

the celtic connection

ISSUE 26 VOLUME 2

Proudly Serving Celts in North America Since 1991

FEBRUARY 2017



Artwork by Wendy Andrew - www.paintingdreams.co.uk
[read more about the artist inside on page 2]

IMBOLC heralds the start of the Celtic spring on February 1 and has a rich history in Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man. [Read more about St. Brigid's Day & Imbolc inside on page 2]

ISSC YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: Teaching a new generation about the Gaelic Games - See page 19.

WIN FREE TICKETS

Win free tickets to **Festival du Bois** at Parc Mackin, Coquitlam on March 3, 4 & 5. (See pages 5 & 6 for details). Entry by February 22. Mark your entry: Festival du Bois

Win free tickets to either Vancouver or Victoria (choice is yours) to see **Carlos Núñez**, bagpipe player from Galicia, Spain in concert at McPherson Playhouse, Victoria, April 6 or Vogue Theatre, Vancouver, April 7. (See pages 5 & 6 for details). Entry by February 28. Mark your entry: Carlos Núñez.

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



SCOTLAND players jubilantly celebrate after their sensational victory over Ireland at the Six Nations opener on February 4. [See page 10]

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



MICHELLE O'NEILL has replaced Martin McGuinness as the leader of Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland. McGuinness resigned in protest as deputy first minister over a botched energy scheme scandal leading to the collapse of Stormont's power-sharing coalition and a snap election on March 2. [Read more on page 18]



TOM KEEFE, a former deputy mayor of Seattle, protesting in Washington, DC, against President Trump's executive order on immigration. [Read more on pages 8, 16, & 17]

BREXIT continues to dominate the headlines in the UK. A majority of MPs have backed a bill moving closer to invoking Article 50. [Pictured right]: British PM Theresa May takes on Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn in the House of Commons. [See pages 8 & 9]



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Celtic Spring Dawns on a Fracturing World

By CYNTHIA WALLENTINE

Though it is the advent of the season of light, darkness stains the threshold.

As I write this, it is twilight on Imbolg, the beginning of the Celtic spring.

A harsh winter survived by some, but not by all.

Lifeless bodies in the ocean, cold, stiffening bodies on the land. The world recoils at the ignorance of simple-minded sentiments that place personal greed ahead of countrymen, global village, and planet.

Imbolg, the lambing season, offers the first hint of survival after days of cold and hunger.

As much as souls yearn for a glimmer of hope that the world is righting, that confidence is long in coming.

In an entwined world, rips in the fabric are not small.

From Europe to the Americas, fear of the future pushes us into the past.

Those without vision cleave to fear, while the twisted, who opened the vein, drink to kill their own unquenchable thirst.

One cannot congratulate humankind for reaching this lofty point.

Barbarism, narcissism, racism, misogyny, and religious intolerance run amok in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

These are not new, but latent qualities, lying in wait beneath the veneer of a seemingly civilized country, triggered and exposed by an elected official favorably compared to a fascist. And that's just the United States. What of Europe?

Not a time of reflection, these are days of action.

A measure of character can be taken in the moment when one voice rises to say "this is wrong."

Even if seemingly ineffectual in the instant, the act harbors truth of soul, never to dissipate.

The Celtic spring dawns. Brid, protect the hearts and the hearths of this world.

The closer the drumbeat, the more fragmented the village.

Divinity cannot save humanity, it can only inspire the grace to survive the corruptions of our species. Be with us Brid, until the night is through.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Women of Ireland: Know Your Place!

Dear Editor:

I rarely pick up your publication any longer and your latest edition (December/January) seems to confirm my original hesitancy from doing so.

Though trying to avoid what I thought biased or controversial, my eyes first landed on page 6 and the presentation of a play entitled "Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off," by the Vital Spark Theatre to be shown at the Jericho Arts Centre.

I will not be seeing this callous adaptation of an historical murder and miscarriage of justice - I'd sooner die!

I then read a rather snooty piece re the president-elect of the United States, and sensing a certain tone or theme to your view of the world, and specifically as it concerns the Irish.

Sensing incontrovertible evidence again of that bias, especially as it concerns women and their changing place in society and your seeming pleasure with "socialist or feminist or homosexual agendas!"

Also, the inclusion of Maurice Fitzpatrick's take (and seeming agreement) with Colm Toibin, and other views of Ireland, especially again, concerning so-called women's rights, same-sex marriage, adoption rights, and etc....

So it would now seem that Ireland's greatest historical moment was its resistance to a ban against the murder of the unborn! The truth is that many Irish women have forsaken their most precious attributes - the continuance of Christian Ireland.

We have been told that Freud regarded the Irish as immune to psychoanalysis - though apparently not to psychosis. Imagine if you can that the women of Ireland (and they alone!) are to be em-

powered with the ability to kill their own (and the father's) progeny!

Ireland, I fear, is doomed. Let the scarab-sellers have it!

Sincerely,
Larry Bennett
Burnaby, B.C.



FRANK DUDFIELD from British Columbia is pictured above with a copy of *The Celtic Connection* in Brazil under the statue of Christ the Redeemer (or Cristo Redentor). Keeping a watchful eye over the people of Rio de Janeiro, the statue sits atop Corcovado 2,300 feet (700 meters) above the city. It was voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007. The largest art deco statue in the world, it is 130 feet (39 metres) tall and the arms measure 98 feet (30 metres) across. Made of reinforced concrete and sandstone, the statue was unveiled in 1931. Access to the site is via a cog railway.

Imbolc heralds the Celtic Spring



YOU would be forgiven for forgetting to put Imbolc, or Saint Brigid's Day,

into your diary. But the Gaelic festival - observed annually on February 1 - is one of the oldest celebrations marking the beginning of spring, and has a rich history in Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Imbolc celebrations are held by some pagan communities on February 1 in the northern hemisphere, to observe the astronomical midpoint between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox.

It is named after an Irish word originally thought to mean "in the belly" - although it can also be translated as "ewe's milk."

Many Christians observe the date as the feast day of Saint Brigid.

The day is referenced in some of the earliest Irish literature, an indication of its significance throughout Gaelic history.

It is believed that Imbolc was originally a pagan festival associated with the goddess Brigid, considered goddess of fire and the arrival of early spring in Celtic mythology.

Imbolc was one of the cornerstones of the Celtic calendar.

For them the success of the new farming season was of great importance.

As winter stores of food were getting low, Imbolc rituals were performed to harness divine energy that would ensure a steady supply of food until the harvest six months later.

The lighting of fires celebrated the increasing power of the sun over the coming months.

For the Christian calendar, the holiday was reformed and renamed Candlemas

- where candles are lit to remember the "purification of the Virgin Mary."

A celebration of hearth and home and the sign of longer days to come, traditional customs included hosting special feasts, visiting holy wells and carrying out divination.

Brigid crosses were also made - although many of these died out in the Twentieth Century.

St. Brigid is remembered as the foundress of the Christian shrine of Kildare.

Until 1220 a perpetual fire tended by 19 nuns burned in a shrine near her church at Kildare.

The fire was surrounded by a fence made of stakes and brushwood, inside which no man was allowed to enter.

St. Brigid was the epitome of kindness and charity and many miracles are attributed to her, including those of curing lepers.

There are many stories of her assisting the poor, freeing slaves and interceding on behalf of unfortunate people.

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ABOUT OUR COVER ARTIST

WENDY ANDREW lives, dreams and paints in the beautiful mystical countryside of Southern England. She has been a professional artist for over 20 years and her work has been published internationally.

Her paintings are inspired by the ancient mysteries that are wrapped in the turning of the seasons, and the voice of The Goddess whispering through the mythical realms.

To order images by Wendy and see more of her paintings visit: www.paintingdreams.co.uk.



You can contact Wendy by e-mail at: info@paintingdreams.co.uk.

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Rain, snow, hail, or sleet ...the show must go on!

VANCOUVER – Winter has come back to surprise us with more snow than I've seen in this town in my 37 years here, but life – and the shows – must go on!

The middle of February gives us a long weekend and we have three spectacular concerts to mark the occasion of the first public holiday since New Year!

On **Friday, February 10** The Rogue presents the return of Cajun Country Revival, featuring Louisiana musicians **Joel Savoy** (fiddle) and **Jesse Lege** (accordion), backed by Portland/Quebec's **Foghorn Stringband** in a concert/Cajun dance at St. James Hall (3214 West 10th Avenue).

Cajun music is a stirring mixture of traditional Acadian music and Latin/Caribbean songs and rhythms, and Joel and Jesse were born into musical families on the bayou, their lives steeped in those magical musical traditions.

With **Nadine Landry, Sammy Lind, Caleb Klauder** and **Reeb Willms** on bass, fiddle, mandolin and guitar, they will fill the hall with dancers and mighty strings underpinning the throaty voice of Jesse's accordion.

Bring your dancing shoes! There will be dance lessons at the beginning (thank you **Becky Winnick** of the Woolly Bears!)

Sunday, February 12 is – unofficially – Alasdair and Natalie Day in Vancouver!

Alasdair Fraser has earned his reputation as one of Scotland's very finest fiddle players the hard way, playing for dances, holding workshops and fiddle camps, and releasing album after album of superb arrangements of Scottish fiddle music.

Inspired by the music of his Highland homeland – and the living museum of Scots culture in Cape Breton – he absorbed the sounds and rhythms of the “auld” ways of playing that were brought to the new world by exiled Scots in the 18th Century.

There the music, language, stories and dances thrived, largely undisturbed by outside influences, until the late 20th Century.

Alasdair established the Valley of the Moon fiddle camp in Northern California over 30 years ago, and some of his “graduates” are now among the leading lights of Celtic music around the world.

With other camps in Scotland and Galicia as well, his inspirational teaching and playing are helping make Celtic music one of the most exciting and enjoyable musical experiences on the planet!

One of the Valley of the Moon graduates, California native **Natalie Haas**, has emerged as one of the finest cellists in Celtic music.

Now married to Quebec guitarist **Yann Falquet** and living in Montreal, she is an adopted Canadiane.

ROGUE FOLK CLUB



By
**STEVE
EDGE**



ALASDAIR Fraser and **Natalie Haas** will hold a day-long workshop, movie premiere and concert on **Sunday, February 12**.

She and Alasdair will hold a participatory workshop at 2 PM at St. James Hall.

This is not just for fiddlers and cellists. It's for all musicians on whatever your chosen instrument, and the emphasis is on ensemble playing.

If there are 20 participants fine. If there are over 100, even better!

The cost is \$30 for a two hour workshop, and if you purchase a concert ticket online, it's only \$15 for the afternoon! Pay at the door for the workshop. Doors open at 1 PM.

We then have a break for lunch (there is a great deal at the Italian Garden around the corner on Broadway. You get 25 percent off your food order when you show them a concert ticket) and there are plenty of other restaurants within a couple of blocks of the hall.

Then we reopen the doors at 5:30 PM for what will be only the second public showing anywhere – and the Canadian premiere – of the documentary *The Groove Is Not Trivial* – a movie about Alasdair, showcasing his music and his teaching.

It is a celebration of the pioneering work he has done to cure Scots the world over of “the Celtic cringe” factor which dissuaded Scots from exploring their traditions back in the Sixties.

It's a film as much about Scottish identity and culture as it is about music, but above all, it's a wonderful insight into the man and his passion for this music.

Alasdair has revived the traditional fiddle/cello combo that was so prevalent in the 17th and 18th Centuries, and he firmly believes that one of Scottish music's most important features is “the groove.”

Maybe Scotland was the first home of funk? Find out on Sunday!

The evening will then feature Alasdair and Natalie in a full-length concert, starting 8 PM.

The movie is free with a concert ticket, and we will be making popcorn in the bar!

The next day is Family Day in B.C., and that evening there will be a concert of gypsy jazz with Argentine guitar sensation **Gonzalo Bergara** and his

amazing quartet, which features the lovely **Leah Zeger** on fiddle and sultry vocals.

This will be only their second visit to Vancouver (they played The Rogue in 2015) and they have a great new CD, *ClaroScuro*.

Later that week Margaret and I are off to Kansas City for the annual **Folk Alliance Conference**. It will be my 26th conference of the 29 that have taken place so far.

It is one of the cornerstones of my musical year, and many of the artists we present at The Rogue were – and continue to be – first encountered at Folk Alliance.

While we're away The Rogue will present a concert with popular Nova Scotia songwriter **Old Man Luedicke** (**Friday, February 17** at St. James Hall.)

The next Rogue concert after that will be the CD launch of *Strong Bow*, by the brilliant young White Rock fiddler/composer/teacher **Kierah**.

She will be accompanied by **Adrian Dolan** (The Bills) and **Adam Dobres** (Ruth Moody Band), who played on – and produced – the new CD.

Kierah has written hundreds of tunes and is one of the highest achievers ever to graduate from the Royal Conservatory of Music.

While acknowledging **Martin Hayes** as one of her biggest inspirations – and that is certainly evident in her performances – she is able to absorb contemporary popular music influences into her work, and yet still display a commitment to honouring the traditional base of her muse in Celtic fiddle tunes.

Furthermore, the tunes she has composed sound and feel as timeless as the traditional tunes she incorporates into her considerable repertoire.

Her third CD, *Stonemason's Daughter*, won her a Canadian Folk Music Award in 2013. *Strong Bow* promises to be an even greater leap forward in the career of this exceptional young musician.

There's another great evening of gypsy jazz on March 9 when Quebec's **Christine Tassan et Les Imposteures** return to The Rogue for the fourth time.

Their newest CD explores their belief in the common ground between two distinctly creative French musical luminaries – Quebec poet **Felix Leclerc** and manouche guitarist **Django Reinhardt** (even though the two may never have actually met!).

Tassan and co. feel there is a natural connection between the poet and the jazz guitarist: one is inspired by the gypsy universe and the music of the other evokes freedom, travel and wide open spaces.

What if these two had made music together?

The idea was sufficiently tempting for the band to construct *Entre Felix et Django* – an entire album of tunes and songs, weaving the music of both men into a uniquely feminine, and exhilaratingly swing-infused gypsy jazz record, with which they are touring extensively across B.C. for the first time.

[Continued next page...]

Rogue Folk Club
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Friday, FEBRUARY 10 Joel Savoy, Jesse Lege & Foghorns Cajun Country Revival	Monday, FEBRUARY 13 Hot Argentine gypsy jazz combo Gonzalo Bergara
Sunday, FEBRUARY 12 Scots fiddle / cello: Concert at 8, Workshop at 2pm, Movie at 6pm!	Friday, FEBRUARY 17 Popular Nova Scotia songsmith Old Man Luedicke
 Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas	Friday, MARCH 3 BC fiddler launches groundbreaking CD (w/ Dolan & Dobres) Kierah
St. James Hall (3214 West 10th Ave.) Tickets & Info (604) 736-3022	Sunday, MARCH 12 Irish accordion diva with trio Sharon Shannon! and many more to be announced!

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SHARON SHANNON is one of Ireland's best known and successful musicians. Her album, *Sharon Shannon*, is one of the biggest selling recordings of Irish traditional music of all time.

[...Continued from page 4]

On Sunday, March 12 the extraordinary Irish accordionist Sharon Shannon returns with her amazing trio, for an event which once again sees The Rogue team up with Celticfest Vancouver to present the show at St. James Hall.

In June 2015 we attended the Doolin Folk Festival in Co. Clare and I managed a quick chat with Sharon after her brilliant set.

She pleaded with me to bring her back to Vancouver, where she hadn't played for over 15 years.

We duly managed this last March, and she – and the sold out audience – had such a marvellous time that she once again insisted on coming back! Hooray for all of us, I say!

We have a March 17 show with a difference this year, featuring Welsh songwriter Martyn Joseph.

We'll probably add some Irish music to the evening, but no green beer and no

plastic hats!

For all Rogue Folk concert information visit www.roguefolk.bc.ca.

Speaking of Celticfest Vancouver, it will have a bit of a different feel this year.

Escalating traffic control and policing costs have forced the abandonment of the St. Patrick's Day parade this year.

Long a signature feature of the event, this colourful spectacle will be missed, but you have to see the sense in concentrating the event – and the costs – into a more focused (and mostly sheltered) location: Robson Square.

There will be multiple stages, and a beer garden where the skating rink is currently housed.

We await more details of the event, but note that there will still be displays of piping and dancing, live music on stage, workshops, and doubtless there will be sessions and whiskey tastings and Irish wolfhounds and shortbreads and plenty of creamy, dark beverages will be consumed amidst the merriment!

Visit www.celticfestvancouver.com for more details.

Looking ahead, you won't want to miss the return of Galician piper Carlos Núñez to The Vogue on April 7.

Finally, here are a couple of CDs you might want to track down: *Big Machine* by Eliza Carthy & The Wayward Band (Topic Records) was released last Friday, February 3.

The iTunes download offers two choices, a regular CD, or the deluxe edition which boasts seven extra tracks for a mere \$2 more.

We saw this band at the Tonder Festival in Denmark in August and were blown away by their dynamism and musical dexterity. This CD is simply stunning! English trad music with powerful fiddles and horns – and a rather vampishly sexy swagger!

You may have seen Barrule, from the Isle Of Man, in October.

The fiddler (Tomas Callister) and bouzouki man (Adam Rhodes) are part of a new quintet called Imar, whose debut CD, *Afterlight*, has just been released.

The band also features Scots concertina wizard Mohsin Amini (of Talisk), Irish piper Ryan Murphy, and English bodhranista Adam Brown.

This is fiercely inventive and exciting new Celtic music!

Oh yes, I almost forgot to mention Cassie & Maggie, from Nova Scotia, whose new CD, *The Willow Collection*, is a wonderful blend of songs and fiddle tunes linked by a common theme of willow trees, lost love, and other tales of woe.

Celtic catharsis anyone? These girls serve it up on the finest Wedgwood plates!

You can hear all these fine musicians – and heaps more besides – on my radio show, *The Saturday Edge On Folk*, every Saturday from 8 AM to noon on CiTR FM 101.9 and www.citr.ca.

CORRECTION

In the combined December/January issue of *The Celtic Connection*, the promotion for Newfoundland Screech from December 5, 2016 – January 1, 2017, at LTO \$2.50 off per bottle was incorrect and should have read LTO \$2.40. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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Galician superstar Carlos Núñez holds magnetic universal appeal

PREPARE to be moved. The Galician musical superstar, who masterfully fuses Spanish fire and Celtic energy, is making a much-anticipated return to the Canadian west coast for the first time since his Vancouver debut in 2014.

The platinum-selling and Grammy-winning sensation Carlos Núñez and his band showcase his wild energy and musical virtuosity on the Galician bagpipes – and beyond – in Victoria's historic McPherson Playhouse on Thursday, April 6, and at the newly renovated Vogue Theatre in Vancouver on Friday, April 7.

After a hiatus while their director completed her MBA, Celtic Performing Arts – the producers of CeltFest Vancouver Island – is excited to announce they are again bringing some of the world's greatest acts in the Celtic world to British Columbia, especially Carlos Núñez.

"I know of no entertainer who is more versatile and inspirational," says producer Carolyn Phillips-Cusson who has worked with and watched Carlos perform from Victoria to Cape Breton since 2008.

"From baroque to rock music – whether to a demure symphony audience, or a crowd of raucous folkies – no one can sit still...he's a magnet!," alluding to his charisma onstage and off.

