VOL. 38 NO. 5 | $8.95 CDN/USA | SUMMER - 2024 | CELTICLIFEINTL.COM

CelticLife INTERNATIONAL



The Renaissance of Renaissance Faires

ALSO!

Highland Games & Celtic Festivals Guide
Celtic Tattoos, Paddington Goes Gaelic
Inspiration Orchestra, Celtic Tarot

DISPLAY IN LIFESTYLES
UNTIL OCTOBER 2024

17th Annual

Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival and Gathering of the Clans

August 23 & 24, 2024 • 9 AM - 9:30 PM

Mayville Lakeside Park, Mayville, New York



From Gatlinburg, Tennessee **TUATHA DEA**



MUDMEN from Ontario, Canada

2 GINGERS INN Proudly Sponsors Both Celtic Bands

2 GINGERS INN — ESTD. 2021 — WHISKEY • BEER • WINE • SPIRITS

1118 E. 2nd Street, Jamestown, New York (716) 294-3192

Performers Include:

TUATHA DEA • MUDMEN • EMERALD ISLE
CELTIC CREEK • STEP N TIME • WATER HORSE
BALLINLOCH • THE FIDDLE SESSION • CATCH N' RELEASE

30 - GATHERING OF THE CLANS • 8 - PIPE BANDS
30 - SCOTTISH HEAVY ATHLETES • 30 - CELTIC & CRAFT VENDORS
CELTIC MUSIC • ALL KINDS OF GREAT FOOD • BEER & WINE GARDEN
SCOTTISH & IRISH DANCERS • CELTIC & CRAFT VENDORS
OLD FASHION FIDDLE SESSION • KID'S AREA W/ CLAN HUNT

SCAN ME

Purchase Your Discounted Tickets online at:
www.96thhighlanders.com

SCAN ME

The Villager

Merritt Winery

Jamestown Cummins 50 Years Engine Plant 1974

SE93 WWSE 93.3 FM

101.3FM 1240AM WJTN Local News, Talk & Lite Rock

My Country! 101.9 WHUG

Rock 103

Kissin' Oldies WKSN 1340AM

106.9 KISSFM TODAY'S BEST MUSIC

SORRY NO PETS ALLOWED FOR INSURANCE REASONS

Plenty of shade trees and tents to escape the Sun & Heat

Sheila Fleet.

DESIGNED & MADE IN ORKNEY, SCOTLAND

Runic COLLECTION

Inspired by runic inscriptions found inside Maeshowe, a chambered cairn in Orkney. Vikings broke into the tomb and made over thirty runic inscriptions—the largest single collection of such carvings in the world.

All Sheila's designs have messages written in runes. The necklet modelled here by Shirley reads 'Reflecting times past and present'.

Discover more at sheilafleet.com/runic



ORKNEY | EDINBURGH
GLASGOW | ST ANDREWS

01856 861 203 | sheilafleet.com

Shirley's outfit is by tartantouch.co.uk


EST 2002
SCOTLANDSHOP
TAILORED TARTAN CLOTHING & INTERIORS
Get ready for the Games
Tailored clothing for the whole family in over 500 tartans
Scan to discover your tartan
678 LOUDON ROAD, LATHAM, NY 12110
10 QUEENSFERRY STREET, EDINBURGH, EH2 4PG
9-11 E HIGH ST, CRIEFF PH7 3AF
WWW.SCOTLANDSHOP.COM | INFO@SCOTLANDSHOP.COM
UK 01890860770 | US TOLL FREE 1-(833)-612-0064

Scan me for Discount

The Scottish Grocer®

thescottishgrocer.com

FREE SHIPPING

$100 Dry Goods
$300 Frozen Foods







Saoghal Ceilteach Iris
chinnidheach air fhoillseachadh
sia uairean 's a bhliadhna le

Dara Knot Inc.
10 Peter St
Markham, Ontario, Canada
L3P 2A4

Celtic Life International is an
ethnic journal published in Canada
eight times a year by Dara Knot Inc.

Siobhán L. Covington, Publisher
Stephen Patrick Clare, Executive Editor
Rebecca Dingwell, Managing Editor
Chris Muise, Managing Editor
Caitlyn Elizabeth Mearns, Managing Editor
Carol Moreira, Senior Copy Editor
Tracy Weaver, Senior Copy Editor

Celtic Life International Office:
Toll-Free: 888-215-6850
Email: info@celticlife.com
Website: www.celticlife.com

Subscriptions:
Toll-Free: 888-215-6850
Email: subscribe@celticlife.ca

Advertising:
Toll-Free: 888-215-6850
Email: info@celticlife.com

Please send all review
requests to info@celticlife.com

Please return undeliverable copies of Celtic
Life International to: Dara Knot Inc.
10 Peter St, Markham, Ontario,
Canada, L3P 2A4

Publication Mail Registration:
No. 40050439 ISSN 1918-0497

Contributors:
James Acken
Lesley Choyce
Andrew Ferguson
Lillian Holt
Tom Langlands
Gary Maclean
Steve Melia
Graham Mole
Candice Sage

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada | Canada

By its publication Celtic Life International
does not endorse the historical accuracy
or the editorial stance of materials submitted
for publication. We do reserve the right
to edit all submitted manuscripts prior to
their publication.

© Celtic Life International, 2024

WWW.CELTICLIFEINTL.COM



FÁILTE

Lerchenauer Field, Munich - A Celtic Discovery

In our younger years, we are often asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

My answer, unwaveringly, was always the same - archaeologist. The idea of travelling to exotic places, equal measure scientist and treasure hunter, seemed very alluring. Truth be told, it still does. There is something irresistible about knowing that mysteries still abound, hidden, waiting to be discovered.

Thus, my interest was piqued upon hearing of a truly unique find made in a Munich suburb last year by the Bavarian State Office for Monument Preservation - a complete Celtic settlement from the Iron Age consisting of an estimated 100 homes with a substantial communal building at its center. Archaeologists were examining the field - a common practice prior to any sort of commercial or residential development - when they were alerted to the presence of darkened, circular marks in the gravel indicating the location of many post holes. They soon uncovered traces of wattle (woven wood) and daub (straw and mud), confirming that the buildings would have been wooden, half-timbered structures.

The site is quite significant, bolstering the long-held theory that the urban area of modern-day Munich was home to numerous Iron Age villages. The hope is that this site, coupled with grave finds, will provide greater insight into the Celts of southeast Germany. It may even shed light on their elusive mortuary customs. It is very rare that a site can be excavated in its entirety like this. What we know so far is that up to 500 people from La Tène (The Shallows) culture settled here around 2,300 years ago and stayed until the Romans arrived and assimilated the occupants.

Today we know that La Tène, and the Hallstatt Celts before them, played a vital role in shaping the cultural landscape of ancient Europe, leaving behind a rich legacy of art, craftsmanship, and community. Hopefully, before Lerchenauer Field is buried under 1,700 apartments, a school, and a daycare, there will be a deeper understanding of the Celts who populated Bavaria during this period of history. And while researchers want to be sure that the site is fully explored, it would be nice to think that a few secrets will remain unearthed - treasures for future archaeologists to find.

Our Summer 2024 edition will transport you to the magical world of Renaissance Fairs, Highland Games, and Celtic Festivals, where you are welcome to uncover your own version of La Tène: distinct, geometric scrolls and knotwork inspiring the designs of present-day Celtic artisans.

Spraoi a bheith agat!
Siobhan L. Covington,
Publisher

TWITTER
Latest Celtic news
@celticlife

FACEBOOK
Join CelticLife at
www.facebook.com/CelticLifeInternational

INSTAGRAM
See behind the scenes
@celticlifeinternational

NEWSLETTER
Stay informed
www.celticlifeintl.com/newsletter

SUBSCRIBE
Don't miss an issue
www.celticlifeintl.com/subscribe

THE CELTIC MARKET
Visit ***www.celticlife.com***

INSIDE!



77 *The Renaissance* of Renaissance Faires

9. First Word

11. De Tha Dol

13. Celts in the Community

15. A man of many hats

19. The Celtic World Forum seeks to inform, inspire, and entertain...

25. Sports, self-improvement, and the soul

29. A beloved storybook character gets a Gaelic makeover

31. A Northern Irish six-stringer stands on the shoulders of giants

41. Celtic Tattoos ~ art, ancestry, and self-identity

45. The Celtic Tarot ~ the future is in the cards

49. Booktowns are becoming an essential component of Celtic culture

53. A small Scottish musical ensemble is making a big splash

57. An English fisherman gets schooled by a Scot

105. The Piper

107. The Fiddler

109. The Dancer

CelticLifeStyle

Sign Up & Win!

Sign up for our newsletter and you could win a one-year print subscription to Celtic Life International Magazine! Visit our website for details.

The Celties!

Do you know someone who has made a significant contribution to promoting and preserving Celtic culture? Details on nominations can be found on our website!

Share Your Story!

We are always on the lookout for a good story! If you'd like to become a Celtic Life International contributor, simply drop us a note via our website or social media channels for more information!

Help Us to Help You!

Celtic Life International has been involved with a variety of charitable organizations and fundraising initiatives over the years. Reach out to us via our website or social media channels and let us know how we can help.

Shop Talk!

If you are interested in carrying Celtic Life International Magazine in your retail outlet, please contact us via our website or social media channels and we will be happy to help!

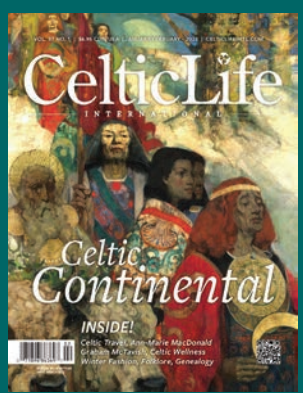
www.celticlifeintl.com



















first WORD
with James Acken

A Game of Ages: History and the Highland Games

The skirling of pipes…the smell and taste of whiskey and haggis…cabers and hammers whirling through the air with reckless abandon, with every manner of tartan billowing in the summer breeze. It's Highland Games season again!

Globally, more than 250 Highland Games take place each year, with easily half in North America. However, you will find these annual celebrations just about anywhere the Celts travelled and settled over the last three centuries.

The first Highland Games is noted to have taken place during the 11th century rule of King Malcolm III. Modern Highland Games started with the Scottish cultural societies of the mid-18th century and owes much to the work of Sir Walter Scott.



In 1822, Scott managed King George IV's trip to Edinburgh and organized a great deal of Scottish pageantry. This was pivotal in revamping the image of the tartan-wrapped, Highland connoisseur of whiskey – after almost a century of vilification. Almost every aspect of the image of the Highland Celt comes from Scott's romantic vision, itself owing a debt to the popularity of James MacPherson's creative "translations" of Ossianic poetry in the 1760s. That romance and pageantry were key in developing the Highland Games that we know and love today. However, digging deeper into the cultural memory of the games unearths even more fantastic treasures.

During the medieval period - and even long before - Celtic cultures had a version of the games that, I believe, is the real reason for their popularity. In modern Gaelic it is called the "Aonach" and pops up in so many songs and myths that its importance to Celtic culture cannot be argued. These gatherings involved legal proceedings, including the recognition of new kings, the honoring of the dead with poetry and song, and athletic competitions that coincided with important ritual days. In each of these aspects, we can see a version of our contemporary Highland Games.

Perhaps the oldest and greatest example of the Aonach is the Aonach Tailteann or "Fair of Tailtiú." In the Book of Invasions of Ireland, it is said to have been instigated by Lugh in honor of his dead mother, Tailtiú. Lughnasadh itself still prompts competitions like racing on horse and foot and several rituals involving the sea and the community. Máire MacNeill's Festival of Lughnasadh gives an excellent account of these games.

> ***It is somewhat shocking to see just how many of our modern conventions have their roots in the ritual past of our forebears.***

Today's field sports almost all derive from often-violent sports; hockey and golf both trace their roots back to the sport of hurling - iomanacht as it is called in Irish and camanachd in Scottish Gaelic - hockey through the game of shinty (as it was called when hurling was moved onto the ice) and golf through "mountain hurling" (though other forms of "stickball" also developed elsewhere). Originally the ball was made from the brains of enemies cured with lime. We know this from several stories, one of which is the tale Aided Chonchobuir, "The Death of Conchobar mac Nessa" and the other is Macgnimhartha Chon Chulaind, "The Boyhood Deeds of Cú Chulainn." In the "Boyhood Deeds," we see the young Cú Chulainn "playing" games with a hundred and fifty youths, one of which is cluiche puill or the "hole game" in which Cú Chulainn acts as a goalie, blocking the other lads' balls from sinking.

Naturally, such games evolved over the years from mock battles to feats of prowess relevant to the changing times. The modern caber toss derives from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century lumber industry in the Scottish Highlands, where the forests were harvested for building ships and making charcoal for the developing steel industry. I have personal experience moving trees that have been felled, and it is truly amazing to note that "tossing the caber" is really the most efficient way to move them without horse or tractor. It is also interesting to see just how important precise accuracy can be.

With all this in mind, the next time you go to the Games, remember that you are participating in what may be one of the most essential cultural elements of Celtic culture and one that has stood the test of time.

WWW.ACKENSTUDIOS.COM









Thistle & Stitch

Locally Made Locally Loved





Custom Embroidery & Handmade Gifts
Imported Scottish & Celtic Treats

Shop in Person

Upcoming Events

July 13 - 14	Skagit Valley Highland Games, Mt. Vernon, WA
July 19	Portland Highland Games, Gresham, OR
July 26 - 28	Pacific Northwest Highland Games, Enumclaw, WA
Aug. 31 - Sept. 1	158th Highland Gathering & Games, Pleasanton, CA
Sept. 6 - 8	Longs Peak Scottish Irish Highland Fest, Estes Park, CO
Sept. 21	Fresno Highland Gathering & Games, Fresno, CA
Sept. 27 - 29	Prescott Highland Games, Prescott, AZ
Oct. 5 - 6	McMinnville Scottish Festival, McMinnville, OR
Oct. 12 - 13	Seaside Highland Games, Ventura, CA
Nov. 1 - 3	Tucson Celtic Fest & Scottish Highland Games, Tucson, AZ

Or Shop Online at ThistleandStitch.com

Based out of Northern California

De Tha Dol











1 Gangs of Galicia

A Spanish crime drama set in the Galician town of Cambados recently made its global premiere on Netflix. Gangs of Galicia hit the streaming service on June 21. The series tells the story of Ana, a lawyer who arrives in Cambados hoping to find answers about the murder of her father. Things get complicated, however, when Ana meets Daniel, the son of a major drug trafficker in the region. The two begin a relationship all while Ana reckons with her father's past and Daniel appears to follow in the footsteps of his own.

2 Manx Photographer

Jack Alexander, a photographer from the Isle of Man, recently had his work grace Rolling Stone magazine. Alexander currently resides in London, but originally hails from the town of Douglas, IOM. His photos have been in a variety of publications, including The Guardian, Cosmopolitan, and BBC. Alexander's first venture with Rolling Stone - The Future of Music digital issue - became available online in April this year. One of his shots of singer-songwriter Rachel Chinouriri made the cover and a number of his photos are spread throughout the magazine.

3 Cornish Danceathon

Each year for the last three years, a Cornish man has been taking part in a 24-hour danceathon for charity. This year, 36-year-old Dean Pascoe raised £5,751 for the CPR Foodbank, which distributes food to the Camborne, Pool, and Redruth areas. When he lost his job in 2019, a friend helped him out by delivering food boxes to his home, which inspired Pascoe to pay that generosity forward. In March, Pascoe spent 24 hours dancing to the song Africa by American pop band Toto - for the third and final time.

4 Historic Château

Archeologists recently uncovered the remains of a castle and moat underneath a hotel's courtyard in Bretagne, France. The site of the Lagorce Hotel in Vannes was first excavated in spring 2023, revealing the ruins of a 14th century castle called Château de l'Hermine. This structure was built for the Duke of Brittany in 1381, but it fell into disrepair after his grandson moved the dukedom out of Vannes a century later. Jewellery, pins, dishes, padlocks, and keys were among the artifacts found at the excavation site.

5 Dolly's Welsh Roots

Country legend Dolly Parton will explore her Welsh ancestry in a four-part documentary airing later this year. In an interview with The Sun, Parton's niece said the family has traced their roots to "The Valleys" region in Wales, but she stayed mum on most of the details. Likewise, Parton herself has said she won't give away any secrets - people will have to watch the docuseries to learn more. In her 2020 book Songteller, however, Parton wrote that her mother sang English, Irish, and Welsh folk songs to her as a child.

GLEN INNES
NSW, Australia

AUSTRALIAN
Celtic Festival

Celebrating the year of
BRITTANY
CORNWALL &
WALES

est.
1992

Held at the
Australian Standing Stones
National Celtic Monument

1 May - 4 May 2025



AustralianCelticFestival.com
Proudly brought to you by Glen Innes Severn Council

Tickets on Sale
March 2025

GLEN INNES
HIGHLANDS

Celts in the *Community*



• *Aimee Lewis*

Welsh volunteer Aimee Lewis recently travelled to Egypt after raising more than £14,000 for displaced Palestinians. In February, Lewis set up a fundraiser called Cwtches to Gaza. As she explains on the GoFundMe page, "A 'cwtch' is a Welsh hug, but it's also more than that. A cwtch is about feeling loved, feeling supported, knowing that you are not alone in the world. On a hard day every Welsh person knows what it's like to need a cwtch from your mam or your granny or your partner. That is what we are focused on doing for injured and displaced Palestinians in Cairo: offering them a feeling of safety and connection." The following month, Lewis caught a flight to Cairo so she could hand deliver the funds in cash. In an interview with ITV, she described the trip as "the most intense thing" she's ever done. That said, she knows the donations have made a real difference - in one case, the money was used to pay for chemotherapy treatments. The Cwtches to Gaza fundraiser is still active on GoFundMe and PayPal, with donations now going towards evacuees for household goods, as well as "evacuation funds" to help people flee Gaza in the first place. "I feel honoured to have been able to help these people," Lewis told ITV.



• *May MacCormick*

Avid knitter May MacCormick has set out to preserve a piece of Scottish textile history: Sanquhar glove designs. Sanquhar patterns are named for the village from which they're said to originate (and the place MacCormick calls home). They're believed to date back as far as the 17th century, but as time has gone on, the art form's prevalence has declined. MacCormick, however, was first taught the craft by her mother. "There are enough gaps in the history of the Sanquhar knitting as it is," she told BBC. "We don't know where it originated from. We know it was a cottage industry, but we don't know where it came from or when it started." MacCormick later learned several glove patterns from a woman named Jane Forsyth: Forsyth loaned her gloves to MacCormick so she could make replicas. Nowadays, MacCormick is one of a small number of people who still have full knowledge of these designs, as most of them have never been written down. Rather than letting Sanquhar patterns die out, MacCormick wants to make them available for future generations. As of April of this year, she has recorded 11 out of 16 of the Sanquhar glove designs in her repertoire. She's also run knitting classes, including online classes during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (which are currently available on the Scottish Women's Institutes YouTube channel). Of course, the hope is that people will learn to make the gloves themselves - but in the meantime, MacCormick happily takes commissions.



• *Canine Partners UK*

Canine Partners is a United Kingdom-based charity that helps train service dogs and pairs them with people who would benefit from their assistance. Puppies are selected for training at seven or eight weeks old, after which their two-year training program begins. They start off in puppy training with a volunteer, then move on to advanced training at the Canine Partners National Training Centre. During this advanced training, the dogs learn skills that are essential for becoming a service animal: opening doors, retrieving the phone, pushing elevator buttons, and more. The dog is then paired with an applicant and the two go through two weeks of additional training together. The Canine Partners website is full of testimonials from clients, including 44-year-old Stephen Brookes. Brookes found himself in need of a service dog after a serious motorbike accident left him with a spinal cord injury. In a blog post, Brookes reminisces about his late canine partner, Kizzy, and how she impacted his life for the better. "Kizzy provided much-needed emotional support, helping me navigate the challenges that arose from my injury. Her companionship allowed me to connect more deeply with my family and provided a distraction from the chronic pain. Even at night, Kizzy's presence eased my nightmares and fears, offering reassurance and comfort," Brookes wrote. "One of the most significant benefits of having an assistance dog was the boost in my confidence. I could venture outside, knowing that Kizzy would help me if I encountered difficulties."

Custom Golf Tours of Scotland & Ireland



IT'S TIME TO GOLF!



BALLYBUNION



ST ANDREWS



WATERVILLE

Golfing in Ireland and Scotland is a rare treat!

Treat yourself to some spectacular golf on the Emerald Isle and the Birthplace of Golf!

IRELAND SOUTHWEST

- Ballybunion
- Old Head
- Waterville
- Tralee
- Doonbeg
- Lahinch

SCOTLAND HIGHLIGHTS

- Royal Troon
- North Berwick
- Muirfield
- Turnberry
- Prestwick
- Gullane No.1

IRELAND NORTHWEST

- Carne
- Connemara
- County Sligo
- Enniscrone
- Donegal

Book Now
+1 720 320 4943

More Information
www.beyondthecrowds.com

Beyond the Crowds is a division of A Happy Place Travel

Peaky Hat

One American business owner is a man of many hats



When Ryan Miller came upon the skeleton site for Peaky Hat, he knew he had the chops to bring it to life. What had started as a drop-shipping business soon became an online shop with its own line of cap designs.

"We sell hats - traditional newsboys and flat caps with a modern approach," shares Miller via email. "We aren't saving lives or making a dent in the universe with captivating technology. But we genuinely hope to make people happy, to have more confidence, and to feel like they belong to something."

Miller grew up in rural Ohio, outside the small town of Plain City. His ancestors hail from Scotland, Ireland, and England. His Irish forebears arrived in Ohio by way of Nova Scotia. These days, he lives in the city of Powell, OH with his wife and children.

Before launching his own business, he spent 20 years working in digital marketing and customer experience. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, Miller was on the verge of burnout. For the sake of his mental health - and with the aim of spending more time with his family - he shifted his career trajectory.

> ***"I have always had a burning desire to 'do my own thing' and build a lifestyle brand in the fashion and retail industry."***

"At school, I studied psychology and sociology, with an emphasis on consumer behaviour. Marketing and brand positioning always fascinated me, especially when told through the lens of storytelling. I was excited to apply my years of experience to a small business - one that I could directly shape - to tell the story the way that I have always wanted."

That story began over a year ago and, since that time, Miller has had to wear many hats, including those for technical support, design, marketing, and customer service.

While multitasking has its rewards, the job of stewarding the company solo is not without its fair share of challenges.

"It's easy to start second-guessing every decision I make or don't make. All the responsibility starts and ends with me," he explains. That said, Miller is optimistic about the company's future. "I am confident in my skills and my ability to apply my experience and I know the future is bright."

The majority of Peaky Hat's business comes from the United States, along with a sizeable chunk of customers in Canada and Australia. Miller largely relies on word of mouth to promote the shop, spurred on by his prioritization of customer service.

"Today, almost 90 percent of all the caps in our store we make ourselves and are our own label: Peaky Hat. Quality products, incredible customer service, and affordable pricing have culminated into the growth we've experienced. Our attention to detail and willingness to push boundaries with our caps, coupled with our attentive approach to the customer, really sets us apart from the competition. The caps speak for themselves, but our approach to treat every customer like a close friend or family member is key to our success and brand."

As far as Celtic-inspired fashion goes, Miller sees it as an untapped market.

"Many forms of Celtic fashion and influence deserve their spot in mainstream marketplaces and will surely continue to grow. The Celtic influence, however, is deep-rooted in irreplaceable history and tradition. Modern day designers and retailers are finding ways to incorporate that into their forward-thinking fashion approaches, and it is exciting to witness and be a part of. We are playing a role in this movement and don't take it lightly." As such, he believes more businesses like this will emerge over the next decade.

As for his own company, Miller is excited about the upcoming prospects of Peaky Hat, "from new designs, new customer experiences, to new offerings." He is already about 60 percent of the way to reaching the ideal he had initially envisioned.

"I will continue to learn and listen to our customers, finding opportunities to improve and to grow personally and as a business. I am hopeful that Peaky Hat can enter new partnerships, expand more into wholesale opportunities, and continue to refine our processes that will result in quality caps that our customers love."

www.peakyhat.com
@peakyhatstore

Find the Celt in You!

in America's Oldest Celtic City







St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival

March 8 – 9, 2025



- Top National and International Celtic bands
- Lectures, Workshops, Celtic Dance, Music & Magic
- Highland Games
- The Original St. Patrick Parade
- Whiskey seminar and tasting
- Celtic artisan crafts, food and more



www.celticstaugustine.com

St. Johns Cultural Council
Culture Around Every Corner.

Florida Arts & Culture

St. Johns County Tourist Development Council
Culture Around Every Corner | St. Augustine & Ponte Vedra

Promoting the Arts in St. Augustine
Romanza
Where the Arts Embrace the Sea
Founded 2009

The Scots-Irish: A Musical Journey

"Once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.."
~ *Seamus Heaney*

Between 1675 and 1745, more than a quarter of a million families of Scots-Irish origin immigrated to the United States for religious freedom and a chance for land ownership. Ultimately, they contributed more than they took from the burgeoning country, balancing their benefits by playing a vital role in shaping the fundamental values of American democracy.

Chris Moser, writer and producer of the in-production documentary The Scots-Irish: A Musical Journey, combines historical narratives with musical performance to shed light on both the legacy of these contributors and present-day efforts to preserve the ideals they fought to bring forth.

"In America civic education and appreciation of the fundamentals of democracy have declined alarmingly," shares Moser via email. "My partners and I want to do our part to address this by producing a compelling film that explores how one group of immigrants, the Ulster Scots, and their descendants have influenced America's democratic traditions and values in important ways."

While the storyline may focus on the turbulence of times gone by, Moser explains that the music is more than a mere traditional cultural representation - instead, it was chosen to showcase the spirit of the narrative itself.

"We opted for tunes that were contemporary with the times and events with which they relate. Although half of the film's running time consists of musical performance, however, it is not solely about the musical traditions of the Scots-Irish. The music sequences add considerable entertainment value and have their own historical and cultural significance.

> ***"As the late Irish traditional singer Frank Harte wrote, 'Those in power write the history, while those who suffer write the songs...'"***

Moser and fellow Atlanta filmmaker David Hughes Duke chose American folk singer John McCutcheon to serve as the project's musical director and narrator.

"John is a multi-instrumental musician and songwriter of Scots-Irish descent," notes Moser. "His dozens of albums have earned him six Grammy nominations. Since the 1960s, he has toured the world performing his original songs as well as traditional folk music and material by folk legends such as Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. John's songwriting has been hailed by critics around the world."

Born and raised in Knoxville, Tennessee, Moser's background in broadcasting, as well as his lifelong interest in his own cultural roots, provided the firm footing for the documentary he felt fated to produce.

"In college, I began a nearly lifelong career in media and, in the late 1960s, I became deeply interested in folk music. In the early 1980s, a concert featuring Mick Moloney and Eugene O'Donnell was an epiphany for me, introducing me to Celtic music. By the mid-1990s, I was booking the talent for the Atlanta Celtic Festival, bringing outstanding Celtic musical artists to the city. "

Moser's musical and cultural sojourns led him to Northern Ireland where his love for the land merged with his desire to highlight America's historic role between the six counties of the north and the 26 south of the border.

"While we are careful to cover the sectarian strife without whitewashing it, we also explore the common bonds that Ulster-Scots and Gaelic Irish heritage have shared throughout history."

At the time of the American Revolution in 1776, the Scots-Irish made up a quarter of the European population in America. Descendants of Scots who lived in Northern Ireland - and who retained their Scottish heritage and Protestant religion - later became



Scots-Irish Americans and were essentially refugees from what is now Ulster and Donegal.

Moser is cognizant of the significant role that these Scots-Irish played in shaping American history and protecting their legacy.

"Democracy is under threat in the United States and around the world. Autocratic movements are aggressively trying to subvert enlightened representative democracy in favor of authoritarianism. By exploring the important place of one group of immigrants and their descendants in America's democratic history, we hope to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of the principles of freedom and equality underlying the constitutional republic our Founding Fathers created in the U.S. as a model for all freedom-loving nations."

With the project close to completion, Moser continues to raise funds for the production and release. Despite many challenges and changes, he remains optimistic and has found rewards within the journey.

"Production will wrap later this year with an aim towards releasing the film in 2025. On a personal level, it has been an incredible experience working with brilliant scholars and deepening my own knowledge of Scots-Irish history and culture.

O'BRIEN CELTIC GIFTS

A division of O'BRIEN DIARIES Ltd.





DESIGNERS &
MANUFACTURERS
OF
QUALITY CELTIC
PAPER PRODUCTS



FOR YOUR DESK...

...Celtic Journals and Notebooks

FOR YOUR WALL...

Framed or Ready to Frame,

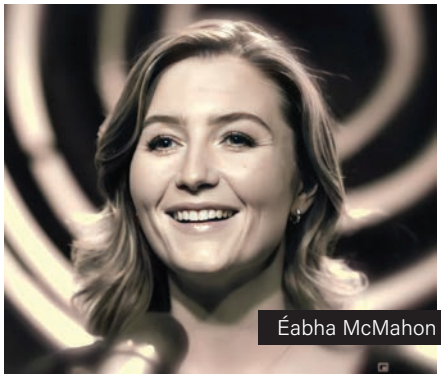
...Old Ireland Maps, The Irish Proclamation,

Irish Emigrant Trail & More

22-25 Westlink Estate Dublin 10 Ireland. Tel +353 1 6266722
email: sales@obrienceltic gifts.ie www.obrienceltic gifts.com

Celtic World Forum

The gathering's sophomore event seeks to inform, inspire, and entertain...


Éabha McMahon

It is no secret that Celtic-themed music has risen in popularity around the world over the last few decades. However, one place where that secret isn't as open is Ireland itself, home to global supergroups like Celtic Thunder and Celtic Woman.

Take it from Shane McDonnell, who knows that first-hand. Having worked in the Irish music scene since the 1990s with acts like Clannad, McDonnell took on a new challenge when he became part of the Celtic Woman team in 2015.

"I was hired to manage Celtic Woman, and one of the first artists I brought into the group was Éabha McMahon," shares McDonnell via email with Celtic Life International. "She and I had often talked about creating a unique event in Ireland that would have equal appeal to both the listener and musician.

"I had witnessed for decades the enormous appeal of Irish music across the world," he continues, "firstly with Clannad, and then even more so with Celtic Woman. Ironically, Ireland has always been the hardest market for both of these acts."

For touring artists like Celtic Woman to be commercially viable, they need to have a broad appeal - one that is accessible to overseas audiences.

"These are truly talented individuals that perform nightly to thousands of people around the world but - for whatever reason - cannot get the same attention in their home country."

McDonnell and McMahon both left Celtic Woman in 2019, continuing to work together towards creating that one-of-a-kind experience that would encourage the Irish to appreciate their homegrown artists.

"It is better for all of us here at home that this style of music finds success on a global scale," notes McDonnell. "Someone much wiser than I once said, 'there is no tradition without innovation.'"

That's the energy with which McDonnell and McMahon launched the Celtic World Forum, a three-day convention for Irish music where aficionados and artists alike can attend panels and performances, share their own sounds, and get up to date on musical opportunities and happenings in their own country.

