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INTERNATIONAL

The Celtic Camino de Santiago

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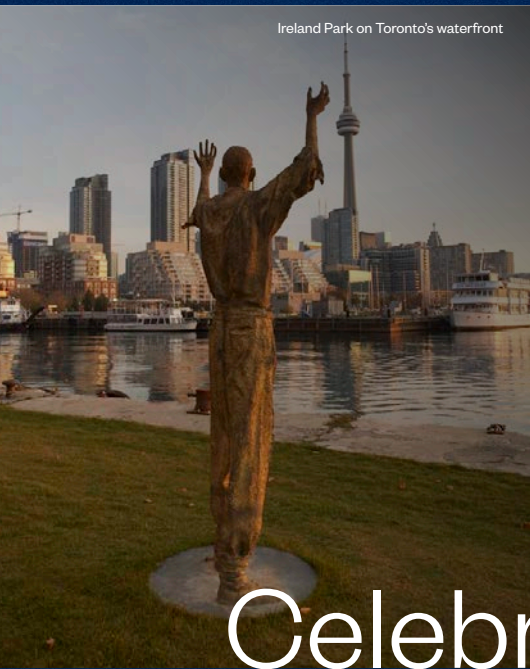


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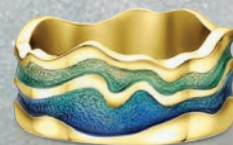
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Siobhán L. Covington, Publisher
Stephen Patrick Clare, Editor-in-Chief
Rebecca Dingwell, Managing Editor
Chris Muise, Managing Editor
Caitlyn Elizabeth Mearns, Managing Editor
Carol Moreira, Senior Copy Editor

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

Subscriptions:
Phone: 902-835-CELT (2358)
Toll-Free: 888-215-6850
Email: subscribe@celticlife.ca

Advertising:
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Email: info@celticlife.com

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Contributors
Lesley Choyce
Andrew Ferguson
Richard Gwynallen
Tom Langlands
Gary Maclean

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Fáilte

O caminho menos transitado

In the summer of 2019, our family took our annual vacation with one resounding purpose in mind - to see WHALES! We had maps, reservations, and itineraries, all with the ultimate goal of spotting as many of these magnificent creatures as we possibly could over our two weeks of holidays.

The first stop on our agenda was the northern tip of the Bonavista Peninsula, Newfoundland/Labrador. We had reserved seats with a local tour company that departed from the docks adjacent to the Matthew Legacy Museum. The Matthew was a small ship that left Bristol, England in the Spring of 1497 with 19 crew members, sailing west across the Atlantic in search of a route to China and the Indies. 35 days later, Giovanni Caboto and his crew - under the mistaken impression that they had reached northeastern Asia - took possession of New Found Land for the King of England. Ultimately, Caboto's happenstance changed the course of history.

In my view, every great escape espouses a bit of the unknown, a few serendipitous flukes along the way, and - in the end - a tale or two worth telling. With those ideals in mind, the day after our whaling tour we headed east to see yet more whales and, hopefully, puffins as well! We travelled to the small town of Elliston - The Root Cellar Capital of the World (or so the sign confidently states) and, as luck would have it, our coastal adventure coincided with an area visit from UNESCO. To mark this event, site organizers had arranged for the first-ever documented root cellar jam tasting on record. While not exactly of the same caliber of significance as Caboto "discovering" Newfoundland, it was this chance happening that made a day of whale and puffin watching even more memorable as we traversed from one root cellar to another tasting the delicious local jam.

Similarly, our March/April edition paves a path that is perhaps a little less travelled, exploring the seventh Celtic nation of Galicia and, in particular, the Camino de Santiago - a sacred and profound pilgrimage for many. This part of Spain is alive with Celtic legend, music, and magic from pre-Christian times. Back then, the Celtic tribe - the Gallaeci - used this route to traverse back and forth to the Atlantic coast. To this day, Celtic cultural customs can be found in the many hillfort villages, the area's numerous pagan festivals, and the lovely lilt of local languages.

It is adventures like these - the ones that take us off the proverbial beaten path - that often offer us the opportunity to have unique experiences and create meaningful memories that will last a lifetime.

Happy Travels!

Siobhán L. Covington, Publisher

Inside!

Vol. 36 No. 2



51

The Celtic Camino de Santiago

21

A new film festival rolls out the red carpet

27

Exploring the history of bourbon

33

Robert Kearns is determined to make a difference

41

Ross Johnstone takes a hands-on approach to the bagpipes

65

Jorge Vázquez's spring-summer 2022 collection

23

One musical family explores creativity and growth

29

Jann Arden gets ready to hit the road

37

Uncovering the hidden meaning in Scottish Gaelic words

45

Mountains, Moose, and Mantle Rock in Western Newfoundland

69

Chef Gary Maclean serves up pheasant

9. First Word / 11. De Tha Dol / 13. Celts in the Community
71. Dram / 72. Words / 73. Music / 82. Last Word

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One small organization in Cornwall is making a big difference



It is estimated that one in four individuals will struggle with some sort of mental health issue each year. That startling statistic is the driving force behind Cornwall Mind, a mental health charity that has been supporting Cornish communities for over 26 years.

"We work with people to support them in achieving their goals and by getting them more engaged in their local communities," explains Jo Boulton, Cornwall Mind's project co-ordinator.

With 19 full and part-time employees and 30 volunteers, the organization currently offers three different modalities of therapy: Active Minds, which promotes mental health through physical activities like gardening and exercise; Creative Minds, which focuses on stress-relief via writing, music, and art; and Community Minds, where participants are encouraged to interact and relate to one another through virtual cafes and talks.

"We offer online services for those that cannot access our face-to-face groups," notes Boulton. "We are now exploring other ways of providing online support as well, as we want more people to have more available options to them."

In addition, Boulton's team supports those in recovery and those experiencing home

insecurity or homelessness. They also host a non-judgemental helpline for people who identify as trans and nonbinary.

More recently, the organization has created specific online support options for those coping with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We endeavour to prevent those who are vulnerable from developing mental health issues by providing advice and assistance. We campaign to improve services, raise awareness, and promote understanding of mental health. We will not give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets support and respect. We offer a range of recovery-focused wellbeing groups such as gardening projects, walking groups, and radio show workshops. We also provide a range of projects for people experiencing mental health difficulties, homelessness, and fuel poverty."

Boulton previously worked for the NHS in a mental health day resource centre, before making the switch to Cornwall Mind after she was drawn to its core values, mission, and style of work.

"I wanted to work in a mental health organization where clients are at the heart of everything."

"Cornwall Mind is a workplace that lives its values, and the wellbeing of our staff is a high priority for us. We are a dedicated team."

The association's client base is broad, catering to anyone over the age of 18 who currently resides in Cornwall and who is struggling with matters pertaining to mental health.

"We work individually with people on a case-by-case basis, as everyone is different and has unique struggles."

Boulton admits that, while rewarding, the job doesn't come without its fair share of challenges.

"As with any small, local charity, funding is always an issue. Although we are affiliated to Mind (the national U.K. charity), Cornwall Mind is an independently registered and funded goodwill organization dependent on fundraising and donations to continue our vital work in the community. We have seen an increase in people needing support during the current COVID-19 pandemic - it really has impacted the mental wellbeing of people, and we are currently facing a mental health emergency. On top of that, Cornwall has a variety of matters that impact the mental health of the local community, such as rural issues involving the farming community, poor public transport, an increasing aging population, reduced employment opportunities and wages, high self-harm and suicide rates, and lack of general mental health and wellbeing support."

The solution, she notes, includes engaging more members of the community to become more involved with fundraising and donations - both options that are now accessible via the organization's website.

"With this, we could increase our services in more areas of Cornwall."

2022 will be busy for Boulton and her peers, with much change and growth expected over the coming months.

"Our plan is to further improve our services and expand across the regions. We want everyone to know we exist so that people have a place to turn. No one should face a mental health problem alone."

www.cornwallmind.org

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5



6

one

Prehistoric Footprints

A discovery on a Welsh beach could date back 200 million years, according to paleontologists. Back in 2020, an amateur paleontologist found what he believed to be dinosaur tracks on a beach in Penarth. With the help of previous investigations from Welsh and French researchers, paleontologists at London's Natural History Museum eventually confirmed the findings. The experts say the footprints are from the Triassic period and likely belonged to a sauropod: a long-necked, four-legged type of dinosaur (such as the *Camelotia*).

two

Quebec Tartan

The Gaspé region of Quebec now has its own official tartan. The tartan was a joint effort by bagpiper Benoît Poulin and kilt-maker Patrice MacLeod. Although MacLeod has retired from commercial kilt-making, he maintains a passion for tartans and what they mean for cultural pride. As a starting point, Poulin and MacLeod looked to the unofficial Gaspé flag (designed by Marc-Antoine Derooy in 2001) as inspiration. Once the design was complete, it was sent to be evaluated by the Scottish Register of Tartans. The tartan is now part of the public domain.

three

LGBTQ+ Friendly Wales

The Welsh Government has taken steps towards inclusion by providing training on LGBTQ+ language and history for its museum, archive, and library staff. The initial training sessions took place through December and January, ahead of the United Kingdom's LGBT History Month. This was part of an action plan funded by the Welsh Government, led by Laila El-Metoui and Norena Shopland. In June last year, Welsh Deputy Minister for Social Partnership Hannah Blythyn announced a Wales-wide Pride Fund to support grassroots Pride events across the country, among other initiatives. The hope is to make Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe.

four

Galician Horses

A recent study from A Coruña University spells out the importance of the wild horses of Galicia to the ecosystem in which they live. It is estimated that the population has been cut in half over the last 50 years. Both directly and indirectly, horse grazing has benefits for the environment, such as reducing "the costs of machine-driven slashing for fire prevention," as reported by *El País* newspaper. The researchers behind the study are calling for improved policies and regulations around protecting the horses, as well as making guidelines easier for horse owners.

five

Viking Brooches

A missing piece of Viking history has gone on display in the Manx Museum. Two bronze brooches, which reportedly date to around AD 900-950, are among the recent artifacts in the museum's collection. Previously, brooches believed to be worn by men from this era have been found on the Isle. Up until the discovery of these items, however, no brooches associated with women had been found. The initial discovery was made by metal detectorists John Crowe and Craig Evans back in 2018. Now, the brooches (along with a glass bead and buckle) are exhibited for everyone to enjoy.

six

Cornish Rivalry

The Cornish villages Kingsand and Cawsand were once fierce rivals. Back in the 1800s, both were hotspots for smugglers. While Cawsand was always a part of Cornwall, Kingsand was part of Devon County until forced boundary changes in 1844. For some time after this boundary change, though, the people of Kingsand remained loyal to Devon. As reported by *Cornwall Live*, "The Post Office also continued to use Plymouth as the correct postal address" in protest. Today, all that remains of the rivalry is a house called "Devon Corn," marking the historic border that once caused such division.

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



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Alex Townsend

Alex Townsend is known around the Isle of Man as “the computer bus man.” Now 62, Townsend has been honoured for launching an ambitious project that began in 1998 and continued for more than two decades. Over nine months, Townsend converted a bus into a mobile classroom, with the help of sponsorships from the Isle of Man Department of Education and Manx Telecom. The mobile classroom travelled to the Isle’s primary schools, where Townsend used it to teach children computer skills. Over the course of 22 years, an estimated 100,000 children benefitted from the project, learning coding, design work and even filmmaking. Not only was Townsend a teacher, but he was also the driver, and he maintained the exterior maintenance of the bus. In 2014, he was recognized by Apple on a list of people who had made a “profound impact” using its computers. Although he retired (along with the bus) in 2020, Townsend was among those to be awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours at the end of 2021. “This honour recognises and is a tribute to all of the teachers and the countless young people on this island, who embraced what they learned on the bus itself and in the associated training sessions,” Townsend told BBC News at the time. “To them, those that backed it in the beginning and the many others who in one way or another kept the computer bus wheels turning, a very big personal thank you from me.”



Gleaning Cornwall Network

A group of Cornish volunteers are reviving a centuries-old practice to help fight poverty. The practice, known as gleaning, involves “rescuing” abandoned crops that would otherwise go to waste. Founded by Holly Whitelaw, Gleaning Cornwall Network collects and takes these crops – which have been leftover from harvest – to places such as food banks and homeless shelters across Cornwall and Plymouth. This both benefits low-income people and reduces food waste. According to an article by Sky News, gleaning was common up until the 18th century, when a court case ruled in favour of private property rights. “Sometimes it is uneconomic to harvest all the vegetables or fruit, there may be a glut, the market might change, and some are just not up to supermarket standards being wonky, too big or too small. Also, farmers have to ensure they have enough produce and have to over produce in case of pest, disease, flooding or drought,” Holly Whitelaw explains on the Gleaning Cornwall website. What’s more, the existing challenges of farming have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. “It’s a win, win operation. Farmers reduce waste and people suffering with lack of fresh, healthy food get some.” After a successful crowdfunding campaign in December, Gleaning Cornwall began looking to obtain two 4x4 vehicles and trailers. This will help volunteers navigate muddy fields and access even more vegetables than before. In addition, the group hopes to expand its reach to North Cornwall this year.



Annie Owen and Childline

North Wales Live reporter Annie Owen is one of many volunteers helping out at Childline – a United Kingdom-based counselling service for kids and teenagers. Trained counsellors are available through phone, online chat, and email. Two of Childline’s 12 national bases are located in Wales, and the organization provides support in the Welsh language as well. When Owen isn’t working as a journalist, she is taking phone calls at Childline’s Prestatyn base. Recently, she wrote an article about what it was like to answer calls from children who are struggling. Owen described one call in particular: a 12-year-old girl who was having suicidal thoughts as she grappled with another pandemic lockdown. Self-harm, suicide and other mental health concerns are common topics when someone calls Childline. “One of the great things about Childline is that young people can talk about anything – and they won’t be judged,” wrote Owen, who has been volunteering for the organization since she was 16 years old. “In one four-hour-long shift I could talk to a young boy about his gender identity, another young person about friendship issues, and then support a young girl to speak to a trusted adult about sexual abuse.” Launched in 1986, the charity has been around for more than 35 years now. Owen has been with Childline for eight years, and she noted that the demand for service has increased since the beginning of the pandemic. Although each shift brings challenges, Owen wrote that volunteering for Childline is the best thing she’s ever done.

Celtic Celebration



Northern Nevada



May 21, 2022

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One Of The Few Celtic Festivals In
The Northern California Region This Year





St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival

March 12 & 13, 2022 • St. Augustine, Florida
www.celticstaugustine.com

After a short hiatus, the St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival returns in 2022 to celebrate the rich Celtic heritage that runs through Florida's veins. As America's Oldest Celtic City, St. Augustine was founded in 1565 by Spanish Celts from Asturias. It was also home to the country's first Irish priest, Father Ricardo Artur, who, in 1601, led the very first St. Patrick procession. As is tradition, this year's gathering kicks off with a rousing St. Patrick's Day Parade in the city's historic downtown core. Following the march, the gathering moves to the nearby events field for two full days of live performances from top national and international musical acts and an array of other activities, including the St. Augustine Highland Games. A family-friendly event, guests are welcome to stroll through the grounds and enjoy a whiskey tasting, workshops, lectures, food, artisan works, and imported Celtic merchandise.



Tartan Day South Highland Games & Celtic Festival

March 31 - April 3, 2022 • Cayce, South Carolina
www.tartandaysouth.com

Set amidst the natural beauty of South Carolina's Midlands region, Tartan Day South honors the region's robust Celtic heritage, highlighting the ancient traditions of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and more. This year, guests are invited to enjoy live musical performances, drum and pipe bands, traditional dancing, Highland Games events, a British car show, a sheepdog herding exhibit, swordplay exhibitions, ax throwing, archery tag, clan and society tents, genealogy lectures, and more. An array of food will be available for hungry visitors, and a Celtic marketplace will showcase fabrics, jewelry, ironware, and other cultural items. In addition, the annual four-day gathering will benefit the non-profit River Alliance, which strives to connect people to the area's rivers (Broad, Saluda, and Congaree), while ensuring that these waterways are properly protected and preserved.



Australian Celtic Festival

April 28 - May 1, 2022 • Glen Innes, NSW, Australia
www.australiancelticfestival.com

Those seeking a unique and exciting experience need only visit Celtic Country, Down Under. The Australian Celtic Festival celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2022 at the Australian Standing Stones national monument in the gorgeous Glen Innes, New South Wales - a magnificent part of the country that enjoys both a rich Celtic heritage and a refreshingly cool climate. This year, the festival will be held from April 28 until May 1, and showcases the Celtic nations of Brittany, Cornwall, and Wales, with an action-packed program of activity and entertainment. A visit to Glen Innes during the festival is a chance to revel in the sound of bagpipes, the colour of costumes, and the movement of dance, at an array of venues. In addition, the four-day agenda includes live concerts and performances, a jousting tournament, Highland games, a strongman competition, Celtic kids' activities, a gathering of the clans, medieval re-enactment groups, Celtic dance, bands and instrumental groups, vendors, food, and much more!



The Northern Nevada Celtic Celebration

May 21, 2022 • Reno, Nevada
www.renoceltic.org

After a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Northern Nevada Celtic Celebration returns this spring with one of the few Celtic gatherings in the Northern California region this year. Set in stunning Bartley Regional Park in south Reno - nestled on the eastern side of the Sierra Mountain Range, within a 30-minute drive of Lake Tahoe - this year's event will showcase Scottish and Irish dancing, bagpipes, Celtic animals, living history actors, clan tents, food and ware vendors, and British cars. Guests will also enjoy live concert performances from musical headliners The Fire: Scottish Band, as well as from local favorites The Blarney Band. Attendees are welcome to close out the festival in style with a Saturday Night Ceilidh at the Black Rabbit Meadery in downtown Reno. A day of fun and festivities for the whole family, the event is free for kids under the age of 12.



