

# the celtic connection

ISSUE 26 VOLUME 1

*Proudly Serving Celts in North America Since 1991*

DECEMBER 2016/JANUARY 2017

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



PHOTO: Visit Britain

EDINBURGH CASTLE provides a spectacular backdrop for the city's annual Hogmanay fireworks display on New Year's Eve. This is Scotland's biggest festival celebration since until relatively recently Christmas was not celebrated in Scotland.

*[Read more on page 11]*



SCOTLAND'S First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has backed calls for a 'Celtic Corridor' between her country, the Republic and Northern Ireland during a visit to Dublin. She is pictured with Senator Denis O'Donovan, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad.

*[Read more on page 9]*



GALWAY NATIVE Mike Crehan and his wife Sheila visiting with Daidí na Nollag (Father Christmas) at the Seattle Irish seniors' annual Christmas luncheon on Saturday, December 3.

*[Read more Seattle Irish news on page 24 & 25]*



MYSTERY OF REBIRTH is illuminated at winter solstice — On Wednesday, December 21 the light returns in the northern hemisphere. Though few may take notice, this event has fueled some of the world's great philosophies as well as an eternal duel fought deep within the forest primeval. Since primitive time humankind has taken notice of nature and its phenomena. Dependant upon the earth and the environment, early men and women understood theirs was a world of great brutality as well as divinity. The earliest deities were those that personified elements upon which survival depended, primarily fertility of earth, animal and human.

*[Cover artwork 'Green Jacket' by Melissa Mary Duncan. Read About the Artist on page 2]*

**DEIRDRE HALFERTY  
and  
LAUREEN REGAN  
share Honorary  
Irish Consul roles  
for Southern Alberta**

*[Read more on pages 20 & 21]*

## WIN FREE TICKETS

Win free tickets to **A Caelestra Christmas** concert at Evergreen Cultural Centre, Coquitlam on December 18. (See page 5 for details). Entry by: December 15. Mark your entry: Caelestra.

Win free tickets to **Eric Bibb** concert at The Act, Maple Ridge, on February 17, 2017. (See page 5 for details). Entry by January 23. Mark your entry: Eric Bibb.

Entries by e-mail only. Mark the name of the event on your entry, including your name and daytime telephone number. (Only one entry per person per event) Send to: [cbutler@telus.net](mailto:cbutler@telus.net)



**Our Special Annual  
Christmas Greeting  
Section - Page 12**



FARRELL McCARTHY founding president of the Irish Canadian Cultural Association (ICCA) in Miramichi, New Brunswick was among 54 recipients presented with the 2016 Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers by Canada's Governor General His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston. The award recognizes volunteers who have contributed to their community at the grassroots levels. McCarthy founded the ICCA in 1983 with the goal of fostering an awareness and appreciation of Irish history, heritage, traditions and artistic expressions in N.B. He also spearheaded a call to create a minister responsible for Celtic affairs in the province. This request to recognize the role of the Irish, Scots and Welsh was finally brought to fruition earlier this year when Lisa Harris was officially sworn in as the new minister of seniors and Celtic affairs for New Brunswick.



## ABOUT THE ARTIST: MELISSA MARY DUNCAN

*"My inspiration comes from only one source. Though the subject may be taken from a Celtic legend, a tale from the Brother's Grimm, the lyric from an ancient ballad or the melody of a carol; the finished painting, and whatever the viewer finds in it, comes from the heart."*  
~ Melissa Mary Duncan

Melissa's very first lessons in painting came from her mother. Born in Toronto, and raised in the Pacific Northwest, Melissa was an introspective child.

A survivor of the crippling effects of polio, she was captivated by the graphic works of Sulamith Wulfig, Arthur Rackham, and the Pre-Raphaelites.

Having grown up with images of knights in shining armour, fair maidens, and tales of the mythic fey, it is hardly surprising that, in her late teens, Melissa became interested in historic re-enactment.

She found a community dedicated to reviving lost skills and traditions. There she was introduced to Medieval and Renaissance art practice.

Enchanted by what she had discovered, Melissa decided to further her schooling. To that end, she studied fine arts at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver B.C., graduating in 1991.

This brought together the themes of her life: the need to overcome adversity, a love of the legendary, and a desire to conjure powerful images using traditional mediums.

Not for her the hollow and plastic representations of faerie found in much of popular media, Melissa understood that true myth sought to explain the world and the human experience of that world.

Frequently, myth or folktales are imbued with tragedy. There is joy and frivolity, too but always, there is a testament to strength and often hope. These themes are woven through her art.

Her images hold an intuitive yet deeply personal familiarity, drawn from her own experience of the world and her passion for a good old fashioned tale.

Her work often celebrates strong female archetypes. Maiden, mother and



crone, the farmer's wife, the knight errant and the travelling bard all have their place in her magically realistic world. As do the other folk, the faerie folk or the faerie.

They are never far away, acting as agents of nature, mischief and change. Each one is lovingly drawn from an understanding of the human heart, a love of history and knowledge of myth. Very often they are drawn from life.

In fact, Melissa works from life as often as she can, cheerfully persuading

friends, acquaintances and strangers to pose for her.

She sketches on the bus, at cafés, and in hospital waiting rooms. Character is very important, bestowing an essential believability to the creatures and subjects she creates.

The setting is equally important to her. Passionate about the environment, her love of nature is obvious in her careful rendering of botanicals, birds and animals. Her latest pieces have been executed primarily in watercolour, gouache, or pencil.

Melissa lives in the historic city of New Westminster, British Columbia. She remains a student of Celtic, English and Northern European history and mythology.

Her art work enjoys a growing international audience and can be found on books, magazine covers, CDs, as licensed products, and in private collections throughout the world

To contact Melissa or learn more about her artwork, visit her website at: [www.melissaduncan.ca](http://www.melissaduncan.ca). Or follow her on Facebook at: Faye, The Art of Melissa Mary Duncan.



"Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-coloured snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steadily falling night. I turned the gas down, I got into bed. I said some words to the close and holy darkness, and then I slept."

— Dylan Thomas, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*

# Light and Darkness Meet at Winter Solstice



OMEONE once said a measure of human greatness is the ability to handle ambiguity. But what of those who are uncomfortable with ambiguity?

By CYNTHIA WALLENTINE

Technological advances are driving vast change across this planet and beyond.

From within the earth, to beyond our atmosphere, technology is irrevocably altering our environment, how we live, and how the future will be written. Irrevocable.

Humans are a species that looks naturally to exploration and expansion it cannot be stopped. It is our nature.

The seismic cultural shifts caused by global technological change open great rifts between countries, economic classes, and the past and the future.

The unsettled tectonics that underpin the Middle East are reflected in the ancient and terrible conflicts that play out above ground, catching the rest of the world in a firefight that sets the masses on their feet to save themselves and their families.

Push back, not in my country.

In a technologically, environmentally, and spiritually connected world, no country, and no human soul, can afford to be an isolationist.

Yet, the world over, an ugly tide of racism, bigotry, intolerance, and greed laps over every continent, as emergent tribalist leaders terrorize groups of individuals as a preferred method of battling unrest and terrorism.

Fear of change and ambiguity grows razor sharp teeth. It is cheap and easy to turn people against the Other, rather than courageously and intelligently face the unknown. It is our nature.

Cause and effect are matters for scholars and history. The mythological world resides in the space between, where things purportedly start and end. That space also coincides with the span of a human life, be it long or tragically short.

Greater minds than mine speak of mythology as the structure that enfolds and informs human life.

It offers ideas of where we came from, where we are going, and why we are here. From mythology come the great religions of the world, to confer meaning and purpose, to ease pain, and promote social justice.

The sure sign of a false mythology, or philosophy, is that which counsels the hatred, intolerance, pain, or supremacy of one person, group, or population over another.

Recently, when the United States fell to the savagery and dishonesty that defined its election cycle, it did not reflect the will of the people, but the complexities of its constitution.

The dimming of that beacon of liberty and justice for all profoundly tips our world toward the darkness of false leaders and their philosophies.

Yet there are signs. Destruction and dissolution precede change. And darkness sometimes signals a beginning.

The indigenous tribes who called themselves Celts did not look at dawn as the start of the day, but the night which came before.



Light follows darkness, although at times, we might feel certain it is otherwise.

There are few Creation myths that do not begin with a vast, undifferentiated darkness, followed by a spark of divine light.

Darkness enables the visibility of certain, special kinds of light, providing containment, meaning, and companionship from those seen, and unseen, who share our journey.

The great fire festivals of the Celtic year commence at the advent of twilight, when illuminating light from a bonfire, a candle, or a star becomes visible.

Darkness contains, but does not conquer light. The dissolution of day signals change is at hand.

Those who fear darkness many times fear change fear the ambiguity of life which is as constant as a heartbeat or the next breath of air, and as certain as death.

Dealing with ambiguity and volatility requires constancy and curiosity. Life and death are not for the faint of heart.

To vote, with your mark, or your feet at any time in life for those who claim they can turn back time, stop change, and reverse the course of human affairs is a vote born from a fear of uncertainty, and a wish for the grey comfort of stagnation.

It is a gesture of darkly open mouths where souls escape into thickening air.

Darkness is all about us, seasonally, and otherwise.

It is better to ride the darkness eyes open, and cultivate change, rather than join brittle armies of opinion.

Find commonalities to dismantle polarities. It is a start.

Remember that change and ambiguity frighten even the strongest heart but you need only witness, not act on, that fear.

Change of many kinds is afoot. The history made now will outlive us. Though countries falter, mythology the process of our lives does not.

We each choose our tale, the characters, and scruples, we will abide. Regardless of the outward storm, we are held eternally.

On Wednesday, December 21, at 2:44 AM PST, the winter solstice marks the limit to solar darkness on this earth. Where we go, we do not know.

Life is change. Vote with each moment of your life to build not destroy even if you are the only one in a crowd who is willing.

Strength, like fear, is contagious. In your mind, family, and community choose to make the difference.

the celtic connection

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## CROSSCARE MIGRANT PROJECT

# 'Family is often at the heart of the decision to return to Ireland'

By SARAH OWEN

*Irish Abroad Networking Officer*  
DUBLIN – Crosscare Migrant Project is a non-profit organisation based in Dublin.

A project of Crosscare (the social support agency of the Dublin Archdiocese) we are part of a global network of Irish organisations funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Emigrant Support Programme to work with Irish emigrants.

Previously named Emigrant Advice, we were established in 1987 in response to the increasing numbers of Irish people emigrating from Ireland.

Since the early 2000s, our work has expanded to include Irish emigrants who are returning home, as well as new migrants living in Ireland.

We provide information and advocacy services around migration and return migration via our drop-in centre in the heart of Dublin city.

For people leaving Ireland, we offer general information on visa requirements for Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand.

We also signpost to Irish support organisations abroad and provide useful links for seeking employment, accommodation and more.

For individuals thinking of coming back to Ireland, we provide tailored information to support them to make an informed decision about their prospective return.

We advocate on behalf of people experiencing difficulties in accessing statutory assistance on return, such as homeless and housing supports, social wel-



**CROSSCARE MIGRANT PROJECT'S** Irish emigrant team: Richard King – Project Leader; Danielle McLaughlin – Policy Officer; Sarah Owen – Irish Abroad Networking Officer; Ian Brennan – Reception; Judy McAvoy – Information and Advocacy Officer.

fare payments, and medical cards.

Many of the people we work with have returned in crisis, including families returning from conflict zones, deportees, former prisoners, Irish travellers, victims of domestic violence, and isolated older people.

We also work closely with Irish Embassies and groups like the Irish Canadian Immigration Centre in Toronto and the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas in Ireland.

Given all of this, you would be forgiven for wondering why you have not heard of us before.

We are getting better at reaching out however, thanks in part to our new Irish Abroad Networking project which stems from the Global Irish Diaspora Strategy to foster stronger connections and collaboration amongst Irish support organisations for the benefit of Irish emigrants around the world.

In 2016, we undertook six overseas trips and met with 65 of these groups in

Canada, the UK, the USA, and Australia. Many of the groups we met told us that they have noted an increase in the number of people enquiring about returning to Ireland, especially from Australia but also from Canada.

People return to Ireland for a variety of reasons, but in our experience family is often at the heart of this decision.

We know that people who return can experience difficulties readjusting to life in Ireland, but we feel it is important for them to share their own stories.

This is why we are inviting Irish emigrants who have returned to Ireland in the last two years to take part in our Returned Irish survey.

We hope that by reflecting on their own experiences, they can help to support and prepare other emigrants considering a similar move back.

So far we have had responses from over 300 people. We are aiming to double this figure by January. The results of the survey will be published in a report to be shared widely with Irish people all over the world.

We also hope to present these findings to Minister for the Diaspora Joe McHugh T.D early in the new year.

The survey is live at <http://svy.mk/2fHzWto> and on [www.migrantproject.ie](http://www.migrantproject.ie), so please do share it with anyone who has recently returned to live in Ireland from Canada or elsewhere.

For more information, see Crosscare Migrant Project's website: [www.migrantproject.ie](http://www.migrantproject.ie). You can also find them on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/CrosscareMigrantProject](http://www.facebook.com/CrosscareMigrantProject)) & Twitter (<https://twitter.com/irishmigrants>) or email them at [migrantproject@crosscare.ie](mailto:migrantproject@crosscare.ie).



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And have a happy Hogmanay and Robbie Burns Day!

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## CONGRATULATIONS JORDAN FLYNN!!!

### OUR HERO - ON WINNING THE BATTLE OF THE IRISH BARS ON NOVEMBER 19TH.



Proceeds of the boxing match were to benefit: The Irish Sporting and Social Club Vancouver (ISSC)



Battle of the Irish Bars

On the left: Jordan 'The King' Flynn, age: 25; weight; 175 lbs; height; 5' 10" County Dublin

On the right: Barry 'Barrington the Third' Walsh, age 26; weight, 181 lbs; height, 6' 1" County Dublin



L-R: John Flynn, Johnnie Fox's; Gus Greer, owner, Johnnie Fox's; Jordan Flynn, jubilant winner of boxing match and manager, Johnnie Fox's; Barry Pierce, GM, Johnnie Fox's; Barry Walsh, boxing opponent and manager Doolin's Irish Pub and Daragh Murphy, owner Johnnie Fox's Irish Snug

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Referee: holding up the jubilant arm of the winner of the match: Jordan Flynn, Manager Johnnie Fox's Irish Snug and defeated opponent, Barry Walsh, Manager Doolin's Irish Pub – After a hard fought battle that saw both men bloodied – Flynn won the fight in a 4th Round decider



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| <b>Thursday, JANUARY 26</b><br>Cascadia's finest bluegrass combo<br><b>The Jaybirds</b>   | <b>Friday, FEBRUARY 10</b><br>Cajun Country Revival                                      |
| <b>Sunday, FEBRUARY 12</b><br>Primo Scots fiddle / cello duo<br><b>Alasdair Fraser &amp; Natalie Haas</b><br>and many more to come! |  |

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TEN STRINGS &amp; A GOATSKIN (they seemed to be everywhere this year!).

## An incredible year topped off by two prestigious awards

**V**ANCOUVER – 2016 - What A Year!

I'm only going to concentrate on the good things that happened to me – and at The Rogue – in 2016.

No mention of voting or the loss of musical luminaries. We get enough bad news in the mainstream media as it is!

I'll kick off with my Top 12 Celtic Albums of 2016 (in alphabetical order by first name):

- Afro Celt Sound System – *The Source* (Realworld Records)
- Ashley MacIsaac – *FDLER* (So Plaid)
- Cassie & Maggie – *The Willow Collection* (Indie, NS)
- Doolin' – *Doolin'* (Compass)
- Four Men & A Dog – *And The Band Played On* (Indie, Eire)
- The Gloaming – *The Gloaming 2* (Realworld)
- Jarlath Henderson – *Hearts Broken, Heads Turned* (Indie, Scotland)
- Ten Strings & A Goatskin – *Aupres Du Poole* (Indie, PEI)
- Wake The Dead – *Deal* (Indie, USA)
- We Banjo 3 – *String Theory* (Indie, Eire)
- Yann Falquet & Pascal Gemme – *Princes et Habitants* (Indie, Quebec)
- 9bach – *Anian* (Realworld)

It's been an excellent year for new music, and I've been very lucky to be invited to festivals and concerts all around the world.

Festivals in Denmark (Tonder Festival), Cape Breton (Celtic Colours), Kansas City (Folk Alliance), Edmonton, Vancouver, Courtenay (Island Musicfest), and the Canadian Folk Music Awards in Toronto.

I even managed to take in a concert by Welsh band 9bach in London in May (two days before I went to the FA Cup Final, which Manchester United won!).

Tonder was especially amazing, with a plethora of great bands from Scotland to the fore (Rura, Manran, Talisk, Treacherous Orchestra) and PEI's Ten Strings & A Goatskin and The Wayward Band, Eliza Carthy's new English big band – especially memorable.

In Edmonton I was blown away by The Step Crew, made up of musicians, dancers and singers from Canada, USA, and Ireland. Step-dancing doesn't travel well onto CD, but as a visual and musical treat this combo takes a lot of biscuits!

The Rogue celebrated 10 years of April In Paris, our festival of gypsy jazz, and

### ROGUE FOLK CLUB



By STEVE EDGE

*"I received a huge ovation, which was very humbling"*



VAN DJANGO'S Cool Yule plays on December 18 at the Rogue.



SHARON SHANNON onstage at The Rogue (she's coming back on March 12, 2017).

eight years of Shorefest, the free festival of Canadian folk and roots music on Sunset Beach before the fireworks displays.

Alas, this might be our last involvement with Shorefest, as our contractual agreement with the radio station has now expired. We're working on other funding ideas. Stay tuned!

Of course, the big news was the City of Vancouver saving St. James Hall from the wrecking ball!

Purchasing the venue – which also serves as a community centre in Kitsilano, and has operated at breakeven for over 20 years, welcoming 500,000 visitors per year – has given the people of Vancouver a great venue for music and so much more for at least 20 years, renewable to 30, and hopefully much longer!

We celebrated the day of the announcement with a concert by one of Canada's finest ever Celtic bands, Coig.

Other Celtic shows which will live long in the memory include the partnerships with Celticfest Vancouver in March – Sharon Shannon, and De Danann – PEI's Ten Strings & A Goatskin, Cape Breton Night with Mairi Rankin, Wendy MacIsaac and Mac Morin, The Fretless at The Revue Theatre, Barrule from the Isle of Man, and Quebec bands Le Vent du Nord, and Yann Falquet & Pascal Gemme.

My year has been topped off with two incredible awards.

I was inducted into the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame in September, and I am writing this in Toronto, scene of my Canadian Folk Music Award of The Slight Music Unsung Hero 2016!

We attended two brilliant showcases at Hugh's Room – with B.C.'s Jocelyn Pettit kicking off the proceedings with a fine set, and those three extremely vibrant and tireless Prince Edward Islanders, Ten Strings & A Goatskin winding up the second showcase.

