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we do not remember days, we remember moments

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# Fáilte!

## *We remember...*

On June 6 the world paused in sober reflection to honour the men and women who fought and died on the beaches of Normandy 75 years ago. The tributes were a testament to their courage, and we must never forget their sacrifice.

The bagpipes have been used in battle for centuries to lead warriors into combat. Following the Battle of Culloden in 1746, the pipes were romanticized as an instrument of war after Jacobite piper James Reid was hanged. At that time, Reid argued that he was not a combatant, only a piper. The Judge, however, disagreed - rebutting that no Scottish army would go to war without pipers - and sentenced him to death.

The bagpipes were never identified as an instrument of war and were not mentioned in the Act of Proscription of 1747. Soon after, they became a standard part of Highland Regiments and their rightful place returned to that of a musical instrument.

Bagpipes played an important role in both World War I and II. In the former, pipers marched through "no-man's land" on the German front where thousands were killed and wounded. During the Second World War, pipers were banned from leading men into battle and were restricted to the rear of the Company.

An exception was Canadian piper Bill Millin of Saskatchewan. Known as "the mad piper," he was the personal piper for Simon Fraser, 15th Lord Lovat, Commander of Special Service Brigade at Normandy on D-Day. There, he piped the invasion forces onto the beaches with nothing more than his instrument and a Skein Dubh, his ceremonial dagger.

In his obituary it noted Simon Fraser's objection to the War Office position on pipers leading troops to battle telling Millin, "But that is the English War Office. You and I are Scottish and that does not apply."

As the only man in a kilt that day, Millin's traditional attire floated to the surface in the icy waters. Still, while men fell all around him, he kept playing his pipes. Ashore, he continued to march up and down the beach playing Road to the Isles.

Years later, a fellow soldier recalled, "It is hard to describe the impact it had. It gave us great life and increased our determination." A German soldier admitted that they did not fire upon Millin, as they thought he had gone mad.

Another war story comes to mind from closer to home.

Johnny MacGillivray was a young farm boy living in northern Nova Scotia when he received word to report to a recruiting office in nearby New Glasgow. This was long before residential postal codes and home addresses.

"Where do you live, Mr. MacGillivray?" asked the recruiter. "Up above Joe Smith's place" was his reply. "Well, where does Joe Smith live?" queried the recruiter. Straightfaced, MacGillivray replied, "Down below our place."

To the men and women who were part of D-Day - whether a young farm boy or a seasoned veteran, piper or pilot, school girl or a mother left at home to raise the family - we remember, we salute you, and we thank you for your service.

*Enjoy and may God Bless!*

**Angus M. Macquarrie, Publisher**

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# Up With Gaelic

*In the fourth instalment in a six-part series on prominent women in the Celtic community we speak with two youngsters from Nova Scotia...*



When Abby and Ella Hanson sat down with Celtic Life International at the beginning of May, it was the start of Gaelic Nova Scotia Month. The siblings had just wrapped up a presentation at the Halifax Central Library.

Although young (Abby 16, Ella 14), the sisters are having an important impact on Gaelic education in their home province. As the founders of Up With Gaelic, the pair visit schools around mainland Nova Scotia, promoting the preservation of Scottish Gaelic culture and tradition.

"Both our parents are in the education system," says Abby. "We had heard a lot about how Gaelic culture was on the social studies curriculum in grade schools, but there were almost no resources to actually teach it. So, with the help of our mom and what we had learned from our Gaelic teachers, we put the presentation together."

At first, one of the biggest challenges was getting people to take them seriously.

"A couple of times in the beginning we would go into classes and people would say, 'Oh, we didn't think you would actually be students,'" shares Abby. "They were expecting adults."

Abby and Ella's maternal great-great grandmother only spoke Gaelic when she first emigrated to Nova Scotia. As the language was frowned upon at the time, Gaels were discouraged from using their mother tongue outside of their own homes. Over time, that led to a loss of the language in Gaelic households, including that of Abby and Ella's family. However, the pair are now working their way back to Gaelic fluency - and their mother has started learning the language as well. Up With Gaelic is their chance to share their heritage.

The duo balance their own schoolwork with their elementary school visits. They started off with 30-minute presentations, but soon bumped them up to an hour after realizing that they needed more time to cover everything properly. Though the sessions vary slightly depending on the students' ages, the core is always the same: Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia. The teens take their audiences from the Gaels' lifestyle in Scotland - residing in blackhouses, spinning wool and caring for cattle - to their journey to Canada. They bring interactive elements to the classroom as well, including a milling song.

The two weren't always as enthusiastic about learning Gaelic as they are now, but in 2014, after participating in Na Gaisgich Òga (a Gaelic

mentorship program for youth) run by the Gaelic College in St. Ann's, Cape Breton, they grew curious. Already violinists (soon to be fiddlers), they were drawn by the musical side of the culture.

"I really liked learning the singing," smiles Abby. "I had a faint idea that it was part of my family heritage - that my ancestors had spoken Gaelic - and I slowly became more interested as I went along and started taking more classes."

For Ella, it wasn't until the second year of participating in the Caidreamh na Cloinneadh (Summer Youth Gaelic Immersion program) that she became invested in learning to speak Gaelic.

*"I really enjoyed learning the language and figuring it out. Like with friends, I got to speak with them in Gaelic and they got to speak back, which is pretty cool."*

"We did it as well this past year. It was also fun because I could completely understand what everyone was saying, and I could hold a conversation - which was really neat and special because I was speaking the language of my ancestors."

Ella has also taken to step-dancing, which she happily demonstrates during the Up With Gaelic presentations.

While neither have immediate goals of teaching Gaelic full-time, they want to continue sharing the culture with students for as long as they can. Based on their experience, they believe that young people today are still interested in learning about Gaelic culture.

"We went to the Gaelic College one year and one of the organizers said, 'We had a family here last week and they came because their daughter had heard about it through your presentation,'" recalls Abby. "That was so amazing that they had remembered it for that long."

Abby and Ella say that, if they have children of their own, they will be happy to pass the language along to them.

"Just look around," says Ella. "Gaelic might not be an active part of our everyday culture, but it is still a huge part of our life."

[www.upwithgaelic.ca](http://www.upwithgaelic.ca)

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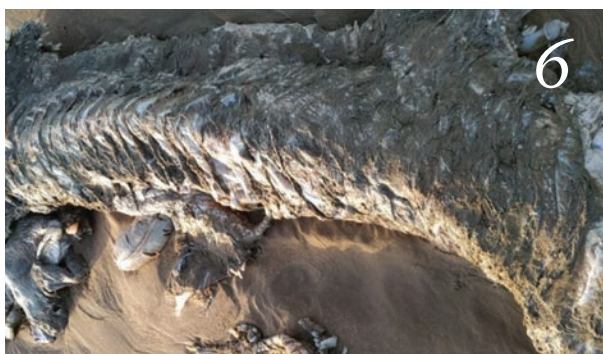
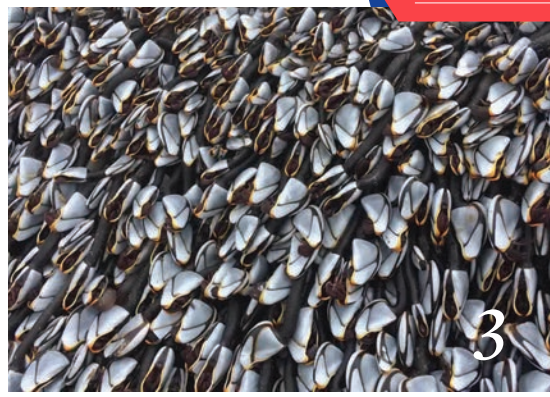
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## one

### High Valyrian more popular than Gaelic

In the United Kingdom, recent census data suggests people are more interested in a fictional language than a Scottish one. According to the last census, 87,056 people understand Scottish Gaelic. Conversely, 100,000 people in the U.K. have signed up to learn High Valyrian on Duolingo - a popular language-learning app. The language was created by David Peterson for the Game of Thrones television series, so it probably won't be very useful outside of comic conventions. Nonetheless, folks are interested: according to Duolingo, about 830,000 people around the world are learning High Valyrian. That is more than the world's Welsh-speaking population.

## two

### Bagpipe world record

Scotsman Ross Jennings wants to play the bagpipe in every country in the world. While he is not there just yet, Jennings did recently hit a major milestone, having played in 100 different countries. He has played near landmarks in India, France and Italy, but Times Square in New York was his choice for the 100th destination. Not only did Jennings make a new world record, but the video of his NYC piping - including a mini concert on his flight there - has gone viral.

## three

### Welsh wall

A strange stone wall inspired by Greek mythology and Welsh folklore has been nestled in the Mountain Ash area for about a decade, but its presence has largely gone unknown outside of the local population. The wall's artist, Tim Clapcott, teamed up with stone masons and took about six weeks to create the ghoulish masterpiece on a dead-end street in the Welsh county of Rhondda Cynon Taff. Creepy stone faces and other strange creatures greet unsuspecting passers-by. Despite its weirdness - or maybe because of it - the wall has received positive attention, including a British Landscape Award.

## four

### Doctors wanted

Noble's Hospital on the Isle of Man is looking to recruit doctors, so it has taken to the Internet. Noble's is one of just two hospitals on the island, and recently it released a promotional video in hopes it would attract people to live and work there. The video depicts multiple medical professionals who currently call the Isle of Man home, talking about what they feel makes the place so great. The interviewees gush about everything from the positive work environment to the activities available during their off-hours. Getting your resume ready yet?

## five

### Manxman completes marathon on broken foot

Running a marathon is challenging to begin with, but imagine doing it with a broken bone! That's exactly what Steven Quayle did for three hours during the London marathon this spring. The Manxman, who is a firefighter by trade, broke his foot, sprained his hip and tore a calf muscle eight miles into the race. Despite the agony, Quayle was determined to cross the finish line and carried on. He told Manx Radio that he thought of the charities he was running for - Hospice Isle of Man and Positive Bones - and that kept him going.

## six

### Marine monster

Galician scientists have discovered the true identity of a "monster" found on a beach in Islantilla, Spain. A young man was walking his dog when he came upon a bizarre-looking animal corpse. After snapping some photos with his cell phone, he contacted La Casa de la Ciencia de Sevilla (Museum House of Science of Seville). The marine researchers of the CSIC didn't recognize the creature, so they turned to Rafael Bañón in Galicia. Bañón and a team of collaborators solved the mystery in just two days: the remains were those of a basking shark, the second-largest shark in the world.

*Have an interesting tidbit to share with our Celtic community? Drop us a line anytime at [info@celticlife.com](mailto:info@celticlife.com)*



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**Bimini Love**

**W**hen Bimini Love noticed the number of women sleeping on the streets during her walks to and from school in Truro, Cornwall, she decided to do something about it. At just 15 years old, Love founded Street Cramps: an organization that helps homeless and low-income people access menstrual products. Street Cramps puts together monthly boxes of products including pads, tampons, baby wipes, deodorant, two pairs of underwear and a heating pad to help with pain. Love got the ball rolling in 2017 by raising £7,000 on Crowdfunder and working with St. Petroc's Society and Cosgame Hall to distribute boxes. "I think that the greatest reward for me has been to hear the women's response and how much of an impact a simple item has been on their lives," Love said during a BBC Three documentary. "Period poverty isn't going away, and so I'm going to keep doing as much as I can to help." Now 17, Love continues to juggle school with fundraising and visiting local shelters. She has inspired others to join the cause, and Street Cramps projects have been popping up in other areas of England such as Oxford and Manchester.


**Martha Musonza Holman**

**M**artha Musonza came to the United Kingdom from Zimbabwe in 2001. With the help of Samara Hawthorn, a Zimbabwe-based friend, Musonza wanted to set up a social enterprise to aid disadvantaged Zimbabweans. She started by selling African arts and crafts at markets. In 2004, Musonza met David Holman at one of these markets, and he became her husband three years later. The couple moved to Wales together. Musonza and Holman then teamed up with Hawthorn to officially create the Love Zimbabwe charity. The organization helms multiple projects, including the original idea of trading African arts and crafts made by artists in Zimbabwe. One of Love Zimbabwe's major recent projects is building a library and learning centre for the Chinamhora Village. On top of Love Zimbabwe, Musonza has also worked with Fairtrade Wales for several years, giving talks about fair trade, gender equality, climate change and poverty. In 2017, she was recognized by the Ethnic Minority Welsh Women Achievement Awards for her social and humanitarian work. "I am convinced that this is the way forward to bring grass root communities together and will continue to make this my goal."


**Cynthia Cooper**

**M**ontreal museum curator Cynthia Cooper is using tartan to change the narrative around religious dress. Cooper - who curates the Dress, Fashion and Textiles collection at the McCord Museum of social history - discovered the Maple Leaf tartan while she was researching a 2017 expo on '60s fashion in Montreal. The Maple Leaf tartan was created by David Weiser in 1964 and was approved an official symbol of Canada in 2011. The green, gold, red and brown colours represent the turning of the leaves from summer to the end of fall. "This is a unique opportunity for me to take textile history and vintage clothing and turn that into exercise in social justice," Cooper told the Montreal Gazette. "It has this power to convey messages about who belongs and who gets to belong." In the midst of a Quebec government bill that would prevent working professionals from wearing religious symbols (such as the hijab or turban) while on the job, Cooper decided to put such symbols on display, using the Maple Leaf tartan to create the textiles. She sourced vintage tartan pieces to create a hijab, a turban, a kippah and even had one piece of tartan decorated with Cree embroidery.

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## One Scottish couple is tapping into nature...

When Rob and Gabrielle Clamp realized that no one was commercially practising the ancient Highland tradition of tapping birch trees, they decided to start doing it themselves.

Rob, who was born in Caithness, has been a professional forester his whole working life, making his way throughout the Scottish Highlands and islands, "leading on many reforestation and woodland management projects." His wife Gabrielle, on the other hand, is originally from France. Her background as a chiropractor and healer blends her understanding of human biology with spiritual and plant-based therapeutics.

The couple - now based in Perthshire - founded Birken Tree just over a year ago. Their respective professional backgrounds provided the perfect combination of knowledge to market Perthshire birch sap and, in doing so, they resurrected an age-old custom.

"We have found records of the use of birch sap in Scotland going back over 5,000 years," shares Rob via email. "In historical times, Highlanders would use the spring sap from birch trees as a tonic after long, hard winters. There are over 100,000 hectares of native birchwood in Scotland, present since the last ice age."

Highland birches, which form part of the northern boreal forests, stretch from Canada, through Scotland and Scandinavia to Siberia.

"Just standing in an ancient Highland birchwood that you know has been here since the last ice age, and feeling its presence and antiquity, is very powerful," he continues. "There are traces of ancient peoples, too, with Mesolithic standing stones, cup-marked rocks, ruined crofts and more."

Rob dedicates his time to finding the best birch trees. Although there are plenty of birch woodlands in Scotland, many of them are quite remote and difficult to access. Gabrielle handles the financial and administration side of the business.

"We also have a mandate to promote the management of native birchwood and to demonstrate its importance in traditional culture and how productive and sustainable it is," notes Rob.

The dynamic duo initially founded Birken Tree upon one core product, which they call Birchwater (pure spring birch sap).

"We then quickly realized the diversity of things that can be produced from birch," says Rob.

*"Birch is the most health-giving tree, with the sap, leaves, bark, twigs and buds all being used traditionally in folk remedies."*

The couple has plenty of plans for future Birken Tree product lines, such as flavoured and sparkling varieties of Birchwater. For now, however, they offer three products, including their original Birchwater.

"Birchwater is very good for skin, hair, immune system and detoxing. We make birch leaf tea which is good for the digestive and urinary systems. We also produce chaga tincture made from a very special and hard-to-find fungus which grows on Birch trees and is highly prized for its potency in helping restore immune systems, combats inflammation, and is good for arthritis and rheumatism."

Getting the goods can be a tough and tiring job, requiring a long walk up a steep hillside or wading through thick vegetation. Fortunately, they have a strong network of friends in the forestry trade to help them during the harvest.

"The nature of much of the harvesting of our raw materials can be quite physical. We tap and collect all our Birch sap by hand, usually on the side of a steep Perthshire hillside! We also collect birch leaves, chaga fungus, and we forage for wild berries such as cranberry, blueberry and juniper."

In addition to their online shop, the couple constantly attend markets, Highland Games, trade fairs and tasting sessions to promote their product and its benefits.

"Birchwater is a very versatile product, so we make sure we are creative and innovative in how we demonstrate its many uses. It can be used for everyday drinking, detoxing, for cooking with, and for mixing with whisky or other spirits."

While other brands make products with birch sap deriving from Latvia, Finland and Russia, Birken Tree is the only company using sap from Highland birch trees.

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# Celtic Crossovers

*Author Greta McLaughlin is haunted by the stories of her past*

**I**t was the untimely death of her mother - an Irish-Scottish immigrant living in New York - that first inspired American author Greta McLaughlin to put pen to paper.

"Being only nine years old, I escaped into imaginary characters, always pretending to be someone else," she remembers. "In retrospect, I was trying to deal with sadness. Loving stories and reading incessantly became my passion. Perhaps, at that time, I already knew that I wanted to be a writer someday."

After graduating from high school, McLaughlin earned a bachelor's degree in English, specializing in Anglo-Irish literature.

"I then went to work for a large advertising agency on Madison Avenue before marrying and having three children. Moving to the far-away suburbs of the city, I became involved in the activities and education of my children and the whole busyness of being a mom. Nevertheless, hidden deep inside there was a desire to write, if I ever found the time."

She credits that drive to the memory of her parents.

"I had these dreamy moments, where I escaped into the past. I was haunted by the memories of my mother's voice, her Scottish accent, and her very short living presence in my life. My father died relatively young as well, and I was drawn, attached to his stories of historical Scottish and Irish heroes, and these looks he would get in his eyes. They were painful looks, for many of these people's lives ended tragically. All of this affected me emotionally. I tried to find time to put words down, just to let it all come out - to become something, some day in the future."

In 2014, after earning her master's degree and working as a Professor of Literature at the local community college, the scribe published her debut novel, *Celtic Cries*, the first in what would become a trilogy.

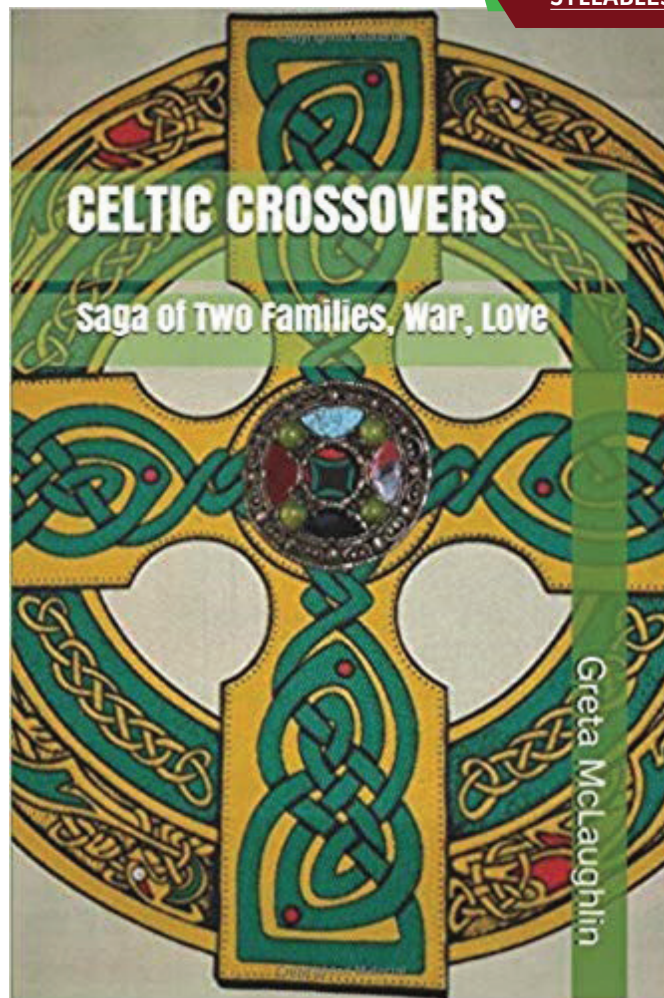
"Me and my husband - who is also of Celtic descent - would constantly travel to Ireland and Scotland to visit relatives. Immersing ourselves in Celtic culture and history for years, I felt inspired to finally write again."

Following the success of her first book, McLaughlin went on to publish its sequel, *Celtic Country*, in 2017. The trilogy's third and final book, *Celtic Crossovers*, was released a few months ago.

The series is described as a sweeping historical saga, taking place between 1899 and 1919. Most recently, McLaughlin takes her readers to Paris, 1918, and opens with two soldiers in hospital - one from Ireland, and the other from Great Britain - recovering from post-war trauma and injuries.

She notes that the novel, and the series as a whole, required a great deal of research.

"I spent a lot of time in Dublin absorbing everything and took two Irish history courses at Trinity College on events leading up to the Easter Uprising in 1916, as well as the eventual Anglo-Irish Treaty, and subsequent Irish Civil War in all its complexities. Additionally, I read



copious amounts of books and magazine articles about the Great War, or World War I, which started just before the Uprising in Ireland."

Since her debut, McLaughlin has gained a very active and dedicated readership.

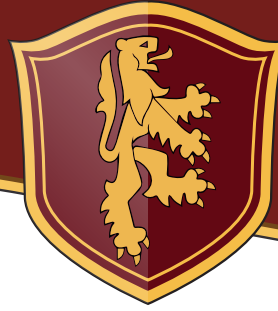
*"My readers tend to be people searching for a connection to their past."*

"Or they are just really interested in history, like a good story and have no blood connection to the Celtic race. And though I am writing about history, I use a fast-paced style and tempo, and my readers have conveyed to me that they like this modern approach. I have sold many novels at festivals, and very often people, who bought a signed copy of my book the year before, stop by again to tell me how much they enjoyed the story and want to know what happened to certain characters after the novel ended. That is why I have written it as a series."

She will continue to share these haunting stories from her past.

"I have never lost hearing my mother's Scottish voice, coupled with her Irish lilt, resonating in my heart, my being. My father's stories and songs about 'lads and lassies,' still echo in my soul. And now, as a retired teacher with my five-year-old granddaughter living with me and rekindling childhood enthusiasm for imaginary people, I will continue my creative pursuits with more Celtic tales for her to hold onto."

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# James Kennedy

*James Kennedy's DIY philosophy serves both him and others well*

James Kennedy grew up surrounded by the sounds of Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Kate Bush, Jimi Hendrix, and Frank Zappa, and those early jams continue to influence the young Welsh musician.

He first dabbled in music at age nine, plucking the strings of a guitar given to him by his father.

"After he showed me some basic blues riffs, I was hooked," recalls Kennedy via email from his base in Cardiff. "I seemed to have a natural talent for it and picked it up really quickly - by my early teens I was already playing gigs in bands."

The singer-songwriter now has three solo albums to his name and has recorded three other albums as frontman for the alternative rock band KYSSHERA. Not only does Kennedy perform on the albums - he wrote and produced them to boot, penning lyrics about political issues, love, death and more, and exploring a variety of genres, from acoustic to experimental.

"The moment that you try to craft an idea into something it is not, you make it worse. Inject raw honesty into your content and it will resonate with the listener. When it comes, it comes from nowhere. My job is to capture it somehow - paper, voice note, whatever. From there it is all perspiration - building upon that seed of inspiration and turning into something people can listen to."

*He admits that - as the music industry has "changed beyond all recognition" - it can be tough to stay afloat.*

"There are more means of artistic freedom and empowerment available than ever before, which is awesome, but the challenge is how to be heard over the crowd and how to maintain a living. What has kept me going until today has been just an insatiable 'need' to do it - it is in my blood. It is actually a curse or sorts as it causes all sorts of other problems in my life!"

Kennedy broke ground with his 2017 solo album, *Home*. The success of the record is one of the proudest moments of his career to date. It became "a Top 50 bestseller and is going over a million streams, without any PR, record company, radio play or press - just sheer fan power."

He is active on various social media platforms, where he engages with fans from

around the world. He affectionately refers to his fanbase as "Misfits."

"For artists, it has been a saviour of sorts," he says of social media. "Before the internet, if you couldn't get a deal with a label, it was game over. A band could not afford to make their own record, never mind releasing and promoting it. It was impossible. These days, you can literally record it all at home, release it for the whole world to potentially discover, and connect directly with fans over social media. You might not make any money, but at least you are not sitting on the shelf."

On top of his musical ventures, Kennedy writes opinion pieces on current affairs and personal experiences. He also does public speaking and is an ambassador for the British Tinnitus Association.

