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Celtic Life

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INSIDE!

NYC Tartan Week

Bradley Cooper

Golf Guide

Celtic Weddings

George Clooney

Irish-American Charm

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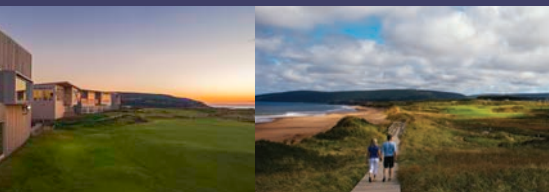
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Fáilte!

Modern Day Seannachaidh

My first recollection of him was at the MacIsaac homestead in Brierley Brook, Nova Scotia, two days before my wedding. Arriving, I was greeted by a melodic voice flowing through the open kitchen window. I remember thinking it a bit different – a bit nasal, a bit raspy. One thing was clear, it was the voice of Jerome Downey. The Irish Newfoundlanders from the Codroy Valley had arrived.

Jerome was in his absolute glory, arms moving like a seasoned spoon player conducting an orchestra, as he sang the ballad “Paul E. Hall.” There was neither orchestra nor accompaniment – just two feet keeping time. He was at his best and most comfortable, surrounded by friends and relatives singing the songs he loved so dearly.

Not until the last word was sung did he stand and extend his big callused hand in greeting, “Welcome to the Ceilidh.” When I left several hours later, Jerome was still singing an endless supply of Newfoundland ballads, not one being repeated. A true Seannachaidh (story-teller) of old.

Dr. Margaret Bennett of Scotland referred to Jerome as “a treasure trove of traditional songs.” Most are of the Codroy Valley but some came with the Irish settlers, such as “MacFaddyn’s Waltz.”

Jerome reminded me of another storyteller – the late Joe Neil MacNeil of Cape Breton. Joe Neil was more the story-teller while Jerome sang accounts of every day events. Both men saw their work recorded, Joe Neil in the collection “Sgeul gu Lath/ Tales Until Dawn” by Dr. John Shaw of the University of Edinburgh and Jerome by Dr. Bennett in “Jerome Just One More Song” and by his nephew, Hector MacIsaac in “A Man you Don’t Meet Everyday.”

The role of the Seannachaidh has changed through the ages but the significance of their work has not. They sang and told stories because it was their passion and desire to see them preserved. Joe Neil often said, “If you were good to sing, you sang. If you weren’t, you told stories.”

Canadian author Alistair MacLeod is a master story-teller with yet another style who has written of life in rural Gaelic communities. “I like to think that I am telling a story rather than writing it”, he once said. You experience this in his classic short-story “The Boat”, through deeply touching images of the tightly-knit culture of the fishermen and detailed descriptions of rustic rural life.

Another unique storyteller is Irish-born Mike Burns of Montreal who has been telling stories of South Kerry, Ireland for more than 50 years. His stories are of fogs, rugged cliffs, farming and fishing and evenings warmed by whisky. Hundreds of stories, centuries old, are told in haunting Gaelic, English or French.

It is incumbent upon us and our Celtic institutions to ensure these rich contributions of the Seannachaidh are captured for the enjoyment of all. These men and women are truly ‘people you don’t meet every day’.

Jerome Downey passed away in early February at age 91. We pay tribute to him in this issue in the Last Word

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



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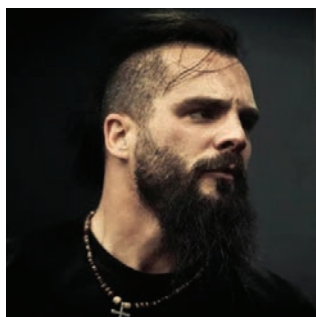
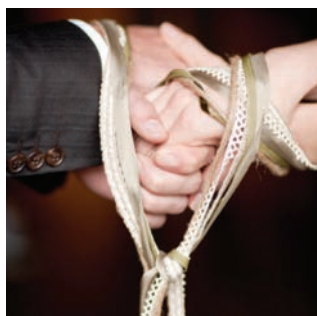
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Our April 2014 Cover.



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DE a |DOL



A beer for Monty Python: Snake Venom

Scottish brewery BrewmElster is offering a new beer that comes with a serious bite. The craft brewery boasts that at 67.5 per cent alcohol Snake Venom is the world's strongest beer. In fact, the beer is so strong that the brewery has attached warning labels around the bottle's neck, cautioning drinkers to beware. The brewery says unlike its other high alcohol content beer, Armageddon, Snake Venom isn't meant to mask the taste of the alcohol. "The alcohol is very strong, but the beer still tastes like a beer rather than a spirit. It's hoppy, malty and very pleasant," the brewer declares. BrewmElster makes its beers without preservatives and uses 100 per cent Scottish spring water. The brewer exhorts drinkers to "ditch the stuffy, old, bland cardboard tasting lagers and ales."

Marvelous Marmite memorabilia

When it comes to Marmite, people either love or hate the dark, savoury spread. Tracy Matthews, a Cardiff woman, definitely loves it – to the tune of 15,000 English pounds. That's how much money she's spent assembling her collection of more than 2,000 items of Marmite memorabilia. Her Marmite Museum Facebook page, which she describes as "one person's homage to the dark elixir," has attracted over 3,700 fans. Matthews began her collection three years ago after winning a limited edition Marmite jar, according to Wales Online. Today owned by Unilever, Marmite was first created in 1902. Made from spent brewer's yeast, and was included in soldier's rations during World War One. Several limited edition Marmites have been released, including one for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

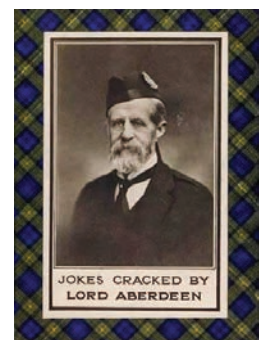


From the farthest reaches of space to...Ireland

Ireland has a new tourism ambassador who's out of this world. The country has enlisted Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield to help promote Irish tourism. The former commander of the International Space Station was brought to Ireland for five days in January. He and his wife roamed the country as "tourists," visiting the sights while being filmed. The resulting three, short films are arranged around themes such as the Gaelic games, scenery and major visitor attractions. Tourism Ireland plans to share the films on its Facebook and Twitter feeds. "Having seen Ireland from space, it's great to be able to give Chris Hadfield a closer look at what Ireland has to offer on the ground," enthused Leo Varadkar, Ireland's Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport.

World's worst joke book back in print

Maybe he should have kept his day job. John Hamilton-Gordon, the first Marquess of Aberdeen and Temair, the seventh Governor General of Canada, and twice Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, apparently fancied himself a comic. Now, The Friday Project, the publishing company HarperCollins has re-released his book of jokes – which has the distinction of being known as the world's worst. Yet according to the Scotsman newspaper copies of the original book titled Jokes Cracked by Lord Aberdeen routinely fetches over 100 English pounds on eBay. During his time in office, Lord Aberdeen inspected the Canadian Navy's fleet three times, participated in the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and travelled the country to meet with people. His online biography from the Canadian archives fails to mention his joke book.





