

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

SM-10

"The Celtic Fringe"

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Prince Edward Island

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Dear Peter,

I did not expect to find the Holy Grail anywhere in Canada, least of all in the Maritime provinces. I did not even realize that I was looking for it, until a book title grabbed my eye and held it, transfixed, while a hand reached for a wallet. The book, *Holy Grail Across the Atlantic: The Secret History of Canadian Discovery and Exploration*, opened a drawbridge to the castle of my childhood memories. I am a sucker for the age of Chivalry, and the quest for hidden treasures. According to John Robert Colombo, who wrote the introduction, this is "the most infuriating book ever written about the history of Canada." The author, Michael Bradley, is one of those unconventional historians who overuse question marks and italicized phrases to add gravity to their theses, and whose tone is a bit too Geraldo for an academic audience. This version of the Grail legend puts a half-buried pile of rubble on an obscure hillside near the crest of a rural Nova Scotia highway on a cosmic-scale map of world history. The as yet unworked archaeological site is allegedly what remains of a secret redoubt built by a Scottish nobleman named Henry Sinclair to serve as a refuge for the living descendants of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Grail (which Bradley, on the basis of philological investigation, interprets to be a sacred bloodline, not a chalice) was brought to North America in the 14th century to keep it out of the paranoiac clutches of the Inquisition; it was secretly transported to a hideaway in Montreal in 1654 and then spirited back to Europe sometime around 1750. The Grail remains to this day a dynasty in waiting, and its agents are everywhere, doing mostly good things for godly reasons.

There's more--so much more, in fact, that the only way I can begin to do justice to this strange saga is to list some of the names of historical personages who figure prominently both in the book and in the last four thousand years of what we call Western civilization. The Benjamites, a lost tribe of Israel; Jesus; Mary Magdalene (the bride); Joseph of Arimathea,

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Since 1925 the Institute of Current World Affairs (the Crane-Rogers Foundation) has provided long-term fellowships to enable outstanding young adults to live outside the United States and write about international areas and issues. Endowed by the late Charles R. Crane, the Institute is also supported by contributions from like-minded individuals and foundations.

King Arthur, Clovis and the Merovingian line of Frankish Kings; Godfroi de Bouillon (King of Jerusalem in 1099); The Knights Templar (of course); Samuel de Champlain; the founders of Montreal; the framers of the U.S. Constitution who were also Masons; Napoleon's Josephine, Bernard Baruch, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt: all of these notables are implicated in this "secret" history, the full revelation of which would, in the author's view, "topple governments and transform society, both in the 'free world' and the Soviet bloc. Humanity would be rocked to its very foundations."

This bizarre romp through the centuries and across a broad swath of world geography--the Middle East, the French Pyrenees, Cadbury Hill (site of Camelot), the Orkney Islands, central Nova Scotia--would probably arouse outrage among adherents to Christian and particularly Catholic doctrine, and if not outrage, then dismissive mockery or even howls of laughter. Disciplined scholars might find Bradley's tome hard to take for different reasons, as it mixes freely personal and anecdotal information (his young son goes fishing) with meticulous documentation of cartographic and literary references, complete with multi-paragraph footnotes. My wife Alice, who has a rather keen eye for academic bullshit, drew my attention to this uncharacteristically informal note (No. 15, in Chapter 7), wherein Bradley reports that his interpretation of the meaning of the word "Sesambre" on Champlain's apparently encoded 1612 map of Nova Scotia is based on a scholarly rendering of the phrase "Open, Sesame". The footnote, in suitably fine print, reads as follows:

Unfortunately, I can cite no authority for this. In 1984 while writing the second draft of this book I contacted several people in the French departments of both York University and the University of Toronto who gave me this surprising information about Sesambre and the origin of the "cesser" words. Subsequently, all of my notes were lost in a 1986 relocation to Ottawa. Attempts to contact these professors before this book went to press in the summer of 1987 met with failure because the professors were on vacation.

