn's invitation in 1872. Small of stature, genial and cultured, he had been Roma's parish priest for twenty-three years when he died aged 63 in 1907. One of his notable achievements in 1886 was to establish and nurture the Roma branch of the Hibernian Society.³⁵ He was accorded honorary Irishness. The affection he won from his Irish parishioners was on display at his funeral: relays of Hibernians carried his coffin to the cemetery and covered it with earth. The Father Capra monument was almost a replica of Margaret Duhig's, except the panel of its Carrara marble Celtic Cross celebrates his priesthood with a lead inlaid chalice. Beneath the chalice is the Catholic maxim *In hoc signo, vincemus* [In this sign we conquer]. The ring of the cross was inscribed *Thy Will Be Done*. Its base pleaded: *Pray for the soul of the Very Revd. Peter Capra D.D., for 23 years parish priest of Roma, died at Roma, 4th May 1907. Rest in Peace*. The Irishness of the great majority of

Father Capra's parishioners was stamped on the panel of his monument with Celtic interlace.³⁶

Wrafter also completed the Michael Kerwin memorial, bearing his distinctive Celtic Revival iconography, in Ipswich in 1908. The son of an Irish labourer, born in Banshee, Tipperary, Kerwin arrived in Queensland in 1853 and died in 1907, aged 84. A successful grazier in the Redbank Plains district, he was survived by his wife and nine children who commissioned the most imposing funerary structure in Ipswich: a towering obelisk, reaching almost five metres, its base embellished with lead-inlaid shamrock triangles, a miniature Celtic Cross, and the Catholic invocations:

Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on him.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Pray for him.

The monument testified to Kerwin's material success in Australia as well as his Irishness and Catholicism.³⁷

Perhaps the best-preserved example of Timothy Wrafter's craftsmanship is an Irish-themed memorial for Brisbane teacher, Patrick Hernon. A member of the St Stephen's branch of the Hibernian Society and Queensland Irish Association, Tipperary-born Patrick Hernon, was a bachelor who emigrated to Australia in the late 1880s. He died unexpectedly from a heart attack in a tram on Petrie Terrace at 45 years of age.

Hernon was accorded a crowded Irish-Catholic funeral attended by notables such as parliamentarians Frank McDonnell, Peter McLachlan and David Bowman and future Irish Association presidents, Peter McDermott and Neil Macgroarty. The many wreaths included tributes from the Sisters of Mercy and the Irish Association.



**Patrick Hernon Memorial
Nudgee Catholic Cemetery
Brisbane**

After a requiem mass in Rosalie Catholic Church, Hernon was buried in Nudgee Catholic Cemetery.³⁸ The Celtic Revivalism of the 1909 Hernon monument followed the template established with the Margaret Duhig memorial. His Irishness was proclaimed, in characteristic Wrafter style, with triangles of shamrocks, inlaid in lead, at the top and on the arms of the marble cross. The intersection of

the cross bore the Catholic monogram IHS and beneath it, at the top of the panel, was the Irish harp.



Timothy Wrafter Jr

1887-1972

(Courtesy Peter Wrafter)

In 1910 Timothy Wrafter sponsored the emigration from Tullamore of his nephew, also Timothy, and a stonemason. The pair collaborated on two of Australia's nationally significant Irish Catholic monuments. The first, erected in Gympie Cemetery in 1911, honoured Irish patriot and Fenian, John Flood. The second, raised in 1912 in Brisbane's Toowong Cemetery, commemorated Young Irelanders Kevin and Eva O'Doherty. While the lives and memorialisations of the O'Dohertys have received considerable attention from historians³⁹ those of John Flood have been relatively neglected. Both monuments represent the zenith of Celtic iconography on Southeast Queensland's memorial landscape. Fenian John Flood was a striking figure whom co-conspirator John Denvir described as:

a fine handsome man, tall and strong, wearing a full and flowing tawny beard. He had a genial-looking face, and, in your intercourse with him

you found him just as genial as he looked. He was a man of distinguished bearing, who you could imagine fill with grace and dignity the post of Irish ambassador to some friendly power he was full of the glorious traditions of '98.⁴⁰