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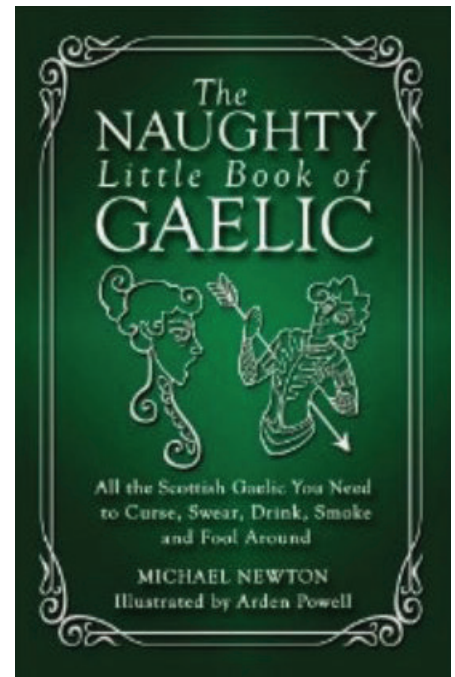
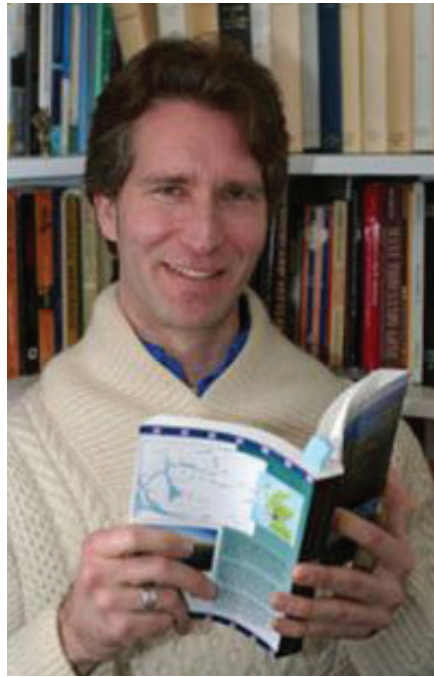
BALMORAL BONNET

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A Book *You'll Swear By*

*If you've ever had a hankering to curse in Gaelic, then Michael Newton is just the guy to help you out. His latest publication is **The Naughty Little Book of Gaelic (All the Scottish Gaelic You Need to Curse, Swear, Drink, Smoke and Fool Around)**. Newton is no longshoreman, however. He is currently recognized as one of the top scholars in Scottish studies in the United States.*

When people learn Gaelic – especially those in high school or college – one of the obvious questions that comes to mind is how to say the typical things that young people say: drinking, swearing, smoking, sex, etc. You won't find many of those words in books that teach Gaelic, and you might get the false impression that no Gaels engaged in such behaviours.

In the summer of 2011, my wife and I were touring around Ireland and I saw a very funny book about Irish curses with hilarious cartoons in a book store, and it hit me that a book like that, that brought together a wide range of taboo terminology and phrases, would be really fun to work on. There are lots of great resources for Gaelic learners, but there could be more that brings out the vivacity and humour of Gaelic life.

Once I decided I wanted to do it, it didn't take too long to get a foundation of material from old printed sources. But it took time to extract more words and phrases from people in conversations, especially since people don't use these

Gaelic words and phrases around people they don't know well. I got some really colourful and unusual phrases by asking people what they knew and by promising to keep them anonymous.

It wasn't always easy to decide what to keep in and what to leave out. The book is meant to be a light-hearted but useful collection of words, songs and lore from a range of Gaelic communities over a long period of time. I want to be inclusive of materials, but not tediously so.

I usually write about academic topics, so being able to work on something so amusing and comical was a nice change of pace. Plus now I have a lot of new, colourful words to use. I'll have to be careful about using them around my baby girl, though.

Language gives you great insight into how cultures work and what their values are. It's very telling that so many English curse words associate bodily functions and sexual organs with shame and indignity. That's rarely the case in Gaelic. Like the Scandinavians, it is more natural for Gaels to express anger and hostility by referring

to death, suffering and bad luck. It is funny that swear words, curses and toasts are sometimes the first and only words that people learn in a non-native language. Even though Gaelic is not widely spoken in Eastern Nova Scotia at this point, many people still recognize and remember these kinds of things in Gaelic.

-The Naughty Little Book of Gaelic (All the Scottish Gaelic You Need to Curse, Swear, Drink, Smoke and Fool Around) is published by CBU Press

- Newton will receive the inaugural Satire Award from the St. Andrews University Scottish Heritage Center for his considerable contributions to the study of Scottish and Gaelic history and culture.

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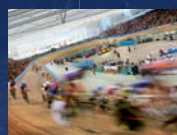
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UP FRONT



Sue McIntosh

These days the Council of Scottish Clans and Associations (COSCA) finds itself navigating a brave new world, one of change and transition, according to COSCA president Sue McIntosh. "Old music versus new music. Facebook versus engraved paper invitations. Computers and mobile devices instead of the back of napkins and yellow legal pads. Young clan members sporting tattoos, piercings and horns on their hats," is the environment COSCA finds itself in these days. Fortunately, with McIntosh at its head, the August organization has the right person at its helm to help weather the generational changes.

Affable, good-humoured and clear-eyed, McIntosh is pragmatic about her role with COSCA and, at the same time, enthusiastic. She leads a 40-year-old, all volunteer organization whose basic mission remains unchanged even while the contemporary world charges ahead. That mission is to help preserve Scottish heritage, culture and history through supporting Scottish American clan and family organizations and other ancestral Scottish organizations that "help keep the Scottish flame alive."

That is, perhaps, easier said than done. McIntosh became COSCA's president in 2012 and the organization's group of trustees immediately handed her the mandate to develop a feasible plan to enable COSCA to deliver more services with long-term sustainability to more constituents and members. McIntosh says the board recognized that the 21st century is nothing like what came before and it meant transitioning from an all-volunteer organization to a fully-staffed, technically savvy and highly communicative resource capable of supporting the hundreds of Scottish ancestral societies and millions of clan folk across the nation.

That led McIntosh to bring COSCA into the 21st century. They began to offer online webinars on topics like attracting new clan society members and how to retain them. And she began to "deal with the frightening new world of social media," McIntosh jokes, "and communicating with younger generations. And speaking of frightening: We offered a very popular workshop on Scottish heraldry. We found a huge appetite for this kind of learning opportunity."

McIntosh comes by her involvement in COSCA honestly. Her Italian-American mother married her Scottish-American father "and introduced my DNA to a different story." Her McIntosh ancestor came from Invernesshire to North Carolina in 1776 with Lord Cornwallis to put down a colonial rebellion. Jokes McIntosh: "That plan didn't work out, but John Og McIntosh liked America

and stayed here." Over generations, the McIntosh family headed westward, ultimately settling in Colorado.

Scottish culture was very much alive in McIntosh's family. One uncle was a piper, Mackintosh Red tartan was draped over everything and as a child at Christmas she received record albums full of the pipes, drums and music of the Hebrides and Highlands. "In fact, it seemed like everywhere I looked, the cool people and my heroes were mostly Scottish."