There were awards given to another great trio from PEI, The East Pointers (ensemble of the year), David Francey (solo artist and contemporary album of the year for Empty Train) and Yann & Pascal (traditional album of the year) and a fine performance from Newfoundland's Ennis Sisters too.

I received a huge ovation, which was very humbling, and it's amazing to think that my Toronto "stage debut" saw me "open" for the likes of Colin Linden and Bruce Cockburn!

I'll have a run-down of my favourite albums and songs of the year on the *Saturday Edge On Folk* on www.citr.ca over the next few weeks.

I hope to gain admittance to the station to host shows on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. I hope you tune me in and turn me on from 8 AM to noon every Saturday.

Wassail! and hearty season's greetings however you choose to celebrate it (you might like a healthy dose of gypsy jazz on Sunday, December 18 with Van Django and company, or a singalong ukulele jam night on the 20th at The Rogue at St. James Hall, for instance! www.roguefolk.bc.ca).

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• 14 are local Craft Beer  
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# Joyful Tales and Soaring Celtic Melodies

COQUITLAM, B.C. – This Christmas season, join Caelestra for an evening of beautiful Yuletide music both old and new.

Five talented musicians performing in full medieval costume, with rich vocal harmonies, and music played on flute, harp, guitars, hand drums and cello, will keep you captivated from beginning to end.

Featuring the heavenly voice of lyric soprano Lambroula Maria Pappas, the Celtic flute of Michelle Carlisle, and the songs of fantasy/folk songwriter Britta Curkovic, Caelestra will take you on a journey back in time and around the globe.

Enjoy jigs and reels, soul stirring ballads, sprightly renaissance tunes, and traditional music with soaring Celtic melodies and tribal rhythms to wrap you in joyful tales of fantasy.

'A Caelestra Christmas' will be pre-



CAELESTRA features Celtic and Medieval music with Lambroula Maria Pappas on vocals; Michelle Carlisle on flutes and whistles; Britta Curkovic is a multi-instrumentalist songwriter; Sacha Levin is on percussion; and Janelle Ragno on cello.

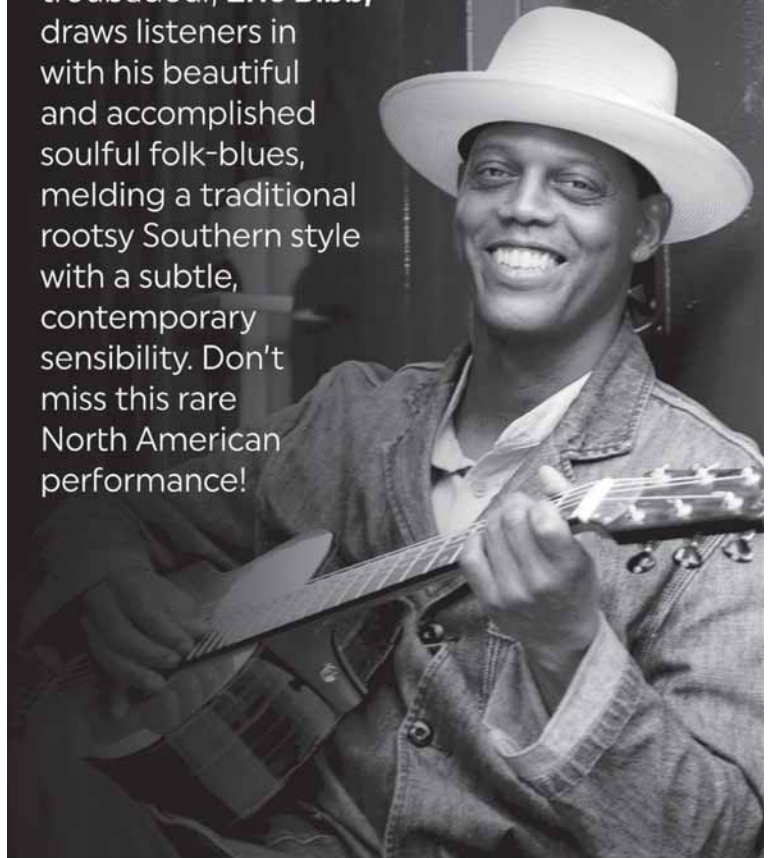
sented at the Evergreen Cultural Centre in Coquitlam on December 18 at 7:30 PM. Tickets are \$25 adult, \$20 senior, \$16 student.

For tickets or more information, call (604) 927-6555, or visit evergreenculturalcentre.ca.

## Eric Bibb

Friday  
February 17, 2017  
8pm | Main Theatre

Grammy nominee troubadour, **Eric Bibb**, draws listeners in with his beautiful and accomplished soulful folk-blues, melding a traditional rootsy Southern style with a subtle, contemporary sensibility. Don't miss this rare North American performance!



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THE NEWS  
Canada

# New Trainspotting sequel trailer released

*Trainspotting 2* reunites the surviving four characters from Danny Boyle's smash 1996 film and looks at what has happened to them 20 years on.

The film is loosely based on Irvine Welsh's book *Porno*, set 10 years after the events of *Trainspotting*. *T2*, however, will be set 20 years after the first film.

It will star four of the five main stars of the 1996 film: Ewan McGregor as Renton, Robert Carlyle as Begbie, Jonny Lee Miller as Sick Boy and Ewen Bremner as Spud. Kevin McKidd's character, Tommy, died in the original film.

The original, which was nominated for an Academy Award and won a BAFTA, follows Renton, who is deeply immersed in the Edinburgh drug scene, as he tries to clean up and get out, despite the allure of the drugs and influence of friends.

Irvine Welsh said *T2* is "very much telling a story about Edinburgh as it currently is."

"The main element to the story is basically Renton, Begbie, Sick Boy and Spud getting back together again, and it tells the story of them getting involved in the vice industry in a very innovative way."

*Trainspotting* focused on Renton and his desperate attempt to kick his heroin habit despite the temptations around him, illustrating how the narcotic has affected his relationships with everyone around him.

Although, if the preview is anything to go by, substances are still going to play a key part in the plot of *T2*, despite Renton claiming that he's off the heroin.

The trailer plays on Renton's iconic "choose life" speech from the first movie – a quote which donned so many bedroom walls around the film's release in 1996 – but this time, it's been given a 21<sup>st</sup> Century twist.

"Choose life. Choose Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and hope that someone,



TWENTY YEARS after the original *Trainspotting* premiered, director Danny Boyle has reassembled the original cast for a sequel, *T2: Trainspotting*.

somewhere, cares," McGregor's protagonist can be heard saying over the top of all of the action. "Choose looking up old flames, wishing you'd done it all differently. And choose watching history repeat itself.

"Choose your future. Choose reality TV; slut shaming; revenge porn. Choose a zero-hour contract; a two-hour journey to work and choose the same for your kids, only worse, and smother the pain with an unknown dose of an unknown drug made in somebody's kitchen.

"And then, take a deep breath. You're an addict, so be addicted, just be addicted to something else.

"Choose the ones you love. Choose your future. Choose life."

Until now, the only sight of *T2* had come from a teaser trailer, released in July.

It depicted the characters standing on a train platform, soundtracked by Iggy Pop's *Lust for Life*.

*T2: Trainspotting* is scheduled for release early 2017.



## 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.

The following is the *Celt In A Twist* Contemporary Celtic Top 10:

1. *William of Barary* by Jim Moray - *Upcefera* on NIAG.
2. *Antwerp* by The Breath - *Carry Your Kin* on Real World.
3. *Wind Her Up* by Doolin' - *Doolin'* on Compass.
4. *An Danna Elegua* by Salsa Celtica - *The Tall Islands* on Discos Leon.
5. *Aupres Du Poele* by Ten Strings And A Goat Skin - *Aupres Du Poele* on TSAAGS.
6. *Anian* by 9Bach - *Anian* on Real World.
7. *After the Rain* by The Dhol Foundation - *Drum-believeale* on Real World.
8. *England* by The Young Folk - *Tyft Hoo Eul Nk G* on Independent.
9. *After The Storm* by Sketch - *Highland Times* on Skye Music.
10. *Shannon* by The Narrowback - TBA on Independent.

**Celt In A Twist Pick Of The Month:**  
**Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy**  
**- A Celtic Family Christmas**

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# Shock of U.S. election has caused some UK politicians to volte face

LONDON – I often wondered how politicians managed to produce so much hot air but figures recently released go some way to enlightening me.

In the 2015 general election the Scottish Nationalist Party increased its number of seats in Westminster from six to 56, making the SNP the third largest political party in Westminster.

A direct consequence of this is that in cafes, bars and vending machines in the parliamentary estate there is a 60 per cent increase in sales of Irn Bru, Scotland's favourite fizzy drink.

Irn Bru is produced in Cumbernauld Scotland, where it is regarded as the second national drink, and outsells Coca-Cola.

Data released shows that 8,708 cans or bottles were sold in the financial year 2015-2016 up from 5,452 the previous year.

The joke is that Irn Bru is made from iron girders and gives the Scots their strength.

Patrick Grady, the SNP MP for Glasgow North said the carbonated drink gave the Scottish politicians "sustenance" through the long days in the House of Commons.

Whilst on the subject of hot air, thank god the U.S presidential election is over.

The shock result has caused some UK politicians to volte face, none more so than, the ex-London mayor and our new foreign minister, Boris Johnson.

Early this year, Johnson said that Trump was "clearly out of his mind."

When Trump suggested that police were afraid to visit some parts of London because of radicalisation, Boris responded by saying "I think he's betraying a stupefying ignorance that makes him frankly unfit to hold the office of the President of the United States."

He added, "The only reason I wouldn't go to some parts of New York is the real risk of meeting Donald Trump." Go get him Boris!

Last Monday, in Brussels, at a meeting for foreign ministers, Johnson said, "I think there is a lot to be positive about; it is very important not to prejudge the president-elect and his administration.

"As I've said before, Donald Trump is a deal maker and I think that could be a good thing for Britain." Nice one Boris.

Meanwhile, the build up to Christmas has started and the decorative lights are being switched on all over the country.

This week sees "Black Friday," a new-ish concept here and one I confess not to like nor really understand.

It is presumably an accountant's ploy to generate maximum sales.

Having spent most of my life selling to shops I know that stores buy in products at a discounted price, especially for these promotions.

Prior to an event this merchandise is offered at an inflated price so they can later claim they are giving amazing discounts.

In reality, they have just reverted to their normal profit margin.

It is not illegal...they are just cheating the public.

## POSTCARD FROM LONDON

By  
ELFAN  
JONES



I remember when the January sale was a real event with genuine bargains, but now I doubt there is one department store which is not having a sale somewhere in its store every day of the year.

Many years ago, a friend who was merchandise manager at McCurdys, a Rochester New York based department store, told me about a quote for which Abraham Lincoln is credited.

The saying goes, 'you can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time'.

These days department stores attempt to do just that.

Finally on a happy note, I presume that the hugely popular British television show *Only Fools and Horses* was shown in Canada.

The hapless wheeler dealer Derrick Trotter "Del Boy," was always reassuring his brother Rodney that "this time next year we will be millionaires."

He would never have imagined that in property terms this would come true.

A four bedroom house on the council estate where the programme was filmed has just sold for £1.1million.

In the sitcom *Del and Rodney* lived in Peckham, a then-rough area of South London, and their apartment was in a block named Nelson Mandela House.

This in reality was Harlech Tower which is in Acton, west London.

In the nineties the Harlech Tower estate had a grim reputation for crime and was used as a location for the 1997 film *Welcome to Sarajevo* about war torn Bosnia.

Today, it is part of one of the most ambitious regeneration programmes in London.

Its position, less than three miles from the centre of London, and the remorselessly rising house prices have made it an extremely attractive investment proposition.

The Harlech Tower apartment block is due for demolition and 2,500 new homes are being built on the new rebranded Acton Gardens Estate which is seen as a model of inner-city renewal.

As Del Boy would have said, "Lovely jubbly."

Merry Christmas,  
Elfan



ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES is a British television sitcom created and written by John Sullivan and originally broadcast on BBC One. Set in Peckham in south-east London, it stars David Jason as ambitious market trader Derek "Del Boy" Trotter, Nicholas Lyndhurst as his younger brother Rodney Trotter, and Lennard Pearce as their elderly Grandad. The series follows the Trotters' highs and lows in life, in particular their attempts to get rich.

## Vital Spark theatre presents the Canadian premiere of 'Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off'

VANCOUVER – "Once upon a time there were two queens on the wan green island, and the wan green island was split into two kingdoms. But no equal kingdoms..."

So La Corbie, the ringmaster, the trickster prophetess, cracks her whip and, with her fiddle player at her side, plunges us into the "whispers, rumours, souchs and chatters" that are at the heart of the story of two of history's most intriguing women – Mary Queen of Scots and her cousin, Elizabeth I.

The stage is set for a deadly game where intrigue, passion, marriage, and murder all spin to La Corbie's telling.

We meet the two queens of course, but also Lord Darnley, the young suitor sent by Elizabeth to marry Mary, Mary's secretary David Rizzio (is he her lover also?), as well as her third husband Bothwell, and, snaking between the plottings and secrets, the lean, gaunt figure of John Knox, "as black as night."

Liz Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off* is no stately



FAWLTY TOWERS star Andrew Sachs was born Andreas Siegfried Sachs in Berlin in 1930. His character Manuel was one of the most imitated British comedy characters of the 1970s.

## Much loved 'Fawlty Towers' actor, dies aged 86

LONDON – Andrew Sachs, the actor who rose to fame in *Fawlty Towers*, has died at the age of 86 after a four-year battle with dementia.

The actor, best known for playing hapless Spanish waiter Manuel in John Cleese's sitcom, passed away in a care home on November 23 his wife has revealed.

Melody Sachs, who cared for him in his final years, disclosed he had suffered vascular dementia, losing his capacity to speak and write in later life.

The disease, the second-most common form of dementia, is characterised by the often sudden loss of language, speech and memory, along with mood changes.

"I never once heard him grumble. It wasn't all doom and gloom; he still worked for two years," said Melody.

"We were happy, we were always laughing, we never had a dull moment. He had dementia for four years and we didn't really notice it at first until the memory started going.

"It didn't get really bad until quite near the end. I nursed Andrew; I was there for every moment of it."

Sachs won a place in the nation's hearts for his role in *Fawlty Towers*, where he played a clueless Spanish waiter who became the butt of John Cleese's jokes.

His catchphrase, "I know nothing," and Basil Fawlty's dismissive "He's from Barcelona" have gone down in British comedy history, with the Seventies sitcom regularly voted among the best-

loved BBC programmes ever made.

Despite his stellar career, Sachs is remembered in recent years for being the innocent victim of a furore in which presenters prank-called him.

In 2008, BBC presenters Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand made a live on-air obscene call to him in which they joked about Brand sleeping with his granddaughter Georgina Baillie.

More than 500 people protested to the BBC, which was forced to apologise to Sachs for these "unacceptable and offensive" remarks.

In 2014, Sachs said he remained "disgusted" by the incident, with his wife telling the *Daily Mail* the episode had been "absolutely horrific."

Born in 1930 Germany, Sachs fled the Nazis with his family in 1938 and eventually settled in North London.

He married Melody – who starred in one episode of *Fawlty Towers* herself – in 1960, going on to have three children.

Beginning his acting career on BBC radio, he went on to appear in *The Saint*, *Randall and Hopkirk* and *The History of Miss Polly*, with guest appearances in *Casualty* and *Doctor Who*.

His *Fawlty Towers* co-star Cleese once said of Sachs, "He just made me laugh till it hurt."

"If you met Andrew you would call him almost retiring, very quiet, almost academic, studiously polite," he said.

"Then suddenly he clips on that moustache and something else in his personality just slips in."

text but a raw, rough telling of the familiar tale of the enmity between Elizabeth and Mary.

Here the focus is on Mary, and on how she tries to control a land riven with sectarianism, with plots and counterplots, while continuing to be a passionate and beautiful woman of flesh and blood.

In what has been called her "scavenging eclecticism of language," and with ferocious iconoclasm and boundless wit, Lochhead sets out a tale of a queen who has failed to learn what Elizabeth did, that a queen must rule with her head not her heart.

*Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off* runs at the Jericho Arts Centre February 17 to March 11, Thursday through Saturday at 8 PM, Sundays at 2 PM, plus matinee (as well as evening performance).

Tickets are \$25 and \$20 for seniors and students. Reservations at (604) 224-8007, ext 3. More information at: [www.vitalsparktheatre.com](http://www.vitalsparktheatre.com).



# Dylan Thomas: Childhood home a shrine to a literary legend

For fans of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, it is the ultimate experience: spend the night in his childhood bedroom, now restored to the way it was back in the 1930s, complete with a jumble of books, cigarette stubs and scraps of paper bearing his scribbled poetry.

Thomas's birthplace at No5 Cwmdonkin Drive, Swansea, is open to visitors for guided tours – but you can also take over the whole property for short breaks during the week or at weekends, for one night or a week or more.

It has become a shrine to the poet – Prince Charles called in for tea in 2012 – and has become a base for Dylan tours.

The young Dylan was doted on here by his parents. His mother cut the top off his egg, and it was a duty he came to expect from all the women in his life.

There is also good fun in following the routes that would once have been taken by the young Dylan and which no doubt provided inspiration for his poetry crammed school exercise books.



Poet Dylan Thomas pictured with his Irish wife Caitlin.



THE INTERIOR of No5 Cwmdonkin Drive, the childhood home of Dylan Thomas.

He would go on to write one of the 50 most quoted lines in English verse (against tough competition from Shakespeare, Keats and Tennyson): 'Do not go gentle into that good night...'

Midway along Terrace Road – Thomas's route to school – visitors will pause to look down over the new Swan-

sea, to the glorious sweep of the bay Dylan would have known so well, and on to Mumbles.

He would wander his 'ugly lovely town' (it became a city in 1969) in search of conviviality and conversation, until he left for London at the age of 20.

The condemned Bush Hotel in High Street is another stop. This is where Dylan took his last drink before his train to London, and on to New York, where he died in 1953 after a mammoth drinking session at the White Horse Tavern.

Walk down Salubrious Passage, where a mischievous schoolboy Dylan would drop coins heated on a Bunsen burner and watch passersby pick them up and drop them with a yelp.

Also, view the offices of the newspaper where he worked as a reporter, the BBC studio where that rich stentorian voice would boom at the microphone in many a live broadcast, and the former Swansea School of Art where the platinum-tongued lothario chatted up fellow female students there.

It's a sad fact that Swansea, in his day and after it, never fully accepted the bibulous, flirting scribe, whose behaviour was moderate by today's standards. But now there is The Dylan Thomas Centre, with its exhibition on his life and work, in Swansea's Maritime Quarter.



