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Fáilte!

Gaelic in Schools

I recently visited the picturesque farming/fishing village of Mabou in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, to attend the Gaels' Summit. The event was organized as an opportunity for Gaels to brainstorm the future of their Gaelic language and culture. Supporters met to identify short and long-term goals, timelines, and leadership. More than a revivalist session, the prevailing idea was to make Gaelic an economic influence by perpetuating its growth, longevity, and permanence.

The Summit was held on the heels of two important announcements by Colaisde na Gàidhlig/The Gaelic College of St. Ann's, Cape Breton, that may have a major impact on Gaelic learning; first, the acquisition of the Atlantic Gaelic Academy - North America's largest school for online Gaelic learning - and second, the purchase of the former St. Joseph's Convent and boarding school in Mabou.

Another event of significance that day was the opening of the Red Shoe. The Red Shoe is an eatery, pub, and place of Cape Breton music founded by the famed Rankin Family of Mabou where everyday Gaelic can often be heard. The name is fitting, taken from a fiddle tune composed by the late Dan R. MacDonald, a native of nearby Port Hood.

MacDonald was both a fluent speaker of Gaelic and a prolific composer, with more than 2,000 tunes to his credit. It is said that he kept a pencil and pad by his bedside to compose new melodies that were dancing in his dreams. "I would wake up, write down the gist of it, and finish the tune in the morning."

He once told me, while visiting a farm at Arisaig, Nova Scotia, "I was out for a walk and accidently stepped in a big cow patty. I wiped off my foot, went back to the house, and wrote The Cow Sh-t Hornpipe."

Mabou was settled by Gaels from Scotland's stunning West Highlands. They brought with them their culture; Gaelic, music, storytelling, and dance. Over time, the Gaelic language experienced decline in the new world. It only survived in Mabou thanks to the dedicated efforts of select individuals determined to keep it alive.

In the early 1970s, the late Allan J. MacEachen, former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, provided funding to teach Gaelic in a few Cape Breton schools. This effort, albeit small, became a cornerstone for the survival of Gaelic as a spoken language. Many of the children enrolled in the program at that time are seeing their own children and grandchildren play active roles in its preservation today.

The late Maureen (Rankin) MacKenzie of Mabou went to Scotland in the 1970s to learn Gaelic. Her son, Kenneth MacKenzie of Mabou - who learned Gaelic in the Cape Breton school system - was one of the key organizers of the Gaels' Summit. Kenneth and his wife Jenny have 2-year-old twins - Iris and Duncan - who are now learning their first Gaelic words. As their grandfather, Ronald Mackenzie, told me "you ask them a question in English and they will answer you in Gaelic and vice versa."

The heart of a culture is its language, and the strength of that heart is its people. Speaking Gaelic at an early age gives it a chance to become a language of everyday communication – this was one of the many ideas discussed at the Summit. As a journey of a thousand miles begins with one small step, let that small step be the teaching of more Gaelic in our schools.

Enjoy and may God Bless!
Angus M. Macquarrie, Publisher

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Celts For Cancer

In the fourth installment of a six-part series to raise funding and awareness for cancer research, prevention, treatment and services, Celtic Life International goes nuts for Cahonas Scotland

Balls...bollocks...bangers...berries...beans... Ritchie Marshall doesn't care what you call your private parts, only that you keep touching them.

The CEO and founder of Cahonas Scotland, who currently minds his time between the communities of Cardross, Argyll and Bute, has first-hand experience with testicular cancer.

"Like most people, the disease affected me through the experiences of friends and family. However, my first link with testicular cancer was through some research that I conducted for a presentation at college. I was simply shocked at both the statistics and the lack of information readily available within Scotland."

After college, Marshall took a marketing position in the charity sector.

"Through my experience working with other charities it was proposed that perhaps I, along with others affected by testicular cancer, should set up a charity to try and make positive change. So, with that, Cahonas Scotland was born."

As CEO, Marshall oversees the not-for-profit organization's ongoing activities.

"These can vary from day to day; from attending events, work-places and schools delivering awareness and education sessions, to working with our volunteers, fundraisers, and corporate supporters who enable us to do what we do."

The mandate of the charity, he explains, is simple.

"Cahonas Scotland is committed to creating a Scotland where all cases of testicular cancer are diagnosed at the earliest stage possible, so that treatment is more effective and survival rates higher. We are on a mission to get testicular health on the agenda from an early age - we want it to be talked about openly and candidly, and for self-checking to become part of every male's monthly routine. Through our education and information on the signs and symptoms of testicular cancer, we aim to empower males in Scotland to be proactive about their own testicular health."

> *"While the group's core audience is male, reaching out to women is key as well.*

"Women often play a huge role in getting the men in their lives to visit their doctor. Much of our work is targeted towards people between the ages of 15 and 35, as this is the most common type of cancer for males in that demographic. Through school education and awareness sessions and workshops, we strive to provide students with the knowledge and information of testicular cancer through simple and straightforward resources, highlighting the importance of self-checking from an early age and creating a positive and life-long habit."

The challenges, notes Marshall, are many.

"As with any charity, ensuring that we have sufficient funds to deliver our work, awareness and education programs is always a struggle. The bigger challenge we face, however, concerns the stigma that is still attached to testicular cancer, and "balls" in general. Amazingly, there is still a taboo regarding testicles; it is one of the few types of cancer that seems to be something you can't talk about. It was the same with breast cancer many years ago, though that is completely socially acceptable to discuss today. We need to do the same with testicles."

The rewards of the work, however, outweigh those issues.

"Knowing that we can, and have, saved lives is reward beyond measure. By educating men and empowering them with the knowledge and confidence to act upon any changes with their bodies, we will continue to make a difference."

Testicular cancer is one of the most treatable and curable cancers; if detected early, more than 98 per cent of men that are diagnosed will be cured.

"That is why we recommend monthly self-checks. Be aware of what is normal for you and look for changes. If you notice any signs and symptoms - anything different or not quite right - don't panic, but get it checked as soon as possible."

People outside of the organization are welcome to get involved.

"As a small charity much of our work relies on the kind contributions from individuals; from making a small donation to volunteering with the charity and aiding us in delivering our life-saving message, helping at events, running a marathon, sharing our message on social media, etc."

Marshall expects the coming months will be...nuts.

"Along with some other top testicular cancer charities in England, we launched - and became part of - the Testicular Cancer Network. We are also currently working on a new educational program/presentation that will be available for every school in Scotland to ensure that all young men are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to act upon any changes in their body."

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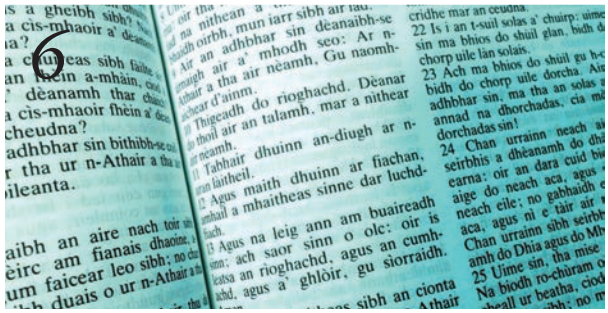
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one

Gaelic Nova Scotia

As of the end of May - Gaelic Nova Scotia Month - residents in the Atlantic Canadian province are able to sport Gaelic licence plates on their cars. This is one of the provincial government's efforts to expand the use of the Gaelic language. It is an appropriate step, given that an estimated 2,000 people currently speak Gaelic in Nova Scotia and roughly 230,000 people are descendants of Gaelic settlers. The aforementioned plate includes Nova Scotia's Gaelic name, Alba Nuadh, and proceeds from purchase go to Gaelic language and other cultural initiatives.

two

Naked Cornish cleaners

If you have a busy life, it may not be uncommon to hire a house cleaner to help with tasks around the home. But would you be interested if that cleaner stripped down before getting to work? Online advertisements offering naked cleaning services have been popping up from all over England, including a Cornish couple who offer their services individually or as a pair. Cleaning, ironing, vacuuming and gardening: if you can name it, there are both men and women willing to do the chores while either naked or partially clothed.

three

Goulden statue

Emmeline Pankhurst, a leader of the British suffragette movement, has roots on the Isle of Man. Pankhurst's mother - Sophia Goulden - was born in Laxey in 1833 and is credited as having an influence on her daughter's political beliefs. Tynwald (the parliament of the Isle of Man) is considering the possibility of honouring Goulden with a memorial statue on the island, prompted by a petition which first gained traction in 2016. If the memorial goes ahead, it will be the second statue depicting a woman on the Isle of Man - the first being Queen Victoria.

four

Stolen heart

In April, the heart of French Queen Anne of Brittany was snatched from Dobrée Museum in Nantes, only to be recovered the following week. According to the BBC, Duchess Anne was the only woman crowned queen consort of France twice. She married Charles VIII in 1491, and then his cousin Louis XII after Charles died in an accident in 1498. The late Duchess Anne's heart is held in a solid gold casket: a heart-shaped box with an inscription in old French. Some feared the thieves would have it melted down, but thankfully, the police recovered the 16th century relic intact.

five

Galician olives

Most Spanish olive oil production takes place in Andalusia. However, other regions within Spain have taken to producing olive oil with their own native olive varieties in the last few years. Galicia is one such example, being home to two indigenous varieties of olive called Brava and Mansa. University of Cordoba and University of Vigo recently teamed up for a scientific study for which these varieties have been cataloged and the olive oil produced has been characterized. Despite the fact that olive tree farming is not traditional in Galicia, the results indicate the oil is of good quality.

six

Gaelic dictionary

Several Sottish universities and the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture are collaborating to bring a comprehensive Gaelic dictionary to fruition. This long-term project could take 30 years to produce and is predicted to contain roughly 100,000 entries. In April, the Scottish government put forth £2.5 million for the next phase of the dictionary. The new dictionary not only covers language, but Gaelic culture and heritage as well. The Dictionary of the Scottish Gaelic Language (Faclair na Gàidhlig) will initially be published in electronic format.

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

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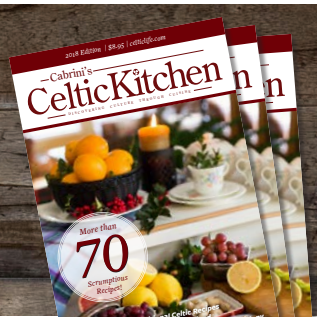
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Hayley Motton

Hayley Motton put her own life on hold to save someone else's - the life of someone she'd never even met. Motton, who lives in Roche, Cornwall, got the idea when she heard a story on a local radio station about someone who had donated a kidney to a stranger. At the time, Motton hadn't realized it was something that could be done. So she did some research. Given that her employer offered paid sick leave, she decided it was something she could take on. "If you had two things in your hand and someone asked for one of them to save their life, you would just hand it over," Motton told Cornwall Live. At the time of the interview, she was aiming to raise awareness for World Kidney Day. "It's kind of the same thing, obviously with an operation involved, but I had two of something that I only needed one of and the other one could save someone." It took about 18 months of tests before Motton was given the go-ahead to have the operation. The details are kept confidential - she doesn't know anything about the person who received the organ, other than they were someone in need.



Fair Plé

"You know, we've been talking about it amongst ourselves, about our experience of often being the only woman on stage with 15-20 men," Pauline Scanlon, a contemporary and traditional Irish singer. "It resonated with all of us. And, in line with the worldwide women's movements of last year and this year, it just seems that we now have an opportunity to address it alongside sister movements like the PRS Keychange and Waking the Feminists." Keychange challenges music festivals around the world to reach gender parity by 2022. Waking The Feminists has a similar goal, focused on Irish Theatre. Now, Scanlon, Karan Casey and several other women are at the helm of the Fair Plé initiative. The movement calls for gender balance in Irish trad and folk music festivals, among other things. Plé translates to "discussion," which is exactly what these women are hoping to spark. From the language used to describe women who perform to broader societal issues, the team agrees the industry is in need of a shift. One step towards change was Fair Plé's May event full of talks and panels, touching on topics such as technical music jobs and mental health.



Peel Charity Shop

A shop on the western region of the Isle Of Man recently donated almost £45,000, dividing the money between 19 different Manx charities. Peel Charity Shop is run by 40 people who work on a volunteer basis, selling clothing, jewellery, as well as other odds and ends. All the items are donated and the shop is non-profit. Peel Charity Shop distributes its funds to various charities twice a year and, as of last year, it has hit its £1 million mark in terms of monetary donations. "The British Red Cross received extra donations, as they needed to get 12 more wheelchairs of varying sorts," Margaret Bowden, secretary of the committee at the shop, told IOM Today. Other charities which benefitted include Sailing for the Disabled, Motor Neurone Disease Association, Isle of Man Breast Care, Manx Scouts and the Manx Eating Disorders Support Group. The shop started up in 2001 and it will have plenty more to give if its popularity persists. "You should see our shop," Bowden continued. "We have three people on a session in the shop because it's busy. We've had to have three people in or we cannot cope."

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Mike Pruette

Mike Pruette brings passion to his profession

With the season of Celtic festivals in full swing, Mike Pruette - founder of Celtic Leatherworks - is excited to have his historically inspired Scottish weaponry and leather accessories on the market.

Pruette has partnered with a team of event vendors to bring his handcrafted products to Highland festivals, Renaissance fairs, and events all over the United States.

And, in a year that has marked a real turning point for his business, he has also begun working with Albannach, the Scottish band whose intense, percussive sound inspired him while he strove to get his venture off the ground.

"I make leather merchandise for them now," says Pruette from his base in Charlotte, North Carolina. "It is a bit of a fairy tale come true for me."

That merchandise includes sporrans, wide cuffs, bracelets, barrettes, and flask covers for both Albannach's on-site event table and online store.

Recently, while attending South Carolina's Gallabrae Greenville Scottish Games, Pruette experienced the thrill of presenting a custom handmade Targe (a traditional small shield from the Jacobite period) to the band's percussionist Jamesie Johnston.

"And, with the addition of the event vendor team, my products are now available in person to more people than I ever imagined possible."

Pruette founded Celtic Leatherworks in 2010 after getting the sense that life was leading him in that direction - he simply couldn't shake the feeling that he should be wearing a kilt. So, he embraced his heritage and ordered one. It arrived three days before he attended his first Highland Games.

"On April 18, 2010, I donned my new kilt and took a 10-minute drive to the Loch Norman Highland Games.

"One of the Clan Tents had a Highland Targe and I fell in love with it. It was almost like the past was calling out to me. Right there on the spot, I decided I would be making myself one."

A visit to the nearby music tent was the next piece of the puzzle.

"Albannach blew me away. The raw energy they exuded was irresistible. I bought three of their CDs and headed home."

For the next six weeks, Pruette cranked Albannach's tunes as he created his first Targe and sporran.

Today, he handcrafts and hand-finishes all the pieces in his workshop - often with his teenage kids learning alongside him. He designs and patterns his own product lines, creates most of his artwork, and sometimes commissions special pieces from Celtic artists when he has an idea he can't develop alone.

His products also sell in retail establishments, including Laughingbrook, Spellcrafting & Ancestral Arts, and Near & Far Scottish. He has expanded his client roster to other Celtic artists and musical groups, including Celtic Hammer Club and Sÿr.

"These days, I limit my custom orders to a select few clients and I work hard to keep the booths and website inventory stocked. Smaller items like barrettes, armbands, and belts keep a constant revenue stream flowing that allow me to indulge in the Targe-making I truly love."

He enjoys seeing projects come to completion.

> *"Being there from beginning to end and holding a finished piece that I can be proud of is what keeps my heart in this work."*

Going forward, Pruette would like to see other authentic creators give each other more support as he has struggled to find genuine Celtic products in a crowded marketplace.

"I am constantly trying to source hardware and components for my bags and other lines and it can be pretty discouraging at times."

In the age of social media, there are many ways to market goods, but he sometimes feels disconnected from other creators.

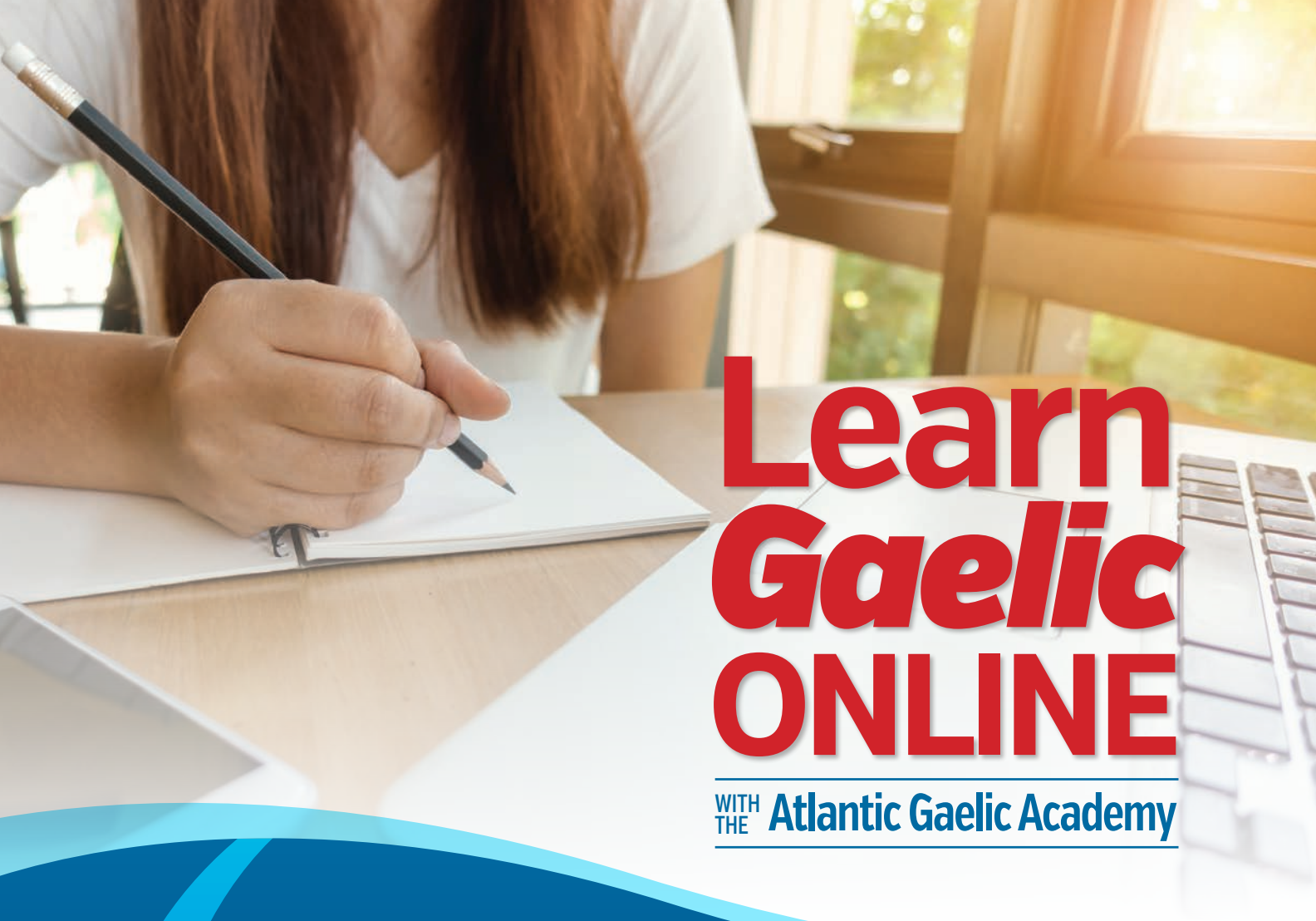
"In a perfect world, I would love to see a complete, free directory of Celtic-oriented businesses and artisans. That would make it easier to spend my dollars where I know they will go towards sustaining this community of makers."

As if the plate wasn't full enough, Pruette is also working on expanding his online customer base. He is remodeling his workshop and developing new product lines as well.

It may sound like a lot to chew on, but he loves his work.

"There are an incredible number of daily challenges and complications in running my own business, but they pale in comparison to the satisfaction of preserving these ancient crafts in my own hands-on way and adding my personal work to the collective history of Celtic arts and leatherwork."

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Colaisde na Gàidhlig

Nova Scotia's Colaisde na Gàidhlig/The Gaelic College is expanding and diversifying its offerings with a new program and property

Located on a scenic peninsula off the famed Cabot Trail twisting along the shores of the Cape Breton Highlands, the internationally-known college has purchased the Atlantic Gaelic Academy and is in the process of buying a former convent and girls' boarding school an hour away in the equally picturesque village of Mabou.

"We definitely see amazing opportunities for growth with these purchases," says Rodney MacDonald, CEO of the non-profit institution. "We are debt-free, except for a standard operating line of credit, and we have increased our revenues by 50 per cent in the past six years so we were in an excellent position to take advantage when those opportunities arose."

The Halifax-based Atlantic Gaelic Academy, North America's largest school for Gaelic learning, currently offers 14 classes; seven in-person, and seven live, on-line courses. A summer learning program is available as well. The programs were developed by Cape Breton native Bob Leonard while researching his own family history.

"As I delved deeper and deeper I came across more and more Gaelic documents and, of course, I couldn't read them. I began to feel I should know the language of my mother's people so I began taking courses."

Leonard soon discovered the available courses and workshops did not meet his needs.

"I wanted something that continued on a regular basis and because it did not exist - outside of going to Scotland to become a full-time student, which was not feasible - I began trying to create it and got a great deal of help along the way."

Thus, combining tradition with technology, the academy was born 10 years ago and today engages students from Canada, the United States, Europe, Australia, and even a lone student in Japan.

"The time had come for me to sell and my interest was in seeing that the academy went to a good home where its work can continue," adds Leonard. "I couldn't ask for a better home than the Gaelic College."

While the college has long provided Gaelic language programs, Rodney MacDonald pointed out it has increasingly been offering university credit courses through The University College of Cape Breton.

"To be able to bring all our language programs together, with Bob staying on as a consultant to work with staff member Joyce MacDonald, who is very fluent in the language, it is a perfect marriage."

Along with the new program, the College has acquired a new property.

The Congregation of Notre Dame spent a century in the village of Mabou, but only three nuns - all with ties to the community - currently reside in its convent. They are scheduled to leave the facility in the fall. The boarding school, which once housed 90 female high school students, closed in 1978. A year later the school reopened as a spiritual retreat centre.

Before deciding to sell the property, the CNDs held a two-year community consultation process, and established four criteria against which offers to purchase were measured.



"They identified four areas that they felt would be appropriate uses of the property and facilities," notes MacDonald; "education, culture, faith and community. We were able to meet their conditions."

As financing of the 40,000 square foot residential building and the five surrounding acres overlooking Mabou Harbour is still in the works, MacDonald noted it was too early to say how the college will use the property.

"It was built as a residential facility and an educational facility and that will certainly continue. In more recent years it has been used as a spiritual renewal centre and for community purposes. Although that won't be our primary purpose, those opportunities will continue."



It is 80 years since farmers and lumberjacks hoisted the first logs to establish the college, its construction overseen by the Rev. A.W.R. MacKenzie, a Presbyterian minister who left his home on the Isle of Skye to seek his fortune in North America. McKenzie had no Gaelic himself, but he believed building the college would give the language an anchor against economic hardship, out-migration, an English-only school system, and the widespread perception that Gaelic was a language of the poor and backward.

The irony of a college owing its beginnings to a Presbyterian minister that is now encompassing a school operated by a teaching order founded in New France in the 17th century is not lost on MacDonald.

"It adds a wonderful dimension to our history here on Cape Breton Island and I think we have some very exciting days ahead for the college, at St. Ann's and in Mabou."

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Ken McGoogan

In the first of a three-part series on Scotland, Ken McGoogan routes through the roots of history

The Great Hall at Finlaggan is a stone ruin. It was never especially impressive, as any visitor can see. But back in the 12th century, it gave rise to a definitive Scottish moment.