> ***"The gathering's core mandate is to be informative, inspiring, and entertaining in equal measure..."***

"Our desire for the Celtic World Forum is two-fold," continues McDonnell, "to bring an overseas audience to Ireland to hear the music in its purest form and learn about its origins and what goes on behind the music, and to show the musical talent here in Ireland that there is a whole worldwide audience out there for them. They should never be afraid to innovate, as countless artists such as Planxty, Moving Hearts, Clannad, and others have done before. It is healthy to see a new wave of artists emerging - Lankum, Amble, Ye Vagabonds - putting their own take on Irish traditional music."

The first Forum took place at the end of 2023 to great success, with people from all around the world participating.

"The feedback we received from the attendees at last year's inaugural event was universally positive. Everyone attending said that it far exceeded their expectations, and expectations were high. We wanted every single person to walk away feeling entirely satisfied with their experience, and we achieved that aim.


Shane McDonnell

"Now we must do it all again and create a program for this year that fulfils the same goals, but is even better," adds McDonnell, who is gearing up to launch this year's Celtic World Forum, running from Sept. 5-7.

"There will certainly be a lot more people attending this year. Éabha has built a close Patreon community which was a big inspiration for this event, so we started with that and grew the message from there. There was a lot of word of mouth involved, and even more so this year, following last year's success. Our aims are very much to grow the annual event, whilst still retaining that sense of community between the attendees and the artists.

"I feel it is important that we celebrate how Celtic music, in all its many different forms, has such a global appreciation," continues McDonnell. "In the same way that traditional songs have been given new life by contemporary artists, it is equally fitting that more modern songs can be adapted to embrace more of their Irish heritage, to reach an audience that may otherwise never hear those works. For these are the songs that, in the future, will provide the source of what will then be considered traditional songs - songs that have stories that transcend generations."

@celticworldforum

WWW.CELTICWORLDFORUM.COM

63rd Scottish Gathering & Highland Games

November 8-10, 2024

SALADO, TEXAS



Celebrating

All Things Scottish!

saladoscottishfestival.com

254-947-5232



Beating *the* Heat

A former military and commercial pilot, Robert Scott is spending his retirement helping to face down Canadian wildfires

"Quick, come and look." Awakening to an unusual urgency in my wife's voice, I glanced at my watch: 1.30am. I joined her on the upstairs deck, noticing a strange orange glow beyond the window.

What greeted me was a scene from hell. The hills that stretched from one horizon to the other were covered in flame. A change in wind direction had caused the Whiterock Lake Fire, which had already threatened us for a week in July 2021, to explode.

A blaze that started in a relatively remote area would go on to burn over 83,000 hectares and cause the evacuation of thousands of residents. Homes were lost but thankfully no lives. We were ultimately among the lucky ones who escaped the ferocity of the fires.

This was a new experience for me, far from anything I had witnessed in previous years in British Columbia or in my early days in the U.K, and later, working around the world.

I was born and raised in what is now The Wirral in northern England, to a strong-willed mother of Irish descent and a father with Scottish roots. My father pursued the family male occupation of Ship's Master, so unfortunately, we didn't see a lot of him. There was an expectation that I would follow in his footsteps which I did, though with a major difference. I joined the Royal Navy and became a fighter pilot.

I enjoyed 12 exciting years in the Royal Navy before leaving to become an airline pilot. The new career took me from Hong Kong to New York to Switzerland before I ended up in British Columbia's glorious Okanagan Valley.

After the cavernous buildings and noise of city life, and even the beauty of Geneva, the Okanagan was paradise. This vibrant, rapidly growing environment also satisfied my desire for an active life in semi-retirement.

> ***However, all of this beauty came with a challenge...***

In 2003, Kelowna experienced the largest and most savage fire on record. Sparked by a single lightning strike, the blaze rapidly spread to consume 25,600 hectares and displace 33,000 people. 2014 delivered a sign of things to come when 320,000 hectares were burned in British Columbia, a massive increase over previous years.

At that stage, I became involved in forming an emergency management committee in our rural community. Predator Ridge includes nearly 1,000 homes of various types, surrounded by rolling hills clothed in a combustible blanket of greenery.

In 2014, the FireSmart program was already on our radar and some of us had previous experience in emergency management. Training was required and volunteers stepped up. New relationships were formed with our City Fire Services, especially as we were a long way out of town and far from rapid assistance.

We now have our own fire hall, manned by auxiliary fire fighters, supplemented by a small number of full-time professionals. Insurance has proved to be a challenge in some circumstances, and we are working on that.

We have a website with information on what to take if evacuated and how to FireSmart one's property. We hold regular mitigation sessions where volunteers remove dead wood and other flammables from the forest floor. Every spring, we hold our pre-wildfire season briefings and review the procedures for dealing with the threat.

In a part of the country where wildfires are a constant topic of conversation, there is new research into technology for wildfire surveillance and public events to educate people on what is being done to make our communities safer and reduce the tragic losses that are becoming the new norm in what used to be summers of fun.

In 2023, B.C. experienced the most devastating wildfires on record. More than 2.84 million hectares burned, with tens of thousands of people evacuated and hundreds of homes and other structures destroyed. Six firefighters lost their lives and some firefighters' homes were destroyed while they fought to protect ours.

Like many major issues in society, climate change has become politicized. Whatever your view, you can be sure that Canadian wildfires will continue to be a yearly feature well into the foreseeable future. We will continue to adapt until we get this monstrous burden under control.

WWW.PRCEMC.CA/FIRESMART

the cottages Ireland






Three hundred year old cottage charm, the sound of the sea, six miles of sandy beach... and you!

Six unique five-star whitewashed thatched cottages in a private hamlet-like setting on the beach. Perfectly located to explore the vibrant beat of Dublin's heart or the World Heritage Site of 'Bru na Boinne' in the heart of the Boyne Valley, birthplace of Ireland's Ancient East. ***25 Minutes from Dublin Airport.***

info@cottages-ireland.com

00353 41 9828104 • www.cottages-Ireland.com



Accessing Our Ancestors

Honour your ancestors, for you are the result of a thousand loves - *Irish proverb*

Weary of urban life while attending college in London, American-born Tara Brading joined a spiritual group centered on Celtic Paganism, marking the beginning of her true calling as an educator, storyteller, and songstress who focuses on ancient feminine wisdom as passed down from sacred ancestors.

"My initiation onto this path began 13 years ago," she shares via email. "It felt like the land was calling me and wanted me to remember something important. While on a pilgrimage at Stonehenge, I felt the presence of ancient ancestors for the first time. What struck me most was a feeling of sacredness. The sacred ceremonial ways of life are often forgotten in our modern world."

If the numbers are correct, our collective fixation with ancestry is on the rise, with more than 26 million people taking genetic ancestry tests since 2012 - the same year Brading began her own exploration into her past. Her journey involved much more than a standard DNA test, however.

"I felt a strong call to go to Ireland for an extended period. I had just left my job working for a reforestation non-profit and went on a deep-dive healing journey with my Irish heritage. After 2012, my life path went through many ups and downs, but my experience at Stonehenge never left me. The pilgrimage completely changed the course of my life and sparked the work that I do now, teaching ancestral feminine wisdom from Ireland and England."

Ancestral feminine wisdom is a term Brading coined to describe the connection between the teachings of female forebears and sacred feminine insight that she believes offers healing and empowerment for women today. If recent trends are any indication, she is not alone in such assertions; the exploration of the Divine Feminine as a method of personal transformation has become increasingly visible in recent years - more than a self-serving exercise, it is a natural and necessary next step to counterbalance pervasive patriarchy.

"Many people are hearing the call of their ancestors at this time, and I have followed this with a deep commitment to sharing ancestral wisdom with others, especially women."

> ***"This is a transformational time for humanity, in which predatory systems of supremacy are beginning to crumble and fall..."***

Uncovering the sacred feminine, and in particular Celtic feminine wisdom, reveals a long and dark history of oppression against women - a lingering wound that Brading seeks to balance with her healing workshops and storytelling.

"Over many generations, every attempt has been made to cut us off from the powerful magic that flows down to us from our wise women ancestors. Those of us with Irish ancestry carry the intergenerational trauma inflicted by the Church and British Empire on women deemed unfit for society. Some were incarcerated in institutions known as the 'Magdalene Laundries' run by the Catholic Church. But Ireland was not always this way. Éire was once a land that belonged to the goddess, and its ancestral feminine wisdom lives on in many ways, particularly in the mythology of the Irish goddesses."



Brading has managed to transform her own personal journey into that of a metaphorical midwife, guiding other women to access and bring forth otherworldly insights during her workshops and online programs.

"My students and followers are primarily women who long to connect with their ancestral heritage. They have roots in Ireland and England and want to engage with spirituality in ways free from cultural appropriation and extraction."

Over time, her work has risen above that of a mere messenger to that of a seer of sacred teachings, channelled through videos, songs, and in her classes.

"I feel passionate about women taking off the masks they wear and becoming the most authentic and sovereign version of themselves beyond the many roles they play in their daily life as a mother, daughter, wife, employee, employer, and so on. I seek to empower them to embrace aspects of their feminine self that have been buried, denied, or repressed so that they may feel confident and stand taller because of it. "

Similar to the hero's journey in Joseph Campbell's highly referenced study of the patterns of myth, Brading encourages a pilgrimage of the heroine - an undertaking that, while not without its challenges, ultimately offers profound rewards.

"It is not an easy path. It requires my full commitment, integrity, and devotion. This path spirals me into the deepest and sometimes darkest aspects of self and lineage so that I can revive precious medicine and truths that can then be shared. On the other side of patriarchal trauma is matriarchal medicine, and on the other side of ancestral pain is deep ancestral love."

www.tara-wild.com
@tara.brading

CHRIS NILAN

Golf Classic



POWERED BY

THE LIAM FOUNDATION

Monday, July 15, 2024

Summerlea Golf Club, Vaudreuil-Dorion, QC

Tickets, details, sponsorship:

@the_liam_foundation

steenie27@yahoo.ca

Sports, Self-Improvement, and Soul

As a youngster, best-selling author, entrepreneur, and motivational mentor Darrin Donnelly knew that he wanted to be either a writer or a football coach. Combining his love of sports and writing, he now motivates millions with his "Sports for the Soul" book series and other 'sports fables' designed to empower.

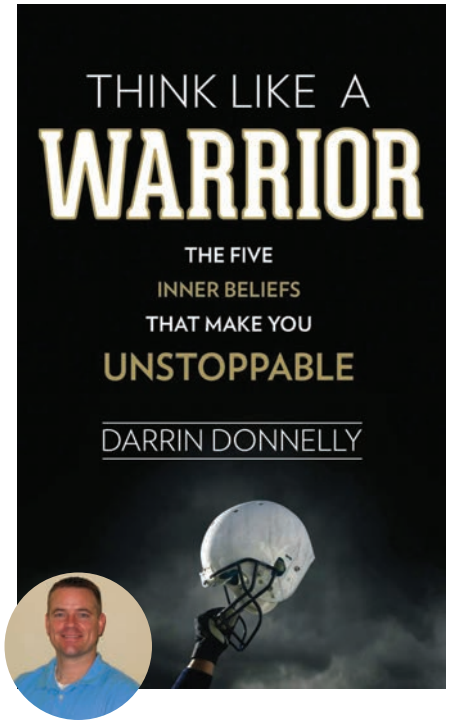
Reflecting on his earliest inspirations, the scribe cites a somewhat surprising source that set the pace for both his career and his life path.

"I remember wanting to emulate Sylvester Stallone," he shares via email. "I was just a kid, probably six or seven, but my brother and I were obsessed with Rocky movies. We'd watch them repeatedly. I remember my dad telling me that Stallone, the guy who played Rocky Balboa in the movie, also wrote the stories that became the movies. I recall thinking, that's what I want to do."

Admiration for the tenacious fictional pugilist is understandable; born into a big Irish Catholic family that remains tight-knit to this day, Donnelly may have called upon some ancestral determination that saw his forebears flee from Ireland to Scotland during the Great Irish Famine of the 1840s. Like them, he remained true to his own nature while developing newly found skills along the way.

"In college, I went into journalism and planned to become a sportswriter. Then, I caught the entrepreneurial bug and spent the next twenty-five years starting and running several different businesses, mostly online publications. Each startup involved a great deal of writing and editing, which I'm sure helped me become a better writer."

Ironically, honing his literary skill set was born of his dedication to becoming a better businessman, and his near-constant consumption of motivational materials and books. Over time, Donnelly realized that the personal development principles he was reading about were also readily available in sports training - and, ultimately, much more accessible.



"As an entrepreneur, I have always been a big fan of motivational and self-improvement books. About fifteen years ago I noticed that a lot of popular self-help books were making big promises that sounded too good to be true and I didn't see any data backing up some of their claims. The business guru has a brand to protect, and the self-help guru could be tempted to offer unproven advice. It hit me that the principles and techniques we learn from sports, especially from successful coaches, are much more reliable."

In true entrepreneurial spirit, Donnelly managed to integrate his experience and success in the business world with his knowledge of sports and coaching techniques and set out to write his own motivational books based on more than mere pie-in-the-sky sales pitches or illusory theories.

> ***"I started writing these types of books because I believe the sports world can teach us self-improvement principles that help us in all areas of life..."***

"The scoreboard never lies. You can't fudge or inherit your results. It's one thing to talk about the power of your mind and things like that; but in sports, specific mental techniques and leadership principles can be tested and proven out on the field of play."

According to Donnelly, the rules of that 'field of play' can provide a solid framework to even the odds in the often-uncertain game of life.

"The leadership techniques of great coaches work well in business and life. From the great achievers in sports, we learn how to be more disciplined, how to accomplish big dreams, how to manage our thoughts, and how to overcome adversity. I love how sports psychology is called "the science of success."

Although Donnelly writes about the principles within sports psychology, readers of his best-selling books span a wide and impressive point margin.

"My readers are from all walks of life. I hear from a lot of coaches and athletes, and a lot of teachers, parents, business owners, and salespeople. I also hear from parents who tell me they read these books with their kids to hammer home the life lessons taught in the books."

True to his Irish heritage, Donnelly is skilled at telling a tale and writes his motivational material in story form.

"Lessons are learned best when told within a story that resonates with us. My books may be about an athlete or coach, but even if most of us weren't great athletes, we can all relate to the fears and stresses they deal with. In sports, people must take risks to get a shot at greatness. The way coaches and athletes handle those journeys teaches us all how to do the same, even if our personal goals have nothing to do with sports."

www.sportsforthesoul.com
@darrindonnelly

Red Label Kilts Inc.
Est 1995
Kilts & Tartan Design

Traditional Kiltmaker & Custom Tartan Designer



74 Esplanade
Port of Sydney
Nova Scotia

redlabelkilts@gmail.com

RED LABEL KILTS
xow9hao5
TARTAN DESIGN

Photo by S. deMacIntyre

Our Kilts are Hand Stitched in Canada

Visit our Year Round Store or Shop Online for Worldwide Delivery

Rose Sutherland

Reimagining a classic Celtic tale



Rose Sutherland



Rose Sutherland can't recall the first time she heard the classic myth of The Selkie Wife. Growing up with Scottish, Irish, and English ancestry, "it feels like I have always kind of known the story," shares the Canadian scribe. What she does remember, however, is that something about the ancient Scottish folktale never sat right with her - even as a child.

Like many folktales, stories of the selkie may differ, but most have a similar structure. In Celtic mythology, a selkie is a mermaid-like creature who shapeshifts between seal and human form. To become human, she sheds her sealskin. Likewise, she must don that skin again if she is to return to her aquatic dwelling. In many versions of the tale, a human male falls in love with the selkie and steals or hides her sealskin so she can no longer return to the sea. Once she is resigned to life on land, the man marries the selkie and may even have children with her - however, the selkie always longs to return to her watery home. In some versions of the tale, one of the selkie's children finds the sealskin and gives it back to her so she may leave her husband. Although the ending might be sad for the man, Sutherland couldn't empathize with him, and it wasn't until recently that she realized why.

A few years ago, she came upon a post on the popular blogging site Tumblr.

"Someone had posted a series of things about magical creatures in a modern context. They had thrown out this notion of selkies as victims of human trafficking and I found it somewhat disturbing that our fables detail the kidnapping of a woman and the forcing of her into marriage."

Sutherland quickly began making notes that would eventually become the basis for her debut novel, A Sweet Sting of Salt. The writing process, she admits, was a messy one.

"I drafted the whole thing over nine months, in fits and starts. After lengthy revisions, the book was officially published this past April."

A Sweet Sting of Salt is Sutherland's reimagining of The Selkie Wife. The novel takes place in 19th century Nova Scotia, where a 24-year-old midwife named Jean falls for Muirin, her neighbour's mysterious new bride.

WWW.ROSESUTHERLAND.COM

"It becomes obvious that there is something going on with Muirin and Jean can't quite put her finger on what it is, at first. The more she digs into it, the more suspicious it all becomes."

In addition to revisiting the selkie figure, Sutherland wanted to challenge the idea that queer people didn't exist - or, if they did, they were exclusively miserable - in historical times.

According to the author, it was a challenge to market A Sweet Sting of Salt since it doesn't fit neatly into one category. These days, fairytale or folktale retellings are almost part of their own genre - whether it's Ava Reid's Juniper and Thorn or Neil Gaiman's take on well-known Norse myths, it seems that what once was old is new again.

Sutherland has her own ideas about why.

> ***"We think of them as children's stories - and they are simplified for small ears, if you will - however, they are actually quite complex..."***

"They delve into things that are very real, very grownup. Concerns about the world, how to look at the world, and lessons you may need to cope as an adult."

To her astonishment, she has come upon many people who haven't heard of the original selkie myth. At first, she had wanted the reader to be blindsided by the fantasy element.

"Unfortunately, to market this book, I have had to spoil the biggest surprise in the story."

As much as A Sweet Sting of Salt is a love tale, it is also a love letter of sorts to Sutherland's home province. Although the author currently resides in Ontario, she grew up in rural Nova Scotia.

"The ways in which I describe Nova Scotia was very much in homesickness and the desire to be home. And by transplanting the folktale to this continent, it instantly becomes much less homogenous. It was not, strictly speaking, only Celtic anymore."

@suther_rose



Irish Studies Program

www.fairfield.edu/irishstudies

FAIRFIELD, CT

Fairfield University, located in southwestern Connecticut only 75 minutes northeast of New York City, offers a dynamic program in Irish Studies. With a significant Irish-American representation among its students and alumni, interest in Ireland has characterized Fairfield for decades. This interest continues unabated today, as Irish people on both sides of the Atlantic have sought to resolve long-standing issues amidst an increasingly global economy. Fairfield's Irish Studies program enables students to investigate Irish contributions to a wide range of disciplines, including literature, history, film, and art. Courses focus on the troubled history of the nation, its colonial and post-colonial significance, the difficult politics of Northern Ireland, and the inspired art and literature that emerged from the turbulent Irish past. To complete the Irish Studies minor, students must complete a capstone research project in an area of their choice. Affiliated with the National University of Ireland, Fairfield's Irish Studies program, through study abroad in Galway, also allows students to take Irish-focused courses in archeology, economics, sociology, linguistics, and the Irish language. The program also offers on-site lectures, concerts, plays, and readings that complement the academic courses.

Fairfield UNIVERSITY

College of Arts & Sciences

Paddington Goes Gaelic

A beloved storybook character gets a makeover



Kay Hutchinson, Scottish radio producer, author and publisher of Belle Kids, recently translated Michael Bond's classic tale of Paddington Bear into the Gaelic language. The children's book includes a series of classic Paddington stories, which - for the first time - are all told in Gaelic.

"I saw a lack of well-known book titles available in Gaelic," Hutchinson explains from her home in Cotswolds, U.K. "We thought it would be a good idea to create a Gaelic book featuring a character that is loved and known the world over - Paddington fit the bill."

This is not the first time Hutchinson has dipped her toes in Gaelic waters; in addition to her new radio shows Stormy Weather and Waverly - both of which showcase the language - she has also produced two Gaelic language radio series for children, along with publishing a series of Gaelic children's books titled Captain Bobo.

"We began to build our connections with the Gaelic community, and everyone seemed to like what we were doing. But we soon realized that kids want to feel that they are part of a wider cultural spectrum."

Hutchinson worked with publishers Harper Collins, along with the Gaelic Books Council, to bring her vision for Paddington to life. Thanks to the popularity of the "little bear from Darkest Peru" - and the recent feature films - support for the project was immediate and strong.

She is quick to add, however, that the project wasn't without its issues.

"There are two key challenges in a project like this; the first is getting a translator that can translate the text into Gaelic in a way that properly expresses the sense of fun that is intrinsic to Michael Bond's original stories. The second is a slightly more practical issue - these are picture books, beautifully illustrated in colour by R. W. Alley, and colour printing is expensive."

The team opted to print the books in a two-stage process; first, the printing of the colour illustrations was done, followed by the printing of the black text only. This put even more emphasis on the quality of translation as the words had to fit the remaining available space.

Hutchinson found what she needed with Scottish teacher, actor, and musician Gillebride MacMillan.

"Gillebride was great at both conveying the sense - and the humour - of the original stories and working to the physical demands of the printed pages."

The book was published this past spring, aptly timed, as another Paddington film - Paddington in Peru – is scheduled to hit theatres in the coming months. The book launch - which included marmalade and treats, as per the original story - featured on BBC Alba's main evening news An Là.

Since then, Paddington has been selected as the only Gaelic title for the School's Programme at this year's Edinburgh International Book Festival, one of the most prestigious literary events in Scotland.

"The book is selling very well. It is not really a surprise as they are great stories, and the illustrations are fun. They lose nothing in the retelling. Local shops have also reported a marked increase in marmalade sales too, although that might just be a rumour."

Hutchinson believes that projects like this are important for Gaelic learners as it allows them to see the language in the mainstream.

> ***"The key is in making the language part of the everyday...that we are in some small way contributing to keep the language relevant through our books and radio work is something I am happy about."***

But the work won't end there. And while the Gaelic language may be currently under some strain, Hutchinson is hopeful for the future.

"One encouraging thing is seeing the steady increase in the number of school students attending Gaelic medium school. I am a Gaelic learner myself and it is interesting to see that some of my classmates are parents keen to keep up with their children."

Hutchinson already has several new projects on the go, including a second Paddington story for Christmastime titled Paddington agus Iongantas na Nollaige.

"There is also the possibility of at least one another iconic children's character that we want to bring to Gaelic-speaking children before the end of next year. We also have a couple of radio projects in mind, one of which would involve working with traditional musicians. So, it is an exciting time for us."

@BelleMediaCoUk

WWW.BELLEMEDIA.CO.UK

77th Annual Pacific Northwest

SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES

AND CLAN GATHERING

July 27 and 28

Enumclaw, Washington





Simon McBride

Northern Ireland's noted six-stringer stands on the shoulders of giants

The Belfast music scene of the 1980s and 1990s was, admittedly, a period of sonic transition; the popularity of punk and new wave artists was phasing out as the city embraced alternative acts, hip-hop beats, and hair-metal bands.

"It was a bit of a wasteland for a guy like me, to be honest" laughs guitarist Simon McBride over a Zoom call with Celtic Life International. "I grew up listening to classic rock; Led Zeppelin, Def Leppard, Iron Maiden, AC/DC, Guns 'n' Roses, and such. If you weren't a fan of U2 or Sinead O'Conner or Enya or the Cranberries, there wasn't a lot going on musically in Ireland."

While the Emerald Isle has produced its fair share of classic rockers over the years, McBride found inspiration across the water.

"Rory (Gallagher) was never really on my radar, but I did listen to Gary Moore (Thin Lizzy), who was Belfast man. And there is no denying the impact that The Edge has had on the instrument. For me, though, it was Jimmy Page, Jimi Hendrix, Eddie Van Halen, Randy Rhoads - rock and metal players. And then there were the shredders - Joe Satriani, Steve Vai, Yngwie Malmsteen, and the like. I didn't get into grunge when it first came out, but I've become a big Nirvana fan since then and guys like Kurt Cobain and Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine) have done their bit to keep the guitar in the spotlight. And I love Joe Bonamassa, who - in my mind - has single-handedly kept the art of blues guitar alive."

At a time when everyone with a laptop can create music, McBride believes there is still room for old-school talent.

> ***"There is so much new music being released these days on so many different platforms that it is sometimes challenging to find the really good stuff - the stuff with soul, played by real musicians..."***

"I can't imagine starting my musical career now...it would be very tough to make a go of it financially."

After stints as a solo artist and performing with Belfast bands Sweet Savage and Blind Friday - as well as a six-year gig with former Commitments frontman Andrew Strong - McBride joined British rock legends Deep Purple in 2022.

"It's been brilliant - a fantastic experience. These guys are veteran performers and still put on an old-school rock concert every night. And the fans are fantastic - I love seeing older folks with their kids and their grandkids out in the crowd. That is a true testament to the timelessness of this music."

Deep Purple is currently on tour in Europe, promoting their latest recording (titled "= 1"), with North American dates scheduled for the fall.

"We released a couple of singles over the past few months and the response so far has been really strong. The new album, these new songs, are a bit of a departure of sorts for us - I don't think any of us are content with sitting still and stagnating as players - and yet there is that instantly recognizable sound that only Deep Purple can make."

A huge part of that sonic moniker comes from the guitar.

"Talk about big shoes to fill," laughs McBride. "Ritchie Blackmore is a legend, and anyone who knows anything about the guitar knows how brilliant and important he is in the history of rock music. And then Steve Morse was with the band for almost 30 years, and he is, arguably, one of the finest guitar players on the planet."

Still, McBride is honoured to stand on the shoulders of giants.

"On the one hand, I am playing these tried-and-true parts that have been written and performed by these legendary musicians, while on the other hand I bring my own sound to the material. So, really, it is the best of both worlds."

Similarly, he notes that his hometown of Belfast now embraces two traditionally differing elements.

"It's changed a lot since I was a youngster," he notes. "I grew up during The Troubles, a very divisive time, and the guitar was one way for me to escape the insanity of it all. It's not like that anymore. Sure, there are still idiots about, and I suppose there always will be, but young people in Belfast have moved on for the most part. They're more interested in culture or school or getting a good job than in any sort of political sectarianism. They're so much more aware than we were at that age, with a greater sense of the wider world.

"And, really, when you think about it, that's great news for the city's music scene..."

@simonmcbrideguitar

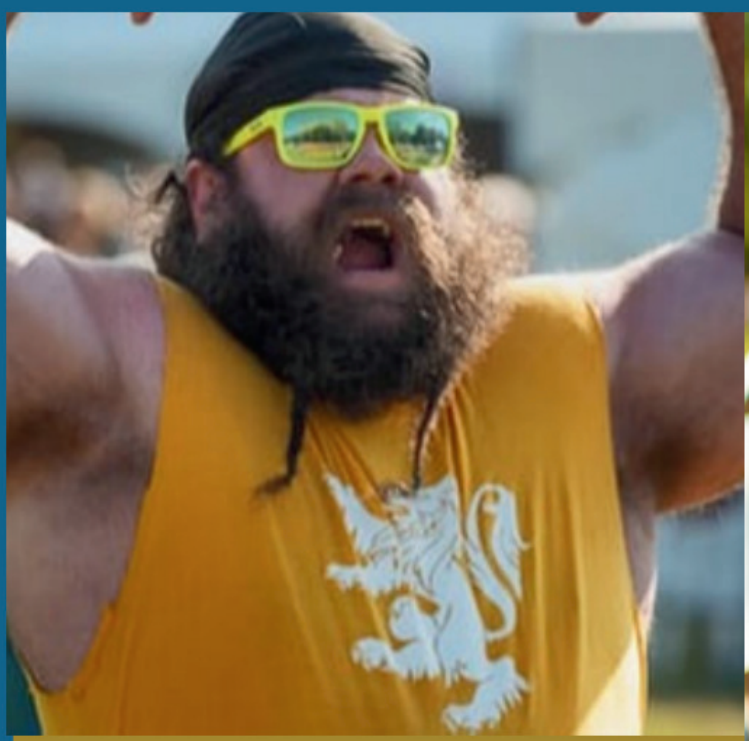
WWW.SIMONMCBRIDE.NET

JEUX ÉCOSSAIS DE
MONTRÉAL
HIGHLAND GAMES
DEPUIS 1855 | SINCE 1855

Sunday,
August 4, 2024

Douglas Hospital,
Verdun QC

Come for the competitions, *stay for the fun!*





montrealhighlandgames.com

GESTION PRIVÉE DE PLACEMENT
PEMBROKE
PRIVATE WEALTH MANAGEMENT



Bonhomme Setter

"Aux chants des violons, un écho se réveille..."
- Emile Nelligan



While Quebec's early French settlers brought their ballads from Normandy and Bretagne, the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Irish immigrants to the province in the 19th century added a considerable Celtic flavor and cultural influence on the region's music scene and more.

For over a quarter century, Quebec City's Bonhomme Setter has maintained that mélange of Celtic and French-Canadian folk traditions - one that still permeates "La Belle Province" to this day.

Founding member and flautist Sylvain Laberge reflects on the origins of the group and its ongoing evolution.

"Bonhomme Setter began in 1998 and we have had many musicians come and go over the years with each of them contributing to our sound. Patrick McSweeney, from Cork, Ireland, is a former member and a guest on our latest album Colours of Time. The current members are all from Quebec City. Since the start, our goal has always been to be true to ourselves, while both challenging and respecting our musical traditions at the same time."

That mix of past and present is apparent in the band's music as well as their moniker, which blends twin legends derived from the province's "deux solitudes."

"We chose a name that would connect anglophones and francophones at the level of folklore," explains Laberge. "It comes from the mythical 'bogeyman' legend in Quebec known as "Bonhomme Sept Heures" (recited to frighten children into coming home before 7pm) and its twisted translation to 'Bone Setter' (an itinerant medicine man who performed medical manipulations on terrified children) from English lore."

The idea for the band was sparked by Laberge's budding love affair with Celtic music, which began in the early 1990s.

"I was blown away by a Chieftains concert at the Quebec Summer Festival in 1993," he recalls. "I fell in love with Celtic music and especially the Irish wooden flute. Matt Molloy (Chieftains' flautist) pulled off this fantastic solo during one tune, and that moment was an eye-opener for me"

Bonhomme Setter's first recording, En Tombant du Troisieme, was released in 1999. Three more albums would be released by 2014.

> ***"Today, our sound can be described as Celtic, with classical and world music influences..."***

"Some of our albums have been called 'Celtic Chamber Music' - a label that we felt was appropriate, given our types of arrangements. With the release of Obia (2014), we focused on orchestrating strings - something that set us apart from other trad groups."

Obia was a turning point for the band and helped launch their first U.S. tour.

"The response was great, and we performed a lot of concerts in Quebec. We toured Maine and Massachusetts again in 2016, including a show with Irish fiddler John Carty as part of the Burren Backroom series in Boston. It was an incredible experience."

Bonhomme Setter frequently collaborates with other musicians, resulting in a melodic mish-mashing of classic and contemporary melodies.

"We create music that reflects who we actually are, rather than trying to sound like someone else," says Laberge, "We all have different musical backgrounds; Stephane is a well-established prog rock guitarist, and Marie-Noelle (violin, viola) and Marie-Pier (cello), are accomplished classical musicians. I am the only "trad" member of the band, but all members have a dedicated passion for Celtic music."

The band recently launched Colours of Time in their hometown.