Much of what Bradley believes about the Holy Grail is based on the research of three British historians, Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, whose best-selling *Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* was published in 1982. Their work was in turn based on earlier research undertaken by French scholars but never translated into English, so the basic theory is not new, nor is it any longer any kind of secret. This Canadian's contribution is thus supplemental to an established controversy--it adds a North American dimension to an otherwise Old World intrigue.

A book like Bradley's invites ridicule, and as much as I am tempted to poke fun at its implausibilities, it would be dishonest. What I find maddening about *Holy Grail Across the Atlantic* is not its multiple affronts to standard Christian belief (about which I am not qualified to comment upon), nor is it the author's inconsistent style, ranging from passionate to coldly professorial; no, what really burns my britches is the underlying theme of divine right kingship. I thought this idea had been put on a pike and then buried, like Louis XVI's head. The concept of an aristocracy based on bloodlines rather than merit or electoral achievement seems unredeemingly retrograde, but it persists.

The high-brow notion that one's lineage really counts for something blends all-too-smoothly with primitive, gut-level racism. The Nazis went perversely wild with Wagnerian treatments of the Grail Romances. It would not surprise me if a genealogy-based power complex were to be resurrected in the New Europe, and it scares me to think that it would inevitably wash ashore in the New World, as Bradley attests it already has done (albeit with such beneficent results as the New Deal.) The Holy Blood thesis could, after all, be true; Michael Bradley and his European precursors along with all those New Age scientists divining the secrets of the pharaohs and Mayan pyramids may someday be regarded as the collective human equivalent of the orbiting Hubble telescope, shifting the paradigms of history by daring to probe deep into our origins and come up with startlingly unorthodox results. Even if his theory turns out to be a crock, I do not believe Michael Bradley is not a crank. He writes:

I have come to believe sincerely that the facts of Western history (such as they are known) argue the presence of an almost-hidden group of people which has molded patterns of human development, which has managed humanity at crisis points. We have been guided in our progress by a secret organization.

There are other ways to look at and think about the Holy Grail. Noel Currer-Briggs, a respectable British genealogist and historian, scoffs at the idea of it being some sort of "sacred Y-chromosome." As the title of his book *The Shroud and The Grail* suggests, Currer-Briggs makes in his view a definitive connection between the legendary cup bearing Christ's blood with the Shroud of Turin. Leaning heavily like Bradley does on word origins and their variable translations, this author takes "grail" to have an altogether different meaning than it does in both the Holy Blood thesis and the more familiar fables about Perceval and Galahad. From Larousse's *Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval French*, Currer-Briggs determines the word *greil* (or *greille*) to connote a grid, grill, trellis or lattice. From this starting point, and tracing a detailed course through endlessly fruitful family trees as well as religious art from Byzantium to Bavaria, the author finally arrives at the surprising and spiritually undramatic conclusion that the Holy Grail was "a shallow box measuring about four by two feet and a few inches deep. It either had a solid top decorated with some kind of grid-like pattern, or the cover was itself a grid of gold or silver, through which the cloth [Christ's burial cloth, or what we call the Shroud] could be seen beneath." I have seen the Shroud of Turin, all folded-up in its casket. It was interesting, but I didn't get any strong vibes or anything.

My wife and I visited the area where Michael Bradley fixes the site of the Grail refuge (dubbed "The Cross" for dubious reasons), ostensibly to do a bit of research on the French-speaking Acadians who were expelled from this part of North America by the British in 1755. (See next newsletter.) I asked the attendant at the Grand Pre memorial park whether she had heard anything about "this crazy Holy Grail stuff" in recent months. She gave me a funny look, and then reported that only a week earlier, someone attempting to retrace Bradley's steps and match his map coordinates had stopped to ask directions. Ah Hah! (The Twilight Zone ditty went off in my head.) That evening, at the huge old mansion Blomidon Inn in nearby Wolfville, I flipped through a cut-and-pasted notebook guide to the surrounding area, and found there a reference to Shirley Maclaine's having said she sensed "a profound degree of mysticism in these parts."