That explains my excitement as - for only the third time in my life - I hiked towards it along a boardwalk from the nearby visitors' centre.

This was a few weeks ago on Islay, one of the most beautiful (and wealthiest) islands of the Inner Hebrides. We were voyaging, my wife, Sheena, and I, with Adventure Canada - part of an expeditionary circumnavigation of Scotland, soon to be calling in at places like Iona, St. Kilda, Lewis, Shetland, and Orkney.

We were among 214 passengers, and I was sailing as one of several resource people available to hold forth on matters of historical interest. On day two, having sailed overnight from Oban, we had piled into zodiacs and roared into Bowmore, where we boarded buses for a fifteen-minute ride to Loch Finlaggan.

The Great Hall, which for almost three centuries served as home to the Lords of the Isles, is now little more than two triangular end walls made of stone. But it was from here, in 1164, that Somerled - the most powerful sea lord of the Western Isles - organized his ill-fated invasion of the Scottish mainland.

I had been sifting through history for some time, looking for Scotland's earliest defining moment, harking back through the Highland Clearances, the Battle of Culloden, the battles of Stirling Bridge and Bannockburn, and several other risings and rebellions.

This 1164 invasion had emerged for me as the signal turning point, the first great clash between two rival cultures - Norse-Gaelic and Anglo-Norman. My own background - paternal DNA of Scandinavian origin, clan alliances with MacNeills and MacDonalds - had rendered me undeniably biased.

> *Finlaggan takes its name from the Irish Saint Findlugan, who helped Saint Columba bring monastic Christianity to Scotland in the sixth century.*

In the early 800s, the Norse - aka the Vikings - invaded and seized control of the Hebrides and much else. They settled and became part of the entrenched, Gaelic-speaking culture; a Norse-Gaelic fusion. By late in the 11th century, the Islay-raised Godred Crovan ruled a sea kingdom that reached from the Isle of Man - equidistant from Ireland, Scotland and England - from Dublin in the south to Lewis and Orkney in the north.

His descendant, Godred IV, ruled with too heavy a hand. The people of Finlaggan - by now a flourishing farming community protected by its hard-to-reach location and possibly a timber palisade - sought the intervention of the great sea lord from farther north in Argyll. Either that, or Somerled invaded.

In 1153, in a major sea battle off the coast of Islay - just a few miles north of Finlaggan - Somerled routed Godred and forced him to retreat to Norway. As a result, he became known as The Hammer of the Norse - even though his own heritage was Norse and Irish. Over the next several years, while fending off competing demands from Norway and Scotland, Somerled consolidated the independence of his sea-based world.

And in 1164, he organized an invasion of mainland Scotland. Working from the Great Hall and a tiny Island a few metres away, Somerled raised a massive fleet, drawing fighters from as far distant as Man, Dublin, and Lewis. Historical novelist Nigel Tranter writes of 160 longships and galleys carrying nearly 20,000 fighters, though that is likely an exaggeration.

Historian John Marsden estimates that the total was closer to 10,000 or 15,000 - still an enormous fighting force for that era – and adds that Dublin probably contributed sixty of the ships. It is Tranter who, in Lord of the Isles, brings the scene vividly to life, evoking the clanging gongs and flashing oars, and working the same magic with Somerled as he did with many other historical figures.

The sea lord led the way into the Firth of Clyde and up the river to Renfrew, where the steward of Scotland had his headquarters. Somerled camped near the town and - though he brought an overwhelming force - that is where he lost his life. In the most vivid scenario, he was betrayed by a kinsman or a servant. In fact, the earliest accounts indicate that a force hastily assembled by the bishop of Glasgow, seven miles from the town, enjoyed a stroke of luck. In the Carmen de Morte Sumerledi, the eyewitness churchman wrote that Somerled was "wounded by a [thrown] spear and cut down by the sword." Such were the times that a priest then severed his head and brought it to the bishop.

Having lost their leader, the invaders retreated to their boats and sailed away home.

What else is certain? As John Marsden writes, Somerled was "the one historical figure who reflects in his every aspect the same fusion of Norse and Gael which binds the deeper cultural roots of modern Gaelic Scotland." History would have taken a very different course, he adds, "had Somerled's great host of west Highlanders, Islemen and Dublin Norse not failed in the venture of 1164."

At Finlaggan, in the ruins of the Great Hall, I stood imagining how a Somerled victory would have transformed the story of Scotland. An independent, Gaelic-speaking nation would have called forth no William Wallace, no Robert the Bruce, no Bonnie Prince Charlie, no Stirling Bridge, Culloden, and Bannockburn. Scotland might have become one not with England but with Ireland, and so spawned a Celtic Utopia. Or maybe not. More likely, the Gaelic kingdom would have ended up embroiled in a different series of battles. And with that thought, smiling grimly, I set out to return to the ship and resume the circumnavigation of Scotland.

Ken McGoogan's books include How the Scots Invented Canada and Celtic Lightning: How the Scots and the Irish Created a Canadian Nation. Ken sails every year with adventurecanada.com



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Dàimh

Celtic trad band Dàimh celebrate 20 years with their first studio recording



Three years ago, Angus McKenzie - piper for the popular, self-proclaimed 'Gaelic Super Group' Dàimh (pronounced 'dive') - spoke to Celtic Life International about the band's 2015 live acoustic album, The Hibredean Sessions.

Since speaking with us, the quintet has pieced together their seventh album - the band's first studio recording - The Rough Bounds.

"We are currently in the middle of the CD launch tour in Scotland," he explains via email. "That tour includes spots in the small Isles, Canna and Muck. We recently finished up a five-week tour in the United States, covering the Midwest and West Coast - our fifth tour of America over the last few years."

The Rough Bounds is of particular importance to McKenzie and the band, who are currently celebrating their 20th year together. Going into this project, the group was keen to recreate itself.

"This particular album took quite a bit of studio time," says the Cape Breton, Nova Scotia native. "We had to develop new ideas and a new sound.

"We have two fiddles on this album; original group member, Gave McVarnish, and also Scottish piper Alasdair White from Battlefield Band, who is joining us as an honorary member. Alasdair has played with us over the years, including our U.S. tours, and we were extremely happy to have him with us. It brought a new voice into the process."

The Rough Bounds - which was released on May 27 (exactly two decades after the band's inception) - includes 12 terrific tracks of traditional Gaelic music with a twist.

"The albums is a mixture of traditional Gaelic songs and tunes that were either composed or collected from tradition," explains MacKenzie. "Our two previous albums both had very strong themes; Tuneship was entirely composed by the band, while The Hebridean Sessions was entirely traditional, performed acoustically on three different Scottish islands. This album is quite different because we have had a longer time to work on the songs with Ellen, our vocalist. She has spent the past few years researching and sourcing songs that work well with our particular sound."



McKenzie admits that creating a studio album was not without its logistical challenges.

"Finding time to rehearse was difficult at times. It is hard when are you on the road performing to find the time to work on new stuff. Additionally, since we all live on islands, getting together when we are home can often be tricky."

Despite the obstacles, McKenzie says that the new recording is a real career highlight for the group.

"It's a big sound, with some amazing guest musicians. We put a lot of thought into everything, right down the guy on the cover. He represents the 'Rough Bounds,' and his tattoos signify both the area as well as us as a band.

"We are also happy to have the world's first Digital Pirate Flag Tea Towel as an extra little something special for our fans. It was designed by Sara Rankin from Mabou, Cape Breton."

McKenzie and his bandmates feel strongly about the state of Celtic music today, which he describes as "vibrant."

> *"The Scottish scene is full of brilliant musicians right now. There is new music composed and added to the pot daily."*

"Here in the Highlands and the Island of Scotland, the Feis movement has played a massive role in preserving and promoting our language, music and culture. There are more children taking interest in it than ever before."

He believes that everyone can be involved in growing Celtic culture.

"We can always be doing more. Dàimh concentrates on Gaelic music because it is important to use it or we will lose it, and because it is at the very core of our identity – it is who we are and it is where we are from. Our goal has always been, and remains, to make Gaelic music accessible and enjoyable for everyone."

The remainder of 2018 will be busy for the band.

"After we tour the Scottish Isles, we have a few European festivals lined up this summer, before we head back to the U.S. in August. In the fall, we will be running our School of Dàihm in Arisaig, where we host workshops to help develop young musician's session skills. After that, I don't know, maybe world domination."

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Nova Scotia pop band Port Cities goes straight to the top with their debut album

As a child, Canadian singer-songwriter and jazz pianist Breagh MacKinnon was surrounded by music. Her father, a Folklore professor at Cape Breton University and part-time musician, inspired her to start.

"I began practicing the piano at the age of six," she recalls. "However, it was not until high school that I started to write and perform my own songs. I was always interested in music, but my high school music teacher Monica MacNeil really inspired me to explore the world of songwriting."

Since then, MacKinnon's appreciation for the ages-old art form has flourished.

"The older I get, the more I realize how important music is in my life. Today, I have a greater understanding of how lucky and fortunate I am to have made music my career."

In 2011, MacKinnon attended the Gordie Sampson Song Camp, where she met singer-songwriters Carleton Stone and Dylan Guthro. The three bonded quickly and, in 2015, formed the popular and critically-acclaimed Atlantic Canadian pop band Port Cities.

"When we started the band, we had a handful of songs that we had either written together or were singing together," she explains. "Over the next two years we collected songs and worked on them with our producer and friend Gordie Sampson, an amazing songwriter from Cape Breton who has won several Grammy Awards. We established a sound that brought together our separate identities as artists - a cohesive 'Port Cities' sound - which is often described as roots rock with a pop sensibility."

Their debut, self-titled album was released last year. The 12-track recording - which includes the trio's hit song "Back to the Bottom" - took just over two years to create.

"Gordie knew us all as individual artists, so he was the perfect person to bring out our best and get to the root of what Port Cities would eventually sound like.

"We would record rhythm section bed tracks in the studio and then take those tracks home where we would experiment with sounds and add the rest of the production at Dylan's home studio or at Gordie's home studio. It was a long process, but that was what we needed at the time."

The result was a mélange of modern Atlantic Canadian music.

"We have three lead singers, and there is a mix of all three of us singing main vocals with lots of three-part harmonies. Since we are all songwriters we try to keep our bar high for material, so listeners can expect some really strong songs."

The album received a strong reception, earning three nominations at the 2018 East Coast Music Awards - including Song of the Year for Back to the Bottom, entertainer of the year, and Pop Recording of the Year.

Despite all the accolades, or because of them, MacKinnon isn't taking anything for granted.

> *"Making music our career is a privilege, and travelling to share that music with people is an amazing experience."*

"I think the saying 'if you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life,' is very true when it comes to our band. That said, being a musician is very unpredictable. The music industry is always changing and it keeps everyone on their toes. Of course, that is also what makes it exciting. From day to day, we are rarely doing the same thing, so we never get bored."

The three Cape Breton natives are equally passionate about the careers of their regional peers.

"We grew up at a time when the Celtic music scene was reaching the world stage, had a really broad definition, and included everyone from Brenda Stubbert to The Rankin Family and Ashley MacIsaac. Seeing so many musicians from such a small area and niche musical genre breaking through into larger markets has had a big impact. Cape Bretoners are so proud of their musical traditions and of the people who are keeping them alive. Even if we are not a 'Celtic' band per se, we couldn't help but to be influenced by its sound and its strong songwriting customs."

Having recently toured both the U.K. and Germany, the band will be on the road across Canada over the coming months.

"And we are currently making new music for our next project," adds MacKinnon, "which we hope to have ready for release in 2019."

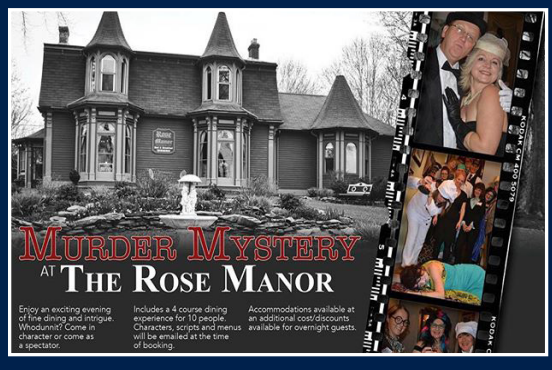
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Clare O'Donohue



Clare O'Donohue goes home for her latest novel Beyond The Pale

American author Clare O'Donohue always wanted to be an author. As a child, she would often read fictional bedtime stories to her mother.

"I enjoyed that as much as hearing my mother read them to me," shares the Chicago-born scribe via email.

By the time she graduated from high school, however, O'Donohue had decided to pursue other options.

"Writing didn't seem like a stable career path. My plan going into university was to become a political speechwriter, but I ended up being a journalist."

She plied her trade at a newspaper for five years before moving to Los Angeles, where she worked on everything from documentaries to daytime television shows. By 2006, however, her childhood passion for putting pen to paper caught up with her.

"I have only ever made a living as a writer, some years more than others. Deep down, it is all I have ever wanted to do. I can't exactly say why, any more than I know why I am left-handed. It is just a part of me."

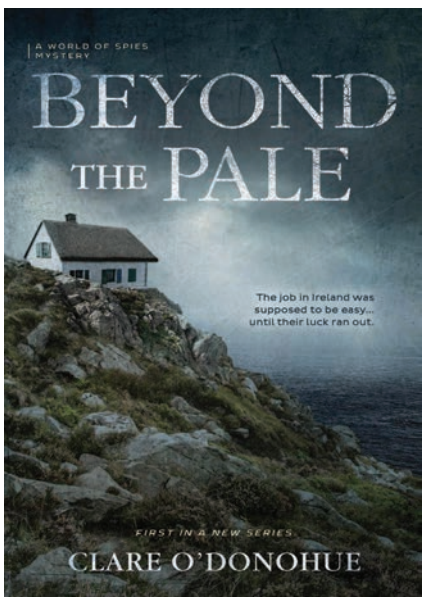
As with her literary skills, O'Donohue's enchantment with storytelling evolved over time.

"I have fallen in love with creating characters and exploring different life choices."

"I am an observer. I watch people, wonder about their lives, wonder about my own choices. All of it makes its way into the characters I create. Without writing, I would be just another annoying eavesdropper - but as a writer, it is all fair game."

Her most recent narrative, Beyond the Pale, tells the tale of a young couple, professors Hollis and Finn Larson, who are enlisted by Interpol to search for a rare and important manuscript on the Emerald Isle. What starts as an all-inclusive excursion, however, soon turns into a game of amateur espionage and "deadly criminal expertise."

"My parents are both from Ireland; my father was from Clare, and my mother from Mayo. I lived there for about a year when I was ten. I also have first and second cousins in Ireland. Needless-to-say it is a place I know pretty well and that I love very much, and one of the goals with this work was to share that with readers.



"Sometimes Ireland can be depicted as twee and old-fashioned. I wanted to depict a modern version that was still the quirky and welcoming place I know. I made the country a significant part of the book so that readers could get to know the place. I made sure to sprinkle in Irish history, culture and scenery."

Donohue admits that writing a novel set in her family's home was not without its challenges.

"When you grow up as the child of Irish parents, you hear stories and songs, and you think 'I know everything there is to know.' But, of course, I didn't. I wanted to get everything right. As I have a fair amount of relatives who live there, I would quickly find out if I got it wrong. I read a lot of books, watched films set there, and most importantly made multiple visits so I could walk the paths that my characters walk.

"I also went alone on my first research trip for this book. I had never taken a solo trip like that before, and I really immersed myself in the journey. I talked to a lot of people, felt free to ask questions, tried new things and generally just took in as much of Ireland as I could."

Praise for Beyond the Pale has been strong, with the likes of fellow scribe Mary Higgins Clarke calling it a "new brand of crime fiction."

"The early reviews have also called it a 'roller coaster ride,'" notes O'Donohue. "Critics focused on the relationship between this husband and wife team of accidental spies. I have also had more than a few people tell me that the book has made them want to take a trip to Ireland."

The author has a variety of literary projects lined up, including a sequel to Beyond the Pale, which will be set in Argentina.

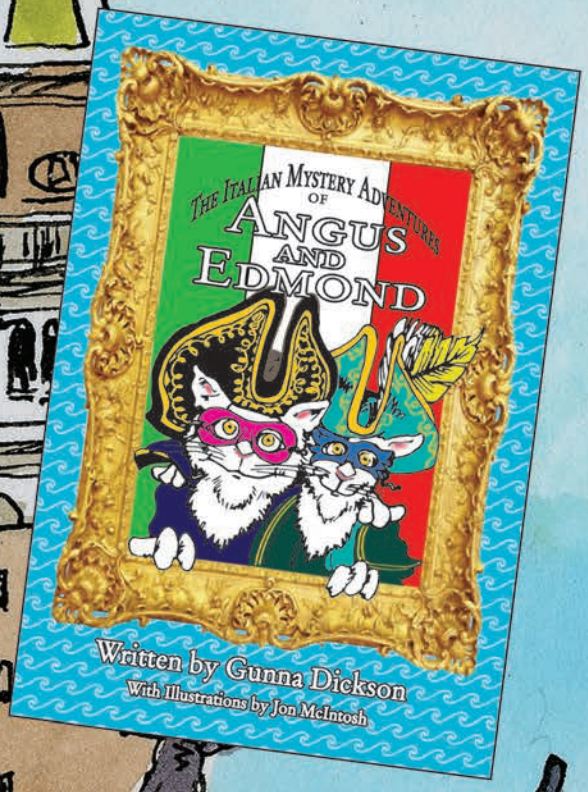
"The idea of the series is to have each book take place in a different country, which is honestly just an excuse for me to travel - a passion of mine. I would also like to set more books in Ireland, and on my bucket list is renting a little space in Connemara for a few months and writing a book set there."

www.clareodonohue.com

CATS AND CLUES

With the Highlands of Scotland and Key West adventures behind them, Angora-mix brothers Angus and Edmond are resting up at home in New York City when they cross paths with a shady rodent and begin receiving cryptic messages. The clues lead them to Italy -- the opera in Milan and carnival in Venice -- where the mystery unfolds and danger threatens.

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Author Gunna Dickson is a New York based writer and editor.

Illustration by Jon McIntosh, Key West.

"The Italian Mystery Adventures of Angus and Edmond" is published by *Virtualbookworm.com* and is available on *Amazon.com* and other online sites.

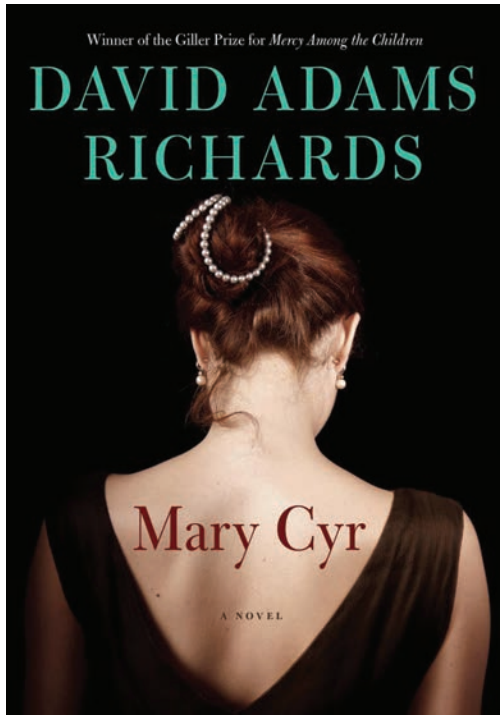




David Adams Richards

Since we last spoke with David Adams Richards (2014), the New Brunswick-based author has been busy on a number of fronts, publishing two new novels and being appointed to the Canadian Senate. Recently, we caught up with the multi award-winning scribe - whose family roots go back to Ireland - to discuss the power of politics and penmanship.





Congratulations on the appointment to the Senate. How does it feel?

Thank you. It feels good. It feels right - like it is where I should be at this point in my life. Ottawa has been good and kind to me so far, so I have no complaints. At times I do miss the comforts and familiarity of being at home in Fredericton though.

Did you ever think that you would be involved in politics?

It wasn't something that was ever on my formal agenda, no. I have always had an interest of sorts in politics, and I have been involved now and again in a number of matters in Fredericton that might be considered political, but mostly I have watched from the sidelines as a casual observer. So, when the call came from the Prime Minister's office last year, I was a little taken by surprise. I discussed the opportunity with my family and friends before deciding that it was too unique an opportunity to pass up.

Has it been what you thought it would be?

I didn't have many pre-conceived notions before going in. In fact, truth be told, I was somewhat unaware of the role that a Canadian Senator plays in the country's political process. There was a steep learning curve there for sure, but I was lucky to have many supportive people around me to keep me moving in the right direction until I could find my feet. That said, what struck me in the first few months of the job was both how much work is involved with the position, and how effective our parliamentary process can be. I'm not sure that most Canadians realize how fortunate we are to have the kind of political system that we do.

Will these experiences find their way into your work as a writer?

They already have in some respects. I mean, that is the role of a writer is it not? To observe and record his or her life experiences. I am sure that a book will come of this, though I am not sure yet how it will present itself. One thing is certain, however; there is much there to work with.

Your new novel, Mary Cyr, is quite political.

Yes, there is a lot of politics in there. It was inevitable, given the theme and the arc of the entire narrative. Canadian politics for sure, and Mexican politics obviously as the story is largely set there, and some American politics as well. But, in some ways, those politics serve as more of a setting or backdrop for the real story, which is one of people and, in this case, one particular character.

Mary is quite a character.

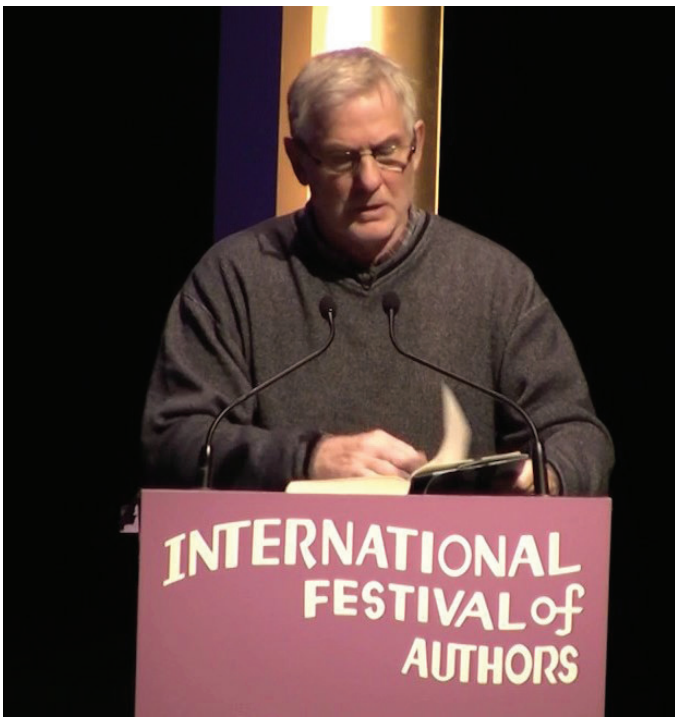
I think so - she might be my favourite character in all my novels. In fact, she might be - and I say this in all modesty and humility - one of the great female characters in the history of Canadian literature. I say that only because she revealed herself to me more and more as the story unfolded. She made it easy on me. I didn't have to work too hard to bring her to life, she was already there.

Where did she come from?

Like most characters of mine, and I believe this is true of most storytellers, Mary is not based upon any one individual, but is more a composite of many people that I have met and known through the years, both male and female. And yes, again like most writers, I am in there as well. But, as I said, she was already there, so I just had to get out of the way and fill in a few blanks here and there.

What is it about her that is so intriguing?

So many things, really; first and foremost Mary is very much her own person, with strong beliefs and opinions. She is outspoken, to the point where others see her as a threat of sorts - too headstrong at times, and perhaps too opinionated too often. Her family, her friends, her peers, politicians, and even the corporate world, see her as an inconvenience, and all of them try at some point in the story try to put her in her place - to keep her silent and out of the picture, largely because of what she represents; truth and justice. She has her flaws and wounds,





of course; she is often hot-tempered, emotional, confused, and misguided, and the tragedies of her past show up in just about everything that she says and does. However, there is no denying her integrity or intent, and she is never afraid to take on bullies of any sort, even when she was a young child at home or during her time in school at the convent.