Circa 1989

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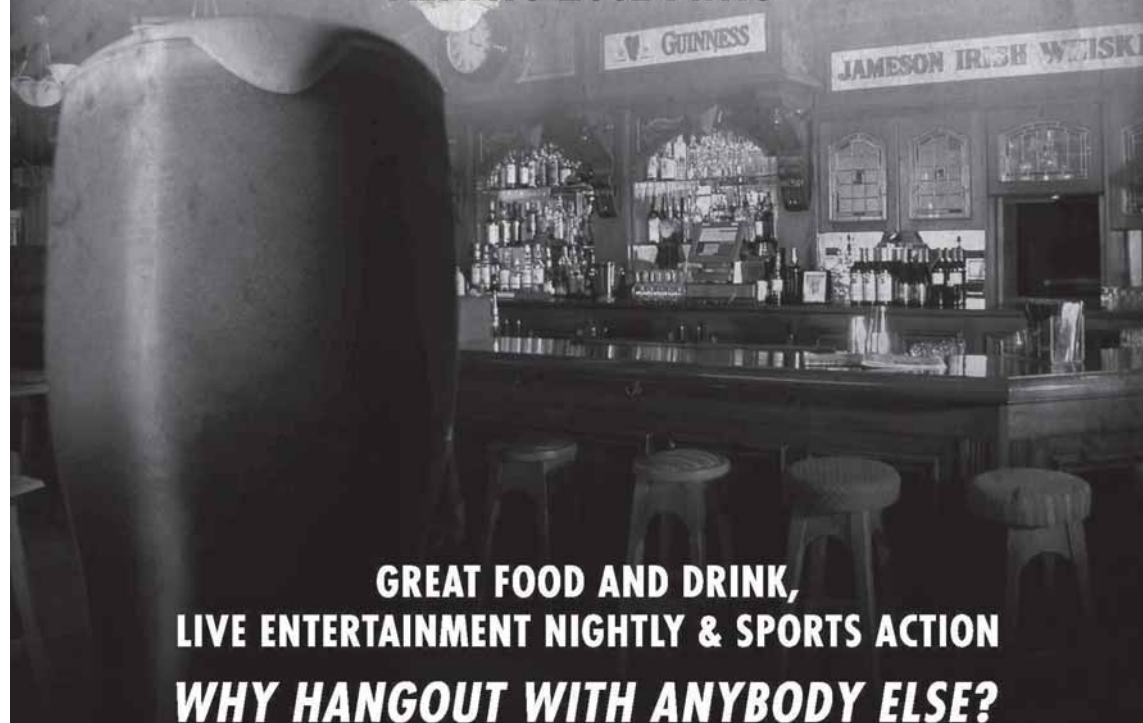
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# From the Blackhouse to the White House: Scotland and the U.S. President-Elect

By  
**HARRY  
McGRATH**

EDINBURGH – In 1640 an act of the Scottish Parliament abolished the “Yule vacation and all observation thereof in time coming.”

This post-reformation attitude to Christmas didn't last forever, as was intended, but it did prevail until 1958 when Christmas in Scotland finally became a public holiday.

It was sixteen more years before Boxing Day was added and a two-day break became the norm.

My uncle, who was with the Glasgow post-office, left for work on Christmas morning, as he did any other morning, and looked forward to Hogmanay.

In keeping with that long Scottish tradition, I will skip over Christmas in this column and spend it anticipating the New Year. It's fair to say that many Scots view 2017 with trepidation.

The primary cause is Brexit which is likely to have a negative effect on everyone in the UK but will be even more keenly felt in Scotland where only 38 percent voted for it.

The secondary cause, however, can be directly attributed to one of our own.

Scotland has long boasted about famous members of its diaspora. The list of well-kent Scots-Canadians is long and wide ranging: politicians, traders, bankers, educators and so on.

In the United States, the roll call is not quite so extensive although “the father of the American navy” John Paul Jones, industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and naturalist John Muir all had the distinction of being born in Scotland.

In addition, an official “gateway Scotland” website claims that an “astounding” 33 presidents of the United States have been of Scottish or Ulster-Scots descent.

However, once you remove the Ulster-Scots, many of whom had fairly direct links to Ireland, the Scottish connection is often distant.

The current president Barack Obama, for instance, is said to be able to trace his ancestry to William the Lion who ruled Scotland from 1165 to 1214.

Ironical then that the new U.S. President-elect has such a close connection to Scotland and such a rocky relationship with the place.

Donald Trump's mother Mary Anne MacLeod emigrated in 1930 from the village of Tong near Stornoway on the Island of Lewis when she was just 18 years old.

Mary MacLeod was born in a black house – generally dry stone walls packed with earth and a thatched roof, and she spoke Gaelic.



DONALD TRUMP'S mother Mary Anne was born in Scotland in 1912. She emigrated from Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis to the U.S. and married Trump's father Fred in 1936. They went on to have five children, Donald, Maryanne, Robert, Fred Jr. and Elizabeth. Trump's mum Mary Anne died in Queens, New York, in 2000.

One can only imagine her thoughts on departing for New York where she would eventually meet and marry real estate developer Fred Trump.

From the earliest days of Scottish devolution, the Trump connection to Scotland was fostered and encouraged.

Former First Minister Jack McConnell courted Trump and raised the possibility of him building a golf course in North East Scotland.

Trump became a GlobalScot i.e. a business ambassador for the country.

I remember giving a talk on behalf of Simon Fraser University's Scottish Studies at a conference in Chicago in 2005, and being preceded by the team that was responsible for attracting inward investment to Scotland from North America.

The primary boast was that Donald Trump had granted it a 20 minute interview, subsequently extended to 40 minutes.

This obsession with Trump passed seamlessly from the old Scottish Executive to the new Scottish Government when the SNP's minority government was elected in 2007.

First Minister Alex Salmond continued to cultivate Trump whose golf course was to be built in his own constituency.

Even minor players sometimes felt the Trump presence.

When photographer Graeme Murdoch and I co-produced the Homecoming Scotland 2009 project “this is who we are” – linking towns in Scotland and in Canada that had the same name – we got a call from a Trump adviser to say

that “Donald” was considering funding our project.

The funding never materialised but passing an old plug-in phone to each other in a freezing room in Edinburgh while someone on the upper floor of Trump Tower in Chicago promised us the earth, will live long in the memory.

Trump's relationship with the Scottish Government began to decline when it approved an application to build wind turbines within sight of his course.

From there, it went into freefall before culminating in a radical reassessment of “the Donald” based on his now infamous comments on Muslims, Mexicans and wall-building.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon described them as “obnoxious and offensive,” Trump's GlobalScot ambassadorship was rescinded and Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen withdrew his honorary degree.

From a Scottish perspective, however, Donald Trump never quite goes away.

He still has his golf course and, in fact, added another one when he bought Turnberry, one of Scotland's most famous links and erstwhile host to the British Open. He renamed it Trump Turnberry in 2014.

However, when Donald Trump is inaugurated on January 20, 2017 and becomes the closest thing we've had to a Scot as U.S. president, many here will think that it augurs badly for the New Year.

In almost any other circumstances, black house to White House would have been a Scottish story for the ages.



WESTMINSTER'S youngest MP Mhairi Black said Jobcentre staff have “lives in their hands.”

## SNP MP Mhairi Black shoots down Tory MP accused of heckling her during a debate

LONDON – Youngest MP Mhairi Black, 22, hit out at David Nuttall was accused of shouting the heckle during a debate on the hated sanctions regime.

The Conservative Party MP was attacked by Westminster's youngest MP on December 2 after he was accused of saying benefit claimants are “terrified they might get a job.”

The Scottish Nationalist Party MP accused David Nuttall of shouting the heckle across the House of Commons during a debate on the hated sanctions regime.

A yell can be heard on a video recording of the debate as Mhairi Black (22), said people are “terrified before they go into the jobcentre.”

It prompted anger across the packed bench of SNP MPs and mutters of “shame on you.”

Nuttall was not shamed by name in the chamber – but several MPs pinpointed him on Twitter.

The Bury North MP stood up to address the claims after Black challenged him to oust himself – suggesting “the person who said it gets to their feet.”

He argued, “The point is that the best way to help people is for them to find work.

“The fact of the matter is that there are more people in work in this country than ever before, so people have no reason to be terrified about going into a jobcentre.

“They ought to be looking forward to it, because the likelihood is that, under this Government, they will find a job.”

But Black pressed further, challenging Nuttall to confirm or deny he made the “shameful” comment.

When he remained in his seat, she concluded: “His silence is a shame.”

The row came as Black introduced a law to stop benefit claimants being sanctioned until their financial needs are assessed.

But the law was shelved after SNP and Tory MPs debated for so long they gave the government just eight minutes to speak – thus running out the clock.

Four SNP MPs talked for two hours and 29 minutes; three Tory MPs talked for an hour and 40 minutes; and Labour's shadow minister talked for 20 minutes.

Complaining about Black's speech, Tory Work and Pensions Minister Damian Hinds said: “She spoke for one hour and 15 minutes and I have very little time.

“I'm not going to be able to get through all the contents of the Bill.”

A damning National Audit Office report said sanctions – dished out to 400,000 people in 2015 – save no money and there's no evidence they work.

Black condemned the rise of food banks, saying, “The idea that individuals and citizens in our society are reliant solely on the charity of others to eat and to feed their children shows we are sliding backwards down a hill to Victorian times.”

She warned the sanctions system could make mental health problems worse.

“Someone who is depressed and anxious, and who is all over the place worrying about where their children's next meal is going to come from, does not have time to think and worry about how to go down the paper trail to get a mandatory reconsideration,” she said.

And she warned homeless people were “disproportionately affected.”

“No matter how we look at it or how we arrive at this point, no government should make their citizens homeless,” she said. “One person made homeless is too many.”

Black said Jobcentre staff “do a tremendous job” but “we are all human, and that we all have our bad days and our grumpy days.

“Unless there are clearcut rules and regulations of conduct in place, that bad day could translate into ruining someone else's day.

“And that simply cannot happen when they have someone else's livelihood and survival in their hands.”

Black has brief cause to blush herself – when she appeared to mistake backbencher Nuttall for a minister.

She said, “If someone thinks it's acceptable to speak in that way about our most vulnerable people that our job as government is to look after them, I would suggest they're not fit for government.”

An MP interjected, “That's why he's on the back benches.”

Tory Michael Gove also attacked her for saying South Thanet was a “leafy, prosperous, happy Conservative suburb with not many real hard issues” – despite it being one of the most deprived parts of south east England.

## The Tam O'Shanter Scottish Country Dancers Burns Supper in White Rock

The Tam O'Shanter Scottish Country Dancers will host their annual Robert Burns Supper on Saturday, January 28, 2017 at the Star of the Sea Hall in White Rock, B.C. For tickets and more information, call (604) 535-8949.





# Scottish first minister backs calls for 'Celtic corridor'

DUBLIN – Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has encouraged closer business ties between her country, the Republic and Northern Ireland during a visit to Dublin.

She added that she passionately believes historic ties between Scotland and Ireland will be strengthened "to our mutual benefit in the years ahead," as she backed calls for a "Celtic corridor" of closer business dealings.

During a historic address to the Seanad, Sturgeon said she will publish a blueprint on Scotland's Brexit options within weeks.

She said the document, to be unveiled before the end of the year, will set out in detail ways in which the Scottish vote on the EU in/out referendum can be respected.

"It will focus on options for Scotland

within the UK. Of course, there is also the option of Scotland considering again the question of becoming an independent country. That option remains firmly on the table."

Sturgeon, the first serving head of government to address the Seanad in Dublin, received a sustained standing ovation from the house after her speech.

It was the culmination of a two-day visit to Dublin, which included talks with political and business leaders, aimed at strengthening ties between Scotland and Ireland in the wake of the June vote for Britain to pull out of the EU.

Earlier, the first minister met 130 business leaders at a breakfast gathering organised by the Irish Business and Employers Confederation.

Sturgeon also warned of a "hardening of opinion" against the UK by other EU countries. "I guess that's because the UK is still not being clear as to what it wants," she said.

In addition to that, she said other member states are hearing comments that suggest the UK can have its cake and eat it, keeping elements of the EU that it wants, and jettisoning those it doesn't like.

Scotland voted to stay – by 62 percent to 38 percent – with every single council area backing the Remain camp.

The SNP leader said how the UK responds to the referendum result will define Scotland for generations to come.

"If the path that the UK takes turns out to be deeply damaging to Scotland's interests – to our economic, social, cultural and interactional interests – then the people of Scotland must have the right to choose a different future," she told senators.

"We understand – acutely understand – none of what lies ahead is easy, but nothing about Brexit is going to be easy."

## Cambrian Hall dance night a resounding success

By  
EIFION  
WILLIAMS



PHOTO: Ruth Baldwin  
RATTLEBONE BAND along with caller J.D. Erskine kept the Cambrian Hall humming at the combined ceilidh/twmpath/barn dance on October 28.

VANCOUVER – The Cambrian Hall's Red Dragon lounge was humming with music, laughter and chatter on Friday, October 28.

The occasion was a combination ceilidh/twmpath/barn dance featuring the Rattlebone Band and caller J.D. Erskine.

A ceilidh is a traditional Irish and Scottish social gathering involving music, dancing and storytelling.

Over the years, the ceilidh has expanded from its original Gaelic roots to include all kinds of music and dance, while retaining its social and community atmosphere.

Other nations have similar traditional social gatherings.

The Welsh call their gathering a twmpath, meaning in Welsh a hump or a hillock, which in past years was the

natural feature occupied by musicians during the open-air singing and dancing.

A barn dance describes a similar gathering that evolved in the American West.

The Cambrian Hall dance was a well-attended fundraiser, with participants of all ages, from six to 80.

Organizers were impressed by the feeling of community engendered by the event and participants enjoyed a social gathering that included children as well as adults.

Several Welsh Society participants wore Welsh costumes while other dancers were dressed for Halloween.

The Rattlebone Band is a well-known English ceilidh band that performs all over the Lower Mainland.

Some of its members also dance with the Vancouver Morrismen.

Band member Graham Baldwin suggested the ceilidh idea to the Welsh Society's social committee as a fundraiser. The committee accepted what proved to be a very successful event.

J.D. Erskine is a very talented and experienced caller from Vancouver Island.

The caller plays a crucial role in a ceilidh by maintaining momentum, varying the music, and introducing participants to the dance steps.

During the interval, dancers enjoyed some traditional Welsh treats such as bara brith and Welsh Cakes.

They were also entertained by the Little Mountain Step'n Clog group performing a delightful Welsh broom dance to the traditional tune *Pwt ar y Bys*.

Given the success of this event, organizers Pat Morris and Ruth Baldwin are planning another fund-raising ceilidh/twmpath/barn dance early in the new year.

Anyone interested in attending should check the Welsh Society's website [www.welshsociety.com](http://www.welshsociety.com) for the exact date and time and buy tickets early as the event is likely to sell out.



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# Senior Tories urged to stop making jokes about Boris Johnson

LONDON – An ally of Boris Johnson has pleaded with senior Tories to stop undermining the Foreign Secretary with public jibes.

Tory MP Jake Berry told critics of Johnson to stop “sniping from the comfort of Whitehall” and back the Cabinet minister.

He spoke out about the attacks on Johnson, amid concerns they are damaging the reputation of the Foreign Secretary around the world.

In recent weeks Prime Minister Theresa May and Chancellor Philip Hammond have publicly poked fun at the former London mayor.

Rossendale and Darwen MP Berry’s defence of Johnson came after the Foreign Secretary visited Afghanistan for the first time.

Berry told the *Mail on Sunday*, “Boris has spent this weekend in Afghanistan, one of the most dangerous countries in the world.

“And what are his armchair critics doing? Sniping from the comfort of Whitehall. They need to get behind him if Britain is going to succeed with Brexit.”

The prime minister used her Conservative Party conference speech to joke “can Boris Johnson stay on message for a full four days? Just about.”



**BORIS JOHNSON**

At a recent awards ceremony the prime minister also teased him after he had joked about Lord Heseltine “throttling” his dog.

May said, “Boris, the dog was put down ... when its master decided it wasn’t needed any more.”

Hammond made a barbed reference to Johnson’s aborted leadership campaign as he delivered his Autumn Statement in the Commons.

“I suspect that I will prove no more adept at pulling rabbits from hats than my successor as foreign secretary has been at retrieving balls from the back of scrums,” Hammond said.

A reference to Johnson’s previous com-

ments about his leadership ambitions that “if the ball came loose at the back of the scrum” he would pick it up.

On his visit to Afghanistan, the foreign secretary held talks with president Ashraf Ghani and chief executive Abdullah Abdullah in Kabul and praised the work of British military and civilian staff helping to rebuild and stabilise the country.

Johnson said, “Afghanistan is an amazing country and I’m incredibly proud of the work that the UK is doing here to challenge extremism and terrorism, promote democracy and human rights and support the Afghan Government’s reform plans.

“British military trainers are improving the ability of the Afghan military to stabilise the country and respond to extremism, and our development works means girls are defying extremists by going to school and university.

“Our work also means that terrorism is increasingly tackled at source.

“Hundreds of British men and women continue to work here for noble reasons, in often highly dangerous circumstances, and we continue to owe them a huge debt of gratitude for the vital contribution that they are making.”

Johnson also went to the British Cemetery in Kabul to pay tribute at a memorial to the 456 UK servicemen and women who have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2001.



**NIGEL FARAGE** with Donald Trump at Trump Tower on November 12 following the U.S. election. Forage was Trump’s first meeting with a foreign politician after the election.

## UK Rejects Donald Trump’s Call for Nigel Farage to Be Made Ambassador

LONDON – Nigel Farage continues to pose a diplomatic headache to Theresa May over his closeness to U.S. president-elect Donald Trump.

The former UK Independence Party (UKIP) leader has just undertaken his second visit to the U.S. since the election while the prime minister is yet to sit down with any member of the president-elect’s incoming administration.

Forage was Trump’s first meeting with a foreign politician after his election win.

The 52-year-old British right-wing populist and Brexit campaigner was pictured alongside the president-elect standing in front of the golden door of Trump’s apartment, grinning like schoolboys.

Following the meeting, Trump Tweeted: “Many people would like to see @Nigel\_Farage represent Great Britain as their Ambassador to the United States. He would do a great job!”

Downing Street flatly rejected the suggestion, responding there was no vacancy for the position.

The idea should have been a non-starter – British Governments appoint their own ambassadors, and the current office-holder, Sir Kim Darroch, has only held the post since January – but Boris Johnson, who is now foreign secretary, was forced to spell out their position.

A former metals trader in the City of London, Farage has led the anti-European Union UKIP on and off since 2006.

Back then, David Cameron, as leader of the Conservatives, described UKIP members as “fruitcakes, loonies, and closet racists.”

Farage said it would be in the national best interest for Downing Street to use his connections with the Trump team.

“I’m happy to help, formally or informally,” he said, “I’m happy just to make an introduction.