"I have always written blogs and articles for my website on whatever subject was interesting to me at the time and eventually, some started to get published. The public speaking started when I began doing charity work."

Kennedy himself experiences hearing loss and has had tinnitus - chronic ringing, buzzing or "whooshing" in the ears - since he was 10 years old, but that never stopped him from pursuing his passion. As his story gave other people hope, he began sharing it openly.

"I have since done talks for other organizations on mental health and the music industry."

For those looking to break into that industry, Kennedy has some advice: "Do everything yourself for as long as you can. Utilize all the free tools available to you and treat it professionally. With hard work, resilience, patience and creativity, you can make a career for yourself doing what you love. If you are on to something, the industry will come sniffing in good time."

As for himself, Kennedy is currently working on a solo album which he hopes will be released later this year.

"I believe that the music industry is in the best place it has been for a long time."

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





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# University College Dublin Choral Scholars



As founding Artistic Director, Desmond Earley has been involved with University College Dublin Choral Scholars since its inception in 1999.

"A conversation with one of the Deans of Residence, Kieran McDermott, made real the idea that it would be a good concept for us to have some choral scholars to cover events on campus," Earley recalls in an email in-interview. "It started off as a church choir, but then it quickly developed its ambassadorial role, and the choir was soon invited to per-form at college functions and events. It grew from there."

Earley is a Dubliner, and he bursts with pride when describing the Irish capital. "I was born not far from Christchurch Cathedral and St. Patrick's Cathedral, near where Messiah - George Frideric Handel's great oratorio - was first performed in 1742."

As a youngster, he learned to play piano and joined a church choir, singing the work of composers such as Benjamin Britten and Johann Sebastian Bach. "I just learned how to read music, essentially by immersion, by singing repertoire. When my voice broke, I concentrated more on keyboard instruments, studying classical organ with the late Peter Sweeney at the Dublin Institute of Technology."

Earley went on to study music at University College Dublin, where he focused on the harpsichord as his main instrument. He continued to study harpsichord to a doctoral level at the Royal Irish Academy of Music with David Adams, even venturing to Vienna for a time at MDW (University of Music and Performing Arts), where he learned from Professor Gordon Murray.

"The academic study of music is just as important to me as studying the performance element: the two aspects merge and feed off each other, particularly when considering historical music as there are issues of style that arise. Not everything is written on the page - notation is not perfect - so one



has to learn the secrets of the past! These are some of the things which have inspired me and which I like to teach the students as part of their study as a choral scholar."

Earley is passionate about working with some of Ireland's brightest and most talented young people, and watching their confidence grow. Through the University College Dublin Choral Scholars, students come together from across the university and from different disciplines to share in choral music in a collegiate and collaborative environment.

*"The biggest reward has to be a sense of achievement for the students, and the positive feedback from our alumni about their experiences..."*

"Being part of the Choral Scholars has helped many in the next stage of their lives, whether they go on to a professional musical career or keep music close to their heart as an amateur. Being a choral scholar impacts on other aspects of their work life: discipline, focus and being part of a team are all things that transfer to any workplace."

The Choral Scholars have taken the stage at Carnegie Hall, performed alongside Monica Hugget's Portland Baroque Orchestra and even recorded two albums: *Invisible Stars* (2016) and *Perpetual Twilight* (2019).

The group studies the standard repertoire of western classical music: Heinrich Schütz, Gabriel Fauré and Bach, to name a few. The choristers also dive into contemporary compositions and re-imagine traditional folk music that has been specifically arranged for choir. Recently, the troupe has focused on commissioning new works from internationally renowned composers.

"We can spend time analysing a song and break down what makes this song 'a good song,' but actually it is really about the heart and soul of the performer and how they make that song their own; how they put across the song; how they wear and how they break it in. It must become their song."

"If a singer can bring intention and emotional experience then that surely is good delivery. Songs are really just gifts from somebody else, something to pay forward to other people. However, unlike a secret - which belongs to the teller - a song belongs to the listener."

University College Dublin Choral Scholars are currently planning and writing new music for their next recording. They will be making their Australian debut in July 2020.

"The group has a gentle national identity and is committed to artistic excellence. I am extremely proud of what they have achieved."

[www.ucdchoralscholars.ie](http://www.ucdchoralscholars.ie)



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A portrait of Griogair Labhruidh, a man with a beard and a flat cap, wearing a dark jacket. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light grey.

# Griogair Labhruidh

Award-winning Gaelic singer, poet, producer and piper, Griogair Labhruidh has worked with some of the biggest names in contemporary Celtic and World music. Recently we spoke with him about his passion and his profession.

**G**riogair Labhruidh's love for Gaelic culture stems from his roots in the Gaelic tradition of both North Argyll and North East Skye. He is a PhD candidate and regularly gives talks, workshops and classes both at home and abroad on Gaelic culture. He lives on the Isle of Skye and spends most of his time writing, recording and producing music, and lecturing at the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Gaelic College. He has contributed to both film and stage and is a part of the multi-million record selling Afro Celt Sound System collective. His current project fuses traditional Gaelic music and poetry with Hip Hop and other contemporary genres.

### **Tell us about your heritage.**

I am a Scottish Gael. I was brought up in the tradition of Highland bagpiping amongst the Highland diaspora of central Scotland - more specifically, in the hinterlands between the Highlands and the Lowlands, an area known as the Leamhanachd. My father's family have been playing the pipes for several generations, as have my mother's, and both were well known for this. My piping ancestors belonged to a musical tradition which is intrinsically connected to the now almost-extinct Gaelic traditions of North Argyll. I have devoted my life to unearthing the depth of this tradition - the dialects, the songs, the place names, etc., and I was lucky to have learned much from the area's last speakers. In recent years I have been drawn more to my roots on my mother's side in the North East of Skye, where Gaelic is still spoken by a large percentage of the population.

### **When and why did you start playing music?**

I started learning the Highland bagpipe at the age of seven, but I was already competent in its repertoire, having been exposed to the tradition since my birth. This was mainly through the influence of my parents, both of whom were steeped in the traditions of the instrument, along with my mother's brother who was a prominent figure in classical Highland bagpipe circles. I am told that I was able to sing some of the repertoire before I could even walk.

### **Are they the same reasons you do it today?**

I started playing music because of my family and my roots. I still perform music for this reason, though it has been amplified through my better understanding of my place within the overall stratum of Gaelic tradition. There are other reasons why performing is important to me, including the increased urgency with which

Gaelic artists must meet the challenge of preserving our fast-disappearing culture and ways of life.

### **What are the challenges of the vocation?**

One of the greatest issues faced by myself, and for others of my generation, is being at the crossroads between an unbroken and very old indigenous tradition - which was intrinsically tied into the land for countless generations - and modernity, with its trappings and added pressures. The Scottish Gaels and their culture have been oppressed for many generations, and the lack of education for Scotland's indigenous culture can be frustrating. The challenge for an artist like me is to use my art and my abilities to break through inter-generational barriers.

### **What are the rewards?**

The greatest reward is being connected to an authentic tradition. It is a true privilege to be the representative of my culture. The connection with generations past, and with the land which we have occupied for all these centuries, is a deeply spiritual one. In my spare time I like to spend hours in the sacred places - the mountains, the lochs, the cleared villages where my people lived - reflecting on their stories, their songs and their beliefs in the other world, thus tying myself into that which is much greater than I am. If I can do anything for my audience it is to bring this to them so that they might have a deeper connection with themselves, with each other, and with the land. The world is in an ecological and spiritual crisis and those of us who are close to our roots are best equipped to effect change and facilitate the healing of indigenous cultures, the land, the planet, and the heart of humanity.

### **Is your creative process more 'inspirational' or 'perspirational'?**

Both. The initial stages of the creative process are completely inspirational. When a musical project nears completion, however, it requires hard work to pull those moments of inspiration together. I enjoy all stages of the process.

### **What makes a good song?**

A good song is characterized by authenticity; it should be a true representation of the artist's inner landscape and connect the listener with this on a deep level.





## What are your thoughts on the current state of Celtic and Gaelic music?

I question the word Celtic and its usage in musical circles. As a Gael, I believe that Celtic refers to the culture of my people, the Gaels, and to those of Celtic origins. Over the years I have heard various styles of music - mainstream competitive piping, Scots fiddle music, Irish session music, and even bluegrass - being described as Celtic. Although these styles may be influenced by Celtic culture, unless there is some content which is related to indigenous Celtic culture and language, a better term to classify these genres might be "folk" music. With Scottish Gaelic specifically, I believe that attitudes are changing. However, within the performer community itself, there are difficulties with both the commitment to understanding the depths of the traditions and the increased commercialization of the culture. This is likely pertinent to many world cultures where the performer community was once based in a particular place and had very different parameters from those associated with formal commercial performance. It is only natural that some of the aesthetics of the indigenous tradition would be transformed over time. This is not a recent phenomenon. My concern is that the true essence of Gaelic music is being lost within contemporary interpretations. In saying that, it is encouraging to see the younger generation engaged at some level in the culture.

## Is enough being done to preserve and promote Celtic and Gaelic culture generally?

No, not nearly enough. In my lifetime there have been numerous attempts to promote the culture, including Gaelic medium education, the establishing of a Gaelic TV channel, and various other national-level movements. These have all helped. However, what we need is to change our way of thinking as a nation and a complete cultural shift in our views towards Gaelic, the Gaels and who we are. Over the past 100 years the traditional body of Gaels has been greatly diminished, leaving a gap in the cultural landscape. This gap has generally been filled by the ideas, way of life and cultural norms of non-Gaels. As such, the Gaelic identity has become endangered and the choices for the indigenous people are now either cultural assimilation or annihilation.

## How can this be improved?

First, it would be greatly helpful if people would acknowledge Gaels as the indigenous people of their land. And education should be an utmost

priority for the Scottish Government; we must invest in, nurture and develop the remaining remnants of our once-great civilization which are now to be found only in a few areas of the islands of the west. A lot of people want to turn Gaelic into just another modern language. But being a Gaelic speaker is different from being a Gael; Gaelic is not just a language - it is a whole world connection and a philosophy and, if we are not careful, it will be forever lost for future generations. Sorley Maclean, the great Gaelic poet, believed that the best chance for Gaelic to survive will be via Scottish independence. This idea is echoed by many cultural theorists who believe that a nation that is in control of its own destiny is the only way for it to truly, successfully achieve cultural revival. And though Scotland is a country with mixed traditional identity, we have yet to come to terms with either our history or our dual identity as a nation. As a Gael brought up separated from his indigenous ancestral environment, and coming from a mixed Gaelic background, I have had to negotiate my own identity. Scotland, as a nation, must do the same thing. That said, it must be asked, is Scotland really a nation? Or are we, the Gaels, a separate nation unto ourselves? Should we ourselves be looking for some sense of self-autonomy as a people?

## What's on your creative agenda for the rest of 2019?

I am currently in the final stages of producing my first album in 12 years. This has been a very challenging undertaking, having started out as a bedroom project and becoming something much more ambitious. The recording brings together all my traditional influences, including my Gaelic poetry, piping and singing, with my non-traditional music interests. The project began as a protest album and a platform to express my own disillusionment with the cultural status-quo regarding Gaelic and the Gaels. It has now grown into more of a celebration of what is possible when taking this tradition and pairing it with jazz, funk, soul and west African music. My time playing with Afro Celt Sound System has helped me see ambitious projects like this through to fruition, and I have been fortunate enough to work with some of the best musicians I have ever met in my life on this album, including some of my friends from my university years and a top African musician. In recent years, I have been focused upon evolving as a music producer and my hope is that this recording will display these new-found skills, get my message across, and - perhaps most importantly - inspire younger musicians to preserve the essence of indigenous Gaelic aesthetics while creating new soundscapes and traversing between genres.

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*Paul Walker*  
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After studying in Dundee, I moved to the Scottish Highlands, which has been hugely formative and inspiring for me - the harshness and beauty in the environment means one has to have practical and warm clothing.

In the Scottish Highlands I saw local people - game keepers - wearing tweed and I believed that it could be reinterpreted for more general use. If the weight was right, a tweed suit was something many people would see as a welcomed addition to their wardrobe.

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# Jenny Gilbertson

Following in a filmmaker's footsteps.  
Story by Rosalie MacEachern.





It is upon the treeless hills of windswept Shetland and the vast, snow-covered plains of the Canadian Arctic that Shona Main feels closest to the spirit of pioneering Scottish filmmaker, Jenny Brown Gilbertson.

"These are the landscapes where Jenny lived and made her documentary films," explains Main, a law school graduate turned filmmaker. "After studying her work in Shetland, I felt that I had to follow her to the Arctic."

Main is now back in Shetland, painstakingly editing film from the four months she spent in the Arctic communities of Coral Harbour, in Nunavut's Kivalliq region, and Grise Fiord, on Ellesmere Island. It is there that Gilbertson, who died in Shetland in 1990, lived and filmed for nine years.

Gilbertson's work is the subject of Main's PhD thesis at Stirling University and Glasgow School of Art. More than 20 of Gilbertson's completed films are housed in the Shetland Museum, the Scottish Screen Archives, the British Film Institute and the Canadian Museum of History.

"Jenny's distinctive work and her methods require more attention than she has had to date," shares Main, who lives in Dundee when she is not working in Shetland. "I am sure that she has not been given her proper place in history,"

Throughout the 1930s, Gilbertson was making films in the most northerly part of Great Britain. Born in 1902, she stood less than five feet tall, the only daughter in a well-to-do family in Glasgow. She insisted on going to university, making it clear that the life of a society matron was not for her. Instead she went to London to study journalism before buying her first 16 mm camera.

Camera in hand, she decided that Shetland - which she had visited years earlier - would be the scene of her first film.

*"It was a very unusual occupation for a single woman in those times."*

"It was Jenny's way, even from the first, to go and live amongst the people she wanted to film, to get to know them and to use what she learned in her work. She was never one to sweep in, take what she needed and be off."

In 1931, Gilbertson made her way to Shetland - which is still today a 12-hour ferry ride from Aberdeen on the Scottish mainland. Determined to make a film about a crofting family she had met previously, she set about learning the crofter's life; herding livestock, cutting peat, and harvesting from the sea.

"She captured the men at work but also filmed women churning butter, cooking potatoes and by the fire knitting Fair Isle sweaters."

In the course of her early work she met Johnny Gilbertson, a young crofter who introduced her to other families, helped set up her shots and acted in them as required. The young couple were soon married.

"She told us she was with a group of women cleaning fish and was up to her elbows in fish guts when she first met him," recalls granddaughter Heather Tulloch, who lives in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

Gilbertson invited Scottish documentary maker John Grierson to view her first film, *A Crofter's Life in Shetland*. Impressed, he arranged for it to premiere in Edinburgh, advised her to get a better camera and then purchased her next five films.

Together with her husband, Gilbertson toured a subsequent film, *Rugged Island*, across Britain and Canada. When a daughter was born, space was made for her amongst the reels of film in their car and they resumed touring Britain. She continued filming through the birth of a second daughter. Upon the advent of the Second World War,



Shona Main

Johnny Gilbertson joined the Royal Army Service Corps. Injured from combat, Johnny came home and ran a small store with his wife until she took a job as a teacher, a temporary position that turned into a 20-year career. It was not until 1967, when she retired from teaching and after her husband died suddenly, that she began filming again.

"She was quite lost without my grandfather," says Tulloch. "It was only when a relative suggested that she dig out her camera and get some shots of a particularly stormy sea that her love of photography seemed to come back to her."

As Gilbertson's interest in her old passion revived, she and Elizabeth Balneaves - a painter, writer and filmmaker who had retired to Shetland - planned a film trip to the Canadian Arctic. Balneaves, 10 years Gilbertson's junior, fell ill and Gilbertson went on alone.

### *Gilbertson was nearly 70 when she arrived in the Arctic, remaining until 1978.*

"She came with a minimum of equipment," says Main. "What she had to spend was time; time to get to know her subject, and time to develop her vision."

As she had done in Shetland, Gilbertson set about filming the everyday lives of people, including their traditional practices.

"Some of the narrative has a colonial slant," continues Main, "but Jenny was not interested in presenting films of romance or victimization. Her goal was simply to show the ordinary lives of folks, to let the rest of the world know how life was lived in the Arctic."



When Main herself arrived in those Inuit communities, she sought out people who had met Gilbertson or who had worked with her.

"I was able to film some of them and I got a lovely recording from one individual."

She quickly learned that the North - Grise Fiord is believed to be one of the coldest inhabited places in the world - is hard on equipment, sometimes causing cameras and sound recorders to simply shut off.

"I kept my camera in a Ziploc bag when I wasn't using it. Otherwise, I was dealing with constant misting as I went from warm to cold."

Main may have had more physical comforts and greater access to technology than Gilbertson, but she grappled with how she would make her own film.

"I wanted to respect Jenny's methods and I wanted to make an ethical film. I would form an idea for a shoot and then find that people would want to do something quite different, so it was a real challenge."

As an academic, she tried to balance her passion for Gilbertson's fiercely independent spirit with a critical eye and analysis.

"To be perfectly honest, there are a couple of her films I don't like but I am still intrigued by this woman who wrote, directed, staged, filmed and edited her own work. To me, she is legendary."

### *The lengths that Gilbertson would go to tell the stories she considered important was remarkable.*

That passion is perhaps best evidenced in her 25-minute film Jenny's Dog Team Journey, which can be found online. As witness to the growing reliance upon snowmobiles in northern communities, she flew to Igloolik and connected with a dog sled owner. With a team of 21 dogs, he took Jenny, his nephew, his nephew's wife and their three-month-old daughter on a two-week journey 500 kms south to Resolute Bay.

Each night of the journey over sea ice and barren hills was spent in a newly constructed igloo, dining mostly on hard biscuits, frozen cheese, canned sardines and tea.

At the end of the film, a spirited Gilbertson - then 75 - expressed her satisfaction with capturing a nearly extinct custom. She then spent another year filming daily life in Grise Fiord before going to Ottawa to edit her films and later returning to Shetland.

Tulloch is thrilled that Main has taken such an interest in her grandmother's work.

"For my sister and me she was just Grandma - a Grandma who wasn't around much for many years, but we are gradually learning more of her story and it is a remarkable one."



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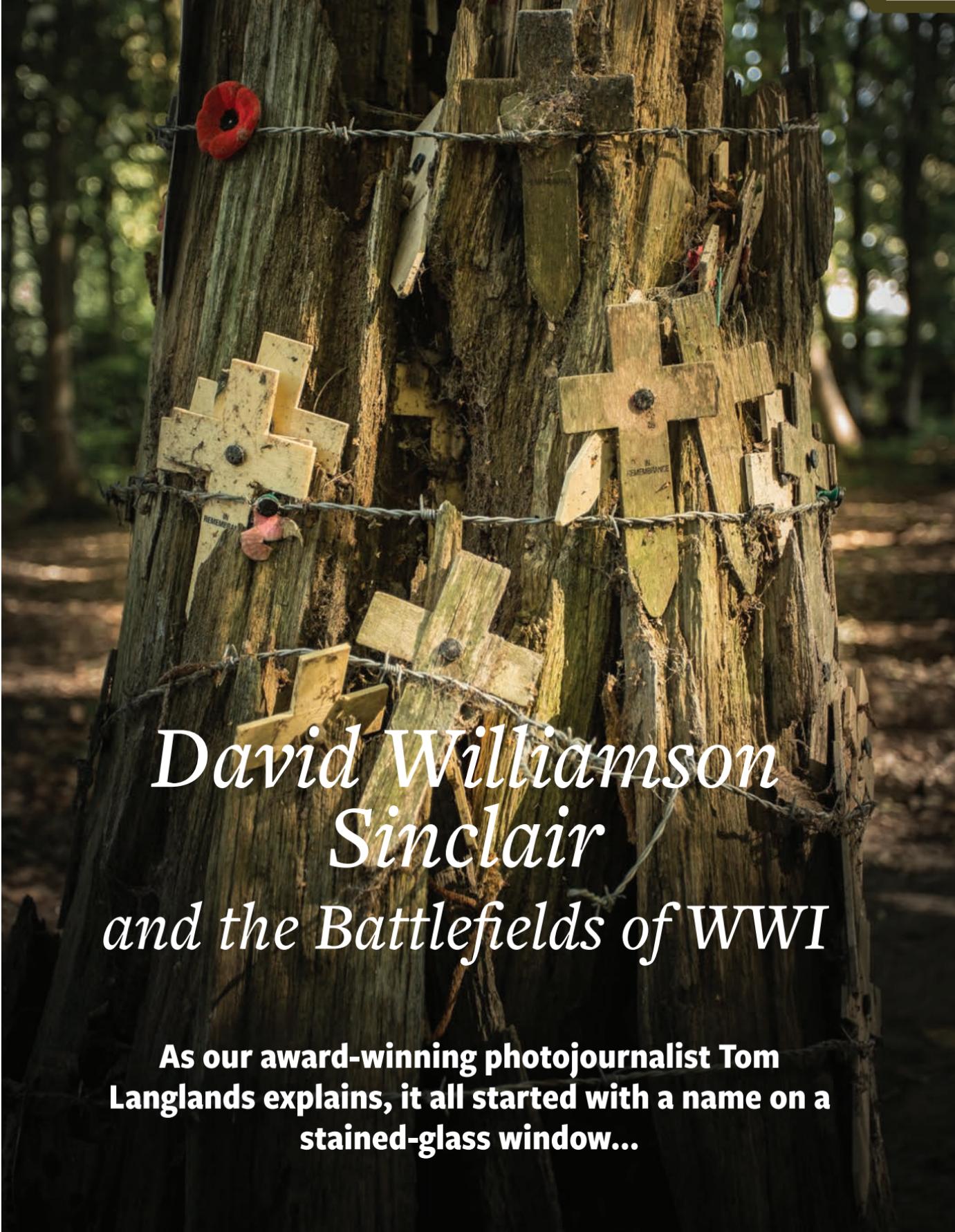
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*David Williamson  
Sinclair  
and the Battlefields of WWI*

**As our award-winning photojournalist Tom  
Langlands explains, it all started with a name on a  
stained-glass window...**



Lijssenthoek Cemetery

Last year, for my local church in Annan, I produced a Remembrance Weekend event to mark the centenary of the end of WWI. Like many older churches the building is home to several plaques and stained-glass windows commemorating local residents who died in The Great War. Titled Voices, the event used the church's drama and singing groups to bring the voices of the past to life.

I chose one name - David Williamson Sinclair - from one of the facility's stained-glass windows and I set about writing a series of fictionalized letters from Sinclair on the Western Front to his mother in Annan. On the Saturday evening of Remembrance Weekend, projected wartime images were accompanied by community singing, war poetry, and recorded diary excerpts. An actress played the part of Sinclair's mother and throughout the evening she read aloud each of the letters as they were delivered. The event spilled over into Sunday morning's Remembrance Service when she received the final 'letter' - a telegram - informing her that her son had been killed in action.

While creating Voices I realised that the Sinclair family in Annan lived only a few miles from the biggest wartime munitions factory in the world - HM Factory Gretna. Here, they produced more cordite - i.e.: 'the Devil's Porridge' - than all the other factories in the U.K. combined. Loaded into bullets, shells, bombs and mines, the cordite, like Sinclair, was destined for the Western Front.

*Wanting to know more about this horrific conflict that resulted in the deaths of 37 million people I headed for the battlefields of Belgium.*

I carried with me a simple, wooden cross that had stood by Sinclair's name on the church windowsill throughout Remembrance Weekend.

I billeted myself at Hotel Ariane in the beautiful city of Ypres. During WWI, the 400-mile-long Western Front stretching from the North Sea to Switzerland bulged



around the town forming the Ypres Salient that was at the forefront of five major battles. Reduced to rubble during the conflict, this historic market city has been rebuilt in all its medieval splendour. The stunning Cloth Hall, once a major marketplace for Ypres' world-famous cloth industry, dominates the market square. Today, it houses the In Flanders Fields Museum, an excellent starting point for an overview of the story of WWI. Straddling the route east from the city, which connected to the front lines, stands the Menin Gate Memorial, its white, stone panels inscribed with the names of over 54,000 missing soldiers. Here, a Last Post memorial ceremony takes place every evening at 8.00pm. Started in 1928, this ceremony was only interrupted briefly when the Germans occupied the city during WWII.

Back on the grounds of Hotel Ariane is a sculpture commemorating the 'Angels of Pervyse'. Mairi Chisholm was born in Nairn, Scotland, and her friend Elsie Knocker in Exeter, England. Surprisingly for the time, they were both motorcycle enthusiasts as well as nurses. When war was declared they traded the comfort of home for Pervyse, north of Ypres. With their medical training they knew that time was paramount in improving the survival chances of the wounded and so they established their own dressing station in a disused cellar close to the front lines. Brav-



Langermark German Cemetery



Author at Sinclair grave

ing gunfire and shells they saved the lives of countless soldiers until they were badly affected by a German gas attack.

