

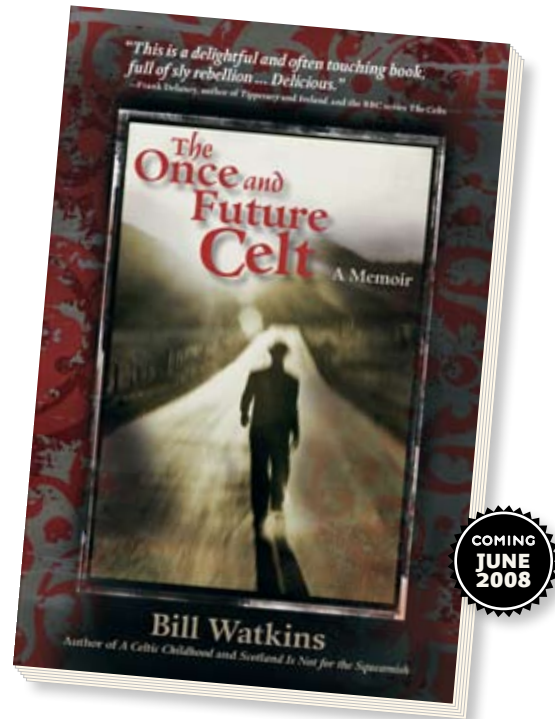
A joyful romp through the British Isles in search of Celtic identity

MINNEAPOLIS (JUNE 1, 2008) – Bill Watkins, who can frequently be found holding court at the Lake Street pub Merlins Rest, has completed his trilogy about his Celtic youth. *The Once and Future Celt* (Scarletta Press: June 1, 2008; \$16.95) is a follow-up to the well received *A Celtic Childhood* and *Scotland Is Not for the Squeamish*. Born in Birmingham, England, to an Irish mother and Welsh father, these delightful books trace Bill's earliest moments to his coming of age as a true Celt.

Bill's adventure in *The Once and Future Celt* begins when he is stranded in a Gypsy camp with an injured foot. He is immediately attracted to his caretaker, the beautiful Riena, but her quick tongue and mysterious past keep his romantic hopes at bay. Bill's prowess on the fiddle and keen interest in the Gypsy culture endear him to the camp inhabitants – and, eventually, Riena. Bill learns his Celtic roots are not so different from the misunderstood Gypsies, as he experiences firsthand the prejudice they suffer in Britain.

Back at his parents' home in Birmingham, Bill has difficulty finding work. When he finally lands a job at a university cafeteria, he tells his proud mother only the "university" part. Soon afterwards she's telling her friends her son is working on a top-secret mission. Before the job starts, however, Bill's father takes him home to Wales, where he shares secrets and ancestral advice.

Following the call of the Celt, the *hireath* – in reality an excuse to pursue another girl – Bill leaves home again. He encounters interesting travelers along the way, from a giant on a Biblical quest to the world's shortest-lived rock band, the Farting Pixies. Eventually he comes full-circle in his quest for identity and self-actualization.



PUBLICATION DATE	JUNE 2008
TITLE	THE ONCE AND FUTURE CELT: A MEMOIR
AUTHOR	BILL WATKINS
ISBN	978-0-9765201-9-1
SPECS	\$16.95, SOFTCOVER, 344 PAGES

The Once and Future Celt takes place on the cusp of the great Celtic revival of the twentieth-century. Interspersed with songs and poems, it is a hilarious ode to the power of family, the opposite sex and the origins of language. Frank Delaney, author of the novels *Tipperary* and *Ireland*, says,

"This is a delightful and often touching book, full of sly rebellion. Bill Watkins has a perfect ear for the more nonsensical sides of the heritage instinct, and a shrewd eye on where he came from – and where he's going. Delicious."

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SCARLETTA PRESS

Bill Watkins JUNE APPEARANCES (and a wee bit of May)

FRIDAY, MAY 30
MERLINS REST PUB
5:00 PM
MINNEAPOLIS
3601 E. LAKE ST.
PHONE: 612.216.2419

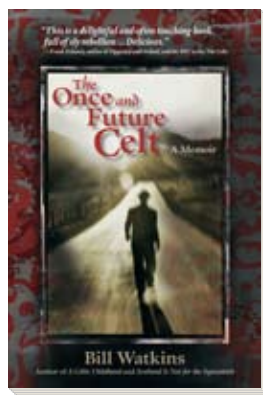
THURSDAY, JUNE 5
KFAI'S WRITE-ON! RADIO
11:00 AM
90.3 MINNEAPOLIS
106.7 ST. PAUL
AND ON THE WEB AT
WWW.KFAI.ORG

FRIDAY, JUNE 6
MERLINS REST PUB
5:00 PM
MINNEAPOLIS
3601 E. LAKE ST
PHONE: 612.216.2419

SUNDAY, JUNE 8
COMMON GOOD BOOKS
2:00 PM
ST. PAUL
165 WESTERN AVE N, STE 14
PHONE: 651.225.8989

TUESDAY, JUNE 17
MAGERS & QUINN
7:00 PM
MINNEAPOLIS
3038 HENNEPIN AVE S
PHONE: 612.822.4611

Please visit www.scarlettapress.com/pressroom.htm for the author tour calendar, which will be updated with other Bill Watkins events.



Questions for Bill Watkins

Your new book completes a trilogy; what made you decide to write in that way?

The third book was the one I thought of first, the previous two are to help the reader understand why and how I came by the opinions and conjectures expressed in *The Once and Future Celt*.

This book is your homage to women. Why is that?

The ancient Celts were a matriarchal society. Even when I was young, my Irish grandmother was the undisputed head of the family, a role my mother later adopted. Throughout history, womankind has often been devalued and blamed for most of the world's ills, and I do my best to redress this fiction. I believe that strong women breed strong men. Some men have a hard time understanding this.

Your pursuit of wisdom is an underlying theme in all your books. Do you feel you have attained your goal?

In order to attain wisdom, the first task is to recognize what it is you are seeking, then to gather together the tools and elements necessary to forge an understanding of the journey ahead; the rest is the journey itself, and the enjoyment and sorrows it affords. Life is a glorious conundrum. One day my journey will end and the final piece of the puzzle will be in place.

There is a great deal of comedy in your books, although they often deal with some very serious subjects. Why is this?

When I was a schoolkid, the teachers who made me laugh were the ones whose lessons I remember best. In my own work, humor serves as a medium through which arcane, weighty and even troubling ideas can be expressed with ease.

Poetry is rife in your trilogy; do you think people can relate to poetry in present-day society?

The poet's job is to hold a mirror up to society, that they may see themselves. Poetry is not just a collection of verse, it is a way of life. To live poetically is the enormous freedom that sadly eludes so many in these cynical times.

"The title of *The Once and Future Celt* hints at the good natured whimsy which pervades this delightful book."

FREDERICK SUPPE, PRESIDENT, CELTIC STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

"... Watkins manages to be disarming, funny, entertaining, and possesses a keen grasp of human nature and its foibles, often all within the same sentence. Read this book and be mightily entertained."

SHERRY LADIG, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, SCOTTISH NEWS IN MINNESOTA

"It's obvious that Bill Watkins loves language. And he is not afraid to use it. A very enjoyable read."

ALPHIE MCCOURT, AUTHOR OF A LONG STONE'S THROW

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