

# the celtic connection

ISSUE 29 VOLUME 2

*Proudly Serving Celts in North America Since 1991*

MARCH/APRIL 2020



THE FACES OF IRELAND (Clockwise L-R) – Children at the Saint Patrick's Day parade in Dublin, Ireland; buskers at night on the streets of Galway, Ireland, 2020 European City of Culture; the spectacular Bullig Bay Loop on Ireland's Beara Peninsula; stones are eternal as seen at Beaghmore, an early Bronze Age megalithic with stone circles and cairns, north west of Cookstown, County Tyrone in Northern Ireland.

[Read more about Tourism Ireland and Galway, 2020 European City of Culture on pages 19 & 29]



PHOTO: Operio Photography

SPRINGTIME is the season for GAA sports. Pictured above are members of the Vancouver Irish Sporting and Social Club camogie team soloing the ball out on the attack against Seattle Gaels at Emerald City Cup. [Read more pages 26 & 27]

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- *Celtic Fest Vancouver Western Canada's Biggest Celtic Festival*
- *Seattle Irish Week Full Program of Events*
- *St. David's Day Celebrations Vancouver*
- *Reflections on a St. Patrick's Day Long Past*

**BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR ST. PATRICK'S DAY GREETINGS SECTION**



VANCOUVER joined a growing cultural movement in 2020 with the presentation of Lá Fhéile Bríde: Celebrating the Creativity of Women at Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre. Read more about the presenters and the event on pages 30 & 31.

## WIN FREE TICKETS

Win a pair of tickets to see the Irish supergroup Dervish on March 15 at Kay Meek Arts Centre, West Vancouver (see page 7 for details). Mark your entry 'Dervish' by March 6.

Win a pair of tickets to see The Celtic Tenors perform with VSO on Friday, March 27 at the Orpheum Theatre, Vancouver (see page 5 for details). Mark your entry 'Celtic Tenors' by March 19.

Win a pair of tickets to see M'Anam & Chor Leoni on April 24, at Chan Centre for the Performing Arts, Vancouver (see page 2 for details). Mark your entry 'M'Anam' by April 3.

All entries by e-mail only to: cbutler@telus.net (only one entry per person to each event and must include your name and daytime telephone number).

Publication  
Mail Agreement:  
4000398

# M'ANAM & CHOR LEONI

Friday April 24 | 8pm  
CHAN CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Ireland's astonishing new men's choir M'ANAM brings ancient Celtic folk songs and powerful Icelandic ballads to life in their Canadian debut performance with Vancouver's renowned Chor Leoni.



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604.822.2697



## New Global Greening sites revealed ahead of St. Patrick's Day

VANCOUVER – Ireland holds a special place in the hearts of people around the world and it also enjoys a unique benefit of a global diaspora with one of the widely recognized and celebrated national holidays – St. Patrick's Day.

One of the most interesting features to emerge with this world-wide fete is Tourism Ireland's famous 'Global Greening', which literally puts a spotlight on Ireland.

This initiative, which marks its 10th anniversary in 2020, sees famous landmarks around the world decked out in green on March 17.

Among the world-famous landmarks to light up for the occasion are the Empire State Building in New York, the National Museum of Qatar, City Hall in Bangkok, the National Theatre in London, and City Hall in Toronto.

In fact, over 300 sites have signed up across more than 40 countries and this year the list just keeps growing with many new locations.

In western Canada, some of the recognized landmarks include in Vancouver: the Sails of Light at Canada Place and the Bloedel Conservatory.

On Vancouver Island, the World's Largest Hockey Stick and Puck will light up at the Cowichan Community Centre.

In Alberta, the world's largest beaver statue in Beaverlodge, Alberta; the Calgary Tower, Calgary; and the High



PICTURED outside the Bloedel Conservatory in Vancouver last year to mark the St. Patrick's Day 'Global Greening' initiative, Ciarán Cannon the Irish Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Frank Flood the Consul General of Ireland, Vancouver, alongside two Irish wolfhounds.

Level Bridge, Edmonton will all be bathed in green on the day.

And, we can't forget Mac the Moose statue in Beaverlodge, Alberta; the in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, will also be part of the celebrations.



Ard-Chonsalacht na hÉireann | Vancouver  
Consulate General of Ireland | Vancouver  
Consulat général d'Irlande | Vancouver

**The Consulate General of Ireland in Vancouver wishes everyone a happy St. Patrick's Day! Lá féile Phadraig shona daoibh go léir.**

### 🍀 SATURDAY, MARCH 7<sup>TH</sup> & SUNDAY, MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>

**HSBC Men's Rugby Sevens Tournament**  
BC Place – 11.30am

Come and show your support for the Boys in Green after their first time qualification to participate in the Sevens tournament in Vancouver.  
Tickets: [www.canadasevens.com/tickets](http://www.canadasevens.com/tickets)

### 🍀 SUNDAY, MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>

**Sharon Shannon in Concert**  
Rogue Folk Club – 7pm

Sharon Shannon will be back in the Rogue Folk Club again, entertaining all with her accordion and fiddle technique.  
Tickets: [www.roguefolk.bc.ca](http://www.roguefolk.bc.ca)

### 🍀 FRIDAY, MARCH 13<sup>TH</sup>

**CelticFest Céilidh**

Hellenic Community Centre – 7.30pm  
The beating heart of the CelticFest, the Céilidh is central to the Fest's ethos and mission to bring Celtic culture to Vancouver.  
Tickets: [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)

### 🍀 SATURDAY, MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>

**St Patrick's Day 5k – hosted by BMO**

Stanley Park Pavilion, Stanley Park – 9.30am  
Put a little Irish in your step. Come out for a flat and fast 5k in scenic Stanley Park. Come for the Race...Stay for the After-Party.  
Register: [www.stpatrickssk.com](http://www.stpatrickssk.com)

### 🍀 SATURDAY, MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>

**Irish Club of White Rock's St. Patrick Day Dinner Dance**

Hazelmere Lawn and Tennis Club – 6.30pm  
A night of delicious food, music and dancing.  
Tickets from Deirdre at 604-803-0733 or Sharon 604-338-3553  
[www.facebook.com/irishclubofwhiterock](http://www.facebook.com/irishclubofwhiterock)

### 🍀 SATURDAY, MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>

**St Patrick's Day Kitchen Party**

hosted by the Okanagan Irish Society – 6.30pm  
An evening full of entertainment and music.  
Cash bar will be available and doors open at 6.30pm.  
Tickets available from Pearse 250-718-1958, Randi 250-863-7907 or Mairead 250-764-8673

### 🍀 SATURDAY, MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>

**Odd Fellow Annual St Patrick's Day Party**  
Vancouver Odd – 7pm

The Odd Fellows' annual St Patrick's party is back again With Blackthorn and the Watt School of Irish Dance.  
Net proceeds to charity.  
Tickets \$20 – [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)

### 🍀 SATURDAY, MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>

**Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir**

Christ Church Cathedral – 7.30pm  
The Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir Perform a mix of traditional Celtic Music & Modern songs.  
Tickets: [vancouverchoir.ca](http://vancouverchoir.ca)

### 🍀 SATURDAY, MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>

**St Patrick's Day Céilí Dance Celebration**  
hosted by Vancouver Irish Céilí Society

Victoria Drive Community Hall – 7.45pm  
A St. Patrick's Day Irish Céilí with beginner-friendly social dances to live traditional music.  
Tickets: [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com)

### 🍀 SUNDAY, MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>

**St Patrick's Day Family Event**  
hosted by CelticFest

Vancouver Art Gallery Square – 12.30pm to 6pm  
The much anticipated St. Patrick's Day Family Event is a free daytime event for families and people of all ages. It takes centre stage at Vancouver Art Gallery's front square with dancing, music, kid's crafts, food vendors and more!  
[www.facebook.com/celticfestvancouver/events](http://www.facebook.com/celticfestvancouver/events)

### 🍀 SUNDAY, MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>

**Dervish**

Kay Meek Arts Centre – 7.30pm  
Dervish plays soulful folk drawing from the tradition song cycles of counties Sligo and Leitrim in north-west Ireland.  
Tickets: [www.kaymeek.com](http://www.kaymeek.com)

### 🍀 TUESDAY, MARCH 17<sup>TH</sup>

**ICCCVan St Patrick's Day Celebration Breakfast Event**  
Terminal City Club – 7.30am to 9.30am

The Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce Vancouver invites members and guests to attend a breakfast event as part of the Global St. Patrick's Day Celebrations  
Tickets: [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)

### 🍀 FRIDAY, MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup>

**The 2 Johnnies Podcast - Live in Vancouver**  
Donnellans Pub – 7pm

The 2 Johnnies are bringing their podcast to Vancouver! As guests of Cú Chulainn GAA Club, they'll be hosting their live podcast with all the madness and mayhem of the World of the 2 Johnnies.  
Tickets: [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)

### 🍀 SATURDAY, MARCH 21<sup>ST</sup>

**St Patrick's Day Gaelic Games Tournament**  
hosted by ISSC

Andy Livingstone Park – 1pm to 5pm  
Come and enjoy our Vancouver GAA Gaelic games tournament, it promises to be a day full of entertainment for all.  
Information: [www.isscvancouver.com](http://www.isscvancouver.com) or follow on [www.facebook.com/isscvancouver](http://www.facebook.com/isscvancouver)

### 🍀 SUNDAY, MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup>

**Altan**

Rogue Folk Club – 7pm  
Altan continues to be one of the most important live acts to play traditional Irish music in Ireland and on the World stage.  
Tickets: [www.roguefolk.bc.ca](http://www.roguefolk.bc.ca)

### 🍀 FRIDAY, MARCH 27<sup>TH</sup> & SATURDAY, MARCH 28<sup>TH</sup>

**The Celtic Tenors & VSO**

Orpheum Theatre – 8pm  
The Celtic Tenors perform alongside the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. The Celtic Tenors offer something truly unique – With the skill, range and ability of world-class tenors.  
Tickets: [vancouverSymphony.ca](http://vancouverSymphony.ca)

# CELTICFEST VANCOUVER

## 2020 Line-Up

Follow @CelticFestVancouver on Facebook for more info

 <p><b>Trad Session</b> February 20th, 7pm Billy Bishop Legion Bar</p>	 <p><b>Sharon Shannon</b> March 8th, 7pm Rogue Folk Club</p>
 <p><b>CelticFest Ceilidh</b> March 13th, 7pm Hellenic Community Centre</p>	 <p><b>Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir</b> March 14th, 7.30pm Christ Church Cathedral</p>
 <p><b>CelticFest Family Day</b> March 15th, 1-6pm Vancouver Art Gallery Square</p>	 <p><b>Dervish</b> March 15th, 7.30pm Kay Meek Arts Centre</p>
 <p><b>Altan</b> March 22nd, 7pm Rogue Folk Club</p>	 <p><b>The Celtic Tenors &amp; VSO</b> March 27th &amp; 28th Orpheum Theatre</p>



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# CelticFest Vancouver 2020: Western Canada's Biggest Annual Celtic Festival

VANCOUVER – CelticFest Vancouver is western Canada's biggest annual Celtic festival. CelticFest is a rich cultural celebration of the seven Celtic nations' kinship and community.

The festival showcases the best of Celtic music, dance, spoken word and supports the rich Celtic Community based here in Vancouver.

**CelticFest Vancouver** will return in March 2020 with an ever-expanding line up of guests and events.

On Sunday, March 8, **Sharon Shannon** will be back in the Rogue Folk Club again entertaining the crowd with her accordion and fiddle technique.

Beginning with Irish folk music, her work demonstrates a wide-ranging number of musical influences, including reggae, Cajun music, Portuguese music, and French Canadian music. Her gig is bound to sell-out so book your tickets fast at the Rogue Folk Club website [www.roguefolk.bc.ca].

On Friday, March 13, the Hellenic Community Centre will host the **CelticFest Ceilidh** from 7:30 PM.

With traditional Irish performers and dances being taught throughout the night, there is something for everyone here.

The beating heart of the CelticFest, the Ceilidh is central to the Fest's ethos and mission; to bring Celtic culture to Vancouver. A Ceilidh is the essential Celtic tradition – so make sure not to miss out on this one!

Tickets for this are on Eventbrite [www.eventbrite.com/e/celticfest-vancouver-ceilidh-2020-tickets-73040210235]



The acclaimed **Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir** will perform at Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday, March 14, at 7:30 PM, their voices will lift the roof with their mix of traditional Celtic music and modern songs. Tickets are on the Welsh Men's Choir website and range from \$15-\$40 [celticfestchristchurch.bpt.me].

The much-anticipated **St. Patrick's Family Day** event will kick off on Sunday, March 15, with a free daytime event for families and people of all ages.

This year, the Family Day will take centre stage at Vancouver Art Gallery's front square, where there will be dancing, music, kid's crafts, food vendors and more to be announced!

Look out for a second announcement on Facebook with the full list of the day's events coming soon! [www.facebook.com/CelticFestVancouver].

On the evening of Sunday, March 15, The Kay Meek Arts Centre will host **Dervish**.

Described by the BBC as "an icon of Irish music" and *The Guardian* as "simply brilliant," Dervish has played its soulful folk drawing from the tradition song cycles of counties Sligo and Leitrim in north-west Ireland.

On tour with its new studio release,

*The Great Irish Songbook*, it celebrates the group's 30th anniversary. Tickets are at the Kay Meek Arts Centre website [kaymeek.com/events/dervish].

To round off the month of events there will be more live gigs. The Altan Irish Trad band will perform at the Rogue Folk Club on Sunday, March 22.

Altan continues to be one of the most important live acts to play traditional Irish music in Ireland and on the world stage. Tickets also available at The Rogue Folk Club website [www.roguefolk.bc.ca].

**The Celtic Tenors** will perform alongside the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra on March 27 and 28 at the Orpheum Theatre from 8 PM.

With a polished international reputation and with over a million CDs sold worldwide, The Celtic Tenors offer something truly unique with the skill, range and ability of world-class performers, combined with the personality and fun of genuine entertainers.

Tickets are at the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra website [www.vancouversymphony.ca/event/the-celtic-tenors].

All direct ticket links can be found at the CelticFest Vancouver Facebook page events section. Keep an eye here to find out about other announcements and information.

**[SPECIAL NOTE:** Family Day will need a team of volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, email: celticfestvolunteers@gmail.com]

Any questions about sponsorship opportunities, food vendors & general inquires, please email: celticfestcoordinator@gmail.com.

## Irish Folk Icons Dervish on tour with new CD *The Great Irish Songbook*

The iconic Irish folk group Dervish is now on a North American tour to promote the release of their first studio album in more than a decade, *The Great Irish Songbook*.

Drawing from the traditional song cycles of counties Sligo and Leitrim in north-west Ireland, this much anticipated album features performances by a remarkable array of guest singers and musicians from both sides of the Atlantic.

Among those featured guest artists is Irish actor and director Brendan Gleeson – perhaps best known for his portrayal of Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody in the Harry Potter films – who lends his lilting baritone to the band's spirited rendition of DK Gavan's much-loved classic *The Rocky Road To Dublin*, which chronicles the adventures of a man as he travels from his home in Tuam, County Galway to Liverpool.

Dervish – Michael Holmes, Cathy Jordan, Liam Kelly, Brian McDonagh, Shane Mitchell, Tom Morrow, and Seamie O Dowd – is also joined on *The Great Irish Songbook* by fellow Irish musicians Andrea Corr and Imelda May; English singer Kate Rusby; Welsh singer-songwriter David Gray; and



DERVISH – Michael Holmes, Cathy Jordan, Liam Kelly, Brian McDonagh, Shane Mitchell, Tom Morrow, and Seamie O Dowd.

from the United States, Steve Earle, Rhiannon Giddens, Vince Gill, Jamey Johnson, The SteelDrivers, and Abigail Washburn.

Veteran music scribe Jackie Hayden's review in *Hot Press* recommends, "if you need an urgent injection of nourishment for your mind, body and spirit, treat yourself to this invigorating excavation of *The Great Irish Songbook*," while *The Irish Edition's*

Jamie O'Brien calls Dervish "one of the best bands in any genre to ever come out of Ireland" and proclaims this album "their best so far."

In the Vancouver area, Dervish will perform on Sunday, March 15 at the Kay Meek Arts Centre located at 1700 Mathers Avenue in West Vancouver. For more information and tickets, see: www.kaymeek.com.

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# 'A very good first year for the Consulate and hopefully an even better one in 2020!'

*A chairde gael,*

THIS is only the Consulate's second St. Patrick's Day and it is great to see such a varied programme of events being held over all of March with events from White Rock to Kelowna.

On behalf of the Irish Consulate General Office in Vancouver, I would like to congratulate all involved in running this year's programme of activities that are being held around St. Patrick's Day in Vancouver and to wish them every success.

The Consulate has facilitated obtaining Emigrant Support Programme funding for a significant number of the events and we will continue to be as supportive as possible, particularly for new initiatives such as the excellent St. Brigid's Day programme of events organised recently by Maura de Freitas which was reportedly the biggest such event in western North America.

Likewise, I am sure the first St. Patrick's Day Family event in the Vancouver Art Gallery Plaza on Sunday, 15 March will be a great success and hopefully it will get some well-deserved fine weather.

Unfortunately, it seems very unlikely that we will have an Irish minister in British Columbia for St. Patrick's Day



**By FRANK FLOOD**  
Irish Consul General  
Vancouver

but once a new government is formed, I am sure that a visit to the west coast of Canada will be high on their to-do list.

The past year has gone really quickly but very successfully from a Consulate point of view, thanks to the great support we have received from the Irish community and the warm and open Canadian welcome we have received.

For example, in 2019 the Consulate funded and supported 26 Irish community, business and diplomatic related events while I expect to have already attended over 30 similar meetings and functions by the end of February.

On the Irish community side, in 2019 the Irish Women's Network led by Eilis Courtney carried out an innovative mapping project commissioned by the Consulate.

The project involved the development of a very useful website [irishinBC.ca](http://irishinBC.ca)

which shows where the Irish are in B.C., the contact details for the around fifty Irish organisations in B.C. and helped to clarify what are the issues facing Irish emigrants.

An initiative to help raise awareness of mental health issues is being undertaken by the Consulate this year as part of our response to this study.

What is really encouraging on the business side is that all of our trade missions to B.C. are so impressed that they keep coming back!

Following the successful mission of five Irish institutes of technology to B.C. last June organised by Enterprise Ireland, we now have 12 Irish universities and colleges coming back at the end of March.

After our initial participation in the annual Roundup Mining and Exploration Conference last year, Ireland was the first European country to have a stand at the exhibition this year reflecting our growing engagement and interest in this sector.

On the services side, Chartered Accountants Ireland are launching a Vancouver Chapter on the 24 February following a visit to B.C. last November while over 20 percent of all Canadian tourists to Ireland now come from B.C.!

Another little known statistic, reflecting the modest trade in goods, is that Ireland has now risen in importance for B.C. exports from 61st place in 2017 to 46th last year.

The significant level of interest in promoting Irish-B.C. trade linkages was highlighted in the online trade directory developed last year by the Vancouver Chapter of the Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce (see <https://icccvan.ca>).

A first class trade directory, developed by Lar Quigley, it is a credit to all concerned.

The new committee with Ruairi Spillane as interim president is making use of the directory and going from strength-to-strength and well worth supporting and attending the regular networking events.

The opening of the new office for the Consulate has been slightly delayed to July of this year but the final plans and design are very impressive so it will be well worth the wait.

The new office will be based on the 13th floor of the Manulife Building on Thurlow and West Pender with around one third of the floor space earmarked for representational activities such as Irish community and business lunches.

The first Thursday of the month Irish business community breakfast events that started last September are proving both useful and popular so do try and make it along.

After July most of our events, including our monthly business breakfast events, will be held in the new Consulate office rather than the Vancouver Club. It will be much less salubrious but also far less more expensive!

Communications remains a key challenge as there is so much going on, it is very difficult to raise awareness among the Irish community let alone the wider Canadian population, so we will be working on ways to meet this challenge in 2020.

Our email contact list is helpful, so please sign up for our Consulate circulation list on the Consulate's website events page at [www.dfa.ie/irish-consulate/vancouver/news-&-events](http://www.dfa.ie/irish-consulate/vancouver/news-&-events).

In line with data protection requirements, anyone can unsubscribe from the list at any time by emailing the Consulate at [vancouvercg@dfa.ie](mailto:vancouvercg@dfa.ie).

*Lá Fhéile Pádraig  
sona dhaoibh go léir*

*Frank Flood*  
Consul General of Ireland,  
Vancouver

FRI & SAT, MAR 27 & 28, 8PM | ORPHEUM

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## Rogue Folk Club

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[www.roguefolk.com](http://www.roguefolk.com)

<b>Thursday, February 27 - Saturday, February 29th</b> <i>Driven Bow Fiddle Festival</i> <b>J.P. Cormier</b> NS <b>Daniel Lapp</b> BC <b>Pierre Schryer &amp; Adam Dobres</b> BC <b>Calvin Vollrath</b> AB  <b>The Paperboys</b> BC <b>Shane Cook</b> ON <i>3 concerts plus 7 workshops!</i>	<b>Thursday, March 5</b> <i>Canadian blues diva</i> <b>Shakura S'Aida</b> ON <b>Tuesday, March 10</b> <b>Arrogant Worms</b> ON <b>Thursday, March 12</b> <b>Martyn Joseph</b> Wales <b>Thursday, March 26</b> <b>Irish Mythen</b> Eire/PEI <b>Friday, April 10</b> <b>The Fretless</b> ON <i>&amp; many, many more!!!</i> <b>St. James Hall (3214 West 10th Ave.)</b> <b>Tickets &amp; Info (604) 736-3022</b>
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# March is upon us...and yes, there will be music!

