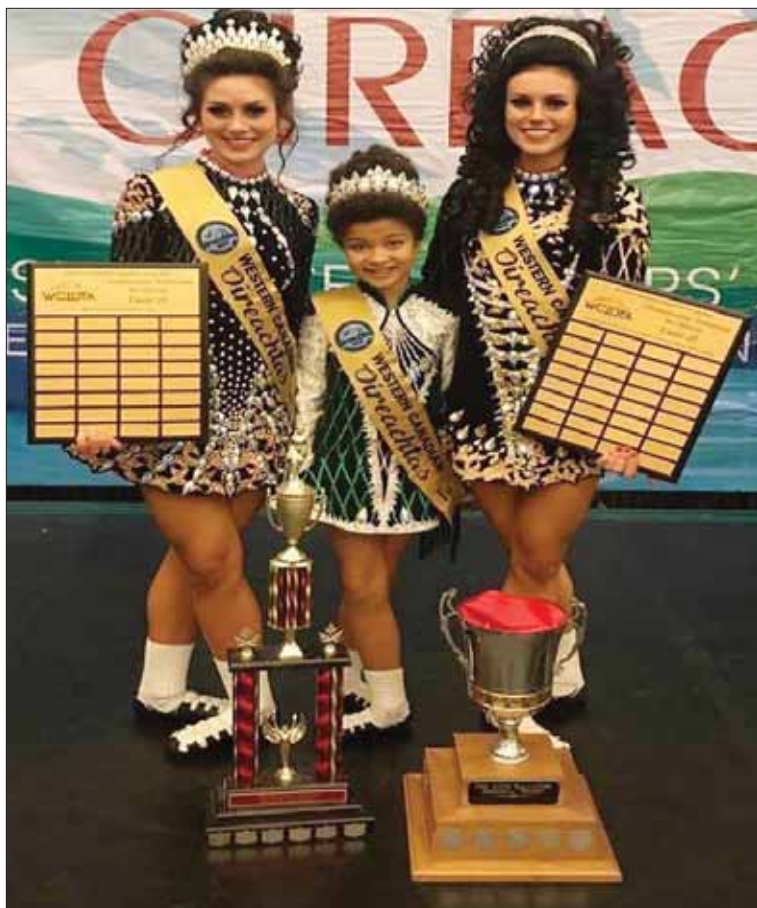


# the celtic connection

ISSUE 27 VOLUME 3

*Proudly Serving Celts in North America Since 1991*

MARCH/APRIL 2018



THE MATTIERIN SCHOOL of Irish Dance in Edmonton, Alberta made history for Irish dance in western Canada at the All Ireland Dance Championships last month. Pictured above are Olivia, Orla, and Londyn of the Mattierin School who all competed at the championships and are also the current Western Canadian Oireachtas Champions. [Read more on page 18]



THE STORM known as 'The Beast from the East' caused chaos across western Europe and left a trail of destruction across Britain and Ireland. Pictured above, hundreds of drivers were stranded for up to 13 hours on snow-covered M80 in Scotland on February 28. [Read more on pages 8 & 23]



FOLLOWING the European Union's draft legal agreement released on February 28, British Prime Minister Theresa May has described it as a threat to her country's "constitutional integrity." [Read more on page 9]

## HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**MARKING 100 YEARS  
SINCE WOMEN  
WERE GRANTED  
RIGHT TO VOTE**  
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**ST. DAVID'S DAY:  
A GLOBAL WELSH  
CELEBRATION**  
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**NORTHERN IRELAND:  
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TALKS COLLAPSE**  
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**SEATTLE'S 2018  
IRISH FESTIVAL & PARADE**  
PAGES 24 & 25



IRELAND'S Attorney General Séamus Woulfe will be a guest of honor in Seattle on the St. Patrick's Day weekend.



THE MAYOR of Seattle's sister city in Ireland, Galway Mayor Pearce Flannery, will also be in Seattle for the St. Patrick's Day weekend.

**REFLECTIONS ON  
ST. PATRICK**  
BY JOHN SCALLY  
A THEOLOGIAN WITH  
TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN  
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**ALSO INSIDE:  
SEE OUR SPECIAL  
ST. PATRICK'S  
GREETINGS SECTION**  
PAGE 12



EILIS COURTNEY, president of the Irish Women's Network of BC is this year's CelticFest Vancouver Celt of the Year. She will be presented with the award on Saturday, March 17 at Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver. [More on page 3]



SINCE 1879 St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue has been at the heart of the Irish community in New York City and, while the building is still admired by tourists and natives alike, a new generation of Irish immigrants has brought a different perspective to established cultural organizations. [Read more on page 28]

## WIN FREE GIFTS

You could win an Easter Basket. U.K. Easter eggs & chocolate from Black Pudding Imports in Langley. Check out their weekly sales on Facebook. (See page 7 for more info). Mark your entry *Black Pudding* and include your name and daytime telephone number. Entry by March 27th. Entries by E-mail only. (Only one entry per person) Send to: cbutler@telus.net.

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- Be unmarried or never been married.
- Be female, born in Ireland or an Irish citizen or of Irish origin by virtue of one of your ancestors having been born in Ireland.

## 2017 Western Canada Rose: 'I've had the best year of a lifetime'

**EDMONTON** – The Irish Sports and Social Society is very pleased to host the annual Rose of Tralee banquet in Edmonton to select a representative for western Canada on Saturday, May 26.

The winner will go on to represent western Canada at the main Rose of Tralee Festival in Ireland which now marks 59 years.

Last year, Sinead McGahern was selected as the Western Canada Rose and she said the experience has been one of tremendous satisfaction. It has allowed her to meet others from around the world who all share a connection with Ireland.

"To say I have had a year of a lifetime is an understatement. My year as the 2017 Western Canada Rose has been filled with so much joy and pure gratification, where I have to keep reminding myself that this isn't all a magical dream.

"I was honoured to represent western Canada in the 2017 Rose of Tralee Festival in August in Co. Kerry, along with being able to open up the Frankfurt Christmas Markets in December of 2017.

"In less than a month, I will be travelling to New York to meet a majority of the other roses to walk in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade.

"But overall, I am most privileged to have met so many different people from all over the world who have ties to Ireland; and it has all been because of the Rose of Tralee Festival."

The heart of the festival is the selection of the Rose of Tralee which brings young women of Irish descent from around the world to Co. Kerry, Ireland for a global celebration of Irish culture.

Reflecting on the experience, Sinead said, "Ireland you continue to amaze me – the people from Ireland and the people that are connected to Ireland.

"All these people have been some of the nicest, most giving, supportive, and selfless individuals I have met.

"And it's been a pleasure to get to know the other 63 roses and 64 rose escorts throughout this 2017/2018 year. My 2017 rose sisters and rose escorts are family for life!

"And this journey is only beginning, I cannot wait to see where it takes me in life."

While some might consider the festival a bit anachronistic or old-fashioned, it has evolved to reach out and connect with the global Irish diaspora, bringing together people in celebration of their cultural heritage.

The Rose of Tralee has a long tradition in Kerry and the festival is something that the local people are very proud of. It has also turned into one of the biggest television events in Europe. Last year, the show drew a peak audience of 743,800 and an average audience of 618,600 viewers.

There are 65 'Rose' centres worldwide with three in Canada – Toronto, Ottawa and Edmonton. Having a western Canadian connection to the festival is a bonus for everyone, and those of us with an Irish connection, should be equally proud.

Entries for the Western Canada Rose 2018 are welcome from anywhere in western Canada.



**SINEAD MCGAHERN, 2017 Western Canada Rose.**

Eligibility requirements include: Must be 18 years of age by January 1, 2017 and will not have reached your 28<sup>th</sup> birthday on or prior to September 1, 2018; be unmarried or never married; be female, born in Ireland or of Irish origin by virtue of one of your ancestors having been born in Ireland.

For more information or to enter, e-mail: [westerncanadarose@gmail.com](mailto:westerncanadarose@gmail.com).

### THE CELTIC CONNECTION

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# Eilis Courtney: Vancouver's own 'Irish Mammy' to new Irish arrivals

**By ITA O'KANE-WILSON**  
VANCOUVER – Alan Cosgrave, president of CelticFest Vancouver, and the Board of Directors for CelticFest have announced the 2018 'Celt of the Year Award'. This year's winner is Eilis Courtney, president of the Irish Women's Network of B.C.

Born and bred in the northside of Dublin, Eilis Courtney followed her brother out to British Columbia in 1988 with plans to stay for 12 months.

She joined the University of British Columbia the following year and has been with them ever since.

Working in the office of Ceremonies and Events for the past 25 years, Eilis' long career has been focused on community building with its fair share of logistical and diplomatic challenges, an environment she thrives in.

She had a lead role in UBC's United Way campaign for the past 27 years and coordinated many community engagement events on campus.

Given her career path, it was no coincidence then that she would become involved in the Irish community in Vancouver and joined the Irish Women's Network of BC in 1998.

She became treasurer in 2004 and took over as president from Deirdre



O'Ruairc in 2010.

The IWN is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year and has two sister networks in Ottawa and Montreal.

With the recession hitting Ireland full-force, the influx of new Irish to Vancouver prompted a call from Eilis for more community collaboration and in 2011, various community groups came together to discuss ways on how to assist the new Irish.

In May 2011, the first newcomer information and networking seminar was held.

Since then, 11 seminars have been held for the newcomers by the Irish Women's Network under the Irish in Vancouver umbrella of local Irish community organizations.

In 2012, she spearheaded the set-up of the Irish in Vancouver website as a portal to the Irish community in Vancouver.

In the fall of 2015, Eilis, as one of two

presidents of community organizations in Vancouver, was authorized by the Embassy of Ireland in Ottawa to witness passport forms and photos.

Since then she has handled over 250 enquiries for information regarding passports, answering e-mail enquiries, providing forms and coordinating meetings to witness passport photos and forms.

Over the past eight years, Eilis has become affectionately known as the "Vancouver Mammy."

For hundreds if not thousands of young Irish, she has been a valuable resource as they settle into life here, has provided much support, and from time-to-time, a shoulder to cry on.

She is a huge presence in this vibrant Irish community and deserves to be acknowledged as the 2018 Celt of the Year.

The award will be presented at Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver on Saturday, March 17 and the evening will feature entertainment by the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir. For tickets and more information, see: <https://vwmc.ca>.

For full information and to purchase tickets for all events, visit: [www.celticfestvancouver.com](http://www.celticfestvancouver.com).

**More on the IWN's  
20th anniversary  
Pages 26 & 27**



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**Sunday, MARCH 25**

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**Old Man Luedecke**

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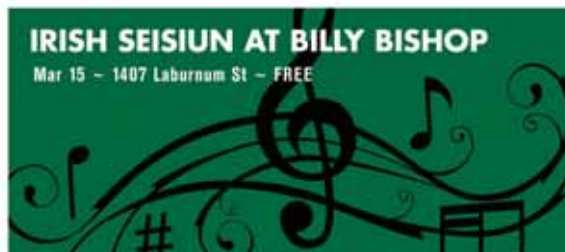
**CELTIC FEST CEILIDH**

Mar 16 – Scottish Cultural Centre – \$25



**WELSH MEN'S CHOIR**

Mar 16-17 – Arts Centre Maple Ridge / Christ Church Cathedral – \$15-\$40



**IRISH SEISIUM AT BILLY BISHOP**

Mar 15 – 1407 Laburnum St – FREE

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### IRISH SEISIUM

at Billy Bishop

1407 Laburnum St  
Vancouver, BC V6J 3W4  
March 15th - 7:00 pm

Tickets - Free Admission  
All Musicians Welcome

### CELTIC FEST CEILIDH

Scottish Cultural Centre  
8886 Hudson St  
Vancouver, BC V6P 4N2

March 16th - 7:00 pm

Tickets - \$25 at  
[www.eventbrite.ca](http://www.eventbrite.ca)

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(2 concerts)

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Maple Ridge, BC V2X 6G1  
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Tickets  
\$34 Adults  
\$32 Senior  
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[www.theactmapleridge.org/buy-tickets/](http://www.theactmapleridge.org/buy-tickets/)

Christ Church Cathedral  
690 Burrard St  
Vancouver, BC V6C 2L1  
March 17th - 7:30 pm

Tickets  
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\$40 Premium seating  
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# What a great start to the year at The Rogue!

**V**ANCOUVER – Sold out shows with **Connie Kaldor** and **Jim Byrnes** (twice), and **Ten Strings & A Goatskin**, **Altan**, and **Tom Russell**, and St. James Hall was almost full for shows with **Beppe Gambetta**, **Paul Pigat**

& **Lynn Miles**, **Stephen Fearing**, and the three nights of the inaugural **B.C. Fiddle Festival – The Driven Bow**.

The festival featuring six B.C. bands led by six virtuoso fiddle players in a variety of styles gave three evening concerts and six daytime workshops – all of them extremely well-attended and full to the brim with exhilarating music and merriment!

The festival opened with several young fiddlers from the Sunshine Coast – **Bad To The Bow** – led by ace young fiddler **Gabriel Dubreuil** on a couple of tunes off the floor.

Gabe then brought out his band **Early Spirit** – with **Jay Knutson** on guitar and vocals, **Will Ross** on bass and **Ben Kelly** on drums.

Mercurial fiddler, composer and teacher **Daniel Lapp** came next, with **Adam Dobres** on guitar.

What a stunning set they gave! The finale saw Daniel and Gabriel teaming up for the first time. The fiddle traditions are alive and well in B.C.

On Saturday there were workshops with **Daniel Lapp**, **Jocelyn Pettit**, and **Cam Wilson** (Mad Pudding) and then Jocelyn's band gave a fine set opening for the Celtic funksters **Mad Pudding**, who sounded like they had never stopped playing together – even though they went their separate ways over a decade ago. It was another breathtaking night of fiddle music!

Sunday's workshops featured **Kalissa Landa** (Locarno), **Kathleen Nisbet** (Metis Dance Hall Project), and **Gabriel Dubreuil**.

Gabe and I even managed to play a few tunes in the hall before the sound checks for the evening show. Great fun!

Kathleen's set was remarkable! With **J.J. Lavallee** on guitar and fiddle, **Patrick Metzger** on bass, and **Liam MacDonald** on drums – plus a spirited crew of local Metis dancers, and some pow wow dancers from New Mexico who were in town for the **Talking Stick Festival**.

The dance floor was full, and stayed that way when **Locarno** hit the stage for the final set of the festival.

This fabulous eight-piece delivered a scintillating set of Latin music with horns and marimbas and guitars, and of course, Kalissa's wonderful fiddle playing – not to mention the songs led by **Tom Landa** and co.

We took the train to Portland at the end of February to catch two shows at the Alberta Rose Theatre: **Tom Russell** on Tuesday, February 27, and a double-bill with **Altan** and **Lúnasa** on Wednesday 28th.

The Alberta Rose is an old cinema which has been lovingly restored and very recently saved as a community treasure. (Crowd-funding is a wonderful thing! Let's hope The Rio can follow suit.)



By  
**STEVE  
EDGE**

## THE ROGUE FOLK CLUB



They have a really strong concert line-up this month, and they also show movies and such. I reckon it holds around 250 people, and they have a full bar. It's in a mostly residential area, but there are a few excellent cafes within a block.

Irish-American singer songwriter **Tom Russell** was in fine form, and the next night we witnessed superb sets by **Lúnasa** and **Altan**, each preceded by a solo fiddle piece from legendary fiddler **Kevin Burke**, who lives in Portland.

At the end of the evening all ten musicians gathered on stage for a breathtaking finale!

**Lúnasa** and **Altan** have both released brilliant CDs this past week.

Lúnasa's eighth album is called *Cas*, and for the first time, they include some songs amidst the incredible instrumental medleys.

Guest singers **Natalie Merchant**, **Mary Chapin Carpenter**, **Tim O'Brien**, **Daoiri Farrell**, and **Eric Bibb** each take on a song, and with a backing band as good as this, well, you know it's going to be good!

The latest line-up features **Kevin Crawford** on flute and whistle, **Cillian Vallely** on uilleann pipes, **Colin Farrell** on fiddle, **Ed Boyd** on guitar, and **Trevor Hutchinson** on bass.

Cillian has been touring with **Bruce Springsteen** lately, and he contributes many of the tunes on the new CD.

The distinctive elements of Lúnasa's sound are still there, of course, with Hutchinson's bass and Boyd's fierce rhythm guitar building the platform for the others to flourish with their superb musicianship and tastefully expansive arrangements.

The songs are a rare treat, too, with Lúnasa demonstrating that they are not just a brilliant session band, they are also excellent accompanists and arrangers.

Altan's new CD, *The Gap Of Dreams*, sees them trimmed down to a single fiddle for the first time.

**Mairead Ni Mhaonaigh** really shines on the new album – and on stage too. She still has that hauntingly beautiful voice, and we now get to appreciate what a great fiddler she is.



PART of the Altan / Lúnasa / Kevin Burke finale at the Alberta Rose Theatre in Portland, Oregon last month.

No longer is she half of the Altan fiddle attack, she is ALL of it and she is in top form throughout.

**Martin Tourish**, the youngest band member, and nephew of **Ciaran Tourish** – who was the main fiddler for years – is a very tasteful accordion player, and I think he contributes most of the arrangements.

The new material is entirely made up of traditional and original songs and tunes from Donegal, with relatively few guests, so this is a drop of the pure Donegal – and every track is a gem!

Since their last visit in 2017 the amazing Scottish fiddle and cello duo **Alasdair Fraser** and **Natalie Haas** have released a new CD, *Ports of Call*, which features tunes from Spain, Brittany, Quebec and lots more ports of call.

As they did last year, they will host a participatory workshop in the afternoon of Sunday, March 11. It will take place downstairs at St. James, in the back room, from 3:30 PM to 5 PM. Pay at the door. \$30.

Last time there were over 50 participants, of all ages, and by the end they were playing a new (to them) tune in perfect unison, with Alasdair and Natalie as conductors and admirers! It was a stunning experience, I have to say.

Last year we also showed the movie, *The Groove Is Not Trivial*, which traces Alasdair's music to its roots in Scotland and explores the influence of the various Celtic regions.

Mostly it reflects on the essential groove of Scottish music, driven by the cello back in the 18th Century, and revived in all its inherently funky glory by these two brilliant musicians!

We will probably show the film at around 7:15 PM in the hall, so get there early.

And, of course, there will be a full concert with Alasdair and Natalie after that. Tickets and information on all upcoming Rogue concerts can be found on [www.roguefolk.com](http://www.roguefolk.com).

The **Vancouver Celtic Festival** runs March 15th to 17th at various venues around the city, with highlights including the **Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir** at Christ Church Cathedral on



ALASDAIR FRASER and Natalie Haas have released a new CD, *Ports of Call*, which features tunes from Spain, Brittany, Quebec and lots more ports of call.