No wonder McIntosh is on a mission to interest the younger generation in their culture. In her opinion, not nearly enough is being done to preserve and promote the culture. "We have millions of Scottish clan and family members in America who are not connected to their heritage. Many have only a vague idea that they may have Scottish ancestry and surprising numbers have no clue at all. Their children have little hope of understanding what it means to possess a Scottish character," McIntosh says.

At that same time McIntosh notes that Scotland's profile has never been higher than it is today. Tartan is in the most fashionable stores and on the New York runways; Scottish actors and entertainers are in the news, Scottish movies and Homecomings attract attention. "With all this, the organized Scottish-American community ought to be on fire. It is not. We are under-performing at a time of incredible opportunity."

With that in mind, COSCA plans to launch a "game-changing" new project in 2014. The Scottish American Clan & Family Center will be a bricks and mortar home and a staffed organization that will act as a place where Scottish organizations from across the country can turn to for collaboration, support and advocacy. As McIntosh notes, "The idea of being Scottish or of Scottish ancestry is becoming increasingly cool – hip, even." She intends to keep it that way.

www.cosca.net

Sue McIntosh says to promote the culture, the Scottish-American community could be doing much more. She advocates for the provision of high-quality organization training and support for Scottish ancestral groups. She says more creative opportunities need to be made available to more people to tell the stories of Scottish ancestry with truth and accuracy, and for the collection and preservation of those stories. "We need to do all that and more, using new, more effective approaches that engage people of all ages, all across the nation, and keep them engaged for a lifetime."



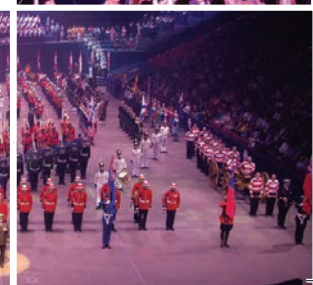
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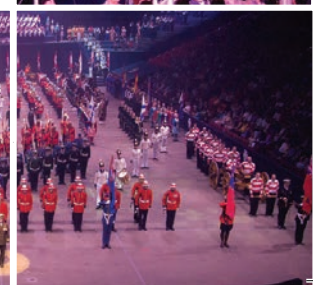
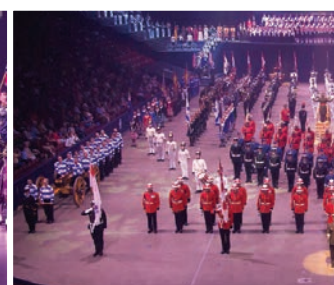


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SEVEN CELTIC QUESTIONS

Megan Leslie is the New Democratic Party's Member of Parliament for Halifax, Nova Scotia. A long-time advocate for social justice and political reform, Leslie has received many awards and accolades for her efforts. Recently she answered our Seven Celtic Questions.

www.meganleslie.ndp.ca

What are your own Celtic roots?

My grandfather's great grand-parents, James Leslie and Rebecca Tucker, were married in Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, and came to Canada in the 1850s to Ontario. My dad says that our family farm was near the village of Benahillie, a place we're not sure how to spell or where to find, but that is where James and Rebecca's births are registered. James and Rebecca were farmers in Grey County, Ontario, which was essentially the wilderness back then. They eventually moved to Owen Sound, Ontario, and started a brick yard. Several generations later I still have family in Owen Sound. My cousin (James) Ryan and my brother James are the 10th generation of James Leslies as far back as we've been able to trace. My great-grandmother's family were Traleavens from Cornwall. They were sailors. My dad said that Poppa always said they were pirates, but he was joking, and maybe a bit of wishful thinking.

Why are those roots important to you?

My dad is a proud Scot, and my mom is a proud Finn, and I've always grown up knowing my Celtic and Finnish roots. It forms part of my identity, and it roots me in my family heritage. It wasn't easy to pick up and move to a new country and start a new life. I like to think I'm a bit more intrepid and adventurous, thanks to this. Our ancestry does define us in some ways.

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

Even though it's been many generations since my family moved to Canada, I still have a sense of that Celtic heritage. Everyone has our Leslie clan crest in their home with our "Grip Fast" motto. We all take pride in our family tartan. Many of the girls in my family grew up Highland dancing, and we all love the bagpipes. I don't know what it is to be Celtic, since we've been in Canada for so long, but I know what it is to keep some of that heritage alive, even if it is in a way that is modeled for our times. I feel like that heritage makes me tough and resilient. It makes me appreciate beauty. My grandmother's favourite flower was the scotch thistle and I think about that often, about how one can find beauty in something so tough and prickly.

How are you involved with the Celtic community?

With political life I don't have a lot of time to stay linked to the Celtic community, and my days of hanging out in gymnasiums at my sister's dance competitions are long gone. However, every year the Speaker of the House of Commons hosts a Robbie Burns evening in Parliament, and I'm proud to attend alongside the other MPs of Celtic roots, and others who like to join in the fun. The Speaker's team makes a mean haggis as well ~ good competition for my dad!

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

Many of us can claim Celtic roots, but how many of us know what that means? We're proud to say we're of Celtic heritage, but we don't know the poetry or the songs or the stories. I think it is important to keep this culture alive as one of the founding cultures of Canada, as part of our history of immigration, and the roots of many Canadians.

Are we doing enough to preserve and promote Celtic culture?

I think we are doing a lot to keep and preserve Celtic culture. There are so many community organizations working on preserving this aspect of our heritage, and when I think about all of the Highland Games and other celebrations, I know we're well served.

What can we be doing better?

I do think that we can do more to include people who are not of Celtic descent and people who are far from those roots. It can seem like some of these events are just for people who are brimming with knowledge of their history, tartan and clans. We could benefit by bringing in people who have lost touch with this aspect of their family histories.

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FACTOR





They're young, talented and fiercely proud of their Celtic heritage

Jesse Leach

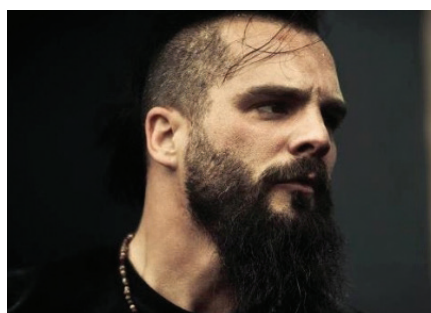
"All of the above..."

Jesse Leach is discussing his Celtic heritage.

"I've got Scottish, Irish and English in my family lineage," says the Killswitch Engage singer from a truck stop en route to a recording session in his home state of Rhode Island.

"I researched my Scottish heritage, which is McCullough, and traced it back to the Gunn Clan and Tartan. I even had a custom kilt made when I was in Scotland. On my Irish side, we were Erleys. Living in Yonkers, NY now – which is known as Little Dublin – has sparked my interest in that aspect of my ancestry."

The thirty-something, metal-core vocalist notes the need to acknowledge the past.



"It's important to understand where you come from – it's a part of who you are. For me, I take pride in knowing that my forbearers travelled here and made a life for themselves. And it's an emotional experience also; hearing my grandmother's slight Scottish accent as a child, looking at old family photographs, listening to the bagpipes or to Irish music

stirs something in me."

Leach made his first trip to Ireland recently – specifically Dublin and Belfast – as part of Killswitch Engage's ongoing world tour in support of their 2013 release *Disarm the Descent*.