It seems I have caught myself in the act of looking for something. It is not religion. It is not a conspiracy--not White Magic, not a dark secret, nothing too heavy. The Holy Grail I have been half-consciously searching for is simply this: a new order of business in the world, a community of right relationships--between individuals, members of families, citizens and government, nations and states, peoples and the plundered planet. Most everybody recognizes that ethnic and racial division lines are death to civility, and that an international system based too rigidly on sovereign states is a formula for war and environmental ruin. Those components of the old order are obsolete. Relationships have to be rearranged. People are sniffing around in ancient texts and their ancestral roots, looking for ways to preserve what is good about modern civilization.

Glimpses of the good and true society keep popping into view and then disappearing, like gopher heads. Forget that. Listen to this (from Charles Taylor, one of Canada's best-known living philosophers, an expert on Hegel and an unsuccessful New Democrat candidate for Parliament in the 1960s):

The right cultural mix has to include entrepreneurship, discipline, whatever makes people save a lot, and civility: the society has to get on with itself, there can't be galloping enmity and resentment. It has to be clever enough to reorient itself when it hits ecological limits.

This is the Canada I came looking for.

It was only shortly after reaching the end of the Bradley and Currer-Briggs books, the former, on reflection, a darkening alley, and the latter a dead end, that I discovered Prince Edward Island, and a new perspective, born of something called the Celtic consciousness.

The standard tourism promotion slogan characterizes P.E.I. as "One of the World's Great Islands." This year's theme is "We're Akin to Ireland" (another of the world's great islands, to be sure, and the only bona fide Celtic state in the 20th century, but more about that later.) Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province, is also called "The Garden of the Gulf" because the farmers and the red soil here produce a whopping number of good eatin' potatoes. Locals simply call the place "the Island." The Micmac Indian name for the place, "Abegweit", has been loosely translated as "cradled in the waves." The gently rolling landscape, neatly divided into cultivated farm plots by narrow roads and rows of trees, and ending abruptly when it meets the surrounding sea, reminds me of the spread on my parents' bed, which had machine-embroidered ridges and crenelations that formed a curvy grid just perfect for pushing along little Matchbox police cars and Land Rovers to the edge of the world that was the edge of the mattress on those days when my brothers and I made hay out of staying home with the measles.

Prince Edward Island is a comforting place to convalesce from the skin rashes and cold claustrophobia of what seemed an overextended Quebec winter. People are not in any big hurry to do anything here. In the spring months the farmers get ready to plant, the lobster fishermen get ready to set their traps, and schoolkids are readier-than-ever to toss their books and hit the

mall. Most of the approximately 700,000 tourists (nearly seven times the population!), who invade the Island each summer do not arrive until the first week in July, when P.E.I.'s one major cottage industry--cottages--springs out of hibernation. There are neat rows of bungalows bunched-up near the shoreline and scattered along the feeder routes from Charlottetown, the Island's only city. Lots of these cabins and cottages are getting fixed-up right now, nail by nail, shingle by shingle. There's no hurry. Slowly getting ready for the summer onslaught and the harvest seasons is a way of life.

Conservatism is another aspect of The Island Way of Life. (I didn't make up the capital letters--journalists use them all the time.) By conservatism I don't mean anything specifically political; the Liberals won 30 of 32 seats in the last provincial election. It has more to do with how things are done, how Island people regard people come from away ("Fromaways" for short), and how social trends take a long time crossing the Strait of Northumberland, which separates P.E.I. from the mainland. When was the last time you had to have a quarter just to get into a "public" Men's Room? I don't mean the individual toilet stalls, but the room itself. It's standard practice here. At the public library, the bathroom is free, but you have to ask a librarian for the key. Everybody does their laundry on Mondays. (Alice tells me this is not limited to Prince Edward Island, but it's conservative just the same.) There's no Sunday paper. I went asking for one at the Oyster Bridge General Store the first weekend we were here, and the lady at the cashier just grinned and said "You're not from around here, are you." She can probably spot a Fromaway a mile away. As for slow moving social currents, get a load of this headline: "Environmental Impact Study Stands in Way of Jobs."