My first cemetery visit was to Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, the final resting place of almost 11,000 men. Its regimented rows of white headstones are a sobering reminder of the reality of war. Established in proximity to a number of casualty-clearing stations, the majority of those buried there are commemorated by name as they were taken from the battlefield as identifiable soldiers before succumbing to their injuries. I visited the grave of the only woman buried there - Nellie Spindler - a highly respected staff nurse. The casualty-clearing station where she had worked was hit by German artillery fire in August of 1917. Wounded by shrapnel, she died shortly afterwards. She was given a full military funeral attended by four generals, the Surgeon General and over one hundred officers.

Next, I found myself by the headstone of Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse in Brandhoek New Military Cemetery, the only per-

son in WWI to receive the Victoria Cross twice for bravery as well as a Military Cross. He studied medicine, graduating with a first-class Honours degree and, along with his twin brother, represented Great Britain at the 400 metres event in the 1908 Olympic Games. Not only did he treat wounded soldiers, but he also personally recovered them from no-man's land, often under attack from snipers and artillery fire. His bravery was recognized in 1915, 1916, and again in 1917. Wounded by shrapnel, and subsequently operated on, he nonetheless died of his injuries.

*Behind every headstone is a story, and by now I had seen tens of thousands of them.*

For me, however, the memorials and graves that evoked the saddest reactions were those where people had died helping others.

The year before war broke out, David Williamson Sinclair had been living a peaceful existence with his family in Annan. His father, David Bews Sinclair was a Master Tailor who hailed from Sandwick in Orkney and his mother Agnes Williamson Reid was born in Lanark. The youngest of five siblings he was dux of Annan Academy in 1913 and that year, at the age of 17, went to Edinburgh University to study medicine, joining the University's Officer Training Corps in 1916. He graduated M.B., Ch.B. in July 1918 and at some time was house surgeon at Dumfries Infirmary not far from Annan. On 29 August 1918 he received a commission at the rank of Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps attached to the 11th Battalion, Royal Scots

that subsequently joined the 9th (Scottish) Division. After one week's training at Blackpool he was sent to the Front close to Ypres.

In order to obtain a more balanced view of the impact of war I visited the German Soldier's Cemetery in Langermark. Over-shadowed by large oak trees, the site has no standing stones, only flat slabs on the ground. This is the final resting place of over 44,000 Germans, of which 25,000 are buried in a single, mass grave by the monumental entrance gate. I wondered how many had died as a consequence of the work of the women who stirred the Devil's Porridge back in Gretna.

All war is brutal, but the scale of this war was beyond overwhelming.

My next visit was Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in the world. This is the final resting place of almost 12,000 men. Unlike the burials at Lijssenthoek Cemetery, however, the majority are unidentified. The memorial wall along the northeast boundary of the site is inscribed with the names of a further 35,000 soldiers whose bodies were never recovered.

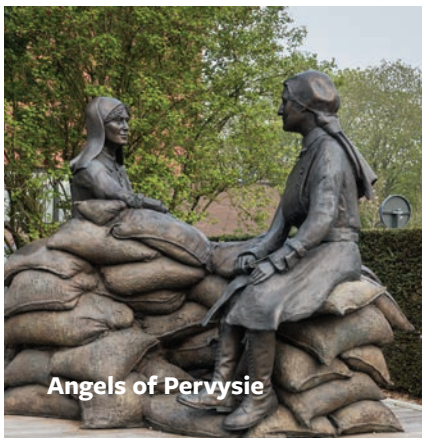
My next stop was Harlebeke, twenty miles to the east of Ypres. It was here that Sinclair's regiment recovered the town from the Germans in October of 1918. It must be assumed that, as a medic, Sinclair would have been treating those wounded in the fighting. What is certain is that he himself was seriously wounded that month and died as he was being taken to the dressing station near Courtrai. He had only been at the Front for six weeks and died a mere three weeks before the end of the war. The chaplain sent a letter to his family in Annan noting that he had been buried. I found his grave in Harlebeke New British Cemetery. On the headstone is inscribed "He hath lived much for all he lived not long" From Annan. I pressed the small wooden cross that I had carried from the church window in his hometown into the soft earth and read a poem - Voices - which I had written for the occasion.

I never knew Sinclair but researching his story had brought me closer to him and his family and had given me a greater understanding of the impact of war on families and communities. When he headed off to study medicine in 1913, war was not on his mind. Yet, like so many others he died trying to save lives, not take them.

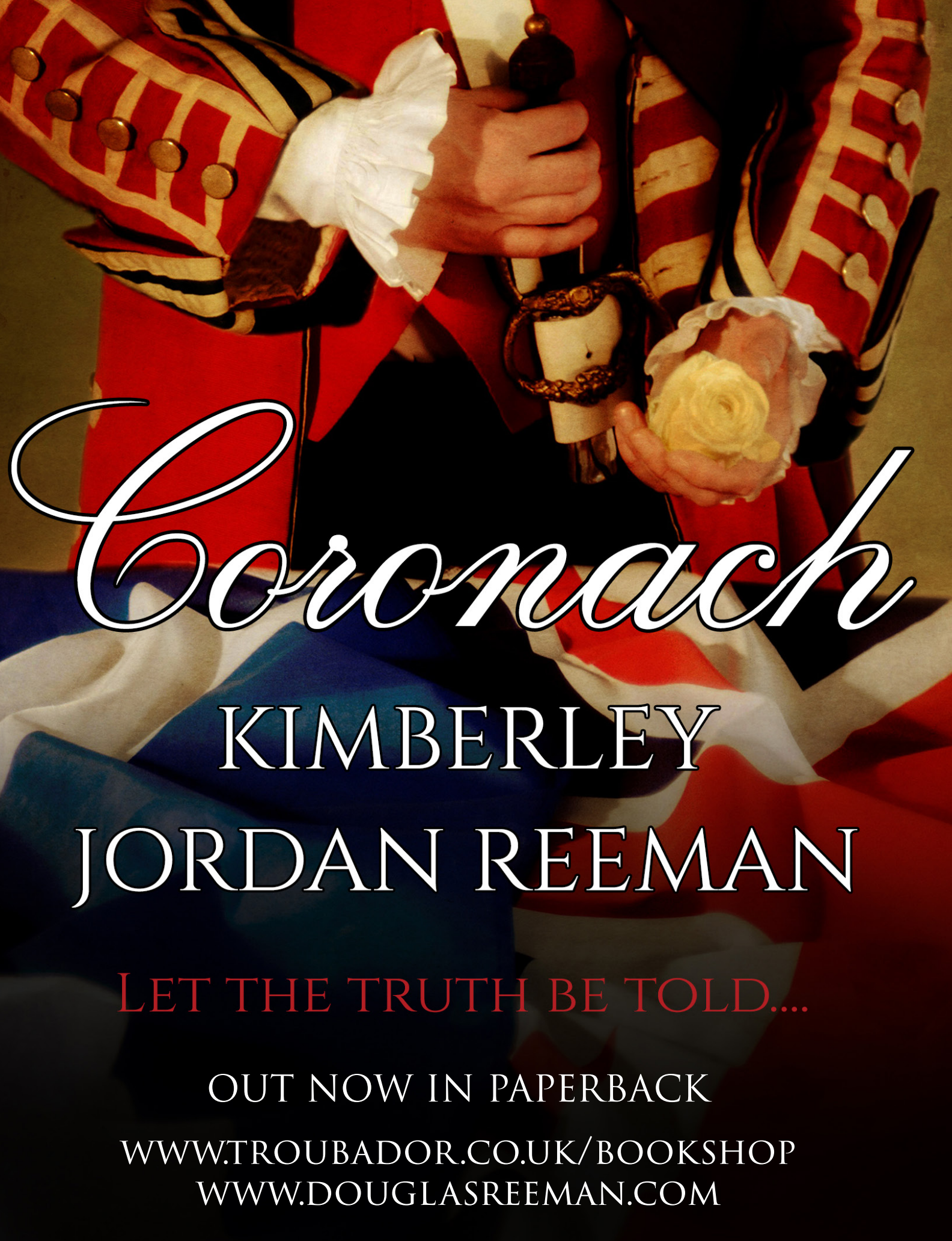
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Angels of Pervysie



# *Coronach*

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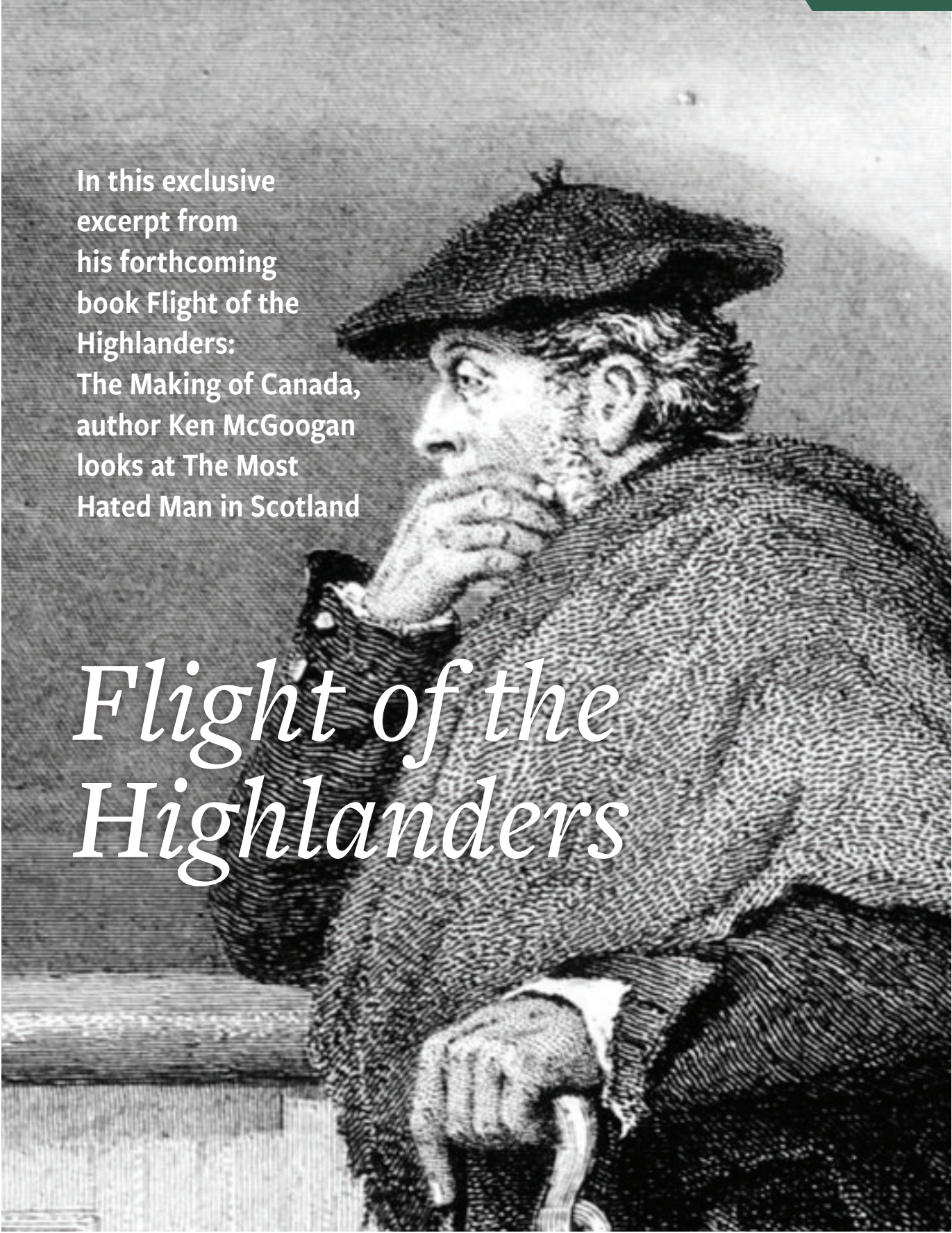
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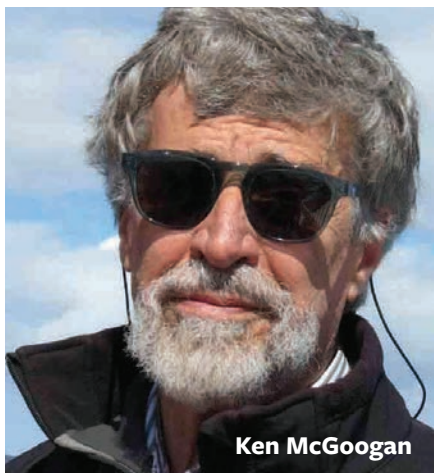
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In this exclusive  
excerpt from  
his forthcoming  
book *Flight of the  
Highlanders:*  
*The Making of Canada*,  
author Ken McGoogan  
looks at The Most  
Hated Man in Scotland

# *Flight of the Highlanders*



Ken McGoogan

In the mid-nineteenth century, Colonel John Gordon lived in the fabulous Cluny Castle in Aberdeenshire. He owned six slave plantations in the West Indies and was said to be “the richest commoner” in Britain. Gordon became “the most hated man in Scotland” not because he was a slave-owner, and not because he was wealthy, but because he stayed that way by ruthlessly squeezing the lifeblood out of poor tenant farmers eking out a living on his massive land holdings - estates that included, as of 1838, the entire island of Barra.



In Clanship to Crofters' War, historian T.M. Devine describes Gordon as the prototypical Highland estate owner, a man who “bought partly because rentals were low and the land was poor in the hope of transforming its prospects and so making huge gains in the long term.” In 1838, by outbidding the

infamous Patrick Sellar in what today would be considered a bankruptcy sale, Gordon acquired key sections of the vast Clan Ranald (MacDonald) estate in western Scotland.

That estate included lands on the Scottish mainland and in both the Inner and Outer Hebrides - among these last, Benbecula, South Uist and Barra. These three islands, linked to the Clan MacNeill for hundreds of years, had been consolidated with the more northerly lands of the MacDonalds in the early 1600s. Two centuries later, the clan chieftain Reginald George MacDonald - famous for swaggering around in Highland dress at the court of King George IV - lived so far above his means that he drove his estate first into trusteeship and then into insolvency.

Enter Colonel John Gordon, who acquired not the entire estate but the three outer islands, where a potato famine began taking a toll in the mid-1840s, reducing people to penury. The Reverend Norman MacLeod wrote: “The scene of wretchedness which we witnessed, as we entered on the estate of Col. Gordon, was deplorable, nay, heart-rending. On the beach the whole population of the country seemed to be met, gathering cockles . . . I never witnessed such countenances - starvation on many faces - the children with their melancholy looks, big looking knees, shriveled legs, hollow eyes, swollen-like bellies—God help them, I never did witness such wretchedness.”

By 1848, the rents paid by these people had earned Gordon a return of less than 66 percent on his investment. Meanwhile, he had been compelled to expend £8,000 in famine relief. The colonel had not attained his splendid lifestyle by letting this sort of thing continue. He acted, and today one result of his handiwork can be discovered on the east side of Barra at an archaeological site that was once a thriving village.

You won't find “Balnabodach” listed in the guidebooks or even on maps of the Outer Hebrides. But if on Barra you drive seven kilometres north out of Castlebay on the one-lane highway that encircles the island, the A888, you should be able to spot a series of ruins on the eastern side of the road, down the hill as you approach Loch Obe. You may have to scramble a bit (think trial and error), but you can make your way through marshy ground to stone ruins that once were Barra blackhouses. To wander among them, careful not to do damage, is to get as close as anyone can to those who lived here once upon a time.

*Here, along a freshwater stream that tumbles down the hill to the loch, people have lived off and on for centuries.*

The loch connects to the open sea by a narrow, four-hundred-metre channel that once afforded excellent protection against sea raiders. Peat deposits provided fuel for fires, and cows and sheep could graze on the gentler slopes. In 1996, according to an Isle of Barra website, archaeologists discovered a barbed flint arrowhead dating from around 2,000 BC. And people who lived here during the Iron Age, between 200 BC and AD 200, left nearly 250 pieces of pottery, as well as flint tools and pumice stones used for scrubbing animal skins.

By the time of Scotland's first census, in 1841, Balnabodach was home to eight households and twenty-six people. They lived in Barra blackhouses built during the previous century, with thick walls and single doors in one long side. Families made do with an earthen floor and cooked and slept around the fireplace at one end. The largest house, designated House A, once had a wooden dresser in one corner. Here, the family displayed their finest pottery, which comprised brightly coloured “sponge ware” from the Scottish mainland and crockery from Stoke and Newcastle in England.

Archaeologists found an abundance of bowls, useful for eating broth, gruel and porridge. They turned up a clay pipe, some glass beads and copper buttons, an iron chisel and knife, and a sharpening stone. They also found a copper thimble outside the front door and could imagine a “woman of the household sitting on a sunny summer day, mending an item of clothing and dropping her thimble between the cracks in the stone.” In an atypical flight of fancy, they surmised that the woman might well have been Anne Macdugald or her sister-in-law, Flory Macdugald.

This they extrapolated from the 1841 census, when Hector Macdugald and his family probably lived in House A, which had a small room added onto one end not as a byre for animals but for human habitation. While most of the households were listed as crofters, one was a cottar (who farmed another tenant's land) and another a pauper - eighty-year-old Neil Macdugald. These families kept a few sheep and did some fishing, but mainly subsisted by growing potatoes and barley.

In the mid-to-late 1840s, the horrendous potato famine that devastated Ireland also wreaked havoc in the Outer Hebrides. It starved Islanders on Barra and South Uist and, less acceptably still, rendered them unable to pay their rent. Colonel John Gordon decided to solve this problem by evicting the wretched crofters and shipping them to Canada. He identified Balnabodach as one of the Barra townships to be cleared and in 1851 turned loose his hired thugs.

According to oral tradition, these well-paid hooligans forced the tenantry into boats in the safe harbour. One young woman was out milking the family cow by the loch when Gordon's agents dragged her off with nothing but the clothes on her back. A few people ran into the hills and were hunted down by dogs. They were hauled aboard in handcuffs.



A Protestant minister named Beatson led the evictions in Barra and the tiny island of Mingulay, which were Roman Catholic. An eyewitness named Roderick MacNeil, remembering in the present tense, described Beatson as “the most vigilant and assiduous officer Colonel Gordon has. He may be seen in Castle Bay, the principal anchorage in Barra, whenever a sail is hoisted, directing his men like a gamekeeper with his hounds, in case any of the doomed Barra men should escape.” One such man “took shelter on an Arran boat which Beatson boarded in a fury, demanding his surrender. The master (one John Crawford) lifted a hand-spike and threatened to split the minister’s skull, man of God or no, if he did not get ashore with his dogs.”

MacNeil, evicted from Mingulay, had never been the same since “my people were scattered, some of them in Australia, some in Canada, and some mouldering in the dust. Oh, the turns of the hard world! Many a trick does it play, and so it was with me. My new house was burned over my head, and I burned my hands in rescuing my dear little children. Oh, the suffering of the poor folk, the terrible time that was! The land was taken from us though we were not a penny in debt, and all the lands of the township were given to a Lowland farmer. He had always wished to have them, and he was not content until he got them.”

*Small boats ferried the Barra people to a ship called the Admiral, which then sailed forty kilometres north to Lochboisdale in South Uist.*

There, on August 11, 1851, a different agent - the hot-tempered John Fleming - invited local tenants to a compulsory public meeting, threatening absentees with a severe fine (forty shillings). The meeting devolved into a surprise press-ganging, as thugs forced people into boats and then onto the ship which lay waiting to carry them to

Canada. Forget gathering possessions: they were going aboard here and now.

Two days before, Fleming had written from South Uist to an emigration officer in Quebec. For the last three weeks, he had been “superintending the emigration of about 1,500 souls from this country to Canada.” He had just learned “with regret” that due to the unexpected illness of Colonel Gordon, nobody had previously notified anybody in Quebec.



Fleming wrote that he had already sent two ships - the Brooksby and the Montezuma filled with passengers in late July, and the Perthshire on August 5. He expected “the Admiral to be cleared out a few days hence.” He described the South Uist emigrants as having worked “at draining, ditching, road making, etc..., and I trust they may be advantageously employed when they reach Canada in similar work, or at railway operations...Of the Barra people, part have found employment at similar work, and part have supported themselves as fishermen, of which they have considerable skill.”

Fleming noted that a thousand people had been sent out two years before, “and send home encouraging accounts to their friends here.” Colonel Gordon was providing a free passage, clothing and shoes, and hoped that “these that are now leaving the land of their fathers may earn a competency in the land of their adoption.”

Two resources enable us to envision the truth of these events. The first, a relatively recent study, “The Jaws of Sheep” by James A. Stewart Jr., was published in Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium for 1998. The other we have already encountered: Gloomy Memories by Donald Macleod. In the 1850s, Macleod had emigrated to Woodstock, Ontario, some 150 kilometres west of Toronto. Whenever he travelled between Woodstock and Toronto, at about the halfway point he would pass through the town of Dundas. There he interviewed numerous former Islanders, survivors of Gordon’s 1851 Clearances.

“Hear the sobbing, sighing and throbbing,” he wrote later. “See the confusion, hear the noise, the bitter weeping and bustle. Hear mothers and children asking fathers and husbands, where are we going? hear the reply, Chan eil fios againn - we know not.” One eyewitness, Catherine Macphee of Lochdar, near the north end of South Uist, described the evictions as “loathsome work.” She told Macleod: “I have seen big strong men, champions of the countryside, the stalwarts of the world, being bound on Loch Boisdale quay and cast into the ship as would be done to a batch of horses or cattle, the bailiff and the ground officers and the policemen gathered behind them in pursuit.”

One powerful Highlander, Angus Johnstone, “resisted with such pith that they had to handcuff him before he could be mastered, but in consequence of the priests’ interference his manacles were taken

off and (he was) marched between four officers on board the emigrant vessel.”

The forced evictions went on for more than three weeks.

One morning, Macphee said, “we were suddenly awakened by the screams of a young female who had been recaptured in an adjoining house, she having escaped after her first capture. We all rushed to the door, and saw the broken-hearted creature, with dishevelled hair and swollen face, dragged away by two constables and a ground-officer.”

Almost 170 years later, while exploring South Uist in 2017, I thought about that young woman’s first capture. Roughly ten kilometres north of the ferry dock in Lochboisdale, we came upon the ruins of a tacksman’s house in Upper Bornish Clearance Village. Earlier that day, after visiting the birthplace of Flora MacDonald, we had visited the Kildonan Museum and picked up an archaeological guide pointing the way to notable ruins. It spoke rather grandly of a “Kildonan Trail” but we found ourselves greeting cattle as we beat across pathless, marshy ground to the ruins of this neglected village. In the eighteenth century, the guidebook said, Upper Bornish comprised half a dozen households, the people living mostly “in long houses shared at times with livestock.”



The tacksman among them, the senior tenant, was the only one who had a separate byre for sheep and cattle. Decades came and went, people lived and died, and in August 1851, the poor farmers whose ancestors had toiled here for centuries were among those commanded to attend a public meeting at Lochboisdale, where a sailing ship called the Admiral stood at anchor. When I read that the penny dropped.

I remembered the eyewitness narrative of Catherine Macphee, who reported that many of those who turned up for the Lochboisdale meeting had been “seized and, in spite of their entreaties, sent on board the transports.” Later she heard the screams of that young woman, who had escaped once only to be recaptured. Among the ruins, I stood reflecting. Given its proximity to Lochboisdale, this village, Upper Bornish, might well have been where that young woman came from. I stood in silence gazing skyward.

Some of those who were put aboard the Admiral broke away and swam to shore. Macphee added that “Fleming led the police and officers in pursuit of them, combing the curling hills to the north of the loch, beating the fugitives down with truncheons and bringing them in irons to the quay.” From Benbecula, located immediately to the north of South Uist, Fleming brought carts filled with bound men over the sand at low tide. He sent raiders to storm cottages as dawn broke, but even then, some people escaped. “Were you to see the racing and chasing of policemen,” Macphee said, “pursuing the outlawed natives, you would think that you had been transported to

the banks of the Gambia on the slave coast of Africa.”

She grew emotional at the remembrance: “I have seen the townships swept, and the big holdings made of them, the people being driven out of the island to the streets of Glasgow and the wilds of Canada, such of them as did not die of hunger and plague and smallpox while going across the sea. I have seen the women putting their children in the carts which were sent from Benbecula and Lochdar to Loch Boisdale while their husbands lay bound in the pen, and were weeping, without power to give them a helping hand, though the women themselves were crying aloud, and the little children wailing like to break their hearts.”

