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Course

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Saving Corofin Castle



By Debi Hall

Abstract

I began the journey to Corofin Castle by exploring images. Corofin caught my eye because it seemed so neglected and lost in its little world. My topic evolved into a persuasive essay that promotes the efforts of Corofin owner, Paul Roberts to restore the castle. The format of my essay is a fictional Irish Festival event where information is presented to interested persons who might promote this cause. I researched encyclopedic references that explain the philosophy of architecture, and invited philosopher Saul Fisher to attend, along with promoters U2, architect José Manuel López Osorio, and the emotional appeal of William Butler Yeats. I refer to articles, Youtube interviews with Osorio, and scholarly documents for my persuasion. The results of this venture surpass my expectations. I learned that compassionate people can restore even the most humble structures for no reason other than to provide safe haven for suffering patients who need a place to die in peace. This profound awakening has inspired me to support Roberts' mission.

Saving Corofin Castle



I fell in love with Irish castles years ago. When I found Corofin Castle, Galway County Ireland, and saw that it was being restored by Paul Roberts to create a safe haven for glioblastoma patients and their families, I knew I wanted to create an event that would introduce key supporters to the project. I decide to host an Irish County fair, complete

with jousting contests, food, fun, music and laughter are the backdrop for my fund-raising efforts. The Paul Roberts project to restore Corofin Castle as a place of safe haven for glioblastoma patients needs support, and I am passionate about a fund raising project that will

raise awareness to

money to support

about the need for

families. I have

band U2 to

historically

Manuel López



the Irish community, raise

the project and educate guests

a safe haven for affected

invited the Irish legendary

perform at the festival,

relevant Spanish architect José

Osorio , Architecture

Philosopher Saul Fisher, and joining us in his glory, 19th century Irish Poet and restoration advocate William Butler Yeats.

Guests from neighboring villages, dignitaries, military leaders, philanthropists and my esteemed panel of experts arrive In horse drawn buggies. Oh, what a sight to behold. The sound of an enormous horn echoes through the meadowland as our announcer, in full Irish costume, plays the dord, I can't believe the day has finally arrived. I am excited beyond words – but I look fabulous. I am wearing a traditional Irish party dress with ribbons. I greet the guests and invite them to enjoy a glass of Bemish, a jigger of Tullamore Dew, ice cold Orchard Thieves Cider, or non alcoholic Shamrock Slush from the cart, brought in by my volunteers. Let the festivities begin!

The day begins with entertainment for the whole family. After a jousting contest, the children of Galway County and those visiting



from far away are escorted by volunteers to the activity center where they will have lemonade and enjoyed face painting, maypole decorating and rounds of Duck Duck Goose and What time is it Mr. Wolf. Meanwhile, all adults collect in the large metal framed presentation tent, complete with floral decorated tables, chairs and, a stage with podium and large projection screen.

Trays of Irish hors d'oeuvres such as Corned Beef and Cabbage Rolls, and Cheesy



Reuben Appetizers are offered to the crowd as they mingle and then take their seats inside the presentation tent. Drinks are refreshed, and I take the stage to introduce two of the special guests who support my cause. I thank everyone for coming and restate the cause. “Welcome

everyone,” I smile, and thank you for attending our Corofin Castle Restoration fund raiser. “As you all know, Paul Roberts has taken on a mammoth task. Paul has already raised and contributed over \$200,000 dollars, but the project needs more. The estimated cost for the restoration of this beautiful castle is \$500,000” (irishcentral.com). “I believe in this cause, because Paul hopes to create a safe haven at Corofin for glioblastoma patients and their families. “I would like to introduce you to our esteemed guests who, I hope, will support this project.”

In just a few hours, we will all come together and enjoy the music of legendary band U2. “I’d like you all to greet the band and hear a



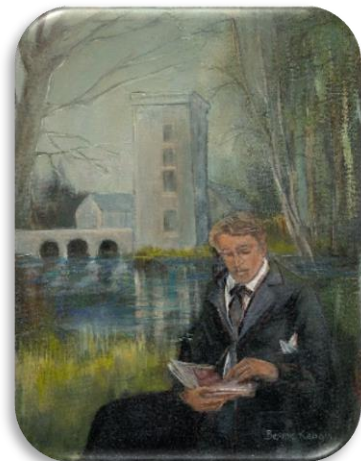
few words from Bono.” The crowd cheers as the band takes the stage. Bono holds the microphone and says, “I’ve won many awards and been knighted by Elizabeth II for my humanitarian efforts (today.com). The band and I have met and decided to offer a third of the



money needed to support this cause. We hope you will enjoy the show tonight and join with us. And so it will be that you too can offer sanctuary and relief to glioblastoma patients and their families” (quotes.thefamouspeople.com). I almost cry when I hear Bono say those words. I didn’t know that the band had already decided to support the cause.

