

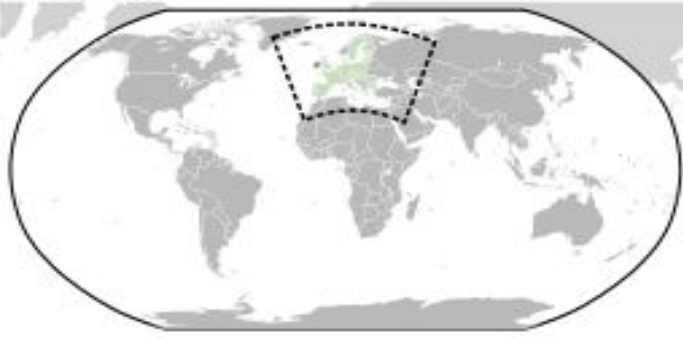
The Emerald Isle



Etymology

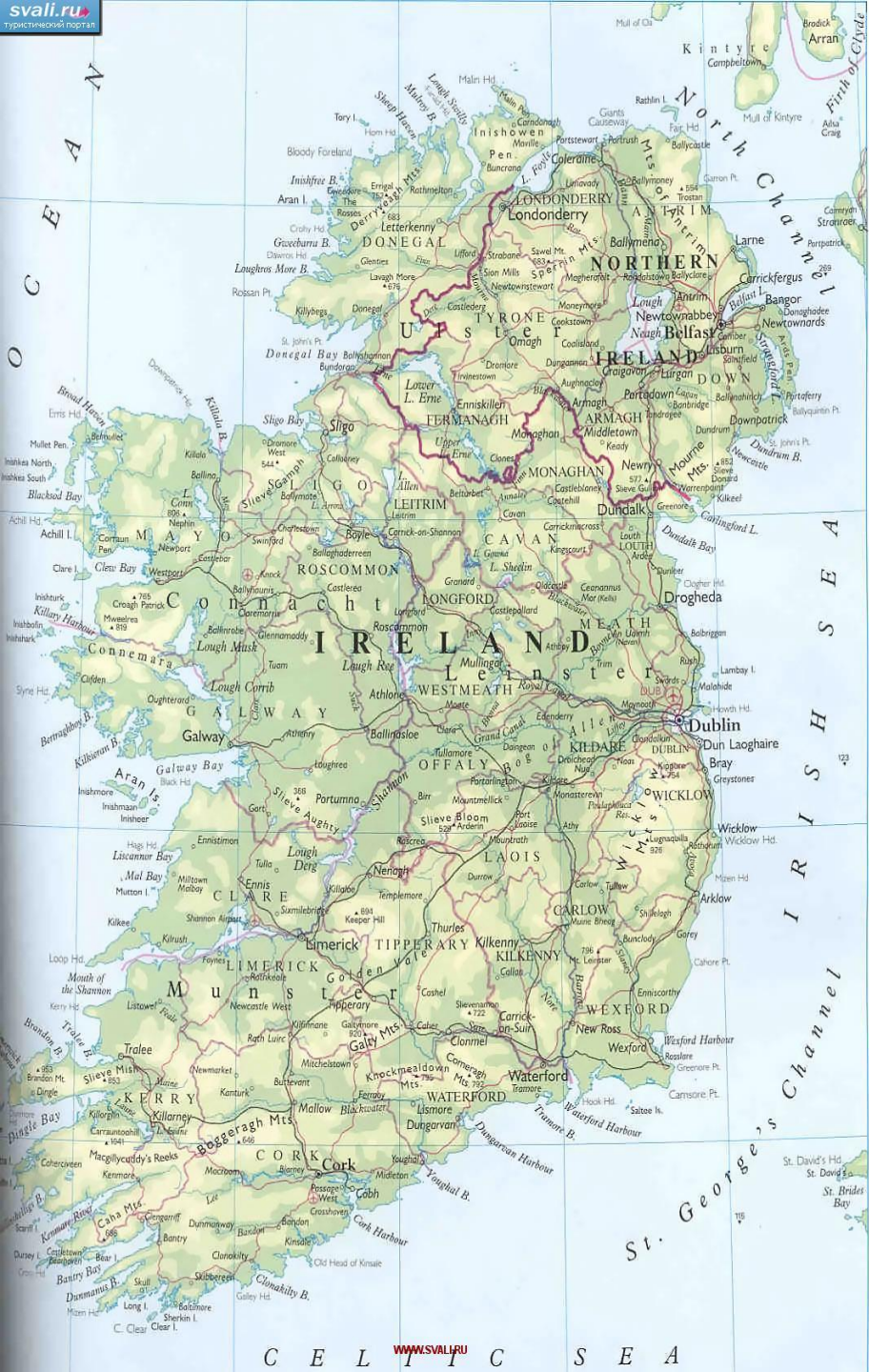
The name of the country is officially Ireland for documents written in English and Éire for documents written in Irish. The modern Irish *Éire* evolved from the Old Irish word *Ériu*, which was the name of a Gaelic goddess. *Ériu* is the matron goddess of Ireland, a goddess of the land.





