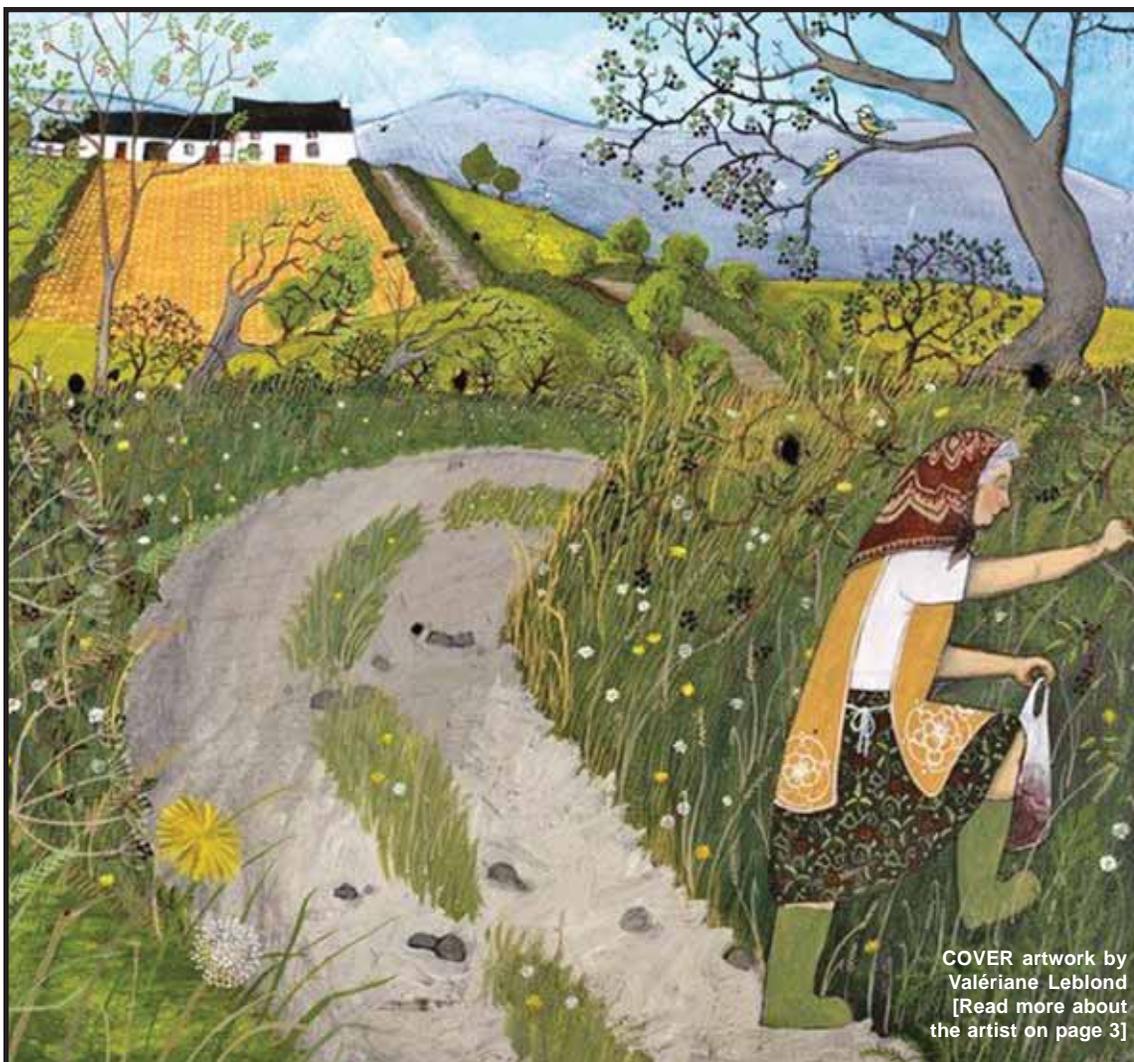


# the celtic connection

ISSUE 28 VOLUME 6

Proudly Serving Celts in North America Since 1991

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2019



COVER artwork by Valériane Leblond  
[Read more about the artist on page 3]

## AUTUMN EQUINOX BLESSINGS

### Twilight Steals the Autumn Light Inward into the Season of Samhain

LEAVES toughened through the summer season double their grip upon stems. Numinous light at twilight and cooler temperatures signal the growing season has reached its endgame.

To those attending to the natural world, the autumnal equinox arrives on Monday, September 23, 2019 at 12:50 AM PDT and the Samhain moon is not so far away.

Anyone who routinely peruses this space will recognize these words of autumn. As age and history are laid down, the restlessness of the season carries on, as steadfast as anything can be on this warming planet.

The autumnal equinox is a point of balance between the fall season that began at Lughnasadh on August 1 and the winter season, and new Celtic year, which begins on November 1.

For the Celts, Samhain, which begins at dusk on October 31, marks the end of the year. It is the Celtic "New Year's Eve." Both Lughnasadh and Samhain

By CYNTHIA WALLENTINE

are lunar fire festivals, while the equinox pays respect to our daytime star.

While we may look at these Celtic dates as slightly out of kilter, they accompany us naturally through our physical and psychic lives.

November, as the Celtic year turns, is a time of deep repose, of thought, of plans gone to ground, and a brooding sky that covers the wintered landscape of mind and soil.

The new Celtic year is ushered in by Samhain, or what we call "Halloween." For the young or the fearful of any age, Samhain rightly brings a shiver in the shadows. But those with a generous heart need not fear the tide that rises on that night.

The deeper home of Samhain is the Féile na Marbh, the feast that is set out for relatives and ancestors passed.

It is not a grisly tradition; it is gentle and full of respect for they who are no longer with us. For families and individuals who forego the civilities, well, there are plenty of bogies in the shadows of the soul that will take their due in good measure.

With age and time, everything on this good earth passes. In the bright light of the Samhain bonfire – or a dusty candle – eternity flickers for those who draw near, whether or not they hold human form.

Not a one of us knows how far into our journey we are, we only have this moment, and the plans, and familiar faces that keep the abstraction of death at bay.

In the Samhain season, form ideas, nurture your own story and those of the heroes you admire, and seek to allow into life the gift that only you can offer. It is never too late.

Bright blessings of the Samhain season to you and yours.

## Inside This Issue



TURMOIL IN THE U.K. as Brexit continues to divide and confuse as British PM Boris Johnson vows to leave the European Union on October 31 deal-or-no deal. Read more pages 6, 8, 18]



CONTROVERSY follows after U.S. Vice President Mike Pence visits Ireland. He is pictured above meeting with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar at Farmleigh House in Dublin. Also pictured on either side are Karen Pence and Dr. Matthew Barrett. [See page 16]

ONE OF MY FONDEST WISHES WAS REALIZED THIS SUMMER WHEN I WAS ABLE TO VISIT GROSSE-ÎLE AND THE IRISH MEMORIAL IN QUEBEC.

By Catholine Butler

READ ABOUT THE JOURNEY ON PAGE 10

## WIN FREE TICKETS

Win two preferred seating tickets to your choice of one show in The ACT Art Centre's "Enjoy the Celtic Spirit" (see page 3 for details). Mark your entry "The Act." Enter by September 17.

You could win a pair (2) of tickets to see Skerryvore from Scotland at Centennial Theatre, North Vancouver on Saturday, October 5, or McPherson Playhouse, Victoria on Sunday, October 6 (see page 3 for details). Mark your entry "Skerryvore" and specify which show you wish to attend – Vancouver or Victoria. Enter by September 20.

You could win a pair (2) tickets to Delta Police Pipe Band Celtic Gala on Friday, October 18 at South Delta Baptist Church, Tsawwassen (see page 7 for details). Mark your entry "Delta Police Pipe Band." Enter by September 27.

All entries must include name and daytime phone number and be sent by e-mail only to: cbutler@telus.net (only one entry per person).

Publication  
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## IRISH NEWCOMERS' INFORMATION AND NETWORKING SEMINAR

**When:** Saturday, September 21, 2019 - 2:00pm - 5:00pm

**Where:** BCIT Downtown Campus, 555 Seymour St, Vancouver

Free networking seminar for all Irish newcomers; learn from an HR specialist about job hunting, changing your Irish CV into a Canadian resume, information interviews and tips for finding a job - Network with established members of the Irish community; make new friends and pick up other useful tips about settling in Vancouver. Social gathering afterwards in Donnellans Irish Pub.

To register for this free seminar, go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NewcomersSeminar210919>



# Féile Bríde: Coming to Vancouver on St. Brigid's Day 2020

VANCOUVER – So many Irish women have a connection to St. Brigid who is known in Ireland as 'Mary of the Gael'. She is also considered to be Ireland's other patron saint.

Not only does Brigid the saint have a long history, but according to the surviving mythology, the goddess Brigid was also a powerful deity and the patroness of healing arts, fertility, poetry and music, prophecy and agriculture.

Over the centuries, the stories of two women named Brigid (or Brigit or Bride or Brighid) have become intertwined in an intricate Celtic knot of myth and miracle as both a Celtic goddess and a Christian saint of that name have personified essential spiritual values of their eras.

Now, the first annual "Féile Bríde: Celebrating the Women of Ireland" is coming to Canada's west coast on Saturday, February 1, 2020.

Organizers are very excited to present this on Saturday, February 1 at the Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre campus in downtown Vancouver.

The initiative is part of the Irish Government's effort to develop Ireland's reputation on the world stage through culture, under the Global Ireland 2025 programme announced in 2018.

It has become a celebration of Irish women around the world – from London to Warsaw to Washington – and celebrates the talent and creativity of Irish women with art exhibitions, music, poetry, dance.

In Vancouver the festival is a joint effort between the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C., the Irish Women's Network of BC and Simon Fraser University.

A highlight of Féile Bríde will be the evening address by keynote speaker Ailbhe Smyth – a leading Irish activist and former head of Women's Studies at University College Dublin.

Ailbhe was one of *Time Magazine's* 'Most Influential People' of 2019 for her work as Co-Director of Together For Yes and Convenor of Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment in Ireland.

She was in Vancouver earlier this year when she attended the UN Women Deliver conference and her return will be eagerly anticipated by all who heard her speak during her visit at a reception organized by the Irish Women's Network and the Irish Consulate.

In addition, the festival will feature a series of smaller sessions throughout the day from 12 noon to 4 PM which will include a wonderful Brigid cross-making workshop presented by talented Irish artist Deirdre Keohane.

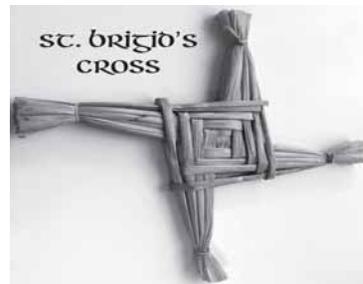
Dara Culhane, Professor with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Simon Fraser University, will present another session entitled "Yours Always: Irish Women Writing the Diaspora." [See sidebar for more details.]

An exhibit of inspiring women of Ireland will be presented with 'Blazing A Trail: Lives and Legacies of Irish Diaspora Women'. Currently on display at the EPIC museum in Dublin, the Vancouver exhibit will also focus on some extraordinary Canadian women of the Irish diaspora.

Additional workshop sessions are yet



AILBHE SMYTH a leading Irish activist and one of *Time's* 'Most Influential People' of 2019 will be the keynote speaker at the festival.



to be confirmed, so be sure to check back for more details in the next issue of *The Celtic Connection* or watch the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C. Facebook page for updates.

'Féile Bríde: Celebrating the Women of Ireland' is supported by a grant provided through the Irish Emigrant Support Programme with the Department of Foreign Affairs, along with assistance from the Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver.

Organizers are seeking local sponsorship to help support bridge funding for this event. If you or your organization can assist with sponsorship, please e-mail: [maura@telus.net](mailto:maura@telus.net), or call (778) 238-1522.

[Féile Bríde is also seeking volunteers who can assist with advance promotion and co-ordination. If you wish to participate, please e-mail: [maura@telus.net](mailto:maura@telus.net) or [irishwomensnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:irishwomensnetwork@gmail.com).]

## Féile Bríde: Celebrating the Women of Ireland

### Yours Always: Irish Women Writing the Diaspora

By DARA CULHANE

VANCOUVER – For many centuries now, Irish people in the millions have emigrated and travelled, settling in cities and towns around the world, all the while staying in touch with family and friends in Ireland.

Across the Irish diaspora, women write and read "letters home" celebrating births and grieving deaths, suffering war and dreaming of peace, exchanging news and spreading gossip, laughing and crying, staying in touch, generation after generation.

This workshop invites eight women to co-create a 90 minute "Readers Theatre" performance – tentatively titled "Yours Always" – where we will invite people gathered to celebrate St. Brigid's Day in Vancouver to join us as we read aloud from our "letters home."

Letters may be from long ago; or, they may be from yesterday; or, they may be postcards, birthday cards, wedding announcements, newspaper clippings; or, they may be photos with notes written on the back; or, they may be emails or texts; or...

The theme of the workshop and performance will be sharing how Irish women as writers and readers of letters home forge and maintain enduring connections over time: creating the ties that bind, bridging the lines that divide, lives lived at home and in the diaspora.

Application to participate in this workshop will be open from October 1 to October 31 and selection will be made on the basis of seeking samples of letters home that together offer illustrations of correspondence over time, from long ago to now. No performance experience is required.

In your application please indicate the dates of the letters you would want to work with, whether they are from and/or to Ireland, what form they take (letters, postcards, emails, etc.), and a brief summary of their content.

Anticipating that each participant will read for about 10 minutes, you will want to have approximately 4-5 pages of text to read from.

We will meet for three hours in December 2019, share our "letters home" and our ideas for presenting a 90-minute Readers Theatre performance.

All ideas are welcome. Each participant will leave this meeting with a rehearsal plan to work with between December and February.

For more information, or to register, e-mail Dara Culhane at: [2019vivavoce@gmail.com](mailto:2019vivavoce@gmail.com).

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## IRISH SENIORS' HOLIDAY LUNCH

Come and enjoy the holidays the Irish way, with good friends, great food, and traditional festive cheer!

Special guests: Consul General Frank Flood and his wife Orla NI Bhroilthe

**Thursday, December 12, 2019**  
**11:30 am to 2:00 p.m.**

Hilton Vancouver Metrotown Hotel  
6083 McKay Avenue, Burnaby

Parking: Free underground for 3 hours or Skytrain only one block away

Entertainment by Pat Chessell Group; door prizes and 50-50 draw

**Ticket cost \$20**

To reserve a seat: mail cheque (made out to the Irish Women's Network of BC) to Aileen Cleary, 986 East 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver BC, V5V 1N6 or pay by e-transfer to [irishwomensnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:irishwomensnetwork@gmail.com)

For more info: email [aileen1431@gmail.com](mailto:aileen1431@gmail.com) or phone 604-727-8590

This lunch is supported by a grant through the



Wine sponsored by Willow and Laura Donnellan. Prizes donated by UBC Extended Learning, The Celtic Treasure Chest, and Donnellan's Irish Pub



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# An immersive Irish language weekend set for Vancouver this October

By **BARRA Ó SCANLÁIN**  
**VANCOUVER**—You might remember reading a headline like this back in the December/January issue. We've finally come circle and are now gearing up for the first event of its kind to be held in Western Canada.

Beginning Friday, October 4, and finishing up on Sunday October 6, with the support of the Consulate General of Ireland, a weekend of Irish classes, workshops, and social events, designed to give you an immersive experience will take place in the heart of downtown Vancouver.

This kind of weekend has been held all over the U.S., and the eastern provinces of Canada, and they attract learners from near and far.

Anyone who grew up in Ireland reading this might find it hard to believe, but learners in North America are willing to travel to have contact with the Irish language, as they can often be learning alone for months before they have a chance to practise their *cuid Gaeilge*.

This weekend will offer three levels of language classes. Usually this means that *Leibhéal one* caters to those with no Irish; *Leibhéal two* for those who are at the "speech barrier" phase (i.e. they know they have words but struggle to get them out!); and *Leibhéal three* will be for those who have a certain level of fluency and want to practise their speech and maybe work through some tricky grammar points.

On that note, we will be focusing on the *focal labhartha* (the spoken word), but as anyone who's learned a language will know, you can only avoid grammar for so long.

As grammar points come up, and where the teachers deem it relevant, they will be dealt with so subtly that you will leave the class not even realising you just learned what a "verbal noun" is!

We are lucky to have Síne Nic an Aillí

of Conradh na Gaeilge travelling from Dublin for the weekend.

Síne will give a workshop on Cultúr Club, Conradh na Gaeilge's collection of initiatives aimed at helping Irish people abroad to celebrate their sense of Irish identity, through language, culture, etc.

This will be most useful for those based in Vancouver but anyone travelling will also benefit from the workshop.

You can expect plenty of social activities over the weekend too, so even if you aren't taking part in the classes and want to get part of the immersive experience, stay tuned to hear about

the nightly activities (think *ceol agus craic*).

The cost is \$160 per person and includes classes, teaching materials, Saturday night dinner, and Friday night reception.