According to her and her husband, René Cusson, who have both performed with Núñez, that magnetism extends to those he works with.



CARLOS NÚÑEZ who has collaborated with some of the finest musicians, including The Chieftains, Ry Cooder, Compay Segundo and Mike Scott of the Waterboys, fuses Spanish fire with Celtic energy.

"Guest performers are tickled to share the stage with Carlos and we are equally tickled to present him – magic always happens!"

Collaborations are Núñez's "modus operandi," one that he explains comes from the spirit of traditional music where the emphasis is not on author of the music, but the "collective creation."

He continues the collaborative tradition in the same spirit of The Chieftains, whom he played with in his youth and early adulthood. Other famous co-collaborators have included Ry Cooder, Compay Segundo and Mike Scott of the Waterboys.

His road to international appeal began humbly and developed in the unique culture where Carlos Núñez was raised in Spain's northwest.

"Like every schoolboy, I played the recorder, which is a flute. And then, because I grew up in Galicia, which is the Scotland or the Ireland of Spain, the next natural step was the pipes, the gaita," he explains.

The gaita is thought to pre-date the

Scottish bagpipes and Ireland's uilleann pipes. Among aficionados, Núñez is as renowned for his prowess on the gaita as Jack White is for his guitar work.

He's also a master of the recorder, the pennywhistle, the ocarina, assorted pipes, a Breton oboe called the 'bombarde,' Breton bagpipes, the Jew's harp, the tin whistle and the flute.

Consistent with the spirit of collaboration Núñez espouses, he sees the various forms of Celtic music as a brotherhood that brings people together beyond languages and borders.

His tunes are inspired by those of the ancient Celts who occupied Galicia 2,500 years ago as well as the Celtic traditions of Brittany, Scotland, and Ireland. His work is also influenced by other countries where Galicians have settled, including Cuba and Brazil.

At the same time, Carlos Núñez's inspired musical interpretations have clearly been influenced by modern rock masters, earning him the reputation of a rock star himself.

The *Miami Herald* dubbed Núñez "the Jimi Hendrix of the bagpipe." The UK's *Guardian* newspaper described his genius as "pipe music as if played by a Coltrane or a Hendrix."

Guests on the 2017 North American tour include María Berasarte, a well-known Spanish singer from the Basque country with Galician heritage.

Also, Itsaso Elizagoien, a brilliant young Basque accordion player, and a young Galician fiddler Carmen Gallego, who will be playing a 12th Century fiddle and tunes of that era that will exhibit its common roots with more modern Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, Appalachian, Bluegrass, and Country fiddling.

Also featured will be a corps of B.C. pipers under the direction of Pipe Major René Cusson, and a dynamic dance troupe of Highland, Step and Flamenco dancers, under the direction of Carolyn Phillips-Cusson – further bringing together the Celtic community to share the traditions in the manner for which CeltFest has been known for over 16 years.

Tickets available on line and by phone at www.rmts.bc.ca or 1-888-717-6121 (Victoria show), and at www.vogue theatre.com to 1-888-732-1682 (Vancouver show). In-person outlets for the Vancouver show at The British Butcher Shoppe on the North Shore (both locations), Tapestry Music on West Broadway, and Tartantown in Coquitlam. Info. at www.celtfest.ca or 1-866-301-2358 (CELT).

SUROÏT from Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Quebec, share a fierce pride in their Acadian heritage and tradition.



FESTIVAL DU BOIS

Renowned Acadian band Suroît will be festival headliner

COQUITLAM – A warm breeze is forecast to heat up the big tents at the 28th annual Festival du Bois, slated for Maillardville/Coquitlam's Mackin Park from March 3 to 5. The renowned Acadian band Suroît will be there!

It was 40 years ago, in 1977, that a group of musical friends living on the Îles-de-la-Madeleine (the Magdalen Islands) in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, got together to form a band.

A number of Acadian families had settled on those islands in 1755 after the British deported them from their homes in the Maritimes – and even through the passage of time, most of the islanders (or "Madelinots") shared a fierce pride in their Acadian heritage.

The name the musicians chose for their group represented a nod to that heritage: "suroît" is a French sailor's word for a southwest wind that brings fine weather.

And the music of Suroît was and is strongly rooted in the Acadian culture and tradition they grew up with.

But it's also true that, in many ways, the secret of the band's longevity and broad appeal lies partly in their unique ability to blend those Acadian musical traditions with other influences – including Cajun, Celtic and bluegrass music – along with even more modern and worldly sounds.

The rage of a storm at sea and the calm of a sunset over a beach on the Mad Islands: you'll find both, despite their contrasts, in Suroît's music, a sound that evokes the sea, fishing, the Acadian reality – and something more.

From the very beginning of their career, Suroît's founding members had a yearn-

ing to take their music on the road.

Even today, they spend much of the year on tour. Founder Alcide Painchaud, a pianist and accordion player who passed away in 2002, attributed this restless spirit to the exile culture from which they came.

Because the land of Acadia no longer exists, the band members are driven to search for it in the hearts and minds of others who come from the same roots, wherever they may be. "We're on a pilgrimage," he once said.

In their 40 years, Suroît has had numerous members, but the group's music continues to reflect their vibrant Acadian identity while encompassing both traditional and contemporary influences.

A fiddle, an electric guitar, mandolin, the rhythm of feet and bones – all contribute to bringing a breath of freshness to their traditionally-inspired music.

They remain one of Canada's most popular and successful francophone musical acts, with a loyal following in both Europe and North America.

Outstanding in live performance, technically brilliant, a joy to see and hear – their continued success also has much to do with the universal themes they invoke, such as the search for roots and community.

Other music artists performing at Festival du Bois include: Mélisande, Nicolas Pellerin et les Grands Hurlleurs, Podorythmie, Zal Sissokho and Buntalo, Jeremiah McLane, and Jocelyn Pettit, among others.

Tickets and full festival information can be found online at www.festivaldubois.ca.



TOP 10 CELTIC HITS FOR FEBRUARY

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 - *Upcetera* on NIAG.
2. *Antwerp* by The Breath - *Carry Your Kin* on Real World.
3. *Seileach* by Cassie & Maggie - *The Willow Collection* on Independent.
4. *An Danna Elegua* by Salsa Celtica - *The Tall Islands* on Discos Leon.
5. *Shannon* by The Narrowback - TBA on Independent.
6. *Anian* by 9Bach - *Anian* on Real World.
7. *Talons Trip to Thompson Island* by The Nordic Fiddlers Bloc - *Deliversance* on Ffuk.no.
8. *England* by The Young Folk - *Tyf Hoo Eul Nk G* on Independent.
9. *After The Storm* by Sketch - *Highland Times* on Skye Music.
10. *The Road to Gleannian* by Doolin' - *Doolin'* on Compass.

Celt In A Twist Pick Of The Month:
Cassie & Maggie - *The Willow Collection*
(Independent)

SFU Public Lecture: 'From Riot to Resistance: The Origins of the Fenians in Canada'

THE FINAL free public talk in the Simon Fraser University Irish lecture series this academic year will be Dr. David Wilson who will present "From Riot to Resistance: The Origins of the Fenians in Canada."

Dr. Wilson is a Professor of History with the University of Toronto and a renowned expert on the Fenian underground in Canada.

He specializes in modern Irish history and the Irish diaspora in North America, with particular research interests in state security and civil liberty, revolutionary movements, and religion and nationalism.

He is the author of an award-winning biography in two volumes of *Thomas D'Arcy McGee, the Young Ireland revolutionary* who turned into a staunch constitutional Canadian nationalist and drew the ire of local Fenians.

On March 17, 1858, the Irish revolutionaries in Dublin founded what has become known as the Fenian Brotherhood, committed to the establishment of and independent Irish republic. On the same day in Toronto, a riot between Irish Catholics and Protestants triggered a series of events that produced a Fenian underground in Canada – with revolutionary aftershocks in Ireland itself.

The lecture is presented by the SFU Department of history on Thursday, March 9, 2017, at 7 PM at the Harbour Centre, Fletcher Challenge Theatre, Room 1900, 515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C.

U2's 2017 Joshua Tree tour to hit Vancouver, Toronto

U2 will kick off its North American tour in Vancouver this spring, but it might be a case of déjà vu for long-time fans of the band.

The Irish super-band will play the entirety of its classic 1987 album, *The Joshua Tree*, when the tour kicks off at BC Place in May, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its release. The band first played BC Place in 1987 during the original Joshua Tree tour.

"It seems like we have come full circle from when *The Joshua Tree* songs were originally written, with global upheaval, extreme right wing politics and some fundamental human rights at risk," said The Edge on the band's website.

"To celebrate the album – as these songs seem so relevant and prescient of these times too – we decided to do these shows, it feels right for now. We're looking forward to it."

Powered by singles *With or Without You*, *Where The Streets Have No Name* and *I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For*, *The Joshua Tree* became the band's first chart-topping



THE band will kick off its 2017 North American tour in Vancouver on Friday, May 12.

album in Canada and the U.S. and went on to sell 25 million copies worldwide.

"Recently I listened back to *The Joshua Tree* for the first time in nearly 30 years," said Bono.

"It's quite an opera. A lot of emotions which feel strangely current – love, loss, broken dreams, seeking oblivion, polarisation."

The North American leg of the tour kicks off on May 12 in Vancouver. The only other Canadian show will be at the Rogers Centre in Toronto on June 23.

The band has a bit of history in Van-

cover, and has played the West Coast city at least 16 times since 1981.

When the band opened its 2015 North American tour in Vancouver, band members first staged rehearsals at the Pacific Coliseum.

But the show made headlines around the world when guitarist The Edge fell off the stage on opening night.

And in 2011, frontman Bono made headlines when he was hitchhiking in West Vancouver after getting caught in the rain and was picked up by Edmonton Oilers centre Gilbert Brule.



After 28 Years Fred & Gary are heading out of the Sunset. We closed January 20th, 2017 and would like to thank the Irish community for it's great support over the years. Slainte' & Cheers to 28 Years! Still doing business at Brewery Creek Liquor Store! info@brewerycreek.shawbiz.ca

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THOUSANDS of people flocked to Hull to celebrate it becoming the UK's second City of Culture. The 'In With A Bang' inaugural event began at 8:17 PM (to mark the start of 2017) with a film about Hull.

Spectacular launch for Hull the 2017 UK City of Culture

THOUSANDS of people flocked to Hull on January 1 to celebrate it becoming the UK's second City of Culture and watch the dramatic opening installation and spectacular fireworks.

More than 25,000 people packed on to the city's marina and lined the bank of the River Humber as the 'In With A Bang' programme began at 8:17 PM with a film about Hull – the start time celebrating the year 2017.

The display – larger than the New Year's Eve event in London – featured fireworks set off from barges on the river and was accompanied by music and video.

Crowds waited for several hours beforehand in near-freezing temperatures amid a party atmosphere with music and entertainment.

Throughout Sunday, thousands flocked to the city centre to visit 'Made In Hull' – a city-wide, week-long, free installation by artists, telling the story of Hull and its people over the last 70 years.

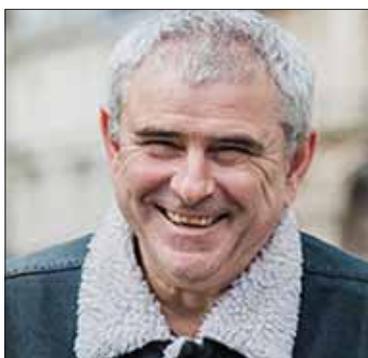
Sean McAllister, a documentary filmmaker from Hull, is the creative director of Hull's inaugural City of Culture event. He said the 'Made In Hull' event would show people that the city had hidden culture.

The crowd in the city centre square chanted a countdown before a projection of a propeller was beamed on to the Ferens Art Gallery building to begin the event and a film of Hull's history.

The crowd then fell silent as they watched Hull's history – from pilot Amy Johnson's solo flight to Australia in 1930 to the present day – projected around the square.

The film, by Zsolt Balogh and titled *We Are Hull*, also incorporated the Second World War, the city's footballing history, its maritime heritage and the future Siemens offshore wind manufacturing plant.

The audience cheered as the phrase 'We Are Hull' scrolled repeatedly across the surrounding buildings at the film's finale.



DOCUMENTARY filmmaker Sean McAllister is the creative director of the inaugural event.

The city was selected in 2013 amid some surprise, from a shortlist which included Dundee, Leicester and Swansea Bay.

Some people have been skeptical about Hull's new status and took to Twitter to share their thoughts.

A tweeter called Joe joked, "If Hull can be the UK City of Culture this year then anything is possible."

On a more serious note another tweeter said they had witnessed verbal abuse in Hull on a regular basis and wondered if the city deserved its new status.

Others were incredulous and used laughing-face emojis to express their bemusement at Hull's prestigious new label.

Organisers of Hull 2017 and local politicians have explicitly linked the cultural plans for the year with the economic transformation of the city, symbolised by the £300 million investment by German tech firm Siemens in an offshore wind manufacturing plant at Alexandra Dock.

Council leader Stephen Brady has said more than £1 billion of investment has flowed into the city since the UK City of Culture announcement, including £100 million of capital investment in the cultural and visitor infrastructure.

Hull is the second city to be given UK City of Culture status, following Derry-Londonderry in 2013.

More than 1.6 million Britons protest Trump state visit

LONDON – The British parliament will hold a debate on calls to cancel Donald Trump's state visit, due to be hosted by the Queen this year, after 1.6 million people signed a petition in support of scrapping or downgrading the invitation.

The debate will be held in Westminster Hall on February 20 and will also consider a rival petition in support of the U.S. president's visit, which has 114,000 signatures.

The petition committee announced the debate after protests around the country over Trump's controversial executive order banning people from seven Muslim-majority countries from travelling to the U.S. and suspending the nation's refugee programme.

The petition states: "Donald Trump should be allowed to enter the UK in his capacity as head of the U.S. Government, but he should not be invited to make an official state visit because it would cause embarrassment to Her Majesty the Queen.

"Donald Trump's well-documented misogyny and vulgarity disqualifies him from being received by Her Majesty the Queen or the Prince of Wales. Therefore during the term of his presidency Donald Trump should not be invited to the United Kingdom for an official state visit."

The rival petition in support of Trump's visit says: "Donald Trump should be invited to make an official state visit because he is the leader of a free world and [the] UK is a country that supports free speech and does not believe that people that appose [sic] our point of view should be gagged."

MPs have previously debated the idea of banning Trump from the UK after he called during the presidential race for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on".

The invitation to make a state visit, which will involve lavish displays of royal pageantry and a banquet hosted by the monarch, was conveyed by Prime Minister Theresa May when she visited Trump in Washington last month.



THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S decision to invite President Donald Trump for a state visit has led to massive protests and involved Queen Elizabeth II in the passionate debate over Trump's travel ban.



BRITISH PM Theresa May and U.S. President Donald Trump walk along the Colonnade at the White House in Washington, DC on January 27, 2017.

But May came under pressure to cancel the visit after Trump issued an executive order barring Syrian refugees from the United States and suspending travel from seven Muslim-majority countries, sparking protests at home and abroad.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson told parliament Trump's approach on immigration was not one the British Government would take, calling the executive order highly controversial, divisive and

discriminatory, but he defended the state visit.

"It is totally right that the incoming president of our closest and most important ally should be accorded the honour of a state visit, and that is supported by this government" he said.

But a growing list of politicians also called for the visit to be cancelled, including lawmakers from the ruling Conservative Party, opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn and London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who is a Muslim.

"We must now rescind the offer of a full state visit for President Trump – until this ban is lifted. I don't believe the people of London will support rolling out the red carpet until this happens," Khan wrote in the *Evening Standard* newspaper.

May's Downing Street office signalled that cancelling the visit was not on the cards.

"To be clear, the prime minister extended an invitation on behalf of the Queen – and she was very happy to do so. The USA is one of this country's closest allies, and we look forward to hosting the President later this year," Downing Street said.

The petition against the visit was the second most popular ever on the parliamentary website, after one calling for a second referendum on membership of the European Union drew more than four million signatures last year.

The EU could force Britain to pay up to 60 billion euro to leave

LONDON – Britain could be forced to pay up to 60 billion euro (£52 billion) in unpaid budget commitments, pension liabilities, loan guarantees and spending on UK-based projects as part of Brexit negotiations, the *Financial Times* reports.

Senior EU negotiators for talks with Britain said once Article 50 is triggered they will begin the official process of Britain leaving the 28-nation bloc.

It looks pretty bad for Britain.

Michel Barnier, one of the European Commission's chief Brexit negotiators, wants to go after Britain on finances, forcing it to plug the financial gap created by Britain leaving the EU.

The total bill is estimated to be between 40 billion euro (£34 billion) and 60 billion euro (£52 billion).

European negotiators say they are also unwilling to discuss transition arrangement or trade deals until a divorce settlement is reached, by mid-2018 at the latest.

If Article 50 is triggered early next year, as Theresa May has signalled, this would leave Britain with just six months to negotiate a transition and trade deal.

A transition deal, which financial firms based in London are lobbying heavily for, could also involve Britain continuing to pay full EU budget contributions for a number of years.

This would lessen the immediate sting of a bill up to 60 billion euro, with payments spread over a few years, but would anger many who voted for Brexit.

The only suggestion that the UK may catch a break is a quote from an unnamed "high-level participant" in the talks, who told the *Financial Times*, "This is all very dangerous."

This suggests that at least some people in the EU corner are in favour of watering down negotiating demands in a bid to reach an amicable Brexit.

The report suggests a relatively clear negotiating position from the EU.

It comes on the same day as a leaked memo suggests that the British government's Brexit plan is in chaos.

The memo says that divisions within the cabinet have led to over 500 different plans developed across different government departments.

It says Whitehall may have to hire as many as 30,000 extra civil servants to deal with the project.

Brexit: UK moves closer to leaving EU as majority of MPs back Article 50

LONDON – Brexit is edging closer following an overwhelming House of Commons vote in favour of legislation to pave the way for Theresa May to trigger the formal process of leaving the EU.

The European Union (Notification Of Withdrawal) Bill will allow the prime minister to invoke Article 50 of the EU treaties and was backed by 498 MPs to 114, a majority of 384, at second reading in the House of Commons, its first stage on February 1.

The eight DUP MPs and two Ulster Unionists backed the Bill, while the SDLP's three MPs and Lady Sylvia Hermon voted against it.

But it split the Labour Party as Jeremy Corbyn was unable to contain a revolt by 47 MPs, including two shadow cabinet ministers, who defied his orders to vote against the Bill.

Shadow environment secretary and York Central MP Rachael Maskell and shadow equalities minister and Brent Central MP Dawn Butler both defied a three-line whip so they could vote in line with their heavily Remain-backing constituencies.

A total of 10 junior shadow ministers and three whips, who are supposed to enforce party discipline, also voted against triggering Article 50. A majority of Labour MPs, 167, backed the Bill, while 15 did not vote.

Corbyn will decide later on how to respond to the rebellious junior front-benchers after making it clear that shadow cabinet members would have

to resign if they defied the whip.

Following a marathon 17 hours of debate over two days, MPs will now await the publication of the government's promised white paper setting out its strategy for withdrawal from the EU.