CAM WILSON and Allen Dionne (Mad Pudding) and Jocelyn Pettit at the Saturday finale of The Driven Bow B.C. Fiddle Festival at The Rogue.

St. Patrick's Day and a Ceildih with **Blackthorn**, **Eire Born Dancers**, **B.C. Regiment Irish Pipes & Drums**, and **A Shot of Scotch**, at the Scottish Cultural Centre (8886 Hudson Street, in Marpole). Full details on [www.celticfestvancouver.com](http://www.celticfestvancouver.com).

**Festival du Bois** runs later than usual this year, March 23 - 25, in Maillardville.

The headline band is Quebec's superb **Le Vent Du Nord**, now a quintet, with the recent addition of fiddler **Andre Brunet**, brother of accordion player **Rejean Brunet**. **Olivier Demers** (fiddle), **Nicolas Boulgerice** (piano, vielle a roue) and **Simon Beaudry** (guitar) round out the band, who will have a new CD out very soon.

Another excellent Quebecois band, **Bon Debarras**, also has a new fiddle player – **Marie-Pierre Lecault** – and a new CD, *En Panne De Silence*.

Also appearing will be **Les Chauffeurs a Pied** (PQ), **Gabriel Dubreuil** (BC), **Blackthorn** (BC), and more. Info: [www.festivaldubois.ca](http://www.festivaldubois.ca).

You can hear music by all these performers and many more on *The Saturday Edge On Folk*, every Saturday from 8am to noon on CiTR fm 101.9 and [www.citr.ca](http://www.citr.ca) with yours truly in the chair, spinning the tunes. I hope you can join me!

See you at The Rogue House!  
Slainte,  
Steve



# Festival du Bois: A bustling hive of music and fun in Coquitlam

COQUITLAM, BC – Fans of Festival du Bois, held annually over the first weekend in March for many years, will want to note that this year's festival of Francophone, folk and world music has been scheduled later in the spring – and will run in 2018 from March 23-25.

After experiencing a few very cold festival weekends in recent years, with a big dump of snow making last year's Sunday performances a chilly challenge, the decision to move the festival dates to later in the spring is good news.

While the big heated tents in Mackin Park like the massive Grand Chapiteau that seats hundreds have always meant a degree of warmth and comfort for audience members and performers alike, well...you know.

It's just more likely to be warmer overall if you want to wander the site in Mackin Park to experience all that this popular festival has in store.

And what's in store this year, you ask? In addition to performances by the likes of stellar Quebec music groups such as **Le Vent du Nord**, **Bon Débarras** and **Les Chauffeurs à pieds**, the dynamic Latin/world sounds of **Mazacote**, **Jacky Essombe's** African dance and story, **Gabriel Debreuil's** fiddle,

**BON DÉBARRAS** is a trio of brilliant young Montréal multi-instrumentalists. They bring together traditional French-Canadian music inspired, through immigration, by Irish, Scottish and English music with the influences of modern-day, multicultural Montreal.



**Blackthorn's** Celtic and folk, the foot rhythms and unique "crankie" show from **Podorythmie** and local favourites, **Alouest**, and their traditional sounds – there's lots more happening over the weekend.

There's a contra dance on Friday night with **The Sybaritic String Band** that will get your juices flowing.

The festival also offers fascinating workshops in nearby Mackin House, special performances for children of all ages, roving characters around the site, thrilling activities like axe throwing (new this year), fun and fascinating exhibits, shopping and delicious food. Maple taffy on snow, anyone?

The 29<sup>th</sup> annual Festival du Bois offers a friendly and affordable opportunity for families to share a great experience of music, dance and Francophone culture.

Mackin Park – 1046 Brunette Avenue – is conveniently located near IKEA in Coquitlam, accessible by transit, bike and car. There are special ticket rates for senior, students and families, and if you buy online in advance of the festival, there's an extra ticket discount on offer.

Full festival information, including performance schedules and artist bios, are online at the festival's website: [festivaldubois.ca](http://festivaldubois.ca).

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ADRIENNE ROBLES  
DJ JOHNNY AWESOME  
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MARCH 16TH-18TH

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# An incredible in-depth historical account of the struggle to win the right for women to vote

HANNA SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON:  
Suffragette and Sinn Féiner  
/Her Memoirs and Political Writings  
By Margaret Ward  
University College Dublin Press  
/Dufour Editions  
ISBN: 978-1-910820-14 8

Reviewed by Sharon Greer

SPAT in the face by a drunk in a Limerick crowd, threatened by thugs to be thrown down steps for heckling politicians at a mass demonstration by shouting 'Votes for Irishwomen!', jailed several times, the extraordinary Hanna Sheehy Skeffington also withstood a number of hunger strikes and fearlessly battled the misogynistic boys clubs of England and Ireland.

This phenomenal feminist endured an unbelievable burden of terror and reprisals which she fought courageously and determinedly for the social – but in particular political emancipation – of women in her struggle to get the vote for women in Ireland in the early part of the 20th Century.

Margaret Ward's latest book, *Hanna Sheehy Skeffington: Suffragette and Sinn Féiner* is a colossal work on Skeffington's memoirs and political writings.

Hanna was a suffragette and Irish national born in 1877 in County Cork.

Along with her husband, Francis Sheehy Skeffington and two other members she founded the Irish Women's Franchise League in 1908 with hopes of securing women's voting rights.

It was through her initial friendship with her husband that brought her to an understanding of feminism.

The first campaign they were involved in was a woman's rights to a university education. Eventually this led them both into the suffrage movement.

Hanna was deeply committed to her beliefs, not just in equality for women, but for people in general.

Her father, David Sheehy, was an MP for the Irish Parliamentary Party who were incidentally opposed to the vote for women like almost all political parties of the period.

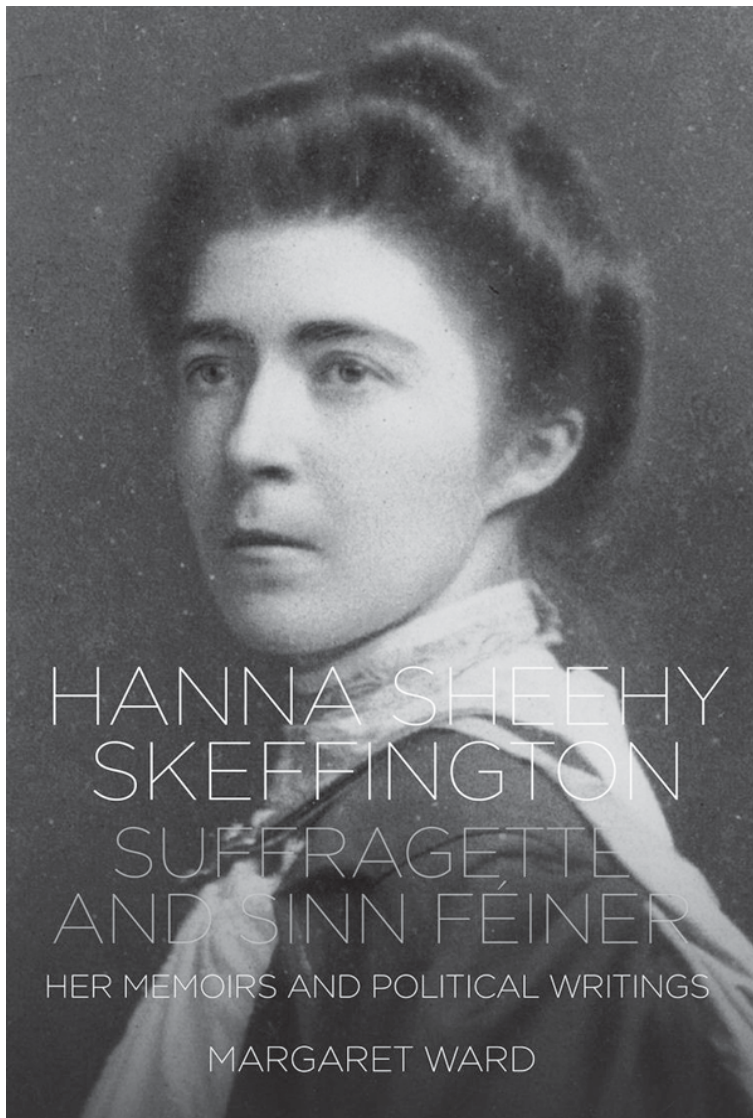
Although her father was an influence in her life it was her relationship with her congenial uncle, Father Eugene Sheehy – a Fenian priest, that initially stoked in Hanna her passion for political reform.

His immeasurable impact on her was both in the personal and political realms. Her admiration and love for her uncle was truly touching.

The most heartbreaking chapter in this staggering narrative is Hanna's description of the murder of her pacifist husband Francis by a British military man, Captain Bowen-Colthurst during the Uprising in 1916.

Francis had been involved in working for the freedom of Ireland, so was a target for retaliation from the British armed forces.

As a result of his murder, Hanna decided to campaign in the United States and embarked on an 18-month long cru-



## Women must fight against inequality, says Irish suffragette's granddaughter

DUBLIN – The granddaughter of one of Ireland's foremost suffragettes has said it is a women's place to take direct action for equality.

Dr. Micheline Sheehy Skeffington said her grandmother, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, would be surprised by how little has been achieved in terms of equal rights for women in the last 100 years.

The academic re-enacted her grandmother smashing the windows of the former seat of British Government rule in Ireland to mark the 100th anniversary of women getting the vote in Ireland.

"We haven't got parity, we haven't got equal pay, we're not equal in the government, we're not equal in the universities," Dr. Sheehy Skeffington said. "We do not command the respect we should. I think she would be a little bit surprised."

In 1912, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington vandalised windows in Dublin Castle in protest against women not having the right to vote. She was arrested and sent

to prison, where she went on a hunger strike.

On February 6, 1918, legislation was passed to grant women over the age of 30 the power to vote and run for general elections...but only women who held £5 of property, or had husbands who did.

The re-enactment was arranged for February 6, exactly 100 years since, in 1918, the Representation of the People Act allowed women over 30, who had property rights or a university education to vote for the first time in Ireland (and Britain).

It wasn't until independence in 1922 that women gained equal voting rights with men in Ireland – six years before they did in Britain.

A plaque will be officially erected by Dublin City Council later this year beside the windows Hanna Sheehy Skeffington smashed in recognition of the important contribution she made to Irish public life.

*"We all, Unionists and Nationalists alike, live overmuch on our past in Ireland. Our great past condones our empty present, and seems to deprecate, instead of stimulating endeavours. Living thus in our past, one is apt to over-draw one's bank account. This tendency is nowhere more aptly illustrated than with regards the position of Irishwomen in the Ireland of today."*  
– Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, 1909

sade to expose what happened to her husband and to lecture on Ireland's claim for self-determination.

Her lecture, 'British Militarism as I Have Known It' was given at Carnegie Hall, New York in 1917.

In 1918 women in Ireland, along with the rest of the UK, were given the right to vote at age 30 with property qualifications, while men could vote at age 21 with no qualifications.

Hanna contributed enormously to the struggle for equal suffrage being part of the Irish constitution in the 1920s.

She was an advocate and catalyst for human and civic rights. She wanted the establishment of the principle of equal pay for equal work. Aren't women all over the world still struggling for that issue today?

Hanna Sheehy Skeffington was a progressive woman who was well ahead of her time.

Her stamina was astounding when faced with the fierce and bitter opposition from many sides in her efforts against a paternalistic and patriarchal society. But she never gave up, and she is an inspiration for women to this day.

Margaret Ward's work is a weighty tome but an incredible historical account of the struggle that Irish women along with British suffragists went through to achieve the remarkable accomplishment of winning the right to vote.

As Ward's book so wonderfully divulges, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington's writings are particularly well written, articulate and humorous. She was a very well-educated woman and an eloquent communicator.

Bravo to these valiant women and men who supported votes for Women and women's suffrage in an era intensely opposed to any modern advancement in the freedom of women.



MICHELINE Sheehy Skeffington, the granddaughter of one of Ireland's foremost suffragettes, re-enacted her grandmother's act of protest in smashing a window at Dublin Castle against women not having the right to vote.



For the re-enactment, the grill covering a smaller window near the side entrance to Dublin Castle was removed and a mock-up window was installed with panes of glass in it.

As Micheline smashed the pane of glass, an actor dressed as a policeman stopped her.

Born in 1877, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington dedicated her life to tackling injustice and women's inequality.

In 1908, she founded the Irish Women's Franchise League, a militant suffrage organisation, with fellow campaigner Margaret Cousins.

In December 2014, her granddaughter won an equality tribunal case she took against the university she works in, NUI Galway.



# Anne-Marie Duff recites Pankhurst's 'Freedom or Death' rally cry at London march

LONDON – English actress Anne-Marie Duff recited Emmeline Pankhurst's acclaimed Freedom or Death rally cry at a march fighting for gender equality.

Duff, who starred as laundry worker Violet Miller in the 2015 film *Suffragette* exploring the women's movement, read Pankhurst's 1913 speech at the March4Women rally in Trafalgar Square on Sunday, March 4.

Scottish rockers Biffy Clyro performed at the International Women's Day rally which was hosted by presenter and comedian Sue Perkins and included a line-up of music, entertainment and speeches.

Duff said, "Emmeline Pankhurst was a formidable figure, whose name means so much to so many people.

"Her fight is close to my heart, and 100 years on, her powerful words are as relevant as ever.

"I'm honoured to have been asked to share them, and I can't think of a more spectacular and special location than the same spot in Trafalgar Square where Emmeline herself stood, and addressed thousands of suffragettes."

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, Bianca



ANNE-MARIE DUFF recited Emmeline Pankhurst's acclaimed Freedom or Death rally cry at a march fighting for gender equality. Pankhurst was a British political activist and leader of the British suffragette movement who helped women win the right to vote. In 1999 *Time* magazine named Pankhurst as one of the 100 Most Important People of the 20th Century

Jagger, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Michael Sheen and Pankhurst's great-granddaughter, Helen Pankhurst, also addressed the crowd.

The march, which kicked off at Millbank's Old Palace Yard at midday, coincided with the 100th anniversary of the first women being given the right to vote and is shining a spotlight on the

inequality women and girls face worldwide.

Biffy Clyro frontman Simon Neil said, "Of course women and men should be equal. We are passionate about the fight for gender equality. That's why we are standing in solidarity with women this Sunday – by performing at #March4Women."

## Pope invited to International Women's Day conference

ROME – International Women's Day is a global celebration which aims to inspire women in countries across the world. This year's celebration falls on Thursday, March 8.

The tradition began in the UK with the first National Women's Day in 1909 and its roots are in campaigning for better pay and voting rights.

This year, events will take place across Britain and the world to celebrate the achievements of women and hopefully inspire others.

In Rome, Pope Francis has been invited to attend the International Women's

Day conference with opening speaker former president Mary McAleese who was barred by the Vatican.

The former President of Ireland was barred from the 'Why Women Matter' conference when it was scheduled to take place at the Vatican, as it had been since 2014. It was then moved to the Aula of the Jesuit Curia in Rome.

In a letter to Pope Francis, director of Voices of Faith organizer, Chantal Goetz, explained that the conference was "an annual global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.

"Voices of Faith warmly invite you to come and listen to young Catholic women's voices on this day, Thursday March 8."

She pointed out that "Voices of Faith is comprised of Catholic women from around the world passionate about creating a prophetic Catholic Church where women's voices count, participate and lead on equal footing with men.

"This year, through our International Women's Day event we are bringing especially young Catholic leaders from across the globe to Rome to share their stories, hopes and dreams for the future of our Church," she said

A promotional video for the conference has called for gender equality in the Catholic Church. "Women are raising their voices and are being heard. The culture that endorses their silence is being eroded. Silence is no longer an option. The time for change is now," it says.

It asks whether the Catholic Church will become a relic. "Despite being made up by a great diversity of people from many walks of life the church is led by the experiences of a very narrow group. It is led by men."

Women, it says, were being "systematically overlooked for roles in the Catholic Church that they are qualified for simply because of their gender."

Besides McAleese other speakers at the conference will include Ssenfuka Joanita Warry, a Catholic lesbian who campaigns for LGBT rights in Uganda and also barred from speaking at the Vatican; Zuzanna Radzik, an outspoken Polish theologian, and Joana Gomes, project director for Jesuit Refugee Services in Chad.

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**TOP 10 CELTIC HITS FOR MARCH**

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

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

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

1. <i>Drums of Chelsea</i> by The Go Set - <i>One Fine Day</i> on ABC Music.	6. <i>The Tullaghan Lassies</i> by Altan - <i>The Gap of Dreams</i> on Compass Records.
2. <i>Sabine Turnaround</i> by Lost Bayou Ramblers - <i>Kalenda</i> on Lost Bayou Records.	7. <i>Seileach</i> by Cassie & Maggie - <i>The Willow Collection</i> on Independent.
3. <i>Welcome to Adamstown</i> by Flogging Molly - <i>Life is Good</i> on Vanguard Records.	8. <i>Don't Let It Bring You Down</i> by Bela Fleck & Abigail Washburn - <i>Echo In The Valley</i> on Rounder/Concord.
4. <i>Blackleg Miner</i> by Offa Rex - <i>Queen of Hearts</i> on Nonesuch.	9. <i>Isumagivappinnga</i> by The Jerry Cans - <i>Inuusi</i> on Aakuluk Music.
5. <i>The Brocca Set</i> by Pete's Posse - <i>The Conversation</i> on Epact Music.	10. <i>Dreamcatcher</i> by Clan of the Celts - <i>single</i> on Independent.

**Celt In A Twist - Pick Of The Month:**  
**ALTAN - The Gap of Dreams**  
(Compass Records)

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# Extreme weather across Britain and Ireland brings code red warning 'risk to life likely'

LONDON – Unrelenting snowfall ground parts of Britain and Ireland to a standstill, trapping motorists on roads overnight on March 1 and threatening air, rail and road journeys across much of the country.

Sub-zero temperatures, gale-force icy winds and blizzard-like conditions swept in from the Atlantic on the tail of the Beast from the East's chilly blast.

The UK has not witnessed such a widespread spell of cold since around March 2013.

The Met Office escalated a heavy snow weather warning for south-west England and south Wales to code red – its highest level – meaning “widespread damage, travel and power disruption and risk to life is likely.”

Scotland faced the brunt of the extreme weather, with police warning the public against travel until a red warning across the south of the country passes.

Hundreds of motorists on the M80 near Glasgow reported being stuck for up to 13 hours, with some spending the night in their cars, and others abandoning their vehicles on the motorway.

Around 1,000 vehicles were at a standstill, tailing back eight miles in both directions, Police Scotland said.

Major airports including London Gatwick and Heathrow told passengers that cancellations loomed, while Glasgow Airport announced it was closed. Rail services were also been mired by delays.