"It took about two years to prepare this album, and it marks the 25th anniversary of the band, so we gathered some former members to record some tracks with us. We had eight musicians on stage at the Quebec City concert and performed one set with the new material and another set of our old songs from the early days. So far, the album has been well received, and we are planning more Quebec concerts. We are also in the process of creating an original show with a Quebec circus company, Look-up Aerial Arts and Poliquin-Simms2."

Ironically, despite the numerous changes in the band's line-up, and its many musical influences, Laberge continually finds himself returning to his roots.

"I listen to all kinds of music, but I always come back to Celtic - there is simply something special there that resonates with me."

WWW.BONHOMMESETTER.COM

YOUR NORTHWEST CELTIC SOURCE



Luxury handcrafted

local and imported clothing, jewelry, souvenirs, gifts, food and more!

Family Owned and Operated Small Business for Over 15 Years!

Celtic Crossroads

NORTHWEST

380 Winslow Way East
Bainbridge, WA 98110, Suite 100
360-344-2123

info@celticcrossroadsnw.com

Kate O'Callaghan

"From the past, through the present, into the future..."





Irish singer-songwriter Kate O'Callaghan shares a familial story with her latest album, Small Behaviours.

A follow-up to her album The Girl with the Beret (2016), the recently released 16-track recording is part of a larger project titled Songs from a Witness Statement, recalling an important time in Irish history.

"It draws from the personal stories of my great-grandaunt's witness statement to the Irish government's Bureau of Military History," explains O'Callaghan via email from her home in County Donegal. "It explores her experiences following the Rising in Dublin, including gunrunning from Scotland, encounters with British Army troops heading off to war, prison breaks, ambushes, and the burning of love letters in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday."

Born in Dublin, O'Callaghan admits she was a late bloomer to the world of music, picking up her first instrument as an adult after moving with her husband to his hometown of Donegal.

"My husband, Seamus, who is a musician (drummer and violinist), bought me my first acoustic guitar as a birthday present. I immediately had an urge to write my own songs. I'm not exactly sure where that came from to be honest, as I had no previous musical background or any idea if I would be any good at it!"

After finishing a long stint at university completing both a science degree and a Ph.D. in Biology, O'Callaghan was happy to trade in her lab coat for a more creative endeavour.

"I do believe that living in Donegal, with its stunning landscapes and wild Atlantic energy has been a great invitation to embrace creativity. You can't turn a corner here without bumping into a player or singer. There are an extraordinary number of incredible musicians in Donegal. It's just in the air."

Over the course of her musical career, O'Callaghan has worked with numerous notable names in Irish music, including the late Ted Ponsonby. She has also recorded and released several albums in addition to the Songs from a Witness Statement project, including her debut EP To You (2010) and her first full-length recording The Still Beyond (2013).

After years of experimenting with different musical styles - including folk, blues, rock, and jazz - the singer/songwriter finally found her voice.

"It took me a while - both my singing and my writing. To be honest, I try not to get too hung up about the labelling. The industry likes to pigeonhole artists for marketability, but it can stifle creativity if it becomes a prerequisite.

"I do tend to explore senses of place and purpose in time," she continues. "When we are gone, this space is filled with a less tangible and ethereal sense of memory and recollection.

> ***"I like to examine this space - the marks we make and the shapes we leave behind that imprint from the past, through the present, into the future."***

O'Callaghan muses that, although drawn from her great-grandaunt's memory, the songs on Small Behaviours have a broader appeal.

"Like many other women involved at that time, constantly negotiating obstacles associated with gender and social expectation, she navigated and exploited the bounded territory between the private female figure and public male space, making the tactics of hiding, concealing and deceit more achievable. The subtle 'small behaviours' of these women - their words, ideas, and gestures - not only rebelled against foreign rule but also against the accepted norms for women in society, revealing a social change in process that would ripple through time."

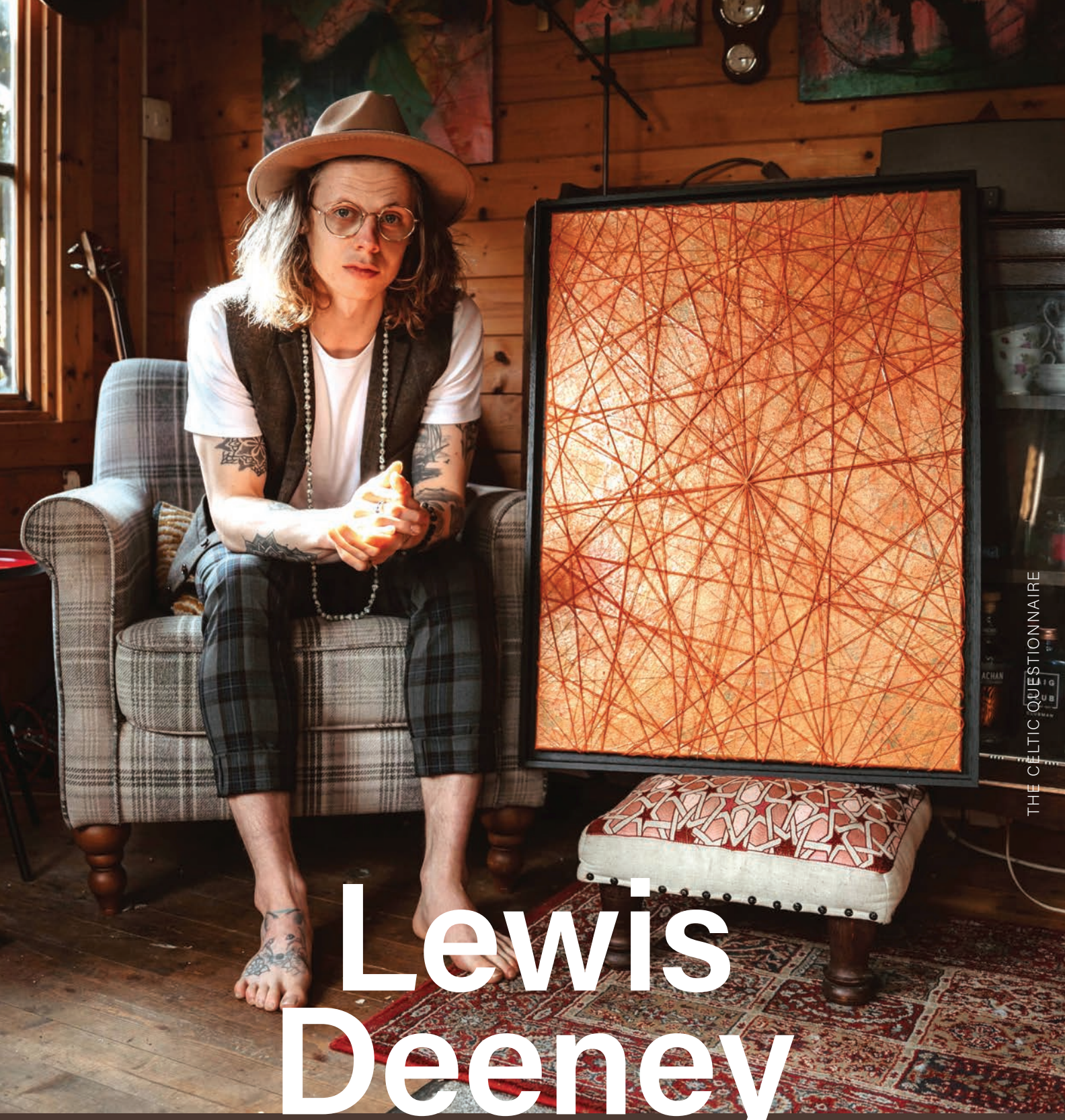
Since being released, Small Behaviors has enjoyed both popular and critical acclaim.

"The premier performance in Donegal, which received a standing ovation, was held on Ireland's new bank holiday celebrating St. Brigid, the first national Irish holiday in honour of a woman. I believe it is a real testament to how far we have come, as a society, in recognizing the importance of women's work and acknowledging the power in telling women's stories."

@kateocalmusic

WWW.KATEOCALLAGHAN.COM


NH SCOT
GET YOUR SCOT ON!
NH HIGHLAND GAMES AND FESTIVAL
SEPT. 20-22, 2024
LOON MTN RESORT
LINCOLN, NH
NHSCOT.ORG/BUY-TICKETS



Lewis Deeney

Scottish visual artist Lewis Deeney's work is instantly recognizable; interlocking geometric forms bring a paradoxical harmony to the gestural abstraction of the painted surface. The result is a compelling interplay of chaos and order, creating transcendent paintings with an iridescent glow as colours glimmer upon the textured surface. Recently we spoke with him from his hometown of Dumbarton, near Glasgow.

WWW.LEWISDEENEY.CO.UK *@LEWISDEENEY*



What are your own roots?

Scottish, I was born in Scotland and both my parents are Scottish. My great grandparents on both sides have Irish roots and emigrated to Scotland but I don't know many details about it. The name Deeney is contested between Scottish and Irish origin, but regardless of where it originated there was much cross over between them.

When and why did you first become interested in the visual arts?

It was never obvious I was going to be an artist; I was always creative and dotted between different things but never had much of a focus. It wasn't until my late teens that I began to pursue the visual arts, however, I was late to mature (still in the process) and didn't take it seriously enough until my early twenties when I was half-way through art school. In reflection, I was always searching for a way to express myself yet didn't find an outlet until abstract painting, and when I did, it captivated me. I was obsessed and have passionately pursued it ever since. Art is a way for me to understand myself and the world, to explore big questions that don't necessarily have an answer. It is a spiritual pursuit that connects me with something beyond myself.

Are they the same reasons that you continue to be involved today?

The essence is the same yet expressed in different ways. I feel compelled to create, it's a compulsion that I feel lost without. Art makes me feel more myself, more connected and more whole. It is still a personal spiritual journey... however, I now believe I have a purpose to share my art with the world. Art at its best is a message of hope, a vehicle for change, to awaken us from our daydreams and see the world from a new perspective. The more that art - in all its formats - is created and shared, the better the world will become as it forces us to question our assumptions, both of the world and of ourselves, connects us with something larger than ourselves, and gives us a vision of a more beautiful world.

How has your work evolved over the years?

The pivotal moment in my creative journey was when I started using a laser cutter. Up until that point my art was unrefined and exploratory. I had a love of abstract painting and of complex geometric structures, often created digitally, but I had not found a way to combine them. I then started using the laser cutter to cut my geometric composition out of my abstract paintings. It was an epiphany moment and unification of two separate, seemingly incompatible interests, which - when combined - created the foundational basis of my art practice to this day. I have practiced yoga for around 10 years, and at that stage of my life I was reading a lot of Eastern philosophy and travelled to India. I was captivated by the mandala, its spiritual significance, symbolism, and beautiful aesthetics. My art at this time was inspired by mandalas, predominately from Eastern spirituality. After graduating, I completed an MFA, during which I became interested in technology, humanity's relationship to it, and how it is changing our understanding of ourselves. Using the same process, I began creating portraits rather than mandalas. After art school I moved to Northern Ireland for a year before returning to Scotland, and it was during this time that I began to explore my own roots and Celtic heritage, right in my homeland. It's funny; we often overlook what is right in front of us and I was enticed by the exotic nature of distant spirituality. That shift towards Celtic spirituality was reflected in my art, as for me they are intertwined. The geometric complexity of Celtic art is mesmerizing and a rich source of inspiration. I feel that it is the art that is most authentically me and I am proud to continue the tradition, breathing new life into the past and expressing it in a new way.

What are the challenges of the vocation?

Probably the volatility of it all; lots of ups and downs, particularly emotionally. The excitement of an exhibition, sale, or award makes the stagnation feel even lower by comparison. This is when self-doubt creeps in as it is hard not to connect your self-worth to your art when you pour so much of yourself into it. It takes time to develop a mindset to protect yourself psychologically from this, something I have improved on but remains an ongoing challenge. The commodification of art is also a challenge, and thinking of money can take the magic away from creation. The reality, however, is that it's necessary to continue creating. The instability of finances is a challenge, as being an artist is expensive with many hidden costs.

What are the rewards?

Being in the studio and creating is a reward in itself. The creative process is a joy also, and being driven by an idea is one of my favourite states to be in. I also love the experience of sharing my art, whether it's exhibitions, sales, or visitors in the studio, it's always joyous when someone meaningfully connects with my work. Because my art is abstract, it's very open to interpretation, and I enjoy hearing what people see within it, regardless of their prior knowledge of art. I appreciate hearing the unique perspective of someone's subjective experience and genuine curiosity, as it often teaches me more about my own art.

What have been some career highlights to date?

Representing Scotland at the Festival Interceltique, the world's largest Celtic gathering, in Brittany last year was a big one. It was the first exhibition where I showed my Celtic inspired works. The whole experience was wonderful, from connecting with the Scottish delegation of the Highland dancers and the pipe bands to exhibiting artists from the other Celtic nations and all the people I met in between. I felt proud to be a part of it and deeply connected to my Celtic roots. My first year after leaving art school I exhibited at the Fire Station Creative, Fife, for my solo show 'Becoming,' which was a special show as it was my first solo show in an established gallery and brought together a diverse range of paintings from the previous few years and very much showed the beginnings of my creative journey.

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

They are both two sides of the same coin and work synergistically together. At certain times one might be more dominant, such as when an idea lights up my mind and energizes my soul. However, to turn that idea into reality there is a lot of work involved, lots of graft - much of which can be mundane. However, because it is fuelled by inspiration, the mundane work doesn't feel so mundane. New ideas often come during these times too, which can sometimes be a distraction and lead me off on a tangent. But it is important to capture the gift of inspiration when it arrives and save it for later. Ideas often brew in my head for a while, I can be working on a current project with ideas exploding in my mind for projects that will be years down the line. Getting back to your question, I would say inspiration because that is the fuel that motivates me to do the hard work and power through.

What makes your work unique?

Firstly, my creative process; I use a laser cutter to cut intricate geometric patterns that are combined with colourful, abstract expressionist painting. My art is also a unique fusion of old and new - I explore the art of the ancient past which serves as inspiration for my work, which is created in a contemporary way. It is a bridge between the past and present, all the while asking questions as fundamental as what it means to be human and why did we first start making art? There is a raw expression in my art - I embrace imperfections - and the hand of the artist is very truly present. In a world of commercial, machine-made reproductions, I want my work to feel very human, to feel alive. The human element is contrasted with the precision of the laser-cut pieces, which again I embrace - symbolic of our modern times with the interplay of humanity and technology. But artists have always embraced the latest technology, which has only added to the cultural significance of the artwork.

What makes a good painting?

A difficult, but important question to ask and attempt to answer. We can intellectualize about it all day but when a painting is good you just feel it in your gut - it is visceral and often undeniable. This will be different for every person, as art is incredibly subjective, which is part of its beauty. Personally, I believe one of the most important attributes in a painting is authenticity - when an artist connects with, and expresses, something higher than themselves, whether they are aware of it or not. Passion is evident in the paint; it gives it life and an energy. That said, all passion with no precision, care and forethought results in an explosion on the canvas, which at times can be good, but often not. A good painting is a balance between artistic passion and precision, regardless of subject, technique, or style. When an artist connects with something beyond themselves, commits to it, and puts in the work, good art will follow.

What is it about Scotland that is so inspiring?

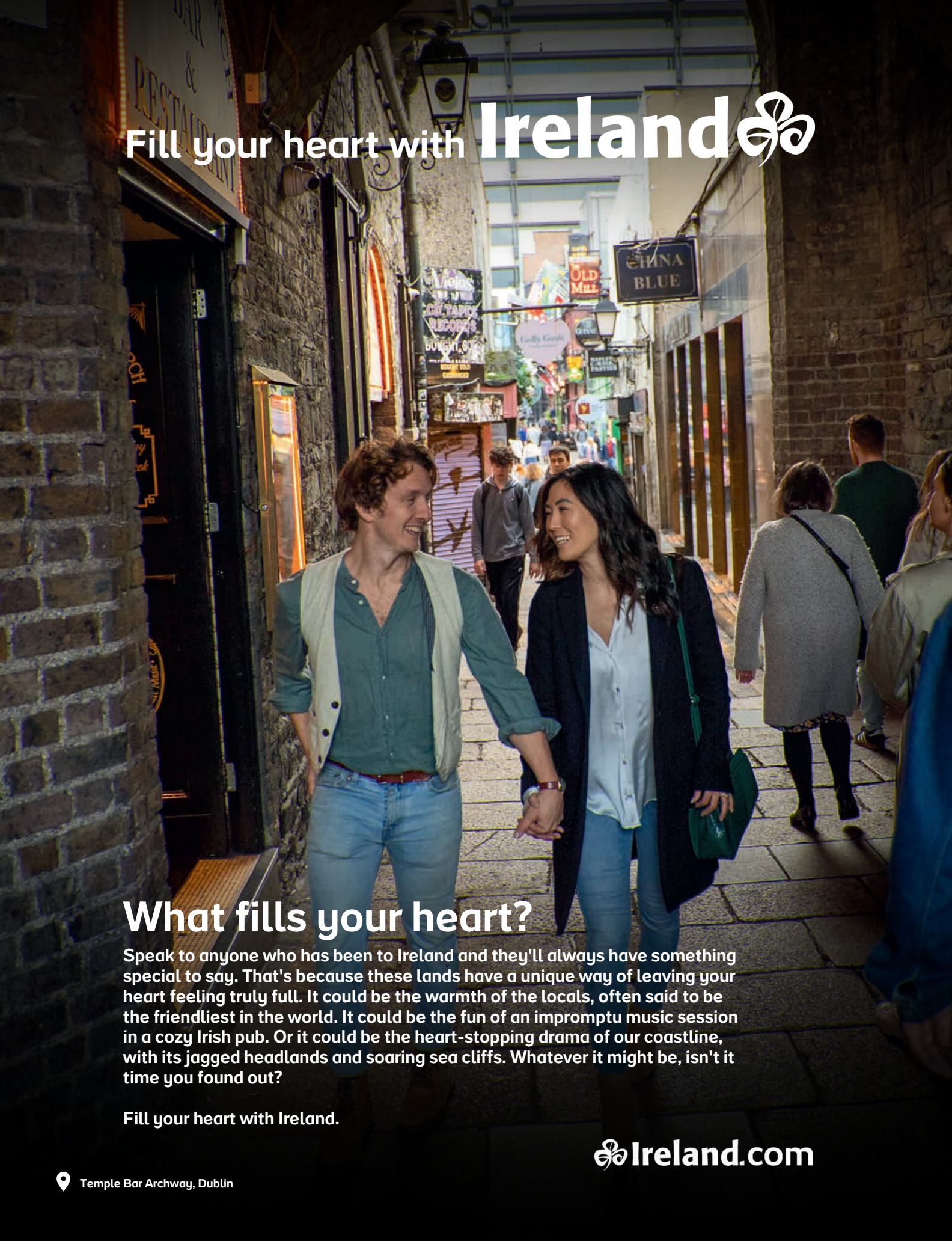
The Highlands are simply magical, and I love being there. The earthy colours are constantly changing with the seasons, and in Scotland, it is not unusual to experience multiple seasons in the one day. Our characteristic rain makes the rays of sunshine that much more beautiful. The Highlands are so sparsely



populated too - cities are often too busy for me. I feel inspired in the open spaces of the Highlands, it is so beautiful and peaceful. Culturally, Scotland's ancient past inspires me greatly; the castles, customs, stone carvings, and the diverse mix of people who have called Scotland home, all come together to create a unique history which has offered me a wealth of inspiration to create paintings from. Celtic art, a very broad term indeed, is geometrically complex. It is fascinating how the Celts were able to draw it and then carve it into stone and metal - beyond impressive, considering the tools they had. So, the Highlands inspire my soul and Celtic culture gives me a way to express it.

What's on your creative agenda for the rest of 2024?

I have a show opening this summer titled 'The Sky is Dreaming,' at the Fire Station Creative, in Fife, Scotland, from July 5 - 28. I am very excited for this show and I have given it my all – these are all new paintings and inspired by Scotland's Celtic past. I will also be attending my first art fair in London in September which I am excited for. Artistically, I have had ideas for a series of public sculptures brewing in my mind for quite some time that I intend to bring into being, also inspired by Celtic culture. That will be a new challenge for me which I am really excited about.



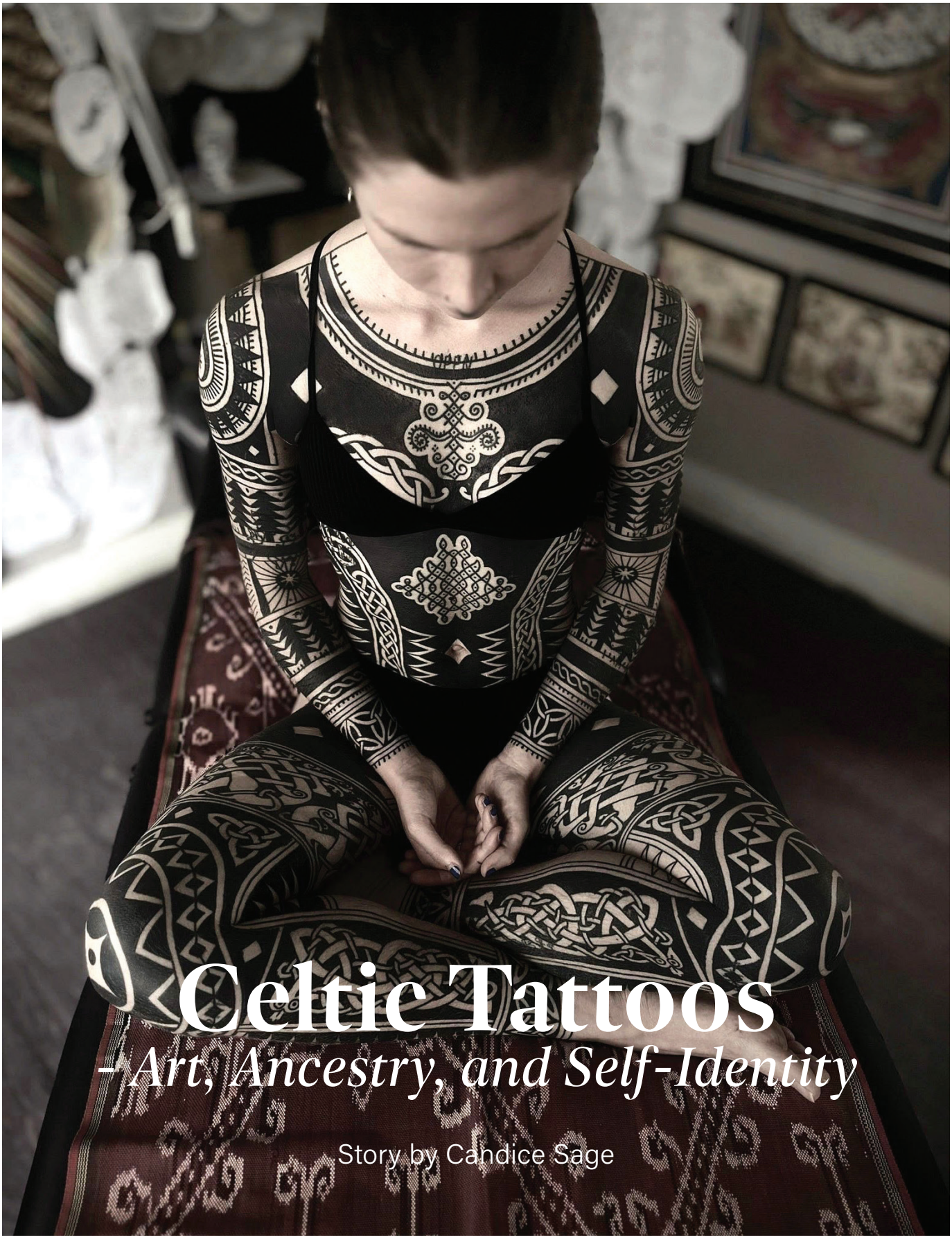
What fills your heart?

Speak to anyone who has been to Ireland and they'll always have something special to say. That's because these lands have a unique way of leaving your heart feeling truly full. It could be the warmth of the locals, often said to be the friendliest in the world. It could be the fun of an impromptu music session in a cozy Irish pub. Or it could be the heart-stopping drama of our coastline, with its jagged headlands and soaring sea cliffs. Whatever it might be, isn't it time you found out?

Fill your heart with Ireland.

Ireland.com

Temple Bar Archway, Dublin



Celtic Tattoos

– *Art, Ancestry, and Self-Identity*

Story by Candice Sage

People get tattoos for a variety of reasons - from a desire for adornment to commemorating a special event or person, or perhaps the peril of a drunken dare. With Celtic tattoos becoming increasingly popular in recent years, Celtic Life International consulted three expert artists and their clients to better understand why.

Pat Fish of Lucky Fish Tattoos is a Santa Barbara, California-based artist who grew up an orphan. As a journalist, she sought out her ethnic identity at the age of 30, timed with Saturn's Return and the quest to discover one's path in life. Fish is of Scottish heritage, with Pictish roots.

Treubhan (meaning "Tribal" in Scottish), is a Brighton, U.K. Celtic artist. He was born in Glasgow and is connected to Ireland through maternal grandparents. He grew up in the Edinburgh countryside with a Scottish stepdad.

Morpheus Ravenna of Banshee Arts is an Oakland, California-based Celtic artist with several generations of Irish, Scottish, and British ancestry.

Each agrees that the Celtic Tree of Life has replaced the Celtic Cross as the most popular pattern today, and all three theorize about what characterizes a Celtic tattoo.

"A Celtic design weaves in and out," explains Fish. "It's like a crochet, with genetic and ethnic based patterns."

Treubhan echoes the definition, adding that identification with Celtic ancestry and traditions are hallmarks of integrity and authenticity.

"It is really all about intention," he noted. "Both the giving of the tattoo and the receiving of the tattoo represent a connection to something bigger...

> ***"I believe that people are looking for a unique experience that will link them to their heritage and culture..."***

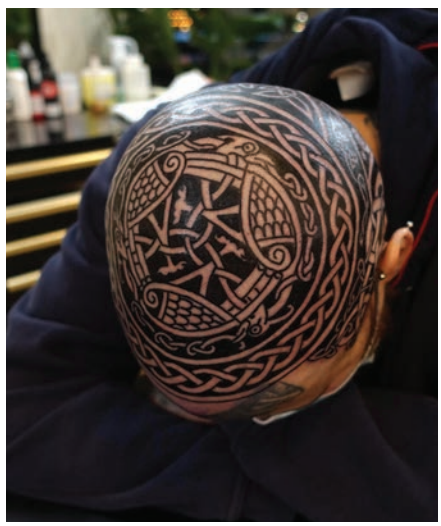
Ravenna describes the spiritual aspect of Celtic tattooing as "an intimate practice, requiring a vulnerability to undergo a process that is cleansing and centering - it offers one the opportunity to step away from oneself and regather."

Each had different reasons for becoming a tattoo artist.

Fish has art and film degrees and has worked as a landscape artist and as a journalist. As a neurodiverse person, being self-employed had a lot of appeal. After discovering her Pictish heritage, she experienced a change in focus. Pictish was more challenging, however, as there weren't as many resources to draw upon - only 6th to 9th century Roman carvings and text. Her confidence has grown with experience, and now she lets "people know that the tattoo has to be a certain size if it is to work." Patterns are adapted to fit a person's body or body part to create "the best canvas."

George Bain's book on Celtic Art from Edinburgh provided a source of inspiration for Treubhan and freehand tattoo design. At age 19, he moved to London and became an apprentice






Treubhan


Morpheus Ravenna


Pat Fish

where he was "completely immersed, it became my whole world." He describes the thrill of finishing a tattoo as "my buzz, my high..."

Ravenna was self-taught and started experimenting with tattoo design around the age of 12. In her 30s, she devoted herself to the spiritual side of Celtic ink, training with world-renowned tattoo artist Indexa Stern in San Francisco. She notes that the "old boy" environments of the past have changed rapidly as more female artists fell into the field.

> ***"It is transformative, a way for people to embody their beliefs, and to shift the way that they see themselves..."***

Each has had their fair share of challenging tattoos, including work on sites of "pain" - hiding self-harming scars, wounds, and the like.

Ravenna recalls a piece she created on a mastectomy scar - a quill and pen design with the tips dovetailing into twin ravens beneath a feathered mantle; a form of The Mórrígan, the Celtic goddess of death and rebirth. The technical element was a challenge - mastectomy scars have a "three-dimensional quality, so it is like sculpting onto flesh." A mastectomy scar is "a site of both pain and healing," she continues, "so getting it right is important as there is so much at stake."

Treubhan had a client who wanted to overlay Celtic patterns over other existing tattoos.

"Large scale tattoos can be scary as they are permanent. The experience is a major physical, emotional, mental and spiritual investment - both for the artist and the client."

One of his clients now adorns a spectacular "body suit."

"It feels like I am now in this version of myself where I am outwardly expressing what is on the inside," she shares anonymously with Celtic Life International. "Previously, I struggled with my body because of self-harm scars and the sadness they brought on from remembering the hurt and pain I experienced. The tattoo removed attention from my past hurts and pain and now people ask me about my heritage and connect with a happier version of me. It amounts to hurting myself in a productive way, rather than the way I hurt myself as a teenager - a different take on the pain beyond sadness that is powerful and empowering, a conscious decision versus an impulse."

And while the reasons for getting a Celtic tattoo may have changed over time, the practice itself remains pretty much unchanged over time.

"Tattooing hasn't really gone anywhere," notes Ravenna. "If anything, we are seeing a return to the old practices - ones that may have been forgotten, or that have gone underground. The practice is older than all of us, so all that is required is a re-remembering. And, in the process, we reconnect with our roots."



15th Annual

Bitterroot Celtic Games & Gathering



August

17 & 18, 2024

Daly Mansion

Hamilton, Montana

Tickets available on-line or at the gate.

www.bcgg.org.



The Celtic Tarot

As Lillian Holt explains, the future is in the cards



"We live in two worlds... the world into which we were born, and the otherworld that was born within us. Both may be a blessing or a curse. We choose." - excerpt from a Druid homily.

The word "Celt" is derived from the Greek "Keltoi" - meaning foreigner - although period etymology points to an alternate meaning as "secret" or "hidden" according to Indo-European and Old Irish origins.

Keeping things hidden and secret was a tenet followed by ancient Druids - forbidden from recording any mystical knowledge in written form. As a result, other than manuscripts from Greek and Roman scholars of the 4th century, surviving texts of Celtic pagan spiritual practices remain scarce, yet – notably - references found within folklore, mythology, and song have had an enduring legacy that remains highly visible within contemporary culture.

Celts of yore were a highly mystical people who, among an array of spiritual customs, venerated all forms of nature. As animists, they believed that trees, rocks, streams, and mountains were imbued with an otherworldly presence and could portend future events.

Such powers of "second sight" can be traced back to the supernatural druids who practiced various forms of divination. Analysing the activities of birds for omens, and studying celestial configurations were among their many functions as religious leaders, lore keepers, and political advisors. In particular, Irish druids carefully observed cloud formations (a ritual known as "Neldoracht") to foretell the future using a yew rod inscribed with words written in Ogham - the ancient script of Ireland.

Runes and tarot cards came centuries later, and although the origin of the tarot is not exclusively Celtic, its most famous spread is, nonetheless, named for the Celtic Cross.

