

# the celtic connection

ISSUE 28 VOLUME 4

*Proudly Serving Celts in North America Since 1991*

MAY/JUNE 2019

## Inside This Issue



PHOTO: Creative Commons/Flickr

CIARÁN CANNON (R) the Irish Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Diaspora and International Development, was in western Canada and Washington State for the St. Patrick's Day celebrations this March. He met with Premier John Horgan (L) in Victoria while in British Columbia to discuss common priorities and bi-lateral cooperation.

[Full coverage of the Minister's visit pages 7, 18, 19]



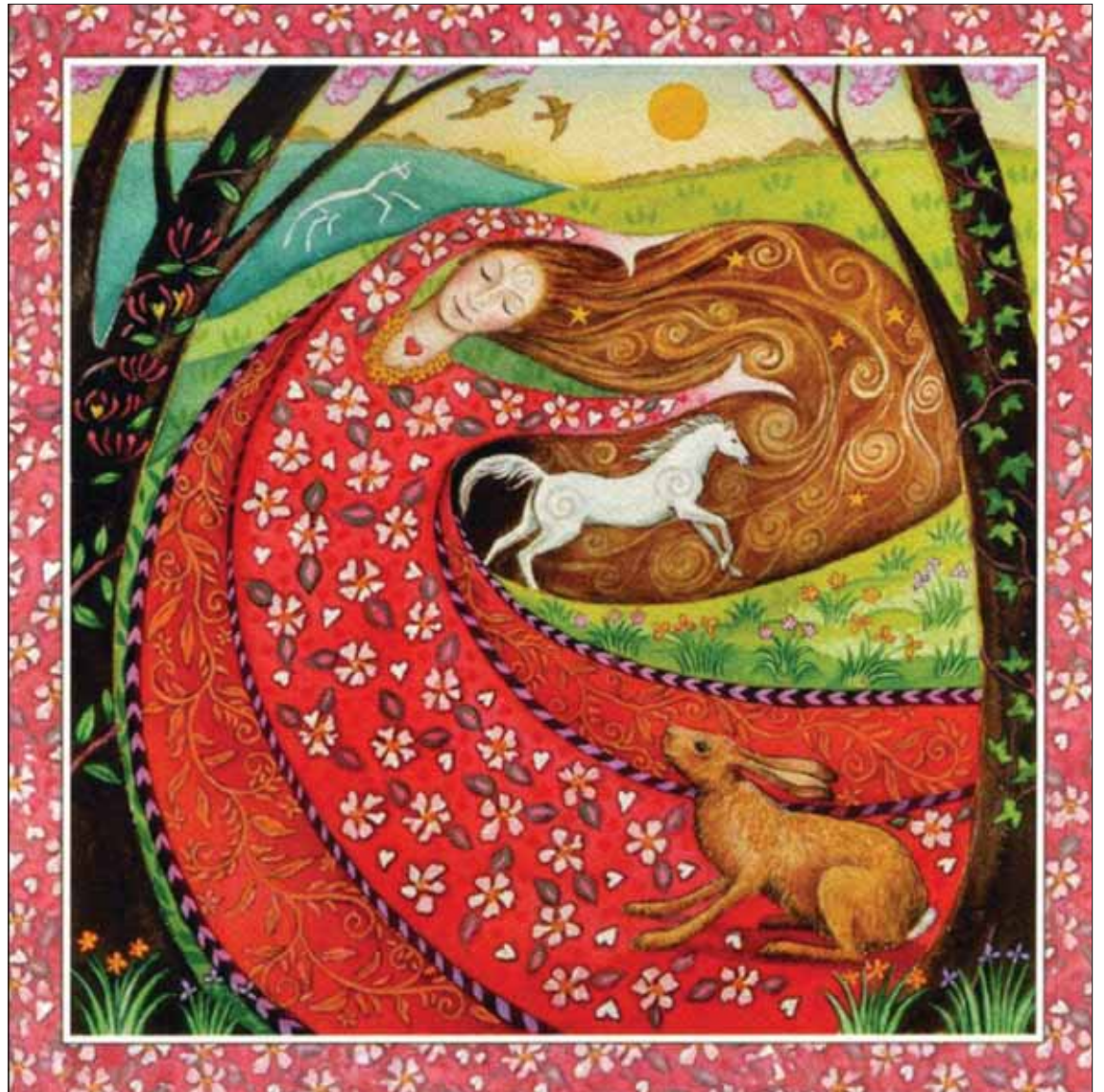
SHOCK and sorrow across Ireland and the U.K. following news of the tragic death of 29-year-old journalist Lyra McKee. She was killed by dissident republicans while covering a disturbance in the Creggan area of Derry on the evening of Thursday, April 18.

[Read more on page 27]



THE TEN-DAY Extinction Rebellion protest in London successfully hijacked a mainstream political discourse bogged down in stale Brexit nuances, and united figures from across the political spectrum in agreement over the climate crisis. The action has already managed to focus the world's media on the urgent need to tackle climate change.

[Read more on page 8]



ARTWORK by Wendy Andrew

BELTANE – Rhiannon-the lover, dances the blossoms into being. The white horse maiden brings joy, creativity and a lust for life...a time of love and celebration. Beltane or Beltaine is the Gaelic May Day festival. Most commonly it is held on May 1, or about halfway between the spring equinox and the summer solstice. Historically, it was widely observed throughout Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man. In Irish the name for the festival day is *Lá Bealtaine*, in Scottish Gaelic *Là Bealltainn*, and in Manx Gaelic *Laa Boaltinn/Boaldyn*. It is one of the four Gaelic seasonal festivals—along with Samhain, Imbolc and Lughnasadh – and is similar to the Welsh *Calan Mai*.

[Read more on pages 2 & 20]



MIKE HURLEY was elected the new mayor of Burnaby, B.C. last October. Born in Magherafelt, Northern Ireland he is proud of his Irish heritage and has a love for the Gaelic Games. [Page 22]

## WIN FREE TICKETS

WIN tickets to the BC Highland Games & Scottish Festival on June 14 and 15 at Lafarge Lake Park, Coquitlam. (See pages 14 & 15 for more details). Mark your entry BC Highland and include your name and daytime telephone number. Entry by May 24.

WIN a pair of tickets (2) on Saturday, July 20 to Vancouver Folk Music Festival on July 19 to 21 at Jericho Beach Park. See pages 3 & 5 for more details. Mark your entry Vancouver Folk and include your name and daytime telephone number. Entry by June 14.

WIN a weekend pass for two to Mission Folk Music Festival on July 26 to 28 at Fraser River Heritage Park, Mission. See pages 3 & 4 for more details. Mark your entry Mission Folk and include your name and daytime telephone number. Entry by June 21.

WIN a weekend pass for two – including the Taste of the Highlands, the Canmore Highland Games and the Canmore Ceilidh – at the Canmore Highland Games at Canmore, Alberta on August 31-September 1. See pages 3 & 14 for more details. Mark your entry Canmore Highland and include your name and daytime telephone number. Entry by June 28.

All entries by e-mail only to: [cbutler@telus.net](mailto:cbutler@telus.net) (Only one entry per person).



# In Fond Memory of William Alexander Duncan



**BILL DUNCAN**  
[1936 - 2019]

HE late Bill Duncan was a real gentleman and here at *The Celtic Connection* he will be sadly missed.

He was a long-time dedicated volunteer and his monthly telephone calls to find out when the next issue would be delivered always led to lively discussions with some interesting information to impart and maybe a few jokes.

William (Bill) Alexander Duncan passed away peacefully at his home in Maple Ridge, B.C. on March 18, 2019. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland on April 26, 1936.

Bill married his childhood sweetheart, Catherine (Kareen) and their two sons, Gordon and Calum, were also born in Scotland.

The family immigrated to British Columbia and settled in Maple Ridge when the children were still quite young.

Bill had a long-standing career as a machinist/millwright at the Chevron oil refinery, retiring in 1996. His only granddaughter Taylor was born in 1997.

In his retirement, Bill enjoyed painting, watching the Rangers live telecast at the Rangers Club in Coquitlam, scenic drives with his beloved wife, and delivering *The Celtic Connection* newspaper in Maple Ridge and area.

To say Bill Duncan was an avid Scottish football fan would be an understatement.

He read every bit of Scottish news about the games and he also loved reading about the boxer Benny Lynch.

But his all time hero was the legendary Celtic goalkeeper John Thomson.

Bill never tired of reading and hearing every bit of information he could glean about his hero who played for Celtic and died during a Celtic-Rangers game.

On one of his visits to Scotland, Bill even visited Thomson's grave at Bowhill Cemetery in Cardenden.

Bill later related to *The Celtic Connection* how very moved he was to finally be at Thomson's grave and see all the football scarves and tributes to Thomson from football clubs and fans from around the world.

Rest in peace Bill, it was our pleasure to have known you.

If you listen to the wind, may you hear the sound of bagpipes and be consumed by his spirit. Forever in our hearts, forever in our minds.

## A BLESSING FOR BELTANE

Bless, O God, true and bountiful, myself, my spouse, and my children, everything within my dwelling from Beltane Eve to summer's ending.

From sea to sea, and every river mouth, from wave to wave, and every waterfall, bless the kine that leave the stall, bless the sheep that depart the fold, bless the goats on the mount of mist.

May Thou attend them and keep them blest, Thou being who attends to me as I bend my knee to Thee.

— Adapted from *The Beltane Blessing* in *Carmina Gadelica*

[*Carmina Gadelica* is a compendium of prayers, hymns, charms, incantations, blessings, literary-folkloric poems and songs, proverbs, lexical items, historical anecdotes, natural history observations, and miscellaneous lore gathered in the Gaelic-speaking regions of Scotland between 1860 and 1909. The material was recorded, translated, and reworked by the excise-man and folklorist Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912).]



## Irish Women's Network of BC Update on the Community Mapping Project

To date, 32 groups have registered, from Metro Vancouver, Kelowna and Victoria and more are registering weekly.

If you are an organisation/ group/facebook page which supports the Irish community in your area, make sure you complete the survey so your group is included.

For a list of who has registered so far, as well as an update on the project, go to:

[www.irishwomenbc.net/irish-community-mapping-project](http://www.irishwomenbc.net/irish-community-mapping-project)



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## ABOUT OUR COVER ARTIST

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

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

To order images by Wendy and see more of her paintings please visit her website at: [www.paintingdreams.co.uk](http://www.paintingdreams.co.uk). You can contact Wendy by e-mail at: [info@paintingdreams.co.uk](mailto:info@paintingdreams.co.uk).

## THE CELTIC CONNECTION

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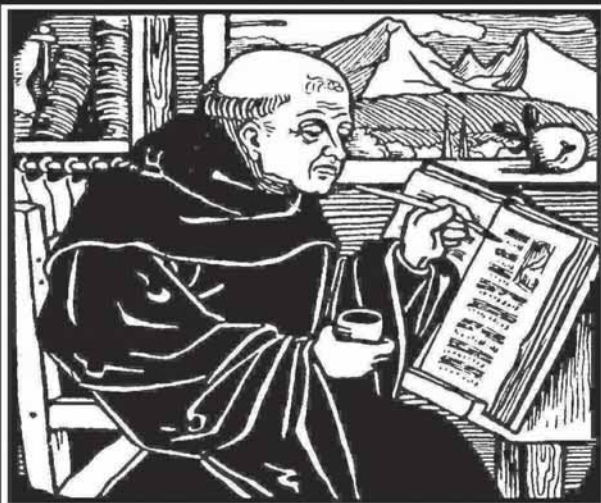
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## Consul General Frank Flood in collaboration with The Irish Graduates Association & Enterprise Ireland

is holding a reception for Irish Alumni on  
**Wednesday, June 26 from 5pm to 7pm**  
in the Grand Ballroom of the Vancouver Club  
located at 915 West Hastings Street  
in Downtown Vancouver

This invitation is open to all Irish and Canadian citizens, living in British Columbia who have studied at an Irish Higher Education Institute.

If you are interested in attending, please visit the Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver website to register:  
<https://www.dfa.ie/irish-consulate/vancouver/news-&-events/>

by 12am Friday, June 14, 2019.

Due to limited room capacity, this event will be on a first come, first served basis.



# Sir Billy Connolly leads New York's Tartan Day Parade

NEW YORK – Sir Billy Connolly was this year's Grand Marshal at the annual New York City Tartan Day Parade on Saturday, April 6.



BILLY CONNOLLY, one of Scotland's most popular entertainers, greeted spectators as he led the Tartan Day Parade through New York City.

Read more about the BC Highland Games and the Canmore Highland Games, page 14

Connolly said he danced "a wee jig" in his heart as he led thousands of participants, including pipers and Highland dancers, along Manhattan's Sixth Avenue.

Around 30,000 spectators watched the Scottish comedian perform the role of Grand Marshal.

The 76-year-old, who has lived in the U.S. since 2011, accepted the invitation to take part despite announcing in December that he was retiring from touring.

He said, "I've absolutely loved being Grand Marshal of this year's New York City Tartan Day Parade.

"The crowds were brilliant and hearing the skirl of the pipes echoing along Sixth Avenue made me dance a wee jig in my heart. What a day."

Previous Grand Marshals include Sir Sean Connery, Alan Cumming, Sam Heughan and Brian Cox, while KT Tunstall became the first woman to lead the parade last year.

It is the showpiece event of Tartan Week, which brings a full programme of special events to New York from April 3-8.

Kyle Dawson, president of the New York Tartan Day Committee, said, "What an incredible twenty-first year this has been for New York City Tartan Week.

"We've enjoyed a phenomenal week of celebrations – from ceilidhs to workshops and pipe bands performances to parties."

Scotland's Veterans Minister Graeme Dey also took part in the parade and said he was "delighted" that Sir Billy led the way. He added, "The annual Tartan Day celebrations are always a spectacular showcase of Scotland."

## MISSION FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL JULY 26 TO 28 2019 FRASER RIVER HERITAGE PARK

FEATURING BEATON-PLASSE QC/NS | GEOFF BERNER BC  
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DIYET & THE LOVE SOLDIERS YT | CÉCILE DOO-KINGUÉ QC  
LEAF RAPIDS MB | ZACHARY LUCKY SK | IRISH MYTHEN PEI  
OKTOPUS QC | PODORYTHMIE WA | RAW HONEY BC  
ROADS UNKNOWN BC | SCHRYER, HILLHOUSE, DOBRES BC  
RICK SCOTT & NICO RHODES IN ROOTS & GROOVES BC | STRANGELY WA  
TURKWAZ ON | JESSE WALDMAN BC

JOHN WELSH & LOS VALIENTES BC | ZIGUE QC

COMMUNITY VOICES: JENNY BANAI – FRASER VALLEY MUSIC AWARDS | RAILYARD YOUTH OPEN STAGE PROJECT  
FESTIVAL CHOIR WITH DEBORAH HANDLEY | MUSIC 101 @ THE TRACTOR GREASE CAFE | LOW BARRIER CHORUS





# Highlights of this year's Folk Fest Season and the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of The Rogue

VANCOUVER – It will soon be folk festival season again, but the local events don't seem to have very much Celtic music on their bills this year. I don't know why this is happening, but here are a few highlights:

**Campbell Bay Music Festival** (June 21-23, on Mayne Island) has an intriguing line-up, including Maritime fiddle / banjo duo **Mama's Broke**, young American old time / bluegrass combo **The Lonely Heartstring Band**, and French quartet **Lausa**, who combine Celtic music with their own local music of Gascony as well as Iberian and North African sounds. [www.campbellbaymusicfest.com](http://www.campbellbaymusicfest.com).

**Island Musicfest** (July 12-14, Courtenay) features a lot of veteran bands in the world of blues, R&B, country rock and such, but there will also be appearances by PEI's **Irish Mythen**, Newfoundland's **Matthew Byrne**, and Nova Scotia's **James Hill** and **Anne Janelle**. [www.islandmusicfest.com](http://www.islandmusicfest.com).

**Harrison Festival of the Arts** (July 12-21, Harrison Hot Springs) has Celtic music from Cape Breton supergroup **Beolach** (15th), Quebec duo **Zigue**, **Lisa Ornstein** (a founder of La Bottine Souriante, and one of the pioneers of the Quebecois music revival of the 1970s), young BC avant garde trio **Aerialists**, and **Matthew Byrne** that wonderful singer from Nfld. [www.harrisonfestival.ca](http://www.harrisonfestival.ca).

**Vancouver Folk Music Festival** (July 19-21) sees a rare west coast appearance by the brilliant **Dardanelles** from Newfoundland – in my humble opinion one of the finest trad bands on the planet! They were in superb form at the Folk Alliance in Montreal in February, and I can't wait to see them again! **Matthew Byrne** is the main singer in the band, and he and **Irish Mythen** will also perform solo. Another major highlight is Quebec's **Le Vent Du Nord**, with a superb new CD and a new addition to their ranks – fiddler **Andre Brunet**. [www.thefestival.bc.ca](http://www.thefestival.bc.ca).

**Mission Folk Music Festival** (July 26 - 28) is getting bigger and better every year as they strive to reclaim their place amongst the most enjoyable folk festivals in the west. There have been some tough years weather-wise and the festival was on the ropes for a while, but I'm delighted to see its revival. Plenty of good Celtic music here, led by Cape Breton's **Andrea Beaton** and Quebec's **Veronique Plasse**, and the B.C. trio of **Pierre Schryer**, **Andy Hillhouse** and **Adam Dobres**. There will also be **Irish Mythen** again, and more Quebec trad from duo **Zigue** (Claude Methe & Dana Whittle) and Seattle's **Podorythmie**. [www.missionfolkmusicfestival.ca](http://www.missionfolkmusicfestival.ca).

**Islands Folk Festival** (July 26-28, Duncan B.C.) has a very modern-looking lineup with **Qristina & Quinn**

## ROGUE FOLK CLUB



By  
STEVE  
EDGE

**Bachand**, U.S. banjo diva **Kelly Hunt**, and East Van's **The Burying Ground** leading the Celtic / trad field. [www.islandsfolkfestival.ca](http://www.islandsfolkfestival.ca).

Meanwhile **The Rogue** presents Vancouver country / folk singer / songwriter **Joe Charron** with his fine band **Great Divide** (**Michael Burnyeat** on fiddle, **Don Fraser** on dobro, and **Stu MacDonald** on bass). Joe launches his impressive CD *This Place Called Home* on Friday May 10 at St. James Hall (3214 West 10th Avenue).

This show marks The Rogue's 32nd birthday and the opening act is also a bit special.

**The Eisenhauers** made a fine CD a couple of years back with Steve Dawson producing. Sherree and Jeremy Eisenhauer moved from East



**SEARSON** – Colleen and Erin – are two Ottawa Valley sisters who combine fiddle and piano with trad tunes and classic Canadian songs. They are joined by multi-instrumentalist Kian Byrne as they play The Rogue on Friday, May 31.

Van to the Kootenays a few years back and played at The Rogue two years ago. Lovely harmonies, and really compelling songs.

Ottawa Valley sisters **Searson** combine fiddle and piano with trad tunes and classic Canadian songs. **Erin Searson** played piano here with **The Step Crew** last July and she also plays tenor guitar, while her sister **Colleen**

is an excellent fiddler and step dancer.

They are joined by multi-instrumentalist **Kian Byrne**. They play The Rogue on Friday, May 31. You can find out more about all the shows coming to The Rogue by visiting [www.roguefolk.com](http://www.roguefolk.com).

There have been some brilliant new releases this month, with **Dervish** lead-

ing the way. *The Great Irish Songbook* sees the band joined by guest singers like **Imelda May**, **Steve Earle**, **Kate Rusby**, **Rhiannon Giddens**, **Abigail Washburn** and more.

Sensational young Scottish piper **Brighde Chaimbeul** released her debut CD, *The Reeling*. Until I saw her on the Celtic Colours website last fall I'd never heard of her: such stunning musicianship! The CD does not disappoint.

**Flook** features two flutes (**Brian Finnegan** and **Sarah Allen**), with **Ed Boyd** on guitar and **John Jo Kelly** on bodhran. Their first album in over a decade just came out. *Ancora* is a fabulous collection of mostly-original instrumentals.

Cape Breton fiddler **Mairi Rankin** recently moved back home from Abbotsford. She is a member of **The Outside Track** and **Beolach**, and has now teamed up with **The Fretless** cellist **Eric Wright** to make a superb album called *The Cabin Sessions*. Watch for this duo coming to town in November.

You can hear music by all these performers and much more besides on my show **The Saturday Edge On Folk** every Saturday from 8 AM to noon on CíTR FM 101.9 and [www.citr.ca](http://www.citr.ca).

