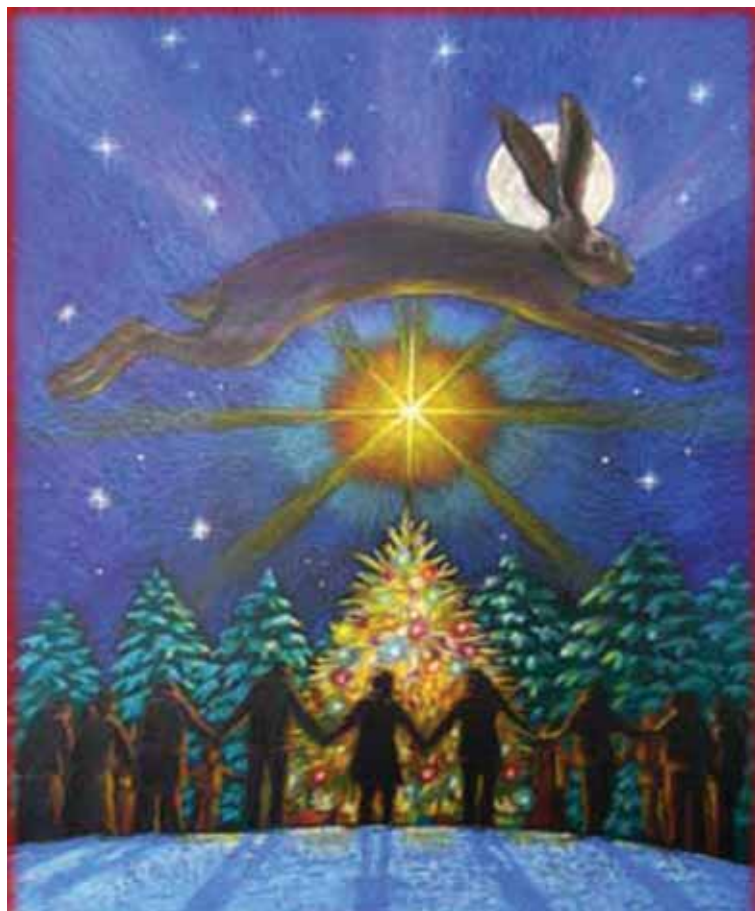


## A Light Among Many: Solstice Arrives in the Season of Stars



ARTWORK by Wendy Andrew  
[More about the artist on page 2 inside]

### Winter Solstice – A welcome return to the light

**W**HEN you look up on a clear night, what do you see? Is the moon visible, does the vast space comfort or isolate you, do the stars stand out? What reaches you?

It is the darkest point of the Celtic year, Samhain into the Winter Solstice.

On Thursday, December 21, the traditional date of the solstice, the Sun will reach its maximum apparent distance from the Earth and turn back, at 8:28 AM (PST). It is the shortest day of the year and the longest night.

Into the dark to witness and experience the return of light it is the eternal promise of the Sun Kings born around the Winter Solstice, or Midwinter.

In the Celtic world, the great fire festivals are lunar, but celebrations of the solstices and equinoxes are beholding to our most visible star, the Sun.

As I write this, it is early December. We are in the season of stars, when night drops earlier, stays longer, and casts a brilliant array into the sky above our heads more visible because the sunlight fades earlier than the rest of the year.

### By CYNTHIA WALLENTINE

To fight off the dark, many install bright lights to illuminate their home exteriors, creating darker shadows, offering a welcome to some who might lurk, and leaking their fear upward.

The escaped light washes out some of the brilliance of a natural night sky in the form of light pollution.

Inside, as seasonal festivals near, decorated trees and other trappings shine quietly, standing for centuries of encouragement to the coming infant light born at Midwinter.

For those who favor a Christmas tree, glistening tinsel, small lights, and ornaments stand for the sympathetic magic passed through the centuries the light of hope, not fear, to support and welcome our returning Sun.

Lights in the darkness, be they on trees, or in the sky, have their own resonant stillness.

The celestial body that drives life on our

planet, the Sun, is a star so bright that it renders invisible all other stars during what we call day, and creates night when the portion of the Earth that we are on, glances away.

When our sun passes beyond the horizon, the sky fills with lights, each with a place in the stellar ceiling, as we slowly rotate here on Earth.

Any human who has viewed this planet after sunset has known the stars, they are a gift of the night.

As well, our moon has its own presence and view, best visible at night and only because the moon can catch and hold the gaze of the Sun from its position in space.

Darkness within, so without. What do those stars say to you?

Do they offer the comfort of a long-ago loved one, or does their guaranteed presence reassure you in our turbulent world? Are they cold and haughty, or warm and twinkling?

Does the eternity of darkness between stars frighten or beckon to you? From an airplane or on the ground, the misty sea above, with its winking lights, guarantees no soul is ever truly in darkness. Light without, so within.

It is the season of stars. Go out tonight, look up. See what you can see and feel. Remember the Sun is returning, as it always will.

Even in the darkest of times, there are lights, kindred souls, common minds, reminders of better things, and days and nights, to come.

Spread across the night sky or the interior of your life, reflect on the deeply brilliant stars that would never be seen but for their place in the darkness. Blessed Be.

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Win a **Macswen one pound haggis and flat of Irn Bru** from Black Pudding Imports in Langley. Check out their weekly sales on Facebook. (See page 11 for more info). Mark your entry Black Pudding. Entry by: December 16. Entries by E-mail only. Mark the name of your entry as 'Black Pudding' and include your name and daytime telephone number. (*Only one entry per person*) Send to: cbutler@telus.net.



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



## Brexit Breakthrough: Divorce Deal Finally Agreed Between UK And EU

**BRITISH PRIME MINISTER THERESA MAY AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION CHIEF JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER HELD A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS TO ANNOUNCE THE BREAKTHROUGH ON THE MORNING OF FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8. [READ MORE ON PAGES 8-9 & 23]**



PHOTO: Visit Scotland

**EDINBURGH** — The Scottish capital really goes to town with all things festive: visitors can take a spin on the big wheel and other funfair rides in the Christmas Gardens, shop at the Christmas markets and go ice skating. New Year's Eve offers an enchanting torchlight procession through Edinburgh's Old Town before the famous Hogmanay street party and a spectacular fireworks display on December 31. *[Read more on page 10]*



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:** Read our exclusive interview with Ireland's Minister of Defence Paul Kehoe who discusses Ireland's role in international peacekeeping efforts and the EU migrant crisis. *[See page 18]*



# A plea from an Irish immigrant for help to find a transplant donor

Dear Readers:

PLEASE take a moment to read this important message from a member of the Vancouver Irish community.

This individual is well-known to many in the local community and would prefer to remain anonymous for the moment. He is in need of a kidney transplant and has requested we share the following:

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to let you know about my medical situation. I have progressive kidney disease and my doctors have recommended exploring the option of receiving a kidney transplant – the best medical treatment for my condition.

Because the wait time for a deceased donor kidney is years, I have been advised to try to find someone who may be willing to donate a kidney to me.

I want to be clear that I would only want a donor who does not feel any pressure to donate. If the idea of donation is not comfortable for you, I want you to know that I understand, and that your decision to not come forward will not affect our relationship in any way.



THE TRANSPLANT TEAM at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver makes the donor's health and well-being a priority. For more information about becoming a donor, go to the BC Transplant website [www.transplant.bc.ca](http://www.transplant.bc.ca).

I've learned it's possible for kidney donors to live a normal and healthy life with just one kidney. Donors are carefully medically screened to make sure it is safe for them to donate.

The transplant team at St. Paul's Hospital here in Vancouver makes the donor's health and well-being a priority. I was also interested to learn donors don't have to be a relative or be an exact blood match in order to donate.

I understand this is an extremely personal decision and there is a lot to think about. If you would like to gather more information, please feel free to contact the donor nurse at St. Paul's Hospital at (604) 806-9027, or go to the BC Transplant website [www.transplant.bc.ca](http://www.transplant.bc.ca).

This is not a commitment to becoming a donor and you can make the choice to step away from the process at any point. You can also explore donation options confidentially or I'd be happy to chat with you about it as well.

If you would like to speak to me directly, please contact Maura at *The Celtic Connection* about my information. You can e-mail her at: [maura@telus.net](mailto:maura@telus.net).

My understanding is that a successful kidney transplant will improve and relieve many of my symptoms and eventually allow me to return to a normal way of life again. Thank you for your care and concern.

## Blessings at Solstice

There is a winter in all of our lives, a chill and darkness that makes us yearn for days that have gone or put our hope in days yet to be.

An endless cycle and yet a perfect model. We need a winter in our lives.

A time of rest, a time to stand still.

A time to reacquire ourselves with the faith in which we live and breathe.

It is only then that we can draw strength from the one in whom we are rooted.

Take time to grow and rise through the darkness into the warm glow of your springtime.

To blossom and flourish, bring colour and vitality into this world, your garden.

Give thanks for the seasons of our lives.



## THE CHRISTMAS LEGEND OF THE BAGPIPES

THERE is a legend in Italy that of all the musical instruments it was the bagpipes that pleased the Blessed Virgin Mary the most.

The instrument, it is said, was the one with which the shepherds of Bethlehem had serenaded her. And thus the one sure sign of the approach of Christmas in Italy is the appearance in the streets of bagpipers, the *zampognari*.

These men, shepherds from the countryside, arrive in Rome and elsewhere in mid-December. For centuries, it was their custom to make their way from one street-corner image of Mary to another, serenading her with bagpipes. Their itinerary is now considerably abbreviated, but they remain heralds of the coming of Christ. – James Monti

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# A time of festive celebration – and a season of reflection

IT IS the season of light and the season of darkness ~ a season of festive celebrations and a season of reflection.

This is the time in our hemisphere when the darkness intersects with the light at the longest day of the year on December 21.

During this beautiful season of celebration, I would like to remind our readers to give thanks for all our blessings, to be generous of spirit and to remember those who struggle daily with loss, poverty and depression.

The past year has been a difficult one for many. A year of seismic changes – both on a global scale and closer to home for families and individuals.

So many beloved souls – both young and old – have passed away and their departure is felt most acutely at this time of year.

And yet, why do we mourn and grieve? No doubt it is the profound loss of our irreplaceable loved ones, but is it also a reminder of our own mortality, how fragile we are as humanity on this planet.

We are all so interconnected, yet at times it is so easy to move along and dismiss the suffering of others.

I pray that all those who have departed us this year have found peace and have been relieved of all burdens or pain they carried in this life.

## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



By MAURA DE FREITAS

The winter solstice is also our reminder of the magnificent continuity of life – out of darkness comes light and we welcome with joy the warmth of renewal and rebirth. It represents the hope of our world.

On December 13, I am looking forward with much anticipation to the annual Irish seniors' Christmas luncheon where old friends will reconnect after such a year of tremendous transformation.

Sadly this will be the last one organized by George McDonnell and the Irish Heritage Society of Canada. We thank George for all his work in this regard.

Thank you also to all those who work to help bring our communities together both in celebration and for support in times of need.

Wishing all our readers and friends a very happy Christmas and a safe and joyful New Year.

Yours faithfully,  
Maura



## For the Record

We want to set the record straight: In our last issue we made an error in the article about Johnnie Fox's Irish Snug in Vancouver. The correct number of seats in the pub should have been just over 50. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

## 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](http://www.paintingdreams.co.uk).

## THE CELTIC CONNECTION

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PHOTO: Scottish Government/Facebook

AUTHENTIC Scottish haggis was ceremoniously unveiled at an event in Toronto showcasing Scottish food and drink in October 2017.

## Known to some as 'Scottish caviar' Haggis is at the heart of every Burns event

**V**ANCOUVER – The Scots know how to get through our darkest time of the year. You just start the party from November 30, St. Andrew's Day, then through Christmas and Hogmanay, until the biggest party of all – Robert Burns Day – and the endless rounds of Burns suppers.

This takes you well into February, and before you can say "Johnny Walker" it's time for the Highland Games.

Local Scottish heritage is alive and well throughout January as pubs, clubs and private parties prepare to pay homage to Scotland's Bard.

Pipers, drummers and Highland dancers are hard pressed to keep up with all the demands, to say nothing of the butcher shops and haggis-makers working around the clock to fill special orders.

Haggis – known to some as "Scottish caviar" – is at the heart of every Burns celebration, and one of the signature recitations is the *Address to a Haggis*. This poem was written by Burns to celebrate his appreciation of the haggis and as a result, Burns and haggis have been forever linked.

The haggis is generally carried in on a silver salver at the start of the proceedings. As it is brought to the table, a piper plays a suitable and rousing accompaniment.

One of the invited guests then recites the *Address to a Haggis* before theatrically plunging a ceremonial knife into aforesaid haggis.

Earlier this year – after nearly half a century – Scot-Canadians were thrilled to learn they can finally enjoy authentic Scottish haggis after the Canadian Government gave the green light to import the produce direct from the homeland.

Since the ban on red meat imports from the European Union was lifted in Canada two years ago, Scottish food companies have been working on haggis recipes that meet Canadian regulations.

Scottish-made haggis was banned from Canada and the U.S. for decades because one of its key ingredients is sheep's lung, which may pose health risks to consumers. But now a new haggis recipe has been developed for export to Canada.



ROBERT BURNS (25 January 1759 – 21 July 1796), also known as Rabbie Burns, the Bard of Ayrshire, Ploughman Poet and various other names and epithets, was a Scottish poet and lyricist. He is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland and is celebrated worldwide.

Scottish Government officials say the new recipe, developed by family-run company Macsween of Edinburgh, does not contain lung and also uses lamb sourced from a Canadian Food Inspection Agency-inspected and approved facility.

"It's great news that Macsween have been able to develop a haggis recipe for export to Canada," Scotland's Economy Secretary Keith Brown said in a news release.

"After waiting 46 years I'm sure there will be many Canadians and expat Scots looking forward to having Scotland's national dish at the centre of their table at the next Burns' supper."

In Vancouver, authentic haggis from Macsween of Edinburgh is available at many premium retailers, restaurants and butchers.

For more details to plan your Burns supper with genuine Scottish haggis, contact: [info@freshconcept.ca](mailto:info@freshconcept.ca).

## Vancouver's St. Patrick's Day parade cancelled again for 2018

VANCOUVER – The Vancouver St. Patrick's Day parade won't be making a comeback for 2018.

Organizers were hoping to resurrect the parade for next year, after having to cancel it this year.

"It's become too expensive," says Harry Cussen, vice-president of Celtic Fest Vancouver.

He says organizers had sought to get special civic status, in order for the city to foot more of the costs, but he says that got too complicated.

Cadillac Fairview, the company that owns Pacific Centre, had been a major sponsor up until a few years ago. The search for another major sponsor has been unsuccessful.

The city had provided some funding, but Cussen says that money didn't go far in covering costs associated with policing, ambulance presence and traffic impact.

"The other grants that we were getting, like from the federal government, have really dropped – like by about 80 per cent, a huge drop."

The parade had run for 13 years.

While the Irish won't have a parade, Cussen points out the festival goes on with concerts, a ceili and other entertainment.

## Snow and Icy Conditions Across Britain and Ireland

Communities across Britain and Ireland are gearing up for a second night of tumbling temperatures as December's icy touch was felt across the country on Saturday, December 9.

The Met Office had warned that rural communities could be cut off as roads become hazardous, with up to 20 centimetres (eight inches) of snow expected in some places on Sunday.

Heavy snow is expected to fall over the Midlands and Wales, thinning into lighter showers as the day progresses.

London and the rest of southern England and Wales will instead be lashed by strong winds and rain, where gusts could reach 70 mph, according to the Met Office.

In Ireland, Met Eireann issued fresh weather warnings for the majority of the country, advising that up eight centimetres of snowfall is predicted, which could cause "slippery paths and treacherous road conditions."

Housing Minister Eoghan Murphy has said that provisions are in place to care for homeless people as temperatures are expected to plummet to -8C.

He tweeted: "Contact with Dublin, Cork, Limerick & Galway has confirmed arrangements in place for rough sleepers. Teams already out in Dublin to help people in ahead of snow forecast for tonight and efforts will intensify in to the evening."



## Celebrating Robbie Burns

Wednesday - January 24, 2018 at 7:00pm

Join us for a fun-filled evening of Scottish music, dance and poetry in celebration of Scotland's National Bard featuring the Celtic group **Blackthorn** and the **Shot of Scotch Dancers**.

Tickets: \$35 Adult / \$29 Senior & Student / \$21 Child under 12

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# Rogue Folk Club

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

<p><b>Saturday, DECEMBER 9</b></p>  <h2>Cool Yule</h2> <p>The Rogue's annual Christmas / Holiday Spectacular, starring gypsy jazz giants <b>Van Django</b> with their unique approach to seasonal songs and featured guests: gorgeous vocalist <b>L.J. Mounteney</b> and harmonica wizard <b>Keith Bennett</b> - plus a few surprises!</p>	<p><b>Saturday, JANUARY 13</b> Pioneering Canadian songwriter <b>Connie Kaldor</b></p> <p><b>Friday, JANUARY 19</b> CD launch with his 10-piece band <b>Jim Byrnes</b></p> <p><b>Friday, JANUARY 26</b> Italian flat-pick guitar virtuoso <b>Beppe Gambetta</b></p> <p><b>Friday, FEBRUARY 2</b> <b>Lynn Miles</b></p> <p><b>Sunday, FEBRUARY 4</b> <b>10 Strings &amp; Goatskin</b></p> <p>and many more to come in 2018!</p>
---	--

**St. James Hall (3214 West 10th Ave.)**  
**Tickets & Info (604) 736-3022**

# Tune in for Steve's annual Christmas show on CiTR FM 101.9 on December 23

## ROGUE FOLK CLUB



By  
**STEVE  
EDGE**

The Rogue Folk Club held a very successful fundraiser at the end of November, with a full house and a silent auction raising over \$20,000 to keep the 30+ year concert series alive and kicking!

There was an overwhelming response, with over 100 donated items in the auction, a few hundred dollars in donations, and a packed house enjoying the music on two floors at St. James Hall.

It was a long evening, commencing at 6:30 PM with acoustic music downstairs featuring the wonderful **Kierah Raymond** on fiddle, and **Michael Averill** on guitar - with special guest **Chris McMullan** from Co. Tyrone on uilleann pipes.

Then we all moved upstairs for some inspired music by **Gabriel Dubreuil** and a new trio, **Stephen Fearing** (a founding Rogue Folk Club member), **Marin Patenaude**, and **The Honky Tonk Dilettantes**.

It was extremely heartwarming to feel all that love and appreciation for the Rogue!

The final concert of the Rogue's 2017 was the annual gypsy jazz Christmas show, **Cool Yule** on Saturday, December 9 at St. James Hall, 3214 West 10th Avenue, with **Van Django** joined by singer **L.J. Mounteney** and harmonica wizard **Keith Bennett**.

It's been a seasonal staple for the past four years, and the band had some new selections again this time. It was a week earlier than usual, because the St. James Hall is having a new dance floor installed the following week!

Also, the rolling pews are being sold off, so if anyone wants some vintage Canadian furniture, just call the St. James office on (604) 739-9373.

We are all very excited about the new floor, and it will be unveiled at the Contra Dance on Saturday, January 6, and the first Rogue shows of 2018 over the following three weekends (**Connie Kaldor** on the 13th, **Jim Byrnes** on the 19th, and **Beppe Gambetta** on the 26th).

Full details of Rogue shows can always be found on [www.roguefolk.com](http://www.roguefolk.com).

