AUTUMN EQUINOX BLESSINGS

Twilight Steals the Autumn Light
Inward into the Season of Samhain

EAVES 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 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 killer, 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 wintery 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 into life the gift that only you can offer. It is never too late.

Bright blessings of the Samhain season to you and yours.

By CYNTHIA WALLENTINE

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).
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 Bridget or Bride) 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 Bride: 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 Bride 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 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 Bride: 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, or call (778) 238-1522.

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

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 read from long ago to now. No performance experience is required.

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 rehearsed plan to work with between December and February.

For more information, or to register, e-mail Dara Culhane at: 2019livavoces@gmail.com.
By BARRA Ó SCANNLÁIN

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 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 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, or e-mail gaeilgewesterncanada@gmail.com. Slán go fiú!
After a great summer filled with music festivals it’s onward now into the Fall 2019 lineup

ROGUE FOLK CLUB

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

PHOTO: Steve Edge
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 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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The Ongoing Brexit Saga: Are there any winners in this scenario?

By MAURA DE FREITAS

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—endgame.
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 too.

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 aim to prop up her shaky Tory Government.

Then, apparently, without a clear strategy, she triggered Article 50 which spawned 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 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 was 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 had been viewed as being invisible with little or no physical infrastructure, as the security barriers and checkpoints were removed due to progress 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 in the UK-held Northern Irish government and after two failed no-confidence votes against her, she finally threw in the towel and resigned on May 24, 2019.

Boris Johnson

Now, in hindsight, the aforementioned drama all seems relatively tame compared to the extraordinary machinations that Boris Johnson embarked in to ensure all power and control are retained in 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 chancellor 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 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 majority, exiled some of his party’s most honored members and been slapped down by lawmakers three times in 24 hours.

Adding to his 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.

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

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, re-emphasized her commitment after Donald Trump’s national security advisor 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, Brexit cannot be allowed to imperil the Good Friday Agreement, trade relations with the U.S., or the peace in Northern Ireland.”

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 Republican senators 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 back a U.K. trade deal that protects the Good Friday Agreement.

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

The Turmoil in Britain’s Parliament sparked large demonstrations on streets across the U.K.

In London a protest on September 10, 2019 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.

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 classic 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.

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 promoting 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, London 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.
Delma 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 in Tsawwassen.

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 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 drummer 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, 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 American 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.
To what extent are Naysayers hindering Scotland’s Progress?

By HARRY McGRAH

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...

Reid was a bit premature when he put “Operation Arse,” made clear her feelings toward Johnson.

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 grappling with have long been settled in Canada.

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 grappling with have long been settled in Canada.

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.”

The naysayers will need to refocus on the positives of remaining part of Britain. And with a Brexit disaster to explain away, it’s 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 wake of developments 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. Britain has yet to ratify any power sharing and confederal arrangement, 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.
Scottish Country Dance: A great exercise for mind and body

By CATHRINE-CONINGS

VANCOUVER – Have you ever come up with an idea 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 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.
NE 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.

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 immigrants. Not only were they fevered and starving but landing in a new country with a language spoken they did not understand.

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 by-rants 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.

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

The following morning, we drove to Grosse-Île during the summer months.

Bilingual tours are conducted on Grosse-Île, but this time we went to the mass grave sites.

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 families, 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.
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.

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

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 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).

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.
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.

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

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.

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, Maeve 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 house 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.
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, who was born on April 1, 1951, was diagnosed with pneumonia before learning he had terminal cancer.

“I was very, very proud to be cast in ‘Father Ted’ and to have worked with such wonderful people,” Grace said in a statement.

He continued: “I am so grateful to my family, my friends, and my fans for their support and love over the years.”

Grace was known for his roles in the hit comedy series “Father Ted” and “Bottler.” He also appeared in films such as “The Full Monty” and “The Commitments.”

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

“Rest in peace Brendan,” said his manager, Tom Kelly. “You’ll be missed by everyone.”

Brendan Grace died on July 11 at the age of 68 after a short illness.

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 afternoo...
Irish Gaelic language first appeared in Quebec’s Gatineau Valley in the early 1800s

HE 19th Century saw the arrival of a large number of Irish immigrants to Canada, particularly in the Ot-tawa 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 Ire-land 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 set-tlement, it was viewed as a secondary and foreign language, suffering a his-tory of shame, decline and suppres-sion.

Irish is one of six Celtic languages and one of three Gaelic languages (Irish, Scottish and Manx Gaelic) that sur-vived 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 frag-ment 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 Irish Gaelic as Gaelic speakers, with around 2,000 of those speaking Irish Gaelic (0.005 per-cent 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 popula-tion 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’...” (...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 [Que-bec], in the Gatineau Valley.