Our landlord is one of those natural-born entrepreneurs who has always been self-confident because he's always been relatively tall and energetic. In 1971 (he must have been about 23) Cuyler Cotton got it into his head to organize a rock concert on the Island. He and a buddy did all the legwork and negotiating to arrange the event, dubbed "Junction '71". The concert never happened, and for his efforts to plug Prince Edward Island into the amplifiers of mainstream North American culture he was hounded by the RCMP and branded a radical rabble-rouser. Here's how Harry Bruce, a crusty Maritime journalist who has written probably the definitive portrait of this region (a book entitled *Down Home*) describes the Roman candle of conservatism touched-off by our friend Cuyler:

...older Islanders feared an invasion by raucous, hairy, dope-zonked and sexually abandoned freaks. This would never do in the land of Anne of Green Gables, and the government of Premier Alex Campbell panicked. With help from the Opposition, and probably the approval of most Islanders, it whipped up a legislative package that amounted to a gross violation of human rights and rushed it through the legislature. You'd have thought war had been declared. The attorney general now had authority to cancel any public gathering "which in his opinion may contribute to the disruption of public order."

The now infamous Bill 55 was so embarrassing an attack on civil liberties it was rescinded within months of its enactment, but not before the concert was

cancelled and a disgusted young man packed himself off to cool his heels and make some money in the Yukon.

Not everyone is consistently conservative. Sometimes Islanders bend with the wind of progress, and almost immediately regret it. Back in 1873, the main condition set down for P.E.I.'s entry into the Canadian federation was that the federal government must maintain in perpetuity a transportation link to the mainland. It's in the Constitution. For the last hundred-odd years, the commitment has been met by a subsidized ferry service between the Island and New Brunswick. For about the same span of time, there has been loud talk about building a bridge across the 14 km. Strait of Northumberland. In 1989, 60 percent of Island voters said YES to a construction plan. Sometime this summer, the environmental assessments will be completed, after which the federal government will be tendering contracts for the project, expected to generate 6,000 jobs over a 5-year period at a cost of at least a billion dollars.

At the moment, it appears only truckers and real estate brokers are still wholeheartedly in favor of the bridge, which nearly everyone refers to as "the fixed link" and my landlord calls Span of Green Gables. The only way to move bulk shipments onto or off the island is by ferry. Consequently, trucks have to line up and wait their turn along with weekenders and tourists. Time is money, and drivers would rather burn rubber and carve ruts in the road with their 18-wheelers than sit for an hour or more (up to six hours in summer!) with an idle load. At the same time, the lack of roadway access is considered a major impediment to speculative interest in Island property. Americans with big bucks and big cars like to drive straight through; no waiting, no ferry boat fuss. The fixed link is supposed to satisfy cravings for money and convenience.

Opponents of the bridge think it means certain death for the Island Way of Life. It will undoubtedly hasten the demise of cherished myths of self-sufficiency, friendliness, innocence and incorruptibility. Harry Bruce has a lot to say about the difference between what Islanders think their life is like and how they actually live it. "No other province is so tortured by the gap between a beautiful dream and homely reality. More than all other Canadians, Islanders allow a fairy tale to dominate politics and distort visions of their homeland destiny." Our landlord friend sees things in much the same way. He grew up on Prince Edward Island, and knows a lot of people here. More than once he has muttered a string of sad sentences about the amount of wife beating and child abuse that takes place behind lace curtains in the many rural communities. The Island cradles bigots and bastards who like the multiple forms of distance and detachment from civil authority that goes along with living offshore. The fixed link may invite all kind of fresh crime and corruption to the Island, but it might also bring some form of psychological relief to those who live in fear of their spouse, or a drunken neighbor, or just the feeling of being trapped in a time warp.

