



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN IRISH FAMINE MEMORIAL



DEDICATION PROGRAM



AN GORTA MÓR

THE GREAT HUNGER

Monday 9 October 2017

Market Square, Subiaco

MAYOR'S WELCOME



Subiaco has a long-standing tradition of welcoming people from all parts of the world and we are proud of our diverse community. The social contribution the Irish community has had on Subiaco is reflected in the naming of local streets, the history of St John of God hospital and the ongoing spiritual connection of St Joseph's church. The Western Australian Irish Famine Memorial acknowledges the suffering that occurred in Ireland during the famine and celebrates the arrival of Irish immigrants to Subiaco and the wider Western Australian community.

The City of Subiaco recognises the traditional custodians of the land on which the memorial is being placed, the Whadjuk Nyungah people, and their connection to this land.

We are proud that Subiaco is the home of this memorial, and it is a great honour to welcome His Excellency Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, to dedicate this monument. *An Gorta Mor* is a wonderful addition to the city's public art collection.

The city wishes to thank Smith Sculptors for this magnificent piece, and recognises their skill and vision in capturing this time in history. The city also acknowledges the dedication of Fred Rea and the Western Australian Irish Famine Commemoration Committee for initiating the memorial.

Heather Henderson
City of Subiaco Mayor

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS



Welcome by the Master of Ceremonies
Sinead Mangan

Mayoral Address and Acknowledgement of Country
City of Subiaco Mayor Heather Henderson

Unveiling of the Memorial

Presidential Address
The President of Ireland, His Excellency Michael D. Higgins

Western Australian Irish Famine Commemoration (WAIFC) Committee
Fred Rea, WAIFC Chairperson

Mary of York
Sung by Bethany O'Brien and Donna Marwick-O'Brien

End of official speeches
Afternoon tea served

FROM WAIFC CHAIRMAN



Without the dedicated support, effort and vision of the Western Australian Irish community we would not be there today. It is indeed an honour to have chaired the committee responsible for this memorial dedicated to those young girls who left the shores of Ireland following the famine.

We are most grateful to the City of Subiaco both for their financial assistance and allocating a prominent site in Market Square.

The generosity of local Irish sculptors, Joan Walsh-Smith and Charlie Smith of Smith Sculptors who sculptured this abiding tribute and destination for the Irish/Australian community in Western Australia.

The famine was a watershed in Irish history; it changed the island's demographic, cultural and political landscape; it became a rallying point for nationalist movements; it highlighted ethnic and sectarian tensions between many Irish and the British Crown. This was a legacy carried by emigrants to the USA, Australia, Canada and elsewhere. That same legacy came to Western Australia in 1853 on such ships as the Travancore and the Palestine. Many Irish girls between the ages of 18 and 23 were sent from workhouses in Ireland to Western Australia in the 1850s and 1860s.

The monument construction has been managed by Peter McKenna and he has put in long hours to get the project completed. We are indebted to Peter.

Our sincere thanks also go to our donors, partners and supporters for their enthusiasm and encouragement for the project.

Fred Rea
Chairman, WAIFC Inc.

MARY OF YORK



Irish workhouse to Australia, across the water she came
To a new life where she knew life would never be the same
In November 1852, at only seventeen,
She sailed aboard the Palestine, to the Swan River Colony

*Once there was a time, when life was more than how to survive
Once she felt the warmth, and the love in her mother's eyes
And she'd hear her mother say, "Mary stay strong,"
Keep your eyes on the roads that lay ahead
But don't forget where you came from."*

This land of beauty, land of her soul, where her spirit had run free
She watched it fade into the mist, as she sailed out on the sea.
Memories tossed amongst the waves, poverty be gone,
A family lost so long ago, scared, a child alone

*Once there was a time, when life was more than how to survive
Once she felt the warmth, and the love in her mother's eyes
And she'd hear her mother say, "Mary stay strong,"
Keep your eyes on the roads that lay ahead
But don't forget where you came from."*

In May 1853, Mary Taylor did arrive
From Perth to York shattered she walked,
The next chapter of her life.

Irish workhouse to Australia, across the waters she came
To a new life where she knew life would never be the same...

May your days be many and your troubles be few
May all God's blessings descend upon you
May peace be within you may your heart be strong
May you find what you're seeking wherever you roam.

*And she'd hear her mother say, "Mary stay strong,"
Keep your eyes on the roads that lay ahead
But don't forget where you came from."*

*And she'd hear her mother say, "Mary stay strong,"
Keep your eyes on the roads that lay ahead
But don't forget where you came from."*

© Donna Marwick-O'Brien

MEMORIAL CONCEPT



Our concept for the Western Australia Irish Famine Memorial commemorates The Famine of 1845–1852, and the impact that this 'outpouring' of desperate people had upon Australia, although the experience in Western Australia was that of emigration rather than starvation.