## For Celtic, Irish and acoustic fans the Mission Folk Music Fest has it all

MISSION, BC – For folk music lovers 'in the know', the Mission Folk Music Festival has long been seen as a place where you can savour the music made by the most talented of artists in an intimate and friendly setting.

It's a place where you can get up-close-and-personal with all kinds of great music in a lovely park overlooking the Fraser River, just east of the town of Mission.

Running from July 26 to 28 in Fraser River Heritage Park, this year's line up promises a weekend full of both familiar sounds and new discoveries – and for fans of all things Celtic, Irish and acoustic, there's lots to see and hear.

And you need look no further for some great sounds than the trio of Celtic-folk masters known as **Schryer, Hillhouse and Dobres**, coming to the MFMF this summer.

Schryer is none other than award-winning Franco-Ontarian fiddler **Pierre Schryer**.

He's is one of Canada's leading traditional fiddlers and a celebrated performer and producer.

Immersed from an early age in the Franco-Ontarian tradition, he grew up competing in multiple fiddle competitions as part of the The Schryer Triplets, appearing numerous times on the iconic *Tommy Hunter Show*.

Pierre went on to create a highly suc-



**SCHRYER, HILLHOUSE AND DOBRES** is a trio of Celtic-folk masters coming to Mission Folk Fest this summer with Adam Dobres, Andy Hillhouse and Pierre Schryer.

cessful solo performing, recording and touring career, receiving numerous titles and awards including Canadian Grand Masters Fiddle Champion and North American Irish Fiddle Champion.

Put a fiddle in his hands, and this guy catches fire!

Trio-mate **Adam Dobres** is an uncommonly talented folk-oriented guitarist with a string of credits.

He's toured all over the world and collaborated with acts ranging from Daniel Lapp to folk ensemble The Ruth Moody Band to pop rock singer Toni Childs.

He's performed with Dustin Bental's alt-country group, did a stint with old time string band, Outlaw Social, and toured and played on the acclaimed radio show *A Prairie Home Compan-*

*ion* with one of Canada's favourite bands, The Wailin' Jennys.

Singer/guitarist **Andy Hillhouse** is no stranger to the readers of *The Celtic Connection*.

He's been a touring bandleader in the Anglo-Celtic music world, a choral director, and a music and culture scholar since the early 1990s.

He's the founder of the popular band Mad Pudding, with whom he toured North America and Europe, and has performed with some of Canadian Celtic music's finest.

Andy released his first solo CD, *Passages*, in 2018. In addition to a successful career as a musician, this multi-tasker is also the artistic and executive director of the Harrison Festival of the Arts.

A tour de force of versatility, fine mu-

sicianship and technical dexterity, Schryer, Hillhouse, Dobres is a trio of fiddle, voice and guitar virtuosos who've joined together for inspired performances of Celtic music played beautifully and well.

They're at the festival all weekend.

But there is, of course, more. Under the category of "all things Irish," the festival also welcomes one **Irish Mythen**.

Born Jane Irish Theres Monica Bernadette Mythen in County Wexford, Ireland, the singer-songwriter known simply as Irish Mythen is not to be missed at this year's festival.

Growing up listening to the likes of Dylan, Makem & Clancy and Joan Baez, went on to write and perform her own poetic, rich and evocative story songs to increasing renown and acclaim.

She's played around the world, working with The Dubliners and The Pogues along the way, and moved to PEI in 2008.

The director of the Philadelphia Folk Festival has called her "a force of nature and a gift from the Almighty Herself."

The eclectic roster of 2019 Mission Folk Music Festival artists also includes Cape Breton and Quebecois fiddle and step dance, and everything from klezmer, country and blues to Cuban son and Senegalese asiko – and more.

The full artist listing and information on their affordable tickets can be found on the festival's website: [www.missionfolkmusicfestival.ca](http://www.missionfolkmusicfestival.ca).



## VANCOUVER FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL

# One of Vancouver's top summer attractions

VANCOUVER – The legendary Vancouver Folk Music Festival celebrates its 42nd year from July 19 to July 21.

Held annually at beautiful Jericho Beach Park in Vancouver, British Columbia, the festival attracts 40,000 attendees over three days and features 60 musical acts across five daytime stages and two evening stages.

Fans of Celtic, old-time, and bluegrass will find plenty to enjoy at the festival. The artists come from coast-to-coast in Canada and all around the world.

The riveting and evocative **Irish Mythen** brings trad-roots storytelling from Prince Edward Island. Fellow East Coasters **The Dardanelles** are one of the most exciting groups to ever take Newfoundland traditional music to the global stage.

Also from Newfoundland is **Matthew Byrne**. He delivers honest folk interpretations with polished guitar-work and powerful vocals. New Brunswick's **Danny Boudreau Band** is one of the best Acadian bands in Canada.

**The Rad Trads**, from down in New York, showcase a singular take on rock 'n' roll that mixes punk rock energy, horn-drenched soul, and jazz precision.

From Ontario come **Lonesome Ace Stringband** and **Andrew Collins Trio**. Lonesome Ace Stringband is one of the most skilled trios of pickers and singers ever to embrace bluegrass, country, and old-time music.



PHOTO: Rachelle Richard Leger  
DANNY BOUDREAU is a singer-songwriter from New Brunswick who leads one of the best Acadian bands in Canada.

Andrew Collins Trio play artfully-arranged, virtuosic string music best described as "chamber grass."

**Emily Triggs** hails from even farther west, in Alberta. But she bundles influences ranging from Texas blues to the Appalachian Mountains to a French Canadian childhood.

British Columbia's award-winning trad-roots duo **Pharis & Jason Romero** intertwine beautiful harmonies.

Then there are groups whose members hail from all over. Aerialists meld creative harmonic sensibilities with a deep love of folk traditions. Call them the beautifully contradictory term "progr-trad."

**John Reischman and the Jaybirds**

combine talents from British Columbia, California, and Washington.

Reischman, a bluegrass mandolin master, seamlessly blends original songs and instrumentals with Appalachian old-time music into a truly unique sound.

And speaking of unique, one cannot forget about California's **Front Country**. They sound as if bluegrass instruments have been unearthed in a time capsule 200 years from now and repurposed to make post-apocalyptic modern pop music.

Experience these plus 48 other acts at the 2019 VFMF. Discover artists playing in country, zydeco, and blues traditions and even pushing boundaries with Korean avant-garde string music.

Along with music, the VFMF will feature a host of other family friendly activities. Treasures await festival-goers at the artisan market and folk bazaar.

Grab a meal or snack from tasty food vendors or a refreshing drink from the adult beverage garden. Take the little ones to the Little Folks Village, a special kids area.

The VFMF is a registered charitable organization that prides itself on its values of accessibility, inclusivity, diversity, and strong environmental practices.

Over 1,200 community volunteers help the festival with everything ranging from the box office, the beer garden, recycling, and cleaning up.

Single-day tickets and weekend passes for the 2019 VFMF are available now at [www.thefestival.ca](http://www.thefestival.ca).

Children under 12 attend for free. Discounted tickets are available for seniors, students, and youth.

## May is Mental Health Month: Show your support by walking from Darkness Into Light

VANCOUVER – Pieta House and The Kettle Society will join forces to help save lives from suicide by walking from Darkness Into Light on Saturday, May 11.

Darkness Into Light Vancouver, is a morning walk that involves a five kilometre walk beginning at 4:30 AM, where participants walk from literal darkness into the morning light all in the name of mental health awareness and suicide prevention.

The walk takes place at Burnaby Lake Park and last year, over 400 people attended the event and raised nearly CAD\$23,000.

Support of this event means the Canadian charity partner, The Kettle Society, will be able to deliver vital programs in our local area.

The event began as a means of fundraising for Pieta House and raising awareness around mental health issues in Ireland.

Pieta House is an Irish based charity that provides life saving support to people in suicidal distress or engaging in self-harm. It also provides suicide bereavement counselling.



PARTICIPANTS in the annual Vancouver Darkness Into Light walk to support mental health begin the undertaking at 4:30 AM to dawn.

All of these services are provided completely free of charge. This service was the first of its kind in Ireland when it opened in Dublin in 2006 and now has 12 centres around the country.

The first Darkness Into Light was held in 2009 in the Phoenix Park with 400 walkers. In 2018, over 200,000 people walked at dawn, together in hope over 28 countries across the world.

Each Darkness Into Light outside of Ireland partner with a local mental health charity and the funds raised are divided equally between Pieta House and the chosen partner charity.

The Kettle Society supports people living with mental illness to lead healthier lives by providing housing, employment, advocacy and support services; raising awareness of mental health issues and promoting the inclusion of people living with mental illness in all aspects of society.

To join the walk from Darkness Into Light on May 11, register at [www.darknessintolight.ie/event/vancouver](http://www.darknessintolight.ie/event/vancouver).

To learn more about Pieta House, see: [www.pieta.ie](http://www.pieta.ie). To learn more about The Kettle Society, see: [www.thekettle.ca](http://www.thekettle.ca).

### Rogue Folk Club

Celebrating 32 Years of the best Celtic & Roots!  
[www.roguefolk.com](http://www.roguefolk.com)

<b>Friday, May 10th</b> CD launch for local songwriter with a great backing band  <b>Joe Charron BC</b> <b>The Eisenhauers BC</b>	<b>Thursday, May 30th</b> Galiano songwriter launches CD <b>T. Nile BC</b>
<b>Thursday, May 23rd</b> Bluegrass / Country Folk aces! <b>Nell &amp; Jim Band USA</b>	<b>Friday, May 31st</b> Ottawa Valley fiddles/songs/dance <b>Searson ON</b>
<b>Friday, June 7th</b> Coast to Coast songwriters <b>Rachel Beck PEI</b> <b>Luke Wallace BC</b>	
<b>Saturday, July 6th</b> Quinn Bachand's gypsy jazz combo w/ guests <b>Zigue PQ</b> <b>Brishen BC</b>	

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

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# The Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir headlined the 2019 Vancouver CelticFest

**By BRENDAN FLYNN**  
VANCOUVER – As part of this year's CelticFest celebrations, the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir, took to the stage at the recently renovated Christ Church Anglican Cathedral at Burrard and Georgia in Vancouver in a concert that was a real treat to attend.

A very eager audience were delighted to welcome the 80-plus "men of Wales" and their conductor on stage for an enthralling evening of song and music.

Apparently choir members have a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds and rumours abound that they can collectively speak over 23 languages.

There was no doubt of their combined musical ability at Christ Church when they gathered to perform.

Musical director Jonathon Quick is a University of British Columbia graduate in voice, composition and conducting.

He was accompanied by award-winning pianist Karen Lee-Morlanf, baritone Desmond Cooper (himself from Dublin), and pianist Caroline Cooper.

The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all with wonderful renditions of Celtic favourites like *Men of Harlech*, *Star of the County Down*, *Will you go Lassie Go*, *The Fields of Athenry* along with so many more songs to warm the heart.

During the evening there were also solo

performances by Karen Lee-Morlanf, Desmond Cooper and Caroline Cooper and the receptive audience did not hold back in providing welcome applause to each and all.

Congratulations are certainly in order to CelticFest and Harry Cussen chairperson for organizing the wonderful evening at Christ Church.

For local men who may be interested in airing their vocal chords in song, the choir would love to hear from you.

Near the conclusion of the evening, Jane Byrne a long-serving member of the Vancouver Welsh Society who has actively supported Welsh culture in Vancouver for over 60 years, was honoured as this year's Celtic Person of the Year.

She was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Harry Cussen and was accompanied to the concert by family members and close friends.

[POSTSCRIPT: During the preparation of this article it came to the writer's attention that the original building was made possible by Henry John Cambie, former chief engineer of the CPR's Pacific Division and People's Warden of the new church, who was also a key negotiator in acquiring the property for Christ Church. Cambie, originally from Co. Tipperary in Ireland had joined the CPR in 1880 and became chief surveyor of the company and was instrumental in designing the CPR line through the Rocky Mountains in Alberta bringing together eastern and western Canada in 1885 when the first CPR train reached Port Moody, B.C.]



THE VANCOUVER WELSH MEN'S CHOIR is 80-men strong with diverse range of ethnic backgrounds.



JANE BYRNE, a long-time member of the Welsh Society of Vancouver was awarded the 2019 Celtic Person of the Year Award by Harry Cussen, chairperson of the Vancouver CelticFest at the Welsh Men's Choir concert on Saturday, March 16. She was joined by family and friends at the event. Pictured above (L-R) [Front] Eifion Williams (Jane's brother), Jane Byrne, and her sister-in-law Mavis Williams. [Back] Wayne (Miriam's husband), Miriam Arnall (Jane's husband Peter's niece who like Peter was born in Dublin), Ann Williams (daughter of Eifion and Mavis), Wilf Owens-Whalen, and Lynn Owens-Whalen of the Welsh Society of Vancouver.



BLACKTHORN AND FRIENDS – the Grand Ceilidh Band.



THE CROWD were enthusiastic and loved the fun dancing.



SHOT OF SCOTCH dance troupe performing a Highland fling.

## CELTICFEST VANCOUVER CEILIDH 2019

# Wonderful evening a huge success with tickets sold out in advance

**By MICHAEL VIENS**

VANCOUVER – This year's Celtic Vancouver Ceilidh at the Scottish Cultural Centre on Saturday, March 16, 2019, was a big success with the event selling out well in advance.

Some folks came all the way from Abbotsford, eagerly wanting to purchase tickets at the door, not knowing it was sold out. Rumour has it they weren't turned away.

The event was produced by members of Blackthorn who felt the need to keep the CelticFest Ceilidh going.

Attendees were greeted by the sounds of a traditional Irish session featuring some wonderful local musicians already in full flight when the doors opened, setting a wonderful tone for the night.

The BC Regiment Irish Pipes & Drums kicked it up a notch marching in for their show opener.

Blackthorn, stalwarts of the local Celtic music scene, took to the stage to perform a couple of feature numbers which included an appearance by the skilled dancers of Shot of Scotch Vancouver.

Blackthorn was then joined on stage by musical friends, Catherine Flynn,



THE AMAZING dance caller Alison Moen had the crowd on the floor in short order for the first of many fun and inclusive ceilidh dances throughout the evening.

Kevin Fink and Lucas Ross to form the Grand Ceilidh Band!

Dance caller Alison Moen had most of the crowd on the floor in short order for the first of many fun, inclusive ceilidh dances throughout the evening's festivities.

In between called dances, the audience were offered the opportunity to relax, catch their breath and be impressed by the fancy footing skills of De Danaan Irish Dancers who presented a delightful display of Irish dancing with their

Eire Born Show and Shot of Scotch, who returned for a few more fabulous Scottish dance numbers including an all inclusive Highland Fling!

There are so many people to thank including: All the amazingly talented musicians, dancers and dance caller who made the Ceilidh the magical night that it was; the Scottish Cultural Centre; Frank Flood, Irish Consul General and all the staff at the Irish Consulate for their support, with special thanks to Deputy Consul General Luke Hanlon who attended with his partner Karla; Maura De Freitas and *The Celtic Connection*; Steve Edge and the Rogue Folk Club; Gerry O'Doherty and Shauneen Clark for tending bar; all of our wonderful volunteers who took care of all that needed to be done; Mama's Fish and Chips for being our official "food truck"; and to BC Bia for a good supply of Taytos.

We've already marked Saturday, March 14, 2020 for CelticFest Vancouver Ceilidh 2020 and tickets are sure to go fast again so check out the CelticFest Vancouver website early next year to get your tickets for what is sure to be another sell out event!

We look forward to seeing you there!





LEXWST'Í:LEM DRUM GROUP shared their rich culture and traditions with guests at the Hearts Beat 2019 event on March 14.



DENISE MCAULIFFE, Tony Dalton, Denise Dalton, Sal Gallagher, Blake Williams, Eilis Courtney.



THE EIRE BORN DANCERS brought an added level of excitement to the performance.



## 2019 Irish Graduates Association & Friends annual speaker dinner Saturday, May 25

VANCOUVER – The Irish Graduates Association and Friends will host a speaker dinner on Saturday, May 25 at the Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club. This year's speaker is Frank Flood, the new Vancouver Irish Consul General.

This is always an evening of wonderful connection and camaraderie where the Irish diaspora come together to chat, support and enjoy one another's company.

It is a great way to meet new people, catch up with old friends and generally support the Irish community in Vancouver and British Columbia.

Shaughnessy in May is a glorious place. Drinks and appetizers will be available in the evening sunshine on the patio stretching out onto the green, followed by a fabulous buffet dinner and wine all included in the ticket price.

The guest speaker is always a big draw and people are looking forward with keen interest to this year's speaker.

To book your ticket, or for more information, e-mail Patricia at patricia.irishgrads@gmail.com.

# HEARTS BEAT 2019: A great evening of cultural sharing

By **BLAKE WILLIAMS**  
and **EILIS COURTNEY**

VANCOUVER – After the highly successful inaugural 2018 Hearts Beat event held at the UBC Learning Exchange on Main Street, a collaborative planning committee met in January to design the 2019 annual Hearts Beat celebration.

At the invitation of the UBC Learning Exchange and the Carnegie Community Centre's Cultural Sharing Program, members of the Irish in Vancouver group were honoured to partner again in support of their initiative.

Hearts Beat is a program to further cultural sharing in traditional First Nations and traditional Irish drumming styles, music, dance, and stories.

Two drum/bodhran workshops were held at the UBC Learning Exchange over a two week period with many participants bringing drums they had made themselves in a drum workshop led by an Elder.

In a large circle, stories were shared of the diverse playing styles and the cultural meanings of different types of drums.

The main event was held at the Carnegie Community Centre Theatre on Main Street on March 14.

With an overflowing crowd of participants and observers, the evening included traditional foods cooked by the Carnegie kitchen and served by welcoming and energetic volunteers from the Strathcona Community Policing Centre.

The walls were adorned with beautifully painted drums created by lexwst'í:lem drum group members and wall hangings representing the four Irish provinces.

When the audience was seated in the theatre, the drummers and musicians from both cultures proceeded to enter following Indigenous protocols to take their places by the stage.

The program contained a variety of First Nations songs and dances by the Carnegie lexwst'í:lem Drum Group, story-telling by Joseph Dandurand, Vancouver Public Library's 2019 Indigenous Storyteller in Residence, a selection of Irish tunes by local Irish musicians and a display of Irish dancing by Eire Born Irish Dance Company.

The evening coincided with the first visit of Irish Minister Ciarán Cannon and his team to Vancouver.

Through Irish Consul General Frank Flood, arrangements were made to have the minister and his team attend, along with Ambassador Jim Kelly and the staff from the Office of the Consulate General of Ireland in Vancouver.



CIARÁN CANNON the Irish Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with responsibility for the Diaspora and International Development speaks to guests at the 2019 Hearts Beat.

The group thoroughly enjoyed the event, so much so that the minister gave an impromptu speech at the end acknowledging what he had witnessed and emphasizing the strong connections between our two cultures with music and storytelling.

He mentioned the similarity between the magic salmon Joseph described in one of his stories and the story about the 'Salmon of Knowledge' from Irish mythology.

Minister Cannon and Consul General Flood also participated in the final drumming song of the evening performed by the lexwst'í:lem Drum Group.

Special thanks to:

- Nicole and the Carnegie Cultural Sharing Program and lexwst'í:lem Drum Group for sharing their music and drumming with us and for continuing to teach us about the rich culture and traditions of the First Nations of B.C. and beyond;

- Joseph Dandurand for sharing his stories with us;

- Denise and Tony Dalton, Sal Gallagher, and Denise McAuliffe who joined us in performing Irish tunes and songs;

- The Irish dancers from Nora Pickett's Eire Born Dance Company.

Of course, the magical event would not have been possible without the extra efforts of all the volunteers who set up the theatre, greeted at the door, served the food, and managed the sound.

Sincerest thanks to Nicole, Matt and Dionne for the invitation to participate in a program of such open and honest celebration of our shared cultural richness and beauty.

We are already looking forward to planning 2020 and hope that we can continue to grow respect and intercultural understanding through this unique event.

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IRISH MINISTER  
OF THE DIASPORA  
AND INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
PAGES 18 & 19



## London Extinction Rebellion activists end protests after 10 days of blockades

LONDON – Ten days of protests, blockades and disruption across London has come to a conclusion as Extinction Rebellion ended its action in the capital on April 25.

More than 10,000 police officers were deployed during the action and more than 1,100 people were arrested since campaigners first blocked traffic on April 15.

On the final day of action, protesters blocked roads, climbed on a train and glued themselves together in London's financial district.

At a 'closing ceremony' at Hyde Park, climate change campaigners sat on the grass next to Speaker's Corner – widely considered London's home of free speech – singing and listening to musicians.

The crowd cheered and clapped when a speaker said "the police were amazing" during the days of blockades.

"We will leave the physical locations but a space for truth-telling has been opened up in the world," event organisers said on their Facebook page.

