

# CelticLife

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

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Celtic &  
Gaelic Studies

Ashley  
MacIsaac

Celtic Tattoos

Fall Fashion

Clannad &  
Celtic Thunder

## THE ARTS!

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*Celtic Colours, Alex Salmond,  
Samhuinn, Hiking Cape Breton*





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## THE CHANGING FACE OF CELTIC

I once asked the late Wilfred Gillis what he thought of Ashley MacIsaac's rendition of the lovely Irish folk tune "Sleepy Maggie". Gillis was a fiddle player who learned jigs and reels from his father that were as pure then as the day they left the Morar area of Scotland in 1790, so I was interested in his response to this innovative new talent.

"Wonderful" was his reply, adding that we need to respect the musicians and music of old, but play for the people of today. "Ashley is an excellent, exciting musician and he does both well. More importantly, he is allowing his Celtic music to evolve," Gillis said.

Like other cultures, the Celtic identity is best reflected in our arts. And that identity is a living force. It's simultaneously old and new. It's vibrant and all around us, appealing to people of all ages. And it is changing as young artists blend the traditional with new forms of creativity – allowing our Celtivity to evolve.

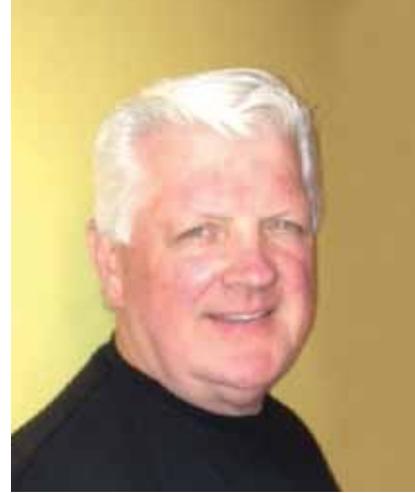
Today, musical groups like Angus Mohr, Clannad, and Celtic Thunder, along with dancers like Michael Flatley and Shawn Silver, are taking Celtic culture - and our identity - in new and exciting directions. By way of example, and due in large part to the popularity of Riverdance, Celtic dance is now taught in over 80 countries around the globe.

Last month, the largest Celtic festival in the world saw performers and spectators gather in Brittany, France. Highland dancing competitions are now held in such faraway places as Moscow, and CeltFest Cuba has become a yearly event in the heat of Havana. This October, Cape Breton will again host Celtic Colours, a world-class event that attracts international artists and visitors.

Individually, artists from the most unlikely places are imbuing Celtic culture with fresh creativity. Uzbekistan-born fiddler Keyreel Fidléir Raskolenko is taking Celtic music to new places – literally – and becoming a musical trend-setter in Russia, where he merges his classical training and a passion for Cape Breton jigs and reels into a unique hybrid. Carolina Mariano is a guitar player from Brazil, who combines Celtic melodies and South American rhythms.

The cover of this issue features another innovative artist. Dancer Joel Hanna from Vancouver, Canada, combines traditional Irish dancing with contemporary dance and modern martial arts, reflecting, perhaps, his unusual heritage; his father is Irish and his mother is from the Philippines.

To borrow a well-worn phrase from Bob Dylan, The "times they are a changin'". And much of this resurgence in things Celtic is a result of e-publishing and social media, which allows us to instantly connect with Celts, and others, around the world. At Celtic Life International we look forward to bringing you new Celtic faces from all parts of the globe. We invite you to participate and to bring us your comments and suggestions. But most importantly, we want you to enjoy each issue of Celtic Life International.



Marcie Macquarrie, Publisher

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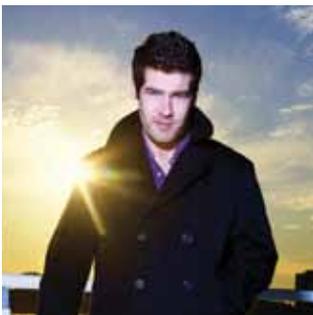
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# DE THA DOL



Photo Credit - Steve Gardner

## *Lady's boy takes flight*

Staff at the Scottish Wildlife Trust in Perthshire are thrilled by the return of the osprey known as Lady of Loch of the Lowes who, after surviving a mysterious illness (Celtic Life International, spring 2012), has returned to the Scottish Highlands from Africa and produced a healthy male chick. Ospreys are rare birds in Scotland, so everyone is delighted that Lady is healthy and has produced a viable chick. Named Blue 44, Lady's chick hatched in May and has been fitted with a tracking device that will provide valuable data about his migration. He is expected to follow his mother in traveling the 3,000 miles to West Africa. No one knows exactly where in Africa Lady goes, so it's hoped the tracking device will answer this important question. Emma Rawling, Perthshire Ranger for the Scottish Wildlife Trust, describes Blue 44 as a bold lad. He took his first flight in mid-July and then promptly worried everyone by disappearing for several days. If all goes well, he will fly to Africa this fall where he will stay for two-three years before returning to Scotland to breed. "The odds of him surviving this hazardous first two-three years are only about 30-40 per cent," Rawling said. "So, fingers crossed for the wee chap." Follow Blue 44's progress at [www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/osprey](http://www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/osprey)

## *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig begins full distance learning program*

This month, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the respected Gaelic college on Scotland's Isle of Skye, will begin offering all levels of its degree program via distance learning. The college has been offering its Cùrsa Inntrigidh (Access Course) for beginners and Cùrsa Adhartais (Advanced Course – year 1 of the degree programme) via distance learning for some time. Now, students will also be able to choose distance learning to complete the modules for years two-four of two BA (honours) degree programs (the degree in Gaelic and Development and the degree in Gaelic Language and Culture). Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's Principal Professor Boyd Robertson said the new step enhances the college's status as a national and international centre of excellence for Gaelic language and culture. Distance learning can also be used in postgraduate study at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Individual modules from the distance-delivered programs are offered as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in areas such as language policy and planning and community development. The degree courses also form elements of a teacher education program, leading to a qualification in Gaelic with Education, delivered in partnership with the University of Aberdeen. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is also an academic partner within the University of the Highlands and Islands. [www.smo.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk)

## *New documentary examines struggles of Canadian Gaels*

Singing Against The Silence: The Gaels of Nova Scotia, a 30-minute video documentary by Dr. Michael Newton, will premier at Canada's Antigonish International Film Festival next month. The documentary explores the struggles of Scottish Gaels in eastern Nova Scotia to sustain and reclaim their language, and puts their efforts into the larger context of linguistic and cultural diversity.

[www.antigonishfilmfest.org/html/antigonishhome.htm](http://www.antigonishfilmfest.org/html/antigonishhome.htm)

editor@celticlife.ca





# FIRSTWORD

*In our last issue, The Rt. Hon. Brian Wilson, a former Labour minister in the government of the United Kingdom, explained why he believes Scots should remain in the U.K. rather than vote for independence in 2014. Here, Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland, puts forth the case for independence.*

The purpose of independence is clear - it will mean decisions about what happens in Scotland and for Scotland are taken by the people who care most about Scotland; that is the people living, working and raising their families here.

Our future, our resources, our opportunities will be in our hands and we will make Scotland the country we know it can be – a wealthier and fairer nation, a country that speaks with its own voice, stands taller in the world, and takes responsibility for its own future.

Independence will mean strong, new relationships between Scotland and the rest of the U.K. - a partnership of equals - a social union to replace the current political union. An independent Scotland will remain in the E.U. and retain the pound. This is in the economic interests of both Scotland and the rest of the U.K. given the close links between the two economies.

There will continue to be open borders, shared rights, free trade and extensive cooperation. And Queen Elizabeth will continue to be head of State, as she has been these last 60 years and as we have been celebrating during this, her Diamond Jubilee year.

A central function of government is to ensure the security of its citizens. An independent Scotland will be committed to this.

At present, almost all decisions about defence and security are taken by the United Kingdom Government, with no formal role or consultation with the Scottish Government or Parliament.

With independence, Scotland will have full responsibility for defence and security. We will have no closer partner than the U.K. in defending against threats to security and we will engage closely as sovereign, equal and cooperative allies.

Security also encompasses economic security.

Scotland has unlimited potential. Our culture, history and reputation for innovation are renowned. Our universities are world-class and our energy resources are unrivalled in Europe. Indeed, on current figures we would have the sixth highest wealth per head in the developed world.

Scotland has around 25 per cent of Europe's potential offshore wind and tidal energy, and a tenth of Europe's wave power potential. Our latest food and drink export figures, including our national drink of Scotch whisky, show exports are at an all-time high of £5.4 billion (\$8.6 billion). We have five of the top 200 universities in the world and Scottish Development International entices many major companies to locate here.

But the recent economic crisis has exposed the failings of the current constitutional settlement. The Scottish Government was limited in its ability to respond to the recession as many of the key job-creating powers are reserved to London. Despite this, the actions of the Scottish Government helped Scotland experience a recession that was shorter and shallower than that experienced in the U.K. With a full set of economic levers, more could be done to deliver growth.

I want Scotland to be independent not because I think we are better than any other country but because I know we are just as good as any other country.

By Alex Salmond





Photo Credit - Rosalie MacEachern

One might expect the poet laureate of Scotland to be a Scot. It has been that way since the Royal National Mod, Scotland's annual Gaelic cultural festival, began in 1891, but the ceremonial robe and crown are now worn by Nova Scotia poet Lewis MacKinnon.

MacKinnon is better known as the executive director of Gaelic Affairs for the Province of Nova Scotia on Canada's east coast, though some still know him as the young fellow from Antigonish County's Dunmore Road who speaks the Gaelic and sings it, too.

When he was crowned last fall in the Western Isles he was introduced as the festival's first-ever transatlantic bard. He is not exactly a stranger to Scotland, but it is more than two centuries since his people left Moidart and the Isle of Muck.

"I guess the people involved with The Mod found something in my Gaelic poems that spoke to them," says MacKinnon. "Nova Scotia is the last living Gaelic community outside Scotland. It is the same language, just more than 200 years removed."

In 2008, MacKinnon published a volume of poetry entitled *Famhair Agus Dàin Ghàidhlig Eile* or in English, *Giant and Other Gaelic Poems*. It is a collection of almost 100 poems printed on facing pages in Gaelic and English. The title piece portrays the Gaelic language as a sleeping but restless giant, stretched out beneath the province.

"The Gaelic language went to sleep in this province, it went to sleep in times past, living under the earth, like a great giant, stretched out," MacKinnon wrote, suggesting the language, while infrequently spoken, remained intrinsic.

"This giant went to bed when our province was young, but now wishes to rise up, to prove that he isn't so frightful, that he is of use, for those who now tread upon him."

MacKinnon's father, Joe, acquired Gaelic as a child growing up in the town of Inverness on Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island, but MacKinnon learned his Gaelic first from a great-uncle who spent the last 15 years of his life with the MacKinnons. Well beyond teaching the mechanics of the language, Dougal MacDougall managed to instill a great passion for the Gaelic.

"He loved his language and one day I asked him to teach it to me. We started with simple, everyday phrases like "close the door" and "open the window." It was something special between my father and my great-uncle. It appealed to me, so little by little, I learned. By the time Dougal was dying we could carry on a pretty good conversation."

MacKinnon studied Gaelic at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, NS. Founded in the mid-1800s by the descendants of Scottish immigrants, it has a small but vibrant Celtic studies department.

As poet laureate, MacKinnon will make his first official address to The Mod in Dunoon in October. His appointment is for a three-year term during which he will perpetuate stories of the Gaels, providing occasional links to the mythical figures of history but more often offering comment on current times.

"It is a tremendous honor and I don't feel worthy of it but I am committed to doing my very best," he says.

*By Rosalie MacEachern*





# SEVEN

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## CELTIC QUESTIONS

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*Internationally renowned sommelier and wine writer Natalie MacLean has no sour grapes about her personal pedigree. The author of Red, White and Drunk All Over, and Unquenchable; a Topsy Quest for the World's Best Bargain Wines uncorks her Celtic heritage in our Seven Celtic Questions.*

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### *What are your own Celtic roots?*

Both my mother, Ann Estelle (MacDonald) MacLean, of Baddeck, Nova Scotia, Canada, and my father, John MacLean of Mabou, Nova Scotia, are Celtic. The only non-Scot was my grandmother, who was a Brophy of Irish origin, so the family line is 100 per cent Celtic-grown. I was born in Toronto. Following my parents' separation, my mother, a teacher, and I lived in Antigonish and Sheet Harbour before finally settling in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia.

### *Why are those roots important to you?*

I spent my summers at my grandparents' home in Baddeck and attended the Gaelic College to learn highland dancing and a wee bit of Gaelic, and pick strawberries when I was not interested in piping class. I excelled at picking strawberries. So my earliest childhood memories are infused with Celtic culture, landscape and language. Eventually, I became quite serious about the dancing as there were no strawberry-picking competitions. When I was a teenager, we went to Scotland each year to compete in the world championships, and my best showing was when I was 17 and placed fifth after three men from Scotland and one woman from the U.S. I also started to teach dancing in my basement when I was 15. I photocopied handmade notices and took them to the principals of the elementary schools in Lower Sackville and asked for them to be distributed. Before I left to work on my MBA at Western University, I had 300 students and five teachers working for me, and was able to put myself through university without debt. I'm sure that would make thrifty Celts proud.

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

For me, being of Celtic origin means knowing that I come from a long line of proud, cultured people and that this line will continue. It reminds me of the interweaving Celtic design on my Claddagh ring symbolizing eternity. It is both comforting and humbling.

### *How are you involved with the Canadian Celtic community?*

More than 300 MacLeans have found me online via Facebook and Twitter, so I guess that's the modern version of a Clan gathering. I'd like to be more involved in the community, which is why I agreed to spill the Celtic beans here.

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

It's important to know where you come from, regardless of your origins: it places you in the universe and is part of your identity. It's also important to pass this culture on to our children, even resistant 13-year-olds like my son.

### *In your estimation, is enough being done to keep Celtic culture alive in Canada?*

That's a good question. I really don't know. Time will tell I suppose.

### *What could we be doing better?*

How about using social media more? It all starts with individual efforts. That said, you can find me at [Twitter.com/NatalieMacLean](https://twitter.com/NatalieMacLean) and [Facebook.com/NatDecants](https://facebook.com/NatDecants). Tweet me a Ciamar a tha thu and I'll respond with Ceud Mile Fàilte!

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



# Lord Willys

*It's been called "one of the finest men's stores in the country" (GQ magazine), "two parts Cary Grant, one part Hugh" (Urbandaddy) and "the new Savile Row" (Page 6). Call it by any other name, Lord Willys in New York City is a testament to the age-old adage that "style is never out of fashion".*

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



Photo - Mark Mann



Lambswool cashmere (Holland & Sherry) blazer with grosgrain detailing and brown trochus shell buttons.

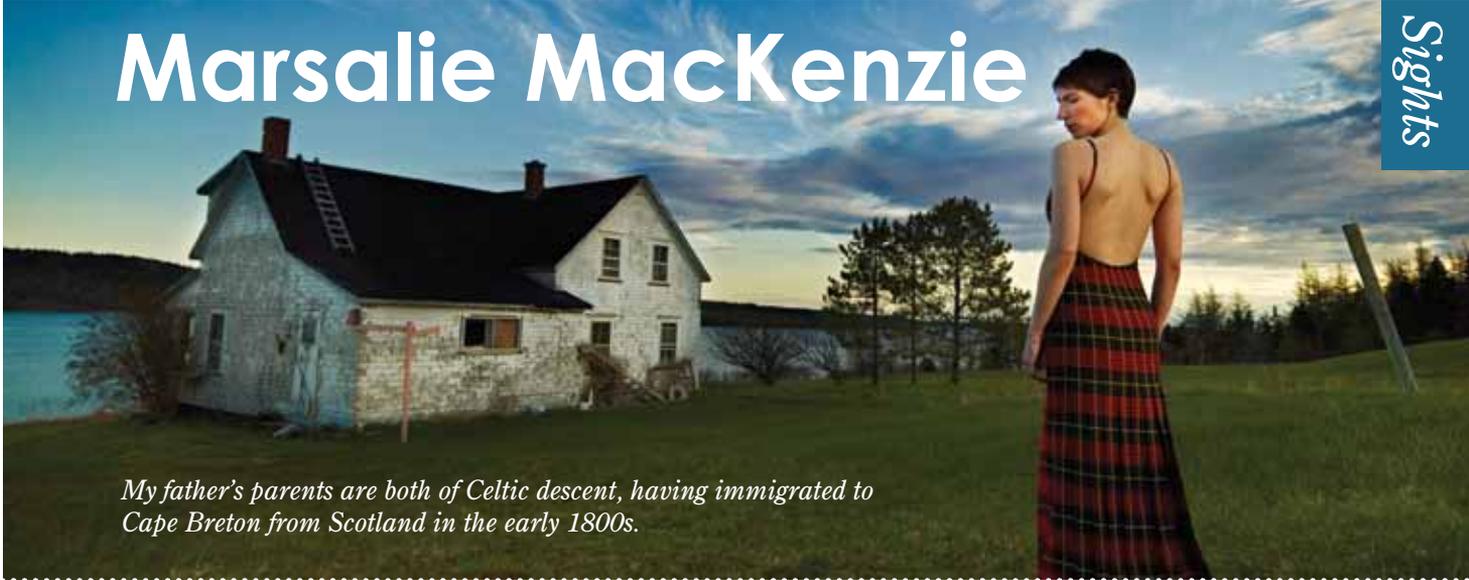
*Jacket \$1,850. Shirt \$205. Tie \$110. Square \$55.*



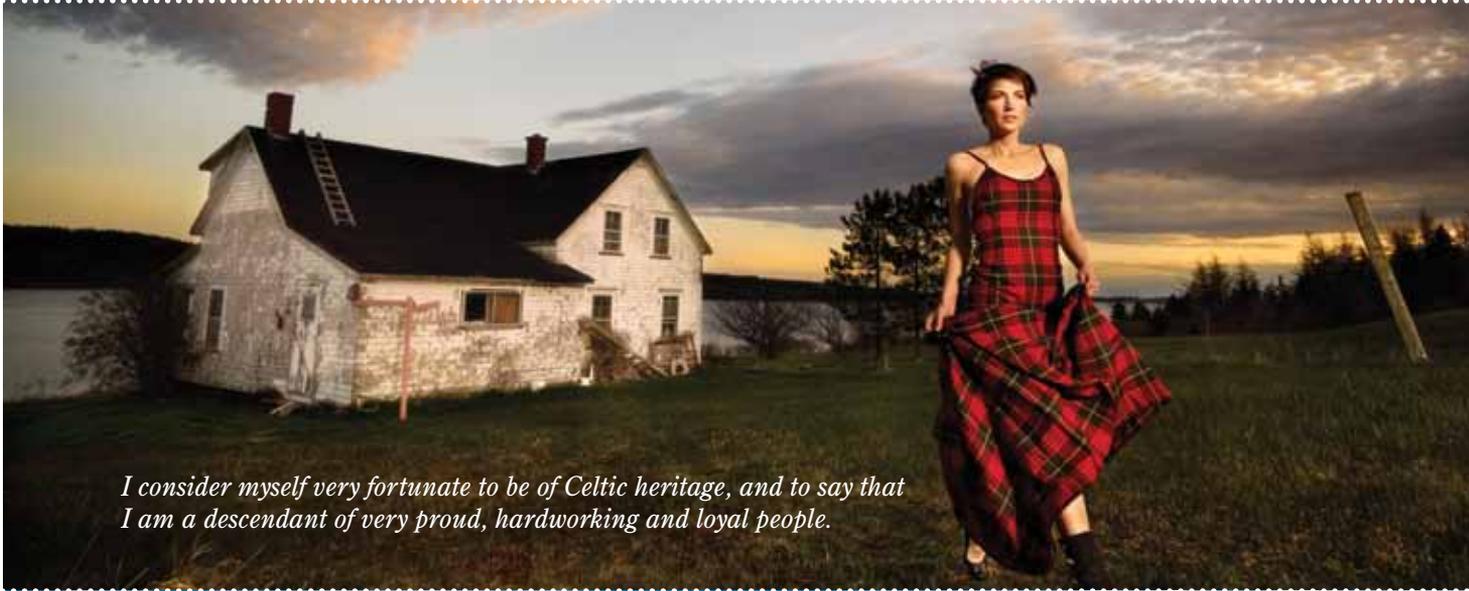
Donegal Tweed (Holland & Sherry) with gros grain trim, dark red stitch detail and black trochus buttons.

*Jacket \$1,850. Shirt \$205. Tie \$110. Square \$55.*

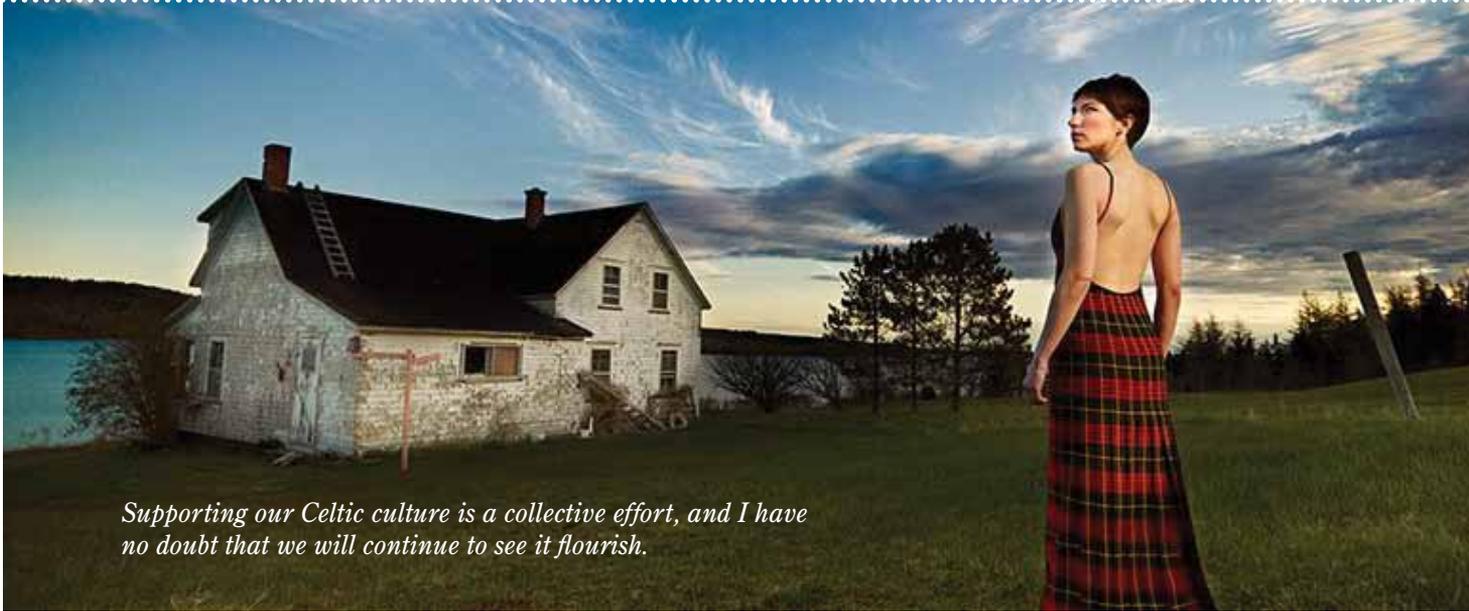
# Marsalie MacKenzie



*My father's parents are both of Celtic descent, having immigrated to Cape Breton from Scotland in the early 1800s.*



*I consider myself very fortunate to be of Celtic heritage, and to say that I am a descendant of very proud, hardworking and loyal people.*



*Supporting our Celtic culture is a collective effort, and I have no doubt that we will continue to see it flourish.*

Photos by Brent McCombs, Fashion by Veronica MacIsaac

# the triskele



The triskele, or triple spiral, is an ancient symbol with many meanings. It commonly consists of three identical interlocked spirals or three identical protrusions stemming from a shared centre. A design with three-fold rotational symmetry may also be called a triskele.

Steeped in time, the triskele is a Celtic and pre-Celtic symbol found at ancient sites and on artifacts in Ireland, Europe and America.

Famously, the triple spiral is found at the 5,000-year-old Newgrange Passage Tomb in Ireland's Boyne Valley. Pagans have often used the triskele to represent the sun, triadic gods, and the three realms of land, sea and sky. It can also represent the cycles of life and the Triple Goddess (maiden, mother and wise woman). Celtic Christians have used the symbol to represent the Christian Trinity.

The triskele is closely associated with the triskelion, a symbol which looks like three running legs. The triskelion is found on the flags of Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean, and on that of the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea.

Some speculate that the Vikings copied the symbol from the Greeks while adventuring in the Mediterranean, as the symbol is found on Greek coins.

The Manx or Isle of Man flag shows a triskelion composed of three legs armoured in chain mail, running clockwise and joined at a triangle.

On the Sicilian flag, three naked human legs are joined by the face of Medusa, festooned by three wheat ears. The legs are said to represent the island's three promontories, while the wheat stands for fertility, and Medusa, for the island's protection.

The origins of the Manx flag are unclear. A legend has it that one day the Celtic Sea God and island's ruler, Mannanan, turned himself into a three-legged wheel so that he could roll down the mountain and vanquish Norse invaders.

In the 10th century, silver pennies featuring the triple knot were issued in the English city of York by the Norse-Irish kings Sithric, Ragnald and Anlaf Cuaran.

Alexander III of Scotland may have adopted the symbol in 1265 when he took the Isle of Man from the Norsemen. Alexander's wife was the sister of the king of Sicily and the symbol was already in use there.

Residents of the island occasionally debate which way the legs should run. On the island's flag they run clockwise. They can run counter-clockwise but should never be kneeling. The Latin Motto associated with the symbol means 'Whichever way you throw me, I stand.'

by Carol Moreira



# Wales celebrates the return of a cultural gem

There was excitement in Wales this summer when a rare medieval document – the Boston Manuscript of the Laws of Hywel Dda - was purchased by the National Library of Wales after a successful bid at Sotheby’s auction house in London. Acquired for £541,250 (about \$866,000), the purchase has allowed a national treasure to return home after two centuries in America.