Ireland is the third largest island in Europe. **The Republic of Ireland** occupies five-sixths of the island of Ireland and the remainder constitutes Northern Ireland, which is a part of the United Kingdom.

Geographical position



It is washed by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Irish Sea to the east, St George's Channel to the southeast, and the Celtic Sea to the south. It is separated from Great Britain by the Irish Sea and the North Channel.

Flag

The **national flag of Ireland** is a vertical tricolour of green, white, and orange. The green part represents the majority Catholic residents of the island, the orange side symbolises the minority Protestant and the white middle part peace and harmony between them.



Coat of arms

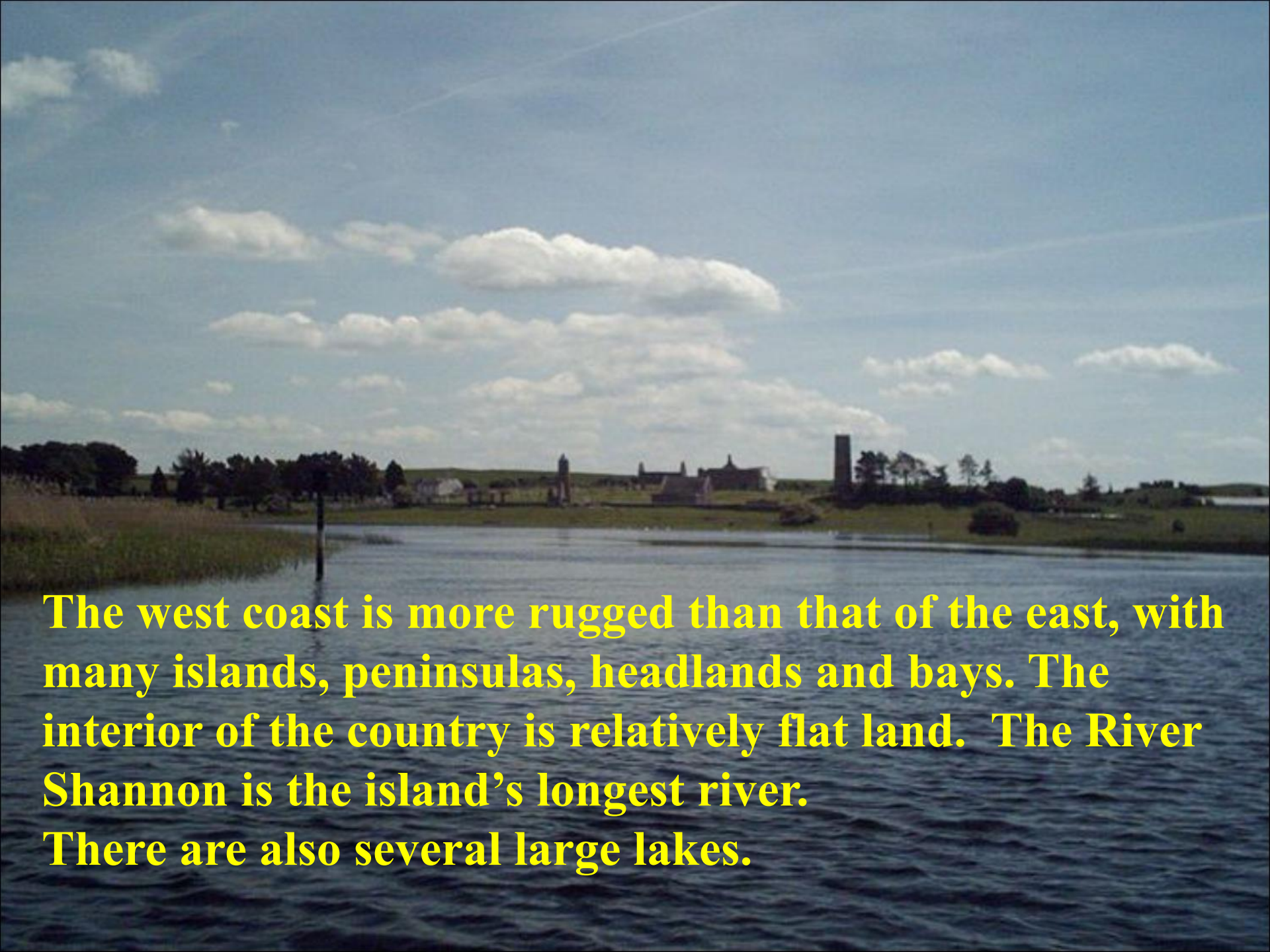
The Coat of arms of Ireland is a gold harp with silver strings on a St. Patrick's blue background. The harp, and specifically the Cláirseach (or Gaelic harp), has long been Ireland's heraldic emblem. It appears on the coat of arms that was officially registered as the arms of the state of Ireland on 9 November 1945.



