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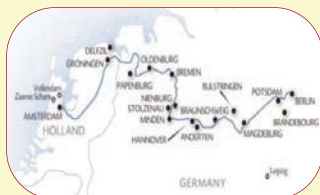
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Fáilte!

The Newfoundland Irish

Growing up in northern Nova Scotia, Antigonish radio station CJFX was my primary source of music as a youngster. Like the Grand Ole Opry, it introduced me to the music of Earnest Tubbs, Ray Price, and Boxcar Willie, as well as Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison and many others. More importantly, perhaps, it was where I first heard local performers like Angus Chisholm, Winston Scottish Fitzgerald and Buddy MacMaster - all playing Cape Breton-style Scottish music.

It was also on CJFX that I first heard the songs, ballads and instrumental music of Newfoundland. The traditional tunes "I's the B'y" and "The Squid Jigging Grounds" - each reflecting the joys and sorrows of life by the sea - were among the first that I can remember.

An island in the Atlantic Ocean on the very eastern coast of Canada, Newfoundland enjoys a great musical heritage - much of it Celtic influenced. Between 1800 and 1820, more than 30,000 Irish settled on 'The Rock' - joining earlier waves of Scottish, Cornish and Breton emigrants.

Over time, many of those Celtic tunes - jigs and reels mostly - took on an identity of their own, becoming distinctly 'Newfie.' Groups like Ryan's Fancy and Figgy Duff popularized traditional melodies such as "Let Me Fish Off Cape St. Mary's" - laying the groundwork for the next generation of artists, including the Irish Descendants, Shanneyganock, Hey Rosetta!, and Great Big Sea, who would put the province on the global musical map by the mid-1990s.

Along with these performers, others who have contributed to the preservation of Newfoundland music include Canadian folklorists Kenneth Peacock and Gerald S. Doyle, and Scottish author, singer and broadcaster Margaret Bennett. In fact, Bennett spent several years in Newfoundland, eventually meeting the province's foremost balladeer and bearer-of-tradition Jerome Downey of the Codroy Valley in western Newfoundland. In 1980, she recorded 26 of Downey's songs, accompanied by a 165-page book complete with lyrics and notes for each.

While music has helped to shine a spotlight on Newfoundland's unique cultural voice, other arts have since taken the lead, including literature (Wayne Johnson, Michael Crummey, Lisa Moore), television (Codco, Rick Mercer Report, This Hour Has 22 Minutes, Hawco), comedy (Shaun Majumder, Johnny Harris), and more.

We must also acknowledge the huge creative contributions made by other notable Newfoundlanders through the years, including actor Gordon Pinsent, visual artist Gerald Squires, poet Al Pittman, and broadcaster Rex Murphy.

In this issue we explore Newfoundland's cultural ties to the Celtic world, and speak with many of the province's shining stars about what it means to be a 'Newfie' today, and the region's profound impact on the country and the world.

Enjoy, and may God bless

Angus M. Macquarrie, Publisher

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Come From Away is more than a Broadway musical

Our October 2017 cover was shot on location in St. John's, Newfoundland, and features Mark Critch, Alan Doyle and Todd Perrin

Photo by Ritchie Perez
www.inbetweendays.ca

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Recently, a most amazing thing happened to me on a weekend jaunt to New York City.

I had been invited to a Sunday matinee performance of the smash Broadway musical *Come From Away*, the warm and witty story of how the community of Gander, Newfoundland, welcomed thousands of distressed travelers during the 9/11 tragedy.

Forgoing an afternoon Mets game (c'mon, it's the Mets...), I took my seat at the Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre on West 45th Street, unsure of what to expect.

Over the next 90 minutes, something surprising occurred; I felt a swell of pride welling up within me; as a Canadian, certainly, but perhaps more poignantly, as a Canadian with deep Newfoundland roots.

Truth be told, I didn't always feel that way.

Growing up in Montréal - as it was in many parts of Canada - being of Newfoundland stock carried a stigma. For the longest time, 'Newfies' were both the country's punching bag and its punch-line.

Of course, that perspective has changed greatly over the last few decades as the province came-of-age politically, economically, socially, and otherwise. Today, Newfoundland and Labrador are at the core of the Canadian cultural canon.

My mother, Joan (née Smart), is a Newfoundlander, a point of great pride for her. One of six siblings - and the self-proclaimed 'runt of the litter' - she has become the family historian of sorts, aided by her big brothers Michael and Buster.

We speak almost daily by phone, and our conversations often turn to our shared heritage.

"Amos Smart arrived in Newfoundland in the early 1800s," she told me of her father's side of the family. "We are unsure of where he



arrived from, but we know that he married in Harbour Grace (Conception Bay) and raised a large family. My grandfather was born there, and later moved to King's Point, where he operated the cable station, and where my own dad, Stan, was born. They then moved to Port aux Basques."

Her Mom, Caroline Dunphy, was of Irish origin; her family crossed the waters from Co. Kerry in the mid-1800s to settle in Holyrood (also Conception Bay.)

"Mom and Dad met in Corner Brook. He had studied engineering in Maine, and had returned to Newfoundland before finding full-time work in Montréal. Meanwhile, she went to nursing school in New York City, where they eventually married in 1930, before landing back in Montréal."

With a wife and five children in tow, my mother's father then took a job in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, where Mom was born. Soon after, after some small shuffles around the province, the family returned to Montréal, where their new home in Westmount became a hub of sorts for ex-pat Newfs.

"It was a little like Grand Central Station there for a few years," Mom remembers with a smile. "There were always family members, or friends, or friends of friends stopping in for

a visit, and we often had to give up our beds! Mom had the kettle going for tea 'round the clock because you never knew who was going to drop in."

It wasn't uncommon to hear music, storytelling and laughter coming from the house on Mount Pleasant Avenue.

"That was a big part of our identity," she continues. "Both Mom and Dad were very proud to be Newfoundlanders, and - like most people from there - they brought their culture and customs with them wherever they went."

"Mom missed Newfoundland," she notes. "Especially in her last days - I think she just wanted to go home. There were just so many ties to that place for her."

Indeed, both the Dunphys and the Smarts will forever be bound to 'The Rock.' Family names linked to my grandparents - including Penny, Jackman, and Carter - are scattered across Corner Brook, Ramea, Renewes, and more. Mom's sister, Margaret, married a Newfoundlander, and her brother Kevin still resides along the Irish Loop in Witless Bay, south of St. John's, with his wife Lynn.

Mom hopes to visit her East Coast sibling again this fall.

"Well, we are all getting a little older, so it's important to make the time to do these things. Time goes by quickly, generations pass, and I'm not sure who will be interested in keeping our family records."

Not to worry, Mom; recently, a most amazing thing happened to me on a weekend jaunt to New York City.

Stephen Patrick Clare
Managing Editor

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When is the best time of the year to visit Wales?

~ Shane Lewis, Berwyn, Illinois

Hi Shane - thanks for the note. The short answer is, anytime. While off-season travelling (November to April) has its perks - including lower rates for flights, accommodations, car rental, etc - visitors must deal with the perils of unpredictable Welsh weather. Snow isn't as much an issue as is the cold rain, which can dampen the experience. And while on-season visits (May to October) are a little costlier, the benefits are worth the price of admission; better weather, improved driving conditions, more outdoor activities, cultural and sporting events all across the country, etc. Personally, I prefer the spring and fall in Wales (and most places actually), when the weather is moderate enough for hiking and biking (be sure to visit Snowdonia National Park), hotel and inn availability is higher, and the grand national sport of rugby is in full-swing. And while Cardiff and Swansea are lovely year-round, the real treats are to be found along the country's western coastline, where time has stood still for centuries and most residents still speak the ancient language. And don't dare leave without sampling the scrumptious mutton!

Why does Cape Breton enjoy such strong Scottish culture?

~ Kelly Oldham, Trenton, Ontario

Hello Kelly. Nova Scotia, and Cape Breton Island in particular, was first settled by Scots in 1621, although larger groups of Scottish emigrants did not arrive until 1773. Over the proceeding generations, tens of thousands more nestled into the flourishing communities of Pictou, Antigonish, New Glasgow, Glencoe, Barra Glen, Baddeck, Mabou, Sydney and more. Most were either Roman Catholic or Presbyterian, and spoke Scots-Gaelic as a first language. While other cultures were at play in the area, including British, Irish, French and Indigenous peoples, the Scots thrived in their new environs, due in large part to the similarity in both climate and landscape with their home country. Their expertise in farming, fishing and raising



cattle amidst adverse weather conditions gave them an advantage, as did their willingness to work with - and learn from - the area's native population. With little else to do during the long winter nights, it wasn't uncommon for most homesteads to rear 10-15 children. Today, about 30 per cent of the province's population claims Scottish roots, and celebrate that heritage each year at many Highland games and festivals across the region.

Is there really such a thing as Celtic heavy metal music?

~ Wayne R, Sacramento, California

Indeed, Wayne, there is such a thing. In fact, it is still alive and well and flourishing in the most unlikely of places. Defined more by sound than geography, Celtic metal (also referred to as folk metal) is a sub-genre of heavy metal that first emerged in the mid-1970s with hard rock acts like Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow and Ronnie James Dio, each of whom combined classic Celtic melodies with MXR distortion pedals and



Marshall amplifiers. By the early 1990s, a number of bands had emerged in Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, and Argentina, who incorporated traditional Celtic musical instruments - including bagpipes, uilleann pipes, fiddle, accordion, tin whistle, and bodhrán - into both their recordings and their live shows. The most well-known of these groups are Waylander and Cruachan, though Primordial, Eluveitie, Ithilien, Mägo de Oz, Suidakra, and Skiltron are very popular as well, some of whom have pushed Celtic metal into new musical territory. While there are no longer any festivals specific to Celtic metal, the annual EPICA event in São Paulo, Brazil, continues to showcase many of the genre's biggest acts each October.

Got a question for Celtic Life? Drop us a note at editor@celticlife.ca

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one

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It is a dream retirement location, but you should probably start saving now. Property on the Isle of Skye near the fishing village of Elgol is for sale for just £1,250,000. What a steal! The 2.6-acre property includes four thatched cottages that look like they come straight out of a storybook, but they are some of the most luxurious cottages on the market. Each includes under-floor heating and oil stoves. On top of that, there is a "main house" on the isle, which is also the largest, boasting five bedrooms and four bathrooms.

two

Welsh women

The recent general election in Wales saw a record number of women elected as MPs. The imbalance is still a hefty one, however, as women only make up 28 percent of Welsh MPs. In other words, 11 out of 40 MPs are female. That said, the progress is clear compared to just 20 years ago when there were just four women holding spots in government. This year, five of the women elected took victory by a margin of more than 10,000 votes. Out of the three parties running, The Labour Party fielded the most female candidates.

three

Galician wine

Galicia may be considered one of the Celtic nations, but did you know it was incorporated into the Roman Empire between the years 29 and 19 BC? The mountainous Las Medulas, Bierzo, was an ideal place for vineyards. These vineyards were abandoned during the Dark Ages, and their first revival didn't last due to plant disease and the Spanish Civil War. Over the past 20 years, though, Galicia's Roman vineyards have been revived once again. Planting and picking the grapes on mountainside is not an easy task, but the idea of creating unique wine motivates those who take up the challenge.

four

Cornish pasty

This baked pastry - often made with a savoury filling of beef, potato and turnip - is a Cornish delight. Or is it? The origins of this treat are unclear and have been a spot of controversy as of late. Recently, a spokesperson for the Historic England organization stirred up the debate by suggesting the pastry may have been invented in Devon, England. Folks took to social media, some of whom pointed out that the dish should be called a "Devon pasty" if that were true. Wherever it came from, the Cornish pasty is enjoyed around the world, including in such faraway spots as Australia and Mexico.

five

Gaelic soldiers

In 1940, a trio of Scottish soldiers were able to escape capture thanks to their ability to speak Gaelic. Upon interrogation by the Nazis, the soldiers responded only in Gaelic, much to the confusion of their captors, who didn't understand the language nor know what it was. According to Private William Kemp's memoir, they were provided with an atlas to point out where they were from. Kemp quickly pointed to Ukraine and the soldiers were set free. This story is the premise for an upcoming film, the World War II action drama *In The Darkest Hour*.

six

Manx Bronze Age

Last year, an archaeological research project was launched to investigate the Isle of Man's prehistoric burial mounds. These are dirt mounds built over human burial sites. More than 160 are known to have existed on the island, but according to the Round Mounds of the Isle of Man project's website, "very few have been excavated using techniques that have left a detailed and reliable record." Recently, a team of archaeologists travelled to the Isle of Man to carry out excavations on a Bronze Age (2000-500 BC) site, where two of these mounds exist. The hope is that the findings will reveal more about what life on the island was like at that time.

Have an interesting tidbit to share with our Celtic community? Drop us a line anytime at editor@celticlife.com

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DO! – Developing Orphans

A charity based in Onchan on the Isle of Man - DO! - aims to help Ugandan children who have been orphaned, left to live in child-headed households, or otherwise impoverished by acts of war, natural disasters and famine. With the help of funding from the Isle of Man, as well as from private donations, DO! provided the means for the construction of three classrooms at the Broadway Nursery and Primary School in Padibe, northern Uganda. The school currently enrolls almost 300 students, and now more help is needed. Luckily, a recent grant will allow DO! to aid with additional facilities, including a multi-purpose hall and accommodations for teachers. "This grant will fund the completion of all the school buildings required under Ugandan law," DO! Chairperson Pat Wiles told *isleofman.com* in a recent interview. "The school's future is assured and the pupils' English speaking education is guaranteed, so they can communicate in a common global language with the rest of the world." The hall will be used for everything from mealtimes and exams to assemblies and other school events. The teacher accommodations will not only help attract teachers to work at the school, but will also ensure a safe environment for any students who board there.



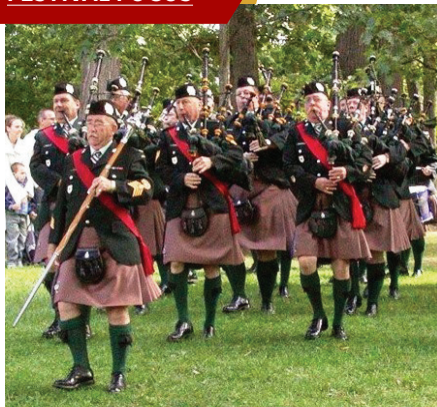
Ade Stack

Ireland's Ade Stack responded to a personal tragedy by helping others. In 2012, Stack gave birth to her son, Hugh, who spent much of his short life in the hospital. Over those eight months, Stack saw parents in similar situations as they struggled. "I remember feeling drunk with tiredness, and seeing parents sleeping on the floor or in a chair to be near their child," she told *The Independent* newspaper. "It was cruel, particularly for people who had to come up from the country." After Hugh passed away, Stack and her partner Marty Curley decided to buy a big house in Dublin and turn it into a care home. There are seven family rooms for people with children who are long-term care inpatients of the Temple Street and Rotunda hospitals. Hugh's House, as the care home is called, is volunteer-run and free of charge, providing a comfortable place to sleep and do laundry. In addition to her work at Hugh's House, Stack runs a chain of pharmacies. She's a mother to three other young children: Theo, Fred and Jeff. Later this year, she will open Zion's House, a home next door with accommodations for four additional families.



Stephanie Downing

A Cornish woman has spoken out in hopes of raising awareness of ovarian cancer symptoms. Stephanie Downing was misdiagnosed for five months, as her doctor believed her bloating was a result of irritable bowel syndrome - despite the fact that bloating is the main symptom of ovarian cancer. At Downing's insistence, her doctor eventually investigated further and discovered that she did, in fact, have cancer. Fortunately, it was an early detection scenario. "I fought my corner, but a lot of women won't feel comfortable doing this over something which can so easily be dismissed as irritable bowel syndrome or menopause," Downing recently told the *Cornish Times*. That was more than three years ago, and Downing is now cancer-free. However, she hopes her story will prevent other women and doctors from dismissing such symptoms as something less serious. As a result, she is working with Ovacome, a U.K. ovarian cancer support network, to share her experience. Ovacome is working to spread awareness of symptoms through the acronym BEAT: B is for bloating that is persistent; E is for eating less and feeling fuller quicker; A is for abdominal pain; and T is for telling your general practitioner.



The Beach Celtic Festival

September 9-10, 2017 / Toronto, Ontario / www.thecelticfestival.com

In 2004, first-generation Scottish Canadian Sandy Graham endured the loss of her mother. In the days before her passing, Graham's mother requested that she not be mourned, but celebrated - and so a festival was born. Today, 14 years later, The Beach Celtic Festival has become an annual event and local tradition in the greater Toronto area. Held the weekend after Labor Day in the beautiful setting of Kew Gardens, the festival celebrates the Scottish, Irish and Welsh settlers who came to Canada in search of a new life. Start each day by slipping on your dancing shoes and partaking in the free Scottish country dance lessons. Later, take a walk along the gorgeous shoreline and enjoy Celtic culture in a pristine setting, courtesy of both the Scottish Pipes and Drums and the Bold Step Dancers. Vendors will showcase their wares along the beach, featuring Celtic jewelry, stone carvings, clothing and more. The free, family-friendly event also offers face painting and games to keep the wee ones occupied. This year, performers include Old Man Flanagan's Ghost, Don Graham, Gary Richardson, Lisa Hartt and Syd Simkins. As always, the event will be held come rain or shine.



Halifax Celtic Festival

September 13-17, 2017 / Halifax, Nova Scotia / www.halifaxcelticfest.ca

This year The Celtic Cultural Society of Nova Scotia is celebrating the fifth anniversary of its annual celebration, The Halifax Celtic Festival, with a focus on the Celtic Harvest. In Celtic tradition, the harvest brings together all members of the community through arts, language, history and cultural tradition. This five-day event is held throughout Halifax, with the main attractions taking place at the Halifax Forum Multipurpose Centre. Since its introduction The Halifax Celtic Festival has had three main goals: celebrate culture, educate attendees and stimulate the Celtic community in Nova Scotia. Each year, local musicians and dancers gather to perform an array of toe-tapping tunes on the main stage, while a slew of local artisans, businesses and organizations show off their merchandise, art and historical pieces. This year, emphasis will be put on Celtic youth, with a series of events catering to the younger generation - including an educational speech titled Giving Celtic Context, a rugby game, and a variety of youth performances. Adults can also enjoy the Celtic Kitchen Party, and a cultural celebration of Canada's 150th birthday. More information on events can be found on the Halifax Celtic Festival website.



Celtic Colours International Festival

October 6-14, 2017 / Cape Breton, Nova Scotia / www.celtic-colours.com

Atlantic Canada's foremost musical gathering, Celtic Colours International Festival, returns to communities across Cape Breton again this fall - and long-time attendees will not be disappointed. Since its inception more than two decades ago, the annual extravaganza has invited some of the world's finest musicians to perform alongside the region's best players, with spectators soaking up both the vibrant melodies and the island's vital traditional Celtic culture. This year's event kicks off with the opening night gala, We Walk as One, at Centre 200, where established artists - including Heather Rankin and Michael McGoldrick - are sure to set the festival's tone. With a special emphasis on Canada's 150th anniversary, a plentitude of performances take place each day, running from early afternoon to late evening. Official concerts include everything from bagpiping and fiddling to dancing and storytelling. For those looking to take in the area's world-renowned hospitality, community meals are offered throughout the nine days. The spectacular fall scenery is the backdrop for more than 280 community events that include workshops, jam sessions and guided hikes. No matter where you end up, you are sure to be pleasantly surprised.



Indianapolis Scottish Highland Games and Festival

October 14, 2017 / Indianapolis, Indiana / www.indyscotgamesandfest.com

This fall, the Scottish Society of Indianapolis and the Scottish Foundation of Indianapolis are holding their eighth annual Highland games and festival. Held in beautiful German Park, the all-day event features an array of athletics, music, food, dance and theatre, all in celebration of traditional Scottish culture. This year's gathering will open with a stirring performance of the national anthem by local singer Ginny Spillman. Immediately following, attending Clan members are welcomed and encouraged to honor their lineage by participating in the Clan Parade. A robust display of traditional athletics will follow, and new athletic equipment enhances the experience for the nearly 70 athletes; seven cabers and a set of 45-foot standards have been added. At this height, athletes will have an opportunity to set world records. For Outlander fans, historical interpreters will take visitors back to the reign of His Royal Highness Charles Stuart, The Bonnie Prince Charlie. Vendor booths will also be set up throughout the park. Music will pepper the day's festivities with performances from the likes of The American Rogues, Celtic Rain, Ed Miller, Highland Reign and the world-renowned Indianapolis 500 Gordon Pipers. Free face painting and other kids' activities make this a great, family-friendly event.



Re-Jigged Festival

October 20-22, 2017 / Dartmouth, Nova Scotia / www.rejiggedfestival.com

Nova Scotia's yearly Re-Jigged Festival is a unique, East Coast take on Celtic Music and Dance. Located in downtown Dartmouth, the three-day event focuses on new directions in traditional Celtic culture. Here, older styles wed with newer ones, as local and international talent gather to sing, dance and play. Things will kick off this year with an intimate workshop-style concert, with musicians working at close quarters with eager guests. Musical guests for 2017 include vocalist Patricia Murray, guitarist Seth Peters, and renowned father and son duo Bill and Joel Plaskett, who will headline the Saturday evening Gala Concert in Christ Church Hall. For those interested in the educational experience, more than 20 workshops are planned for the weekend. Don't miss the Sean-Nos Seminar with Jackie O'Reilly, or the Irish square dance tutorial with Jim Keenan. Re-Jigged will bring back some annual activities again this year, including both the hugely popular half-day choral and the children's workshops. The Sunday afternoon concert is a "Pipers' Ceilidh" and features three traditions: Highland, small pipes and the Irish uilleann pipes. For more information on dates, times and tickets, be sure to check the event's website.



Stone Mountain Highland Games and Scottish Festival

October 20-22, 2017 / Atlanta, Georgia / www.smhg.org

It has been 45 years since the Stone Mountain Highland Games and Scottish Festival made its debut. What began as an effort to promote and preserve Georgia's Scottish culture and history has grown into one of the largest - and oldest - festivals in the Metro Atlanta area. The field events begin early each morning and include competitions in athletics, piping, drumming and more. A mass pipe band, highland dancing and authentic Scottish music - from the harp to the fiddle - will follow. A major highlight of the festival is the Parade of Tartans, where all clan members stand in unison in honor of their heritage. For those interested in getting the full Scottish experience, vendor and artisan booths are set up throughout the park, selling a variety of Scottish goods, including food, jewelry and crafts. After a long day at the Stone Mountain Park, kick up your feet at the evening ceilidh and country dance. A number of special performances and guests are scheduled to appear, including a return by Santa Claus himself. Whether or not you have a tartan, this two-day event encourages everyone to embrace their inner Scot.