"We would like to thank Londoners for opening their hearts and demonstrating their willingness to act on that truth.

"We know we have disrupted your lives. We do not do this lightly. We only do this because this is an emergency."

Extinction Rebellion is urging the government to "tell the truth" about the scale of the climate crisis.

It wants the U.K. to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2025 and a Citizens' Assembly set up to oversee the changes needed to achieve this.



ONE OF THE MOST striking visuals of the protest were the silent ghostly-white figures cloaked in scarlet-red, drifting gracefully through lines of police and crowds of demonstrators. The mystical apparitions are the brainchild of Bristolian Doug Francisco, founder of The Invisible Circus launched as a street performance troupe in the Nineties. He said the red is intended to represent the blood of the species, "They're like spirits coming back from beyond the grave, here to warn the living of the grave errors they're making; a beautiful, bloody mob of nightmarish bodies, pleading with us not to destroy ourselves."

Dame Emma Thompson, who joined the activists on Saturday, has defended flying from Los Angeles to London to take part.

The actress said it was "very difficult to do my job without occasionally flying" but she was "in the very fortunate position of being able to offset my carbon footprint."

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan said the protests had been a "huge challenge for our over-stretched and under-resourced Metropolitan Police."

Five days after the protest ended, MPs approved a motion to declare an environment and climate emergency.

This proposal, which demonstrates the

will of the Commons on the issue but does not legally compel the government to act, was approved without a vote.

The declaration of an emergency was one of the key demands put to the government by environmental activist group Extinction Rebellion.

Dozens of towns and cities across the U.K., including Manchester and London, have already declared "a climate emergency".

There is no single definition of what that means but many local areas say they want to be carbon-neutral by 2030.

The Welsh and Scottish Governments have both already declared a climate emergency.



EUROPEAN COUNCIL President Donald Tusk (R) and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker (L) address reporters after the summit.

## EU leaders agree to a flexible Brexit extension to October 31

LONDON – The European Union has granted the U.K. another Brexit extension with a new Halloween deadline after British politicians were unable to agree on a withdrawal agreement prior to the March 29 deadline.

It's thought the new date was chosen as it would mean the U.K. would leave before the first sitting of the new EU Commission on November 1.

Should The U.K. remain in the EU past that point it could create another constitutional headache for the EU.

European Council President Donald Tusk confirmed the extension had been agreed among the leaders.

Prime Minister Theresa May had requested an extension until the end of June. She addressed the leaders at a special summit before leaving to allow a discussion to take place.

May set out her case for a short extension in a presentation behind closed doors lasting around one hour, during which she answered questions from the leaders of the 27 other member states.

She then left the room to allow the EU27 to discuss the U.K.'s future in her absence.

The group were locked in the summit for almost five hours debating the issue. It is understood French President Emmanuel Macron was the most resistant to the U.K.'s request and did not want any extension to pass beyond the end of June.

He was said to have wanted clarity and assurances from the U.K. on its role in

the EU after the May elections and on the process of getting Commons agreement on a deal.

He warned that a no-deal Brexit would be less damaging than a "disruptive" U.K. remaining for month after month.

Failure to reach unanimous agreement would mean the U.K. crashing out of the EU without a deal at 11 PM on Friday, March 29.

The prime minister had asked for a delay to June 30, with a break clause allowing the U.K. to leave as soon as Parliament has ratified her Withdrawal Agreement.

European leaders were said to want a longer extension with an option to leave earlier should the opportunity arise to allow for it.

Tory sources said that the PM stood by commitments made to the backbench committee that she would hand over to a successor for the second phase of negotiations after ratification.

The EU president who had originally proposed an extension of up to a year, confirmed the U.K. had accepted the deal.

Donald Tusk said, "This extension is as flexible as I expected and a little bit shorter than I expected, but it is still enough to find the best possible solution," he told reporters in Brussels.

And he had a stark warning for British politicians who have been deadlocked for months: "Please do not waste this time."

## Huge protest march in London demanding a second Brexit vote

LONDON – Hundreds of thousands of people have marched in central London calling for another EU referendum, as MPs search for a way out of the Brexit impasse.

Organisers of the 'Put It To The People' campaign say more than a million people joined the march before rallying in front of Parliament.

Protesters carrying EU flags and placards called for any Brexit deal be put to another public vote after European leaders agreed to delay the U.K.'s departure from the EU.

Speakers at the rally included Labour's deputy leader Tom Watson, Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, London Mayor Sadiq Khan, former Tory turned independent MP Anna Soubry and former attorney general Dominic Grieve.

Crowds were told the initial count showed more than a million people had turned up – putting it on a par with the biggest march of the century, the Stop the War march in 2003.

Labour's Tom Watson told the crowd in Parliament Square that Theresa



HUNDREDS of thousands of people took to the streets in London on Saturday, March 23 for the 'Put It To The People' march to call for a second referendum vote on Brexit.

May's deal was a "lousy" one – whether you voted Leave or Remain.

He said he had this message for her, "I can only vote for a deal if you let the people vote on it too."

"Prime minister, you've lost control of this process, you're plunging the country into chaos, let the people take control."

Meanwhile, a record-breaking online petition on Parliament's website calling for Brexit to be cancelled by revok-

ing Article 50 has attracted more than four million signatures.

As the number of signatures on the petition continued to climb, its creator Margaret Georgiadou said she had "received three death threats over the phone," and a "torrent of abuse" via her Facebook account.

Liberal Democrat MP Layla Moran said the petition could "give oxygen" to the campaign for another Brexit referendum.



### TOP 10 CELTIC HITS FOR MAY

*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>Ocean Child</i> by Flook - Ancora on Flatfish Records.	6. <i>Step Up</i> by Afro Celt Sound System - Flight on ECC Records.
2. <i>The Airt O The Deil</i> by Yoko Pwno - ArteFacts on Skye Records.	7. <i>The Old Road to Garry</i> by The Gloaming - The Gloaming 3 on Real World.
3. <i>Typhoon Nozaki</i> by Vasen - Rule of 3 on NorthSide.	8. <i>The Rambling Irishman</i> by Dervish - The Great Irish Song Book on Rounder.
4. <i>Borderline</i> by Skerryvore - Evo on Tyree Records.	9. <i>A Pagen's Prayer</i> by Fionn - Fionn on 604 Records.
5. <i>Something to Say</i> by The Town Pants - Something to Say on independent.	10. <i>Le Pays De Samuel</i> by Le Vent Du Nord - Territoires on Borealis.

**Celt In A Twist - Pick Of The Month:**  
Yoko Pwno - ArteFacts (Skye Records)



# Great Famine Voices Roadshow representative Dr. Jason King visits Vancouver and the site of planned Ireland Canada Monument

VANCOUVER— Ireland Canada Monument Society directors, Brendan Flynn, Teresa McDonnell and newest society member Mary Monks Hatch welcomed Dr. Jason King, the academic coordinator of the Irish Heritage Trust, to the proposed monument site at Wainborn Park in False Creek on April 27.

The Irish Heritage Trust is responsible for a number of Irish heritage properties, including Fota House and Gardens (Cork), Strokestown Park and the National Famine Museum (Roscommon) and Johnstown Castle, Estate and Gardens (Wexford).

King was in Vancouver as part of The Great Famine Voices Roadshow 2019, a series of open house events in the United States and Canada that brings together Irish emigrants, their descendants, and members of their communities to share family memories and stories of coming from Ireland to North America, especially during the period of the Great Hunger and afterwards.

Last month the second Great Famine Voices Roadshow visited The Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Massachusetts and Embassy of Ireland, Washington D.C.

From Vancouver, King will travel to Parliament Hill in Ottawa for "Irish Day on the Hill" on May 6; a reception at the residence of the Ambassador of Ireland to Canada on May 8;



DR. JASON KING of the Irish Heritage Trust in Stanley Park, Vancouver.

the Henry National Historic Site, Kingston on May 9; McMahon Hall, Quebec City in partnership with Parks Canada and Irish Heritage Quebec on May 11; and a presentation at Ireland's Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac University on June 14.

The Great Famine Voices Roadshow in the U.S. and Canada is hosted by the National Famine Museum at Strokestown Park and the Irish Heritage Trust.

The Roadshow is being held in partnership with Ireland's Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac University, the University of Toronto, and Parks Canada. It is funded by the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme.

In Vancouver, Ireland Canada Monument Society directors provided King with an overview of the project and the names of the Irish Canadians to be included on the monument who have contributed to Canada over the centuries.

He also viewed an historic stone donated to the Ireland Canada Monument Society in 2009 by Marianna O'Gallagher, and Irish Canadian historian who wrote extensively on the history of the Irish in Quebec City.

O'Gallagher was instrumental in the creation of Grosse-Île National Historic Site and her grandfather was a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians who erected a Celtic cross on the site in 1909 to honour the memory of the thousands of Irish immigrants who perished there in the years of the Famine

Originally part of the Celtic Cross on Grosse-Île, the stone broke away from the cross during a violent storm in the 1940s. It will form part of the Ireland Canada Monument in Vancouver.

Following a tour of notable historic sites in the Vancouver area, King recorded a number of videos which will be added to an online archive of the voices of Irish emigrants.

A selection of these family memories and stories will be made freely available on the Great Famine Voices online archive: [www.greatfaminevoices.ie](http://www.greatfaminevoices.ie).

For queries, or if you would like to contribute a family memory or story online, contact Dr. Jason King at the Irish Heritage Trust: [faminestudies@irishheritagetrust.ie](mailto:faminestudies@irishheritagetrust.ie).



STROKESTOWN PARK HOUSE in Co. Roscommon is the site of Ireland's National Famine Museum. Together the house, museum and gardens embody and communicate over 300 years of Irish history. The museum is open to the public and contains records from the time of Ireland's Great Famine of 1845–1852. The museum was built by the Westward Group and all the documents on display in the museum are from the estate. The exhibit aims to explain the Great Irish Famine and to draw parallels with the occurrence of famine in the world today. It is twinned with the Grosse-Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site in Quebec, Canada.



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## BBC announces feature-length film on the life of poet Seamus Heaney

The BBC has announced a feature-length film exploring the life of Nobel Prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney.

Following the Irish writer's death at 74 in 2013, his wife, children and brothers have shared poems and insights into family life with Heaney with "intimacy and poignancy."

Raised in a family of nine children and the son of a cattle dealer, he shot to fame in 1966 with his earthy portrayals of rural life in his lauded collection *Death of a Naturalist*.

Heaney has been described as the greatest Irish poet since WB Yeats, and forged an international reputation for verse which led to him being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995.

With the working title of *Seamus Heaney: The Music of What Happens*, the film will examine his powerful rise as a modern bard with the help of his wife Marie, and his three children Michael, Christopher and Catherine.

Patrick Holland, controller of BBC Two, said, "Seamus Heaney is a cultural colossus who created some of the most powerful, beautiful and resonant poetry of the last 50 years. This film



NOBEL LAUREATE Seamus Heaney was internationally recognized as one of the principal contributors to poetry during his lifetime.

promises exceptional intimacy and poignancy."

Mark Bell, commissioning editor of BBC Arts, called the film "a rich and tender appraisal of this great writer using the memories of his family and those closest to him".

Heaney was born in Co. Derry and raised in a rural setting. He later attended university in Belfast.

His poetic breakthrough came with publication by Faber & Faber in 1966.

His younger life was lived in parallel with *The Troubles*, which he refused to let dominate his poetry.

Heaney moved to Co. Wicklow in the Republic in the early 1970s, and remained an Irish citizen.

A friend of Ted Hughes, Heaney's poetry came to be admired internationally, and his work has been widely used in school syllabuses.

The famed poet was also praised for his translation work, in particular the ancient epic *Beowulf*.



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# Trump baby blimp back and could be even bigger for U.K. state visit in June

LONDON — U.S. President Donald Trump will pay a three-day state visit to Britain as a guest of Queen Elizabeth II in June, Buckingham Palace has announced – more than two years after Britain extended him an invitation for a pomp-filled ceremonial stay.

The palace said Trump and his wife, Melania, had accepted an invitation from the Queen for a visit that will take place June 3-5.

Though many other American presidents have visited the monarch, only two – George W. Bush and Barack Obama – were honoured with a state visit, which typically features ceremonial greetings, a horse-drawn carriage ride and a banquet with the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

It's rare for a state visit to be announced just a few weeks before it takes place, but this one has been contentious ever since Prime Minister Theresa May invited Trump soon after his inauguration in January 2017.

The trip has been deferred amid concerns about the president's reception in the U.K. and Britain's extended crisis over Brexit, which has consumed most of the government's political energy.

Trump finally made an official trip to the U.K. last summer, though that wasn't a state visit.

Demonstrators followed him everywhere nonetheless, with tens of thousands flooding the streets of central London to protest his presence and a six-meter balloon depicting the U.S. president as a screaming baby flown near Parliament.

More protests are all but certain this time around with anti-Trump campaigners considering launching a hot air balloon, five times the size of the blimp, which would also depict Trump as a wailing baby in a nappy.

Emily Thornberry, foreign affairs spokeswoman for Britain's main opposition Labour Party, criticized the planned visit.

"It beggars belief that on the very same day Donald Trump is threatening to veto a United Nations resolution against the use of rape as a weapon of war, Theresa May is pressing ahead with her plans to honour him with a state visit to the U.K."

In addition to meeting with the Queen, Trump will also hold talks with May, whose handling of Brexit he has repeatedly criticized.

The president has said he gave May advice on how to negotiate Britain's exit from the European Union, but she didn't listen. May has said Trump advised her to sue the EU.

Trump has also said May's proposed Brexit deal, which calls for Britain to retain close economic and regulatory ties with the EU, would likely scupper the chances of a U.K.-U.S. free trade deal.

It hasn't been announced whether Trump will address Parliament, an honour granted to presidents including Ronald Reagan and Obama.



U.S. President Donald Trump and Britain's Queen Elizabeth inspect the Guard of Honour at Windsor Castle during the president's last visit to the U.K.



ANTI-TRUMP campaigners considering launching a hot air balloon, five times the size of the blimp, which would also depict Trump as a wailing baby in a nappy.

The U.K. fits in with Trump's plans to attend the June 6 commemorations in France marking the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

Trump and the first lady plan to attend a ceremony in the naval city of Portsmouth to commemorate D-Day on the final day of his visit, the White House said.

Nations that took part in the campaign to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany have been also been invited to attend.

They include Canada, France, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Luxembourg, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Greece, and Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Germany has also been invited in keeping with previous D-Day commemorative events.

After leaving Britain, Trump and his wife will travel to Normandy, in northern France, as a guest of President Emmanuel Macron to attend D-Day ceremonies at the Normandy American Cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer.



NEW BRITISH passports (L) are now being issued without the words 'European Union' on the front cover.

## UK passports without 'European Union' on front cover issued despite Brexit delay

LONDON – The British Government has started issuing passports without the words "European Union" on the front cover even though the U.K. remains a full member of the bloc – for now.

The Home Office was working under the assumption that Brexit day would have been March 29.

This has since been extended with the U.K. currently due to leave the EU by October 31 at the latest but, as yet, no withdrawal deal has been approved by MPs.

Regarding the new passports, the Home Office have released a statement saying the removal of the words "European Union" was part of a two-stage process that will culminate in the old blue British passports being reissued from late 2019.

Of course, the blue passport was emblematic of the U.K. Government's promise to "take back control" after the 2017 election.

The statement reads, "Burgundy passports that no longer include the words 'European Union' on the front cover

will be introduced from 30 March 2019.

"Passports that include the words European Union will continue to be issued for a short period after this date.

"You will not be able to choose whether you get a passport that includes the words European Union, or a passport that does not. You will not be issued with a passport that includes the words European Union after the U.K. has left the EU.

"There will be no difference for British citizens whether they are using a passport that includes the words European Union, or a passport that does not include the words European Union.

"Both designs will be equally valid for travel. U.K. passports issued before the U.K. leaves the EU will remain valid travel documents. You do not have to replace a passport that meets your travel needs."

The introduction of these new passports has angered those applying for new ones who were hoping to hold on to an emblem of EU membership.

## Record demand for Irish passports ahead of Brexit leads to warnings ahead of the summer season

DUBLIN – There continues to be record demand for Irish passports with one-in-three applications coming from Great Britain and Northern Ireland due to Brexit.

New figures show more than 112,000 people applied for an Irish passport in March, the highest number ever in a single month.

As the original deadline for Brexit approached, the Department of Foreign Affairs was also flooded with 4,800 phone and 1,500 web inquiries every week.

Paper applications from Great Britain



and Northern Ireland residents from January to March were up 103 percent and 71 percent, respectively, on the same three-month period last year.

There were 58,000 applications from Northern Ireland, and 41,000 from mainland Britain.

Tánaiste Simon Coveney has urged families to check their passports ahead of the summer holiday season to ensure they are in date.

"Every year we see hundreds of families who end up spending thousands of euro re-booking flights because a day or two before travel they realise that one of the children's passports is out of date.

"We have expanded the online service to allow for both child and adult renewals and we would ask anyone travelling to take the five minutes to check the family passports ahead of the busy season of May, June and July."

The spike in demand began in January when 100,400 applications were received.

This continued with 100,500 passport requests in February before a big jump in March.

Demand is being driven by a rush of people in Northern Ireland and Great Britain to obtain an Irish passport. This will ensure they still have open access and full employment rights in

other EU countries after Brexit.

The UK was due to leave the EU at 11 PM on March 29 but this has now been put back twice and possibly will not happen until October 31.

Prior to the first quarter of 2019, there were only two months over the past five years when the application figure exceeded 100,000.

In 2018, there was a total of 850,000 applications, but based on the current trajectory the department is planning to cope with 1.1 million requests this year.

Hundreds of extra staff have been taken on to process applications and deal with enquiries. The largest single category of applications is now online, which officials say is the fastest way of obtaining a passport.





THE CAMBRIAN HALL has been home for the Welsh community in Metro Vancouver for 100 years.

## Vancouver Welsh Society Celebrates 100 years at the Cambrian Hall

VANCOUVER – This year marks the hundredth anniversary of the building of the Cambrian Hall, the only Welsh social facility in North America built specifically for that purpose.

Early Welsh immigrants brought to Canada the rich cultural traditions of their homeland, such as the eisteddfod and the gymanfa ganu.

In the 1920s they formed the Cambrian Society, later renamed the Welsh Society, to celebrate and coordinate their contributions to the cultural life of Vancouver.

By the end of the decade members of the Cambrian Society came to realize the need for a building where they could hold their various activities.

The society was fortunate at the time to have some prominent and wealthy Vancouver donors whose names are commemorated on the cornerstone of the building at 17th Avenue, just off Main Street.

The Cambrian Hall was officially opened by Marion Malkin, the mayor's wife, on September 1, 1929.

The ceremony was followed by sold-out afternoon and evening concerts presented by society members.

Throughout its history, the Welsh Society has held an annual anniversary dinner to commemorate the opening of the Hall.

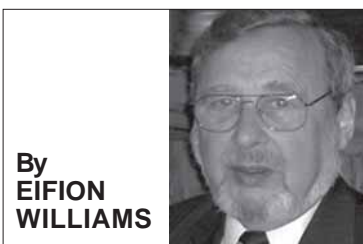
Since its opening, the Cambrian Hall has seen many renovations and improvements, including conversion of the lower hall into the Red Dragon lounge and the addition of a stage in the upper hall.

A bar licence was also obtained to help pay the hall's costs. These changes made the building rentable, easing the financial burden on the society.

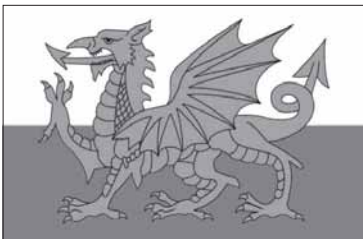
Throughout its history, the hall has benefited from voluntary work carried out by dedicated members of the society. A monthly work day has been instituted to carry out repairs and maintenance on the building.

In the 1980s the Vancouver City Council recognized the cultural significance of the Cambrian Hall by designating it a Heritage B building.

In addition to the Welsh Society, it has also over past years been home to many affiliates and offshoots, includ-



By  
EIFION  
WILLIAMS



ing the Cambrian Circle Singers, the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir, the Vancouver Orpheus Choir and the Dylan Thomas Circle.

Today, the Welsh Society hosts various activities in the hall throughout the year.

In addition to traditional celebrations like the Gymanfa Ganu, the St. David's Day festivities and the anniversary dinner, there are Welsh spirit afternoons, a book club, a genealogy club, pub nights, quiz nights and twmpath (Ceilidh) dance nights.

There are also Welsh language classes for learners and conversation sessions for Welsh speakers. A bilingual religious service is held at the hall on the second Sunday of every month.