Through the early 1800s, Irish fami lies settled along the Ridge Road (mod-ern Gatineau Park Trail number one) from the counties of Derry, Antrim, Fermanagh, Cavan, Roscommon, and Donegal (...indeed they are a ‘distinct people’)...” (O’Boyle (Tomás Ó Buachalla) 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 Ostanic Society, as one of the most important scholars of the Irish lan-guage living at the time.

O’Boyle would compose several ac claimed Irish-Gaelic poems under the pen name Eire go Bríos (Ireland For-ever) before his tragically early death in South Greater (now a suburb of Ottawa) in 1886, at the age of 46.

One such poem, Is Truagh Gan Mis’ in M’Aidh, alludes to the mythical exiled swan children of the Irish King Lein.

Is truag mís i m’ea, na bhfuil aon uair de go bhfuil an Gorta Mór.

Maighdean Fhionn, agus an chuid.”

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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 Bradhaigh), was him-self 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 Ché-lsea consisted of 100 families, Irish for the most part, and those speaking only the Irish language.

Farther north, by 1842 some 43 percent of families in the Wakefield Dis-trict were of Irish ancestry. These in-cluded the Cahil (Ó Caill), Carrol (Ó Car就被), Casady (Ó Cásaid), Conners (Ó Conchobhair), Kelly (Ó Ceallaigh), Mahony (Ó Mathgamhna), McGarry (Mac Fhearaideach), Morris (Ó Muiris), Mullen (Ó Maoldaí), Plunket (Plunkett), Riea (Ó Raonlaochta), Roney (Ó Ruanaidh) and Treacy (Ó Treasaigh) families.

With the Irish came the highest of the Irish language in many cases, it was likely the only language they knew.

The large number of arriving Famine Irish meant that Gaelic grew to the third-largest European language group 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 Arat Mac Giolla Chaimhín notes, “Perhaps, as in Ire-land, the Famine had finally succeeded, where overt coercion had failed, to in-still a sense of shame and inadequacy in Irish culture and language.”

Irish became associated with poverty, backwardness and death. Many survi-vors of the Famine abandoned the lan-guage in its aftermath.

Despite a large number of Irish Ca-na-dians understanding Irish, proportion-ally 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 lan-guage and of the Anglo-Irish who radi-culed 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 cul turally anglicizing the Empire’s mi-norities. Schools used corporal punish-ment to ‘teach’ foreign languages and cultures out of children.

Elders from Prince Edward Island still remembered in 1987 the forms of punish-ment that were used in their day against those found speaking Gaelic.

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

Many factors contributed to the de-cline 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 Demblish states: “Even before the census took place, the presence of Gaelic speakers (Scottish and Irish) was apparently signifi-cant enough to deserve explicit men-tion in the instructions. And both vari-eties of Gaelic were indeed among the most common responses to the new question.”

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

[Continued next page...]

THE IRISH would leave indelible marks on the Gatineau Valley landscape, including Martinville, possibly named for Martin O’Malley (O Maile), Brennan’s Hill (Croch Bhriainn), Farrellton (O Stearghair), the Hogans (O Róisín) and Kealey (O Cadhla) settle-ments, McKale’s (Mac Céille) Corner, Ryanville (O Riain), and the Cuddyhees (O Cuaidighthadh) and O’Neill (O Neol) stopping places.

MAP SOURCE: GVHS Pathfinder Maps and Richard Blanchard

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MAP SOURCE: GVHS Pathfinder Maps and Richard Blanchard
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 beautiful shamrock on the side of the stone highlights an enduring connection to Irish culture.

Novenas

Novenas to the Blessed Virgin Mary
Novenas 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, 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.

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.

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, Roofees and Effey, are listed under this “Irish” entry 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 Eithinín), O’Leary (Ó Laoghaire), Moore (Ó Mordha) and Needham (Ó Nuadh) 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, allowing them to group 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 rewriting “English” in their place.

Until the second half of the 20th Century, the Official Canadian Census of Quebec classed all non-francophones as English-speaking people, despite the Eastern Townships phrase “les anglois qui ne parlent pas l’anglais” (the English who do not speak English) to describe German speakers.

These efforts worked to heavily diminish the presence of Gaelic speakers across Canada. By the 1931 census, only 334 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 2010, Canadian folklorist Edith Fowke, with the support of the Smithsonian Institution, ventured to the valley to find any remaining echoes of the language.

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 sean nós (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, Súilteach ghal é mo mhúrthainn. Éireann mo mhúrthainn lán. Grá mo chroí mo chruiscín, Is sláinte ghal é mo mhúrthainn. We’ll have another cruiscín lán, lán, lán, and we’ll have another cruiscín lán.