“But I just think it’s ridiculous, petty and potentially against the national interest for our government not even to ring me up to have a chat with me, let alone ask me to make some introductions.

“It isn’t just Trump, there are quite a few members of Trump’s team, people now taking quite senior positions, that I have known and got on with for years.”

On December 2, Farage posted photographs on Twitter showing him standing beside four key Republican politicians with influence in Trump’s fledgling government.

“Great series of meetings discussing the UK-US special relationship,” Farage wrote.

Farage met with Kevin McCarthy, who as house majority leader is the second most powerful congressional Republican.

He also met with Chuck Grassley, a senator from Iowa, and Peter Roskam, a congressman from Illinois, who are both chairmen of powerful congressional committees, with clout in Washington.

And he was pictured with Orrin Hatch, a senator from Utah who has defended Trump’s controversial assertion that despite Constitutional protections, there should be “consequences” for people who burn the American flag.

Asked if he would report back on his trip to May, Farage said, “They don’t want to talk to me, I don’t exist, to quote Downing Street, I am irrelevant.”

## Theresa May Warned: Give Businesses a Brexit Plan

LONDON – Theresa May is damaging business by leaving employers “uncertain” over their access to talented European workers, the head of the Conference of British Industry (CBI) has warned.

Paul Drechsler said the prime minister must do more than refuse to offer a running commentary and repeat her “Brexit means Brexit” mantra and actually lay out a plan for what happens when Article 50 is triggered.

He said at the CBI conference on November 21, “When it comes to negotiations, no-one understands the need for discretion better than business.

“We’re not asking for a running commentary – but we are looking for clarity and – above all – a plan.”

He said while there had been “encouraging signs,” such as decisions on Heathrow and Hinkley Point, thousands of firms were still faced with the question of what happens the day after Brexit.

Drechsler warned, “Today, businesses are inevitably considering the cliff edge scenario – a sudden and overnight transformation in trading conditions.

“If this happens, firms could find themselves stranded in a regulatory no man’s land.”

The Irish businessman went a step further – saying it would be “impossible” at short notice for the nation’s ports, airports and logistics firms to navigate new trading rules if they came into



**THERESA MAY**

force without warning.

“So – for many firms it’s not about a ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ Brexit, but a ‘smooth’ Brexit, which avoids these cliff edge problems,” he said.

“The government should build on the positive moves it has already made to dispel uncertainty by drawing up plans

for a smooth transition, giving firms both the time to adapt to new regulation and the confidence to invest beyond 2019.”

May herself gave a speech at the CBI conference, in which she gave her biggest hint yet that the government might seek a transitional exit from the EU.

She said, “Obviously as we look at the negotiation we want to get the arrangement that is going to work best for the UK and the arrangement that is going to work best for business in the UK.

“And I’m conscious that there will be issues that will need to be looked at.

“I understand the point that Paul [Drechsler] has made, others have made this point, that people don’t want a cliff edge, they want to know with some certainty how things are going to go forward.

“That will be part of the work that we do in terms of the negotiation that we are undertaking with the European Union.”

## PENINSULA PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS ‘BELFAST GIRLS’ IN MARCH 2017

WHITE ROCK, BC – Upcoming next year is the Canadian premiere of *Belfast Girls* written by Jaki McCarrick and directed by Wendy Bollard.

This theatre production tells the story of five young women who escape starvation in 1850 Ireland by winning passage on a ship bound for Australia as part of Earl Grey’s ‘orphan scheme’.

During what is commonly referred to as the Famine, approximately 4,000 young women were enticed to Australia with promises of jobs and a better future.

In reality many of these young ‘orphans’ were prostitutes, well over the age of

18 and what they found in Australia was more hardship. Jaki McCarrick’s captivating play *Belfast Girls* weaves the tale of five of these women.

The play was first presented in August 2011 at the King’s Head Theatre in London. The next year it went on to be developed as a staged reading at the National Theatre Studio, London and was subsequently published in 2015.

Peninsula Productions is proud to present the Canadian Premiere of *Belfast Girls* from March 1 to 11 at the Coast Capital Playhouse White Rock and from March 15 to 18 at the Goldcorp Stage at BMO Theatre Centre in Vancouver. For tickets and more details, see: [www.peninsulaproductions.org](http://www.peninsulaproductions.org).



# Hogmanay: Scotland's Biggest Festive Celebration

**U**ntil relatively recently Christmas was not celebrated in Scotland. During the Scottish Reformation it was regarded as popish and superstitious.

The holiday was apparently too much like good fun for the rather dour brand of Calvinism adopted by John Knox and his followers. They took this so seriously that for 400 years Christmas was effectively banned.

Whilst the Reformers could ban Christmas, they had no say at all in the celebration of the New Year. Right up until the 1950s, New Year was the major event of the festive season – except Scots don't celebrate New Year, they celebrate Hogmanay.

After all this time, there is still no consensus on what Hogmanay means. Hogmanay as we know it is a cocktail of various different religious and social rituals.

Initially it was a Druid or pagan celebration, probably to do with the winter solstice. Elements of the Roman festival of Saturnalia and the Viking celebrations of Yule can also be found in the celebrations in Scotland.

It has always been important to go into Hogmanay with a clean sweep, both literally and metaphorically.

Before Hogmanay, a huge spring clean begins, although few houses continue with the older tradition of burning juniper to rid the house of evil spirits. Socks are darned, windows washed and, where possible, life resolutions are undertaken.

On the stroke of midnight it is still common for houses to be "first footed" by a tall, handsome stranger bearing gifts.

Although the first-footer is seldom a stranger, it is preferable that he is dark. This harks back to days of Viking invaders when a fair-haired man knocking at your door was more likely to inspire terror than pleasure.

Until quite recently the first-footer was subject to a rather rigorous code of looks. Out-of-date now, there was a time when a first-footer should not be flat-footed, cross-eyed or have their eyebrows meeting (thought to denote the evil eye).

All congenitally disabled people were feared as first-footers and actively discouraged from people's houses – again no longer the case.

The first-footer still brings gifts. Whisky, food and a lump of coal are the main trio of traditions that come with the first-footer – a sign of how little has really changed from times past. (The medieval clergy gave food to the parish poor, which in itself was reminiscent of pagan food offerings.)

Perhaps the thing that heralds Hogmanay and New Year around the world is the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*, the Robert Burns song that so epitomises the spirit of the season. It is at that time that Scots tend towards the sentimental, thinking of folks no longer there or far away.

Both Glasgow and Edinburgh have become renowned for their celebration of Hogmanay. The parties attract visitors from across the world, who gather together to celebrate with music, singing, fireworks, dancing and friendship.

In Scotland, Hogmanay is a time to gather together with friends and family and consider the past year. It is a time of hope, a looking forward to a better year and a time when people resolve to improve their lives and the lives of others.

## Hertz car rental confused by tweets from angry Rangers fans

GLASGOW – As football fans tend to do after a frustrating defeat, thousands of Rangers supporters took to Twitter to vent their frustration in the wake of the November 30 2-0 loss at Hearts.

While lamenting their own players, some also tweeting about the disappointment at losing to "Hertz," a common nickname for the Tynecastle club.

This confused those in charge of the Twitter account for Hertz, the well-known car rental company, who thought disgruntled customers were subtweeting rather than complaining direct to the @Hertz account.

One Rangers fan tweeted "Wtf was that

#hertz" before getting a response from Hertz.

Another tweeted: "I hate hertz."

To this Hertz responded: "We don't like hearing this! Can you please DM us your RR# and more details about your experience so we may assist?"

Wittily, he responded with: "Well... it all starts with the 4-3-3."

A Celtic fan added: "Still f\*\*\*\*\* hate Hertz."

To which Hertz replied: "We don't like hearing this! Can you please DM us your RR# and more details of your concerns so we may resolve this for you?"

It's highly unlikely Hertz will be able to satisfy the concerns of these disgruntled fans, unless they can convince Mark Warburton on the merits of a plan B.



RANGERS manager Mark Warburton fumes on the sideline as Gers are beaten by Hearts at Tynecastle on November 30.

## AT THE END OF THE YEAR

The particular mind of the ocean  
Filling the coastline's longing  
With such brief harvest  
Of elegant, vanishing waves  
Is like the mind of time  
Opening us shapes of days.

As this year draws to its end,  
We give thanks for the gifts it brought  
And how they became inlaid within  
Where neither time nor tide can touch them.

The days when the veil lifted  
And the soul could see delight;  
When a quiver caressed the heart  
In the sheer exuberance of being here.

Surprises that came awake  
In forgotten corners of old fields  
Where expectation seemed to have quenched.

The slow, brooding times  
When all was awkward  
And the wave in the mind  
Pierced every sore with salt.

The darkened days that stopped  
The confidence of the dawn.

Days when beloved faces shone brighter  
With light from beyond themselves;  
And from the granite of some secret sorrow  
A stream of buried tears loosened.

We bless this year for all we learned,  
For all we loved and lost  
And for the quiet way it brought us  
Nearer to our invisible destination.

— John O'Donohue  
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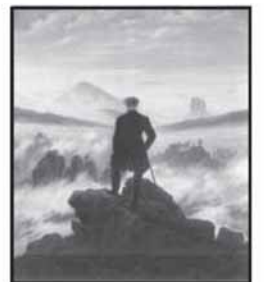
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# Letter to Santa Gets a Heartwarming Reply

**V**ANCOUVER – Van-Fraser Heritage Club member Frank Sanders was recently reviewing an old Canada Post publication entitled *The Mail Bag*.

In a 1964 edition Frank found an article headlined 'The Long Arm of Santa Claus' that provided the following Christmas story:

Early in 1948 a letter was received in the Forward Division of the former Post Office at Hastings/Granville in Vancouver.

No one is quite sure how the letter found its way to Vancouver given the address was only Santa Claus, Rocky Mountains, Canada.

The letter was from seven-year-old Iris Swinton of Dundee, Scotland. She is asking why Santa did not bring her a doll for Christmas.

The Vancouver post office employees, touched by the letter, contacted Iris's mother at the return address.

It turned out Iris's mother had been left a widow with two sets of twin boys, seven and six and Iris an infant. It was also revealed that Iris was not too well and that she had never had a visit from Santa.

This information prompted Vancouver post office employees to collect funds to purchase and send Iris the doll she had requested from Santa.

They were able to arrange for the doll to be shipped by air, free of charge, by Trans Canada Air (now Air Canada).

Also enclosed with the doll was a one pound money order so that Mrs. Swinton could pay any fees charged by British Customs.

However, hearing about the story, British Customs waived any fees and charges.

So, thanks to a misdirected letter, the generosity of Vancouver Post Office employees, Trans Canada Air and British Customs, Iris received the doll she had requested from Santa.

Very touching letters of thanks were received from both Iris and her mother.

## A Thank You Letter from Iris

7 April, 1948

*My Dear Friends in Canada:*

Dolly arrived safely and she is the most beautiful I have ever seen.

I got your very nice letter to and sorry to know that Santa does not live in the Rockies any more.

But I will never need to write Santa again for a dolly for Snuggles is the bonniest wee girl in the world. I call her Heather White.

Mummy says she is such a pretty flower. She goes walkies with me and goes to the shops with me and says her prayers with me to and we say a very nice prayers for all of you kind friends in Canada.

God bless all of you and thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

I am the happiest little girl in Scotland now. I never had a dolly before. I will awfully good care of her.

Santa never came to me before now I

know why he does not stay in the Rockies now. I will love Snuggles all my life.

I would like to say thank you all by sending you this photo of myself.

I had it taken with dolly just for all of you to see an hope you will like it.

I will send you all more of them if you would like them.

So cheerio good luck and God bless all of you. I will always call you my dear Canadian friends.

From a very happy wee girl.

*Iris Swinton*

*Good Luck Please write*

*[Spelling errors left as appeared in the original letter.]*

## Thank You from Iris's mother

April 7, 1948

*Dear Sirs or Madam:*

Your parcel arrived all in perfect condition and they said there was nothing to pay for it.

I still have this one pound note in my possession and was wondering if there has been a mistake, will the post office here call for it or maybe you can enlighten me what to do about it.

Well friends, in the first place I want to

thank all of you for your kindness towards Iris.

I never saw the like of this doll in Scotland, what a beauty she is, and I know Iris will take good care it, she is big enough to understand that.

It has caused some sleepless nights what excited she has been. And no wonder, this doll has been the envy of many people in Dundee.

We were going to have the photo taken, and gosh, we were almost mobbed with people, they all wanted to see it, really it was something new in Dundee.

Well she as sent this photograph of herself and the dolly, it is her way of really saying thank you to you all.

I hope you will accept it from her as it is sent with a very happy little heart and you can see the excellent look she has on that photo.

She was not keeping well lately but this dolly has made a great change in her. She is happy and sings to it most of the day.....

Well, I cannot find words enough to thank you all but you will understand how very grateful I am.

She has put you to a lot of trouble no doubt, but it is something we will always remember for the rest of our lives.

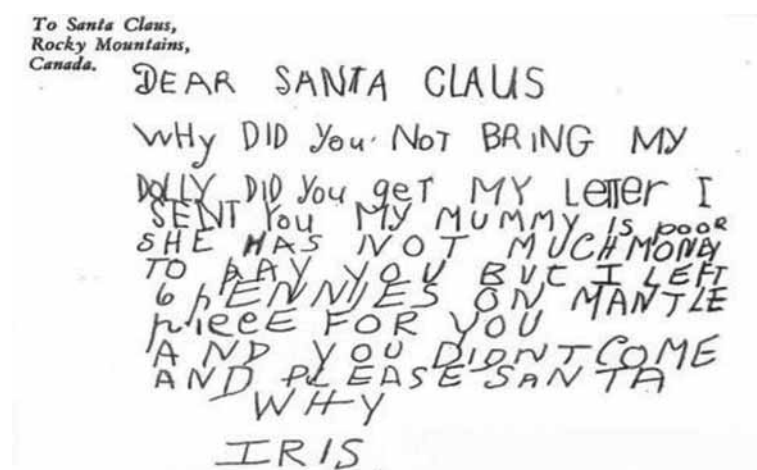
You have been good friends to her, I am so happy myself about I can only say God bless you friends.

*Mrs. Swinton*

[In 1963 Vancouver post office employee Richard Murray Clamp visited Dundee and had a chance to meet with Iris and her young family.]



IRIS SWINTON of Dundee, Scotland with her treasured doll.



MRS. SWINTON, Iris' mother also sent a thank you note saying the doll sent to her daughter from Canada was unique in Scotland.

## Irish Christmas Traditions

IRELAND has a wide number of Christmas traditions that are steeped in the Gaelic and Catholic heritage of the country.

### The Wren Boy Procession

The Wren Boy Procession has been revived in recent years with parades being held on St. Stephens Day in Sandymount in Dublin and other locations. There are several legends regarding the 'wren boy'.

One such tale tells of a plot in a village against some British soldiers during Penal times. The soldiers were surrounded and were about to be ambushed when a group of wrens pecked on their drums raising the alarm. The plot failed and thus the wren became known as 'The Devil's Bird'.

To commemorate this deed a procession takes place where a pole with a holly bush is carried from house to house and families dress up in old clothes and with blackened faces. In ancient times an actual wren bird would be killed and placed on top of the pole.

It is possible that the very Irish tradition of visiting houses of friends and relatives on St. Stephens Day traces its origin to these events.

### The Christmas Candle in the Window

A tradition that was very widespread in the 1970s but which seems to be dying out somewhat and especially in urban areas is the 'candle in the window'.

Symbolically the candle represented a welcome to Joseph and Mary as they wandered in search of lodgings. The



candle indicated to strangers and especially to the poor that there may be an offering of food in the house within.

During the Penal Times in Ireland Catholic priests were forbidden to perform Mass so the candle acted as a covert signal that the occupier was a Catholic believer and that mass could be held on the premises.

Mary the mother of Jesus was especially revered in Ireland at Christmas. There are many traditions involving girls named Mary which at one time was by far the most popular female name in the country.

The candle in the window was often to be lit by a girl named Mary and only extinguished by her. The removal of decorations in January were also often to be punctuated by a visit from a Mary.

### The Christmas Laden Table

The centre-piece of the Christmas holiday in Ireland is the Christmas Dinner. After the often lavish meal the kitchen table was again set and on it was placed some bread and milk and the table adorned with the welcoming candle. If Mary and Joseph, or any wandering traveller, happened by then they could avail of the hospitality.

### Christmas Holly Decoration

The widespread practice of placing a ring of Holly on a front door started in Ireland.

Holly was one of the main plants that flourished at Christmas time in Ireland and gave the poorer population means with which to decorate their homes.

### Little Christmas

All Christmas decorations are usually taken down and put away on 'Little Christmas' (January 6th.). It is considered very bad luck to remove the decorations and Christmas tree before this date.

### Modern Irish Christmas

Modern Ireland has changed vastly from the times when these Irish Christmas traditions flourished and have often been replaced with newer more secular ones.

St. Stephens Day is still regarded as a day to visit family and friends but is also a great sporting day with horse-racing, football and a myriad of other sports taking prominence.

Many workers take the entire week off between Christmas Day and New Years Day with many businesses completely closing down during this time.

Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve is also very well attended and is often adorned with a choir, the Church with a Manger and Nativity scene.

A Christmas Day swim is practised in certain parts of Ireland with perhaps the most famous being at the 'Forty Foot' tiny beach in South Dublin.

### The traditional Gaelic Greeting

The Gaelic greeting for 'Merry Christmas' is: 'Nollaig Shona Duit'.....which is pronounced as 'null-ig hun-a dit'.



# Beannacht Nollaig

Page 1



## Irish Women's Network of BC

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Beannachtai na Nollaig

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*Nollaig fé shéin  
is fé mhaise dhaoibh go léir*

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# Merry Christmas

Page 2



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HAPPY NEW YEAR*

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# Beannacht Nollaig

Page 3



*We wish all our members & friends a  
Very Happy & Holy Christmas  
& All The Joys of The New Year*

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George at [crumlin@eastlink.ca](mailto:crumlin@eastlink.ca) or Tony at [mccamley@nwgymsum.com](mailto:mccamley@nwgymsum.com)

For more information about the Irish Heritage Society of Canada  
Contact: (604) 948-2885

[www.irishheritagesociety.ca](http://www.irishheritagesociety.ca)

## THE PRINCE GEORGE CELTIC CLUB



WISHING EVERYONE  
A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS  
& A HAPPY NEW YEAR

- President, Catherine Mills  
& the members of the Celtic Club

For inquiries and information about  
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E-mail: [cmillspg@shaw.ca](mailto:cmillspg@shaw.ca)



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May peace, everlasting peace, reign supreme."*

- Soundings, Vol. 2, #12

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# Merry Christmas

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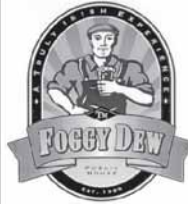


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# Wishing all a very happy and peaceful Christmas

By Sharon Woods (president)  
and White Rock Irish Club  
executive

The Irish Club of White Rock was honoured to have The Barra MacNeils from Cape Breton perform their Christmas Concert, at the Coast Capital Theatre White Rock to a sold out audience.

