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In Search of Ancient Ireland: The Origins of the Irish from Neolithic Times to the Coming of the English

By Carmel McCaffrey, Leo Eaton



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This engaging book traces the history, archaeology, and legends of ancient Ireland from 9000 B.C., when nomadic hunter-gatherers appeared in Ireland at the end of the last Ice Age to 1167 A.D., when a Norman invasion brought the country under control of the English crown for the first time. So much of what people today accept as ancient Irish history?Celtic invaders from Euproe turning Ireland into a Celtic nation; St. Patrick driving the snakes from Ireland and converting its people to Christianity?is myth and legend with little basis in reality. The truth is more interesting. The Irish, as the authors show, are not even Celtic in an archaeological sense. And there were plenty of bishops in Ireland before a British missionary called Patrick arrived. But *In Search of Ancient Ireland* is not simply the story of events from long ago. Across Ireland today are festivals, places, and folk customs that provide a tangible link to events thousands of years past. The authors visit and describe many of these places and festivals, talking to a wide variety of historians, scholars, poets, and storytellers in the very settings where history happened. Thus the book is also a journey on the ground to uncover ten thousand years of Irish identity. *In Search of Ancient Ireland* is the official companion to the three-part PBS documentary series. With 14 black-and-white photos, 6 b&w illustrations, and 1 map.



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Editorial Review

Review

Well-written...informative...new and fascinating material challenging many myths. (Lawrence J. McCaffrey, Emeritus Professor of History, Loyola University of Chicago)

Your search for the roots of Irish history and culture begins here, with this marvelous book. (Terry Golway *The New York Observer*)

Journeys across the centuries to explore fabled Erin's remarkable past and uncover the real story behind the island nation's rich global legacy. (*Irish Connections*)

In bite-sized morsels that accommodate the busy lives of modern readers *Search* tells us about both the major figures central to momentous events and the daily lives of commoners. (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*)

As much as can be excavated or deduced of ancient history is superbly featured with a wealth of fine detail in this fascinating and highly readable resource. (*Library Bookwatch*)

...A clearly recommended pick for anyone interested in an updated, scholarly research tool covering the latest truths about Irish history.... Provides an important gateway to understanding early Irish roots. (*The Bookwatch*)

...An illuminating look at the new finds and scholarship and their place in Ireland's past.... The deft and meticulously researched prose...brings ancient Ireland to vivid life. (*BostonIrish.Com*)

A great story, interesting to read and appealing to anyone with an interest in Ireland...A readable history...poignant, not pedantic. (Virginia Garnett *Carroll County Times*)

From the Publisher

This engaging book traces the history, archaeology, and legends of ancient Ireland from 9000 B.C., when nomadic hunter-gatherers appeared in Ireland at the end of the last Ice Age-to 1167 A.D., when an Anglo-Norman invasion brought the country under control of the English crown for the first time. So much of what people today accept as ancient Irish history-Celtic invaders from Europe turning Ireland into a Celtic nation; St. Patrick driving the snakes from Ireland and converting its people to Christianity-is myth and legend with little basis in reality.

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In Search of Ancient Ireland is the official companion to the PBS series of the same name.

About the Author

Carmel McCaffrey lectures on Irish history, literature, culture, and language at Johns Hopkins University. A native of Dublin, she founded the literary review *Wild About Wilde*. She has also written *In Search of Ireland's Heroes*. She is a Gaelic speaker and frequently travels back to Ireland. She lives in Mt. Airy, Maryland.

Leo Eaton has produced, written, and directed television and film in Europe and the United States for thirty years and has received many of television's major awards. London-born, he lives in New Windsor, Maryland.

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