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 learned the language 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, Mile Mile of Green, offers a historical overview of the Irish language in Canada. Published in Ottawa by Boreal Press in 2015, it is available through Amazon or the publisher. Any readers interested in sharing their stories or anecdotes about the Irish language in Canada 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 Gatinaul!, its annual local history journal, and is reprinted here with the permission of the Society. For more details on the GVHS, a not-for-profit organization located in Chelsea, Quebec, see www.gvhs.ca.

Reference Sources
2. Historical records usually contain spelling inaccuracies due to a combination of litterate transcription and accents, and non-standardized English spelling of foreign language surnames.
3. Newly arrived families in 1861 include Brian (O Briain), Burns (O Bruin), Clifton (O Ceilein), Cooteen (Mac Gilla Coití), Daly (O Dalbh), Driscoll (O Diotairscile), Eagan (Mac Athagdan), Flinn (O Fionn), Ganion (Mac Fhionann), Goggin, Hays (O Morhda), Lagen (O Liagín), Lau, McCartney (Mac Cartaigh), McLaughlin (McLaughlin) (Mac Lochlainn), Mealyer (Mac Leachlaidh), McLean (O Morogh), Murray (O Murchadh), Roak (de Róiste), Ronan (O Ronain) and Sweyn (Mac Saithin). These are indicated as mother tongue Irish by being recorded “same as above” with ditto marks.
4. This means Scottish and Irish Gaelic combined, having similar numbers of speakers, and at the time considered to be dialects of one language.

Selected Bibliography

From our family to your family, serving with compassion for over 110 years.

PHOTO: GVHS Adrienne Herron

Publication of a novena is $25

www.celtic-connection.com
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 “nagotiate 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 Ireland 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 previous 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 Uachtarain 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.

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 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 own 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 believed he will achieve a Brexit deal before the deadline of October 31.

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?’”

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.

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.
A native of Co. Meath, Stokes began running through November 30. In Seattle (106 3rd Ave S) on October 12.

The exhibit consists of 1,845 handmade mementos to the more than one million people who died during the 1845-1852 Irish Famine.

The exhibit, called “memento Mori” Irish Famine exhibit, is a collaboration between glass artist Dale Chihuly’s hot shop and the bodhrán for beginners, begins sean-nós: Irish dance, shanty singing, the bodhrán for beginners, begins sean-nós: Irish dance, shanty singing.
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 15, 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 North- ern Ireland Secretary Lord Trimble, who was born in 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 irreducible features.

With someone as amiable 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, nation- alist 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.

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 order- ily exit from the EU is impossible if the U.K. jettisons the backstop?

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

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

President Macron of France, in par- ticular, has voiced his exasperation with the U.K. and the damage that its prohibited ‘exit’ is doing to the fabric of Europe.

It is quite conceivable that the Octo- ber 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 treat- ies in place to ensure it can continue to trade with the EU, the U.K. cannot be damaged its economy.

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

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

The capitalist system is wholly wed- ded to the objective of economic growth, yet in a no-deal Brexit this facet 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.

Compromises 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 negotia- tions 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 every- thing possible to protect its own interests.

By doing nothing to counteract the U.K.’s thamatus [personification of death] instinct, we are party to being driven over the precipice. These cir- cumstances are deeply unfair, but poli- cymakers in Ireland are often in a state of denial.

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

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 Agree- ment.

The EU is wholly sympathetic to the Irish wish to retain an open border, but it cannot risk losing a key player in the eurozone.

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

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

DUBLIN – More Irish pass- ports 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 mak- ing a total of 139,044 applications in the Republic of Ireland.

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

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

By MAURICE FITZPATRICK

Dublin – Minister now believes that a no-deal Brexit will be significantly worse than they previously expected, with predictions of thousands of imme- diate job losses in tourism and “carnage” in the fishing sector, following 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 rejected from them, and which left several Min- isters 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.

The Great Brexit Debate Continues Online on Social Media

While the debate continues in British political cir- cles, 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 North- ern 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 Fein 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 pathetic 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 sover- eign 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.
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 Pomerule 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 Pomerule 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 Og 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, committee 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 this publication about The Celtic Connection why about 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 walls.

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 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.

The GPO Bar + Kitchen promises quality food and beverage in a pretentious free environment right in the heart of the Granville Entertainment District.
The National Eisteddfod in North Wales: The biggest competition in Europe

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 going to the theatre cost of lot of money. Today the fares 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.

It is a small price to pay for marrying myself.

We are Fam-

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