Central Virginia Celtic Festival and Highland Games

October 28-29, 2017 / Richmond, Virginia / www.vacelticfestival.com

The Central Virginia Celtic Festival and Highland Games returns this fall to the Richmond Raceway. The two-day event, which is run completely by volunteers, is not only for the benefit of attendees. Instead, every penny raised goes to support a local charity. This year, proceeds go to the Cullather Brain Tumor and Quality of Life Center, a non-profit, free-of-charge resource. The festival and highland games focuses on all things Celtic, from highland dance to hurling and musical competitions. After enjoying a variety of entertainment, event-goers are encouraged to take a walk through Vendor Village to check out the wide variety of jewelry, traditional Celtic food, pottery, and of course, kilts. For an additional fee, visitors can participate in a professional whiskey tasting, with an interactive session on how to "nose and taste" single-malt Scotch whisky. This family fun event will leave no member out, with a Wee Ones area full of face painting, mini athletics and more. Musical acts The Fighting Jamesons and Albannach return to main stage to perform, along with a number of local artists. Find more about this festival, and pick up tickets, on the festival website.



IrishFest Atlanta

November 3-4, 2017 / Atlanta, Georgia / www.irishfestatlanta.org

This fall, Georgia's IrishFest Atlanta will return for its fifth year. The two-day festival focuses on the mark Ireland has made in Atlanta, throughout the U.S., and around the world. Each year local, regional, national and international artists gather to celebrate Irish culture through traditional music, song, dance and language. This year will be packed with an array of activities and entertainment. Attend a workshop or lecture in the morning, and learn a variety of skills, including piping and dancing. After, be sure to take a stroll through the IrishFest Atlantic Marketplace, where vendors will display jewelry, glassware, arts, crafts, and more. This family-friendly event is perfect for your wee'ans, who will surely enjoy the Children's IrishFest Camp with activities ranging from storytelling to crafts - and, of course, snacks. Free music and dance performances will be held each day. Musical groups, including The Yanks, Pride of New York, The Pride of Moyvane Ceili Band, Shannon Dunne, and others are scheduled to perform. For details, be sure to check the event's website.



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Gach ni Albannach



Celtic League of Asturias

A growing movement aims to have Asturias acknowledged as a Celtic nation

Fernán Morán, President of the Asturian Celtic League, believes that Asturian Celtic culture needs to be nurtured at home and recognized internationally.

Asturias is an autonomous community in northwest Spain with ancient Celtic traditions, although its Celtic language died out in the Middle Ages.

For that reason, Asturias - and neighbouring Galicia - were rejected as national members of the international Celtic League in the mid-1980s. The league decided on a linguistic criterion for national membership, arguing that an area should only be considered Celtic if a Celtic language has been spoken as a historical community language within living memory.

Morán disagrees.

"Asturies have occupied the same territory for more than 2,800 years," he explains. "All the parameters of Asturian culture are Celtic: folklore, mythology, archaeology, history, crafts, etc."

"A language by itself does not have the capacity to confer identity or nationality to anyone. A Vietnamese person can learn the Welsh language perfectly, but that does not make him Welsh."

Morán notes that although the Asturian Celtic tongue is extinct, remnants of it remain in the current language.

"The very name Asturias comes from the Celtic root Stour, which means river, or river course, a name that is often seen elsewhere in Europe, as in the Stour rivers in the U.K."

He adds that other Celtic nations are also losing their languages.

"Except in the case of Wales, where 20 per cent of the population speaks Welsh, the rest of the Celtic nations are in a really dangerous situation."

To support his claim, he points to figures obtained through research.

"In Bretagne, only 6.7 per cent of the



population speaks Breton. In Ireland, 1.5 per cent of the population speaks Irish Gaelic. In Scotland, 1.1 per cent of the population speaks Scottish Gaelic. On the Isle of Man, the language is considered almost extinct. In Cornwall, only 100 people speak Cornish, so it's also considered almost extinct.

"In Asturias we may have lost our ancestral Celtic language, but we have kept alive all the other factors that shape our Celtic culture and identity."

He points out that the first mention of the Asturians as a Celtic tribe came in 29 BC, in the work *Geography* by the Greek historian Strabo. At that time, women inherited property and held other powers indicative of a matriarchal society.

"Until recently, these features were preserved in Asturian territory as the custom of the covada, which consisted of the woman giving birth and continuing with her daily work while the man took care of the newborn."

"These people had great knowledge of the natural environment, and they used medicinal plants. The economy was diverse with surpluses used in trade. There was livestock and agriculture. Tribes such as the cilúrnigos made excellent metal cauldrons that were sold throughout the Atlantic Arc. They were also great goldsmiths."

According to Morán, Asturias received two waves of Celtic populations. The first was of Britons in the sixth century AD. Their arrival is reflected in local place names like Beach of the Bretones and Bretones Village. There was also a wave of Irish, arriving in the sixteenth century to escape ongoing conflict with England.

Today, Asturians hold an array of annual Celtic events to showcase the strength of the culture.

"In the capital of Oviedo, every Saturday and Sunday from May through October, there are parades of bagpipe bands in the city centre," shares Morán. "There are food, beer, cider and literary events. There are also Celtic crafts and gold and silver markets."

The Celtic League of Asturias was formed in 1980 with the aim of making Asturias known as a Celtic nation. It now has close to 1,600 members worldwide, and is active at international events, including the largest annual Celtic gathering in the world - the Festival Interceltique de Lorient in Bretagne - which has recognized Asturias as a Celtic nation.

While the global acclaim is welcome, Morán says that he feels most rewarded for his work when he sees children dressed in traditional Asturian costumes and playing the bagpipes and drums.

"Or when I ask children about Asturian mythology and they know it is related to the mythology of other Celtic nations. Or when I go to a Celtic festival and see the flag of my nation flying alongside those of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Isle of Man, Bretagne and Galicia."

"Going forward, we will continue to work hand in hand with our Celtic brothers and sisters for the preservation and promotion of our culture."

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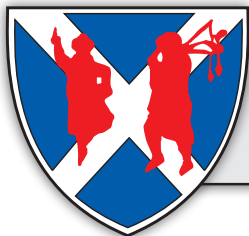
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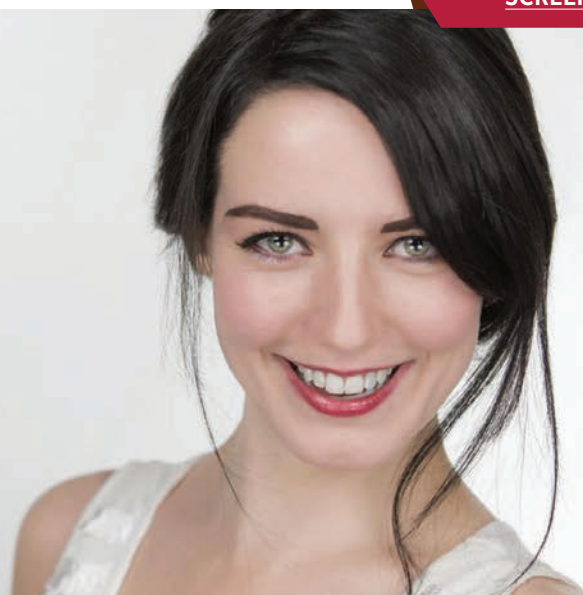
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Mhairi Calvey

Scottish actress Mhairi Calvey lights up the silver screen



It has been over two decades since Mhairi Calvey made her cinematic debut as the beloved young Murrin in the six-time Oscar winning film, *Braveheart*.

The Glasgow native has since appeared in a myriad of critically acclaimed movies, including the thrillers, *Any Time Now* and *Five Pillars*. The past two years have been particularly eventful.

"I recently filmed an action movie called *Eden Grey*," she tells Celtic Life International. "The protagonist was a bit of a female 'Jason Bourne' type, so it was a lot of fun. It was a dream role, as I am trained in Krav Maga martial arts and I had the opportunity to put my fight skills on camera. I also filmed in the sci-fi series *Horizon* - the set was incredible and the script was full of emotion."

Last year, she played the lead role in the science-fiction conspiracy film, *Abduct*.

"It is about a girl named Crystal who believes she killed her family as a child and is now on the run from aliens and government spooks."

In *Abduct*, Calvey stars alongside Sienna Guillory (*Resident Evil*) and Mark Arnold (*Teen Wolf*). The film draws its inspiration from shows like the *X-Files* and real-life, paranormal radio host, Art Bell.

"I think fans of the *X-Files* will really enjoy it. It is packed with effects and action moments - plus it has a few twists and turns."

Calvey enjoys challenging and gritty roles that are often written for men. She was attracted to *Abduct* for the uniqueness of both the character and the narrative.

"It was a genre I had never done before, and the script offered me the chance to research a lot of new and fascinating subjects. There is one scene in particular that really drew me to the character - her monologue. I



don't want to give too much away, but when I read it I just knew that I wanted to play the part. It gave me a really interesting back story to work with."

The film became available to order via Amazon Prime and several other outlets in the U.K. earlier this year. It will soon be available via more platforms globally, including in the USA.

More than ever, she believes, the art of film plays a vital role in both the lives of individuals and the well-being of society as a whole.

"Acting and film are important worldwide. It gives people the chance to express themselves, to connect to others, and to inspire people. Art focuses on the good in the world and I think we need more of that."

She points with pride to the cultural boom in her homeland.

"There is a brilliant culture and art scene in Scotland these days, with wonderful theatre, film and TV. Things like *Outlander* have really given our amazing and talented people a brilliant opportunity to shine. It is all beautiful, epic-scale work which showcases our heritage and culture. It's really exciting."

Further support for local communities, and involving the younger generations, are two areas she believes could be strengthened back home.

"I know some wonderful and creative individuals and groups who could always do with extra support. It would also be inspiring to see more funding open for Scotland-based independent film and theatre. There are many great actors and crew based in Scotland, and it would be wonderful to see more opportunities open up for them."

Next year will also be productive for Calvey; along with the extra work brought about by rekindling her modeling career, she already has a number of screen projects lined up.

"I have been quite fortunate to do some brilliant independent movies, but I really want to make the move into television. I have done a little bit of TV work and really enjoyed it. It would be rewarding to do more, perhaps something along the lines of *Outlander* or *The Crown*. Both those series really inspire me. I would like to travel more with work as well, maybe film something or do a play abroad. Learning about other art and cultures fascinates me. I've got some other feature films on the go as well, which I can't say too much about at the moment, but I am really excited about them."

www.mhairicalvey.com

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Belleek Pottery

In the years following the Great Famine, one Irishman took it upon himself to transform an entire community



Facing hard times and unemployment, the village of Belleek in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, was at its lowest point in the mid-1800s when John Caldwell Bloomfield and his partners founded Belleek Pottery.

And while the world around it has had its share of ups and downs since that time, both the company and its namesake township have continued to thrive.

"I am delighted to report - as we celebrate our 160th anniversary in 2017 - that through world wars, depressions, recessions, and the economic and political challenges we have had here in Ireland, we very much remain in business," says John Maguire, the company's current managing director.

"In fact, today we are one of the largest employers in Fermanagh, and one of the biggest tourist attractions in Ireland."

Those good fortunes have only served to strengthen the ties between the company and local residents.

"The pottery is very much at the heart of the village," shares Maguire. "The population of Belleek is approximately 500 people, and most families that live in the area are employed with us."

The work at Belleek is bountiful; master artisans sculpt the pottery by hand, tour guides show tens of thousands of visitors around the facility and the community, while many more are employed at dozens of retail outlets across both Ulster and the Republic.

Like Waterford Crystal in Eire's south-east, Belleek Pottery is world-renowned for its fine craftsmanship, making it especially popular with collectors (one aficionado owns 7,500 pieces). Their wares ship to all corners of the globe, including the U.K., mainland Europe, China, and Australia.

Their biggest export market, however, is North America.

"We actually had our first trade show in

Philadelphia back in the 1880s," notes Maguire. "For any company to remain in business for a long time, it is vital to open up strong foreign markets. The U.S. and Canada have been hugely important in our growth."

In recent years, Belleek has gotten into the business of online retailing as well. They also created a brand of contemporary products, called Belleek Living, in order to grow both their relevance and competitiveness in the global marketplace.

The company's bread and butter, however, remains their Belleek Classic line, which is still crafted - and still held to the same stringent standard - as it was 160 years ago,

"Each piece will pass through 16 different pairs of hands," explains Maguire.

"Our founders were quite clear in their original mandate that each piece must be perfect. It has been a very high standard to maintain, but it has certainly served us very well for over a century and a half."

That rigorous practice isn't the only policy that has remained intact for 160 years. The very make-up of the company, as the beating economic heart of the entire village of Belleek, is another firm standard that has withstood the test of time.

"The business is in a good place to hand off to the next generation of people from this area, and that is at the top of our agenda," says Maguire, who adds that the company's founders were adamant that their brand remain inherently and unmistakably Irish. "That is extremely important to our retailers around the world, and also to our collectors and customers."

While Belleek Pottery has enjoyed a good, long run, Maguire is cognizant of current challenges facing the marketplace, including changes in consumer habits and - perhaps more poignantly - the uncertainty brought about by the recent Brexit vote.

"At the end of the day, we cannot concern ourselves with matters that are out of our hands. In truth, by continuing to commit ourselves to excellence in the quality of our craftsmanship - as we have for the last 160 years - we are in full control of our own destiny."



That confidence, he believes, comes from the community.

"We have been very lucky to have such a loyal workforce through the years. These folks are very passionate about what they do, and they take great pride in where they are employed. We are very conscious of the importance of Belleek Pottery to the community, and to this region, and we are equally aware of how important the people here are to us. Without them, we wouldn't have made it to 160 years. With them, however, we hope to thrive for another 160..."

www.belleekpottery.ie



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Irish dancer Raymond Sweeney's new production TitanicDance explodes with excitement and emotion

Former Lord of the Dance star and choreographer Raymond Sweeney always knew that dancing would be a major part of his life.

"I attended my first Irish dance lesson at age nine," remembers the Leitrim-born performer. "I have seven siblings, and my mum took us all along to Irish dancing class to give it a go. I enjoyed it and stuck at it. Back then it wasn't cool for a young lad to do Irish dancing, but I did, and I'm glad because I wouldn't be where I am today otherwise."

Now, 26 years later, Sweeney continues to dance for many of the same reasons - and a few more.

"I still love dancing, but it is on a totally different level now," he explains. "Today, it's about performing on stage with my own production and getting a buzz from the reaction of the audience."

The three-time Irish Dancing Champion has racked up a number of accomplishments and awards over the past two decades.

"I joined Lord of the Dance when I was 16 years old and I was a part of that production for over 15 years," he recalls. "It was a huge chapter in my life and had a lot of high-lights while I was there."

Sweeney isn't suggesting the vocation is without its challenges, however; he has worked hard to maintain fitness levels required for peak performance.

"Irish dancing and dancing fitness has changed dramatically since I started my professional touring career. It is very important that I keep up with all levels."

This year, Sweeney took his career to a higher ground with his debut musical production, *TitanicDance* - a project four years in the making.

"I have always been very ambitious and push myself to new heights. Having my own touring production was always a dream of mine."

"I believe it was fate that I was introduced to (co-producers) Sean McAnaney and Kevin Toland back in 2013. They were also aspiring to create an Irish dance production and we started to work on a concept immediately. We wanted to use a really solid theme in our story, and we came up with the idea of the Titanic.

"There are very strong links to the story of the Titanic in Ireland, especially Belfast and Cobh, but I knew the story had the potential to touch people all over the world. I travelled to Belfast and Cobh to get inspiration and to feel the spirit of the Titanic. In no time the ideas were flowing and, along with my team, we started to develop the show."

He says that the creation of *TitanicDance* has been his greatest accomplishment.

"Seeing the show come together, and then getting the reactions and reviews that we have received to date, has been nothing short of amazing. It is hard to believe at times, but it makes all the hard work and stressful days well worthwhile."

Future audiences, he notes, "are in for a real treat."

"*TitanicDance* tells the story of the world's most famous ship - from its beginning in the Belfast shipyard to its tragic end in the Atlantic Ocean. Audiences will experience an explosive, exciting and emotional performance like no other."

Sweeney gives credit to productions like *Riverdance* - specifically, their 1994 performance at the Eurovision song contest - for boosting Irish culture around the world.

"Since then, the popularity in Irish dancing and music has just grown and grown, giving opportunities to many like myself to showcase our art to audiences worldwide."

While that growth has been staggering, he believes that the Irish government can play an even bigger role in preserving Eire's culture.

"They could certainly do more with regards to funding productions and artists that promote Irish culture globally. That said, I generally think that the Irish and Celtic culture is being well pushed all across all four corners of the planet today through productions like *TitanicDance*."

Over the coming months the project will tour Ireland, the U.K. and China.

"My main focus at the moment is to make sure that the show becomes a worldwide success. After that, I will see what kind of other exciting opportunities present themselves."

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I was born on the beautiful Isle of Man. Although I was starved of fashion when I was growing up, I was surrounded by green rolling hills, the sea, and views of the seven kingdoms!

I first knew I was interested in fashion when I was very young; from the age of three I would demand what I wanted to wear and how I wanted to style my own look, much to the frustration of my parents. Later this developed into a way of life for me - I never stopped thinking about fashion, and this started to translate through art and design.

What I do today is really all about helping women to feel fantastic about themselves. The bespoke is extremely unique, as it is my own design with a particular customer in mind, and there will be no other item like it in the world. No woman is the same, has the same body or the same personality. Being in tune with my customers, and designing something for them - which in turn becomes them - is beyond rewarding. Seeing how happy my designs make people feel is priceless.

The fashion industry is uncertain, changing, and challenging, as consumers today are more demanding, quality-savvy, and have unpredictable purchasing power. We need to work harder to keep up with smarter shoppers, reaching customers in new but personal ways through technology. However, there are opportunities for fashion brands to diversify their product, and re-approach what they design to be more agile in our approach to meet the needs of the "see now, buy now" fashion cycle.

We are opening a new Claire Christian store on the Isle of Man, which will be the first of its kind over here. The idea is to work together with other local businesses to create a lifestyle location - a "creative hub" for all creative industries to display their incredible talent alongside the Claire Christian brand.

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LHH Scotland

Our award-winning photojournalist
Tom Langlands explores the art of self-catering
with Scotland's LHH Ltd

It is fair to say that over a lifetime of more decades than I would care to mention I have travelled Scotland extensively. I have laid my head to rest in everything from cheap tents, that were totally unsuitable for the vagaries of Scottish weather, to caravans and campervans where I would awaken to ice on the inside of the windows in winter. I have stayed in many bed and breakfast establishments and self-catering houses of varying quality, and I have also enjoyed some of the finest hotel accommodation that this country has to offer.

In a world where foreign travel is affordable for many, and where international comparisons can be made easily, the last thirty years have seen a huge shift in the type and quality of accommodation that today's travellers look for in destinations like Scotland. Though not everyone has raised their game to meet those expectations, it comes as both a relief and a comfort to find an organization that has not only raised its game, but also delivers consistently.

When I travel around Scotland it is invariably with camera and fishing rod. If you asked my wife she would say that we don't have holidays in Scotland - we have photography trips or fishing expeditions.

Going self-catering means that I am not restricted by meal times or the need to stay out at certain times of the day so that someone can service my room. I can go out early to photograph the sunrise or stay out late to catch the evening rise, or even stay out all night for a spot of sea-trout fishing without worrying that I have missed a mealtime or that I may be disturbing other guests by coming and going at unsociable hours. It is the flexibility of self-catering breaks that I enjoy. There is the added benefit that some self-catering properties are situated in spectacular locations, the kind of places where you won't find a hotel - nor would you want to!

After a couple of mediocre experiences with self-catering accommodations, I stumbled across the website for LHH some years ago. Several months previously, I had fractured my foot and - given the inevitable restrictions that my recovery was imposing - my wife and I decided to book a leisurely break and to invite a couple of family members along with us. One was my elderly father-in-law who has problems with his sight. All of this necessitated making sure that the property was going to suit our needs while also being of high quality and in a good location. We narrowed our preference down to a Perthshire house that oozed character. I am long past the stage of being fooled by glossy images, so I telephoned LHH to discuss the finer details of the layout and location. I spoke with Wynne Bentley, the firm's owner and Managing Director. LHH is the marketing agent for the properties in its portfolio, and I remember being impressed with both how well Bentley knew the particular property that we were interested in and her extensive knowledge of the local area. This had not been my experience of other letting agents in the past. Our stay in the property was excellent and the service from LHH was the best I had experienced to date. Since then I have used LHH many times and have stayed in some of the most amazing, unique, comfortable and luxurious properties across the Highlands of Scotland and on the Outer Hebrides. I have never been disappointed with the houses, their location or the services.

Bentley's maternal great-grandmother hails from North Wales, and she was christened Winefride - after the Welsh Saint Winefride. Her father's side of the family had Irish connections. She laughs as she recounts the story of her name, "I hated the name Winefride, and

after seeing shops in Wales displaying the surname 'Wynne' I decided - at twelve years of age - that from then on Wynne would be my new forename!"

After graduating with a B.Sc. in geology from Manchester University in 1984, and later with a Masters degree in micropalaeontology from Aberystwyth University in 1986, Bentley married a Scot and moved to Ullapool where she worked for a spell in the fish farming industry with Wester Ross Salmon Ltd.

She had assumed that, after graduation, she would find work as a geologist in the oil or petrochemical fields. However, the late 1980s saw considerable cutbacks across the oil related industries, and so she embarked on a new career direction gaining diplomas from the Chartered Institute of Marketing and the Institute of Export and International Trade. After a spell as an export controller for a company in Lancashire, the family relocated to the Black Isle, north of Inverness. It was there that friends asked her if she could use her marketing skills to promote the letting of Poyntzfield House near Cromarty as a holiday home. It was a large, underused facility at the time, but following a successful marketing campaign, owners of other sizable properties approached her about her services. The result was the establishment in 1997 of Large Holiday Houses, dealing specifically with castles, mansions, lodges and big farmhouses that generally housed eight or more guests. The company acquired an excellent reputation from both property owners and holidaymakers. In 2003, Little Holiday Houses was formed, with a shift in emphasis towards equally high-end smaller cottages and houses catering for two to eight persons. Two years later, both these aspects of the business amalgamated to form LHH Ltd. Today, many people assume that LHH stands for Luxury Holiday Homes. It is no coincidence that this misnomer has arisen, and it is an accolade that Bentley is happy to accept.

Before any property makes it into LHH's brochure it must be the equivalent of 4 or 5-star quality, and will be visited by at least one member of staff who will acquire first-hand knowledge of the site.

Awareness of the local area is also vital, as the company prides itself on assisting visitors when planning travel arrangements, and also offers first-hand advice about what can be found in the vicinity - from regional attractions to quality restaurants.

LHH is very much a family business. Bentley's daughter, Catherine, is her Personal Assistant, while another daughter, Robyn, works remotely as proof-reader and provides temporary staff relief for holiday cover, etc. Additionally, the company employs a Property and Contract Manager, Accounts Manager, Reservations Administrator, Website and IT administrator and an Accounts administrator.