They are amazing musicians, extremely talented. The Barra MacNeils are made up of four brothers, sister and friend.

Lucy MacNeil left the audience with a very simple Christmas message to be shared with all: Remember those who are alone for Christmas; take the time to talk to people; and even a smile can make a big difference in a person's life. Simple but we feel the need to share. Share the spirit of Christmas!

After the show members of the White Rock Irish Club went to Bin 101 Wine & Tapas Bar next door and a good time was had by all.

The Irish Club of White Rock is changing things a little this year with Christmas celebrations after Christmas.

The club will celebrate Irish little Christmas – the last day of Christmas – often referred to as Nollaig na mBan (Irish Women's Little Christmas) on Saturday, January 7.

There will be a buffet-style Christmas dinner and dance at the Elks hall on

George Street in White Rock at 6 PM with music by Brian Nicholls. There will also be an open mike.

Reserve tickets ahead of time as there will be no tickets at the door. Tickets are \$30 (including tax and gratuity). Tickets are available from Sharon at (604) 338-3553 or Deirdre at (604) 803-0773.

The Irish Club of White Rock will hold its annual general meeting at the end of January. A date has not yet been announced but if you have any concerns or issues you would like to add to the agenda, please e-mail Deirdre O'Ruairc at shamrockhome@shaw.ca or Sharon Woods at sharonnicholls@gmail.com.

An Irish Club of White Rock open house is planned for Sunday, March 12 from 2- 4 PM downstairs in the Elks Hall, on George Street, White Rock.

Serving afternoon tea and Irish entertainment. More details to follow.

This year, St. Patrick's Day falls on Friday, March 17 and the Irish Club of White Rock will celebrate on the day with a St. Patrick's Day dinner dance at the Hazelmere.

A brilliant celebration is being planned, details will come out in the new year. Mark the date on your calendar (March 17) and reserve tickets early as many are already spoken for. Call Sharon at

(604) 338-3553 or Deirdre (604) 803-0773.

The Fraser Valley Gaels are celebrating Christmas on Saturday, December 10 at 6:30 PM at the Pinnacle Hotel-Harbourfront, Vancouver. For more details, e-mail Ray O'Farrell at: raymondo.farrell@live.ie.

Fraser Valley Gaels and the White Rock Irish Club have worked closely together on many events in 2016 and we look forward to working with them again in 2017, supporting their games and events.

The Irish Club of White Rock would like to extend a warm welcome to all new comers to White Rock and surrounding areas. We encourage you to come out and join us or just give us a call and say hello. We look forward to meeting you at our upcoming events.

Wishing everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous new year in 2017.

Again, a big thank you to Maura and Catholine and the team at *The Celtic Connection* for another great year. This great Irish newspaper keeps us all up-to-date on what is happening with the different Irish organizations, news from Ireland, and just keeping us connected.

Merry Christmas to all. *Nollaig shona dhuit.* www.irishclubofwhiterock.com



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With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year*

**We are looking forward to getting back to playing  
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## GAA: CALGARY CHIEFTAINS OG

# ‘Joining a football club essentially gives you a family’



ALGARY – Leane Lively, her partner Sean and their one-and-a-half-year-old twin boys, Harry and Ralph, emigrated to Canada in 2014. They have now settled down happily in Calgary.



By  
**CATHOLINE  
BUTLER**

Sean works in construction and Leane is articling at the law firm of Gruman Mark Professional Corporation in Calgary.

Leane was born and raised in Dublin, where she lived until the age of 10 before moving to Arklow, County Wicklow.

At home, Leane played Gaelic football for Laragh Ladies Gaelic Football Club and comogie for Annacurra Camogie Club.

Always on the go, she was playing GAA seven nights a week and said she wouldn't know anything different.

Wasting no time after arriving in Calgary, Leane joined the Calgary Chieftains Women's Gaelic Football Club and helped organize the Calgary Chieftain's Og – the children's arm of the Calgary Chieftains Club. She is also the chairperson for the children's club.

She has just recently completed the Train the Trainer course and will be coaching the kids once they move outdoors in the new year. During the winter the kids train indoors.

James Doyle is the underage head coach for the children and is also the chairperson on the Calgary Chieftains while Leane takes care of all the paperwork.

Calgary Chieftains Og was just formed in October and Leane said, “we have new recruits come into the training sessions all the time and there are a lot of documents to be filled out, and that's what I've been taking care of.”

The children range from four years of age up to 16 – it's quite a diversity in ages with about 25 children participating at the moment.

Leane explained, “Currently, we're just playing Gaelic football and trying to teach the skills of the game, but once we move outside in March or April we will incorporate the hurling.

“There is another children's club in Calgary, Na Fianna and we're hoping that eventually our children will be able to play against them.

“Possibly when we move outside we could organize a competitive game between the two teams.

“Between the two clubs, we collectively have about 50 children playing GAA. We are the Northwest of the city and they are the Southeast.

“The Calgary Chieftains Og team developed due to the fact that there was an interest of parents with children that



**LEANE LIFELY**

wanted their children to play GAA,” she said, “but the trip down to the south is about 30 to 40 minutes drive in the evening time, and for younger kids it's hard to keep them awake.”

The parents of most of the children are of Irish descent and obviously their parents probably played GAA in Ireland before moving to Calgary themselves.

“But we do have a couple of Canadian kids playing,” said Leane, “and we have had a few dropping in to see what Gaelic football is all about.

“For us it's fantastic. It's one thing if parents want them to play, but it's another thing if children want to play on their own. So, that's the name of the game, it's not to keep the parents happy, but to keep the children happy...happy children, happy parents.”

Speaking about the possibility of the children eventually taking part in tournaments in Red Deer or Edmonton, Lively said that would certainly be a possibility when they get into the outdoor season.

She said that both Red Deer and Edmonton have a blitz on, so it would be their aim to try and arrange tournaments with them this summer.

“I don't think for the upcoming year we would go much further than that. But, we do have Na Fianna here in the Southeast and it would be good to set-up a couple of competitive matches with them.”

One of the things about the kids playing Gaelic football is that there is not a huge outlay of expense for equipment by the parents. It's definitely not as expensive as say hockey equipment would be.

“Even when we do start the hurling,” said Leane, “it's essentially just a helmet for the hurling.

“And, of course, you will want to be providing the children with a sliotar so that they can go home and practice, because that's what it's all about.

“Later on, we would like to go into the schools and see if we can actually incorporate GAA games into the physical education system.

“I'm not sure how that would go but we have 50 children now, so there must be more children out there who may just not have heard of the games.

“Of course, it's not just our aim to just have Irish children play. We definitely want to bring it out to the wider public

and welcome any nationality to play.”

GAA is not just played by Irish people, there are thousands all over the world playing it.... some have no Irish heritage at all.

“It would be fantastic to have it known to all Canadians like hockey, soccer, and baseball,” said Leane. “That's pretty much it... it's promoting the games.”

In terms of playing for the Calgary Chieftains women's team and coaching the Calgary Chieftains Og, Leane laughed and said, “well, we will be playing on different nights and yes, it will be quite busy.”

Canada was always somewhere Leane wanted to explore having previously lived in Australia but, like many new arrivals, thoughts of family are never far from her mind.

“I come from a family of eight, so I did have a significant support system there. But in saying that, one of my brothers had actually moved here and when we moved one of my sisters moved over a couple of months later.

“My mother was just here this past summer for six months and my parents were



**JAMES DOYLE** the underage head coach with the Calgary Chieftains Og Gaelic football team.

both here the summer before. So, in saying that, I have been blessed and more blessed than most people have.

“Calgary for my career has definitely been fantastic. The opportunities here have been second to none as compared to Ireland.

“So, in that sense Calgary has been fantastic to myself and my family. We have met some very good friends and friends from home live just in the next neighbourhood.

“Also, joining a football club, essentially gives you a family. My club at home was my family and to move here and actually find something like that really helps you settle.”

Still, she does miss the support of family, specially with two healthy and busy little boys.

“It's just the chat and the old cup of tea in front of the fire that you miss.

“Our life here is definitely a better quality and we have family coming and going a lot of the time. Thankfully not all at the same time.”

Then, Leane laughed and said, “you know what we do miss ... we could do with a proper chipper here.”

For more information about the Calgary Chieftains Og – the children's arm of the Calgary Chieftains Club – call (587) 435-6363, or e-mail: [lively18@hotmail.com](mailto:lively18@hotmail.com).

## Sober for the New Year What better Christmas gift?

BOWEN ISLAND, B.C. – No one necessarily ever wants to go to treatment for drugs and/or alcohol, especially not during a time of year that's associated with exciting gifts and hearty family dinners.

But going to rehab on the biggest family day of the year could actually be the greatest gift someone could ever give themselves and their loved ones.

Chances are, if someone's at the point of needing professional help for substance abuse, they've already experienced their fair share of holiday indulging.

“If you are actively in your addiction, you're typically causing some chaos in the family and that dream or wish that you'll be home for Christmas and everything will be wonderful...many times you don't even show up,” says Lorinda Strang, co-founder and Executive Director of Orchard Recovery Center, which is located just outside Vancouver.

This is why Strang strongly encourages people to seek treatment during the most wonderful time of year.

Because here's the thing: over-indulgences around the holidays can make for just the sort of indelible memories you don't want to make.

“You may do something at an office Christmas party that you'll regret, or at your family dinner,” says Strang.

“Also things can just happen, and when those things happen at this time of year – it's Christmas, so people don't forget as easily.”

Ah, yes, that time Aunt Meg had one too many eggnogs and face planted in the winter wonderland? It's sort of impossible to un-see the visuals created

by a relative who's heavily under the influence, under the mistletoe.

There is definitely an inherent value in actually starting the new year already sober.

The holidays are a time of year when substance abuse can be at its highest so being in the safe, supportive environment of a recovery center is a great way to practice sober living and developing the tools for surviving future celebrations, Christmas and beyond.

Depending on how long someone's been a resident, there are opportunities for overnight passes during peak holiday times (namely Christmas Eve and Christmas Day), so clients may go home for the family soiree and then return to treatment.

“Sometimes we have people get approved for a day-pass or an overnight-pass, then they come back and say, ‘I'm so glad I'm back here’,” says Barb Metcalfe, the Director of Family Programs at Orchard.

“You wouldn't think that at first. Many clients come in afraid to deal with the holidays, but they end up forming such strong camaraderie with their peers and having a really positive experience.”

Former Orchard client Mary M. can attest to that. “I had a wonderful sober Christmas for the first time in many years and I was grateful – it was a gift, a miracle and magical,” she recalls.

“If it wasn't for the Christmas I spent at the Orchard, I doubt I would be sober today. I was where I was supposed to be that Christmas.”

And to be clear, Christmas at Orchard isn't a non-stop 12-step meeting with some sad stockings taped to the wall. It's a big, cheerful holiday spread – and if it's appropriate, the resident's family can join in.

“Christmas at the Orchard was one of those things that I'll never forget,” says Orchard alumni member Jordan.

“It was the first time I spent Christmas with my mother since I was 21... I don't think that I had felt that kind of love in any of my memories at that time.”

Most facilities find a way to incorporate the reason for the season if clients are getting clean during the holidays.

At Orchard, the Spiritual Director comes to visit; residents take nature walks, possibly visit a labyrinth, and even have the option of attending a religious service off site if they choose.

Board games, karaoke and gratitude lists are also on the agenda.

No matter their faith (and all are welcome, it's totally a Higher Power of your own understanding), people can definitely count on enjoying a family-like atmosphere and the stunning beauty of Bowen Island.

Perhaps Strang says it best when she explains why rehab could be the most ideal holiday destination.

“Everybody's first thought [when they get sober] is, ‘My life is over, I'm never going to have fun anymore’,” she says.

“Then they get that moment when they're warm and glowing and feeling connection, when they actually experience it within themselves and a serious light goes on.

“‘I can do this’, they think. ‘This is actually going to be okay’.”

And what better Christmas present is there than that?

Learn more about Orchard Recovery Center at <http://orchardrecovery.com>, or call (866) 233-2299.



# Christmas Holiday Doom Turns to Thankful Diagnosis

By **PATRICK HANEY**

My experience with hereditary hemochromatosis began the month before my thirty-third birthday.

In August 2009, despite feeling generally healthy I was declined extended disability insurance as a result of some blood analysis the insurance company completed. Essentially, my liver enzymes were elevated.

My liver enzymes were elevated? It was a surprise for sure, so a trip to my general physician ensued where he spent about six weeks sending me for numerous blood tests trying to rule out any major infectious diseases.

In the end, his biggest concern was hepatitis A or B, which didn't make sense to me, but was the most logical explanation about my liver enzymes.

He also lined me up for an abdominal ultrasound which I was able to get for mid-October and produced more questions as it showed an enlarged liver and spleen and enlarged lymph nodes in my abdominal cavity.

I soon had a referral to a gastroenterologist, which took another six weeks so there was more waiting and wondering.

The gastroenterologist I saw at the end of November was straightforward. He asked me about joint pain, ordered a few more lab tests, and then tested my ferritin. This was the first time I heard about ferritin.

My wife was away at a work trip the day my lab results arrived in the mail.

My ferritin result came back off the charts with the first number high in the 9000s.

Before she was home that night, I spent some time with "Dr. Google."

I found the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society's website and realized the gravity of my situation.

My wife came in the door and I said "I think I know what I have." It was called hereditary hemochromatosis (HHC).

Because of my enlarged nodes and the extreme level of ferritin, the specialist wasn't convinced it was just HHC, but could also be leukemia or lymphoma.

Before I knew it, I was ordered for an urgent CT scan.

I was left with a message of impending doom right before the Christmas holidays along with waiting on the genetic test results for HHC, which I would not receive until early 2010.

Furthermore, no one in our family has ever been diagnosed with HHC, at least that I was aware of, which made the doctors even more skeptical it was solely HHC.

I received a positive genetic test for

HHC (homozygous C282Y) in mid-January.

I was referred to a hematologist, who ruled out the additional scare of lymphoma and got me started on a weekly phlebotomy regime in February which will continue as long as my hemoglobin stays reasonable and my ferritin levels are lowered to a target of 50.

Even with my out-of-the-ordinary lab results, it still took five months to get my diagnosis with HHC.

I am a young, healthy man with no other medical problems. I did not have unusual abdominal pain or fatigue.

Out of all the symptoms that could be attributed to HHC, I only ever experienced joint pain in the thumb and forefinger of both my hands.

I had gone to the doctor about this four years ago, which he and I both chalked up to repetitive stress from daily computer work.

I realize that had I not had the test from my insurance company, I am sure I would have suffered more severely from HHC within the next decade.

I now encourage my friends and acquaintances to have their ferritin tested by their doctors whether they have HHC in their family or not, particularly if they have any of the following symptoms:

toms:

- arthritis, especially in their hands
- chronic fatigue
- loss of sex drive (libido) or impotence
- lack of normal menstruation (amenorrhea)
- abdominal pain
- high blood sugar levels
- low thyroid function (hypothyroidism)
- abnormal liver function tests, even if no symptoms are present

Transferrin saturation percentage (TSAT) is also an important diagnostic that if elevated, is a good indicator that HHC is present.

The Canadian Hemochromatosis Society has helped me understand the ins and outs of this condition.

I've been told that I must be the quarterback of my own health and stay on top of my treatment and conditions related to HHC.

I've pushed to see not only a hematologist, but also other specialists like cardiologists, gastroenterologists and so on because HHC is a multi-system disorder, especially depending in the severity of its impact when diagnosed.

Now, six years after my diagnosis, I am managing my iron levels well and am continuing to live my life to the fullest. I wish the best to those of you similarly affected with HHC as well.

## Irish Government passes medicinal cannabis bill

DUBLIN – The Dáil has passed a bill to make cannabis available in Ireland for medicinal use.

The Irish Government had said it would not oppose the legislation. It aims to legalise and regulate cannabis products used for medical purposes.

People Before Profit TD Gino Kenny, who put the bill forward, told RTÉ's *Morning Ireland* it would be up to a doctor to decide on its usage.

After the bill was passed, Kenny praised the Irish Health Minister for his position in not opposing the bill and thanked all of those who supported the legislation.

Kenny said he hoped the medical profession would come on board to support the use of the drug once it has been approved by the Health Products Regulatory Authority.

Minister for Health Simon Harris has said that although he has concerns about some elements of the bill, he would not oppose its progression to Committee Stage.

Harris asked the Health Products Regulatory Authority to advise him on the scientific and clinical value of cannabis as a medicine.

He said he wanted to receive that advice from the agency before progressing the legislation any further.

The minister also indicated that amendments would have to be made to the proposed bill to avoid the unintended effect of making cannabis legal for recreational use.

He said the Dáil debate was important and that he hoped it sends a signal to Irish patients that politicians want to see movement on this. But he added that as Minister for Health he has to carry out the appropriate checks.

The legislation is expected to be supported by a majority of TDs in the Dáil (Irish Parliament).



### St. Augustine's Prayer for Protection

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give Your angels and saints charge over those who sleep. Tend Your sick ones, O Lord Christ. Rest Your weary ones. Bless Your dying ones. Soothe Your suffering ones. Pity Your afflicted ones. Shield Your joyous ones, and all for Your love's sake. Amen.

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Also known as the Celtic Curse, HHC causes the body to retain too much iron – and if undiagnosed and untreated – can potentially lead to heart disease, liver disease, diabetes, arthritis, and some forms of cancer.

If you are of Celtic or northern European heritage (the group at highest risk) please take a moment to answer a few simple questions on our quick self-assessment and determine if you may be at risk.

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# Laureen Regan: The voice on B.C. TransLink Skytrains and the Vice Consul for Ireland Trade and Investment



ALGARY – Laureen Regan is president of the Ireland-Canada Centre for Commerce (ICCC) Calgary and she was recently appointed Honorary Vice Consul for Ireland Trade and Investment.

On my recent visit to Calgary, I met up with Laureen and she spoke about her new appointment and how well it has worked in conjunction with the Ireland-Canada Centre for Commerce.

She said, “There are commonalities between the focus of both roles.

“Just this week I had a call from a fellow who is looking to set-up a business in Ireland and was enquiring around the tax benefits and opportunities there.

“He wanted to learn more about Ireland’s membership in the European Union and how this would benefit his business.”

Laureen’s role is to help guide him through that process and connect him with the right people who can best assist him in his endeavour.

It also works for businesses coming this way who are looking for information about setting up an arm in Canada.

She said, “It’s basically the same questions, wondering what opportunities are available for potential businesses being set-up either in Ireland or Canada.