Plans are now being developed to officially celebrate the hall's centenary.

On Saturday, October 5 there will be a concert featuring the Vancouver Orpheus Choir with guest artists from Wales.

On Sunday, October 6 there will be a Gymanfa Ganu at the hall.

The conducting will be shared by Liana Savard, artistic director of the Orpheus Choir, and Eifion Thomas, music director of the Llanelli Male Voice Choir, who is well known to the Welsh community from several previous visits.

Details on these events will be provided at a later date.

**GWENLLIAN FERCH GRUFFYDD:**  
The 'Joan of Arc' of Wales  
Read more on page 28

## Welsh Society's annual spring sale held last month



MARY LEWIS in traditional Welsh costume.



PAT MORRIS was another great volunteer who worked to make the day a success.



PHOTOS: Alcwyn Rogers  
VOLUNTEERS were very busy for the first hour as prospective customers who had been lined up waiting outside rushed in to view items on sale at the annual spring sale.



THE TABLES with the home-made Welsh baking and preserves are usually the most popular. Other tables offered pre-owned books, collectibles, children's wear and electronic goods.

By EIFION WILLIAMS

VANCOUVER – On Saturday, April 26 the Vancouver Welsh Society held its annual spring sale, one of the society's most successful regular fundraising events at the Cambrian Hall.

As in other years, prospective customers were lined up outside the hall before the 10 AM opening and for the first hour the upper hall was packed with buyers checking out the items on display.

The spring sale has benefited from the Cambrian Hall's

location on Main Street, which has become a popular and trendy shopping street for many Vancouverites.

As in past years many customers headed first to the home-made baking and preserves table to buy homemade Welsh fare.

Other items for sale included collectibles, pre-owned books, kitchenware, children's wear and electronic goods. There was also a silent auction of goods donated by Vancouver businesses and individuals.

The spring sale was organized by Gillian Rogers and the Welsh Society Social Committee.

## Images for planned Loch Lomond tourist development released

PLANS for a new £30 million tourist development at the foot of Loch Lomond were recently unveiled for the world-famous tourist site.

Loch Lomond is a popular lake in southern Scotland, part of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.

It is the largest inland stretch of water in Great Britain by surface area.

The proposals include a 60-bedroom apartment-hotel, 32-bedroom budget accommodation, a craft brewery, boat house, leisure centre and restaurants as well as upgrades to public footpaths and green spaces.

Named Lomond Banks, the site would be developed in part of Balloch, which is currently marked for tourism development in the local plan.

Lomond Banks director Andy Miller said: "As you can see from our artist impressions, we are fully committed



AN ARTIST'S IMPRESSION of how the development at Loch Lomond would look. The development would include a 60-bedroom hotel.

to seeing Balloch become the true gateway to Loch Lomond.

"Our plans for West Riverside and Woodbank House offer an opportunity for a unique leisure-based development and, with Lomond Banks,

Scotland will have a quality destination that respects and compliments the surrounding area."

It is estimated it would create 80 full-time jobs, 50 part-time jobs and 70 seasonal roles in the area.





VICTIMS of the November 29, 2013 crash (TOP: L to R) David Traill, PC Kirsty Nelis, PC Tony Collins, Gary Arthur, Samuel McGhee (BOTTOM: L to R) Colin Gibson, Robert Jenkins, Mark O'Prey, John McGarrigle, Joe Cusker

## Clutha crash inquiry hears of helicopter's final seconds

GLASGOW – More than 100 people were at the Clutha Vaults pub when a police helicopter, returning to its base on the banks of the River Clyde, crashed through the roof on November 29, 2013.

A fatal accident inquiry into the crash opened at Hampden Park in Glasgow on April 8, 2019 and heard from a number of people, including a taxi driver and pedestrians.

Statements on behalf of six of the 10 victims were also read out after a minute's silence was observed.

The final seconds of the flight in Glasgow city centre were described at the opening day of a hearing into the tragedy.

Eyewitnesses described hearing noises coming from a police helicopter before it crashed.

The inquiry heard that there was no evidence the aircraft's fuel had been contaminated but that both water and compressor washing fluid could affect fuel gauge readings.

Robert Vickery from the Air Accidents Investigation Branch said no indication of fuel contamination had been found.

However, under cross-examination by Donald Findlay QC, for the family of victim Robert Jenkins, he acknowledged that fuel contamination on such

a small aircraft would be "barely detectable."

Vickery, senior inspector of air accidents at the AAIB, agreed with Findlay that "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."

He told the court, "All our investigations are based on evidence. We cannot work by speculation, we cannot work by making assumptions, because making assumptions and speculating is not good for aviation safety."

"We can cause problems by guessing."

Vickery told the inquiry that there was no smell of fuel or any evidence of a leak at the scene of the crash.

The inquiry has previously heard that the helicopter's pilot had received five low fuel warnings before the crash.

It has also heard that the aircraft did not have a flight recorder, which meant there was no data about when fuel warnings came on and the length of time they stayed on.

Pilot David Traill, 51; PC Tony Collins, 43; and PC Kirsty Nelis, 36, lost their lives along with seven customers who were in the bar on Stockwell Street. They were Gary Arthur, 48; Joe Cusker, 59; Colin Gibson, 33; Robert Jenkins, 61; John McGarrigle, 58; Samuel McGhee, 56; and Mark O'Prey, 44.

## Nicola Sturgeon issues rallying cry for new Scottish independent referendum

EDINBURGH – Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has issued a rallying call to Nationalists to help build a majority for independence as she unveiled plans to hold a second referendum within the next two years.

It came as the SNP launched a revived "Yes" campaign intensifying the prospect of a repeat of the 2014 referendum in response to the Brexit turmoil.

The first minister's plans were branded "absurd" by opponents at Holyrood on April 23, who accused her of seeking to stoke up grievance and division just five years after the last vote on leaving the U.K.

New legislation will be brought forward at Holyrood by the end of the year which would provide the framework for the vote, the SNP leader has announced.

But the Scottish Government will hold off seeking a Section 30 order from Westminster which has control over the constitution, including referendums.

Theresa May has made it clear that she would refuse such an order – but she is expected to be replaced as prime minister within months.

The first minister also held out an olive branch to opposition parties as she announced plans to convene cross-party talks on more powers for Holyrood to address the broken "status quo."

Plans for Citizen's Assemblies were also set out which would see a "cross section" of Scots society come together to set out the way forward for the country.

Sturgeon has been under pressure for months to set out an update on her plans for a referendum after declaring her plans to stage a vote in response to the Brexit vote which saw a majority of Scots vote to remain.

"I consider that a choice between Brexit and a future for Scotland as an



NICOLA STURGEON has unveiled plans to hold a second Scottish independence referendum within two years.



THE SCENE at the Scottish National Party (SNP) spring conference in Edinburgh.

independent, European nation should be offered in the lifetime of this parliament," Sturgeon told MSPs.

"If Scotland is taken out of the EU, the option of a referendum on independence within that timescale must be open to us. That would be our route to avoiding the worst of the damage Brexit will do."

The referendum is being sought to give Scots an alternative to the turmoil of Brexit amid growing fears over the impact jobs and the economy in Scotland, particularly if there is a no deal departure.

The legislation being introduced at Holyrood will set the framework of rules and procedures for a referendum that would fall within the competence of the Scottish Parliament.

It will be on the statute book by the end of the year, with Constitution Sec-

retary Mike Russell to set out the details next month.

The SNP has also voted in favour of setting up a separate Scottish currency "as soon as practicable" if Scotland becomes independent.

A grassroots challenge changed a proposal by the SNP's deputy leader and Scotland's Finance Secretary of enabling MSPs to vote on establishing a new Scottish currency within five years of leaving the U.K., removing the stipulated time in favour of "as soon as practicable."

The amended proposal was passed unanimously, marking a major shift in policy from the party's stance in the run-up to the 2014 independence referendum when then-first minister Alex Salmond said Scotland would continue to use the pound in a U.K.-wide currency union.

Campaign group Scotland in Union said the SNP had voted to "fast-track its plan to scrap the pound."

Deputy leader Keith Brown and Finance Secretary Derek Mackay's plan was for Scotland to continue to use the pound in a transition period after leaving the U.K. while aiming for a vote on establishing a new Scottish currency by the end of the first term of an independent Parliament.

Urging delegates to back the plan, Mackay said, "Our currency proposition is simple. On day one the currency will be the pound because it is our pound too."

"We know that keeping the pound in the early years of independence is the preferred choice of the Scottish people, it's how people pay their bills, and they don't want us to take that away from them. And no U.K. Government can threaten to do that."

"Our policy will only change when an independent, democratically elected Scottish Parliament, informed by an independent Scottish central bank that we would build, decides it is in our economic interests to do so."

## Scotland's 'oldest clan chief' the 16th Laird of Invercauld turns 100

BRAEMAR, Scotland – Celebrations were held at the family seat of Scotland's oldest clan chief to mark his 100th birthday.

Captain Alwyne Farquharson, 16th Laird of Invercauld, turned 100 on May 1 with the occasion marked at



BRAEMAR CASTLE was leased to a local charitable organization in Braemar in 2006 and is open to the public.

Braemar Castle on Deeside.

The chief of Clan Farquharson has held the role for 70 years and was honoured by the community to mark his special day in his honour.

He leased Braemar Castle to a local charitable organization 11 years ago

with the attraction since flourishing as a visitor attraction.

Captain Farquharson is the Laird of Invercauld Estates but spends much of his time in Norfolk.

He assumed the title in 1941 after his aunt, Myrtle Farquharson, was killed in a London bombing raid.

The captain served with distinction as a captain in the Royal Scots Greys during the Second World War.

Following the war, as he recovered from his injuries at his father's home in Yorkshire. He met his first wife Frances, a fashion editor with Vogue in the United States.

Clan Farquharson branched from Clan Shaw in the 16th Century and the first Clan Chief, Finlay Mhor was stand-



CAPTAIN Alwyne Farquharson, 16th Laird of Invercauld.

ard bearer for Mary Queen of Scots at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547.

The 9th Laird of Invercauld stood alongside the Earl of Mar when the standard was raised to start the 1715 Jacobite rebellion in Braemar.

Over the centuries, the clan has spread worldwide and each year many return to visit their clan seat and to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors.

The clan chief's birthday will also be celebrated at the Ballater Highland Games in August.



# A Fond Farewell Dennis MacLeod



By  
HARRY  
McGRATH

**E**DINBURGH – The SNP's spring conference in Edinburgh was something to behold.

In an era when other Scottish political conferences look like struggling Parish councils, the SNP conference features a vast auditorium, standing room only sessions and a stage microphone so active that it must be hot to the touch.

I had lots of time to study this from a seat close to the back on the last Saturday in April. I was an observer rather than a voting delegate, but it was hard not to be impressed by both the scale and content of the thing.

Speaker after speaker proposed motions on Sri Lanka, global warming, Lyra McKee and numerous other issues. And they were not limited, as in some other conferences, to those of a certain age.

A group of teenagers proposed and passed a motion on the introduction of a school leaver kit based on a New Zealand model "aimed at equipping young people with practical skills for life."

The particular focus of the first afternoon session, however, was the issue of what currency an independent Scotland will adopt if and when it comes to pass.

The debate was a rather quixotic mix of those who perorated on virtually everything except currency and others with considerable subject knowledge.

In the end, one of the latter won the day and the original motion was amended to say that Scotland would shed the pound and adopt its own currency "as soon as practicable" after independence.

Right on cue, a panel base survey in the *Sunday Times* found that if the U.K. leaves the EU without a deal support for independence would rise to 52 percent. It also revealed that 59 percent felt that independence would be better for Scotland than a no-deal Brexit.

In the midst of all this, I couldn't help but think of Dennis MacLeod who died on Vancouver Island just before the conference started.

Dennis was born in a croft in Helmsdale in Sutherland, his ancestors having been cleared from Kildonan.

His father was killed in the Second World War and his mother supported the family by waiting on tables and cleaning the local school.

From these difficult beginnings Dennis became a millionaire, operating mineral mines in Africa and Canada and eventually employing 1,500 staff in an international operation called Caledonia Mining.

Dennis made a temporary return to Scotland in the 1990s and lived in Scatwell House in Strathconon which became a kind of unofficial northern headquarters for high profile members of the SNP.



DENNIS MACLEOD presenting the statue to the Helmsdale community.



THE SELKIRK SETTLERS monument in Winnipeg.

It was from there, for instance, that then-SNP leader Alex Salmond made his controversial address to the nation during which he branded the NATO intervention in Kosovo as "an unpardonable folly."

In 2007, Salmond unveiled a statue in Helmsdale that was commissioned by Dennis and dedicated to those affected by the Highland clearances.

The 10 foot-high bronze statue "The Emigrants" commemorates the people who were cleared from the area by landowners.

It stands in opposition to a controversial statue of "clearance laird" the Duke of Sutherland down the coast at Golspie.

Dennis also raised a twin statue to the Helmsdale one on the banks of the Red River in Winnipeg with "Selkirk Settlers" inscribed on the plinth.

I first met Dennis in Vancouver in 2005 at a reception I helped organise for George Reid – now Sir George Reid – who was the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament.

On my frequent return visits to Canada thereafter, I would visit Dennis and his wife Glynis on Vancouver Island and he'd regale me with Highland stories, poetry and music as the gloaming descended on Saanich, four-and-a-half-thousand miles from Helmsdale.

In 2006 Dennis co-authored a book called *Grasping the Thistle* with Michael Russell who is now MSP for Argyll and Bute and Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations.

I have a pristine copy before me as I write this. It's inscribed: "To Harry with best wishes, Dennis MacLeod" and bookmarked with a Swartz Bay to Tsawwassen ferry ticket dated September 7, 2015, the last time I visited him.

The reason the book is pristine is that I already had a copy but didn't have the heart to refuse his generosity.

Generosity defined Dennis both as private host and public figure.

His start-up funding enabled the establishment of the University of the Highlands and Islands Centre for History and our own modest Homecoming project would not have been possible without him.

He even flew in from Canada to join newspaper designer Graeme Murdoch and myself at our "this is who we are" reception and exhibition at the Scottish Parliament on St. Andrews Day, 2009.

Above all, Dennis's financial support helped sustain the SNP at a time when it was on its uppers.

Back then the party's current position – 12 years in power in Scotland, the majority of MPs at Westminster, polls that show independence within its grasp – was the stuff of dreams.

The next step, as announced by Nicola Sturgeon, is the establishment of a "Citizen's Assembly" to build agreement on Scotland's constitutional future.

Media outlets here are citing an Irish model but "Grasping the Thistle" references a British Columbian one that long preceded it.

Dennis's idea was to muster a Scottish "Citizens Convention" by echoing the process used during B.C.'s 2004 Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

The convention would then be embedded in Scotland's political system as an aid to democracy.

There was much to learn from Dennis, much to enjoy and now, alas, much to miss. RIP.



## Tomb of Robert the Bruce at Dunfermline Abbey

DUNFERMLINE, Scotland – A 3D reconstruction of the tomb of Robert the Bruce is now on display at Dunfermline Abbey Church.

A half-scale model of the lost tomb was presented by the Chief Executive of Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Alex Paterson on April 26.

A collaborative project between HES and the Centre for Digital Documentation and Visualisation (CDDV) to recreate the lost tomb from fragments started in 2013.

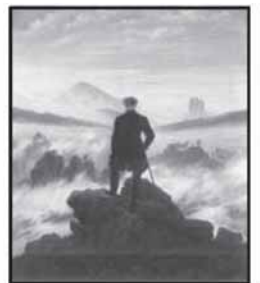
On his death, Bruce's heart was removed so that it might posthumously be taken to the Holy Land, it is buried at Melrose Abbey.

His tomb was destroyed during the Reformation (along with all the other Royal tombs in the Abbey). Fragments of it along with Bruce's remains were discovered in 1817 and excavated in 1818.

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SET in the magnificent Canadian Rockies, the Canmore Highland Games attracts over 5,000 visitors from across North America over the weekend of August 31 and September 1.

## The Canmore Highland Games: A Celtic blending of old and new world charm

CANMORE, Alberta – Imagine a beautiful meadowland surrounded on all sides by spectacular mountains.

By SALLY GAREN

The remnant of the powerful force of nature that created this magnificent scene is today a crisp headwater of a meandering mountain river that glistens as it cuts through the valley floor.

A sunny green park sits at the center point of this breathtaking setting. It is a natural amphitheater of awesome proportions where the thundering sounds of massed Pipes and Drums reach a crescendo each year.

This is the heartbeat of a Highland Games.

We could be describing Brae O' Mar along the River Dee in Scotland where King Malcolm III (Canmore) – or *CeannMor* in Gaelic, meaning great chief – presided over the first ever Highland Games.

Instead, we are describing an entirely different place.

This is a vibrant community winding along the beautiful Bow River that cuts through one of the most impressive parts of the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

This town, named after Malcolm himself, is Canmore, Alberta.

Now in its 29th year, the 2019 Canmore Highland Games will be opened by honorary Chieftain Bruce McGee of McMillan McGee Corp.

Over the days of August 31 and September 1, when the Bow Valley is shifting from full summer bloom to stunning autumn crimson, approximately 5,000+ visitors from across North America will take part in the rhythm and flow of three events – the Taste of the Highlands, the games themselves and the Ceilidh.

There is an old Gaelic word that harkens back to 16<sup>th</sup> century Scotland, *craic* (pronounced 'crack'), which describes a lively social atmosphere with good conversation and revelry.

The Taste of the Highlands is fantas-

tic *craic* and the best way to get into the Highland spirit. Sponsored by The Famous Grouse, the Taste hosts over 40 scotch, beer and wine producers, along with local food vendors.

It is all the charm of a Scottish pub paired with some of the best experts in the world of fine drink.

Moderation during the taste is prudent as games day is full of not to be missed events and entertainment.

Featuring the largest Highland dance competition in Canada, an assortment of heavy sports, pipes and drums competitions, sheep dog demonstrations, as well as food and retail vendors, there is truly something for everyone to enjoy.

In the big tent local volunteers serve up great food and drink while Scottish Country, Highland and Irish dancers delight the crowd.

The musical entertainment has always been a huge hit amongst festival goers and this season promises a very exciting lineup.

Banda Taverna from Brazil transports audiences back in time with traditional Celtic music and costume right out of an old-world tavern.

Cabot's Crossing is a four-piece ensemble of incredible musicians often joined in song and dance by the crowd.

The closing event is a Canadian Celtic Rock band that goes by the name of front man Johnny McCuaig.

The energy of these showmen is second only to that of the electrified crowd.

Just as soon as it began the sound and fury of the Canmore Highland Games draws down and the echo against the Canadian Rockies subsides.

Festival goers make their way home with lungs full of mountain air and hearts full of old and new world Celtic charm.

For more information: <https://canmorehighlandgames.ca>.

# The Paperboys to headline the 88th BC Highland Games in its new lakeside venue

COQUITLAM – Visitors to the BC Highland Games & Scottish Festival in Coquitlam on June 14 and 15 will be in for a real treat this year.

Not only is the almost century old event expanding and moving to a new location, but one of B.C.'s premier Celtic music group, The Paperboys, kicks off their summer touring schedule at the Games on both Friday night and Saturday afternoon.

"We're thrilled that The Paperboys will be with us," says Mike Chisholm, BC Highland Games executive director.

"I have been listening to this band for years and I'm looking forward to two great concerts from Tom Landa and his band in our new venue."

The band will play Saturday afternoon, June 15 at the Games, along with a free set on Friday evening June 14 on the Ceilidh Stage on the new Lew Ross Scottish Heavy Event Field.

It is one of a number of events kicking off the 88th Highland Games, including an inaugural 5 and 10k Tartan Run/Walk, vendors, whisky tasting and open Piobaireachd on the main stage.

The Juno-award winning band has produced nine albums in its 25-year history and was a key part of a wave of popular Canadian folk music in the 1990s that included Ashley MacIsaac, Great Big Sea, Leahy, The Rankins and Rawlins Cross.

"One big difference between Canadian Celtic artists from the east coast, and Celtic bands in other parts of the world is that we have a different approach to playing the music," says Landa.

"We are not flame-keepers in preserving tradition, so we are free to mess around with it and create something different."

The band has travelled all over North America and Europe over the past quarter century, including Vancouver Folk Festival, Bumbershoot, Edmonton Folk Fest and The Kennedy Centre.

The band is one of the highlights of the BC Highland Games which is moving to its new location at Coquitlam's Lafarge Lake Park after 27 years at Percy Perry Stadium.

"We have been planning this move for the past three years," says Chisholm.

"The new location is a much better site for a Highland games with trees, real grass, plenty of space and of course a beautiful location on Lafarge Lake.

