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GOING GLOBAL

A recent article in the Harvard Business Review suggested that we live in an era of risk and constant change. "Our future success will depend largely on our ability to read and react appropriately to the signals of change; to be willing to experiment rapidly and frequently, not only with products and services, but with business models, processes and strategies as well."

So much has evolved in publishing since our first issue 25 years ago, especially in recent years with the paradigm shift brought on by the revolutions in both technology and communications.

Celtic Life has always adapted to the times and with this issue those changes are reflected both on our website and in our magazine, each of which were re-launched on March 17 – the feast day of Saint Patrick.

As you will see, the magazine itself has a fresh layout with new features, while maintaining the same high standard of writing we have always provided.

As such, and to better reflect our growing readership and scope of coverage, we have renamed the magazine Celtic Life International and expanded our content to 72 pages. We also now offer three types of digital editions, including one designed specifically for mobile devices.

Inside this issue you will find articles on world-renowned fiddler Natalie MacMaster, award-winning author Ami McKay, Republic of Doyle star Allan Hawco, Irish heart-throb actor/director Kevin J. Ryan, Stuart McLean of CBC's Vinyl Café, journalist Linden MacIntyre, Globe and Mail columnist John Doyle, visual artist G. Scott MacLeod and Tartan fashionista Veronica MacIsaac.

Our re-designed, multi-media website is a dynamic hub of Celtic culture – informative, entertaining and engaging. Here you will discover a daily dose of news, views and reviews, clan and festival profiles, Q&As, humour, recipes and many more treats and tidbits from across the Celtic world.

We invite you to be an active member of our Celtic family by joining us on Facebook (CelticLife.ca) and Twitter (@celticlife) and we are available via LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google + as well. Be sure to keep an eye out for our new YouTube Channel in the coming weeks.

As always, we are grateful that you are the centre of our growing community and we are happy to have you with us for an exciting and evolving year ahead.



Marcie Macquarrie, Publisher



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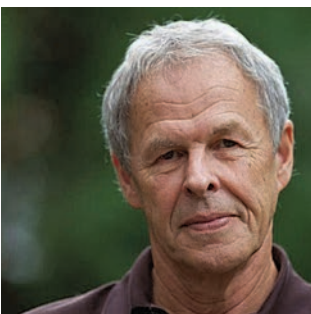
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FIRST WORD

By John Doyle

Dear Mam, Dad, and All,

It was St. Valentine's Day a few weeks back. Nobody here calls it "Saint Valentine's Day" and I don't know why. He was a Saint, after all. The "Saint" part is forgotten, even unknown, I suppose. Nobody calls Ireland the land of saints and scholars either. Which is probably wise, the place being only famous here for being broke, at the moment. And I think that's better than being known for being poor, backward and peculiar.

I think that, maybe, when I first came to Canada somebody might have said "the land of saints and scholars" to me. But wryly, I suppose. With affection. It is odd how Valentine's Day makes a person think, but secretly. The purpose of the day is to express forthright love for a loved one. A partner, a spouse, a crush. The day enables the shy to speak and the suddenly forthright are forgiven. And yet, it must make some people melancholy. Loves lost, forgotten or fabulously unsuitable return to the surface. I have been in Canada for thirty-one celebrations of Saint Valentine's Day and, yes, it makes me remember.

Once I told an actress I liked that there is a memorable line in Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors - "In what part of her body stands Ireland?" A character asks the question about a woman being described to him. The actress didn't remember it, or know it. The question is an insult in the play, a set-up for a joke about the woman not being attractive at all. I explained to the actress that in Ireland it doesn't matter. We have this ability to take insults and twist them into something new, a weapon to be used in defence of insulting attack. It's an intuitive savouring of language. We are programmed to mock. She didn't understand.

Later I talked about the way the Irish use the f-word. Effin' this and effin' that. It lends rhythm to the talk. A pause, a colourful emphasis inserted into the mundane talk. That, she understood. Actors understand the rhythm of language, the need to turn a drizzle of soft words into a thunderous rainstorm of vehemence, if only for effect.

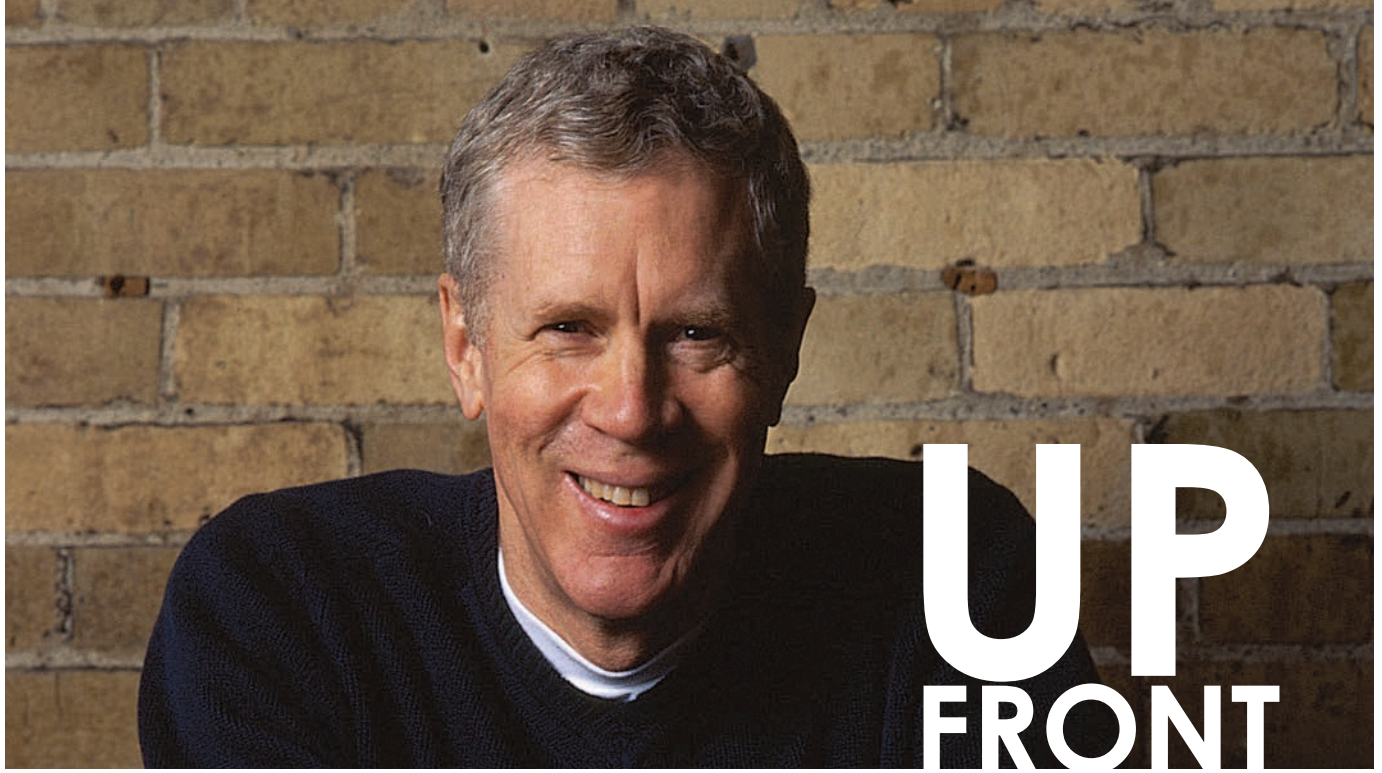
It's the language I miss, if I'm asked or if I think about it. And Saint Valentine's Day makes us think of regret, things lost. I write almost daily, for my work and other excursions into storytelling. There are days when I feel in need of an afternoon in Dublin, an injection of the talk, the wanton embrace of invective and the scorn for the banality of ordinary words and expressions.

If there is a place in Canada I could find the same succour, I suppose it is in Newfoundland. There, the delight in language is evident. And yet, I know it's not home. I could ask of Newfoundland, "In what part of her body stands Ireland?" and be told it's everywhere. And yet it's not my true love. The journey to Newfoundland from Toronto is long and if I'm going to go there, I might as well go home. There are many Doyles in Newfoundland, but not my Doyles.

Thanks for the Saint Valentine's Day card and the lottery scratch ticket. I won 4 Euros. I'll come over and spend it soon. I know the country's broke. And if you're sending anything else, send words. Just effin' words.

John Doyle is the Television Critic for the Globe and Mail and the author most recently of The World is a Ball: The Joy, Madness & Meaning of Soccer.





For close to twenty years, Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast have found creature comfort at The Vinyl Café. In this exclusive interview, host Stuart McLean opens up about his beloved, weekly radio show and the Celtic roots of its core character Dave.

How did The Vinyl Café come about?

The Vinyl Cafe began when David Amer, a music producer on Peter Gzowski's Morningside program, suggested we do a show together. David would choose the music and I would introduce it. I added the story telling element. We didn't really have a plan. We just did a pilot, more for fun than anything, and then went about our business for five years before the CBC decided to give it a try.

Are they the same reasons you keep doing it?

Yes, that is more or less the same reason we keep doing it. We have fun. And it seems to be working, and it gives me a chance to write about anything I want to.

Where do the story ideas come from?

If I knew that I would have a lot more ideas! Mostly from the characters I would say. Then the stories are developed collaboratively between me, my editor Meg, my producer Jess, and the audience.

Do you have any particular favourite stories?

Often it is the one I am working on, which always seems to be just about to become perfect and of course never does! Some of my very favourites are about Sam, the young boy, whom I feel closest to; Fig Tree. Planet Boy, the Car, Summer of Stars, and Monster.

You have often stated that you have no idea what Dave and the others look like – why do you think that is?

It is odd – I could not describe them to you, but I would know them if I met them. I have a few very clear pictures of some of the locations where they have been – the clearest being the road that climbs the mountain behind McAulay's farm in Big Narrows. I can see it perfectly, but just from one perspective, far away. My images of Big Narrows are clearer than anything else.

Why did you decide to give Dave Scottish/Cape Breton roots?

My wife's family is from Sydney and Glace Bay. I visited a number of times over the years. I feel a deep affection for the people and the place and I wanted to give it a shout out. I had no idea the decisions I was making at the beginning of all this would have the significance they do twenty years later.

In your opinion, how do those roots factor into his character?

Dave has a basic understanding, or feeling, for the importance of the unimportant, and he is more concerned with his friendships and his family than he is with getting ahead. He has the heart of a small town boy.

What's ahead for The Vinyl Cafe?

More of the same I hope. More tours, more shows and more time spent with the characters and with the people I work with. I love them all.





SEVEN CELTIC QUESTIONS

Cape Breton-born Linden MacIntyre co-hosts CBC TV's the Fifth Estate, and is the author of The Long Stretch, Causeway: A Passage from Innocence, and The Bishop's Man, which won the 2009 Scotiabank Giller Prize. His latest work, Why Men Lie, is scheduled for release this spring.

.....

What are your own Celtic roots?

Scottish Hebridean on my father's side, and Irish (Donohue) on my mother's side. I grew up in Port Hastings, on the Strait of Canso. My father was from MacIntyre Mountain, not far from there, and my mother was from Bay St. Lawrence on the northernmost tip of the island. My mother and an aunt still live in Port Hastings. I have many cousins and friends in the area. I have a summer home in nearby Judique, which is where I went to high school and I go back mostly to reconnect with the place, the people and the sea.

Why are those roots important to you?

They provide a template for personal identity and a survival narrative that makes contemporary struggles seem manageable.

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

These days it is to be part of a heritage that has lost much of its cultural integrity through the breakdown of language and community.

How are you involved with the Canadian Celtic community?

I am a part of it but haven't been specifically involved for many years, not since an energetic period of Gaelic language promotion in the seventies.

Why is it important to keep Celtic culture alive in Canada?

I believe that heritage is important as a reminder that we are part of a larger and more lasting entity than the self, the here and now.

In your estimation, are we doing enough to keep Celtic culture alive here?

Many individuals are working hard, with some public sector support, to sustain the crucial elements of culture — the music and the language, the small communities. Political support is, in part, motivated by commercial imperatives and sentiment but should be applauded because it keeps the flame of awareness alive among young people who would otherwise be overwhelmed by the mass movements of the cultural market place.

If not, what could we be doing better?

We need a greater political commitment to community, and genuine cultural survival through language education.





WARMING UP TO KEVIN J. RYAN

"I'm freezing me arse off..."

Kevin J. Ryan isn't used to the cold Canadian winters. The award-winning Irish actor and filmmaker – who lives in Los Angeles for most of the year – is on location in downtown Toronto in mid-February, finishing production on BBC America's historical drama *Copper*.

"I'm all bundled up here," laughs the handsome twenty-something, "but I'm starting to lose all feeling in my toes. I don't know how you Canucks take it – you're a bloody rugged lot."

Despite the bitter cold, Ryan has reason to feel warm these days; *Copper* is expected to make him hot-property in Hollywood, and his role as Detective Francis Maguire is one that he wears well.

"It's set in New York City in the 1860s," he explains, "at a time when the first wave of Irish immigrants arrived in the new world following the (potato) famine. We shot some of the series there, and walking through the neighbourhoods, seeing the old tenement buildings and hearing the stories of struggle and hardship was an incredible history lesson for me."

The story of the Irish in America might ring familiar for Ryan.

Born in Dublin, the young thespian apprenticed as a stone cutter – a family trade for eight generations – before following his vocation into the arts.

"Theatre, dancing and music were my true callings," he recalls, "and sports also. I was actually a dirt-bike champion back home for a bit."

With his family's support, Ryan crossed the waters in the mid-2000s to pursue his passion for performing. His solid Irish work

ethic paid off, and it wasn't long before he landed leading roles in several critically acclaimed independent films.

Agents took notice, and soon cast him in a number of higher-profile productions, including *Entourage* and *Days of Our Lives*.

"The work has been good and steady," he says. "And it has opened the door to other opportunities."

Indeed, his resume has grown significantly in a short time. Along with starring in RTE's popular series *Raw*, Ryan has produced two films of his own; *Laredo*, and *The Tub*, both of which won numerous film-festival awards in 2009.

Things won't be slowing down anytime soon either; his work on *Copper* – which is directed by Oscar-winner Barry Levinson (*Rain Man*, *Wag the Dog*) – highlights a busy year that will see several of his films in production or released, including *Songs for Amy*, *Tripping Tommy* and *Paddy in the Boot*.

"Things are coming together very quickly for me, and I am very grateful," he humbly confides. "Sometimes I have to pinch myself to be sure I'm not dreaming. It has all been a little overwhelming."

True to his Celtic roots, Ryan looks to home for support.