VANCOUVER – Well, as we are approaching the month of March at a frantic pace – even though there is an extra day to come in February – there is a plethora of Celtic music events coming up!

Since this is a combined March/April edition and the next issue of *The Celtic Connection* won't be out until the end of April, there is much to tell you!

First off, **The Rogue Folk Club** has had a blockbuster start to 2020, with no less than six sold out shows at the Mel Lehan Hall at St. James in the first few weeks!

Concerts are coming thick and fast!

• **February 27** – **J.P. Cormier** and **Daniel Lapp**. The opening night of our fiddle festival – **The Driven Bow** – sees the amazing Cape Breton singer songwriter and multi-instrumentalist J.P. team up with Victoria's mercurial fiddler Daniel Lapp. We first saw this combination at *Celtic Colours* a few years back and have been trying to bring their incredible show to The Rogue ever since.

• **February 28** – **Pierre Schryer** and **Adam Dobres** plus **Calvin Vollrath**. You may have seen Pierre and Adam as **David Francey's** backing band last month. You might have seen them at the *Mission Folk Festival* last summer. Pierre is a multiple Canadian fiddle champion and Adam is a brilliant guitarist.

This is the official release of their first album together, *Mandorla*. Calvin Vollrath is a prolific tunesmith and remarkable fiddler with over 70 albums to his credit.

• **February 29** – **The Paperboys** plus **Shane Cook**. The festival concludes with the wonderful, rollicking Celtic stomp of Vancouver's Paperboys and special guest, Shane Cook from Ontario – one of Canada's finest young fiddlers and composers.

• There are **seven participatory workshops** for fiddlers – and accompanists – on **Saturday, February 29** as well.

• **March 8** – **Sharon Shannon**. Always a delight, the accordion diva from Co. Clare has sold out The Rogue every time! This will also sell out. She is touring western Canada and starts her tour in Vancouver. She will be joined by **Jim Murray** and **Jack Maher** on guitars.

• **March 12** – **Martyn Joseph**. This Welsh troubadour is a proud valley boy and one of the most passionate and committed singers and advocates of the downtrodden you could ever wish to hear.

• **March 22** – **Altan**. The Donegal powerhouse trad quartet led by fiddler/singer **Mairead Ni Mhaonaigh** is still at the peak of its creativity. This promises to be another sold out show so book early.

• **March 26** – **Irish Mythen**. Wicklow-born, and now making her home in PEI, Irish possesses one of the most powerful voices you will ever hear! She is also a unique voice for the oppressed and one of the most engaging performers you could wish to hear.



By  
STEVE  
EDGE

## THE ROGUE FOLK CLUB



SHARON SHANNON plays The Rogue on Sunday, March 8.



IRISH MYTHEN is at The Rogue on Thursday, March 26.

• **April 10** – **The Fretless**. Canadian string quartet blending Celtic tunes with chamber music arrangements but above all playing searing medleys with two fiddles and viola driven by fiercely rhythmic cello.

• **April 16** – **Madison Violet**. Cape Breton's **Lisa MacIsaac** is Ashley's sister: a fine singer songwriter who also plays fiddle. She is joined by **Brenley MacEachern** (from Ontario, with Cape Breton roots) and they have a new CD, *Everything's Shifting*.

• **April 23** – **Dave Gunning**. From Pictou, NS, Dave is one of Canada's most impressive songwriters. His narrative style and poignant lyrics place him comfortably alongside such esteemed Canadians as David Francey,

Stan Rogers, Gordon Lightfoot, etc.

The Rogue also celebrates the Blues with **Shakura S'Aida** (March 5) and the annual **Hornby Blues** show – with four Canadian Blues singers on **April 25** (**Angel Forrest**, **Rick Fines**, **Paul Pigat**, and **Steve Marriner**); and Bluegrass with Toronto's **Slocan Ramblers** and Seattle's **Downtown Mountain Boys** (March 30); musical comedy with **The Arrogant Worms** (March 10), and a sold out show on **March 13**; and strong voices like America's **Eliza Gilkyson** (April 9), PEI's **Rachel Beck** & Vancouver's **Sarah Wheeler** (April 5); and Canada's **Good Lovelies** (May 3!)

There will also be two Friday evenings of **Gypsy Jazz** on **April 17** and **24** for April In Paris. Visit [www.roguefolk.com](http://www.roguefolk.com) for all the details.

As if this wasn't enough, it's also **CelticFest Vancouver** from **February 20 to March 22**, with special events including **Blackthorn's Ceilidh** at the Hellenic Community Centre on Arbutus (March 13),

**Family Day** on the Art Gallery Forecourt on Georgia Street on **March 15** from 12:30 to 6 PM (with music by **Fionn**, **Cannery Row**, and **Shoreline** – and a host of family and adult activities including a parade and a beer garden). [www.celticfestvancouver.com](http://www.celticfestvancouver.com).

Irish supergroup **Dervish** make a welcome return to B.C. with a concert at West Van's Kay Meek Theatre on **Sunday, March 15** at 7:30 PM. Not to be missed! <https://kaymeek.com/events/dervish>.

There are two important Saints' Days – **March 1** is St. David's Day and **March 17** is St. Patrick's Day and I'm sure there will be some music that day somewhere around town! (There's also **Roguelele Night** at The Rogue, but I don't think it's on an Irish theme. Not my fault!!)

Finally, **Festival du Bois** runs at Maillardville's Mackin Park on **March 6-8**, with **The Sybaritic Stringband** playing for a dance on opening night.

The headliners include **Yves Lambert Trio** (Quebec), **Tipsy 3** (NB/PQ/NS), **Blackthorn** (BC), and **Gervais/Dallaire/McDade** (AB) [www.festivaldubois.ca](http://www.festivaldubois.ca).

You can hear music by all these performers – and much more – on my weekly radio show, *The Saturday Edge On Folk* on [www.citr.ca](http://www.citr.ca) and 101.9fm every Saturday from 8 AM to noon.

Slainte,  
Steve



THE DONEGAL powerhouse trad quartet Altan, led by fiddler/singer Mairead Ni Mhaonaigh, will be another sold out show for The Rogue on Sunday, March 22, so get your tickets as soon as possible.

## NEW SINGLE OUT MARCH 17

### PAT CHESSELL

like a rock  
(feat. Aaron Chapman)

From the forthcoming album  
"The Road Not Taken"



Pat and his team would like to wish all readers of the Celtic Connection a Happy Saint Patrick's Day!



This project has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada. Ce projet a été rendu possible en partie grâce au gouvernement du Canada.



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# World-class performers The Celtic Tenors will perform with the VSO Pop Series

VANCOUVER – The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO) will present The Celtic Tenors at The Orpheum on March 27 and 28.

The acclaimed tenors – Daryl Simpson, James Nelson, and Matthew Gilsenan – will perform as part of the VSO Pops Series sponsored by London Drugs.

As the most successful classical crossover artists ever to emerge from Ireland, The Celtic Tenors have a polished international reputation with over a million albums sold worldwide.

The program will consist of a unique blend of classical, folk, Celtic, and pop songs combined with the personality and fun of genuine performers.

They will perform classical arias, a capellas, hauntingly beautiful Celtic harmonies, along with popular contemporary songs.

The program, led by conductor John Smith, features such favourites as *Nessun Dorma*, *Galileo*, *Red-Haired Mary*, *Calypso*, and many more.

The Celtic Tenors first appeared on the musical map in 2000 when they performed an off-the-cuff audition at EMI in London, UK.

To the surprise of all witnesses, they were signed on the spot to an international record deal. The trio has now released five albums, sung leading roles



THE CELTIC TENORS will perform at The Orpheum Theatre on March 27 and 28.

with renowned opera companies, and headlined several festivals across the globe.

They have appeared on television across the U.S. and Canada, as well as Europe, and produced their very own German TV special which aired to millions of viewers.

Founded in 1919, the Grammy and Juno-award winning Vancouver Symphony Orchestra is one of the largest arts organizations in western Canada.

It is Canada's third largest orchestra, and one of the few orchestras in North America to have its own music school. The VSO and Music Director Maestro Otto Tausk celebrated the orchestra's 100th anniversary season in 2018-2019.

For more details about the VSO Pops Series and to purchase tickets for The Celtic Tenors, visit [www.myVSO.ca](http://www.myVSO.ca).



PHOTO: Nejc Rudel

M'ANAM – Ireland's super-choir takes a curtain call following a concert.

## Ireland's latest super-choir M'Anam make Vancouver debut this April

VANCOUVER – Ireland's latest super-choir, M'Anam ("My Soul") will make their North American debut in Vancouver on April 24.

They will perform in a joint concert with Vancouver's Juno-nominated Chor Leoni Men's Choir to open the VanMan Male Choral Summit at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts.

M'Anam is an all-male ensemble of eight singers led by conductor/composer Michael McGlynn. McGlynn is famous for his work with the legendary *Riverdance* and also leads the renowned mixed choir, Anuna.

In the short time since M'Anam's founding in 2018, the ensemble has been featured on the soundtrack of *World of Warcraft*, sung on the latest album by Japanese jazz-rock ensemble Mouse On The Keys, released several stunning videos, and enjoyed a successful album-launching European tour.

The group draws on a huge range of musical experiences, from rock to classical, folk to indie – but what excites them most are the connections between the lands of Iceland and Ireland.

With repertoire ranging from 9th-Century Icelandic elegies to dead Vikings, to classic Irish folk songs and brand-new works written for them by McGlynn, M'Anam brings a fresh new approach to the tradition of male-voice singing.

Their North American debut will feature M'Anam alongside Chor Leoni as the opening concert of the annual VanMan Male Choral Summit.

VanMan draws 300+ male singers together for a weekend of rehearsals, workshops, and performances.

For more tickets and more information about M'Anam and Chor Leoni online at: [www.tickets.ubc.ca](http://www.tickets.ubc.ca), or call Chan box office: (604) 822-2697.

### Famous Quotes

"It is in the cultivation of instrumental music I consider the proficiency of this people to be worthy of commendation; and in this their skill is, beyond all comparison, beyond that of any nation I have ever seen."

*Giraldus, Cambrensis  
(Gerald of Wales)  
[c. 1147 - c 1223]  
The Topography of Ireland*



## Put on your dancing shoes for an Irish ceili St. Patrick's Day

VANCOUVER – Put your green dancing shoes on for the annual St. Patrick's Day ceili presented by the Vancouver Irish Ceili Society on Saturday, March 14, 8-11 PM.

Experienced callers teach the dances step-by-step and beginners are very welcome. All dances are done to live traditional Irish music. Wear comfortable shoes that can slide.

A 50/50 draw and special performances will be featured at the break. Refreshments will also be available. Wear green or festive St. Paddy's day accessories!

The ceili will be at the Victoria Drive Community Hall, 2026 East Avenue, Vancouver (43rd Avenue at Victoria). Doors open at 7:30 PM.

Tickets are available through Brown Paper Tickets until 12 hours before the event, and then they will be available only at the door. [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4502600](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4502600).

You don't need to come with a partner, but why not invite a friend? For more information, e-mail: [vanirishceilisociety@gmail.com](mailto:vanirishceilisociety@gmail.com), call: (604) 812-4131, or visit online at: [ceili.vcn.bc.ca](http://ceili.vcn.bc.ca).



## TOP 10 CELTIC HITS FOR MARCH

*Celt In A Twist* is local contemporary Celtic radio heard weekly on AM 1470, CJVB in Vancouver.

[www.worldbeatcanada.com](http://www.worldbeatcanada.com).

The following is the *Celt In A Twist* Contemporary Celtic Top 10:

1. High on Highland Life by Barleyjuice - *The Old Speakeasy* on Ryf Records.
2. The Bunker Hill Set by Tradish - *Homemade Tales* on GO' Danish.
3. Pull Me Down by Debra Lyn - *Blue Sun Rises* on Palette Records.
4. Des Chemins Creux by Dom Duff - *7vet Kelc'h* on Coop Breizh.
5. The Airt O The Deil by Yoko Pwno - *ArteFacts* on Skye Records.
6. Three Reels by Natalie MacMaster - *Sketches* on Independent.
7. The Vet Set by Graham Lindsay - *TradHead* on Independent.
8. The Capable Wife by Coig - *Ashlar* on Coig Music.
9. Jolie Rouge by The Dreadnoughts - *Into the North* on Independent.
10. Ocean Child by Flook - *Ancora* on Flatfish Records.

**Celt In A Twist - Pick Of The Month:**  
**TRADISH - Homemade Tales**  
**(GO' Danish)**

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VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY President Lynn Owens-Whalen with concert pianist Máire Carroll, Dewi Garmon Jones, a French horn player from Wales, and the Consul-General of Ireland Frank Flood.



ELECTION 2020 Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin, Mary-Lou McDonald Sinn Féin leader, and Leo Varadkar. Sinn Féin won the popular vote while Fianna Fáil narrowly won the largest number of seats. There have been bitter clashes between the leaders to determine the next taoiseach.

## Bertie Ahern: No Irish government in place before end of March

DUBLIN – Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern has predicted a new Irish Government will not be formed before the end of March. He said work on creating a “stable and sustainable” coalition had not yet properly begun.

Sinn Féin surged during Ireland’s General Election on a manifesto promising change in housing and health saw it become the third major party in the Republic.

The first meeting of the Dail parliament on Thursday, February 20 is unlikely to elect a new government.

Ahern told RTE’s *The Week in Politics*, “When you are putting a government together we have to look to the future as well.

“It is not just about sorting out the present position. It will have to take into account the election result and what is the policy formulation.”

He said negotiators and party strategists needed to focus on housing, homelessness and health. “Otherwise they will lock themselves into a major problem.”

While taoiseach and Fianna Fáil leader, Ahern helped create the 1998 Good Friday Agreement which largely ended violence in Northern Ireland.

Sinn Féin topped the first preference poll following the February 8 General Election with a total of 37 seats – just one fewer than that of Fianna Fáil.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar’s Fine Gael won 35 seats.

No single party has enough seats to govern and Sinn Féin appears to have failed to muster enough support from a coalition of small left-leaning parties and independent members of the new Irish parliament.

Fianna Fáil has ruled out entering a coalition with Sinn Féin because of historic links to the IRA and wide policy differences over issues like how to run the economy.

It is reportedly veering towards discussions with Fine Gael aimed at forming a grand coalition of two parties from opposite ends of Ireland’s Civil War divide a century ago.

The pair have dominated power since the state’s formation.

Sinn Féin president Mary-Lou McDonald has spoken out against more of the same political coalitions when the people have voted for change. She has called her political rivals “arrogant” in denying her party a place in the next Irish Government.

## A wonderful cross-cultural afternoon featuring Welsh and Irish music

By EIFION WILLIAMS

VANCOUVER – An overflow crowd enjoyed an afternoon of Welsh and Irish music and hospitality at the Cambrian Hall on Saturday afternoon, February 8.

The occasion was a visit by internationally acclaimed guest artists Dewi Garmon Jones, a French horn player from Wales, and concert pianist Máire Carroll from Ireland.

The event was hosted by the Vancouver Welsh Society and supported by the Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver.

Vancouver Welsh Society President Lynn Owens-Whalen was initially informed by the Irish Consulate that the two performers planned a visit to Vancouver while on a current tour.

With the support of Irish Consul-General Frank Flood and the Welsh Society’s Social Committee, Lynn then proceeded to organize an informal afternoon of music and hospitality in the Red Dragon lounge at the Cambrian Hall.

Pianist Máire Carroll has an impressive list of performances and academic achievements.

She has played in venues all over the world, including Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, London’s Barbican Centre, Dublin’s National Concert Hall, and many other venues throughout Europe, Asia and North America.

Máire is also very innovative. In 2018 she launched a concert series called ‘Hidden Pianos’, where she played to audiences in unfamiliar spaces such as the Dublin Port Waterways and introduced the series to primary schools in the Dublin Docklands.

Her most recent project was called ‘Classical Collision’, which included a performance at Ireland’s annual Body and Soul Festival last summer.

Máire began her studies at the age of four at the Royal Irish Academy of



ACCLAIMED GUEST ARTISTS Dewi Garmon Jones and Máire Carroll.

Music. She graduated with an M.Mus. degree with distinction at London’s Royal Academy of Music.

She was later awarded an LRAM degree and was the 2016 winner of the Royal Academy of Music’s Franz Reizenstein Award for outstanding achievement. She is currently completing her doctorate studies at Trinity College, Dublin and the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

French Horn player Dewi Garmon Jones also studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London. He has performed with Ireland’s RTE National Symphony Orchestra, the Halle Orchestra, the Liverpool Philharmonic, the Dublin Brass Ensemble and the Wexford Opera Festival Orchestra.

Dewi has also played for musical shows in London’s West End and on UK tours in productions such as *The Lion King*, *Les Miserables*, *West Side Story* and *Little Miss Sunshine*. He regularly tours with Ensemble Cymru and Sinfonia Cymru.

In 2019 he performed Puccini’s *Tosca* in Abu Dhabi, with Bryn Terfel in the leading role.

In earlier years, Dewi was Principal Horn of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales and is currently associate director of the ‘Hidden Pianos’ series launched by fellow performer Máire Carroll in 2018.

The Saturday afternoon event at the Cambrian Hall was an overwhelming success.

Audience members, predominantly from the Lower Mainland Welsh and Irish communities, were very appreciative of the guests’ performance while enjoying a convivial atmosphere that included a bar service and snacks prepared by Welsh Society members.

Lynn Owens-Whalen opened the event by welcoming the audience to the Cambrian Hall and by reminding all those present how valuable an asset the hall was to the Welsh community.

She invited everyone present to visit the hall during an open house on St. David’s Day, March 1.

Before introducing the two guest artists, Consul-General Frank Flood emphasized the importance of maintaining social and cultural connections between the two Celtic Nations and said he was pleased to see so many representatives of the Irish community in the audience.

The Cambrian Hall audience was honoured to be entertained by these two distinguished and talented performers. Both included in their repertoire music resonant of their respective homelands.

Máire’s program included piano pieces she had composed or arranged herself and other classical pieces inspired by Irish composers, while Dewi included in his program a couple of familiar Welsh folk tunes.

Following their musical presentations, Máire and Dewi spent some time socializing with audience members and both promised to return to Vancouver and the Cambrian Hall in the near future.

## I/CAN: Offering cross-Canada support with immigration and wellness/mental health

TORONTO – The national mandate at The Eamonn O’Loghlin Irish Canadian Immigration Centre (aka I/CAN) includes provision of services across Canada.

Outside of Toronto, we currently have a critical mass of clients in Vancouver (some of you might remember we used to provide on the ground outreach in Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, and Fort McMurray, but since 2015 we receive fewer queries from those locales).

Though clients may reach out at any time via our toll-free line or email, our team travels to Vancouver throughout the year to provide in-person outreach and information on immigration (particularly with respect to permanent residency).

We recently upscaled services to Vancouver and now offer a monthly seminar that addresses immigration and wellness/mental health supports.

As I write this, I have just landed back in Toronto following three rain-soaked (records were broken!), inspiring days in Vancouver.

In addition to hosting a large format workshop on Express Entry (Canada’s system for processing PR applications for skilled workers), I had the privilege of joining the Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce-Vancouver (ICCCVan) event ‘Women Leading Change’, participating as a panelist alongside Pauline O’Malley and Gerri Sinclair.

Event organizers Bríd Dunne and Aoife Dowling programmed an impactful evening with thought-provoking questions inviting robust feedback from the audience.

The following day on February 1, once

again I was a panelist, this time at Lá Fhéile Bríde (the St. Brigid’s Day Festival) organized by the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C., the Irish Women’s Network of B.C., and Simon Fraser University.

In a conversation moderated by Maura De Freitas, Suzie Newman (Orchard Recovery Centre), Dr. Máire Durbin (Orchard Recovery Centre), Amy O’Sullivan (Darkness into Light-Vancouver) and I addressed “Mental Health and the Irish Diaspora from a women’s perspective.”

This proved to be a considerable, relevant two hours as women from the floor shared insights and asked tough questions and panelists sign-posted to critical services in Vancouver.

I commend organizers for their vision in programming events with real purpose and actionable take-aways.

If you know of anyone who could avail of I/CAN’s service, please do send them our way: [www.irishcdn.org](http://www.irishcdn.org).

# ICCCVan presents excellent discussion on the topic 'Women Leading Change'

VANCOUVER – Thursday, January 30 saw the Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce Vancouver (ICCCVan) host a panel discussion on the topic of 'Women Leading Change'.

ICCCVan Vice-President Bríd Dunne opened the evening speaking of the Chamber's mission to bring professionals in our Irish community together so that they can learn from and support each other.

The Chamber was founded in 2017 and has grown from strength-to-strength over the last number of years, including the launch of the BC/Ireland Business Directory and a doubling of their membership.

Dunne spoke of the Lá Fhéile Bríde festival providing the ideal opportunity to celebrate a day that is increasingly seen as an opportunity to commend and applaud the strong women of Ireland.

Seeing that through their Ireland-Canada lens, organizers with ICCCVan

were excited to be able to bring together an incredible panel of women, with experiences from both side of the Atlantic Ocean.

And with that, the three panelists took to the stage at the Vancouver Club.

- Pauline O'Malley developer of RevTurbo, a business development methodology based on behavioural psychology. O'Malley is also the author of *Lifestyle Selling Women* and is the Founding Chair of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade's Leaders of Tomorrow student mentorship program.

- Dr. Gerri Sinclair, Managing Director of Kensington Capital Partners, is responsible for directing the \$100 BC Tech Fund.

Dr. Sinclair is also a digital strategy adviser at Vancity Credit Union. Gerri was the founder and CEO of NCompass Labs, the digital content management company acquired by Microsoft in 2001. At this year's Business in Vancouver Influential Women in Business Award Gerri will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.

