

# the celtic connection

ISSUE 23 VOLUME 1

Proudly Serving Celts in North America Since 1991

DECEMBER 2014/JANUARY 2015



A SEXUAL ASSAULT arrest in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan may lead to developments in the high profile disappearance of a pregnant hairdresser in Ireland 18 years ago. Fiona Pender, a 25-year-old hairdresser and part-time model, was last seen August 22, 1996 in Tullamore, Ireland. She was seven months pregnant when she disappeared. [See page 23]



## The Developing Soul Stirs in the Light of the Winter Solstice

By CYNTHIA WALLENTINE

From the soft grey, out of the dim into the dawn, it slips. The thin edge of the developing season, the emerging soul, is looking to become new again.

Samhain, with its darkness is passing. Exhausted from the involution, time has worn itself away, and looks to the beginning of another season.

A myriad of winter festivals reflect the physical nature of our brightest daytime star, the sun. Reaching its southern limit at 3:03 PM PST on December 21, the sun takes its shortest step of the year – and returns.

This promised return of light, as illumination, heat or truth touches all souls, setting a pattern for each day, season and belief.

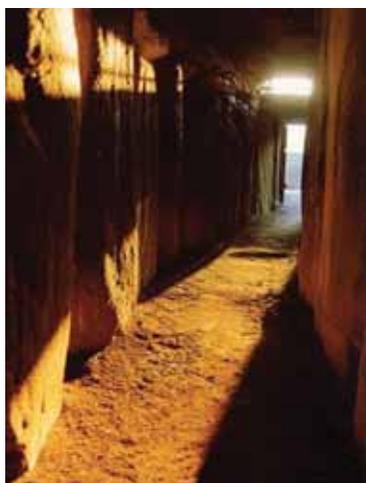
At the winter Solstice, all that is old becomes new. There are few who do not draw strength from the sight of light in the darkness. One small light, one candle, can draw and hold the attention of many. But there is more to the deal.

The origins of many common festival traditions are found in the responsibilities felt by our forbears to speed support to that newly born sun. It is a two-way street.

Evergreen trees, festooned with figures of luck, love and baubles of glass form a bridge between heaven and earth.

While grounding the divine, these decorations and festivities reflect illumination upward, lending strength to the young light. Reciprocity.

Winter traditions and religious practices honor the hope of this world, the return of light from the darkness.



For we who still walk this earth, in wonder tale and in personal life, the light has come a long way, from there to here.

Crossing mountain, ocean and plain, it traversed time to meet you and unfold in the coming year.

As you stand in this place and watch it arrive, so you shall stand next year and watch it move off, continuing its endless journey from here to there, leaving you forever changed.

Just as the path of the sun dims and brightens, so does ours. The moment of winter Solstice is one of emergence, as close as your next breath or as far as 93,000,000 miles into space.

In the distance, something is waiting. It is a turn – of life, season, fortune, or maybe just a phrase. It may change your life, in fact it probably will. Both new and old, it is coming. Blessings of the winter Solstice to you and yours.



COVER ARTWORK: By Mary MacArthur



President Obama imposed sweeping immigration reforms on November 20, easing the threat of deportation for some 4.7 million undocumented immigrants, including an estimated 50,000 Irish living in the U.S.

[Read more on page 27]



A SPECTACULAR scene takes place each year on the last Tuesday of January when a replica Viking ship is set ablaze at the Up Helly Aa fire festival on the Shetland Islands off Scotland to celebrate their Viking heritage.

[Read more on page 9]



Our Special Annual Christmas Greeting Section - Page 15

Publication Mail Agreement: 40093398

# Irish-Canadian journalist Kathy Gannon honoured with the 2014 press freedom award

TORONTO – Irish-Canadian Associated Press reporter Kathy Gannon was honoured in Toronto with the 2014 Tara Singh Hayer Memorial Award for courage in reporting.

Gannon serves as special regional correspondent for Pakistan and Afghanistan for The Associated Press.

In April this year, an Afghan police officer opened fire on Gannon and Pulitzer-prize winning photographer Anja Niedringhaus.

Both veteran AP journalists on assignment, the women were covering the run-up to the Afghan national elections. The nearest hospital was a 45-minute drive away.

In her first radio interview since the attack, Gannon tells *As It Happens* host

Carol Off she was sure that she and Niedringhaus were going to die before they reached the hospital. "All I kept thinking is 'I want to go peacefully'."

Tragically, Anja Niedringhaus did not survive the attack. But on December 3, her photography was celebrated at the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression gala in Toronto, where Kathy Gannon was presented with the press freedom award.

Gannon has covered the region for the AP as a correspondent and bureau chief since 1988, a period that spans the withdrawal of Russian soldiers from Afghanistan, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the bitter Afghan civil war between Islamic factions and the rise and fall of the Taliban.

Gannon was the only Western journalist allowed in Kabul by the Taliban in the weeks preceding the 2001 U.S.-British offensive in Afghanistan.

In addition to her coverage of South Central Asia, she has covered the Middle East, including the 2006 Israeli war against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, and war in northern Iraq.

A native of Timmins, Ontario, she was the city editor at the *Kelowna Courier* in British Columbia and worked at several Canadian newspapers before her career took her overseas. She has lived in Israel, Japan, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In 2005 Gannon authored *I is for Infi-*



PHOTO: AP File Photo, 2012

A KABUL court announced Wednesday, July 23, 2014, that the Afghan police officer charged with killing Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhaus, right, and wounding veteran AP correspondent Kathy Gannon, left, has been convicted and sentenced to death.

*del: From Holy War, to Holy Terror, 18 Years Inside Afghanistan*, an examination of the Taliban and post-Taliban period, published by Public Affairs.

Her brothers Robert and Terry, both retired, were prominent in their fields and her sister, Patricia Ann, was a nurse in Canada's north for 40 years.

Gannon is the youngest of six children. Her brother Brian, now retired, and her late brother Lorne were also respected journalists.

Gannon is married to highly regarded Pakistani architect and artist Naem Pasha, and has a stepdaughter, Kyla Pasha.



DEIRDRE and Brian O'Ruairc of the Irish Club of White Rock were overnight recently in Port Townsend, Washington, where they came across a lovely little Celtic shop called Wandering Angus. Deirdre says, "great store with a wonderful selection of Irish stuff." Pictured here holding a copy of the November 2014 issue of *The Celtic Connection* is Deirdre O'Ruairc with Debbie and Maxx Sonandre and Tracey Williamson of the Wandering Angus.

## TARA SINGH HAYER MEMORIAL AWARD

TARA SINGH HAYER, publisher and founder of the *Indo-Canadian Times*, was shot to death execution-style while getting out of his car in the garage of his home in Surrey, B.C. on November 18, 1998.

Hayer was a vocal opponent to violence in the Sikh separatist movement. He was also due to give valuable testimony for the prosecution in the bombing of Air India Flight 182 in 1985.

Following his death his statement to the RCMP became inadmissible as evidence and was later cited as a reason why the suspects in the bombing were eventually acquitted in 2005.

## ABOUT OUR COVER ARTIST

MARY MACARTHUR is our cover artist this month. She graduated from The University of St. Thomas and the Glassell School of Art in Houston, Texas, having studied theology, life drawing, English and painting.

Since then she has been working freelance design and illustration and has illustrated two books, *Clare's Costly Cookie* by Julie Kelly and *Life is Crumbly* by Jansina Grossman.

Mary is on a quest to become an illustrator and religious artist. For more about her work, see: <http://snowflakeclockwork.blogspot.ca>.

## THE CELTIC CONNECTION

ISSUE 23 VOLUME 1 - Established in 1991

#452 - 4111 Hastings Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 6T7  
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Published 10 times per year. Unsolicited submissions welcome but will not be returned. Please retain a copy for your files. Contents copyright 2013 *The Celtic Connection*. Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the publisher but rather a reflection of voices within the community. All correspondence must include a name, address and telephone number.

Canada Post Canadian Publications Agreement 40009398

## A Child's Christmas in Wales

"It snowed last year too: I made a snowman  
and my brother knocked it down  
and I knocked my brother down and then we had tea."  
— Dylan Marlais Thomas [1914 - 1953]  
*A Child's Christmas In Wales*

[Over 60 years after Dylan Thomas' death, his writing is just as loved now as it was then. The Swansea-born writer died in New York on November 9, 1953, aged just 39, but by that time he had already written works including *Under Milk Wood*, *A Child's Christmas In Wales*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* and *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night*.

His influence has continued to be felt by writers and artists down the generations and he is celebrated each year in his home town with the annual Dylan Thomas festival. This event took on special significance in 2014 – the centenary of his birth.]



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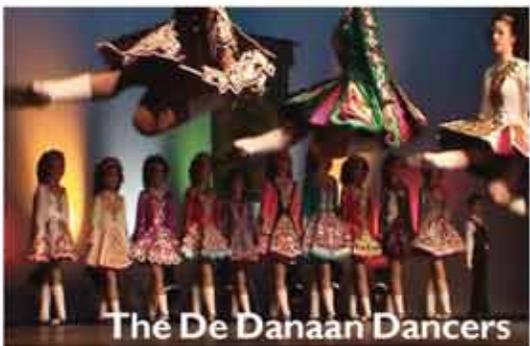
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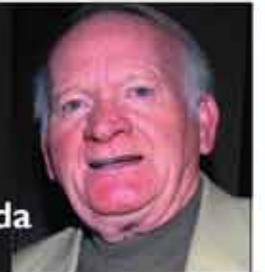


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INCLUDING THE LEGENDARY  
KILLARNEY**

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BRAIDWATER WITH RAY & MARY FYNES,  
BLACKTHORN, THE PAT CHESSELL BAND,  
RAVEN & DOVE...  
ALONG WITH MANY OTHER  
SPECIAL GUESTS INCLUDING  
THE FABULOUS DE DANAAN  
SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE**

*So what's a Hooley you ask? For generations,  
the highlight of Irish social life was the Hooley.  
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and merriment flowed freely as described in  
the Percy French song, "There's a Hooley on  
in Hannigan's House Tonight."*

*We hope you'll join us to help support  
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community for nearly 25 years.*

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www.celtic-connection.com**

# 11<sup>th</sup> Annual CelticFest Vancouver: An Exciting Line Up for 2015



DE DANAAN IRISH DANCERS on the Irish Heritage Society of Canada float in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade in downtown Vancouver in March. It is next scheduled for March 15, 2015.

VANCOUVER – The dates have been announced for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual CelticFest Vancouver in 2015. From March 7-17, concert venues, pubs, clubs and city streets will come alive with the sights, sounds, and vibrant spirit of Celtic culture.

An expanded festival promises 10 event-filled days of music, dance, family fun, spectacle and discovery for folks of all ages and backgrounds.

Western Canada's largest Celtic celebration offers the best of traditional and contemporary Celtic culture in all its diversity, and vitality – and everyone is invited!

"We're looking forward to welcoming people from all around the region to our 11<sup>th</sup> festival," says Festival Director Nicole Sirockman.

"Join us in an exciting celebration of traditional and contemporary Celtic culture, from great concerts and performances, to workshops, special events, and, of course, the wildly popular Celtic Village and the St. Patrick's Day parade.

"Festival Programmer Tom Landa, a dynamic figure on the Celtic and music scene who has led The Paperboys to international fame, is hard at work in his new job at CelticFest with some great plans for 2015. Stay tuned for more details to come."

The festival's schedule of ticketed events is a 'must-see' list of events.

Here's a glimpse of what's on tap (with full details to be announced January 21, 2015).

In addition to main stage ticketed shows spotlighting celebrated local, national and international music artists, back by popular demand is the **CelticFest Ceilidh** on March 14. This rollicking, kick-up-your-heels night of music and dance sells out every year.

Whisky enthusiasts will have two great options to savour at the 2015 festival, with the introduction of The Belmont Whisky Tasting.

Both introductory and advanced sessions are geared to delight and inform both whisky newcomers as well as seasoned tasting "masters."

The Belmont is the new name for the beloved and refurbished The Cellar on Granville Street.

Participating pubs and restaurants in and around the downtown Vancouver area will offer near non-stop performances by musicians, bands and dancers throughout CelticFest, and up to and including St. Patrick's Day on March 17.

In addition to an amazing range of ticketed shows and events, CelticFest 2015 continues its tradition of offering a variety of FREE events for everyone to enjoy.

On the weekend of March 14-15, **The Celtic Village returns** both to Granville Street between Robson and Nelson and to Robson Square with music, dance, fun and frolic, food – and shopping, too!

This FREE weekend-long street fair features performances by some of the hottest Celtic music groups around, along with local dance groups and other entertainers, on multiple stages.

Visiting Villagers can shop at the **Street Market** for an array of Celtic treasures and the works of gifted artisans, and sample from a wide selection of food and fare.

Friends and families can gather and wander, soaking in that special Celtic feeling all weekend long.

To participate as a Street Market vendor, complete the online entry form at [www.celticfestvancouver.com](http://www.celticfestvancouver.com)

CelticFest's signature event, the fun and fabulous **St. Patrick's Day parade**, paints downtown Vancouver in a glorious emerald green on Sunday, March 15, starting at 11 AM.

The parade route flows north along Howe to Georgia Street, drawing spectators from far and wide to cheer on a couple thousand lively parade participants – marching pipe and drum bands, Celtic music groups, acrobats, drill teams, Irish and Scottish youth dance groups, and many more.

To be part of this grand procession, complete an entry form at [www.celticfestvancouver.com](http://www.celticfestvancouver.com)

Sirockman says, "We can't wait to open the curtain on CelticFest Vancouver 2015! We've got a great festival waiting to be unveiled, and I look forward to seeing everyone there!"

Event tickets go on sale, and the full festival schedule will be announced, and posted online, January 21, 2015 at [www.celticfestvancouver.com](http://www.celticfestvancouver.com).

# An Irish Christmas Celebration: A Warm Night of Entertainment

By CATHOLINE BUTLER  
VANCOUVER – Two years ago Blake Williams of the Irish Wakers wanted to help raise funds for the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C.

At the same time, he wanted to provide an evening of entertainment and socializing for many of the new Irish recently arrived in Vancouver. He felt they might feel lonely for their family and friends at this special time of the year.

Last year's 'An Irish Christmas Celebration' – produced and directed by Williams – was a smashing sold out success. This year audiences can expect more of the same warmth and entertainment at St. James Hall in Kitsilano on Friday, December 13.

Speaking recently to *The Celtic Connection* about plans for this year's event, Blake said, "We're very happy to be back again for the second year. It takes a lot of work for the organizing committee to pull it all off.

"We will have The Irish Wakers returning, The Eire Born Irish Dancers, and a new group this year called Raven & Dove. Rebecca Blair, the well-known harpist, will also be back with a new singer Sarah Ann Chisholm."

Something new this year will be the Irish soda bread contest and we are accepting registrations by the Irish counties.

So, there will be one loaf of soda bread from each person registered and identified by county and we will have a kind



BLAKE WILLIAMS

of fun competition among all the bakers.

Speaking about what first prompted Williams to start 'An Irish Christmas', he said, "The origin actually started in Ireland as I was visiting there and walking along the Liffey in Dublin.

"I was thinking about the large Irish Diaspora and the role Canada played and I was aware of so many Irish coming to Vancouver.

"Later during my travels to Australia, I also met many of the Irish who had immigrated there.

"The Irish Wakers had just finished performing in Australia and some of us went off to a pub to chat about things. I began thinking about Christmas and what an emotional time of year it can be so far away from home."

Blake reflected on the need to create an event to offer a warm welcome to Irish newcomers, something that would have a sharing and celebration of Irish culture and where people could just

exchange Christmas greetings.

Of course, one very important aspect of 'An Irish Christmas' is that it's a time of giving and The Irish Benevolent Society helps people with hope.

Oscar Wilde said, "Nothing shall be out of the reach of hope, life is hope," and it's that hope that the Irish Benevolent Society provides to people who are down on their luck or just need a little hand-up temporarily."

Blake said, "That is really just a big part of the Irish community, and we are happy to support it."

He is very grateful for the support he has received saying, "Fortunately, we have received the gift of time and talents from the artists, the volunteers, the support of the Irish pubs, *The Celtic Connection* and of course Irish Ambassador Ray Bassett.

"So, it's a real show of community and even though it's only been done once before at a sold-out concert, we are encouraging people to get their tickets early to avoid disappointment because the hall will only hold so many."

Tickets are \$20 per person and can be purchased at [www.eventbrite.ca](http://www.eventbrite.ca) or at The Celtic Treasure Chest, at the Dunbar shop at (604) 261-3688 and The Celtic Treasure Chest shop in Delta at (604) 940-5366. Also, from The Celtic Connection at (604) 434-3747. For more information, visit: [www.irishchristmas.ca](http://www.irishchristmas.ca).

# Winter Harp 2014: A Magical Seasonal Favourite

VANCOUVER – For over two decades, the sights, sounds and magical feel of the Winter Harp concert tour has simply meant "Christmas" to enthusiastic audiences across western Canada.

Winter Harp has become a must-attend show for scores of fans – an eagerly anticipated event that regularly sells out.

As one devotee says, "(Winter Harp) has become an integral part of the magic of Christmas for us."

This year, the seven-member ensemble plays 14 concerts in 11 cities, from Winnipeg to Vancouver Island - including multiple dates in the Lower Mainland.

On the evening of December 20, they play Vancouver's awe-inspiring St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church.

The 2014 tour performances feature the much-treasured elements that have made the concert so popular.

Backdrops of cathedral and snow sets the stage for the golden Celtic and classical harps, drums, tambourines, temple bells, flutes and an assortment of beautiful ancient and rare instruments.

Featured is the ethereal-sounding *bass psaltery* (the only one like it in the world), the *organistrum* (an early form of the hurdy-gurdy) and the Swedish *nyckelharpa*.

On stage, Winter Harp's outstanding musicians and singers, clad in beautiful medieval attire, perform a collection of music that ranges from familiar carols to Celtic, medieval, world and Spanish tunes: from *Polish Lullaby* to *Parting Glass*, *First Noel*, *A Gaelic Carol*, *El Santo Niño*, and *Christmas is Com-*



ON STAGE, Winter Harp's outstanding musicians and singers, clad in beautiful medieval attire, perform a collection of music that ranges from familiar carols to Celtic, medieval, world and Spanish tunes.

ing to *O Come All Ye Faithful*.

Featured again this year is special guest and celebrated Celtic harpist Kim Robertson, whom Winter Harp Director Lori Pappajohn calls, "A legend in the harp world."

Robertson is a leader in the renaissance of the Celtic harp in North America, and a pioneer of the folk harp movement.

Also returning is acclaimed singer, Roger Helfrick, whose voice is described by Pappajohn as "pure gold." Roger also plays both medieval harp and plucked psaltery.

Other members of the ensemble include Janelle Nadeau (pedal harp, vocals), Lauri Lyster (percussion, vocals), Jeff Pelletier (flute, bass flute, recorder, wooden piccolo), Joaquin Ayala (nyckelharpas, bass psaltery, organistrum) and Lori Pappajohn (Celtic harp, vocals).

Pappajohn says, "It is our great pleasure to present the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Winter Harp.

"It is a true honour to again bring our special concert of music, songs and stories, and to share the wonder of the Christmas season with western Canadian audiences.

"We welcome people of all ages and backgrounds to join us in this unique and joyful celebration of the season."

In addition to the December 20 Vancouver concert, other Lower Mainland dates include the Chilliwack Cultural Centre on December 16, the North Shore Credit Union Centre for the Performing Arts at Capilano University for two nights on December 17 and December 18, and Maple Ridge's The ACT for two shows on December 21.

Full concert performance information is at [www.winterharp.com](http://www.winterharp.com).

Last year's sold-out show!  
**AN IRISH CHRISTMAS**  
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December 13, 2014  
 St. James Hall, 3214 W. 10 Ave., Vancouver



featuring  
 The Irish Wakers ❖ The Eire Born Dancers  
 Rebecca Blair, Harpist ❖ Raven & Dove  
 & special guests

Extending a welcome to new arrivals &  
 raising funds for the Irish Benevolent Fund of BC

**tickets on sale now**  
 at [www.eventbrite.ca](http://www.eventbrite.ca) or visit [www.irishchristmas.ca](http://www.irishchristmas.ca)

**Community Events Listing**

**December 14, 16 to 21 at 8 PM, December 13, 14, 20, 21 at 2 PM**  
 – The Cultch presents *Dylan Thomas: Return Journey* a Richard Jordan Productions (UK), starring Bob Kingdom. Original direction by Anthony Hopkins at the Historic Theatre at The Cultch, 1895 Venables Street, Vancouver. Tickets from \$19, call: (604) 251-1363, or online: [tickets.thecultch.com](http://tickets.thecultch.com)

**December 22, at 7:30 PM** – *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, Dylan Thomas' classic tale and an annual holiday tradition not to be missed. Live original music, readings and your favourite carols with Russell Roberts, Colleen Winton, Sayer Roberts, Gower Roberts and Brian Tate. Anvil Centre, New Westminster. Tickets, call (604) 521-5050, or online at: [www.ticketsnw.ca](http://www.ticketsnw.ca).

**January 24** – Tam O'Shanter Dancers, will host their annual Robert Burns dinner/dance at the Star of the Sea Hall, 15262 Pacific Avenue, White Rock. Tx's adults: \$55, Children 10 and under \$30. Call: Cheryl 604-535-8949 or Grant 604-345-5433.