"I'm pretty sure everyone will love it."

Other performers at the 2019 BC Highland Games include Bob Collins, Metis singer J.J. Lavelee, east coast piper Barry Shears, Blackthorn lead singer Michael Viens on the Traditional Stage, Cookeilidh from Victoria and Kilbirmie Station.



THE PAPERBOYS led by Tom Landa is a Juno Award winning group and one of B.C.'s premier Celtic music bands.



PHOTO: City of Coquitlam

THE TD COMMUNITY STAGE at Lafarge Lake in Coquitlam, B.C. This new location for the 2019 BC Highland Games is an intimate grassy, treed area on the edge of Lafarge Lake in downtown Coquitlam. It is the site of a number of summer civic celebrations including Canada Day and the Kaleidoscope Festival.



## 2019 BC Highland Games How to get there:

Lafarge Lake Park is at the end of the Skytrain's Evergreen extension. Parking is limited so attendees are encouraged to take public transit to the Games.

Friday evening is a free event, but Saturday requires tickets which can be purchased online in advance, or at two entry gates. The Paperboys will perform starting around 7 PM on Friday.

Bring lawn chairs as beer garden seating may be limited.





**88<sup>th</sup> BC HIGHLAND GAMES AND SCOTTISH FESTIVAL**

**JUNE 14 & 15, 2019**

*New Location* **LAFARGE LAKE PARK, COQUITLAM**  
TAKE SKYTRAIN TO LAFARGE LAKE STATION

*Friday, June 14-5pm*  
**FREE CELTIC KICK-OFF**  
With The Paperboys  
+ 10k Tartan run/walk, beer garden,  
whisky school, Open Piobaireachd

*Saturday, June 15* GATES OPEN AT 9AM  
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## THE IRISH CLUB OF WHITE ROCK

# Plans underway for an upcoming new season after this year's AGM

By DEIRDRE O'RUAIRC

WHITE ROCK, BC – Irish Club of White Rock is off to another great year! Our year goes from April to March 31.

The club held its annual general meeting on April 25 at the Elks Hall White Rock and like many AGMs...not a big turnout.

Disappointing for the president and the executive, nonetheless those in attendance made up for it. It was a very enthusiastic group with one amazing volunteer.

Sharon Woods gave a brief history of the club.

It began unofficially in the early Sixties and officially launched in 2004 with first president Brendan Hamill as a social group supporting Irish arts and culture.

It offers support and a welcome to all the Irish in the community. It is open to all Irish and those of Irish heritage or those who just want to enjoy Irish culture – “there is always a welcome here for you” is our motto.

Sharon provided a summary of events held over the past year, including: a pub quiz, pub nights, summer barbecue, Halloween party, and Christmas dinner.

Members also attended several functions with the new Consul General of Ireland Frank Flood, meeting with other Irish groups in Vancouver.

This has been a great opportunity to meet and know the other groups and to work more closely together while supporting each other's events.

Sharon will continue as president this year along with her current executive and a new member June Parnell – we would like to welcome June and we thank you for your support and ideas.

Highlights of the past year have been the summer barbeque and our Halloween party with special guest Consul General Frank Flood and his wife Orla.

The annual St. Patrick's Day dinner dance on March 16 was another great success. It was held at the Hazelmere Golf and Tennis Club with music provided by the local Celtic band Happy Hour.

Once again, Frank Flood and his wife Orla were special guests, along with local MP Gordon Hogg and Mayor of White Rock Daryl Walker.

Plans are already underway for March 2020.

Sharon and the executive are working to put together plans for our upcoming 2019/2020 season.

The club welcomes all input and would love to hear from you. Please share with any newcomers to the area that the Irish Club of White Rock will always extend a warm Irish welcome.

The Irish Club of White Rock includes White Rock and surrounding areas which is only a 45 minute drive from Vancouver, straight out Highway 99.

White Rock is a beautiful seaside community and it has a lot to offer, so do come and visit.

Everyone is invited to follow us on Facebook. For more information, e-mail: [irishclubofwhiterock@gmail.com](mailto:irishclubofwhiterock@gmail.com), or call Sharon at (604) 338-3553, or Deirdre at (604) 803-0773.



IRISH CLUB OF WHITE ROCK executive pictured above with Irish Consul General Frank Flood and his wife Orla at the St. Patrick's banquet at Hazelmere Golf and Tennis Club on March 16.



IRISH CLUB OF WHITE ROCK president Sharon Woods with her husband James and friends at the St. Patrick's dinner dance.



JUNE PARNELL with family and friends at the St. Patrick's banquet at Hazelmere Golf and Tennis Club on March 16.



GUESTS at the St. Patrick's banquet at Hazelmere Golf and Tennis Club on March 16.



GORDON HOGG and his wife LaVerne celebrating St. Patrick's Day on Saturday, March 16.



DARYL WALKER with Frank Flood the Irish Consul General, Vancouver.

## ST. PATRICK'S FAMILY DAY PHOTO GALLERY



THE t-shirt says it all for this happy Irish baby: “I’m a little lucky charm” at the St. Patrick's Family Day celebration on March 17.



THE LITTLE people had a wonderful time celebrating with balloons, face painting and lots of treats. They loved the music and were up dancing and enjoying themselves all afternoon. It was a day of happy memories for everyone.



LALLA COULSON was busy at the Celtic Treasure Chest display with a table stocked full of delicious treats from home for parents and kids alike.



A LEPRECHAUN stopped by for a visit at the St. Patrick's Family Day celebration (also known as Tom O'Sullivan). He is pictured above with Catholine Butler of *The Celtic Connection*.



# Saint Patrick's Day Family Celebration in an extraordinary year for the Irish Vancouver

**S**AINTE Patrick's Day, celebrated globally on March 17, is Ireland's national holiday. It commemorates Saint Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland and it is both a cultural and religious day of celebration at home and abroad.

Brand Ireland is one of the world's fastest growing 'nation brands'.

It is believed that there are up to 70 million people around the world claiming Irish ancestry and heritage.

According to the *Irish Times*, the value of Brand Ireland increased 26 percent in 2018 to 469 billion moving it into the Top 30 of Nation Brands.

It comes as no surprise then, Saint Patrick's Day (synonymous with Brand Ireland) is honoured worldwide and Vancouver is no exception.

The Irish community is growing in Vancouver and throughout B.C.

Numerous events were held to promote Saint Patrick's Day, including the hugely popular Saint Patrick's Day Family Celebration, held in Vancouver for the first time on, you guessed it March 17! It has been a year of firsts.

The community welcomed a new Irish Consulate office in Vancouver, led by Ireland's first Consul General in Vancouver, Frank Flood.

For the first time, an Irish Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ciarán Cannon TD was in Canada around Saint Patrick's Day.

The Consulate team offered a financial contribution and practical assistance that helped spark the Family Day initiative.

In the spirit of true collaboration, the Consulate team along with over a dozen Irish cultural groups and their volunteers worked in partnership, bringing to life the Family Day in less than two months.

Commenting on the motivation behind the event the Irish Consul General Frank Flood said, "To me, St. Patrick's Day has always been about family and taking the kids to a parade or a match or a family get-together.

"We realised in the Consulate after we held the community forum breakfast at the end of January that, although there were a number of events planned around St. Patrick's Day, there was nothing for families to do on the day itself.

"What was really satisfying was that

By RHONDA McDOWELL

*"My favourite part, besides the Irish Wolfhounds, was when all the toddlers took over the stage and danced away after the Irish dancers' performance."*

— Frank Flood

once the Consulate indicated that we wanted to see a family event and were willing to fund it, the Irish community responded immediately and positively.

"Particular credit must go to Claire Diamond who led from the start and was then supported in organising the event by the Rogue Folk Club, the Irish Women's Network and the Irish Families in Vancouver.

"Not to mention all the other Irish community groups and volunteers on the day who made the event so successful."

The Family Day represented an authentic celebration of the rich culture that Ireland boasts.

Rogue Folk Club opened its doors at the St. James' Community Square at 1:30 PM on Saint Patrick's Day and were met by a steady line up of kids and adults eagerly awaiting all the program had to offer.

In true Saint Patrick's Day fashion, they donned their various shades of green as a nod to the Emerald Isle.

It was a glorious Sunday afternoon that lent itself to indoor and outdoor activities.

The program was varied and included everything from Irish music, dance and language to kids' art, craft, sport, a showcase of Irish Wolfhounds and the always popular Irish snacks and drinks went down a treat!



KATHERINE KISS with the Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver, distributed balloons to delighted children at the St. Patrick's Day Family Celebration.



TWO little girls came dressed for the day and ready for fun.

You know it's going to be a success when a new supply of Tayto is needed early in the day.

Those attending were officially welcomed to the event by Frank Flood and a representative of the Musqueam Nation who spoke to an excited crowd about his own Irish heritage.

All ages showed up to celebrate, ranging from 70+ years to one of our youngest, five week old Lucy who was so content listening to the music that she stayed for the duration!

This was a celebration that extended well beyond the immediate Irish community.

It was supported by a great many nationalities, all excited to be part of the Irish community for the day, to learn about our culture, honour our traditions and there wasn't a beer of the green variety in sight!

Quite simply everyone joined in the fun, experienced the naturally social and welcoming environment that Ireland is famed for and proud of.

Many expressed their thanks at having somewhere to go with young kids that was like 'home from home', not contrived, just a feel good factor.

Volunteer coordinator, Claire Diamond captured what inspired the event saying, "We don't mind green beer, Guinness and leprechauns, but there is so much more to Saint Patrick's Day.



FIDDLER Doug Medley waded into the crowd and soon had everyone on their feet dancing along to his tunes like a Pied Piper.

ness and leprechauns, but there is so much more to Saint Patrick's Day.

"We want to showcase the richness of Irish culture and talent, offering a welcoming and fun social environment for both kids and adults."

The day was a huge success with attendance far exceeding anticipated numbers.

Thanks to the stellar efforts of the Consulate, community groups and a great many volunteers in making sure everyone was accommodated safely.

Feedback on the day and in the days that followed has been exceptionally positive.

Perhaps the proof of success was in

the last spontaneous act of the day when a group of approximately 15 toddlers, inspired by the musicians and Stewart School of Dance took to the stage for an impromptu dance session of their own making.


This was echoed by Frank Flood who said "My favourite part, besides the Irish Wolfhounds, was when all the toddlers took over the stage and danced away after the Irish dancers' performance. For me, that alone made it all worthwhile."

That's a hard act to follow; we look forward to St. Patrick's Day 2020!

For more information, e-mail Rhonda McDowell at: rhondamcdowell.ca@gmail.com.




ON A LOVELY SPRING AFTERNOON a long line of families lined up outside St. James Hall waiting for the doors to open for the St. Patrick's Day festivities on March 17.



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# Global Ireland: A New Vision for Closer Connections with the Irish Diaspora

**V**ANCOUVER – Ciarán Cannon the Irish Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with responsibility for the Diaspora and International Development was in western Canada and Washington State for the St. Patrick's Day celebrations this March.



By  
**MAUREA  
DE FREITAS**

He met with various Irish cultural and business organizations in both Calgary and Vancouver and made a flying visit to Victoria between events to meet with John Horgan, the premier of British Columbia.

While in Vancouver, the minister also attended a community consultation luncheon to speak about Ireland's ambitious new diaspora policy: Global Ireland – Ireland's Strategy for the U.S. and Canada 2019-2025.

The meeting brought together representatives from almost 26 local Irish organizations to discuss Ireland's support for the diaspora and how the government can better engage with Global Ireland.

## New Irish Consulate Announced for Toronto

During his address, Minister Cannon also announced plans to further expand Ireland's diplomatic presence in Canada.

The Consulate of Ireland in Toronto is scheduled to open mid-2020 and will be the second in Canada since Simon Coveney, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, announced plans for Ireland to expand its global footprint.

At a press conference in October 2017, Minister Coveney said the opening of new consular missions in Canada reflects the strength of the Ireland-Canada relationship and the expanding Irish community here.

He also said, "This will strengthen our hand when helping Irish business to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)."

In addition, "The announcement of these new Irish embassies and consulates are important first steps in expanding our global footprint and diversifying our trade portfolio as we prepare for Brexit."

## Ireland Preparing for Brexit

In Vancouver, Minister Cannon reinforced the importance of Ireland's work in preparation for Britain's departure from the European Union.

The positive impact of Ireland's decision to establish the first Republic of Ireland consular mission in Canada since the embassy opened in Ottawa in 1939 has been immediately apparent since the arrival of Frank Flood, the new Irish Consul General in Vancouver.

"Frank Flood has only been here for a few months and from accompanying him around Vancouver the last couple of days it is apparent that he has made a wonderful impact in a very short period of time," said Minister Cannon.

"He primarily sees his function here as two-fold. The first is to sustain and grow and develop the Irish community here in Vancouver and indeed throughout British Columbia, and the second is to begin to develop a really strong trading relationship between Ireland and British Columbia.

"So, he's done very well in both regards in a very short space of time."

One of the biggest boosts to the increased Ireland footprint in Canada has been CETA, a new free-trade agreement between Canada and all 28 European Union member states.

The signing of CETA eliminated 9,000 various trade tariffs between the EU and Canada and has also led to a new Industrial Development Authority (IDA) office in Toronto, along with an expanded presence of Enterprise Ireland and Tourism Ireland in Canada.

"This means that there are now huge trade opportunities for both the European Union and Canada as a whole which are going to emerge," said Cannon.

"What we want to do is to position Ireland as the launch pad for investors in Canada and in B.C. who are contemplating establishing their first presence in the European Union to that market of 450 million people.

"Ireland will be the only English speaking country in the European Union after Brexit. Members of the Eurozone have a common law system, similar to Canada, so it all makes sense in terms of building that relationship."

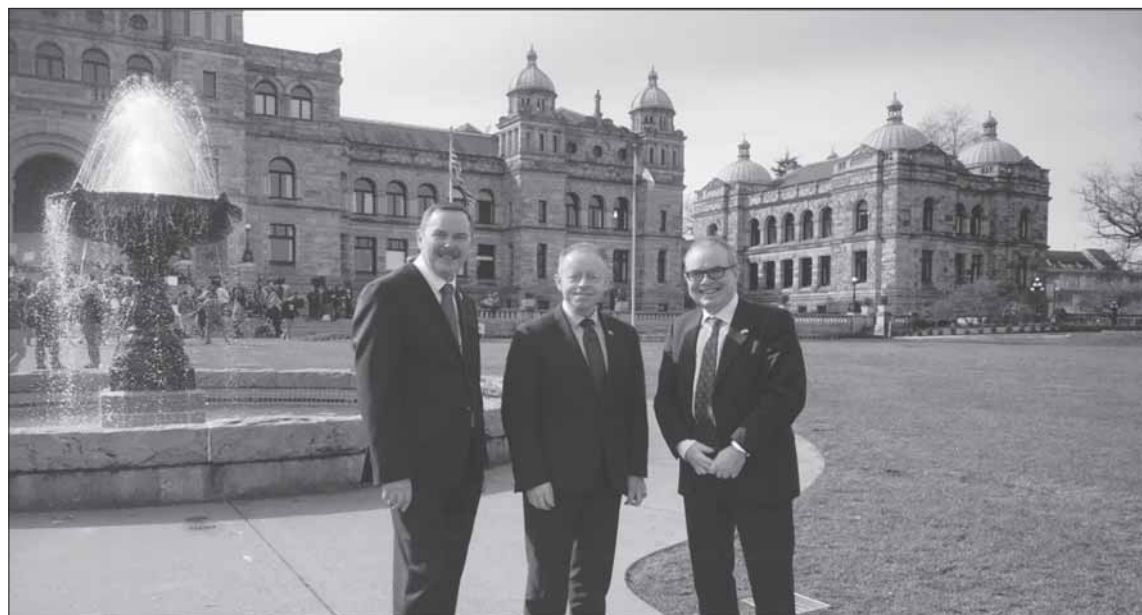
Cannon pointed out that in his discussions with John Horgan, it was pointed out that traditionally British Columbia has looked to Asia in terms of a trading relationship, but CETA has brought a new dimension to the table.

"One of the reasons that I'm here this week is to start that kind of engagement so that when business people in this part of the world are contemplating expanding beyond B.C. and beyond Canada, they now start to look toward the European Union and that they look to Ireland as a natural home for that investment."

One indication of the importance Ireland has placed on its relationship with Canada can be seen in the fact that no less than 19 Irish Government ministers have visited this country over the past 24 months.

## Brexit and the Good Friday Agreement

At the time of our meeting in Vancouver, Brexit was reaching yet another deadline without any resolution and it appeared that the British prime minis-



CIARÁN CANNON (centre) the Irish Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with responsibility for the Diaspora and International Development with Frank Flood the Irish Consul Vancouver (L) and Jim Kelly the Ambassador of Ireland to Canada (R) outside the British Columbia Parliament Buildings in Victoria, B.C.

*"You can sense that vibrancy, even here in this room, and that isn't the case with Irish communities all over the world. As I said earlier, a lot of Irish communities are now facing up to the fact of having no new people coming in. Their immigration pipeline has essentially been shut down, particularly in the United States."*

– Ciarán Cannon

ter would seek a delay to extend the Article 50 departure date beyond the 29<sup>th</sup> of March.

Minister Cannon indicated that the Irish Government would be supportive of that delay.

He said, "It gives Britain a bit of breathing space in terms of being able to convince I suppose first of all the parliamentarians and ultimately the general public that an orderly withdrawal is a winner for everyone and the alternative is a disaster.

"A no-deal Brexit would be a lose-lose proposition for everyone – for Britain, for the European Union, and indeed for Ireland and particularly for Northern Ireland.

"Our deepest fear since Brexit was first mooted as a possibility, even before they had the referendum was that it would set the peace process back a very long way.

"That's something that is very precious to us, it was a very hard won peace process, one that we've had in place now for 20 years. It has been extraordinary in terms of bringing together two communities in Northern Ireland and in terms of Northern Ireland's economic growth it has been powerful.

"We want that to continue. We want to have the seamless movement of people and goods and trade back and over an essentially invisible border and Brexit's potential capacity to damage that is pretty immense."

The opportunity to protect the Good

Friday Agreement and the peace process, according to Minister Cannon is through an orderly departure as set out in the withdrawal agreement negotiated between the European Union and British Prime Minister Theresa May.

"The protection of peace in Northern Ireland has been central to that agreement," he said, "so, for Britain to leave the European Union beyond that structured withdrawal agreement would be a really dangerous place to go."

Cannon said the alternative however is not a good one for Northern Ireland with very serious potential consequences.

"The carefully and meticulously assembled Good Friday Agreement which we all signed up to – the U.K., Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland – and we believe if any kind of border infrastructure appeared in any location, you would begin to see that peace process unravel pretty quickly.

"It would give those on the fringes of both communities who, to be frank, many never had any interest in a peace process, it would give them a new legitimacy that they don't deserve."

## Vancouver Irish community growth

In closing, Minister Cannon discussed one of the most remarkable changes we have witnessed in almost 30 years publishing *The Celtic Connection*, which has been the transformation of the local Irish community.

Where once there was very limited Irish immigration to British Columbia

and a very tight-knit but aging community, the 2007-2008 financial crisis in Ireland changed all that.

It began with a trickle but young Irish accents can now be heard throughout Metro Vancouver with the arrival of a whole new wave of migrants under the Canadian Experience Class Express Entry visa.

This program administered through Canada Immigration and Citizenship allows individuals who have worked here for at least one year to immigrate permanently.

These young migrants are outward looking, dynamic, and most of all are highly skilled in a wide range of industries from trades to technology.

Minister Cannon spoke about how impressed he was with these young people and said, "You're very lucky here in Vancouver because you have an Irish community that is being replenished over and over again.

"You can sense that vibrancy, even here in this room, and that isn't the case with Irish communities all over the world.

"As I said earlier, a lot of Irish communities are now facing up to the fact of having no new people coming in. Their immigration pipeline has essentially been shut down, particularly in the United States.

"Their challenge now is to how to sustain these communities if there are no

[Continued on page 19]





CATHERINE FLYNN sang the Irish National Anthem at the Consular Corps Reception accompanied by Rebecca Blair on harp.

[Continued from page 18]

young people coming. They're having to work now to address that problem because their Irish identity is very important to them."

The difference of course is the older generation were much more cohesive, they put down roots and shared a much closer bond since communication and travel were greatly restricted once they immigrated.

Many were never to return home once they left Ireland, so they made Canada their new home and they built local communities to maintain their culture.

In fact, Minister Cannon remarked they built Canada.

And indeed they did, from east to west there is a rich history of the Irish in Canada and the enormous contributions they have made building roads and railroads, in fact the very infrastructure of this country.