It may also bring an end to the unemployment industry. Most workers in the fishery business and many farmers only have to labor 10 weeks in order to qualify for 42 weeks of compensatory insurance payments from the federal government. Thus, instead of the ramshackle houses or rusted automobiles one might expect to find in a region with a 15-20 percent unemployment rate, there are lots of satellite dishes and not a few Corvettes. The indignity of such a blatantly generous payoff from the full-time labor force in other parts of Canada is most evident when local newscasters go out into the rural

districts to interview families out of work but obviously not really hurting for money. You feel sorry for them and you envy them and you curse them and you wonder how the system can last all at the same time. The Mulroney government, strapped for cash, is trying to make unemployment insurance a little harder to come by and to start redirecting welfare payments toward retraining programs. That means change--a different way of life. It's a hard sell.

So, Prince Edward Island is a community under siege. The Atlantic is a moat for people who want to protect the Island Way of Life. The fixed link is a talisman for those who want to transform the place into a well-paid concession stand. Everyman thinks himself a King Arthur of sorts, keeping barbarism at bay. Some of the barbarians come from New Brunswick. K.C. Irving, one of the world's richest land barons, is the Black Knight. He heads a family of dragons. They own forests and pulp mills, farm land and potato processing plants, oil refineries and gas stations, shipping lines and trucking firms. The Irving empire is the epitome of successful vertical integration. Premier Joe Ghiz is the dragonslayer, and land use laws are his battle axe. He is trying to keep the Irvings from owning and controlling everything that grows or moves on the Island, and most of the peasants are on his side. Other baddies come from New England, and New York. They show up in the dead of winter, wearing galoshes, looking to make a killing in the process of development.

As is evident, much of the siege mentality is self-imposed. People want better jobs, and more money, but they also want everything to stay the same, because increased prosperity will destroy the Island's distinctive rural culture. (Already, mechanization and monocropping practices have reduced the number of farms from over a million in 1930 to about 3600 today.) It's risky business, having already decided, in a democratic fashion, to go ahead with a project that will rationalize this part of Canada's existence, while at the same time wishing that a fixed link to the bigger, stronger and more southern shores will just never really materialize. It's like free trade. And it cannot be long before some Maritime novelist seizes upon the cosmic significance of a causeway.

The battle to preserve island civilizations has been going on for a long long time, at least since Roman and Saxon and Norman invaders pushed the Celts out onto the fringe of Europe, where they remain defiantly protective of their reputedly more intuitive and less materialistic way of life. You'd think the Irish and the Scots and the Bretons and so many Atlantic Canadians had found the Holy Grail or something.

Let me tell you about the invisible link. Most of the people of Prince Edward Island have Celtic ancestors. Highland Scots, Ulster Irish, Lowland Scots and Gaels from Galway: they all made their way to this part of Canada in several emigrant waves, mostly in the 19th century. I am giving up on distinguishing one group from another. At the Sam the Record Man shop in Charlottetown, the Ireland and Scotland and Local Talent cassettes are all in the same bin because it's basically all the same music. As blood relatives (and notwithstanding the bad blood between them at various intersections of history), the Scots and Irish go way way back, into the mist. Statistics Canada, the federal agency that collects census data,

stopped keeping track of each group separately in the 1970s, and lumps them together as descended from peoples of the British Isles, but earlier figures put the Scots at about 10 percent and Irish slightly less as a percentage of Canada's total population. Despite a slow but steady diminishing presence relative to other immigrant groups, the influence of this large and variegated immigrant cohort on Canadian culture has been immense. The Celts bear responsibility for the shape and content of English Canada's system of higher education. There are an inordinate number of Celtic Canadians in politics, medicine, law and commerce. Both the Scots and Irish are considered to be "Charter" groups in Canada's social evolution; that is, they both helped to establish the dominant society to which later arrivals would have to adjust. According to W. Stanford Reid, editor of *The Scottish Tradition in Canada*:

[T]he history of Canada is to a certain extent the history of the Scots in Canada. They have not remained in one area, as have the large majority of French Canadians, nor have they tended to settle in concentrated groups either in towns and cities as have many other racial units. Instead they appear in every location and in every possible aspect of Canadian life.