For more information, and updates on the weekend October 4-6, check out [bit.ly/irishvancouver](http://bit.ly/irishvancouver), or e-mail [gaelgewesterncanada@gmail.com](mailto:gaelgewesterncanada@gmail.com). *Slán go fóill!*

**READ MORE** history of the Irish language in Canada on pages 14 & 15 this issue.

## ABOUT OUR COVER ARTIST

**COVER** artist Valériane Leblond is a French and Quebecer artist who has lived in Wales since 2007.

She was raised in Angers, France, and went to live in this beautiful country after graduating in literature in Nantes. She lives in an old farmhouse near Aberystwyth with her three sons, several cats and too many chickens.

Valériane has a little studio at home where she paints while listening to French radio and sipping posh tea. In winter the wood-burner is lit and she has a cat or two purring by her side. In summer she struggles to stay indoors and paint more during the evening.

Her artworks often deals with the idea of belonging, how people inhabit the land, what makes the place they call home. Most of her works have details and sub-stories that you may notice if you look longer.

She also illustrates picture books, which is a great way of combining her two passions, books and painting.

To learn more about Valériane and her beautiful artwork, visit her website: [www.valeriane-leblond.eu](http://www.valeriane-leblond.eu).



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## ENJOY THE CELTIC SPIRIT!



**Leahy**  
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 Saturday, September 21, 2019 | 8pm



**The Rainbow Fish**  
 Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia  
 Saturday, September 28, 2019 | 3pm



**Anne of Green Gables - The Ballet™**  
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# After a great summer filled with music festivals it's onward now into the Fall 2019 lineup

**W**E JUST spent a week or so in Haarlem, Netherlands, after taking in the 45th annual Tønder Festival in Denmark. What a great weekend that was!

We were guests of **Folk Spot Denmark**, a showcase of Danish Trad with four bands on each of two nights. We had the rest of the weekend to enjoy the other festival acts, including **Imar**, **Dervish**, **Hudson Taylor**, **Irish Mythen**, **John Smith**, **Julie Fowlis**, **Kate Rusby**, and **Breabach**.

We arrived at the southern town of Tønder on Thursday evening August 22, having been driven down from Copenhagen – about four hours – and having checked into our B&B.

We were just in time to hear PEI's **The East Pointers** rocking the open air stage in fine warm evening weather. (In fact it was pretty hot all weekend. Very unusual for Tønder apparently).

We then headed over the hill to the tiny Pumphouse venue to hear **The Unwanted**. This Irish trio features **Cathy Jordan** (Dervish) on vocals, guitars and bodhran, and her former bandmate **Shamie O'Dowd** on fiddle and guitar and vocals, plus **Rick Epping**, an American exiled in Ireland for many years now, on harmonica, concertina and vocals.

They released a superb CD called *Pay Day* that week. (Dervish released *The Great Irish Songbook* a few months ago, drawing scant praise from the likes of *Roots* magazine – which sadly folded this summer after 40 years – for the predictable choice of material. Going through the motions was the gist of what was said. I think that's a bit harsh, although it's definitely not my favourite Dervish album).

Hearing this "Unwanted" trio explains a lot; Cathy must be rightly proud of the little combo, and the new CD – their second, over a decade since the debut recording – is superb. A really compelling exploration of the common roots of Irish and American folk song.

Next we caught a set by Danish band **Folkeklubben** on that big open air stage. They seem to be a sort of Danish Blue Rodeo; very catchy songs and well-loved by locals.

We rounded off the evening with a rousing set by **Imar** in the big tent 1 (which holds around 2,000. It was packed and the band was received rapturously!).

Just couldn't stay awake long enough to hear Cajun music from **Joel Savoy**, **Jesse Lege & Kelli Jones** in the Spiegelent.

For us, Friday kicked off at noon with a superb set by **Kate Rusby** and her fine band in Tent 1, although we did catch a couple of songs by Dublin's wonderful folk / pop combo **Hudson Taylor** on the open air stage.

The festival had invited 5,000 Danish school kids for free that day! The huge arena space was packed. What a great idea!

We met up with our friends Barry and Brigitte from Aalborg for lunch and explored the site with its six stages and copious amounts of restaurants and bars – all of them erected for the festival, which swells the town's population from around 3,000 to over 13,000 throughout the event.

Then it was time for Folk Spot Denmark part 1, with **Phonix** (bass clarinet, accordion, drums and vocals) and six dancers, followed by the lovely female fiddle/viola/cello trio **Vesselii**, the mellow tones of **Rannok** (fiddle and piano), and the exceptionally dramatic Norwegian singer **Viik** – backed by two drummers, fiddle, acoustic bass, cittern and accordion.

At times they sound like Loreena McKennitt, at others she tears the place apart with cattle calls. So very dramatic and exciting!

Next up for us was a great set by **Chris Smither** in tent 2 and a wonderful set by Hebridean singer **Julie Fowlis** and band in the Bolero Spiegelent. Again, too tired to hear more, but who could follow such a band? Not many to my ears!

That night we were treated to new digs at a sanctuary called Refugium. What a glorious place out in the country with a lovely old huge church and a garden resplendent with flowers and hordes of butterflies.

Saturday began with a huge breakfast and then lunch as soon as we reached the site.

We only managed the first course, during which local Springsteen fan **Jacob Dinesen** treated us to a couple of his acoustic songs before we ventured out into the heat to hear the brilliant Danish-Swedish trio **Dreamer's Circus**.

The Spiegelent was full, but we found makeshift chairs of wood and coffeebean bags outside and relished their intricate musical stylings.

Folk Spot part 2 kicked off with a crazy set of acoustic mayhem by **Mads Hansen's Kapel**, and a very trad set on fiddle and accordion by Norway's **Odde & Nilssen**.

Local duo **Fromseier Hockings** were next. They are a couple playing guitar and fiddle and in their spare time they are raising two kids and an apple orchard!

Their first commercially available batch of cider was on the menu at the Folk Spot tent. As delicious as their music, it's closer to Strongbow than Growers, nicely dry with a crisp finish.

The final act was **Trio Svin**, and the tent was packed with millennials. Odd, I thought. Then they started.

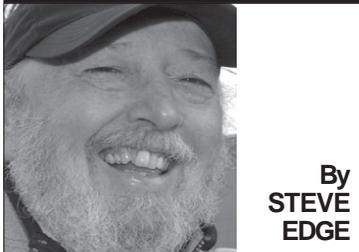
Loud, brash, and inventive, they are led by a two metre five fiddler and incorporate political speeches and other contemporary sounds into their set. This is very exciting, edgy stuff! The crowd loved them!

There was more loudness on open air with Breton trio **Plantec's** blend of trad with techno. Folk music that makes your ears bleed!

We ventured as far back as we could go, and found some unique portable bench seats amongst the bars and food trucks and gardens.

**Adam Holmes** and **Heidi Talbot** (aka **Arcade**) sounded great in the Pumphouse but it was really hot and stuffy in there, so, after a visit to the

## ROGUE FOLK CLUB



By  
STEVE  
EDGE

Gin Bar at the opposite end of the site (recommended to us by Francis Xavier, former A.D. of the Mission Folk Festival) we ventured to the side stage/back stage viewing area to hear a sublime set by **Patty Griffin** and her two brilliant accompanists.

There was just time to hear the last encore by Scotland's **Breabach** before we took the shuttle back to Refugium.

After Sunday's breakfast feast we returned to the site to hear Scottish band **Tide Lines**. Hadn't heard them before.

Worthy successors to **Big Country** and **Runrig**, they feature a great singer in **Robert Robertson**, but I'd prefer them if the guitarist played more war pipes. Really good power trio though.

After lunch we heard **Hudson Taylor** again. Such a fun band. Two brothers now joined by their younger sister and a small band – and by **John Smith**, with whom they've written a hit song or two.

After dinner – during which we heard a superb solo acoustic set from **Jacob Dinesen** – **John Prine** was supposed to be there but of course he's not been well this summer.

Instead of replacing him – as other festivals have done – they staged a tribute concert with dozens of artists singing his songs. I thought that was a really classy thing to do, and it was absolutely stunning!

We were invited to brunch the following day at the home of Esther and Kai, the parents of Leonard Podolak's wife Anna.

Leonard is best known as the banjoist with **The Duhks**. There we learned of the passing of Leonard's father, **Mitch Podolak**. Sad news, but he had been ill for a long while.

Mitch was responsible for the founding of the three great western Canadian folk festivals: Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Edmonton. Maybe not solely responsible, but without him these events would not have started all those years ago. Maybe they would never have started at all. Who knows?

Mitch was also the longtime host of classic CBC radio shows *Simply Folk* and *Touch The Earth*. He also founded *Home Roots*, the house concert series that has brought folk music to small communities throughout the west for over a decade now.

Mitch was – and remains – a huge figure on the Canadian music landscape. He will be missed – but never forgotten!

Just two weeks before Tønder's 45th anniversary we were at the 40th annual **Edmonton Folk Music Festival** – another stellar event.

Thursday's highlight for me was the



PHOTO: Steve Edge

**ALASDAIR FRASER & NATALIE HAAS** are booked to perform at The Rogue in Vancouver on Friday, September 20.

closing set by Irish blues / roots singer **Hozier**.

Friday evening started with a brilliant concert set by Co. Clare trio **Socks In The Frying Pan**. **Andy White**, **John Smith**, **Kate Rusby** and **Tim O'Brien** shared a memorable workshop, and the main stage concert saw superb sets by **Jason Isbell**, and **Brandi Carlile**.

Saturday was a full day, with another great combination featuring **Tim O'Brien**, **The Harpoonist & The Axe Murderer** with **Dawn Pemberton**, **John Smith**, and the amazing Madagascar trio **Toko Telo**.

The main stage matinee featured **Dervish** in stellar form, and after that we heard **Kate Rusby** in concert.

Then Canadian First Nations bands **Twin Flames** and **Digging Roots** joined **Noura Mint Seymali** (Mauritania) and **Dobet Gnahore** (Cote d'Ivoire) in an unlikely combination that saw all the musicians joining in from the first note to the last. What a show that was!

**Bruce Cockburn** was the evening concert highlight, but it had been cold all day and it was nice to head back to the hotel for the acoustic party hosted by **Socks In The Frying Pan**.

On Sunday after watching Man United destroy Chelsea, I headed back to the site to hear a stunning Gospel/Soul session with **The Hamiltones**, veteran R&B singer **Don Bryant**, the amazing **California Honeydrops**, and **War & Treaty**.

The matinee set saw **Dobet Gnahore** and band in superb form, and after that we heard great concert sets by **Twin Flames** (UNESCO Song of The Year of Indigenous Languages), and Scottish trio **Talisk** – with that mad concertina wizard **Mohsen Amiri** (also of **Imar**) BBC Musician of the Year.

The final concert saw sets by **California Honeydrops**, **Dan Mangan**, **The Waifs**, and **War & Treaty**. Alas, no John Prine.

The festival wrapped up with a rickling acoustic party hosted by **Dervish**. For once it hardly rained all weekend, but it was a bit on the chilly side. However, this was a 40th birthday to treasure for all concerned.

I would like to express sincere gratitude to **Paul Norton** and **Jim Burnett** for hosting *The Saturday Edge On Folk* on CiTR fm 101.9 in my absence. I'm back now with heaps of new music

from Tønder and beyond!

Speaking of thank yous, **Brian Jones** is stepping down as The Rogue's Crews Controller after over 15 years of sterling service.

We simply could not have had a concert series at St. James without his devotion to the tasks and without the remarkable team spirit he has built and maintained amongst the ever-changing crews. Over 1,000 shows in that time. Thanks a million, Brian!

We have been extremely fortunate over the years. There have been just four volunteer co-ordinators in all that time: Vibe Smith, Art Price, Hunter Taliesin, and Brian Jones – with Brian being by far the longest-serving.

If you or anyone you know is interested in assuming this crucial role, please let us know.

We might be able to manage for a while as the core group of volunteers is extremely dedicated and reliable, but need to find someone to continue to perform the role in the professional way to which we have become accustomed – and reliant.

So, who's coming to The Rogue this fall, you ask? **Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas** (September 20th), **The Tannahill Weavers** on their 50th anniversary tour (September 26th), **Martin Kerr** (27th), **Christine Tassan et Les Imposteures** at Performance Works (29th), **Tom Russell** (October 4th), young blues singer **Jontavious Willis** (October 6th), **The Small Glories** with their great new CD *Assinboine & The Red* (October 11th), **Martin Simpson** with his stunning new CD *Rooted* (October 17th), **The Sojourners** with a new EP (October 18th), **The Young 'Uns** from NE England (October 24th) and Scotland's **Paul McKenna Band** (October 27th) for starters!

Check out [www.roguefolk.com](http://www.roguefolk.com) for details and tickets.

Elsewhere, don't miss Scotland's **Skerryvore** at the Centennial Theatre on October 5 – unless you'd prefer some stirring music from Norway's **Mari Boine** at The Chan Centre that night. The Chan is also the place to see American songwriting diva **Rosanne Cash** (September 28).

You can hear music by as many of these performers as I can possibly squeeze in to four hours every Saturday morning from 8 AM to noon on **CiTR fm 101.9** and [www.citr.ca](http://www.citr.ca).

# Derry Girls series is teaching Netflix users about Ireland's love of the 'Rock the Boat' dance

The critically-acclaimed comedy series *Derry Girls* has been offering Netflix users a unique glimpse into Irish culture ever since it arrived on the streaming platform.

Set in Derry in the 1990s, the series about a group of schoolgirls living in Derry during The Troubles has become nothing short of a global phenomenon.

The arrival of the show's second series provided further proof of that, with fans all over the world logging on to binge-watch the second batch of episodes.

Not that it's been entirely plain sailing for fans from abroad.

For starters there was the issue of accents which, as unbelievable as it sounds, forced some to turn the subtitles on in a bid to keep up on what was going on.

Thankfully, the majority managed to see the funny side throughout all of this.

Since then the show has continued to baffle and delight Netflix audiences, not least when it came to an unfamiliar bit of Irish culture practiced at parties and social gatherings for decades.

It came during the fourth episode from the second season titled "The Curse" which sees the gang causing uproar at a family wedding with comedic results.

The episode's particular highlight comes when the gang partake in the "Rock the Boat" dance to the dulcet tones of the Hues Corporation hit of the same name.

Much like Whigfield's "Saturday Night" or the Los Del Rio hit "Macarena," the "Rock The Boat" dance has been a staple of many an occasion in Ireland.

It involves a group of partygoers sitting on the floor in a row, swinging their arms back and forth while clapping to the beat.

What most probably didn't realize, however, was that this is a distinctly Irish practice.

Writing on Twitter, one fan asked: "Is the 'Rock the Boat' dance really a thing????"

Another wrote: "Dear #Irish people from the internet, is the choreography of 'Rock the boat' where people sit on the floor from #DerryGirls a real thing? I NEED TO KNOW"

"Wait... it isn't... international...?" an Irish Twitter user replied.

The realization soon began to kick in.

"I'm feeling incredibly embarrassed now for all of Ireland for some reason lol. I had no idea we owned this and now that I think about it, it's the weirdest tradition," one Irish social media user reflected.

It wasn't long before others were sharing photographic evidence of Ireland's obsession with the dance – including one rather bold World Record attempt.

An essential part of any great social gathering, the hope now is that Netflix users the world over will begin spreading the good word of the Hues Corporation.



DERRY GIRLS set in Derry, Northern Ireland in the 1990s was picked up by the online streaming giant Netflix and released to critical acclaim in December 2018.



KEADY, Co. Armagh were holders of the new Rock the Boat World Guinness World Record on Sunday, June 23, 2013. The dance is wildly popular at weddings and any other social gathering in Ireland. It involves partygoers sitting on the floor in a row, swinging their arms back and forth while clapping to the beat.



SPANISH BANKS in Vancouver was the scene of a great live Irish music session on the beach this summer. The music continues throughout the year with live Irish sessions featuring the same musicians every Sunday night from 5:30-7:30 PM at the Wolf & Hound on West Broadway. Be sure to drop by and enjoy some toe-tapping traditional tunes.

**THE CELTIC CONNECTION**

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<b>Friday, September 27th</b> Engaging singer songwriter returns! <b>Martin Kerr</b> AB	<b>Thursday, October 16th</b> English guitar wizard and master of blues and folk <b>Martin Simpson</b> UK
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# The Ongoing Brexit Saga: Are there any winners in this scenario?

**I**F YOU'VE been watching the shambles known as Brexit for the past three years, you'll know it's been a bewildering ride and where it stops nobody knows...least of all the British political establishment currently battling it out in Westminster.

As an outsider looking in, it would appear that the country is swept up in some suicidal folly that looks like lose-lose all around.

The head spinning events were precipitated by a referendum to determine if the British people wanted to leave the European Union.

## David Cameron

Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron put the question to the nation on June 23, 2016, confident that common sense would prevail and the country would unite and return a no vote.

He felt compelled to take this step with a pack of Eurosceptics snapping at his heels and threatening to dilute his party's hold on power.

The general population, having grown complacent since the deprivations of the Second World War responded with apathy.

Almost half of the population did not vote for a variety of reasons – either ineligible or not registered to vote, or simply could not be bothered.

Meanwhile, the leave campaign mounted a hard-nosed, well-oiled campaign of fear and misinformation, while the remain side so complacent in their victory hardly mounted a challenge to correct these messages.

When the final votes were counted and it became apparent that the leave side had won the day, there was widespread shock.

## Theresa May

The euphoric afterglow was soon eclipsed when David Cameron promptly announced his resignation and Theresa May, almost giddy with anticipation, skipped into her new position. The golden ring was a poison pill as the new prime minister would soon learn.