*Families were separated. On Barra, many people had fled into the rolling hills. Most were tracked down by dogs and taken, but not all.*

The daughters of one John MacDugall, for example, aged twelve and fourteen, were left alone on Barra after the rest of the family was shipped off to Quebec.

Between 1848 and 1851, Colonel John Gordon cleared more than 2,000 people from the Outer Hebrides. On five ships, he transported almost 1,700 people to Lower Canada, where 600 were accepted as paupers and were supported by the colony. Hundreds of others were reduced to beggary. A few were buried on Grosse Île, site of an immigration depot near Quebec City.

Gordon’s promises of work and land proved empty. More than seventy people who had voluntarily boarded the Admiral wrote a deposition asserting that they had done so “under promises to the effect that Colonel Gordon would defray their passage to Quebec; that the Government Emigration Agent there would send the whole party free to Upper Canada, where, on arrival, the Government agents would give them work, and furthermore, grant them land on certain conditions.” They declared, further, that they “are now landed in Quebec so destitute that if immediate relief be not afforded them, and continued until they are settled in employment, the whole will be liable to perish with want.”

Many who proceeded to Upper Canada made their way to the township of Dundas. “They were in rags,” said a newspaper, “their mourning weeds were the shapeless fragments of what had once been clothes.” The Dundas Warder of October 2, 1851, reported: “We have been pained beyond measure for some time past, to witness on our streets so many unfortunate Highland emigrants, apparently destitute of any means of subsistence and many of them sick for other attendant causes. There will be many to sound the fulsome noise of flattery in the ear of a generous landlord who had spent so much to assist the emigration of his poor tenants. They will give him the misnomer of benefactor, and for what? Because he has rid his estates of the encumbrance of a pauper population.”

That same editorial described the funeral of a refugee child. “It was pitiful the other day, to view a funeral of one of these wretched people. It was, indeed, a sad procession. The coffin was constructed of the rudest wood...Children followed in the mournful train; perchance they followed a brother’s bier, one with whom they had sported and played for many a healthful day among their native glens...There was a mother too, among the mourners, one who had tended the departed with anxious care in infancy and had doubtless looked forward to a happier future in this land of plenty. The anguish of her countenance told too plainly these hopes were blasted, and she was about to bury them in the grave of her child.”

On Nov. 26, 1851, the chief emigrant agent in Quebec, A.C. Buchanan, responded to Colonel Gordon’s agent, John Fleming, with

a cool-headed but ferocious dressing down. Between August 28 and October 18, he wrote, five ships had arrived from Gordon's estates carrying 1,681 passengers. These were Brooksby, 285; Montezuma, 442; Perthshire, 437; Admiral, 413; and Liskeard, 104. Five adults and three infants had died while sailing or in quarantine.

"These parties presented every appearance of poverty," he wrote.

"And, from their statement, which was confirmed by the masters of the several vessels, were without the means of leaving the ship, or of procuring a day's subsistence for their helpless families on landing, and many of them, more particularly the party by the Perthshire, were very insufficiently supplied with clothing."



Buchanan laid out an account, noting that Gordon owed £152, in addition to which "there is a charge for a week's rations served out to the passengers on leaving the vessel, for which this department is held responsible, in the event of Colonel Gordon's declining to settle it."

Buchanan noted that because the Quebec populace spoke French, "this city and neighbourhood afford no opening of any extent for the employment of the destitute emigrants who arrive in large numbers and at a particular season of the year. It is in the interior and western portions of the province only that employment for labourers and artisans is to be procured, and these must be reached before the pauper can find any means of support. Therefore, to convey to this port emigrants possessing no resources whatever, and without a provision of some kind for their progress westward, is to subject them to great distress and certain discouragement."

Clearly furious, Buchanan continued at length. The provincial government could not afford to carry the freight for "those who are interested in the removal from Great Britain of paupers and other unprofitable portions of the populations." He asked Fleming to tell Colonel Gordon that "the mere transfer to this port of an indigent tenantry, without an alteration in any respect in their condition, gives no reasonable ground for expecting their subsequent successful progress."

On the other hand, if "the landlord who is interested in the reduction of the population of his estate should extend his assistance so far as to carry forward his emigrants to the occupation of land, or should secure their advance to advantageous employment, the sure result would be incitement to industry and exertion, and the strongest desire on the part of all to obtain a similar opportunity of benefiting themselves."

Buchanan closed by referring "to the wholly different circumstances under which a party consisting of 986 persons were sent out in the past spring by Sir James Matheson, from the island of Lewis. These emigrants were provided with a passage to this port, food and

clothing, and on arrival were supplied with a week's rations and a free passage to their ultimate destination. They had embarked in the early part of the season, and nearly the whole landed here in July, when an unusual demand for labourers existed in almost every section of the province. About 400 proceeded to Sherbrooke, Eastern Townships, where those able to work obtained employment on the Montreal and Portland Railroad at ample wages. The remainder went forward to Toronto, where they, also, immediately obtained suitable employment."

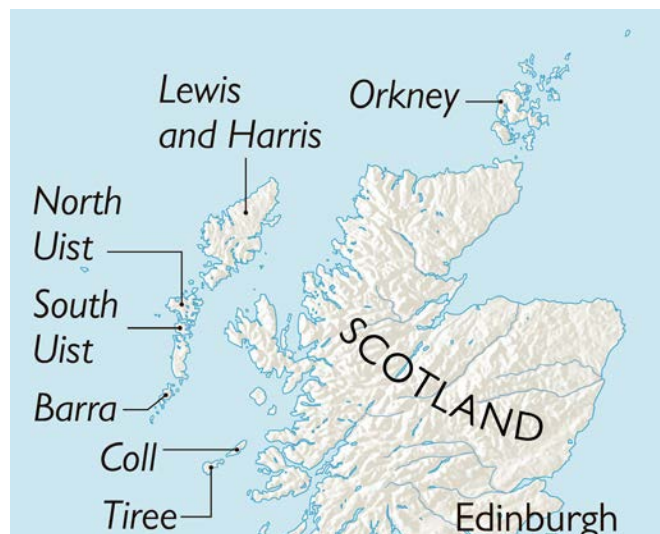
At the end of the year, in a report to head office in England, the medical superintendent in Quebec, G.M. Douglas, wrote of those Highland emigrants sent out by Colonel Gordon: "The supply of provisions and water seems to have been good and liberal; but I never, during my long experience at the station, saw a body of emigrants so destitute of clothing and bedding; many children of nine and ten years old had not a rag to cover them. Mrs. Crisp, the wife of the master of the Admiral (which vessel brought out 413 of the number), was busily employed all the voyage in converting empty bread-bags, old canvass, and blankets, into coverings for them.

*"One full-grown man passed my inspection with no other garment than a woman's petticoat."*

"Great care and precaution seemed to have been taken of their health on the voyage by the medical men in charge, especially Dr. Patterson of the Perthshire, who caused the ship's allowance to be issued sparingly at first, as many families had for months previous to embarking subsisted solely upon shell-fish and sea-weed picked up on the beaches and rocks of their island. I learned on inquiry that the ordinary payment for the day's labour of an able-bodied man in South Uist was one pound of oatmeal, and that constant labour even for this miserable pittance was not to be obtained."

As to the money spent on provisions provided to the destitute souls he had dispatched to Quebec, Colonel Gordon, comfortably ensconced at Cluny Castle, never repaid a penny. Colonel John Gordon. The most hated man in Scotland.

*In his forthcoming book, Flight of the Highlanders: The Making of Canada, Ken McGoogan chronicles those who came to Canada as a result of the Highland Clearances. He tells the story of those forgotten Scots who, frequently betrayed by their own chieftains and evicted from their ancestral lands, found themselves battling hardship, hunger, and hostility in a New World they could scarcely have imagined.*





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# *Welsh Dumpster Diving and Other Adventures*

**In the second instalment of a four-part series, Lesley Choyce wanders through the wonder of Wales...**



**O**n our first evening in our slate cottage in Betws-y-Coed, I watched as the storekeepers in the Rock Bottom shop closed-up for the day and threw a number of boxes in a green dumpster that shared the same parking lot as our cottage. It immediately drew my curiosity.

My days of dumpster diving were mostly behind me, but not forgotten. My heyday was during an era when no one had to actually padlock their dumpsters. Diving into dumpsters was fun and exciting and as easy as leaning over the metal rail and doing a minor gymnastic manoeuvre to find your way inside for easy pickings of whatever a store would throw away. In North America - back when I was young - vast quantities of reasonably sound goods were heaved daily and, for the most part, no one really cared if young men like me with not much money and a sense of trashy adventure came poking about. But those days were long gone. Now, garbage containers were mostly locked, usually to keep other people from dumping their own garbage into.

But the Cotswold Outdoor Rock Bottom folks didn't seem worried about who or what might creep into their big green container after hours. And so there I was, leaning far over, feet nearly straight up in the air, rooting through nifty looking boxes that mostly had nothing until I found a very expensive looking shoe box that, lo and behold, held a brand-new pair of running shoes. A small celestial voice inside my head said, "If they are your size, then they were meant for you."

*I grabbed the box, cantilevered my carcass out of the bin, and looked around to see if anyone was watching.*

Only the chestnut trees. And they promised they wouldn't speak a word. Thus, I lodged the magic box under my left arm like an American football and made an end run for the front door of the slate house. Inside, breathing hard as if I had just run a marathon in my newfound running shoes, I opened the box. And there they were. My size; 9.5. Kind of aqua blue with orange and white soles - a pair of elite running shoes I would never have bought in a million years. But now they were mine. I didn't recognize the markings. Not Nike, Not New Balance. No. But something strange, something exotic with an upside-down Q and U.

Linda immediately looked them up on the internet with some kind of program that was like facial recognition for shoes. (Who comes up with these sites? And who uses them on a regular basis? I want to know.) It turns out they were called Cloud Surfers. They were made in Switzerland and claimed to be "The world's lightest

cushioned shoe for Running Remixed" whatever that meant. Back in Canada they would have cost nearly \$300. I had hit the jackpot.

I loved my new slim, ultra-chic running shoes and expected to find more booty (pardon the pun) every night thereafter. But alas, nothing more came my way as a garbage gift from the Cotswolds. And I will never know why this pair of shoes was in the dumpster but they were going back to Canada with me so I could wear them on campus when I returned and so colleagues around the Faculty of Arts and Sciences would say to each other in the department lounge, "I think there is something different about Professor Choyce since his sabbatical." Or so I hoped.

That evening while sitting in our cozy den, me with my new footwear, I randomly picked a book from the shelves called *The Fragrant Minute* by a writer called Wilhelmina Stitch, whose real name was Ruth Jacobs. It turned out she was English, born in Cambridge, and somewhat famous in her day although probably not as famous as Isaac Newton. But she had carved out a writing career in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada as "the poem a day lady." The editor of the little book had this to say about Ms. Stitch: "Most of us are of common clay. We only desire to walk in seemly paths and live serenely. It may be that Wilhelmina Stitch recovers for us the glamour of half-forgotten days, the sweetness of memories, the buoyancy of childhood. It may be that she reminds us of something fragrant within ourselves of which contact with life is prone to rob us."

In her poem "The Gift of Day" Wilhelmina writes,

*The very minute I awake,  
I find, and this is every morn,  
A precious gift for me to take  
The gift of Day, newborn.*

The book also included thirty-one, sort-of-prose poems of a similar vein, each one more optimistic than the one before. I suppose most would find the entries somewhat sappy, but the sentiment was much like the chapter on Buddhism I was reading in *Man Seeks God*.

"Live in the present. Be kind. Be compassionate. Don't grieve or remain attached to losses. Celebrate each and every little thing."

Right on, Wilhelmina. Her books have been relegated to those large and mouldering dustbins of literature, I am sure, but there is nothing quite like sitting in a warm slate cottage in Betws-y-Coed wiggling my toes inside some really comfortable \$300 running shoes that I snatched for free with my loving wife and dog nearby and reading a gushy early twentieth-century Winnipeg optimist who published a poem a day and became famous for it. Perhaps her work will be resurrected by some future graduate student at the University of Manitoba, or even Cambridge itself, and brought back into the folds of pop culture just at some distant depressing moment when all hope for humanity seems to be fading like the last pink dregs of a Prairie sunset.

Most books found in rental houses are pretty banal; romances and thrillers and murder mysteries in large type for old geezers like me to read without the need of glasses. But here were more than a few gems. Not great tomes about the history of syphilis like back in *Little Walden* but a good assortment including *Born to Run* by Christopher MacDougall, which is the best book on running that I have ever read and contains an enlightening chapter on how the modern running shoe with all of its mechanisms to protect the human running foot has done more damage to feet than if we ran barefoot. Fortunately, the author explained why post-modern footwear like my newfound Cloud Surfers had minimal arch support and a fairly thin soul allowing the foot-brain connection to flourish as it had with our ancestors



whose very survival depended upon the ability to outrun in bare feet whatever monstrous creatures of our shrouded past would try to eat us on a daily basis.

And as I rooted around in this wonderfully fecund little library, I also found a local book titled *The A-Z of Betws-y-Coed* by Donald Shaw published by Gwasg Carreg Gwalch. (Say what?) Under “B” I discovered that the Black Plague visited the valley here in 1349 during the reign of Edward I. Did the damn plague find its way to every nook and cranny of Europe and the British Isles? I had already studied up on this Black Death or Bubonic Plague and knew it had wiped out a hundred million or more unwary people in Europe and Asia. Maybe if the locals could have kept visitors (and visiting rats that carried the infected fleas) away they might have been spared. But they were not. Reading about the disease, I made a mental note that if I came down with vomiting, fever, headaches and swollen lymph nodes any time soon, I would go directly for treatment as you would probably die from the plague within a week of exposure if not sooner.

If you had survived the plague, you may have produced children who would have had children or grandchildren who would have been around in 1468 when the town was bashed by the Earl of Pembroke in what historians like to call the War of the Roses. You can be forgiven if that sounds like the name of a terrible movie from the 1980s you once saw pitting Kathleen Turner against Michael Douglas. The real war was not about a marital squabble that went ballistic but about two competing factions for royal domination; the Plantagenets (white rose) and the Lancasters (red rose, like the tea).

I have read lengthy explanations about what this “civil” war was about, but I don’t see it as my task to try to explain or make sense of the endless bloodshed and fighting that seems to have occurred on every square foot of the U.K. To summarize, however, I would say the fighting was because people were unhappy, the white roses blamed the red roses and vice versa, there was a certain amount of greed and lust for power, and common folk were easily duped into fighting for whichever side they sided with. History reports there was mental illness involved on the part of both families as well. If you care to know more, the library can supply you with the necessary details but I am just a guy with his feet up in Snowdonia looking for some background on where I am plunked down.

Alas, I will just jump ahead to the more important details of the twentieth century.

For example, there was a “problem” with gypsies in Betws-y-Coed in the 1930s. The problem was that the “travelers” kept showing up and the locals did not like them. I found no reports of stolen children or major crime, just minor hustling. Cheating perhaps. Maybe the mean-spirited bartender I had encountered was not even Welsh but the son of wandering gypsies who decided to stay in one place and cheat his clients, letting them come to him instead of him following in family footsteps to find new marks.

But to leave Betws-y-Coed’s history on a gentler and positive note, author Shaw writes that in 1951, “Postwoman Catherine Roberts retired. It was said that during her years of service she had walked the equivalent of twice around the world.” That’s a lot of walking and it led me to wonder how many shoes she had worn out and what kind of shoes were they? This would have been in the days long before Cotswold Outdoor Rock Bottom and the other fashionable outdoor footwear establishments invaded the town like modern day rose warriors.

*1951, I noted, was the year I was born, which, I suppose, means nothing at all, except that it was a year when some of us - me in particular - were just coming into this world.*

Our eager parents were hoping that all the wars were over and a bright peaceful future lay ahead while retiree Catherine Roberts, who had served her community faithfully, was hanging up her postal walking shoes and looking forward to a quiet afternoon sipping tea beneath blooming Welsh wisteria while studying the new growth of her hydrangeas flourishing in the front yard.

In the morning, Linda ran back and forth on the main drag of Betws while Kelty and I walked up into the forest behind the house. We passed Taverners - a hostel for young hikers who were sitting out at tables in the bright sun eating fresh fruit and granola. Here again was the young tribe of hikers that rather fascinated me. There were a lot of them here in town and it brightened my day. Sure, they had



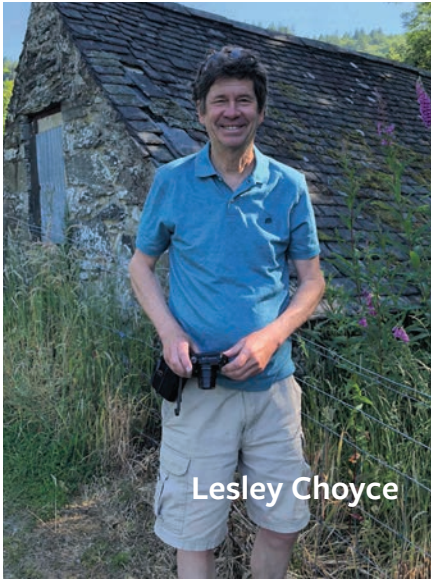
what looked like unwashed dreadlocks, and they were tattooed and had odd bits of metal sticking out of unlikely parts of their faces. But they were young and free (maybe) and had arrived here without cars and with only what they could carry in their voluminous nylon backpacks. Some were probably rock climbers, some bicyclists and some purebred hikers who were about to walk to the tops of Moel Siabod, Moelwyn Mawr or climb Snowdon itself. God love them, these

granola-munching, long-haired, eco-friendly tourists who didn't give a hoot about video games, designer jeans, long-term employment plans or the latest Donald Trump news gossip.

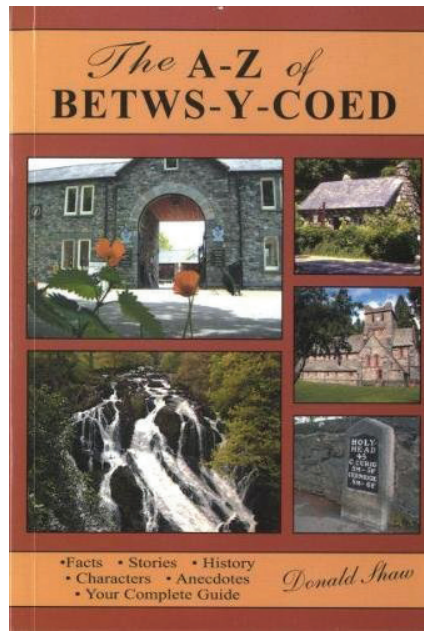
Further along the road, Kelty and I breathed in the pure forest air and observed the spears of morning sunlight filtering through the hemlock branches, using this elixir to cure some morning worries about my daughter about to have twin babies back

homes. I had to work hard to quell the shouting voices in my paranoid parental head. But as everything seemed, while not ideal, very much under control in Canada, I reconfirmed my faith in the Canadian medical system and my trust in the support Pamela had around her. We had a backup plan for leaving if we had to. I said several simple prayers for my child and her imminent offsprings' well-being, and then I tried to quiet my mind.





Lesley Choyce



Linda Choyce

For today, at least, we'd stick with our plans. And, as for me, today I was going surfing.

And not in the ocean. Any ocean.

And that would be a first for me.

Dolgarrog is a short drive north along the Conwy River from where we were staying. It is an unlikely place for an inland surfing park but there it is - Surf Snowdonia, "the world's first artificial surfing lake." Part of me didn't like the idea of surfing an artificial wave. Why? Because it's artificial, that's why. Those modern hippie hikers wouldn't have

thought much of me I bet if they knew I was about to pay a hefty fee to surf a man-made wave. But I probably would not be back this way again and there was indeed a wave here - a reportedly surfable, head-high wave.

*I had been surfing since I was thirteen and never given it up.*

*In my book, once a surfer, always a surfer. Age would never be an issue.*

Why the surf park was in Dolgarrog is a bit of a mystery to me. Travellers come here for the mountains, the climbing and the hiking. There would be skiing in the winter, of course. But there is not a great population base like other places in the world where "surf gardens" were cropping up. But I guess there was a good water supply and carloads of summer tourists willing to give predictable surfing a go. So, for one morning, I would join the inland surfers and see what it was like.



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A woman is the central figure, wearing a large, elaborate headdress made of white lilies, red roses, and green leaves. She has white face paint with a small black cross-like symbol on her forehead and dotted patterns around her eyes. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, garment with intricate Celtic knotwork patterns. The background is a warm, golden-brown color with soft, out-of-focus lights, suggesting an indoor setting with warm lighting.

# *Celebrating Celtic Culture*

*As Celtic Life International Senior Writer  
Chris Muise tells us, Celtic culture can be  
uncovered in all corners of the world...*



Romania

I am lucky to live in Nova Scotia. I could trip and land in a celebration of Celtic culture.

It isn't hard for folks to find a way to connect with their Irish, Scottish, and Gaelic roots here in Canada's ocean playground. From the strong Gaelic ties in Cape Breton, to the rich shipping heritage of my hometown of Yarmouth, there is at least a little Celtic in every corner of Nova Scotia. Heck, even the name means "New Scotland."

But the province is hardly unique in that sense. Of course, Scotland and Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom all have their own cultural celebrations - that goes without saying. But every year, this magazine also highlights the myriad of Celtic festivals and celebrations that happen around the world. Seemingly, communities across Canada, and many pockets of the United States, have a chapter in the epic story that is the Celtic Diaspora.

But it can be easy to forget that the net of the Celtic people has been cast much wider than just North America and the U.K. It may be easy to find some Celtic history in those parts of the world, but it is also hard to find a place on this rock that hasn't been touched by the Celtic people.

Trust me. I've been looking.

Readers of Celtic Life International will recognize a few examples of far-reaching celebrations of Celtic culture, as we have featured plenty of them over the years. In 2019 alone, over 51 countries around the world have, or will, host Celtic festivals of some sort, including in such unlikely spots as Bra-



Brent Cassidy

zil, Sweden, Italy, Senegal, Indonesia, Argentina, Russia, New Guinea, and many more.

The Festival Interceltique de Lorient, held in France each summer, is among the many festivals we have showcased. A southern port city in Bretagne, the country's ancient Celtic region, the annual ten-day gathering is one of the most prominent events on the global Celtic calendar, and across Europe in particular.

Beginning in 1971 with the region's first bagpipes festival, the festivities open with a

Kaoteriad - a traditional Breton stew of seafood and potatoes topping a baguette - held in the Porzh Pesketa harbour district, with Breton music for ambiance. A huge draw is the Parade of Celtic Nations, which invites more than 3,500 artists from across the Diaspora every year.

Beyond the borders of the traditional Celtic nations, the town of Beclean in Bistrița-Năsăud County, north-eastern Transylvania, Romania, hosts a Celtic festival altogether different.

According to archaeological findings, the history of Celts in Transylvania goes back to the 4th century BC. Radu Zagreanu is a Romanian archaeologist, who also helps keep Beclean's annual Celtic Village re-enactment portion of its Festivalul Celtic Transilvania historically accurate.

"The Celts exercised politico-military rule over Transylvania between the 4th and 2nd century BC and brought with them a more advanced iron-working technology," he explains. "Located geographically on the edge of the Celtic world, we created this concept at the festival, called the Celtic Village, a recreation of a hypothetical Celtic fair, where people from different parts of the Celtic world gather together and spend an unforgettable weekend together."

You would be surprised where Celtic history pops up when you look hard enough. Even as far afield as Cuba and Barbados - festivals which we have also covered in depth - the celebrations make sense given the patterns of voluntary or forced emigration to the Caribbean. So while it may not be obvious, there is Celtic culture there to celebrate.

What about places where Celtic connections are few and far between?

How do people of Celtic lineage who live in more remote regions - where the Diaspora is not as prominent - honour their heritage?

With "passion, persistence, and professionalism." At least, that is how Brent Cassidy manages it.

Cassidy, an Irishman of Donegal and County Fermanagh by way of North Carolina, explains how he wound up living in Oulu, Finland, just 300 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle.

"I arrived as an exchange student back in 1997 and studied Scandinavian culture. I returned to America to get my degree, before coming back here to work as a kindergarten teacher."

Most of Ireland's connections to Finland in history are relatively recent - the two nations first established diplomatic relations in 1962, according to Ireland's embassy in Finland. It's not like they go a-ways back, like Celts in France or Spain or even North America and the Caribbean. So...what, if any, is the connection?