More than a foot of snow was dumped



PHOTO: National Police Air Service - London

'THE BEAST FROM THE EAST' as it approaches central London on Tuesday, February 27. A wall of snow created an apocalyptic image as popular tourist stops were engulfed by the storm. This photo taken from a helicopter shows the enormity of the storm as it covered The Shard, almost 1,000 feet high, and completely covered Tower Bridge.

in some parts of the country – peaking with 34 centimetres of snow in Wittering, Cambridgeshire.

The Met Office said it had likely been deeper than this in some places, but dry, windy conditions had made it hard to measure.

Temperatures dipped as low as minus 10.3C in Kinloss, Scotland.

Up to 50 centimetres of snow is expected over Dartmoor in Devon.

Hundreds of schools were forced to close, including more than 125 schools in North Yorkshire, more than 330 across Kent and all schools and colleges in the Republic of Ireland.

In Lincolnshire, police warned that “most roads” had become impassable,

with the force's control room tweeting that it had received reports of some remote villages being “totally cut off under two feet of snow.”

As well as the red alerts – which has never before been issued for Scotland, England or Northern Ireland – amber warnings were also issued for the north-east of England and the central belt of Scotland.



EMMA CHAMBERS

## Actress Emma Chambers has died aged 53

LONDON – British actress Emma Chambers, who starred alongside Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts in the 1999 movie *Notting Hill*, has died.

She was 53 years old. Her agent confirmed the news with a statement saying, “Over the years, Emma, created a wealth of characters and an immense body of work.

“She brought laughter and joy to many, and will be greatly missed,” said her agent, John Grant.

Grant said the Doncaster-born actress died of natural causes on Wednesday, February 21. She is survived by her husband, fellow actor Ian Dunn.

In *Notting Hill*, Chambers played the younger sister of Hugh Grant's character. Following the news of Chambers' passing, the actor said on Twitter that she was “a hilarious and very warm person and of course a brilliant actress.”

Chambers is well known in England for her long-standing role as Alice Tinker in the BBC's popular sitcom *The Vicar of Dibley*. The series ran for more than a decade.

The show originally ran from 1994 to 1998 but returned for numerous festive and comic relief specials with the latest episode airing as recently as 2015.

# Father of murdered Welsh schoolgirl relives nightmare after losing his memory

CARDIFF, Wales – The father of murdered five-year-old April Jones has had to learn of his daughter's death for a second time after a virus damaged his memory, it has been revealed.

Paul Jones (49) reportedly asked his wife why their daughter had not been to see him as he recovered from a severe case of encephalitis, a potentially lethal brain condition that left him unable to remember much of the previous decade.

Five-year-old April was snatched from outside her home in Machynlleth, mid Wales, on October 1, 2012 before being murdered by pedophile Mark Bridger.

April's mother, Coral (46), said husband had recognised the youngster in family photos used to jog his memory and asked why she had not come to visit.

When told the reason for her absence, he broke down as he had to relive the horrors of his daughter's death.

Coral Jones said, “How much more can a family take? I've already lost my daughter and now I have lost my soulmate and my rock.



“I feel so alone. Paul is the only person who can truly understand the pain I have felt over losing April.”

She said her husband remembered their daughter Jazmin (22), and son Harley (16), but had forgotten events from the last decade, including their wedding and family holidays.

She said their marriage withstood the immense strain of the harrowing ordeal, although her husband's illness came as a major blow.



PICTURED above Paul and Coral Jones following the murder trial of pedophile Mark Bridger. Paul Jones suffered the devastation of learning of his daughter's death for a second time after a virus damaged his memory. (L) Five-year-old April Jones disappeared from the housing estate where she lived in Machynlleth, mid Wales, on October 1, 2012. Her disappearance led to one of the biggest searches in British history.

He fell ill from a virus infection 18 months ago, with his wife adding, “I was absolutely gobsmacked when I was told Paul's illness had been caused by a cold sore.”

She said her husband had felt ill when he woke up one night “confused and hallucinating.” She called an ambulance and he was rushed to a hospital near Aberystwyth.

The infection and resulting brain swelling led to the loss of memory for most

of the last decade, although Coral said he remembers some people closest to him.

Bridger, who was convicted of April's murder, child abduction and perverting the course of justice, refused to tell police what he had done with the youngster's body – although officers did recover fragments of her skull from his fireplace. The former lifeguard was sentenced to a whole life tariff, meaning he will die behind bars.

## Thousands without water in Wales in wake of storm

Blizzards, strong winds, drifting snow and bitter cold have caused death and disruption as the weather system nicknamed the Beast from the East combined with Storm Emma to create some of the most testing weather experienced in the UK for years.

In Wales, the aftermath is continuing to cause problems with some roads and schools still affected on March 7.

About 1,500 homes were still without water because of problems caused by burst pipes.

Welsh Water said it was still trying to fix problems in Gwynedd, Pembrokeshire and on Anglesey.

Some customers are also still without supplies in Merthyr Tydfil, Brecon, Rhondda, Gwaedol y Garth and Carmarthen.

Many of those affected have complained about delays in receiving bottled water. Welsh Water has apologised.

It said it was prioritising vulnerable people who were without water and had opened bottled water stations to help those who were cut off.





IN A HIGH-PROFILE intervention in the Brexit debate, former British Tory Prime Minister John Major urged a second referendum saying, 'No-one voted for higher prices and poorer public services, but that is what they may get' if EU withdrawal leaves the UK poorer and weaker, as forecasts suggest.

## Two former British PMs Warn of 'terrible backlash' post-Brexit

LONDON – In a high-profile intervention in the Brexit debate, two former British prime ministers warned of a “terrible backlash” from the public if EU withdrawal leaves the UK poorer and weaker, as forecasts suggest.

John Major, the former conservative prime minister, warned that Theresa May's Brexit 'red lines' made a favourable outcome impossible.

He called on the PM to stand up to the “ultra-Brexit” minority in her party and drop her “red lines” of taking Britain out of the single market and customs union.

Speaking in London at a business gathering organized by the Creative Industries Federation just two days before Theresa May set out her own vision for a post-Brexit Britain, Major said that the referendum result obliged the government to negotiate a Brexit deal, but not to pull the UK out of the EU “at any cost.”

He said the Conservative Party appeared not to understand business concerns over Brexit, and was only saved from a “hemorrhage of business support” because of fears of Labour's Jeremy Corbyn taking power.

Losing trade advantages in relation to the EU was an act of “economic self-harm” and loss of access to Europe could cost as many as 125,000 jobs in Japanese-owned firms alone.

He warned that the government's current negotiating position was not realistic and he urged the prime minister to be prepared to “change course” and seek a Norway-style solution which would involve accepting single market rules and paying for access to EU markets.

It was “not credible” to expect to leave the single market, customs union and European Court of Justice while at the same time seeking a la carte access to European markets, he said.

He urged May to hold a free vote on the final deal with the option of putting it to the public in a second referendum, describing his intervention as “heartfelt” and “analytical.”

“No-one voted for higher prices and poorer public services, but that is what they may get. The emerging evidence

*“I find it not just disappointing but sickening that people should really be prepared to sacrifice peace in Northern Ireland on the altar of Brexit.”*

– Tony Blair

suggests Brexit will hurt most those who have least. Neither parliament nor government wish to see that,” said Major.

In Brussels, former labour leader and British prime minister Tony Blair said Theresa May's plan does not address the fundamental dilemma at the heart of Brexit.

Ahead of a speech where he urged European Union leaders to work to stop Brexit, he said May's Brexit plan is “literally not going to happen,” no matter how tough she is in negotiations with the European Union.

Blair told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme, “The problem that she (Theresa May) has is that there is no way round the dilemma.

“What she thinks is that it's possible to get the European Union to give us access to Europe's markets without the same obligations that the rest of Europe has in the single market.

“That is not possible. It's not a question of a tough negotiation or a weak negotiation, it literally is not going to happen.

“So the dilemma you have is you're either going to have to stay close to Europe to minimise economic damage, in which case you abide by Europe's rules, or you're free from Europe's rules, in which case you're going to have economic damage.”

He repeated his criticism of Brexiters who dismiss the impasse in negotiations over maintaining a soft Irish border.

“I find it not just disappointing but sickening that people should really be prepared to sacrifice peace in Northern Ireland on the altar of Brexit,” he said.

## Brexit: Furious response from UK on EU's draft legal agreement

BRUSSELS – An EU proposal for the Northern Ireland border threatens the “constitutional integrity” of the United Kingdom, Theresa May has said.

The EU's draft legal agreement released on February 28 proposes a “common regulatory area” after Brexit on the island of Ireland – in effect keeping Northern Ireland in a customs union – if no other solution is found.

Unveiling the draft agreement on what has proved to be a busy day for Brexit news, EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier called on the UK to come up with alternatives.

The European Union laid out how it would regulate Northern Ireland's trade if no better solution was found in the fast-closing window before Britain's departure from the EU, prompting furious reactions in London and Belfast.

In response to the proposal, UK negotiator David Davis warned Britain will refuse to pay its multibillion-pound Brexit divorce bill until Brussels backs down on attempts to keep Northern Ireland subject to European Union rules.

Barnier denied that the proposal, intended to avoid a disruptive EU-UK “hard border” on the island of Ireland, would loosen Northern Ireland's constitutional ties to the rest of the United Kingdom.

But British leader Theresa May told her parliament that no prime minister could ever agree to these terms.

The hardline Democratic Unionist (DUP) allies in Belfast on whom she relies for a slim majority denounced the EU draft as “constitutionally unacceptable” and “economically catastrophic” as it would distance Northern Ireland from mainland Britain.

Establishing a “common regulatory area” with Ireland and 26 other EU states, as the draft treaty proposes, would in effect keep the British province in a customs union with the bloc.

“Northern Ireland shall be considered to be part of the customs territory of the Union,” read the draft, which some



ANTI-BREXIT campaigners protesting outside the Irish Government buildings in Dublin.

diplomats characterised as a clear bid by Brussels to seize the initiative and drive negotiations forward on its terms.

Barnier said Britons should not be surprised by a text that merely translated an interim accord with London into legal language.

And he said the border proposal was only a “backstop” solution, which could be changed if Britain offered alternatives along the lines of those it hinted at during talks in December.

In December, a last-ditch agreement over the Irish border was reached between May and the European Union. That was greeted with widespread relief, yet it did not really settle the matter, setting the stage for the most recent action by the European Union.

Britain's vote to leave the EU has undermined one of the pillars of the Good Friday Agreement – a 1998 settlement that ended decades of violence in Northern Ireland between mostly Catholic Irish nationalists and Protestant unionists who favour continued union with Britain.

Under the Northern Irish peace process, the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has melted away, with checkpoints dismantled to reduce sectarian tensions.

In Dublin, Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney echoed Barnier, saying the draft was “absolutely faithful” to the

December accord and “should not be a surprise to anybody.”

Taoiseach (prime minister) Leo Varadkar said it was up to May and the DUP to come up with their own solutions if they did not like it.

Barnier rammed home that “time is short” before Britain will be out of the EU in exactly 13 months.

He called on May to “pick up the pace” of negotiations so that a withdrawal treaty, including terms for keeping the status quo during a two-year transition, could be agreed this autumn and ratified by March.

As the rhetoric on both sides has taken a more irritable turn, and negotiations have stalled since the interim accords in December, Barnier said he was “preparing for every situation” in case Britain, the continent's second-biggest economy, lurches out of the Union without a deal after 46 years.

One EU diplomat said Barnier and his team had “switched gear into attack mode” and had agreed with Dublin on a tactic to push Britain on from December's fudge on the Irish border.

Supporters of Brexit argue that Britain will benefit from no longer being bound by EU rules and can do more trade with the rest of the world, while opponents say the prospect of new barriers to trade in Europe is already damaging its economy.

## Brexit: Edinburgh preparing to pass legislation to protect Scotland

EDINBURGH – Britain's Government said on Monday, February 26 that it expected to reach an agreement with the United Kingdom's devolved nations on how power will be shared after Brexit, but its latest proposal to unlock a political impasse fell flat in Scotland.

Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales do not have a veto on Brexit legislation, but ignoring them risks worsening already strained relations, stoking nationalism in Scotland, and further complicating the already-difficult withdrawal process.

The government needs a deal before the summer in order to pass the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill in Britain's national parliament. The bill will formally sever the UK's ties to the EU and “copy and paste” EU legislation into British law.

Tory cabinet minister David Lidington said most currently devolved powers would now automatically stay in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, the devolved

nations' capitals, after Britain leaves the European Union.

But he said the British Government would make exceptions if it believed that would damage the UK as a whole.

“The government will protect that vital common market of the United Kingdom by retaining UK frameworks where necessary,” Lidington said in the latest of several speeches by senior ministers setting out the British Government's Brexit roadmap.

That would ensure simplicity of administrative processes for businesses or citizens of the UK as it leaves the EU, he said.

Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Government also argues it will give Britain more strength to negotiate trade deals.

Scotland's Brexit minister Michael Russell, whose party supports Scottish independence from the UK, slammed Lidington's speech. “However they try

to dress this up, the reality is the UK Government is using Brexit to try to take control of devolved powers without the agreement of the Scottish parliament,” he said.

In response to the announcement, the Scottish Government has brought forward its own Bill as an alternative to the UK legislation, amid the ongoing dispute over what devolved administrations have branded a “power grab” by Westminster.

The British parliament must seek consent from the Scottish parliament and the Welsh assembly when legislating on policy areas that overlap with their devolved lawmaking powers in areas such as education, health, farming and fishing. Both have declined to give their consent to the withdrawal bill.

May's spokesman said the government had made a “considerable” offer on the redistribution of powers, and that accepting the deal was the best way to ensure a smooth and orderly EU exit.



# St. David's Day: 'I think the Irish got a better deal'



**L**ONDON – Greetings from the UK. Although spring is just around the corner, a weather front that the media has named “The Beast from the East” has swept in bringing heavy snow and sent temperatures tumbling below freezing.

We must be the only country in the world where if snow is forecasted for Thursday the trains grind to a halt on the Wednesday, presumably in fear.

Hundreds of thousands of commuters suffered disruption in yesterday's morning's rush hour because hundreds of trains were cancelled.

I often wonder what the Swiss think of us. They spend most of the winter up to their elbows in snow and yet there is no disruption.

Happily for me I no longer commute and with the sub-zero temperature and a biting wind, the wisest thing to do was to *cwch* up by the fire.

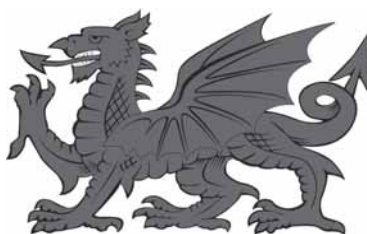
For Christmas my sister sent me a coffee mug, and on it is written: “Anybody can cuddle but only the Welsh can *cwch*.”

For non-Welsh speakers “cwch” is one of those words that have no exact English translation. To pronounce it the word rhymes with “butch” and I suppose the nearest word to it in English is “cuddle” but that does not do it justice.

## POSTCARD FROM LONDON



By  
**ELFAN  
JONES**



For many years I thought it was an English word because my parents would use the phrase “cwch up a bit” meaning either to cuddle up, give a hug or to move up on the sofa to make room for someone else to sit down.

The word was also used to tell the dog to go to her basket “go to your cwch.”

It was also a cupboard under the stairs “cwch dan star” or “Cwch glo” the word for the coal shed in the back yard.

When I was growing up in Ammanford in South Wales, the language I spoke was a glorious jumble of Welsh and English and when I was in my forties, living in Twickenham, I asked a neighbour to “cwch up a bit” and was surprised when she didn't know what I was talking about.

Another Welsh word which defies an English translation is “hwyl.”

The dictionary of Welsh published by the University of Wales describes it like this: “A healthy physical or mental condition, good form, temper, mood, frame of mind, fervour, ecstasy, unction and zest.”

I suppose that covers it, because “hwyl” is all of those things, and when sitting in the stadium in Cardiff listening to 70,000 people singing, and watching the Welsh rugby team run rings around the Scots the “hwyl” is strong.

Today is March 1, celebrated in Wales and by the Welsh around the world as St. David's Day – St. David being the patron saint of Wales.

It intrigues me as to why it is celebrated. I understand celebrating St. Patrick's Day because he drove the snakes out



**ACROSS** Wales and around the world Welsh people proudly celebrate their patron saint, Saint David, and everything they love about Wales on March 1.

of Ireland and replaced them with Guinness. Although he was technically English (born in Cumbria), the Irish forgave him because he gave them a damn good excuse for a party.

Obtaining reliable information about St. David has proved difficult as there does not seem to be much agreement on where or when he was born.

Caerfai in Pembrokeshire in 462 AD or Henfynwy in Cardiganshire in 501 AD seem popular choices, but there is general agreement that he travelled around Brittany and Cornwall, preaching the gospel and founding churches and monastic settlements.

He founded his own monastery in what is now known as St. David's in Pembrokeshire, and his monastic rule prescribed that the monks had to pull the plough themselves, could only drink water and eat only bread and herbs.

He practised asceticism and as a self-imposed penance he would stand up to his neck in a lake of cold water reciting scripture.

His followers were not allowed personal possessions, to eat meat or drink beer. I may have missed the point, but I think the Irish got a better deal.

As usual there are stories of miracles – apparently doves would perch on St. David's shoulder, and when preaching to a large crowd, near Kidwelly in Carmarthenshire, a small hill suddenly arose from the ground so he could stand on it and be seen by everyone.

The story I liked best is that St. David led a Welsh army to victory against the Anglo-Saxon invaders.

He gave his troops a leek each before the battle telling them that it was a gift from God and eating it would ensure victory.

Of course, his small army won the day – probably the cumulative force of bad breath was too much for the enemy, and it must be the first recording of chemical warfare in history.

So as we say in Wales: ‘*Hapus Dydd Gwyl Dewi*’ which means ‘Happy St. David's Day’.

## Worldwide St. David's Day greetings exchanged in Vancouver

**VANCOUVER** – On St. David's Day, Thursday, March 1, Welsh residents in the Lower Mainland joined people of Welsh heritage in many parts of the world in celebrating Wales' patron saint.

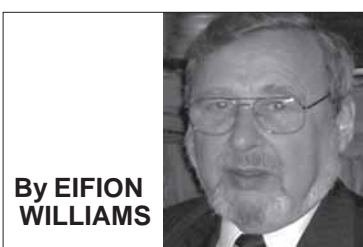
An open house was held at the Welsh Society's Cambrian Hall where attendees enjoyed some traditional Welsh fare and joined in the singing of favourite Welsh songs.

The society's annual St. David's Day dinner was held on Saturday evening, March 3, presided over by Lynn Owens-Whalen, the society's president.

Antone Minard read out greetings from kindred Welsh societies in various parts of the world, followed by the traditional toasts.

The toast to Canada was presented by Kathy Thomas, the toast to Wales by Marilyn Hames, and the toast to St. David by Elizabeth Rogers-Jones.