Next, after almost two years of negotiation, the Withdrawal Agreement from the European Union was rejected in the U.K. – not just once but three times – after endorsement by leaders of the 27 remaining EU countries.

This comes after Theresa May called a misguided snap election in 2017. At this juncture she lost her majority and was forced to form a coalition with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) – hardline unionists who appear to be anti-everything (except Brexit, of course) – in an attempt to prop up her shaky Tory Government.

Then, apparently, without a clear strategy, she triggered Article 50 which started a two-year countdown to exit from the European Union.

It should be noted that the reason the U.K. joined in the first place was that it had become clear that without membership there was a danger of political isolation within Western Europe.

The numbers voting to join were higher than the slim majority that pushed

By MAURA DE FREITAS

through the 2016 referendum to leave the EU with just 51.89 percent in favour.

## The Backstop

One major area of contention following the Brexit referendum rests with the fact that both Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to remain.

Leading up to the vote to leave there seems to have been little or no thought to freedom of movement on the island of Ireland by those who championed the Brexit referendum.

Since about 2005, the northern border has been perceived as being invisible with little or no physical infrastructure, as the security barriers and checkpoints were removed due to processes put in place by the Good Friday Agreement signed in 1998.

The 'backstop' has been described as an insurance policy or safety net intended to ensure no return to a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, even if no formal deal can be reached on trade and security arrangements.

This was part of the negotiations led by now former Prime Minister May but has since led to endless bickering within the British House of Commons and after two failed no-confidence votes against her, she finally threw in the towel and resigned on May 24, 2019.

WASHINGTON – There is “no chance” of a U.S.-U.K. trade deal succeeding if Brexit jeopardises the Good Friday Agreement, the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives has warned.

Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, has said that the party will block the deal in Congress if the U.K.'s departure from the European Union “undermines” the peace accord in Northern Ireland.

Pelosi, whose party controls the house, was reaffirming her commitment after Donald Trump's national security adviser said during a visit to London that the U.K. would be “first in line” for a deal.

Border controls may be imposed on the island of Ireland in the event of a no-deal, which is seen as a threat to the Belfast Agreement that ended decades of bloodshed.

And the chances of the U.K.'s departure without a deal have been seen as increasingly likely after Boris Johnson made his “do or die” pledge to leave by the October 31 deadline.

Pelosi said, “Whatever form it takes,



THE TURMOIL in Britain's Parliament sparked large demonstrations on streets across the U.K. In London a protest on September 6 against “Boris Johnson's coup against the democratic process” was marred by violence when scores of pro-Brexit counter-protesters attempted to disrupt the rally.

## Boris Johnson

Now, in hindsight, the aforementioned drama all seems relatively tame compared to the extraordinary machinations since Boris Johnson ascended to the high office he has long coveted.

As Prime Minister Johnson vowed to leave the EU – deal or no deal by witching hour, October 31, 2019.

To achieve this aim, he decided to suspend – or ‘prorogue’ – parliament for up to five weeks starting September 12 ahead of a Queen's Speech on October 14.

This will be the longest such pause in 89 years, and leaves little opportunity for debate in the House.

He is now facing a series of legal challenges over this decision, including one by John Major – a former prime minister with his own party.

Next, Johnson suffered defeat in the House of Commons when proposed

legislation to stop a no-deal Brexit was approved.

The Brexit Bill would require the prime minister to seek a three-month Article 50 extension if he has not secured a Brexit deal by October 19. It must now pass through the House of Lords before seeking royal assent.

Prior to the vote, Boris threatened members of his own party with expulsion if they dared to defy him.

This led to a breakaway group of 21 rebel conservative MPs – many senior members, including two former chancellors of the exchequer – voting against the PM. Shockingly, they are now excluded from standing as candidates for the party in the next general election.

Next, after just one day earlier declaring that he would “under no circumstances” call a general election, Johnson tabled a motion calling for a general election on October 15. He vowed to take the U.K. out of the EU on October 31

as scheduled if he was still prime minister at that time.

In summary, after just six weeks on the job as prime minister, Johnson has lost his governing majority, exiled some of his party's most honored members and been slapped down by lawmakers three times in 24 hours.

Adding insult to injury, he has just been abandoned by his own brother who resigned as a junior minister. Jo Johnson said he would also step down as a member of parliament citing a conflict between family loyalty and the national interest.

Stranger than fiction, you just couldn't make this up.

It would all make for great entertainment if it wasn't so bloody awful for so many people whose future depends on some form of sanity emerging through this fog, but, as I mentioned earlier, don't hold your breath.

## Leo Varadkar

The final word must go to An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.

The Irish leader made a joint statement with Boris Johnson following a private meeting in Dublin on September 9.

During the press conference, Varadkar used a classical reference about his British counterpart that gained attention.

He said, “Negotiating FTAs [free trade agreements] with the EU and U.S. and securing their ratification in less than three years is going to be a Herculean task for you,” he said.

“We want to be your friend and ally, your Athena, in doing so.”

In Greek mythology, the goddess Athena did assist Hercules as an ally – but it was by knocking him out and stopping him from killing any more people, including his own family, when he went mad.

## Pelosi: ‘No chance of U.S.-U.K. trade deal if Brexit threatens Good Friday Agreement’



NANCY PELOSI, (R) the U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Congressman Richard Neal, met with the Tánaiste Simon Coveney at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin in April 2019.

Brexit cannot be allowed to imperil the Good Friday Agreement, including the seamless border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland, especially now, as the first generation born into the hope of Good Friday 21 years ago comes into adulthood. We cannot go back.

“If Brexit undermines the Good Friday accord, there will be no chance of a U.S.-U.K. trade agreement passing the Congress.

“The peace of the Good Friday Agreement is treasured by the American people and will be fiercely defended on a bicameral and bipartisan basis in the United States Congress.”

If a deal is to be approved in the U.S. it must pass both chambers of the Congress: the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The Senate is controlled by Republicans supportive of the U.S. president, but Pelosi's party has a firm grip on the House.

Civic and business groups across Northern Ireland have called on Pelosi to only back a U.K. trade deal that protects the Good Friday Agreement.

The letter is signed by more than 20 civil liberty groups, community organizations, trade unionists and representatives of businesses across Northern Ireland.

A delegation from the consortium will travel to Washington later this month to outline their concerns to speaker Pelosi and other senior U.S. politicians from the main parties in Congress.

In the letter, the groups asked speaker Pelosi to ensure the U.S. Congress scrutinized any future trade deal with the U.K. “very carefully to ensure full compliance with the 1998 Agreement.”

“We urge Congress to satisfy itself that the truly transformational foundations for peace and prosperity here, which were laid with the indispensable aid of the United States, are not undermined in any manner by decisions to be taken in Congress,” the letter said.

The groups that have signed the letter include the Committee on the Administration of Justice, the Freight Transport Association (Northern Ireland), the Human Rights Consortium, Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, Manufacturing NI, Disability Action Northern Ireland, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, NICVA, Northern Ireland Retail Consortium, Retail NI and Union Northern Ireland.



THE O'BRIEN SCHOOL of Irish Dance will be among the line-up of Celtic entertainment on October 18 at the South Delta Baptist Church in Tsawwassen.

## Delta Police Pipe Band 2019 Celtic Gala: Features two solid hours of entertainment

By DON MACPHERSON

DELTA – The Delta Police Pipe Band is holding a Celtic Gala fundraiser October 18 at the South Delta Baptist Church located at 1988 - 56th Street Tsawwassen B.C. starting at 7:30 PM. The tickets are only \$30 with children 12 and under admitted free.

The evening will include two hours of solid Celtic entertainment from the Pipes and Drums of the world-renowned Delta Police Pipe Band, the O'Brien School of Irish Dance, Turas Harp Celtic Group and the Delta Choral Society Choir.

The Delta Police Pipe Band is currently under the direction of retired Staff Sergeant Delta Police, Pipe Major Steve Ramsden, and retired Staff Sergeant Vancouver Police, Drum Major Moe Coll.

It is a non-competitive band that is made up of first responders, professionals and students from all walks of life.

The band has travelled extensively throughout Europe and around North America. Along its journey it has played at various tattoos including the Edinburgh Tattoo in Scotland, The International Tattoo in Halifax and the International Military Tattoo in Virginia.

The band has also played alongside



THE DELTA POLICE Pipe Band in Holland while on tour in Europe.

musicians such as The Chieftains, Irish Tenor Anthony Kearns, as well as twice with Sir Paul McCartney at Rogers Arena in Vancouver.

The skirl of the pipes will caress your ears and stir up your inner Scot with many of the tunes you know and love.

The O'Brien Irish School of Irish Dance – with locations in Victoria, Duncan and Ladner – holds classes for children and adults alike who want to kick their heels up and enjoy classic Irish dancing.

Two senior dance members from the Ladner School will be performing in memory of their late father who was a member of the Delta Police and a drum-

mer with the Delta Police Pipe Band.

The troupe is under the direction of Carolyn Robinson. They will surely entertain the crowd with their jigs and reels as they prepare to compete the following day at a highly competitive feis.

The Delta Choral Society is a local choir group with some 90 members strong who, under the direction of Danielle Hamilton and accompanist Paul Kemp has performed throughout North America and the Lower Mainland putting on entertaining concerts.

This group loves to inspire their audiences to sing along with them with well-known familiar tunes.

The Turas Harp (an Irish term meaning "trip") is a newly formed Celtic group that will take you on an Irish musical trip with a combination of fiddle, guitar, uilleann pipes, melodic vocals and of course the harp.

Each musician is professionally trained and comes from a background playing with symphony orchestras.

The group includes a professional Suona player who has entertained and performed at previous gala events and is a current member of the pipe band.

As an added bonus, there will be a draw during the intermission, for two tickets to the pipe band's 2020 Burns Dinner which attracts over 800 people over two nights, acknowledged as one of the biggest annual Burns Dinner throughout the North America Scottish community. This is an evening you surely don't want to miss.

Bring the family and enjoy an evening of Celtic Music. You can place an order for tickets by calling the Delta Police Pipe Band phone number at (604) 940-5040.



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### TOP 10 CELTIC HITS FOR SEPTEMBER

*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>Isle Of Skye Reel</i> by Soulsha - Carry It On on Independent.	6. <i>Des Chemins Creux</i> by Dom Duff - 7vet Kelc'h on Coop Breizh.
2. <i>Chris Stout's Compliments</i> by Frigg on Frost On The Fiddles by Independent.	7. <i>Typhoon Nozaki</i> by Vasen - Rule of 3 on NorthSide.
3. <i>Ocean Child</i> by Flook - Ancora on Flatfish Records.	8. <i>The Rambling Irishman</i> by Dervish - The Great Irish Song Book on Rounder.
4. <i>The Airt O The Deil</i> by Yoko Pwno - ArteFacts on Skye Records.	9. <i>Something to Say</i> by The Town Pants - Something to Say on independent.
5. <i>Borderline</i> by Skerryvore - Evo on Tyree Records.	10. <i>The Capable Wife</i> by Coig - Ashlar on Coig Music.

**Celt In A Twist - Pick Of The Month:**  
Frigg - Frost On The Fiddles (Independent)

## Resignation of Ruth Davidson bodes ill for the Conservative Party in Scotland

EDINBURGH – The leader of the Conservative Party in Scotland has quit her post one day after Prime Minister Boris Johnson moved to suspend Parliament ahead of Brexit.

Ruth Davidson cited family reasons in her decision to leave the job, but her distaste for Johnson was no secret.

Her departure could throw the unity of the U.K. into doubt. In her role, she was the most influential voice for Scotland remaining a part of the U.K. at a time when support for Scottish independence has risen amid widespread opposition to Brexit.

Davidson campaigned successfully to keep Scotland inside the United Kingdom during the Scottish independence referendum in 2014.

And in 2017, she successfully brought the Conservatives back from the political wilderness in Scotland – winning 13 parliamentary seats, up from just one in the previous election.

The total was enough to keep former Prime Minister Theresa May in power, amid a disastrous showing elsewhere in the U.K.

But her position was made more difficult when Johnson became prime minister in July.

Johnson is widely seen as toxic in Scotland: earlier in August, a poll showed support for Scottish independence surpassing 50 percent for the first time since 2017.

Davidson – along with a majority of Scots – voted to remain in the EU in the 2016 Brexit referendum.

But Johnson campaigned to leave, and has increasingly advocated Britain leaving the EU without a deal – which Davidson has said would be damaging to Scotland.

Davidson's resignation will not change the parliamentary arithmetic around Brexit – she is a member of the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, not the British Parliament in Westminster – but it is a blow for the moderate wing of the U.K.'s ruling Conservative Party, where she was seen as a key figure and rising star.

Her name had even been raised among Conservatives as a potential future party leader.

But Davidson said she had no plans to try for the role – last year, she became the first U.K. party leader to give birth to a child in the job. She was also the U.K.'s first openly gay leader of a major political party.

Even before May resigned, Davidson and her allies reportedly mounted a secretive attempt to prevent Johnson from winning the ensuing Conservative leadership election. Its codename, "Operation Arse," made clear her feelings toward Johnson.

In the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, support for the Scottish National Party, which is currently in power in Scotland and advocate for Scottish independence, rose.

But Davidson campaigned firmly to resist calls for a second independence referendum. With her gone, the calls for Scotland to secede from the U.K. may increase.

## To what extent are Naysayers hindering Scotland's Progress?

DINBURGH – Some years ago I spent a happy hour or three in a popular Edinburgh howff with the poet Alasdair Reid.

Reid has just returned from the StAnza Poetry Festival in St. Andrews where he read his poem "Scotland" before setting fire to the paper it was printed on. He told me that he did that because the poem was no longer relevant.

"Scotland" tells of a beautiful Scottish day: "A day peculiar to this piece of the planet / when larks rose on long thin strings of singing / and the air shifted with the shimmer of actual angels..."

Eventually the narrator meets "the woman from the fish-shop" and spoke to her "like a sunstruck madman." However her response was not what he had anticipated: "Her brow grew bleak / her ancestors raged in their graves / as she spoke with their ancient misery: / We'll pay for it, we'll pay for it, we'll pay for it."

Reid was born in Whithorn in Galloway and was a son of the manse. He spent most of his life outside of Scotland which may explain why he is a relatively neglected figure in his homeland.

As well as being a poet, he wrote for *The New Yorker* and translated Borges, Neruda, Gabriel Marques and others.

He died on September 21, 2014 at the age of 88 and, in the words of an obituarist, "just three days after the naysayers for an independent Scotland won the day and the sunstruck madmen of Reid's poem ... crawled home in defeat."

The degree to which naysayers are holding Scotland back is, of course, open to debate. However, on a recent trip to Canada I found myself wondering why so many of the issues that Scotland is still debating have long been settled in Canada.



By HARRY McGRATH

For instance, earlier this year the Scottish Government introduced a Deposit Return Scheme for drink containers.

It was greeted with howls of protest from businesses objecting to the fact that no similar scheme has been introduced in England. By way of contrast, British Columbia first introduced deposit-return legislation in 1970!

And so it goes. From drug legalisation, safe injection and harm reduction to gender identity, Scotland is arguing and citing apocalyptic outcomes while Canada has already acted on the same issues and the world is still turning.

Even the recently announced citizens' assembly on Scotland's constitutional future is now threatened with boycotts amid accusations that it is a front for the independence movement.

Contrast that with the relatively smooth passage of British Columbia's own citizens' assembly back in 2004.

Needless to say, I am not the first to notice Reid's naysayers at work.

I recently re-read a book on what Scotland can learn from the Nordics. In it a Scots-Norwegian is quoted as saying "things considered impossible in Scotland were actually and easily happening here."

Was Reid a bit premature when he put a match to his poem and declared it irrelevant?

Well, perhaps not. One thing Scotland has going for it is a government that is prepared to press ahead even when the naysayers appear.

It recently released its programme for government which includes a variety of methods to tackle climate change, poverty and drug deaths. It also confirmed its intention to hold a second independence referendum within the lifetime of the parliament.

And this, perhaps, is where the "we'll pay for it" crew will struggle.

The scare tactics that were used before the first referendum – an independent Scotland will be out of Europe, its currency will collapse and so on – are no longer available to it as these things are happening anyway.

The naysayers will need to refocus on the positives of remaining part of Britain. And with a Brexit disaster to explain away, it's not obvious what these will be.

Perhaps Reid was right to believe that the "we'll pay for it" attitude in Scotland is no longer empowered. The Scottish Government narrative around multiculturalism, diversity and immigration is consistently positive and very close to Canada's own story.

In the 20 years of devolution there have been numerous initiatives in Scotland that, consciously or unconsciously, have followed a Canadian model.

These include smoking bans, gay marriage, national literature in school curricula and minimum alcohol pricing.

The main problem now is that Scotland can't build Canadian style multiculturalism without its own immigration policy to adapt to that end, as Canada did under Trudeau Senior.

Nor can it rid its territory of nuclear weapons without any power over foreign affairs, as Canada did when the squadron at Comox on Vancouver Island flew the last nuclear weapons back to the United States in 1984.

It helped, of course, that Canada finally acquired "full legislative independence" in 1982, 105 years after confederation. I am not sure Scotland can wait that long.

## Leaked U.K. memos warn of food, drug shortages in Brexit chaos

LONDON – Secret British Government documents have warned of serious disruptions across the country in the event that the U.K. leaves the European Union without a trade deal on October 31, according to a report.