She is often scathing in her criticism.

She doesn't hold back in displaying her disgust at hypocrisy, whether it be with members of her family, or her friends, or academics, or politicians, or those in the world of business. A big part of Mary's story involves her efforts to find somewhere she can fit in – which might be her biggest weakness - and finding a place where she can make a difference, be it in the schoolyard, in the universities, amongst the arts crowd, with various left-wing causes and, of course, in a small town in Mexico, where she tries to get to the truth about the disaster at the mine which her family owns.

Where does all her pent-up ambition to change the world come from?

It is said that anger comes from a place of sadness, while rage comes from a place of injustice. In Mary's case, I believe it is both. Certainly, the events of her younger years - the death of her parents, being orphaned and then adopted by other family members who refused to involve her in their business dealings, being teased by local bullies, the death of her schoolmate and the ensuing blame, being seduced and then discarded by her professor, the loss of her son - all left her with these huge wounds and a great sense of injustice. She is constantly faced with the decision to recoil from life or to face her fears and use these experiences as fuel to move forward.

Given her immense family fortune, how much of Mary's behaviour is rooted in 'white guilt' or 'wealth guilt'?

A few people have asked me that, and I have replied that, whether consciously or unconsciously, it cannot be denied. You may have noticed in the book, perhaps more so with this one than with the others, that I have a distaste of sorts for political correctness. Some critics and readers have called me ignorant, insensitive, and even indifferent to these matters. But they miss the point; my issue is not with the matters themselves, but rather with the mob mentality that sometimes come with them. This is even more of an issue today, given that we live in an age when everything is so transparent, and where we have taken the problem of gossip to new and dangerous places via the internet.

How does that affect Mary?

Early on, I believe that what other people think and say about her has a real impact on how she sees and handles herself in the world. Later on, not so much - she develops a thicker skin, a stronger sense of self, of who she is, and how she can affect change in the world. This is a profound shift in her thinking, and a key turning point in the story; the idea that a single individual can make more of a difference than a group of people, or society as a whole. And history affirms this; the greatest changes that the world has ever known, either for better or for worse, have come from the acts of individuals. In some regards, people like Mary Cyr give us great reason to be hopeful for the future.

Given your new political position, do you think that you can have a similar impact?

Oh, I don't know. Maybe. I certainly hope so. Time will tell I suppose. I am still learning the ropes at this point. I like to think that I have made some sort of positive difference in my personal life - as a father, husband, family member and friend - through the power of example, sometimes of what to do and sometimes of what not to do. Professionally, I think that I have written a few good stories, with perhaps a few more to come.

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Fly Scenic Scotland

Our award-winning photojournalist Tom Langlands takes to the Scottish skies





I have always loved flying, but somehow travelling in a big, commercial jet doesn't always feel like flying - not real flying!

The first time I ever flew was as a schoolboy army cadet in a Bell 47 helicopter. This was the iconic, bubble-fronted chopper with the open lattice-tail made famous in the late 1950s television series Whirlybirds. It was every schoolboy's dream to fly in one of these, and that trip earned me much kudos amongst my peers. The flight probably only lasted 20 minutes - perhaps up to 60 minutes during the many retellings - but I remember the rotors whirring, the tail lifting, that great, goldfish bowl of a front tipping downwards and the feeling of adrenaline pumping as we headed over the rooftops of the city. It was the all-round visibility, the sense of not being enclosed and the feeling of freedom - that was real flying!

In the years that followed I enjoyed several flights in light aircraft, and I even took a few flying lessons. Then life moved on and the only flying I did was for business trips or travelling on vacation in commercial airliners. I had all but forgotten the thrill of flying until one warm, sunny day this spring I had the opportunity to get back in the skies in a Cessna 172 light aircraft - thanks to Fly Scenic Scotland.

The skies were clear - with only the occasional, wispy cloud accompanied by a light, south-westerly wind - as I boarded the little, four-seater plane at Oban Airport. My pilot and airline captain, Donald Cameron, made sure I was fastened in comfortably and that my radio headset was working. His voice crackled in my ears as he explained the safety checks, and I could hear my own responses clearly as I adjusted the microphone in front of my mouth. Cameron switched on the engine and the propeller spun into action with its gentle vibrations feeding back through the plane. He checked the flaps, revved the engine, gave his call sign to the control tower and requested permission to take off. Air traffic control crackled back, "You are clear for take off at your discretion." We were still on the ground and yet the excitement was palpable. Taxiing to the north end of the runway we turned to face south. The engine noise increased, the plane strained to be let loose and then we were off along the runway. As our speed increased Cameron eased the stick back, the nose lifted ever so gently and we were in the air.



Looking out below the wing, I could see that the tide was high in Ardmucknish Bay to my right, and Connel Bridge eased past on my left. As we climbed, we banked to take a clockwise circuit around the ruins of Dunstaffnage Castle and Chapel. Built in the early 13th century, this was once the stronghold of the MacDougalls and it is thought that Bonnie Prince Charlie's saviour, Flora MacDonald, was incarcerated here. With good all-round visibility, the bird's-eye perspective adds another dimension to the landscape and its history. I've walked around this castle before, but from up here it was easy to see the strategic importance of its location overlooking the Firth of Lorn. To the west lay the islands of Lismore and Mull, and to the south Colonsay, Jura and Islay lay on a blanket of sparkling blue. To the east were the mountains and valleys sculpted by the forces of nature over millions of years, and so often epitomized in Scotland's stories and songs.

No amount of maps or satellite images can replace the experience of witnessing the result of millions of years of creation from the air.

As we continued south towards Easdale I quizzed Cameron about his obvious love of flying and discovered that he had first taken to the air some 38 years ago.

He is a local man and knows the airfield and its surroundings well. Modestly, he confided that he had just finished building his own plane and, when he wasn't flying, he was a part-time fireman as well as a part-time undertaker. I reckoned that for anyone with a





fear of flying that covered all the bases!

We did a double circuit around the Clachan Bridge, also known as the bridge over the Atlantic. Banking and descending so I could get some photographs, I could see the little cars crossing from the mainland to the Isle of Seil. A bit further south we climbed to 3,000 feet before turning to head inland and wind our way back north parallel to the shore. With a final swing west over Oban harbour, I watched the Calmac ferry heading into port and numerous small boats scattered across the waters below. We banked and circled the town looking down on McCaig's Tower - a 200-foot diameter, stone folly fashioned in the style of Rome's Colosseum. I had often looked up at it but never down into its interior from above. With a final sweep back to the airport, Cameron lined us up with the runway and eased us down with barely a bump. The trip was everything that I loved about flying.

Back inside the airport building I was keen to meet the man behind the brand. Graeme Frater is Managing Director of Cloud Global and owner of Fly Scenic Scotland, and has been involved with the aviation industry for over twenty years. Leaving school when he was sixteen, his first job was with a travel agency, but after two years he started working at Glasgow Airport as a Flight Dispatcher, co-ordinating the turnaround and calculating the weight and balance of passenger flights. After seven years at Glasgow Airport came a six-year stint with an airline company based at Edinburgh Airport until it went out of business in 2009. Having amassed considerable knowledge about how the aviation industry works, Frater decided to start his own business. "I teamed up with two colleagues and with an investment of only £100 each we launched Cloud Global. It was based at Glasgow Airport and started as an aviation jobsite before expanding into the buying, selling and leasing of aircraft parts." In 2016, Cloud Global acquired Perth-based ACS Aviation Ltd. specializing in commercial flight training. This was followed in 2017 with the acquisition of Border Air Training providing pilot training and aircraft charter services from Carlisle, Cumbernauld and Oban Airports. As part of that deal the company acquired Oban-based Fly Scenic Scotland, which it has restructured and rebranded.

Frater is aware that Scotland's amazing scenery is a huge tourist magnet.

> *"We get many foreign visitors who want to see their ancestral home from the air or fly over the castles which have shaped the history of this nation."*

"When we rebranded Fly Scenic Scotland we were keen to incorporate the Saltire into the logo and to use green to reflect the landscape we fly over and blue for the sky we fly in."

Oban Airport is in a prime location for the company's core business. At present, Fly Scenic Scotland offers ten pre-determined, tour-flights over different parts of the west coast. All these routes cover some of the best scenery that Scotland has to offer, but as Frater notes, "We are not restricted to those routes and we will always endeavour to accommodate the specific requirements of visitors by purpose building routes if possible." The company has plans to continue to grow with the acquisition of more and bigger planes and Frater believes they have only started to tap into the huge tourist market.

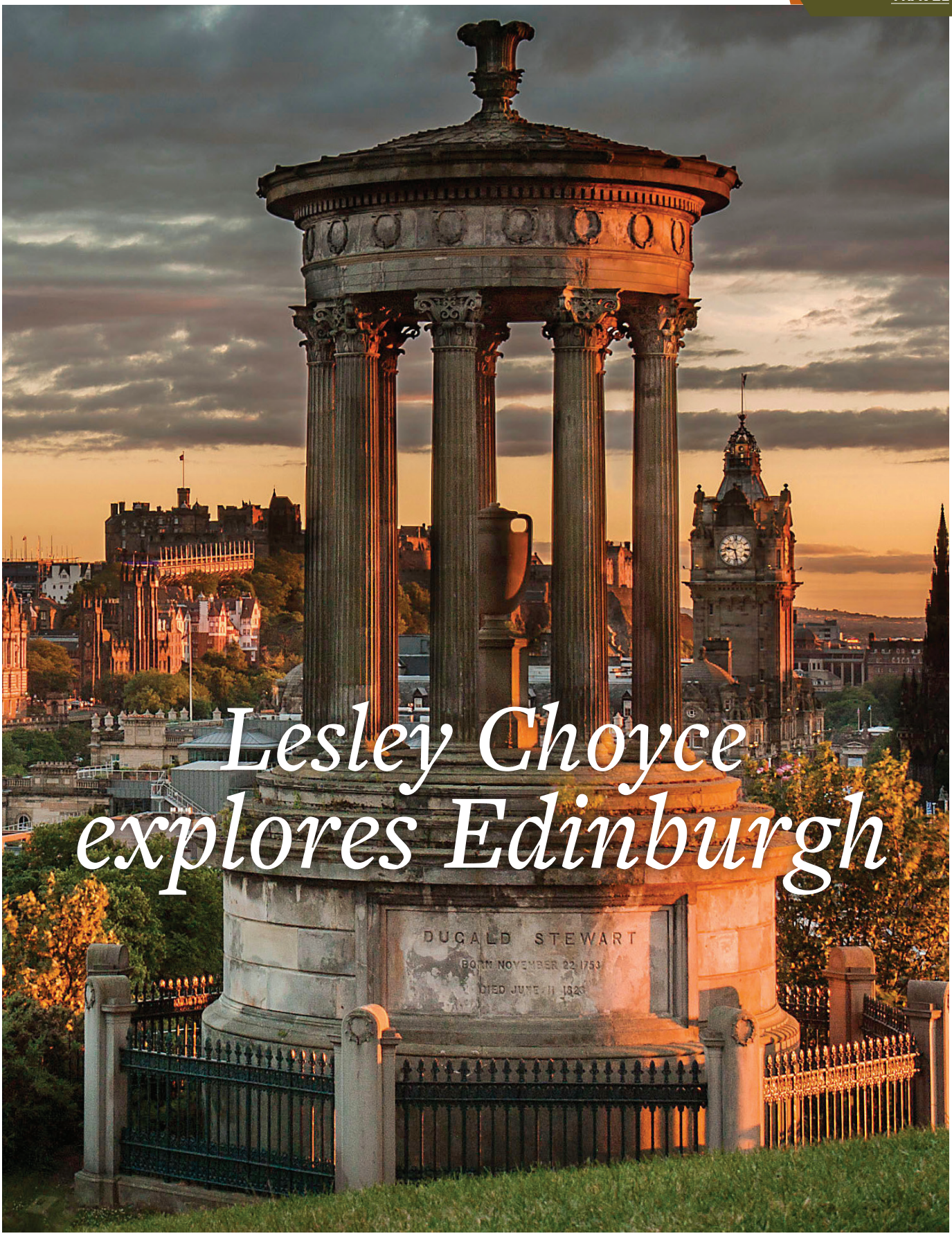
Seeing a landscape from the air, flying over valleys, rivers, lochs and castles, gives you a different experience of a place and a greater understanding of how it was shaped. That apart, there is also something exhilarating about soaring like a bird with great, all-round visibility while chatting to the pilot through your own headset, and descending, banking and turning to take a closer look at an historic landmark. Now that is real flying!

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Lesley Choyce explores Edinburgh







There's not much to say about the urban sprawl heading into Edinburgh from the south. It looked like a lot of tough neighbourhoods where it would be easy to get into a scuffle in a pub if you spoke highly of a football team from England. But once we had made our way towards Old Town and got rid of our vehicle in a car park near Waverley Station, the city began to weave a spell over my wife Linda and me.

We paid a most handsome sum of money to stay at the Fraser Suites just a block from St. Giles Cathedral. It was a tad uphill from the car park (well, everything in Old Town seems to be quite up or down) and if rolling luggage over ancient cobble stones is exotic in your world, then this is the place for you. And I am indeed one of those travellers - excited by the notion that famous and notorious men and women from centuries past had helped to polish these stones with the soles of their shoes the same as me.

I had a small agenda of things to seek out in Edinburgh: pubs with dogs of course, literary connections, exploration of as many dark nooks and crannies as possible, and conversations with locals about whatever was forefront on their minds.

Those conversations, as it turned out, were harder to come by than I thought. It seemed that everyone we met on the street was from somewhere else. The street in question was High Street, and the section we traversed most was the famous "Royal Mile." I would later learn that thirteen million tourists visit Edinburgh each year, so that explained the great diversity of folks cavorting about in the city.

On a Saturday morning we hiked further uphill to Edinburgh Castle and were not surprised to find it mobbed with visitors.

> *The castle was built on an extinct volcano, but it hasn't erupted for 350 million years, so most of us there that day felt reasonably safe.*

By the entrance to the castle grounds was a plaque that read, "NEAR THIS SPOT IN 1625 Sir William Alexander of Menstrie, Earl of Stirling, received sasine, or lawful possession of the royal province of Nova Scotia by the ancient and symbolic ceremony of delivery of earth and stone from Castlehill by a representative of the King. Here also (1625-1637) the Scottish Baronets of Nova Scotia received sasine of their distant baronies." In essence, below our feet was a small patch of Nova Scotian land declared so that men granted free land in Nova Scotia didn't actually have to go to the trouble of traveling there to make their claim. So there we were, over 4000 kilometres from my home province, yet still standing (or at least looking at) Nova Scotia soil. William Alexander, as it turned out, was a busy man and never did visit Nova Scotia. Inside the castle you will find more tourists than I was comfortable with but if you want to see the Stone of Destiny (the rock, not the movie) you'll have to pay your money and take the tour.

The statue that made the most impression on me along the Royal





Mile was that of Adam Smith. I had never seen a statue of an economist before and, thanks to the fact I'd been reading Arthur Herman's How the Scots Invented the Modern World, I had learned that Smith "thought of himself primarily as a moral philosopher" and believed, unlike the church of his day, that man was primarily good rather than bad.

I hadn't made up my own mind whether Adam Smith himself was a good guy or a bad guy. He'd said things like, "All money is a matter of belief." And "Man is an animal that makes bargains: no other animal does this – no dog exchanges bones with another." But Smith also said, "The real tragedy of the poor is the poverty of their aspirations."

Alas, whatever we contemporaries felt about the man, seagulls on this fine spring day had been sitting on Mr. Smith's metallic head and his face had been whitewashed by their plenteous droppings, reminding me vividly of the same fate of Winston Churchill's statue in Halifax where the old public library once stood. So goes the fate of philosophers and politicians. Later, in Glasgow, pondering the famous traffic cone covering the head of Lord Wellington, I would reflect on what a hard life it is for statues in the U.K. where people and creatures can do them disservice at any time of day.

Not far from Mr. Smith, I noticed a formation of stones in the ground in the shape of a heart. This turned out to be a mosaic called the Heart of the Midlothians, where there once stood a prison built in the fifteenth century. Many executions had taken place here over the years at this very spot. There is a tradition of people spitting on the stones, perhaps initiated by the lucky ones (many of them simply men who did not pay their debts) released from jail over the centuries. Most folks I saw that day were too polite to spit and, in truth, many walked right over the spot without noticing it.

Right alongside of the Heart of the Midlothians was yet another statue - that of Walter Francis Montagu Douglas Scott, the 5th Duke of Buccleuch. Among his other accomplishments, he is given credit for importing Labrador Retrievers from Newfoundland to Europe for the first time in the 1830s. In my mind, his other political achievements fell to the wayside and it brightened my day to see yet another Canadian connection, especially one involving dogs.

Linda thought we should lunch at the Elephant House where it was reported that J.K. Rowling once did some writing or research for the early Harry Potter novels.

> *The sign outside says "The birthplace of Harry Potter" – but that may be stretching it a bit. Who knows?*

Inside, it was a noisy, happy little restaurant on the King George IV Bridge. The "bridge" itself confused me somewhat in that it didn't seem to be over any body of water, but looking down from the bridge, was a whole other level of the city with narrow streets and ground level stores. I couldn't quite figure out how this could be since we, too, were on ground level. It was like peering into another world below us and it was indeed as Harry Potteresque as a thing could be.

I still had a small grudge against Ms. Rowling because trashy newspapers in England and Scotland had claimed she had the cutest West Highland White Terrier in the U.K. I thought my own Westie much cuter and soon he too would be in the U.K. and we would try to right this wrong. Nonetheless, there we were for lunch in her former haunt with memorabilia from herself and great gobs of Harry Potter graffiti aplenty on the walls of the loos. I ordered haggis, neeps and tatties ("Our Scottish national dish") for lunch in honour of the occasion and found it most filling.

Back on the Royal Mile we wandered down as many narrow alleyways (or closes, as they are called) as we could. Among the many are Advocate's Close, Anchor Close, Old Post Office Close, and the curiously-named Fleshmarket Close - which refers to what was once a butcher's market rather than a place for street sex. Mystery writer Ian Rankin borrowed the name for the title of one of his novels where a number of dark and brutal events occur.

Down one alleyway, we came upon The Writers Museum which is blessedly free and open to the public. The building dates back to 1622 and displays artifacts and images of Robbie Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson. Behind a glass case, Stevenson's high



top shoes looked like he had just taken them off yesterday and I was rather impressed to see a photograph of the author of Treasure Island imbibing kava with some shirtless citizens of Samoa. I'd read Treasure Island as a lad and it had not occurred to me that perhaps drugs were involved in the creative process.

There was much ado in the museum about Burns' poetry and it prompted me to recite what I could remember of "A Man's a Man for a' That" until my wife grew embarrassed enough to elbow me in the ribs to MAKE ME desist. A few steps further along, staring at a bust of Walter Scott, I couldn't for the life of me remember reading a single thing by such a famous Scottish writer and wondered why his fame lingered while his writing fell out of favour.

Stumbling upon Devil's Close, we ambled into a pub called The Devil's Advocate to quench our thirst and moved on to dinner at an establishment called the Filling Station on High Street where I ordered a curry dish, having done my duty earlier in the day to partake of the Elephant House haggis.

Pubs and restaurants there are aplenty in and around the Royal Mile.

Halfway through my curry, it occurred to me that here in Scotland I was eating Indian food, in England I opted for Italian food, in the U.S. Mexican food, and in Canada, I preferred Thai.

The following morning, Wetherspoon's near the train station provided nourishment for the day in the form of a tasty but lumpy egg, a couple of rashers of bacon, a delightfully bulbous sausage and the inevitable black pudding (it's the blood that makes it black, yes?). I couldn't help but notice that a large percentage of men were drinking large mugs of beer with their breakfast and, asking a waiter why that might be, he explained that Monday was a bank holiday.

As you can tell, I probably have not done the city full justice, having skipped or merely glanced at some of the more famous sites, both ancient and modern, of Edinburgh. The bagpipers were in tune on most corners, and I confess I was shocked at the cost of an authentic kilt. During the day, buskers juggled large knives while atop rolling planks, hen parties sang a Helen Reddy song in unison, and a number of young inebriated semi-clad men covered a reasonable rendition of "Wonderwall" by Oasis, then ran off, leaving one of their own behind who turned his back on the throng of curious onlookers and urinated on the wall of St. Giles Cathedral, whose crown-shaped steeple dates back to the fifteenth century.

Heading back along King George IV Bridge, we stopped by Greyfriar's Kirk which has "stood in the same spot since 1620 - the first new kirk to be built in Post-Reformation Scotland." Here we came upon a shrine erected to a dog known as Greyfriar's Bobby that much reminded me of the statue of the loyal dog Hachiko I had once stumbled upon in Tokyo.

Bobby was a Skye terrier (closely related to Westies, I might add) who "guarded" his owner's grave every day for fourteen years after the man's death back in the nineteenth century. In a nearby bookstore, I noted that there were at least twelve children's books written about Bobby and at least two animated movies. Clearly, loyalty in dogs is admired by Scots and authors in many parts of the world.

So far we had failed to find any dogs in pubs, but as luck would have it, the closest pub to Greyfriar's Kirk had two large dogs, a black one and a white one, lounging on the floor, dutifully waiting for their masters who were drinking McEwan's ale. The establishment was called Sandy Bell's Pub and it purported to be famous for its folk music. A fiddler and a guitar player were tucked in a corner improvising something closer to jazz than folk, but it was a comfortable and pleasant place to ponder the story of Bobby, and to see how dogs behaved in the presence of Scotsmen drinking beer.

On a shelf over the bar was a bust of a man and a note on the wall indicated it was the "head of Hamish Henderson." I wondered what a replica of this man's head was doing in a pub and later learned Hamish was a poet, songwriter, collector of folk songs and lore, as well as a soldier and a communist - quite the list of accomplishments. I couldn't help but take a moment of reverie to wish that someday a pub owner would think enough of me to place a replica of my head over the bar to keep a watchful eye over generations of patrons. Alas, it was a foolish and ill-conceived idea if ever there was one.

I also noted a sign over the bar that read, "No Football Colours Allowed," and I asked a gent sipping scotch what that was all about. "Fights," he said. "Ya can't have two different colour shirts in one pub or you have trouble."

Two colours presumably indicated fans of two different teams. Combine that with enthusiasm and alcohol and presumably you have fisticuffs.

Then he pointed out the window across the street to yet another pub, an Irish one called McSweeney's. "You want to see some ruckus, you should go over there." And sure enough, outside McSweeny's stood two sturdy bouncers waiting for football trouble to come their way.

But I found it not in our best interest to do further investigation into football team loyalty and hostility.

I liked the way drinkers casually walked over and around the lounging canines whose weary eyes indicated they'd be much happier sleeping under the front porch. So, in the name of research, I asked the young tattoed barmaid with a nose piercing the following question: "How does having dogs in the pub change the nature of the place?" As you might guess, it came out sounding rather formal and stilted.