Speaking from the Library’s elegant home on Penglais Hill above the town of Aberystwyth, manuscripts librarian Dr. Maredudd ap Huw said the unusual pocket-sized manuscript reflects actual legal practice during the second half of the 14th century.

“Judging by the interest in the manuscript, both online and from an increase in visitors to the Library, the Welsh people are delighted to see the manuscript returning to Wales,” the librarian said, a smile in his voice.

The National Library contains masses of information about Wales and the world that users can access for free. The spacious building on the hill houses millions of books, thousands of manuscripts and archives, maps, pictures and photos, films and music and electronic information.

So why are the Welsh so pleased to regain a little book written in medieval Welsh? It’s because the volume contains handwritten notes made by the itinerant judge who used it while working in South Wales. Such notes are rare among Welsh medieval manuscripts and will allow academics to peer through time into the development of Welsh identity.

The term the Laws of Hywel Dda does not relate solely to this book – it describes the native Welsh laws, practiced in Wales before the 16th century, and collected and arranged in the 10th century. The laws were first written down by Hywel Dda, a Welsh king (known as Hywel the Good in English), between 942 and 950 when he ruled most of the country.

Hywel was known for his compassion and good sense. It’s believed that while codifying the laws, his staff adapted existing laws, so some parts of the legislation probably pre-date Hywel’s own era.

Today, the Laws of Hywel Dda are contained in about 30 manuscripts dating from the 13th to 16th centuries and written in Welsh and Latin.

The Boston book is one of the earliest manuscripts of its kind ever offered in a public sale. It was sold by the Massachusetts Historical Society, which was probably given the manuscript by Welsh emigrants early in the 19th century.

Dr. Manon Williams, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund, which along with the Welsh Government helped the Library purchase the manuscript, described the book as “one of Wales’ true treasures”.

Now it is back in Wales, experts will interpret it, allowing it to be better understood.

“I hope local people and visitors will take this unique opportunity to come and see this important piece of Welsh history,” Williams said.

The manuscript did initially attract a large crowd to the Library’s Hengwrt Room, the gallery for exhibiting rare books and manuscripts, where it was displayed until the end of August. Now, conservators will begin preserving its fragile pages. Replicas will then be created for permanent viewing and the manuscript will be digitized to provide worldwide access. A program of education and volunteering opportunities as well as a touring exhibition are also being planned.

by Carol Moreira

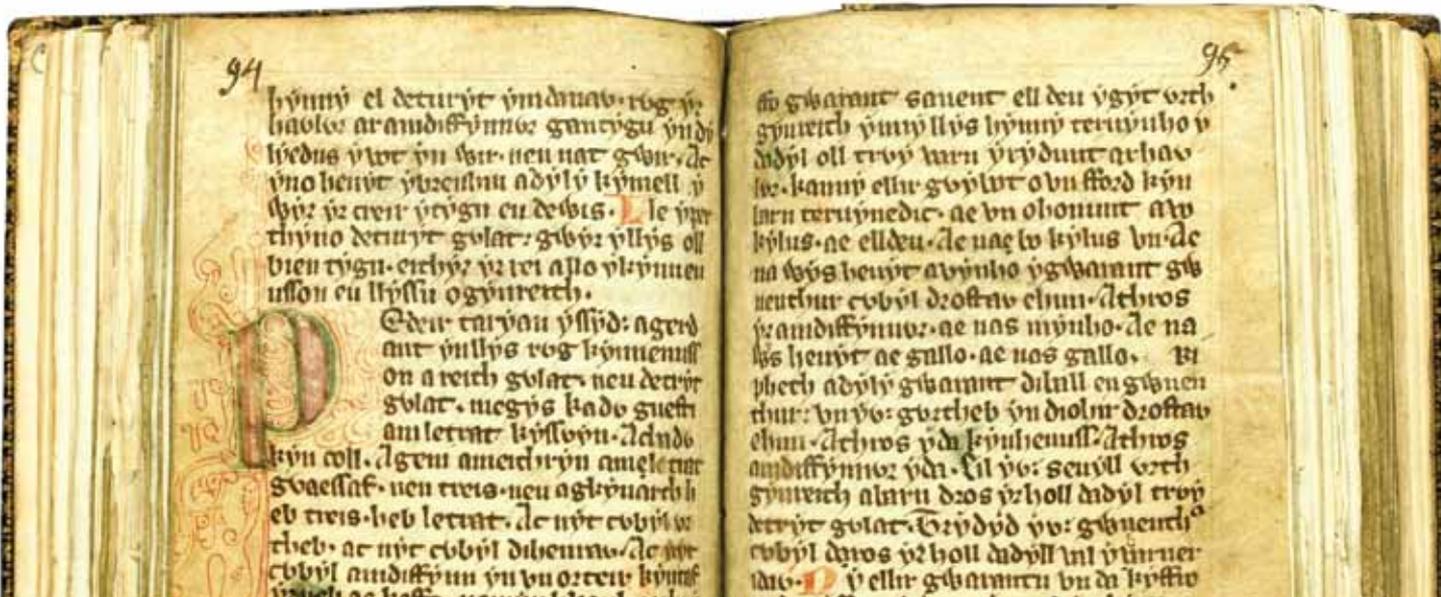


Photo Credit - The National Library of Wales



# Clannad + Celtic Thunder

*Two of Ireland's finest musical artists – Clannad's Moya Brennan and Celtic Thunder's Keith Harkin - are preparing to return to North America this fall. They took time out to share a phone call with Celtic Life.*

Despite the differences in age and sex, Irish musicians Moya Brennan (Máire Ní Bhraonáin) and Keith Harkin have much in common. They both hail from the northern part of Ireland (Brennan from Gweedore, County Donegal and Harkin from Derry). They both write, record and perform original music (Brennan with Clannad and as a solo artist and Harkin with Celtic Thunder and as a solo artist); and both will tour North America with their respective ensembles this fall.

"I absolutely adore being on the road," shares the 60-something Brennan, whose Dublin-based band will be performing across Canada and the U.S. from September to December.

"It's wonderful to get back there," she continues, acknowledging the group's almost 20-year absence from the continent. "North American audiences have always been so enthusiastic and supportive of what we do."

"There's no place in the world like it for touring," agrees 26-year-old Harkin, one of five current members of super-group Celtic Thunder. "The energy and the response are fantastic, and we make a ton of new fans and friends there every time we're over."

Both artists say they owe their success to their Irish roots. "As children, our home was filled with melodies," recalls Brennan. "My mother taught music and my father was a travelling musician.

"Folk, classical, jazz, rock, pop - you name it and we were exposed to it. Either the radio or the stereo was blaring, or someone was strumming a guitar or plunking away at a piano or a fiddle. Each of my brothers and sisters – there were nine of us in all – sang or played some sort of instrument, and music was as much a part of our everyday dialogue as language."

Much of that dialogue was in Gaelic.

"Gaelic was, and still is, embedded within our community. For our family, speaking Gaelic was as natural as speaking English."

These musical and linguistic influences reached fruition in 1970, when five members of the Brennan family formed Clannad. Over the next dozen years, the band released several folk-infused albums, receiving critical acclaim for their traditional Celtic sound. In 1982, the group shot to international attention with the haunting title-track to the movie *Harry's Game*. Three years later, they struck gold again with the Celtic-Pop crossover album *Macalla*, featuring the best-selling single *In a Lifetime* - a stirring duet with U2 frontman Bono.

"You can actually hear me teaching him some Gaelic phrases at the beginning of the song," recalls Brennan. "He was so proud of his heritage and so eager to learn everything about it. And that wasn't necessarily something you might say about a young Irish person at that time."

The massive popularity of *In a Lifetime* catapulted Clannad to fame and shone the spotlight on modern Irish music.

"All of a sudden it was cool to be from Ireland," chuckles Brennan, calling out her contemporaries Thin Lizzy, the Pogues, Sinead O'Connor, the Waterboys, the Saw Doctors, My Bloody Valentine and the Cranberries.

That swift renown laid a sure foundation for modern artists like Snow Patrol, Damien Rice and Celtic Thunder,

"Without them we would not enjoy the kind of success that we do today," says Harkin, paying props where due. "Wherever we tour in the world, people come out as much for us as they do to just hear Celtic music."

Like Brennan, the blond rocker grew up surrounded by sound.

"My father turned me on to Neil Young, the Beatles and Tom Waits," he remembers. "And, even though I was raised in the north, Irish and Celtic music were a huge part of my sonic landscape."



## Clannad + Celtic Thunder

Those early influences are all in evidence today, both in his work with his band mates and with his recent self-titled, debut solo recording.

“What these artists all share in common is strong composition,” explains the six-stringer, whose collection of acoustic and electric axes would be the envy of all aspiring guitarists. “They bring words and music together in arrangements that are almost perfect, flawless - especially the Celtic stuff, which is very structured. That style has shaped my own songwriting process and it is at the core of what the band does.”

Despite their success, both Brennan and Harkin have their feet firmly grounded in Irish soil.

“I don’t have the time for it,” states Brennan of her superstar status. “I’ve always been too busy with my family and with my work to get caught up in that nonsense. And no-one here at home would tolerate it.

“I think it’s unfair that so many people take the piss out of a guy like Bono just because he is so famous. No matter how popular

U2 have become, I have always known them to be regular, down-to-earth guys. And it’s pretty much the same for all of the Irish artists I know.”

“That’s the joy of being in Ireland,” pipes up Harkin. “Nobody gives a damn who we are.”

It is, he believes, a cultural quirk.

“It’s an Irish thing, for sure,” he laughs. “Celebrity really doesn’t carry much weight here at home. We can go off for a pint at the local pub and people pay no mind to us at all. To them we’re just other Irishmen. It’s great actually.”

By contrast, Los Angeles – where Harkin resides when he is not back home or on the road – is star struck.

“People are always stopping me to say hello or ask for an autograph,” he says. “I don’t mind it, but coming from where I do, I sometimes can’t help but wonder what all of the fuss is about. I mean, it’s just me.”





# Celtic Colours

*Celtic Life International sits down with the organizers of Cape Breton's much-loved Celtic Colours International Festival to discuss the joys and challenges of their work.*

October in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, is a wonder to experience; along with the crisp autumn air and the full fall foliage, the region hosts the annual, world-renowned Celtic Colours International Festival.

This year's celebration takes place from October 5-13, with an array of amazing activities scattered across the 'other Island' on Canada's eastern coast.

In 1995, inspired by Cape Breton's strong music scene, the event's artistic director (and recent Order of Canada recipient) Joella Foulds, along with her business partner Max MacDonald, formed a company to promote the region's Celtic culture and artists.

"We felt instinctively that a festival was an important way to do that," says Foulds, "a decentralized festival that celebrated our living Celtic culture in an international context.

"We also decided that it should happen in October because it is the most beautiful time of the year, it was outside the normal tourism season and would not interfere with the many cultural activities that already go on during the summer."

The name 'Celtic Colours' was coined by a colleague.

"It took almost two years to develop the festival, gather the necessary resources, work with communities and create a non-profit society which then took over the 'ownership' of the name and concept," shares Foulds.

The festival's directive has remained the same since the beginning, although audiences now come from across the world. In 2011, the event entertained visitors from all Canadian provinces and territories, 50 U.S. states and 19 other countries. In total, 55 per cent of visitors were from off-island.

"The mandate was always to bring international Celtic cultures together for our local celebration," Foulds explains. "The mission statement for the first few years included the 'promotion of the Gaelic language' and although we still do that, there are now other organizations and a government department dedicated to that aim.

"So, we work together. Celtic Colours can provide the promotional and celebratory element in the larger goal of preserving the language. The decentralized model brings the festival to the small communities where the culture has been preserved over the generations."

The festival's growth has been rapid. In 1997, the first year, organizers held 27 concerts and about 20 "workshops". Soon, there were more than 40 concerts and, this year, there will be 46. Other events developed more gradually because communities wanted to get involved and had other cultural elements and activities to offer besides concerts.

By last year, the number of community cultural events was almost 300 and covered five categories that included learning opportunities, visual arts, participatory events, outdoor events and community meals. In 2012, this number has been intentionally reduced to 235 to ensure better focus and quality.

Community meals have grown to 47 this year as well, much to the delight of audiences.

"They are very popular because the small communities that host concerts often have very limited restaurant facilities," Foulds states. "We sell about 19,000 concert tickets and about 15,000 people attend the community cultural events."

Visitors can expect more of the fun and festivities they have grown to expect this year, as the 2012 festival will include all of the popular elements as well as participatory events such as square dances and sessions, visual art exhibits and outdoor events. Organizers have also added a broad theme about "islands".



“This is really a fun way to share and compare how cultures have evolved on various Islands,” says Foulds. “Canada’s island cultures include Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Vancouver Island and, of course, Cape Breton.”

As well, international guests have been invited from islands such as Ireland, Shetland, Orkney, South Uist and the Danish island of Fyn.

The nightly festival club continues to be the highlight for many devoted attendees, allowing the spontaneous sharing of cultural backgrounds and acting as a catalyst for unique and exciting music.

Celtic Colours is essential to the area’s Celtic community, says assistant artistic director Dawn Beaton.

“Cape Breton music is widely revered around the world, even beyond the Celtic nations, for its richness, authenticity, powerful drive and impact on those both in the community and those new to the music and culture,” says Beaton. “It’s also important to keep that alive for residents here in Nova Scotia...Milling frolics, authentic ceilidhs, house parties, square dances and concerts have long been a staple of this area, both formally and informally. Celtic Colours has taken this model, and expanded it with Celtic cousins from near and far to explore the relationship, and how special the music and culture is that we have here.”

The festival has been a vital part of promoting and preserving the region’s Celtic culture and community. And while Beaton acknowledges that much has been accomplished in partnership with the Office of Gaelic Affairs, the established Fiddlers’ Association and community groups like Féis Mhàbu and Féis an Eilein, she admits that more can always be done to promote and preserve Celtic culture.

“The mix is what is changing,” she continues. “Funding support varies every year, there are other projects that take funding away from roots-based approaches and festivals, there is mainstream music and other events that get more attention than Celtic events both big and small, and possibly result in a smaller percentage of funding available and awareness when it needs even more attention.

“I’d love to see the East Coast and its music have a greater presence on TV and radio. We have to ensure we are teaching our youth about their own ancestors and history so they understand their identity, the past struggles and efforts made by those people to secure the placement of this culture where it deserves to be, and the mantle the next generation have to keep the tradition alive.”

Foulds agrees that efforts must be maintained.

“It is always a challenge to explain the wide range of cultural activities we offer. We have made real progress this year in our goal to connect our audience to the events that interest them. We have developed a new website that makes it much easier to find areas of interest and geography and it even allows customers to create their own Celtic Colours itinerary with the click of a mouse.”

She says organizers strive for unique and creative presentations.

“We need to keep exploring the music and culture of more areas of the world and bringing it to our communities. We could do a better job of honouring our own local culture bearers.

“Every year we present at least two ‘tribute’ shows, but we’re always striving to dig deeper and do that better. We are very anxious to do more with youth and play a stronger role in preserving and promoting our traditional culture locally. However, we are limited by very few funding resources to do this work and very little revenue to pay the costs. This is a major concern not only for the future of the culture, but also for the sustainability of the festival.”

Another feature requiring ongoing development is volunteer training, as the festival depends on volunteers carrying out important professional roles such as stage and site management at the venues.

“We offer annual professional development to our volunteers, but need to keep improving on how we do this and how we reward and motivate them to improve their skills,” Foulds says.

She hopes for bigger and better things for the festival in the years to come.

“We expect to continue developing the festival in response to the needs of the artists and the communities. Our focus will continue to be on what is authentic. While the festival is a celebration and reflection of a traditional culture, it is very much a living culture that evolves in a natural way, so we intend to reflect that evolution as best we can. We will continue to support and encourage the creation of new music and art through our creative projects. Quality goes hand in hand with authenticity and we are always striving to do a better job of what we present and what those experiences mean for our audience.”

Growth is not a high priority, she adds, but if it happens naturally and comfortably it will be embraced.

“We have the capacity for larger numbers in the offerings we have currently and we hope to expand on our international visitors while never losing sight of the needs of the local audience. If the festival does not remain valued and authentic locally, it will lose its uniqueness. That would spell its demise. So it is in everyone’s interest to serve our own audience.”



# True Colours

Now that 23 per cent of females and 19 per cent of males are tattooed, adorning oneself with permanent markings is no longer just a fringe thing. According to a Harris Poll, about one in five people walking down the street has a tattoo. The question is; why are so many people expressing themselves this way?

If I were a cynic, I would say it's because of the corporatization of the modern world. A 2007 survey from Media Matters, states that the average adult is exposed to between 600 and 625 advertisements every day. Only 272 of those are from traditional television, newspaper, magazine, and radio. That leaves over 300 non-traditional exposures to advertisements – that's a huge number and it would be even higher if tattoos were factored in.

Okay, maybe tattoos are not yet trademarks like Pepsi or Nike, but they do advertise the values and characteristics of the person wearing the tattoo. I have seen tattoos of cartoon characters like Daffy Duck. I doubt this is a firm commitment to the corporatization of thought, but it does open the door to this question: does the bearer of the tattoo fully realize what she/he is saying?

Tattoos, after all, are permanent reflections of what a person has thought or felt. Jane Caplan, author of the seminal work on tattooing *Written on the Body* states that, “establishing a cultural

identity is one common social role that the tattoo has played throughout history.”

So, in essence, tattoos are personal advertising. In the foreword to his book *Tattoos – Philosophy for Everyone: I Ink, Therefore I Am*, Rocky Rakovic states, “The people of our generation wanted to scream their identity on their skin and shout their opinions from the rooftops. When the craft of tattooing bettered itself through aesthetics, safety, and public relations, we went under the tattoo gun.”

Western society became familiar with tattoos following the travels of Captain Cook to Australia and Hawaii. The sailors on these voyages copied the idea of marking the body from the aborigines they encountered. The sailors used tattoos as memoirs of home, as marks telling others where they had been on their voyages and as talismans protecting them on their trip. For example, tattoos of a rooster on one foot and a pig on the other were believed to protect a sailor from drowning, according to Jean-Chris Miller's *The Body Art Book*.

The aborigines were not the first or only people to embrace tattooing. Between the first and fourth centuries, the Picts of Caledonia (an area which is now considered part of Scotland) used to tattoo themselves with totem animals to reflect personal





attributes. The tattoos were thought to help them in battle, as was their practice of dyeing their skin with woad to appear more menacing (think of Mel Gibson painted blue in *Braveheart*).

Today, individuals use tattoos to establish themselves as someone unique in the sea of others they encounter daily.

Carla Heggie, a 58-year-old Canadian professional, is proud of her most recent tattoo – two beautifully entwined dragons. It’s the third knot she’s had tattooed in the past decade and she happily rolls up her shirtsleeve to display it.

“I like to live outside the box. The tattoos suit my personality,” says Heggie. All three of her tattoos are Celtic knots; the unending twists and symbolism of the circle of life appeal to her and say a lot about who she is.

Heggie and her sister-in-law had planned to go sky diving about 10 years ago, but her doctor wouldn’t authorize the adventure. So her sister-in-law suggested they get tattoos.

Heggie embraced the opportunity. She had considered getting a tattoo before, but hesitated. Now the chance to reclaim her body as her own, using it to demonstrate her passion for her Celtic background, seemed right. Heggie lives in Halifax, in eastern Canada, but her mother is from Cheshire in North West England (bordering on Wales) and her father is Scottish. She identifies with both the Welsh and Scottish cultures.

She plans her fourth tattoo for after her next knee surgery. Plans for a fifth are not yet concrete, but “it definitely will happen”. The Celtic knots are her way of marking herself and her place in the world. (In contrast, Heggie’s sister-in-law has not ventured into a tattoo parlour since the tattoos they got together.)

Heggie’s first tattoo was obtained in Ontario, but the latter

two were drawn by Eldrick Murphy, a tattoo artist at Sin on Skin tattoo studio in Halifax.

Murphy estimates that up to 20 per cent of his work deals with Celtic emblems.

This is not surprising. Celtic symbolism is beautiful and meaningful.

Cornish writer Alan Kent comments that Celtic symbolism has remained appealing throughout the ages. In his contribution to the book *Celtic Geographies: Old Cultures, New Times* he states, “... Celtic is perceived as it has often been perceived in the past – that it is alternative, a cultural ‘Other’, a perception as prevalent now as when primarily English scholars first considered peoples from Celtic territories to be more primitive, more spiritual, more in tune with the Earth.”

People today want to advertise these values as being part of themselves.

It’s also interesting to note that the word “tattoo” may come from a Tahitian word “tatau”, meaning “to mask”. That makes me wonder - if individuals are using tattoos to advertise who they are to the world, what other part of themselves are they hiding away?

### Popular Celtic designs include:

- The Trinity Knot, which symbolizes unity and strength;
- The Mandala Knot, which represents spiritual strength and awareness and the balance of body, mind and soul;
- The Celtic Tree of Life, which symbolizes life change and life balance;
- Celtic cats, dogs and dragons, which reflect personality traits;
- The Infinity Knot, which represents the immeasurable.

By Jen Powley





# Samhuinn Festival

*Each October 31st, the Samhuinn Festival lights up the dark streets of Edinburgh. Celtic Life contributor Tom Langlands describes this mysterious Celtic forerunner of Halloween.*

Gold-edged leaves curl inward, shivering against the autumn winds. Forests rustle in nervous anticipation, while the sun retreats to the horizon and night shadows creep slowly over the countryside and on into the city. The Holly King awakens and his breath chills the air. The Summer King senses his own power weakening and knows that soon it will be time. Spirits are stirring and strange magic is in the air - Samhuinn is approaching.

October 31st marks the Celtic New Year and traditionally it was celebrated with the Samhuinn Festival that marked the passage of summer to winter. With its roots in ancient druid and pagan cultures, Samhuinn was believed to be a time when the veil separating the world of the living from the spirit world was at its thinnest, affording a final chance to communicate with the dead before the curtain of winter descended and life lay dormant until the May Queen and her consort, the Summer King, returned in the spring.

With some regional variations, this was how the cycle of life was understood. Samhuinn (pronounced SAH-vin) was the time to leave a door open or light a candle to enable the spirit of a loved one to make a final visit home.

Samhuinn was also a time to be cautious, as not all spirits were good, and it would be easy to fall prey to those with evil or mischievous intent. Donning a disguise, especially one that intimidated malevolent spirits, was a sensible precaution, while carrying a lantern could protect against evils that lurked under the cover of darkness.

Some of these beliefs continued into the Middle Ages and, around this time, the tradition of dressing up, making spooky lanterns and going out 'guising' began. Although Halloween owes its name to a Christian tradition, it has much older roots and the 'trick or treat' principle is founded on the ancient belief that giving a gift would appease the spirits, while failing to do so may incur their wrath.

This November's eve, as darkness falls on Scotland's capital city Edinburgh, the Celtic New Year will be celebrated, as it has been for more than a decade, with a modern Samhuinn Festival.

Each year, viewers flock to the Royal Mile to see the Summer King, surrounded by his playful entourage, make his way along the narrow streets from Edinburgh Castle's Esplanade. Despite



light music, bright costumes, dancing and many smiling faces there is a sense of foreboding. Black clad torchbearers lead the way, ominous shadows flicker along ancient walls and the beat of distant drums fills the air.

As the procession turns into Parliament Square the danger is palpable. The music reaches a crescendo and mischievous spirits, in the form of sinister red men, emerge from the darkness. Then the Holly King appears and, in a spectacularly colourful performance of fire, smoke, light and noise, a fierce battle rages between the two kings until the Holly King triumphs and the transition from summer to winter is complete.

With the Summer King slain there can be no more summers and that is a bleak thought for those who live off the land. So, in accordance with legend, the powerful, blue-skinned goddess of winter, the Cailleach, appears and restores life to the Summer King so that he can return the following year.

The resurrection of the Summer King takes place in the square below the great crowned spire of St Giles Cathedral, (known for being a focal point of Scotland's Reformation during the sixteenth century). Those who stand and watch can't help but sense many parallels echoing across religions, cultures and centuries of human history.

The success of Edinburgh's Samhuinn stems from the Beltane Festival held on April 30th to mark the arrival of summer. Organized by the Beltane Fire Society since 1988, this fire festival on Edinburgh's Calton Hill, is a joyous celebration of the return of the sun

Matt Richardson, Chair of the Beltane Society, told Celtic Life that in the early days, audiences numbered around 300-400 but, by the mid 1990s, this figure had grown to 3,000- 4,000.

What's more, it wasn't the tourist market that drove the development of the Beltane Festival - it was the local community. In the words of Angus Farquhar, the founder of Beltane Fire Society, the surge in numbers was due to "a local manifestation of an international spirit".

Andy Meechan, a senior figure in the society, explains that Samhuinn was created to 'bookend' Beltane, with both festivals celebrating ancient rites in a modern way.

"We embrace the city we live in, rather than apply a rural pastiche. The festivals are a celebration of Edinburgh and her people and communities," Meechan says.

Today, Halloween is celebrated in many countries across the world. If you hear a knock on your door this November's eve and find yourself confronted with a "trick or treat" from scarily clad figures carrying eerie lanterns, be mindful of the centuries of tradition they represent. On this night the veil is thin and the spirits are restless.

Have a magical Samhuinn.

*Words and photos by Tom Langlands*



# Death of Coloman

Photo Credit - [cannundrum.blogspot.com](http://cannundrum.blogspot.com)

It's a tragedy when any innocent man is accused of being a spy then tortured, hanged and his body left to rot. Sadly, that's precisely what befell pilgrim monk, St. Coloman one thousand years ago this fall. The wandering monk never reached Jerusalem but, after his death, he was credited with many miracles and was later known as the patron saint of hanged men.