The *Sunday Times* newspaper published what it said was what the British Government expects in the case of a sudden, "no-deal" Brexit.

Among the most serious: "significant" disruptions to the supply of drugs and medicine, a decrease in the availability of fresh food and even potential fresh water shortages due to possible interruptions of imported water treatment chemicals.

Although the grim scenarios reportedly outlined in the government documents have long been floated by academics and economists, they've been repeatedly dismissed as scaremongering by Brexit proponents.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said he is ready to leave the EU regardless of whether he is able to renegotiate the Brexit deal struck with Brussels by his predecessor, Theresa May.

His own officials, however, have warned that with a no-deal Brexit, the sharing of law enforcement data and the health of Britain's crucial financial services industry could be in jeopardy after October 31.

The documents published by the *Times* also quote officials as warning that up to 85 percent of all trucks wouldn't be ready for French customs at the critical English Channel crossing that day, causing lines that could stretch out for days. Some 75 percent of all drugs coming into Britain arrive via that crossing, the memos warned, "making them particularly vulnerable to severe delays."

The officials foresee "critical elements" of the food supply chain being affected that would "reduce availability and choice and increase the price, which will affect vulnerable groups."

In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel said the country is ready for Brexit, even without a deal to smooth the transition but she would "try everything in my power to find solutions" and that "I believe that it would be better to leave with an agreement than without one."

## Creating DotScot web domain for Scottish-Canadians

By JANIS CLEUGH

A former Port Coquitlam resident was back in Canada this summer to plug a web domain extension he hopes will be close to the hearts of Scottish-Canadians.

Harry McGrath, a native of Scotland and former teacher who once worked with SFU's Centre for Scottish Studies, is now the head of engagement and global outreach for dotScot — or .scot — a registry that gives people of Scottish heritage a chance to express their roots online.

According to the 2016 census, about five million Canadians identify as having Scottish ancestry, including some 24,000 residents in the Tri-Cities.

Since the non-profit group launched five years ago, dotScot has caught on with the Scottish Government (gov.scot), the country's film industry (screen.scot) and 18,000 businesses, cultural organizations and individuals who are using the country code for e-mails, websites and other



*DotScot unifies Scots and Scots diaspora worldwide by linking heritage and culture with technology*

online communication to highlight their identity. Scottish actor Sean Connery is also on board and promoting the country code.

McGrath told *The Tri-City News* he was "spreading the word" about dotScot while in Canada and spoke

with members of ScotCanBC, the Scottish Canadian Business Association of BC, to drum up support.

The domain extension is unique to Scotland and similar to .ca for Canada and .au for Australia.

"It's intended for Scots wherever they live, which is what makes it unique and different from a country code," he said, adding, "Brexit has helped us because people want to be proud of their Scottish and European backgrounds."

"DotScot unifies Scots and Scots diaspora worldwide by linking our heritage and culture with technology," said Victoria resident Theresa Mackay, a Canadian dotScot ambassador, in a news release. "It is about declaring pride in who we are."

For more information about .scot, please visit [www.dot.scot](http://www.dot.scot).

[This article was first published in the Tri-City News in Port Coquitlam, B.C. and is reprinted here with kind permission of the editor. [www.tricitynews.com](http://www.tricitynews.com).]

# Scottish Country Dance: A great exercise for mind and body

By CATHRINE-CONINGS  
VANCOUVER – Have you ever craved an activity that accomplished many goals at once? A perfect solution is Scottish Country Dancing.

It offers exercise at a rapid pace – a good cardio and pulmonary workout, lower body and leg stretches, foot and ankle flexing – a chance to exercise your memory, and on top of it all, a very social and welcoming environment in which to learn.

I got hooked many years ago and knew I wanted to be in this for the long haul. This activity includes dancers in their nineties, along with almost every other decade of life.

As one progresses from the beginner stages, the dances get more complex, more interesting, and one gets a bigger high from successfully dancing a difficult one!

And there is so much variety, so many new dances being devised all the time, that the repertoire is constantly growing.

It resembles square dancing to some degree – dancers and their partners form sets of two, three, four or five couples, and interact with the other couples in their long or square set. The biggest difference is no one calls out the moves.

This is where your memory is stretched and pulled and squeezed and strengthened!

You must remember what to do next in the midst of very fast music – whether to stand still or dance forward, whether to give right hand or left hand or any hand, and which couple you are as the dance progresses, and what your moves are now that you are in a different place – as pairs progress from first position to all the other positions in the set.

There are basic formations and figures, and dances are usually a rearrangement of these, but new ones do keep cropping up, for example the snake formation, danced to some very Harry Potter-like music!

This is a superb hobby for anyone who wants to keep active, both mentally and physically, and the social benefits are indisputable.

I'm at the stage where I'm able to give back after years of enjoyment, by being on a committee which organizes dance parties.

My latest job is publicity for our annual Heather Ball, but I play piano in a fiddle orchestra and in a small band, and it's such fun to also be able to produce the lively Scottish reels, jigs and strathspeys for other dancers.

When another pianist is available, we each play half the evening and dance the other half! And I danced for many years on a performance team that is in much demand around Robbie Burns Day.

As a 20-something I never dreamed I would be dancing my whole life, but I am addicted to this cleanest and healthiest of drugs, as are many others!

You're welcome to come and try it out at any club during their first meetings in September. You will be welcomed, encouraged and supported, and it's great exercise.

There are groups in many parts of British Columbia. For more information and links, visit: [rscdsvancouver.org](http://rscdsvancouver.org).



DANCERS of all ages enjoy Scottish Country Dancing at the Scottish Cultural Centre in Vancouver. Classes are available across the Lower Mainland and throughout British Columbia. Check out the RSCDS website for more information: [www.rscdsvancouver.org](http://www.rscdsvancouver.org).

## Lively Roots of Square Dancing Found in Scottish Country Dancing

By JANET MASON  
RSCDS Vancouver

VANCOUVER – Scottish country dancing is the social dancing of Scotland not to be confused with Scottish Highland dancing which is solo and competitive. It is one of the predecessors of square dancing and the toe-tapping music just invites you to dance!

Research has shown that dancing is one of the very best activities for mind and body and Scottish country dancing provides exercise to wonderful music. It's social, it's lots of fun, and it's a great place to make new friends.

Under the umbrella of the Vancouver Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, many clubs around the Lower Mainland offer classes taught by qualified teachers.

From September to April, classes run at the Scottish Cultural Centre in Vancouver, in Coquitlam and Burnaby and at many other locations.

Beginners are welcome, you don't need a partner, and you don't even need to be Scottish to "dance Scottish." The group is looking forward to welcoming you!

## Could Nessie just be a large eel?

LOCH NESS, Scotland – For years, the mystery of the Loch Ness monster has stumped scientists and brought waves of monster sleuths to northern Scotland.

But is the supposedly shy creature with a snake-like head and a long, green body just, in the end, an eel?

Scientists in Scotland using a new water sampling technique to study biodiversity in the Loch Ness, a massive 23-mile lake with seven million cubic meters of water, have been hoping they might also find evidence of the elusive creature.

But after a year of study, the team said they have found over 3,000 species in the lake – most so small you wouldn't know they were there – but no trace of a monster.

"It's deep dark and mysterious and it's possibly the best setting in the world for a monster mystery," said Professor Neil Gemmill of the University of Otago in New Zealand, as he began the press conference in Loch Ness Centre & Exhibition to announce the results.

Gemmill said his team had analyzed the water samples for environmental DNA that creatures shed as they move through an environment.

"We can collect that DNA and obtain a very accurate indication of what the species was that shed that material, and over time you can collect quite a large body of information from literally a litre of water," he said.

But they found no evidence of a plesiosaur – a prehistoric marine reptile that some had theorized might be the monster. "There is probably not a giant scaly reptile swimming around Loch Ness," said Gemmill.

So what might the monster be? One "plausible" idea based on anecdotal evidence, according to Gemmill, is that the monster could be a large eel.

But that theory, too, raises questions. Eels usually only grow to four to six feet, and they migrate to reproduce.

And though the survey was comprehensive Gemmill made the point that a lack of evidence does not mean the mystery has been solved.



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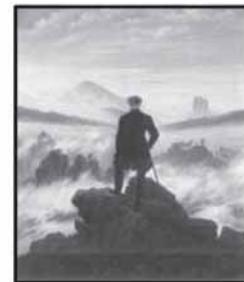
[www.rscdsvancouver.org](http://www.rscdsvancouver.org)  
mason@sfu.ca

dance scottish

## Are you .Scot yet?

.Scot is the domain name for the worldwide family of Scots

It's now available for individuals, groups and businesses connected to Scotland



TO FIND OUT HOW TO BECOME A .SCOT VISIT  
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# My visit to Grosse-Île and the Irish Memorial: One of my fondest wishes realized

ONE OF MY fondest wishes was realized this past summer when I was finally able to visit Grosse-Île, Quebec.

Located in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, Grosse-Île was a quarantine station hastily set-up for the thousands of Irish people fleeing the Famine in Ireland between 1845 and 1849.

Over 5,000 are buried on that island while countless others were buried at sea on the harrowing journey.

The first "Famine Ship" arrived on May 17, 1847, the ice still an inch thick on the river, and there were 241 passengers, 84 were stricken with fever, while nine had died on board.

With the hospital only equipped for 150 fever cases, the situation quickly spun out of control.

More and more ships arrived at Grosse-Île each day, sometimes lining up for miles down the St. Lawrence River throughout the summer.

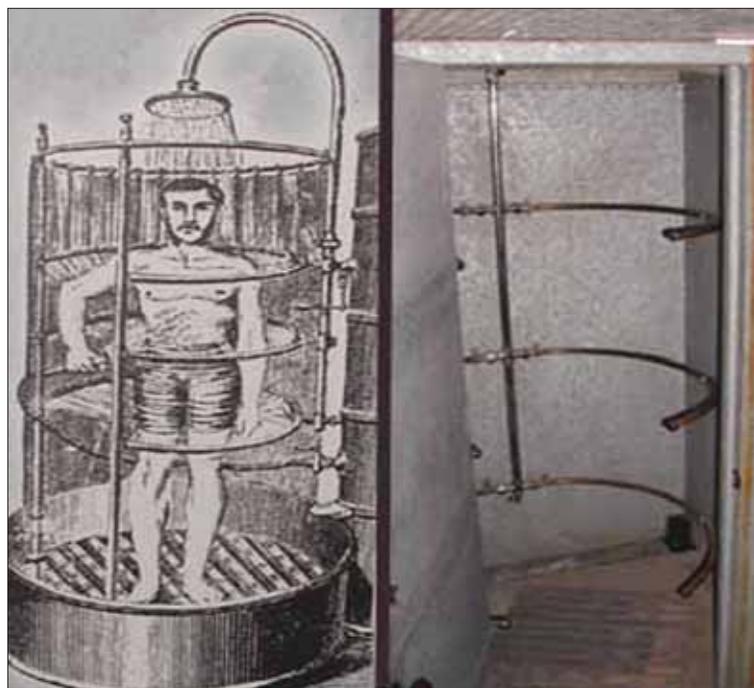
The ships that carried these starving and fevered, cholera and typhus-ridden Irish were known as Famine Coffin Ships – so named for their crowded and deplorable conditions.

Men, women and children were all crowded into very small confines. As a result, germs and fever spread rapidly in such conditions.

I was accompanied on my trip this July by my sister Myrna Daly and her son (my nephew) Wayne Daly. We drove from Ottawa to Quebec City, which is a five hour journey.

Quebec City is really beautifully situated along the St. Lawrence River. There are little outdoor cafes with plenty of flowers everywhere and everyone is very friendly and helpful.

We remarked on the many tourists in town enjoying the charm and flavour of Quebec City. It has a very European atmosphere with so many historical buildings to explore, it would be easy to forget that you're still in Canada.



AN ILLUSTRATION of the shower system from the Parks Canada interpretive poster and an actual photograph of a shower stall.

By CATHOLINE BUTLER

We stayed close to the Plains of Abraham in Old Quebec. The streets are very narrow but still accommodate cars and the large sightseeing tourist buses.

The following morning, we drove to Berthier-Sur-Mer to take the boat to Grosse-Île.

The crossing takes about 35 minutes. I was so excited to finally be on the boat and see the large Celtic Cross that's visible as you approach the island.

This cross was erected in 1909 and was a joint collaboration by the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Quebec City and the New York Ancient Order of Hibernians. It's such a fitting tribute as it stands guard over the thousands of Irish interred on Grosse-Île.

I experienced two very deep contrasting feelings upon arrival: While I was happy to finally be on Grosse-Île, I felt profound sadness to know that the dreams and hopes for a better life in a new country ended so tragically for so many thousands of Irish on this island.

To compound the sorrow, many would have been heartbroken having witnessed loved ones who died on these floating coffin ships put overboard into a watery grave. Husbands lost their wives, wives their husbands, and families lost their children.

The Irish language would have been the first spoken language of these migrants. Not only were they fevered and starving but landing in a new country with a language spoken they did not understand.



PHOTO: Wayne Daly

THE ICONIC CELTIC CROSS visible on the approach to Grosse Île was erected by the Ancient Order of Hibernians in 1909 and measures 14.18 metres (approximately 46.5 feet) high. An inscription at the base is in Irish, English and French. On the side facing the mass graves and the Gulf of the Saint Lawrence beyond, the inscription in Irish reads: "Children of the Gael died in their thousands on this island, having fled from the laws of the foreign tyrants and an artificial famine in the years 1847-1848. God's loyal blessing upon them. Let this monument be a token to their name and honour from the Gaels of America. God save Ireland. Equally moving are the French and English inscriptions, although they do not assign blame.



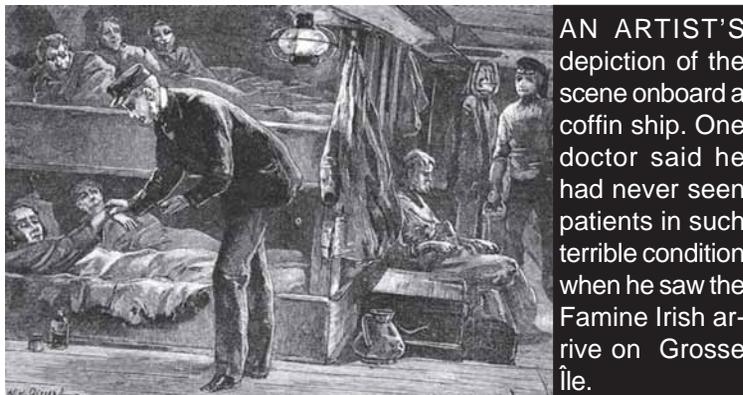
PHOTO: Wayne Daly

THE GROSSE ÎLE and Irish Memorial is a National Historical Site of Canada located near Quebec City.



PHOTO: Wayne Daly

THE LOCATION on Grosse Île where over 5,000 Irish immigrants were buried during the summer of 1847. The raised platform to the left recognizes the Quebecois doctors/nurses/staff who lost their lives helping the sick Irish immigrants.



AN ARTIST'S depiction of the scene onboard a coffin ship. One doctor said he had never seen patients in such terrible condition when he saw the Famine Irish arrive on Grosse Île.

But they would have understood that there were people here waiting and anxious to help them.

Many doctors and nurses who volunteered to go to Grosse-Île and tend to these sick and dying Irish also contracted typhus and cholera themselves.

There is a cemetery on the island just for all the medical personnel who succumbed to these diseases.

All of the 5,000 Irish who died were placed in individual coffins and buried in a special cemetery. There were so many coffins that they were stacked on top of one another.

There wasn't enough soil on the island to cover the graves, so barges of soil were transported from Quebec City to fully cover the coffins.

With lice on both the dying and the living, and to stop the spread of disease, men, women and children were all required to take disinfecting showers.

A guide showed us the room with the individual showers.

Each shower had its own door and everyone was required to disrobe and leave all their clothes. These were picked up and taken to be washed and then put in huge kettles at a very high heat to kill the lice.

When they entered the disinfecting shower long metal bars encircled the person, preventing any movement while the shower was taking place.

While I realize the disinfecting had to be done, I just felt a cold chill when I thought most of these people would never have had a shower before in their lives. This must have been just terrifying for them.

Parks Canada has done a commendable job in preserving all the buildings on the island including the fever sheds.

Bilingual tours are conducted on Grosse-Île during the summer months by the employees of Parks Canada.

Some of the guides are dressed in historical costume and all are so well versed and helpful. They are available to answer all the questions visitors have about what took place on the island.

The Quebec Government has to be commended for their role in providing money and resources to help the Irish when they arrived on Grosse-Île during those terrible years.

Also, to the people of Quebec who adopted the orphaned Irish children and raised them with their own family, allowed the children to keep their Irish names.

Grosse-Île is a National Historic Site that serves as an Irish Famine memorial. It was dedicated in 1996 after a four-year-long campaign to protect the mass grave sites.

At the end of the day we were a more somber reflective group boarding the boat to take us back to Berthier-Sur-Mer. We were all very quiet absorbing what we had seen and heard on Grosse-Île.

One really poignant touch by Parks Canada, as the boat was just about to depart Grosse-Île, all the guides who had been so helpful to us that day stood on the pier waving goodbye to us. It was quite emotional.



PRINCE GEORGE evening reception – (L-R) Shirley Bond MLA, Consul General Frank Flood, Terry Fedorkiw, Todd Doherty MP and Eilis Courtney, president of the Irish Women’s Network BC.