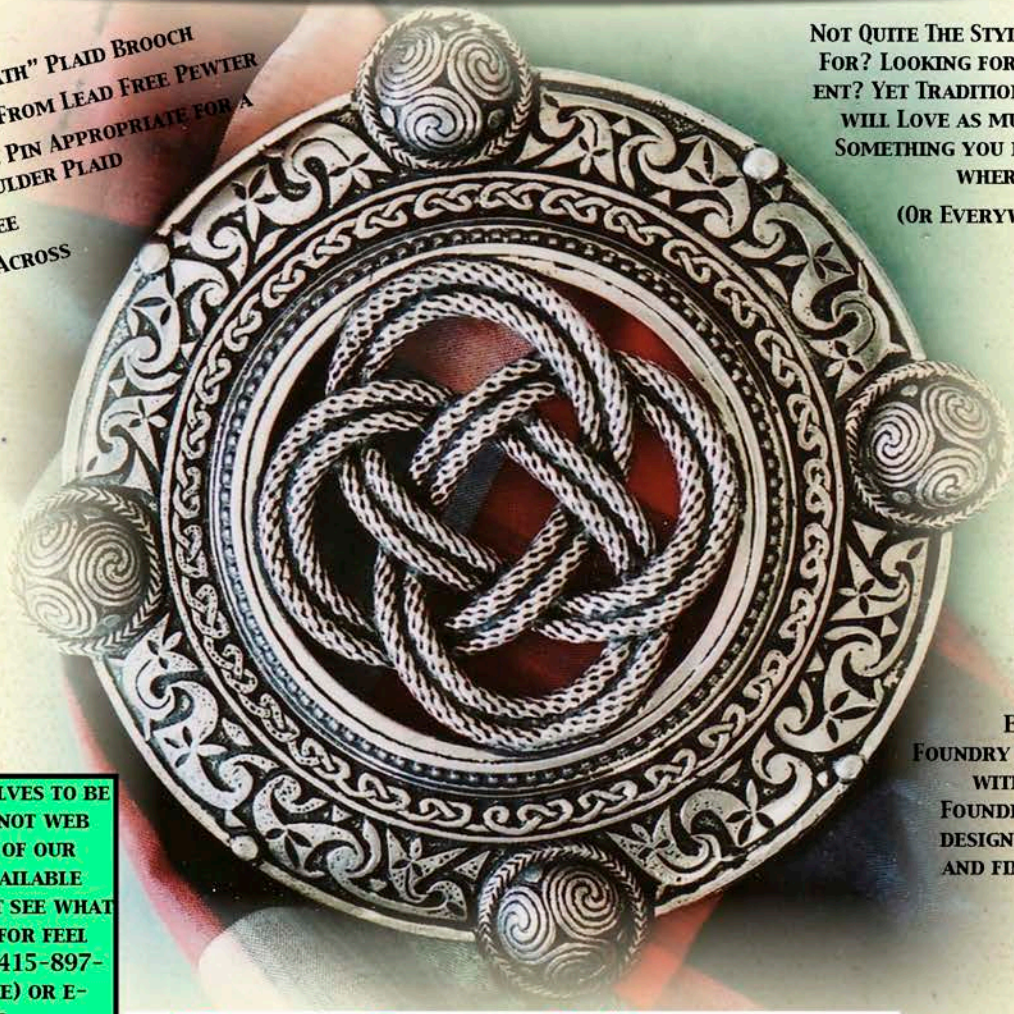
The young lady gave me a funny look but an honest answer, "Well," she said, "the dogs are much nicer than the drunks." Truth be told, I saw no drunks at Sandy's, but then it was the middle of the day. After that, it was a final hike back to High Street where a new piper provided the official sound track for the advancing fog rolling slowly but inexorably up the cobblestone street from the North Sea below.



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Natalie B. Coleman



I am a native of Co. Monaghan, Ireland. In 2006, I graduated in Fashion & Design from the Limerick School of Art & Design. I then studied at Central Saint Martins under the tutelage of the late Louise Wilson. In 2011, I set up my own studio and launched my own label.

I have always loved the way clothes could transport you to other worlds. I truly believe that the right dress can change your life. And I still love the narrative quality of clothing and the passing down of beautiful pieces from one generation to the next.

I believe that good design has to come from a place of truth, and that you have to believe in your own product, using the best fabrics and finish.

My collections play on feminine silhouettes with humorous and sometimes subversive illustrative prints and motifs. As my work has evolved it now pivots more between tradition and innovation. I have developed a modern Irishness in my work. This narrative is coupled with opulent fabrics, appliques, whimsical hand-beaded and hand-painted surface decoration.

The collections have gained recognition from both Irish and international fashion press and buyers. They have been featured in magazines such as Harper's Bazaar, Self, Grazia, Marie Claire, Dutch Vogue, and Cosmos. Fans of the label include Laura Whitmore, Angela Scanlon, Marina & The Diamonds, Suki Waterhouse, Tami Roman, Lily Collins, Little Mix, and Mary J Blige. We present the collections at London and Paris Fashion Weeks.

To do something I love and to have people appreciate the quality and effort that has gone into the design and craftsmanship is beyond rewarding.

In addition to owning and running a successful label, I also am a fashion lecturer at the National College of Art & Design in Dublin. I decided last year to go back to school, so I am currently studying for a Masters Degree in Philosophy in Gender and Women Studies at Trinity College in Dublin.



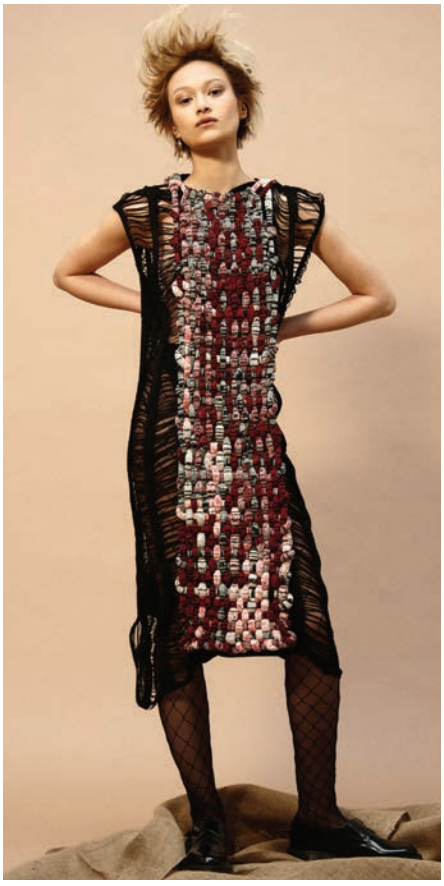




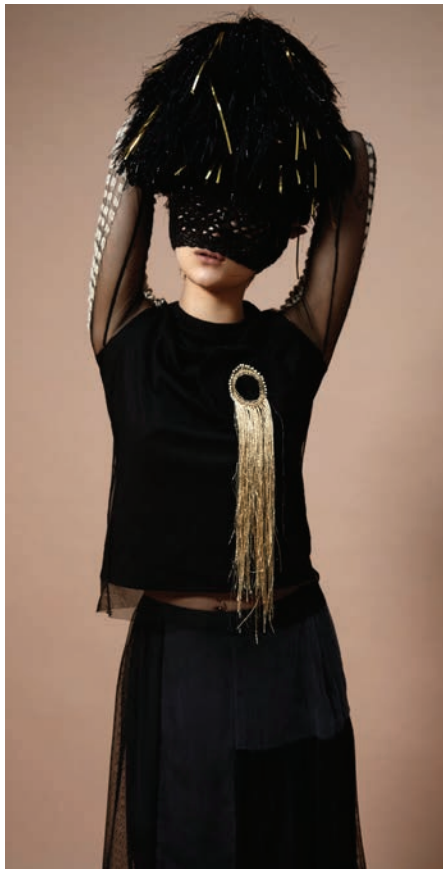




















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Celtic Spirit

No matter the location, size, shape or season, Highland Games and Celtic Festivals are driven by a common and enduring spirit. Celtic Life International senior writer Rosalie McEachern tells us more...





Behind the brilliant pageantry of massed pipe bands on parade, or the folksy intimacy of a late night ceilidh, or a soulful concert under the stars, there buzzes a bevy of busy organizers.

Traffic directors and ticket agents, groundskeepers and gofers, committee chairs and clan chiefs - they appear when the morning dew is fresh on the grass, leaving only after the night's last note echoes. You may recognize them rushing purposefully between stages and athletic fields, clutching a sheaf of papers on a clip board, or with smart phone in hand. More often than not, however, they go unnoticed. They may be well-trained one-job specialists, or overburdened jacks of all trades. Together, determined, they turn the wheels of Highland Games and Celtic Festivals the world over.

Only a handful can look forward to a pay cheque - for the legions of volunteers, the reward is found in the size and enthusiasm of the audience. It is a satisfaction often stirred with relief that the much-planned and intricately-executed event has once more been staged. After that, it falls to the gate receipts and the expenses to gauge the gathering's success.

Whether at the world's largest Cowal Games in Dunoon, Scotland, which attracts 3,500 competitors, or at Toronto's free-admission Beach Celtic Festival, the basic needs are the same; a stage for the performers, and washrooms for the crowds they attract. From there, the lists go on; permits, insurance, security, transportation, accommodations, meals, refuse, recycling and more.

"Volunteers - the vital connective tissue of every event - range from young children to a handful of stalwarts in their nineties.

A few celebrations - such as the vibrant Celtic Colours International Festival on Cape Breton Island, which features close to 50 concerts at a variety of venues across the region each autumn, or the Milwaukee Irish Festival, which bills itself as the world's largest Irish gathering - number their volunteers in the hundreds. For many games and festivals, though, the list is becoming worrisomely short.

On both Canada's west coast and the east coast of the United States, the reins of two lively festivals are held by passionate men who will be 79 on their next birthdays.

Norm Crerar, who still works as a ski instructor, is the founder of British Columbia's Okanagan Military Tattoo, which is being slated for a fifth time this summer.

"What I need is a 65-year-old who can come along behind me and do a two-year apprenticeship to learn the ropes and pick up the pieces when I'm done," he notes. "I'll be around for years yet, but not forever."

Peter Langmore is in his 19th year as chair of the Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival, which marks its 25th anniversary this July in picturesque Northampton, Massachusetts.

"Most of our organizers and volunteers are in their 60s and 70s," he shares. "It has been this way for years. I enjoy every minute of it, and so does the crowd, but there will come a time when I can't do it."

Langmore adds that the Glasgow Lands event could not go on without aid from a group of volunteers from a couple of state-operated residential homes.

"They are a wonderful help to us, and we donate back to them in the form of grants. If







the festival were to end, it would be a great loss to them as well."

For the time being both Crerar and Langmore believe that being busy will keep them young. They are striking examples, however, of a problem that now plagues many festivals - a shortage of younger volunteers to step up and shoulder the responsibilities currently held by aging organizers.

The Canmore Highland Games, nestled at the foot of the Three Sisters mountain range in the stunning Canadian Rockies, has been to the brink and back. Late in 2016, festival president Sandy Bunch announced that the 2017 games would not take place due to a lack of volunteers.

"We are a small tourist town," he explains. "We host skiing and cross-country mountain biking and lots of other events. We had the same handful of volunteers doing everything and we simply had to say we couldn't do it another year."

A co-founder of the yearly gathering, Bunch is the last active member of the original group.

"It feels like I've been with the games since Christ was a choirboy. Over that time, I have seen the number of volunteers dropping, with the load on other volunteers steadily increasing. We'd put out calls for volunteers and maybe get a couple."

A native of Perth, and a former member of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders regiment in Scotland, Bunch first came to Canada to work at CFB Suffield, settling in Canmore after leaving the military.

"When we announced we were cancelling I still had hope help would come and it did; a local developer joined us, bringing employees and friends to our ranks. Other people who didn't want to see the games go down also pitched in. We were all energized by the community response."

The games went ahead and will do so again this summer.

"I wouldn't say that we are out of the woods long term, but we're in good shape for now. The community in general has a better understanding of what we, and every festival, are up against."

The rollicking Milwaukee Irish Festival takes place on a 75-acre property, specifically developed for staging festivals. The envy of many games and festivals, it also has 400 volunteers and an active youth volunteer program.

Catherine Ward, director of festival operations, acknowledges the need to monitor people power.

"Recruiting new volunteers, while keeping our long-term volunteers feeling appreciated and relevant, is always an ongoing challenge."

"Succession planning for volunteers can be a sensitive matter as well."

Some veteran festival organizers worry about the unwillingness of younger people to take over responsibilities. However, Ward - who can cite examples of families working together - suggests that it is more than unwillingness at play.

"In today's world one of the biggest problems is that the younger generation doesn't have either the time to volunteer or the discretionary income to take time off work and get involved."

David Smith, games chair of the Antigonish Highland Games, one of the oldest such events in North America - and which takes place in a town of only 4,500 - suggests that for many festivals outside large centres the next generation are simply no longer available.






Nancy Truszkowski

"With so many of our young people going to larger centres to work, they may certainly come home for Highland Games week, but they aren't here to plan or organize. We'd like to partner with more community groups to broaden what we can offer, but it is difficult to find the people to partner with."

Nancy Truszkowski, president of the long-running Portland Highland Games in Oregon, is also seeing a decline in the number of volunteers.

"It is a growing concern, both in maintaining our current pool and attracting new people. Actually, we have happily engaged a troop of Boy Scouts to help out."

At the Oban Highland and Island Music Festival, one of a number of festivals in a resort town in the Scottish Highlands, a core group of organizers come forth each year.

"New members are hard to find," admits Caroline Boyle, who became a piano convener with the three-day festival after being invited by a friend on the festival committee.

In Montana and on the Isle of Man, similarly small groups stage festivals year after year.

"We have had the same core volunteers since our inception," shares Brendan McDonough of An Rí Rá Irish Festival, which takes place in Butte, Montana, a community renowned for its deep Irish roots. "It is a challenge for every event to attract new volunteers, but somehow we manage."

Four decades in, the Isle of Man's Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering draws about 3,000 over several days each year.

"We have a board of eight people, most of whom have been there for nearly 10 years," says Dr. Chloe Woolley of Culture Vannin, adding the group frequently restructures in hopes of finding a better model for volunteers. "However, we do have a few new recruits this year."

Doug Clark, director of the Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival and Gathering of the Clans in Mayville, New York - and president of the 96th Highlanders Pipes and Drums of Jamestown - says his festival has grown steadily in recent years.

"Having enough volunteers to run everything is difficult and may become more difficult still."

"A bigger issue is a lack of sponsorship in recent years; we are always on the lookout for great people to help with funding."

At the Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games, which takes place in a quaint Ontario community of 20,000, marketing co-chair Lee Puddephatt says the pool of volunteers ebbs and flows, remaining adequate through constant recruiting. The greater challenge is getting volunteers to take on key leadership roles.

Among the few festivals to currently have no concerns about volunteer labour are the Glengarry Highland Games in Eastern Ontario, the New Hampshire Highland Games and Festival, the Pittsburgh Irish Festival, and Festival Interceltique Lorient in the northwest of France.

Located in the village of Maxville, Ontario, the Glengarry Highland Games is one of the largest gatherings of its kind in North America, attracting 50 pipe bands and 200 dancers annually. Past president Dona Cruickshank says the crowds and the volunteers just keep coming.

"The games are a big tourist event and have a major economic impact, which may be why we are able to draw volunteers from the neighboring counties of Stormont and Dundas."

She noted the three counties have become home to increasing numbers of retired professionals, including many from the neighboring province of Quebec.

"These are people willing to give something back to the community and the Glengarry Highland Games is an obvious choice for them. We are very fortunate to have them work alongside the great people who have been helping us for years."

The well-oiled New Hampshire Highland Games and Festival, staged at a ski resort on gorgeous Loon Lake in Lincoln, New Hampshire, draws 35,000 visitors from across the U.S. and beyond each September.

"We have three generations of families helping us," explains Terri Wiltse, executive director of NHSCOT, which oversees the annual event. "We have a Booster Club handling tickets; we have other groups who take on particular responsibilities and often bring their own volunteers, and we also have Boy Scouts and Eagle Scouts who work with our facilities crew. Many of our individual events are run by societies as well."





The Pittsburgh Irish Festival has a core group of volunteers who return each year. The gathering regularly attracts new workers as well.

"Our volunteers range from 18 to 90," says Mairin Petrone, the event's executive director. "We see a lot of college students who come in groups with service organizations and fraternities/sororities, full families, senior citizens, and even some high school students volunteer with a parent or guardian."

Festival Interceltique de Lorient is France's largest celebration, running 10 days and nights, attracting 750,000 visitors annually, and showcasing entertainment from several Celtic countries, including Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and Galicia. The spirited gathering is such a powerful economic draw each year that the city of Lorient takes its needs into consideration during construction season.

"A small group of permanent employees, both full and part-time, puts together a team of 1,600 volunteers each year," explains organizer Julie Oviedo. "We are very fortunate to have them involved, and we consider them to be members of our family."

Oviedo reports that the Festival Interceltique Lorient brought in 12.9 million Euros last year - more than twice its budget to stage the event. Much of that profit came from away; 43 per cent of attendees were visitors from Europe, the United States, Canada, South America, Australia and elsewhere.

Although volunteers come and go, most event organizers use words such as "steady" and "holding" to describe their annual audience.

While many events are billed as family-friendly, most lean towards an older demographic - but one that is being replenished by recent retirees.

Most of the traditional Highland games - Portland, Glengarry, New Hampshire and Antigonish among them - point to an upswing of interest in high-caliber Scottish heavy events as a positive indicator for the future.

The weight of history bears on the backs of some festival organizers; the Antigonish Highland Games - first staged in 1863 - has run annually except for a few years during wartime. The gathering was initially conceived by area farmers and shopkeepers - most of them the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of Highland pioneers.

"Their legacy is all around us, in the music and the athletics, in the place names and the names of many of the people," points out games chair David Smith. "The spirit carries on..."

It is the same in Ontario's Glengarry County, where many of the first Highlanders settled outside of Nova Scotia.

"Our area is rich in Scottish history," says Dona Cruickshank. "I have some of it in my own bloodlines, and to protect and promote that culture is our core mandate."

In Portland, Oregon, where the names on the games' board of directors are strikingly similar to those in Antigonish and Glengarry, festival organizer Nancy Truszkowski's own Scottish history runs deep.

"My grandfather, Sir James McDonald, was born in Scotland, was the British consul general in Oregon during World War II and was knighted for his service. He was one of the original organizers of the games, and I joined soon after my daughter finished dancing."

In recent years, some of the traditional Highland Games have revamped their brands - adding festival or Celtic to their names - an open invitation to other Celts. In fact, most organizers say that those doors are wide open to people of all backgrounds.

"Last year, Canada marked its 150th birthday and we received funding to allow us to celebrate Acadian, Dutch and Mi'kmaq cultures as well," says David Smith of the Antigonish Highland Games. "Would we do it again? Absolutely, if we had the money."

Similarly, the Okanagan Military Tattoo regularly features local Ukrainian and Punjabi dance troupes to reflect the region's diversity.

The larger Irish festivals - Milwaukee and Pittsburgh - primarily celebrate local Irish heritage. However, they take no issue with featuring music from other Celtic nations. In fact, the term 'Celtic' appears to be a comfortable label for most.

Catherine Ward of the Milwaukee Irish Festival is the wife of founder Ed Ward, a man renowned for his love of the music of Tommy Makem and the Clancy Brothers.

"Our parent company is Celtic MKE. In recent years the festival has incorporated more influences from the Celtic nations, including Scotland and Canada, whilst remaining true to our roots."

In Pittsburgh, Mairin Petrone runs a festival founded by her mother, Maura, and her aunt, Nan, both of whom have Irish blood. As event planners, they saw space for an Irish festival.

"We market our festival as Irish but include our Celtic cousins from countries such as Scotland and Wales," she notes, adding that festival vendors still use her great-grandmother's recipes.

While most games and festivals gather some data from year to year, only the larger festivals - Bretagne, Milwaukee and New Hampshire - have the kind of detailed analytics to match up to the business world. Smaller gatherings simply do not have the resources.

"We have a young woman volunteering with us this year and her abilities with social media have been a godsend - a very welcome addition," noted Peter Langmore of the Glasgow Lands Festival.

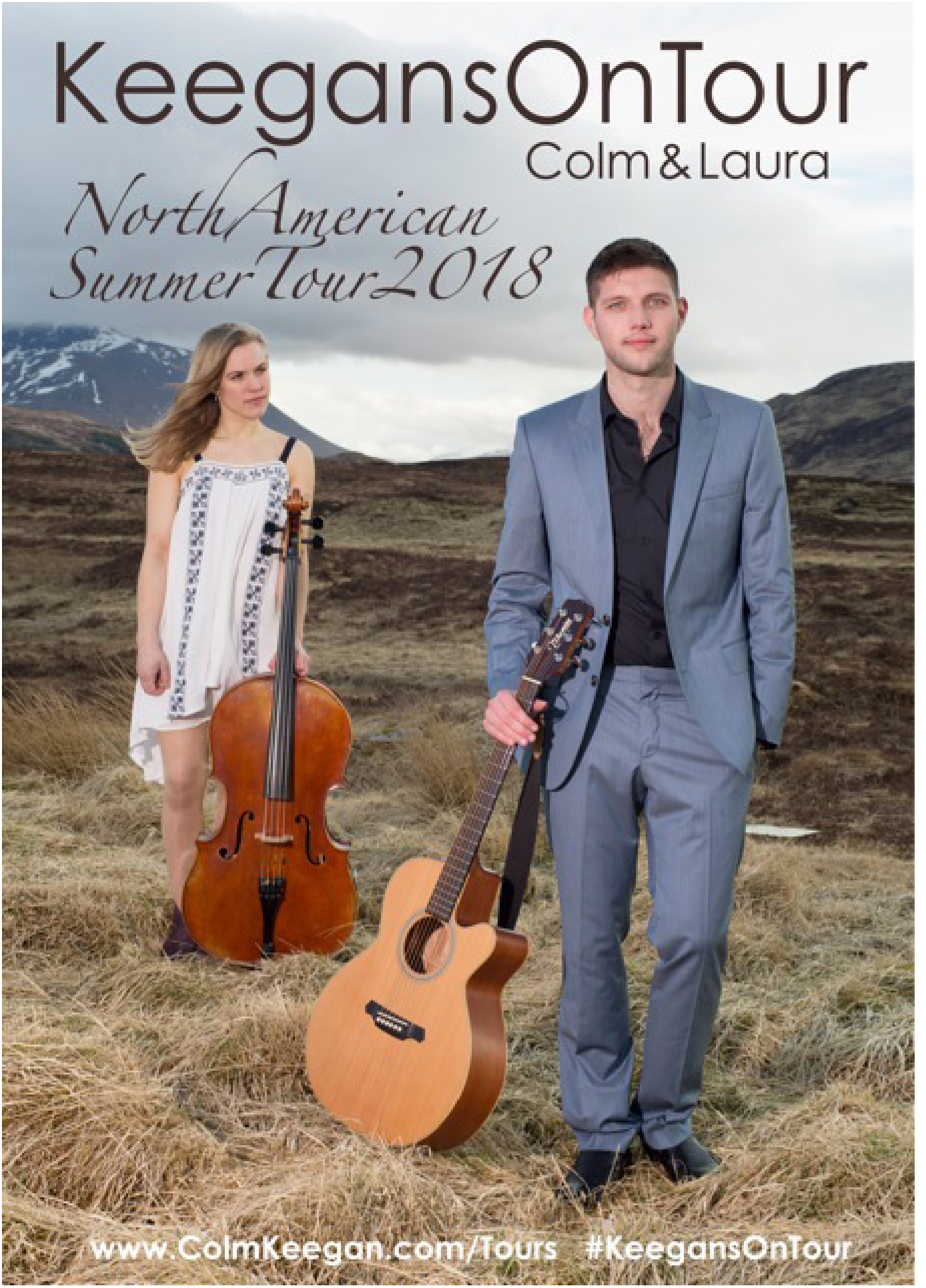
> *"No matter the location, size, shape or season, Highland Games and Celtic Festivals are driven by a common and enduring spirit.*

Perhaps nowhere is that spirit more evident than at Toronto's Beach Celtic Festival; what began, 15 years ago, as a one-day concert in homage to organizer Sandy Graham's mother - Scottish-born Jemima Sutherland, a Highland dancer and the daughter of a pipe major - is now a two-day festival, featuring dozens of performers, and attended by thousands.

"She died in Montreal, I was in Toronto," recalls Graham. "I went for a walk, and there in my neighborhood park was a piper playing and I knew then how I would honor her.