Landscapes

The west coast of Ireland mostly consists of cliffs, hills and low mountains. The highest point in the country is Carrauntoohil at 1,038 m or 3,406 ft, which is situated in the Macgillycuddy's Reeks mountain range.





The west coast is more rugged than that of the east, with many islands, peninsulas, headlands and bays. The interior of the country is relatively flat land. The River Shannon is the island's longest river. There are also several large lakes.

Animals



hedgehog



hare



badger

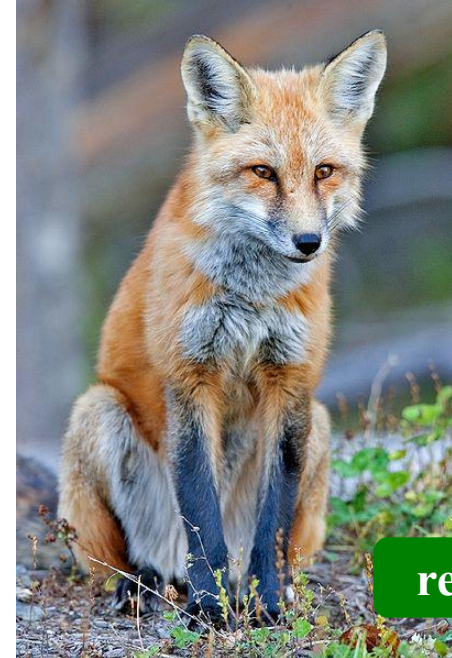


red deer

There are 55 mammal species in Ireland. Some species, such as the red fox, hedgehog and badger, are very common, whereas others, like the Irish hare, red deer and pine marten are less so. There are about 400 species of birds in Ireland.



pine marten



red fox

Climate



Ireland has a mild, temperate and damp climate. The country's climate is the result of the Gulf Stream influence. The weather in the east, where Dublin is located, is a bit cooler. It is the driest part of the country.

History



The first known settlement in Ireland began around 8000 BC.

