

The ICON WALK

*The
Greatest
Story Ever
Strolled*



Arms and the Man
 Caesar and Cleopatra
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 John
 Saint

**WRITER/HISTORIAN BARNEY PHAIR—
 THE FOUNDER OF THE ICON WALK**



JOHN HUME
 Nobel Peace Prize (1998)

It is totally appropriate that John Hume was also the recipient of the Gandhi and the Martin Luther King award. It was an event come full circle. Gandhi acknowledged Daniel O'Connell as his role model for the tactic of resistance and Gandhi in turn was the inspiration for Martin Luther King's civil rights movement in America. It was on a march for civil rights 1968 that the American example that violence was used to break up the protest and the "troubles" began. Three decades of violence followed.

Throughout this period John Hume was the voice of reason, using calm his intellect rather than the gun to find a solution. Eventually he was able to bring the extremists to explore a solution that did not entail violence and a starting of a peaceful solution. Roughly 160 years after Daniel O'Connell achieved Catholic Emancipation through peaceful demonstrations John Hume moved their case to a place where equality of conscience would start to not mean inequality in citizenship. In 2010 he was chosen as the greatest Irish person in History; we love this choice.

This allowed Catholics to be elected to the British Parliament as well as other rights to Roman Catholics.



A Journey from Unsightly to **UNESCO**

When tourists come to Dublin, many make their way to the bustling Temple Bar area. The main thoroughfare of Fleet Street is chock full of shops, hotels and restaurants. But pedestrian traffic is being drawn down previously-avoided alleyways parallel to Fleet Street. The Icon Factory, an artists' cooperative run entirely by volunteers, has turned those alleyways of Aston Place, Bedford Lane and Price's Lane into The Icon Walk, a permanent art installation that celebrates iconic figures of Irish music, art, sport and culture.

Over the course of a few short years, the artistic transformation of these once-neglected side streets is changing the neighborhood. A cultural history of Ireland can now be seen on the walls of these alleys. Although the small organization struggles financially, The Icon Walk has received the coveted endorsement by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) for being "an important site for the celebration of Irish literary talent and culture."

JAMES JOYCE, OSCAR WILDE AND THE POGUES

It was writer/historian Barney Phair who had a vision for this gritty area. He believed that art was the key to changing the landscape and educating both tourists and Dubliners alike. It is his insightful and often humorous commentary that now hangs alongside the 70+ works of art grouped in categories ranging from "The Playwrights" to "Great Moments in Irish Rock" and "The Wall of Irish Sport." Barney is passionate as he speaks of the art he and others have worked so hard to establish and maintain.

"I believed from the beginning that art could civilize this corner. We cleaned it up both literally and figuratively," says Barney. "The Ireland Funds believed that too and they were the very first funds we ever received."

Now, enormous panels depict cultural icons as diverse as James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, and the Pogues. Because over thirty artists were involved in the creation of The Icon Walk, the artistic styles are as diverse as they characters they portray. The Icon Factory also has a small storefront where visitors can take home images of The Icon Walk in the form of t-shirts, coasters and other mementos. The storefront is an informal gathering place for artists and their supporters and also serves as a gallery where artists can display their work for free. Now, tourists, school children and college groups can turn off Fleet Street to look up at the faces and stories of Ireland's cultural treasures. Other cities are looking to replicate Icon Walks of their own and Dublin can be proud of this new cultural highlight supported by The Ireland Funds.



ARTIST ACA SZOT