I invite William Butler Yeats to the stage. As he steps onto the platform, his eyes tear up when he sees, projected onto the screen, Bernie Keogh’s depiction of Yeats at his renovated castle, Thoor Ballylee. “This, my friends, is the world of hope,” Yeats proclaims, fighting back the tears. I bought this castle for my beloved wife George.” He goes on to explain that his love for Ireland and the worthy cause of Paul Roberts have inspired him to write another set of poems and donate the money to Corofin Castle. I am thrilled that two of my invited guests are already dedicated to the fund raiser and lend their support. I worry about how my final two guests will respond to this effort.

I need time to prepare the slide presentation for the plans to restore Corofin, so I send the adults on a walking tour of the property, conducted by Paul’s Heritage Park Board of Directors. I prepare the projector, while volunteers arrange trays of assorted Irish cheese and water crackers and appetizers.

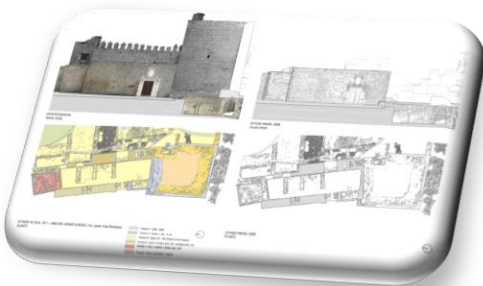


Cold and warm beverages are offered as the guests return to the presentation tent for the introduction of our final two special guests, who are skeptical about the project.

I first introduce esteemed philosopher Saul Fisher, creator of the Philosophy of Architecture. Saul is polite but makes it clear that the condition of Corofin concerns him.



He has kind eyes as he presents his concerns. Corofin was built in 1451 and is in shambles. “My



problems with this project are twofold,” Saul explains. “First, the possible use of the castle is in question as functionalist architectural doctrine places function or utility at the heart of the architectural enterprise. Secondly, the question of aesthetics come

into play. The condition of Corofin further questions the relative roles in appreciation of individual experience of architecture, as against the social or the environmental” (Standford).

After Dr. Fisher finishes, I realize that I will need to convince him that Corofin Castle is a



worthy project because of its aesthetic and practical value.

Finally, I introduce the most challenging member of the guest panel, esteemed restoration master architect José Manuel López Osorio. The architect speaks Spanish, so I have a screen translation on the projector as he speaks. I introduce him and show a few images of the incredible work of his team. One his most famous projects was Castillo de Baena. The

audience gasps when they see the amazing work Osorio restored. He ends the presentation by

explaining to the guests that he would be happy to work on the project to restore Corofin, but the



cost will be in the area of \$1 million. My heart stops. How will I

be able to convince all these people to increase their donations?

First, during the soup and salad course, I must explain the functional relevance of the project as a safe-haven for glioblastoma patients.

The guests take a break to walk around the grounds, join with their children, drink cool beverages and mingle with the experts I have invited. An Irish Riverdance company performs a charming dance on the stage area, and the families enjoy the music. The children are encouraged to try clogging. After a short time, the children sit with the dancers and visit, enjoying fruit and vegetables while the adults return to the presentation tent.

As I return to the tent, I see children gleefully dancing and frolicking around the stage area, chaperoned by event volunteers. When the adults return to the tent, they find that the tent has been transformed into an elegant dining hall with white linen table cloths, candelabras, Irish flowers and ivy

tables with charming centerpieces. While Grammy's Irish soda pub salad, I tell them for housing patients.



framing the floral the adults dine on bread and Irish about the plans glioblastoma

I begin by projecting the image of Paul Roberts on the screen. I remind the guests that glioblastoma is a discouraging disease. Glioblastoma is an aggressive type of cancer that can occur in the brain or spinal cord. Glioblastoma forms from cells called astrocytes that support nerve cells. Glioblastoma can occur at any age, but tends to occur more often in older adults. It can cause worsening headaches, nausea, vomiting and seizures (Mayoclinic). With standard treatment, the life expectancy is 11-15 months. Paul Roberts bought this land and hopes to restore the castle to help the stressed families of these brain cancer patients.



Once the castle is preserved and made habitable, Paul hopes that families can travel there to de-stress and maybe even visit the nearby River Clare for some trout or salmon fishing.