## Discovering the Irish community in Prince George, B.C.

By **EILIS COURTNEY**  
*President, Irish Women’s Network of BC*

**VANCOUVER** – As the first-year anniversary approaches for the arrival of the Irish Consul General in British Columbia, it was time to explore the northern part of the province and this timing worked well for the Community Mapping Project.

Thanks to a contact provided by a member of the Okanagan Irish Society, we were connected with Terry Fedorkiw (Rossiter) who hails from Wexford and who is one of the key members of the Prince George Celtic Club.

Terry knows all the Irish in the community (not to mention everyone else in the town!) and very quickly had our trip organized.

Consul General Frank Flood and I arrived on Tuesday, August 27 for a three day visit and we hit the ground running.

Frank immediately went to the University of Northern B.C. (UNBC) for meetings with senior academics and I prepared for the focus group meeting and community reception that evening.

These two events are just one of the components of the Community Mapping Project, undertaken by the IWN on behalf of the Consulate General of Ireland.

Frank and I were delighted to connect with a focus group of 15 Irish-born community members and listen to the history of the Irish in the community as well as their ideas and suggestions for future connections with the Consulate General.

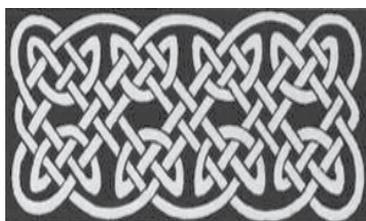
Following the focus group, we hosted over 50 members of the Irish community, friends of the PG Celtic Club and local politicians at a lively reception.

During this reception, we were welcomed by local MLA Shirley Bond, and MP Todd Doherty.

I shared information on the Community Mapping Project and Frank spoke about the recent establishment of the Consulate General of Ireland in Vancouver, and of the growing number of



GARTH FRIZELL, Councillor, City of Prince George, with Frank Flood and Lyn Hall, Mayor of Prince George.



Irish consulates being established in countries around the world.

He stressed the importance of these consulates in being present to offer assistance and support to those who have left Ireland to go elsewhere for work, study, or immigration as well as develop and expand trade partnerships.

As well as meeting Prince George Irish community members, Frank met with Mayor Lyn Hall and was interviewed by CBC for the local radio.

We both had a tour of the College of New Caledonia, met with the Thursday morning business group, and enjoyed some of the local dining establishments (which are to be highly recommended).

One of the highlights was a visit to The Exploration Place, which is a wonderful museum and science centre.

We learned about the local first nation, the Lheidli T’ennet, as well as some of the interesting history of the city.

More importantly, we connected with one of their curators who is interested in doing research on the Irish in the area, including the story of the Frontier Apostles, so we are excited about the potential of this project.

The Prince George Irish community is part of the Celtic Club, joining those who have roots in other Celtic nations – Wales, Scotland, and Isle of Mann.

The club has been in existence for over 40 years, and runs monthly club nights, at which there is a sharing of music, dance, spoken word, and the craic, usually focused on one of the Celtic groups.

I think it is fair to say that the welcome Frank and I received from the Irish community was true Irish hospitality and in turn, the community was energized by the first ever visit of a senior Irish diplomat to their home town.

Personally, I can’t wait to see what initiatives emerge as result of this visit. Thank you to Terry and all who were part of making us feel so welcome.

For more information on the Community Mapping Project, watch for the launch of the new ‘Irish in BC’ website in mid-October online at: <https://www.irishwomenbc.net/cmp2.html>.



Ard-Chonsalacht na hÉireann | Vancouver  
Consulate General of Ireland | Vancouver  
Consulat général d'Irlande | Vancouver

### Connect with the Consulate!

#### First Thursday Business Breakfast

Join us for breakfast on the first Thursday of every month! Connect with Irish professionals working in Vancouver and catch up with Consulate news and activities.

#### Vancouver Irish Language Weekend 2019

4-6 October 2019

Immerse yourself in the Irish language for a weekend! All levels of ability welcome. Fluent and experience teacher from Ireland. Full details & registration at <http://bit.ly/irishvancouver>

#### Cultúr Club

6 October 2019

Cultúr Club is a FREE training workshop for anyone who wants to learn how to teach children the Irish language. Full details & registration at [www.cnag.ie/culturclub](http://www.cnag.ie/culturclub)

#### Job Opportunities

The Consulate is currently recruiting for two local staff positions: Executive and Administration Assistant, and Financial and Administration Officer. Closing date for applications is 25 September 2019, at noon.

#### Keep in touch!

Keep up to date with Consulate events and activities by signing up for our Mailing List & following us on Facebook and Twitter @IRLinVancouver

For information on all of the above visit our website at [www.dfa.ie/vancouver](http://www.dfa.ie/vancouver)

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# After a great summer barbeque, planning now for the Halloween party

## IRISH CLUB OF WHITE ROCK



FRIENDS gathered to enjoy a lovely summer afternoon barbeque (L-R) Carrie, Derek, June and Amy.



JUNE AND AMY PARNELL setting out the delicious spread at the summer gathering.

WHITE ROCK – The Irish Club of White Rock held their annual summer barbeque in Redwood Park on July 28. It was a fantastic day with the largest numbers attending to date.

Club president Sharon Woods said, “On behalf of the club, I would like to thank everyone for supporting our event and a special thanks to our executive and club members who came on board to help out on the day.

“James and Steve did a great job on the barbeque. Your help is very much appreciated.”

A warm welcome is extended to all the new club members who signed up on the day. Sharon said it was fantastic to see so many new families come on board.

She also extended a warm thank you to the Fraser Valley Gaels who organized GAA football and hurling for the kids on the day. The kids loved it along with the games organized by Kellie and Chelsea.

The executive is now making plans for more upcoming events which include the annual children’s Halloween party.

This will be held on Sunday, October 27 for \$10 per family and includes Halloween treats and games.

There will also be several pop up events throughout the year.

For timely updates, visit the Irish Club of White Rock Facebook page, or become a member and receive all the e-mails on upcoming events.

For more information, e-mail: irishclubofwhiterock@gmail.com, or call Deirdre O’Ruairc (604) 803-0773 or Sharon Woods (604) 338-3553.



POSSIBLE contenders for the GAA North American Hurling Championships in the year 2039 preparing for the challenge at the Irish Club of White Rock summer barbeque.



VOLUNTEERS Deirdre and Rosella welcomed guests to the Irish Club of White Rock summer barbeque.



RELAXING with friends (L-R) Mia, Sharon, Amy and James.



CHILDREN’S GAMES and races at the annual Irish Club of White Rock summer barbeque.



KEVIN AND CHELSEA MCDONNELL helped to organize the GAA football and hurling for the kids.



MEMBERS of the Irish Club of White Rock enjoying the summer barbeque – (L/R) Philip, Eileen, Colin, Maria, Katrina, Geraldine, Aidran, Kellie and Ray.

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

**New Irish Museum of Literature Opens**

DUBLIN – The Museum of Literature (MoLI) is a new addition to cultural institutions in Dublin.

It celebrates Ireland’s world-renowned literary culture and heritage from its earliest storytelling traditions to its influential contemporary writers.

It is located in the UCD Newman House on St. Stephen’s Green in Dublin, where a myriad of Irish writers including James Joyce, Flann O’Brien, Maev Binchy and Mary Lavin used to study.

Even the name MoLI pays tribute to Ireland’s most famous writer James Joyce: It is named for his best-known female character Molly Bloom from *Ulysses*.

Dynamic, immersive exhibitions will showcase literary treasures from the National Library collections, including the first copy of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, as well as handwritten notebooks for *Ulysses* and fascinating letters, for example one from Joyce to WB Yeats.

MoLI will also host a free-to-access national children’s programme as well as a Joycean research library accessible to students, scholars and the public alike.

MoLI houses its own digital broadcasting studio, recording interviews, readings, discussions and events with writers, poets, artists, performers, educators and academics from Ireland and abroad.

The in-house Radio MoLI broadcasts 24 hours a day across the world on [radio.moli.ie](http://radio.moli.ie).

# Father Ted star Brendan Grace has died aged 68

DUBLIN – The Father Ted star Brendan Grace died on July 11 at the age of 68 after a short illness.

The veteran Irish actor and comedian was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer just 10 days earlier.

Grace played Father Fintan Stack in the popular Channel 4 comedy series about three priests. He also starred in the 2013 television film *Brendan Grace's Bottler*.

He had lived in the U.S. for many years but returned to his native Dublin in early June, where he was first diagnosed with pneumonia before learning he had terminal cancer.

He is survived by his wife, Eileen, and their four children.

Tom Kelly, Grace's manager for 27 years, speaking on Virgin Media One's Ireland: AM programme said the entertainer's death was a great loss to Ireland.

"Although he was aware of the outcome himself in the last few days when the cancer was diagnosed, it's a great shock to everybody," he said.

"He was very weak, he didn't wish to have chemo or anything like that, and the inevitable happened. He was one of the greats in modern entertaining, it's a huge loss."

The comedian Brendan O'Carroll, writer and star of *Mrs Brown's Boys*, led the tributes, saying, "So sad at the passing of a great comedy legend, husband and father, Brendan Grace."

"He opened doors for so many of us and leaves a legacy of love and laughter that will echo through this land and we will all mourn his passing. Rest peacefully Bottler, you've earned it."

Thousands of messages have been posted by fans on social media recalling fond memories of watching Grace with their families, calling him a "legend of Irish comedy."



**BRENDAN GRACE**  
(1 April 1951 – 11 July 2019)

# Thousands attend opposing abortion rallies in Belfast

BELFAST – Thousands of people from across Ireland attended opposing abortion rallies in Belfast on Saturday afternoon, September 7.

Pro-choice groups held a 'Rally for Choice' at Writer's Square, while pro-life groups held a 'March For Their Lives' event at Custom House Square.

It comes after a silent demonstration by new pro-life group NI Voiceless attracted 20,000 people, according to the organisers, to Stormont the night before.

The opposing groups gathered on Saturday to show their support, or lack of for new abortion legislation set to be introduced in Northern Ireland.

In July, MPs passed the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Act, which contained a provision placing a duty on the government to regulate to provide for access to abortion in Northern Ireland.

It comes into effect if the Stormont executive is not restored by October 21, with regulations required to be in place by the end of March 2020.

Currently terminations are only allowed in cases where a woman's life is at risk or if there is a danger of permanent and serious damage to her mental or physical health.

Among those in attendance at the pro-choice march were veteran campaigner and former MP Bernadette McAliskey, former MLA Eamonn McCann and campaigner Elaine Crory.

Grainne Teggart, of Amnesty International, said the rights of women can no longer be denied.

She added, "Today's rally comes at a critical time. Following recent law reform at Westminster we will soon have decriminalisation of abortion and free, safe and legal and local services."

"For those facing prosecution this cannot come quickly enough."

"After many years of fighting, we are finally getting the equality we de-

serve. Any return to Stormont before October 21 must only happen with agreement on abortion reform on exactly the same terms as has been secured at Westminster.

"These rights have been long and hard-fought for, and we will not accept our rights being sacrificed for political expediency. The north is now – we are determined to make this a reality."

Speaking after attending the demonstration, Sinn Fein MLA Caral Ni Chuilin said, "Current legislation in the north is failing women and remains incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights."

"The issue of women's healthcare should be dealt with through legislative change."

"The first step in this process should be the repeal of draconian British legislation which criminalizes women."

The pro-life event was led by Precious Life's Bernadette Smyth and Father Paddy McCafferty. Baroness O'Loan, a former police ombudsman, also spoke at the rally, where she laid blame for the imposition of new abortion legislation on Northern Ireland's "absentee" politicians, decrying the lack of an executive sitting at Stormont to represent the public.

# New award honours Irish revolutionary Constance Markievicz

DUBLIN – A new award to honour the memory of Constance Markievicz has been announced to support the arts.

The new bursary scheme for artists was announced to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Markievicz's appointment, the first female cabinet minister.

A founder member of Fianna Éireann, Cumann na mBan and the Irish Citizen Army, Markievicz took part in the Easter Rising in 1916.

She was elected Minister for Labour in the First Dáil, becoming the first female cabinet minister in Europe.

The bursaries are intended to improve the representation of the roles, experiences and ambition of women through original work in a variety of art forms.

The Arts Council oversaw administration of the award scheme and received a total of 107 applications earlier this year.

The bursary scheme both honours Countess Constance Markievicz – herself an artist – and provides support for artists from all backgrounds and genres in producing new work that re-



CONSTANCE MARKIEVICZ who took part in the 1916 Easter Rising was a founder member of Fianna Éireann, Cumann na mBan and the Irish Citizen Army.

flects on the role of women in the period covered by the centenary commemorations.

Future awards will be made each year to up to five artists or writers (either individual artists working alone or in collaboration with others) to a value of 20,000 euro per individual or group.

The scheme will open for submissions again early in 2020 with the next round of bursaries to be awarded in May 2020.



Irish Women's Network of BC

## Community Mapping Project – is your group registered?

There are now 44 groups registered, from Metro Vancouver, Kelowna and Victoria and more are registering weekly. If you are an organization/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)

Watch out for the new website 'Irish in BC' which will be launched mid-October.



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# Irish Gaelic language first appeared in Quebec's Gatineau Valley in the early 1800s

**T**HE 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw the arrival of a large number of Irish immigrants to Canada, particularly in the Ottawa and Gatineau valleys, and with them, the Irish Gaelic language of their ancestors.

Many Irish names are still found in this area, but what has become of their language? Scholar and Irish speaker Danny Doyle (*Dónall Ó Dubhghaill*) writes about the story of Irish Gaelic in the Gatineau Valley, since it first appeared in the early 1800s.

By **DANNY DOYLE**

Considering the heavy Irish settlement of the Gatineau Valley [in western Quebec], it is not surprising that a Celtic language was once spoken here.

Having arrived as early as the 1540s, Irish Gaelic (*an Ghaeilge*) has existed in Canada for about 475 years, and speakers of the Celtic languages in Ireland and abroad are inheritors of nearly 3,000 years of cultural tradition.

The majority of the Irish who came to Canada spoke Irish, many knowing no other language. Yet from earliest settlement, it was viewed as a secondary and foreign language, suffering a history of shame, decline and suppression.

Irish is one of six Celtic languages and one of three Gaelic languages (Irish, Scottish and Manx Gaelic) that survived into the modern period.

Once widespread throughout Europe, the Celtic languages were almost entirely extinguished through centuries of invasions and conquests.

The Celts now survive only in a fragment of their indigenous lands, with only a small number of people natively speaking Celtic languages (about 1.5 percent of the people in the Republic of Ireland claim to use the language daily).

In the 2006 Canadian census, about 6,000 people listed themselves as Gaelic speakers, with around 2,000 of those speaking Irish Gaelic (0.005 percent of the population).

The English colonization of Ireland imposed centuries of harsh repression on the Irish people. Despite this, at the start of the 19th Century Irish Gaelic remained the only language of about half the population of Ireland, with about 70 percent of the population able to understand it.

## A Distinct Language

The distinct language and culture of the Gaelic speakers in Canada set them apart, as one essayist noted in the late 1800s: "... go deimhin is 'muintir fá-leath' ad mar tá na Francaighhe ..." (...indeed they are a 'distinct people' as are the French...).

In some communities, Irish was the dominant or only language spoken. Such was the case in Chelsea [Quebec], in the Gatineau Valley.

Through the early 1800s, Irish families settled along the Ridge Road (modern Gatineau Park Trail number one) from the counties of Derry, Antrim, Fermanagh, Cavan, Roscommon,



PHOTO: GVHS Collection of Don Kealey

**IRISH-BORN** Bridget (née McCarthy) Daly, seated, with her youngest daughter, Margaret Hayes, in an undated photo. Born in 1820, Daly is listed as an Irish speaker on the 1901 census, while her daughter's mother tongue is recorded as English.

Mayo, Galway, Tipperary, Carlow, Wexford and Cork.

The first parish priest, Father John O'Brady (*Seán Ó Brádaigh*), was himself an Irish speaker.

He would surely have found use for his Irish in the canton, since in 1838 he described to his Bishop that the Catholic community he found in Chelsea consisted of 100 families, Irish for the most part, and those Irish speaking only the Irish language.

Farther north, by 1842 some 43 percent of families in the Wakefield District were of Irish ancestry. These included the Cahil (*Ó Cathail*), Carrol (*Ó Cearbhaill*), Casady (*Ó Caiside*), Connors (*Ó Conchobhair*), Kelly (*Ó Ceallaigh*), Mahony (*Ó Mathghamhna*), McGarry (*Mac Fhearadhaigh*), Morris (*Ó Muiris*), Mullen (*Ó Maoláin*), Plunket (*Pluinced*), Rice (*Ó Maolchraoibhe*), Roney (*Ó Ruanaidh*) and Treacy (*Ó Treasaigh*) families.<sup>2</sup>

With the Irish came the highest of Gaelic arts. In Upper Wakefield (modern Farrellton), Father Thomas O'Boyle (*Tómás Ua Baighell*) of Mayo arrived as the first parish priest in 1849.

O'Boyle, a highly learned scholar and

Irish-language poet, was named by Seán Ó Dálaigh, the head of the Dublin Ossianic Society, as one of the most important scholars of the Irish language living at the time.

O'Boyle would compose several acclaimed Irish language poems under the pen name *Éire go Bráth* (Ireland Forever) before his tragically early death in South Gloucester (now a suburb of Ottawa) in 1866, at the age of 46.