Coloman, or Colman, became venerated in Europe, but historians know little about his youth, although he may have been the son of an Irish king, according to Professor Dagmar O' Riain-Raedel, author of *Ireland and Austria in the Middle Ages: The Role of the Irish Monks in Austria*.

We do know that until his murder in 1012, Coloman lived the life of a pilgrim monk. In this, he was like many of his era. The tradition of the itinerant holy man had long been established and Jerusalem acted as a magnet to the ardently religious soul.

In *Journeys on the Edges: The Celtic Tradition*, author Thomas O'Loughlin tells how certain Christians believed that "faith had travelled to them, and that they had to travel as part of the demands of being Christians. They valued pilgrimage, and they

were conscious of the imagery of the Christian life as a journey towards a homeland: the heavenly Jerusalem."

Believing this, Coloman embarked on a pilgrimage from the British Isles, undeterred by the fact that such pilgrimages often ended in disaster. Violence frequently erupted around the holy site and there was also plenty of conflict along the way. Many pilgrims were butchered for trivial or fabricated reasons. Some local rulers even killed travelers for sport. Saint Patrick, another holy wanderer, nearly met such a fate.

Coloman's own pilgrimage came to a brutal end fifteen miles from Vienna, at the Austrian village of Melk, where there was fighting between Austria, Bohemia, and Moravia. Unable to speak the local German tongue, Coloman's inability to communicate was construed as evasiveness and he was accused of being a Moravian spy.

Crimes of espionage have long been punished by drastic measures. One thousand years ago, hot iron rods and flaming tongs were among the torturer's tools. If the sufferer somehow

managed to survive these horrors, the hangman awaited. Coloman endured agonies and was finally hanged alongside two thieves.

In O'Loughlin's words, Coloman had viewed Jerusalem as "the heaven toward which he must journey, the destination to which he must direct his boat of flesh." Instead, he found his earthly destiny at the end of the strangling rope on October 18, 1012.

As was the norm, mutilated and rotting bodies were not buried, but displayed as a warning to anyone who might consider acting against authority. However, while the other victims rotted beneath the sun and were devoured by birds and beasts, Coloman's corpse was ignored both by animals and the laws of science.

For 18 months, his body failed to decay. To amazed onlookers, it became clear that Coloman was no ordinary man. The immortality of the soul appeared to have migrated to the flesh. The backlash against his murder was intense, and a cult following developed.

In the Catholic Church, the term 'incurruptible' has been applied to dead bodies that failed to decompose, and incurruptibility is among the qualities used to establish whether an individual deserves to receive sainthood. Two years after his slaying, a ceremonial funeral was held on the cliffs of Melk and Coloman was made Austria's first patron saint, becoming one of approximately 80 Catholic saints who have been deemed incurruptible.

In time, many churches in Austria, Bavaria, and Hungary were named after him. The Hungarian monarch King Geza I even named his son Coloman. Centuries later, in 1713, as plague

ravaged the land of Melk, a 70lb. wax candle was burned in an effort to summon his benefaction.

Many artistic depictions of the saint have been created. Some are grisly, showing him with a hanging rope and the torturer's tongs and rod. Others show him with more tranquil objects, such as a book and a maniple (a silk band worn as a Christian symbol around the wrist).



Photo Credit - wikimedia

To this day, he is venerated in Ireland, Austria, and other European locations. He is still the patron saint of the town of Melk and each year on October 13th a mass is held in his honour in Melk's beautiful Benedictine Abbey where his bones are enshrined. October 13th is also his saint day and is celebrated with a big fair. Horses and cattle are brought to Melk, which sits on the River Danube, in the hopes of receiving his blessing.

To many, Coloman's demise reflects the ongoing universal tragedy that involves persecution of those who, for whatever reason, stand out as different.

As the monks of Melk Abbey have said, "In our times, where listening to each other has become increasingly difficult, he can be seen as a contemporary saint, as he, stranger in a strange land, was not understood. Whoever is different, looks or speaks differently, makes himself suspicious, causes fear, and can easily become the victim of prejudice."

By Ray Cavanaugh

Additional Sources: [www.saintpatrickdc.org](http://www.saintpatrickdc.org), [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org), [www.romanmiscellany.com](http://www.romanmiscellany.com).



# Halloween

Celtic immigrants from Europe arriving in the New World brought many of their ways with them. Along with a love of music, storytelling and strong hearts, they brought something darker – their belief in ghosts.

I grew up forty years ago next to the Canadian-Irish farm community of Johnville in Carlton County, New Brunswick, where scary tales were told whenever neighbours gathered to share work or socialize.

Like most rural places, Johnville had its share of hants, which is an expression used by many older residents for a ghost or spook. My father claimed that a section of Carlow Road had a ghost. Known as the Deignan Turn, it was said that a lone traveller had been killed and buried right on the turn of the road in the late 1860s. For years after, a large circle of red soil would appear in late summer where the murder was said to have taken place.

Even stranger, was the patch of soft, silky grass that grew up and turned blond!

The dark red stain with the blond “hair” was a regular

sight and, for anyone passing in the gathering gloom of a country evening, quite unsettling.

Despite being graded, the stained ground remained and the unusual spot continued to appear every year. Lifelong resident Joe McGraoty once told me he would not drive through the Deignan Turn after it was freshly graded. “No sir” he said. “If it was the end of times I would not!”

Today, the turn has been straightened and filled in. Perhaps the red stain and its silky hair are finally at rest.

Another much-discussed ghostly form was the-will-o’-the-wisp, a spectral mist that pursued one of my relatives. My Great Uncle Robert was a veteran of the Great War who feared little. But he always said he was “mostes scared ever” while tramping home from hunting along the O’Brien Brook. Dark was falling, so he decided to spend the night under the stars.

He was looking around for wood to build a campfire when a column of thin smoke arose in front of him. The formless shape hung in the still evening air and then began



Sunday evening game when he noticed a light flickering on the dark road ahead. Getting closer, he saw an oil lamp sitting on a velvet card table with two ghostly hands spread around it.

Suddenly, several cards flipped over all by themselves and he was pleased to see a winning hand. Then, more of the cards began to turn, and a cloven hoof slowly walked into the circle of light. At once, the gambler realized he was playing against the Devil and could never win. Frightened senseless, he ran for his life as the lamp went out and a voice said "Another time". He never touched a single deck again.

The most famous ghost story in Carlton County is of the haunting of Keenan Bridge. According to legend, a woman disappeared one dark night on her way home and was never seen again. Years later, a body was discovered by workmen repairing the bridge's foundations. A second discovery of a human skull in the bridge frame led folks to believe they'd found the missing woman and, shortly after, the lonely bridge spirit appeared.

Drivers crossing the bridge over the Monquart Stream would suddenly find a headless escort beside them who disappeared when they reached the other side. My Uncle Allen often recounted his own experience on the haunted bridge with his motorcycle. He claimed he stopped one night and waited to see the ghost. When nothing happened he tried to start the motorcycle. When it failed to fire up he pushed it off the bridge and tried again to start it. The bike started fine.

to drift towards him.

Great Uncle Robert said he was "frozen and couldn't draw no air" but, as the apparition drew closer, he found his feet and took off for home. As he retreated, the mist kept pace with him although he ran as fast as he could. Finally, as he reached a hilltop, he looked back and watched the will-o'-the-wisp disappear into the ground. He refused to ever return to the spot and cautioned the family to steer clear as well.

Telling a ghost story in the past had a whole list of rules to follow. No one asked for a ghost tale. Instead, it was often the teller who announced they would recount one. In the lumber camps, no ghost story was told after midnight and never on Sunday. Some people closed all the windows and doors before a ghost story was told, while others claimed none could be told during Lent. Many of these rituals are long gone, and today we all enjoy a delicious freight on a stormy night.

One tale said that a fellow from Johnville who liked to play cards a little too much was walking home from a

Uncle Allen went back onto the bridge and stopped and again the bike would not start. He rolled it off the bridge, and darned if it started. According to Uncle Al, he tried this experiment a couple more times until he felt it might be smart to get going as the bike would only fire off the bridge. Uncle Al said that as he drove away he saw a figure in his rear view mirror standing on the bridge - minus its head!

In our modern world we discount many of our Celtic ancestors' myths and superstitions as foolish folklore. Our eyes are clouded and we refuse to see what might walk this earth. But perhaps, just at dusk, go for walk sometime along an abandoned field or a dark wood and close your eyes and open your mind to what might be lurking in the dark....

*By Cary Rideout*

*Image of the ghost of Keenan Bridge:  
artist Lorain Ebbett-Rideout.*





# The History of Highland Dance

*In this third in a series, Dr. Michael Newton of the Department of Celtic Studies at St Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia explores the history of Highland Dance. This segment looks at Highland Dance in the 20th century.*

In previous instalments, I have tried to outline how dance traditions diverged in different communities: this process is particularly well represented by the informal, vernacular traditions of immigrant Gaelic communities in Nova Scotia, on the one hand, and by the formal institutions pressing their authority on communities in Scotland on the other.

At the end of the 19th century and into the 20th, prominent self-appointed dance gurus, such as the MacLennan brothers of Ross-shire, intervened in the transmission of Highland Dance tradition, silently creating new dances and movements without leaving much of a paper trail.

Many people now repeat the common story that the first movement of the dance Seann Triubhas (“Old Trousers”), where the dancer kicks his legs forward, represents the dislike for trousers (which Highlanders had to wear after the Battle of Culloden) and their desire to kick them off. In fact, D. G. MacLennan admitted in his 1950 tract on Highland Dances that

he himself invented this movement and that it had no historical basis.

Other dance teachers also reformed styles and techniques. One Gaelic folklorist noted in 1928 that whereas traditional sword dances, performed like other rituals for good luck before battle, would have only been done deiseal (clockwise) in the past, they were now being done tuathal (counter-clockwise), a movement that no traditionally minded Highlander would have considered a good idea before risking his life.

The incremental but relentless appropriation of Highland Dance tradition by non-Gaelic institutions was essentially completed in 1925 when the Scottish Pipers’ Society met in Edinburgh to decide how to define and standardize dances. The dancers in attendance were James Gordon and D. G. MacLennan, who claimed their expertise via the lineage of the deceased William MacLennan. As they announced at the time:

“It is hoped that the committees of all Highland gatherings throughout the country will agree to adopt these rules, which have been arrived at only after very full discussion by representatives from all parts of Scotland and the best known experts, based on the traditions handed down by the best dancers from the day of the late William MacLennan, who was the leading exponent of his time.”

Not everyone agreed with such rules or was willing to defer to the guidelines of the committee, which is not surprising: the very essence of folklife and folklore is variation, and dances had been evolving and developing independently in different communities under different cultural conditions for generations. Judging by the

comments of Matthew Hayes, president of the Scottish Dancers' Association, the Gaels of the western Highlands felt slighted by the monopoly exerted by the Lowlanders of the east and felt that MacLennan's approach was not representative of their tradition:

"In view of the fact that different styles of dancing prevail in different parts of Scotland taught by teachers as efficient as Mr McLennan, it would be interesting to know upon what authority the Pipers' Society have determined which is correct. [...] As one who attends most of the Gatherings in Scotland, I affirm that McLennan's style is not the popular one and is not recognised anywhere except on the East Coast. [...] To lay down any fixed routine of steps is futile, as every teacher has his own style."

Further controversy ensued, demonstrating that the imposition of a single competition style was done to the detriment of the diversity and expressiveness of the wider tradition. In fact, one correspondent, A. MacPherson of Sutherland, bemoaned, "Already we have an Association which I am afraid has, to some extent, killed individualism in bagpipe playing, and now we are threatened with a Dancing Association."

The formation of the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing in 1950 – which has since claimed exclusive rights to define dance standards – carried forward an inherently flawed process which introduced non-Gaelic elements, compromised the Highland character of the dance style, and reduced regional and individual variations.

Besides creating a single, athletic competition format, the other major innovation of the twentieth century which has changed Highland Dance tradition has been the domination of female dancers. While I do not wish to enter into the question of whether it was right or morally justifiable to exclude females and children from dance traditions – as was the case with Highland Dance into the early 20th century – it is certainly the case that many proponents of the art resisted such changes. In a very short time, then, Highland Dance went from being an exclusively male art form to being a predominantly female one, with the majority of dancers now being young girls. This cannot but have also impacted dancing styles and repertoires.

Once females began competing in numbers, suitable dances had to be invented, borrowed or adapted for them. Some elements in some of these dances must have existed for some time, even if they have been transformed by new settings and styles.

The "Irish Jig" was previously known as The Irish Washerman and is clearly derived to some degree from the French dance *Branle des Lavandieres* noted by Thoinot Arbeau (the pen-name of Jehan Tabourot) in his 1589 dancing manual *Orchésographie*. The Irish Jig probably also owes something to a medieval Gaelic dance known as *Cailleach an Dùdain* which was a dramatic dance, no longer performed, enacting the death and resurrection of a powerful female character (similar to ritualistic resurrection dramas associated with calendar customs in many parts of Europe).



It would be easy to assume that the dance *Flora MacDonald's Fancy* has some significant connection to the Highland heroine of the same name, but there is no evidence that the dance existed before the late nineteenth century. *Flora Cruickshank* of Peterhead (Aberdeenshire), the woman credited with remembering it and performing it for a modern choreographer, said that she learnt it from her grandfather, who had been a dancing master. She claims that it was originally danced to the tune "I Ha'e Laid a Herrin' in Salt," but this was replaced with tunes whose names play up the image of Jacobites and Prince Charles. This is indicative of the way in which "Highland Dance" has been modified to enhance the aura of romanticism around it and make it seem older than it actually is.

It is only after Gaelic tradition has weakened in communities that these "modern" forms of "Highland Dance", imported from urban Scotland, usually in association with Highland Games or similar organizations, have replaced vernacular Gaelic dances (reels, step-dancing, etc). The Antigonish Highland Society, for example, only called for the hiring of a highland dance instructor in 1921. In Cape Breton, it was the Gaelic College itself that taught and promoted modern highland dance after its foundation in 1938 – but not without provoking smothered resentment and resistance that has persisted to the present.





# Piecing Together the Past

If you ever pause in your busy life to wonder about the lives of your ancestors, you're not alone. The Baby Boomers are leading a surge of interest in genealogy despite, or maybe because of, their own fast-paced, transient lifestyles.

In North America, some 40 million Americans and six million Canadians lay claim to Scottish ancestry. Many want to know more about their heritage but don't know where to start. Here, Christine Woodcock, Director of the Canadian company Genealogy Tours of Scotland, offers amateur genealogists a road map.

THE place for Scottish records is the office of the General Register (GRO). Their website is the repository of all official documents: birth, marriage, death, census, valuation rolls, wills and testaments.

Here's what you need to know: the website is:

<http://scotlandsppeople.gov.uk>. It is a pay-per-view site, so be prepared. You can purchase 30 credits for £7 (about \$10). It costs one credit to view the index and five additional credits to view the image of the record. At today's exchange rate, that's about 35 cents per image.

Credits are purchased in bundles of 30 and are good for one year. So, if you purchase 30 credits on May 1st, they will last until

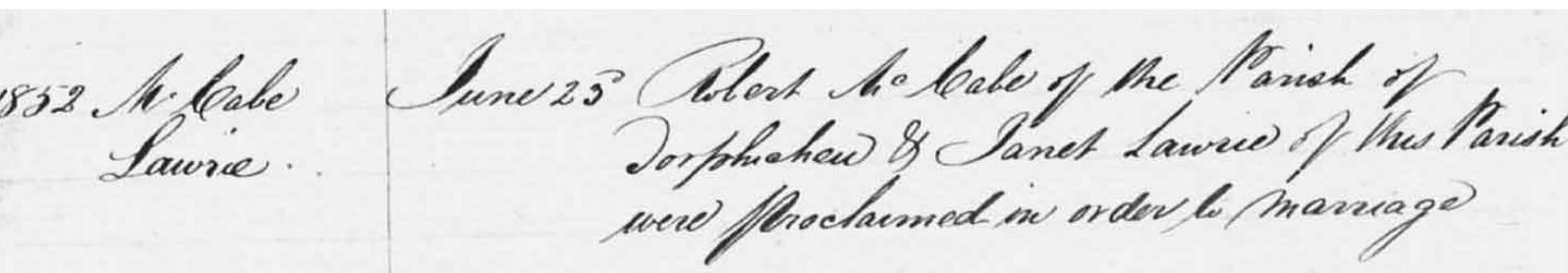
April 30th of next year. If, in June, you decide to give genealogy up for the summer and have four credits left, when you resume your research in September, you can add 30 credits to your existing four and you will then have 34 credits for one year from September.

Civil registration didn't start until 1855. For research before that date, you need to look at the old parish registers (OPRs). Find that link on the left hand side of the website and enter the data fields.

OPR Baptisms: you won't get birth dates since documenting a birth was not the responsibility of the church. What you will get is a recorded statement about the child's baptism. This will give the date, the parish and the name of at least one parent, sometimes both.

OPR Burials: rather than death records, you will see burial records or a statement about the purchase of a mortcloth for dressing the dead.

Burial records are important, since few Scots were of a stature where they could afford a headstone. Therefore, you won't find a monumental inscription no matter how hard you look. For instance, the Glasgow Necropolis is 37 acres. It has 50,000 internments, 3,500 headstones and 32 mausoleums; the



1852 Mc Cabe  
Lawrie.  
June 23 Robert Mc Cabe of the Parish of  
Dorphushew & Janet Lawrie of this Parish  
were proclaimed in order to marriage

remaining 46,500 dead are all buried in common ground with no headstones and no monuments. The only way you would know your ancestor was among them is by reading the burial records in the parish registers for Glasgow.

OPR Marriages: you will get documentation of the reading of the banns. The intention of the couple to marry was announced for three successive Sundays prior to the marriage. This was known as the “crying of the banns”.

Don't forget to check the census records. These will give not only the name of your ancestor, but the people in their family as well. From this, you will glean enough information to ensure that you are searching the RIGHT family. You will find the name of the head of the household, usually the father/husband unless he was deceased or away at work on that particular night. If the husband was away, his wife will be listed as the head. All children residing in the home will also be listed, along with their ages.

Remember that it was not uncommon for children as young as 13 to be away at work. In this case, you will need to do another search, using just their name and, if they were boarding with another family, you should be able to find them. Remember too that the ages on the census are approximate and make sure you allow for a two or three-year window.

Census and Birth records are accessible to the public after 100 years. Scotland takes this time frame very seriously, so you will not be able to access any newer records online. You can see the index for births right up to about two years ago, although if you wish to view the actual image, you will need to order it from the Registrar General.

On the birth records, you will find the maiden name of the mother, which will help you build her family tree. Again, don't forget to check for her family on the census returns under her maiden name. You will come up with her siblings as well. Also on the birth registration, you'll find the date and place of marriage for the parents of the new baby. This will give you the information you need to proceed with searching marriage records.

The most recent census available online is the 1911 census. To fill in information since 1911, you can access the 1915 valuation rolls. More of these will be added later this year. The next year of valuation rolls to go online will be 1905, which will give you a snapshot of where your ancestors were between the 1901 and 1911 census records. The GR did a survey of its users and learned that people were more interested in getting the older valuation records online than the newer ones, hence the decision to release 1905 next.

Marriage records are accessible after 75 years. Again, the indexes are available up to a couple of years ago, but you need to send away for the actual document if you wish to see a marriage record that is more recent than 75 years. On the marriage record, you will find the names of each partner's parents, the occupation of each partner and that of their fathers. A mother may have an occupation listed if she continued to work after her children were

born, but this was fairly uncommon. Accessing marriage records always gets you one generation back by providing information on the couple's parents.

ALWAYS pay attention to the names of the witnesses on the marriage records and to the names of the informants on a death record. You will find these are often family, close friends or neighbours. These people formed part of your ancestor's social circle. Knowing this information, allows you a better understanding of the story and not just of the dates and place names.

Death records are accessible after 50 years. The death records list the name of the deceased. Note that Scottish women always retained their maiden name. You can search for a woman under either her married name or her maiden name and get the same image. The name of the spouse, as well as any previous spouses, the place and the cause of death will also be on the record and will give you some indication of the length of her final illness.



### Regular vs Irregular Marriages

Can't find your ancestor anywhere in the marriage registers? Are they not in the parish registers for the “calling of the banns”? They may have had an “irregular” marriage. This wasn't uncommon in Scotland as, in order to be considered married, two people simply had to declare themselves man and wife, generally in front of two witnesses. However, if witnesses were unavailable, the couple could simply refer to themselves as married.

Naturally, the church disliked irregular marriages for a variety of reasons (morality and finances being the major two). Often, the church would “catch up” with the couple, who would then be summoned before the kirk session to take their penance, pay their fine, marry legally and be on their way. Kirk session records have been digitized but at the moment they are only available at Scotland's People Centre in Edinburgh. The hope is that they will appear online in the next year or so.

## The Scottish Naming Pattern:

The Scots (and often the Irish) had a very distinctive pattern for naming their offspring. Here is how the Scottish Naming Pattern worked:

The first-born son was named for the paternal grandfather.

The second-born son was named for the maternal grandfather.

The third son was named for the father, unless he shared a name with one of the grandfathers.

Fourth and subsequent sons were often named after the father or mother's brothers.

The first-born daughter was named for the maternal grandmother.

The second-born daughter was named for the paternal grandmother.

The third daughter was named for the mother, unless she shared a name with one of the grandmothers.

Subsequent daughters were generally named for the mother or father's sisters.

You will often find a name that doesn't fit but, upon closer inspection, you may find that this is the same name as one of the witnesses or informants - someone who played an important role in the life of this family.

In addition, if one of the first three children died, the next baby born of the same sex was given that name so that the name would live on for future generations. This became a bit of a conundrum for me when I was assisting a family looking for their roots in North Uist. This family had Donald MacDonald, then son Donald MacDonald who died at age three, so the next-born son was Donald MacDonald (so far, so good). This Donald survived, but a subsequent son was also named Donald - Donald John MacDonald. Both grandfathers were Donald and each had a living grandson named for him!

It gets even better when every eldest son marries an eldest daughter: Henry marries a Margaret and they have a Henry and a Margaret and then that Henry marries a Margaret or Margaret marries a Henry. That's when the "Auld Henry", "Wee Henry", "Big Henry" and "Margaret's Henry" all come into play.

## Diminutives

Now let's add diminutives to the mix. For instance, Ellen, Helen, and Eleanor are often used interchangeably. For the most part, Ellen is the diminutive of Eleanor. Ellen is the common pronunciation of Helen. Nellie can also be the diminutive of Helen or Eleanor.

Jean and Jane are often used interchangeably. This gets complicated when you have a daughter of each name. Janet is often also referred to as Jane but can also be Jennie or Jessie.

Mary and Marion both often get referred to as May, Mamie or Maisie, while Margaret usually goes by Peg or Peggy, but can also be referred to as Maggie or Meg.

Catherine, Kathleen and Kate are generally one and the same.

Isabel and Isabella are the same but may also be known as Bella, Belle, Sibby or Tibbie.

Elizabeth is rarely Elizabeth, usually being Betty or Bess, but perhaps also Beth, Lizzie, Elsie or Libby.

For men, John may be Ian, Iain, or Jock.

George may be Jordy, Geordy or Dod.

James may be Jamie, Jimmy or Hamish. As the saying goes, "Keep calm and carry on!"

## Not Everything Is Online

Of course, you reach a point in your research where you can no longer get the information you seek online. You will either be looking for records that are too recent or too old to be published online. That is when it becomes necessary to either travel to Scotland to spend time in the archives or to hire a genealogist on the ground to do the work for you. The Scottish Genealogy Society has a roster of professionals who will assist in your research, for a fee.



If you get the chance to go to Scotland, and spend time in Scotland's People Centre, you can view documents right up to the present day. These cannot be copied or downloaded, but you can transcribe to your heart's content.

At the National Library, you can access national and regional newspapers, old maps, historical clubs and society records, emigration lists and a great deal more.

At the Scottish Genealogy Society, you can view burial records, monumental inscriptions, some trades directories, voters' rolls and more. At the National Archives, you can access kirk session records, court records, tax records and a host of other information to assist you in really knowing who your ancestors were.

Since this is likely to be a once-in-a-lifetime trip, do yourself a favour and know what it is you hope to accomplish and where you can accomplish it. The worst thing you can do is just show up in Scotland and hope for the best. For anyone who has been bitten by the genealogy bug, there can be nothing more profound than actually walking in the footsteps of your ancestors. Walking the same streets, past the schools they attended, the places they worshipped and worked, and through the villages they called home. If you travel to your ancestors' homeland, take the time to travel to your ancestral area be it city, village, hamlet or croft. It will be a most humbling and life-altering experience.

#### Don't underestimate local resources

Many of us are familiar with standard search engines, websites and online resources but we often forget to contact local societies for information relevant to the place where our ancestors resided. Often, the local family history societies will have parish census records, church records, monumental inscriptions, old maps and information related to local businesses, schools and families. A list of Family History Societies can be found through the Scottish Association of Family History Societies at <http://www.safhs.org.uk/members>.

Don't be shy about contacting the local society and asking where to turn next. They may be just the contact you need to help break through a brick wall or two.

#### Connecting with Others

One of the best things about the genealogical community is our penchant for connecting. We all desperately want to connect to those who came before us and we are also fond of connecting with others searching for their past. Because of this desire to connect, the genealogy community is very helpful. I can't begin to thank those who have helped me further my research - most of them total strangers. They are people I would not recognize on the street, but whose names I know because of our connection to family history.

A great way to connect with others, especially early on in your



research, is through message boards. These are parts of websites where you can leave your unanswered questions. This is a good way to find others who are looking for the same family members. Make sure your title captures the people you are looking for. Don't give long lists of people's names, but create something as simple as Haddows of Lanarkshire, Scotland. This rules out those with Haddow ancestors who are from the U.S., England etc. and makes the responses more meaningful to you.

Most of us are aware of Ancestry. It might be good to leave a message on the message boards to find a connection. This saves you trawling through hundreds of possible matches in other people's trees with inaccurate information.