The plans are expected to lay out details of the clean break with the EU that the PM wants, including leaving the EU single market, overhauling membership of the customs union, and controlling migration, with a period of transitional arrangements to help businesses adjust.

"The battle's only just started," said former Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke, the one Conservative who said he'd oppose the bill.

"We've been in a very unreal, silly world since the rather startling result of the referendum. We're on a voyage of discovery now with a sketchy outline of the negotiating position."

Under Theresa May's plan, Parliament will have to decide on a series of issues that will "completely divide" political friends and the wider country, former Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne told lawmakers before the vote in London.

Her government will have to grapple with controversies over setting migra-

tion limits, state support for farms and businesses and free trade policies, he said.

"I will be in those fights in the couple of years ahead," Osborne, who campaigned to stay in the EU, told lawmakers.

May didn't want to give Parliament a say on triggering Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon treaty, formally launching Britain on the path out of the EU. But she lost a court case last month and was forced to seek approval from lawmakers.

Osborne and other senior Conservatives expressed reservations about May's trajectory toward a hard Brexit, an arrangement that would see complete control of immigration, laws and budget even if it means giving up membership of the single market and customs union.

They will seek to use the so-called white paper as a reason to re-write May's bill when it enters the next stage of detailed parliamentary scrutiny.

The bill will eventually get to the unelected upper house. The Tory Government has no majority in the 805-member Lords, in which the anti-Brexit Liberal Democrats have more than 100 lawmakers.

Former Labour minister Peter Hain, now a member of the House of Lords, tweeted that "I and others will vote against bill" when it goes to the upper chamber later this month "to block May's right-wing Brexit nightmare for Britain."

UK's ambassador to the EU: Scathing resignation letter leaked

LONDON – Sir Tim Barrow has been appointed as Britain's new ambassador to the European Union after the dramatic resignation of former envoy Sir Ivan Rogers.

Early January, in a leaked 1,400-word resignation letter to his staff, Rogers launched a thinly-veiled attack on the "muddled thinking" in Theresa May's Conservative Government.

Government sources said Rogers had "jumped before he was pushed" and that Number 10 believed his negative view of Brexit meant that he could not lead the negotiations after the prime minister triggers Article 50.

Sir Ivan, who had sparked criticism from some MPs by warning ministers a UK-EU trade agreement might take 10 years to finalise, was due to leave his post in October.

His early departure was welcomed by Brexit campaigners while pro-EU politicians said it was a blow to the government's negotiations.

In his note, Sir Ivan said, "I hope you will continue to challenge ill-founded arguments and muddled thinking and that you will never be afraid to speak the truth to those in power."

On the UK's Brexit negotiations with the EU, which are due to begin by the end of March, he said "serious multi-lateral negotiating experience is in short



SIR IVAN Rogers (L) resigned last month as Britain's ambassador to the EU. He has been replaced by Sir Tim Barrow (R).

supply in Whitehall," adding this was not the case in the European Commission or in the European Council.

The nature of the UK's trading relationship with the EU has been much debated ahead of the formal talks.

Sir Ivan said that "contrary to the beliefs of some, free trade does not just happen when it is not thwarted by authorities," adding that market access would depend on the terms of the deals struck.

The diplomat also made clear that the timing of his resignation was designed to avoid disruption by leaving later this year when his term of office was expected to expire.

Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron said Prime Minister Theresa May was "marching ahead without a plan or even a clue.



Keith Jack

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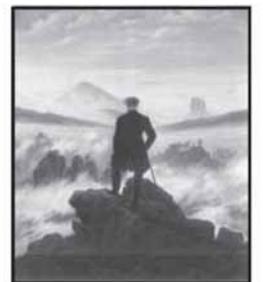
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Captain Ieuan Lampshire-Jones: 'On the Ship of Life, He Stood His Watch Well'

VANCOUVER – It was with profound sadness that members of the Vancouver Welsh Society learned at the end of December of the passing of long-time member Captain Ieuan Lampshire-Jones.

The captain was respected and admired for his many years of service as a highly esteemed merchant navy officer and marine surveyor.

His dedication to the Vancouver Welsh Society was evident right up to the last months of his life with his participation in the monthly bilingual church services at the Cambrian Hall.

Ieuan Lampshire-Jones was born in 1923 in Aberarth, a small coastal village on the Ceredigion coast. The village has a long maritime history and up to the end of the nineteenth century was an important port with a thriving ship-building industry.

Aberarth mariners sailed to all parts of the world and Ieuan himself came from a long line of seafarers. On his 80th birthday, he wrote a memoir on his early years in Aberarth, in which he said, "I am the last Master Mariner born and raised in the village."

The centre of Ieuan's life growing up in Aberarth was Bethel Chapel and its Sunday School, where music became a part of his life.

According to the diaries he kept on his many voyages, his skill as a pianist served him well on many occasions and he frequently played piano or organ accompaniments at events in the Cambrian Hall.

Given his maritime background, it is no wonder that Ieuan went to sea, joining his first ship in Avonmouth in 1939.

A November, 2012 Veteran Profile of Ieuan in the magazine *BC Shipping News* carried the headline: "Seafarer or Surveyor, Captain Jones Outshines Them All."

The captain took part in the Second World War as a merchant seaman, winning six campaign medals, including the Burma Invasion Star, the North African Invasion Star and the Atlantic Star with clasp, denoting his contribution to the D-Day landing at Juno Beach. He was also a recipient of the 1939-1945 Second World War Civilian Medal.

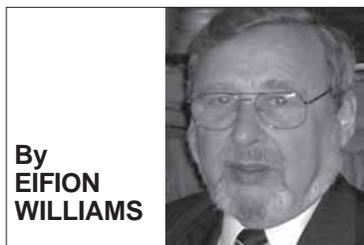
After the war, Ieuan attended the Department of Marine Studies at the University of Wales, the Southshields Marine and Technical College and the City of London Polytechnic School of Navigation.

He obtained his Master's certificate in 1950 and served on merchant ships to worldwide destinations throughout the 1950s and 1960s, frequently accompanied by his wife Philomena, whom he married in 1950.

When he left the sea in 1969 Ieuan was the Senior Captain for one of the largest shipping companies in the world, World Wide Shipping out of Hong Kong.

That same year he and his family immigrated to North Vancouver and Ieuan took up a position in Vancouver opening up a field office for SGS Supervision Services.

As a senior principal and manager for Gen-testing Laboratories, Ieuan built a



By
EIFION
WILLIAMS



CAPTAIN IEUAN
LAMPSHIRE-JONES

formidable reputation for his expertise in marine surveying, covering a territory that included the entire Pacific Northwest from Northern California to Greenland.

His expertise in bulk cargo loading led to his becoming well-known in the shipping world and his advice was sought by many companies and countries throughout the world.

In May 2013, the Association of Marine Surveyors of BC held an awards ceremony and dinner in honour of Ieuan, who was one of the founders of the association in 1968.

His cheerful personality and sense of humour undoubtedly contributed to the captain's popularity with fellow mariners as it did with members of the Welsh Society. He served the Society in many capacities, including terms as president and vice-president.

For many years he played an active role in Society activities, including the monthly bilingual church services and Welsh-speaking sessions.

It was at the monthly church services that three major influences in Ieuan's life became apparent – his faith, his music and his mother tongue – all nurtured those many years before in the village of Aberarth and Bethel Chapel.

In November, 2015, the Welsh Society dedicated its Sunday service to the captain, in which members thanked him for all he had contributed to the Society and to people in so many parts of the world who had benefited from his lifetime of service.

The Vancouver Welsh Society extends its profound sympathy to Ieuan's wife Philomena, to his three daughters, Christine, Susan and Jill, grandchildren Nicholas, Adam, Nina and Kaleigh and great-grandchildren Charity and Nicola.

A celebration of life for Captain Ieuan Lampshire-Jones was held on January 14 at Boal Chapel and Memorial Gardens, North Vancouver, with the Rev. Robin Jacobson officiating.

On the ship of life, he stood his watch well.

Neville Thomas: Raconteur, community leader, and friend to many

By EIFION WILLIAMS

VANCOUVER – Retired teacher Neville Thomas, who passed away on January 4, will be remembered by Vancouver Welsh Society members as someone who probably did more than anyone to raise awareness of the Welsh community in the B.C. Lower Mainland.

With his wide circle of friends and involvement in several other community organizations, Neville represented the face of the Welsh Society to the public.

Although socially and politically active as a proud Canadian, he never forgot the rich culture he inherited from his early days in Wales.

Neville gathered a multitude of friends during his lifetime, from his boyhood in Wales to his years in retirement. His circle of friends was not confined to British Columbia but extended to the UK, the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

John Neville Rees Thomas was born in 1939 on a farm near the Welsh village of Felindre, a small farming community near Swansea.

He came from a Welsh-speaking family steeped in a traditional Welsh chapel and Sunday school environment.

He was educated at Pontardawe Grammar School and the University of Wales, Swansea, where he graduated in 1961 with a B.Sc degree in Mathematics and Geology.

Following training as a teacher, Neville took up a position at a school in London's East End, followed by a year at the prestigious London Oratory School.

In 1965 he emigrated to Canada, where his first teaching post was in the British Columbia coastal community of Ocean Falls.

After leaving Ocean Falls, Neville spent several months teaching in Australia and New Zealand before returning first to the UK and then, in 1968, returning once more to Canada, taking a teaching position in the interior community of Quesnel.

In 1969 he moved to Maple Ridge and taught first at Maple Ridge Secondary and then at Pitt Meadows Secondary, where he was a highly-respected mathematics teacher until his retirement in 1998.

In 1975, Neville married his beloved Kathy, a fellow teacher in the Maple Ridge district, who shared his interests and supported him in his various endeavours. Kathy has since herself become an active and valuable member of the Vancouver Welsh Society.

Neville became a member of the Welsh Society in 1980 and continued to make valuable contributions to the Society for the rest of his life.

He served on the Society's executive in several capacities, including a term as vice-president. As membership secretary in the 1980s, he enrolled more members than anyone else before or since.

Many will also remember Neville as a jovial master of ceremonies and raconteur at popular Society events in the Cambrian Hall.



NEVILLE THOMAS

In the mid-1980s, as the Welsh Society's building committee chair, Neville was responsible for the renovation of the upstairs hall, including building a stage and constructing new staircases.

He was also a frequent contributor to the monthly bilingual religious services at the Cambrian Hall.

In 1985 the Welsh Society produced the first Vancouver performance of Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* at the Cambrian Hall.

In 1996 Neville, together with Allan Jones and Ted Langley, formed the Dylan Thomas Circle, which quickly attracted new members. Another performance of the popular play for voices was presented by the Circle in 2000, to much public acclaim.

Neville served the Dylan Thomas Circle in many capacities over the years, organizing events such as poetry readings, annual presentations of *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, and annual outings to interesting venues in the Lower Mainland.

Having lived in Swansea for several years, Neville was familiar with all the locations associated with Dylan's life and work.

He never lost his love for Swansea and rarely lost an opportunity to speak nostalgically of Dylan's "ugly, lovely town."

He was a strong supporter of Welsh rugby and made many friends in the Vancouver rugby world.

In 2002, following the death of Swansea-born Harry Secombe, Neville organized a presentation of sketches from the iconic 1950's radio show *The Goon Show*, which proved to be a huge success with many fellow British expats in the Vancouver area.

Following his retirement, Neville liked to meet in a pub or restaurant with as many friends as he could gather around him, the "lads" as he liked to call them.

At these gatherings, he would forcefully hold forth on solutions to all the world's problems, although his contributions were usually laced with much humour.

Neville was a well-rounded individual with a wide range of interests and, whenever possible, involved in efforts to improve society.

He was mindful of individual suffering and loyal to his many friends. He was also very aware of his Celtic background and frequently encouraged the involvement of other Vancouver Celtic groups in Welsh Society events at the Cambrian Hall.

Welsh Society members and friends of Neville extend their sincere condolences to Kathy and to Neville's family in the UK.

A Celebration of Life for Neville Thomas will be held at the Cambrian Hall, 215 East 5th Avenue in Vancouver on February 11 at 2 PM.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Neville's memory can be made to one or more of the following: Amnesty International, Vancouver Union Gospel Mission or the Vancouver Welsh Society.

Six Nations Opener: Scots score a late big win over Ireland

The Six Nations Championship is without doubt the world's greatest rugby tournament.

Each year the collective fans of six proud nations – England, France, Ireland, Italy, Scotland and Wales – share in the passion and excitement of this feast of rugby.

Some of the rivalries in this tournament date back more than 140 years, which simply adds to the sense of occasion.

The 2017 Six Nations Championship got underway in Edinburgh on February 4, where Scotland beat Ireland 27-22 in the opening match.

England then beat France 19-16 at Twickenham in 'Le Crunch'. Italy will take on Wales at Stadio Olimpico in Rome on February 5.

It was a remarkable comeback for Scotland at the Six Nations opener at Murrayfield. The Dark Blues blew the Irish away in the first half, taking an incredible 21-8 lead into the break, with Stuart Hogg crossing twice.

However 17 unanswered points soon had the Irish leading with tries from Iain Henderson and Paddy Jackson putting them 22-21 ahead.

The host team was trailing with just seven minutes left when Greig Laidlaw was the hero for Scotland after scoring two late penalties to top off a stunning Six Nations opener.

It was only the second time that Scotland have won their opening match in the Six Nations, the last occasion coming 11 years ago.

Canadian Inuit look to Wales for language preservation lessons

NUNAVUT – Jeela Palluq-Cloutier, executive director of the Nunavut Language Authority, and her 16 fellow Inuit travellers made a visit to Wales in December in order to try and learn how to save a dying language.

The representatives from Nunavut, Labrador, northern Quebec and the Northwest Territories were invited to Wales by Prince Charles.

Wales might seem like an odd detour on the journey to revive an Inuit language but the Welsh language survival story speaks volumes.

Welsh is believed to be around 4,000 years old, making it the oldest language in Britain but during the mid-1900s, it almost became extinct.

The language was rescued thanks to a concerted campaign over the past 25 years, which saw Welsh declared an official language and Welsh education made compulsory in public schools.

As a result, there are now Welsh road signs, radio and television stations. There is also a Welsh Language Commissioner, whose stated job description is to “promote and facilitate use of the Welsh language.”

More than half a million people in Wales (around 20 percent of the population) now speak Welsh. And the first minister of Wales recently introduced reforms aimed at doubling that number by the year 2050.

For a lesson in language preservation, the Inuit delegation visited Bangor University, the largest Welsh post-secondary institution, where linguistic experts are now teaming-up with software developers.

They’ve created a Welsh online dictionary app, which has been downloaded more than 70,000 times. They’ve also built a Welsh-speaking digital assistant computer, inspired by Apple’s Siri.

“If we didn’t provide the technology, we’d face digital extinction,” says Delyth Prys, the head of the university’s Language Technologies Unit.

“At work, in your leisure time, you live your life online. And if you don’t have your language online, then your language has had it.”

The visiting Inuit delegation hopes to create a similar digital dictionary, to help standardize and promote a unified Inuktitut language.

The Inuit language in Canada currently includes a dozen dialects and nine writing systems.

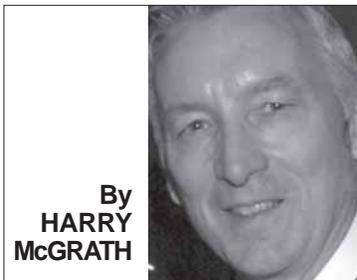
“If you see a word in one dialect, you could press a button (on the app) and find out how you say it on another dialect,” says Monica Ittusardjuat, Language Coordinator for the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami advocacy group. “It’s going to be the same writing system all across northern Canada.”

Their week-long visit to Wales also included stops at the Welsh Books Council, the National Library of Wales and the Welsh Joint Education Committee.

“I’m very grateful for this trip,” says Jeela Palluq-Cloutier, speaking in her native Inuktitut.

“For a chance to learn about the Welsh language, so it may help us with our own language, so we can pass it on to our children. It’s the language of our ancestors. We don’t want to let it go.”

Robert Burns, Trainspotting and Scotland’s Uncertain Future



By
HARRY
McGRATH

DINBURGH – The Burns season is not what it used to be now that I live in the poet’s homeland.

When I was still in Vancouver, my day could begin with an interview on the Fanny Kiefer Talk Show, segue into a lunchtime “Toast to the Lassies” in a care home and finish with an “Immortal Memory” at the Vancouver Club at night.

The season lasted the best part of a month as the numerous contending Burns Suppers tried to squeeze themselves into the preferred Friday or Saturday slots.

In Edinburgh, my Burns-associated activity is restricted to climbing through the window to pay my respects at the grave of Jean Lorimer who is buried in the graveyard ayont [beyond] the house.



THE ORIGINAL *Trainspotting* movie made stars of Ewan McGregor, Jonny Lee Miller, Robert Carlyle, and Ewen Bremner, and firmly cemented itself as a classic.

Jean – or “Chloris” as Burns called her – was the inspiration for the songs *Lassie wi the lint white locks*, *Whistle and I’ll come tae ye*, and 24 others.

The online Burns encyclopaedia is rather dismissive of Jean and the songs written to her.

“Whatever the state of her charms,” it says, “none [of the songs] is among Burns’ finest.”

Jean was the daughter of a wealthy merchant but married a ne’er-do-well and was living in relative poverty in South Edinburgh before she died.

My various attempts to raise her profile – including a previous column in *The Celtic Connection* – have met with little success.

The only other visitor I have seen at her grave is my cat and tangible evidence of previous visits is restricted to the inscription which reads: “The Chloris’ and Lassie wi’ the lint white locks’ of the poet Burns. Born 1771, Died 1831.”

It was placed there by the Ninety Burns Club of Edinburgh in 1901.

It wasn’t only poor Jean that lacked for attention this Burns season. The poet himself had to compete with the publicity generated by the *Trainspotting* sequel.

I remember the dramatic effect that the book and film had on North American notions of Scottish identity the first time around.

Before *Trainspotting*, media images of Scotland were dominated by kilts, whisky, haggis, adverts for cheap consumer goods and Groundskeeper Willie from *The Simpsons*. But the “Trainspotting effect” changed the game.

A review in the *Vancouver Sun* described it this way:

“I want to be Scottish. I want to be pasty-faced and in imminent danger of losing all my teeth. I want to eat deep fried mars bars. I want to be skint. I want to use anatomical terms to describe my fellow human beings.

“I want to ken things. I want to collect the giro. I want to have punched out veins and say I canna, I wisna and I willna. In other words I want to be hip....I imagine being Scottish as being a kind of foul-mouthed, drugged-out nihilist.”

Back in Scotland, opinion was split on whether this was the kind of image that the country should be presenting to the world.

Critic (and now close friend) Alan Taylor saw Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* as part of an “efflorescence” in Scottish writing.

Writer Alexander McCall Smith, on the other hand, criticised Welsh for dealing in Scottish miserablism.

I haven’t seen T2 *Trainspotting*, but plan to. I anticipate that nostalgia will be the new element added to the violence, drug-taking and black humour of the first film.

It could hardly be otherwise given that the actors and those who were young (ish) when they watched them punch out their veins 20 years ago are now graduated to middle age.

Nostalgia, however, is not what it used to be and neither is Scotland.