"Despite the distance, I am very close with my family," he shares. "I call them almost every day and I get back there quite a bit. They keep me grounded. Every time I start sounding too big for my britches they remind me who I am and where I am from."

"And when I told them how cold it has been here in Toronto, they said I should just stop complaining and count my blessings."



Hawco's Republic



Allan Hawco's reality is more fantastic than most. His hit CBC Television drama, *Republic of Doyle* – now in its third season – draws more than one million Canadian viewers each week, and is now broadcast in over 100 countries across the globe.

Not surprisingly, it's a bit surreal.

"We have an African-American president in the United States, Newfoundland is an economic superpower, and I have my own television series where I'm the executive producer, writer, and star," says Hawco, sounding almost dumbfounded.

"I feel like I've either slipped through string theory into an alternate reality, or like I'm in that ward of the hospital where I've made all this up in my head and the nurse is sayin, Yes, honey, you have a blue GTO, we know, we know – your leather jacket, yeah."

Charmed as it may seem, Hawco's reality – and the show's success – has less to do with luck than it does with hard work, dedication, and being surrounded by exceptional people.

"We're an awesome team," he shares of the cast, crew and others that collaborate on ROD. "I have a spectacular group of people around me. I spent years putting together a team of people I want to spend all my time with, because, y'know, you end up married to them in a way."

That union is undeniably busy these days. Besides Doyle, Hawco's company – Take The Shot Productions – has three other projects currently underway, another in development and one more possibly taking flight down the line.

The benefits to Newfoundland communities are hard to miss.

"In Newfoundland and Labrador in the past three years we've spent over \$67 million," he notes. "Every season is about \$22-23 million, and it's done over 9 months – it has to be spent...that's just the way we're funded."

The investment employs trades people, provides experience and training for local film crews, and contributes to the province's film industry infrastructure – which invites expats to come home and work in something other than the oil and gas sector.

It also showcases The Rock's sheer physicality to the rest of the world. "I wanted to highlight the beauty of the place that I love so much," shares the actor. "I was thinking how great it would be to have a character (Jake) who was watching over the city that I love. I love characters that are connected to a place and just have a passion for the place they live in and are there to protect it."

From all indications, it appears that the audience agrees – something that Hawco doesn't take lightly.

"To get something made is impossible, so when you're making it you're like holy crap, we have to make sure we really give this our all," he smiles.

"We have a massive responsibility now, telling a story that people have invested in and we can never take that for granted... That's so important for me. You don't know what you've got, right? And I know what I have."



By Robyn McNeil

THE MAHONES FOREVER



Finny McConnell loves performing in Halifax. “Usually, we roll in on a Saturday night,” shares the founder and front-man of Canadian Celtic Punk legends The Mahones at a recent stop in the Nova Scotia capital. “But for some reason this gig was changed to a Wednesday.”

It’s no matter for McConnell and his band-mates; the Kingston, Ontario quintet have been putting out seven days a week in support of their latest effort *The Black Irish* – an eclectic mix of rowdy rockers and soft Irish ballads – since its release last year.

“I love the new record,” he shares. “It really reflects how far we have come as players.”

Indeed, it’s been a wild ride since McConnell and his long-time musical mentor Barry Williams put the band together on Saint Patrick’s Day, 1990.

From the very beginning, the band set their sights on Celtic Punk. “I started off with the nasty Irish drinking songs,” grins the singer-songwriter. “In fact, the first song I wrote for the band was ‘Drunken Lazy Bastard.’”

Today, McConnell writes in batches of 10 to 20. “I come up with the titles first, to define what I want the piece to be about. I find a good hook, and I finish it off by painting in the lyrics. And then I won’t write anything for two years.”

Citing The Clancy Brothers, The Dubliners, and The Pogues as musical influences, The Mahones have shared the stage with

the likes of The Dropkick Murphys, Shane MacGowan and The Popes, Steve Earle, Flogging Molly and Van Morrison.

Though tied by similar sound and style, McConnell steps outside of traditional musical structures. “A lot of people in the genre take airs, which are like riffs, of Celtic songs from the past, rewrite them and put their own lyrics to them. I like to invent my own and make them as completely original as possible.”

While most of the band’s material is of the Celtic Punk genre, they have experimented with other styles, including jazz, country, folk and rock – something that is well-reflected on the new recording.

“We like to mix it up,” laughs McConnell. “It keeps things fresh for us and it keeps listeners guessing.”

That variety is perhaps most evident on *Whisky Devils*, a tribute album, that was released last year. “We were honoured,” he says humbly. “Twenty bands around the world recorded twenty of our songs for our 20th anniversary. Some of them even play them better than we do!”

Their musical peers aren’t the only admirers, as the line-up outside the nightclub in Halifax attests to.

“So what if it’s a Wednesday?” smiles McConnell. “We’ve always got a little Saturday in us to share.”



SARAH AINSLEY HARRISON

Halifax-based model and actress Sarah Ainsley Harrison is not just another pretty face. A sure blend of Celtic style and substance, Sarah is pursuing her life-long dream of running for Miss Universe Canada.



"I am a dual-citizen of the U.K. and Canada. I got my U.K. passport through Scotland. My mother was born in Edinburgh, and my sister and I lived there with her and my Nana when my father was working with the Canadian Military in Cairo."



"I'm proud to be Celtic. Celtic heritage is one of incredible resilience and strength."



"Roots are so important, as they shape you into who you are. My family has played a defining role in both carving out my character and inspiring my ideals."



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FROM SCOTLAND WITH LOVE

Some of the world's hottest Scots will again converge on New York City this April to help kick-off Tartan Week, the annual global celebration of Scottish heritage and tradition.

On Monday, April 2, designers, models, moguls, media and celebrities will assemble at the prestigious Liberty Theatre on 42nd Street in Times Square for From Scotland with Love, the highest-profile Scottish fashion show on the planet.

"This is our 10th anniversary show and everyone involved wanted to do something special to mark this significant achievement" says chairman and founder Dr. Geoffrey Scott Carroll.

"After a decade it was time to rethink, refresh, and reinvigorate the event," he shares, noting that the original Dressed to Kilt moniker served the occasion well. "Thus we have rebranded the show From Scotland with Love".

From its humble origins in Carroll's kitchen a decade ago, the annual gathering has grown into the third-largest fashion extravaganza in the world.

Media from around the globe – including Russia, China, Japan, India, Latin America and Continental Europe – will descend upon downtown Manhattan to capture and convey the latest in Scottish design and fabrics. Last year, the stylish spectacle reached more than 2.6 billion people worldwide through thousands of websites, newspapers, magazines and TV outlets.

The Honorary Chairmen and Hosts of this year's show will include Sir Tom Hunter, the Chairman and founder of the Hunter Foundation; Lord McConnell, the current head of the Cash for Kids charity and the longest serving First Minister in Scotland's history; Ian Grabiner, COO of the Arcadia Group; Donald Trump, CEO of Trump International; Brian Cox CBE, Scottish actor and Rector of the University of Dundee; Scottish actor Kevin McKidd; Canadian actor Kiefer Sutherland; Geoff Day, Senior Executive

with Mercedes Benz USA; Dawn Halfaker, the President of the Board of Directors of The Wounded Warrior Project; Dougal Munro, President of Holland & Sherry; Robin Galbraith, Founder & Chairman of the Calzeat Group of Companies, and many other distinguished individuals from both sides of the Atlantic.

Past participants have included the likes of comedian Billy Connolly, athletes Ahmad Bradshaw and Bernie Williams; musicians Amy Grant and KT Tunstall, and actors Gerard Butler, Chris Noth, Kyle MacLachlan, Kiefer Sutherland, Mike Myers, Anne Hathaway and Sir Sean Connery.

Jonathan Saunders, Vivienne Westwood, Alexander McQueen, Veronica MacIsaac, Johnstons Cashmere, Pringle of Scotland, Harris Tweed Hebrides, Calzeat, GlenIsla Kilts, Holland & Sherry, and Lochcarron of Scotland have all featured their fashion wear at past events. "It is, by far, the largest single group of Scottish designers to appear on one runway, and many of those big names, and more, will be with us again this year" says Carroll.

The gathering isn't all glitz and glamour, however, with a number of notable causes benefitting from the festivities.

"The Wounded Warrior Project in the U.S. helps the thousands of wounded warriors returning home from the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and it also provides much needed assistance to their families," explains Carroll.

"And Cash For Kids is an organization that makes a significant difference to thousands of sick and underprivileged children in Scottish communities and provides the neediest with a better and brighter future.

"It is very rewarding to see that this gathering not only brings out people," he smiles, "it brings out the best in people."

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NATALIE MACMASTER

Cape Breton Girl!

Natalie MacMaster is having a difficult day.

"I just broke a nail," sighs the thirty-something, multi-award winning fiddler over the phone from a truck-stop in the U.S.

"It's really not that big a deal, except that I can't seem to find my nail-file."

Make no mistake – these aren't the grumblings of celebrity. Though her sensational talent, strong work-ethic and stunning good looks have taken her to the very top of her profession,

MacMaster remains true to her Cape Breton roots; warm, humble, hospitable – and humorous.

"Maybe I can borrow a file from one of the guys in the band," she laughs. "I swear, some of them pay way more attention to their appearance than I do to mine."

These days, it would seem that practicalities take precedence over primping.

"I don't care what it looks like – it just keeps catching on everything."

She muses that as she has gotten older, she has learned to put life into proper perspective. "The things that used to matter to me are no longer nearly as important in the big scheme of things. I mean, really, what the heck – it's just a nail."

"I steal a few moments here and there when I can, like during our sound-checks and so forth, but really, when we're on stage it's all about putting that practice into the performance."

And while she and her band-mates string together similar sets and song structures for each show, there is often space to stretch their playing.



Fiddling

On tour in support of her latest release, *Cape Breton Girl*, MacMaster has her hands full with things other than her fiddle (or her nail-file.)

"There are always plenty of distractions on the road to keep me busy," she confides, adding that the endless demands of travel, interviews, appearances and motherhood doesn't afford her the opportunity to practice her chops as often as she would like.

"We have windows of improvisation during the concert where we can let loose a little bit and try out new musical ideas," explains MacMaster. "We never really know what's going to happen from one night to the next, as it often depends on the energy of the audience. But that's all part of the fun right?"

It is, she acknowledges, an entirely different experience from being in the studio.

"Recording is a much more controlled environment, and there isn't the same kind of feeling involved as there is with a concert performance. I wouldn't say that it is more stressful than doing

shows – just that it is a different kind of pressure to perform. Those sessions can be very unforgiving.”

For Cape Breton Girl, however, the process was a little more lively and laid-back.

“This record is very much a return to my Cape Breton roots –

It was only months after the experience that she saw how much her skills had evolved.

“Actually it was my mother and father who pointed out that my playing had matured. I was quite surprised actually. To be honest, I hadn’t really noticed it myself, probably because I’ve been so busy these past few years.”



nothing fancy, just old-fashioned jigs and reels – so it was fun and familiar ground for me.

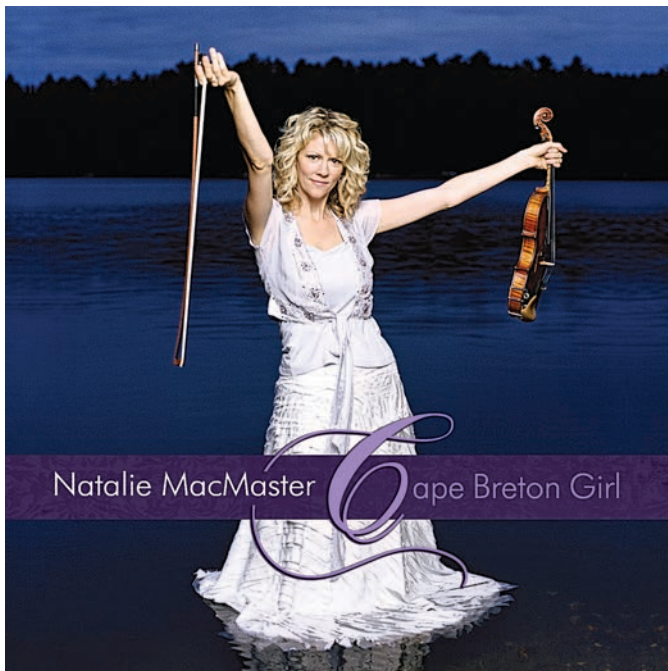
“Also, it was produced at Glen Gould Studios in Toronto, which is a great space to get creative. There’s a real sense of musical history there.

“And I was surrounded by a team of wonderfully talented musicians who always worked towards what was best for the songs. That really brought out the best in me and took my playing to another level.”

Family

While she concedes that having four children, all under the age of six, has meant less time for her creative endeavours – “that can happen when you’re making meals, doing laundry and rushing kids out the door to wherever” – MacMaster says that being a mom more than fills the musical gap.

“I don’t want to miss out on anything; they’re only this age for so long and they’re already growing up so quickly.”



Part of that presence comes in the form of daily home-schooling, giving the siblings the best chance to develop mentally and morally.

“Kids today are under so much pressure, especially at school, and there’s no need for them to rush into anything that they don’t need to rush into just yet. They’ll get their chance at iPods and iPhones and the like soon enough, but for now they don’t need that stuff.”

Pop music, however, is very much a part of their everyday lives.

“I’ll put on a CD at home and we’ll all start dancing together, or we’ll be in the car and everyone will sing along to whatever’s on the radio. They’re still a little young for Justin Beiber or Katy Perry, but they all like the big dance beats.”

Old-time TV shows are also very popular. “We’ve got the Davy Crockett DVD box set and the original Andy Griffith series also. It’s wholesome entertainment, the kids just adore it, and it’s perfect for those long, dull drives in the van.”

The kitchen is often the centre of much commotion as well.

“They all want to help mom,” laughs MacMaster. “So I let them crack eggs, roll dough and stir the pancake mix. Sure it gets a little messy, but it’s great family time, good fun, and it can certainly make for some very interesting meals.”

Food

“I love food,” she laughs. “Don’t get me going; I love talking about it, I love making it, and I love eating it.”

It would seem that celebrity chef loves to share it also, as a substantial section of her website is devoted to recipes for such mouthwatering munchies as Molasses Crinkles, Tweed Squares, Chocolate Truffles and Gingerbread Cookies.

“Can you tell I have a sweet tooth?” she giggles. “Actually, I think I may have a problem.”

The famous fiddler blames her fondness for feasting on growing up with her mother Minnie’s scrumptious home-cooking.

“As far back as I can remember she always had something on the stove or in the oven. We ate very well, and we ate a lot. I guess there is a part of me that wants to pass that love of food along to others as it was passed on to me.

“What’s the old saying? Take a penny, leave a penny?”