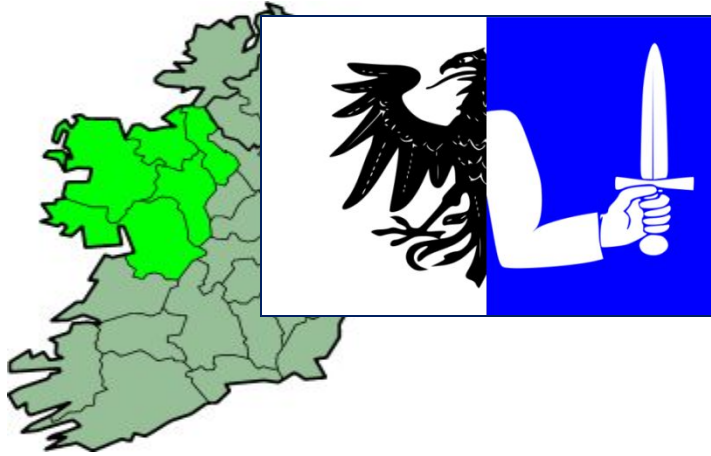
In the early to mid-5th century AD Saint Patrick and other Christian missionaries came to Ireland and Christianity began to spread.

From around AD 800 Viking invasion began. Vikings founded Dublin. In the end of XII century the part of Ireland was occupied by England. There were the epidemic of black death in 1348.

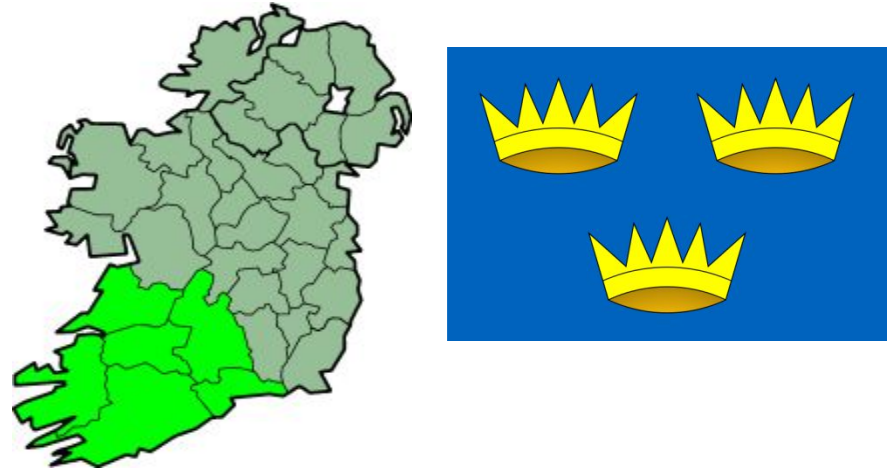
From the 1 January 1801 until 6 December 1922, Ireland had been part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Ireland became an independent state in 1949.



Cúige Chonnacht



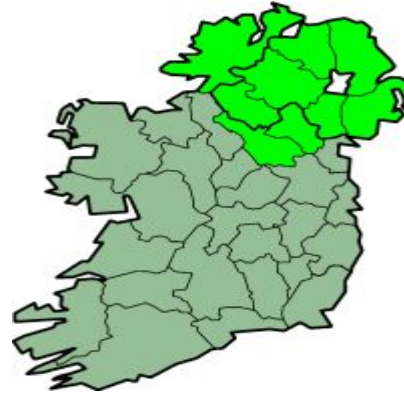
Cúige Mumhan



Cúige Laighean



Cúige Uladh



Ireland is subdivided into four provinces: Connacht (west), Leinster (east), Munster (south), and Ulster (north). Ireland has thirty-two traditional counties. Twenty-six of the counties are in the Republic of Ireland and six counties are in Northern Ireland. The six counties that constitute Northern Ireland are all in the province of Ulster.



Government

Ireland is a parliamentary democracy and a republic. The head of Parliament is the Prime Minister. The President is elected by the population for a seven-year term.



President Mary McAleese

Mary McAleese





ST. PATRICK'S DAY

(MARCH 17 th)





st. patrick's day celebration



It's the main national Irish holiday. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. He used the shamrock, a three-leaved plant, to explain the Holy Trinity to the pagan Irish.



Population

The population of Ireland is about 4,459,300 people.

The official languages are English and Irish. Irish is the "national language" according to the Constitution, but English is the dominant language.