Yet, how did the most popular tarot spread, within the most widely used divination tool, become titled with the most recognized Celtic religious symbol? Typically, the answer relies on a scarcity of sources, although research into the origins of the tarot and its connection to the Celts does offer a glimpse into the pervasive presence of ancient Celtic culture that has endured through the ages.

References to the occult are apparent in various cultures on virtually all continents. As one of the most practiced forms of divination, the tarot has a long history that begins in the Western world - in Italy during the late Middle Ages - when playing cards were all the rage amongst the rich.

> ***"Elaborately hand-painted with intricate illustrations, cards were coveted by Kings and nobles as luxury items.***

These original decks (adapted from earlier versions from China, Persia, and Egypt) consisted of four suits - variations on those recognized today: swords - (spades); sticks/ wands - (clubs); goblets/ cups - (hearts); and coins/pentacles - (diamonds).

By the early 15th century, 21 trump cards were added to a standard deck. These "triumphs" or "Trionfi" (so-called in Italy) - depicted exquisitely designed subjects such as the Fool, the Emperor, and other mediaeval allegorical characters and settings. This early version of the tarot - known as "Tarocchi" - eventually spread throughout Europe, popularized in "trick-taking" games that later evolved into a modern version of the card game Bridge.

By the 18th century, French writer Antoine de Gebelin introduced the concept of using Tarocchi cards as divination tools and suggested that the added trumps had connections to mythical sources as diverse as the ancient Egyptian texts of the Book of Thoth and the Hebrew alphabet and Kabbalah. However, none of these claims was ever fully substantiated.

Soon after Gebelin's literary text on the tarot was released, Jean-Baptiste Alliette - known under the pseudonym "Etteilla" released the first tarot deck to be used exclusively for fortune-telling in 1789 - the same year as the French Revolution. As the news spread across Europe of "la Grande Révolution", the revamped version of the cards as a divination tool also made its way across the English Channel, eventually igniting a little uprising of its own with the members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a century later.

While books about mysticism made their way through Europe in the late 1800s, a group of British men and women created an underground movement devoted to metaphysics and the occult, analysing a wide range of material from medieval manuscripts to Egyptian and Hellenic archaeological discoveries. Essentially, freemasons with a bit of a twist, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn attracted the interest of many influential artists, writers, and musicians. Irish poet W.B. Yeats was a prominent participant, as was English occultist Aleister Crowley. Scholarly spiritualist A.E Waite, also a member, would go on to create the widely used Rider-Waite tarot deck with illustrations by author and artist Pamela Colman Smith, published in the early 1900s.

Waite's newly created deck included the



accompanying groundbreaking guide, "A Pictorial Key to the Tarot" - now considered the basic blueprint for all things Tarot in the post-modern age. In addition, the guide contains one of the few recorded references connecting the Tarot to what he termed "an ancient Celtic method of divination" when he first introduced the Celtic Cross Spread in the 1910 publication.

"I offer a short process which has been used privately for many years past in England, Scotland, and Ireland," he wrote. "I do not think that it has been published - certainly not in connexion with Tarot cards"

Undeniably the most popular of all Tarot formats, the Celtic Cross spread is laid out in the shape of the iconic religious symbol found across Ireland, with four additional cards placed to the right of the cross to represent the staff.

According to some interpretations, the cross structure incorporates both Christian and pagan elements representative of various facets of ancient Celtic lore. The distinguishing circle at the intersection of the cross, linking the four arms mounted on a staff are - ostensibly - symbolic of the two seasons of Samhain (winter) and Bealtaine (summer), which are then further defined by the festivals of Imbolc (Spring) and Lugnasadh (Autumn). Further, the four seasons may connect to the four directions (North, South, East, and West) - and the four elements of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. The circle at the centre represents the sun that unifies the four quadrants, with various masculine and feminine attributes ascribed to elements within the arrangement. Some interpretations liken the four directions to the phases of time itself: The North representing Possibility; the South denoting the Present; the West, the Past; and the East, the Future - with each of these accounted for in the Celtic Cross Tarot spread.

Since lore reveals that the ancient Celts lived their lives according to the movements of the sun, it is appropriate that the spread attempts to convey as much within an esoteric equivalent. According to this theory, the transitory nature of time and its phases is linked to a raising of consciousness (sunrise), emerging from the unconscious realms (sunset), occurring within an ongoing cycle of light and dark - or, conversely, via awareness and detachment.

Numerous formats and methods of interpretation for the Celtic Cross Spread have evolved and been adapted over the years. British actress and socialite Frances Farr - also a member of the Order of the Golden Dawn - is credited with creating an enduring layout based on numerology that differed from Waite's original concept.

> ***Despite the exhaustive speculation over the years, the precise origin of the Celtic Cross Spread remains a mystery.***

For over a century, occultists and scholars have speculated on the connection between the tarot and Celtic culture and whether it exists at all. Some experts claim that the naming of the spread was most likely the result of Yeats' involvement in the Order of the Golden Dawn, which counted many Celts among its members.

John Michael Greer, author of the "Celtic Golden Dawn" (2013) explores the Celtic connection to the original English Hermetic Order in his "Complete Curriculum of Druidical Study". He cites three factors for the significant Celtic influence within the Order and writes,

"The fascination with all things Celtic that pervaded English culture during the heyday of the Golden Dawn…(included) three factors… Samuel Mathers, one of the order's founders, descended from the MacGregors and an enthusiast for all things Celtic, … Mather's wife Moina, a gifted clairvoyant and as much as a Celtophile as her husband; and William Butler Yeats who was initiated into the order in 1890".

Yeats most certainly played a significant role in creating the earliest version of the spread, given his involvement in, and the popularity of the Celtic revivalist movements of the early 20th century.

Since the emergence of the Rider-Waite deck in 1910, numerous versions have followed that deviate significantly from the illustrations of Waite's original. Current Celtic Tarot decks incorporate a range of ancient imagery that includes druids, faeries, and Celtic gods and goddesses - notably absent from the early days of the Tarot. The Celtic Cross spread, however, remains the mainstay for most Tarot divinations.

Although the precise origins of the Celtic connection to the tarot remain shrouded in mystery, what is apparent is the ongoing interest in the mystical ways of the past that have endured through centuries. Even though most knowledge of ancient Celtic spirituality remains based on Greek and Roman texts - likely unreliable given the tactical viewpoint of those authors - the remaining spiritual lore of the early Celts of Ireland and Scotland, particularly, has not only survived but thrived, thanks to many proud and practicing Celts today.

Leslie's Illustrated CELTIC TRAVEL TRILOGY BY LESLIE LEE



Armchair travel?

Or hit the road!

WITH A POCKET-SIZED FIELD GUIDE TO IRELAND

Shop now at

leestudiotc.com

Celtic Book Towns

Bookshops are an essential component of Celtic culture, and book towns have become an equally vital and vibrant fixture.

Caitlyn Elizabeth Mearns tells us more.



There is nothing quite like walking into a bookshop: the scent...the atmosphere...and (if you're lucky) a four-legged creature napping in the corner. It is a feeling unlike any other - one that whispers, "You are home."

Readers and writers are intimately familiar with this feeling. They seek it out, be it through bookshopping, signings, or other literary events. For some, bookshops are a time machine, a door to a parallel universe, or a pool of self-reflection.

Imagine, then, stepping into an entire town of tomes, a village of volumes, a burgh of books...

In its most basic of terms, a book town is a small, usually rural area, filled with new, used, and antiquarian bookshops of myriad styles and themes. Historically, there was a set criterion denoting what is or isn't considered a bookshop, how many bookshops may exist in the town, what kind of bookshops those might be, and so forth. Today, however, the regulations are looser, and more locales harboring a love of the written word now identify themselves as book towns.



Perhaps not surprisingly, given their penchant for storytelling, several of these prominent "book towns" can be found across the Celtic nations.

One such town is Wigtown, a small community in the south of Scotland within the Galloway region.

Adrian Turpin, director of the Wigtown Book Festival, says that - compared to the rest of Scotland - the area is a bit of an anomaly.

"When you think about this part of the world, you usually think about Edinburgh or Glasgow," he shares via email. "Or maybe the Highlands and the Highland islands. That is how Scotland is presented in the world."

Turpin notes that Wigtown - and all of Galloway - has a rich and diverse past that weaves together threads of Scottish, Irish, and Northern Irish culture into a unique cultural tapestry.

Historically, Wigtown existed as a mostly forgotten farming community. The idea to create a book town originally came from a very practical place.

"That was always one of the key motives for book towns," explains Turpin. "They were deliberately placed in rural regions to encourage tourism."

There is, he admits, another - perhaps more romantic reason - for their existence.

> ***"I believe that books have the power to make a difference in our lives..."***

As such, Turpin and his peers work diligently each year to operate and oversee the Wigtown Book Festival.

Founded in 1999, the Wigtown Book Festival is a ten-day gathering that includes music, ceilidhs, cinema, food, and - of course - literary events such as author signings and discussions.

"It is a little like the circus coming to



Adrian Turpin



Julie Finch

town," smirks Turpin. "The population here is less than one thousand, so during the festival it is not unusual to find more people at events than living there - it just sort of takes over."

The happening hosts anywhere from 250-300 events each year, with four or five occurring concurrently, and features local, national, and international writers and creators. Over the years, the festivities have featured talent from across the U.K., Germany, France, South Korea, Taiwan, and beyond.



This year's festival will be held from September 27 to October 6.

Turpin is quick to acknowledge the debt that Wigtown, and other book towns, owe to a gentleman named Richard Booth and a little Welsh town known as Hay-on-Wye.

"There is something really magical about this place," says Julie Finch, CEO of the Hay Festival, Hay-on-Wye's annual book festival. "Before arriving in Hay, visitors are treated to a wonderful trek across a bridge amidst the stunning backdrop of the Brecon Beacons (Bannau Brycheiniog) National Park. And then, quite suddenly, they are pulled into a bookshop at every turn. These are all independent bookshops, so they are quirky, have unique offers, and employ incredibly helpful and knowledgeable staff. It is a living, breathing, book town place.

> ***"And it is all about the books you've browsed, bought or discovered - the books you didn't know that you wanted, but somehow go away with."***

Hay-on-Wye began its book town journey when Oxford graduate Richard Booth opened his first bookshop, The Old Fire Station, in 1962. Booth, a renowned eccentric, began trading books internationally, many of which he bought second-hand out of the United States. Inspired by Booth, more bookshops opened over time and, by the 1970s, Hay-on-Wye had become widely known as "The Town of Books."

Today, the area is home to over 20 second-hand and antiquarian bookshops.

In 1987, Booth and his literary cohorts created the Hay Festival. Since then, hundreds of thousands of visitors, and up to 700 artists and creators, gather for 11 days of books, art, culture, and celebration each spring.

Finch was a lover of the event long before she took over as CEO in 2022.

"I have been a long-time audience member. I don't recall what first propelled me here because it was far from where I lived, but I came back year after year and really began to become imbibed in it. So, I became a part of it."

Along with daily book readings and signings, guests are encouraged to visit art galleries, take in the cinema, or simply relax and chat at a local restaurant, cafe, or pub.

"And then you'll find yourself on a bench somewhere talking to absolute strangers about something you've just been to," laughs Finch. "There is a real sense of community."

While Finch and her team recently wrapped the 2024 Hay Festival, the spirit of the event carries on through the Hay Festival Global, which sees similar festivals take place internationally throughout the year. Hay-on-Wye also hosts a literary Winter Weekend in November.

"Books are very much the fabric of our existence," notes Finch. "Ideally, everyone would be a reader. We do know that, in the U.K., one in five children don't have any books at home. And on the other end, if you could buy as many books as you wanted, you could never read them all.

"The quirkiness, or the serendipitous nature of independent bookshops, is that you are going to leave with something that you never imagined you would read.

> ***"That art of discovery is important in terms of opening our minds and broadening our thinking in a very complex world..."***

Wigtown and Hay-on-Wye are not the only book towns within the Celtic nations. There are others, including the increasingly popular Irish book town of Graiguenamangh in Kilkenny - and there are likely to be more in the future.

Turpin says that the preservation, promotion, and evolution of book towns is vital.

"It is the bringing together and defining of communities...we connect with one another through the sharing of our stories..."

WWW.WIGTOWNBOOKFESTIVAL.COM WWW.HAYFESTIVAL.COM

stone mountain
scottish festival & highland games
attend "the friendly games."

The SMHG Board of Directors and our family of volunteers wish to welcome you to our 52nd presentation of the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland games. Come meet your fellow clansmen along with our Honored Guests and many old friends as we gather in this picturesque setting so rich in heritage.



Enjoy Scottish:
Musical Entertainment
Harping & Fiddling
Shops & Foods
Dancing

Along With:
Gathering of Clans
Children's Games
Highland Games
Demonstrations
Pipe Bands
Exhibits

Atlanta, Georgia and
Stone Mountain Park Meadow

October 19th & 20th, 2024

Adult $25 (Sat or Sun) | Children under 12 free.*
*With adult ticket entry. Park vehicle entrance fee required in addition to event tickets. No pets allowed.

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Presented by
Stone Mountain Highland Games, Inc.
P.O. Box 384 • Marietta, GA 30061
(770) 521-0228 • www.SMHG.org

©All rights reserved Stone Mountain Highland Games, Inc. 2024



The Inspiration Orchestra

A small Scottish musical ensemble is making a big splash. Words and photos by Tom Langlands.



I first heard The Inspiration Orchestra when a small ensemble of members played in the Garden Room at Pitmeadow Farm, Dunning, Perthshire as part of their 2023 Concert Tour. It was Christmastime and the atmosphere was magical. Vine branches meandered across a translucent ceiling below a starlit sky as I enjoyed a warm glass of mulled wine. As the musicians took up position and started playing, it hit me that I was witnessing something profoundly inspirational, moving, and humbling. Led by musician and tutor Ian White, the orchestra comprised individuals with varying degrees of mental and physical disability - some quite pronounced - and almost all requiring the help of an assistant. To produce a performance from the challenges I saw before me was nothing short of a seasonal miracle.

Fast forward to May 2024, and I am in the wonderful setting of Pitmeadow Farm once again - this time for an all-day event of farmyard fun, classic cars, and music from The Inspiration Orchestra. Farm owners Ewan and Fiona McLean-Foreman had converted their large barn into a concert venue. When I arrived, White was running around like a madcap roadie setting up keyboards, music stands, a mixer desk, microphones, amplifiers, monitors, and lights. Despite the anticipated four hundred visitors comprising mostly family, friends and caretakers, there is much at stake - namely, the reputation of The Inspiration Orchestra as an outreach project, the expectations of audience members and, most importantly, the enjoyment of the individual musicians - many of whom regard this as the highlight of their year. Given the logistical challenges and the needs of participants, concerts were delivered in three thirty-minute sessions throughout the day. Each performance featured a different combination of musicians of all ages - always fronted by White on guitar and vocals, holding things together. I attended all performances and listened as audience members were wowed with a selection of ballads, gospel songs, country and folk classics, good old-time rock 'n' roll, and even two numbers co-written by Bob Boyd - the band's bassist - and White. I zeroed-in on lines from Boyd's song Beautiful Lady -

It's not been easy, it's been painful
But she gives courage to me and it's wonderful

and his equally poignant Waiting for Monday -

He's lonely and sad, dreams of love that he had
Now he's walking alone, lost in his dream

These were powerful words that hit hard. I watched tears flow, comforting arms placed around neighbours' shoulders, and an emotionally charged silence fill the room.

> ***Each performer was different; some were born with disabilities while others were affected by illness or injury later in life. Many were unable to comprehend or even articulate their own story.***

Away from the poignant lyrics, any awkward tensions were assuaged with uplifting numbers that offered sing-along or accompanying hand-clapping opportunities.

White is the musical and production brains behind The Inspiration Orchestra. His mantra is simple, "If you are disabled and want to play music with The Inspiration Orchestra, we will find a place for you irrespective of your disability or your musical ability."



The delivery is more complex. Looking around I see individuals in wheelchairs, others with major mobility issues, some unable to lift their heads, and some with significant sight or hearing loss. Undaunted, White has created devices or adapted instruments to meet their specific needs. A guitarist has his instrument laid flat on a table. It has a single string. Before each song a capo is fitted at the relevant fret to ensure that when plucked the string is in harmony with the key of the song. A keyboard player has a sensor fitted that, when touched by her head, plays a note. Coloured lights sit before some players. These flash when White presses a foot pedal indicating a change of note. Drums, tambourine, and a drink can filled with rice provide the percussive drive. The result was remarkably harmonious. I witnessed solo performances on violin, harmonica, guitar, keyboards, and vocals. Audiences showed their appreciation with rapturous applause and participants beamed with joy at the acknowledgement of their achievements.

Keen to learn more about White and the background of The Inspiration Orchestra, we met at his Perthshire home. Coffee and a comfortable sofa seemed a mile away from the stresses of performance. "Music has always been my passion," he remarks casually. It is an understatement from a man who rose through the ranks of school concerts and the folk music scene in Ayr, and, later, in Aberdeen in the 1970s and early 1980s. It was while studying for an arts degree at Aberdeen University that he met his wife, Carol. He acknowledges her influence, "She opened me up to the Christian faith, changing me from folk club performer to Christian evangelical singer-songwriter. None of this would have happened without her." He recalls the moment of transition, "I was playing a gig at Inverary in late '78 when I felt something tell me to stop this pub work." He cancelled all engagements for the next three months. A week later he was in a church in Aberdeen listening to touring evangelist singer Dave Pope, who ran a band called The Alethians that had toured with Cliff Richard. Pope offered White a place in his band and for the next six months they engaged in an evangelical music tour of the U.K. In the early 1980s he undertook a theology degree, but it was music that drove his evangelical outreach. For over two decades he was one of the most influential Christian singer-songwriters of his generation, selling over 250,000 albums and undertaking multiple trips to perform in the USA (20), New Zealand (12), Europe (6), Australia (4) and Africa (1). Times change, however, and by 2012 his 'big era' was over.

In 2014, while playing at a Capability Scotland disabled home, he noticed a girl holding down a single note on a keyboard. The resultant drone was a unique moment of harmony and gave him the idea of musical partnering with disabled people. He puts down his coffee cup and momentarily loses himself before announcing, "That was the moment The Inspiration Orchestra was conceived."

He acknowledges other 'nudges' along the way such as the time he was playing to 1,200 people in a hall in Aberdeen. In the audience was a woman named Margaret Benson who had a disabled son. Years later she told him that she turned to her friend that evening saying, "I feel in my bones that one day I will be in a disabled ministry with that guy, but he doesn't know it yet and I've not to tell him." In 2014 White met Benson and asked her to help him set up a charitable trust for disabled people. The following year The Inspiration Orchestra became a registered Scottish charity. Currently, its members are drawn from Tayside, but White regards it as a 'start-up' project that could be expanded and rolled out across the country. He tutors the musicians at home, in small groups within community halls or in places such as Pitmeadow Farm.

> ***Back in the barn I note the pride, sense of achievement, and self-worth that pervades the orchestra - moments when the human spirit rises highest to defy great adversity.***

Living in a profit-oriented society that often alienates the disadvantaged, we diminish the value of what they can offer and what they can teach us. When these individuals make music, there is a joy in the way they connect and communicate despite the enormous hurdles they overcome to do so. When the music ends, the hugs, the congratulations, and the laughter spill out far beyond the confines of a barn. I leave Pitmeadow Farm, profoundly inspired, moved, and humbled - even more so than the first time I heard The Inspiration Orchestra play. ~ Words & photos by Tom Langlands

The Inspiration Orchestra is seeking funding to commission a video for promotional purposes. Donations may be made through The Inspiration Orchestra website and would be received with gratitude.

Pitmeadow Farm offers high-quality, self-catering accommodation in a stunning location in rural Perthshire. The Inspiration Orchestra acknowledges the contribution of Ewan and Fiona McLean-Foreman with gratitude.

WWW.THEINSPIRATIONORCHESTRA.COM WWW.PITMEADOWFARM.CO.UK WWW.TOMLANGLANDSPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

SAVE THE DATE

ORCELTICFEST.COM

OREGON CELTIC FESTIVAL

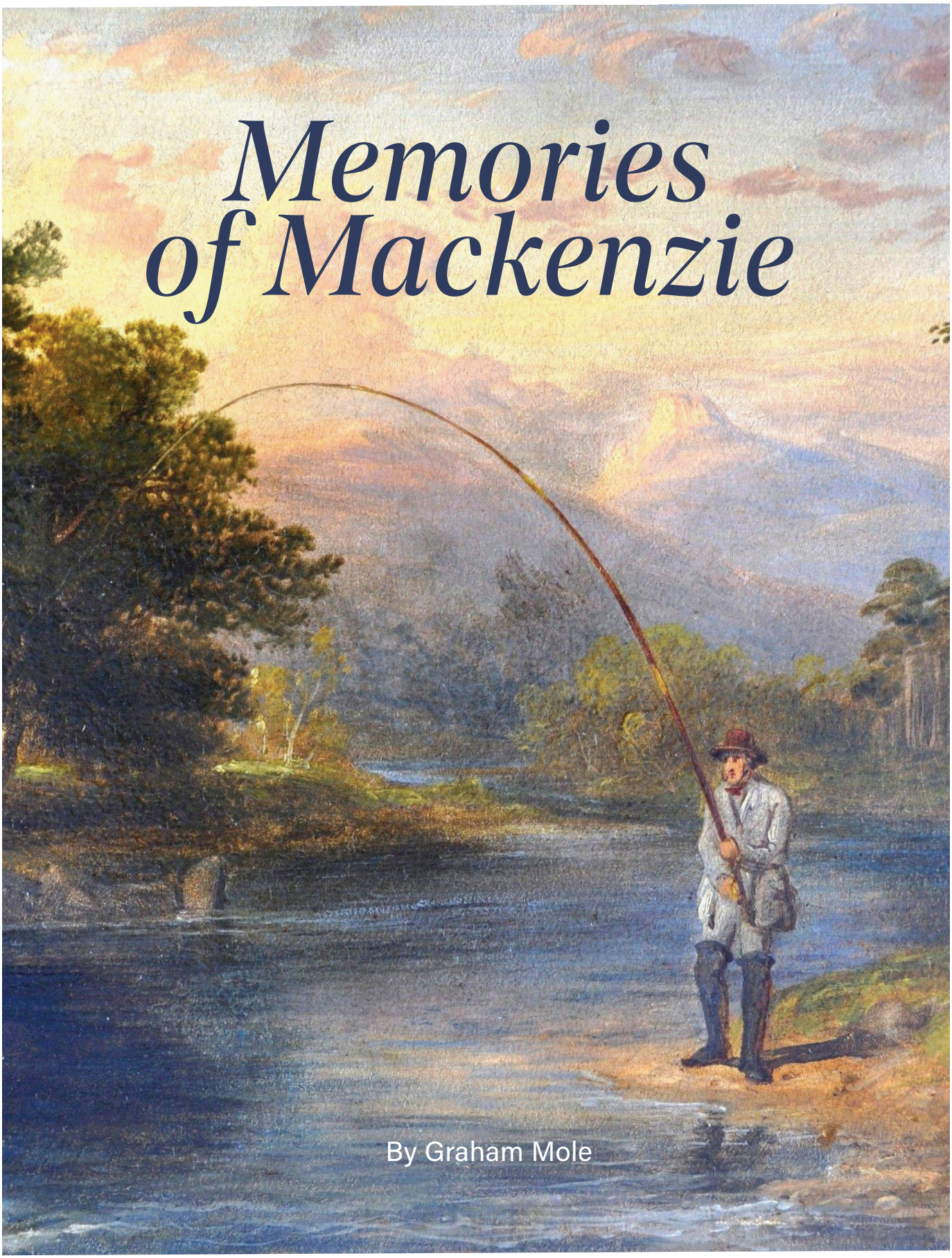
SEPTEMBER 13~14~15, 2025

All Day Music, Dancing, Whiskey Tastings,
Vendors, Food, & Celtic Fun!!

FEATURING

TEMPEST - SCREAMING ORPHANS
THE ELDERS - WAKE THE DEAD
AND MANY MORE!

Memories of Mackenzie



By Graham Mole

Shhhhh...don't tell anyone, but as an English chalk-stream fisherman there was once a time when I got schooled by a Scotsman.

He was a ghillie by the name of Gregor Mackenzie and over a lifetime of fishing he kept hundreds of pages of notes. They were scribbled and scrawled, in no definable order, on myriad scraps of lined paper. My job was to turn them into a book.

By then Mackenzie was in his seventies and spent summer afternoons watching horseracing on TV. Outside his bungalow - built for him as a retirement present by his grateful boss Sir George McAlpine - a small stream passed through his yard.

Immediately upon my arrival, MacKenzie took me outside and handed me a rod, "Let's see your casting laddie."

I knew if I fluffed it, I wouldn't get the job - and this was to be my first book. My cast was passable - just - and I got the job.

In the months to follow I learned a lot about the man - and more about fishing.

MacKenzie was the epitome of a ghillie - deferential without loss of dignity, patient and friendly, but capable of a look whose sternness shrank your soul. He had learned to fish from his father who, like his father before him, had been head deer stalkers for a local Laird.

His first job was as a bailiff for the Peebleshire Angling Association, followed by a post on the Inverlochy water - his first away from home. It was a vintage period, with foreign princes arriving on their own trains to rent both the castle and the river for the summer.

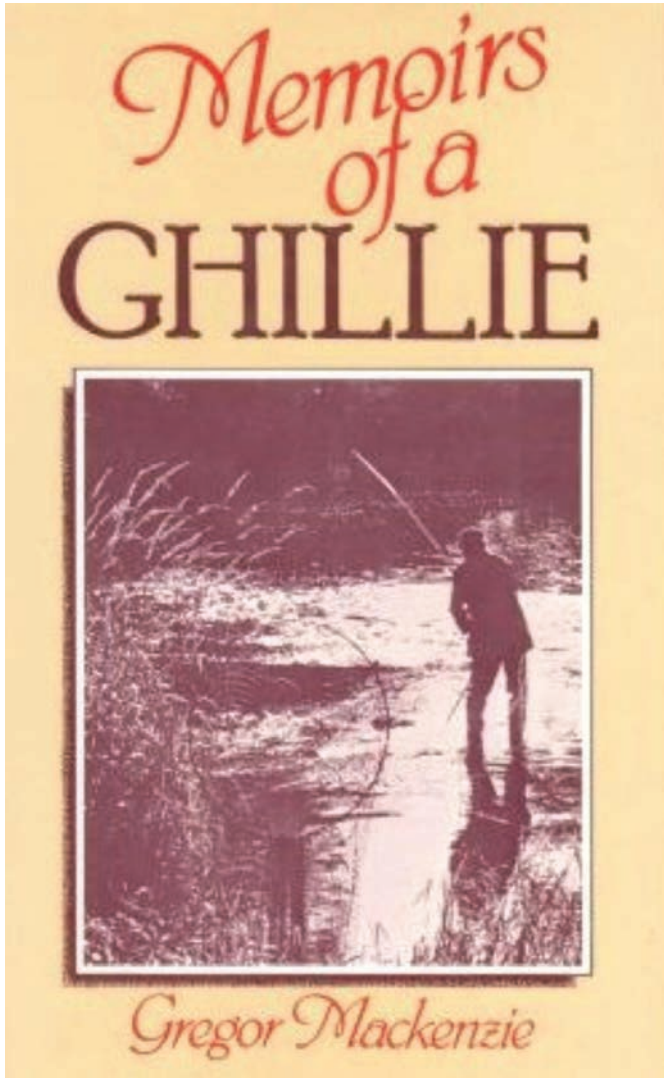
Then, like all true Scotsmen, he was exiled to England, to Walton's Dove in Derbyshire, a haunt of the rich and famous, like Wallis Simpson, the then-future Duchess of Windsor. So generous were members of the local community that one gentleman even offered MacKenzie his old Rolls Royce after purchasing a new one.

And those were drinking days - MacKenzie once found 24 drinks lined up for him on the bar one evening. Each of the locals had bought him a pint and a whisky chaser. Fearful of offence, our man drank the lot.

After six idyllic years, he relocated to Hampshire Avon and found a job teaching new anglers to fish. One of those new anglers was David Niven.

It was 1939, and the film star reckoned the war could get along without him for a few hours, so he decided to have his first salmon lesson. He was mortified when, after days of effort, he hooked and landed a fish - a kelt which MacKenzie promptly threw back. Niven's revenge came later; as MacKenzie gaffed a salmon for her Ladyship, the hook came adrift. He dove into the river, landed on the fish and managed to insert two fingers into the gills. Hauling it ashore he heard Niven yell, "Tell me Mackenzie? Is this how you usually land a fish?"

There, at that time, the salmon would congregate in their hundreds immediately below the nearby power station at Ringwood. Desperate to carry on, the salmon literally knocked themselves to death trying to jump the hatches. Hundreds of dead and injured fish littered the river. Over the years MacKenzie managed to get a fish pass built to drive salmon into the upper reaches. At that time those salmon averaged 22lb.



MacKenzie then started breeding salmon, and later trout, before World War II ended a way of life.

After the war came his biggest challenge - what he described as a mile and a half of black, slimy, smelly mud - a stretch of river for which Sir Malcolm McAlpine, in June 1945, had just paid a world record price of twelve thousand two hundred and fifty pounds.

MacKenzie was tasked with putting back into order what was later dubbed The Golden Mile. It was a colossal job. Two years later, having used an army of navvies and bulldozers, built a light railway for the spoil, and planted the river with ranunculus, MacKenzie finally allowed Sir Malcolm, now 70 years old, onto the river. They caught one fish.

Soon, the site became a haven for the rich and famous - Sir Charles Forte and his son Rocco were constant visitors. But for colour there was little to outdo actor James Robertson Justice. Touring the valley in one of his two Rolls Royces, one sporting a live eagle on top, he would convince people that he was broke. He'd borrow MacKenzie's dog to go on shoots with the Queen, then come home to help with the weed cut, pedaling an adapted cycle round the river.



Gregor's past may have been rich, but he feared for the future of fishing.

"In my time fishing has become a vast commercialized sport," he said in 1978, "and the countryside has been turned into an outdoors factory, drenched in chemicals to boost food production. Never before have towns been so thirsty for water, and so ruthless about acquiring it. Yet in all this there is, perhaps, a blessing. The mistakes of our generation have now become so obvious that they are beginning already to prick the national conscience. Talk of restocking the Thames with salmon and sea trout, the establishment of scientific research projects, the planned prohibition of salmon netting at sea, the scare brought on by the 1976 drought, all these, by perverse quirk or otherwise, are favourable signs of public concern."

Sadly, the national conscience was only pinpricked. And, by involving authority in letting the salmon run free into the upper Avon he had unwittingly signed its death warrant.

He wrote, "Until then, riparian owners had each looked after their own stretch. Now the board had a foot in the door..."

A year after the salmon pass went in the river authority dredged and straightened twenty miles of the river - to help drainage. Shallows, redds, and bends all went.

In the end, Gregor was bitter.

> ***"While the rest of the country was fighting for its life, they got on with the job of ruining one of our finest rivers."***

With the water table lowered, farmers started using more and more nitrogen, and fish catches dropped. What fishing there was had been taken over by anglers arriving by the coachload wanting the countryside as a playground. The fishing couldn't stand it anymore.

Anglers' numbers diminished, hotels closed, jobs were lost and a huge, swift, and increasingly sterile canal carried away at an ever increasing rate the water needed for the increasing number of washing machines and the like.

What had been "fisheries" boards became regional "water authorities".