**Irish Language Classes in the Lower Mainland** – A conversation circle every Monday evening from 7:30-8:30 PM. One week in Kitsilano at Calhoun's Café, 3035 West Broadway, and the next week in East Vancouver at Café Napoli, 1670 Commercial Drive. No need to be fluent it's a learning experience and all are welcome. E-mail Mike Kelly at [yllek20@hotmail.com](mailto:yllek20@hotmail.com) or call (604) 732-6986 or Scott Oser, e-mail: [oser@phas.ubc.ca](mailto:oser@phas.ubc.ca).

A magical journey into the heart of Christmas with carols & stories to warm the soul

**Winter Harp**



Harps, flutes, medieval instruments, percussion, poetry & song

Dec. 16, Chilliwack Cultural Centre  
 Dec. 17 & 18, Capilano University  
 Dec 20, St. Andrew's-Wesley, Vancouver  
 Dec. 21, The ACT, Maple Ridge

Ticket info at [www.winterharp.com](http://www.winterharp.com)



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# Here's some great Celtic music to celebrate Winter Solstice and the Christmas season

2014 has been an amazing year for Roots music in Vancouver and beyond!

Concert highlights include sold out shows at **The Rogue** with **Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas** in January, **The Fretless** with **Cara Luft** in February, **Carlos Nunez Quartet** in February (and the incredible concert at The Centennial Theatre in September with all those special guests!).

Welsh songwriter **Martyn Joseph** also filled St. James Hall in March, and we had memorable and well-attended shows with Ireland's **Caladh Nua**, Scots guitarist **Tony McManus**, Scots & Irish pipers **Ross Ainslie & Jarlath Henderson**, Quebecois trad trio **De Temps Antan** (twice!) and English guitarist **Martin Simpson**.

My personal fave was the debut of Cape Breton Celtic quintet, **Coig**. It was their first gig west of Ontario and they were in stellar form!

**Dervish** made a rare visit to B.C. with a stunning main stage set to close the **Mission Folk Festival** in July, and **Cathy Jordan** teamed up with Canadian singer **Ruth Moody** for a memorable trad. song workshop earlier in the day.

Far and away the best celebration of Celtic and Irish music at the summer festivals was the **Edmonton Folk Music Festival** in August.

Celtic music legends **Sharon Shannon, Lunasa, Donal Lunny & Andy Irvine, Ron Kavana, Niamh Parsons** and **Paddy Keenan** were joined by young Dublin folk / pop singers **Hudson Taylor**, and rockabilly queen **Imelda May** delivered a magnificent set on the Friday night main stage.

There were some great workshops / sessions (Dublin-born Festival Producer **Terry Wickham** likes to call them "Wessions") with most or all of the above cramped onto Stage 5, including a memorable party called **The Pineapple & The Potato**, with Hawaiians **Led Kaapana** and **Jake Shimabukuro** jamming with Kavana, Lunny, Keenan, Shannon and the Lunasa boys!

Canadians **Lizzy Hoyt, Ruth Moody, Pharis & Jason Romero**, England's **Jez Lowe** and **Baka Beyond**, and Americans **Della Mae** and **Elephant Revival** were among my other highlights of the weekend.

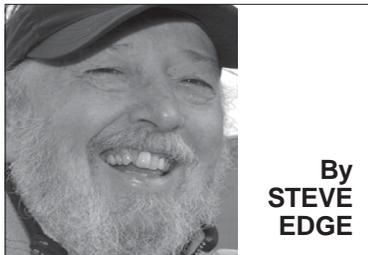
**Shorefest** on Sunset Beach is presented by **LG104.3** and **The Rogue**, and the Wednesday show with **Locarno** (led by **Tom and Kalissa Landa**) and **Spirit of the West** was especially memorable.

My favourite albums of 2014 include the following:

*All Life Is Here* by Manchester trio **Harp & A Monkey**, and **The Ballad Beyond** by Co. Durham singer **Jez Lowe**.

Two great collections of songs about life in the post-industrial north.

**Bellowhead** released their fifth CD, *Revival*, towards the end of the year and, if you're careful, you can get the



By  
STEVE  
EDGE

double CD coming in at just under 80 minutes with 20 amazing versions of shanties and folk songs by the bellowing hendectet (that's the proper word for an 11-piece band, by the way!).

Also look for *The Elizabethan Session*, a suite of songs written about the reign of Elizabeth I.

It's a formidable piece of work, featuring no less than eight musicians who are all singers as well (including **Martin Simpson, Nancy Kerr**, and **Seth Lakeman**.)

**Nancy Kerr** also released a superb solo debut album, *Sweet Visitor* in 2014.

**Kathryn Tickell**, renowned Northumbrian piper, teamed up with two classical musicians and a clog dancing accordionist to record a fabulous album entitled *Kathryn Tickell & The Side*.

I'd also recommend Welsh band **9bach** for their amazing trad/ techno CD *Tinician* and Manx-Gaelic singer **Ruth Keggins** for her debut album, *Sheear*.

The pick of the Scots this year would be Hebridean singer **Julie Fowlis** (*Gach Sgeul / Every Story*), Scots/Cuban fusioners **Salsa Celtica** (*The Tall Islands*) and **Emily Smith** (*Echoes*) while **Oysterband** also released a superb song collection called *Diamonds on the Water* (they are coming to The Rogue in August, by the way).

I am also very impressed by the new albums by Limerick's **Goitse** (*Tall Tales & Misadventures*), **Caladh Nua** (*Honest To Goodness*) and **We Banjo 3** (*Gather The Good*) while Donegal sisters **The Henry Girls** deliver sublime harmonies on their fifth CD, *Louder Than Words*.

From Canada's east coast I'd heartily recommend **Coig's** debut CD *Five* and the new album by Antigonish sisters **Cassie & Maggie MacDonald**, *Sterling Road*.

Calgary's **Lizzy Hoyt** is a superb fiddler and singer and harpist and her new CD, *New Lady On The Prairie*, was produced by Vancouver's **John Reichman**.

Finally, Victoria's gorgeous old-time band **The Sweet Lowdown** have just put out their third CD, *Chasing The Sun*. They'll be at The Rogue on March 20.

There's always heaps of Celtic music to celebrate the winter Solstice and the Christmas season. Here are a few of them!

**An Irish Christmas** – December 13 at St. James Hall (3214 West 10th Avenue).

**Christmas Roguelele Night** – December 16 at St. James Hall.

**Winter Harp** – December 17 & 18 at Blue Shore Financial Centre for the Performing Arts at Capilano University.



ALASDAIR FRASER and Natalie Haas will make a return appearance at St. James Hall in Kitsilano for The Rogue this January 11.

**Van Django Bells** – The Rogue's Christmas Party - December 19 at St. James Hall.

**Dylan Thomas Christmas: A Child's Christmas in Wales**, at Ryerson United Church – December 19.

**Winter Harp** – December 20 at St. Andrew's Wesley, and December 21 in Maple Ridge.

**Winter Solstice Lantern Festival** - December 21, at False Creek, Yaletown, Chinatown, and Strathcona.

**Blues for Christmas** - December 21, at The Commodore Ballroom.

**Chelsea Hotel NY Party** - December 31, at the Firehall Theatre.

2015 shows include:

**Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas** - January 11, St. James Hall ([www.roguefolk.bc.ca](http://www.roguefolk.bc.ca)).

N.Z.'s **Don McGlashan** - January 16, at Presentation House in North Van.

**Martha Redbone** - January 17, Capilano University.

**Roy Forbes** - January 24, St. James Hall.

**Foghorn Stringband** - January 30, St. James Hall.

and **The Duhks** - February 1, St. James Hall too.

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THE DUHKS are a Canadian and American eclectic folk band, from Winnipeg, Manitoba featuring banjo, fiddle, guitar, percussion, and vocals. They blend folk music, along with traditional Irish dance music, integrating Latin-influenced percussion as well as Celtic and Cajun influenced fiddle-playing.

## Band Aid 30 tops the charts despite controversy

LONDON – Band Aid 30's *Do They Know It's Christmas?* which features a host of stars, has stormed to the top of the singles chart.

The charity single, organised once again by Bob Geldof, shifted more than 312,000 copies to make it the year's fastest-selling single, the Official Charts Company said.

The track, with all proceeds going toward the fight against Ebola in west Africa, has outsold the rest of the top five combined.

The reworked version features stars including One Direction, Bono and Ellie Goulding, Ed Sheeran and Chris Martin, and is expected to raise millions to help fight the disease.

Band Aid 30 hit the shelves on the morning of November 23, and within hours has already reached the top of the iTunes chart. The song raked in more than £1 million in pre-order sales within minutes of being launched,

But there have been some complaints over the song's content, with some of

the lyrics changed to reflect the Ebola crisis.

One major criticism is the whole sentiment of the song, *Do They Know It's Christmas?*, which was taken from the original recording 30 years ago and helped famine-stricken Ethiopians.

The *Washington Post* says that according to a recent survey, 87 percent of the population in Liberia is Christian, so of course they know it's Christmas.

Many commentators, including Al Jazeera, accuse the song of having a "them and us" feel about it. It claims the song portrays the fantasy of an Africa filled with victims waiting to be saved.

There is some support for it however.

A blog by the *Independent's* Benjamin Parker is called "Band Aid 30: Leave Bob Geldof's Christmas anthem alone – how much have you raised for Ebola?"

Despite the controversy, the new recording is now the bookies' favourite to claim the coveted Christmas number one spot this year.

# The Irish Tenors: Irish Holiday Celebration

RICHMOND, BC – Finbar Wright, Anthony Kearns and Ronan Tynan are on tour this year with The Irish Tenors Premiere Irish Holiday Celebration and will perform for one night only at the River Rock Casino on Friday, December 19.

The trio have been touring together as The Irish Tenors since 1998 with sold-out shows at Radio City Music Hall, Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, The Hollywood Bowl and major concert halls throughout the world.

Since they first joined voices they have made countless traditional treasures breathe with new life.

Moreover they've proven themselves gifted interpreters of a wide range of material with such songs as *My Heart Will Go On*, *Fairytale of New York* and even Jimmy Kennedy's *South of the Border (Down Mexico Way)*.

These songs sit comfortably in their repertoire alongside *Danny Boy*, *Whiskey in the Jar* and *Fields of Athenry*.

All classically trained singers, Wright, Kearns and Tynan combine to produce a sound and concert experience which touches the heart and stirs the emotions.

The magic they've captured on their

releases has resulted in millions of albums sold and the upper reaches of *Billboard's* music charts.

They have appeared on several highly-rated television specials on PBS including *Ellis Island* and *Live from Belfast*. The Irish Tenors continue to perform around the globe thrilling old fans while winning over new ones.

Tickets available at all Ticketmaster Outlets or charge-by-phone 1-855-985-5000 or order on-line at: [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca).



THE IRISH TENORS – (L-R) Finbar Wright, Anthony Kearns and Ronan Tynan.

## Festival du Bois: Coquitlam's French-Canadian Festival

COQUITLAM – Festival du Bois has announced the dates for its 26<sup>th</sup> annual festival in 2015.

From February 26 to March 1, an exciting roster of musicians and performers slated to perform over the February 29 - March 1 weekend will grace the stages of the big heated tents in Mackin Park in Maillardville/Coquitlam, the centre of francophone culture in B.C.

Fans of Celtic music will enjoy the featured musical artists from Quebec and the Maritimes, as well as artists from other parts of the country and here at home.

Get ready to dance and sing along. There are workshops, exciting shows and activities for kids of all ages, crafts, delicious food – and so much more! Mark your calendars, and stay tuned for the full festival announcement in mid-January at [www.festivaldubois.ca](http://www.festivaldubois.ca).



## Rogue Folk Club

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<p><b>Friday, December 19</b> <i>The Rogue's Gypsy Jazz Christmas Party!</i> <b>VAN DJANGO Bells</b></p>	<p><b>Sunday, February 1</b> <i>Celtic / Old Timey / Quebecois Cajun/Bluesy Soul - fr. Winnipeg</i> <b>The DUHKS</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday, JANUARY 11</b> <i>Scots fiddle meets soaring cello</i> <b>Alasdair FRASER &amp; Natalie HAAS</b></p>	<p><b>Saturday, February 7</b> <i>Canada's leading folk songwriter</i> <b>James KEELAGHAN</b></p>
<p><b>Saturday, January 24</b> <i>Popular BC Songwriter returns!</i> <b>ROY FORBES</b></p>	<p><b>Friday, February 13</b> <i>Hot trad. quartet from Quebec</i> <b>Le VENT du NORD</b></p>
<p><b>Friday, January 30</b> <i>Old Time fiddles, strings &amp; songs</i> <b>FOGHORN STRINGBAND</b></p>	<p><b>Sunday, February 15</b> <i>String quartet plays Celtic &amp; more. The #1 Instrumental band of 2014</i> <b>The FRETLESS</b></p>
<p>and <i>lots more!</i></p>	

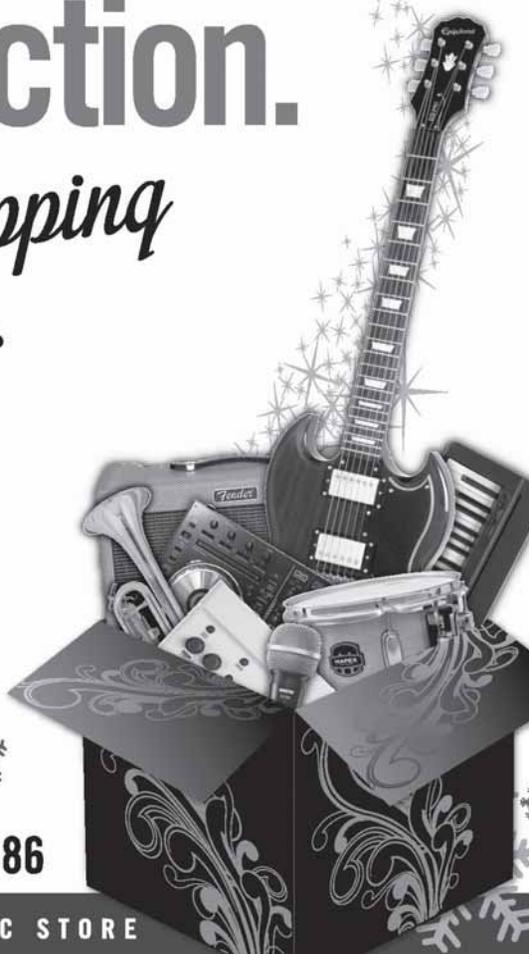
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# Jane Byrne honoured by the Vancouver Welsh Society

**V**ANCOUVER – The annual Vancouver Celebration of Wales events was held at the Cambrian Hall this year on November 1 and 2.

The opening event was a 'Noson Lawen', a traditional Welsh fun evening in the Red Dragon, featuring guest soloist Nerys Jones from Seattle along with a fascinating account of both Welsh and Celtic customs and legends by Dr. Antone Minard.

At one point during the evening, president David Llewelyn Williams presented former president Jane Byrne with a gift and framed certificate of appreciation in recognition of her many years of service to the Welsh Society, including nine years as president.

The certificate reads: "On behalf of all the members, please accept our grateful thanks for your leadership and your vision for the continued success of the Society. Your dedication and enthusiasm keeps our Welsh spirit alive."

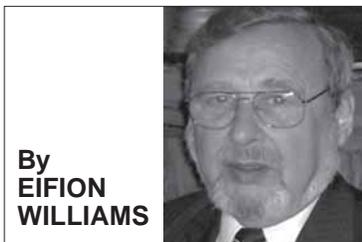
On Sunday morning, November 2, there was a bilingual church service, presided over by Neville Thomas. The afternoon *Gymanfa Ganu* (hymn-singing festival) was well-attended, with guest soloist Nerys Jones stepping into the breach as conductor.

Prior to the second half of the *Gymanfa* programme, David Llewelyn Williams drew the audience's attention to the grievous loss of eight active members of the Welsh Society who had passed away during the year.

In their memory, the president called for a minute's silence, following which the audience sang the beautiful and evocative Welsh hymn *Gwahoddiad*, which had been especially requested by Elizabeth Murray in memory of her late husband Don.

The president thanked the social committee under Gillian Rogers for arranging such an enriching weekend and Ray Batten for his valuable contribution as accompanist during the weekend events. He also thanked Nerys Jones for conducting the *Gymanfa Ganu* at such short notice.

Welsh Society members are now looking forward to Russell Roberts' reading of *A Child's Christmas in Wales* on December 12 and 13. Unfortunately, many who planned to attend this popu-



By  
EIFION  
WILLIAMS



JANE BYRNE

lar event will be disappointed as both evening performances are already sold out.

On Sunday, December 14 there will be a bilingual Christmas carol service at the Cambrian Hall at 11 AM, followed at 2 PM by the annual children's Christmas party.

The Welsh Society's annual Christmas dinner, catered by Jordan's International Food Designs, will be held on December 20 at the Cambrian Hall. Tickets are available from Gaynor Evans, (604) 271-3134.

Meanwhile, the Vancouver Welsh Society is pleased to learn that its popular Welsh language instructor Dr. Antone Minard has been invited by *Cymdeithas Madog* to be one of the instructors at the 39th annual *Cwrs Cymraeg* (Welsh course) gathering, to be held next July at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon.

*Cymdeithas Madog*, officially The Welsh Studies Institute in North America, is dedicated to helping North Americans learn, use and enjoy the Welsh language.

Its annual week-long course attracts participants from across North America and includes many social events as well as language instruction.

January is normally a quiet month for the Welsh Society, but on January 24 members will again celebrate St. Dwynwen's Day, the Welsh equivalent of St. Valentine's Day.

The program is being arranged by David Llewelyn Williams and will include an amusing limerick competition leading up to the event.



DAVID LLEWELYN  
WILLIAMS



DR. ANTONE MINARD



PEOPLE pose with the iconic Coca-Cola truck.

## Hundreds turn out in Cardiff to see much-loved Coca-Cola truck

It is a symbol that Christmas is coming and hundreds of people flocked to see the iconic Coca-Cola truck as it pulled up in Cardiff on December 8.

The bright red truck, made famous by the instantly-recognisable soft drink adverts, was parked outside the St. David's shopping centre through the day.

The city was the 32nd stop for the unmistakable lorry, which has already visited Swansea, Wrexham, Newtown and Caernarfon on its 45-location tour.

People from across South Wales turned out to see the truck and have their photos taken on the Coca-Cola podium.



UK CAMPAIGNERS against the TTIP North American free trade agreement believe the deal will impact health services.

## Million across Europe sign anti-free-trade petition in protest

LONDON – More than a million people across Europe, including 180,000 in the UK, have signed a petition opposing trade deals between the European Union and North America.

The World Development Movement (WDM) said the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) had provoked strong opposition, which critics claim could lead to health services being privatised.

Unions and campaign groups are opposed to the deal, which the government maintains will boost business in the UK, create jobs and fuel the economy.

Nick Dearden, director of the WDM, said, "The European Commission is

desperately fighting to prevent a critical debate from taking place about these trade deals with North America.

"With TTIP threatening labour rights, environmental standards and vital public services like the NHS, it's not surprising that more than a million people have voiced their opposition to it in such a short space of time."

Trade Minister Lord Livingston said, "Pressure groups are misleading people into believing that TTIP will lower standards and put the NHS at risk. This is simply not true, as the EU, the U.S. and the UK Government have all made clear.

"TTIP will, however, make it easier for small businesses to export and will mean more choice for consumers and lower prices in the shops."



## SFU SCOTTISH STUDIES CENTRE

# Upcoming lectures and Presentations

VANCOUVER – The Simon Fraser University Scottish Studies Centre will present a lecture by Dr. Ann Rigney (Chair of Comparative Literature, Utrecht University) entitled 'Where Walter Scott meets the Mahatma: Reflections on Transnational Literature.'

It will be held in 7000 Earl & Jennie Lohn Policy Room at SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings Street in Vancouver on Monday, January 12 from 7-9 PM.

On January 23 from 12 noon to 1 PM, the SFU Scottish Studies Centre will present a Robert Burns Day Celebration in the Teck Gallery, SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings Street in Vancouver.

For the past three years, the centre has hosted a very successful marathon reading that has brought old and young together in celebration of the Scottish bard.

Last year's marathon went for a record six hours! This year, they are asking people to come down and make history in a different way by joining them for a mass reading/singing of Burns's most popular works – *To a Mouse* and *A Man's a Man* – plus the traditional haggis-addressing and socializing.

Starting at noon, the celebration will also feature performances of Scottish music and song. Check their website for more details closer to the event at [www.scottish.sfu.ca](http://www.scottish.sfu.ca).



## TOP 10 CELTIC HITS FOR DECEMBER

*Celt In A Twist* is local contemporary Celtic radio heard weekly on AM 1470, CJVB in Vancouver.

[www.worldbeatcanada.com](http://www.worldbeatcanada.com).