Considering Bentley's degrees in geology, it is perhaps fitting that LHH is based in a beautiful rural setting only a few miles from the Cromarty home and museum of Scotland's eminent geologist and fossil-hunter, Hugh Miller. Given the stunning locations of many of the firm's properties, she is determined that the office should remain based in a similar location.

"In the interests of quality of life, we have resisted vehemently all temptations to relocate to the city to take advantage of financial incentives," she notes. That outstanding 'quality of life' is reflected in the company's exceptional properties, and why I continue to visit them year after year.

www.lhhscotland.com
www.tomlanglandsphotography.com



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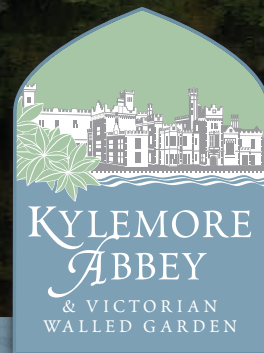
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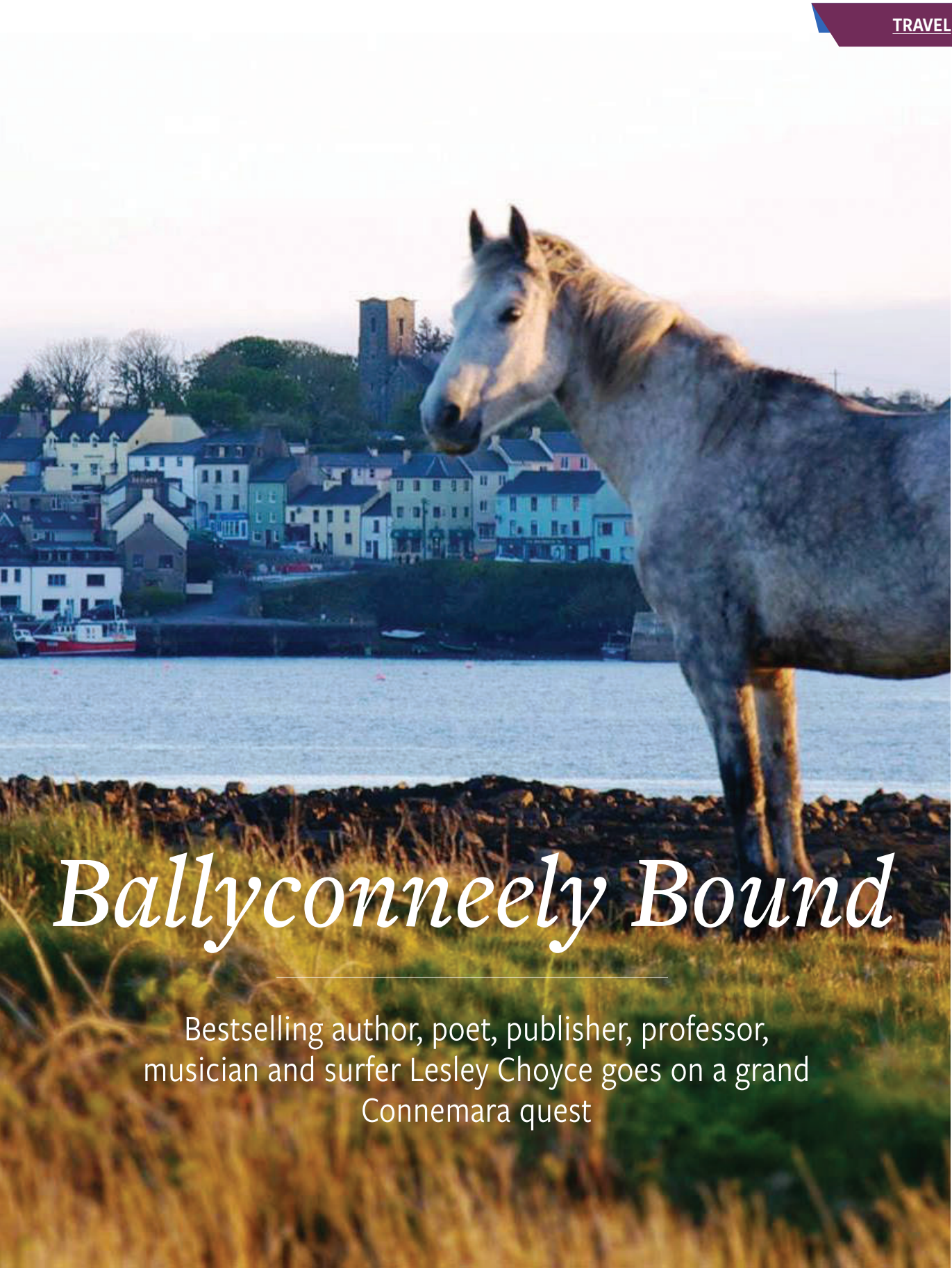
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Ballyconneely Bound

Bestselling author, poet, publisher, professor,
musician and surfer Lesley Choyce goes on a grand
Connemara quest



I don't know what it is, but every few years I get itching to return to Ireland and find a really narrow back road in some remote part of the country to drive around on. My wife Linda and I have done some fair damage to our rental cars over the years as a result. Not the drive-it-like-you-stole-it kind - just a lot of scratched paint and the odd ding in rear-view mirrors. We have taken to carrying around a tube of scratch removal paste that we use to buff out the scratches before we return our vehicles. That seems to do the job.

Not long ago, we flew in to Shannon and rented a car that already had a dented mirror and, even before we hit the road, I reminded myself to fold both side mirrors in while going through small villages where the locals park their cars half on the street and half on the narrow sidewalk.

Ireland was as green as I remembered it - even for a dry July - as we drove north towards our destination, a stone house near the shores of Bunowen Bay. We passed through Lahinch, a popular surfing town on the Atlantic. Ireland has become a surf-crazy country in the last decade and attracted surfers from around the world to ride monster waves on offshore ledges in places like Mullaghmore and Easky. The waves in Lahinch were a tad tamer as we travelled through. The town was a bit too popular for my tastes, with a narrow crowded beach packed with pale bodies working on some serious sunburn. I did recall, however, sitting in a pub there one rainy



day in February on a previous visit, looking directly out on lads surfing some difficult, but powerful winter waves. So, if and when I return to Lahinch, it will be off season.

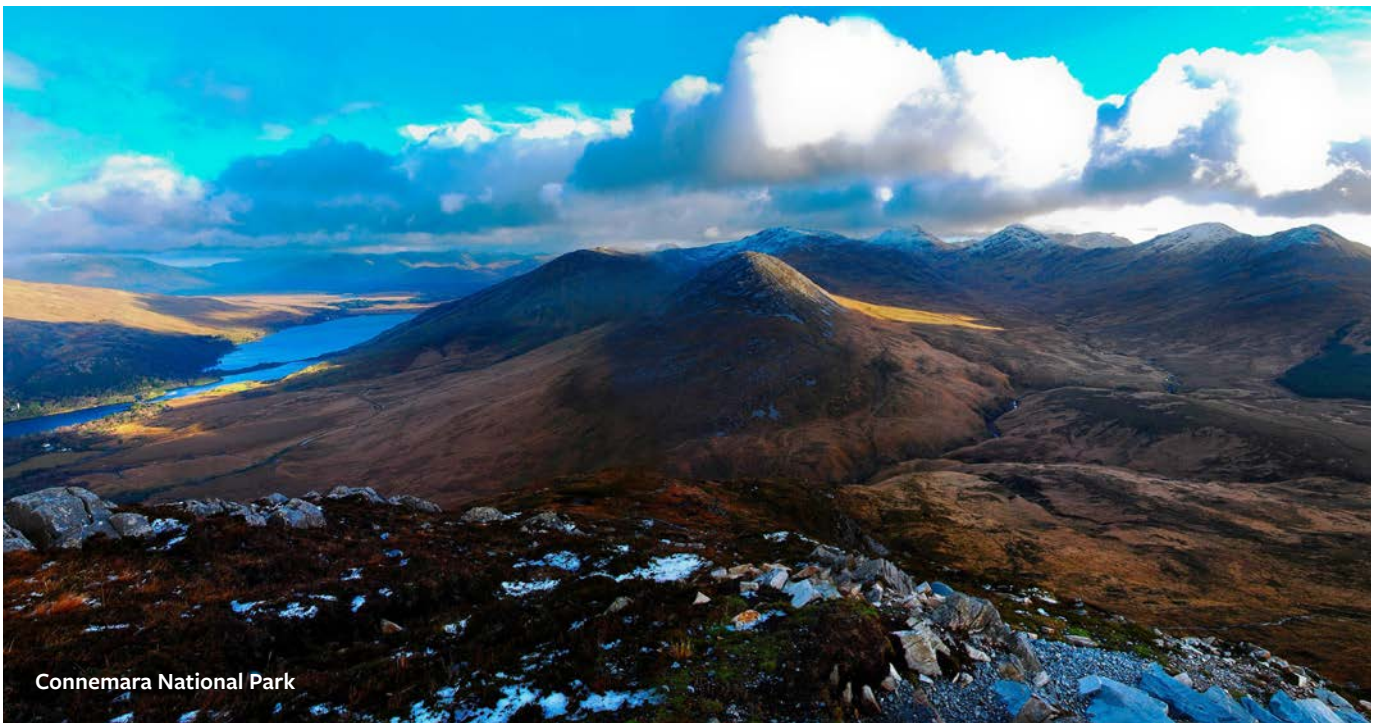
The Cliffs of Moher were the next stop, mostly because it was on the way, and they were indeed as spectacular as ever. We joined the throngs of tourists from around the world as they stepped out of their buses and cars to make their way to the famed 100 to 200 metre-high-cliffs and stare down at the ocean. An international swarm of teenagers were trying their best to see who could get closest to the edge and I wondered how many people over the years have actually died here. But there's no denying it is a breath-taking place. In the parking lot, I purchased an obligatory penny whistle and a shillelagh like a good foreign spendthrift. before heading off to Doolin for



the first pint of the trip at Gus O'Connor's Pub. The Guinness tasted equally as good as the one I'd had here many years before with my old friend Mike. We'd argued that day about James Joyce versus Jack Kerouac like a pair of perfect intellectual idiots while a full Sunday afternoon jam session was taking place with ever-changing fiddle players and new musicians arriving by bus each half hour.

Linda and I spent our first night in a country hotel in Lisdoonvarna, famous for the month-long matchmaking festival that occurs each September when as many as 40,000 lonely-hearts arrive to seek a spouse. For most, it must seem an efficient and tidy way to avoid decisions, dating, dinners, and the complex modern rituals of romance.

In the morning, we were back on the coastal road of the Burren, past Slieve Elva



and Black Head. I was particularly taken by the rugged, otherworldly frozen-lava-like limestone formations near Murroogh, and the megalithic tomb at Poul nabrone.

We saved Galway for another day and stayed on the N59 to Clifden, then onto the joyfully twisty and narrow road - more like a paved sidewalk really - leading to our cottage beyond Ballyconneely. The map suggested that much of the peninsula was something called the Roundstone Blanket Bog - not an image that might attract many travelers, but the rocky, pockmarked coastline with its little pure white sand pocket beaches was a dream-come-true for coastal lovers like us.

Across the road from our stone cottage was a fenced-in field with a beautiful white horse - a Connemara pony, of course, that most certainly had been a unicorn in a previous incarnation.

Linda fell in love with the horse immediately and fed him carrots whenever the opportunity presented itself.

When we asked about beaches with good waves, folks were strangely tight-lipped. This was a tad puzzling, since most Irish people to whom I asked a question would inevitably tell me much more than I ever wanted to know. But, finally, one hiker we met took pity on us as we poked around sandy coastal trails and told us about a place where the local surfers found favourable waves. It required driving several kilometers through a very large sheep pasture. There were no real roads - just some wheel tracks in the grass and sand, and the sheep were mostly willing to step aside, and if not, you could just drive around them. The beach will go unnamed, but it was exactly what we were looking for - clear blue water, rocky outcroppings on either side, hard packed sand and wallowing North Atlantic waves perfectly suited for our inflatable boogie boards and our thirst for salty wet adventure.

On the weekend it was actually quite crowded with local folks, so it wasn't really that much of a secret, but the mood among camping families was as mellow as a clan gathering of hippy farmers that I once recall attending.



Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten-Brown

Clifden is the big town near Ballyconneely. The visitors' website boasts, "Clifden today is a vibrant and cosmopolitan town on the very edge of Europe." Well, it was a cheerful place with busy people and a few too many shops selling geegaws from China. But the Alcock and Brown Hotel caught my attention, and the two names rang a bell. So I went searching to find out more about those two surnames.

According to National Geographic, "In 1919 Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten-Brown became the first pilots to fly nonstop across the Atlantic. They were pioneers and heroes, ushering in the next chapter in the progress of aviation."

As it happened, the dynamic duo took off from Newfoundland, flew across the ocean, and landed in one of those large Irish bogs just shy of Clifden, thinking it a level and welcoming patch of earth. Though a bit of a crash landing, both men were fine. Alcock told the London Daily Mail that on the trip they had encountered several unforeseen events and that, "The cockpit was very cozy indeed, but when we peered over the side, sleet and ice chewed bits out of our faces."

Later, wandering the streets of Clifden, I kept wondering why I knew so much about Charles Lindbergh's later flight across the At-



Kylemore Abbey

lantic and so little about these two aviation pioneers.

There is a spectacular drive from Clifden to Knockavally called, appropriately, Sky Road, with some exceptional views of Clifden Bay. We drove on yet another finger of land out towards the Atlantic until we came to Cleggan (Gaelic for skull) where, in 1927, 25 local fishermen were lost at sea in a sudden gale, devastating the town, but later immortalized in poems, songs and stories. The day was slipping away so we didn't take the ferry to Inishbofin (Island of the White Cow) with its small population of 180, a place that was inhabited more than 5000 years ago.

On yet another day, we headed south, skirting Roundstone Blanket Bog, and did barefoot hikes of Dogs Bay and Gorteen beaches, ending up in Roundstone, a lovely, slightly touristy town. We had lunch in a little internet café but, upon walking back to our car, encountered an intoxicated band of young men and women in their early twenties along the road. They were goofy, yet polite to us, and I couldn't quite figure out why the young, somewhat-drunk gentlemen were wearing socks and no shoes. However, the girls were laughing at their antics and they wished us well as we passed.

We found some good mountain hiking in Connemara National Park, not far from Letterfrack, which is Gaelic for Speckled Hill.

Letterfrack was founded by a Quaker couple in the nineteenth century, who moved here and set up a farm to provide food to residents during the Great Famine. After that, Protestant missionaries moved in to convert Catholics to Protestantism, but had little success and gave up after 25 years.

Letterfrack also has a connection to my home province of Nova Scotia, in that it was here that Marconi set up a receiver station for wireless messages coming from Cape Breton, far across the Atlantic.

Farther inland along Killary Harbour, called by some "Ireland's fjord," is Leenane, home of the Aasleagh Waterfalls on the River Erriff, not far from where it meets the harbour. Nearby, we discovered the Connemara Seaweed Baths, where you can pay a fee to sit in a tub filled with seaweed and saltwater. The clever folks who run the establishment say that their seaweed "is hand cut daily and fresh with essential nutrients and minerals...as well as relaxing tired and aching muscles, saltwater seaweed baths provide a natural cure for

skin ailments from psoriasis to eczema and also help relieve associated pain of arthritis and rheumatism."

It made me think of the tons of fresh seaweed that washes ashore back home in Nova Scotia going to waste as it rots on the beach instead of being utilized for its curative powers. I made a note to myself to gather up a carload of it after the next storm, empty it into my bathtub, and lie in it for a good hour or two while listening to New Age music.

Then it was back to boogie boarding at the hidden beach, and a drive to the westernmost tip of our peninsula - Slyne Head. As the road grew yet more narrow and grassy, we were shocked to suddenly come upon a most opulent and worldly Connemara Golf Club.

One of the most curious things about both Ireland and Scotland is that just when you think you are completely off the beaten path and at a most end-of-the-earth locale, you discover a putting green, a mansion-like club house, and men wearing funny hats and baggy pants hitting a little white ball across a perfectly manicured lawn.

There was nothing to do but go into the clubhouse restaurant, which welcomed non-members, for some fish and chips and glass of Kilkenny before another afternoon boogie board session at yet another secluded and unnamed beach.



Watching sunsets, while feeding carrots to the Connemara pony across the road became the norm for us. Linda had nick-named him Buddy and he had already grown to like his daily treat by greeting us kindly with a nuzzle on the neck.

Ireland had once again worked its magic on us with barren stone hills, beautiful beaches and, here in Ballyconneely, on a soft summer evening, it seemed impossible to realize that nearly 170 years ago, the entire region was beset by calamity.

On the website connemarahistory.com, the author notes, “In 1845 a fungal disease called ‘blight’ (phythophthora infestans) began to affect the potato crop and led to its failure several years in succession. The British government was slow to react, and this led to mass starvation and disease. Relief schemes were introduced, but these were too late to have any great impact on the situation. Grain continued to be exported, and in one incident grain was left to rot in Clifden port while the population starved.”

A final day of hiking took us to the Twelve Bens and we found a gravel road heading up into the mountains. Once suitably far from any towns or tourists, we left the car and hiked up through beckoning grass and rock strewn fields filled with free-ranging sheep gossiping about our presence.

It was clear that this Connemara that we had grown to know was a hard land in many ways - certainly not an easy place to grow potatoes among the many stones. And its history was beset by tragedies aplenty. But here on the slopes of one of the Bens - we never figured out exactly which one - we were able yet again to leave our own century behind. It was a sunny, oddly windless afternoon filled with small vibrant flowers, growing low to the ground but brilliant in colour, tucked between the many stones.

Perhaps here was another of those “thin places” we had encountered in Sligo and Donegal, a sacred location where the line between the physical world and the spiritual world is diminished to nearly nothing. A place where the magic of the natural surroundings steals your cares away and reminds you that your five senses can provide you with much entertainment and satisfaction, but just beyond your mortal vision is something even much grander.



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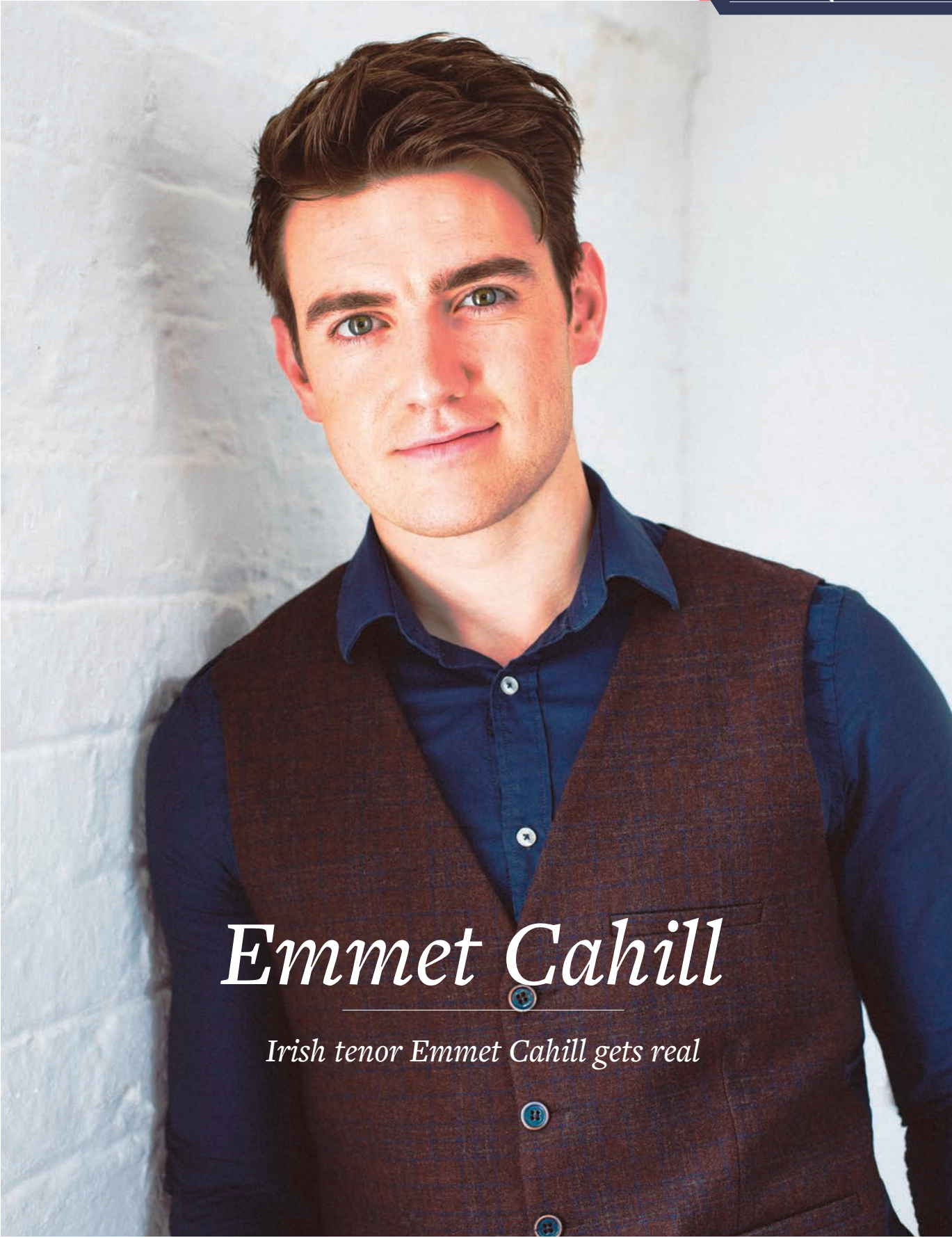
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A portrait of Irish tenor Emmet Cahill. He is a young man with dark, wavy hair and light-colored eyes, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt under a brown, textured vest. The background is a light-colored, textured wall.

Emmet Cahill

Irish tenor Emmet Cahill gets real



*Emmet Cahill is currently playing to sold-out audiences across North America, performing songs from his debut recording **Emmet Cahill's Ireland** along with a mix of Broadway favourites, movie hits, folk classics, well-loved hymns and the occasional operatic aria. Recently, he spoke with Celtic Life International about his past, present and future.*

Where do you currently reside?

I live in a small town in the midlands of Ireland called Mullingar.

When and why did you start playing music?

I began playing music and singing at the age of four. Music was a huge part of family life at home; my father was a piano teacher, and he encouraged me to play, and my mother was a church singer and taught me many different songs growing up. I saw the enjoyment my parents got from music, and I wanted that for my own life also. They really encouraged me to pursue my passion as I grew older, both in school and elsewhere. As a family, we would perform at church ceremonies all over the country. We would all play and sing together; my dad on piano, my brother on cello, my sister playing classical flute and singing, while I would sing and play violin. Music was a great way of sharing something together as a family.