The memorial concept takes the form of a Celtic double spiral motif, representing the winding and unwinding of birth and death, expressed as a spiritual 'walked labyrinth'. This draws the visitor inexorably on a journey of grief, remembrance and, ultimately, discovery into the heart of the design, while meditating on The Famine Prayer, inlaid into the paving.

This leads to the centrepiece bronze sculpture of the 'keening' Childless Mother, which is a personification of "*Uaigneas*", an eternal expression of loneliness in the Irish language, voicing the enormous sense of inconsolable loss and emptiness of parents left behind. The green granite base is encased in a Celtic knotwork band, symbolic of the intertwining of both cultures.

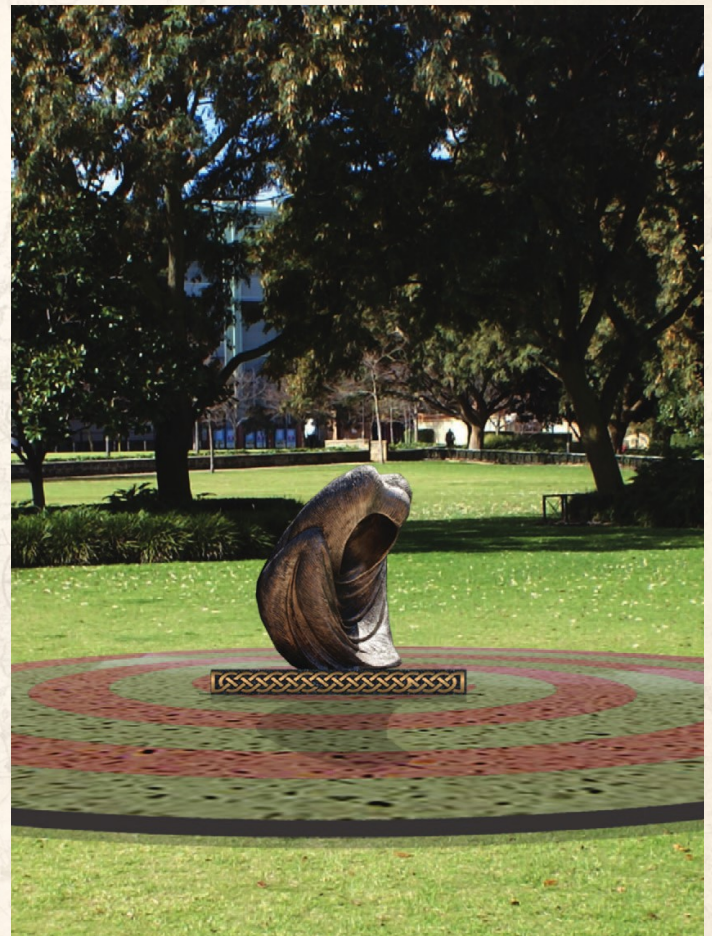
Joan Walsh-Smith and Charles Smith

September 2017

SMITH SCULPTORS



Charles Smith and Joan Walsh-Smith are award-winning sculptors originally from Ireland who specialise in large scale monuments and memorials, on an international scale. Their previous work in Australia includes: The National Memorial to the Australian Army, Canberra; The National Memorial to HMAS Sydney II, Geraldton; The Fenian Catalpa Memorial, Rockingham; numerous Anzac Memorials and, currently, the Australian Sailor Monument in Fremantle.



Artists' concept: *An Gorta Mor*, Memorial to the Great Irish Famine, 2017

The Irish Famine Memorial has been made possible thanks to the Western Australian Irish Famine Commemoration Committee, the City of Subiaco, Smith Sculptors and contributions from many donors.

Their generous contribution is recognised with thanks and appreciation.

WAIFC Committee:

Fred Rea, *Chairman* | Peter McKenna, *Project Manager* | Sheila Murphy, *Publicity*
Sean McDonagh, *Treasurer* | Allan Smith, *Project Consultant*
Jim Egan, *Secretary* | Vince Gallagher, *Fundraising*

Joan Walsh-Smith and Charles Smith, *Smith Sculptors*

Mark Price, *Wood & Grieve Engineers* | Denis Burke, *BC Formwork*
Frank Smyth | Nathan Colgan, *Colgan Industries*
Olan Healy, *McDonald Surveys* | Andy & Sally-Ann McDonald, *McDonald Surveys*
John Whelahan, *Complete Cabling* | Sean King, *PC Walls*
Mark Keogh, *UON* | Australian-Irish Heritage Association
Gay Collins, *Pipeline Technics* | Carl & Marie Holmes, *Masonmill*
Henry McLaughlin | Mike Frawley | Dan White

Irish Families in Perth | Irish Golf Club of WA | The Irish Club of WA
GAAWA | Claddagh Association of WA | Ireland-WA Forum
The Irish Theatre Players | Perth Glasgow Celtic Supporters' Club | Flightworld
Paul McLoughlin, *Northside Meats* | Paddy Monaghan