On 8 April 1867, Flood was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for his leading role in the Fenian uprising. Transported to Fremantle in Western Australia, he was conditionally pardoned in 1871 and worked as a journalist in several locations before settling in Gympie in 1881, a goldmining town about 120km north of Brisbane. He prospered for the remaining twenty-eight years of his life as a company secretary, sharebroker and, from 1888 to 1902, proprietor of the *Gympie Miner*.⁴¹ Flood was a mainstay of the goldfield's large Irish-Catholic community. He joined Gympie Catholics in a move to memorialise the late Brisbane Catholic Bishop James Quinn. In 1889 he established and commanded an ethnic militia, the Gympie company of the Queensland Irish Volunteers.⁴² In the same year he hosted John Dillon, the first of a succession of Irish Parliamentary Party fund-raising envoys to Australia, followed by his close friend and fellow-Fenian, Michael Davitt (1895) and John Donovan (1906).⁴³

Flood maintained correspondence with leaders of the Irish Parliamentary Party and was a conduit between Gympie and Ireland. When hotelier Arthur Webb visited the United Kingdom in 1900, Flood orchestrated a meeting

for him with Michael Davitt, whom the Gympie Hibernians, at Flood's suggestion, had commissioned to select 280 books for their library.⁴⁴ His memorial is the chief marker of Gympie's Irish past and the outstanding regional example of the Wrafters' Celtic Revival craftsmanship. Standing over four metres above his grave, the handsome Celtic Cross consisted of polished



**John Flood Memorial
Gympie Cemetery**

Aberdeen granite on a Bohn base of unpolished local stone. It was set on concrete with Helidon freestone walling and enclosure. The ringed cross with its central IHS monogram signified Flood's Catholicism. The panel proclaimed his Irish pedigree and nationality with a series of motifs: winged harp, sunburst, interlace ribbons and family crest. A trio of Celtic Revival symbols — round tower, wolfhound and harp —

dominated the visual presentation.⁴⁵ They recalled Flood's launch of a Celtic Revival in Gympie in

September 1900, with a public lecture on ‘Irish Language, Learning and Literature’.⁴⁶

The memorial was inscribed:

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
JOHN FLOOD
(A TRUE IRISH PATRIOT)
BORN 21st MAY 1841 AT SUTTON DUBLIN IRELAND
DIED 22nd AUGUST 1909
AGED 68 YEARS
ERECTED IN 1911 BY FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS
TO COMMEMORATE HIS LIFE'S WORK
IN THE CAUSE OF IRISH NATIONALITY
R.I.P.

Irish Catholic Republicanism on Brisbane's Memorial Landscape

The Wrafter family's contributions to Irish Catholic memorialisation in Southeast Queensland included two historically significant Irish republican memorials in Nudgee Catholic Cemetery. Commemorating Irish Republicans and the 1916 Rising in Dublin, the two monuments constituted a memory chain, spanning generations and centuries. They also materialised the reciprocal memory links between Australia and Ireland. The first was the 1923 Fitzgerald-McKitterick monument unveiled by Father Michael O'Flynn. The other was the

2017 William (Dan) Ryan memorial. Both honoured Irish Republicans who suffered for their cause and could not have been completed without the altruism of the Wrafters. The two monuments signalled Irish Catholicism with a Gaelic prayer pleading that those whose bodies they guard were resting on the right-hand side of God.

Brisbane's first Irish Catholic republican memorial was sculpted by Timothy Wrafter junior. It commemorated Catholic bookshop proprietor Thomas Fitzgerald and writer George McKitterick. They were Brisbane's most vocal supporters of *Sinn Féin* and the 1916 Dublin Rising, until their respective deaths in 1918 and 1921. Both suffered for their cause. McKitterick died a premature death at 27 years of age.⁴⁷ Later in the same year, Fitzgerald was imprisoned for six months on the grounds that he was of 'hostile origin and Association'.⁴⁸ The second commemorated Dan Ryan, a veteran of the Rising who died in Brisbane in 1958 and was buried in an unmarked grave in Nudgee Cemetery. Brisbane's commemoration of the centenary of the 1916 rebellion occurred at his grave. The memorial, dedicated and blessed on Easter Monday 2017, was largely due to the work of his family in Ireland, the Irish Embassy in Australia and two men in Brisbane. These were Joseph Thompson, secretary of the Irish Australian Support Association who located Dan Ryan's grave and Peter Wrafter, grand-nephew of the Fitzgerald-McKitterick

memorial sculptor, who likewise generously contributed to the memorial's construction.⁴⁹

