

Irish Heritage

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damentally outside the Irish organizations."

Today, in Washington, he said, that number of people will gather for Ceili dancing each week. Where once there was a single Irish bar, he said, there are now 100. And by 1976 when the Smithsonian Institution staged a Feis, participants came for Ceili dancing from all over the country, he said.

In a wry aside, Martin noted that what is now happening in the U.S. is also only now happening in Ireland.

In Rochester, the Hibernian Ceili Dancers number about 25 at weekly rehearsals. Martin himself, however, has

taught Ceili dancing to more than 100 in the past two years, and recently two area professional schools of Irish dance have added Ceili dancing to the curricula.

Frances Cosgrove thinks that the apparent upswing in interest in Irish culture stems from a desire on the part of younger people to "find out where they came from." She sees the phenomenon as perhaps a corrective to a lost sense of identity and objectives, "where they were and where they are going."

Ms. Cosgrove is spokesperson for the United Irish Societies, a board which coordinates activities for the Knights of Equity, the Hibernians, and the Harps.

It was the board, in conjunction with the Downtown Promotion Council, which sponsored last Saturday's St. Patrick's Parade and the attendant ceremonies including Mass celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

She is also recording secretary for the Irish National Caucus, without discussion of which she said no story on the Irish renaissance is complete.

The caucus, she said, is an American group organized to address questions of civil and human rights violations in Northern Ireland.

Chief of that group is Jean Arena who said in Rochester there are about 40 members with an additional 90 to 100 supporters who meet once a month.

The function of the group is "to make the violations of human rights in Northern Ireland a political and moral issue in this country," she said.

With 40 local chapters across the country, the caucus represents one of the largest

ethnic coalitions lobbying in Congress, she said.

On the situation in Northern Ireland, Ms. Cosgrove, who was born in Longford, said that many are simply not aware of the degradation happening to all segments of the population, and scored general American attitudes toward the problems there. "Most people turn a deaf ear," she said. "The apathy has consumed them."

All the recent interest in Irish culture, however, certainly owes a great deal to the Irish fraternal societies which have acted in great measure to preserve Gaelic identity among immigrants while helping them incorporate into the mainstream of American life.

Those societies are the Knights of Equity, the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Harps. As Ms. Cosgrove noted, while only the Knights of Equity strictly identifies itself with the Catholic Church, to be Irish in America is almost synonymous with being Catholic.

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On the Right Side

All About Evelyn Waugh

Who is this Evelyn Waugh you are so enthusiastic about?

He was an English author, born in 1903. He went to Oxford for a rowdy time until 1924; had a kind of scatter-brained marriage in 1927; was divorced in January 1929; became a Catholic in September 1930 with no expectation of possibility of remarriage. He heard of the famous Duke of Marlborough annulment case from historian Christopher Hollis; was counselled to petition for a Church annulment. His case was cruelly neglected by a priest official although it was a clear case of invalidity. He was granted annulment in January 1935. He married Laura Herbert of a strong English Catholic family in April 1937 and had a successful marriage. He is considered one of the greatest satirists in the English language. He died Easter Sunday, 1966.

You sound like a gossip columnist.

Do you think so? I became interested in Waugh a few months ago when the TV people began to advertise a coming series based on his "Brideshead Revisited." I had read some of his books in the 40s and 50s, and recalled him as a famous convert, along with Graham Greene, Msgr. Knox, Arnold Lunn, and many at that time. I had read "Brideshead" in 1946 and on re-reading it, recalled only one scene. It was the dying of wealthy, adulterous Lord Marchmain, who violently rejected the offer of a priest to be reconciled. Would he or would he not finally die in the Church? The drama is intense. And there is an odd humor as several characters expressed their misconception of Extreme Unction and the work of the priest.

Sounds interesting.

Television critic Robert McKenzie has a perceptive critique of this PBS offering. "This 11-part series in England is the most

faithful and scrupulous adaptation of a novel you will ever see. Granada Television has made a series which will enchant the few and mystify the many." Waugh intended his book to be an exposition of God's sanctifying grace, tantalizing a mixed-up Old Catholic family. He uses Catholic doctrine and symbols and events which "mystify" the many.

McKenzie continued: "The series would be worth seeing if only to catch John Gielgud, Lawrence Olivier and Claire Bloom in minor but vivid parts... The homosexual element will bother some but it is presented in Waugh's style, feeling but without detail. We don't know if Charles and Sebastian become lovers in a physical way." The "Brideshead" series is on the Rochester channel only Mondays at 9 p.m., but friends in Auburn get it from the Syracuse PBS station Mondays at 8 p.m. with a repeat on Sunday at 3 p.m.

Do you recommend "Brideshead Revisited"?

Personally, I am enchanted. But it might be a disappointment to others. However, the series will renew interest in Waugh and his books and his religion. This makes me happy. Some of his books are slap-happy satires like "The Loved One" and "Vile Bodies." But he also wrote the biography of Msgr. Ronald Knox, a great convert. And he wrote a biography of the Jesuit martyr, Edmund Campion, as an act of thanksgiving to Father Martin D'Arcy and the London Farm Street Jesuits. Christopher Sykes published a biography, "Evelyn Waugh," in 1975 which combines a chronology of his life and a flow of mini-reviews of his books as they were produced. "Diaries of Evelyn Waugh" was published by Michael Davie in 1976, which is frightfully candid and revealing of many literary and society people in England with whom he associated. I am surprised his estate has not been sued for libel. And Father John Hayes reminded me that there is a book out of Waugh's letters which are less intemperate than his diaries.

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