“Most of these are simple, old-fashioned recipes – the kind that have been passed down through generations of family members. They are easy to make and everyone can enjoy them. And you just can’t beat home-style cooking.”

Sure enough, and still less than halfway through her North American tour which will see her crisscross the continent well into the fall, MacMaster is already aching for a taste of home.

“We take the kids on the road with us, so we do the very best we can to eat properly. It’s not easy though, because sometimes we just have to make do with what’s behind the counter at a truck-stop. And if the kids don’t eat well, then everybody gets cranky.

“Speaking of which,” she adds, “I’ve got to get us into town for a proper supper before tonight’s show.

“And I have to find a drugstore along the way so that I can pick up another nail-file.”



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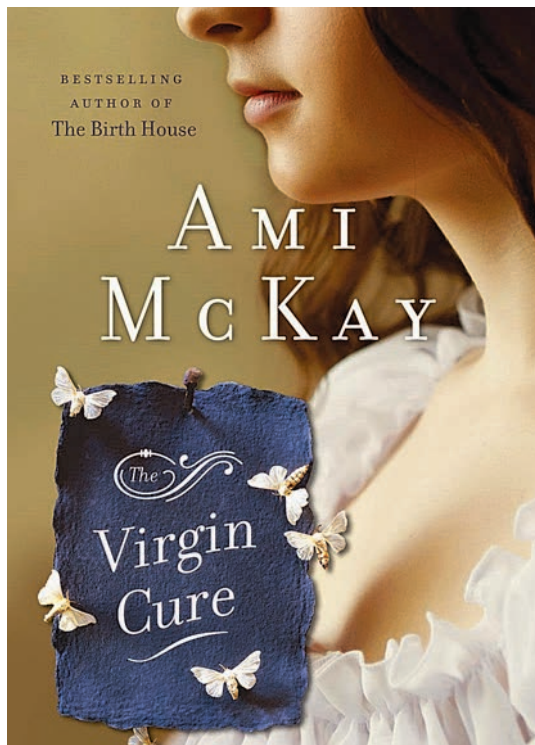


AMI MCKAY'S CURE

*Ami McKay hit the mark with her first full-length novel *The Birth House*; the touching tale of An Atlantic Canadian Midwife resonated with readers and critics alike, earning the Scots Bay, Nova Scotia resident numerous awards, nominations and a lengthy stay atop bestseller lists. Her long awaited follow-up is *The Virgin Cure*. Recently Celtic Life spoke with the scribe about the new book.*

What inspired you to tell this story?

While digging around the roots of my family tree, I uncovered the story of my great-great grandmother, who is the basis for Dr. Sadie's character in the book. Not only was my great-great grandmother a female physician in the late 1800s, but she was also one of the first women to practice medicine in New York City. Her medical studies and her work were carried out through the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children, and her patients were primarily immigrants who were living in the tenements and on the streets of the Lower East Side of Manhattan. In my research, I found many parallels between her work and that of the medical workers and social activists who are working with girls and women in third world countries today, including their shared struggle to educate young women and girls about the myth of the virgin cure; the belief that a man can be cured of disease by having relations with a virgin. When I thought of the fragility of these girls' lives, both past and present, I knew it was a story I wanted to tell.



Where did the character of Moth come from?

Early on, I made an attempt at writing the novel from Dr. Sadie's perspective, but I found her voice wasn't quite working. When I'd sit down at my desk each day, it was the world of the girls Sadie was trying to help that I wanted to stay in and explore. As much as the doctor was a part of their lives, she wasn't with them 24/7, and there were moments I felt I was missing because I was only seeing things through her eyes. Moth, a twelve-year-old girl on the streets, started taking over greater and greater portions of the narrative, until I finally decided to just give the story over to her. I like to think that it's probably how the real Dr. Sadie would have wanted the story to be told – through the voice of the girls she worked so hard to help.

What were some of the challenges involved with writing the story?

One of the biggest challenges for me was in realizing that there were no easy solutions to the problems Moth would face in the story. There were 30,000 children under the age of fifteen living on the streets of New York in 1871. As much I longed to write of some miraculous event that would save them all, I knew it wouldn't be fair to the past or right for the story. The issues raised in the book are also far murkier than I'd first anticipated. I often found myself wondering, "What is freedom?" and "what's the definition of a good life?"

What were the rewards?

I gained an enormous amount of respect not only for my great-great grandmother, but for all women and men, past and present who refuse to look the other way when faced with what looks to be an impossible task. It's made me dig deeper in my writing and my life.

What did you learn during the process?

This may sound strange, since novels are primarily written alone, but I discovered the importance of listening. I found that writing *The Virgin Cure* required a great deal of silence to get to the heart of the story. There were many times when I could have steamed ahead with what I thought should come next, but by sitting alone and letting the story linger, I came upon unexpected turns that were often better.

*How much pressure, if any, did you feel to meet or exceed the success of *The Birth House*?*

It wasn't so much the success of *The Birth House* that cast a shadow on my attempt to write something new, as it was my desire to not disappoint readers. I've had many wonderful conversations and exchanges with people about my first novel and I've appreciated every one of them. It was difficult to begin writing *The Virgin Cure*, but once I got into the thick of it I couldn't stop. On a personal note, I lost both of my parents during the time I was writing *The Virgin Cure*, so the book became an escape for me. I could leave the noise of the present behind and travel with Moth for a while – it was balm for my soul.

*How have you grown as a writer since *The Birth House*?*

Every story is an adventure, an opportunity to fly for a bit on new narrative and in a different world. The idea of starting again used to frighten me. Now it excites me.

What kind of feedback have you received from readers?

The word from readers has been positive so far, which makes letting it go out into the world much easier. I'm grateful for every reader – there are so many books in the world, enough for many lifetimes. To know that people have picked up the book and read every word amazes me. I don't think I'll ever get over it.

What's next for you?

Another novel, *The Witches of New York*, but it's too soon to say anything more about it, so stay tuned!




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SCOTT MACLEOD'S SAGA

G. Scott MacLeod might be the busiest man north of the border.

The Montreal-based painter, photographer and musician has a myriad of creative projects on the go at any given time; exhibits, sessions, salons and studios colour his landscape with creative commitments.

In 2009, the 40-something artist added filmmaker to his list of credits with the release of *After the War with Hannelore- A Berliner War Child's Testimony* from 1945 to 1989 – a series of visual vignettes recounting the life of one woman in the years following World War II.

The success of that first film inspired MacLeod to undertake *The Saga of Murdo MacLeod*, an animated exploration of early Scottish settlement in the Eastern Townships region of Quebec.

The new work, a partnership with the National Film Board of Canada, is scheduled for release in 2012, and is the first of four planned collaborations on Canadian

– to illustrate their differences, as well as the strong symbolic similarities in their lore, history, language and music.

“The Saga of Murdo MacLeod is also one of the many untold European-First Nations first contact stories in Quebec,” he adds. “There is still more room for Canadian animators and filmmakers to explore this

“*Like many cultures, our Celtic histories were maintained through the oral tradition,*”



history with celebrated Montreal storyteller Mike Burns.

“Mike is a traditional Irish seanachie,” shares MacLeod. “He has maintained the storytelling tradition by cultivating his craft and committing hundreds of stories to memory over the years.”

His experiences with Burns pushed MacLeod to explore the oral and narrative traditions in film and animation.

“I have studied feature works from countries like Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand. I’ve also studied animated films from Israel, and similar efforts from Canada including *The Man Who Planted Trees* (1987) by Frédéric Back, *The Danish Poet* (2006) by Toril Kove and *Felix in Exile* (2007) by South African artist William Kentridge.”

With their cross-cultural references and allegorical themes, those cinematic gems had a profound influence on *The Saga of Murdo MacLeod*.

“It was my hope to experiment with the fusing of these two cultural groups – the Abenaki and the Scots

area of history, as these stories are unknown to many Canadians and the world at large. I am interested in these cross-cultural stories from our history as a result of growing up in the culturally diverse city of Montreal, coming from Scottish lineage, and working with Mohawk, Squamish and Cree Nations over my three-decade career in music and art.”

The project afforded the artist the opportunity to further examine his own lineage.

“My Celtic family names are MacLeod, MacIver, Gillespie and Watson.

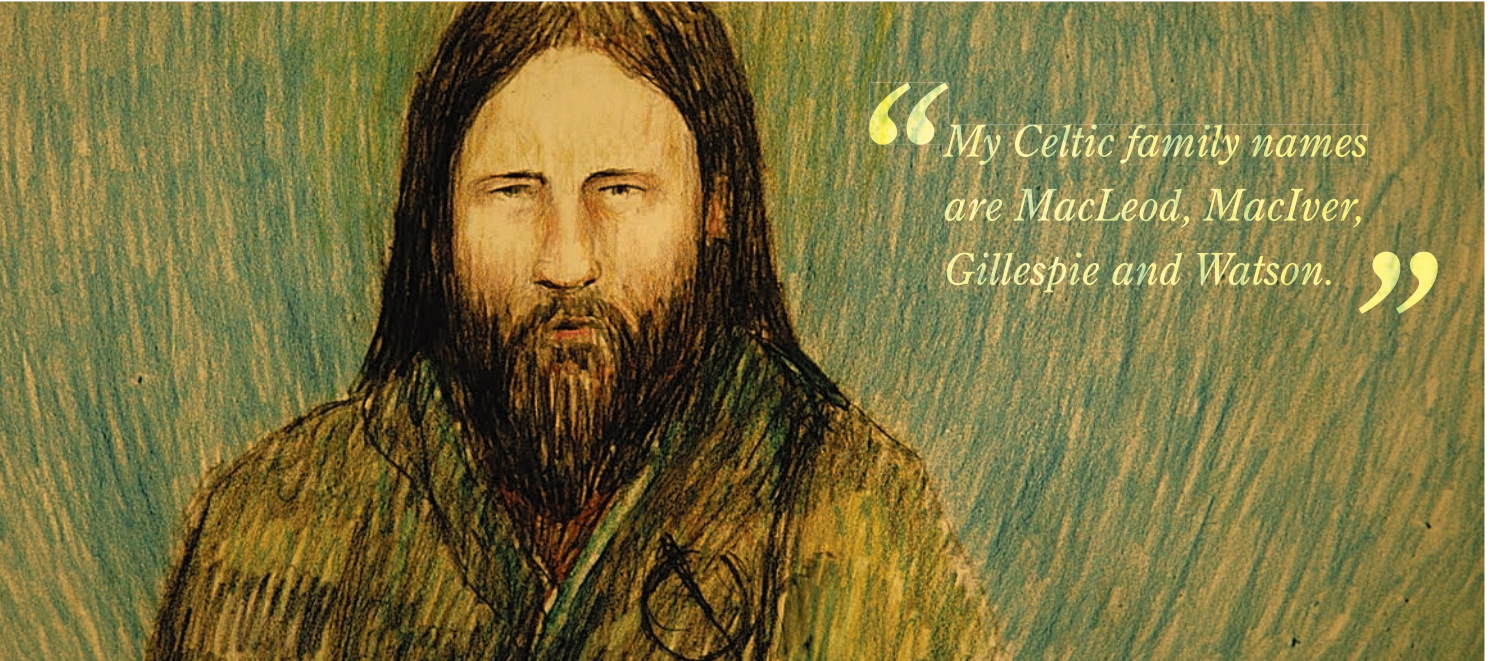
“My father’s lineage is from the Isle of Lewis in the Hebrides of Scotland,” he continues. “The MacLeods and the MacIvers came to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and settled in Baddeck in the 1830s. My paternal ancestor, Annie MacIver, ran an inn called Mother Gaelic’s, which my grandfather Bert MacLeod bought back into our family line. For years it was a family cottage, and now my Aunt Joan MacLeod currently runs it as a B&B under the same name.

“The Gillespies came to the United States and Canada during the late 1800s early 1900s. My Great

Grandfather James Gillespie was a Scottish engineer from Motherwell and worked in Scotland, India, and the United States before settling in the steel town of Sydney, Cape Breton. My mother's people, the Watsons, were originally from Fife and crossed the Atlantic on a steamer in the mid 1800s. They landed in New York, traveled to the mid west, and then crossed the Great Plains with handcarts and cover wagons for

In that regard, Canada is a good fit for MacLeod.

"We are a fusion or 'métissage' of many cultures," he notes, "and because of that our Celtic consciousness as our ancestors knew it has changed. I believe that this is a good thing, however, as many Celts left their homelands because of religious, linguistic and social divides. While Canada is certainly not perfect – and



“My Celtic family names are MacLeod, MacIver, Gillespie and Watson.”

they promised land in Provo City, Utah. They were Mormons and wrote down their life histories, as was the tradition. Incredibly, I have these very vividly written testimonies of their Exodus to America. They were very religious people and set up missions in the most difficult of circumstances. Life was difficult for these early Scottish settlers, much like the characters in The Saga of Murdo MacLeod.”

That heritage is at the heart of MacLeod's life-long fascination with, and passion for, Celtic culture.

“Any of us who are not First Nation share the immigrant story,” he explains. “Coming to this new/old land is embedded in our families' records and consciousness to varying degrees. I have perhaps been more interested in my roots than some, and I have explored these themes in the Celtic stories, songs and myths.”

“That being said, I am not a nationalist. However, I see the value of holding onto the positive attributes of my Scottish roots. I am comfortable with maintaining that identity as long as I feel it is a part of the collective whole, amongst those who are willing to share and enjoy our differences.”

we have a difficult colonial past to reconcile – our new construct is a positive attempt at something that we have never seen before.”

Still, despite the distillation, MacLeod says that Celtic culture is alive and well, both here at home and abroad, thanks to a strong storytelling tradition.

“Like many cultures, our Celtic histories were maintained through the oral tradition, long before the written word, and it was customary for the bards to commit our stories to memory. Today, we are lucky to still have people such as Mike Burns in our communities and cultures, committing part of their lives to being master storytellers and relating our cultural Celtic wealth. Our western cultures should take more time to appreciate and honour our elders and artists, as history has proven this to be a worthwhile exercise. Wisdom, knowledge and experience are among us, but it up to us to cultivate, celebrate and share this wealth.”



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THE HISTORY OF HIGHLAND DANCE

— *part one*

In this first of a four-part series, Dr. Michael Newton of the Department of Celtic Studies at St. Francis Xavier in Nova Scotia finds firm footing on the history of Highland Dance.

A recent controversy over the Gaelic College in Cape Breton possibly reducing support for modern “Highland Dance,” in preference for other types of Scottish-Gaelic traditions, has come to light. It has exposed, not only fundamental divisions between people’s participation or understanding of the customs, but also the degree to which the public has been misled by romantic misrepresentations promulgated by Highland Games and other “heritage” events.