The following is the *Celt In A Twist* Contemporary Celtic Top Ten:

1. *The Hunger & The Fight* by The Mahones - *The Hunger & The Fight* on Whiskey Devil Records.
2. *Chasse-Galerie* by MAZ - *Chasse-Galerie* on Independent.
3. *The Ferryman* by Basco & DR Big Bad - *Live at DR Byen* on Go! Danish.
4. *Sam Ham* by Black 47 - *Rise Up* on Black 47 Records.
5. *Say Anything* by Young Dubliners - 9 on YD Records.
6. *Liliwiau* by 9Bach - *Tincian* - on Real World.
7. *Lime Juice Tub* by Kamerunga - *Terra Australia* on ABC Music.
8. *Leaving of Liverpool* by Homeland - *That Show* on Independent.
9. *Chasin' A Rainbow* by Railroad Earth - *Last of the Outlaws* on Black Bear Records.
10. *Loch Lomand* by Firkin - *Finger in the Pie* on Pump Jump Records.

**Celt In A Twist Pick Of The Month:**  
Basco & DR Big Band - *Live at DR Byen*  
(Go! Danish Records)

# Largest fire festival in Europe takes place in Scotland in January

LERWICK – Hundreds of Vikings march through the Shetland town of Lerwick each year bearing lit torches in an annual celebration of their Norse heritage at the Up Helly Aa fire festival.

This is the largest fire festival in Europe and it takes place on the last Tuesday of January. The procession moves through the streets before culminating with the burning of a replica ship.

The tradition originates from the 1880s and has been cancelled only a handful of times to mark the death of Queen Victoria and the First and Second World Wars.

The current Lerwick celebration grew out of the older yule tradition of tar barrelling which took place at Christmas and New Year as well as Up Helly Aa.

Squads of young men would drag barrels of burning tar through town on sledges, making mischief.

After the abolition of tar barrelling around 1874-1880, permission was eventually obtained for torch processions.

The first yule torch procession took place in 1876. The first torch celebration on Up Helly Aa day took place in 1881.

The Scottish island's Norse heritage is celebrated at annual Up Helly Aa fire festival and culminates with burning a replica Viking ship.



The following year the torchlit procession was significantly enhanced and institutionalised through a request by a Lerwick civic body to hold another Up Helly Aa torch procession for the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh.

Up Helly Aa features a band of latter-day Viking warriors, known as the Jarl Squad, and draws visitors from around the world.

The first galley was introduced and burned in 1889 and the leader of the fire-bearing warriors is dubbed the "Jarl."

There is a committee which a person must be part of for 15 years before one can be a jarl, and only one person is elected to this committee each year.

The procession culminates in the torches being thrown into a replica Viking longship or galley.

The event happens all over Shetland and is currently celebrated at 10 locations – Scalloway, Lerwick, Nesting and Girlsta, Uyeasound, Northmavine, Bressay, Cullivoe, Norwick, the South Mainland and Delting.

Each year its hardy residents are forced to endure the darkest of winters in the entire British Isles. Last year the spectacular event went ahead despite storm force winds.

And for those who could not be there, the Promote Shetland local tourist authority streams the ceremony live online to thousands of viewers across the globe.

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# Migration surge to UK a blow to Cameron before election

LONDON – Prime Minister David Cameron suffered a blow to his re-election campaign after his pledge to cut migration to the tens of thousands was undermined by new data showing a net 260,000 people moved to Britain in the year to June.

The data, which showed net migration was up more than 40 percent on the previous 12 months, is awkward for Cameron who is under pressure from the rise in popularity of the anti-EU UK Independence Party (UKIP), which wants to strongly curb the number of people coming to Britain.

Immigration has shot to the top of voter concerns before a 2015 national election and Cameron has promised to reduce net migration to below 100,000 before the May vote, a pledge a senior minister in his Conservative party said the government was now unlikely to meet.

Cameron, who has vowed to renegotiate Britain's ties with the EU ahead of a membership referendum in 2017 if he is re-elected, set out new plans to limit EU migration in a highly anticipated speech.

On November 28, he announced an array of moves for stopping EU migrants from claiming benefits, but while attention was still focused on those moves he backed off from a confrontation with his counterparts on the Continent over proposals to introduce a quota system for migrants.

Under the European Union's freedom of movement rules, EU citizens are entitled to work anywhere in the bloc. That has seen hundreds of thousands of EU nationals come to work in Britain, which has the group's fastest-growing economy.

He put his emphasis on introducing stringent welfare restrictions as a way of reducing the "pull-factor" attracting migrants to Britain.

He outlined proposals, to be included in next year's Tory election manifesto, to ban migrants from receiving in-work benefits such as tax credits for four years and to stop jobless migrants qualifying for unemployment benefits.

Those who cannot find a job within six months would be required to leave the country, he said.

The prime minister insisted the package of measures he is unveiling will mean Britain has the toughest welfare system for EU migrants anywhere in Europe.

His retreat over Tory plans for Britain to impose a cap on numbers of European Union migrant workers received a mixed reception from Eurosceptic backbenchers who had been pressing for a tougher stance with Brussels.

The Conservatives had previously floated the idea of restricting the number of EU nationals allowed to work in Britain – a so-called "emergency brake" – but it was conspicuously absent from his remarks, in the face of opposition from other European capitals.

Cameron said his aim was to introduce pan-EU reforms, but he was ready to implement them in Britain alone if he did not gain support.

UKIP, which came under heavy attack



BRITISH Prime Minister David Cameron delivers his much-anticipated speech on immigration on November 28.

from Cameron, accused him of deceiving voters on the issue.

Nigel Farage, the party's leader, said, "He cannot control immigration from the EU and has dropped his suggestions of a cap or an emergency brake on numbers coming in."

The Conservative MP for Amber Valley, Nigel Mills, said, "I think the message we needed was that we would put an absolute cap on it because we have too many people coming."

"The only comprehensible way of stopping that is to say 'Look, here's how many we are prepared to take each year'."

In his speech, delivered at a JCB factory in Staffordshire, Cameron emphasised the value to Britain of EU membership, insisting he believed he could succeed in wresting powers back to this country from Brussels.

But he also signalled he was prepared to argue for Britain to leave the Union as a last resort if other member states resisted his plans to cut benefits to migrants.

## UK migrant threat 'fantasy' says senior United Nations envoy

LONDON – The notion that a core British culture is under threat from immigration has been described as a "fantasy" and "b\*\*\*\*\*t" by a senior United Nations official.

Francois Crepeau, the UN's special rapporteur on migrant rights, also appeared to criticise the British Government's stance on supporting search and rescue efforts in the Mediterranean to save immigrants trying to reach Europe.

He told the *Independent*, "The fantasy is that there is a core British culture that was created probably 2,000 years ago and carried on, and now it's being threatened by all those barbarians that are coming to our gate."

"This is utter b\*\*\*\*\*t, but who is going to say this? That is why I think we have a problem with political conversations that we can't have."

He told the paper he was concerned by the rise of anti-immigration sentiment across Europe and even went as far as saying, "If Britannia is ruled by the UKIP, or with UKIP-type policies, it is

"If our concerns fall on deaf ears and we cannot put our relationship with the EU on a better footing, then of course I rule nothing out. But I am confident that we can and will succeed."

And although he did not refer to UKIP by name, he clearly had the anti-EU party in his sights as he warned politicians to take care over the language they used about immigration.

"We must anchor the debate in fact, not prejudice. We must have no truck with those who use immigration to foment division. We should distrust those who sell the snake-oil of simple solutions."

Nick Clegg, the deputy prime minister, said some of Cameron's ideas were "sensible and workable."

But he added, "There are some very serious questions about whether others will ever really happen in practice and whether they are deliverable."

The Labour leader, Ed Miliband, said, "David Cameron is a busted flush on immigration. He has broken his promises to the public and made false promises to his party."

not going to be cool."

And of the European search and rescue mission, he said, "Not supporting search and rescue operations means letting them die."

"This is what happens, if you don't search and rescue them; they die. If we accept that, I think we go well beyond the moral boundaries of our political system."

In October the government set out its opposition to search and rescue operations, warning that they might encourage more illegal immigrants to attempt the crossing.

But after facing criticism in the Commons, immigration minister James Brokenshire said the UK would be prepared to offer further support on top of the single debriefing expert already allocated.

An Italian mission that saved tens of thousands of people making the treacherous journey from North Africa was wound up and replaced last month by a European Union initiative focused on border control.



THE SALTIRE FLAG was raised over 10 Downing Street on St. Andrew's Day.

## UK Politicians mark St. Andrew's Day

LONDON – Leaders from across the political divide have reflected on the referendum campaign as they marked Scotland's national day on November 30.

While Prime Minister David Cameron used his St. Andrew's Day message to stress the importance of working together for a "successful future," the new Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said she looked to the future with "renewed focus and optimism" after the independence debate.

Just over two months ago Scots voted to stay part of the United Kingdom, with 55 percent voting for the union and rejecting independence in the referendum.

Cameron said the Saltire would be flying "proudly" above 10 Downing Street as he told how he was "just one of the millions of people who were relieved, proud and delighted that Scotland decided to stay."

He added, "There was one big message at the heart of our campaign: We can have a strong UK and a strong Scotland – with its own identity and achievements to celebrate. That's what St. Andrew's Day is all about."

"As we celebrate St. Andrew's Day, we celebrate Scotland, this great nation of culture and enterprise, of pride and passion, whose countrymen and women gave the world the steam engine, the television, penicillin, James Bond, Harry Potter – even the Higgs boson."

"Today, Scotland's national day, the world shows its admiration for those achievements, and the bagpipes will ring out from the islands of Argyll to the streets of New York."

The prime minister continued, "Everywhere you look around the globe, people want a bit of Scotland: in Australia, where tartan is proudly worn; in the Bahamas and Canada, where haggis is eaten; and in France, where they drink more Scotch in a month than they do Cognac in a year."

"This St. Andrew's Day, we will be celebrating that huge global reach, flying the flag for Scotland at our UK embassies and high commissions."

"And when I think of the Saltire, set against the sun in Dar es Salaam, billowing in the Ottawa wind, I think of all the incredible things that we are doing, together, as a United Kingdom."

"The key to a successful future is working, as one, for the good of us all. That is why all of us – in every corner of our country – will be celebrating St. Andrew's Day and why nowhere will the Saltire be flown more proudly than here, above 10 Downing Street."

Sturgeon, who succeeded Alex Salmond as both first minister and SNP leader, said St. Andrew's Day was "a wonderful time to reflect on Scotland's many contributions to the world – our people, our history and our culture."

She said, "2014 has been a year like no other for Scotland, during which we welcomed the world for our Year of Homecoming, the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, and the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles."

Sturgeon said Scotland was an "outward looking nation" and added, "As first minister, I recognise the importance of Scotland working together with our friends in Europe and across the globe to secure a better, more prosperous and peaceful future for all."

## Irish Minister warns over UK quitting EU

DUBLIN – Ireland has weighed into the heated row over Britain's future in Europe, warning that any exit from the EU would pull the two neighbouring countries apart just as they are forging historically close links.

Dublin's Foreign Affairs Minister Charlie Flanagan said the Irish are dismayed at the prospect of the UK going it alone and could not simply sit by as debate intensifies ahead of a proposed make-or-break referendum on membership in 2017.

In a direct plea to Britain, he said, "While I'm fully respectful of and sensitive to the internal democratic reflection under way within the UK, I cannot shy away from this debate."

"The UK's continued membership of the EU is hugely important to us and there is too much at stake to remain on the sidelines."

Flanagan added, "Ireland's position on this is unequivocal: we want the UK to remain a full, integral member of the Union."

Speaking in London at the European Council on Foreign Relations, the senior Irish government minister, who also has responsibility for trade, said the EU laid foundations for unparalleled peace and stability across the continent.

"That ought to be appreciated here in the UK, which sacrificed so much in two world wars precisely because of the absence of a settled European order based on law," he said.

"The role of the EU in bringing about and maintaining that peace and stability should never be underestimated or taken for granted."

# Alex Salmond sets sights on Westminster

EDINBURGH – Scotland's former First Minister Alex Salmond has confirmed his intention to stand for a seat in Westminster at the general election in May.

He resigned as SNP leader and First Minister just hours after the Yes campaign lost the independence referendum, and speculation over his political future has continued ever since.

He will run in the Gordon constituency which is currently held by Liberal Democrat MP Sir Malcolm Bruce, who is retiring.

The announcement of Salmond's candidacy ends weeks of speculation about a possible return to the Commons.

Salmond told his Ellon audience that there is the "prospect of real power for Scotland" if the SNP wins a significant number of seats at Westminster.

Since the referendum, support for the SNP has swelled and the party's membership has grown from 25,000 to more than 92,000.

Recent polls have also predicted large gains for the party at next year's gen-



SCOTLAND'S former First Minister Alex Salmond is to stand for a seat in Westminster at the general election in May 2015.

eral election, with one showing the SNP leading Labour by 46 percent to 26 percent in Scotland.

When standing down as First Minister, Salmond described his seven-year tenure as the "privilege" of his life.

He was given a standing ovation by his party colleagues, and was embraced by deputy Nicola Sturgeon, who has replaced him at the head of the Scottish Government.

He said, "Scotland has a new sense of political confidence and a new sense of economic confidence. That new political confidence, or engagement, is the point on which I wish to end."

The Gordon seat, which will now become one of the most-watched in next year's general election, was won by Lib Dem Bruce with a majority of 6,748 over the SNP in 2010.

Salmond, who was First Minister for seven years, was recently named *Spectator* magazine's Politician of the Year at a ceremony in London.

He said he was "honoured" to receive the award for a second time, having previously been recognised in 2011 after the SNP's landslide win in the Scottish elections.

The former SNP leader said, "This has been a momentous year for Scotland and, while the Yes campaign may not have won in the referendum, there is no doubt that Scotland has been changed utterly."

## Gordon Brown to quit as MP and turns down seat in House of Lords

LONDON – Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown has confirmed in an emotional farewell speech that he will leave Parliament at next May's general election, after 32 years as an MP.

Speaking in his Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath constituency, he said he would be leaving "public office" but would continue his public service in his role as the United Nations' special envoy for global education.

He said he would turn down a seat in the House of Lords and would never return to frontline politics.

But he promised to intervene in future to safeguard Britain's place in the EU, Scotland's place in the UK and the NHS. He also pledged to work for Ed Miliband's election as prime minister in May and to help Labour in the 2016 Scottish Parliament elections.

Brown, who appeared with his wife Sarah and sons John and Fraser, said local people had shown "kindness" and given him "strength" when his daughter Jennifer Jane died after 10 days some 13 years ago.

"We are not leaving Fife," he said. "It is London we are leaving."

Brown bowed out on a high after playing a pivotal role in heading off a Yes vote in the referendum on Scottish independence in September.

He played a critical role, along with Tony Blair, in the New Labour project which made his party electable again in 1997 after 18 years in the wilderness.

As the longest-serving chancellor in liv-



FORMER British Prime Minister Gordon Brown is to step down as an MP.

*"We are not leaving Fife, it is London we are leaving."*

ing memory, his 10 years at the Treasury saw him pump billions into public services and keep Britain out of the euro – a decision that Blairites now admit he got right and their man wrong.

But his tenure was marred by feuding between Brownites and Blairites. It stemmed from his decision to stand aside to give Blair a free run at the Labour leadership as the modernisers' candidate when John Smith died in 1994.

His premiership never really recovered from the "non-election" of 2007, which he called off at the last minute.

## The National newspaper now permanent

EDINBURGH – A new Scottish newspaper supporting independence is to become a permanent fixture after a successful trial.

*The National* went on sale as part of an initial five-day run but will now continue after sales "beyond the wildest dreams" of publishers.

An editorial in the paper on November 28 thanked readers for their support and disclosed that 60,000 copies were sold on its first day and that about 11,000 people have signed up for a digital subscription to *The National*.

The newspaper costs 50p and the masthead describes it as "the newspaper that supports an independent Scotland."

It is published by Newsquest, which already publishes the *Herald*, the *Sunday Herald* and the *Evening Times in Scotland*.

The *Sunday Herald* was the only newspaper in favour of leaving the UK in the run-up to September's referendum. Its editor Richard Walker is also in charge of *The National*.

The editorial in the paper today said, "Our first edition sold out. We printed 100,000 copies the following day, and sales stayed at a high level.

"They have slipped slightly since – as sales inevitably do after a launch edition. But they remain beyond our wildest dreams and are bolstered by more than 11,000 digital subscriptions. It's been an incredible – if challenging – week."

Former First Minister Alex Salmond showed his support for the publication as he carried a copy of *The National* on stage as he was named *Spectator* magazine's Politician of the Year at a ceremony in London.

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Our sincerest thanks and appreciation.

Jen & Jesse Findlay

## A POSTCARD FROM LONDON

# Britain's moving tribute to her First World War dead

By  
ELFAN  
JONES



LONDON – In 1914 the First World War broke out and at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918 it ended.

In the four years of conflict nine million soldiers had been killed and 21 million injured.

Among those casualties, 888,246 British and Commonwealth soldiers fell. Now, 100 years on, to commemorate their sacrifice, the same number of ceramic poppies were planted in the moat surrounding the Tower of London.

The artistic vision entitled “Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red” by ceramic artist Paul Cummins and Royal Shakespeare Company set designer Tom Piper, created the effect of a river of blood flowing around the castle, both spellbinding and very moving.

Each day at sunset names of 180 Commonwealth troops, killed during the war, were read out as part of a roll of honour followed by the playing of the *Last Post* by a member of the armed forces.

Volunteers began planting the poppies in August with the last one being planted on Armistice Day by 13-year-old cadet Harry Hayes from the Reading Blue Coat School Combined Cadet Force.

Having pierced the ceramic flower into the ground, he saluted the thousands of people in the crowd completing the vibrant swathe of the breath-taking memorial.

My wife and I felt privileged to be among the estimated five million people who visited the Tower of London and witnessed this extraordinary display.

Despite pleas and a petition to retain the poppies, volunteers began removing them on November 12 and now the site is bare and a sea of mud.

The ceramic poppies were for sale at £25 each and all have been sold with the proceeds being shared between six military charities. Sadly, there are no plans to repeat the display.

Last month's issue of *The Celtic Connection* mentioned that an effigy of Alex Salmond was blown up at the annual November 5 Guy Fawkes celebrations in Lewes in East Sussex.

Piers Morgan, the self-satisfied and irritating television presenter, advised Salmond not to take it personally as in a previous year his effigy had suffered the same fate.

Having had the great pleasure of attending one of these riotous affairs, I think it should be explained that it is all for fun and charity and no insult is intended to the individuals selected to accompany Guy Fawkes on a sudden journey to the stars.

It is all very much tongue-in-cheek, and personalities in the news are often the



SOME five million people visited Britain's moving tribute to her First World War dead. The ‘Blood Swept Lands and Seas Of Red’ installation with 888,246 ceramic flowers planted under the Tower of London represented every British or Commonwealth citizen who died during the conflict. The display raised an incredible £11.2 million for charity. The first flower was planted on July 17 and the last was put in place on November 11 to coincide with Armistice Day ceremonies

subjects chosen by the Lewes bonfire societies.

I witnessed effigies of both Angela Merkel and the Olympic cyclist, Sir Bradley Wiggins, being paraded in advance of being propelled into the November sky.

On that occasion a 10-foot high effigy of her majesty the Queen accompanied by cardboard corgis was also paraded.

I don't think the Queen was blown up or burnt but the strategically placed bangers (firecrackers I think you call them) did the corgis no favours and Alex Salmond can be grateful that he didn't suffer the same indignity.

It has been suggested that Ed Milliband, the Labour party leader, needs something to buck him up a bit as his rating in the polls is at an all-time low.

No doubt the Tory council in Lewes would have a few ideas.

In the banking world the Royal Bank of Scotland are considering doing away with the age-old security question requesting the maiden name of the customer's mother, not wishing to offend customers raised by gay parents.

Global head of RBS's Inclusion programme, Majorie Strachan stated that asking for the maiden name of an ac-

count holder with two mothers or two fathers would be problematic.

This is the bank the government had to bail out with public funds, and that the Financial Conduct Authority fined £14.5 million for serious failings in advice given to mortgage borrowers. They obviously find many things problematic.

And finally a Christmas tale to warm the cockles of your heart (unless you are a taxpayer in Doncaster).

Doncaster Council in South Yorkshire has written to Peter Macdonald, an unemployed alcoholic, as he was falling into arrears with his rent.

The letter read, “We can see you are struggling to pay the shortfall between your rent and your housing allowance due to the large amount you spend on alcohol.

“We understand that you spend this as you are alcohol dependant. We have decided to award you a discretionary housing payment and will pay you an extra £9.06 per week.”

In Doncaster this will buy him at least another three pints of beer

A very happy Macdonald said, “I know this is a nanny state, but I had no idea they looked after you this well.”

*Merry Christmas to all,  
Elfan*

## Tributes for PD James who has died aged 94

LONDON – The queen of crime writers PD James has died aged 94 after a career that took her from the civil service to the House of Lords via the bestseller lists.

Her family said the bestselling writer, who became Baroness James of Holland Park in 1991, died at home in Oxford.

The novelist, who wrote a string of books about detective Adam Dalgliesh, spent 30 years working as a civil servant before becoming a full-time writer.

Her publishers Faber & Faber said, “She was so very remarkable in every aspect of her life, an inspiration and great friend to us all.”

The Dalgliesh books found a wider audience through a series of ITV adaptations with Roy Marsden in the lead role and James branched out into non-fiction and stand-alone novels including one updating Jane Austen's *Pride And Prejudice*.