"I believe it is more of a mentality," says Cassidy. "Both cultures are, in my opinion, rather relaxed. I suppose it comes from this rural culture, where the city life is still pretty new. A lot of the people in this city actually come from the countryside."

There is another, more concrete connection: music.

"Irish music has been here for prob-

ably about 30 years," says Cassidy, himself a musician. "When I started getting into the scene, I might have played music occasionally. But I really wanted to play music and listen to music, so I started organizing sessions. The sessions started once a month, and then they grew to twice a month. Then I decided to start a festival."

The Irish Festival of Oulu debuted humbly in 2006, hosting about 2,000 people. It didn't take long to catch on, however.

"It just kind of took off," Cassidy recalls. "2007 was a really big year. We even had (renowned Irish piper) Paddy Keenan perform. Today, the gathering has evolved to include a wide range of events, including theatre, poetry, storytelling, and film."



Marc-Ivan O'Gorman

It's been slower-going for Marc-Ivan O'Gorman, a Co. Carlow transplant living part-time in New Delhi with his Indian wife. Whereas Cassidy connects to people with music, O'Gorman speaks the language of cinema, which he has tried to share with his Indian neighbours.

"I was working for a TV channel there and I had been involved in film and the arts since I was a teenager, so this is always my way of interacting with other cultures," O'Gorman explains from Los Angeles.

"I noticed that there was a real dearth of interaction, or general understanding, between Irish and Indian cultures. And I felt there was actually quite a lot of common ground there - similar experiences and attitudes to life than perhaps they were aware of. But, even just geographically, they hadn't really explored those overlaps.

***"Both countries are former British colonies that had successful national independence movements in the 20th century."***

"They kind-of bounce off each other, communicating on a sort of philosophical

and cultural level."

O'Gorman notes that most Indian people's awareness of Ireland is through the country's literary lineage; writers such as W.B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, and James Joyce. Aiming to grow that awareness, he founded the first Indian Film Festival of Ireland.

"The first iteration of the festival was picking movies that featured Irish writers, either as adaptations of plays like *Dancing at Lughnasa*, or adaptations of short stories like William Trevor's *Ballroom of Romance*. I picked famous Irish writers, found movies that featured them, and called it *The Writing Irish*."

The most recent festival in 2018 explored Irish animation, including the classic 2009 film *The Secret of Kells*.

And though film is a huge industry in India, it has been hard to grow the festival as O'Gorman finds himself competing with both Bollywood and popular global cinema.

"India has a thing called Parallel Cinema, which is what we might call independent cinema or art house cinema. It is still quite small, however. What they think of cinema is popular cinema, like Hollywood stuff. As such, the people who are taking in a film festival in India are going to be the literary type. It is a smaller audience to be sure.



Rob Hennessey

"I can't say that it is growing," he continues. "I would say the audience is more numbers of the same groups of people. In India, festivals like this aren't a popular thing. If I was going to put an Irish film on in Canada, let's say, I could go, oh Colin Farrell is in it, and Kelly Murphy. People would react with, 'oh, international Hollywood movie stars - let's go'. But if I put that same film on in



India, Indians wouldn't know who either those guys are, so even that wouldn't draw the audiences. It's going upstream a little bit, trying to convince the Indian people to come and enjoy these movies."

Robert Hennessey might have an even greater challenge. Living in the largely rural region of Fukui Prefecture, Japan, many of his neighbours have never even heard of Ireland.

"Being Irish in Japan, I can tell you that most Japanese don't know anything about Ireland," says Hennessey, an English teacher at the Fukui University of Technology.

"If you tell them that you are Irish, they think that you are from Iceland. They have heard more about Iceland than they have heard about Ireland: both countries are in relatively the same region, but as the Japanese have an interest in hot springs and thermal this-and-that, they know about Iceland. However, they have little or no idea about Ireland."

A native Dubliner, Hennessey has been living in Fukui City for the last nine years. You might think that being surrounded by people who have almost no clue what or where Ireland might have him feeling alienated and discouraged. But it has had quite the opposite effect. As he explains, it inspired him to share his culture more vigorously.

"Yes, we are worlds apart. That said, it gives us a great opportunity to show them something different."

Hennessey helps to organize the Fukui St. Patrick's Day parade -

now three years running - though it is more of a small march around the park, followed by a tight-knit shindig at the local train station.

"The majority of the fun goes on in this event space, which has a big screen, and a load of food tents set up on two stages. And on the two stages, we feature Irish musicians who have come to join us from all around Japan for the weekend. We have a local sake brewery sponsoring us, with a local glassblower providing tri-colour green, white, and orange sake cups."

*"It's a nice little event, but it is not quite New York."*

Despite the lack of cultural knowledge, the event is usually a smashing success because it is a novel experience for the locals.

"The Japanese love anything new, whether it is a new cell phone, or a new drink, or a new car - they are all about new. They were very keen to partake, and I didn't have to really convince them much at all."

Besides a chance to revel in his native culture with a few other Irish ex-pats in the area, Hennessey sees the festivities as an opportunity to share more than his history and heritage with his neighbours - it is also a chance to share a whole new kind of world-view.

"The initial reason for starting it was basically just to have a bit of





Ortigueira Celtic Festival



The Irish Festival of Oulu

fun. I could get into the cultural importance of this-and-that, but basically, where we live here is a very rural, conservative, underpopulated place, so there is not a whole lot of fun to be had sometimes.

“What the Irish can offer them is a bit of spontaneous amusement; street busking with the music or breaking out into Irish dance here and there. The Japanese can’t do that. They need to practice everything, and get everything perfect, and run it through over and over until it is just right.

“The St. Patrick’s Day thing is kind of needed here, and something that the people appreciate. I guess I saw it as a bit of a payback; I have been treated very well here - the locals have been very kind to me and have always looked out for me.”

For O’Gorman, sharing his heritage not only gives locals a chance to learn something from his culture, but he learns a lot from viewing his own heritage through their eyes.

“You have unexpected realizations when you take things out of context. When you are looking at Northern Ireland, and there is a movie about that, an Indian audience, unexposed to that, might say, ‘I don’t get it. What’s the problem? Is it religious?’ Oh, well, partially. ‘Well are they both Christian.’ Well, one is Protestant, one is Catholic. ‘OK what’s the difference?’ It is kind of subtle. It makes you examine your own culture. Seen from afar, that does seem like a rather nuanced distinction. If you get a little bit of distance on your own culture, it helps you understand it better.”

For Cassidy back in Finland, the clash of two unique cultures highlights the ways in which they are similar.

“Irish music in northern Finland - people ask, so how does that

work? But it works. An Irish festival in Ireland is an Irish festival in Ireland. But with an Irish festival in Oulu, Finland you are actually inside of two cultures; amidst the Finnish language and architecture, you throw in some Gaelic and ‘trad’ tunes and voila; it is kind of like a very tasty milkshake of blueberry, strawberry, and banana.”

*And it is here, at the edge where the different cultures connect, that the magic happens.*

“Last year, the very last evening of the festival, we were finishing up with music, playing a session, and somebody called us outside. The whole pub cleared, and there were these green northern lights in the sky. Maybe there was a little bit of Irish luck or something in that. Those are the type of experiences that we have.”

If you are still wondering how Celtic celebrations can germinate, seemingly from nothing, in the far corners of the world where the cultural climate may seem anaerobic to Celtic growth, it should be obvious by now how it works. It is not by design, but by the passion of individual people.

“It is worth putting together,” says Hennesey, as the bell chimes at Fukui Tech. “People like it and appreciate it and it always goes over well. Sometimes I think that I am crazy for doing it, but it is beyond rewarding. It’s just fun.”

“I always go back to the simple question - why do I do this?” Cassidy adds. “And I truly believe that it is because of my love for Celtic music and culture. Whatever happens on top of that is extra.”



Festival Interceltique de Lorient

A man with a beard, wearing a grey t-shirt and a dark kilt, is in the middle of a caber toss. He is leaning forward, holding a large wooden caber with both hands. In the background, another person in a kilt and blue socks with 'BEAVER' written on them is visible. The event is taking place on a grassy field.

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# Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering

## Manx Pride on display

**T**he Isle of Man may be the smallest of the Celtic nations, but Dr. Chloe Woolley says its residents are “fiercely proud” of their history and heritage.

Nowhere is that pride better displayed than at the yearly Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering, a long-standing event that was first founded by Manx cultural icon Mona Douglas in Ramsey in the north of the island in 1978.

“Yn Chruinnaght is Manx Gaelic for ‘The Gathering,’” shares Woolley via email. “Two years ago, we decided to extend the title in an effort to bring the festival to a wider audience. After trying ‘Celtfest’ for one year, we settled on ‘Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering,’ which has already made the festival and its ethos much more accessible to newcomers.”

For her part, Woolley has been involved with the event in one way or another for most of her life.

“I grew up attending and participating with my family and school when the festival was known just as Yn Chruinnaght. My mum was secretary for a few years, and I performed in the event from a young age; playing the fiddle, reciting Manx dialect poems in the children’s competitions, and performing with the Ramsey-based dance group, Ny Fennee. I wrote my PhD dissertation on the ‘Revival of Manx Traditional Music’ at Edinburgh University, and a lot of my research examined Yn Chruinnaght and the musicians involved.”

Woolley joined the Yn Chruinnaght festival committee 15 years ago. Her official title is “secretary” – though she is in multi-task mode on most days, “booking the acts, updating social media and the website, emceeing some of the events, and tidying up backstage.”

“There are 12 of us on the committee, with a few extra stewards during the festival, and we all ‘muck-in’ to make it run as smoothly as possible. I am also the Manx Music Development Officer at Culture Vannin, so part of my role there is to support lo-



cal festivals that involve Manx music and to assist with the promotion of our culture on and off the island.”

Since its inception, Yn Chruinnaght has evolved significantly. For instance, it no longer takes place in Ramsey. “Older festival-goers still have fond memories of Yn Chruinnaght taking place until the early hours in a large marquee in Ramsey, but many factors – including the building of a swimming pool on the site of the marquee – forced us to make bold changes in 2007 and take the festival to Peel, where we now have a purpose-built theatre at our disposal.

The competitive side of things has changed over time as well.

“Yn Chruinnaght’s former children’s competitions in music, song, dance and Gaelic became a separate entity called Cruinnaght Aeg for a number of years, before becoming the ‘Manx Folk Awards’ in 2012, which I currently organize for Culture Vannin in conjunction with the Isle of Man Department of Education.”

These competitions now take place before Easter, and this year’s event saw 1,200 youngsters three to 18 years of age from 26 Isle of Man schools taking part.

This year’s Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering takes place from July 15-20. Celtic musicians, including Welsh supergroup Mabon, harpists Rachel Hair and Mera Royle, and Irish singer Daoiri Farrell, among others, are scheduled to take the stage.

“As well, we have an Appalachian banjo player who will be visiting the Isle of Man to trace his ancestral roots.”

*Attendees can also expect a Manx ceilidh, Celtic language poetry and bagpipes of various origins.*



“I think there is a growing confidence across the island that Manx language and culture is something to be particularly proud of. Political support, the individual successes of musicians, increased media coverage and interest from outside the island have noticeably helped to raise the profile here in recent years.”

She adds that Yn Chruinnaght is one of multiple active cultural groups, communities, festivals and organizations that are doing great work in promoting the culture.

“As long as it continues to be an enjoyable experience, worthwhile to the community, and there is a dependable team of people to share the duties with, I will remain involved with the festival for the foreseeable future.”

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

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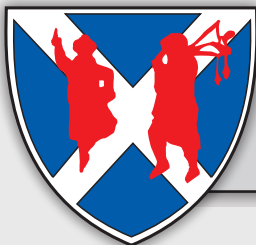
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# Elvis in Wales

*Celtic Life International correspondent Beryl Johnson tells us why thousands flock to a Welsh seaside town every year*



**S**ome sources claim that he has Irish blood. Others say that he is of Scottish descent. So why is the biggest Elvis Festival in the world held in a sleepy seaside town in Wales?

Though it is difficult to confirm any Welsh connection, it is said that the name Presley comes from the Preseli Mountains in the country's plush western region. Whatever the truth, thousands of Elvis fans converge on the little town of Porthcawl in South Wales each September to celebrate the life and music of the King of Rock & Roll.

Founded by a television company in 2004 for the making of a one-off documentary film, the festival was never intended to be a recurring event. Yet, 15 years later it continues to grow in both size and scope; this year, over 800 Elvis look-a-likes and tens of thousands of visitors are expected to attend the annual gathering, doubling the population of the usually-sedate retirement town.

"Fifteen years ago, we had no idea that this would result in 40,000 descending annually on Porthcawl," shares organizer Peter Phillips. "In hindsight we should not have been surprised; Elvis remains the most iconic entertainer of the last 100 years and Wales loves a good party."

*With hundreds of events taking place over the course of the weekend, the entire town turns wall-to-wall Elvis.*

Bars, stores, restaurants and even chip-shops all get into the swing of things, decorating their premises, hosting contests and competitions - be they official or unofficial - and holding impromptu celebrations of all sorts and styles.



The official shows take place in the Grand Pavilion - a magnificent 1930s music hall situated on the seafront, with spectacular panoramic views across the Bristol Channel.

The Hi-Tide, once a beach shop during the 1940s, is now a lively music venue with four bars and outside seating. It is also the official sponsor of the Porthcawl Elvis Festival, hosting upwards of 50 Elvis Tribute Artists (ETAs) who perform more than 100 shows over the course of the weekend.

The Best Elvis Competition is staged in two parts; the first is held on Friday afternoon, while the second is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, later followed by the Grand Final.

The First Kings contest features the Elvis Tributes Artists who performed at the original event, which is then followed by a performance by Rob Willis, the 2018 Best Festival Winner.

The Elvies - the World's most prestigious award show for Elvis Tribute Artists - takes place on Saturday night.

Sunday will feature three concerts; the extremely popular Elvis Gospel Show; Elvis Orchestrated - where world's premier ETA Kraig Parker will be performing with the prestigious Cardiff Philharmonic Orchestra - all followed by the swingin' sounds of

the fabulous Graceland Band with Mills & Boone.

The gala weekend finishes with the festival's traditional Trilogy Show, where three ETAs perform Sun Studio, '68 Special and Vegas sets.

Throughout the gathering, close to 20 alternative venues around town host a "fringe festival" - events that are not part of the official program, including a Pricilla Presley beauty contest.

Of course, locals and visitors get right into the spirit of things; fans of all ages and genders don Elvis jumpsuits and black wigs with signature hairdos, while ladies in 1950s dresses and coiffed bobs teeter on stilettos. Gold lamé, boots and army uniforms are in abundance also. The town is full of elderly people gyrating in the streets. Young people - all of whom weren't even born during Elvis' lifetime - act as though they have always been part of the mania. Even dogs proudly sport their lame coats and polka dot bows. Each pays tribute to The King in their own way.

Festival organizers say it all works thanks to the idiosyncratic Welsh mentality, and that it most likely couldn't happen anywhere else.

## Where to stay

There are plenty of options for accommodation in Porthcawl with a choice of 5-star luxury hotels, boutique hotels, homey B&Bs, caravans and camping. Many artists, celebrities and fans stay at the Brentwood Hotel, which becomes the Heartbreak Hotel for the duration of the festival.

[www.elvies.co.uk](http://www.elvies.co.uk)

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## Embro Highland Games

July 1, 2019, Embro, Ontario

[www.embrohighlandgames.ca](http://www.embrohighlandgames.ca)

Ontario's Embro Highland Games has been preserving and promoting ancient Caledonian culture through music, athletics and education for more than 80 years. Today, the annual gathering is considered one of the oldest and most celebrated Celtic festivals in Canada. This year, the day-long event will stay true to form by showcasing a swath of Celtic competitions in Highland dance, piping, drumming, and heavy athletics, where invited contestants will gather to compete in the Stone Put, the Weight for Distance, the Hammer Throw, and more. The celebration will again be hosting the popular 2km, 5km, and 10km Road Race events, as well as the always-entertaining Tug-of-War competition. The festival will be bringing back other fan favorites also, including the sheep dog demonstrations, Scottish Dogs on Parade, a Rugby Sevens Tournament, Highland cattle & horses, kilted yoga, and a refreshment garden where attendees will enjoy a selection of local craft beers and spirits. New for 2019; learn to Scottish country dance in the air conditioned hall!



## Kamloops Highland Games

July 13, 2019, Kamloops, British Columbia

[www.kamloopshighlandgames.ca](http://www.kamloopshighlandgames.ca)

Organized by the Kamloops Highland Games Society, the Kamloops Highland Games is a one-day festival that celebrates the strong Celtic heritage amidst the plush and picturesque interior of British Columbia's west coast. This July, the annual gathering returns to Albert McGowan Park to celebrate with an array of athletics, culture, and toe-tapping music. The always well-attended Heavy Athletic competition will feature hundreds of competitors trying their hand at a variety of traditional physical feats. The event also hosts miniature games, designed specifically for the wee lads and lasses. Also on tap are both Highland dance and massed pipe and drum bands competitions, dog agility and HEMA fighting demonstrations with fighting troupe Lynx, Scotch Tastings, and a Gathering of the Clans across the venue. Musical performances take place all day at the festival's popular Beer Garden, an authentic and rollicking kitchen party showcasing the sights and sounds of the Highlands. As always, guests will enjoy strolling across the grounds and sampling the food and artisanal wares of the many Celtic vendors.



## The Festival of the Tartans

July 17-20, 2019, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

[www.festivalofthetartans.ca](http://www.festivalofthetartans.ca)

This July, the Festival of the Tartans - a five-day celebration of Scottish pride and culture - returns to the Scott W. Weeks Sports Complex in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia for its 63rd annual gathering. From humble beginnings, the festival is now considered one of the province's premier Scottish celebrations, welcoming thousands of local, regional, national and international visitors and competitors each year. This summer, things kick-off with a launch ceremony; a mid-morning social complete with tea, cakes, speeches and the sounds of the Na Gaisgch Pipes and Drums. From there, guests will enjoy a full range of weekend activities, including a Kilted Golf Tournament, Scottish music, a Garden Party at the Glen Haven Manor, Highland dance competitions and the traditional Scottish Highland Games, featuring seven heavy athletic events. The event also brings back a number of fan favorites, including the Kinsmen Chicken BBQ, the Open Car Show and the Atlantic Canada Open Quartet Championship, one of the largest bagpipe competitions on Canada's east coast. The festivities round out Sunday morning with a traditional Kirkin' O' the Tartan ceremony at the Loch Broom Historic Log Church.



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## Maine Celtic Celebration

July 19-21, 2019, Belfast, Maine

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

This July, the Maine Celtic Celebration returns to downtown Belfast for three days of history and heritage. Located on two near by parks - the Steamboat Landing and the Belfast Commons - the three-day gathering aims to preserve and promote Maine's strong Celtic roots through a series of musical performances and cultural demonstrations. Things kick off this year on Friday afternoon with the official opening ceremonies featuring a pipe band performance, then visitors can enjoy a pint while listening to the smooth sounds of sets by a local Acadian-Celtic band Belfast Bay Fiddlers, the Quebecois trio Genticorum, and Philadelphia-based Irish band The John Byrne Band. In addition, the event will host a Celtic Dog Show, sheepherding, music and dance cultural workshops, a 5-mile Kilted Canter and a series of historical lectures, including a history of the bagpipes. After a full day of music, Saturday evening will round out with fireworks and the Mighty Session - a traditional Irish music gathering where guests are welcome to either join in or simply kick back and enjoy. Sunday sees the ever-popular Highland Heavy Games, U.S. National Cheese Roll Championships and more great music and workshops with Belfast Harbor as your backdrop.

## Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival

July 20, 2019, Florence, Massachusetts

[www.glasgowlands.org](http://www.glasgowlands.org)

This July 20, the Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival - a non-profit organization committed to the promotion and preservation of Scottish culture - returns to Look Park in Florence, Massachusetts to celebrate its 26th year. Since its inception over two decades ago, the annual gathering has grown significantly, earning its title as the second largest event of its kind in New England, and the only one in Massachusetts. The day-long festival welcomes thousands of attendees each year to enjoy watching the numerous competitive events, including Highland dance, piping and drumming - featuring over 20 massed bands - and the traditional Highland Games. In addition, attendees are welcome to enjoy workshops on the art of spinning and weaving, a Clan Village, historical re-enactments, and a slew of musical performances on the main stage under the Celtic Pub tent. The festival also features the very popular Harpers Tent, where visitors are treated to a relaxing afternoon of traditional harp music. Children are always encouraged to partake in a number of age-appropriate activities, including face painting, story time, a miniature version of the games and a spray park.

## Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games

July 26-28, 2019, Seattle, Washington

[www.sshga.org](http://www.sshga.org)

For over 70 years, the Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games Association has worked tirelessly to provide Washington area residents with an authentic Scottish experience through music, dance, education and athletic competition. The organization's first annual festival - then called the Seattle Scottish Highland Games - was held at the West Seattle Stadium in 1947. Over time, the event evolved, eventually changing its name to the Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games and Clan Gathering, and settling into the community of Enumclaw, Washington. This July the festival celebrates its 73rd anniversary, bringing together thousands of people for three days of cultural celebration, education and preservation. Competitions begin each morning with Scottish Athletics, West Coast Drum Corps, individual piping and drumming, and Highland dancing. Musical artists - including Celt-rockers Tempest, The Fire, Scottish balladeers Colin Grant-Adam and Carl Peterson, Scottish duo Men of Worth, and Celtic trio Brother - are scheduled to perform on five musical stages. In addition, visitors are encouraged to check out Clan tents and ancestry workshops, a Scottish farm and dog show, and the very popular Celtic marketplace, which offers up the finest in Scottish food and wares.

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## Dayton Celtic Festival

July 26-28, 2019, Dayton, Ohio

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

Since its inception in 2002, the Dayton Celtic Festival has established itself as Ohio's premier Celtic celebration. The three-day event has succeeded in maintaining its mission to preserve and promote the area's rich and robust Celtic heritage through musical performances, dance competitions and cultural exhibits, aiming to "saturate your senses" with the sights and sounds of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and beyond. Each year, visitors enjoy a full array of activities, including whisky tastings, Irish Wolfdog demonstrations, musical workshops, genealogy tents and cultural vendor booths. Musical artists perform a variety of classic and contemporary Celtic styles daily throughout the event. This year attendees are in for a real treat as both Northern Ireland trad band Cuig and French-Irish sextet Doolin take the stage. The event is also pleased to welcome the likes of Celt-rockers Gaelic Storm, Scythian, Rory Maken, Socks in a Frying Pan and the Fitzgeralds. Things wrap up on Sunday morning with a traditional Celtic Breakfast, Sunday Morning mass, and the always-popular Parade of Kilts, where guests are encouraged to don their tartans and show off their true Celtic pride.

## New Brunswick Highland Games

July 25-28, 2019, Fredericton, New Brunswick

[www.highlandgames.ca](http://www.highlandgames.ca)



One of Atlantic Canada's largest Scottish celebrations – named both one of the "Top Festivals" in New Brunswick and one of American Bus Association's 100 Best Events in North America for five consecutive years – the New Brunswick Highland Games is an absolute must for those with a passion for Celtic culture. Established in 1981, the four-day festival welcomes thousands of guests to the Government House in Fredericton, New Brunswick, each year for music, dance, culture and history. This July, the gathering celebrates its 38th anniversary with a host of pipe and drum competitors from across North America, musical performances, Highland dancing, heavy athletic events, authentic Scottish cuisine, whisky tastings and more. The event also highlights a free off-site concert this year on Saturday night at the Officers Square, and includes live performances from Cape Breton's Barra MacNeils, as well as a beer garden and a screening of Disney's animated feature film *Brave*. Always a family-friendly affair, the festival engages the wee ones with a number of age-appropriate activities, including a Kid's corner, a miniature version of the games, and more. The weekend wraps up in tradition with a closing Massed Bands ceremony.

## Okanagan Military Tattoo

July 27-28, 2019, Vernon, British Columbia

[www.okanagantattoo.ca](http://www.okanagantattoo.ca)



Considered one of the largest entertainment extravaganzas in all of Western Canada, the Okanagan Military Tattoo is a non-stop, two-hour event that unites cultures and celebrates the military through music, dance and more. The origins of the term "Tattoo" reach back to 17th century Europe, when the Low Country innkeepers would cry "Doe den tap toe" – "Turn off the Taps" – as the fifes and drums of the nearby regiment signaled a return to quarters. Today, the term is a contraction of "tap toe" and refers to a high-octane variety show with a military flavour that includes musicians, dancers, actors and a special "Tribute to the Veterans." Present day Tattoos often gain inspiration from the traditions and culture of the country they represent. Each year the Okanagan Military Tattoo features upwards of 600 performers from all over North America and the U.K., including massed pipes and drums, military and civilian brass bands, precision drills, Highland dancers and cultural troupes. In 2019, the Tattoo will see performances by the Brentwood Imperial Youth Band, the Calgary Round-Up Band, the Regimental Band of the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own) and the Kamloops Pipe Band, among others. As always, be sure to check out the pre-Tattoo exhibit, which opens two hours before the shows and features over 30 displays including book signings, cultural displays, historical information sessions and vendor booths.

