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Fáilte!

It was a wonderful summer and as we recall our Celtic experiences of the season - the Highland Games, Celtic weddings and yes, Irish whisky – summer was too short. One of the highlights was the ScotDance Championships in Montreal. Our hats are off to the Moms, Dads, teachers, volunteers, and in particular, the young competitors who made the event a resounding success. Congratulations to all.

With so many diverse Celtic events occurring around the world, it begs the question, “What is Celtic culture?”

A culture can be described as the customs, beliefs, social interactions and material traits of a religious, social or racial grouping – the things, places and practices that define who we are as individuals, as communities and civilizations. It is that which we want to keep, share and pass on.

Celtic culture is ancient, dating back to the late Bronze Age and because it is so old, it is not easy to define. Yet today, it is a living, vibrant force in the modern world – thriving in many unsuspected places through its art, music, writing and spirituality.

The name “Celt” originated with ancient Greeks who called the “barbarian peoples” of Central Europe, “Keltoi”. The early Celts were a broad cultural-linguistic group of constantly changing tribal nations. A warrior culture was at the heart of Celtic society, but their aggressive tendencies were balanced by great sensitivity to music, poetry and philosophy. Partly because of conflict, they kept moving throughout Europe, however, Celtic culture has never been eliminated and continues to progress with modern times.

There is no such thing as a “Celtic Race”. Today, the seven Celtic Nations share a heritage with the common thread being a linguistic link. This is the definition used by Celtic scholars who take “Celtic” to refer to a family of inter-related languages and the cultural traditions expressed through those languages, all of which descended from a common ancestor.

It is our desire for Celtic Life International to be a living expression of modern Celtic culture. Some recent contributors to Celtic Life have generated lively discussion about Celtic identity with their questioning of what constitutes authentic Celtic heritage, tradition and culture. Celtic culture may not be easy to define and may be open to differing interpretations, however, it remains an excellent topic of discussion and Celtic Life welcomes the opinions of readers – just contact our editor at editor@celticlife.ca.

With the August sunsets long faded, we now welcome the vivid colours of fall and among them, Celtic events, such as the New Hampshire Highland Games and the Celtic Colours International Festival in Cape Breton. We encourage you to participate and experience all the wonderful aspects of this ancient Celtic culture.

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



INSIDE

Volume 27/No. 3 / Fall 2013

Special

- 55.** The Irish Rovers
- 59.** Billy Connolly
- 63.** Celtic Studies

Stories

- 15.** Ian Buchanan
- 17.** Celtic Tenors
- 19.** Stuart McLean
- 24.** Gridiron Celts
- 26.** Celts on Ice
- 28.** Celts in Space
- 30.** Remembering Seamus Heaney
- 35.** Sea Spirits
- 44.** Gaelic Loanwords
- 50.** Starlings

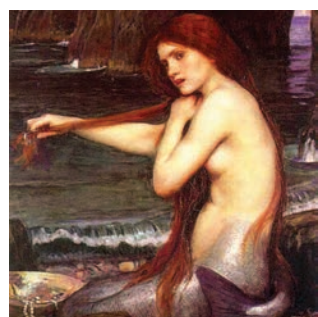
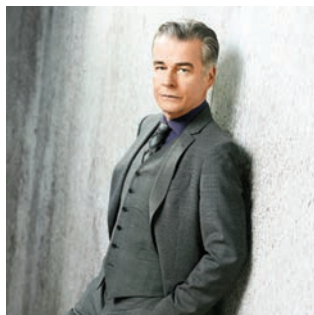
Style

- 52.** Calum Harvey

Standards

- 9.** First Word
- 11.** Up Front
- 13.** Seven Celtic Questions
- 75.** Dram
- 77.** Slainte
- 79.** Cabrini's Kitchen
- 83.** The Piper
- 85.** The Fiddler
- 87.** The Dancer
- 91.** All in the Family
- 98.** Last Word

Our Fall 2013 cover



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DE *tha* DOL



The Queen Celebrates Abbotsford

Abbotsford, the Borders home of the great Scottish writer, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) has re-opened to the public following a £12 million transformation. Her Majesty the Queen re-opened Abbotsford on July 3, 22 months after it closed to the public and 180 years after it first opened to visitors. The Queen was welcomed by staff and trustees of The Abbotsford Trust, the charitable organization that runs the former home of the author of Waverley, Ivanhoe and Rob Roy. The event followed a five-year campaign to save Abbotsford and its collections after the death of Dame Jean Maxwell Scott, the last of Scott's descendants to live in the house. Over 4,500 objects from Scott's collections have been catalogued, cleaned and, where necessary, repaired. A new visitor centre has also been added. Fundraising continues as an additional £2 million is needed to create an endowment. Donations are being matched by the Heritage Lottery Fund. www.scottsabbotsford.co.uk

Scottish Ospreys introduced to Spain

Twelve young Scottish ospreys have been released on the north Spanish coast, during the first stage of a five-year project to restore breeding ospreys to the Basque country. Last year, the Biscay Regional Council and the Urdaibai Bird Center consulted Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) about the project. SNH issued a special license to Roy Dennis of the Highland Foundation for Wildlife to collect the young ospreys from nests with more than one young in the Scottish Highlands and Moray. The move follows the successful reintroduction of ospreys to Andalusia in southern Spain. The birds had been extinct for many years in mainland Spain. Ospreys became extinct in Britain in the early 20th century, but since the 1950s they have spread in Scotland, where over 200 pairs now nest. www.snh.gov.uk, www.roydennis.org



Cemetery establishes social history of Limerick

The city of Limerick has launched an online, searchable database of 70,000 people buried at Mount St. Lawrence Cemetery in the first of several projects designed to document the city's social history. It took staff two years to transcribe thousands of handwritten records of those buried at the cemetery between 1855 and 2008. "Our cemeteries and the stories surrounding those who are buried there contain vital links to our past..." said Mayor Kathleen Leddin. The cemetery has been the primary place of burial in Limerick City since it opened in 1849. www.limerick.ie/cityarchives

Wales' Boston Manuscript Now Online

Digital images of the Boston Manuscript, a rare 14th century document containing the Dyfed version of native Welsh law can now be viewed online. The manuscript returned home from the U.S. to the National Library of Wales after being bought for £541,250 at auction at Sotheby's last year. Since then, various copies have been made. Paul Russell, Professor of Celtic Studies at the University of Cambridge, was the library's academic advisor on the manuscript. "The teaching version is a masterpiece," he said. "It will give students far greater understanding of how a medieval manuscript was created." www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=6177

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first word

The Irish Economy is on the road to recovery and this is borne out by the fact that we now have one of the highest economic growth rates in Europe. Latest forecasts suggest that the economy will grow by 2.7 per cent in 2014 – not Tiger rates of growth but impressive growth indeed. That is not to say that the worst is over; we still need to solve the deficit with difficult budgets in 2013 and 2014; we still need to fix the banks and provide relief to those who cannot pay their mortgages and we still need to invest in infrastructure to bring tradesmen and construction workers back to work.

Ireland is a small open economy; one that has five key advantages for business investment: we have talent; a favourable tax rate; a modern track record; a proven ability in technology, and of course, we are a tenacious nation. Another key advantage is that we have a phenomenal diaspora across the world – people who love their country of birth or place of lineage. This diaspora will assist Ireland, but it is up to Ireland to ask for assistance. And it's a different form of assistance to that provided by those who emigrated in the 1950s and 1960s; we need their ideas and investment.

As we all know, 2013 is the Year of The Gathering in Ireland and for Cork, Rebel Week from October 14-20 will be the flagship Gathering event for the city and county; a week-long celebration of culture, hospitality, sport, business and community. Cork people are never shy about their roots or about the achievements of the largest county in Ireland. We intend to bring many of our sons, daughters, sisters and brothers back to their roots by the Lee.

Many of our diaspora would not recognize the Cork of today in comparison with the Cork of the 1960s and 1970s. Industry is dominated by high-value products and services are led by a vibrant Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) sector. But they would recognize some aspects:



*John Mullins,
Chairman of the
Global Cork Economic
Forum, explains the
importance of tapping
Ireland's diaspora for
economic ideas during
the upcoming
Cork Rebel Week.*

unemployment emigration and recession. It is for this reason that a Global Cork Economic Forum will be held on October 17 and 18.

As chairman of the forum, I am establishing a local steering board to organize the event and ensure that we tap into to as many of our business diaspora as possible. We are establishing a database with the help of local business groups and other intermediaries, but we need the Cork public into assist us in inviting back our best talent.

The objective of this forum is to ensure that we invite the best business talent in various sectors, including agrifood, pharmachem, ICT and energy as well as tourism, entrepreneurship and research. We want to focus on ideas that could benefit the region and create jobs for those who live here and those who would very much like to return.

The Global Irish Economic Forum, first held at Farnleigh in 2009, created the concept of The Gathering and it is already reaping dividends for the country's tourism, conference and leisure industries. I am confident that we are at the start of an economic upswing, one supported by many commentators. Ahead

of that upswing, the Cork region must consolidate what it has as a region and begin to focus on new businesses and ideas that will engender employment. We must reduce the number of forced commuters to other European countries, the number of young, talented people who are emigrating and the lines queuing for social welfare every week.

Since the recession of the eighties, the Cork region has proven its resilience. We are proud of the standard of education and research in our colleges and schools. We have transformed our economy in the last thirty years and we can transform it again in the next thirty. We need those Cork citizens who are working in larger markets, in larger businesses with larger vision to come back and help us devise the way forward. The Global Cork Economic Forum will give us the chance to gather ideas for a path to renewed economic prosperity and meaningful employment for those who have left through our airport or who are without jobs.

www.corkrebelweek2013.com





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UP FRONT



When you make a purchase at a Celtic shop, you gain much more than a product, said Anne Tarrant, executive director of the North American Celtic Trade Association (NACTA). "There's an awful lot more to our members' products than just visual appeal. They all have a story and some intrinsic Celtic element," she said. "When you shop online, you're not going to hear the story or feel the passion the shop owner has for what he or she is doing."

Tarrant, who emigrated to the U.S. in 1987 from Ireland, is passionate about encouraging people to support their local Celtic businesses. "They're in such a niche market and need your support," she said. "When you support them and their products, you are supporting your culture and heritage in our local communities."

Years ago, when she lived in Ireland, Tarrant was the owner of a sheet metal manufacturing business. "I was very much a producer," she said. "Things have changed, but I certainly have an appreciation for the manufacturing and craft process."

Later, Tarrant worked for the Irish Business Organization in New York City. But for the last decade, she has been working with NACTA to help their members do more business. The organization began 20 years ago as a loose association of a small number of shops. In 1999, NACTA became a more formal group and hired Tarrant to create a serious trade association for the Celtic market.

NACTA has two branches: one for retailers in the U.S. and Canada and one for the suppliers to that market, who are located in the U.S. and the Celtic nations. The latter includes craft people, manufacturers, service providers and others who have an interest in the Celtic market in North America. NACTA runs a variety of programmes for its retailers and suppliers.

"These include basic things a trade association would do in terms of connecting members to each other," said Tarrant. "It's great for the members to have someone else in another state to

share their ideas amongst. The ideas one person has in Florida can be just as relevant to a store in Toronto."

NACTA runs a trade-only show to present educational seminars to its members, both retailers and suppliers, and to get them together to build stronger business relationships with fellow business people.

"Sharing ideas becomes very important when there are common issues," said Tarrant. "But we're fed by our members and what they tell us they need. We try to fulfill that for them."

One of the more popular programmes NACTA is now running involves travel. "When a customer walked into a Celtic shop, that person is likely to have an interest in travelling to the Celtic nations and visiting Ireland and the British Isles. We set up an arrangement 10 years ago with CIE Tours International whereby our member stores can sell travel to Ireland and the Celtic nations. Basically, they'll give the customers information then they call us to plan their trips and give them a little more personal attention."

NACTA also runs a contest called Home to Ireland, where members can enter their customers to win a trip for two to Ireland. "That's really popular with customers, of course," said Tarrant.

Coming from Ireland herself, Tarrant is fascinated by the intense interest North Americans have in Celtic history and culture.

"It's amazing for me to come to the U.S. where everyone here is from somewhere else," she said. "I don't know of any other ethnic group that has so much interest in it. But the Irish and Celtic diaspora still have a very vibrant and deep-rooted culture. There is also interest in Celtic culture from people beyond those countries. There's some kind of draw to Celtic history and heritage, whether it's Celtic design that's represented on different products with huge meaning and thousands of years of heritage or something else. It's unique and special and I think it's wonderful to present it to people and celebrate that."

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Scots will be riding a wave of celebrations next year when countrywide festivities will include the year-long national Homecoming, the Commonwealth Games, the Ryder Cup and big cultural celebrations in Glasgow. Homecoming Director Caroline Packman reveals her own feelings about the months ahead and discusses what it means to be Scottish.



SEVEN CELTIC QUESTIONS

What is your own ethnicity/heritage?

With a surname like Packman it's perhaps less obvious than some others! On my father's side I've traced my ancestry back six generations to the 1770s - all were crofters and farmed land only a few kilometers from where my parents still live in the north-east of Scotland. I recently found out that my great-grandfather's brother emigrated to Canada, so I've discovered a whole new branch of my family in Perth, Ontario. On my mother's side, my ancestors immigrated to Scotland from the Lake Como region of northern Italy in the 1830s and established a successful watch-and-clock-making business, until most of a later generation emigrated from Scotland to Australia.

Why are those roots important to you?

Tracing my ancestral roots was exceptionally rewarding as discovering the connections and my family background gave me some great anecdotes to share with my family. Discovering your roots enables you to become aware of who you are as a person. It also made me realize that family history is more than just names and dates; tracing my roots gave me an insight into who my ancestors really were, where they lived, and what they did.

What does it mean to you to be of Celtic heritage?

I believe my heritage is a part of my identity. Although I love travelling and have lived and worked extensively overseas, it's still nice to come home and it makes me feel proud to say I am Scottish. It's always amazing to see the reception and engagement from people overseas when they find out you are from Scotland.

How are you involved with the Celtic community?

It is mostly through my work. As Director of Homecoming Scotland 2014, it's my role to ensure we showcase hundreds of events across the country and position Scotland on the world stage as a dynamic and creative country with a rich history and culture. A good example of this is through our continued work with clan and highland games associations, both at home and overseas, to ensure that Scottish culture is at the very heart of our Homecoming Scotland events.

Why is it important to keep Celtic culture alive?

I think it's important to keep all cultures alive. However, people of Scottish descent who have visited Scotland to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors, tell us that it's often one of the most powerfully engaging adventures they have ever undertaken. The archives and data that chronicle the lives of their ancestors, the castles, the crofts and the churches that provide background to their lives are still here to discover.

The connections to that history will be highlighted through the Homecoming Scotland 2014 programme of events. There's also the importance from a business perspective – due to the reach and engagement of Celtic culture, we shouldn't forget that strong trade links have been forged which generate significant revenue for many businesses.

Are we doing enough to preserve and promote that culture?

Absolutely, I think there are some great examples of how Scottish culture is being promoted and preserved and 2014 is a prime example of this. The Homecoming programme itself aims to do just that by showcasing Scotland's traditional and contemporary culture, both through new festivals, music, visual arts and heritage. There is also the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme. This vibrant creative festival will occur in Glasgow and across Scotland to complement the largest multi-sport event the country has ever seen – the Commonwealth Games. The Glasgow programme will encompass the broadest possible range of cultural expression – including performing arts, visual arts, literature, traditional arts, architecture and design.

What could we be doing better?

I think we are in great shape for promoting culture both at home and overseas. Everything that's planned for 2014 will showcase our rich history and culture. For me, it's not really about what we can do better; it's about building on these opportunities and ensuring we create a lasting legacy for Scotland. The country has much to look forward to in 2014, but most importantly Scotland looks forward to welcoming visitors, the people who will make next year extra special!

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Ian Buchanan

You see, Buchanan, who had played the notorious romantic adventurer from 1986-1989, was recast with actor Greg Beecroft, but when fans never warmed up to someone else in Duke's shoes, the show killed off the character. But this being daytime, death rarely sticks.

"This go-around has been great..." Buchanan said. "I love what they are doing with him and the show, looking back at those from the '80s who were important..."

Born in Hamilton, Scotland and raised among six siblings in East Kilbride, Buchanan's father was a foreman and his mom a nurse.

"I have happy memories from my summers, the days were very long and we would spend them bicycling and swimming in the river," he shared. "Winters were never my favourite because the days were very short and we went to school in the dark, but everyone was nice, and people didn't lock their doors and generally felt safe."

His first career choice was not acting, but the hospitality industry and he worked as a bellhop at 14 and studied hotel management in Scotland.

While on vacation in Spain, Buchanan was discovered by a photographer and was soon working as a fashion model. After 10 years of modelling, Buchanan made his way to acting, studying at New York's Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute.

"I didn't set out to make acting my career. It was something that I was drawn towards," he said. "I was always in plays in school and when I became a model I graduated into commercials and it seemed like something I would like..."

Early on, he was seen at Manhattan's The Actors Studio by ABC brass who wanted him to play opposite British-born Finola Hughes as Anna's love interest in *General Hospital*.

"...It was a lot of hard work and very exciting and I was oblivious to how big it all was. To be part of a super-couple (with Hughes) was a lot of pressure, but we kept it light and had a lot of fun with it."

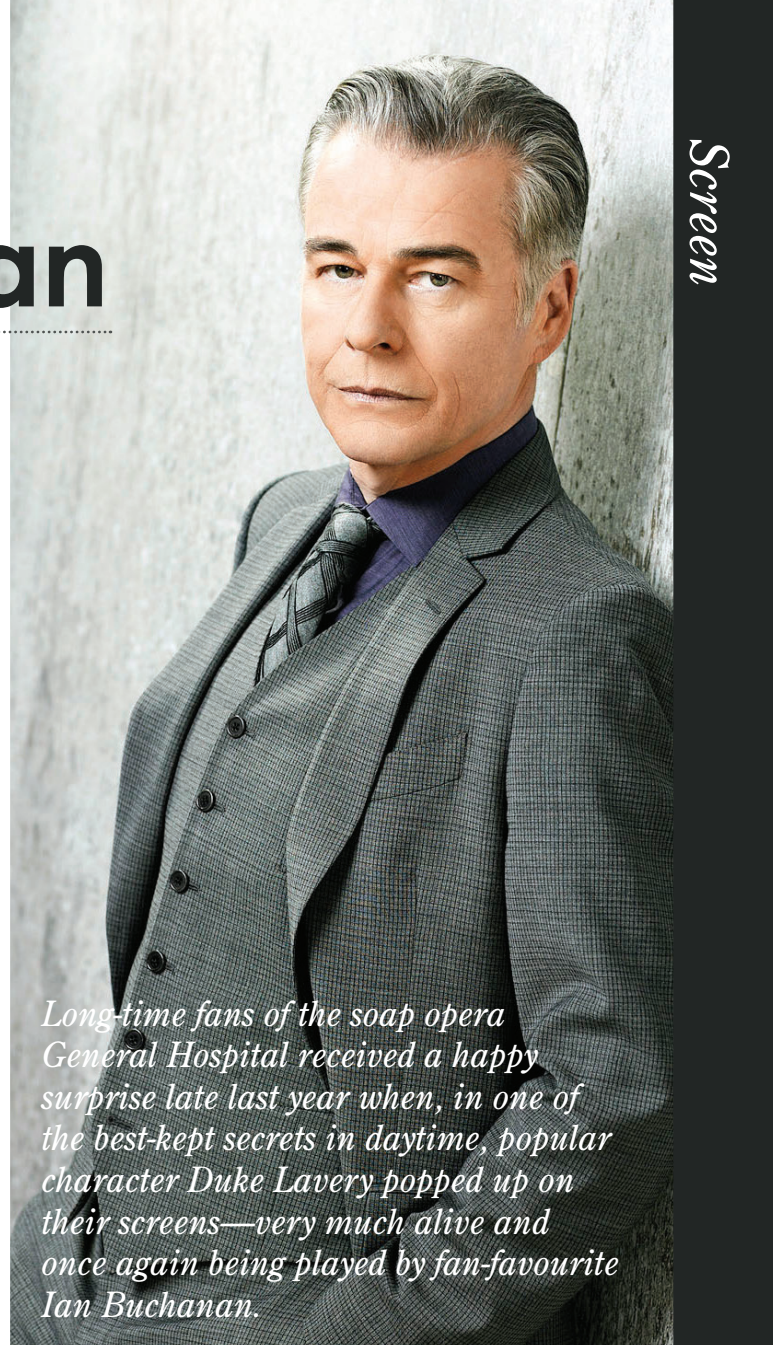
After three years, Buchanan decided it was time to exit. "In retrospect, maybe I would have stayed a few extra years just to get the full experience at that age, but I didn't want to be there for 25 years. I wouldn't want to be anywhere for 25 years."

Upon leaving GH, Buchanan was looking to do comedy. He found that opportunity, first as Ian McFyfer on *It's Garry Shandling's Show* and then as Dick Tremayne on *Twin Peaks*.

"I was doing a commercial for Calvin Klein's Obsession and David Lynch was directing it and Lara Flynn Boyle (*Twin Peaks*' Donna) was in it and a week later, he called me in to do *Twin Peaks*," Buchanan said. "There's this big resurgence of the show now and it's a cult success all over, and it was an interesting time for me."

In 1993, Buchanan was lured back to soaps and began a six-year run on *The Bold and the Beautiful*. That was followed by turns on *All My Children*, *Port Charles* and *Days of Our Lives*.

Recently, he and Hughes attended a charity event for ChildHelp, a group that rescues children from abuse, and he was



Long-time fans of the soap opera General Hospital received a happy surprise late last year when, in one of the best-kept secrets in daytime, popular character Duke Lavery popped up on their screens—very much alive and once again being played by fan-favourite Ian Buchanan.

amazed at the love and support the fans of *General Hospital* still have for the actors and the characters of Duke and Anna.

That's why he's excited to be back on the *General Hospital* canvass. He's also keeping busy elsewhere on stage. He has been a member of the NYC political cabaret troupe, The Citizens Band, for the past 10 years, alongside notable performers like *New Girl*'s Zooey Deschanel, Zoe Kravitz, Karen Elson and Nina Persson from the Cardigans.

"We often have four shows a year and I go to New York when we get one ready," he said. "I'm also doing *The Lion in Winter* this spring with Mariette Hartley at The Colony Theatre in Burbank."

Four of Buchanan's brothers and sisters still live in Scotland and the actor makes sure to return at least once a year. Looking back, he is happy with the way his career has turned out.

"I'm very grateful for the fans and how supportive everyone has been. It's been quite the adventure."

~ By Keith Loria



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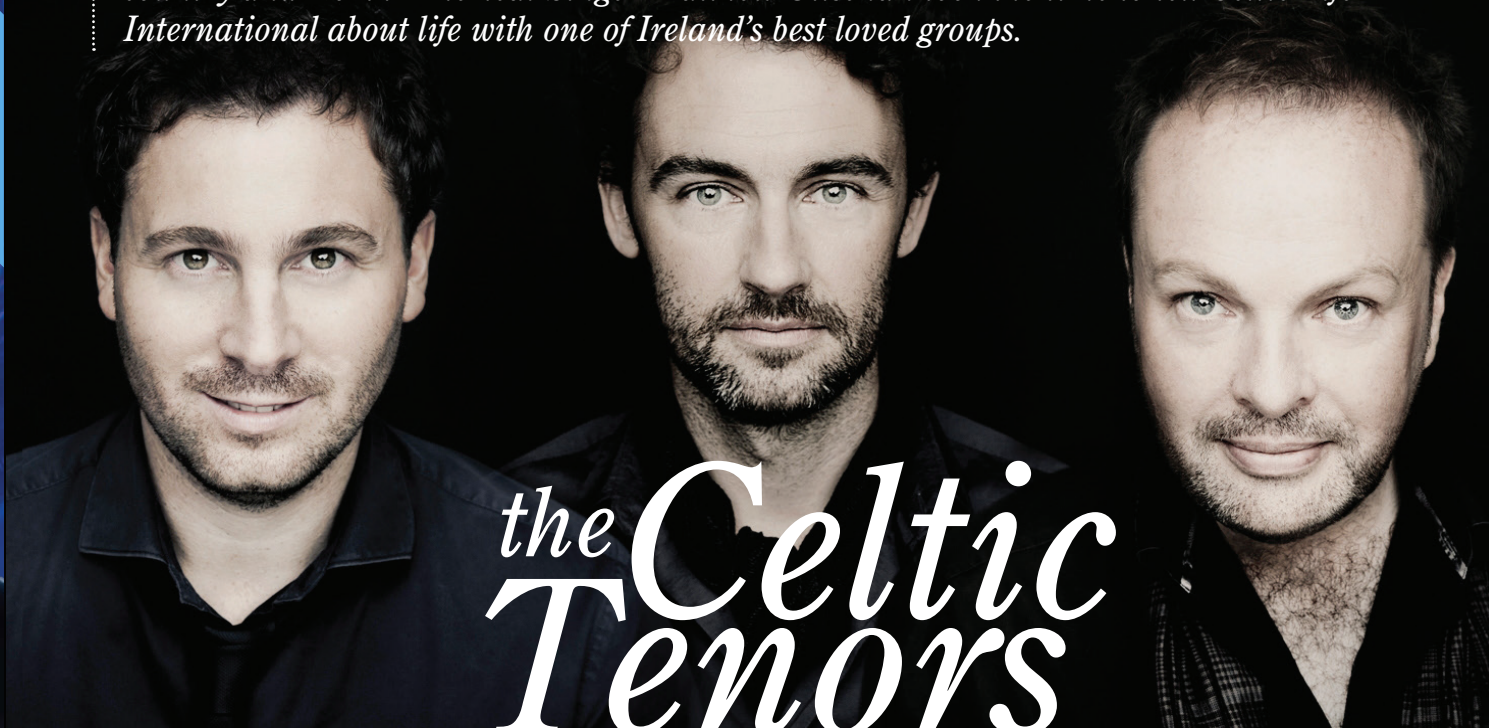
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Members of the globally popular Irish trio, The Celtic Tenors, are busy putting the finishing touches to their upcoming Christmas album while also touring their home country and North America. Singer Matthew Gilsenan took the time to tell Celtic Life International about life with one of Ireland's best loved groups.



"There are many rewards to our success, including making a living singing, which is a labour of love," Gilsenan said. "Connecting with so many people never wears thin and I feel that getting into the studio to make an album is a reward in itself."

The group has had an exciting 12-year career although their sound has evolved since Gilsenan, James Nelson and Daryl Simpson first got together. The trio started as an Irish-classical fusion act, bringing their classical voices and their own harmonies to non-classical Irish and Celtic songs. They later blended Irish songs with similar Scottish songs and spent a summer on tour with Air Supply, performing a version of the Air Supply song I'm all out of love, which they later recorded.

"Our greatest stretch album-wise is called Hard Times, possibly just a reach too far, but it was crucial in our development," Gilsenan said. "Essentially an album of Americana, we experimented in a new way, dipping into American and country. Our next album, Feels like Home, was a tempering of this and became our coming-of-age album. Made in the middle of Ireland, co-produced by ourselves, but guided by the brilliant Martin Quinn this is our best album to date."

Gilsenan said the group has benefitted enormously from working with Quinn, a multi-instrumentalist. "The egotistical producer will make your album sound the way he wants you to sound, not necessarily how you actually sound. Martin played in a number of our shows before taking this on, so he knew how we could perform and consequently got the best out of us."

Since that collaboration, the group's recorded sound has grown closer to their live sound. The singers have also got better at knowing when to sound 'classical' and when to sound 'natural'. "This opens up a huge amount of great songs to us and has possibly led to a more consistent sound," Gilsenan said.

Gilsenan himself grew up on a farm in Meath, a county bordering Ulster.

"Meath was just far enough away from Dublin, the old centre of English rule, to hold on to its more ancient heritage, while being fairly open to the more English influences too," he said. "Growing up, I was steeped in Irish traditional music; song and dance, but I also went for piano and singing lessons under the watchful eyes of the nuns in our local convent. The result was a pretty eclectic set of musical tastes which all thrive in my musical core."