- Cathy Murphy, Executive Director I/CAN – the Irish Canadian Immigra-

tion Centre that offers outreach and information in areas such as employment, social services, and immigration. Cathy is also VP of the European Union Chamber of Commerce Canada.

Moderating the panel discussion was Aoife Dowling, Director, Digital Banking Solutions with Vancity.

It was an amazing evening of thought-provoking conversation.

The discussion opened by asking "Why do we still need to have Gender Equality conversations?" and ended by

contemplating where next the panelists and the audience wanted to lead change.

Even after the panel discussion had ended and the panelists had left the stage, the conversations continued as guests mingled throughout the room introducing themselves and making impactful connections.

The next ICCCVan event will be their annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast Celebration on the morning of March 17 in the Terminal City Club.

For all the details, and to get your tickets, check out [www.icccvan.ca/events](http://www.icccvan.ca/events). Tickets are limited, so be sure to get yours early.

Don't forget the Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce Vancouver (ICCCVan) is a not-for-profit organisation so all ticket sales go towards the costs of running the business networking events they hold.

Membership is currently as little as \$50 for 12 months and entitles you to heavily discounted tickets to their events.



GUEST PANELISTS: Cathy Murphy, Pauline O'Malley, Gerri Sinclair.



GUESTS at the ICCCVan 'Women Leading Change' event. [Foreground] Vice Consul General, Jennifer Bourke with Joanne McAllister. [Background] Consul General, Frank Flood.



ICCCVan Board: Alan Cosgrave, Bríd Dunne, Ruairi Spillane, Aoife Dowling, Brendan Dalton (not pictured Mary Hatch).

We wish you all a very

**Happy  
St. Patrick's  
Day!**



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# Deal or no deal, UK consumers face higher prices post-Brexit

LONDON – A British retail group has warned that even if the UK negotiates a trade agreement with the European Union, it will face higher tariffs and extensive checks.

Following the UK's official departure from the European Union on January 31, 2020, formal negotiations will be launched next month to begin the process of forming a new trade relationship.

During its membership of the EU's Customs Union and Single Market the UK was able to import and export goods seamlessly. But the UK Government has said that border controls will be needed to ensure the right customs and excise duties are collected and borders are kept secure after the 11-month transition period ends on December 31, 2020.

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) said that without practical agreements with the EU, companies could be required to produce a mountain of paperwork at border crossings – VAT sales tax and excise documents, freight documents, health and veterinary paperwork, export health certificates, exit and entry summary declarations, and safety and security permits.

"The issue is simple – higher tariffs and extensive checks will harm consumers, retailers, and the UK economy. The government must set about to negotiate a zero tariff agreement that minimizes checks and red tape otherwise it will be consumers who suffer as a result," said BRC chief executive Helen Dickinson.

Almost 80 percent of all the food that UK retailers import comes from the EU. The lobby group said the government must establish import and export processes along with the infrastructure needed to conduct the necessary checks.

It said staff will need to be hired and trained to carry out these checks, while IT systems will need to be adapted and tested. Holding facilities for lorries, particularly at the key ports of Dover and Folkestone in southern England, will also need to be built.

Meanwhile, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and chief negotiator Michel Barnier have both cast doubt on Boris Johnson's aim to reach a comprehensive agreement by the end of the year.

The EU has repeatedly warned that the UK cannot expect to enjoy continued "high-quality" market access if it insists on diverging from EU social and environmental standards.

The European Parliament has called for the UK to follow EU rules in a host of areas, such as chemicals regulation, food labelling and subsidies for companies, as part of a process of "dynamic alignment." But UK ministers have repeatedly ruled out such a close regulatory relationship.

A Downing Street spokesperson said, "Our approach is clear – we are not asking for anything special, bespoke or unique, but are looking for a deal like those the EU has struck previously with other friendly countries like Canada.

It should be noted however that CETA (the "Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement" between Canada and the European Union) took years to negotiate and was about 22 years in the making and is yet to be ratified.

But this was a relatively simple trade agreement that does not include the



THE UK'S LONG-SUFFERING FISHING FLEET were expecting to finally catch a break with a prospective Brexit bonus instead they're getting torpedoed according to Jim Pettipher of the Coastal Producers Organisation.

services provisions and deals on non-tariff barriers that a big exporter of professional services such as Britain will almost certainly require.

Deals between larger economies such as the US/EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the US/Asia deal known as the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) proved so complicated and controversial that they have collapsed under their own political weight.

Meanwhile, just when the UK's long-suffering fishing fleet were expecting to finally catch a break with a prospective Brexit bonus, instead they're getting torpedoed according to Jim Pettipher of the Coastal Producers Organisation.

Skippers of more than 2,100 vessels in England have been ordered to use a

new Catch Recording App in a bid to collect more detailed information on how much fish is being caught by small-scale fishermen.

Concerned industry representatives say the technology roll-out could sound the death knell for traditional fishing, just as Britain prepares to cut itself from the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

Furious officials have accused the fishing regulator, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), of having "torpedoed" the survival chances of the English industry with the imposition of its £1.8 million Catch App.

Under 10 metre boats, which account for 80 percent of all UK vessels, are being forced to use the app to record the weight of their catch accurately – or risk a criminal record and fine.

## Boris Johnson appoints new U.S. ambassador amid Donald Trump 'fury' over Huawei

LONDON – Boris Johnson has appointed a new British ambassador to the United States amid reports of a furious row with President Donald Trump over Chinese tech giant Huawei.

Dame Karen Pierce, currently the UK permanent representative to the United Nations, will become the first woman to hold the post, Downing Street said.

She replaces Sir Kim Darroch, who was forced to stand down last year after diplomatic cables he wrote criticising the Trump White House were leaked to the press.

Since joining the Foreign Office in 1981, Pierce has been posted to Tokyo, the Balkans and Geneva. She served as the UK's ambassador to Afghanistan in 2015 and 2016.

She became political director at the Foreign Office, a leading domestic diplomatic position, before heading to the UN.

There she has regularly crossed swords with Russia over its conduct in the Syrian civil war, arguing its sup-

port for Bashar al-Assad's regime has weakened Vladimir Putin's moral authority.

Pierce has a blunt speaking style when necessary and fought back strongly against suggestions that British influence at the UN was on the wane because of Brexit.

Her appointment comes amid reports that the president was "apoplectic" at Johnson's decision to give Huawei a role in building the UK's 5G network.

The *Financial Times* reported that British officials were taken aback by the force of Trump's language when the prime minister telephoned to explain the move.

It followed intensive lobbying from Washington that allowing a Chinese supplier access to the country's critical communications networks would constitute a major security risk.

U.S. officials repeatedly warned that they would withhold intelligence-sharing from any ally which did so.

Downing Street refused to be drawn directly on the report, insisting that the relationship with the U.S. remained "excellent." However there was no di-



FORMER DEPUTY at the Treasury, Chief Secretary Rishi Sunak has been appointed to replace the British Chancellor of the Exchequer Sajid Javid following his dramatic resignation.

## Sajid Javid quits as British Chancellor amid disagreement with Boris Johnson

LONDON – Sajid Javid has dramatically quit as British Chancellor of the Exchequer in a disagreement with Boris Johnson over his closest aides.

The British prime minister had been expected to keep Javid in his post and news of his resignation shocked Westminster on Thursday, February 13.

Allies of the former chancellor said the prime minister had ordered him to fire all of his senior aides if he wanted to remain at the Treasury – something Javid refused to do.

He resigned rather than have many of his powers stripped and handed over to Johnson's aides in 10 Downing Street.

The chancellor is considered Britain's second-most powerful official after the prime minister and now his former deputy at the Treasury, Chief Secretary Rishi Sunak, will take the job having reportedly agreed to a joint Number 10-Number 11 team of advisers.

The bombshell came after long-standing rumours of tensions between the ex-chancellor and Johnson's closest

aide Dominic Cummings.

In August he had fired Javid's aide Sonia Khan and it appears Number 10 wanted to go further in keeping a closer eye on the chancellor.

In appointing Sunak, a 39-year-old former investment banker who won his seat in Parliament only in 2015, Johnson is out to make sure that the Treasury will not curb his free-spending agenda.

Javid said that "no self-respecting minister" could accept the condition being imposed.

He had walked smiling into Number 10 in a sign that he expected to remain in place ahead of the March 11 Budget.

His departure came after Julian Smith was unceremoniously dumped as Northern Ireland Secretary, Andrea Leadsom was sacked as Business Secretary and Theresa Villiers lost her job as Environment Secretary.

Other senior ministers axed by Boris Johnson included Geoffrey Cox from his post as attorney general, and Esther McVey as housing minister.



DAME KAREN PIERCE will become the first woman to hold the post of British Ambassador to the United States. One of Britain's most senior diplomat she is now the UK permanent representative to the United Nations.

rect denial of the claims. But the claims add to the sense that Dame Karen – one of Britain's most senior diplomats – may have her work cut out when she takes up her new role once her appointment is formally approved by the Americans.

As well as the differences over Huawei, the two countries are at odds over the UK's plan to impose a tax on U.S. tech giants, with the Americans threatening to retaliate with tariffs on the UK car industry.

The UK is also pressing for the extradition of the wife of a U.S. intelligence official charged with causing the death of 19-year-old motorcyclist Harry Dunn, whom the Americans are refusing to hand over.

At the same time, the government in London is anxious to secure an early post-Brexit free trade deal with the U.S. now that the UK has formally left the EU.

Pierce said she was "honoured" to have been asked to take up the post. "I think it is the UK's single most important relationship. There is a deep bond between Britain and the U.S., built on many pillars," she said.

# Major incident declared in South Wales after Storm Dennis



IN SOUTH WALES, residents of Nantgarw in a rescue boat being evacuated by emergency teams.

THOUSANDS were left without power on Sunday, February 16 after Storm Dennis swept across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, bringing heavy rains and strong winds.

In the UK roads and flooded railway lines were shut down. Flood warnings reached an all-time record, with a staggering 594 in place across England as evacuations took place across the country.

Severe flood warnings were issued for the Scottish Borders and for the River Neath in South Wales, while local media reported the River Taff had burst its banks at Pontypool.

The situation was said to be "life-threatening" in South Wales, where the Met Office issued a red warning due to heavy rainfall and flooding risk.

Police there declared a major incident as people were moved to emergency rescue centres after their properties and businesses were devastated by water from overflowing rivers.

Some areas sustained heavy damage as streets were evacuated with the help of lifeboats in some of the worst-hit areas.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service area manager Ian Greenman said the service had received an "unprecedented" 1,300 calls during Sunday and had carried out 76 life rescues.

One of the worst-hit areas in South Wales was the village of Nantgarw, Rhondda Cynon Taff, near Cardiff, which had seen entire streets left underwater since the early hours of Sunday morning.

Emergency teams including firefighters and volunteers had been evacuat-

ing the village's Oxford Street since around 5 AM and were still working midday on Sunday.

Paul Mason, group manager of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, said the scene his team had faced was the worst he had experienced in his 31-year career.

He said, "We started getting calls at 5 AM. The water was up to the window sills in some instances, so we sent a number of boats and crews down here to assist with our partner agencies, systematically going through each of the houses, knocking on doors, trying to prioritise individuals."

"This weather is unprecedented. We haven't seen this, it's incredible, and it's right throughout the South Wales Valleys. In my 31 years in the service this is the worst I've ever seen. I've never experienced anything like this before."

In the Scottish Borders people were advised to evacuate from their homes on the night of Saturday, February 15 as Storm Dennis swept through the area.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) issued the advice for residents in Hawick due to the conditions.

SEPA flood duty manager Mark McLaughlin said, "Severe Flood Warnings for areas in the Scottish Borders have been issued tonight as we continue to see rivers respond to the impacts of Storm Dennis."

"These warnings mean that extensive flooding is expected to properties and businesses with many roads impassable. Some evacuations have been advised."

"The Severe Flood Warnings have been issued for Teviot and Slitrig at Hawick and Newcastleton. We advise people to stay away from flood water and to not take unnecessary risks."

Over the weekend, the military was deployed to build flood defenses in West Yorkshire in areas where people were still struggling to repair their homes after the floods caused by Storm Ciara just days earlier.

It was estimated that more than 40,000 travellers were affected by the disruption on air, rail and road networks and more than 700 homes in westerly Cornwall were left without power.



ABERYSTWYTH seafront in Ceredigion, Wales is battered with gigantic waves from Storm Dennis on Saturday, February 15.

## Wales won't be intimidated in post-Brexit negotiations, says First Minister

CARDIFF, Wales – Wales will not be intimidated out of fighting for its interests in future negotiations with the European Union after Brexit, Mark Drakeford has said.

The Welsh first minister also said the UK Government would have a "fight on its hands" if it decided to retain powers returning from the EU which fell into devolved areas of law.

Drakeford was speaking at the Pierhead Building in Cardiff Bay, where he said Wales would "remain a proudly European nation" but warned it and the rest of the UK would experience "stresses and strains" in the coming years.

He said "Brexit may have happened

but we are yet to step out into that brave new world.

"And while Brexit may be done in that narrow sense, the impact of Brexit, the form of Brexit is with us for years to come."

"Here in Wales and in the Welsh Government, we will not be hoodwinked by any simplistic assertion that Brexit is now over and done."

"We will not be browbeaten by the assertion that the decision to leave the EU is a decision that brings an end to debate or to discussion."

"And we will not simply be bored into submission by the reality that Brexit is with us not just for today but for years and years to come."

During a question and answer session,

Drakeford said Wales and the other devolved nations should be given a "guaranteed place" in the forming of the UK's negotiating mandate, and be part of negotiations which depended on devolved matters.

He added, "If the UK Government thinks the way to sustain the UK after the EU is to act unilaterally, to ride roughshod over the responsibilities that have been devolved to Wales – devolved because of two referendums – then I say here, as I've said directly to them, they have a fight on their hands."

Drakeford also warned those who complained about being "rule takers" in the EU would instead now have to be rule takers to the U.S. in order to trade with it in the future.



### VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY

## March 1 is St. David's Day and you're invited to join the festivities

VANCOUVER – The Vancouver Welsh Society will celebrate St. David's Day on Sunday, March 1 with an open house in the Cambrian Hall's Red Dragon lounge.

The event is open to the public along with members of the Welsh Society and everyone is invited to enjoy a day of entertainment and activities. Refreshments will include traditional Welsh cakes and leek soup.

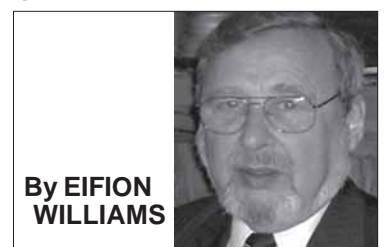
As in years past, there will also be a 'Druid's ceremony', a simulation of the Welsh National Eisteddfod's Gorsedd ceremony, ending with the archdruid's call for 'Peace'.

Doors will open at 2:30 PM for the open house which is expected to continue into the evening.

The traditional St. David's Day dinner will be held on the evening of Saturday, February 29 with guest of honour Surrey-based harpist and classically trained singer Leanne Page.

Leanne will be making a welcome return to the Cambrian Hall after delighting audiences at previous performances with her melodious playing and beautiful voice.

Many will remember Leanne's performance, together with her son



By EIFION WILLIAMS

Connor on classical guitar, at the Cambrian Hall's 90th anniversary concert at West Point Grey United Church last October.

On Saturday, March 7, there will be another Ceilidh/Twmpath/barn dance at the Cambrian Hall featuring the popular Rattlebone Band.

This event has become popular with participants of all ages, providing lots of fun and social interaction.

Dance steps are taught and called on the spot. Refreshments including beer, wine, soft drinks and snacks will be available for sale.

In addition to the above events, the Vancouver Welsh Society offers several monthly activities, including a bilingual church service, Welsh learning classes and Welsh speaking classes, a genealogy group, a book club and Welsh Spirit events.

Further information on all the above events can be found on the Vancouver Welsh Society's website: [www.welshsociety.com](http://www.welshsociety.com).

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PRO-EU CAMPAIGNERS take part in a 'Missing EU Already' rally outside the Scottish Parliament on January 31, 2020 when the UK officially left the European Union.

## Report says Independent Scotland 'would face five year wait to rejoin EU'

EDINBURGH – An independent Scotland would take four to five years to rejoin the EU, a major new report has revealed.

And it warns that Scotland would effectively be forced to adopt the euro or see its influence shrink within the EU.

The report, entitled 'The EU Blueprint Pathway for Scotland's Accession to the European Union Under Independence', was published by political scientist Anthony Salamone in Edinburgh.

It urges Scotland to rejoin the Brussels bloc after a Yes vote as this would be in the country's "economic, social and geostrategic interests."

Scotland will be in a "strong position to satisfy the political and economic dimensions" of EU membership, the report adds.

"Scotland's accession would not pose a challenge to the EU's integration capacity," it states.

And although the length of accession process is not defined, it would not happen immediately.

"Scotland will reasonably take 4-5 years to join the EU," it adds. "The government should adopt a target to EU accession of four years."

In the meantime, Scotland should seek to broker an "Association Agreement" on issues like customs and trade.

A majority of Scots (62 percent) voted to Remain in the EU in the Brexit referendum on 2016, but the weight of

*"Scotland will be in a strong position to satisfy the political and economic dimensions"*

votes south of the border swung the outcome in favour of Leave.

Nicola Sturgeon is demanding the right to hold a fresh referendum on independence this year in response to Brexit and would seek to rejoin the EU after independence.

The Scottish Government has insisted it has no plans to join the EU single currency if it becomes member state.

The report accepts that the EU would not require Scotland to join the euro at a "particular time" and it would be up to Scotland to determine this issue.

But new members must eventually "participate fully" in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) which includes joining the euro.

"The eurozone is a core aspect of the Union and the locus for most dimensions of future political integration," it adds.

"The longer the Republic were to remain outside of the euro, the less influence it will have in its operation and, by extension, the Union."

## Royal watching in Victoria, B.C. ...but not as we know it!



By  
HARRY  
McGRATH

EDINBURGH – Looking for news stories from western Canada in the British media is like watching for a blue moon, but with less expectation of success.

I have been on the lookout since returning to Scotland 12 years ago and can count the number of stories that I have spotted on one hand.

For instance, there was a brief flurry of British press interest in Vancouver after the hockey riot of 2011 though, generally speaking, there was a lot more 'in pictures' coverage than reporting or analysis.

Looking back at *The Guardian's* 'world gallery' of fires, fights and police horses, it's not hard to understand why even broadsheets couldn't resist the temptation to prioritise images over text. From there things were quiet for a long time.

The detention of Huawei's global chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, in Vancouver in 2018 got some media attention here. But the fact that it took place in Vancouver was secondary to the international power play between China and the United States.

Prior to the Huawei story, it was Victoria that made headlines here when it was discovered to be the home of Aggregate IQ, a small marketing company which had been lavishly funded by Vote Leave and other groups with an interest in Britain departing the EU.

The story ran on as the main actors in AIQ were subject to political enquiries in Britain and in Canada.

While the big story was the contribution a small Victoria company made to Brexit, it was also fascinating (at least to me) to watch the British press struggle to understand anything about Victoria, not least the fact that it is something of a tech hub.

Instead British Columbia's capital city was routinely described as "the back of beyond" or "the middle of nowhere."

Eventually Channel 4 sent a journalist over to the "Canadian backwaters." He travelled around on a small boat, mispronounced Cowichan, stared through the window of recently vacated offices in downtown Victoria and met some Canadians who politely informed him that they weren't keen to help him find anyone.

Eventually he ran into a conspiracy theorist who saw dark forces at work everywhere and had to settle for interrogating him.

Which brings us in a roundabout way to Harry and Meghan and whatever the British press learned about Victoria via the AIQ story doesn't seem to have taken root.

This may have something to do with



DOWNTOWN VICTORIA, B.C. – The Victoria Inner Harbour is one of the most beautiful harbours in the world and serves as the gateway to the city's historic streets and distinctive architecture. It is also just steps from the Parliament Buildings, home to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

the fact that investigative journalists and royal correspondents are entirely different breeds but I suspect there is more to it than that.

When the news first broke that the royal couple had "gone to Canada," there was an outbreak of speculation about how cold they would be and remarkably little interest in where exactly they were in the world's second largest country.

Belatedly narrowing it down to Victoria didn't stop the snow and ice caricatures despite the fact that Victoria's weather is broadly similar to London's.

And descriptions of Vancouver Island were sometimes excruciating with one journalist describing it as "a resort island near Vancouver."

It was something of a relief, then, when my friend and Victoria resident Michael Elcock popped in the Scottish Review with some actual knowledge to impart.

Michael pointed out that while Victoria may not be on a resort island, it has often been a place of refuge for high profile people who need a break from public scrutiny.

These include Bob Hope, John Wayne, Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, Shirley Temple and Princess Margaret.

Michael ascribes Victoria's popularity with famous types to the fact that the locals leave them alone.

I was in Victoria when the news broke that the royals were around and, while I had no luck spotting the other Harry from my barstool perch in the Bard and Banker, I did watch some local television interviewees insisting that that the couple's privacy should be respected.

Friends have since told me stories of small Victoria businesses that were closed to paparazzi and people refusing to talk to British media outlets.

And this is no small thing. Most royal watching is mere stuff and nonsense but everyone remembers the treatment Princes Diana received from some in Britain's media, not least Prince Harry himself who is now openly talking about it.

The news just broke here about the suicide of a former host of a 'dating reality' television show called *Love Island*.

When her death was announced one of Britain's more virulent tabloids took down a story that mocked her.

It was originally published on St. Valentine's Day, the day before she died.

So more power to the collective elbow of Victoria's citizens as they politely spurn British media advances and guard the privacy of the now former royals.

And here's hoping Harry and Meghan stay where they are and wait for the British press to forget (again) where Victoria is. Shouldn't be long now.