I made some Rogue Folk Calendars for 2018, featuring photos I've taken at the Rogue this past year.

They were on sale at the Cool Yule show on the 9th, and will be on sale at the Rogue office on Granville Island in the following weeks (best call first at (604) 732-1305 to make sure there's someone there!).

The Rogue has lots more last minute



PEI favourites Ten Strings & A Goatskin, along with special guests Ben Miller and Anita MacDonald, play on Sunday, February 4.



IF IT'S MUSIC you're looking for...check out The Rogue Folk Club in Vancouver. Local music legend Jim Byrne plays on January 19 and Altan, Ireland's most influential folk music band, plays on Sunday, February 25.

Christmas Gift Ideas. Everything from gift certificates to concert tickets and Parcel O'Rogues ticket bundles.

There are some fabulous concerts coming up in 2018, including a decent helping of Celtic music.

We are delighted to announce the return of Ireland's **Altan** - this time at St. James Hall (Sunday, February 25), and PEI's **Ten Strings & A Goatskin** (with special guests **Ben Miller** & **Anita MacDonald** from Cape Breton, Sunday, February 4).

Scots fiddler **Alasdair Fraser** and cellist **Natalie Haas** return on Sunday, March 11 for an evening concert and an afternoon workshop.

With support from Creative BC, The Rogue is proud to present the first ever **B.C. Fiddle Festival** on the long weekend of February 9-11.

Six fiddlers will each present a workshop in the afternoons on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th, and there will be three evening concerts too.

**Daniel Lapp** will bring a band on the 9th, with **Gabriel Dubreuil** and **Early Spirit** opening the show.

The Saturday concert will feature the very eclectic **Mad Pudding** (featuring **Cam Wilson** on fiddle) and **Jocelyn Pettit**, and on Sunday we wrap things up with **Kathleen Nisbet's Metis Fiddle Ensemble** and the amazing **Locarno** (featuring **Kalissa Hernandez-Landa** on fiddle.) Full details are on the Rogue website.

I'll present my annual **Christmas Special** radio show on Saturday, December 23 on CiTR FM 101.9 and [www.citr.ca](http://www.citr.ca) from 8 AM to noon, with

seasonal songs and tunes you will not hear anywhere else this winter - definitely not in a shopping mall, at least!

The following week I'll bring you music from my favourite albums of 2017 (Saturday, December 30, same time, same channel!).

Amongst those selections you can expect to hear music from such Celtic CDs as *The Blue Room*, the brand new CD by the **Martin Hayes Quartet** (he and **Dennis Cahill** are joined by fiddler **Liz Knowles**, and bass clarinetist **Doug Wieselmann**, who plays with **Laurie Anderson**, amongst others).

PEI's other Celtic trio, **The East Pointers' What We Leave Behind**; Cape Breton quartet **Coig's** second album, *Rove*; new Irish "Supergroup" **Usher's Island** (**Donal Lunny**, **Andy Irvine**, **Paddy Glackin**, **Michael McGoldrick**, and **John Doyle**), and **McGoldrick / Doyle / McCusker's The Wishing Tree**; Newfoundland's outstanding trad. singer **Matthew Byrne's Horizon Lines**; Banjo-toting singer **Daoini Farrell's True Born Irishman**; **Fraser & Haas' Ports Of Call**; **Sharon Shannon's Sacred Earth**; Manx / Scots quintet **Imar's Afterlight**; and **Kierah's** superb CD *Strong Bow*, flying the flag for B.C.'s Celtic scene.

I hope to have the latest **Celtic Colours LIVE CD** by then as well. Not sure if **Eliza Carthy** counts as "Celtic" but her **Wayward Band's** CD *Big Machine* will also be in there somewhere!

Have a great "holiday season," Happy Solstice, and Wassail! (or as Irish comedian Dave Allen used to say, "May your God go with you!")

*Slainte, Steve*



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# A great selection of Christmas gift ideas at Celtic Treasure Chest

**By CATHOLINE BUTLER**  
VANCOUVER – The Celtic Treasure Chest shop is located in the Dunbar area on the west side of Vancouver.

It's a well laid out and merchandised store with room to browse the aisles given the significant amount of product on the shelves.

Owners Stephen Coulson and Christina Ciccone recently celebrated their first anniversary as new owners at the store.

I recently dropped in to check out their new merchandise for the Christmas season.

The shop opened at 10 AM and it was surprising to see the number of customers already in the store shopping.

Stephen was kept busy with customers, so I spoke to Christina about their new products for Christmas.

She said, "a lot of the gift items that we have are British in nature such as tins of biscuits and teas and sweets in lovely packaging with a Union Jack such as the Keep Calm items."

"We have some really nice tins of Scottish fudge along with a wide selection of the little Miss and Mister based on the books."

"We also stock tins of biscuits and hot chocolate, candies and lunch kits for children."

"Christmas puddings are available in various sizes, along with chocolate selection boxes, mincemeat tarts, Marks and Spencer Christmas cakes, and the Marks and Spencer Christmas puddings as well."

"We also have the Mr. Kipling cakes and Battenburg cakes."

Celtic Treasure Chest also offers a whole line of the official Harry Potter, Game of Thrones, and Dr. Who, books and gift items.

For Christmas gift giving ideas, Christina suggests, "anything in tins are really lovely and they are everywhere this year. We have Nuts About Britain tins of assorted nuts."

"We also have some Royal giftware and no doubt we will also have some Prince Harry and Meghan Markle items when that wedding takes place in the spring."

"We offer a whole range of dairy products, meat pies, bacon, sausages, black and white pudding."

"Also, we now have Macsween haggis, imported straight from Scotland, so we are well prepared for Christmas, Hogmanay and Robbie Burns celebrations."

The Celtic Treasure Chest now offers

extended hours for Christmas, open 7 days a week from 10 AM to 7 PM, so there is plenty of time for everyone to get their Christmas shopping done.

The Celtic Treasure Chest is located at 5639 Dunbar Street, Vancouver. For more information, call (604) 261-3688, or visit online: [celtictreasurechest.com](http://celtictreasurechest.com).

## Wasted lives: Astronomical Costs of Alcohol Addiction

VANCOUVER – A report by the CBC has revealed that British Columbia has the highest rate of hospitalizations for alcohol-related problems in the country.

The ongoing opioid crisis and rash of overdoses from illicit drugs has been at the forefront of many people's minds, but the biggest, least discussed addiction on the rise in the province is a legal substance: alcohol.

British Columbians drink, on average, 9.4 litres of pure alcohol each year – the equivalent of roughly 14 bottles of beer or two and a half bottles of wine each week.

Consumption has continued to rise every year since 2012 according to AOD Monitoring Project, Centre for Addictions Research of B.C. with the University of Victoria.

Dr. Keith Ahamad, an addictions specialist at St. Paul's Hospital and a researcher at the B.C. Centre on Substance Use, witnesses the consequences of alcohol addiction first-hand every day.

"It's difficult to see day-in-and-day-out, alcohol consumption is a major, major public health concern," he said.

Last year, at least 36 percent of emergency room visits to St. Paul's and Vancouver General Hospital for substance abuse were alcohol-related. That number is conservative and just relates to cases where excessive drinking was the cause, Ahamad said.



It doesn't include broken bones, car accidents and injuries related to impaired driving, violence caused by someone who had been drinking, or other long-term consequences of alcohol abuse.

"The hospital is literally filled with the consequences of alcohol addiction," Dr. Ahamad said. "The number of people that present to the emergency department as a direct consequence of acute alcohol intoxication day-to-day is overwhelming."

By comparison, 24 percent of emergency room visits relating to substance abuse were because of opioids.

A big part of the problem is the medical system's response to alcohol addiction. He said, "the health-care system has just not been trained to screen for addiction appropriately."

Drinking isn't going to disappear anytime soon, but more needs to be done to reduce the harm. Party season can be particularly challenging for those struggling with addiction he said.

"I think we have accepted that we do like alcohol," said Ahamad. "We also have a culture around accepting alcohol in our society... we just have to minimize those risks."

He emphasized more focus is needed on preventative measures, harm reduction and comprehensive approaches to treating people with alcohol addiction.

In Canada, as a whole, there were more hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions than for heart attacks last year and the cost to the medical system is high, with the average stay entirely caused by alcohol estimated at more than \$8,000.

Drink responsibly over the holiday season. If you or a loved one is suffering reach out for help. Check out the BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services online at: [www.bcmhsus.ca](http://www.bcmhsus.ca). For group support, contact Alcoholics Anonymous [www.vancouveraa.ca](http://www.vancouveraa.ca) or call 24 hours (604) 434-3933. For a list of meeting to support family or friends, see <http://bcyukon-al-anon.org/meetings.html>.



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## TOP 10 CELTIC HITS FOR 2017

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

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

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>Shannon</i> by The Narrowbacks - <i>Arrogance &amp; Ignorance</i> on Independent.                                | 6. <i>An Danna Elegua</i> by Salsa Celtic - <i>The Tall Islands</i> on Discos Leon.  |
| 2. <i>Welcome to Adamstown</i> by Flogging Molly - <i>Life is Good</i> on Vanguard Records.                            | 7. <i>The Queen of Hearts</i> by Offa Rex - <i>The Queen of Hearts</i> on Nonesuck.  |
| 3. <i>Don't Let It Bring You Down</i> by Bela Fleck & Abigail Washburn - <i>Echo In The Valley</i> on Rounder/Concord. | 8. <i>Seileach</i> by Cassie & Maggie - <i>The Willow Collection</i> on Independent. |
| 4. <i>Drums of Chelsea</i> by The Go Set - <i>One Fine Day</i> on ABC Music.   | 9. <i>Antwerp</i> by The Breath - <i>Carry Your Kin</i> on Real World.               |
| 5. <i>Anian</i> by 9Bach - <i>Anian</i>  | 10. <i>Fair Margaret &amp; Sweet William</i> by Jim Moray - <i>Upcetera</i> on NIAG. |

**Celt In A Twist Pick Of The Month:**  
**PETE'S POSSE - The Conversation (Epact Music)**



# Celtic Traditions: Music and gifts along with unique sweaters

By CATHOLINE BUTLER

VANCOUVER – Celtic Traditions shop is located in the Kitsilano area of Vancouver. The shop is mainly known for the beautiful imported wool sweaters, capes, shawls and throws from Scotland and Ireland.

Store owner, Michael Pratt spoke to *The Celtic Connection* about some of the merchandise he could recommend for Christmas gift giving to keep a lucky recipient warm and toasty all winter long.

He explained “This is my busiest time of year and I have lots of sweaters that I bring in from Donegal in Ireland and Scottish sweaters from Aberdeen, along with beautiful blankets from Tipperary in wool and mohair.”

Speaking about his sources, Michael said, “I also have two people supplying shawls, one from Kerry, and a new one from just outside Dublin who is a fabulous designer. His little shawls are really great, light weight and look just beautiful on.”

“My price range for the small shawls range from about \$140 and the large wraps at about \$235, the heavier ones at \$250 to \$300.”

Michael’s sweaters stock is extensive and offers something for everyone.

“We have both hand knit and machine knit Aran fishermen sweaters,” he said. “The hand knits are hard to get but the machine knits are just as nice and more affordable.”

“In our other sweaters, we have pullovers and cardigans for men and women,



MICHAEL PRATT, owner of Celtic Traditions in the Kitsilano area of Vancouver, says all their sweaters are made in small companies in Ireland and Scotland which produce very high quality merchandise.

and you are really getting a quality product.

“These sweaters are all made in really small companies in both Ireland and Scotland, where there may be 25 to 30 people working in these shops and they produce really quality merchandise.

“Many of these shops are located in a small country lane and a lot of these places are really out of the way, so they are really exclusive and wouldn’t be selling to the big stores.”

Celtic Traditions also offers a great selection of Celtic jewellery in both silver and pewter.

Michael is also a great fiddle player and the shop is more than a retail outlet, it doubles as a music school. Lessons are available for fiddle, harp, voice, whistle, bodhran, and concertina students.

Michael was born in England but his mother and father are both from Ireland. His father is from Tipperary and his mother is from Leitrim. He frequently travels back and forth to Ireland.

Celtic Traditions is located at 3721 West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Vancouver. For more information, call (604) 222-2299 or visit online at: [www.celtictraditions.ca](http://www.celtictraditions.ca).



GERARD MAHONY, GM at Mahony & Sons Burrard Landing says Jameson is the number one choice in Irish whiskey.

## Mahony & Sons: A warm welcome on cold winter nights

By CATHOLINE BUTLER

VANCOUVER – Dark, cold and wet winter weather is the time when we crave some warm and delicious comfort food. Mahony & Sons pubs feature a lot of delicious Celtic comfort food on their menu.

There are three Mahony & Sons pub locations in Vancouver – one near the University of British Columbia on the Endowment Lands, one downtown Vancouver at Burrard Landing and the other at False Creek near Granville Island Public Market.

I recently visited the Burrard Landing location and enjoyed one of my favourites on their menu, the bangers and mash. The bangers are Mahony’s custom sausages and really tasty, served with Guinness gravy, roast vegetables and Yukon mashed potatoes...just to die for on a dreary night.

My other favourite is their Irish potato soup which has lots of potatoes and leeks in a creamy broth...it’s a meal in itself.

There are lots of other delicious items on the menu and next time I visit maybe

I can get past my favourites to sample some other delectable items.

Brunch is served on weekends and holidays at the pubs. Live entertainment is also featured and there is a well-stocked bar with Guinness being a big seller.

Gerard Mahony, general manager at the Burrard location said, “in the Irish whiskeys, Jameson is the favourite at all the pubs.”

Both Burrard Landing and the False Creek location have spectacular views of the North Shore mountains and the sea planes taking off and landing. The Burrard Landing location also has the added bonus of the big cruise ships anchoring steps from their front door.

When it’s cruise ship season in the summer, Mahony and Sons at Burrard Landing and False Creek are filled with hundreds of ship passengers when they come ashore. Gerard said luckily they have a list of the cruise ship docking times and staff the pubs accordingly.

For more information on Mahony & Sons, visit: [www.mahonyandsons.com](http://www.mahonyandsons.com).

## New location in Langley, BC for Mary’s British Home Store

By CATHOLINE BUTLER

LANGLEY, BC – For over 38 years, Mary’s British Home store was a destination in the scenic fishing village of Steveston, British Columbia.

This fall, owner and Birmingham-born Mary Carter closed her shop in Steveston and moved to a new location in Langley. A move that brought the 82-year-old closer to where she now lives.

The move was not spur of the moment but a well-thought out decision when two years ago Mary started to see a change in her customer base.

“My British customers started to tell me they were moving and that’s when I started to worry because they were my mainstay customers.”

Many of Mary’s regular customers and old friends have followed her to her new location and now new faces are getting to know her as well.

The shelves still stock the familiar U.K. products such as the jams, marmalades, biscuits, shortbread, specialty teas from England and Ireland.

Other deli items include sausages, specialty bacons, black and white pudding, haggis with a good selection of meat pies and British groceries to name just a few.

Christmas crates have arrived in from overseas and now the shelves are bursting with all the fragrant and mouth watering aroma from the old country.

Mary said, “we have all the good things

like puddings, Christmas fruit cakes some plain some iced with marzipan, Mr. Kipling’s, mincemeat tarts and fruit slices, Battenburg cakes, Cadbury selection boxes, boxed and tinned chocolates and haggis for stuffing poultry and for Hogmanay and Robbie Burns celebrations.”

Be sure to drop in to the new store in Langley and say hello to Mary.

Mary’s British Home store is located at 20435 Fraser Highway in Langley. For more information, call (604) 427-0368.

MARY CARTER (R) is pictured with some of the delicious speciality bacon in her shop.



FOR OVER 38 years, Mary’s British Home store was the go to destination for British products in the scenic fishing village of Steveston, British Columbia.

## Best Christmas songs for the party season

This time of year means all of us are preparing to rock round the Christmas tree, but what are the best songs for getting the festive party started?

Whether you’re catering for a crowd of kids on a Sunday afternoon or a golden oldies party night, pop music has enshrined the youthful hope and exuberance of the festive season for decades

With lashings of seasonal spirit, here are our top picks to make sure you get the most out of Christmas:

1. *Fairytale of New York* – The Pogues and Kirsty MacColl;
2. *All I Want For Christmas Is You* – Mariah Carey;
3. *White Christmas* – Bing Crosby;
4. *Last Christmas* – Wham!;
5. *Happy Xmas (War Is Over)* – John Lennon & Yoko Ono;
6. *Do They Know It’s Christmas?* – Band Aid;
7. *Christmas Wrapping* – The Waitresses;
8. *Merry Xmas Everybody* – Slade;
9. *Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)* – Darlene Love;
10. *Must Be Santa* – Bob Dylan.

Honourable mentions also go to these 10 hits.

11. *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* – Bruce Springsteen;
12. *Christmas in Harlem* – Kanye West featuring Cam’ron, Jim Jones, Vado, Cyhi Da Prynce & Pusha T;
13. *I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday* – Wizzard;
14. *Days of Christmas* – Destiny’s Child;
15. *Jingle Bell Rock* – Bobby Helms;
16. *The Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth* – Bing Crosby and David Bowie;
17. *Step Into Christmas* – Elton John;
18. *Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree* – Brenda Lee;
19. *Blue Christmas* – Elvis Presley;
20. *Driving Home for Christmas* – Chris Rea.



# Ireland's DNA revealed by region with first genetic map

DUBLIN – Are you a Gael, a Celt, a Viking or British? According to a new study, it may depend on where you live in Ireland.

The first genetic map of the Irish reveals geographic clusters that reflect the impact of immigration, invasion, and plantation.

Seven of those clusters show Gaelic ancestry, aligned with the borders of ancient kingdoms, while three show a shared ancestry with the British.

Researchers led by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and the Genealogical Society of Ireland (GSI) have published *The Irish DNA Atlas: Revealing Fine-Scale Population Structure and History within Ireland* in the journal, Scientific Reports.

The landmark study is the first fine-scale genetic map of Ireland, revealing patterns of genetic similarity in 10 clusters, roughly corresponding with the ancient provinces, as well as with major historical events, including Viking invasions and the Ulster Plantations.

These findings can contribute to the diagnosis of diseases in which genes play a strong role, particularly for populations of Irish ancestry.



Findings from this study will be of help to the new FutureNeuro Science Foundation Ireland Research Centre, which is seeking to improve the diagnosis of rare neurological disorders and to personalise treatment.

Edmund Gilbert of the RCSI, first author on the paper, said, "We have demonstrated that the structure emerging from genetic similarity within Ireland mirrors historical kingdoms of Ireland, and that Ireland acts as a sink of Celtic ancestry."

"Additionally, we find evidence of a west-Norwegian-like ancestry that we believe is a signature of the Norse Vikings."

"We also observe the impact of historical events, such as the Ulster Planta-

tions, on the DNA of the people of Ireland."

Co-author Michael Merrigan, of the GSI, said the study challenges the accepted narratives on the origins of the people of Ireland.

"We now get a clearer, scientifically-based map of the distribution and settlement of our ancestral groups across the island of Ireland," he said.

"Historians and students of medieval Ireland have now a wonderful resource on the movements and inter-relationships of our ancestor groups through their DNA."

He said the study will open up new research opportunities for many disciplines, especially those researching Irish medieval genealogies and the history of Irish clans.

It also reveals relatively high levels of Northwest French (probably Celtic) and Norwegian-like (probably Viking) ancestry in Ireland.