He got into music as a little lad thanks to a school teacher. "She was like a talent

scout for the parish school and church and I was collared at around age six. Rural Ireland in the 1970s was still pretty retrospective and deep in recession so there was a huge amount of community-based talent shows, many of which embraced traditional style music. I did a few of these in solo and group singing competitions. When I was around 12, I inherited a record player from an aunt who had emigrated. This machine opened the floodgates musically for me."

Today, when he and the other Celtic Tenors need to focus on recording, all three singers arrive with something prepared. "We then get around the piano and jam and pull it apart and stick it back together. The next step is our laptop and mic where we get to hear how corny our day's work actually is and start rebuilding again," Gilsenan said. "Then we put it on its feet in front of an audience. If it passes this test, we still refine and refine. If we get it into the studio, that's where the final touches come and the roadmap for performance is made."

www.celtic-tenors.com



A man with light brown hair and a beard, wearing a grey and brown herringbone Harris Tweed jacket over a white shirt. He is looking over his shoulder towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with stone walls and trees.

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Stuart McLean's COMMUNITY

The much-loved Canadian storyteller, humourist and broadcaster is on tour this fall, promoting a new book and connecting with communities across the country in his own inimitable and endearingly warm style.

Stuart McLean has become as familiar with Canadians as they are with him. Having crossed the country dozens of times over the last two decades, the long-time voice of CBC Radio's popular Vinyl Café will be reconnecting with audiences in the coming months as he takes to the road to support a new volume of yarns called *Time Now for the Vinyl Café Story Exchange*.

"The story exchange is the part of the show when I read letters from our listeners. We've been doing it for ten years now, and so we've taken ten stories from each year and put them together in what I believe might be our best book ever," the storyteller explained.

McLean, who traces his own roots back to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, said the process of piecing the anthology together was both challenging and rewarding.

"Jess Milton, who produces that segment of the show, went through the first big batch of stories and whittled it down. From there, she and I were able to go back and forth with the remaining stories and discuss which ones worked best for the collection."

He noted that there were no set criteria for inclusion, except for how a piece resonated with them emotionally.

"There are a lot of big feelings in there," he shared. "I know it sounds cliché, but some of those stories made me want to laugh out loud and others made me want to cry. A few really stood out - one in particular about a teacher who came into class and started verbally abusing one of his young students. He then stopped

everything dead in its tracks and asked the other students why they had put up with him being so abusive. Then he began a discussion on the horrors of the Nazi regime. He had acted out what had gone on in that country during that period in history. To me it was very profound and



very touching to read.

"On the other end of the spectrum, there are lots of stories of buffoonery, foibles and foolishness of everyday lives told with great warmth and affection."

Interestingly, as he and Milton worked their way through the submissions, a sense of the country's identity began to emerge.

"I think the book adds up to a bigger picture of who we are in an unspoken kind of way. It reads like you are in a room full of people who are having dinner together and who are getting to know one another more intimately."

The renowned raconteur enjoys a unique perspective on that identity while on tour.

"Although what it means to be Canadian is still something that most people would have a hard time identifying or verbalizing, I have a sense of who we are because of my travels. It amazes me that this country can be so vast and diverse and yet there are these common bonds that we share from coast to coast.

"Canada is one of the world's great communities," he continued, "and we have done a very good job fostering that sense of community in our schools, and when we gather together via our televisions and radios, online, at the movies or at sporting events, etc."

McLean finds that sense of community in the camaraderie of his travelling companions also.

"We are very much like a family out there," he explained of his road crew and musical guests. "Like any workspace, I can't help but get to know the people I

spend my days with, especially when we are at such close quarters."

And while he will continue to entertain audiences both on the road and on the air for the foreseeable future, the wandering scribe makes no bones about his love for home life.

"I like sleeping in my own bed, and getting up in the morning and making my own cup of coffee. I love my little neighbourhood and the people in it. It is a familiar community for me, right?"

"Then again," he laughed, "so is the rest of the country."





NEW LOOK, SAME AWARD WINNING TASTE



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Colin Broderick

That's That, the latest book from Irish author Colin Broderick is receiving good reviews, although it is not a story the author wished to tell. That's That deals with the difficult subjects of Broderick's early years in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, as well as The Troubles, the violence that wracked Northern Ireland between the late 1960s and the late 1990s. The author, who now lives in New York, tells Celtic Life International about his book and what it cost him to write it.

Resistance

"I actually didn't want to write it at all in the beginning, but my agent Jane Dystel felt it was time for me to write about my childhood. I had already written my first memoir; Orangutan, which is a pretty hardcore account of the first twenty years I spent in the U.S., as I worked the Irish construction scene in New York and battled with one addiction after another through all sorts of madness, failed marriages, trips to hospitals and jail cells, while trying to somehow formulate my life as a writer. I wasn't well for a long time and, once I'd made the admission that I wasn't well, Jane felt that maybe it was time to get at the "why". I think she understood that if I were to get past my own insanity I had to go back and make an effort to understand where I came from, and as a result discover who I really am."

Recall

"Writing the book was a nightmare. My third marriage fell apart about two years into writing, and I had at least one pretty severe breakdown. I was basically going back into my psyche to confront the dragons I'd spent my life running from. I wound up spending over four years immersed in the book trying to wade through to the other side. "I had to acknowledge the pain and confusion of my own childhood and I had to try to be careful that in the telling of my own story I didn't inflict too much unnecessary pain on my immediate family, especially my parents. Thirdly, I was writing about Northern Ireland, the Irish Republican Army, local atrocities, bone-deep hatreds, repression, the church, so I needed to be careful that I treated that material with the utmost care."

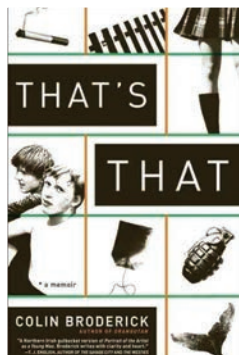
Responsibility

"I felt a real responsibility to get this right. I was trying to explain not just my own personal narrative, but what life was like for any regular family living through the years of The Troubles. I felt an obligation to tell a version of the story that would clarify, for the average American reader, what exactly The Troubles were all about. And I was educating myself and dealing with my own emotional resistance to the subject matter. I learned so much and I discovered myself. Still, this wasn't so much a book for me as an experience. When I walked into Barnes and Noble and saw the actual book sitting there on the shelf for the first time I felt no emotional connection to it. For me, the experience was going through it."

Rewards

"The book has had an incredible response. I've had men and women from all over Northern Ireland who grew up in that era say the same thing, 'You wrote my childhood.' That is the most amazing validation. And many Americans who've read the book have told me that they could never understand Northern Ireland, or the history that led to that period we call The Troubles, but the book clarified it for them. That's been amazing because we have such an enormous section of the population here in America with a blood link to Ireland."

www.colinbroderick.com



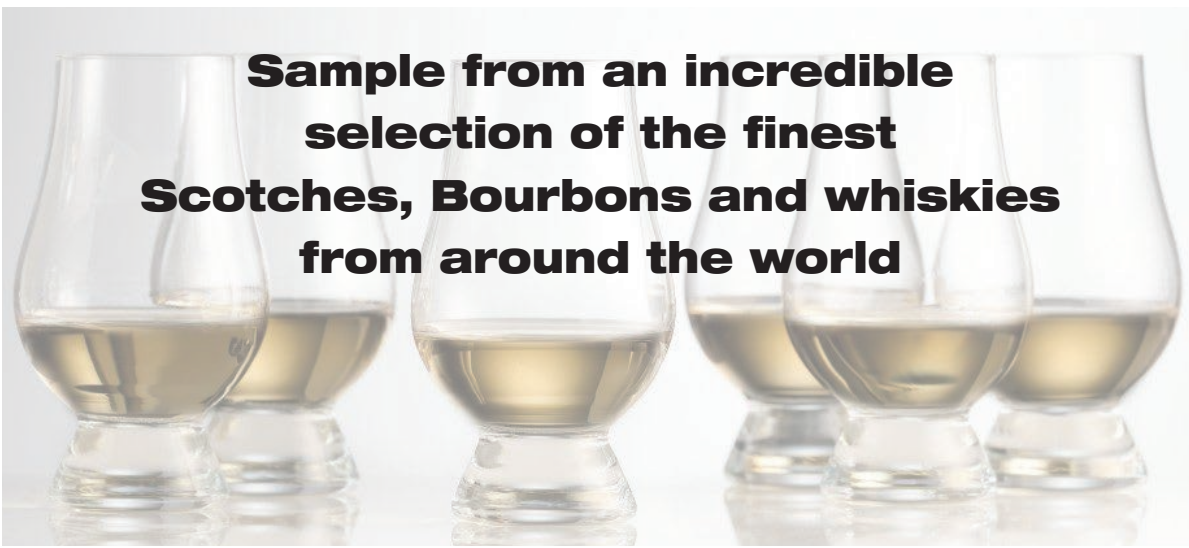
That's That: A Memoir - By Colin Broderick
Broadway Books / 368pp / \$15

Decades of divisions in Ulster left scars upon generations, with shattered psyches scattered across the region and around the world. An emotional coming-of-age account of growing up amidst that dysfunction, *That's That* takes readers to the heart of the Troubles; both those inherent to the six counties of Northern Ireland and those within the author himself. An 'insider's perspective', Broderick successfully captures and conveys small snippets of everyday life in County Tyrone, painting a pained portrait of a people in peril. By turns political, personal, tender and tough, *That's That* is a powerful, profound and poignant detailing of one man's descent into the past in an attempt to confront his demons and heal the present.

~ SPC



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Whisky

Live International

You don't need Celtic heritage to enjoy the many facets of whisky.

Dave Sweet, the 47-year-old, Chicago-based director of the Whisky Live events that promote the drink around North America, can attest to that. Sweet's own background is Croatian and Slavic and he is very enthusiastic about not only whisky, but promoting Celtic culture throughout North America as well.

The goal of the Whisky Live events is to reach as many new whisky drinkers as whisky enthusiasts.

"We'll cater to enthusiasts and try to bring out special and rare whiskies and premium whiskies," Sweet told Celtic Life International. "But we also want to cater to all new whisky drinkers that are coming in. Sometimes, that means encouraging them to try sweeter whiskies or flavoured whiskies."

Today's whisky drinker does not fit a stereotype. Years ago, the image of an older, male crowd came to mind. But Sweet said whisky is one of the fastest expanding categories in the spirits industry and it's enjoying a renaissance similar to the one cigars had 10 to 15 years ago.

"There's Canadian whisky, bourbon, scotch, Irish whisky

and whisky from around the world and that expands the range quite a bit," said Sweet. "There used to be an older, more mature crowd drinking Scotch and young kids drinking Jack Daniels and Coke."

But the category has now expanded to include young professionals learning to appreciate fine whiskies of all types more cleanly on the rocks or neat. It's a much broader category."

In fact, one of the whisky-blenders Sweet works with has said, 'All wine drinkers are whisky drinkers, some of them just don't know it yet.'

"Drinking wine and whisky is very parallel," said Sweet. "The language is the same. You have a nose, you have a finish, and a huge range from sweet and soft to sharp to smoky to peaty or very earthy. Whisky is an incredibly complex spirit. All really good red wine drinkers can find a whisky they like."

Sweet came to Whisky Live from 30 years of consumer and trade show experience in the publishing business.



"One of my clients was publishing Whisky Magazine," said Sweet. "As their U.S. representative, I was invited to the first Whisky Live event in New York City and was absolutely inspired. It was an incredible event held ten years ago at Tavern on the Green in Central Park. I got involved immediately, and began gaining a business understanding of the event. Three years later, I started running them."

Now there are two types of Whisky Live events. The first was created by founder and publisher of Whisky Magazine, Damian Riley-Smith, and held in London in 2000. Whisky Live shows are held each year in major cities around North America including Toronto, Los Angeles, and Boston with the signature event held in New York City, which is also one of the anchor events for New York's Tartan Week. These occasions feature anywhere from 150 to 300 different whiskies, live entertainment and a full buffet dinner.

Sweet founded the second type of event, Whisky Live at the Games, to bring Whisky Live to lovers of all things Celtic at highland games and

Scottish festivals.

"The festival and games events are different because we really focus only on the whiskies," said Sweet. "The venues already have lots of live music and food offered by many vendors. We have done them at the Scottish Highland Gathering and Games held by the Caledonian Club in San Francisco and also in Chicago. We're looking to expand to a few more events in the U.S. as well as the Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games in Ontario, Canada, and one or two other key markets in Canada."

There's no denying that whisky is a central part of Celtic culture. That's why Whisky Live embraces it by partnering with the Irish Tourism Board, the National Trust in Scotland and publishes Scotland Magazine, which focuses on history, travel and culture in Scotland.

Whisky Live events will take place this fall in Boston, Oct. 2, Los Angeles Oct. 17 and Toronto Nov. 1.

www.whiskeylive.com



Gridiron CELTIS



*Players from the Celtic nations
have made their mark on American
football writes Brian P. Dunleavy*

Scott Couper never thought about making history. He just wanted to play the game he loved.

That game was American football, and Couper played it well enough to become the first Scotland-born “skill-position” player (quarterback, running back or wide receiver) to appear in a modern National Football League (NFL) game when he suited up for the Chicago Bears against the Pittsburgh Steelers in a pre-season exhibition game at Croke Park in Dublin in 1997. A wide receiver, he took the field for three plays.

“On my third play, third down, the quarterback threw a pass to me and I didn’t make the catch, and I’ll go to my deathbed regretting that,” said the life-long Glaswegian, “But playing in that game was a great experience. I relished the 10 days I had with the Bears in training camp. I was just happy I got a chance to sign an NFL contract, put on an NFL jersey for a while. It is one of the best memories of my life.”

The U.S.-based NFL is, of course, where the sport of American football is played at the highest level, and while its popularity pales in comparison to that of football (or soccer), rugby or Gaelic football in Celtic countries, it has long had a cult following in that part of the world. In fact, youth programmes thrive throughout Ireland, Scotland and Wales, in spite of a lack of support from the NFL, organizers say.

“In the mid-1980s in the UK, we only had four television

channels, and at the time there was a younger channel called Channel Four,” Couper recalled. “And on Sunday nights, they would put on highlights of American football, and it became sort of a craze in the U.K. I was 14 and wasn’t playing any kind of organized sport at the time, so I decided I wanted to try playing it. The sport was so vivid on TV; it really just captured my imagination.”

Couper, who came to idolize former Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Steve Largent, signed on with the now-defunct Glasgow Lions youth program in 1984 (many of the coaches and even some of his teammates were former American college players). He continued to play through university before he signed a professional contract with the Scottish Claymores of the World League of American Football (also known as NFL Europe) in 1995. He stayed with the Claymores until the team folded in 2004, but his cameo in the American Bowl marked his only actual NFL appearance.

Couper’s name may be in the record books, but he is not the first Scot to play in the NFL. According to Pro-Football-Reference.com, an online database of NFL history, that distinction belongs to Fort William native Chick Lang, who appeared at tackle for two games with the old Duluth (Minnesota) Eskimos in 1927. Lang was soon followed by Glaswegian Arthur Matsu, the son of a Japanese father and Scottish mother who played six games for

the Dayton Triangles in 1928. It would be nearly 50 years before another Scot, kicker Ian Sunter of Dundee, began his two-year career in the league in 1976.

In all, Pro-Football-Reference.com reports that seven Scots have played in an NFL regular-season game, and two of them—Lawrence Tynes, of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and Graham Gano, of the Carolina Panthers, both placekickers—are still active. In 2008, the Greenock-born Tynes, who moved to the States when he was 10, became the first Scot to win the NFL's championship when he won the Super Bowl as a member of the New York Giants; he won another championship as a Giant in 2012 before moving to the Bucs as a free agent in the summer.

Gano's background is similar to that of Tynes. He was born in Dundee, to a Scottish mother and an American father stationed there with the U.S. navy, and lived in Arbroath in his early years before moving to the U.S., when he was nine. He grew up playing soccer in Scotland—and even dreamed of suiting up for the country's national team—before deciding to focus on American football as a senior in high school. He joined the Panthers in 2009.

"My Scottish roots are very important to me," said Gano, a married father of two, adding that he often communicates with the NFL fans in Scotland via Twitter. "It's an honour to be one of the few Scots to play in the league."

At present, Scotland is the only Celtic nation represented in the NFL ranks. Again according to Pro-Football-Reference.com, Wales has had two players appear in the league—Blockwood-born kicker Allan Watson, who played four games for the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1970, and Jon Norris, who played three games for the Bears as a defensive lineman in 1987.

There are 10 Ireland-born players with NFL experience, with most having played in its early years in the 1920s (County Mayo's Birdie Maher was the first). Dubliners Adrian Young, a linebacker, and Neil O'Donoghue, a kicker, each had fairly long careers as professionals, with Young suiting up with the Bears and the Philadelphia Eagles over a five-year career, from 1968-73, and O'Donoghue wearing the colours of the Buffalo Bills, Buccaneers and then St. Louis Cardinals, from 1977-1985. Kilkenny native and placekicker Duncan O'Mahony had a seven-year career in the Canadian Football League (CFL), which fields a modified version of the American game, from 2001-2008.

Young Irishman Patrick Murray, also a placekicker, hopes to follow the lead of O'Donoghue and his countrymen. Though born in the U.S., Murray holds dual citizenship through his parents,

who emigrated from County Monaghan in the 1980s. His father was a Gaelic football player for his county team, and Patrick grew up playing Gaelic football in the New York area before deciding to focus on the American game while at Fordham University. At press time, he was hoping to earn a tryout with an NFL team.

"Gaelic football was the number one sport in my house, so it was tough for me to give it up," Murray said, "but my father and I agreed that I had to in order to make my dream of playing in NFL a reality.

"My father really took to the game after watching [the film] Rudy," he continued, referring to the film about a football player at the University of Notre Dame. "I credit him with teaching me everything I know about kicking technique, and a lot of my approach is based on what I learned playing Gaelic football and watching him play. He's 52 years old now, and he can still kick an American football 50 yards. I don't trust anybody to coach me but him."

Although the number of Celts currently playing American football professionally in North America is relatively small, those who know the game expect that to change. Gano said he and Tynes have discussed travelling to Scotland to work with young players at some point, and Murray said he would like to do the same in Ireland. Couper is already giving back to the game he loves by working with the Glasgow Tigers American football club, a team of adult amateurs who play in the U.K.'s National Leagues of American Football. He also works with youth programmes in the Glasgow area.

"When [NFL Europe disbanded], the development money went away, and the game over here took a step back," said Couper, who works for a medical imaging company and lives with his wife and three sons in the Glasgow area. "Local teams are developing talent now, and there are people doing a lot

more volunteering and working with young players than I am at the minute, and the sport is thriving in the U.K. because of them. Thanks to them, there are doors open now for players who have talent from over here, and with the NFL holding games at Wembley every year, the sport is getting a lot of attention. I think we'll see a lot more players from this part of the world reaching the highest levels of the sport as a result."

In Couper and the other Celts who have played the game, they certainly have plenty of role models.



With little known about the ancient and mysterious Celts, their era is often described by historians as 'quiet' even 'silent', writes Donald Wiedman.

A dig into the history of the National Hockey League reveals that the NHL's 'Celtic Era' came and went anything but quietly. From 1919 to 2010, 30 professional ice hockey players born in the Celtic nations of Scotland, Ireland and Wales left quite a loud impression on the North American game.

The first Celtic nation-born player in the NHL was Glasgow, Scotland's George Carey, a right winger who won the Stanley Cup with the Quebec Bulldogs. He played from 1919 to 1924 for Quebec, the Hamilton Tigers and Toronto St. Patricks. The last native Celt in the NHL was first-pick-overall Owen Nolan, born in Belfast, Ireland. Between 1990 and 2010, Nolan skated in 1,200 NHL games with teams in Quebec, Colorado, San Jose, Toronto, Phoenix, Calgary and Minnesota.

A breakdown of the birthplaces of the 30 Celtic hockey players shows that 21 came from Scotland, six from Ireland and three from Wales. All played at least one game at the world's highest level of professional hockey. Impressively, over a 90-year span these three small but mighty nations bore nine Stanley Cup winners, one Hockey Hall of Famer, a league MVP, ten All Stars, two Vezina trophies for best goaltender,



Celts on ICE

and a Calder trophy for top rookie.

Goaltender Charlie Gardiner, who in 1911 at seven years old moved from Edinburgh to Winnipeg, is the undisputed champ of Celtic

impact players. From 1927 to 1935, Charlie won two Vezina trophies with "the goalless wonders" the Chicago Black Hawks, and was named to four All-Star teams. In 1934, he captained his team to a

Stanley Cup win, the only NHL goaltender ever to do so. With a 2.02 lifetime Goals Against Average (GAA), and 1.48 GAA in the playoffs, Gardiner was posthumously inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1945. Today, the Gardiner Conference in Britain's Elite Ice Hockey League is proudly named after him.

In Winnipeg, Gardiner was friends with another great Celtic NHL goaltender, Wilf Cude, twice an All Star and one of three NHL players born in Wales. From 1930 to 1941 he backstopped Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston and Montreal teams, starring in 1934 with Detroit Red Wings, but losing the Stanley Cup final to Gardiner's Black Hawks. During the cash-strapped 1931/32 season, Cude was the NHL's official 'spare goalie', on loan to any team whose goaltender got hurt.

Dunc Munro from Moray, Scotland, captained the Toronto Granites to the 1924 Winter Olympic ice hockey gold medal - Munro scored 18 goals in the international tournament - then joined the newly formed Montreal Maroons to help them win the Stanley Cup in their inaugural season. Olympic dreams also came true for Bill Thomson of Troon, Scotland, whose Port Arthur Bearcats team won the 1936 Winter Olympics silver medal for Canada. Bill scored seven goals in eight games.

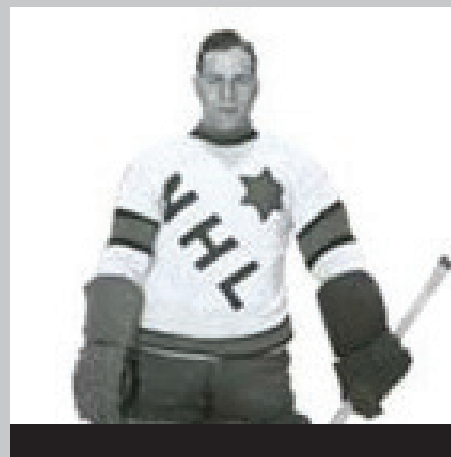
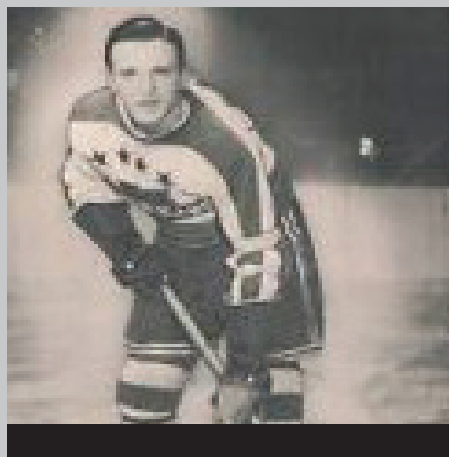
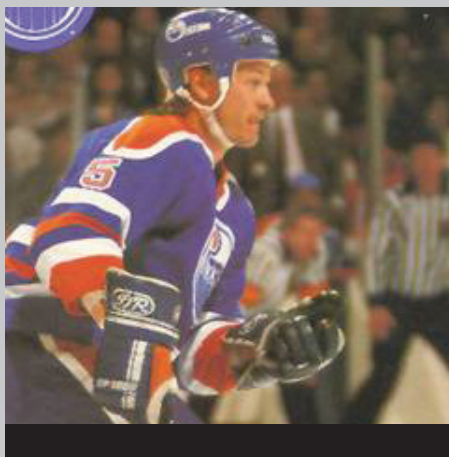
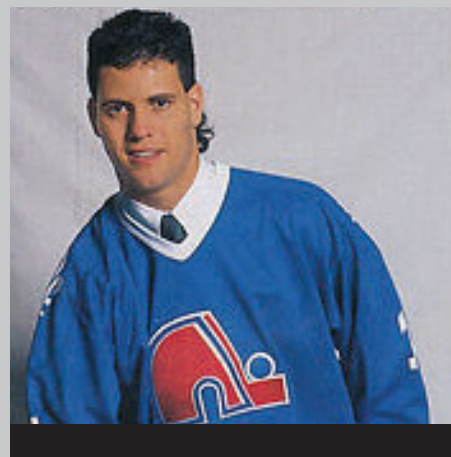
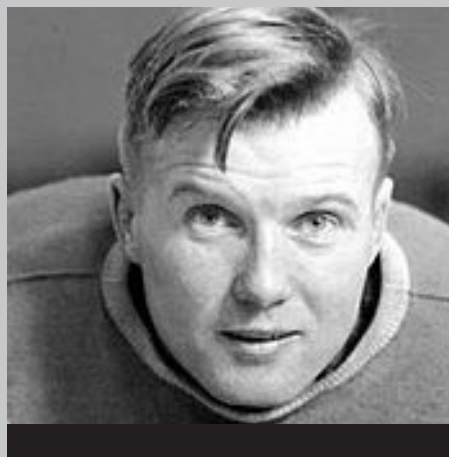
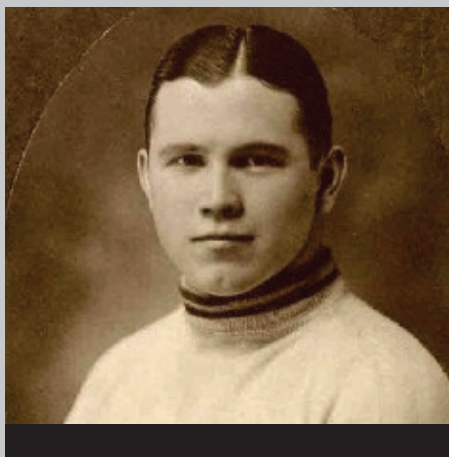
Another great (big) Celtic NHL champion, who also won big on the world stage, was Glasgow-born Steve Smith, a bruising 'stand up' defenseman for three Stanley Cup winning Edmonton Oilers teams, and a 1991 Canada Cup champ. Owen Nolan was also a key 'power forward' on Canada's

2002 Olympic Gold Medal and 1997 World Championship Gold Medal teams.

Three out of the six players born in Ireland who played in the NHL are from Belfast, including the Detroit's James Alexander McFadden who grew up in Carman, Manitoba. Jim was the 1948 NHL Rookie of the Year, won the 1950 Stanley Cup with Detroit, and appeared in the 1950 All Star Game.

Cleveland Barons, and Hartford Whalers up to 1987.

Rest assured the NHL 'Celtic era' has not yet completely disappeared. One time Boston Bruin defenseman and assistant coach Gordie Clark, born in Glasgow in 1952, is today the Director of Player Personnel for the New York Rangers. Clark, who moved to Saint John, New Brunswick, when he was a little



Hockey in North America being all about nicknames, the best Celtic-era NHL nickname goes to "The Glasgow Gobbler" Andy Aitkenhead, a goaltender and major player for the New York Rangers in his rookie season, and the team's 1933 Stanley Cup.

Honourable mention goes to Adam "The Flying Scotsman" Brown, born in 1920 in Johnstone, and winner of the 1943 Cup with Detroit.

The most un-Celtic of nicknames went to Edinburgh-born Tommy "Cowboy" Anderson who won the 1942 Hart Memorial Trophy with the New York Americans as the league's most valuable player. As the first to win the trophy while on a team that missed the playoffs, 'Cowboy' remains one of three NHL MVP-winners not to be in The Hockey Hall of Fame.

The nation of Wales can claim bragging rights to the biggest Celtic impact on NHL coaching, with 14-year player and eight-year coach Jack "Tex" Evans. Born in Morriston in 1928, Evans grew up in Drumheller, Alberta, playing for the New York Rangers and 1961 Stanley Cup winning Chicago Blackhawks. He then coached eight seasons behind the bench with the California Golden Seals,

over two, says he didn't pick up hockey right away, but credits hard-nosed Celtic-style Scottish soccer with readying him for battles on the North American ice.

"Soccer was my first love. That's all we played," he said. "Across the street was a skating rink, so I did skate. But then, around 12 or 13, hockey clicked in, and kind of took over everything. The Scots played a very aggressive national game of soccer, and I think we brought it to the rink. It was already in our blood.