JUST HOURS before the UK formally left the European Union, Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon addressed SNP supporters in Edinburgh to unveil new measures as part of a push towards an independent Scotland.



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# The Outlander Effect: The popular book and TV series is increasing travel to these Scottish sites

**B**EST-SELLING author Diana Gabaldon hadn't even set foot in Scotland when she began the book that launched the popular *Outlander* series.

But she's made the country so attractive to readers – and to watchers of the Starz television program – that the Scottish government's tourism agency gave her an honorary Thistle Award for generating a flood of visitors to the fens, glens, jagged mountains and soft jade landscapes she so alluringly describes.

According to numbers from VisitScotland, *Outlander* has increased tourism by an average of 67 percent at the sites mentioned in the books or used in filming.

Gabaldon, who is from Phoenix, Arizona, wrote the first book and part of the second before traveling to Scotland.

As a research professor pre-Internet, she read exhaustively to craft indelible images of Scottish places for the "practice novel" she kept secret from her husband.

When the unfinished draft sold in a three-book deal for a "staggering amount of money at the time," Gabaldon let her professorship lapse and headed to Scotland.

Despite having no Scottish heritage, she says, "I remember seeing the green land rising and thinking, 'This feels like home.'"

She and her husband parked at Carter Bar, where she posed for a photo in front of the England-Scotland border stone.

This stone appears in Book 3, *Voyager*, where the character Jamie says of it, "Looks like the sort of stone to last a while," according to fan Karen Henry, who blogs at Outlandish Observations.

If you long to visit after being exposed to the sweeping vistas and compelling history in the books and the show – for which Gabaldon (68) is consultant and wrote several episodes – here are some spots to include on the itinerary.

Inverness: "It's called the heart of the Highlands," says Gabaldon of the city she names as her first recommendation, "and has reverberations through the third book and on into the rest of the series.

"It's where the entire clan system came to a screeching halt." In the show, however, Inverness is played by another city, Falkland

Culloden Battlefield, five miles from Inverness: Here, the Jacobite rebellion ended in one hour of brutal bloodshed in 1746.

"The Scots really didn't have a chance," says Judy Lowstuter, owner of Celtic Journeys travel company.

After the loss to the English, Scots "were not permitted to speak Gaelic, and in the Highlands that's all they spoke. They wouldn't let them wear



WITH ITS CONICAL ROOF, Preston Mill is unusually shaped. In the show, Jamie hides under the wheel.



THE MEMORIAL CAIRN at Culloden Battlefield, near Inverness. There are also memorial stones for the various clans that fought there.



DOUNE CASTLE, a medieval courtyard fortress built around 1400 by Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany, stands in for Castle Leoch in the "Outlander" TV series.

kilts or play bagpipes; the whole culture was extinguished."

A battlefield is a somber place to visit, but Hugh Allison, former property manager at Culloden who now owns Inverness Tours, says he's found a way to help U.S. visitors relate to the site.

"You could make the argument that this is the battle that formed the United States of America," he says.

Its repercussions emptied English and French treasuries, which meant England's King George III called for more taxes in the American colonies, "and we know where that went."

At Culloden, various clans have memorial stones on the battlefield. Although the character Jamie Fraser is fictional, his clan is not.

And yes, that clan has a stone on the battlefield as well.

Falkland Palace, Falkland, Fife: This beautiful hunting palace has marvelous gardens and the oldest tennis court in Scotland, where Mary, Queen of Scots, and her father played.

Besides serving as an apothecary in the show's "Hail Mary" episode, the palace appears in the inaugural episode if you know where to look for it, according to Allison.

Claire peers in the window of the ironmonger (a term used until the 1970s in Scotland to mean "hardware store") at a blue vase.

"Look over her shoulder and you'll see the gatehouse of Falkland Palace," Allison says.

Doune Castle, Doune, Perthshire: This medieval stronghold that plays Castle Leoch on TV conveys visible poignancy: Claire and Frank visit it in ruins in the show's "modern day" 1940s, and Claire returns when it is in its heyday.

Visits to the castle have increased 227 percent since the Starz series debuted in 2014, according to a report called "The Outlander Effect & Tourism," commissioned by VisitScotland last year, the highest rise for the filming sites in the study.

Some sites are off the tourist path for other reasons.

The Reverend Wakefield's home, where characters settle into the library to conduct research, is a private house not open to visitors, according to Jenni Steele, the film and creative industries manager at VisitScotland.

"There are a lot of locations in the series that I cannot promote," she said.

"They might be on private land, or a historic structure delicate in its fabric that can't cope with too many visitors."

Preston Mill, East Linton, near Edinburgh: This is another site that has benefited from needed repairs.

The old mill's wheel, under which Jamie hid from English soldiers, was jammed, but Steele said *Outlander* fans responded enthusiastically to a funding appeal for restoration work, and the target was reached quickly.

Astonishingly, all the locations for *Outlander*, excepting South Africa, were filmed in Scotland. The VisitScotland website features 42 shooting sites up through Season 4, and after Season 5 ends, its locations will be added, too.

The Scots praise Gabaldon not just for the tourists she's brought but for her generosity of spirit and sense of kinship with the country.

There are tales of book signings that didn't end until 2:30 AM, benefits for hospice associations, sandwich shops that gave her food on the house because she did so much to raise the local economy.

"People may go to Scotland thinking of Jamie and Claire, but when they come home, it's Scotland in their minds, because of the way Diana has represented Scotland in the books," Lowstuter says.

"She kept very true to the history and magic of Scotland, embellished by her ability to bring it to life on the page."



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# Reflections on a Vancouver St. Patrick's Day Long Past

FRIEND reminded me recently of a St. Patrick's Day many moons past when we first met down at Heritage Hall on Main Street and I started thinking back to those days with a bit of nostalgia.

A

I had almost forgotten those high-spirited young times when we were busy being the bad boys and girls in the crowd.

We were always up to something...usually not good, and having such a great laugh doing it.

That particular celebration was a day-long event and, of course, I was there with my little booth selling Jimmy Reddy's exquisite Celtic jewellery. I was always working at something on St. Patrick's Day.

From one end to the other, the room was festooned in green, white and gold and literally hummed with raised Irish voices as people talked and joked and bantered back and forth....and enjoyed a few drinks.

There was a warm greeting at the door for everyone and all the familiar characters were on the scene.

The Stage Eireann ladies were selling hot dogs for \$1 and engaged in the usual minor squabbles.

Bernie Percy was behind the bar lining up the Irish coffees and keeping a close eye on the cash. Marie Morris and company were on the door with a warm Irish welcome to the festivities for everyone.

Pat Warren was up on stage as the usual genial host and master of ceremonies. Some of the usual actors stepped up to perform their party piece, while other talented volunteers sang their hearts out.

Then Vi Moore arrived with a flurry surrounded by her dancers but couldn't get her music to work, so everyone ran around trying to somehow get it hooked up to the PA system. A few eyes rolled to the sky while others tut-tutted that some things never change.

Earlier in the day it was mostly families with troops of kids and young dancers running through the place, but as day stretched into evening, the children began to fade from view and still more people crammed into the old hall.

By nighttime the room was literally rocking with the band blasting out all the favourite tunes. The dance floor was so packed you couldn't move, and it was impossible to hear anything coherent over the music.

Hopeful crowds kept lining up outside trying to get in the door to join the craic, but chances were fading fast in that department.

Finally, as a prank, late in the evening, someone decided to pull the fire alarm but you couldn't hear a thing over the din, so everyone just carried right along. (I swear to God by the way it wasn't us....but I have my suspicions!)

Then, the fire department arrived in full gear but still no one noticed as the party was in full swing.

When the fire marshal arrived and saw the state of the room, he nearly had a fit with people hanging from the rafters. He tried to get someone to pay

By MAURA DE FREITAS



MARIE MORRIS with Veronica Stabler, two of the original members of the local Irish theatre group, Stage Eireann.

attention but nobody cared and everyone just kept dancing.

Finally, exasperated, he pulled the plug on the PA and shut down the music.

He was nearly beside himself trying to get a handle on the scene and roared out that the room was dangerously overcrowded so the party was over.

Everyone was very obliging once the situation became clear and one-by-one, with a shrug and good humour, they began to drift away. It was a great night but everyone accepted that sooner or



BILL FORBES onstage singing his heart out on St. Patrick's Day with Pat Warren at Heritage Hall. They are both departed now for greener pastures but never forgotten by friends and family.

later it all had to come to an end.

Such is life....and, as I reflect back on those days, I think of so many of those lovely people who have also now left our lives forever.

Those of us who were once so full of mischief have now grown older but we look back with fondness on times we thought would never end.

We didn't realize how fleeting were the days and how soon they would all be just memories. How glad I am to have shared them with such friends.



LOCAL Celtic artist Brian MacIsaac [now owner of Crannóg Ales], Sharon Brown, Patricia (Warren) Burke, and Janet Feirin [former owner of Aran Bakery] at a St. Patrick's Day celebration at Heritage Hall hosted by Stage Eireann on Main Street in Vancouver.



THE HERITAGE HALL is an historical building on Main Street in Vancouver, dating back to 1914. It has served many functions over the years, having originally opened as a civic Post Office. For a period of time it fell into disrepair until a passionate community group in the early 1980s spearheaded the reconstruction and the development of the site into the multipurpose resource space that it is today. The interior boasts a 3,300 square foot, French-inspired ballroom that features many re-conceived details, including a large mural, a tile floor, and stained glass chandeliers.



MARIE MORRIS and Pat Warren presenting Pat McCay with the coveted door prize: A beautiful painting of Killarney town by Dick Morris.

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# BEANNACHTAÍ NA FÉILE PADRAIG

The Blessings of St. Patrick on You



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# BEANNACHTAÍ NA FÉILE PADRAIG

The Blessings of St. Patrick on You



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from Seattle's Irish Heritage Club and the  
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and warm your heart and home.  
May good and faithful friends be yours,  
Wherever you may roam.  
May peace and plenty bless your world  
with joy that long endures.  
May all life's passing seasons  
bring the best to you and yours!*

Pat and Staff Wish Customers and Friends  
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# BEANNACHTAÍ NA FÉILE PADRAIG

The Blessings of St. Patrick on You



Page 4

## HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

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## IRISH CLUB WHITE ROCK

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### Irish Quotes

When I came back to Dublin I was court martialled in my absence and sentenced to death in my absence, so I said they could shoot me in my absence.

— Brendan Behan [1923-1964]  
(Irish author noted for his earthy satire and powerful political commentary.)

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TOURISM IRELAND representatives toured western Canada earlier this month with a delegation of 14 Irish and Canadian industry trade partners. The group included: Sandra Moffatt, Tourism Ireland; Rebecca Graham, Adams and Butler; Ellen Mitchell, Irish National Stud; Jennifer Bond, CIE; Dana Welch, Tourism Ireland; Eugene Garrihy, Doolin 2 Aran Ferries; Mark Odwyer, Secret Ireland Escapes; John Higgins, National Trust; Alison Metcalfe, Tourism Ireland; Avril Collins, Ireland's blue book; Fiona Delahunty, Griffin Group; Jonathan Sargeant, Royal Irish Tours; Aidan McNally, Teeling Whiskey; Jason Powell, Mid & East Antrim.

## 'Fill Your Heart With Ireland' and discover your heritage

VANCOUVER – Tourism Ireland led a delegation of 14 Irish and Canadian industry trade partners on a tour across western Canada earlier this month.

The group showcased the island of Ireland to travel agents and media in Vancouver, Langley, Calgary and Edmonton.

Tourism Ireland is the organization responsible for promoting the island of Ireland overseas as a leading holiday destination and representatives included: Dana Welch, manager for Canada; Alison Metcalfe, vice president of North America and Australia/New Zealand; and Jocelyn Black, publicity and communications executive.

The Vancouver event and workshop took place at the Hotel Georgia in downtown Vancouver and the theme this year was 'Fill Your Heart With Ireland'.

The presentation included a very col-



By  
**CATHOLINE BUTLER**

ourful and impressive video showing breathtaking landscapes from the Cliffs of Moher to the Giants Causeway and everywhere else in between.

Each delegate spoke about their area of tourism expertise and explained the various types of accommodations available such as hotels, bed and breakfasts, home farm stays, or booking to stay in one of the many castles of Ireland.

Various types of tours are available around the island from bus tours to every part of Ireland by bus, train, car rental, as well as boat tours to the Aran Islands with Garrihy's Doolin2Aran Ferries or Dublin Bay Cruises.

Ireland specializes in sumptuous supernatural foods from the sea and farm and the video highlighted some of these mouth-watering creations.

And, of course, who could forget to mention the pub night life in Ireland with the music, dancing and singing.

Two drinks that come to mind: Guinness – that legendary black creamy beverage for which the Emerald Isle is famous – and delicious Irish coffee topped with real whipped cream.

For anyone who has previously visited the island of Ireland, it could be time to plan a return visit and for those contemplating a first visit to the Emerald Isle...there is no better time!

Alison Metcalfe manages what is called the long-haul market and she said there are quite a lot of similarities between what motivates consumers for travel in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Australia and Canada are quite alike in terms of market size and what moti-



FRANK FLOOD the Consul General of Ireland was a guest at the Tourism Ireland event. He is pictured above (centre) with (L-R) Sandra Moffatt, Alison Metcalfe, and Dana Welch.

vates them to travel although Australia and New Zealand visitors do tend to stay a long time since they are typically coming to Europe for five or six weeks and on average spend about two weeks in Ireland.

She said, "Tourism Ireland is trying to encourage them to start or finish their vacations in Ireland. Now they can get to Dublin with one stop whereas before they had to fly to London or Amsterdam. Now it's through the Gulf and direct into Dublin, so it's much easier and you can start or finish your trip in Ireland.

She pointed out a number of key points that play a very important role in continuing to grow visitor numbers to Ireland.

- Tourism is the island of Ireland's largest indigenous industry, responsible for in excess of four percent of GNP in the Republic of Ireland and employing around 325,000 people across the island;

- In 2019 almost 11.2 million overseas visitors were welcomed to the island of Ireland, delivering revenue of almost 5.8 billion euro.

In the course of the presentation, Dana Welch spoke about the west coast as a key market for Tourism Ireland with 675,000 Canadians with Irish heritage in British Columbia.

She said access from western Canada has never been better. "In Vancouver, Air Canada is flying direct from April to October but we are hoping they will extend the service to year-round, especially with the number of Irish here now that are flying to and from Ireland.

"WestJet also flies from Calgary direct to Dublin, it's not year round yet but hopefully that will be extended.

"There are other options in that you could fly to Toronto and connect with flights to Ireland, that are year-round, or go to Seattle and fly direct with Aer Lingus."

Dana also indicated a big market increase from Canada in 2014 when year-round direct flights became available from Toronto to Ireland.

She said, "In 2018 we had 244,000 Canadians travelling to Ireland, last year we had about 250,000 and when all is said and done we will probably have larger numbers this year."

Canadians generally stay from nine to 10 nights and they are interested in ancient history, so that is a real motivator as they like to explore their own ancestry. One in four Canadians will also travel to Northern Ireland.

Asked about any impact Brexit might have on tourism to Ireland, particularly to the North of Ireland, Allison replied, "The good news is that there is no hard border, you can just drive across since there is no border stop.

"You just need a valid passport as far as tourism is concerned, but there is no change whatsoever. It's business as usual and there is no interruption in service."

Tourism Ireland's international website attracted 23 plus million visitors in 2019. It offers 29 market sites available in 11 language versions around the world. For more information, visit: [www.ireland.com](http://www.ireland.com).

## Keeping Faith in the Season of Spring

By CYNTHIA WALLENTINE

WITH the festivals of spring comes emergence, a time when faith must hold against the cold before the sprouts of the growing season are seen.

Our kind has forever celebrated the return of light to our hemisphere. Imbolg, Candlemas, Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, the Vernal Equinox, Easter or Eostre perhaps you can add to this list from your own traditions.

The spring months of any year are loaded with opportunities to recognize the importance of what is becoming while it is yet a seed.

We cannot know the traditions or meaning behind the actions taken by those whose feet crossed this earth thousands of years before ours.

From them, though, come some of the archaic beliefs and fragments upon which we hold to authenticate our festivals and locate ourselves in their great river of time. Belonging is as important as becoming.

Despite the removal of time, we are never far from the electricity that formed their thoughts, and kept their hearts beating.

We feel the cold, fear lack of food, gasp at the turn of worldly events, and love our family and friends. We live and we die. Our names and our selves will be forgotten. Are we so different?

The festivals of spring recognize and celebrate change.

Whether the birth of lambs, a celestial moment of balance, the rebirth of man



from a cave, or the rambunctious fertility of hare and egg these expressions of spring speak to change that is rarely seen, but which we know will take place.

This process by itself is the essence of faith holding at arm's length the worry of a hungry season with eyes scanning the horizon for the new thing that will change the current course of life.

St. Patrick's Day celebrates one form of faith. Another is the trust we have when we reach out to something be-

yond, something we cannot yet see.

While we may not recognize the form of the return, something will in time reach back to us as a result of our questing energy.

What is it that you wish to emerge in this spring season?

Perhaps you await the birth of a child, a new job, a return of health or a vaccine to stem a pandemic.

Maybe you seek the return of the lost, a more stable life, a new love, or change just for the sake of change.

While each unique wish is deeply personal, someone who walked this earth before you has wished for something similar, once upon a time.

We are the present, but we are not so far from our past. Keeping faith in that which is becoming heals the past and creates a path for us, and others, into the future.

May your heart be answered in the coming seasons. Blessed Be.

A NOTE: I had the opportunity recently to return to Vancouver for the conference, Lá Fhéile Bríde: Celebrating the Creativity of Women. I wish to thank Maura de Freitas and all those who organized and attended the conference. I feel genuinely blessed to have met and mingled with so many beautiful souls during the conference. Thank you so very much.

[Read more on pages 30 & 31]

# Our wonderful whirlwind visit to Dublin reminds me what a truly great city it is

GREETINGS from a wet and windy Bournemouth.

We are finally out of the European Union and there is a political calm after the idiotic Brexit storm.

Boris Johnson's emphatic victory in the election means he has a large majority and with the exception of the Scottish Nationalists all the other opposition parties are in disarray. Uncle Boris can do what he likes for the next four years. A scary thought.

So far there appears to be no difference to our lives, there are no food shortages, house prices have not tumbled, the bank interest remains the same...and it is still raining.

In Scotland there has been another sighting of the Loch Ness monster.

On January 18, Eoin O'Faodhagain, an Irish hospital clerk, spotted not one but two large objects splashing around on Loch Ness and captured it all on a webcam.

The video shows something rising from the water then disappearing. This is good news as the mythical creature is reputed to be worth £41million a year to the Scottish economy.

A second giant creature has been spotted in the Nahuel Huapi Lake in Argentina whose economy is flagging.

I believe Lough Neagh is the largest lake in Ireland. Watch this space.

Two weeks ago my wife and I made a flying visit to Dublin.

Our Canadian friends John and Laurie had flown over from Canada to celebrate Laurie's sixtieth birthday.

We decided to turn up at their hotel and surprise her. I had forgotten what a great city Dublin is although for us impoverished Brits the price of a pint of Guinness there is almost (but not quite) prohibitive.

## POSTCARD FROM BOURNEMOUTH

By  
**ELFAN JONES**



We had time to spare so we took a tour on the Hop on Hop off Bus Tour. This was brilliant.

The driver and guide informed us that we had arrived during the rainy season which starts on January 1 and ends on December 31.

We didn't hop on and hop off but remained on board and laughed for two hours all around Dublin.

There were so many interesting places to see we will just have to return and visit them, hopefully when it is not raining.

We followed the tour with a pint in a pub next to the statue of Molly Malone that the driver referred to as "The Tart with the Cart."

Why does Guinness taste so much better in Ireland? I'm glad I don't live there because I would have drunk myself to death by now.

In 2014 a genius in Highways England came up with the idea of a "smart motorway."

A new type of motorway to manage traffic in a way that minimises cost, environmental impact and construction time by avoiding building additional lanes.

These wonder motorways are the old motorways but modified to include

large signs regulating speed and scraping what was known as the "hard shoulder"—a lane which you pulled into if your car broke down or for any other emergency [ie: Desperate comfort stop, child unwell etc.).

The 'hard shoulder' has been replaced with 'emergency refuge areas' which are between a mile and two and a half miles apart and are 109 yards long, including the entry and exit approach.

So far over 400 miles of motorway have been converted at considerable cost and 38 people have been killed because they broke down outside the emergency refuge area and with no hard shoulder to pull into got hit by a truck.

Another 1,485 near misses have also been recorded.

Work on "smart motorways" has been put on hold for a safety review.

It beggars belief that no one would have thought that this could happen.

The boss of Highways England has said that the smart motorways are too complicated to use.

My advice is that if you do break down on a smart motorway, say half a mile from the emergency refuge area (which would be very inconsiderate of you considering the cost of it all), you should put on your hazards lights, exit the vehicle from the passenger side, and run like hell.

As a constant user of the smart motorway, I confess it confuses me.

Warning lights tell you to slow down for no apparent reason, signs tell you that the motorway is closed at a given junction and when you get there you find it isn't.

My favourite is a notice board which appears at the beginning of road works. It shows a picture of a little girl and the caption reads: "My Daddy is working here so please observe the speed limit."



THE STATUE of Molly Malone and her cart is affectionately nicknamed "The Tart with the Cart" by Dubliners." Located on Suffolk Street, just a short walk from Trinity College and the famous Grafton Street, it commemorates a young woman who worked as a fishmonger but also as a working girl and who died in one of the outbreaks of Cholera that regularly used to sweep the city of Dublin.



EOIN O' FAODHAGAIN (54) was watching a live stream of Loch Ness in the Scottish Highlands when he spotted something unusual. He immediately started his own recording of the live stream to show the world what he had seen.