"Having a genetic map of the Irish population will be invaluable in studies of the genetic component of some common diseases in the Irish population, especially those diseases which show a difference in prevalence rates across the island of Ireland," said Sean Ennis, a co-author of the paper.

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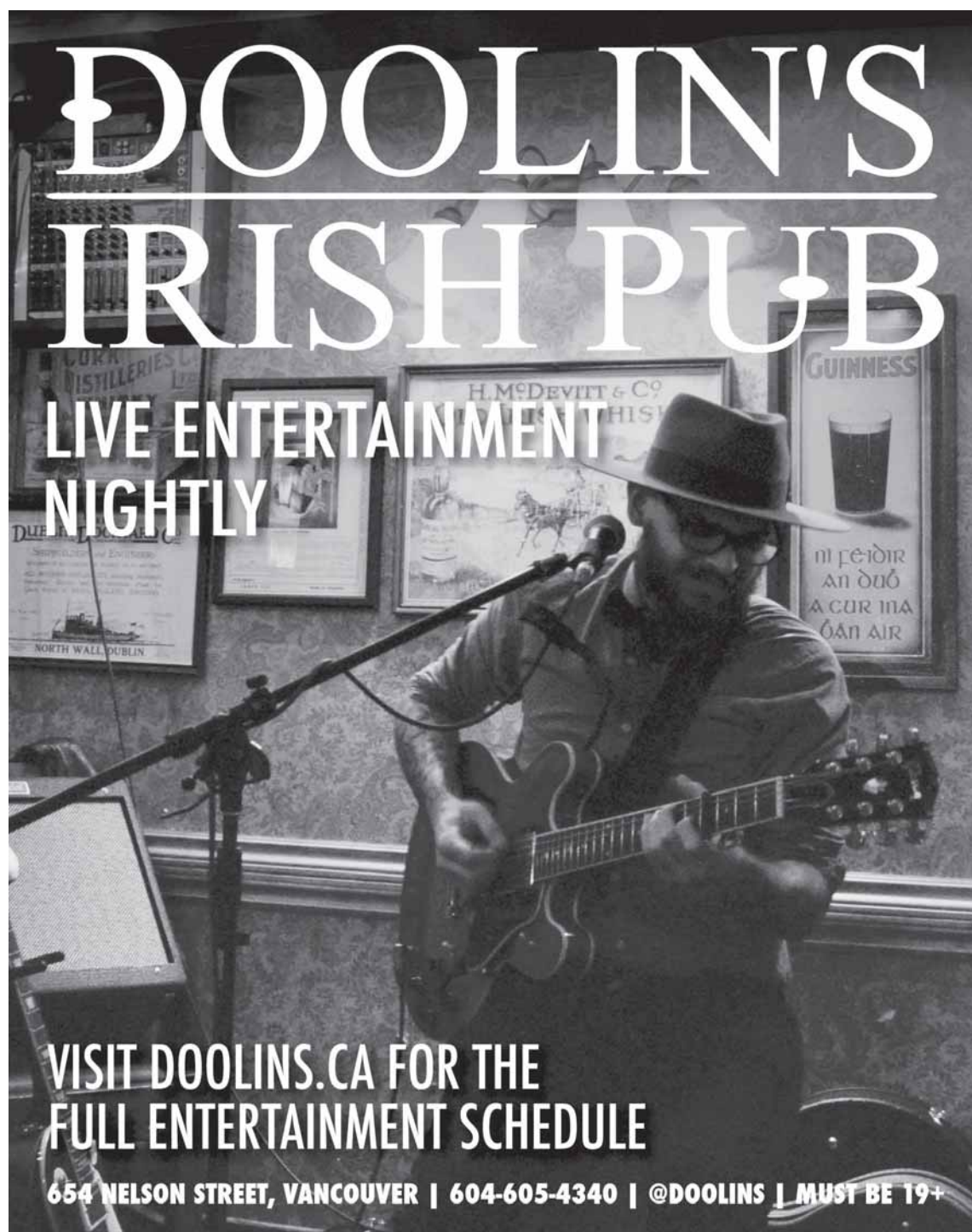
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# Theresa May: 'There will be no hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland'



**LONDON** – British Prime Minister Theresa May has agreed an historic Brexit divorce deal with the European Union, paving the way for the negotiations to move onto Phase II trade talks.

After a pre-dawn meeting in Brussels on Friday, December 8, the prime minister joined European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in announcing the breakthrough.

Juncker announced that “sufficient progress” had been made in the talks to allow both sides to move onto discussions of a future trade deal between the UK and EU after 2019.

May said the deal “had required give and take on both sides” and after “some tough negotiations” she had agreed to the ‘divorce bill’, which is expected to total up to £50 billion.

She also guaranteed rights for EU and UK citizens, including a continuing, time-limited role for the European Court of Justice, and new words on the crucial issue of Northern Ireland.

“I’m confident that we can ensure we both won’t have a hard border in Northern Ireland but will retain the economic integrity of the United Kingdom,” May said.

“In Northern Ireland we will guarantee there will be no hard border. We agreed...there should be no barriers north-south or east-west.”

The deal came after a night of lengthy telephone diplomacy with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) over the fate of the Irish border in any future post-Brexit trade deal.

The DUP, which props up May’s minority government in Westminster, gave the first confirmation of the breakthrough when its leader Arlene Foster announced the whole of the UK would quit the EU single market and customs union.

Foster insisted that “six substantive changes” had been made to an earlier draft agreement on how Northern Ireland would conduct its trade with the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the UK.

But she also made plain she was not entirely happy and that May had forced the issue in order to meet Brussels’ deadline of sorting a deal by the following week, ahead of the EU summit with all 28 national leaders.

“There are still matters there that we would have liked to clarify. We ran out of time essentially,” Foster said. But she added “there’s no red line down the Irish sea.”

May said she would personally commit to the people of Northern Ireland her key pledges protecting the future ‘integrity’ of the province’s role within the UK.

The breakthrough means the UK can now begin talks on a post-Brexit free trade agreement with Brussels.

The EU had refused to progress negotiations to Phase II until a deal was done on the Irish border, citizens’ rights and how much money the UK will pay as it leaves the bloc.



THE BREXIT AGREEMENT opens the way for Phase II negotiations on the future trade relationship between the UK and EU to begin.



JEAN-CLAUDE Juncker’s chief of staff Martin Selamyr tweeted a picture of white smoke emerging from the Vatican, a traditional symbol that an historic decision had been reached.

At their joint press conference, May explained that she wanted the future free trade deal with the EU to be all-encompassing for the whole of the UK, including Northern Ireland.

The PM said that “if that is not the case, we will look to” agreeing a cross-border solution that recognised the “specific circumstances of Northern Ireland” and its “unique” role as the only land border between the UK and the EU.

But EU council president Donald Tusk had the most ominous warnings for Tory Eurosceptics, declaring any transition period after 2019 would mean the UK having to take EU rules without any say over them.

“As you know the UK has asked for a transition of about two years while remaining part of the single market and customs union and we’ll be ready to discuss this but naturally we have our conditions I propose that during this period the UK will respect the whole of EU law including new law,” he said.

“It will respect budgetary commitments, it will respect judicial oversight and of course all related obligations.

“Clearly within the transition period following the UK’s withdrawal EU decision making will continue among the 27 member states, without the UK.”

Tusk added that the next phase of talks would be “much harder” and pointed out that it had taken Britain 18 months since the Brexit referendum to even get to this stage of preliminary agreements.

“So much time has been devoted to the easier part of the task.

“And now, to negotiate a transition arrangement and the framework for our future relationship, we have de facto less than a year.”

## Nigel Farage refuses to give up his £73,000 EU pension

**LONDON** – Former UKIP leader Nigel Farage has been accused of “appalling hypocrisy” for refusing to give up a £73,000 per year EU pension that is set to be paid for from the UK’s Brexit bill.

Farage said he would not give up his pension entitlement, telling the Andrew Marr Show on BBC, “Why should my family and others suffer even more?”

Up to 10 billion euro of the UK’s anticipated 50 billion divorce bill is set to pay for the pensions of EU officials and MEPs, with Farage in line for a £73,000 income after Brexit.

Brussels parliamentarians are due three and a half percent of their salary for each full as an MEP, up to 70 percent of total earnings, funded by European taxpayers.

Farage will have served 20 years by the time the UK leaves the EU in 2019, netting around £7,500 a month.

The EU’s fiercest critic is also reported to be enrolled in a second pension scheme originally set up to top up pensions of MEPs from poorer member states.

The scheme, which 38 of the UK’s 73 serving MEPs are enrolled in, will top up Farage’s pension by £42,000.



FORMER UKIP leader Nigel Farage has been accused of “appalling hypocrisy” for refusing to give up his £73,000 per year EU pension that is set to be paid for from the UK’s Brexit bill..

He will be eligible to claim the pension in 10 years, when he reaches 63, three years before pensioners in the UK.

Reports suggest Farage is also in line for a relocation payment of up to 200,000 euro once he ceases to be an MEP.

Liberal Democrat Brexit spokesman Tom Brake said, “Nigel Farage is a shameless hypocrite. He rails against the so-called EU gravy train, but is happy to cash in when it suits him.

“No doubt he also secretly backs the £50 billion Brexit divorce bill that includes money to pay for his EU pension.”

Asked if he would take his pension despite criticising the size of the UK’s Brexit “divorce bill,” Farage said, “All I can say is, given the arbitrary way the European Union behaves in terms of money, I’d be very surprised if I get any of it.”

## Sterling rises after major Brexit breakthrough

**LONDON** – The pound briefly rose against a host of currencies on December 8, after the European Commission declared that enough progress had been made in Brexit talks to move on to a second phase of negotiations.

In early trading, sterling was up around 0.3 percent against the dollar and 0.4 percent against the euro. It also rose against Japan’s yen, the Swiss franc, the Australian and Canadian dollars and a selection of other world currencies.

Theresa May arrived in Brussels in the early hours of Friday, to stage a joint press conference with EU leaders.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said that “sufficient progress” had been made on all three so-called “divorce issues” – the Irish border, a financial settlement and EU citizens’ rights.

The UK business community immediately welcomed the progress.

“After the noise and political brinksmanship of recent days, news of a breakthrough in the negotiations will be warmly welcomed by companies across the UK,” said Adam Marshall,

director general of the British Chambers of Commerce.

“Business will particularly cheer the mutual commitment to a transition period to support business confidence and trade, and will want the details confirmed swiftly in the new year when negotiators move on to the big questions around our future trade relationship with the EU,” he added.

Stephen Martin, director general of the Institute of Directors agreed.

“The most pressing concern for UK companies has been their EU staff, who have urgently needed certainty about their future in this country.

“We have grounds to hope now that our members will be able to send their employees off for the Christmas break feeling more comfortable about their status here,” he said.

Kallum Pickering, a senior economist at bank Berenberg, said that as a result of this, firms and households will likely expect that a soft Brexit has become more likely.

“Higher business and household confidence from the lower risk of a hard Brexit should underpin stronger gains in long-lived consumption and investment,” he said.



# Brexit breakthrough: 'Politically bullet proof' deal rules out hard border says taoiseach

DUBLIN – Taoiseach Leo Varadkar hailed a “significant day” for Ireland and said the deal reached between the UK and the EU Brexit negotiating team contained a “politically bullet proof” agreement to avoid a hard border.

He was speaking at a press conference in Dublin on the morning of December 8 after the European Commission decided to recommend to EU leaders that Brexit talks with the UK move on to discussions about trade and their future relationship after it decided “sufficient progress” had been made.

## KEY POINTS

The key points of the deal are a guarantee of no hard border in Ireland and that the “constitutional and economic integrity of the United Kingdom” will be maintained.

It has also been agreed that EU citizens living in the UK and vice versa will have rights to live, work and study protected. Special arrangements for Irish people in the UK and British people in Ireland will also continue.

A financial settlement of the UK's liabilities to the EU which is “fair to the British taxpayer” has also been reached.



TAOISEACH Leo Varadkar met with DUP leader Arlene Foster earlier this year.

Varadkar said the Irish Government had “achieved all that we set out to achieve in phase one of these negotiations”.

The deal has been sent to the leaders of the EU 27 states ahead of a summit next week with a recommendation that it be accepted. If it is agreed, then ‘Phase Two’ talks on post-Brexit trade deal between the UK and EU can now go ahead.

The agreement also states that a separate strand of the negotiations in Phase Two will be concerned with Irish issues.

The breakthrough followed an overnight agreement reached between the commission's Brexit task force and Downing Street which prompted British Prime Minister Theresa May to fly to Brussels to sign the deal with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. Juncker said the “result is of course a compromise.”

Varadkar said he was satisfied “sufficient progress has now been made on Irish issues, the parameters have now been set and they are good.”

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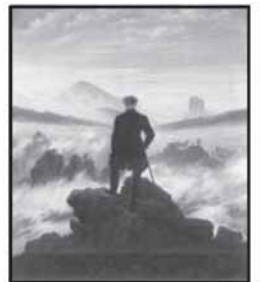
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## Leo Varadkar surges in polls after tough Brexit stance

DUBLIN – Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar's Fine Gael party surged into an 11-point lead in a poll on Tuesday, December 5, gaining credit for the government's Brexit negotiating stance and indicating its recent near-collapse had not hurt his popularity.

Varadkar has played a key role in negotiations over Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, insisting that a tentative deal struck on the Irish border must be fulfilled if talks are to move onto the next phase, as London wants.

Support for his Fine Gael party rose to 36 percent, while opposition Fianna Fail fell to 25 percent. Irish nationalist party Sinn Féin remain unchanged, on just 19 percent.

The taoiseach's own approval ratings rose to 53 percent, while 57 percent of voters said they felt the country was “on the right track.”

That was in sharp contrast to a week earlier when the tánaiste, his deputy prime minister, had to resign to avert a government collapse and election before Christmas, an episode that members of Fine Gael feared would damage both the party and its leader.

## Devil in the detail says Sturgeon as she welcomes breakthrough

EDINBURGH – Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has welcomed a breakthrough in the first phase of Brexit talks but warned that the “devil is in the detail” of the deal.

She said “things now get really tough” after the European Commission announced that “sufficient progress” had been made to move negotiations on to the next phase.

Intensive talks have been continuing after the Northern Irish Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which props up the minority Conservative Government in Westminster, scuppered a deal aimed at resolving the Irish border issue on Monday, December 4.

Prime Minister Theresa May said the fresh deal would guarantee the rights of three million EU citizens in the UK and ensure there would be no hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic.

Sturgeon has said there is an opportunity for those in opposition to unite behind a “soft” Brexit, which would see the whole of the UK stay in the single market and customs union.

Responding to news of the deal on Twitter, she said, “Move to phase 2 of talks good – but devil is in the detail and things now get really tough.”

“If Brexit is happening (wish it wasn't) staying in single market & customs union is only sensible option. And any special arrangements for NI must be available to other UK nations.”

She added, “An aside – a UK Government that is able to say that come what may, it will avoid hard borders with Ireland/Ni after Brexit can never again tell Scotland that independence would mean a hard border between Scotland and UK.”

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson wrote on Twitter, “Good news on moving to phase 2 in EU negotiations. Now, let's talk trade.”

She criticised Sturgeon for linking the developments to Scottish independence, calling on the SNP leader to “give it a rest.”

“Right on time Nicola Sturgeon uses any Brexit development to bang the indy drum. Could set your watch by it,” she said.

In a statement Davidson said the announcement was “a real step forward.”

She said, “Throughout this process, my overriding priority has been to ensure we act as one United Kingdom and no home nation is left behind.

“I am therefore glad that this morning's agreement ensures the integrity of the UK.

“The work on a comprehensive trade agreement with the EU27 can now begin.

“This will require more hard work and patience. But I am optimistic that Britain and Europe can together build a new relationship, underpinned by the ties of trade, shared values and mutual interest. It is in all our interests.”

## BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

After 22 years, Helen Ritchie, owner and operator of Vancouver's premier Celtic shop, is looking for a motivated individual to take the reins of Celtic Creations.

A well-established retail store specializing in the sale of Celtic jewellery, gifts and more, Celtic Creations is considered one of Canada's premier Celtic shops and the “go-to” destination for Celtic wedding and engagement rings. The business has a prime Lonsdale Quay location, a curated selection of Celtic products and knowledgeable sales staff.

This is an exciting opportunity to build on a profitable business with a well-established customer base and strong relationships with key suppliers.

Please contact Helen  
if you wish to discuss this opportunity.  
helen@celticcreations.ca





TEN people were killed when a police helicopter crashed into the Clutha Vaults pub in the centre of Glasgow in November 2013. Among those killed were (top) Tony Collins, Kirsty Nelis, Samuel McGhee, (bottom) David Traill, Gary Arthur.

## Five-year wait for Glasgow helicopter crash 'unacceptable'

GLASGOW – Ten people were killed when a police helicopter crashed into the Clutha Vaults pub in the centre of Glasgow on November 29, 2013.

The three people on board the aircraft, pilot David Traill (51), and police officers Kirsty Nelis (36) and Tony Collins (43), died along with six people in the pub; Robert Jenkins (61); Mark O'Prey (44); Colin Gibson (33); John McGarrigle (57); Gary Arthur (48) and Samuel McGhee (56). Joe Cusker (59), died 13 days after the crash.

Survivors and relatives of those killed when the police helicopter crashed in 2013 have expressed frustration at the

delay when an inquiry into the deaths was announced nearly five years after the tragedy.

The Crown Office, which announced the long-awaited fatal accident inquiry (FAI) on November 24, confirmed that no criminal charges would be brought after the helicopter ran out of fuel and crashed while returning to base on the banks of the Clyde.

The inquiry is expected to start in the autumn of 2018, almost five years after the accident.

Representatives of those killed and injured in the crash said the length of time taken to reach this stage was unacceptable



LOCALS in Castlecary fought to save passengers in challenging conditions with sub-zero temperatures and snow. Thirty-five people died and 179 were injured in the 1937 rail disaster.

## Memorial marks 80 years since train disaster

The Castlecary rail disaster cost 35 people their lives in a freezing snowstorm on a December Friday night in 1937.

Another 179 were hurt in the tragedy when an Edinburgh to Glasgow express ploughed into a stationary train just west of Castlecary – a small village in North Lanarkshire, Scotland.

Among the dead were the seven train crew and an eight-year-old girl.

The crash happened in the evening of December 10, 1937 as the express from Edinburgh Waverley was travelling at high speed in a blizzard.

Both the express and the other train, from Dundee, were bound for Queen Street Station.

The Dundee train was running late and had stopped at signals outside

Castlecary Station when the express train rammed into the stationary carriages.

An investigation after the incident found a signaller error was to blame, with driver error and challenging weather conditions contributing factors.

For years the disaster was remembered by the local people in Castlecary with a makeshift memorial by the side of the railway.

But, keen to create a fitting tribute to those who died and those who helped in the aftermath of the terrible tragedy, Castlecary Community Council created a permanent memorial in 2007, made from railway sleepers, pieces of track and a wheel from a piece of rolling stock.

Victims of the disaster will be remembered at the ceremony this December.

## Scotland's Christmas festivities start way too early in the season



DINBURGH – *Trainspotting* author Irvine Welsh, now a resident of Chicago, once said that he thought Scotland a mundane place until he left it.

When he started travelling he discovered that it "is actually one of the most weird, crazy, eccentric [expletive deleted] places I've ever been."

As someone who has done his share of living in Scotland and leaving it, I think I know what he is getting at.

Take, for instance, the great Greggs Nativity scene imbroglio of mid-November.