"The theory of the game of soccer is so similar that my Dad, who knew nothing of hockey, understood right from the beginning. Actually, when I first got interested in coaching, I used to get all my drills from my dad's soccer books.

"And, no doubt, we probably brought a few battles over from the old days on the curling rink too."



Celts in SPACE

Celts have made their mark on many areas of human endeavour and space is no exception, writes Christopher Stott.



Neil Armstrong

Michael Collins

Buzz Aldrin

The high school students sit silently, full of anticipation as they wait for an astronaut to speak with them. The youngsters are part of the United Space School programme and are waiting in a lecture theatre at the University of Houston in Clear Lake, Texas. They come from around the world to participate in the summertime programme, but interestingly the majority are from Celtic nations. The astronaut speaking with them also has Celtic roots. A great many of the engineers and scientists from NASA donating their time to teach on the programme, which is run by the non-profit group the Foundation for International Space Education, are also Celts. Celts in space? This might seem surprising. Yet to those in the space industry, it's business as usual. From the very first days of U.S. manned space flight through a half century later, Celts are at the forefront of designing, building, operating, and flying pretty much everything that the West has put into space. According to analysts at Flightglobal, the Isle of Man is now the fourth most likely nation to return to the Moon following the U.S., Russia and China.

If you're a fan of Dan Brown and conspiracy theories, it would be easy to see one here. You could say that a veritable Celtic Space Mafia must be operating, so prevalent are Celts at all of the crucial design and decision points in the history of space flight. Depending upon which way you choose to see the facts, it either gets darn right spooky, or puts a warm, knowing glow in your Celtic heart.

OK, for fun, let's play conspiracy for a moment, just so you can see how easily Celtic prowess in science, engineering, and politics could be misconstrued. Let's ask a series of rhetorical and leading questions.

Who was the first American to fly in space? Alan Shepard. Who was the first American to orbit the Earth? John Glenn. Both are Americans of Scottish decent.

Interestingly, they both flew to space in a Mercury Capsule built by the McDonnell Aircraft Company. Great Scotts, American engineering. Those who designed mission control from Mercury through to today's international space station were also led by Celts.

OK, let's keep going. Which President tasked NASA to put a man on the Moon 'before the decade is out, not because it is easy, but because it is hard'? President John F. Kennedy, an American of Irish decent. Which president then took up the mantle of achieving JFK's goal? President Lyndon B. Johnson, an American of Scottish descent. The entire crew of Apollo 11 were also of Celtic lineage. The first people to walk on the Moon, who took that one small step and that one giant leap for all of us... were Celts. There is even a specific and official Lunar Tartan that was a best seller at Harrods of London for many years and is still available.

Some say that Neil Armstrong took a piece of tartan to the Moon. Upon his return, he wore his kilt proudly as he was paraded through Langholm, Scotland, where he was declared a Freeman of the Burgh.

Buzz Aldrin is also of Scotts descent and proudly so.

Let's also please not forget the Command Module pilot, Michael Collins, a great American of Irish decent.

The Apollo 11 crew were followed by more Celtic Moonwalkers such as Alan Bean (Apollo 12), Alan Shepard (Apollo 14) who played golf on the Moon (an appropriately Scottish thing to do), David Scott (first to drive on the Moon, Apollo 15), and James Irwin (also Apollo 15).

Alan Bean also took his family tartan to the Moon. In 2011 he sent a piece to the Scottish Tartans Authority with the following note, "This piece of MacBean tartan was flown to the moon in our Apollo 12 Command Module Yankee Clipper. It was then transferred to our lunar module Intrepid and was landed on the moon, November 1969. I am entrusting this valuable piece of tartan history to your care. Alan Bean, Lunar Module Pilot."

In all of human history, only twelve men have walked on the Moon. Half of them were Celts. Conspiracy? No, more a passion for science and engineering coupled with the American Dream.

The leading role of Celts held true for Skylab, the United States' space station. The proud tradition of Astronaut of Celtic descent has continued through to today's International Space Station programme.

Astronauts with Celtic lineage in the Space Shuttle programme include Jerry Ross, Bonny Dunbar, Eileen Collins, the first woman Shuttle Commander, and Mark and Scott Kelly (NASA's first twin astronauts), Jim Kelly and Megan MacArthur. As a salute to their heritage, the tartans of many Clans are often flown in space. Astronaut Catherine "Cady" Coleman celebrated St. Patrick's Day in orbit in 2011 by playing a 100-year-old Irish flute.

In correspondence with the Scottish Tartans Museum in

North Carolina, veteran Shuttle Astronaut Jerry Ross said, "I was already a member of the Clan Ross Association of America...I thought it would be neat to fly the tartans and then make presentation items to give to the Chief, to the various Clan Ross associations around the globe, and to my family."

Jerry noted that on one of his missions, STS-74, more than half of his crew were of Scottish descent.

Many of those who have flown for the European Space Agency and France are also Celts. Indeed, the first Frenchman and the first European in space was Bretton General Jean-Loup Chrétien who not only flew to the Mir Space Station, but then also later flew on the U.S. Space Shuttle.

The Canadian Space Agency astronaut core is also proudly home to many Canadian Celts, from David Williams through to Chris Hadfield, who recently returned from six months aboard the Space Station where he tweeted in Irish Gaelic.

In 2011, David Williams spoke of his heritage on a visit to Wales. "My father, who was born in Bargoed, never would have imagined that his son could have a chance to fly in space, it's something that hadn't been done then," he said. "And that's in the space of one generation. I've had the privilege of going on two missions, doing three space walks. The Welsh dragon has flown in space, I was able to speak a bit of Welsh. I think it will be very exciting to look to the next generation of Welsh astronauts who will be able to go into space."

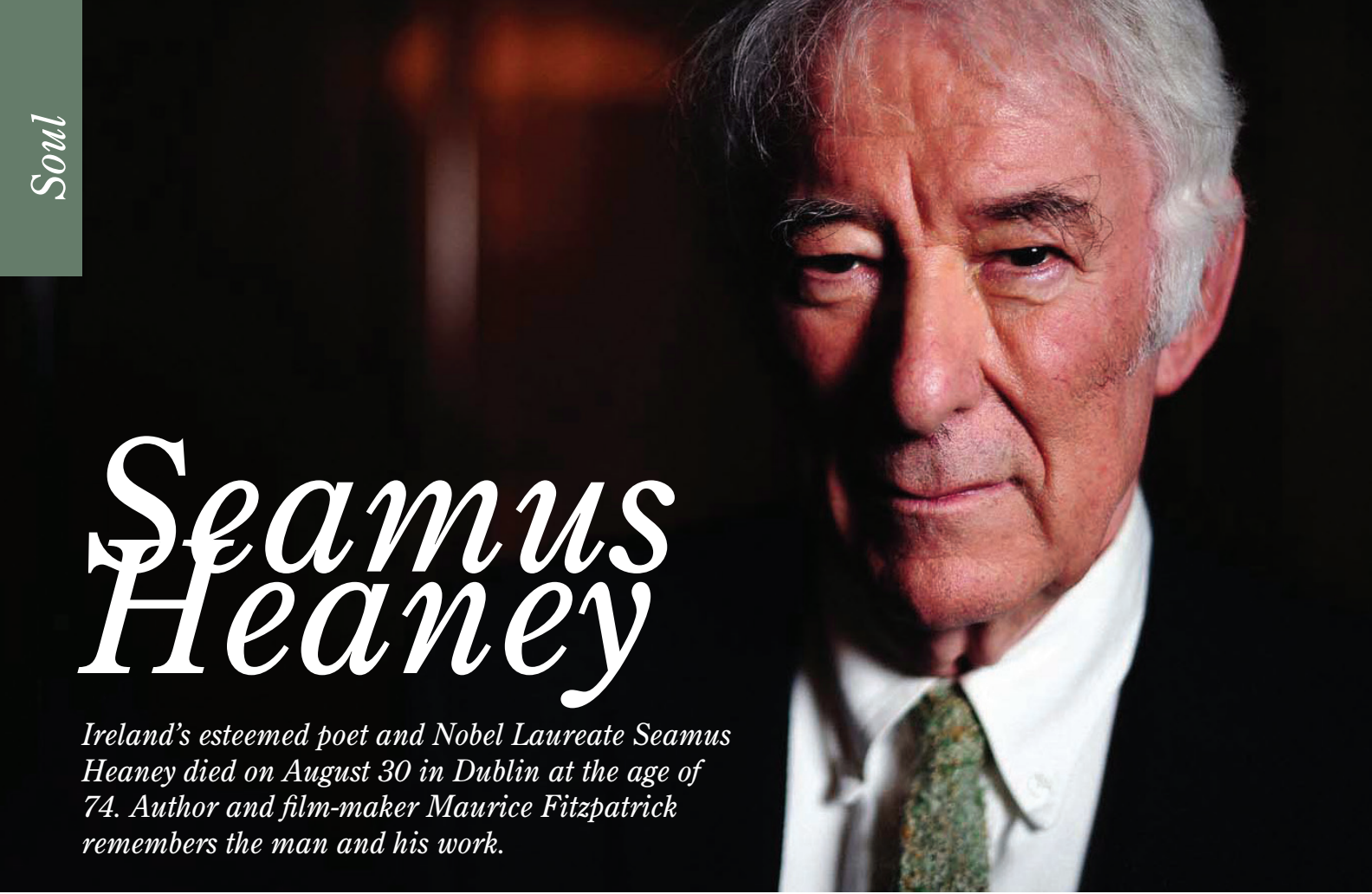
We have yet to find a Space Shuttle mission flown without at least one astronaut of Celtic decent on board. So, the next time you stop and look up at the Moon, imagine the Celts who walked there, who sent them there, who made it possible for them to get there. Think then of all of those who flew on the Space Shuttle and of the tartan that is circling above you aboard the International Space Station that orbits the Earth every ninety minutes.

Wonder perhaps where the Celtic students attending the United Space School programme will take us on their giant leaps of the future.

The astronaut speaking with the space school students in late July this year was my wife Nicole Stott, space walker and veteran of two Space Shuttle flights, including the last flight of the Space Shuttle Discovery, and Expeditions 20 and 21 to the International Space Station. Stott has spent over 100 days in space during her ongoing career at NASA. She was also the first to speak Manx Gaelic from orbit to schools on the Isle of Man via a live video conference in 2009.

www.unitedspaceschool.org





Seamus Heaney

Ireland's esteemed poet and Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney died on August 30 in Dublin at the age of 74. Author and film-maker Maurice Fitzpatrick remembers the man and his work.

When Seamus Heaney was twelve years old, his younger brother, Christopher, was knocked down by a car while playing on a road near their farmhouse in South County Derry. Heaney was then at boarding school, a hugely intelligent scholarship boy who had entered halls of learning hitherto sealed off to his caste (Northern Ireland was changing). On that morning, Heaney served mass at Nazareth House in front of the school, and after the service, he was brought to the president's room and told that his brother had been killed. The poem he wrote about his return home for the funeral became so signature a piece in his oeuvre, so widely recognized a poem, that he became reluctant to read it in public, almost as though it no longer belonged to him. It was one of the earliest poems that lifted Heaney to the popular and critical esteem he would have for the rest of his life; a poem that marked the sudden pain of death:

*He lay in the four foot box as in his cot.
No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked
him clear. A four foot box, a foot for
every year.*

In later life, Heaney wrote again about the loss of Christopher in the poem *Keep Going*, which he dedicated to his brother Hugh, who had taken over the farming of the Heaney home-place. The poet would have known how hard it was for Hugh to turn down that road most days of his life, inevitably recalling the tragedy. He would have known because something similar happened to him. When I asked Heaney about the death in a documentary film, he replied that on the drive home from boarding school to bury his brother, "We passed a little field that day in the car. For years and years afterwards when I passed that field I noticed it and it always brought back that moment."

I first approached Seamus Heaney when I asked him to participate in a film for RTÉ/BBC about the school where he received his secondary education, St. Columb's College in Derry. I was then living in Tokyo, and when he learned that I was trying to organize the film from there, he was full of sympathy and willing to work around my schedule. That is the Seamus Heaney I remember. No airs or graces, yet full of grace, and in whose poetry we are

encouraged to walk on air.

As an honoree of St. Columb's College, in interview he managed to deal deftly with the more brutal aspects of the Catholic education he received there, recalling, "On the first day in the Big Study...I had never seen such execution, such executive strapping." Yet his eyes laughed at his own use of the words and at the experience.

Being the eldest sibling of a family of nine, the Head Boy at St. Columb's College, one of the first from a farming-class Catholic background to enter Queen's University Belfast as a student and soon after a lecturer, Heaney was set from the first on a course from which he never strayed. He took the lead and led by example: Heaney's life is a study of exemplary conduct from the thorny avenues of a sectarian society through civilized self-expression and the encouragement of mutual understanding.

He was aware of the 'representative status' that being of the first generation to benefit from the 1947 Education Act conferred. His journey from a background of limited opportunities to acceptance in the most renowned arenas, while

remaining most comfortable in South Derry and continually celebrating the local in his poetry, has been a recurring feature of tributes to Heaney. He seemed to share Auden's hope that good poetry could be, "like some valley cheese, local, but prized elsewhere".

Father Andrew Dolan of St. Mary's Church, Bellaghy, who officiated at Heaney's burial mass on September 2, stated that Heaney "wanted to be buried in the same graveyard as Christopher", the brother he lost so long ago. He is also buried beside his parents, Patrick and Margaret—in our end is our beginning. In a revealing poem from his last collection, *Human Chain*, it is clear that Heaney, their first-born, was not so much the result of their marriage as its cause, a fact they had to keep quiet in conservative South Derry.

Heaney's parents had great regard for him, something that enriched his sensibility throughout his life. He recalled his mother going to meet him at the bus station when he returned from school, so that they could have some time together before the young Seamus got swamped in the commotion of the house. He also reflected, years afterwards, that his leaving the home-place to go to school in Derry City was a searing experience for his father:

*That summer before college, him in his prime,
Me at the time not thinking how he must Keep coming
with me because I'd soon be leaving.*

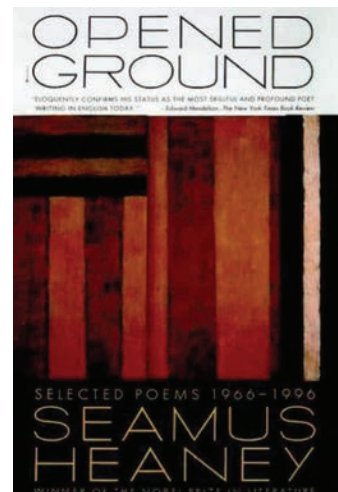
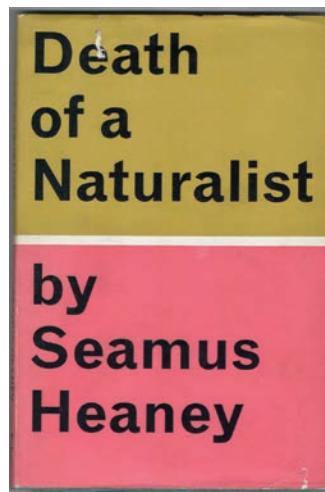
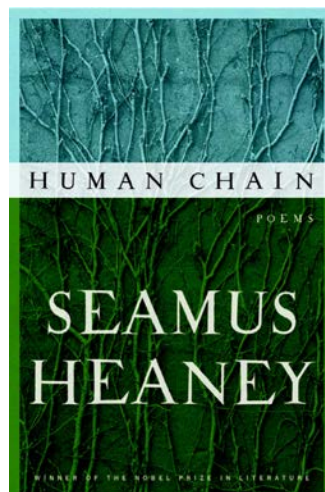
Heaney inherited a worldliness from his father, a cattle-dealer, whose job it was to know whether men he met at a market were buyers or bluffers. Young Heaney accompanied his father and witnessed these transactions. Unsurprisingly, he came to have a knowing expression, and looked the world in the eye.

Heaney gazed into unknown worlds with equal brio. A man who invested so much of his life plumbing the netherworld—descending to the underground in his Virgil and Dante translations—confided to his long-time editor and friend, Karl Miller, that he hoped to see his father again, like Aeneas setting off into the underworld in search of his father.

Ireland has no equivalent of Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey. Burying our renowned poets in a beautiful church in the capital city could never take root. One's place of origin, the intimate sense of connection to a place, remains all-important in Irish life. Patrick Kavanagh's remains belong in Inniskeen and Heaney's belong in Bellaghy. Accordingly, Seamus Heaney's final journey was from his family home in Dublin to his ancestral soil in Bellaghy.

In his last known interview, Heaney stated, "I think that I am basically a ground person, you know, if it came to which element...I am sedimentary...That's an image for consciousness in this country." Fields, a cut of road, a well, a gap or a riverbank were, in Heaney's mind and pen, transformed into a part of a greater Being, a living entity. The people and places of his earliest experience were his great subjects. He beautifully illustrated how his people made his place, and place, his people.

Out of this solid base and "hearth language", Heaney's work developed in remarkable ways. He learned to incorporate Latin, Greek and Italian poetic traditions and meters; to be cultivated through contact with Polish and American poetry; to comfort the oppressed—"with the farming of a verse/ make a vineyard of the curse," in Auden's words. The better side of our nature is



nurtured and educated by Heaney's poetry.

Recipients of his generosity—schools, communities, charities, young writers—mourn his passing. He is a loss to Ireland, but also to the world. A celebrated figure at Oxford, Harvard, the Swedish Academy and the White House, we remember him as a humble and wonderfully vibrant human being.

Now, there is a void. Heaney is survived by his three children and his extraordinary wife, Marie. He has left the Irish population at a loss. We are all bereft, but also filled with gratitude for one who gave us such a high example. His books and his contribution to our country will endure. Heaney acknowledged that poetry does not change anything, but that it can enable a more profound understanding of our world. Through that enhanced understanding, we do better things, we effect little changes and we just might achieve moments of transcendence in work and in life.

*And some time make the time to drive out west...
You are neither here nor there,
A hurry through which known and strange things pass
As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways
And find the heart unlatched and blow it open.*



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Builder in Stone: John Lorrain of Dumfriesshire and Pictou

On Canada's east coast, the Nova Scotia town of Pictou boasts a rich, Scottish-influenced architecture both in wood and stone, writes genealogist Allen Robertson.



Early builders often favoured the use of sandstone because this choice permitted close imitation of the late Georgian styles that Scottish immigrants had left behind. One of these builders, a stonemason named John Lorrain, has left his legacy in houses that are recognized as heritage structures. Now, research into Lorrain's history has uncovered his progress and problems in a new land.

A native of Dumfriesshire, John Lorrain (1786-1840) was just one of the stonemasons to come from the Scottish county, among them writer and philosopher Thomas Carlyle, engineer Thomas Telford and journalist-author Allan Cunningham.

In 1816, Lorrain decided to emigrate to Pictou with his wife, Margaret Bell, and their children, including their son George who had trained in the mason's craft with his father. It appears that Lorrain had contacts in Pictou for no sooner had he arrived than he was engaged to do mason work on the new court house and jail. Records indicate that over the next two years John also began to construct his own sandstone house on Church Street. He appears in the Court of Sessions (1819) among the town officers as a hogreave (a person who looked out for wayward hogs that had left their owners' properties) and was granted a tavern license. That same year, he purchased the land on which his tavern was built, becoming the well-known John Lorrain's Tavern which served as an inn and housed the Masonic meeting hall.

Over the ensuing years, Lorrain hosted many government and public travelers, as well as St. Andrew's Day celebrations. In Lorrain's own words, the inn "can warrant the most genteel and comfortable accommodations" (1832). In 1820, Lorrain, along with four other men, became constables and holders of tavern licenses – an early example of self-regulating businessmen. He also served as a Second Lieutenant in the 1st Battalion of the Pictou militia.

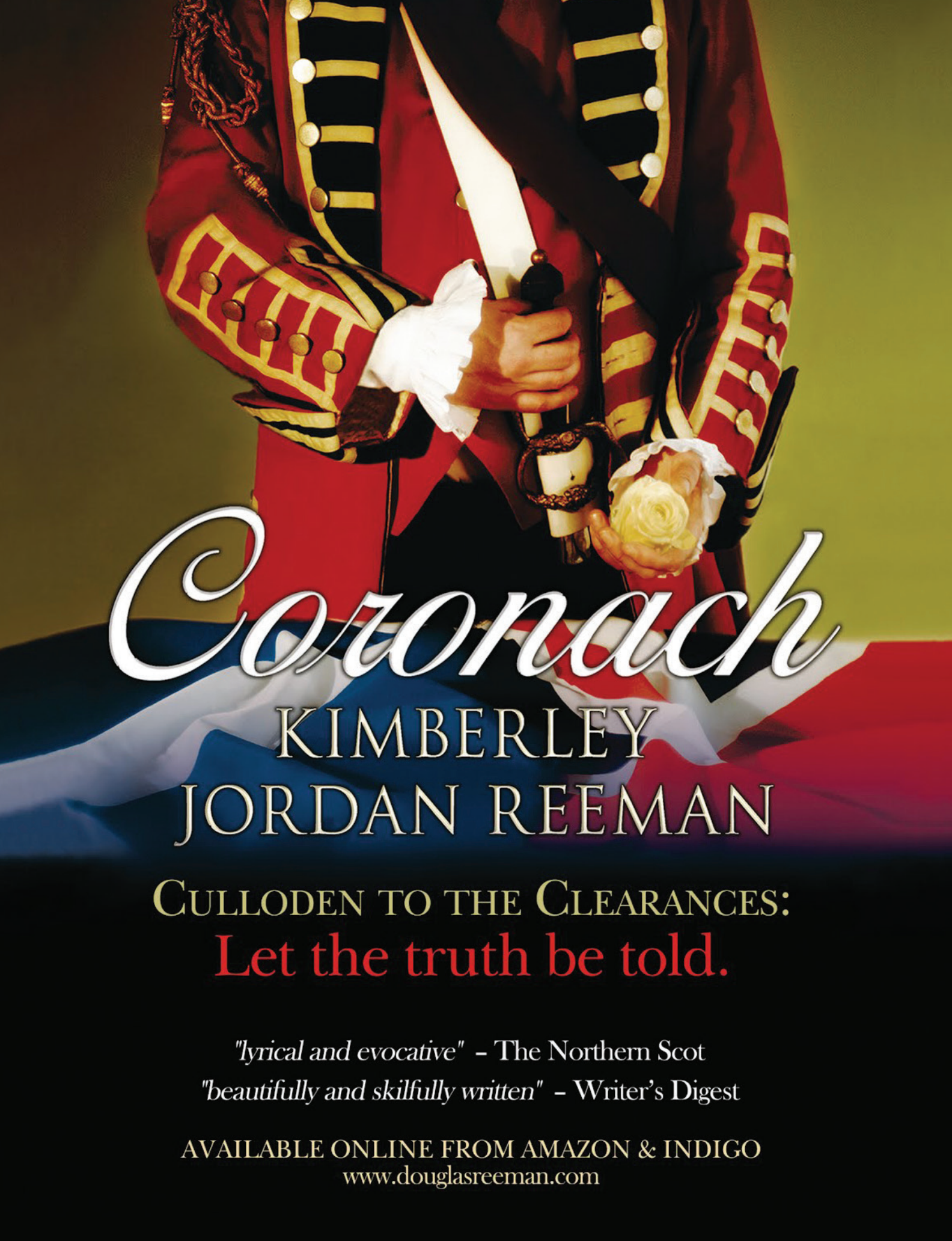
Lorrain's two-and-a-half story stone house with its five-sided ("Scotch") dormer windows remains impressive today. The interior must also have been impressive judging from an advertisement Lorrain placed in 1829 when he leased the lower

level and listed five fire places, a frost-proof cellar and front parlours. That year, Lorrain also had to place a newspaper notice for a "Smart active Lad as an Apprentice to the Stone Cutting and Mason trade" after his previous indentured boy, 16-year-old William Edmond, ran away. It was a bad summer for absconding apprentices in Pictou; William Ward, 16, and William Fraser, 15, were both posted in the Colonial Patriot newspaper by their masters who stated that the boys were runaways and offered rewards for their return with warnings not to harbour them. Lorrain's former apprentice Edmond is later listed as a miner in the 1838 Census working in nearby Egerton Township - a trade which can hardly have been less rigorous than that he studied under his former master.

Lorrain did not only work in Pictou. In 1833, he built a cottage with two Scotch dormers at Lower Gulf Shore in nearby Cumberland County, including an engraved lintel over the main door with the date and initials of the owner (Hebridean-born mariner Murdoch Nicholson.) Lorrain's son George probably assisted in this work. Sadly, George outlived his father by just five years, dying in Charlottetown on nearby Prince Edward Island in 1845. Another son of Lorrain's, William Johnston Lorrain, became a successful Pictou merchant and tax collector. William's wife Margaret Ramsay was from Charlottetown and one wonders if her father David knew George. Two of John Lorrain's daughters married locally, becoming Margaret Gourley and Anna Bell Skinner.

The final note on the legacy of John Lorrain comes from an advertisement he placed stating that he carved headstones "for sale on reasonable terms", suggesting that there are probably stones with his initials on them in Pictou County. His and Margaret's own tombstone is in Pictou's Laurel Hill Cemetery. Lorrain built for the living and the dead, and his Dumfriesshire craftsmanship remains to be admired.



A person in a red and gold military uniform, likely a Scottish Highland Guard, is shown from the waist up. They are holding a sword in their right hand and a white rose in their left hand. The background is a solid olive green.

Coronach

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The pounding ocean waves and high winds carve the landscapes into distinctive forms and shape the minds and cultures of the Celtic peoples. This is undoubtedly true of Cornwall, which pokes like a long finger into the treacherous waters of the North Atlantic. The sea here provides food and wealth, but also tragedy and death. The immense power of this environment has led to the creation of a huge corpus of Cornish sea folklore, in particular stories of sea spirits that embody the qualities of the ocean.

Mermaids, or *morvoren* as they are known in the Cornish language, often feature famous mermaid legends and include the stories Lutey and the Mermaid and the Mermaid of Zennor.

In the small village of Zennor, situated in the far west of Cornwall, there is a church dedicated to Saint Senara, a Breton saint who is said to have floated to Cornwall inside a chest after being cruelly punished by her husband. Within the church, an enigmatic carving of a mermaid is incorporated into one of the benches. Made of dense, ancient wood, this striking carving is said to celebrate the story of a young man called Matty Trewhella who lived hundreds of years ago and was a renowned church singer. One day, a beautiful and mysterious lady appeared at the door of the church, apparently enchanted by Matty's singing. The stranger began attending church services, listening intently to Matty's performances. Then they both disappeared and it was believed they had fallen in love and eloped.

Years later, fishermen in the nearby cove of Pendour, were accosted by a mermaid who angrily requested they

remove their anchor, which was blocking the door to her home. The fishermen recognized the mermaid as being the lovely lady from the church and wondered whether Matty had been lulled to his doom or followed his heart to a new life.

The story of Lutey and the Mermaid occurred some 30 miles from Zennor on the Lizard Peninsula, the most southerly point in mainland Britain. It is said that Lutey, a local fisherman, was walking on the beach when he found a stranded mermaid. Taking pity on her, he carried her to the sea's edge and to freedom. As a reward, the mermaid gave Lutey the power to heal which was then passed down through his family. This power came with a heavy price however; Lutey drowned nine years after helping the mermaid, and it was believed that every nine years one

of his relatives would face the same destiny.

For me, the most fascinating Cornish sea spirit is not a mermaid but a powerful and destructive manifestation of the storm - the Bucca. High above the village of Newlyn in West Cornwall there is a green rock formation covered in curious patterns and shapes called the Tolcarne. This was one of the abodes of the Bucca, thought to be a storm demon or a remnant of a Celtic storm god. Here, and on the foreshores of local beaches, the town's fishermen used to leave an offering of three fish to appease this elemental force. It was thought that failure to do so would result in death.

Over time, Bucca was transformed into the Devil himself. It's said he was chased from Cornwall by the choir of St. Pol De Leon Church, leaving his footprints

embedded in the green rock above the village.

Sometimes in Cornwall, when the waves are pounding, it is easy to understand why people living near the volatile and mysterious sea came to believe in volatile and mysterious entities.