Are they the same reasons you do it today?

Absolutely - I still love to sing and play. And my family is as supportive as ever with my music career. It has always been a central part of my life, and I really couldn't imagine doing anything else

How have you evolved as an artist over time?

I find that my life experiences, both good and bad, have had a great impact on my artistry on stage. In particular, I draw on past experiences when performing Irish songs. The songs I perform often bring back memories from my childhood in Ireland, make me think of a special person in my life, or remember someone close to me that I have lost. I do allow myself to get quite emotional on stage. For some people it can seem a little scary to let your real feelings take over on stage, but by letting my guard down and being totally myself it brings complete emotional honesty to a performance, which resonates on a much deeper level with an audience. Many people approach me after my concerts and say they feel like they know me, despite only seeing me perform for the first time. I love hearing that.

How would you describe your sound today?

My sound is a mix of classical Irish and folk music. My approach to these genres, however, is very much influenced by my classical music training.

What are the challenges involved with the vocation?

The main one would be not seeing my friends and family as often as I would like. I miss Ireland a lot when I leave, but in a way I get to bring a big part of Ireland with me when I perform these songs every night, so my homeland never feels too far away.

What are the rewards?

Seeing so many interesting places that I would otherwise never experience. I have been blessed to meet many inspiring people through

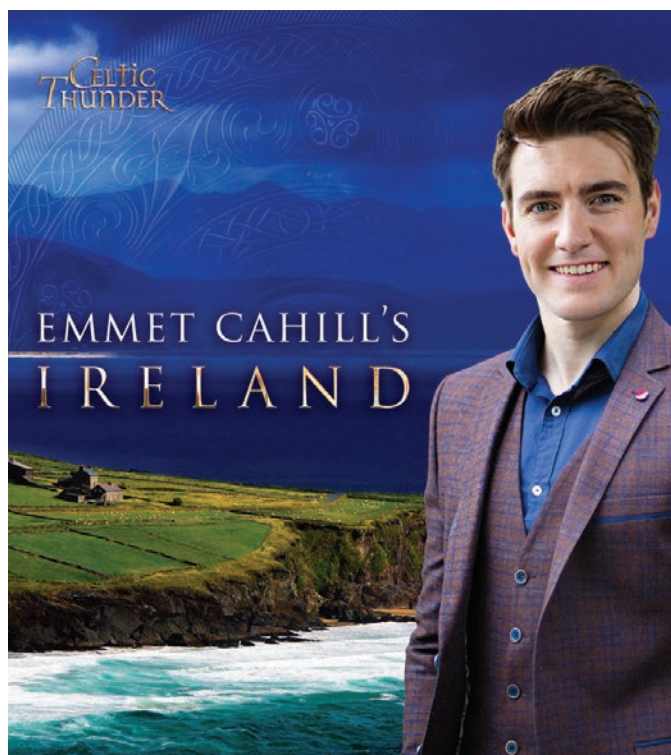
music, and have made life-long friends along the way also. Being able to stand on stage and speak so proudly about my country, and tell the stories of my forefathers through these beautiful songs is something I cherish greatly.

What have been some career highlights?

Having my parents travel around the world to see me perform has been a real highlight. They were my first teachers - in music and in life - so to be able to share this experience with them years later is something very special. And they are still teaching me! I am very much looking forward to performing at Carnegie Hall next March - details on that show will be coming soon.

Is your creative process more 'inspirational' or 'perspirational'?

I would say inspirational. I don't try to force the emotions too much. As I said, I like to draw on personal human interactions and experiences. I'm inspired by human stories, both happy and sad. So many people have spoken to me about their connection to the Irish songs that I perform - Danny Boy, When Irish Eyes Are Smiling and I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen - they have been passed through many generations of families, particularly in America and Canada.





What makes a good song?

How a song impacts someone is always subjective and personal. I try to perform songs that have depth to them - both musically and lyrically. Songs that speak of human stories really resonate with me.

What's the best part of being on the road?

The whole experience is great; living my dream by performing on stage every night, meeting new people every day and seeing so many different cultures. I love speaking with the fans before and after the shows - hearing that they drove 10 hours to see the show, or thanking them for bringing me a home-cooked meal or a Starbucks card! They are incredibly generous, and are my family away from home. I know so many of them by first-name basis now so it is just like catching up every time I am on tour.

What are your thoughts on the current state of Ireland's music scene?

I think it has become quite diverse in recent years, and Irish music has been fused with many different styles - which is a good thing in my opinion. That is essentially what I have been doing myself - taking old Irish songs and making them relevant to today's audiences.

Is enough being done to preserve and promote Irish and Celtic culture generally?

There is always work to be done. Ireland is a country that is developing and changing and has always moved with the times. However, I think there is a unique pride that we have for our culture and history that will always be

a big part of who we are. The Irish story of emigration has taken us all over the world for hundreds of years, and continues to do so today. I like to think that by keeping these songs and stories of the past alive, the Irish story can continue to be told to new audiences for years to come.

Can this be improved?

Yes - by making the music more relevant to today's audiences, yet staying true to both the style in which the songs were composed and the people that these songs represented.

Do you miss your Celtic Thunder days?

I took a break from the show in 2014 to focus on my solo career, but it is great to be back working with the guys at the moment. We played 72 cities in the USA and Canada last year, and we have a busy year of touring and recording ahead this year. It is a lot of fun being on the road with the guys - we know how to have a laugh and not take ourselves too seriously.

What do your family & friends think of what you do?

They are happy to see that I love what I do. I don't talk about my career a lot with them. To be honest, when I am at home I like to lead as normal a life as possible and switch off. Walking my dog, going to the gym, playing golf, etc.

How has the internet helped your career?

It has helped a lot, as it is a great way to keep fans involved with what I am doing when I am not on the road. I love to interact with every-

one on social media, and I post videos pretty regularly. It is lovely to hear from fans before a tour, as it builds my own excitement for the shows, and I try to reply to as many messages as possible.

What advice might you have for a young person looking to pursue a career in music?

Choose the musical path you are most passionate about and - most importantly - be uniquely yourself. That's your best shot, as it is authentic and real, and people ultimately relate to that best of all. They want the real you on stage.

If you weren't involved with music or the performing arts, what would you be doing?

I am a big sports fan, so that would be the other line of work I would love to try - maybe working in the media. Recently, I have enjoyed doing some TV work to promote my album, so I would certainly be open to doing broadcasting at some point.

What do have on tap for the rest of 2017, and into 2018?

It is a busy year ahead. Along with the Celtic Thunder commitment, I am launching a new album on my upcoming fall tour with orchestral concerts, festivals, and theatre shows in the USA, as well as a number of church concerts lined up for my debut Canadian solo tour in October. Busy times, for sure, but good times.

www.emmetcahill.com



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Celtic Fusion

As Celtic Life International Senior Writer
Chris Muise explains, Celtic music today might not
be what we think it is...



How great is it when you are cycling through radio stations, maybe on a quiet drive through the countryside of wherever you happen to be, and the folk masterpiece *We Rise Again* – performed by Cape Breton supergroup The Rankins – roars out over the airwaves? It makes you feel almost immortal in a sense, connecting you with generations of people who came before.

One of the great Celtic power ballads known the world over, the band's version of *We Rise Again* introduced Celtic music to whole new audiences.

But just how Celtic is it?

That's not to cast any doubts on the Rankin family, or the authenticity of their work – obviously, their music can be considered Celtic by today's standards. But ask a Scot alive during the Highland clearances? You might have gotten a different answer.



Heather Rankin

"It is going to be different from what you'd hear in Scotland today, or what you would have heard in Scotland 200 years ago," says Heather Rankin, who first performed the song with her family in 1993. "It has evolved over the last couple hundred years here. Now, it is all relative to where you are, and who you are talking about."

This brings us to the question; what is Celtic music? Is it the same everywhere? What has it been, and what has it become?

Today, it is almost impossible to define Celtic music as one single thing. Instead, Celtic Life International broached the topic with a number of performers, musicians and music experts to get their perspectives on an ever-evolving genre.

"I can understand why people would have difficulty describing it," says Ellen MacIsaac, a Celtic music professor at both Ottawa University and Carleton University in Ontario.

One of the first things MacIsaac asks of her students at the start of each school year is to try and define Celtic. The answer is never obvious.

“One of my favourite tricks is to play them pieces from Wales and Brittany, and then ask them if they think it sounds Celtic? Often, the answer is no. Without seeing the visual context of anything Celtic, people don’t necessarily know that they are listening to a Celtic piece of music.”

MacIsaac adds that it can be difficult to even identify what sounds, melodies, and themes make up the DNA of Celtic music, as the Diaspora has produced so many disparate styles over the centuries. Often, it comes down to context.

“We are accustomed to hearing certain kinds of music and calling that Celtic. What makes something Celtic? Well, part of it is the expectations of the people that are listening.”

“In North America, we have our own particular take on things because we look back on our ancestry with very rose-tinted glasses - a very romantic notion of Celtic identity - that doesn’t necessarily have much to do with life on the ground in a Celtic country.”

In North America, the sounds of fiddles, pipes and drums belting out classic folk tunes at pubs and festivals is considered traditional “Celtic.” In an actual Celtic nation like Ireland, that stuff is outdated, equivalent to The Charleston or The Jitterbug.

“For them, the traditional stuff is old hat,” says MacIsaac. “I met a lot of people in Ireland who would swear up, down, and sideways that Celtic Woman doesn’t qualify as ‘Celtic.’”

So does that mean “traditional” Celtic music isn’t traditional? No - it just means that it is not traditional to everyone.



Dawn Beaton

“It depends where you are from,” says Dawn Beaton, the artistic director of the Celtic Colours International Festival in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Beaton and her sister Margie grew up playing traditional Gaelic tunes on the fiddle, but Beaton recognizes that what she calls traditional is fairly new in the grand scheme of Celtic music.

“We pull some of our repertoire from the more immediate past,” she explains, “Cape Breton-composed tunes from the last 80 years or so.”

Those eight decades of music are informed by the culture that came before it, of course, but older tunes were largely - almost exclusively, even - passed down by oral tradition. From one generation to another, small changes were inevitable. With time, and with vast migration patterns, those changes snowballed.

“For some of the really old, old tunes, who really knows where they have come from?” muses Beaton. “We might sometimes think we’re playing a Scottish tune, when really it is Irish in origin. So much of that music went back and forth between those two countries before coming over here.”

It’s hard to keep it all straight - even in the same region. Cape Breton’s Celtic Colours International Festival showcases talent from across Atlantic Canada each autumn, and Beaton says that a sensitive ear can distinguish differences in style and form, even from community-to-community.

“To the untrained ear, it probably sounds quite similar. But there is a very interesting difference between Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and most of Nova Scotia - even within Nova Scotia, and even within Cape Breton!”

Centuries of evolution isn’t the only factor affecting Celtic music, however; today’s players want to put their own stamp on the sound.

“The sheet music that you get in a music book is just a skeleton, really,” continues Beaton. “You might start with that, but eventually you will put your own inflection on it.”



Afro Celt Sound System

“How could there not be change over time? There is naturally going to be different influences on Celtic music and how it is performed.”

That said, Beaton notes that much of the music still being played on Cape Breton Island is largely the same as when the Scottish Gaels first settled the region hundreds of years ago, and that she and many others strive to keep it that way.

“We come from very humble roots, and it’s not only ours to take off in another direction.”

There are others, however, who aim to push the genre to new places.

“Call it Celtic fusion, cross-Celtic, or perhaps pan-Celtic,” says Celtic Life International’s Managing Editor Stephen Patrick Clare, a long-time musician, music critic and historian.

“Like most other sonic styles, Celtic music has pollinated across musical and geographic boundaries, with all sorts of great new sub-genres popping up, including Celtic Death Metal, Celt-Rock, Celtic Jazz, Celtic Rap, and more. It’s quite exciting to witness the evolution.”

Clare counts Calan, Eluveitie, Afro Celt Sound System, Shreem, Mägo de Oz, and the Waterboys among his favourite contemporary Celtic artists, but notes a special affinity for Celt-Punk.

“The Pogues, the Dropkick Murphys, the Mahones - there is something about the melange of traditional melodies and hardcore aggression that gets the blood going.”

He’s not alone in that regard.

“We are a punk band with Celtic overtones,” says Tobin Bawinkel of Chicago’s Flatfoot 56.

“My parents were heavily into bluegrass and folk music, and we played all the time as a family. I picked up the guitar when I was 12, and I fell in love with punk soon after. Flatfoot 56 started as a hardcore band, but came under the Celtic influence after we discovered the Clancy Brothers, the Chieftains and the Pogues.”

Finny McConnell can relate.

“For me it was the raw energy of the Pogues, the Clash, and the Who,” shares the frontman for Kingston, Ontario rockers the Mahones.

“Growing up in Ireland, there was music of all sorts going on in the clubs and on the streets. We had Rory Gallagher, the Clancys, Thin Lizzy, U2, Stiff Little Fingers, the Dub-

liners...it was this huge smorgasbord of styles and sounds.”

Heather Rankin experienced Celtic fusion first-hand at a Kansas City Showcase.

“It was like a metal punk band that did bluegrass, but they were definitely Celtic,” she recalls. “I couldn’t put my finger exactly on what it was that they were going for, but I could certainly hear the Celtic influence in it.”

Rankin is no stranger to pushing the Celtic envelope; her group often put a contemporary spin on classic Celtic tunes.

“We harmonized a lot, and often used electric and non-traditional instruments. I believe it is what made us interesting. Otherwise, it would just be the same songs, played the same ways, and nobody would care. Because we allowed other influences to find their way into what we were presenting, we were able to bring a bigger audience to Celtic music.”

“You can’t put music in a museum.”

Of course, Celtic fusion has its critics. It’s not hard to see how some purists might scoff at something like Celtic Punk, and decry it as illegitimate. But then again, that kind of attitude is hardly new.



The Mahones

"There will always be the perception from the older generation that the younger generation is taking it and changing it," says Beaton. "I think that's been the complaint for every generation for the last 200 years... there's naturally going to be different influences on the music and how it's performed."

But is Celtic fusion music truly Celtic music? Or is the Celtic element a mere affectation - a flavour to spice up the melody? Again, it comes down to context, and what listeners bring to the table.

"By all means, it's Celtic," insists Rankin. "If it makes you think that, then it's got to have some Celtic elements."

Although Celtic fusion might be experimental, that doesn't mean it dishonours Celtic customs; a Celtic Death Metal band might be more in tune with Celtic heritage than purists.

Ellen MacIsaac believes that young artists across the seven Celtic nations are looking for new and relevant ways to express their cultural pride and identity.

"By way of example, look at Wales where there has been a big push over the last 25 years to resuscitate their language. Incorporating it into contemporary music is one way of doing that."

MacIsaac explains that traditional folk music in Wales dissipated when the Methodist Church discouraged the use of the Welsh language. As a result, most of the country's residents now consider religious hymns as folk music.

"Today, however, you find pop artists and folkie singer-songwriter-types in Wales writing in Welsh, but taking it in a completely different direction to save the language."

She also points to the new wave of Irish heavy metal bands that incorporate ele-

ments of Eire's legend and lore into their throaty refrains.

"These bands reference all sorts of mythological events. For example, they might write about the legend of The Táin - the famous Cattle Raid of Cooley - one of the great epics of Irish tradition. In that regard, they are delving deeper in history than most folk musicians. It's a great way to preserve and promote that heritage to younger audiences."

So, to recap: if wild offshoots of traditional Celtic music can be considered truly "Celtic," but traditional Celtic music might not be as traditional as we think, then what exactly is Celtic music today?

The best answer is probably all of the above.

Given how far back the history of the Celts goes, and how wide-spread their descendants are today, it is almost impossible to pigeonhole the genre to fit any one concise description.

"That's like trying to figure out how to undo a knot," says MacIsaac. "Where do you even begin?"

Celtic music is almost like an organism. It is a living thing, and all the individual parts need each other to keep the whole creature alive.

"I think we are able to attract a wider audience to Celtic music when we allow other influences to weave their way into what we are presenting," says Rankin. "Celtic music has to evolve to expand its audience, and reach younger people so that it doesn't die out with the older generation."

Celtic fusion, she continues, draws in new listeners who might not have otherwise been interested in the genre. That initial point of contact could help them better appreciate the core traditional Celtic experience.

"Of course, you're going to have pockets of purists, and you're going to have places where the music stays the same for a number of generations."

"There is something for everybody," adds MacIsaac. "The tradition-bearers are there at the core, while the experimental stuff is there to draw people in. Gatherings like Celtic Colours International Festival are ideal for showcasing those things."

"There is a place for both," agrees Beaton, "so long as there is both."

Perhaps the most exciting development in Celtic music these days is seeing its popularity grow on the global stage.

"It is really starting to branch out," says MacIsaac, adding that Celtic music enthusiasts are popping up in places you might not expect, including Tokyo, where Comhaltas - the Irish Music Association - has been talking about opening a chapter.

"We have a long history of Celtic music being the fundamental expression of the Celtic peoples, whether they come from the Celtic nations, or from any of the Diaspora groups around the world. And for a long time, we owned it. It was our way of expressing ourselves.

"Today, people who aren't necessarily Celtic in background are getting into it. It's moving away from being an isolated cultural expression to becoming something else, though I'm not sure there is a name for it just yet. I'm very interested to see what ends up happening."

A full-page photograph of Daniel O'Donnell performing on stage. He is wearing a dark grey suit and a light-colored shirt, holding a microphone in his right hand. The background is a blurred stage scene with other musicians and warm lighting.

Daniel O'Donnell

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Colm Keegan

With a new album, a new musical partner, a new tour, and a newborn baby, Colm Keegan is busier than ever

Multi-award winning Irish vocalist Colm Keegan should have seen his future musical success coming.

"I guess it was inevitable," he shares via email. "Music played a huge role in our home in Dublin. We had regular 'sing-songs' in the house. My Dad and his family were the biggest role models for me in that regard, as they could pick out any song by ear and play along. From a young age, I knew that I wanted that same skill when I was older."

As a youngster, however, Keegan's true passion was sport; Gaelic football, rugby and hurling. Singing was only a hobby of sorts.

"I hardly had any time for music," he laughs. "Back then I sang in the Palestrina Cathedral Choir in Dublin's city centre. I had a brilliant and balanced introduction to a formal musical education early on, as well as a development in using my ear and understanding musical structure."

After graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Music and Irish Studies from University College Dublin, Keegan's career took off quickly.

"Things came together when I was asked to join Celtic Thunder, one of Ireland's most successful musical productions. That single phone call altered my career path, and subsequently changed my life."

By his mid-20s, he had already racked up an impressive list of accomplishments, including recording and touring with Celtic Thunder, performing for the Pope, and writing his dissertation. His proudest musical moment, though, took place more recently.

"I had always dreamed of recording my

very own solo album, and last year I teamed up with the Assistant Music Director of Celtic Thunder, Seamus Brett, to start that process.

"To say this was a dream come true is an understatement; this was the most enjoyable experience of my musical life so far."

Keegan's debut recording, *I'll Never Be Alone* - a blend of choral music and traditional Irish melodies - hit #1 on the iTunes World Music chart last fall.

"Coming from a choral background, I have always been interested in Irish composers such as Michael McGlynn from the renowned Irish choir Anúna. Here, the choir takes traditional Celtic pieces and offers a very sacred, haunting approach to it. This has really stood with me throughout the years, and during my solo gigs, I try to take audiences on a journey between all the various forms of Celtic music I have had in my life."

Keegan currently lives in Glasgow, Scotland, with his wife and musical partner Laura Durrant - a former cellist for Celtic Thunder - and their newborn baby boy Oisín.

Despite the new responsibilities of parenthood, the couple still found the time to tour across the USA together this year.

"To share the whole experience with my wife by my side, I couldn't be any more thankful."

He has also kept in contact with his former band mates.

"Being in Celtic Thunder is a little like being in the Mafia," he jokes. "Once you are in, you are in for life. I still stay in touch with everyone from the group, and I am delighted to be joining them for our third Celtic Thunder Cruise this coming November."

A proud musician and countryman, Keegan believes that more work must be done to promote and preserve Irish culture.

"Music is part of the Irish DNA. I would love to see Irish radio and TV pushing more local artists and giving them as much time as those with massive production teams around them. This would be a great platform for local artists. That said, every time you hear a new artist you learn something. I would never discourage our people to look beyond Irish music - too much of one style can create a rut - but to do so without losing our roots."

Along with this fall's Celtic Thunder Cruise, Keegan will finish the year off close to home with a solo tour of Ireland and Scotland. Next year looks to be equally as eventful.

"We will be heading to the west coast of the USA, and I am hoping to finalize plans to tour Canada for the first time on my own. There are also some loose plans that have been penciled in for a return to the studio and the possibility of recording my second solo album. So, I will likely be busier than ever."

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Nathan

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Nathan Carter

Celtic country singer Nathan Carter jumps from the top of the Irish charts to the concert halls of North America



He's been billed as Ireland's next Daniel O'Donnell and compared to his idol, Michael Buble, but Nathan Carter is well grounded, enjoying his success while carefully calculating his next moves.

"North America is the next big step for me and I couldn't be more excited," says the singer over the phone from his home in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland.

Supported by a six-man band, and featuring special guest, former Celtic Woman vocalist, Chloe Agnew, the clean-cut and charismatic Carter will be performing a dozen shows over 14 days this September, including stops in Boston, Toronto, and Chicago.

With a string of chart-topping albums and singles under his belt, the 27-year-old has already toured Ireland, the U.K., France, Spain, and Australia.

"The North American tour is like starting all over again," he shares. "I've built an amazing following in Ireland and the U.K. over the past seven years, but this will be my first time performing in the USA and Canada."

Carter is widely credited with bringing a new generation to country and Celtic music. His latest album - *Living the Dream*, with its bestselling single *Summer's Here* - just spent five weeks atop the Irish charts. Strategically, he is tailoring his North American shows to better reflect his roots.

"In Ireland, I do a lot of country songs and mix in some Celtic tunes," he explains. "But in North America they have their own style of country music and they do it so well that I am likely to be doing more Celtic numbers, more traditional music. At least, that's

the plan for my first time round."

The vocalist already laid the groundwork for the North American tour last fall, with a well-received public television special where he performed traditional songs such as *The Banks of the Roses*, *Loch Lomond*, *Home to Donegal*, and *Caledonia*, alongside a few country and folk numbers.

Excited as he is, he is mindful that it takes time to develop an audience.

"I built my fan base starting with small gigs, before building up to arena-size venues. We're doing as many shows as we can while we are in North America, and as we don't really know what to expect we'll just put on the best shows we can. Chloe and I will both perform on our own, but we will collaborate and put some focus on the band as well."

Carter has earned a solid reputation among his peers, critics, and fans for his strong work ethic, averaging 120 shows a year.

"I love it, and I've got a great group with everybody doing the job they are meant to do, and fans that come from show to show. I am lucky and I know it."