"I'd like to get over more regularly," he confides. "When I was in Scotland, it felt like home when my feet first touched the ground. I saw my heritage in people's faces there, and it felt like I belonged."

With a full slate of projects on the go – touring with his band, as well as writing and recording with side projects – it might be awhile before Leach gets back to either country.

"I carry my heritage with me wherever I go. My Celtic roots are at the core of who I am."

www.killswitchengage.com

Celtic Chique

Anyone who believes today's youth aren't embracing Celtic culture clearly hasn't heard the Irish singing sensation, Celtic Chique. The six teenage girls, who live in Ireland's Longford and Westmeath counties in the midlands, specialize in Irish, contemporary and Celtic songs. They've just released their first recording titled *One Step Closer*. "We put our own twist on songs that have survived for generations and that means a lot to people who have connections with Ireland," says band member, Laura Ward.

Aged 15 to 17 years of age, the sextet is thrilled their debut single – *Winter, Fire and Snow* – made it to number 26 on the iTunes chart and to number one in the vocal genre. Laughs Marie Egan: "It wasn't exactly the type of music we had on our iPods at the time, but we now feel a great appreciation and knowledge of Celtic

music. As a group, it's safe to say we're all so close. Everyone has each other's backs, not only when performing, but also in our daily lives."

The girls are graduates of Longford's Evolution Stage School, which prepares students to attend castings, photo shoots and other opportunities. The manager



of the school, Paul Hennessey, came up with the idea of forming the group and selected its members based on their age and vocal ranges. "We went from not really knowing each other to a team effort with a lot of time spent together," muses Andrea Glennon.

As a group, the girls agree that more youth their age should be exposed to Celtic culture and that a certain percentage of young people aren't aware of its value and beauty and therefore aren't able to appreciate it as much as it deserves. Opines Aisling Cahill: "I think more air time for Celtic music on radio stations would be a good place to start! Some variation would be refreshing, especially if it meant promoting the Celtic culture."

www.celticchique.com

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Heartbeat of Home

It's mid-winter in Toronto, and John McColgan is feeling the deep freeze.

"Aye, it's nippy to be sure," laughs the Irish creator of Riverdance, who is in the Ontario capital for the North American debut of his newest dance extravaganza Heartbeat of Home.

"I've been here several times before," he adds, "and it seems like there's always a lot of snow and cold when I visit. I've started to wonder if it's like this year round."

While McColgan has endured, and even embraced, the frigid temperatures of central Canada, early reviews of HOH's run at Toronto's Ed Mirvish Theatre have likely warmed his heart.

"A spectacular celebration of the human spirit that provides non-stop entertainment as well," says the Toronto Star, adding, "Heartbeat of Home is an exuberant, sexy tribute to the diversity of dance."

Broadway Baby upped the honours, claiming, "It's everything a great theatre production should be. Creative, invigorating, sexy and inspiring, this is a show with a clear vision, even better execution, and more than the requisite amount of heart..."

The accolades continued to pour in during the seven week run, with everyone from the Globe and Mail and the CBC to Now Magazine and Global TV praising the two-hour spectacle for its emotive choreography and stirring world-beat rhythms.

Similar acclaim followed both the show's premier in Dublin last fall, and a subsequent tour of China.

"As long as the audiences enjoy it," sighs McColgan. "Then I feel that sense of relief and reward. Those are the folks we answer to."

"And, ultimately, we as a team need to feel challenged with the work also – that it is stretching our artistic abilities and pushing us to new creative places."

It was that desire for growth – a yearning for new direction – that inspired McColgan and his wife, producer Moya Doherty, to create Heartbeat of Home.

"We had been with Riverdance since 1995," he shares. "Certainly that show enjoyed great success, and we were satisfied that we took it as far as it could



go. And I had always told myself that the day I was satisfied with something was the day to let it go."

Though, like its predecessor, Heartbeat of Home finds its footing in the Emerald Isle, the new work is a step in other directions.

"It's Irish dancing for the next generation," explains McColgan. "We found the best performers from all over the world through online auditions; over 200 young men and women applied, and more than two million fans selected twenty of the dancers."

After in-person auditions in Dublin, a final ten participants were chosen to appear in the show.

"These young men and women aren't necessarily of Irish ancestry, but they all have a passion for Irish dance. Interestingly, many of them told us that they were inspired to start dancing after seeing Riverdance."

The result is a multi-cultural, multi-faceted experience.

"I believe that the show is more reflective of modern Ireland," continues McColgan. "Dublin, in particular, is a very different city than it was just a generation ago; culturally, socially and economically."

The audiences have changed also.

"Riverdance opened the door on traditional Irish culture to millions of people around the world," he notes. "Heartbeat of Home might have them looking at that culture a little differently – perhaps with a greater global perspective."

Over the coming months, McColgan, cast and crew will be in Chicago, Detroit and Boston.

"There's a few Irish in those towns," he jokes, "and I'm sure they will love the show."

"Here's hoping the weather will be a little warmer..."

www.heartbeatofhome.com



Heartbeat of Home features 39 on-stage dancers and musicians

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Vincent Pratchett

Fire-fighter's first book gets a warm reception

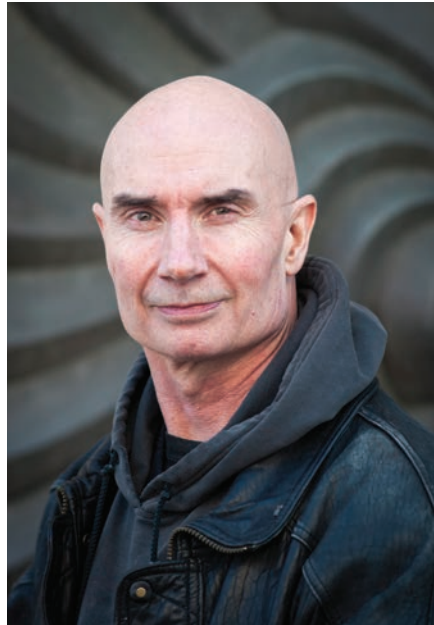
Toronto writer Vincent Pratchett comes by his story-telling ability naturally. He was born into the Irish tradition of tale-weaving on his mother's side, with accomplished writers on his (English) father's side. In fact, renowned fantasy novelist Terry Pratchett is his first cousin once removed. The latter Pratchett is celebrated for his Discworld series, of which there are some 40 volumes, and for which he received a knighthood, probably for economic contribution to his country as much as anything else. Terry Pratchett's books have sold over 85 million copies in 37 languages.

You would think with that kind of talent in the family, it might be daunting for Vincent Pratchett to have applied himself to writing. As it turns out, Vincent has never even met Terry, just heard about him. Rather dismissively, he says: "We're related, but that's the (English) writer side. I'm more of a story-teller. That comes from the Irish side."

Bold words indeed for someone who's just published his first book. But *The Raven's Warrior*, the story of a Celtic warrior nabbed by Viking raiders and sold to a wizard and a witch, is doing impressively all on its own – without any assistance from Sir Terry. The *Raven's Warrior* won USA Book News' 2013 Best Book Award for visionary fiction.