Simon Reed is the author of The Cornish Traditional Year, which examines the unique pattern of seasonal customs in the Duchy, and Wassailing - The British Blessing Custom. He was Mayor of the Cornish town of Penzance between 2003 and 2005 and is responsible for many of the recently revived traditions found in that community. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.



seaSPIRITS

*The Celtic nations have always
had an intimate bond with the sea,
writes Simon Reed.*





Glass sculptor Elizabeth Armstrong was surprised to feel relaxed when she walked into the CBC TV studio to present her business, Aqua Vitae Stemware, to Canada's Dragons' Den panel. Armstrong figured she was calm because she'd already got through the bigger challenge, which came earlier when she prepared for the session by presenting to her friends.

"Just before I went to Toronto for the taping, I had a Dragons' Den party," the Montreal-based artist and business woman told Celtic Life International. "I invited a group of my friends that are fans of the show to come and be the dragons to prepare me. That was nerve-racking. My friends were ruthless, much worse than the real dragons. Being in front of the real panel was a lot of fun. As long as you are prepared and you give them a show, they love you and your product."

The TV panel of well-known business people asked Armstrong about the scalability (growth potential) of her business – a possible problem for an artisan. They loved the Dragons' Den wine and whiskey glasses that she'd made for the show and were also taken with her Kama Sutra glasses.

Armstrong's Celtic-themed glassware usually impresses people, especially her Bestia Collection, which features four Celtic animals – the Welsh Dragon, Celtic Boar, Irish Wolfhound and Scottish Lion. She also makes a Tribal Trinity Knot that is sought after by many who are not of Celtic background but who like Tribal art.

Inspired by her own heritage which is Scottish, Welsh and Irish, Armstrong began her business after working for glass sculptor Peter Collins at Vitrie Montreal while in university.

"When I graduated, I built myself a glass studio where I sculpted large pieces of glass art for family and friends," she said. "I took a leave of absence from work three years ago to explore starting a small business in glass sculpting. I officially started my crystal stemware business two years ago, focused on Celtic art on crystal wine, whiskey and beer glasses."



In the two years she has been in business, Armstrong has managed to get her crystal glasses into 40 stores in North America as well as a couple in Scotland and Ireland.

"Most of my business is in the United States. I also have several stores in Canada that carry my Celtic glasses, as well as my Great Canadian Loon glasses that depict loons during mating season when they dance on the water with their wings outspread."

Armstrong has recently expanded into making custom-designed whiskey glasses for a whiskey company in Alberta, in western Canada, as well as provocative crystal wine glasses for high-end erotica boutiques and lingerie stores.

She said her main competitors are businesses that laser-etch logos onto

glass as well as crystal companies that cut crystal with geometric and linear patterns. Armstrong said she works differently. "I don't etch glass; I deeply engrave crystal glasses. I have a lot of flexibility with the designs I can do on the crystal. I use crystal instead of glass because as an art medium it is beautiful to use. The clarity, weight and sparkle of crystal highlight what I do with the designs. Also, each piece is enhanced with a Swarovski crystal or semi-precious stone. My pieces are unique."

The artist said she finds it rewarding to work with an individual to create something personal that they will cherish. "That is primarily why I focused on Celtic art on crystal stemware. I like the stories behind the images and include them with the glasses when people purchase a set."

Her crystal stemware is bought by both men and women. "My beer and whiskey glasses have bold designs on them, meant for men because it's often very hard to find a good guy gift."

Packaging is a challenge as its cost can bump up a product's price. "Glass is fragile and has to be shipped carefully. I needed boxes that protected the glass, looked elegant, weren't too bulky and weren't exorbitantly expensive. I have been able to achieve packaging that does what I need it to do."

Having overcome these issues, Armstrong is looking forward to revealing how she did on Dragons' Den and seeing what impact the show has on her business after it airs on CBC TV later this fall.

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Based in Pitlochry in Highland Perthshire, Heathergems is a Scottish craft business and success story, which is gathering sales and attention around the world after quietly building focus and momentum over more than half a century.

"The finished Heathergems display the natural markings of each individual heather stem, highlighted by the varying shades of the natural dyes," said Stuart Buyers, Managing Director.

The process of turning heather, that quintessentially Scottish plant, into jewellery and gifts begins when workers collect heather stems from the Perthshire hills.

"This is old heather which has lost its nutritional value to wildlife. It is normally burnt to allow new heather to grow, although the process of cutting the heather also allows new heather to grow up," explained Buyers.

The heather stems are then dried before being shot blasted to remove the bark.

"The cleaned stems are then coloured with natural dyes. The heather is very hard, so the stems are put in a vacuum

chamber before the dye is released. It takes several days for the dye to penetrate the heather," Buyers said. "The colours never come out exactly the same, which means Heathergems are special to the



individual. You are getting your very own piece of Scotland when you buy a Heathergem. That is very important to tourists researching their Scottish heritage and it's one reason our products sell extremely well to the American market."

He said that after the dyed stems have dried, they are made into blocks, which are normally composed of two colours. The colours are mixed and soaked in resin before being put in a hydraulic press which squeezes the heather between two moulds at a pressure of up to 80 tons. The compressed block is then left to harden. Later, it is cut to produce the jewellery.

"The individual pieces are cut out on computer-controlled machines to different shapes," Buyers said. "Each piece is then filled and sanded to a very fine finish before being lacquered by hand. Some pieces are natural shapes like hearts and ovals. Some are inserted into decorative metal settings, the majority made from pewter and silver."

The full range of Heathergems jewellery and gifts can be seen in many quality gift shops throughout



Scotland as well as quite a few stores overseas. Heathergems has a factory shop and visitor centre in Pitlochry and a website where viewers can see and order the products.

The company dates back to the 1940s. At the time, wood was being rationed after the Second World War, and a group of men in East Kilbride near Glasgow started a business making flooring tiles from beech wood branches. The smaller branches were collected and compressed into a block from which they cut flooring tiles. The process was expensive and, as a result, the business did not last. But one of the men involved, Hugh Kerr, a craftsman from Glenlivet, developed the process using heather stems and started making Heathergems in very small quantities in his own workshop.

In 1969, Kerr met Charles Buyers, a Glasgow accountant, who was looking for craft industries to set up in the Highlands as a project for the then Highlands and Islands Development Board, which was seeking to boost employment. The board decided that Kerr's project was not viable, so Buyers put his own money behind Heathergems.

The original company was established in a small factory in East Kilbride and began producing Heathergems in the spring of 1970. A few years later, it was decided the company should be moved to a more natural home in the Highlands. As a result, Heathergems moved to Blair Atholl in Perthshire in 1979. Hugh Kerr died in 1974 and Charles Buyers in 1992.

Today, Heathergems is run by the second generation of the Buyers family. Stuart Buyers works with his sister, Marjorie Brown, who is also a director. The third generation of the family, Marjorie's two sons Craig and Stuart, work for the company.

Buyers said that Heathergems has had an excellent year with sales well up, despite the recession. "The family put this down to the fact there is so little left that is made in Scotland and many visitors are looking for quality products that are genuinely Scottish," he said.

www.heathergems.com



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Saving Troop Island

Bill Troupe and his wife Sheila were enjoying a sunlit breakfast in their rural Nova Scotia kitchen when a headline in the Chronicle-Herald caught Bill's eye – Troop Island, a piece of land given to his Scottish ancestor in 1774, was being sold. Bill stared at the headline and felt the news stir deep feelings about his family history. He read on and learned that local environmental groups were fundraising in order to buy the island for the community. Bill immediately resolved to help acquire it.



Bill Troupe



Sheila Troupe

Troop Island became Troop Island in 1774 when three brothers immigrated to the east coast of Canada from Kelton in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland. The brothers – William, James and George Troop – were fishers and farmers and they were given grants of land near Peggy's Cove, an area now famous for its unique glacier-carved rocks and jaunty lighthouse. Troop Island was part of the parcel of land granted to Bill's ancestor, William.

When Troop Island came on the market in 2009, it had already been sold out of the Troop family, but Bill saw the effort to buy the island for the community as a way to reaffirm his own roots. He didn't want the island to be sold to private developers and he decided to lend his own name – variously spelled Troop or Troupe – to the campaign.

"We wanted the island preserved in its wild state and we wanted the community to have access to it, for it is part of every

Nova Scotians' heritage," said Bill, now aged 80 and a retired businessman and teacher.

In many ways, Bill and Sheila's attachment to Troop Island is typical of the way Nova Scotians feel about their islands and coastline. These residents of eastern Canada grow up sailing and fishing around Nova Scotia's many unpolluted bays and islands. The province has 7,400 km of coastline abutting the Atlantic Ocean and around 3,800 islands but, with around 95 per cent of Nova Scotia's coastline now in private hands, the free-spirited, island-hopping lifestyle is in danger.

In the 1940s and 50s, Beth McGee spent a lot of time playing with her brothers and friends on Troop Island. Like Bill and Sheila, the business woman and environmentalist got behind the campaign to buy Troop Island in order to ensure that future generations will enjoy the bay as she did.

"Troop Island was only three-quarters of a mile from the wharf of my family's cottage on Wooden's Cove where we spent the summers," Beth said. "We would row out to the island and later took a boat. Troop was a magical island to us. We liked the beach

on the east side where there is a big rock, ideal for a picnic, and it was sheltered and good for swimming. We would explore all around the island and pick up shells and observe the wildlife; the osprey didn't like it when we were there – they'd scream at us. We had great freedom."

Freedom matters, but Troop is an especially precious place because of its rich and rare ecosystems. Despite being mere meters from the coastal road that takes coachloads of summer tourists to view the striated rocks of Peggy's Cove, Troop is largely undisturbed. It offers intertidal marsh lands, bird life,



Photographs by Scott Pelton and Jennifer Mackinnon

freshwater ponds, and Acadian forests of ancient Yellow Birch, Sugar Maple and American Beech, where osprey perch in the same nests passed down through generations.

"These trees were young when Shakespeare was writing his sonnets," said Geoff Le Boutillier, a long-time volunteer with the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (SMBSA), one of the groups behind the purchase.

Worryingly, Troop Island had already been divided and plans for development made when the SMBSA proposed buying it for the community. Residents immediately got behind the plan to buy 27 acres of the island for \$820,000 (the remaining acre remains in private hands, but there are no plans for development.)

Ella McQuinn, the SMBSA board member who headed up the campaign alongside the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, said that as soon as fundraising began and the media drew attention to it, the group heard from many people – young and old, locals and others who'd never even seen the island – who all felt passionate about protecting it. Local businesses, community groups and families stepped up and people reached out to friends and contacts through social media.



"We had little over a month to pull the community campaign and remaining funds together since securing a last-minute option to buy the island," Ella explained. "The stakes were high and the goal was ambitious. Yet the support was overwhelming. The natural world on Troop represents a variety of ecosystems that are becoming more precious to people of every age."

Still, time was tight. "It turned from a leisurely three-mile walk to a 30-meter dash," Ella told the celebratory crowd of well-wishers who gathered to rejoice once the funds had been secured.

Despite being a grassroots volunteer group, the SMBSA was well placed to lead the campaign, having helped purchase an island for the community before. St. Margaret's Bay has a relaxed lifestyle built around its 30 islands and pristine coastline, but as it is only 30 minutes from Nova Scotia's capital, Halifax, it is also a fast-growing area.

Concerned about the rapid pace of development, residents formed the SMBSA in 2003 in order to monitor the area's growth. The group helped the community acquire Micou's Island in 2007. Working with the provincial and municipal governments, the SMBSA co-ordinated a \$1 million fundraising campaign that resulted in the island being bought with \$400,000 of funds donated

from the public, \$500,000 from the province and \$100,000 from the city. The province now owns the island and the SMBSA co-ordinates its care.

A 22-acre tidal island, Micou's lies just a few meters from the mainland and is accessible twice a day when the tide retreats. Once a summer camp site for the indigenous Mi'kmaq people, Micou's is much loved although, like most of Nova Scotia's islands, its shores have been changed by human activities – deforestation, agricultural, residential and recreational use have all altered Micou's habitat.

Today, the SMBSA stewards both Micou's and Troop and is interested in helping with similar future projects. The provincial government is a useful partner, having committed to protecting 12 per cent of the province's land by 2015 – meaning that the land will be left in a natural, wild state. Around the world, 12 per cent is often cited as a desirable target.

Other provincial groups are also striving to preserve the natural environment, including the Mahone Islands' Conservation Association. Just a few miles down the coast from St. Margaret's Bay, the association focuses on preserving Mahone Bay's

ecologically sensitive drumlin islands.

Those involved with the Troop purchase have been left feeling a rosy glow. "We hope that the incredible momentum that built around this campaign will continue to build towards protecting other coastal lands and islands in the bay and across the province," Ella said.

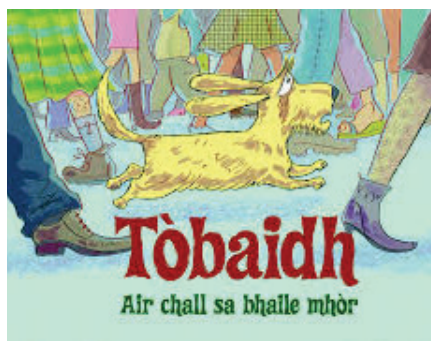
For Bill and Sheila Troupe, lending their name to the Troop Island purchase and making a sizeable donation themselves has been a rewarding experience, allowing them to be part of an important legacy.

"It's been very exciting. Troop Island is part of our family story," Bill reflected. "Preserving the island's name was important to us as our son, William James, is the last male heir of those three immigrant brothers who came from Scotland all those years ago."

By Carol Moreira
www.heartofthebay.ca

Gaelic LOANWORDS

How ‘Celtic’ is the English Language asks linguistic anthropologist Emily McEwan-Fujita, as she looks at the hidden legacy of Gaelic.



As a child growing up near Chicago, once on St. Patrick's Day I saw a banner that said "Erin go bragh." A grownup explained that it meant "Ireland forever." I just thought of it as funny English. As an English speaker, I simply didn't realize that it was a totally different language. Only when I started to study Gaelic much later did it occur to me that Irish and Scottish Gaelic were real languages, just like English.

But in daily life the boundaries between languages are not as firm as they are in a dictionary or classroom. People borrow words or expressions from another language for necessity, convenience, style, or fun. Borrowing usually happens in situations that linguists call "language contact," when there is ongoing interaction between people who speak different native languages, or when native speakers of one language learn to speak another language. Language contact can also occur indirectly when people have contact with foreign ideas or things—for example, English speakers can talk about feeling *déjà vu* or *schadenfreude* while drinking a latte or a chai.

As linguists and language students alike have found, the English language bears interesting traces of historical contact with the Celtic languages, as well as more well-known languages.

What are the Celtic languages?

The Celtic languages are a family of Indo-European languages which share a common origin and characteristics. One of the two main branches of Celtic is the Gaelic languages, which in the present day include Irish (Gaeilge), Scottish Gaelic (Gàidhlig), and Manx Gaelic (Gaelg).

In contrast, English belongs to an entirely different family of Indo-European languages, the Germanic family, which also includes languages like Scots, German, Dutch, Afrikaans, Norwegian, and Swedish. But a great deal of English vocabulary of course also derives from Norman French, due to the intensive contact that followed the Norman conquest of England.

How did the Celtic languages influence English? Ireland had been subject to intensive contact through English military conquest, colonization, and political incorporation beginning in the 1100s, while in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands of Scotland, English speakers made the most serious inroads beginning in the 1600s. English speakers thus came into contact with Gaelic culture, and ultimately borrowed words for unique or ubiquitous concepts.

As Anglophones took control of education in Ireland and Scotland, they attempted to stamp out the "barbaric and incivil" Gaelic languages. Gradually, in one area after the next, mother-tongue Gaelic speakers were forced to learn English as they entered schools with English-only education, took jobs working for English speakers, or emigrated for work. But in each area, the way that people learned to speak English was filtered through the distinctive sounds and grammar of their native Gaelic. They passed this way of speaking on to their children, who passed it onto later generations, until it became a distinctive dialect.

The main areas where you can see the influence of Gaelic on English are in vocabulary, grammar, and accent. We'll look at vocabulary first.

Gaelic Vocabulary in English: "Whisky Galore"

Some Gaelic words have been fully absorbed into English. When a word is borrowed this way, the pronunciation and meaning are usually changed, as speakers put new English sounds and stresses on it, or perhaps even leave out bits, just as "latte" now refers to the milk-and-espresso drink which is called a *caffè latte* in Italian.

In fact warming drinks are a good place to start, because English speakers have always loved to import a tasty new drink as well as the word for it. Plenty of people know that "whisky" means "water of life" (*uisge beatha*) in both Irish and Scottish Gaelic. This compound word first came into English as "usquebaugh" in

the late 1500s. Gradually this word faded out of use, however, with the last Oxford English Dictionary examples cited in the late 1800s. Meanwhile, “whisky” came into use in the early 1700s—and notice how the “beatha” or “-baugh” (“life”) element was dropped.

“Galore,” a frequent companion to “whisky,” means “in abundance” or “plenty” in English. The word was borrowed from both Irish *go leór* and Scottish Gaelic *gu leòr*, both meaning “enough” or “sufficiently.” Galore was first used in print in 1675 according to the Oxford English Dictionary Online, so it is a loan of long standing.

The company Deiseal Ltd. made Gaelic borrowings into the focus of an advertising campaign for their Úlpan Gaelic course in Scotland. Dàibhidh Grannd, head of Deiseal, explained why:

“Gaelic is often falsely accused of being inferior, since English speakers notice the borrowed English words in it like *telebhisean* (television) and *heileacoptair* (helicopter).

“The Úlpan posters turn this on its head by pointing out that English speakers already have some Gaelic in their English.

“Úlpan is an adult language course largely aimed at English speakers, and we’re saying that you already know some Gaelic, but perhaps you weren’t aware of it. Come and discover some more.”

“I’m after going”: Gaelic Grammar in English

While Gaelic loanwords often go unnoticed, Gaelic grammar used in English attracts attention. Other English speakers often see it either as a quaint reminder of regional origins, or a mistake that must be corrected. Given the common Gaelic influence, it is unfair that in North America, an Irish person’s accent is seen as interesting and mildly prestigious, while in Canada, a Cape Breton or Newfoundland accent shaped by Scottish Gaelic or Irish may brand the speaker as a hick.



Lewis MacKinnon

Nowadays, Cape Breton’s Gaelic English can also be a point of regional pride. The late singer Rita MacNeil’s well-known song “It’s a Working Man I Am” provides a good example of Gaelic grammar in English. An emphatic statement like this (in contrast to “I am a working man”) closely resembles emphatic constructions in Gaelic which use a special form of the verb called the copula (is e or ’s e in the present tense—e.g., ‘S e duine gasda a th’ann, It’s a fine man that is in him). While this statement can also be made in other dialects of English, it’s a very good bet that in this case, the influence is directly from Gaelic.

An idiomatic Gaelic expression also accounts for one of the most common aspects of Cape Breton English. Jamie Campbell, who grew up in Port Morien, recalled:



“I once cut up all of my father’s seed potatoes just because I had a sharp knife and nothing else to do. He didn’t say, ‘You ruined my seed potatoes.’ He said, ‘You’re after ruining my seed potatoes.’”

Barry Shears, originally from Glace Bay, recalled: “We always used ‘he was after dying,’ or ‘she was after going downtown.’ Using such phrases was always said to be a sign of incorrect English.” But this construction was the proper Gaelic equivalent to using either the present or past perfect with the adverb “just” in English, in order to express a recently completed action with ongoing effects. In other words, “I’m after doing something” means “I have just done something,” and “she was after doing something” means “she had just done something.”

Lewis MacKinnon, executive director of Gaelic Affairs with the Nova Scotia Government, offers another example of Gaelic grammar in English: “I frequently hear a distinctive expression from people who come from a Gaelic background. It’s the way they use the verb ‘wanting’. They



Emily McEwan-Fujita

tend to say ‘I am wanting [to go, etc.]’ instead of ‘I want [to go etc.]’”

MacKinnon believes this is due to the influence of the frequently used Gaelic structure “Tha mi ‘g iarraidh [a dhol]” which is literally “I am wanting [to go, etc.]”

The unique Gaelic aspects of English in Nova Scotia are becoming more widely

known and appreciated. Gaelic Affairs recently launched a museum exhibit titled “The Gaels in Nova Scotia” which includes a section on the Gaelic influences on English. It turns out that as well as the grammatical patterns already mentioned, commonly heard phrases like “Who’s your father?” [Cò a b’ athair dhut?] and “There you have it” [Sin agad e] are translations from frequently used Gaelic expressions.

Other varieties that linguists call “Celtic Englishes” include Hebridean English and Highland English as spoken by Gaelic speakers and their descendants in Scotland, the Hiberno-English or Irish English of modern Ireland, and some varieties of English spoken in Newfoundland, Canada.

Whether it’s borrowed Gaelic words or the unique patterns of Gaelic speech, the Gaels have imparted a colourful and lasting Celtic legacy to English.





Were they heroes or traitors? The San Patricios Battalion or El Batallón de los San Patricios is forgotten in the U.S., but revered in Mexico. John Daly looks at the Irishmen who deserted the U.S. Army then fought against America during the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848.

Beginnings

It started with the Irish famine of the mid-19th century. In October 1845, a blight devastated Ireland's potatoes, ruining about three-quarters of the crop. The blight returned in 1846 and around 350,000 people died of starvation. An outbreak of typhus also ravaged the population, leading massive numbers of Irish to emigrate to America.

In 1846, thousands of these immigrants enlisted in the U.S. Army, joining the forces under General Zachary Taylor that invaded Mexico after Congress declared war on May 13 that year. In all, 4,811 Irish-born soldiers served in the U.S. Army during the Mexican-American conflict.

Among those already serving in the U.S. Army, was twenty-eight-year-old Irish émigré John O'Reilly from Clifden, Galway. O'Reilly had previously served in the British Army, where he acquired a deep knowledge of artillery, but he left in 1843 for the United States.

On September 4, 1845, O'Reilly enlisted for five years in the 5th U.S. Infantry Regiment at Fort Holmes in Mackinac and Michigan and was sent to Corpus Christi in Texas to join Taylor's troops. But, before the U.S. had even declared war, O'Reilly had organized a company of foreign soldiers at Matamoros to fight the invading U.S. forces. The St. Patrick's Battalion, known to the Mexicans as the "San Patricios," would eventually number several hundred men. While O'Reilly left no memoirs and so one can only speculate on why he deserted, he was doubtless influenced by the harsh treatment meted out to Irish immigrant soldiers, including harsh discipline, the overt racism of the Protestant officers, and being forbidden to attend Sunday Mass. Later, while being held prisoner in Mexico City, O'Reilly wrote to a friend in Michigan: "Be not deceived by a nation that is at war with Mexico, for a friendlier and more hospitable people than the Mexicans there exists not on the face of the earth."

The War Begins

Not all the San Patricios were deserters from the U.S. Army, as their number also included Irish and other Europeans already settled in Mexico. When the Mexican generals learned of the difficult conditions the Irish faced in the U.S. Army, they encouraged defections by promising deserters land, money and promotions, surreptitiously distributing leaflets exhorting Irish Catholics to join them.

The conflict was not universally popular in the United States. Henry David Thoreau went to jail rather than pay taxes to support it and newly elected House of Representatives member Abraham Lincoln denounced the war in Congress. Former president John Quincy Adams opposed it and future president Ulysses S. Grant described the conflict as "the most unjust war ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation."

In May 1846, O'Reilly and several dozen men under his command first skirmished with the Americans at the siege of Fort Texas. Four months later, on September 21, 1846, the San Patricios first fought as a formal Mexican army unit, providing artillery support and adding to their reputation in handling heavy weaponry. The San Patricios' green battle flag displayed an Irish harp surrounded by the Mexican coat-of-arms with a scroll reading "Freedom for the Mexican Republic," and the Gaelic motto "Erin go Brágh" ("Ireland forever").

At the battle of Monterrey, September 21-25, 1846, the San Patricios fought with valour.

On February 23, 1847, Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna attacked the dug-in U.S. forces at the Battle of Buena Vista, also known as the battle of Angostura. The San Patricios again played a prominent role. During the battle, two six-pounder cannon belonging to the U.S. Fourth Artillery were captured by Mexican forces due to the intense fire from the San Patricio artillerymen. Several San Patricios, including Juan O'Reilly, who was subsequently promoted to the rank of El Capitan, received

the Cruz de Honor de la Angostura for bravery.

In June 1847, the San Patricios were transferred from the artillery branch to the infantry and merged into the Foreign Legion branch of the Mexican Army, becoming known as the First and Second Militia Infantry Companies of San Patricio. Later, the battlefield shifted to eastern Mexico and when General Winfield Scott landed his troops and captured Veracruz on March 28, 1848, the U.S. soldiers marched on Mexico City.

The Battle of Churubusco

The San Patricios' last stand was in defense of Mexico City at Churubusco on August 20, 1851, one of the bloodiest battles of the war. Mexican President Santa Ana said, "With a few hundred more men like the San Patricios, Mexico would have won the battle." Sixty percent of the San Patricios were killed or captured, fighting until their ammunition ran out. Three times a white flag of surrender went up, to be torn down by the San Patricios, who knew what fate awaited them if captured by the U.S. Army. Only the intervention of a U.S. Army officer stopped the battered victors from killing the captured San Patricios, who included the wounded O'Reilly.

Retribution

U.S. military justice was brutal. Of the 83 San Patricios captured, O'Reilly and 71 San Patricios were court martialed. Fifty of the San Patricios were sentenced to be hanged and 16 were flogged and branded. To the surprise of the U.S. Army, Scott reduced O'Reilly's sentence from hanging to "whipping and branding," justifying his action by noting that because O'Reilly had deserted prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the Articles of War dictated that he could receive only the lesser sentence. O'Reilly and his cohorts were also branded on their cheeks with a two-inch-high letter "D" for deserter.

On September 13, on a hill outside Mixcoac in sight of Mexico City's Chapultepec Castle, U.S. Army Colonel William S. Harney, a harsh disciplinarian, brought thirty condemned San Patricios to a gallows within view of the battle still

raging around the fortress-castle. The men were executed "in a fearful dance of death," according to an eyewitness. In an incident of brutal irony, Harney himself was an Irishman. O'Reilly and his flogged companions were forced to dig their fallen comrades' graves. Mexicans were shocked and outraged by the brutal treatment of the San Patricios.

On September 14, the American Army entered Mexico City, effectively ending the war. By the subsequent Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago, Mexico lost approximately half its territory, for which it received \$15 million in compensation.



The San Patricios who had not been hanged were imprisoned for the duration of the war.

Aftermath

The Mexican-American War had the highest desertion rate in U.S. military history, with over 5,280 of the nearly 40,000 U.S. Army regulars who saw duty disappearing. Of that figure, nearly 1,000 were Irishmen. For the U.S. Army, the conflict provided a training-ground for the men who would lead the Northern and Southern armies in the upcoming American Civil War. General Taylor used his fame as a war hero to win the Presidency in 1848.

O'Reilly returned to the Mexican Army and was promoted to colonel. Later, he was arrested on suspicion of taking part in an abortive revolt against the Mexican government and rumors of his execution by a firing squad nearly sparked a revolt by the reorganized St. Patrick's Battalion. According to some accounts, O'Reilly died in Veracruz in August 1850 and is buried there.

The San Patricios have been honoured in Mexico as foreign heroes. In 1959, the Mexican government dedicated a commemorative plaque to them in the Mexico City suburb of San Angel, which lists the names of all members of the battalion who lost their lives fighting for Mexico, either in battle or by execution.

In September 1997, on the 150th anniversary of the U.S.-Mexican war, legislation was passed to inscribe upon the Wall of Honor inside the Mexican Congress, "Defensores de la Patria 1846-1848" and "Batallón San Patricio." In April 1999, Irish President Mary McAleese made a state visit to Mexico and laid a wreath at a monument in Mexico City to the San Patricios. The Irish fighters are also commemorated in Mexico each year on St. Patrick's Day and on September 12, the anniversary of the first executions.

In the U.S., recognition of the San Patricios has been muted. In 1999, Hollywood released a film based on them called *One Man's Hero*, starring Tom Berenger. In 2010, American musicologist Ry Cooder, in collaboration with renowned Irish band the Chieftains, released their *San Patricios* CD.