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ACS Clothing



One Scottish company showcases style and sustainability



The fashion industry is a major culprit in the climate crisis, but ACS Clothing aims to prioritize the environment while offering fashionable threads across the United Kingdom.

ACS Clothing first opened its doors in 1997 in the east end of Glasgow. Now in its 25th year, the company makes formal and Highland fashion more financially accessible and sustainable through rental and renewal fulfillment services.

“Due to the nature of rental clothing, our business model has always been inherently sustainable,” explains Anthony Burns, the company’s chief operating officer.

“However, as sustainability became more widely spoken about over the last few years, we realized that ACS was in a position to enable large brands and retailers to introduce a circular fashion offering into their business model.” This gave Burns and his coworkers the push they needed to partner with other clothing companies. In addition to its bespoke rental services, the firm also offers textile care and repair, eco-cleaning, order management and more.

According to Burns, ACS is now established “as circular fashion fulfillment specialists and have been pioneering sustainable and scalable change within the fashion industry.”

He notes that the company now services about 80 per cent of the U.K.’s formal rental market. “We offer a turnkey fulfillment solution that enables brands and retailers to introduce circular fashion alongside their current e-commerce model. We take care of everything behind the scenes for our rental and resale fashion partners.

“For years we were entirely behind the scenes. We built connections and relied on

reaching out to potential brands and word-of-mouth. However, in recent years we have invested time and resources into digital marketing and building our brand, so we now have potential brand partners reaching out to us.”

Although lockdowns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have been challenging for ACS Clothing, operating as a circular business has its perks. Burns stresses that the company values “purpose over profit,” but in fact, their business model often results in cost savings.

“People and other organizations often assume that to be sustainable is going to cost money and reduce profits. However, we have saved a lot of money by changing our processes.” LED lights throughout their facility, for instance, reduce energy usage and keep energy costs down as a result. In addition, the facility has e-vehicle car charging points, as well as a compost area outside to reduce food waste.

They have even recycled the by-products from their cleaning processes into building bricks. Currently a “carbon neutral” business, ACS aims to reach net zero emissions by 2023.

“At the end of the day, the less you consume, the lower the cost.”

Burns also notes that the company provides opportunities for companies and individuals alike.

“We offer our brand partners minimal risk options that will encourage the introduction of more circular fashion models. We minimize the barriers to entry and work with them towards growth and success. We work

with community partners to employ people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and we provide training and development opportunities that encourage our team to learn on the job whilst gaining qualifications.”

This has led to high rates of worker retention, which benefits ACS as well as its employees.

In general, Burns feels there isn’t enough being done to promote an environmentally friendly economy. At the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, countries pledged to reach climate goals by 2050. However, he sees this action as “too distant and too late.” While he is hopeful about Scottish legislation around extended producer responsibility and the Circular Economy Bill, it is still not enough to turn the climate crisis around.

“For now, people and brands need to take action. However, the shift towards a circular, or environmentally friendly economy will be driven by future generations. Education will be the key to real, long-term change.”

Although Burns is mum on the details, he notes that ACS has exciting opportunities in the pipeline for 2022. In the meantime, the company will continue to work to counteract the environmental damage from the fashion industry.

“Our purpose extends far beyond our bottom line and there are many other rewards that come with that. In an industry that is regularly coined as one of the highest polluters in the world, the shift towards circularity is vital if we are to experience positive industry-wide change. Knowing that we are a business-for-good is a reward in itself.”

www.acsclothing.co.uk

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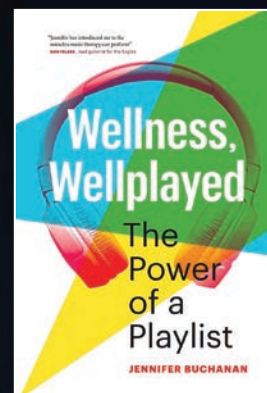
"PENNY WHISKEY"

5TILL 9:30PM



Jennifer Buchanan

One Canadian woman shares the healing power of music



Jennifer Buchanan - who has roots in Scotland, Wales, and England - says that it was a family health crisis that first inspired her life's calling.

"I witnessed the power of music as a young teen when my Grandad had his second stroke leaving him unable to speak or walk," she shares via email from her home in Calgary, Alberta. "It was my Granny who asked me to bring my guitar to the hospital center and sing his favorite song (White Cliffs of Dover). As I sang, I watched the face of the grumpy old man I thought I knew shed the tears of a man who wanted a more meaningful connection."

That experience inspired Buchanan to register in a music therapy degree program. She later founded JB Music Therapy, which has been instrumental in the implementation of hundreds of music therapy initiatives across Canada for 30 years.

"I have always been curious about how music resonates strongly with people - and equally as curious as to why different music evokes emotional responses. Was it a certain chord progression or tempo that draws people in? Why are we attracted to songs written in a certain style? What role do lyrics play in these preferences? And the bigger question; how can we leverage the science and clinical evidence to replicate music's benefits? My work as a music therapist has granted me many of these answers, but has also deepened my curiosity, leading me to continue to seek research to inform my clinical practice and grow our team so we can increase our impact."

Her organization - which employs a diverse team of 18 Certified Music Therapists (MTAs) - currently works in a myriad of medical settings, including intensive care, burn, neurorehabilitation, mental health, and forensic units.

"We also do end-of-life care - including hospice and palliative care - and, in addition, we are involved with group homes for adults with disabilities, long-term care, and dementia care facilities, as well as preschools and high schools.

"Working in the community feels like we are a part of something much bigger."

Buchanan - who is also the Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Music Therapists - has extended her teachings through a series of books. Her 2015 tome, *Tune In*, explored the idea of using music intentionally to reduce stress and boost mood. Her latest effort, *Wellness, Wellplayed*, is about one specific technique, broken down into different exercises.

"I wanted to give more attention to one of my favourite concepts - designing purposeful playlists. Each exercise in the book is designed to provide readers with a process and a product that will benefit their emotional health and wellbeing. Playlists can be a bridge to something deeper within ourselves, and a way to address our human need to feel, create, and connect. *Wellness, Wellplayed* also blends education with fun - something I feel that we all need right now. In addition to the experiential exercises, readers will also have many opportunities to reflect on the past and feel inspired for their future. The book delves into the history of the mixtape, as well as how music is processed in the brain. There are also inspirational stories on how others are connecting to their music that I hope encourages the reader to do the same."

She notes that there has never been a more important time for people to discover

the healing power of music.

"In Canada, according to the non-profit research institute ICES, one in five children and youth experience a mental illness at any given time. The Canadian Mental Health Association also shares that in any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness. By age 40, about 50 per cent of the population will have, or have had, a mental illness, affecting people of all ages, education, income levels, and cultures; however, systemic inequalities such as racism, poverty, homelessness, discrimination, colonial and gender-based violence, among others, can worsen if mental health supports are difficult to access. I believe that after the pandemic has finally subsided, we will see the full effects of the mental health crisis on our hands. Having access to mental health professionals - including music therapists - as well as greater access to leisure facilities and creative spaces where people can gather will be part of the solution.

"Music brings meaning into moments, but on a more complex level, it impacts brain function and human behaviour. It also reduces stress, relieves pain, and improves symptoms of isolation and depression. It boosts our mood, enhances our memory, and motivates us as well."

Buchanan hopes to expand her reach over the coming years.

"I would love to continue to engage in lively discussion around the benefits of music, music therapy and our emotional health and wellbeing. I can already feel this is happening here in Canada and I look forward to more opportunities in other countries as well."

www.jenniferbuchanan.ca

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SCOTLAND

International Festival of Cinema



Vivien Reid

Anybody who works in the arts can tell you that you don't get opportunities through resumes or auditions nearly as much as you do through luck, exposure, and who you happen to know.

A new film festival celebrating independent Scottish cinema is rolling out the red carpet in the town of Peebles this April, with the hopes of providing emerging filmmakers the opportunity to network with established industry players.

Mhairi Calvey is no stranger to the film business, having starred in a number of productions over the years, including Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*, in which she played the childhood version of Catherine McCormack's character, Murron, at the age of seven.

What Calvey is rather new at, however, is running a film festival.

"The Scotland International Festival of Cinema was first put forth as an idea by American film and television director Stephen Savage and executive producer Trinity Houston, who founded the highly successful Idyllwild Cinema Festival in Southern California," she explains to Celtic Life International via email. "That festival endowed them with 13 years of experience and know-how. Savage approached me with the idea of launching a sister festival to Idyllwild in Scotland. We met up in London and began

exploring the possibilities of embarking on this new venture while putting together a team that could help make it a reality.

"With the valuable addition of Scottish screenwriter and producer Lesley Paterson (executive producer and co-writer of the Netflix Original movie, *All Quiet on the Western Front*), and Vivien Reid, who lives in Peebles, the roots of the Scotland International Festival of Cinema took hold. Just two short years and a pandemic lockdown later, that venture is now officially happening."

Calvey has been hard at work watching film submissions and selecting nominees, all in preparation for the festival's launch on April 19 at the Eastgate Theatre. The task has forced herself and Reid, with whom Calvey works closely, to think outside their comfort zone and exercise different skills than those she is used to as a performer.

"This is unknown territory for us both, but we both believe that you need to do the things that you fear the most."

"We have also had to put our business heads on, and as creatives, this has resulted in finding new ways to problem solve and communicate, especially with regards to working around the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that we can see it all starting to take shape, we are really excited to watch the event come to life and share it with like-minded people."

While many big-wigs of Scottish film will be attending the show - including Calvey's former co-star Angus McFadyen (with whom she shared a screen both in *Braveheart*, and years later in *Robert the Bruce*), director Carol Morley, actress Shauna Macdonald, and Academy Award, Golden Globe, and BAFTA-nominated actress Anne Archer - Calvey stresses that this is a festival for all who love film.

"Anyone can attend in person, and we will also be holding the festival online, so cinema-buffs from around the world can



Mhairi Calvey

watch the films."

Along with film screenings, other events on tap include Q&A sessions with filmmakers, a Women in Film night, and whisky and gin tastings.

Calvey's biggest motivation - perhaps as a way to give back to the community that has been so good to her over the years - has been to help fledgling filmmakers find an audience.

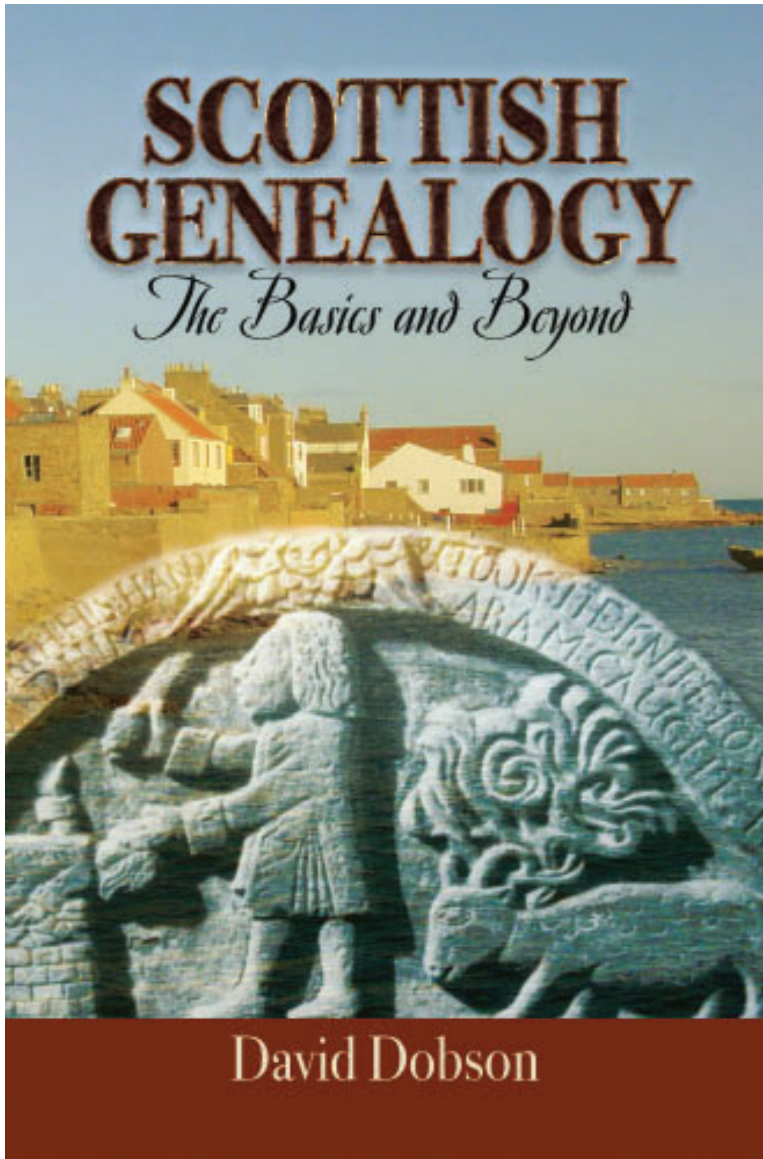
"The Scotland International Festival of Cinema is an event catering to talented new creatives, affording them a chance to gain a foothold on terrain that would not otherwise be available to them in an effort to launch their art by plugging them into the same networking pipelines enjoyed by more established film companies.

"Our goal is to provide a forum in which up-and-coming filmmakers can connect with established industry professionals, to advance and promote their work, within an atmosphere supportive of independent cinema. Our collaboration with Idyllwild Festival of Cinema also gives filmmakers the chance to connect with contacts across the pond.

"In short, Scotland is here to support the film voices of tomorrow," she says, adding that this year's event is just the start. "We want SIFC to continue and grow for many years to come."

www.scotlandifc.com

SCOTTISH ROOTS



Scottish Genealogy: The Basics and Beyond

By David Dobson

While this publication identifies the major sources and repositories for those just getting started on their research, what makes this book stand out from all the rest is its focus on the other, less commonly used, sources that will allow researchers to advance their research. For each research topic—including statutory registers, church records, tax records, sasines and land registers, court records, military and maritime sources, burgh and estate records, emigration records, and much more—Dr. Dobson has compiled an extensive list of the publications and archival records that most researchers have not heard of. It would take years for any other individual to compile such a far-reaching bibliography and compilation of relevant records in Scottish archives. David Dobson was born in 1940 in Carnoustie, Scotland. Most of his working life was spent at Madras College, St. Andrews. He has been an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Aberdeen, the University of Edinburgh, and at present, at the University of St. Andrews. He is the author of more than 200 books, including *Scottish Emigration to Colonial America, 1607-1785*, *Scottish Trade with Colonial Charleston, 1683-1783*, and numerous historical and genealogical source books. He now lives in Dundee and is working on further source books.

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The McDades

One musical family explores creativity and growth on their latest album

Multi award-winning family band The McDades has picked up where they left off with their third full-length studio recording, *The Empress*.

Siblings Shannon Johnson (violin/vocals), Solon McDade (bass/vocals), and Jeremiah McDade (multi-instrument/vocals), the Alberta-based folk trio hails from robust musical roots.

“Our parents are both musicians and started us on the fiddle and other various instruments at a young age,” shares Jeremiah via email. “As kids we did a lot of performing around Canada with our folks in The McDade Family Band. Since we grew up playing music, it has become a part of our identity.”

The three formed The McDades in 2001, releasing their debut full-length album *For Reel* the following year. Their sophomore effort, *Bloom* (2006) brought them both popular and critical acclaim, picking up a bevy of Juno Awards, Independent Music Awards, and Canadian Folk Music Awards.

“The number one reward, though, has been the amazing feeling of playing music with one another and with other great musicians,” notes Jeremiah. “It has been energizing and often magical.”

While their sonic style is mainly inspired by Celtic music, the band also invites other elements into their work.

“Each of us have other musical influences we have picked up over time that have been fused into our style,” shares Jeremiah. “Jazz performance degrees from McGill University brought a lot of improvisation to the music, while collaborations with Indian musicians have brought some Indian Classical influences.

“All the music that we listen to and perform with others tends to find its way into our music.”



Jeremiah admits that the vocation is not without its share of difficulties, especially recently.

“There are many challenges involved with being a professional musician, not least of which is a pandemic. One particular problem is the advent of streaming services, which has had a negative impact on revenue streams for the vast majority of recording musicians worldwide. We are also spread out across Canada - which can be difficult in terms of playing together - but we manage to make it work.”

The new album, *The Empress*, takes its name from the third card in a tarot deck - which symbolizes creativity, growth, and the natural world. The band is also fascinated by the number three, which represents strength, harmony, wisdom, and understanding.

“It was a difficult, but rewarding process,” explains Jeremiah of piecing together the album’s 11 tracks. “It was recorded in different locations across Canada, and we even did a recording session in Dublin. The band is spread out between various cities in

Canada, so a lot of the preproduction was done by sending ideas back and forth to each other. We included some brand-new original instrumentals as well as some unique takes on a few traditional songs and covers of two wonderful Canadian songs.

“A good song is anything that can connect to someone on an emotional level,” he continues. “We are strong proponents of powerful melodies that stay with you. Being instrumentalists as well as singers, we appreciate instrumental prowess in songs as well.”

So far, *The Empress* has struck a chord with both listeners and critics.

“It has been resoundingly positive so far. We have had a great response from our fans, from radio, and from reviewers.”

The band will begin touring in support of *The Empress* this spring, with dates already booked in both Canada and the USA.

“A good live show needs to connect with the audience on an emotional level. It should be a shared experience between the performers and the listeners. People getting up to move to the music is always a good sign as well.”

