

Over the Fence



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THE LONG ACRE TRUST

There's a new initiative just starting up in Central Hawke's Bay that is of considerable interest. Called the Long Acre Trust it is aimed at utilising roadsides around Hawke's Bay and New Zealand by planting trees for beauty, fruit, nuts and timber. Recently a group of interested folk met at Wallingford Station, and were hosted by John Ormond and his wife. Driving the trust is Tim Wynn-Harris (now returned to CHB after a long absence) and Andy Watts.



I think that it's an idea worth supporting, but add a caution that care must be taken to select and place trees with forethought and vision, and to give them the dignity of good after-planting management – something that all trees are entitled to. That is, not to impair visibility, position only small trees under power lines, give due arboriculture to larger trees to ensure a good millable stem at the end of a tree's life. There are plenty of fine examples of such pruned avenues in Europe, especially France, which, I am told are the result of Napoleon's initiative with the purpose of shading his legions while on the march.

No better example of thoughtless roadside plantings in – well in the entire world really – can be seen in eastern CHB (the old Patangata County) where the engineer in the mid 1960s got it into his head to have the overseer plant willy-nilly radiata pines along the roadside. They have long since become an eyesore and a menace. Hemmed in between the road and road fence the removal of these prodigious but worthless trees is a major cost, which is pretty much confined to the 'too hard' basket.

Good luck to Tim Wynn-Harris and his Trust.

POEM

Tim Wynn-Harris is a colourful character who has done many unusual things in his life, a London bobby and a CHB farmer being just two. He's written a book of his life and on Saturday I was browsing through it and found this poem by Robert Frost.

Wikipedia says this of Robert Lee Frost (March 26, 1874 – January 29, 1963) was an American poet. He is highly regarded for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech. His work frequently employed settings from rural life in New England in the early twentieth century, using them to examine complex social and philosophical themes. A popular and often-quoted poet, Frost was honored frequently during his lifetime, receiving four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry.

At the age of 86 Frost was chosen by John F Kennedy to recite one of his poems at Kennedy's inauguration as President in January 1961. Anyway, here's the poem...

*The forests are lovely
Dark and deep,
and I have many promises to
keep.
And many promises to keep
Before I go to sleep.
To keep
Before I go to sleep.*

POOR IRELAND

It was only a very few years ago when New Zealand's economic stewardship was being unfavourably compared to Ireland. The two countries have similar populations, so why were we lagging so far behind booming Ireland? Well, one answer was that we didn't have a sugar daddy in the form of the European Union to help out. How things have changed. We may not be at the top of the OECD, but we keep on keeping on, whereas today Ireland is a basket case. Below is a good article I have copied from the New York Times.



IRELAND'S PARADISE LOST

by Ross Douthat

For an American tourist weaned on Gaelic kitsch and screenings of "[The Quiet Man](#)," the landscape of contemporary Ireland comes as something of a shock. Drive from Dublin to the western coast and back, as I did two months ago, and you'll still find all the thatched-roof farmhouses, winding stone walls and placid sheep that the postcards would lead you to expect. But round every green hill, there's a swath of miniature McMansions. Past every tumble-down castle, a cascade of condominiums. In sleepy fishing villages that date to the days of Grace O'Malley, Ireland's Pirate Queen (she was the Sarah Palin of the 16th century), half the houses look the part — but the rest could have been thrown up by the Toll brothers.

It's as if there were only two eras in Irish history: the Middle Ages and the housing bubble.

This actually isn't a bad way of thinking about Ireland's 20th century. The island spent decade after decade isolated, premodern and rural — and then in just a few short years, boom, modernity! The Irish sometimes say that their 1960s didn't happen until the 1990s, when secularization and the sexual revolution finally began in earnest in what had been one of the most conservative and Catholic countries in the world. But Ireland caught up fast: the kind of social and economic change that took 50 years or more in many places was compressed into a single revolutionary burst.

There was a time, not so very long ago, when everyone wanted to take credit for this transformation. Free-market conservatives hailed Ireland's rapid growth as an example of the miracles that free trade, tax cuts and deregulation can accomplish. (In 1990, Ireland ranked near the bottom of European Union nations in G.D.P. per capita. In 2005, it ranked second.)

Progressives and secularists suggested that Ireland was thriving because it had finally escaped the Catholic Church's repressive grip, which kept horizons narrow and families large, and limited female economic opportunity. (An academic paper on this theme, "Contraception and the Celtic Tiger," earned the [Malcolm Gladwell treatment](#) in the pages of *The New Yorker*.) The European elite regarded Ireland as a case study in the benefits of E.U. integration, since the more tightly the Irish bound themselves to Continental institutions, the faster their gross domestic product rose.

Nobody tells those kinds of stories anymore. The Celtic housing bubble was more inflated than America's (a lot of those McMansions are half-finished and abandoned), the Celtic banking industry was more reckless in its bets, and Ireland's debts, private and public, make our budget woes look manageable by comparison. The Irish economy is on everybody's mind again these days, but that's because the government has just been forced to apply for a [bailout](#) from the E.U., lest Ireland become the green thread that unravels the European quilt.