"I have since learned that there is more Scottish and Irish heritage in my neighborhood than I was ever aware of. We are everywhere. Originally, I wanted the event to reflect that. Today, however, we are happy to welcome everyone.

"The idea is simple, really...just show up and enjoy yourself."


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Celtic Sounds

While life on the road isn't always easy for Celtic musicians, the rewards of performing at Highland Games and Celtic Festivals is worth the work. Chris Muise tells us more...



It was fortunate that Celtic Life International was able to catch Cassie & Maggie MacDonald during their brief few weeks home in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Throw a dart at the musical duo's calendar and chances are high that you would hit one of their many dates on the road.

"We have been home maybe two weeks now," guesses Maggie, during an in-person interview.

"We were overseas for a whole three months," adds Cassie. "As of July 1, we will be gone right up until the end of September, so it will be another busy year for us."

A pair of 20-something sisters, Cassie and Maggie are quickly establishing themselves as musical mainstays on the Celtic festival circuit.

"Cassie plays fiddle, and I play guitar and piano and sing lead - Cassie sings harmony," explains Maggie. "We sing in both English and Scots-Gaelic."

"We grew up in a very traditional Celtic musical family," adds Cassie, "surrounded by fiddle music, Highland dancing, and step dancing, so it was very natural for us when we were young to pick up instruments and become musicians ourselves."


Cassie & Maggie MacDonald

Interest in Irish and Scottish festivals has blossomed in the U.S. in recent years, giving the duo a chance to be seen and heard in huge milieus.

"We have been touring professionally for the last five years," says Cassie. "We mostly travel to the States during the summer festival season, and that's really where we have built our core audience."

"That is a great way to get new fans," adds Maggie. "People pick which day to attend a festival largely based on the musical headliner, but they will be there all day long, listening to upcoming artists."

> *"It is not just newbies finding new blood among their fan base at Highland Games and Celtic Festivals.*

The Mudmen have been touring the world and proving that you can rock-out with a bagpipe since the 1990s. They have only been doing the festival circuit for the last decade, however.

According to founding member Sandy Campbell, festivals are a great place to introduce your sound to fresh ears.

"Festivals are really where it's at for us," says Campbell over the phone. "There is a guaranteed crowd - and performing in front of a large amount of people will surely make some new fans."

Steve Phillips, co-founder of The Elders, agrees.

"For us, the main meat and potatoes are those Irish festivals - their crowds are mas-


Mudmen

sive. If you get the opportunity to play in front of them, and they like you, then you just climbed up one more rung of the ladder.

"Realistically, there is going to be a lot of people simply coming for the event itself - so there are plenty of folks who are just walking around. Our goal is to convince them to stop and listen to us."

Cassie and Maggie agree that performing before large crowds demands a strong stage presence, both to capture and maintain audience attention.

"It can be quite challenging, because sometimes listeners have eight other choices of stages," says Cassie. "Or they could be getting a hot dog, or they could be walking around in the park - so, how do you get them to sit there and really take in your whole performance?"

Fortunately, playing the festival circuit has helped them to hone their stagecraft - often by getting inspiration from watching other acts work their magic.

"You hear what people are doing, and how they are making an impact," continues Cassie. "I really enjoy watching how bands work the crowd, and how they can draw an audience in. I have learned a lot about what to do on stage - and what not to do - from other bands on the road."

Captivating an audience is far from the only issue for the life of a touring act on the festival circuit. Dedicating as much of your life to time on the road - or often in the air - can take its toll on both one's social and family life.

"It is challenging to be away from your friends and family for extended periods," says Cassie, who finds it hard to catch up with loved ones for fear of inundating them with nothing but stories of life on the road. "It can be difficult for the people in your life to relate to the lifestyle that you are living."

> *That lifestyle is not as glamourous as you might think; frequent flights, long hours on the road, and worrying about making enough money to keep the act going are all part of the deal.*

According to Campbell, making it as a touring musician comes with a lot of dedication, sacrifice, and a serious balancing act between the demands of being on stage and those of daily life.

"Keep your day job - even if you can find a job that you can come and go to while you are touring. Actually, the name 'Mudmen' comes from the fact that my brother and I toiled at brick work for years - the mud man is the guy who mixes the mortar and supplies the brick to the bricklayer.

"All those years that we were signed to EMI Records...Rob and I were pouring cement or digging a hole - we were working."

"The average lifespan of a band is four years," adds Steve Phillips, who acknowledges that The Elders are fortunate to have enjoyed a two-decade career. "You just put on your blinders and go for it as hard as you can, knowing that you only have this little window of opportunity. You've got to get it done while you can."

Phillips, who sidelines as a music producer, says that this year will be The Elders' last tour season.

"We really don't have much to prove anymore - we have a back catalogue of stuff that we can feel very proud of. We are packing it in at a point where everybody is happy and healthy. We are not stopping because we have to; we are hanging it up because we want to end on a high note."

The Elders got their start as a cover band before creating their own Celtic compositions, and Phillips wants the next generation of touring Celtic acts like Cassie & Maggie to consider covering those compositions - especially if it helps them find their own voice.

"I hope people start playing our songs like the way we played other bands' songs. If all you do is play cover songs, you are going to reach a plateau, and then there is nowhere else for you to go. Cut your teeth on songs like our songs, but then you've got to do your own thing. That's what keeps the genre moving forward."


We Banjo 3


Red Hot Chilli Pipers

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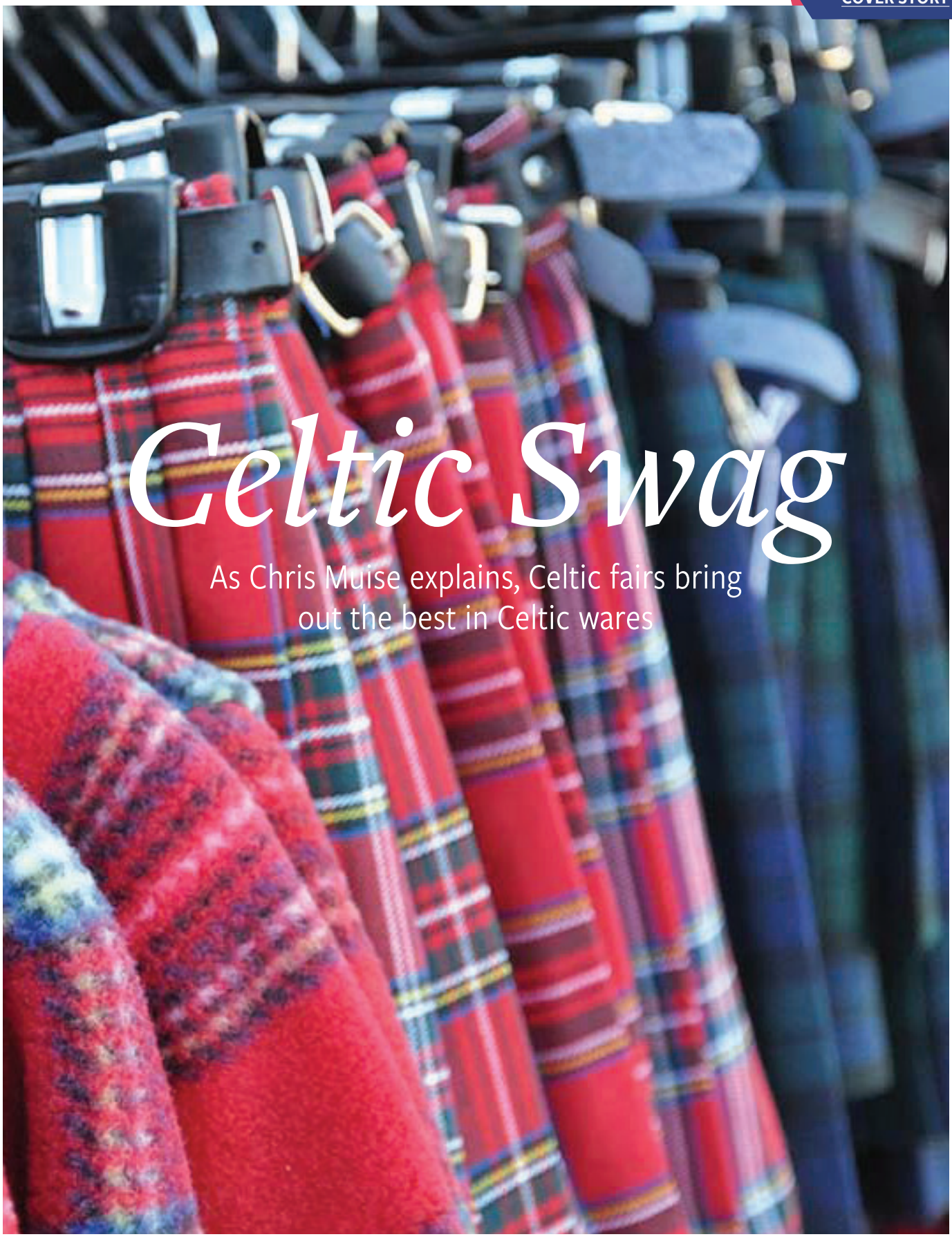
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Celtic Swag

As Chris Muise explains, Celtic fairs bring out the best in Celtic wares







Rob Gandara

It's festival season, and one of the best things about any festival - from rock hullabaloos to comic-cons - is the swag. Highland Games and Celtic Festivals are no different; vendors come from far and wide to peddle their wares, giving attendees a chance to take home something special to remember the celebration of their heritage.

Vending on the festival circuit is not for the faint of heart, though. It takes dedication, perseverance, and a little luck to be successful.

"Going into an event, you are sinking in a lot of money," says Carol Ann MacLeod, who co-founded MacLeod Highland Outfitters with her husband Kevin in 2008. "You don't know how the numbers are going to all add up until the end of the day."

MacLeod Highland Outfitters was conceived to provide pipe bands in Atlantic Canada with gear and supplies, a strong niche market that wasn't being serviced. Their catalogue has since expanded to include all sorts of Celtic clothing, giftware, jewelry, highland dance supplies, and more.

"With resources like Ancestry.ca now available, people have really become interested in their heritage. Visitors at Highland Games and Celtic Festivals started to jump in on it, looking for all sorts of items."

The couple's company began as an online shop, and via in-person presence at Celtic events in Eastern Canada. They now have a shop in Moncton, New Brunswick.

While festival business is good, MacLeod admits that there are some challenges to the vocation.

"A seasonal business can be precarious at times. There is always a risk - really, you don't know what people are going to buy, you can only speculate. You simply do your very best to offer a strong variety of goods."

In addition, with outdoor events, you are always at the mercy of the clouds.

"You can have a good year or bad year based on weather. You are relying solely on the weather, and spectators. Are people going to show up to an event in the pouring rain?"

MacLeod has seen floods - and even a tornado - undo a lot of hard work.

"There were a lot of vendors that lost everything that day - their tents were ripped away, and their stock was gone. That was brutal. And it is not as if you are really insured against Mother Nature."

"It is a bit like farming - you plan for it, budget for it, ride the wave, and next time around, hopefully, you have a good season."

In addition to natural hazards, MacLeod notes that the sheer amount of time and energy dedicated to growing the business can be quite taxing.

"Your summers are gone; you are not lounging on a beach on weekends - every weekend you are on the road. During the





week, you are placing, receiving and shipping orders."

It can get even more hectic when weekend work isn't your only source of income, which is the case for many vendors on the circuit.

"I run another business, and I have a full-time job," says Roger Scott, founder of Scotsman Grooming. "The challenge that we have is juggling all of that."

"I usually do between 25 and 30 festivals a year," adds Rob Gandara, owner of Carbony Celtic Winds out of Corvallis, Oregon. Gandara is a product development engineer by trade, and travels the circuit selling Celtic wind instruments that he makes out of carbon fibre. "And those events are on weekends, so do the math on my work week."

Despite the hectic schedule, and the inherent risks that come with the gig, these entrepreneurs are quick to credit the festival circuit with the success they have enjoyed; it allows them to connect with customers and spread awareness of their brands in a way that brick-and-mortar and online storefronts cannot.

Holy Heck USA is a Celtic leather craft company based in Boise, Idaho. Founded and co-operated by long-time leather artisans Holly Gilchrist and Selina Heck, the company prides itself on using American cow hide to make their leather products, rather than importing it.

They believe the best way to convince their clientele that this makes a difference in quality is to put it directly in the customer's hands.

"Our product is so tactile," says Gilchrist. "The beautiful photos that we have online can give one a sense of the quality of the product, but when you see it in person, it is a whole other level; the smell of the leather - people love that when they visit our vendor booth."

"Getting out to these events is an integral part of our business," adds Heck. "It is critical to our business in a way that it keeps the craft alive and vibrant. We don't want to be artists that work in a vacuum."

"A hundred years ago, you would have found a bottle of beard conditioner or beard oil to be as common as toothpaste on a Victorian bathroom shelf," says Roger Scott, whose self-formulated products are naturally-scented and fast-drying.

Beard grooming techniques have fallen out of fashion, according to Scott, and existing products have turned men in-the-know off the practice. Convincing customers his brews are different requires sampling.

"Once they try mine, and they can see the difference, we have about a 98 per cent sales rate."

Likewise, Rob Gandara's carbon fibre instruments - which are designed to preserve the resonant integrity of classical 19th-century designs without risk of environmental damage, such as warping or cracking - need to be handled to be appreciated.

"You can build a website and create a great product, but you can't sit at home and wait - you've got to get the items in people's hands."

"This business, probably more than any other, is about relationships," adds Gandara. "I can't imagine I ever would have gotten even close to where I am today if I didn't travel and come to people and meet them."

Scott echoes the sentiment, adding that attendees at Celtic festivals are plugged into their heritage, and look for the feeling of a close-knit Scottish village, where vendors play the role of the local shop-keep.

"A Scottish gathering is just that. It is called a gathering for a reason; everyone should feel like they are family when they come, and they are seeing family again whenever they see us."

That fellowship and familiarity helps to draw Scott and his peers back year after year.

"It is a gathering not only for the attendees, but also for the vendors. What is great is that they come running over as you are setting up on Friday for a hug and a hello. We work in a very collaborative manner."

"It is much less competitive than maybe one might think," says Carol Ann MacLeod, who sees vendors aiding each other in times of need. "If you are having some problems or issues, the other vendors are always there with a helping hand."

"The camaraderie among vendors is exceptional," says Gandara. "I always feel like I am going home every time I land somewhere, and it is the people that make me feel at home."

SUMMER 2018 HIGHLAND GAMES & CELTIC FESTIVALS GUIDE

JULY

Blas – International Summer School of Irish Traditional Music and Dance
June 25-July 6
www.blas.ie

The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo
June 26-July 2
www.nstattoo.ca

Malad Valley Welsh Festival
June 29-July 1
www.welshfestival.com

Feis a' Chidsin! Kitchen Fest!
June 29-July 7
www.kitchenfest.ca

ScotDance Canada Championship Series
June 29-July 4
www.sdccs.ca

Embro Highland Games
July 1
www.embrohighlandgames.ca

An Chuirt Chruitireachta – International Harp Festival
July 1-6
www.cairdenacruite.com

Gathering of the Clans – Pugwash
July 2
www.pugwashvillage.com/index.php/festivals-and-events/gathering-of-the-clans

Kenmore Highland Games
July 4
www.kenmorehighlandgames.com

Almonte Celt Fest
July 6-8
www.almonteceltfest.com

Antigonish Highland Games
July 6-8
www.antigonishhighlandgames.ca

Irish American Heritage Irish Fest
July 6-8
www.irish-american.org/at-the-center/iahc-irish-fest-2018

Kincardine Scottish Festival and Highland Games
July 6-8
www.kincardinescottishfestival.ca

Traidphicnic Galway
July 6-8
www.traidphicnic.com

Aberdeen Highland Games
July 7
www.aberdeenhighlandgames.com

Forres Highland Games
July 7
www.forreshighlandgames.com

Earagail Arts Festival
June 7-29
www.eaf.ie

Luss (Loch Lomond) Highland Gathering
July 7,
www.lusshighlandgames.co.uk

Penticton Scottish Festival
July 7
www.pentictonscottishfestival.ca

Sterling Renaissance Festival
July 7-August 19
www.sterlingfestival.com

Harpenden Lions Club Highland Gathering
July 8
www.harpenden-lions.co.uk/highland-gathering

Catskills Irish Arts Week
July 8-14
www.catskillsirishartsweek.com

The Swannanoa Gathering – Celtic Week
July 8-14
www.swangathering.com

Yn Chruinnaght – Celtic Gathering Isle of Man
July 11-15
www.ynchruinnaght.com

Grandfather Mountain Highland Games
July 12-15
http://www.gmhg.org/homepage.shtml

Festival of the Tartans and Highland Games
July 11-15
www.festivalofthetartans.ca

Payson Scottish Festival and Highland Games
July 13-14
www.paysonscottishfestival.org

Saline Celtic Festival
July 13-14
www.salineceltic.org

Athena Caledonian Games
July 13-15
www.athenacaledoniangames.org

Colorado Irish Festival
July 13-15
www.coloradoirishfestival.org

Morvern Games and Gala Week
July 13-22
www.facebook.com/morverngamesandgalaweek

The Famous Alva Games
July 14
www.alva.ukctest.co.uk

Dundee Scottish Festival
July 14
www.dundeescottishfestival.com

Jersey Shore Piping and Drumming Classic
July 14
www.jerseyshorecelticfestival.com

Kamloops Highland Games
July 14
www.kamloopshighlandgames.ca/The_Kamloops_Highland_Games/Welcome.html

Loch Lomond Highland Games
July 14
www.llhgb.com

Cold Spring Village Celtic Festival
July 14-15
www.hcsv.org/event-directory/?event_id1=2330

Glenarm Castle Dalriada Festival
July 14-15
www.dalriadafestival.co.uk

Skagit Valley Highland Games
July 14-15
www.celticarts.org/celtic-events/2018-games

Rosneath Peninsula Highland Gathering
July 15
www.rosneathgames.co.uk

Stonehaven Highland Games
July 15
www.stonehavenhighlandgames.com

Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan
July 15-22
www.munsterfleadh.ie

Burntisland Highland Games
July 16
www.facebook.com/BurntislandHighlandGames/

Inveraray Highland Games
July 17
www.inveraray-games.co.uk

Féis an Eilein
July 17-August 25
www.feisaneilein.ca

Galway International Arts Festival
July 16-29
www.giaf.ie



HebCelt Festival
July 18-21
www.hebceltfest.com

Mull Highland Games
July 19
www.mullhighlandgames.weebly.com

Miramichi Irish Festival
July 19-22
www.canadasirishfest.com

Cambridge Highland Games
July 20-21
www.cambridgehighlandgames.ca

Minnesota Scottish Fair & Highland Games
July 20-21
www.mnscottishfair.org

Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival
July 20-22
www.clevelandirish.org

Maine Celtic Celebration
July 20-22
www.mainecelticcelebration.com

Orillia Scottish Festival
July 20-22
www.scottishfestival.ca

Badger State Feis
July 21
www.badgerstatefeis.com

Balquhidder, Lochearnhead and Strathyre Highland Games and Gathering
July 21
www.lochearnheadhighlandgames.co.uk

Adams County Irish Festival
July 21
www.adamscountyirishfestival.org

Governor Thomas Dongan Feis
July 21
www.donganfeis.org

Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival
July 21
www.glasgowlands.org

Inverness Highland Games
July 21
www.invernesshighlandgames.com

Lochcarron Highland Games
July 21
www.lochcarrongames.org.uk

Portland Highland Games
July 21
www.phga.org

Taynuilt Highland Games
July 21
www.taynuilthighlandgames.com

Tomintoul Highland Games
July 21
www.tomintoulhighlandgames.co.uk

Arizona Highland Celtic Festival
July 21-22
www.nachs.info/festival.shtml

The Elizabeth Celtic Festival
July 21-22
www.elizabethcelticfestival.com

The Ennismore Shamrock Festival
July 21-22
www.selwyntownship.ca/en/discoverourtownship/Ennsimore-Shamrock-Festival.asp

Nations Capital Feis
July 21-22
www.nationscapitalfeis.com

Le Celti Cimes
July 21-27
www.celticimes.org/celticimes_2018

Fiddler's Green Club Walking Festival and Concerts
July 22-30
www.fiddlersgreenfestival.eu/#

Festival Intercélticu de Avilés y Comarca
July 22-29
www.intercelticu.com

Arisaig Highland Games
July 24-25
www.arisaighighlandgames.co.uk

Festival Cornouaille Kemper
July 24-29
www.festival-cornouaille.com

Durness Highland Gathering
July 27
www.durnesshighlandgathering.co.uk

The Great American Irish Festival
July 27-28
www.gaif.us

United Irish of Dayton Celtic Festival
July 27-29
www.unitedirishofdayton.org/Festival/index.html

New Brunswick Highland Games & Festival
July 27-29
www.highlandgames.ca

Speyfest
July 27-29
www.speyfest.com

Virginia Highlands Festival
July 27-August 5
www.vahighlandsfestival.org

Airth Highland Games
July 28
www.airthgames.co.uk

Celtic Festival Missoula
July 28
www.celticfestivalmissoula.com

Greater Niagra Feis
July 28
www.greaterniagarairish.com/feis.html

Maine State Feis
July 28
www.stillsonirishdance.com/p/maine-state-feis.html

St. Louis An Samhra Feis
July 28
www.ansamhrafeis.com

Dufftown Highland Games
July 28
www.dufftownhighlandgames.com

Halkirk Highland Games
July 28
www.halkirkgames.co.uk

Okanagan Military Tattoo
July 28-29
www.okanagantattoo.ca

Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games & Clan Gathering
July 28-29
www.sshga.org

Scoil Alca – Summer School
July 28-August 4
www.scoilacla.ie

Mary from Dungloe Festival
July 28-August 6
www.maryfromdungloe.com

St. Andrews Highland Games
July 29
www.standrewshighlandgames.co.uk

AUGUST

Killin Highland Games
August 1
www.killingames.co.uk

B in the Park' Sons of Scotland Pipe Band Concert
August 2
www.sospb.com

Irish Folk and Celtic Musical Festival
August 2-4
www.festspiele-balver-hoehle.de/event/irish-folk-celtic-music-festival.html



Montelago Celtic Festival
August 2-4
www.montelagocelticfestival.it

Dornoch Highland Gathering
August 3
www.dornochhighlandgathering.com

Columbus Feis
August 3-4
www.columbusfeis.com

Glengarry Highland Games
August 3-4
www.glengarryhighlandgames.com

St. Andrew's Society of Detroit Highland Games
August 3-4
www.highlandgames.com

Balaklava Eisteddfod
August 3-5
www.balaklavaeisteddfod.org.au

Cahersiveen Festival of Music and the Arts
August 3-5
www.celticmusicfestival.com

Dublin Irish Festival
August 3-5
www.dublinirishfestival.org

Highland Games Fehraltorf
August 3-5
www.highland-games.ch

Iowa Irish Fest
August 3-5
www.iowairishfest.com/wordpress/festival-info/

Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Festival
August 3-5
www.nlfolk.com/festival/info

Rocky Mountain Irish Gathering
August 3-5
www.rockymountainirishgathering.com

O'Carolan Harp & Traditional Music Festival
August 3-6
www.ocarolanharpfestival.ie

National Eisteddfod Caerdydd / Cardiff
August 3-11
www.eisteddfod.wales

Festival Interceltique Lorient
August 3-12
www.festival-interceltique.bzh

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo
August 3-25
www.edintattoo.co.uk

Aboyne Highland Games
August 4
www.aboynegames.com

Brodick Highland Games
August 4
www.facebook.com/BrodickHighlandGames/timeline

Là Mór a' Bhaile/Highland Village Day
August 4
http://highlandvillage.novascotia.ca/what-see-do/la-mor-bhaile-highland-village-day

