

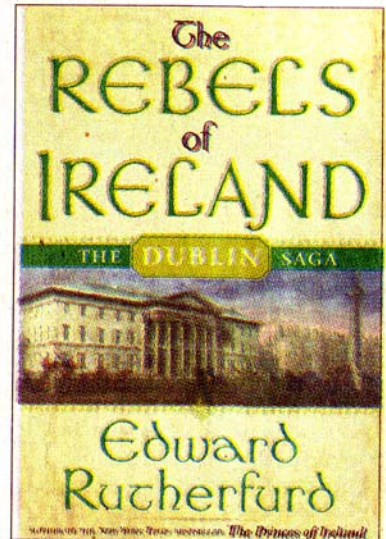


Peter Cihelka/News & Messenger

Jacqueline Fitzpatrick's series of watercolors called "Ireland: A Journey Into the Past" is on display at the ArtBeat Gallery in Manassas. Her landscape "Ring of Kerry Countryside, Ireland" is part of the show.

Escape to Ireland

Montclair artist gets lost in creating landscapes of the Emerald Island



Doubleday

"The Rebels of Ireland" is Edward Rutherford's 800-page conclusion to "The Dublin Saga."

Celebrate St. Patty's in silence

By **RON BERTHEL**
Associated Press

There are many ways to celebrate St. Patrick's Day — watching a parade, wearing green, feasting on a traditional Irish meal and hoisting a pint or three at a local pub.

But some folks might find it satisfying also to quietly celebrate with a book about their Irish heritage.

And when Irish eyes are reading, their focus might be on one of these recent volumes — fiction, history or biography — about the land of St. Patrick and its people.

Readers can watch history unfold, from the first century to the 20th, in the two-volume "An Irish History of Civi-

Montclair artist gets lost in creating landscapes of the Emerald Island

By ELISA A. GLUSHEFSKI
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In September 2000 Jacqueline Fitzpatrick and her husband, Vinnie, voyaged to Ireland in hopes of tracing his ancestral roots — ultimately to no avail.

What Fitzpatrick was able to take from her second trip to the Emerald Island, though, were life-long impressions of moss-covered tundra and imposing cliffs that she revisited in December 2005 by reading journal entries and fingering through hundreds of pictures.

From those pictures the 70-year-old Montclair resident painted a set of watercolors that will be exhibited through April 30 at ArtBeat Gallery in Old Town Manassas.

To allow people to understand what excited her senses during her travels, Fitzpatrick said, buyers would receive a novella of journal entries she made throughout her weeklong trip — starting at her arrival to BWI Airport to her bidding “Erin go Bragh” to the Emerald Island.

The price for the six original paintings runs from \$250 to \$450 and prints are \$50.

In her landscapes, she gives scale by including herding sheep

WHEN YOU GO

• “Ireland: A Journey Into the Past,” paintings by Jacqueline Fitzpatrick
 • Through April 30; artist’s reception will be held from 2 to 6 p.m. Saturday
 • ArtBeat Gallery, 9407 Main St. in Manassas
 • (703) 365-8558 or www.artbeatgallery.org

in a valley or sightseers ascending a planking to Blarney Castle’s entrance.

Like with many of her paintings — most of which fill a closet in a spare bedroom — Fitzpatrick works mostly from pictures. That’s not to say, however, that she is restricted to what is in those pictures, she said. Usually they’re only meant to function as a frame of reference.

“Once you start, you start seeing things in a different way,” she said, “and find truly remarkable things in ordinary things.”

Fitzpatrick worked very structurally during the two months, she

said, because she had to complete it before her trip to Florida in February and before her March turn as featured artist at the gallery.

Fitzpatrick described herself as having a Type-A personality, whose life is almost entirely defined by structure.

“I can’t work in the midst of chaos,” she said.

So before sitting down to a blank canvas Fitzpatrick would first pick up the groceries, clean the house and make sure everything was in order. Then, she said, she could comfortably devote an entire day to strictly painting.

“It [painting] is not something you stay with,” she said. “When I do sit down and paint I lose complete track of time and soon enough a whole day has passed. But the best part about it is getting lost in it.”

Retiring in 1995 from 30 years of administrative work, Fitzpatrick took up painting as a hobby and began attending workshops to find the best method for her medium.

“I found that I still had some energy left in me,” she said after dropping a teacup from her mouth. Acrylics weren’t Fitzpatrick’s

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Courtesy of Jacqueline Fitzpatrick

“Cliffs of Moher” is one of several works featured in Jacqueline Fitzpatrick’s “Ireland: A Journey Into the Past” at the ArtBeat Gallery in Manassas.



Courtesy of Jacqueline Fitzpatrick

The artist revisited her September 2000 trip to Ireland by looking through hundreds of photographs last December. This watercolor is titled “Connemara.”

See BOOKS, Page D5

And when Irish eyes are reading, their focus might be on one of these recent volumes — fiction, history or biography — about the land of St. Patrick and its people.

Readers can watch history unfold, from the first century to the 20th, in the two-volume “An Irish History of Civilization” (McGill-Queen’s University Press).

Don Akenson sprinkles fiction into a series of hundreds of anecdotal accounts of history from an Irishman’s point of view. His vignettes take readers hopping around the world, introducing them to a host of famous figures, including St. Patrick, Walter Raleigh, James Joyce, Michael Collins and William Bonney (aka “Billy the Kid”).

Also historical fiction, “The Rebels of Ireland” (Doubleday) is Edward Rutherford’s 800-page conclusion to “The Dublin Saga.”

The previous volume, “The Princes of Ireland,” ended with the disastrous 1534 Irish revolt and the disappearance of the sacred Staff of St. Patrick. “Rebels” picks up as England subjugates the Irish and seizes their property, and it continues through the 400-year saga of Ireland’s path to independence in the 20th century.

The narrative is advanced through the lives of several fictional Dublin families, Catholic and Protestant, from various economic and social levels, modeled on actual people.

♦♦♦

A nonfiction volume of history that is itself historic is “Ireland” (Belknap-Harvard University Press), Gustave de Beaumont’s long-forgotten history of the Irish and portrait of 1830s Irish society.

Beaumont traveled throughout Ireland in the mid-1830s, where he observed the harsh treatment Irish Catholics were suffering at the hands of the British, and wonders how a government as enlightened as England’s could tolerate such abuses.

This edition has W.C. Taylor’s English translation from the French, which was published as two volumes in London in 1839. It includes a new introduction by Tom Garvin and Andreas Hess, both of University College, Dublin. It also contains the first English translation of a preface Beaumont wrote for the 1863 edition in which he refers to the failure of Ireland’s potato crop in the 1840s and the ensuing Great Hunger. That famine sent millions of Irish to

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tomorrow: Artisans repair Katrina-broken saints

ARTIST

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bag, so she went the way of watercolor.

After having a rotator cuff surgery, Fitzpatrick was unable to indulge in one of her other pleasures, tennis, so she in-

creasingly devoted more time and energy to painting.

It’s no surprise that she was drawn to painting, though. As a teenager in Norfolk, she wanted to go to college for architecture or art.

Her dream is to own an oceanfront house in Virginia Beach that she could use as a studio. But for now the closest

thing she has is her spare bedroom workspace which has a window that lets in the eastern sunlight.

Until that happens — if it does, she said — her space at the gallery, where she volunteers, will suffice.

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