Mourning the loss, MacKenzie wrote, "Just imagine what would happen if one were to be found, a man whose knowledge could never again be discovered. He'd find himself in some glass palace inhabited by suited officials. He'd be asked to come back only when they'd invented the right form. And there would, of course, be many meetings about it. Committees would spawn subcommittees, each giving birth to files and memos and minutes. Then they would decide that he was either or both (a) not budgeted for or (b) not familiar with the administration - and in any case, he has no written qualifications. And, soon enough, there were more officials than fish."

He concluded "The damage that has been done, even if every effort is made to repair it, will take years to achieve. But it must be done, for what has happened to the Avon is on its way for other rivers and has, indeed, already occurred elsewhere. Just don't let it happen to your river..."

MacKenzie is gone now, but should we ever meet on some celestial bank, I think I'd be ashamed to tell him things aren't a lot better. Yes, we are more environmentally aware. Yes, we have a whole government agency devoted to the environment. Yes, there are more ecologically friendly washing machines.

And, yes, some of us are still fighting MacKenzie's fight - to ensure that Scotland's rivers remain a healthy home for the country's finest fish.

LET US ELEVATE YOUR

SCOTTISH GAMES

Curious how your Games could look?
Scan the QR code above!









1.2 Millon+
Total Reach

20%
Percentage Growth in Revenue

27%
Growth in Ticket Sales

50%
Sponsorship Growth

Stop stressing about your marketing, save money, and grow your event by partnering with us!

CONTACT US TODAY TO
START PROMOTING
YOUR NEXT CELTIC EVENT!

STINGRAYBRANDING.COM

Stingray Branding
WEB · MARKETING · DESIGN



HISTORY

Is Merlin buried in Brittany?

Celtic Life International correspondent Steve Melia digs through the past



Bruno Sotty

Where is the tomb of Merlin, the Welsh wizard who features in the legends of King Arthur? Somewhere in Wales, you might imagine... however, it actually stands in a clearing in the Forest of Paimpont in Brittany, which has become a regional centre for Arthurian legends. And while some historians call that association an 'invented tradition' - no newer than the Nineteenth Century - there is, as I would discover on the second part of my biking excursion around Brittany, certainly more to the story than that.

The forest is big by European standards, though not continuous. Small farms and clearings intersperse the trees, particularly around its fringes. I had an appointment with a man who was going to open a chateau just for me. On the way I planned to visit two legendary sites.

The first was the tomb of Merlin: two small standing stones in the middle of a circular clearing - the remains of a neolithic burial site, which was dynamited by grave robbers in 1892. Before that, in 1820, a local magistrate, Jean Poignand, decided that this monument was the tomb of Merlin. His reasons were unclear, however his writings helped to revive interest in Celtic legends and their link, real or imagined, with the forest.

Further along the same path is the 'spring of eternal youth' - whose muddy waters have the power to reverse the ageing process. The only catch, however, is that one must be entirely free from sin for the waters to work their magic.

When I arrived at the chateau of Comper the main gate to the grounds was locked. The sky was darkening, and thunder was rumbling in the distance. As I rode through a side entrance, I half-expected to be confronted by an ogre. Instead, a young woman, Anaëlle, called out from behind me. The director had been delayed, she said, but I should leave my bike by the stables and follow her into the chateau.

Anaëlle then showed me around the 14th century chateau, which is now the 'Cen-



King Arthur statue at Tintagel Castle, Cornwall



Merlin's Tomb

tre for Arthurian Imagination.' It overlooks a lake, where a great crested grebe was diving for fish. In local legend, the lake is home to the fairy Viviane, or the Lady of the Lake as she is known in the English versions.

English Arthurian legends often differ from those of the French and Welsh. Most films, television programs, and stories about King Arthur were likely inspired by Le Morte d'Arthur, written by Sir Thomas Mallory in 1485. The main French stories, however, were written three hundred years earlier by Chrétien de Troyes. One of these tales, Yvain, the Knight of the Lion, contains a spring called Barenton, within a forest called Brocéliande, the legendary name applied to the forest of Paimpont today. When Yvain pours water onto a stone beside the spring, it triggers a storm and summons a Black Knight who tries to kill him.

> ***That story is a key element of the question I had come here to answer: how did those legends attach themselves to this place?***

I walked around the displays, which are only open to the public on weekends for most of the year. The information boards cited stories of Chrétien de Troyes and the Celtic roots of the legends. A 3D hologram of the sword Excalibur twists and turns behind a screen, just out of reach.

The director, Sotty Sotty, arrived as I returned to the reception. An imposing man, with a bushy beard and piercing eyes, he looks convincing as a medieval storyteller. In fact, he and his staff often role-play the tales for children. In addition, they also organize conferences for researchers and afficionados.

"I came from the world of show business and cultural administration," shared Sotty. "Like most people who work here, I wasn't from this area. I was born in Paris. I came here as a visitor at first, and I was attracted by the magic, by the possibility of living a dream. There is nowhere else quite like it."

One of the few things that we can say with certainty is that the Arthurian legends originated amongst the Celtic peoples of Britain. So, how did they make their way to Brittany, and, specifically, to Paimpont?



Lady of the Lake in the Chateau of Comper



The False Lovers in the Valley of No Return

"They came in two waves: first, from the Celtic migrations of the Early Medieval period and, later, from French writers in the later Middle Ages," explains Sotty. "They wrote about the magical forest of Brocéliande, but none of them gave us an address. It was an imaginary place. We have one document, a 1467 charter issued by Count Guy of Laval which notes the spring of Barenton, in the forest of Brécilien, as the forest of Paimpont was called back then. The charter was rediscovered in the nineteenth century, when people began linking other local sites to the legends."

Sotty had just returned from Tintagel, in Cornwall, where the town's Arthurian Centre presented the legends differently, as influenced by Sir Thomas Malory.

"They tend to downplay the Celtic aspect, as Malory had a political agenda," muses Sotty. "England was in a parlous state at that time, so he set out to write an English origin myth. But King Arthur, if he existed, was fighting against the Anglo-Saxons. And the stories come from Celtic mythology - the grail, for example: in Chrétien de Troyes' version, the grail is not a holy relic, it was a sacred dish of abundance, a reminder of Celtic artefacts like the Irish Cauldron of Dagda."

Few of the chateau's visitors were from Britain or North America, Sotty had noticed. And though most of his staff spoke fluent English, our conversation was in French. Interestingly, he had recently travelled to Wyoming, USA, where he discovered connections between the Arthurian legends and the tales of the Wild West.

"It would be good to make connections with the Breton Canadians, also," he added.

Before departing, he offered me advice on other sites to visit, and more history on the area.

The village of Paimpont, in the centre of the forest, is clustered around a 13th century abbey and its lake, next to the Brocéliande tourist information centre. The legends have attracted many creative people, and all over the forest there are all sorts of arts and crafts, murals, and posters for workshops. Sadly, though as expected, they have also spawned a lot of commercial kitsch, including a cardboard Merlin who welcomes you to the historic centre that is lined with businesses claiming links to the legends. My personal favourite had to be the Pizzeria du Roi, with grinning elves ready to serve up deep-dish delights, inspired by the legend of the failed hunt when King Arthur gave up and ordered a pizza.

> ***Characters in these legends often get lost in the woods, and I wondered if modern cartographers were helping to preserve that tradition.***

What looked like roads on the official IGN map, and on Google Maps' recommended cycling routes, were often rough forest tracks. I got lost on the way to the spring of Barenton. In a clearing, from out of the mist, appeared a damsel, who reached into her bag

and produced a smartphone. She wasn't sure of the route either, but she pointed me towards a car park, where, she noted, it should be signposted.

The water from the spring was cleaner than the one I had seen the day before, but it seemed an unremarkable place to attract such interest. I wondered whether to wet the stone beside it, just to confirm that all that talk about raising storms was nonsense, but after my soaking the day before I decided not to risk it.

My next stop, Tréhorenteuc Church, looked like a typical village church from outside. The interesting part is inside: between 1942 and 1962, its unorthodox priest, l'Abbé Gillard, infused it with local legends. At one end is a stained-glass window, mixing Christian and Pagan imagery. A rabbit with its paw shielding its mouth whispers a secret to another. At the opposite end is a mosaic with a white hart, symbolizing both Christ and Merlin.

My last stop was the Valley of No Return, where Arthur's sister Morgane was enraged to find her lover with another woman. She turned them into two rocks (aptly named the False Lovers) and imprisoned all other knights who ventured there. Only Lancelot, whose love for Guinevere was untainted, was able to liberate them. That story had no link to Brocéliande until a 19th century noble, Blanchard de la Musse, decided to locate it there.

At the start of the climb up to the rocks is a golden tree. It was erected in 1991 after a forest fire, then chopped down by a man who believed it "degraded the forest". His efforts to defend himself in court by reciting poetry didn't impress the judge. He was fined and the sculpture was restored "with increased security" in 1999. The tree had no direct link to the local legends, so the tourist board commissioned writers to create new ones.

That process of inventing or embellishing legends goes back at least as far as the twelfth century, when Plantagenet kings ruled England and western France. The Arthurian legends provided a unifying story for the new empire. But is there any evidence that they came to Brittany any earlier? I had read conflicting accounts, so I asked Martin Aurell, Professor of Medieval History at the University of Poitiers, who replied, "That's a good question. You would need a week-long seminar of the top specialists to answer it." As the written records are more recent, it is impossible to say for sure, but he believes they did arrive with those early migrants because "the legends were so popular amongst the insular Britons, and there were many contacts between them and Brittany." He points to the stories of two saints: though written down later, they refer to earlier times, and mention King Arthur.



Merlin welcomes tourists to the centre of Paimpont

My ride home took me through Bécherel, Brittany's "book town" and the port of Saint-Malo, where it was still warm enough to swim in the sea. I stayed in its walled city, which looks ancient from a distance, though when you look closer, you can see where most of it was rebuilt after World War 2.

Back in England I rode through Dorset and Somerset, ancient territory of the Durotriges, from where many of the Britons migrated to Brittany. In the 1970s, archaeologists excavated a hillfort associated with King Arthur at South Cadbury, in Somerset. They discovered a feasting hall and told the press they had found Camelot. Is this where Arthur won his famous battles and halted the advance of the Anglo-Saxons?

The hill with its wide flat summit came into view as I approached from the South. Behind me, and to my left, lay the uplands the Celts were defending. To the north and east lay the flatter lands, in the hands of their enemies. I parked my bike and climbed to the summit. Cattle were grazing near one of the defensive ditches. There were views on all sides, but the site seemed very exposed. The wind was whipping my face. This was a good spot for a fort, but this was no Camelot. I stood for several minutes, imagining the defenders, scarred by past defeats. I imagined a farmer, who never wanted to fight, thinking like so many people before and since: if I get out of this alive, I will take to the seas.


Steve at Saint-Malo



Oideas Gael
ó 1984
40
BLIAIN AG FÁS

WWW.OIDEASGAEL.IE

Tel: +353 (0)74 97 30 248
oifig@oideasgael.ie
Co. Donegal, Éire

Courses in Irish Language & Culture for Adults

Celebrating 40 Years

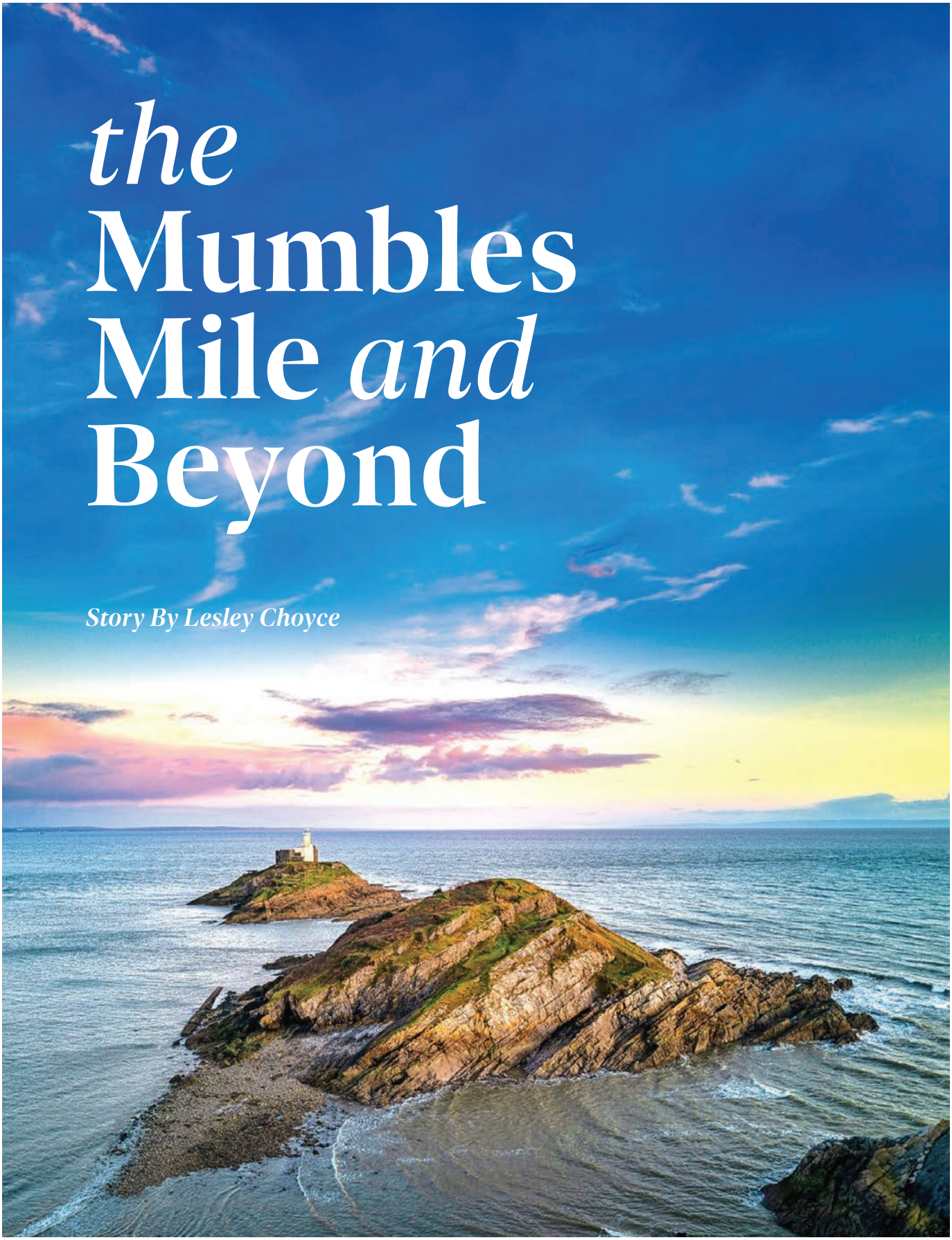
Irish Language (all levels), Hill Walking, Archaeology, Environment, Geology, Painting, Weaving, Singing, Flute & Whistle, Irish Harp...

Fáilte Ireland

Gaeltacht na hÉireann

the Mumbles Mile *and* Beyond

Story By Lesley Choyce





A while back, in my hometown of Halifax, Nova Scotia, I found myself in conversation with a Welshman about the Gower Peninsula in the southwest region of his home country.

"Where are you staying while you are there?" he enquired.

"My wife Linda and I have a house rented in Mumbles," I answered.

He lifted an eyebrow and immediately responded, "Oh, well. If you don't have a good time in Mumbles, it will be your own fault."

I was a little surprised by the response and asked him about it. I understood that he meant to imply that this seaside suburb of Swansea was a party town of some sort, but I was greedy for more details.

At that point, my new acquaintance from across the pond gave a sly smile and chuckled and said he preferred not to elaborate.

And thus was my mysterious introduction to the town of Mumbles, or Mwmbwls in Welsh. The truth is, Linda and I were more interested in the remote beaches and headlands of the Gower than the town itself, but, due to the man's unusual phrasing, I kept thinking about what he said, and my curiosity grew. It implied that it would be downright difficult to not have fun there. Thus, I envisioned someone travelling there, a particularly cranky curmudgeon perhaps whose goal was just that - a determined effort to be unhappy walking along Mumbles Road or Plunch Lane just to spite the place. It was an amusing mental picture.

When the day dawned for us to arrive at our destination, we drove to the coast from the interior by way of Cockett and Sketty to Swansea Bay, before following Mumbles Road down through Black Pill and West Cross. In downtown Mumbles, we took a right hand turn on Newton Road towards our rental apartment whose entrance was on a grass-covered, narrow, pot-holed back lane. My first impression of the town was that it was bigger than I expected, a smallish city really, with crowds of pedestrian shoppers elbowing each other down narrow sidewalks in the rain. There were not a lot of smiling faces, but then the weather was quite lousy, and inflation had probably dampened spirits.

Now, most travellers finding their way to Mumbles wonder where the name comes from and if it has anything to do with the way the locals speak. To the latter, I can safely say, it does not. As to the origin of the name, most authorities will tell you that it comes from the French word for breasts - mamelles - and refers to two small islands just off the shore here. It is said that visiting French sailors long ago claimed these islands reminded them of that part of the female anatomy. My first impression of those islands was certainly nothing of the sort, but perhaps those early continental sailors had spent considerable time at sea and were relying on imagination rather than memory.

> ***I should also note that Mumbles is often referred to as The Mumbles, the article added perhaps because it refers specifically to those two islands.***



Oystermouth Castle

When I asked around to determine which the locals preferred, one word or two, no one seemed to have an opinion or cared much one way or the other.

Our rental apartment on the back alley was named "Under Milkwood" - and I had a notion this referred to the play by Welsh writer Dylan Thomas. We had often stumbled upon places in Wales and Ireland where Dylan Thomas had spent time lingering, finding inspiration, but mostly drinking. Mumbles was one of those towns. While living in the much larger burg of Swansea, he wrote to his first girlfriend this observation, "Mumbles, a rather nice village, despite its name, right on the edge of the sea."

The poet had spent some time doing theatrical work at the local theatre here. More time, apparently, was spent imbibing at his two favourite pubs, The Mermaid and The Antelope, both sadly gone. According to Concord Theatricals, Under Milkwood is "an emotive and hilarious account of a spring day in the fictional Welsh seaside village of Llareggub." In the play there is a reference to the town with the introduction of a drowned (but garrulous) sailor named Alfred Pomeroy Jones who refers to himself as a "sea lawyer, born in Mumbles, sung like a linnet, crowned you with a flagon, tattooed with mermaids, thirst like a dredger, died of blisters." I'm not quite sure what the quote means, and why our landlord had adopted the play's name for our home away from home was even more mysterious. It was a modest place, although it boasted an unlikely, enormous, and extravagant bathroom with floors and walls of white marble reminiscent of a well-preserved Roman bathhouse.

After we settled in, we drove the famous "Mumbles Mile" to the lighthouse to catch a gorgeous sunset. There, atop the headland, was a professional photographer taking pictures of a young wedding couple gazing out across the shimmering surface of Bracelet Bay as the winds subsided to a mere whisper.

Arcing past the tip of the headland, Mumbles Road turns into Plunch Lane where Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones (who was raised hereabouts) own a rather fancy estate known as Silverhurst. As Plunch Lane turned into Higher Lane, we motored on to Langland Bay where I hoped to check out the surfing scene. Alas, the sun had set, and the surfers had retreated to the pubs, so we vowed to return in daylight.

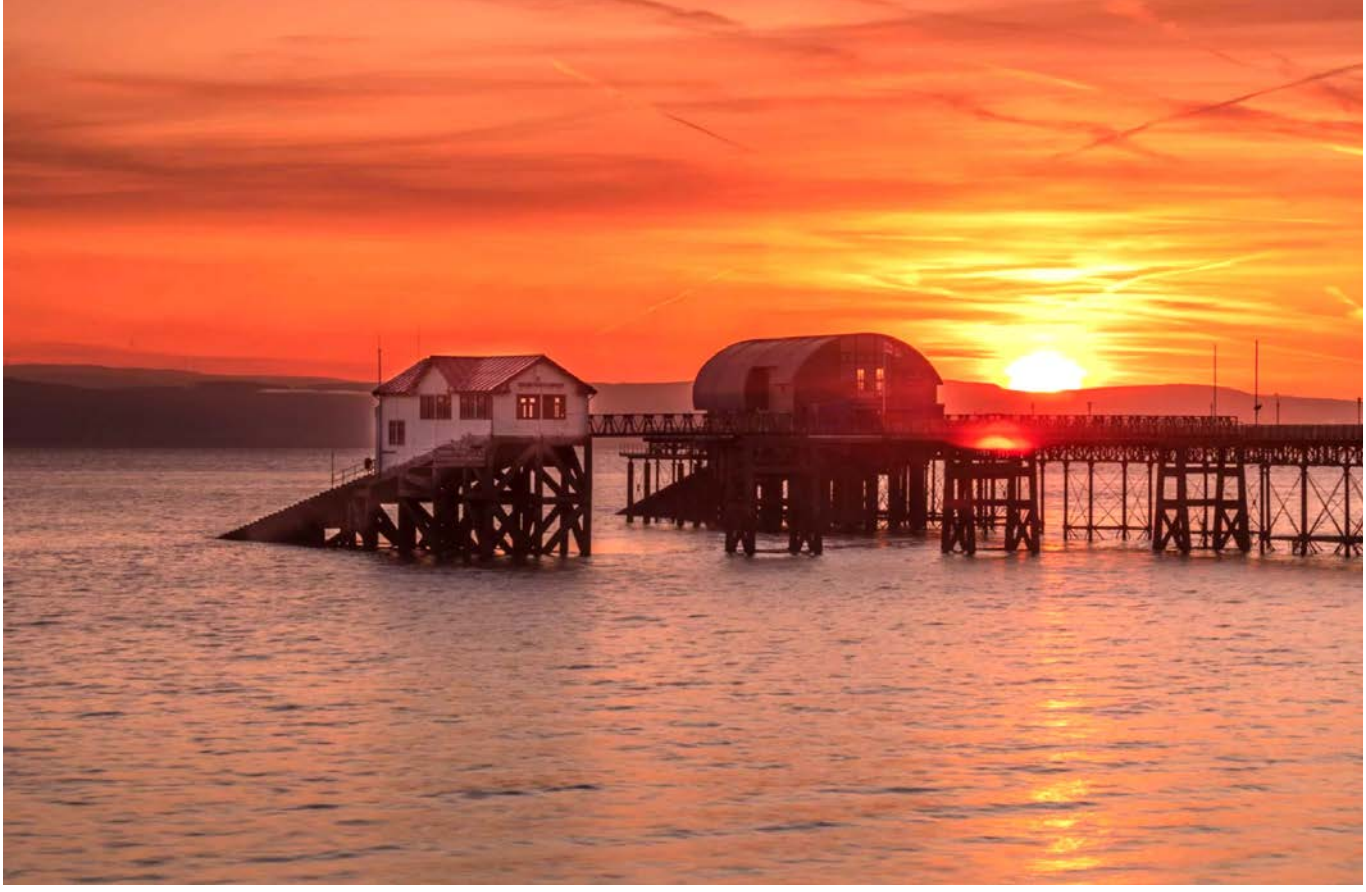
We took the cue of darkness to send us in search of adventure downtown in Mumbles, which we now knew was reputed to be a raucous social town, a mecca for rowdy drinkers in exile from the more urban Swansea. It occurred to me that Mumbles and the environs was a bit like the Welsh version of the famous Jersey Shore of my own youth. After all, it had beaches, surfing, beer, music, and even its own famous poet - Bruce Springsteen.

Back in 2013 WalesOnline christened Mumbles as "the Monaco of Wales" arguing that, "It's got celebrities, a towering Norman castle, breathtaking sea views, quaint fishermen's cottages and a clutch of intimate restaurants." It also had some of the most expensive properties in a seaside community in all the U.K. Alas, if anyone bought into that comparison, they would be rather disappointed to discover the obvious: Mumbles, for all its Victorian charm, looks nothing like the once home of Grace Kelly.

The first stop on our pub crawl was the White Rose on Newton Road. As advertised, it was warm and friendly and claimed to have been so since 1856. Sports on wall-mounted TVs always seem to diminish whatever air of authenticity a pub can muster, but then I have learned from my travels that so often the more "authentic" a pub appears, the more likely it has been remodeled so to appease tourists like me. So, the White Rose can be forgiven. And, to their credit, they have "six well-kept cask ales" on hand and, if you sign up for their newsletter, they will give you a free drink the next time you stop in. Who could ask for more?

There was an old down-and-out looking fella sitting at a table near us with his down-and-out looking dog. The gent was sipping a coffee and trying to make it last as long as humanly possible, so I was glad he and his companion were having a quiet moment in a warm pub in what must otherwise have been a tough life. More kudos to the White Rose.

During our week in Mumbles, we also checked out the Gower Brewery Taproom



with a most palatable Oxwhich IPA and various meat pies from a source called Pieminister. Looking at the menu I was also impressed.

> ***Where else in the pub world could you order delights like potato doughnuts as well as kale and parsnip fritters?***

But, by far our favourite refreshment establishment was the legendary Pilot Freehouse on the also legendary Mumbles Mile. It too dates to the 1800s and is often associated as being the watering hole for local lifeboatmen who risk their lives at sea. The Pilot prides itself in being home to traditional pub games like bar skittles and something called shove ha'penny, reported to be a game of dexterity and skill involving the shoving of coins across a board.



Linda and I don't usually do all that well getting to know locals because we tend to keep to ourselves, but The Pilot was a crowded place and we ended up sharing a table with a man I'll call Carl and his one-eyed pug dog whom I will refer to as Reginald. I'm always pleased to share a table with a polite dog and Reggie was certainly that. He and his master were clearly regulars here and, although Reggie did not order his own pint, he sat politely and quietly enjoying his time at the pub and our companionship while drooling copiously on the coasters.

Carl was Australian by birth but had been living in Wales for a long time and was now retired. He talked at great length about how wonderful Reginald was although he had once been a great scrapper (which might have explained the missing eye) but had settle down in his old age. Anyone could tell that Carl loved that dog more than anything and as he proceeded to give us a detailed history of his adventures with Reggie, we learned that Carl was in fact divorced. He shared custody of the pug with his ex-wife and thus cherished his share of the time with Reggie as the "special times" of his life.

Oddly enough, the following day we ran



into Carl and Reginald at the shorefront of Langland Bay where there were indeed some lads catching a few windblown waves surging in from the Atlantic. We sat with the two of them for a bit and caught up on news about Reggie's indigestion from the evening before and his early rising to head out into the misty morn for a pee. After a bit, Carl took his leave of us to jump into the sea for a swim, a cold dip it would be for him, I wagered, without a wetsuit. But then I'd always known my Australian surf buddies to be tough as nails and more than willing to ignore whatever seasonal adversity they might encounter.

Reggie, of course, kept vigil of Carl, sitting beside us on the bench and greeted by name from all who passed us by.

Of course, our real reason for being in this corner of the UK was to explore every nook and cranny of the magnificent Gower Peninsula. But first we wanted to get a good feel for the town itself, realizing there was much more to it than pubs and men with pugs stories.

Linda led me to a bookstore, and I selected what turned out to be a riveting read called Islands of Abandonment by Cal Flyn. This most excellent author wrote about places on earth that humans had ravaged and then vacated including Chernobyl, West Lothian (Scotland), parts of Cyprus, Staten Island, and even Paterson, New Jersey. The story created a sharp contrast to the mostly idyllic forests and shorelines that were mere minutes from downtown Mumbles.

Not far from the bookstore was the famous Oystermouth Castle or Castell Ystum Llwynarth as the Welsh would say. It sits on a hill high above the city and the grounds are a joy to traverse. It too had also been created, ravaged, and ultimately abandoned by those who had lived there. The castle (whose name has nothing to do with oysters) was built by the Normans and dates back to the twelfth century. It changed hands a number of times while seeing the all-too-familiar ravages of warring parties. In a document from the thirteenth century called the Chronicles of the Princes, one can find the following references:

1093: "The French devastated Gower, Kidwelly and the Vale of Tawe; and the countries remained a desert."

1116: "There was a castle in Gower which Gruffudd, son of Rhys, burned entirely."

1215: "Lord Rhys, collecting a vast army, advanced on Gower. He made for the castle of Oystermouth, and he camped around it that night. The following day he captured the castle, which with the town, he burned."

Despite such a catastrophic history, Linda and I found the grounds of Oystermouth Castle quaint, peaceful, and accommodating to us foreigners. Small flowers bloomed amidst the lush green grass, and dogs sniffed at the base of trees.

Soon we'd be off on our road trip to the most distant point of land on the Gower - a daunting snaking finger of land called Worm's Head. But for now, we had to admit, we had found inspiration, a bit of history, dog stories, good craft beer, and - of course - a fair bit of fun here in Mumbles by the sea.




Lesley and Linda

WWW.LESLEYCHOYCE.COM

SCOTI CREATIONS



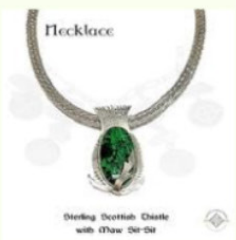


TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

STEP BACK INTO THE WORLD OF CELTS, PICTS AND VIKINGS WITH OUR EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF HANDCRAFTED JEWELRY.

CONNECTING YOU TO YOUR HERITAGE.







Please visit our website to see our schedule of events

www.scoticreations.com





SCOTI CREATIONS
Always Handcrafted

www.scoticreations.com

www.etsy.com/shop/scoticreations

Adrian Jenkins



I am of Welsh heritage, brought up in the Medieval market town of Newark on Trent, Nottinghamshire, in England - the East Midlands. I lived at home with my parents and five siblings until I was 23, when I moved to London to attend drama school and pursue a career in acting.

I was 18 when I purchased my first used camera. There was no manual, so trial-and-error and intuition were my guides for learning my way around all the dials and settings. In some ways, this humble beginning profoundly shaped the way I approach photography. My true focus, both figuratively and literally, has always been what lies beyond the camera - my subject and composition - not the mechanics of the camera itself.

Having lived in Edinburgh, and fallen in love with the beauty of Scotland, I wanted to share my photography. Ironically, I only started to do so after moving to the USA. I have built my business around a passion that has grown out of my connection to Scotland, and now I visit at least twice a year and afford myself the time just to be present, watching, waiting as the light paints the scene, and capture moments never to be repeated.

With Scottish landscapes, weather is an important factor and often my biggest challenge, forcing me to be both spontaneous, but creative. I find myself in the photographic version of "improv" from my theatre days. No matter how carefully I plan my trips to Scotland, the fundamental question of "what will I photograph today?" is often not possible to answer until I open that front door the morning of. Despite the challenge, there is nothing more gratifying than when the weather aligns with nature and I can capture that atmospheric shot of the hills covered in mist, the frozen lochs in winter, or the fleeting light as it dances across the majesty of the Scottish landscapes. You don't know the outcome until it is there in front of you, and that's what makes it so exhilarating.

A good photo is all about finding one's voice and learning how to share a story in a visually compelling way. A photographer should endeavour to breathe humanity and life into their compositions, not seek to strip it out in pursuit of 'perfection'. In line with the idea of voice, composition is vital. Ultimately, a good photo has the power to disrupt the viewer from their present moment and transport them elsewhere, wherever the storyteller takes them.

