The guest artist this year was Vancouver classical pianist and guitarist Emyr Honeybun who wowed an appreciative audience with his selections from popular composers such as Bach,



By **EIFION  
WILLIAMS**



**EMYR HONEYBUN** participated in St. David's Day celebrations at the Cambrian Hall in Vancouver.

Rachmaninoff and Liszt.

Emyr is an Oxford University graduate with a masters degree in music performance. He is currently a piano instructor at Vancouver's Amadeus Music Academy.

The celebration of St. David's Day has grown over the past few years, not only

in Wales, but among Welsh exiles in many parts of the world.

People all over Wales celebrate with special events such as the 1,000 member male voice choir formed especially for the annual concert at St. David's Hall, Cardiff.

Welsh male voice choirs also travel to all corners of the globe to entertain Welsh exile communities on St. David's Day.

St. David's Day is also a popular annual celebration in schools throughout Wales. Schoolchildren participate in events such as marches through their towns and villages, singing and dancing to Welsh folk music, competing in Eisteddfodau (music and literary competitions) and dressing up in traditional Welsh costumes.

Not much is known about the life of St. David (Dewi Sant in Welsh). Most of the details of his life were written several centuries after his death, much of it probably legend rather than fact.

He is said to have been born on what is today the Pembrokeshire coast, near the present cathedral city of St. David's and spent his early life in a monastery.

He later travelled throughout Wales and parts of England and Brittany on missionary journeys and established several churches.

There are many stories told about St.

David's life, most of them probably apocryphal.

It is said that occasionally springs of water appeared where he preached and on at least one occasion the ground rose when he spoke so that everyone could see and hear him.

Many Welsh people are today familiar with St. David's last words in a sermon to his followers: “Be joyful and keep your faith and your creed. Do the little things you have seen me do and heard about. I will walk the path my fathers have walked before me.”

“Do the little things” (*Gwnewch y pethau bychain*) is today a well-known phrase in Welsh.

David was canonized in 1120 and March 1, St. David's Day, was added to the Church Calendar.

Following his canonization, many pilgrimages were made to St. David's and the Catholic Church decreed that two pilgrimages to St. David's equaled one to Rome, while three pilgrimages equaled one to Jerusalem.

St. David's Day has evolved over the years into a celebration of Welsh culture and traditions, an event that brings together Welsh people across the globe.

The Vancouver Welsh Society receives many St. David's Day greetings from Welsh societies and sends out its own annual greeting in return.

## BBC Wales loses rights to broadcast rugby Pro 14 tournament

Live coverage of regional rugby will not be shown on BBC Two Wales next season after the BBC failed to reach a deal to continue broadcasting the Pro14 tournament.

Competition organisers are understood to have awarded the UK rights to a pay-TV service, but BBC Wales had hoped to continue broadcasting games in Wales.

It means viewers will no longer be able to watch regional games on free-to-air television in English. Negotiations over Welsh language rights are ongoing.

In a statement, BBC Wales said it was disappointed.

“We're proud of our record of covering live Pro14 rugby across television, radio and online and we offered a significantly increased financial bid in order to safeguard these rights on a free-to-air basis for hundreds of thousands of viewers in Wales, and across the UK,” it said.

“We know there will be a real disappointment at this outcome among hundreds of thousands of rugby fans who have enjoyed live free-to-air coverage on the BBC over many years.”



# The Beast from the East cuts off all avenues to the south



By  
**HARRY  
McGRATH**

EDINBURGH – The Beast from the East sounds like a professional wrestler who might once have faced off against Saskatoon-Glaswegian Rowdy Roddy Piper.

Instead it's the name given to the storm that has just passed through Scotland, leaving a pile of snow and ice in its wake.

"Beast" may sound a bit hyperbolic but the storm did its best to live up to the moniker and most of the country ground to a halt as a result of its predations.

Planes, trains, buses and cars were confined to barracks.

Those foolish enough to ignore the "no driving" warnings found themselves stranded on motorways for up to 13 hours and dependent on the good offices of local folk for their well-being.

From my front window in Edinburgh, I saw intrepid types heading for snow-covered Arthur's Seat dragging sleds, skis and, in one case, two kayaks.

Children gambolled on the lower slopes, released from school for the third day in succession.

The food shop round the corner was closed and those further afield featured bare shelves and hungry customers contending for whatever provisions were left.

The last time Scotland saw anything like this was in early December 2010 and the storm cost the transport minister his job.

This time the transport minister is Humza Yousaf who spoke at Simon Fraser University on Tartan Day 2014 when he was Minister for External Affairs and International Development.

There can be no complaints about Humza's performance as he spent days and nights in a control centre furiously tweeting warnings and updating conditions.

As the days progressed, the warnings piled up as high as the snow but one series struck me as particularly interesting.

From Edinburgh, there are essentially five direct ways of travelling to England – by plane, train, or via the A1, A7 or A68 roads.

With the airport closed, the trains all cancelled, and the roads impassable, the Scotland/England border was essentially unreachable.

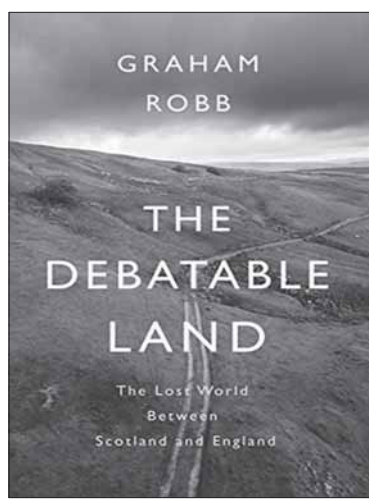
In the Scottish Borders itself, the storm cut off small communities one from the other and local authorities were struggling to visit isolated farms and make sure everyone was alright.

Unexpected visitors were not always so welcome in the Borders.

One of the books I read while the Beast had me trapped in the house was *The Debatable Land: The Lost World Between Scotland and England* by historian Graham Robb.



LANDMARK statue of a border reiver in Galashiels, Scotland.



*"Scottish voters had been sensitized to the benefits of European membership by the campaign for Scottish independence."*

The Debatable Land was once an independent territory between Scotland and England which was controlled for three centuries by local clans like the Armstrongs, Grahams, Eliots and Nixons.

From the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, these "Border reivers," as they were known, were unsuccessfully policed by the wardens of what became the Border shires of West, Middle and East March.

The Debatable Land covered both sides of the border and the reivers were both Scots and English.

They raided indiscriminately in Scotland and in England, only sparing those with whom they shared kinship.

As a teenager in the Border town of Galashiels, I was very aware of the reivers.

A statue of a Border reiver was (and is) a town landmark and the word reiver got attached to everything from pubs to sports teams.

Robb, however, is keen to clear up some myths about the reivers including the tendency to associate them with the Borders in general rather than the much

smaller Debatable Land where they were based.

He also strips away other misconceptions; particularly those that resulted from the so-called "border ballads," many written or adapted by Sir Walter Scott, which eulogised the reivers or had them operating as Robin Hoods.

Despite the fact that the reivers caused their share of grief along both sides of the Scotland/England border, Robb is a fan of frictionless borders.

He constantly stresses how well Borderers get along no matter which side of the border they live on.

This may be true, but the issue of frictionless borders is once again in the news and not only in Ireland.

He ends by trying to explain the different Brexit votes on both sides of the Border, rather lamely concluding that "Scottish voters had been sensitized to the benefits of European membership by the campaign for Scottish independence."

There's much more to it, but that's a column for another day.

In the meantime, there is another way to cross the Scotland/England border. In Gala, the block of flats next door to where my family lived was reserved for members of the local police force.

There were six flats in total, a generous allotment for a smallish town with a low crime rate.

In retrospect, the routine nature of the Gala beat may explain why some of our neighbours had interesting extra-con-stabulary duties.

An occupant of the "police flats," for instance, used his spare time to keep a watching brief over the land south of his home town of Newcastleton which is only a few miles from the English border.

On one occasion, his son and I joined him on his perambulation.

We eventually came to a fence traversed by a stile and he told us that if we stood on either side of it we would have one foot in Scotland and the other in England.

It could well be that Brexit will push Scotland and England in different directions but one can only hope that future generations of Borderers will still be able to walk into England, weather permitting of course.



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## Five great days of entertainment at Ireland's 2018 St. Patrick's Fest

DUBLIN – The annual St. Patrick's Festival, Ireland's national celebration of identity, arts and culture, will showcase the very best of Irish and international talent and entertainment with a whole host of fun festivities from March 15-19.

### St. Patrick's Day Parade

There are countless activities planned for the 2018 festival including the spectacular St. Patrick's Day parade through the centre of Dublin on Saturday, March 17.

The legendary parade will travel across the city and will certainly astound and amaze with its myriad of talented performers, vivid colours and awesome hand-crafted structures. This world-famous festival is set to be the best yet.

Leading the parade as this year's grand marshal will be Dublin star of the stage and screen Liam Cunningham who was chosen in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Irish acting both at home and internationally.

*Game of Thrones* star Liam Cunningham will join the illustrious ranks of previous grand marshals such as Annalise Murphy, Joanne O'Riordan, Brendan O'Carroll, Katie Taylor, Packie Bonner and Johnny Giles to name but a few.

### Herstory: Walking Tour

Another highlight of this year's festival will be the installation celebrating Irish women's stories throughout history with

talks in landmark locations around the city.

Herstory is a new cultural movement in celebration of the centenary of the partial enfranchisement of Irish women.

Herstory: Suffragette Walking Tour will highlight some of the key figures and events undertaken by very courageous women in their efforts to win equality for women.

Herstory: Ireland of Equals will tell the life stories of historical, contemporary and mythological women.

Generations of pioneering Irish women played a crucial role in the development of democracy in their own country and around the world.

The suffrage movement in Ireland has been overshadowed by the events that took place in 1912-1923. The suffrage movement came to the fore in the mid to late 19th Century.

Initially the movement relied on constitutional methods to win support for their cause, but in the early years of the 20th Century, more campaigners began to emerge such as Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Margaret Cousins, who

set up the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL) in 1908.

They were followed by Louie Bennett and Helen Chenevix who founded the Irish Women's Suffrage Federation in 1911. The IWFL was a more militant body with close ties to the Women's Social and Political Union and Sylvia Pankhurst.

The First World War changed the whole political spectrum in Ireland and from 1916 on, Irish independence dominated everything. But the suffragettes did not go away. Many supported the independence movement, sadly though, in the new Ireland that emerged, the rights of women were far from realised.

Speakers for Herstory include Senia Paseta (professor of Modern History, Oxford University); Dr. Micheline Sheehy Skeffington (women's rights activist and granddaughter of Hanna and Francis Sheehy Skeffington); Dr. Mary McAuliffe (historian and assistant professor of Gender Studies, UCD) and more to be announced.

Each speaker is followed by a performance by young contemporary poets from the NUI Maynooth.

For full festival schedule and details, visit: [www.stpatricksfestival.ie](http://www.stpatricksfestival.ie). To learn more about Herstory and the biographies of the women featured, see: [www.herstory.ie/biographies](http://www.herstory.ie/biographies).

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# BEANNACHTAÍ NA FÉILE PADRAIG

The Blessings of St. Patrick on You



Page 1

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The Blessings of St. Patrick on You



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## IRISH SPORTING & SOCIAL CLUB

# The Gaelic games are alive and well in Vancouver

**V**ANCOUVER – The GAA season is back with a bang! The frost and snow certainly did not keep the Irish Sporting and Social Club' (ISSC) from developing their club.

By AISLINN RICE  
PRO – ISSC Vancouver

The ISSC is the principal GAA club in Vancouver, but with other expanding and developing clubs, such as Fraser Valley and Éire Óg, the ISSC are determined to stay on top of their game.

This year the ISSC took the next step in developing the club and introducing GAA games to the youth of Vancouver.

With a fantastic new development officer, Lorraine Muckian, in place, this task was made easy.

Lorraine arranged for a young coach to travel to Vancouver from the homeland to teach Gaelic games to both elementary and high schools in Vancouver.

Emmet Loughran from Belfast was the coach chosen to grace the ISSC with his presence.

Emmet has coached over 200 students both hurling and football, as well as coaching the camogie and hurling academies for new and improving players in February.

The past three weeks has been a massive success for the club, with schools requesting more coaching.

With such great success, the club is now starting the process of updating the five-year club development plan, which will be started with an e-mailed survey to both present and past members of the ISSC. We invite everyone to be involved in this development plan process.

March and April are lining up to be exciting months for the club with our games getting underway for some very eager players.

The new executive committee has been very busy planning the new year ahead, with the aim of a lot more games for all codes within the club.

**Lá Fhéile Pádraig Sona Daoibh from ISSC:** The ISSC would like to invite everyone out to Andy Livingstone Park on March 17, 2018, for an array of Gaelic games from 11 AM - 1 PM.

**Spring League:** On Friday, March 23 the six-week spring league will commence and promises to be very competitive and full of fun this year.

The games will take place every Friday evening at 7 PM for six consecutive weeks. All new members welcome!

**Start of the Season Training:** The ISSC will be back in full training mode in early April.

Training times and venues for each code will be confirmed in the next month.

Please follow our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/isscvancouver](http://www.facebook.com/isscvancouver) for all updates. All new members welcome.

We are pleased to announce that the ISSC have launched a brand-new website, full of all the information you would need.

Thanks to Liam Kennedy, an ISSC hurler, the website is now modern and easily accessible. Please visit our new website at [www.isscvancouver.com](http://www.isscvancouver.com).

Please contact [isscvancouver@gmail.com](mailto:isscvancouver@gmail.com) with any questions or queries about any of the upcoming events.

The ISSC look forward to another great sporting year full of healthy competition amongst the Vancouver teams.

## ISSC COMMITTEE 2018

**Chairperson:** Maria Eviston

**Secretary:** Sofie Gallagher

**Treasurer:** Trevor Farrell

**Public Relations Office:**

Aislinn Rice

**Club Development Officer:**

Lorraine Muckian



INTRODUCING a new generation to the GAA games in Vancouver. [File photo *The Celtic Connection*.]



Lá Fhéile Pádraig Sona Daoibh from the Western Canada Division of the GAA

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# The Trees or the Forest? Find the View that Fits your own Life this Spring Season

By CYNTHIA WALLENTINE

SPRING is a season of constant change against a constant backdrop.

The blessing of the Celtic year is its timeless structure. While there remains a sun and a moon in the sky, the soul can count upon the immutable promise of dark to light, and birth to death to rebirth.

When the details of life threaten to swamp, the promise comes alive, picking us up, setting us back on a path, and offering hope in the bigger picture. Yet sometimes, it is important to step off the path, and see the trees for the forest.

On a full moon, the neighborhood streets are a river of light, broken only by the shadows of bare branches of trees that can feel spring coming from their roots.

In the rich austerity of moonlight, attention is drawn to the shapes of the branches, the direction of the greater limbs, and the guessed-at strains that caused each of them to grow as they have.

Daylight renders tree shadows as well, but perhaps they are not as stark, as much of a character sketch of the tree, as at night. In full day, we more easily view the detail of the cloak of bark or the gown of leaves when season permits.

At night or day, it is tempting to take in the whole street, the scene, the situation, the "bottom-line." Knowing the full



THIS SPRING...step off the path, and really consider the trees for the forest.

story gives us a better perspective and ability to make decisions of large or small importance. The big picture is "the way it is."

But is it? Just as it is easier to make decisions based on what we believe to be the whole picture, it is also easier to pass judgment on people, places, or things that we do not know details about which we cannot even guess.

Spring officially arrives on March 20 this year. Just days before that, we will celebrate St. Patrick's Day on March 17.

We commemorate spring with abundance and smiles because the light and milder weather is hopefully upon us.

Yet to live in step with the details of these festivals is to remember this is a time of preparation to plant, of being hungry, of having an idea of what you want to grow, and doing the work to prepare the land.

St. Patrick himself, a mythic doer of miracles, was a man who found meaning by choosing to live a hardscrabble existence in a land that had once enslaved him.

The days of spring are not a time of fruition, they ask for the idea, the seed, and the detail that formed, or will form.

As the hinge between the seasons of Samhain and Beltaine, spring knows the past, and what could become the future. Spring is change driving ever forward, but within the bounds of the great Celtic wheel.

What is in the details of your life, what approached and faded back unknown when you pressed by?

What do you really feel about what you see, before your mind has its way? No other season speaks to change as well as that begun at Imbolg.

This spring, step off the path, and really consider the trees for the forest.

## HEMOCHROMATOSIS: I've got Celtic blood in me

By OWEN MACNEIL

I'm 58 with a wife and three adult sons. I've lived in the cities of Saint John, Fredericton, Sydney and Halifax before moving back to New Brunswick and settling in Moncton.

So depending on who I'm talking to, I'm either a Cape Bretoner or a New Brunswicker but no matter how you look at it, I've got Celtic blood in me – one of the risk factors for hereditary hemochromatosis.

I was diagnosed with hemochromatosis by a seemingly random blood test approximately six years ago.

I had gone to a health clinic which chose to do a broad spectrum of blood tests. My ferritin level came back slightly high. I went back to the health clinic two months later and it was much higher, at over 600 ng/mL.

I was then scheduled to see a specialist, Dr. Rubin Cohen, an amazing oncologist and hematologist. He has since retired and has a new clinic at The Moncton Hospital named after him: the Dr. Sheldon H. Rubin Oncology Clinic.

I received a quick confirmation of hemochromatosis and then started my phlebotomies. Initially I was doing one

OWN MacNeil shares his story of becoming aware of the 'Celtic curse'



phlebotomy per week for a few months and then one every two weeks, and then one per month.

Eventually my phlebotomy frequency was lowered to my now permanent schedule of one every two months, if required.

As a younger adult, I had donated blood many times giving well in excess of 70 donations.

I had cut down for no particular reason but also had no symptoms related to hemochromatosis.

I believe this may have delayed my iron loading, which was detected virtually as soon as my ferritin began rising.

I have two sisters and two brothers, and so far three out of the four have been

tested and are not affected by iron overload.

Of my three sons, two have been tested and are also not affected by it.

I was absolutely lucky to have been diagnosed with no prior symptoms.

This was clearly the result of the health clinic running a broad spectrum of blood tests as a preventative assessment.

Without that, I may very well have been another patient with undiagnosed symptoms.

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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# Londyn Nachtigal: 2018 U19 All Ireland Champion

## An historic moment for Irish dance in Western Canada

EDMONTON – The Mattierin School of Irish Dance was established in Edmonton, Alberta in 1993.

This year marks not only the school's 25th anniversary, but also its most successful competitive year to date.

Last September, Mattierin dancer Olivia Nachtigal was featured in *The Celtic Connection* for her incredible achievement at the North American Irish Dance Championships.

In February 2018, the Mattierin School returned triumphant from the All Ireland Irish Dance Championships in Killarney, Ireland with Londyn Nachtigal crowned as the 2018 Under 19 All Ireland Champion.