For those unacquainted with it, Greggs is a national bakery chain with its origins in Newcastle.

From there, it soon spread north swallowing up Rutherglen Bakery in Glasgow among others. It now has a special place in the Scottish heart (pun intended) with no fewer than 149 stores across the country.

One constant over the years has been the Scottish fondness for Greggs' products.

The all-ages line up for lunch time, pastry-wrapped meat of dubious provenance at the 149 outlets is something to behold.

The sausage roll is a particular favourite. For many years it has even been celebrated with its own T-shirt bearing the slogan "Sex and Drugs and Sausage Rolls," a play on a song lyric by rock star Ian Dury.

Recently someone in the organisation decided that it would be a good idea to promote Greggs' advent calendar and its promise of sundry free treats by replacing baby Jesus in the Nativity scene with a sausage roll.

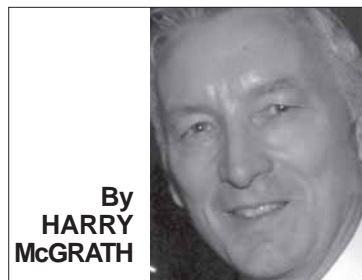
This was too much for some, especially coming on the back of a price rise in October which took the sausage roll to a new high of 90 pence for one.

Christian groups were especially offended and Greggs soon issued the now standard corporate apology about not meaning to give offence etc.

The controversy soon rolled on but it did leave behind some new takes on old carols e.g. "O Crumb, All Ye Faithful."

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Greggs silly pre-Christmas season was that it took place in the middle of November and was late by other standards.

Christmas paraphernalia started to appear in shops here in early October; a phenomenon that is not unique to Scotland but one that had the effect of



By HARRY McGRATH

putting Scottish Halloween in the shade.

On the plus side, this at least muted the annual gripe about current Halloween practices being imported, invented North American traditions.

The supermarkets dutifully put pumpkins next to the Christmas stuff and children could be seen Trick-or-treating, though in modest numbers compared to Canada.

There was still the occasional voice raised in defence of carving turnips rather than pumpkins, guising instead of 'Trick-or-treating and dookin' for apples instead of filling up on sweets, but even those making a case for the old ways know it's a lost cause.

Early November also saw some strange happenings in the centre of Edinburgh.

A big wheel appeared in Princes Street Gardens along with one of those pillars with seats that pulls you slowly into the stratosphere before plummeting you back to earth.

Another of these stomach churners was erected in George Street which parallels Princes Street, a symbol of the rapid expansion of "Edinburgh Christmas" in recent years.

Soon there were myriads of huts selling decorations, mulled wine and toques with tassels.

I attended "Light Night" and the switching on of the Norwegian Christmas tree which is gifted to Edinburgh every year.

Carols boomed over loud speakers and people wished each other a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It was November 19.

All this premature joy was somewhat tempered, at least in those who noticed, by the "ring of steel" around the festivities. It included armed policemen and newly-erected concrete barriers.

If I had to nominate one thing from the various weird, crazy or eccentric things that have dominated headlines in Scotland ahead of Christmas, however, it would be the surprise appearance of the recently-resigned Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale on a television programme called "I'm a Celebrity Get me Out of Here."

I am not sure if there is any equivalent show in Canada but, if there isn't, the country should consider itself blessed.

The idea is that "celebrities" are taken off to a "jungle" in Australia, deprived of all creature comforts and subjected to various humiliating and/or debilitating trials.

In Dugdale's case she was introduced to the doubtful pleasure of wading through fish guts and spiders and was directed to drink a pig anus milkshake.

Booted off in the second round, she now faces the prospect of returning to Scotland to explain to her constituents where she has been (not that they don't know already); face a possible enquiry from her party concerning her unauthorised absence; and deal with speculation that she may be planning to defect to the Scottish National Party or quit politics completely.

In short, when Christmas does finally arrive it won't be a moment too soon.

The calendar has finally ticked over into December so I trust it's not too early to wish all my readers and friends in Canada a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



THE ANNUAL Edinburgh Christmas festival features myriads of huts selling decorations, mulled wine and toques with tassels.

## Thousands of Santas turn Glasgow red and white

Thousands of Santas turned Glasgow red and white to raise money for a cancer charity on Sunday, December 10.

Runners of all ages took part in the annual Santa Dash 5K, starting and finishing in George Square.

A sell-out 7,500 crowd braved sub-zero temperatures for the event, which this year is in aid of the Beatson Cancer Charity.

Since the inaugural race in 2006 the Glasgow Santa Dash has raised more than £200,000 for various charities.





# New 'World Peace Tartan' now available at Tartantown



TARTANTOWN offers a huge selection of everything Scottish in Coquitlam, B.C. Pictured above is owner/general manager Terry Lee with a sample of some of their gift products.

**By CATHOLINE BUTLER**  
COQUITLAM, BC – Tartantown has been an established presence at the same location on Clarke Road in Coquitlam for the past 30 years.

As the name would indicate, this retail shop offers everything Scottish from kilts and Highland dress to a wide gift selection of crystal and jewellery. You can also sign up here for either Highland dance or bagpipe lessons.

With Christmas, Hogmanay and Robbie Burns fast approaching, I spoke with Tartantown owner and general manager Terry Lee about their new merchandise for Christmas, and of course Hogmanay and Robbie Burns are very busy times in the Scottish community.

Terry said, "This year we have expanded a bit more into wool scarves and stoles. For example, we have the new World Peace Tartan."

This tartan from Scottish Creations was created to promote a global message of peace. The light blue colour repre-

sents the presence, hope and potential of the United Nations.

Scotland is symbolized by the purple and green of the Scottish thistle.

The red and black are reminders of the realities of war and violence and the great need for new living culture of non-violence.

The white running through the pattern provides a counterbalance by peace and light.

The tartan was launched on June 22, 2012 when the first ever World Peace Tartan scarf was presented to the Dalai Lama during a visit to Edinburgh.

Also new this year at Tartantown is the Heather Gems jewellery collection, which is made from the root of the heather flower and every stone is unique.

So the store is filled with great gift ideas and has lots to offer for the holidays.

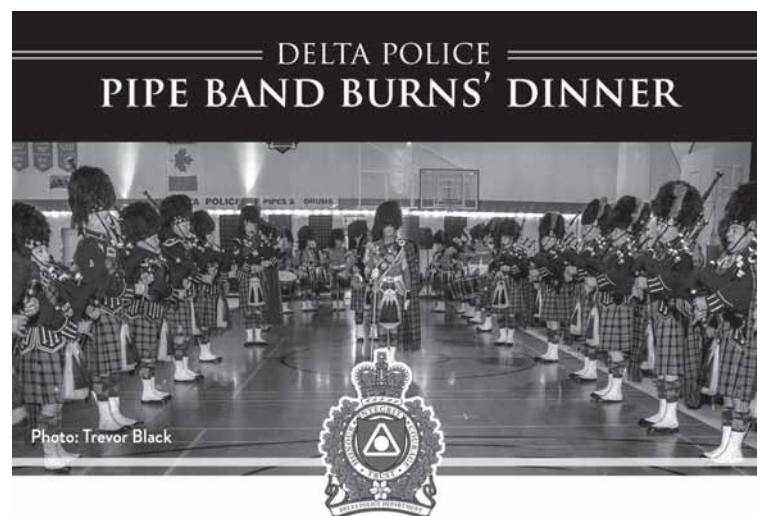
Terry said, "We have two busy seasons for renting the Highland dress costumes. Our busiest is for weddings from June to September, and then December and January for Hogmanay and Burns time is also very busy."

Last year Terry Lee stepped down from his position as pipe major with the award-winning SFU Pipe Band and became an adjudicator on the Royal Scottish Association judging panel, something he really likes doing.

He said, "I actually seem to be going back to Scotland more now than when I was competing with the pipe band. There is more international judging now and I will be going down to New Zealand in March for their pipe band competitions. It's something I'm quite enjoying."

Access to Tartantown just got a whole lot easier with the opening of the new Burquitlam, Skytrain station earlier this year. It is located directly across the street from the shop.

Tartantown is located at 555 Clarke Road in Coquitlam. For more information, call (604) 936-8548 or visit: [www.tartantown.com](http://www.tartantown.com).



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY THE DELTA POLICE PIPE BAND'S BURNS' DINNER CELEBRATION IS THE LARGEST OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD WITH OVER 800 GUESTS ATTENDING OVER TWO NIGHTS?

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## Irish Christmas Traditions

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

### The Wren Boy Procession

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

One such tale tells of a plot in a village against some British soldiers during Penal times.

The soldiers were surrounded and were about to be ambushed when a group of wrens pecked on their drums raising the alarm.

The plot failed and thus the wren became known as 'The Devil's Bird'.

To commemorate this deed a procession takes place where a pole with a holly bush is carried from house to house and families dress up in old clothes and with blackened faces.

In ancient times an actual wren bird would be killed and placed on top of the pole.

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

### The Christmas Candle in the Window

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

Symbolically the candle represented a welcome to Joseph and Mary as they wandered in search of lodgings. The candle indicated to strangers and especially to the poor that there may be an offering of food in the house within.

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

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

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

### The Christmas Laden Table

The centre-piece of the Christmas holiday in Ireland is the Christmas Dinner. After the often lavish meal the kitchen table was again set and on it was placed some bread and milk and the table adorned with the welcoming candle.

If Mary and Joseph, or any wandering traveller, happened by then they could avail of the hospitality.

# Fond Memories of Christmas Past In Ireland



CHRISTMAS really began in earnest on "Big Saturday," the Saturday before Christmas, when we journeyed into town to "bring home the Christmas."

By JOHN SCALLY

It was far and away the busiest day in the town, a fascinating mixture of the Christmas spirit and hard-nosed business.

For me, the big task was to buy seven presents with a solitary pound note in my pocket, the fruit of three months' saving, though setting out that morning I thought I had a fortune.

A set of four hair combs for my grandmother, a half-dozen razor blades for my grandfather, a box of multi-coloured soaps for my mother and sweets for my sisters made up my shopping list.

The market square was buzzing with the "making of the deal," an event which inevitably provoked heated argument, exaggerated claims and affected disinterest and which ended either in stubborn resistance or with warm handshakes and "God Bless you mam and a happy Christmas to you and yours."

The three items sold on the square were geese, turkeys and Christmas trees.

The trees were subjected to intense scrutiny: all trees had to be the genuine article, the faintest suggestion of anything artificial was regarded as nothing less than sacrilege.

In the centre of the square a group of tuneless singers made up a raucous street choir, managing to turn the timeless classic *Silent Night* into a contradiction in terms.

As they were trying to raise money for St. Vincent de Paul and it was the season of goodwill to all men and women I felt obliged to give them a shiny thrupenny piece.

There was the obligatory excursion to the friary for Mass preceded by confession for which we queued interminably.

Despite the solemnity of the Mass, the smell of incense smelt more beautiful than a springtime primrose.

The main shops were then visited.

The prices of the most important items were carefully collated, before necessities as well as luxuries were purchased, stretching family financial resources to the very limit.

A high level of skill was needed to fit all the ingredients for the Christmas feast into the boot of the car.

The highlight of the day was a visit to the biggest shop in town to see Santa Claus.

The toyshop was like Aladdin's cave to my spellbound eyes. I always loved the way the little bell went "ching" as I opened the door.

Armed with a shining two-shilling piece, a gift from my grandfather, the requisite fee for the honour of receiving Santa, I took my place in the queue in a state of high excitement.

By the time we got home, Grandpa had lit a fire when we arrived. Although the light was off, the fire gave leaping flames, dancing shadows and a rosy glow.

On Big Saturday night the decorations were always put up. The Christmas tree was normally the first to be decorated.

After great debate, the nicest cards we

had received were selected and exhibited on the mantelpiece amidst a sea of tinsel and holly.

We cheated by putting two rows of string across the ceiling and hanging up the nicest cards from previous years.

A turnip was carefully chosen to play reluctant host to a tall white Christmas candle, which was neatly adorned with sprigs of red berry holly and dispatched on the kitchen window-sill.

We parcelled our small presents, wrote cards, showing old world people in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century clothes walking about snowy landscapes.

We helped or hindered our mother in putting up the decorations on the tree.

The tree was to be decked out with lovely stars, bobbles, red and green and gold, crisscrossing in a kaleidoscopic display of colour.

On the branches were little candles never to be lighted because my grandfather was afraid of fire. On the top of the tree was a tin foil star.

There were little silver balls, lights like tiny stars and pale-coloured tinsel threaded among the branches.

Near the top of the tree was strung a row of crinkled silver papier-mâché bells, each one with a clapper made from a varnished nut. Round the bottom were set boxes of presents done up in pretty paper tied with red ribbon.

The goose which was to form the main course for the Christmas dinner was plucked and left hanging on the back of the shed door outside.

Disaster struck one night when a mini storm caused the door to open, allowing our two cats to enter. By the following morning, the goose looked rather anaemic.

A crisis was averted when a neighbour gave us one of his geese, in return for a few bags of turnips.

I often wondered if in the middle of the Fourth Century, when Pope Julius I decided that Christ was born on the 25th of December in the year 0, he could have foreseen the implications of this date for turkeys and geese in the years to come.

On Christmas Eve in dark's dull density, the curtains were stripped off the windows and a single candle was put to burn in each sill until the morning.

Then we hung up our stockings near our beds. We borrowed the biggest stockings we could find from our grandfather.

They were to be filled not by Father Christmas but by our grandparents. Torn by longings we were unable to assuage, we were incapable of settling.

Anticipation was always the keenest pleasure. Bursting with impatience, we resolved to stay awake all night, to sneak a peep through the bannister, to catch a glimpse of Santa's red cloak.

The stockings were not to be touched until after the Christmas dinner. Then, the presents were pulled out and examined with squeaks of delight and excitement.



These were muffled as far as possible to let my grandfather have his customary snooze on the chair, a muffling process helped by unwrapping and eating a few bars of delicious Cadbury's chocolate. Our feet hardly touched the ground with delirium.

On Christmas morning we woke early, long before the first faint vestiges of light illuminated the specklings of frost on the hard ground.

We rushed downstairs, drawn as if by a magnet to the place under the Christmas tree, where hopefully Santa Claus had neatly piled our presents.

Competition was intense as to who was to be the first to make the discovery, to shriek out: "He came, He came!" our excitement transmitting like electricity; our shining faces a fitting reward to the idea of Santa.

We always had porridge for breakfast on Christmas morning. My mother assured me that the Celts were responsible for Christmas pudding, which started life as nothing more than a great big bowl of porridge.

It was years later that I discovered that not everyone had porridge for Christmas.

My mother also told me that at one stage the most hated figure in Irish history, Cromwell, had banned all Christmas festivities to prevent people from enjoying themselves.

Cromwell had always been my *bête noir* because of his remark, which never failed to anger me: "To hell or to Con-naught."

His views on Christmas convinced me that he was not just dastardly but daft.

At Mass that morning there was a crush of people.

The attendance was swelled by emigrants home for Christmas, a welcome respite for families divided by economic necessity.

Christmas Eve was a time of delirious reunions as trains and buses to Athlone and Roscommon brought husbands, fathers, daughters, sons, girlfriends and boyfriends home to the bosom of their families.

The later morning hours ran on to the day's highlight, Christmas dinner, roast goose with ham and potato stuffing.

The dessert was to be Christmas pudding boiled in liquid blue flames from a tablespoonful of brandy heated over a candle, and mince pies.

After Mass, preparations for the Christmas dinner began in earnest.

A special tablecloth was taken out from under its hiding place and the best china and delph were rescued from the top shelf in the cupboard.

The atmosphere was as Dickensian as Scrooge after the ghosts.

## Traditional Christmas Pudding

This recipe dates back to the late Nineteenth Century. Although Christmas puddings should be made well in advance, it is possible to make this pudding on Christmas Eve with very successful results.

8 oz currants  
8 oz. sultanas  
8 oz. stoned raisins  
8 oz. Barbados sugar  
4 oz. grated beef suet  
4 oz. fresh breadcrumbs  
4 oz. ground almonds  
4 oz. blanched almonds, chopped  
4 oz. mixed candied peel  
6 oz. cooking apple, peeled and finely chopped  
8 oz. plain flour  
Finely grated rind of 1 lemon  
Finely grated rind of 1 orange  
2 tbsp. lemon juice  
3 fl. oz. stout  
4 eggs, beaten  
1/2 oz. ground mixed spice  
1/4 tsp. grated nutmeg  
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon  
Pinch of salt  
5 tbsp. brandy

Mix all the ingredients together in a large bowl with 2 tablespoons of the brandy. Pour the mixture into a greased 3 1/2 pint pudding basin and cover with a double layer of greased, waxpaper or aluminum foil-pleated in the middle to allow for expansion. Tie string under the rim and across the top to make a handle. Place a trivet in the base of a large saucepan. Lower the pudding into the saucepan and fill with enough boiling water to come two-thirds of the way up the sides of the basin. Pour in more boiling water if necessary.

When the pudding is cooked, pour the remaining brandy over the surface and re-cover. To reheat, boil gently for 3-4 hours. To serve, decorate with a sprig of holly and flambé with warmed brandy, if desired. Can also be served with delicious Devonshire Cream.



# Beannacht Nollaig

Page 1



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## Irish Women's Network of BC

Wishes you peace  
and joy at Christmas  
Beannachtai na Nollaig

[www.irishwomenbc.net](http://www.irishwomenbc.net)

Upcoming event:  
Nollaig na mBan, Sunday, January 7th,  
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our Cherished  
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ALL OUR SUPPORTERS AND ADVERTISERS -  
YOUR SUPPORT HAS BEEN THE LIFEBLOOD  
OF THIS NEWSPAPER.



*Nollaig fé shéin  
is fé mhaise dhaoibh go léir*

A very Happy Christmas to everyone  
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# Merry Christmas

Page 2



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# Beannacht Nollaig

Page 3



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

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

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

## WISHING YOU A HAPPY & SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON for 2018

We will be ringing in the bells for the Irish New Year  
at 4:00 PM on December 31st. Hope we see you here!

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May the sanctity of the home be ever preserved.  
May peace, everlasting peace, reign supreme."*

*- Soundings, Vol. 2, #12*

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# Merry Christmas

Page 4



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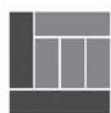
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# Ireland's Minister of Defence Welcomed to Vancouver

VANCOUVER – On Thursday, November 16, the Embassy of Ireland hosted a reception to welcome Minister of State at the Departments of An Taoiseach and Defence with Special Responsibility for Defence, Paul Kehoe, T.D.

Jim Kelly the Irish Ambassador to Canada welcomed the minister to the reception held at Brockton Pavilion in Stanley Park.

Earlier this year, Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney announced the opening of a new permanent Irish consulate in Vancouver by the end of 2018.

[PHOTOS: Courtesy of Brendan Flynn, Chair of the Ireland Canada Monument Committee.]

**TURN to page 18  
in this issue  
for our exclusive interview  
with Minister Paul Kehoe**



PHOTO: Al Harvey  
AERIAL PHOTO of Wainborn Park in Vancouver where the proposed Ireland Canada Monument will be located.

## Ireland Canada Monument fundraising campaign

VANCOUVER – The Ireland Canada Monument project has launched a GoFundme campaign as part of the fundraising effort toward establishing a monument in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The project has been spearheaded by Brendan Flynn and was inspired by the visit of President of Ireland Mary McAleese to Vancouver in 2005.

