

PRESS RELEASE SOUTH SHORE IRISH HERITAGE TRAIL

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, CONTACT: Brenda O'Connor bcoc1124@aol.com, 781-545-4732 For more information visit <https://ssirishtrail.org/history/>)

The South Shore Irish Heritage Trail, a tourist route celebrating the history of Irish immigrants to south coastal Massachusetts, will be dedicated in Scituate Harbor on Sunday, May 22, 2022. The Trail will be made up of nine towns from Weymouth to Plymouth, an area with one of the highest concentrations of Irish Americans in the United States.

“It’s been a joy to work on,” says Brenda O’Connor, President of the Heritage Trail. “We have learned so much about the achievements of the Irish who came here with nothing and helped build the communities where they found refuge.” The mission of the Trail is to celebrate the achievements of Irish immigrants and to educate visitors as they take in sites with links to local Irish history. A corollary purpose is to help boost tourism in the nine communities that have helped fund the Trail. Another major contributor has been the Irish government through its Emigrant Support Fund.

From the Hull home of Irish rebel John Boyle O’Reilly, to the Scituate museum of the Irish mossaing industry, to the Kingston grave of an immigrant who died fighting for the Union in the U.S. Civil War, the South Shore has dozens of Irish-themed sites (33 sites to be exact!) that visitors can follow along the trail with the aid of a website and brochures designed for each member community.

“We’ve modeled the trail on Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way which has been a huge success,” says President O’Connor. Tourist trails have been proven to work as engines of economic development and we think this one will too.”

The Trail was developed by Scituate’s West Cork, Ireland Sister City Committee aided by local representatives from each of the nine-member communities. “The local historical people have been immense,” O’Connor says. “They’ve uncovered little known facts about these brave, early immigrants to our shores.” Kingston, for example, shipped tons of corn to Ireland during the Great Famine of the mid-18th century; Marshfield contributed too through the efforts of legendary town father, Daniel Webster; Hull’s Boyle O’Reilly staged a daring escape from a British prison in Australia, a story to be told at his summer home, now the Hull Public Library.

The Scituate launch ceremony will begin at the harbor bandstand at 1PM as bells peal in the nine-member communities. The bells at Scituate’s Lawson Tower, built by an Irish immigrant, Charles Logue, will ring out a selection of Irish tunes. The U.S. and Irish national anthems will be sung, one in English , the other in the Irish language. Speakers will include Ireland’s Consul General to Boston, Laoise Moore, regional political leaders, and former television anchor Peter Mehegan, a Scituate resident who helped work on development of the Trail.