*Death Comes To Pemberley* pitched Austen's characters, Mr. Darcy and his wife Elizabeth, into the middle of a murder mystery and was later filmed by the BBC.

She listed Austen among the four authors she regarded as having the greatest influence on her work, alongside Dorothy L. Sayers, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh.



BEDLAY CASTLE, located just northeast of Glasgow, is for sale with an asking price of £500,000 and comes with nearly 10 acres of land.

## 16<sup>th</sup> Century Haunted Scottish Castle for Sale

GLASGOW – With an asking price of £500,000, this Scottish castle is an attractive offer, although you might be sharing the building with a specter.

Bedlay Castle, located just northeast of Glasgow, comes with nearly 10 acres of land.

During the Middle Ages this land was owned by the Bishop of Glasgow, but in 1580 the property was given to Robert Boyd, 4<sup>th</sup> Lord Boyd of Kilmarnock, who built his own castle at a natural defensive point.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century building is a simple tower house of two storeys and an attic. The tower house was around 13 by 7.5 metres, and had a square stair tower protruding from the north-east corner.

At the ground floor were two vaulted cellars, with a hall above. The stair tower was later modified by the addition of an extra storey, reached by a spiral stair corbelled out from the join of the stair tower and the main block.

In 1642 the castle was sold to James Robertson, who later became Lord Bedlay.

His family extended the castle, and owned it until 1786. This extension is of the same height as the original building, with a single room on each floor. Round towers finish off both western corners of the extension.

Because the extension was built on lower ground, an extra floor was created at the lower level, accessed from the ground floor, and including a hidden room beneath one of the towers.

The castle, which is a listed historical

site, has long been used as a home and has six bedrooms. One will find large barrel-vaulted store rooms, cellars and two smaller larders as well as the main kitchen and living room.

The master bedroom is on the first floor together with a drawing room and gallery, and a large dining room. The other five bedrooms can be found on the second and third floors.

One of the legends about Bedlay Castle is that it is haunted – before this castle was built the property was used as a palace for the Bishops of Glasgow.

Apparently one of the bishops drowned in a nearby lake, but his ghost has been roaming around Bedlay Castle ever since, despite an attempt at an exorcism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Some people have reported seeing the bishop's large figure appearing spontaneously, and others have heard of him moving around the building.

The sale is being handled by Duncan Barrie of CKD Galbraith.

He commented, “The sale of Bedlay Castle makes owning a beautiful Scottish castle an affordable reality for many. However the scale of the restoration work required is fairly extensive but would be well worth the investment of time and finance.

“The property is deceptively close to the city of Glasgow, and there is direct access to the A80 to Stirling, Edinburgh and Perth via the M9 and A9; yet the mixture of pasture land and amenity woodland surrounding Bedlay gives a considerable element of seclusion and privacy.”

## Confidence in Scottish businesses ‘on the rise’

EDINBURGH – Business conditions in Scotland are improving, according to a survey of chartered accountants.

The latest business confidence monitor shows Scottish businesses recorded a confidence score of 22 between July and October, up from the previous quarter.

A total of 60 chartered accountants were asked how they would describe their confidence in the economic prospects facing their business over the next 12 months, compared to the previous 12 months.

They scored zero for stating “as confident,” positively up to 100 for more confident, and negatively down to -100 for less confident, with an average score

calculated from all the responses.

Only 21 percent of respondents said marketplace competition is a greater challenge than a year ago.

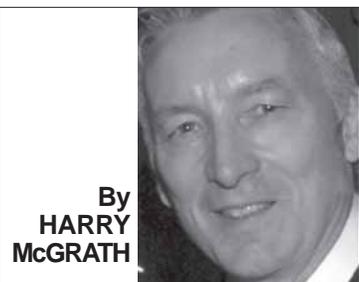
Turnover is reported to have increased by 5.5 percent in the last 12 months, with gross profits up by 4.9 percent.

Both of these growth rates are faster than those seen over 2013. Similar growth rates are expected in the year ahead.

Scotland's confidence rating is still below the UK average of 28.6.

The business monitor is conducted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) and Grant Thornton UK.

# The two Perths: The douce and the dangerous



By  
**HARRY  
McGRATH**

EDINBURGH – Until recently I had spent as much time in Perth, Ontario as in Perth, Scotland and my vague notion of the original Perth was based on two things.

The first was the testimony of a young man I coached in Canada who became a professional footballer in Scotland.

He played for four different teams in Scotland, the first of which was Perth's team, St. Johnstone.

He told me that walking around Perth after dark produced a heightened sense of physical threat in him that no other Scottish town could match.

In 2013, I finally visited Perth myself to speak at the Burns Club annual dinner.

From the convivial interior of the Salutation Hotel (commonly referred to as 'the oldest hotel in Scotland') it was hard to imagine the danger supposedly lurking in the streets outside.

Donald Paton has shed light on this apparent contradiction in his new anthology of writing about Perth.

It contains evidence of both Perths – the douce and the dangerous – and many more Perths besides. In fact, there seem to have been almost as many Perths as there were people to observe them.

Paton has collected over 120 pieces of writing about Perth and arranged them in chronological order.

The first is by "traveller-poet" John Taylor who arrived in 1618 when the town was still called St. Johnstone and found it "much decayed by reason of the want of his Majesty's (James VI) yearly coming to lodge there."

The last is a speech by Queen Elizabeth II delivered in 2012 "on the occasion of the granting of city status [to Perth]."

In between times, Paton has done a fine job of gathering an eclectic selection of writers most of whom, as the title suggests, are visitors to Perth rather than residents.

Burns is here, so too Scott, Buchan, Defoe, Ruskin, Beatrix Potter and General Wolfe. More recently, comedian Billy Connolly, actor Brian Cox and writers like Tom Weir, Jack House and Nigel Tranter have all had something to say about Perth.

There are also plenty of unknown punters who have felt moved to put their thoughts on paper when passing through the town.

Paton, as many *Celtic Connection* readers already know, was born and raised in Perth but now lives part of the year in Vancouver and there is some evidence of the Canadian connection in the anthology.

Several visiting Canadians are cited, including a young girl who was in Perth in 1846.



DONALD PATON with Provost of Perth Elizabeth Grant at the launch of his new book *Perth As Others Saw Us*.

She was taken "to view the Tay in all its grandeur" by John Dickson, a lawyer and a member of the Society of Writers to the *Signet*.

Dickson records that "she looked over the parapet of the bridge through her gold eyeglass and disposed of the Tay with the remark 'Ah! A pretty little creek'..."

She is not the only iconoclast in the anthology and this often provides the most engaging testimonies, especially compared to politicians and monarchs who usually say what they are expected to say.

Queen Victoria has two entries without saying much of anything and there are contributions from politicians of various stripes who sing the town's praises.

One notable exception is Michael Russell, until recently Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Education, but writing here when he was following the journey around Scotland once taken by poet Edwin Muir.

Russell provides a nicely crafted description of Perth as he found it in 1998.

He gives to the Salutation Hotel with one hand ("my favourite") and takes away with the other ("though its claim to be the oldest in Scotland is probably bogus").

He also slips in what might now be regarded as a wee piece of modern Scottish history: "Perhaps I like Perth because I associate it with success: it was here that Alex Salmond became SNP leader in 1990, and, at the same time, as his campaign manager, I avoided being defeated for the party office I held."

Anthologising is a notoriously tricky business considered in some academic circles as being subject to politicizing, sacralising, anathematizing and so on. But Paton is refreshingly honest about his motivations.

"As in any anthology," he writes in the introduction, "the selection reflects the compiler's tastes and prejudices. I have included what interested, engaged or amused me and this brought together some improbable bedfellows!"

He has clearly taken care to juxtapose the propagandist and the cynic where appropriate.

As mentioned, the Queen has the last entry in the anthology and praises Perth for its importance "at the very heart of Scotland."

*Scottish Review* editor and journalist Kenneth Roy, however, has the penultimate entry and tells a different story.

By coincidence, he was in Perth to speak at the annual Burns dinner the year before I did.

But his real concern is the town's home-

less problem and "the poverty and disadvantage lurking not far from Debenham's front door."

According to Roy, some of the good people of Perth are pretending not to see any of this.

His mood is not helped by a woman who approaches him after his speech to say "I do hope Scotland isn't as depressing as you made it out to be tonight."

If a new city has to be created, Roy "would have given the honour in Scotland to a town less pleased with itself."

Roy is one of a handful of people who get two entries in the anthology and it is interesting to see how attitudes can change over time.

Roy's mood is much lighter in the earlier piece, penned 25 years before he delivered his Burns speech, and Perth emerges as quirky and funny rather than self-satisfied.

Victorian-era art critic John Ruskin also has two entries.

In the first, he is full of the joys of the two childhood years he spent in Perth but the second is taken from his diaries when "all looked hopeless and cheerless; the town smoky and ugly in outer suburbs."

Ruskin concludes that it is not Perth that has changed but him, "partly from my own pain at not seeing E(uphemia) G(ray)."

'Effie' Gray was born and is buried in Perth. She is the subject of a recent movie starring Dakota Fanning.

There is poetry-a-plenty in Paton's anthology and it is of varying quality. The best of the worst poetry is, as always, by William McGonagall who left Dundee for Perth "resolving to return no more [to Dundee] owing to the harsh treatment I had received in the city as is well known as a truth without recording it."

The inhabitants of Perth, by contrast, were very kind to him and his wife and he rewarded them with a series of poems *Beautiful Ancient City of Perth / One of the grandest on the earth*, etc.

The title *Perth As Others Saw Us* is, simultaneously, a tip of the hat to Robert Burns ('To see ourselves as others see us!') and an indication that most of the writers are visitors rather than residents of Perth.

The book is a fascinating read in itself but also preserves some writing that would have disappeared from history without Paton's efforts. Future generations with an interest in Perth will have cause to be grateful.

[*Perth As Others Saw Us* is available from the publisher tippermuirbooks@blueyonder.co.uk or from Amazon].



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# Legacy of First World War Christmas truce lives on



THE Duke of Cambridge will unveil a new Christmas Truce Monument at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire on December 12. He is pictured above with Arsenal and England star Theo Walcott at the launch of the Football Remembers design project.

LONDON – The Duke of Cambridge will attend a dedication ceremony for a monument commemorating the 1914 Christmas Truce at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire on December 12.

The memorial unveil is part of Football Remembers, a series of events in December being delivered jointly by the Premier League, The FA and the Football League in partnership with the British Council, to commemorate the First World War.

The design for the memorial was chosen by The Duke of Cambridge and England star Theo Walcott, after the Football Remembers competition was opened to more than 30,000 schools across the UK.

Until now, there has been no memorial on the 150-acre site dedicated to the Christmas Truce story of December 25, 1914. The new memorial has been funded by the Football Remembers partners.

One hundred years ago this Christmas, on the bitter, battered no-man's land between the German and Allied trenches, bands of cold, demoralised, bewildered men, taught to hate, played together in the most famous scattering of football games in history.

On December 23 – that first winter of the First World War – hymns were heard from both sides of the line – *O Tannenbaum, Oh Come All Ye Faithful*.

By Christmas Eve, these trees had been decorated with candles and paper lanterns that could be seen shining across the mud.

As a deep hard frost settled over northern Europe, carols drifted into the air from both sides of the line – *O Tannenbaum, Oh Come All Ye Faithful*.

In no-man's land, soldiers from the two sides shook hands and laughed and smoked. They exchanged presents: beef, rum, chocolate and cigarettes from the British and sausages, cognac and coffee from the Germans.

They dug graves in the hard earth, gathered the bodies of the dead, and occasionally buried them, German and Briton, side-by-side.

They made repairs to the trenches, and talked about their families – many of the German soldiers spoke excellent English.

And then, in pockets, up and down the 500-mile front line, they played football – sometimes with a tin can, sometimes with a rolled up sandbag and occasionally with a real leather football – their huge army boots heavy with water, the ball leaden from the constant damp.

The poignancy of those Christmas kickabouts lives on today. A century on, there are numerous commemorations this December.

At the National Football Museum, a new exhibition, "The Greater Game – Football and the First World War" opens on December 19.

It will cover all things football, including the Christmas Truce, but also the controversy surrounding the continuation of the 1914-15 football season, the development of women's football at munitions factories and the Footballers Battalion, formed at Fulham Town Hall in 1914.

The museum is also supporting www.footballandthefirstworldwar.com, a project to create a database about football during the war, to which everyone is encouraged to contribute.

December 6 marks the start of Football Remembers Week, and on December 17, the British Army will take on the German Army in a special football match at Aldershot Town Stadium.

The match will bring together serving soldiers from both countries almost exactly 100 years on from the original Christmas Truce moments of December 25, 1914.

## An Irish Christmas Tradition: The Candle in the Window

THE candle in the window at Christmas symbolizes many things in Ireland.

It's still a favorite traditional Irish Christmas decoration, harkening back to that ancient Christmas Eve when Mary and Joseph could find no shelter.

It is a symbol of Irish hospitality – a way of welcoming Mary and Joseph...and any travelers who might happen to pass by looking for a warm place to stay.

In the days when it was illegal and even dangerous to practice the Catholic faith in Ireland because of the oppressive Penal Laws, the candles seen in the windows of Irish homes at Christmas also signaled traveling priests that this was a home where they would be welcome and where they could safely conduct the traditional Irish Catholic Christmas Mass.



The words from the "Kerry Christmas Carol" give a sense of the roots of this old Irish tradition:

*Don't blow the tall white candle out  
But leave it burning bright,  
So that they'll know  
they're welcome here  
This holy Christmas night!*

The placing of a lighted candle in the window of a house on Christmas Eve is still practised today.

A further element of the tradition is that the candle should be lit by the youngest member of the household and only be extinguished by a girl bearing the name 'Mary'.

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THE 1914 Christmas Truce during the Great War. This is the original image printed in *The Illustrated London News* on January 9, 1915. The caption reads: "The Light of Peace in the trenches on Christmas Eve. A German soldier opens the spontaneous truce by approaching the British lines with a small Christmas tree."

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# Beannacht Nollaig

Page 1



## Nollaig fé shéin is fé mhaise dhaoibh go léir

A very Happy Christmas to everyone  
around the Pacific Northwest!  
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and its affiliated programs - Baile Glas dancers; Ceol Cascadia Irish Music Association; Friends of St. Patrick in Seattle; Irish Heritage Players; Irish Network Seattle; Irish Reels Film Festival; Seattle Gaels Gaelic Football, Hurling & Camogie; Seattle Galway Sister City Association; and Seattle Irish Immigrant Support. [www.IrishClub.org](http://www.IrishClub.org)

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For more information about the Welsh Society activities  
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from all of us

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# Merry Christmas

Page 2



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# Beannacht Nollaig

Page 3

## The Tree of Life



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May hunger disappear and terrorists cease their senseless acts.  
May people live in freedom, worshipping as they see fit, loving others.  
May the sanctity of the home be ever preserved.  
May peace, everlasting peace, reign supreme."*

- Soundings, Vol. 2, #12

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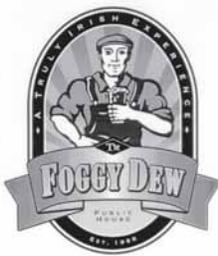
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# Merry Christmas

Page 4



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# Hemochromatosis community loses its founder and crusader

**V**ANCOUVER – Hereditary hemochromatosis, or iron overload, is an inherited disorder that causes the body to absorb two to three times the normal amount of iron.

Over the years, the excess iron builds up in the vital organs, joints and tissues where it can cause a number of debilitating and potentially fatal conditions such as liver and heart disease, diabetes, impotence and arthritis.

Hereditary hemochromatosis is the most common genetic disorder in Canada, affecting one in 300 Canadians, predominantly of Celtic and European descent.

Tens of thousands of Canadians and people around the world have Marie Warder to thank for their diagnosis and treatment of hemochromatosis.

Journalist, author, teacher, musician, and founder of the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society, Marie spent nearly half of her life crusading against the ravages of hereditary hemochromatosis.

Both her daughter, Leigh, and husband, Tom, were diagnosed with the disorder. Tom suffered severely from the damage caused by the excess iron before passing away in 1992 from liver failure caused by hemochromatosis. Leigh, thankfully, was diagnosed early enough to minimize any potential harm.

The distress of knowing both Leigh and Tom had this “iron thing,” seeing how close to death Tom had gotten before receiving a diagnosis, and realizing it was indeed hereditary, compelled Marie to warn the medical community and general public about the dangers of iron overload and its potential to devastate families and future generations if left undiagnosed and untreated.

Letter writing ensued but proved unsuccessful after being rejected from various publications due to lack of case histories.

Despite the rejections, Marie was motivated by Leigh’s improvement in her iron levels to start writing the groundbreaking book, *The Bronze Killer*, and founded the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society (CHS).

After two years of searching for enough “hemochromatotics” to start a society, writing and re-writing the constitution and saving enough money for activities, Marie finally incorporated CHS in 1982 with seven members.

In the years that followed, Marie learned as much as she could about the disorder from researchers and doctors around the world; many from Canada agreed to become directors of CHS’ Board and/or medical advisors to the society.

After receiving request after request in the mail for patient information, Marie realized she and the society needed to produce brochures for the Canadian public.

Soon after, Marie felt the space contained within a brochure limited the amount of information that she could provide, and so she wrote the booklet, *Iron...the other side of the story!*, which became the society’s only ongoing source of income for some time.



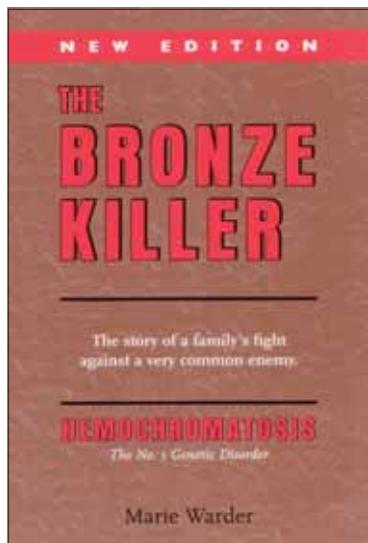
PHOTO: Delta Optimist  
**MARIE WARDER** warned the medical community and general public about the dangers of iron overload and its potential to devastate families and future generations if left undiagnosed and untreated.

*“Genetic disorders recognize no boundaries”*

During this period, Marie acknowledged that “genetic disorders recognize no boundaries”, and she established The International Association of Hemochromatosis Societies to help fledgling groups in other countries get off the ground.

A central registry of hemochromatosis sufferers was built to coordinate family screening. Newsletters were written and mailed as funds permitted. Federal and provincial governments were briefed. Information was spread. Letters were taken to heart and personally answered by Marie.

Public awareness in Canada increased, in no small part to appearances by Marie, CHS medical advisors and hemochromatosis sufferers in the media.



**MARIE WARDER** wrote the ground-breaking book, *The Bronze Killer*, and founded the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society (CHS).

The Canadian Hemochromatosis Society grew in recognition and activity level under the tireless guidance and leadership of Marie. Many of these years the CHS operated out of Marie’s and Tom’s home, with files kept under the bed.

However, as Charles Magill writes in his story on Marie in the October 1995 *Reader’s Digest*, “As the society grew, so did Marie’s anguish over Tom’s worsening condition.

“Arthritis crippled his hands, and joint disease in his feet made walking agony. Angina prevented him from sleeping, and twice, heart attacks landed him in intensive care.”

After Tom passed away, Marie found solace in keeping herself busier than ever. However, her own health faltered.

Before she stepped down as president of the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society in 1994, she was able to persuade the Canadian Red Cross to accept blood donations from people with hemochromatosis.

She convinced Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada to have the term “reduced iron” on food labels (which was often misinterpreted by hemochromatosis sufferers as having a reduced quantity of iron) replaced by “iron.”

She was also present at the World Health Organization meeting on the prevention and control of hemochromatosis, held in Israel.

As Marie recovered from her health issues, and through the following years, she continued to help those with hemochromatosis.

Where she worked as a lay chaplain at Delta Hospital, near her home in Tsawwassen, B.C., she would often see patients with symptoms of hemochromatosis, and seize any opportunity to present them with information on the disorder.

She often received e-mails from newly diagnosed individuals with questions and expressions of gratitude for her book, *The Bronze Killer*.

Marie blogged about hemochromatosis, and was an avid user of social media to get the word out about the disorder.

In recent years, unable to type and restricted to the use of a wheelchair, Marie would use a voice recognition device to write her books, e-mails, and online content.

The days she thought she would let go of hemochromatosis, hemochromatosis would not let go of her.

Even a few weeks prior to her passing, Marie forwarded a request she received to the office of the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society by an individual looking for more information.

After several years of deteriorating health, Marie had to be hospitalized in late September 2014. In the early hours of October 20, Marie slipped away peacefully at the Delta Hospital at the age of 87.

Marie’s talents, skills, aptitude, fortitude and commitment have saved numerous Canadians and others around the globe from the preventable hazards of hemochromatosis, and helped countless others find an early diagnosis.

Thank you, Marie, for all you gave from your heart to help so many.

For more information on the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society, visit: [www.toomuchiron.ca](http://www.toomuchiron.ca).

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## Are You of European or Celtic Ancestry?