A similar debate has occurred in the world of Highland bagpiping. In the last decade, the work of scholars, such as Hugh Cheape, William Donaldson, John Gibson, Allan MacDonald and Barry Shears, has revealed how the musical traditions of the Scottish Highlands were appropriated and reshaped by “improvers”. These were often Anglophone élites based in the urban Lowlands who imposed alien aesthetics on Gaelic music played on the bagpipe. By the late nineteenth century, Highland communities effectively lost control of their bagpipe traditions to institutions that had distinctly different agendas and musical styles. By challenging the supposed authenticity claimed by modern authorities, some bagpipers have recently been emboldened to reconnect to an older, vernacular style directly tied to Gaelic language rhythms and song tradition.

Thus far, the Highland Dance community has not gone through a similar process of challenging old orthodoxies and re-establishing a style more closely tied to folk culture and communities. Some Highland dancers may want to know more but are not presented with opportunities to learn. Others may be content with the ways things are. Still others seem to revel in the romantic stereotypes of the nineteenth century and avoid a critical examination of history for fear that their authority of Highland Dancing and nostalgic investment would be invalidated.

With the general subordination of Gaelic to Anglophone culture, there has been a lack of institutions to develop Highland tradition on its own terms, and to educate people about it. In 1955, the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing acknowledged its inability to provide an account of the origins of Highland Dancing:

Reliable evidence concerning origins and early development is scarce and scattered; in the general neglect of Scottish culture which has prevailed, until recently, in all four Scottish universities, Highland Dancing has been largely ignored by learned men, and as yet little or no serious research has been done. There is an opportunity here for academic investigation which, it is to be hoped, they will not fail much longer to exploit.

Although quality research has begun, much remains to be done. Far too often, fanciful fictions have been recycled in popular

books and articles about Highland Dance, not to mention Highland Games booklets, causing much confusion and misrepresentation. Many of these myths surrounding the dance reflect stereotypes of Highlanders as fierce, semi-savage warriors — a stereotype encouraged by the British Empire war machine, which was keen to employ Scottish Gaels in this role, but one which distorts the Highlands' complex history.

Particular attention needs to be paid to the late nineteenth-century “improvers” and trend-setters of Highland Dance. I hope to shed some light on these issues, in this four-part series, and inspire other scholars to develop this research further. In the meantime, perhaps this critical examination in dance history can help explain the difference between folk dance rooted in a Gaelic community — such as step-dance — and the formal, institutional forms — such as Highland Dance — that have emerged secondarily.

Origins

Dance, broadly referring to bodily movement to music, is found in all human societies. Scottish Gaelic society had several forms of dance from early times including ring dances stepped to choral songs and ritual dances performed at special events. Unfortunately, these older forms of dance were eventually squeezed out of existence by new forms of dance which emerged from French court society.

Scotland was well connected with the French court not only because of the alliance with France (from the late 13th century to mid-16th century) but also because of later connections through the Catholic Church and the Jacobite movement.

Probably the first of these French dance styles that impacted Scotland was the hay d'Alemaigne, which seems to have come into England and Scotland c.1500; it eventually came to be known as the “reel” in Scotland (ruidhle in Gaelic). (The reel was the most popular form of social dance in many Scottish communities into the early 20th century).

By the early-18th century, dancing masters trained in France or with French-trained teachers. They also studied lessons in manners, etiquette, and the French language, aspiring to ascend the social ladder. The use of dance to display social status was an aspect of the “refinement of manners” which was affecting European society as a whole





during this era. Couples' dances were a means of demonstrating refinement and social rank, especially when it came to courtship. Along with the dances came dance music, played on portable fiddles which came into the Highlands in the late-17th century.

By the mid-18th century, dancing masters had established themselves in virtually all of the major towns of the British Isles and made at least passing visits to smaller villages, even in the Highlands. One of their new specialties were solo dances, which were then referred to as "High Dances," "Hornpipes" or "Pas Suel". Dance masters created their own choreographies, taught, and held regular "dance balls".

It is likely that some dance masters produced choreographies which hybridized the new French footwork, leg positions and figures with some elements of pre-existing Highland dances — *Dannsa a' Chlaidheimh* "The Sword Dance" being the strongest candidate for some degree of continuity. It must be appreciated that solo dancing was an international movement strongly tied to French fashions, even when the teachers were Scottish or teaching in the Highlands.

Some of the names of these dances suggest origins in the Highlands, but these are misleading. A "fling," for example, was understood to be a particular dance movement; but, the term "Highland Fling" does not appear until 1794, when it was used in a tune's title composed by a Lowland dance teacher residing in London. It does not appear as an entire choreography until 1840.

The claim has been made that the Highland Fling is a "wild dance of triumph following victory in battle...inspired by the capers of the stag, the dancer's upraised arms representing the animal's antlers," to quote one Highland Games booklet. This reflects the warrior stereotype previously mentioned, but has no basis in reality. There is no Gaelic name for the dance and it is likely to be the product of a non-Highland choreographer exercising poetic license in creating a pseudo-style rather than anything rooted in older tradition.

Dancers hold their arms up in many dance traditions in Europe, and in the folk style of dancing. Highlanders enjoyed snapping their fingers to the music and hooting to show their enthusiasm. The Lowland "improvers" of dance in the nineteenth century found this to be too crude for their tastes, so they insisted that dancers hold their fingers still and stop making noise. Any resemblance to stag antlers is coincidental.



By Dr. Michael Newton



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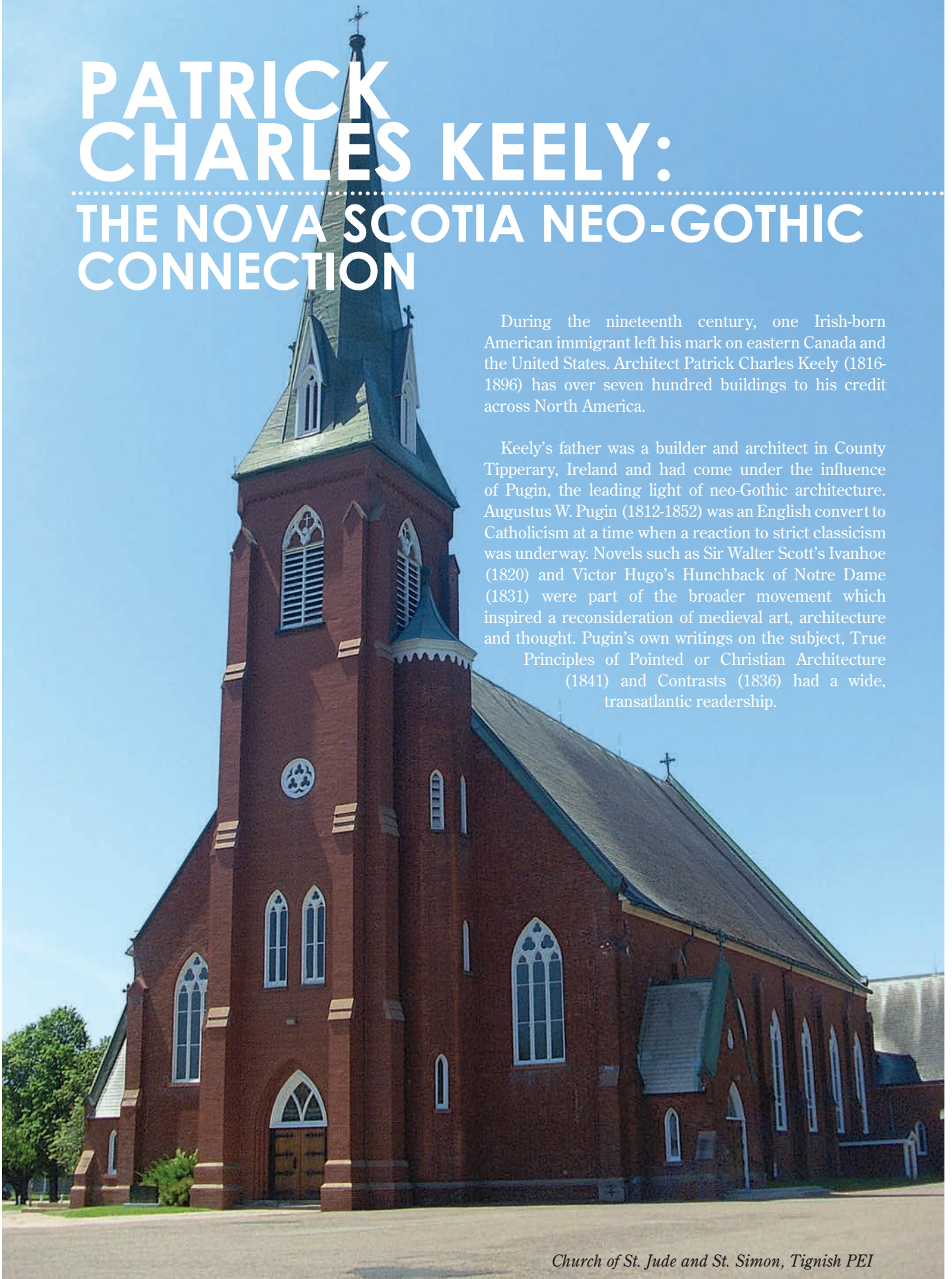
poet, piper, fiddler : the way we say it in Nova Scotia



PATRICK CHARLES KEELY: THE NOVA SCOTIA NEO-GOTHIC CONNECTION

During the nineteenth century, one Irish-born American immigrant left his mark on eastern Canada and the United States. Architect Patrick Charles Keely (1816-1896) has over seven hundred buildings to his credit across North America.

Keely's father was a builder and architect in County Tipperary, Ireland and had come under the influence of Pugin, the leading light of neo-Gothic architecture. Augustus W. Pugin (1812-1852) was an English convert to Catholicism at a time when a reaction to strict classicism was underway. Novels such as Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820) and Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831) were part of the broader movement which inspired a reconsideration of medieval art, architecture and thought. Pugin's own writings on the subject, *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841) and *Contrasts* (1836) had a wide, transatlantic readership.



Church of St. Jude and St. Simon, Tignish PEI

Keely appears to have never met his near contemporary before emigrating to the United States, but avidly read and discussed Pugin's advocacy of the Gothic style. His own Irish Catholic roots inspired Keely to look back to medieval church design. Exterior design evoked the great Gothic cathedrals of the British Isles with their upward thrust in construction: long lancet windows, stone arches and buttresses, rose windows, ornamental crockets, multiplication of threes in motifs for the Trinity and some earlier Norman elements with "dog-tooth" stone rows framing doors and interior arches.

Keely arrived in Brooklyn in 1842. His first significant contract was for the neo-Gothic church of Saints Peter and Paul. His subsequent work included designing both the exterior and interior of new churches and remodelling older buildings. Keely built up a business of apprentice architects, builders and decorative artists. From Arkansas and Connecticut to Vermont and Wisconsin, Keely's buildings have survived in at least 16 states; New York State boasts 13 of his structures and at least 37 of Keely's churches were constructed in Massachusetts (some have since been demolished). North of the border, Keely's name is associated with churches across both Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

Two churches are modeled on his designs in the Maritimes, in Tignish, P.E.I. and Halifax, while his interior work is found in a Saint John, New Brunswick church.

Peter MacIntyre invited Keely to design the Church of St. Simon and St. Jude in Tignish, marking his Canadian debut. MacIntyre was a friend of Archbishop Connolly of Halifax. That connection reinforced Connolly's interest in the man who was by 1860 being called the "Pugin of America."

Keely's Island church was realized in brick and sandstone with a central entrance tower and spire supported with buttresses and the typical neo-Gothic arched windows. The neo-Gothic vogue in churches was not unknown to Thomas Connolly. As new bishop in Saint John in 1852, he announced his intention to build a new cathedral. Connolly's Saint John successor, Bishop John Sweeney, had local craftsmen build the high altar, reredos and other ornamental features according to plans drawn up by Keely.

In Halifax, Bishop Connolly wanted Keely to plan an enlargement and redesign of St. Mary's Cathedral to firmly establish the Catholic Church's stature in the provincial capital.



St. Mary's Basilica, Halifax NS

It was in the aftermath of the American Revolution that Irish Catholic merchants and other leading laity obtained permission to construct St. Peter's chapel. Work on the stone church began in 1820; Bishop Edmund Burke is said to have drawn the plans himself. The new St. Peter's faced Spring Garden Road; its central square tower of iron and sandstone was pierced with Gothic arched windows and a crenellated top. It became known as St. Mary's in the 1830s. Buried in the graveyard between the two wings of the old and the new church were many of St. Peter's early Irish and Mi'kmaq worshipers. Their descendants and new immigrants assisted with St. Mary's upgrades in the 1860s.

Older lithographs clearly show St. Mary's two rows of side windows – the windows below have a simple square design, while those above are arched Gothic frames. Keely's redesign called for the removal of these openings, which were then replaced with tall lancet windows (later dignified with stained glass.)

Connolly had practicality in mind (St. Mary's congregation had outgrown its seating capacity), but he also wanted to match the aesthetics of the neighbourhood (St. Matthew's Presbyterian across the intersection had been built in French Gothic style) and to give glory to God. Both Architect and Bishop succeeded by all accounts in that the great granite facade of St. Mary's is still one of the iconic images of Halifax.



St. Mary's Basilica, Halifax NS

Keely's first plans called for twin towers reminiscent of his design for St. Patrick's Cathedral in Brooklyn. However, economic considerations altered that to one central spire.

His interior work included the removal of the three-sided upper galleries to permit the placement of new windows which flooded the church with cascades of light. He extended the row of central pillars and arches of the imitation-vaulted ceiling; later, the pillars would be given a faux marble effect. The ceiling of plaster and wood created excellent acoustics in a pre-electric age.

The revised facade would not be commenced until 1868. Keely's design was enhanced by the importation of polished red Aberdeen granite to flank the three main doors. This front is similar to that of the Cathedral of St. Colman (Cobh, Ireland) also begun in 1868.

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: These words are carved in stone above the three main doors; both Keely and Connolly were well aware of the significance of threes. The facade in this regard reflects the medieval/neo-Gothic tradition of church entrances. Each granite doorway has its pointed arch and columns. Above the main central door is a circular window framed in wood with plain-coloured glass calling to mind the Rose windows honouring the Mystical Rose (Mary).

The quatrefoil (four-petaled leaf) motifs are found throughout the Basilica. Immediately above each door is an arch in stone wherein a quatrefoil window is set in wooden frames. The outer portion of the stone arches are framed in a raised arch, the two lower ends of which end in a foliate ball referred to as a "hood-mould". These sections of the entrance are then topped with carvings of a quatrefoil variant. Above these, one sees the great windows and further up elements which recall stylized fleur-de-lis.