Carter opted out of school to pursue music full time at the age of 16. Though his parents had their reservations about his decision, they are now among his most enthusiastic fans, visiting often and getting to as many shows as possible.

"I was off playing in the bars in northern England and I wasn't even old enough to drive. My grandmother never doubted what I was doing and she was my driver and my CD seller. She is still a great support in every way."

Growing up in Liverpool, home of The Beatles, he was accustomed to seeing tour buses in his neighborhood.

"John Lennon lived with his auntie for a time in her house right at the end of our road so the area is quite popular with fans. We all grew up with the music and stories of The Beatles."

In a city known for rock and roll, it was his parents and Irish grandparents who gave him an appreciation of country and Celtic music.

"My granddad was a big Johnny Cash fan and loved Buck Owens. We went often to Ireland and always listened to Irish music, as well. If there was an Irish show in town, we were there. I saw The Dubliners perform a few times."

He traces his first musical awakening back to a Liverpool music store he visited every weekend as a child.

"There was always an old fellow outside busking on an accordion and I was fascinated watching him play. I got an accordion for Christmas and I started with it at age five. It certainly wasn't easy in the beginning, but I will be playing it a fair bit on the North American tour."

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Newfoundland & Labrador

Canada's Celtic Culture Capital

Canada's easternmost province - a rugged, raggle-taggle region affectionately known as 'The Rock' - draws on its roots to create a unique identity. Celtic Life International Senior Writer Rebecca Dingwell tells us more.





If Nova Scotia is New Scotland, then perhaps its provincial neighbour to the northeast should be called “New Ireland and Labrador.”

The scenery is so similar, in fact, that BuzzFeed created a quiz challenging readers to spot the differences between photos of the province and places in Ireland. To say it isn’t easy is an understatement.

That likeness goes beyond the landscape, however. The 2015 piece “There’s one place like home in Newfoundland, Canada” from the Irish Examiner reads: “Newfoundland feels like Ireland 20 years ago, when people left their doors unlocked, hitchhiked without fear, and took the time to stop and chat.”

Newfoundland (NL) is said to be the only place outside of Ireland to have earned an Irish name: Talamh an Éisc, roughly translated from Munster Gaelic to mean “Land of the Fish.” Look a little closer and you will find hints of Irish (and other Celtic cultures) in the province’s music, food and dialect.

One of the reasons for the strong Irish influence in NL is - of course - emigration, which goes back hundreds of years.

“Irish and English experience over three centuries should be taught properly in the high schools,” says John Mannion, author

of Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada. A historical geographer by trade, but retired since 2005, Mannion has been “researching the background of the Irish-Newfoundland experience in the field and archives on both sides of the Atlantic” for most of his academic life.

“From their inception, the Irish migrations to Newfoundland emanated from a small region in the homeland. No province in Canada drew its immigrants from so concentrated a space.”

According to Mannion, the highest number of people came from Waterford City and New Ross, along with the town of Carrick-on-Suir.

Seasonal Irish migrations to Newfoundland began in 1675, when young Irish men came to work on contract for English merchants and planters. As young Irish women joined the migration and married the men, those seasonal migrations evolved into permanent family settlements. The pattern increased, writes Mannion, due to the collapse of the old migratory cod fishery after 1790. A greater influx of Irish migrants, particularly women, followed between 1800 and 1835. The population growth “helped transform the social, demographic, and cultural character of Newfoundland.”

In Larry Dohey’s opinion, the Irish in Newfoundlanders “is bred to the bone.” Celtic peoples of Scotland and Wales inhabit NL as well, but they exist in “small pockets.”

Dohey is the director of programming at The Rooms: A museum, gallery and “public cultural space” in the provincial capital city of St. John’s.

“We are immersed,” he says of Irish culture.

“Our traditional Irish music is difficult to distinguish from our Newfoundland music. We continue to use old Irish phrases and words. Our folklore comes from our Irish ancestors.”

That folklore includes stories of hags and fairies, reminiscent of storytelling from Ireland and other parts of Europe. Dale Jarvis is an expert on the on the topic, and holds the only full-time, provincially-funded folklorist position in the country.

“A lot of European settlement in Newfoundland happened earlier than in many parts of Canada, so the folklore in many ways is quite old. A lot of the Irish settle-



“Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are very proud of their roots, and I think there is something profoundly Celtic in the way people are tied to the land and sea, their stories, legends and myths.”

As those customs are so ingrained, a child in Newfoundland might grow up with Celtic traditions and influences without even being aware of their origins. Such was the case for Alan Doyle, former frontman for Great Big Sea who has since embarked on a solo music and writing career.

“Our Irish accent - the southern shore, where I’m from - speaks the way people spoke in Waterford around 1880,” says the renowned songsmith.

As a kid in Petty Harbour, a small town about 15 minutes south of St. John’s, Doyle spent a great deal of time listening to Irish and Newfoundland folk music.

“I was so lucky to grow up in a musical environment. Almost 99 per cent of the music I played, I played to facilitate some kind of gathering.”

When he first started making music of his own, it didn’t occur to him that what he was doing was Celtic, Irish-influenced, or folk.

“Before I was - say, 13 or 14 - it was just music,” he explains, adding that while his father was listening to John Denver or The Clancy Brothers, he would put on Def Leppard and Bon Jovi.

“I never even thought of those two styles as being radically different.”

Founded in 1993, Great Big Sea recorded and performed to worldwide acclaim for almost two decades. The band was, and still is, famous for its epic sea shanties - the type of tunes that have Celtic roots. GBS has also been referred to as Celtic rock, or “aggressive folk.” Even as Doyle’s career changed course, the Celtic flavour is something he has taken with him, “especially in the instrumentation.”

“My first instinct in building some sort of instrumental hook or theme for a song isn’t electric guitars and pianos and keyboards, the way it probably is for a lot of pop and rock musicians. For me, it’s always accordions and fiddles and mandolins and whistles. Those are the things that come to mind first. Those are the ‘melody’ instruments, which make the songs sound Celtic almost instantly.”

Doyle laughs as he recalls his first visit to the Emerald Isle.

“It was one of the great disappointments of my travelling life

ment in Newfoundland, for example, happened in the 18th century, long before the later waves of Irish emigration to North America,” he explains. “Then, because of the relative isolation of some communities, traditions were maintained for much longer than they were in more urban areas, or even in the home countries where those traditions came from. So some traditions are both older, and better preserved, than they might be in other provinces.”

Over time, these stories and traditions evolved into something unique to Newfoundland. By way of example, Jarvis points to tales of fairies, which he says have been “surprisingly resilient” over the years.

“A common charm against the fairies in many parts of Newfoundland was keeping bread in one’s pockets. This is more of a West Country English tradition, which blended with Irish fairy traditions in Newfoundland over time, and which eventually died out in the parts of England where it originated.”

While Newfoundlanders don’t genuinely believe in fairies to the extent they once did, those tales still thrive. In fact, Jarvis says there seems to be a resurgence in fairylore in the province. He points to the novel *Blasted* by Kate Story, as well as Robert Chafe’s play *Butler’s Marsh*, both of which draw on that mythology. In addition, NL’s oral traditions and storytelling have been kept alive through both the St. John’s Storytelling Festival and the St. John’s Storytelling Circle.

“The province produces an amazing number of storytellers, authors, playwrights and comedians, all drawing upon our strong oral traditions,” notes Jarvis.





when I first went to Ireland and there wasn't a welcoming committee at the Dublin airport going, 'You're home! Welcome back. Thank you for continuing the culture elsewhere.' A very short time after, I realized how unreasonable an expectation that was."

He believes that, back then, "Irish people weren't as aware of Newfoundland as Newfoundlanders were of Ireland."

That appears to have changed in recent years, however. For instance, a southeast Irish group goes by the name Newfoundland (or, "Newfoundland the band" to clear up any confusion). The group's website notes that "The band got their name from the connection between their home region and Canada's Newfoundland, where many Irish emigrants settled long ago." The Irish sextet realized a dream earlier this year when they toured their namesake province.

Newfoundland, Doyle points out, has a very distinct subculture, due, in part, to the islanders' need to be self-sufficient in their entertainment.

"Newfoundland is one of the last holdouts of a generation of people that were disconnected, isolated and of themselves. So we became unique and real and organic, and looked to our own backyard."

He recalls the local CBC television program *The Wonderful Grand Band* - a St. John's-based variety show starring a musical group and comedy troupe of the same name - from the late 1970s. For Doyle, they were "bigger than The Rolling Stones."

"There are not many people who can say that when they were 10 years old the biggest thing in their entire pop culture lives was from 20 kilometres away."

Irish dancer Shawn Silver owes a great deal of his inspiration to a local CBC program as well. Titled *All Around the Circle*, the show featured Silver's Portuguese grandfather as a dancer.

"You can imagine, as a little boy who loved dancing and loved that whole element of traditional dance, to see your grandfather there - it just made it all the more real for me," he recalls.

Silver is the founder of iDance, which he started in St. John's in 1994. It is the only dance centre focused exclusively on Irish dance in Newfoundland and Labrador. He has been involved with dance most of his life.

"From my earliest memories, dance and music and rhythm were really normal, natural things," he shares, adding that old-school Kitchen parties were a regular occurrence. "It is kind of a cèilidh, in a

sense. For us, it was all about accordions and guitars and banjos and mandolins - and men were traditionally the dancers."

Still, Silver wanted more. He knew there was something beyond the limited steps he saw at parties "around the bay" or in his grandfather's kitchen. At age 5 or 6, he saw a dance competition that inspired a desire for more in-depth training.

"That was it for me; there was this whole array of a whole other language that was being spoken and it was a broader, bigger language. I knew that what they were doing was the basis of it all, but I knew there was more. More technique, more stylized, there was a larger history behind it."

Kristin Harris Walsh agrees. The St. John's-based dance scholar and writer has done her fair share of research on that history. Initially trained in ballet, Walsh became "hooked" on step dance after moving to St. John's in 1997 to begin her PhD in folklore. She became so interested in the influence of Irish culture in NL that she wrote her dissertation on the topic by focusing on dance - specifically how traditional dance practices exist in NL today (in particular, step dance and set dance) and why Irish culture continues to be performed through dance in the province.

"There are a number of forms of Irish step dance and Newfoundland step dance," she explains, singling out three distinct styles of Newfoundland step dance: traditional NL step dance (or the "kitchen party" style of step dance), Irish-Newfoundland step dance (which was brought to NL from Ireland when the Christian Brothers founded schools here) and the 'Riverdance' style of step dance, "which is Irish in origin and exploded around the world after Michael Flatley premiered it in 1994."

"Each style is similar to each other, and to other Irish forms, in that the foot is the focus; it is percussive as it both keeps the beat of the music and accentuates the different parts of the tune that the dancer wishes to emphasize. Each style in NL is slightly different. The traditional NL step dance style is very similar to sean-nós ("old style") step dance in Ireland: feet are close to the floor, and it was usually performed in a social setting, mostly by men. Dancers were not trained, and they improvised their steps according to the tune and how they felt like dancing. Irish-Newfoundland step dance is a little more formalized. There are choreographed dances, some of which were brought over from Ireland, and others that were created in NL or learned from other step dancers elsewhere. Riverdance-style step dance is highly athletic, with the rigid torso and the high kicks and pointed toes. So while each has stylistic elements that are unique, the focus on the foot as a percussive instrument is common to all of them."

Shaun Silver ended up leaving the province to go to school, heading for Montreal at age 16. There, he pursued the formal dance training - including Irish dance - that wasn't yet accessible in his hometown.

"When I started to learn it, it just made perfect sense to me," he says of Irish dancing. "I just hadn't had all the exposure yet, but it was perfectly inside me."

Returning to Newfoundland was never in question. And when he did come home, he brought his newfound skills back to share with others.

"Every Newfoundlander, we have this longing - a need to be where we are from. We've all been out in the world, honed our crafts and skills, before coming back here to offer it and teach it and live it."

And live it, they do. Especially when it comes attached to Irish roots.

"When we talk about Celtic culture in Canada, it comes back to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland," continues Silver. "We are kind of the granddaddies of this Celtic bit. The heart of it really is here in the east, isn't it?"

As for Walsh, she is currently researching the connection between sean-nós step dance in Ireland and traditional Newfoundland step dance.

"While it's still too early for me to share results, the fieldwork that I have done indicates that there are clear similarities between the two, both in terms of how dancers move and the social contexts in which they danced. And of course the cultural links between Newfoundland and Ireland are important here too."

One need only visit the island, talk to the locals, and see a show to understand that Newfoundland has an Irish presence. But something remains unclear: Why is the Irish heritage so much more apparent than that of other settlers? As Walsh points out, demographics "show that there are far more individuals of English descent than Irish descent" in NL, adding "I've always been fascinated by the extent to which Irish culture is important here."

"I think there are many possible reasons as to why Newfoundland has embraced and internalized Irish culture so fully. They are both island cultures who were dominated by the British for many years. They both have strong rural cultures, with communities that would have been isolated from urban cities as well as from each other. There are similarities in religious and folk belief traditions, terrain, and many other small-but-fascinating cultural traits. The arts here - music in particular, but also writing, dance, etc - drew, and keep drawing, heavily upon those influences."



Foreword by Rex Murphy



Dictionary of Newfoundland English



Second edition with Supplement

A Newfoundland & Labrador Primer

Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) is a stunning province on the most easterly point of Canada, made up of the island Newfoundland - which sits at the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence - and mainland Labrador. The majority of the province's population lives on the island, despite the fact that Labrador is almost three times the size. According to the Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Population, NL is home to a total of 500,610 people. An estimated 57 per cent of those people claim heritage of the British Isles. About 43 per cent are of English origin and 21.5 per cent are of Irish origin, while 7 per cent claim Scottish heritage and 0.7 per cent claim roots in Wales. Perhaps the most iconic images of Newfoundland are the colourful houses of the affectionately known "jellybean row" in St. John's. However, there is much more to the island than that: the beautiful Gros Morne National Park, the historical Viking settlement of L'Anse aux Meadows and the small town of Corner Brook. Especially along the Avalon Peninsula, Celtic blood runs deep. There's even an area known as the Irish Loop. Famed Newfoundlanders include folk-rocker Alan Doyle, actor and comedian Mark Critch, as well as Mallard Cottage owner (not to mention Top Chef Canada contender) Todd Perrin. "We have, largely, a rural society in Newfoundland, so there are many people who still know about traditional food and cooking methods," says Perrin. The place has a very specific culture that can't be duplicated anywhere else. In fact, the province's dialect is so unique that there exists an actual Dictionary of Newfoundland English. Don't know what "scrunchins" are? Better get reading.

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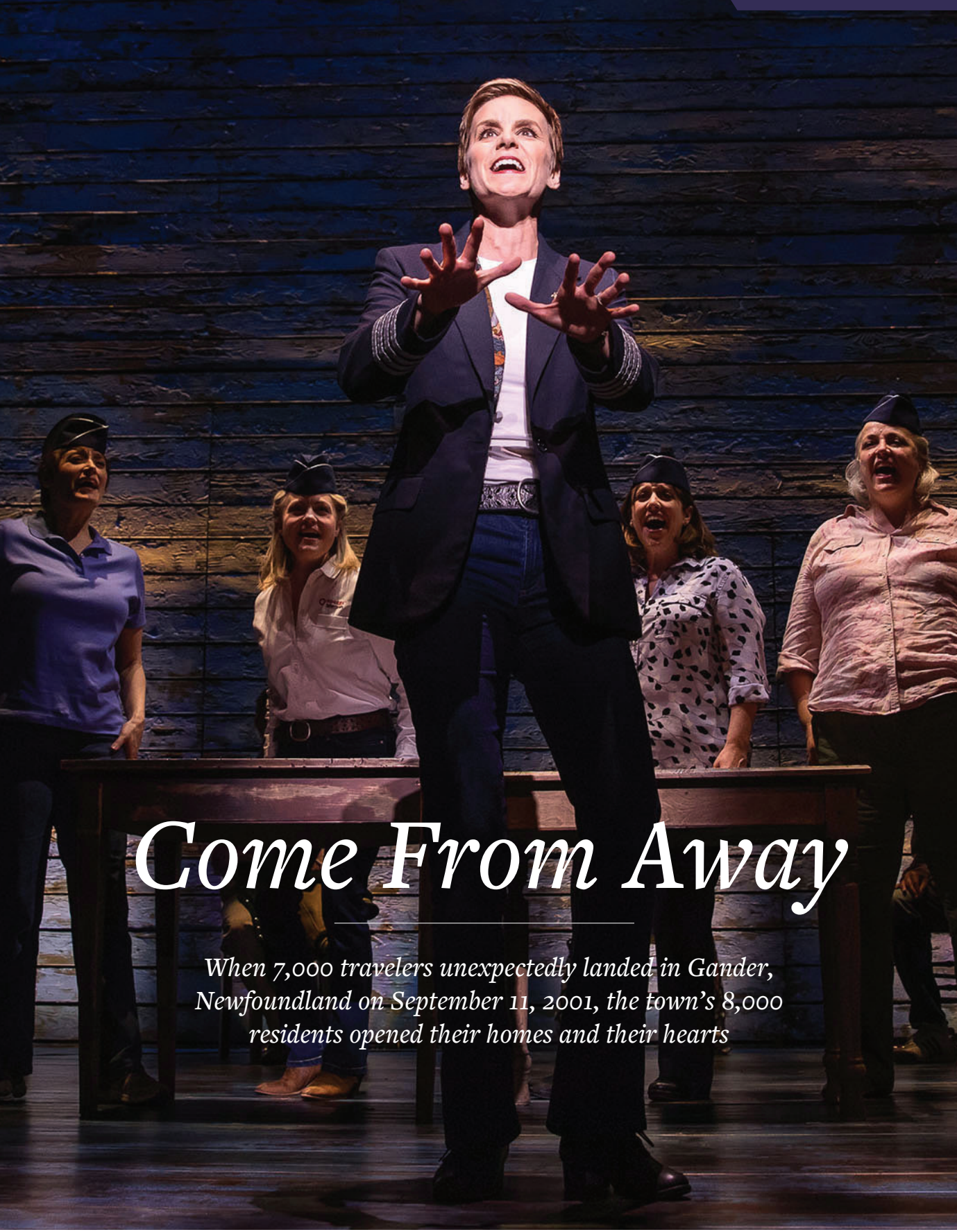


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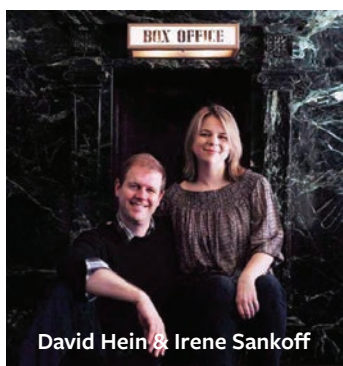
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Come From Away

When 7,000 travelers unexpectedly landed in Gander, Newfoundland on September 11, 2001, the town's 8,000 residents opened their homes and their hearts



David Hein & Irene Sankoff

There is a telling moment towards the finale of *Come From Away* - a moment so brief that it is easy to miss amidst the on-stage swirl of music and mayhem.

"Wanna' hear a good Newfie joke?" asks Gander's jovial mayor to no one in particular.

"Knock-Knock," he says aloud, before quickly delivering the punch-line, "Come on in, the door's open..."

Though fast and fleeting, that single moment speaks to the warmth and welcome extended to confused and frightened travelers whose 38 planes were diverted to the northern Newfoundland community on the day of the World Trade Center attacks.

There are so many memorable moments in the smash Broadway musical, in fact, that show-goers are hard-pressed to pick out a particular favourite after the 90-minute performance.

"I loved the music," says Greta Warren of Manhattan. "The songs and the fiddles and guitars were all so upbeat and uplifting. I just wanted to invite them all over to our place afterwards for a party."

"The accent and the dialect," notes Nick Ricci of Staten Island. "And all the quirky little things about Newfoundland culture - the bit about having to kiss the cod was hilarious."

Others were touched by the show's message of hope.

"What got me was that these were all true stories," shares Alan Douglas of Pennsylvania, who attended the performance with his wife and two grandchildren. "This community, which no-one had ever heard of, just dropped everything to help people they had never met."

"It was very, very heartwarming," adds his wife Lorraine. "Not only to see people come together during a time of tragedy, but to do so

without any sense of self-interest. If only the rest of the world were like that..."

For *Come From Away* co-creators David Hein and Irene Sankoff, that kind of audience approval means more to them than anything.

"That first week we opened on Broadway was a little nerve wracking to say the least," admits Sankoff over the phone from the couple's home in Toronto.

"Aside from dealing with all of the last-minute logistical and technical issues, and tweaking the timing of lines, the musical cues, and so forth, we were playing to some of the most seasoned and sophisticated theatre-goers in the world. We had no idea how it was going to be received by audiences - as with all things on Broadway, they would make or break the run."

The play was an instant triumph, aided by the attendance and accolades of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Ivanka Trump, as well as numerous other political dignitaries.

"I was a little more confident," says Hein, who grew up on the Canadian Prairies.

"I believed we had something special that would hit home with people, but hearing the buzz on the street after those first shows confirmed what I knew in my heart."

Critics and industry types also loved the production; to date, *Come From Away* has picked up a plentitude of prominent prizes, including a Tony Award in June for Best Direction Of A Musical.

Sankoff, a native Montrealer, says the honours have been overwhelming.

"To be honest, when we first came up with the idea for the play, we would have been happy just to have had it run the high-school and community center circuit."

The road to success was paved with love.

Hein and Sankoff first met at York University in Toronto in the early 1990s. Moving to New York City in 1999 to pursue careers in music and theatre respectively, they married in 2001, shortly after 9/11. Later relocating back to Toronto, the couple collaborated on *My Mother's Lesbian Jewish Wiccan Wedding*, which first presented at the Toronto Fringe Festival, before graduating to the 700-seat Panasonic Theatre.

"The epiphany for us with that show was that it worked because it was based upon a true story," shares Sankoff, explaining how Hein's mother had come out of the closet and remarried later in life. "Audiences connected with it because it was real."

When it was suggested that the duo consider applying their new-found musical formula to Newfoundland's role in the 9/11 attacks, the pair flew to Gander for the event's 10th anniversary. There, they met and interviewed hundreds of locals and "come from aways" who had gathered to commemorate and celebrate a decade of friendships.

"It was very emotional," recalls Hein. "Though so much had changed over those ten years, the bonds between these people had been fused tight by the intensity of that initial experience. There certainly was no shortage of stories to tell."

The twosome honed in on several key narratives, including a gay male couple's concern with small-town prejudice, an Egyptian Muslim man facing fear and backlash, a budding love affair between a British gentleman and a woman from Texas, an urban black man's shock at wandering through friendly white neighbourhoods, and two mothers of firefighters - one of whom is desperately trying to contact her son who is on site at Ground Zero.

"We were really moved by these people's stories," says Sankoff, "so we knew that audiences would be as well."