In the last 20 years, devolved government arrived and the country took a new political course.

In cultural terms, nobody worries much any more about whether the place is more accurately represented by Burns or Welsh, Groundskeeper Willie or Outlander.

More pressing issues include where one stands on Scottish independence or on Brexit or how much damage will be wrought by a half-Scottish president of the United States.

Above all, Scotland is more diverse than it was when *Trainspotting* hit bookshops and cinemas in the 1990s and this diversity is now being reflected in the range of its cultural voices.

In many ways the country feels as Canada did from the 1970s in its determination to celebrate multiculturalism and see strength in diversity.

It’s not really a coincidence that Scotland’s unofficial national motto (“work as if you live in the early days of a better nation”) is paraphrased from a poem published by Canadian Dennis Lee in 1971.

Unfortunately, all this progress is under threat from Brexiters and Trumpeters yelling about restrictions, walls, bans and so on.

Scotland sometimes feels surrounded and wanting for allies, but it has at least one.

The Canadian prime minister recently tweeted: “To those fleeing persecution, terror and war, Canadians will welcome you regardless of your faith. Welcome to Canada.”

Scotland’s first minister immediately pointed to the tweet and added: “Welcome to Scotland too.”

What she didn’t say, of course, is that Scotland lacks the decision making powers over immigration that Canada enjoys.

Those powers need to be “comin yet for a’ that” if Scotland is to act on its inclinations the way Canada does.

Hidden Glasgow Central platform to be re-opened after 50 years

GLASGOW – A long forgotten underground train platform at one of Scotland’s busiest stations is to be restored to its heyday a century ago to enhance popular behind-the-scenes tours of the complex.

Tracks will be re-laid and a vintage train carriage from the era shunted into the long-forgotten low-level platform at Glasgow Central.

A re-created bookstall will display historic newspapers, with other features to include shop fronts, old-fashioned vending machines and gas-effect lighting.

Funding for the restoration will come from revenue from the tours of the station, which have attracted 29,000 visitors in two years.

The low-level station closed in 1964, and two of its four platforms remained shut when the cross-city Argyle line reopened in 1977.

The line – which opened in 1896 and runs underground through the city centre – was described as “sombre, sulphurous and Plutonian” by the poet C. Hamilton Ellis in 1938.

Smoke from trains was so thick that in the gloom, knife-wielding robbers cut handbags from the arms of female passengers.

The crimes led to the creation of a women’s waiting room to improve safety.



PHOTO: Network Rail
SIGN to the low level platforms from the main concourse at Glasgow Central Station.

The restoration plans are part of a development scheme for the tours drawn up by station owner Network Rail. Glasgow Central is used by 34 million people a year and more than 1,000 trains a day.

Station manager Susan Holden said, “Underneath Central, there is a whole other world, which has a big story to tell. The tours are providing us with new income we never had before.”

The current tours take visitors below stairs, to areas not normally seen by the public, such as huge former coal and grain stores, and a temporary mortuary used in the First World War.

The dead were carried off trains and left on rows of stretchers covered in army blankets. Their relatives had the horrific task of finding and identifying them. Widows often had to resort to

paying strangers loitering on the streets outside to carry the stretchers for them.

Some of the empty stretchers were still stored at the station as late as the 1950s, and a hunt is now on to find surviving examples to go on display.

Trips onto the station’s 48,000-pane glass roof – one of the largest in Europe – are also to be revived as a separate tour, offering stunning views across the city.

Rail industry insiders welcomed the development of the Glasgow Central tours.

One said, “This project will help recapture the era when the Second City of Empire was awash with confidence and optimism, and trains took commuters home to the stylish new suburbs of the West End and beyond.”

In memory of an old friend: Donal Kavanagh

January 7, 1928 - December 25, 2016

DONAL (Don) Kavanagh passed away peacefully in Aylmer, Quebec after a brief illness on Sunday, December 25, 2016 at the age of 88.

His beloved wife Cecilia (Celia) predeceased by only a few months on February 9, 2016. Don was a devoted father to Michael (Stephanie) and lovingly remembered by his grandchildren Siobhan, Aodhan and Loughlin. He is sadly missed by his siblings, nieces, nephews and dear friends in Canada and Ireland.

Don was born in Dublin, but he made Ottawa his home. He will always be remembered for his ready smile, generous nature, his great love of Irish music and song and playing his harmonica.

He was always fiercely proud of his Irish heritage and he played his music in Irish pubs, concerts and fundraisers in Ottawa and throughout the Ottawa Valley.

I first met Don Kavanagh at various social events sponsored by the Irish Society of Ottawa in the 1960s where I was also a member.

Don often sang and played his harmonica and along with Chris Murphy, Davey Donoghue and Joe McFadden, they went on to form an Irish group called The Celts. They were all talented musicians and had a big following wherever they played.

Don was a fixture whenever live music was needed for the local Irish dance school under the direction of Peggy Kendellan. My daughter Maura was one of her students.

In the early Seventies our family helped establish the first Irish pub in Ottawa – the Molly McGuire's. Don often entertained there with the various groups arriving in from Ireland and he was really in his element then.

One of my responsibilities at Molly's was to greet people at the door and welcome them. I knew all our regular customers by name and they called me 'Molly'.

As there were often long lineups, I would spend hours standing at the door. Many people would come over and chat over the course of the evening and tell me about their lives.

I can clearly recall one night when Don came in and stood at the door talking to me. He was worried about a medical test and said he would tell me when he got the results from his doctor.

A few days later, two Irish girls – Maura O'Prey and Celia Donnelly – stepped in to Molly's to hear some Irish entertainment. I seated them near the stage where they would have the best view.

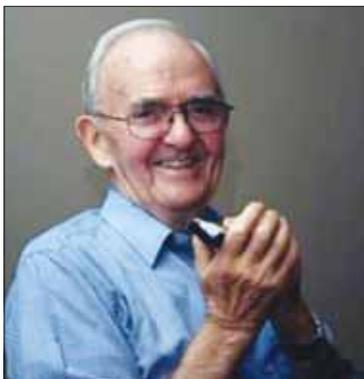
That night Don came in and told me the doctor had given him some good news and he was ecstatic. Then he asked if there was anyone in the pub he might know. I said yes and led him over to Maura and Celia's table.

That was the beginning of the romance. A few days later Don came back in and told me he and Celia had started seeing each other and he was thrilled.

They really made a wonderful couple



By
CATHOLINE
BUTLER



DONAL (DON) KAVANAGH

and eventually the two were married. I always felt that maybe I helped in a small way in bringing Donal and Celia together.

A number of years later when Martin Brown, Eddie McLaughlin and myself were fundraising to start restoration of the Martindale Pioneer Cemetery in

Quebec, The Celts stepped forward and offered to help.

The band played at no charge for our first fundraiser at the parish hall at Farrellton, Quebec. It was a brilliant evening, a huge success, and everyone loved the music.

I will never forget how The Celts helped to raise the initial funds for the project and how thankful we were for their generous support.

Don often told me that whenever he had visitors from Ireland, he would take them up the Gatineau to visit the Pioneer cemetery and show them the cenetaph with all the Irish names engraved in stone.

Then he would take them up to visit my mother on her farm and then on to visit Martin Brown at his farm. Don often said he loved Martindale and would be happy to have a small bit of land there.

Together, Don and Celia were great supporters of many Irish organizations, including the Ottawa Gaels Gaelic Football Club, the Irish Society of Ottawa, the Irish Drop-in Centre Ottawa, many Irish dancing groups and others.

We may have lost a great musician but heaven is richer for Don and his harmonica – no doubt he is with his beloved Celia and playing music with the angels. May they rest in peace.

In Memory of Myrna Cussen

VANCOUVER – The funeral for Myrna Cussen, the beloved wife of Harry Cussen was held in Vancouver at St. Augustine's Parish on Thursday, January 5.

Myrna Cussen died peacefully at home surrounded by her loving family after a short illness on Saturday, December 31, 2016.

Born in 1943 in Chandler Quebec, to parents Gus and Bea McGrath, she graduated from St. Patrick's High School in Chandler and Convent of Notre Dame in Ottawa. She worked at DuPont in Montreal and Vancouver and at the Canadian Consul in Seattle.

She leaves behind brothers Gerry and Morgan, niece Kelly (Rand), stepchildren - Kerry Cussen Retzlaff (Jim), Erin Cussen (Julie) and Liam Cussen (Julie) and her son Ryan Cussen (Melanie). She was a loving grandmother to Janie, Bridget, Tommy, Chloe, Connor and Garrett.



Raifteirí: The Last of Ireland's Wandering Bards

ANTOINE Ó RAIFTEIRÍ (also Antoine Ó Reachtabhra, Anthony Raftery) [1779–1835] was an Irish language poet who is often called the last of the wandering bards.

He was blinded by small pox while very young and earned his living by playing the fiddle and singing his songs in country houses in the west of Ireland.

Because he was blind, he did not write his poems or songs but committed them to memory.

Moreover, he composed in Irish and there was no interest in publishing the work of an Irish minstrel in Irish during his lifetime.

Fortunately, others did capture his songs and poems on paper (at least some times) and some survived in the memories of others for decades.



During the revival of Irish culture that took place a century after he lived, Douglas Hyde (*Songs Ascribed to Raftery*), Lady Gregory (*Lady Gregory: Selected Writings*) and William Butler Yeats hunted through the west of Ireland, discovering Raftery's songs and poems.

These are the opening two verses of *Cill Aodáin* one of his most famous poems:

Fr. Brendan Boland: 'An inspiring, kind, saintly and loving gentleman'

MANY of our readers in the Vancouver area will remember Father Brendan Boland. We received word this evening that Fr. Boland passed from this life at 5:30 PM on Tuesday, February 6, 2017.

He will be remembered by his many parishoners at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Vancouver and by his many friends in the Irish community.

Father Boland was a mainstay at all the Irish seniors' luncheons hosted by the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C. He always said Grace in both Irish and English and would often recite a poem by Ireland's famous wandering bard Antoine Ó Raifteirí.

Pearse Walsh who has been a friend for many years, writes that he visited with Father Boland two weeks ago and read him one of Ó Raifteirí most renown poems: "Anois teacht an Earraigh."

"As soon as I read the first line he proceeded to recite it in his beautiful deep Irish voice and even though he was feeble he recited a full verse of it."

"He especially dwelt on this verse:

*Is dá mbéimse i mo sheasamh
i gceartlár mo dhaoine
D'imeodh an aois díom
is bheinn arís óg*

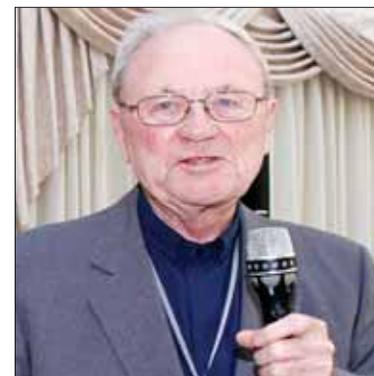
Translated:

And were I to be standing
in the center of my people
age would depart from me
and I would be again young.

"He so loved Ireland and especially his home County Mayo and Belmullet where he was born.

"Did you know that he officially blessed all three Mahony pubs in Vancouver before they were opened.

"What an inspiring, kind, saintly and loving gentleman he was. *Ar Dheis De go raibh a h'anam.*"



FATHER Brendan Boland at the Irish seniors' luncheon reciting the poetry of Antoine Ó Raifteirí.



FR. BOLAND is pictured above with Pete Mahony as he blessed the opening of Mahony's Burrard Landing in downtown Vancouver in 2011.

The funeral Mass for Father Boland will be held at 10 AM on Saturday, February 11 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 2465 Crown Street in Vancouver, B.C.

May he rest in peace.



Cill Aodáin

Anois teacht an earraigh
beidh an lá ag dul chun síneadh,
Is tar éis na féil Bríde
ardóidh mé mo sheol.

Ó chuir mé i mo cheann é
ní chónóidh mé choíche
Go seasfaidh mé síos
i lár Chontae Mhaigh Eo.

I gClár Chlainne Mhuiris
A bheas mé an chéad oíche,
Is i mballa taobh thíos de
A thosóidh mé ag ól.

Go Coillte Mách rachaidh
Go ndéanfadh cuairt mhíosa ann
I bhfogas dhá mhíle
Do Bhéal an Átha Mhóir

[Translation]

Now coming of the Spring
the day will be lengthening,
and after St. Bridget's Day
I shall raise my sail.

Since I put it into my head
I shall never stay put
until I shall stand down
in the center of County Mayo.

In Claremorris
I will be the first night,
and in Balla just below it
I will begin to drink.

To Kiltimagh I shall go
until I shall make a month's visit there
as close as two miles
to Ballinamore.

[This poem is published in memory of Father Brendan Boland who often recited the works of Blind Raifteirí at open mic sessions during the Irish seniors' luncheons in Vancouver, B.C.]



Poetry Circle

THE EMIGRANT

In search of great fortune, in search of great fame,
From poor mother Ireland in small groups we came.
We came from the north, we came from the south,
A few even came from the county of Louth.

Alberta had riches beyond comprehension,
It had lots of jobs, even some with a pension.
We would work for a few years and save a few dol-
lars,
Then return to our homeland as worldly scholars.

We worked in the forest, we worked in the mines,
Some of us worked on the big power lines.
We sweated and froze in McMurray's tar sands,
'Til the cold of the winter it blistered our hands.

We worked in the north where the sun never sets,
We worked in the south as farm hands and vets.

At forty below we still had to go,
The oil and the gas it still had to flow.

But now we are older, our hair turning grey,
Still living in hope of that wonderful day.
When we could return to our own native soil,
And say to hell with you Alberta and all of your oil.

To go back to Ireland is still our intention,
Maybe when we retire or start drawing our pension.
To share our life stories with the friends of our youth,
And to hear some of theirs, not always the truth.

Sure this is the dream that keeps us upbeat,
As we head out to work in the cold or the heat.
For the bills must be paid, and the work must get done,
As we live out our lives in old Edmonton.

— Tom Morris
Edmonton, Alberta



JOHN PATRICK HARRINGTON - 9/22/1934 – 1/3/2017

WITH his wife, Mary and children Siobhain and Frank, grandchildren Patrick and Ronan at his side, John passed away in White Rock, British Columbia after an eight-month battle with cancer.



Proudly holding court on the sixth floor of Peace Arch Hospital's Hospice, John's final weeks were spent with visits by countless loyal friends who brought with them brilliant memories, song and humor.

Although the cancer affected John's ability to speak, the sparkle in his eye and his charming Irish disposition were all he needed to communicate his appreciation and adoration for all his visitors.

The flow of well-wishers was non-stop as it became clear to the staff that John had chosen to live a full life of family, friends and community.

He was the epitome of cool, calm and collected. Always imploring his children to "keep life simple and take each day as it comes." If he ever caught you rushing around (or he was late to mass or the airport) he could be heard whispering "it's better to be late in this life than early in the next."

Born in 1934 in Island Bridge, Ireland to Frank and Christina, John grew up playing soccer where he was a local stand-out with big dreams.

He adored his hometown of Dublin; watching matches in Croke Park, running around Phoenix Park, swimming in the River Liffey and gallivanting in the Furry Glen.

John married Mary Keating in Emo, County Laois.

In 1970 they embarked on an adventure to Canada, wistfully boarding the Russian ship the Alexander Pushkin.

Arriving in Montreal, the two journeyed across the icy Canadian tundra by rail to the other side of North America to rainy Vancouver.

They finally made their way to Burns Lake – a rural village and First Nation Indian Reservation in the North-Central Interior of British Columbia, population 2,649.

Eventually, John and Mary moved to Prince George in 1971 where they bought their first home and their fledgling family flourished.

Prince George provided a place for their children James, John, Siobhain and Francis to grow up, explore and be curious.

It was in Prince George that John made many lifelong friends through coaching soccer, playing handball at the Triad and hosting (and attending) plenty of shindigs with the Irish community.

To this day, many of John's young players stayed in touch with him remembering him as a role model and mentor they never had.

The only time John criticized his players or children was if they didn't try. He wanted to see effort. John motivated his children to push the limits, constantly reinforcing "a man who never made a mistake never made anything."

In 1987 John moved the family to Vancouver for more accommodating weather and work opportunity.

Still connected with his old pals from the past, John immersed himself in the White Rock community through the Good Shepherd Church and the Elks Lodge.

After playing countless rounds of golf, John hung up the

clubs and could be seen walking the White Rock Pier or hitting the gym at the Pacific Inn.

With the technology of karaoke now at his finger tips, John could be heard singing Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin with his talented crew of pals at the Elks.

He also spent many of his retired years visiting his sons in Los Angeles and Arizona.

Sport never left John. He religiously followed soccer, boxing, rugby. Anytime and anywhere an Irishman was competing John was cheering them on.

John was without question a raconteur. His stories and quips kept his family and friends either

laughing or questioning the cosmos.

Mesmerized by our place in the world and where we all fit into God's master plan, John would constantly pontificate to his children about the vastness of the universe.

John's interest in the infinite vastness of time space and our place in it inspired him to inform his children of the fragility and ephemeral lives they have.

"We are only here for a coffee break," but John made the most out of this "coffee break" and seized every second of every day. His last few days were spent with grace and dignity.

He was an inspiration to all who had visited him. For John, the terminal cancer was one massive uppercut, followed by a devastating right hook when he came out of surgery unable to speak or write.

He took these cruel punches and fought like the underdog. He took each brutal step, adapted and overcame.

John loved life and did not want to go. His mind was still sharp until the very end and he could see, hear and feel the love.

It is said you can tell a man's true character by who shows up at his funeral. From what was witnessed in the hospital rooms, John's character is legendary.

In the end, John may have lost his battle to cancer but he won the respect and admiration of his family and friends who witnessed his bravery and sense of humour in the face of overwhelming odds.

John inspired his own family not to be afraid of death, to walk through the darkness with your chin up, never to quit living in the moment and to take an extra long coffee break whenever you can.

John is survived by his wife Mary, his sons James, John and Frank, and his daughter Siobhain. His daughters-in-law Nicole, Denise and Candy, and son-in-law Rick Coopman. His grandchildren Patrick, Ronan, Cashlin, Ava, Dillon and Rhett.

He always said the jewels in a man's crown are his children and grandchildren – that's true wealth. He will be greatly missed, but his legacy will carry on deep within their hearts. We will never walk alone.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Thursday, January 12, 2017 11:00 am at Good Shepherd Church, 2250 150th Street, Surrey. Father Glenn Dion celebrant. Interment at Gardens of Gethsemani Cemetery, Surrey. In lieu of flowers, donations to Peace Arch Hospice Care Society would be greatly appreciated.

Kearney's Columbia-Bowell Chapel
604-521-4881



IRISH NEWCOMERS' INFORMATION AND NETWORKING SEMINAR

When: Saturday, March 4, 2017 2 – 5 pm
Where: BCIT Downtown campus
555 Seymour St, Vancouver

Free networking seminar for all Irish newcomers; learn from a HR Consultant about job hunting, making your Irish CV into a Canadian resume, information interviews and tips for finding a job. Network with established members of the Irish community; make new friends and pick up other useful tips about settling in Vancouver. Social gathering afterwards at Doolins (2 for 1 drink ticket for all attendees).