The whole culminates in a cross, which was installed on September 7th, 1874, rising to a height of 189 feet above ground level. At the time, it was considered the tallest free-standing spire in North America. The impact of the height is overshadowed today by modern buildings nearby. An idea of the steeple's impact can be partly recaptured by walking down Argyle Street to meet Sackville; from that location the Basilica can be seen rising against a clear sky.

Keely's and Connolly's collaboration of nearly a century and a half ago remains realized in granite, religious pride and the visionary eye of the architect from County Tipperary.



By Allen B. Robertson, Ph. D.



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St. Peter's - Cape Breton Island

"These pieces find their source of inspiration in the Scottish countryside; tweeds, fringe, pleats and a full-length tartan gown – they are homage to my heritage..."

Style

VERONICA MACISAAC SPRING 2012 COLLECTION

Photo credit Brent McCombs



"That heritage is in my blood – my parents are kilt-makers, my brother is a professional bagpiper and I was a highland dancer as a child..."

Photo credit Brent McCombs

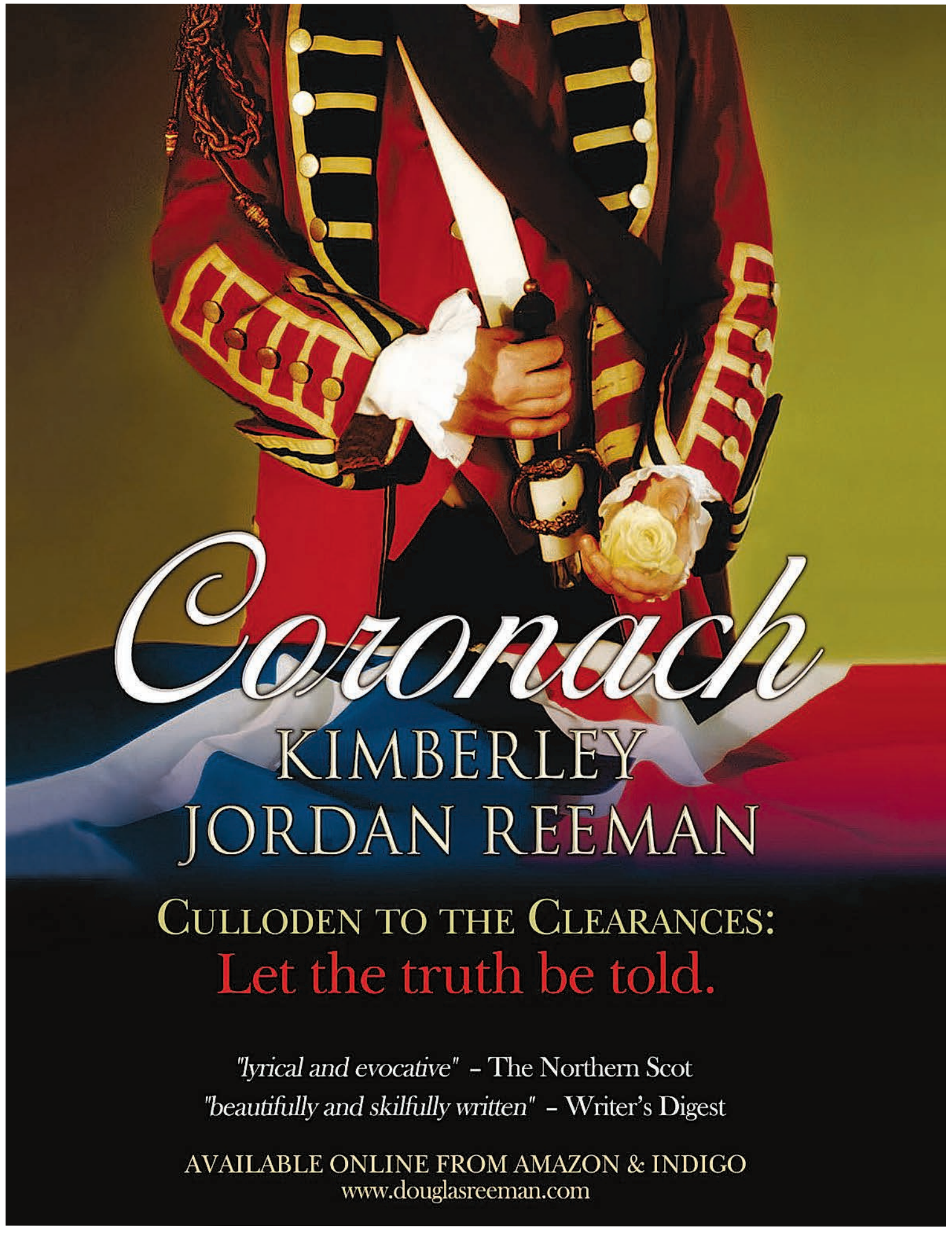




Photo credit Brent McCombs



"My family roots are in Cape Breton, and Celtic culture has had a huge impact on who I am and what I do..."

A person in a red and gold military uniform, likely a British Grenadier Guard, is shown from the chest down. 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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Culloden Remembered



Each April 21, members of Nova Scotia's Scottish community gather on wind-swept cliffs in the hamlet of Knoydart to commemorate the last battle on British soil and the end of a way of life for the peoples of Scotland – the Battle of Culloden.

As a community, the Scots of Nova Scotia assemble in fellowship and reflect on this Historic event from which they are separated by centuries and an ocean.

The residents of northern Pictou County have hosted the act of Remembrance since the early 1980s, and people now travel from across Atlantic Canada and elsewhere to pay their respects to those who fell at Culloden in 1746. This year's happening is expected to draw upwards of 300 people.

The ceremony itself has humble beginnings. The cairn commemorates the lives of three survivors of the Battle of Culloden; John MacPherson, Angus MacDonald, and Hugh MacDonald, each of whom had seen action in the Clan Ranald Regiment in 1746. Decades later, the men immigrated to northern Nova Scotia, rejoining families that had left Scotland in the aftermath of the collapse of the Jacobite cause. The remains of MacPherson, MacDonald and MacDonald lie nearby the historic monument.

Almost two centuries later, the late Dr. Ronald St. John MacDonald rallied the community to erect a commemorative cairn, modeled after the "Memorial Cairn" that stands on the Culloden Battlefield in Inverness-shire. Then, as today, the site offers a panoramic view of the Northumberland Strait.

After years of neglect, Joe Johnny Joe MacDonald of McArras Brook, Nova Scotia, led the refurbishment of the cairn and the revival of the Battle of Culloden ceremony in 1982.

Each year, participants gather at the roadside of Route 248 in Pictou County, adjacent to the cairn-site. At 11 a.m. they are piped to the cairn, preceded by the Colour Party of the Royal Canadian Legion. Sentinels are posted at the four cardinals of the cairn. Attendees are free to lay a wreath in remembrance to the fallen at Culloden and to honour the resilience of the Scottish people in the difficult years that followed. Representatives of many local and regional community and cultural organizations lay wreaths on behalf of their members. A significant moment is the spraying of the cairn with uisge beatha (water of life) in memory of those who fell on both sides 266 years ago.

Following the procession and ceremony at the cairn, the public are invited to a reception and dinner at St. Mary's Parish Hall in the adjoining village of Lismore, where a roast beef dinner with trimmings and desserts are served. In Nova Scotia, where Scots represent the largest cultural group (30.9 percent), the Culloden Ceremony attracts the attention of the global Scottish community. Nova Scotians are fiercely proud of their Scottish heritage and they readily honour the successive generations of immigrants from Scotland that made the voyage to the New World in search of a better life.

 By Tom Wallace

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ON THE WOLF'S TRAIL

Travel



Pluscarden Abbey

Scotland's Stewart Dynasty perhaps had more rotten apples than most family trees. Alexander Stewart, known as The Wolf of Badenoch, was the rottenest of them all – or at least that is how his enemies wanted him to be remembered.

Alasdair Mór mac an Rìgh (Great Alexander, son of the King) was born in 1343. He was the third surviving son of King Robert II; his grandfather was Robert Bruce, King of the Scots. Due to his commanding presence, The Wolf of Badenoch was, for a time, king in all but name of northern Scotland. He was sometimes cruel, but a strong hand was needed to keep the feuding clans in check.

Alexander received his first title, the Lord of Badenoch, in March 1371. A year later, he became Royal Lieutenant of the North. Hungry for more, he married the widowed Euphemia I, Countess of Ross, and effectively doubled his lands. He was also named Earl of Buchan and Justiciar North of the Forth.

The Wolf had no children with Euphemia and he discarded her for Mariota de Athyn, who became his steady partner. She gave

him a brood of five sons and a daughter. Alexander named all his sons rulers of Badenoch.

A power struggle within the royal family soon developed. Alexander's brother, Robert, the Earl of Fife, was not the heir, but effectively led his older brother, John of Carrick, by the nose. In 1388, Robert became effective ruler of Scotland with the exception of The Wolf's northern domain. In a war of wills, Robert attacked Alexander through devious means; Alexander tried to defend through sheer brute force. Robert of Fife removed Alexander's lieutenancy over the north and transferred it to his own son Murdoch who understandably never set foot in The Wolf's territory.

After Euphemia appealed to the Church, The Wolf was ordered to return to his wife by Bishops Bur of Moray and Alexander of Ross (1389). Alexander disregarded their orders and was excommunicated. Condemned to hell, his possessions became targets for plunder.

The Wolf resolved to teach Bishop Bur and his enemies a lesson. In May 1390, he amassed a force of Highland caterans. They left a trail of destruction, including the torching of the Royal Burgh of Forres and Elgin Cathedral.

When Alexander Stewart was called to appear at the Church of Friars Preachers, he was granted absolution by Bishop Walter Trail. How Bishop Bur must have seethed in anger!

In 1392, the papal court declared Euphemia's marriage to Alexander null and void. As a result, The Wolf lost all the lands he had acquired through marriage. His sons reacted violently. Eventually, three of them were captured and imprisoned in Stirling Castle.

According to legend, The Wolf died (circa 1405) after a game of chess with the Devil. Ironically, he is buried in Dunkeld Cathedral. Visit Striking Landmarks along The Wolf's Trail

Lochindorb Castle

Lochindorb Castle was built on an islet in a small loch within the bleak Dava Moor. The Wolf chose his favourite lair well, for from Lochindorb he could control all important routes to the north. It was said that Alexander Stewart fought like a wolf but entertained like a king. The lands around Lochindorb were ideal for guests to hunt, hawk and fish. It is from this base that Alexander Stewart set out on his notorious expedition of 1390.

Lochindorb is located about 7 miles northwest of Granton-on-Spey and can only be visited by private transport. Today, the castle lies in ruins, although its thick walls and tower bases are still standing.

Loch an Eilein

This smaller fortress was also built on an island in

the middle of a loch, set amidst the Rothiemurchus forests. The castle walls lined the perimeter of the small island and consisted of two square towers joined by curtain walls. The surrounding communities of Rothiemurchus included foresters, charcoal burners, herdsman and hunters, and must have provided significant revenue to The Wolf's coffers.

Loch an Eilein's site was voted Britain's Best Picnic Spot in May 2010. Walk the nature trail around the loch to enjoy unique wildlife and perhaps catch a glimpse of ospreys feeding.

Ruthven Castle

This third stronghold of Alexander Stewart guarded routes that probed right across the highlands to Lochaber and the upper Spey Valley. Today, no trace of the castle remains, except the 46-metre-high mound, since Britain had it removed to construct military barracks following the Jacobite rising (1715).

Ruthven Castle is associated with the legend of The Wolf's death where a tall visitor dressed in black, allegedly the devil, appeared to challenge The Wolf to a game of chess. When the mysterious man won, a fierce thunderstorm erupted. By daybreak, the storm abated, but outside the charred forms of The Wolf's men lay on the ground. Alexander Stewart was found dead in the Great Hall.

Forres

This small town sits close to the Moray coast and was the first major settlement to be burnt by The Wolf during his 1390 expedition. A royal castle guarded the town; today, only its mound known as Castlehill



Loch an Eilein

remains. Modern visitors to Forres find a quaint town decorated by colourful floral displays. The Forres Foothpaths Trust has established a network of walks enabling visitors to discover the town's history and the beauty of the surrounding countryside.

Elgin Cathedral

Inspired by the still imposing ruins of Elgin Cathedral, visitors can easily fantasize on what a magnificent church it must have been. After Alexander Stewart's attack, the Cathedral was rebuilt and survived another torching in 1402. During the Reformation, it was stripped of its lead roofing. Gradually, decay would set in and eventually complete what The Wolf had set out to do. Thankfully today, Historic Scotland cares for the ruins and the decay has been stopped. Visitors can thus enjoy this great medieval monument.

Pluscarden Abbey

This Benedictine community nestles in the scenic Vale of St Andrew. While under the Bishop of Moray's protection, the abbey (then referred to as the Priory of Pluscarden) must have presented a lucrative target for The Wolf's 'wild, wikkid hielandmen.' There is no absolute evidence that this priory was actually attacked. However, some claim the structure has marks of an early fire; others argue that the marks are mould. Reoccupied in 1948 by the Benedictine monks, Pluscarden breathes life once more.

Spynie Palace

The ruins of the Bishop of Moray's palace at Spynie are located amidst lush woodlands by the shores of Spynie Loch. During the middle ages, the loch was connected to the sea, providing access to shipping, and helping the area thrive. This was where Bishop Bur must have fled when The Wolf's expedition drew near. Alexander Stewart did not assault Spynie, for his army was anything but suited to the task.

Dunkeld Cathedral

Ironically, after burning several cathedrals, Alexander Stewart was buried in Dunkeld Cathedral – he was royalty, after all. His tomb, topped by his effigy, is one of the few surviving Scottish royal monuments from the middle ages. Visitors to Dunkeld will find the association of this pleasant little town with the notorious Wolf of Badenoch an unlikely one.