"There were so many mixed feelings - confusion, hope, joy, sorrow, anger - an entire spectrum of human emotions and experience crammed into just a few days."

Despite its remote location, Gander - whose heyday was in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, following the construction of an international airport to service overseas flights - proved to be an ideal setting.

"Newfoundlanders are resourceful and resilient," notes Hein. "And they are truly a unique and amazing people; the way they speak is incredibly distinct, as are their customs and traditions. In a lot of cases, the humour was already built right in to what we were trying to do. There was no real need for us to add any flavour, colour or character - it was all there."

By the same standards, the music came easily.

"I have always been a huge fan of traditional Celtic and Irish music," continues Hein. "I grew up on the sounds of Great Big Sea, Shanneyganock, and a whole bunch of other great bands and artists from Newfoundland, so putting the songs together for this show - especially the jigs and reels - was a lot of fun."

Come From Away would come together over five years, with the pair researching, writing, and refining the production. After intensive work-shopping in both Canada and the USA, a bidding war from producers ensued, leading to successful runs in San Diego, Seattle, Washington, Toronto, and now, The Big Apple.

"I guess it's all downhill from here," laughs Hein.

All kidding aside, the couple is thrilled to continue sharing Newfoundland with the world.

"Knowing that the story has resonated with audiences, and that we have touched people in some way, is truly its own reward," says Sankoff. "If they can leave the theatre holding onto a memory, or perhaps a moment - or even a series of moments - then we have done our job, and maybe the world will be a better place for it."

For Hein, the return is closer to home.

"The reward for me has been sharing these incredible moments, each and every day, with my beautiful wife."

www.comefromaway.com



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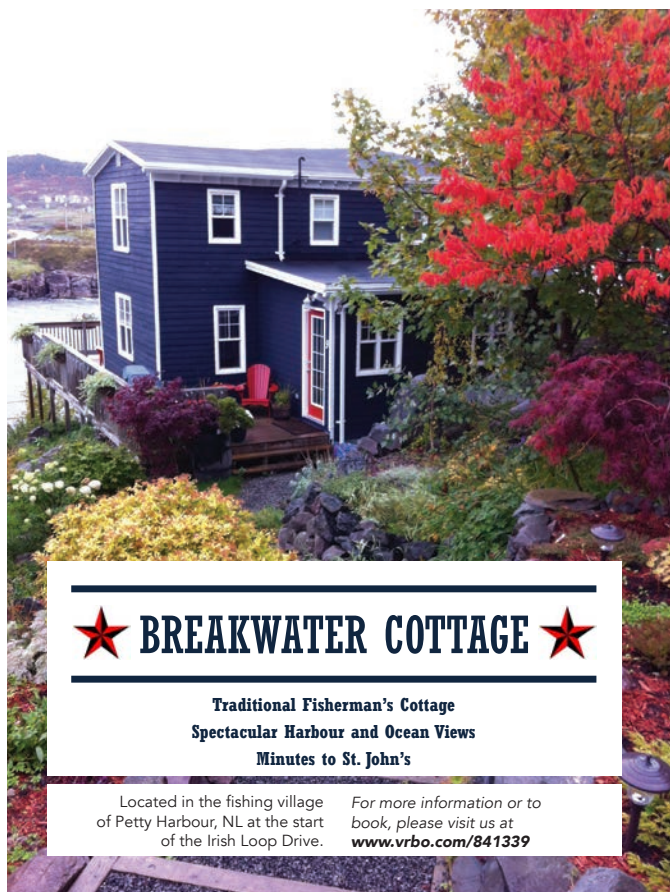
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Whether profound or profane, Mary Walsh is never short on words

Mary Walsh, Newfoundland's reigning queen of comedy, is having a few anxious moments as Canada: It's Complicated - her new musical celebrating the country's 150th anniversary - takes off to tour the country.

The show is designed to showcase Canada's history and diversity, providing a platform for emerging performers. Walsh is one of its writers.

"We've got talented young people from all over everywhere coming together in this musical," she says from her home in St. John's. "I know it is going to be wonderful, but I'm more used to going down the street to Missus and asking her if she wants to be in a show."

A job as a radio host while she was still a teenager catapulted Walsh into a life on stage, in film, and on television.

"The comedy came easy," she recalls. "As a kid, being funny was one of the few things that was rewarded."

"If you don't have a sense of humour in Newfoundland you are not going to survive."

Many will remember Walsh in her role on CODCO, the legendary Newfoundland sketch comedy troupe that broke internationally before reuniting in the late 1980s for a five-year stint on CBC television.

"We all knew each other or each others' brothers and sisters. Almost all of us went to Catholic school together. I was the most working class of the lot, but we all came from the same place."

When the show ended, Walsh moved on to a new CBC satirical current affairs program, This Hour Has 22 Minutes, which has been on the air since 1993.

"I had an idea for a Friday night show, something we could do in St. John's. Michael Donovan of Salter Street Films thought it might work for TV, so I called around town to a bunch of friends and that's how it all started."

She stayed with 22 Minutes for 11 years, becoming best known in her roles as the acid-tongued Marg Delahunty, and Marg, The Princess Warrior, who had a habit of



ambushing politicians.

Although she still makes the occasional guest appearance on the show, Walsh has focused on other endeavours in recent years - writing, collaborating, acting, and directing plays, films and movies.

Now 65, she has just published her first novel, *Crying for the Moon*, the story of a young working-class St. John's girl who goes to Expo '67 in Montreal on a school trip, gets pregnant, is forced to give the baby up, and becomes a directionless passenger in her own weary young life.

She shares that the 336-page narrative has been her most satisfying project.

"I wanted to write a book since I was eight years old. The good thing about being in your sixties is that you start to ask yourself 'if not now, then when?' It would be awful to die without doing what I most passionately wanted to do."

Though she is often asked, Walsh insists that *Crying for the Moon* is not autobiographical.

"I didn't go to Expo, and I didn't get knocked up, but I knew lots of girls who did and - for some - their lives were destroyed. That baby they had to give up was their only glimmer of hope, and through lack of experience they believed that if they could only find the baby to love them, things would be okay."

Maureen, the book's main character, lives a street or two over from Carter's Hill, where Walsh grew up.

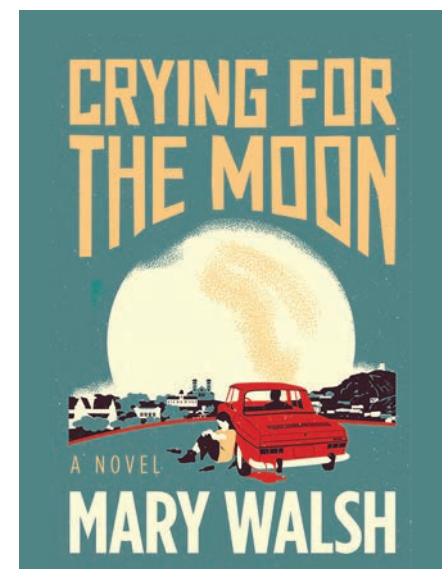
"The setting is well-known to me, the streets, the neighborhood, the Catholic schools, and what it was like for many girls in that era. Other parts of the book, such as poisoning and police interrogation tech-

niques, required a good deal of research."

Maureen's inability to feel at home anywhere is something Walsh did experience, however; she was raised by relatives who lived next door to her parents and siblings, and she struggled with a sense of abandonment for many years.

"No doubt it contributed to who I am today, but I held onto that sense of being wronged for way too long. As you get older you stop asking why and start to concentrate on what is and see what you can make of that. It is a better, more peaceful place to be."

Along with her new musical, the coming months will see Walsh starring in both *Little Dog* - a darkly hilarious television show filmed in her native Newfoundland - and a Christmas reunion show from her own award-winning television comedy series, *Hatching, Matching and Dispatching*.



Rick Mercer



Rick Mercer is one of the most familiar faces in Canada. Born and bred in St. John's, Newfoundland, he currently hosts one of the country's most popular weekly television programs, *The Rick Mercer Report*, now going into its 15th season. Recently, Celtic Life International spoke with the multi award-winning comedian, broadcaster, author and philanthropist about his past, and his unwavering passion for both his profession and his home province.

What are your family's roots?

We are mostly English and some Irish. On both sides of my family we have been clinging to the island of Newfoundland for hundreds of years. Where we actually came from is a bit of a mystery.

When and why did you get into comedy and broadcasting?

I guess you could say I started in the comedy business in high school. I was part of a comedy troupe - we performed in bars and did late night cabaret style shows. Sometimes we would play with a rock band. After high school I dedicated myself to it full time. Gradually I realized I didn't want to do standard comedy, but comedy which concerned current events. I liked comedy that had an opinion. Broadcasting was always the dream. I am not one of those people who came from the theatre or the comedy world, works in TV, and wishes they were back on the boards performing live every night. Being on the CBC is where I always wanted to be.

Are they the same reasons you do it today?

Absolutely - I have always had two great interests; politics and comedy. The fact that I have been able to meld the two, and make a good living from it, is something I am very grateful for. I love performing on TV and on stage. I love making politics or current events accessible and interesting.

What are the challenges of the profession?

I think for some people being constantly on the road would be a real problem or challenge. For some reason I have no problem with that.

How have you evolved as an artist over time?

When I started I was the classic "angry young man" - and I was good at it too. But the advantage of being an angry young man is that everything is cut and dried, black and white. As I get older things become a sea of grey. I spend a lot more time looking at both sides - or maybe twelve sides - of every argument. Something else that I didn't see coming was that *The Mercer Report* has become very much a family experience. I love that families watch the show, and that kids enjoy the program with their parents. There isn't very much of that going on in broadcasting now, with everyone huddled in their own corners with their tablets.

In your opinion, why does the show remain so popular?

The show is very much a celebration of Canada, and I am thrilled to be part of that. I think Canadian content is more important now than ever. Canadians respond to the show because they know every week I am going to be somewhere in the country, and chances are it's a place they may not be that familiar with. I get great personal satisfaction introducing Canadians to Labrador or Cape Breton or the North. I love going off the beaten path, and I know that viewers do as well.

What does it mean to be a Newfoundlander today?

Well I would have to say what it has meant for a very long time; it means being from, or living in, the greatest place on earth. Can you tell I am biased? Like every other time in Newfoundland and Labrador's history, this is a very challenging time for the province. There are huge challenges on the economic front; our demographics are struggling, and far too many people - myself included - packed up and went away to work. But nothing about Newfoundland and Labrador has ever been easy.

From your perspective, why has the province's cultural sector exploded in recent years?

It's a great product. Newfoundland and Labrador has an incredible cultural heritage. We are proud of our musicians and our writers. We have so many tremendous creators. One of the very bright spots in Newfoundland is the explosion in tourism, which I believe is driven in many ways by our cultural sector. However, it is one of the great ironies that we have a long tradition of politicians speaking very passionately about the importance of our cultural sector, and at the same time we have a long tradition of not putting our money where our mouths are. At both the municipal and provincial levels, we can surely improve on funding for the arts and cultural sector.

www.rickmercer.com



Allan Hawco

Actor, writer, director and producer Allan Hawco insists he is just another hardworking Newfoundlander

Folks still recognize Allan Hawco as Jake Doyle, the impulsive, wise-cracking, GTO-driving half of St. John's father and son private-eye series *Republic of Doyle* on CBC television.

"Not many of us get national recognition in this business in Canada," shares the 40-year-old via telephone from his home in Newfoundland's provincial capital. "If you are lucky enough to have achieved that, well, I have a great level of appreciation for it. Your currency as a performer is in the people who want to watch you, and Doyle fans were very loyal."

The hit series ended in 2014 after six seasons when its writers "reached our creative conclusion" and has since vaulted into the Netflix realm.

That hasn't slowed the native Newfoundlander down, however; Hawco has just finished production of *Caught*, a four-episode CBC television series set to air in 2018. Based on a novel by Newfoundland writer Lisa Moore, it is an action-packed drama about a drug smuggler who breaks out of jail and goes in pursuit of his former partner.

"*Caught* was wonderful, flawless in production. When I read it, I loved the plot and characters, so I called Lisa immediately and told her we wanted to make it into a series."

He expects the series will be destined for more than four episodes, and is also hoping for a third season of *Frontier*, a fiction-based Netflix-Discovery Channel historical series based on the once-lucrative Canadian fur trade.

"Long before oil we had furs, so the show is about warring factions fighting for control of a valuable commodity."

Along with five other partners, Hawco owns and operates Take the Shot Productions, a St. John's company hell-bent on creating its own opportunities. Because he plays lead roles in *Republic of Doyle*, *Frontier* and *Caught*, he tends to get the attention he believes should be focused on the company.

"It is misleading to think it is just me because I've got amazing partners, all with great skills and working hard here in Newfoundland."

Hawco was born on Bell Island, off the Avalon Peninsula in Conception Bay, on the province's east coast. His mother was an elementary school teacher, while his father worked on the ferry that connects the islet to the Newfoundland mainland. He initially studied business at Memorial University in St. John's, but was eventually drawn to stage production.

"I went to university because my mother made me," he laughs. "I really wasn't that interested in business, but I certainly see the irony of that now, considering how much of my time is tied up with business."

When he announced to his parents that he would rather study theatre, the brilliance of his plan was not immediately clear, particularly to his mother.

"I auditioned for the National Theatre

School of Canada and was one of about 12 students accepted, so that conferred a degree of legitimacy to what I wanted to do."

He recalls a particular theatre school instructor telling him that his best chances for success would come by taking career matters into his own hands.

"He was right. I like to scout possibilities and I like to be in charge. I wanted to pick my own roles and without the star power to do that, my partners and I started our own production company."

Although CBC offered him the part of renowned hockey commentator Don Cherry in a biographical series, Hawco brazenly countered with a proposal for *Republic of Doyle* - an idea he had been toying with since he was 19.

"CBC took a huge risk on us, and we may have given them a few reasons for panic in the early days. Film and TV is about the right fit, and it took us some time to find it because we had never made a series before."

He is pleased that *Republic of Doyle* - and subsequent productions - have helped to put the province, and many of its talented actors and crew, on a bigger national stage.

"I think it took a long time for Canada to get to know Newfoundland, and for us to get to know Canadians. Until the 1970s, unless you were in fish or other commerce, there wasn't much reason to come to Newfoundland. That's all changed now."

"With *Republic of Doyle*, we felt we had a moral contract to produce a show that was authentic to our place. To have succeeded was sheer magic."



Comedian, author, and star of CBC Television's hit series *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, Mark Critch opens up to *Celtic Life International* about his past, his path, and his home-province pride.

be Canadian. There's nothing as fulfilling as hearing a stranger quote back something that I have written. Sometimes when I am writing, I wonder if anyone is ever going to hear what I am writing. When it connects with someone it makes it all worthwhile.

How have you evolved as a comedian and broadcaster over the years?

It takes time to find your own comedic voice and to have the confidence that you need to make honest decisions when performing. When I first started on the show, it was like borrowing a car and not wanting to scratch it. You drive slower. You don't eat in the car. Now I'm not afraid to take the back roads or get some coffee on the seat.

What makes for good comedy?

Honesty. When a comedian says something that you are thinking but can't say yourself, it makes for a great, uncontrollable reaction. The best reaction you can get is when a couple in the crowd nudges one another and nods a 'that's you.'

What does it mean to be a Newfoundlander today?

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are no longer looked at as a cute, goofy province. We are now known for our intellectuals, and we have some of the greatest restaurants in the country. We might be heading into some dark days though; we had a huge boom with the oil, but the price of oil dropped and we got caught with a lot on our credit card. Our fisheries and oil industries are in trouble. That said, we need to be up to the challenge of pushing past the negativity and sailing through this storm. We have done it before and we will do it now. To be a Newfoundlander today means what it always has; hard working, generous, proud, and tough enough to make it through the storm and to keep believing in the reasons to fight your way through.

Why has Newfoundland's cultural sector exploded in recent years?

We have an amazing cultural history. The path was cut years ago by Codco, the Wonderful Grand Band, Rising Tide Theatre, and more. Today, we have the best music - Ron Hynes, Great Big Sea, Jim Payne, Amelia Curran, and Hey Rosetta. We have the best comedians - Shaun Majumder, Mary Walsh, and Rick Mercer. We have the best authors - Michael Crummey, Lisa Moore, and Wayne Johnson. And our theatrical scene is brilliant, with the likes of Gordon Pinsent and Allan Hawco. Now, with *Come From Away* on Broadway, our story and voice is being interpreted on the global stage. There was a time when we may have asked ourselves are we as good as the rest of Canada? Now we know that we aren't - we are better.

www.cbc.ca/22minutes

What are your family's roots?

My father's family lived in Gaskiers, St Mary's Bay. My great-grandfather was a fisherman, as was his son Patrick. My mother's people were Bells and they had a farm. Her grandmother was an O'Connell from Waterford, Ireland.

When and why did you get into comedy and broadcasting?

I first rented a theatre when I was 15 to do a sketch comedy show. I always wanted to write and perform my own material. From there I went on to become an actor, but the comedy took on a life of its own. I eventually landed a gig writing for *22 Minutes*. From there, I ended up on air.

Are they the same reasons that you do it today?

Absolutely. I'm fortunate to make a living doing what I love, but if I wasn't working as much, I'd still be doing it. I love writing something and then performing it fresh the same night. It's the best.

What are the challenges of the profession?

There can be an uncertainty as to where the next cheque is coming from. That, and time away from family, are the two things that can make it stressful. But doing what you love for a living adds years to your life.

What are the rewards?

Meeting people from across the country and beyond that I would never normally meet. I often meet new Canadians who watch *22 Minutes* when they first come to the country to get a grasp on what it means to



Gerald Squires

By putting his province on the canvas, Gerald Squires helped put Newfoundland on the map

Renowned Newfoundland artist Gerald Squires always claimed to show himself in his paintings, but it is Newfoundland - in all its rugged, enduring majesty - that shone through in his work.

A prolific painter, sculptor, lithographer, and stained glass artist, Squires passed away from cancer in 2015 at the age of 77.

An ardent advocate for 'The Rock' - as Canadians affectionately call the country's easternmost province - he believed that something special was lost when Newfoundland joined Confederation in 1949.

"We are only now beginning to get our dignity back," he told journalist and fellow Newfoundland native Sandra Gwyn in the mid-1970s.

In an article in the *Globe and Mail* following his death, Newfoundland writer Joan Sullivan credited Squires with playing a key role in restoring that dignity.

"Always absolutely recognizable, over time his art became more representational. The more realistically he painted landscapes, the more the work came to represent Newfoundland itself."

Plans for a comprehensive exhibit of his work at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery in St. John's were already in the works when Squires died. Spanning six decades of work, and titled *Spirit Visible*, the exhibit features 130 pieces, ranging from 18-foot paintings to sculpture, ceramics and drawings. With the help of Squires' wife, Gail, the gallery was able to negotiate loans of many pieces from private collections.

"These works were chosen to represent his versatility and technical range, his connections with his community and above all, his expression of spirituality through art," notes curator Caroline Stone.

Born in 1937 in Change Islands - a tiny, remote outport community on the northeast coast of Newfoundland - Squires' parents were Salvation Army officers. Nothing in his early childhood foreshadowed his becoming an internationally known artist.

"Art needs to be bought, therefore we need wealth," he said during a 1987 interview with Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador. "However, wealth didn't really exist in Newfoundland then - we were simply too poor."



Finances were so challenging, in fact, that Gail Squires remembers they once gave Squires' father an unframed painting because they could not afford to frame it.

"Quite pleased to get it, he happily stood it behind his stove to serve as a grease-catcher. I saw Gerry's mother use a few of his paintings to prop up a bed as well."

As a teenager in Ontario, Squires began to study art and was increasingly fascinated by the works of great painters. He left a newspaper job to take his wife and two young daughters to Shoal Brook on Newfoundland's west coast in 1969.

"We opened a gallery and, amazingly, there were a few people who bought art from us, back in those days of making bathtub gin and scratching by," recalls Gail.

The family eventually moved across the island to an abandoned lighthouse on a stretch of land jutting two miles into the Atlantic. It was there, in Ferryland, that daughter

Esther Squires says that she and her sister Meranda "pretty much grew up under his easel and it was our happy sense of normal." She now realizes it was often her mother's pottery work that paid the bills in those early days.

As Squires' work, including *The Boatman* and *The Ferryland Downs* series, gathered attention, he was invited to tour and exhibit internationally. *The Boatman* is often interpreted as a protest against the provincially mandated closing of isolated outport communities, and his painting *Uprooted* is seen as a metaphor for the Newfoundland experience.

His riveting depiction of the 14 Stations of the Cross, the Last Supper, The Crucifixion and Resurrection - commissioned by a St. John's area church - was a project that fed his life-long spiritual search. As he often did, he chose Newfoundlanders as his models; a southern shore fisherman helps carry the cross and his daughter Esther appears as St. Veronica, while the path to the crucifixion is a road through Ferryland.

A tribute to his enduring influence, Squires' life and work is now the subject of a major retrospective book by retired academic Stan Draglands. As well, a deeply evocative film by Newfoundland writer Kenneth J. Harvey - *I Heard the Birch Tree Whisper In the Night* - captures Squires' struggle to complete his last painting, while discussing the artist's quest, spirituality, mortality, and his impending death.

That two-panel canvas sits, unfinished, in Squires' Holyrood studio.

"It is very dark," says Gail Squires. "You can see death in it."

A family-run gallery on Prescott Street in St. John's continues to preserve and promote Squires' lasting legacy.

www.geralsquiresgallery.com

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For six glorious weekends this fall, chefs from Scotland, the United States and Canada will look for inspiration in the bounty of land and sea off Newfoundland's northeast coast. Foraged seaweed, wild berries and caribou sausages will fuel their culinary adventures, though it is line-caught cod that will occupy pride of place.

Coaxed from the sea as it was in the days before massive trawl nets, Fogo Island cod is world-renowned for its texture and taste.

It was cod that brought the first settlers to the rugged island in the 1600s, and the inn's architecture pays homage to the wooden fish-drying stages that graced the shoreline for centuries. With its floor to ceiling windows overlooking the wild Atlantic, the facility is a testament to the strength of spirit that has endured on the islet after other isolated outport communities were closed out in the 1960s. It was during that uprooting - designed to consolidate a population that had spread out along the winding coastline - that Newfoundland's Memorial University and the National Film Board collaborated in a legendary community film-making exercise, The Fogo Process. It gave a voice to the outport community's efforts to survive the devastating loss of the inshore fishery, and began a long association between the island and film.

At the time, Zita Cobb was a young child, the only girl among seven siblings growing up in the Fogo Island community of Joe Batt's Arm. Raised in a home without electricity or running water, she left the island to attend university, later earning a fortune as a high



tech executive. When she returned in 2006, Cobb, along with two of her brothers, established the Shorefast Foundation, a registered charity, with the objective of rejuvenating the local economy "in ways that work for local residents, rather than against them."