To register for this free seminar, go to
www.surveymonkey.com/r/SeminarMar4

More info: Go to entry on March 4 at www.IrishInVancouver.com/whats-on.html
Sponsored by the Irish Government's Emigrant Support Program

IRISH SPORTS and SOCIAL SOCIETY EDMONTON

12546-126 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5L 0X3 Tel: 780-453-2249 Fax: 780-451-5969

ENTERTAINMENT

February 11 – Tone-Trust
March 11 – St. Patrick's Dinner & Dance – Lyle Hobbs & Dwayne Allen
Tickets: \$30 members/\$35 non-members available at the bar February 15th
March 16 – Pub Night with The Parting Glass
March 17 – St. Patrick's – Tickets \$15 in advance/\$20 at the door – Irish Dancers throughout the day/evening
7:00 AM: Full Irish Breakfast (\$5 without ticket)
• Club Hurling Championship Finals game LIVE on the big screen
• Club Football Championship Finals game LIVE on the big screen
11:00 AM – Bobby & Ray
4:00 PM – The Parting Glass
9:00 PM – The Chancers
March 18 – Vibram Souls - \$5 cover (for charity)
March 19 – Irish Centre Open House

Annual General Meeting – Sunday, March 26, 2017

1:00 PM (doors open at 12:30 PM)
Inviting all 2016 voting members to attend and become involved

Membership

Our membership year is from January 1st – December 31st
Note: Membership cards will not be issued until after the AGM

Jam Sessions

Almost every Thursday. Call 780-489-7402 to confirm.
Bring your musical instruments & drop into the Irish Centre for a good ole Irish Jam Session

Club Facilities for Rent - for birthday, anniversary, wedding or any other special occasion

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Young readers introduced to Irish history in book set in the Famine

BOSTON – John A. Walsh, an illustrator and graphic novelist, and Christine Kinealy, founding director of Ireland's Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac University, have co-authored the young readers graphic novel, *The Bad Times: An Drochshaol*.

The Bad Times is a graphic novel set during the Irish Famine (or, The Great Hunger).

Brigit, Daniel and Liam are three teenage children from the west of Ireland who live through the horrors of the Great Hunger, also known as "the bad times."

Their friendship keeps them strong as they each have to make tough decisions in order to survive. Quinnipiac Press published the novel in collaboration with Ireland's Great Hunger Institute. It is available at Amazon.com.

The Great Hunger refers to a tragic period in Irish history when more than one million people died of famine or famine-related diseases. Many Irish speakers simply referred to this calamity as "an drochshaol," which roughly translates as "the bad times."

"It is historical fiction, but, most importantly, we tell a good story and from that story there are elements about people who actually existed and places and settings that are real," Walsh said. "I



think we have done a good job of balancing the real and the fictional."

"One of our aims was to bring the story of the Great Hunger to a younger generation," said Kinealy, who also is a professor of history at Quinnipiac.

"It does deal with famine and there is death in it, but we have created something that is very visual and historically accurate. It tells the story of this pivotal event in Irish history in a way that is accessible, attractive and authentic."

Walsh is the creator of *Go Home Paddy*, a graphic novel that is being serialized online. He lives in Boston with his wife, Rachel, and daughter, Fiona Maeve.

Kinealy is the author of many books on the Irish Famine, including *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52* and *Charity and the Great Hunger in Ireland: The Kindness of Strangers*.

She has a PhD from Trinity College in Dublin and now lives in the United States.

The Bad Times is the first graphic novel to be produced on the topic of the Great Hunger.

Although it is aimed at young readers, like all graphic novels, it can be read and appreciated by people aged from eight to 80.

More than simply telling a good story based on a tragic event in Irish history, *The Bad Times* contains many teachable and relatable moments that can introduce young people to issues that are relevant today concerning social justice, human rights, emigration and displacement, and love and humanity in the midst of catastrophe.

Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland has written, "The Great Irish Famine was a devastating, traumatic and transformational event in Irish history.

"*The Bad Times* reminds us of the lives so profoundly affected by the Great Irish Famine and the impact on the class system, above all on children.

"It uses a new medium that will bring us deep into the heart of a tragedy that has left an indelible imprint on Irish society and the Irish people."



TOM O'FLYNN has always been known as a great dancer and while he was wheeled into the banquet in a wheelchair, he enjoyed the music so much he leapt up and waltzed around the room with Patricia Jarvis at the Irish seniors' luncheon.



BERNARD WARD onstage with Pat Chessell and Andrea Taylor.

IRISH HERITAGE SOCIETY OF CANADA

Irish seniors enjoyed music, dance and good company

BURNABY – This year's Irish seniors' Christmas luncheon was again presented by the Irish Heritage Society of Canada and supported by the Emigrant Support Programme with the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs.

Seniors gathered at the Hilton Vancouver/Metrotown to enjoy a delicious sit-down meal followed by a delightful afternoon of entertainment and socializing.

Well know local musicians Pat Chessell and Andrea Taylor provided the music while organizer George McDonnell served as master of ceremonies.

A number of guests participated in the open mic which always gives the feeling of a big old-fashioned house party.

George offered a wonderful rendition of the *Dying Rebel* along with ever-popular *Fields of Athenry*.

Passionate and powerful performance were also given by Bernard Ward, Margaret Larkin, Jim O'Connell, Flora Young and Brenda Warren.

At closing, Nora Murphy spoke very emotionally about her beloved late husband Jackie who passed away after the last seniors' luncheon hosted by the Irish Benevolent Society on December 18, 2015.

Jackie and Nora were always such a delightful couple at the luncheons often performing together.

Nora said Jackie had such a wonderful time up singing and dancing and enjoying that afternoon. He took ill that night and passed away very suddenly.

For more information on upcoming events, call George McDonnell at (604) 948-2885 or e-mail: crumlin@shaw.ca.

[More photographs of the Irish seniors' luncheon to follow in our March 2017 issue.]

Hemochromatosis: Part of the '1 in 300' with the genetic condition

MY NAME is Samantha and I am 29 years old. My sister Olivia is 28 and we are both genetically at risk for developing iron overload, also known as hereditary hemochromatosis.

In 2011, Olivia was diagnosed with hypothyroidism after fainting in a university lecture.

She was put on medication for this condition and was later referred to an endocrinologist in Vancouver.

During this time she also presented with a high ferritin level, which her family doctor assumed was simply associated with her thyroid condition.

My mother (who is a registered nurse) urged Olivia to ask the endocrinologist why her ferritin was continuously high.

The doctor stated that this was not his specialty and suggested she return to her family doctor to address this issue.

As the months went by, our mother was increasingly concerned about our fatigue and general well-being. My sister and I chalked it up to our busy schedules at university and Olivia's thyroid condition.

In December 2011 we traveled home to visit our parents and my mother insisted that we go see our family doctor and have our blood work checked again.

The doctor was initially reluctant to test my ferritin (and re-test my sister's), but after my mother called his office and insisted, he agreed to order a ferritin test for both of us.

Not only did my sister's ferritin come back high again but my ferritin level

was also elevated at 670.

My mother, who was becoming increasingly suspicious, did some research online and found the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society (CHS) website.

The website is a great resource as we find it to be one of the most reliable, relevant and easy-to-read websites regarding the genetic disorder.

My mother asked the family doctor if he would follow up with transferrin saturation and iron levels.

When these test results also came back high, the doctor was unsure of the prognosis but felt that occasional blood work to monitor our ferritin would suffice.

Yet again our mother intervened and spoke with the family doctor.

She suggested that these might be possible indicators of hemochromatosis and showed him information that she had printed from the CHS website.

The doctor, unsure how to proceed, decided to call the molecular geneticist at the lab in Vancouver.

Following this, we underwent genetic testing, and on January 11, 2012 we were both diagnosed (at 23 and 24 years of age) with genetic hemochromatosis.

While my sister and I are now aware of our genetic condition and can manage the progression of this illness, there were many people involved in getting to the point of our diagnoses, which at times proved to be especially challenging for females of our age.

My sister and I are the "1 in 300 Canadians" who have this genetic condition. We are confident that with our early diagnosis and continued treatment we shall have long and healthy lives.

Try out some Irish Céilí dancing this month

VANCOUVER – If you're a fan of Irish céilí dancing, check out the Vancouver Irish Céilí Society.

The next event will be held on Saturday, February 18 and features Irish tunes by John Gothard on concertina and Dale Russ on fiddle.

Each dance is taught on the spot and will be held at the Victoria Drive Community Hall, located at 2026 East 43rd Avenue in Vancouver. Doors open at 7:30 PM.

An early St. Patrick's Day dance will be held on March 11.

Tickets are available at the door: adults \$15, \$5 kids 6-12, and children under five free.

IRISH CLUB OF WHITE ROCK

Always a warm welcome for all newcomers

WHITE ROCK – The Irish Club of White Rock extends best wishes to all for 2017.

Last year was a very good one for the club and they are looking forward to an even better year in 2017.

Some of the highlights of 2016 were: a very successful St. Patrick's Day dinner dance at the Hazelmere Golf and Tennis Club, White Rock; a summer wind-up party in June at the Elks Hal in White Rock with music by Robbie Greville; an annual summer picnic at the Peace Arch Park, White Rock; Blackthorne band at Crescent Beach legion hosted by the Irish Club of White Rock; and the Young Wolf Tones concert.

The Irish Club rang in the Irish New Year at the Dublin Crossing Pub – a great afternoon with a huge turnout with lots of new young families.

The Christmas party was held this year on the last day of Christmas – a great success with music by Brian Nicholls.

Plans for 2017 include an open house on Sunday, March 12 at the Elks Hall on George Street in White Rock. The annual St. Patrick's Day dinner dance at the Hazelmere Golf and Tennis Club on Friday, March 17. A great evening is in the planning so reserve tickets early.



IRISH CLUB OF WHITE ROCK executive committee – [Back] James Woods, Claire O'Connor Deirdre O'Ruairc, Robbie Greville, Vincent Crowley, [Front] Cheryl Jorgensen, Sharon Woods [president], and Kathleen Pedersen.

The annual general meeting will be held on the last week in March at the Elks Hall. More details to follow.

Recently the Club Facebook page has been revamped.

Everyone is invited to check it out and send a friend request to Irish Club of White Rock and share with friends and family.

The Irish Club of White Rock would also like to extend a very warm wel-

come to all newcomers to White Rock, Surrey and Langley. Club members would love to meet up and you're invited to one of their upcoming events.

A new website is currently under construction and will be up and running in a few weeks, at: www.irishclubofwhiterock.com.

For more information, call club president Sharon Woods at (604) 338-3553 or Deirdre O'Ruairc at (604) 803-0773.

Dramatic new play set against the backdrop of the Irish Famine

VANCOUVER – Peninsula Productions will present the Canadian premiere of Jaki McCarrick's captivating play *Belfast Girls*, directed by Wendy Bollard next month.

The show opens at the Coast Capital Playhouse in White Rock from March 1 to 11, and plays *The Cultch* in Vancouver from March 15 through 18 as part of CelticFest Vancouver.

Show times at *The Cultch* are at 8 PM nightly, as well as a 2 PM Saturday matinee. For ticket information visit www.peninsulaproductions.org. (Not suitable for young audiences; extreme language and violence.)

Belfast Girls 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."

McCarrick examines themes of class, race and misogyny through the turbulent journey of these women's lives.

"We are delighted to be presenting the Canadian premiere of this timely and important play," said director Wendy Bollard.

"From the first time I picked up the script, I was fascinated by these women and how McCarrick weaves heart-break, humour and hope throughout their tumultuous journey.

"During the Irish Famine approximately 4,000 Irish women took passage from Ireland to Australia, as part of the Earl Grey Orphan Scheme," explains Bollard, who recently worked with world renowned Improbable Theatre.



BELFAST GIRLS: Five women fight for the right of self-determination in the face of injustice.

"I love this play because it explores the lives of five women who believe they have the right to choose their own destiny.

"As they travel, each woman unravels her idea of fortune and opportunity – a new life – yet as the ship closes in on the end of its voyage, they come to learn that things may not be as rosy as promised."

The relevance to today's politics comes to bear, according to writer McCarrick.

"En route they discuss and analyze their plight and become radicalized. Via various discoveries, they come to the terrible conclusion that they have, most conveniently, been got rid of from a country they very much wanted to stay in," McCarrick said.

"Like Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, it's an allegory, about the state screwing its most vulnerable during a crisis."

Despite this, the women make the most of their circumstances – organizing and educating themselves, and amidst the burden of a difficult passage a tender love affair between two of the characters blossoms.

Belfast Girls was first presented in 2011 at the King's Head Theatre in London. It went on to be developed at the National Theatre Studio and was subsequently published in 2015. *Belfast Girls* is now in development for a feature film.

Belfast Girls stars Mariam Barry as Judith, Tegan Verheul as Hannah, Amelia Ross as Sarah, Paige Gibbs as Ellen and Olivia Sara Grace as Molly.

Director, Wendy Bollard; set designer, Andy Sorensen; costume designer, Chantal Short; lighting designer, Nicole Weismiller; sound designer, Corina Akeson; stage manager, Jennifer Wilson.

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THE NUMBER of people homeless in Ireland has passed the 7,000 mark for the first time as the crisis continues to deepen.

Empty building occupied in Dublin as homeless crisis deepens

DUBLIN – In December, an anti-homelessness movement called Home Sweet Home occupied a derelict building called the Apollo House on Dublin's Tara Street.

A coalition of homeless people, housing activists, artists and trade-unionists entered the empty National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) office building, saying it was "scandalous" that so many buildings lay empty while so many people had no home.

The group said the occupation was to give homeless people a bed for Christmas. As the 100th anniversary year of the 1916 Easter rising came to an end, one in three people in emergency accommodation in Ireland was a child.

Following negotiations with the government, the group left the building a month later. As part of the deal, it was agreed four million euro will be spent on two new facilities for the homeless in the capital.

Ken Peterson, the Irish-American chief executive of a Washington State telecommunication company called Columbia Ventures Corporation, made an offer to Home Sweet Home activists as he was prepared to buy the building from NAMA for an estimated price of 7.5 million euro.

Peterson, who has family connections in Westmeath and Down, offered to buy Apollo House so it could continue to be used to accommodate homeless people and said he would make the same offer

again in similar circumstances.

According to the Chief Executive at Peterson's company, the offer is still on the table and has not been declined.

Focus Ireland has said new government figures reporting that, for the first time, over 7,000 people are homeless shows the crisis is deepening.

The Homeless Report for December 2016 by the Department of Housing found that 7,148 were homeless nationwide in the week of December 18-25.

"It is terrible to see over 7,000 people (including over 2,500 children) homeless for the first time on record," said Focus Ireland chief executive Ashley Balbirnie.

In a statement accompanying its figures in the report, the department admitted there had been significant rises in rates of homelessness in recent times and said the root cause "is the supply shortage across the housing sector, which in turn is a result of the recent economic collapse and the associated damage to the construction sector."

To help end the crisis, the Peter McVerry Trust has urged the government to make use of the tens of thousands of empty homes around the country. It says there are 13 empty houses for every homeless adult in Irish cities.

Francis Doherty, the head of communications for the Trust says there is simply no excuse not to tackle homelessness head-on.

Kenny orders full review of U.S. pre-clearance agreement

DUBLIN – Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny has ordered a "complete review" of a special agreement with the U.S. for air passengers leaving the Republic amid claims Donald Trump's travel ban could be illegal.

Dublin and Shannon airports are among the few in the world where passengers can clear customs and immigration before travelling to the United States under an international agreement between the two governments.

Pre-clearance duties are carried out by U.S. officials who have been carrying out the four-month hold Trump put on allowing refugees into the United States and temporary barring of travellers from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Somalia and Sudan, the U.S. Embassy in Dublin said.

"I have asked for a complete review of the pre-clearance facilities here in Ireland," said Kenny.

"I would say that pre-clearance has been of enormous convenience, so these are issues that we are happy to negotiate upon," Kenny told a joint news conference with British Prime Minister Theresa May on Monday, January 30.

In a statement, the government added that "there is obviously concern" about the change in the U.S. immigration rules introduced by the new administration, and that Dublin had contacted the U.S. Government about the matter.

The Irish Government wants to convene a meeting as soon as possible to discuss the recent developments, the statement said.

There has so far been one case where a person was refused pre-clearance to



DUBLIN AIRPORT one of the few in the world outside North America where passengers can clear United States customs and immigration prior to boarding.

In respect of the policy introduced by the American Government, I disagree with it...."

the United States at either airport, a spokesman for the department of transport said.

Kenny said, "In respect of the policy introduced by the American Government, I disagree with it and I will obviously say that to the president and vice-president when I meet with them."

Kenny also said that he intended to accept the annual St. Patrick's Day invitation to meet the U.S. president in the White House despite disagreeing with Trump's immigration policies.

Like May, who has faced calls to cancel an invitation for a state visit to Trump, some members of parliament have said Kenny should not visit the White House and almost 35,000 people signed an online petition saying that if he did meet

Trump on the Irish national holiday, he would not do so in their names.

"I intend to accept the invitation...I think it is really important to say face-to-face with the president the issues that are really important to us.

"We have had great influence in the U.S. over the years. We still have that influence and we intend to use it," Kenny said.

The taoiseach's announcement follows warnings from one of his own ministers that implementing the travel ban at Irish airports could be illegal.

Katherine Zappone, the Republic's American-born minister for Children and Youth Affairs, had written to Kenny seeking an investigation into its operation.

She suggested it "may be unlawful" because the U.S.-Ireland pre-clearance agreement upholds the rights of people under Irish law.

It is understood Zappone is concerned that the implementation of the ban on Irish soil could amount to nationality and religion-based discrimination.

She also said the Republic has a moral obligation to "stand with our fellow human beings against discrimination of this kind."



Ireland's Education Minister Reviewing School Baptism Rule

DUBLIN – Education Minister Richard Bruton is to tackle the "baptism barrier" that gives Catholic children priority admission to nine out of 10 of the country's primary schools.

Bowing to growing pressure for change, he says he plans to limit or remove the role that religion can play in the school admission process. It is the first such move by any Irish Government.

Bruton says the system is "unfair" and does not reflect the reality of modern Irish society, where the number of Catholic-controlled schools is now well ahead of the proportion of families who are practising Catholics.

A Catholic-first admissions policy means many children cannot get into their nearest school because they are not baptised – and many parents are baptising children purely for school-entry purposes.

Bruton is inviting the views of all inter-

ested parties, and hopes to have proposals to table when a Labour Party bill in this area comes to committee stage in June.

The Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA) has responded to the move saying that barriers to getting into local schools are more often a lack of space than religious difference.

Fewer than one in 20 Catholic schools in Dublin are turning away children who have not been baptised according to CPSMA general secretary Seamus Mulconry.

"The real issue is one of resources and the need to create school places through the opening of new schools, or the expansion of existing ones," Mulconry said.

"The framing of this debate on the 'baptism barrier' is frankly insulting to the principals, staff, and volunteer boards of management of Catholic schools throughout the state."

Mother of Pogues frontman dies in New Year's Day car crash

TIPPERARY – Singer Shane MacGowan's mother has died in the first Irish road death of 2017.

Therese MacGowan (87) died on New Year's Day when the car she was driving struck a wall in Ballintoher, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

She was the car's sole occupant and was pronounced dead at the scene near her home in Silvermines at around 3 PM on January 1.