The All Ireland Dancing Championships is the longest running major competition in the Irish dance calendar, having first launched in 1932.

Londyn competed here against top dancers from around the world and she is the first female in western Canada to win this title.

This is a very prestigious accomplishment in a competitive Irish dancer's career and an historic moment for Irish dancing in western Canada.

Her younger sister, Olivia Nachtigal, the current North American National Champion, won fifth place in the Girls 16-17 category. She was the highest North American dancer in this category.

Orla Greene, also with the Mattierin School, danced in the Girls U10 and placed 21st overall, also the top North American in her category. This was Orla's first time travelling to an overseas major competition.

Londyn, Olivia and Orla are also the current Western Canadian Oireachtas Champions and to top it off, Londyn and Olivia were featured on the November 2017 front cover of the *Irish Dance* magazine along with an editorial spread.

This is the largest magazine covering the worldwide market of Irish dancing.

On the weekend of February 24, the Mattierin School travelled again to Phoenix, Arizona where four of their

dancers competed in the North American Feis Commission Belt.

Dancers must have won first place in an Open Championship in 2017 to compete.

Top dancers from all across North America competed and Olivia Nachtigal won the Robert Gabor Junior Belt, and was the only dancer at the event to win with a perfect score!

Peyton Schroter also competed and was a top six finalist in the Junior Belt and Londyn Nachtigal was a top six finalist in the Gerry Campbell Senior Belt.

Along with the title, Olivia was awarded a US\$1,000 scholarship and both Peyton and Londyn were awarded US\$100 scholarships.

Dancers with the Mattierin School are looking forward with anticipation to the 2018 World Irish Dance Championships in Glasgow, Scotland which they will attend following St. Patrick's Day.

For more information about the Mattierin School, see: [www.mattierin.com](http://www.mattierin.com).



IRISH CLUB OF WHITE ROCK – Vincent Crowley, Rosella Moloughney, Kathleen Pedersen, Sharon Woods, Robbie Greville, Cheryl Jorgensen, Claire O'Connor, Deirdre O'Ruairc, James Woods.

## The Irish Club of White Rock: Annual St. Patrick's Dinner Dance

WHITE ROCK, BC – Sunny White Rock is only a 45-minute drive from downtown Vancouver, it is also easy to access by public transit on the 351 bus route from the Bridgeport Canada Line station in Richmond.

It is home to a big Irish community and a warm Irish welcome is extended to everyone by the Irish Club of White Rock.

This small seaside community is clustered around eight kilometres of sandy beach and the warm shallow waters of Semiahmoo Bay. It is flanked on the south by the Canada/U.S. border, with Blaine, Washington on the American side.

White Rock is famous for its 1,500-foot long pier, its two and a half kilometre long beach promenade and, of course,

the large white rock which weighs in at 486-tons and is a glacial deposit from the coastal range.

While it may be raining in other Lower Mainland locations, the sun is usually shining in White Rock.

It receives the lowest rainfall in greater Vancouver and average summer temperature is 23 celsius.

White Rock also boasts a great variety of restaurants, fish and chip shops, and great shopping.

The White Rock Irish community has been gathering for over 30 years. The Irish Club of White Rock became official in February 2004 and the first president was Brendan Hamill.

Readers are encouraged to review *The Celtic Connection* archives for a great article by Brendan Hamill in the February 2004 issue.

Upcoming events for the Irish Club of White Rock is the annual St. Patrick's

Day dinner dance, to be held at the Hazelmere Golf and Tennis Club, on 8th Avenue in South Surrey on Saturday, March 17.

This is a wonderful opportunity meet new friends.

An excellent buffet dinner will be served before live entertainment which includes music by Brian Nicholl and friends, DJ Robbie G., the De Danaan Irish Dancers, and maybe a surprise or two.

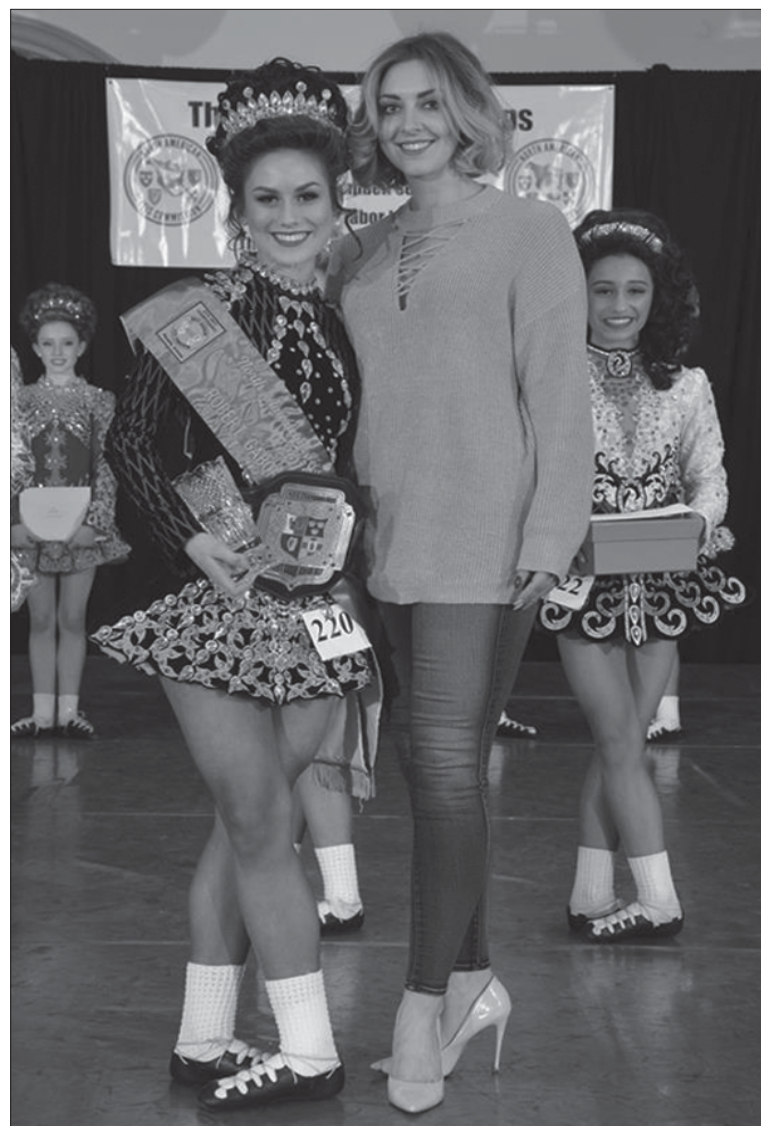
More events are planned throughout the year. Follow the Irish Club of White Rock on Facebook or join their e-mail list.

If you're new to White Rock, the club extends a warm welcome. For more information, call president Sharon Woods (Galway) at (604) 338-3553, or secretary Deirdre O'Ruairc (Dublin) at (604) 803-0773.

*Lá fhéile Pádraig sona dhaoibh* from the Irish Club of White Rock.



LONDYN NACHTIGAL – All Ireland Champion in the Girls 2018 Under 19 category.



OLIVIA NACHTIGAL NAFC Junior Belt Champion is pictured with Rebecca Bell TCRG.



# Who was Saint Patrick?



**DUBLIN** – My father was born on Saint Patrick's Day. He was called Paddy in honour of our national saint. Since he died when I was five I always have had ambivalent feelings about the nation's day of celebration.

By JOHN SCALLY

As a boy I rejoiced in the respite we were given from the rigours of our Lenten fast. However, when other people speak of festivity to me the seventeenth of March is tinged with sadness.

With each passing year my sorrow has increased as I reflect ruefully on all the might-have-beens.

This unhappy association of ideas has been a forbidding impediment to the cultivation of a healthy attitude to Saint Patrick on my part. It is time to change that.

As a boy growing up probably in Wales Patrick enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle and learned Latin. Then his life was changed forever just before his sixteenth birthday.

A ship came over from Ireland, in search of plunder and slaves. Slaves could be sold for gold and were used as labourers on the land with farmers as their masters.

Patrick wrote that he was one of thousands captured on that day.

We next hear of him in the west of Ireland near "the woods of Focult by the western sea" in County Mayo.

Interestingly this is the only place in Ireland that Patrick mentions by name although he is popularly associated with a number of places such as Tara and Armagh.

Although Patrick would later become Ireland's great spiritual shepherd he started life as a more humble one.

He was entrusted with the burden of protecting his master's sheep from savage attacks by wild animals. He would



become Ireland's greatest spiritual shepherd.

Patrick began to feel that God was calling him for a special task. As he slept he had visions.

In one such vision, he saw himself as an immobile stone, stuck in the mud. Then something dramatic happened.

In Patrick's own words, "He that is mighty took hold of me, lifted me out of the mud, and set me out of the mud, and set me up on top of the wall."

Patrick was convinced that he was being prepared for a divine commission.

Patrick spoke about his ministry in images. He described his pastoral work as "hunting and fishing." He hunted people in need of the Good News.

He fished patiently for them, constantly seeking a good catch. His aim was to persuade them to take the road less travelled and embrace Christianity.

In the Fifth Century Ireland was ruled by approximately 100 chieftains but shortly after his death most of these warrior-kings had become Christian.

Yet it would be a mistake to think it was all plain sailing. In his *Confession* Patrick writes about an aristocratic young woman, of royal birth and great beauty.

After she heard about the Christian message she wanted to give her life to follow and serve Jesus. Patrick exhorted her to remain single so that she might dedicate herself exclusively to the service of God.

Her family were mortified about this and did not conceal their hostility. They persecuted their daughter and physically attacked Patrick!

Patrick had no time for people who acted sanctimoniously or who loved pomp and felt that humility was the bedrock of the Christian Church.

In his *Letter* which he wrote to Coroticus, a king in southern Scotland who had taken some of Patrick's newly confirmed Christians as captives we see a different side to Ireland's patron saint.

Patrick was irate because Coroticus, who professed to be a Christian, treated these Christians whom he had enslaved extremely badly.

Patrick knew he was obliged to speak out against the injustice. Innocent people were wronged and Patrick appears to have made their pain his own.

"What am I to do, Lord? Lord, I am thoroughly despised. See, your sheep are torn to pieces around me and are carried off by the raiders, as ordered by the evil-hearted Coroticus."

Patrick was unequivocally taking the side of the downtrodden, the oppressed and the marginalised regardless of the personal cost or threat to his physical well-being.

Can the same be said of his followers in Ireland today?

John Scally is a lecturer with the Department of Theology and Religions in Trinity College Dublin, but in his spare time is a writer and broadcaster. Since 1992 he has written 40 books with cumulative sales of over 150,000 copies. He is the author of the biggest selling GAA book in Ireland, *Raising the Banner: The Biography of Ger Loughnane*, and for a few years his biography of Tony Ward was the biggest selling rugby book in Ireland.

## Make Your Own Irish Soda Bread

With St. Patrick's Day on the horizon, you might want to try your hand at baking some delicious Irish soda bread. We've included some prize-winning recipes here you might enjoy along with a traditional Irish stew to accompany this delicious bread. *Bon appetit.*

### IRISH BROWN BREAD

3 cups of whole wheat flour  
1 cup all purpose flour  
1 heaped teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon of salt  
2 cups of buttermilk

#### Method:

Combine dry ingredients and mix well. Add buttermilk, stir with a wooden spoon. Turn dough out on to a lightly floured board and knead lightly until smooth, shape into a ball, place on a floured cookie sheet and with the back of your fingers press down to flatten. Cut a cross to divide the dough. Bake at 350° F for 50 minutes. Place on a wire rack to cool.

### RAISIN BREAD

4 cups of white flour  
1 ½ cups of raisins  
1 heaped teaspoon baking powder



1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon of salt  
2 cups of buttermilk

#### Method:

Combine dry ingredients and mix well. Add buttermilk, stir with a wooden spoon. Turn dough out on to a lightly floured board and knead lightly until smooth, shape into a ball, place on a floured cookie sheet and with the back of your fingers press down to flatten. Cut a cross to divide the dough. Bake at 350° F for 50 minutes. Place on a wire rack to cool.

### IRISH SODA BREAD (WHITE)

4 cups all purpose flour  
1 heaped teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon of salt  
2 cups of buttermilk

#### Method:

Combine dry ingredients and mix well. Add buttermilk, stir with a wooden spoon. Turn dough out on to a lightly floured board and knead lightly until smooth, shape into a ball, place on a floured cookie sheet and with the back of your fingers press down to flatten. Cut a cross to divide the dough. Bake at 350° F for 50 minutes. Place on a wire rack to cool.

Note: Either the brown or white bread is delicious with Irish stew, cut fairly thin and serve.

### TRADITIONAL IRISH STEW

1 ½ pounds of lamb cut up and trimmed  
2 large onions  
6 potatoes – peeled and cut up  
2 carrots – peeled and sliced  
Some fresh parsley  
Salt and pepper  
3 cups of water

#### Method:

Place all ingredients in a large covered pot on the stove at a low heat, and cook slowly for about one and a half to two hours. If not thick enough mix a tablespoon of cornstarch and add just at the end and stir frequently.



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# NORTHERN IRELAND: Which narrative is the truth?

## THE VIEW FROM IRELAND



By  
**MAURICE  
FITZPATRICK**



CAMPAIGNERS made their way to the city hall on Sunday, February 25, marching together under the banner Time for Truth, with many carrying pictures of their loved ones.

## Victims of Troubles killings march for justice in Belfast

BELFAST – Victims of the Troubles are tired of their rights being used as a “bargaining chip” in the push to get a deal at Stormont, a campaigner has said.

A number of groups representing relatives bereaved in different fatal incidents took part in a march in Belfast to call for political action in dealing with the past.

Campaigners made their way to the city hall on Sunday, February 25, marching together under the banner Time for Truth, with many carrying pictures of their loved ones.

Sinn Féin’s Northern Ireland leader Michelle O’Neill joined other party members including South Down MLA Emma Rogan, whose father Adrian was shot dead in the UVF Loughinisland massacre in Co. Down in 1994.

The march was organised before the breakdown of talks between the DUP and Sinn Féin. Legacy issues were among those being discussed as politicians worked towards a deal to restore power-sharing at Stormont.

Sinn Féin president Mary Lou McDonald, speaking the day after talks collapsed, said the party had secured a commitment from the British Government to have a public consultation on stalled mechanisms to deal with the Troubles and to release funds needed to finance legacy inquiries.

Sinn Féin’s Gerry Kelly claimed funding for coroner probes into disputed conflict deaths were agreed during the recent talks, but DUP leader Arlene Foster said it would be “astonishing” if

the UK Government granted funding for legacy inquiries without an overall agreement.

The UK Government said all discussions with Northern Ireland’s parties were in the context of how it would respond if there was a deal.

A spokeswoman added that the Westminster Government has set out clear commitments to take forward the Stormont House Agreement legacy institutions, and to support inquest reform.

Mark Thompson, director of Relatives for Justice, who attended the march, said the British Government “carries the responsibility” of ensuring legacy issues were addressed, and added, “You can’t use us as a bargaining chip for the rights of victims.”

He said, “It’s disingenuous of the Secretary of State and the UK Government to dangle a carrot in front of political parties saying, ‘If you guys can get a deal, we will give victims their rights’.”

“These rights are obligations and rights that are held under the European Convention and the Human Rights Act.”

He said the weekend demonstration was about more than the sole issue of legacy inquest funding, reiterating a call for action on important elements of the 2014 Stormont House Agreement.

A Historical Investigations Unit to examine unsolved murders is “crucially important” to bereaved families, he said.

He said, “That would look at all the unsolved issues for families right across the community and that will deal with approximately 1,800 to 2,000 cases.

There is a theory abroad that some mean-spirited politicians within the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) (a tiny minority of course) wished to block the re-establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly until Gerry Adams stood down as president of Sinn Féin.

The motive of this alleged plot was to deprive Adams of the chance to gloat in his valedictory about the distance Sinn Féin has come from 1983, when Adams became president of Sinn Féin, through to Sinn Féin’s electoral success in Northern Ireland combined with its reasonably strong presence in Southern politics.

The theory falls down, however, now that Gerry Adams has been replaced by Mary Lou McDonald and, even so, there is all but no prospect of talks leading to a breakthrough in Stormont.

Yet Gerry Adams’ legacy, the fate of negotiations to revive Stormont and the DUP’s strategy remain linked in curious ways.

The latest crescendo hit Northern Irish politics on February 14 when Arlene Foster announced that she had given up on talks to re-establish the power-sharing Assembly, despite the arrival of the taoiseach and the British prime minister in Belfast on February 12.

The DUP’s pretext for withdrawing from negotiations is the threat to their identity that a stand-alone Irish Language Act apparently poses.

That language has emerged as the sticking point between the political factions is far less incidental than it might first appear.

So many of Northern Irish identity problems are reducible to language, and it is only when those problems are addressed as being bound up in language that a profound shift can occur in the attitudes of people who live there.

Whether or not Foster realises this, it suits her to characterise Sinn Féin’s demand for an Irish Language Act as an arrogant and one-sided takeover of the power-sharing structure.

What greatly enables Foster to characterise Sinn Féin thus, is that they are indeed dab hands at arrogant takeovers.

For example, in early February, Sinn Féin’s national chairman, Declan Kearney, argued that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was in fact led by Sinn Féin, stating that the movement had ‘multiple parents and many children’ – whereas the historical record debars them from legitimately claiming paternity to it.

Danny Morrison, former Sinn Féin publicity director, is similarly enthusiastic to portray Sinn Féin as an equal rights



ICONIC MURAL of Bernadette Devlin (McAliskey) depicts at the Battle of the Bogside in Derry in August 1969. Bernadette was a seminal figure in the Northern Ireland civil rights campaign and a founding member of the college-based civil rights movement, People’s Democracy along with Eamonn McCann.

*“Those claiming bragging rights from 1968 might reflect with greater humility on the price paid against the degree of progress made since that first march and examine their actual contribution to the reality of 2018...”*

party, stating recently that if Unionists had acceded to equal rights in 1969 no body would have lost their lives in violence.

Yet Sinn Féin’s defence of equal rights is vitiated by its ongoing defence of its terror campaign during the Troubles, including as far back as the 1973/4 period when a power-sharing Executive between Nationalists and Unionists attempted to govern Northern Ireland.

In a post-truth era, these howlers constitute the norm of political whitewashing and airbrushing – an historical revisionism that poisons the contemporary political environment.

Founding members of the Civil Rights Movement – Bernadette Devlin McAliskey and Eamonn McCann – rapidly dismissed the canard that the Civil Rights Movement was steered or started by Sinn Féin.

McAliskey was scathing of the hypocrisy: “Those claiming bragging rights from 1968 might reflect with greater humility on the price paid against the degree of progress made since that first march and examine their actual contribution to the reality of 2018 – a stagnant, sectarian, dysfunctional Stormont making the rich richer and the poor poorer; a damaged, demoralised and divided community; justice denied; truth distorted.”