If so, YOU are at risk for Hereditary Hemochromatosis

If you have two or more of the following symptoms that are otherwise unexplained, contact the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society to inquire about the proper tests for iron overload.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Chronic fatigue                                       | Menstrual irregularities, premature menopause                               |
| Loss of body hair                                     | Arthritis and joint pain (check knuckles of thumb, first and second finger) |
| Loss of libido & sex drive; impotence                 | Chondrocalcinosis   |
| Abdominal distension and discomfort (bloating)        | Diabetes (adult onset type 2)   |
| Thyroid problems                                      | Enlarged liver, liver diseases including cirrhosis                          |
| Sudden weight loss                                    | Bronzing or graying of the skin   |
| Elevated liver enzymes, glucose & triglyceride levels | Cancers (metastasized from the liver)                                       |
| Personality changes, mood swings; anger & depression  | Heart arrhythmia, cardiomyopathy  |
|   | Heart disease; congestive heart failure                                     |

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# Some great memories of beautiful Cape Breton and our stay at the unique Normaway Inn



In my journey through the Maritimes last summer with my son Pat and granddaughters, Madi and Kelsey, we had some wonderful experiences and enjoyed spectacular scenery.

After arriving in Nova Scotia, we travelled to Prince Edward Island, then on to Cape Breton Island, and finally to Newfoundland through to Labrador.

It was the trip of a lifetime for us as a family and one particularly memorable part of the journey was the time spent on Cape Breton Island.

The views are breathtaking with the mountains and the ocean. It's easy to understand why so many songs are written about the beauty of the island.

At dusk, we started looking for a place to spend the night but everywhere we stopped was fully booked. We began thinking we might have to spend the night in our vehicle.

Finally, someone suggested the Normaway Inn and they called ahead and told them we were on our way. By the time we arrived, we were tired and hungry and they very kindly kept the dining room open for us...and what a delicious meal it was.

The Normaway Inn is actually a big farm with several cottages. Luckily, we were able to secure a couple of those cottages for the night.

In the morning we could see around the farm with several horses and a donkey in the field. There is also a huge barn which doubles as a concert venue. On the night we arrived, there was a concert, but apparently we were too late to enjoy it.

Breakfast was in the main house, a lovely old rambling inn with a welcoming charm and a well-lived in feel. There are rooms upstairs and a large dining room on the main floor where guests can enjoy a chat over a leisurely meal.

Dave MacDonald is the owner of the Normaway and a real character who loves to swap stories with his guests. He has a great sense of humour and it seems he knows just about everyone in Cape Breton and beyond.

He has an amazing recollection for dates, along with who visited the Normaway on a certain date, and when various musicians played at the inn.

He spoke to me about the history of the Normaway and about the concerts held in his barn.

"George Washington MacPherson was the chap that built the Normaway," he said.

"He was born on this property and, in 1925 he wrote a book called *A Parsons Adventure* that told all about his life and speaks with great fondness about his dad Norman.

"In 1926, George bought this property from his brother Ralph and built the Normaway with the intent of catering to salmon fishery, retired preachers, and you name it.

"According to my dad, one day, George was in the livingroom chatting to his wife and asked what they were going to call the Normaway.

"She asked how many years had it



By  
**CATHOLINE  
BUTLER**

been since Norman passed away and George said, 'that's going to be the name, it's the Normaway'."

Dave has been at the Normaway for the past 40 years. He said, "I got the horses after I got married, because my wife loves animals and I thought that my wife would be less likely to leave me if there were some horses here.

"Now, she's more likely to leave me because I breed them and forget to sell them. My wife bought the donkey.

"We used to have Highland cattle and sheep and I sold them but I'm planning to buy more. But yeah, I've got to sell some horses first if I want to hang onto my wife."

Some well-known Cape Breton musicians have worked and performed at the Normaway barn and some recognized political figures have also stayed at the inn.

Recalling some of the well-known guests who have stayed at the inn, Dave said, "One time I was standing at the door on Father's Day 1996, the same year I got married.

"And, here is John F. Kennedy Junior standing in the doorway with his sister Caroline, but I didn't know who he was. I always ask our guests where they're off to that day, and he said New York.

"Then, one of the girls working here asked if I thought he was JFK junior.

"I said, I'll find out and I introduced myself. He said that he was John Kennedy and we chatted for about 45 minutes to an hour.

"Anyway, he got to his flight a little late, and that's how everyone else found out who he was. I think he was looking for a place to get married because it was later that summer that he got married.

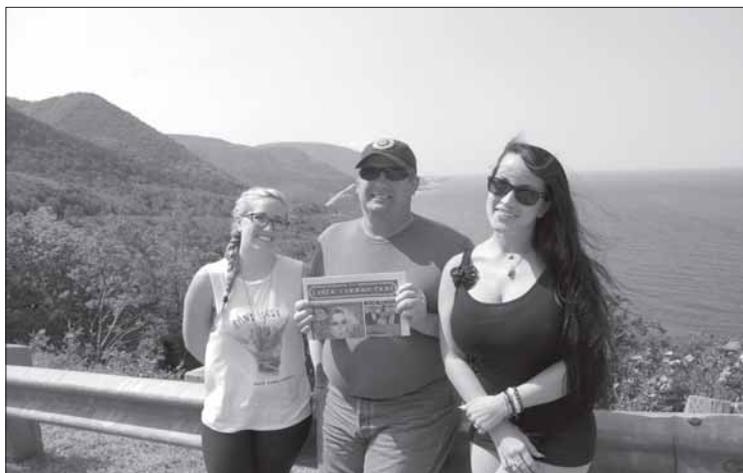
"John Kennedy Junior's grandmother was connected to Nova Scotia. Jackie O's people were French and I think her grandmother lived in Nova Scotia. Jackie was always very fond of Cape Breton."

Dave continued to tell me about some of the other famous guests he hosted. Dan Akroyd is one, and William Shatner did a film here. He and his family stayed here for three weeks and he loved Cape Breton.

"I remember the first time Ashley MacIsaac played here," said Dave. "His dad called up in the morning and asked if the dances were open to the public and I told him, yes.

"Anyway, at the barn, we always have a little open mike session and the MC for the evening invited some kids up to the mike.

"One of the kids would play the piano, then would move to the fiddle, and then



PAT McCAY with his two daughters Kelsey and Madisson holding a copy of *The Celtic Connection* in front of a spectacular scenic view on their trip through the Canadian Maritimes last summer.

*"I said, I'll find out and I introduced myself. He said that he was John Kennedy and we chatted for about 45 minutes to an hour."*

to step dancing, and one of those kids was Ashley MacIsaac. It was just an incredible evening, he was so talented. Ashley has continued to play here over the years.

"Two years ago, we had a concert in our livingroom and public radio from the States were here to record it. Then, they took Ashley to New York to do work on Broadway.

"One year, Natalie McMaster was playing here and *The Herald* newspaper did a big spread on it.

"About 900 people showed up at the Normaway, and that day the carpenters were just finishing the stage as the people were arriving...it was quite a day.

"Natalie was as wonderful as she always is, and before the concert she was over by the tree teaching the kids how to play the fiddle – we had people here from Halifax and all over for the evening.

"After that day, we decided if Natalie is going to play here, we wouldn't advertise it."

Rita MacNeil was the first person to fill the barn according to Dave and that was in 1984. He said, "then we did an outdoor concert with Rita as well."

Rita grew up in Big Pond and for a few years, Dave shared a telephone party line with her.

"She was a wonderful gal and sad she is passed on, but she left a great musical legacy behind," he said.

John Allen Cameron also played there and he recorded a song that Buddy MacDonald wrote called *Getting Dark Again*.



DAVE MACDONALD, the owner of the Normaway, is a real character and a great storyteller.

It seems that Buddy was at a party and, along with a number of other guys, they started playing the music.

Then it got dark, and they played all night long and then the next day, they played all day again.

And, then someone said, "Buddy, it's getting dark again," and Buddy decided to write a song about it.

"The Rankin family live just down the road from me," said Dave. "Jimmy Rankin got married here, and Raylene worked here. Sad that she has passed away, an absolutely marvellous girl."

And of course, there was the very tragic and untimely death of John Rankin early one winter morning when he was on his way to a hockey game.

John swerved to avoid a mound of salt on the ice covered road near Whale Cove, and plunged over a 25-metre cliff into the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Speaking about future plans at the Normaway, Dave said, "Our long range plans are to do more music nights in the barn. We do them in the livingroom now. This is our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of doing music almost seven nights a week."

As I wrote this article, I was thinking about our visit to the Normaway and meeting Dave MacDonald. When he starts to talk, time stands still as you're drawn into this riveting storytelling.

We all left with great memories of the Normaway Inn, The Cabot Trail and beautiful Cape Breton.

The Normaway Inn is located on Egypt Road, Margaree Valley, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. For more information, call toll free at 1-800-565-9463 or visit online at: [www.thenormawayinn.com](http://www.thenormawayinn.com).



## WHITE ROCK IRISH CLUB

# White Rock Irish Festival: Plans for March 2015

By DEIRDRE O'RUAIRC  
WHITE ROCK – *Nollaig Shona*. December is fast approaching and the White Rock Irish Club executive would like to wish each and every one of you a very happy and peaceful Christmas and all the very best in 2015.

The club will hold its AGM on January 30, 2015 and the positions coming up are president and secretary.

If you would like to put your name forward or nominate someone, please send nominations to Robert Holland by e-mail at: [dutchy110@hotmail.com](mailto:dutchy110@hotmail.com), or phone (604) 446-1219.

Plans are underway for the White Rock Irish Festival for the month of March and what an honour it is to the Irish community!

St. Patrick's Day is in the planning – more details in the New Year. The Irish Club is represented on the planning committee, which meets every two weeks. If anyone would like to join in the planning or has ideas, please contact me.

We would much appreciate any suggestions or ideas you may have for the club, I would love to hear from you.

We have several new Irish families moving into the area and we would like to extend a warm Irish/White Rock welcome to them. If you meet newcomers please share our information with them.

There is an unofficial Irish Club meeting most mornings at 10 AM at Tim Hortons at 152nd Street/17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A nice way for newcomers to meet us.

It is by working together as a team that will keep our club alive and vibrant!

For more information about the White Rock Irish Club, contact president Deirdre O'Ruairc by e-mail at: [shamrockhome@shaw.ca](mailto:shamrockhome@shaw.ca), or call (604) 538-6765.



## Christmas holly

The placing of a ring of holly on doors originated in Ireland as holly was one of the main plants that flourished at Christmas time and which gave the poor ample means with which to decorate their dwellings.

All decorations are traditionally taken down on Little Christmas (January 6) and it is considered to be bad luck to take them down beforehand.

IRELAND-CANADA CENTRE FOR COMMERCE

# WestJet CEO says Canada is Dublin's fastest growing market

CALGARY – As most Irish-Canadians have heard, WestJet now flies to Dublin. This is a very exciting time for the Calgary based airline, not only accessing Ireland, but also, by opening up access to the EU for trade and tourism.

The Ireland-Canada Centre for Commerce, Calgary, had the opportunity to host a luncheon featuring Gregg Saretsky, President and CEO of WestJet and joined by Michael Hurley, Deputy Head of Mission for the Embassy of Ireland in Ottawa.

Oil and Gas, IT, Agriculture and Transportation industry executives filled the room to network and listen to these compelling speakers.

Opening the lunch, the ICCC was delighted to welcome Michael Hurley from the Irish Embassy in Ottawa for his first trip to Western Canada.

Michael Hurley has recently taken up duty as Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Ireland in Ottawa.

Before that he was Deputy Director for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Dublin.

His previous overseas assignments were in: The Hague, as Deputy Head of Mission; Brussels, at the Irish Permanent Representation to the European Union; and Madrid, as Consular Attaché.

Michael spoke on the ties with Ireland that continue to be strong, and also the new focus of the embassy now that Ireland has shown such strong recovery.

The Ireland-Canada Centre for Commerce, Calgary, looks forward to working with Michael Hurley over his term in Canada.

Gregg Saretsky, was instrumental in getting WestJet to go to Dublin. That commitment to this new route has seen unprecedented success for the airline.

The St. John's to Dublin route sold 11,000 seats in the first 24 hours. With travel between Ireland and Canada at an all time high, the timing couldn't be better.

Passenger numbers to Canada have been off the scale with almost 100 percent growth year on year. Canada is Dublin's fastest growing market this year.

Gregg went on to say that the airline has also extended the dates they will be flying between Ireland and Canada, starting early in the year in May and going on well into October.

With new planes on the horizon, the opportunities for additional flights from other Canadian cities are on the horizon.

Gregg closed the luncheon with a draw for two return tickets to Dublin next summer.

Sean Kelly, a long time member of the ICCC in Calgary, was the lucky winner! He was delighted that he will be able to return home next summer with the whole family.



GREGG SARETSKY with Lauren Regan of the Ireland-Canada Centre for Commerce, Calgary and Michael Hurley, the new Deputy Head of Mission with the Embassy of Ireland in Ottawa.

IRISH WOMEN'S NETWORK

## Christmas in the City – What to Do?

By ITA KANE-WILSON  
VANCOUVER – There are so many things to do in Vancouver over the Christmas holidays and family favourites of ours include the Festival of Lights at Van Dusen Garden, Bright Nights Christmas Train in Stanley Park, and the Vancouver Christmas Market downtown.



These all cost a pile of money, but if you do your research online you can find some free activities out there as well.

There's free ice skating at Robson Square during the holidays. You still have to pay for skates and helmet rental, but it's not expensive.

Canada Place is always worth a wander around and Granville Island has lots of free activities this time of year, including the Winter Solstice Lantern Festival on December 21.

This is an annual event and this year takes in the Roundhouse in Yaletown, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden in Gastown, as well as Granville Island. More details on their website: www.secretlantern.org.

Christmas is also a very lonely time of year for a lot of people away from home either for the first time, the fifth time or even the twentieth time. It never gets easy being away from your family and

friends in Ireland.

The Irish Women's Network and the Irish in Vancouver Facebook pages are maintained by volunteers living in Vancouver.

If you ever feel like reaching out, we're on the other end. There's a big Irish community here and nobody should ever feel alone.

With that in mind, the Irish in Vancouver/VIBE and Irish Women's Network are organizing a Christmas get-together and more details will be on social media very shortly.

Keep an eye out. It would be great to see you and raise a glass with you.

Happy Christmas to one and all.

For more details, visit: www.irishin-vancouver.com.

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# Dublin accuses British Army of torture during the Troubles

BELFAST – The British and Irish Governments will clash in the European Court of Human Rights over one of the Troubles' most harrowing torture cases involving the degrading treatment of Irish prisoners at the hands of the British Army.

Dublin has asked the ECHR to revisit its judgment in the "hooded men" case of the 1970s, when 14 suspects were arrested in 1971 after Edward Heath introduced internment without trial in a bid to quell violence in Northern Ireland.

The 14 men were captured, flown by helicopter to a secret location, now known to be the Ballykelly army base, and subjected to methods of torture including "white noise," sleep deprivation and beatings.

On their way to the interrogation centre, the men were hooded and thrown to the ground from helicopters. Testimonials suggest many were told they were hundreds of feet in the air, but were actually just a few feet from the ground.

Three years later, the men were awarded £12,500 in damages and the ECHR later admonished Britain for its degrading treatment, but, crucially, fell short of finding the UK guilty of torture.

Newly unearthed documents stored in the UK public records office in London appear to suggest Britain accepted that the techniques used on the men amounted to torture.



PHOTO: Amnesty International.  
THE 'HOODED MEN' at a press conference in Dublin with Colm O'Gorman from Amnesty International.

The evidence came to light in a television documentary, *The Torture Files*, by the Irish broadcaster RTE.

Since then, campaigners and a number of the 14 prisoners have lobbied the Irish Government over the case with the request to the ECHR made on behalf of the Irish Government by Foreign Minister Charlie Flanagan.

"On the basis of the new material uncovered, it will be contended that the ill-treatment suffered by the hooded men should be recognised as torture," he said.

The UK Ministry of Defence has rejected allegations that it used torture and

said it had "always fully co-operated" with statutory inquiries.

But campaigners welcomed the move to attempt to bring the case back into the ECHR.

Patrick Corrigan, Amnesty's Northern Ireland programme director, said, "Ireland is to be commended for playing its role in ensuring the UK is finally held responsible for what it did to these men in those interrogation rooms 43 years ago.

"We hope the UK Government now announces without further delay the establishment of an independent investigation."

## New book prompts call for inquiry into some deaths during Troubles

DUBLIN – Northern solicitor John McBurney says he wants to know what the taoiseach and Garda Commissioner are going to do about claims in a new book alleging collusion between the IRA and some members of the Garda during the Troubles.

New allegations that rogue gardaí and other State employees colluded with the IRA throughout the Troubles, even helping to prevent the entire army council from being arrested, should be subjected to a formal inquiry, it has been claimed.

The allegations are made in a book *Southside Provisional: From Freedom Fighter to the Four Courts* by Dublin solicitor Kieran Conway.

In the book Conway claims he is a former IRA head of intelligence and has knowledge of IRA collusion with gardaí and high ranking public figures.

McBurney, a Northern solicitor who has represented the families of Peter Robinson and Ian Paisley, also represented the family of the late chief superintendent Harry Breen of the Royal Ulster Constabulary at the Smithwick tribunal in Dublin.

Two senior police officers, Chief Superintendent Harry Breen and Superintendent Bob Buchanan were ambushed by the IRA in County Armagh after they traveled from Dundalk where they had a meeting with An Garda Síochána on March 20, 1989.

Prior to driving to Dundalk, Breen had expressed concern that there was an IRA mole in the Garda whom he named to his staff officer.



THE SMITHWICK tribunal found on the balance of probability that there was collusion between the Garda and IRA in the killing of RUC officers Harry Breen (L) and Bob Buchanan (R) in March 1989.

Although never conclusively proven, there is compelling evidence that an IRA supporter within the Garda provided information to the IRA in Northern Ireland.

Breen and Buchanan were the two highest ranking RUC officers to be killed in the conflict. Their deaths also strained relations between RUC and Irish police.

The Irish Government set up a tribunal headed by Justice Peter Smithwick to determine the facts of the case.

The tribunal found on the balance of probability that there was collusion between the Garda and IRA in the killing of Breen and his colleague superintendent Bob Buchanan in March 1989.

McBurney has since been examining 13 other killings in the Dundalk border area between 1981 and 1985.

The killings included Northern Irish high court judge Lord Justice Gibson and his wife Cecily, and the Hanna family who were killed in an apparent case of mistaken identity, among others.

Among the claims in Conway's book is that the IRA received a tip-off from high up within the Garda Síochána that the force's Special Branch was about to arrest the IRA ruling command while it was at a secret location for talks with Protestant clergymen in 1974.

Conway also alleges in the book that members of the Dublin establishment including a top banker, stockbroker, a leading journalist and several mainstream politicians aided the Provisionals in their armed campaign.

Elite figures in Irish society ferried IRA weapons and hid wanted activists in houses in affluent areas of Dublin, according to the book.



THE GENERAL POST OFFICE in Dublin was the centre of the 1916 Easter Rising.

## National holiday possible for 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1916 Rising

DUBLIN – Preparations are underway for the centenary commemorations in 2016, which a member of the British Royal Family could potentially attend.

Among the ideas proposed to commemorate the historic event, a once-off 'Republic Day' is being "seriously considered" by politicians.

The idea is that a 'Republic Day' would be held on Monday April 25, 2016, marking 100 years and a day after the Rising itself.

A series of seven concerts starting on Easter Monday, 2016, each of which will be dedicated to one of the seven signatories of the Rising has been confirmed. They will take place at the National Concert Hall.

The Easter Rising was an armed insurrection lasting six days from Easter Monday, April 24 to Saturday, April 29, 1916 with the aim of ending British rule in Ireland and establishing an Irish Republic.

It was the most significant uprising in Ireland since the rebellion of 1798.

Led by Pádraig Pearse and James Connolly, the Irish Volunteers took over the GPO on O'Connell Street and key locations around the city were occupied by members of the Irish Citizen Army, Irish Volunteers and Cumann na mBan.

The Irish tricolour was raised over the building and Pearse went outside to read the proclamation declaring Ireland to be a republic.

Following on from days of bloody fighting and shelling of buildings from the gun boat Helga on the river Liffey, the Rising was finally suppressed and the leaders surrendered.

They were first imprisoned in Richmond Barracks and then the leaders were court-martialed and executed at Kilmainham Jail. Many of the Volunteers who had taken part in the Rising were sent to internment camps in England and Wales.

A decision to invite representatives of the British Royal Family, the UK Gov-



HEATHER HUMPHREYS, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, has direct responsibility for the 1916 centenary celebrations.

ernment and unionism to the centenary ceremonies has created significant controversy, both Fianna Fail and Sinn Féin have indicated strong disagreement with the plan.

Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams said, "I have been raising for some time now, both in the Dáil and elsewhere, the widespread concern at what has so far been a minimalist approach to marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Easter Rising.

"The government's treatment of the historic Moore Street 1916 battlefield site has been a disaster, with the desires of property developers getting precedence over the need to preserve and promote our national heritage.

"For the record, the 1916 Rising was a seminal event in Irish history, a decisive blow in the struggle for Irish freedom and a beacon of hope for colonised and oppressed peoples the world over.