Another great message board system is Rootsweb. Rootsweb is free. The responses may take longer but they are generally helpful. As well, many of the message boards are now linked to the mailing lists, which reach people a whole lot faster.

FamilySearch has a community page for those searching their Scottish Ancestors. It can be found at: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/ScotlandGenealogy>

For connecting with others specifically researching in Scotland, GenesReunited is a fabulous website. I highly recommend joining and uploading your tree. I have found living relatives I never knew existed and the help I've received has been amazing. A membership is \$34 annually and every couple of weeks or so, you get an e-mail with "hot matches".

The software is programmed to look for other trees with the same names and then notify you of the connections. The computer doesn't always narrow it down to your specific ancestors, but it often does. You can then connect with others researching the same family members. This is particularly helpful in the early stages of your research if you are uncertain about where in Scotland your ancestors lived. Once you have this information through your connection with others, it makes your time on ScotlandsPeople far more productive and allows you the most value for your credits.

So, take the plunge. Branch out and connect. You will be pleasantly surprised with the results. In the process of researching your roots, you will discover your Celtic heritage.

Words and photos by Christine Woodcock



# Hiking the Cape Breton Highlands



Three years ago, folk singer Taylor Mitchell was attacked by coyotes while hiking alone in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park on Canada's east coast. Tragically, she did not survive.

Mitchell was horribly unlucky; attacks like this are extremely rare - it was the first such incident in Nova Scotia - and Mitchell's death should not deter visitors from experiencing the beauty of the area.

"We haven't had any incidents lately," says Mariève Therriault, the national park's visitor experience product development officer. "There are lots of steps being taken to ensure these things don't happen again". Therriault, an avid hiker, has yet to see a coyote in the eight years she has been working in the park.

The national park covers 948 square kilometers of the Cape Breton Highlands, a mountainous plateau of rugged, coastal cliffs and lush vegetation stretched across the northern section of Cape Breton Island. Perhaps the scenery - which is reminiscent of Scotland - explains why thousands of Scottish Gaels have settled the area throughout the centuries.

Considered one of the planet's most picturesque drives, the 298-km Cabot Trail encircles the majority of the Highlands. Tens of thousands drive the circuit each year to experience its sheer beauty. And when the evenings begin to cool in late September or early October, and the leaves turn sizzling reds and golden yellows, the Cabot Trail becomes a true visual feast.

The fall foliage views are even more stunning when you set out on foot into the surrounding wilderness.

"We've been trying to encourage people to take advantage of our trails to discover all the treasures that it's hiding," says Therriault.

The national park boasts 26 different hiking trails suitable for a range of skill levels; from the 15-minute, wheelchair accessible Bog trail to the challenging three-hour Franey climb.

"Franey is one of my favourites." Therriault exclaims. "You have a view of Cape Smokey, the Middle Head Peninsula that

goes out into the Atlantic Ocean, and the Clyburn Valley. It feels like you're standing on the edge of the world."

There are also dozens of hiking routes outside the national park, accessible via the Cabot Trail. For example, the North River Falls Trail, a 25-minute drive from the Gaelic College in St. Ann's, showcases the largest waterfalls in all the Maritimes.

Native Cape Bretoner and avid outdoorsman, Jason McNeil, describes the 19-km hike as a huge challenge, but well-worth the sweat.

"Once you make it through the old forest, the hike becomes increasingly more difficult as you wind your way through more mountains, scale riverside cliffs and nervously cross old hand-made bridges," he relates.

"The mighty 32-metre North River Falls is a truly breathtaking sight...I always feel an unexplainable serenity when I am in these woods. Time it with the leaves changing during the fall for an extra mind-numbing experience."

Nearby, in the village of Indian Brook is Cabot Shores, a wilderness retreat owned by Dr. Paul Weinberg and his wife Barbara.

"We teach people where the good trails are off the Cabot Trail, and sometimes we will actually guide them on those trails," says Dr. Paul.

There are several public trails nearby that glimmer and shine during autumn, including the Indian Brook trails that Dr. Paul and members of the local Mi'kmaq community created.

The Weinbergs are passionate about the therapeutic benefits of outdoor recreation, and they have guided hikers from six to 91 years old and hosted retreats for groups like Young Adult Cancer Canada.

Tom C. Wilson, chairman of the annual Hike the Highlands Festival, sees another benefit of hiking in the region - the camaraderie.

"The festival is a physical activity but it's also a social activity," shares Wilson. "Every year when we have our first hike of the festival, you'd just be amazed at all the hugs."

This year's gathering runs from September 14 to 23, and offers participants a choice of 26 guided hikes around the Highlands.

Another festival soon approaching is the popular Celtic Colours International Festival, from October 5 to 13. Many of the venues, showcasing music and art from local and international Scottish, Irish, Acadian and Mi'kmaq traditions, are located around the Cabot Trail. You would be hard pressed not to find a route close to each of the host towns, so attendees can easily enjoy the colours alongside the Celtic cultures. Additionally, Parks Canada will be guiding festival hikes the mornings of October 9 and 11.

For your walking holiday in the Cape Breton Highlands, make sure to bring comfortable hiking shoes, a walking stick or pole, water, light snacks, sun block, mosquito repellent and a wide

brim hat, says Roland Coombes of Cape Breton Island Hoppers Volkssport Club.

“If you pack it in, pack it out,” he adds, noting that even biodegradables, like apple cores, should be carried out since they could potentially attract wildlife to frequented trails.

The safest way to avoid dangerous encounters with wildlife, Wilson says, is to hike in groups. If you decide to go hiking alone for a soul-searching experience, be aware of Parks Canada’s guidelines on dealing with moose, black bears and coyotes. (Guidelines are available on their website, in brochures and on signs throughout the park). Should you come face-to-face with a bold coyote, stand your ground and never run, recommends Therriault.

In all likelihood, however, your hiking experience within the pristine environs surrounding the Cabot Trail will be fun and fulfilling, especially this time of year.

“Sometimes it feels like you’ve just plunged in paint, it’s so surreal, the colours are so vivid,” shares Therriault. “We are so spoiled with all the hiking trails. I’ve been here for eight years and I’m still in awe of the place.”

## Recommended Autumn Hikes

### Celtic Life International

*Lone Shieling / 0.6 km / northern side of the national park*  
The Lone Shieling, surrounded by rare, old-growth forest, is set within the Grand Anse Valley, renowned for its striking autumn colours. Children of all ages will be delighted when they come across the traditional Scottish crofter’s hut.

### Mariève Therriault

*Franey / 7.4 km / eastside of the national park*  
The Franey trail is a challenging climb up to an elevation of 430 metres. At the top, enjoy a stunning, 360° view of the Cliburn Valley, Cape Smokey and the Atlantic Ocean.

### Roland Coombes

*Salmon Pools / 12.2 km / westside of the national park*  
Follow a relatively level path alongside the Chéticamp River which is bordered by 400-metre tall canyon walls. The autumn leaves are particularly vibrant along this trail.

### Cara Palmer (Inverness County’s Physical Activity Strategy Coordinator)

*Fishing Cove / 12 km or 5.7 km / north-west corner of the national park*  
Descend steadily down the mountain to a pristine cove where whales are often sighted. Set up camp for the night on one of the wilderness platforms before the climb back up.



## Cape Breton Island

### Tom C. Wilson

*Pollett’s Cove / 18 km / north of Pleasant Bay*  
This day-long hike takes you through stunning coastal landscapes and is balanced between climbs and flat terrain on the way into the cove. Michael Haynes, author of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Hiking Trails, has said this is his favourite.

### Cabot Shores

*Indian Brook Trails / Village of Indian Brook*  
Trails on either side of the Indian Brook were constructed by the owners of Cabot Shores and the local Mi’kmaq community. The public trails start at Cabot Shores’ property and guide hikers through the colourful autumn woods where they will see three spectacular waterfalls.

### Visitors

*Skyline / 7.5 or 9.7 km / west side of national park*  
The Skyline is the national park’s most popular trail and is hiked by approximately 26,000 visitors per year. Hikers can park their car near the top of the mountain and walk an almost level trail to a wondrous view of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

### Jason McNeil

*North River Falls Trail / 19 km / outside St. Ann’s*  
This challenging backcountry trail takes you to the Maritimes’ largest waterfalls. The forested terrain is gorgeous during the fall and is known for a diversity of wildlife sightings.

By Michelle Brunet





# Puffin Stuff

*I have never forgotten the moment I saw my first puffin. I was sitting by the sea at Auchmithie, a small fishing hamlet on the east coast of Scotland, birthplace of that culinary delight the Arbroath Smokie! The day was sunny but a stiff breeze forced the waves into a disorderly queue, before sending white-topped breakers to rattle the pebbles of Auchmithie Bay.*

*The bird flew along the shoreline in front of me, wings flapping vigorously. There was nothing unusual about the black and white plumage and it would not have caught my attention except for a flash of what seemed like the painted face of a circus clown with a protuberant false orange nose - the kind you might hold in place with an elastic band around the back of your head. It was unmistakably a puffin and it would be thirty years until I saw another one.*

Puffins belong to the Auk family and there are three species found in the North Pacific Ocean but only one in the North Atlantic. Slightly larger than a pigeon, the Atlantic Puffin is the smallest and most common of them all. Sometimes referred to as Clown of the Sea or Sea Parrot, on account of its unusual beak and head markings, it has been characterized in animations, comic strips, book illustrations and on postage stamps. Widely distributed, it can be found from eastern America to northern Russia and from northern France to Iceland but falling numbers in recent years are causing concern.

Research indicates that around 10 per cent of Atlantic Puffins breed in the British Isles, with Scotland playing host to large colonies on some of its rugged coastlines and islands.

The birds, which are monogamous, arrive at their breeding grounds towards the end of March and pairs soon begin reinforcing their bond with much rubbing of their bright orange beaks. Within weeks, the colony becomes a hive of activity with thousands of puffins flying, fishing, swimming and congregating in giant rafts on the nearby sea and then preparing burrows in the soft soil at the tops of cliffs in preparation for the single egg they will lay. Amidst all this activity can be heard the little growls and squawks that are their unique way of communicating.

Parents share all responsibilities, including burrow digging, egg incubation, fishing and feeding the chick that will hatch around June or July. The main sources of food are sand eels and sprats and catching these can necessitate swimming to depths in excess of 50 metres!

Once hatched, the pufflings as they are known, fledge by making their way alone, usually under cover of darkness, to the cliff tops and then to the sea below.

It would be reasonable to assume that by living in remote locations puffins are protected from many of the dangers affecting other birds. Sadly, this is not the case and they are especially vulnerable to environmental disasters such as oil spills.



The sinking of the Torrey Canyon supertanker and the resultant oil spill off the coast of Cornwall in 1967 caused the deaths of thousands of puffins, including 80 per cent of those along the French coast of Brittany. Similarly, with large numbers of puffins concentrated at localized breeding sites and only a single egg being produced each year, the introduction of a predator, such as a mink or rat, can be devastating.

At other times, something seemingly innocuous can have immense consequences. Paul Nixon of the Scottish Seabird Centre in North Berwick says that officers monitoring the island of Craigeith in the Firth of Forth recently became aware of an enormous dip in puffin numbers – they had fallen from around 28,000 pairs to just a few thousand. A giant plant called a tree mallow was the cause of the problem.

“It had been introduced to the islands by lighthouse keepers 300 years ago for medicinal purposes but had spread out of control and was preventing the puffins from nesting and rearing their pufflings,” Nixon explains.

It took 140 work parties of 700 volunteers to cut down the tree mallow!

Changing weather patterns also have an impact and over the last few years summers in Scotland have become wetter. This year has seen record-breaking rainfall with reports of puffin burrows being inundated with water.

Although Atlantic Puffin numbers have fallen significantly over the last decade some colonies are doing well. However, no one is complacent and Dr Andy Douse, an ornithologist with Scottish Natural Heritage, confirms that the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology is continuing with important monitoring work, especially on the Isle of May.

Although there is reason for cautious optimism, concern is such that at present the Atlantic Puffin is on the Amber list of UK Birds of Conservation Concern. It would be nice to think that in 30 years’ time these wonderful birds may still be found at Auchmithie and many other places too.

*Words and photos by Tom Langlands*





*This Fall at*  
**COLAISDE NA  
 GÀIDHLIG**  
 THE GAELIC COLLEGE



*September* .....

September 21 - 23 **AN DÒIGH GÀIDHEALACH - GAELIC WEEKEND**

Spend a weekend with the whole family immersed in Cape Breton culture! Our September Gaelic weekend has exciting learning opportunities for all ages and skill levels, with top notch instructors. For more information and to register, visit us online at [www.gaeliccollege.edu](http://www.gaeliccollege.edu).

September 28 **SQUARE DANCE with Howie MacDonald and Kinnon & Betty Beaton** 9pm - 12am

Help us warm up the Great Hall of the Clans for the weeks ahead with a lively square dance, featuring none other than Howie MacDonald, Kinnon and Betty Beaton. (19+)



*October* .....

October 5 - 13 **CELTIC COLOURS FESTIVAL CLUB** 11pm - 3am

October 7 **THE CAPE BRETON FIDDLERS** 2:00pm

The Cape Breton Fiddlers are always a crowd pleaser, but add their guests PEI's Chaisson Family and you're in for a wonderful afternoon of music and more!

October 13 **PIPERS' CEILIDH** 2:00pm

Piping is a cherished tradition both here and in Scotland. Battlefield Band has put its stamp on the art all over the world for more than four decades. We are delighted to welcome them for their first visit to Celtic Colours, where they will share the stage with some of Cape Breton's finest pipers.

October 18 - November 15 **FALL EVENING CLASSES**

Wanting to learn how to highland dance, step dance, play the fiddle or sing Gaelic songs? Now is your chance! Visit our website for all the details.



**DON'T FORGET**  
 STILL RUNNING UNTIL OCTOBER 5

**Unparalleled Cultural Learning Experience** including demonstrations in the Great Kilt, Gaelic language and song, music, dance and weaving!

**Great Hall of the Clans Museum** including 8 interactive displays

*November* .....

November 3 **3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL PANE IN THE GLASS FUNDRAISER** 6:00pm

Support the Gaelic College at this year's Pane in the Glass fundraiser. Join us for music, dinner, and a live auction where you can take home a one-of-a-kind piece of art.

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# Back to School

*Celtic Life International editor Carol Moreira looks at the state of Celtic and Gaelic Studies today*

Teacher Melissa Shaw was stunned. After inviting her high school community to attend a lunchtime chat about forming a Gaelic society, she found students overflowing from her classroom.

“I couldn’t believe all those kids gave up their lunchtime – lunchtime is a big deal,” said Shaw, who teaches Gaelic history and culture at Citadel High School in Nova Scotia, on Canada’s east coast.

A few months later, the Gaelic students held a ceilidh and a crowd of 400 came to watch.

“There were so many people supporting the kids I was in tears, realizing we had something special,” the teacher told Celtic Life.

To Shaw, those experiences demonstrated the surge of interest around Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia, a name that means New Scotland in Latin and where more than one-third of residents are descended from Gaelic-speaking settlers.

Nova Scotia’s government established the Office of Gaelic

Affairs in 2006 to work with the public on renewing Gaelic language and culture, but the province isn’t the only place encouraging and experiencing interest in Celtic tradition. For centuries, the suppression of minority languages resulted in them becoming eclipsed by dominant tongues in a process known as language shift, but things are changing as the hand of oppression lightens.

In 2001, the British government ratified the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, finally offering protection to Celtic languages within the British Isles.

In France, the Deixonne law of 1951 allowed regional languages to be taught in public schools, although Breton remains the only living Celtic tongue that’s not recognized as an official or regional language.

“The French Government refuses to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages,” laments Breton teacher David Ar Gall.

Inequality remains, but all over the world people whose ancestors were ashamed of their native tongue, seeing it as representing the poor and disadvantaged, now wish to reclaim it.

“We want to take back what was taken,” says Melissa Shaw.

*For youngsters, it helps if it's 'cool'*

Prehistoric Celtic peoples consisted of travelling tribes that originated in eastern Europe and gradually spread west, probably reaching Britain and Ireland around 500BC. Over time, these tribes often merged with other Celtic and non-Celtic peoples, including the Picts of Scotland.

Celtic languages arose from the same Indo-European root as French and English. Today, six Celtic languages survive and they fall into two groups. The Goidelic or Gaelic tongues include Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic and Manx Gaelic, which are all closely related as both Scottish and Manx Gaelic, which is spoken on the Isle of Man, evolved from Irish.

The Brythonic languages include Welsh, Breton and Cornish, which all evolved from British, the Celtic tongue spoken by the ancient Britons during the Iron Age and Roman periods, (approximately the 8th century BC to AD 410).

Irish and Scottish Gaelic are most alike. Cornish is said to share about 80 per cent of its basic vocabulary with Breton, 75 per cent with Welsh, and 35 per cent with Irish and Scottish Gaelic.

“Today, we tend to see languages as separate, but for most of human existence there was a continuum of dialects, each shading into the next and tending to follow geographical features, such as

mountains and rivers,” explains Dr. Emily McEwan-Fujita, a Nova Scotia-based linguistic anthropologist.

For minority languages to survive, it's necessary for young people to think them 'cool', Professor Paul Moon, an Auckland-based historian, recently told listeners of Radio Australia.

The languages under discussion were Maori and Pacific vernacular tongues, but guest Peter Wishart, formerly of Scottish rock band Runrig, agreed with Moon.

“There's no other way to proceed if one is trying to save these very fragile languages,” said Wishart, whose band popularized Gaelic by fusing it with rock during the 1980s and 1990s.

David Ar Gall says he strives to make Breton 'cool'.

“It's easy with pupils younger than 12 - more difficult after,” says Ar Gall, who works at the Breton-medium Skolaj Diwan Gwened in Vannes, Brittany.

“I try a lot of things, like movies, blogging, singing in Kan Ar Bobl (the Breton Eisteddfod), as well as radio, theatre, languages, games and TV programs.”

Problematically, his students' 'cool' life revolves around French and English.



"We don't have teenage music in Breton- there's no teenage-music band, not a lot of movies in Breton, international stars or television," Ar Gall says.

"But things are changing. I see more pupils playing music in Breton pipe bands and they speak Breton together – 10 years ago that wasn't true. The Breton language is gaining ground in traditional music."

Encouragement often comes from other communities, notes Ar Gall, who learned Breton from his grandmother as a teen after his parents rejected it due to official opposition.

"Recently, we attended Barrafest (in Scotland) and the kids were surprised to see that it was possible to speak Gaelic, play the bagpipes and listen to boy band One Direction too," Ar Gall says with a grin.

In Australia, where more than 50 per cent of residents have Celtic heritage, Dr. Pamela O'Neill of Sydney University says many young people are drawn by "the 'cool' factor".

"For others, it might be a genuine feeling of connection to a Celtic culture, or sheer 'nerdiness,'" says the professor who's based in the Celtic Department, where students study medieval and modern Irish and Welsh.

"My own 11-year-old daughter is learning Irish, and I think she loves that it's something none of her friends do, but she also likes feeling that she's connecting to her family's past."

Nova Scotia youngsters are drawn to traditional music and dance and the story-telling tradition exemplified by the mythical hero warriors of Ireland's Fenian Cycle.

Citadel graduate Brigid Curran finds magic in Gaelic songs.

"The songs are about something specific - you're being told a story about a way of life many hundreds of years old," explains the young woman. "It could be a love story or something about a struggle that feels similar to yours - you relate."

### *Gaelic reveals cultural nuances*

In his influential book *The Celts*, Irish author Frank Delaney says that the Basse-Yutz flagons, dated to the fourth century BC, "display the Celts as a maturing, sophisticating, civilizing

people, prepared to respond to influences from outside their own regional sphere, aware of other cultures, observing those with whom they traded".

Joe Murphy, who teaches Gaelic at St. Mary's University in Halifax, shares Delaney's view. The popular image of the Celts combines mysticism, aggression – they were fierce warriors - and verbal virtuosity, or *craic* as it's known in Ireland.

But Murphy found that learning the Irish Gaelic of his ancestors revealed a complex culture.

"Once I found a couple of old ships' lamps that were black with filth. I started cleaning them and, as I got below the dirt, I realized they were gleaming copper. Uncovering Gaelic culture is reminiscent of that – what's inside is more valuable than what's on the surface," Murphy says.



Gaelic is descriptive, and rich in imagery. And Murphy has learned to love the personal and social values expressed in Gaelic, which was first written down during the fifth century, using the Latin alphabet.

The fact that the English sentence "I have the cup" becomes "The cup is at me" in Gaelic appeals to him. "It shows how Gaelic doesn't stress the primacy of the speaker or owner, but a feeling of shared existence."

He also likes that when Gaelic speakers reply to a question they answer in the

positive or negative form of the verb used by the questioner.

"You have to be engaged with each other," he explains. And he appreciates the fact that the verbs 'to die' and 'to change' are the same – *chaochail*.

"This seems to express a person's existence as part of a cosmic cycle."

### *International connections foster learning*

As David Ar Gall finds, students are energized by mingling with people from other Celtic communities. The energy arises when students see the links between languages and art forms. Celtic peoples were long ago eclipsed by the Romans, but their mosaic lingers.

Recognized around the world, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig College on the Isle of Skye focuses on developing Gaelic language and



culture, but it's not only Scots who flock to this lovely island. The international student body includes people from North America, Germany, China and France.

Many students are motivated by a background in Gaelic, an ancestral connection, or an interest in the culture or linguistics. Distance-learning is increasingly popular, with around 300 distance-learners annually. The college also offers residencies for artists working in music, literature and the visual arts.

Former Sabhal Mòr Ostaig student Dr. Katharine Olson now teaches history at Bangor University in Wales. She's also a former student of the intensive Cwrs Wpan course run at Cardiff University. The course aimed to teach students Welsh in just two months and Olson, herself an American, was delighted to find herself among foreign students who included many from the Welsh settlement in Patagonia, Argentina.

Like Olson, some of the overseas students stayed in Wales, where there has been an increase in language learning, partly because of adult participants.

"The establishment recently of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (Welsh National College), funded by the Welsh

Assembly Government, of which I am a member, has also constituted a substantial step forward in Welsh-medium education, and the provision of classes in Welsh," says Olson. "Bangor University as well as others in Wales, has made Welsh-medium education a priority, and a number of our students do their degrees entirely through the medium of Welsh."

The effective Gàidhlig aig Baile (Gaelic in the community) immersion method helps popularize Gaelic in Nova Scotia. Developed in Scotland, Gàidhlig aig Baile teaches Gaelic through an initial focus on everyday activities, conversation and games.

Emily MacKinnon, Gaelic Director at Nova Scotia's Colaisde na Gàidhlig (The Gaelic College), says that over the summer, staff focused on identifying cultural links to the 300 youth and adults who attended the Gàidhlig aig Baile programming.

"We are seeing musicians and artists taking an interest in learning the language, and learners of the language taking an interest in other aspects of the culture," MacKinnon says. "This is helping people better understand and appreciate the interconnectedness of all parts of Gaelic culture."

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's web editor Mick Mac Nèill grew up

speaking Gaelic on Vatersay, the most southerly inhabited island in Scotland's Western Isles.

He feels protective of Gaelic, seeing it as an intrinsic part of Scottish life.

"Gaelic is part of what defines us and, in a world of increasing globalization, it's also what makes us different."

### *Snapshots*

In the Republic of Ireland, Irish is the first official language and is a compulsory subject in schools. In the 2011 census, 1.3 million people said they occasionally spoke Irish. More students now attend a Gaelscoil, or Irish-medium school.

Along with the students attending similar schools in Northern Ireland, these schools educate over 37,800 children.

In Northern Ireland, Irish Gaelic received official recognition in 1998 under the Good Friday Agreement. Efforts to promote the language show 10.4 per cent of the population speaking it in 2001.

In Wales, the Welsh Language Act of 1993 put Welsh on an equal footing with English. It is compulsory for all students to study Welsh up to age 16, and 20 per cent of all Welsh school kids learn in Welsh-medium schools. It's also taught in many adult education centres. A 2004 survey by the Welsh Language Board revealed that 22 per cent of the population spoke Welsh – up almost one per cent from three years earlier.

In Scotland, Gaelic-medium education is popular – enrollment has increased over 1,000 per cent from 1985-86 when there were only 24 pupils in two schools, to 2011-12 when 2,418 pupils were enrolled in 60 schools. Gaelic-medium education is mostly

provided by special units in English-medium schools, but there are now dedicated Gaelic schools in Glasgow, Inverness, and most recently Edinburgh. The Úlpan system, adopted from the Welsh and Hebrew models and funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig (the Gaelic language board), is a popular option for adults learning Gaelic, including the parents of some Gaelic-medium pupils.

In Brittany, the Diwan federation of Breton-medium schools was established in 1977 and now has 46 colleges (junior high schools) and one lycee (high school).

Teacher David Ar Gall says that more than 70 per cent of Bretons want to save the language and 206,000 people currently speak it. Revivalists have published dictionaries and journals and translated popular works such as the comics Asterix, Tintin and Peanuts.

In Cornwall, in southern England, work to revive the language began in the early 20th century. Cornish is now taught in some schools. Growth of Cornish is supported by groups such as the online magazine Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek, the Magakernow Cornish language partnership and Cornish-language-news.org.

On the Isle of Man, government and the community of around 80,000 are working together on many projects, which will include a new adult learning program.

For children, there are Manx-language playgroups, nurseries and an elementary school. Children, age 7 to 11 can also learn Manx for 30 minutes per week at any of the English-medium elementary schools.

After age 11, some pupils continue learning two subjects per year in Manx at the Queen Elizabeth II High School. Students can opt to take lessons at any of the Island's high schools.