But that's small time compared to the news that *The Raven's Warrior* was made a World Book Night Selection. That means on Shakespeare's birthday, April 23, Pratchett's novel will be one of 38 that will be handed out for free to over half-a-

million people in the U.S. who either read occasionally or not at all. Not too shabby for a 58-year-old firefighter who only decided a few years ago to start hammering out a novel after one day writing a magazine article.



As it turns out, it's not Sir Terry with his multi-million book sales who instilled a love of story-telling into Pratchett, but rather an aunt living on a farm in Ireland's rugged County Mayo. At age 18, Pratchett lived with his Aunt Evelyn for a year-and-a-half. "Being on that land, raising crops and looking after cattle, and realizing my people had done that for generations, made me feel connected to my ancestors.

And my aunt was teaching me everything about the Irish culture and history."

Among other things, his aunt told the susceptible Pratchett about the Storytellers, men who once walked the width and breadth of Ireland for a buttered slice of soda bread, a drop of whiskey, and an audience. "The stories surround them like the air they breathe," she told Pratchett.

After Ireland, Pratchett improbably ended up in Hong Kong, where he worked as a bouncer for a prominent nightclub, and fighting in competitive martial arts matches, before breaking into the Hong Kong film industry as an actor and stuntman, although any films he worked on are obscure enough to escape notice on the Internet Movie Database (IMDB.com). Arriving back in Toronto, Pratchett answered an ad recruiting for firefighters. "I went from fighting people for a living to fighting fires," he says. "But the principles are similar in that you're dealing with a situation that's rapidly spinning out of control and trying to impose order on the chaos."

The Toronto Star recently joked that it's a good thing Pratchett is a fire-fighter because "his career as an author is liable to get red hot in 2014." For his part, the fledgling author isn't ditching battling the flames yet, although he is already penning a follow-up to *The Raven's Warrior*, noting that the book's protagonist has a long way to go from where he currently stands. "He has to get back to his roots. He has to get back to Ireland."

by Ivan Hansen



Vincent Pratchett's book, *The Raven's Warrior*,

finds itself in good company for World Book Night. Other authors include Scott Turow, Michael Pollan, Cheryl Strayed, Garrison Kiellor, Carl Hiaasen, Malcolm Gladwell, Joseph Heller, Agatha Christie, and Anthony Bourdain.

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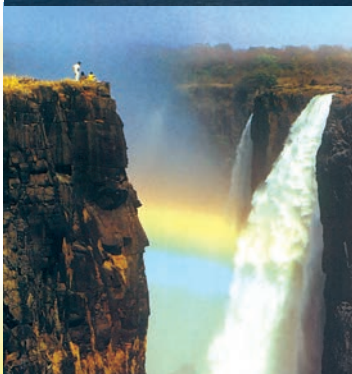
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Rotorua, NEW ZEALAND	Hotel Overnight
Rotorua, NEW ZEALAND	Hotel Overnight
Auckland, NEW ZEALAND	Embark 6:00 pm
Tauranga, NEW ZEALAND	8:00 am 5:30 pm
Cruise Coast of New Zealand	~ ~
Akaroa, NEW ZEALAND	8:00 am 6:00 pm
Dunedin, NEW ZEALAND	8:00 am 6:00 pm
Cruise Milford Sound	9:00 am 7:00 pm
Cruise Tasman Sea	~ ~
Cruise Tasman Sea	~ ~
Hobart, TASMANIA	8:00 am 6:00 pm
Cruise Bass Strait	~ ~
Melbourne, AUSTRALIA	7:00 am 5:00 pm
Cruise Tasman Sea	~ ~
Sydney, AUSTRALIA	Disembark Ship
Cairns, AUSTRALIA	Hotel Overnight
Cairns, AUSTRALIA	Hotel Overnight
Cairns, AUSTRALIA	Hotel Overnight
Alice Springs, AUSTRALIA	Hotel Overnight
Ayers Rock, AUSTRALIA	Hotel Overnight
Sydney, AUSTRALIA	Hotel Overnight
Sydney, AUSTRALIA	Hotel Overnight
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Madikwe, SOUTH AFRICA	Game Lodge
Madikwe, SOUTH AFRICA	Game Lodge
Madikwe, SOUTH AFRICA	Game Lodge
Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA	Hotel Overnight
Victoria Falls, ZAMBIA	Hotel Overnight
Victoria Falls, ZAMBIA	Hotel Overnight
Victoria Falls, ZAMBIA	Hotel Overnight
Knysna, SOUTH AFRICA	Hotel Overnight
Knysna, SOUTH AFRICA	Hotel Overnight
Knysna, SOUTH AFRICA	Hotel Overnight
Winelands, SOUTH AFRICA	Hotel Overnight
Winelands, SOUTH AFRICA	Hotel Overnight
Winelands, SOUTH AFRICA	Hotel Overnight
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Chris Nilan



After retiring from professional hockey, Chris Nilan took on the fight of his life

The National Hockey League has had its fair share of gutsy Irishmen through the years, including Red Kelly, Joe Malone, King Clancy and Terry O'Reilly. No one was perhaps grittier than Chris "Knuckles" Nilan, however, who recorded more than 3,000 penalty minutes over 15 seasons with the Montreal Canadiens, New York Rangers and Boston Bruins.

Nilan's 688-game career as an on-ice enforcer found its roots in his younger years.

"I grew up a Bruins fan in West Roxbury, which is a very Irish section of Boston," he tells Celtic Life International over the phone. "That part of town was pretty tough back in the day, and I learned how to use my fists as a kid to get by. Growing up there definitely had an influence on the way I played hockey."

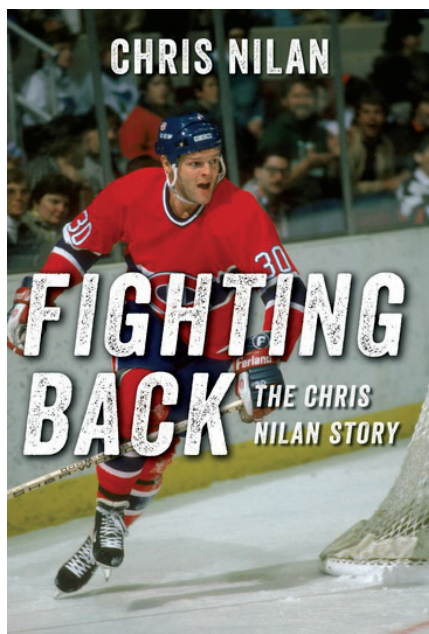
Like many Bostonians, the 56-year-old is fiercely proud of his Celtic heritage.

"My brother and I researched our ancestry and we can trace our father's family history back several generations to Cork, Kilkenny and the West Coast.

"I'm typically Irish," he continues, "loud, opinionated and emotional. And I've always had a real blue-collar work ethic, like a lot of those who settled North America. Cities like Boston and New York were built on the backs of hardnosed Irish immigrants. I know that sounds like stereotyping, but it pretty much describes me to a tee."

Interestingly, Nilan doesn't feel the same way about the typecast Irish penchant for alcohol.

"It's a bum rap, really. Every culture drinks, it's not just an Irish thing. Look at places like Italy or Spain where wine is served with every meal. How we got



pinned with that one is beyond me."

Ironically, the ex-pugilist endured his own battle with the bottle.