A Garda spokesman said the crash was being treated as an accident. "It would appear to be a single car collision with a wall," he added.

Therese, an award-winning Feis Ceoil singer from Silvermines, Co. Tipperary, met her husband Maurice MacGowan in Dublin.

They moved to England where their son Shane was born in Kent on Christmas Day 1957. They later returned home to Tipperary where The Pogues singer spent much of his childhood.

Heartbroken, Shane expressed his thanks via social media for the support he received after his mother died.

On his behalf, his partner Victoria Mary Clarke Tweeted: "#shanemacgowan would like to say Thank you and God bless you to all the people who are offering kind words and condolences. It means a lot."



POGUES singer Shane MacGowan pictured with his mother.

Prime Minister Theresa May and Enda Kenny meet in Dublin

DUBLIN – British Prime Minister Theresa May met with Taoiseach Enda Kenny in Dublin to discuss Brexit on January 30.

A 'friction-free' border was the target set during their Brexit meeting that was largely overshadowed by events in the United States.

Both prime ministers faced a series of questions over their engagements with President Donald Trump on a day when they hoped to show some progress on building a post-Brexit understanding.

Kenny described their discussions as "frank" but indicated that the Republic would be working to help Britain retain some trading rights after they leave the EU, while May said "everyday movements" across the border must remain "seamless."

Earlier this month as the British PM set out her 12 objective Brexit plan, she said maintaining the common travel area between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland was a priority during the negotiations.

She said that "no-one wants to return to the borders of the past."

However, it was the turbulent global climate in the wake of the U.S. president's travel ban that dominated their joint press conference with Kenny confirming he will accept the traditional St. Patrick's Day invitation to the White House.

May insisted that despite a public back-



BRITISH Prime Minister Theresa May is greeted by Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny for high level Brexit discussions in Dublin on January 30.

lash her offer of a state reception for Trump in London remains open. "That invitation stands," she said bluntly.

The prime minister said the U.S. "is a close ally of the UK" but "we have a different approach to these matters in the UK."

On Brexit, Kenny said a deal to keep UK-EU trade as close as possible would be an "absolute priority" for Ireland.

"Our two governments are agreed that a close and friction-free economic and trading relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union, including Ireland, is in our very best interests," the taoiseach said.

"And as the UK prepares for its formal notification under Article 50, we want

to see that these deep trading ties between our two countries are recognised and facilitated.

"That will continue to be an absolute priority for my government, not just in our discussions with the British Government, but also with our EU partners as we prepare for the negotiation process on the EU side of the table."

For her part the PM promised to try to retain a situation whereby residents of the Republic and Northern Ireland will be able to freely pass over the border daily without interruption.

"We have of course said we do not want to see a return to the border of the past – that isn't just a phrase, actually it symbolises the sort of seamless, frictionless border that we want to see in the future," said May.

"Of course there are elements of full membership of the customs union that would restrict our ability to trade and do trade agreements with other parts of the world.

"But I believe, and this is what we are working on, that we need to find a solution which enables us to have as seamless and frictionless a border as possible between Northern Ireland and Ireland so that we can continue to see the trade, the everyday movements, that we have seen up to now."

The meeting follows the joint ministerial summit in Cardiff where the DUP and Sinn Fein met with the prime minister.

It was attended by DUP leader Arlene Foster and Sinn Fein's leader in Northern Ireland Michelle O'Neill.

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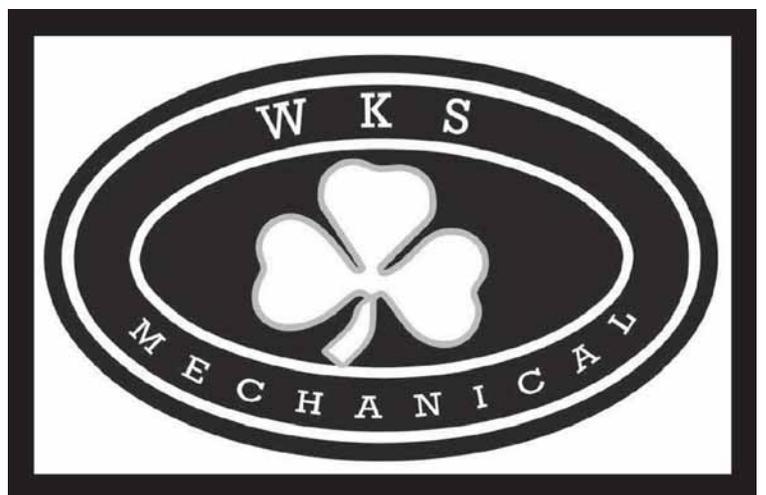
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Mary Robinson: 'He's a bully. And you have to stand up to bullies'

DUBLIN – Former president of Ireland and human rights campaigner Mary Robinson has said the world must stand up to Donald Trump, whom she branded a "bully."

Robinson, who is a member of independent global leaders group The Elders, said they are extremely concerned about a number of orders introduced by Trump since he was inaugurated.

The Elders was founded by Nelson Mandela and is working in their own words towards "peace and human rights."

She spoke to RTE Radio One's *Morning Ireland* about the orders halting the entry of all refugees and banning immigrants from seven Muslim majority countries.

Robinson described what is happening in America at present as "chilling," and said that it is "also worrying because it is not going to make America any safer." She said, "This may just act as a recruitment tool for ISIS and make things worse."

The Trump administration has insisted the restrictions are designed to allow the government time to draw up "extreme vetting" measures.

"The trouble is this ban on all refugees from Syria and other Muslim countries has really upset a balance globally," said Robinson.

"I have been in New York a lot in recent times, and I have seen the extreme



MARY ROBINSON

"What we're concerned about is that the impact on the ground in developing countries is shocking,"

vetting of refugees from around the world.

"The idea that you have a global ban on all refugees at a time when Syria needs maximum support and allowing in, and now this issue is being discussed more seriously at international level than at any time that I can remember.

"Last September a major meeting was held on refugees and the world committed itself to two global compacts, one on migration and one on refugees.

"This executive order cuts through all that in a way that's very disturbing and a very bad example."

She also decried another of Trump's executive orders – the reinstatement of the 'global gag' rule blocking funding for non governmental organisations (NGOs) which may provide abortion counselling in developing countries.

"What we're concerned about is that the impact on the ground in developing countries is shocking," she said.

"It will mean more unplanned pregnancies, more backstreet abortions, and a lack of proper neonatal care, childcare, pre healthcare, at a time when we're supposed to be implementing sustainable development goals."

Asked whether or not the protests being seen against Trump will really make any difference, Robinson replied "well he's certainly very interested in crowds and crowd sizes."

And the crowds seen the day after his inauguration were much bigger despite all attempts to say otherwise.

"President Trump has a giant ego, we know that, and he's a bit of a bully. And you have to stand up to a bully."

Robinson refused to be drawn into the controversy on whether Taoiseach Enda Kenny should travel to the White House in March to meet with the U.S. president as per tradition.



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MARTIN MCGUINNESS (L) Arlene Foster of Democratic Unionist Party (R).

Martin McGuinness: 'The First Minister's position not credible'

BELFAST – Northern Ireland's deputy first minister, Martin McGuinness has resigned from office in protest over the Democratic Unionist Party's (DUP) conduct over the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme.

Speaking to BBC News, McGuinness told reporters he had tendered his resignation, effective as of 5 PM on Monday, January 9, 2017 – a move likely to lead to a Northern Ireland assembly election.

Here is Martin McGuinness's resignation letter in full:

Over 10 difficult and testing years, in the role of deputy first minister, I have sought with all my energy and determination to serve all the people of the north and the island of Ireland by making the power-sharing government work.

Throughout that time, I have worked with successive DUP first ministers and, while our parties are diametrically opposed ideologically and politically, I have always sought to exercise my responsibilities in good faith and to seek resolutions rather than recrimination.

I have worked tirelessly to defend our peace process, to advance the reconciliation of our community and to build a better future for our young people.

At times I have stretched and challenged republicans and nationalists in my determination to reach out to our unionist neighbours.

It is a source of deep personal frustration that those efforts have not always been reciprocated by unionist leaders. At times, they have been met with outright rejection.

The equality, mutual respect and all-Ireland approaches enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement have never been fully embraced by the DUP.

Apart from the negative attitude to nationalism and to the Irish identity and culture, there has been a shameful disrespect towards many other sections of our community.

Women, the LGBT community and ethnic minorities have all felt this prejudice. And for those who wish to live their lives through the medium of Irish, elements in the DUP have exhibited the most crude and crass bigotry.

Over this period successive British Governments have undermined the process of change by refusing to honour agreements, refusing to resolve the issues of the past while imposing austerity and Brexit against the wishes and best interests of people here.

Against this backdrop the current scandal over the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) has emerged.

It is my firm view that the DUP's han-

dling of this issue has been completely out of step with a public mood which is rightly outraged at the squandering of public money and the allegations of misconduct and corruption.

The public are demanding robust action and accountability but the DUP, in particular its leader Arlene Foster, have refused to accept this. The DUP leader has a clear conflict of interest. She was the minister responsible for the RHI scheme at its inception.

No cost controls were put in place and warnings were ignored. This has led to an enormously damaging pressure on our public finances and a crisis of confidence in the political institutions.

The minister responsible for the RHI scheme should have no Executive role in overseeing how this will be rectified.

There are significant conflict of interest issues and I have urged Arlene Foster to stand aside without prejudice to ensure confidence in the necessary investigation and in the wider public interest.

These institutions only have value if they enjoy the confidence and support of the people they were established to serve. They only have meaning if they are delivering fairly for all our people based on the principles of equality and mutual respect on which they were founded.

I have sought to maximise the potential of the institutions for forward progress in a society emerging from a bitter conflict.

But the refusal of Arlene Foster to recognise the public anger or to exhibit any humility in the context of the RHI scandal is indicative of a deep seated arrogance which is inflicting enormous damage on the Executive, the Assembly and the entire body politic.

The first minister has refused to stand aside, without prejudice, pending a preliminary report from an investigation. That position is not credible or tenable.

The Irish and British Governments have internationally binding obligations to uphold issues of equality and parity of esteem. They need to fulfil these obligations.

Therefore, it is with deep regret and reluctance, that I am tendering my resignation as deputy first minister with effect from 5 PM on Monday, 9th January 2017.

In the available period Sinn Féin will not nominate to the position of deputy first minister.

We now need an election to allow the people to make their own judgement on these issues democratically at the ballot box.

*Yours sincerely,
Martin McGuinness.*

The Fall of the House of Stormont



HERE is an irony about the cash for ash Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) financial fiasco that ended Arlene Foster's tenure as first minister in Northern Ireland and has precipitated an unexpected election this March 2.

The political structure of the North of Ireland, so often characterised as 'an unpredictable tinderbox', was foiled by an administrative flaw in a heating scheme. This is burning not as tragedy but as farce.

In any case, the politicians' recriminatory rhetoric produced sparks aplenty.

In the past, such flare-ups typically played out with the hardline parties holding out fiercely for a time, and an outside mediating force being brought in to tame them down. But this time the division may well be cataclysmic.

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leadership of the power-sharing Executive in Belfast was badly undermined by the tawdry financial cock-up, which was shouted up into a cacophony of sectarian wailing, when the focus should have remained on addressing the RHI issue.

Instead, the scandal served to reveal quite how divided the Assembly really is and how incapable it is of confronting a serious crisis on its own.

Arlene Foster's handling of the RHI scandal has been truly abysmal.

Rather than taking her share of responsibility for the stuffing of £500 million into the rathole of the Renewable Heat Incentive and admitting that it was an instance of gigantic mismanagement of public money, Foster portrayed the fallout as a Republican conspiracy to steal a march to hold the prized first ministership in their hands.

Having flogged that horse, she began to characterise her critics as misogynistic, which lost her considerable sympathy, notably among fellow female politicians.

Foster's political career is at stake and

THE VIEW FROM IRELAND



By MAURICE FITZPATRICK

she is grasping at whatever lifeline that comes within her reach.

She continued to ignore pressure from all sides to step aside for an investigative report into RHI to be conducted. Then her deputy first minister resigned (under Stormont rules there must be a deputy first minister and Sinn Féin refused to nominate a successor).

Martin McGuinness' resignation letter read: "It is a source of deep personal frustration that [my] efforts have not always been reciprocated by unionist leaders. At times they have been met with outright rejection. The equality, mutual respect and all-Ireland approaches enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement have never been fully embraced by the DUP."

With that, the fat is in the fire. McGuinness is quite right that a significant portion of the DUP is in denial of the Good Friday Agreement framework.

Gone are the days when McGuinness and Paisley (who, for all his faults, ultimately did attempt to make the Belfast Assembly work) sat down together chuckling to themselves.

It was McGuinness' resignation that triggered the March election in Northern Ireland. That happened, coincidentally, against the backdrop of news that McGuinness is seriously ill (it is doubtful that he will ever hold office again).

Last year Northern Ireland moved tentatively beyond its sectarian bounds; that movement came from the bottom up, spurred by a grassroots movement, the People Before Profit Alliance (PBPA), whose candidates gained mandates in the May 2016 Assembly Election to transcend the traditional green

and orange template of Northern political parties.

Eamonn McCann got elected in Derry and Gerry Carroll topped the poll in West Belfast. PBPA illustrated that, with a dedicated surge, class-based politics can and should run athwart the assumption that Northern Irish voters will irreversibly vote according to their religio-political affiliation.

Centrist parties of both unionist and nationalist hues, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), followed the PBPA's lead by making gestures of cooperation with each other and by going into opposition together in the Stormont Assembly.

So what do all of these shifts portend for the forthcoming election?

For the first time in more than a decade and at a crucial time, given that Brexit is on the horizon the centrist parties have a chance to regain some of the ground they lost since Sinn Féin and the DUP signed the St. Andrew's Agreement in 2006.

UUP leader Mike Nesbitt has said that he wants this election to be "a referendum on 10 years of DUP and Sinn Féin rule."

Moreover, if the UUP and the SDLP do gain support as fallout from the collapse of the turbulent DUP/Sinn Féin administration, there are grounds to expect that they would form a coalition with good potential to last.

Nesbitt may want a referendum on DUP/Sinn Féin rule, but the forthcoming election will far more resemble a referendum on the sustainability of a power-sharing Assembly in Northern Ireland.

DUP/Sinn Féin may well be returned again but if they fail to form a new government within three weeks of the election, Stormont will be suspended.

Dublin will scramble to honour the guarantees of the Good Friday Agreement, but few in London will be willing to invest the time or political capital to shore up that effort.

And here hardline unionism will play its age-old favourite card: its alliance with the Conservative Party in British Parliament.

The Conservative Party has a majority in British Parliament but a very slim one, 329 out of 650 seats. The DUP holds eight seats in British Parliament.

It is easy to imagine circumstances in which British Prime Minister Theresa May could badly need DUP support during this crucial year.

If so, it would be quite wrong to assume that the current DUP leadership will bargain hard to defend the Belfast Assembly (they may well bargain to abolish it). For better or worse, 2017 in Britain will be dominated by Brexit.

The DUP knows this and there is nothing they would like more than to form common cause with Little Englanders outside the EU.

Direct rule of Northern Ireland from London could appeal just enough to the DUP and to the British Conservative Party to prompt them to prorogue the Stormont Assembly on a semi-permanent basis.

Since its inception, the Assembly has periodically faced crises, leading at times to its suspension. But seldom has the crisis looked so bleak as now.

The election on March 2 is the biggest threat to power-sharing in Northern Ireland since the re-establishment of the Assembly at Stormont in 1998.

Michelle O'Neill: Sinn Féin's new leader in N. Ireland

BELFAST – Sinn Féin has announced that Michelle O'Neill will replace Martin McGuinness as its leader in Northern Ireland.

The 40-year-old County Tyrone woman is the current health minister having previously been agriculture minister.

Following the announcement, she paid a warm tribute to McGuinness and said she was "following in the footsteps of a political giant."

She will have just five weeks to prepare for an election after Stormont's power-sharing coalition fell apart over a botched energy scheme scandal.

The fallout from the Renewable Heat Incentive scandal, which is approximately £490 million over budget, led to McGuinness quitting after DUP leader Arlene Foster refused to stand aside as first minister while an investigation was carried out.

As they hold a joint office, his resignation automatically put Foster out of her job and prompted the calling of snap elections on March 2.

Born Michelle Doris on January 10, 1977, she was raised in the village of Clonoe in rural County Tyrone and hails from a family of prominent Irish republicans.

She was first elected to the assembly in Mid Ulster in 2007 and has held various senior positions within Sinn Féin.

In 2011, she was appointed as minister for agriculture and rural development.

The following year, she announced the department would move to a former British army barracks in Ballykelly, County Derry.

After the announcement, it came to light that Strabane had been chosen as a more suitable location by an internal DARD assessment, a decision that O'Neill then overruled.

Youth Development Program: Introducing a whole new generation to the Gaelic games

VANCOUVER – One of the most exciting developments in the world of GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) sports in recent years, has been the creation of a youth program to introduce a new generation to the benefits of the Gaelic games.

Ronan Deane has been the driving force behind the Youth Development Program of the Vancouver Irish Sporting and Social Club (ISSC).

He also has two daughters – Lily aged 10 and Greta aged six – who are members of the Youth Program.

The program, launched in 2008, has two facets – one is for schools throughout the Vancouver area, and the other is a youth program in the summer open to the local Irish community.

In the last few years, the summer program has gathered strength but new members are always welcome.

In a recent interview with *The Celtic Connection*, Ronan said, “this will be a pivotal year, with the ISSC and the Fraser Valley Gaels – the new club in Surrey and the Fraser valley.

“We are noticing with the immigration from Ireland that a lot more family groups are coming to Canada, and as a result we are hoping to see more kids in the Youth Program.”

Speaking about the schools program, Ronan said, “Personally, I am most proud of the schools program for two reasons.

“One is that we have been able to visit a lot of schools, eight secondary schools and three or four primary schools all over the Lower Mainland – from Surrey to North Vancouver, downtown Vancouver and as far away as Chilliwack.

“We offer a free demonstration of the Gaelic games of football and hurling within the sports program of the schools that we are visiting.

“We come in as guests of the schools, so we are covered by the school insurance. We demonstrate the skills to the schools, mainly Gaelic football but hurling has also been requested.

“When we do a demonstration of hurling we bring the helmets and hurleys so that the schools don’t have to worry about any equipment.

“The kids love the hurling, it’s a real leveller.

“You will always get jocks in the school and then there are the kids who aren’t into sport.

“Because no one has seen hurling and Gaelic football before, it makes it an equal playing field, and the other thing is that it’s a different culture.”

The Gaelic games have been remarkably well received at the schools they have visited.

“We have been warmly received and welcomed with a lot of interest from the schools that we have visited,” said Ronan.

A testimonial of the experience is requested at each school and Ronan said some of the comments from the kids are fantastic.

By CATHOLINE BUTLER

“We hear things from the kids like: ‘this morning I never heard of Gaelic football and now I want to play it for the rest of my life.’

“Kids love to exaggerate, but they definitely do enjoy it,” he said.

The Surrey school has had the group back several times and Stephen Burns, a physical education teacher in South Delta Secondary School, has invited them back again.