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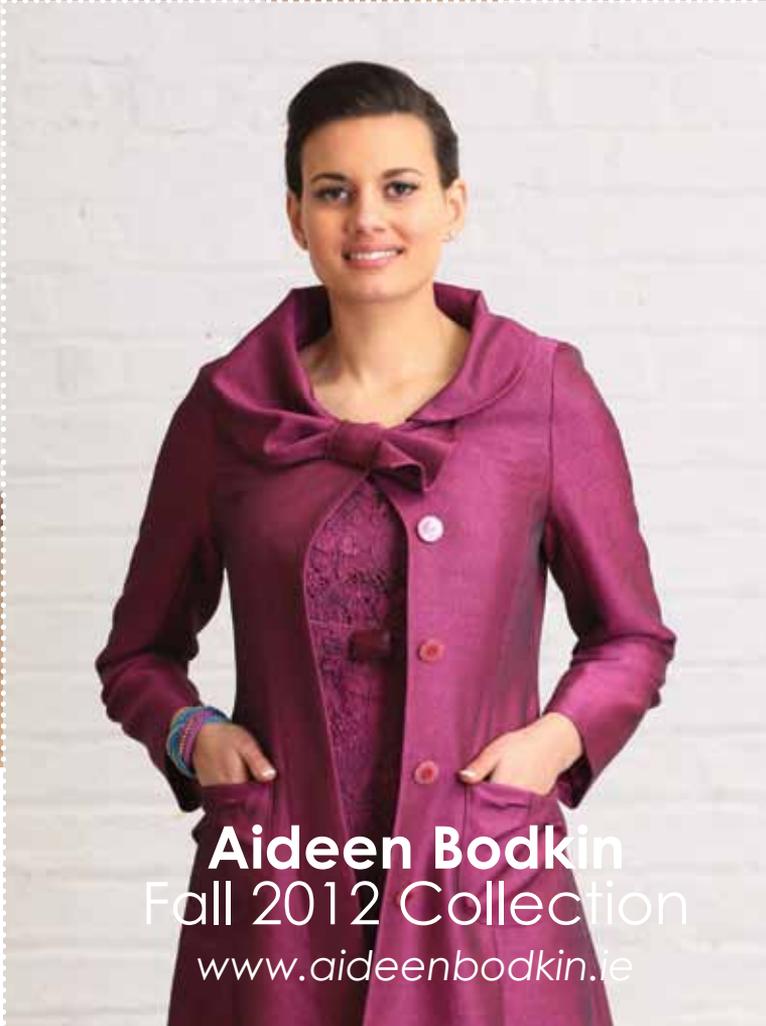
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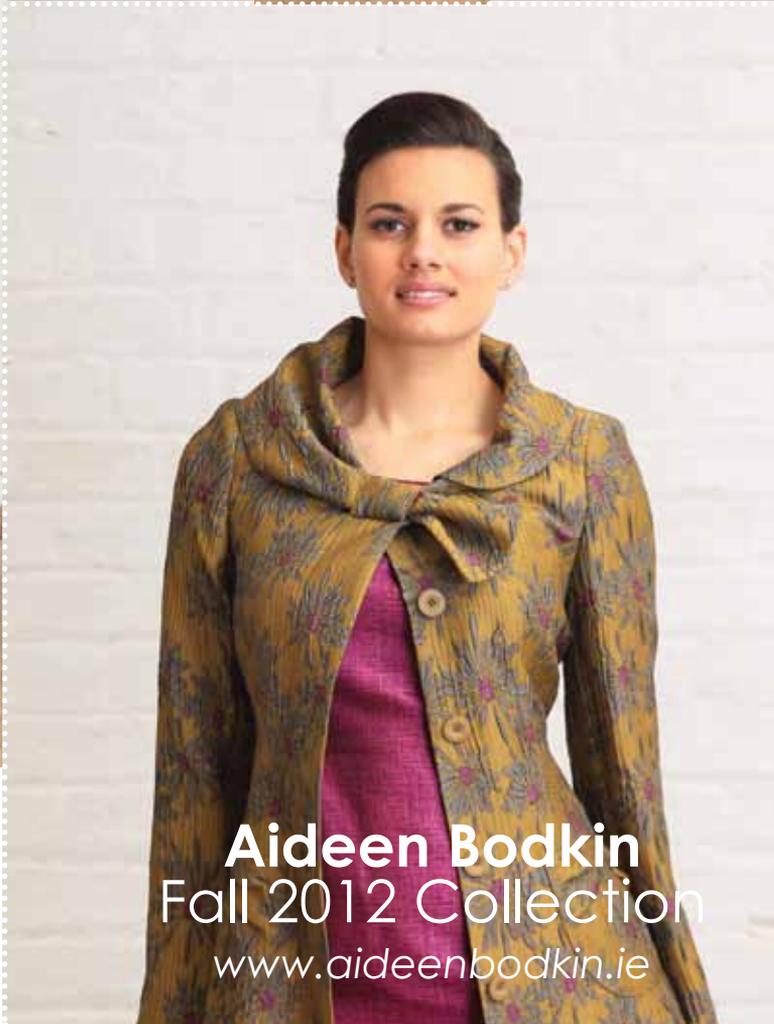
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By Stephen Patrick Clare

# RESHAPING *the celtic soul*

*Young artists around the world are vital,  
vibrant vignettes in a contemporary Celtic collage*

Joel Hanna snaps his head back and breathes deep before launching himself across the smooth wooden floor, a sudden whirlwind of arms, legs and torso twisting and turning under the unforgiving glare of studio lights.

The Vancouver-based dancer is preparing for three weeks of Riverdance rehearsals in Ireland this fall.

“That was better,” he puffs aloud, wiping the sweat from his brow and adjusting his black robe. The simple gown, which resembles a 16th century Celtic courtesan kilt, is worn in homage to his heritage.

“My father is Irish, and my mother is from the Philippines,” he says later over the phone from his home in Vancouver. “It’s always been a somewhat sensitive subject, especially growing up in the Irish dance community. Back then, I was the only male Asian-Irish dancer. Now, that kind of mix is much more accepted in this discipline, but until recently it was really just something that people of Irish descent did.”

For Hanna, and for thousands of other Celtic artists around the world, the recognition that they – and their work – now belong to something greater than themselves is a testament to the times.



It also speaks to the adage that art is more than a mere flowerbed along the road of life – it is a window to the soul, a visible link in a chain of unconscious events, and a mirror upon which we reflect.

As such, the Celtic arts – and thus the Celtic identity – is a living, breathing force, constantly evolving.

“When I started creating and producing my own work, I wanted to do something truly different,” says Hanna, who incorporates elements of traditional Irish dance, modern step, tap, flamenco and martial arts into his own unique *mélange* of motion. “But doing something different for the sake of it being different is pointless. Like making a mess just because something is clean, or breaking something because it’s working.”

He quotes famed martial artist and film-star Bruce Lee, who Hanna says was always looking for “the perfect expression”; Man, the human being, the creative individual, is always more important than any established system or style.

“To me, that means achieving exactly what you want to do, exactly how you want to do it, when you want to, thus reaching the perfect form of expression because it’s you, and yours. And no one will ever be able to re-create it, making your work unique, and different - all because it’s you.”

That creative process, he explains, is as much inspirational as it is perspirational.

“It’s almost scary sometimes. For example, last summer I was invited to create a piece for a showcase called “Choreography on the Edge” in New York, and I spent a long time just exploring music and ideas, until I found the “right” direction and feeling I wanted. I could see it and hear it in my head, but I was terrified because I didn’t know if I would be able to do it. In the end, it was exactly what it was supposed to be, and it felt wonderful, and every dancer in the piece and the audience felt it too - that magic.”

He notes that the decision to merge artistic disciplines and styles was not a conscious one.

“It just happened. I wanted to see if it was possible to tell a story using the language of Irish dance, the fluidity and energy of long-form kung fu, with a rhythmical voice - something that might not be separated or governed by the body’s movement, but would be a key part of it. At that point the lines became so blurred that it didn’t matter anymore what shoes I was wearing; rhythm was rhythm and music was music. To me they are synonymous universal laws, not unlike mathematical equations or Pythagorean tuning. The variables are the people expressing them.”

Those variables are vibrating across the planet.

## Cuba

In Havana, Cuba, 38-year-old Alejandro Gispert leads a group of Galician pipers called Banda de Gaitas Eduardo Lorenzo.

"We came together in 2010 for CeltFest Cuba," he recalls. "Each of us had been studying traditional Galician folklore, mostly music, but we wanted to better understand our full Celtic connections."



CeltFest, which unites musicians from Ireland, Scotland, Canada, Spain, France and elsewhere for seven days of festivities each spring in the Cuban capital, has had a major impact on the group's sound.

"Although our style is firmly rooted in the Caribbean, with a mix of Spanish and African rhythms, we integrate Celtic melodies on top of the beat," explains Gispert, who has traced his own Celtic lineage back to 17th-century Spain. "Our concerts can be quite exciting, with the pipes, drums and dancers. Audiences here have never heard anything like it."

His side project, Muño, takes the equation one step further, adding guitars, flutes and accordions. Given the country's difficult economic and social standing, the challenge to obtain and maintain instruments, equipment, rehearsal space and concert venues is constant.

"Still, this is my dream," he shares. "Music and art are the best way to create a stronger Celtic community here in my own country, and to grow the relationships we have established with Celtic people from other parts of the world."

## Brazil

Carolina Mariano understands the sentiment.

"In Brazil there's no Celtic culture rooted in our everyday life," notes the 23-year-old singer-songwriter via email from Caçapava, near São Paulo.

"There are a few Celtic events that occur in some of the bigger cities - musical gatherings, fairs, shows - but not very many."

Mariano, who cites Loreena McKennitt, Ritchie Blackmore, Orla Fallon, Carlos Seixas and The Dubliners among her influences, says that pursuing her passion in Brazil is a struggle.

"Musicians here aren't united, valued or treated as professionals," she confides. "Music is considered a hobby, a pastime. You really have to love what you do and be persistent to get anywhere."



That determination has paid off for the songsmith. Last year her band Opus 23 released their debut recording - a sonic hybrid of Celtic, rock, baroque and Portuguese infused melodies - to critical acclaim.

This December, the group will appear at a massive musical celebration in São Paulo.

"It is a big Viking - Celtic festival," she explains. "There will be bands of all styles participating, but they all have some sort of Celtic sound. It is amazing to hear the results when you bring different cultures together."

## Russia

Like Mariano, Uzbekistan-born fiddler Keyreel Fidléir Raskolenko is part of a new generation of global Celtic artistry that blends new and old.

"I was trained as a classical violinist, but fell in love with Celtic music about five years ago," he writes from his home near Moscow. "It makes me feel excited like a child, positive-thinking, energetic. It's mystical and powerful, and it has a very long history, so I feel the breath of the centuries on my neck."

Raskolenko's sound is distinctive; a mixture of Russian folk, classical and Celtic tones. Much of the latter is the result of his studies at the Fleadh Cheoilnäh Eireann music school in Tullamore, Scotland, and on the Isle of Skye.

"The older generation of the former USSR isn't familiar with this kind of music," says the 30-year-old. "However, most of my friends like Celtic music, and it's more wide-spread and popular



“I took over 10,000 pictures,” she says of her two-month trip. “When I came home, I exhibited the work in galleries in Osaka and Kyoto. My hope was to enlighten people here about Irish and Celtic culture, and perhaps even to shock Japanese society into some sense of lightness.”

Sait returned to Ireland this past June, re-kindling friendships and taking another 5,000 photographs for a new exhibit that debuts next month in her hometown.

“I place photos of Irish people next to photos of Japanese people in everyday real-life situations; riding a bus, shopping, walking the dog. Despite the similarity of function, the differences in manners and approach are staggering.

“The camera doesn’t lie, and images are an ideal way to reflect on who we are and where we come from.”

## Senegal

Along the lush west coast of Africa, Senegalese visual artist Alioune Douzat is reflecting on his own colourful Celtic connection.

“My family tree goes back to Celts that had settled in Brittany over 2,000 years ago,” relates the 34-year-old painter. “They came to Senegal in the mid-1800s when the area was colonized by the French.”

Douzat’s journey into his past began in 2007, when he was contacted by a member of his namesake clan in France.

“Hundreds of us were invited to a gathering in Rennes,” he recalls by email. “I met ‘cousins’ from Haiti, Quebec, India, Louisiana, Southeast Asia and other parts of Africa.”



.....  
here in Russia than it was even just five years ago.”

By example, he points to the quick growth in Moscow’s Celtic community.

“There are many dance schools and bands nowadays; Irish, Scottish and even Breton music and dances. We run jam sessions and ceilidhs, and you can always hear live Celtic music in pubs. I meet people learning Irish and Scottish Gaelic. The main thing I like about it is that Celtic communities, whether Russian or not, are usually friendly and open to everyone willing to join in.”

## Japan

Photographer Rika Sait was so taken by that Celtic charm that she has made it the focus of her work.

“I live in a very conservative country,” she shares via Skype, “especially my city Osaka, which is a financial capital. People are reserved here, and life is structured and orderly.”

Her first exposure to Celtic culture came courtesy of Irish musical ambassadors U2. A long-time fan, Sait travelled to Saitama in 2006 to see the super-group in concert.

“I met a lot of crazy Irish people at that show,” she remembers with a sly smile. “I had my first taste of real whisky also.”

Her new-found friends left such an indelible impression on the 27-year-old that she travelled to the Emerald Isle the following year on a government grant.

The ensuing family dialogue stirred something deep in Douzat.

“I felt as if, very suddenly, I belonged to this global Celtic tribe,” he muses.

Those emotions emerged in his art; ancient Celtic symbols and imagery mish-mashed with African colours and scenery. The work is vivid, vibrant and sensual. And, he says, it was unexpected.

“It just started showing up in my paintings over time, almost like it bubbled up from my subconscious, like I was accessing some long-lost part of myself.”

## France

Maxime Renault can relate. The aspiring digital media artist from Paris connected with his Celtic past, present and future at the 2011 Festival Inter-Celtique in Lorient, Brittany.

“My grandfather is from the area, so I heard all about the Celts growing up,” he says. “And, to be honest, it meant nothing to me until last year.”

Renault’s experience at the 10-day gathering changed his perspective.

“I always thought of Celts as old-school farts,” admits the 24-year-old. “To me they were out of touch with contemporary culture. It turns out I was wrong. I met the most creative people in the world at that festival; jewelers, tattoo artists, DJs, fringe performers, acrobats, musicians, other digital media artists. It was a virtual Celticpalooza.”

Armed with a stronger sense of self, Renault began designing Celtic-inspired websites, social media pages and iPhone apps in his spare time.

“It’s a huge marketplace,” he states. “Now I’m getting calls and emails from every corner of the world – all of them Celtic people who are fiercely proud of their culture.”

## Scotland

“It belonged to my mother, who inherited it from her own mother.”

Jess Hughson revs up the half-century old sewing machine, a family heirloom.

“It still works perfectly,” smiles the 19-year-old clothing designer from Glasgow, placing a thick spool of red thread onto the well-worn device. “I don’t need anything more than this, really - just my imagination.”

Hughson is busy preparing her latest designs for a fall fashion show in Ayr, just a few kilometers to the south.

“This is a black woolen pullover with hoodie,” she explains, “with red stitching on the pouch and red letter embroidery - perfect for autumn.”

The words *Ah dinnae ken* – Scottish for I don’t know - jump out from across the front.

“My mother doesn’t like it,” she states off-handedly. “But I know it will sell.”

Hughson has been designing individualized items since she was 11. Her exclusive sweaters, jackets, hats and scarves fetch top dollar in local boutiques.

“I get my inspiration from the internet,” she says, acknowledging the influence of Gustavo Cadile (Argentina), Veronique Branquinho (Belgium) and Yeojin Bae (South Korea).

“Styles and trends are now accessible to me, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week,” she declares. “And I can order materials from anywhere in the world. Global fashion is, literally, at my fingertips.”

The result is an array of astonishing, avant-garde attire.

“It’s certainly very different from what we are used to here in Scotland, and it will take some getting used to,” concedes the teenager, “but change always does.”

## Coda

What is clear from speaking with Hughson, Renault, Douzat, Sait, Raskolenko, Mariano and Gispert is that the Celtic identity – as reflected in its art.

“It’s almost beyond definition at this point,” says Joel Hanna. “At one time you could point to the bagpipes or Irish or highland dancing or a kilt and say that’s Celtic, but you can’t do that anymore – in a global village there are too many variables.”

“That said,” he continues, “there are some common denominators that Celtic people share; history, heritage and tradition to be sure, and a real pride in that past; a sense of community and of spirituality; the rhythms and melodies in our dance and music; and, I believe, as we see with the scope and scale of our Diaspora, a strong spirit of adventure.”

That desire to explore and evolve, he believes, is both exciting and ever-present.

“We see it today foremost in our arts, and it is our responsibility, as artists, to add our own voices to those who came before us by pushing our work, and ourselves, to places we have never been before.”





## Anakana Schofield

**Hometown:** *Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*

**Vocation:** *Author*

**Work:** *Malarky (2012)*

**Words:** “I am Irish. I came to Canada in about 13 years ago and am also now Canadian. My mother lives in Co. Mayo in the village she grew up in. The rest of my people are in Dublin. I put much stock in the fact my mother tongue is Hiberno-English, as spoken to me by my mother since I was in the womb. I have a strong interest in an Gaeilge and I think the rhythm and use of language in my work may have been influenced by both of those things.

**Website:** *[www.anakaschofield.com](http://www.anakaschofield.com)*

## FOUR TO WATCH FOR



## Declan Crowley

**Hometown:** *Saratoga, New York, USA*

**Vocation:** *Dancer*

**Work:** *Lord of the Dance (2010 – present)*

**Words:** “I think the most important thing we can do as ambassadors of Celtic culture, or culture on a larger scale, is reiterate to the next generation the importance of actively passing on cherished traditions as the current generation begins to fade. It is up to tomorrow’s generation, something that I’m certainly a part of, to continue to pass on the many traditions of our ever-growing people across the world, and we are well-equipped to continue to take our art and culture with us. The key is to be active in this pursuit.”

# FOUR TO WATCH FOR



## Karina Finegan

**Hometown:** *Dublin, Ireland*

**Vocation:** *Photographer*

**Work:** *Portraiture*

**Words:** “I am Irish-Portuguese. My Mother is from a town called Bailieborough in Co. Cavan. My Father is from Lisbon, Portugal. I grew up in a seaside town called Cascais, about 40 minutes outside Lisbon. I moved to Dublin for college and I’ve been here since. So I guess my “ethnicity” would be Celtic/Latino? Celtino let’s say.”

**Website:** *www.karinafinegan.com*



## The Stanfields

**Hometown:** *Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada*

**Vocation:** *Musicians*

**Work:** *Death & Taxes (2012), Vanguard of the Young & Reckless (2010)*

**Words:** “We aren’t the flashiest or sexiest band in the world, but we aim to leave nothing on the table. It’s a love of music that drives us. Our focus is more refined, but the drive still comes from the same place. Death & Taxes is basically an extension of many of the themes found on our last record. Striving to understand a particular concept, like the economy and where a “normal” person fits within, is a life’s work.” (Jon Landry, vocalist)

**Website:** *www.thestanfields.ca*

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# A Death of Tradition

*Long before funeral parlors, the Irish conducted wakes in their own homes – after the household “waking table” had foretold a coming death in the family.*

It seemed like only a week ago the waking-table had given forth its ominous creak. Untouched or burdened with dinnerware, the long wooden planks of the household dining table had announced the passing of a family member. Now, in the flickering light of the small cottage, it bore the weight of Thomas Kilkenny. He had been a man of tradition, adherent to custom. Accordingly, his wife was observing the funeral conventions of their ancestors, at least those as the church would allow.

Upstairs, Thomas' deathbed articles were being readied for a burial of their own....in the family garden. Also, as was the custom, Mrs. Kilkenny would see that his clothing was washed in the requisite three days before dispensing it to the men of the family. On the wall, the relentless grind of the pendulum clock had been stilled. The hour of Thomas Kilkenny's passing had been marked. Near the door, the large looking-glass had been turned to the wall so that death should not look upon itself.



When Thomas had given his final sigh to this life, two members of the family had thrown open all the windows and doors to the house. His soul must not be impeded in any manner on its final journey. Accordingly, no tears were shed by the family until his remains had been prepared for waking by two neighbor women who were versed in the necessary skills for this task.

By resisting the impulse to cry immediately, the family had given Tom's soul an opportunity to sneak away unheralded, past the sleeping agents of "The Devil." Hopefully, by the time the official mourning had begun, Thomas Kilkenny would safely be in the hands of his Creator.

Tom had stipulated to his wife that he wanted no paid "keeners" at his funeral. He had always claimed that the women who took up this chore expressed grief that was directly proportionate to the amount of money they were paid and, no more or less. And their wailing grew more bitter and lewd as they passed the ever-present pint of whiskey. No, the head of the Kilkenny house had always maintained that the sincere grief of his family and friends would be enough to sustain his soul in death.

His body now rested on the slats of the waking-table. A tall and straight man, Tom had not required to be "pressed" with field stones. Seldom would a wake pass that the disconcerting story of one man's funeral would not be recalled. It seems that he died a bent and broken figure whose body required several stones to keep it in the sober posture of death. As the waking reached its intoxicating heights, a mourner eased the stones from the deceased, causing the body to "bolt upright."

When preparations of Thomas Kilkenny had been made, the family gratefully accepted the news that death had found his fingers "stiff and straight." This news came as a relief to the family. It was believed a pliable finger on a corpse forewarned of yet another death impending in the same household. Perhaps straightening his fingers was the last dying act of a man who believed this; perhaps a conscious effort to spare his family additional grief.

Down in the village cemetery the two neighbors who had been called upon to prepare Thomas Kilkenny's final resting place, paused for a drink from the pint graciously provided them by the family. As they drew healthy slugs from their bottle, they saw the first billows of smoke from the Kilkenny deathbed, which was being accordingly burned near the cottage of its former occupant.

The importance attached to nearly all funeral tasks was demonstrated by the fact that they were always carried out in pairs. On the road past the cemetery, two more members of the family journeyed through the village spreading the news of the sadness that had overtaken the Kilkenny house. Soon the "festivities" would begin. In that part of their cottage used as a kitchen, Mrs. Kilkenny was grating a mound of the requisite cheese for the abundant food table soon to be spread for the mourners.

As the day ended and evening fell around the Kilkenny cottage, the working men of the village, friends and faraway neighbors, gathered to pay their respects and share the sorrow and hospitality of the bereaved family. That afternoon, the immediate relatives of Thomas Kilkenny had shed their initial tears and wails of sadness over his remains. Then they withdrew to allow others to view Thomas, say their "Goodbyes," and express their own grief at his passing.

As the mourners entered the wake-house their first obligation was to the deceased and then to the family. As they passed among them, Tom's wife being first and then in order of closeness to the dead, the mourners stated their sympathy with: "I'm sorry for your trouble." The next stop was usually the kitchen where they were offered the customary clay pipe and tobacco. As each mourner took this, he murmured: "Lord have mercy on the dead".

Some of the mourners also made use of the small bowl of snuff that was at the center of the table. Before the evening was finished, most of the food and whiskey would be consumed and the cask of stout, that Tom used to enjoy so much, would be replenished more than once.

As the kitchen filled with neighbors and friends, and the smoke from the clay pipes made visible layers in the air, Mrs. Kilkenny paused and thought: Two of an Irishman's fervent final wishes were taking place; Thomas Kilkenny had passed a lovely death and his wake would not be a "quiet one." It would not be long before the games would begin.

More often than not, the traditional Irish wake was far merrier than a wedding. Singing, dancing, card-playing and much revelry were always present. The only exceptions being the wakes of people struck down at an untimely period in life—young children, or young parents who were struck down before aiding their



children through life. These were always reserved and somber. The most boisterous wakes always occurred at the passing of an older member of the community, one who had tasted all the fruits of a full life.

The games the Irish engaged in during the process of burying their dead were, to a large measure, condoned and welcomed by the family of the deceased. Most of them were carried out, not with disrespect, but merely as an adjunct to the occasion. However, there were some activities frowned on by families and the church. These involved any nudity or blasphemous dialogue.

Occurring regularly at wakes were various contests of strength and skill. Athletes were always welcome mourners as they could be persuaded to “perform and instruct.” Games like “lifting the corpse” (four men trying to lift another man stretched out stiff on the floor....by their thumbs) became popular as the evening wore on and the consumption of spirits increased.

Not all games involving strength and physical abilities were so harmless. Fighting and brawling were common at wakes. Indeed, it was considered a sign of bad luck not to have “blood spilled” on the day of a funeral. Often, if a fight did not break out during the course of some waking game, a member of the family of the deceased would assume responsibility and start a fight before the body was laid to rest.

This too, was an acceptable ritual until it became a forum for political violence. Groups like the Mollie Maguires made a habit of attending wakes and picking out individuals who were not sympathetic to their views and making them the brunt of the ensuing physical abuse. These practices, along with any involving lewdness, were among those that the church struggled hardest to change.

At the cottage of Thomas Kilkenny though, the ritual of respect and conviviality had passed as custom dictated. Mrs. Kilkenny stood before her husband’s coffin and placed a symbolic tool and other small articles near his hands that he might need in his future, wherever that might take him. As she gazed at her husband for the last time, she took comfort thinking, “At least the road to the gravesite will be a long one”.

Ostensibly for the purpose of “deceiving the dead,” but like as not to defer the final act of interment, the longest route possible was always taken to the cemetery. The procession of mourners began to form amid urgings that they remain together. A space

or break in the line of march was considered an unlucky omen.

Along the procession would be relay teams of pallbearers, all possessing the same surname. These men would observe such traditions as resting the coffin on the ground whenever they passed over a stream, and making a circle around a church, following the path of the sun.

Thomas Kilkenny was a “colourful” man and a tradition that had long ago ended might have stood him in good stead. In years gone by, it was common to have “keeners” join the march and divide into two camps. One group would acclaim the virtues of the deceased, while the other group would castigate him for his shortcomings. This airing of all views, both good and bad, was meant to spare the poor man any further criticism, and to leave the way open for his family to embrace only fond remembrances.

