

# The Friends of Fort Trumbull Welcome The Manager of Quinnipiac University's *Ireland's Great Hunger Museum*



On August 30, 2018, the Friends of Fort Trumbull will welcome Claire Puzarne, the manager of *Ireland's Great Hunger Museum* at Quinnipiac University. There can be no more relevant topic during this summer of 2018 with the spotlight on Immigration, the refugee crisis, and hunger.



The museum, located at 3011 Whitney Ave., Hamden, houses the world's largest collection of famine-related art. The collection focuses on the famine years from 1845-52, when Ireland was dealing with a blight that repeatedly destroyed the potato crops, the main staple of the Irish diet. The British government's indifference to the plight of the Irish population, who were members of the United Kingdom, was well documented. 1 million of the Irish population died as a result of the famine, and 2 million emigrated to nations around the world. Then, as now, the United States did not graciously welcome these immigrants. Who can forget the many help wanted signs that said, "Irish need not apply."

Ms. Puzarne, a graduate of Boston University, also has a master's degree in public history from California State University, Sacramento, and is a student in the MBA program at Quinnipiac. In 2017, she was inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma, the international honor society serving business programs.

In 2016, Ms. Puzarne was instrumental in organizing the creation of the “Famine Folio”, a collection of short essays by diverse authors, which won first prize in the Museum Publications Design Competition. These essays are tools to teach the public about the Great Hunger- the worst devastation of a single population in Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In February, 2018, Ms. Puzarne was the project manager to prepare a collection of 50 paintings and sculptures from the museum which traveled for the first time “home” to Ireland. It has been on display at Dublin Castle until the end of June and has traveled to West Cork and on to Derry. The exhibit is entitled: “Coming Home: Art and the Great Hunger”. Ms. Puzarne has said, “For the last year it’s been my job to get this exhibition ready, and we are thrilled to be bringing it to the people of Ireland”.

If you are wondering whether you have to be Irish to be moved by this museum and its collection, Ms. Puzarne has said, “You definitely don’t. It’s a human story, and I think everyone can relate to different aspects of it.” This museum will remind people of the obstacles faced and the sacrifices made by all immigrants as they seek a better life.

The public is welcome to attend, at 7 p.m., at the Fort Trumbull Conference Center, this free presentation- the fifth in our 2018 series- *Musings on Museums*. New members are always welcome. Come early as seating is limited. Bring a friend, stay for refreshments, and get to know us.