# *2019 An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival*

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## An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival

August 9-11, 2019, Butte, Montana

[www.mtgaelic.org](http://www.mtgaelic.org)

One of the premier Irish celebrations in all of North America, the An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival is a signature event put on by the Montana Gaelic Cultural Society each year. Since its inception, the three-day festival has maintained its mission to promote and preserve the region's strong Irish heritage and pride for future generations. Thousands of visitors are expected to gather again this August for a weekend of musical performances and cultural happenings. This year, educational workshops and seminars will be set up across the venue and include a beginner's guide in both Gaelic speaking and traditional Irish dance, as well as a talk with local historian Jim McCarthy. A variety of musical acts are sure to keep toes-a-tappin' with the likes of the Whileaways, Irish balladeer Tom Sweeney with Evans & Doherty, and the Trinity Irish Dance Company taking the main stage. Between sets, guests are welcome to peruse the many vendor booths which showcase some of the area's finest Irish wares and culinary fare. Also on the agenda this year is a traditional Road Bowling Tournament for attendees of all ages.



## Goderich Celtic Roots Festival

August 9-11, 2019, Goderich, Ontario

[www.celticfestival.ca](http://www.celticfestival.ca)

Considered one of the largest and most prominent events of its kind in central Canada, the Goderich Celtic Roots Festival - organized by the Goderich Celtic Folk Society - is a must for anyone passionate about the traditional music, dance, and art of the seven Celtic nations. Since convening in 1993, the three-day celebration has nurtured the area's strong Celtic heritage, welcoming thousands of visitors and performers to the beautiful shores of Lake Huron annually for musical performances and cultural demonstrations. This year, the gathering will host five stages and over 60 hours of live music, including sets by Irish quintet Altan, fiddler Liz Carroll, Scottish fiddler Brian McNeill, guitarist Tony McManus, Irish duo Michael Rooney and June McCormack, and many more. In addition, the weekend also features a variety of cultural happenings, including a beer garden, art demonstrations, crafts, and an array of children's activities. As always, visitors will enjoy perusing the myriad of vendor booths, which offer up a fine selection of traditional Celtic food and high-quality artisanal gifts.



## Milwaukee Irish Fest

August 15-18, 2019, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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

Drum roll, please! Milwaukee Irish Fest, the world's largest celebration of Irish and Celtic music and culture, returns to the Milwaukee lakefront August 15 through 18, 2019. The festival features hundreds of musicians, dancers and entertainers from around the world, with music running the gamut of genres, from traditional Irish to the most contemporary sounds of today. Now in its 39th year, this annual celebration lets attendees experience all facets of Celtic life, including art, food, history, sports and culture. "But music is the heartbeat of this festival," explains Mike Mitchell, executive director of CelticMKE, the festival's hosting organization. This year's entertainment lineup sets the stage for an unforgettable festival, including performances by fan favorites like Gaelic Storm and The High Kings, plus newcomers like Elephant Sessions and Boxing Banjo. The 2019 Showcase stage performances at Milwaukee Irish Fest will shine a light on Galway, a gem of a city on Ireland's west coast. Often referred to as the cultural heart of Ireland, Galway will be the European Capital of Culture in 2020, and its unique customs and history will be on full display throughout the festival grounds this year.



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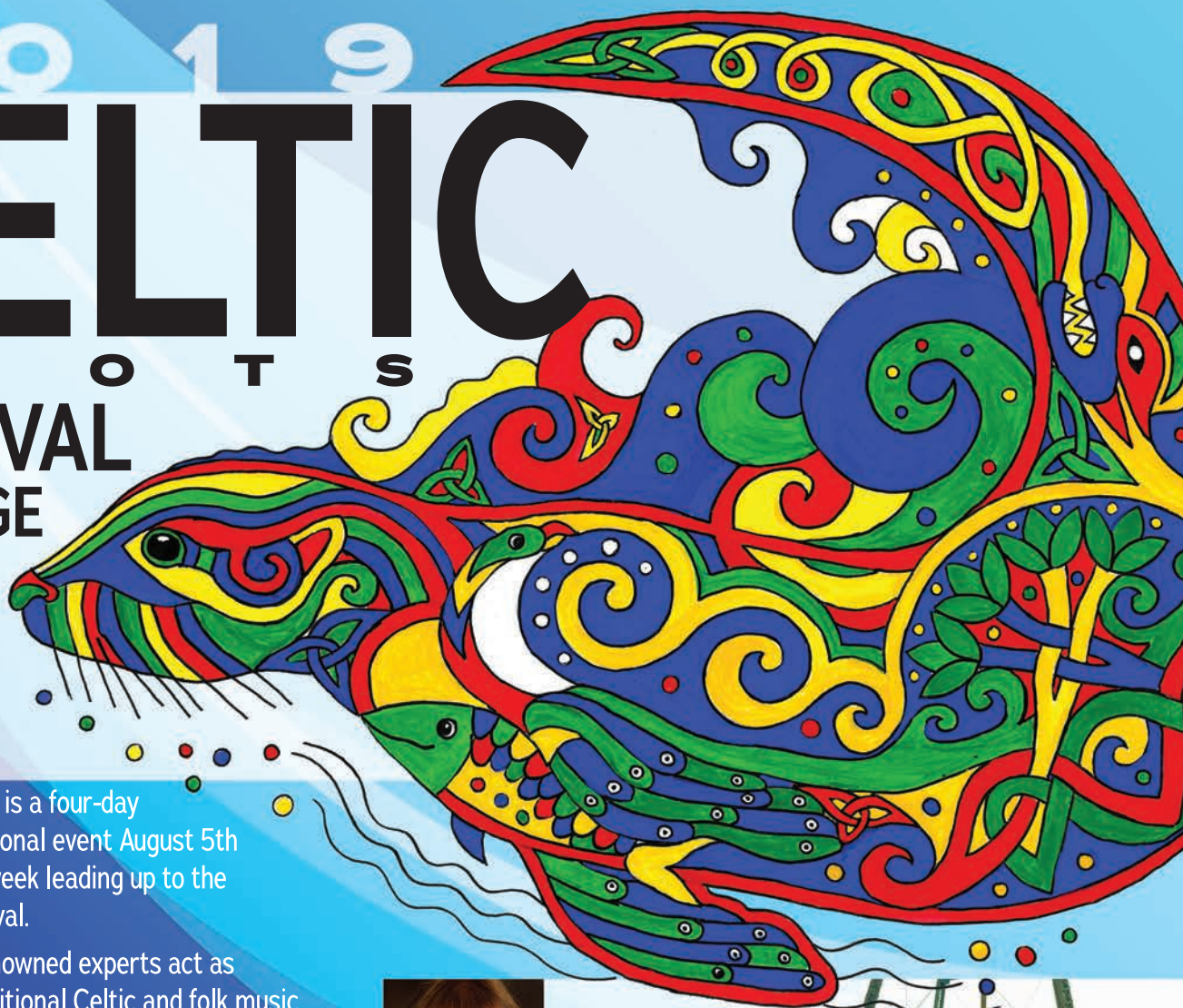
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The Celtic College is a four-day immersive educational event August 5th to the 8th in the week leading up to the Celtic Roots Festival.

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Tickets & College Registration available now! **celticfestival.ca**



## Buffalo Niagara Scottish Festival

August 17-18, 2019, Amherst, New York

[www.bnhv.org](http://www.bnhv.org)

Since 1972, Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village has been inviting visitors to discover the area's rich and robust history through interactive local history exhibits, 11 historic buildings from the Buffalo Niagara region, and special events that celebrate the culture and history of the Buffalo Niagara region - including the annual Buffalo Niagara Scottish Festival. Now in its 35th year, the two-day event celebrates the area's strong Celtic ties. This year, the gathering again hosts massed pipe and drum bands, world class Celtic music and dancing, band and solo pipe and drum competitions, Scottish cultural programs, and the Highland Games - with five world records set on the festival's athletic fields. Cultural displays fill the weekend's itinerary, offering an array of educational experiences, including bagpipe workshops, Clan Gathering and customary Kirkin' of the Tartan ceremony. The event also features a Scottish American of the Year award, as well as hosting a Celtic Marketplace that serves up a strong selection of authentic Scottish wares and vendors providing local craft beer, wine, mead, scotch and Scottish and American food offerings. All day will see upbeat musical performances from Seven Nations, Bill Craig, Tom Keefer, Celtic Cross, McCarthyism, Celtic Spirit, and more.



## Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival

August 23-24, 2019, Maryville, New York

[www.96thhighlanders.com](http://www.96thhighlanders.com)

This August, the Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival returns to Lakeside Park in Maryville, New York to celebrate its 14th year. A passion project of the 96th Highlanders Pipes and Drums band, the annual gathering is a two-day celebration that brings together the music, culture and history of Scotland and Ireland through a series of performances, demonstrations and athletic competitions. Things begin Friday evening with a traditional Celtic ceilidh, featuring Vancouver-based traditrio Town Pants. Saturday morning showcases several massed pipe bands, including the Great Lakes Pipe Band from Cleveland, Ohio, and the Niagara Police Pipe Band from Ontario, Canada. Additionally, over 50 athletes come from across North America to compete in one of the many heavy events. Afternoons bring dance demonstrations from both the Audrey Watkins School of Highland Dance and the Olean Area Irish Dancers. Cultural vendors, authentic Scottish cuisine and the annual Clan Gathering - which welcomes upwards of 30 Clans each year - are also on the weekend's agenda. Musical performances continue throughout the days and into the evenings, with sets by Celtic Creek, Sue Tiloston and Jim Cunningham, Ballinlock and Limerick five-piece Celtic rock quintet Penny Whiskey.



## Wisconsin Highland Games

August 30 - September 1, 2019, Waukesha, Wisconsin

[www.wisconsinsscottish.org](http://www.wisconsinsscottish.org)

Home to the Green Bay Packers, the Milwaukee Brewers and Bucks, Wisconsin also hosts one of the strongest Celtic communities in North America, with the Scots and Irish settling to the region for generations. Each year, the Wisconsin Highland Games invites locals and visitors of all ages and backgrounds to the Waukesha Expo Center to celebrate Celtic heritage and culture. This year, the three-day gathering offers attendees a jam-packed array of amazing activities, including an opening night ceremony and ceilidh, piping and drumming competitions, Highland dance competitions, a longbow tournament, a battle axe and knife throw contest, a haggis hurl, heavy athletics, sheep and duck herding demonstrations, a Celtic Canines exhibition, a cattle display, and more. Two single-day Feis competitions are on the agenda as well. Clan tents and vendor booths will be set up across the site, showcasing the best in Scottish and Irish history, heritage, wares and fare. The wee ones will be entertained and engaged with the Lil' Rampant Lions area and the doling of trinkets in the Queen's Court. A Parade of Tartans and a traditional Kirkin' of the Tartan close the weekend off in grand style.

One of the World's Largest  
& Most Complete Celtic  
Celebrations



PLEASANTON, CALIFORNIA  
CALEDONIAN CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO

August 31 - September 1  
Pleasanton, California



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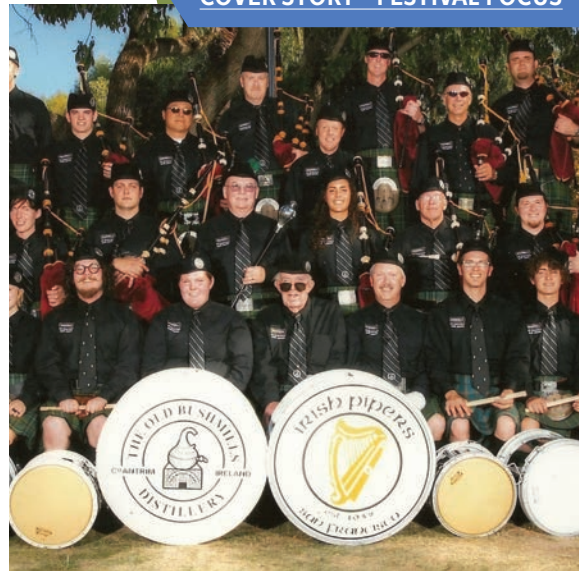
**21**  
Events &  
Attractions

## Caledonian Club of San Francisco Highland Games

August 31 - September 1, 2019, Pleasanton, California

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

Each Labor Day weekend, thousands of Celts come together at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton in the San Francisco Bay area for the annual Scottish Gathering and Highland Games. Established in the summer of 1866, the celebration was the brainchild of 17 Scottish expats who wished to preserve and promote their rich Scottish heritage. Now, over 150 years later, the festival has grown from its humble beginnings - a small family picnic and nine athletic competitions - into one of the largest happenings of its kind in North America, with an array of knowledgeable educators and thrilling performers. This year, the two-day event hosts another strong selection of activities including more than 35 pipe bands from U.S. and Canada in daily grandstand shows, the 45th U.S. Invitational Heavy Event Championships, musical and Highland dance competitions, Celtic heritage and clan booths, a kilted one-mile run, and a whisky tasting where participants are welcomed to sample from up to 100 varieties of whiskies and scotches. Musical performances will see the likes of Scottish-Gaelic quintet Albannach, singer-songwriter Ed Miller, and several others performing at both the gala Friday night concert and the Grandstand Show. Visitors are always welcome to check out the wide variety of vendor booths where they will find a fine selection of authentic Scottish food and wares.



## Canmore Highland Games

August 31 - September 1, 2019, Canmore, Alberta

[www.canmorehighlandgames.ca](http://www.canmorehighlandgames.ca)

There is a bewitching quality to the Canadian Rocky Mountains surrounding Canmore, Alberta, the site for the Canmore Highland Games. Amidst this postcard backdrop it is no wonder that the annual gathering has a massive hashtag following on Instagram. Event organizers have had 28 years of practice to craft the event into a multisensory extravaganza to delight thousands of attendees from all over the country and abroad each year. In 2019, things kick-start on Saturday, August 31, with the Taste of the Highlands, featuring an array of local food vendors with mouth-watering samples, elegant wine flavours, an assortment of Micro-Brews and of course, fine Scotches. Sunday, September 1, the day begins with a pancake breakfast and then it is on to the competitions, which include Highland Dance, Pipes & Drums, Heavy Sports and a Tug o' War battle. Perhaps most exciting is an all-new British Auto and Motorcycle show! Visit a stimulating line-up of vendors and entertainment culminating in the grand finale, the Massed Pipe & Drums leading the charge to the Canmore Ceilidh where the headliner is the Johnny McCuaig Band.



## The Radford Highlanders Festival

October 12, 2019, Radford, Virginia

[www.radford.edu/festival](http://www.radford.edu/festival)

Since first convening in the mid-1990s, the Radford Highlanders Festival - a cultural celebration put on by Radford University and the City of Radford each year - has aimed to provide attendees with an authentic Celtic experience through musical performances and cultural exhibits. Over that time, the festival has evolved into one of the region's most popular visitor destinations, seeing upwards of 10,000 guests annually - almost triple the amount of people it saw in its first few years. This year, the day-long event returns to Radford University for the first time since relocating to Bisset Park in 2014. At the core of the festival experience is the ever-popular Scots-Irish Heavyweight Games, a series of traditional athletic competitions featuring the caber toss, the stone put, and more. In addition to the Games, attendees are invited to enjoy a full range of Celtic-inspired activities, including a Clan gathering, cultural vendor booths, authentic Irish and Scottish cuisine, sheep-dog demonstrations, and live musical performances from rousing and raucous headliner Scythian and high-octane Celt-rockers CrossBow. As always, the festival is family friendly with free admission - a great way to spend the day in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains!





# JOIN US!

## Nov 2, 2019

### TICKETS

Adult Ticket ( Advance ) \$20

Adult Ticket ( Day Of ) \$30

Children ( Age 6-12 ) \$5

Children ( Under 6 ) FREE

### LOCATION

Boone Hall Plantation  
2521 Highway 17  
North Mt. Pleasant, SC

\* All tickets come with  
FREE admission to Boone Hall!

## #WeRScots



### FIND OUT MORE!

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



# *Highland Games & Celtic Festivals*

*Summer 2019*

## JULY

### Blas – International Summer School of Irish Traditional Music and Dance

June 24 – July 5  
[www.blas.ie](http://www.blas.ie)

### Malad Valley Welsh Festival

June 28 – 30  
[www.welshfestival.com](http://www.welshfestival.com)

### Feis a' Chidsin! Kitchen Fest!

June 28 – July 7  
[www.kitchenfest.ca](http://www.kitchenfest.ca)

### West Cork Chamber Music Festival

June 28 – July 7  
[www.westcorkmusic.ie](http://www.westcorkmusic.ie)

### The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo

June 29 – July 6  
[www.nstatattoo.ca](http://www.nstatattoo.ca)

### An Chuir Chruitireachta – International Harp Festival

June 30 – July 5  
[www.cairdenacruite.com](http://www.cairdenacruite.com)

### Embro Highland Games

July 1  
[www.embrohighlandgames.ca](http://www.embrohighlandgames.ca)

### Gathering of the Clans – Pugwash

July 1  
[www.pugwashvillage.com/index.php/festivals-and-events/gathering-of-the-clans](http://www.pugwashvillage.com/index.php/festivals-and-events/gathering-of-the-clans)

### Kenmore Highland Games

July 3  
[www.kenmorehighlandgames.com](http://www.kenmorehighlandgames.com)

### ScotDance Canada Championship Series

July 3 – 7  
[www.sdccs.ca](http://www.sdccs.ca)

### Almonte Celt Fest

July 5 – 7  
[www.almonteceltfest.com](http://www.almonteceltfest.com)

### Kincardine Scottish Festival and Highland Games

July 5-7  
[www.kincardinescottishfestival.ca](http://www.kincardinescottishfestival.ca)

### Traidphicnic Galway

July 5-7  
[www.traidphicnic.com](http://www.traidphicnic.com)

### Aberdeen Highland Games

July 6  
[www.aberdeenhighlandgames.com](http://www.aberdeenhighlandgames.com)

### Forres Highland Games

July 6  
[www.forreshighlandgames.com](http://www.forreshighlandgames.com)

### Gairloch Highland Games

July 6  
[www.facebook.com/events/2320757224877645](https://www.facebook.com/events/2320757224877645)

### Luss (Loch Lomond) Highland Gathering

July 6  
[www.lusshighlandgames.co.uk](http://www.lusshighlandgames.co.uk)

### Penticton Scottish Festival

July 6  
[www.pentictonscottishfestival.ca](http://www.pentictonscottishfestival.ca)

### Sterling Renaissance Festival

July 6 – August 18  
[www.sterlingfestival.com](http://www.sterlingfestival.com)

### Antigonish Highland Games

July 7-14  
[www.antigonishhighlandgames.ca](http://www.antigonishhighlandgames.ca)

### Earagail Arts Festival

July 10-28  
[www.eaf.ie](http://www.eaf.ie)

### Grandfather Mountain Highland Games

July 11-14  
[www.gmhg.org](http://www.gmhg.org)



### Clann Na Ngael Summer Feis

July 12  
[www.facebook.com/SummerFeis/](https://www.facebook.com/SummerFeis/)

### Payson Scottish Festival and Highland Games

July 12-13  
[www.paysonscottishfestival.org](http://www.paysonscottishfestival.org)

### Saline Celtic Festival

July 12-13  
[www.salineceltic.org](http://www.salineceltic.org)

### Colorado Irish Festival

July 12-14  
[www.coloradoirishfestival.org](http://www.coloradoirishfestival.org)

### Irish American Heritage Irish Fest

July 12-14  
[www.irish-american.org/at-the-center/iahc-irish-fest-2019](http://www.irish-american.org/at-the-center/iahc-irish-fest-2019)

### West Cork Literary Festival

July 12-19  
[www.new.westcorkmusic.ie/literary-festival](http://www.new.westcorkmusic.ie/literary-festival)

### Athena Caledonian Games

July 13  
[www.eost.biz/caledonian-games](http://www.eost.biz/caledonian-games)

### The Famous Alva Games

July 13  
[www.alva.ukctest.co.uk](http://www.alva.ukctest.co.uk)

### Jersey Shore Piping and Drumming Classic

July 13  
[www.jerseyshorecelticfestival.com](http://www.jerseyshorecelticfestival.com)

### Kamloops Highland Games

July 13  
[www.kamloopshighlandgames.ca/The\\_Kamloops\\_Highland\\_Games](http://www.kamloopshighlandgames.ca/The_Kamloops_Highland_Games)

### Loch Lomond Highland Games

July 13  
[www.lhgb.com](http://www.lhgb.com)

### Cold Spring Village Celtic Festival

July 13-14  
[www.hcsv.org/event-directory](http://www.hcsv.org/event-directory)

### Glenarm Castle Dalriada Festival

July 13-14  
[www.dalriadafestival.co.uk](http://www.dalriadafestival.co.uk)

### Skagit Valley Highland Games

July 13-14  
[www.celticarts.org/celtic-events/hg19/](http://www.celticarts.org/celtic-events/hg19/)

### Morvern Games and Gala Week

July 13-21  
[www.facebook.com/morverngamesandgalaweek](https://www.facebook.com/morverngamesandgalaweek)

### Harpden Lions Club Highland Gathering

July 14  
[www.harpden-lions.co.uk/highland-gathering](http://www.harpden-lions.co.uk/highland-gathering)

### Rosneath Peninsula Highland Gathering

July 14  
[www.rosneathgames.co.uk](http://www.rosneathgames.co.uk)

### Catskills Irish Arts Week

July 14-20  
[www.catskillsirishartsweek.com](http://www.catskillsirishartsweek.com)

### The Swannanoa Gathering – Celtic Week

July 14-20  
[www.swannagathering.com](http://www.swannagathering.com)

### Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan

July 14-22  
[www.munsterfleadh.ie](http://www.munsterfleadh.ie)

### Burntisland Highland Games

July 15  
[www.facebook.com/BurntislandHighlandGames](https://www.facebook.com/BurntislandHighlandGames)

### Yn Chruinnaght – Celtic Gathering Isle of Man

July 15-21  
[www.ynchruinnaght.com](http://www.ynchruinnaght.com)

**Galway International Arts Festival**

July 15-28  
[www.giaf.ie](http://www.giaf.ie)

**Inveraray Highland Games**

July 16  
[www.inveraray-games.co.uk](http://www.inveraray-games.co.uk)

**HebCelt Festival**

July 17-20  
[www.hebcelfest.com](http://www.hebcelfest.com)

**Festival of the Tartans and Highland Games**

July 17-21  
[www.festivalofthetartans.ca](http://www.festivalofthetartans.ca)

**Mull Highland Games**

July 18  
[www.mullhighlandgames.weebly.com](http://www.mullhighlandgames.weebly.com)

**Miramichi Irish Festival**

July 18-21  
[www.canadairishfest.com](http://www.canadairishfest.com)

**Cambridge Scottish Games**

July 19-20  
[www.cambridgescottishfestival.ca](http://www.cambridgescottishfestival.ca)

**Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival**

July 19-20  
[www.clevelandirish.org](http://www.clevelandirish.org)

**Minnesota Scottish Fair & Highland Games**

July 19-20  
[www.mnscottishfair.org](http://www.mnscottishfair.org)

**Maine Celtic Celebration**

July 19-21  
[www.mainecelebration.com](http://www.mainecelebration.com)

**Orillia Scottish Festival**

July 19-21  
[www.scottishfestival.ca](http://www.scottishfestival.ca)

**Adams County Irish Festival**

July 20  
[www.adamscountyirishfestival.org](http://www.adamscountyirishfestival.org)

**Balquhider, Lochearnhead and Strathyre Highland Games and Gathering**

July 20  
[www.lochearnheadhighlandgames.co.uk](http://www.lochearnheadhighlandgames.co.uk)

**Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival**

July 20  
[www.glasgowlands.org](http://www.glasgowlands.org)

**Governor Thomas Dongan Feis**

July 20  
[www.donganfeis.org](http://www.donganfeis.org)

**Inverness Highland Games**

July 20  
[www.invernesshighlandgames.com](http://www.invernesshighlandgames.com)

**Lochcarron Highland Games**

July 20  
[www.lochcarrongames.org.uk](http://www.lochcarrongames.org.uk)