"They could catch their own dinner," Roberts said, chuckling (Houston.chronicle). Saul Fisher, our esteemed philosopher, asks "Why Corofin though? Wouldn't these patients be better served in

sanitariums?" I think about Saul's question when Yeats adds a question of his own? "Tis better methinks to place the patients in structures of modern machines and treatments, lest he be, as I wrote in my infamous poem *A Man Young And Old: I. First Love*

*Maundering here, and maundering there,
Emptier of thought
Than the heavenly circuit of its stars
When the moon sails out."*

I pause for a moment and then speak carefully. In August of 2018, American patriot John McCain ceased all treatment for his brain cancer. After his landmark Senate vote, months of

intense therapy and surgery, he was tired. Knowing that the end was near, wouldn't it have been



wonderful if McCain could have taken his entire family to a quiet and lovely Irish castle to relax and smell the fresh air? Paul Foster's doctor wanted more for his patient than relentless machines and family stress. "I encourage him to [restore the castle]. It's his passion," Zhu said. "I tell patients, 'Don't just stay home and do nothing. That's not life' "(Houston.chronicle). I pause for a long time and let the guests look at the heroic image of John McCain projected onto the screen.

I break the silence by inviting the children, who have been waiting outside the tent with the dance troupe to join the party for the main course. They enter in great fanfare with Irish music playing. They now wear hair ribbons for the girls and hats for the boys and they bring smiles to faces as they dance through the presentation tent.

A festive mood shines on the faces of the guests as they watch their children perform a clogging routine on the presentation stage. One of the children leads the guests in prayer as dinner is served. Volunteers bring baskets of assorted breads such as Irish Brown Bread and Soup Tureens filled with delicious Irish Stew. While the heads of the tables ladle soup into the individual hand-crafted wooden bowls, I introduce Saul Fisher to discuss what Corofin County Restoration might mean to the Galway County community.



Saul explains the relevance of the preservation of this castle. “One interpretation of this last variant theory says that ...the mark of particular groups’ expressive thinking, must [include] an aspect of such thinking special to... the group wedded to the particular human spirit”

(www.academia.edu). Yeats

impulsively interrupts Saul and presents himself to the guests, the community of Galway. “We needs must support this noble cause and restore this great fortress, for it is true my friends as I have written:

I am of Ireland,

And the Holy Land of Ireland,

And time runs on,' cried she.

'Come out of charity

And dance with me in Ireland.'

(I am of Ireland, Yeats)

Yeats's words lilt in the air as community members discuss the need for jobs, the opportunities for county residents to take part in this incredible

project. As dinner ends, the mood in the room is positive as Yeats, Fisher and Osorio circulate around the presentation tent. I show images of the people of Galway County on the projection



screen and include images taken earlier of the children dancing, putting ribbons in their hair, being fitted for manly hats and playing games. I announce that it is time to adjourn to the stage area where U2 is ready to perform. It is dusk, and the Irish sky presents a stunning frame for the band.

After the band finishes the final song, the crowd cheers. At this point, the festivities have been noticed by communities outside of Galway, and the crowd grows. I have planned for this. During the concert, the tent was removed and more chairs and tables have been added. In the



center of each table are short candles and bright green ivy surrounding chocolate Irish Cream Cakes, plastic plates, forks and napkins. Urns of Irish Coffee, Irish tea, and water are displayed on a beverage stand. The projection screen shows slides of renovated castles, happy people and tasteful images of folks in need. I invite all the guests to join us for

dessert and coffee. On the way to their tables, guests pick up beverages and their presentation packets, which include funding brochures, and donation envelopes. Computer kiosks are set up throughout the open presentation area to accept credit card donations. The guests take their seats



to hear final remarks.

With all assembled, I remind everyone that we have come together on this glorious Irish night in hopes of raising money to restore Corofin Castle. José Manuel López Osorio steps up to the podium and says that he has been so moved by the outpouring of support that he will include out-buildings in his plans to restore the castle and grounds. Bono takes the stage and asks everyone present to dig deep into their pockets and give generously of their money and their time

to support Corofin. “There are volunteers here with stamped envelopes, and pledge cards, credit card readers and the like.” Just then, Paul Roberts makes a surprise entrance and takes the microphone. “This is a beautiful place,” Roberts says. “It’s the families that get affected by the disease more than anything. How do they work through the wonderful world of medical retirement and insurance? How do they reset their lives to this circumstance?” The audience is in awe. In that silence, a volunteer hands Paul an envelope. He opens it and gasps. “I’ve just received the donations from this evening’s fund raiser. We have collected \$650,000. “As you would expect, Yeats takes the stage. Never one to miss the chance to have the final word, Yeats stands at center stage, no microphone needed, and ends the evening in his thick Irish brogue:

“I have spread my dreams under your feet.
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.”

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