"I'd always enjoyed a few beers," he shares. "Drinking was a part of my life as a young man, and certainly later on during my career. At some point, I crossed a line that took me to some pretty dark places."

That nightmarish journey – from alcohol to painkillers to heroin – is one that he recounts vividly in his recently released autobiography, *Fighting Back: the Chris Nilan Story*.

"I wrote the book for a number of reasons," he explains. "I think it was important for me to look back at what I went through as part of my healing process. And I also hope that by sharing my story – my experience, strength and

hope – that someone who is struggling with dependency issues might be able to find some inspiration in it."

Now in his fourth year of continuous sobriety, Nilan has never been busier.

"Along with all the book signings, I host an afternoon radio show on TSN 690 in Montreal. I speak to different groups – mostly young people at schools – as part of my No More Bullies Tour initiative. I've been travelling a lot – I just got back from Afghanistan which was my fourth time over there. And I still play in some old-timers hockey games. So I've got all I can handle for the time being, and I'm just trying to take things one day at a time; keeping busy keeps me out of trouble.

As for a Stanley Cup prediction, "Knuckles" is again leaning towards the Chicago Blackhawks and his hometown Bruins.

"Both teams have a lot of firepower, great goaltending, excellent coaching and grit. And that's the X-factor – grit – you can have all the talent in the world, but you're not going to win without toughness."

Chris Nilan

- 688 NHL games played
- 110 goals scored
- 3043 penalty minutes
- Won the Stanley Cup with the Montreal Canadiens in 1986

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Invergordon, SCOTLAND	9:00 am 5:00 pm
Stromness, SCOTLAND	9:00 am 4:00 pm
Portree, SCOTLAND	9:00 am 9:00 pm
Cruise North Atlantic	~ ~
Porstruth, N. IRELAND	8:00 am 5:00 pm
Isle of Man, SCOTLAND	8:00 am 5:00 pm
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Sorrento, ITALY	~	7:00 pm
2-day stay to visit Sorrento, Amalfi Coast, Positano, the Isle of Capri and Pompeii		
Olbia, SARDINIA	1:00 pm	8:00 pm
Cagliari, SARDINIA	1:00 pm	8:00 pm
Alghero, SARDINIA	1:00 pm	10:00 pm
Mahon, MINORCA	1:00 pm	10:00 pm
Palma, MALLORCA	8:00 am	11:30 pm
Ibiza, BALEARIC ISLAND	2:00 pm	11:30 pm
Valencia, SPAIN	1:00 pm	8:00 pm
Tarragona, Reus, SPAIN	8:00 am	11:30 pm
Barcelona, SPAIN	8:00 am	7:00 pm
Sete, FRANCE	8:00 am	8:00 pm

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Marseille, FRANCE	8:00 am	Overnight
Marseille, FRANCE	~	9:30 pm
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Nice, FRANCE	8:00 am	Overnight
Nice, FRANCE	~	8:00 pm

2-day stay to visit Nice, Villefranche-sur-Mer, Cannes, Grasse, Eze Sainte Paul and Monte Carlo

Portofino, ITALY	8:00 am	11:30 pm
Livorno, ITALY	8:00 am	Overnight
Livorno, ITALY	~	8:00 pm
2-day stay to visit Pisa & Lucca. Florence or Siena		
Portoferraio, Is. Elba, ITALY	8:00 am	1:00 pm
Ajaccio, CORSICA	8:00 am	8:00 pm
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Susie Wolff might well be the fastest woman on the planet

“Blame it on my genes,” laughs Scottish-born racing car driver Susie Wolff over the phone from Europe.

“My dad raced motorbikes when I was a child in Oban, and we followed him around from track to track. The love for speed and excitement was in my blood from early on.”

Sure enough, it wasn't long before Wolff took to the wheel herself, starting with karting in 1990 at the tender age of eight.

Racing came naturally to the youngster, and success soon followed; in 1996 and 1997, she was named British Woman Kart Driver of the Year. After a series of national and international victories, she picked up Top Female Kart Driver of the Year honours in 2000.

The now thirty-something never looked back, keeping a torrid career pace.

In 2002, she made the transition to single-seater racing in the Formula Renault 2.0 Series, winning the BRDC Rising Star Award in 2004. The following year, she switched gears to the British Formula Three International Series. In 2006, she stepped up to the challenging German Touring Car Series, a run that lasted until 2011.

Fortune would shine even brighter for Wolff in April of 2012, when she was named as a development driver for the world-renowned Williams Formula 1 team.

“It's been a dream come true,” she shares. “Frank (Williams, owner) and the crew have become like family to me. They have been very supportive of my ambitions.”

While Wolff has yet to compete in the coveted class, she says it is only a matter of time before she goes wheel-to-wheel with the world's best drivers.

“It's tough; there's no spot on the grid for me this year, but I am patient and realistic and I will be ready when the time comes. For now, I am taking advantage of the opportunity to get out on the track when I can and learn as much about the car as possible.”

She shirks the idea that women are at a disadvantage in the male-dominated sport.

“As we've seen with Danica Patrick in NASCAR, there is openness to growth and change in North America that has

eluded us in Europe, where attitudes are traditionally a little more conservative. Still, I don't feel like there's any sort of ‘glass-ceiling’ here. And if there is, let's see if I can break it.

“That said, I think it's difficult for any driver, be they a man or woman. Racing, and especially F1, is not just about having the talent and getting on the grid, it also has to make commercial sense.”

Despite the dangers inherent to her profession, Wolff's experiences have given her a profound reverence for the risks.

“I have respect for the car and for the people I race against, and I understand that big accidents could happen. But I never feel fear or try to think too much when I'm out there. The moment I have any doubt is the time for me to call it a career.

“My family, friends and my husband know what's involved, and they might be a little on edge about it sometimes, but they have always been very supportive of my vocation.”

“Still,” she adds, “the safety standards in this sport today are years ahead of what they were in years past. The risks are there, but they are quite minimal, really.”

“And compared to motorbike racing, what I do seems like a walk in the park.”

www.susiewolff.com

- *Wolff's maiden name is Stoddart. In 2011, she married Toto Wolff, executive director of the Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 Team.*

- *The couple currently lives in Ermatingen, Switzerland.*

- *In 2013, Wolff was awarded an Honourary Fellowship at the University of Edinburgh as an Ambassador for Women in Sport.*

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Since 1719, Belhaven Brewery has produced fine beers in Dunbar, Scotland. Today the maker of Scotland's favourite beer, Belhaven Best, ships its ales and stouts across the globe.

Head Brewer George Howell is the creative mastermind behind some of the brewery's renowned products, such as the Belhaven Black – with its strong notes of chocolate and coffee – or the 2008 World Beer Champion Belhaven Scottish Stout. He is also the concocter of this year's new specialty craft range: Scottish Oat Stout, Scottish Ale, Craft Pilsner, Speyside Oak Aged Blond Ale and Twisted Thistle IPA.

An interest in science led the Edinburgh native to study microbiology at university. From school, Howell took a position at the Heriot Brewery in 1974. After two years he was running their laboratory.

"My entire life I've always enjoyed beer, so that probably had something to do with getting into brewing," laughs Howell. "I'm very, very pleased I did that because the brewing industry has certainly been very good to me over the years."