One such poem, *Is Truagh Gan Mis' In M'Aladh*, alludes to the mythical exiled swan children of the Irish King Lear:

*Is trua gan mis' i m'eala,  
Do ghluaisfinnse abhaile,  
Ag snámh seal ar fuathscéith thar luascadh na dtonn;  
Ba duan mo thriall thar muir,  
Mar Fionn-ghualainn ní Lír,  
Laoch ionmhain na hÉireann go rianú mo bhruinn!  
Dá mbeinn féin faoi gheasa,  
Ná 'r bhféir fós a sheasadh  
Is cónaí s' ndúchas mo shinsear 's mo ghaol,  
Ag iomlua gach srutha,  
'S ag ionladh mo chrutha,  
I' bhfíorthuibreacha suait' ar feadh tíre na nGael!*

It is a pity I am not a swan,  
I would travel home,  
Swimming on phantom wings over the rolling waves;  
Severe would be my journey over the sea,  
As Fionnuala daughter of Lear,  
Beloved hero of Ireland that traces my dreams!

If I myself was under taboo  
On the grass not to stand  
I would live in the district of my ancestors and relations,  
Travelling along every stream,  
And washing my form,  
In the true sweet springs throughout the land of the Gaels!

## The Irish Famine

From 1845 to 1852, the Irish Famine (*an Gorta Mór*, "the Great Starvation") decimated the population of Ireland. Forced onto the poorest lands and mostly limited to potato cultivation, mono-lingual Irish speakers were hit hardest by the injustices of the Famine.

An estimated 1.5 million people died. Another two million fled Ireland, 60 percent of whom were monolingual Irish speakers.

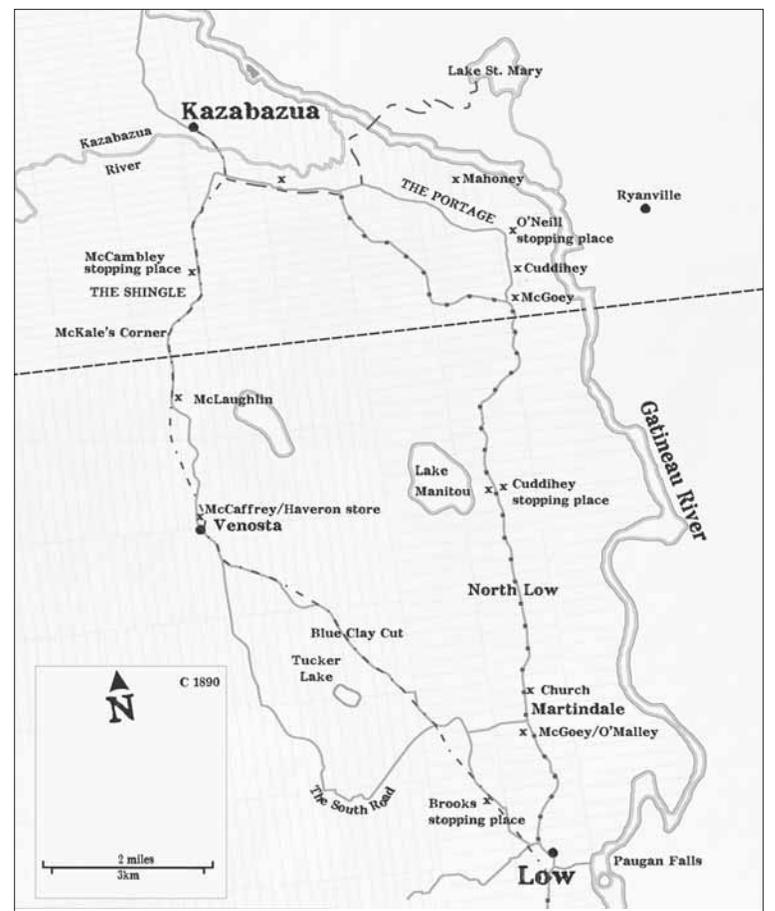
The emigration of so many Gaelic speakers from Ireland is recognized as a major factor in the language's decline. The Irish language and indeed the very population of Ireland never recovered from the effects of the Famine.

The arrival of the beleaguered Famine Irish to the Gatineau Valley meant that by 1851 half the residents of Wakefield, Low and Masham had been born in Ireland.<sup>3</sup>

Reflecting the strong social divide among those affected by the Famine, only five percent of the newly arrived Irish were Protestant; the remainder were Roman Catholic.

There is no question that a large number of these new arrivals spoke the Irish language in many cases, it was likely the only language they knew.

The large number of arriving Famine Irish meant that Gaelic<sup>4</sup> grew into the third-largest European language group



MAP SOURCE: GVHS Pathfinder Maps and Richard Blanchard

THE IRISH would leave indelible marks on the Gatineau Valley landscape, including Martindale, possibly named for Martin O'Malley (*Ó Maille*), Brennan's Hill (*Cnoc Bhréanainn*), Farrellton (*Ó Fearghail*), the Hogan (*Ó hÓgáin*) and Kealey (*Ó Cadhla*) settlements, McKale's (*Mac Céile*) Corner, Ryanville (*Ó Riain*), and the Cuddihey (*Ó Cuidighthigh*) and O'Neill (*Ó Néill*) stopping places.

in the country, being spoken by one in 10 Canadians.

While the number of Irish speakers in Canada was at its highest in the decades following the Famine, this was also the period of its greatest decline.

As Irish activist Aralt Mac Giolla Chainnigh notes, "Perhaps, as in Ireland, the Famine had finally succeeded, where overt coercion had failed, to instill a sense of shame and inadequacy in Irish culture and language."<sup>5</sup>

Irish became associated with poverty, backwardness and death. Many survivors of the Famine abandoned the language in its aftermath.

Despite a large number of Irish-Canadians understanding Irish, proportionally only one in five actively used their language.

Remaining speakers of Irish would have felt immense pressure to give up their language, especially from those Irish who had already done so.

Canadian oral histories contain stories both of the Irish who used their language and of the Anglo-Irish who ridiculed Gaelic speakers as backward. Raising Irish-speaking children, as had occurred before the Famine, almost entirely stopped.

Along with Ireland, Canada was part of a worldwide British system where education aimed at linguistically and culturally anglicizing the Empire's minorities. Schools used corporal punishment to beat "foreign" languages and cultures out of children.

Elders from Prince Edward Island still remembered in 1987 the forms of pun-

ishment that were used in their day against those found speaking Gaelic.

This system found some of its worst extensions in the residential schooling of Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit children.

Many factors contributed to the decline of the Gaelic languages in Canada.

Governmental neglect, institutional abuse, indifference among speakers, and, above all, shame and the ingrained belief that English was a more useful language all contributed to the collapse of the Irish language by the closing of the 19th Century.

Globally, Irish was and remains a mere shadow of what it had been just a few decades prior.

An examination of the 1901 census for Wakefield and Low captures the final echoes of the Irish language in the Gatineau Valley. This census was the first to allow for "Gaelic" or "Irish" to be written as the first language spoken in the home.

Concerning this new language question, professor Jonathan Dembling states: "Even before the census took place, the presence of Gaelic speakers (Scottish and Irish) was apparently significant enough to deserve explicit mention in the instructions. And both varieties of Gaelic were indeed among the most common responses to the new question."<sup>6</sup>

In this census, nine residents of Wakefield listed their mother tongue as "Irish."

[Continued next page...]



PHOTO: GVHS Adrienne Herron

ECHOES of the Irish language persist in the valley, such as the inscription on the McLaughlin tombstone at the St. Martin Catholic Cemetery, which translates to “Peacefully in God’s country.” A colourful half shamrock on the side of the stone highlights an enduring connection to Irish culture.

[Continued from page 14]

Of those nine, three had been born in Quebec to Irish-speaking families: Bridget Clary (*Brid Ní Chléirigh*, b. 1843), Ellen Morris (*Eibhlín Ní Mhuiris*, b. 1846) and Francis Tenpenny (*Prionsias Mac an Tiompaigh*, b. 1846).

In all three cases, the census shows the active loss of the language, with all of their children being raised in English rather than Irish.

As in other areas, including Ireland, the children would likely have hidden, out of shame, that their parent had spoken Gaelic. This part of their heritage would then be unknown to future English speaking generations.

While nonagenarian Mona Monette of Brennan’s Hill does not recollect any known speakers, she can understand why the language would have been hidden: “It was poor times, and they would try to hide that they were poor ... they couldn’t write and they would be shy of it.”

In Wilson’s Corners, now part of Cantley, Catherine Timlin O’Boyle Holmes (*Caitriona Nic Thoimlin*) listed

herself as an Irish speaker.

Holmes had been born in Dumha Liag, County Mayo. Her great-grandson Bryan Daly recalls hearing from his mother that Holmes would speak Irish with other women in the area, and that her children continued to use certain Irish phrases and words.

He was also told that his mother, Agatha, Catherine Holmes’ granddaughter, was teased by her siblings for being left-handed with the phrase the “ole ciotach” (*ciotóg*, a lefthanded, awkward person).

Bryan Daly’s paternal side originated in County Offaly and, though he doubts they actively spoke much Irish, some phrasing and words were preserved. For example, Daly remembers his father, Frank, correcting his male children with the phrase “don’t be such a damn amadan” (*amadán*, a male fool).<sup>8</sup>

In the area of the village of Low, Quebec, the family of Samuel and Adell Stewart is of note.

They had arrived in Canada two generations previously, with Samuel’s grandfather John born in Ireland c. 1791.

## NOVENAS

### Novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary (never known to fail). O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine, splendour of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God. Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this my necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. O show me herein you are my Mother, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Sweet Mother, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal. You gave me the Divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me. This prayer must be said for three days, even after the request is granted and the favour received, it must be published.

– PJMK, MJK, CC, CB, LMC, ST

### Novena to St. Peregrin

O blessed St. Peregrin, who was miraculously cured of an incurable cancer, I come before you on behalf of all those who suffer with cancer, especially (name person). I ask that you plead for them, asking God to bless their doctors with the wisdom and knowledge needed to bring their cancer into full remission or cure them of it completely. As they are being treated, ask the Lord to grant them the grace and strength to bear their illness with courage, patience and dignity. St. Peregrin, wonder-worker, I am confident in your help for all those afflicted with cancer, especially (name person). Amen.

Publication of a novena is \$25

## Canadian Census

Their surname, Irish ethnicity, and Presbyterian religion on the census indicates the family was likely from the north of Ireland.

In 1901 the eldest Stewart son, Robert, was listed as an Irish speaker. The remaining four children, Sarah, Emmly, Roofes and Effey, are listed under this “Irish” entry as “same as above.”

This is the only unambiguously recorded instance of the language continuing to be passed to a new generation by 1901.

All other listed Irish speakers recorded English-speaking children. It is likely the language did not survive much longer.

It is possible that 23 other Irish speakers are listed in the 1901 census for the Low area, belonging to the Evans (*Ó hEimhin*), O’Leary (*Ó Laoghaire*), Moore (*Ó Mórdha*) and Needham (*Ó Niadh*) families.

These are indicated as mother tongue Irish by being recorded “same as above” with ditto marks.

It is standard practice in census studies to accept “same as above” or ditto marks as the full intention of the enumerator and not to assume error. However, this is less reliable than a direct statement of “Irish.”

It is possible this was a recording error, but it is just as possible that the Irish-speaking families lived near to each other, accounting for their grouping on the census.

Of these 23 people, none had been born in Ireland (14 born in Quebec, nine in Ontario) and only four (the O’Leary family) were Catholic.

Even with “mother tongue Irish” census results appearing in the Gatineau Valley, the true number of Irish speakers is unknown.

Due to cultural pressures, many Irish speakers would not have freely recorded themselves as such.

Compounding this were the census enumerators themselves, who across the country erased the existence of minority languages through “corrections,” crossing out disliked responses and overwriting “English” in their place.

Until the second half of the 20th Century, the Official Canadian Census of Quebec classed all non-francophones as English speakers, leading to the Eastern Township phrase “*les anglais qui ne parlent pas l’anglais*”<sup>9</sup> (the English who do not speak English) to describe Gaelic speakers.

These effects worked to heavily diminish the presence of Gaelic speakers across Canada. By the 1931 census, only 834 of Vancouver’s estimated 10,000 Gaelic speakers were listed as such, and only 230 of Toronto’s estimated 20,000.

## Irish-Canadian Culture

In 1957, Canadian folklorist Edith Fowke, with the support of the Smithsonian Institution, ventured north to find any remaining echoes of the language and culture.

She met with O.J. Abbott, who as a boy had learned over 100 songs from the third-generation Irish-Canadians of the Ottawa Valley and Northern Ontario lumber camps.

The songs followed Irish verse style, and retained the *seannós* (old-style) singing tradition of flatly speaking the final line.

One such song, which Abbott had learned from Owen McCann of Hull, is *An Cruiscín Lán* (The Full Little Jug):

*Grá mo chroí mo chruiscín,  
Sláinte gheal mo mhuirín,  
Éireann mo mhuirín lán.  
Grá mo chroí mo chruiscín,  
Is sláinte gheal mo mhuirín,  
We’ll have another cruiscín  
lán, lán, lán,  
And we’ll have another cruiscín lán.<sup>10</sup>*

Love of my heart my little jug,  
Bright health my little darling  
Ireland my full darling.  
Love of my heart my little jug,  
And bright health my little darling  
We’ll have another jug that’s full, full, full  
And we’ll have another jug that’s full.

The song is a fragment, a reminder of a time when the Irish language had found a home in the Gatineau Valley.

The earliest settlers had raised Irish-speaking children, and later the most desperate had found refuge from the horrors of the Famine. They brought their language to the valley, and in it they created poetry and song.

These collecting efforts came too late,

and the songs and stories of the Gaelic Irish were mostly lost.

Despite this loss, echoes of its history and a love for Irish culture still resound along the length of the Gatineau Valley.

Danny Doyle’s recent book, *Míle Míle i gCéin: The Irish Language in Canada*, gives a historical overview of the Irish language in Canada. Published in Ottawa by Borealis Press in 2015, it is available online through Amazon or the publisher. Any readers interested in sharing their stories or anecdotes about the Irish language are invited to contact Danny at donalldubh@gmail.com.

NOTE: This article was originally published by the Gatineau Valley Historical Society (GVHS) in Volume 45 of *Up the Gatineau!*, its annual local history journal, and is reprinted here with the express permission of the Society. For more details on the GVHS, a not-for-profit organization located in Chelsea, Quebec, see www.gvhs.ca.

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- 2 Historical records usually contain spelling inaccuracies due to a combination of illiterate informants, enumerator interpretation of accents, and non-standardized English spelling of foreign language surnames.
- 3 Newly arrived families in 1851 include Brian (Ó Briain), Burns (Ó Broin), Cilloin (Ó Cilleáin), Coolen (Mac Giolla Chuille), Daly (Ó Dálaigh), Driscall (Ó hEidersceoil), Eagin (Mac Aodhagáin), Flin (Ó Floinn), Ganion (Mac Fhionnáin), Goggin, Hays (Ó hAodha), Lagen (Ó Lagain), Laundres, McCarty (Mac Carthaigh), McLaughing (McLaughlin) (Mac Lochlainn), Mealyer (Mac Laochdha), Morrin (Ó Móráin), Mullen (Ó Maoláin), Murphy (Ó Murchadha), Roak (de Róiste), Ronan (Ó Rónáin) and Sweny (Mac Suibhne).
- 4 This means Scottish and Irish Gaelic combined, having similar numbers of speakers, and at the time considered to be dialects of one language.
- 5 Aralt Mac Giolla Chainnigh. *The Irish Language in Kingston Ontario*, 2005.
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## Mike Pence backs Boris Johnson over Brexit in awkward Dublin visit

DUBLIN – In what has been described as an uncomfortable press conference, U.S. Vice-President Mike Pence expressed support for U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the ongoing Brexit negotiations following a meeting with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar

Speaking during his visit to Ireland on Tuesday, September 3, Pence said Ireland and the European Union should “negotiate in good faith with Prime Minister Johnson and to work to reach an agreement to respect U.K. sovereignty and minimize disruption to commerce”.

“The United States supports the United Kingdom’s decision to leave the European Union in Brexit,” he said, though he added that the Good Friday Agreement needed to be respected.

For his part Varadkar said the impact that a hard border would have on Ire-

land would be substantial and “deeply destructive.”

Later, ahead of a meeting in the U.S. ambassador’s residence, asked if the Good Friday Agreement needed to be in place in order for the U.S. to sign a trade agreement with Britain, Pence said, “Let me leave the details to others,” adding that the U.S. would continue to affirm the importance of the accord.

The robust support for Britain from the vice-president during his visit to Ireland had not been expected but Irish Government sources stressed they were “very satisfied” that the private discussions between Pence and Varadkar had reinforced the role of the U.S. as a guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement.

In particular, the Taoiseach pointed out that a majority in Northern Ireland supported the backstop.

Another controversy emerged when Pence stayed at a Trump owned property in the Co. Clare village of Doonbeg.

This was despite the fact that his meetings were on the other side of the country in Dublin, requiring a two hour commute to Aras an Uachtairain for his meet-and-greet with President Higgins.

Pence defended his decision to stay in the Trump hotel following widespread criticism in the U.S.