It is worth remembering that the Civil Rights Movement’s objective in 1968 was to secure the same rights in Northern Ireland as obtained in Britain.

Since Sinn Féin could never risk arguing for the benefit of any form of association with Britain, their claim to an historic quest for rights carefully elides any reference to their campaign to extricate Ireland from the political link with Britain.

In Sinn Féin’s revisionist project, they

must not simply insert themselves into the narrative of a movement that was not theirs, they must reconfigure the original aims of that movement to reflect the image of Sinn Féin.

Little wonder, then, that the founding members of the Civil Rights Movement abhor Sinn Féin’s forgeries upon the annals of history.

Against this backdrop of the historical narrative hewn to serve tawdry political agendas, a new documentary on Gerry Adams’ political life, written and presented by veteran journalist Vincent Browne, screened on TV3 on February 7 and 8.

That there is no Unionist voice in Browne’s documentary which undercuts the piece because it enables the film to considerably side-step Adams’ attitudes towards sectarian killing during the Troubles and to power-sharing.

The documentary does detail IRA atrocities and makes it clear that Adams – for all his denials – was a member of the IRA; Adams himself is absent from the film.

The most glaring absence in the documentary, however, is the constitutional alternative to violence that existed throughout the Troubles, which ultimately Sinn Féin embraced after the Good Friday Agreement.

A younger viewer of this documentary could be forgiven for thinking that there was no middle ground during the decades of the Troubles, and that Adams’ milestone achievement was not so much leading Sinn Féin towards constitutional politics but rather creating the political space in Northern Ireland for constitutional politics to exist in the first place.

The role of John Hume cannot be recognised in such a portrayal of history because Hume’s entire political life, starting as a Civil Rights leader in the 1960s, is a comprehensive repudiation of this narrative. This is history with pages ripped out.

This portrait of Adams – who Martin Mansergh calls a ‘statesman’ in the documentary – fails to liberate itself from the web of political fictions spun by apologists for a futile campaign of violence.

As the prospect of re-establishing the Good Friday Agreement’s institutions becomes ever more remote, the revisionist narrative erodes the basis for their continued survival still further.

It is the revisionist attitude of mind, more than anything else, that enables Arlene Foster to dominate and to sabotage Northern Irish political affairs today.

## Gay couple argue for marriage recognition in Belfast court

BELFAST – The Court of Appeal in Belfast has been told that a gay couple from Northern Ireland whose marriage in England is only recognised as a civil partnership in Northern Ireland, are suffering unlawful discrimination.

The court was told on the morning of February 26 that the situation amounts to a violation of the two men’s human rights.

Granted anonymity in the case, the petitioner ‘X’ and his husband got married in London in 2014.

But, under current laws, they can only be classified as civil partners in North-

ern Ireland, an alleged downgrading of their relationship.

They are attempting to secure a declaration that their marriage remains fully constituted throughout the United Kingdom.

In August last year a High Court judge dismissed the case after identifying no breach under European law.

He held that it was up to government and parliament to provide same sex marriage rights, not the courts.

Petitioner ‘X’ is now seeking to have that verdict overturned. The hearing continues.



# Northern Ireland power-sharing talks collapse at Stormont

BELFAST – There is “no current prospect” of a deal to restore power sharing in Northern Ireland, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader said on Wednesday, February 14.

Arlene Foster said the talks failed due to disagreements with Sinn Féin about legislation for the Irish language.

Sinn Féin’s Michelle O’Neill accused the DUP of having “collapsed” the talks process.

Both parties have been locked in negotiations in a bid to end the 13-month stalemate at Stormont.

O’Neill, Sinn Féin’s leader at Stormont, said her party had “reached an accommodation with the leadership of the DUP” but claimed that the DUP then “failed to close” on it.

She added that Sinn Féin was in contact with both the UK and Irish Governments and would set out its “considered position.”

In her statement, Foster called on the UK Government to set a budget and start making policy decisions for Northern Ireland.

The DUP leader said that “significant gaps” remained in the discussions between the region’s two biggest parties.

“We do not have a fair and balanced package,” she added, saying that Sinn Féin’s demand for legislation to give the Irish language official status in Northern Ireland was a key dividing issue.

“I respect the Irish language and those who speak it but in a shared society this cannot be a one-way street,” she added.

“Respect for the unionist and British identity has not been reciprocated.”

The DUP would continue to aim for a restoration of devolution, she said, but it would “not accept a one-sided deal.”

After the DUP and Sinn Féin blamed each other for the failure of the talks, the Northern Ireland secretary signalled that a deal remained possible.

“I believe the basis for an accommodation still exists,” said Karen Bradley. “We will continue to work with everyone to make sure we deliver this.”

But Bradley added that the UK government would “need to consider practical steps” in the “continued absence” of devolution.

Taoiseach (Irish prime minister) Leo Varadkar tweeted that he regretted the DUP’s statement and that “power sharing and working together are the only way forward.”

On February 14, he tweeted, “I very much regret the statement from the DUP. Power sharing and working together are the only way forward for Northern Ireland.”

“The Tanaiste and the Secretary of State are in close contact and we will continue to confer with the British Government about the next steps.”

At Stormont, it was clear that things were not going well behind the scenes.

There was a great sense of optimism just a week earlier, but it became pretty clear there was a standoff developing by Tuesday, February 13.

Arlene Foster had appeared before the cameras and said that a stand-alone Irish language act was not something the DUP could accept.



ARLENE FOSTER announced talks between the DUP and Sinn Féin had not resulted in a “balanced package.”

*“No prospect of a deal and no process in place that could lead to a deal. We are in a very precarious situation at this point in time...”*

Sinn Féin came out and said there would be no deal unless it included one of those.

It is understood both parties met on Wednesday morning and quickly realized there was going to be no middle ground on an Irish language act. Then it was a matter of who was going to pull the plug first.

A statement from Foster soon popped up on Twitter, making it very clear that this phase of negotiations was over.

SDLP leader Colum Eastwood said he was “disappointed” and “angry” at the failure of the talks, and claimed it had left the Good Friday Agreement “in peril.”

He said the Stormont parties must resist a return to direct rule from Westminster, with “the DUP having the whip hand.”

Under an agreement struck last summer, Theresa May’s Conservative government relies on the DUP’s support to stay in power at Westminster.

Eastwood said the parties must “not allow this moment to be the destruction of all that we have achieved.”

“We can’t allow this British Government, or this DUP to think that they’re going to govern Northern Ireland on their own – that cannot be allowed to happen,” the SDLP leader said.

Robin Swann, the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), described the talks process as a “shambles.”

He said, “What I think we need to know, and what Northern Ireland clearly needs to know, is the door to devolution now firmly closed?”

Swann called on the Northern Ireland secretary to provide clarity on whether it was the end of the talks or whether more negotiations were planned.

The leader of Alliance Party, Naomi Long, said there was “no prospect of a deal and no process in place that could lead to a deal.”

“We are in a very precarious situation



NORTHERN IRELAND secretary Karen Bradley said the UK Government would have to make decisions for Northern Ireland.

at this point in time, we are essentially in uncharted territory,” she added.

Hopes of an imminent deal had been “falsely raised” she said, and “now we have seen them dashed yet again.”

Speculation of a breakthrough mounted just a week earlier as both the UK and Irish leaders prepared to travel to Stormont to help seal a deal.

But British Prime Minister Theresa May and the Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar left Belfast on Monday, February 12 with no sign of agreement.

Former DUP minister Simon Hamilton described their visit as “a bit of a distraction.”

“I don’t think it was entirely helpful in getting us to a successful conclusion,” he told a press conference.

Northern Ireland has been run by civil servants since the power-sharing executive made up of the DUP and Sinn Féin collapsed in January 2017.

The then deputy first minister Martin McGuinness pulled Sinn Féin out of the coalition after a bitter split between the governing parties over the botched Renewable Heat Incentive scheme.

Derry Chamber of Commerce president, Jennifer McKeever said the lack of a deal was “disappointing and frustrating.”

“The collapse of the latest round of talks will come as another body blow for businesses in the North West which are facing the greatest economic challenge of our generation,” she said.

“Thirteen months is too long to be without devolved government and the lack of leadership from Stormont in the Brexit negotiations has been particularly frustrating for the business community,” she added.



SINN FÉIN leader Michelle O’Neill reacts as the DUP says there is no prospect of devolution for Northern Ireland and the Stormont talks collapse on Wednesday, February 14.

## Ian Paisley’s widow savages DUP leader over Stormont mess

BELFAST – The widow of the late Ian Paisley has savaged the current DUP leadership, saying that Arlene Foster should have stood aside as first minister more than a year ago over the RHI scandal – a botched green energy scheme.

Baroness Paisley, a vice president of the DUP, labelled the current political stalemate a “total mess” and called for the parties to work in the interests of the people.

Sinn Féin and the DUP had been in negotiations to end the 13-month deadlock at Stormont but the talks collapsed last month with both parties blaming each other for an impasse over a proposed Irish language act.

Paisley said that her husband and Sinn Féin’s Martin McGuinness “wouldn’t have got into this mess in the first place.”

The party veteran’s blunt comments came on February 22, in the wake of allegations that the parties were on the verge of a deal which would have restored the government at Stormont but that Foster pulled the plug after a unionist backlash over the inclusion of Irish language legislation.

The party denies that it had reached an agreement with Sinn Féin.

Paisley said that the current political limbo in Northern Ireland – where there has been no government for more than a year, leaving civil servants attempting to make political decisions – was “heartbreaking” and that “politicians need to face up to facts.”

She has spoken critically about the party on several occasions since her husband resigned as party leader just a year into his extraordinary warm period in office with Martin McGuinness, something the Paisley family allege was the result of an internal coup by party members unnerved by the new dispensation.

Speaking on BBC *Radio Foyle*, Baroness Paisley – who was elected a politician before her husband – said there was a need to “confess where they’ve gone wrong – and they have gone wrong” and to “cut out all nonsense...and come back and start anew. We all need proper government at this time.”

She said the big issue was that “people do not face up to the truth; they need to be honest with one another.”

Paisley said that if today’s politicians “had followed the example that the late Martin McGuinness and my husband set for them, this would not have happened.”



Baroness Paisley, a vice president of the DUP, labelled the current political stalemate a “total mess.”

When asked if she included the DUP in her comment about people not facing up to the truth, she said, “That’s right. They’re hiding from the truth. And you must be absolutely honest with one another because there’s only one way to be honest when you’ve made a mistake and it’s to confess your sin and confess your mistakes because no one is perfect.”

She said that her husband and Martin McGuinness “wouldn’t have got into this mess in the first place” because “whenever things go wrong you’ve got to put them right and you’ve got to go to the basis of where they went wrong and put that right.”

Alluding to the current DUP leader’s refusal to stand aside as first minister over a year ago over revelations about her role in the ‘cash for ash’ scandal – a decision which led to Sinn Féin collapsing Stormont, she said, “If you’re the first minister....the buck stops at your desk and you have got to do what is right and stand down from your position until the matter is sorted out.

“I think if that had been done at the beginning, there would be a different situation here at the moment and we wouldn’t be in the mess we’re in.”

Baroness Paisley also made clear that she did not support either an Irish language act or an Ulster Scots language act – which the DUP has suggested to counter-balance Irish language legislation.

She said she didn’t think there was a need for “a stand alone act on any language because as far as I can see there is no barrier to the Irish language in Northern Ireland.”





SCOTTISH Health Secretary Shona Robison says a 50p minimum unit price will 'save thousands of lives'.

## Scottish Government confirms alcohol minimum unit price

EDINBURGH – In two months' time Scotland will become the first country in the world to set a minimum unit price, in an attempt to curb the nation's alcohol problem.

Scottish Health Secretary Shona Robison has confirmed the level minimum unit pricing will be set at 50p after a consultation.

Robison predicted the move would "save thousands of lives" and stop families falling apart through alcohol abuse.

However, opposition parties and health scientists argue that the effect of the policy would be "considerably reduced" because the minimum price had not been increased from the level first proposed in 2011.

They had argued for a rate of 60p or higher.

The Scottish Parliament voted through the legislation in 2012, but it was delayed by a legal challenge from the Scotch Whisky Association.

Scientists at the Royal Society of Edinburgh said setting minimum pricing at 70p – which could see the minimum price for a bottle of wine rise to around £6.50 – would "reflect a greater degree of ambition."

A spokesman said, "An increase to 60p could be feasible, reflect the changes to the economy since 2011, and could be supported by a majority in the Scottish Parliament."



"A rise to a rate of 70p would reflect a greater degree of ambition and might also be supported, and would have a larger effect on the consumption of alcohol and on inequalities of outcomes.

"We have concerns that the 50p rate proposed in 2011 will be introduced now and remain for a further five years, by which time its real value and therefore the effectiveness of MUP [minimum unit pricing] will be considerably reduced."

The Wine and Spirit Trade Association said setting MUP at 50p would "impact around half of all products on the shelf."

In its analysis of the consultation responses, the Scottish Government said a 50p minimum unit price was "proportionate" as it struck a balance between public health and market intervention.

Alcohol-related harm currently costs Scotland around £3.6 billion a year and causes 24 deaths a week.

It is estimated that a 50p unit price could lead to 8,200 fewer hospital admissions within five years.

## Protection for workers during severe weather announced

EDINBURGH – A "Fair Work" charter will be devised in a bid to stop staff being forced to travel to work in severe weather, Nicola Sturgeon announced on March 6.

The First Minister said there should be legislation to protect workers in such extreme conditions, such as during the recent code red warning when people were urged to avoid travelling.

The charter will be developed with the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

In a joint statement with STUC general secretary Grahame Smith, Sturgeon said, "We are grateful to the people of Scotland who have coped tremendously well with the red weather warning and who heeded the advice not to travel.

"However, the Scottish Government and the STUC share a real concern that some workers were placed at unnecessary risk through being compelled to travel to work or placed under threat of lost pay if they did not make it into work.

"We are committed to doing everything within our current powers to encourage employers to be fair and flexible.

"That is why we have agreed to collaboratively develop a Fair Work charter, focusing on the treatment of workers affected by severe weather or other emergencies.



ANNE DYER the first female bishop in Scotland has been consecrated.

## First female bishop consecrated for Orkney and Aberdeen

ABERDEEN, Scotland – The Scottish Episcopal Church said the consecration of Canon Anne Dyer as Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney – a supporter of marriage equality – was a "significant and historic event."

She became the Right Reverend Anne Dyer after the service at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Aberdeen. She succeeds the Right Reverend Dr. Robert Gillies, who retired as Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney in 2016.

The Scottish Episcopal church previously defended the selection after a group within the diocese called on her to consider standing down.

She was elected by the college of bishops after the diocese itself twice failed to draw up a shortlist of at least three suitable candidates.

But 18 clergy and lay members of the church who objected to the appointment said the process was "divisive" and "disrespectful."



SCOTRAIL said that once its new electric trains enter service it will return to full capacity but in the meantime, 10 rush-hour services between Glasgow and Edinburgh will run with three or four carriages instead of the usual six.

## Fury as Scots train axes seats at rush hour

GLASGOW – Passengers on one of the country's busiest commuter routes are facing overcrowding as ScotRail cuts the number of carriages on some rush-hour trains.

The peak-hour commuter crush on the express line stems from leases running out on older diesel trains – amid delays to electric replacements.

The rail operator is reducing the number of carriages on the Glasgow to Edinburgh route as some trains on that route have reached the end of their lease and are being transferred to operators elsewhere in the UK.

ScotRail said that once its new electric Hitachi Class 385 trains enter service it will return to full capacity. In the meantime, 10 rush-hour services between the two cities will run with three or four carriages instead of the usual six.

Politicians called on Transport Minister Humza Yousaf to take it up with Abellio, which has been stung by criticism of how it is handling the £7 billion ScotRail franchise.

The rail operator has introduced a reduced £13 anytime day return fare for travel on the Glasgow Queen Street to Edinburgh via Airdrie route, which is almost half the current price. It is not known when the new trains will enter service, however the fare is available until May 19.

Scottish Labour's rural economy and connectivity spokesman, Colin Smyth, said, "These are deeply troubling reports that once again reveal a lack of planning by ScotRail.

"Commuters on one of the country's most important routes are now facing delays and disruption. It is increasingly clear that SNP transport minister Humza Yousaf's warm words about improving services are simply being ignored by the private rail firms who just do as they please while passengers suffer.

"Not only is the new rolling stock delayed, but trade unions are concerned it may not be safe to use at all. ScotRail needs to get a grip and resolve this situation immediately."

## Bishop resigns following row over role at priest's funeral

NEWRY, Co. Down – The Bishop of Dromore has resigned following the controversy over his officiating at a pedophile priest's funeral.

Bishop John McAreevey stepped down March 1 after weeks of anger when it emerged that he said Requiem Mass for Father Malachy Finnegan, a pedophile and former president at St. Colman's College Newry.

In a statement released by his solicitors Arthur J. Downey, the bishop said his resignation would take "immediate effect."

In the simple two-line statement, McAreevey said, "Following media reports which have disturbed and upset many people in the diocese and further afield, I have decided to resign with immediate effect. I shall make further comment in due course."

Last month, he met parents from a Co. Down primary school, who, along with families from other schools, said they did not want him to officiate at their children's confirmation.

Even before the parents of children

from St. Patrick's Primary School, Hilltown, Carrick Primary School, Burren and St. Patrick's Mayobridge voiced their concerns, Bishop McAreevey admitted making "an error of judgment" by officiating at the 2002 funeral of the pedophile teacher.

McAreevey described the crimes of Finnegan as "abhorrent, inexcusable and indefensible."

The bishop, who has also spoken to a victim of the priest, said that his decision – made when he was a priest – to say the mass "was the wrong one."

Allegations about the disgraced teacher and cleric were highlighted in a recent BBC *Spotlight* program, although the first allegation against him came to light in 1994.

Malachy Finnegan died in 2002 and has been accused of sexual abuse by 12 people.

He served at St. Colman's from 1967 to 1971 and was a teacher from 1973 to 1976.

He was president of the college from 1976 to 1987.

Between 1994 and 2016, the 12 allegations of abuse were made against him.

## 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, MJK, CC, CB, CLF, KLSLK, BC

### Novena to St. Joseph

Oh glorious St. Joseph, thou hast power to render possible even things which are considered impossible, come to our aid in our present trouble and distress. Take this important and difficult affair under thy particular protection, that it may end happily. (Name your request.) O dear St. Joseph, all our confidence is in thee, let it not be said that we would invoke thee in vain and since thou art so powerful with Jesus and Mary, show that thy goodness equals thy power. Amen. St. Joseph, friend of the sacred heart, pray for us. – For favour received.