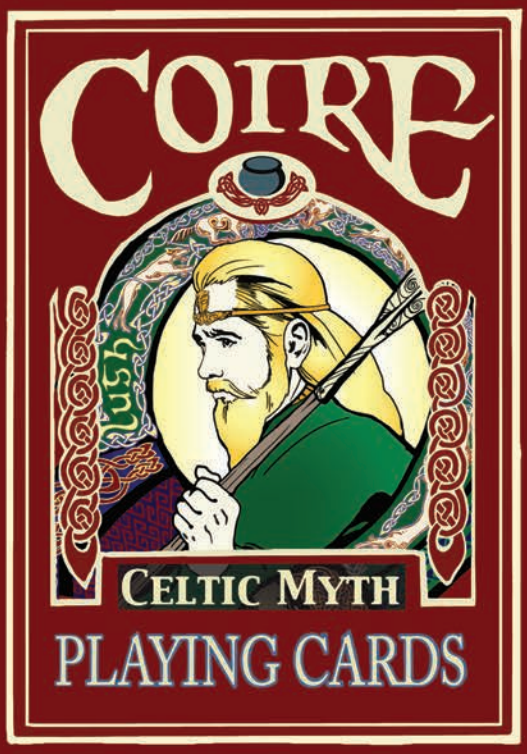


Seanchar Úr

Anceint Lore for Modern Minds

FROM

ACKEN STUDIOS



A Poker-Sized Playing Card Deck

inspired by Celtic history and legend with artwork rooted in the Celtic Renaissance and drawn from original, authentic descriptions of the figures in *Lebor Gabála hÉrenn, Táin Bó Cuailgne* the *Mabinogion* and many others.

Each court card features two figures from Celtic myth, while the numbered pip cards map the traditional suits onto the Four Jewels of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

available for purchase at

THECELTICDECK.COM

FREE FAMILY FESTIVAL FOR ALL AGES

Sydney Mines Highland Games

Sunday, August 18, 2024
11am–8pm

150 Pitt Street, Sydney Mines, N.S.

Sydney Mines Highland Games Cultural Society

ALL ARE WELCOME

The Renaissance of Renaissance Faires



This summer, hundreds of thousands of costume-clad Celts will gather to rebirth the past in the present. Chris Muise goes behind the scenes to tell us more.



The morning Cornelia Miller Rutherford drove her young daughter to work a quarter century ago, she had no idea that it would change the course of her life forever. She was driving towards her own personal renaissance.

"I had a child who was an actor in film and stage," Rutherford reminisces while on a Zoom call with Celtic Life International from her home in Virginia. "This company came in to Virginia, and they spent a couple of million dollars building this spectacular fantasy, fanciful Tudor village outside of Fredericksburg - what became the Virginia Renaissance Festival."

Her daughter was hired as a cast member.

"She was only 15, so I was schlepping up and down the road. Sometimes I couldn't go because of my work schedule, so her boyfriend would take her. One day they called me and said, 'you're pretty funny. How would you like to be a part of this?' So, all three of us ended up being part of the show."

The spectacle returned each year, and Rutherford, her daughter, and her daughter's boyfriend would get involved in some way or another. Rutherford says the magic of the Faire worked itself into her DNA so slowly, she hardly noticed it - until it was gone.

"I had never had any experience with Renaissance Faires - there is a big one over in Maryland and I was aware it was there, but I never went. We just had a really good time... it was a wonderful experience. And then that show closed after four years. The first year they weren't open - by then, my daughter was off at college - and I was down at the end of the driveway getting the Saturday paper, and I looked over and my neighbour, who was also getting his paper. We just looked at each other and said, 'we don't belong here - we're supposed to be at a Faire.'"



Jules Smith

And that - in a nutshell - is how Rutherford came to be the founder, President, and CEO of the Virginia Renaissance Faire.

The gathering began with a handful of the most dedicated members of the cast and crew creating a small touring version of the event, travelling to schools around the state and other nearby regions to offer kids a fun way to learn about history.

"After all, who is Virginia named after? Elizabeth the First, the Virgin Queen," notes Rutherford. "After about a year, we had been hired by the DC Department of Tourism to entertain during 4th of July week. We were hired to do an hour; we did two and a half, because the audience was just all over it."

After a few years, they had outgrown the small travelling wagon they had hitched to - it

was time to go big or go home.

"I took everybody out to lunch, and told them, 'I think I can do this - if I try and put the show back together, are you with me?' It was basically, 'if you build it, we will come.' I knew absolutely nothing about what I was doing. So, of course, I cashed out my retirement for my 50th birthday to fund it, and then proceeded to pay myself back out of my paycheque for the next 12 years."

It turned out to be a wise investment for the cultural enrichment of her state. Today, the Virginia Renaissance Faire has a home in the back field of the Lake Anna Winery in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, and is doing so well that it has almost outgrown itself once again.

"It has become insanely popular," says Rutherford. "We are having record weekends now. We've never seen 4,000 before, and last year we had a 6,000-person day."

That said, the Virginia Renaissance Faire isn't even the biggest in the neighbourhood. America is downright riddled with Renn Faires.

"We are a small Faire," says Rutherford, somewhat proudly. "Maryland gets over 300,000 people each year. Pennsylvania does 350,000. The Bristol Renaissance Faire, Kenosha, Wisconsin - 400,000 a year. Shrewsbury down in Texas, they'll get 400,000 to 500,000 people."

As with Virginia, the bigger festivals have all come from humble beginnings.

"This is our 48th season," shares Jules Smith, President and General Manager of Maryland Renaissance Festival. "This is my 44th full time with the festival, and it is my 39th season as the GM. Eleven years ago, I also became President when my father graduated to Chairman of the Board."

Smith's father was one of the early pioneers of the Ren Faire craze in America and passed on both his passion for, and knowledge of, anachronistic afFaires.

"Phyllis Patterson and her husband Ron were both teachers in a school in California. In 1963, to raise money for school programs, they staged a small event and it went over really well. It was essentially a tent show, but the costumes looked great. They made a big impression, and so they decided to run it as a private business.

"That was the largest single springboard for Renaissance Faires," continues Smith, adding that other ones popped up here and there before the real renaissance explosion.



> ***"Most people who opened Faires in the United States came out of Minnesota..."***

"The folks who started Michigan, Colorado, Kansas City, and a number of festivals around the country had their experiences first in Minnesota, which was true for us as well.

"My father had a business partner - George Coulam - and they were both involved in the Minnesota Renaissance Festival in the early 1970s. My father was only a partial owner - George was the founder and principal owner."



Coulam's advocacy is the subject of a new, three-part HBO documentary series "Ren Faire."

"George had the concept, if you will, of a kind of a permanent village amusement park, different than the Faires in California, which were essentially set up and torn down each year. George needed money, so eight people put in $3,000 each, and George bought them out after the first year, except for my father. Seven seasons later, when he sold it, he gave my father his $3,000 back. So, my father and the fellow who ran the food at Minnesota simply decided to start their own festival in 1977."

That festival would become the Maryland Renaissance Festival, which Smith and his five siblings own and still run today - inherited from their father after he passed away.

"In terms of attendance, we are the second largest of our type in the United States," says Smith. "We have 1,300 participants on any given day, with over 200 of them being performers. Those shows take place over ten stages, plus our 3,000-seat jousting arena. We now cap our attendance at 20,000 people per day."

Ren Faires have grown in popularity in recent years (COVID-19 notwithstanding), with new ones popping up across North America annually.



"Everybody I talked to - from the two Texas Faires, the Minnesota Faire, New York's two Faires, Arizona, North Carolina, and Georgia - have all enjoyed really strong growth, since the pandemic in particular."

"There is a massive interest in the Renaissance," confirms Ruth Foisy Davis, who was part of the team that launched the Niagara Renaissance Faire earlier this year. Cara Henry, also a Niagara Ren Faire organizer, adds, "we felt that there was a need for a Renaissance Faire in the Niagara region, for those who have never been to one, or for those who have not been for a while. We thought that maybe we would have about 500 or so guests. It went way above our expectations - we had over 2,500 guests."

Smith notes that while Ren Faires vary from Highland Games and other Celtic Festivals, there is a crossover.

"Renaissance Faires offer a broader sort of entertainment; juggling, magic, sword swallowers, Commedia dell'arte theatre productions, jousting in an arena. It is meant to look like a village. Most Renaissance Faires, the bigger ones that attract large quantities of people, have a full village with a building set up for crafts, food, and specialty items and services - things like hair braiding, face painting, games, and rides.

> ***"We are an entertainment experience, not living history, however, we do play heavily with that history..."***

The Virginia Renaissance Faire - which, unlike Maryland, is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit afFaire - takes the historical side of things a little more seriously, wanting to stay true to their educational roots. Some folks even dress-up as real historical figures.

That dedication can prove tricky sometimes, including when considering how to include Celtic history - which runs thick in the local area, but not so prominently in Elizabethan-era England. Cornelia Rutherford admits that you sometimes must play to the crowd's expectations; the point is to have fun, after all.

"So, the question becomes 'do we play to what they expect, or do we not, and try and educate them,'" she ponders. "We made as a conscious decision that it's a festival day, the Queen is coming, and we are going to have fun. And if we must take our snapshot of history and turn it into a chapter, because people will like it and we can still teach them, then we will do that. We have several of our stage acts that play 'Celtic' music. We try whenever we can to slip a little of that history in."

For Rutherford, though, there is a limit - and she draws it at fantasy fungi.

"You know who's discovered Renais-



Cornelia Miller Rutherford

sance Faires? The whole anime/cosplay group. A recent Shakespeare fantasy weekend was filled with Faireies and goblins and hobbits and Captain Jack Sparrows. The one that really throws me, however, is mushrooms. People dressed like mushrooms, with these great big giant mushroom hats on their heads. I'm not kidding - we were awash with mushrooms at our last event."

Lewissa Quinn, a veteran Ren Faire and Highland Games vendor who owns and operates Threads of Time - a custom medieval costuming tailor service - thinks the recent boom in interest owes much to the fantasy crowd.

"Part of the reason for the huge growth in Faire attendance recently is that folks desperately need some escapism after the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. First of all, it is something that they could do outside and, secondly, people got more heavily into fantasy because pretty much all there was to do during the lockdown was read books, watch movies, or play online games. Mild interests became hardcore interests.

"We had a huge influx of new attendees in the past three years. Everyone loves the experience of doing something in real life that they've only seen in movies or video games. I see Faires continuing to grow. Especially those of the more fantasy orientation. Even the hardcore history-based Faires are allowing more fantasy aspects in.

> ***"People want to believe in magic, and the hope for better things..."***

"The computer fantasy gaming industry has certainly contributed to our success," Smith concurs. "I think it's kind of an avatar experience for visitors. It is one of the things we can offer that television can't; everything is so hands-on here; the tastes, smells, sounds, the feeling - you are immersed in it."

Sarah Schlothauer agrees.

"They are getting immensely popular, especially in the U.S.," says the New Jersey transplant to Germany who attends several Ren Faires and medieval markets in the region with her German husband.

"I frequently see photos of people going to them and I think the popularity of pop culture media - things like like Dungeons & Dragons and Game of Thrones - have given people an interest in Medieval and Renaissance-adjacent aesthetics. I also hope it inspires people to learn the real history too."



Practicing what she preaches, Schlothauer has taken an interest in a group of re-enactors who perform as the Beguines, a Christian order of women who lived outside of the monastery system and healed the sick. Experiencing history is just one the reasons Schlothauer keeps coming back.

"What I most love about them can be summed up in three alliterative words: craftsmanship, culture, and camaraderie," she explains. "At the markets, my problems disappear. I struggle with chronic depression, anxiety, a subtle jaw disfigurement, and am currently in the process of recovering from extreme anorexia. However, at the markets, I don't think about any of that. I slip into my outfit, and I become my best self.

"I am usually quiet and reserved, but at the medieval markets, I strike up conversations, I dance, I feel good in my body. People are kind here, and the camaraderie between festival goers is real. One day I was dancing with my husband to some live music and a woman told me, 'Watching you just makes me so happy; you have such a warm energy.'"

That camaraderie is real between the people who bring these villages to life, too. It is what has kept Rutherford in the game all these years, despite the growing pains - the tie that binds the Virginia Renaissance Faire together to this day.

"If I knew then what I know now there would be no Virginia Renaissance Faire - the pain of starting this was excruciating. I will say it again; I really had no idea what I was doing, but I had this gut feeling that told me I could probably do it. I had people who looked at me and said, Mom - everybody at the show calls me Mom, even the people older than me - they said, Mom, you just lead on - we're with you. So, I was the first lemming off the cliff.

"It is an all inclusive, loving, supporting group of people who come together for five weekends every year," beams Rutherford. "If I got on Facebook and asked for help, there would be several hundred people in my driveway by midnight, and none of them would ask why - they'd just be there."

While the Virginia Renaissance Faire has come down for another year, they've got challenges ahead, like finding a new home, as the winery is looking to sell. But, come hell or high water, Rutherford assures that it will be back next year.

"Our little village of Staffordshire has suddenly become a field in the back of a winery again. The people that have worked their butts off in the rain and the heat for three, four weekends of rehearsals and five weekends of Faire - plus a Saturday of heavy lifting - would be the first to admit they don't think they could do another weekend. But, like me, they will be back.

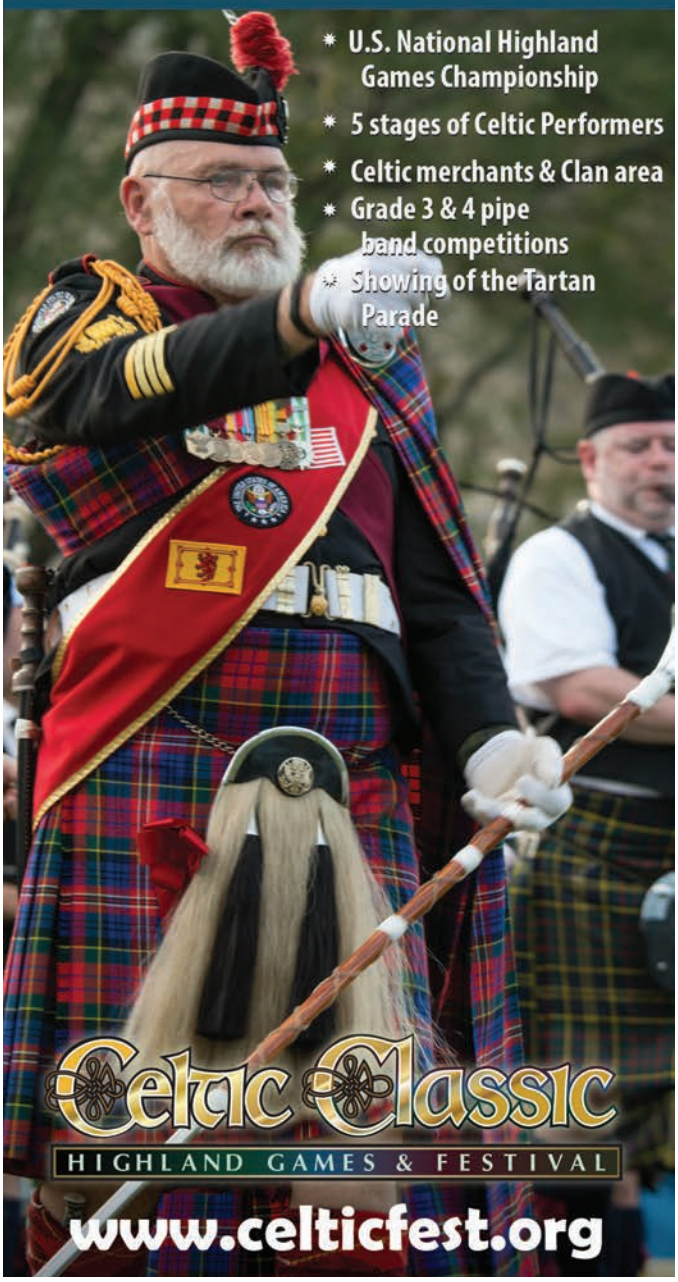
"It truly feeds your soul. There is something about it that connects us all when we make this magic happen."

Pants Optional!

Breakout the Kilt!

September 27-29 2024

Historic Bethlehem, PA

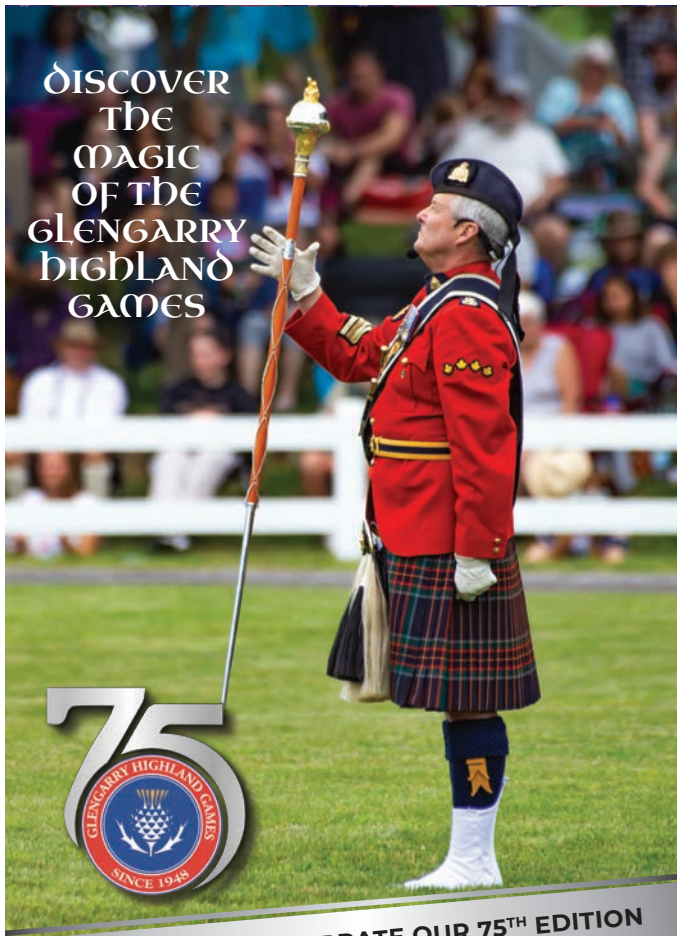


- U.S. National Highland Games Championship
- 5 stages of Celtic Performers
- Celtic merchants & Clan area
- Grade 3 & 4 pipe band competitions
- Showing of the Tartan Parade

Celtic Classic

HIGHLAND GAMES & FESTIVAL

www.celticfest.org



JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 75TH EDITION

AUGUST 2 & 3, 2024

The World Scottish Highland Games Heavy Events

SATURDAY



Scotland's National Chef Gary MacLean 2016 MasterChef Professionals Champion

FRIDAY 11 AM /1PM



FRIDAY NIGHT TATTOO AND CONCERT

The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Pipes and Drums (Ottawa)



CELTIC HEADLINERS

The Barra MacNeils

Massed Bands

The MacCulloch Dancers

A Grand Fireworks Finale

(613) 527-2876 Maxville, ON

GlengarryHighlandGames.com

THE BEST IN CELTIC ENTERTAINMENT

- The North American Pipe Band Championships ™
- Piping & Drumming
- Highland Dancing
- Heavyweight Events
- Fiddling with Cape Breton Fiddlers
- Tug of War
- Concerts
- And much more

Off the Beaten Path

Many Highland Games, Celtic Festivals, and Renaissance Faires are already well-known, due in large part to both their visibility and accessibility. However, as Lillian Holt tells us, there are some unique annual gatherings that deserve a look.



Kachemak Bay Highland Games

July 6 / Homer, Alaska, USA

www.kachemakbayscottishclub.org



In addition to the countless festivities across North America and Europe - some as remote as the Argentine province of Patagonia or the Welsh Eisteddfods - Celtic celebrations span the globe. The state of Alaska is no exception. This July, visitors to the "50th State" will experience the thrill of the Highlands in the charming seaside town of Homer, where the Kachemak Bay and Alaskan Scottish Clubs host the 2024 Kachemak Bay Highland Games. Festivities will include all the traditional elements of a true Highland gathering, including musical performances by the Harp Twins, athletic competitions for all ages, food and vendor stalls, and artisan markets. The traditional ceilidh not only promises food, fun, and frolic for the whole family, but is also an opportunity to explore breathtaking wilderness and amazing ocean adventures.

International Festival of the Celtic World

July 11 - 14 / Ortigueira, Galicia, Spain

www.festivaldeortigueira.com



Overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and the Cantabrian Sea, the intrinsic beauty of the Celtic nation of Galicia - the picturesque setting for the International Festival of the Celtic World - is matched only by its rich history going back more than a millennium when the Celtic tribe Gallaeci settled in the area north of the Douro River. For four days in July each year, Ortigueira A Coruña transforms into a Celtic musical haven showcasing both established and emerging artists from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Bretagne, as well as local talents. Founded in 1978, the festival features craft markets, dance workshops, street musicians, and marching bands and attracts more than 100,000 visitors each summer. The gathering has been declared a Festival of National Tourist Interest by Spain's Ministry of Economy.

Yn Chruinnaght

July 22 - 28 / Isle of Man, UK

www.ynchruinnaght.com



The literal translation of "Yn Chruinnaght" is "gathering", and this one promises to be grand on the Isle of Man. From July 22 to 28, guests are invited to celebrate Manx culture - and its connection to the other Celtic Nations - with music, ceilidhs, dance, workshops, lectures, an arts and crafts fair, and more. The World Manx Association and Gaelic Society originally conceived the annual Chruinnaght Vanninagh Ashoonagh festival to celebrate Manx traditions. However, in 1977, Mona Douglas, a leading cultural affairs figure at the time, transformed the event into an inter-Celtic festival with participation from Bretagne, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall. Musically, this year's event showcases the cutting-edge sounds of Manx-Scottish band HEISK, Scottish fiddle favorite Duncan Chislom, and a captivating Celtic Seasons concert. In addition, language learners and lovers will enjoy Culture Vannin's Manx Gaelic summer school lessons. Set amidst a scenic fishing village within a quintessential Celtic locale, Yn Chruinnaght is a big-time festival with small-town hospitality.

Montelago Celtic Festival

July 31 - August 3 / Umbria, Italy

www.montelagocelticfestival.it



During the rise of the Roman Empire, the Celts scattered across Europe, including into Northern Italy. Today, the region of Umbria in Central Italy hosts a massive Celtic folk festival, drawing upwards of 15,000 attendees annually to the picturesque Colfiroito Plateau - an area that has been protected as a regional park since 1995. Tents, stages, activity centres, food, and craft stalls line a stunning natural expanse, treating festival-goers to a high-energy extravaganza. Music includes round-the-clock traditional and contemporary Irish and Scottish performers, bluegrass, folk, and heavy metal. Visitors can refine their fancy footwork on the Balfolk stage with trad dancing classes, browse artisan fairs crammed with authentic handicrafts, or take lessons to make their own incense, Roman mosaics, or even a medieval meal. The Mortimer Pub - the literal heart and haven of the festival - offers a wide selection of craft beer and sits adjacent to the many food stalls that serve up delicacies such as wild boar and handmade lasagna.

Festival Interceltique de Lorient

August 12 - 18 / Lorient, France

www.festival-interceltique.bzh



Dubbed as the world's largest annual gathering of Celts, the Festival Interceltique in the charming seaport town of Lorient in western France boasts ten days of concerts, shows, and a myriad of mesmerizing entertainment. Last year, the festival attracted close to one million visitors and organizers are expecting similar numbers again this summer. For 2024, more than five thousand musicians, singers, pipe bands, harpists, dancers, visual artists, lecturers, and filmmakers - representing all seven Celtic nations - will grace 12 stages as part of more than 300 shows. Also on the event's agenda are daily parades, sports competitions (Celtic wrestling!), history exhibits, artisan markets, and Celtic masterclasses. This year's theme - Youth of the Celtic Countries - aims to link both past and future with hope for the preservation and promotion of an ever-evolving Celtic diaspora.

Celtes et Cie Festival of Saint-Malachie

August 16 & 17 / Saint-Malachie, Quebec, Canada

www.festivalceltessaintmalachie.com



Despite the region's francophone majority, it is no surprise that the Celtes and Cie Festival of Saint Malachie in the province of Quebec has attracted thousands annually since its premiere in 2016. One-quarter of the population of Quebec City claimed Irish heritage in the late 19th century - with a fair smattering of Scots too. Today, their descendants celebrate those roots in the enchanting region of the "Chaudière-Appalaches" that stretches along the St Lawrence River for over 200 km. Headlining musical artists in 2024 include Solstice, Alycia Putnam (Cape Breton), and Quebec's hottest Trad band, Reveillons. As an extra treat, the 30-member Celtic choir - Choeur Celtique de Saint-Malachie - will perform in the quaint village church accompanied by the l'Ensemble Celtique des Appalaches.

Tønder Festival

August 21 - 24 / Tønder, Denmark

www.tf.dk



In 1974, a group of music enthusiasts from Denmark organized a three-day folk festival with a focus on good ballads and great beer. These humble beginnings eventually evolved into one of Europe's most respected traditional and modern folk festivals with roots in Ireland, Scotland, England, Scandinavia, Canada, and the USA. With nine stages featuring both established and emerging Celtic musical artists, this high-energy event takes over the entire town each year, with audiences swarming the streets and squares. Thankfully, camping facilities accommodate up to 15,000 across a broad expanse on the festival grounds. Also recognized for its tasty fare, the Tonder site boasts a wide range of eating and drinking venues - including Fiddlers Green and Shamrock Sandwich - to suit all palates and pocketbooks. A favorite among musicians and festival aficionados alike, this year's high-powered and packed lineup promises to sustain the annual gathering's strong reputation.

Zambia Highland Games

August 24 / Lusaka, Zambia, Africa

www.facebook.com/jocksoc



According to the "Scotland DNA" project published over a decade ago, about 1% of Scottish men are direct descendants of the Saharan Berber and Tuareg tribes of North Africa - a lineage that stretches back more than 5000 years. The figure is similar for those of Irish heritage. Whether the present-day participants of the Zambian Highland Games have any Celtic lineage seems to have little bearing on the recent revival and continued success of the event. Following a hiatus due to Covid, and endorsed with a visit from the British High Commissioner to Zambia at last year's games in Lusaka, the Zambian Highland Games bounced back better than ever, confirming the far-reaching influence of Scottish culture across the globe. The 2024 gathering invites locals and visitors to participate in traditional competitions including the tug of war, tossing the caber, and jumping the barrel. Organized by the Lusaka & District Caledonian Society, the organization seeks to promote awareness of Scottish culture in Zambia by preserving links between the two nations that have endured for millennia.

Porthcawl Elvis Festival

September 27 - 29 / Porthcawl, Wales

www.elvies.co.uk



Each year, the small Welsh hamlet of Porthcawl Beach puts on its blue suede shoes to host the largest Elvis festival outside of the King's hometown of Memphis. Thousands of fans gather annually to pay tribute to the original rock 'n' roller. Competitive live impersonators, and other Elvis-mania-related events, begin over the summer months across the south coast of Wales, culminating in the Best Festival Elvis competition and The Elvis Gospel Show in September. Since the customary venue for the event - The Grand Pavillion - is currently under renovation, the main competition heats have been relocated to the Showdome venue at Pardean Trecco Bay. Now in its 2oth year, the Elvis Festival will see 26 entrants competing in live performances accompanied by a full orchestra. The festival's last day features the Elvis Gospel Show with the Maestage Gleeman Male voice choir, followed by a performance from the Best Elvis competition winner.

Kuala Lumpur Highland Games

September 28 / Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

www.facebook.com/KualaLumpurHighlandGames



It may seem a wee bit odd but discovering a Scottish Highland event in the middle of tropical Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia might actually make sense. Given a culture that worships the sound of the bagpipes - and with the Highland Games being one of Scotland's greatest exports (second only to kilts and whisky) - holding the games at the Bukit Kiara Equestrian & Country Resort in Southeast Asia may not be as far-fetched as it sounds. Organized by one of the oldest Loyal Societies in Malaysia, the Selangor St Andrew Society's membership includes Scots and their descendants, and anyone interested in Scottish culture. Established in 1887, the SSAS plans the games yearly according to long-standing tradition. Visitors can expect the classic Scottish Heavy events and many other activities for the whole family amid bagpipes belting out beloved Scottish ballads. A rugby match is expected to kick off the day designed to promote camaraderie and Scottish pride.



NEW BRUNSWICK

HIGHLAND GAMES FESTIVAL
LE FESTIVAL DES JEUX ÉCOSSAIS

DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK



Fàilte gu

FÉIS AN EILEIN '24

Christmas Island, NS

FÉIS AN EILEIN
EILEAN NA NOLLAIG

26th Gaelic Concert Series

Bi-lingual Gaelic-English concerts with Cape Breton's finest musicians
Tuesday evenings 7:30pm July 16, 23, 30, Aug. 4, 13
47 Church Rd. Christmas Island, NS

34th Annual Féis an Eilein Week

Aug. 20-24 featuring a Concert, Symposium, Milling Frolic, Workshops in Gaelic song, stepdance, fiddle, and more!

Gaelic Youth Day Camps

Summer Music Program and Bi-Weekly Gaelic Cultural Camps for Youth
July 3 Aug.19

www.feisaneilein.ca

@feisaneilein__

NOVA SCOTIA ALBA NUADH
Office of Gaelic Affairs
Oifis Iomairtean na Gàidhlig

Canada

NOVA SCOTIA
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

Cape Breton Island

SALTWIRE NETWORK

CAPE BRETON
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY



Hidden History of the Highland Games

By Dr. Michael Newton

People regularly come together at Highland Games to celebrate popular forms of Scottish culture. Despite claims of their antiquity, however, Highland Games are essentially inventions of the nineteenth century that contrast sharply with the ways in which Highlanders, and people of other parts of Scotland, celebrated their culture and identity in previous eras.

Like all societies, Scottish Gaels - the people of the Highlands - have calendar customs which bring communities together to celebrate. In the past, many of them occurred on the feast day of a particular Saint, and involved special foods, music, poetry, dance, and sports such as horse-racing, hunting, swimming, archery, and wrestling.

During the eighteenth century, however, many old traditions were terminated intentionally or due to disruptions and changes in social norms. Old leaders - clan chiefs and tacksmen (landholders) - who survived looked for ways to retain their social status and make a profit through transitions, and the recruitment of former clansmen into Highland Regiments proved rewarding. The Highland Games as we know them were devised by these Anglophone élite who wished to imbue Highland culture with the values of the British Empire and emphasize the athletic prowess and military potential of Highland men. The first Highland Games were held in 1818 at St. Fillans, Perthshire.

Whenever new traditions are invented, people feel the need to connect them to the past, even if this involves fabricating origin legends. A story began circulating that Highland Games were instigated by King Maol-Chaluim III (Malcolm Canmore, 1031–1093). He was a real and important king of Scotland with good name recognition, but there is no historical evidence that this was anything other than a romantic fable created by an advocate of the Highland Games to legitimize the new tradition.

Twelfth-century Irish literature describes a large annual "tribal" gathering at Carmun which included horse races, athletic competitions, storytelling, songs, legal proceedings, and other activities. Some see this as evidence of the antiquity of Highland Games, citing common cultural connections between Gaelic Scotland and Ireland, but if this were true, why is there nothing like Highland Games in Ireland?