Spokane Scottish Highland Games
August 4
www.spokanehighlandgames.net

Colorado Scottish Festival
August 4-5
www.scottishgames.org

Prince Edward Island Highland Games & Scottish Festival
August 4-5
www.caledonianclubofpei.ca

The Monterey Scottish Games and Celtic Festival
August 4-5
www.montereyscotgames.com

Bridge of Allan Highland Games
August 5
www.bofagames.com

Montreal Highland Games
August 5
www.montrealhighlandgames.com

Cascadia Irish Music Week
August 5-11
www.sites.google.com/site/cascadiairishmusicweek

Celtic College &Kids Day Camp
August 6-10
www.celticfestival.ca

Isle of Skye Highland Games
August 8
www.skye-highland-games.co.uk

Feakle Traditional Music Festival
August 8-13
www.feaklefestival.ie

Ballater Highland Games
August 9
www.ballaterhighlandgames.com

Guinness Irish Festival
August 9-11
www.guinnessfestival.ch

John Arcand Fiddle
August 9-12
www.johnarcandfiddlefest.com

Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival
August 9-12
www.folkharbour.com

Aberfeldy Show and Games
August 10-11
www.aberfeldyshowandgames.co.uk

Augusta Festival
August 10-11
www.augustaheritagecenter.org/augusta-festival

Sparta Celtic Festival
August 10-11
www.spartacelticfest.org

IrishFest La Crosse
August 10-12
www.irishfestlacrosse.org

An Rí Rá Montana Irish Festival
August 10-12
www.mtgaelic.org/an-ri-ra-montana-irish-festival.html

Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games
August 10-12
www.fergusscottishfestival.com

Goderich Celtic Roots Festival
August 10-12
www.celticfestival.ca

Irish Fair of Minnesota
August 10-12
www.irishfair.com

Ohio Celtic Fest
August 10-12
www.ohiocelticfest.com

The Pipers' Gathering
August 10-12
www.pipersgathering.org

Abernethy Highland Games
August 11
http://nethybridge.com/abernethy-highland-games/

Bute Highland Games
August 11
www.butehighlandgames.org

Central New York Scottish Games & Celtic Festival
August 11
www.cnyscottishgames.org

Dundonald Highland Games
August 11
www.dundonald-games.org.uk

Feis at the Falls
August 11
www.feisatthefalls.homestead.com

Galway Days Irish Festival
August 11
www.irishalaska.org

North Berwick International Highland Games
August 11
www.northberwickhighlandgames.org

Cortachy Highland Games
August 12
www.cortachygames.co.uk

Perth Highland Games
August 12
www.perthhighlandgames.co.uk



Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Drogheda
August 12-19
www.fleadhcheoil.ie

High Desert Celtic Festival and Highland Games
August 13
www.facebook.com/events/962291837114782

Piping Live!
August 13-19
www.pipinglive.co.uk

Festival des Filets Bleus Concarneau
August 15-19
www.festivaldesfiletsbleus.fr

Saskatoon FolkFest
August 16-18
www.saskatoonfolkfest.com/pavilions/scottish

Milwaukee Irish Festival
August 16-19
www.irishfest.com

Glenisla Annual Gathering and Friendly Society
August 17
www.glenislahighlandgames.co.uk

World Pipe Band Championships
August 17-18
www.theworlds.co.uk

Berea Celtic Festival
August 17-19
www.berea-celtic.com

Glenfinnan Gathering
August 18
www.road-to-the-isles.org.uk/en/events/

Great Lakes Feis
August 18
www.greatlakesfeis.org

Helmsdale and District Highland Games
August 18
www.helmsdalegames.co.uk

Maine Highland Games and Scottish Festival
August 18
www.mainehighlandgames.org

The Nairn Royal Brackla Highland Games
August 18
www.nairnhighlandgames.co.uk

Stirling Highland Games
August 18
www.stirlinghighlandgames.com

Bitterroot Celtic Games & Gathering
August 18-19
www.bcgg.org

Buffalo Niagara Scottish Festival
August 18-19
www.bnhv.org/scottish

National Heritage Week Ireland
August 18-26
www.heritageweek.ie

Crieff Highland Gathering
August 19
www.crieffhighlandgathering.com

Glass City Feis
August 19
www.glasscityfeis.com

Masters of Tradition Festival
August 22-26
www.westcorkmusic.ie/mastersoftradition

Oban Games by the Argyllshire Gathering
August 23
www.obangames.com

Cowal Highland Gathering
August 23-25
www.cowalgathering.com

Tønder Festival
August 23-26
www.tf.dk

Greenbridge Celtic Folk Fest
August 24-25
www.greenbridgecelticfolkfest.com

Buffalo Irish Festival
August 24-26
www.buffaloirish.com/irishfestival.htm

Peoria's Irish Fest | Erin Feis
August 24-26
www.erinfeispeoria.com

The Faerieworlds: A Gathering of Tribes
August 24-26
www.faerieworlds.com

Ballyshaners Irish Festival in Alexandria
August 25
www.ballyshaners.org/festival/index.htm

Birnam Highland Games
August 25
www.birnamhighlandgames.com

Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Competition
August 25
www.cgm2018.ca

Glenurquhart Highland Gathering & Games
August 25
www.glenurquhart-highland-gathering.co.uk

Irish Hooley Music Festival
August 25
www.irishhooley.org

Kalamazoo Scottish Festival & Highland Games
August 25
www.kalamazooscottishfest.org

Long Island Scottish Festival & Games
August 25
www.liscots.org/festival_and_games.htm

Lonach Highland Gathering & Games
August 25
www.lonach.org

North Lanark Highland Games
August 25
www.almontehighlandgames.com

Strathardle Highland Gathering & Agricultural Show
August 25
www.strathardlehighlandgames.org.uk

Quechee Games Scottish Festival and Competition
August 25
www.quecheegames.com

Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival
August 25-26
www.96thhighlanders.com/festival/Festival.html

Missouri State Championships and Greater St. Louis Feis
August 25-26
www.missouristatechampionships.com

Maryland Renaissance Festival Scottish Celebration
August 25-26, September 1-3, 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, 29-20, October 6-7, 13-14, 20-21
www.rennfest.com

Will County Celtic Fest
August 26
www.willcountycelticfest.com

North American Festival of Wales
August 30-September 2
www.thewnaa.org/index.html

Kansas City Irish Fest
Aug 31-September 2
www.kcirishfest.com

Wisconsin Highland Games
August 31-September 2
www.wisconsinscottish.org

Soldier Hollow Classic Sheepdog Championship & Festival
August 31-September 3
www.soldierhollowclassic.com

PORTLAND HIGHLAND GAMES



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Mt. Hood Community College | Gresham, Oregon

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Portland Highland Games

July 20-21, 2018, Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham, Oregon
www.phga.org

This year, the Portland Highland Games celebrates its 66th anniversary with a swath of Scottish talent, including pipe bands, dancers, athletes, and more. Once again, the annual gathering hosts a mix of traditional and modern athletic competitions, including the Caber Toss and the Stone Throw, along with others that are unique to the region, like the Portland Stone, where participants attempt to toss a 96 pound weight. In addition, visitors can partake in a number of events, including a whisky tasting, the Kilted Mile Run and the Youth Fun Run, which is designed for those 13 years of age and younger. A number of competitions - fiddling, drumming, piping, dancing and heavy athletics - will be held Saturday the 21st, with some amateur athletics held on the Friday afternoon. For those interested in brushing up on their Scottish heritage, upwards of 60 Clan tents will offer an array of historical information. As always, don't miss the great music, the sheep dog demonstrations, the display of British motorcycles, or the pre-games events - including a Piobaireachd competition - all held the night before the games! As always, there will be plenty of beer, bangers, meat pies, and fish & chips!



Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival

July 21, 2018, Florence, Massachusetts
www.glasgowlands.org

The Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival - a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving Scottish culture - celebrates its 25th anniversary this July. Over the past two decades, the annual gathering has become one of the most notable Celtic events in Massachusetts, earning its place as the only Scottish festival within the state and the second largest within all of New England. Visitors won't want to miss this year's celebrations, which include a Highland Pipe Band Competition featuring over 20 bands, Highland Dance Competitions, and Heavy Athletic Competitions featuring several world record-holding athletes. If you are in a toe-tapping mood, head over to the Celtic Pub Tent for some of the best in Scottish music, headlined by popular quintet Albannach, Celt-rockers Enter the Haggis, the Tartan Terrors, the Screaming Orphans and Charlie Zahm. Be sure to check out one of the many vendor booths for Celtic-inspired merchandise and food, or head over to the Clan Village to show off your Celtic pride. Also on tap are children's games, the Pioneer Valley Harpers Guild, spinning and weaving, sheep herding, and much more - a day-long event that is fun for the whole family!



Dayton Celtic Festival

July 27-29, 2018, Dayton, Ohio
www.daytoncelticfestival.com

Celebrate three days worth of the best Celtic music, dance, art and culture at Dayton, Ohio's largest downtown festival. Established in 2002, the Dayton Celtic Festival has grown to become one of the Midwest's premier festivals. It's the perfect place for visitors to saturate their senses with the sights and sounds of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and beyond. Visitors will enjoy cultural exhibits that engage and educate, and a Gaelic Mass on Sunday. Food and merchandise vendors will delight with the best in classic and contemporary flavors, fashion, and Celtic wares. And of course, the entertainment is second to none! Each year, the gathering welcomes an amazing array of local and international musical artists. Headliners for 2018 include We Banjo 3, The Fitzgeralds, Heron Valley, and a debut solo performance by Rory Makem. In addition, the festival is pleased to welcome back fan favorites, Gaelic Storm, Scythian, and the popular trad trio Socks in the Frying Pan. As always, the gathering is family friendly and children are invited to check out the Rainbow's End Children's area, full of games, crafts, and more!

2018 FEATURED ENTERTAINERS

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July 27-29, 2018

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Fredericton



New Brunswick Highland Games

July 27-29, 2018, Fredericton, New Brunswick
www.highlandgames.ca

The New Brunswick Highland Games is celebrating its 37th anniversary this summer at Government House in the capital city of Fredericton. Since its inception, the annual gathering has had one goal - to share and commemorate the province's lively Scottish culture and heritage. The three-day event, which has become one of the most renowned and recognized on the East Coast of Canada - including being named among the "Top Festivals in New Brunswick" - showcases competitions in piping, drumming, dancing, and heavy athletics, vendors, musical entertainment, clan pride, and a variety of workshops. Attendees can truly enjoy a complete Scottish experience. This year, things begin with the aptly titled "Kick-Off Party" - an evening of music and dance, featuring 2018 JUNO nominees, Còig. Following that, visitors can choose from a variety of activities, including whisky tasting, workshops on Scottish Gaelic, and much more. As always, you don't need to be of Scottish descent to attend the New Brunswick Highland Games - the event is ideal for anyone interested in exploring Scottish culture and history, and is open to anyone looking for a great time!



Okanagan Military Tattoo

July 28-29, 2018, Vernon, British Columbia
www.okanagantattoo.ca

Get ready for 2 hours of heart-pounding, fast-paced family entertainment when the 5th annual Okanagan Military Tattoo returns to Kal Tire Place in Vernon, British Columbia, this July. The musical extravaganza features over 500 performers from all over the continent and the United Kingdom, with massed pipes and drums, military and civilian brass bands, precision drills, highland dancers, cultural troupes, and a poignant refrain from the Lone Piper against the stunning backdrop of "the Castle." The term "Tattoo" evolved from a European tradition dating back to the 17th century when the Low Country Innkeepers would cry "Doe den tap toe" - Turn off the Taps! as the fifes and drums of the local regiment signalled a return to quarters. Today the word Tattoo refers to the ceremonial performance of military music by massed bands. Each Tattoo is influenced by the culture and traditions of the country they represent. This year's event will showcase its international flavour by featuring the 133rd US Army National Guard Band from Washington State, along with the Regimental Band of the 15th Field Artillery (Royal Canadian Artillery) from Vancouver. Other performers include the Salvation Army Band, the Cadet Band and Drill Team from Camp Vernon, and the Vernon Community Band.



Glengarry Highland Games

August 3-4, 2018, Maxville, Ontario
www.glengarryhighlandgames.com

Since its inception in 1948, the Glengarry Highland Games - a non-profit project originally spearheaded by a small group of local and area businessmen - has dedicated itself to promoting and preserving Scottish culture and heritage for each new generation. The result is "one of the largest Highland Games worldwide." The yearly gathering is home to the North American Pipe Band Championship - where upwards of 50 mass pipe bands and 200 dancers gather to compete annually. This year, the two-day festival kicks-off with the traditional Tartan Ball, where guests are encouraged to wear their finest tartan and enjoy a hearty dinner of haggis, and dance to the rhythms of Glengarry's most renowned Celtic band, The Brigadoons. For two full days, the grounds will be filled with traditional Scottish events, including heavyweights, fiddling, piping and drumming, as well as some newer cusoms like the Tug of War, the Harp Workshops and the Kilt Run. A spectacular Tattoo takes place Friday night with some of North America's finest entertainers. The Saturday closing massed bands performance is something that will stay with visitors forever. Live shows run throughout the weekend, with two stages set up - one at the Metcalfe Café, and the other in the Tent. As always, the Glengarry Highland Games is a family-friendly event, with mini Athletics and a Wee Bairns area set up with the little ones in mind.

THE FAMILY EVENT OF THE SUMMER

MONTREAL HIGHLAND GAMES & CALEDONIAN RUN

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5TH

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PIPING & DRUMMING HIGHLAND DANCING ATHLETICS FAMILY VILLAGE CELTIC VILLAGE



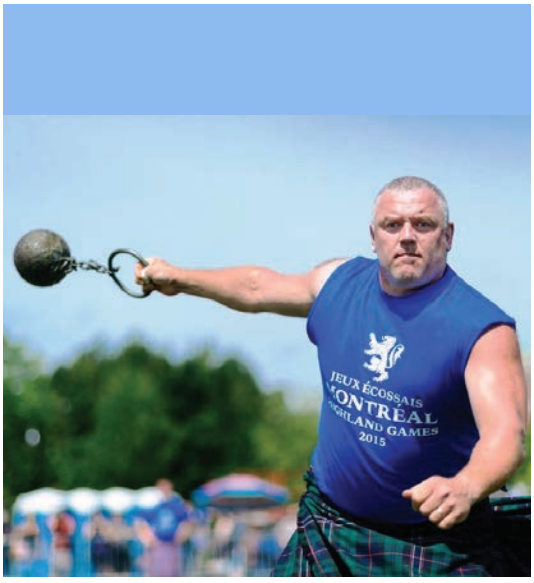






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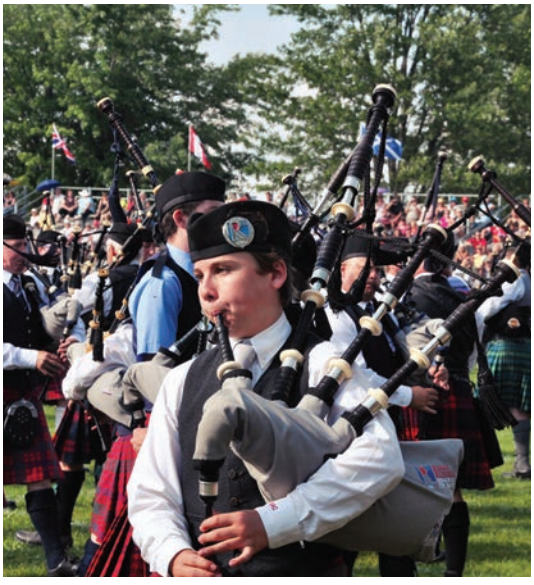
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Montreal Highland Games & Festival

August 5, 2018, Verdun, Quebec
www.montrealhighlandgames.com

The Montreal Highland Games calls itself "one of the premier events on the North American Highland games circuit." For over 40 years, the gathering has always taken place on the Sunday following the Glengarry Highland Games (in nearby Maxville, Ontario), making it a double-header weekend for many competitors. Before the competitions come to town, things kick-off on Thursday through the streets of Verdun with the Caber Parade, followed by a "Scots in the Park" celebration. Sunday's competitions include Highland dance, pipe bands, tug of war, and a range of athletics. Watch the very best Scottish athletes participate in seven traditional Highland events, including Putting the Stone (like a shot putt using a stone in place of the steel ball), the 56-pound weight thrown for distance and height, the 28-pound weight thrown for distance, the heavy hammer toss, the sheath toss, and the caber toss. There will be plenty of other activities to take part in as well; kid-friendly entertainment such as bouncy castles, face painting and 'medieval battles' take place at the Family Village, and one of the most popular fixtures - the Ceilidh Tent - features performers throughout the day and a post-closing "jam sesh." Don't miss the music of The Steel City Rovers and Mariner's Curse!



Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games

August 10-12, 2018, Fergus, Ontario
www.fergusscottishfestival.com

With attendance expected to top 20,000, this summer's Fergus Scottish Festival will once again shine a spotlight on the four pillars of traditional Scottish culture: Highland dance, heavies competitions, pipes and drums, and the gathering of more than 50 Clans. The quaint Ontario community will also be hosting the Canadian Scottish Athletics Federation 2018 Women's Championship at this year's event. The gathering's featured guest is Graham McTavish, best known for his role as Dougal MacKenzie on the hit STARZ television drama Outlander, based on Diana Gabaldon's wildly successful book series. As with past years, the Heritage and Clans venues have joined forces, partnering with the Ontario Genealogical Society to create an innovative mix of traditional and dynamic displays and events. The music is equally enticing, featuring popular Celt-rockers The Red Hot Chilli Pipers following the Friday night "Tattoo'd in Tradition" ceremony on the main field. Other music acts include fan favourites Albannach, as well as The Glengarry Bhoys. From heart-thumping Celtic tunes to traditional artisans, educational workshops and McKiddies fun, this year's edition of the festival promises a warm and wonderful experience for everyone.



An Rí Rá Montana Irish Festival

August 10-12, 2018, Butte, Montana
www.mtgaelic.org

Each year, The Montana Gaelic Cultural Society welcomes visitors from around the world to celebrate and commemorate Irish culture and heritage at their three-day signature event, the An Rí Rá Montana Irish Festival. Since its inauguration, An Rí Rá has cultivated an excellent reputation as one of the best Irish festivals in North America; the annual gathering has maintained a commitment to Celtic culture, actively nurturing its growth throughout the northwest. This year's event will continue that tradition, bringing in a swath of Irish activities and entertainment, including the offering of free Irish Gaelic classes for beginners, where visitors can brush up on the native tongue of their ancestors. As always, music and dance take center stage over the weekend, with a range of acts from both near and far. Musical headliners include Celtic duo Rory Makem and Donel Clancy, traditional Irish group Girsa, and the stirring all-male quartet the Dublin Gulch. Also appearing is the traditional Irish dance group, Tiernan Irish Dancers, as well as musical mainstays The Elders, who are currently on their Farewell Tour.


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Milwaukee Irish Fest

August 16-19, 2018, Henry Maier Festival Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
www.irishfest.com

This August, Milwaukee Irish Fest - the largest celebration of Irish music and culture in the world - returns with upwards of 100 musical acts scheduled to appear across 17 stages over four days. As always, the renowned annual gathering leaves no musical stone unturned, showcasing everything from traditional Irish music to contemporary Celtic rock. This year the event shines the spotlight on talent from Nova Scotia, the Celtic Heart of North America, featuring performances by the likes of fiddling sensation Natalie MacMaster, Celtic duo Mary Jane Lamond and Wendy MacIsaac, Cape Breton folk band Coig, and many more. Also taking the stage will be The Red Hot Chilli Pipers. Along with the amazing array of music, visitors can enjoy a variety of traditional and modern Irish grub - including culinary classics like birdies and Shepherd's Pie - with over 45 food locations to tickle the taste buds. Special guest chef, Alain Bosse (aka: the Kilted Chef), will be on hand as culinary ambassador to serve up the best in Atlantic Canadian cuisine. As if all that were not enough, the festival is also home to the Cultural Village, which hosts presentations, art, literature, vendors and more.



Bitterroot Celtic Games and Gathering

August 18-19, 2018, Hamilton, Montana
www.bcgg.org

The Bitterroot Celtic Games and Gathering is the largest of its kind in Montana and is held every third weekend in August at the Historic Daly Mansion. On Saturday, there will be live music all day on the entertainment stage, along with on-site pipe and drum competitions and Highland and Irish dance competitions. The adult Highland games competition is scheduled to take place throughout the grounds all day. Whisky lovers are in for a treat - there will be a Scotch vs. Irish whisky tasting, advanced "high-end" Scotch tasting, as well as a mead tasting in the special events tent. The back lawn area will feature sheep dog herding demos along with hurling demonstrations. Near the front porch of the mansion, Celtic cooking demonstrations will whet the whistle on both Saturday and Sunday. Festival-goers can expect more than 50 vendors showcasing traditional food and wares, as well as a beer tent stocked with local brews. The free ceilidh starts at 7pm and goes until 10pm. Sunday is the junior and kids' day for the Highland games, plus activities that the public can partake in, including a bonnie knees competition, a skillet toss, a 'beards 'n braids' competition, and a traditional tug o' war.



Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival

August 24-25, 2018, Jamestown, New York
www.facebook.com/JamestownRegionalCelticFestival

This summer, the Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival and Gathering of the Clans is returning to Maryville, NY, for its 13th year. The festival was designed - and continues to be hosted - by the 96th Highlanders Pipes and Drums, the region's finest and most renowned pipe band. Since the event's inception, the 96th Highlanders have brought thousands of Celts together each year for two days of music, dance, food and more. This year, Celtic rock band The Town Pants will be featured at the weekend's Friday night Kick-Off Party. After a few hours of proper Celtic celebration - and a good night's sleep - visitors can return the next morning to enjoy a full day of action, which includes everything from traditional athletic competitions to stirring musical performances from upwards of nine pipe bands and six solo Celtic musicians. The gathering will also showcase a fine variety of craft and food vendors, and the always-popular Beer Garden will be open for business all day. As always, the festival welcomes Celts from far and wide to come and celebrate their heritage at the Gathering of the Clans, which will see up to 25 Clans in attendance.



North Lanark Highland Games

August 25, Almonte, Ontario
www.almontehighlandgames.com

The North Lanark Highland Games - formerly the Almonte Highland Games - is one of Ontario's premier summer events. Celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2018, the one-day event - which welcomes upwards of 6,000 visitors annually - is the perfect place to celebrate the region's rich Scottish culture and heritage. Each year, pipe bands, dancers, and a bevy of heavy weight champions gather in the province's Ottawa Valley to perform, party, and put their Celtic pride on display. This year, the games will kick off mid-morning with a series of athletic events, including the Hammer Throw, the Sheaf Toss, and the always-popular Caber Toss, before getting into high gear with individual and group piping, dancing, and drumming competitions. The festival has been showcasing both emerging and experienced dancers since its inception in 1984 - awarding a "Dancer of the Day" each year hence - and visitors will again enjoy taking in traditional dance displays, which include Pas de Basques and High Cuts, The Highland Fling, and many more. As in past years, the celebration is a family friendly affair, with an on-site Mini Games set up to keep the energetic wee ones engaged and entertained.

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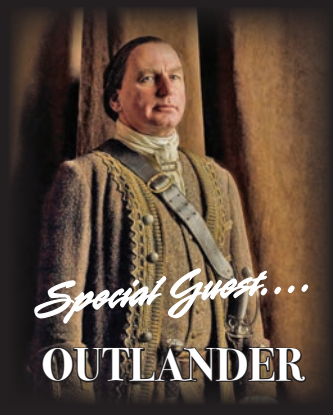
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Canmore Highland Games

September 1-2, 2018, Canmore, Alberta
www.canmorehighlandgames.ca

The Canmore Highland Games were originally established in 1991 as a way to nurture the growth of Celtic customs throughout Western Canada. Each year, thousands of attendees enjoy an amazing array of Celtic talent - from athletes to musicians to dancers - over two days of celebrations amidst the scenic splendor of Alberta's gorgeous Centennial Park in the Rocky Mountains. This year, the festivities begin with the 'Taste of the Highlands' - a spirited soiree where patrons can sample from over 90 local and imported scotches, whiskies and wines. The following day begins with a hearty pancake breakfast, followed by a variety of traditional activities, including the Highland Dance competitions, a drum major contest, piping competitions, and the always-popular Kilted Tug 'O' War. An evening Ceilidh brings the party to a rousing finale with a super selection of music, dance, pipe bands, and a headlining concert by Canada's very own Celtic rockers The Mudmen.