For myself, while researching this piece, I found that one of the flogged and branded San Patricios was named John Daly.



Chasing history around Ireland

*Canadian Ken McGoogan is the author of the books *Fatal Passage*, *Lady Franklin's Revenge*, and *How the Scots Invented Canada*. This October, with HarperCollins Canada, he will publish *50 Canadians Who Changed the World*. Here, he describes his adventure chasing history around Ireland.*

We got lost in the dirt roads north of Clonakilty. We were looking for the spot where Michael Collins got ambushed. According to historian Tim Pat Coogan, Collins was “the man who made Ireland.”

In “Clon” itself, as they call it, a busy town 330 km southwest of Dublin, we had seen the house where, as a boy, Collins lived with one of his sisters. We had admired the larger-than-life statue of the legendary figure. And we had followed the signs to nearby Woodfield and explored the site of the family homestead.

But as evening fell we headed north towards Beal na Mblath, roughly along the route Collins followed in August 1922. The movie *Michael Collins*, starring Liam Neeson, made that final journey look easy enough. We had a Google Maps printout: how hard could it be?

This being Ireland, signposts were few. We ended up driving this way and that until we spotted another vehicle and hailed the driver, a middle-aged woman with a teenager alongside. She started to explain but then gave up and cried, “Never mind, follow me!” She led us, at remarkably high speed, to within one kilometre of the site and pointed along the road. Finally, we spotted it: the white stone cross that marks the spot where Collins died.

As we stood there, alone in the evening, I realized that this would be a highlight of our driving adventure in Ireland. Looking

back, I can not only confirm that, but add that most of our peak moments arose when we strayed off the beaten track.

Yes, we got lost. We got lost in Kinsale, looking for a stone chair. We got lost hunting the birthplace of the Irish saint who founded the monastery at Iona in Scotland, and then again, seeking the lakeside castle that, late in the 16th century, served as a base for pirate queen Grace O'Malley.

But when we did reach our various destinations, we would find ourselves alone: no tour buses, no hordes of souvenir-hunters. With the Irish “Gathering” already in full swing, and more than 300,000 people expected to visit Ireland this year, some travellers may yet be looking for that more private experience. In our “hire car,” we drove 2,200 km in three weeks and got lost half a dozen times. But we would repeat this journey in a heartbeat.

The experience did bring surprises. As Canadians we learned, for example, that driving can be a co-operative endeavour rather than a competitive

one. On those narrow, winding back roads, you sometimes have to pull over and let the other fellow pass. And, yes, a man can ask directions and survive – at least in Ireland, where the people really are incredibly friendly.

Bottom line: driving can get you places most visitors never see. And for a history buff, that can be invaluable. Consider Kinsale, a lively, colourful resort town 285 km southwest of Dublin. It offers





yachting, angling, golf, art galleries, and restaurants, and it plays host annually to a gourmet festival. Because the town is hilly, with winding streets that dwindle to a single lane most visitors who arrive by car park their vehicles as soon as they can.

A few kilometres outside town, however, if you are willing to ask directions, you will find a series of green-and-white signs marking locations related to the Battle of Kinsale. A local pamphlet describes that battle, which took place on January 3, 1602, as the one in which "Ireland lost control of its destiny." An Elizabethan army overwhelmed a native Irish force led by the legendary Hugh O'Neill. The victors subsequently destroyed a symbol of Irish authority, the chieftain's chair of the O'Neills.

In 2001, locals erected a new stone chair at a crossroads near the site of the battle, and began urging visitors to come and sit in it. You might get lost looking for that chair, as we did. But when you do finally sit in it, you will indeed "feel supported by the invisible heroes around you." And, later, if you travel north to Rathmullan, you will discover those same phantoms gathered round an arresting memorial to the Flight of the Earls.

Our search for the birthplace of Saint Columba came in between. Columba was

the sixth-century monk who brought Christianity to Scotland. We set out from Derry in Northern Ireland, aka Londonderry, and reached the town of Letterkenny in forty minutes. From there, the drive to Garton is supposed to take less than half that.

But in the sheep-dotted hills, because it was Saturday, we found the saint's information centre closed and not a soul in sight. Various signs pointed us this way and that, and when, by a process of trial and error, we reached the place where both Scottish Christianity and the Book of Kells had their roots, we felt a rush of satisfaction.

The hunt for Rockfleet Castle had already yielded to a similar process. Those taken with Grace O'Malley, the 16th-century pirate queen, should start at the splendiferous Westport House in the coastal town of Westport. Built in the 18th century atop the ruins of an O'Malley Castle, it features splendid gardens, an arresting waxworks display, and thirty open rooms replete with original antiques and artifacts.

A marble statue of the pirate queen graces the corner of one hallway, and at the lowest levels, you can explore dungeons that date from her era. Those who wish to feel still closer to this singular

heroine can drive fifteen minutes north to Newport and follow narrow dirt tracks to Rockfleet, a lovingly restored tower house in which Grace O'Malley once lived.

As for Irish history that does not require getting lost, of course it is everywhere. Before leaving Dublin, besides the Book of Kells at Trinity College, we took in Glasnevin Cemetery, which is dominated by the memorial to Daniel O'Connell; Kilmainham Jail, where Charles Stewart Parnell once occupied a double cell; and the Guinness Distillery, which celebrates a history dating back to 1759.

The best long-term overview of Irish history can be found at the National Heritage Park at Ferrycarrig, just off the main highway (the N11) ten minutes north of Wexford. Here you can wander through 9,000 years of history, seeing how people lived during the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Celtic/Early Christian era, and on through the Vikings and the Normans. When we reached the highest point in the park, we noted the round-tower memorial to heroes of the Crimean War, but mainly we savored the panoramic view of rivers and distant mountains and assured each other that, yes, we would be back.



Starlings

Heavy hooves pound the well-trodden track. With two riders, the going is slow and the galloping steed puffs in the chill air, but the growing darkness is a friend, shrouding the intent of the young lovers. A glint of moonshine on water punctures the thin mist and signals that they have reached the Solway Firth and the River Esk that marks the boundary between England and Scotland. Another mile and they will be in Scotland and just a little further to the blacksmith's place. It shouldn't take long to pay the fee, seal their vows over the anvil and then they will be wed. Nothing can stop them now, except...

...except, once her father realizes they are both missing he will be in hot pursuit. He disapproved of her new suitor from the start and careless talk of marriage will have left him in no doubt where they are headed...Gretna Green!

The small village of Gretna Green is renowned as the place where runaway lovers wed and its history of romance and intrigue has made it a world-famous wedding destination. The reason for this dates back to 1754 when Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act became law in England and Wales. Among other things, the law stipulated that those younger than twenty-one needed parental consent to marry. In Scotland, boys could marry at 14 and girls at 12 without consent.

For a fee, Gretna Green blacksmiths would provide witnesses and perform a quick ceremony at the anvil. Runaway weddings took place all along the border, but its location meant that, for many, Gretna Green was the easiest place to wed. Today, the Gretna Green area still hosts more than five thousand weddings annually and attracts thousands of

international tourists.

Gretna Green also sees another massive influx of visitors every year. From late autumn, one of the largest gatherings of starlings in the country can be seen performing their amazing aerobatic displays in the skies above the village. Known as murmurations, these swarms begin with the onset of colder weather, when smaller flocks of starlings, which are often seen in the surrounding countryside, come together to form bigger groups. Toward the end of October and heading into November, the groups get ever larger. The phenomenon starts as daylight fades and flocks of a dozen to several hundred birds head towards the Gretna Green area. Some arrive from the nearby Solway Coast and farmlands while others travel over 20 miles.

A murmuration is an extraordinary sight. The gathering begins slowly and high in the sky as the individual flocks merge. Within half an hour, the sky darkens as hundreds of thousands of starlings arrive from all directions. At the start of the murmuration season

most of the birds are British but, as the cold weather hits other parts of northern Europe and Russia, they are joined by huge numbers of foreign visitors. It is estimated that, at the peak of the Gretna Green murmurations, there could be between one and two million birds in the sky.

As the sun drops over the horizon, the display begins. In a mesmerizing show of twisting, turning, swooping shapes, the flock goes one way and then another. Several groups break in different directions before turning and converging again at speed.

Watch the shapes and you see stars, dolphins, dragons and fish silhouetted against the sunset. As the minutes pass, the murmuration gets lower in the sky. There is little chatter from the birds, only the swish and flutter of over two million beating wings. This is an air show. It is nature's theatre.

As they drop towards their chosen roost site, the swarm spirals and condenses. Then it flows like black ink narrowing into a funnel. In minutes, the

sky empties and, from the trees and hedgerows, the noise starts; the amazing chatter of hundreds of thousands of birds. In the morning, small groups of starlings head off in different directions in search of food, only to gather again the following evening. Subject to weather, this pattern continues throughout November and December until the birds finally disperse around the turn of the year.

Scotland's cities. They were attracted by the warmth, the nesting sites that old buildings offered and easy food sources. Numbers were so high that they were regarded as a pest and some authorities introduced devices to scare the birds away. The tactics worked and the starlings left the cities but it seems they didn't simply relocate to the country.

Despite the massive murmurations that can be seen at places



Keith Morton, Species Policy Officer for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Scotland, explained why the starlings gather in such huge flocks. "Starlings are very temperature sensitive and they have to roost in big gangs. A few individuals will literally drop off their perches and die during the night because they did not get a good enough spot in the roost or did not manage to get enough food during the day."

Morton said that the discovery of the temperature-sensitivity issue is particularly interesting, "Starlings became extinct over almost the whole of mainland Scotland by about 1800. This is thought to have been a reaction to a sustained low temperature climate blip. Somewhat counter-intuitively, they survived in the Outer Hebrides and in Shetland and possibly in Orkney and bits of Caithness and Sutherland. Despite their high latitude, these areas are washed by the relatively warm Gulf Stream ocean current and retained a milder temperature. One result of all this was that the isolated surviving starlings evolved into a separate sub-species — or certainly a phenotypically different form, if not a full valid subspecies. These are referred to as Hebridean starlings and Shetland starlings. The Shetland ones are the most morphologically distinctive."

As mainland Scotland warmed in subsequent years, the few starlings that had survived were supplemented by an influx of birds from the south of the U.K. but it would still be another 150 years before starlings would fully recolonize Scotland.

In the 1950s and 60s, starlings were a common sight in

like Gretna, Morton notes that worryingly, starling numbers are falling. "Over the whole U.K., the long-term trend has been an 80 per cent decline between 1970 and 2010. The shorter term trend has been a 50 per cent decline between 1995 and 2010, so the rate of decline has increased."

The rate of decline in Scotland is slightly lower than the U.K. average, but is still a cause of concern. "Population trends for starlings make it a 'red list' species, i.e. of highest conservation concern, although it remains a common, widespread bird," Morton said.

The reason for the decline in numbers is not fully understood, but it is likely that loss of habitat through modern farming techniques plays a significant part, while previous generations of city-dwelling starlings were driven out as pests. It is sad that the numbers are falling, for the spectacle they provide is one of nature's truly magical moments.

As the season of the giant murmurations approaches, I think back to the runaway marriages and wonder how many love-struck couples were guided to Gretna Green, in fading light, by the starlings performing above this small Scottish village.

~ Words and Photos by Tom Langlands

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the Irish Rovers

BID FAREWELL TO ROVIN'

The title of a classic Irish folk song turned out to be the perfect name for The Irish Rovers whose members have spent almost five decades touring the globe. Formed in Toronto in 1963, the Canadian-Irish folk group has helped popularize Irish music around the world. But now, the band is bidding a slow farewell to life on the road. Frontman and songwriter George Millar talks to Melanie Furlong about the Rovers' long career.

In recent years, the Rovers have undertaken three major tours annually with each tour lasting about six weeks. "It used to be a lot more in our younger days," said Millar, who has been with the band from the start, "but even three major tours take a toll on the body. It's for a young man."

That's why the Rovers have decided to take a step back and hang up the walking shoes.

"We're going to finish our final tour in 2015," Millar said. "We will still be doing a CD now and again and we'll still be doing

public appearances for festivals and things like that. We're getting away from the everyday grind."

The Rovers have always attracted crowds in Canada's Atlantic Provinces, where many residents have Celtic roots, so the Rovers' final tour of the region will be a nostalgic affair. It will begin in Newfoundland this fall and continue on into the United States. The band may include Australia and New Zealand in their 2014 itinerary and will finish back in Canada in 2015.

The band members owe their fans

no apologies for slowing down. In all their years of touring, none of the band ever missed a performance—except for the odd cancellation caused by a flood or hurricane.

"We're very proud of that," Millar said. "You can be sick and sore, but when you get to the stage you have to do the same show. People are there to be entertained. They've paid their money so you have to bring the same energy on stage and enjoy yourself."

Making sure their audiences have fun is an art The Rovers have perfected over



the years. Millar said one way they've contributed to the current Celtic music culture in North America is by making people aware that Irish music is so much fun.

"We could have been singing about some poor Irish guy in the 1700s that got hung, drawn and quartered, and as we're singing it on stage I notice the people are clapping their hands because of the upbeat tempo," he said. "I'm saying to myself, they don't understand a bloody thing we're singing about! It's a happy-sounding music; I think that's why it's been around for so long."

The original band of musicians, all of whom emigrated from Ireland to Canada in the early 1960s to avoid the political conflict in their divided country, became well known for their ability to have fun wherever they went.

Bob Hallett, of the Newfoundland band Great Big Sea, recently paid tribute to the Rovers. "You know it's one thing to play music, it's another thing to play it with enthusiasm and energy and to do it for so long..."

The members of the Rovers are both Catholic and Protestant and they have never tried to use the stage as a political platform. Standing together has been enough.

"We left Ireland to get away from all that," said Millar. "We're not a political band and religion was always a non-issue for us. We sing songs like The Orange and the Green (about a boy with a Catholic mother and a Protestant father) and try to have fun ourselves for two hours on stage. People don't walk away pondering things. If they walk away whistling Drunken Sailor, we've done our job properly."

Although the members of the band are "ever-changing," according to Millar, no one seems to mind as long as they're hearing favourites like The Black Velvet Band, Wasn't That a Party and The Unicorn. "There are still two or three of us that are

the originals," said Millar. "And if the audience is hearing what they want to hear, then they are satisfied and happy."

Millar first played as an Irish Rover in Toronto in 1963 when he and Jimmy Ferguson met and entered a talent show together. The pair won the contest and Millar enlisted his cousin Joe Millar to join the band and, after travelling to Calgary, his brother, Will Millar. The group found major success in 1968 with a song written by beatnik poet Shel Silverstein called The Unicorn.

"We were sparse on The Unicorn," said Millar. "I played the rhythm guitar, Glen Campbell played lead guitar, my cousin Joe Millar played the harmonica and we brought in a bass player. There were no drums or anything else on that little song that became such a magical giant all over the world."

Since then, the Rovers have been on many stages and had countless career highlights, but The Unicorn remains one of the pinnacles. "That song took us out of the folk clubs of the day and put us onto the stages of the world," said Millar.



Ten years after The Unicorn, Wasn't That a Party was another unexpected hit, followed quickly by Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer, written by Randy Brooks. "All our hits were unexpected hits," Millar revealed, "because groups like us don't normally get played on rock n' roll or country channels. There's nowhere to play us really. So, to get these major hits coming out of a band like us are highlights you couldn't forget."

Appearing in their own variety shows for the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corp), Ulster TV and Global for about 12 years was another major highlight for the band. Their programmes included The Irish Rovers, The Rovers Comedy House and Party with The Rovers. "We were able to meet all of the top players," said Millar.



Musical stars like Johnny Cash, Bobby Darin and Andy Gibb appeared on their shows. "It was amazing to meet these people and have these diverse personalities come on our little show. You realize they're just normal people like everybody else."

Being able to travel back to their homeland and film many outdoor recordings in Ireland, Scotland, and England for their television programme was also a highlight. In fact, producers at the CBC worried about losing the band to Ireland. "A couple of boys did move back after that," said Millar. "They'd been in Canada for 10 to 15 years, then when they returned some of them did indeed move back."

The call to home remained strong. A few years ago, The Rovers recorded a live show in Belfast called *Home in Ireland*, which is available on DVD.

"PBS (America's Public Broadcasting Service) bought the DVD and it showed all over the world," said Millar. "It was nice to be able to go back and play in Belfast to a live audience and show some of the beauty of the coast on the DVD. We were all born and raised in Ireland so we all had favourite spots to take the cameras and show things. It's always nice to go home and play."

The 2012 tune *The Titanic* is also a tribute to their homeland. The ill-fated ship was built in Belfast, close to Millar's family home in Ballymena. "We wrote the song for the 100th anniversary of the tragedy and all the souls that were lost on board," said Millar. "We had a lot of connections to the Titanic, probably a lot of our grandfathers worked on it in some aspect. It employed a lot of Irishmen in 1909 and took three years to build so it fed a lot of people in Northern Ireland."

Their music has evolved over the years due to modern advances in recording techniques as well as band changes. Jimmy Ferguson passed away while on tour in 1997, Will Millar retired in 1994, and more recently, Joe Millar retired to the golf course making room for his son Ian to step up. Today, the Irish Rovers include: George Millar on guitar; Wilcil McDowell, an All-Ireland Champion on the accordion; Sean O'Driscoll, one of the best banjo players in Celtic music; Ian Millar on bass guitar; with Morris Crumb on the keyboard, and Fred Graham on bodhran. Geoffrey Kelly, who also plays with Vancouver folk bands *The Paperboys* and *Spirit of the West*, on whistle flute; and Gerry O'Connor, one of Ireland top fiddlers, will both be joining them for this final tour.

And the members are far-flung. Aside from those who have moved back to Ireland, a couple live on Vancouver Island, one is in Fort Lauderdale and another in Montreal. But recording is never a problem. "We start in Vancouver Island with just a guitar and a voice," said Millar. "My nephew Ian plays the bass and we send those tracks back to Ireland where Wilcil will put on his accordion and we put on an Irish piper and a tin whistler. They send it back to me where we add more things. We put new voices on and take old voices off, so that technique allows us to do a lot more."

This arrangement seems to work well for the band. "Irish music doesn't require that you have 34 tracks and put them all on the tune," said Millar. "That doesn't really make sense. We try to keep the music as pure as we can so we can reproduce it on stage."

With the recent DVD, their 2012 album, *Drunken Sailor*, and their single, *The Titanic*, The Irish Rovers are once again making international headlines and enjoying radio airplay. This attention has also brought them a new generation of fans and given them more than 10 million views of *Drunken Sailor* on YouTube. "It is quite amazing," said Millar. "It's bringing a lot of younger people back to the show. I'm thinking, God, I'll never get retired at this rate!"



Did you know?

Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau asked *The Irish Rovers* to become Canadian citizens. "We were absolutely flattered," said Millar. "The Prime Minister told his aide, 'I really like them, but if they're going to be representing Canada at expos, I think they should be Canadian citizens.' We got a call to be at City Hall in downtown Vancouver the next morning at 9 am, and we said, 'great'. We've never looked back." That was in 1976. Over the years, the Rovers have represented Canada at five World Expos.

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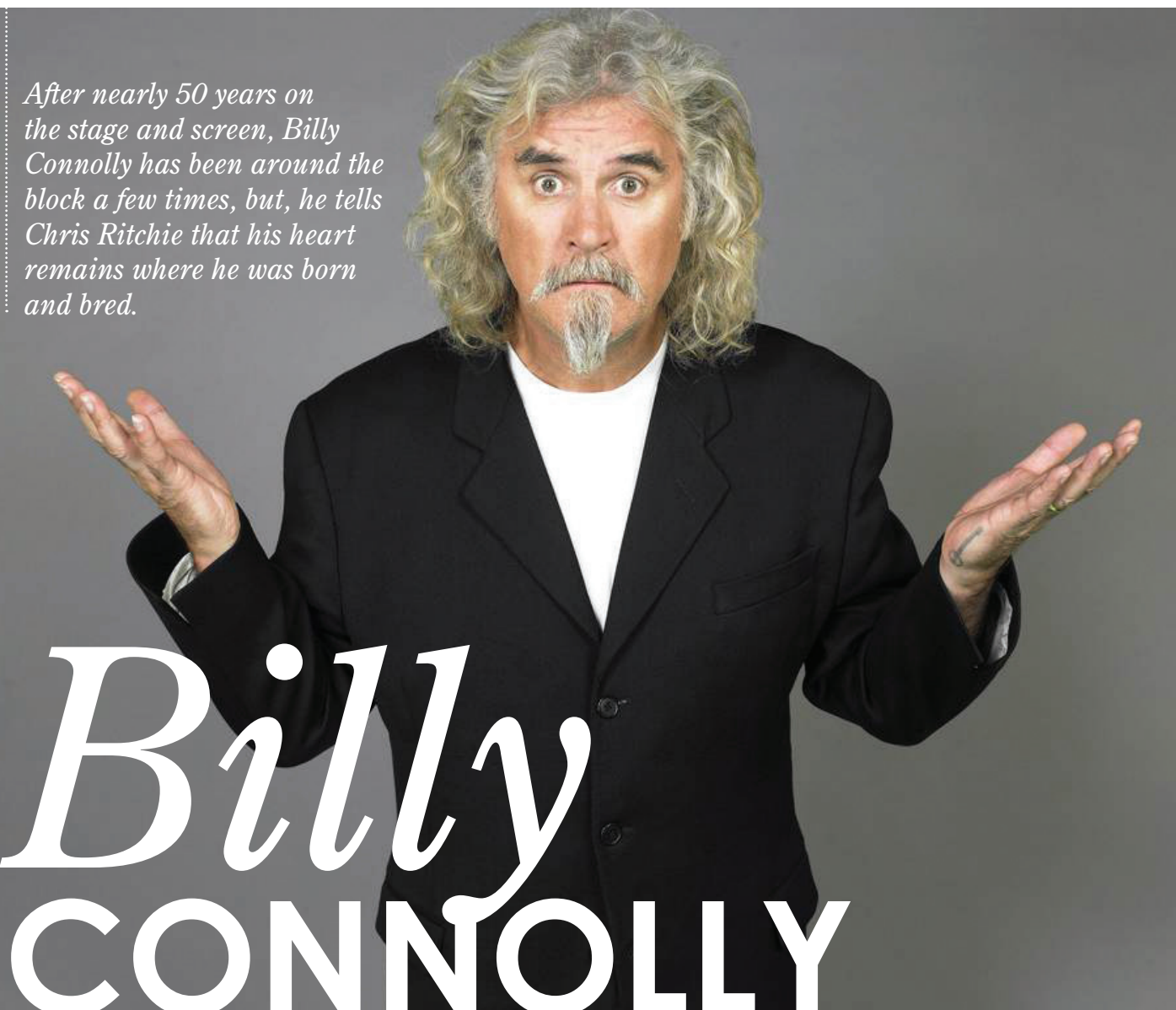


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Cape Breton Island

After nearly 50 years on the stage and screen, Billy Connolly has been around the block a few times, but, he tells Chris Ritchie that his heart remains where he was born and bred.



Billy CONNOLLY

Folk singer, comedian, raconteur, traveller, movie star... Billy Connolly is all these things and more. A truly likeable and engaging orator, The Big Yin might just be the most famous Glaswegian on the planet.

"If someone wants to think that, I've no problem!" laughs the former shipyard welder who, now 70, achieved global success through his folk singing and stand-up comedy. Indeed, helping people raise a smile remains his favourite pastime despite notching up an impressive string of movie roles since his breakthrough performance in the 1997 drama Mrs. Brown, alongside Dame Judi Dench.

Earning a BAFTA nomination for his portrayal of Queen Victoria's favourite servant, John Brown, Connolly went on to

take a variety of roles, including that of a pet zombie in the hilarious and underrated Fido. There followed a priest with a dark secret in The X Files and, more recently - and alongside an esteemed cast including Michael Gambon, Pauline Collins and Maggie Smith - a place in Dustin Hoffman's directorial debut, Quartet.

Connolly admits he finally now has faith in his big screen appeal. "I'm 70 and it has taken this long for people to take me seriously," he laughs... "myself included!"

Connolly famously left his beloved Scotland for the States some 30 years ago, but he now spends much of his time at his home in Strathdon, Aberdeenshire.

So what was it that pulled him back? "At the time when I left, I needed a break," he said. "I think many people go through

that mentality of getting away from home. It was a million things that led to my departure. I wanted to get away from the media over here, have a clean getaway, and America represented that for me.

"I have homes in New York, Malta and Aberdeenshire and because I'm moving around so much, people wonder where I consider home. And I have thought about that; I've pondered that. And of course, it's Scotland. I probably spend more time in New York, but that's more to do with the fact that I've children who live there. Those kids are, technically, American themselves, I suppose. But it's very special up in Aberdeenshire. You can do all your battery recharging there and when I head up to the west coast, I get this tingly feeling - it's this feeling that that's

where I belong. So that's where I call home."

Indeed, for all his globetrotting, Connolly is still a passionate devotee of the Celtic way.

"Oh absolutely. It's never about where you live; it's about where you're from. And the fact is strangers find people from Scotland and Ireland instantly interesting. Maybe it's the tangled accent, maybe it's the tangled hair, or the slightly weather-beaten features, but there is that attraction, and I've found it throughout my life.

"I guess I need to ask myself if I've preyed on that through my comedy, and I don't think I have. My comedy isn't so much about nationality, it's about humanity, and that's important to me.

"What I have relied upon though is the confidence that being Scottish has given me. I've always felt it's an edge, and it's carried me through life, serving me well. And I'm delighted it has been like that."

Connolly has recently been in New Zealand shooting the next instalment in Peter Jackson's Hobbit trilogy, *The Desolation of Smaug*. The actor and comedian takes on the weighty role of dwarf warrior king Dain Ironfoot, alongside Sir Ian McKellen, James Nesbitt and Martin Freeman. This is arguably his biggest film yet, but none of the success seems to have gone to his head.

"How on earth did I make it this far? It's the world's longest running joke!" he laughed. "I think I've been very lucky, very blessed particularly that I had the chance and choice to try so many different things out. Music, stand-up, movies – it's been extraordinary."

Although he is surely best known for his caustic, meandering (and expletive-laden) stand-up comedy routines, as an actor he has gone from strength to strength. In the last two years he has crammed in *Gulliver's Travels*, Disney voiceover project *Brave* and *The Hobbit*... "Aye, I've had a great couple of years, the time of my life! *The Hobbit* was a dream job to get. I love travel and getting to stay down in New Zealand, playing this warrior dwarf with a red Mohawk, hair down to my backside... well, that was wonderful! Two-and-a-half hours every morning getting done up and when I saw myself as a dwarf on screen, after all the effects, I was blown away. Absolutely splendid – you've never seen nothing till you've seen yourself as a dwarf!

"And my costume is mostly armour – it's absolutely fantastic. I've got tattoos running up the side of my head. I was desperate to go for a walk in Wellington dressed like that. I even wanted to come home looking like that, adopt it for myself, but Peter Jackson was having none of it."

With an all-boys cast including Sir Ian McKellen, James

Nesbitt and Martin Freeman, it must have been a lot of fun on set?

"Ah yes, constant laughter and ribbing and joking. It's like being back at school with those lads, like you're on a class trip. And Jimmy was the biggest laugh on set, and he knows great songs. You know those Irish traditional songs with big fights in them – he knows every syllable of them and he'd always be singing them in between takes. All of us would be cracking up. He is the greatest comedian. He should have gone into live comedy. I think he missed his calling there."

For his voice work in the beautiful animated tale *Brave*, Connolly was moved by its portrayal of his home soil. "Isn't it a beautiful, gorgeous film? My heart sang when I saw it, the colours and the way it painted the Highlands. Of course I was so proud when they asked me to be King Fergus. It's one of the films

that will be watched again and again, but when you're doing something that's reflective of home you give it absolutely everything you've got."

In Dustin Hoffman's *Quartet*, Connolly found himself among some of the finest acting talent around, which he says was a daunting proposition but one which helped to raise his own performance.

"The story, about these retired opera singers living in a nursing home, really intrigued me. But when Hoffman told me who was in it, I wanted to say 'no'. I was scared I wouldn't match up. But I remember working with Judi Dench and realizing how these sorts of people bring out the best in you. So I said, 'yes, let's do it'."