He said the choice was “logical” and was chosen to accommodate the “unique footprint” that comes with the security detail and other personnel needed. Pence was travelling with a 300-strong entourage.

Earlier, his chief of staff said Trump had suggested the vice-president stay at the hotel, though he said this wasn’t a “request” or a “command.”

Trump has faced accusations of conflicts of interests over his business affairs since becoming U.S. president. His suggestion last month that his resort in Miami could be a venue for next year’s G7 summit provoked outrage from his opponents.

## SEATTLE IRISH NEWS



IRISH SPEAKERS at a Pop-Up Gaeltacht meeting at Shawn O'Donnell's in Fremont being held at 6 PM every Wednesday evening.



THE SEATTLE GAELS hurling, camogie and football teams at the North American GAA Finals in Leesburg, Virginia on the last weekend of August.

## Donald Trump calls Ireland part of U.K. as he boasts about his British properties

DUBLIN – Donald Trump confused Ireland and the U.K. while answering questions about a post-Brexit trade deal and listed Doonbeg among his properties in Britain.

The gaffe came at a press conference at the end of the G7 Summit in France in August, when he was asked by a British reporter about claims he would “do over” the U.K. in a future free trade deal.

The U.S. President insisted he wouldn't. “I love the U.K.,” he said, pointing out that he owns properties there – and listed Doonbeg in Co. Clare, very much not in the United Kingdom, among them.

He visited his Irish hotel and golf resort in June and held talks with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar at nearby Shannon Airport.

His visit was followed by U.S. Vice-President Mike Pence during his trip to Ireland in September.

Trump’s blunder came as he rejected any suggestion he would be unfair to the U.K. in a future trade deal.

“No, no, no. I love the U.K.. I own property in the U.K. I love the U.K. I have no idea how my property is doing because I don’t care, but I own Turnberry [in Scotland] and I own in Aberdeen, and I own in Ireland as you know – Doonbeg – great stuff.”

U.S. reporters were quick to pick up on the error with NBC News’s White House Correspondent tweeting that Trump listed Doonbeg among the other hotels and pointing out that it is “located in the Republic of Ireland and not in the U.K.”

Earlier Trump praised the new British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and said he believes he will achieve a Brexit deal before the deadline of October 31.



U.S. PRESIDENT Donald Trump pictured above at the G7 Summit in France confused Ireland and the UK while answering questions about a post-Brexit trade deal and listed Doonbeg among his properties in Britain.



THE TRUMP International Golf Links and Hotel Ireland in West Clare has been at the centre of recent controversy following a visit by U.S. Vice President Mike Pence in September.

He said Johnson’s predecessor Theresa May “wasn’t able to do a deal. I gave her my ideas as to doing the deal very early on and you possibly know what they are but I would have done that,” he said. “She chose to do it her way and that didn’t work out so well.”

Trump said he believes Boris Johnson will be a “great prime minister.” He added, “We like each other. We had a great two-and-a-half days. I’ve been waiting for him to be prime minister for about six years. I told him ‘what took you so long?’”



PHOTO: Rozarii Lynch  
AN IRISH FAMINE EXHIBIT of 1,845 glass potatoes opens at METHOD Gallery, 106 3rd Avenue S, Seattle, on October 18. The exhibit is the concept of Seattle glass artist Paula Stokes, a native of Co. Meath. It consists of 1,845 hand-blown glass potatoes assembled in the form of a cairn, suggesting a burial monument to the more than one million people who died during the 1845-1852 Irish Famine.



IRISH NIGHT at the Seattle Mariners – (L-R) Daisy, David and Gabby Jacobsen, Mariners’ Catcher Tom Murphy (whose great-grandparents are from Ireland), Tom Keefe, John Keane, Michelle Barker and Jimmy Bystrom.

# SEATTLE IRISH NEWS

## PASSINGS

- Mary Charles (88), a native of Co. Leitrim and longtime Irish community organizer, died in Edmonds August 1.
- Fr. Raymond Heffernan (88), a native of Belfast who has served in the Seattle area since 1957, died in Seattle July 28.
- Frank Shriane (83), a native of Co. Roscommon and longtime Irish community organizer, died in Mukilteo July 10.
- Danny Bray (93), a native of Dublin who lived in Seattle most of his life, died suddenly in Kentucky June 27.
- Maura Commins (98), a native of Co. Louth who has lived in the Seattle area since 1968, died in Seattle June 25.
- Dan Nolan (89), a native of Kerry who has lived in the Seattle area since 1948, died in Seattle June 12.
- Roland Hjorth (83), UW Dean Emeritus whose late wife was from Co. Wicklow, died in Seattle May 6.
- JoAnne Randall (77), former president of the Friends of St. Patrick, died in Bellevue June 20.
- Mike McQuaid (79), father of the former president of the Friends of St. Patrick, died in Seattle June 9.
- Nicholas Leonard (93), a native of Dublin, died in Edmonds May 23.

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílse*  
– May their faithful souls rest at God's right hand

**SENIORS' LUNCHEON** – The Irish Immigrant Support Group has scheduled another Irish seniors' luncheon at the Wilde Rover Irish Restaurant in Kirkland at noon on Saturday, September 28.

All seniors with an Irish connection are welcome. Over 500 different Irish seniors have attended these luncheons over the past ten years, and all have been wonderful, fun occasions.

The subsidized cost for the buffet lunch is \$15 for seniors and \$20 for non-seniors and all are welcome, but advance reservations are required to (253) 237-2811 or [Lunch@irishclub.org](mailto:Lunch@irishclub.org).

**BELLINGHAM IRISH FESTIVAL** – Co-sponsored by the Celtic Arts Foundation, Bellingham's Irish Festival runs Friday-Sunday, October 4-6, with numerous musical performances including Irish music sessions at Uisce Irish Pub and Honey Moon Meadery; workshops on the fiddle, rhythm guitar, sean-nós: Irish dance, shanty singing, the bodhrán for beginners, beginning tin whistle, ceili dance class, beginning flute, Irish social dancing and more!

All venues are within a central six block area of downtown Bellingham and most events and performances are free! For the full schedule, visit [bellinghamirishfestival.com](http://bellinghamirishfestival.com).

**IRISH FAMINE EXHIBIT** – Congratulations to Seattle glass artist Paula Stokes on her spectacular "1845: Memento Mori" Irish Famine exhibit.

The exhibit consists of 1,845 hand-blown glass potatoes assembled in the form of a cairn, suggesting a burial monument to the more than one million people who died during the 1845-1852 Irish Famine.

The Exhibit opens at METHOD Gallery in Seattle (106 3rd Ave S) on October 18 and runs through November 30.

A native of Co. Meath, Stokes began



By JOHN KEANE



TOM KEEFE, founding president of the Seattle Galway Association in 1982, throws the Ceremonial First Pitch at Irish Night at the Seattle Mariners.



ST. PATRICK (aka Tom Keefe) was Honorary Steward for the \$50,000 Irish Day Stakes at Emerald Downs at Irish Day at the Races.

her work in Seattle as manager of glass artist Dale Chihuly's hot shop and special projects. More information at [paulastokes.com](http://paulastokes.com).

**GAELIC MASS** – Seattle's annual Mass of Remembrance in the Irish (Gaelic) language will be Friday, October 28, at 7:30 PM, at St. Patrick's Church, 2702 Broadway Avenue E (just off I-5 at Roanoke Street).

This Mass commemorates the deceased members of Seattle's Irish Community, especially those who have passed away in the past 12 months who will be remembered by name during the Mass.

To submit names to be remembered or for more information, call (253) 237-2811 or e-mail [GaelicMass@irishclub.org](mailto:GaelicMass@irishclub.org).

**USGAA FINALS** – The Seattle Gaels competed in the North American GAA Finals in Leesburg, Virginia the last weekend of August.

While the outcome wasn't quite what they wanted, they should still be incredibly proud of a great weekend with lots of grit, determination, and heart on display from all the players.

The Gaels camogie team won their quarter-final against Milwaukee, but lost the semi-final to Annie Moore's from New York.

The men's football team lost their quarter-final, but went on to win the Shield Competition Final Sunday.

The Gaels hurlers lost their quarter-final match to St. Louis. Congrats to all the Gaels who traveled and participated.

**IRISH THEATRE** – Director Kelly McMahon plans to establish an Irish-focused theatre company in Seattle, with the aim of presenting the inaugural production next year.

Previously, Kelly got a Masters degree in drama and theatre studies from NUIG (Galway), and worked with Irish theatre artists and companies including An Taibhdhearc, The Town Hall Theatre, The Lyric in Belfast, including her own Ninth Wave company.

She is exploring the idea of a Seattle-based company that will produce theatrical works from Ireland, either from the classic cannon or the exciting new works of current writers.

With the support of the Irish Heritage Club, she is forming a committee to support the project and develop plans for a first production, possibly in 2020.

For those interested in becoming involved or learning more, contact (253) 237-2811.

**NEW BOOK** – Actress Kate Mulgrew, the former Seattle resident who stars as Red in the Netflix television series, *Orange is the New Black* (and previously starred in *Mrs. Columbo*, *Star Trek: Voyager*, etc.), lived in Seattle's sister city of Galway while writing her recently published memoir, *How to Forget: A Daughter's Memoir*. She says, "I found in Ireland an acceptance of my actions that I never found here in the U.S."

**DUBLIN BUSINESS MISSION** – In May, the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Greater Seattle Partners led a delegation of over 40 regional business and civic leaders to Dublin.

A report on the trip at [seattlechamber.com](http://seattlechamber.com) highlights: "Sessions such as a panel with arts leaders, a conversation with Lord Mayor of Dublin Nial Ring, and multiple discussions on inclusive growth gave the delegation insight into how our Irish counterparts think about how to keep people from being left behind.

"...By making culture relevant for all, and making a strong public and philanthropic case for continued investment in it, Dublin's leaders are working to keep arts and culture a vibrant part of the region."

**PASSPORT REMINDER** – Most Irish passport holders can now renew their Irish passports online at [passportonline.dfa.ie](http://passportonline.dfa.ie), but it's suggested to allow at least six weeks for the online renewal.

You can also now arrange to receive a reminder e-mail notification of the date your Irish passport expires – scroll down to register at Passport Renewal Reminder.

Be aware that emergency passports for U.S. residents can only be issued in actual emergencies. Please make sure your passport is not close to being expired!

## MISCELLANEOUS

• Contact Seattle's Irish Book Club at [jaadams095@gmail.com](mailto:jaadams095@gmail.com).

• Independent Galway City Councilor Mike Cubbard has been elected mayor of Seattle's Sister City of Galway, while Councilor Donal Lyons was elected Deputy Mayor.

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# Brexit: Coming Apart at the Seams

FOR a long time the Irish Government has held fast to the assumption that 'the backstop' (a provision that guarantees an open border no matter what the outcome of Brexit negotiations) is sufficient to ensure no hard border in Ireland.

The government's updated contingency plan for a no-deal Brexit, the Contingency Action Plan, published on July 9, makes clear that it has revised that view considerably.

Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, acknowledged that the government now considers that the risk of a no-deal Brexit is 'significant'.

Disintegration, the chief fallout of Brexit, heightens considerably in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

On Wednesday, July 3, former Northern Ireland Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Peter Hain said, "It is not the backstop, but a no-deal Brexit which will threaten the Union between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K. Which is a major reason why No Deal must be stopped."

A big problem, for those who wish to protect the integrity of the U.K., is that new British prime minister, Boris Johnson has promised to bring the U.K. out of the EU without a deal unless they can renegotiate the current deal.

Yet the former prime minister, Theresa May, negotiated and signed up to a Withdrawal Agreement with the backstop as one of its irreplaceable features.

With someone as amateurish and trivial as Johnson at the helm, the chance of a no-deal Brexit runs much higher.

At the hustings Johnson primarily addressed the less than one percent of the U.K.'s population who comprise the Conservative Party membership who have the power to elect their leader.

They are an older demographic, nationalistic and even jingoistic, and they count among them a considerable number of deluded people.

Johnson's pronouncements therefore need to be understood in terms of his intended audience.

## THE VIEW FROM IRELAND



By MAURICE FITZPATRICK

Even so, the positions he has taken are very dangerous. Brexit is often likened to self-harm, but no-deal is more akin a full-on suicide attempt.

On July 16, Johnson moved closer to that reality by ruling out the backstop or any rider to it: "no to time limits or unilateral escape hatches or these kind of elaborate devices, glosses, codicils... It has been devised by this country as an instrument of our own incarceration in the single market and customs union. It needs to come out."

Surely he can understand that an orderly exit from the EU is impossible if the U.K. jettisons the backstop?

Europe may – yet again – agree to allow the U.K. more time to exit, but it is unwise to bank on that.

Although incoming European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, has indicated that a further extension for the U.K. may be possible, that decision requires the approval of the EU 27 leaders.

President Macron of France, in particular, has voiced his exasperation with the U.K. and the damage that its protracted 'exit' is doing to the fabric of Europe.

It is quite conceivable that the October 31 deadline for the U.K. to leave (a date insisted on by Macron during the last round of EU 27 negotiations) may be immovable.

If the U.K. were to exit the biggest trading bloc in the world without treaties in place to enable it to continue to trade with the EU, the U.K. cannot but severely damage its economy.

Typically only a catastrophic event such as a war could prompt a country to do such a thing. In this case, however, the act would be quite unforced.

A no-deal Brexit outcome would raise profound questions about the economic and political make-up of the U.K..

The capitalist system is wholly wedded to the objective of economic growth, yet in a no-deal Brexit this tenet of the economic system, which helps to structuralise the U.K., would be rejected.

Ireland's fate is unavoidably tethered to U.K.'s fate.

Compromisers within Irish politics and media have begun to argue that, by conceding something to the newly installed British prime minister, Ireland could retain the initiative in negotiations and shorten the odds of no-deal.

A corollary of this argument is that the U.K. jeopardising its interests is no reason for Ireland to fail to do everything possible to protect its own interests.

By doing nothing to counteract the U.K.'s thanatos [personification of death] instinct, we are party to being driven over the precipice. These circumstances are deeply unfair, but politics often is.

The injustice of it would principally be felt in Northern Ireland. In a no-deal scenario, there are several competing (and fully legitimate) claims at play in the North.

On the one side, the Northern Irish electorate voted to remain in the EU in 2016 and voted for the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

Northern Ireland's rights should be protected, and its voice should be heard. Yet the European customs union depends upon goods entering the EU from a 'third country' being checked and monitored.

If the U.K. abruptly leaves the EU, there is no way to do that without a hardening of the Irish border, which is inimical to the Good Friday Agreement.

The EU is wholly sympathetic to the Irish wish to retain an open border, but its customs union cannot survive an open border in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

Overarching these concerns is the insistence on the part of a minority in Northern Ireland, which has ever diminishing support, that the U.K. referendum outcome in June 2016 must be implemented.

In September, after the summer recess, Irish, U.K. and European negotiators will have less than eight weeks to formulate a solution to this crisis. The odds are now no better than even that they will succeed.

# Irish Ministers taken aback by predicted scale of no-deal Brexit damage

DUBLIN – Ministers now believe that a no-deal Brexit will be significantly worse than they previously expected, with predictions of thousands of immediate job losses in tourism and "carnage" in the fishing sector, after discussions at Cabinet on Tuesday night, September 3.

A report published in the *Irish Times* indicates Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney briefed his colleagues at the meeting, which ran for four-and-a-half hours and included a lengthy discussion about no-deal planning.

Cabinet members were circulated with a document on the likely implications of no-deal, which was later collected from them, and which left several Ministers taken aback by the severity of the warnings.

They were told that 10,000 jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry were likely to be lost in the first three months after Brexit.

The implications for parts of the agri-food industry also shocked some of those present while Coveney told the meeting that there would be "carnage" in the fishing industry after a no-deal, according to one person present.

Ministers were also told it was inevitable there would be some checks on goods imported across the border but that those checks would not take place at the border.

When pressed by some Ministers for more details about the nature of the checks, Coveney declined to elaborate – though there was some mention of mobile checks.

It is understood that discussions are taking place in Government Buildings about issuing more detail to the public in advance of the return of the Dáil following summer break.

Coveney and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar stressed the importance of protecting Ireland's place in the EU's single market, which would require the checks be carried out in consultation with the EU.

"The checks will come," one minister said. "But telling people where they are will be awkward."

Another minister said, "We're going to have to level with people. It's going to be a lot worse than people expect."

The Government says that it is in discussions with the European Commission about protecting the single market in the event of a no-deal, while maintaining an open border between North and South.

## The Great Brexit Debate Continues Online on Social Media

While the debate continues in British political circles, the discussion is no less fierce online with a torrent of opinions both for and against Brexit and views from every possible angle.

We thought this response from Ciaran Irvine who is from Derry in Northern Ireland was particularly interesting and representative of a large segment of the population.

He was responding to the following question: *Is it possible that the seven Sinn Féin Westminster MPs could be persuaded to topple Johnson's government?*

His reply: Never interrupt your opponent when he is making a mistake.

This keeps being raised by people, but engage brain and think this through for one second.

How on earth is it in any way in SF's interest to save the British from their own lunatic act of national self-harm?

Repeated polls have shown a strong likelihood of a majority vote in favour of a united Ireland in NI in the scenario of a no-deal catastrophic Brexit.

The Tories and the DUP are doing more to advance the cause of an independent free and united Ireland than anything SF have managed themselves in decades.