When the funeral procession reached the cemetery and, if the tradition of “spilling blood” had not yet come to pass, then men from the Kilkenny funeral would seek out others who might be burying their own. The Irish believed that the last man buried on any given day must carry water for the dead, and the friends of Tom Kilkenny would fight to the man for Tom’s right to be buried first. In this manner, they would satisfy two customs simultaneously.

As the marchers arrived at the cemetery, they first spread out to the various graves of their own deceased. After offering prayers, they returned to the gravesite prepared for

Thomas. Again, they distributed the clay pipes that are such an integral part of any Irish wake. After the final pipes had been extinguished, the men interred the remains of the man they called Thomas Kilkenny. Women stepped forward to sing the “caione”. Then the priest sprinkled the assembled with Holy Water and everyone prayed.

As Mrs. Kilkenny made the long trek back to the cottage, she thought of her niece, whom she had left behind. As a relative, she was allowed to tend the cottage while the mourners carried out their final duties but, due to her condition, the soon-to-be-mother was forbidden the sight of an open grave.

Her aid and comfort would help Mrs. Kilkenny return the household to normal. Their first chore would be to upright all the overturned furniture—the result of a most traditional Irish wake.

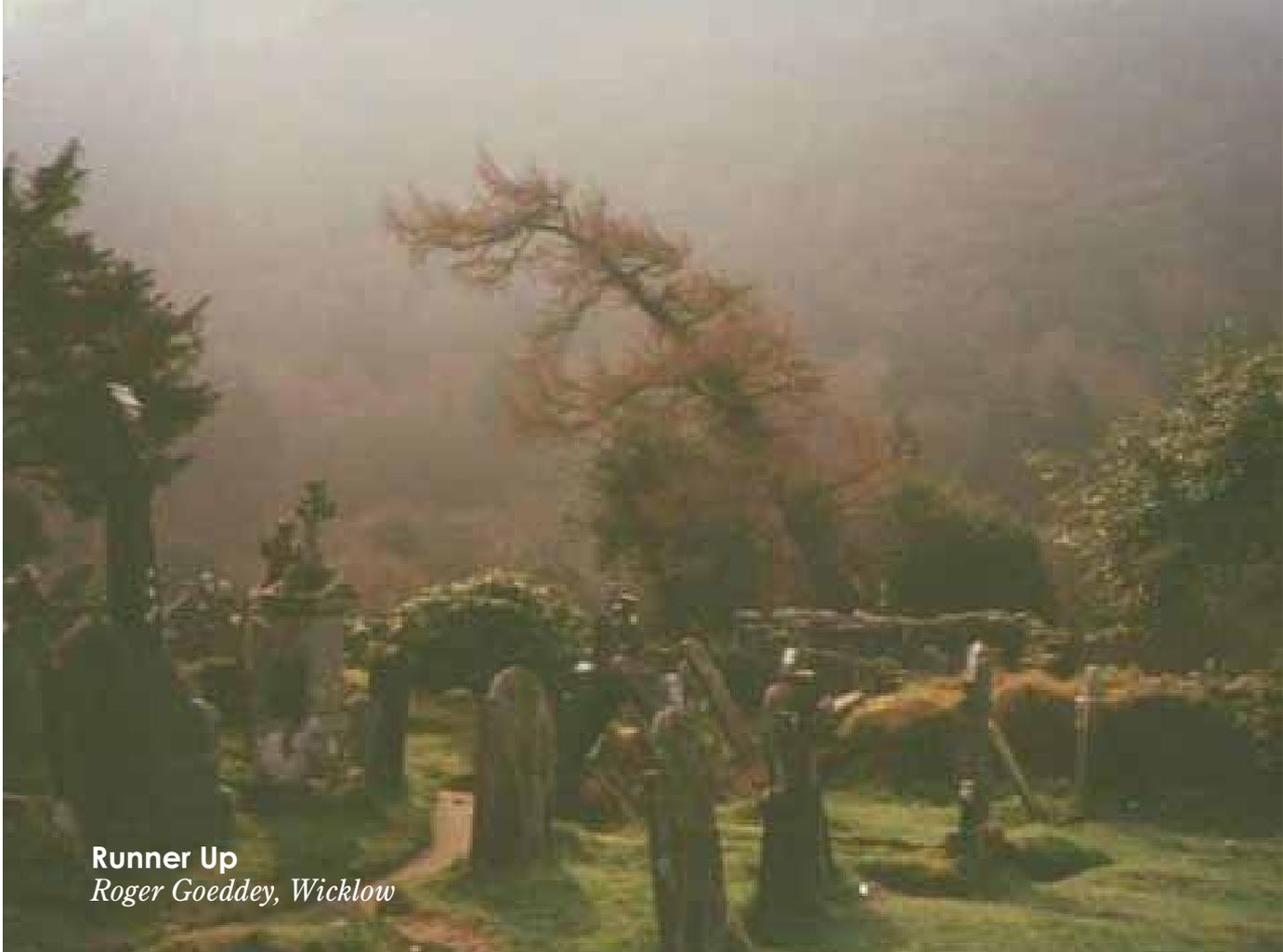
By Ted Conigliaro



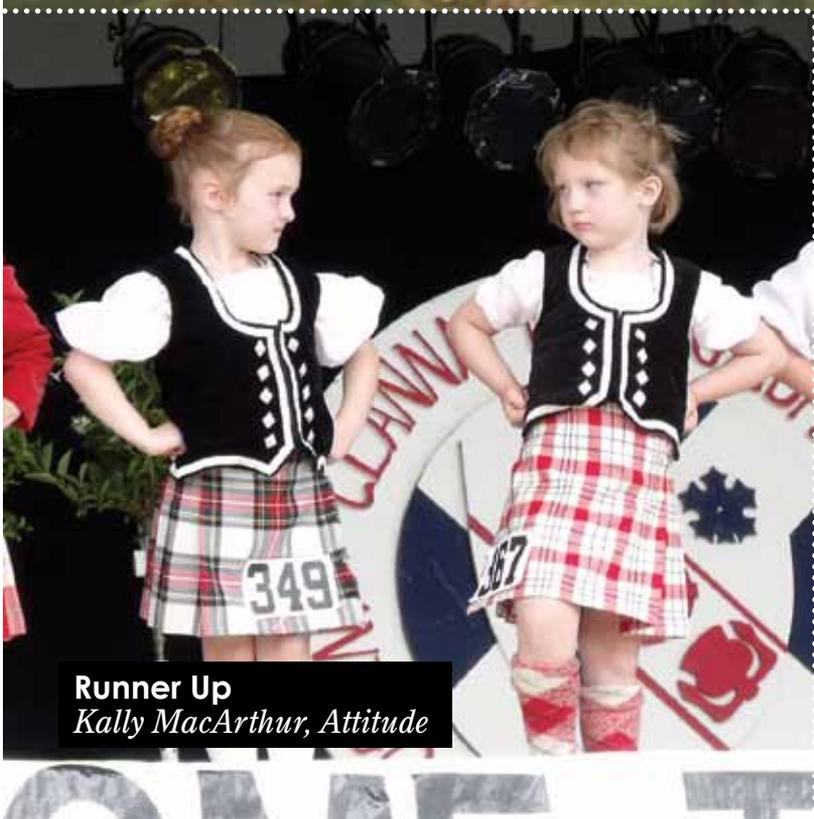


# Winner

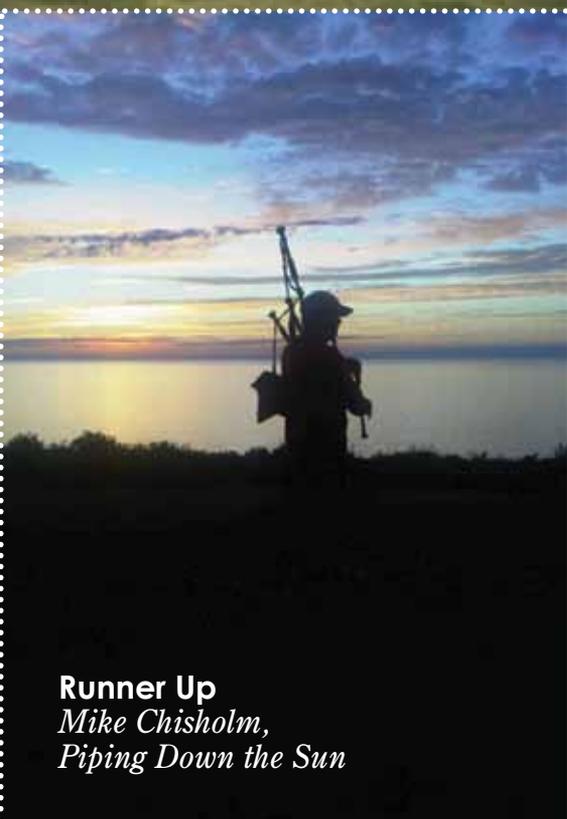
*Shirley MacDonald, August in Arisaig*



**Runner Up**  
*Roger Goeddey, Wicklow*



**Runner Up**  
*Kally MacArthur, Attitude*



**Runner Up**  
*Mike Chisholm,  
Piping Down the Sun*



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# BINGO!

Audiences in Halifax, Nova Scotia are in for a theatrical treat this fall, as Daniel MacIvor's *Bingo!* takes the stage at the Neptune Theatre from October 16-November 4.

The story of five former class-mates, who gather at Sydney, NS-area hotel on the eve of their thirtieth high school reunion, and starring renowned singer and actress Heather Rankin, is being heralded as both humorous and heartfelt - perhaps a knowing nod and a wink to the playwright's Scottish / Cape Breton roots.

"My grandfather on my mother's side was Neil P.S. MacLean, who settled in Washabuck," he explains via email, "and on my father's side my grandfather was Charlie MacIvor, who settled in Iona."

The writer notes that the warm, witty work found its footing in Atlantic Canada as well.

"I remembered a conversation I had with my old friend Steve MacDonald and his partner Debbie Corkum in their kitchen in Cape Breton about trying to make work for an east coast audience that would really speak to them in a lighthearted but true way, and I had an idea about a thirty-year class reunion and I immediately thought of the title *Bingo!* The next morning I came into the kitchen and Steve had already made the poster and put it up on his fridge. It felt like something real already. Within a week I had the first draft of the play."

Both MacIvor and Rankin believe that the production highlights their Celtic heritage.

"We're all storytellers in Cape Breton, and I think that is basically true of any island people," explains the author. "When the borders of your world are not political or simply lines on a map, but rather the end of the land and the beginning of the ocean, we see things in a unique manner; we understand how the light exists in the darkness and we look inside ourselves and into our own stories in a different way than the rest of the world."



Rankin both echoes and adds to the sentiments.

"Growing up in Cape Breton there is a strong sense of rootedness in place. Relationships with the people in our community cross the generations and run deep. Oh yes, and I should mention the wonderful sense of humour. We are able to laugh at ourselves and make light of the darkest times."

Despite their common creative legacies and Celtic lineage, *Bingo!* marks the first time that the pair has collaborated on a production.

"It's been an honour working with Daniel," says Rankin. "I've seen a number of his films and I've read many of his plays and I am a big fan. I effortlessly connect with his writing. Having the opportunity to work with him has meant a great deal to me. I still pinch myself. I owe a great deal of gratitude to him, and I have been in very good hands from the get go. He has that ability to give very clear direction while still allowing you to explore how you might approach each scene. He's a very clever man."

"Heather is a superstar," replies the scribe. "She's one of those people who is so confident in front of an audience that you can't take your eyes off her. And while she's a born performer, she still has a genuine and totally honest access to her heart. And not only that, she is one of the kindest and most generous humans I have had the pleasure to meet."

That chemistry will likely result in performances that will engage, entertain and enlighten audiences.

"*Bingo* is a funny and warm and touching piece, and everyone will connect differently with the various characters," smiles the star.

"Attendees can expect a full evening," adds MacIvor. "There will be lots of laughs and likely a tug on a heartstring or two."



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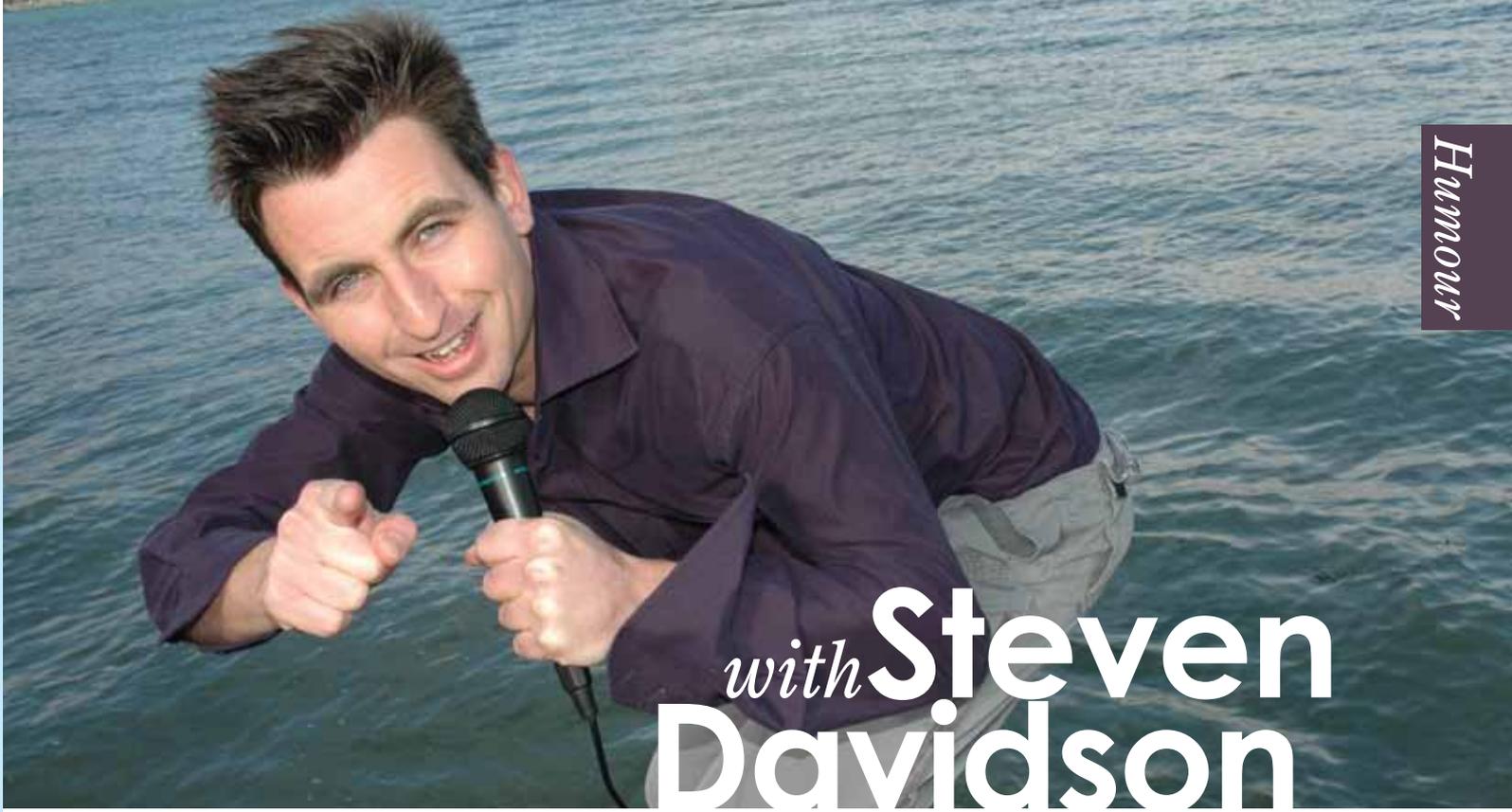
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Christine Woodcock  
Tour Facilitator



with **Steven Davidson**

Each August, hordes of hopefuls descend on my hometown to be part of the world's largest arts festival, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The 2,500 shows encompass comedy, cabaret, dance, opera, music and theatre...and roughly equal amounts of beer and haggis fritters. What these visitors are hoping for varies from the simple aim of getting served at the bar before their designer stubble becomes a beard, to catching a rain-soaked glimpse of Edinburgh Castle through their saltire-blue disposable poncho hoods, to the loftier ambition of spotting a soon-to-be-hit show amidst the flyers thrust by armies of determined promoters.

For the majority of the participants, most hopes and fears revolve around the audience. Unless an act has appeared on TV regularly and recently, lack of press coverage can consign participants to a month of playing to rooms with audiences of fewer than three - two being the lighting and sound technicians, and the other, their mums.

During the Fringe, aliens could land and people would assume they were method-acting Cambridge students. There's no guarantee of an audience even for a 20-metre tall, lizard-like life form firing laser bolts from its eyes. Fringe-goers have seen it all, so if they couldn't also tell jokes while juggling, those aliens would be playing to empty rooms after the first night.

With these odds, being funny is a serious business from the floodlit side of the stage. When you perform stand-up, seeing smiles is not enough, and people inwardly enjoying your work is useless. In exchange for our stories and jokes, we require nothing less than the sweet and noisy explosion of the laugh. And we all laugh louder within the safety of a crowd.

Never before was this as evident as during the preview performance of my first show at the Fringe, in 2006. With a half-full venue five minutes from show-time, my girlfriend headed into the Grassmarket in a desperate attempt to find an audience. Unbelievably, she returned with a group of cheery tourists from Japan and filled every remaining seat.

My elation was punctured two minutes into the show, when I realized that this particular group of tourists didn't speak a word of English. I compensated with exaggerated miming to one side of the room, and hoped that the other side were not put off by each joke being accompanied by a small silent film.

Eventually, the longest hour of my life came to an end, timed cleverly, if parsimoniously, to coincide with the nightly fireworks signifying the end of the Military Tattoo. Then the tour guide approached, as the only English-speaking member of the party. Very respectfully, he said, "Mr. Davidson, they enjoyed it very much, they were wondering if they could come again tomorrow night?"

Thankfully, I did not have a show the following night, but it was an excellent reminder that at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the potential for daft occurrences is unlimited. For those of you who visit without hopes and dreams of fame and fortune, it is the best place to be in the world for sheer choice of entertainment. Just make sure to buy two pints as soon as you reach the bar.

*Comic and radio host Steven Davidson took his solo show Gamesmaster to the Edinburgh Fringe this year.*





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# Gillian Crawford

Gillian Crawford and her sister Lyndsey Bowditch were enjoying a breezy vacation in the Scottish Highlands when they realized there was a gap in the market for a design-led Scottish gift company which also manufactured at home.

Having both worked in the tourism and heritage sector, the sisters knew this was a niche they could fill and they dreamed up their first Tartan Twist jewellery collection that very night over a bottle of single malt.

“As sisters growing up in Scotland, we were always inspired by our rich heritage and the dramatic Scottish landscape,” says Gillian. “That particular autumn, with the leaves changing colour and the heather still in bloom, we kicked off our boots, poured a glass of single malt whisky and settled down in front of a blazing log fire, sketchbook in hand.”

The aim was to combine the best of contemporary Scottish design with the rich inventory of traditional tartans to create high-quality gifts.

“We wanted to create a range of luxurious, affordable and authentic Scottish gifts. We love tartan and, taking tartan as our starting point, we designed the initial ranges, which comprise jewellery collections for adults and children, featuring sterling silver, freshwater pearls and clan tartan ribbons,” Gillian told Celtic Life.

Success swiftly followed. Soon after launching in 2008, Tartan Twist won best new Scottish Product at Scotland’s Trade Fair. Demand from high-profile stockists, such as The National Trust for Scotland and Gleneagles Hotel, soon convinced the sisters, now business partners, of the viability of their fledgling business. They worked with Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International, government agencies which identified them as a company with high-growth potential.

In 2010, Tartan Twist was nominated as Jewellery and Accessories Designer of the Year at the Scottish Fashion Awards, in association with VOGUE.com.



Now, Gillian and Lyndsey are working with Scottish Development International on an export program. They intend to move into other products and have recently launched their designer jewellery sister brand, Lily Blanche. The North American market is within their sights and they have a potentially exciting joint venture in Japan later this year.

“Tartans, plaids and Celtic designs now have high-fashion value as well as retaining their traditional heritage associations,” Gillian says. “A new collection of young designers - such as Louise Gray, Jonathan Saunders and Christopher Kane - are drawing on their Scottish roots and the Paris, Milan and New York catwalks had a strong sprinkling of tartans and plaids this spring.”

She said young Scots are more in touch with their heritage than ever.

“There’s been a real resurgence of the kilt in Scotland among young people who tend to dress it down with boots and a woollen sweater.”

All of which augurs well for two sisters who love Scotland and single malt.

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



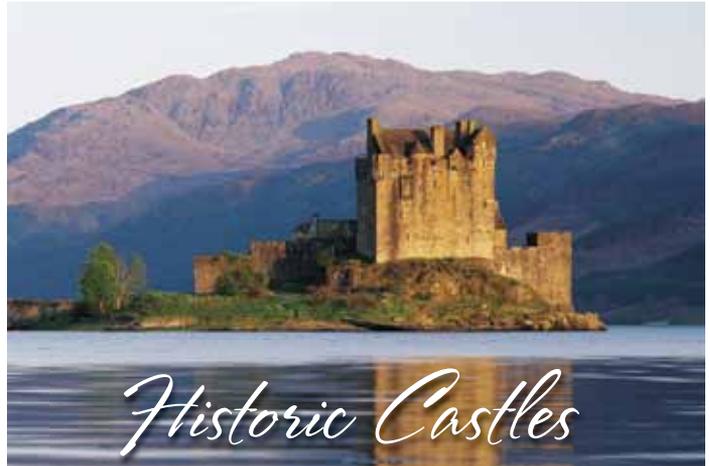
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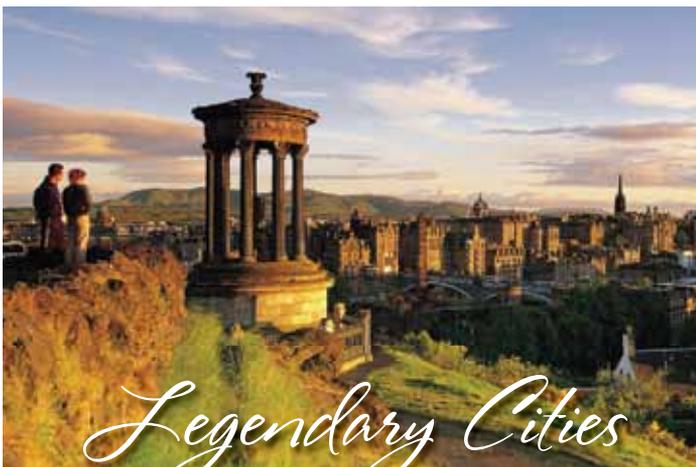
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Cabrini's  
Kitchen

# Baked Apples



As much as I would like to lay claim to the apple as a fruit belonging to the Celts, I must give credit where credit is due. The first apple goes to Adam and Eve in The Garden of Eden. The farm where I was raised in Antigonish County on Canada's east coast had at least a dozen apple trees which bore delicious fruit. Towards the end of September these apples were ripe and delicious. It was our time to shine in the school yard. We would load our school bags with them and divvy them up at recess for feasting and enjoyment. Alas, our popularity was as seasonal as the apples.

## INGREDIENTS

4 apples  
 ¼ cup brown sugar  
 1 teaspoon cinnamon  
 4 teaspoons butter  
 2/3 cups apple juice  
 ¼ cup sultana raisins  
 Maple syrup

## PREPARATION

Wash the apples and core them.

Make a shallow cut through the skin around the center of each apple to prevent the skin from cracking during baking.

In a bowl, combine the cinnamon, sugar and raisins together.

Stuff each apple with this mixture and top off with a teaspoon of butter.

Add juices to the pan.

Bake uncovered at 375 degrees for 40 minutes, just until tender.

Once the apples are removed from the oven, baste with the pan juices.

Serve with your choice of ice-cream, frozen yogurt, whipped cream, yogurt, or sour cream.

Drizzle the top with maple syrup.

This recipe serves 4, double the recipe for 8.

Enjoy! Cabrini



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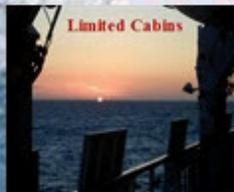


Ivonne Hernandez



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# with Andrew Ferguson

Dram

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No town in the Speyside is more famous than Dufftown. Only six distilleries still operate in Scotland's whisky capital today, including Glenfiddich and Balvenie. Glenfiddich was founded by William Grant in 1887, and Balvenie just five years later. The two distilleries are still owned by William Grant & Sons, which also own a third, little-known distillery Kinninvie. Dufftown is also home to Mortlach (1824), a highly respected single malt, primarily used as a component of blended whisky and seldom seen as a single malt.

**Try Glenfiddich 15 Year;** formerly known as the Solera Reserve, it is a complex and balanced offering.

**Try Balvenie 15 Year Single Barre;** always from a single cask at a higher strength, never a disappointment.

The City of Elgin is another important destination for any whisky pilgrim to the Speyside, and a good base from which to explore. To its south are Longmorn (1895) and BenRiach (1898) distilleries, the latter of which was recently taken over by an independent firm that also owns Glendronach. To the west is Benromach (1898) and the museum (closed) distillery Dallas Dhu (1899). East of the city is the town of Keith, home to one of Scotland's oldest and most beautiful distilleries, Strathisla (1786). But the City of Elgin has whisky attractions in its own right, including Glen Elgin (1900) distillery and Scotland's most respected independent bottler, Gordon & MacPhail. Gordon & MacPhail (1895) in addition to being a prolific bottler of whisky also has a whisky shop that is one of the Speyside's best.

**Try Benromach 10 Year;** the first 10-year-old distilled and bottled after Gordon & MacPhail took over; sweet, spicy and delicate smoke.

**Try BenRiach 10 Year Curiositas;** BenRiach is one of a few Speyside distilleries to make a peated spirit, and this 10 year is a fine example, tasted blind you'd think it was from Islay.

**Try Strathisla 12 Year;** sadly most of Strathisla's production is reserve for Chivas Regal, but this meaty Speysider is a classic.