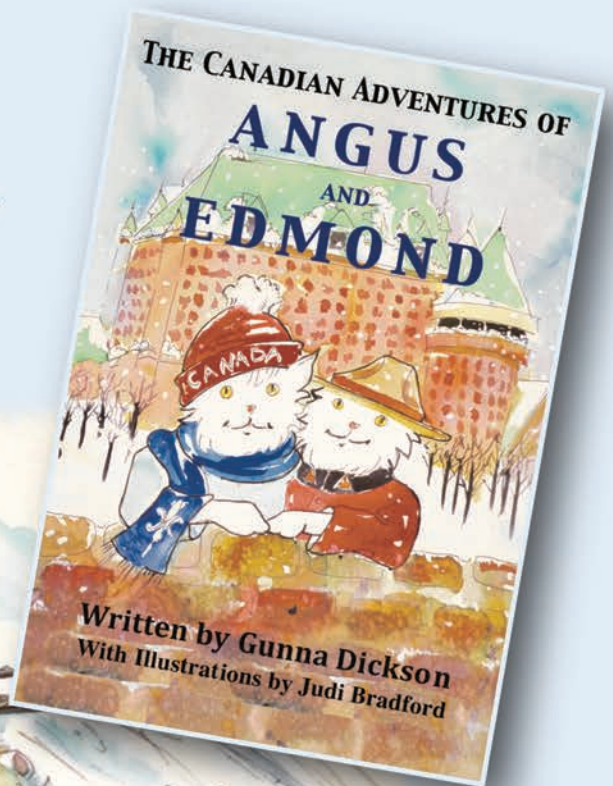
Jeremiah believes that the Celtic music scene, both at home and beyond, is constantly growing and evolving.

“There are many wonderful performers in the genre and having a chance to hear or play with them is something we cherish. Keeping the music alive through performance and composition is very important. A big part of what we find most exciting is trying to bring new elements to the music while respecting the tradition and keeping our roots in mind.”

www.themcdades.com

Oh, Canada!

The well-traveled Angora-mix brothers set out to visit their neighbor to the North and find themselves in a different world.



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More information at [https://gdicksonbooks.com](http://gdicksonbooks.com)

Angus and Edmond

Celtic Life's favorite cats come to Canada

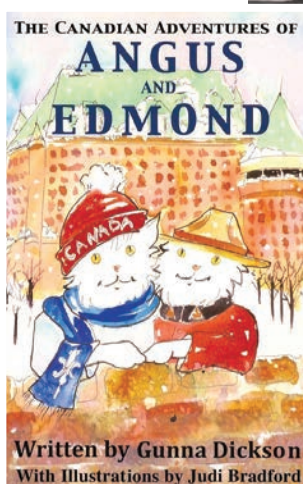


Photo by Susan Stava

Celtic Life International's favorite feline duo Angus and Edmond are back again - and this time they are visiting their friendly neighbours to the north.

Series creator Gunna Dickson explains that the idea for *The Canadian Adventures of Angus and Edmond* came to her during a cold and restless winter.

"My favorite getaway destination is Europe, but I had only a few days, so I decided to do the next best thing - visit Montreal and Quebec City. And, of course, the boys are always with me in spirit," she shares via email. "I had been to both cities a number of times before. I had visited Montreal in both summer and winter and loved the architecture, the underground shops, and the boat rides on the St. Lawrence River."

Dickson had already taken her little literary lions to Scotland, Italy, Hungary, Catalonia, and Key West. In their latest (and sixth) sojourn, the NYC-based Angora-mix brothers tour the 17th Century Notre Dame Basilica, go skating in Le Grande Roue, snack on poutine and sugar maple treats, and more.

She notes that her abilities as a writer and storyteller have evolved over time.

"I have generally become more observant, paying closer attention to actions and detail. I feel more engaged and, hopefully, that helps to further engage readers as well." Her cat crusaders have grown also.

"The more that they are exposed to different people and places, the more they

learn. Travel is a good teacher. They make new friends everywhere. And despite his pronunciation issues, Meowsieur Angus persists in trying to speak French. Edmond's Spanish is improving."

Work on the new book began in early 2020. Dickson admits that producing a new tall-tail tale during the global COVID-19 pandemic presented certain challenges.

"I got back to NYC just weeks before the first lockdown. And then came two dreary and depressing years. I was in no rush to put out a book because I knew it would not go anywhere. I would not go anywhere. People were confined and frightened. There would be no book signing in Key West, as there had been for the previous books. What was the point? I lost enthusiasm.

"Another challenge was working at a distance from my closest collaborators," she adds, referring to the book's talented illustrator Judi Bradford - who was 1,000 miles away in DeLand, Florida during the time of production - and layout specialist Linda Tilt, who lived even farther away in Riga, Latvia.

This is the first time Bradford has worked as the main illustrator on the Angus and Edmond series. Previous volumes were illustrated by Jon McIntosh or Suellen Crowley Weaver.

"Gunna's book was a delight and the timing worked out well," says Bradford. "I was in the heat of summer in central Florida drawing cats in snowball fights. Just visualizing all

the snow of the Canadian adventures cooled me down. And I spend a lot of time drawing cats on any given day.

"Pencil and paper were my best friends in childhood," she continues. "I was an only child for a long time, and we lived in pretty isolated places. So, I wrote stories and drew pictures a lot. In fourth grade in Bradenton Florida, I went to a free art class at the museum and began to see how drawing worked and I was hooked. I still love pencil drawing."

Though only recently released, response to the new story has already been strong.

"The regular Angus and Edmond fans love it," says Dickson. "From Honolulu to Scotland, Florida and Kansas, they have been very generous in their praise. One reader in St. Andrews said it has become a family tradition to read the books. I hope that my ladies will get more fans with each book, but we still have a way to go."

The scribe admits that it is hard to say what the future will hold for Angus and Edmond.

"Since all of their adventures are the result of trips that I have taken myself - with a liberal helping of fantasy - where they go next will be determined in part by travel restrictions."

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Clay Risen

One man explores the history of bourbon

American author Clay Risen has been writing since he was a youngster.

"I started a newspaper at my elementary school," shares the scribe via email. "Well, that's a stretch - it lasted a single issue."

Risen's love for the newsroom evolved over time, and today - in addition to being an author - he plies his trade as both a reporter and an editor for The New York Times.

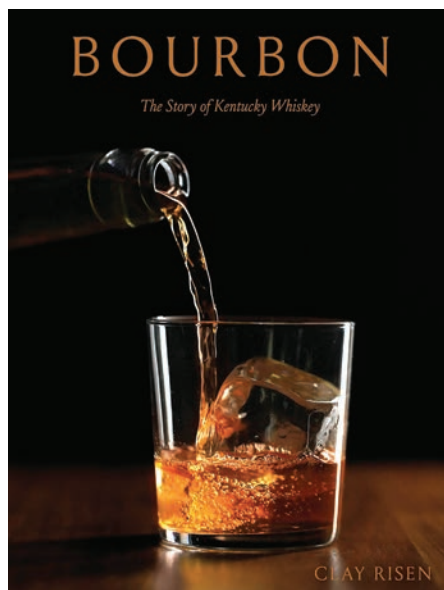
"As to why I started [writing], I suppose because it has always come easy to me, and it feels good doing it. Some people say they like having written something more than the actual process of writing it, but I am the opposite - I relish the writing and couldn't care less about the results once they are out the door. Plus, I don't think that I'd be very good at anything else."

His catalogue of works includes the Gilder-Lehrman award finalist *The Crowded Hour: Teddy Roosevelt, the Rough Riders and the Dawn of the American Century* (2019), and the critically acclaimed *American Whiskey, Bourbon & Rye: A Guide to the Nation's Favorite Spirit* (2013), among others.

His latest effort, *Bourbon: The Story of Kentucky Whiskey*, hit bookstore shelves this past December.

"About four years ago my publisher came to me with an idea. They had put out a book called *Champagne*, about both the drink and its region in France, and they wanted to do something similar for Kentucky. It is a wonderful book - the author, Peter Liem, dives deeply into what makes Champagne, Champagne - the people, the history, the terroir. I couldn't do exactly the same, because Kentucky whiskey doesn't have quite as extensive a history, nor is it as tied to the land as Champagne is. Instead, I focused on the people, the culture, and the communities around bourbon to explain what makes it special."

Risen was perfectly paired for this project: his dad's family has been in Kentucky since the late 18th century.



"Where they came from is a mystery," he admits. "Risen sounds German, so maybe they were like the ancestors of James Beam, who came to the state from Germany via Pennsylvania around the same time. My mom's side is mostly Scottish, though again, they arrived long ago and from nebulous shores. The irony is that I still have family in Kentucky, and my closest Scottish relatives live in Oban, near the Oban distillery, and yet I am the only one with any connection to whiskey."

Encased in an elegant drawer-styled boxed set, the new, 288-page tome includes an illustrated history and guide, archival photographs, rare bottle labels and more.

And though COVID-19 travel restrictions had an impact on the project, Risen found the process to be rewarding and educational.

"I knew how much work and knowledge goes into making bourbon, but I don't think I fully appreciated it until I wrote this book."

"Above all, it is about barrel management. Good distillation is important, but at the big distilleries, at least, what matters is how it is aged. And the best managers use their warehouses as giant tools, knowing the intricate details of each and how those qualities affect barrel aging - how one corner heats up faster in the spring, or how another retains humidity better than the rest.



"Much of this is received knowledge, oral tradition almost," he continues. "And while it goes back generations, many people are only now starting to talk about it publicly. Not because it was a secret, but because for a long time there was a sense that the public didn't care - and because, this being Kentucky, people don't like to trumpet their own expertise."

The book has enjoyed an excellent response since its release.

"It was a bit of a star-crossed roll out. The publication was delayed because the books were late in getting from the printer in China to the United States, and then the actual publication date fell at the height of the omicron wave. On the upside, this isn't a book meant to sell a bunch of copies quickly and then disappear. It will be around for a long time, and I am hoping people will be just as excited to read it five years from now as they are today."

Going forward, Risen notes that he has "always got a few pots on the stove."

"I have a series of whiskey books built around reviews, and I am wrapping up the third, about American rye. I also write books about American history, set mostly in the postwar decades, and my current project is about the anti-communist Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s."

www.clayrisen.com

Celtic Woman



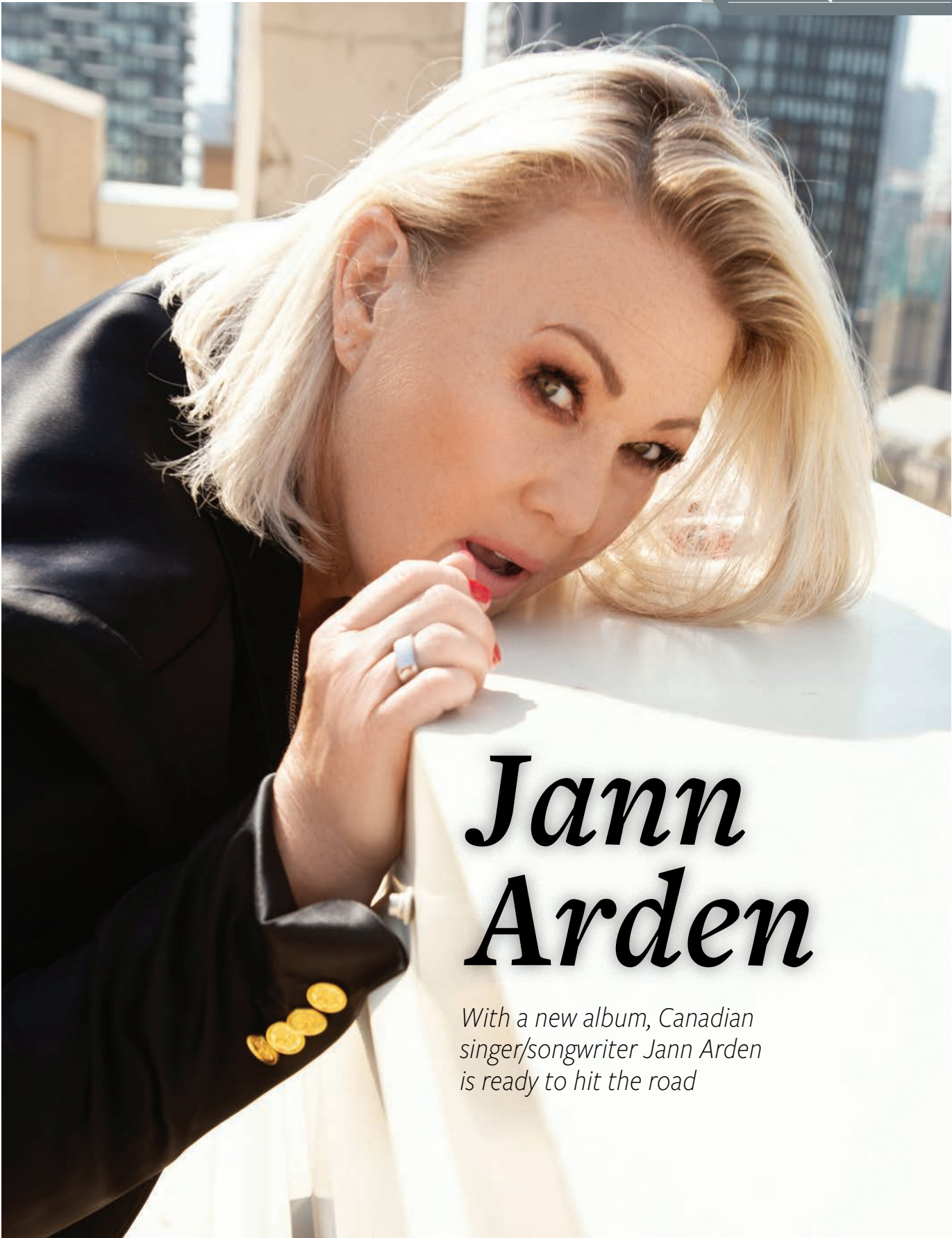
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Jann Arden

With a new album, Canadian singer/songwriter Jann Arden is ready to hit the road

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, Jann Arden has never been busier. With a hit television series, a popular podcast, bestselling books, and an array of philanthropic interests, the much acclaimed, multi award-winning singer/songwriter has just released her 13th full-length recording, *Descendant*. Recently Celtic Life International Editor-in-Chief Stephen Patrick Clare spoke with Arden about her past, present, and future.



How have you been coping with the current state of the world?

You know what? It's been great for me actually. Now that I have been home for an extended period, I realize how lucky I am to have such a great home and how much I enjoy just being around the house. I was so busy for so long - writing, recording, touring, television, promotional junkets and all the other activities that support my work as an artist - that it has been nice just to sit still and take things slow for awhile and to enjoy the fruits of my labours. When you are so busy being busy, you often don't realize how important it is to take the time to breathe and pause to reflect on where you are in your life. For me, it was long overdue, and it has been refreshing and rejuvenating. That said, I am getting a bit claustrophobic at this point, and I need a good reason to get out of my house!

You will be turning 60 soon.

Don't remind me. Actually, after some challenging and worrisome years, I am in a really good place these days and quite happy with who I am. I feel like I have arrived, or landed, at a new phase of my life - a safe spot - and that I am quite comfortable in my

own skin. I still feel younger than I am - in my head I will always be 30 - although some days my body tells me otherwise. But one of the perks of getting older, I suppose, is having a greater acceptance for everything. A lot of the stuff that used to get under my skin just doesn't rattle me anymore, and I simply can't be bothered with things that don't matter. My perspective has evolved, but I am always amazed that I still awake each day with that sense of childlike wonder and awe. I never lost that.

What is important to you now?

Many of the same things that matter to most people I guess - health, family, friends, feeling like I am making a difference in the world. And, for me, of course, staying creative is essential - maybe more than ever.

You really put yourself out there.

Do I? I never really saw it that way, but perhaps you are right. Between the album, the book, the TV show, guest appearances, the podcast, and everything else, I suppose that people are probably quite sick of me by now. The bad news for them is that I don't have any plans to go away anytime soon.

How much of all that is Jann the person versus Jann the performer?

They are one and the same and, really, what you see is what you get. I am pretty open about my life and with my thoughts and feelings. That said, any artist will tell you that as much as you bring yourself to the studio or the concert stage or the page or the canvas, there is always a part of you that you keep to yourself, that you don't give away. That is vital in a business that can sometimes suck the soul right out of you. It's a bit of a balancing act.

How do you keep that balance?

Oh, I have great people around me that keep me in check. They are my eyes and my ears... my family, my friends, and a few folks in the entertainment business that I know and trust. Every once in a while, especially when I get one of my big, outrageous ideas, one of them will tap me on the shoulder and ask me "What the hell are you doing?" And they are usually right. Not always, but often enough that I pay attention. And then I just have to laugh at myself.

Humour has long been a hallmark of your work.

Well, without it I would be dead in the water. Life can sometimes be so...heavy. I mean, look at what the world has been going through in the last two years and think of how much more terrible things would have been without those little moments of laughter and joy here and there each day. Thankfully I was born with a big funny bone, and I can keep myself, and hopefully others, in the right kind of stitches.

With so much on the go, does your music ever get lost in the mix?

No. Never. That is, first and foremost, who I am and what I do. It always has been and always will be. I do enjoy being involved with the other things as they bring out different - and sometimes surprising - sides of me, but nothing comes close to writing, recording, and performing music. It is still the most satisfying and rewarding thing that I do, and I don't believe that will ever change.

What went into the new recording?

Descendant was a joy to make. Looking back over the process, it was easy. And at this point in my life easy is good. I like easy. Those songs almost came together by themselves - a few of them had been floating around in one form or another, or in my head, for some time, while others just showed up at the door when I began writing. I have always been rather fortunate that way - sure, there have been times in the past when I have struggled with the process, wrestling with music and lyrics, but that wasn't the case this time. It all flowed quite easily. And, like I said, at my age easy is good.

How have you evolved as an artist over the years?