SF can achieve their raison d'être by simply doing nothing at all. And in the aftermath the British and the Unionists cannot bitch and whine about the outcome and do their usual complaining about the beastly Irish because they did it to themselves.

Well, doubtless they still will bitch and whine, of course, but nobody will take them seriously.

Questions like this you know what they demonstrate? They demonstrate that far too many British people still don't get it.

They seem fundamentally incapable of understanding that Ireland is a sovereign nation, not some sort of subservient possession to be toyed with.

And that there is no obligation whatsoever on anyone in Ireland to come along and clean up your own damn mess. You broke it, you own it. We're done here.

## Nearly 79,000 Irish passports issued to U.K. residents in first 6 months of 2019

DUBLIN – More Irish passports were issued in the U.K. than in the Republic of Ireland in the first six months of 2019.

The Irish passport office has confirmed that 78,744 passports were issued to first-time applicants living in Great Britain and Northern Ireland from January till the end of June.

During the same period 60,300 Irish passports were issued to adults making their first application in the Republic of Ireland.

In order to apply for an Irish passport you must be an Irish citizen.



Thousands of U.K. residents have rushed to apply for Irish passports before the Brexit.

Irish citizenship can be acquired in a series of ways, including through place of birth, Irish descent, marriage, adoption or residing in Ireland for a particular length of time.

Irish citizenship is automatic for people who were born on the island of Ireland before 2005 or those with a parent who is an Irish-born citizen.

There has been a marked increase in the number of people from the UK applying for an Irish passport ahead of Brexit.

In 2015, there were more than 46,000 applications from Great Britain. This more than doubled in 2018 to over 98,500 Irish passport applications.

It has been suggested many want to retain the benefits of EU membership, including the freedom of movement, with the U.K. set to leave the European Union on October 31.

VANCOUVER IRISH SPORTING AND SOCIAL CLUB

# 2019 – The Year in Review

By NIAMH BARRY

VANCOUVER – As the Irish Sporting and Social Club (ISSC) celebrates its 45th year in Vancouver, it's clear to see the club has gone from strength-to-strength since its beginnings in 1974.

This year saw teams represent the club, and collect silverware, all over North America, from San Diego on the west coast to Virginia in the east, and as far north as Edmonton.

The club hosted an All Vancouver Gaelic Football League in the spring, participated in the USGAA finals, and won across the board in the Pomerleau Vancouver GAA Championship. All this alongside a busy year of social, youth and games development activities.

The year started early with a hugely successful talent show where performers across many genres battled it out for the top spot.

The early on-field action for the ISSC

involved hosting the St. Patrick's Day Gaelic Games celebration where the men's football tournament cup was dedicated to, and presented by, Jim Speiran, the stalwart of Vancouver GAA.

Hosting duties didn't stop there as we also hosted a five-week-long Gaelic Football Spring League with 12 teams involved across men's and ladies football.

One of the major focuses of the ISSC is around promoting our Gaelic games and encouraging participation at every age and skill level. It was an active year in this regard with several initiatives across various fronts.

On the youth side, we provided a Gaelic games coach to seven different local schools for four weeks, ran youth games across the season and had a Gaelic games youth camp.

The youth weren't the only group to have an opportunity to learn the skills of the game, all were welcome at six

weeks of skills development sessions for beginners for football and hurling/camogie.

This year also saw the launch of the Gaelic for Mothers and Others initiative and some returning ISSC stars tog out for a co-ed ISSC legends game.

Other off-field activities for ISSC members included coaching and refereeing courses and a six-week yoga for GAA players course which was taught by Deirdre Hurley.

Emboldened by winning the Gaelic Football Spring League, the ISSC Camogie team travelled to San Diego in May and took part in both camogie and football 7's tournaments.

In a huge achievement for the team, they won out the football competition and went to the final of the camogie.

This was not the only tournament claimed by the camogie team, the Emerald City cup was also added to the trophy case after victories in Seattle.

The ISSC ladies footballers dominated Vancouver, Western Canada and North America this year.

The first championship win of the season was the Western Canadian Championships hosted by Edmonton Wolf Tones GAA Club.

This was followed by the Pomerleau Vancouver GAA titles in Senior and Junior levels.

To close out the season the team travelled to Leesburg, Virginia for the USGAA finals. In an all-Canadian Intermediate final, Toronto was defeated on a scoreline of 5.20 to 0:05.

The growth of GAA in Vancouver over the last number of years lead to a highly competitive Gaelic Football season.

The ISSC men's football teams also achieved clean sweeps in competitive action this year.

The Western Canada Championship trophy was picked up in Edmonton.

In the Senior and Junior Vancouver Championships, ISSC came out on top in hotly contested games against the Fraser Valley Gaels and the Éire Óg GAA Club.

It would be remiss to reflect on such a successful year without taking the time to acknowledge and thank all of the volunteer coaches, referees, commit-

tee members and organisers who make these fantastic events possible. We would also like to extend a huge thank you to all of our sponsors that supported us this year, Donnellan's Irish Pub, Tegan Law, Seva Physiotherapy and Whistler Water.

**Annual General Meeting**  
The AGM will be held on September 26, in the Yaletown Roundhouse at 6:45 PM.

This is an important event to have a say in who will sit on the ISSC committee for the coming year. All positions will be elected on the night.

If you are interested in taking a more active role in the ISSC, reach out to any committee member or the ISSC Facebook page for more information.

**End of Season Wrap Up Party**  
An end of season wrap up party will be held on September 27 in Donnellan's Irish Pub.

This event is open to all and will see medal presentations on the night. Attendees are encouraged to arrive early to ensure speedy entry.

**Dinner Dance**  
A dinner dance will be held towards the end of the year to present awards and celebrate the year's many successes. Further details will be announced on the ISSC social media channels.

## GPO Bar + Kitchen: The newest Irish gathering spot in Vancouver

By CATHOLINE BUTLER

VANCOUVER – The GPO Bar + Kitchen is the newest Irish gathering spot to open on Granville Street. Irish people will immediately recognize the name GPO, which stands for general post office.

The GPO in Dublin is a landmark building which featured prominently in history and song associated with the Easter Rising or Easter Rebellion of 1916 resulting in an independent Irish Republic.

The GPO in Vancouver was formerly Donnellan's Chipper & Bar. When the Chipper got its liquor license it was decided to renovate to a bar and kitchen. Many of the Chipper staff now work at the GPO.

Galway-born, Kieran McGrath is the owner/bartender and general manager at the GPO and he recently spoke to *The Celtic Connection* about why the GPO is not just another Irish bar.

McGrath has extensive hospitality experience and before opening up the GPO he worked at Donnellan's Irish Pub on Granville Street.

He said, "my greatest achievement thus far with the GPO would have to be seeing previous customers and friends come out of their comfort zone with regard their regular drink choices."

"To see staunch Guinness and Magners drinkers dip their toes in the water with some of our cocktails has been great to see."

The GPO is Irish owned and operated but you won't see leprechauns and shamrocks up on the wall.

McGrath said they named it the GPO because Irish people would know the name and also because the name GPO is trendy.

When designing the GPO, the owners wanted to create a place where people could come to enjoy delicious food and drinks at a reasonable price in a fun, relaxed and non-pretentious environment.

They offer food specials every day and one of the most popular food items has been the spicy chicken buttermilk



GPO Bar + Kitchen chef Leonard Doody (left) and owner/bartender Kieran McGrath (right) bring a taste of Ireland to Vancouver.



The GPO Bar + Kitchen promises quality food and beverage in a pretentious free environment right in the heart of the Granville Entertainment District.

burger. It's chicken that has been marinated for 24 hours in buttermilk before being breaded and deep fried and served with a choice of salad or fries.

There is also a wide selection of craft beer and an extensive cocktails menu.

One of the popular cocktails is the elderberry collins made with gin, elderberry liquor, lime juice and sugar syrup and garnished with a lime wedge and an edible flower.

And, of course, they have Guinness and Magners cider.

Kieran said, "our goal at the GPO is to cater to the growing Irish community in Vancouver and offer a comfortable

place for anyone to meet new people."

The GPO is an intimate snug that seats 45 patrons with live music every Friday and Saturday.

It is open for breakfast at 9 AM and features an Irish rasher benedict on Irish soda bread. Lunch is served seven days a week and features daily specials with brunch served daily until 3 PM.

Be sure to stop by the new location and check out the craic at the GPO Bar + Kitchen located at 1224 Granville Street in Vancouver. Put a 'like' on their Facebook page for more updates.



ISSC LADIES FOOTBALL TEAM – Intermediate North American Champions



MEMBERS OF THE ISSC Men's Football Teams competing in the Pomerleau Vancouver.



ISSC CAMOGIE TEAM – Winners of San Diego 7's Football and Emerald City Cup in Seattle.



ISSC TEAMS taking part in the 2019 Spring League.

# The National Eisteddfod in North Wales: The biggest competition in Europe

**G**REETINGS from the U.K. where according to Nicola Sturgeon, leader of the Scottish National Party, democracy is now dead and we are governed by a tin pot dictator called Boris the Terrible.

We are rushing like lemmings to fall over the cliff, because after October 31, the day we tumble out of Europe, we are all doomed, food shortages, no medicine for the sick, a plague of locusts shall descend on the land and the dead shall rise from their graves.

Farce is a noun meaning a comic dramatic work using buffoonery and horseplay including ludicrously improbable situations, and farces were very popular theatre in this country in the 1950s.

I remember the excitement of going, as a little boy, from Wales to London to stay with my aunt and uncle. They took me to a West End theatre to see Brian Rix and the silly antics of the actors making total fools of themselves.

I loved it, and was very grateful because my parents told me that going to the theatre cost of lot of money. Today the farces are free, just tune in to "Today in Parliament" for a damn good laugh.

August in the U.K. has become the month of music festivals and it seems that the rock stars of the Fifties and Sixties, Seventies and Eighties are out in droves "packin' em in" all over the country.

Apart from the major pop festivals like Glastonbury, The Isle of Wight and Reading, dozens of events now occur with aging pop stars headlining.

I had heard the hit record *We are Family*, but Sister Sledge would not have been high on my list to queue up for, but I did see them recently.

It is a small price to pay for marrying a younger woman, and the venue was in the grounds of a beautiful hotel in the New Forest. Happily for me, The Wailers (without Bob Marley who died in 1981) were also on the bill.

Tears for Fears playing in Hampton Court would have impressed Henry VIII, and apparently Kylie Minogue wowed them in Blenheim palace – the stately home built by the Duke of Marlborough in 1722, and the birth place of Sir Winston Churchill.

Old age does not seem to be a deterrent because Tom Jones 79 has been on tour, Rod Stewart at 74 is as good as ever, and 77-year-old Barbra Streisand singing in Hyde Park London was wonderful.

There is a limit though: I wondered why they had taken 82-year-old Kris Kristofferson out of his old people's home.

He was the handsome co-star with Barbra Streisand in the 1976 film *A Star is Born*, but now he sadly shuffled on stage to sing a duet with Barbra

## POSTCARD FROM LONDON



By  
**ELFAN  
JONES**

Streisand. He mumbled and looked bewildered. Bless him it was late for him to have been out.

Like punch drunk heavyweight boxers, some elderly stars need to be advised to call time on their career. I heard Paul McCartney a couple of years ago and was sad to hear him struggle.

Earlier this month the National Eisteddfod was held in Llanwrst in North Wales attracting 150,000 visitors. It is quite remarkable because although entirely conducted in Welsh it is the largest competitive festival in Europe.

Edinburgh is the largest arts festival in the world, with millions of people attending, but it encompasses, the Festival, the Fringe, the Book Festival and the Military Tattoo and runs for 24 days.

The Eisteddfod is a week-long series of cultural competitions with over six thousand competitors taking part and the most prestigious prize is "The Chair" which is awarded for poetry.

The first recorded eisteddfod which means "a gathering" was held in 1176 at Cardigan Castle. Poets and musicians from all over Wales attended, and competed for a seat at the nobleman's table, hence a chair being the coveted prize.

In 1819 during an eisteddfod held in Carmarthen South Wales the Gorsedd was introduced: the brain child of Edward Williams who was better known as Iolo Morganwg, a self-styled bard and literary forger and whose goal was to preserve Welsh cultural traditions.

The Gorsedd consists of an assembly of bards who in the context of an eisteddfod are known as Druids, and include poets, writers, musicians, artists or others who have made a contribution to the Welsh nation, the language and its culture.

The Druids add a sense of mysticism to the proceedings but should not to be confused with the original Druids who were priests and leaders in the ancient Celtic pagan religion. To my knowledge there have been no human sacrifices held in a National Eisteddfod.

In 1861 the first eisteddfod in its present form was held in Aberdare and in 1880 the National Eisteddfod Association was formed and given the task of staging the annual event with the venues alternating between North and South Wales.

Should you wish to attend, then the 2020 National Eisteddfod will be held in Tregaron.

Best wishes, *Elfan*



THE VANCOUVER Orpheus Male Choir will headline a concert celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Cambrian Hall on Saturday, October 5 at the West Point Grey United Church in Vancouver.

## Welsh Society's Heritage Weekend celebrates the 90th Anniversary of the Cambrian Hall

**VANCOUVER** – The Vancouver Welsh Society will celebrate the Cambrian Hall's 90th anniversary with a Heritage Weekend on October 4-6.

Highlighting the weekend events will be the 90th anniversary concert of the Cambrian Hall on Saturday, October 5 at West Point Grey United Church, jointly organized by the Welsh Society and the Vancouver Orpheus Male Choir.

In addition to the choral performance by the Orpheus Choir, the program will also feature guest artists mezzo-soprano Nerys Jones, harpist Leanne Page and her son Connor, and Samuel Wyn-Morris, an up-and-coming young tenor from Wales.

**The Vancouver Orpheus Male Choir** is well-known in British Columbia for its eclectic mix of popular ballads, sacred songs, Canadiana, rousing male voice classics and original arrangements of contemporary works. The choir regularly tours B.C. to entertain small communities and has also completed several national tours.

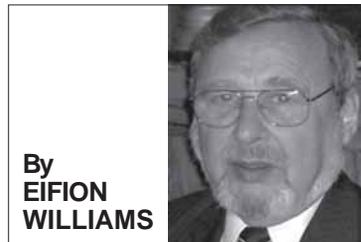
Much of the Orpheus's success is due to its artistic director **Liana Savard** and the Choir's accompanist **Barry Yamanouchi**, who will conduct and accompany the choir at the October 5 concert.

**Samuel Wyn-Morris** is a 22-year-old tenor from Llanelli, Wales. He is one of the young Welsh stars who are members of Loud Applause Rising Stars (LARS), an organization based in Llanelli dedicated to supporting young Welsh artists.

Samuel, a graduate of the Guildford School of Acting has already built a formidable reputation as a soloist and performer in musical theatre.

He has also been a popular soloist with some of Wales' most famous choirs, including the Pendyrus Male Choir, Llanelli Male Choir, Morryston Ladies Choir and the Morryston Orpheus Choir.

Samuel is looking forward to his visit to Vancouver. Welsh Society President Lynn Owens-Whalen says, "He is thrilled to be coming and it is heartwarming to know that we, as a Soci-



By  
**EIFION  
WILLIAMS**



**SAMUEL WYN-MORRIS**, a 22-year-old tenor from Llanelli, Wales, is an up-and-coming young Welsh artist.



**MEZZO-SOPRANO Nerys Jones** was born in Llanfair-Caereinion, Mid-Wales and now lives in Seattle, Washington.

ety, are supporting young Welsh artists."

Mezzo-soprano **Nerys Jones** was born in Llanfair-Caereinion, Mid-Wales, and studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Art and the Guildhall School of Music.

Now based in Seattle, she has performed with the world's leading opera companies and has also hosted her own television show *Yng Nghwmmi Nerys Jones* on Welsh television station S4C.

Nerys has performed with the Puget Sound Opera and Seattle opera and this year received popular acclaim for her roles in *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*. She is popular with Welsh Society members following her previous appearances at Society events.

**Leanne Page** is a well-known harpist and classically trained singer based in Surrey, B.C. She is equally sought after for her instrumental flare and the expressive beauty of her voice.

From classical to Celtic, from sacred to popular, from opera arias to movie tunes, Leanne demonstrates her knowledge and skill in a variety of genres.

Frequently accompanied by her talented son **Connor** on classical guitar, Irish whistle and/or piano, Leanne creates a rich and vibrant musical atmosphere. The Welsh Society is pleased to welcome back these two popular artists.

The Saturday concert will undoubtedly prove to be a popular event.

Audiences can also enjoy further vocal performances by Samuel Wyn-Morris and Nerys Jones at the Gymanfa Ganu (hymn-singing festival) on Sunday afternoon, October 6, at the Cambrian Hall.

The communal singing at the Gymanfa will be conducted by Liana Savard and the accompanist will again be Barry Yamanouchi.

The Heritage Weekend will start at the Cambrian Hall on Friday evening, October 4, with a Noson Lawen, a traditional Welsh evening of entertainment featuring music, comedy and storytelling in a generally convivial atmosphere.

Members of the public are welcome to all the above events.

Tickets for the Vancouver celebration concert – 90th anniversary of the Cambrian Hall are available through the Vancouver Welsh Society website: [www.welshsociety.com](http://www.welshsociety.com) and the Vancouver Orpheus Male Voice Choir website: [www.vancouverorpheus.org](http://www.vancouverorpheus.org).