Having been stationary for 20 minutes, I become obsessed with the idea of getting out of the car and writing: "Tell your daddy to pull his finger out and get on with it."

I was warned that on reaching 75 men get grumpy and I think they could be right.

*All for now,  
Elfan*

# St. Patrick's Day dinner and dance is always a highlight of the year

WHITE ROCK – One of the highlights of the year for the Irish Club of White Rock is the annual St. Patrick's Day dinner and dance.

This year it will be held on Saturday, March 14 at the Hazelmere Golf and Tennis Club located at 18150 - 8th Avenue in Surrey.

Doors open at 5:30 PM, dancers with the Steele School of Irish Dance perform at 6:30 PM sharp, and music is by Pat Chessell Band – the best Celtic music in the Lower Mainland.

The Irish Club of White Rock also had a very successful Celtic Christmas dinner at Beecher's Place, Crescent Beach, Surrey, on Friday, December 6. A big thank you to all who came out to the event and who helped make it possible.

The club has been in existence for over 40 years in the beautiful seaside town of White Rock, about an hour's drive east of Vancouver, which boasts a strong local Irish community.

The main focus of the Irish Club of White Rock is to promote Irish culture and arts in the community and

## THE IRISH CLUB OF WHITE ROCK

provide a strong social network for its members.

Everyone is invited to come and visit and also to share this information with friends and family living in the area.

A warm welcome *céad míle fáilte* [a traditional hundred thousand welcomes] will always be extended to all new arrivals.

Upcoming events and information are posted on the Irish Club of White Rock Facebook page. Better yet, become a member and receive all the news updates by e-mail.

The Irish Club of White Rock continues to support and promote all the events hosted by other Irish groups in the Lower Mainland and shares that information with its members.

For more information or suggestions, contact president Sharon Woods by phone at (604) 338-3553 or e-mail: [irishclubofwhiterock@gmail.com](mailto:irishclubofwhiterock@gmail.com).



MARGARET RYAN and Mary Schlote socializing at the Celtic Christmas celebration.



ORLA NÍ BHROITHE and Larry Ryan at the Irish Club of White Rock Celtic Christmas celebration.



KATHLEEN PEDERSEN, Sharon Woods (president) and Deirdre O'Ruairc at the Irish Club of White Rock Celtic Christmas celebration, one of many events the club hosts throughout the year.

# My Winter Visit Home to Old Dublin

*'The old heart of Dublin is alive and well,  
it has the elegance of a capital city but a young vibe'*

**I**ARRIVED in Dublin in mid-November fully expecting the weather to be wintry and miserable but I was pleasantly surprised.

The Irish are well used to bad weather and dark evenings, so the life of the city continues unabated in winter.

A few grey days here and there and several cold sunny days – this kind of weather suited me perfectly. I brought with me a puffy coat and all the usual warm comfortable clothes for travelling.

Christmas decorations were up in earnest and the shop windows were packed with every kind of temptation to entice shoppers.

I was on a mission to see what Dublin had to offer the off-season visitor. In the end, I came to the conclusion that any time of year is a good time to visit Dublin and Ireland.

Dublin tourism made no concession to winter and all the hop-ons and tours were roaring around the city and – to my amazement – most of them were almost full.

All the “must see” tourist sites were open for first-time visitors, Kilmainham Goal, Guinness Brewery, the Dublin Zoo, Jameson's Whiskey, as well as the two great churches Christ Church Cathedral, and St. Patrick's built 1192 – both churches in remarkably good condition.

Taking a walking tour is a good way to get the feeling of the city and a chance to get your bearings. There are also guided tours with special themes such as pub tours and literature tours. A visit to the local tourist office or hotel lobby usually has all this information.

My own choice was the new EPIC Museum, which is all about Irish emigration, the role it played in the world, and how it impacted the homeland.

It is a very well designed and engaging museum built by the same people who created the Titanic exhibits in Belfast. It's more of an experience than the usual walk about and read.

There were heartbreaking stories of hard times and terrible struggles, but the Irish emigrant nearly always prevailed one way or another.

They sent money home and despite all odds, they laid down roots in foreign soil. They also remembered the homeland and held Ireland very close, especially in their music and religion.

After four hours of being totally absorbed in the exhibits, I realised it was long past lunch time and I was hungry.

I prowled around the city leisurely visiting the Art Gallery, the National Museum, the National Library all situated around Kildare Street, they are free and have good cafes serving lunch with excellent soups and coffee.

I never pass an old church in Dublin without going in to light a candle, this is not because I am a deeply religious person but because lighting a candle or two brings me back to childhood, and to remember my departed friends and family.

I made a special detour to visit the Whitefriar Carmelite Church on

By MARIE BRUCE



**THE AWARD-WINNING EPIC Irish Emigration Museum was named 'Europe's Leading Tourist Attraction' at the World Travel Awards in Lisbon last year.**

Aungier Street and especially to light candle at the Shrine of St. Valentine.

The sacred remains of St. Valentine, patron saint of love and lovers, was gifted to this church by Pope Gregory XVI. It is a beloved church in a very old part of Dublin and one much visited around Valentine's day.

Back in the day, many a single woman living in a bedsit in Rathmines trekked over to Whitefriar Street weekly to offer novenas and light candles to St. Valentine in the hope of meeting a good husband.

I doubt if that tradition still exists in the liberated 2000s, however Whitefriar is always busy with people praying for their special intentions, offering novenas and lighting candles.

The old centre of Dublin is packed with bookshops, gourmet food stores, cafes and good pubs. Warm and welcoming fires are lit in the pubs, making them homely and cosy.

My choice of drink in winter is hot port and lemon studded with cloves. It is quite delicious, warming and just

perfect for the time of year.

I can't tell the difference between good pints of Guinness and not so good, because any I tasted in Dublin were wonderful and creamy. Dubliners are connoisseurs of the pint of Guinness, and they will tell you the difference.

I walked over to St. Stephen's Green to visit University Church built in 1855 by Cardinal John Newman in Byzantine style which reminded me of a small church in Italy. I was lucky to hear the choir practicing for Christmas services.

Almost next door is the Museum of Literature called Moli. All the greats of Irish literature like Joyce and Yeats are celebrated there.

Festivals continue throughout the winter and I was lucky to be there for the Swift Festival with 10 days of packed events in some very historic Georgian buildings.

I managed a choral concert at the old Church of Trinity College and a wonderful evening of discussions at St. Patrick's Cathedral where Dean Swift is buried.

The panel who spoke consisted of the Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Mary McAleese, and several other prominent speakers. A brilliant evening in that wonderful ancient church.

Dublin is the capital city of Ireland and has attracted many hi-tech and multi-national companies lured by the young, well-educated workforce, and the open economy.

It is said the Irish are the most highly educated and employable graduates in the world – quite an achievement for a small country with a population under five million.

Ireland is committed to its membership in the European Union and the current conversation is all about the border between Northern Ireland and Éire.

I only touched the surface of what I could do and what was on offer in the city, I didn't have time to see a play or



MARIE BRUCE lighting a candle at St. Valentine's Shrine at Whitefriar Street.



A PRESERVED Iron Age bog body on display at the National Museum of Ireland.

visit the pubs in Temple Bar where music roars on day and night.

Music should be on everybody's list when in Dublin, check the listings on the current “what's on” to find out times and venues.

Dublin is fairly compact, so walking and buses during the day, and taxis in



DELICIOUS baking on display at Avoca Food Market in Dublin.

the evening was my mode of transport.

The old heart of Dublin is alive and well, it has the elegance of a capital city but a young vibe.

As the Irish say – *céad míle fáilte* – come anytime, winter or summer, and a warm welcome awaits.

## IRISH WOMEN'S NETWORK OF BC

### PAMELA (PAM) FRANCES GLASS October 23, 1929 – January 24, 2020

By EILIS COURTNEY  
President, Irish Women's  
Network of BC

I was honoured to be invited to say a few words on behalf of the Irish Women's Network in tribute to Pam Glass and her involvement with the IWN.

I first met Pam when I got involved with the IWN about 15 years ago and from the start I could see that she was passionate about her connection with her homeland and very proud to be a Dub (particularly a North-sider like myself).

She was hugely supportive of everything the IWN did and after I became president, would often call to strategize about how to get more people involved and attending our events.

She was awarded the IWN Woman of the Year in 2003 in recognition of her contributions.

Every January, the IWN celebrates an event called Nollaig na mBan – Women's Christmas. During the early 2000s we held a big dinner downtown and this was one of Pam's favourite events.

Pam was always in attendance and every year she brought a gang of Glass women – daughters, granddaughters, daughters-in-law – as she wanted to share her enthusiasm for celebrating Irish women.

In order to encourage attendance from the White Rock group, she came up with the idea of getting a limo to bring them in and home so they could have a glass or two and kick up their heels but always get home safely. She loved to dance and was always first on the dance floor.

Pam had a great sense of humour and was always up for the craic and her involvement in the 2008 calendar was a great example of that.

For those that don't know, in 2008 the IWN celebrated their 10th anniversary by producing a calendar based on the movie Calendar Girls.

Pam was totally game to be involved from the start and, in fact, one of the calendar pictures was in her garden and then changed to White Rock City Hall,



PAM GLASS with Declan Kelly, the former Ambassador of Ireland to Canada, in October 2009.

where she was the judge in the photo, highlighting her position as a citizenship judge.

When I asked other members of the IWN what words came to mind when they thought of Pam, they said she was a mentor, a role-model for women, a community builder, open-minded, positive and enthusiastic for everything. She will be sorely missed.

Pam passed away on January 24,

2020. She is predeceased by her loving husband Cecil (2013), and her beloved daughter Kelli (2009). She is survived by daughters Maeve (Steve), and Siobhan, and son Eamonn (Marina), her adored grandchildren, Dan, Liam, Caitlin, Sam, Connor, Eilish, Ciaran, Kaja, and Kata, and great-granddaughter Delilah, her brother Jim Kelly (Kitty), nephew John Carr (Ann), the Harrold family in Dublin, and numerous family and friends nationwide and internationally.

# Governments North and South of the Border

## THE VIEW FROM IRELAND



By  
**MAURICE  
FITZPATRICK**

**THE** threat that forced the two biggest parties to return to the Northern Ireland Assembly in January was the prospect of an assembly election if they did not.

Terrified by the pounding they would likely receive from the electorate, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin did a deal to restore the assembly after a three-year hiatus.

Sinn Féin had recorded three consecutive electoral slippages in the preceding 18 months and it would have been delusional to expect to be rewarded by an angry public deprived of public services as a consequence of the moribund assembly.

So Sinn Féin cowered from the electoral blowback and signed up. How, then, did the same party, in the Irish general election in February, notch up by far its greatest electoral success in living memory?

As the only party that operates in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland and whose raison d'être is to unite Ireland, Sinn Féin would be loath to admit the reason it stood to do so badly in the North in January and did so well in the South the following month is partition.

If issues such as Brexit, Sinn Féin's violent past and its record of governing in Northern Ireland were game-changers in the minds of the Southern electorate there would have been no surge in support for the party.

But those issues are alarmingly remote from the Southern electorate's priorities.

That electorate is completely preoccupied with its own remediable crises in housing, cost of living (particularly childcare and insurance) as well as the dysfunctional health service and ever-longer commutes.

For over a decade, government policy has deprived young people of the right to a decent standard of living.

So Sinn Féin's strategists put these concerns into the machine and found that the word tying them all together in the minds of voters is change; and campaigned on that platform.

Naturally, the two main parties that have formed governments since the foundation of the State, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, also understood that the people wanted change.

But they were considerably disadvantaged from presenting themselves as credible agents of it: Fianna Fáil supported Fine Gael in a minority government arrangement since 2016 and the public was so thoroughly sick of it that it was willing to punt for Sinn Féin to clean the Augean stable.

What Sinn Féin's very long period in opposition has finally taught the party is to tailor its message to the dominant mood of the people rather than to fixate on its less popular (in the South) constitutional aspirations.

The constitutional question always takes precedence in Sinn Féin's agenda and, while that garners votes in the North, it is not nearly as important in the South.

Assuming Sinn Féin has properly absorbed that lesson it now stands to endure as the third force in Southern politics, representing the left of centre voter.

Paradoxically, though, Sinn Féin has consistently supported austerity measures in the North. So how can it position itself to the left in Southern politics?

Either it has a left-wing identity or it has a cross-border identity, but maintaining both does not stand up to scrutiny. In truth, its pull to the left the central reason it won the popular vote is merely a vehicle to ride to power.

Ireland will now have a caretaker government (the same government) until another government can be formed.

It is plausible that Fianna Fáil, the party that won the most seats, will maintain its stance of refusing to form a government with Sinn Féin.

If it does, then a 'grand coalition' between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael with support from the Greens could emerge. In that case, the parties that form the government of the 33rd Dáil must do two things, or face dire consequences in the next general election.

Firstly, they must position themselves significantly to the left of the outgoing government. If drastic economic change is what the public wants and voted for, it must now get it.

Sinn Féin would make hay out of being thus marginalised, so only a major economic overhaul would enable the government to survive and to justify itself to the public for not incorporating the winners of the popular vote.

## Final Penal law in Ireland finally repealed after 283 years

BELFAST – After 283 years, the last of the Penal Laws in Ireland has been repealed by proposals to restore power-sharing that was backed by Stormont parties on January 10.

The proposals put forward by Tánaiste Simon Coveney and Northern Secretary Julian Smith will repeal the Administration of Justice Act (Irish Language Act) 1737.

It will establish a Commissioner for the Irish language in Northern Ireland and there will be legal recognition of the language, translation services and speaking through Irish or Ulster Scots in court will be permitted.

Historian, Dr. Eamon Phoenix said, "About 36 percent of the population in the 2001 census in the North said they spoke Irish to some degree...you meet so many people who have a love for the language and now they can say it has parity with the other traditions in the North of Ireland."

The Penal Laws were put in place af-

ter the Battle of the Boyne in order to quiet the Catholic upper and middle class. They were meant to force Irish Catholics and Protestant dissenters to accept the Church of Ireland.

Secondly, there is a card they could play to outmanoeuvre Sinn Féin on the constitutional question (and I acknowledge that there is no evidence that the parties have been discussing this idea).

The most Machiavellian move for such a coalition would be to put Irish unification centrally on its agenda. Given Prime Minister Boris Johnson's decreasing commitment to unionism and the potential of the EU to help to finance the transition, they might just achieve that historic and increasingly inevitable feat during the five-year lifespan of a government.

The All-Ireland agenda under any guise is anathema to unionists, but it is a diabolical prospect when it is sponsored by Sinn Féin, which continues to provide unionists with reasons to distrust them: on being elected in Waterford, a Sinn Féin candidate cheered for the IRA.

Sinn Féin, in opposition, would be both unable to oppose the motion they are in politics to realise and unable to claim it as their achievement if it happens.

Doubtless, Sinn Féin would find a way to cavil about the form of unity negotiated while not opposing the motion in itself, but such objections would be small beer.

Unification by this route would put Sinn Féin in a bind and force them to accept that accomplishing unity is more important to them than delivering it themselves.

In this scenario, one of the paradoxical consequences for Sinn Féin of this earthquake election would be that, having finally won a compelling mandate to participate in government, its ultimate agenda would be best advanced by remaining outside of it. It would also give the other parties an ambitious agenda that they badly need.

Irish filmmaker and writer Maurice Fitzpatrick is the Heimbald Chair of Irish Studies at Villanova University. His book, *The Boys of St. Columb's*, has been recently re-published by the University of Notre Dame Press.



SINN FEIN returns to devolved government with Stormont leader Michelle O'Neill becoming deputy first minister.



ARLENE FOSTER of the DUP leads her party into the chamber at the Parliament Buildings. She has been reappointed first minister.

## Powersharing returns to Northern Ireland

BELFAST – Powersharing has returned to Northern Ireland as all five of the main parties have taken seats in the region's new executive.

The Assembly sat once again on the afternoon of Saturday, January 11 after the landmark agreement to restore devolution.

MLAs were in the chamber for around two hours to conduct the business of electing and appointing speakers and ministers.

DUP leader Arlene Foster resumed the first minister role she lost when the last administration collapsed in 2017, while Sinn Féin's Stormont leader Michelle O'Neill has become deputy first minister.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar hailed the local politicians for backing a compromise deal to revive the institutions.

The DUP has also taken the economy, education and agriculture ministries; Sinn Féin the finance and communities portfolios; while the SDLP, Ulster Unionists and Alliance Party fill infrastructure, health and justice respectively.

Foster said she was "deeply humbled" to be reappointed first minister.

The DUP leader said there was plenty of blame to go around for the three-year powersharing impasse, but she insisted it was now time to look to the future.

Despite the titles, Foster and O'Neill hold equal standing at the top of the ministerial executive.

O'Neill said it was a "defining moment" for the region. She said she was honoured to follow in the footsteps of the late Martin McGuinness and become deputy first minister.

The inclusion of all five of the main parties in the executive is a significant

development. The last executive prior to Stormont's collapse in 2017 did not include the three smaller parties.

Powersharing returned after the DUP and Sinn Féin, the region's two largest parties, agreed to re-enter a mandatory coalition ministerial executive.

They both signed up to a deal, tabled by the UK and Irish Governments, that offered compromise resolutions to a range of long-standing disputes on issues such as the Irish language.

The endorsement of the two parties was essential for the formation of an executive, as peace process structures mean an administration can only function if it includes the largest unionist party and largest nationalist party.

The "New Decade, New Approach" deal will also be accompanied by what the UK Government has promised will be a major investment package.

Government funding is set to help tackle a host of acute problems facing a public sector that has been floundering amid the governance vacuum.

One of the most high-profile of those is an industrial dispute in the health service that has seen nurses take strike action on three occasions in the last month.

Under the terms of the deal, the new executive will also take action to reduce spiralling hospital waiting lists; extend mitigation payments for benefit claimants hit by welfare reforms; increase the number of police officers on the beat; and resolve an industrial dispute involving teachers.

The last DUP/Sinn Féin-led coalition government collapsed in January 2017 over a row about a botched green energy scheme.

That row subsequently widened to take in more traditional wrangles on matters such as the Irish language and the thorny legacy of the Troubles.

# Seamus Mallon, former leader of the SDLP and architect of Good Friday agreement, dies aged 83



SEAMUS MALLON leader of the SDLP and deputy first minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly is pictured (third from left) on the front steps of Stormont Castle with (L-R) First Minister David Trimble, U.S. President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2000.

BELFAST – Seamus Mallon, an architect of the Northern Ireland peace process who served as deputy first minister, passed away on January 24, 2020 in Co. Armagh at the age of 83.

During the 1960s, he became involved in the civil rights movement, especially in his native Armagh.

In 1979, when John Hume went from being deputy leader of the SDLP (under Gerry Fitt) to leader, Mallon became deputy leader.

He was elected to the first power-sharing Assembly in 1973, and to the Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention in 1975 representing Armagh.

Between May and December 1982

Mallon was appointed by the then Taoiseach Charles Haughey to the Republic's upper house, Seanad Éireann.

Tributes from across the political spectrum in Ireland and the UK poured in after the SDLP announced that its former deputy leader had died.

Mallon was a nationalist who desired Irish unity but was a scathing critic of republican violence.

He described the 1998 Good Friday agreement as “Sunningdale for slow learners” – a withering rebuke to extremists on both sides who brought down the 1973 Sunningdale agreement and extended the Troubles, costing thousands of lives.

“Seamus Mallon was a force of nature,” Colum Eastwood, the SDLP’s leader, said in a statement.

“In the darkest days of conflict, when hope was in short supply, Seamus represented the fierce thirst for justice that ran through the SDLP and through communities that had lost so much to political violence.”

Ireland’s president, Michael D Higgins, said Mallon possessed unsurpassed courage, civility and fairness.

“He was instrumental in bringing into being a meaningful discourse that heralded a new possibility of civil rights within a shared island.”

The taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, said, “History will remember Seamus as an architect of the Good Friday agreement, a committed peace builder and a tireless champion of an inclusive Ireland.”

The former U.S. president Bill Clinton,

who was a key player in the Good Friday agreement, hailed Mallon as a “hero of the peace process in Northern Ireland” and “a profoundly good man.”

He said, “As his party’s chief negotiator in the talks leading to the Good Friday agreement, he was respected by all parties for his intelligence and integrity, his candour and convictions.”

Lord Empey, the Ulster Unionist peer, lauded Mallon’s sense of humour and principles. “I don’t believe the Good Friday process could have succeeded without him.

“He understood the practicalities and realities of politics and government, something that some of his colleagues failed to appreciate ... I think all of us have lost a champion of democracy and justice today.”

Mary Lou McDonald, the Sinn Féin leader, issued a short statement expressing condolences to Mallon’s family and recalling his contribution to

Irish politics and the Good Friday agreement.

Born in Markethill, County Armagh, Mallon was a school principal who entered politics via the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

As deputy leader of the SDLP from 1979 to 2001 he served – and often clashed with – the party’s mercurial, towering leader, John Hume.

After the Good Friday agreement Mallon served until 2003 in the power-sharing administration at Stormont with the unionist first minister David Trimble, another fraught but effective partnership.

Last year with the journalist Andy Pollak he published a book, *A Shared Home Place*, which warned against a united Ireland unless and until at least a substantial minority of Northern Ireland’s Protestants were in favour – a rebuke to nationalists who seek a unity referendum decided by simple majority.



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## The Economist publication says Irish unification becoming likely

LONDON – *The Economist* says a United Ireland is becoming far more likely and it is “time to start thinking about what it might mean.”

The influential magazine, headquartered in London, says that the recent Irish election result, anger over Brexit both North and South, and quickly changing demographics in Northern Ireland leading to a nationalist majority has suddenly brought the Irish Unity question to center stage.

“Until today, however, unification has never been more than a Republican fantasy,” says the editorial published on February 13.