That's a good question, and if you had asked me that two years ago, I am not sure that I would have been able to answer it, or at least have answered it accurately. One of the benefits of this pandemic - and you always have to look for that silver lining, right? - has been the opportunity to turn inward and reflect. What a luxury that is, especially at a time when there are so many ways and means to be distracted. And one of the things that I have had the chance to reflect upon

is how I have grown as both a person and as an artist. And I have realized a few things about myself that, perhaps under "normal" circumstances, I might not have considered. First, I have learned to get out of the way and allow the songs to appear. All I have to do is suit up and show up and do what I do each day. Secondly was the realization that the message is always more important than the messenger. So, that allows me to take the work seriously without taking myself too seriously. And, lastly - as I mentioned earlier - my perspective on life has changed; I realize that the big picture is made up of the tiny details of my daily life - the simple joy of watching a hawk fly, a short stroll by a still lake, or the beauty found in a bouquet of flowers, or the pleasure of a few smiles and laughs with a family member or friend over a cup of tea.

Simplicity.

Exactly. And what was so amazing about this album was that all the people involved - the musicians, Darcy Phillips, who wrote two songs with me and did some arranging, my producers Bob Rock and Russell Broom - we were all on the same page that way. You know, despite all the arguments about how technology is ruining our lives and taking us away from the things that really matter, there is something to be said for how it has improved our lives. For a musician, sketching and writing and recording and mixing songs has never been easier. We no longer have to be in the same space to work together. Sometimes, in the past, being at close creative quarters has been challenging, especially when you are working with deadlines. There was a lot of pressure to produce. That wasn't the case with Descendant.

Do you have a favourite track on the new album?

All of them. I mean that - I love each and every piece. I'm not sure that the question is fair, though, as it is like asking a mother to pick out a favourite child - each are near and dear to her heart and the love for each is pure and true. That said, there are some songs from my previous recordings that I prefer over others, and even a few that I can't listen to anymore. But I don't feel that will be the case with the songs on Descendant.

What makes a good song?

Another good question. For me, there has to be a connection of some sort there. It



could be an emotional connection, or even a spiritual connection, but there must be some sense of familiarity with the music or the melody or the lyric - something that speaks to me or perhaps resonates with some deeper part of me.

Soul.

You can call it that for sure. Soul music really isn't about colour or race or a particular genre of music, however - it can be found in any work of art that is honest and real and comes from a place of truth and love and beauty. There is a wealth of great music being produced these days, and it will be interesting to see how it evolves over the coming years.

Speaking of the future, what do have planned for the remainder of 2022?

Well, as much as I have enjoyed the downtime, I must get back to work - my bills aren't going to pay themselves. So, we hit the road in May for a month of shows across Canada, and then there will likely be other dates through the summer and into the fall. I have really missed being on the road, and I can't tell you how much I am looking forward to playing concerts again and sharing these new songs with people. If anything, it gives me a good reason to get out of my house!

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*Robert Kearns is determined
to make a difference*





(left to right): Toronto Mayor John Tory, Bryan Bown (Toronto Waterfront Secretariat), City Councillor Joe Cressy, Dr. Eamonn McKee (Ambassador of Ireland to Canada), and Robert G. Kearns (Chair & Founder of Canada Ireland Foundation).

It is said that one can learn more from a single conversation with a wise man than from reading 1,000 books.

“Oh, I am not so sure how wise I am,” chuckles Robert Kearns, Chair and Founder of Canada Ireland Foundation (CIF). “If you had told me a quarter century ago that I would still be involved with all of this today I would have told you that you were mad.”

All joking aside, Kearns is determined to make a difference.

“I suppose that, like most Irish, I am tempered by a gentle heart,” he smiles over a Zoom call with Celtic Life International. “As a people, that has been both a blessing and a curse over time. The history of the Irish - at home and abroad - has been one of heroics and heartbreak in equal measure.”

Kearns is well versed in history. Born and raised in Ireland’s capital city, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Archaeology and Greek and Roman Civilization from University College Dublin. A life-long learner, he is not shy to draw upon his vast reservoir of historical facts and figures, particularly as it pertains to Celtic culture.

“I have always been fascinated with the past,” he notes, bringing to mind the age-old adage that those who are unwilling to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. “It may be a cliché to say that in order for us to have a better understanding and appreciation of who we are today we must better

understand and appreciate where we come from, but it is nonetheless true. It is certainly true for the Irish.”

That ‘look back to look ahead’ philosophy first took flight after Kearns emigrated to Canada from the Emerald Isle in 1979. Since washing ashore, he has immersed himself in a myriad of ex-pat initiatives, including the

Ireland Fund of Canada, the American Ireland Fund, the Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce, the Celtic Studies program at St. Michael’s College at the University of Toronto, and more.

After finding firm footing in the Canadian business community, Kearns began working to gain support and funds to build





Renderings of
Toronto's Eireann
Quay, future home
of The Corleck



Ireland Park on Toronto's waterfront. His efforts eventually evolved into the creation of the Canada Ireland Foundation.

According to Wikipedia, "Ireland Park is located on the shores of Lake Ontario on Éireann Quay, adjoining the Canada Malting Silos, at the foot of Bathurst Street in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Officially opened in the summer of 2007, Ireland Park commemorates the tens of thousands who fled Ireland during the Great Famine. In 1847, over 38,000 Irish men, women and children landed at Rees's Wharf on the shores of Toronto, fleeing famine and eager to start a new life. Although Toronto only had approximately 20,000 residents at the time, the city accepted the newcomers and went to great lengths to provide aid and care. Over 1,100 new immigrants did not survive to make Canada their new home, with many perishing in fever sheds during the Typhus epidemic of 1847.

"Ireland Park is a tribute to all the Irish ancestors who came with only hope for a new life in a promising country."

Fittingly, the CIF plans to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the peak of the Great Famine (an Gorta Mór) this summer with an array of activities at Ireland Park.

Today, the organization encompasses an ever-expanding portfolio of historical research projects, as well as year-round artistic and cultural programming.

"One is really an extension of the other," shares Kearns. "We now have more freedom to explore and expand our cultural offerings through musical concerts, art shows, interactive exhibits, educational workshops and seminars, historical studies, and more."

While the CIF's core mandate may have evolved, it remains true to Kearns' original vision.

"Canada Ireland Foundation celebrates and commemorates the story of the Irish in Canada," announces the organization's website.

"Our mission is to create and maintain commemorative public spaces, provide opportunities for artists from both nations to travel to each other's countries and facilitate cultural exchange. CIF engages academics to produce unique research on the history and contribution of Irish migrants, along with their descendants to Canada, and hosts various events to celebrate with our constituents the role of the Irish in Canada and Canada's influence in Irish affairs."

This past November, the organization broke ground on its newest initiative, The Corleck Building.

"When The Corleck opens in 2023, it will become a vibrant new hub for arts, culture and heritage on Toronto's waterfront," notes Kearns on the foundation's website. "The Corleck will present new opportunities for the Irish-Canadian community to explore its deep roots, and to engage with the many diverse cultures that enrich the city today."

For his years of tireless work, Kearns received the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement in February. With typical Irish humility, he is grateful for the accolades, but is firmly focused on the present and the future.

"The acknowledgement is certainly appreciated, especially if it helps us to get more people interested and involved with what we are doing."

"There is still much to be done, however, and - while it is great to stop and smell the roses for a few minutes here and there - we must capitalize on our momentum."

As such, going forward, Kearns explains that two essential elements are necessary to preserve and promote Irish heritage in Canada, and elsewhere.

"We have enjoyed some success raising money over the years. Both the public and private sectors have been very generous, and we are extremely grateful to the Canadian Irish community, and to our government partners in both Canada and Ireland, for their ongoing support. For us to keep doing the work that we do, however, we must continue to reach out."

Along with funding, education is a vital piece of the puzzle, particularly amongst younger generations.

"Are we doing enough to inform our youth these days? Yes, and no, I suppose. On the one hand, there has never been a time when so much information is available to so many people via so many platforms. Whether it is through traditional media - books, magazines, television, or films - or via the advent of new technologies, it is easier than ever to carry our message.

"That said, and given how quickly those new technologies are advancing, the challenge is then one of being open to change and growth. Websites, social media, and the like are constantly evolving, and it is necessary that we remain relevant to fulfill our mandate."

Kearns adds that both areas can be advanced through ongoing dialogue.

"We need to keep talking - about our past, our present, and our future. As with any relationship - whether it is online or in-person - the communication of ideas and experience is essential to our evolution as a community.

"And, sometimes, a single conversation can make all the difference in the world."

www.canadairlandfoundation.com

Ireland's language and culture

Comhluadar



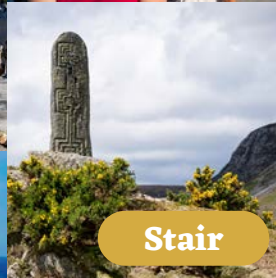
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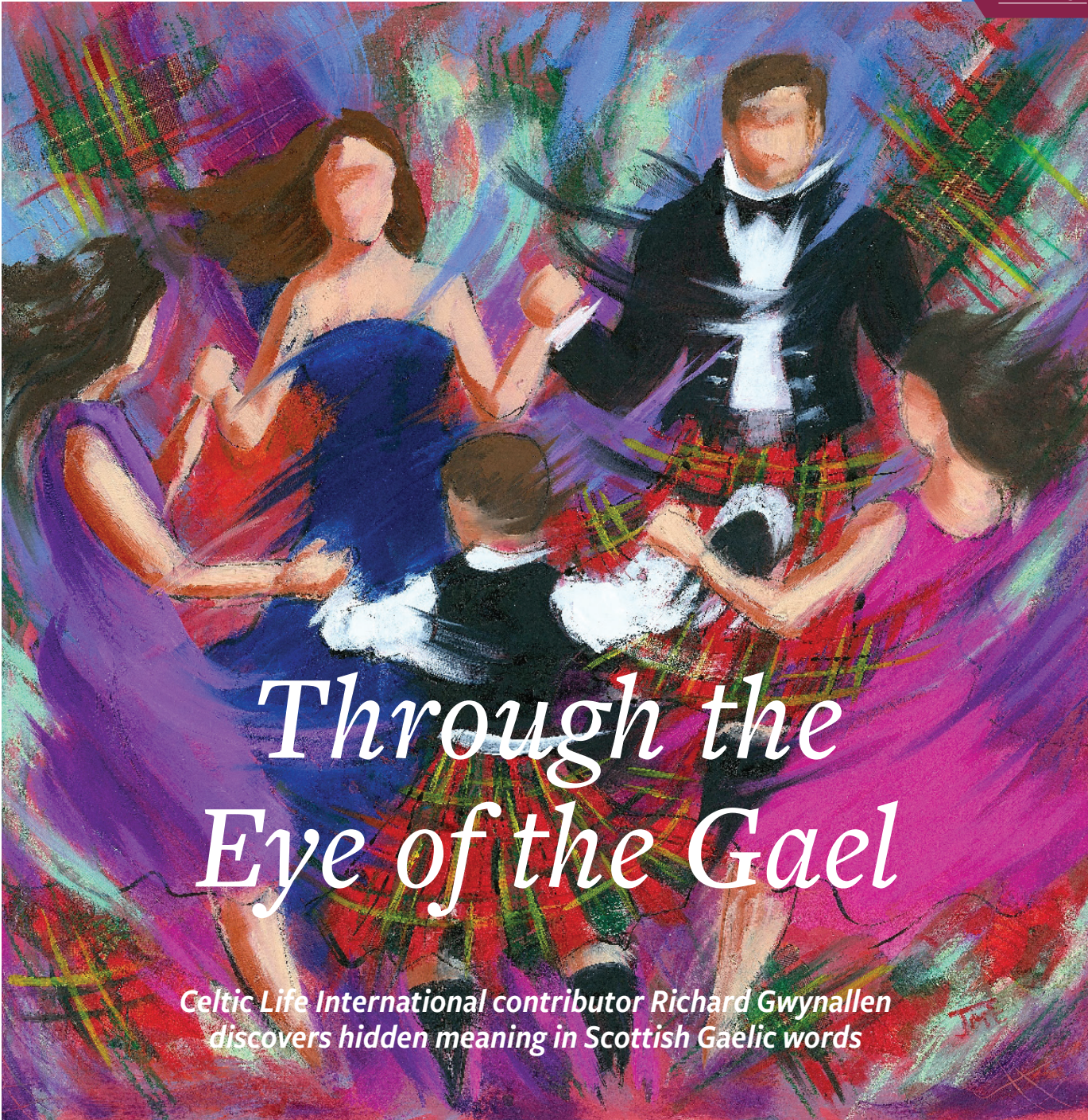


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Through the Eye of the Gael

Celtic Life International contributor Richard Gwynallen discovers hidden meaning in Scottish Gaelic words

Learning a new language is, at its best, opening new ways of viewing the world. To be sure, it is only glimpses in the beginning, but those glimpses draw the learner into a deeper relationship with the language.

Far from Samuel Johnson's characterization of Gaelic as the "rude speech of a barbarous people," Scottish Gaelic is a poetic language with complex concepts of time, and the intersection of people and place, embedded within the grammar and vocabulary.

Although the student of Scottish Gaelic may well find its grammar complex and challenging, deeper study reveals, embedded within

its grammar, a different way of viewing the world that requires some conversion to its philosophy in order to understand it.

Scottish Gaelic sayings and word combinations are also rich in meaning. However, even single words can unlock a new way of seeing and relating to the world.

If grammar is the path we walk, and sayings and phrases are the landscape itself, words may be like stones along the path that opens ultimately to a new horizon. They speak to us of both Scottish Gaelic culture and mindset.



Academic linguists may take issue with my interpretations, however, here I will offer a few of the terms that I think reflect the relationship of the speaker to his or her community, and suggest how even a single word can convey a different way of viewing our reality that is entirely unique to the Scottish Gaelic language. I caution that this is but a smattering of the possibilities.

Let's take as our first example one of the Scottish Gaelic terms best known to English speakers: céilidh.

Céilidh - the word resounds with joy, fun, and music even to those who have no intention of learning the language. For many readers, the term may immediately conjure up a band, dancing, and lots of beer. Or perhaps a concert or performance with several singers or musicians taking turns on a stage. However, the basic meaning of the term is to visit. It refers also to a gathering at a "céilidh house" where songs, poems, stories, and news are shared, usually amongst people who know each other well; an expanded form of a visit and an expanded form of what might happen in a visit with a friend or relation. The poet, Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn, or in English Iain Crichton Smith, described his view of the traditional céilidh:

"The traditional ceilidh was a celebration of happenings in the village - it was alive, it was a diary and a repeated record. . . the ceilidh represented the community that joined together in entertainment created from within itself. Stories would be told, songs would be sung."

The traditional céilidh also reinforced bonds. And for the exile, it evoked home and warmth. At the end of the song 'S fhada leam an oidche gheamhraidh, Murchadh MacPhàrlain writes that he is "Far 'm bu mhiann leam dhol a chèilidh" ("far from where I would like to be 'céilidhing.>"). In this context, céilidh, implies "belonging", being in a place where you feel connected, wanted, and a part of the fabric of community.

Before proceeding into anything more esoteric, we can visit another Scottish Gaelic term also well known to English speakers: slàinte.

Slàinte! the crowd shouts as glasses are raised. If we ask a group of people at an Irish pub the meaning of slàinte we are likely to get "Cheers." Perhaps a few will say it actually means "health," and they would be correct. Slàinte directly translates as "health." Slàinte Mhath! Good Health. Air do shlàinte! To your good health! Òlaidh sinn do dheoch-slàinte. We drink your health!

The root of the word, however, is slàn. The root word, of course, also refers to health. An slàn dhut? Are you well? Guma slàn a chì mi thu. May I see you well. However, it also means "whole," as in the poem, An Roghainn (The Choice), by Somhairle MacGill-Eain (also known by his English name Sorley MacLean):

*Ach nan robh 'roghainn rithist dhomh
'S mi 'm sheasamh air an àird,
Leumainn à nèamh no iutharna
Le spiorad 's chridhe slàn.*

McGill-Eain translates that part of the poem as:

*But had I the choice again,
And stood on that headland,
I should leap from heaven or hell
With a whole spirit and heart.*

So, what are we really saying when we toast with the term "slàinte"? We are wishing upon others wholeness, represented as health, and including all those things that constitute health and wholeness: physical and mental health, vibrancy, love, family, community, livelihood, and peace.

Dùthchas is a term that resists easy explanation, as it represents a set of ideas. The origins of any language reflect the intersection of people with their land. "Place" is a very important concept in Gaelic.

Dùthaich refers to land, but specifically to one's native land, the land with which one has an intimate connection. In the form dùthchas, the word refers to the place of one's origin and, specifically, to hereditary temperament, spirit, or rights derived from that connection. In the form dùthchasach, it refers specifically to indigeneity, as well as traditions or customs that derive from that indigeneity and a love for one's native land.

All these terms refer to an intersection between people and land that go beyond the place you were born or places you've lived.

In Michael Newton's words, dùthchas is the idea that "people belong to places rather than places belonging to people." Indigeneity is based on a shared history, experience, and interaction with that land. The right to it is rooted in daily habits and activities and it is bound up with relationships to others, and responsibilities.



And how would you want to be known in your community? In traditional Gaelic communities you would want to have cliù.

Cliù appears in the dictionary as “1 Fame, renown. 2 Praise. 3 Character, reputation.” Such as, *Fo dheagh chliù*. Under a good character.

But in context of the culture, what does “character” or “reputation” mean? What does it mean to you, the reader, to have a good reputation? Is it “honesty,” “kindness,” or other traits?