Further south of the City of Elgin are the towns of Rothes and Aberlour. Rothes is home to five distilleries, of which Glenrothes (1878) and Glen Grant (1840) are without doubt the standouts. Glen Grant is notable for its beautiful Gardens while Glenrothes is the main component of the storied Cutty Sark blend. A few miles further south-west the town of Aberlour is the unofficial home of sherried Speyside whiskies. Of the most prominent three, Aberlour (1826) distillery is the least well known, but interestingly France's bestselling whisky. No more than five minutes on either side of Aberlour are Macallan (1824) and Glenfarclas (1836) two of the Speyside's most respected distilleries. Glenfarclas is the second oldest family owned distillery, and also the only distillery with stocks of whisky maturing from every year spanning five decades. Macallan is the Cadillac of whiskies, both priced and promoted as the King of Malts. Cragganmore (1870) is also of note, a heavy Speysider, and one of Diageo's six Classic Malts.

**Try Glenrothes Alba Reserve;** matured exclusively in American oak, and Kosher, it is soft, floral and sweet.

**Try Aberlour A'Bunadh;** varying from one batch to the next, this sherry forward cask strength whisky is always big!

**Try Glenfarclas 105 Cask Strength;** the world's first regular cask strength offering this big (60%) whisky is always candied with dark fruit and spice.

**Try Macallan 18 Year;** the elegant side of sherry with leather, tobacco and dried fruit.

**Try Cragganmore Distiller's Edition;** this port finished whisky is very chewy and fruity.

Although many of the distilleries are clustered in around a handful of centers, some of them push deep into the hills on the edge of the Cairngorms. Glenlivet is the most famous of these, founded by George Smith in 1824. Tomintoul is also well up into the hills near a town of the same name. Founded much later, in 1969, it is one of the highest distilleries in Scotland.

**Try Glenlivet Nadurra 16 Year;** this straight Bourbon cask Livet is non-chillfiltered and very honeyed.

**Try Tomintoul with a Peaty Tang;** another peated Speysider with a chunky earthiness.



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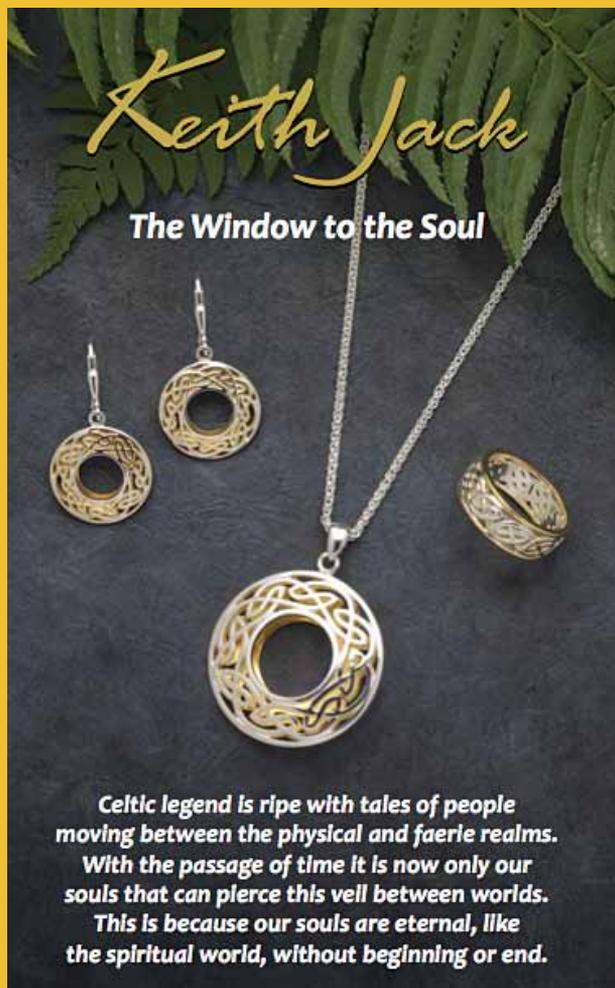
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## Dubai's Irish Village is an emerald patch in a desert city

St. Patrick's Day celebrations at Dubai's Irish Village have become so popular the party now runs a full week. What's more, for each of the past six years, Ireland's famous son Sir Bob Geldof has flown into the United Arab Emirates to start the fun.

Created in the mid-1990s to cater for fans of the Dubai Tennis Championships, the Irish Village allows guests to enjoy traditional Irish food and music inside a traditional wooden pub or outside on a wide terrace overlooking lovely gardens.

The development was dreamed up by Colm McLoughlin, Executive Vice Chairman of Dubai Duty Free, and was supported by H.H. Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum.

From the start, the duo prioritized authenticity and the Village was designed by McNally Design of Dublin, using Irish craftsmanship and materials, which were shipped to Dubai and reassembled on site.

"Even the paving stones came all the way from Liscannor in County Clare on the west coast of Ireland," explains Dave Cattanach, Food and Beverage Manager. "All props and décor items, from the telephone box down to the shop windows' bric-a-brac, are genuine Irish pieces."

The Village opened in the fall of 1996 with a full complement of Irish staff. Over the years, the terrace has been extended and now holds 3,500 people who frequently enjoy performances by the likes of U2, Finbar Fury, The Commitments, ASLAN, The Saw Doctors and comic Dara O'Briain.

Music's importance is demonstrated by the life-size bronze sculpture on the terrace, which depicts three traditional Irish musicians. Entitled The Session, the sculpture was created by Irish artist Austin McQuinn.

Dubai is a cosmopolitan city and, for the large Celtic community, the Irish Village is an oasis in a place where summer temperatures often reach a humid 42 degrees Celsius.

"The Celts consider The Irish Village home," says Cattanach, "They enjoy the atmosphere, the live music, the pub food, the ales and stouts."

Non-Celts appreciate the same things.

"Our clients are mainly Dubai residents and they're all nationalities with a higher percentage of British, Irish, and South African," Cattanach explains.

"Arab expatriates, such as Lebanese, Jordanians and Egyptians, are another big group. We also attract tourists who visit The Irish Village as a landmark on the old side of Dubai."

This July, the Village celebrated its eighth Hopfest. Party-goers enjoyed more than 100 ales, beers and stouts in a final three-day party before Ramadan, Islam's month-long period of fasting. Party-goers were undeterred by outside temperatures reaching 45 degrees Celsius.

"The Hopfest tent was really cool with icy air blowing from the Fosters' fridges," says Cattanach with a smile.

Earlier this year, the Village culinary team was thrilled to make the shortlist in Dubai's new "Green Box" Taste of Ireland culinary competition. The Master Brewer competition was also held in Dubai this year and Village barman Keith Healy won Best Pour, with the honour awarded by Fergal Murray, Guinness ambassador and brew master.

The Village's traditional craft shop is a busy spot. It's stocked with items handcrafted in Ireland and helps satisfy Dubai's appetite for quality Irish gifts and memorabilia.

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# La Taupiniere

*rte de Concarneau - Croissant Saint-André  
Pont Aven, Brittany, France*

It is perhaps fitting that some of France's finest and most creative cooking can be found in the artistic enclave of Pont Aven.

Paul Gauguin, Emile Bernard and Paul Serusier erected their easels here in the late 1800s, attracting students and visionaries from across Europe. Today, the quaint community of 3,000 is home to the world-renowned Pont Aven School of Contemporary Art, and remains an inspired setting.

That inspiration is evident in the local cuisine – simple, fresh and delicious – and nowhere is it better exhibited than at La Taupiniere.

Nestled gently along the rte de Concarneau, and resting in a soft bed of flowers and foliage, the generations-old farmhouse is awash in pastels; the supple greens and mauves are warm and welcoming, and make an ideal backdrop upon which many mouthwatering masterpieces are made and enjoyed in an open-design kitchen.

As expected, the seafood is exquisite in Pont Aven, with local fishermen bringing fresh catch to market daily. La Taupiniere prepares and presents it perfectly.

Le bonbon de calamar, fumet homardine – a sweet squid bathed in lobster broth – is light, slightly seasoned, and pleasing to the palate.

Les huitres spéciales pochées, fondue de poireaux – oysters with poached leeks – is also appetizing; savoury and succulent, you can still taste the salt water from the shell.

Both the La poitrine de pigeonneau rôtie – roasted breast of squab – and Le filet de dorade grise, beurre aux olives noires – freshwater bream smothered butter and black olives – are excellent choices. Each is filling, and yet easy on the belly.

For more adventurous eaters, Le blanc de barbu aux légumes, beurre au pesto - white catfish adorned with vegetables and

pesto butter – is a tender and terrific treat, though likely not to everyone's taste. That said, fussy diners would be wise to revisit this delicacy here.

It should be noted that owner Guy Guilloux is an expert on langoustines, having written several acclaimed books on the subject. It is no surprise then that the sultry shellfish is the house specialty.

As such, the Langoustines panées au sesame – breaded prawns with sesame – is delightful; crisp, though not crunchy, and robust and full of flavor.

The same can be said for Les nems de langoustines, confit d'oignons et mangue – prawns, accompanied by onion and mango – a salty surprise that leaves a lingering and lusty aftertaste, and that works well with the house white wine.

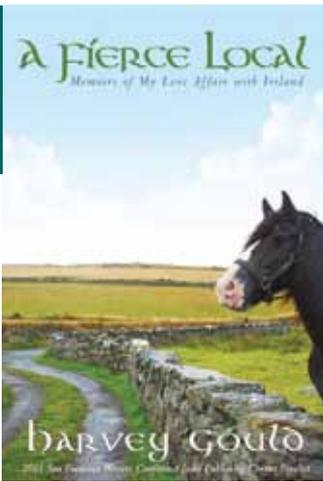
As for the wines, La Taupiniere offers a superb selection of both local and regional whites and reds. It is customary and best that you ask the sommelier for a proper recommendation to escort each plate, as the essence varies with individual options.

And while options are few for dessert, be sure to save space for Le mille feuille de crêpes dentelles aux fraises - mille feuille crepes with strawberries – rich, creamy and scrumptious. No one creates crepes like les Bretons, and no one in Brittany does them as well.

Similarly, there are few places on the planet that present food in such an aesthetically pleasing manner; the French are masters of simple chic, well-reflected in their attire, décor and meals.

Though pricey and popular – be sure to make reservations weeks, and perhaps even months in advance of your visit - La Taupiniere is a culinary experience not to be missed.

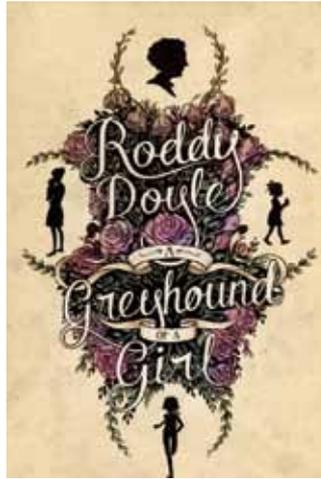
*by Vanessa Monteaux*



## A Fierce Local: Memoirs of my Love Affair with Ireland

By *Harvey Gould*  
iUniverse / 312 pp / \$22.95

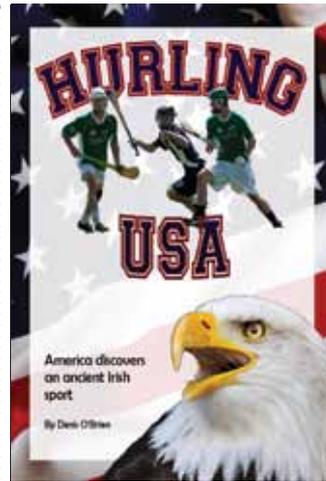
Bursting with quirky anecdote and affectionate detail, *A Fierce Local* recounts the adventures in Ireland of Jewish-American Harvey Gould and his Irish-American wife, Karen. The book offers insights into the Irish character. Traits such as the national love of verbal sparring and the flexibility of local time-keeping are explored, as is the Irish love of horses, riding and hunting - passions Gould shares and which he pursues with energy, even after being diagnosed with a rare blood cancer. At times, Gould's stories are over-long and he begins to resemble a relative who has returned from a trip with too many holiday snaps to share, but readers will likely overlook this as his enthusiasm is infectious. ~ CM



## A Greyhound of a Girl

By *Roddy Doyle*  
Harry N. Abrams Publishing  
/ 192 pp / \$18.95

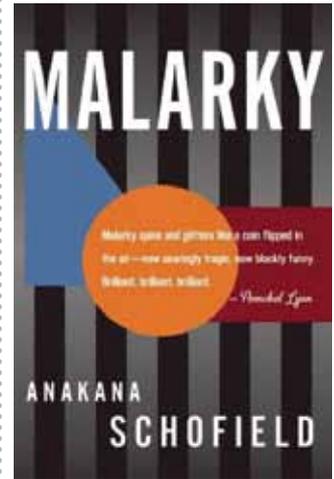
There is no question that Irish scribe Roddy Doyle inspires the imagination, both in his adult novels (*The Commitments*, *Bull Fighting*) and his work for young readers (*Mad Weekend*, *Wilderness*). His latest effort, *A Greyhound of a Girl*, meets in the Young Adult middle. Four generations of females (including a ghost from the past) come together in this sad and funny narrative that explores themes of family, love and loss. Doyle's trademark wit is again well at play, spinning the small, daily tragedies into wry strands of comic relief. Full characterizations, fresh and funny dialogue and a fluid narrative arc bring the book to life for both established and emerging lovers of literature. ~ SPC



## Hurling USA

By *Denis O'Brien*  
Amazon Digital Services /  
File size: 1585 KB  
(print: 309 pages) / \$12.29

Bold, straight-talking, and written with the deftness and focus a hurler might bring to the job, Denis O'Brien tells the story of U.S. hurling from 1800s Irish America to today. His coverage is comprehensive, well-illustrated, and a fast-paced, terrific read. As to the organizational shortcomings in promoting what is a truly exciting, world class sport, he pulls no punches. The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) stateside has been insular and mysteriously retiring in reaching out to promote hurling to ethnically diverse, largely can-do America. The all-American Milwaukee Hurling Club, with a membership of 300 built up in a mere 17 years, is testament to other possibilities. American hurling must get out of the ghetto and go native. ~ Brendan Toland



## Malarky

By *Anakana Schofield*  
Biblioasis / 225 pp / \$19.95

This quaint and quirky debut from Irish-Canadian author Anakana Schofield is not for the faint of heart or mind. The story of an Irish mother/farm-wife who refuses to be outwitted by life is racy, eccentric, hilarious and, ultimately, brilliant. The protagonist, whom the author affectionately calls 'Our Woman', is a shining sun who is orbited by a bold and bizarre supporting cast. The resulting chemistry and dialogue defy the laws of linguistic gravity, as does the minimalist writing style, which does take some getting used to. This is a worthy and welcome work of wonder, and the reader closes the book hoping there's more to come from this young and gifted writer. ~ SPC



## The Stanfields

### *Death and Taxes*

After all the critical and popular success of their debut recording Vanguard of the Young & Reckless (2010), some feared the dreaded sophomore jinx for The Stanfields. Instead, the Nova Scotia-based quintet has upped the ante with a stirring and spirited follow-up offering; from the rowdy opening salvo of Jack of All Trades, through the rolling Mrs. McGrath and Road to Guysborough, and closing with the darker Dunvegan's Drums, this collection is a rollicking romp of Celtic-infused rock 'n' roll that is equal parts Pogues, Steve Earle and The Clash. Best enjoyed at top-volume, the new album is as at home hiking the Highlands as it is blaring across the bar room floor. That said, be sure to catch the band in concert this fall. ~ SPC



## Nuala Kennedy

### *Noble Stranger*

Irish singer and flute player Nuala Kennedy takes traditional tunes to new and interesting places with her latest effort Noble Stranger. Along with acoustic guitars, mandolin, whistles and other customary Celtic instruments, the work is earmarked with elements of pop-infused electronic keyboards. To offset the occasional aural oddities, strong song structures and solid musical arrangements keep the work warm, welcoming and well-grounded. Kennedy's vocals and flute are the real treats here, however; sweet and savoury at once, each soars above the sonic landscape like the sky over Monet's Impression, Sunrise. A bold, but certain step for the songwriter, and one that is likely to bring along a legion of new listeners. ~ SPC



## Plantec

### *Awen*

En homage to their rich Breton heritage – and with a gentle nod towards things to come - longtime musical innovators Plantec find the right mix of past, present and future with their 7th studio recording Awen. A mélange of traditional instruments (bombarde, acoustic guitars) and modern technologies (synths, rhythms) conspire to create a colourful cornucopia of finely-crafted and contemporary Celtic compositions that weave like threads of musical tapestry into a greater quilted whole. By turns haunting, moving and melodic, the ten tracks linger long after the last notes have faded away, leaving listeners with a sense of both the familiar and the foreign. Standout songs include Orin Andro, Dans Ar Seieein Valse, and No Christou Loudeac. ~ SPC



## The Bronze Branch

### *An Craobh Umha*

Fans of the bodhran will be delighted with this debut release from Winnipeg, Manitoba-based singer-songwriter Virginia (aka The Bronze Branch); the traditional Celtic instrument sits surely at the centre of this highly rhythmic recording, driving the melodies of Oro se do Bheatha 'Bhaile, The Well Below the Valley and Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye. Elsewhere, acoustic guitars and acapella take centre stage; in particular, Airde Cuan and Taim Cortha o Bheith im Anon Im Lui highlight both the artist's grasp of Gaelic and the subtleties of singing it well and properly. To that end, An Craobh Umha is an excellent start for the young Canadian artist, and something solid to build upon for the years ahead. ~ SPC



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## theStewarts

on pipes and drums into the wee hours. Fiona was even playing her pipes in her formal white gown. Our two oldest boys, Ryan and Evan, were gobsmacked by the spectacle and wanted to learn how to play the pipes.”

So back home, Dave and Denise enrolled their boys as chanter students with the Transcona and District Pipe Band. Under the instruction of the late Pipe Major George Lawrence, the boys progressed to grade four, winning many awards and medals along the way.

Now 23, Ryan is the Pipe Major of the Transcona and District Pipe Band and competes as a grade one player. He also plays with the City of Regina Pipe Band.

Evan 21, is Transcona’s Pipe Sergeant and a grade two piper. He’s been asked to play with Winnipeg’s Erin Street Pipe Band and compete at the Pleasanton Games in California this month.

Bryden, 17, received many accolades for drumming and took over as bass drummer for the Transcona band in 2008. He is now an instructor. The youngest, Aislyne, 12, is thrilled to be playing tenor in the Transcona band alongside her brothers.

Over the years, Dave and Denise have filled many roles on Transcona’s band executive. They consider the time well spent.

“We’re proud of our mini band when they practice together around the kitchen table,” Dave says with a smile. “Bryden also plays the bodhran while Ryan plays the penny whistle and has a set of small pipes. Sometimes, we have our own ceilidh!”

The music has brought them closer to each other and their culture.

“This includes my father who, after many years, has come back to his roots,” Dave says. “He has a renewed interest in Scottish history and listens to all types of Scottish music which he loves to share.”

Family weddings often bore kids, but a wild wedding ceilidh inspired the Stewart brothers to connect with their Scottish roots. Now, years after their musical journey began, the award-winning Canadian siblings can throw their own ceilidhs.

It was the year 2000 when Winnipeg-based Dave Stewart received an invitation to the wedding of his cousin, Fiona, whom he’d last seen when she was just 11 years old and played the pipes at his own wedding to his wife, Denise.

Dave had been intrigued to see his young cousin play the pipes. His parents had immigrated to Canada from Britain in 1967 and they’d raised him to be North American, but his uncle had passed on Scottish ways.

“My parents became quite Canadian, dropping most things Scottish or English for things like country music and Canadian beer in order to fight being homesick,” Dave explains.

“My dad’s brother also immigrated to Canada, staying in Winnipeg a few years, then marrying and moving to Saskatchewan. My uncle kept close to his roots by introducing Scottish culture to his daughter.”

Later, when Fiona told Dave she wanted her family to attend her wedding to fellow piper Mike Francis, Dave and Denise traveled to Saskatchewan with their three sons and new-born daughter.

“The outdoor wedding included groom and groomsmen in full highland dress,” Dave recalls. “It was terrific, but the ceilidh that followed was a blast, with many guests belting out tunes



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# Annbjorg Lien

The Fiddler

By her own admission, Norwegian fiddler Annbjorg Lien was the town “nerd.”

“I grew up in a village called Mauseidvåg, outside of Ålesund,” shares the now 41-year-old via email. “It is a small town at the west coast of Norway by the sea. There was no folk tradition there, so I listened to radio and recordings of master fiddlers from around Norway.

“My mother sang to me and my brother, and my parents listened to folk music, so there was much music and song in our home. My father learned to play the hardanger fiddle as a grown up, and started to teach me and some friends in the village when I was about five years old. I don’t think anyone there had ever seen one before.”

Lien learned quickly; within a decade she had recorded her first songs, and at the age of 16 she signed a formal recording contract with the Heilo label, releasing her first full-length album just a year later.

Since then, she has toured the world with her various ensembles, has received an array of awards for her playing, and has recorded with the likes of Loreena McKennitt and Mairead Ni Mhaonaigh.

“There has always been a love for Celtic music in Norway,” she says, “so I was familiar with this great and wonderful tradition. Up until 5-10 years ago, we actually heard more Celtic music than Norwegian music in our country. I believe the attraction comes from its heartfelt quality, the love people have for passing their stories along to future generations, and the strong belief in dreams.”

Her own dreams have come to full fruition in recent years.

“Becoming a mother created a new planet for playing, communicating and composing for me. And I have learned more about life, especially that I have so much more to learn about life, nature, and connecting with people - this is what inspires new music.”

That inspiration is evident on her latest recording, *Khoom Loy*.

“The idea was to make an international meeting point between traditions, and between musicians that I am inspired by,” she notes.

“The title comes from a trip my family and I had to Phuket in Thailand, at the place where the Tsunami came in. My husband lost a very good musician friend there, and we were shown the tradition they have of sending up a lantern (a *Khoom Loy*) and with a thought to the people that passed away. It was such a strong and wonderful experience that I was inspired to write words and music about it.”

The *Khoom Loy* became a symbol of the connection between the past, present, and future.

“Which is the very same connection we find in folk music,” she explains. “Folk music also bridges the gap between people from all over the world. With *Khoom Loy*, I explored the idea of taking a musical journey with no rules attached, and mixing different sounds from different parts of the world within the same song.”

“Is that nerdy?” she laughs. “Well, if it is then I’m ok with it.”



## Annbjorg Lien

*Khoom Loy*

From the opening overture of *Tareq*, to the gentle sweep of the title track, to the traditional *Dancing Larry* and closing with the haunting *Psalm*, Annbjorg Lien takes the Celtic fiddle to bold and beautiful places on *Khoom Loy*. Though firmly rooted in Scottish and Irish melody, classic jigs and reels merge with jazz, fusion, rock, new age and Southeast Asian scales to create a brash new hybrid of music. A strong supporting cast of players knows their place, allowing Lien to do with the fiddle what Jeff Beck does with the guitar; paint with sound. An absolute must-have for Celtic music lovers. ~ SPC



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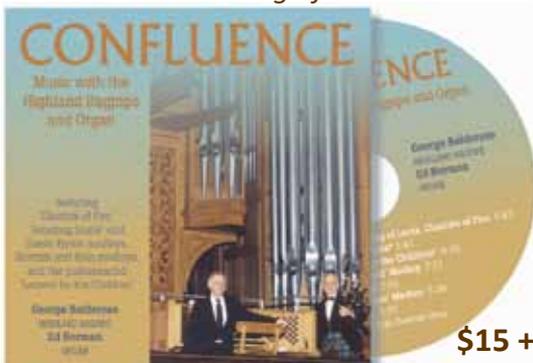
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Also! Newly opened Celtic Circle Café  
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# Shawn Silver

Respected dancer and choreographer Shawn Silver is feeling as high as one of his own fabled leaps. Having established his Canada-based company iDance in Australia, Silver will next take his Irish dance school to China.

Known for his work with Magic of Ireland, Riverdance, and his own touring show, Talamh an Eisc, Silver is credited with reviving Irish dance in his home province of Newfoundland and Labrador and making it mainstream elsewhere.

The most easterly point in North America, Newfoundland has a strong Irish culture. Silver boasts Irish, Portuguese and Welsh heritage and was first inspired by the dancing skills of his dad and grandfather.

He calls himself “a modern dance master” like the travelling Irish masters of old. His many international successes include establishing iDance Ireland, iDance Portugal and iDance America.

Exploring other traditions is a joy.

“In Portugal there is a burgeoning traditional Celtic dance community,” he says. “In Iceland, when we performed in Reykjavik, a quarter of the country’s population came to watch. They’d never seen Irish dancing live.”

Down under, he formed iDance Australia and will spend six months there next year teaching and preparing for the Australian Celtic Music Awards and The Australian Celtic Festival. Then, it’s on to China.

“The Chinese have some incredible dancing,” he says. “We saw a glimpse during the Beijing Olympics. Shows like Riverdance are popular. There’s even a Chinese version of Riverdance but with the music altered to suit the audience.”

Silver’s new ventures are especially precious given that four years ago he almost died in a car crash.

It was a sunny December day in Newfoundland when Silver

skidded on black ice while en route to a performance.

“I felt like I was in a washing machine,” he recalls. “As soon as the car flipped, I felt a deep, harsh thud in my back, bounced several hundred feet, and cars smashed around me.”

He was in a coma for several weeks and woke to find he remembered no one – not even his long-time partner, Bruce Pearce. Two of his vertebrae were smashed and doctors thought he would be paralyzed, but the strong dancer’s muscles in his lower back held his bones in place.

Just three months later, he performed at a Saint Patrick’s Day show. Recovery was painful, but he was accustomed to pain.

“I’ve broken legs and feet dancing,” he says. “Once I knew there would be no paralysis I was unstoppable. I didn’t want to be the guy who used to dance.”

Gradually, his memory also improved, although he now pieces dance routines together, “like a quilt”.