> ***The orchestrated nature of Highland Games, and their neglect of the most important aspects of Highland culture - indigenous practices of song, music, and literature - has long been obvious to native Highlanders.***

Caroline MacDonnell commented in 1885: "Various efforts are being made to revive the old Highland Games, but it seems to be either unknown or overlooked that they were the pastime of the people - whereas now, several persons endeavour to gain a livelihood by them, which materially alters their character."

Games were not the means of participation in a shared, living heritage, but a spectacle put on by performers and competitors for outsiders thirsty for exoticism. New events were created, and older practices were selected from certain areas, in order to create dramatic entertainments. The caber toss, for example, was held in the Central Highlands in earlier times, but not in the Northern Highlands or Outer Hebrides, where there are virtually no trees.

The choice of activities demonstrates who was in charge and what their agenda was. Although initially a few Highland Games offered support for authentic forms of Gaelic cultural expression and a variety of physical recreations, the overseers soon narrowed the choice of activities to those that would appeal to a non-native audience who shared their vision of the Highlands as a breeding ground of imperial soldiers. Such contradictions are revealed in a Gaelic text from 1880 written in the form of a dialogue between two native Gaels, one of whom had just attended the Highland Games in Oban. (The term "laird" refers to the landlords in the Highlands who also ran, supervised and judged these spectacles.)

"Did many of them wear the Highland dress?"

"It was worn by most of the competitors and by a few of the gentry. ..."

"Will you tell me this: were prizes given at it for Gaelic poetry?"

"There were not."

"I am very sorry for that. It was different in the time of Duncan Bàn Macintyre. ..."

"Is it not surprising that the lairds do not encourage our own bards?"

"It is, considering that Gaelic is the language of the people. The lairds are generally intelligent and well-informed men."

"They are, but they are not so zealous about learning as they might be."

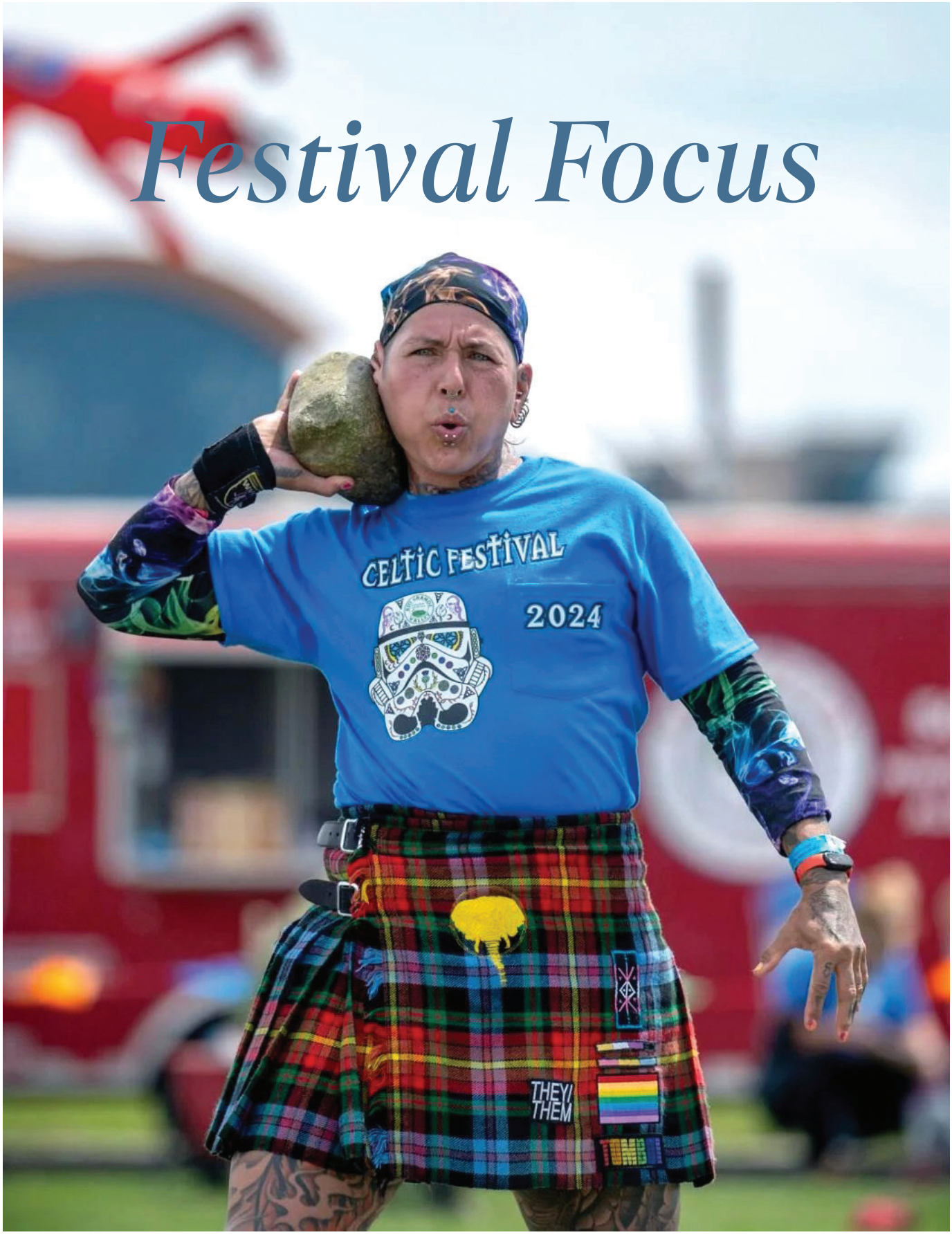
The dialogue contains innuendo and requires an explanation: "Highland dress" was not worn by the Highland natives attending the Games but only by competitors and the aristocrats displaying their pomp. Next comes a comment about the contents of the Games. One of the major Gaelic poets of the late 18th century, Duncan Bàn Macintyre, won the Gaelic poetry contests at the first several Falkirk Gatherings – precursors to the Highland Games – and the men lament that there is no patronage for Gaelic poetry as there once was. There is a hint of sarcasm in the compliment to the lairds' intelligence, but criticism of their lack of interest in Gaelic – the native language and culture of the Highlands – is more explicit.

Highland Games can be great fun, and sometimes some learning is imparted along with food and entertainment. Those involved with these events should realize, though, that the Games are not accurate representations of Highland culture or heritage but are by-products of its suppression and assimilation.


Outlander Stars
MARIA DOYLE KENNEDY
& DUNCAN LACROIX
THE NEXT GENERATION LEAHY
GLEADHRAICH ALBANNACH
TARTAN TERRORS DAVID LEASK
PIPES & DRUMS | HIGHLAND DANCE
HEAVY EVENTS | CLANS & HERITAGE
& SO MUCH MORE!
Fergus Scottish Festival & Highland Games
AUGUST 9-11, 2024
SCAN TO BUY TICKETS!
fergusscottishfestival.com


Aug 31
Sept 1
Git yer tartan on!
CELEBRATING CELTIC CULTURE IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES!
CANMORE HIGHLAND GAMES
CANMORE HIGHLAND GAMES
SAT AUG 31, 9 AM - 4 PM | SUN SEPT 1, 8 AM - 5 PM
TASTE OF THE HIGHLANDS
SATURDAY, AUG 31, 5 - 9 PM
THE CANMORE CEILIDH
SUNDAY, SEPT 1, 6 - 11 PM
Advance tickets & info at: canmorehighlandgames.ca

Festival Focus



The College of Piping ~ Highland Storm

July/August
Summerside, PEI
www.collegeofpiping.com



An exhilarating evening of Celtic music and dance, Highland Storm showcases stunning displays of Highland and step dancing, accompanied by the breathtaking sounds of pipes and drums, the haunting melodies of beautiful traditional songs, and the fire of the fiddle. Audiences will be transported back over 250 years to a pivotal time in Prince Edward Island's history, when 3 ships - the Annabella, the Edinburgh, and the Falmouth - arrived in Canada, having carried families from their homeland in Scotland with little more than the clothes on their backs. Recounting the first year of settlement, and the challenges of clearing land, cutting wood, building shelter, and surviving winter, Highland Storm shares the experience, strength, and hope of first-generation Scottish immigrants. Directed by Peter Gallant and featuring fiddler Gilbert Arsenault and vocalist Christine Gallant, the stunning spectacle includes performances from The College of Piping's instructors and students.

Sherwood Park Highland Gathering

July 20 & 21
Sherwood Park, AB
www.sphg.ca



The Sherwood Park Highland Gathering returns to Broadmoor Lake Park in Sherwood Park, Alberta, this July for two days of family fun and festivities. Last year, more than 12,000 people attended the event, including over 400 competitors. Saturday highlights sanctioned events in pipes, drums and massed bands, as well as Highland dancing, heavy events, and a Corporate Tug-O-War. Saturday night, family members of all ages are welcome to savour the sounds of local Edmonton Celt-Rockers Celtara, who are sharing the stage with both the North Stratton Pipe Band and members of the Celtic Ceilidh Dance Academy. Sunday will showcase sheep and duck herding demonstrations, dog agility, more Celtic entertainment, a Viking Village and a Heavy Events Clinic open to the public. On site all weekend, food trucks and a vendor marketplace serve up Celtic-themed wares and fares, and the wee ones will have fun in the Kids Zone while parents sample the beer gardens. Parking is available on-site for both cars and bicycles.

Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games & Clan Gathering

July 27 & 28
Enumclaw, WA
www.sshga.org



The Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games Association has worked tirelessly to provide Pacific Northwest residents with an authentic Scottish experience through music, dance, athletic competitions, and education for over 75 years. Their first festival (then called the Seattle Scottish Highland Games) was held in 1947. The event evolved, eventually changing its name to the Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games and Clan Gathering, and settling into the community of Enumclaw, Washington. This July, the annual event celebrates its 77th year, bringing together thousands of people for a weekend of cultural celebration, education, and preservation. Competitions begin each morning with Scottish Athletics, individual piping and drumming, Highland dancing and pipe bands. Featured musical artists - including Celt-rockers Tempest, Katie Jane Band, Peter Daldry, Colin Grant-Adams, Men of Worth, and Celtic trio Brother - will perform across five musical stages. In addition, visitors are encouraged to check out Clan tents, a Celtic Kennel, and the popular Celtic marketplace and Hall of Vendors, which offers up the finest in Scottish fare and wares.

Glengarry Highland Games

August 2 & 3
Maxville, ON
www.glengarryhighlandgames.com



The Glengarry Highland Games celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2024, solidifying its status as one of the premier Celtic events in North America. Along with an array of Scottish cultural activities, including Highland dancing, fiddling, piping and drumming, and more, this year's gathering will host the World Scottish Highland Games Heavy Events. In addition, to mark the anniversary, the festival has added two new special events to the agenda; the traditional Friday night Tattoo will feature the foot-stompin' sounds of Canada's Celtic ambassadors The Barra MacNeils - and, in honour of the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force - the RCAF Pipes and Drums will also perform. Additionally, long-term Games MC Reg Gamble has been selected as this year's Guest of Honour, and be sure not to miss acclaimed Scottish MasterChef Gary Maclean on Friday. The massed-band fanfare and closing ceremonies are sure to stir the souls of both newcomers and those returning to the Games.

Iowa Irish Fest

August 2 - 4
Waterloo, IA
www.iowairishfest.com



Dust off your kilt and get ready for Iowa's premier Irish cultural event, happening the first weekend in August in Waterloo, Iowa. Iowa Irish Fest is a jam-packed three-day event filled with history, workshops, live music, food, family fun and much more! Fest goers will enjoy music from some of the world's best Celtic bands, including headliners Scythian, Enter the Haggis and The High Kings! You don't want to miss the Celtic Cruise, Highland Games, Shamrock N' Run, Family Fun Area and other events that make the Fest memorable. Whether you're learning about Whiskey at a Whiskey Master Class or planning your adventure to Ireland at the Travel & Tour Workshops, Iowa Irish Fest has something for everyone! Tickets can be purchased at IowaIrishFest.com or at participating Hy-Vee and Veridian Credit Union locations. The app is available on both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. Iowa Irish Fest was founded by the Cedar Valley Irish Cultural Association as a way to foster and develop Irish fellowship and outreach into the community.

Montreal Highland Games

August 4
Montreal, QC
www.montrealhighlandgames.com



Established in 1855, the Montreal Highland Games is the oldest Scottish festival in the Province of Quebec. This year, the annual gathering kicks-off in grand style on Thursday night with the Promenade of Cabers through the streets of Verdun, followed by a Wee Ceilidh at the Burgundy Lion Pub on Friday night. Sunday, guests will enjoy an array of activities on the grounds of Verdun's Douglas Hospital, including "Highland Heavies" athletic contests, Highland dance and piping competitions. rugby matches and jousting medieval knights doing battle. Vendors will be on site with Celtic-themed wares and fare, and the wee ones will keep busy in the Family Village area, replete with bouncy castles and wee cabers. Along with Scotland's premier bagpipe Celt-Rockers Gleadhraich, Montreal's hometown favourites Mariner's Curse will set the soundtrack for this year's festival.

Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival

August 8 - 11
Lunenburg, NS
www.folkharbour.com



Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival is a small-town festival with a big reputation! Each year, music lovers flock to this distinct UNESCO World Heritage town for both the best in folk music and a healthy dose of fun. The longest running music festival in Nova Scotia, and one of the oldest in Canada, the all-ages event takes place over four days in early August and offers something for everyone. Intimate, and steeped in history, the gathering's 4 indoor and 2 outdoor venues each serve up excellent seating and are within walking distance of each other. Artists performing on the Wharf Stage are often accompanied by the songs of seagulls and fresh sea breezes, enhancing the already-rich Folk Harbour experience. Between shows, guests will enjoy the numerous galleries, museums, shops, homemade ice cream, pubs, and restaurants that make this colourful town a warm and welcoming destination any time of the year.

An Rí Rá Montana Irish Festival

August 9 - 11
Butte, MT
www.mtgaelic.org



The An Rí Rá Festival is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2024. The annual gathering takes place at the Original Mine Yard in historic Butte, Montana, a city park that offers spectacular views of both the city and the surrounding mountain ranges. Guests of the gathering will enjoy strolling the festival grounds, taking in lectures, seminars, and workshops, studying the Irish language, signing up for a raffle, or savouring the sounds of traditional musical artists, including Altan, The Elders, the Spain Brothers, and local favorites Dublin Gulch. In addition, both the Chicago-based Trinity Irish Dancers and the homegrown Tiernan Irish Dance School will display traditional dance. An Rí Rá is a family friendly event and admission for the weekend is free. Sponsored by The Montana Gaelic Cultural Society, the festival is produced each year by a dedicated group of volunteers.

Fergus Scottish Festival & Highland Games

August 9 - 11
Fergus, ON
www.fergusscottishfestival.com



One of the largest and most popular annual events on Canada's Celtic calendar, the Fergus Scottish Festival serves-up something for everyone each summer. A family-friendly event, this year's gathering includes local and international Heavy Event athletes, Highland Dancers, Pipe and Drum bands, Scottish Clan societies, as well as an amazing array of musical talent from the likes of The Next Generation Leahy, Albannach, Gleadhraich, Tartan Terrors, David Leask, Gillebride MacMillan, and more. Vendors offer visitors a strong selection of Celtic wares and fares, and guests are welcome to sample a wee dram of whisky. In addition, actors Maria Doyle-Kennedy and Duncan Lacroix from the smash hot TV series Outlander will be on site to meet and greet fans.

The Bitterroot Celtic Games & Gathering

August 17 & 18
Hamilton, MT
www.bcgg.org



The Bitterroot Celtic Games & Gathering returns this summer for its 15th year. Held annually on the third weekend in August at the historic Daly Mansion, the two-day festival is the largest cultural event of its kind in Montana. All weekend, guests will enjoy live music on the main stage with performances from The Wicked Tinkers, House of Hamill, Teton Skye, and Swagger. Also on the agenda are pipe and drum competitions, Highland and Irish dance performances, a Clan Tent Village, and a daily Grand Parade of Clans and bands. Adult Highland Games competitions are scheduled throughout the grounds on Saturday. A Scotch, Irish whiskey, and mead tasting will tee-up the Saturday night Ceilidh, while a Celtic Tea will take place on Sunday. Also on Sunday, the young ones are invited to participate in Junior Highland Games while all are welcome to participate in the Bonnie Knees contest, a Skillet Toss, a 'Beards & Braids' competition, and traditional Tug o' War contests. Guests can browse vendor stalls to sample traditional foods and wares. The Daly Mansion will also be open for self-guided tours for the weekend. There is something for everyone at this wonderful, family-friendly event.

Sydney Mines Highland Games

August 18
Sydney Mines, NS
www.facebook.com



After a hugely successful inaugural festival in 2023, the Sydney Mines Highland Games returns this summer with a jam-packed day of fun and festivities for the whole family. Guests are invited to enjoy an array of activities this August 18, including traditional Heavy Events, bagpiping and Highland dancing, a 5k run, boxing and arm-wrestling demonstrations, a tug-of-war, a Cape Breton's Strongest Farmer competition, and much more. Following the closing ceremonies, music lovers will savour the sounds of the Island's famous Men of the Deep. Visitors from outside of the region will be blown away by world-renowned warmth and hospitality of local residents.

Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival

August 23 & 24
Jamestown, NY
www.96thhighlanders.com



Founded, organized, and hosted by the 96th Highlanders Pipes & Drums Inc. of Jamestown, New York, the Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival/Gathering O' the Clans & Highland Heavy Games celebrates 17 years this summer. Canadian Celt-Rockers the Mudmen kick-off the festivities on Friday night at 6pm with a high-energy concert. Saturday, the festival runs from 9am to 10pm, and will feature eight pipe bands, seven Celtic musical artists, 25 clan societies, and Scottish Heavy athletic competitions. Also on tap are Scottish and Irish dance exhibits, a vendor's area full of food, drinks, and Celtic-themed goodies, and the always popular beer tent where thirsty patrons will find Guinness, Smithwick's, and more on tap. A Kids area, featuring mini-Highland Games events, will keep the wee ones busy, and a Saturday evening ceilidh - featuring Tennessee-based Celtic-fusion band Tuatha Dea - is sure to fill the dance floor.

Canmore Highland Games

Now 2 Full Days!

August 31 & September 1
Canmore, AB
www.canmorehighlandgames.ca



Experience the colours of the tartans and the thrill of the pipes this summer during two full days at the 33rd annual Canmore Highland Games. Taking place Labour Day weekend at Canmore's Centennial Park - beneath the scenic peaks of the Rockies - the yearly gathering offers visitors three distinct experiences: the Taste of the Highlands, the Canmore Highland Games, and the Canmore Ceilidh. Guests will savour spirits, mead, ale, and Celtic-inspired food at the Taste of the Highlands. The Highland Games serves up heavy sports, Highland dancing, piping and drumming competitions, clan society information, a Celtic market, British automobiles on show, a sheepdog exhibition, a tug-of-war, and more. The Canmore Ceilidh is sure to have visitors on the dance floor well into late evening, and live music is on the agenda both days. The Canmore Highland Games is a family-friendly event, and ticket options are available via the festival's website.

Virginia Scottish Games

August 31 & September 1
The Plains, VA
www.vascottishgames.org



A Labor Day Weekend tradition, the Virginia Scottish Games at Great Meadow in the Plains celebrates the region's rich and robust Scottish roots with its 50th anniversary in 2024. This year, the two-day event will feature an array of activities, including Highland Games heavy events, piping and drumming competitions, Highland dancing contests, a fiddling tent, Clans and Scottish societies, a Scottish dog showcase, a British car show, and a customary Kirkin' of the Tartan. Adults are welcome to savour a selection of spirits at the ever-popular Whisky Tasting, while an assortment of games will keep the kids busy. In addition, guests are invited to stroll through the vendors area and enjoy uniquely crafted goods and authentic Scottish cuisine. Live musical performance by the Steel City Rovers, Ardmore, the Seán Heely Celtic Band, and a special tribute to the late Alex Beaton, are sure to delight visitors.

Oregon Celtic Festival

September 13 - 15
Canby, OR
www.orcelticfest.com



This autumn, the spirit of our ancestors comes to life amidst the fabulous fall foliage of the US Pacific Northwest as the Oregon Celtic Festival celebrates Celtic culture in Canby, Oregon. This year's gathering showcases a stellar lineup of musical artists, including The Elders, Screaming Orphans, Tempest, and Wake the Dead. While music remains at the heart of the event, guests are welcome to sample the fine flavors of both classic and contemporary Celtic and local cuisines, partake in whiskey tastings, or stroll through the merchant area for unique crafts, apparel, and artisan goods. The Oregon Celtic Festival is a family-friendly event, providing a lively and welcoming atmosphere that is ideal for those looking to connect culture and community.

New Hampshire Highland Games & Festival

September 20 - 22
Lincoln, NH
www.nhscot.org/highland-games-nh



This September, get your Scot on at the 49th annual New Hampshire Highland Games & Festival at Loon Mountain Resort in Lincoln. Presented by NHSCOT, the three-day celebration showcases the spirit of Scotland through music, entertainment, food, drink, and dozens of cultural activities. Cheer on your favorite athletes in the Caledonian Clash, a new heavy athletics competition. Learn to cook from Scotland's National Chef, Gary Maclean, or sing along with "the Hebridean Baker" Coinneach MacLeod. Dance to Celtic music under the concert tent, observe the pageantry of Massed Bands, stop for a photo with the Highland cows, or watch sheep dogs step through their paces. In addition, the festival offers an array of activities and seminars, including rugby, street curling, Gaelic lessons, Highland dance and more. Enhance the experience with tickets to the Tartan Ball, a Saturday Night Concert, Beer Tastings, Whisky Master Classes, and more. Guests are invited to stroll through Vendor Village and sample wares and fares from more than 30 sellers.

Celtic Classic Highland Games & Festival

September 27 - 29
Bethlehem, PA
www.celticfest.org



Returning for its 37th year, the Celtic Classic is the largest free, family-friendly Celtic festival in North America. This year, opening ceremonies will see the Showing of the Tartan Parade through Historic Downtown Bethlehem, concluding on Highland Field where the top ten professional Highland athletes will again be competing for the title of the U.S. National Highland Games Championship. Also on the weekend's agenda are Grade 3 and 4 pipe band competitions, lectures, demonstrations, more than 40 Celtic retail merchants, the Celtic Heritage Hollow with a Clan Village, and an array of activities for children. Guests will enjoy five stages of world-class Celtic music from the likes of Ally the Piper, The Byrne Brothers, The Prodigals, Conor Mallon, and On the Lash. Dozens of food vendors will serve up a variety of treats, including fish-n-chips, pasties, bangers & mash, bratwurst, corn on the cob, poutine, and more.

Stone Mountain Highland Games

October 18 - 20
Atlanta, GA
www.smhg.org



For over 50 years Scotland has been coming to Georgia, with the Stone Mountain Highland Games and Scottish Festival! This year, Brigadoon returns with Friday events at the festival's host hotel, the Hilton Northeast Atlanta. Saturday and Sunday, the meadows and meandering tree-lined paths of Stone Mountain Park will transform into a uniquely Southern-styled Scottish Highland Games with an impressive mix of sights and sounds. As one of the premier Scottish festivals in the U.S., the Stone Mountain Highland Games will be featuring colorful pipe bands, Scottish athletics, piping and drumming competitions, Highland dancers competing before world-renowned judges, Country dancing, fiddling, and more. Scottish food and drink, Clan tents and vendors with lovely goods imported from the British Isles, and Celtic performers are all part of this traditional gathering. Don your tartans if you have them. No tartan? NO problem! EVERYONE can be Scottish for this fun and educational weekend trip to the Highlands! Visit the event's website for more information.

July Events

Embro Highland Games
July 1

Gathering of the Clans
July 1

Kenmore Highland Games
July 3

Penticton Scottish Festival
July 5 - 6

Almonte Celtfest
July 5 - 7

Kincardine Scottish Festival
& Highland Games
July 5 - 7

Newcastleton Traditional
Music Festival
July 5 - 7

Aberdeen Highland Games
(Australia)
July 6

Forres Highland Games
July 6

Kachemak Bay Highland Games
July 6

Luss Highland Games
July 6

Willie Clancy Summer School
July 6 - 14

Antigonish Highland Games
July 7 - 14

Ceol na Coille Summer School
of Irish Traditional Music
July 8 - 12

Grandfather Mountain
Highland Games
July 11 - 14

International Festival
of the Celtic World
July 11 - 14

Stonehaven Folk Festival
July 11 - 14

Payson Scottish Festival
July 12 - 13

Saline Celtic Festival
July 12 - 13

Angelbachtal Castle Park
July 12 - 14

Dalry Folk Festival
July 12 - 14

Guinness Cincinnati Celtic Festival
July 12 - 14

Newton Stewart Traditional &
Acoustic Music Festival
July 12 - 14

Edinburgh International
Jazz & Blues Festival
July 12 - 21

Alva Highland Games
July 13

Athena Caledonian Games
July 13

Inverness Highland Games
July 13

Jersey Shore Piping
& Drumming Classic
July 13

Minnesota Scottish Highland
Games
Jul 13

Robert Burns
Commemorative Supper
July 13

Skagit Valley Highland Games
July 13 - 14

Earagail Arts Festival
July 13 - 28

Catskills Irish Arts Week
July 14 - 20

South Sligo Summer School
July 14 - 20

Swannanoa Gathering Celtic Week
July 14 - 20

Burntisland Highland Games
July 15

Inveraray Highland Games
July 16

Monterey Scottish Games
& Celtic Festival
July 16 - 17

Ulster Fleadh
July 16 - 23

Hebridean Celtic Festival
July 17 - 20

Mull Highland Games
July 18

Highland Storm
July 18 - August 14

Cambridge Scottish Festival
July 19 - 20

Irish Festival on the Miramichi
July 19 - 21

Maine Celtic Celebration
July 19 - 21

Orilla Scottish Festival
July 19 - 21

Speyfest
July 19 - 21

Forest Fest – Forest Fleadh
July 19 - 24

Balquhidder, Lochearnhead
& Strathyre Highland Games
July 20

Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival
July 20

Lochcarron Highland Games
July 20

Portland Highland Games
July 20

Tomintoul Highland Games
July 20

Arizona Highland Celtic Festival
July 20 - 21

Elizabeth Celtic Festival
July 20 - 21

Sherwood Park Highland
Gathering
July 20 - 21

Joe Mooney Summer School
July 20 - 27

Stonehaven Highland Games
July 21

Belfast TradFest
July 21 - 28

Celtic Gathering Isle of Man
July 22 - 27

Meitheal Summer School
July 22 - 27

Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival
July 22 - 28

Fiddler's Green Festival
July 24 - 28

Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival
July 25 - 27

Durness Highland Gathering
July 26

The Lairds Games
July 26

Ailsa Craig Highland Games
July 26 - July 28

CCE MAD Week
July 26 – 28

Dayton Celtic Festival
July 26 - 28

Eilean Dorcha Festival
July 26 - 28

New Brunswick Highland Games
July 26 - 28

Airth Highland Games
July 27

Dufftown Highland Games
July 27

Halkirk Highland Games
July 27

Uxbridge Scottish Festival
July 27

Pacific Northwest Scottish
Highland Games
& Clan Gathering
July 27 - 28

St. Andrews Highland Games
July 28

Scoil Acla Summer School
July 28 - August 3

Meitheal na Gaeilge
July 29 - August 3

O'Carolan Harp Festival
July 29 - August 5

Arisaig Highland Games
July 31



August Events

Montelago Celtic Festival
August 1 - 3

Ballyshannon Folk & Traditional Music Festival
August 1 - 4

Féile an Phobail
August 1 - 11

Dornoch Highland Gathering
August 2

St. Andrews Society of Detroit Highland Games
August 2 -3

Glengarry Highland Games
August 2 - 3

Dublin Irish Festival
August 2 – 4

Iowa Irish Fest
August 2 - 4

James Morrison Traditional Music Festival
August 2 - 5

Edinburgh Military Tattoo
August 2 - 24

Aberlour Strathspey Highland Games
August 3

Aboyne Highland Games
August 3

Dundonald Highland Games
August 3

Highland Village Day
August 3

Inverkeithing Highland Games
August 3

Mey Highland Games
August 3

Newtonmore Highland Games
August 3

Spokane Scottish Highland Games
August 3

Colorado Scottish Festival
August 3 - 4

Bridge Of Allan Highland Games
August 4

Montreal Highland Games
August 4

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann
August 4 - 11

Goderich Celtic Roots Festival
August 5 – 11

Isle Of Skye Highland Games
August 7

Killin Highland Games
August 7

Feakle International Traditional Music Festival
August 7 - 12

Ballater Highland Games
August 8

Fairport's Cropredy Convention
August 8 - 10

Rock The Fiddle
August 8 - 10

Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival
August 8 - 11

Assynt Highland Games
August 9

Sparta Celtic Festival
August 9 - 10

An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival
August 9 - 11

Fergus Scottish Festival & Highland Games
August 9 - 11

Irish Fair of Minnesota
August 9 - 11

IrishFest La Crosse
August 9 - 11

The Pipers' Gathering
August 9 - 11

Aberfeldy Show & Games
August 10

Central New York Scottish Games & Festival
August 10

North Berwick Highland Games
August 10

Strathpeffer Highland Gathering
August 10

Albany Scottish Festival and Highland Games
August 10 - 11

Piping Live!
August 10 - 18

Kiltwalk Dundee
August 11

Perth Highland Games
August 11

Tain Highland Gathering
August 11

Festival Interceltique de Lorient
August 12 - 18

Cortachy Highland Games
August 13

Berea Celtic Festival
August 15 - 18

Milwaukee Irish Fest
August 15 - 18

Festival Celtes et Cie de Saint-Malachie
August 16 - 17

World Pipe Band Championships
August 16 - 17

Philadelphia Folk Festival
August 16 - 18

Helmsdale Highland Games
August 17

Maine Highland Games & Scottish Festival
August 17

National Capital Highland Games
August 17

Stirling Highland Games
August 17

Bitterroot Celtic Games & Gathering
August 17 - 18

National Heritage Week
August 17 - 25

Crieff Highland Gathering
August 18

Sydney Mines Highland Games
August 18

Féis an Eilein
August 20 - 24

Tonder Festival
August 21 - 24

Masters of Tradition
August 21 - 25

Mull of Kintyre Music and Arts Festival
August 21 – 25

Argyllshire Gathering
August 22

Blair Castle International Horse Trials & Country Fair
August 22 - 25

Cornwall Folk Festival in Wadebridge
August 22 - 26

Iúr Cinn Fleadh
– Newry City Music Festival
August 22 – 26

Glenisla Highland Games
August 23

Desmond O'Halloran Music Weekend
August 23 - 24

Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival
August 23 - 24

Niagara Irish Festival
August 23 - 24

Peoria Irish Fest
August 23 - 25

Bute Highland Games
August 24

Glenurquhart Highland Games
August 24

Hunter Valley Highland Games
August 24

Irish Hooley Musical Festival of Dubuque
August 24

Lonach Highland Gathering & Games
August 24

Strathardle Highland Gathering
August 24

DCCS Highland Games
Aug 24 - 25

Glenarm Festival of Voice
August 26 - 28

Cowal Highland Gathering
August 29 - 31

Kansas City Irish Fest
August 30 - September 1

Wisconsin Highland Games
August 30 - September 1

Birnam Highland Games
August 31

Capital District Scottish Games
August 31

Canmore Highland Games
August 31 - September 1

SF Caledonian Club Scottish Highland Games
August 31 - September 1

Virginia Scottish Games & Festival
August 31 - September 1




Sherwood Celtic Yuletide Festival
Saturday Dec 14 - McDade, TX
Pre Show Friday Night for Camping Patrons
For Discount Tickets & More Info Visit:
www.SherwoodForestFaire.com
Ed Hulse


© Bruce T. Hamilton
Includes an annual subscription to Scotland Magazine! and CelticLife Magazine!
SCOTTISH HERITAGE USA
FOUNDED IN 1965
Join Scottish Heritage USA today
www.scottishheritageusa.org

Sarah Sigwulf Hunter

Understanding my ancestry has always been an important part of my life. My upbringing was influenced by family historians, genealogists, and stories from my elders. My family tree is mostly Celtic, from across Europe and the British Isles, and my most recent ancestors came to Canada in the early 1900s from Scotland, England, and Austria. My spirit connects mostly with my Scottish roots.