Iain Mac a’ Ghobhainn (Iain Crichton Smith) describes cliù like this:

“The Highlander has a concept of cliù, which roughly means ‘reputation,’ and such a concept implies that a man who has it may be considered useful to the community, not glorified, but respected. . . . he wishes to be known as one who belongs to a community and who does service to that community.” (Real People in a Real Place, p 19)

This particular concept of having a good reputation is rooted in the idea that the individual is part of a community.

With that, let’s begin to wander the path a bit outside the physical world of the community. Take, for example, aiteal.

Aiteal is a very small quantity of something, but it can also be a glimpse of something, a breath, a breeze, a ray of light, or briefly heard speech. All of these are fleeting experiences that imply that something much larger exists; glimpses, if you will, for those who want to follow further, prods to take the next step.

A word like aiteal can swing you from the seemingly insignificant, to passing things like a breeze or a ray of light that sharpen momentary awareness of life, to breath, and to the glimpse of something that lies behind and beyond all of that.

Some words combine the most unexpected things, like dust and atoms.

Smùirnean refers to truly tiny things... a mote, an atom, a particle of dust - things that range from having no importance to us (except maybe the need to clean it away), to unseen building blocks of life. But it is also the small, even uneasy, feelings we get when we are on the point of realizing something; a tingle, a shiver, a slight sense of unease or heightened awareness, perhaps of the interconnectedness of life. Dust and atoms - all parts of a whole.

And some words have the potential to upend our understanding of reality, like crith.

Crith reminds us that our understanding of the world we see is limited. Crith refers to trembling or shivering. It could be from fear or cold, but not just from fear or cold. It’s the vulnerability and insubstantiality of solid objects - the tremor from an earthquake, or the shimmering in the air one sees as part of a heat haze, or the ghost light of a will-o’-the-wisp, (those mysterious atmospheric lights seen by travelers at night, especially over bogs, swamps, or marshes). It’s the layer of floating moss on top of clear water in a quaking or quivering bog. It’s the crumbling earth from a ploughed and dry field.

Seen this way, crith reminds us that our material world is shifting, that what seems substantial can change, that a glimpse of something on the other side of the veil is not only possible but also very near at hand. And that shiver might be the beginnings of understanding.

Scottish Gaelic has many ways of hinting that our world is not as rigid or stable as we like to believe. Science has started to catch up with such indigenous knowledge with our growing awareness of quantum physics and how electrons are in continual movement... materialising, dematerialising, then rematerializing somewhere else.

The fact that any solid, dependable mass that starts to quiver or falter can be referred to as crith makes it an ideal word for the unpredictable and infinitesimal particles that we have delineated as the building blocks of all life.

It isn’t just trembling and quaking that gives a hint that something else is to be glimpsed, as lannair indicates.

Lannair is a beautiful example of a word that leads from an experience of physical sight to innersight. It means a glittering or gleaming, but not like glitter thrown on art projects, or lights hung about the room. It’s the reflection of rays from a polished surface, the phosphoric glitter from fish scales in the dark, or the calm or glitter caused by oil on water. It’s the quicksilver flash of the salmon in stirred waters.

At the same time, lannair can be a great flame, and not just a bonfire. It may refer to an inner flame: *Thàinig lannair ann an sùil Chaluim* (a gleam came into Calum’s eyes, Calum’s eyes shone with an inner fire/light). Understanding lies just beyond the glitter.

Finally, I will leave you with one of my favorite words in the language, deò.

Deò is breath, but also air. It’s a ray of light, but also the vital spark of life. It’s vision, but not just sight. It’s vision that allows one to see beyond, even beyond the veil. And it is the place where a stream falls into the sea, where one life or path merges with the infinite, where we are all connected. Deò is almost like a mantra, a chant that draws you to that point where the stream lets out into the sea, a place between worlds, a gateway through which past and future both flow.

The beauty and the deep meaning of Gaelic words can enliven our language learning as we weave through lenition, the genitive case, and grammatical challenges. However, it can also be a path to reorientate us, to turn us back to what we have forgotten about our connection to the earth, to each other, and to how we view our world.

If we dare to dive in and escape the confines that language and modernity has placed upon us, there are whole worlds of new experiences awaiting.

Richard Gwynallen is a Gàidhlig learner, and co-founder and fear-stiùiridh of Sgoil Gàidhlig Bhaile an Taigh Mhóir, The Scottish Gaelic Language School of Baltimore



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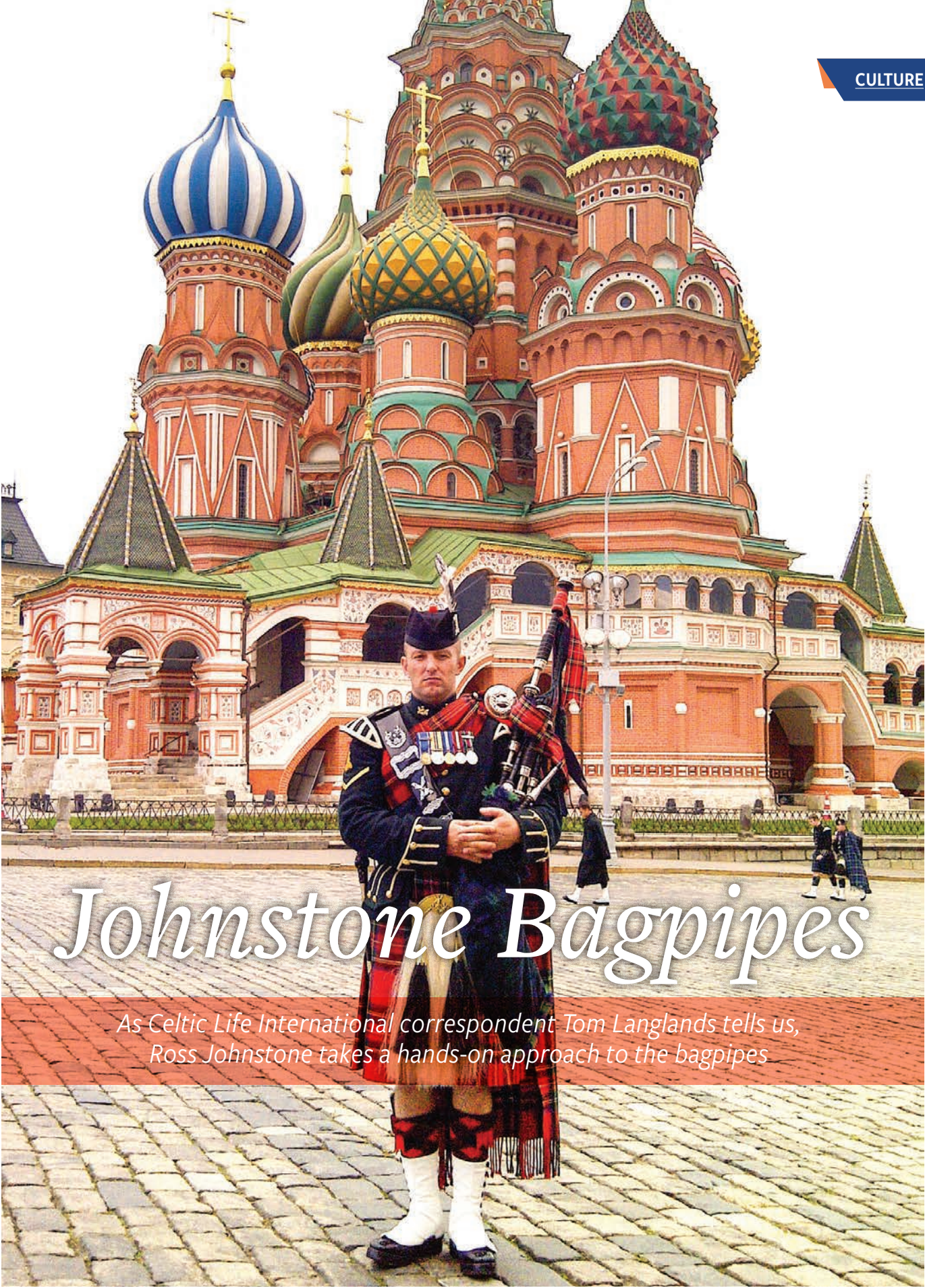
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A bagpiper in a kilt and sporrans stands in front of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow. The cathedral's colorful, onion-shaped domes and intricate brickwork are prominent in the background. The bagpiper is wearing a dark jacket with medals and a red and black kilt. The ground is paved with cobblestones.

Johnstone Bagpipes

*As Celtic Life International correspondent Tom Langlands tells us,
Ross Johnstone takes a hands-on approach to the bagpipes*



Ross Johnstone is the only bagpipe maker in Scotland to be accredited by The Guild of Master Craftsmen. As such, it is with a sense of justifiable pride that he knows he has - quite literally - left his mark on many a set of hand-crafted, Highland bagpipes and that his creations are played by some of the world's best pipers.

I recently met with Johnstone in his workshop only a stone's throw from Stirling Castle - a place where he has played his bagpipes on many occasions. Surrounded by lathes, drills, wooden drones and chanter, decorative silver ferrules - metal, connecting collars - and reused ivory mounts, there was little doubt that I was in the presence of someone who knew a thing or two about bagpipes. "It runs in the family," he announced as he carefully routed a cylindrical piece of black wood spinning in the lathe. "My great-grandfather was a pipe major with the Gordon Highlanders, but it was my grandfather, who was born in India in the 1920s and was a piper all of his life, who got me interested in the pipes."

Being born and brought up in Edinburgh gave the young Johnstone many opportunities to watch the tartan-clad pageantry of pipe bands and to become accustomed to the skirl of the pipes. Around the age of six, he started taking whatever opportunities arose to follow his grandfather whenever he was playing. Encouraged by his grandfather, he started - like all good pipers - practicing the chanter, and, by the age of 11 he was playing the pipes with the Edinburgh Post Office Pipe Band. Leaving school in his teens, he enlisted with the army, spending three years with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders

before returning to civvy street to begin a two-year apprenticeship in motor mechanics. Not wishing to forsake the military, he joined the Territorial Army (now renamed Army Reserve) - Royal Engineers. His army training and the skills he acquired as a mechanic and engineer were soon put to good use on a nine-month operational tour of Bosnia and a four-month tour of Kenya. Returning home to Edinburgh, he began a five-year apprenticeship in bagpipe-making with some of the nation's finest craftsmen. Having completed his bagpipe-making apprenticeship - and still playing the pipes at every opportunity - Johnstone volunteered for a nine-month operational tour of Iraq before returning home once again, this time spending several years working as a mechanic for

a well-known U.K. garage chain. Struggling with the boredom of the dull daily routine, he took the opportunity of a six-month spell of contract work in Germany, repairing U.S. Army Humvees, followed by a year in Kuwait repairing Humvees and M1 Abrams battle tanks.

His wartime travels were complemented by an even more impressive list of nations visited as a bagpipe player.

He has played with the Territorial Army 71 Engineer Regiment Pipe Band, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland Pipe Band, and The Black Watch Pipe Band - all of which has resulted in him performing at military tattoos in Edinburgh (13 times), Basel (4 times), Bermuda, Berlin, Nova Scotia, Moscow, Virginia, and Malmö. As well as tattoos he has played in the British embassies in Moscow, Kuwait, Bermuda, and France, and also at the Queen's state banquet and at The Queen Mother's funeral. He lists a three-month tour of North America with the Black Watch as a highlight of his musical career and cites playing at the hallowed Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia as one of the most poignant moments.

When asked if there has been any other single event that is especially memorable, he lifts a chanter to his lips, places his fingers over the holes as if playing and reminisces with obvious joy. "Playing on stage in New York alongside Lady Gaga, Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Wonder, Billy Joel, and Mary J. Blige for Sting's 60th birthday celebrations is the best job I have ever done!"



He met his partner Lynzie through the Territorial Army. She is a piper also and they share a house with their four St. Bernard dogs in the quiet village of Menstrie at the foot of the Ochil Hills. With all the musical and practical skills accumulated over the years it wasn't a difficult step to start repairing and making his own bagpipes. That developed into doing repair work for friends and, as his reputation as a quality craftsman grew throughout the piping community, the work soon rolled in. He set up a workshop next to his home and, in 2014, Johnstone Bagpipes was established.

Although the backbone of his work is the repair and restoration of old and damaged pipes, he is one of only four craftsmen in Scotland hand-making traditional Highland bagpipes.

Today, the majority of bagpipes sold commercially are produced in factories where they are turned out in their hundreds by computer-controlled machines. For Johnstone, who still recalls the magic of the first time he ever held his grandfather's pipes, it is not the way this instrument - with its ancient and cultural heritage - should be made. Clearly passionate about his work, he takes a length of dark, square-sectioned wood from an overhead shelf and, running his palm along the smooth surface explains, "I give the wood time to settle, and this means there is less chance of it cracking or splitting. There is also something about the beautiful, warm tones of hand-made pipes coupled



with the knowledge that you are playing something created with the love and care of someone who understands the heritage of our national instrument." Ebony used to be the wood of choice for making pipes, but many of the species of trees regarded as providing true ebony are now considered endangered. African blackwood - often from Mozambique - is now the preferred wood. It is not a true ebony, but it is hard, durable, impervious to water, has little obvious grain and, although it is difficult to work with, it is a beautiful wood for turning and for holding intricate details. Showing me several examples, he explains how the square section is turned into a smooth cylindrical rod before being drilled centrally down its length and otherwise shaped and grooved to form either the windpipe, chanter, or one of the three drones - one bass and two tenor - found on a set of Highland pipes. In the old days,

ivory would have been used for the various mounts. Today, there are several alternative, composite materials available although reusing old things made of ivory - such as snooker balls - permitted under conservation legislation. Johnstone liaises with other craftsmen to obtain the ferrules that adorn his completed pipes with the top-quality, hand-engraved, silver ferrules often coming from a renowned Canadian silversmith.

Many clients have their own special requests when ordering pipes and he once made a set with solid gold ferrules for a wealthy American from Texas. Laughing, he recalls the most bizarre request he has ever received, "I had one customer ask if it would be possible to make the mounts from his late father's bones. Naturally, I declined but was more than a little curious as to how the customer planned to obtain the bones!" Once all the individual components are connected to the bag, they are tested over four to five days by playing and tuning to ensure everything has "settled." Then, the bag cover and the cords that hold the drones together are added, providing the familiar, finishing touches that mark out the Highland bagpipes.

I have always admired the Highland bagpipes; whether it be the massed bands at a tattoo or a lone piper on the battlements of a castle, there is something deeply rousing about their sound. After an afternoon spent in Johnstone's workshop, I am much more knowledgeable about how pipes are made and certainly more appreciative of the true craftsmanship that he brings to his creations. It will certainly add another dimension to my next experience of hearing them played.

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In the third installment of a four-part series, Lesley Choyce explores Newfoundland and Labrador's Gros Morne Mountain



Mountains, Moose, and Mantle Rock



Lobster Cove

Clearly, I had underestimated how difficult the hike to the top of Gros Morne would be. I am sure that I was not the first mountain novice to be lured into this adventure by the travel brochures and sparkling images of hikers standing casually on the gorgeous barren mountain top. But for me, the hardest part was yet to come.

I reckon it was at least a good nine kilometres back down the mountain to our car and I was in pain most of the way, walking stiff-legged with my right leg and making my left leg do most of the work. My wife Linda and I also soon discovered that we had purchased a really crappy drugstore sunscreen that dripped off our sweaty foreheads as we were getting fried by the unrelenting Newfoundland sun. I realize those last three words may not have ever been expressed together in the English language before, so let me be the first.

Folks along the way offered condolences and encouragement as I hobbled on. I kept telling myself we were almost there to the parking lot, a lie, which if repeated over and over, convinced me I knew next to nothing about estimating distance in mountain country while overestimating my stamina for such lofty pursuits. It occurred to me

as well that if I had been here several million years ago, I would be at the bottom of the now defunct Iapetus Sea and, if I could surface, I could have body-surfed back to the parking lot with more ease in the inviting tropical waters.

But continents had shifted in unfavourable directions as far as I was concerned during those four hours it took me to descend the mountain. Descents, as most hikers discover, are never just one direction. You go down for a while, then back up a hill, only to trudge back down and so forth and so on. But finally, after hours of toil and pain, we were back standing on the civilized tarmac where we started and the comradery from early on in the hike seemed to have returned for most hikers. Linda's ears perked up when she heard someone crack open a cold beer from a cooler in their Jeep and it was as if the whole parking lot suddenly went quiet as sweaty sun-scorched weary hikers all around looked on jealously.

I guess I have forgotten to mention that I had observed an endless pageant of partridge berry and bunchberry plants along every slope of Gros Morne. And lichen to die for. Had I been in better spirits on the way down, I would have written an ode in praise of the low, rug-



Lesley & Linda



Bunchberries

ged plant life we had encountered on our prodigious journey. Sitting in our air-conditioned car briefly before leaving, burning fossil fuels to cool us down and feeling guilty and happy all at once, we vowed to find some decent sunscreen next time, carry more water than we planned, bring along some Advil and a better attitude for me. I also reminded myself that if we got good and stranded up there for any length of time, the partridge berries and bakeapples might sustain us until we hobbled back out of that wild unyielding wilderness.

That evening, there was a cod dinner to be had at Java Jack's in Rocky Harbour. Everyone writing a review on TripAdvisor raved about the cod and I would too if I were prone to review such things. Afterwards, outside the restaurant, I tried making small talk with a man having a smoke beside his Ontario SUV. I could tell he was a tourist, so I blithely asked, "What's on for tomorrow?" Without missing a beat, he barked, "I haven't been told yet. I'll do whatever it is she says." I know that sounds like a really sexist thing for a man to say, but he said it not me, and it somehow stuck in my head as both sad and funny - a reminder that not everyone has fun and adventures on a vacation.

That night, I recall, despite my aching knee which only caused me grief when I walked on it, I slept like one of those many large pieces of driftwood festooned along these rocky shores and woke to a misty morning with five crows on the power line competing with each other in some kind of a guttural bird poetry slam.