With the help of Norway-based architect Todd Saunders, a native of Newfoundland himself, Cobb built a 29-suite hotel with a theatre and other amenities for tourists seeking a world-class travel and cultural experience.

Things are done differently at Fogo Island Inn; wood is used for heating, furniture is hand-crafted, beds are decked in traditional quilts, and visitors are offered a half-day tour with a community host.

The facility's kitchen is also unique.

"We have a kitchen collective of about 26 people, every one of them a part of our team," shares executive sous chef Tim Charles by phone. "The focus is not on the chef, it is on the team working together. It means that all of us take great pride in what we produce. Like anyone preparing for company, we are planning to offer our best."

Charles has been at the inn since before it opened for business.

"We have seen the interest in the Thanksgiving weekend grow to the point we could consider offering more, and now we are up to seven culinary seasons. Autumn is Berry Season, and the weather will be wonderful, so we are going to showcase the beauty and bounty of Fogo Island."

The (Canadian) Thanksgiving weekend he is referring to is the fifth annual chefs' weekend on Fogo Island. Two-time James Beard Award-winning chef Hugh Acheson is coming from Georgia to cook up inspired dishes against the backdrop of the island's Partridge Berry Festival. Called South by Northeast, the weekend program will feature live music, story-telling, and a berry-picking excursion.

In early November Chef Michael Howell is presenting a Fogo Island version of Devour: The Food and Film Fest, first founded in Nova Scotia. He and Thomas' kitchen collective will collaborate to match flavourful dishes with a series of six short films shown in the inn's cinema.

"I have already been introduced to Fogo Island's line-caught cod and I am looking forward to experiencing it where it is caught," says Howell. "We had a number of films made on Fogo Island at last year's Devour festival in Nova Scotia, so to be on Fogo for food and films will be hard to beat."

Howell spent 10 years as an actor and director, and a subsequent 20 years as a chef and restaurant owner, so the touring festival is "the great passion of my later years."

"I am always intrigued by uber-foraged ingredients, so I am excited to see what comes from a very beautiful, self-contained culture on Fogo Island."

www.fogoislandinn.ca

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Newfoundland has a diverse and multifaceted composition of cities, towns and communities - each a great place to live, play, work and invest, and each with its own resolve to further succeed and prosper.

The town of Holyrood, located at the head of stunning Conception Bay, is one such place. Although small in number - pop: 2,500 - area residents are big in their determination, imagination and resourcefulness.

That resiliency recently took another step when the community crafted a vigorous regional development and diversification plan to ensure its viability and sustainability.

Centred on the vast and chilly Arctic Ocean which touches its shores, Holyrood has been collaborating with Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador's Fisheries and Marine Institute to create a Cold Ocean Innovation and Research Hub. The new facility will strategically strengthen the province's ability to respond to the needs of the ocean industry - and those of various regulatory agencies - in the safe, efficient and sustainable development and exploitation of northern oceans and resources.

Fueled by passion with purpose, and spearheaded by Mayor Gary Goobie, local council members, and a staff led by Chief Administrative Officer Gary Corbett, the town created the Oceans Holyrood Initiative in 2013 with an eye towards greater ocean sector development. With the support of Canada's Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the Provincial Department of Tourism, Culture, Innovation and Industry, "Everything Oceans" was adopted as the undertaking's motto, and the impossible became possible.

That vision soon became a mission and mandate, with Holyrood launching a well-designed path to position itself as a center for oceans-related commerce, applied research, training and education.

Recognizing the value of its strategic location, its access to cold pristine Arctic water, and the presence of the Marine Institute, Holyrood is now a major site of interest to entrepreneurs who want to establish new sector developments and align themselves with a strong start-up model to assist in their journey toward commercialization.

As such, the town has quickly evolved into a hub where start-up companies receive the support and opportunity required to succeed.

CAO Gary Corbett - convinced that success is a result of preparation, hard work and learning from others - set a deliberate course to exchange ideas, and absorb new and creative methods and procedures. The goal has been to foster higher-level thinking by reaching out to others who have the wisdom and courage to be risk-takers and innovators.

"We have devised a creative environment by providing office spaces, boardrooms, innovation theatre, and other amenities for start-up companies," he recently told the OGM.com.

"And though we are working in Arctic-cold waters, we are determined to make the experience of being here very warm and inviting."

Holyrood wants to capture the attention of those with a likeminded view of entrepreneurship - one which will allow for an expanded capacity for innovation, and creates an environment for accelerated economic growth and international competitiveness.

To that end, the town has reached out to other regions to engage in information gathering and sharing, including Ireland.

The fit is natural; the two islands enjoy a long and rich history, with the majority of Newfoundlanders claiming Irish ancestry.

In addition, they share common synergies in their approach to start-up supports, innovation, and cutting-edge research.

In recent years, the Emerald Isle has been very successful in the fostering of innovation and growth of start-up companies across Galway, Letterkenny, Cork and Dublin.

"There must be a way of sharing this experience, and an opportunity of collaboration across the sea with these innovative Irish companies" said Corbett, before signing Holyrood's first international Innovation and Start-Up Collaboration Agreement with Letterkenny Institute of Technology, CoLab this past June.

Soon after, Holyrood signed a second agreement with Galway City Innovation District, the non-profit company behind the successful Portershed technology and innovation hub in downtown Galway. The aim of the agreement is to support further growth in the marine and technology sectors in their respective regions.

Riding those waves of success, Holyrood has since initiated business-to-business relationships in the two countries by providing further opportunities for like-minded firms to exchange and expand ideas.

This is great news for the nine companies that currently occupy the BeachHead Start Up Hub at the Holyrood Municipal Building. The town now finds itself positioned to better attract innovative entrepreneurs to North American markets, and to push its BeachHead innovation companies into European markets.

By transitioning from the traditional use of the ocean resources to something more innovative and sustainable, Holyrood is now the foremost staging area for ocean research in the eastern Canadian Arctic and north-west Atlantic regions.

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NONIA

NONIA's preservation of knitting traditions allows Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to wear their pride on their sleeves



Marie Hayward's eyes widened when she was recently presented with a huge basket of wool.

"When do I got to have that knit up?!" she asked with some alarm.

Edna Duffett, President of the Newfoundland Outport Nursing and Industrial Association (NONIA), quickly assured her that it was a gift, to do with as she wished, and not another knitting order from the not-for-profit organization.

Hayward was being recognized for 70 years of knitting at NONIA's Annual General Meeting at Government House in St. John's. The basket was a gift from a wool supplier.

One of over 150 women around the province of Newfoundland and Labrador who knit for NONIA on a regular basis, Hayward is - amazingly - not the first to reach the 70-year milestone. Many of the group's knitters are part of a family tradition, where mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and others have contributed for generations.

Founded in 1920 to help the province's outport communities access better health care, NONIA used funds raised from the sale of hand-knit garments to pay the salaries of public health nurses. In 1934, the association's mandate was taken up by the government. Despite the support, the group's original homespun mandate was maintained, providing valuable assistance to outport households over lean decades.

Today, NONIA retains its status as a not-for-profit cottage industry, managed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Its retail location in downtown St. John's employs a staff of five to eight persons, depending on the season. The organization's knitters continue to craft sweaters, socks, hats and mitts for all ages. Table linens are hand-woven as well. Signature sweater styles are named for Newfoundland communities, including Fortune Bay, Cape Freels and Rocky Harbour. Prod-

ucts are also sold through the group's website, as well as via select retailers across the region and at the annual provincial craft fair.

Over time, NONIA's brand has become renowned, both at home and abroad, for its quality. In the province's outport communities, it is still a badge of honour to be a NONIA knitter, as it signifies a high-level of ability.

NONIA's mission now also includes



the preservation of knitting heritage. For example, an iconic piece of local handwear known as a trigger mitt was traditionally knit by every rural woman in Newfoundland. The mitt is part glove, with a separate index finger, providing greater dexterity for outdoor work, including hunting, splitting fish and cutting wood. Two strands of wool were used for extra warmth, and the knitters developed intricate patterns to make the mitts both interesting and attractive.

Knitting skills were first brought to Newfoundland and Labrador by European settlers - the area's Indigenous peoples did not knit, instead using furs and hides as their primary clothing materials. Most of the landed immigrants were Irish, English and Scottish, so many of the province's knitting patterns have Celtic roots. In fact, NONIA's business model was borrowed in 1920 by Lady Harris, the wife of Newfoundland's English Gover-

nor, from a similar organization in Scotland.

"NONIA was key to increasing knitting skills in Newfoundland, by distributing high-quality wool and patterns, and giving outport women a mechanism by which to share their skills," writes Shirley Anne Scott, author of *Canada Knits: Craft and Comfort in a Northern Land*.

The organization is blessed with a passionate group of board members, many of whom have supported the group for years.

"Once NONIA comes into your life, it is there forever," says long-time board member, Karen Hickman. The association has also enjoyed the loyalty of many long-serving staff members, including Cathy Marsh - who has worked on the retail side of the business for 32 years - and Judy Anderson, who recently retired after more than two decades of service.

"Many of us grew up in NONIA knitwear," notes the group's manager Keelin O'Leary.

"NONIA's history is woven into the fabric of both the province's heritage, and into the hearts of her citizens."

O'Leary is encouraged to see that tradition being passed along to younger generations.

"One of my favourite stories is of 11-year-old Aiden Lawlor of Lethbridge, Bonavista Bay. His great-grandmother, Iris Skiffington, knit for NONIA for over 50 years, and Iris' sister was also a long-time knitter for the organization. Aiden recently did a school heritage project about us, using all kinds of interesting materials saved by Iris over the decades. Aiden is now keen on supporting and promoting the association, and he may very well become our first male knitter in many years!"

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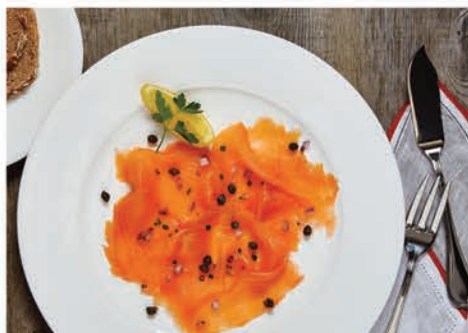
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Jiggs Dinner

Newfoundland, a rock in the cold North Atlantic Ocean, welcomes her guests with warm and generous salutations. Like all island people, Newfoundlanders are unique; many parts of the province are made up of little fishing villages, outposts and islands, where residents have learned to thrive with a little ingenuity. This is evidenced in their crafts, their paintings, and their music.

Their approach to food is no different; fish and moose are the main sources of protein in the native Newfoundland diet. With a plentitude of off-shore cod nesting along the easterly Grand Banks, codfish recipes are abundant and have many variations, including cod tongues, cod cheeks and britches. "Britches" get their name because of their resemblance to a pair of pants, and are filled with cod roe. Fittingly, the lady fish wears the britches in the family. Moose was introduced to Newfoundland in 1940 by its sister Maritime province, New Brunswick. It was a match made in heaven, as moose can be boiled, broiled, stewed, or canned in a bottle. Have it in sausages or burgers. It is the ultimate healthy meat as it feeds on fresh fodder from the forest. Gar-

dens and livestock are harder to produce because the terra firma is mostly rock and much of the land refuses to play host to agriculture. Codroy Valley, on the province's southwest coast, is one of the few regions where farming can be carried out.

Newfoundland is the only province in Canada that has its own dictionary to explain some of its expressions. Do not try to guess what is in a recipe from its name or you will soon find yourself in a conundrum. For example, Figgy Duff is a pudding without figs. Figs are what Newfoundlanders call raisins, and the duff is a pudding made from bread, raisins, spices, and molasses steamed in a pudding bag. Similarly, bake apples are not apples but bog berries, sometimes called cloudberry. They smell like apple pie when the sun shines on them, hence the name. And the ultimate Newfoundland steak is really baloney - and we all know there is a little baloney in everyone.

Jiggs Dinner is a traditional meal commonly prepared and eaten on Sundays in many regions across Newfoundland and Labrador. It is a popular boiled dinner that belies its name.



Ingredients

- 3 pounds (1.5 kg) salt meat
- 2 cups (500 ml) yellow split peas
- 1 large turnip, peeled and cut into eighths
- 3 large carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch (5 cm) lengths
- 6 large potatoes, peeled and cut into quarters
- 1 head cabbage, cut into eight wedges
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) butter
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Salt meat, cured in salt brine, is not the same as corned beef (which is preserved in a solution of salt, sugar and saltpeter). Look for salt meat where Newfoundland/Labrador foods are sold. If unavailable, corned beef may be substituted, but the flavour and texture will be different.

Soak the salt meat overnight in cold water, changing the water at least once. Rinse meat one more time. Place in a large pot and cover with fresh water. Bring to the boiling point, reduce heat and simmer for at least two hours.

Place split peas in a cloth bag or a clean tea towel, gathered up and tied at the top, leaving an extra length of string. The peas should form a loose ball; if tied too tightly they will not cook properly. Place bag in pot with the salt meat and tie the bag to the pot handle to keep it off the bottom and prevent scorching. Return to boiling point, then reduce heat and let it simmer for another 10 minutes.

Add vegetables 2 to 5 minutes apart, starting with turnip, then carrots, potatoes, and finally the cabbage.

Simmer for 20 to 25 minutes until vegetables are tender. Drain off water. Carefully open the bag of peas (the peas are very hot), turn peas into a bowl and whip, adding in the butter, salt and pepper.

Cut the salt meat into cubes, and serve with boiled vegetables and mushy peas, called peas pudding, accompanied by pickled beets and sweet mustard pickles. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

And don't forget to kiss the Cod! ~ Cabrini



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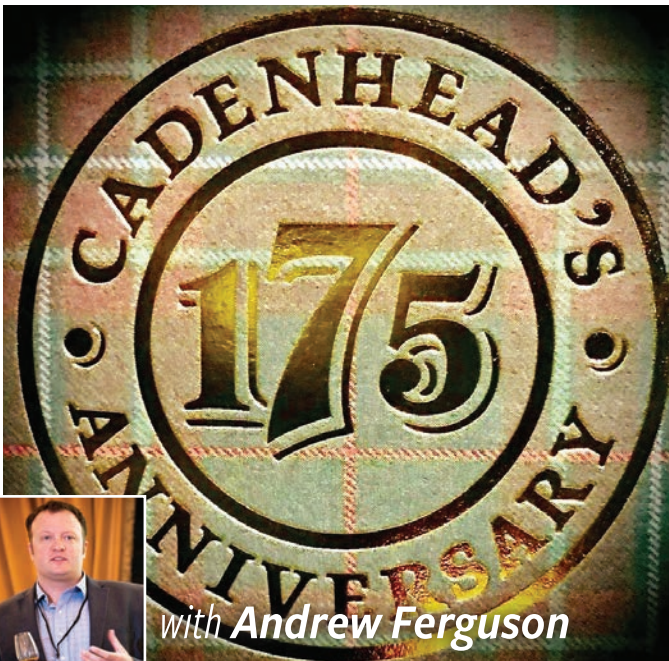
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As strange as it may sound, it is only in the last three to five decades that most distilleries have seen fit to bottle their own whiskies as single malts. Prior to that, the vast majority of whiskies distilled in Scotland were produced almost exclusively for blends. With few exceptions, most of the available single malts prior to the 1970s were bottled by independent bottlers like Gordon Macphail and WM Cadenhead. Distilleries like Glenfiddich, Macallan, Glenmorangie, Bowmore and Glenlivet began bottling their whiskies as single malts, and exporting them globally, in the 1960s. Other distilleries would follow in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Some products - like John Dewar & Sons' "The Last Great Malts" series - have only been launched in the last few years.

Independent bottlings are whiskies bottled by a third party, and not the distillery which produced them. Not all distilleries actually bottle their whiskies as single malts, and many that do have limited ranges. Independent bottlings fill this niche in the market, generally releasing single casks and small batch single malts that can vary enormously from the distillery's core offering. If you are a devoted single malt aficionado, chances are you've come across more than a few independent bottlings in your day. If you haven't yet dipped your toes into the world of independent bottlings, then you may be missing out on some of the world's finest whisky, and it is high time you took a look at what they have to offer.

The oldest - and one of the finest - of all the independents is WM Cadenhead's. Established in 1842, Cadenhead's, as they are affectionately known, is a stubbornly traditional firm, with an exceptional range of whiskies. Along with Gordon Macphail, Cadenhead's is one of Scotland's best independent bottlers, with a range of old whiskies that is envied by the rest of the industry. Until the last few years, Cadenhead whiskies were only available from their network of shops in the U.K. and Europe. The Small Batch line was created four years ago to satiate selected whisky specialists around the world, and to distribute the company's aging overstock.

WM Cadenhead was acquired by J.A. Mitchell & Co. in 1972, the family-owned firm which also owns the Springbank and Glengyle distilleries. After acquiring Cadenhead's, and its stocks of maturing whisky, Hedley Wright - J.A. Mitchell's colourful chairman and owner

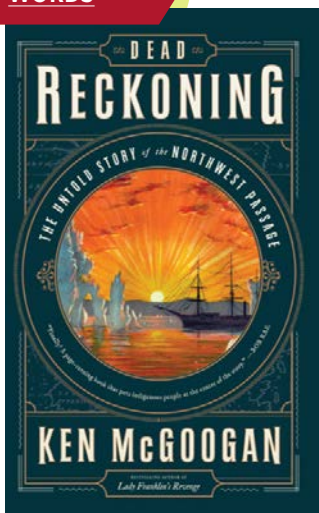
- is said to have spent the next few decades wandering Scotland with his check book. Wright made frequent visits to "his friends" at various distilleries across Scotland, purchasing casks as he went. Hedley kept track of his acquisitions on a series of ledgers, releasing casks bit by bit to the team at Cadenhead's for bottling. To this day, the firm doesn't even know the full extent of the casks they are sitting on. However, so long as Hedley keeps the flow of rare and old whiskies coming, Cadenhead's will continue to be one of Scotland's most interesting independent bottlers.

Today, Cadenhead's is headquartered in the scenic coastal town of Campbeltown on the Kintyre Peninsula, within walking distance from its sister businesses, the Springbank and Glengyle (Kilkerran) distilleries. The Cadenhead's Shop and Whisky Tasting Room serves as a visitor centre and retailer for the three brands. They offer daily tours and tastings Monday to Saturday. While Springbank Distillery may be the main draw, the Cadenhead Warehouse tour is not to be missed. Mark and or Cameron will take you into bowels of a dark, dingy old dunnage warehouse to sample some stunning whiskies, right out of the cask.

Campbeltown is a bit of a trek, 4 hours by car from Glasgow, near the end of the Kintyre Peninsula. The town is charming, with much to see in the surrounding area, justifying at least a two-day visit. The world-famous Machrihanish Dunes Golf Course is just ten minutes away. In my opinion, Campbeltown is best seen in conjunction with the islands and Arran, Islay (and Jura) over a week-long tour. Caledonian Macbrayne, Scotland's west coast ferry service, has a special pass for just such a route, called a Hop Scotch. But if Campbeltown is just too far to go, keep your eye open for one of the many other Cadenhead shops in Edinburgh, London and across Europe. In Canada, Cadenhead Small Batch whiskies can be purchased from Kensington Wine Market in Calgary.

Cadenhead is celebrating its 175th Anniversary this year, so let's raise a glass for their continued good spirits!

www.kensingtonwinemarket.com
www.fergusonwhiskytraveltours.com



Dead Reckoning

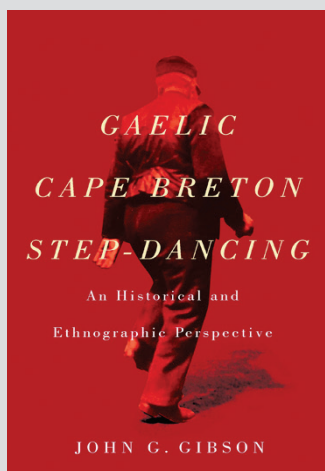
By Ken McGoogan
Harper Collins / 448pp / \$33.99

Canadian author and historian Ken McGoogan is no stranger to Arctic exploration, having previously published four well-respected works on the subject. Subtitled *The Untold Story of the Northwest Passage*, *Dead Reckoning* is sure to raise some eyebrows in its challenging of conventional thoughts of those long-ago, ill-fated voyages. Grounded in his own impeccable field studies, McGoogan weaves politics, history, economics, climate change and cultural diversity into a tapestry of truth, uncovering an array of unsung heroes along the way, including fur-traders and members of Canada's Inuit community. Certainly, without the latter, the two ships might never have been discovered. And though the Brits might disagree, there's no denying that there is more to the original story than John Franklin, Edward Parry and James Clark Ross. ~ SPC

Gaelic Cape Breton Step-Dancing

By John Gibson
MQUP / 496pp / \$55

Part of McGill-Queen's Studies in Ethnic History Series, and weighing in at almost 500 pages, author John Gibson is both thorough and thought-provoking in his exploration of a fading art. Using data collected from extensive fieldwork in Nova Scotia, the author reaches across the pond to trace the roots of contemporary Cape Breton Step-Dancing. While originating in the Gaelic-speaking Scottish Highlands, the form's roots prove to be much older, finding its first footing in the rhythmic dance traditions of Western Europe. With an array of maps and photos, the work is more than an academic exercise - it is an important study in the patterns of cultural emigration that helped to shape Canada's Maritime Provinces, and ones that continue to influence the country's identity. ~ SPC



BOMBS, BULLETS AND THE BORDER

Policing Ireland's Frontier:
Irish Security Policy, 1969-1978

PATRICK MULROE



Bombs, Bullets and the Border

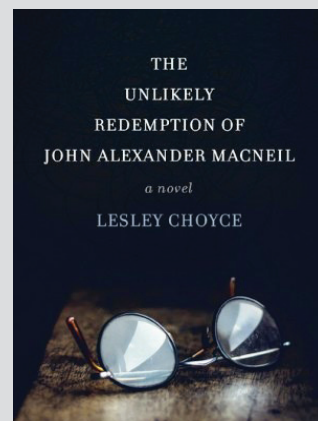
By Patrick Mulroe
Irish Academic Press
296pp / \$24.99

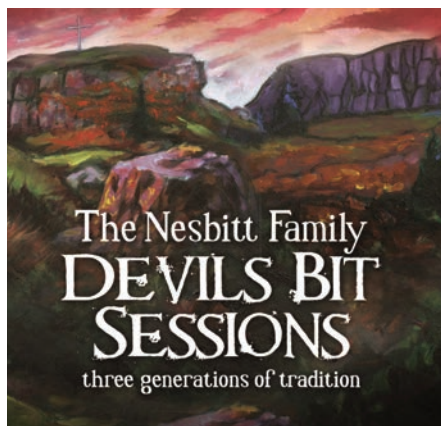
A lifelong resident of Monaghan, Ulster, Dr. Patrick Mulroe has first-hand knowledge of *The Troubles*. Deeply researched, and replete with compelling interviews of area residents and paramilitary personnel, *Bombs, Bullets and the Border* outlines the logistical nightmare of dealing with the Irish Republican Army's guerilla warfare tactics in and around the border areas between 1969 and 1978, particularly with regards to the smuggling of weapons. Made even more poignant with over 20 black and white photos, the book is a powerful snapshot of a time and place that saw two sides of the same coin in conflict. It also serves both as a horrific reminder of civility gone awry, and what might await area residents should the delicate power sharing structure in Northern Ireland dissolve. ~ SPC