I was raised in a small town on Georgian Bay, and now reside in Burlington, Ontario with my partner and dog pack.

I have always been a very creative person and found great joy expressing myself through clothing or creating a different persona with a costume. As a teen, I admired Rob Halford of Judas Priest - yes, for his music, but also for his fashion. By then, my grandmothers had taught me to sew. Later, I did a co-op term with a seamstress in high school, and I have been a professional seamstress ever since.

My creative views have evolved with me over the years. When I first started Fit for the Gods, it was a side project making authentic Medieval and Iron Age costumes to honour our ancestors, history, and the old Gods. I still have those same influences, but how I express them has changed. I now also create unique, versatile items that can be worn for many occasions with a more sustainable approach.

My creative process is often inspirational, motivated by the myths of ancient gods and artwork. I also often find myself inspired by the pagan world that my ancestors once lived in, immersing myself in a historical topic and allowing my creative mind to flow.

Most of my clients love history, the occult, and sustainable living practices, and I meet many of them at Medieval Games, Renaissance Fairs, and Pagan Festivals.

A good piece of clothing is made ethically with high standards for a long life. The quality of our clothing will continue to improve with advances in more sustainable textiles, and we invest a lot of time sourcing and staying up to date with high quality, ethically made fabrics.

I consider the clothing I design to be artwork, and staying true to my creativity will allow those who appreciate it to gravitate towards it. I intend to continue making small batches and one-of-a-kind, ethically made clothing out of high quality, sustainable fabric.



WWW.FITFORTHEGODS.COM































Albannach

Glasgow Lands SCOTTISH FESTIVAL



Enter the Haggis

29TH ANNUAL GLASGOW LANDS SCOTTISH FESTIVAL

LOOK PARK, NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

JULY 20, 2024 - 9 A.M. - 5 P.M. • ENTERTAINMENT UNTIL 8:30 P.M.



Tartan Terrors

Heavy Athletics, Pipe & Drum Competitions, Fencing & Sword Demos,
Massed Bands, Clan Tents, Historic Highlanders, Scottish Food and vendors,
beer and whisky tasting, harpers, weavers, water spray park.

ENTERTAINMENT IN THE CELTIC PUB TENT FEATURING: ALBANNACH, ENTER THE HAGGIS, SARAH THE FIDDLER, TARTAN TERRORS
RAIN OR SHINE.

For information:
visit our Facebook page or
www.glasgowlands.org
glasgowlands@hotmail.com

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Co-Sponsored By: WESTFIELD BANK · BURGER KING · nepm

NORTHERN WATTERS KNITWEAR & TARTAN SHOP

FINEST CANADIAN CRAFTS - TARTANS PRODUCTS
JEWELLERY - MOHAIR SOCKS - YARN
CELTIC BLANKETS - SHEEPSKIN SLIPPERS
KILTS & ACCESSORIES - CAPES
DEERSKIN ITEMS - NATIVE PRODUCTS



HISTORIC PROPERTIES	PIER 20	VICTORIA ROW
1869 UPPER WATER ST	1209 MARGINAL RD	150 RICHMOND ST
HALIFAX, NS	HALIFAX, NS	CHARLOTTETOWN, PEI
(902)405-0488	(902) 406-2050	(902)566-5850

HOME OF THE 100% BRITISH WOOL SWEATERS & ACCESSORIES SHOWCASING OVER 250 ARTISANS!

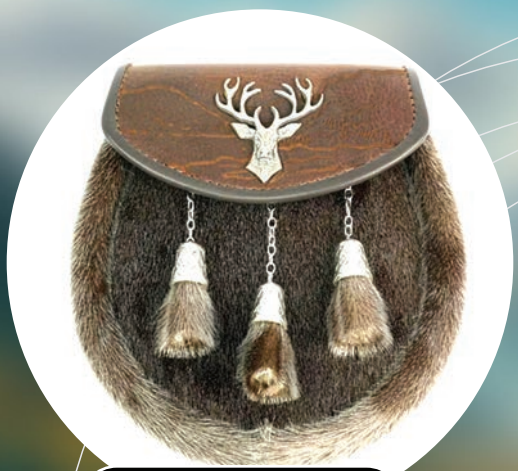
MAIN DISTRIBUTOR FOR SCOTTISH CLAN ITEMS IN NORTH AMERICA

VISIT OUR CHARLOTTETOWN LOCATION TO SEE OUR KNITTERS WHILE THEY WORK!

1-800-565-9665 - WWW.NWKNITWEAR.COM

the celtic collection

Hittin' the Highland Games!



Artisan Sporran
£280
www.scotlandshop.com



Bespoke Kilts
Pricing Upon Request
www.redlabelkilts.ca



Ogham Pendant Necklace
in Sterling Silver
$155
www.sheilafleet.com



Clan Crested
Beer Mugs
$26
www.nwknitwear.com



Lochy Sgian Dubh
$99
www.scotlandshop.com

my ireland family heritage

Walk in the footsteps of your ancestors

Family Genealogy Tours
Designed Exclusively for You

Full Genealogy Research

Private Luxury Heritage Tours

Visit your ancestral townland & national heritage sites

Find us on

www.myirelandheritage.com
info@myirelandheritage.com | +00 353 1 689 0008



Ottavio Gusmini

For one Italian piper, it's amore



Ottavio Gusmini learned to play an array of musical instruments as a young man. However, it wasn't until he had finished his formal studies that he would discover the instrument that would become his "one true love."

"I grew up with a drum set and studied classical percussion," Gusmini recollects via email with Celtic Life International from his home in Lombardy, Northern Italy. "In fact, I graduated in percussion at the Milan Conservatory in 2004. However, I started playing the bagpipes soon after graduation."

The shift from percussion to pipes, he admits, is a long story.

"Playing around Europe as a percussionist with many musical ensembles, I often came into contact with pipe bands from the U.K. or other European countries. Their world, sound, and way of playing always fascinated me, and, in 2003, I started attending a Celtic music festival near my hometown."

Over the years, Gusmini witnessed performances from the likes of the Tannahill Weavers, Breabach, Finlay MacDonald, Fred Morrison, Capercaillie, Flook, and more. However, of all the sounds he heard at the festival, one stood out above the rest.

"Among the various musical instruments played, the one that touched my heart the most was the Great Highland Bagpipe. This instrument still touches my heart every time I play it, or when I hear someone playing it. In fact, I probably love the bagpipes more than I did 20 years ago.

> ***"My wife says that the bagpipes are my lover, because I often spend more time with them than with her..."***

Gusmini has since dedicated his musical career to the Great Highland Pipes. Even so, being a bagpiper in Italy comes with its share of hurdles.

"First of all, it is certainly a difficult musical instrument, and much more difficult than people think," notes Gusmini, adding that part of the problem was a lack of local pipers to apprentice under. "In Italy, I didn't always have proper teachers. I solved that issue by moving to Scotland in 2016 for two years.

"Another big problem I deal with almost daily is the fact that in Italy, the Scottish bagpipes are a little-known instrument. We pipers are often associated with the 'zampognari' and the zampogna players of central and southern Italy; but the Great Highland Bagpipe and the zampogna are instruments with completely different histories and traditions.

"One of the most difficult tasks for a 'Scottish' piper in Italy is to teach people this difference, and to have the Scottish bagpipes appreciated for what they are, with their own history and repertoire."

Despite the infrequent demand for pipers in Italy, Gusmini has managed to enjoy a fulfilling career, often playing for American and U.K. tourists around Lakes Como and Maggiore. He has also performed on stage with the likes of The Red Hot Chili Pipers and The Chieftains, and has released a solo album called Masked Times.

However, his most important role is as a teacher, encouraging future generations to grow the bagpipe tradition in a country where there is little.

"From my perspective, people here have only recently become interested in piping. What we don't see is any kind of interest from the very young. Among my pupils I have people aged 20 to 60, but I have never seen a child, nor have I have never seen any children with other piping teachers. Sometimes we see the sporadic teenager, but children - never. It's too bad, really, because they are the ones who could take Italian piping to the next level."

Still, every new pupil he helps to see the beauty of the Great Highland Pipes and the dulcet tones they produce brings him joy, and hope for the future.

"We should try to make the bagpipes better known in Italy, using any means possible, including presentations in schools. From my point of view as a teacher, one of the greatest rewards is seeing other people learning to do something that I love to do so much."

FACEBOOK.COM/OTTAVIO.GUSMINI

School of Celtic Studies/Scoil an Léinn Cheiltigh
Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies/Institiúid Ard-Léinn Bhaile Átha Cliath
10 Burlington Road, Dublin 4, Ireland

Celtic Studies

Summer School

2025

Mediaeval and Modern Irish and Welsh
Language and Literature

14th - 25th July 2025

REGISTRATION OPENS
TUESDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2024
www.celt.dias.ie

DIAS



Made in Scotland by Scots. Representing the very best designs and gifts from Scotland.
www.scottishcreations.com



THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO FAMILY TREE DNA:
Y-DNA, Mitochondrial, Autosomal and X-DNA
By Roberta Estes

FamilyTreeDNA, founded in 2000, was the first and is still the only company to offer three kinds of DNA testing for genealogy:

- The Family Finder autosomal DNA test provides you with your ethnicity breakdown, plus matches to close and distant family members on both the paternal and maternal sides of your family.
- Mitochondrial DNA tests your mother's direct maternal line.
- Y-DNA tests the direct paternal line for men, providing matches to males both recently and distantly related.

Roberta Estes, the author of over 1,600 articles about genetic genealogy, explains each kind of test, when it's most useful, and how to incorporate the results into your genealogy. This guidebook contains multiple screenshots like the ones you can expect to view on your own computer; roadmaps and checklists with instructions on how to proceed; plus, an extensive glossary to help you decipher the technical language associated with DNA testing. In a word, this is the only comprehensive guidebook to FamilyTreeDNA.

8-1/2" x 11". 264 pp., profusely illus., paper. 2024.
Print edition: ISBN 9780806321288 **$37.50** / **e-Book version:** ISBN 9780806372471.**$24.95**

Genealogical Publishing Company · 3600 Clipper Mill Rd. Suite 229 · Baltimore, MD 21211 **www.genealogical.com**

Mary Francis Leahy

One young Canadian steps out of the shadows of Celtic tradition



"To be brutally honest, I was forced to play the fiddle." Mary Francis Leahy is joking...sort of.

As one of seven offspring to have sprung from two famous fiddlers - Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy - the 18-year-old Canadian musical phenom is in good humour, having just released her debut solo recording First Light.

"My dad says I was genetically forced to be a fiddler," she laughs over the phone from her home in Ontario. "Growing up in the home that I did, it was always like 'play your fiddle and eat your vegetables.' And, truthfully, I did not like to practice. In fact, I still don't like to practice. But I must admit, my parents were right - it does make a big difference."

While she has been fiddling around with the fiddle most of her life, Leahy admits that her love for the instrument only came about more recently.

"In my younger years, I did not want to make a career out of music. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, but I didn't think that being a professional musician was in the cards for me. Thankfully, my parents never put any added pressure on me. Whatever I decided to do with my life was alright with them. They know, first-hand - and likely more than most people - the many challenges that come with being a full-time musician."

Her perspective on performing changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was weird, I don't know - something just sort of clicked inside of me and things started falling into place. I was listening to a lot of Latin music and that inspired me to start writing. I wasn't necessarily composing traditional Celtic music...don't get me wrong - I was raised with that music, and there will always be a special place in my heart for it - I just felt that it had already been said, and there was no motivation for me there. I felt like I had something new and different to give - something that was uniquely my own. That's when it clicked.

Over the coming months, Leahy would sit at the piano for an hour each day until she had composed something...anything.

> ***"It actually drove me nuts, because my mom would hide in the next room or at the top of the stairs with a recording device and tape everything I played. She always said, 'You have to do something with all of this!'"***

Around the same time, almost serendipitously, her parents built a recording studio in the home.

"All of a sudden, I had this musical playground right down the hall from my bedroom. Recording an album seemed very natural given the circumstances, and so it began."

For First Light, Leahy enlisted multi-award winning Cuban Canadian Elmer Ferrer as co-producer, arranger, guitarist and digital programmer. Also on board for the sessions were Remi Arsenault (bass), Mark Kelso (drums), and León (percussion).

Leahy says that she savoured the opportunity to work with top-shelf talent.

"They always push you to be better than you thought you could be. Great musicians inspire the ear and direct your musicality in new ways."

So far, response to the recording has been beyond her expectations.

"I'll be honest here - I get very anxious about what other people think, and I was so scared to put this out there. I was actually expecting people not to like it. But then my brother's teenage friends started coming up to me and telling me how super cool it was, and I'm like - ok, that's great, because I didn't expect you guys to go for this at all, but that's amazing."

Leahy is currently touring North America in support of First Light.

"I am just so grateful to my parents for believing in me from the start of this project. Without their support, I would not have had the courage or the patience to do it.

"But that's their job as parents, right? And they are like that with my brothers and sisters also. The rest of the world might know them as famous fiddlers, but to me they're just mom and dad."

@fiddlemaryfrancis



CHICAGO SCOTS

Are you Scottish by birth, by heritage, or simply by inclination?

Join Chicago Scots Reciprocal Membership Program

You will automatically become a member of the National Trust for Scotland and enjoy free access at 100+ historic sites in Scotland.

Your membership will support Chicago Scots primary charity, Caledonia Senior Living & Memory Care

NATIONAL TRUST for SCOTLAND | Foundation USA

SCAN OUR QR CODE TO GET STARTED!







Kristy Van Hoven

Tending the torch of tradition

For Kristy Van Hoven, the love of Highland dance began with a trip.

"I was visiting my family in Argyle & Fife in Scotland, and I had the opportunity to experience Highland dancers while attending a dinner," she shares via email from her home in Toronto, Ontario. "Upon my return from that trip, I decided to get involved in Highland dance."

An immigrant to Canada with Scottish, Scandinavian, and American heritage, Van Hoven was older than most of her student peers when she first put on her Celtic dancing shoes.

"As a young person, I attended Highland games, but I didn't really connect with the sport until I was a teenager. After college, I found more avenues to explore Scottish dance training and added step dance and ceilidh dancing to my repertoire."

Over the next 25 years, Van Hoven would perform in both Highland Dance World Championships and Canadian National Championships. She has also made several TV and festival appearances.

Her greatest joy, however, has come from sharing what she has learned with others through her Toronto-based studio, Guthrie School of Dance.

"I am truly inspired by the dancers I teach - these are kids who are just starting their journeys, or maybe adults who come back to Highland dance after a break, or perhaps those who are discovering dance for the first time. Today, we work with musicians and pipe bands across North America, and it is exciting to take part in live shows that explore the diversity of cultural and heritage dance."

Van Hoven says that Guthrie School of Dance is committed to being a safe and inclusive space for learners of all ages.

"When I started teaching, there were little, if any, options for adults who wished to start or continue their Highland dance studies. My mission has been to create a warm and welcoming space for those who are shy to start but have an abiding passion for the pipes, or tartan, or just a great dance class.

"Many students who didn't necessarily fit into the role of the ideal competitor were also struggling to find a studio where they could simply let loose and dance," she adds. "So, I started welcoming in students who were looking for a space - regardless of age, ability, or dance experience."

That hybrid, "adaptive Highland dance class" - which is available both in-studio and online - became a huge success.

Despite that success, she believes that a barrier of entry - be it age, skill, or culture - remains an issue.

"As a cultural art form, many people are leery to start if they don't have Scottish heritage. However, Highland dance is an amazing way to make new friends, exercise, ward off illness, and have a bloody good time all at once. So, when asked if you need to be Scottish to dance, I say absolutely not!

> ***"Cultural heritage is best shared well beyond your community as a way to find common ground and share stories."***

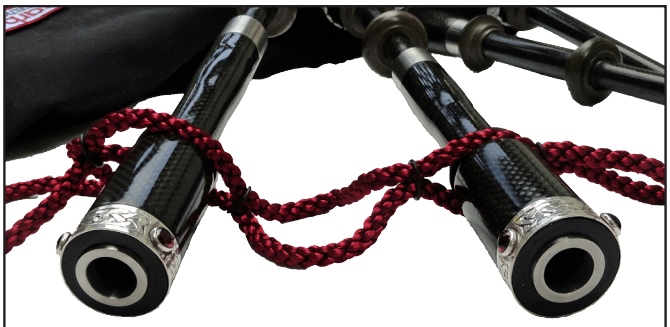
The challenges of the vocation, she notes, are minimal compared to the rewards.

"Being a part of the legacy of Scottish and Highland dancers is very fulfilling, and there are lots of opportunities to engage younger generations in the Scottish arts of dance, music, and more."

She admits that schools like hers - as with many organizations and individuals committed to preserving and promoting Celtic culture - have their work cut out for them in the coming years.

"There are so many things vying for people's attention these days. The trick is meeting people where their needs are - not everyone is going to want to be the elite athlete that is required for top competitions, some may not even want to compete or perform - but a passion to challenge oneself through dance always seems to be an interest."

FACEBOOK.COM/GUTHRIEDANCE



Carbony™ Celtic Winds are innovative musical instruments that offer the advantages of modern carbon fiber technology with time tested designs.

We put tradition on the leading edge. Order one of our whistles, flutes, or bagpipes today at www.Carbony.com.

carbony™
CELTIC WINDS



HERE'S WHY STAHLY IS A BIG NAME IN QUALITY HAGGIS:

*GREAT TASTE:
same family recipe since 1920!

*AVAILABLILITY *nationwide*

*EASY TO PREPARE:
simply heat and serve!

*GOURMET TIPS:
at www.thehaggis.com

TRADE & RETAIL ENQUIRIES

CALL: 251-405-0032
EMAIL: info@camwrap.net
VISIT: www.thehaggis.com
259 CHARLES STREET ~ MOBILE, AL ~ 36604

CAMWRAP has been distributing STAHLY quality haggis nationwide since 2003

Old Friends Genealogy, LLC

Kate and Mike Lancor
Genealogy Researchers
Association of Professional Genealogists Members

Let us "chase" your Celtic ancestors!
Discover your Irish or Scottish roots!
It's personal ~ Their story & legacy!
Find out where your ancestors lived in Scotland or Ireland!
Zoom consultations available!

Website: **oldfriendsgenealogy.com**
Facebook: **Old Friends Genealogy**
Email: **oldfriendsgenealogy@gmail.com**
Phone: 603-204-8409 (U.S.)

www.SurnameCrest.com

SURNAME CREST .com

Family Coat of Arms gifts for every occasion



High Quality. Low Prices. Custom made.

Trustpilot

www.SurnameCrest.com

www.OysterTales.ie

Oyster Tales
www.oystertales.ie

Hand-decorated Wild Atlantic Way oyster shells



www.OysterTales.ie

TWO Irish businesses that are passionate about what they do.
Unique Items | Made with Love | Fast Worldwide Delivery
10% Online Discount with Code "CelticLife"



Hot Smoked Salmon & Crab Fishcakes *(with Broccoli Slaw)*

the CELTIC CHEF
with Gary Maclean

I love the Highland Games, particularly those in North America – in fact, I believe I have been to more games in the USA than Scotland. The food is amazing, usually very casual and handheld, and I enjoy the interpretation of Scottish classics done in a very local style using the very best indigenous ingredients. This is my take on an incredible lunch I had at the New Hampshire Highland Games at Loon Mountain in New Hampshire. I just could not believe the size of the event and the number of people in attendance. I go back there every year and hold culinary demonstrations showcasing Scottish food and traditions. This recipe includes an ingredient I love - Old Bay seasoning; it comes from Maryland and is the perfect spice for this recipe. If you ever go to Annapolis, you will find loads of amazing seafood shacks and even before you go in all you will smell is Old Bay Seasoning.

Fishcake Ingredients

1 lb 2oz (500g) potatoes, peeled and cut into quarters
1 oz (25g) butter
11 oz (300g) hot smoked salmon
3½ oz (100g) white Crab meat
2 oz (50g) capers
½ oz (15g) Old Bay seasoning
Small bunch chives, chopped
Small bunch dill, chopped
1 egg

For the coating
3½ oz (100g) plain flour
2 eggs
Splash of milk
3½ (100g) Panko breadcrumbs

Broccoli Salad Ingredients

1 head of broccoli
2oz (50g) sugar
3-½ oz (100g) cherry tomatoes, halved
2 tbsp white vinegar
7oz (200g) mayonnaise
2 red onions, sliced
2oz (50g) sliced almonds
3-½ oz (100g) sultanas

Fishcake Instructions

In a large pan, place the potatoes in cold salted water and slowly bring to boil. Once cooked, drain and allow them to "steam out" for a few minutes. Then place the potatoes back into the pot and back onto the stove and - on a low heat - dry out the potatoes. Add the butter to the potatoes stage and then mash. Before everything gets cold, mix the smoked salmon, crabmeat, one egg, capers, chopped chives, dill, and Old Bay seasoning. Next, shape the fishcakes by weighing out 100g balls and then pressing them into a pastry cutter. Place the fishcakes into the fridge for an hour or so to firm up. Once firm, coat them in breadcrumbs in three bowls: one with seasoned flour, another with the 2 eggs and the milk, and one for the breadcrumbs. Roll the fish cakes in the flour first, then the egg and milk mixture, and then the breadcrumbs. There are a few options for cooking; deep fry until golden, or shallow fry them (making sure you keep them moving) or cover them with a little oil and bake them in a hot oven at 180˚C.

Broccoli Salad Instructions

Cut the broccoli into florets. With the stalk, peel the outside and discard, and then keep peeling to thin cut strands. Next, take a large pan of salted water and bring to a boil. Add the broccoli florets and cook for 60 seconds. Add the cut stalk slices and cook for another 60 seconds. Quickly drain and cool in cold running water. Once cold, drain any remaining water. Slice the florets thinly. In a separate bowl, combine sugar, sultanas, white wine vinegar, sliced red onion, and mayonnaise. Mix this over the cooked sliced broccoli, and lightly coat. Pop into a serving dish and top with the sliced almonds and halved cherry tomatoes.

Slàinte Mhath! - Gary
www.garymacchef.com

The Fiddle and the Sea B&B

AN FHIDHILL AGUS AN FHARRAIGE, B&B

Ensuite rooms. Near sandy beaches
on the warmest waters in eastern Canada.

Experience the living Celtic Culture



109 High Road, Port Hood
Nova Scotia, B0E 2W0

902-631-5980

contact@thefiddleandthesea.com
www.thefiddleandthesea.com

STIUDEO BOHEMIANAOH A TUATH

Hand Made Garments & Decor

DIY Kits:
Crafty Culture- jewelry, crochet, sewing
& Mindfullness- malas for meditation

Uniquely Yukon Workshops



NORTHERN BOHEMIAN STUDIO



Escape to Scotland

bookscentscandles.com

Artisanal candles
for Outlander fans
since 2013

Save 15% at checkout - enter
SCOTLAND to save

Located in Pennsylvania, USA

Own the Shiny One!



Solid Sterling or 14K
Heirloom Quality
Pins, Pendants, Bolos

www.crestbadges.com
Custom Orders Welcome
Mention this Ad Save 10%



There is a reason why we are the only Canadian retailer ever short listed for World Whisky Retailer of the Year (and two time Runner Up)… we have great taste!

Always on the hunt for cool new single casks, here are a few of the latest and greatest!

KENSINGTON
WINE MARKET
ESTABLISHED 1992

kensingtonwinemarket.com
@KensingtonWM



DRAM
with Andrew Ferguson

Fabulous Fettercairn



Did you know that Scotland's national animal is a unicorn? You might have been tempted to guess it was a noble stag, but you'd have to guess again. In Celtic mythology, the unicorn symbolizes power, purity, and innocence. It first appeared on the Royal Coat of Arms of William I (a.k.a. the Lion) in the 12th century and was first used as a symbol for Scotland during the reign of King Robert III (1390-1406). Over the centuries it became an increasingly common feature in Scottish heraldry, and by the mid-1500s unicorns had become a key component of the Scottish Coat of Arms.

Today it is the country's national animal, and some Scots even mark National Unicorn Day every April 9. But why all this talk of unicorns? Because the unicorn is also the emblem of the Fettercairn Distillery - adopted for the facility by its founder, Sir Alexander Ramsay. The unicorn is the dominant symbol in the Clan Ramsay crest.

Fettercairn Distillery was founded in 1824 on the outskirts of a village by the same name where the foothills of the Cairngorm Mountains meet the barley fields of Scotland's east coast. In 1830, Sir John Gladstone, father of the future British Prime Minister William Gladstone, purchased the distillery and the estate it sat on. While the family would own the distillery for nearly 100 years, it would mostly be run by tenants.

Although William Gladstone never got his hands dirty with respect to distillation, during his time as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1859-1866) he did pass the Spirits Act of 1860. This law cemented and extended the rights of merchants to blend and store both malt and grain whiskies under bond. These rights were further extended in 1863, allowing spirits dealers to retail their whiskies to the public in small quantities. Gladstone's legislation effectively gave birth to the Blended Scotch Whisky trade. In time, this paved the way for the likes of Andrew Usher & Co., John Walker & Sons, Chivas Brothers, and dozens of other world-famous brands.

Fettercairn is a rather traditional distillery in most respects, with one key difference: both of the spirit stills (used for the second distillation) have a ring of pipe near the top which drizzle cool water down the neck of the stills. The effect cools the copper neck - both internally and externally - increasing reflux and producing a lighter spirit than they would have otherwise been expected to.

> ***"As with most Scottish single malts, Fettercairn's whisky has primarily been produced as a component for blends.***

It features most prominently in the blended scotch brands of Whyte & MacKay, who acquired the distillery in 1973. The first official bottlings of single malt from the distillery begun popping up in the 1970s, but it has only been consistently available as a single malt since the mid-1990s. Fettercairn was also an early proponent of whisky tourism, opening a visitor center in 1989, well before many other better-known distilleries.

In 2009, with the tide rising for single malt, an increasing focus was put on marketing the distillery as a single malt brand. The range was revamped again in 2018, in the lead-up to the distillery's 200th anniversary, which they are celebrating this year.

Fettercairn's spirit is generally fruity and nutty in aroma and taste, often showing with a lighter floral edge thanks to the cooling rings on the spirit stills. The whisky is primarily matured in American oak, though its owners do love a Port Cask Finish, or Matusalem Sherry Finesse. Official Fettercairn bottlings are generally available in most good whisky shops around the world, and with a core range of expressions from 12-50 years of age.

To mark the anniversary, Fettercairn has released a set of six vintage whiskies aged 3-60 years of age (which cleverly add up to 200 total). These sets are almost as rare as unicorns, with just 10 being made available for sale worldwide. Each set is housed in a unique cabinet made by a master craftsman, and - as they say - if you have to ask the price, then you probably can't afford it. But you can see one by visiting the distillery, which is located roughly halfway between Dundee and Aberdeen. Fettercairn offers tours and tastings year-round, though you are always best to book in advance.

WWW.FETTERCAIRNWHISKY.COM WWW.KENSINGTONWINEMARKET.COM

The Highland Games

By Evelyne A. McMaster

The hills echo with bagpipe tunes,
The 'gathering' is in full swing,
Tartaned dancers are on stage,
Performing, the 'Highland Fling.'

Spectators gather around the tents,
While others look to see
The caber being tossed around,
Oh! Who will the winner be?

The strongest pull at the tug-o-war,
Muscles, rippling in the sun,
After the pull, a welcomed rest,
Then it's on, with the fun!

Pipe bands parade up and down
Loved by one and all,
With skein dhus and swinging kilts,
They stand, erect and tall.

The scenery is breathtaking,
With mountains in purple hue,
If you go to the next highland games,
Can I come with you?





How can you discover, share, and celebrate your Scottish Heritage?

By going to...

Cambridge Scottish Festival

Victoria Highland Games

Kingsville-Essex Highland Games

Uxbridge Scottish Festival

Glengarry Highland Games

Canmore highland games

Georgetown Highland Games

Greater Moncton Scottish Association 50 Years 1974 – 2024
Greater Moncton Highland Games

Montreal Highland Games

NCHG
National Capital Highland Games

Niagara Celtic Heritage Festival

Kincardine Scottish Festival & Highland Games

North Lanark Highland Games Almonte

Orillia Scottish Festival

Red Deer Highland Games

Sherwood Park Highland Gathering Strathcona County

Fergus Scottish Festival & Highland Games

Northumberland Highland Games

By belonging to...

BAIRD	BELL	BRUCE	BUCHANAN	BURNETT
CAMERON	CAMPBELL	CARRUTHERS	CHISHOLM	COLQUHOUN	CURRIE
DAVIDSON	DONALD	EDMONSTONE	ELLIOT	FARQUHARSON	FERGUSSON
FORBES	GORDON	GRAHAM	GREGOR	GUNN	HOPE
HUNTER	IRVING	IRWIN	JOHNSTON	KENNEDY	KINCAID
LACHLAN	LAMONT	LENNOX	LESLIE	LOGAN	MACALPINE
MACAULAY	MACBETH	MACDOUGALL	MACDOWALL	MACEWEN	MACFARLANE
MACFIE	MACINNES	MACKAY	MACKENZIE	MACLAREN	MACLELLAN
MACLENNAN	MACLEOD	MACNEIL	MACNICOL	MACPHERSON	MACRAE
MACTHOMAS	MUNRO	MURRAY	PAISLEY	PRINGLE	RAMSAY
SHAW	SINCLAIR	SKENE	STRACHAN	WATSON	YOUNG

By supporting...

House of Cassady

Rugby Canada

Taylor's Tartans

Burnett's & Struth Scottish Regalia Ltd.

williamglen.ca William Glen & Son kiltscanada.com

EST 2002
ScotlandShop
Tailored Tartan Clothing & Interiors

ClanDesigner
Unleash Your Scottish Pride

By subscribing to...

CelticLife International

and

The Scottish Banner
A' Bhratach Albannach 48 Years Strong 1976 - 2024

By being a part of...

Westman Scottish Association

Scottish Society of Ottawa

Scottish Studies Foundation

1836
St Andrew's Society of Toronto

Le chardon et la fleur de lys
The Thistle and the Fleur de Lys

New Brunswick Scottish - Cultural Association

For benefits, resources and how to join
www.scotscanada.ca/membership

Learn more and contact our members at
www.scotscanada.ca

Clans and Scottish Societies of Canada - Scots Canada

SHEENCO
TRAVEL
Luxury Travel Specialists
since 2012
Luxury Vacations

Ireland
Scotland
England
Wales



www.sheencotravel.com
www.sheencotravelfranchise.com