**Portland Highland Games**

July 20  
[www.phga.org](http://www.phga.org)

**Taynuilt Highland Games**

July 20  
[www.taynuilthighlandgames.com](http://www.taynuilthighlandgames.com)

**Tomintoul Highland Games**

July 20  
[www.tomintoulhighlandgames.co.uk](http://www.tomintoulhighlandgames.co.uk)

**Arizona Highland Celtic Festival**

July 20-21  
[www.nachs.info/festival.shtml](http://www.nachs.info/festival.shtml)

**Badger State Feis**

July 20-21  
[www.badgerstatefeis.com](http://www.badgerstatefeis.com)

**The Elizabeth Celtic Festival**

July 20-21  
[www.elizabethcelticfestival.com](http://www.elizabethcelticfestival.com)

**The Ennismore Shamrock Festival**

July 20-21  
[www.selwyntownship.ca/en/discoverourtownship/Ennsimore-Shamrock-Festival.asp](http://www.selwyntownship.ca/en/discoverourtownship/Ennsimore-Shamrock-Festival.asp)

**Le Celti Cimes**

July 20-26  
[www.celticimes.org](http://www.celticimes.org)

**Festival Intercélticu de Avilés y Comarca**

July 20-28  
[www.intercelticu.com](http://www.intercelticu.com)

**Stonehaven Highland Games**

July 21  
[www.stonehavenhighlandgames.com](http://www.stonehavenhighlandgames.com)

**Cascadia Irish Music Week**

July 21-28  
[www.ceolcascadia.org](http://www.ceolcascadia.org)

**Fiddler's Green Club Walking Festival and Concerts**

July 21-28  
[www.fiddlersgreenfestival.eu](http://www.fiddlersgreenfestival.eu)

**Tessie Burke Reel Feis**

July 22  
[www.irishcentrepgh.org](http://www.irishcentrepgh.org)

**Festival Cornouaille Kemper**

July 23-28  
[www.festival-cornouaille.com](http://www.festival-cornouaille.com)

**New Brunswick Highland Games & Festival**

July 25-28  
[www.highlandgames.ca](http://www.highlandgames.ca)

**Arisaig Highland Games**

July 25-31  
[www.arisaighhighlandgames.co.uk](http://www.arisaighhighlandgames.co.uk)

**Durness Highland Gathering**

July 26  
[www.secretary134.wixsite.com/highlandgathering](http://www.secretary134.wixsite.com/highlandgathering)

**Augusta Festival**

July 26-27  
[www.augustaheritagecenter.org/augusta-festival](http://www.augustaheritagecenter.org/augusta-festival)

**The Great American Irish Festival**

July 26-28  
[www.gaif.us](http://www.gaif.us)

**Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games & Clan Gathering**

July 26-28  
[www.sshga.org](http://www.sshga.org)

**Speyfest**

July 26-28  
[www.speyfest.com](http://www.speyfest.com)

**United Irish of Dayton Celtic Festival**

July 26-28  
[www.unitedirishofdayton.org](http://www.unitedirishofdayton.org)

**Virginia Highlands Festival**

July 26-August 4  
[www.vahighlandsfestival.org](http://www.vahighlandsfestival.org)

**Airth Highland Games**

July 27  
[www.airthgames.co.uk](http://www.airthgames.co.uk)

**Dufftown Highland Games**

July 27  
[www.dufftownhighlandgames.com](http://www.dufftownhighlandgames.com)

**Greater Niagra Feis**

July 27  
[www.greaterniagarairish.com/feis.html](http://www.greaterniagarairish.com/feis.html)

**Halkirk Highland Games**

July 27  
[www.halkirkgames.co.uk](http://www.halkirkgames.co.uk)

**St. Louis An Samhra Feis**

July 27  
[www.ansamhrafais.com](http://www.ansamhrafais.com)

**Okanagan Military Tattoo**

July 27-28  
[www.okanagantattoo.ca](http://www.okanagantattoo.ca)

**Nations Capital Feis**

July 27-29  
[www.nationscapitalfeis.com](http://www.nationscapitalfeis.com)

**Mary from Dungloe Festival**

July 27-August 5  
[www.maryfromdungloe.com](http://www.maryfromdungloe.com)

**St. Andrews Highland Games**

July 28  
[www.standrewshighlandgames.co.uk](http://www.standrewshighlandgames.co.uk)

**Scoil Alca – Summer School**

July 28-August 3  
[www.scoilacila.ie](http://www.scoilacila.ie)

**AUGUST****Montelago Celtic Festival**

August 1-3  
[www.montelagocelticfestival.it](http://www.montelagocelticfestival.it)

**Highland Games Fehraltorf**

August 1-3  
[www.highland-games.ch](http://www.highland-games.ch)

**Dornoch Highland Gathering**

August 2  
[www.dornochhighlandgathering.com](http://www.dornochhighlandgathering.com)

**Glengarry Highland Games**

August 2-3  
[www.glengarryhighlandgames.com](http://www.glengarryhighlandgames.com)

**St. Andrew's Society of Detroit Highland Games**

August 2-3  
[www.highlandgames.com](http://www.highlandgames.com)

**Balaklava Eisteddfod**

August 2-4  
[www.balaklavaeisteddfod.org.au](http://www.balaklavaeisteddfod.org.au)

**Cahersiveen Festival of Music and the Arts**

August 2-4  
[www.celticmusicfestival.com](http://www.celticmusicfestival.com)

**Dublin Irish Festival**

August 2-4  
[www.dublinirishfestival.org](http://www.dublinirishfestival.org)

**Iowa Irish Fest**

August 2-4  
[www.iowairishfest.com/wordpress/festival-info/](http://www.iowairishfest.com/wordpress/festival-info/)

**O'Carolan Harp & Traditional Music Festival**

August 2-5  
[www.ocarolanharpfestival.ie](http://www.ocarolanharpfestival.ie)

**Festival Interceltique Lorient**

August 2-11  
[www.festival-interceltique.bzh](http://www.festival-interceltique.bzh)

**The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo**

August 24  
[www.edintattoo.co.uk](http://www.edintattoo.co.uk)

**Aboyne Highland Games**

August 3  
[www.aboynegames.com](http://www.aboynegames.com)

**Dundonald Highland Games**

August 3  
[www.dundonald-games.org.uk](http://www.dundonald-games.org.uk)

**Spokane Scottish Highland Games**

August 3  
[www.spokanehighlandgames.net](http://www.spokanehighlandgames.net)

**Colorado Scottish Festival**

August 3-4  
[www.scottishgames.org](http://www.scottishgames.org)

**The Monterey Scottish Games and Celtic Festival**

August 3-4  
[www.montereyscotgames.com](http://www.montereyscotgames.com)

**National Eisteddfod Caerdydd / Cardiff**

August 3-10  
[www.eisteddfod.wales](http://www.eisteddfod.wales)

**Bridge of Allan Highland Games**

August 4  
[www.bofagames.com](http://www.bofagames.com)

**Montreal Highland Games**

August 4  
[www.montrealhighlandgames.com](http://www.montrealhighlandgames.com)

**Killin Highland Games**

August 7  
[www.killingames.co.uk](http://www.killingames.co.uk)

**Celtic College & Kids Day Camp**

August 5-9  
[www.celticfestival.ca](http://www.celticfestival.ca)

**Isle of Skye Highland Games**

August 7  
[www.skye-highland-games.co.uk](http://www.skye-highland-games.co.uk)

**Guinness Irish Festival**

August 7-10  
[www.guinnessfestival.ch](http://www.guinnessfestival.ch)

**Feakle Traditional Music Festival**

August 12  
[www.feaklefestival.ie](http://www.feaklefestival.ie)

**Ballater Highland Games**

August 8  
[www.ballaterhighlandgames.com](http://www.ballaterhighlandgames.com)

**John Arcand Fiddle**

August 8-10  
[www.johnarcandfiddlefest.com](http://www.johnarcandfiddlefest.com)

**Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival**

August 8-11  
[www.folkharbour.com](http://www.folkharbour.com)

**Aberfeldy Show and Games**

August 9-10  
[www.aberfeldyshowandgames.co.uk](http://www.aberfeldyshowandgames.co.uk)

**Sparta Celtic Festival**

August 9-10  
[www.spartacelticfest.org](http://www.spartacelticfest.org)

**Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Festival**

August 9-11  
[www.nlfolk.com/festival/info](http://www.nlfolk.com/festival/info)

**An Rí Rá Montana Irish Festival**

August 9-11  
[www.mtgaelic.org/an-ri-ra-montana-irish-festival.html](http://www.mtgaelic.org/an-ri-ra-montana-irish-festival.html)

**Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games**

August 9-11  
[www.fergusscottishfestival.com](http://www.fergusscottishfestival.com)

**Goderich Celtic Roots Festival**

August 9-11  
[www.celticfestival.ca](http://www.celticfestival.ca)

**Irish Fair of Minnesota**

August 9-11  
[www.irishfair.com](http://www.irishfair.com)

**IrishFest La Crosse**

August 9-11  
[www.irishfestlacrosse.org](http://www.irishfestlacrosse.org)

**Abernethy Highland Games**

August 10  
[www.nethybridge.com/abernethy-highland-games](http://www.nethybridge.com/abernethy-highland-games)

**Feis at the Falls**

August 10  
[www.feisatthefalls.homestead.com](http://www.feisatthefalls.homestead.com)

**Brodick Highland Games**

August 10  
[www.facebook.com/BrodickHighlandGames/timeline](http://www.facebook.com/BrodickHighlandGames/timeline)

**Central New York Scottish Games & Celtic Festival**

August 10  
[www.cnyscottishgames.org](http://www.cnyscottishgames.org)

**North Berwick International Highland Games**

August 10  
[www.northberwickhighlandgames.org](http://www.northberwickhighlandgames.org)

**Piping Live!**

August 10-18  
[www.pipinglive.co.uk](http://www.pipinglive.co.uk)

**Perth Highland Games**

August 11  
[www.perthhighlandgames.co.uk](http://www.perthhighlandgames.co.uk)

**Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Drogheda**

August 11-18  
[www.fleadhcheoil.ie](http://www.fleadhcheoil.ie)

**Festival des Filets Bleus Concarneau**

August 14-18  
[www.festivaldesfiletsbleus.fr](http://www.festivaldesfiletsbleus.fr)

**Saskatoon FolkFest**

August 15-17  
[www.saskatoonfolkfest.com/pavilions/scottish](http://www.saskatoonfolkfest.com/pavilions/scottish)

**Berea Celtic Festival**

August 15-18  
[www.berea-celtic.com](http://www.berea-celtic.com)

**Milwaukee Irish Festival**

August 15-18  
[www.irishfest.com](http://www.irishfest.com)

**World Pipe Band Championships**

August 16-17  
[www.theworlds.co.uk](http://www.theworlds.co.uk)

**The Pipers' Gathering**

August 16-18  
[www.pipersgathering.org](http://www.pipersgathering.org)

**Glenfinnan Gathering**

August 17  
[www.road-to-the-isles.org.uk/event-details.php?id=126](http://www.road-to-the-isles.org.uk/event-details.php?id=126)

**Helmsdale and District Highland Games**

August 17  
[www.helmsdalegames.co.uk](http://www.helmsdalegames.co.uk)

**Maine Highland Games and Scottish Festival**

August 17  
[www.mainehighlandgames.org](http://www.mainehighlandgames.org)

**The Nairn Royal Brackla Highland Games**

August 17  
[www.nairnhighlandgames.co.uk](http://www.nairnhighlandgames.co.uk)

**Stirling Highland Games**

August 17  
[www.stirlinghighlandgames.com](http://www.stirlinghighlandgames.com)

**Bitterroot Celtic Games & Gathering**

August 17-18  
[www.bcg.org](http://www.bcg.org)

**Buffalo Niagara Scottish Festival**

August 17-18  
[www.bnhv.org/scottish](http://www.bnhv.org/scottish)

**National Heritage Week Ireland**

August 17-25  
[www.heritageweek.ie](http://www.heritageweek.ie)

**Crieff Highland Gathering**

August 18  
[www.crieffhighlandgathering.com](http://www.crieffhighlandgathering.com)

**Masters of Tradition Festival**

August 21-25  
[www.westcorkmusic.ie/mastersoftradition](http://www.westcorkmusic.ie/mastersoftradition)

**Oban Games by the Argyllshire Gathering**

August 22  
[www.obangames.com](http://www.obangames.com)

**Tønder Festival**

August 22-25  
[www.tf.dk](http://www.tf.dk)

**Glenisla Annual Gathering and Friendly Society**

August 23  
[www.glenislahighlandgames.co.uk](http://www.glenislahighlandgames.co.uk)

**Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival**

August 23-24  
[www.96thhighlanders.com/festival/Festival.html](http://www.96thhighlanders.com/festival/Festival.html)

**Buffalo Irish Festival**

August 23-25  
[www.buffaloirish.com/irishfestival.htm](http://www.buffaloirish.com/irishfestival.htm)

**The Faerieworlds: A Gathering of Tribes**

August 23-25  
[www.fairieworlds.com](http://www.fairieworlds.com)

**Peoria's Irish Fest | Erin Feis**

August 23-25  
[www.erinfeispeoria.com](http://www.erinfeispeoria.com)

**Ballyshaners Irish Festival in Alexandria**

August 24  
[www.ballyshaners.org/festival/index.htm](http://www.ballyshaners.org/festival/index.htm)

**Bute Highland Games**

August 24  
[www.butehighlandgames.org](http://www.butehighlandgames.org)

**Glenurquhart Highland Gathering & Games**

August 24  
[www.glenurquhart-highland-gathering.co.uk](http://www.glenurquhart-highland-gathering.co.uk)

**Irish Hooley Music Festival**

August 24  
[www.irishhooley.org](http://www.irishhooley.org)

**Lonach Highland Gathering & Games**

August 24  
[www.lonach.org](http://www.lonach.org)

**Long Island Scottish Festival & Games**

August 24  
[www.liscots.org/festival\\_and\\_games.htm](http://www.liscots.org/festival_and_games.htm)

**North Lanark Highland Games**

August 24  
[www.almontehighlandgames.com](http://www.almontehighlandgames.com)

**Strathardle Highland Gathering & Agricultural Show**

August 24  
[www.strathardlehighlandgames.org.uk](http://www.strathardlehighlandgames.org.uk)

**Will County Celtic Fest**

August 24  
[www.willcountycelticfest.com](http://www.willcountycelticfest.com)

**Kalamazoo Scottish Festival & Highland Games**

August 24-25  
[www.kalamazooscottishfest.org](http://www.kalamazooscottishfest.org)

**Missouri State Championships and Greater St. Louis Feis**

August 24-25  
[www.missouristatechampionships.com](http://www.missouristatechampionships.com)

**Maryland Renaissance Festival Scottish Celebration**

August 24 – October 20  
[www.rennfest.com](http://www.rennfest.com)

**Cowal Highland Gathering**

August 29-31  
[www.cowalgathering.com](http://www.cowalgathering.com)

**North American Festival of Wales**

August 29 – September 1  
[www.thewnaa.org/index.html](http://www.thewnaa.org/index.html)

**Kansas City Irish Fest**

Aug 30 – September 1  
[www.kcirlshfest.com](http://www.kcirlshfest.com)

**Wisconsin Highland Games**

August 30 – September 1  
[www.wisconsinhighlandgames.org](http://www.wisconsinhighlandgames.org)

**Soldier Hollow Classic Sheepdog Championship & Festival**

August 30 – September 1  
[www.soldierhollowclassic.com](http://www.soldierhollowclassic.com)

**Birnam Highland Games**

August 31  
[www.birnamhighlandgames.com](http://www.birnamhighlandgames.com)

**Caledonian Club of San Francisco Highland Games**

August 31 – September 1  
[www.caledonian.org](http://www.caledonian.org)

**Canmore Highland Games**

August 31 – September 1  
[www.canmorehighlandgames.ca](http://www.canmorehighlandgames.ca)

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## Bajan Rum Punch



**I**n May, Celtic Life International was invited to participate in the 10th annual Barbados Celtic Festival. We were delighted to leave the dreary, weary weather of Nova Scotia for some long-overdue sun, surf and sand. It also provided us the opportunity to explore the beautiful Caribbean island's storied history.

Barbados was once the wealthiest of the British colonies, built upon the backs of sugar and slavery. In fact, the wealthy sugar trade spawned the slave trade. Many Irish and Scots - mostly political dissidents, bankrupts, religious non-conformists, and prisoners taken from rebellions - were torn from their homelands to endure seven years of labour. Those slaves became known as 'Redlegs' - in reference to the sunburn brought on by the hot tropical sun.

In all, more than 50,000 Irish were transported from Ireland to Barbados between 1652 and 1659.

Over time, another 100,000 Scots from poor Highland crofts chose to go to Barbados and other Caribbean countries to better their lot in life. Many went as indentured servants, with legal personhood which would be restored once their years were paid out. Enslaved persons were viewed as sub-human and never had this window. White indentured servitude was eventually superseded by African slaves.

Rum Punch is the official cocktail of Barbados. The Bajan people insist on simple syrup, local rum, and freshly ground nutmeg as core ingredients. Recite this Bajan rhyme when serving to give the occasion a touch of Caribbean flavor and flair:

*One of sour  
Two of sweet  
Three of strong  
Four of weak*

### Ingredients

1 oz. part freshly squeezed lime juice  
2 oz. parts sugar cane syrup  
3 oz. Barbadian rum  
4 oz. water, passion fruit juice, or half and half  
2-3 dashes bitters  
Grated nutmeg  
Slice/wedge of lemon

### Instructions

Pour the lime and sugar cane syrup into glass. Stir. Add the rum and water or fruit juice. Stir again. Finish with ice, a few dashes of bitters and grated nutmeg. Garnish with fresh lemon.

*Ith do shàth!  
Cabrinì*



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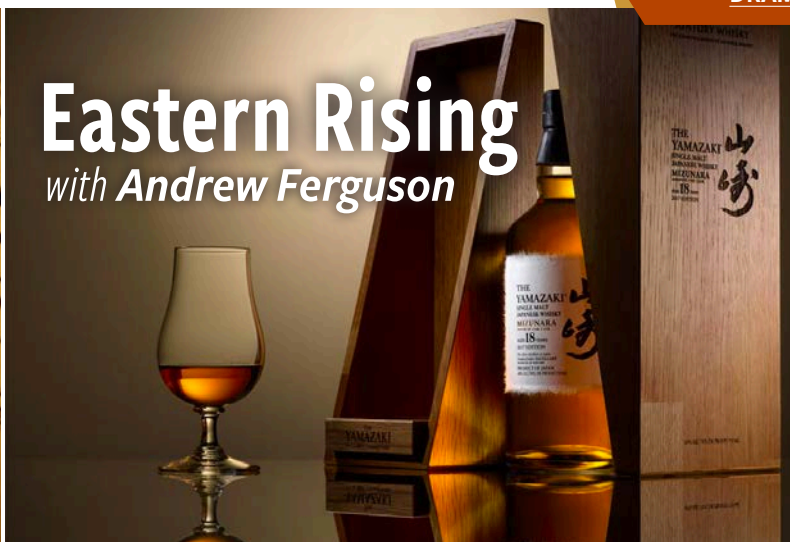
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# Eastern Rising

with Andrew Ferguson



If you are one of the many whisky drinkers who have just discovered Japanese whisky, I have both good and bad news for you. The bad news is that you are at least 5, if not 10 years late to the party. The golden age of Japanese whisky was a decade ago when you could get single malts like Yamazaki 18 and Yoichi 15, as well as pure malts (blended malt in the U.K.) - including Taketsuru 21 and blends like Hibiki 21 - with relative ease and at a fair price. You could even get bottlings of closed distilleries like Karuizawa and Hanyu for as little as \$100.

Oh, though, how times have changed!

In the last decade, the interest in - and demand for - Japanese whisky has soared, leaving an industry which had all-but-shuttered production in the 1990s and 2000s caught flat-footed. Yoichi 15 will set you back close to a grand these days, and good luck finding a 20+ year-old Karuizawa for anything less than \$10k.

There are Japanese whiskies on the market today, to be sure. However, caveat emptor - not all is what it seems. When the Japanese whisky industry was born in the 1920s, it modeled itself on that of Scotland. The rules governing Japanese whisky are almost the same as those of Scotland circa 100 years ago, with a couple of exceptions. Like Scotland, the Japanese market is driven by Blended Whisky, with Single Malts providing most of the flavour, aroma and texture, and grain whisky typically serving as a benign (and most often bland) form of filler. In both countries, single malts must be produced at the distillery they are named after. The difference occurs with Blends and Blended Malts; whereas with Scotch, the whiskies must all have been made and matured in Scotland, there is no such restriction for Japanese Blended Whisky. Even

in the glory days of Japanese whisky, most of the best blends were made with some foreign whisky, usually from Scotland, Canada or the U.S. There just simply was not enough domestic production to meet demand. However, at that time, Japanese components were front and center, merely backed by imported elements. That is increasingly not the case today.

Classic economics suggests that when demand exceeds supply prices will rise, encouraging supply up towards equilibrium with demand. That said, there is a major issue with this idea pertaining to whisky - time. If a Japanese Single Malt calls for 10 or 15-year-old whisky, then supply is problematic unless enough stock was set aside years ago. Hence, age-statement Japanese whiskies are almost impossible to find, having since been replaced by younger No-Age-Statement bottlings. For Japanese Blend or Blended Malt, however, stock can be imported from anywhere in the world and, so long as it is blended and bottled in Japan, it can be called Japanese Whisky.

*There are an exponential number of "Japanese Whisky" bottlings hitting the marketplace these days.*

Most of these bottlings have prominent Kanji script, samurai or other stereotypically Japanese symbols on the label. Many of these whiskies are made without even a drop of domestically-produced Japanese whisky. Suntory, Japan's biggest whisky producer - and to their credit - released a whisky called

AO earlier this year, acknowledging it to be a "World Blend" with components from Japan, Scotland, Canada, Ireland and the U.S. It was not the most memorable whisky I tried on a recent trip to Japan, but I applaud their transparency.

Although available, you will be hard-pressed to find Japanese single malts like Chichibu, Hakushu and Miyagikyo at anything near a reasonable price. But there are some Blends and Blended Malts to be had that are worthy of the Japanese Whisky moniker. One of my favourites, and the 2018 World Whisky of the Year (Whisky Advocate) is Nikka From the Barrel, produced by Japan's second largest whisky firm, Nikka. The price has risen in recent years, but it is still very good value. Hibiki Harmony is likely the best-known, on account of the sheer size and clout of its owner, Beam Suntory. This one also ticks all the boxes if you want something that looks Japanese. In terms of value, there is the White Oak Akashi, which is made with its own single malt and imported grain. My favourite whiskies are from Ichiro's Malt, owned by Ichiro Akuto of Chichibu Distillery fame. They are hard to find, even in Japan, though there are several well-stocked liquor stores which have them at very reasonable prices in Chichibu. All these whiskies are made with some foreign elements, but Japanese components are front and center.

The good news about Japanese whisky, if you have just discovered it, is that you are 5-10 years early for the next party. Japan's distilleries have increased production over the last decade and new distilleries are opening. Soon enough, the sun will be rising again on Japanese whisky!

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



## Coronach

By Kimberley  
Jordan Reeman  
Authorhouse  
732pp / £8.99

Truth be told, upon completion of *Coronach* - the new paperback reissue of the terrific 2007 tale of Scotland's Highland genocide - I struggled for words. I could describe the novel's soaring and sweeping storyline. I could outline the historical, political, military, and socio-cultural context within which that storyline unfolds. I could detail the larger-than-life lives of those who inhabit that context.

I could characterize the scribe's writing as clean, clear and concise. I could signal the significance of the work for modern audiences. I could explain why a book such as this is a worthwhile investment of time and headspace, or why it will tug on heartstrings. Truth be told, however, upon completion of *Coronach*, I struggled for words. Except, perhaps, one; EPIC.

~ SPC

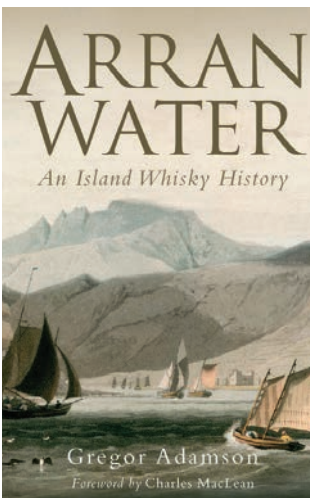
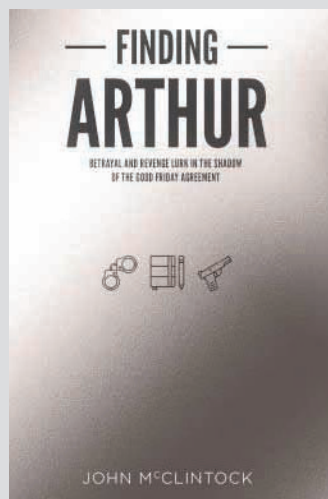
## Finding Arthur

By John McClintock  
Shanway Press  
396pp / £8.99

Those with an abiding interest in the Troubles, or those who are simply searching for a solid summer read, need look no further.