Tuesday was to be an easy day with some down time driving north. I was in favour of keeping things coastal to check out these shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence where old Captain Cook once sailed by to access the prospects for his monarch. First stop was a hiking trail near Green Point, an easy boardwalk and sand path called officially "The Coastal Trail." Linda ran 10 kilometres while I limped to the beach and communed with seabirds, smooth hard stones, and bleached washed-up trees that had been collecting here for many years. It was reminiscent of parts of the Vancouver Island coast for me as the sea breeze and cool clear water soothed my spirit and set me right.

We weren't in the mood to take in the fishing exhibit further north at Broom Point although, as usual, I was curious about the name of the place. Where's the broom? I asked Linda as we stood on the stairway down to the water. We guessed that the name had something to do with the "folds" of limestone fingers that reached out into the Gulf.

I admit that most any sort of rock formation interests me, and Newfoundland is certainly rich in wonderfully odd and unusual geological manifestations.

For some reason, we didn't continue on to Cow Head and Shallow Bay but retreated back down the coast to get a better look at Sally's Cove. According to the website northernpeninsula.ca, "Sally's Cove is believed to be named after Sally Short who - along with her children - were shipwrecked here while leaving her husband." This leaves me with many unanswered questions as to why Sally was leaving her husband and exactly how she ended up in a shipwreck and who it was to then name this place after her. According to the site, the official population today is only 20 souls, down from 430, as families were relocated when the national park's authorities arrived to sweep inconveniences out of here. I think I felt an honest twinge of guilt as a mere tourist when it began to seep in that properties get expropriated when parks are created by government.

A little further south, we pulled off the main road when I saw a sign indicating a turn off to a small coastal village named Old House



Rocks. Here we discovered some classic Newfoundland fish shacks, wind ravaged cottages and a pleasant place to dip my bare feet in the cool clear water.

Still recovering from the mountain climb, we poked around further at the Lobster Cove Head Lighthouse and the Norris Point cemetery which was heavily populated with Hiscocks and Budgens, Mudgens and Oats, along with Organs, Pikes, and Snows.

Dinner back at the popular Fisherman's Landing in Rocky Harbour was another feed of fish, of course. The raucous place was packed with locals, many of them eating plates piled high with onion rings the size of donuts. And, although we had sampled some moose sausages the day before, we both passed on the house specialty - a moose platter with potatoes, carrots, and turnips. Maybe next trip.

At the dinner table, we found ourselves discussing yet again the fact that we would have to remain on the lookout for moose. None yet had tried to leap in front of our vehicle which was a good thing, but they had not presented themselves to us in more favourable encounters either. I am not a hunter and would be loath to see any of the creatures shot, but I did understand that they were a significant source of food for low-income rural families. I explained to Linda that Johnny Cash had come to Newfoundland in 1961 because he wanted to shoot a moose. He gave concerts at several small communities and a gentleman named Herman Whalen was the hunter who took him into the woods where he finally succeeded in "getting his moose." Whalen was a tad disappointed in the man in black, however, when it came to dealing with the dead animal, saying, "Generally if I'm alone it would take me 10 minutes to field dress a moose. It probably took Johnny Cash an hour."

We awoke early on Wednesday and took the long but magnificent drive around the East and South Arms of Bonne Bay. Along the South Arm we drove through the delightful communities of Glenburnie, Birchy Head and Shoal Brook - known together as GBS - while on our way to the fabled Tablelands. Here are some unlikely bare mountains that look like the ones I once hiked through near Sedona in Arizona. Reddish or ochre in colour, these massive chunks of barren rock are of a different nature from the rest of the park. As I understand it,



Rocks at the Broom

this rock was once part of the earth's mantle that was thrust up and through the surface 450 million years ago. The words peridotite and serpentinite may not mean a lot to you, but they refer to common rocks of the Tablelands. Overall, the tarnished and beleaguered land is made up of "mantle rock" - rock from the earth's mantle. And, in case you are wondering, that is a 2,900 metre layer of rock that protects the earth's surface from the hot liquid core of our beloved planet. I believe the Tablelands are the only place on the earth where you can hobnob with the mantle and still walk away.

Scattered about the Tablelands are scrubby alder bushes and dwarf larches, while low to the ground are more cheerful yellow flowered cinquefoil and saxifrage plants.

Hiking through here was one of those rare experiences where you feel like you have been transported to another world.

The parks people claim that this is where to find "the worst soil on the planet," an odd but fascinating claim to fame. The soil apparently is rich in cobalt, iron, nickel, magnesium, and chromium which creates a toxic environment for most forms of life. So, if you are a plant or animal and can survive here, you are as tough as it gets. Yet the scrubby hackmatack survives here, as do flowering plants like





sandwort, alpine campion, thrift, Lapland rosebay and Harebell.

We stayed pretty much to the trail which was, blessedly, an easy one. There wasn't a trace of breeze, and we were enveloped in an eerie stillness that augmented the alien landscape. You are welcome to go off trail here and scramble up the loose-stone slopes if you have a mind for it, but I was still recovering from my forced march down from Gros Morne so I was happy to stay on the flats. We did come across some backpackers from Québec, though, who were jogging back down from a distant rust-coloured hill. "See the moose?" one guy asked. Well, we saw something that looked like a stick-figure of a moose on a distant mesa. "We tried to get close," he said. By my estimation, the moose was at least two kilometres away, so I guessed that they didn't make it because the terrain was just too rugged. With that, they jogged on back the trail towards the parking lot.

If you hike the well-marked two kilometres to the end of the trail you come to a large wooden patio of sorts with information placards and a striking view of a waterfall coming down from the upper Tablelands. I felt thankful for the fact that the parks people had made this unique place so accessible, although I realized that making wilderness sites like these too accessible may one day lead to the disdainful Disneyfication of parts of this grand province.

Once back at the car, we drove Highway 431 on to the end of the road at the shores of Trout River Pond. The town of Trout River, on the shoreline of the Gulf was settled by a single family - the Crockers - in 1815 and no one else came to live there until the 1880s owing to its extreme isolation. A dead blue whale washed up here in 2018 and its bones are now in the Royal Ontario Museum. Each year the town hosts the colourful Bang Belly Festival, "A six-day schedule of events filled with music, games, food, dance, and laughter, highlighting the

heritage of our community." Unfortunately for us, we would not be around for the festivities.

After that, we reversed course and took the long winding road back around Bonne Bay to Norris Point to catch the passenger ferry heading across the bay to Woody Point. Here was our only opportunity to get out on the water and absorb a good view of this amazing arm of the sea. Although some claim that the ride will give you sightings of seals, whales, and other sea life, we only saw the dark clear waters and the surrounding steep mountains. But it was a refreshing little sea cruise nonetheless that deposited us in downtown Woody Point. Some workers there were adding a third story to 3Ts fish plant where a couple of distracted looking men were holding up a framed wall that wobbled in the breeze, looking as if it was about to topple into the bay. A young couple from Québec who had come across the wide water with us cruised casually around the historic sites of the town on long skateboards which made me nostalgic for my skateboard days even though those halcyon hours of youth were long gone.

When the Bontours boat captain deposited us back at Norris Point, we joined the throng of sunburnt tourists at the Cat Stop pub, sitting on a dockside patio. I nursed a Squeezebox IPA as Linda enjoyed a Caesar. The service was slow but festive and we overheard a guy with a large dog telling a story to anyone who would listen about his first day out on the water with his new sailboat. The story ended with him saying, "So there I was coming back with the boat, but I had never learned how to dock it. So, I Googled it and followed the instructions." Clearly the nautical times they were a changin'.

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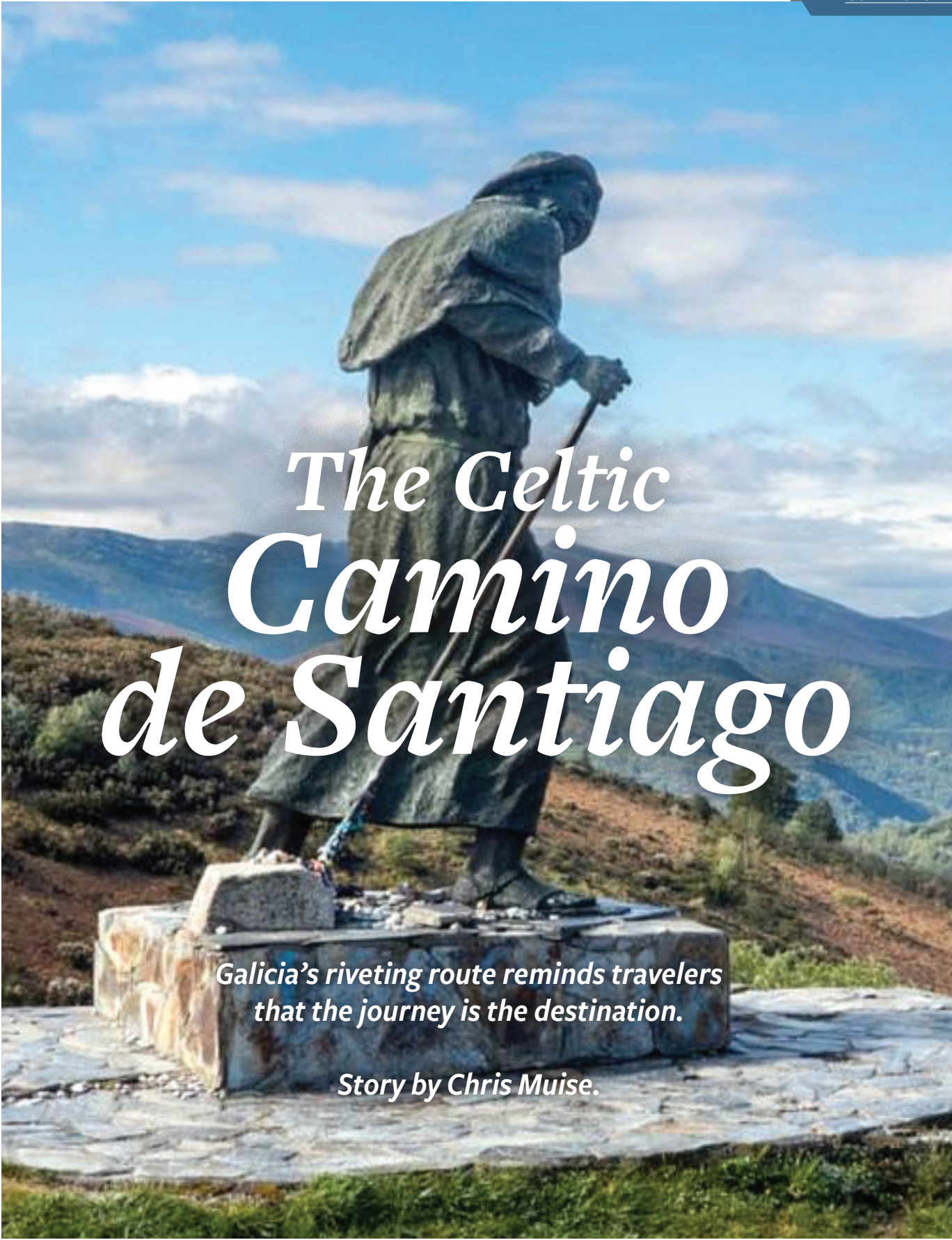
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The Celtic Camino de Santiago

Galicia's riveting route reminds travelers that the journey is the destination.

Story by Chris Muise.



It has been said that spiritual awakenings are often preceded by rude awakenings.

That was certainly the case for Dubliner John Brierley. Seemingly set for life, Brierley had built a prosperous chartered surveyors' business by the age of 39, enjoying the well-earned fruits of his labours.

"I was the perfect self-made man," he tells Celtic Life International via Zoom, before solemnly adding, "and suddenly, my life was totally empty and meant nothing to me."

On the verge of burnout, Brierley took a year off for a "business sabbatical" - spending time in nature and refreshing his mind and body.

"So many people spend their whole lives maybe doing something that they were never meant to do. As it turned out, I was becoming

one of those people."

The time off proved to be well spent.

"That was probably the most productive year of my life. It was then that I found myself on the Camino de Santiago."

The Camino de Santiago - literally "Santiago's road" in Spanish - is a series of pilgrimage routes leading to Galicia, the Celtic corner of Spain, and one of the seven Celtic nations.

In fact, Brierley's sojourn was such a life-changing experience that he gave up his old career to dedicate himself fully to sharing the good word.

Interestingly, sharing the good word is practically the origin story of the Camino; it all started when one of Jesus' disciples, James the Great, endeavoured to spread the

gospel to the westernmost part of the known world.

"There may not be a lot of historical fact, but there is a lot of legend," explains Brierley, who has since written 12 guidebooks for the various Camino routes. He also speaks around the world on the topic. "James had already agreed to go to the Iberian Peninsula."

The disciple's destination was a region called Finisterre, which is as far west as one can go in Europe. Back then, the western end of Europe was considered the end of the known world.

"That became the most important spiritual place on Earth, because when you reached Finisterre, when the sun sank in the west, it sank to Tir Na Nog, or the land of



Annemiek Nefkens



John Brierley



Maureen Summers

eternal youth. You could not get closer to the world of spirits, to God, to whatever the pagan worshipers of the time knew it as.”

Sadly, James wasn’t successful in his mission to convert the Iberian masses and was quickly beheaded upon his return to Jerusalem.

“His body, then, was brought back to the place where he had sought to bring the message,” says Brierley, adding that even in death, James did not have much luck in Finisterre. “As a Christian, he wasn’t allowed to be buried there - he had to be laid to rest three days away. He ended up in a place called Librodor, which was a Roman town well-known for its burial site, which is Compostela.”

This site eventually came to be known as Santiago de Compostela, the capital of Galicia, and the end point of every Camino route. The path became a popular pilgrimage for Christians to take some few hundred years later.

“In the 11th century, the Crusades against the Muslims in the Holy Land meant that you couldn’t go there anymore,” shares Brierley. “What happened, then, was this massive swing to, ‘well, you can go to one of his apostles, who is buried in Santiago. That is pretty easy to get to’ - and that created a huge reorientation of the pilgrim traffic.”

Fast forward to about 25 years ago, when Brierley made his first pilgrimage. While, by his own admission, he isn’t particularly religious, he did encounter his fair share of Christians - and believers from all faiths - upon his journey.

“Indeed, when I walked up from Sevilla in the south of Spain one year, I only met one other pilgrim - a wonderful Japanese Shinto follower,” Brierley recalls, adding that, as the presence of organized religion became less prominent in people’s daily lives in the modern era, the Camino began attracting people from all walks of life - even atheists - to have a genuine spiritual experience.

“The Camino is very eclectic. It is every religion and none on this route, which is part of its power.”

“And when we take the extra time out - particularly, for walking an overtly spiritual pilgrimage route - something magical happens.”

Annemiek Nefkens can attest to that magic. Like Brierley, Nefkens was enjoying the life she had built for herself. Until, that is, she wasn’t.



“I was working as a communications adviser, and I was really focused on my career at that time,” Nefkens recalls over Zoom from her home in The Netherlands. “I had set goals for myself; in five years, I wanted to be a senior communications adviser, and five years after that, I wanted to be a manager of the communications department.”

“I achieved all of these things. I spent a lot of hours on working, working, working. Not only physically, but also in my head. I had everything I wanted. I married a man who was also working a lot. Life was good.”

However, she soon began having physiological warning signs - tension headaches, nervousness, and more - all of which she chose to ignore. Then, the ball dropped.

“In just a month or two I lost all the things that I thought made me who I was; the work, the marriage, the money - all the security I thought I had was suddenly gone.”

Like Brierley, Nefkens sought answers along the Camino, starting her trek near Paris, taking one of the most popular routes, the Camino Frances.

“In the beginning, it was really hard: I was all alone there in France, I really didn’t speak the language, and I cried a lot.”

However, as per the popular phrase shared among the route’s faithful pilgrims, “the Camino provides.” In Nefkens’ case, it offered a sympathetic ear.

“I started to know others like me,” she explains. “I recall meeting a German woman, and by coincidence she shared a story that was very similar to mine. There was a real connection there.”

Nefkens communed with her fellow travelers, sharing albergues (Spanish hostels),

and coming to consider them as extended family.

“I often roomed with 10 or 20 other pilgrims. We would sleep, get up early, share breakfast, and then simply start walking. That is the life of a pilgrim. I was never alone, on any single day on the Camino from Paris to Compostela.”

As her 2,000km journey continued, she found renewed purpose in supporting travelers who were new to the trails.

“Helping other pilgrims gave me a renewed purpose.”

Arriving at the steps of the Cathedral of Santiago three months later, Nefkens knew that she had been changed forever. Soon after her tour, she accepted a job at a travel agency specializing in Camino excursions, and eventually cofounded her own travel agency, WAW.travel, with her fiancé, Roberto Santos, who had been born and raised along the Camino.

“I lived in Santiago de Compostela for a year,” adds Santos, jumping into the Zoom chat with Nefkens. He gives a nod to the city’s Celtic culture, pointing out a charming pub in particular. “Casa das Crechas is really close to the Cathedral of Santiago, and that is where all the people who have Celtic roots meet. There, they play music, sing songs, and read poems. It is a bit surprising, but their dedication to preserving Celtic traditions is inspiring.”

Nefkens’ aim with WAW is to help other women through the Camino and show them that they can balance a life of career and

family with self-care and self-reflection.

"That is my personal mission, because I am an example of this. I can give you 20 other examples of this among my close circle of friends. I talk with a lot of women, and many of them are suffering from something. I learned the hard way that, in the end, you need to take care of yourself before you can take care of others."

She has been back many times since making her first pilgrimage, across several different routes, both for professional and personal reasons.