The Ireland Canada Monument Society was incorporated in June 2010 as a non-profit. All directors and members of the society volunteer their time and efforts to the completion of this historic project.

In June 2017, the Monument Society was delighted to have a site approved by Vancouver Park Board at Wainborn Park, False Creek, Vancouver, British Columbia.

All donations go towards the completion of the project. If you can help support the campaign, please visit: [www.gofundme.com/the-ireland-canada-monument](http://www.gofundme.com/the-ireland-canada-monument).



JIM KELLY, Ambassador of Ireland to Canada (centre), is pictured with (L-R) Lar Quigley, Gertie O'Shea, Brendan Dalton and Ellis Courtney (president of the Irish Women's Network).



GUESTS at the reception (L-R) George McDonnell, William Donnellan, Teresa McDonnell, Gwen McCamley, Tony McCamley.



IRELAND CANADA Monument Project members (L-R-) Claire Fox, Brendan Flynn, Theresa Thoreson (paralegal), Teresa McDonnell.



MAUREEN and Jim Speiran with Maria Eviston. [Jim Speiran is an honorary lifetime president of the Vancouver Irish Sporting and Social Club. Maria Eviston is the new Chairperson of the ISSC.]

### Quote of the Month

CHRISTMAS is a time of giving and generosity so we thought it appropriate to quote this 1 John 3:17 bible passage as a reminder of those less fortunate: "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?"



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# EU Migrant Crisis: Since 2015 Ireland has rescued over 17,000 migrants in the Mediterranean

**V**ANCOUVER – Paul Kehoe TD, Ireland’s Minister of State at the Department of Defence, was in Vancouver last month for the 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference.

Over 500 delegates from more than 70 countries and international organizations gathered along with representatives from the African Union, the European Union, NATO and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie to discuss improvements to UN peacekeeping operations.

Minister Kehoe spoke to *The Celtic Connection* during his visit about Ireland’s role in international peacekeeping efforts along with domestic policy.

## Interview by Maura De Freitas

CC: Welcome to Vancouver Minister. What is the purpose of this conference and what is Ireland’s participation?

PAUL KEHOE: This conference is a great opportunity to meet with and have a conversation with other ministers from Europe and the wider world.

It is a great opportunity also for Ireland to be able to highlight the work that they do in peacekeeping under the UN flag abroad in such places as Mali, Lebanon and the Golan Heights in Israel.

CC: In our current climate of global uncertainty can you speak to me about Ireland’s role with international defence efforts?

PK: Well, Ireland is a neutral country which means that we are not part of any military lines, but that does not mean that we don’t engage and play our part in the various international crisis whether at the EU level or the UN level. We must engage and participate in issues of international concerns.

Ireland currently has 11 missions – 10 land missions and one sea mission.

The sea mission is where the naval service are deployed to the Mediterranean. In July this year, I secured government and Daíl approval to join up with Operation Sophia which is an EU mission in the central Mediterranean where we already had one vessel operating as part of the UN mandated mission.

Previous to this, since 2015, we were deployed to the Mediterranean and rescued over 17,000 migrants, so we have been a huge contributor in the migrant crisis.

We also have a little over 600 troops in 10 different land missions, so for a small country like Ireland to make such an impact is very much seen and appreciated by the UN.

CC: That is a staggering number – 17,000 migrants – that Ireland has rescued in the Mediterranean.

PK: Yes, the Irish Naval Service from 2015 to mid-2017 rescued a little over 17,000 migrants on the Mediterranean.

CC: How has the migrant crisis in Europe changed Ireland’s approach to domestic defence and Ireland’s position of neutrality?

PK: Well, Ireland has always been an active participant in the EU common security and defence policy.

Let me state that the migrant crisis has not affected Ireland’s role and involvement in the common security and defence policy in which we have always positively and actively participated.

In recognition of the migrant crisis, we have recently joined Operation Sophia where we are assisting with the collective efforts to help migrants counter criminal elements.

Of course, this is a change from where we would have been rescuing migrants. Here we are trying to stop migrants from going out onto the sea where there is a huge danger and thousands of lives were being lost.

CC: When you say trying to stop the migrants, at what point are you trying to stop them, North Africa?

PK: Yes, definitely Africa. The migrant crisis is a huge issue that Europe is trying to come to grips with and we are stopping the trafficking on unsafe vessels – where they are putting migrants on unseaworthy vessels – women and children especially.

We believe there is a better way of trying to address the problem than risking so many lives. All of the international aid agencies and humanitarian organizations are assisting there.

CC: I understand that Ireland has been a member of the UN since the mid-1950s and there have been a number of missions where Irish peacekeepers have engaged in combat with loss of lives.

PK: Yes, that is correct. There were a number of incidents but the Siege of Jadotville is probably one of our most high-profile UN peacekeeping missions and one of Ireland’s most painful chapters in this regard.

CC: I understand that the Siege of Jadotville took place in September 1961, during the United Nations intervention in the Katanga conflict in Central Africa.

PK: Yes, at the Siege of Jadotville, Ireland’s ‘A’ Company, 35th Battalion, showed great collective courage and bravery and there were no lives lost.

I was privileged earlier this year to take the decision to honour these men with a specific medal. There was also a Netflix movie about the Siege of Jadotville brought out last year and it is an absolutely amazing piece of footage.

Jadotville was one of many incidents that highlights the reality of an often difficult situation facing peacekeepers deployed to areas of conflict and instability, and it is inevitable that these people risk their lives on these missions.

So, we must always do whatever we can to ensure that they are trained and equipped to minimize the risks that they face to the greatest extent possible.



PHOTO: www.paulkehoe.com

IRELAND’S Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Paul Kehoe, T.D., presented the International Operational Service Medal to some 70 serving and retired members of the Permanent Defence Force at a ceremony held in Dún Laoghaire Harbour in November 2016. The Irish naval personnel took part in the mission to rescue migrants in the Mediterranean and included crew members who served on board the L.É. James Joyce, the L.É. Eithne, the L.É. Niamh and the L.É. Róisín.



IRISH NAVAL vessel L.É. Niamh has participated in the humanitarian response in the Mediterranean and helped rescue hundreds of migrants from unseaworthy crafts.

*“The Siege at Jadotville was one of many incidents that highlight the reality of an often difficult situation facing peacekeepers deployed to areas of conflict and instability, and it is inevitable that these people risk their lives on these missions.”*

That is why I recently did a review of 350 Irish defence force members who are going on peacekeeping duties to Lebanon and they would have done a rigorous training exercise over a long number of months dealing with all types of situations that might happen when they are on active duty.

CC: You also mentioned Mali earlier which is another very dangerous mission.

PK: Well Mali was highlighted by Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the Under-Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations over the last two days at the conference.

He spoke about Mali and the whole part

of central Africa which is war-torn and where there are huge challenges and difficulties.

Ireland has peacekeepers in Mali training the local armed forces and I know there are a number of other countries also contributing troops there.

I will visit Mali along with the Irish prime minister the week after next to pay tribute to the Irish peacekeepers who are out there and to honour the work that they are doing there.

CC: Has social media had any impact on Ireland’s approach to domestic defence? I understand Taoiseach Leo Varadkar recently tweeted a photo of a meeting with Ireland’s national defence

leadership that created some controversy and concern about national security.

PK: Well social media has changed many aspects of modern society and one thing it has done is to make the sharing of information a lot easier and a lot faster.

Within the Irish defence force we have our own social media policy and once you put something out on social media, it cannot be retracted.

As minister my biggest fear is that if anything was to happen to any peacekeeper abroad, it is often on social media before it even gets back to the families.

But, let me state that we use social media for our recruitment campaigns and it is a very important factor for any defence force recruitment campaign across the world. We rely on social media to attract new members to our defence force, and we do that very effectively.

CC: In closing minister is there anything you feel important to convey to the local Irish community?

PK: Absolutely. What I would like to say is that Canada and Ireland have a long history with very close ties.

While many Irish people have emigrated to Canada over the years, in recent years over 10,000 working holiday visas have been available to Irish people to come to Canada.

This has provided a great opportunity for many Irish people to experience life here in Canada like they did in Australia and America.

I would like to say that there is a huge number of well-educated young Irish people with a skill set that I know will be an asset to the Canadian workforce. There is also a tremendous amount of trade between Ireland and Canada.

I know that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was in Ireland in July and our Taoiseach Leo Varadkar had a return visit here in August. Our former Taoiseach Enda Kenny was here as well.

Also, the increase in direct flights from different parts of Canada into Dublin has made it a lot easier for Irish people to come to Canada. In addition, well in excess of 200,000 Canadians visit Ireland every year.

I understand that traffic has increased over 56 percent in the last three years which is really significant.

Our Ambassador Jim Kelly does an absolutely brilliant job out here and he will be assisted with the opening of a new consulate office here in Vancouver in 2018.

While in British Columbia, I was delighted to meet Premier John Horgan whose parents were both Irish-born in Cork. There is a huge amount of political Irish connections here in Canada.

Here in Vancouver, I was delighted to meet with members of the new Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce where it is all new young Irish entrepreneurs making a difference to the economy here in British Columbia.

[Ireland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney has announced the opening of a new permanent Irish consulate in Vancouver by the end of 2018.]



# Slave Auction in Libya Caught on Camera by CNN

Footage released last month by the U.S. network CNN shows men being sold at a human auction in Libya.

After receiving the grainy footage, CNN journalists travelled to the north African country to verify the authenticity of the tape. There, they secretly filmed an auction outside the Libyan capital of Tripoli.

Many of those being sold are African migrants trying to make their way to Europe. Hundreds of thousands of migrants have crossed the Sahara and the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe.

Thousands die on the journey and those who make it arrive in Libya virtually penniless, making them vulnerable to modern-day slave traders.

They're refugees fleeing conflict or economic migrants in search of better opportunities in Europe. Most have sold everything they own to finance the journey through Libya to the coast and the gateway to the Mediterranean.

But a recent clampdown by the Libyan coastguard means fewer boats are making it out to sea, leaving the smugglers with a backlog of would-be passengers on their hands. So the smugglers become masters, the migrants and refugees become slaves.

The undercover reporters witnessed a dozen men being sold at a slave auc-



UN ENVOY TO LIBYA, Martin Kobler, talks to illegal migrants during a visit at a detention centre in the Libyan capital Tripoli on February 21, 2017.

tion and the report led to protests outside Libya's embassy in Paris and widespread calls for an investigation.

CNN was also informed of the location of at least nine auctions, however, "there are believed to be many more."

According to the UN, there are now approximately 700,000 migrants in Libya.

As the route through north Africa becomes increasingly fraught, many migrants have relinquished their dreams of ever reaching European shores.

This year, more than 8,800 individuals have opted to voluntarily return home on repatriation flights organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

In a statement, the UN has called for "urgent action to end [Libya's] trade in enslaved people. It is now clear that slavery is an outrageous reality in Libya.

"The auctions are reminiscent of one of the darkest chapters in human history, when millions of Africans were uprooted, enslaved, trafficked and auctioned to the highest bidder."

## Simon Coveney appointed Ireland's new Tánaiste

DUBLIN – Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has announced Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney as the new tánaiste (deputy prime minister).

The Cork South Central TD and Varadkar's rival during the Fine Gael leadership contest will replace Frances Fitzgerald who resigned over her handling of a police whistleblower scandal.

The new appointment was announced in the Dáil on November 30.

Varadkar said in appointing Coveney as tánaiste he was "very conscious of the important role he plays as Minister of Foreign Affairs, as minister responsible for Brexit."

He added, "I believe his appointment as tánaiste and deputy prime minister will enhance his position in representing the government overseas in the negotiations currently underway."

The government was plunged into crisis when Fianna Fail's Micheal Martin threatened to bring down Ireland's minority government over Fitzgerald's handling of the Garda whistleblowing scandal involving Sergeant Maurice McCabe.

Hours before she faced a motion of no confidence vote the former tánaiste resigned, saying she had put the national interest ahead of her political career by stepping down to avoid an "unwelcome and potentially destabilising" election.

Her resignation brought the country back from the brink of a snap election.

Fianna Fail, which props up Varadkar's government, wanted Fitzgerald out over



PHOTO: Office of the Taoiseach  
THE TAOISEACH Leo Varadkar (centre) at government buildings in Dublin with his new appointments (L-R) Josepha Madigan, the new Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; Leo Varadkar; Heather Humphreys, the new Minister of Business, Enterprise and Innovation; and Simon Coveney, the new tánaiste (deputy prime minister).

her involvement in the long-running police scandal, which revolves around her knowledge of an aggressive legal strategy against a police officer during a private inquiry in 2015.

The scandal relates to e-mails dating back to 2015, released by the Department of Justice.

The e-mail show that Fitzgerald was aware of a controversial legal strategy to target Sergeant McCabe at a private judge-led inquiry into claims of wrongdoing.

The contents contradict claims by Fitzgerald – who was justice minister in 2015 – that she only learned of the approach being taken by lawyers in 2016.

As part of the taoiseach's reshuffle following Fitzgerald's resignation, Heather Humphreys was nominated as the new Minister for Business.

This led to the promotion to cabinet of Josepha Madigan to replace Humphreys as Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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# After 56 years, Irish soldiers awarded medals for Siege of Jadotville

DUBLIN – Irish soldiers who fought in the Siege of Jadotville have been awarded medals, 56 years after the five-day siege in September 1961.

Dozens of veterans and relatives of those who served in 'A Company' 35th Battalion were presented with An Bonn Jadotville (The Jadotville Medal) during a ceremony at the Custume Barracks in Athlone on December 2.

The specially commissioned medal depicts a Celtic warrior, and is inscribed in Irish with the words bravery, defence and calm.

The siege happened during Ireland's peacekeeping mission in the Congo on September 13, 1961.

During the seige, a contingent of 155 Irish soldiers held out for five days against a force of 3,500-5,000 heavily armed mercenaries until they ran out of ammunition, food and water.

A number of efforts to get reinforcements to them failed, and they were finally forced to surrender.

No Irish soldier lost his life during the siege, but a number were wounded.

A medals board at the time denied them the honour and for many years those



THE SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED An Bonn Jadotville medal was given to the members of 'A Company' and relatives of their late comrades. The medal depicts a member of the Fianna, with sword and shield.

events in the Congo went unrecognised by the Irish State and the Defence Forces.

Minister of State for Defence Paul Kehoe and former Taoiseach Enda Kenny decided to award a medal to the men of 'A Company' in June 2016.

At the recent ceremony, as Minister Kehoe presented the medal, he spoke



SOLDIERS of 'A Company' Irish Defence Forces UN in the Congo in 1961. The small company of 155 Irish soldiers held out for five days at the Siege of Jadotville against an overwhelming force of up to 5,000 heavily armed mercenaries. For many years those events went unrecognized by the Irish State and the Defence Forces and the medals board denied them the honour until their bravery was finally recognized in 2016.



THE CEREMONY at the Custume Barracks in Athlone on December 2 marks the culmination of a campaign of decades to have the service of 'A Company' rightfully recognised.

about the words on An Bonn Jadotville.

He explained they were carefully chosen in order to pay tribute to the courageous actions of the men of 'A Company'.

"The words state *cosaint chalma* (which means "valiant defence") and *misneach* (which means "courage")," he said.

The word "Jadotville" is depicted on the clasp of the medal and the medal ribbon represents a combination of an Irish tricolour and the United Nations Operation in Congo mission medal.

Speaking at the ceremony, the minister told the soldiers and family members, "the retelling of the events at Jadotville does not and cannot reflect the incredible reality of what happened during the siege and its aftermath."

## Lord Kilclooney withdraws tweeted 'Indian' remark

BELFAST – Former senior Ulster Unionist Lord Kilclooney has withdrawn a tweet in which he described Irish Taoiseach (prime minister) Leo Varadkar as "the Indian."

The Northern Ireland peer said he used the term as shorthand for Varadkar as he "couldn't spell his name."

He later withdrew the remark because of the "upset and misunderstanding caused."

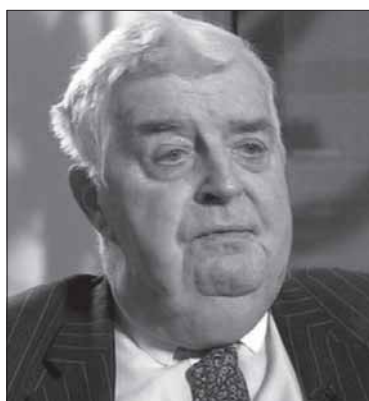
Sinn Féin's Alex Maskey and Alliance Party deputy leader Stephen Farry both described the November 23 tweet as racist.

Kilclooney's tweet came in reply to comments by the Irish Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney who said he would like to see a united Ireland "in his political lifetime."

"Simon Coveney is stirring things up," wrote Kilclooney, "Very dangerous non statesman like role! Clearly hoping to undermine the Indian."

The comments sparked a Twitter storm and led to an onslaught of accusations that to use the term was racist.

In a follow-up tweet, Kilclooney re-



FORMER senior UUP member Lord Kilclooney.

sponded, "Certainly not racism but shorthand for an Indian surname which I could not spell.

"I should have said PM and not used Indian as shorthand for his name which I must learn to spell correctly.

"This has caused upset and misunderstanding and so I withdraw it. I am no way racist and accept that Varadkar is 100 percent an Irish citizen."

Leo Varadkar was born in the Republic and is of Indian heritage. He was elected taoiseach in June this year.

## Settlement reached in claims following Berkeley balcony collapse

DUBLIN – A settlement has been reached of all claims against a number of parties following the Berkeley balcony collapse which killed six students and injured another seven.

Five Irish students and one Irish-American student lost their lives in the early hours of June 16, 2015.

They were 21-year-olds Lorcán Miller, Eimear Walsh, Olivia Burke, Nicolai Schuster and Eoghan Culligan.

Irish-American Ashley Donohoe (22), who also died in the incident, lived in California and was a cousin of Olivia Burke.

A further seven Irish students were seriously injured when the balcony collapsed during a twenty-first birthday party. The students were spending a summer in California on a J1 visa.

The students injured in the incident were Hannah Waters, Clodagh Cogley, Niall Murray, Sean Fahey, Jack Halpin, Conor Flynn and Aoife Beary, all aged between 20 and 22.

The terms of the settlement are confidential. A statement issued by Walk up Law Office, who represented all of the



THE SIX STUDENTS who died after a balcony collapsed in Berkeley, California. (Clockwise from top left) Eimear Walsh, Eoghan Culligan, Olivia Burke, Lorcán Miller, Ashley Donohoe, and Nicolai Schuster.

Irish victims of the tragic incident, confirmed settlements had been reached of all claims against BlackRock Realty Advisors and Greystar RS California, and their related affiliates.

"BlackRock and Greystar have adopted policies and procedures regarding the inspections of balconies on the properties that they own or manage on a regu-

larly scheduled basis," the statement said.

The parties also have agreed to work to promote greater awareness of balcony safety issues and take appropriate actions to prevent future tragedies of this nature. A report earlier this year highlighted problems with water proofing and dry rot damage at the complex.



# Irish Women's Network of BC celebrates 20 years

VANCOUVER – When the first meeting of the IWN was held in 1998, little did the organizers think that 20 years later the IWN would still be going strong, connecting women and inspiring women's networks to form in other parts of Canada.

From the first group meeting in Burnaby Library to the online network via e-mail and social media for the last 20 years, Irish women have provided support and networking opportunities for women and more recently, for Irish newcomers to Vancouver.

Now the IWN wants your input. They want your ideas, suggestions and comments for the 20th anniversary.