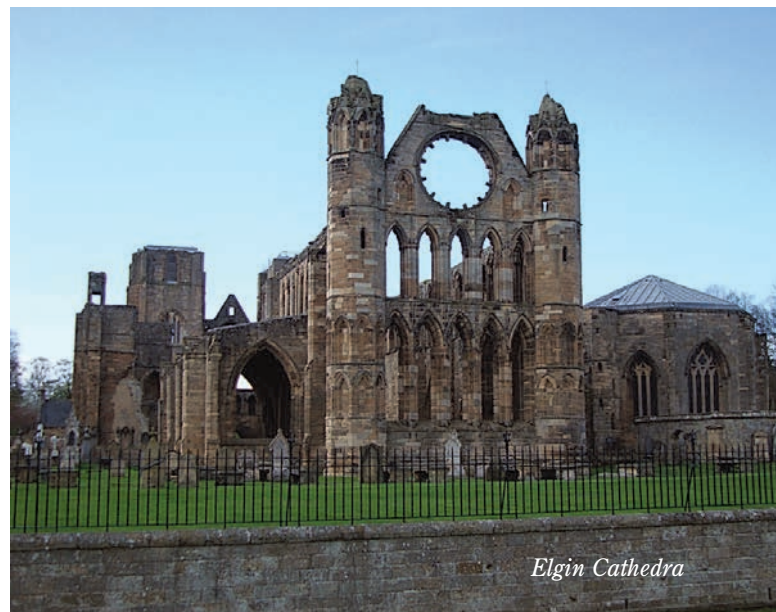
By Richard Zahra



Dunkeld Cathedral



Spynie Palace



Elgin Cathedral

THE LADY OF

To follow the A9 north from the Fair City of Perth is to experience the spirit of Scotland. Here, the silvery waters of the Tay meander through historic woodlands, including the famous Birnam Wood, literally brought to life in Shakespeare's Macbeth. The small settlement of Birnam became what it is today through the introduction of the railway in 1856. Its small station opened up the beauty and wildlife of Scotland's Highlands for visitors to explore. Among them, was a young Beatrix Potter, who was so enthralled by the animals around her, she penned a famous letter that became The Tale of Peter Rabbit.

Leaving Birnam, we cross Thomas Telford's bridge over the Tay and enter Dunkeld. St Columba's sacred relics were moved here from Iona in 849 and it became the religious capital of Scotland, resulting in the construction of a cathedral. Sadly, much of the cathedral now lies in ruins, having been sacked during the Reformation. The Jacobites also brought destruction to Dunkeld after the famous Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689. Most of what exists today was built after that time.

Dunkeld's location by the river gave rise to numerous linen mills in the 19th century and was home to many weavers and fishermen. Today, its whitewashed buildings and town cross give it an intimate charm popular with visitors. For many though, the town is only a small part of what the wider area offers. Indeed, for one very special lady, the Lady of the Loch, who has her summer residence in the hills overlooking Dunkeld, it is not the town but the location that draws her back every year.

Lady takes up residence at Loch of the Lowes annually from March to September. She is a celebrity, having been featured on television and in newspapers all over the world, and in the book Lady of the Loch. Eighteen months ago, against all odds, she survived a mysterious illness. Lady has given birth to some 45 offspring and has made an annual journey from Africa to Perthshire for two decades. She is believed to be one of the world's oldest ospreys.

Loch of the Lowes is a Scottish Wildlife Trust nature reserve. There, I met up with Emma Rawling, a Perthshire Ranger passionate about ospreys. I asked Emma to tell me about Scotland's ospreys and the Loch of the Lowes' most famous bird.



THE LOCH

She explained that, pushed to extinction in Victorian times, the last pair of ospreys recorded in Scotland was in 1920. Sadly, collectors stole their eggs and they were shot for sport, stuffed and displayed as trophies. Then, in 1954, a pair of birds arrived by chance in Scotland. These birds prompted the Royal Society for Protection of Birds to implement an osprey reintroduction programme. For the next 20 years, about 80% of all eggs laid were stolen. As recently as 1988, no fewer than 11 of 49 nests were robbed.

I asked Emma what was so important about the return of the ospreys. She explained that, apart from the desire to reintroduce the species to Scotland, there were other advantages. “The return of the osprey is what got many people started on serious wildlife watching in the Highlands,” she told me, adding “Ospreys are ambassadors for successful tourism. They symbolise all that is good about the quality of the Scottish natural environment: clean air, sparkling water and fishing.”

So why is the Lady of the Loch so special? She has returned to the same nest, since the age of four, for 21 years. She has laid approximately 50 eggs and produced some 45 live chicks. In 2010,

she became seriously ill whilst raising her two, four-week old chicks. Watched around the world via webcams, she remained in very poor health for 48 hours. Surprisingly, her partner took over feeding the chicks. Advice was sought from avian specialists and it was thought she would not survive.

“Against all the odds she got out of the nest on the third day and flew down to the loch,” shared Emma, who sat vigil in a nearby hide. “She drank some water and washed herself. She was very weak but managed to fly back to the nest and took charge again of feeding her chicks”.

As Lady headed off on her next 3,000-mile journey to Africa, many doubted she would return. But in March last year she did, laying a further three eggs that sadly produced no young. Then, she headed off earlier than usual for Africa.

As you read this, many will be anxiously scanning the skies to see if Lady of the Loch has once more returned to her Highland Home.



By Tom Langlands



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Saturday Aug. 25th Workshops and Gaelic Story-telling, evening Square Dance

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HANDFASTING

The ritual of joining two souls is older than history. Each of us who falls in love and determines to spend our lives with one special person gives a lot of thought to the ceremonial start of the union. Even if two people have shared their lives for some years, the time when they commit their love into the future is momentous.

Of course, a wedding is the most familiar ritual that consecrates a union. However, our Celtic ancestors joined two lovers together in a ceremony called a handfasting, and this tradition is experiencing a revival.

In our ancestors' time, couples committed to each other and produced families without the benefit of clergy. In that long-ago era, our forefathers and foremothers made their own unions and grew old in them. Today, couples who want to draw from that ancient wisdom are choosing alternatives to traditional church weddings. Handfasting is a satisfying path for many.

Generally, handfasting differs from traditional weddings in a few

accepted ways. In handfasting, the couple make promises to each other, without a decree bestowed upon them by a representative of the church or government. There is a great deal of freedom in a handfasting ceremony: it may be held inside or out, with magical clothing and symbols or no clothing at all. The couple may commit for a year or forever, they may have an official or not, they may be same-sex partners or a man joining a woman.

A sweet and universal element of a handfasting involves binding the couple's hands together during the ceremony with symbolic ribbons, ropes or string. Usually, the couple face each other and join their right and left hands, forming an infinity shape with their bodies, arms, and hands. The official, when there is one, calls in the blessings from each direction and lays a cord across the couple's joined hands as each blessing is spoken.

The actual promises are usually written by the couple, reflecting what is important to them. These personal vows often begin with a statement of intent from each partner, declaring their love and their reasons for wanting to be joined. Many choose to be



handfasted for a year or for a longer specified time. This “trial” period is seen as a respectful and sensible way to begin a life of conscious caring.

The statement of intent is then followed by the vows, also composed by the couple. Often these promises are down-to-earth and realistic, showing a deep understanding of what it means to create a life with another person. The official lays a cord over the clasped hands of the couple as the vows are made, one cord for each group of promises.

The vows are repeated during the ceremony, according to the wishes of the two uniting. If an official is not present, the cords may be draped by friends or family members. When the vows are complete, a prayer may be spoken, the cords loosely knotted, and the statement of the union declared, as in this example:

This binding is symbolized by these cords and knot, however your joining is fastened by your promises. May you each be strong and honourable and keep your promises for as long as you have declared.

This is a wonderful time for additional blessings to be spoken to the couple by friends and family.

The knotted cords are often used as a home decoration to remind the couple of their declared love.

Many couples today want the best of both the handfasting ritual and the legality of a marriage. This is absolutely possible. In truth, there is very little that is required for a union to be legal in Canada. Upon the receipt of a completed marriage license, a county will record the names of the couple, the place, date, official, and witnesses, and the couple is then legally married.

Any kind of wedding or handfasting ceremony – what is said, what spiritual beliefs are expressed, what promises are made, and what sort of ritual is included – is entirely up to the couple. They may incorporate their desires into the special way they begin their committed life together with the bright blessings of their loved ones.



by Karyl Huntley

It's springtime and love is in the air. If you're planning on tying the knot this season, here are a few ideas on putting together a contemporary Celtic wedding.

TOP TEN CELTIC WEDDING TIPS

1. **Engagement Party.** Usually it is the father of the bride who hosts the engagement party, at which he pledges his daughter's hand and asks the groom to take good care of her.
2. **Showing of the Presents.** The mother of the bride hosts an afternoon tea to which guests are expected to bring presents to help the young couple set up home.
3. **Rings.** Traditionally, only the bride receives a ring, although this is changing. In Ireland, the Claddagh ring is still popular, while in Scotland, rings can incorporate the groom's clan crest. Recently knot-work rings, symbolizing eternity, have become quite popular also.
4. **Bride's Wedding Outfit.** The bride wears a circlet of flowers or jewels rather than a veil. Handcraft jewellers often design a diadem to the bride's specifications. The dress is usually flowing rather than tight-fitting, and white is still popular, although some brides are choosing to have a dress designed in their clan's tartan. The fabric should be rich, like satin, and beadwork is very trendy.
5. **Flowers.** Many Celtic brides prefer bouquets of wildflowers, and both white heather and English lavender are favoured. Often, the entire bridal party will either wear or carry white heather for good luck.
6. **Invitations and Place-Settings.** Ideas include embossing wedding invitations and place-setting cards with Celtic knot-work or, for a Scottish wedding, with both the bride and groom's clan crests. A sprig of white heather may also be attached to the place-cards.
7. **Wedding Cake.** The Irish favour whisky cakes while the Scots lean towards Fruit-cake iced with marzipan.
8. **Music.** A bagpiper is a great way to herald the arrival of guests arrive and/or the bride and groom into the church, wedding reception or dinner. Arrange to have Gaelic hymns played – perhaps by a Celtic Harpist to play – during the ceremony and/or reception. A Celtic band, musician or D.J. at the wedding dance will guarantee to get people going with reels, jigs and step-dances.
9. **Church Service.** Traditionally the bride and groom go down the aisle together while guests throw grains of rice. Vows are often in Gaelic, or English translations of traditional Gaelic vows.
10. **Wedding Dinner.** Serve a little honey mead along with a selection of wines, and make sure your male guests are supplied with a shot of good single malt whisky. Male guests may also be given cigars wrapped inside knot-work packaging or the groom's tartan. Female guests may be presented with chocolates soaked in whisky.





THE LAST KING OF IRELAND

Never mind all the fuss about Willie and Kate.

The truth is that most of us are descended from poor Celtic peasant stock, and, in the presence of titled folk, we tend to genuflect in obeisance – it's habitual, a kind of genetic response to a benediction from well-heeled royals.

There are, in fact, more bluebloods around than we can shake a sceptre at. But why we're so captivated by the foreign variety, especially since we have royals of our own, isn't just puzzling, it's downright maddening.

Patsy Dan Rodgers is, after all, an Irish king. Not king of Ireland, mind you, but King of Tory Island, a domain lying nine miles off the Donegal coast in the broad, windswept Atlantic. An affable Renaissance man, whose kingdom and claim to nobility would dwarf those of most European Royals, Patsy Dan is "the real thing."

He's quick to explain that Tory kingship isn't hereditary, that it's kingship by consensus, a likely holdover from the age of Gaelic chieftains and brehons.

The King is the Island spokesman and negotiator and has, as well, certain regal ceremonial duties.

He meets and greets all visitors to Tory on their arrival: "A

pleasure to welcome people from the country," meaning Ireland itself, offering guests a genuine "God be with you" – a very civilized Irish and kingly thing to do.

Protocol-conscious visitors, making their way up Tory pier nervously ask if they should address the king as "Highness" or "Excellency" or "Majesty" and/or bow or kiss his ring?

But Patsy Dan will have none of that. He laughs heartily and says, "No ring kissing here. The crown jewels and rings have been put away for the duration."

The King's summers are crowded with visitors; academics, birdwatchers, folklorists, musicians, students and tourists. The remainder of his Tory year is relatively quiet, however, allowing time to sketch and paint the landscapes and seascapes that have earned him a reputation as one of Ireland's most sought-after artists. His works are exhibited in mainland galleries and well beyond.

At a recent academic conferral – he received an honorary degree from the University of Ulster – Patsy Dan acknowledged the institution, then reached for his accordion and struck up a rousing medley of Tory favourites. His brilliance and spontaneity brought down the house.

Clever and resourceful, he recognizes that songs, singers, and dance are all great Tory traditions. "We are the embryonic source of Irish and Scottish cultures – the remnants of true Celts."

In addition to promoting music and the arts, he is himself a historian, folklorist, fisherman, guide and storyteller with a wealth of mythological tales inherited from Tory seanachies.

And though he might have expected one of those engraved invitations to Willie and Kate's wedding bash last year, he wasn't disappointed when it didn't arrive. "An oversight surely," he mused.

Royalty may be distant or forgetful, but Patsy Dan Rogers is neither. "I'll send them a nice gift," he said, adding "after all, Tory will be here long after the Empire."



By Donal O'Cathasaigh

AND WE'LL TOAST
WITH GLEN BRETON
WITH MORE THAN A DRAM

FOR THE DREAM
OF GLENORA HAS
CAPTURED OUR LAND



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WORLD CLASS WHISKY

It has been nearly two centuries since Scottish immigrants settled Glenville, Nova Scotia. Today, the quiet community – which nestles gently amidst the plush Mabou Highlands of Cape Breton – is raising a racket around the world as the home to Glenora Inn and Distillery and its multi-award winning uisge-beatha.

It all began in the late 1980s with the vision of local Cape Breton businessman Bruce Jardine. “Bruce’s dream was to build this distillery and to produce a world-class whisky,” shares Robert Scott, executive vice-president of Glenora.

Aiming for authenticity, Jardine visited Scotland to study the rich tradition of making smooth single-malt.

Glenora’s first batch of Glen Breton Rare was produced in 1990. “We still have some of that initial stock,” notes Scott, “and it remains the very first single-malt whisky produced in North America.”

As a single-malt, Glen Breton Rare consists of barley, yeast and water, produced in authentic Scottish copper pot stills. “The water comes from MacLellan’s Brook, which flows through Glenora’s property and is fed by over 22 natural springs from the highlands above the distillery.”

The result, he says, is “a unique burst of flavour on the finish, with a taste of apple, butterscotch, honey and maple – all signs of a distinct world class whisky.”

Critics appear to agree with the assessment.

In 2006, Wine Enthusiast Magazine named Glen Breton Rare one of the Top 50 Spirits in the world. And, in 2011, both Glen Breton Rare and the more-recent Battle of the Glen were awarded gold medals at the prestigious International Review of Spirits in Chicago.

The accolades haven’t stopped; in 2011, Glenora was also honoured as Distillery of the Year by the Canadian Whisky Awards Group.

“Actually, we have become more than a distillery,” explains Scott. “We have evolved into a rich Cape Breton experience.”

True enough, Glenora now boasts an inn, six private chalets and one of the finest dining rooms from coast-to-coast, listed among the top 100 in the country according to Where to Eat in Canada.