"This year, I will be walking again, to Santiago de Compostela. They say it is like a virus - except that this is a positive one!"

"There is something very real called the Call of the Camino," Brierley chimes in, adding that even those who don't complete the whole 2,000km trek on the first try always seem compelled to finish it on another occasion. "Once the Camino calls you...I don't know anybody who didn't start it who didn't either finish it, or come back to finish it. It is that powerful."

As noted by both Brierley and Neffkens, there is no one way to take the Camino. There are 12 major recognized routes, denoted by stone way-markers that point to Santiago de Compostela, and some are larger than others. Some are even shorter by design, to make it easier for people (many who may not have the privilege of taking three months away from everyday life) to complete their journeys and earn their Compostela certificates.

One such pilgrim is Maureen Summers, a Halifax, Nova Scotia woman who first walked the Camino with a friend from Vancouver. They couldn't make the whole journey in their limited vacation time, so they endeavoured to try again when the pair happened to be in Scotland, where Maureen was visiting her husband's family.

"It was fabulous, just an amazing experience," she shares, explaining that she and her friend took a day in Dublin to walk some of the Camino Ingles.

*"We decided that we couldn't
not go back and finish."*

The Camino Ingles is also known as the Celtic Camino, as it would have been the start of any Irishman's trip to the mainland, arriving in the aforementioned Finisterre, to trade, or to follow the Camino themselves. Brierley is currently writing a new guidebook on the Camino that he hopes will promote it and other smaller routes that don't see the same numbers as the Frances and other, more well-trodden paths to Santiago.

"Partly what I am trying to do is move the heavy traffic off the Camino Frances - a quarter of a million people trudging along the route. There are lots of ways into Santiago. It helps to spread the economic and cultural benefit to remote parts of Spain, which could well do with what they call the 'pilgrim dollar.'"

Lesser-known routes were the least of the worries of anyone relying on the "pilgrim dollar" the last few years, though. Just like everything else, the Camino was effectively shut down at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and is only now starting to open again to international travellers.

Summers is currently the co-coordinator of the Halifax chapter of the Canadian Company of Pilgrims, a national organization that connects Camino enthusiasts to one another, and helps provide information sessions and local community walks, among other things.

"Many countries have some type of association that supports people in their interest about the Camino, and in preparation for doing a Camino," she explains. "And these provide a community when one comes back from a Camino as well. Some of the chapters run weekly



walking groups, while others have annual or biannual group meetings, featuring different guest speakers and doling-out information on what you need to take."

Of course, with a worldwide viral disaster making international travel almost impossible, the Canadian Company of Pilgrims - and their 19 chapters - are essentially in a holding pattern for until things get back to some semblance of normalcy. However, that doesn't mean the group was sitting on their collective hands; as mentioned before, Summers and the other members of the organization know that "the Camino provides," but this time, the pilgrims are providing for the Camino.

"The Camino is sleeping," she acknowledges, a bit mournfully. "However, we are doing what we can to keep it alive by helping those who are desperately trying to keep their business going in some of these very small places."

Thus, a fundraiser was born.

"The intent of Keep the Camino Alive is to enable Canadians and our members to donate through the Canadian Company of Pilgrims," explains Summers. "There has already been over \$35,000 raised, and donations sent to many albergues. That money is being used to get plexiglass installed, and new beds that conform with Covid-19 restrictions. The fundraiser will continue until the end of 2022, as we don't want to see that infrastructure destroyed."

It is important that this Camino infrastructure is in top order, because soon, there could be even more pilgrims making use of it.

"There is very much a feeling of hope in terms of the Camino coming alive again," says Summers. "They are expecting, throughout the year, about 500,000 people will walk Caminos."

"All the hostels, all the different associations, everybody is in fever pitch," adds Brierley. "There is this massive, pent-up demand, people are aching to get onto the Camino. I think we are going to see a surge of interest for two reasons. One is the pent-up demand. But two - and probably more importantly - the pandemic has forced people to reflect on their lives. They have lost jobs, or lost loved ones, and are on a bit of a wake-up call. They are beginning to ask those deep, existential questions, like what is this life all about?"

"Those of us who have walked the Camino, in order for the experience to be of any relevance to the world we live in, we have to bring the Camino home with us," says Brierley. "Part of the efficacy of the Camino is bringing back what we have experienced and learned and sharing it with others who might need some sort of spiritual awakening."



Highlights

The Camino de Santiago is a vast adventure full of natural beauty and medieval architecture spanning two stunning mountain ranges in north-central Spain. This pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and the purported tomb of the apostle Saint James the Greater in northwestern Spain began in the 9th century. Commonly known as a Christian road for more than a thousand years, the Camino was, in fact, built over Celtic and Roman roads that were twice as old. The modern visitor can journey in more comfort than in medieval times but savor the same natural and cultural highlights.

Pyrenees

Among the most breathtaking views along the Camino is the pinnacle at the beginning, a few miles after pilgrims depart from the French town of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port to cross the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain. The highest point, just before reaching the Spanish town of Roncesvalles, is at the Col de Lepoeder, one mile (1,450 meters) above sea level. An ancient native beech forest anchors one's feet below, and at eye level is the infinite layered mountain vista of the Pyrenees.

Burguete

Burguete is a magical mountain setting, especially when Roncesvalles is overflowing with pilgrims. Set between enchanted forests, this is where Hemingway stayed to go trout fishing in the Pyrenees, eternally captured in *The Sun Also Rises*. A hike from here to the village of Espinal, 2.2 miles (3.6 km) to the west offers a taste of the medieval pilgrimage route and takes trekkers through beautiful wildflower-covered rolling hills into a native pine and oak forest.

Pamploma

Famous for the running of the bulls and Hemingway, the real appeal of Pamplona is not when the city swells with the bull-running masses to celebrate their city's patron saint, San Fermín, but during the everyday of this pedestrian-friendly city. Local life is centered on the colorful main square, the Plaza del Castillo, and the surrounding cobbled streets. Here cafés cater to the best of those small plates known as pintxos in Basque and pinchos in Spanish. Take a seat, order, and savor the slow lane.

Eunate

No one knows who built this little 12th-century octagonal church, which is one of the highlights of the Camino. Its arched cloister surrounds the chapel like the rings of Saturn and its beauty is further accentuated by the solitary hill on which it stands, surrounded by rolling green meadows dotted with grazing sheep and swaying wildflowers. The church's engravings show enigmatic characters that speak of mixed esoteric traditions and the diversity of the medieval masons who built it.

Estella Irache

The first pilgrim's guide, the 12th-century *Codex Calixtinus*, hailed Estella as one of the Camino's most beautiful towns serving some of the best food and wine. It retains its medieval

beauty, set on the banks of the Ega River, and its cafés serve excellent garden-to-table cuisine and local wine. Two miles (3 km) away, through vineyards and oak and pine forest, Bodegas Irache winery maintains the medieval tradition at Irache's 10th-century monastery by keeping the pilgrim's fountain flowing with both water and wine.

Torres del Rio Dome

Like Eunate, Torres del Rio's 12th-century Holy Sepulcher church is octagonal and beautifully harmonious. Inspired by the architecture from Islamic Spain and borrowing the cross ribbing of Cordoba's mosque dome in the south, it is worth the one euro the chapel caretaker asks from visitors. Enjoy the space's acoustics and look up to take in the overall architectural magnificence. Note the carved capitals and their menagerie of fantastical creatures.

Najera Vineyards

Across the entire Camino, pilgrims pass through diverse and excellent wine country, but this 6.5-mile (10.4 km) stretch in Rioja wine country is especially pleasing for the walker, not just the wine lover. The landscape is of red earth, green vines, and dark blue undulating hills against clear skies. Both the medieval hamlet of Ventosa and town of Nájera have local cafés where visitors can order a glass of wine from the very land they just traversed.

Oak Forest

Oak trees were sacred from prehistory into the Middle Ages and many churches and chapels across Iberia are surrounded by oak, but few are set in such a vast lyrical oak forest as the one in San Juan de Ortega's valley. The church of the celebrated and sainted 12th-century engineer, San Juan de Ortega, possesses a harmony that is a physical delight to experience. Nearby Atapuerca, Europe's oldest site for human remains (around 1.2 million years old) makes this the Camino's most ancient terrain.

Burgos

Burgos is justifiably famous for its immense 13th-century Gothic cathedral, one of the largest in Spain, and its beautifully preserved, walled medieval town where El Cid was a native son. Across the Arlanzón river is the new world-class human evolution museum showcasing Europe's earliest human remains. But for the ultimate experience of Burgos, head to the colorful main square, the Plaza Mayor, to join the locals in the evening ritual of enjoying tapas and a glass of wine with friends.

Fromista Church

Considered one of the earliest and purest forms of French Romanesque architecture in Spain, with its animated, folkloric sculptures capturing the medieval world of the 11th century, Frómista's church of San Martín embodies the Romanesque's ideals of harmonious physical and acoustic proportions. The church is set in the central square of a welcoming and small Castilian town with good food and wine, which adds to the magic of coming here.

Sahagún

Sahagún was a prosperous and diverse place in the Middle Ages, and its buildings reflect the influence of Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Europeans from many origins living side by side. The town retains its traditional Saturday market when the central square fills with riotous colors from foods, crafts, and household goods. All around are four churches worth visiting—San Tirso, San Lorenzo, La Peregrina, and Virgen del Puente—all built in the signature red brickwork style carried north by Muslim craftsmen.

Leon

A Roman garrison town in the 1st century, León has a 13th-century Gothic cathedral that steals the limelight. Built over old Roman baths, this cathedral is considered one of Spain's most French Gothic churches and possesses an unusual lightness and lyricism. But the treat is in stepping inside to stunning stained glass windows of saturated colors, especially the electric cobalt blue. This is so pronounced that the building appears as if it is made entirely of light and color, not stone. The old town surrounding the cathedral is a food and wine lovers' delight with medieval pedestrian paths leading to numerous taverns serving the best of hearty Leonese cuisine.

O Cebreiro

The third highest point on the entire Camino, O Cebreiro treats pilgrims to one of the route's most beautiful vistas and layered sunsets. It is the gateway to Galicia, the final region of the Camino; from here, pilgrims have 92 miles (148 km) left, passing through mountains, valleys, and rolling hills to the final goal at Santiago de Compostela. The village's sweet round granite homes with thatched roofs preserve its medieval appearance and its earlier Celtic roots. The intimate 9th-century church is the site of a famous miracle.

Biduedo to Samos

A few kilometers after O Cebreiro, this 9-mile (14.5-km) section of the trail from Biduedo to Samos descends into misty green valleys, gently rolling hills, and chestnut and pine forests with occasional hamlets untouched by time. It is one of the Camino's most enchanting stretches. The Benedictine monastery at Samos, founded in the 6th century but rebuilt in the 16th century, appears in its bucolic setting with the final descent into the village.

Santiago de Compostela

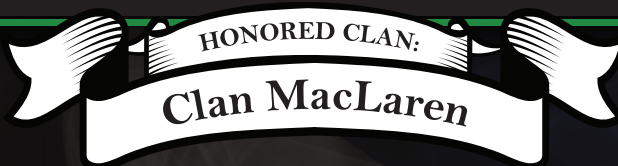
Medieval Santiago de Compostela's gray stone buildings turn mossy green when it rains, while its cathedral—the pilgrim's ultimate goal—holds the radiant center. All around, stone-arcaded cobbled streets, with a lone musician playing a medieval tune, transport visitors to another time, while the farm-to-table food scene and the daily market, Mercado de Abastos, brings you right back to the present. The cathedral's beauty is not its ornate façade, but just inside, at its original 12th-century engraved gateway that leads in to an airy and harmonious space where Saint James reigns. Excavations under the cathedral confirm the presence of ancient tombs from Celtic and Roman times.

Source: *Fodors.com* / Reprinted with kind permission



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Ramón Vaquero

www.ramonvaquero.com

I was born in Vigo, an industrial city in the south of Galicia that is the largest in the region. My parents are Galician. I still reside in my hometown, where I have had my photography studio for years. My work, however, allows me to travel to other cities and countries.

My father was a great fan of photography and even worked as a camera repairman. So, the vocation was a big part of our homelife. When I was 10 years old my parents gave me my first camera, and there was no turning back - the act of creating images has captivated me since that time.

Although I have been a professional photographer for many years,

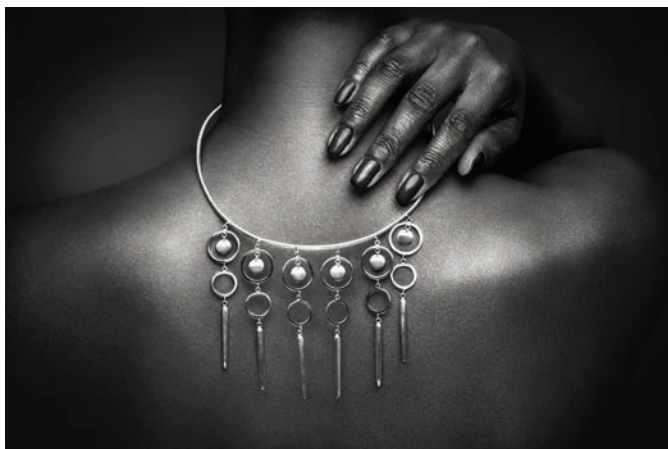
I still feel like that child with my first camera. I remain fascinated with the process of creating images - the planning, the realization in the studio or outdoors, and the post-production work. I like to think that my work has improved and continues to evolve, both technically and in terms of imprinting my personality upon the images.

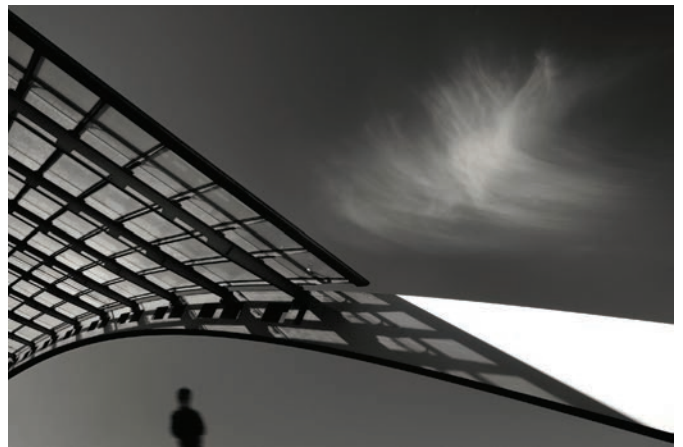
There is no perfect formula for taking a great photograph - good technique is not enough. It is much more complex and perhaps beyond words. Think about it - photography is something so unreal that it stops time. And while some factors can be explained, a really great picture has an enigmatic element that differen-

tiates it from a standard image.

Galicia is a wonderful spot to take photographs because of the abundance of good light across the region. In addition, the variety of landscapes and architecture means that you can travel from one community to another, and it feels like you are in a different country altogether. That speaks to the richness and diversity of our cultural identity.

Working on something you love is one of life's greatest satisfactions. Equally, the creative process itself is very satisfying. I love knowing that my work touches people in some way. Meeting amazing and interesting people is also a hugely rewarding part of the profession.





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“For me, fashion represents much more than my profession - it is my lifestyle; how I conceive the world and how I decide to live in it...”

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My roots are Spanish, specifically from Galicia. I currently live in the city of A Coruña, in the northwest of Spain. After 20 years living abroad, I returned 7 years ago. This city offers me tranquility and daily contact with nature.

I have been interested in fashion since I was a child. As a teenager, I travelled to many design fairs across Europe with my mother, who is an interior designer. Those experiences fired up a passion in me, and a sense of belonging - a place that spoke a language with which I identified and felt comfortable.

My work evolves daily. I always say that a collection is the evolution of the previous one. There is no drastic break between collections, but they grow with me, they accompany me in my development as a person, and that is reflected in my evolution as a designer. I do not conceive a separation between my work and my essence as a person and a woman.

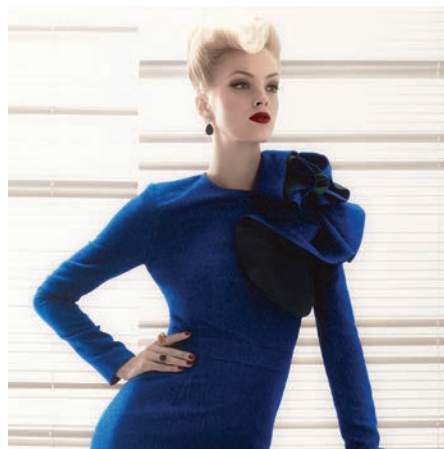
The challenges of the vocation are related to the goals you set for yourself - they speak to your ambitions and level of demand. The higher the goal, the greater the challenges you may encounter, and therein lies great learning. The greatest reward is the enjoyment of creating, experimenting, and communicating.



Everything can be an inspiration - the important thing is to have an open mind and vision to be receptive to everything that we experience in our daily lives. Most of my inspiration comes from my own personal and cultural interests. However, there is another important part of the process; my subconscious, my inner personal work, and everything that arises from a more spiritual element. Then comes the perspiration, the actual work itself.

Change is constant in fashion, and even more so today, where two apparently opposite currents coexist; one is the return to a more artisan, manual, and high-quality modality of work - which preserves essential trades in this sector that were almost forgotten - and the other is the emergence of the virtual fashion model, which is conceptual and intended for the virtual world only. I believe that both could nurture each other.

Currently I am focused on the illustration of my fashion creations, where I am better able to connect with my creative essence, express myself in a more visual way, and discover a part of myself that I have not explored. Experimenting and exploring new artistic paths inspires me both personally and professionally.