The Durability and Mobility of the Celtic Cross

Eleven of the twelve funerary monuments in this survey featured a Celtic Cross. In nine of them it was the dominant structure. The exceptions are the 1888 Henry Conway monument in Warwick and the 1908 Michael Kerwin obelisk in Ipswich which include miniature Celtic Crosses. The 2017 Dan Ryan memorial at Nudgee only contains an inscription. The earliest, and perhaps, most emotionally charged was that erected in 1894 over Father Cranfield's grave in Roma. The latest Celtic Cross in our study was the 1923 Fitzgerald-McKitterick monument at Nudgee. These measured an almost three-decade duration for Celtic Revival funerary monuments in Southeast Queensland, expressed in Irish high cross replicas as grave markers. This coincided with the Home Rule-inspired surge in diasporic homeland engagement, which largely dissipated in disillusionment with Irish politics precipitated by the outbreak of Civil War in 1922.

Celtic Crosses no longer sprout in Catholic sections of Southeast Queensland cemeteries. Yet Celticism in Irish memorialisation— secular as well as Catholic— resurfaced in the late twentieth century. In 1986 St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace, unveiled an imposing bronze Celtic Cross to commemorate its Irish Catholic heritage.

Over four metres high, sculpted by Catharina Hampson, the Cross was derived from Ireland's medieval precedents and echoed the Irish high crosses still standing in Ireland at Monasterboice and other Christian precincts. Its design borrowed their biblical scenes and Celtic artwork. It also preserved history of its own site and the Christian Brothers' mission in Queensland with mini-portraits of Bishop Quinn and other significant figures in the College's history from its foundation in 1875.⁵⁰ A similar resurrection occurred when the Queensland Irish Association commissioned a new float for the 1994 St Patrick's Day procession to replace its decades-old display of an Irish thatched cottage. The new entry was dominated by a Celtic Cross and other emblems of ancient and medieval Ireland.⁵¹

Conclusion

Southeast Queensland's Irish Catholic memorials are about memory, faith, identity and connection. In new lands their planting on the landscape connected immigrants with their country of destination, providing a sense of possession and permanence. Those derived from the Celtic Revival were also a comforting reminder of the settlers' country of origin. Monuments salvage and anchor someone or something of value otherwise receding with the remorseless tide of time. They connected the living and the dead, earth and heaven, Australia with Ireland, the

past with the present and future. Once raised, they can have extended afterlives as the 2017 pilgrimage of the President of Ireland to his ancestors' graves in Warwick demonstrated. Their language is largely symbolic but such icons as the Celtic Cross, reaching back over 1,000 years to medieval Ireland, have retained their power and eloquence. Their march from cemeteries into the community takes them back towards their original function as teachers, containers of history and markers of a living Irish and/or Catholic presence. In a world of ceaseless change, they offer a reassuring sense of continuity, stability and identity.

¹ This is a revised version of the talk given in June 2020.

²In 1911, Catholics, some 80% per cent of whom were of Irish birth or descent, constituted 24.71% of Queensland's population, the highest proportion in Australia, second only to New South Wales which recorded a figure of 25.51%. In Brisbane, Catholics constituted 22.98% of the population, again second, among the capital cities to Sydney's 24.63%. There were heavier concentrations of Irish Catholics in some regional centres. Comparable figures for Gympie, Ipswich Roma and Warwick were 25%, 23%, 30% and 32% respectively. *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, Vol 1, Statistician's Report*, Melbourne, McCarron, Bird & Co., 1914, pp. 201, 213; see also M. Rosa MacGinley, 'The Irish in Queensland: An Overview', in John O'Brien and Pauric Travers (eds), *The Irish Emigrant Experience in Australia*, Dublin, Poolbeg, Press, 1991, pp. 106-7 and 'Irish Immigration to Queensland' in David Larkin (ed.), *Memorials to the Irish in Queensland*, Brisbane: Genealogical Society of Queensland, Irish Group and the Queensland Irish Association 1988, pp. 22-23.

³ Peter Collins, "'Who fears to speak of '98?'" historic commemoration of the 1798 rising', Eberhard Bort (ed.),

Commemorating Ireland: History, Politics, Culture, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2004, p. 19.

⁴Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'Brisbane Statuemanía: Memorialising Irish-Australian Premiers 1898-1955', *Queensland Historical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 3, November 2016, pp. 199-218.

⁵Larkin, *Memorials to the Irish in Queensland*, p. 6.

⁶Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006, p. 22.