As well, more than 10,000 visitors participate in on-site tours each season, with The Glenora Pub hosting ceilidhs twice a day and offering single-malt enthusiasts the opportunity to sample private stock.

Guests are also invited to enjoy nearby Cabot Links – one of North America’s only true-links golf courses that boasts an ocean view from every hole. “They certainly make for the very best of neighbours,” smiles Scott. “In fact, we’ve even created a Cabot Links Reserve private label bottle to honour our relationship.”

Glenora supports the region’s thriving Scottish-Gaelic culture as well, with a myriad of both on and off-site activities.

At the centre of it all, however, was the dream of a world-class single-malt whisky.

“Bruce passed away just before his vision came to full fruition,” shares Scott fondly, “but he’s likely smiling down on all of this now, a wee dram in hand.”



Molly Malones

Hidden in the heart of Hiroshima, Japan, is a wee wonderful slice of Celtic life. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, Molly Malone's Irish Pub is a home away from home for both Celts in exile and wannabe Celts. Recently Celtic Life shared a pint with the bar's general manager Mark Gardiner.

What are your own roots?

I'm originally from a small town called Fermoy in County Cork, Ireland, about a 25-minute drive north of Cork city. I lived there until I was 18 and then headed to Galway to do a four-year course in Hotel and Catering Management.

What is the history of the establishment?

Molly Malone's opened in December 2002. The owner used to have a Karaoke business but decided to close that down and do something that Hiroshima was lacking. An Irish pub never entered his head. His daughter, however, had lived in New York for five years and had experienced pub life so she thought it was the perfect idea.

Who are your clients?

These days it's around 60% Japanese and 40% foreigner. We get a lot of tourists coming through, as well the English teachers that reside here and soldiers from the US marine base which is only a 45-minute train ride away. The Japanese clientele is quite broad, with an age range of 20-80, although the majority would be between 30-50.

Is there a large Celtic community there?

There is only a sprinkling living here; a few Irish, a few Scottish, some Welsh and even one Galician.

What kinds of events take place there to promote Celtic culture?

There is a small group of musicians that practice Celtic music and sometimes play in the pub, including a fiddle player, a flautist, tin whistle, bag piper, guitar and banjo. We always bring musicians for Christmas, St Patrick's Day, and the pub's anniversary, and during the year a few groups will be touring all the pubs in Japan so we'll get them along too. Locally I have done presentations to senior citizens about Ireland and its culture. There is also a Lafcadio Hearn society here – he was a man of Irish and Greek descent that lived in Japan over 100 years ago and became famous for writing and translating children's stories.

What do you have planned for St. Patrick's Day?

This year St. Patrick's Day will be celebrated on March 16th & 17th. The pub becomes green, as do all the staff and customers and we will be bringing 3 musicians down from Kyoto to play on both nights.



Irish Stew; Still a Favourite



Irish stew – the Emerald Isle's celebrated dish of mutton and potatoes – is a tasty, filling feast on any occasion, but it is especially enjoyable on a cold, blustery day. And ballymaloe or stobhach gaelach – as it is known in Gaelic – is also very affordable, made with the cheapest and most readily available ingredients.

Historically, the Irish raised sheep and root crops as a means of survival. The sheep provided wool for warm clothing, as well as milk, cheese, and meat for subsistence. And potatoes were a sure staple on every dinner table prior to the great famine of the mid-1800s.

Back then, the meal was made from whatever the natives could muster-up, usually lamb or mutton, onions, parsley and potatoes. Often, lamb or mutton neck bones, shanks, and other trimmings were the only basis for the stock. Root vegetables enhanced the essence, and turnips, parsnips, carrots, and barley were added when available. The ingredients were simmered for upwards of two hours to ensure both the tenderness of the meat and the fullness of flavor.

When the Irish began arriving in the United States, they brought these rich recipes with them. Over time, the stew evolved and adapted to include local offerings. As sheep were not as plentiful in the new world, other types of meat were substituted. Many North American versions even included Guinness stout in the mix.

Today, some swear by the newer version, while others have exalted the original dish to near gourmet status. Whether you like the basic version or a fancier one, try this recipe for a wholesome, hearty meal.

I have chosen pearl barley as a natural thickener for the stew.

1 tbs. olive oil
2 lbs. boneless lamb shoulder cubed into two-inch chunks.

1 tsp. salt
Fresh ground pepper to taste.
1 sprig of dried thyme
1 large onion diced.
4 carrots peeled and chunked
2 parsnips peeled and chunked
2 tbs. pearl barley
4 cups chicken stock
6 large potatoes peeled and chunked
1 tbs. fresh rosemary
1 cup of chives
Chopped fresh parsley

Heat oil over medium heat in a large Dutch oven. Add lamb pieces and cook, stirring, until lamb has browned. Season with salt, pepper, and dried thyme.

Add the onions, carrots, and parsnips and cook for a few minutes. Add the chicken stock and pearl barley and bring to a boil before turning down to simmer. Simmer for 1 hour or longer depending on how tender you enjoy your lamb.

Stir in potatoes and simmer for 15 minutes before adding the chives and rosemary.

Continue cooking until potatoes are soft.

Garnish with parsley.



GOOD FOOD, GOOD TIMES, GOOD CRAIC.



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An Authentic Irish Pub

Halifax, Nova Scotia
902.406.7640
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CRAIC AGUS CEOL

*Durty Nelly's Authentic Irish Pub
Halifax, Nova Scotia*

The original Durty Nelly's is one of Ireland's most famous culinary landmarks, known for its food and hospitality the world-over.

That Craic Agus Ceol is also alive and well across the waters, and a home away from home can be had at Durty Nelly's Authentic Irish Pub in the heart of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Whetting our whistle with the best pint of Guinness in Atlantic Canada, our soiree started in style with a creamy carrot-based Seasonal Soup (\$6.49), crispy Calamari (\$9.99) and the brilliant Bruschetta Flatbread (\$6.49), awash in diced tomatoes, onion, garlic, and olive oil, feta cheese and drizzled with aged balsamic.

Soon after, we shared The Ploughman's Lunch (\$12.49), a savoury sampling of garden green salad, honey baked ham and Irish cheeses, served with a fire grilled pita, gherkin pickles, olives and tomato chutney.

A Dubliner, and perhaps hankering for home-style cooking, my lovely lass lapped-up the Boiled Ham and Potato Dinner (\$10.99). With carrots and cabbage gently garnished in fresh herbs and spices, the platter was properly proportioned and lived up to its advance billing as being "Just like Ma use ta make it!"

I selected the tender Guinness Braised Lamb Shank (\$17.99), softly simmered in stout and served with Irish colcannon and market fresh vegetables. Wholesome and warming, the dish was wonderful and welcome on a cold winter's night.

A number of other options tempted our taste-buds, including the Jameson Lacquered Baby Back Ribs (\$16.49), the Nova Scotia Lamb Stew (\$14.99), the Chicken Pot Pie (\$11.49) and Durty Nelly's famous Fish 'n' Chips (\$12.99). Alas, each will have to wait until next time.

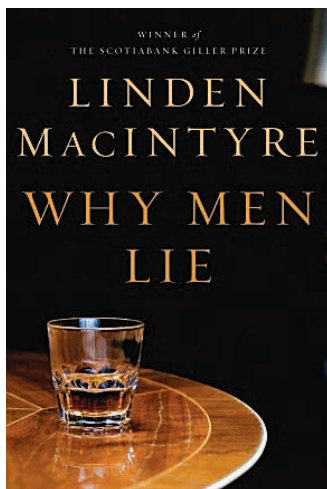
Citing Oscar Wilde that "I can resist anything but temptation," we opted to overcome our moderation with the Bailey's Irish Cream Cheesecake (\$5.49) – piled high on a graham cracker crust and frothed with fresh whipped cream – and the more traditional Toffee Bread Pudding (\$5.49), smothered in hot caramel sauce. Sweet and scrumptious, each was surprisingly light and left lingering pleasantries upon the palate.

Quick kudos should go to our server Jason for his attention, which was both personable and professional. And owner Joe McGuinness regaled us with tales of his early years growing up in Dublin – certainly it is easy to see where Maritimers inherit their world-renowned hospitality.

Likewise, the amicable atmosphere and attention to detail in décor – including stacked bookshelves and antique advertisements from the Emerald Isle – also helped to enhance the authenticity of our experience.

www.durtynellys.ca

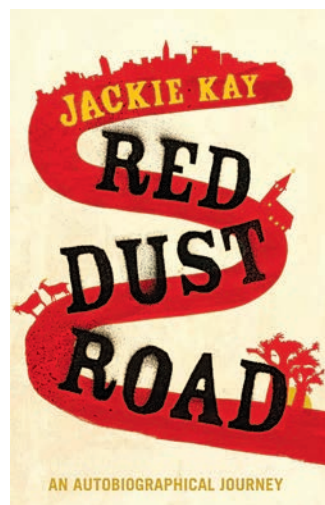




Why Men Lie

By Linden MacIntyre
Random House
/ 384pp / \$32

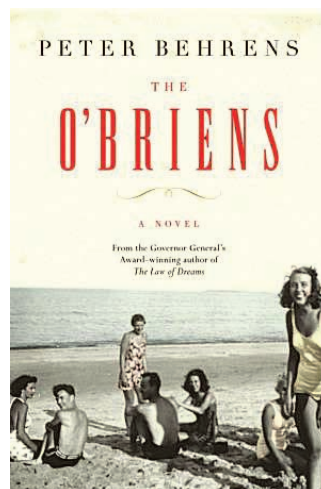
All eyes were on MacIntyre after his timely narrative *The Bishop's Man* plucked the 2009 Giller Prize. The Cape Breton-born journalist produces again with *Why Men Lie*, the emotionally complex and compelling tale of one woman's journey to and from love. Middle-aged, independent and self-assured, Ellie MacKaskill Gillis is unexpectedly swept off her feet. But all is not as it appears, and, caught off guard by hope, Ellie rediscovers what she knew all along; that men lie because they must, and that women believe them for the same reasons. By turns tender and tough, MacIntyre's latest is an early front-runner for another Giller.



Red Dust Road

By Jackie Kay
Picador / 304pp / \$24.95

Winner of the 2011 Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust Book of the Year, Glasgow-based scribe Jackie Kay touches hearts around the world with this soulful and stirring autobiographical search for her biological parents. *Red Dust Road* begins in Nigeria and a difficult reunion with her birth-father – a born-again faith-healer – before moving to Scotland and an equally awkward encounter with her birth-mother. Along the way, readers are treated to laughter and tears, and the revelation that we only become disillusioned with our families when we have illusions to begin with. A moving tale, and one that is well-worthy of all the accolades.



The O'Briens

By Peter Behrens
House of Anansi Press /
432pp / \$32.95

Following the great critical and popular success of his debut novel *The Law of Dreams* (2006), Montreal-born author Peter Behrens again delivers with his sophomore effort *The O'Briens*. Set in Quebec at the turn of the 20th century, the sequel follows Irish immigrant Joe O'Brien on his quest to leave his past behind and build a new life for his family. The setting sets a sure stage for strong character development over a solid narrative arc, as Behrens masterfully weaves this coming-of-age tale of tragedy and romance in threads of tone, mood and texture. Beautifully written, and an absolute must-read.

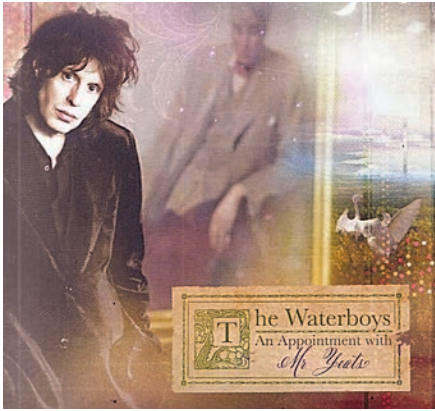


Wild Geese

By Caroline Pignat
Red Deer Press / 335pp /
\$12.95

Dublin-born author Caroline Pignat returns with the sequel to her Governor General's Award winning YA novel *Greener Grass*. Escaping the Irish famine, youngsters Kit Byrne and Michael O'Toole are quarantined at Grosse Ile, Quebec. Desperate to reunite with her family, Byrne endures the trials and tribulations of surviving in the new land with only one companion to support her. Entertaining, enlightening and well-paced, the story skillfully details the plight of millions who crossed the waters in the mid-1800s in search of a better life. *Wild Geese* is an excellent opportunity for young readers to connect with their Celtic history and heritage.





THE WATERBOYS

An Appointment with Mr. Yeats

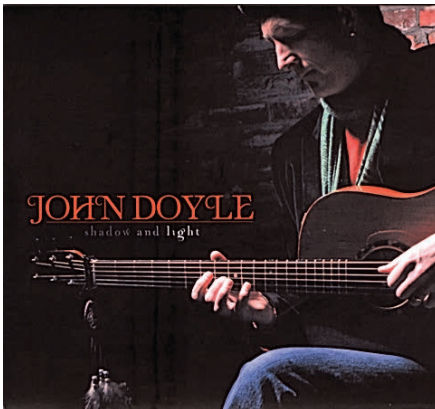
It's been five years since Mike Scott and his raggle-taggle band of minstrels released *Book of Lightning*, but *An Appointment with Mr. Yeats* has been well-worth the wait. By turns straight-up and soft, the 14 tracks feature the poetry of Ireland's finest scribe set against an array of guitars, fiddles, flutes and horns. The result is a masterful, and deeply-moving, symphony of sound, with solid arrangements wrapped around strong, free-spirited performances; stand-out tracks include *Sweet Dancer* and *The Faery's Last Song*. Blending tradition with innovation, Scott cements his reputation as one of the finest contemporary songwriters in the Seven Celtic Nations.



Seudan

Seudan

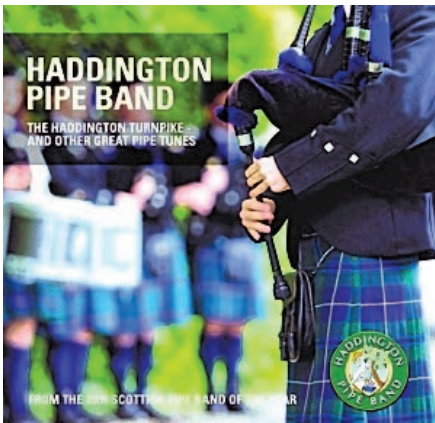
The Seudan concept began two decades ago when Hamish Moore copied an 18th century set of Highland pipes – the 'Black Set of Kintail' – now housed in the Inverness Museum. By 2011, Moore and his son Finn had completed eight similar sets of pipes. Seudan showcases the connection of Gaelic music to language and dance, while paying homage to musical masters. The pipers set the pulse racing as they roar through strathspeys, reels, jigs and quicksteps. Not since *Fosgail an Dorus* (MacInnis and MacNeil, 1992) has there been such an impressive recording of Gaelic piping.



