



The Legacy of the Great Irish Famine in History, Archaeology and Folklore

Michael Gibbons, Irish archaeologist and historian, explores the consequences of the Great Irish Famine on the history of modern Ireland.

This event is supported by



Date: Wednesday 8 October

Time: 6 – 7 pm

Venue: Theatre

Cost: \$10 Friends, \$15 non members

Bookings: (02) 6262 1698 or friends@nla.gov.au

Spring Book Club Lecture

Read *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and join Dr Rich Pascal for a discussion of this twentieth-century classic.

Date: Monday 27 October

Time: 6 – 8 pm

Venue: Friends Lounge

Cost: \$10 Friends, \$15 non members (includes light refreshments)

Bookings: (02) 6262 1698 or friends@nla.gov.au

For bookings, details of membership and subscriptions, contact:

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Donald Friend (1915–1989)

Shoppers at Night, Bondi Junction Mall
(detail)

From Ayam-Ayam Kesayangan'

Manuscripts Collection MS 5959, Item 2

October Friends

It is estimated that one in three Australians can claim an Irish ancestor. The contribution of the Irish to the development of Australia has been profound with Irish-Australians having been leaders in every facet of Australian life, including sports, literature, politics and the labour movement. Although migration to Australia took place throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is probably the mass migration following the Great Irish Famine that first springs to mind.

The Great Famine of 1845–1850 was one of the greatest human catastrophes in nineteenth-century Europe. Its consequences for the history of modern Ireland were of enormous significance, as they were for those major destinations of Irish emigration—the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. It is estimated that over one million people left Ireland during this time to seek new lives in far-off lands.

This month, thanks to the support of Culture Ireland, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to explore this subject further with Irish archaeologist and historian Michael Gibbons. Michael is an archaeological consultant and a member of the Croagh Patrick Archaeological Committee. He has contributed to numerous

programs on Irish history and archaeology, including as a researcher for the BBC Television documentary *A History of Britain*, and as the presenter in a series on the Great Famine in Ireland for Irish Television.

On Wednesday 8 October, Michael Gibbons will speak about the legacy of the Great Famine in history, archaeology and folklore. Anyone with an interest in their Irish ancestors or in the immigrant landscape of nineteenth-century Australia should not miss this presentation.

Also taking place in October is the Spring Book Club Lecture. Dr Rich Pascal of the Australian National University will talk about *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, before participants break into small groups to further discuss themes over a glass of wine. This novel, which is based on the impact of slavery and the emancipation of slaves, was the winner of the 1987 Pulitzer Prize, and in a 2006 *New York Times* poll of 200 critics, writers and editors, it was named 'the single best work of American fiction published in the last 25 years'. Numbers are strictly limited for this event, so book your seat through the Friends office.

SHARYN O'BRIEN

Executive Officer

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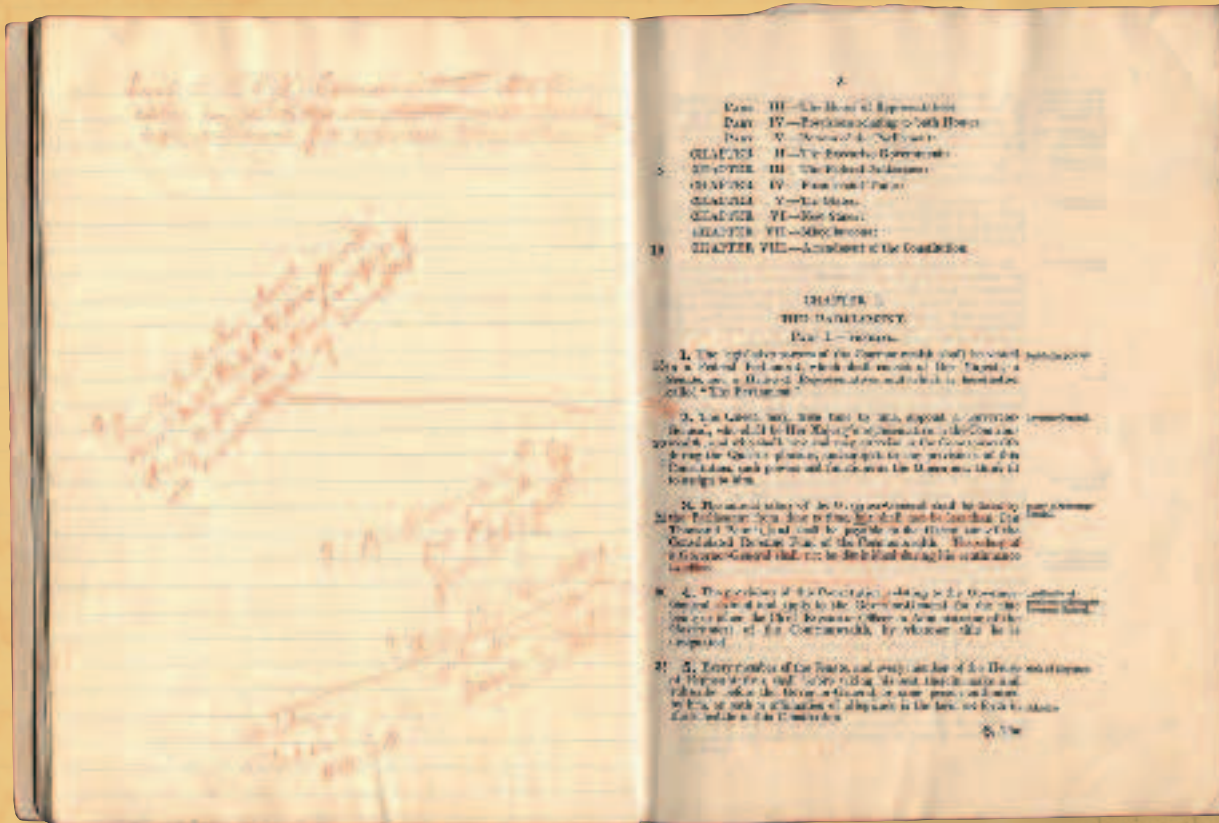
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Papers of Sir Edmund Barton, Manuscripts Collection, MS 51 Series 6 Item 990a.
The Barton papers have been digitised and can be viewed at nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms51.

Draft Constitution Annotated by Edmund Barton

Federation of the independent Australian colonies was first proposed in the mid-nineteenth century. Edmund Barton—later first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia—was a leading advocate for federation and one of the draftsmen of the Australian constitution. The draft constitution shown here is in Barton's papers held by the Library and has been annotated by him. It was drawn up by Samuel Griffith from a text compiled by Andrew Inglis Clark, and was adopted by the National Australasian Convention on 9 April 1891.

Momentum for federation grew in the 1890s and culminated when, after many revisions, the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* was enacted by the British Parliament on 9 July 1900 and proclaimed on 1 January 1901. Setting up 'the Commonwealth' as the central authority to govern Australia, the Act details the structure and functioning of the Parliament and its Ministers, legal and financial matters, and relations with the states. It is the primary document of the governance system for the Commonwealth of Australia.

As Barton said at a meeting he addressed during the campaign:*

*For the first time in history we have a nation for a continent,
and a continent for a nation.*

*reported in Robert Garran, *Prosper the Commonwealth*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, c.1958, p.101

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