Scottish Gathering and Games

September 1-2, 2018, Pleasanton, California
www.thescottishgames.com

The Scottish Gathering and Games were originally developed by the Caledonian Club of San Francisco in the fall of 1866 when a group of 17 Scottish expats gathered together at Clem Dixon's Ale Vaults to discuss the idea of creating an annual celebration of Scottish pride. Within a week, the first Scottish Gathering and Games were held, consisting of a family picnic and nine athletic competitions. Over the years, The Scottish Gathering and Games has evolved into a signature two-day extravaganza. Today, the event remains one of the most exciting and engaging festivals in North America. This year, two very special VIP guests - Gary Lewis of the beloved Starz series Outlander, and Hafthor "The Mountain" Bjornsson of HBO's hit series Game of Thrones – will be in attendance to meet and greet fans. In addition, the festival has a strong selection of Scottish activities on the schedule, including Highland dancing, a kilted one-mile run, whisky tasting and more. The central event will be the Heavy Athletics, which will showcase a number of authentic Scottish sports, from the Caber Toss to Stone Putting.



Pittsburgh Irish Festival

September 7-9, 2018, West Homestead, Pennsylvania
www.pghirishfest.org

Mark your calendars! This September, the Pittsburgh Irish Festival is inviting you to "step into Ireland" for its 28th annual celebration at Riverplex at Sandcastle in West Homestead, Pennsylvania. This three-day event features live music and dance on four stages, more than 40 Irish and Celtic merchandise vendors, a Celtic Canine dog area, cultural displays and demonstrations, traditional Celtic cuisine and beverages, craft beers, and free whiskey tastings. There will also be crafts and games for the kids (children under the age of 12 get free admission). New festival fixtures for this year include ancient Celtic axe throwing, live Celtic art demonstrations, and Irish vodka. If you get peckish during the festivities, snacks from Ireland will be on offer, including candy, chocolate, potato chips, honey, and more. There will be plenty of music to please the ears too; this year's entertainment line-up includes the always-popular Gaelic Storm, who perform both traditional and original rock tunes. Donegal's all-sister quartet Screaming Orphans are also taking the stage, as are Doolin, Corned Beef & Curry, Donnie Irish, The Wild Geese and several others.

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Féis an Eilein

20th Annual Gaelic Concert Series ~ "Bu Deònach Leam Tilleadh"; July 17, 24, 31 & Aug 7, 14
28th Annual Féis an Eilein; August 21 – 25, Christmas Island, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia
www.feisaneilein.ca

The Féis an Eilein, located on Cape Breton's charming Christmas Island - the first place to host a Féis outside of Scotland - is the perfect place to brush up your Gaelic. Since its inception in 1991, the annual series of events has worked hard to educate, entertain, and engage visitors. This year, the Féis expects upwards of 2,500 guests to enjoy a variety of workshops in Gaelic, singing, step-dancing, and fiddling. Hosts of the event are happy to note that the Piper's Ceilidh is making its return after a short hiatus, with an evening that includes former Bean an Taighe Feis instructor, Anita MacDonald, her touring partners, Ben Miller and Zakk Cormier, her talented sisters, Lauren and Katherine, and more. The 20th Annual Gaelic Concert Series 'Bu Deònach Leam Tilleadh' ("I would willingly return") is also on the agenda for the coming months, where both emerging and established artists from Cape Breton's Celtic music scene will gather to perform at the island's Fire Hall. As always, a series of lessons will be held throughout July and August for students of all ages in fiddling, step-dancing, Gaelic and more.



Pacific Northwest Highland Games

July 28-29, Seattle, Washington
www.sshga.org

The Pacific Northwest Highland Games was founded in 1947 by a group of dedicated, local Scots. At that time the event was known as the Seattle Scottish Highland Games, and was held as a way to celebrate the organizers' shared Celtic heritage through music, dance, athletics, and more. Over the years, the festival grew to become one of the largest Celtic celebrations in all the American Pacific Northwest - thus earning a suitable change in name. This year will kick off Friday the 27th with an evening of true Scottish sights and sounds on the main field with the Rising of The Clans & Flaming Saltire where guests will enjoy the sweet melodies of the Clan Gordon Pipe Band, the Northwest Junior Pipe Band and the Tacoma Scots Pipe Band. Nearby, the Rampant Lion Pub hosts the evening's special Donald McRae Pub Piping Competition, followed by BOWI Band. Also on tap that night is an evening of Scottish Country Dancing at the Tilted Kilt Pub down the street. The rest of the weekend will see true authentic Scottish athleticism and competition, as the gathering plays host to the North American Scottish Athletics Championship, the U.S. West Coast Drum Corps Championship, as well as individual piping and dance competitions. Other great activities include a Kirkin' O' the Tartan, an evening Ceilidh, and the always-popular Parade of Clans.



New Hampshire Highland Games & Festival

September 21-23, Lincoln, New Hampshire
www.nhscot.org

In 1975, on the first Sunday of August, three dedicated Scots - John D. Murray, Evelyn Murray and Tom Lenthall - hosted a small gathering called the Clan Picnic. The goal of the gathering was to advocate the preservation of Scottish culture. The picnic was very well received, inspiring the creators to make it an annual affair. The first official New Hampshire Highland Games & Festival was held the following year and saw upwards of 800 guests - an impressive start for what would become one of the most notable Scottish celebrations in North America. Today - over forty years later - thousands of people of Scottish descent, and those who simply love all things Scottish, of all ages and backgrounds continue to connect from far and wide to share and celebrate Scottish culture and traditions. Held the third Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of September each year at Loon Mountain Resort in the New Hampshire White Mountains, the gathering features fun and fascinating events, from sheep dog trials and pipe, drum, and Highland Dance competitions to Scottish heavy athletics, including the caber toss, the stone carry, the hammer throw, and more. Other cultural offerings include world-class musical performances, free 'try-it' classes, whisky and beer tastings, educational seminars, and the pageantry of massed bands. There are more than 65 Scottish clans in the Clan Village, where festival-goers can learn more about Scottish heritage specific to individual clans. Visitors can browse and shop the Vendor Village, featuring over 30 merchants showcasing Scottish kilts, bagpipes, balmorals, and much more.

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and Gathering of the Clans

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Canmore highland games

September 1-2, 2018
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Taste of the Highlands
Saturday, September 1
5 – 9 pm

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The Highland Games
Sunday, September 2
8 am – 5:30 pm

Join us for a full slate of outdoor events comprising the Highland Games: pancake breakfast, highland dancing, piping and drumming, heavy sports, tug of war contest, sheep dogs, clan tents, Celtic vendors, Scotch tasting, traditional food and beverages, indoor beer garden with live music, food trucks, massed bands and more.



The Canmore Ceilidh
Sunday, September 2
6 – 11 pm

THE MUDMEN

The evening Ceilidh is a spirited celebration of music and dance, kitchen-party fashion. Scottish country dancing, Highland Dance, Irish Dance, guest pipe band, and live Celtic music by the Mudmen, and a variety of other acts for your entertainment all evening long!

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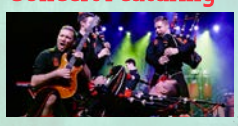
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August 18-19, 2018

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Free Ceilidh Party Saturday at 7pm

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Bitterroot Celtic Society

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251 Eastside Hwy, Hamilton, Montana

406-274-8886 • www.bcgg.org

North Lanark Highland Games

Saturday | August 25th 2018 | 9am – 6pm

N.L.A.S. Fairgrounds in Almonte, Ontario



www.almontehighlandgames.com



Vinegar of the Four Thieves

This recipe is perfect for summertime ~ enjoy it as both a vinaigrette and/or as an insect repellant.

During the 17th century, the bubonic plague ravished the city of Marseilles, France. It is reported that a band of thieves and other "ne'er-do-wells" remained immune from the plague by covering their bodies and faces in a vinegar that had strong antibacterial and antiviral properties. This allowed them to assail homes at night and rob graves at their leisure. The plague, which spread by insect bites, did not seem to have any effect on them. Finally, they were caught in the act, imprisoned, tried, and condemned to death. However, the courts offered the prisoners leniency - death by hanging rather than being burned at the stake - if they would reveal the secret of their resistance to the Black Death.

The thieves acquiesced and surrendered their recipe:

Take of rosemary, rue, wormwood, lavender, sage and mint, a large handful of each. Place in a stone jar and turn over it four quarts of strong vinegar, cover closely and keep near the fire for four days; and then strain and add one ounce of pounded camphor gum.

Here is my modern-day take on their powerful potion.



Ingredients

2 tbsp. chopped fresh lavender leaves
2 tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
2 tbsp. chopped fresh mint
2 tbsp. chopped fresh sage
2 tbsp. chopped fresh marjoram
2 tbsp. chopped fresh anise hyssop
4 cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed
1 quart apple cider vinegar

Instructions

Toss herbs and garlic together in a 1- quart mason jar, cover with vinegar and allow them to marinate for 7-10 days in a sunny location. After this period, strain the vinegar through a fine mesh sieve into a second clean mason jar. Store at room temperature until ready to use. Serve as you would a vinaigrette, or as a seasoning for braised meats and vegetables. This recipe has many uses: dressing a doorway to keep enemies at bay, as a natural cleanser for shiny counters, as a skin beautifier, and as a marinade for braised beef and vegetables. However, my favorite is that of insect repellant: simply mix ¼ cup of prepared vinegar in an 8 oz. spray bottle and fill with water.

Slàinte mhath! ~ Cabrini

P.S. I would like to thank Dominique Debarnot of France for his nice note on my Bara Brith recipe. He uses it to celebrate Celtic cultures in his teachings!



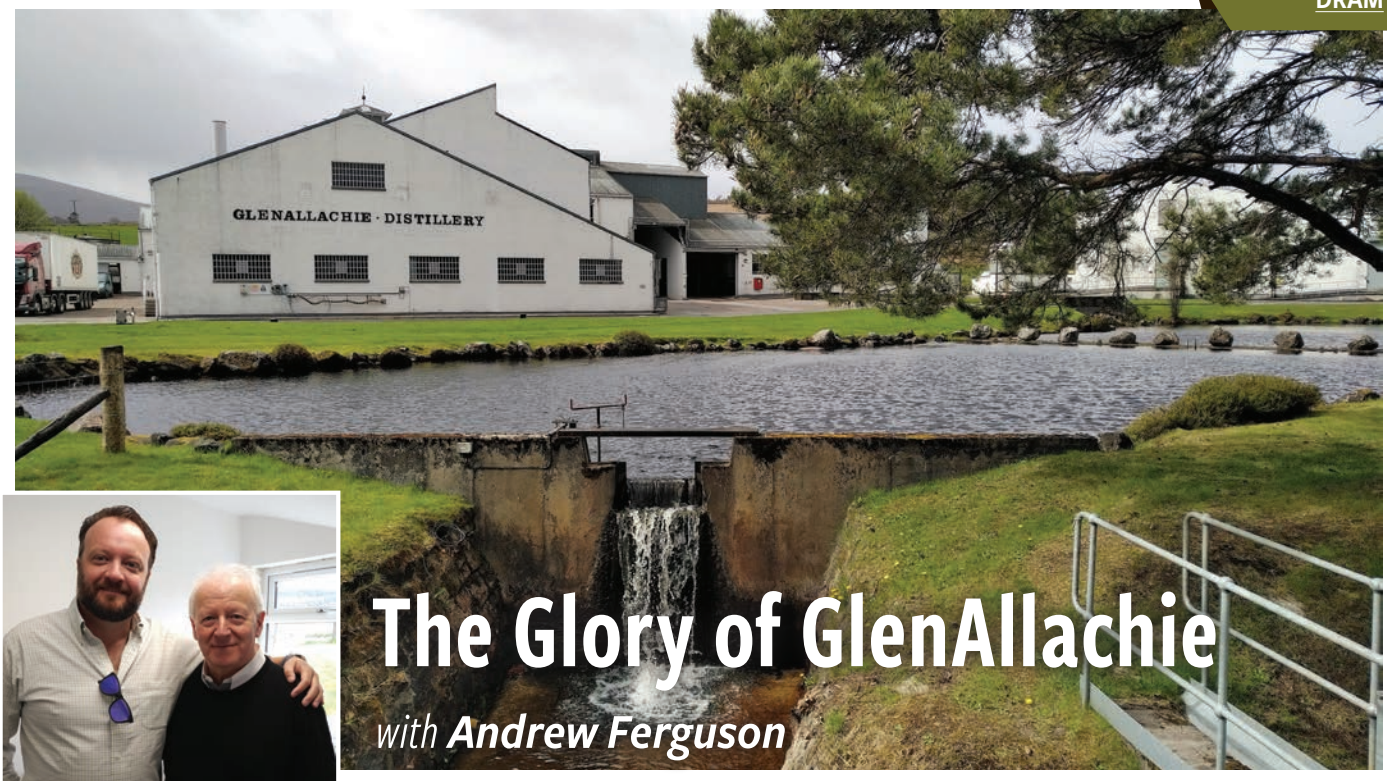
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The Glory of GlenAllachie

with ***Andrew Ferguson***

Like many an Anorach - an extreme subspecies of whisky nerd - I was gutted when I heard the news that Billy Walker and his team had sold the BenRiach Distillery Co. to Brown Forman two years ago. For the previous 12 years, BenRiach, and its sister distillery Glendronach, were two of the most dynamic and innovative of Scotland's distilleries.

They catered their brands not just to the general public but also to whisky aficionados and collectors, with interesting limited releases and lots of single casks. What I didn't know at the time was that Walker didn't want to sell. His partners, however, wanted out, and the Brown Forman offer was just too good to turn down.

I recently bumped into Walker during my first ever visit to the GlenAllachie Distillery. In the 12 years that I had worked closely with his other brands, our paths had come close to crossing, but we had never actually met. Walker and a new consortium were still digesting their purchase of the GlenAllachie Distillery in late 2017. After selling The BenRiach Distillery Co. the year prior, Walker told me that he was eager to find a new project. He approached Pernod Ricard, from whom he had bought BenRiach (2004) and Glendronach (2008), with a proposition to help them bring their Scapa single malt from the Orkneys more to the fore. The offer was politely rebuffed, but they came up with a tantalizing counter; would he be interested in buying GlenAllachie Distillery? The answer to that question should now be self-evident.

GlenAllachie Distillery was built in 1967 at the height of a major whisky boom, opening a year later just outside the Speyside village of Aberlour. The distillery was commissioned by Mackinlay McPherson, the company which had provisioned Sir Ernest Shackleton's expedition with whisky in 1907. Blended scotch whisky skyrocketed in demand through the 1960s and early 1970s, prompting producers to increase capacity and lay down ever-increasing stocks of malt whisky. The industry, however, way over-shot the mark.

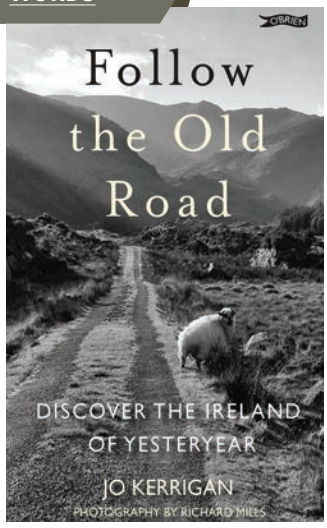
Distilleries that had either just gone through major upgrades, or which - like GlenAllachie - had only opened a couple of decades earlier, were permanently closed, mothballed or sold. GlenAllachie shut its doors in 1985 but would reopen just 4 years later under new ownership. The distillery was relatively new and modern by Scottish standards, and an attractive acquisition for a company looking for a workhorse to serve their blends.

Under the ownership of Pernod Ricard, the whisky became an important component of the Chivas Regal blends. Only a handful of official single malt bottlings were ever released, primarily under the Chivas Cask Strength label. These whiskies were not readily available, however, and independent bottlings have been surprisingly rare.

As part of the acquisition, GlenAllachie's new owners assumed nearly 50,000 casks of maturing spirit. True to fashion, Walker was quick to sort out which casks were maturing nicely, and which needed to be re-racked into better quality wood. As with Glendronach and BenRiach, different cask types were acquired for finishing and maturation. He has also tinkered with GlenAllachie's new make of spirit, telling me "the spirit is good, but I can make it even better!" GlenAllachie has always been known as a big, though soft and fruity malt. Under the new stewardship, GlenAllachie has slowed its fermentation and distillation to encourage an even fruitier, though more muscular spirit. The facility is also now laying down casks of peated spirit - about 20 per cent of total current production.

The distillery is not yet set up to receive visitors, though they have made some exceptions for friends in the trade. A visitor center is planned, but its construction is still some time off as well. Consumers won't need to wait too long to start seeing expressions of the whisky however; a core range of 10, 12, 18 and 25-year-old whiskies is being rolled out in Canada this fall. I had a chance to sample both the 12 and 25-year-olds with Walker at the distillery, and they did not disappoint!

www.theglenallachie.com
www.kensingtonwinemarket.com



Follow the Old Road

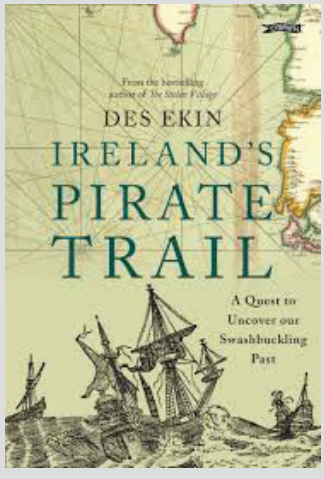
By Jo Kerrigan & Richard Mills
O'Brien Press
304 pp / €16.99

Journalists for both the Irish Examiner and the Evening Echo, Jo Kerrigan and Richard Mills were each born and raised in quaint West Cork on the Emerald Isle. Their first-hand experience with the country's rich and robust heritage is on full display in this terrific tome. With a strong balance of text and photographs, the prolific pair captures and conveys the spirit of the island's past - and its people - finding the essence of each in both Eire's better-known spots and its many quirky nooks and crannies. The result is more than a look back at 'ye' old country' - instead, as the past permeates the present, readers are reminded why Ireland is what it is today. A wonderful work that will surely inspire. ~ SPC

Ireland's Pirate Trail

By Des Ekin
O'Brien Press
368 pp / €16.99

More history lessons here from the folks at O'Brien Press in Dublin. This time, Northern Ireland journalist Des Ekin hops in his car and tours the Irish coastline looking for pirates. Drawing from local and area records, empirical evidence, passed-down oral accounts and more, the author does well to piece together a puzzling part of the country's swashbuckling past. Equally engaging is Ekin's personal touch; at times, the work reads like a diary of sorts, chronicling the scribe's own insights, opinions, impressions, and emotions - as good travel writing should - inviting readers along for the ride. While the Emerald Isle enjoys a tremendous mythology of pirating both at home and away, much as it was for the buccaneers themselves, the journey is the destination. ~ SPC





Ràithean airson Sireadh / Seasons for Seeking

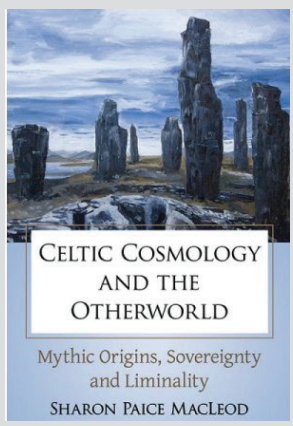
By Lewis MacKinnon
112 pp / $15.99

Nova Scotia's Lewis MacKinnon has done more to preserve and promote the Gaelic language than anyone, single-handedly carrying the torch of cultural tradition via a variety of mediums. His latest effort - and fourth book of Scottish Gaelic poetry - Ràithean airson Sireadh / Seasons for Seeking is a beautifully blended and bilingual selection of the scribe's own stanzas mixed with interpretations of the work of 13th century Persian poet and mystic Rumi. The clever collage comes across like a spiritual smorgasbord of sorts, with ideas and emotions jumping out at readers from each page. Neither for the faint of heart nor the empty of head, the well-crafted collection will certainly challenge audiences to reconsider their perspectives on the value of language, poetry, and life. ~ SPC

Celtic Cosmology and the Otherworld

By Sharon Paice MacLeod
McFarland Books / 277 pp / $39.95

Although the ethereal nature of the subject matter might leave some with questions or flat-out doubt, there is simply no denying author Sharon Paice MacLeod's qualifications; the Harvard-trained Celticist has taught Celtic literature, mythology, and folklore in universities for many years, and she is a renowned expert on Celtic religion and belief, early Irish and Welsh poetry and wisdom texts, cosmology, and visionary traditions. Using the most recently available research and linguistic translations to update readers - both everyday and academic – the scribe takes a fresh look at the beliefs and practices of the Celtic peoples during the Iron Age. Those with a passion for creation myths, cosmology, deities, priests, priestesses, and the rites of ancient magic will find the tome both insightful and illuminating. ~ SPC





Snow Patrol
Wildness

Those wondering what became of Snow Patrol finally have an answer as to why the Northern Ireland pop-rockers waited 7 years between studio recordings. It is an all-too-familiar story; rock star excess leads to addiction, alcoholism, mental and emotional illness, depression, writer's block, rehab and, ultimately, recovery. Gratefully, the band's vocalist and lyricist Gary Lightbody doesn't regale listeners with listless, twelve-step tales of life on and off the edge, instead crafting a 'post-crisis' masterpiece of musical magic that will wind and weave its tuneful tapestry around the heart. There is something to be said for the gift of 'poor man's therapy' - the rawness of this recording reminds us that it sometimes takes *une saison en enfer* before one can truly reach the promised land. ~ SPC

Eamon O'Leary
All Souls



Fans of Tom Waits, Townes Van Zant, Eliot Smith, JJ Cale, Simon & Garfunkel and Leonard Cohen will want to wrap their ears around Eamon O'Leary's stirring debut recording for Reveal Records. By turns tender and touching, the Dublin-born troubadour, who now resides in New York City's Lower East Side, reveals both light and dark sides of the soul with this haunting, beautiful, booze-infused collection of melodies. Make no mistake; the simplicity of these ten terrific tracks belies a deeper, more masterful craftsmanship - rarely heard in our age of obvious, over-the-top commercial clatter - where life, love, loss and redemption are found in the spaces between the notes. Wise, wily, and ever-so world-weary, the Irish songsmith is sure to become your new best-kept secret. ~ SPC



Calan
Deg | 10

I have been championing Calan for a number of years now; the gifted Welsh quintet has impressed more than this critic, however, with the likes of Sting and fellow countryman Bryn Terfel also singing their praises. And while I am not usually a big fan of compilation recordings, I am making an exception here; the oddly-titled Deg | 10 is an excellent recapping of the band's first decade, with eighteen songs - including live tracks and remixes - that will engage and entertain both new listeners and long-time fans. In truth, the talented Celtic-music traditionalists/revivalists could easily have released all 6 of their recordings as a 'Greatest Hits' box-set, as each of the albums is 'all killer, no filler' - yes, they are that good. ~SPC

Aidan O'Rourke
365: Volume 1

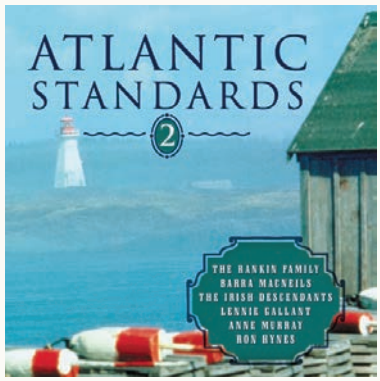


Last year, one of Scotland's finest musicians - fiddler and composer Aidan O'Rourke - came up with a novel idea; the BBC Folk Award winner, and founding member of renowned trad-bands Lau, Kan, and Blazin' Fiddles, took a full year off to write daily musical responses to author James Robertson's short story collection 365: Stories. After 12 months of sketching, O'Rourke emerged from self-imposed exile, chose 22 of those tunes, entered the studio with producer Kit Downes, and recorded a double album. In what is likely to be the first in a series of sonic soundtracks, O'Rourke leads listeners through his muse's lush literary landscapes with only the instrumental lilt of a Celtic fiddle, a piano, and an accordion bringing the scribe's words to life. ~ SPC

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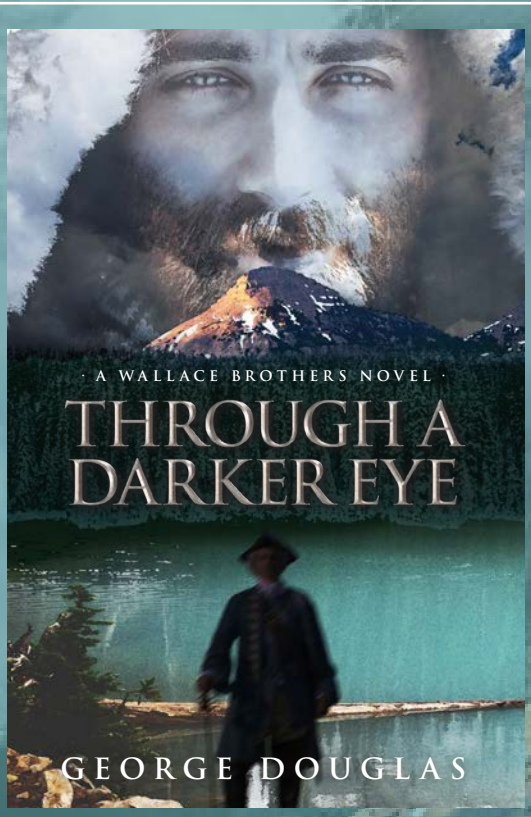


Great Big Sea, The Rankin Family, The Barra MacNeils, Ron Hynes, Natalie MacMaster, The Cottars, The Irish Descendants, Ashley MacIsaac, Lennie Gallant, Rita MacNeil, Rawlins Cross, Jimmy Rankin, Vishtèn,

J.P. Cormier, The Fables, Slainte Mhath, 1755, Anne Murray, McGinty, Banshee, Dave Gunning, Fleur Manville, Samantha Robichaud, Chrissy Crowley, The Navigators, Shanneyganock, Gillian Boucher, Celtic Connection.