If the bailout does its work and the Irish situation stabilizes, the world's attention will move on to the next E.U. country on the brink, whether it's Portugal, Spain or Greece (again). But when the story of the Great Recession is remembered, Ireland will offer the most potent cautionary tale. Nowhere did the imaginations of utopians run so rampant, and nowhere did they receive a more stinging rebuke.

To the utopians of capitalism, the Irish experience should be a reminder that the biggest booms can produce the biggest busts, and that debt and ruin always shadow prosperity and growth. To the utopians of secularism, the Irish experience should be a reminder that the waning of a powerful religious tradition can breed decadence as well as liberation. ("Ireland found riches a good substitute for its traditional culture," Christopher Caldwell [noted](#), but now "we may be about to discover what happens when a traditionally poor country returns to poverty without its culture.")

But it's the utopians of European integration who should learn the hardest lessons from the Irish story. The continent-wide ripples from Ireland's banking crisis have vindicated the Euroskeptics who argued that the E.U. was expanded too hastily, and that a single currency couldn't accommodate such a wide diversity of nations. And the Irish government's hat-in-hand pilgrimages to Brussels have vindicated every nationalist who feared that economic union would eventually mean political subjugation. The yoke of the European Union is lighter than the yoke of the British Empire, but Ireland has returned to a kind of vassal status all the same.

As for the Irish themselves, their idyllic initiation into global capitalism is over, and now they probably understand the nature of modernity a little better. At times, it can seem to deliver everything you ever wanted, and wealth beyond your dreams. But you always have to pay for it.

ENDS

The Sad Plight of Ireland's Abandoned Horses

By Marco Evers

During Ireland's boom years, thousands of people bought horses as a status symbol. But with the economy in crisis, many owners can't afford to keep them. Some 20,000 abandoned horses are roaming Ireland and could face starvation this winter.

Before the crisis, Conor Dowling's callouts were usually for stray cats and dogs. That was in the good old days, almost three years ago, when Ireland was the booming Celtic Tiger and richer than ever before in its history. When his phone rings now, Dowling, an inspector for the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, gets ready to attach the horse trailer to his car. "70 percent of calls are about horses," he says. A stallion roaming across a street or galloping alongside a motorway. Or an abandoned racehorse found grazing on someone's lawn.

"We have a huge problem," says Dowling. His stables are full of horses that no one wants and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find new owners for them. "Hardly anyone dares say it aloud but we are going to have to put down a lot of these animals."

Ireland, which escaped decades of chronic poverty to enjoy an unprecedented boom, has had to [apply for an EU bailout](#) to stave off financial collapse. The plight of Ireland's horses illustrates the changing fortunes of this nation on the brink. During the boom years, many Irish people indulged themselves. Entrepreneurs threw up new housing estates all over the island. Some took helicopters to fly from one building site to another. Then the crash came. More than 33,000 brand new homes and apartments stand empty in so-called "ghost estates" because no one can afford to buy them any more.

The damage done by real estate magnates and bankers threatens to push the country into the abyss. Crisis managers from the EU and the International Monetary Fund have flown to Dublin to take over the reins from Irish politicians. The nation faces rigorous austerity measures that will affect it for decades to come.

LETTER FROM SANTA

The following is a letter from Santa that appeared in the *CHB Mail*. Not sure about this.

Dear Husbands

It has come to my attention that many of you are under performing. As the symbol of Christmas is giving, and as a man myself, I feel that it is my responsibility to educate you as to how to make your lady feel special at Christmas time.

Firstly, you will have noticed that she has taken charge of the gift buying for the household. She puts your name on Christmas cards, gift tags and festive emails so you receive some of the credit.

She buys carefully selected gifts for your family and decides which charities to donate to.

Now you're probably thinking that when she says "Don't worry about getting anything for me" she means it. Well, she doesn't! She means "I usually get nothing and so I'll keep my expectations very low and any effort you make will be amazing".

If you're lucky enough to have a wife who leaves blunt and obvious wish lists laying around, impress her more by crossing off as many items as you can, plus one or two she doesn't expect.

Many wives will be more subtle. Your house is usually cleared of junk mail but suddenly one or two flyers are open at strategic places and left on the table when you're called for dinner. Look closely, there may even be circles around some items. Buy those, not the cheaper version.

And if you feel it safer to also get a return card, try to ensure it's not dated 24.12 – make it look like you planed things a little better.

Gift vouchers may impress some women but you should know by now whether you lady thinks they're an easy option or a license to go shopping.

Beware though, many wives tend to spend those on other family members, so a good option would be a hand-made card outlining what you think the vouchers would suit best "e.g. Darling wife, I've noticed you don't have many shoes that match that fantastic handbag your friend bought you for your birthday, so here's a voucher for you to spoil yourself". Notice and complement the shoes she buys.

Don't be scared to ask her friends for ideas or which particular shops your should shop at.