How do you think it should be celebrated? What impact has the IWN made on your life or others? Do you want to volunteer to help?

Please complete a very quick online survey to answer these and other questions to help celebrate 20 years of the Irish Women's Network at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/20thAnnivIWN](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/20thAnnivIWN).

For more information about the IWN, e-mail: [irishwomensnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:irishwomensnetwork@gmail.com).

## IRISH WOMEN'S NETWORK OF BC



MICHELINE SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON – granddaughter of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Ireland's most famous suffragette – presented a public lecture at Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre Campus on Wednesday, November 8. Her presentation was part of her USA/Canada lecture tour recreating her grandmother's lecture tour in 1918, and which is being filmed for a documentary. Micheline is pictured above (front/centre) along with (L-R) Ita Kane-Wilson (IWN), Dara Culhane, Roisín Sheehy-Culhane, and Patricia Jarvis (IWN).

## HEMOCHROMATOSIS: Don't let the Celtic Curse be your Christmas surprise

By IAN HILLEY

It is the season of giving. It is the season rooted in the story of birth. Birth is amazing, exciting and wonderful. Who knew birth triggers a genetic clock that can trigger a health time bomb.

My mum survived the Blitz during the Second World War; her parents were from Manchester and Wiltshire.

My dad was from Clydeside in Glasgow, Scotland and was a regular blood donor in the United Kingdom, being honoured with a gold pin to recognize over 50 donations.

Who knew that they would produce a child with haemochromatosis, or as we say here in Canada, "hemochromatosis"? No one! At least not until some 50 years after my birth.

I count myself lucky. I found out that I had hemochromatosis after a routine annual medical available to anyone in Ontario.

I saw a different physician than my regular family physician. In addition, to the regular blood tests he performed a ferritin test.

In a subsequent visit I received the feedback that my ferritin was high (about 700 ng/mL versus the typical range of 25 – 300 ng/mL for a male).

Having shared my family history, a Cockney with Glaswegian roots, I was sent to a hematologist to investigate the possibility of hemochromatosis. Hemo what? Too much iron. What? Why? How?

I had the good fortune to discover I had the disorder. After de-ironing, involving bi-weekly trips to see the hematologist, I learned that I could manage the disorder through regular blood testing for ferritin and occasional blood donations.

The surprisingly simple treatment – giving blood on a regular basis – is effective in managing the condition for most people and more often than not the blood can be donated to the Canadian Blood Services.

Nearly two-thirds of the 125,000 Canadians with hemochromatosis, the Celtic Curse, don't know they have it, and thus are at risk of severely debilitating or even fatal health impacts.

This disorder is most frequently seen in



IAN HILLEY, past president of the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society.

Canadians whose families have come from Northern Europe, in particular, France, Ireland and the UK. The disorder affects one in 83 Irish people.

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

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

The treatment involves simply taking blood on a regular basis, which helps the body to reduce its iron to normal levels.

I shared my diagnosis with my mum, dad, sister, spouse and daughters. My sister does not have hemochromatosis but she could be a carrier.

My daughters are not experiencing any symptoms of hemochromatosis but they are young women and will have the genetic test.

My mum, who sadly passed away this year, was unhappy that she had shared this genetic gift with me.

I monitor my condition with a made-in-Canada, free to download app, "Iron Tracker" developed by Professors Gary Grewal and Andrew Hamilton Wright of the University of Guelph.

The app has been downloaded more than 3,500 times and has been in use in 38 countries around the world since the fall of 2014

I have just retired as president of the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society.

It is estimated that 80,000 of the 125,000 Canadians with hemochromatosis do not know they have it.

Until recently, medical professionals were taught this was a rare disorder, so some doctors may not be fully alert to the symptoms and risks.

"It is very important to think of hemochromatosis early because the later effects are not reversible and can result in severe illness," said Dr. Sam Krikler, Regional Department Head of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology for the Fraser Health Authority, British Columbia.

It is the time for giving. So if you have hemochromatosis and want to help the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society, help those who are newly diagnosed, or are investigating a diagnosis for their symptoms, please make a donation at [www.toomuchiron.ca](http://www.toomuchiron.ca).

If you know someone who might have hemochromatosis, or want information on Canada's most common genetic disorder please go to [www.toomuchiron.ca](http://www.toomuchiron.ca) or phone 1-877-223-4766.

Many of us will be looking forward to the surprises that will await under the Christmas tree.

Make sure that you know that you have hereditary hemochromatosis – don't let this diagnosis be a surprise and be too late to make a difference.

[One in 300 Canadians, mainly of northern European descent, are at risk for hemochromatosis. Most are unaware of the condition. The Canadian Hemochromatosis Society's mission is to promote the early diagnosis, screening and testing of hereditary hemochromatosis through its awareness-raising programs in medical communities and with those at risk, to see an end to suffering and premature death related to the disorder.

Please support this mission with a donation to the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society, 285 – 7000 Minoru Blvd., Richmond, BC V6Y 3Z5. More information can be found at [www.toomuchiron.ca/celtic](http://www.toomuchiron.ca/celtic).]



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Are you of Celtic or northern European heritage?

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What is iron **OVERLOAD**?

Visit [www.TooMuchIron.ca/celtic](http://www.TooMuchIron.ca/celtic) to take the self-assessment.

**Canadian HEMOCHROMATOSIS SOCIETY**  
Société canadienne de l'hémochromatose

Help us promote awareness of Hemochromatosis and save lives.  
Please send your donation today to:  
Canadian Hemochromatosis Society  
285 – 7000 Minoru Blvd., Richmond, BC V6Y 3Z5



## Pope Francis' call to change Lord's Prayer divides theologians

A call by Pope Francis to change the wording of the Lord's Prayer has divided opinion among theologians.

The Pope objected to a line in the prayer, also known as the Our Father, that asks God to 'lead us not into temptation.'

The religious verse is spoken by millions every day and is believed by Christians to be a translation of the original Aramaic prayer Jesus entrusted to his disciples.

Speaking to the media in Italy, the 80-year-old cleric said the wording should be changed to reflect that it is not God who leads humans to sin.

"It is not a good translation because it speaks of a God who induces temptation," he said.

"I am the one who falls. It's not him pushing me into temptation to then see how I have fallen. A father doesn't do that, a father helps you to get up immediately. It's Satan who leads us into temptation - that's his department."

He noted that the Catholic Church in France had already adapted the prayer to say 'do not let us fall into temptation'.

## 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, MJ, CC, CKB, MPD, LRLS

### Novena to St. Anthony

O Holy St. Anthony, gentlest of Saints, your love for God and charity for his creatures, made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers. Encouraged by this thought, I implore you to obtain for me (request). O gentle and loving St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms; and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. Amen. — SVS

### Novena to St. Clare

God of mercy you inspired Saint Clara with the love of poverty. By the help of her prayers may we follow Christ in poverty of spirit and come to the joyful vision of your glory in the Kingdom of Heaven. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. — SVS

Publication of this prayer is \$25 monthly (Canadian residents include 5% GST)

# Buncrana pier tragedy: Sean McGrotty was a 'wonderful partner and father,' said wife Louise James after verdicts

DONEGAL – Louise James, the Northern Ireland mother from Derry who lost her partner, two sons, mother and sister in the Buncrana pier tragedy has said she hopes lessons are learned and paid tribute to Sean McGrotty as a "wonderful" partner and father.

Sean McGrotty (49), his sons Mark (12) and Evan (8), their grandmother Ruth Daniels (59) and aunt Jodie Lee Daniels (14) died when their car slid from Buncrana pier in Co. Donegal into Lough Swilly on Sunday, March 20, 2016.

A jury found the five victims died by misadventure following a two-day inquest in Buncrana, Co. Donegal, near where the accident happened.

The jury described it as a "heartbreaking tragedy" and recommended national guidelines for all piers and slipways across Ireland.

A post-mortem examination found that driver of the car Sean McGrotty was more than three times over the legal drink-driving limit, a pathologist told the inquest in Buncrana.

He was found to have consumed 159 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood, when the drink-drive limit is only 50.

That could indicate an "element" of intoxication, pathologist Dr. Catriona Dillon told an inquest, however she could not say how this affected his ability on the day.

McGrotty's four-month-old baby Rioghnach was saved by heroic rescuer Davitt Walsh who entered the freezing waters of Lough Swilly in response to the distressed cries of the children and pleas for help from their father.

Louise James was in Liverpool at the time of the tragedy. The inquest was



FORMER Ballymena United footballer Davitt Walsh heroically dived into the water and saved four-month-old Rioghnach-Ann, the sole survivor of the tragedy.

told she had a "feeling" something terrible had happened at around the time all five perished in Buncrana.

She had just arrived back in Northern Ireland at the airport when she was told of the devastating news.

Speaking outside the inquest, family solicitor Owen Gallagher read out a statement on behalf of Louise.

In it, she said, "It is with a heavy heart and great sadness that I have listened to all the evidence that has emerged during the course of this inquest.

"There are simply no words capable of expressing my pain, my disbelief and anger over what happened that day.

"My heart is shattered. Every moment of every day is filled with thoughts of my beautiful boys Mark and Evan, my mother Ruth, my sister Jodie Lee and my partner Sean.

"The one ray of sunshine in my life is my daughter Rioghnach who survived this horrible tragedy and for that I must once again thank Davitt and all the others who helped to save her on that day."

The statement continued, "I firmly believe the slipway should have been closed to the public or else proper warn-



EVAN MCGROTTOY, aged eight, died alongside his father Sean McGrotty (49), 12-year-old brother Mark, grandmother Ruth Daniels, 59, and her 14-year-old daughter, Jodie Lee Daniels, when their SUV sank after sliding off a "slippery as ice" slipway in Buncrana in March 2016.



THE SCENE at the pier in Buncrana Co. Donegal where a family of five died tragically on Sunday, March 20, 2016.

ing signs display it was an accident waiting to happen.

"Hopefully lessons will be learned and recommendations implemented.

"Finally regarding Sean. Notwithstanding the evidence that has emerged, he was a wonderful partner to me and an

adoring father to his children. He lived for them. And as it has emerged from this inquest he died as he lived – he could have saved himself and chose not to."

Gallagher ended saying James would not be making any further statement and appealed for her to be given privacy.

## Hundreds attend Dublin rally in support of homeless

Between 100-200 people attended a protest in support of homeless people outside the Customs House on Dublin's quays on the afternoon of Sunday, December 10.

The protest was organised by Councillor Christy Burke.

Burke told the rally he wants an immediate end to eviction courts as a first step to tackling the homeless crisis.

Speaking after the rally, Burke also called on the government to draw up an inventory of vacant homes held by the banks and to allocate these to homeless people.

The protest was also addressed by Niamh Lambe, an 18-year-old mother, who is living in a homeless hub with her three-month-old daughter Emma.

She said the only solution to the homeless crisis is for the Government to build

more houses. She said she had to fight to secure her place in the hub and before that she had been living in bed and breakfast accommodation.

She said not having a home is holding her back from returning to education and she hopes 2018 will be a better year for everyone waiting for a home.

Earlier in the week, Gardaí in Cork city said they were investigating the death of a homeless woman in her forties, whose body was discovered on December 6.

It is understood that the woman was sleeping rough where her body was found in a doorway on Lower Oliver Plunkett Street and that she may have died in early morning hours.

Sources say the woman was Irish and known to be a member of the homeless community in Cork city.

Inner City Helping Homeless (ICHH) called on the Government to declare a National Homeless Emergency.



COUNCILLOR Christy Burke told the rally in Dublin he wants an immediate end to eviction courts.

"Yet another person with a name, a family and a story that died alone on the streets of our country. This cannot be allowed to continue," the group stated.

"We have continuously warned that we would have more deaths on the streets if immediate emergency action isn't taken. With snow due later this week we fear this isn't the last death we will see before Christmas."

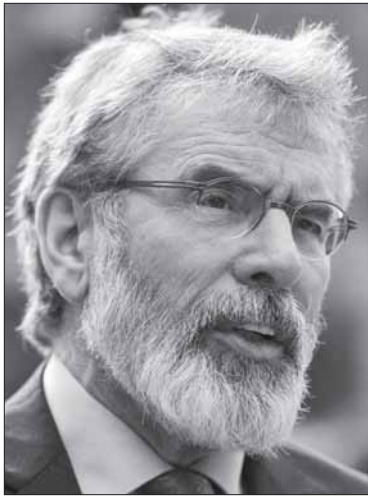
ICHH CEO Anthony Flynn said, "This

death is another indictment on the lack of service provision being provided by the State.

"Homeless services are in turmoil with extra beds not coming online quickly enough, we have weather warnings throughout the country and rough sleeping is at peak levels.

Meanwhile, Minister for Housing Eoghan Murphy said arrangements are in place for rough sleepers as temperatures drop over the weekend.





GERRY ADAMS

## Gerry Adams to step down as Sinn Féin president in 2018

DUBLIN – Gerry Adams has announced his intention to step down as Sinn Féin president in 2018.

The 69-year-old republican veteran told the annual Sinn Féin Ard Fheis in Dublin last month it would be his final one as leader, and a special meeting of the party would be called next year to elect a successor.

The TD for Co. Louth, who has been party president since 1983, also told delegates he would not run in the next election in the Irish Republic.

“Leadership means knowing when it is time for change and that time is now,” he told the annual conference.

Adams said the move was part of the ongoing process of leadership transition within the party.

The plan, formulated along with Martin McGuinness before his death earlier this year, has already seen Michelle O’Neill (40), take the role of Sinn Féin’s leader at Stormont.

Adams has gone before the Ard Fheis to seek re-election every year since 1983 and that formality was repeated on the evening of Saturday, November 18.

But in his leader’s speech, he told republican faithful it would be the last time he would put himself forward for the role.

“I want to thank everyone who has welcomed me into their homes and communities and have made me part of countless campaigns, countless elections and countless negotiations,” he said.

Amid rapturous applause and a standing ovation, Adams told delegates, “We are going to continue to go forward.”

He paid special tribute to his wife Collette and son Gearoid.

The long-standing MP for west Belfast switched his focus to the Dublin parliament in 2011, becoming a TD for Co. Louth.

Sinn Féin has made steady gains in the Irish Republic in recent polls but many believe the prospects of further growth is limited due to the presence of Troubles era figures.

Current deputy leader Mary Lou McDonald (48) will be a clear favourite to succeed Adams.

# Northern Ireland SDLP party leader Colum Eastwood said: ‘This is British direct rule, delivered by the DUP and Sinn Féin’

BELFAST – Power-sharing talks in Northern Ireland remain entrenched after Sinn Féin and the DUP have failed to reach agreement, after an almost year-long impasse at Stormont.

Sinn Féin said the difficulties in reaching a deal had been “compounded” by the DUP’s confidence-and-supply pact to prop up Theresa May’s Government.

The power-sharing assembly has been vacant since January after a bitter row between Sinn Féin and the DUP over the “cash-for-ash” scandal.

The parties have so far this year missed four different deadlines to form a Stormont Assembly.

As a result of the impasse, Northern Ireland has made a significant move towards handing political power back to Westminster as the Secretary of State James Brokenshire has published a budget for the region.

Brokenshire said that public services would begin to run out of money if a budget was not put in place by the end of November.

The Northern Ireland Budget Bill passed through the House of Commons on November 14, backed by all parties without a vote.

The budget for 2017/18 shows an increase in health spending of 5.4 per cent.

Brokenshire’s budget does not include the £1.2 billion special package that the DUP settled with Prime Minister Theresa May as a part of the deal to keep the Conservative Party in power in Westminster.

He told MPs that the first of £50 million from the deal will be released this financial year.

Brokenshire said that he regretted having to impose a budget on Northern Ireland, but expressed hope that an executive could be formed.

Speaking at the House of Commons, Brokenshire said that the passing of the budget “should not be a barrier to negotiations to continue, but the ongoing lack of agreement has had tangible consequences for people and public services in Northern Ireland.”

The Secretary of State has previously stated that the budget bill would only cover the 2017-2018 period and “does not mean a move to direct rule.”



TALKS to restore the Northern Ireland power-sharing government have failed to reach agreement after almost a year-long impasse.

This was contradicted by the SDLP as party leader Colum Eastwood said, “This is British direct rule, delivered by the DUP and Sinn Féin.”

The current incarnation of the Northern Ireland Assembly was first elected on June 25, 1998 and first met on July 1, 1998. However, it only existed in “shadow” form until December 2, 1999 when full powers were devolved to the Assembly. Since then the Assembly has operated intermittently and has been suspended on four other occasions:

February 11 – May 30, 2000  
August 10, 2001 (24-hour suspension)  
September 22, 2001 (24-hour suspension)  
October 14, 2002 – May 7, 2007



N. IRELAND Secretary of State James Brokenshire.

## Brexit breakthrough: Letter to the people of Northern Ireland from Theresa May

BELFAST – Prime Minister Theresa May has outlined her commitment to the people of Northern Ireland in a letter following the breakthrough in the Brexit talks on the morning of Friday, December 8.

Below is her letter to the people of Northern Ireland:

Today I agreed to a joint report between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union on the progress of our negotiations.

This covered the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens in the EU; our financial settlement with the EU; and ruling out a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

This progress now enables the UK Government to move to the next phase of negotiations.

This next phase will focus on securing the deep and special partnership between the United Kingdom and European Union that we all want to see.

As a prime minister who hugely values Northern Ireland’s position within our United Kingdom – and believes passionately that the United Kingdom is stronger and better together – I want to set out six key commitments to Northern Ireland, principles that have guided me in the negotiations with the EU.

These commitments are consistent with our steadfast support for the Belfast Agreement and its successors; the principles that underpin them; the institutions they establish; and, the rights and opportunities they guarantee for everyone.

This government will continue to gov-

ern in the interests of the whole community in Northern Ireland and uphold the agreements that have underpinned the huge progress that has been made over the past two decades.

First, we will always uphold and support Northern Ireland’s status as an integral part of the United Kingdom, consistent with the principle of consent. The Government I lead will never be neutral when it comes to expressing our support for the Union.

Second, we will fully protect and maintain Northern Ireland’s position within the single market of the United Kingdom.

This is by far the most important market for Northern Ireland’s goods and services and you will continue to have full and unfettered access to it.

Third, there will be no new borders within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In addition to no hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, we will maintain the Common Travel Area throughout these islands.

Fourth, the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, will leave the EU customs union and the EU single market. Nothing in the agreement I have reached alters that fundamental fact.

Fifth, we will uphold the commitments and safeguards set out in the Belfast

Agreement regarding North-South Co-operation. This will continue to require cross-community support.

Sixth, the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, will no longer be subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

These negotiations are crucial for the future of Northern Ireland and the whole United Kingdom. Whether you voted Leave or Remain, I am determined to deliver an outcome that works in the best interests of everyone across the United Kingdom.

## Ireland and EU to hold UK to Brexit agreement

DUBLIN – A spokesman for Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has said both Ireland and the EU will be holding the UK to the Phase I agreement reached on December 8.

The spokesman said cited in particular Article 46 which states that “The commitments and the principles...are made and must be upheld in all circumstances, irrespective of the nature of any future agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom.”

The spokesman said that “as the Taoiseach indicated on Friday, even if the worse case scenario occurs and there is no final deal, there must still be full alignment north and south under the agreement.”

It comes as Britain’s Brexit minister David Davis described the UK Government’s pledge to prevent any return to a hard border with Ireland after Britain leaves the EU as “a statement of intent” rather than a legally binding move.

