

Beyond the Shamrock: An Irish Dozen

With Saint Patrick's Day approaching, we offer a generous collection of Irish-themed material; there's nonfiction history and historical fiction, contemporary fantasy and folkloric picture books, contemporary adventure and broad-ranging collections. Those looking for a way to take the holiday beyond the Lucky Charms leprechaun will find a hundred thousand welcomes here.

*Deborah Stevenson, Editor
March 2009*

THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The *Bulletin* Dozen is a monthly theme-based booklist available from the Bulletin's website. Since we're awfully fond of bakers here at the Bulletin, we thought we'd adopt their philosophy of generosity and throw in an extra one or two when we have them to offer — so don't expect an even dozen.

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An Irish Dozen

*A Bulletin Dozen
Booklist*

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Armstrong, Jennifer. The Dreams of Mairhe Mehan. Knopf, 1996. Gr. 7-10

In this poignant and compelling novel, young Irish immigrant Mairhe must contend with the divisions in Washington, D.C.'s Irish community in the face of the Civil War. (BCCB 11/96)

Bartoletti, Susan. Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine, 1845-1850. Houghton, 2001. Gr. 5-10

Bartoletti's thoughtful and cogent account of this tragic period capably makes the history accessible to young readers. (BCCB 10/01)

Bateman, Colin. Running with the Reservoir Pups. Delacorte, 2005. Gr. 6-9

Twelve-year-old Eddie, at loose ends since his family's move to Belfast, unwittingly gets involved with criminals in this fast and funny adventure. Followed by Bring Me the Head of Oliver Plunkett. (BCCB 1/05)

Brown, Don. Across a Dark and Wild Sea; written and illus. by Don Brown. Roaring Brook, 2002. Gr. 2-5

Columcille, more often known as Columba, may not have the press that Saint Patrick does, but Ireland's lesser-known saint receives an involving treatment in this picture-book biography. (BCCB 5/02)

Byrd, Robert, ad. Finn MacCoul and His Fearless Wife: A Giant of a Tale from Ireland; ad. and illus. by Robert Byrd. Dutton, 1999. 5-9 yrs

Byrd offers a lively retelling of the classic Irish tale of the giant Finn, who, aided by his wily wife, Oonagh, takes on the Scottish giant Cuchulain. (BCCB 3/99)

Conlon-McKenna, Marita. Under the Hawthorn Tree; illus. by Donald Teskey. Holiday House, 1990. Gr. 4-6

This dramatic historical novel about three children's journey to find family amid the nineteenth-century Irish famine remains a standout

story. Followed by Wildflower Girl and Fields of Home. (BCCB 12/90)

Dunlop, Eileen. Tales of Saint Patrick. Holiday House, 1996. Gr. 5-8

Seasoned storyteller Dunlop effectively retells the Saint Patrick legends, freshening her telling with modern dialogue and making the slaint's colorful life immediate and dramatic. (BCCB 5/96)

Giff, Patricia Reilly. Nory Ryan's Song. Delacorte, 2000. Gr. 6-10

Giff brings her polished and inviting style to this historical tale of a young girl who must draw on her strengths to survive as Ireland is gripped by the potato famine. Followed by Maggie's Door. (BCCB 10/00)

Green, Ellin, ad. Billy Beg and His Bull; illus. by Kimberly Bulcken Root. Holiday House, 1994. 5-8 yrs

This robust Irish hero tale about a king's son, his beloved, all-conquering pet bull, and his dramatic giant-fighting and princess-winning adventures makes for splendid picture book fare. (BCCB 4/94)

Heaney, Marie, ad. The Names Upon the Harp: Irish Myth and Legend; illus. by P. J. Lynch. Levine/Scholastic, 2000. Gr. 5-8

Irish studies specialist Heaney adapts eight Irish folktales for young readers in this elegant volume well bolstered with additional reading and source information. (BCCB 3/01)

Krull, Kathleen. A Pot o' Gold: A Treasury of Irish Stories, Poetry, Folklore, and (of Course) Blarney; illus. by David McPhail. Hyperion, 2004. Gr. 4-6

Carefully balanced (there are stories, poems, and recipes), well documented, and liberally illustrated, this anthology brings together literature, folklore, humor, and maybe a little bit of salivating. (BCCB 2/04)

Lyons, Mary E. Feed the Children First: Irish Memories of the Great Hunger. Atheneum, 2002. Gr. 4-8

Lyons draws on historical images and family accounts of descendants to create heart-wrenching, memoir-esque accounts of a country's impoverishment and privation. (BCCB 3/02)

McCully, Emily Arnold. The Pirate Queen; written and illus. by Emily Arnold McCully. Putnam, 1995. Gr. 3-5

McCully's dramatically illustrated account of Grania O'Malley, the famous Elizabethan-era Irish pirate, chronicles the pirate queen's legendary and tumultuous life. (BCCB 10/1995)

Melling, O. R. The Hunter's Moon. Amulet, 2005. Gr. 7-12

A pair of cousins' trip around Ireland turns from happy jaunt to fantastical adventure when one girl is abducted by the Faerie King and the other must quest across the island to try to save her. Followed by The Summer King. (BCCB 4/05)

San Souci, Robert, D., ad. Brave Margaret: An Irish Adventure; illus. by Sally Wern Comport. Simon, 1999. 6-10 yrs

In this rousing adventure tale, red-headed Margaret takes to the sea with handsome stranger Simon, slays monsters and giants, and wins her man's hand. (BCCB 5/99)

Schmidt, Gary D. Anson's Way. Clarion, 1999. Gr. 6-9

In this dramatic novel of eighteenth-century Ireland, English soldier Anson is sent to Ireland in order to serve his king, but he finds there that maintaining the peace means different things to different men. (BCCB 5/99)

Thompson, Kate. The New Policeman. Greenwillow, 2007. Gr. 6-9

When time goes out of whack in Ireland, fifteen-year-old J.J. determines to fix it, which leads him into the strange and fantastical land of the Tir na n'Og. Followed by The Last of the High Kings. (BCCB 7/08)