The second source of satisfaction on Ronan’s list is the volunteers.

“Whenever, we put a request out to the ISSC for volunteers to help with the Youth Program, we always get a handful.

“We set up the visit to the school and put it out to the membership and, fair dues, every time we always get six or seven people who want to help out.

“All the members that come out to the school say they love it and it’s such a great experience to work with the kids.

“For the volunteers that come to the schools it’s also a great volunteer experience to add to their resume.”

This year will be a big year in Calgary with a lot of Gaelic clubs taking part in the 2017 Western Canada GAA tournament, and the 40th anniversary celebration of the Calgary Chieftains Club.

Ronan said this will present a unique opportunity for the junior clubs of Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver to possibly also take part in a Western Canadian youth championship tournament.

He laughed and said, “This might also be the 150th anniversary for Canada, but more importantly it’s the 40th for the Calgary Chieftains.

“So we’re hoping to see a huge turnout from all the clubs in western Canada to descend on Calgary. How nice would it be to have a youth championship going on at the same time?”

Ronan Deane is from Mayfield in the north side of Cork City, and this is also the home of Ireland’s famous Irish soccer player Roy Keane.

Since he was a youngster, Ronan has played with the Brian Dillons Hurling and Gaelic Football Club.

He said, “I played at Brian Dillons since I was a baby and I often find a way to play with them when I go home on holiday.

“I’m a Brian Dillons person first and foremost. All my brothers played with Brian Dillons and I have a real affinity with them.

“I come from a big family – I have five brothers and two sisters – and we are all Brian Dillons people.

“My mom is from Turners Cross and my dad is from Blackpool.

“Everyone at Brian Dillons knows my mother because she is a very vocal supporter of the team wherever she goes [Ronan laughs], and sometimes she can even tell someone what she thinks of them.”

In 1997 Ronan Deane graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Cork Institute of Technology. He worked for BMD (a mechanical con-



RONAN DEANE with some of the participants in last year’s Youth Development Program.



RONAN DEANE is the driving force behind the program.



ISSC VOLUNTEERS with the Youth Development Program – Tadhg Egan, Elmarie Cronin, and Tara Philips.

tractor) in Cork from 1997 to 2000.

After years of study and some work experience behind him, Ronan felt it was time to do some travelling, have fun, and just play Gaelic football.

“I left Cork and went to Australia for fun, ‘finding myself’ is the term people use.

“I went to Perth on spec and worked in bars and played Gaelic football for Southern Districts Gaelic Football Club and had a great time there.

“I was very lucky when playing in Perth to represent West Australia.

“They picked a select team from all the clubs in Perth and we played for Western Australia at the Australian Championships in Adelaide in 2000.

“We made the final but were beaten in the final. It was a great experience and a great championship.”

Ronan said there are some remarkable comparisons between Perth and Vancouver.

“I always compare Perth to Vancouver....they are similar in size, have similar ports with an industry and resource economy.

“The big difference between Perth and Vancouver is that when I landed in Perth there were eight Gaelic football clubs, and when I arrived in Vancouver I found out there was only one club.

“I couldn’t get my head around that...and I still can’t get my head around it. There are two clubs in Vancouver now, but I have no idea how many clubs there are in Perth now.

“I really love the GAA out here, don’t get me wrong. It has its issues but at the end of the day it’s a bunch of people going out and playing Gaelic football.

“It’s a great fun and you get to meet a lot of friends.

“What I would really love to see is the Canadian GAA have a format similar to the Australian one where you get representatives from each province, and I think that could happen.

“It may be awhile yet, but I think it’s something Canada could learn from Australia.”

Speaking about his change in plans to travel the world and why he left Australia for Canada, Ronan said, “I met a girl.”

That girl was Jennifer Ramsey from North Vancouver.

He said, “Vancouver wasn’t on my flight path, since I was thinking about my travels around the world, but she was a lovely girl and I followed her to Vancouver in 2001.”

Ronan played one tournament with the Vancouver ISSC before he moved to Calgary to find a job.

“My first year in Calgary, I played a tournament in Edmonton where I played for both Calgary and Vancouver....it was tiring but a lot of fun.”

He found work with Jacobs Engineering – a firm based in Calgary – as project co-ordinator. They specialize in power plants and oil and gas engineering and later they sent him to work in Fort McMurray where he stayed for three years.

“While I was in Fort McMurray I founded a Gaelic football club and named it [Ronan laughs] the Fort McMurray Brian Dillons Football Club.

“We played two seasons and a few years later the name was changed to the Fort McMurray Shamrocks. I like to think I had some influence on the Shamrocks.

“Unfortunately, right now there is no Fort McMurray Shamrocks with the oil patch having a bit of a time, but I’m sure we’ll see it all again.

“Later, I joined Leducor Company. They do civil and mechanical engineering and I worked with them for a year-and-a-half until my daughter Lily was born in Vancouver.

“That prompted a move to Vancouver where I worked with Leducor for the next seven years.

“In 2012, I moved over to Graham Construction and Engineering. They do bridge and road work and waste water construction and there are a lot of Irish working at Graham.”

Ronan laughed and said, “I always like to say that Jennifer dragged me to Canada and I dragged her all over Alberta.

“But we are happily settled now in North Vancouver, close to Jennifer’s parents and numerous relatives....close to the children’s schools, and we have no intentions of moving in the foreseeable future.

“The most important thing is family, and we love being close to Jennifer’s family.”

Ever since Ronan Deane arrived in Canada, he has been involved with the GAA.

Every week he receives e-mails from new Irish arrivals landing in Vancouver or Calgary asking his advice regarding work and accommodations.

Ronan says he does his best to pass on their resumes to the right interested people.

For more information about the Vancouver Youth Development Program, e-mail Ronan Deane at: ronandeane@hotmail.com.



SEATTLE IRISH NEWS

PASSINGS

- Joan Gamble who died in Belfast on January 31, was the sister of Seattle's Karen Patterson.
- Sr. Meg O'Farrell, 91, a native of Dublin, died in Seattle January 17.
- Robin Horrell, 72, a native of Dublin, died in Redmond January 12.
- Marcus Murphy, 65, a native of Dublin, died in Bellevue January 10.
- Michael Duffy, brother of Seattle's Sr. Mary Duffy, died January 4 in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon.
- George O'Malley, 96, who died in Co. Mayo on December 5, was a brother of Martin O'Malley and Una Majeska who both live in Edmonds.

GAVIN CONCERTS – Frankie Gavin is synonymous with DeDannan, the globally renowned band he founded in the mid-1970s and Frankie will be in Concert on February 18, 7:30 PM at the Phinney Center Concert Hall, 6532 Phinney Avenue N, Seattle. Tickets at www.seafolklore.org.

There are also shows in Olympia on 2/19 – call (360) 705-2819; Vashon Island 2/21 - keggleston@kateggleston.com; Bellingham 2/22 – www.brownpapertickets.com; and Port Townsend 2/23 - (360) 379-3136.

There is no more exciting fiddle or flute player in the world of Irish music today, and the Guinness Book of Records lists Frankie as the world's fastest fiddle player, clocking him at 150 beats per minute.

CHILDREN'S IRISH SHOW – The Seattle Children's Theatre production of *Into the West*, recommended for ages nine and up, runs February 23 - March 19 at the theatre on the corner of second and Thomas at the Seattle Center.

Adapted from Jim Sheridan's screenplay for the film *Into the West* – the 1992 internationally acclaimed award-winning movie – the show is set in Dublin and rich with Irish mythology, music, and legend.

It tells the extraordinary tale of two siblings, Ally and Fin, and the mythic white horse which enters their lives called Tír na nÓg, the "Land of Eternal Youth" of Irish legend. Visit www.sct.org or call (206) 441-3322 for tickets or more information.

GAAGO – When signing up to watch live Gaelic football and hurling games from Ireland via GAAGO.ie, please make sure to use the Seattle Gaels GAAGO club code: 096CS17, when signing up. That way the Gaels will get credit.

For the \$149 fee you can watch a package of 125 GAA games live (or watch them later) at www.gaago.rte.ie.

U2 CONCERT – U2 will play Century Link Field in Seattle on Sunday, May 14, touring *The Joshua Tree* album in celebration of the 30-year anniversary of the band's seminal album.

Each show on the tour will include a performance of *The Joshua Tree* in its entirety, the album which in 1987 catapulted U2 into super-star-



By JOHN KEANE

ditional narrative episodes with documentary footage, the film celebrates the music that Joe Heaney created while also painting an unflinching portrait of Heaney, the man.

Shot in black-and-white, several Irish actors are portraying Heaney at various ages starting in his native Connemara on the west coast of Ireland.

The first non-American to be awarded funding from the National Endowment of the Arts, Heaney wrote more than 500 songs before his 1984 death at the age of 64. At the time he was attached to the Musicology Department at the University of Washington.

dom and which went on to sell 25 million copies.

JOE HEANEY FILM – The life story of legendary sean-nós singer Joe Heaney, who died in Seattle in 1984, is being brought to the screen in *The Song in Granite*, an exploration of the man and his music.

With an approach that marries tra-

[Continued next page...]



IRISH GOVERNMENT Minister Dara Murphy TD shakes hands with Honorary Consul of Ireland John Keane at a Seattle reception on January 11. Looking on is Aly Gardner-Shelby, president of Irish Network Seattle.



ADRIENNE HARRINGTON, Head of Data Protection Unit, Department of the Taoiseach, Dublin, chats with Steve Lenox, president of Irish Network USA at a Seattle reception on January 11.



(L-R) CHRIS NIEHAUS, Senior Director of Product Marketing for Microsoft Cloud Platform, Conor Sheehy, IDA Ireland, and Irish Government Minister Dara Murphy participating in an Irish Network Seattle panel discussion on January 11.

IRISH WEEK 2017 IN SEATTLE

- Saturday, February 25 – Irish Soda Bread Cooking Class
- Saturday, March 4 – Irish Soda Bread Contest
- Friday, March 10 – Sister City Association Breakfast
- Friday, March 10 – Mayor's Irish Week Proclamation Luncheon
- Friday, March 10 – St. Patrick & The Pirates
- Friday, March 10 – Green Stripe Laying on 4th Avenue
- Saturday, March 11 – Irish Flag-Raising
- Saturday, March 11 – St. Patrick's Day Parade
- Saturday, March 11 – Irish Festival Seattle
- Saturday, March 11 – Matt Talbot Dinner
- Saturday, March 11 – Irish Network Seattle Party
- Sunday, March 12 – St. Patrick's Day Dash
- Sunday, March 12 – Irish Festival Seattle
- Sunday, March 12 – Friends of St. Patrick Banquet
- Friday, March 17 – St. Patrick's Day Mass for Peace
- Saturday, March 25 – Irish Genealogy Workshop
- Sunday, March 26 – Seattle Gaels Field Day

All the details on these events can be at: www.IrishWeek.org.



(L-R) IRISH GOVERNMENT MINISTER Dara Murphy TD, Steve Lenox, president, IN-USA, and Matt Rossmeissl, general manager, Commerce Business Operations at Microsoft at a Seattle reception on January 11.



(L-R) CAOIMHE O'ROURKE, Mary Purdy, Cathy Duffy (at rear), Dolores O'Donnell-Doherty, Grace Barcoe, Noreen McCormack, An Other, Gerrarda O'Beirne, Caitlín Kearney, Geraldine Trefethen, and Sharon Gillin at Seattle's Irish Women's Christmas Celebration on January 6.

HUGH DUFFY, SJ – Best wishes to Father Hugh Duffy, the Jesuit priest and Gaelic scholar from Dublin who was a professor at Seattle University for many years until his return to Ireland three years ago.

He had successful aortic valve replacement heart surgery in Dublin just before Christmas and appears to be recovering nicely.

If you'd like to drop a note of encouragement, write him at Fr. Hugh Duffy, S.J., Jesuit House of Writers, 35-36 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.

AVIATION & IRELAND – Washington State's economy is very much tied to the Irish economy and according to *The Irish Times*, the aviation sector contributes more than four billion euro to Irish economy.

Three planes each month being built in Boeing's Renton plant have been purchased by Irish airline Ryanair.

And that's through 2023, maintaining at least 10,000 jobs in the state for the next six years!

Nine of the world's top 10 airplane leasing companies are headquartered in Ireland.

BOEING ORDER – GE Capital Aviation Services (GECAS), an Irish-American commercial aircraft financing and leasing company has placed an order for 75 MAX 8s, valued at about \$3.8 billion, boosting Boeing's net order tally for 2016 to more than 600 airplanes.

GECAS is the largest commercial airline leasing/financing company in the world.

The company was based in Ireland and originally staffed by former Guinness Peat Aviation employees, but now has three global headquarters, located in Shannon, Co. Clare, Singapore, and Norwalk, Connecticut.

MINISTERIAL VISIT – Dara Murphy TD, the Irish Government Minister of State for European Affairs, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, visited Seattle in late January for meetings with IT companies in the Seattle area.

While here the minister was hosted by Irish Network Seattle at a wine and cheese reception, and participated in a panel discussion and audience Q&A on the theme "Brexit, Data Control and the EU: European Business in the new, Old World."

See photos and a video of the reception and discussion on Irish Network Seattle's Facebook page.

FRIENDS BANQUET – Renowned



(L-R) KAREN DORAN, Mary McHale, Josephine Melly and Dolores O'Donnell-Doherty at Seattle's Irish Women's Christmas Celebration on January 6.

violinist and producer Geoffrey Castle has been producing his St. Patrick's Celebration for the past 12 years and his Celtic Christmas Celebrations for the past nine years.

He and his band will be performing for the Friends of St. Patrick at their annual banquet which this year is on Sunday, March 12 at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Capitol Hill.

Special guests at the banquet include Galway Mayor Noel Larkin, and Pulitzer-prize winning author Tim Egan. More details at www.FOSP.org.

SEATTLE-IRELAND FLIGHTS – Flights from Seattle to Dublin for \$390 R/T are listed at www.secretflying.com as being available in September and October of this year.

The drawback is that you mustn't mind extra stops or date restrictions. But if you want to visit Ireland, your time is flexible and you wish

to save money, it may be worthwhile checking out.

MISCELLANEOUS

- The Irish Book Club will discuss *The Thing About December* by Donal Ryan at their meeting on Tuesday, March 7 – call (206) 525-5310.

- Emmet Cahill, award-winning Irish tenor with Celtic Thunder, performs Saturday, February 25 at 7 pm at Town Hall Seattle.

- Best wishes to local Irish politician, Snohomish County Councilman Brian Sullivan, who has announced he is running for Mayor of Everett.

- Sunday, June 25 is this year's Irish Day Stakes at Emerald Downs.

- Sunday, July 16 is this year's Irish Community Picnic at Lake Sammamish State Park.

- Tuesday, July 25 is this year's Irish Night at the Seattle Mariners, vs. the Red Sox.

Dozens of UK banks and financial firms 'looking at moving to Ireland'

Banks and financial institutions make up the overwhelming majority of more than 100 companies inquiring about relocating to Ireland after Brexit, the head of the agency tasked with bringing foreign investment into the republic has confirmed.

Martin Shanahan, the chief executive of the Industrial Development Agency (IDA), said many of the corporations looking to move were based in the City of London.

Shanahan said that while Ireland would try to make capital out of the UK voting to leave the EU, Brexit was not the outcome he or anyone else in Ireland favoured.

He also said the IDA did not fear a Trump presidency would shut down American multinational investment into Ireland.

The IDA has a target to create an extra 80,000 jobs in the country by 2019, many of them from new U.S. firms setting up their European base in Ireland.

Ireland will be the only English speaking country left in the EU after Brexit, giving Shanahan and his IDA colleagues extra impetus in their attempts to woo companies, some of which are based in the UK.

Michael Flatley Performs at Trump Inauguration

Michael Flatley's Irish dance group, *Lord of the Dance*, performed at President Trump's Inaugural Ball, even though many acts refused to take part because of the new president's past controversial statements.

A close friend of the Clintons, Flatley has also been friendly with Trump in the past and the now president had previously attended the *Lord of the Dance* show.



MICHAEL FLATLEY

On inauguration day in Ireland, anti-Trump marches in Dublin drew many thousands with similar marches held in Galway, Belfast, Castlebar and elsewhere.

A Donald Trump inauguration celebration in the Pavilion Bar in Trinity College Dublin reportedly drew only five Trump supporters.

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BOXES of evidence are brought into Ireland High Court in Dublin on February 7.

Privacy watchdog in Ireland challenges Facebook's data transfer mechanism

THE CASE POTENTIALLY HAS ENORMOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR TRADE AND PRIVACY RIGHTS OF MILLIONS OF EU CITIZEN

DUBLIN – Ireland's privacy watchdog has launched a bid to refer Facebook's data transfer mechanism to the European Union's top court in a landmark case that could put the shifting of data across the Atlantic under renewed legal threat.

Commissioner Helen Dixon's current case is against Facebook Ireland, because it transfers data from its European Headquarters in Dublin to its parent in the U.S.

The move is the latest challenge to the various methods by which large tech firms such as Google and Apple move personal data of EU citizens back to the United States.

The issue of data privacy came to the fore after revelations in 2013 from former U.S. intelligence contractor Edward Snowden of mass U.S. surveillance caused political outrage in Europe.

The revelations stoked mistrust of large technology companies and calls for an overhaul in the way businesses can move personal data – from human resources information to people's browsing histories – so as to protect Europeans' information against U.S. surveillance.

Ireland's data protection commissioner has jurisdiction over Facebook as its European headquarters are in Dublin.

She wants The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) to determine the validity of Facebook's "model contracts" – common legal arrangements used by thousands of firms to transfer personal data outside the 28-nation bloc.

Dixon has formed the view that some of the complaints against the model contracts are "well founded" Michael Collins, a lawyer for the commissioner told Ireland's High Court on February 7.

"If you share her doubts – it doesn't mean you have to be finally satisfied – then you must make a reference to the European Court. The Commissioner's

concern is simply to get it right, not to advocate for any particular result."

Collins said only the CJEU and not a national court or the Data Protection Commissioner has the jurisdiction to rule a European Commission decision invalid.

He said that under EU law, a transfer of data can only be made to a country outside the EU if that country ensures an adequate level of protection.

This is the U.S. Government's first litigation case in Irish courts and the case has potentially enormous implications for trade and privacy rights of millions of EU citizen.

A ruling against model clauses could cause major headaches for companies that need to transfer personal data to the United States – be it for completing credit card transactions, hotel bookings or moving employee data between countries.

The Irish commissioner's office initially became involved after Austrian law student and privacy activist Max Schrems made a complaint in Dublin about Facebook's handling of his data in the United States.

Schrems and other privacy campaigners contend that alternative arrangements such as model clauses don't offer Europeans any means of redress either.

The court has since agreed to a request to allow the United States Government to join the case, potentially giving the new U.S. administration a platform to lay out its views on surveillance laws.

The issue is whether U.S. law provides EU citizens with equivalent protection and access to court as available under EU law, counsel said.

The Mystery of Edinburgh's Gilmerton Cove

EDINBURGH – Gilmerton Cove is a series of underground passageways and chambers hand-carved from sandstone located beneath the streets of Gilmerton, an ex-mining village, now a suburb of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Once an underground dwelling-place, Gilmerton Cove has remained unchanged for centuries and yet to this day no-one knows who built it and what it was for.