"The democratic and republican principles of freedom and equality contained in the 1916 Proclamation are as relevant to the Ireland of 2014 as when read aloud by Pearse at the GPO."



BIRTH OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC by Walter Paget [1863-1935], depicting the GPO during the shelling.

# Homeless man dies in a doorway just steps away from Dail Eireann

DUBLIN – The death of Jonathan Corrie (43), a heroin addict who died in a Dublin city-centre doorway, highlights the growing problem of homelessness. His body was discovered on the morning of December 1 on Molesworth Street.

Corrie, who was from Kilkenny, was remembered as nice, polite, gentle and no trouble by those who offered him care and comfort, as he battled his own demons.

“He had been coming into us for about five years. He would come in once or twice a week. He was always very polite,” recalled Alice Leahy from the charity Trust.

“He might have a clean-up and a cup of tea and, if he needed, his feet treated.

“He was very quiet, nice, polite, gentle and never caused any problems when he was with us. We were all very sad to hear of his passing.”

Reacting to the death, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin called for a public debate on homelessness and revealed a diocesan property would be made available to house up to 30 people before Christmas.

As a mark of respect to Jonathan, the Oireachtas Christmas Tree lighting ceremony at Leinster House was postponed.

Instead a vigil attended by more than 200 people was held and bouquets placed at the scene where Corrie passed away.

Speaking at an emergency summit on homelessness, Environment Minister Alan Kelly has pledged every person sleeping rough on the streets of Dublin will be offered emergency accommodation by Christmas.

He said an additional 200 beds will be made available in the coming days and weeks and that any extra funding needed to meet the ambitious target will be made available by his department.

“In the city of Dublin, by Christmas, there should be no reason for anybody to sleep rough. If they want a bed, it’ll be there for them. That’s the ambition.”

Kelly also said there was an urgent need to roll out targeted increases in



THE PLIGHTS of Jonathan Corrie who died on the street outside Leinster House highlights the growing issue of homelessness in Dublin.



BROTHER Kevin Crowley at the Capuchin Day Centre for the homeless in Dublin’s north inner city. They offer meals and food parcels to an average of 2,000 people daily.

*Homeless people have been dying on the streets for years but it took one outside the Dail to get attention.”*

rent supplements to vulnerable families who can no longer afford sky-rocket-

ing rents in the capital.

Despite all the good intentions, one of the biggest providers of hot meals for homeless people in Dublin never received an invite to the emergency summit.

Brother Kevin Crowley, from the Capuchin Day Centre on Bow Street, has been seeking help for those without homes for years, yet he was not asked to attend the discussion in the Custom House organised by Minister Kelly.

“Maybe I’d be a nuisance to them,” said Crowley. “Homeless people have been dying on the streets for years but it took one outside the Dail to get attention.”

He added, “If I was there, I’d tell them there should be less talk and more action. Instead of putting up people in hotels and spending a fortune with nothing to show for it at the end, they should be building housing units for homeless people.

“What is needed is housing where people can have dignity and respect, especially for people with families.”

The Capuchin Day Centre runs a daily provision of meals and food parcels for those in need. “Yesterday we had 2,000 people through our centre for breakfast, food parcels and dinner,” said Brother Kevin.

Charities and agencies invited to the summit included Merchant Quay Ireland, Trust, Barnardos, Focus Ireland and the Simon Communities of Ireland.

Peter McVerry Trust, Threshold, NABCO (National Association of Building Co-operatives), Irish Council for Social Housing, Crosscare, Sophia Housing, and Society of St. Vincent De Paul were also represented.



“I’ve never forgotten about her,” said Fiona Pender’s mother. “She’s on my mind constantly. It’s important for me to find her body and the body of her baby. I need to give them dignity.”

## Sexual assault arrest in Canada may lead to body in Irish cold case

SASKATOON – A sexual assault arrest in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan may lead to developments in the high profile disappearance of a pregnant hairdresser in Ireland 18 years ago.

Fiona Pender, a 25-year-old hairdresser and part-time model, was last seen August 22, 1996 in Tullamore, Ireland. Pender was seven months pregnant when she disappeared.

Police believed she was murdered and her body buried, but nearly two decades later her fate remains a mystery.

Now, the arrest of a 41-year-old Irish man in Saskatoon for sexually assaulting and threatening to kill his wife has allegedly led to information in the Pender case.

The *Star Phoenix* reports that after the arrest of the man, who cannot be identified due to a publication ban on anything that would identify the complainant in the sexual assault, Irish police have begun further investigations into the Pender disappearance and are planning to dig in new locations for her body.

“I’ve never forgotten about her. She’s been on my mind constantly,” said Pender’s mother Josephine (65). “It’s important for me to find her body and the body of her baby. I need to give them dignity.”

Irish police told Josephine that new information could lead to a break in her

daughter’s case and only that the new information came from a “foreign” source.

Media reports say sources have confirmed that revelations were made during the investigation of the sexual assault case in Saskatchewan.

According to a report in the *Saskatoon Herald*, the man is the main suspect in the Pender case, but was never charged.

Although he has denied involvement in the disappearance, police have reportedly received information that he may have told another woman the location of where Pender is buried.

It is unclear when the man left Ireland or when he married, but he and his wife moved into their home in Saskatoon less than a year ago, say residents.

RCMP have confirmed the man’s arrest but declined to comment on the connection to the Pender case or any collaboration with Irish police.

Alison O’Reilly, a Pender family friend and a reporter with the *Irish Mail*, said Fiona’s disappearance gripped Ireland in 1996, and news of the developments in Canada has thrown the case back onto the public radar there.

She said Josephine and her remaining son “have been to hell and back,” as they’ve clung to even the smallest leads.

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# 'All I want for Christmas is a sectarian hate-filled flag'

BELFAST – A flag protestor has told how her 13-year-old son asked for an Ulster Freedom Fighter (UFF) flag for Christmas.

The mother spoke of the boy's love of loyalist flags in an interview with Queen's University researchers, who carried out a major study on the flag dispute.

She said, "On top of his Christmas wish list was the inevitable Play Station 4, and top of his list was 'Mammy, I want a UFF flag, the black one with the red hand and gold, right?'"

"And I was going 'Where does this come from?'"

The mother, who has not been identified, added, "Eventually I did manage to track one down and he was, what, 13 at Christmas."

"And he opened the Play Station box and went 'Thanks Mum', and then he opened the flag and was ecstatic."

The report was published on the second anniversary of Belfast City Council's decision to restrict the flying of the Union flag to 18 days a year.

The study has suggested that a group of uncontrollable loyalist rabble-rousers were more trouble than paramilitaries during the Union flag protests.

It reveals how inflammatory "flag provocateurs" toured the country stirring up trouble and warns that events could spiral out of control yet again if politicians do not show better leadership.

"The Flag Dispute: Anatomy of a Protest" said there was great respect and emotional resonance for paramilitary flags, as well as the Union flag.

Researchers at the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation also called for more resources to be put into cross-community work and less into bolstering loyalist culture.

Nolan believes that the protests tapped



AN ULSTER Freedom Fighters flag. Members of the UDA, since 1973, used the cover name of UFF to claim responsibility for the killing of Catholics.



LOYALISTS taking part in flag protests at Belfast City Hall paralysed the province, cost £21 million to police, and led to 160 PSNI officers suffering injuries.

into a deep well of Protestant resentment with the peace process.

The report states that one of loyalism's most frequently voiced concerns is that 'no-one listens to us' – although "this is not accompanied by any desire to listen" on its part.

It proposes that reconciliation agencies review single identity work, which does not reach out to nationalists and urges support for programmes that help loyalists articulate grievances and engage

with others from different backgrounds.

The study also criticised Stormont leaders who have "not provided an inspiration." It said that "political parties, rather than modelling good relations, act to encourage mutual hostilities."

"In this context it may require the reconciliation bodies to bring forward their own 'peace plan' setting forward a clear vision of how reconciliation can be achieved," the report stated.

## Background

Two years ago, Belfast City Council voted to restrict the flying of the Union flag on City Hall to 18 designated days a year instead of 365.

The council's nationalists, who have a slim majority, had proposed removing it altogether, but accepted the Alliance Party's compromise.

Unionists had wanted the flag kept up permanently, apart from the Progressive Unionist Party. It initially supported designated days but later did a U-turn. The protests which followed lasted until summer 2013 and still flare up occasionally.



MOUNTING PROTESTS – including the taking to the streets by 150,000 people around the country last month – reflect widespread anger at austerity measures imposed on Irish citizens.

## Controversial water charges will be capped next April at 160 euro

DUBLIN – Irish homes will begin to get water bills capped at 160 euro from next April, the government has confirmed.

After months of confusion and increasingly heated street demonstrations over the latest austerity tax, Environment Minister Alan Kelly admitted mistakes in its calamitous introduction.

"We, as a government, have made mistakes but now we face a critical choice," he said. "Put simply, we now have a choice that is based on either short-term emotion and anger or long-term prudence and common sense. Anger is never a good starting point for a key decision."

Under the controversial scheme, householders will be liable for charges of 160 euro for single-adult homes and 260 euro for all other homes.

But water conservation grants of 100 euro a year mean the effective costs will be 60 euro and one euro respectively.

The charges, liable from January 1, will remain the same for four years. Following angry protests targeting senior government ministers in recent days, a national demonstration against the "tap tax" is being planned for December 10.

Under the scheme, householders who do not pay the water charge face late payment penalties of 30 euro for single adult homes and 60 euro for others.

Those who don't register for the levy will not qualify for the water conservation grant and will automatically get a 260 euro a year bill.

Gardai said there have been arrests and charges around the country related to water charge protests, but they were unable to immediately give an overall figure.

The Garda Ombudsman – the force's official watchdog – said it is investigating 16 complaints against officers involved in policing demonstrations.

Some of the complaints include allegations of assault, which are classified as criminal investigations, while others relate to claims of abuse of authority.

The torching of two Cork County Council water services vans in Bantry, west Cork, is being linked by some to the growing fall-out.

Mounting protests – including the taking to the streets by 150,000 people around the country last month – reflect widespread anger at the latest austerity measure imposed on Irish citizens.

## Memorial concert marks 40th anniversary of Birmingham pub bombings

BIRMINGHAM – A memorial concert was held in Birmingham on November 21 to mark the 40th anniversary of the IRA pub bombings.

The event has been organised by the Justice for the 21 campaign group, who have renewed their appeal for a new inquiry into the case.

On November 21, 1974 IRA devices were planted in two central Birmingham pubs – the Mulberry Bush and the Tavern in the Town.

The bombing will forever go down as one of the darkest days in Birmingham's history.

While the IRA may have wanted to strike at the heart of Britain, it was the Irish community which suffered hardest. At least 10 percent of those killed and injured were either Irish or of Irish descent.

Although warnings were sent, the pubs were not evacuated in time and 21 people were killed, with a further 182 injured.



THE Birmingham Six were released outside the Old Bailey court in London in 1991 after their life sentences were quashed.

The aftermath of that horrific explosion created a backlash against the city's Irish community which took decades to heal.

Irishmen – Hugh Callaghan, Patrick Joseph Hill, Gerard Hunter, Richard McKenny, William Power and John Walker – were arrested and later

wrongly convicted to life imprisonment.

They served 16 years before their sentences were quashed in 1991. Hugh Callaghan has backed a renewed call for a new inquiry into the attack, claiming "it could mean the real killers being caught and the last bit of suspicion gone."

## Woman to head up An Garda Siochana

DUBLIN – Noirin O'Sullivan had been acting Garda Commissioner since her predecessor Martin Callinan stood down in March during a wave of controversies to engulf the force earlier this year.

Her elevation means women now occupy many of the top justice jobs in the Republic, including Justice Minister, Director of Public Prosecutions, Attorney General and Chief Justice.

Deputy Commissioner since 2011, O'Sullivan has publicly declared her backing for more openness in the Garda and committed herself to working with the new Garda Authority, the Garda Ombudsman and the Garda Inspectorate to bolster public confidence in the force.

The force has been at the centre of several controversies in recent years, including allegations of wrongdoing, malpractice and corruption that led to the resignations of ex-chief Callinan as well as former justice minister Alan Shatter earlier this year.



NOIRIN O'SULLIVAN

Retired Garda officer John Wilson, a whistleblower who was central to exposing the penalty points scandal, said the appointment was a missed opportunity to bring in an outsider to change a "poisonous and hateful culture" within the force.

"On a personal basis I wish her well in her role as the new Garda commissioner, but I have called repeatedly for the appointment of an outsider," he said.

# Give the Gift of Health This Christmas

**T**HIS update just in from the North Pole. The Elfin flu has shut down Santa's workshop for the rest of the week causing a slowdown in production.

As a result, some of Santa's gifts will not appear under the tree this year. The bad news is that you will have to provide them. The good news is that *Sláinte* has some really great ideas for you.

Give the gift of health this year by stocking the kitchen with the proper tools. These take the form of small kitchen appliances, kitchen utensils, cookware, cooking classes and cookbooks.

**Appliances.** Giving kitchen items as gifts can be fraught with misunderstanding so *please* ask the potential recipient what they want before you buy.

Most young women want something more romantic for Christmas than a blender.

You can give your health-conscious brother a juicer and your lasagna-loving sister a pasta maker, but you will be sleeping under the tree Christmas night if you buy your wife or lover a pressure cooker.

If she is interested in cooking, find a cooking class for couples; this also gives her the gift of your time and shows that you are willing to learn something that is important to her.

An exception to this "appliance rule" is the high-end coffee maker or espresso machine. For coffee aficionados of all ages, these appliances can make the perfect gift.

*Sláinte* strongly suggests you stay away from any product advertised via TV infomercials. The products advertised at night tend to be overpriced; products advertised during the day tend to break before the new year.

**Cookware.** Consider the recipient's stage of life when choosing cookware.

Young singles and seniors cooking for one or two need smaller capacity cookware than those with families or adults who enjoy entertaining.

Sets of cookware are nice but *Sláinte* always ends up with sizes or shapes she never uses so she has started to buy them piece by piece.

She recently found new skillets at Costco. The handles are rubberized and easy to grip and long so you won't get burned by splashing liquids.

Best of all, they are not expensive with the small skillets coming in a package of two. Ask if the recipient prefers non-stick or stainless steel surfaces.

Cookware eventually wears out, especially items with nonstick coating. Once the coating is scratched or chipped the skillets should be discarded.

What is the condition of your parent's or grandparent's cookware? Perhaps they could use a few small skillets and a box of kitchen towels.

Every cook should have at least one cast iron skillet. Cooking acidic foods in a cast iron skillet (like tomato sauce) is an easy and natural way to add absorbable iron to the diet.

**Kitchen Tools.** Anyone setting up a new kitchen (for example, someone moving, restocking, or downsizing) can use a few new kitchen doodads.

**SLÁINTE – TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH!**



By  
**MAUREEN KEANE**



The right tool for the right project is worth its weight in gold. These include potato peelers, can openers, whisks, tongs, scoops, slicers, and garlic presses.

*Sláinte* recommends kitchen tools made with large, easy-to-grip handles such as the products made by OXO.

They are particularly good for older cooks who may have trouble gripping small, hard handles that slip out of the hand.

Sharp knives are also an essential tool; a dull knife can make any slicing task real drudgery.

If you give knives, include a book on how to use each type of knife and how to care for them.

**Cooking Lessons.** Most of us learn to cook from female relatives, usually our mothers. Very often they never learned to cook either, so mom had little to pass on.

As a result, a growing number of people do not know the cooking basics and the result is poor nutrition.

Cooking classes make a great present for yourself no matter what your age. Many men become interested in nutrition and cooking after retirement (or a heart attack!).

For them a class in whole foods cooking will pay back in better health. Cooking classes are a lot of fun and you can eat the homework!

In addition to cooking schools, cooking classes are available online, on DVD discs, through adult education in your community, and offered by food markets and kitchen stores.

Some hospitals even have classes on special diets such as gluten-free or low sodium cooking. It's best to give the gift of cooking classes through a gift certificate so the recipient can pick the type and time of the class.

**Cookbooks** There is a wide variety of cookbooks available. Don't skimp here. Get a splashy coffee table sized book on a topic they love.

*Beannachtaí na Nollag* from the staff here at *Sláinte* (that is, my cat and myself).

Maureen Keane MS CN is the author of 14 books on health and diet and a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Read her blog at: keanenutrition.com.

# The Gloaming in concert: Two sets of pure musical bliss

By EILIS COURTNEY  
VANCOUVER – Saturday, November 18 was a date I have been anticipating for quite a while.

Not only was it to be the Canadian debut of the new Irish "super-group" The Gloaming but during the summer, I was invited by my colleagues at the UBC Chan Centre to do a pre-show talk with two of the members, Martin Hayes and Iarla Ó Lionáird.

I first heard The Gloaming when they performed a piece called *Opening Set* during the 'Ceiliúradh' (Celebration) at the Royal Albert Hall held in honour of the historic visit of President Michael D. Higgins to the UK.

I was blown away by the haunting singing of *sean-nós* exponent Iarla Ó Lionáird and the phenomenal individual and combined musicianship of the other four equally talented members, Martin Hayes, Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, Denis Cahill and Thomas Bartlett (aka Doveman).

Little did I know then that Vancouverites would get the chance to see them live. Happily, the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at UBC managed to secure them for the last concert of the group's 2014 tour.

My research for the pre-show talk was helped greatly when I went to see the documentary *The Gloaming: Moment to Moment*, sponsored by the Chan Centre at The Cinematique, which explains how the group got started and details the collaboration between the five performers.

The audience that night was also treated to a second movie, *Aisling Gheal*, which is about a group of women passionate about keeping the *sean-nós* tradition alive.

It is not every performer who agrees to give a pre-show talk just before going on stage so the fact that Martin and Iarla did so was greatly appreciated by the packed room of fans.

Despite being delayed arriving in Vancouver, Martin and Iarla were relaxed and entertaining and had the room laughing and fully engaged with their stories of the group's coming together musically as well as tales about the tour they were just completing.

Both men have known each other for a long time, having performed as young boys at various traditional competitions and so the friendship and mutual respect came through in the conversation.

My job was made very easy indeed as the chat just flowed and all too soon, the half hour was up and everyone needed to get into the theatre for the main act.

The concert was two 45-minute sets of pure musical bliss, with traditional tunes and old Irish poems and songs blended with contemporary arrangements, to provide the audience with a new listening experience.

During the encore, demanded by the appreciative fans, Iarla sang my favourite song from the CD – *Saoirse/Freedom*.

Listening to him sing in Irish (Gaelic) in the acoustically-stunning Chan Centre was a moving, patriotic experience I never felt before – and one that will be remembered for a long time.



PHOTO: Don Erhardt  
IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD, Martin Hayes of The Gloaming onstage at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at UBC for the pre-show talk with Eilis Courtney.



PHOTO: Don Erhardt  
THE GLOAMING performance was an unforgettable experience and included traditional tunes and old Irish poems and songs blended with contemporary arrangements.

## THE CHRISTMAS LEGEND OF THE BAGPIPES

There is a legend in Italy that of all the musical instruments, it was the bagpipes that pleased the Blessed Virgin Mary the most.

This is the instrument, it is said, with which the shepherds of Bethlehem had serenaded her.

And thus, one sure sign of the approach of Christmas in Italy, is the appearance in the streets of bagpipers, the *zampognari*.

These men, shepherds from the countryside, arrive in Rome and elsewhere in mid-December.

For centuries, it was their custom to make their way from one street corner image of Mary to another, serenading her with bagpipes.

Their itinerary is now considerably abbreviated, but they remain heralds of the coming of Christ. – James Monti

## NOVENAS

### NOVENA TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary (never known to fail). O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine, splendour of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God. Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this my necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. O show me herein you are my Mother, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Sweet Mother, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal. You gave me the Divine gift to forgive and forget all the evil against me. This prayer must be said for three days, even after the request is granted and the favour received, it must be published. – PKM, MJ, CC, GTK

### NOVENA TO ST. JUDE

Most holy apostle, St. Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the Church honors and invokes you universally, as the patron of hopeless cases, of things almost despaired of. Pray for me, I am so helpless and alone. Make use I implore you, of that particular privilege given to you, to bring visible and speedy help where help is almost despaired of. Come to my assistance in this great need that I may receive the consolation and help of heaven in all my necessities, tribulations, and sufferings, particularly - (Here make your request) and that I may praise God with you and all the elect forever. I promise, O blessed St. Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favor, to always honor you as my special and powerful patron, and to gratefully encourage devotion to you. Amen – PMC, MJF, CB, CC

Publication of this prayer is \$25 monthly  
(Canadian residents include 5% GST)



## Words of Ireland: Marketing fun Irish sayings to the world

By CATHOLINE BUTLER

The Irish have a way with words and a unique turn of phrase that often, when translated into another culture, have a very different meaning.

Dublin-based Teresa Croke has developed her business around these everyday sayings and added them onto shopping bags, insulated lunch bags, shoe bags and mouse pads.

These products have provided a good laugh and a great conversation piece for Irish people all over the world.

Croke recently spoke with *The Celtic Connection* about her new business saying, "We all know the Irish have a great way with words. My company, Words of Ireland, has captured some of those funny Irish expressions on gifts and everyday products.