Publication of each novena is \$25 per issue (Canadian residents include 5% GST)





IRELAND'S Minister for Defence, Paul Kehoe, presented the International Operational Service Medal to some 70 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 LÉ James Joyce, the LÉ Eithne, the LÉ Niamh and the LÉ Róisín.

## Irish Navy to redeploy to the Mediterranean

DUBLIN – The Irish cabinet has approved the redeployment of the Naval Service to the Mediterranean.

The objective will be to hunt down people-smugglers and to 'search and destroy' their pipelines from Libya into southern Europe, while still saving the hapless men, women, and children who are sent out to their near-certain deaths in leaking dinghies.

The minister with responsibility for defence, Paul Kehoe, received full support from his Cabinet colleagues to send Irish navy ships to the Mediterranean Sea where tens of thousands of mainly African and Syrian migrants have drowned in recent years trying to get to a better life in Europe.

The Naval Service, which has to date saved 18,017 migrant lives, was initially involved in a purely humanitarian rescue Operation Pontus, but it changed last year when the government agreed to switch to the more aggressive EU operation to counter people-smuggling from war-torn Libya.

The Naval Service has been preparing for the go-ahead for the operation for several months.

It's expected that LÉ Samuel Beckett will be the first ship to deploy to the Mediterranean Sea in 2018.

Sources say that it will deploy in early April and be skippered by Lieutenant Commander Eoin Smyth. After her eight week tour of duty it will be replaced by LÉ James Joyce.



IRISH NAVY vessel LÉ Samuel Beckett.

## Closure of Blarney tourist office a 'great loss to the village'

BLARNEY, Co. Cork – It may be home to one of Ireland's most visited attractions, but the tourist office in a popular Cork village has closed – more than six years after its demise was actually announced.

While kissing the Blarney Stone promises the gift of the gab, there will be no more words of advice coming from the village's tourism office after it shut its doors for the last time.

Blarney & District Chamber of Commerce has announced that the office, near the village square, has closed, having been run for years on goodwill.

Kate Durrant of Blarney Chamber of Commerce said the closure of the office pointed to a wider strategy by Fáilte Ireland that focuses its resources on

"super offices" in larger centres, and that the community came together to keep the Blarney offering going for the past six years.

"We were allowed to continue to run it under licence, and Freda Hayes at Blarney Woolen Mills let us have the unit for a peppercorn rent, all for the good of the community," said Durrant.

"It was kept going thanks to the work of Mary Twohig, who went in every day for six years and managed the students or workers we got through community employment schemes to keep it going.

"It was through using government initiatives, and the involvement of people like P.J. Lynch and Deirdre Healy, that the office was able to stay open for so long."

# Ireland weathers worst storms in more than 30 years

DUBLIN – Blizzard conditions swept across Ireland on the night of March 1 as polar air brought by the so-called Beast from the East weather system mixed with 100 kilometre gales from Storm Emma.

It is expected to hit Ireland harder than anywhere else, and it is predicted to be the worst snow storm in the Republic since 1982.

Snow one metre (39 inches) deep is forecast for parts of Ireland in the worst winter storms in more than three decades.

The entire country has been put under a red alert weather warning, the highest level, as the most severe snow storm in 36 years spread across the island.

Schools and colleges across the country will remain closed and commuters are also facing further disruptions.

Dublin Bus, some Bus Éireann services, Irish Rail, Dart and Luas trams were cancelled and the country's roads were largely deserted as the public heeded advice from the government not to venture outside until the snow storm passed.



SNOW ALERT as 'exceptionally cold weather' sweeps over Ireland. It is predicted to be the worst snow storm in the Republic since 1982.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar urged people to stay safe. "The risk to life and limb presented by severe weather conditions should not be underestimated by anyone," he said.

Varadkar added, "It's not safe to be outside in such conditions. No-one should be on the roads."

More than 250 soldiers have been deployed to help ensure key staff can get

to hospitals and to house-bound patients.

Met Éireann is also concerned that flooding could become a problem in the greater Dublin area when the snow thaws.

In Northern Ireland, more than 300 schools were closed, some health facilities shut to non-urgent admissions and there was disruption and delay on the roads.

## Looters raid Tallaght supermarket with a bulldozer during storm

DUBLIN – Armed gardaí were patrolling the Tallaght area in a six-wheel drive military vehicle on the morning of March 3 after youths used a bulldozer to smash into a supermarket during a looting incident in Tallaght.

Nine people were arrested after over 50 gardaí were dispatched to the area to deal with the incident in west Dublin on March 2.

Treacherous driving conditions hampered the garda response as some approach roads were virtually impassable.

It began shortly before 5 PM on Friday night when gardaí at Tallaght station

received reports of looting at the Lidl supermarket.

A uniformed patrol in a jeep was sent to the scene but had difficulty accessing the location because of heavy snow drifts up to five feet.

The gardaí attempted to approach the supermarket on foot but immediately came under attack from the growing gang of looters.

Stones and other objects as well as snowballs were hurled at the gardaí, who summoned help.

Civil Defence and Defence Forces trucks and snowploughs had to be utilised to bring garda reinforcements to

the scene and six people were arrested.

Another garda unit which was en route came across a raid using a concrete saw on a Centra store in Jobstown. Three more people were arrested there.

More than 50 gardaí, including the armed support, the traffic and local divisional units were involved.

Gardaí are investigating reports that a bulldozer had been used by the looters to smash their way into the supermarket.

Furthermore, they are investigating reports that a safe was dragged out from the supermarket and the bucket of the digger was used in an attempt to smash it open.

## Second man arrested over murder of Detective Garda Adrian Donohoe

DUNDALK, Co. Lough – A second man has been arrested in connection with the murder of Detective Garda Adrian Donohoe in Co. Louth five years ago.

The man in his fifties was arrested in Dundalk on February 26. He is currently being detained at Balbriggan Garda Station.

A 27-year-old man who was arrested as he left Wheatfield Prison a day earlier remains in custody. He was taken to Dundalk Garda Station, where he can be questioned for up to three days.

Gardaí are expected to make a court application to extend his detention period for a further three days.

Detective Donohoe, a father-of-two, was shot dead outside Lordship Credit Union in Bellurgan in Co. Louth on January 25, 2013.

He and a colleague, Detective Garda Joseph Ryan, were on a cash escort from a number of credit unions on the Cooley Peninsula when an armed gang blocked them in to a car park outside Lordship Credit Union.

When Donohoe got out to investigate, two gunmen ran towards him and one shot him dead.

Ryan was then held at gunpoint by two of the raiders while the others robbed cash and other items from the credit union employees.

Earlier this year, gardaí said the suspects for the murder were known to them. They have described the developments as significant.

Following the arrest, 27-year-old Aaron Brady from New Road, Crossmaglen, Co. Armagh has been charged with the murder of Detective Garda Adrian Donohoe.



GARDA Adrian Donohoe, a father-of-two, was shot dead outside Lordship Credit Union in Bellurgan in Co. Louth on January 25, 2013.



## Honored Irish Guests

**IRISH ATTORNEY GENERAL** – Ireland's Attorney General, Séamus Woulfe SC, a native of Dublin, is the legal adviser to the Irish Government and is therefore the chief law officer of the Irish State.

Educated at Belvedere College he obtained a BA (Mod) (Legal Science) from Dublin's Trinity College, Dublin and an LLM Degree from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia.

He earned a BL degree from the Honourable Society of King's Inns in 1987 and began practicing at the Irish bar.

He was called to the inner bar as senior counsel in March 2005. This is the attorney general's first-ever visit to Seattle and he is accompanied by his wife Sheena Hickey. We wish them a warm Céad Míle Fáilte to Seattle.

**MAYOR OF GALWAY** – Coming from Ireland to help us celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Seattle is the mayor of Seattle's sister city in Ireland, Galway Mayor Pearce Flannery.

Pearce was educated at Garbally College, NUI Galway, GMIT and the University of Limerick. He is a successful self-employed businessman and is a former winner of the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award.

He is also an author of several books including *Grabbing the Oyster!* from which he donated all profits to charity.

He was elected deputy mayor of Galway in 2016 and mayor in 2017. We welcome Mayor Flannery on his first-ever visit to Seattle.



TWO expert Irish genealogy researchers will present an Irish genealogy seminar in Seattle on March 18. Gillian Hunt (L) from Belfast and Fintan Mullan (R), who helped to pioneer the rootsireland.ie genealogy website, will present the seminar.



INSTRUCTOR Fionna Shriane-Travis (center) gives directions during the Irish soda bread cooking class conducted in Seattle on February 17.



OUTGOING Friends of St. Patrick President Kathleen Burns passes the symbol of office, a Shilleleagh that was brought to Seattle from Ireland in the 1850s, to the new President, Pat Dolan at the Friends of St. Patrick Banquet on March 3.

## 2018 IRISH FESTIVAL IN SEATTLE

### SATURDAY, MARCH 10

**IRISH SODA BREAD CONTEST** – 2-3 PM at T S McHugh's Restaurant, First and Mercer, Seattle. Contest admission is free and judging starts at 2 PM.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 11

**MATT TALBOT DINNER** – 6 PM, the Elysian Fields Restaurant, 542 1st Avenue S. (located across from the CenturyLink Field parking lot and down the street from F X McRory's), a fundraiser for the homeless program operated by the Matt Talbot Center. For more information, contact (206) 256-9865.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 16

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY MASS FOR PEACE** – 10 AM, St. Patrick's Church, 2702 Broadway E (just off Roanoke), Seattle. Presider and Homilist is Father Seamus Lavery with the Seattle Irish Choir leading the singing. Call (253) 237-2811.

**MAYOR'S IRISH WEEK PROCLAMATION LUNCHEON** – 12 Noon, at The Ninety, 406 Occidental Avenue S. (located across the street from F X McRory's), in Seattle's Pioneer Square.

Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and other dignitaries will issue city, county and state proclamations of Irish Week 2018.

Among the special guests will be the St. Patrick's Day parade grand marshal, the honorary grand marshal and other dignitaries. This is also the annual St. Patrick's Day Irish seniors' luncheon. Advance reservations are required. For tickets and more information, call (253) 237-2811.

**LANDING OF ST. PATRICK** – 5:30 PM on South Lake Union. St. Patrick was originally brought to Ireland by Irish pirates around 400 AD.

Over 1,600 years later, the South Lake Union Pirates will deliver St. Patrick back to the Emerald City, dropping him off at South Lake Union (near MOHAI) at 5:30 PM Friday evening. No admission fee and kids are welcome. Call (253) 237-2811.

**GREEN STRIPE LAYING ON 4TH AVENUE** – 7 PM, a mini-parade to mark the route of the St. Patrick's Day parade down the center of 4th Avenue, starting from Jefferson Street at 7 PM. All aboard the flat-bed truck at 6:30 PM outside the old McRory's. It's free and children are welcome. Call (253) 237-2811.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 17

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY DASH** – 8:30 AM, a nearly four-mile run from T S McHugh's near the Space Needle and ends at the Seattle Center! There is no race-day registration. To register, visit: stpatsdash.com.

**IRISH FLAG-RAISING** – 12:20 PM, the parade grand marshals and other dignitaries join the mayor of Seattle in raising the Irish tricolor in front of the King-County Administration Building, followed by the playing of the Irish and U.S. national anthems.

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE ON 4TH AVENUE** – 12:30 PM, the St. Patrick's Day parade grand marshal and the honorary parade grand marshal lead Seattle's 47th annual St. Patrick's Day parade up 4th Avenue.

The parade travels north from Jefferson, and after passing the reviewing stand at Westlake, goes via the Monorail to the Seattle Center for closing ceremonies in the Armory at 2 PM.

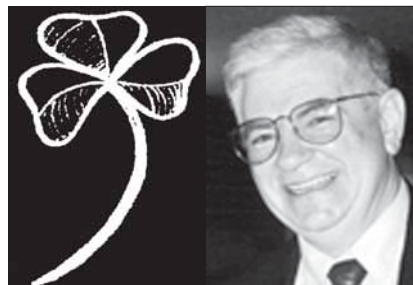
Seniors are invited to ride the parade for free in a Duck's Boat. Just be at 4th Avenue and Jefferson by 12 noon to take your seat. For more information call (253) 237-2811.

### IRISH FESTIVAL SEATTLE

**SEATTLE CENTER ARMORY (formerly Center House)** – Saturday 10 AM-6 PM, Sunday Noon-6 PM, FREE admission.

The weekend festival has booths selling Irish and Celtic products, Irish food and libations, Irish music, singing, dancing, workshops, lectures, cultural displays, an Irish Reels Film Festival, an Irish art exhibit, children's contests and activities, etc.

For details, visit [www.IrishWeek.org](http://www.IrishWeek.org), call (253) 237-2811.



By  
JOHN  
KEANE

### SUNDAY, MARCH 18

**IRISH GENEALOGY SEMINAR** – As part of the Irish Festival, an all-day Irish genealogy seminar will be conducted on the Sunday from 10 AM-6 PM on the upper level Armory at Seattle Center.

The Irish Genealogy Seminar will be conducted by genealogical experts from Ireland, Fintan Mullan and Gillian Hunt.

A detailed workshop schedule can be found at [www.IrishWeek.org](http://www.IrishWeek.org). For tickets and more information, visit [www.IrishWeek.org](http://www.IrishWeek.org), or call (253) 237-2811.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 25

**SEATTLE GAELS FIELD DAY** – The annual open field day is at Magnuson Park from Noon to 4 PM for all to try their hand at any of the games of hurling, Gaelic football or camogie. Visit [www.SeattleGael.com](http://www.SeattleGael.com).

### WWW.IRISHWEEK.ORG



**PARADE GRAND MARSHAL** – Bob Ferguson, Washington State's 18th attorney general, will be grand marshal of Seattle's St. Patrick's Day parade on March 17.

A fourth-generation Washingtonian, Bob is a graduate of the University of Washington and New York University law school. He is one quarter Irish through his O'Brien grandmother.

**WASHINGTON STATE'S Attorney General Bob Ferguson will be grand marshal of Seattle's St. Patrick's Day parade on March 17.**

However, the name Ferguson is widespread in Ireland especially in the northern province of Ulster. The name itself is of Old Gaelic origin, a form of "Fergus" or "Fearghus."

Harry Ferguson, a Co. Down native, is credited with developing the Ferguson tractor and was the

first person in Ireland to build and fly his own airplane, but Bob doesn't know if there's any connection.

Bob and his wife, Colleen, are the parents of nine-year-old twins, Jack and Katie, all of whom will proudly march with him on March 17.

**PARADE HIGHLIGHTS** – Two different Star Wars Costume groups will again march in Seattle's St. Patrick's Day parade as a salute to the fact that numerous scenes in the most recent Star Wars films were shot in Ireland.

About 60 Unicyclists from Whittier Elementary School will also perform along with different pirate groups (including the Seafair Pirates and their Moby Duck which will also be going over to the Irish Festival afterwards); and the Seafair Clowns along with several pipe bands including the Seattle Firefighters and the Seattle Police Pipe Bands.

New bands this year include the Navy Band Northwest and the Robert Eagle Staff Middle School Marching Band.

The Ride-the-Ducks Boat Shamrock Shuttle will again carry seniors unable to walk the parade route. Please come down and walk with your favorite group or behind your provincial Banner. Wear your colors with pride!

**IRISH FESTIVAL** – Admission to all Irish Festival activities is FREE on both Saturday and Sunday, March 17 and 18.

The festival features non-stop Irish music, singing and dancing, booths selling Irish and Celtic products, workshops, lectures, cultural displays, children's contests and activities, including contests to find the kid with the Smilingest Irish Eyes and the Most Irish Looking Face. Special festival features include a Tom Thompson Art Exhibit.

**GENEALOGICAL SEMINAR** – The highlight of the weekend at the Seattle Center has to be the Irish Genealogy Seminar on Sunday, March 18, from 10 am to 6 pm conducted by experts from Ireland.



## 2018 IRISH FESTIVAL IN SEATTLE

Fintan Mullan, executive director of the Ulster Historical Foundation in Belfast, has been with the Ulster Historical Foundation (ancestryireland.com) for 22 years.

He helped to pioneer the online births, deaths and marriages system which led to [www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie), the Irish Family History Foundation's unique database with over 20 million Irish historical records.

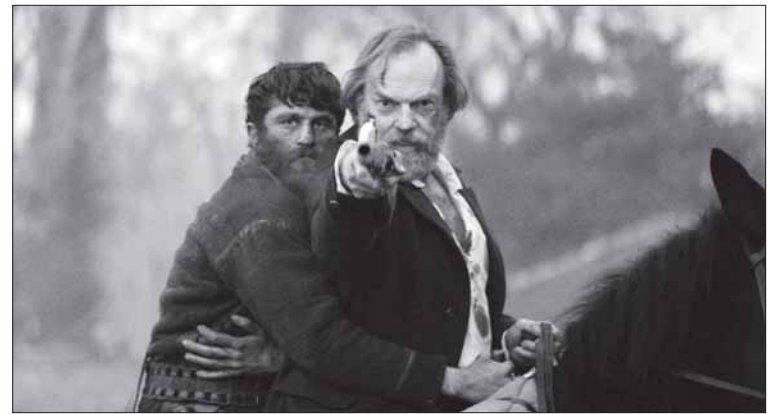
Gillian Hunt is the foundation's research officer, and has been with the foundation since 2001. More details at [IrishWeek.org](http://IrishWeek.org).

**GIANT RAFFLE** – On Sunday, March 18, two round-trip tickets direct from Seattle to Dublin are being raffled off during the Irish Festival.



ÉIDÍN DOLAN (L) watches a performance by dancers from the Seattle Irish Dance Company at the Friends of St. Patrick Banquet on March 3.

Raffle tickets are \$5 each and only 1,000 are being sold. The tickets can only be purchased in person from Irish Club members, and may not be mailed or sold online. Visit any of the Irish Week 2018 events to get your tickets.



JAMES FRECHEVILLE and Hugo Weaving star in *Black 47* a new film based on the Irish Famine.

## Black 47: The Famine on film – it's only taken 170 years

*Black 47*, Lance Daly's film that addresses one of the most traumatic periods in Irish history, is a story that has barely registered on the big screen before.

The Irish revenge story set during the Famine received its world premiere at Berlin International Film Festival last month.

Actor James Frecheville stars as Feeney, an Irish Ranger who has been

fighting abroad for the British Army but becomes a deserter and returns home.

When he discovers what has happened to his family, Feeney swears vengeance.

His old British Army comrade Hannah (*The Matrix* and *Lord of the Rings* star Hugo Weaving) is then dispatched to put an end to Feeney's uprising.

*Black 47* will open in Irish cinemas later this year. Hopefully soon in North America as well.

## Aer Lingus makes Seattle its 12th U.S. destination

SEATTLE – Aer Lingus has announced a brand new route from Dublin to Seattle – Ireland's first ever direct service to the Emerald City.