Access is through an old plumber's workshop, where visitor panels dripping with damp and fungus set out what little is known about the cove.

This leads to an even darker, mouldier room where the entrance to the cove begins. Here, rough stone steps lead you 10 metres underground to the snaking of tunnels and chambers below.

The size is surprising, the intricacy of the carving astonishing. And the sense of the mysterious is overpowering.

A five-year collaborative project between Gilmerton Heritage Trust and The City of Edinburgh Council allowed the newly restored cove to open in 2003 as an educational resource for the community as well as a place to visit.

It is known that it was the 18th Century residence of local blacksmith, George Paterson. The parish records show that he was reprimanded for allowing alcohol to be consumed within the Cove on the sabbath.

Paterson claimed to have hewn the rooms and passages from the rock between 1719 and 1724. Thereafter, his family lived there until his death in 1737.

Although unconventional, this underground home may have provided reasonable accommodation when compared with the state of housing above ground. Down here, the family would have had space – even if less than comfortable.

The dispute and the intrigue arise from a suggestion that far from constructing the whole building, Paterson merely inherited an existing structure.

In 1897 FR Coles, Assistant Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, investigated the cove. His conclusion was that it would have been impossible for one man to have built it in five years.

'Appealing Apple tax decision a mistake' says Irish academic

DUBLIN – Appealing the Apple tax decision damages Ireland's reputation, a Trinity College academic has said.

Professor Jim Stewart, who in the past has claimed U.S. multinationals in Ireland have paid as little as 2.2 percent corporation tax, warned EU public opinion could interpret the appeal as government support for Apple's tax strategies.

And he said it was unfortunate that Ireland was in dispute with the European Commission when it may need to seek important concessions in the wake of the Brexit vote.



A PASSAGEWAY inside the underground chamber of Gilmerton Cove. The latest research at Gilmerton Cove suggests that the mysterious network of underground tunnels was once a Druid temple that dates back more than 2000 years. For centuries, the hand-carved passageways and hidden chambers have been linked to smugglers, the Knights Templar, and witchcraft.

Furthermore he suggested that the stonework showed clear signs of pickmarks, as used by miners, and not the chiselling he would have expected had the blacksmith indeed fashioned himself an underground home.

Mining and Gilmerton have had a long connection. Coal and lime have been found here since the 13th Century and the last mine only shut in the 1960s.

It is no great leap to suppose that Gilmerton cove was a trial bore – a seam that miners dug out, which came to nothing.

It is reasonable to think that Paterson found the caves already excavated and set about building the "furniture" that can be seen today.

It may well be that Paterson used the drinking parlour as a pub and the punch bowl held alcohol. But this might not have been the original function.

There are some who think the cove was in fact a home to witches, or a coven, or a Masonic meeting place.

There is another theory that the chapel was the meeting place of people persecuted for their religion, who gathered far from prying eyes to conduct their services in secret.

The punch bowl used by Paterson may have been a baptismal font – the hidden room serving as a chapel for Roman Catholics to baptise their newborn.

Further exploration of the cavern only deepens the mystery. Two small bolt holes – tunnels that shoot off out of the building – have been found.

There is speculation that one leads towards nearby Craigmillar Castle. The other is said to head straight to Rosslyn Chapel only a few miles away.

With the revelation of secret passageways – or escape routes – theories topple over each other like dominoes.

Echoing around the caves is a distant whisper of a deep and hidden mystery. It is said that the Knights Templar – those fighting Crusader monks – used this place for assignations, entering secretly through the tunnels that run back to Rosslyn.

And as everyone knows by now, the Templars didn't just bring fighting talent when they came out of the East, but something else.

Which leads to one final question about Gilmerton. Could this neglected, half-forgotten cave be the true resting place of the Holy Grail?

Extensive archaeological and historical research has failed to resolve the mystery.

In 2007, the documentary television series *Cities of the Underworld* featured Gilmerton Cove in the episode Scotland's Sin City which postulates that the cove was linked to a nearby Hellfire Club building via a secret passage.

"I think taking this appeal damages Ireland's reputation and I think it was a mistake," Stewart told an Oireachtas committee.

The European Commission announced last August that Ireland must collect around 13 billion euro plus interest from Apple as a result of a tax treatment that amounted to illegal State aid to the company.

The government and Apple have appealed against the decision.

Stewart told the Oireachtas Finance Committee that the government's case was "identical" to Apple's case, and that the government was spending considerable sums defending the Apple case.

The professor said he believed the money was legally owed to Ireland, but that in terms of economic value added, there was likely to be a tax liability in other countries.

In that context, Fianna Fáil finance spokesman Michael McGrath replied that the payment of 13 billion to Ireland from Apple "is hardly a leading example of tax justice."

Brian Keegan, director of taxation with Chartered Accountants Ireland, said the decision by the commission "infringes on Irish sovereignty."

He said there should be certainty for tax purposes, otherwise "we are all just making up the rules as we go along."

UK Foreign Minister Boris Johnson once again admonished for misbehaving



L A T E D
Happy New Year from soggy Bournemouth.

I can't really complain because with the exception of a couple of days, the weather has been dry with temperatures around the 10 to 12 degree mark.

Politics has been dominated by President Trump's antics and the ongoing predictions of impending disaster as a result of the U.K. leaving the European Union.

I think our Prime Minister Theresa May, is having voice coaching to try to make her sound more like Winston Churchill.

Our Foreign Minister Boris Johnson has again been admonished for misbehaving.

This time he is likening us to prisoners of war in the EU and French President Francois Hollande to a Second World War German prisoner of war camp commandant threatening dire consequences if we attempt to escape.

So, it is all good fun in the playground....now on to more serious matters.

Were you aware that January 21 was Squirrel Appreciation Day?

The creator of this important date is Christy Hargrove, a wildlife rehabilitator in North Carolina, who in my opinion might have too much time on her hands.

In the U.K. we have grey and red squirrels. Originally just red but in 1876 Thomas Brocklehurst, a Victorian banker, released into the wild a pair of grey squirrels he had brought back with him from a business trip to America.

Today there are five million of the little buggers and they have all but wiped out the red squirrels that are much prettier.

I assumed that jealousy might have been the reason, but apparently the Ameri-

POSTCARD FROM BOURNEMOUTH



By
ELFAN JONES

can grey squirrels spread a deadly squirrel pox which kills the reds within five to seven days.

It could be in revenge for the Europeans giving smallpox infected blankets to the Native Americans.

The only areas where the red squirrels survive in any number are in Scotland: I can imagine them all little Bravehearts with woad on their faces shouting "They may take our lives but they'll never take our nuts." "Alba gu bra" (Scotland Forever).

Coming up this month on February 5 is the Clown Service which is held annually at Holy Trinity Church in Dalston in East London.

It has nothing to do with politicians but is a service in memory of Joseph Grimaldi.

Grimaldi [1778-1837] is regarded as the greatest British clown who introduced the concept of a tragic comic clown and the pantomime dame.

Pantomime is a British tradition, and although perhaps not known in Canada or the U.S.A, is still very popular here.

Held in theatres during the Christmas and New Year period it includes singing, dancing, slapstick humour and audience participation.

The stories are loosely based on fairy tales but with cross-dressing. The hero or principle boy is normally played by a

pretty woman wearing thigh high boots (seeing this alone is worth the price of admission).

His (the principle boy's) mother is then played by a man who is normally a well-known comedian, wearing outlandish clothes and sporting an enormous bosom.

I think I will give up trying to explain this as it is akin to telling the Japanese about cricket.

Suffice to say it is supposed to be for children, but there is so much concealed adult humour in the show that taking the children is often just an excuse.

If you are visiting our fair and soggy land, then you may be too late this time to enjoy a pantomime but fear not there are plenty of events in the calendar.

On March 25 the 27th annual World Pooh Sticks Championship will be held in Little Wittenham near Oxford.

When Winnie the Pooh and Christopher Robin first dropped a handful of sticks from a bridge into a stream and rushed to the other side to see which came under first, they would not have imagined this would start a tradition.

Nowadays around two thousand people travel to watch teams of six compete in a knock-out competition dropping different six different coloured sticks from each of the two bridges in the village.

If that doesn't ring your bell, who can resist attending the World Marbles Championship on April 6 at the Greyhound Pub in Crawley West Sussex.

The World Coal Carrying Championship will be held at the Royal Oak (presumably a pub) Gawthorpe West Yorkshire on April 9, which is the same day that the Bottle Kicking and Hare Pie Scramble is held in Hallaton Leicestershire.

You could rush from one to the other.

So, I won't detain you any longer as presumably you will want to charge off and book your tickets. Have fun.

Best wishes,
Elfan.



BRITISH Foreign Minister Boris Johnson has likening UK citizens to prisoners of war in the EU and French President Francois Hollande to a Second World War German prisoner of war camp commandant.

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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, CB, APW, L, K, L, K, S, MF, DC

Novena to St. Joseph

Oh glorious St. Joseph, thou hast power to render possible even things which are considered impossible, come to our aid in our present trouble and distress. Take this important and difficult affair under thy particular protection, that it may end happily. (Name your request.) O dear St. Joseph, all our confidence is in thee, let it not be said that we would invoke thee in vain and since thou art so powerful with Jesus and Mary, show that thy goodness equals thy power. Amen. St. Joseph, friend of the sacred heart, pray for us. (For favour received) — JD

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. — SVS

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

Publication of this prayer is \$25 monthly
(Canadian residents include 5% GST)

Theresa May 'made joke about size of Donald Trump's hands'

DONALD Trump has faced jibes about the size of his hands since the 1980s and Theresa May has poked fun at the size of his hands in a joke to a private fundraising party, according to reports.

The British prime minister made light of photographs of her holding hands with the U.S. president when she spoke to the Conservative Black and White Ball in London on the evening of Monday, February 6.

The *Daily Telegraph* reported that in response to applause from Tory donors, May said, "Thank you very much for that wonderful reception.

"I don't think I have received such a big hand since I walked down the colonnade at the White House."



THERESA May shakes hands with Donald Trump at the White House.

May and Trump were pictured holding hands as they walked from the Oval Office to a press conference during last month's visit to the White House.

Downing Street explained it as a chivalrous gesture from the president, who reached out to take May's hand as they

walked down a small slope.

Trump has faced jibes about the size of his hands since the 1980s, when *Spy* magazine repeatedly labelled him a "short-fingered vulgarian."

The taunt even surfaced in the contest for the Republican presidential nomination, when rival Marco Rubio asked: "Have you seen his hands? And you know what they say about men with small hands."

A furious Trump later hit back in a television debate, saying: "Look at those hands. Are they small hands? ... I guarantee you there's no problem."

Since then, everyone from *Saturday Night Live* to protesters in the streets have taken aim at the president's hand size: "Hands too small, can't build a wall" became a favored chant at anti-Trump rallies.

Rugby greats hail unifying force of World Cup in Ireland

BELFAST – A Rugby World Cup in Ireland would be a fitting tribute to how far the island has come, a former international player whose career was ended by injuries in an IRA bomb atrocity has said.

On April 27, 1987 Ulster players Nigel Carr, David Irwin and Philip Rainey were travelling in a car along the main Belfast to Dublin road a month before the inaugural World Cup when their lives changed forever.

They had been about to pass the car in which Lord Justice Maurice Gibson and his wife Cecily were travelling when a Provo landmine was detonated.

The IRA had been targeting Northern Ireland's second most senior judge for three years, and seized its chance when Gibson, who was returning from holiday via Dublin, had been left by his Garda escort at the border, but before his RUC escort could pick him up.

The attack made headlines around the world. *The New York Times* described how the "judge's car almost disintegrated in the force of the blast."

Given that his injuries were less severe, it is Irwin who can recall the horrifying scene with the greatest clarity.

He remembers the searing heat of the explosion hitting him "like a thousand light-bulbs," and the isolation of waiting for police to arrive at the scene while he heroically returned to drag his unconscious team-mates from their vehicle.

"It was an incident in life that makes you reflect on what is important," he said.

"Clearly life itself is important after an incident like that and things like rugby and sport pale into insignificance.

"We were very lucky and fortunate - Nigel, myself and Philip. Although we were involved, we were very, very lucky.

"I suppose being a doctor by profession, day in, day out, I see people with illnesses and losing life and you certainly do appreciate the simple things in life after something like that.

"I played with a 13 on my back because I felt it was lucky for me, not unlucky. That's the way I've always thought.

"Now, you could argue that we were unlucky to be in the bomb, but I would say I was lucky to come through the bomb."

Carr, who had even more reason to curse fate, echoes a similar sentiment despite having had his career ended by the injuries sustained in the blast.

A combative back-rower, one of the best this province has ever produced, Carr would miss out on the World Cup, and ultimately have to admit defeat in his efforts to get back to the top of the game.

"It was a conscious decision," he said of his outlook.

"The other way... it would be easy to be bitter and let it eat away inside you. It would be easy to think: 'I missed out on a World Cup, I could have toured with the Lions in 1989, I could have done this that or the other'.

"But who knows? I don't want to feel

that way, that something has been stolen from me.

"I'm much happier, and genuinely do look at it in a way that, for all the thousands of people who were murdered here, thousands of people maimed and injured, I'm still here with all my fingers and toes. I had a rugby career. I played in a championship winning side.

"I was blessed in a lot of ways to have played with so many good players and shared some of that success. I was a good player, I'm not that modest, but there was a lot of good fortune.

"The camaraderie and the good times, I've had all those and more. I look back with satisfaction about what I achieved rather than what might have been."

While Carr missed out, Irwin played twice in that first World Cup. He revealed that tentative steps have been taken to have a 1987 squad get-together this side of the border.

"I've already heard some of the players from the south saying they want to

have a 30-year reunion for the first World Cup team and they would like to have it in the north – because of that incident they thought it was appropriate to have it up here," he said.

"It's in the early stages now, but it's certainly a nice gesture that they felt it was appropriate to have it up here in recognition of what Philip, Nigel and I went through as part of going down to the south to play for Ireland.

"Clearly the whole situation is a lot different now, socially Belfast is one of the places to come to with all the attractions that it has."

Later this year Ireland will find out if it has won the right to host the 2023 World Cup, and for Carr the arrival of the tournament for the first time would show just how far they have come since players were caught up in bombings or visiting teams refused to travel for safety reasons.

"In terms of something like a World Cup, wouldn't that be fantastic?" he said.

"It's something to again emphasise that all-Ireland aspect. For those of my generation, when people were being bombed and shot on a weekly basis, it's very different now for people of a

younger generation to recognise what that was like at the time.



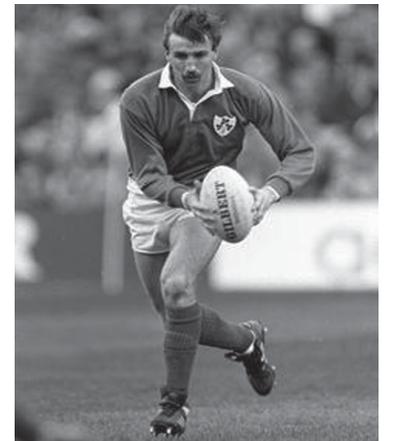
FORMER internationals Nigel Carr and David Irwin.



NIGEL CARR

younger generation to recognise what that was like at the time.

"Going down and playing rugby on an all-Ireland basis brought people together



DAVID IRWIN

from all different persuasions and communities.

"I think rugby has been great for Ireland, and long may that continue."

Ex-heroin addict sets record as fastest solo rower in world's toughest race

A FORMER heroin addict who fought back from the brink of suicide to become an endurance athlete has rowed his way into the record books.

Clean-living endurance athlete Gavan Hennigan, has become the fastest solo competitor in the history of the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, dubbed the world's toughest row.

He pulled into Antigua's English Harbour on February 1 after a punishing 3,000-mile journey across the ocean in a time of 49 days, 11 hours and 37 minutes.

It meant he also smashed the record for the quickest Atlantic crossing by an Irish rower, beating the previous best by Sean McGowan by 69 days.

Hennigan, from Galway, fought mental and physical challenges during the crossing, which began on December 14 in the Canary Islands, to come in third ahead of a fleet of two-, three- and four-person teams.

Speaking as he arrived to a hero's welcome in the Caribbean, Hennigan said, "It was pretty tough those last few days holding off the team behind me – I was rowing non-stop, but I was determined to finish third.

"Coming into the finish line tonight was just an incredible atmosphere. It was an epic adventure, and I'd absolutely want to do it again."

The 35-year-old was used to the isolation, having been a saturation diver on oil rigs for the last decade.

And the mental challenge was an altogether different battle to the anguish he suffered while addicted to hard drugs in a bedsit in London in the early 2000s.

Hennigan said he turned to heroin after struggling to admit he was gay.

But after fighting back from the brink

of suicide, the Irishman channelled his energies into clean living and endurance challenges which have seen him travel the globe in pursuit of his next thrill.

Speaking to the Press Association on the eve of the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, Hennigan said, "I had a lot of personal struggles.

"I feel like having come back from the brink, that dark place in my mind, I don't feel like something like this challenge could faze me too much – this is just for fun."

Praising Hennigan for his determination, Carsten Heron Olsen of race organiser Atlantic Campaigns said, "We're thrilled to see Gavan in safe and sound following a record-breaking row.

"From the start, Gavan has been one of the most organised participants in the race and I'm not surprised to see him finish third – clearly his preparation and hard work has paid off.

"Gavan's a fantastic example of someone who has used difficult moments from his past to motivate himself to achieve great feats and inspire others in the process."

His crossing – making him the fastest solo racer in the three-decade history of the competition – saw him raising money for Jigsaw Galway and Cancer Care West.

McGowan, the only Irishman to have previously completed the challenge, did so in 118 days.

The overall race winners, Anglo-American quartet Latitude 35, arrived in Antigua after just 35 days, itself a challenge record.

British foursome Row For James arrived four days later and raised more than £500,000 for pioneering suicide prevention crisis centres.



GAVAN HENNIGAN arrives in Antigua having made history in completing the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge.

Northern Ireland has highest suicide rate in UK

NORTHERN Ireland continues to have the highest suicide rate in the UK, according to the latest figures from the British Office for National Statistics.

The statistics show there are 16.5 suicides per 100,000 population in Northern Ireland.

This compares with Scotland which had the second-highest rate at 14.5 per 100,000, followed by 10.3 in England and 9.2 in Wales.

Almost four out of five suicide victims in the North were male.

The *Irish News* has reported that since the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998, more people have taken their own lives in Northern Ireland than were killed during the Troubles.

Professor Siobhan O'Neill, from Ulster University Psychology Research Institute, told the BBC there may be a link

between those decades of conflict and the deaths of some of those who have taken their lives in a time of relative peace.

"Deprivation certainly is one of the legacy issues and we know that those areas that are deprived, that have high levels of deprivation, have also been the same areas that were exposed to conflict.

"Those are the areas where our suicide rates are highest," she added.

That link between deprivation and despair means that the legacy of the Troubles is having an impact on another generation in places like Derry.

Meanwhile, a sports-based charity, founded by former Manchester United player and Northern Ireland international Pat McGibbon, is aiming to promote positive mental health in deprived areas before suicidal thoughts take hold.