The accident brought him even closer to his large family of 13 and Bruce, who acted as caregiver.

“I remember the fear in Bruce’s eyes and the compassion,” he says. “Faced with that situation, you feel helpless, a burden. He showed me strength, love and support, and became my hands.”

That he is dancing again seems incredible good fortune to the performer who also loves math and once worked as a financial broker.

He tells youngsters to follow their dreams and says dancing defines him.

“It’s a language to me. When I’m dancing hard and moving across the floor I almost feel I can float. I love to share it and I love to teach it. It’s in me and it just won’t leave.”





# Clan Douglas

Being invested as a knight into the Equestrian, Secular and Chapterial Order of St. Joachim was an honour David Arthur Douglas never expected. But the long-standing member of the Clan Douglas Society of North America does feel the knighthood is in keeping with his clan's ancient traditions of chivalry.

"Being part of the illustrious order of St. Joachim, that includes Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, who was a member between 1801 and 1805, is a tremendous tribute and keeps our Douglas heritage alive," says David, who received his knighthood in 2009 in recognition of his volunteer work, his military service, and his personal and professional accomplishments.

"Heraldry and knighthood go hand in hand with the rise of the Douglas Family," the new knight says. "Sir William Douglas (1243-1298) was knighted, as was Sir James Douglas (1286-1330) and Sir William Douglas (1300-1353). This continued for many generations."

Established in 1755, the Order of St. Joachim was first headed by the European prince, Christian Franz von Sachsen-Coburg Saalfeld, and was composed of both Protestant and Catholic nobles at a time when knightly orders usually allied themselves with only one faith. Having witnessed much war, the founders pledged to be tolerant of all religions.

In keeping with the ancient tradition that every knight possess his own coat of arms, the clan's most recent knight petitioned and won approval from the Governor General of Canada for the right to bear arms.

In the Douglas clan, coats of arms belong to one specific family, which meant David was free to develop his own personal shield and crest, but he made sure to incorporate the ancient Douglas symbols that reflect his own life, character and achievements.

"On the shield, I have kept the three white stars on a blue background. However, the centre star is that of the Star of David, reflecting my Jewish faith and name, while the other two stars relate to my two sons," David told Celtic Life.

The blue chevron design represents a square and compass, tools used in David's previous profession in furniture manufacturing and sales and also symbolizing his Masonic membership. The red heart is replaced by a red Early Bronze Age, Near Eastern Oil Lamp, which symbolizes his doctoral dissertation as well as the field of archaeological study and David's extensive collection of this precious artifact.

The gold Heraldic Beast remains the same except that David's is winged, symbolizing world travel, and burns in a lighted Early Bronze Age lamp. Other symbols relate to David's affiliation with the Toronto Signals Band, which is associated with the 709 Communication Regiment, Canadian Army Reserves.

"The new personal motto, inscribed in French, as was the Douglas tradition, means, Nothing without Honour, Loyalty and Tradition," David explains.

In true knightly style, he stresses that many of his clansmen also deserve recognition, in particular, Peter Douglas.

"It should be noted that Peter Douglass, now Regent Canada East, has served the CDSNA faithfully in many executive roles," David says. "He truly is a very special individual."

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





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www.clanlamont.ca



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North America; www.clanyoung.tripod.com  
United Kingdom; www.clanyounguk.co.uk



# Fall 2012 Celtic Festivals & Highland Games Guide

## SEPTEMBER

Calgary Highland Games, Canada  
September 1  
[www.calgaryhighlandgames.org](http://www.calgaryhighlandgames.org)

Appalachian Celtic Connection, USA  
September 1-2  
[www.appalachiancelticconnection.org](http://www.appalachiancelticconnection.org)

Scottish Games Pleasanton, USA  
September 1-2  
[www.thescottishgames.com](http://www.thescottishgames.com)

Virginia Scottish Festival & Games, USA  
September 1-2  
[www.thescottishgames.com](http://www.thescottishgames.com)

Canmore Highland Games, Canada  
September 2  
[www.canmorehighlandgames.ca](http://www.canmorehighlandgames.ca)

Philadelphia Irish Festival, USA  
September 6-8  
[www.philadelphiaceilgroup.org](http://www.philadelphiaceilgroup.org)

Long Peaks Scottish & Irish Highland Games, USA  
September 6-9  
[www.scotfest.com](http://www.scotfest.com)

Trenton Scottish Irish Festival, Canada  
September 7-8  
[www.trentonscottishirish.com](http://www.trentonscottishirish.com)

Syracuse Irish Festival  
September 7-8  
[www.syracuseirishfestival.com](http://www.syracuseirishfestival.com)

Pittsburgh Irish Festival, USA  
September 7-9  
[www.pghirishfest.org](http://www.pghirishfest.org)

Sycamore Shoals Celtic Festival, USA  
September 7-9  
[www.shoalsceltfest.com](http://www.shoalsceltfest.com)

Rochester Irish Festival, USA  
September 7-9  
[www.rochesteririshfestival.com](http://www.rochesteririshfestival.com)

The Beach Celtic Festival, Canada  
September 8-9  
[www.thecelticfestival.com](http://www.thecelticfestival.com)

Ship Bottom Irish Festival, USA  
September 8-9  
[www.lbiaoh.com/ifest](http://www.lbiaoh.com/ifest)

Great Irish Fair of New York, USA  
September 14  
[www.gifnyc.com](http://www.gifnyc.com)

Irish 2000 Festival, USA  
September 14-15  
[www.irish2000fest.com](http://www.irish2000fest.com)

Oklahoma Scottish Games, USA  
September 14-16  
[www.okscotfest.com](http://www.okscotfest.com)

Indy's Irish Festival, USA  
September 14-16  
[www.indyirishfest.com](http://www.indyirishfest.com)

Michigan Irish Music Festival, USA  
September 14-16  
[www.michiganirish.org](http://www.michiganirish.org)

Hector Quay Highland Homecoming, Canada  
September 15  
[www.shiphector.ca](http://www.shiphector.ca)

Gloucester City Shamrock Festival, USA  
September 15  
[www.gloucestercityshamrockfestival.com](http://www.gloucestercityshamrockfestival.com)

Greeley Irish Festival, USA  
September 15  
<http://www.greeleyirishfestival.com/>

Celtic Games of the Quad Cities, USA  
September 15  
[www.celtichighlandgames.org](http://www.celtichighlandgames.org)

Niagara Celtic Heritage Festival & Highland Games, USA  
September 15-16  
[www.niagaraceltic.com](http://www.niagaraceltic.com)

New Hampshire Highland Games, USA  
September 21-23  
[www.nhscot.org](http://www.nhscot.org)

Ligonier Highland Games, USA  
September 22  
[www.ligonierhighlandgames.org](http://www.ligonierhighlandgames.org)

McPherson Scottish Festival, USA  
September 22-23  
[www.macfestival.org](http://www.macfestival.org)

St. Louis Scottish Games, USA  
September 28-29  
[www.stlouis-scottishgames.com](http://www.stlouis-scottishgames.com)

Celtic Classic Highland Games, USA  
September 28-30  
[www.celticfest.org](http://www.celticfest.org)

Louisville Irish Festival, USA  
September 28-30  
[www.louisvilleirishfest.com](http://www.louisvilleirishfest.com)

Cornish Festival, USA  
September 28-30  
[www.cornishfest.org](http://www.cornishfest.org)

Pipes in the Valley Celtic Festival, USA  
September 29  
[www.pipesinthevalley.com](http://www.pipesinthevalley.com)

KVMR Celtic Festival, USA  
September 29, 30  
[www.kvmr.org/celticfestival](http://www.kvmr.org/celticfestival)

## OCTOBER

Southern Illinois Irish Festival, USA  
October 5-7  
[www.silirishfest.org](http://www.silirishfest.org)

Celtic Colors International Festival, Canada  
October 5-13  
[www.celtic-colours.com](http://www.celtic-colours.com)

Chesapeake Celtic Festival, USA  
October 6-7  
[www.celticfest.net](http://www.celticfest.net)

Reno Celtic Celebrations, USA  
October 6-7  
[www.renoceltic.org](http://www.renoceltic.org)

Scotland Connecticut Highland Games, USA  
October 7  
[www.finitesite.com](http://www.finitesite.com)

Seaside Highland Games, USA  
October 12-14  
[www.seaside-games.com](http://www.seaside-games.com)

Royal National Mod, Scotland  
Oct 12-19  
[www.acgmod.org](http://www.acgmod.org)

Smithville Irish Festival, USA  
October 13-14  
[www.smithvilleirishfestival.com](http://www.smithvilleirishfestival.com)

Lowender Peran Festival, Cornwall  
Oct 17-21  
[www.lowenderperan.co.org](http://www.lowenderperan.co.org)

Re-Jigged  
October 19-20  
[www.rejiggedfestival.com](http://www.rejiggedfestival.com)

Stone Mountain Highland Games, USA  
October 19-21  
[www.smhg.org](http://www.smhg.org)

Kapunda Celtic Festival, Australia  
October 20-21  
[www.kapundaceltic.org.web](http://www.kapundaceltic.org.web)

Eisteddfod de Chubut, Argentina  
October 25-27  
[www.eisteddfod.org.ar](http://www.eisteddfod.org.ar)

Galway Bay Irish Music Festival, USA  
October 25-28  
[www.galwaybayevents.com](http://www.galwaybayevents.com)

## NOVEMBER

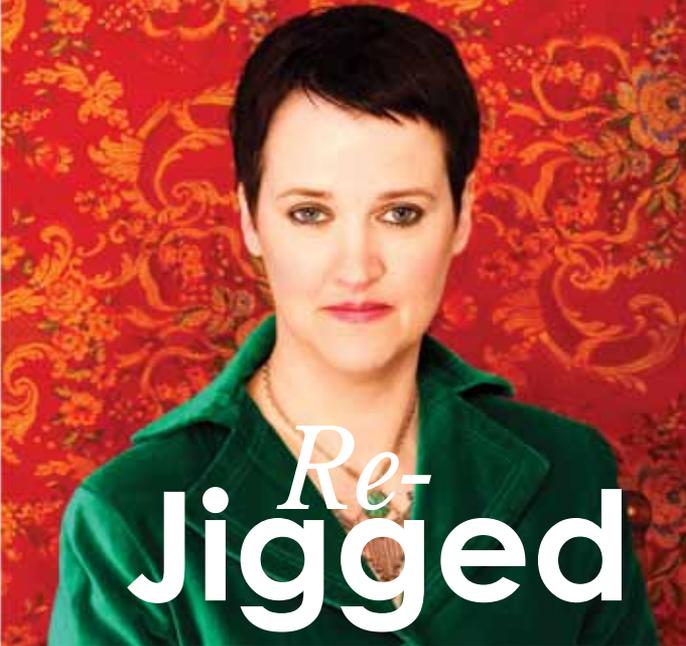
Tucson Celtic Festival, USA  
November 2-4  
[www.tucsoncelticfestival.org](http://www.tucsoncelticfestival.org)

Austin Celtic Festival, USA  
November 3-4  
[www.austincelticfestival.com](http://www.austincelticfestival.com)

Beechworth Celtic Festival, Australia  
November 9-11  
[www.beechworthcelticfestival.com.au](http://www.beechworthcelticfestival.com.au)

St. Andrews Tartan Ball, USA  
November 10  
[www.saintandrewsociety.org](http://www.saintandrewsociety.org)

Dunedin Celtic Festival, USA  
November 17  
[www.dunedinhighlandgames.com/celtfest](http://www.dunedinhighlandgames.com/celtfest)



# Re-Jigged



In just three years, the Re-Jigged Festival on Canada's east coast has grown like a Nova Scotia kitchen party. Growth is a cheerful sign of success, but organizers want a natural evolution for the province's first new-trad Celtic music festival.

"Through our workshops and performances, we explore a fundamental creative question," says musician and festival founder Glenn Coolen, "What makes a piece of great Celtic music or dance in this day and age?"

Atlantic Canada has many residents who are descended from Gaelic-speaking settlers. The festival is held in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and reaches for the essence of Celtic music and dance by juxtaposing new and traditional creations by new and established talent.

"Ours is very much a downtown Dartmouth festival, held in wonderful, small acoustic halls along a gracious, tree-lined street," says Re-Jigged volunteer Elizabeth MacDonald. "It's this intimate, creative vibe and new-trad focus that distinguishes Re-Jigged from the bigger music festivals."

Scheduled for October 19th and 20th, this third festival feels a long way from the first year's event when organizers, still gauging support for a Celtic music and dance festival, were delighted to find their 12 workshops and seminars well attended. Then the gala concert sold out, with most of the audience staying on for the ceilidh afterwards.

"And the event broke even," says Coolen, still sounding incredulous. "All in all, clear evidence of an appetite for what Re-Jigged had to offer."

Coolen got involved after being approached by Gaelic singer Patricia Murray who suggested the two of them "might put a modest attempt at a festival together."

"We were both perplexed as to why there was no single Celtic music festival in a region bursting with musicians and dancers

from the Scots, Irish and Cape Breton traditions," Coolen says.

Inspired by his youthful experiences playing at Scottish events, folk, jazz and world music festivals as well as Irish feiseanna and set dancing festivals, Coolen signed up.

He hopes the festival will continue to expand, evolving to a multi-day event, while keeping the small town, small acoustic hall feel.

The growing interest young people show in Celtic culture is inspiring.

"Nowadays, there are several Irish dance schools in the area, numerous music sessions at pubs, house parties, regular ceilthe, feiseanna, Irish pubs and Irish language societies," Coolen says.

"And the backbone of Celtic music, dance and culture in this province - the Scottish-based traditions of Antigonish and Pictou Counties and Cape Breton - appear as strong as ever. I can hardly keep track of the new up-and-coming fiddlers from these areas."

## Re-Jigged 2012

*This year's workshops include sessions in Irish sean-nós step dance, Cape Breton step dance, traditional social dance, whistles, bodhran and Celtic percussion, fiddle, Celtic harp, trad Gaelic singing, performing and arranging modern Celtic songs, Irish flute, guitar, Scottish small pipes and border pipes, and uilleann pipes.*

*Gala concert performers include Cape Bretonners Mary Jane Lamond and Wendy MacIsaac, MacCrimmon's Revenge, who are specialists in Celtic and World genres, Brian Cunningham, who is one of the world's leading Irish sean-nós dancers and Zeph Caissie, a modern Irish step dancer who toured with Riverdance.*

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



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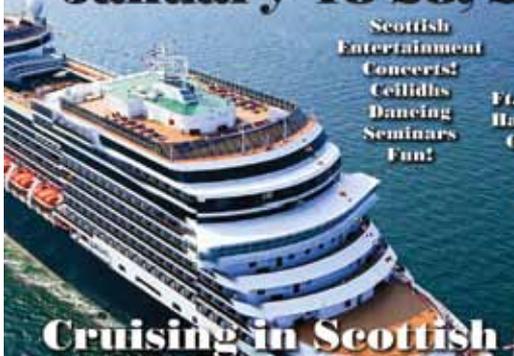
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Highland Village Museum, Cape Breton

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### My cultural must-do list

- Visit the Great Hall of the Clans at the Gaelic College of Arts & Crafts
- An afternoon milling frolic at the Highland Village Museum
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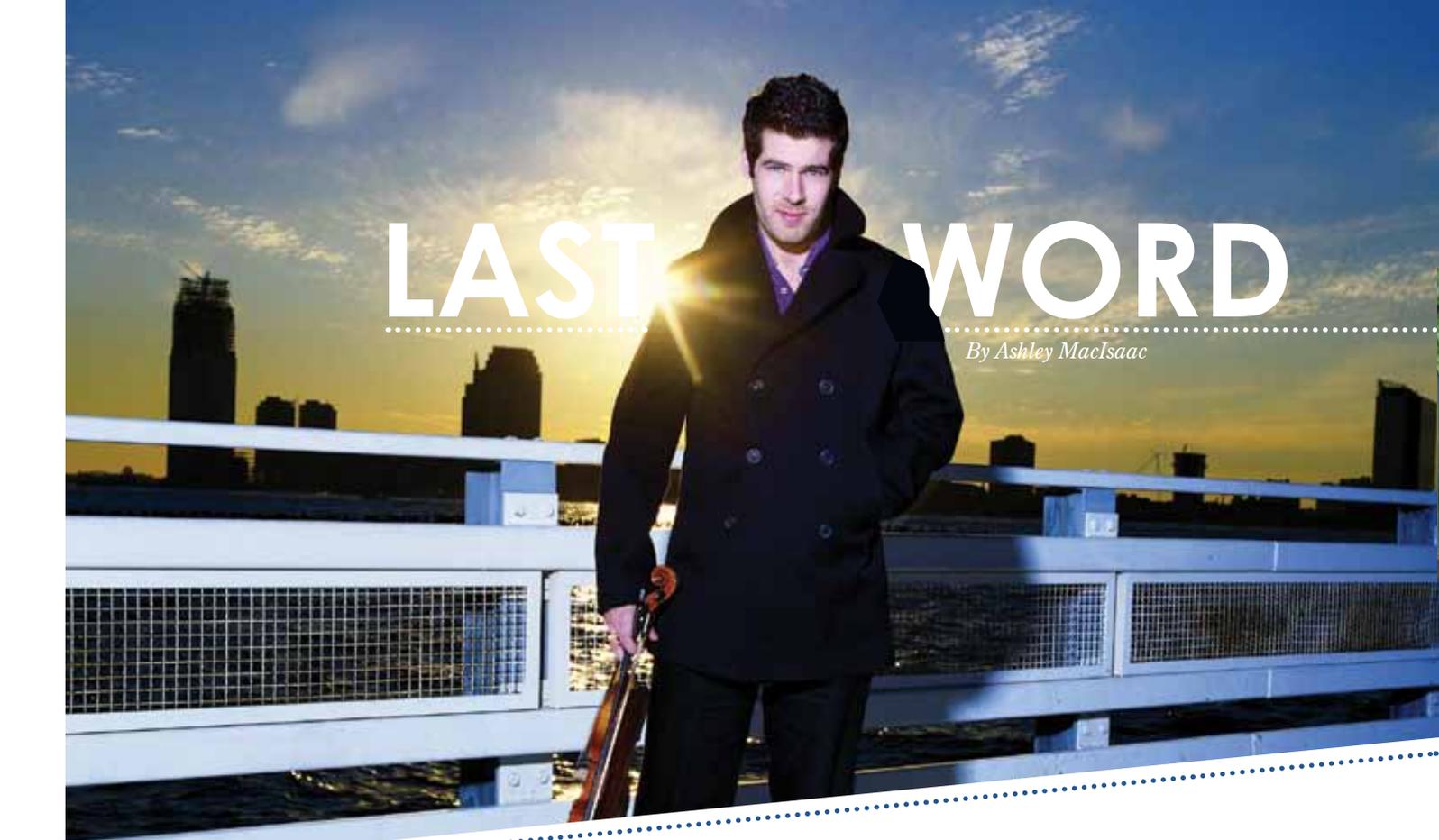
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# LAST WORD

By Ashley MacIsaac

When I first thought that I might be gay, I was already a fiddler, a step-dancer, and a bearer of a great tradition.

I asked myself, how in God's name could I possibly go with this whole gay thing? I was surrounded by family, friends and fans who believed that fiddlers were 'real men', masculine and bold.

Who was I to screw with this stereotype? And, how was I to reconcile a long-held perspective with my true identity?

I have always believed in myself as a musician – that has never been in question, and it isn't today. So, back then, I just went ahead and did my own thing, bringing my music to the world, confident that my abilities as a player would overshadow the whole question and controversy surrounding my sexual identity. If I was unique and good, even great, then people would like me, gay or not. And that is what happened.

Sure, early on in my career many people were angry and turned off by how open I chose to be about my personal life. Other fiddlers, and even their parents, sent me nasty letters with warnings of my descent into Hell and threats of eternal damnation, etc.

But now I understand that they were probably just jealous of my talent and success. Some of those players – some of them the very same anti-gay individuals who chastised me - enjoy opportunities today because of the doors that I opened.

Me? I love people and I refuse to treat one individual any differently from the next. Or audiences for that matter; be it at a Gay Pride event, the opening ceremonies of an Olympic Games or even a square dance in a small village.

In truth, real music fans couldn't care less about my personal life. They don't want to hear about my visit to some really awesome dance club in New York's Gay Village. They want to hear my music.

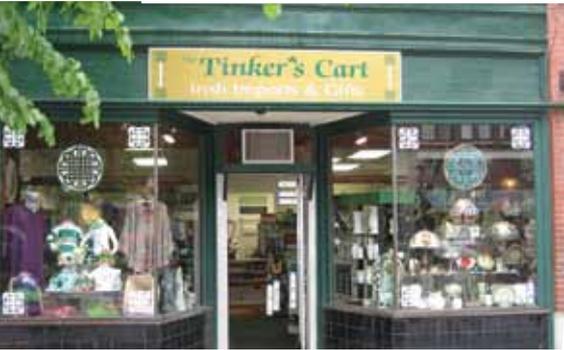
And music is what I do. I still make traditional albums, and of course I still push the limits of Cape Breton fiddling in my pop recordings and in my performances. It is my job to balance and present a modern agenda with a traditional upbringing.

The irony of it all is that while the music of the Celts has been around a long time, being gay has been around even longer.

I cannot overstate how important both have been to my life. Hopefully other young musicians feel as free to express themselves in both areas as I have, no matter their ethnic, cultural, financial, musical or sexual standing. I know that, for me, a fiddle player from the wilds of Cape Breton, each element has enriched my life and contributed to my passion and profession.

In retrospect, I realize that my attitude perhaps didn't come so much from a desire to present my music to the world, but more a wish to discover what the world had to offer someone like me. Gay. The fiddle has allowed me to see the world, and I love it – haters included.





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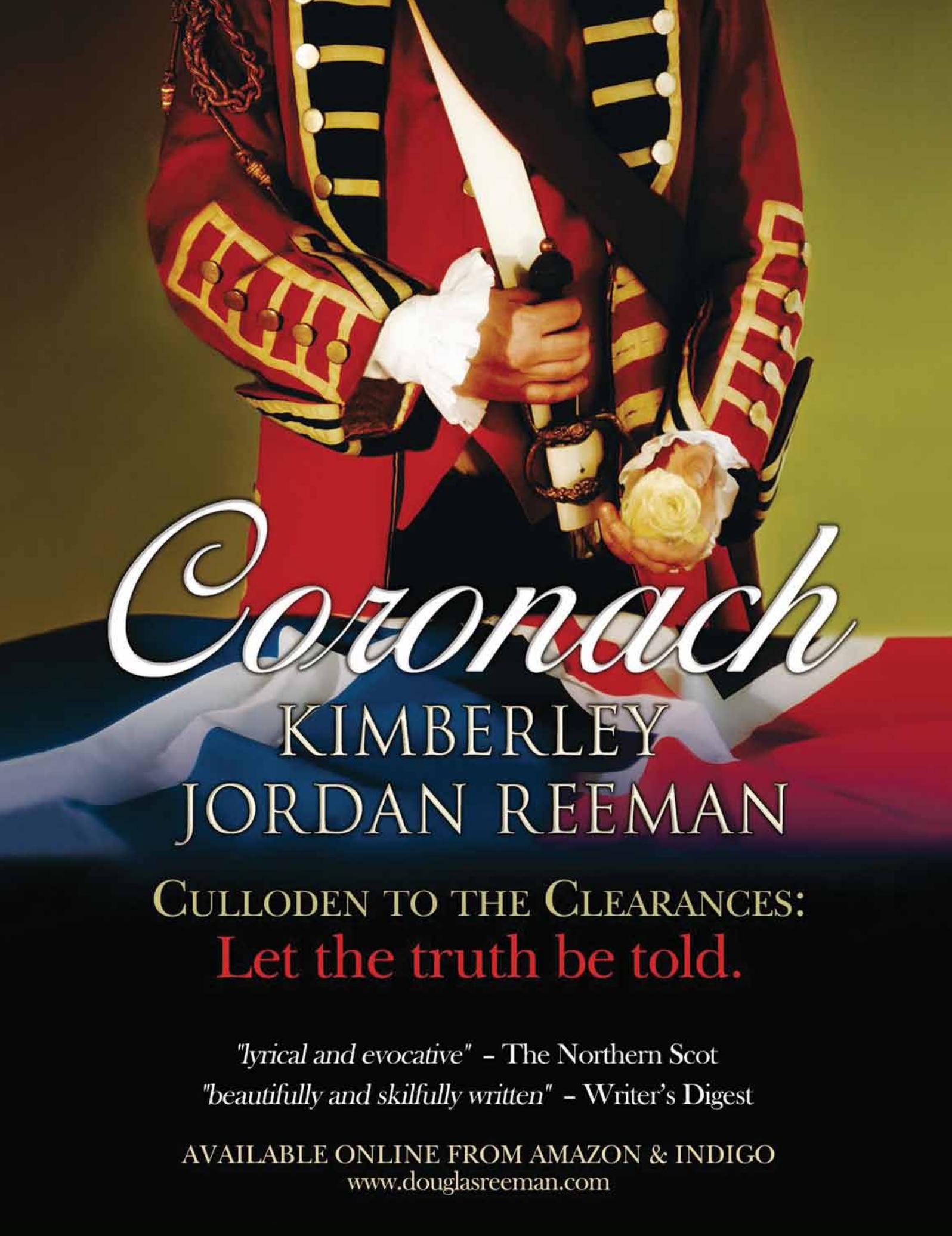
What do those most precious to you really deserve: a chain store or something truly choice? Speak from the heart and express yourself more exclusively.

When you want to make the thought really count, count on your local Celtic Shop. For a list of NACTA member shops in the USA and Canada, go to [www.celticshopsinamerica.com](http://www.celticshopsinamerica.com) or call toll-free **1-866-622-2244**



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A person in a red and gold military uniform, likely a Scottish Highland regiment, is shown from the waist up. They are holding a sword in their right hand and a white rose in their left hand. The uniform features gold braiding and buttons. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and yellow.

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