“The questions are generally asking if there is someone in particular that they should be meeting with or a little bit more information about say Alberta as a trade destination.

“These are some of the same kinds of questions I would be asked, whether it’s about investing in Ireland or in Canada. And, I would say I probably get one such call a week.”

In addition, Laureen also attends various functions to help raise the profile of Ireland as an export country and the benefits of going there.

“For example, three weeks ago I was in Dublin on an Ireland Canada Business Summit, so really I’m looking to build bilateral trade whichever way you’re going.”

Her role is well-suited given her connection with trade and investment with the Ireland-Canada Centre for Commerce.

She said, “I have speakers come into planned events to talk to our members and that could be anything from a minister, a leader in the business sector such as the CEO of WestJet, or an immigration minister. Events can really vary depending upon topics that we think would fill a room.”

In the past, Debra Yedlin was among the guest speakers welcomed by the ICCC.

She is a business columnist at the *Calgary Herald* who also contributes to the *Globe and Mail*.

Laureen said, “Her topic was actually great. She spoke on the lessons that Ireland learned moving through the recovery of their recession, and they did it so well.

“The hard decisions they had to make allowed them to get through the recovery as quickly as they did and how Alberta might take a page from their book.

By **CATHOLINE BUTLER**

“Since, as you know, Alberta is struggling. Yedlin also spoke about what Alberta could be doing here as they did in Ireland, in order to drive recovery.”

Many people may not realize that an honorary Irish diplomatic title is not a paid position but rather a volunteer one.

Boom Group Inc., is Laureen’s company that pays the bills.

She said, “there are actually two sides to the business.

“On one side, we work with corporate businesses with maybe 500 employees to deliver employee incentive programs.

“On the other side of the business it’s connecting those employees – about 50,000 members – with incentives. Those incentives come from national, regional, and local merchants.”

Boom members can take advantage of savings on almost anything from car rentals, holidays, auto repairs, computers and electronics, entertainment and a whole other wide range of cost saving benefits.

With the downturn in the Alberta economy and a main topic of conversation most days in the province, Laureen said, “What we have found is that we’re actually in a very strong position.

“We have been signing on new member companies recently and our present companies have been renewing throughout the downturn. Many are looking to reward employees who have been working throughout in a reduced workforce.

“There are not as many people working but the job still needs to be done and people are asked to do more with less resources.

“Often, because of the recession, they are not seeing raises or bonuses so this is something that an employer can do and really thank the employee for their hard work and dedication.

“It shows them that they appreciate them in a way that can help the employee, where they can save more money, and keep more money in their pocket. Whether it’s for their health insurance or car insurance or just maybe taking the family to a movie.”

The employees who are part of Boom Inc. can access preferred pricing with various retailers. So, if you are a Boom Group member, you get a discount on everything from insurance to skiing, movies, you name it, there’s a whole range of products and services.

Along with Laureen Regan’s many and varied talents, she is also the friendly voice you hear on B.C. TransLink Skytrains calling out all the stations along the line.

Regan laughed and said, “About four or five months ago I did the commercials for the new Evergreen Sky Train and recently I did a series of radio commercials for the new line.”

She explained this contract came about through sheer good luck.

“The equipment for the original Skytrain system was manufactured in Alberta and when they were pitching the equipment, they wanted an actual sample of how it would work.

“They asked if I would do the sample, and I did.

“After about eight months, they called up and wanted the voice that did the demo to do the voice prompts, so that’s how it started.

“Then in January of this year, I was asked to re-audition and luckily I got the job again.

“I’m the voice that invites you ‘to sit back and enjoy your trip on the Evergreen line...maybe you would even like to take a nap, but it’s all go, go, go.’”

But there’s no napping for Laureen Regan with her busy schedule....of course the Evergreen Line might be a welcome option for her to have a nap.

Contact Laureen Regan at Boom



LAUREEN REGAN at Boom Group Inc. her company headquarters in Calgary, Alberta. Her faithful canine companion Ella can be seen sitting in the background.

Group Inc. located at suite #302 - 605 - 11th Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2R 0E1. Call (403) 441-8800.

For information on the Ireland-Canada Centre for Commerce (ICCC) Calgary, see: [iccccal.com](http://iccccal.com), or e-mail: [lregan@iccccal.com](mailto:lregan@iccccal.com).

## Ottawa to ease path to permanent residency for skilled workers

OTTAWA – The federal government has changed its electronic immigration-selection system to improve the chances of international students and some high-skilled foreign workers to become permanent residents.

The changes to the Express Entry system, which scores and ranks applicants based on factors such as age, language ability, education and work experience and then matches them with Canadian employers, took effect on November 19.

The changes will make it easier for some highly skilled workers already in the country and international students who completed their post-secondary education in Canada to get an invitation to apply for permanent residence.

Under the Express Entry system introduced by the previous Conservative Government, employers who offer jobs to foreigners must get government approval through a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), which requires them to prove they could not find a Canadian to do the job.

While the LMIA was meant to target abusers of the low-skill temporary foreign worker program, Canadian tech firms had to go through the same time-consuming process even when the only people with the required skills were outside Canada.

The changes to Express Entry reduce the importance of obtaining an LMIA for high-skilled workers.

Some workers already in Canada on a temporary LMIA-exempt work permit and who want to stay permanently will no longer need a LMIA to get job-offer points in the Express Entry system.

This includes people working in Canada under the terms of the North American free-trade agreement and workers in Canada temporarily under an intra-company transfer. Applicants must have been working in Canada for at least a year to apply.



CHANGES to the Express Entry system in Canada took place on November 19.

*“Canada’s innovation economy competes on a global scale for top talent. [The] announcement by Minister McCallum makes it easier for high-growth companies ...to attract skilled workers and remain competitive”*

These workers will also be in a better position to compete against Express Entry applicants who are still required to obtain an LMIA, as the number of points given for the assessment will be reduced.

Previously, job offers supported by an LMIA were worth 600 points; as of November 19, the same offers will be worth either 200 points for senior manager positions or 50 points for all other jobs.

The changes are aimed at making it easier for highly skilled foreign workers to become permanent residents.

“We have committed to doing more to attract highly skilled immigrants to come to Canada and become permanent residents, because this is important to build our economy and strengthen our society.

“I am confident that the changes to Express Entry will be one of the many positive outcomes of the changes we will be bringing to our immigration system,” Immigration Minister John McCallum said in the news release.

The Canadian tech sector has pressed McCallum to help it obtain much-needed foreign talent.

Allen Lau, CEO and co-founder of the online publishing platform Wattpad, said that while the sector is investing in and training local talent, the demand outpaces the Canadian supply.

“Canada’s innovation economy competes on a global scale for top talent. [The] announcement by Minister McCallum makes it easier for high-growth companies like Wattpad to attract skilled workers and remain competitive,” Lau said.

Finally, applicants will have 90 days to complete their permanent-residence application if they get an invitation from the government, up from 60 days under the previous requirements.



# Deirdre Halferty: 'I've met some brilliant people with the new Irish'

**By CATHOLINE BUTLER**  
CALGARY – Deirdre Halferty is the Honorary Consul Ireland for Calgary and Southern Alberta, a real estate agent with Calgary West Realty, and past president Irish Cultural Society Calgary.

Halferty was born in Belfast before immigrating to Canada and making Calgary her home.

Shortly after arriving she quickly became involved with the Irish community in Calgary and served two different terms – three years each as president on the Irish Cultural Society Calgary, and two years as past president.

She still serves as a mentor to the present board members and speaks about the Irish centre on many occasions to the newly arrived Irish, encouraging them to become involved in the centre and bring some new ideas and perspectives to the table.

Deirdre has worked in real estate for the past 15 years. Well-known and respected as a reliable real estate agent in Calgary, she receives many of her referrals from satisfied clients who pass her name along to neighbours and friends in the community.

In 2014, Ray Bassett, the Irish Ambassador to Canada, named Deirdre Halferty Honorary Consul Ireland for Calgary and Southern Alberta.

This prestigious appointment was mainly due to her exceptional work as president of the Irish Cultural Society and the many other social aspects of her work in the Irish community in Calgary.

In a recent conversation with *The Celtic Connection*, Deirdre spoke about her responsibilities as honorary Irish consul.

"The majority of my work is handling passport renewals for first-time applicants for both first and second generation Irish. Generally, they're looking to get their Irish citizenship and passports."

She explained, "Actually, I don't deal with citizenship if it's second generation and their grandparents were born in Ireland. Then, they need to do the form birth registration before they can apply for their passports."

"If they are first generation, like children of an Irish parent, then they can get their citizenship automatically."

"Other applicants, not of the above, would have to connect with the Irish Embassy in Ottawa."

Deirdre said the majority of applications are now done online and if applicants follow instructions listed on the website they mostly wouldn't need to contact the embassy unless there was something specific.

She has received calls from across Canada from people who needed additional information and couldn't find a contact locally.

"I've had applicants call me from Ottawa, from Saskatchewan, from Fernie, B.C. because it's closer to Calgary, and, of course, from Alberta."

"I get the calls because they're having trouble reaching the embassy, although it doesn't seem to be as bad getting through as it used to be."

Some of the problems facing the young Irish often relate to documentation, such as identification papers.



DEIRDRE Halferty is also a real estate agent for Calgary West Realty.



STEPHEN AVENUE is a major pedestrian mall in the heart of downtown Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Halferty explained, "What seems to happen with a lot of young Irish people here is they use their passports for ID when they go to the bars or out in the evening. Irish passports are not recognized as ID in Alberta, and sometimes they are lost or stolen."

Another issue related to driving licenses. Because there is no reciprocal agreement between Alberta and Ireland, drivers can't just automatically get an Alberta drivers' license.

"They actually have to do the whole Alberta test again, which is ridiculous," she said, "I think Alberta is one of the few provinces that isn't reciprocated."

"In fact, they are reciprocated in British Columbia and I have been told of many young Irish going over to B.C. to obtain a license there."

"They will give a false address to obtain a B.C. license and this license is then recognized in Alberta."

"This is something that needs to be dealt with so they can get their Alberta license here. The last I heard this situation was being held up not in Alberta but in Ireland."

"I had been trying to work on this through the former Irish Ambassador to Canada, Ray Bassett and the Alberta Government."

Lost or stolen passports are a real problem explained Deirdre.

"If this happens, they must reapply as if they are applying for the very first time and it's a real nuisance factor."

"The alternative would have been to get an Alberta driver's license or an interim Alberta ID from the Provincial Government."

Another situation arises when Irish citizens need to travel on short notice.

"People often procrastinate regarding passports, so it's always a rush. Then, I have to contact the embassy to get passport and travel documents," said Deirdre.

She explained that many think this is a simple procedure but there is a lot of due diligence necessary to prevent fraud and ensure security, and this takes time.

"In the case of someone having to return home because of a death in the family the embassy is always very understanding."

Sometimes there is a need for assistance with legal representation and Deirdre has worked in liaison with the Irish embassy in this regard as well.

"Some of the young Irish get themselves into a bit of bother here or they have an immigration problem, and I must make sure they have legal representation."

"But, I must say, Siobhan Dornan at the embassy is unbelievably helpful with these situations."

And, it's not always problems that Deirdre hears about in her work as Irish consul.

"I've met some brilliant people with the new Irish here," she said, "and they really keep you rejuvenated. They also give you a laugh and it helps you get in touch with your Irish sense of humour again."

With all this time and effort, it must be noted that honorary Irish consuls in Canada are not paid a salary from the Irish Government.

They are extended a small honorarium but their efforts are mostly voluntary and without financial compensation.

Since the downturn in the Alberta economy, Deirdre has noticed a decrease in the numbers of new Irish in Calgary. Some have returned to Ireland and they can work in Europe as members of the EU.

Deirdre also noted the incredible number of Northern Ireland people clamouring for an Irish passport since the Brexit vote.

She commented how the economy has impacted the real estate market and her business saying, "It has remained pretty much status quo for me because I have been in the business for 15 years."

"In the mid-range of \$450,000 to \$700,000, that's pretty much unchanged. There are always people moving in and out, but anything over one million is definitely taking a little longer to move."

"The market has gone down five percent over a million and three percent between about \$600,000 to a million."

"There is a bit of a flood of condos on the market but again, if it's a good location, priced right and a decent size, then it will still sell. If it's a tiny bit overpriced, it will sit for longer."

"I recently had some buyers from Vancouver who bought property, possibly because of the 15 percent tax that has cooled the housing market in Vancouver."

"I know the media would like us to say that people are walking away from their homes en masse, but I haven't seen that yet. It's certainly not as bad as the Eighties with the downturn in the economy then."

"Ninety-five percent of my business is referrals. This wouldn't be a good business to be getting into today and starting out cold. You get a lot of part-time realtors who fall off the edge of the cliff at times like this."

"The slogan on my website is: 'The Hard Workin' Irish Woman', and that's what I aim to be." Visit Deirdre's website at: [www.dhalferty.com](http://www.dhalferty.com).

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# Colm Tóibín: 'Ireland in the 1970s was a great country to emigrate from'



HIS second part of a column on a new volume, *Great Irish Reportage*, examines the role that journalism played in challenging Ireland's views of itself in the 1970s and 1980s.

Naturally, dissent in Irish journalism pre-dates that watershed. Consider, for example, in this volume an article by Honor Tracy.

Tracy became a pariah by merely describing the way in which a Catholic Canon in a country parish had enriched himself, stirring his parishioners to raise funds for his new house.

More unflinchingly, Protestant dissent against Catholic intolerance flows from the pen of the great Hubert Butler.

Butler's exposé of religious bigotry during the Fethard-on-Sea boycott of Protestants is the best essay in this book.

It manages to capture so much of post-partition Southern Irish attitudes in one sweep that it should be prescribed reading in every secondary school in Ireland.

There is also Gertrude Gaffney's polemic in response to our constitution's callous exclusion of women from the workplace; a compelling article in part because Gaffney manages to implicitly refute the constitution's claims by writing in a modern and self-confident idiom.

Articles 40 and 41 of our constitution impeded the natural progress of women in Irish society for at least two generations, and responsibility for those disabling Articles falls four-square on Éamon de Valera's shoulders.

Gaffney ranks de Valera in the company of Hitler for his comparably reactionary policies towards women.

(How Dev's shade might writhe when, starting in the 1990s, we had 21 consecutive years of women presidents who proved that they could occupy the country's highest office better than he could.)

Even so, this volume's compiler, John Horgan, provides telling editorial input that Gaffney was a champion of General Franco, who was enacting in Spain exactly the policies that Gaffney found objectionable in Ireland.

Women's sexuality is further explored in Mary Maher's brave account of the inhumane treatment of working-class women in our maternity wards.

Mary Kenny's article, dating from the 1960s, does similar investigative work on the canal banks of Dublin's South Side, speaking to prostitutes long before it was thinkable that the national broadcaster would televise or document the sex trade.

Yet these voices are salient partly because they are so rare. Dissent against the Church and the State in periodicals was successfully silenced, insofar as it was attempted at all, in the half century since partition.

In Northern Ireland to articulate the abuses of the state in a newspaper was to face an even more comprehensive climate of censorship.

The 1960s, it is said, came to Ireland a decade late. When it did arrive, however, it brought with it a range of new personalities who founded periodicals to give voice to a new counter culture.

## THE VIEW FROM IRELAND



By MAURICE FITZPATRICK

This generation could either leave the country or, provided that they managed to get a job, stay.

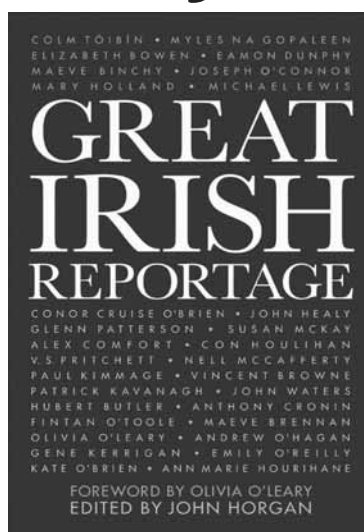
Those who stayed were largely underwhelmed by what they found; as Colm Tóibín put it: "Ireland in the 1970s was a great country to emigrate from."

They wrote about it and wrote against it. The educated young people who remained were brave and open about their socialist or feminist or homosexual agendas.

Journalists like Nell McCafferty, Colm Tóibín and Gene Kerrigan became Irish proponents of Tom Wolfe's ethic of personalising news story writing and cultivating journalism as a literary form.

They, among others, swept aside the stagnancy and introspection that had characterised Irish journalism since partition.

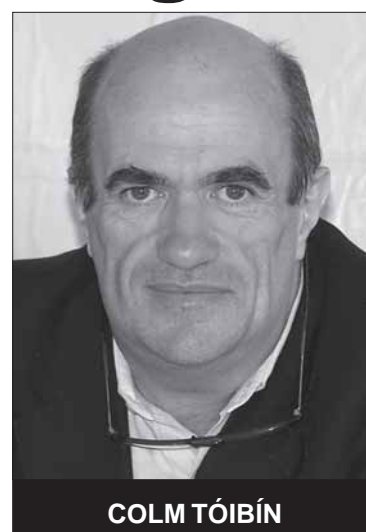
Vincent Browne's magazine, *Magill*



(one of several innovative periodicals) gave the new crop of journalists a vehicle to write what they thought.

For instance, a long article, reproduced in *Great Irish Reportage*, which Gene Kerrigan wrote for *Magill* in 1983 in defence of Irish people who resisted the introduction of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution, which formally banned abortion, is eerily contemporary over 30 years later.

The most surprising piece in this collection from the point of view of challenging orthodoxies is not really an article at all: Vincent Browne conducts a lengthy interview with Mary McAleese



COLM TÓIBÍN

before her election as President of Ireland as a Fianna Fáil candidate.

Browne's line of questioning focusses on the praise McAleese heaped on Fianna Fáil leaders of yore: Éamon de Valera ("the greatest visionary Ireland has had") and her fulsome admiration of Charlie Haughey.

How to reconcile McAleese's feminism with an identification with de Valera, or political integrity with an analysis of Haughey as admirable?

McAleese was, when she won the popular vote, a jumble of contrary pulls: feminist yet traditional, pro-gay rights yet Catholic, northern yet adopted by a

mainstream southern political party. Browne's forensic approach made for a great interview.

Here I will make a case for an article that may have been included.

While several articles collected here confront the Northern Irish Troubles, one article by Eamonn McCann examining the way in which the violence in the North transformed a natural affinity among Southerners for their Northern counterparts to indifference or worse, would have been welcome.

McCann has continually illustrated how the continuation of atrocities in the North created a distance between the Southern and Northern jurisdictions; and how those attitudes were deftly justified by the organs of the State.

His 2012 feature on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bloody Sunday, arguing that the massacre sealed a partitionist view of the Troubles, deserves to be anthologised.

And McCann certainly belongs in the pantheon of great Irish journalists, whatever the criteria for selection may be.

The range, style and courage of these articles make this a book destined to endure.