The Airbus A330 service will offer both business and economy classes, and will operate from May 18, 2018 on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

The service will run four times a week, with flights scheduled to arrive in Seattle at 5:35 PM, and depart for Dublin at 7:20 PM.

Seattle has strong business links to Ireland, boasting a vibrant technology sector.

It's home to technology giants Microsoft and Amazon, both of which have significant operations in Ireland. The Irish-based aircraft leasing sector will now be connected directly to the home of Boeing.

This strategy delivers increased connectivity for Ireland, which supports international trade and economic development, as well as growth in tourism.

It also highlights the gateway connections available at Dublin from North America, UK and Europe, with the convenience of US Customs and Border Protection pre-clearance services at Dublin Airport.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency says there are currently 15 airport pre-clearance locations in six countries, including two in Ireland (Dublin and Shannon).

The others are in Aruba; Freeport and Nassau in The Bahamas; Bermuda; Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; and Calgary, Toronto, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver, and Winnipeg in Canada.

For guests travelling from Seattle, Aer Lingus will offer 24 seamless connections, via the Dublin Gateway, to UK and European cities such as London, Paris, Rome, Brussels, Amsterdam and Frankfurt. British travellers will enjoy connections via Dublin to Seattle from cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Fares range from 259 euro (approximately US\$350) each-way including taxes and charges, when booked as a return trip. Find more on [www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com)



TRAVELLERS will be able to fly direct to Dublin from Seattle starting on May 18, 2018.

## Game of Thrones cast sink pints in Belfast bar

BELFAST – While waiting out the storm known as The Beast from the East, the cast and crew of the hit HBO show *Game of Thrones* dropped into one of Belfast's best-known bars for a few pints.

As the snow melted away on March 3, Jon Snow or Kit Harrington joined Emilia Clarke, who plays Daenerys, 'Grey Worm' Jacob Anderson and Peter Dinklage who plays Tyrion Lannister called into Kelly's Cellars.

They were also joined by show writers and producers David Benioff and D.B. Weiss.



The Game of Thrones cast enjoyed a night out at Kelly's Cellars in Belfast while waiting out The Beast from the East.

The show, which has become a global phenomena and put Northern Ireland on the map for those wanting to travel to Westeros. Production is currently underway across the country on the eighth and final season.

"As you may have noticed, Winter Is Coming. Or Coming Back. Or whatever," Kelly's Cellars said in a tweet.

"But whatever it is, it was a pleasure to welcome some of the cast of Game of Thrones yesterday evening.

"Because that's what they do....They drink. And they know things."



*Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig*

**Happy St. Patrick's Day!**

to all our friends around the Pacific Northwest from Seattle's Irish Heritage Club and the Seattle Gaels Gaelic Footballers and Hurlers

**For details on SEATTLE'S IRISH WEEK or information on our activities, visit our website: [www.irishclub.org](http://www.irishclub.org)**

### Seattle Irish Immigrant Support Group



**FREE SERVICES AVAILABLE**

to Irish people in need, regardless of the person's religious, social or economic background.

Consultation and referrals, networking opportunities, limited immigrant legal assistance, advocacy and support in handling drug, alcohol, child or spousal abuse, family crises, senior issues, poverty, etc.

Call toll-free **877-517-3559** or email [info@irishseattle.com](mailto:info@irishseattle.com)  
P.O. Box 75123, Seattle, WA 98175 [www.irishseattle.com](http://www.irishseattle.com)







THIS magnificent stained glass window in Belfast City hall is dedicated to the lives, suffering and contribution of working class women. The window depicting women mill workers was made by a firm in Derry to show the struggles that women have faced. It was supported by all political parties and unveiled in March 2016.

## Give us Bread and Roses

The poem *Bread and Roses* was written by James Oppenheim to celebrate the movement for women's rights and published in *American Magazine* in 1911, is closely associated with the Lawrence textile mill strike of 1912.

During the strike, which was in protest of a reduction in pay, the women mill workers carried signs that quoted the poem, reading "We want bread, and roses, too."



## Bread and Roses

As we go marching, marching  
We battle too for men  
For they are women's comrades  
And we mother them again

As we go marching, marching  
In the beauty of the day  
A million darkened kitchens  
A thousand mill lofts grey  
Are touched with all the radiance  
That a sudden sun discloses  
For the people hear us singing  
Bread and roses, bread and roses

As we go marching, marching  
We battle too for men  
For they are women's comrades  
And we mother them again  
Our lives shall not be sweetened  
From birth until life closes  
Hearts starve as well as bodies  
Give us bread, but give us roses

As we go marching, marching  
We bring the greater days  
For the rising of the women  
Means the rising of the race  
No more the drudge and idler  
Tend that toil where one reposes  
But the sharing of life's glories  
Bread and roses, bread and roses

## IRISH WOMEN'S NETWORK OF B.C.: Memories from our Archives



MEMBERS of the Irish Women's Network presented a cheque to Sharon Brown and Marie Morris of the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C. in February 2008. Pictured above presenting the cheque (L-R) Margaret Brown, Eilis Courtney, Geraldine Megannety, Deirdre O'Ruairc (president of the IWN), Sharon Brown, Maire Morris and Pam Glass.



MEMBERS of the Irish Women's Network in November 2016 (L-R) Leanne Ardley, Eilis Courtney, Geraldine Megannety, and Ita Kane-Wilson with special guest Dara Culhane (centre). Dara Culhane is a Professor of Anthropology with Simon Fraser University and she presented a talk about the Sheehy sisters – Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, Mary Sheehy Kettle, Kathleen Sheehy Cruise O'Brien and Margaret Sheehy Culhane Casey. Dara is the granddaughter of Margaret Sheehy.



WINNING TEAM at the June 2009 Irish Women's Network golf tournament (L-R) Ann Innis, Marie Morris, Ann Carr and Noeleen Corr. The annual tournament was organized by Marie Morrie and her sister Noeleen Corr.



FORMER Irish Ambassador to Canada Ray Bassett met with members of the Irish Women's Network in 2011 (L-R) Mary Monks Hatch, Ray Bassett, Geraldine Megannety, Patricia Jarvis, and Siobhan Airey.



SIOBHAN AIREY and Geraldine Megannety with Betty Allen (2012 Irish Woman of the Year), and Ita Kane-Wilson. Betty was honoured for her long term support of the IWN and her tireless work as a volunteer in her church and community.



A WARM welcoming committee in June 2011 for new Irish arrivals in Vancouver (L-R) Eilis Courtney (president of the Irish Women's Network) along with Geraldine Megannety, Mary Monks Hatch, and Siobhan Airey.



MICHELINE Sheehy Skeffington – granddaughter of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Ireland's most famous suffragette – is pictured above (front/centre) along with (L-R) Ita Kane-Wilson (IWN), Dara Culhane, Roisín Sheehy-Culhane, and Patricia Jarvis (IWN) following her talk at Simon Fraser University in November 2017.



MEMBERS of the Irish Women's Network at the 2005 Annual General Meeting (L-R) Mary Monks Hatch, Marie Morris, Deirdre O'Ruairc, Geraldine Megannety, and Pam Glass.



## IRISH WOMEN'S NETWORK OF B.C.

# Twenty Years-A-Growing – A Slice of Herstory

By MARY MONKS HATCH

VANCOUVER – In late April or early May (watch our Facebook page for information), we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Irish Women's Network of B.C.

Life was so very different 20-odd years ago. Newspapers and letters were 10 days old by the time they reached us from home.

Phone calls cost 80 cents a minute between midnight and 8 AM, twice that much during the day. No Skype, e-mail, or internet, and no Irish voices unless you worked to find them.

You could come out of a supermarket and find someone waiting by your car because it displayed an Irish flag, a someone hungry for an Irish accent, any Irish accent. And anyone Irish you met for a second time was an old friend.

Mercifully, there was *The Celtic Connection*, proving that there were actually Irish people out there, and showing what they were doing together.

For the sporty there was the Irish Sporting & Social Club, Stage Eireann for the theatrically minded, the Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) for people in business, and one or two other small groups.

A few, mostly women like me who had nothing to do with business, joined the ICCC purely for their social gatherings, especially that stylish annual event the Emerald Ball.

The hunger among Irish women to gather with their own kind was almost palpable, and a notice in *The Celtic Connection* brought an immediate response.

Support among ICCC's women members was keen and constructive, and very quickly we were having monthly meetings in Burnaby library.

Two pieces of writing inspired the start-up of IWN: Mary Robinson's speech to the Oireachtas "Cherishing the Diaspora," and Rosita Boland's article in *The Irish Times* on 6 January 1998, "On the women's day of Christmas."

The enthusiasm of the women at our first meeting saw the Network take off like a flame touched to gasoline.

In small groups, women (some in Vancouver since the 1950s) chatted eagerly about where they came from, what they had in common, what they wanted from the Network.

Some guidelines were agreed: 1) Nobody should be prevented by financial circumstances from participating, so there would be no membership fee and every event would have to be self-funding; 2) Anyone who attended an IWN event was automatically a member; 3) The 'structure' of the network should be informal.

From the start, members were pulling rabbits from hats through unsuspected connections and a variety of talents.

I was embarking on a diploma in professional writing while working full time, so I had to take several steps back and persuade others to take the lead.

And lead they did, that group of talented, enthusiastic, and resourceful women.

Marie Morris ran an annual golf competition with her sister Noeleen Corr. Their sister, Dolores Byrne, formed a book club with Margaret Browne,



PRESIDENT of the IWN Deirdre O'Ruairc presented Irish President Mary McAleese with honorary membership in the Irish Women's Network of B.C. in May 2005.

Bernie Todd and Betty Allen.

For our first, memorable, Nollaig na mBan dinner, Tania Belsito persuaded her husband, Larry, to give us a splendid, memorable evening at the Coast Plaza Hotel at Stanley Park, where he was manager.

Deirdre O'Ruairc magically produced a letter of greeting to us from Uachtarán na hÉireann, and later arranged for President Mary McAleese and her husband to join us for lunch, and for Mary Robinson to have breakfast with us.

It was Deirdre, too, who instituted the Woman of the Year award (surprising me with that award at a dinner celebrating our first anniversary), and had a group of us photographed, apparently naked, for our own "Calendar Girls" production.

For several years, she also led IWN in representing Ireland at the European

festival in Burnaby, as well as our participation in an event at Vancouver Public Library, at which we showcased Irish literature.

Changing times can bring surprising and unforeseen needs.

The big change that occurred in the Vancouver area was, of course, the sudden influx, following the sudden death of the Celtic Tiger, of bright young Irish people, all highly educated, brimming with confidence, ability, and talent, eager to make the most of what British Columbia had to offer.

All they lacked was vital information about the difference between getting a job back home and landing one in Vancouver.

IWN was then (and still is) in the capable and untiring hands of Eilis Courtney, ably supported by the ever-resourceful Geraldine Megannetty.

Together they arranged information events at BCIT's downtown campus, and funding by the Irish Government so they could be offered free of charge.

They presented speakers and expert guidance in the process of job searching. They appealed to the Irish community to provide knowledge on various fields of employment, and the community responded with huge generosity. That work continues.

Speaking of huge generosity, I have to pay tribute to the enormous support that *The Celtic Connection* has always given IWN.

An organisation that doesn't collect membership fees, unsurprisingly, doesn't have the wherewithal to fund communications, so we relied heavily on the goodwill of Maura and Catholine. Before the internet was established, such help was vital in building our network.

The past 20 years of IWN have brought us social gatherings bright with chatter and laughter, literary events, Nollaig na mBan celebrations, sister networks in Toronto and Ottawa, friendships, and a raft of warm, shining memories: maybe not so much "Twenty Years A-Growing\*", as "Twenty Years A-Glowing."

\* *Apologies to Maurice O'Sullivan and his classic memoir of Blasket life.*



DEIRDRE O'RUAIRC (president of the Irish Women's Network) holding the Irish flag with Catholine Butler (2006 Irish Woman of the Year) on the podium at the opening ceremonies for the European Festival at the Scandinavian Community Centre.



FOUNDING MEMBER of the Irish Women's Network in Vancouver, Mary Monks Hatch, is pictured here with former President of Ireland Mary Robinson in 2006.



## Famous Irish Quotes

*I was elected by the women of Ireland, who instead of rocking the cradle, rocked the system.*

– Mary Robinson

First female President of Ireland, b.1944

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# Irish American experience in New York continues to evolve with influx of 'New Irish'

**I**T WAS several years ago while on a travel stopover in New York City, my husband and I decided to visit St. Patrick's Cathedral – the spiritual refuge for countless thousands of Irish who found a new home in this great city.

In the past we have visited some of the most magnificent churches in Europe and abroad, but we were unprepared for the sheer size and dimension of this spectacular cathedral. It is truly breathtaking.

Built in the form of a cross, St. Patrick's occupies an entire city block and the ornate structure is the largest decorated Neo-Gothic-style Catholic cathedral in North America. It can accommodate a staggering 3,000 people.

The interior features intricate marble designs on the numerous altars, along with rich stained-glass windows and extraordinary artwork throughout. New York natives and tourist of all religious backgrounds still marvel at the building's stunning beauty.

In the days following September 11, 2001, it is said so many people came to light a candle at St. Patrick's Cathedral that it created a fire hazard.

As we approach St. Patrick's Day, I felt compelled to reflect on this most compelling stamp of Irish influence in New York City.

When St. Patrick's Cathedral was completed in New York City in 1879, the annual parade on March 17 was extended up Fifth Avenue in order to allow the archbishop and clergy to review the festivities while standing in front of the church.

Over more than three centuries, Irish immigrants have crossed the Atlantic to make a new home in North America and New York City has been one of the main destinations for so many in search of a brighter future.

Migration increased dramatically in the 1840s as a consequence of Ireland's potato famine of 1845-49, which left more than one million people dead from starvation and disease and another million forced to leave the country.

Most of the Irish who arrived in the U.S. during this period had little education and few material possessions.

They encountered systematic economic discrimination, and the longstanding prejudice of many members of the Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority toward both the Irish and Catholicism.

In addition to the external prejudices, many Irish experienced cultural clashes and internal conflicts within their own communities, but the one common anchor of Irish identity was the Catholic Church and Irish nationalism.

Shut out socially and economically because of their poor skills, Catholicism, and poverty, the Irish carved a place for themselves in two arenas where pedigree, birthright, and money mattered little – politics and the Church.

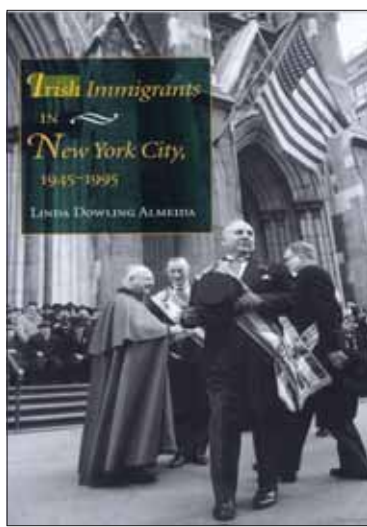
Perhaps the most dramatic symbol of Catholic and immigrant presence in New York City was the construction of St. Patrick's Cathedral in the upper reaches of Manhattan between 1859 and 1879.

New York's first Archbishop John

THAT WAS several years ago while on a travel stopover in New York City, my husband and I decided to visit St. Patrick's Cathedral – the spiritual refuge for countless



By  
**MAURA  
DE FREITAS**



*"The gap had as much to do with the culture and society from which the 'New Irish' came as with the economic and social circumstances they found in New York. Even though both immigrant communities originated in Ireland, their cultures, politics, and overall world perspectives were quite different."*

Hughes boldly decreed to the American native-born community that the cathedral reflected the status, dignity, and permanence of the Catholic ethnics in New York City.

Despite the cost, the construction of the new St. Patrick's Cathedral was supported by the New York Catholic community.

Many Irish women who gained employment as domestics chipped in some of their meager wages to help with the St. Patrick's Cathedral building fund.

When the first cornerstone was laid on Sunday, August 15, 1858, on the Feast of the Assumption, 200 priests and 100 choirboys marched in the formal procession.

The throng of onlookers was so thick – 100,000 strong, by one estimate – that all the city's streetcars were diverted north to accommodate the crowd. Downtown Manhattan was described as "depleted."

One interesting reference source I located in my library as I was researching the background of St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Irish in New York, is a book published by Indiana University Press in 2001 by American academic Linda Dowling Almeida.

Entitled *Irish Immigrants in New York City, 1945-1995*, Almeida writes about the distinct waves of Irish migrants to the city, particularly between those who immigrated in the 1950s and the group she describes as the "New Irish" of the 1980s.

I found her descriptions most interesting, given the huge cultural changes in Irish cultural communities across Canada – and particularly western Canada – since the collapse of the Celtic Tiger in Ireland.

A new wave of mobile, educated, and highly motivated young Irish migrants has arrived here since the 2008 global financial crisis.

In her work, Almeida reveals a tense distance between the eighties migrants to the United States and the established Irish American immigrant community who settled post 1945.

With a little probing, she said it became obvious that the breach was much deeper than mere generational conflict.

According to the writer, "The gap had as much to do with the culture and society from which the 'New Irish' came as with the economic and social circumstances they found in New York."

"Even though both migrant communities originated in Ireland, their cultures, politics, and overall world perspectives were quite different."

She outlines the differences between the groups in terms of their lives in Ireland, their reasons for emigrating, and their experiences in New York.

While every generation of Irish immigrants, large and small, carries with it the character of the Ireland they leave behind, she explains the compelling feature of the "New Irish" population is the mark made by economic and social modernity.

Further, technology has changed the landscape as well. Advanced communication, telephones, and travel shortened the distance between Ireland and New York and made the trip to America a commute rather than a final journey.

That convenience and their own confidence made the 1980s migrants less reliant on the established Irish community and organizations than their predecessors because they were never very far from home virtually or in reality.

Previously new Irish immigrants tended to live in closer communities, and identified themselves by their local parish. The difference is the "New Irish" never felt that New York was their ultimate destination – they do not have that sense of permanence.

Perhaps these experiences have something to inform local Irish organizations in western Canada. As young migrants arrive, the more established community, often with an aging demographic, continues to search for ways to adapt to this changing dynamic.



PHOTO: Museum of the City of New York

THE CONSTRUCTION of the new St. Patrick's Cathedral 1859 and 1879 was supported by the New York Catholic community. Many Irish women who gained employment as domestics chipped in some of their meager wages to help with the St. Patrick's Cathedral building fund.



PHOTO: J.M. Luijt / Wikipedia

BUILT in the form of a cross, the cathedral occupies an entire city block on Fifth Avenue.



PHOTO: Maura De Freitas

VISITORS of all religious backgrounds still marvel at the building's stunning beauty.



PHOTO: Maura De Freitas

THE INTERIOR features of St. Patrick's Cathedral include intricate marble designs on the numerous altars, with rich stained-glass windows and extraordinary artwork throughout.