But Sinn Féin’s success in Ireland’s recent general election “is just the latest reason to think that a united Ireland within a decade or so is a real – and growing – possibility.”

Of course, the Irish election results come after discussions about Irish unity galvanized during Brexit.

“The north voted against [Brexit], but the biggest unionist party and England voted for. Nationalists were not the only ones to be angered by the current home secretary, who suggested using

the threat of food shortages to soften up the south in the negotiations, heedless of the famine in the 1840s when all of Ireland was under British rule.

“A change in demographics in Northern Ireland can also be attributed to the growing conversation that surrounds Irish unification.

“Northern Ireland’s census in 2021 is likely to confirm that Catholics outnumber Protestants for the first time. The republic has also become more welcoming.

“The influence of the Catholic church has faded dramatically and society has become more liberal.

“Over the past three decades, restrictions on contraception have been lifted and gay marriage has been legalized.

“All this explains why support for unification in Northern Ireland appears to have risen in recent years. In some polls, respondents show roughly equal support for it and the status quo.”

The impact of Irish unification, *The Economist* says, would go far beyond the physical island.

“The Irish diaspora includes more than

20 million Americans. Parties to ethnic conflicts across the world have long found common cause with Northern Ireland’s Roman Catholics, who contend that the separation from the south is an illegitimate vestige of 500 years of incompetent and often callous domination from London.”

The editorial concludes, “The island of Ireland needs a plan. The priority should be to work out how to make unionists feel that they have a place in a new Ireland.

“Work is needed on the nuts and bolts of unification – including how to, and indeed whether to, merge two health systems (one of which is free), the armed forces and police services, and what to do about the north’s devolved assembly.

“Politicians from Britain and Ireland need to start talking, too. The price of ending violence two decades ago was for Northern Ireland, the republic and Britain to jointly set out a political route to a united Ireland.

“If the people of the north and the republic choose that path, the politicians must follow it.”



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# Parties and protests as UK leaves the EU on January 31

BELFAST – The UK's departure from the European Union was marked with parties and protests in Northern Ireland on the night of Friday, January 31.

Pro-Brexit members of the public gathered at the front gates of Parliament Buildings for a 'Brexit Celebration' event at 11 PM, when the UK left the EU after 47 years of membership.

DUP MLA Jim Wells was one of the organisers of the event.

He said, "My first vote as an 18-year-old was to vote to leave the European Union in 1975. I never thought in my life that I would see the opportunity to leave. Here we are 47 years later and at last our nation is leaving the European union."

Speeches and a countdown to the 11 PM exit were held, marking what organisers described as "the historic event."

Meanwhile, the anti-Brexit protests organised by the Border Communities Against Brexit group and Sinn Féin were held to mark the night.

Protesters gathered at six locations along the border in counties Louth, Cavan, Donegal, Fermanagh, Monaghan and Donegal. Around 200 people gathered a few miles from Newry to voice their opposition to Brexit.

Standing yards from the Irish border, Co. Armagh sheep farmer Seamus McDonnell said that communities have been left in limbo by the uncertainty following the split.

The anti-Brexit campaigner, who farms on both sides of the border, said many people in local communities were against Brexit.

He said, "We will be left in limbo here for the next 11 months because we don't know if there will be a hard border, soft border or no deal. No one knows. I don't think Boris Johnson knows yet."

"We are out of Europe and I think in a few months time it will totally take effect."

"We may have a free-flowing border now but it (the end of the transition period) will make a big change. You have a big dread and we don't know if we will be able to continue what we're doing."

Also attending the night's protest was Stormont finance minister Conor Murphy.

"This part of Ireland did not consent to Brexit, we voted significantly to remain within the EU and we are being taken out of the EU without consent," the Sinn Féin representative said.

"People are very fearful of all the consequences of this, we know we weren't

in any way in consideration by the British Government or the people in Britain when they voted for Brexit.

"There are a lot of concerns from people as to how this will unfold. People in the government in the south (Republic of Ireland) need to be very vigilant that the protocols that have been agreed by the British Government are followed."

"We do not want to see a hardening of the border."

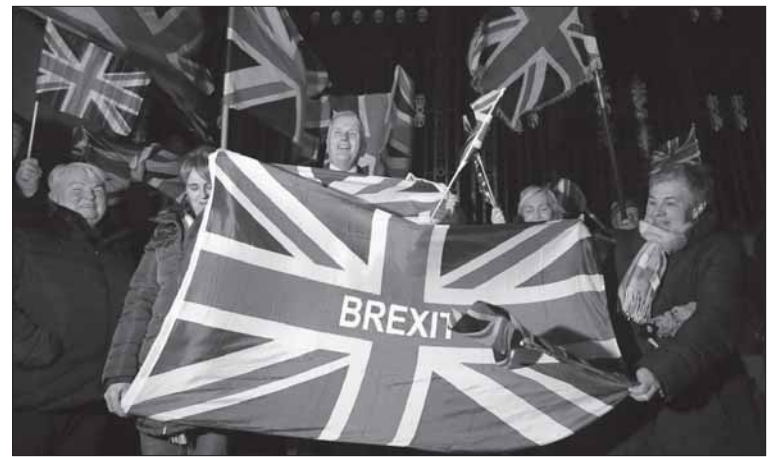
The anti-Brexit campaigners also demanded for Northern Ireland to continue to have a voice in the EU after the UK leaves.

In an earlier protest, Border Communities Against Brexit activists unveiled a new billboard declaring the "fight goes on."

They urged the Irish Government and the restored Stormont Executive to push for some form of continued representation in EU structures.

It comes as the region's three MEPs leave the European Parliament ahead of Brexit.

Border Communities Against Brexit expressed relief that a hard border with security check points appeared to have been avoided but warned the process was not over and there remained the risk of a damaging no-deal on trade.



DUP MLA Jim Wells joined Pro-Brexit members of the public gather at the front gates of Parliament Buildings, Stormont in Belfast for a Brexit Celebration event.



SINN FEIN deputy leader Michelle O'Neill attends the unveiling of a Border Communities Against Brexit poster in Carrickcarnon.

## New Northern Ireland Secretary declares no border between Great Britain and NI

BELFAST – The new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Brandon Lewis has said that there will be no border between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Speaking to reporters in Belfast, ahead of his meetings at Stormont House, he said that there would be no border down the Irish Sea after the Brexit transition period.

Lewis said, "The United Kingdom is going to be one area and all will be able to benefit from our future global trade deals."

"I appreciate what Michel Barnier says, he's a very good man trying to do a good job for the EU, but this is also the man who said we couldn't open the Withdrawal Agreement. Our prime minister got that agreement open, got a new agreement. We've got it through parliament, we've left the European Union."

"And we're going to build for a better economy for the whole of the United Kingdom as one. We are absolutely clear. As a UK government, we will not be having a border down the Irish Sea."

Meanwhile, EU sources confirmed that the UK can be brought to the European Court of Justice if it fails to carry out checks and controls on goods going from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

Lewis was named new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by Prime Minister Boris Johnson on February



BRANDON LEWIS was appointed new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by Boris Johnson on February 13 following the prime minister's cabinet shuffle.

13. He had previously served as Minister of State for Security and Deputy for EU Exit and No Deal Preparation.

His appointment came after Julian Smith was sacked from the Northern Ireland Office as part of the prime minister's cabinet reshuffle. He was appointed in July 2019 and lasted 204 days in the role.

Smith took over from Karen Bradley who was sacked by the new prime minister Boris Johnson after 562 days as NI secretary.

He oversaw a talks process that led to the Northern Ireland parties agreeing a deal to restore a power-sharing government at Stormont last month. He was also praised for his role in helping legislation to provide compensation to historical abuse victims pass through Parliament.

On his first visit to Belfast, Lewis met with the Tanaiste Simon Coveney.

It comes weeks after Coveney helped secure the New Decade, New Approach deal to restore the NI Executive.

It was Coveney's first visit to Belfast after Fine Gael suffered huge losses in the general election in the Republic.

Lewis has refused to say whether the government will introduce an amnesty for British soldiers.

During a visit to Derry, he said, "I am not going into the detail at the moment, we will come forward as a government with an outline of what we want to do in due course."

Lewis also said Prime Minister Boris Johnson wanted to make sure there are no "vexatious claims about veterans."

LYRA MCKEE was a respected young journalist and writer who was shot dead in Derry as she observed rioting on April 18, 2019. Her death created widespread condemnation and outrage from media and the public, politicians of all parties, and religious leaders.



## Man charged with Lyra McKee murder

DERRY – Police in Northern Ireland have charged a 52-year-old man in connection with the murder of journalist Lyra McKee.

Paul McIntyre has been charged with murder, although police say they believe several people were involved and they are still seeking "evidence to bring the gunman to justice."

He was arrested on February 13 and has also been charged with possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life, and professing to be a member of a proscribed organisation.

McKee was shot dead in Derry as she observed rioting on April 18, 2019.

McKee's killing caused widespread shock in a region still scarred by decades of violence known as the Troubles, in which more than 3,500 people died.

She was an increasingly influential journalist who had written powerfully about growing up gay in Northern Ire-

land and the struggles of the generation of "cease-fire babies" raised after the 1998 Good Friday peace accord that ended three decades of sectarian violence.

Hundreds of people attended McKee's funeral, including the prime ministers of Britain and Ireland and political leaders from Northern Ireland's Protestant and Catholic communities.

Her death helped spur a successful effort to get feuding politicians to revive Northern Ireland's power-sharing government, which had collapsed in 2017.

Her funeral heard what many regarded as a public rebuke to politicians by the presiding priest at her funeral, Father Martin Magill, who asked why it had taken such a tragedy for them to come together in united purpose.

The cleric's words were met with a standing ovation by the congregation.

Fresh talks were called in the aftermath, which were to go on to last over nine months until the new powersharing Assembly was finally restored this year on January 11.

# Storm Dennis: ‘Ghost ship’ washed up in Cork after drifting unmanned for almost 18 months

BALLYCOTTON, Co. Cork – The ‘ghost ship’ which washed up on the Cork coast at the height of Storm Dennis boasts a story bizarre enough to rival that of famous phantom ships including the Flying Dutchman and the Marie Celeste.

Until it was driven onto rocks west of Ballycotton in east Cork on Sunday, the 80 metre MV Alta had incredibly floated abandoned and unmanned across the Atlantic for almost 18 months – avoiding major shipping lanes and amazing those mariners who viewed the vessel drifting silently on the horizon.

The ship is the largest ‘ghost ship’ to have been driven ashore by a storm in Ireland for over a century.

Two years ago MV Alta survived a major engine breakdown that resulted in its 20 strong crew having to be rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard – and, a few years earlier, had even survived two attempted hijackings off Africa.

One attempted hijacking was alleged to have involved pirates pretending to be a security crew hired by the owners to protect the vessel.

The ship was abandoned on October 3, 2018 when the U.S. Coast Guard had to stage a major rescue operation to assist the multi-national crew.

The 20 sailors were successfully evacuated from the MV Alta when the vessel was 1,400 nautical miles south east of Bermuda. Amid confusion over the ships owners and registration, it was abandoned.

For 17 months the freighter then drifted as a ‘ghost ship’ across the Atlantic – somehow avoiding disaster



PHOTO: Irish Coast Guard/PA Wire

UNDATED Irish Coast Guard handout image of the abandoned cargo ship the MV Alta, that washed up on the coast of Co. Cork during Storm Dennis over the weekend.

in busy shipping lanes in the process.

On September 3, 2019, the crew of the Royal Navy ice patrol ship, HMS Protector were so intrigued by the vessel spotted on the horizon which ignored its repeated communications that it went to investigate.

The MV Alta was by now in mid Atlantic and, despite having been abandoned almost a year earlier, was still drifting serenely through Atlantic doldrums and violent storms.

The Royal Navy crew confirmed at close range that the MV Alta was unmanned – and were so intrigued by their find that they posted photos on social media and formally recorded their sighting with marine authorities.

Despite global interest in the story, the freighter vanished into the Atlantic mists and was presumed sunk until it suddenly reappeared in Storm Dennis on Sunday off the east Cork coast.

The combination of Storm Dennis’ 120kmh winds and the storm surge drove it aground on rocks outside Ballycotton.

Now stranded on razor-sharp rocks around the headland from the famous east Cork fishing village, MV Alta’s incredible journey is likely to end by the ship being torn apart by future storms or being towed off the rocks to be brought to port for scrapping.

Cork Co. Council is liaising with the Coast Guard and the Commissioner of Wrecks to ensure this Irish ‘ghost ship’ doesn’t leave a trail of polluted fuel across east Cork beaches and fishing grounds.

An individual claiming to represent the owner of the MV Alta has reportedly made contact with the Revenue Commissioner and a spokesperson said the Receiver of Wreck will be pursuing the matter further. Anyone who lays claim to the vessel has one year to establish their claim.

# Travel advisory issued for Irish citizens for Italy’s coronavirus affected areas

Irish citizens have been advised by the Department of Foreign Affairs not to travel to areas of Italy affected by a coronavirus outbreak.

In revised travel advice issued on February 24, the department notes the increase in the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus in Italy, and the restriction imposed by the Italian authorities in specific parts of the north of the country.

The department says travellers, in order to ascertain whether their destination in Italy is in an affected area, should consult the government website of the region in question or, if they are in Italy, call 1500.

The advice follows news of six deaths in Italy and the first major travel restrictions to be imposed in Europe.

Northern Italy has seen more than 50,000 people in a number of towns in the Veneto and Lombardy regions quarantined.

Italian officials have cancelled sporting events, closed schools and businesses and cut short the Venice carnival. Italian officials have cancelled sporting events, closed schools and businesses and cut short the Venice carnival.

The chances of a coronavirus case occurring in Ireland have “significantly increased” in light of the Italian outbreak with the State now preparing for the likelihood that there “could well be a case in Ireland in the coming days and weeks”, Minister for Health Simon Harris said.

Harris’s comments followed a special meeting of the national public health emergency team in relation to the spread of the virus in Europe.

He said a number of his department officials were taking part in European level meetings while the national public health emergency team would meet again shortly.

Isolation facilities have been made available by the HSE in all hospitals

while the necessary additional funding will be provided if a case does occur, he added.

Reviews of mass gatherings are also set to take place in the coming days, particularly the Ireland-Italy Six Nations rugby match, which is scheduled to take place in Dublin’s Aviva stadium on March 7, the minister said.

Asked whether there were plans to cancel St. Patrick’s Day events in March, Harris said all mass gatherings were being kept under review but there were no plans to cancel events yet.

“The rugby game is something that needs considerable consideration,” he said. “This situation is evolving. The weekend’s activities have shown that there is still an awful lot unknown about the coronavirus and about the path it might take.”

In relation to possible airport screenings, Harris said public health doctors were “working around the clock” on the issue while Ireland was following World Health Organisation and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and control for guidelines and advice.

It’s important that the EU responds to the health emergency in a “uniform way” to avoid mass confusion, said Harris.

“Any action Ireland takes will be based on health evidence as opposed to being seen to be doing something for the sake of doing something.”

Meanwhile two Irish citizens have arrived at a quarantine block near Liverpool in England after being evacuated from the Diamond Princess cruise ship moored off Japan. They were among a group of 32 people – the rest of whom are British nationals – who arrived at the centre on Saturday. Four of the group have tested positive for coronavirus, according to British officials.

It is understood that a number of secondary schools across Ireland have decided to cancel school trips to Italy in light of the latest travel advice.

# Just 29 percent in Northern Ireland would vote for unity, major study reveals

BELFAST – Despite optimistic prediction about the re-unification of Ireland, a new study of voters in Northern Ireland reveals that less than a third of people would vote for a united Ireland if a border poll was held tomorrow.

The results are Northern Ireland’s largest general election face-to-face study ever carried out. Just over 2,000 people were interviewed across 18 constituencies between December 28 and February 11.

A total of 29 percent would support Irish unity but 52 percent would back remaining in the UK if a referendum was held imminently.

The key to nationalist success in a border poll is winning over those who define themselves as ‘other’ and vote for Alliance, the Greens and smaller parties.

Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of those who define themselves as other – neither nationalist or unionist – would support remaining in the UK with just 27 percent opting for Irish unity.



The Liverpool University-led project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council with interviews conducted by Social Market Research.

Asked to define national identity, Irish was the most popular with 35 percent of voters choosing it to 34 percent saying they were British and 23 percent identifying as Northern Irish.

Asked to label themselves ideologically, 28 percent chose ‘unionist’, 25 percent ‘nationalist’ and 40 percent said neither.

Despite the cash-for-ash scandal, support for devolution was remarkably

high. The restoration of the Assembly and Executive was backed by 81 percent of people with a minuscule minority of two percent opposing it.

On the border poll, if the ‘don’t knows’ are removed from the overall result, the figures break down at 65/35 in favour of maintaining Northern Ireland’s current constitutional position.

Support for the Union was higher among unionist voters than support for Irish unity was among nationalist voters.

Power-sharing with both unionists and nationalists in the Stormont executive governing together was also strongly endorsed with 61 percent support and seven percent opposition.

But deep divisions remain on an Irish Language Act with 36 percent of voters supporting one and 32 percent opposed.

Both DUP and UUP voters were equally against the legislation with 74 percent opposed while 82 percent of Sinn Féin and 77 percent of SDLP supporters were in favour. Alliance voters were 32 percent in favour to 25 percent against.

## NOVENAS

### Novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary (never known to fail). O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine, splendour of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God. Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this my necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. O show me herein you are my Mother, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Sweet Mother, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal. You gave me the Divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me. This prayer must be said for three days, even after the request is granted and the favour received, it must be published.

– PMKJ, MJK, CC, CB, LMC, ST

### Novena to St. Joseph

Holy St Joseph, you were a man of great hope and faith. You faced many difficult times in your life, fleeing into Egypt, caring and fearing for Mary and Jesus, you lived like us today in uncertain times. Your strength came from knowing that the power and faithfulness of God would always be constant.

Fill us with the confidence that you had in the Lord, Our God. Help us to know that God is close to us, that He will deliver us from the trials and troubles we are now encountering.

May the light of the Lord give us hope. May it guide us every day of our lives and uniting our prayers with yours, may we be assured by the peace and joy of the Lord, that will strengthen us in all our difficulties. Amen. Holy St Joseph, pray for us. – CB

# Ireland's national games thriving in Vancouver with the ISSC standing out from the crowd

VANCOUVER – The Vancouver Irish Sporting and Social Club (ISSC) has been hard at work preparing for the 2020 season.

We've already had a huge turn out at the induction events we hosted at the beginning of the year with individual social meetings for football and camogie at the end of January and a club-wide open night at the beginning of February.

February was right down to business with an open house on Saturday, February 1, where we hosted a skills demonstration to people who had never played before, extending GAA sports to the wider community of Irish, English, Scottish, Canadian, Australian and Spanish.

Shauna Hilley exhibited all the basics of football, while Amy Beecher demonstrated camogie. We had definitely peaked their interest as we doubled the numbers on the first day of our annual skills academy on Tuesday, February 11 than we had last year.

Some of the women have played before but we had a lot of rookies which is amazing to see. We have been busy filling them with stories of our unique club, especially as our camogie women ended up winning more trophies in football than camogie!!

## Elmarie Cronin

Those of you who were lucky enough to be at our 45th anniversary dinner dance back in November, would have heard emcee Tommy Bourke's Q&A session with camogie co-founder Elmarie Cronin.

**Tommy:** You're involved in setting up the camogie team for the club, how has the team developed and progressed since it was set up and what helped you along the way?

**Elmarie:** Well I do have to give some credit to the hurling team, they have been behind us the whole way through.

It took us a bit of time to get notice from the board, especially when I came along nine years ago there wasn't even a camogie team.

So myself and Rita Ritchie had a vision, we had never played ladies football before and we had to start playing it because there was no camogie team.

I remember being up on the field and someone goes 'will anyone go in goals?' and I was like 'yeah I will!' And there I remained until we formed a camogie team!!

I think there were four of us one Sunday morning in Strathcona and we just built it from there in 2011 and thank God when 2015 came along we were able to put a team into the North Americans and we just haven't looked back since.

But it all comes back to getting our club behind us, getting the committee behind us, getting sponsors behind us and only for them we wouldn't be where we are today.

**Tommy:** You're the only camogie club in western Canada\*. What are the challenges in that and what do you do to get people more involved in camogie?

**Elmarie:** Yeah, people ask me all the time 'who do you play against?' and I'm like 'Seattle are our local team'\*...in another country.

Calgary is the other team, but they're a bit far distance away. But we try,

By **GRÁINNE McDERMOTT**  
PRO/Irish Language  
& Culture rep



PHOTO: Operio Photography  
**CAMOGIE TRAILBLAZERS**  
Elmarie Cronin and Rita Ritchie.

and we play against each other, but sometimes the numbers aren't there and fair play we have the ladies footballers who are always willing to make up another team or do a sticks in thing.

Actually we're very lucky, we used to have hurling and camogie days in Rupert and we'd have mixed in with the lads then, that used to be a great time. But, an hour playing with the lads would toughen you up, but we used to play with under 16 but these lads aren't under 16 at all!

We had to play with the juniors! So we just kept ploughing along. It is hard but when you love a sport, and when you love playing it, and when you have the hurley in the hand, you just don't care where you play, or how you play, or who you're playing against, just once you're out there and playing is the main thing at the end of day.

[\*Until this year with the establishment of Van Isles over in Victoria, Vancouver Island.]

**Tommy:** Now that you've mastered camogie you seem to have moved onto football. What happened that made you switch over and make football your new passion now? You won the Spring League and then you won in San Diego, are you now in a ladies football club?

**Elmarie:** Sorry, I've so many medals with both sports I just can't keep track! Ah yeah it's gas. This year has been a bit exceptional.