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THE CELTIC CHEF
with Gary Maclean

Pheasant

Pheasant is an iconic and beautiful bird that was brought to the U.K. as early as the 11th century by the Normans. Pheasants were introduced in North America in the 18th century and have become well established throughout much of the Rocky Mountain states, the Midwest, the Plains states, as well as in Canada. It is also found on menus all over Scotland. I spent a number of years working for the largest feathered game producer in Scotland. They have been instrumental in obtaining these birds from estates all over Scotland and northern England.

This recipe was inspired by a dish called Chasseur, or Hunter's Chicken. It is a one-pot wonder and the pheasant cooks without drying out. If you cannot find a pheasant, then this recipe works well with most game birds and with good quality chicken.

Ingredients

1 pheasant (oven ready)
25 g / 1 oz unsalted butter
200 g / 7 oz button mushrooms (trimmed and wiped)
200 ml / 7 fl oz beef stock
Small bunch tarragon leaves
100 g / 3½ oz cherry tomatoes
100 g / 3½ oz baby onions
100 g / 3½ oz streaky bacon
150 ml / 5 fl oz white wine
1 x 400 g can / 14 oz chopped tomatoes
50 g / 2 oz plain flour
½ oz lemon juice
25 g / 1 oz good oil
Salt and pepper

Instructions

Pre-heat the oven to 160°C/325°F. Cut the pheasant into 4 pieces (splitting legs into thigh and drumstick and cutting the breast in 2). Heat a sauté pan with the oil, then add butter. Once foaming, add the seasoned pheasant pieces. Sauté over a reasonably high heat, turning and allowing the pieces to become golden in colour. Add the baby onions and the bacon, allowing to colour. Remove the pheasant from the pan and place to one side, then pour off any excess fat. Place the pan back on heat, add the mushrooms and cook until you have achieved some colour. Next, dust in the flour, making sure to stir it in until there are no lumps. Then add the white wine and bring to boil. Reduce by ¾. Add the stock and reduce by ½. Next, add the tinned tomato, the cherry tomatoes (halves) and the tarragon. Pop the lid back on and place into the oven for an hour. If you don't have a pan that works for the oven you can pour the mix into a large casserole dish and cover with foil. Remove from the oven once the timer goes, then season with salt and pepper. Finish the sauce with a squeeze of lemon juice to enrich the flavour.

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New Kids on the Block

with *Andrew Ferguson*



The Scotch whisky industry has seen something of a baby boom over the last ten years, with no fewer than 30 new distilleries opening - a dramatic growth spurt for an industry which only saw 6 new distilleries open in the 20 years prior. While most of these new entrants are still at least a year or two away from being able to legally bottle whisky (the spirit must mature at least 3 years in oak casks), a few of them have already started to hit the market. Here are some of the new kids on the block, with actual whisky hitting the street.

When the Glasgow Distillery opened in 2015 it became the first distillery to operate in the city in over 100 years. Founded by Liam Hughes and Ian McDougall, the distillery was awarded "Scottish Whisky Distillery of the Year 2020" in the Scottish Whisky Awards. The distillery primarily produces peated and unpeated double-distilled single malts, but also dedicates 1 month of production to triple-distilled spirit. The whisky has been named 1770, in honour of Glasgow's first distillery, Dundashill, which opened that year. The distillery has 3 whiskies in its core range: Original, Peated and Triple Distilled. The distillery is only offering virtual tours at present.

Is there anything more romantic than a Scottish island distillery? The founders of the Isle of Raasay Distillery, Alastair Day and Bill Dobbie, certainly agreed with that sentiment, having originally planned to open in the Borders. The distillery was built next to

the Victorian Borodale House, which serves as a hotel, and has spectacular views looking towards the Isle of Skye. The facility produces a 50/50 mix of peated and unpeated single malts, with some of the barley, including some rare strains, grown on the island. Raasay's single malt whisky has been released in small batches from spirits distilled, matured, and bottled on the island.

Lindores Abbey Distillery was founded on the site of a ruined abbey of the same name.

It was the site of the first recorded manufacture of whisky anywhere in the world. In 1491, King James IV of Scotland permitted "Friar John Cor of Lindores Abbey being granted 'eight bolls of malt wherewith to make aqua vitae'." Work on the distillery and visitor center, founded by Drew & Helen Mackenzie-Smith, began in 2013, but couldn't be completed until 2017 due to discoveries made during excavation of the site. The legendary late Dr. Jim Swan was a consultant for the distillery, which began producing single malt spirit in December of 2017. Since 2000, the distillery has been exclusively producing with locally grown Lindores barley. It also produces an Aqua Vitae inspired by whisky's origins at Lindores Abbey, as well as single malt bottled at 46 per cent.

Lochlea Distillery, unlike all other new

distilleries, decided to fly under the industry and consumer radars, that is until they had 3-year-old whisky in late 2021. Lochlea was founded in 2018, just south of Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, by beef farmer Neil McGeoch. The farm dates from the 1700s and was the home of a young Robert Burns during his formative years, 1777-1784. The distillery only uses estate-grown barley and produces a more full-bodied spirit than traditional Lowland distillers. It is filled into predominantly fresh bourbon and sherry casks, but also a dozen other types of casks. The distillery's inaugural release, a limited edition, was released in the Fall of 2021.

Kingsbarns Distillery was founded in 2014 by the Wemyss family, who have been operating as an independent bottler, Wemyss Malts, since 2005. Plans were first hatched to open the distillery on an 18th century farmstead near St. Andrews in 2008. The distillery began production in 2014, with the first casks being filled in 2015, primarily ex-Bourbon, but also STR (shaved, toasted and re-charred ex-wine barriques) and sherry casks. The first whisky was released in 2019, with a few other limited editions following it. The first core release, Balcomie, is a 5-year-old matured in ex-bourbon and oloroso sherry casks. The distillery is open to the public and is the only one that I am aware of with its own doocot (Scottish for dovecot).

www.kensingtonwinemarket.com



Again, Rachel

By Marian Keyes
Penguin Random House
576 pp / \$24

The eagerly anticipated, long-awaited follow-up to Rachel's Holiday (1998) doesn't disappoint. After a stint in rehab, Rachel Walsh settles into a middle-class life - marriage, children, career, hobbies, etc. When a long-lost love reappears, she begins to question her choices and, as the past permeates her present, is at a loss for what to think, feel, and do. Bestselling Irish scribe Marian Keyes is in fine form here, describing an avalanche of retrospection that invokes regret, remorse, and what-could-have-been. Although trying at times with detail, the robust narrative arc breathes in the spaces that exist in-between the novel's characters - the sign of an experienced author that knows what to leave out. While targeted to women, readers of all sorts will enjoy Rachel's mid-life ride.

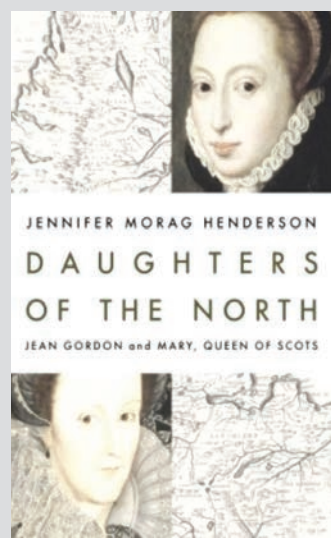
~ SPC

Daughters of the North

By Jennifer Morag Henderson
Sandstone Press
480 pp / £24.99

Thoroughly researched and brimming with fact, Daughters of the North examines the life of Jean Gordon, first wife of the Earl of Bothwell, who was later married to Mary, Queen of Scots. Author and playwright Jennifer Morag Henderson has done well to deep dive into the life of a little-known, though remarkable and resourceful woman whose impact and influence on history may otherwise be overlooked. Reading like a literary House of Cards - and packed with the drama of 16th century power, wealth, romance, and more - Daughters of the North will appeal to anyone with a passion for partisan intrigue. Ahead of her time, Gordon was a forerunner to the equality movement and a poignant example that women can compete in the political arena.

~ SPC



Bread and Butter

By Ciara McLaughlin
O'Brien Press
208 pp / \$29.99

Ok, I will admit it; I love cookbooks. From the front cover to the closing credits, cookbooks are more than a mere collection of culinary commands - they are a delectable discovery of culture. Subtitled Cakes and Bakes From Granny's Stove, and chock-full of hearty, homespun recipes (and stunning photographs), Bread and Butter harkens back to a simpler, and perhaps tastier time. Kudos to award-winning Irish designer, cake artist, and professional baker Ciara McLaughlin for piecing together a practical, albeit mouth-watering melange of classic and contemporary cuisine that will not only keep family traditions alive and well but will help to create new and lasting memories around the home front. My own copy will most surely be well-worn and dog-eared in a matter of months.

~ SPC

The Tootle Hooter and Bluebell's Stolen Smile

By Jan Hannah
Stour Valley Publishing
32 pp / £7.99

It seems like forever-and-a-day since I read a goodnight story to my children, who are now 25 and 13 years-of-age, respectively. For parents, those are the magical moments where we watch our kids' imaginations come alive with endless possibilities. Scottish author and illustrator Jan Hannah taps into those treasured times with this quaint and quirky account of one kitten's valiant efforts to reclaim her smile with the help of forest creatures and their wacky and wonderful Tootle Hooter (bagpipes.) Fun and fanciful, this terrific little tale of life in the Scottish Highlands is brilliantly brought to life with a series of colourful and comical drawings. And while, admittedly, I do miss those magical moments, I am not ready to be a grandfather just quite yet.

~ SPC





Ronan Furlong

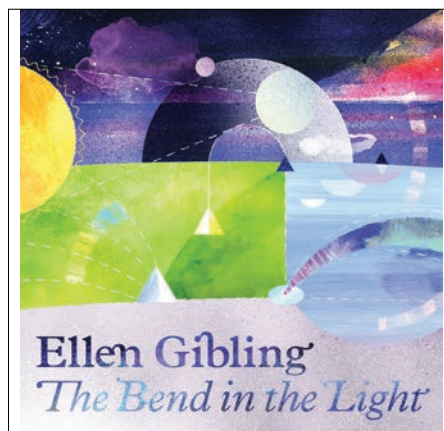
Ataraxia

While it may be true that you can't teach an old dog new tricks, some find a fresh leash on life. Such is the case with *Ataraxia*, the latest full-length effort from seasoned Irish singer/songwriter Ronan Furlong. A darling of indie music critics for over three decades, Furlong's mastery on the guitar is matched by his masterful melodies, reminding listeners that there is art in artisanry. The proof is in the proverbial pudding, as the songsmith has crafted 11 new timeless and thought-provoking tunes with lyrical leanings towards history and philosophy. Fans of John Prine and Christy Moore will be touched by the tough and tender, street-smart sonic style that sounds as sure through air pods as upon a small stage in an old pub. ~ SPC

Syr

Sentinel

Hailing from Columbia, South Carolina (Go Gamecocks!), veteran Celt-rockers Syr bring past to present with their latest album, *Sentinel*. Firmly rooted in old-school trad, the sonic sextet weaves and winds their way through 13 terrific tracks with a twinge of southern twang - both a testament and a tribute to the band's terroir. And while they aren't afraid to branch out with moments of modern country, pop, and even reggae, make no mistake; *Tir N'aill*, *Baobhan Sith*, *Òran Na Gaillinn*, and several other songs showcase the group's commitment to preserving the sounds of yore. The result is a diverse listening experience that bridges the gap between classic and contemporary Celtic music, and one that will excite both older fans and those new to the genre. ~ SPC



Ellen Gibling

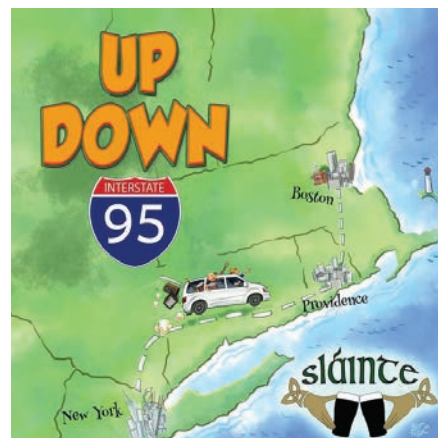
The Bend in the Light

The harp might be the most underrated and least understood instrument in the Celtic music arsenal. Thankfully, there is still strong support for those that write, record, and release albums featuring the famed, multi-stringed mechanism. As such, *The Bend in the Light* - the recently released recording from Nova Scotia's Ellen Gibling - is an illumination of sorts. Awash in a musical melange of hops, jigs, reels, airs, and even polkas, the Halifax native leaves no sonic stone unturned in her efforts to bring the instrument up-to-speed with moving and memorable melodies that are certain to stroke listeners' souls. By turns bold and beautiful, the album's 12 tracks are a nod to the vital role that the instrument still plays in the Celtic musical canon. ~ SPC

Sláinte

Up Down 95

Any band whose bio begins with the words "formed in a dorm room at Boston College" is kind of a must-listen, right? Sure enough, Massachusetts 11-piece Celt-Punk-Rock collective Sláinte comes exactly as advertised. And although there will be inevitable comparisons to fellow Beantown brawlers The Dropkick Murphys, the old-school Irish pub vibe gets high marks on the lo-fi *Up Down 95*. A well-balanced blend of original songs (*Ember*, *Irish Whiskey*, *Boston Girl Who Fled to New York*) and cover tunes (*Flogging Molly's Drunken Lullabies*, the Pogues' *Streams of Whiskey*, and a stirring take on Bruce Springsteen's classic *Atlantic City*), the ten-song release holds its own in a genre that can get quite crowded, especially around St. Patrick's Day. For best results, play at full volume! ~ SPC





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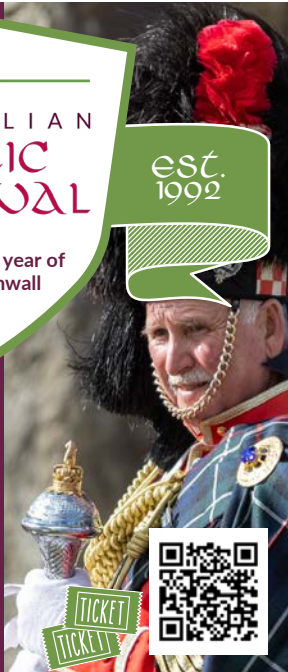
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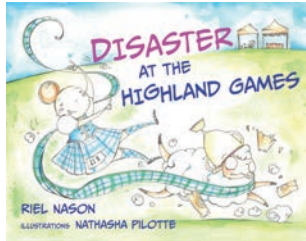
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Alexa McDonough; 1944-2022

Political Canadian trailblazer Alexa McDonough died on January 15, having lived with Alzheimer's disease for a number of years. She was 77.

In 1980, McDonough made history when she became the first woman to lead a major political party in Nova Scotia: The New Democratic Party (NDP). Fifteen years later, she became the second woman to lead the NDP federally.

McDonough was born Alexa Ann Shaw in Ottawa, Ontario. She was politically minded from a young age. As a teenager, she took an interest in Halifax's Black community of Africville. Later, employed as a social worker, her first job involved helping with the relocation of residents from Africville. She later became publicly critical of how it was handled: "There was a community support and way of life in Africville that was devastated in the relocation," McDonough said at the time.

She initially took the plunge into Nova Scotia politics through her work with the Liberal Party in 1970. She eventually became disillusioned with both the party and its leader, Gerald Regan, and moved on to the NDP. There, she remained for the entirety of her political career - one that was marked by both struggles and breakthroughs. She first won her seat in the House of Commons in

1997, and the NDP more than doubled its total seat count in that year's Federal election.

McDonough announced her full departure from politics in June 2008. The following year, she served as interim president of Mount Saint Vincent University and was awarded the Order of Canada. Mount Saint Vincent is now home to the Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice. On Twitter, Sociology professor Ardath Whynacht reflected on the impact that McDonough had on the university: "She made it clear that there would be no more admin meetings at golf clubs and fancy restaurants," wrote Whynacht. "She said, 'if you want to have a meeting, do it in your office like everyone else.'"

I personally met McDonough once, in 2017, when I was covering a book launch for the Halifax weekly newspaper *The Coast*. As it happened, the launch took place at Mount Saint Vincent. McDonough was one of eight women profiled in Madelyn Holmes' *Working for the Common Good: Canadian Women Politicians*. Following the event, I briefly interviewed her, and I was struck by her memories of disdain from not only men, but fellow women. Although she said women were mostly supportive, there were those who disapproved of her involvement in poli-

tics when - in their opinion - she should have been solely focused on raising her young children.

In truth, being a politician at the same time as being a mother was hardly an issue. As stated in McDonough's obituary:

"Her children shared her proudly - and mostly willingly - with the larger world because they also knew their mother would be there for them whenever they needed her."

McDonough is survived by her sons, Justin and Travis, as well as by several grandchildren.

Criticism and barriers never stopped her, however. It wasn't until later, after I spoke with my mother about the interview, that I realized what a big deal McDonough was. The reasons behind her personal popularity feel just as important as her political popularity. As a politician, she is remembered as someone who used her position to help those in need, including the families of the victims of Nova Scotia's Westray mining disaster. She advocated for Donald Marshall Junior, a Mi'kmaq man who was wrongly convicted of murder. She also spoke out against Islamophobia after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

As a person, McDonough is remembered as funny, kind, and self-deprecating. In her official obituary, one line stands out: "Alexa was notoriously late for events and appointments because it seems she never met anyone whose story she didn't need to hear, whose problems she didn't want to help solve." How many politicians - and people in general - can truthfully say they believe everyone's story is worthwhile?

And how many politicians of her calibre would agree to be interviewed by a 20-something reporter from a small community paper, when she had only expected to attend a quiet book launch?

Policy is crucial, yes. But public kindness doesn't always translate to private kindness. My experience - and the experiences of many others - suggests that, for McDonough, it did. She is an inspiration. She was also a person: one who left her mark on the hearts of many.

-Rebecca Dingwell

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