In the '80s Howell began to shift his focus from the lab into production management. He also pursued Master Brewer certification through the Institute of Brewing & Distilling. He attained this distinction in 1989, after several years of dissertations, exams and hands-on experience in every aspect of the industry.

His hard work paid off. Howell joined Belhaven in 1992 and a year later he was promoted to Head Brewer. "I take great pride for having created some new beers over many years," he says. "It's great when you actually produce something that goes to trade and somebody goes out on a Friday night, puts their hand in their pocket and spends their hard-earned money to buy your product."

Howell enjoys the camaraderie that exists in the brewing industry and is impressed with Belhaven's staff who roll up their sleeves to create quality products. Howell also holds dear the brewery's rich history.

"We don't live in the past—we have a very modern brewery—but it was Scotland's oldest, surviving brewery and we still brew

on the same site as when it started in 1719," he says describing the gorgeously preserved buildings set in the "Grain Basket of Scotland."

Howell notes that Belhaven makes a point of using the purest of ingredients, including waters drawn from the original 18th century onsite wells and the finest local Scottish barley.

"We also carefully preserve our very own yeast culture, which has been in use for a long, long while, and certainly is one of the dominant factors that creates the Belhaven flavour and House characters," Howell adds. "It's protected and held in a yeast bank and we grow fresh cultures off it every few weeks."

Due to increasing demand, Belhaven recently invested one million pounds into upgrading its brew house to augment production. Princess Anne came to tour the revamped facilities last January. "That was a fantastic day and one for the memory bank, I have to say," says Howell. "Certainly the new brew house will make sure that Belhaven Brewery is around for a long, long time."

At 61, Howell acknowledges that some day he'll have to pass on the reins. For now, he continues to set foot in the brewery every

day. Each morning Howell and the trained flavour profile team gather in the lab to check each beer. According to Howell, while each brew has its own scientific parameters, the human senses of sight, smell and taste are the critical test.

Howell admits his favourite Belhaven beer is the malty and "biscuity" Scottish Ale, which has been exported to the U.S. for over two decades and is just one of the brewery's internationally popular brands. "But when it comes to beer, I'm really quite promiscuous," he laughs. "I enjoy many, many different types!"



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Old-fashioned Irish resolve land five on Forbes list

The financial magazine Forbes released its annual list of 30 under 30, those whom the publication calls "the young disrupters, innovators and entrepreneurs," who are "impatient to change the world." The magazine says its editors and reporters worked with panels of expert judges to choose the field's brightest stars under the age of 30. Writes the magazine, "In sum, they represent the entrepreneurial, creative and intellectual best of their generation." Five of them are from Ireland. Meet them below.



Niall Horan

Hailing from Westmeath, Ireland, Niall Horan is one of the five members of the hugely popular boy band, One Direction, whose current earnings top \$50-million annually. On the basis of three recordings, they have become one of the top pop groups, winning two BRIT Awards and four MTV Video Music Awards. Billboard declared them the best new group of 2012, and they've become the first band in Billboard 200 history to have three albums debut at number one. The story, of course, is well-known now: how the five boys went before the judges of X Factor, who deemed them not strong enough as solo artists and asked them to form a group. They placed third, but Simon Cowell still signed them to his record label regardless. Says Horan on the band's website: "We're very lucky lads."



Rory McIlroy

Rated as the third most marketable pro athlete in the world (after Brazilian football player Neymar and Argentinian football player Lionel Messi) by SportsPro, pro golfer Rory McIlroy commands huge endorsement deals from the likes of Nike, Bose and Omega. Hailing from Holywood in Northern Ireland, McIlroy at a young age has already had a remarkable career, notching up a record score at the 2011 U.S. Open, winning the 2012 PGA championship with another record, and becoming the youngest player to reach \$10-million in career earnings on the PGA tour. Golf has always come naturally to McIlroy. He recorded a 40 yard drive at age two and made his first ace at age nine. Altogether, he has six PGA victories, and five international wins.

Patrick and John Collinson

Frustrated with the difficult process of online payments, the Collinson brothers formed a company called Stripe and launched in 2011. Stripe created a suite of integrated applications that makes it easier for businesses to handle financial transactions. One of the company's slogans is "Accept payments from anyone, anywhere." The company now processes billions of dollars



annually for everything from start-ups to Fortune 500 businesses. As well, Stripe has increasingly targeted the mobile market, getting the thumbs up from investors; the 80-person firm is currently valued at \$1.75 billion. It just goes to show that the two brothers from Limerick are pretty good at making sure they get paid along with everyone else.



Terry Cavanagh

Terry Cavanagh is an independent game designer from Monaghan. At his company, the aptly named Distractionware, Cavanagh is responsible for turning out wildly popular games like Super Hexagon, "a minimal action game," which happened to be a finalist for a couple of large gaming awards. He's also been a finalist for Game of the Year on Apple's App Store. Cavanagh told The Escapist in an interview that's he's a self-taught game programmer, who began coding the computer language BASIC on his Commodore before moving on. According to the Edge Online, Cavanagh left his job at a bank to become a full-time developer and he threw himself into it whole-heartedly, designing 54 games in 2010 alone. But since, he's taken to concentrating one game at a time, obviously to good effect.

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the Mother of Tartan Day

It may be nearly 30 years ago that Jean Watson and Bill Crowell first conceived the idea of Tartan Day, but for Watson the memory remains as fresh and indelible as the day on which she first proposed it, not the least because of its initial comic result.

"We were at a meeting of the Federation of Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia, talking about how young people were not as interested in their Scottish heritage as they should be," recalls Watson from her home near Halifax. "And we thought if there was a Scots day in Canada, it just might attract their attention."

In March of 1986, the pair proposed to their Federation peers that they establish Tartan Day. Watson envisioned it as a day to promote Scottish heritage by visible means. This meant wearing the kilt, especially where it wasn't normally worn in places like the office and in restaurants.

After the motion passed, the Federation called for volunteers to form a committee.

"Nobody put their hand up but me," laughs Watson. "I was the committee for 10 years to promote Tartan Day in Canada."

In many ways, Watson was the perfect person for the job. Born in Pictou, Watson grew up surrounded by her Scottish roots; her ancestors, hailing from Glen Lyon, had settled in Nova Scotia in 1833. At the age of 14, after being diagnosed with cancer, her interest in that heritage took hold. "I read encyclopaedias on Scotland to take my mind off my troubles," she remembers.

That passion turned to action, and over the years she helped found the Pipes and Drums of Clan Farquharson, the Clan Lamont Society, the Clan Watson Society of Canada and the Stewart-Stuart Association of Nova Scotia, serving as president of each. She has also been president of the Federation of Scottish Clans twice.

Watson's efforts to establish Tartan Day began with lobbying members of her home province's Legislative Assembly, and Nova Scotia proclaimed its first Tartan Day on April 6th, 1987, coinciding with the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320.

Watson then pushed to have Tartan Day observed in every province, urging several regional and national Scottish associations to do the same. "I must say that my husband Andrew helped an awful lot," she smiles. "We had to lick a lot of letters!" By the early 1990s, every province in Canada recognized Tartan Day, with the U.S. following in 1997. In 2004, Scotland's Angus Council spearheaded the annual event, and today Tartan Day is celebrated all over the world.