An initial deal to move Brexit talks to a second phase was secured, by agree-

ing terms on how much Britain should pay to leave the EU, on citizens’ rights and the border issue, where London agreed a fallback of regulatory “alignment” with the EU.

“This was a statement of intent more than anything else,” he said. “It was much more a statement of intent than it was a legally enforceable thing,” he told the BBC’s Andrew Marr show.

Davis also said Britain will not pay a 44 billion euro exit bill to Brussels if it does not secure a trade deal.

The comments appeared to contradict those of UK Chancellor Philip Hammond who has said it would be “inconceivable” the UK would fail to honour its international obligations.

Pressed on the Chancellor’s remarks regarding the exit payment, Davis said, “No. It is conditional on an outcome. I am afraid that wasn’t quite right.

“It is conditional. It is conditional on getting an implementation period. Conditional on a trade outcome. No deal means that we won’t be paying the money.”





DAVID SHEEHY, a schoolteacher in Redmond, with his cousin Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington, after Micheline spoke about her Irish suffragette grandmother Hanna in a full lecture hall at Seattle University on November 2.



RYAN GALLAGHER, a Seattle police officer and former president of the Friends of St. Patrick, organizing mattresses as part of the Beds For Kids program that saw 600 beds delivered this year in Seattle's Central District.



PLANS are underway in preparation of the visit by Pope Francis to the Republic of Ireland in 2018. There is no indication yet if he will travel north of the border but it is expected he will.

## Pope Francis will visit Ireland next August

DUBLIN – Government officials are working to co-ordinate next year's visit to Ireland by Pope Francis.

It is understood Phoenix Park will host the Pontiff for his farewell Mass during his visit. This would be the second time it is held in the park, with more than one million people attending Pope John Paul II's Mass in 1979.

A meeting is planned with officials from the Office of Public Works (OPW), the Department of An Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

OPW Commissioner John McMahon will be in attendance at the meeting due to the operation of the Phoenix Park falling under the remit of the body.

It's understood the OPW will be involved "in a number of events" during the visit next summer.

Since confirmation of Pope Francis' visit to Ireland earlier this year, discussions have been taking place between World Meeting of Families organisers and State bodies. However, the first formal meeting of organisers will take place in early December.

The itinerary for the trip is still to be announced but it's expected to coincide with the ninth edition of the gathering of Catholic families, which is to take place on 21-26 August 2018.

There has been no indication yet if Pope Francis will travel north of the border, but it is widely expected that he will.

## SEATTLE IRISH NEWS

### PASSINGS

• EAMONN DOOHAN (53), son of the Seattle-area's Irish-born parents Anne and Dennis Doohan, died in Stanwood November 29.

• ROSALEEN SWEENEY (98), a native of Co. Leitrim, died in Seattle November 24.

• ANGELA GAYNOR (79), a sister of Camilla Barrett and Marie Bradshaw of Edmonds, died in England November 26. Memorial Mass at St. Thomas More in Lynnwood December 27 at 11 AM.

• PAUL KOSCHE (90), the father of Irish Heritage Club's Ralph Kosche, passed away last week. Service arrangements are pending for January 7.

• LINDA WALLINE (67), mother of Ara Walline and mother-in-law of the Seattle Gaels Dermot Randles, died on November 7.

• NUALA LYONS (79), a native of Dublin, died November 9 in Spokane.

• MAUREEN WALKER (91), a native of Dublin, died in Marysville November 2.

• MICHAEL JAMES MCCLEARY (49), brother of Suzanne McCleary, died October 27 in Kennewick.

• MARY HUGHES, mother of Kirkland resident Barbara Hughes, died October 17 in Derry.

• TRACY O'DAY (70), co-owner of the Wee Bit O'Ireland store which operated in Seattle's Pioneer Square from 1970 to 1986, died in Seattle October 25.

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh  
a n-anamacha dílse  
– May their faithful souls  
rest at God's right hand*

**IRISH WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS** – The Seattle area's 2018 Nollaig na mBan (Women's Christmas) dinner is being held on the traditional holiday, Saturday, January 6 (the 12th Day of Christmas) at 7:30 pm at JJ Mahoneys Irish Pub, 8932 161st Ave NE, Redmond.

While this is a celebration for the women in our lives, men are also welcome to attend and enjoy the Irish music and singing, the food, good company, and to share the craic.

Enjoy a meal and a drink (beer or wine) for \$35 per person, incl. tax & tip. For more details, e-mail: [sgillin@mac.com](mailto:sgillin@mac.com), or for reservations go to **EventBrite.com**.

**SEATTLE-DUBLIN DIRECT** – Starting Friday, May 18, 2018, Irish airline Aer Lingus will fly from Seattle direct to Dublin four times weekly: Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. R/T fares for the nine hours 15 minute flight are quoted as starting at about \$610.

Passengers from Seattle can fly on from Dublin to 24 other European cities.

On the return trip, passengers will be pre-cleared in Dublin by U.S. Customs and Immigration so that when travellers arrive in Seattle they do not have to go through customs and passport control.

**DUBLIN TRAFFIC** – Dublin is Sea-Tac's fifth most popular destination for passengers going to Europe, the Middle East, or Africa.



By  
**JOHN  
KEANE**



NIECES Alice Gaffney, Geraldine Henderson and Kate Farrell (standing) with their aunt Sister Ellen Caldwell, a native of Co. Cavan who celebrated her 100th birthday on November 16 in Bellevue, WA.



**IRISH NETWORK** Seattle's Monique Meche, newly appointed to lead International Public Policy at Netflix after a five year tenure at Amazon as VP of International Public Policy.



In 2016, a total of 35,189 passengers flew between Sea-Tac Airport and Dublin, approximately 23,460 outbound to Dublin and 11,730 inbound to Seattle.

As there are no direct flights, all of those passengers had to stop at an intermediate airport on their trip. Never again if they use Aer Lingus!

**THE HARP** – Best wishes to the new Irish bar in Kent, The Harp Bar & Restaurant located on the Riverbend Golf Course at 24437 Russell Road, Suite 117, Kent, WA.

Opened last May by Belfast native Lorraine Torres, it's a family friendly location catering to families, groups and kids' sports teams who want a fun, safe environment to enjoy a tasty meal. Visit them on Facebook.

**100th BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS** – Sister Ellen Caldwell, a Sister of St. Joseph of Peace, was born in Co. Cavan on November 16, 1917, and she celebrated her 100th birthday in the order's retirement home on Killarney Way in Bellevue where

she has lived since retiring eight years ago.

She left Ireland as a novice in 1936 and has served since then mainly at St. Joseph Hospital, Bellingham, but also at Ketchikan General Hospital in Alaska.

As a centenarian, she receives a congratulatory letter from Irish President Michael D. Higgins and the Centenarian's Bounty, a check for 2,540 euros (about \$3,000) sent to all Irish-born centenarians on their 100th birthday.

Congratulations also to another Irish-born sister in the same community, Sister Rose Donoghue, a native of Co. Leitrim, who recently celebrated her 103rd birthday.

**CONGRATULATIONS** – To Irish Network Seattle's Monique Meche, newly appointed to lead International Public Policy at Netflix after a five year tenure at Amazon as VP of International Public Policy.

Prior to Amazon, Meche was VP of Government Affairs and Corporate Social Responsibility at ArcelorMittal, based in Luxembourg.

She also worked in a variety of policy-related and business positions at Cisco Systems and Intel in Ireland.

**BEDS FOR KIDS** – 600 Seattle children are now sleeping in their own beds, thanks to Seattle police officer and former president of the Friends of St. Patrick in Seattle, Ryan Gallagher.

This is the third year that officers Jeremy Wade and Ryan Gallagher have run the program that all started after they made a routine call to a home in Seattle's Central District.

When the officers found two young girls sleeping on the floor without a proper bed, they returned the next day with beds which they had bought with their own money.

That started the Beds for Kids program which this year raised more than \$100,000. For more details, visit [www.bedsforkidsseattle.com](http://www.bedsforkidsseattle.com).

**IRISH WEEK 2018** – For those planning ahead, Irish Week 2018 will kick off in Seattle on Saturday March 3 with the Friends of St. Patrick Banquet which will be co-sponsored by Irish Network Seattle in 2018.

The Friends banquet has been an annual event in Seattle since 1941.

The St. Patrick's Day parade will be on Saturday, March 17 while the Irish Festival will be held Saturday and Sunday, March 17 and 18. All the details at [www.irishweek.org](http://www.irishweek.org).

### MISCELLANEOUS

• For information on the next Irish Book Club meeting, e-mail: [hudit@comcast.net](mailto:hudit@comcast.net).

• Geoffrey Castle's Celtic Christmas on Saturday, December 23, at the Northshore Performing Arts Center, 18125 92nd Avenue NE, Bothell, WA.

• Congratulations to Tom Lagan of the Tacoma Rangers GAA who was recently elected as Registrar of the North American GAA.

• Best wishes to Carmel Kelly, the Dublin Librarian who lectured on W B Yeats at Seattle's 2015 Irish Festival, whose children's book *Man of the People: Fr. William Doyle SJ* was recently launched in Dublin.



# Why were so many Irish deported from the U.S. in the 19th Century?

THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS, ONE OF THE MAJOR DESTINATIONS FOR IRISH MIGRANTS, SYSTEMATICALLY DEPORTED DESTITUTE IRISH MEN AND WOMEN AS A MATTER OF PUBLIC POLICY.

The untold story of 50,000 Famine Irish who were deported back to Ireland by New England authorities has been revealed.

Writing in *The Irish Times*, Hidetaka Hirota, a Mellon Research Fellow who is writing a book *Expelling the Poor* (Oxford University 2017) on the subject, revealed a little-known hardship many Famine emigrants faced.

The Know Nothings, the KKK-like Protestant group, was behind the persecution of Catholics who had fled to Boston during the famine.

The state of Massachusetts, one of the major destinations for Irish migrants, systematically deported destitute Irish men and women as a matter of public policy.

As anti-immigrant sentiment grows today in Europe and America, this story of hardship is worth remembering.

The origin of Massachusetts deportation policy dated back to the colonial period in the 17th Century.

Based on the model of the British poor law, British colonists in Massachusetts developed laws for banishing transient beggars from the colony.

When a large number of impoverished Irish migrants arrived in Massachusetts during the 1840s, nativist Americans in the state built upon the colonial poor law to develop laws for deporting foreign paupers in public almshouses to Europe, Canada, and other American states.

Between the 1840s and 1870s, approximately 50,000 people were expelled from Massachusetts under this policy.

The statistics provided by Massachusetts authorities does not reveal how many of them were Irish, but correspondence among state officials suggests that the policy practically operated as a measure to reduce the Irish population in Massachusetts.

The enforcement of deportation law was extremely harsh.

Some deportees pleaded not to be sent back to Ireland, but their voices usually fell on deaf ears.

Elderly people who had spent as long as 40 years in the U.S. were not exempted from deportation.

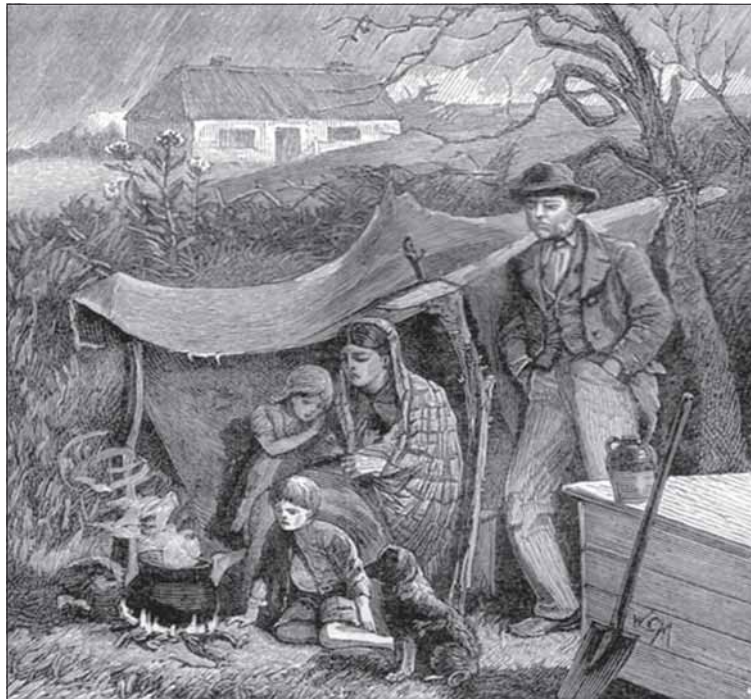
Massachusetts law technically limited overseas removal to non-citizens, but officials had little hesitation in shipping off American citizens of Irish descent, such as American-born children of Irish parents and naturalized Irish immigrants.

In 1855, the *Boston Pilot*, an Irish Catholic newspaper, fiercely condemned these manners of removal.

"How much more will [the deportation law] be abused under this vile tyranny which decrees that poverty, Irishism and Catholicity are crimes, and to be punished as such?"

In the face of this criticism, nativists insisted deportation was a good and necessary policy.

Calling Irish paupers "leeches upon our



AN IRISH family evicted during the Famine. Large numbers of tenants were forcibly removed from their homes by the landlords and forced to find shelter where they could.

taxpayers," they advocated the uncompromising implementation of the policy to remove from Massachusetts "an ignorant and vicious Irish Catholic population."

One leading nativist in Boston declared in 1858 that an Irishman "will not work while he can exist by begging."

Upon arriving in Ireland or Britain, Massachusetts officials routinely dumped deportees on the streets without giving them any basic provisions for immediate self-support, such as money, food, and clothes.

As a result, deportees often entered local workhouses for survival, while some of them became street beggars.

Arrival in Europe did not necessarily mark the end of the journey.

Massachusetts officials often sent deportees to Liverpool as the major European port for transatlantic lines.

Frowning at what they called "importation of Irish paupers," authorities in Liverpool transferred the deportees to Ireland by implementing the British poor law, the very origin of Massachusetts deportation policy.

## Irish paupers were banished from both America and Britain

Irish paupers were thus doubly banished, first from America and then from Britain.

Ireland turned out to be an unfriendly place for deportees as well.

Just like American and British authorities, poor-law officials in Ireland regarded returning Irish paupers as unwanted burdens on poor relief.

When a group of four deportees entered the workhouse in Cork in 1868, one local official asserted that they "ought not to come at all."

Another Cork official complained, "This city is the receptacle for every poor person who comes from America or England."

Frustrated with the admission into workhouses of returning migrants, Irish officials even considered sending them back to America.

When two destitute Irish women arrived in Galway after having been deported from the United States in September 1859, a local newspaper reported that one of them "will be shipped to America."

Whether or not Galway authorities sent this person back in the end, the idea of re-deportation serves as a grim reminder of the low status of returning paupers in Irish officials' minds.

At the end of their long migration that included two transatlantic voyages, deportees thus found themselves virtual foreigners in their country of birth.

Physically removed from the U.S. and Britain and socially marginalised in Ireland, the Irish migrant poor, in essence, became stateless people in the 19th-Century north Atlantic world.

Anti-immigrant sentiment has been gaining enormous political influence and popular support in Europe and America today.

While immigrants from Latin America are the major targets for American deportation policy now, some of its origins lay in earlier anti-Irish nativism.

At the same time, the deportation of the Irish from 19th Century Massachusetts has much to offer for us to think about the vulnerability of international migrants, especially refugees, under prescriptive governmental policy and the current global problem of social, economic, and legal statelessness many of them are suffering.

Hidetaka Hirota is a Mellon Research Fellow in the Society of Fellows in the Humanities at Columbia University. This article is based on his forthcoming book, *Expelling the Poor*, which will be published by Oxford University Press in 2017. He spoke on this subject at NUI Galway's Moore Institute earlier this year.

# Saoirse Ronan defends that SNL Aer Lingus sketch

Saoirse Ronan has responded to criticism of her recent hosting stint on *Saturday Night Live* following accusations that her sketch about Aer Lingus played up to Irish stereotypes.

Ronan, who is Oscar tipped for her lead performance in the forthcoming movie *Lady Bird*, hosted SNL on December 2 with music guests U2 but one skit in particular caused outrage among some Irish viewers who said it was "dreadful," "awful" and "incomprehensible."

The Irish actress donned a classic green Aer Lingus uniform for a wildly unfunny sketch overflowing with Irish stereotypes and painful accents. It featured references to potatoes, Oscar

Wilde and, for some reason, dogs.

Speaking to Ryan Tubridy on the *Late Late Show*, Ronan said, "It was fun and the show is a comedy show and it was a huge thing for me to go on."

Asked jokingly by Tubridy if she "was anti-Aer Lingus," she said, "I'm not anti-Aer Lingus! I collect my points on Aer Lingus, that's how often I fly Aer Lingus."

The airline subsequently took to Twitter to troll the sketch in the combative style of U.S. President Donald Trump, writing: "Just tried watching Saturday Night Live - unwatchable! Totally biased, not funny and the Ronan impersonation just can't get any worse. Sad."

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WEXFORD road crash victims Doug Alexander and Lily Alexander died instantly along with their two adult sons Doug Jr. and Stephen in the two-vehicle collision on Monday, December 4.

## Irish-American family of four killed in tragic Wexford crash

DUBLIN – There has been an outpouring of support for relatives of the Irish-American family of four who lost their lives in a tragic car accident on the evening of Monday, December 4.

Lily and Doug Alexander and their two adult sons Doug Jr. and Stephen were killed in the two-vehicle collision on the main New Ross to Wexford. A U-turn is believed to have caused the crash on the N25 New Ross to Wexford town road in which they died.

According to emergency personnel at the scene of the crash, it appears the driver of the Alexander's BMW 5 series rental car, which was travelling towards Wexford town, pulled left onto the hard shoulder and paused.

It then made a sharp turn right, as if to make a U-turn back towards New Ross.

However, it was hit side on and with great force by an articulated lorry, which was also travelling in the direction of Wexford town.

Both the car and lorry came to a standstill on the far side of the road, the car almost totally obliterated.

Why the driver of the car made this manoeuvre is unknown.

"Did he look over the wrong shoulder," wondered a first responder on the scene, noting the driver would have been more used to driving on a different side of the road in the U.S.?

"It's impossible to know but it just doesn't make sense."

The driver of the truck, a man in his 40s and a passenger were physically uninjured in the collision but both were badly shaken and were treated for shock at the scene.

The family had travelled from Illinois

to Shannon Airport earlier that day for the funeral of Lily's sister Winnie Keevey in Co. Wexford. Their heartbroken family has released a statement paying tribute to them.

They said, "It is with great sorrow that our family and friends unite across the Atlantic to mourn the passing of Doug, Lily, Doug Jr. and Stephen Alexander.

"They were generous, loving and fun. As well as their love for family in America, they opened their hearts and homes to all who travelled to them.

"They greatly enjoyed their regular trips to Ireland, with their final trip here to say farewell to Lily's sister, Winnie.

"They will be greatly missed but we have been left with wonderful memories of great times spent together, both in Ireland and Oak Lawn."

They added that they appreciate "all the kind words and support we have received" as they appealed for privacy as they grieve.

Lily and Doug Snr (who were both aged in their seventies) are survived by their daughter Debbie, Lily's brother Matt Ryan Snr and her sister Rita, Doug's brother Sandy and sister Daisy, as well as their children and grandchildren and extended family who live in Ireland and the U.S.

Stephen 'Steve' Alexander (49) was an award-winning police officer and leaves behind two daughters, aged 11 and 10.

Meanwhile, Doug Jr. (40s) was a dad of two young daughters, aged six and seven, and had played in a rock band for the past 20 years.