## BREXIT UPDATE

European Union leaders agreed to grant the United Kingdom another six-month extension to Brexit after late-night talks in Brussels on April 11.

Following the agreement, European Council President Donald Tusk said in a message to British friends.... "please do not waste this time."

Theresa May, who had wanted a shorter delay, said the U.K. would still aim to leave the EU as soon as possible.

The U.K. must now participate and hold European elections in May, or leave on June 1 without a deal.



CLARE TIMONEY welcomed guests to the breakfast meeting with Minister Cannon hosted by the Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce Vancouver.



MINISTER CANNON (centre) with members of the Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce Vancouver. Pictured far left is Lar Quigley, president of the ICCC.



RUARI SPILLANE, Frank Flood, Ciarán Cannon and Harry Cussen at the Irish Diaspora consultation lunch in Vancouver on March 15.



BRENDAN FLYNN and Theresa McDonnell of the Ireland Canada Monument Society with Frank Flood the Irish Consul General, Vancouver, following the Irish Diaspora consultation lunch.

(L-R) Mike McNaney, Vice President, Industry, Corporate & Airport Affairs, WestJet; Dana Walsh, Manager, Canada, Tourism Ireland, Toronto; Minister Cannon; Ed Simms, CEO, WestJet; Jim Kelly, Ambassador of Ireland to Canada, Ottawa; Mark Porter, EVP People and Culture, WestJet; Lauren Regan, Honorary Vice Consul Trade and Investment Ireland, Calgary; Geoffrey Keating, Director, Irish Abroad Unit, Dublin.



CIARÁN CANNON, the Irish Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Diaspora and International Development in Calgary, Alberta while on his visit to western Canada in March. He is pictured above meeting with executives of WestJet.



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THE May Queen at this year's Beltane Fire Festival in Edinburgh was dressed in a ceremonial costume of recycled materials to portray oil spills, deforestation and waste and to express the damage that is being done to the planet.



## Edinburgh's Beltane Fire Festival 2019 has a new focus on climate change

EDINBURGH – Edinburgh's world-famous Beltane Fire Festival has been overhauled so that the spectacular show staged atop Calton Hill on the night of April 29 tackles climate change for the first time.

The central character of the May Queen is seen expressing rage at the damage being done to the planet at the outset of the four-hour performance, which marks the changing of the seasons.

Her ceremonial costume has been altered with recycled materials to portray oil spills, deforestation and waste to depict "the earth as it truly is."

Members of the 300-strong cast in the show, which has been running for more than 30 years, have been encouraged to use recycled materials in their costumes.

Organisers pledged to look at less harmful ways of creating the fire effects which draw 8,000 revellers to the landmark each year on the last night of April to herald the arrival of summer.

First held in 1988, the fire festival celebrates "the return of the fertility of the land at a time when livestock would have been out to pasture."

However, organisers have decided to "ramp up its green message" by altering the "ordinarily stoic" May Queen, played by Katie O'Neill this year.

A blog posted on the festival website states: "The world as we know it is dying. We're living through a major extinction event.

"Even if our societies can stomach the changes it will take to limit global warming, we are – for most of the planet – reaching a point of no return.

"Our planet is dying, and collectively

we are living through the cycles of grief. This year's Beltane reflects that grief.

"The May Queen – embodiment of the Earth – arises this year, not as the perfect flower of tradition, but as the Earth as it truly is – covered with plastic, oil spills, and on fire. She is angry. She is sad. She is grieving for what is lost."

In a video message, O'Neill said, "Beltane honours the goddess, the divine feminine that is within all of us, regardless of gender. It's about fostering qualities of care, compassion, community, equity, empathy, collaboration and communication.

"The May Queen's story and character this year is quite different from the past. When she rises out of the Acropolis on Calton Hill she is not the flowery goddess she has always been.

"She is really angry, looks down at her dress covered in oil spills, pesticides and deforestation and is enraged. She wants to call war.

"But she comes out of her state of anger, which is ultimately from a place of fierce love for the earth and her children. Her story is one of alchemy and of taking that anger and turning it into joy."

Festival trustee Bradley McArthur said, "The May Queen will look as majestic as normal, but for anyone who has been to Beltane before, her regalia will look different.

"When she is awakened she is very much in an abused state, to represent how much the earth has been abused. There will be changes in her mannerisms and behaviour.

"There will be subtle differences in how she carries herself throughout the night, moves about the hill and interacts with certain groups.

"She will very angry at the start, but that tempers off a bit as she realises you don't have to be angry to be strong or defend what you believe is right."

## The passage of Beltaine on May 1 moves us into the high, bright season of the year

By CYNTHIA WALLENTINE

Beltaine begins at twilight on May Eve and stretches to twilight on the first of May.

Beltaine, like its counterpart Samhain on October 31, is a great hinge of the year, swinging us into the bright blue sky, and down again to earth, like the children we once were.

The air is warm, the nights timeless. All around us, the vegetative world has woken hungry, the soil breathes with life. The beauty of the natural cycle is unmatched.

Yet within this whirl of sunlight and stars, there is forever a restlessness. Despite the plans and plantings of summer, no outcome, no harvest can truly ever be guaranteed.

The winsome green of summer coils around a gnarled bough, one a part of the other.

The fetching night and the darker wisdom, two sides of the same coin, tossed amidst unsuspecting human communities.

Such is the gift and the grit of the high season of the year.

From a young age, humans are taught to visualize and achieve goals. We plot solutions to good outcomes, we set our sights on tomorrow.

Yet concretized dreams can become leaden, the sail left unfilled for the loss of the moist breath of the soil.

Still, imagination and creativity without form or discipline fail. Ideas take flight, unable to make landfall because there was no soil prepared for their growing season. Heart and hand together build future.

Humans forever seek more than what is before their eyes.

From the earliest spirals, to cathedrals of piety and skyscrapers of fortune, we are a species that strives, builds, bites back on itself, and strives again.

All in the service of restless seasons that manifest in our hands.

The brightest point of the season, summer

solstice on June 21, is followed by a slowly dimming walk toward the winter solstice, where the light is born again.

From Beltaine to Samhain, and summer to winter solstice, our world is held in earthly and celestial thrall. We dedicate our lives to cosmic memory and the churning existence of our world.

Beltaine, like Samhain, is a fire festival. The heat and light provide and consume.

Sparks pop and fly skyward along with our gaze as our feet rest upon the ground. Driven by the sun, midsummer reminds us that twilight is coming.

Run, sleep, love, and weep. Use heart to guide and hand to build. Be deep and be bright in this high season.

From fireflies to fireworks, hard work to leisure bring ideas to life and be open to the fruits and gifts of every harvest. Blessed Be.



## The Okanagan Irish Society St. Patrick's Day Celebration

KELOWNA, B.C. – The Okanagan Irish Society hosted a great St. Patrick's Day celebration at the Kelowna Golf and Country Club on Sunday, March 17. Over 170 guests enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner and a wonderful evening of entertainment.



THE Blakey School of Irish Dance performed for guests at the Okanagan Irish St. Patrick's Day celebration.



GUESTS enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner at the event which was held at the Kelowna Golf and Country Club on March 17.



PEARSE WALSH, president of the Okanagan Irish Society at the St. Patrick's Day celebration on March 17.



YOUNG dancers with the Blakey School of Irish Dance delighted guests and brought a wonderful youthful energy to the evening.



# May is Hemochromatosis Awareness Month

By DREW BROADFOOT

My story begins in Northern British Columbia, in Prince George, where we are fortunate to have our University Hospital.

My knowledge of hereditary hemochromatosis began in June of 2018. But wait a minute it started to affect my health way before that.

I am currently 66-years-old, and visit my family doctor (GP) on a regular basis.

I had been diagnosed with high blood pressure and Mr. Gout (inflammation in joints in my toes) a few years ago, and have been on medication for a while. I have a complete physical exam annually.

In 2015, during a regular visit, my doctor asked me how much alcohol I consumed, as my liver enzymes were higher than normal.

High alcohol use can cause elevated liver enzymes and signal possible liver damage.

My consumption did not coincide with the elevated liver enzymes but he may as well have called me a liar.

This question was asked of me many times over months as he must have thought I was not telling him the truth.

You might be asking *why* I am telling you this. My answer is because hereditary hemochromatosis is a stealth condition that can lead to other diseases. But I felt great!

Over the last 5 years I had exhibited some of the more common symptoms for hemochromatosis, such as joint pain, fatigue and elevated liver enzymes. I assumed that was all a normal part of the aging process. I had not been physically active during my life, unless you count hitting the links.

Needless to say, I packed around a few extra pounds for many years. My GP had always tried to get me to lose weight.

In the spring of 2018, my wife and I went to see the doctor, together. On this particular day he asked, "How can I help you to exercise more?"

It is embarrassing to admit that we have addictions; mine is food.

To answer his question I replied, "Well, if my feet were not so frigging sore with seemingly thousands of needles poking into the soles of my feet, I might want to do more walking, hiking, etc."

He listened intently as he knew I did not walk the golf course anymore, but rather rode a motorized cart. Then my wife piped up and said, "He is tired all of the time and lays around."

Boom! It was like the light came on, and my doctor's mind went elsewhere. He sent me in for more blood work. The next week I went to see him again.

He told me he wanted another test to confirm results, and sent me for a DNA test for hereditary hemochromatosis.

After a couple of weeks he called us into his office, where he had the longest face on.

All I could think was "Is it cancer?" He informed us it was hereditary hemochromatosis.

By this time I had read up on the disease and I was not surprised. I was comforted that we now had an answer.

He immediately referred me to an internist. His recommendation was to get my ferritin level down to between



HEMOCHROMATOSIS has been called 'The Celtic Curse' due to the high incidence among people of Celtic heritage. Drew Broadfoot pictured above is among those diagnosed with Hereditary Hemochromatosis.

50 and 100 ng/mL, closer to 50.

I went in for an ultrasound within weeks, but the results were not conclusive so a CT scan was ordered.

There appears to be no permanent injury to my liver. If the iron overload was left undetected, there might have been serious damage.

Before my first phlebotomy, my ferritin level was at 2100 ng/mL.

Within a few days of my confirmed diagnosis, my weekly phlebotomies started (which is having a pint of blood removed from me), for a duration between June and December.

On December 18, my ferritin level had dropped to 40 ng/mL. I would rather do this than the chemical chelation.

The RNs here at University Hospital of Northern B.C. were awesome.

They had to be patient with me and my hidden veins. My time there was enjoyable; I was getting to be known as the "Iron Man."

We all must keep our humour no matter what diagnosis we receive. Now my ferritin has increased slowly to 52 ng/mL.

Upon reflection over the past few months and years, I have found that since my iron levels have been lowered, the following has happened: My itchy abdomen has disappeared; chronic splits on my finger-tips which would bleed have stopped; pins and needle sensation on my feet has disappeared; I have more energy; anger mood swings have disappeared.

Were these directly attributed to my iron levels? I am not sure.

My family doctor strongly recommended that my sister and children be checked out.

My sister does not have hemochromatosis. My youngest son's genetic test results came back positive for the mutated genes while my other kids have not yet been tested.

I recommend reading about a recent study in the U.K. that uncovered a higher number of cases of disease than originally thought was caused by hemochromatosis.

The article can be found on the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society's website, [toomuchiron.ca](http://toomuchiron.ca), where you can find further good reads.

This is a hidden disease which is so common, yet many people have not even heard of it.

I hope my story helps prevent any disease in your future that would have been caused by undetected hemochromatosis.

## Major global alcohol conference to be hosted in Dublin next year

DUBLIN – A major global conference on alcohol control and policy will take place in Dublin in 2020.

Ireland's capital has been selected as the destination for next year's Global Alcohol Policy Conference.

The event takes place every two years, and brings together policy makers, researchers and advocates, civil society representatives and practitioners to share knowledge on alcohol issue.

Health Ministers Simon Harris and Catherine Byrne welcomed the announcement.

The theme of the conference complements the vision of the national 'Healthy Ireland Framework'; to create a society where everyone can enjoy good physical and mental health and well-being.

The announcement follows a recent report which shows Ireland is a nation that continues to drink to excess, downing 11 litres of pure alcohol per person last year.

That's the equivalent to nearly a bottle of vodka a week, or 482 pints of lager a year.

A separate report warned that adolescent girls in Ireland have one of the highest levels of binge drinking in the world.

The shock statistics were deplored by Alcohol Action Ireland – which also warned about a rise in the consumption of spirits.

There has been a 21.4 percent rise in spirit consumption over a five-year period, 2014-2018, amid a trend for greater consumption of gin and cocktails.

Separately, a study published in *The Lancet* tracked the countries with the highest levels of young women binge drinking – with a prevalence of more than 55 percent – were Denmark, Finland, Ireland and New Zealand, in that order.



# Mike Hurley: 'The pipeline question to me is from a Burnaby perspective and Burnaby alone'



By  
CATHOLINE  
BUTLER

BURNABY – Magherafelt, Northern Ireland-born Mike Hurley became the new mayor of Burnaby in the British Columbia civic election on October 20, 2018.

With an intimate knowledge of the needs of the City of Burnaby from his years as a firefighter it seemed a natural progression to the office of mayor.

He immigrated to Canada in 1984 and joined the Burnaby Fire Department in 1988. As a firefighter he also served as vice-president and later as president of the Burnaby Fire Fighters Association.

As president of the Professional Fire Fighters Association Burn Fund, Hurley led the effort to raise \$15 million to build a facility that accommodates families and burn unit outpatients for Vancouver General Hospital and B.C. Children's Hospital.

The society raises money for community groups and non-profit organizations which supports more than 50 charities.

Over \$800,000 annually is given for bursaries and they operate a Nutritional Food Program that benefits kids at 26 elementary schools, four high schools and four youth centres.

As a firefighter, Hurley garnered many awards, but none more proudly than when he received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002 and the Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.

Hurley has a love of sports particularly Gaelic football that he grew up playing in Ireland.

That love continued in Canada, when he joined the Vancouver Irish Sporting and Social Club and serving for a term as president of the club.

Recently, early one morning I dropped in to speak with Mayor Mike Hurley in his office at Burnaby City Hall.

He was seated at his desk with the definite look of a man with an agenda in a hurry to get out into the Burnaby community. There is even a shiny shovel leaning against one of the walls, albeit a ceremonial shovel given to him.

He spoke about some of the projects that he is most focused on as a priority.

"Actually," he said, "one of the main reasons that I decided to run for mayor, was the homeless issue within this city.

"As a firefighter we dealt with that a lot and really there was no hope for anyone here who was homeless because nothing was being done to assist them.

"The answer always seemed to be there is a shelter in New Westminster or



MIKE HURLEY was elected Mayor of the City of Burnaby in the B.C. Civic Elections in October last year.

*"When I talk to parents and grandparents, their main concern is how their families who want to stay and live in Burnaby are going to be able to since housing has just become more and more impossible."*

Vancouver and it didn't seem to be that it was our responsibility.

"And technically that was correct, but it's still a human issue and, at the end of the day, I believe public service is here to serve people, and do anything you can to help people and give them a little lift up ...that's the reason I'm here."

Speaking about one of the other major issues, Hurley said, "The other issue is housing but really it's all the same problem.

"Families are finding it difficult to live in Burnaby because it has become so expensive.

"When I talk to parents and grandparents, their main concern is how their families who want to stay and live in Burnaby are going to be able to since housing has just become more and more impossible.

"But, not only that, we are not building the type of houses that families need. Pretty much the answer to most of the homelessness is getting the right type of housing."

Speaking about the pipeline question, Hurley said, "The pipeline question to me is from a Burnaby perspective and Burnaby alone, and that is extra capacity means extra tanks sitting up on Burnaby mountain.

"Remember, we're in an earthquake zone here and the extra danger that brings to our community in our opinion cannot be justified by the seeming need that I think is a fantasy... that if we can get Alberta oil to tidewater it's going to bring premium prices."

Continuing, Hurley said, "Remember that the oil coming out of the oil sands is a very low quality product and costs \$15-20 more to refine that product, if

you can find a refinery that can actually do it.

"Most refineries cannot refine the product because of the different chemicals that make-up that oil.

"So, we will never get premium price for that oil because it's an inferior product.

"There are a lot of misconceptions that I think are being put out there by the oil industry which is very well-healed and funded.

"In my opinion there is not really the market for this oil that we are led to believe."

With time at a premium, I asked Hurley if he had any plans for a visit to Ireland.

"Well it won't be this year as I have a lot on my plate. But, I am hoping that me and my family can go back next year and take in an All Ireland Final and I know that the battle for tickets will be on again."

Then, he laughed and said, "Maybe I'll contact the mayor of Dublin and see if he can help with the tickets."

Does Mike Hurley miss playing Gaelic football? He said, "Yes, I really miss playing Gaelic football. It was my big thing growing up and I had the good fortune of playing for my county in the Derry under 21 and I miss it greatly, especially the camaraderie."

He also said, "The Gaelic football this year is going to be hosted right here in Burnaby. And the main tournament will be here and the main facility also.

"We have been able to assist the club in being able to get these fields in the summer.

"And there is such a growth here now



PHOTO: Courtesy of Burnaby Now  
CITY OF BURNABY City Hall on Canada Way in Burnaby, B.C.

with three different clubs. I can remember how difficult it was to field just one team.

"It's wonderful to see the sport growing but I guess from an Ireland perspective more and more young people are leaving because they need to go elsewhere to find work.

"So we are back to the old story of the greatest thing coming out of Ireland is their people."

Continuing, Hurley said, "Back in the Fifties when the Irish came to Canada it was mostly trades and manual labour.

"Now, for example, I go to a lot of meetings in Metro Vancouver, and one day I heard six presentations and three of those were actually young Irish people.

"So, it's good to see the Irish people coming here and getting good jobs."

## Shadow over Belfast as Bombardier puts up for sale sign

BELFAST – Canadian aerospace giant Bombardier has announced it plans to sell its aerostructures business in Belfast.

Around 4,000 people are employed in the east Belfast plant. No new redundancies have been announced and Bombardier has said it is committed to finding the right buyer.

Bombardier is already embarking on a series of cost-cutting measures within its Northern Ireland business.

In November it announced plans to shed 490 jobs, which would leave its workforce at 3,600, around half of what it was five years ago.

The Belfast plant specialises in aircraft components, engine nacelles and manufactures wings for the A220 aircraft. Airbus took a majority stake in the narrow body jet series in July 2018.

Bombardier bought the Short Brothers operation in 1989. The original company dates back to London in 1908, but Shorts started building aircraft in Belfast in 1936.

The facility became increasingly important during the Second World War and by 1948, Shorts became a Belfast company in its entirety.

U.K. Business Secretary Greg Clark described the Belfast plant as one of the "most important aerospace facilities in the country" and a "vital asset" to the sector.

"The Belfast plant, its expertise and its highly skilled and dedicated staff will be highly sought after – the gov-



THE BOMBARDIER Aerospace plant is now up for sale putting thousands of jobs in jeopardy.

ernment will work with potential buyers to take this successful and ambitious business forward," he added.

In response to the announcement, trade union GMB, which represents many Bombardier employees, said it was demanding the company provide reassurances over the future of its workers in Northern Ireland.

"Our members – and their families – have already suffered a terrible year," said GMB organiser Michael Mulholland. After months of uncertainty following Trump's tariffs – they were then hit with the news of 490 job losses – and now this.

"Bombardier jobs are absolutely vital to Northern Ireland's economy and it's time workers were treated with the respect they deserve. GMB will be meeting reps today and over the next few days to discuss next steps."



# John O'Beirne: Irish businessman plans to expand his successful retail marketing concept

VANCOUVER – John O'Beirne, a native son of Co. Roscommon, Ireland, and his wife Olga are the owners of Mad Hatters retail outlets, and they have an ambitious business plan for their company.

By CATHOLINE BUTLER

As a team they have worked hard and built Mad Hatters into a very successful retail concept that specializes in accessories for men and women such as luggage, purses, scarves, linens, and a wide selection of many other seasonal products.

Their stores are located in many malls across western Canada – Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

They carefully source their merchandise both overseas and locally, and in doing so are able to market the products for about half of what you would pay in a department store.

After 15 years of nurturing and building up the Mad Hatters brand, they are now ready to take their next calculated business step – a franchise plan to market the Mad Hatters retail concept to other successful operators.



JOHN O'BEIRNE

John O'Beirne recently spoke to *The Celtic Connection* about how he visualizes this program will work for successful operators to get in on the ground floor of this unique concept.

He explained “What we are doing is going to smaller cities where there is new population growth, such as new

immigrants, who have a real demand for fashion at valued priced products.

“Fashion generally costs and what we want to do is have fashion combined with function and bring people very nice items that are value priced.

“We tend to be more successful in smaller cities such as Edmonton or Calgary, not that those cities are small but smaller than Vancouver or Toronto.”