Set against the shaky backdrop of Northern Ireland following the 1998 Peace Accord, *Finding Arthur* is the fictional story of one man's efforts to keep the goodwill going despite all odds. When a gang of political murderers are released from prison, they effort to extract revenge from the journalist responsible for their internment. DI Quinn is assigned to keep watch on the ex-cons. Weaving and winding its way through the main streets and back-alleys of Belfast and the countryside of County Down, the pulp-fictionesque narrative provides a powerful and poignant portrait of a people and place caught in the crossfire of conflict.

~ SPC



## Arran Water

By Gregor Adamson  
Neil Wilson Publishing  
208pp / £14.99

*Arran Water* refers to whisky distilled illicitly on the Isle of Arran during the heydays of smuggling in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Scotland. The product, practice and period have all long been lost in the shadow of the country's whisky giants. Until now. Author, historian and Isle of Arran native Gregor Adamson has done remarkable research, rooting through the region's records to reveal the rise and demise of the illegal industry. Along with a deep dive detailing of economic, political and cultural conditions of the era, the scribe outlines the bitter conflict between the smugglers and government taxmen. More than a spirited history lesson, the book offers insight into the spirit of a people who would not be broken.

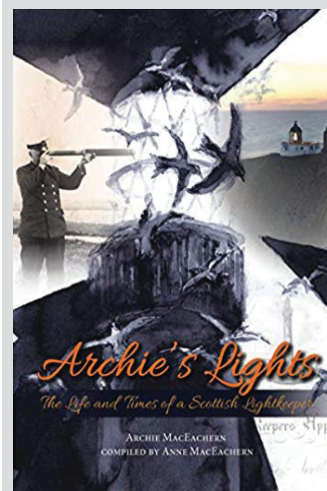
~ SPC

## Archie's Lights

By Archie & Anne MacEachern  
Whittles Publishing  
208pp / £18.99

Subtitled *The Life and Times of a Scottish Lightkeeper* - and illustrated with 25 colour photos, eight drawings and water colour sketches, 40 black and white photographs, and a detailed regional map - *Archie's Lights* chronicles one man's 67 years of service by the sea, the last of three generations of family lighthouse keepers. A selection of short stories, personal musings, unique observations and more, the quirky work covers everything from astounding accounts of shipwrecked sailors and WWII espionage to lively encounters with both locals and local livestock. All the while, MacEachern dutifully manned his post and raised a family. Warm, witty, wise and wonderful, the book is akin to sitting by the home hearth listening to Grandfather's tall and terrific tales of bygone eras.

~ SPC





## Screaming Orphans

### *Life in a Carnival*

Once upon a time there were four sisters from Ireland; Angela, Joan, Marie Thérèse and Gráinne Diver. The Diver siblings came of age in the community of Bundoran, Co. Donegal, home to the soulful, ethereal sounds of Enya and Clannad. After years of paying their dues on smaller stages across the Emerald Isle, the quartet signed both a publishing contract with Chris Blackwell and a major label deal with Warner Music, and soon began performing and recording alongside the likes of The Chieftains, Christy Moore, Liam O'Maonlai, Sinéad O'Connor, Babba Maal and Peter Gabriel. *Life in a Carnival* is the band's 14th studio recording; 12 fresh, Celtic-fused folk-rock-pop tunes - where "honey and gravel collide" - that are sure to leave listeners happily ever after. ~ SPC

## Malinky

### *Handsel*



One of Scotland's finest sonic exports, Malinky have been quietly going about their musical business, adding to the Celtic cultural canon for two decades. Now, to celebrate the band's 20th anniversary, the quartet has released their fourth full-length album - their first in four years - *Handsel*. With a little help from six guest singers - including long-timers Hector Riddell and Len Graham, and relative newcomers Ellie Beaton and Cameron Nixon - Malinky seamlessly weave their way through a tapestry of 27 traditional melodies with ease and grace. In particular, listeners will fall in love with the lull and lilt of *Begone Bonnie Laddie*, *The Braes o Broo*, *The Lang Road Doon* and *The Fisherman's Wife*. My runaway pick for Celtic recording of the year. ~ SPC



## The Waterboys

### *Where the Action Is*

On the 30th anniversary of The Waterboys' seminal album *Fisherman's Blues*, Mike Scott and his merry band of tradsters return with a mixed bag of rock, folk, blues and ballads. And while the musical melange is not without its moments and merits - *In My Time on Earth* is true to heart and form - the end result, which includes a bevy of bizarre remixes and mash-tracks, are ten uneven and uninspired offerings. Though the critics have been kind, with one calling the new recording "another reliably interesting and well-written addition to the band's latter-day renewal" and another saying it is their "best for a while," it can't be easy for Scott knowing that his best years as a songwriter are three decades behind him. ~ SPC

## JigJam

### *Phoenix*



A multi award-winning quartet from the heart of Eire's midlands, JigJam blend the best of traditional Irish music with Bluegrass and Americana in a hybrid genre called "I-Grass." As such, their latest effort - *Phoenix* - sounds exactly as you might expect; acoustic and slide guitars, banjos, bodhrans, and heartfelt harmonies transport these thirteen terrific original and traditional tracks from "ye old country" to the wild hipster west of the new world and back 'round again. Highlights here include *Someday*, *Red Paddy on the Ridge*, *Let it Roll*, *Greenhill's Gold*, and *Tullamore to Boston*. A sound selection of songs from a talented troupe that would feel at home in Nashville, Memphis, Dublin or Galway. Be sure to catch them on tour in the coming months. ~ SPC

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# David Welsh

*For the sheer love of piping...*

Growing up in the Scottish countryside, David Welsh was destined to pick up the bagpipes.

"I learned to play in Aberdeen with the 47th Culter Boys Brigade, moving from Novice to Juvenile, and finally into the Grade 2 band of Culter and District by the age of 15," shares the 40-year-old via email. "Although I enjoyed some solo success in the under-18 categories, I found my passion to be with the pipe bands and thus became Pipe Sergeant of the newly formed Grade 3 Deeside Caledonia in 1995."

Now, over three decades later, he continues to play for the sheer love of the instrument.

"I am constantly learning new things and becoming a better player. I love both the sound of the bagpipe and the challenges involved in producing a high-quality sound; the combination of a well-maintained instrument with proper finger and blowing technique. I still have many more things that I wish to achieve with my own playing and in pipe bands and will continue to pursue that for as long as my fingers let me."

Welsh - who plies his trade with a set of 1980 Engraved Silver David Naill pipes - admits that the vocation can be challenging, both as a solo performer and as a band player.

*"It can be very difficult to stay relevant musically. And keeping the fingers going and continuing to play at a high level isn't easy."*

"As well, piping is a reasonably expensive hobby, and it can be tough earning enough from it to be able to continually pursue my goals.

"I am also Pipe Major of a band with both a Grade 2 and Grade 4 teams," he continues, "and there are many challenges involved with this, both at a competitive and non-competitive level. Attracting new learners and new members is also an on-going issue. We need to shed the 'shortbread tin' image - the pipes are, after all, a real instrument."

The rewards, he shares, still far outweigh the difficulties.

"Getting that magic moment where it all comes together in the band circle, or solo performance, is beyond words. Winning is always good, but the journey itself is simply amazing.

"And I love the personal bonds that reach all over the globe. The camaraderie and social aspect of the instrument - pipe banding in particular - is also a huge highlight for me. I have a worldwide network of friends and have ticked off many a country or city visited as a result of playing."

In 2005, Welsh moved from Scotland to Australia, before settling in New Zealand, where he now teaches and tutors both novice and intermediate level players.

"I have a real passion for getting new, young players into the art.

"I run my own business from home; teaching bagpipes privately - both in person and via Skype, assisting bands, selling bagpipe equipment, and performing at various events.

"I am also the lead tutor for the Central North Island Youth Band, which runs teaching camps during school holidays here, and

I have been a tutor for 10 years at the annual New Zealand Summer School, where I met the famous Simon Fraser University duo J. Reid Maxwell and Jack Lee."

Welsh believes that the interest in the pipes still holds strong amongst the younger generations.

"In Scotland, the school band scene is flourishing. Here in New Zealand, there are pockets of phenomenal success, as there have been great implementations to the correct systems, mainly via private schools. It is all just a case of marketing it correctly. Getting new learners into the band, certainly in the capital city, is challenging because there are many other things a kid can do these days, many of which are far less complicated than pipes, and therefore, less time-consuming. But we do a pretty good job of keeping them engaged in that learning process. Once there, our retention rate is respectable for a small local band. Hard work and investing the time into a proper teaching program, plus the proper marketing of what we actually do, are great ways to keep the interest growing."

Travel is in Welsh's near future, with trips to Canada and a jaunt to Scotland for the World Pipe Band Championships on the agenda.

"I want to bring back all that I learn from these trips to New Zealand and continue to challenge my own pipe band with new music. I also want to work on improving our own learner program, keep improving my playing technique and, one day, possibly re-enter the solo scene."

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*After studying the classical viola as a youngster, Anne-Marie Forsyth discovered the fiddle as an adult.*

**“W**hen I was 29, my father suggested taking up Scottish country dancing so that we could do it together,” shares Forsyth, a proud New Zealander with Scottish heritage, via email.

“As part of a weekend dance school there was an option for a two-hour music workshop, so I went along to that, still on the viola. Afterwards, my classmates and I decided to start a Scottish music club, but I was frustrated by the gulf I could hear between the sound on our dance recordings and the sound we made as classical musicians reading from the page.”

At the time, the Southern Hemisphere International School of Scottish Fiddle (SHISSF) - a fiddle camp in New Zealand - was operated by Cathy Fraser of Australia. Every year, from 2004 to 2014, top-notch fiddle instructors from Scotland and North America came to New Zealand for one week to teach. Forsyth first jumped into SHISSF in 2006, but it was far from love at first sound.

“I hated it, felt like a complete failure, and resolved to stop playing Scottish music completely. Fortunately, by then I had already joined a Scottish country dance band and had committed to a few gigs later in the year. One thing led to another, I returned to SHISSF in 2007 and haven’t looked back.”

Forsyth now has over two decades of fiddling experience to her name.

“Despite being a dyed-in-the-wool violist - and having successfully avoided any contact with an E string for the better part of 30 years - I did finally take up an actual violin in 2008, partially because of a shoulder injury and partially because I wanted to expand my repertoire of tunes.

“I now play in several dance bands on both viola and violin, teach, run fiddle camps of my own, organize a Scottish fiddle competition at the annual Highland games, lead the Ceilidh Club band, and run the Auckland



## The art of Guerilla Fiddling

Scottish Fiddle Club.”

On top of that, Forsyth performs with Hjaltibonhoga - the Shetland fiddle team - in front of thousands of people at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo in Scotland each August. She has played for dancers at home, as well as in Australia, Scotland, France and the United States.

*One of her favourite experiences is something she calls “guerilla fiddling.”*

“I drive around Scotland with my friends and if one of us spots the name of a tune, we must all get out the car and play it together before getting back in the car and driving off. One tune is never enough, and we have often wound up having roadside sessions in the middle of nowhere, attracting an audience of passing motorists, hikers and sheep, or in some ancient castle.”

Forsyth’s teachers, Scotsmen Gregor Borland and Douglas Lawrence, have been her main source of influence and inspiration. She plays a fiddle that she found in a second-hand shop in Scotland, as well as her French violin from the turn of the 20th century.

Her tunes of choice are in the north-eastern Scottish style. “Any good tune has to have a hook, a shining moment that attracts your attention and makes you love it. I tend to prefer the minor keys, but it is by no means exclusive.”

Although Forsyth claims New Zealand has more pipers and drummers (and possibly Highland dancers) per capita than Scotland itself, she says the country’s musicians are “still trying to build up awareness that Scottish fiddle even exists.”

“As far as I am aware there was only one Scottish fiddle player in the whole of New Zealand until the arrival of the SHISSF in 2004. Our current fiddle groups have grown directly out of what we learned at SHISSF, and since then out of what we have learned at other fiddle weeks overseas and at our new fiddle camp, ScotStringNZ. That is only 15 years!”

As for keeping Scottish culture alive, Forsyth suggests we “discard dusty traditions and embrace fun activities instead,” such as foot-stomping fiddle sessions, ceilidhs and concerts. “We should really just take a lesson from the Irish and simply celebrate being Scottish.”

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# Sabra MacGillivray

*One Nova Scotia dancer is taking big steps*

Celtic culture runs in Sabra MacGillivray's blood. "There is a strong musical heritage in my family lineage," shares the long-time native of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, via email.

"My grandfather, Hugh A. MacDonald, was a well-known fiddler here in Antigonish County. He was also referred to as the 'Polka King,' and recorded Scottish fiddle music with the Celtic Music label on old 78 records. His mother spoke fluent Scottish Gaelic and sang in Gaelic. His wife - my grandmother - Winnie MacDonald, played the fiddle as well and accompanied him on the piano at dances, concerts, and ceilidhs. My mother, Janice, learned to play the fiddle and piano and later passed those down to me, my sister Kendra, and my brother Troy."

MacGillivray took her first dance steps at the tender age of five.

"At the time, my older sister (Kendra) was a Highland dancer, and I, of course, tried to copy whatever she did. When I was old enough, I was put in dancing lessons. I was also brought to Highland dancing competitions when she started competing, and I would soon do the same. As we were a very musical family, there were melodies around us all the time. We were brought to places where we could see and hear music from a very young age; concerts, square dances, ceilidhs and house parties. It was very natural to be inspired by the musicians and dancers that we were exposed to."

Today, she is considered one of Atlantic Canada's leading ambassadors of Celtic culture.

*"I like to think that I am inspiring the next generation to continue in the traditional styles of both Highland dancing and Step Dancing."*

When she isn't flinging and lifting, MacGillivray dedicates her time teaching the ancient art, and is considered one of the premier educators in the field.

"I started teaching when I was 16, so I have more than 25 years of instructing under my belt. It was a nice little job while I was in high school and university, but over time, it has become much more than that. Working with my own group of dancers not only gave me a creative outlet, but also offered me the opportunity to develop dancers to the point where they could join me on stage. I love to learn the 'old stuff' and pass on what I have picked up. It feels like I am doing my part in preserving the tradition."

"I have a wide range of students, between the ages of four and 18," she continues. "I get to watch them grow from early school ages to the time they head off to university. They become poised, athletic, strong and graceful dancers, with solid work ethics."

Recently, she took her career to the next level, releasing an online step dancing video series.



"It was a challenging start to say the least," she admits. "I spent 2 years collecting and buying the right equipment and technology to record the videos and audio. Then I had to learn how to use it! I made a lot of mistakes, often having to re-record several times before getting a product that I was happy with."

The series consists of 15 instructional videos, including both a Strathspey and Reel step dance solo routine. Additionally, students receive audio tracks, a PDF outline, and direct access to MacGillivray for additional support.

"Connecting with the students is one of the biggest benefits of this video series. With my online teaching, I have heard from people around the world - folks who are excited to reconnect with their roots through traditional dance."

She will continue to teach, both in person and via her online platform, and believes that it is the best thing that she can do to promote and preserve Celtic culture.

"As long as we can keep our young people interested and excited to learn the craft, we won't be at risk of losing our heritage. I think there is room for the older stuff - like traditional step dancing from years ago - while also creating new and innovative steps and collaborations. This is vital for keeping our customs alive and well for future generations."

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



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**JULY  
16**

**Còmhla Cruinn "Gathered Together" - Dedicated to Jim Watson**  
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Joanne Rankin MacIntyre, Colin Watson, Keith & Kyle MacDonald,  
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**JULY  
23**

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Fear an Taighe Goidridh Dòmhnallach. Cousins Howie, Sandy, Johnny, Brian  
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**JULY  
30**

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**AUG  
6**

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Emma Cholak, Zoie Chaisson & Katherine MacDonald. Ryan J MacNeil and  
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**AUG  
13**

**Ruaridh 'nar Chuimhne "Remembering Rod C."**  
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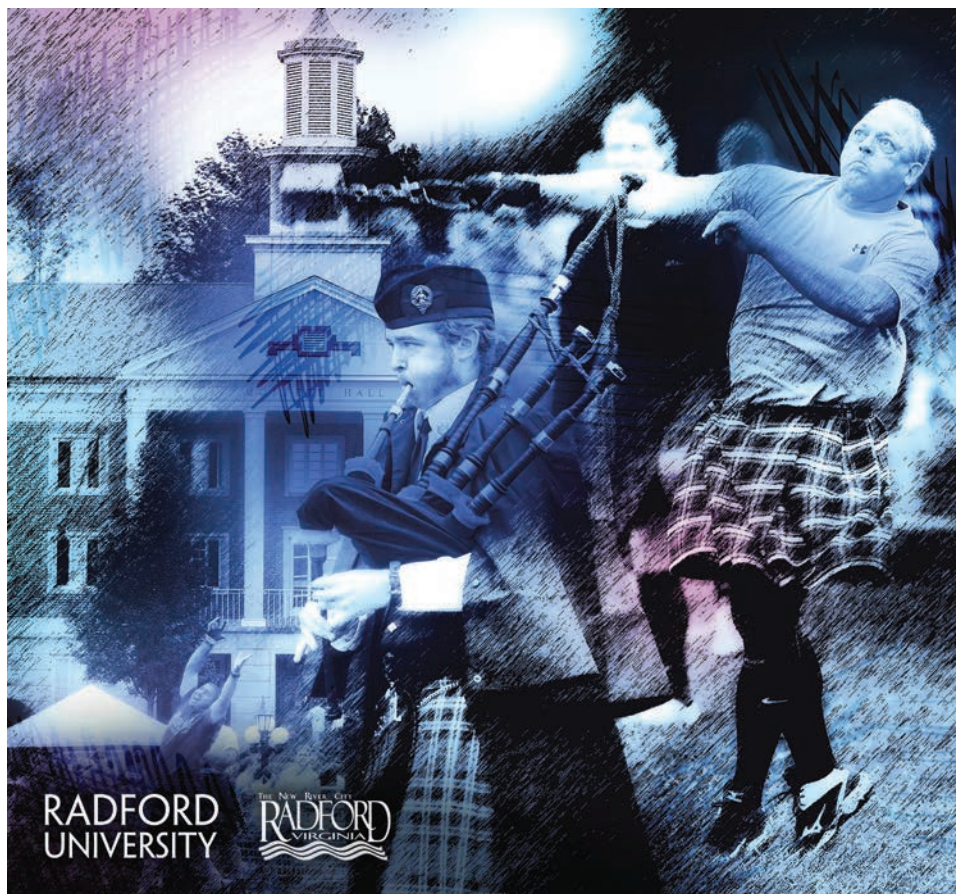
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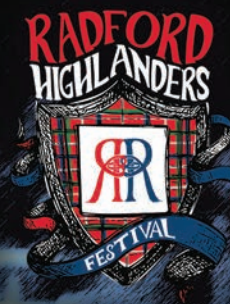
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JULY  
**13**



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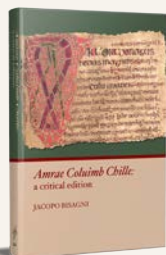
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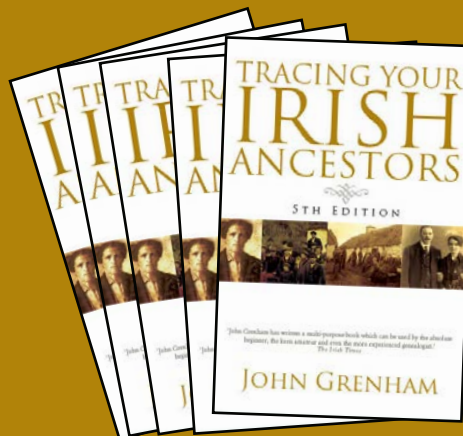
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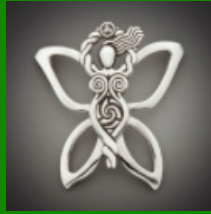


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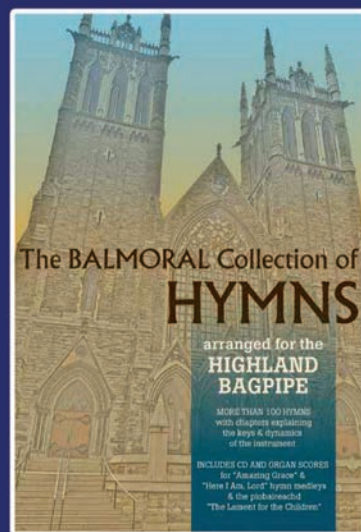


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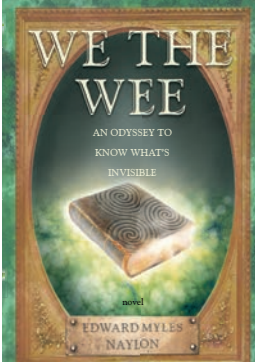
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# Lyra McKee; 1990-2019



**L**yra McKee was a bright young journalist on the rise. Hailing from Belfast, Northern Ireland, she spent years working as an investigative reporter across the region after first becoming interested in the profession as a teenager at the encouragement of an English teacher.

“My experience has always been that other people raise the bar for you,” McKee said in an interview with *Successful Belfast*. “But the script is written for working class kids, and they don’t realize that they can rewrite the script even without people encouraging them.”

As an adult, she studied at Birmingham City University, creating a public platform for herself with her own news blog *The Muckraker*. Throughout her career, she produced work focused on issues that often went overlooked, including the fallout of the Troubles - a period of terrible conflict concerning Northern Ireland’s status within the United Kingdom. The Troubles began in the 1960s and are largely understood to have ended in 1998, although sporadic violence in the region continues to this day.

McKee wrote on a freelance basis for BuzzFeed News, *The Belfast Telegraph* and several others. She also worked remotely as an editor for a USA-based website called *Mediagazer*. One of her most impactful stories - “Suicide Among the Ceasefire Babies” - ran in *The Atlantic*, speaking to the after-effects of the Troubles on those too young to remember them.

Her first book, *Angels with Blue Faces*, recounts the Troubles-era cold case murder of MP Reverend Robert Bradford. A second book, *The Lost Boys*, tells of several unsolved cases of young boys who went missing during the same period. It was set to publish next year, but she never got the chance to finish it.

Along with her journalistic work, McKee was a proud gay woman and a fierce advocate for LGBTQ rights. She lived in Derry with her partner, Sara Canning, and is said to have doted on her 11-year-old pet cat. In 2014, she published a “letter to her 14-year-old self,” which went viral and was later turned into a short film. In her 2017 TED Talk, she broached the subject of religion and its impact on LGBTQ people, particularly younger generations. “We need to have conversations,” she noted, “difficult conversations, and fight for the hearts and minds of people who oppose us.”

McKee was killed tragically on the job this past spring when she was caught in the crossfire during a riot in Derry. Reportedly, Molotov cocktails sailed through the air, setting several vehicles aflame. Members of the New IRA (a dissident Republican group) fired shots at the police, but it was McKee who was fatally wounded. Her death is being treated as a terrorist incident.

McKee’s family issued a statement following her death.

*“To know that our wee Lyra was so well-loved across the globe and by people of all walks of life, is a true testament to her personal philosophy and her vision for the world.”*

Her friend, Mike Harris, wrote an impassioned article for CNN. “Lyra was part of a generation of young Northern Irish people who wanted to put the country’s troubled past behind it, to forge their own post-sectarian identity. Lyra wasn’t to be defined by whether she was a Protestant or Catholic, she was fiercely proud to be from Northern Ireland but aware that things could be better.”

McKee has been memorialized through a Belfast mural, featuring the words, “It won’t always be like this. It’s going to get better.” It is a callback to her 2014 letter about growing up gay in Belfast but takes on another, second meaning now.

The day after McKee’s death, Ireland’s Taoiseach Leo Varadkar made a statement in front of Dublin’s Government Buildings. “She changed lives as she lived and will do so again in death.”

Thus far, Varadkar appears to be correct, as McKee’s legacy lives on; fellow journalists have held vigils around the world, and the hashtag #WeStandWithLyra has been making the rounds on social media. And, at the end of May, hundreds of her friends and admirers participated in a three-day “peace walk” from Belfast to Derry.

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