Culture

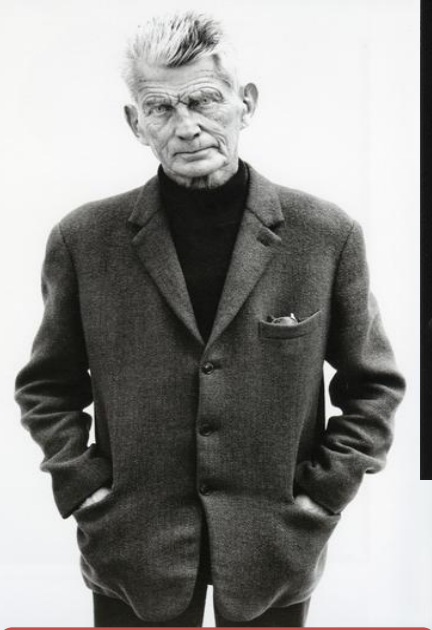
Ireland is regarded as one of the Celtic nations of Europe. It is known for its traditional music and song, theatre, literature and architecture.

Riverdance is the most famous Irish theatrical show consisting of traditional Irish stepdancing. It became famous after the Eurovision Song Contest in 1994 which was held in Dublin.

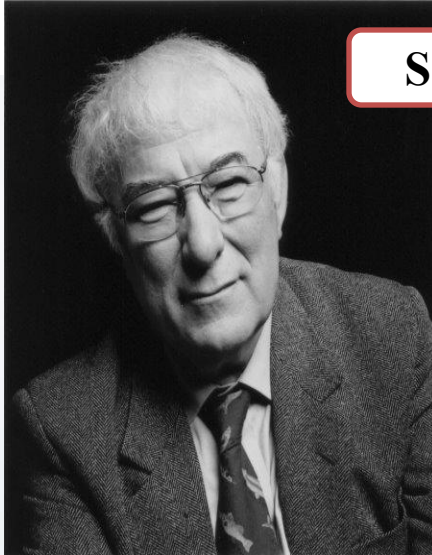


Ireland has made a large contribution to world literature in all its branches, particularly in the English language. In the 20th century, Ireland produced four winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature: George Bernard Shaw, William Butler Yeats, Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney.