The Unlikely Redemption of John Alexander MacNeil

By Lesley Choyce
Fernwood Publishing
228pp / \$21

With over 90 books to his name already, bestselling Nova Scotia author, poet, publisher, professor, musician, surfer - and Celtic Life International contributor - Lesley Choyce proves that he remains as profound as he is prolific with his latest novel. Set in rural Cape Breton, *The Unlikely Redemption of John Alexander MacNeil* is the story of an elderly curmudgeon whose daily rituals - including cooking breakfast each morning for a wife that has been dead for thirty years - are upset when a pregnant teenager suddenly shows up at his door unannounced. Warm, witty and wise, the author does well to create a quirky chemistry between the pair that develops over a strong narrative arc. An excellent gateway into the work of a great writer. ~ SPC





The Nesbitt Family

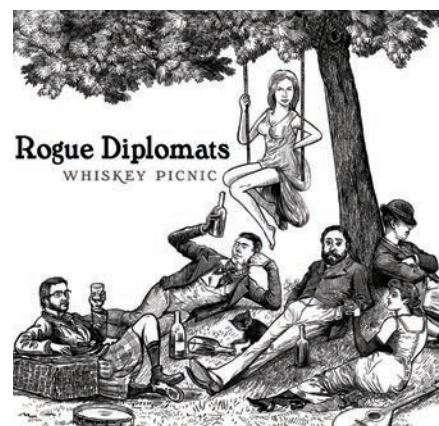
Devils Bit Sessions

Recorded live off the floor during a weekend seisun at the Nesbitt family's home at the foot of Devil's Bit Mountain in Co. Tipperary, and featuring three generations of family members and a few very special guests, Devil's Bit Sessions is a raw, rollicking romp through traditional Celtic music and culture. A sonic trip through time, the 19 tracks do well to capture and convey the trials and triumphs of rural Irish life. Toes will tap and hands will clap, as Grammy Award winning violinist - and longtime member of Emerald Isle supergroup Celtic Woman - Máiréad Nesbitt leads her siblings through a series of jovial jigs, rustic reels and beautiful ballads. Those with a passion for authentic 'trad' won't want to miss this one. ~ SPC

Rogue Diplomats

Whiskey Picnic

Fittingly, Whiskey Picnic opens with a 26-second invitation to join the Rogue Diplomats for an old-school piss up. The quirky quintet from New York and Pennsylvania - made up of emerging and established musicians and showbiz professionals - takes no prisoners and makes no excuses on their terrific 11-track debut recording, rambling through classics like Galway Hooker, Mary Mac, Old Brown Ale, and Wild Rover like there is no tomorrow. Armed with guitars, accordions, tin whistles, bouzoukis and bodhráns, the young band rips and roars with an energy and enthusiasm that is only surpassed by their vibrant vocal harmonies. Fun, festive and full of frolic, the 'Dips are sure bets to make every day seem like St. Paddy's Day at your local Irish pub. ~ SPC



Rattle The Knee

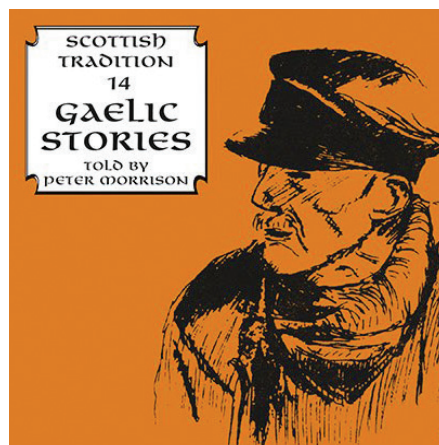
Paving and Crigging

More great 'trad' here, this time from Los Angeles-based trio Rattle The Knee. Patrick D'Arcy leads his latest group through their debut recording, Paving and Crigging, featuring himself on uilleann pipes, fiddler Kira Ott and guitarist Jimmy Murphy, romping through 14 traditional Celtic tunes, including Paddy's Rambles Through the Park, Green Fields of Canada, An Buachaill Caol Dubh, and Lady on the Island. Interestingly, the entire album was recorded in the lower register of B natural, once the standard key for traditional Irish jigs, reels and ballads. Though the resulting drone makes for a meditative, zen-like listening experience, there is enough variety and voice here to keep it festive and fresh. An excellent first effort by a talented trio to keep a close eye on. ~ SPC

Peter Morrison

Gaelic Stories

True to its title, Gaelic Stories features 14 traditional tales told by celebrated Scottish seanchaí Peter Morrison, a crofter and fisherman who lived on the small Hebridean island of Grimsay, near North Uist and Benbecula, off the country's west coast. Originally recorded between 1962 and 1974, and first released in 1995 as an audio cassette only, the album has been re-mastered and reformatted for contemporary audiences. Even those who don't understand a word of Scots Gaelic will enjoy Morrison's lively lilt and brash brogue as he recounts local legend and lore. More importantly, perhaps, is that the soundtrack serves to preserve and promote a disappearing way of life. Credit both Greentrax Recordings and the School of Scottish Studies at Edinburgh University for making the investment. ~ SPC



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After 40 years of piping, Jack Heins is convinced that his music has been a gift from God

“I truly believe that I was given this gift to pipe people home,” says ‘Piper Jack’ Heins from his home in New York State, referring to years of graveside visits.

“There is just something about the pipes that makes you smile and laugh at the happy moments...but there is also that same mysterious sound that makes your heart cry out during sad times.”

At funerals, he gathers the grieving family around the grave, sharing words of comfort before playing the old Scottish poem Auld Lang Syne.

“I explain that it is a song we all sing once a year, as the New Year is brought in, and that it is about having enough room in our hearts to make and accept new friends, while never forgetting the old ones...”

As a final fond farewell, he then pulls out an upbeat jig or reel.

“I tell the family that their loved one will dance their way to heaven. It is how I share my heritage with other people at a time when they need it most.”

Heins’ interest in death hits close to home; he once ‘died’ for 15 minutes himself.

“My son just happened to be home from college that week...he came running downstairs when he heard his mom screaming that I was dead. He immediately dialed 911 and the operator talked him through the whole CPR process. A week later, I woke up in the hospital staring at a bunch of nurses and doctors. They all kept telling me how lucky I was to be alive, and I kept saying how blessed I was.”

Even after 40 years as a student of the bagpipes, Heins notes that he is still learning to master the instrument. He describes himself as a traditionalist both in style and sound.

“I do like the slurring and echoing sounds that are being done on the piping



circuit now, but I am more a march, quick march, jigs and reels kind of guy.”

He is often asked about his role as pipe major to his own troupe, the City of Syracuse Highland Pipe Band, which he founded in 2003. The question makes him smile, as his responsibilities involve making decisions based on the interests, talents and skill levels of 24 unique individuals. He is also tasked with ensuring that the instruments are in tune - a complex undertaking.

“Each bagpipe has a double cane reed in the chanter that is either flat or sharp,” he details. “Each set of pipes also has three drones that all have individual reeds in them. Each one of those has to be tuned to the low A on the bagpipe chanter.”

Once one bagpipe is set up, Heins begins working on the other 12 to 14 sets as they must all be tuned to each other. The reeds tend to flatten or sharpen, depending on the weather.

“On sunny days, they start to dry out

and change pitch. On wet days, they start to dampen up too fast and change pitch.

“If the band doesn’t sound good, there is only one person to blame - me.”

He wouldn’t have it any other way, of course. Scottish music comes naturally - his mother emigrated from Scotland at the age of 21 - and it has always been central to his life. He still plays the set of Kintail bagpipes his parents bought him back in 1977. His own son, Mike, joined his dad’s band as a snare drummer when he was just eight years old.

“He was so small that we had to take the drum apart and let him just play the top snare,” Heins recalls with a smile. “Now, Mike is 22, stands 6’4”, and is drum sergeant in the band.”

Retiring from teaching Technology Education after his experience of ‘dying’, Heins continues to instruct others on how to play the pipes. He doesn’t charge for lessons, however, as he received free instruction himself as a child.

He also hopes to keep comforting grieving families with his music.

“There are too many instances of people wanting to have their loved ones piped home, but have overlooked it during the duress, or simply didn’t know how to get in touch with a piper. I want to remedy that situation, as everyone should be piped home.”

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Pascal Gemme

Sharing his musical birthright is a joy for French-Canadian fiddler Pascal Gemme

“Traditional Quebecois music is a mélange of Irish, Scottish, English, French and North-American melodies,” explains fiddler Pascal Gemme via email from his home in la belle province.

“I have sensed great interest in this style of music everywhere I play,” he continues. “Quebec’s musical heritage is recognized around the world, and I teach people in Europe, the U.S. and even Australia, who are familiar with our repertoire.”

The Quebec fiddling tradition includes some unique forms, including the ‘brandy’ - a sort of slip-reel that sounds like a reel, but is in 3/4 time instead of 4/4.

Throughout his travels, Gemme has witnessed the power of music to bring people together.

“Whenever I play fiddle, no matter where I am on the planet, I feel like I am home. Fiddling and traditional music connect us, creating a common, open ground for sharing. It makes me feel like I am part of something bigger than myself, while at the same time it keeps me grounded to my roots.

“I also like the fact that there are an infinite number of tricks and tunes one can learn from other players, and that those songs reflect the history of those who have passed that music down through the generations.”

Gemme’s musical passion was ignited by a fiddler in his own family - his maternal grandfather.

“Like most fiddlers I have met, he had collected music from other fiddlers, and learned from recordings, including a unique collection of tunes from all kinds of sub-cultures.

“In the same performance, my grandfather could play Quebecois tunes, as well as Irish and Scottish reels and jigs, melodies from popular songs of the moment and American-style tunes. I had the chance to spend a fair amount of time with him and this is how I developed an ear for fiddle music.”

The young Gemme began developing that ear at the tender age of five, acquiring his own instrument three years later. He hasn’t studied the violin formally since he was eleven, having become distracted by the guitar during early adulthood.

“My musical journey eventually led me towards a more classical tone than my grandfather achieved. Some people think I am classically trained, and I take that as a compliment.

However, I think of myself as more of a traditional Quebecois fiddler.”

Gemme’s musical influences include Quebecois fiddlers Michel Bordeleau, Hermas Rehel, Édouard Richard, and Yvon Mimeault. He also takes inspiration from the one-row button accordion players of old Quebec City.

“Their repertoire is quite unique,” he notes of the latter. “A lot of the melodies have been influenced by quadrille-style music that was popular in Europe from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s.

“It is a joyous style that has influenced all of the other musical genres in Quebec, even a lot of the Celtic music. The melodies themselves are quite unique in both the time signature and the modes they use.”

A book-lover, Gemme’s career highlights include performing in the Library of Alexandria in Egypt. He also relished playing in the rainforest in Malaysia on a stage built into the branches of a tree.

These days, he is putting the finishing touches on a new album with his trio Genticorum. Following the recording, he will tour North America with the group, as a solo artist, and with guitarist Yann Falquet.

Last year, he found himself teaching students of commercial music at Belmont University School of Music in Nashville.

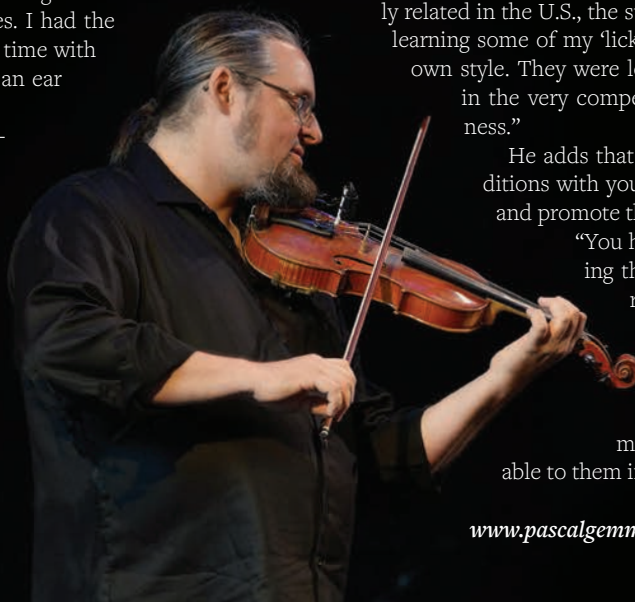
“Since country music and traditional music are so closely related in the U.S., the students were really interested in learning some of my ‘licks’, and to include them in their own style. They were looking to acquire an extra edge in the very competitive Nashville recording business.”

He adds that sharing Quebecois musical traditions with younger players is vital to preserve and promote the genre.

“You have a lot more chance of catching the fiddling bug if you see it live rather than just on YouTube.

And if kids get to play that traditional music in class, alongside their usual classical repertoire, they will have more options of expression available to them in both the studio and on stage.”

www.pascalgemme.com





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Tereza Bernardová

Tereza Bernardová is proud to promote Irish dance in the Czech Republic



Prague-based Tereza Bernardová is a passionate advocate of Irish dance, both as a performer and through her school, inSpiral Dance Company.

Through inSpiral, Bernardová, 32, also works outside the Czech Republic, furthering Irish dance elsewhere in Europe. It is the latest satisfying step in an artistic path that first bloomed when she studied at Galway's Hession School of Irish Dance and, later, at the University of Limerick, where she gained an MA in Irish dance.

She says that her years in Ireland were integral to her development.

"Especially on the west coast, dance is breathing at you from every corner. It had a huge influence on my later dance career."

Bernardová's youthful talent and enthusiasm won her a myriad of medals and roles in Irish dance productions. She competed in the World, All Ireland, and Great Britain Championships, becoming Connacht Champion in 2009. She also appeared on a variety of TG4 (Irish public television) programs, including Féilte, An Samhraid Linn, Gradam Ceoil and Step Beo.

Dancing professionally, she shares, was a thrill.

"I never even dared to dream about dancing in a real Irish dance show. So, I felt extremely lucky when I was asked to alternate with seannós dancing queen Emma O'Sullivan in the touring production of Rhythm of the Dance."

Tours of Europe with the show Ragús followed, where she danced both seannós and troupe choreographies.

"To top it all, I had the pleasure of performing with Pulses of Tradition. We performed in the beautiful venue of Triskel Christchurch in Cork City. We also represented Cork City in France and Scotland."

Surprisingly, Bernardová came to Irish dance relatively late. She didn't commit to the genre until age 16, although she had already started tap and jazz-contemporary lessons five years previously.

"With Irish dance, I just happened to be in the right place at the right time - several times. When I was about 14, my father came home with an advert for Irish dance lessons and asked me to go with him to check it out."

She enjoyed the class, and soon after saw Riverdance on video. She found the show spectacular, but was enjoying her other dance classes too much at the time to make the switch. After all, Irish dance was little known in the Czech Republic in the mid-1990s.

Things changed for Bernardová when she joined an Irish dance club along with her father, older sister and mother.

As with elsewhere, interest in Irish dance in the Czech Republic began blooming around the start of the century.

"We started to discover what the genre had to offer. I think the same thing was happening across the rest of the continent. Certainly, the number of people taking Irish dance classes has been up ever since, and the average age of participants has lowered."

Bernardová always wanted to start her own school, and she realized that dream in 2013 when she co-founded inSpiral with fellow dancer Andrej Mikulka.

"I respect tradition. When I teach both seannós and step dancing I try to say something about the style and its character. As a performer, I tend to bring in extra bits from other styles depending on the type of event."

Although inSpiral is based in Prague, she also teaches classes and workshops in other Czech cities. As well, she works with dancers in Germany and Finland, leading weekend workshops. In Finland, the school connects dancers in several cities.

She notes that Celtic culture is now celebrated year-round in the Czech Republic.

"There are local Irish bands, dance groups, and concerts and annual festivals."

Competitive step dancing is currently very popular in her homeland also.

"Set dancing and seannós dancing have been enjoying a revival for a number of decades in Ireland, and that wave is now travelling across Europe."

Bernardová is currently studying a two-year program in basic dance pedagogy in Prague's Academy of Performing Arts (HAMU), and remains focused on growing her school.

And though she is proud of her own heritage, Ireland retains a special place in her heart.

"Irish people are very proud of their culture - they like to gather to play a few tunes, sing songs, dance, and enjoy some good craic. These days, that culture is recognized around the world. For whatever reasons, I find it all so alive and fascinating."

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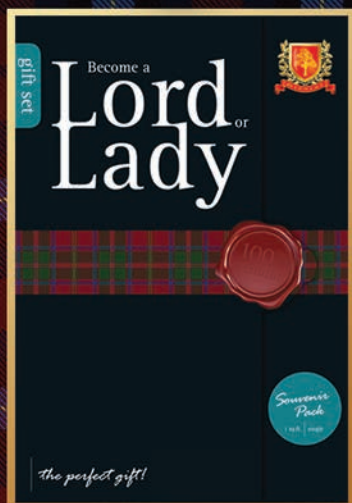
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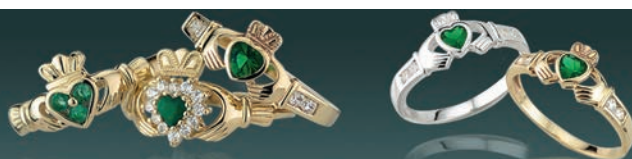
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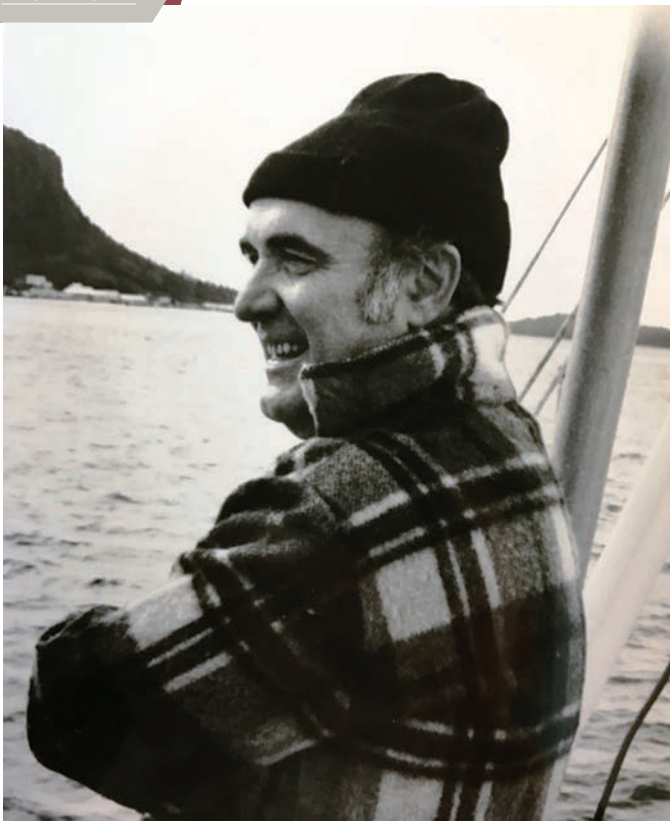
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James McGrath

1932 - 2017

In 1986, after retiring from federal politics, he was named Newfoundland's eighth lieutenant governor, a position he held for five years.

In the mid-2000s, Canadian journalist and writer Roy MacGregor toured the country in search of the elusive Canadian identity. While in St. John's, he spoke with McGrath on the heels of a provincial commission on renewing and strengthening Newfoundland's position within Canada.

McGrath noted that Newfoundlanders had become fed up with being the punch line of jokes, suggesting that education and modern technology had brought his province out of its "incredible inferiority complex."

"We are no longer ashamed of our culture and our accents," he told MacGregor, who included the interview in his 2006 book *Canadians: A Portrait of a Country and its People*.

MacGregor says that McGrath believed Confederation had been a raw deal for Newfoundland, which had been portrayed as "a basket case" to Canadians for too long.

"In 1949 we had a \$40 million surplus. We had no debt. We had the world's biggest fishery. We had untapped mineral resources in Labrador. We didn't even know about the oil and gas off our shores, or about the hydroelectricity from Churchill Falls. That's the kind of "basket case" we were when we came into Canada," he said, pointing out the once-abundant fishery was now depleted and that Canada was claiming a lion's share of Newfoundland's plentiful natural resources.

McGrath served briefly as a federal fisheries minister from 1979 to 1980 under the short-lived tenure of then-Prime Minister Joe Clark, but joked that he "wasn't there long enough to do any harm."

Soon after, as a member of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government, he chaired a committee on parliamentary reform that led to the Speaker of the House of Commons being elected by secret vote rather than at the behest of the Prime Minister. Another recommendation led to the formation of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians.

The accolades were many; McGrath was honoured with the Churchill Society Award for the Advancement of Parliamentary Democracy, an honorary degree from St. Francis Xavier University, an honorary doctorate from Memorial University, the Queen's Jubilee Medal, and was one of only six Canadians to be granted a lifetime membership in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He was also a Knight, Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and a Knight, Great Cross, Military Order of Malta.

Despite all the official acclaim, those who knew him best remember him as a proud Newfoundlander, and a loving and devoted father and husband.

Predeceased by a daughter, Sheilagh, he is survived by his wife Margaret and children Kathleen, Caroline, Peggy, Joanna and Sean, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

As a young man, James McGrath actively opposed Confederation with the rest of Canada. Years later, in retirement, he still harboured deep doubts.

A long-time Newfoundland politician - and former lieutenant-governor of the province - McGrath passed away peacefully earlier this year at the age of 85.

In 1948, he was a member of the Responsible Government League, one of many volunteers among the "No" forces during a passionate and divisive referendum on Newfoundland's future.

By the smallest of percentages, Joey Smallwood - who went on to become the province's first premier after the 1949 union - carried the vote by convincing rural Newfoundlanders and those in the region's many outports that their interests would be better served as Canada's 10th province.

As McGrath's obituary noted, "These events inspired him to enter public life and to represent the interests of Newfoundland nationally and internationally throughout his career."

On the day after Confederation, James Aloysius McGrath, born in Buchans, in central Newfoundland - one of 13 children, and proud of his strong Irish roots - received the last Newfoundland passport ever issued.

Following Confederation, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force before returning to Newfoundland in 1953. After a stint as the sales manager of a local radio station, he quickly rose through the ranks of the provincial Progressive Conservative Party.

As Joseph Howe had done when Nova Scotia joined Confederation 90 years earlier, McGrath worked for his constituents within a system he never totally accepted. He was first elected to the House of Commons in 1957 as the Progressive Conservative member for St. John's East. Like many who swept in with the Diefenbaker landslide of 1957, he was defeated in the next election, but returned to Ottawa in 1968 and was re-elected in five subsequent elections.

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