We put a camogie together and we just came out winners of every football tournament and it was brilliant but I still wanted to win a camogie cup but we didn't, but sure what can you do at the end of the day! It just goes to show people just want to play, we just want to be involved with a club, be out there playing the sport.

We went up to San Diego in May and we were just going in solely to play camogie and sure Lorraine [Muckian] threw a message in the group and was like 'ah sure, will we play the football. You know more games, who cares if we play three games in one day!!'

And everyone was like 'yeah, yeah, yeah!' I was like 'you know I'm the oldest now and I'm going in the goal again (hand up again!), okay we'll do it if I play in goal again!'



PHOTO: Operio Photography  
**FOOTBALL CAPTAIN** Shauna Hilley demonstrated all the basics of Gaelic football at the Open House hosted by the ISSC on Saturday, February 1,

And they were like tough El, you know we are playing the both! So down we went and were playing 3/4 games, the same 7/8 of us that was there . . . and yeah we came out winners of the football!

We've also been telling our newest ISSC members about our successes of the last year for ladies football, echoing captain Shauna Hilley's praise for contributing factors of good energy and mentorship in her Q&A with Tommy.

## Shauna Hilley

**Tommy:** Vancouver Championship, Western Canadian, North American victories all to your name. Can you tell us what contributed to your success?

**Shauna:** It was a very successful year for the ladies for sure. And to be honest when I was thinking that I was going to be asked this question it was simple, it was just really a combination of really simple things. We had just a really positive energy within the camp throughout the whole entire year.

I don't think any of us felt that we were pressured in any way or anything like that it was just so positive and we never felt if you did something wrong that someone would ever say anything. Everything was always positive and constructive in a good way.

Obviously as well we have such a great combination again of, I call them, the "cord oldies," the old people who have been here 3+ years (they're the oldies now in my book).

Then you had people "fresh off the boat," and then we had another few that were only playing a year or so, so they were all into wanting in the Westerns and North Americans.

We were even joking at the end of the year that for a whole ladies group of

all different types of personalities, we didn't have any spats or confrontations, so I think that was really good as well.

What contributed to that as well was definitely the three lads that we had on our team this year. They deserve a hand for putting up with all the ladies this year – Ronan, Owen and Oisín.

Unfortunately we are losing Oisín this year, but we can only thank him for everything that he's done. Breaks my heart to lose a fellow Wicklow person but that's okay, there'll just be more rivalry on the pitch so we wish St. Finians ladies the best of luck and can't wait to meet them on the pitch!

Everyone was so dedicated throughout the year. Ronan who wasn't actually playing this year went to Seattle, Western Canadians and North Americans just to support us, so I don't think it gets more dedication than that to be fair.

I would like to point out that I think we had more competition this year, across the board with new teams. Fraser Valley Gaels was in their third year this year and they had a really strong panel.

The ladies that were at the Westerns, we had such a great competition against them and that lit the fire in their belly to play even better and go to the North Americans and win! So we really wanted to win this year and a nice happy camp!

## Michael Sweeney

It's not just the ladies that are proactively pre-season prepping. Our football lads are hosting their registration night on Friday, February 28 at Tap and Barrel, Olympic Village.

This will be an opportunity for anyone interested in joining as well as ex-

isting members to get all the information for the upcoming season and how we can prepare following the success of 2019.

Why should you attend this event? Pure perseverance as Michael Sweeney shared in his Q&A.

**Tommy:** Football has changed and is still growing in Vancouver. I think that's safe to say, and the level of competitiveness and standards have gone up a lot in the last few years. How do you think we compare with the U.S. now, compared to maybe five years ago?

**Michael:** This is my third year playing, when I first came the ISSC had just the mass group of numbers. Fraser Valley were just getting going and with St. Finians now there's four clubs and obviously then there's three ladies football clubs as well.

So, yeah, the standard has risen and I think anyone that was at the Vancouver final this year could see that.

I had friends that were over visiting at the time and they couldn't get over the standard of play and the level that it's got to now.

I suppose with the standard of the U.S., they throw a lot of money with players, you've got the likes of your Diarmuid Connollys coming over for great money and we don't have that, but I think in a lot of ways we're better off for not having that approach.

I think the lads [JP Ryan's] and the ladies have shown that just hard work and just work off the field in terms of recruitment.

There's a lot more people coming to Vancouver now, a lot of Irish, there's a bigger diaspora of people coming, so in terms of how we compete with the U.S. on the club basis I think we beat them hands down.

When they can throw money at it, which personally I don't know if that's the right way, if that's what the GAA is about, I don't think so, I think it's more of a gratis kind of thing.

Yeah, the standard's grown like crazy. Even if you look at the Vancouver final on our team alone, we've got so many guys that played county, senior county, under 21s, county minor.

Fraser Valley were the same, they had a ton of boys as well, Eire Og too. So the standard has grown so it's only going to be a matter of time before we're beating those American teams at the higher level, and so it's just going to grow as the numbers keep coming here.

**Tommy:** Winning the Western Canadians this year was a sweet victory after the loss in the final last year. What did you do to prepare this year that was different from other years?

**Michael:** Yeah, last year the Western Canadians were on here in Vancouver, and I'd say we were the hot favourites to win.

It was kind of a freakish weekend, I think in the space of 10 minutes we had like five guys injured, it was nuts! Oisín did his leg the first minute, we had lads breaking fingers left, right and centre!

Then we went out in the final, and fair play to Fraser Valley, they beat us. But that was a tough pill to take, especially at home.

[Continued next page...]



PHOTO: Operio Photography

CAMOGIE women at the ISSC Open House demonstrating their skills to people who had never played before, extending GAA sports to the wider community.

*“It was kind of a freakish weekend, I think in the space of 10 minutes we had like five guys injured, it was nuts!”*

[Continued from page 26]

This year I think what was different was we went up with probably the least numbers.

It was the first time we’ve ever went up as underdogs in something, and we weren’t too worried about who was going because we knew that the guys who were going were going to give everything.

On the day, especially the final, the lads were nervous, I was nervous as well, after losing the year before and Fraser Valley was going for the three in a row as well.

I think on the day guys were committed, guys were just focused on that weekend and just getting the job done.

On the day of the final as well our forwards were absolutely unbelievable, like Jeff Sheridan, Carl Martin, Dan Nea.

For us it was an important victory, there were a lot of guys that hadn’t actually won a Western, guys that had been here for a long time but hadn’t won.

Even Mick O’Shea was there on the sideline and he was wearing a top that was about four sizes too small for himself and shorts six sizes too small for himself, to show how much it meant for lads like that.

No it was a great victory. Afterwards you act like you would when you’re 12 again, jumping around and stuff.

It did mean that much for us for that particular reason. And just going back to your question, what was different was we knew we were underdogs, and we just had to give it everything we had and it just worked out well for us that weekend.

On the topic of “20x20 – she can’t see it, she can’t be it,” the ladies had inspiring words of encouragement.

**Tommy:** 20x20 is an all-inclusive movement to shift Ireland’s cultural perception of women’s sport by 2020.

Do you think things have changed here in GAA in Vancouver/the ISSC with regards to women’s sports and their input and roles in the club?

**Shauna:** 100 percent! For anyone that doesn’t know the 20x20 initiative has three basic goals: They want to increase ladies participation by 20 percent, be it referees, players and on the administrative role; 20 percent more media across Ireland for women’s sports; and 20 percent more attendance.

On the administrative role, this is actually I can say for a lot of ladies is really personal in the sense of having such a strong base on the executive committee for the ladies.

For the past three years we’ve had a woman chairperson, Mev [Maria Eviston] in the past and now Blá [Bláithín Noone], and we have all the other roles such as secretary which are filled by women, so that has definitely been an instrument in and having greater participation on everything throughout all of the codes.

They are pretty much like role models for a lot of people because if we don’t have them then women in the sport may potentially die out. So we have to make sure that there’s always going to be women on the board for sure.

**Elmarie:** Shauna’s 100 percent right, I would agree. I know I keep saying nine years ago it was a very different ISSC. I sat around a table of mostly men fighting for this camogie team.

It was hard but I’m at the stage now that if one more camogie person goes on the board, oh my God, because I need them out playing and attending training and not attending meetings!

Of the ISSC Committee roles, five the nine positions are currently held by women:

**Chairperson** – Bláithín Noone  
**Vice-Chairperson** – Aisling Slevin  
**Secretary** – Anne Buckley  
**Treasurer** – Aoife O’Connor  
**PRO/Irish Language & Culture rep** – Gráinne Mc Dermott

As well as player reps Shauna Hilley and Michelle O’Connor (football) and Amy Beecher and Laura Dwan (camogie).

Let’s not forget Lorraine Muckian, who works tirelessly in refereeing, training and development, is now vice chairperson for Canada GAA. Also former chairperson Maria Eviston is PRO for Western Canada GAA.

Looking to play ladies or mens football or camogie, please contact us through our Facebook or Instagram page @isscvancouver or email isscvancouver@gmail.com.

# Manchester City banned from Champions League sending shockwaves through football fans

Manchester City has been banned from the Champions League for the next two seasons for ‘serious breaches’ of UEFA’s financial fair play regulations.

The move sent shockwaves through football and may now see questions raised over their domestic success.

The reigning English champions were found to have circumvented FFP rules between 2012 and 2016 and have been fined £25 million.

Serious questions may now be asked by the Premier League, with sources suggesting they may impose a points deduction.

Manchester City won their first title in 2012 and their second in 2014, both within the time period UEFA adjudicated upon.

However, the Premier League may well decide to wait for the outcome of an appeal Manchester City have vowed to launch before deciding whether to take action of their own.

Questions may also be raised over the future of manager Pep Guardiola, his players and potential signings.

City say they will appeal against the decision at the earliest opportunity via the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

They accused UEFA of “initiating, prosecuting and judging” the case and say they are not surprised at the outcome.

UEFA launched a probe after documents published by the German magazine *Der Spiegel* suggested the club had falsely inflated sponsorship deals with firms linked to their Abu Dhabi ownership.

City have won four Premier League titles since being taken over by Sheikh Mansour, a member of the Abu Dhabi royal family, in 2008.



THE REIGNING English champions were found to have circumvented FFP rules between 2012 and 2016 and have been fined £25 million and banned from the UEFA Champions League Final.

A UEFA statement said, “The Adjudicatory Chamber has imposed disciplinary measures on Manchester City Football Club directing that it shall be excluded from participation in UEFA club competitions in the next two seasons (ie. the 2020/21 and 2021/22 seasons) and pay a fine of €30million.”

City reacted furiously to the development and say they will appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

The club have made no secret of their

desire to win European football’s top prize, the Champions League, for the first time and manager Pep Guardiola admitted last year that his tenure is likely to be judged on whether he succeeds in the competition or not, despite having already won two league crowns.

The Premier League champions face Real Madrid in the last 16 of this season’s competition with the first leg taking place at the Bernabeu on February 26.



Lá Fhéile Pádraig Sona Daoibh from the Western Canada Division of the GAA

## 2020 Western Canadian GAA Championships July 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>

At: Our Lady of the Assumption School, Calgary, AB  
 Hosted by: Calgary Chieftains



**Calgary Chieftains**

**Edmonton Wolfe Tones**



**Fraser Valley Gaels**

**I.S.S.C Vancouver**



**Regina Gaels**

**Vancouver Éire Óg**



**Cú Chulainn Vancouver**

**St. Finnians Vancouver**



**Van Isle Rovers Victoria**



**Winnipeg Trinity**



**JP Ryan's Vancouver**

To get involved in your local GAA Club visit  
[www.gaelicgamescanada.com](http://www.gaelicgamescanada.com)  
 or the Western Canada GAA Facebook page

## Is there an organisation anywhere comparable to the GAA?

Run almost totally on a voluntary basis, the Gaelic Athletic Association reaches into practically every community on the island of Ireland and with a success no other institution does.

It is the only one of those three great pillars of nationalist Ireland – itself, the Catholic Church and Fianna Fáil – to continue thriving uninhibited at home and abroad as the third decade of the 21st century beckons.

A huge source of the GAA’s strength is attachment and loyalty to the local club, of which there are over 2,200 in all 32 counties of Ireland. There are a further 462 clubs abroad, “wherever green is worn,” – 83 in the UK; 71 throughout Europe; 132 in the U.S.; 19 in Canada; 64 in Australia; and, 22 in the Middle and Far East.



FORMER President of Ireland President Mary Robinson was in Seattle on Friday, February 14 where she addressed a group on climate change and signed her new book, *Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future*.



FORMER President of Ireland President Mary Robinson signs her new book for Jane Sepede following a talk she gave in Seattle on the climate crisis.



THE IRISH HERITAGE CLUB Board of Directors recently met to organize Irish Week 2020 in Seattle. (L-R) [Back row] David Jacobsen, Brendan Shriane, Janet Mount, Heather Murphy, Ralph Kosche, Caron McMahon, and Seán Bailey. [Front row] John Keane, Jane Sepede, Jean Roth, Nanci Spieker, and Corbin Johnson.



IRISH CONSUL GENERAL Robert O'Driscoll, Mary Shriane, Maureen Keane, Mary Robinson, John Keane, and Jean Roth on February 14 following an address by the former Irish President at K&L Gates in Downtown Seattle.

## SEATTLE IRISH NEWS

### PASSINGS

- Mary Gaskin (93), mother of Seattle's Alan Gaskin, died in Co. Louth January 30;
- Angela Cummins, a native of Co. Louth, died in Mukilteo January 16;
- Sister Elizabeth Linnane CSJP (94), a native of Co. Kerry, died in Bellevue January 11;
- Maureen Nielsen (94), a native of Co. Derry, died in Kennewick January 8;
- Allan Carson (91), a native of Belfast, died in Seattle January 4;
- John O'Sullivan (90), a native of Co. Kerry, died in Tacoma December 29;
- George Bradshaw (87), husband of Co. Leitrim native Celine, died in Edmonds November 26;
- Eithna Love (93), a native of Co. Down, died in Olympia November 26;
- Isabel Beegle (76), a native of Co. Down, died in Everett November 13;
- Madge Peterson (93), a native of Co. Armagh, died in Seattle November 9;
- Julianne Carty (67), a native of Dublin, died in Ridgefield November 29;
- Barney Gallagher (93), a native of Co. Donegal, died in Puyallup December 3;
- John Majeska, husband of Úna and brother-in-law of Martin O'Malley, both natives of Co. Mayo, died in Edmonds November 18;
- Father Kieran Heneghan (95), brother of Seattle's Father Jarlath Heneghan, died in Co. Meath September 22;

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílse*  
— May their faithful souls rest at  
God's right hand

**SEAN-NÓS FESTIVAL** – The 13th annual Sean-Nós Northwest Traditional Irish Festival at Evergreen State College in Olympia is Saturday and Sunday, April 4-5.

Two full days of workshops and classes on traditional Irish singing, dancing, language, music, and culture. Registration at [seannos.org](http://seannos.org).

**GAELS GAA** – The Emerald City Cup for men's Gaelic football is named for the late Frank Shriane, one of the club's founding members.

The Gaels' new committee members for 2020 are: Chair - Joseph Lavy; Vice chair - Oisín Desmond Keely; Registrar - Tom Va; Treasurer - Ryan Clapp; Secretary - Bridgett Vechey.

**IRISH HUSKY** – Sophie O'Sullivan, a runner who has competed internationally for Ireland, is a UW Husky Track & Field recruit in its 2020 class.

Her mother, Sonia, a native of Cork, was one of Ireland's greatest ever athletes. She set a world record in the 2,000-meters in 1994, won gold in the 5,000 meters at the 1995 World Championships, and a silver medal in the 5,000 meters at the 2000 Olympic Games.

**SOUNDER SIGNING** – A recent Seattle Sounders signing is Shane O'Neill, a native of Middleton, Co. Cork.

Shane has played six MLS seasons since his rookie debut in 2012, the past two at Orlando City SC.

Shane's father, Colm O'Neill, was a star Gaelic football player in Ireland and played with Cork from 1984 until 1991 during which Cork played in three



By  
**JOHN  
KEANE**

All-Ireland Finals.

**CCE PUGET SOUND** – The Puget Sound Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCE) is affiliated with the international CCE organization, the primary Irish organization dedicated to the promotion of the music, dance, song, and language of Ireland.

In the Seattle area, CCE's holds monthly Irish set-dances at the Wilde Rover Pub in Kirkland and Shawn O'Donnell's in Fremont. Details at [CCEPugetSound.org](http://CCEPugetSound.org).

**ZAPPONE DEFEATED** – Among those members of the Dáil (the Irish parliament) who lost their seat in the recent Irish general election was Seattle-born Katherine Zappone, the outgoing Irish Government Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

Katherine was first elected to the Dáil as an Independent in 2014, the same year she came back to Seattle to be Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

**EMERALD EVENING** – The Seattle

Police Pipes & Drums host their Emerald Evening 2020 on Saturday, April 4 at the SPAA Pavilion, 11030 E Marginal Way S, Tukwila.

The event to raise funds for the SPD Pipe band starts at 4:30 PM. Cocktail hour, program 5:45 PM, followed by a buffet dinner, hosted beer and wine bar, dessert dash, whiskey tasting bar, live auction, etc., as well as performances by the Seattle Police Pipes & Drums with dancing afterwards! Tickets \$40 at (253) 237-2811.

### MISCELLANEOUS

• For information on the next Irish Book Club meeting, contact [jaadams095@gmail.com](mailto:jaadams095@gmail.com).

• The Cascadia Irish Music Week is July 20-25 at The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Irish music classes based on your instrument and skill level. More info and registration at [ceolcascadia.org](http://ceolcascadia.org).

• Best wishes to Seattle's Randal Bays on his new album of Irish fiddle tunes, *UP THE WEST*, available at [upthewest.com](http://upthewest.com).

• Congratulations to Seattle's Irish glass artist, Paul Stokes, whose "1845: Momento Mori" Irish Famine exhibit will be displayed later this year at the Irish Famine Museum in Roscommon and also at Johnstown Castle in Wexford.

• Irish musician Andy Cooney hosts a 7-day cruise to Alaska leaving Seattle May 31 - details at [travelpro@warwick.net](mailto:travelpro@warwick.net).



**GALWAY MAYOR** Mike Cubbard will be in Seattle to participate in Irish Week 2020 and to march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday, March 14.



FORMER Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny will be in Seattle to serve as Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday, March 14



SEATTLE'S new Archbishop Paul Etienne will be the homilist and presider at the Irish Community's St. Patrick's Day Mass at St. Patrick's Church on Friday, March 13.



OFFALY NATIVE Jim Cummins, an invaluable member of Seattle's Irish community, will serve as Honorary Grand Marshal of Seattle's St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 14.

## 2020 SEATTLE IRISH WEEK EVENTS

### Full Details at IrishWeek.org

#### Special Irish Week Presentations

- Joanne McFall, with Cré Crafts (Cré is the Irish word for clay) in Ireland, will conduct Celtic ceramics demonstrations on both days of the festival.
- Celtic Life & Heritage will present workshops both days on how to ignite your child's learning with presentations on Irish History, an Irish card game, and a video journey through Ireland.
- At the festival, a Lego artist will recreate the historic Rock of Cashel using Lego bricks, including the grounds, graves and the wall, all on a green Lego hill!
- Dr. Tyrone Bowes, a biotechnologist and genealogist with Irish Origenes in Galway, will describe how to use the latest technology and DNA results to decipher clues to your Irish ancestral origins.

**PARADE GRAND MARSHAL** – Enda Kenny became Ireland's taoiseach in 2011 just as Ireland was trying to recover from the economic downturn caused by the housing crisis.

He stepped down as taoiseach in 2017 after Ireland's economic recovery was well underway.

First elected to the Dáil (Irish Parliament) in 1975, he was the longest serving Dáil member when he declined to run for re-election in the recent Irish General Election.

In 2013 he was the first serving taoiseach to pay an official visit to Seattle.

We are delighted and honored to have the former taoiseach as our 2020 St. Patrick's Day Parade Grand Marshal.

**HONORARY GRAND MARSHAL** – Jim Cummins, a native of Co. Offaly, has lived in Kennewick with his wife Eloise for the past 44 years.

He retired in 1995 as Warden at the Walla Walla Penitentiary after 25 years with the Washington State Department of Corrections.

Jim helped found the Irish Immigrant Support Group in Seattle in 2001 and served as chair for 15 years.

He served for six years as National Treasurer of the Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers around the U.S. and still helps organize our senior luncheons.

Jim is an invaluable member of the Seattle area Irish community and we're delighted to have him as Honorary Grand Marshal of this year's parade.

**GALWAY MAYOR** – Mike Cubbard became mayor of Galway City this past June, the first time he was elected to serve as the city's first citizen.

With nearly six years of political experience, he is an independent voice on the City Council not belonging to any political party.

He is visiting Seattle for the first time and with him are his wife Karen, and their three young boys.

We wish them all a sincere Céad Míle Fáilte (One Hundred Thousand Welcomes) as they visit Galway's sister city of Seattle.

#### PROGRAM OF EVENTS

##### SATURDAY, MARCH 7

- 2020 Irish Soda Bread Contest

##### FRIDAY, MARCH 13

- St. Patrick's Day Mass
- Mayor's Proclamation Luncheon
- Pirates Landing of St. Patrick
- Green Stripe Laying on 4th Ave

##### SATURDAY, MARCH 14

- Irish Flag-Raising
- 2020 St. Patrick's Day Parade
- Irish Festival Seattle

##### SUNDAY, MARCH 15

- St. Patrick's Day Dash
- Irish Festival Seattle
- Matt Talbot Dinner

##### SATURDAY, MARCH 21

- Irish Genealogy Seminar: "Putting The Gene Back Into Genealogy"
- Seattle Gaels Field Day

**MAYOR'S LUNCHEON** – Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and Galway Mayor Mike Cubbard will join Grand Marshal Enda Kenny at the Mayor's Irish Week Proclamation Luncheon at noon on Friday, March 13, at the Ninety, 406 Occidental Avenue S., Seattle.