Nova Scotia (New Scotland) is but one example of how place names in Canada reveal the Celtic influence. New Glasgow, Antigonish, Glencoe, Dunvegan, Caledonia, the Argyle Shore, the Bonnie Brae Bakery--the list goes on. Besides the fact that one of every three Islanders count one or more Irish ancestors in their family tree, P.E.I. resounds with Irish-sounding names (O'Halloran Road, Kildare Lake) and even looks like the Old Country. Professors who travel back and forth across the Atlantic say P.E.I. resembles County Wexford, Monaghan, and Cork. The owner of the Dublin Pub in downtown Charlottetown says people here "are very much like they are back home [in Ireland]. They have an easy-going way of doing things. P.E.I. could be the 31st county of Ireland." Tourist literature invariably describes the Island's dominant summer color as "Irish green". In the spring, some Islanders comb the beaches for clumps of Irish moss, the seaweed which washes ashore and when dried serves as an emulsifier (carageenan) in a host of food products. One of the Island's early governors wanted to name it "New Ireland." I trust you get the picture.



Everywhere in this region there is an echo of the past. People gather for Saturday night "ceilidghs" (the Gaelic word for get-togethers). Saint Andrew's and Irish Benevolent Societies abound, and generally serve as a community venue for slide presentations on somebody's distant relations. Historians draw parallels between Prince Edward Island's least-cared-for tradition of absentee ownership with the carving up of choice parts of Ireland for the benefit of English lords. At Summerside, on P.E.I., there is a new (and unique to North America) College of Piping and Celtic Arts. At Point Pleasant Park, overlooking Halifax harbor, there is a great spread of heather, reportedly the result of members of the Highland Scots Regiment having shaken out their bedrolls and blankets upon disembarking on this spot during World War II. Historians claim the itinerant monk St. Brendan touched the shores of Atlantic Canada long before other Europeans. And curling; how else to explain the longevity of this crazy game of shuffleboard on ice with brooms and rock kettles than to consider it a joke played on contemporary Canadians by their Celtic forebears?

There is something mysterious happening on Prince Edward Island and in the other Maritime provinces. It is ancestral alchemy. People are preserving their Celtic heritage for no discernible purpose. The past has a tenacious grip on their psyche, like the clasp of a four-thousand-year-old aunt with an important message to impart to a slightly addled nephew. The Celts exploit their ancient roots with unyielding verve, reading stories and poems aloud to a pleasantly dumbfounded audience, singing in Gaelic, dancing Irish jigs and reels, joining in the summer revel of the Highland Games, which are held all over the place every year. (1991 marks the 4th International Gathering of the Clans, which will take place on P.E.I. The logo for year-long event is "The Road to the Isle.") There doesn't appear to be a political objective in mind. The Canadian Irish, unlike their American counterparts, do not organize themselves into pressure groups to aid and abet the I.R.A. "Ireland is very much a place apart," writes David Wilson in a 1989 booklet entitled *The Irish in Canada*, "the subject of often vague and conflicting images" characterized by anachronistic or tribal war, or viewed through a sentimental haze "as artificial as the embarrassing public rendition of 'When Irish Eyes are Smiling' performed by Brian Mulroney and Ronald Reagan at the so-called Shamrock Summit of 1985." There is no visible connection between Canadians proud of the individualism they've inherited from their Scottish ancestors and the self-determination efforts of the Scottish Nationalist Party in the homeland. The Celtic consciousness is not a movement, but rather the hardy remnant of a cultural nation in diaspora.

Maritime Canadians cling to their ancestral roots like barnacles to a jetty. Why do they do it? Are they just afraid of the future? How thin can you stretch a bloodline and still claim there's something vital flowing through it?

Some local authorities on all this would have us believe that ancestor worship is just part of an innate insecurity, and a need to feel grounded in time. "Why work so hard to keep the Scottish tradition alive on P.E.I.?" asks a correspondent for the Charlottetown *Guardian* newspaper (which "covers the Island like the morning dew".) A member of the Prince County Caledonia Club replies: "I don't think there's one single reason," I think it's about wanting to have a base, to know that they came from someone and that they have stability in their life." J. Angus MacLean, a former premier of the Island, says "one of the deepest needs of mammals...and of birds and fish,

and probably all forms of life, is a knowledge that they belong in a certain corner of the universe, and it belongs to them." He continues: "Every time I have journeyed to the Hebrides off Scotland, I have felt singularly at home, as though I belonged there in a special way."