Continuing, he said, “People take great pride in running their own business and we are setting our businesses up so that they can be easily franchised. The owner/occupier, such as a husband and wife team can take the business by the reins with a modest enough investment in a smaller size store concept, say about 2,000 foot size.

“They could make a good income, say \$50,000 to \$70,000 a year, provided they run the business themselves as labour costs are so high these days and in such short supply.

“Also, people working in their own field are a lot more motivated because they have an invested interest in ensuring its success.”

Speaking about the types of merchandise that would be stocked in these stores, O'Beirne said, “We classify it as ladies and mens accessories – ladies leggings, tops, hats, gloves, scarves, purses, luggage – all accessories.

“Also, household items such as curtain panels, kitchen towels and all colour co-ordinated. Basically anything you could carry out in a bag. You won't need any trucking service to get the items home.

“In this country, the seasons are 80 percent cold with a 20 percent summer, so it's a fairly conservative colour blend. Whether we like it or not, it's cold weather for two thirds of the year.”

Speaking about Vancouver franchise locations, O'Beirne said, “we have a presence in Vancouver with two stores, but Vancouver is a very mature high-fashion market.

“Our newer markets are the smaller cities in B.C. and Alberta, where a lot of new immigrants are likely to go, because that's where they can afford to live.

“They can go there and get a home, the kids can go to school, they get a business and everyone is progressing. In about two years they are up and running.

“Some of these new Canadians may have come from very warm climates, but their kids will grow up here and sooner or later they are calling British Columbia and Alberta home.”

Mad Hatters has a large distribution centre in Surrey from where all the merchandise is shipped to the stores.

The plan is that some of the Mad Hatters retail stores will be corporate while others will be franchised in the near future.

John has wasted no time and is now energetically marketing his franchising concept to new immigrants to Canada.

For more information about Mad Hatters franchising, contact Sunbelt Business Brokers by e-mail at: ish@SunbeltEdmonton.com, or call (587) 400-6989.



DISPLAY racks of merchandise stocked at Mad Hatter retail outlets across western Canada. Owners John and Olga O'Beirne plan to franchise their successful marketing concept.



Dustin and wife Amy with their children Georgia and Luca at the 2019 Challenge Cup win in Cardiff, Wales.

## Game of Thrones boost to economy in Northern Ireland

Fantasy drama series *Game of Thrones* is providing an unexpected economic boost in Northern Ireland.

Filmed at studios in Belfast, and on locations across the area, the show is part of a big growth in the arts and entertainment industry there.

Northern Ireland's popularity as a filming location is worth around £270 million to the economy, an industry figure has said.

The second series of the Channel 4 hit *Derry Girls* and the highly anticipated finale of Sky Atlantic's *Game Of Thrones* were among the highlights of a bumper 2018.

In total, nine television dramas and six feature films were made there in the last 12 months.

Northern Ireland Screen chief Richard Williams said the industry is now estimated to be worth £270 million.

*Game Of Thrones* alone is estimated to have brought more than £206 million into the local economy over eight seasons.

The HBO show's legacy is set to live on through a tourism project.

The 2018 roll call, which includes *Mrs. Wilson* and *Krypton's* second series, were all filmed with funding support from NI Screen.

### VANCOUVER ISSC DATES TO REMEMBER – 2019 SEASON

**Victoria Highland Games**  
May 18 - 20 Victoria

**San Diego 7's**  
May 25 - 27 San Diego

**Western Canadian Championships**  
June 29 - 30 Edmonton

**North American Championships**  
August 23 - 25 Leesburg, Virginia

**Vancouver Gaelic Games League & Championship**  
June 2 Round 1 Burnaby Lake  
June 10 - 14 Round 2 Burnaby Lake  
July 8 - 12 Round 3 Burnaby Lake  
July 22 - 26 Round 4 Burnaby Lake  
July 29 - August 2 Round 5 Burnaby Lake  
August 10 Finals Burnaby Lake

## Canadian Hockey Family Finish Career in Northern Ireland

Dustin Johner is a Canadian-born hockey player who has been playing in leagues all over North America and Europe for the past 15 years.

Most recently when an opportunity came up for him to play in the United Kingdom for the Belfast Giants of the EIHL (Elite Ice Hockey League), Johner jumped at the chance to make the move to Northern Ireland – a place where he and his family had always wanted to go.

The Giants saw much success this season including a silver medal in the Continental Cup, second consecutive Challenge Cup Championship, the Erhardt Conference Cup, as well as the all-coveted Elite League Championship title.

“It was pretty incredible to see that the Giants have such a big and dedicated fan base, considering Northern Ireland is not known for hockey and only has two ice rinks in the whole country,” says Johner.

The Belfast Giants team employs a majority of North American players, 13 of whom are Canadian. The team also has players from Scotland and England, and local players from Northern Ireland.

Johner and his family have really fallen in love with the city of Belfast and the country itself over their two seasons with the team.

Immersing themselves in the culture and traveling around the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland as much as possible has been a highlight for the young family.

One of the stand-outs was to attend the U.K. Pipe band Championships at Belfast's Stormont Estate last June, which saw over 100 bands compete.

Dustin's in-laws founded the Canmore Highland Games in 1991, so the pipes were always a fond memory for his wife Amy.

Being able to see bands perform across the pond was quite a special event for all the Johners.

“It's going to be tough to leave this amazing place,” says Johner. “Our children are so young; this is really the only home they remember.”

Johner announced his retirement as the season came to an end in mid-April.

The Giants organization has a sponsorship with Ulster University and have been able to set Johner up for life after hockey.

He comes home with an MBA after working in an intensive study program over his two seasons with the team.

“It's going to be so great reconnecting with family and friends when we make the move back to Alberta this summer, but we're for sure already looking forward to coming back to Northern Ireland to visit all the great friends and places we've grown to love over our time here.”





U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Speaker Nancy Pelosi (right) and Congressman Richard Neal (left) are greeted by Simon Coveney, Ireland's Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade at Iveagh House, Dublin.

## ‘Don’t even think about it’ – Pelosi warns Trump over U.S.-U.K. trade deal that threatens damage to peace in Ireland

DUBLIN – The Tánaiste Simon Coveney welcomed Nancy Pelosi and a delegation of eight Congressional leaders to Dublin for the first official engagement of their two-day visit to Ireland on April 16.

The third most powerful politician in the United States warned Donald Trump and the Brexiters not to even think about a U.S.-U.K. trade deal if there is any threat of a border in Ireland.

Pelosi, the U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives, said a trade agreement that damages peace in Ireland “just can’t possibly happen.”

Addressing a small gathering in the Department of Foreign Affairs last month, she said the Good Friday Agreement is “not just a peace agreement” but something that resolved hundreds of years of conflict.

She said America, including President Bill Clinton and former senator George Mitchell, had worked hard to ensure people on this island could live in harmony. “This isn’t for us an issue or an agreement. It’s a value.”

Pelosi, who regularly clashes with U.S. President Donald Trump, went on to say that while speaking with U.K. politicians in recent days she made clear the position of the Democratic Party.

She said the U.K. people had voted to

leave the EU and politicians must facilitate that. But she added, “And as they work that out, not to think for one minutes that there’s any comfort for them that if they leave the EU they will quickly have a U.S.-U.K. trade agreement.”

“That’s just not in the cards if there is any harm done to the Good Friday accord. Don’t even think about it.”

Pelosi said that U.S. politicians were not taking sides. “We’re just holding to our values. It’s an ideal that is a model for the world other places copy so that they can make peace and find common ground.”

Coveney told the same lunch gathering that Ireland respects the U.K.’s decision to leave the Union.

“We have no desire to make life difficult for the U.K.,” he said, adding that Ireland would be the strongest voice in the EU when it comes to support a close relationship in to the future.

“We want our nearest neighbours to thrive and to prosper.”

He said Britain will make its own decisions about the future but “they do not have the right to determine ours.”



NANCY PELOSI, the U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives, at a gathering at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin. She said a trade agreement that damages peace in Ireland “just can’t possibly happen.”

## SEATTLE IRISH NEWS



U.S. SENATOR Maria Cantwell, Honorary Grand Marshal Nicole Russeff, Galway Mayor Níall McNelis, Irish Government Minister Ciarán Cannon and Parade Grand Marshal Joe McDermott blowing the ceremonial starter whistles at the start of Seattle's St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 16.



CIARÁN CANNON, Irish Government Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Affairs, with Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan, at the March 19 announcement of the opening of an Enterprise Ireland Trade Office in Seattle.



DRUM MAJOR Scotty Bach (R) checks out the route ahead as he leads the Seattle Police Pipes & Drums in Seattle's St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 16.



HONORARY GRAND Marshal Nicole Russeff poses with St. Patrick (aka Tom Keefe) before the start of Seattle's St. Patrick's Day Parade.



OISÍN KEELY of the Seattle Gaels briefly takes the microphone to explain the rules of Gaelic Football to spectators at Seattle's St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 16.



FORMER U.S. Congressman Jim McDermott chats with King County Council member Joe McDermott, the Grand Marshal of Seattle's St. Patrick's Day Parade, at the Mayor's Irish Week Proclamation luncheon on March 15.



CIARÁN CANNON, Irish Government Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Affairs, and Galway Mayor Níall McNelis try on some Pirate headgear at the Pirate's Landing of St. Patrick on March 15.



PHOTO: Becky Washington  
DANNY SULLIVAN, president of the Seafair Pirates, poses with Galway Mayor Níall McNelis at the Pirate's Landing of St. Patrick on March 15.



# SEATTLE IRISH NEWS



By  
**JOHN  
KEANE**

## PASSINGS

- Don McCarty (75), a native of Dublin, died in Tacoma April 9;
- James Douglas (55), who lived in Seattle for many years, died March 29 in his native Bray, Co. Wicklow;
- David Maxwell (85), a native of Belfast, died March 30 in Vancouver, WA;
- Catherine Quigley (78), a native of Seattle, died February 15 in Cork where she had moved in 2006;
- Laura Garrison (83), a sister of Hubie McMorrow of Edmonds, died February 6 in England;

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dílis*  
May their faithful souls  
rest at God's right hand

**MAY 27 MEMORIAL DAY MASS** – An open-air Memorial Day Mass will be celebrated at the Seattle area's Irish Pioneer Cemetery, St. Patrick Cemetery in Kent, at 10:30 AM on Monday, May 27.

The four and a half acre cemetery is located one mile east of I-5 on Orillia Road at 204th Street, just east of Sea-Tac Airport.

Founded by Limerick-man Richard O'Connell in 1880, the cemetery is the resting place for numerous Irish-born Seattle Pioneers and they are especially remembered on Memorial Day in addition to remembering those who have given their lives in service to this country.

All are welcome but bring a lawn chair! For information, contact (253) 237-2811.

**MAY 31 FR. TREACY'S 100TH** – It's not every day that a community gets to celebrate a member turning 100, but Co. Laois native Fr. Bill Treacy will reach that milestone on May 31, 2019.

To mark the occasion, a concelebrated Mass will be celebrated on Saturday,

June 15 at 11 AM at Assumption Church, 6201 33rd Avenue NE (just north of Calvary Cemetery), Seattle, and all members of the Irish community are invited to attend.

Since he arrived in Seattle in 1945, Fr. Treacy has consistently tried to build bridges between peoples of different faiths and his involvement in establishing the Treacy Levine Center is a testament to a life which has been a blessing to the people of Seattle and especially to the area's Irish community.

Please show your esteem for a wonderful human being by attending the Mass at 11 AM, Saturday, June 15, Assumption Church.

**JUNE 15 SENIORS' LUNCHEON** – In Assumption Church Hall immediately following the 11 AM Mass, there will be an Irish Seniors' Luncheon celebrating all seniors but especially 100 year old Fr. Bill Treacy.

All Irish seniors and spouses and friends, those of Irish birth, Irish descent or Irish connections, are invited to attend the luncheon at \$20 per person. Please note that ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED listing the names of all guests to (253) 237-2811.

**JUNE 16 BLOOMSDAY** – The Wild Geese Players of Seattle will perform a staged reading from James Joyce's *Ulysses* on Bloomsday, Sunday, June 16, 2:30 PM at the Seattle Central Library, 1000 4th Avenue, downtown Seattle.

*Ulysses* is set in 1904 and chronicles the wanderings of Leopold Bloom around Dublin on June 16th. For more details, visit [wildgeeseatlseattle.org](http://wildgeeseatlseattle.org).

**JULY 7 PICNIC** – Seattle's Irish Community Picnic is noon-6 PM, Sunday, July 7, at Lake Sammamish State Park in Issaquah (exit # 15 off I-90). Games and fun for the entire family, and all are welcome.

There's a covered picnic area and several barbeque grills if you bring charcoal. Gaelic football and hurling games at 1 PM followed by games and fun for the entire family – tug-o-war, sack-races, water balloon toss, etc. For details, contact (253) 237-2811.

**JULY 14 IRISH RACES** – Irish Day at the Races at Emerald Downs is Sunday, July 14 at the racetrack in Au-



THE VERY FIRST Seattle Gaels team which played Vancouver at John Hendry Park in July 1979. The Gaels will celebrate their 40th anniversary with a GAA tournament and other events in Seattle on June 7-8.

## SEATTLE GAELS' 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Founded in 1979, the Seattle Gaels will celebrate their 40th Anniversary with an all-day Gaelic Football, Hurling and Camogie Tournament at Seattle's Magnuson Park on Saturday, June 8 and with various evening events on Friday and Saturday, June 7-8.

The highlight will be a function on Saturday evening, June 8, at the Marriott Hotel on Seattle's waterfront.

The team's first coach, Tommy Jordan, has already booked his ticket to fly back from Australia to attend.

For all the details, visit the Seattle Gaels on Facebook or go to <http://bit.ly/2V5Vs0x>.

Gaelic Football was played sporadically in Seattle from the 1920s to the 1960s, but other than some pick-up games at Irish picnics or a few games organized in the 1960s between teams from Seattle, San Francisco and Vancouver, by 1970 Gaelic football had become dormant in the Seattle area.

The game was revived in Seattle in 1979 when the Seattle Gaels GAA Club was formed and that year the Gaels played a few challenge games against the IISG team from Vancouver, B.C.

In 1980 a Tacoma team was organized and they joined Seattle and Vancouver to form the Northwest Divisional League.

That same year, 1980, the Seattle Gaels also affiliated

with the North American GAA for the first time and travelled to San Francisco's Polo Fields to play the San Francisco winners in the North American GAA Senior Football Quarter-Final.

Seattle lost at the end by just 6 points in their first ever official GAA game.

The Northwest Divisional League was later expanded to include teams from as far away as Calgary and Edmonton, and at various times included other teams from Portland and another Seattle team, Pearse Ogs, but those last two teams and Tacoma only lasted a few years.

However, the Northwest Champions would annually participate in the North American GAA Finals (the National Championship Tournament for Gaelic Games) and the Seattle Gaels have sent one or more teams to the Finals every year since 1994.

In 1997, for the first time the Seattle Gaels affiliated a women's Gaelic Football team, and in the years since have also affiliated Hurling and Camogie teams.

Officially a program of the Irish Heritage Club, the Seattle Gaels GAA are more than just a sporting organization, but are a key component in the cultural landscape of Seattle's Irish community, helping to promote a sense of Irish identity and belonging.

Over the past 40 years, the Gaels have played a significant role in the promotion of Irish activities in the Seattle area. They should be very proud of what they have accomplished and long may they prosper!

burn. Coupons for free admissions and free race programs will be e-mailed the end of June or contact: [races@irishclub.org](mailto:races@irishclub.org).

Irish Day features Irish music, stepdancers, free kids activities (pony rides, inflatable slide, face painters), etc., along with thoroughbred racing.

For reserved seating or dining reservations, or for more information, contact Emerald Downs.

**JULY 25 IRISH BASEBALL** – Irish Night at the Seattle Mariners is Thursday, July 25, vs. the Detroit Tigers at Seattle's T-Mobile Park.

Watch the Tara Academy Irish Dancers and the Seattle Police Pipes and Drums perform in center field about 30 minutes before the game which starts at 7:10 PM.

Reduced price tickets (\$29 View Level or \$41 Main Level) include a free Irish Night Mariners' cap. The cap and reduced prices are available only online at [mariners.com/Irish](http://mariners.com/Irish) (Promo Code: Irish).

**IRISH TRADE OFFICE** – Enterprise Ireland has announced the opening of a new trade office in Seattle to promote business connections between this area and Ireland.

The announcement was made at a

meeting between Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan, and the Irish Government Minister for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciarán Cannon.

"We are thrilled that Enterprise Ireland has chosen to expand its presence here in Seattle," said Mayor Durkan.

"We will continue working to strengthen Seattle's cultural and economic ties with Ireland, and we will continue to celebrate the incredible contributions of our Irish community to this great city."

Enterprise Ireland already has offices in New York, Chicago, Boston, Austin, and San Francisco.

**TRADE PARTNERS** – Washington State was the #1 source of merchandise exports to Ireland in 2017, and Ireland was the #1 customer of Washington State services exports in 2016, as estimated by The Trade Partnership in Washington, D.C.

Those stats are copied from the U.S.-Ireland Business Report published by the American Chamber of Commerce Ireland which devotes four pages to Seattle and its connections to Ireland. More details at [amcham.ie](http://amcham.ie).

**GAELIC-SPEAKING MAYOR** – Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan, who took some Irish language classes during a year

studying at University College Dublin, recently did a PSA greeting in Gaelic for Irish TV during Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish Language Week).

Here's the text of her message:

*Is mise Jenny Durkan, Mheara Seattle. Beannachtaí chuig Oileán Iathghlas na hÉireann ón gCathair Iathghlas! Tá súil agam go leanfaidh an caidreamh agus an comhpháirtíocht idir Éire agus Seattle – agus Washington state – sa bhliain atá romhainn, agus dar ndóigh sna blianta eile amach romhainn. Go raibh maith agaibh agus slán go fóill!*

Translation:

I am Jenny Durkan, Mayor of Seattle. Greetings to the Emerald Isle of Ireland from the Emerald City! I hope the relationship and cooperation between Ireland and Seattle – and Washington state – will continue in the next year, and of course in the years ahead. Many thanks and good bye for now!

## MISCELLANEOUS

• Celtic Woman, Ancient Land, at The Paramount Theatre, 7:30 PM, Friday, May 10;

• Ceol Cascadia Irish Music Week at the Evergreen State College in Olympia July 21-28 - details at [ceolcascadia.org](http://ceolcascadia.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 425-244-5147 or email [info@irishseattle.com](mailto:info@irishseattle.com)

P.O. Box 75123, Seattle, WA 98175 [www.irishseattle.com](http://www.irishseattle.com)



# Nancy Pelosi visits Ireland at crucial Brexit crossroads

Say what you like about British politicians who still advocate Brexit, but they know their worth.

Faced with the prospect of the U.K. participating in European Parliament elections this May if it does not leave the EU by then (as it certainly will not), Nigel Farage, leader of the Brexit Party, made the following threat: that he would get elected to it.

Prime Minister of the U.K. Theresa May couched her threat differently, but it amounted to something similar.

She offered to resign as prime minister if the Withdrawal Agreement she negotiated with the EU is passed through Westminster (it got hammered yet a third time on March 29).

What both Farage and May in effect were saying was: push ahead with Brexit because if you do not you will be stuck with us. British politics really is a sorry sight just now.

Writers have been making hay out of the crisis.

On March 29 the *Irish Times* enlisted about a dozen writers on Irish matters to air their views on Brexit.

The writers set about describing Britain's maestros who have led the charge to leave the EU.

The choice image came from poet Nick Laird who likened the consequence of Brexiters' efforts to Britain to "standing at the very edge of the pool, our hands tied behind our backs, pretending we're Olympic swimmers."

In addition to reducing Westminster, the "mother of parliaments," to a laughing stock, Brexit has also thoroughly fatigued the body politic; so much so that now, as the entire enterprise may be fading away like a storm that has uprooted nearly everything

## THE VIEW FROM IRELAND



By  
**MAURICE FITZPATRICK**

in sight, the dominant mood is not relief but a numbed awe at the wreckage.

The once efficient legislative body, Westminster Parliament, has become a zombie, incapable of animation either by those who advocate Brexit or by those who do not.

The parliament, where serious debate used to prevail, has completely disintegrated and its members have been warned to take extra security precautions in arriving and departing.

A serious politician like Speaker Nancy Pelosi blew like a cyclone through the fripperies of Brexiters on her recent trip to London and Dublin.

Speaker Pelosi was accompanied by Congressman Richie Neal, Chair of the Friends of Ireland caucus, who led the congressional delegation, which had as its central mission the articulation of the position on Brexit by the U.S. Congress.