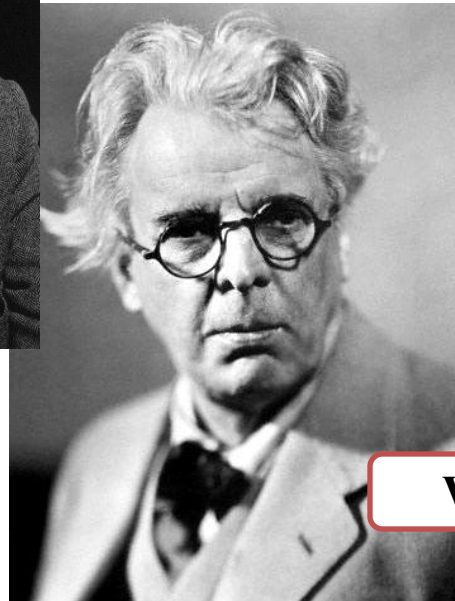
Literature



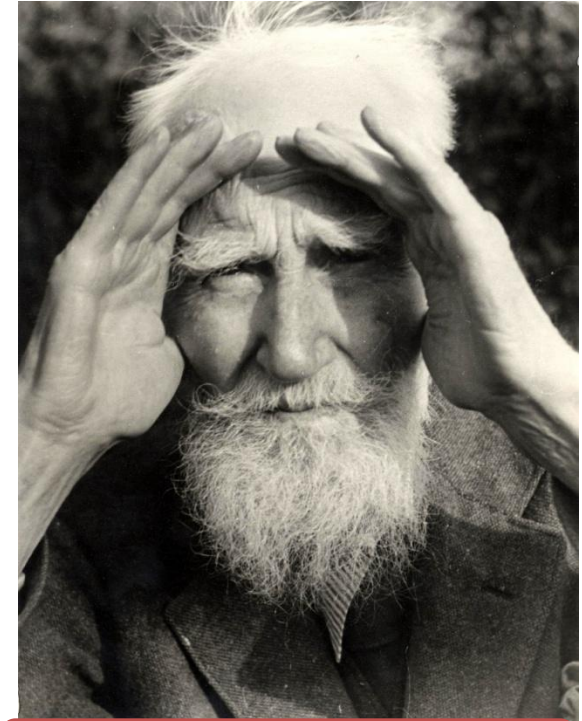
Samuel Beckett



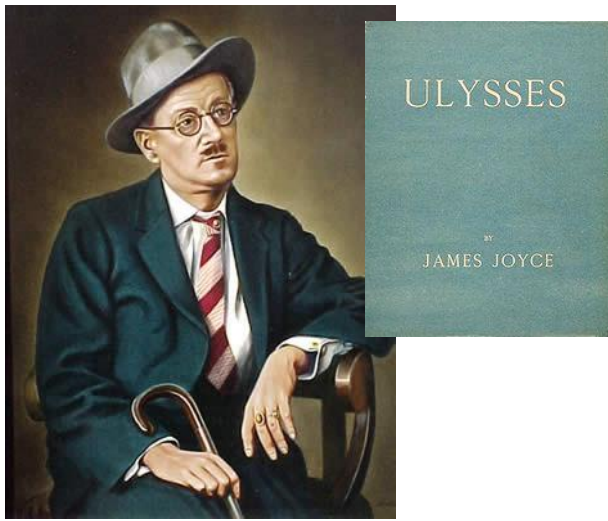
Seamus Heaney



William Butler Yeats



George Bernard Shaw



Although not a Nobel Prize winner, James Joyce is one of the most significant writers of the 20th century. Joyce's 1922 novel *Ulysses* is considered one of the most important works of Modernist literature and his life is celebrated annually on 16 June in Dublin as "Bloomsday."



The day involves *Ulysses* readings and dramatisations, pub crawls and general merriment. Much of it hosted by the James Joyce Centre.



Economy



Agriculture is an important industry in Ireland. Nowadays the Irish economy focuses on high-tech industries and services.



In 2002 Ireland joined the euro currency, while Northern Ireland remained with the pound sterling. The government decided on a single national design for all Irish coin denominations, which show a Celtic harp, a traditional symbol of Ireland, decorated with the year of issue and the word *Éire*.



Dublin is the capital of Ireland and its largest city. It sits at the mouth of the River Liffey on Dublin Bay. Frequently visited sites in Dublin include Christ Church Cathedral, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Trinity College, and Abbey Theatre.



The largest cities are Cork, Limerick, Waterford.