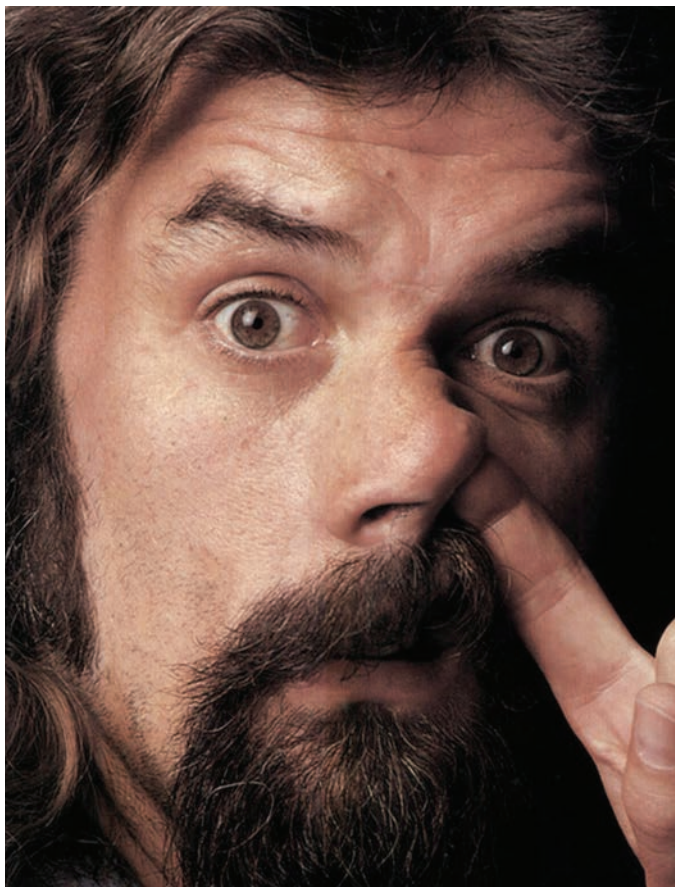
Joining stage and screen legends Maggie Smith and Michael Gambon wasn't nearly as nerve-racking as Connolly had thought it might be. "I never worked with Maggie before, and if I'm honest, she scared me a bit," he smiled.

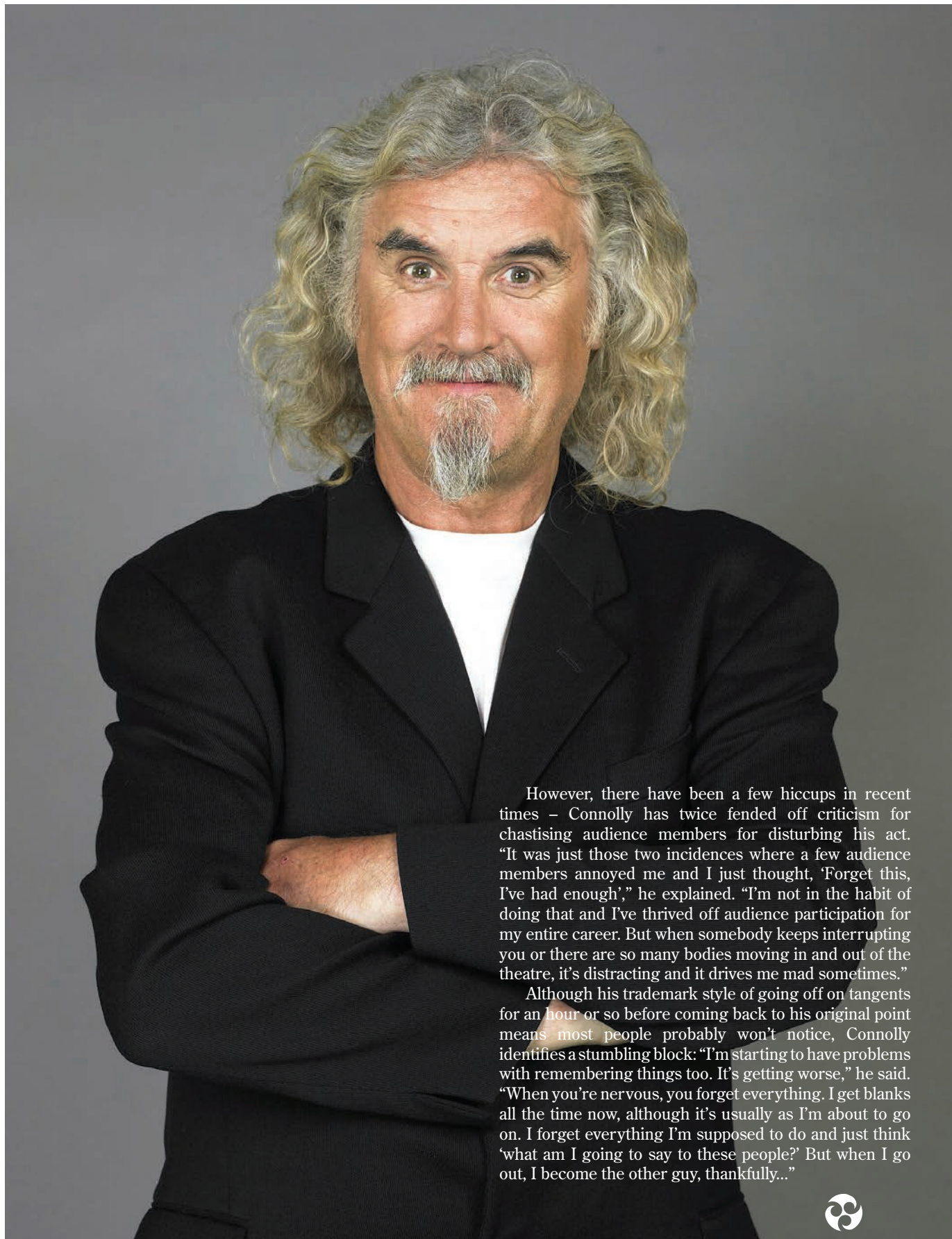
"I knew she was formidable

and I was genuinely a little nervous to meet her. But she was incredibly lovely and charming. I thought I heard stories about Gambon being difficult and hard to work with and nothing could be further from the truth."

We already know *The Big Yin* can sing, but can he sing opera? "There's a scene at the end where the quartet gets together for their first performance in years, and we actually underwent extensive singing training for this scene," he recalled. "We performed it for Dustin, and he wept with joy. He was astounded so we can't have done a bad job!"

Before he heads back to New Zealand, Connolly is returning to the stage to do what he does best—making people laugh. "It's what I started out doing. I guess it's nice to come back to what you know," he said.





However, there have been a few hiccups in recent times – Connolly has twice fended off criticism for chastising audience members for disturbing his act. “It was just those two incidences where a few audience members annoyed me and I just thought, ‘Forget this, I’ve had enough’,” he explained. “I’m not in the habit of doing that and I’ve thrived off audience participation for my entire career. But when somebody keeps interrupting you or there are so many bodies moving in and out of the theatre, it’s distracting and it drives me mad sometimes.”

Although his trademark style of going off on tangents for an hour or so before coming back to his original point means most people probably won’t notice, Connolly identifies a stumbling block: “I’m starting to have problems with remembering things too. It’s getting worse,” he said. “When you’re nervous, you forget everything. I get blanks all the time now, although it’s usually as I’m about to go on. I forget everything I’m supposed to do and just think ‘what am I going to say to these people?’ But when I go out, I become the other guy, thankfully...”





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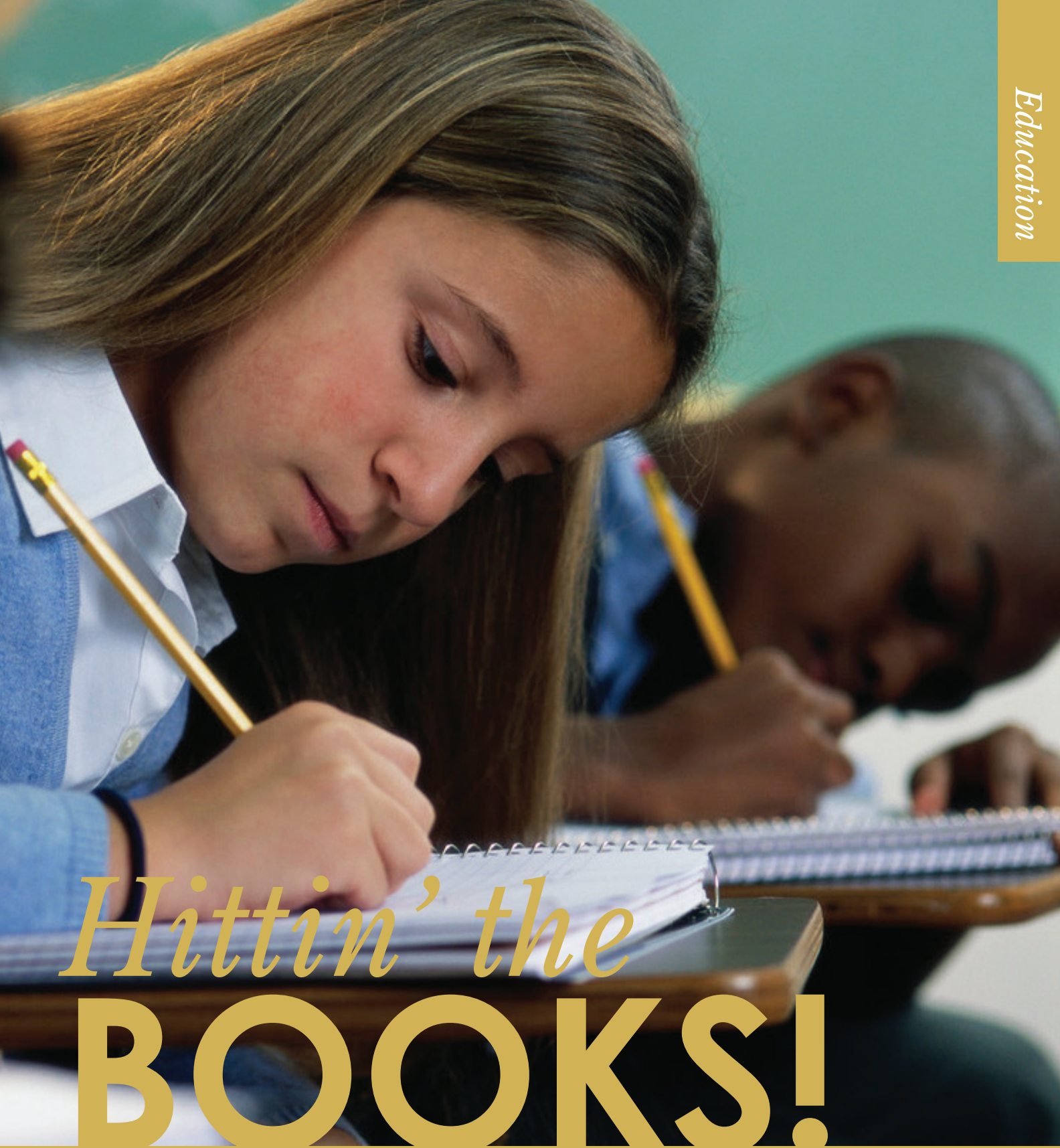
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McGill's Scottish Heart

To most people, the name Montreal evokes French culture. The city is famous as the economic and cultural heart of the province of Quebec and French is the official language. But the Scottish contribution to Montreal has also been significant and it's this contribution that will be reflected and explored by a new academic Chair in Canadian-Scottish Studies soon to be based at the city's esteemed McGill University.

It's no accident that the new Chair will be housed at McGill as the university was founded by James McGill, a Scottish trader and philanthropist who was born in Glasgow in 1744 and who went on to make his fortune in Canada. The Port of Montreal is the largest inland port in the world and, in James McGill's day, Montreal was the country's hub. The university that bears his name was founded in 1821, according to a bequest in McGill's will.

Defining the role of the new Chair and fundraising for it is the work of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal and Canada's McEuen Scholarship Foundation.

"Everything that came into Canada came to Montreal – people; goods; ideas – from here things were turned around and pushed west – ultimately, creating a country," explained Bruce Bolton, a member of the fundraising committee and Executive Director of the Macdonald Stewart Foundation.

The Scots' contribution to Canadian health and education systems is well known, as is their defining role in building Canadian commercial and financial institutions such as the Hudson's Bay Company, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Bank of Montreal, but there remains much for the new Chair to explore.

"As early as the late 18th century through to the 20th century, the Scots in Montreal quietly made their fortunes and, in the process, built both a city and a country. Generally, they did this in a modest way and we don't know much about the early role they actually played – this will be a focus of the Chair," said Bolton.

The proposed Chair would be the first in Canada devoted specifically to the entwined histories and present-day cultures of Canada and Scotland, he added. The organizers are aiming to raise \$3 million in funding and have already raised two-thirds of that sum. The intention is for the Chair to be fully funded by December 2016 and for the first holder of the position to be hired by September 2017.

James McGill himself would doubtless approve. McGill always valued education although he left Glasgow University without completing a degree, probably because of his family's circumstances. After arriving in Canada, his hard work and fluency in French assisted him as he navigated the rivers and lakes of the Great Lakes frontier, wintering in unmapped wilderness.

After making his fortune, McGill settled in Montreal and, in December, 1776, he married the widow Charlotte Trottier Desrivieres, becoming stepfather to her two young sons. He continued in the fur trade, but also encouraged general trade and pioneered the export of goods to Britain. Committed to public service, McGill was a magistrate of Montreal, a member of the first Parliament of Lower Canada and a member of the Governor's Executive Council. During the War of 1812, he commanded the militia that defended the city, helping to stymie the American plan to annex Canada.

McGill died in December, 1813, leaving Burnside, his forty-six acre country estate and £10,000 to the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning to establish a university or college in Quebec.

Today, McGill's remains are buried in front of the Arts Building on the downtown campus that used to be his Burnside country estate. Young people stream by, books in hand, and it's hoped that the new Chair will help pique their interest in Scottish-Canadian history.

"At the time of James McGill, Scotland itself was entering an intellectual renaissance that effectively changed the modern world," said Peter McAuslan, Committee Chair. "To understand the impact of the Scots on Canada is to give insight into the nature of our past and perspective on our future."

www.mcgill.ca





Gaelic SCHOOL

Gaelic, once considered the language of the poor, the backward and the aged, is now tripping from the tongues of teenagers in Antigonish County, Nova Scotia. Rosalie MacEachern looks at the educational programs that are revitalizing the language along parts of Canada's east coast.

Antigonish, the home of St. Francis Xavier University, is a small Nova Scotia town with strong Scottish roots. Its Highland character is preserved in the surrounding place names as well as in the surnames of many of its families and in the character of the Antigonish Highland Games, now 150 years old. The Gaelic language of the town's forebears, however, has been largely silent for generations, so it is not surprising that there is great satisfaction in the recent graduation of a class of Gaelic learners from Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School.

"They are the first Core Gaelic graduates in North America," said parent Brian MacDonald who pressed the local school board to offer Gaelic as an alternative to Core French.

The seeds of the Core Gaelic program were sown in St. Andrew's, 10km from Antigonish where, 200 years earlier, pioneers from the Highlands and islands of Scotland's west coast struggled to clear enough land to feed their families while petitioning for a Gaelic-speaking priest to live among them. Many years later, in 2005, a provincial grant was secured for an after-school Gaelic program at St. Andrew's Consolidated School.

"It was a beginning. It gave children an exposure to the language and it gave us an opportunity to build interest and figure out how we could make Gaelic part of the school curriculum," MacDonald said.

A 2006 cultural program that brought multi-generational Gaelic-speaking families from Scotland to several Nova Scotia communities was pivotal in increasing interest, he added. "We had a prize-winning float, featuring our visitors and our own children, in the Highland Games parade and the interest grew from there."

MacDonald, a school administrator, collected 500 letters from students expressing their interest in Core Gaelic as an option to Core French which is mandatory in Nova Scotia schools from Grades Four through Nine. The province responded by announcing that a Core Gaelic program would meet its second language requirements. The province also established curriculum guidelines for Grades 10, 11 and 12.

MacDonald, whose early memories of the language are restricted to hearing his mother speaking with her sisters on a party line in Cape Breton, said Antigonish area parents learned from the experience of schools in nearby Cape Breton that previously offered Gaelic.

"Gaelic was offered in some Cape Breton schools but was often reduced in hours to accommodate other subjects. It took a back seat to other classes and was the last class to be fit into a tight schedule. We wanted Gaelic offered just like Core French is offered, with a set number of class hours per cycle, and that is

the status we got," he said, adding that Cape Breton schools have since adopted the Core Gaelic model.

By September this year, 260 students will be studying Gaelic at four Antigonish County schools.

The fortunes of the Antigonish Gaelic program took a dramatic upswing almost six years ago when an energetic young teacher from Scotland's Black Isle arrived. Mairi Parr's mother is a native Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Skye and she raised her children to speak the language. Parr studied Gaelic after graduating high school and spent a term at University College, Cape Breton.

"I had such a wonderful time in Nova Scotia I was desperate to come back someday. My boyfriend was studying in Cape Breton when I saw the job posted. It was April Fools' Day, and I was certain it must be a joke, but here I am," she said with a laugh.

Parr vividly remembers her first day teaching in Antigonish. She began teaching at Saint Andrew Junior School but moved with the students to Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School.

"I met the double of a boy I'd just taught in Fort William and when I asked him his name, wasn't it Chisholm, the same as the boy I taught in Scotland."

Parr said most of her students are unaccustomed to the language, although a few have a relative who speaks it and many, but not all, are descendants of Gaelic speakers.

"What most of them have is a great familiarity with the culture, the music and maybe the dancing. Many of them also have a good sense of the history and that has been very useful in learning the language," she said.

Brian MacDonald's daughter Anna, who started in the after-school program, credits Parr with bringing her to an appreciation of the ancient language.

"I didn't love it in the beginning, but Ms. Parr gave us a lot of encouragement. Her way of teaching attracted more students and it got to be more interesting," she said.

Anna and Parr, who has taught some of the graduates since Grade Eight, agree the students did not appreciate how much Gaelic they had acquired until they took a trip to Scotland before graduation.

"We went to all the historical places and Ms. Parr's grandparents' farm on Skye. The trip was really special," Anna said.

Another graduating student, Megan MacKenzie, was impressed by the welcome the students received in Scotland.

"The Scottish people wanted us to see everything. They were very nice to us, very welcoming and encouraging us to speak Gaelic," she said.

Megan's mother, Margaret MacKenzie, grew up hearing Gaelic spoken.

"I can remember family gatherings with aunts and uncles, all in the dining room, speaking Gaelic. After a few minutes they would be roaring with laughter but if you asked what was so funny you'd be told it didn't translate well. At the time I didn't have the

inclination to learn but I regretted it later and when I heard about this program I was anxious for Megan to learn," she said.

Megan admits she was intimidated, given that some of her older relatives are fluent Gaelic speakers and scholars.

"I didn't agree until some of my friends said they were going to take Gaelic. I was worried about how well I might do," she said.

Megan's great-aunt is Sister Margaret MacDonell CND, a former chair of St. Francis Xavier University's Celtic Studies department.



"It is wonderful to see a class of Gaelic learners graduating. I am sure Megan and the other graduates have been enriched by their experience," she said.

Sister MacDonell acknowledged the view that Gaelic would "prevent you from getting along in the world" was once prevalent in Nova Scotia.

"I did not experience that growing up in Judique where we learned our Gaelic at home and our English at school, but I know it was the case in other communities where a sense of

inferiority was cultivated and it became infectious. It was wrong, of course. We need look no further than St. F.X. where the founders and leaders for many, many years were all Gaelic speakers. It did not stop them from getting ahead," she said.

Sister MacDonell's years as chair of the Celtic studies department were marked by two major initiatives to preserve and promote the Gaelic language: the Cape Breton Gaelic Folklore Collection was established and a Chair of Gaelic Studies, named for former St. F.X. history professor and Gaelic speaker, Sister Saint Veronica (Mary Macdonald), was created.

Dr. Michael Linkletter, current chairman of the Celtic studies department, said it is wonderful to see young people learning the language and expressed hope that some of them will continue their studies at St. F.X.

"The Celtic studies department at St. F.X. has long had close ties with the Gaelic community in Nova Scotia, and a number of the people closely involved with the promotion, preservation and promulgation of the language in our province have come through our program," he said.

St. F.X. is one of few North American universities to offer studies in Celtic languages, literature and history

and the only one to offer four years of Scottish Gaelic. The university has also digitized the Cape Breton Folklore Collection, containing 1,600 songs and stories from native Gaelic speakers representing 100 communities, a project co-ordinated by librarian Rita Campbell.

"Gael Stream, Sruth nan Gaidheal, gives new learners an on-line opportunity to hear the dialects of various areas while learning customs, traditions and songs from people raised in the Gaelic language," she said of the collection which is available at gaelstream.stfx.ca



Learning Scottish Gaelic

Many of us are interested in learning Gaelic, but it can be difficult to find the right class. Linguistic anthropologist and author Emily McEwan-Fujita offers some advice for those who want to learn Scottish Gaelic.



Perhaps your family heritage is Scottish or maybe you've had a longstanding interest in Celtic cultures. Perhaps, like me, you heard a beautiful song in a language you didn't even know existed and it touched you like nothing else ever had.

So... now you want to learn Scottish Gaelic. *Dè nì thu*—what will you do? In the days before the internet, it was not always easy to find a class. Fortunately, nowadays there are a number of different paths.

Local Heroes

Nothing beats face-to-face interaction for learning another language. You may be lucky enough to live in an area where community Gaelic classes are offered and where you will meet new people in your area.

Dedicated volunteers are the force behind many community classes. *Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Àrd-Bhaile*, the Halifax Gaelic Society, is a voluntary nonprofit group founded in 2005 to provide Gaelic classes to the Halifax area in Nova Scotia, Canada (halifaxgaelic.ca). New courses at four levels start three times annually. Locally trained tutors teach in the *Gàidhlig aig Baile* (GAB) method, which involves learning to speak Gaelic through activities and patterned repetition, with no reading or writing allowed.

Norma MacLean started off by taking a *Sgoil Ghàidhlig*

course, and became president of the organization two years ago. She said that the GAB classes “give you confidence. It becomes natural to sit there and chat. That is one of the highlights of the method: because you're always in the moment, it does cause you to think in Gaelic.”

In the U.S., the Washington Gaelic language and cultural society, *Slighe nan Gàidheal* (slighe.com) has been offering Gaelic language classes in Seattle since the 1990s. “Zero to Gaelic,” their adult language education program, is designed to fit the schedules of busy folks who cannot attend a weekly class. The program consists of six day-long Saturday classes each year for three years. The teachers are mostly locally based fluent speakers who learned Gaelic as adults. After completing the three-year program, students can continue to take *Ceum Suas* [Step Up] classes in various topics.

In Scotland, many educational institutions and independent tutors now offer the *Ùlpan* course, funded by *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* and based on the principles of the *Ùlpan* system in Hebrew and *Wlpan* in Welsh. The course uses games, conversation, and repetition to develop speaking skills. The *Ùlpan* website lists upcoming courses by location (ulpan.co.uk).

Cli Gàidhlig, the adult Gaelic learners' society in Scotland, lists not only its own *Ùlpan* courses but also Gaelic conversation coffee mornings and other types of language courses throughout the country on its website (cli.org.uk).

From a Distance

People who cannot find a course locally can now take classes online and through conference calls.

The Atlantic Gaelic Academy (gaelicacademy.ca) conducts both local community courses in the Maritime Provinces of Canada and Skype-based courses for students around the world. AGA offers five levels; each level runs for nine months, from September to May, with 30 three-hour sessions. The course thus takes five years to complete and is designed to take students through from no ability to fluency. Afterward, students can continue with more advanced courses in which they study and discuss Gaelic literature in Gaelic.

The teachers come from a variety of backgrounds; some are native speakers from Scotland, some are fluent speakers from Nova Scotia, and others have become fluent by working through AGA's own program and studies in Scotland.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (smo.uhi.ac.uk), the Gaelic college on the Isle of Skye in Scotland, offers an innovative year-long distance course aimed at total beginners called An Cùrsa Inntrigidh. The course materials are provided online, and group telephone tutorials take place once a week, with students calling in to a land line at the college.

After completing the course, students can go on to take a university-level Gaelic course at Sabhal Mòr either through distance learning or in person.

An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach (ACGA), The American Scottish Gaelic Society, lists other distance and community classes and local study groups in the U.S. and Canada on their website (acgamerica.org).

Destination: Gaelic

If learning something new is your idea of fun, or if you miss the camaraderie and intensity of summer camp, then you can consider taking a “destination” Gaelic course as part of your vacation travel. Every summer, residential Gaelic courses are offered in North America and Scotland in locations characterized by natural beauty and other tourist attractions. Some folks use these courses to jump in at the deep end, while others see them as a chance to intensify studies they started at home.

In the U.S., ACGA runs the Beinn Seanair Gaelic Song & Language Week at Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina each year. The week takes place just before the famous Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

Although the Blue Ridge Mountains are a big attraction, Dr. Jamie MacDonald, founder of the event and one of the Gaelic language instructors, said that the attendees themselves make the week special. “The teachers from Scotland are always amazed at how interested the students are in the language and how eager they are to learn,” he observed.

Colaisde na Gàidhlig, the Gaelic college located on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia (gaeliccollege.edu) has come under new leadership in the past few years and is renewing its

commitment to the Gaelic language as the foundation of Nova Scotia's Celtic culture. In summer 2013, the college presented five week-long courses from July through mid-August, with two weeks for youth, two weeks for adults, and one for families.

In a typical week-long course, a student chooses five different subjects on which to focus. It is possible to put together a schedule with mostly language-focused classes, including Gaelic taught in the GAB method, Dràma, Òrain (songs), and Naidheachdan (storytelling). The instrumental music classes, while taught in English, also emphasize the importance of Gaelic in Cape Breton's cultural traditions.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Scotland is one of the most well-known destination summer schools (smo.uhi.ac.uk). The Cùrsaichean Goirid, short courses in Gaelic language and traditional music,

have been running for 40 years now. About 750 students took a SMO short course last year. One of them, Robert Forsyth from Blue Mountain in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, found that the week-long session boosted his skills, enthusiasm, and confidence, and significantly broadened his view of the language. Forsyth met fellow Gaelic students from Sweden, France, and Ireland. “I learned that Gaelic is not just spoken in isolated communities in Cape Breton or the Highlands of Scotland. It is alive and valued and spoken by many people in Canada and in countries across Europe,” he said.

Last but not least, if you happen to be fluent in Irish already, at the Irish language and culture school Oideas Gael in Donegal you can take a beginner Scottish Gaelic course—taught through the medium of Irish!

Learning Tips

Be patient. No matter what type of course you take, it takes time to learn a language. Your progress may follow a pattern like weight loss, with each jump in ability followed by an apparent plateau. But if you put in the time and effort, then “beag air bheag,” little by little, you will get there.

Expect to sing. It's a rare Gaelic instructor who would not be teaching you a song or two along with the grammar and conversation. Gaelic song is a valued part of the culture and a great way to work on pronunciation and vocabulary, so jump right in.

Talk as much as possible. Learning a new language takes you out of your comfort zone, but seeking opportunities to speak to others will help you put into practice what you have learned in theory.

Listen a lot. For most people it's difficult to find places to hear spoken Gaelic, but listening to the singing of fluent Gaelic speakers, and program on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (bbc.co.uk/radionangaidheal), is a great help with the unique pronunciation and rhythm.

Follow your passion. Whether it's learning how to pronounce the name of your favourite whisky, or memorizing the lyrics of a song you love, do what makes you happy. You never know where it might lead you.





Concordia University's School of Canadian Irish Studies

From Dream to Reality

For Dr. Michael Kenneally, growing the bonds between his academic life and his homeland has been a labour of love.

Hailing from Youghal, County Cork, Ireland, Kenneally first developed courses in Irish literature and history shortly after joining the staff at Montreal's Concordia University in 1991. By 2002, Minor and Certificate programs were being offered at the institution and, in 2009, he realized a dream with the formation of the School of Canadian Irish Studies, where he has since served as Principal and Chair.