"I think my inspiration came from the fact that I have always loved funny expressions and the distinct accents from counties all around Ireland.

"Having lived in Canada for many years, I know how much fun it is to use these favourite phrases, especially with other people who actually understand it...who get it."

Teresa decided to put all her favourite Irish phrases onto products that people use in their everyday life, and she said it's been lots of fun working on these products.

Her range includes items like lunch bags, tote bags, mouse mats and key rings – it's novelty fun items.

For example, the cooler lunch bags are a great talking point. Teresa said her customers have told her about the laugh they've had during their lunch break sharing the meaning of some of these sayings.

The smaller tote bags are convenient for carrying all kinds of items, such as library books, boxes of tea, even Irish dancing shoes.

Some women have been known to carry an extra pair of flats to change into after a night on the town wearing those high heels. These totes will come in handy here.

"There is a broad international appeal for these products," said Teresa. As you know, many people have immigrated



DUBLIN-based Teresa Croke has launched a gift line featuring some of Ireland's unique and funny expressions. She is seeking a North American agent to help bring her products to a larger audience.

from Ireland over the past five years – and they all grew up hearing these phrases."

There are now Irish people living in every corner of the planet and Teresa said, "we love getting photos and stories from people from around the world – some have immigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia the U.K. and Asia.

"We had one Irish guy living in China and his colleague asked what it means when some Irish people say 'he's a gas man all together.' These are some of the funny phrases we all use and we don't even think about it."

Teresa Croke lived in Canada for several years where she worked as an airline attendant for 14 years and loved her work. She was based mostly in Vancouver but also lived in Toronto and Montreal before moving back to Dublin a few years ago.

Teresa is looking for an agent in Vancouver to market Words of Ireland products. The products are mailed out the day the order is received and can be mailed anywhere in the world.

To purchase Words of Ireland products, e-mail: [tc@wordsofireland.ie](mailto:tc@wordsofireland.ie) or visit the website at: [www.wordsofireland.ie](http://www.wordsofireland.ie).

## Ancient Celtic monastic settlement was an important pilgrimage site

By MARIE BRUCE

IT takes about two-hours of easy driving from Dublin on those amazingly good Irish roads to reach the ancient Celtic site of Clonmacnoise.

It is situated outside Athlone in the county of Offaly right in the centre of Ireland. I vowed I would not visit Ireland again without a visit to Clonmacnoise and 2014 was the year.

If you enjoy history and ancient sites, then Clonmacnoise is up there with Delphi in Greece.

It is a hugely atmospheric place with enough buildings and ruins to imagine it in its heyday, more like a small town than a monastic site.

I should mention the stunning situation on a hill running down to the River Shannon with wide views of the countryside.

St. Ciaran founded the first monastery here in 544, he died soon after but Clonmacnoise continued and became one of the most important places of learning and pilgrimage in Europe.

The site includes the ruins of the cathedral, seven churches and three high crosses. I was amazed so much has survived, considering it was plundered often by the Vikings and fell into decline from the Thirteenth Century for several hundred years until it was designated a national monument in 1877.

There is plenty to see and I spent a couple of hours walking and resting on the site, as I said it had that special peaceful atmosphere that draws you in and you need time to absorb the place.

The last high king of Ireland Rory O'Connor was buried under the high altar of the cathedral which is now in ruins. The round towers and Celtic crosses are true symbols of Irish monastic sites.

They recommend you visit the museum and interpretive centre first, to get the time line and the history.

The museum also houses a fantastic



CLONMACNOISE, founded in 544 by St. Ciaran, is an easy two-hour drive from Dublin. It became one of the most important places of learning and pilgrimage in Europe.



WRITER Marie Bruce gathering turf in the bog in Co. Offaly.

collection of early Christian gravestones dating from the Eighth to Twelfth Century, thankfully these are now safe for future generations to view.

I was there in mid September and was very surprised there were very few people visiting this amazing place, I highly recommend taking the time to visit Clonmacnoise, it makes a terrific day trip from Dublin.

We drove through parts of County Offaly on our way back to Dublin. For me, the big thrill was seeing acres of bogland. It is uniquely Irish to visit the bog and celebrate the survival of these ancient peatlands.

Jokes and songs were written about the bogs of Ireland and men from the country were often referred to as bog men.

In fact, the bogs of Ireland offer not only turf for fuel but a wildlife refuge for birds, and allow wildflowers and orchids to flourish in its peaty soil.

Cutting turf or "saving the turf" was said to be backbreaking hard work, machinery now does all the work.

Although it was late, I had to have a walk out into the bog. I wanted to hold a sod of turf in my hand and smell it.

The smell of burning turf can make Irish immigrants long for home and family, there was such comfort sitting around a glowing turf fire on a winters night.

There are still pubs, mainly in the country, with turf fires. This would be a big attraction for me, to have a pint of Guinness beside a turf fire.

## Samuel Beckett play banned for 50 years to open in Vancouver

VANCOUVER – Blackbird Theatre returns to The Cultch this year with the Canadian premiere of Samuel Beckett's play *All That Fall*.

For more than 50 years no one was allowed to stage this entertaining and deeply affecting Irish play.

At last the ban has been lifted and audiences in London and New York have been treated to the double delight of seeing a radio play produced on the stage.

Blackbird Theatre, whose *Waiting for Godot* was a held over hit at The Cultch, and whose *Uncle Vanya* played to packed houses last year, has been granted the rights to present this first Canadian production of *All That Fall*.

*All That Fall* is a 75-minute radio play

written by Samuel Beckett in 1956 for the BBC.

After its broadcast in 1957 several prominent theatre producers, including Laurence Olivier, tried to obtain the rights to produce it as a stage play, but Beckett refused all requests.

Finally in 2012, Trevor Nunn, English theatre, film, and television director succeeded in persuading the Beckett estate to allow theatrical staging of the script as a radio play and *All That Fall* played in London (2012) and New York (2013) to rave reviews.

*The Guardian* wrote, "Beckett at his most Irish and accessible."

Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* said, "You're unlikely to find a more salty or succinct embodiment of his fathomless sense of humor."

The play stars Leanna Brodie, Adam Henderson, Lee Van Paassen, Gerard



PHOTO: Tim Matheson  
*All That Fall* with William Samples, Lee Van Paassen and Adam Henderson at the historic Cultch in Vancouver from December 29 to January 24.

Plunkett, and William Samples.

*All That Fall* will run from December 29 to January 24 at the historical Cultch theatre located at 1895 Venables Street in Vancouver. For tickets or more information, call (604) 251-1353, or book online at: <http://thecultch.com/shows>.

# Themes explored film 'Calvary' show a new form of Catholicism



BRENDAN GLEESON (R) as Father James and Kelly Reilly as Fiona (L) in *Calvary*.

The credits had hardly rolled on John Michael McDonagh's new film, *Calvary*, before a pointless spate of controversy, generated by the director himself, threatened to subsume the genuine worth of his sequel to *The Guard* (2011) in a public row.

At issue was the quality or otherwise of Irish films. More about that later.

*Calvary* is in every sense a follow-up to McDonagh's first feature, *The Guard* (a third film would certainly be welcome to form a trilogy).

This film involves just as equally compelling a performance from the protagonist as its predecessor, played by Brendan Gleeson on both occasions.

In *Calvary* he is a priest. The priest's swaying soutane and the garda uniform in small town Ireland are still the clearest symbols of community, and touchstones of communitarian common cause, although trust in them has been greatly diminished by scandals in the recent past.

It is therefore appropriate that McDonagh, in his demythologisation of small town Ireland, cast Gleeson first as a guard and now as a priest.

In neither role does Gleeson fulfill the stereotypical function of his uniform or cloth: instead, he restlessly seeks to rehabilitate the role and make it meaningful in a changed Ireland.

Just as the garda was irreverent and brutish, the priest is flawed, yet both characters are good people determined in their own quirky manner to serve the public.

Many other parallels to *The Guard* come to mind – in both films, a black man, a deliberate anomaly in a rural Irish drama, plays a central character; both feature a precocious child, albeit a somewhat miscast one, who is a keen observer of the world; both films are elevated at moments by gorgeous images captured by cinematographer Larry Smith.

In *Calvary*, too, Patrick Campbell's magisterial music score and his choice of songs sees 'The Beatitudes' in Irish followed by *Calvary's* theme song, which, in sounding almost foreign, was just the musical transportation that the film required.

And foreignness is a desirable effect since *Calvary* sets the most unlikely characters side-by-side.

Some sensibilities may be offended by the presence of a lippy New Jersey rent boy in small town Ireland beside a frighteningly insensitive hospital doctor.

The burning of the church in this film, like many churches that have been burned in Ireland in the past 15 years, is done with malicious intent.

Only the stone altar remains after the arson attack. It is set against the sea as a symbolic sole remnant of a ruined church, still somehow standing in spite of such assaults.

Through exploring such themes in *Calvary*, McDonagh shows a new form of Catholicism possible in Ireland in 2014: the church's ecclesiastic dogmas are exchanged for the pastoral sympathy of a priest such as Fr. James, who embodies a capacity to endure the worst abuses of a disaffected community.

Gleeson is at his most solid and convincing in this respect: he holds his character's position with dignity and has clear concern for the hurt that people have experienced.

That said, the director is careful not to allow matters to become overly solemn. The dialogue sparkles, moving the action at a good tempo, leavened throughout by the McDonagh trademark wit for which his playwright brother is also famed.

Now back to McDonagh's comments on Irish film: He who damns shall be saved?

*Calvary* is one of the very few genuinely Irish films ever to squarely face issues of the meaning of life. So it is a pity that McDonagh wants to distance himself from the Irish film-making tradition.

As he stated in an interview, "I'm not a fan of Irish movies, I don't find them to be that technically accomplished and I don't find them that intelligent...so I'm trying to get away from the description of the movie as an Irish film in a way."

That wasn't very nice, and neither is it accurate. The film is set in Sligo with an Irish cast, and McDonagh is of Irish extraction. McDonagh's comment is implausible.

How will the BIFA (British Independent Film Awards) assess *Calvary* in early December, remembering that its counterpart IFTA (Irish Film and Television Awards) gave it the Best Film plaudit?

Does this film present an Ireland for Britain, with its director jeering Irish films and film-makers along the way as a bonus? Surely it is possible to analyse films, including those set in Ireland, independently of such limited criteria?

Steve McQueen, who in 2008 made *Hunger* (for my money one of the best "Irish" films of the past decade) happened to be an Englishman, although he made no to do about the fact.

At the risk of tempting fate, it seems likely that BIFA will give *Calvary* an award, but will do so for the film's own proper merits.

Whether or not BIFA claim McDonagh as their own, and whether or not McDonagh wishes to acknowledge *Calvary's* self-evident Irishness, it still feels like the second expression of an Irish film trilogy.

A better line of inquiry than all this speculation about national appropriation might be: If McDonagh makes another Irish film, what subject matter will spark his interest next?



MORE than 50,000 undocumented Irish living in the United States have been given fresh hope with new immigration reform announced by President Obama. Many hope to one day return home to visit without fear of losing the life they have built in America.

## Obama immigration reforms give hope to undocumented Irish in the U.S.

WASHINGTON – More than 50,000 Irish immigrants living illegally in the United States have been given fresh hope of one day being able to return home.

In a unilateral move that has left members of the U.S. Republican party outraged, President Barack Obama has announced immigration reforms that will leave 3.7 million of the estimated 11 million people living illegally in the U.S. eligible for three-year work permits.

Those entitled to apply will have to have been in the U.S. for more than five years and be the parent of a U.S.-born child.

His administration will begin accepting applications this spring from undocumented migrants who are seeking to avoid deportation.

Obama outlined the actions in a televised address, describing them as "accountability – a commonsense, middle ground approach."

"If you meet the criteria, you can come out of the shadows and get right with the law. If you're a criminal, you'll be deported," he said in a 15-minute prime time speech from the East Room of the White House.

Presidents, as head of the executive branch of government, can issue orders on policy matters if Congress doesn't support them.

In the absence of legislation, Obama said that he would direct immigration enforcement agents to focus on deporting "felons, not families; criminals, not children" and overlook the illegal status of just over four million immigrants who are parents to U.S.-born citizen children or legal permanent residents.

The measures will apply to those in the U.S. for longer than five years once they pass a criminal background check and their taxes are paid up-to-date. They will be able to apply for work permits and a temporary reprieve from deportation.

Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs Jimmy Deenihan welcomed the announcement but added that he saw the measures as a first step forward.

"Today represents real progress, albeit with further important steps yet to be achieved," he said. "Some will not benefit from these new arrangements and we will continue to make the case on their behalf."

He added, "Having now received the details of the measures announced by President Obama, we will examine them closely with a view to ensuring that as many Irish nationals as possible benefit from their application."

Obama rejected Republican accusations that he was exceeding his authority as president, saying that these were the "kinds of actions taken by every single Republican president and every single Democratic president for the past half century."

He dismissed suggestions from members of Congress that his actions for undocumented migrants amounted to an amnesty.

"That's the real amnesty – leaving this broken system the way it is," he said. "Mass amnesty would be both impossible and contrary to our character."

Under Obama's measures, his administration will expand eligibility for "extreme hardship waivers" allowing qualifying illegal immigrants to visit their home countries through their U.S.-born children or legally resident spouses.

In his televised address, Obama challenged Republicans to focus their energy not on blocking his measures but on approving long-stalled legislation to take their place.

He said, "To those members of Congress who question my authority to make our immigration system work better, or question the wisdom of me acting where Congress has failed, I have one answer: Pass a bill."

Irish immigration activists welcomed the president's actions.

"This will have a big effect on our community," said Ciaran Staunton, the New York-based co-founder of the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform.

"Many people will sigh with relief because not only could they not work here legally but they couldn't travel. For anyone who meets both areas this will indeed be a huge day."

He expressed disappointment that undocumented Irish who have been living in the U.S. for more than five years who don't or couldn't have children will not be helped under these measures.

"We hope that the White House will address this oversight immediately," he said.

### THE VIEW FROM IRELAND



By MAURICE FITZPATRICK

*"I'm not a fan of Irish movies, I don't find them to be that technically accomplished and I don't find them that intelligent..."*

— John Michael McDonagh

Then there is a misanthropic Celtic Tiger aristocrat, determined to regain his soul, using Father James as a handler.

Another character who comes closer to the bone in this film is a pub owner, played by Pat Shortt.

His premises is about to be repossessed by the bank, and who instances the Catholic Church's theft of Jewish wealth and collusion with the Nazi regime as adequate evidence that the church has no moral authority to pontificate to those who overextended themselves financially.

Scenes in *Calvary* switch very rapidly and, for the most part, effectively.

One scene that sounded a rare duff note saw Fr. James passing the time of day with a young girl, a visitor to the locality, only to have her father pull up in his car in high dudgeon, concerned that his daughter is being pumped by a priest.

The personal insult, the condemnation by association, the harsh public perception of a very individual and private priest, pushes Fr. James to drink – but the dramatic context and chain of causation do not seem authentic.



SEATTLE POLICE Department's 2014 Officer of the Year, Officer Ryan Gallagher (right) meets Taoiseach Enda Kenny at Government Buildings in Dublin on September 30. In the rear are Seattle Mayor Ed Murray (left) and John Keane.



PHOTO: Sean O Sullivan

DANNY AND CATHRYN Quinn at Seattle's Irish Seniors' Christmas luncheon shown here with Daidí na Nollag (Father Christmas, a.k.a. Owen Cullen). The couple were celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.



PHOTO: Sean O Sullivan

PHYLLIS SAMPSON and Nora Jordan [seated], Irish Vice Consul Kevin Byrne [standing], with Daidí na Nollag (Father Christmas, a.k.a. Owen Cullen), Maureen Keane and Nanci Spieker at Seattle's Irish Seniors' Christmas luncheon.



PHOTO: Sean O Sullivan

JOAN O'BYRNE, Owen Sweeney and Mal Monahan [seated], Daidí na Nollag (Father Christmas, a.k.a. Owen Cullen) [standing] with Mary Monahan at Seattle's Irish Seniors' Christmas luncheon.

## SEATTLE IRISH NEWS

### PASSINGS

- Father John Horan, 94, a native of Duagh, Co. Kerry, who has been a priest in Seattle since 1946, died in Seattle on November 23.
- Michael Doohan, 69, a native of Gortahork, Co. Donegal, died in Renton on November 23 after a very brief battle with cancer.

**MOTHER'S CHRISTMAS** – The 2014 Mother's Christmas Dinner is Sunday, January 5 at 6 pm with the location still TBD.

Known as Little Christmas around the world, the twelfth day of Christmas is called Nollaig na mBan (or Women's Christmas) in most parts of Ireland.

Celebrate this Irish holiday by taking the woman in your life to dinner! For details and reservations, call (206) 412-2960.

**CELTIC YULETIDE** – Magical Strings' 36th Annual Celtic Yuletide Seattle concert is December 13 with Tacoma's concert on December 12. Concerts will also be held in Kent, Mount Vernon, Bellevue, Portland and Leavenworth.

Featuring the lyrical and joyful sounds of Celtic harps, hammered dulcimers, violins, cello, whistles, concertina, percussion and more, this grand gala of Celtic-inspired holiday music is filled with Irish singing, dancing, juggling, caroling and storytelling. For the details, visit [magicalstrings.com](http://magicalstrings.com).

**FINNEGAN'S WAKE** – Saturday, December 13, 8 PM, in the Chapel Performance Space at Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N. Seattle.

An original staging performed from memory by Neal Kosaly-Meyer of the complete first chapter of James Joyce's novel *Finnegan's Wake*, with sound design, lighting (darkening), and sets carefully made. This is a FREE performance.

**BOOK CLUB** – The next Irish Book Club meeting is Tuesday, January 13 to discuss *The Land of Spices* by Kate O'Brien, a book that was banned in Ireland when first published in 1941.

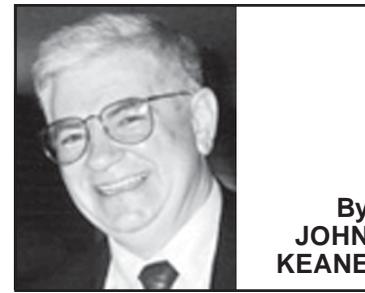
O'Brien's writings were ahead of their time and she is known as a feminist writer because of her desire for gender equality. Contact (206) 361-1713 for meeting details.

**HERITAGE CLUB AGM** – At the Irish Heritage Club's recent Annual General Meeting, David Jacobsen was elected president for 2014-2015.

Ari Hausler and Jane Sepede were re-elected to the board while David Jacobsen, Corbin Johnson and Brendan Shriane are new board members and Mary Shriane is the new membership secretary.

Special thanks to Justin McMahon who stepped down after two years as president but who remains on the board, to Frank Gill who stepped down after 14 years as membership secretary, and to Ralph Kosche who stepped down after 10 years on the board but who remains as stage manager for the Irish Festival. For more information, visit [irishclub.org](http://irishclub.org).

**GUINNESS RECOGNITION** – Guinness co-hosted Seattle's Irish Community Christmas party on De-



By  
JOHN  
KEANE

cember 6 as one of their Raise Your Glass events to highlight the Seattle Gaels GAA Club which was founded 35 years ago in 1979.

The national recognition by Guinness is an acknowledgment of the Gaels' efforts to promote the Irish games of Gaelic football, hurling and camogie around the Pacific Northwest and it also ties in with Guinness' Made of More promotion.

The Gaels today organize teams in all four GAA codes – men's Gaelic football, women's Gaelic football, men's hurling and women's camogie.

Four Gaels' teams traveled to Boston this past Labor Day weekend to compete in the North American GAA Championship finals and in 2016 the North American GAA Championship finals will be played in Seattle.

The 2016 finals will bring over 100 teams and 5,000 players and spectators to Seattle from all across the USA and Canada.

For what the Gaels have accomplished over the past 35 years, they were a worthy nominee for National Guinness recognition.

**OFFICER OF THE YEAR** – Seattle Police Officer Ryan Gallagher and his partner Jeremy Wade were recently honored as the Seattle Police Department's Officers of the Year.

Patrol Officers in Seattle's East Precinct in the Central District, several months ago Ryan and his partner were shocked and upset to find two young girls living in a home with no beds.

The officers purchased two brand new twin beds with their own money and later delivered them to the home.

They then founded The Beds for Kids Project and with the Seattle Police Foundation have already raised thousands of dollars to insure that Seattle's children have a suitable place to sleep every night.

In 2011 Ryan also founded the Seattle Police Pipes and Drums Pipe Band which he brought to Ireland this past September for a two-week tour of Ireland where they were joined in Galway by Seattle Mayor Ed Murray.

An officer in the Friends of St. Patrick in Seattle, Ryan traces his Irish ancestors to Crossmolina, Co. Mayo.

**MAYOR'S ANCESTRY** – The October issue of *Irish Lives Remembered* ([irishlivesremembered.ie](http://irishlivesremembered.ie)), a free online Irish genealogy magazine, has a nice article on Seattle Mayor Ed Murray's Irish ancestry.

The mayor's four grandparents were born in Ireland, in Limerick, Tipperary and two in Co. Down. The

article was written by Bríd Nowlan, a member of Irish Network Seattle.

**CITY OF FILM** – Galway, Seattle's Irish Sister City, has been awarded the permanent status of UNESCO City of Film by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Galway is now one of just five cities around the world to have been awarded the status of UNESCO City of Film.