Their funerals will take place at St. Mary's Church in Cushinstown, Co Meath on Monday, December 11.



GARDAI at the scene of the fatal crash between a rental car and a truck which saw four members of a family killed in Cushinstown Co Wexford.

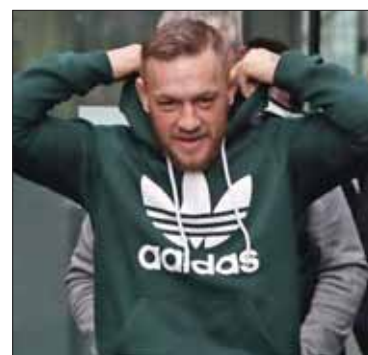
## Conor McGregor said to have 900,000 euro bounty on his head from Irish mobsters after pub fight

DUBLIN – On Monday November 27, British and Irish tabloid media began to speculate about Conor McGregor's potential involvement in a Dublin pub brawl where he punched several men who were affiliated to the Irish mafia and drug cartels.

The reports claimed senior members of Ireland's infamous Kinahan crime cartel are seeking retribution against the UFC lightweight champion.

It is claimed 29-year-old McGregor allegedly assaulted a man at the Black Forge Inn in Crumlin with ties to Kinahan lieutenant Graham "The Wig" Whelan.

Whelan is one of the country's most feared gangsters who was a key player



IRISH UFC lightweight champion Conor McGregor was defiant in the face of gang threats. He is pictured leaving court on an unrelated matter following the pub altercation.

in a long-running feud which claimed 16 lives in the early 2000s.

One report suggested the man, who is in his 50s, is Whelan's father.

Several publications, including Ireland's *Independent*, ran stories referencing a "celebrity" and "well-known Irish sports star" without directly naming McGregor due to Ireland's strict libel laws.

Those reports claim the unnamed celebrity assaulted a young man and later punched a man in his 50s, who is believed to have ties to the Kinahan cartel. In the aftermath of the assault, the unnamed celebrity was taken out of the pub and driven away.

It should be noted that, according to Irish and British media, there was no official complaint filed after the alleged brawl and no statements were taken from any of the pub's patrons.

McGregor has since taken to social media, where he posted a video with the caption "The celebrity."

Given the current relevance of the Kinahan cartel in combat sports, it is important to understand the gang's significance in Ireland, their influence over certain athletes, and the ongoing crisis facing the cartel.

In February 2016, five gunmen dressed as police officers stormed a boxing weigh-in at the Regency Hotel in Dublin, Ireland, with AK47s and fired shots at those present during the ceremony.

The shooting, which resulted in the death of Kinahan enforcer David Byrne, was believed to have been a revenge attack by the rival Hutch gang after one of their members was killed in Spain.

As a result, a bloody gangland feud between the Hutch mob and the Kinahan cartel continues to this day. All told, 10 people have been killed so far in the Hutch-Kinahan gangland feud.

However, it was the incident at the boxing weigh-in at the Regency Hotel that garnered international attention, and indirectly revealed some of the associations between combat sports in Ireland and the drug-dealing gangsters surrounding it.

Reports have since emerged that the assaulted gangsters have demanded a 900,000 euro (\$1.4 million) 'ransom' from the "famous Irish sports star" involved in the incident at the Crumlin pub.

While the reports remain unconfirmed, it is difficult to assess the degree of danger that McGregor now finds himself. His father has blasted media reports his son was involved in the pub brawl saying, "It's absolute nonsense."

Tony McGregor told the *Irish Mirror* the UFC star's family had nothing to fear from the deadly Kinahan cartel and insisted no one was after them.

Veteran Irish crime reporter Paul Williams, the author of several books on organized crime in Ireland, painted a far more alarming picture of McGregor's position during his show *Newstalk Breakfast*.

He said, "Conor McGregor is potentially in very, very serious danger, I hear that from my sources and from looking at the lay of the land.

"He has ended up crossing swords – accidentally or however – with some very, very heavy people, or some people who are related to some very, very heavy people who could pose a very serious threat to his safety, and potentially his life. And I don't say that lightly."



THE LATEST victim of the Kinahan/Hutch gangland war is Caine McCormack-Kirwan the 24-year-old son of a man who was killed earlier this year in the same feud.

## Ring of steel guards funeral of latest victim of Ireland's gang war

DUBLIN – The funeral of the latest suspected victim of the Kinahan/Hutch gangland feud was held in Dublin's north inner city under the watch of armed gardai.

Caine McCormack-Kirwan, found shot dead in a field in Meath is believed to be the 13th victim of the feud that had already claimed the life of his father earlier this year.

The 24-year-old father-of-one was the son of Noel 'Duck Egg' Kirwan, a childhood friend of Gerry 'The Monk' Hutch, who was shot dead in Ronanstown, West Dublin, almost a year ago.

McCormack-Kirwan was last seen in Aldi car park in Cloness at around 5 PM on Friday, December 1.

His coffin was piped into Our Lady of Lourdes church on Sean McDermott Street in Dublin's north inner city at 11 AM on December 9 with a heavy garda presence nearby. This is the same church where his father's funeral was held just months earlier.

His brother told sympathisers: "He was a rogue, a devil, a nuisance, but he had a heart of gold."

Addressing several hundred mourners at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Father Hugh O'Donnell said, "It's a great, terrible moment to be back here 12 months after Noel's death to have another funeral for his son Caine. God knows what it's like to be betrayed and in this case crucified, to be executed."

In a letter read to mourners, Caine McCormack-Kirwan's son, Oscar, recalled the "favourite things" he did with his father, and said, "I'll see you later Daddy... I love you."

The investigation into Caine McCormack-Kirwan's murder is understood to be focusing on a known gangland figure believed to have links to the Kinahan cartel.



# Freezing conditions in Edinburgh park for 'world's biggest sleepout' to end homelessness

EDINBURGH – Thousands of people slept out in freezing conditions in Scotland's capital to raise money to tackle homelessness.

Around 8,000 people bedded down for the night in Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens as queues stretched from the entrances to the gardens as thousands arrived to secure their spot.

Crowds laid out rows of sleeping bags in orange waterproof covers on top of groundsheets covering the grass.

The Sleep in the Park event aims to raise £4 million to end rough sleeping and homelessness in Scotland.

Celebrities joined and entertained in frigid conditions overnight, in what organisers described as the biggest event of its kind globally.

Live Aid founder Bob Geldof, Monty Python comic John Cleese, Olympian Chris Hoy, comedian Rob Brydon and Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon were also among the well-known faces helping to keep participants fed and entertained through the night.

John Cleese supported the event by writing and performing a bedtime story.

Bob Geldof, who recalled sleeping rough in London when he first arrived in the city decades ago, hailed the turnout "magnificent" and said it was more than just a gesture.

Scotland's Deputy First Minister John Swinney, Communities Secretary Angela Constance and Housing Minister Kevin Stewart have also signed up to take part.

The event was organized by charity Social Bite, which has become a magnet for celebrity support in recent years.

Josh Littlejohn, co-founder of Social Bite, said, "We've been really fortunate to get some high profile visitors.

He said, "I'm blown away by the amount of people who have turned out. It is mind-blowing really for a country like Scotland, a small country, to get behind a cause like that.

"That's going to translate to somewhere in the region of between £3 million and £4 million that's going to be raised. It's an absolutely incredible result and I'm really humbled by it."

He said the famous names lend "excitement" to the occasion but people had turned up for the cause of tackling homelessness rather than as music fans.

He added, "This concept of sleeping in the cold is such a daunting thing in people's mind that it trumps Liam Gallagher and it trumps anyone else, but it just helps lend that level of excitement and gets people engaged in the issue, so we're really grateful for everyone that's turned out to support."



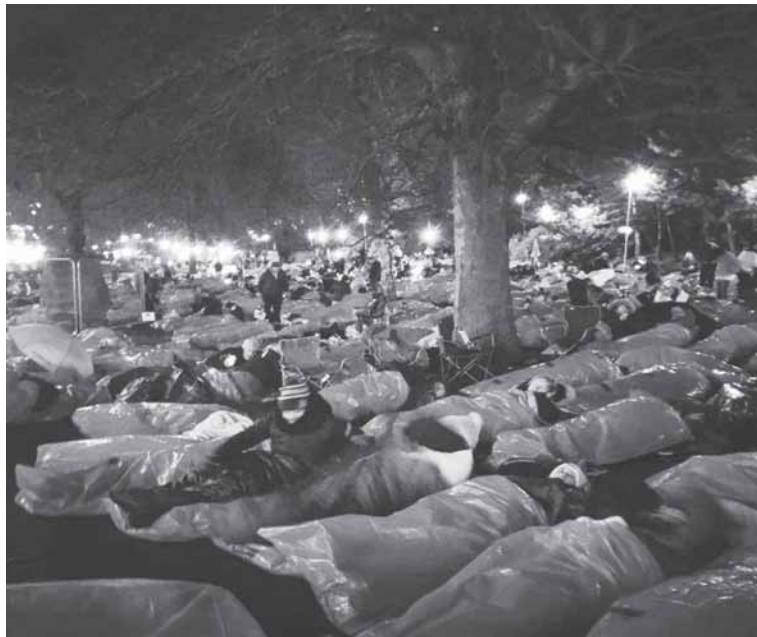
KEN GORDON with the organizing charity Social Bite tweeted, "Stunning #sleepinthepark event last night. Well done @SocialBite\_ . I have never been so cold. When it was over we walked past people sleeping in doorways on Princes Street. They do this every night. #eradicatehomelessness. Please donate to <http://www.sleepinthepark.co.uk>."

Littlejohn said he hoped the event would lead to a structural change in homelessness in Scotland to the Housing First model, following pledges that around 475 homes for homeless people will be provided across the central belt by the EdIndex Partnership and Wheatley Group.

He said, "That's almost 500 homes in the central belt alone that have been offered and that's going to get people out of sleeping rough, out of hostels and out of the homeless system and give something that we all take for granted, which is a stable place to call home.

"From that safe and secure base we're going to fund a comprehensive support resource to go round those people and make sure they are supported in those homes and help get them out of that dire situation.

He said, "That's something that we hope will be a more broad structural response in Scotland, so our default position as a society and as local government and national government, the way we respond to homelessness is to try and get people into a mainstream stable home and provide some support around it."



BOB GELDOLF was among 8,000 who slept out in freezing Edinburgh to raise money for homelessness

## Students' event depicting miners' strike cancelled amid 'deep concerns'

A social event set up by Durham University college rugby team, that was due to depict the battle between miners and Margaret Thatcher's government, has been cancelled amid "deep concerns."

Trevelyan College Rugby Club attempted to organise a pickets versus police "Battle of Orgreave" themed social event.

This was a violent confrontation on June 18, 1984 between police and pickets at a British Steel Corporation (BSC) coking plant in Orgreave, South Yorkshire.

It was a pivotal event in the 1984-85 UK miners' strike, and one of the most violent clashes in British industrial history.

The Trevelyan event was labelled as the "Forwards vs Backs" social, the other half of the squad were asked to come as Margaret Thatcher's government so that the tensions of the miners' strike could be recreated.

Players were asked to turn up as "working-class-beating-bobbies" or "Falkland War heroes", with one student due to turn up as "the Iron Lady herself."



POLICE OFFICERS pushing against striking miners outside the Orgreave Coking Plant near Rotherham on June 18, 1984.

However, complaints from the Durham Miners' Association led to the cancellation of the event which was due to take place on November 29.

A short statement provided on the Durham Miners' Association Facebook page read, "We will be writing to the college and the university to voice our deep concerns."

Durham Miners and the city's univer-

sity will work together to educate students in understanding the heritage and culture of the county in which they study.

Miners leaders met with University Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart Corbridge to plan an education programme which helps incoming students understand the history and tradition of the Durham coalfield.

## Max Clifford dies in hospital aged 74

LONDON – Disgraced celebrity publicist Max Clifford has died in hospital, aged 74, after collapsing in prison.

Clifford collapsed in his cell at Littlehey Prison in Cambridgeshire on December 7 and again the following day, his daughter said.

He was taken to hospital where he suffered a cardiac arrest. He had been serving an eight-year sentence for his historical sex offences.

The Ministry of Justice said as with all deaths in custody, there would be an investigation by the ombudsman.

In May 2014, Clifford was jailed after being convicted of eight historical indecent assaults on women and young girls under Operation Yewtree – the Met Police investigation set up in the wake of the Jimmy Savile scandal.

During this trial, evidence was heard about Clifford's manipulative behaviour, including how he promised to boost the careers of aspiring models and actresses in return for sexual favours.

After his convictions, he continued to protest his innocence. The Court of Appeal was due to hear his case appealing against his sentence in the New Year.

Clifford's lawyer, John Szepletowski, said his death meant there were a number of unresolved legal issues.

He said Clifford had been suing News International and Mirror Group Newspapers for allegedly hacking his phone.

The lawyer also said Clifford was being sued by a number of women who claimed he had sexually assaulted them.

Szepletowski said his legal team would meet in the coming days to decide whether Clifford's criminal appeal case should continue.

He said Clifford had been receiving legal aid for the appeal, after being declared bankrupt earlier this year and having to sell his Surrey home to pay his debts.

During his long career as a publicist, Clifford, who started his own company at 27, looked after press and publicity for a mixed range of clients such as Marlon Brando, Marvin Gaye, Muhammad Ali and Jade Goody.

He had helped to launch the career of The Beatles by sending press releases about their debut single, *Love Me Do*, when record company bosses were unsure about the group's potential.

However, after 50 years in the showbiz industry allegations against him began to emerge.



# Welsh Corgi socks and the Royal Warrant

**G**REETINGS from a cold but sunny Bournemouth. The headlines in the papers earlier this week were that Prince Harry and Meghan Markle had announced their engagement.

This was happy news which apart from giving relief from the ongoing gloom and doom of the Brexit negotiations, got me reminiscing about the time I was sales director of my family owned knitwear and sock company Corgi Hosiery Ltd.

We were based in Ammanford, a small coal mining town in Wales and at the time of Prince Harry's birth I was attempting to obtain the Royal Warrant for the company, as a supplier of socks and knitwear to Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales.

My maternal grandfather had started the business in 1892, employing a few ladies using hand operated machines called "Griswolds" to manufacture long heavy Yorkshire woollen stockings for the coal miners.

The socks were called "Sanau Gwaith" (work socks). A second range was added, and these were finer, clerical grey wool socks to wear in chapel on Sunday, known as "Sanau Parch" (respectable socks).

This continued until the 1930s when my father, a school teacher, joined my mother to run the company and totally transformed it.

He discovered that the same machines could produce high-quality woollen, diamond patterned socks called Argyles.

By 1939 Corgi employed 110 people, mainly coal miners' wives, sending 98 percent of the production to the United States and Canadian markets, the largest customers being Brooks Brothers and The Hudson Bay Company.

During the Second World War production changed to plain socks for the military.

My brother joined the company in the early 1960s and Corgi began manufacturing knitwear as well as socks.

When my cousin and I came along we were still exporting 85 percent of our products but were virtually unknown in the UK.

Our biggest home market customer was the Ministry of Defence for whom we produced Diced Hose and full kilt stock-

## POSTCARD FROM BOURNEMOUTH

By  
**ELFAN JONES**



**AN ORDER** for sweaters for William and Harry from the office of the Prince of Wales reads: William – Sleeve less: marron, navey, yellow. Jumpers: marron, navey, red, yellow, green; Henrey – Sleeve less: marron, yellow, navey. Jumpers: navey, red, green.

ings for the Gordon Highlanders and Black Watch regiments.

A fact I have enjoyed telling Scottish friends on numerous occasions.

In the late 1970s a Japanese magazine had featured our cashmere knitwear, rating our heavier styles as the finest in the world, and second after Ballantyne of Scotland for our lighter weight products.

But in the UK we were still unknown – the logic seemed to be that knitwear comes from Scotland and Wales produces coal.

In a London pub, one lunchtime, I was teasing a Scottish friend, Duncan Beattie, the then sales director of Barrie Knitwear.

I was showing him a picture of Prince Charles as Commander in Chief of the Gordon Highlanders wearing a kilt and



ELFAN JONES is pictured above [front far left] as a young boy working at his family knitwear and sock company, Corgi Hosiery Ltd., based in Ammanford, a small coal mining town in Wales.

diced hose which we had made in Wales.

He expressed his disgust that they weren't made in Scotland, but gave me the idea of attempting to get a Royal Warrant, which in effect is an endorsement from the first family and would surely raise the company's profile.

At the time only four members of royal family Her Majesty the Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh, The Queen Mother and The Prince of Wales could grant a warrant. Today there are just the three.

Duncan gave me the telephone number for Buckingham Palace, but when I dialled it somebody with a strong cockney accent answered "Buck ouse ere" and thinking it was a practical joke I retorted "Beattie you bastard you got me again" and put the phone down.

Directory enquiries showed the number was correct, so I redialled and this time a well-spoken operator put me through to the Prince of Wales office.

Minutes later I could not believe that I had so easily obtained an appointment with Michael Colborne who ran the day-to-day administration of the Prince of Wales office.

After the Prince married the household moved to Kensington palace and one of my fondest memories is sitting in a small office with Princess Diana as she chose colours of sweaters for her two little boys.

I have kept some of the orders and the one you see in the photograph above, in particular, always makes me smile.

On the day this arrived in my office, the newspapers were reporting that Prince Charles was criticising the state of education in the UK. Particularly the standard of spelling etc.

In fairness it was probably his valet Michael Fawcett who had written it. You may notice that Prince Harry was christened Henry or Henrey if you can't spell properly.

I thought of sending it to the papers for a laugh, but if I had done so would probably have kissed goodbye to any chance of a Royal Warrant.

Happily I was granted the Royal Warrant to the Prince of Wales in 1988 and although the company is now owned by Dents, an English glove company, it continues to supply members of the royal family and is still managed by members of my family.

*Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Elfan.*



CORGI USES many older machines in its manufacturing, including rare 125-year-old Griswold hand-knitting machines.

## Christmas dinner for canine companions of homeless in Wales

**SWANSEA** – Even people's dogs won't miss out when the homeless and vulnerable are treated to a free two-course Christmas dinner in Swansea, Wales this year.

The Brangwyn Hall in Swansea will host the annual 'Together at Christmas' event on December 12.

Organised by JR Events and Catering, with support from Swansea Council, it will feature a Christmas party experience, including a Christmas tree, Christmas crackers, live music, singers, a DJ and a photo booth – as well as the two-course dinner for anyone on their own.

But it will also include a staffed area outside the venue for people's dogs to join in and enjoy some festive treats.

There will also be free services at the event, courtesy of local businesses, including a hairdresser and dental specialist as well as information points on housing support, employment schemes

and welfare and benefits advice.

Swansea Council is organising free transport to and from the event for people who need it.

Jessica Rice, director of JR Events and Catering, said, "Last year's 'Together at Christmas' event was an outstanding success, but we're pulling out all the stops to make sure this year's event is even better.

"Everyone deserves some happiness at Christmas, so we hope the event will give festive cheer to as many homeless, vulnerable or isolated people in Swansea as possible.

"Kindly supported by Swansea Council and many businesses, charities and other organisations across the city, 'Together at Christmas' also gives local people the chance to volunteer their time on the day to help deliver a memorable afternoon for residents in our communities who are most in need."



BY 1939 Corgi employed 110 people, mainly coal miners' wives, sending 98 percent of the production to the United States and Canadian markets.