Places of interest

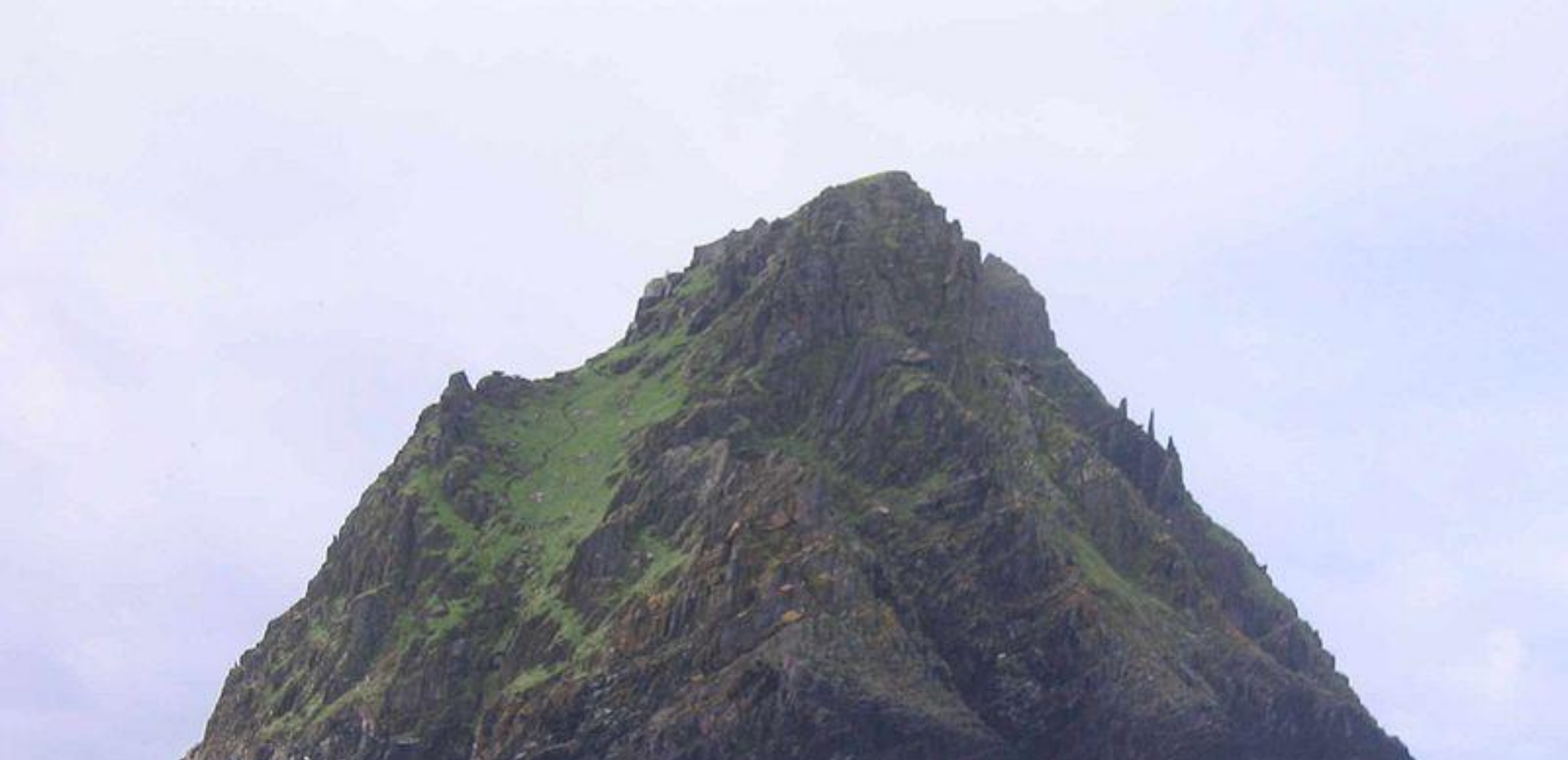


There are some World Heritage Sites in Ireland.



Bru na Boinne (Palace of the Boyne) is the largest and one of the most important prehistoric megalithic sites in Europe.

It is a complex of Neolithic chamber tombs, standing stones, henges and other prehistoric enclosures, some dating from as early as 35th century BC - 32nd century BC.



Skellig Michael (*Michael's rock*), also known as **Great Skellig**, is a steep rocky island in the Atlantic Ocean. It is the larger of the two Skellig Islands. From the 7th century, for 600 years the island was a centre of monastic life for Irish Christian monks. The Gaelic monastery situated almost at the summit is one of Europe's better known but least accessible monasteries.

Poulnabrone Dolmen is a portal tomb in the Burren, County Clare, Ireland, dating back to the Neolithic period, probably between 4200 BC to 2900 BC.



Drombeg stone circle is one of the most visited megalithic sites in Ireland.





The Castlestrange stone is a granite boulder decorated with flowing spirals, dating from the Iron Age period between 500 BC and 100 AD.

The **Turoe stone** is a granite stone decorated in a Celtic style located in the village of Bullaun, County Galway, Ireland. The stone is now positioned on the lawn in front of Turoe House, set in a concrete base and metal cattle grill.



Sport

Ireland's national sports are **Gaelic football** and hurling.

Gaelic Football is played by teams of 15 on a rectangular grass pitch with H-shaped goals at each end. The primary object is to score by kicking or striking the ball with the hand and getting it through the goals.



Hurling is an outdoor team sport of ancient Gaelic origin, and played with sticks called *hurleys* and a ball called a sliotar.

The game has prehistoric origins, has been played for at least 3,000 years, and is one of the world's fastest field team sports.



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The End

The project was done by Kseniya Vikhrova,
11 form school 347.
Saint-Petersburg, 2011.