The force of the Friends of Ireland caucus has been bolstered since earlier this year when Neal became the chair of the powerful Ways and Means Committee.

That status has enabled Neal to reinforce the agenda of the Friends of Ireland to maintain an open border in Ire-

land and to protect the Good Friday Agreement.

Strong statements of support during St. Patrick's Day in Washington this year were followed by a visit by Senator Chris Murphy to Dublin during which he voiced U.S. concern about Brexit and the need to protect the open border in Ireland.

Speaking in Dublin on March 22, Senator Murphy, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, gave an unequivocal guarantee of U.S. support to an open border.

He said that there was "no chance" that the U.K. would sign a trade deal with the U.S. and that "we can't compromise the sanctity of the Good Friday Agreement and folks in [the U.K.] parliament need to know that," adding that "it only takes a minority of senators to stop a trade agreement."

This set the tone for the Speaker's visit in mid-April. In an interview at the London School of Economics on Monday, April 15, Pelosi endorsed Murphy's stance and said, "If there would be any weakening of the Good Friday accords, there would be no chance whatsoever – a non-starter – for a U.S.-U.K. trade agreement."

"The Good Friday accord ended 700-years of conflict. It's not just about the geography though, this is not a treaty only: it's an ideal, it's a value."

"It's something that is a model to the world and we don't want that model to be something that can be bargained away in some other agreement."

The Speaker reiterated these commitments the following day in Dublin when she met members of the Irish cabinet.

Coming from the Speaker of the House, this was a shot across the bow of fantasists who believe that the U.K. can negotiate a better trade deal with the U.S. outside the E.U., and can do so while disregarding how important the Good Friday Agreement is to senior members of the U.S. congress.

Neal, in particular, is apt to remind people that the U.S. is a co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement.

Pelosi's intervention echoes directly back to the visits to Ireland of Speaker Tip O'Neill in 1979 and 1985.

Then, as now, the Speaker's comments on the British Government's responsibility for peace and stability in Ireland have been discomfiting for the British.

Theresa May made the questionable decision of not meeting the delegation of nine congressmen when they visited London.

Instead she took time out from her walking holiday in neighbouring Wales (some of her antagonists hoped that she would walk the length of the Great Wall of China instead) to speak to them by telephone.

Presumably this is May's way of laying the groundwork for a future trade deal with the U.S.?

Her reception for the delegation stands in contrast to the royal welcome that President Trump received in London last July.

Yet London's denialism is futile. While the British Government is betting on support from the White House for a trade deal, it cannot avoid, sooner or later, coming to a reckoning with the U.S. Congress.



POLITICIANS from across the U.K. and Ireland, including Arlene Foster, Mary-Lou McDonald and Michelle O'Neill, attended the funeral of Lyra McKee.

## Northern Ireland powersharing talks to resume with all political parties

**BELFAST** – The British and Irish Governments have announced a new talks process, aimed at restoring devolution in Northern Ireland would begin on May 7.

An agreement has been reached to establish a new round of talks involving all the main political parties in Northern Ireland, Theresa May and Leo Varadkar have said in a joint statement.

Negotiations are expected to take place after local council elections in Northern Ireland on May 2. All the main parties will be invited.

The move comes after politicians were publicly challenged by a priest at the funeral of journalist Lyra McKee over why it had taken the 29-year-old's murder to force politicians to unite.

The British prime minister and taoiseach said in a joint statement they were "determined to work together to ensure this process comes to a successful conclusion."

The statement said, "In coming together with other political leaders in St. Anne's Cathedral to pay tribute to Lyra McKee, we gave expression to the clear will and determination of all of the people of these islands to reject violence and to support peace and a better future for everyone in Northern Ireland."

"We also heard the unmistakable message to all political leaders that people across Northern Ireland want to see a new momentum for political progress. We agree that what is now needed is

actions and not just words from all of us who are in positions of leadership."

It is the latest attempt to restore the power sharing agreement after the Stormont Assembly collapsed in Northern Ireland more than two years ago.

Sinn Féin collapsed the coalition government in January 2017 in protest at the DUP's handling of a green energy scandal.

Since then, several rounds of talks have failed, with the two parties failing to find a compromise on a number of outstanding issues including Irish language rights and the legalisation of same-sex marriage.

For almost 10 years, the DUP and Sinn Féin worked together in government under a system of mandatory coalition, where unionist and nationalist parties shared power.

But in late 2016, a row developed over the DUP's handling of a flawed green energy scheme that could cost the taxpayer £490 million: the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme.

On January 9, 2017, Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness resigned as deputy first minister, citing the DUP's conduct around RHI as the main reason.

That meant DUP leader Arlene Foster lost her job as first minister and triggered the collapse of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

## 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.

— PJMK, MJK, CC, CB, KLS



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# At journalist's Belfast funeral, priest asks 'why in God's name' it took a murder for politicians to come together

BELFAST – A priest at the funeral of Lyra McKee in Belfast on Wednesday, April 24 asked “why in God’s name” it took her murder to bring politicians to a point where they may seek to resolve their differences.

Father Martin Magill, a friend of McKee and of her north Belfast family, spoke about the murdered journalist's qualities when he delivered the homily at her ecumenical funeral service in St. Anne's Church of Ireland Cathedral.

She was shot dead by members of the New IRA while covering a disturbance in the Creggan area of Derry on the evening of Thursday, April 18.

The chief mourners at the funeral were McKee's mother Joan, her partner Sara Canning, her sisters Joan, Nichola and Mary, her brothers Gary and David, nieces and nephews and great-niece Ava.

Some hundreds of people gathered outside St. Anne's clapped in solidarity as the coffin was carried into the cathedral. The wreaths at the funeral included a heart of pink and white flowers and wreaths made up of the rainbow colours symbolising the LGBT community.

The funeral attendance included President Michael D. Higgins, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, British Prime Minister Theresa May, Northern Secretary Karen Bradley, British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, DUP leader Arlene Foster, Sinn Féin leaders Mary Lou McDonald and Michelle O'Neill, SDLP leader Colum Eastwood, Ulster Unionist Party leader Robin Swann, Alliance leader Naomi Long, Tánaiste Simon Coveney, the SNP leader in the House of Commons Ian Blackford, and PSNI chief constable George Hamilton.

Magill spoke about Lyra's warmth, her love of her family, writing, and Harry Potter, of her “determined doggedness,” and of her love of life and fun.

However, Magill also had stern words for her New IRA killers and also for the politicians who have contributed to the political paralysis and pessimism in Northern Ireland.

“Many of us will be praying that Lyra's death in its own way will not have been in vain and will contribute in some way to building peace here.

“Since Thursday night we have seen the coming together of many people in various places and the unifying of the community against violence,” said Magill.

“I commend our political leaders for standing together in Creggan on Good Friday.

“I am, however, left with a question: Why in God's name does it take the death of a 29-year-old woman with her whole life in front of her to get us to this point?”

The priest received a spontaneous standing ovation after delivering that challenge although it was reported that politicians were slow to stand during the applause and finally rose awkwardly to their feet.

Afterwards, he said, “The people, in a sense, really put the pressure on in the cathedral to stand.



LYRA MCKEE'S partner Sara Canning (L), reacts as pallbearers carry the coffin of journalist Lyra McKee as they leave St. Anne's Cathedral in Belfast on April 24 following her funeral.

Obviously the politicians realised, ‘Oh goodness, everybody behind us is standing, we need to move,’ and they literally moved because people had moved.”

Father Magill added, “I dare to hope that Lyra's murder on Holy Thursday night can be the doorway to a new beginning. I detect a deep desire for this.”

He quoted one of McKee's friends in Derry who said, “We have had enough. There is a younger generation coming up in the town and they don't need guns put in their hands.

“They need jobs, they need a better health service and education. They need a life, not a gun put in their hands.”

To those who had any part in her murder, Magill said, “I encourage you to reflect on Lyra McKee, journalist and

writer, as a powerful example of ‘The pen is mightier than the sword’. I plead with you to take the road of non-violence to achieve your political ends.

“To those still intent on violence, I ask you to listen to the majority of the people on your beloved island of Ireland who are calling on you to stop.”

McKee's mother, sisters, brothers and her partner issued a statement before the funeral acknowledging “the outpouring of support and love we have witnessed these past few days.”

“We as a family know that the whole community has been touched by the events of Thursday night and that many are rightly angry,” they said. “Lyra's answer would have been simple, the only way to overcome hatred and intolerance is with love, understanding and kindness.”

## ‘Informers will be executed’: chilling graffiti painted near spot where Lyra McKee was killed

DERRY – Pro-IRA graffiti has appeared in Derry with a chilling warning against helping the police.

Painted on a wall, one message reads “Informers will be executed,” and another says “IRA here to stay.”

Another message includes a picture of a rat, with the message “Informers will be shot. IRA,” and another says “RUC Informers: They will forget about you, we won't. IRA.”

The slogans appeared early on the morning of May 2 in the Creggan area, metres from where journalist Lyra McKee was killed on April 18.

She was shot by a dissident republican linked to the New IRA who fired at police lines during disturbances over the Easter weekend.

Pro-IRA graffiti which had been painted over in the days after McKee's murder has been restored, saying the IRA “aren't done” and is an “undefeated army.”

The new graffiti comes as the PSNI offered anonymity for anyone in the community who comes forward with

evidence about the death of McKee or the New IRA.

Police have made a number of arrests and released images of the suspected gunman before and after the killing in Derry in a bid to encourage witnesses to come forward.

Detectives say more than 140 people have already come forward with information, videos and images from the unrest.

Complete anonymity, including giving evidence behind a screen and using voice altering technology, have been offered for anyone called to give evidence at a trial.

Crimestoppers has offered a reward of £10,000 for information leading to the conviction of those responsible for the murder.

Kevin Campbell, Sinn Féin councillor and a Creggan resident, said the people of the area had sent a message to the perpetrators and will not be deterred.

“It's an absolute insult to the memory of Lyra McKee, who was murdered by these people,” he said.



THE LANDMARK Free Derry corner has been repainted to reflect revulsion felt at the killing of Lyra McKee.

## Free Derry Corner repainted after Lyra McKee murder

DERRY – The landmark Free Derry Corner has been repainted to reflect revulsion felt at the killing of Lyra McKee.

The 29-year-old journalist was shot dead by indiscriminate fire during violence in the city on the evening of Thursday, April 18.

The famous civil rights-era slogan on a gable wall is regularly altered to reflect community sentiment in the Bogside estate.

The city's Catholic bishop has said the nationalist community needs to be liberated from dissident republicans blamed for McKee's shooting.

A message at Free Derry Corner said, “Not in our name, RIP Lyra” with a heart painted beside it.

Police arrested two teenagers who they suspect are members of the dissident republican New IRA involved in shooting the young journalist in the head. They were later released without charge.

A gunman aiming to kill police hit McKee when he fired indiscriminately during disturbances in the Creggan estate.

Bishop Donal McKeown told BBC Radio Ulster's Sunday Sequence programme, “The one liberation they require in that community is liberation from Saoradh.”

Saoradh, translating to liberation in Irish, is a grouping which has the support of the dissident republican group the New IRA.

Bishop McKeown added, “We don't want to be labelled with a reputation that comes from a small group that represents a small number of people but is actually a danger to all of us.”

Floral tributes were piled up at the lamppost where McKee fell, including one written to “beautiful Lyra” from her partner Sara Canning.

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Detective Superintendent Jason Murphy said since the shooting

there has been a sea-change in community attitudes towards the gunmen.

The New IRA is an amalgam of armed groups opposed to the peace process and it recently claimed responsibility for parcel bombs sent to London and Glasgow in March.

Murphy conceded there remains fear of reprisals from the shadowy gunmen for giving information to police.

Police believe the violence was orchestrated in response to an earlier search by officers aimed at averting imminent trouble associated with the anniversary of the Easter Rising.

Around 50 petrol bombs were thrown in the confrontation and two cars were burned out.

McKee was reported to be a prodigiously talented journalist, one of the brightest and best of her generation, with a body of work that included ground-breaking research into suicide in Northern Ireland.

She was a regular contributor to the *Belfast Telegraph* and in a Valentine's Day feature, she talked about the great happiness she had found with “the love of her life,” the young woman with whom she recently moved to Derry to live with.

On the professional front, too, as well as her journalism, she was enjoying success and had signed a book deal with Faber & Faber.

On the night of the shooting, she was doing her job, covering riots in the Bogside. Her last tweet reads, “Derry tonight. Absolute madness.”

Gail Walker editor of *The Belfast Telegraph* wrote, “That Lyra should have been shot dead at a time of such joy, when life was just beginning to really come together for her, is the cruellest of ironies.

“The loss of such a journalistic talent is immense, but the loss of such a genuinely lovely, warm and empathic person is a huge and enduring heartbreak for her family and partner and my thoughts are with them all.”

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# The untold story of Wales' Joan of Arc

**M**OST people will have heard the names Joan of Arc or Boudica. But not many might know about one of history's most fearless and ferocious females – Gwenllian ferch Gruffydd.

Some say she was the original Maid Marion or female Braveheart – but she was the original heroine of Wales.

Heavily pregnant and with children in tow, she, alongside her husband, would ride again and again into battle to protect their land from Norman invasion.

Even after her brutal death, described by one historian as an “insult” to Wales, the words “revenge for Gwenllian” became a battle cry across the country – inspiring its own revolt.

The daughter of the King of the Gwynedd and his wife Angharad, Gwenllian ferch Gruffydd was born in Anglesey.

Growing up, she quickly became known for her intelligence and beauty, but was far from a typical princess.

At 16-years-old her father received a visit from two men – Prince Gruffydd of Deheubarth, now much of south west Wales, and his brother Hywel.

Immediately, Gwenllian and the prince fell in love, he impressed with her sword fighting skills as much as everything else.

In her book *Gwenllian ferch Gruffydd, the Warrior Princess of Deheubarth*, historian Laurel Rockefeller writes, “In the year eleven fifteen Gwenllian's hope became reality.

“In a private wedding in the castle chapel she wed her prince at last, cementing in marriage the alliance between Gwynedd and Deheubarth and making both prince and princess the happiest of all men and women in Wales.”

From there it wasn't long before children followed – Morgan, Maelgwyn, Owain, Maredudd, and Rhys ap Gruffydd.

By the year 1130 the prince and princess had also welcomed twin daughters Nest and Gwladus.

However, with the growing fear of Norman invasion, there was little time to enjoy an idyllic family life in Dinefwr.

Instead, the family were often forced into thick woodlands and mountains, and from there conduct raid after raid on the enemy.

Rockefeller said “Gruffydd and Gwenllian fought together for 20 years with her children in tow. She would be eight months pregnant. That's the strength of a Welsh woman.”

By using a guerilla style campaign, both Gwenllian and Gruffydd were able to attack Norman and Flemish settlements invading the kingdom.

After redistributing the goods and money, it is said that the pair gained a reputation similar to Robin Hood and Maid Marion.

In 1135 the opportunity came for the family to take back control of their lands. After the death of King Henry I of England, both his nephew and daughter began fighting for the crown,

the most simple of weapons and no armour to speak of.

“Only her sons Morgan and Maelgwyn possessed formal training in warfare.”

Despite the odds, Gwenllian continued to prepare for battle. She divided her forces – entrusting half her men with Welsh chieftain Gruffydd ap Llewelyn.

However, marching straight to Maurice, the chieftain betrayed his leader and revealed the location of his princess and the army.

With no other choice, Gwenllian felt she had to take action. Along with her sons Morgan and Maelgwyn, she led her army out of the forest to attack the stronghold at Kidwelly Castle.

However, vastly outnumbered, her and her men found themselves overwhelmed.

“Helpless, Gwenllian could only watch as her son Morgan was impaled before receiving a blow to the neck.

Rockefeller writes, “A knight broke apart Gwenllian's shield with his mace, breaking her arm. Maelgwyn rushed to his mother, blocking with his sword

*“A knight broke apart Gwenllian's shield with his mace, breaking her arm. Maelgwyn rushed to his mother, blocking with his sword the blow meant to kill her and suffering great injury in the process.”*

taking their eyes away from activity over the border.

By the following year, tension in Wales had begun to rise.

On New Year's Day 1136, Gwenllian and Gruffydd woke to the sound of alarm bells ringing through Dinefwr Castle.

At Carn Goch – six miles away – the battle was already raging as 1,000 Welshman marched up north to take back farms and pastures previously lost to the Normans.

In what became known as the Battle of Llŵchwr, it is thought the Normans lost around 500 men, thanks in part to the actions of Gwenllian, Gruffydd and their son Morgan.

By January, the people of Deheubarth were preparing for war. Leaving Gwenllian in charge, Gruffydd travelled north to Gwenllian's homeland, ready to help her father rid their land of the enemy.

Meanwhile, Norman survivors, led by Lord Maurice de Londres, sheltered in Kidwelly Castle.

For two weeks, time passed as Princess Gwenllian continued to rule her kingdom.

One day, however, a messenger arrived with the news – more Normans had set sail headed for west Wales.

With Maurice de Londres desperate for revenge, it was only a matter of time before they moved, aided by thousands of men sent from English barons.

It was time to act.

“One week later Princess Gwenllian inspected her forces,” Laurel wrote.

“In all of Deheubarth only two to three hundred men and women were strong enough to answer her call to arms.

“The rest of her people were too weak from the bitter winter and the recent famine created by the Normans to be able to assist her.

“Among those before her, most were farmers and shepherds armed only with



the blow meant to kill her and suffering great injury in the process.

“Finally only Princess Gwenllian and Prince Maelgwyn remained among the living.”

With their hands tied behind their backs, Maelgwyn and Gwenllian were lined up in front of Maurice.

Replacing chivalry and custom with a burning need for revenge, a log was

brought out to the site where the princess was executed on the spot.

Rockefeller said, “It was against chivalry to kill a woman. When you captured a king you were supposed to ransom them like as happened with Richard the Lionheart.

“But they decided to take a log out of Kidwelly and they beheaded her with an axe. It was just layer upon layer of insult.”

According to legend a spring welled up on the spot where Gwenllian died – now known as Maes Gwenllian.

Up and down the country the battle cry went up – “*Ddail Achos Gwenllian*,” or “revenge for Gwenllian.”

As news of her death spread, the Welsh vowed revenge, culminating in the Gwent Revolt of 1136.

Before long, armies took back Ceredigion, while Gwenllian's brothers wrestled control of Llanfihangel, Aberystwyth, and Llanbadarn.

Laurel said, “She was a vital part of cultural history, as much as Boudica was. She deserves to be known as one of the heroines of Wales.”

## Birdwatching, off to Ibiza, the EU elections, and watching a comedian become president

### POSTCARD FROM BOURNEMOUTH



hawks and falcons on a regular basis for three months we can hopefully persuade the gulls to go.

Raising a family in an area where there are dangerous predators flying around might be a bad idea and consequently they will pack their bags and leave.

What I find remarkable is that with all the modern technology, the incredible hi-tech advances that man has achieved over the centuries, there is nothing to scare off seagulls and we have to employ the services of a man using techniques from the Middle Ages.

Watching the performance is fascinating. When the falconer arrives he stands in our parking area with a peregrine falcon on his arm.

When the gulls see it there is an almighty amount of screeching and they fly off in all directions.

You can almost hear them saying “Oh my God, get me out of here,” but not all of them fly off and I can only assume that the ones that remain are the birds with eggs in a nest.

They just stand in pairs on the roof top, watching every move the falcon makes, really quite brave.

The peregrine does not attack them but flies back and forth from the man's arm to different balconies for about an hour.

There is an eerie stillness, not a squawk

from the seagulls nor the falcon, but the remaining gulls are motionless, they just stand there staring at the intruder.

The area remained peaceful for the remainder of the day but by 2 AM the following morning it seemed that word had got round that the tough guys had gone and it was party time again.

We do not know how successful this will be as there are differing reports, but hopefully our feathered friends will find another night club. Only time will tell, and in the meantime I have got my ear plugs ready.

Next week my wife and I are off to Ibiza, one of the Balearic Islands which I am told is beautiful, but I have also heard that it is a great favourite among younger people.

Parts of the island are famous for their night clubs where you can party all night. I am just hoping that we are going to the quiet part.

The Easter break gave everybody a chance to forget about Brexit for a short while but in the next few weeks the elections for the European parliament will take place.

As a result, 73 lucky British winners will receive £91,000 salary plus handsome expenses, to sit in a parliament that we should have left two months ago.

However the big political story was that Volodymyr Zelensky, a 41-year-old comedian with no discernible policies has won the election to become the president of the Ukraine.

The media had a field day, but I saw nothing exceptional in this because in our houses of parliament we have 650 comedians with no discernible policies, and it seems that people have only recently noticed.

All for now.

Best wishes,  
Elfan.