"We've been working in the Irish community and the Irish academic world for 25 to 30 years," said Kenneally, referring to himself and his wife, Dr. Rhona Richman. "If you had asked us 30 years ago whether this vision would become real, we wouldn't have known."

Today, the School of Canadian Irish Studies has 800 students in its Minor, Major, Certificate and Graduate programs. This year features 22 different courses taught by faculty from Ireland and North America, as well as visiting scholars. The classes cover history, literature, geography, language, film, ethnomusicology, theatre and Diaspora studies. Students can also participate in exchange programs in Ireland and workplace internships around Montreal.

Dr. Kenneally credits the success of the school to the support of the university, the Irish, Canadian and Quebec governments, and interested individuals. "Most of what we have done has been in collaboration with the community," he acknowledged, singling out the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation.

To date, the Foundation has raised nearly \$8 million for annual scholarships, faculty and a public lecture series. Since the 1990s, 180 distinguished speakers have visited the university, including past Irish presidents and the late poet Seamus Heaney.

Students of all sorts are enrolling. "Obviously our mandate is to teach courses about Ireland and the Irish abroad," noted Kenneally. "But we say that Ireland serves as a case study for issues that are relevant all over the world."

"Our students are interested in an Irish perspective on larger issues pertaining to political science, history, cultural geography and other relevant subjects."

www.cdnirish.concordia.ca



Villanova University's Irish Studies Program

Immersing in Irish Identity

Villanova University in Pennsylvania was founded by Irish Augustinians in 1842. Two years later, rioters (opposed to Irish settlement) threatened to destroy the College. Despite the tensions, the school survived.

Perhaps it is fitting, then, that Villanova University is home to the country's oldest Irish Studies program, founded in 1979 by Dr. James Murphy.

Student Allison Duran is minoring in the program and interning for the department. "I saw that Villanova had an Irish Studies program, and that's not something that's offered at many colleges," said Duran. "I took my first class and fell in love with it."

The Irish Studies concentration is interdisciplinary, so students can take courses in literature, politics, history, music, film, Irish Gaelic and more.

The opportunity to learn in Ireland is also appealing. "The Irish study abroad program is very popular because we have an established professor who is working for Villanova in Ireland," explained Duran, referring to Dr. Mary O'Malley Madec, Director of The Villanova Center National University of Ireland, Galway.

Duran went to Galway last fall. "We did a class with Dr. Madec where we looked at poetry and history and she took us on a couple trips, to Westport and Dublin," she recalled. "She gave us the opportunity to experience many different sides of Ireland."

Next summer will mark the beginning of a new exchange program organized by Villanova and Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Students will study Irish theatre from a literary, performance and historical perspective. Interested students from across the U.S. are welcome to apply.

Duran says concentrating in Irish Studies has been a "life changing experience." From exploring the famous Joseph McGarrity collection in her university library to living with Irish university students during her time abroad, she has been able to further immerse herself in Irish culture.

"I'm from an Irish family and it's always been a part of my life growing up, hearing about the famine or about how my great grandparents moved here from Ireland. But I never really knew much of the history. So the program has definitely been a personal connection to my identity."

www1.villanova.edu/villanova/artsci/irishstudies



The Gaelic College

A Unique Learning Environment

Margie Beaton started taking lessons at Nova Scotia's Gaelic College when she was just four years old.

Years later, she keeps coming back.

"Though now I'm the Director of Marketing and in-house graphic designer," she laughed. "However, it's not unusual for me to pick up the fiddle and play tunes in a demonstration, dance in a lunchtime ceilidh, teach in an after-school program or help in general operations – there's never a dull moment, and no two days are ever the same!"

Students of all ages from all over the world take part in the unique environment.

"It really is a place of all-around learning," she continued, "meaning that you don't just learn in the classroom, you learn at all times of the day in numerous ways. The classes are top-notch, with true pillars of the culture chosen as instructors. You're immersed in the way of life here, with live music often on the go, chances to get in on a square dance or ceilidh, time outside in our beautiful surroundings, access to historic displays and reference, all in warm Cape Breton hospitality. It's fun!"

It is also, she added, very rewarding.

"All the hard work pays off when you see the faces of excited students, happy to be here and so eager to learn."

The College – which just celebrated its 75th year – is headquarters to The Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association and the Celtic Colours International Festival as well, and enjoys a long-standing history with the local community.

"It seems synonymous with the area of St. Ann's and the culture of the Island. From quite humble beginnings to the non-profit institute that it is today, the community has been key to that growth, and through the work of the Foundation, is still very much involved in the planning and future of the school."

Beaton is excited about the initiatives now underway at the institution.

"With plans to offer more courses online and a continued relationship with Cape Breton University, we hope to extend opportunities to learn, at any time of year.

"And when you just keep coming back, it becomes as familiar as family."

www.gaeliccollege.edu



Immersing in St. Michael's College

Redefining Celtic Studies

"I suppose I'm still involved because the environment here is so warm and nurturing," smiled Ann Dooley, PhD and Professor Emerita of Celtic Studies at St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto.

Born and raised in Tipperary, Ireland, Dooley arrived in Canada in 1971 after obtaining her graduate degree at the University College Dublin. It was while pursuing her doctorate in Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto that she began teaching courses for the school's fledgling Celtic Studies undergraduate program.

Under her watch, the school's curriculum has expanded its scope and size significantly, and now offers Specialist, Major and Minor degrees at the undergraduate level.

"Our courses actually work very well in tandem with other classes here," noted Dooley. "Many of our 480 students this year are involved with other academic pursuits here at the University of Toronto, but they find great value in undertaking Celtic Studies."

And while she acknowledged that some are drawn by the romance of Celtic mythology, pagan culture and new-ageism, those notions are quickly dispelled.

"Celtic is difficult to define," admitted Dooley. "While Celts do share a common heritage going back many centuries, the Diaspora is too vast and diverse today to describe as one particular thing."

Instead, she and her peers push for a more holistic perspective – a mandate that is front and center on the institution's website; The Celtic Studies Program offers a wide variety of undergraduate courses on the languages, literature, history, music, folklore, art and archaeology of the peoples of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We examine Celtic identities in the modern as well as the ancient and medieval world, and explore the transmission of these traditions to Canada and the United States.

The facility accomplishes this with a myriad of methodologies, including hosting visiting professors from Ireland, organizing conferences with international scholars, and offering summer scholarships for students to study across the Atlantic.

"And it is all done in a very supportive and encouraging manner," shared Dooley. "We have excellent teachers here – very real and human people – who make it a warm and nurturing environment to learn in."

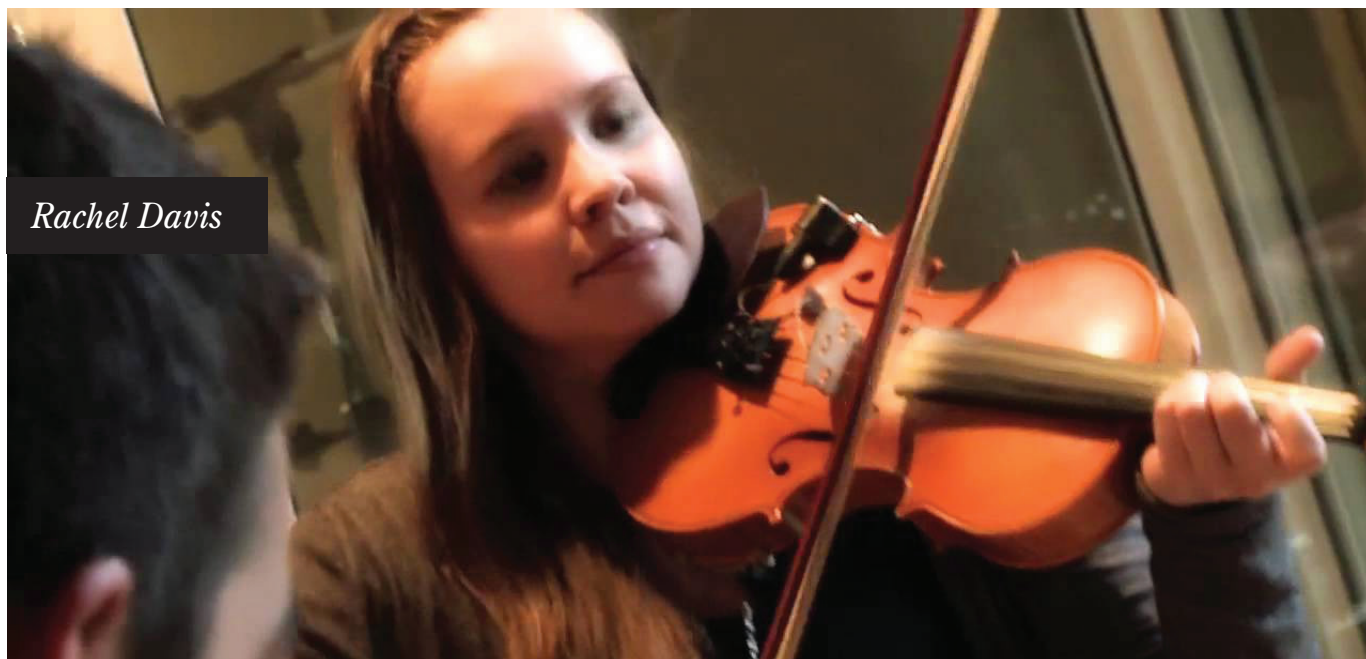
www.stmikes.utoronto.ca/celticstudies

Spragg Session

Celtic Colours *in the Schools*

An innovative program, Celtic Colours in the Schools, is helping foster a love of Celtic culture on Cape Breton Island off Canada's east coast, writes Amy MacKenzie.

Rachel Davis



Celtic traditions are alive in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia where the stomps of seasoned step dancers and the sounds of fiddles, guitars and pianos fill dance halls across the island.

Organizers of the Celtic Colours International Festival, a 10-day October event that celebrates Celtic music, dance and culture, want to ensure the island's living Celtic culture will be sustained in future years through educating local youth.

The organizers developed an educational program 13 years ago that brings musicians to select schools throughout Cape Breton to expose the island's youth to traditional Celtic music, dance and the Gaelic language through participatory performances.

The program, Celtic Colours in the Schools, added a new option this year called Roots in the Room, which brings traditional Cape Breton musicians into music classes to perform and answer questions students have about their careers. The performances offer a more intimate setting than a school-wide presentation.

The Elementary Roots program brings in young artists who engage students in Grade Primary through Grade Six with interactive performances in which they learn a few Gaelic phrases and step dance moves in addition to watching the musicians perform.

Yvette Rogers, the program's outreach coordinator, said the elementary students are enthusiastic when the artists visit their school and most grasp the lessons right away.

"They were so excited and they were all up step dancing and they just light up," she said. "I can sense the excitement in the room."

In the Junior/Senior High version, bands from the Celtic Colours lineup perform an energetic show with music that crosses genre lines to broaden the students' perceptions of what traditional Cape Breton music is and what it could be.

"We give them a cutting edge band that is rooted in the traditional culture, but they'll often have a modern edge. Sprag Session is one of the bands we've brought in," Rogers said. "They get a really good response from the students because they have the drum kit, the electric bass - it's new but it's still quite honourable in terms of it stemming from traditional music."

Music teacher Donna-Lee Parker brought the Roots in the Room program to her Grade Nine class in Louisburg. She said having Cape Breton fiddler Rachel Davis and singer songwriter Buddy MacDonald speak with her students helped them develop an appreciation for traditional roots musicians.

"The Grade Nines are a hard nut to crack in a sense because they're all about being cool. But once Rachel and Buddy started talking and telling stories, they were very attentive," she said. "Louisburg is at the end of the road, literally. It's a little fishing town and they're kind of cut off from music, except for the radio. To try to open them up to Celtic music that is so present in Cape Breton and is unique to Cape Breton, that's what I was trying to bridge with Roots in the Room."

The program also brought Cape Breton musicians Dawn and Margie Beaton to Parker's class. They offered her students advice on how to get involved in the music industry in Cape Breton by maybe selling tickets at the door, or by going to school to learn about music production or even designing album covers.

"I think they were able to open the students' eyes to the whole industry side of music, but in Cape Breton right around them. I think it was very, very valuable," Parker said.

She said the program is worthwhile whether it inspires students to pursue traditional music as a career or to develop an interest in any aspect of the culture.

"If we get these students to say, 'Hey mom and dad, can we go to this concert at the Playhouse? It's Colin Grant or it's somebody from Scotland.' If you can get them to appreciate the music and want to go to a concert, then it's totally been successful."

Rogers said the increased enthusiasm for Celtic music helps the Celtic Colours Festival, but the main focus is on inspiring and motivating Cape Breton children and youth to take an interest in the Celtic heritage and culture of their island.

www.celtic-colours.com/celtic-colours-in-the-schools



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with Andrew Ferguson

In 1978, Phillip “Pip” Hills was given a cask of whisky by the owners of the Glenfarclas Distillery by way of compensation for some work he’d done for them. The cask was hauled back to Edinburgh in the boot of his car and promptly shared with friends. The single malt was straight from the cask, bottled unfiltered, undiluted, at cask strength and without any artificial colouring. It was like nothing they’d ever tasted before; far more characterful than the standard distillery bottlings they were used to. The decision was soon made to acquire another cask, and then another...

As interest grew, a syndicate was formed to purchase casks and distribute them among the subscribers. By 1983, the syndicate was growing and Pip Hills’ wife was tired of the casks being bottled in her kitchen. The group purchased its first property in Leith, a district of Edinburgh called the Vaults for its stone wine cellars which are reputed to date from the 12th century. In 1983, the decision was also made to open a membership and the Scotch Malt Whisky Society was born. In 2013, the Society celebrates its 30th anniversary. It is now the world’s largest whisky club with more than 27,000 members and branches in 17 countries including the UK, Canada and the United States.

More than just a whisky club, the Society is also one of the most respected independent bottlers in the world. The group selects and bottles around 400 casks annually from a broader range of distilleries than any other independent bottler. To date, they have bottled single malts from 129 different single malt distilleries and from 10 grain distilleries. They have also bottled casks of Japanese

single malt whisky as well as Rum, Cognac, Armagnac and Bourbon. Bottlings are always single casks, bottled at cask strength without colouring or chfiltering.

The Scotch Malt Whisky Society’s standards are high, with only those whiskies that are very good or interesting selected for bottling. Cask samples are reviewed weekly by the Tasting Panel, which consists of Society staff, whisky industry members and others with well-respected palates. Their job is not only to select whiskies but also to contribute to the whiskies’ whimsical tasting note and name.

Unlike other independent bottlers, the Society doesn’t name the distillery of origin. Society whiskies are identified by a two-part number and a name derived from their tasting note. The Society wants their members to purchase whiskies based on tasting notes, not brand loyalty. Each distillery has been given a number corresponding with the order in which the whisky was bottled by the Society. As Glenfarclas was the first distillery the Society bottled, it has the honour of being distillery number 1. The second number denotes the number of casks bottled by that distillery. By way of example, a whisky numbered 1.160 is the 160th cask of Glenfarclas bottled by the Society. 1.160 was bottled a few years ago with the name Sunny Spiced Apples and Vanilla Cream, a reference to its flavour profile.

The Society has bottled nearly 5,000 whiskies over the last 30 years, but their edge and sense of whimsy is undiminished. In the past couple of years, we’ve seen whiskies bottled with names like Jar Jar Binks in Trouble Again (a Star Wars reference), Wild West Cowgirl

Dressed in Leather, Cigar Smoking Dragon and Explosion in a Honey Factory. The Society’s bottles are reserved for members, but membership is open to all and is valid worldwide. The Society has two venues in Edinburgh, including the Vaults which is still the Society’s spiritual home, and one in London where members can have a dram and enjoy a meal. There are also partner bars and hotels around the world where their curious whiskies can also be found. I recently visited Bar High Society in Tokyo which is one of the Society’s Japanese partner bars.



The first year of Society membership includes a membership kit with four sample bottles, a tasting note book, a membership book and pin. Members also receive the quarterly, award-winning whisky magazine, Unfiltered, and monthly bottling lists called Outturns. Visit www.smws.co.uk (UK), www.smws.ca (Canada) and www.smwsa.com (US).

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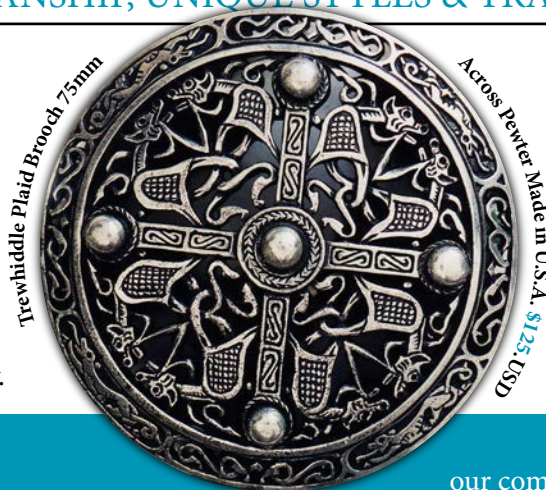
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J. Mulligan's in the market town of Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon seems a typical Irish hardware store, with household goods in one window and tools and supplies in the other. Inside, cans of paint line the walls, crowded against boxes of nuts and bolts, electrical supplies and hand tools.

In another area, electric tea kettles (a staple in Ireland) squeeze beside dishes, pots and rolls of vinyl. But a doorway at the far side of the hardware section leads to the real gold mine of J. Mulligan's—a bar. Here, the shelves contain bottles of whiskeys, vodka, beer and cider. Taps hold Guinness and Smithwick's, chilled and ready to pour. This is where many regular patrons gravitate for what they jokingly call “a pint of paint.”

Owner Padraig Mulligan, 59, has been serving pints alongside the paint all his adult life.

“When I leave here they'll be carrying me out feet first,” he said, while his son John stacked bottles. “This is my work, but it's also my social life.”

Public houses, or pubs, used to be the centre of village life in Ireland, and often carried groceries and dry goods as well as spirits. A few multi-purpose pubs still remain, such as Foxy John's in Dingle and Mooney's in Monasterevin, Co. Kildare.

Padraig's father, Jimmy, started the shop on Main Street on Dec. 8, 1944, at a time when items like bike tires, cigarettes and whiskey were scarce. With the war on, one had to be a merchant with permission from the government to sell these items. With these merchandise “allotments” in short supply, Jimmy saw an opportunity and started a hardware store to sell hard-to-find items for the home and farm, and a public house to quench the thirst of parched shoppers.

Padraig recalled the commotion on opening day. “A new opening in those days was a rare event. This, coupled with the fact that it was a holy day, ensured a large crowd.”

The Mulligan family, with five children, lived above the shop. “One of my earliest memories is of us kids sitting at this bar, screwing nuts onto bolts,” Padraig said. As a teenager, his father enticed him with the job of cutting oak beer barrels in half, using a hand saw. “He was as cute as a fox about it—he said it would build muscles, and that I could have the brass bung holes to sell.” Padraig earned about 70 cents total for cutting apart 28

barrels. Mulligan senior made considerably more by selling the half barrels for watering troughs.

“I told him he was making money on slave labor,” Padraig laughed.

On fair days in the spring and fall, farmers brought their animals and goods to the market town.

“...The shop would open at 6 a.m...We did a brisk business in hot whiskeys, tea and coffee. It was served in the snug, where there was a roaring fire,” Padraig said, pointing to what is now a stairwell.

Fair days were filled with the sound of cattle mooing and sliding as they were driven down Main Street. Farmers tied their donkeys to the back wall of J. Mulligan's, where they awaited the return of their drivers, “in pre-breathalyzer days,” Padraig said. “On fair days the place would be wedged.”

Mulligan's wasn't the only pub in town. Padraig estimates there were 40 to 50 licensed premises. Now, there are about 13 pubs operating in Ballaghaderreen. Tougher drink-driving laws, an indoor smoking ban and the poor economy have hit pub life. But Mulligan's diversified business thrived, and in 1982 Jimmy Mulligan bought a larger store and the hardware store and pub moved down the street. Padraig was managing the store then, but the move didn't feel right.

“After one week I knew—I felt like a fish out of water. I had no grá for the place,” he said, using the Irish word for “love.”

His parents and brother, Brian, felt the same. They moved the store back to its original spot, although Brian continues to run a furniture store at the second location.

Jimmy Mulligan retired aged 75 and died in 1991 on Dec. 8—47 years to the day since he opened his pint-serving paint store.

~ Words and Photo by Marcie Miller



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Cabrini's Kitchen



Cranachan

A traditional Scottish dessert, cranachan is made from a nutritious mixture of whipped cream, sugar, fresh raspberries and toasted oatmeal. It is associated with harvest time and special occasions. When served at a wedding, a ring is placed in the mixture and whoever finds the ring will be the next to marry.

This recipe combines the tart flavour of the raspberry, the richness of cream and the crispiness of toasted oatmeal. Add a kick of whisky for a superb sweet course.

INGREDIENTS

3/4 cup pinhead oats
6 tbsp. whisky
2 cups whipping cream
2 cups fresh raspberries
1/2 cup confectioner's sugar
mint leaves

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread oats out in a thin layer on a baking sheet. Toast in the preheated oven for about 10 minutes or until nutty brown. Set aside to cool.

In a medium bowl, whip the cream to firm peaks. Gently fold in the confectioner's sugar and whisky.

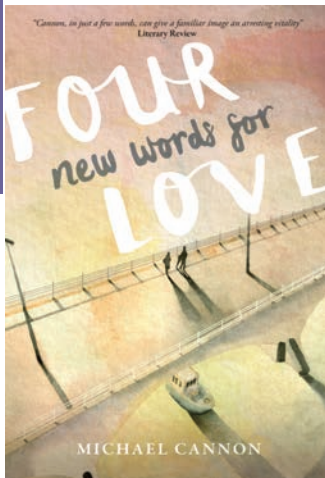
Take 1½ cups of the berries and mash with a fork. Don't worry if a few large lumps of raspberry remain.

In either a glass trifle bowl or individual serving glasses, layer the dessert, starting with the cream. Then add the raspberries and another layer of cream. The final layer should consist of oatmeal so it will retain its crispiness.

Garnish each serving with whole raspberries and a mint leaf. The recipe makes six servings.

Ith do shàth! Cabrini



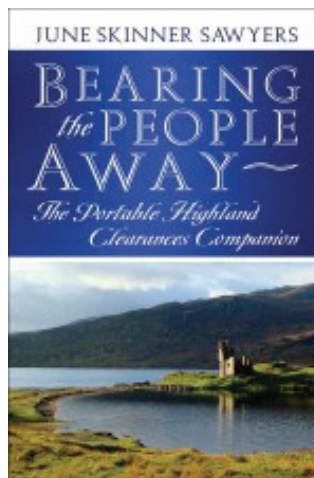
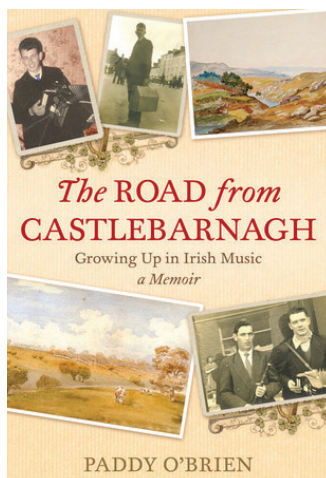


Four New Words for Love
By Michael Cannon
Freight Books / 229pp / £8.99

The fourth novel from Scottish author Michael Cannon explores the powerful, life-affirming qualities of friendship in its many forms. The story's opening chapters are propelled by the passionate friendships between three disparate young women growing up in working-class Glasgow: Gina is a smart girl from a disadvantaged home who becomes accidentally pregnant; Lolly is her big-breasted, big-hearted friend and Ruth, is an insecure, shadowy girl who is dominated by her socially ambitious mother. After tragedy strikes, Gina ends up alone and desperate in London where she is rescued by the platonic friendship of a reserved widower, Christopher. The story blossoms in these later chapters. Christopher's character is sensitively drawn and his loneliness and growing feelings for Gina are beautifully evoked as is her burgeoning confidence. But the reader fears for them both when a careless remark from Christopher threatens their contentment. The novel's denouement is compelling. ~ CM

The Road from Castlebarnagh
By Paddy O'Brien
Orpen Press / 316pp / \$24.95

Irish traditional musician, composer and collector Paddy O'Brien can now add storyteller to his resume with this endearing recollection of rural life in Daingean, County Offaly. Subtitled *Growing Up in Irish Music*, the work is both a melodic memoir that spans a career of more than fifty years and a bird's-eye perspective on the region's timeless countryside social life. With plenty of good yarns to go around, and relayed in a smooth and soothing lilt (much like the many jigs, reels and airs played by O'Brien himself) readers might feel like they are sitting at the scribe's kitchen table, swapping stories over freshly baked biscuits and a hot cup of tea. Warm, witty, wise and wonderful, *The Road from Castlebarnagh* is a musical journey worth taking. ~ SPC



Bearing the People Away
By June Skinner Sawyers
CBU Press / 320pp / \$24.95

Subtitled *The Portable Highland Clearances Companion*, this all-in-one work is part reference guide, part handbook, part travel guide and part resource digest. By way of chronology and encyclopedic listings, Sawyers details the global Scottish Diaspora following the great Highland Clearances of 1790-1855. The result is a fascinating survey that connects the Celtic dots across the globe, highlighting a people determined to preserve and promote their history and heritage. Particularly stirring are the passages on the individuals, both renowned and unknown, past and present, who have called the world's attention to what now must be reconsidered as cultural genocide. Though academic in essence, *Bearing the People Away* is an easy and even read, and an excellent and essential work for anyone interested in Scottish emigration stories. ~ SPC

Seán Keating; Art, Politics and Building the Irish Nation
By Éimear O'Connor
Irish Academic Press / 384pp / \$59.95

An acclaimed arts academic in Ireland, O'Connor's in-depth study of one of that country's most controversial voices and visual artists Seán Keating (1889-1977) is an illuminating look at both the man and the era in which he lived. Drawing lines between Keating's work and the political and social unrest on the Emerald Isle – particularly during its rise to independence – the author makes a strong case for the artist both reflecting, and ultimately betraying, his times. The result will leave readers wondering if art merely mirrors life or the other way around. Beautifully illustrated with over 200 paintings, sketches and photographs, the question seems almost moot; Keating's brilliant use of colour, lighting, depth and texture were masterful and stood well beyond any political and social milieu. ~ SPC





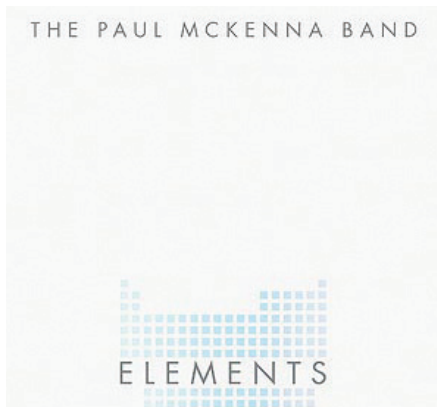
KT Tunstall / *Invisible Empire // Crescent Moon*

KT Tunstall comes of age with her latest release, *Invisible Empire // Crescent Moon*, a soft and stripped-down 13-song sojourn that showcases songwriting subtleties. From the opening arpeggio of the title-track to the closing chorus of *Feel it All*, the Scottish songstress sets a 'less-is-more' tone, highlighting bare-bones vocals and gentle guitar work with occasional accents of piano and percussion. Themes of travel, yearning, love won and lost, memory, joy and regret wrap like lyrical wisps of smoke around the listener's inner ear, calling to mind Daniel Lanois' folky and masterful *Acadie*. While not everyone is on board with the singer-songwriter trend of the last decade, there is no denying Tunstall's gifts as a composer and arranger, nor that she's got the goods to go the distance. ~ SPC



Come On Live Long / *Everything Fall*

The quirky Irish quintet hits all the right notes on their debut full-length recording *Everything Fall*, a terrific 10-track disc that touches on both traditional and contemporary influences. The lush harmonies of *Wasteland* and *Mountains* open the ears, before *Little Ones* slides softly by. *Say Your Prayers* and *Berth* are darker and atmospheric, while *Cybil* and *Old Apart* pay homage to the band's Emerald Isle roots. *Go* is the only up-tempo tune here, and *Billions* testifies to the group's 'widescreen' tag. Though shades of Snow Patrol, Stars and Arcade Fire sit like shadows, it is only because *Everything Fall* stands squarely on its own in the light of melody. Coupled with a cozy Aran sweater, this makes for a snugly soundtrack to the autumn months. ~ SPC



The Paul McKenna Band / *Elements*

Classic and contemporary come together on this hushed and lovely collection of Scottish folk tunes. Guitar, fiddle, banjo, mandolin, bouzouki, bodhran, whistle and the uilleann pipes blend seamlessly across *Elements*, creating a sonic spectrum that is both beautiful and breathtaking. In particular, *Lonely Man*, *Indiana*, *Mother Nature* and *Take Your Time* strike an emotional chord, at times soaring and at other times sensitive. *Mickey Dam* is playful, while *Flying Through Flanders* and *Michael Hayes* are more traditional in scope and style. The disk closes with *No Ash Will Burn*, a warm sing-a-long that is equally at home around the hearth-fire or at last call. And through it all is McKenna's soulful lilt, staking his claim as the heir apparent to Christy Moore and Van Morrison. ~ SPC



Irish Moutarde / *Raise 'Em All*

Progressive-metal band Eerie by day, this young and boisterous quintet from Quebec City moonlights as Celt-punks Irish Moutarde after-hours, cranking-out three chord rock with flash and fury. Following in the footsteps of The Dropkick Murphys and The Mahones, this debut release kicks out the jams with *The Black Mill*, *The Cabin*, *LLL*, and *Farewell to Drunkenness*. *The Bear and the Maiden Fair* is sheer cheer, as is *The Wearing of the Green*. Slower songs like *Glasses to the Sky* and *The Fields of Athenry* bring balance to the recording, while *Olaf* (sung en français) is a fitting and rollicking tribute to the province's pronounced Irish heritage. Good tunes and good times by a great band who will make their mark on the Celtic festival circuit. ~ SPC

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Chris

Hong Kong-born piper Chris Lee loves the sound of the bagpipes, but accepts that many people around the world do not. To many of his compatriots, the pipes sound like noise. So, after making the most of his chances to study and compete in Scotland and Canada, the award-winning young piper has returned home committed to popularizing his instrument.

