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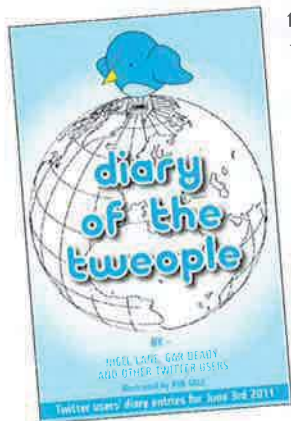
A Diary for the Tweople, By the Tweople

There's no denying the wonderfully wide (and sometimes weird) reach of Twitter. From messages from Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring, to live tweets of the Republican presidential debates, to to-the-minute updates concerning Kim Kardashian's whereabouts. Since the social networking phenomenon was founded in 2006, it has attracted well over 200 million users, who sign-in routinely to post their 140-character messages. It was precisely the scope and popularity of Twitter that so fascinated Gar Deady and Nigel Lane of Co. Kildare, Ireland, and led them to embark on a social media project called *Diary of the Tweople*.

Who are the "tweople?" The two Irishmen coined the phrase to describe the Twitter people. And hundreds of them – from Ireland and the U.S. to Australia and Russia – turned out via their computers and assorted wi-fi devices to participate in Lane and Deady's Diary Day on June 3, submitting summaries of their days. "We had several excellent entries," Gar told *Irish America*, "ranging from funny, to bizarre, to very serious. One entry simply said "Shaving when drunk... dangerous game!" Another was from Justice for Magdalenes – a group of human rights activists and family members fighting for justice for the women who suffered abuse while living in Ireland's Magdalene Laundries. Their entry centered around waiting on a decision from the UN Committee Against Torture.

Deady and Lane eventually whittled the entries down to 70, which have now been compiled into an e-book, complete with illustrations by Irish designer Rob Gale that incorporate the iconic Twitter bird. *Diary of the Tweople*, which is available online through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, iTunes and other e-book sellers, is more than an entertaining read, though. It's a prime example of how social media is changing the way we record personal narratives. Each of the published entries contains a link to the author's Twitter page, which allows readers to directly or indirectly follow-up with the writers. Thrilled with the results, Deady and Lane are already planning another Diary Day.

– S.L.



Irish Artist of the Light Shines in New York

For Irish artist Roisin Fitzpatrick, inspiration and light came from an experience most people would count among their darkest of days. In 2004, shortly after her 35th birthday, Fitzpatrick suffered from a brain hemorrhage – a sudden pain at the back of her head quickly became a near-death experience. As she lay very still in a hospital bed, fighting for her life, she turned to meditation in order to get herself through the pain and fear, rather than panicking about all of the unknowns. It was through this concentration, this focus on the present and the incredible energy she connected with, that the traumatic experience became a transformational one.



Roisin Fitzpatrick and Christy O'Connor Jr.

"I achieved total spiritual freedom," Fitzpatrick recently told *Irish America*. "We run around in life, looking for joy and happiness, most often in places where it can never be found, as proven by the boom and bust of the Celtic Tiger. Paradoxically, it is all within us, all of the time."

After making her miraculous recovery, Fitzpatrick, a native of Co. Wicklow who had previously put her degrees in business and international relations to work at the European Commission, United Nations and European Bank, decided to devote her life to sharing this energy with others through art. As "Artist of the Light," her aim is to "assist people to connect with their highest potential, to live lives with a greater sense of joy, well-being, purpose and meaning."

To communicate this energy, Fitzpatrick works with crystals, which beautifully reflect and refract light. She sews the crystals by hand onto sheets of white silk, creating intricate patterns based on nature, astronomy, pre-Celtic art forms such as Newgrange, and the Tautha de Dannan, the "people of the speckled light" from Celtic mythology.

Fitzpatrick described the response to her work as "phenomenal." "Doors have opened for this art in ways I could never have imagined in my wildest dreams." A glance at her list of fans and supporters speaks to her wide appeal and profound affect: actress Roma Downey of *Touched by an Angel* and her husband, TV producer Mark Burnett were early supporters, as was mind-body expert, doctor and writer Deepak Chopra. Fitzpatrick's art has also gained the attention of writer Marianne Williamson, philanthropist Loretta Brennan Glucksman, hotelier John Fitzpatrick, and Irish golfer Christy O'Connor Jr., who recently purchased one of her works.

In addition, Roisin Fitzpatrick has enjoyed frequent exhibitions on both sides of the Atlantic, from the Royal Dublin Society to galleries in Chelsea and SoHo. Up next is a solo exhibition at the Consulate General of Ireland in New York, running from October 3 – November 16.

– S.L.