In a year in which the quality of public discourse has precipitously fallen, this book is a timely reminder of what is so precious to preserve.

*Great Irish Reportage* edited by John Horgan is published by Penguin Ireland.

## Pat Hickey to return to Ireland after being loaned bail money

DUBLIN – Pat Hickey, former president of the Olympic Council of Ireland, is to return to Ireland after being loaned bail money by an Olympic body, it has emerged.

Hickey (71) has been in Brazil since he was arrested three months ago during the Rio de Janeiro Olympics on suspicion of alleged illegal ticket touting.

It has been reported now that the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) has agreed to pay his bail, allowing him to come back to Ireland on medical grounds.

Hickey, who has denied any wrongdoing, stood down from his role as president while an investigation takes place.

ANOC said he will return home due to what it described as a heart condition.

Last month, a judge in Brazil ruled that he could be given back his passport and permitted to leave the country on payment of a €410,000 bond.

With the bail payment being covered by ANOC, Hickey will be given back his confiscated passport. ANOC has said that the bail payment is a loan and it expects to be reimbursed.

In a statement, ANOC said, "The decision was unanimously approved by ANOC president Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah and all ANOC vice-presidents via a postal vote on November 20, 2016.

"The payment was made as a temporary loan so that Patrick Hickey could meet his bail requirements and return to Ireland where he can receive medical treatment for a heart condition. The terms of the temporary loan make it clear that it must be repaid to ANOC in full.

"For legal reasons, all other terms and conditions surrounding this bail payment will remain confidential."

Last month, the Olympic Council of Ireland ruled out paying the bond for Hickey.

He was held for a time in a maximum security Rio jail after he was arrested on August 18.

He was formally accused under Brazilian law of ticket-touting, running a cartel and illicit marketing.

At that time, Judge Fernando Antonio de Almeida cited Hickey's "critical health" before recommending that his imprisonment be converted into "domicile imprisonment."

Last month Jonathan Irwin head of the Jack and Jill Foundation charity defended the controversial Olympics chief, expressing his satisfaction that his "old pal Pat Hickey" had received permission to leave Brazil.

Irwin's friendship with Hickey goes



PAT HICKEY the former president of the Olympic Council of Ireland was arrested in Brazil on August 18.

*"I'm a bit like the rabbit, who is absolutely entranced by the snake"*

back to the early 1990s, when Irwin joined forces with Dublin mayor Gay Mitchell to bring the Olympics to Ireland.

"I know Pat," Irwin said. "When we first met he treated me as if I was a beetle to be crushed under foot, but we got to know each other."

He added, "I'm a bit like the rabbit, who is absolutely entranced by the snake."

"It was a pretty awkward birth between

Pat and the beetle [Irwin himself] but I have to say that I admired his ability to be a very successful street-fighter, and I enjoyed his company. He's got the most charming French wife..."

Irwin said Hickey's treatment in Brazil was extraordinary, given his status as a "VIP" and Ireland's top sportsman.

"There he was naked and dragged off to prison. And then the hate-fest that started over here in the media...as if this was the devil incarnate."

Irwin also criticised Irish Minister for Sport Shane Ross and Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan for their supposed lack of support for the embattled Olympics chief.

"I couldn't believe that Shane Ross, our Minister for Sport, gets on a plane and leaves our top administrator under arrest, you know, without going back.

"My hero was always [19th-century British statesman] Lord Palmerston, who if a British citizen or passport-holder got into trouble said, 'by God, we'll send a gunboat out to take him home'. None of this nonsense.

"Obviously the man has got to face charges if they ever get to court, but to leave him abandoned was just unbelievable.

"It was pretty pathetic, wasn't it – to abandon any human being in a foreign country with a legal system that seems so very different to ours, and seems to be even slower..."

"Whether you like him or not, he has achieved more than any Irish sports administrator has ever done."



# The lone voice of the whistleblower: Tom Gilmartin dead at 78

**CORK** – Tom Gilmartin who was a key witness in the controversial Mahon Tribunal has died.

The former property developer (78) had been ill for some time and passed away at Cork University Hospital on the morning of November 22.

The Irish businessman became a central witness at the Mahon Tribunal with testimony concerning planning and political corruption that “rocked Ireland.”

The tribunal ran from November 1997 to March 2012 and was the longest running and most expensive public inquiry held in the Republic of Ireland.

Originally from Sligo, Gilmartin built a hugely successful engineering business in Luton in the UK.

The decline of the UK car industry led him to move into construction and development in the 1980s in the UK, Northern Ireland and the Republic.

However, his experiences of planning in Dublin, particularly in relation to a proposed shopping centre, was one of the primary causes for the establishment of the Mahon planning tribunal in Dublin Castle.

Gilmartin was subjected to demands for money by politicians, and was repeatedly obstructed when he refused to pay them.

His statement before the tribunal was a crucial role in ending the political career of former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern in the ensuing scandal.

Gilmartin agreed to co-operate with the tribunal after he was left incensed about comments made about him by former Irish Government minister and EU Commissioner, Pádraig Flynn, during a *Late Late Show* appearance on RTE.

Many of Gilmartin’s allegations involved

the late Liam Lawlor and Cork-based property developer Owen O’Callaghan.

He famously told one Fianna Fáil politician who tried to sting him for IR£5 million, “You guys make the Mafia look like f\*\*king monks.”

He later said he gave a cheque for IR£50,000 to former TD Pádraig Flynn.

In his evidence to the tribunal, he said Flynn had tried to get him to lie and change his version of events.

Following publication of the hard-hitting Mahon tribunal report, the Gilmartin family claimed it was a total vindication of Tom Gilmartin’s position.

The report concluded that corruption and abuse of power were ‘endemic’ in politics and it made serious findings against senior figures who represented Fianna Fáil, such as Bertie Ahern, Pádraig Flynn and Albert Reynolds.

Gilmartin is survived by his wife Vera and four children.



THE late Tom Gilmartin famously told one Fianna Fáil politician who tried to sting him for IR£5 million, “You guys make the Mafia look like f\*\*king monks.”



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## No change for rights of Irish citizens in UK says Brexit Secretary

**LONDON** – Irish citizens are expected to have their special status in the UK protected post-Brexit, according to David Davis.

The Brexit Secretary told MPs he believes there will be no change to what is enshrined in law in the Ireland Act 1949.

This legislation established the special status in which the Republic of Ireland is regarded “not a foreign country” for the purpose of UK laws.

Speaking in the Commons, SNP MP Martin Docherty-Hughes (West Dunbartonshire) told Davis, “My constituents share an issue, share a concern already brought to the floor of this House by myself and also (Mark Durkan, SDLP MP for Foyle) about the relationship with our closest neighbour and with our border with the sovereign

nation of Ireland, in which the Ireland Act 1949... they talk about the common travel area but there’s no answer to this question yet.

“Would you, here on the floor of the House, say here and now that there will be no change to the rights of Irish citizens as dictated by the Ireland Act, amended in 1949?”

Davis replied, “It’s a very specific question and forgive me if I did not answer it before because I intend to.

“I will write to you in detail but I think the answer is there will be no change.

“The aim, as I said to you before, is that the common travel area rights – including the rights to vote, the rights to work and so on, both ways – will continue but I will come back to you about the detail.”



DAVID DAVIS told British MPs he believes there will be no change to what is enshrined in law in the Ireland Act 1949.



## Record-Breaking Year for Irish Passports

**DUBLIN** – More than 700,000 Irish passports have been issued so far in 2016.

Last month the Irish passport office tweeted, “Wow, we have just broken a new record, over 700,000 passports have been issued so far this year! #RecordBreaker.”

Last year a total of 670,000 Irish passports were issued.

In the three months after the contentious Brexit vote, applications for Irish passports were up more than 17,300 compared to the same period last year.

Some 21,549 people in Britain sent off for the documents in July, August and September, along with 15,747 people in Northern Ireland.

The Irish Embassy in London and the Irish Passport Office were flooded with applications, as people who wanted to hold on to their EU citizenship in the event of the UK leaving the EU were galvanised into action by the referendum.

One in four people in Britain is said to have Irish heritage. Anyone born on the island of Ireland or whose parents are Irish automatically qualifies for citizenship. In some cases, those who have an Irish grandparent can also apply.

## Enda Kenny's popularity is surging – but Fianna Fáil is the most popular party

ENDA Kenny’s popularity is up to 36 percent in the latest Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI poll.

It’s the Fine Gael leader’s best personal showing in this poll in four years, the paper notes.

His counterpart at the head of Fianna Fáil, Micheál Martin, is at 38 percent. The figure for Gerry Adams is 27 percent, while recently appointed Labour leader Brendan Howlin is on 21 percent.

Both main parties have gained support since the last poll in October. The poll was carried out among 1,200 people.



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LEITRIM-NATIVES Camilla Barrett and Mary Charles along with Limerick native Father John Madigan visiting with Daidí na Nollag at the Irish seniors' Christmas luncheon.



ANTRIM NATIVE Kay McKenna and Down native Cathryn Quinn visiting with Daidí na Nollag.



DUBLIN-NATIVE Brian Cullen and his wife Jennifer visiting with Daidí na Nollag at the Irish seniors' Christmas luncheon.



BELFAST-NATIVE Reverend Barry Keating and his wife Nancy visiting with Daidí na Nollag at the Irish seniors' Christmas luncheon.



KERRY NATIVE Dan Nolan and Limerick native Pat Bennett visiting with Daidí na Nollag at the Irish seniors' Christmas luncheon.

## SEATTLE IRISH NEWS

### PASSINGS

• Larry Peterson, the father of Vanessa Peterson of the Seattle Gaels, died suddenly in Virginia November 28.

• Paul LeBrun (89), whose wife Lily is from Co. Donegal, died in Edmonds November 4.

• Marie Donohoe (91), whose late husband was from Co. Leitrim, died in Seattle October 18.

• George O'Malley (96), who died in Co. Mayo on December 5, was a brother of Seattle's Martin O'Malley and Una Majeska, and an uncle of Seattle's John O'Malley.

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a nanamacha dílse.*

May their faithful souls rest at the right hand of God.

**WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS** – The Seattle area's 2017 Nollaig na mBan (Women's Christmas) celebration will be on the traditional holiday (the twelfth day of Christmas) which in 2017 falls on Friday, January 6.

The celebration will be held at the Wilde Rover, 111 Central Way, Kirkland.

While this is a celebration for the women in our lives, men are also welcome to attend and enjoy the Irish music and singing, the food, good company, and to share the craic.

Enjoy a three course meal and one drink (beer or wine) for \$35 per person, including tax and tip. Visit [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more details and to make reservations, or e-mail: [sgilllin@mac.com](mailto:sgilllin@mac.com).

**IRISH ART EXHIBIT** – Artist Mark Bohne has a 'Paintings of Ireland' exhibition at the Sand Point Arts and Cultural Exchange at Seattle's Magnuson Park (Building 30 West, 7448 63rd Avenue NE).

The exhibit is open 10 AM - 3 PM Thursdays and Fridays through December 17.

Mark has visited Ireland for extended stays for the last two decades, deepening his affinity for Ireland and its rugged and beautiful landscape and to explore his own Irish roots.

This exhibition is largely the result of two awarded artist residencies.

**CELTIC CHRISTMAS** – Geoffrey Castle's Celtic Christmas on Saturday, December 17, is a wonderful new Northwest holiday tradition. A high energy stage show that brings the joy and magic of the holidays to the Northshore Performing Arts Center, 18125 92nd Avenue NE, Bothell.

Ticket prices ranging from \$15 to \$25 are available by calling (425) 893-9900.

**ISSAQUAH GAA** – The Issaquah School District has adopted the Irish games of Gaelic football and hurling as mainstream PhysEd sports.

Skyline High School, Issaquah High School and Liberty High School now all teach Gaelic football and hurling to boys and girls as part of their PE curriculum.

Issaquah School District may be the first school district in the United States teaching Gaelic Athletic Association games at all of their high schools.



By  
JOHN  
KEANE

**IRISH UNIVERSITY ALUMNI** – About 50 alumni and friends of the University of Limerick held a UL Alumni organizing reception at Seattle's Museum of Flight at Boeing Field in November.

Bobby O'Connor, UL Alumni Chairman, and Majella O'Connell, Executive Director, University of Limerick Alumni, were both in attendance.

Among the speakers was Dr. Pio Fitzgerald who graduated from the University of Limerick with a degree in Aeronautical Engineering.

He first started with Boeing in 1997 and in 2011 was named Boeing Commercial Airplanes Engineer of the Year.

He is currently the Program Integration Manager for the Boeing 747-8 program based in Everett.

A Seattle chapter of the UL Alumni Association has now been started

and it is hoped that maybe alumni of other Irish universities might also be willing to organize so that a combined Irish Universities Alumni group could organize joint events.

In the meantime, for more information on the UL Alumni group, e-mail: [Majella.OConnell@ul.ie](mailto:Majella.OConnell@ul.ie).

### MISCELLANEOUS

• For information on the next Irish Book Club meeting, call (206) 361-1713.

• A video called *Ireland*, narrated and shot by Seattle teenager Sam Cleary, won an award at the recent Ethnic Heritage Council Film Festival.

• *On The Edge: An Odyssey*, a paperback by UW grad Stephen Murphy, is a memoir of risk-taking, poignancy and redemption, available at Amazon and other online retailers.

• Former Seattle resident Nancy Blanton has a new novel set in 1634 Ireland, *The Prince of Glencurragh*, which just won Florida's Royal Palm Literary Award for historicals, available at Amazon and other online retailers.

*Go raibh síoch n na Nollag agus Bliain Nua faoi sh,an 's faoi shonars ort 's ar do mhuintir!*

May the peace of Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year be with you and yours!



(L-R) NOREEN MCCORMACK, Michael Gallagher, Niamh Coleman and Michelle Coleman at the University of Limerick Alumni organizing reception at Seattle's Museum of Flight.



MAJELLA O'CONNELL, Executive Director, University of Limerick Alumni, speaks at the UL Alumni organizing reception at the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field in Seattle.





IRISH TOURISM industry sales mission event in Seattle in November – (L-R) Marc Kavanagh, Sceptre Tours; Billy Condon, Tourism Ireland's Vice-President of Marketing USA; John Keane, Honorary Irish Consul; Margaret Jeffares, Good Food Ireland; and Helena Healy, B&B Ireland.

## Donald Trump adviser warns 'flood of companies' will leave Republic of Ireland

WASHINGTON – Stephen Moore, one of Donald Trump's top advisers, has warned a "flood of companies" will leave the Republic of Ireland under the president-elect's planned new tax regime.

Moore, senior economic advisor to Trump, said the centrepiece plan of the new Washington administration was wooing back multinationals with radical business tax cuts.

"I believe that when we cut these tax rates – we're going to cut our business tax rate from roughly 35 percent down to roughly 15 to 20 percent – if you do that you are going to see a flood of companies leaving Ireland and Canada and Germany and France and they are going to come back to the United States," he said.

"It is going to have a very high impact on jobs."

Moore, formerly a chief economist with U.S. conservative think-tank the Heritage Foundation, said the effort to entice companies back from low corporate tax-rate countries would be central to boosting the U.S. economy.

This was the "single most important thing for our country right now," he told BBC Radio 4's World At One.



ENDA KENNY spoke to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump by telephone for 10 minutes following the night of his election.

"There is no question about it, and we see day-after-day in this country that we are losing our businesses and our corporations," he said.

"They are effectively renouncing their U.S. citizenship and they are moving to Canada, to Britain, to Ireland, to China and Mexico.

"That is a significant loss of jobs and we want to have the jobs here in the United States, we don't want to have them go abroad."

The remarks follow a 10-minute telephone conversation between Trump and Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny, who said the president-elect praised his economic policy.

"I had a very good conversation with the president-elect," said the taoiseach.

"He understands Ireland very well, he was complimentary about the decisions made about the economy here.

"He is looking forward to doing business with Ireland and I asked him specifically about Patrick's Day, he is looking forward to continuing that tradition over many years."

It is tradition for the taoiseach to travel to Washington on March 17 to present the U.S. president with a bowl of shamrocks, to symbolise close ties between the countries.

Kenny said Trump has invited him to the White House next year to continue the custom.

Earlier, Kenny told the Irish Dail that "racist and dangerous" remarks made by Trump during the election campaign were made in the "heat of battle."

In a softening of his outspoken rebuke from May, Kenny said he would be happy to work with Trump.

## Growth in Irish construction industry hits seven-month high

DUBLIN – Growth in the Irish construction industry has hit a seven-month high, new figures indicate.

Activity, new orders and employment all increased at faster rates in October, according to the Ulster Bank Construction Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI).

Companies also increased their purchasing activity, and confidence over future output also improved from September.

Activity on housing projects also rose

at a sharp and accelerated pace during October.

The rate of new order growth was substantial, having quickened for the fifth consecutive month to the strongest since February.

As a result, construction firms were encouraged to increase their staffing levels.

The rise in new business in October was also a key factor behind an expansion of purchasing activity by construction firms – among the sharpest since the survey began in mid-2000.

Meanwhile, higher demand for inputs led suppliers to increase their charges, and also resulted in delivery delays.

The rise in input costs faced by construction firms during October was sharp and the fastest since August 2015.

Business sentiment ticked up in October and remained strongly positive, with about two thirds of respondents predicting an increase in activity over the next 12 months.

Among the factors supporting optimism were predictions of improving market conditions and a good pipeline of work, the survey said.

## Undocumented Irish urged not to make 'rash decisions' by lobby group

NEW YORK – Undocumented Irish living in the U.S. have been urged not to make "any rash decisions" amid president-elect Donald Trump's latest comments regarding deporting or imprisoning up to three million immigrants.

Ciarán Staunton, chairman of the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform, said the group would keep a close eye on events as they progressed in Washington.

"While we are all concerned with many of president-elect Trump's statements on immigration during his campaign, we urge people not to make any rash decisions or live in fear of a knock on the door," he said.

Trump said the authorities would round up undocumented immigrants with criminal records – a group he estimated at between two and three million people.

He said he would later "make a determination" on those, including thousands

of Irish, who were undocumented but had an otherwise clean record.

It is estimated that there are about 50,000 undocumented Irish in the U.S.

Staunton said the group would like to emphasise that Trump said he was focused on people with criminal records.

He criticised some media for "misleading" reports on the potential deportation of undocumented immigrants.

Trump said in an interview on CBS's *60 Minutes* "what we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records – gang members, drug dealers...we are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate."

He said when the border was secured and "everything normalised," he would decide on a plan to deal with the "terrific people" who were in the U.S. illegally but who had clean criminal histories.

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# Conor McGregor Delivers Knockout in UFC's New York Debut

NEW YORK – Conor McGregor knocked out Eddie Alvarez in the second round to win the Ultimate Fighting Championship lightweight title and become the first UFC fighter to ever hold two belts at the same time.