Proclamations of Irish Week 2020 will be issued and their parade sashes will be presented to the Grand Marshal and

Honorary Grand Marshal. Reservations required to (253) 237-2811.

**PARADE HIGHLIGHTS** – In Seattle's St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 14, there will be at least seven participating bands including the Seattle Firefighters Pipe Band, the Seattle Police Pipe Band and the Navy Band Northwest.

They will join about 60 unicyclists from Whittier Elementary School, the Keystone Kops, Irish Wolfhounds, Irish Terriers, Kerry Blues, the Seafair Pirates, the Seafair Clowns, and many other groups.

The Ride-the-Ducks Boat will again serve as a Shamrock Shuttle to carry seniors who are unable to walk the parade route (seat reservations at (253) 2371-2811).

All are welcome to walk with their favorite group or behind their Irish Provincial Banner. Parade starts at 12:30 PM, find all the details at irishweek.org.

**FESTIVAL DETAILS** – Admission is FREE to all Irish Festival activities on both Saturday and Sunday, March 14 and 15 at the Seattle Center.

The festival features non-stop Irish music, singing and dancing, booths selling Irish and Celtic products, workshops, lectures, cultural displays, children's contests and activities, including contests to find the kid with the 'Smilingest Irish Eyes' and the 'Most Irish Looking Face'. The festival runs noon to 6 PM on Saturday, and 10 AM to 6 PM on Sunday.

**IRELAND TICKETS RAFFLE** – On the afternoon of Sunday, March 15 at the Irish Festival at the Seattle Center, there will be a raffle for two round trip tickets direct from Seattle to Dublin on Aer Lingus.

Tickets at \$5 each can only be purchased in person from an Irish Heritage Club and ONLY 1,000 TICKETS CAN BE SOLD.

So pick up your tickets at any of the Irish Week events or at the Irish Heritage Club booth during the Irish Festival.

The special drawing is on the festival's main stage at 5:30 PM, Sunday, March 15, and you do not have to be present to win. *Adh mór* – Good luck!!

**OTHER EVENTS** – Other events of Irish Week include the St. Patrick's Day Mass on Friday morning, March 13, at 10 am at St. Patrick's Church, celebrated by Seattle's new Archbishop Paul Etienne.

Then that afternoon at 5 PM, the Pirates Landing of St. Patrick will be held at south Lake Union, near MOHAI, followed at 7 PM by the Painting of the Green Stripe on 4th Avenue. All events are free and kids are very welcome. Information at irishweek.org.

**DERVISH** – Irish band Dervish performs at Seattle's Neptune Theatre, 1303 NE 45th Street, at 8 PM on March 17, St. Patrick's Day. Dervish includes six of Ireland's finest traditional musicians. Tickets at EventBrite.

## Galway: European Capital of Culture 2020

Galway will celebrate 2020 European City of Culture with over 1,900 events across 154 projects in collaboration with local, national, European and international artists and cultural organisations, in villages, towns, on islands.

Some of the highlights include:

- Wild Atlantic Women for Women's Day, on March 7-8, featuring author Margaret Atwood and Derry Girl actor Siobhán McSweeney, sunrise performance and exhibition inspired by court testimonies of domestic abuse.
- Sruth na Teanga, Branar's immersive theatre about the evolution of the Irish language, in Galway's former airport building.
- The Connemara landscape illuminated in an epic spectacle called Savage Beauty by Finnish light artist Kari Kola from March 14-17.
- The acclaimed Druid Theatre will take 20th-century Irish one-act plays to local communities across the county from May to July.
- An epic telling of Gilgamesh by Macnas, written by Marina Carr and designed by Julian Crouch will run April, June, November, and December.



Sadly, the opening ceremony of Galway 2020, which was due to take place on the evening of Saturday, February 8 was cancelled due to bad weather.

Organisers said they were "extremely disappointed" to announce the cancellation due to the severe national weather warnings.

"In the interests of the safety of the public the weather warnings currently in place mean that it has been deemed unsafe to go ahead."

Thousands had been expected to attend the official launch of the event to mark Galway's year as European Capital of Culture. Capacity for the free event was 28,000, with scope to increase to 45,000.

"We are saddened for the community cast, our volunteers and the whole team who have worked so hard during the last weeks and months," said a spokesperson.

"Today's event would have marked the finale of what has been a hugely successful week-long series of events on

the Fire Tour of lighting ceremonies that have lit up towns across the county."

A large-scale fire-lit themed opening ceremony had been planned at South Park in the city's Claddagh.

President Michael D Higgins, along with other Irish poets, artists and musicians, was due to take part in a "fire and flame" opening devised by a local team and Wonder Works, a UK events company which has worked on Olympic ceremonies.

More than 500 locals, including community groups, choirs, chanters and drummers were due to have been involved.

This designed to be the culmination of smaller fire ceremonies in Clifden, Spiddal, Tuam, Ballinasloe, Portumna and Athenry.

Six hand-carved steel "town spheres" were due to arrive at South Park, joined by the city's sphere, transforming into giant glowing orbs, lighting up the headland. In the bay, Galway hooker fishing boats were due to be lit up.

The full programme of events is available at galway2020.ie/en/programme

**NOTE:** Galway is the Sister City of Seattle, WA, and this year the Mayor of Galway will be a special guest in Seattle during Irish Week 2020 in Seattle on March 13, 14 and 15.

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# Lá Fhéile Bríde: Celebrating the Creativity of Women: Vancouver joined a growing cultural movement in 2020

**F**ROM the blue skies that opened the day following torrential rainstorms the night before, it felt like such an auspicious beginning to St. Brigid's Day.

With the support of the Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver, the first festival to honour Ireland's patron saint of women was held at Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre in downtown Vancouver on Saturday, February 1, 2020.

The event was a collaboration between the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C., the Irish Women's Network of B.C., and Simon Fraser University.

Lá Fhéile Bríde: Celebrating the Creativity of Women is part of a growing annual celebration of Irish women around the world.

It began three years ago and has expanded to connect women from London to Warsaw to Washington with events celebrating the talent and creativity of Irish women with art exhibits, music, poetry, dance.

It is always people coming together to create a sacred space that sets the tone and that deep sense of community and kinship was felt by many present at the event in Vancouver. There was such warmth and openness in sharing so many experiences and issues which have touched all our lives.

This was particularly evident in the workshops and discussion groups. I cannot say enough about the wonderful women who brought their own unique experience, strength and insight to each session.

One of the most popular groups was Legends and Mythology of Brigid which featured Philomena Jordan, an Irish storyteller who captured the spirit of the day with her wonderful bodhrán and ability to skillfully weave a tale.

This panel, moderated by Cassandra Steiner, consisted of Dr. Siobhán McElduff, PhD Classics, University of British Columbia; writer Cynthia Wallentine; and Reverend Marnie Peterson with St. Brigid's Ministry, Christ Church Cathedral.

Another standing-room only session focused on Mental Health & the Irish Diaspora and covered such issues as psychological well-being, addiction and suicide prevention from a woman's perspective.

This group consisted of Susie Newman, a substance abuse therapist with the Orchard Recovery Centre; Dr. Máire Durnin, a medical doctor who specializes in addiction medicine; Amy O'Sullivan with Darkness Into Light, a suicide prevention movement; and Cathy Murphy, the executive director of the Eamonn O'Loughlin Irish Canadian Immigration Centre in Toronto.

Another insightful session was a reading of Letters from Home led by SFU professor Dara Culhane. This was a 90-minute readers theatre performance by five local women who read aloud from their letters to and from home.

The letters covered a wide range of experiences and in the course of advance preparation the group participants formed a close bond. Plans are



By  
**MAURA  
DE FREITAS**



**DEIRDRE KEOHANE** is the talented artist behind the beautiful artwork of St. Brigid on display at the festival.



**THE EVENING** event opened with a procession of women bearing light accompanied by evocative background music.

now underway to continue the readings with an ever-growing group of women joining the readings.

For more information, anyone interested is invited to contact Dara Culhane directly for more details at: 2019vivavoce@gmail.com.

Since the tradition of weaving St. Brigid's crosses is so deeply ingrained in Irish culture it is not surprising that the workshop led by Irish/Canadian artist Deirdre Keohane was so well attended.

In fact, that space which also served as a hospitality area literally buzzed with energy as participants gathered to weave their own St. Brigid's cross while a Pop-Up Illumination was screened in the background.

This was part of the HerStory movement where women are photographed alongside a projected image of a woman who has inspired their own lives.

Over 17 local women participated in the project this year and these images can be viewed online on the website: www.brigidfestivalvancouver.com.

Deirdre Keohane is also the artist who painted the magnificent image of St. Brigid which was a centrepiece display at the festival.

Her artwork is internationally recog-

nized with one of her works presented some years ago to the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins.

Finally, one of the most remarkable events happened just a few weeks prior to the festival when keynote speaker Ailbhe Smyth was forced to cancel due to ill health. Her participation had been eagerly anticipated so it was quite a disappointment and a bit stressful to find someone who could possibly step in as a replacement and fill that void.

It seemed near miraculous when Dr. Anglela Byrne, who is now with the Culture Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland, agreed on such short notice to re-organize her busy schedule and travel from Dublin....and we could not have found a more perfect guest speaker given her background.

As former Historian-in-Residence at EPIC, Ireland's museum of emigration, Angela was the curator for 'Blazing A Trail' which was exhibited for the first time in Canada at the St. Brigid's Day Festival in Vancouver this year.

Dr. Byrne's address that evening was focused on the women featured on those panels. Her talk brought their struggles and achievements to life, helping us to understand in much more depth how those brave and pioneering women helped to open a door for so many of us to follow our own path.

I want to extend a huge note of appreciation to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland, for supporting the exhibit and facilitating Dr. Byrne's presence in Vancouver.

On the morning of the event, a flurry of messages of encouragement and good wishes were received from far and wide, but it was the following from Ailbhe which was most poignant.

She wrote: "I'm thinking of you on the day of your great festival and I'm sure it will be beautiful and brilliant, and only wish I could be there with you. *Beannachtaí La Fheile Bríde* to you all – May Brigid's strength, passion, leadership and creative power light up Vancouver!"

The evening was brought to a close following Dr. Byrne's presentation with a reception, hospitality and the sounds of Irish traditional music led by an all-women group of talented musicians. What a wonderful way to end an eventful day.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention our admiration and gratitude to Macealach McBride for her creation of the beautiful website which helped to bring Lá Fhéile Bríde Vancouver 2020 alive for so many.

Sadly for us, Macealach has returned to her home in Co. Donegal but her work in Vancouver remains online as an inspiration for those who might step forward to assist in the year ahead. It can be viewed online at: www.brigidfestivalvancouver.com.

Special thanks to everyone who supported Lá Fhéile Bríde 2020 Vancouver ~ particularly Jennifer Bourke with the Consulate General of Vancouver; Eilis Courtney with the Irish Women's Network of B.C.; Willeen Keough with Simon Fraser University; Dara Culhane with Simon Fraser University; to all our volunteers; to all our sponsors who helped make the event possible; and finally, to everyone who came out and graced us with your presence.



**FRANK FLOOD**, Dara Culhane, Syexwaliya (the indigenous elder who offered the Territorial Welcome) Jennifer Bourke, Maura De Freitas, and Dr. Angela Byrne following the evening presentation at the St. Brigid's Day Festival on February 1, 2020.



**A RECEPTION** followed the evening presentation with a talented group of all-women traditional session musicians providing the wonderful background music.



**LETTERS FROM HOME** led by Simon Fraser University professor Dara Culhane was a 90-minute readers theatre performance by five local women who read aloud from their letters to and from home. This group is continuing so watch for more updates on readings in the near future.



**A TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS** with the Irish Women's Network of B.C. welcomed participants to the event and directed participants to their respective workshops and rooms.



THE LEGENDS AND MYTHOLOGY of Brigid panel moderated by Cassandra Steiner, consisted of (L-R) Reverend Marnie Peterson with St. Brigid's Ministry, Christ Church Cathedral, Dr. Siobhán McElduff, PhD Classics, University of British Columbia; writer Cynthia Wallentine; and storyteller Philomena Jordan.



THE MENTAL HEALTH panel consisted of consisted of Susie Newman, a substance abuse therapist with the Orchard Recovery Centre; Dr. Máire Durnin, a medical doctor who specializes in addiction medicine; Amy O'Sullivan with Darkness Into Light, a suicide prevention movement; and Cathy Murphy, the executive director of the Eamonn O'Loughlin Irish Canadian Immigration Centre in Toronto.



UNDER the watchful eye of Irish/Canadian artist Deirdre Keohane participants enjoyed the Brigid cross-weaving workshop. In the background a slide show of participants with the HerStory Pop-Up Illumination can be seen in the background. These images can be viewed online at: [www.brigidfestivalvancouver.com](http://www.brigidfestivalvancouver.com).



WHILE in Vancouver, Dr. Angela Byrne, pictured centre, visited the site of the future Ireland Canada Monument and met with committee members. It was Brendan Flynn the Chair of the Society who recommended Angela as a speaker for the Brigid Festival. Pictured above (L-R) Susan Chamberlain, Patricia Jarvis, Teresa McDonnell, Claire Fox, Dr. Angela Byrne, Mary Hatch, Catherine Flynn, Macealeach McBride.

IT'S A POWERFUL image. Hundreds of people holding a light walking together through the darkness into the dawn. Darkness Into Light started in Ireland in 2009 to bring awareness and support for mental illness and suicide prevention and it has now grown into an international movement of thousands. Join the walk in Vancouver on May 9, 2020.



## Darkness Into Light: A symbol of hope and a celebration of life



VANCOUVER – Darkness Into Light is an annual run started in Dublin's Phoenix Park in 2009 to bring awareness and support for mental illness and suicide prevention.

There were about 400 yellow-clad walkers that fateful morning, all huddled together in the blackness and the cold, standing behind the starting line.

Who would have guessed that little event called Darkness Into Light would become the symbol of hope, the celebration of life that it is today?

And Darkness into Light is about hope. It is about letting people know they are not alone.

It has grown from a small movement of several hundred to thousands around the world now walking the darkness into the light so they can share their stories and inspire others.

The Vancouver Darkness Into Light walk has become part of that movement with all proceeds raised going to charity to support mental health and suicide prevention.

Friends and families of all ages (including pets) are welcome to join the walk on Saturday, May 9, to show solidarity and support for all those living with mental health issues.

This wonderfully unique 5K walk will once again start at 4:15 AM at Burnaby Lake. Last year 474 people attended the Vancouver event and raised CAD\$32,474.

The walk starts and finishes at Burnaby Lake Rugby Club, 3760 Sperling Avenue in Burnaby.

This year will be bigger and better than before, so make sure that you remember the date and invite your friends and colleagues to this incredible event.

In Vancouver, if you're struggling, or know someone that is, please reach out to The Kettle Society who can connect you with the excellent local mental health resources.

Also, Crisis Centre BC is available for immediate support. If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, call 1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE).

For more information and updates on the May 9 Darkness Into Light walk at Burnaby Lake, follow on Facebook: Darkness into Light Vancouver.

**We're Here to Help.**

Athena Theodorakakis, Ryan Crean, Christina Koh, Anne Plunkett-Rumley, Sherry Moreau, Steven Colon, Megan Johnson, Chris Bradshaw, Gabe Rogan, Aaron Morrison, Taylor Meers, and Mike Crean

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# An Irish Christmas Celebration: A Wonderful Festive Season Prelude



DEIRDRE Keohane donated a print of her artwork which was raffled to help raise funds for the Brigid Festival. She is pictured above making St. Brigid's crosses which were sold at the event.

VANCOUVER – In a wonderful festive prelude, 'An Irish Christmas' was held on Sunday, December 22 to help raise funds for worthwhile causes in our community.

The night was a fabulous success while also helping to bring the warmth of the season to those who might be far from home and missing friends and family.

It was made possible through the support of a great line-up of local session musicians; Brian and Chandra, owners of the Wolf & Hound restaurant; the Consulate General of Ireland, Vancouver; the Irish Women's Network of B.C.; and *The Celtic Connection* newspaper.

Many families and groups appeared to enjoy the roast beef Sunday dinner and take part in the evening's events which included an Irish music session, a 50/50 draw, prize raffles, and a silent auction for a lovely limited edition fine art print of St. Brigid by Irish/Canadian artist Deirdre Keohane.

On behalf of the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C., Maura De Freitas welcomed the full capacity crowd and volunteers to the session and she described the purpose and program for the St. Brigid's Day Festival to illuminate and to celebrate the creativity of women.

The session players included: Mary Brunner, Michael Burnyeat, Craig McGregor, Eilis Courtney, Rick McDougall, Blake Williams, Catherine Craig, Angela Brady, Sal Gallagher, Jane McEwen, and Pedro Lopes. They were later joined by Catherine Flynn and finally, Desmond Cooper, a baritone from Dublin stepped up to the microphone for a beautiful rendition of *The Wexford Carol*. A great night was enjoyed by all!

During some breaks in the music, raffle numbers were drawn to award prizes. Special thank you to both *The Celtic Connection* and the Celtic Treasure Chest retail store in Dunbar for the beautiful prize gift baskets filled with Christmas goodies from home.

There was a special moment of silence throughout the restaurant to recognize the loss five years earlier of young Christine Flynn and to reflect that she is remembered, she is deeply missed, and she will not be forgotten.

As the session tunes and songs started again, it was a great privilege to have Catherine Flynn join the session with her amazing banjo playing.

Gifted fiddler Mary Brunner noted that "the camaraderie of the musicians was evident so with the tunes on a roll



A talented group of 12 musicians donated their time to bring the warmth of the season to An Irish Christmas and help raise funds to benefit the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C. and the St. Brigid's Day Festival.



A HUGE THANK YOU to the great volunteers who came out and worked so hard selling raffle tickets to benefit the St. Brigid's Day Festival. The huge array of prizes and gift baskets were thanks to the Wolf & Hound, the Celtic Treasure Chest and *The Celtic Connection*.



THE SESSION PLAYERS included: Mary Brunner, Michael Burnyeat, Craig McGregor, Eilis Courtney, Rick McDougall, Blake Williams, Catherine Craig, Angela Brady, Sal Gallagher, Jane McEwen, and Pedro Lopes. They were later joined by Catherine Flynn and finally, Desmond Cooper, a baritone from Dublin stepped up to the microphone for a beautiful rendition of *The Wexford Carol*. A great night was enjoyed by all!

and with the contributions of the other people involved everything came together so well."

Then, one of those unplanned and unrehearsed magical surprises occurred when Sal mentioned she had a friend in from Dublin who might be able to contribute a song.

A quick chat occurred and suddenly Desmond Cooper, a baritone from Dublin, stepped up to the microphone and sang a beautiful rendition of *The Wexford Carol* to great applause!

The acoustic session music drew young children and parents to jump up and dance. Many thanks to all the volunteers, the restaurant owners and staff, the session musicians, the com-

munity groups and generous customers who added to the spirit of the evening.

It was thanks to everyone that over \$1,400 was raised toward the Irish Benevolent Society of B.C. to support the St. Brigid's Day Festival on February 1, 2020.

Brian and Chandra observed, "It was an evening of music, dance, and craic, all for a good cause. As Helen Keller said, 'Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much'. Thank you all!"

As the evening ended far too soon for many, departing guests and volunteers alike were overheard saying, "Let's do this again next year!"



IRISH CONSUL GENERAL Frank Flood presented Gwen and Tony McCamley a framed letter of acknowledgement for their work and dedication in supporting the Irish community through the Irish Heritage Society of Canada.

## A festive gathering with thoughtful presentations

VANCOUVER The annual Irish seniors' holiday luncheon is always an eagerly anticipated event and each year over 100 guests gather at the Hilton Metrotown Hotel in Burnaby to enjoy the festive spirit.

Hosted by the Irish Women's Network and organized by Aileen Clery, the luncheon is always a wonderful opportunity to connect with old friends, enjoy a delicious meal, share stories, and have the craic.

Special guests at this year's event was the Irish Consul General Frank Flood and his wife Orla Ní Bhroithe.

In a lovely gesture, the Consul General acknowledged several key community members for their commitments and contributions to Irish culture.

The presentation of a framed letter to Tony and Gwen McCamley of the Irish Heritage Society, which has now been dissolved, was particularly poignant. It read as follows:

*Dear Tony and Gwen McCamley*  
On behalf of the office of the Consulate General of Ireland in Vancouver and the Irish community, I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank you for the great work that you have both carried out on Ireland's behalf in British Columbia.

For over sixteen years you were greatly involved and led the work of Celtic Heritage Society and subsequently the Irish Heritage Society supporting the local Irish community. During this time with Tony as president and Gwen as treasurer you also successfully brought forward fully developed plans to build an Irish Cultural Centre in Langley at very significant personal cost.

While no stone was left unturned, without the necessary support at that time for this excellent initiative, the Centre was not eventually established. However, under your guidance and support, the Irish Heritage Society continued to make a significant contribution to the welfare of the Irish community in the Greater Vancouver area until its activities ended in 2018.

This letter is in recognition of your great acts of kindness, thoughtfulness, generosity and support which you have given as leaders of the Irish community in British Columbia.

Wishing you both every success and happiness,

*Le gach dea-ghu!*



AIDEN CLERY with the Irish Women's Network of B.C. was recognized for her ongoing work organizing the annual Irish seniors luncheon.



EILIS COURTNEY, president of the IWN was thanked for her extensive work on behalf of the Irish community, including the Irish Mapping Project in 2019 and launching the new website: [irishinbc.ca](http://irishinbc.ca)



BRENDAN FLYNN was acknowledged for his dedication and work with the Irish Monument Project which reached new milestones in 2019.