⁷Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'Memorialising Irish Australians in Southeast Queensland, 1872-2017', *Queensland History Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 10, August 2018, p. 678.

⁸Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'Irish Symbols in Warwick 1871-1917', *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 19, 2019, pp. 36-52.

⁹Maggie M. Williams, *Icons of Irishness from the Middle Ages to the Modern World*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 132-133, 145-146.

¹⁰*Brisbane Courier*, 23 April 1898, p. 6; *Freeman's Journal* (Sydney), 28 May 1898, p. 10; Rodney Sullivan, 'The Queensland Irish Association: Origins and Consolidation, 1898-1908', *Queensland History Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 5, May 2014, pp. 407-408; Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, "'Let the damn Protestants do the enlisting": The TC Beirne Libel Case in Brisbane, 1916-1917', *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 18, 2018, p. 28.

¹¹Michael Joseph O'Flynn, Death Certificate, Queensland Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages (QBDM); 'Dean Michael O'Flynn', Larkin, *Memorials to the Irish in Queensland*, pp. 129-130.

¹²See for example *Age* (Brisbane), 16 December 1905, p. 26.

¹³*Age* (Brisbane), 30 November 1907, p. 3.

¹⁴From Thomas Moore's 'And Doth Not a Meeting Like This', *Irish Melodies*, London, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1853, p. 179.

¹⁵John F. Finerty, *Ireland in Pictures*, Chicago, J. S. Hyland, 1898. For a case study of this diffusion, and its impact in regional Queensland see Rodney Sullivan and Robin Sullivan, 'Irish Symbols in Warwick 1871-1917', *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 19, 2019, pp. 36-52.

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- ¹⁶ Sister Mary Xaverius O'Donoghue, *Beyond Our Dreams: A Century of the Works of Mercy in Queensland*, Brisbane, Jacaranda Press, 1951; Father Joseph McKey, *The Warwick Story*, The Warwick Newspaper Company, 1972 and *Linger Longer*, Warwick, The Warwick Newspaper Company, 1979; Father Denis Martin, 'The Irish in Queensland', in Larkin, *Memorials to the Irish in Queensland*, pp. 13, 17; Father Peter Murphy, *Warwick and the Irish*, Toowoomba, Diocese of Toowoomba, 2005.
- ¹⁷ *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 26 June 1886, p. 2.
- ¹⁸ *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 23 May 1888, p. 2.
- ¹⁹ James McMahan, Death Certificate, QBDM; *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 6 December 1882, p. 4.
- ²⁰ *Warwick Argus*, 22 May 1888, p. 2
- ²¹ On the Irish in Warwick see Sullivan, 'Irish Symbols in Warwick 1871-1917', pp. 36-52.
- ²² Derived from the Greek word for Jesus.
- ²³ Francis Barron Woods, Death Certificate, QBDM; *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 November 1902, p. 979.
- ²⁴ Patrick Higgins, Death Certificate, QBDM; Gerard Walsh, 'President talks about close relations between Australia and Ireland during historic visit', <https://www.warwickdailynews.com.au/news/president-talks-about-close-relations-between-aust/3245468/>, accessed, 19 March 2018; *Irish Echo* (Sydney), November 2017, p. 3.
- ²⁵ *Western Star and Roma Advertiser* (Toowoomba), 30 May 1894, p. 2.
- ²⁶ *Queenslander* (Brisbane), 1 July 1893, p. 13. We thank Jonathan Wooding, Sir Warwick Fairfax Professor of Celtic Studies, School of Literature, Art, and Media, Faculty of Arts, The University of Sydney, for assistance in interpreting the Father Cranfield memorial.
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- ²⁸ TD Sullivan, *Irish National Poems by Irish Priests*, Dublin, M.H. Gill & Son, Ltd., 1911, pp. 2-3.
- ²⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 11 September 1903, p. 7.
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³¹ T. P. Boland, *James Duhig*, St Lucia Qld, University of Queensland Press, 1986, p. 16.

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³⁶ *Darling Downs Gazette* (Toowoomba), 20 April 1908, p. 5.

³⁷ Michael Kerwin, Death Certificate, QBDM; *Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser*, 19 May 1908, p. 9.

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⁴³ *Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette*, 30 July 1889, p. 3; 10 August 1895, p. 4; 1 September 1906, p. 7; 24 August 1909, p. 3; *Brisbane Courier*, 25 March 1895, p. 6.

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⁴⁵ *Gympie Times*, 26 September 1911, p. 3.

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