McGregor dominated from the opening bell of the main event of UFC 205 at Madison Square Garden on November 12 and the sold-out crowd roaring with each blow.

McGregor is now the reigning featherweight and lightweight champ.

UFC has not decided if McGregor will be allowed to defend both championships. UFC President Dana White said McGregor could be about the only fighter in the promotion to handle that kind of fight load.

The 28-year-old Irishman added the lightweight title to his own featherweight belt when referee John McCarthy stepped in and stopped the bout with under two minutes of the second round left.

Afterwards, McGregor announced he was becoming a father for the first time and that he wanted a shareholding in the UFC where he is by far the most famous figure in the sport.

In the first round, McGregor tagged Alvarez early with his left hand and dropped him to the canvas several times.

Alvarez, a veteran fighter who was expected to give McGregor a real test, showed a lot of spirit to get out of the first round.

In the second round, every time the Philadelphian tried to take down McGregor, the Irishman was able to easily get out of trouble and get back to striking.

McGregor picked his opponent apart, and with a left, decked Alvarez again.



CONOR MCGREGOR celebrates his KO victory over Eddie Alvarez.

The Dubliner went in for the kill and pelted Alvarez with punches until the referee stepped in to stop the fight.

After the fight, "The Notorious" demanded that his belt be brought to the octagon so he could put one on each shoulder.

"I am on another level," he added when asked about the fight.

"I've spent a lot of time slaying every-

body in the country," McGregor said.

"I'd like to take the chance to apologise to absolutely nobody."

UFC was live and legal in New York for the first time since an MMA ban was lifted earlier this year.

With his two UFC belts draped over his shoulders, he shouted, "This is what I dreamed into reality... that looks good, oh that looks good, God bless."



MICK ROCHE



DANNY MURPHY

## GAA mourns passing of Mick Roche and Danny Murphy

Three-time All-Ireland winner Mick Roche has died at the age of 73, while Ulster secretary Danny Murphy has also passed away, aged 67.

### MICK ROCHE

Roche, who played at the heart of the Tipperary defence, was a mainstay of the Premier side for almost a decade, lining out for 27 Championship appearances between 1964 and 1973.

Roche won his All-Irelands in 1964, '65 and '71, and also collected five Munster crowns and three National League titles.

The Carrick-on-Suir native captained his county to finals in '67 and '68.

Roche was selected on the first All-Star Award team in 1971 at centre back and prior to that received three Cú Chulainn Awards, the forerunner to the All Stars, in 1964, '65 and '67.

With his club Carrick Davins, Mick won back-to-back senior county championship titles in 1966 and 1967, scoring 1-9 in the Davins win over Ballygunner in the 1966 Munster Club Final.

Tipperary County Board Chairman Michael Bourke said: "I, like the whole of the hurling world, am rocked with the news of the untimely passing of Mick Roche.

"Not only was Mick a legend who car-

ried that tag with great humility, he was a colossus who earned tremendous respect from his peers and even from those who never had the privilege of playing with or against a giant of our game.

"His influence in Tipperary's success in the Sixties and also in the Seventy-One All-Ireland Final is incalculable and his loss will resonate for a long time."

### DANNY MURPHY

A member of the Burren Club in Co. Down, Murphy, served as an administrator of every level of the Association, and had served in his role as Ulster secretary since 1997.

On Murphy's contribution to the Association, Ulster president Michael Hasson said: "Danny was an outstanding leader who provided unstinting dedication to the GAA in Ulster for over 35 years.

"His contribution to every aspect of the GAA, from his initial involvement with St. Mary's GAC, Burren, his beloved County Down and his immense commitment to Comhairle Uladh brought unprecedented success to every unit of the Association he was involved in.

"It was very fitting that Danny's leadership was honoured earlier this year by the First Minister Arlene Foster and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness at Stormont in recognition of his efforts in promoting reconciliation, tolerance and respect across all communities."

## Web Summit eyes dizzying new heights in Lisbon

DUBLIN – The 2016 Web Summit was a different affair from previous years, not least because this is the first year the event was not held in Ireland.

In a blaze of publicity ahead of last year's event, co-founder Paddy Cosgrave announced the event, which began in Dublin in 2009, would move to Lisbon.

The reasons were spelled out: the facilities in Dublin just didn't have the capacity that the co-founders thought were necessary to grow the Web Summit.

WIFI, hotels, transportation and conference space were among the chief complaints.

It seems a long time has passed since the Web Summit was called the Dublin Web Summit, changing its name after the 2011 show to reflect, perhaps, the organisers' future ambitions.

Its humble roots saw 400 attendees in a single room; by 2011, there were more than triple that number, and it grew exponentially.

In 2015, there were about 40,000 people at the Web Summit, which was held over two halls in Dublin's RDS.

The move to the MEO Arena and the Feira Internacional de Lisboa (FIL) in Lisbon will allow the capacity to increase to 80,000 attendees over time.

That is bigger than any venue in Ireland could accommodate, and the Web Summit organisers know it.

Lisbon is betting that hosting the Web Summit, which has become Europe's largest tech event, will spur the growth of startups and draw foreign investors, helping it compete with the continent's main innovation hubs.

Cosgrave said the strong government support given startups in Portugal was one of the reasons why he moved the event to Lisbon from Dublin.

"They recognise the value of technology and want to put Portugal on the map

as a tech hub," he said.

"The Portuguese capital is well placed to become a tech hub because it has strong infrastructure, a vibrant tech community, cheap rents and an educated workforce that is fluent in English," Cosgrave said.

Apart from tech startups, chief executives from leading companies like Renault Nissan took part this year as the Web Summit becomes a meeting ground for technology and business.

Cosgrave said, "If you track the Web Summit, in 2010 it was a startup conference, the average age of attendees was in the mid-20s.

"But in 2014 it began to change, the average age is now 36, it has become very much a ... technology business conference."

"The Web Summit's rapid growth brought it to Lisbon as the venue had simply run out of space in Dublin," Cosgrave said.

"If you look at Lisbon, something was already happening, and I hope that the



THE WEB SUMMIT which has become Europe's largest tech event made its presence felt on the streets of Lisbon.

Web Summit adds to the growing wave of interest in what's happening in Lisbon and Portugal.

"It's difficult to explain these things. Historians can look back and explain why a city is cool."

He cited a growing number of startups in Lisbon and the decision by the

founder of Berlin's co-worker startup campus "Factory" to open in the Portuguese capital as evidence of its growing attraction.

The Web Summit's biggest point of interest this year could be in bringing together a large number of experts in the car industry on driverless cars, according to Cosgrave.



# Pope Francis: Visit to Ireland in 2018 may include North



PHOTO: AP Photo/Alessandra Tarantino, pool

POPE FRANCIS exchanges gifts with Taoiseach Enda Kenny (R), during a private audience in his private studio at the Vatican, Monday, November 28, 2016.

DUBLIN – The Pontiff has confirmed his intention to visit Ireland following a meeting with Taoiseach Enda Kenny in the Vatican on November 28.

Pope Francis may also include a visit to Northern Ireland as part of his trip to Ireland in August 2018.

Following a 25-minute-long private audience, the taoiseach said that he had explained that the Irish Government will “co-operate and assist” with any arrangements necessary for a northern leg to his journey.

The focus for Pope Francis’s trip will be the gathering in Dublin of the World Meeting of Families, which was last held in Philadelphia, where there were crowds of about one million.

The event, which is to run over four days, is expected to draw significantly larger crowds, but will be far shy of the numbers that turned out for the Pope John Paul II visit in 1979.

The World Meeting of Families Congress “promotes the pastoral care of families, protects their rights and dignity in the church and in civil society, so that they may ever be more able to fulfil their duties”.

Following the papal visit announcement, DUP leader Arlene Foster acknowledged that she would meet the Pope if he travelled to Northern Ireland in his capacity as head of state.

A spokesman for the first minister said, “Any potential visit to Northern Ireland by the Pope is a matter for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London.

“Were the Pope to visit Northern Ireland in his capacity as head of state then

the first minister would meet him.”

Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness has said it would be unthinkable the Pope would come to Ireland and not cross the border.

McGuinness Tweeted: “Great news that @Pontifex to visit Ireland in 2018, I believe he would receive a very warm welcome throughout the island.”

Reverend Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland said, “I am sure that many, many Roman Catholics both south and north of the border will be very excited and encouraged by the news that Pope Francis is likely to attend the 2018 gathering of the World Meeting of Families.

“If this materialises, I would hope that all other people on this island will want to join with our fellow citizens in welcoming the leader of their church to Ireland.

“Should any visit include an appropriate opportunity to travel north and visit Northern Ireland, I would trust that all in our community would take the opportunity to show due respect to such a visit.

“That will indeed be a sign that as a society we are continuing to develop into the kind of country that we all want Northern Ireland to be.”

During his visit to the Vatican, the taoiseach presented leader of the Catholic Church with a print of a stained glass window by Harry Clarke. In return, the Fine Gael leader received an etching of St. Peter’s Basilica.



TEN PEOPLE were shot dead in west Belfast in the three days after internment was introduced in 1971, in what the bereaved families refer to as the Ballymurphy Massacre.

## Ballymurphy: Inquest into deaths of 10 people to begin this month

BELFAST – An inquest into the deaths of 10 people shot dead by soldiers in west Belfast 45 years ago will get under way later this month.

The killings by members of the Parachute Regiment took place in Ballymurphy over a three-day period in August 1971.

A preliminary inquest hearing has been scheduled for November 30 but it will not be completed unless the Coroner’s Courts service is given additional funding.

The decision to prioritise the Ballymurphy deaths follows a review of more than 50 so-called legacy inquests, involving more than 90 deaths in some of the most controversial incidents of the Troubles.

They include killings by police officers and soldiers, and others where there are allegations of collusion.

The Lord Chief Justice, Sir Declan Morgan, has written to the families of the Ballymurphy victims informing them that their inquest is deemed to be at an advanced stage of readiness.

Those killed included a mother-of-eight and a priest.

A solicitor representing the families has welcomed the scheduling of a hearing date, but stressed that this does not mean the inquest will be completed at this time.

“The families have received notification that the inquest has been prioritised by the Lord Chief Justice,” said Pádraig Ó Muirigh.

“However, he was very clear that this doesn’t mean that the inquest can be completed at this time.

“He warned earlier this year that legacy inquests can’t be completed unless extra funding is made available and that position hasn’t changed.”

The decision means the Ballymurphy inquest will be among the first to be heard if the Stormont Executive or Westminster government agree to a request from Sir Declan Morgan for additional funding for the coroner’s court service.

The Lord Chief Justice has drawn up a

five-year plan to hear all outstanding legacy inquests.

It has been estimated that the cost would be at least £10 million.

His request for additional funding has been blocked by First Minister Arlene Foster.

Lawyers acting for families of more than 30 people killed in some of the

most controversial incidents of the Troubles have launched legal action in an attempt to have the funding released.

They are seeking a court order instructing the Stormont Executive, department of justice and Westminster government to give the Lord Chief Justice the resources he has requested.

A hearing for a judicial review application has been listed for December 14.

### 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 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. – PMK, MJD, CC, MDF, LMC, RD, LMC, CB, MF

#### 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 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. – BMCW

#### Novena of Childlike Confidence

O Jesus, Who has said, ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you, through the intercession of Mary, the Most Holy Mother, I knock, I seek, I ask that my prayer be granted. [Request] O Jesus, who has said, all that you ask of the Father in my name, He will grant you through the intercession of Mary, the most Holy Mother, I humbly and urgently ask Thy Father in Thy Name that my prayer be granted. [Request] O Jesus, who has said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away but My word shall not pass,” through the intercession of Mary, Thy Most Holy Mother, I feel confident that my prayer will be granted. [Request] – SVS

#### Novena to St. Anthony

O Holy St. Anthony, gentlest of Saints, your love for God and charity for his creatures, made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers. Encouraged by this thought, I implore you to obtain for me (request). O gentle and loving St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms; and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. Amen. – SVS

#### Novena to St. Clare

God of mercy you inspired Saint Clara with the love of poverty. By the help of her prayers may we follow Christ in poverty of spirit and come to the joyful vision of your glory in the Kingdom of Heaven. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. – SVS

## THE CELTIC CONNECTION

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# Dublin: City of a Hundred Thousand Welcomes



DUBLIN is having a tourist renaissance and the old city is packed. Hotels are enjoying full occupancy and the usual tours continue winter or summer.

**N**OVEMBER is hardly prime time to visit Ireland but, as it happened, I couldn't have picked a better time for weather and a few less tourists.

Dublin is having a tourist renaissance and the old city is packed. Hotels are enjoying full occupancy and the usual tours continue winter or summer.

I am so impressed at how the city manages their tourists – from airport transportation to city tours and everything else in between – we are welcomed and guided to where we want to go. Welcome to Ireland is on everyone's lips who deal with tourists.

On the first morning I started my visit in Dublin, I woke up and was greeted with bright sunshine. It was a bit chilly but I was prepared with a puffy coat and boots to take on the weather.

The Irish breakfast is legendary and on that first morning I smiled to myself as I tucked into those delicious sausages, bacon and all the rest.

Nutty brown bread, good marmalade and in my case I drink tea in Ireland, they know how to make a decent pot of tea.

I was well fortified to walk along Grafton Street which was just around the corner from where I was staying.

Grafton Street is the hub of Dublin's south side and is known for its vibrant atmosphere and a place to see and be seen and usually thronged with people. Very good street musicians gather the crowds around them.

I happened upon Clarendon Street Church and went in while Mass was in progress. Clarendon Street Church is beloved by Dublin people and I gave thanks for my safe arrival, my good breakfast and the time I had to enjoy the days ahead.

Dublin is a young city and, of course, now it is a very multicultural city. Walking around I noticed the youthful atmosphere, I felt I was the oldest person on Grafton Street.

Restaurants and specialty food shops reflect the influx of Asians, Africans and most European countries. Many of

the young people working in hotels and restaurants and shops are from outside Ireland.

It was time to locate the Hop On/Off tour buses. They ply the streets and I jumped on to a green Dublin bus tour.

Kevin, the driver, welcomed me and asked where I was from. On hearing Vancouver, the whole bus clapped – a Canadian on board.

Kevin was an exceptional driver, full of information. He pointed out all the places of interest – squares, historic houses, government buildings, galleries, pubs and churches, and he regaled us with stories. At one point we all had to join in singing Molly Malone.

I stayed on the bus to the very end of the route. I didn't want to miss any of Kevin's hilarious comments. In fact, I think the whole bus stayed on, so Kevin called it the "Jump On" bus.

There are things I always do when I come to Dublin, I call them my pilgrim route.

I never miss a visit to the wonderful Hugh Lane Gallery where I was able

*"Kevin was an exceptional driver, full of information....he regaled us with stories. At one point we all had to join in singing Molly Malone."*

to join a lecture on the beautiful portrait of Eva Gonzales by Edouard Manet.

The story of Hugh Lane's will and his gallery is long, but in a nutshell, Dublin and London share five very important paintings, and it was Ireland's turn to have these five works of art back in the gallery.

I returned to the gallery another evening for a magnificent concert in the Atrium.

The world-famous harpist Anneleen Lenaert and Dionysis Grammenos, a young clarinet player, thrilled the audience and received four standing ovations for their efforts.

I enjoyed another concert at the Victorian ornate Olympia theatre.

This was Christine Boville's Piaf concert. Christine sang her heart out and received several ovations, but even more interesting for me was the old Olympia theatre itself.

It is very ornate with lots of velvet and old lighting and I counted two bars inside the theatre. Here, one is allowed to take your drink to your seats. How very civilized.

I dropped in to Trinity College and, this time, I decided to have another look at the Book of Kells in the old Library.

Then, I crossed the road to the famous Bank of Ireland Building. I needed a cash machine and went in.

Only in Dublin will you find a roaring fire to welcome you into a bank. I had to take a picture.

Lunch in the Kilkenny Shop was another huge treat for me.

I like the kind of Irish food they serve, and I am never disappointed.

Despite my diet restrictions, I indulged in their famous cabbage and bacon with parsley sauce and mashed potatoes. Yum! Except the portion was huge.

I would never miss a browse in the historic Powerscourt Centre. It is a combination of small shops, cafes and good restaurants....all on different levels.

November is the time when all the fires are lit in restaurants and pubs. I found myself drawn to these cosy places.

The Dublin pub scene is as busy as ever, historic pubs are dotted around the city and mostly, they are comfortable places where people meet and have a pint.

The rowdy action is contained to the Temple bar area where the weekends are jammed with visitors, some wildly celebrating their stag parties wearing crazy hats and getting very drunk.

Another pilgrimage for me is a visit to Glasnevin Botanical garden.

The autumn colours were still glowing and gardeners were busy planting spring bulbs, but the trees held on to their leaves since the weather was so mild.

There are all manner of tourist things to do in Dublin from walking and pub tours to day trips to Wicklow.

Tourist information is readily available and getting around the city is very easy. I choose to walk most of the time, but it is easy to hop on a bus or take the Dart.

Dublin has turned into a shopping mecca. Everywhere you go, the shops and restaurants are all busy and, in some cases, it is hard to find a free table in a café.

I found hotels and eating out expensive, but shopping for shoes and general clothing seemed reasonable to me.

I travel light and try never to shop for big items but I bought some cute clothes for my grandchildren. I just couldn't resist the bargains in Dunne's and Penney's.

Walking along, I noticed signs for barbers and hot shaves – all very up market.

One sign offered free beer or coffee for haircuts before 11 AM. There were plenty of takers when I looked in the window.

Soon, my whirlwind tour of Dublin was over and I was heading out to take a road trip on the Wild Atlantic Way. That is another story.

By **MARIE BRUCE**



**MARIE BRUCE**

## Donegal among world-famous destinations to be named 'coolest' place to visit in 2017

DONEGAL – Donegal has topped National Geographic Traveller's 'Cool List: 17 for 2017'.

The list declares itself to capture "top culture capitals, hipster hotspots, wild escapes and places generally keeping it cool."

Described as "undiscovered," the county is described as "a weather-nibbled coast spotted with sea stacks, Blue Flag beaches and offshore islands, Donegal is a land that feels undiscovered.

"Last summer, scenes for Star Wars: Episode VIII were filmed on the Inishowen Peninsula. But this area of Ireland is also expecting 2017 to be a big year.

"There's an array of reasons to visit, from surfing beaches in Magheroarty and Ballyhiernan Bay to Horn Head – a driving, walking or cycling loop that squeezes the 1,600-mile Wild Atlantic Way into a 4.5-mile nutshell," it read.

Fáilte Ireland have since welcomed the accolade, reporting the Wild Atlantic Way to be going "from strength to strength."

The list also recommended Santiago, Helsinki, Greenland, Peru, Aarhus, Canada, Portland, India and South Africa.



THE MAJESTIC Slieve League cliffs in Co. Donegal, a stop-off point on the Wild Atlantic Way.