She may go to the farming supplies store every week for you but that doesn't mean it's her favourite shop.

You will also be letting her friends know what a caring thoughtful husband you are and this is a gift for your wife in itself (and woman do talk about these things).

Many shops will have extended open hours close to Christmas, so not having time is no excuse. Internet shopping is also an easy option if town is not your thing (but not used stuff from auction sites!)

Wrapping paper is also as important as the present. Newspaper is not wrapping paper. This is not the time to recycle the kids paintings. Use nice (Christmas!) wrapping and the effort of a ribbon will not be wasted. Don't forget a few XXXs on the gift card too.

Take my advice and you will find yourself having a very merry Christmas night, wink, wink!

Best of luck!

Santa

(Well, it's good to see Santa has seen the light and joined us sensitive new age guys, but let's not go over the top. There's a lot of Christmases to come (hopefully) and so why raise expectations? EM)

TREES OF HAWKE'S BAY

This time last year I promoted that great New Zealand Christmas tree, the pohutukawa. Forgive me, but I'm at it again, and may well be a year hence.

This is a fantastic tree, able to stand severe coastal conditions and the hardest of soils. It will grow in raw shingle, hang out of cliffs just above crashing waves and flourish in the boniest conditions, as that illustrated, growing in raw limestone under bluff hill just opposite the entrance to the Port of Napier.

It is something of a wonder that it has taken so long to cultivate seriously in our coastal margin, but full marks to the Napier City Council, especially, and to the Hastings District Council for planting this superb tree in greater numbers. But is it enough? No way! We must plant **far more** along our coast from Mahia to Wangahu.

Several years ago a partnership between DOC and Carter Holt Harvey (now sponsored by Meridian Energy) was formed to protect existing Pohutukawas and encourage new plantings – and it has been a great success. It is run by a trust called **Project Crimson**. Originally it concentrated on the species natural range, (north of Gisborne on this coast), but now it seems it is broadening its promotion. This piece below is copied from its website...



WESTSHORE SCHOOL WINS TREEMENDOUS MAKEOVER

Westshore School is one of four schools selected nationwide to receive a Treemendous School Makeover – a joint initiative by the Mazda Foundation and Project Crimson Trust.

The 114 pupil school will have the area around the school library and reading room enhanced with decking and native plants.

“We are thrilled to win a Treemendous Makeover,” says Susan Averill, teacher and leader of the project for Westshore School. “We are looking forward to involving the students in the creation of the new garden which we hope will reflect the unique coastal location of the school and celebrate the local character.”

The school has undertaken a number of other gardening initiatives around the grounds including planting of native trees outside the school hall with the support of other local not-for-profit environmental organisations.

“It is excellent to see schools such as Westshore School placing an emphasis on environmental education,” says Andrew Clearwater, Chairman for the Mazda Foundation. “Through the Treemendous programme we have created 11 outdoor classrooms and we’re looking forward to visiting Hawke’s Bay in 2011 to transform Westshore School’s grounds.”

The parents and school community are confident of a good turnout for the makeover when they join forces with the Treemendous Team in the New Year.

The three other schools selected for a Treemendous School Makeover this year are Spotswood Primary School (New Plymouth), Epuni School (Lower Hutt) and Rapaura School (Blenheim).

Bridget Abernethy, Executive Director for Project Crimson, said the calibre of the applicants was extremely high.

“It’s fantastic to see so many schools applying for the Treemendous programme. The judging process certainly wasn’t easy with the schools that applied putting so much creativity into their entries.”

WELL SAID (1)

"I want to help clean up the state that is so sorry today of journalism. And I have a communications degree."

Sarah Palin, Fox News interview with Sean Hannity, Nov. 22, 2010

WELL SAID (2)

"True courage is an attribute mustered by individuals during moments of crisis. A courageous act is made without weighing its popularity or unpopularity. Instead, it relies solely on the belief that the act must be done because it is the right thing to do. In all cases, courage is being brave enough to take a stand, regardless of the outcome, regardless of potential praise or criticism."

Senator Edmund G. Ross (1826-1907)

Edmund G Ross was rather an obscure historical figure, but came to some prominence when John F Kennedy chose him as one of his subjects in his 1956 book *Profiles in Courage*. This was about US senators who had taken a stand on an issue that cost them their political ambitions. Ross held the crucial vote that prevented President Andrew Johnson (Lincoln's vice president and successor upon his assassination) from being removed from office on an issue of policy rather than ethics (as Nixon would have been had he not pre-empted it with resignation. In casting his vote Ross knew his political life was over, as it was. He was burned in effigy and had his life threatened. But he is remembered in the 21st Century as a man of courage. Probably he never knew he would be subject to such posthumous honour. More's the pity.

LAST WORD

If you haven't already, don't forget to take a look at the new website: www.overthefence.org.nz. And if you think a friend would like to read Over the Fence, then feel free to forward it.

In the meantime, have a great Christmas and all the best for 2011.

Cheers, Ewan Mac