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Through A Darker Eye is available online at: ChaptersIndigo.ca & Amazon.com

Nate Silva



Summers at piping camp may not have rocketed Nate Silva to popularity, but it won him some like-minded friends

"Let's say that I had just finally learned a new tune that was really tricky for me - I'd be itching to go to my friends at school and proudly talk about my triumph," recalls piper Nate Silva, 36, via email from his home in Salem, outside of Boston. "If I was lucky, they'd have politely said something along the lines of 'um dude, we were talking about football, okay?'"

The son of Portugese and Polish parents, and raised in southeastern Massachusetts, Silva was encouraged to explore music at a young age. After trying his hand at both the violin and the trombone, and even performing with a Polish folk ensemble, he picked up the pipes after being blown away by a performance in Summerside, Prince Edward Island.

His first instructor, the late Eric Armour of Rhode Island, had spent much of his youth attending summer camps at Colaisde na Gaidhlig/Gaelic College in St. Ann's on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, and it was there that Silva also found his passion.

"Being at the Gaelic College for the summer provided a very powerful combination for youngsters like myself - expert instruction coupled with peers."

At long last, the teenager felt free to share his piping experiences while also having great fun taking part in "all sorts of idiotic shenanigans."

"For someone like me, this was a recipe for something profound. I was desperate to return to the Gaelic College every summer to be reunited with my friends. What's more, many of those friends could be found at the local Highland games and festivals, so I certainly made sure to get to those events as well."

While the social aspects were enough to keep him returning for seven summers, he points out that renowned instructors such as Bob Worrall, Ed Neigh, Ken Eller, John Walsh, Fin Moore, Ryan MacDonald, and Bruce MacPhee helped him to develop his piping skills by leaps and bounds.

> *"Cape Breton is where I truly fell in love with the music and the culture, amplified by what became lifelong friendships."*

"That is what kept me playing in my formative years. Today, I am motivated by looking back on how monumental those experiences were for me and wanting to share them," says Silva, who recently began teaching the pipes.

Although he stopped competing at an early age, finding it too restrictive, he is taking a fresh shot at it and recently placed in Grade 3. If anything, it will make him a better resource for his students.

"I have had a couple of good showings starting out so I am hoping to move up to Grade 2 soon. I hated piobaireachd when I was a kid, but in starting up competitively again I had to give it a go. I stumbled across a tune that somehow really caught my attention - MacGregor's Saute. I love it, and that makes all the difference for me."

As a performer, he thrives on entertaining an audience, tapping or stomping his foot and even running in circles as he plays.

"I really gravitated toward the folk style of piping, particularly the Cape Breton ceilidh style; fast, up-tempo strathspeys, reels and jigs were my bread and butter for a good 20 years. More than anything, I like to be engaging - to show energy."

In his youth, Silva was drawn to the Celtic sounds of Seven Nations, Ashley MacIsaac, Richard Wood, Rufus Harley and Slainte Mhath.

"Bruce MacPhee's playing in Slainte Mhath probably had the most direct influence on my own sound and that continues to this day. Many people seem to be under the impression that bagpipes can't, or shouldn't be played with anything except themselves and maybe percussion. I have come to see that bagpipes, like any instrument, are only as limited as the musician allows them to be."

Today, he appears regularly with Cu Dubh, a high-energy, tribal-style bagpipe and drum group that plays festivals up and down the American east coast.

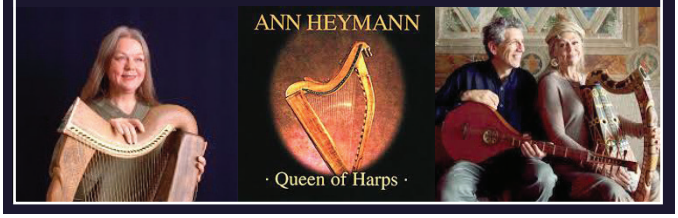
"Another career highlight for me was my time with the Highland Light Scottish Pipe Band. I showed up one day just hoping to have an outlet to play once or twice a week," he says, noting that he later became even more involved as both pipe sergeant and pipe major.

"And, through it all, I am still making lifelong, like-minded friends..."

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Emerald Rae

American fiddler Emerald Rae mixes it up on her latest recording



"My voice and songs are fairly contemporary, but they are heavily influenced by traditional, old-time tunes and Celtic music," shares Emerald Rae via email.

On her recently released self-produced, self-titled album - which includes an edgy take on the classic ballad Deep Salt Sea - the young fiddler seamlessly blends past and present.

"I think things need to be updated," she notes. "I see a lot of heritage-based promotion that excludes people who don't have Celtic blood. This is a subtle - but important - distinction, especially for someone like me who has no Celtic blood whatsoever. My roots are mostly Azorean Portuguese and French Canadian."

Descended from a long line of fishing folk in the historical seaport of Gloucester, Massachusetts - where she still resides today - Rae was encouraged to sing, dance, and play from an early age, simply to be part of the joy that music brought her family.

"I started singing as soon as I could talk and picked up the fiddle when I was seven years old. Shortly after that, I got into Scottish fiddling because my mother decided to learn the bagpipes."

Over her 20-year musical career, she added to her artistic arsenal, stretching out creatively.

"I learned how to step dance in multiple styles. My fiddle drones like the bagpipes or strums like a ukulele or jangles like a flamenco. I am always trying to push myself and I often have to learn a new skill to pull off the song I just wrote."

Somehow, she says, it all works.

"It is a bit like figuring out a logic puzzle to fit all the bits of inspiration together."

Unlike her previous album, If I Could Fly, where she played an array of instruments, Rae's new recording features only voice and fiddle. And though she has performed in many bands through the years, the new, pared-down sound has given her greater freedom to marry older and newer melodies.

"Celtic music is just as relevant as it has always been. Each new generation brings new ideas and new flavours, so it can mature like a fine wine. The biggest problem is that usually the older generation doesn't like to see it evolve...but it must.

> *"Tradition is a living, breathing thing that needs to grow and change and have air to breathe..."*

She estimates that she has learned thousands of Irish and Scottish tunes over the years.

"I love a solid pop song, but I have a thing for ballads too. A good song is in the ear of the listener. I am always curious to see what people think of my tunes and how they interpret them - it can sometimes be way more interesting than what I was thinking when I originally wrote it."

At the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Rae learned the art of improvisation and majored in film scoring - each discipline helping her to better understand and appreciate the practical aspects of creative composition.

"My love for contemporary music has always seeped out in my fiddle tunes and songs. The last two decades of my life has been all about abundance - something I like to bring to my songwriting."

To further fuel that lifelong passion, Rae regularly takes time to reflect.

"When you are in the game this long, you have to reassess your reasoning every so often. My enjoyment of it certainly keeps growing the more that I am able to fully express myself creatively."

The life of a travelling musician, she admits, is considerably less glamorous than people may think.

"It is definitely not for everyone and it is tough mentally. It is like being any entrepreneur – there is a mountain of challenges, but if you work hard the rewards are plentiful. For every tough day, there is a seriously fun day, so I can't complain.

"When you get on stage and play something you have made, that is yours, that took years to learn how to write and people love it – there is simply nothing better than that. And I am always grateful to have received so much love and support from other musicians through the years, as well as from music fans. We are like a big, global family."

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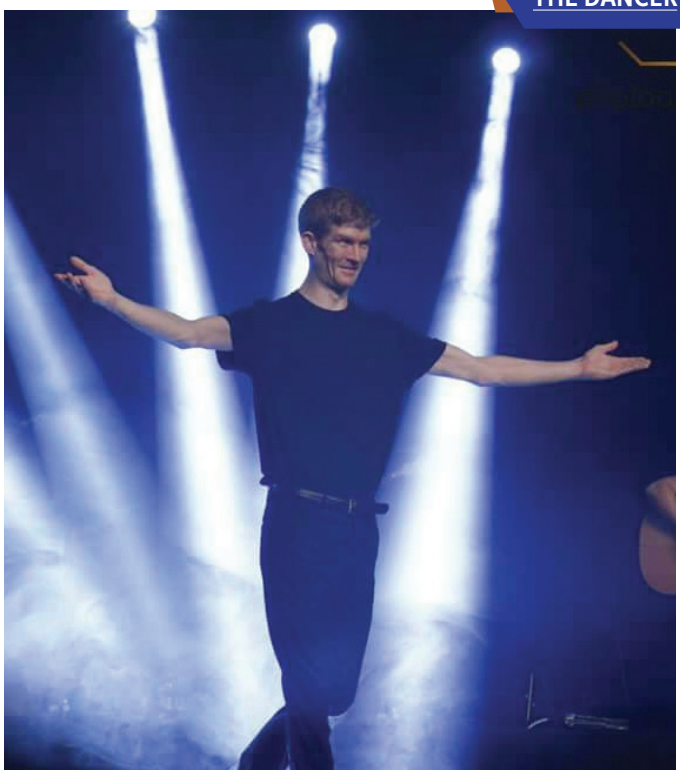
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Tom Conroy

Irish dance is a family affair for Tom Conroy





Thanks to the influence of his grandfather, Tom Conroy began dancing at the age of eight.

"My grandfather in Ireland had done the old style (or sean-nós) dancing," he shares via email, "and the tradition somehow carried on through the family; one cousin living in Chicago studied dancing with Michael Flatley when they were both kids, and another cousin living in Milton Keynes taught me some basic steps."

Upon learning of a proper dance school in his hometown of Lincoln in the English East Midlands, where he still resides today, Conroy "couldn't wait to get started," he recalls.

Over the next few years, the youngster studied with Caroline Devaney of The Devaney School of Irish Dancing, who had a profound influence on his artistic evolution.

"She would often just dance in class to teach, and she really encouraged her dancers to perform by organizing lots of shows for the public."

Now 30, Conroy has been dancing professionally for 13 years. He placed third at the British National Dance Championships in Blackpool when he was 16, and within a year he was touring on an international scale. His first show was with Irish dance group Gaelforce Dance in Tallinn, Estonia, where he estimates that 8,500 people were in the audience.

"I was 17 when I joined the troupe, and 3 weeks after beginning rehearsals - and injuring myself - we started a two-month tour of eastern Europe, and then Taiwan a few weeks later. It was the start of some amazing dancing memories."

Since then, he has toured with several shows, including Ontario-based The Magic of Ireland, which has taken him to France, Germany, Belgium, and Denmark. Later, when Gaelforce started touring a new production called Dance Masters, he found himself back on the road.

Conroy made the move to Dublin in 2008, living there for several years. During that time, he performed three times a day, seven days a week in hotels and bars for a show called Celtic Rhythm.

With all the heavy leg work, his style evolved naturally over time.

"When competing, I was strictly traditional step-dancing. Now when I perform I am a lot more relaxed - almost like sean-nós - and try to mix different styles of percussive dance, including tap."

> *"As such, the rewards of the vocation have changed; before I was performing for places at competitions, while today I perform simply to entertain people.*

"And seeing children watching you dance with admiration is much more rewarding than any trophy or medal from a feis."

Conroy is now back in Lincoln, where he has worked as a professional dance teacher for the last three years. The calling comes naturally to him; as a teenage student, he enjoyed helping his instructor with her young students.

These days, his own pupils "consist of some older girls who used to dance with my teacher, some beginner adults, and a number of younger 'new' dancers."

He notes that most of his students are surprised by the amount of work that is involved in practicing and competing. As it was for himself as a young dancer, however, all that hard work eventually pays off.

"I have had one dancer rank fourth in the world championships, and another who ranked twelfth in their respective age groups. My students can expect a lot of rhythm and clever timing in their dancing, a lot of fun during classes and other activities, as well as opportunities to perform at local events such as St. Patrick's Day gigs, festivals, fairs, and more. No matter what their age or ability, I am very proud of all of them."

In addition to teaching, Conroy also wants to do more to promote Celtic culture in his home community.

"I am hoping to increase the popularity of Irish events in the city, and perhaps even start an Irish society. A Saint Patrick's Day parade would be a great addition also."

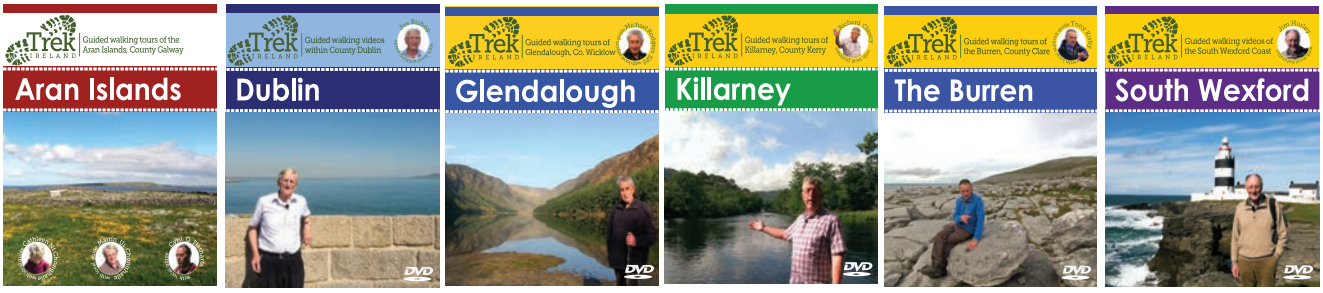
His partner, Sinéad, has also started dancing, and the plan is for Conroy Irish Dance to become a family business - "with our future family all being dancers."

"Blame it all on my grandfather," he smiles. "If it weren't for him, we wouldn't be doing what we do now..."

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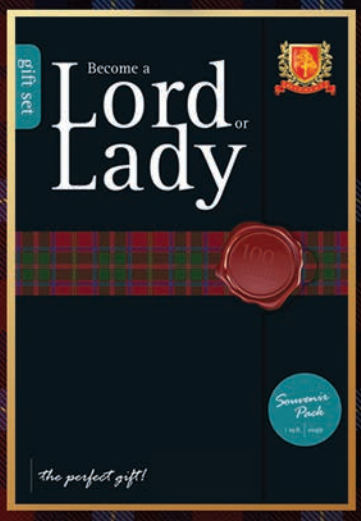
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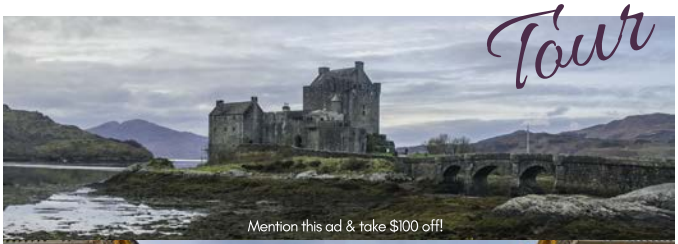
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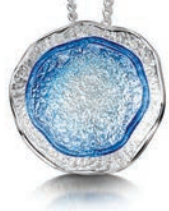


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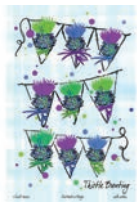
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Jon McIntosh; 1947-2018



Photo cedit: Hays Blinckmann

To the strains of "Highland Cathedral," a kilted bagpiper led a procession of family and friends of Jon McIntosh from St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Key West across the street to an Art Studios reception to continue the celebration of the life of the beloved illustrator, painter and graphic designer.

Jon Charles "Tosh" McIntosh passed away on March 12 at the age of 70. His sudden death after a short illness stunned the little island, where he was a well-known and well-loved presence for more than 20 years.

On the sunlit afternoon of April 14, inside the grand 19th Century white church at the corner of Eaton and Duval streets, it was raining tributes. During the Liturgy of the Resurrection, among readings from the Scriptures, prayers, hymns, laughter and tears, there were torrents of praise, gratitude and affection for the man who touched so many through his art, humor and kindness. Jon was described over and over as funny, sensitive, creative, genuine and loyal...a loving father, sibling, grandfather and friend.

Meg Anderson remembered a "remarkable" brother - "loving, funny, curious and exuberant - who saw colors I never could." He built castles in the sand near their grandparents' hotel on Lake Erie in Michigan..."His fiercely protective and nurturing nature would carry over to his roles as a parent and grandparent."

Forgan McIntosh, the beneficiary of his "father's rose-colored glasses" described a parental bond "built on bedrock – deep friendship and mutual respect." He said his father, with a beautifully creative mind, face and hands, possessed a friendliness, warmth and good nature - "things that all the education in the world could not teach."

In an emotional tribute, Jon's stepdaughter - oil painter and author Hays Blinckmann - injected a moment of levity when she recalled his describing their 27-year connection as "the longest relationship he ever had." She earlier wrote poignantly in Keys Weekly, "He was my stepfather, my father, my best friend, often my cohort, my sidekick...We joked that we got each other in the divorce when he and my mother separated; it was a win-win...he was my person."

As I sat with light streaming gently through the stained-glass windows among hundreds of people who had known Jon longer and better than I did, I was grateful for the brief bright moment in time - three years that felt like three minutes - I had the privilege of working with him.

Jon's magical presence entered my life when I was at a low point, after the death of my husband, Stewart - a Scot. I had adopted two white Angora-mix littermates from the New York Humane Society and wrote a silly cat travelogue, "The Adventures of Angus and Edmond" about the search for their Scottish roots. I needed someone to illustrate it and a mutual friend introduced us via e-mail. We "clicked" immediately and a joyous collaboration was born.

I learned that Jon had graduated from Rhode Island School of Design with a BFA in painting. Co-owner of an art gallery, he was a multi-award-winning artist whose work was prominent in corporate and private collections in the U.S. and U.K. He'd had exhibitions in Providence, Boston, Martha's Vineyard, London and Puerto Rico, and his editorial work appeared in publications such as Atlantic Monthly, Esquire, Offshore and The Boston Globe. He had illustrated children's books, co-authored a comic strip and drew political cartoons. His commercial assignments included NASA, Wang, Converse, Radisson, Gillette, Bose, etc.

Wow! I could not believe that this amazing and accomplished individual was willing to illustrate my silly little book. Icing on the cake was his Scottish heritage. Jon's family was from the Moy area, and his grandfather came to the U.S. by way of Nova Scotia in the late 1800s. As he would later tell Celtic Life International in an interview, "At an early age my grandfather taught me about our clan and heritage. He even made it possible, when I visited him in the summer to learn the pipes. I have made many trips to Scotland and visited with the Mackintosh of Mackintosh. I was even married in Scotland at my friend's castle in Ayrshire."

E-mails flew back and forth for several months, and by the time we met face-to-face - it was exactly an hour before our first book signing at Island Books on Fleming Street - we felt like we knew each other. With a strong mental chemistry, we were already buddies.

In person, Jon was every bit as charming, witty and delightful as his illustrations.

It was the start of a collaboration that would become a series of travel adventures that took the intrepid feline brothers to Scotland, Key West and Italy, with numerous stops in between. And it nearly took them to Spain, the fourth book on which he had just begun work.

In every adventure, Jon made Angus and Edmond's antics come to life in the most charming, mischievous and hilarious ways – always exactly as my words had intended, and more.

I feel blessed by his professionalism, brilliance, high-energy enthusiasm, good humor, kindness and generosity. I am proud and grateful that he so magnanimously shared his talent with me.

Jon had the gift of making everyone he came in contact with feel special. And in that way he himself was a gift.

He is worthy of accolades far greater than I am able to bestow upon him, but this one is personal. From me to the Magical Mr. McIntosh, I offer this Scottish toast:

"Here's tae us, wha's like us... Damn few..."

And now...one fewer. Rest easy, my friend...

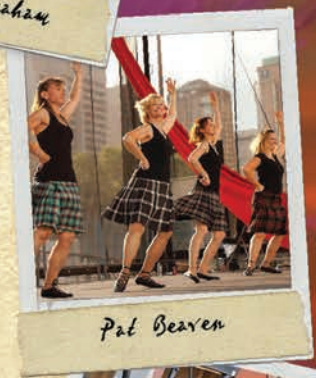
~ Gunna Dickson




Yemima Blackie Sutherland-Graham and Jean Darling Sutherland


Pipe Major Donald Sutherland (R-L-R)


Sandy Graham


Pat Beaven

The Annual Beach Celtic Festival

What started out as a one-day event to honour the legacy of Producer and Beacher Sandy Graham's family has turned into a popular yearly event that is held over two days nestled in the Beach at Kew Gardens, Toronto's very own Brigadoon.

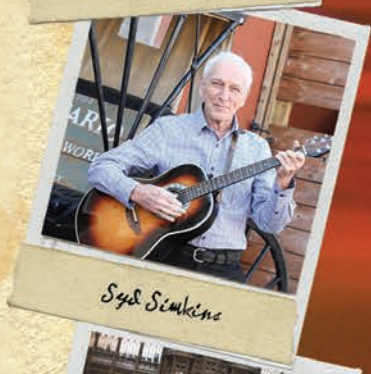
Every Year dancers, pipers, vendors, singers, songwriters, dogs, kids, families all converge in this park to celebrate the diaspora of the Irish, Scottish and Welsh immigrants who make up the mosaic of Canada.

This year is the 15th Annual Beach Celtic Festival on Saturday 8 and Sunday September 9, 2018, 9 am - 7 pm daily. Admission is free!

Our entertainers donate their time and talent to make this event happen every year so support us by coming out to celebrate traditions of the Celtic Community.

www.thecelticfestival.com


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