Shadow and Light

John Doyle

John Doyle's guitar work with Solas and Liz Carroll is legendary. He travelled with Joan Baez as bandleader and musical arranger, and has produced many recordings for other musicians also. This new album showcases his song-writing and performing chops. The songs cover a range of emotive themes, including Irish emigration, World War I, the Gold Rush, and mythology. Doyle croons his way through the tunes with great depth and colour, all-the-while playing the guitar, mandola and bouzouki. An impressive list of bluegrass and Irish musicians also contribute to the sonic kaleidoscope.



Haddington Pipe Band

The Haddington Turnpike and Other Great Pipe Tunes

The Haddington Pipe Band celebrates its 30th anniversary with the release of its first recording. *The Haddington Turnpike and Other Great Pipe Tunes* features well-known pipe songs that have echoed across Highland games and parades for generations, including old favourites like *Farewell to the Creeks*, *The Drunken Piper* and *The Haddington Turnpike*, which was named East Lothian's piping anthem in 2009, the same year the group was named Scottish Pipe Band of the Year. A must hear for pipe music lovers.





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Each summer, Halifax, Nova Scotia, hosts the world's largest annual indoor event.

With a colourful cast of thousands, the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo brings together civilian and military elements for eight days of breathtaking performances from July 1 - 8.

"It is a night that's part Cirque du Soleil in its variety and inventiveness, yet pure Gaelic sentiment too, and one of the most moving nights of entertainment that I have ever experienced," writes Linda Jacobs of *The Hamilton Spectator*.

Featuring marching bands, bagpipers, musicians, dancers, acrobats, trampoline artists, cutting-edge video and much more, the soiree is both homage to the past and a nod to the present and future.

This year's event will feature three themes, *Titanic*, the War of 1812 and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

"We're careful to make it a different experience every year," says marketing manager Leah Whitehead. "And because of that, the Nova Scotia International Tattoo is now considered the most innovative production of its kind in the world."

Historically, Tattoos are competitions between Military regiments. The name itself comes from the 17th century phrase *doe den tap toe*, which means the beating of drums through town streets – a signal to tavern keepers that it was time to turn off the taps to soldiers.

Halifax's event began in 1979, the year the city hosted the International Gathering of the Clans with Her Majesty, The Queen Mother in attendance.

The happening has evolved in both size and scope since that time, and today boasts a week-long array of activities attended by audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Along with the nightly shows, a number of free public events are scheduled around the city, including concerts, parades, walking tours, and workshops for musicians, dancers and gymnasts.

"A number of gymnastics troupes will be with us again this summer, and young people will have the opportunity to take in some hands-on time with them," explains Whitehead.

At the centre of all the excitement is the quickly-paced 2-1/2 hour nightly spectacle.

As well, four afternoon matinee performances are on this year's schedule, making the show more accessible to families. "Children especially love the acrobats from Switzerland and Germany," smiles Whitehead. "And we have had parents tell us that their kids have learned more about history and culture at the Tattoo than anywhere else."

To that end, she and her peers strive to emphasize the province's Celtic roots.

"That is certainly a huge part of who we are and what we do," she shares. "Along with the pipes, drums and highland dancers, we always end each evening with rousing renditions of the traditional Scotland the Brave and The Black Bear."

www.nstatattoo.ca





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Pipe Major **Roderick MacLean**, Band Manager,
Director, School of Music
E: roderick.maclea@regimental.com
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Allison MacKenzie, Coordinator
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Canada, B1T 1R7
P: 902-622-2627 / 902-622-2605
E: feisaneilein@ns.sympatico.ca
www.feisaneilein.ca

GATHERING OF THE SCOTS

New Brunswick, Canada
May 24-27, 2012
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E: info2@gatheringofthescots.com
www.gatheringofthescots.com

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Betty McIntosh, Secretary
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E: aexec@glengarryhighlandgames.com
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Grant Withers GIVES BACK

343 firefighters lost their lives on September 11, 2011 in New York City.

"In the aftermath of this tragedy, the FDNY Emerald Society Pipes and Drums began the arduous task of playing at hundreds of funerals and remembrance ceremonies for the Firefighters lost on 9/11," recalls Fire Captain Grant Withers of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Inspired by both the brave men and women who sacrificed so much that horrific day, and the New York City Fire Department's piping band that honoured them in the days and weeks that followed, Withers resolved to take up the bagpipes.

"It was then that I decided to seek out an instructor and start the process of learning one of the most challenging instruments in the history of music," he shares.

A decade later, Withers is the Pipe Major of the Halifax Firefighters Pipes and Drums (Union Fire Club). "Our role is to perform at Fire Department and community-based events," he explains. "We typically take part in graduation ceremonies, retirement events, Fire Service funerals and functions that both the Fire Department and Halifax Regional Municipality support."

Plans for this year include trips to both Cape Breton and to Ottawa, as well as performances in the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo Parade in Halifax, at the Halifax Explosion memorial in December, and at ceremonies for local and national firefighters who have fallen in the line of duty.

"The more I participate in events and festivals in Nova Scotia the more I see how Celtic culture impacts our way of life," he shares. "We are very lucky to live in an area where it is commonplace to enjoy kitchen parties, step dancing and ceilidhs. And I feel that, by playing the pipes, I can help in my own small way to keep our unique culture alive."

Despite the temptations of video games and social media, Withers believes that young people today still feel an attraction to the bagpipes.

"In many cases there is Celtic background in the family and the parents keep the connection alive through piping," he notes. "I take my hat off to the kids who stick with it; this instrument can be unforgiving and demands dedication and constant practice to improve."





ALL IN THE FAMILY

The Macnabs are one of Scotland's seven original clans.

The first record of the use of the name Macnab dates back to 1124 A.D, and one of the important historical landmarks of Scotland is the remains of the old MacNab Castle of Island Ran, which is located on an island off the north bank of the river Lochay. The Macnab lands were located along the south side of Lock Tay as far as its eastern end.

The Macnab name, which today is spelled in several different ways, comes from the Gaelic "Mac an aba", which in English means The Children of the Abbot.

Clan Macnab's first known ancestor was Abbott of Glendochart and Strathearn, the nephew of Saint Fillan and son of Kenneth MacAlpine, the first King of the Scots (843-858).

Saint Fillan founded the Glendochart monastery and served as its first leader. Since then, successive Macnab chiefs have filled the role.

"We are a clerical clan," explains David W. McNabb, long-time president of The Clan Macnab Society of North America.

David founded The Clan Macnab Society of California in 1977, after visiting the 23rd and presiding Chief of Clan Macnab, James Charles Macnab, at Kinnel House in Scotland a year earlier.

His decision to expand the organization nationally in 1990 grew out of "the love I have for my own family, clan history, and the connection it provides with the greatest culture on earth.

Now we are the largest and most active Clan Macnab society in the world."

Over the years, the group has grown to over 200 members from across North America, many of whom connect with the clan through its presence at a myriad of Celtic events.

"We maintain a presence at about 15 Highland games in the U.S. each year."

As such, the organization has grown significantly over the last two decades, and now offers its members a greater opportunity to learn more about their past, present and future.

"We went from a four-page quarterly newsletter to a 40-page publication," notes David. "And we have an extensive clan library for them to enjoy.

"We also offer them a number of clan-related items both at events and via our website, including tee-shirts, caps, videos, booklets and teas."

The North American Macnabs also organize a clan gathering in Scotland every five years, with the next meeting scheduled for July of this year.

www.clanmacnab.com



CLANS



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CLANS



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CLANS



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Clan Scott Society

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Clan Sinclair Association, Canada

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Clan Wallace Society (Worldwide)

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www.clanwallace.org



The Federation for Scottish Culture in Nova Scotia

The members of the FSCNS actively preserve and promote Scottish Culture and Heritage. We recognize the contributions of generations of Scots to the fabric of our society. We celebrate Scottish cultural traditions through fellowship. Best of all, we like to have fun.

Membership is open to anyone who wants to learn more about Scottish culture, as well as clan societies and Scottish-cultural organizations.

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The FSCNS publishes its own newsletter, The Broadsword®, which is a benefit of membership.

For more information, please email the Federation at info@scotsns.ca, or write to us at:

FSCNS Inquiries
PO Box 477
Lower Sackville, NS Canada B4C 3G4

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours, aye.

Thomas E. Wallace, President
tewallace@ns.sympatico.ca

Celeste Henderson, Memberships
hendercw@ns.sympatico.ca

www.scotsns.ca



The Clan LAMONT

*Preserving Our Past
Protecting Our Future*

For information about
The Clan Lamont Society

In Canada visit or e-mail us @
<http://www.clanlamont.ca/>
info@clanlamont.ca

In The United States @
<http://www.clsna.us/>
sectreas@clsna.us





LAST WORD *By Keara Barnes*

I was only meant to be in Dublin for six months, but it has already been nearly 2 ½ years. Since arriving, I've moved four times, been home to Vancouver three times, worked four different jobs, travelled to five other countries, fallen in love for the first time, made numerous lifelong friends, often been mistaken for an American, seen countless theatre productions, consumed lots of alcohol, and listened to more live Irish music than I ever thought possible.

I moved to Dublin after graduating with a BFA in Theatre from the University of Victoria. After working in various pubs for my first year here – an experience which was, at the same time, exhilarating, exhausting, exciting and embarrassing – I scored my 'big break'; a two-month marketing internship with the Abbey Theatre, Ireland's National Theatre. I now work full-time for the Abbey, part-time for the Gaiety Theatre, and volunteer for the Ark, a cultural centre for children.

It's been an emotional struggle at times to come to terms with the fact that I chose to leave my world at home and create a life on my own halfway across the planet; but for all the moments that I've despaired I've had about ten of sheer bliss.

While it's been hard to live away from my immediate family, I have immensely enjoyed spending time with my mother's side of the family who live here. I also met my boyfriend three months after arriving, and we began dating in the typical 'Irish fashion' (meeting for pints). We've been together for two years now and share a lovely apartment right beside Phoenix Park. We travel around the country often, stealing weekend getaways in various country castles and cottages. I enjoy spending time with the amazing friends I've made and make it a priority to visit three different European countries each year.

I am an incredibly different person now than when I left Canada; one who is independent, confident, and proactive (to use my mother's word). I spend more time in the rain than I would like (that's Ireland for you!), and more time in pubs that I care to (or can!) remember. I love the Irish sense of humour (the brashness and the slagging), and I enjoy all the quaint and quirky aspects of modern life in Dublin, including always bumping into people I know. And I know I have become a better person here because I am no longer offended when someone calls me American.



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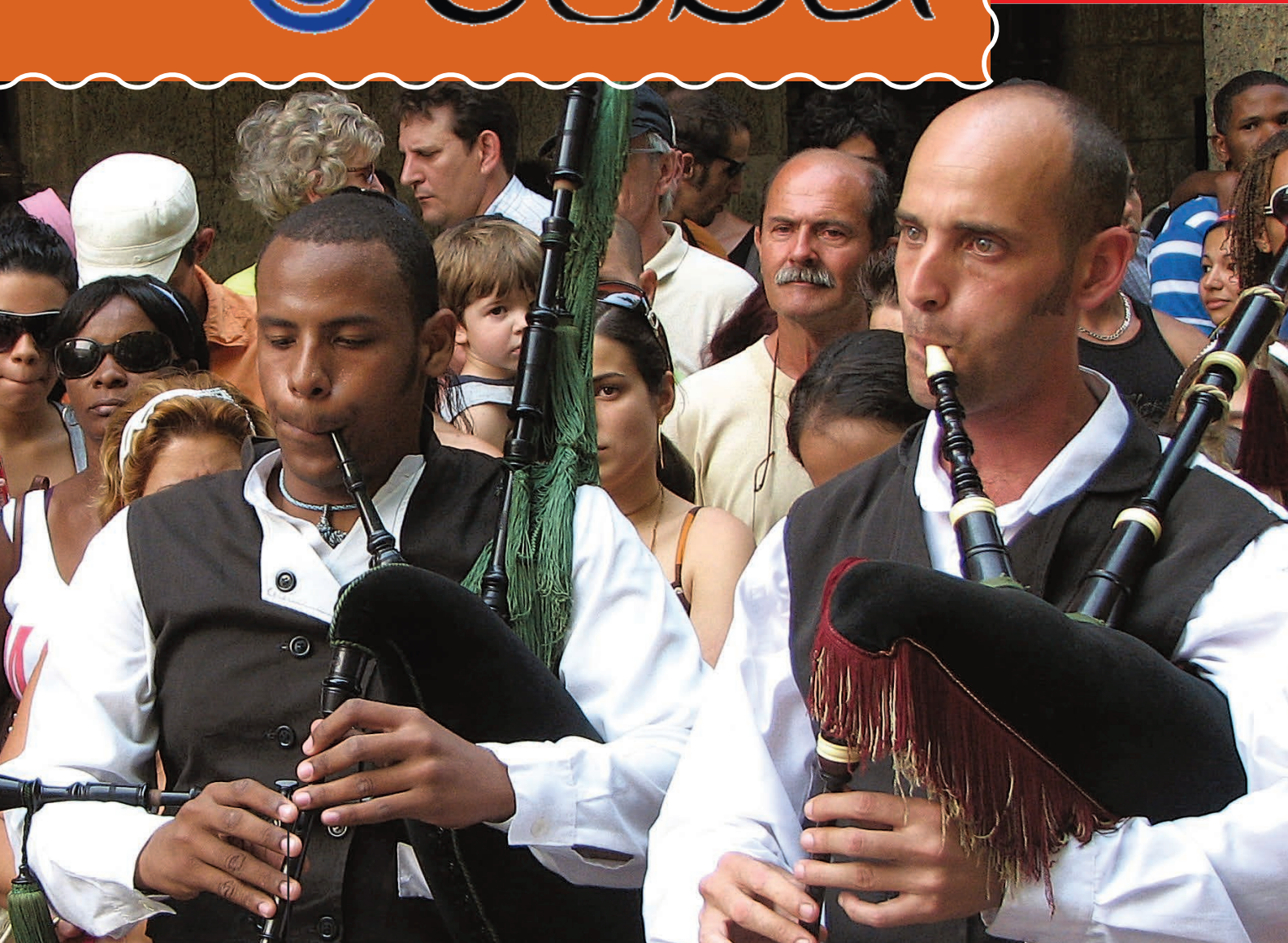
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