"I really hate the sound of un-tuned bagpipes myself. It's easy for the bagpipes to sound terrible as they are complicated to tune and maintain, so, getting a good tonal quality is always a challenge," Lee said. "But when I was living in Canada and travelling in Scotland, I was able to watch and listen to the best solo competitors in the world. I learned what the pipes are supposed to sound like... the drones combine to create a constant chord which accompanies the melody played on the chanter and that sound is just hauntingly beautiful."

Piping was introduced to Hong Kong by the British Army and that is reflected in the piping culture. Lee, now aged 23, has been playing the pipes for 10 years, after falling for their unique sound while in Hong Kong's Boys' Brigade. "I was marching and heard the pipe band from a distance. I couldn't see them, but the sound was mysterious and solemn to me. In 2003, I started to learn the basic fingerings on the chanter from a friend, Roy Lau."

Three years later, Lee began taking online lessons from Bruce Gandy, whose album, *My Father's Son*, was a big influence on Lee.

"It is still one of my favorite CDs, most of the tunes are Bruce's original compositions. I googled his name, found his website and emailed to see if I could get lessons by webcam. Soon, I started to take formal piping lessons, including my first piobaireachd from him."

Gandy then offered Lee a scholarship to study with him in person at the Halifax



Citadel School of Piping and Drumming in Nova Scotia, Canada. Lee studied in Canada between 2008 and 2010. During that time, he also worked at the Halifax Citadel National Historic site as a piper and competed three times at the North America Championships with the 78th Highlanders Halifax Citadel Pipe Band.

"The time in Halifax was the biggest part of my life. It was full-time piping, practicing and performing. I learned so

Lee

much and I am still taking online lessons from Bruce."

During that time, Lee also competed in solo contests. His awards included being named runner up for the piobaireachd sections at both the Nicol-Brown and George Sherriff contests. He visited Scotland for a total of three months and passed the PDQB piping tutor exam with distinction at the National Piping Centre, and won a CPAC grade piobaireachd prize at the Blairgowrie & Rattray Highland Games.

Now back in Hong Kong, Lee is teaching the pipes full-time. The most difficult thing is to keep the students' interest, because teenagers in Hong Kong have lots to do.

"I play with the Hong Kong Pipe Band here, and recently the band won the Singapore Championship. In early 2012, I got to meet some international musicians who play Celtic music here in Hong Kong. Their band is called the Pearl River String Band. We've started to meet up for some tunes and in June, 2012, I organized my first ever recital and invited them to perform at the show.

"It was a full house and I displayed different styles of pipe music on highland pipes and Scottish smallpipes, as well as crossover with American Bluegrass music and traditional Chinese instruments. I also met Michael Spangfort from Sweden, who plays the Irish flute, whistles and bodhran. He played at my show too. I was very happy with the show. In 2013, I performed with a group of Irish dancers and musicians during St. Patrick's weekend, it was an awesome time."

In November, Lee will offer Hong Kong residents his first public seminar – An Introduction to Scottish Bagpipe Music. "And I intend to keep practicing hard and to compete at solo competitions in Scotland next year."

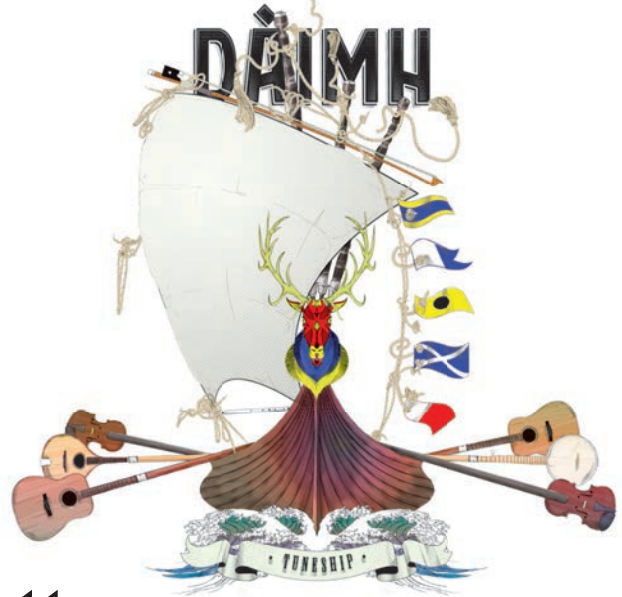




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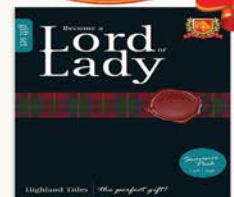
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Troy MacGillivray

Award-winning fiddler Troy MacGillivray is releasing his new CD this fall.

It's not been easy for the young Canadian to get a new CD together, but MacGillivray, who hails from Lanark, Nova Scotia, wanted to share sets of tunes from composers he admires.

"Last year, I did a small New England tour with Allan Dewar on the piano, and we did the Tune Poets concept – picking a composer and playing that composer's tunes in a set, so all the tunes were composed by that person," MacGillivray explained. "For example, we had four jigs all composed by Wilfred Gillis. The next number was a full set of Dan R. MacDonald tunes. The tour went well and people liked the concept, so I decided maybe a similar recording would work. So that is where we are at. I have been trying to get time between playing and teaching to capture some of these sets by people such as J.S. Skinner and Wilfred Gillis."

It has been fun digging into composers' books, learning their tunes and sharing them, especially as many of the tunes are not often played. "Some them haven't been discovered yet," the fiddler said. "There are so many great tunes out there, and many great composers. Often, a tune can be amazing and if the right backup isn't there, with the right chords, it might not sound like such a great tune. So it's the whole package, not only writing the tune, but how it's presented."

Still only 33 years old, this new album is MacGillivray's sixth. It's no surprise to learn that his musical passion and education began at a very young age.

"I started the fiddle around eight or nine, and piano about the same time," he said. "I played piano mainly for many years, while playing the fiddle at home. I had my own first fiddle gig in March of 2002 at the Red Shoe Pub in Mabou.

"My sister Kendra began teaching fiddle when she was 16 at the community centre near our house in Lanark, and, in the winter, I would go early in the day to start the fire with my dad and warm the place up for her lessons. Then I would stay and keep the heat going and join in the classes with my three-quarter size fiddle. Growing up, we lived the culture through our instruments and how we interacted with our families. The music was everything to us."

Now, MacGillivray's thoughts are already turning towards his next recording, although he never forces his creativity. "A creative process is inspiration. I don't put myself under pressure to come up with new material. If it is not right there, it's not there. There are always tax papers to work on, do that and come back to the music later. The inspiration will hit and it will come together."

He finds there is huge interest in the fiddle around the world. "Last year I was part of a workshop weekend in Northern Manitoba where there were 650 students, all teenagers, and over 40 instructors - a massive fiddle gathering for a small community in a remote part of Canada. And there are many successful summer camps that are testament to the great interest in the fiddle. Through these camps alone, you can see how many young people are playing and having great fun with it."

Perhaps part of the appeal is that the fiddle is "at home" in many genres. "It fits so well as a solo instrument or with a band, and it cuts through, has a great range of frequencies and can reveal emotions in the hands of the player."

As well as pondering his next recording, MacGillivray is thinking about next year's live shows. He knows he will be busy and can't guess where his muse will take him, but he knows he will always be a traditional player. "It is what I love. It's the best."

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Brian CUNNINGHAM

When 28-year-old Brian Cunningham arrived in the U.S. three years ago from Connemara, Ireland, his goal was to introduce sean-nós Irish dance to America.

Sean-nós, which means “old style” in Gaelic, originated in Ireland hundreds of years ago but was maintained throughout English occupation by only a few families. It is closely related to tap dance and even Cape Breton step dance. With loose arms and legs, the movements are similar, but shuffles are very different and there is a lot of floating on the heels. Although there are many similarities in style and rhythm, it’s a unique dance form that predates Irish step dance.

Years ago, Irish cottages were built with stone floors and half doors that dancers integrated into their improvised performances along with broom handles. Sean-nós dancers have described the main difference between step dance and sean-nós by explaining that you must dance with the music, not to it.

But as the English occupied Ireland and gained power, they prohibited both sean-nós and house parties in order to prevent the Irish from gathering to make plans against them. Cunningham said Irish step dancing was born from dancers trying to disguise sean-nós by holding their arms straight against their bodies so that English soldiers wouldn’t understand what they were doing.

“There’s a deep story there that resonates with everyone, especially with older Irish,” Cunningham told Celtic Life International from his home in Chicago.

Cunningham teaches classes and workshops, performs in a touring show, and does occasional solo performances.

“When I started performing here, I could see people loving the looseness and wildness of sean-nós right away,” Cunningham said. “And over time, I’ve really seen it grow. More people are taking my classes and a lot more people are asking questions and trying to understand it. The first year was the hardest because nobody knew what it was. They were so used to the Irish step dancing they saw in Riverdance.”

The dancer has been dancing the Connemara-style of sean-nós since he was five years old. “It’s been in our family for hundreds of years and it’s been passed down for generations,” he said. “My whole family used to dance and I used to watch them. I loved the looseness and the rhythm. It’s such a passionate thing.”

Cunningham studied Irish step dancing for a couple of years at school, but said sean-nós won him over from the start.

“I love the finger roll accordion and tunes like Sally Gardens and Miss McLeod,” he said. “Also, sean-nós is danced mostly solo and improvised. It’s very fast-moving in your head and dancing sean-nós is very exciting and a great feeling.”

Cunningham’s been dancing sean-nós professionally since he was 15 years old with members of his family.

For the past two years, he has been performing in Atlantic



Steps, the story of sean-nós he created with U.S. choreographer Kieran Jordan. This show is Cunningham’s main vehicle for introducing sean-nós to North American audiences.

Atlantic Steps tells different stories about what came out of sean-nós. With a cast of dancers and musicians from both sides of the Atlantic and specially commissioned backdrop visuals from Irish artist Vincent Crotty, the show routinely brings spectators to their feet.

Following its successful 2012 debut, Atlantic Steps showed in performing arts centres throughout Arizona, California, Kansas and Massachusetts in 2013. Next year, Atlantic Steps has engagements lined up in California, Wisconsin, Texas, Michigan and New Hampshire.

“I can say I’m 99 per cent sure that in Chicago sean-nós is going to be huge,” Cunningham said. “It’s made a big blow-up in Ireland too. It’s starting to come back.”

He said Irish television has been actively promoting sean-nós. “They tend to make it flashy. I hope they keep it the old way and tell the story as it was. It’s exciting enough as it is.”

Preserving sean-nós is important to Cunningham. “That’s what we listened to to get to where we are today,” he said. “There’s a very good job getting done on [the promotion of sean-nós]. The old style is so important. If a fun flavour is put on it in the right way, it will bring people into the culture.”

Brian Cunningham will be appearing at Re-Jigged in Nova Scotia this October.

www.atlanticsteps.com



EVENTS

OCTOBER

Whiskey Live, Boston
October 2

The Irish Festival of Oulu
October 2-6

Bakersfield Celtic
Music Festival
October 4-5

Williamsburg
Scottish Festival
October 4-5

Winnipeg Irish Festival
October 4-5

Harpers' Escape Weekend
October 4-6

Southern Illinois
Irish Festival
October 4-6

Celtic Harmonies
International Festival
October 4-13

Long Beach Irish Day
October 5

North Alabama
Scottish Festival
October 5

Scotland County
Highland Games
October 5

Aztec Highland
Games & Celtic Festival
October 5-6

Castlegar Highland Games
October 5-6

Chesapeake Celtic Festival
October 5-6

Reno Celtic Celebrations
October 5-6

Maryland Renaissance
Festival – Irish Celebration
October 5-20

Boorowa Irish Woolfest
October 6

Cork Folk Festival
October 10-13

Liverpool Irish Festival
October 10-20

Seaside Highland Games
October 11-13

Weston Irish Festival
October 11-13

Royal National Mod
October 11-18

Celtic Colors International
Festival
October 11-19

Indianapolis Scottish
Games And Festival
October 12

Radford Highlanders Festival
October 12

Rencontres Interceltiques
de Saint Ghislain
October 12-13

Smithville Irish Festival
October 12-13

Scotland Connecticut
Highland Games
October 13

Lowender Peran Festival
October 16-20

Whiskey Live, Los Angeles
October 17

Tyneside Irish Festival
October 17-27

Stone Mountain
Highland Games
October 18-20

Central Virginia Celtic
Festival and Highland Games
October 19-20

Kapunda Celtic Festival
October 19-20

Illawarra Scottish Fair
October 20

Sligo Live Festival
October 23-28

Galway Bay Irish
Music Festival
October 24-27

Re-Jigged
October 25-26

O'Flaherty Irish Music Retreat
October 25-27

Willie Keane Memorial Weekend
October 25-28

The Dougie MacLean Festival
October 25-November 3

Glenfiddich Piping and Fiddling
Championships
October 26

West Kentucky Highland Games &
Festival
October 26

Big Bend Highland
Games & Scottish Festival
October 26-27

Camden Town Festival
October 27-November 3

Eisteddfod de Chubut
October 31-November 2

Camden Town Festival
October 27-November 3

Eisteddfod de Chubut
October 31-November 2

NOVEMBER

Whiskey Live, Toronto
November 1

Tucson Celtic Festival
November 1-3

Austin Celtic Festival
November 2-3

House Folk Scottish
Music Festival
November 7-8

Copenhagen Irish Festival
November 7-10

Ennis Trad Festival
November 7-11

Beechworth Celtic Festival
November 8-10

Maryland Irish Festival
November 8-10

Salado Scottish
Clan Gathering
November 8-10

Sneem International Folklore &
Storytelling Festival
November 8-10

Yachats Celtic Music Festival
November 8-10

St. Andrews Tartan Ball
November 9

Scottish Highland Games & Celtic
Music Festival on the Mississippi
Gulf Coast
November 9-10

William Kennedy
Piping Festival
November 14-17

Comhaltas Irish
Traditional Music Festival
November 15-17

Jacksonville Celtic Festival
November 16

International Gathering
of Scottish Highland Dance –
Disneyland Paris
November 21-25

Scots Fiddle Fest 2013
November 22-24

Dunedin Celtic Festival
November 23

DECEMBER

Éigse Dhiarmuid
Uí Shúilleabháin
December 6-8

Ingleside Renaissance Faire
December 14-15

The Pipes of Christmas
December 14-15

Montol Festival
December 21

Edinburgh's Hogmanay
December 30 – January 1

Old Year Festival
in Portmagee
December 31

The summer season may be setting behind us, but there are plenty of great events to experience this fall. Here are our recommendations for the autumn's must-see Highland Games and Celtic Festivals.

Festival FOCUS



Celtic Colours International Festival

When: October 11-19, 2013 *Where:* Cape Breton, Nova Scotia
Web: www.celtic-colours.com

North America's premier celebration of Celtic music is the perfect soundtrack to the stunning landscape upon which it takes place. With nine days of festivities featuring hundreds of performers at dozens of venues across the island, there is something for everyone at this year's event; formal concerts, after-hours jam sessions, laid back kitchen parties and ceilidhs galore. Along with the music, festival goers are sure to enjoy the food, culture and down-home warmth of the region and its world-renowned hospitality.



Ventura Seaside Highland Games

When: October 11-13 *Where:* Chatsworth, California
Web: www.seaside-games.com

If you are looking for a change of scenery as the cool autumn weather takes hold, look no further than the sunny San Fernando Valley of southern California. Pipe bands, heavy events, fiddling, highland dance competitions, dart contests, battle re-enactments, a harp gathering, clan alley and children's activities are all on the agenda again this year. A special appearance by Côr Cymraeg De California - the Welsh Choir of Southern California - will highlight a strong slate of live entertainment.



Re-Jigged

When: October 25-26, 2013 *Where:* Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Web: www.rejiggedfestival.com

Engaging, educational and entertaining, the 'little Celtic festival that could' has grown in size and stature since its inception in 2010. Today, it is recognized as a world-class showcase for both emerging and established national and international artists. Daytime workshops, seminars and sessions in music and dance draw audiences of all ages, while evening concerts guarantee a full dance floor. Family-friendly, the festival also features a children's Gaelic program and a Celtic story telling hour that will keep the kids intrigued.



Scots Fiddle Festival

When: November 22-24, 2013 *Where:* Edinburgh, Scotland
Web: www.scotsfiddlefestival.com

Fiddlers of all ages, nationalities, non-players, beginners and professionals alike will gather in Edinburgh again this fall for the finest four-string finger work you will ever hear. Now in its 18th year, the three-day celebration was named Event of the Year by the MB Alba Scots Trad Music Awards, and will again feature concerts, ceilidhs, recitals, sessions and workshops. A special Sunday night Youth Gaitherin will bring the festivities to a close with a nod to the future of the famed Celtic instrument.

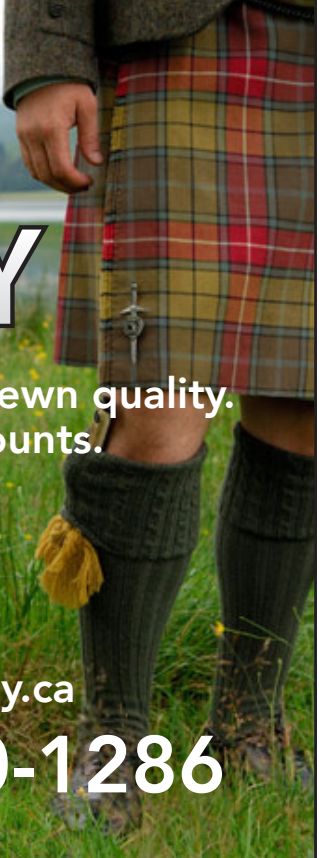


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Ernest V. Moncreiffe



the Clan Moncreiffe

Members of the Clan Moncreiffe Society (CMS) are looking forward to celebrating the society's founder, Ernest V. Moncreiffe, with a memorial service this October at the Stone Mountain Highland Games in Atlanta, Georgia. The international society, whose members spell their name in a myriad of ways, owes its success to Moncreiffe who was key to establishing the group in 1998.

Charlotte Moncrief, CMS treasurer and membership chairman, said Ernest visited Scotland several times in the 1970s and 1980s to meet with Lord Harry Moncreiffe at Tulliebole Castle. He also met with the Chief of Moncreiffe, Peregrine Moncreiffe, at his home. Ernest was able to unite both sides of this family so that the Clan Moncreiffe Society of North America could be established. Several years later, in 2007, the name was shortened to Clan Moncreiffe Society to allow global members. The group now has 188 registered Clan members from 25 U.S. states as well as others from Australia, Scotland, Canada and Cuba.

"Ernest was not only interested in Moncrief genealogy, but in the people," Charlotte said. "He compared the occupations of Moncreiffe members, gathered documents and pictures of all the important information regarding the Clan and made three-ring binders to give to all the officers and commissioners. That way we all had proof and history in our hands." Ernest also had a small library which he donated to the Society.

Ernest died December 31, 2012, after a long illness and this October's AGM will be the first opportunity for the Society to honour him. "We truly miss him," said Charlotte. "Ernest was a great motivator and fun to be around."

Charlotte said Ernest inspired her and her husband Mike, CMS vice-president, to get involved in the close-knit CMS family.

She and Mike have since travelled to Scotland with the Society three times. "The first time we went to Scotland, Mike and I were amazed that 40 Moncriefs, whom we had never met before, could stay together for more than a week and still have a good time. Lord Moncreiffe and our CMS Chief, Peregrine Moncreiffe, allow us to visit their estates, they take us on tours, feed us and are glad to provide their knowledge of history, family, and Scottish information."

The Society meets once a year in Georgia for its AGM and weekend activities.

"Even though 12 months pass between meetings, it's as though we met yesterday," said Charlotte. "...We are as close as family and members email each other often during the year."

At the Stone Mountain Highland Games, the CMS presence has grown considerably and Clan members are now very active. Member Susie Moncrief, of Florida, participates in the Kilted Mile run every year, for example.

"Susie was an encouragement to all her clansmen to begin participating in the events," said Charlotte. "...The results have been that Clan Moncreiffe has won the Carmichael Award for the most clan member participation in the Kilted Mile run at Stone Mountain four times!"

When Honorable Rhoderick H.W. Moncreiffe visited the U.S. in 2001, he gave a sword to a member who participated in a gaming event. The Clan has continued the tradition by presenting the Sword Award every year to a member who has offered exceptional service to the Society.

The Clan continues to look for ways to be active and engage its membership. CMS has another trip to Scotland planned for 2014 and members are currently working on acquiring non-profit status. "Our tartan is not common and it is difficult to find," said Charlotte. "We've had bolts of material made in Scotland on an as-needed basis so that members can purchase tartan for kilts, sashes, ties, etc. We are investigating having the tartan made in silk and other materials."

Commissioners have been attending highland games and Scottish festivals in several U.S. states to spread the word about CMS. Clan members and many members of the public are fascinated by the number of variations on the family name: Mancriff; Moncreiffe; Moncreiff; Moncrief; Moncrieffe; Moncrieff; Muncrief and Scott-Moncrief. CMS uses the oldest spelling on record, which is also the Clan Chief's name.

Charlotte feels that the Clan's work has paid off. "It has been great to see younger generations become interested in their ancestry and we are growing by including them. Now, they are becoming leaders for the future."

www.moncreiffe.org





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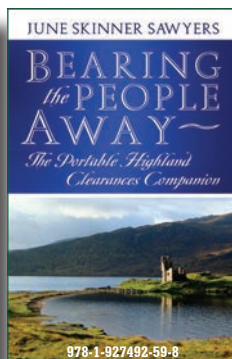
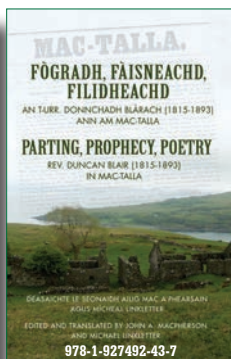
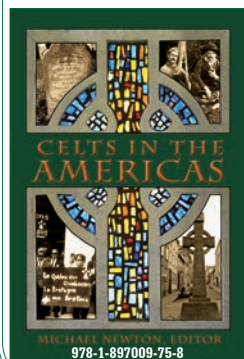
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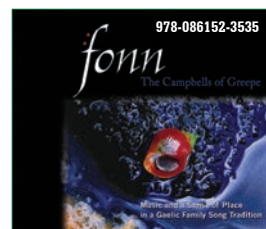


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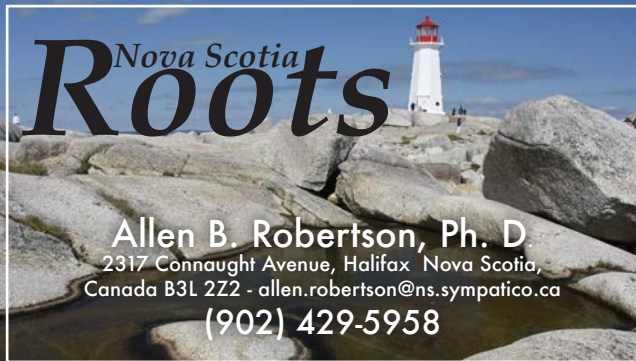
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It's the call no one ever wants to receive; the one bearing bad news that changes everything forever.

In early October, 2010, my physician phoned our home in Sydney and requested that I come into his office the next morning. He wouldn't tell me why, only to be there on time.

I knew what it was about; I had found a lump in my breast only three weeks earlier and had undergone a mammogram a few days later. My mind raced in all directions for the rest of the day, mostly towards a worse-case scenario.

Both my Mum and my older sister Anne had been diagnosed with breast cancer in the previous decade. While my sister survived, my mother did not, succumbing in April of 2007. Her final days were painful and unpleasant, although she carried herself with great dignity until her last breath. She was only 61.

Anne and I were both diagnosed at the age of 34, with Anne's diagnosis coming in 2008. Too soon, we thought, but statistics show that more young women are afflicted by breast cancer each year around the world.

We each had a breast removed, mine on the left and hers on the right. Today we joke that between the two of us we still have a good pair left. It wasn't funny at the time, however, especially with the loss of our mother still so fresh.

Early detection likely saved us each further complications, and we are both still screened regularly, as are our two younger sisters. All of us, even my once steady father, feel anxious about each test result. It is as if we are waiting for a ticking time bomb to go off. Gratefully, we are all still here.

Towards the end of my mother's life, when it became clear that she was not going to make it, relatives gathered at my parents' home from across Australia. Every bed, couch and cot was full, with siblings, nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles all moving in to share in the caregiving. Even in this bitter milieu, the house had never been so alive.

According to Dad, that was the way things were done when he was a child in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. He has shared stories with us about how his grandparents lived with his family until they passed, and how kin would come from across Ireland, and from as far away as London, to share in the grieving.

Apparently, after the deceased was laid to rest, many stayed for weeks afterwards to help with household duties and offer comfort.

It was like that when Mum passed.

While she was born in Australia, both sets of her grandparents had arrived from Ireland years earlier looking for a better life. Like most of Irish descent, many in our family still practice ancient customs, including those that took place at my mother's wake; her body was washed, laid out on a small bed in the back room and a small crucifix and rosary beads placed in her hands. Sheets were hung over the bed, pipes filled with tobacco, glasses filled, candles lit, clocks stopped and mirrors turned towards the wall as mourners wept and wailed openly. Given the drama of those three days, the actual funeral seemed almost a letdown.

After the service, some relatives returned to their lives, while others stayed on in support. In particular, my Aunt Bridgit and Aunt Theresa were of great comfort, most often simply lending a much needed ear to myself, my sisters and my father over a cup of tea.

When Anne was diagnosed, they were the first to arrive and the last to leave, and it was the same when I went through my own treatment two years later.

Although it is easy today to dismiss our seemingly outdated Irish traditions, there is something to be said for keeping them alive. If anything, what I witnessed at my mother's wake, and everything that I have experienced since then, has only served to strengthen my sense of belonging, bringing me back to my roots, and reaffirming the healing power of my heritage.

Today, I no longer jump when the phone rings, as it is usually a relative checking up on us. And while some of them are a little longwinded (sorry Uncle Kevin!), I am always grateful that I am still here to take their call.

By Kelly Ahearn

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