Such attachments so permeate thinking here that the Guardian editorialists remark that should the Meech Lake Accord fail, the resulting breakup of Canada would leave Islanders stranded "like the Hebrides after the migrations or the Highlands after the Clearances or, even like Glencoe after the Massacre." How many people actually get the historical references? It doesn't matter: the mere sound of the words arouses a homing instinct, a feeling of belonging to something tragic but durable.

All of this is somewhat alien to a transient couple from the mongrel culture of the American West. We're both part Irish, like just about everybody else in the United States, at least on March 17, and the day after.

This is the way I look at it, after two pints of Guinness. Just as there are multiple levels of acculturation and social identity (family, neighborhood, nation, race, etc.), there are also layers of consciousness. Some of them lie very very deep, and go way far back in time. People celebrate their ethnic heritage, but they scarcely realize how powerful the undercurrents of ancient blood ties can be in shaping modes of thinking and behavior. The effect is profound, and a bit disturbing; it's as if these fringe area Celts, for the most part preoccupied with getting a living and going to the horse races and doing the Monday wash are being guided by a secret intelligence.

Celtic Canadian Maritimers are unwittingly steeling themselves to survive the coming Dark Ages, when material deprivation will throw communities back upon their spiritual resources, such as a sense of humor, an affinity for jigs and hornpipes, and a blind determination to tough it out. There's no hurry.

"What is essential to the Celtic consciousness is the spirit of being an exile on this earth and of being in constant search for the Blessed Isles or the Holy Grail." This is William Irwin Thompson, founder of the Lindisfarne Society, and a historical detective of sorts. His words were on my mind last Friday night in Charlottetown, at a concert dubbed "A tribute to Maritime Music." It was there I heard the sound that the Holy Grail makes when it touches down upon a simple Celtic stage. Picture two sets of feet. One wears scuffed-up but sturdy black work shoes. The other wears leather flats and knee socks. Somewhere above the knees are a joyous happy fiddle and an Irish pennywhistle, making lovely music. But it's the feet that touch the soul: tap-tap-tapping a perfect rhythm to the harmony of the universe.

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

Erin go braugh,

Stephen Maly 9

THE FUNNY PAGE



**Prince Edward Island
Department of Agriculture
USING COMPOSTED AND RAW
MANURE ON THE FARM SEMINARS**

**Thursday, April 5
1 - 4 p.m.**

**O'Leary District Agricultural Office
est Prince Regional Services Centre**

Anne Shirley pen pal wanted by a British Gilbert Blythe

LOOKS FOR ANNE

It is one of my dearest wishes to correspond with a lady living on Prince Edward Island who has the personality, character and appearance of beloved Anne Shirley of Green Gables.

Albeit that she is a fictional character, through Megan Follows portrayal she lives in my heart as a reality and I have set my whole being on finding such a lady, initially for correspondence, but hopefully, eventually as my wife and if God pleases the mother of my children.

Naturally I have to say something about myself, my name is Carey aged 32, slim, 5'9" height, darkish hair and grey-blue eyes. I am possessed of a spiritual, philosophical, imaginative and perceptive personality, I am genuine, honest, a friendly and open, not really a Gilbert Blythe sadly, age alone rules that out, but willing in a pure and selfless way to become one for an

Anne Shirley I can give my whole life to.

The loves of my life (besides Anne of course) are reading deep and meaningful books especially those with spiritual, philosophical and inspirational elements, writing letters, composing poetry, positive thought and the occasional prayer, music anything quiet and melodic but especially spiritual Enya and the fairytale style of Sally Oldfield, sports, mainly football and cricket and the statistical and historical spheres of both games, walking by the sea and in the countryside, stimulating and thought-provoking conversation, pleasant people and much more.

Write to:
**Mr. C. Mitchell
8 Delamere Court
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