A total of 63 cities were shortlisted for the award in this application period and the designation recognizes a city's contribution to cinema and media production.

The Galway area has a long association with film making going back over eighty years, including *Man of Aran* in the early 1930s, *The Quiet Man* in 1952, *The Field* in 1990, and *The Guard* in 2011.

The award is seen as a fitting testament to all of the great directors, producers, writers and actors who have made Galway their home over the years.

It is estimated that the growing film and TV industry in the Galway area currently employs in the region of 600 people and is worth almost \$90 million to the local economy.

The title of Creative City of Film also includes membership of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network. The City of Seattle is in the process of applying to be awarded the title of UNESCO City of Literature.

**IMMIGRATION CHANGES** – Irish government and religious leaders along with Irish immigration groups across the U.S. have welcomed the executive action on immigration that was recently announced by President Obama.

It is estimated that these new changes will provide significant relief to at least several thousand of an estimated up to 50,000 Irish-born undocumented in the U.S. who, because of their status, have been unable to attend weddings, funerals and other key family events back in Ireland.

There are currently 11 Irish Immigration Centers across the U.S. that provide an array of front line services to Irish immigrants. One of them is Seattle's Irish Immigrant Support Group.

If you have specific questions about your situation, please e-mail: [info@irishseattle.com](mailto:info@irishseattle.com).

**CENTENARIAN'S BOUNTY** – Sr. Rose Donoghue, a native of Co. Leitrim who now lives in Bellevue, recently received the following letter from the President of Ireland:

"Dear Sr. Donoghue, I have learned with great pleasure that you will celebrate on 23 November, 2014 the hundredth anniversary of your birth.

"What a wonderful occasion for you, your extended family and friends as you reminisce and celebrate a life great in years, and I have no doubt, rich in accomplishments.

"I join with your family and friends in wishing you a very happy birthday.

[Continued next page...]

# SEATTLE IRISH NEWS

"Born, as you were, in the second decade of the Twentieth Century, you have lived through remarkable times in the history of Ireland and the world.

"You have witnessed remarkable changes, in lifestyles and technological developments, unimaginable at the time of your birth in 1914.

"May you be surrounded today by the warmth of happy memories and secure in the knowledge that you continue to make this world a better place for all who love you.

"I am delighted to send my warm-

est personal congratulations and most sincere good wishes, along with the enclosed centenarian payment.

"Yours sincerely, Michael D. Higgins, Uachtaráin na hÉireann, President of Ireland."

A check for \$3,135.36 was enclosed with the letter.

### MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS

An Annual Celtic Christmas Celebration at The Kirkland Performance Center on December 12 and 13, features violinist Geoffrey Castle with special guests, dancers, and a visit from Santa Claus.



LOS ANGELES Galaxy forward Robbie Keane displays his trophy with his wife Claudine and son Robert.

## Robbie Keane named MLS MVP

LOS ANGELES – After a terrific season with LA Galaxy, the Irish striker has won the league's equivalent of Player of the Year.

Major League Soccer has named Robbie Keane as its Most Valuable Player (MVP) for 2014 on December 4.

Ireland captain Keane was included in the Team of the Year and has now beaten competition from Seattle Sounders striker Obafemi Martins and New England Revolution's Lee Nguyen to claim the league's most prestigious individual prize for the first time.

Having finished second behind former team-mate Mike Magee last year, the LA Galaxy skipper produced his best form during his fourth season in the U.S. – with 19 goals and 14 assists from 29 appearances.

Galaxy overcame Seattle Sounders in the Western Conference final and 34-year-old Keane is certain to start when Bruce Arena's men take on Revolution in the MLS Cup Final.

Keane's scoring exploits are clear: He's netted 53 goals with 35 assists in 84 regular season games since joining LA in August 2011, plus another eight goals and six assists in 16 playoff matches and seven goals in 14 CONCACAF Champions League games.

He's tallied 22 goals with 18 assists in all competitions this year.

But his game is far broader than the numbers suggest.

He gives a master class in off-the-ball movement every time he steps on the field and plays the pivotal role in the Galaxy's interchange-heavy possession game.

"We think Robbie's spectacular," Galaxy head coach Bruce Arena said following the ceremony.

"He's remarkable in the sense that his consistency year in and year out has been spectacular. And you don't see that typically of strikers.

"He sets the tone for our team each and every day.

"He's a great professional, he's good with our young players, he's fabulous in getting the team ready to play.

"Those things you don't see in the box score, for sure, but he's that guy with our team."



GUESTS at the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in Bellevue for Co. Leitrim native Sr. Rose Donoghue – (L-R) [Front Row] Sr. Monica Heeran (from Co. Leitrim), birthday girl Sr. Rose Donoghue, and Mary Charles (from Co. Leitrim). [Back Row] Brigid Morkel (from Co. Leitrim), Therese Michels (Sr. Rose's niece who lives in Renton), Sheila Gormley and her husband Donal (Sr. Rose's nephew) who live in Co. Meath, and Honorary Consul of Ireland John Keane who delivered to Sr. Rose a congratulatory letter and check from Irish President Michael D. Higgins.



MEMBERS of the Seattle Gaels women's football and camogie teams at the Seattle Gaels awards banquet – Katie Corcoran, Camille Clarke, Heather Morris, Brianna Wallace, Lindsay Brown, Ranko Asari, Bridgett Vechey, Chelsey Thomas, Ada Chen, Aoife Blake, Vanessa Peterson, Jayme Markham, Jenna Volcko, Kerry Rezmer, and Caroline Lee. In center rear with his hands raised is Gaels Chair Brian White.



OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS of the Irish Heritage Club at Seattle's Irish Community Christmas Party – (L-R) [Front] Candace Dunne, Mary Shriane, Nanci Spieker, Jane Sepede and Jean Roth. [Rear] Brendan Shriane, Corbin Johnson, Ari Hausler, John Keane, David Jacobsen and Ralph Kosche.

## Seattle Irish Immigrant Support Group



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# Hockey world mourns the loss of 'The Big Irishman'

VANCOUVER – He was known as 'The Big Irishman' and when Pat Quinn (71) passed away in Vancouver on Sunday, November 23, 2014, the hockey world lost a legend.

He was a player, coach, a player's coach, a general manager, president, chairman and team owner.

Pat Quinn did everything in hockey but officiate and was convinced he'd be better at that than the men in stripes, whom he loudly baited from the bench, always working a wad of green chewing gum.

"He was around the (NHL) 45 years," said Leaf coach Randy Carlyle. "That is longevity in this business."

In all the places where Quinn's enormous shadow fell – Toronto, Hamilton, Vancouver, Edmonton, Atlanta, Los Angeles and even Boston where the Bobby Orr hit still resonates – people paused to remember one tough Irishman.

Years ago, a Vancouver reporter asked Quinn how he kept going in an often cruel sport that battered him physically, denied him a chance for so long, and saw him hired and fired so many times as coach and executive.

"If there is such a thing as destiny, I just feel I get put back into this business," Quinn said.

"Even when I didn't search it out, the game came back to me. For that I am grateful."

Quinn's condition prevented him from attending this year's Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Toronto where he is chairman, a fitting tribute to a man who was a walking, talking archive of the sport.

And Quinn was all about old school hockey which often led to clashes in the modern NHL, with player agents, a heavyweight league office and the media in the bigger cities he worked.

He wasn't always successful as an executive, but as coach, he put the Flyers and Canucks in the Cup final, became only the second coach since Punch Imlach to get the Maple Leafs to the conference final twice and holds the record among Toronto coaches with a .591 winning percentage. In 15 full seasons up to his last job with the Edmonton Oilers, his various teams missed the playoffs only three times.

First line, or fourth, Quinn made a place for someone willing to work their way to it.

"I'd never have played in the NHL without Pat," said Mike Busniuk, who was on the Flyer team that had a league record 35 game unbeaten streak in 1979-80.

"We were treated like men. You made a mistake, he put you back on the ice. You missed curfew, he didn't say a word, but you knew to work extra hard at practice the next day. Even when he sent me down, he looked me in the eye."

Quinn was moved up, down and all around himself – he was once Tim Horton's defence partner on the Leafs



PAT QUINN'S warmth and humour came through despite a tough demeanour. He is remembered with great fondness and respect by friends and foes alike.



PAT QUINN [January 29, 1943 - November 23, 2014]

– before the belt on Orr opened many eyes.

Quinn always wanted to put that incident into perspective. He pointed out that the two defencemen had some prior run-ins leading up to the hit.

One in particular saw Orr slash Toronto goalie Bruce Gamble when he covered the puck in a prior game. This resulted in Quinn knocking down Orr with a cross check.

While on his back Orr kicked Quinn in the stomach. Quinn retaliated with a boot to Orr's behind.

On the well-known hit, Quinn gave credit to his teammate Brit Selby, who usually was assigned to check Orr.

Selby was alongside Orr as he carried the puck along the sideboards in his own end.

His attention was directed at Selby and he didn't see Quinn skating in to lower the boom.

"I caught him with my shoulder," said Quinn, who was accused at the time of catching Orr with an elbow.

"It wasn't an elbow. If my elbow hit him, maybe it was a momentum thing," he added with a sly smile.

Quinn went to the expansion Canucks and later the new Atlanta Flames.

He was never a gifted player, but later he dedicated himself to make the game entertaining and railed against trap teams such as the New Jersey Devils.

His proudest achievement might have

been the 2002 Olympic gold and the 2004 World Cup, both with Canadians.

Quinn is survived by his loving wife of 51 years Sandra (née Baker), and his daughters Valerie Quinn Rydland (Rick) and Kathleen Allison (Kalli) Quinn. Proud Grandpa to Quinn, Kate and Kylie Rydland.

To his family he was a devoted son and brother, a loving husband and father and a warm and caring grandpa.

Pat always lead by example. He always put his family first, he was a man of God, a loyal friend and a proud Canadian.



DELEGATES at the Canadian County Board convention – (L-R) [Standing] Ulster Provincial Council President- Elect: Michael Hasson, Toronto St. Mike's: Sean Harte, Ulster Provincial Council President: Martin McAviney, Canadian Secretary: John O'Flynn, Canadian Vice Chair: Ronan Corbett. [Seated] Canadian Development and Child Protection Officer: Paula Macfarlane, Canadian Chair: Brian Farmer, Canadian Treasurer: Yvonne Morley.

## 2014 Canadian County Board Convention held in Ajax, Ontario

By SEAN O'FLOINN  
Secretary of the Canadian  
County Board

TORONTO – The Canadian County Board Convention was held in Ajax, Ontario on December 7, 2014 with the election of officers by delegates for 2015 and for the passing of motions presented by clubs.

The name of the Gaelic Athletic Association, as it applies to Canada, is the Canadian County Board, Incorporated (CCB).

The basic aim of the CCB is to preserve and promote Gaelic games and pastimes in Canada.

In seven provinces (five time zones) of the Maple Leaf County are 15 cities with 21 affiliated GAA clubs with over 700 playing participants.

Going from west to east (7,349 km in total), the Western Divisional Board (founded in 1994) consists of British Columbia's Vancouver Irish Sporting and Social Club; Alberta's Calgary Chieftains; Red Deer Eire Ogs (Mens); Edmonton Wolfe Tones; Fort McMurray Shamrocks (Mens); Saskatchewan's Regina Gaels (Mens); and Saskatoon's Clann na nGael (Mens).

The Toronto Divisional Board (founded in 1947) consists of Ontario's Toronto Hurling Club, St. Mikes, St. Pats, St. Vincents (Mens), Gaels (Mens), Camogie Club; Durham Robert

Emmets, and Brampton Roger Case-ments.

The Eastern Divisional Board (founded in 2014) consists of Ontario's Ottawa Gaels and the Eire Og Ottawa Hurling Club, Quebec's Montreal Shamrocks, Quebec City's Les Patriotes, Nova Scotia's Halifax Gaels and Newfoundland and Labrador's St. John's Avalon Harps.

The founding of the Canadian County Board took place in Toronto, Ontario on Sunday, November 15, 1987. GAA President Dr. Mick Loftus of Crossmolina, County Mayo, chaired the meeting.

Among those in attendance were Toronto's Cormac O'Muiri, Ottawa's Pat Kelly; Montreal's Paul Moran and Paddy Dunne (R.I.P.).

The first elections of officers were Toronto's Paul Kennedy as chairman, Vancouver's John O'Flynn as secretary and Ottawa's Michael Connolly as treasurer.

Others who have served on the County Board since its foundation include Diarmuid O'Connor, Noelle Russell, Sean Harte, Matthew Healy, Fionnuala McGovern, Pat Donnelly, Billy Millar, Lorraine Morley, Jarlath Connaughton and Eddie Mangan.

Youth and minor organizations that the County Board works with include Vancouver ISSC, Brampton Rebels, Toronto Chieftains, Ottawa Gaels and Ottawa Eire Og Hurling.



VANCOUVER – A new board of directors was elected at the Vancouver Irish Sporting and Social Club annual general meeting on November 24. The Board is as follows (L-R): **Chair** – Vacant (Pending Ratification); **Secretary** – Rachel Quinn; **Western Canada Reps** – Elmarie Cronin; **Vice Chair** – Elan Park; **Club Development** – Ronan Deane; **PRO** – JP McLoughlin; **Treasurer** – Dave Foley; **Social** – Tommy Bourke; **Western Canada Reps** – Robert Dunphy.

# Former Rangers owner arrested upon arrival in UK

GLASGOW – Former Rangers owner Craig Whyte has been arrested at Heathrow following his detention by police in Mexico.

An arrest warrant was issued for the 43-year-old in connection with an investigation into the sale of Rangers Football Club in 2011.

Whyte took control of the Ibrox club in May 2011 but it went into administration in February the following year.

It is understood he was held by police in Mexico and was flown to Heathrow airport in London where he was detained by Police Scotland officers on November 27.

From there he was escorted north for an appearance at Glasgow Sheriff Court where he was released on bail after a 45-minute judicial examination. One of Whyte's bail conditions is to surrender his passport.

He made no plea or declaration to a charge of being involved in a two-year fraudulent scheme and a second allegation under the Companies Act.

After being granted bail, Whyte left from the front door of the court building amid chaotic scenes. A number of angry fans who had turned up outside yelled abuse as Whyte left in a waiting car.



FORMER Rangers owner Craig Whyte (43) faces charges in the sale of the Rangers Football Club in 2011.

Sporting a goatee beard and slick back hair, he made no comment as police officers ushered him through a large crowd of reporters and cameramen.

Whyte bought the club from Sir David Murray for £1 in 2011. Rangers subsequently went into administration in February 2012.

The businessman faces a string of allegations including claims he funded a controlling share in Rangers by selling off season tickets – after pretending to then chairman Sir David Murray he had cash of his own.

It is also alleged a failure to pay outstanding VAT and National Insurance payments plunged Rangers into administration.

Four men appeared in court earlier last month charged with fraudulent activity linked to the sale of the club three years ago.

Charged with attempting to pervert the course of justice, Gary Withey (50), David Whitehouse (49), Paul Clark (50), and David Grier (53), all made no plea or declaration and were granted bail following a hearing at Glasgow Sheriff Court.

The three were employees of Duff & Phelps, the company which carried out the administration of Rangers. Withey worked for Craig Whyte's London law firm Collyer Bristow before he took on a post with Rangers.



THE VANCOUVER Irish Sporting and Social Club, with funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and the GAA, has stepped up its efforts in the promotion of Gaelic Games in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

## IRISH SPORTING AND SOCIAL CLUB

### Outreach success to a new generation

VANCOUVER – The Vancouver Irish Sporting and Social Club, with funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and the GAA, has stepped up its efforts in the promotion of Gaelic Games in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

There were several significant stages in the successful promotion of Gaelic football to schools in 2014. All of these involved e-mails, phone calls, and hours and hours of volunteer time.

Firstly, members visited schools and successfully presented a clear short (1.5 hour maximum) format to a variety of age groups from primary to graduating class in secondary schools.

This year seven secondary (over 500 students) and one primary (over 150 students) schools had successful presentations.

ISSC spokesman Ronan Deane said, "We were bombarded by requests from new schools to see us for the first time, and from previous schools who want us back to go again.....Yes, I said *bombarded!*"

Students at Clayton Heights Secondary School in Surrey enjoyed three visits this year. The kids were thrilled with the opportunity and took to this "odd" sport with enthusiasm.

Some of the comments in the feedback included: "Before class I had never even heard of Gaelic football but by the end of class I was fascinated with the complexity of the game. Thank you Ronan and Tara for being awesome!" says Saul S. "Thanks so much for coming out Ronan and Tara – we all had a great time! I play soccer so learning how to play Gaelic football was an interesting twist on the game I'm familiar with," says Liam B.

In September a "Cul Camp" type format was rolled out as part of the Fall Youth Gaelic Games Program.

It ran over four successive Saturdays and was well attended and good value for the club and participating member families.

The response was extremely positive and the format will expand to Spring and Fall programs to be held in May and September 2015. They will be held

*"Before class I had never even heard of Gaelic football but by the end of class I was fascinated with the complexity of the game."*

in neighbourhoods of the schools where the club had the best responses in 2014.

Ronan added, "Secondly, we were able to engage with the school districts and teachers themselves, and demonstrate the value of Gaelic football as a challenging and interesting set of skills for all students to try.

"We were able to convince almost 50 physical educators from all over the Lower Mainland to work with the ISSC on future projects."

The ISSC is always looking for ways of showing off their favourite sport.

In March this year, they featured in the St. Patrick's Day parade and held a demonstration game against the local Australian team.

Volunteers also presented hurling and Gaelic football at the City of Richmond 'Move for Health' weekend with approximately 100 participants.

The club also participated at the De Danaan Feis weekend in November at the Olympic Oval in Richmond, with approximately 40 volunteers presenting information on hurling and Gaelic football.

"These events are annual and form a very simple, and intrinsic, part of our programs," says Ronan. Our attendance at these events, and our receipt of invitations to attend these and other events demonstrates to us our value, and motivates us to attend and promote more and more."

For more information about the Vancouver Irish Sporting and Social Club and the GAA Youth programs, visit: [www.isscvancouver.com](http://www.isscvancouver.com), or e-mail: [info@isscvancouver.com](mailto:info@isscvancouver.com). The club is also on Facebook at: ISSC Vancouver and ISSC Vancouver - Youth Gaelic Games.

## 'JACK TO A KING' – THE SWANSEA STORY

By EIFION WILLIAMS

A new Welsh documentary film chronicles the rise of Swansea City Football Club from almost certain oblivion at the bottom of the Football League in 2003, to the rarified atmosphere of the Premier League eight years later.

The film, *Jack to a King – The Swansea Story*, is directed by Marc Evans, who has also directed episodes of the popular mini-series *Hinterland*, which is set in the Welsh county of Ceredigion.

('Swansea Jacks' or 'The Jack Army' are terms of unknown origin sometimes used to describe Swansea City supporters.)

Older Swans' supporters, who for decades shivered on the terraces of the old Vetch Field watching Third or Fourth Division football, would be shocked to find their beloved team playing in the Premier League in the brand-new state-of-the-art Liberty Stadium.

Swansea last tasted top-tier football in the 1981/82 season after winning rapid promotion from the fourth tier in four seasons, a league record, only to slide all the way back down over the following four seasons.

Given the club's roller coaster history, supporters are inclined not to take the club's success for granted.

The film says as much about Swansea itself as it does about its football club.

It tells the story of the club's rise and



HUW JENKINS Chairman of the Swansea City Football Club at the London premiere of *Jack to a King*.

fall, and rise again, through the words of the characters involved.

A people who survived wartime bombing, industrial decline and recession showed the same resilience in saving its football club.

In 2001 Swansea City, languishing at the bottom of the football league and facing bankruptcy, was sold for one pound to a businessman named Tony Petty.

The new owner's solution to the club's financial woes was mainly to fire players to cut costs.

Petty's controversial handling of the club's affairs led to huge opposition from supporters, who formed an organization to take over the club and restore its fortunes.

Several investor/supporters paid £50,000 each to save the club. As it turned out, the team won the last game

of the 2002/3 season and avoided relegation out of the league.

Following what one critic called "a real-life sporting fairy-tale," by 2011 Swansea City had climbed into the Premier League.

In what will probably forever remain one of the highlights in the club's history, Swansea clinched promotion that year by defeating Reading 4-2 in a championship play-off at Wembley in front of 90,000 spectators.

The promotion was reputedly worth £90 million to the club and brought great economic benefits and worldwide recognition to the city.

Now in its fourth season in the Premier League, Swansea City has held its own against the competition.

With a third of this season's Premiership matches played, Swansea today sits at seventh place in the league and is taken seriously as a potential threat by other teams in the league. And the club is still largely owned by its supporters.

*Jack to a King* was released in the UK in September and has been generally well-received by critics.

The film's executive producer Mal Pope, summing up the film's appeal, said that "this is a truly remarkable story of how a ragtag band of builders, housewives, teachers and travel agents came together to save their football club and ended up turning their city into a worldwide brand.

"A story of how sometimes even the wildest dreams can come true."

IRISH TRUE

GLASSES UP TO THE SONG AND THE STORM

To see the rest of the story, visit [TullamoreDEW.com](http://TullamoreDEW.com)