Jean Watson

"Give her credit," says Troy MacCulloch, president of the Federation for Scottish Culture of Nova Scotia. "Jean stuck with it and saw it through at every level."

MacCulloch knows a thing or two about Tartan Day himself, having been involved with organizing Tartan Day festivities in Pictou County for a decade, and helping coordinate last year's Tartan Day event at Government House in Halifax. "My favourite part is seeing the young dancers, pipers or drummers or young speakers of the Gàidhlig," he muses. "It's great to witness the next generation taking an interest in preserving and promoting our past."

Today, Watson is busier than ever. She continues her letter writing campaign, and this time is determined to get calendar companies to recognize Tartan Day. She is also Chairperson of the 2015 International Gathering of the Clans Festival in Nova Scotia, and is hoping to attend the New York Tartan Day Parade and visit Scotland again in the near future.

"I find it very hard to believe how Tartan Day has spread worldwide," she says, reflecting on the last three decades. "It's just wonderful that so many people are enjoying it and having a good time!"

"Nobody put their hand up but me," laughs Watson. "I was the committee for 10 years to promote Tartan Day in Canada."

In 2004, Watson received the Flora MacDonald Award from the St. Andrew's Scottish Heritage Centre in Laurinburg, North Carolina

In 2007, she was named Scot of the Year by Toronto's Scottish Studies Society

In 2012, Watson was awarded The Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal by the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia



the Riding of the Marches

Obliviously asleep, I am suddenly aware of the surreal sound of a bugle from the street below. Bizarrely, the clattering of horses' hooves on the roadway accompany it, as well as someone shouting loudly that it is time to get up. Early morning light permeates the bedroom curtains and through my blurred vision my bedside clock tells me it is 6.30 a.m. I momentarily curse this inconsiderate intrusion into my dreams before fact consumes fiction and I remember that today is Annan's annual Riding of the Marches. The bugle awakens the townsfolk and on this day the town awakens its history.

Annan, with a population of around 10,000, lies close to the mouth of its namesake river, the gently flowing waters of which conceal a very turbulent past. To the English border it is only 10 miles, with the "auld enemy's" shoreline even closer across the estuarial waters of the Solway Firth. Although its location has given it trading advantages over the centuries, the river has also put Annan at the forefront of many conflicts. Since local tribes first attempted to fend off Roman invaders this area has had to fight hard for its freedom. The invasions of English forces have razed Annan to the ground on several occasions and when not at

the forefront of Scottish/English conflicts it has had to endure centuries of murderous raids by the infamous border reivers inhabiting the lawless Debatable Lands. Rousing the townsfolk to protect their homes and livestock was a necessary part of yesteryear, but today it is a fun occasion with historic overtones.

The earliest recorded ceremonial Riding of the Marches in Annan was in 1871, but for the next 75 years it was held infrequently, only taking place to coincide with special events such as the Queen's coronation or the cobbling of the High Street. It wasn't until 1947 that the first of the modern day annual events took place.

Stuart Thompson was Cornet in 1977, has served on the Riding of the Marches General Committee for 37 years and has been chairman for the last 12 years. He believes passionately that the Riding of the Marches is an important festival for the town. "This is a community-based event with the community spirit very much at the heart of it. It unites the entire town on at least one day of the year, celebrating historic traditions and reaching out to Annan's youngsters who, in turn, are the future of the town and the Riding of the Marches in the years ahead."

Annan's Riding of the Marches is held on the first Saturday in July and although the tradition of riding the ancient marches



is what defines the contemporary event, it is only one part of what has expanded into a major gala for the area. Various forms of entertainment punctuate the day. These include a procession of decorated floats representing many of Annan's key businesses and organisations, which a local girl crowned as Queen of the Border leads through the town centre. A fun fair and an arena with a variety of displays running throughout the afternoon keeps all ages entertained and reinforces the community spirit.

The scale of this celebration necessitates plenty of planning and Thompson knows only too well the level of hard work involved. "Planning for next year's event starts immediately after the previous one finishes and it now takes up 12 months of the year. The selection process for the principal characters takes place in the early part of the year and by spring the Cornet, his Lass, the Standard Bearer and the Queen of the Border will have been chosen." In the weeks before the main event they visit local schools and participate in numerous community events raising awareness of the traditions behind the gala day and further reinforcing the community spirit.

Although other border towns have similar events each celebrates its own unique traditions in different ways. Annan's event is one of the largest and Thompson is well aware of the social and economic benefits associated with it. "It is one of Annan's busiest trading days of the year. Riding of the Marches draws visitors from across Scotland and other parts of the UK as well as international visitors from places such as Canada, USA and Japan. Many return again and again combining their trip with visits to family and friends in the area."

After Reveille, the principal characters of the day, namely the Coronet and the Cornet's Lass, accompanied by their entourage of Standard Bearer, previous principals, guests, marshals and riders from the wider area, gather on horseback at the east end of the town's High Street. It is a colourful and noisy spectacle. The red jackets of the Cornet and his Lass set them apart from the other black-clad riders. Around 100 to 140 horses and riders bedecked with rosettes, ribbons and sashes in the Burgh colours of blue and gold gather, and the immaculately groomed horses snort and toss their heads in eager anticipation.

As the bugle-wakened crowd cheers them on, they make their way past the ancient Fish Cross and along the historic High Street, pausing at the market square near Annan's baronial Town Hall. Here the Standard Bearer is entrusted with the Burgh Standard. To the age-old cry of "Safe Out, Safe In" and with much cheering and whooping, and no small amount of civic pride, men, women and children of all ages gallop off to ride the ancient boundaries, or "marches," and lands of Annan.

In more distant times and out of necessity the townsfolk would head out in similar fashion to intercept raiders, confront an approaching army or simply to check on outlying areas and inspect the integrity of the walls, ditches and fences of the Burgh marches. It is a tradition dating back over 600 years and historically would have been potentially dangerous with occasional skirmishes or worse.

Today, only stops to feed and water the horses and riders and for such ceremonial moments such as the Hole in the Hedge will interrupt the cavalcade's progress. This tradition takes place at a hedgerow standing upon land Willie Crone's smithy once occupied. Legend has it that in olden times a young boy was pushed through the window of the smithy under instruction of keeping lookout for raiders. Today, this tradition is marked with

a local boy shoved through a hole in the hedge and given a "skelp" on the backside to help him on his way. In another nod to the past, snuff is passed around in an antique silver snuffbox gifted to the town in 1807 by one of the Burgh's famous residents, General Dirom.

The route taken each year is broadly similar, but with variations taking account of the tides along the Solway shore. It is both impressive and emotional to watch over 100 horses charging across the sands behind the Burgh Standard to circle the Altar Stane lying in a channel of the Solway Firth and marking the most southerly point of the burgh boundaries.

Having ridden the marches, the cavalcade returns for the annual chase held on open parkland by the river. Here, the riders participate in high speed gallops reminiscent of the way in which their ancestors once gave chase to would-be marauders.

Setting Annan's Riding of the Marches apart from other similar events is the return of the Burgh Standard in the evening and the Cornet's assurance to the townsfolk that all is in order, for this marks the onset of the grand finale: a spectacular colour and sound extravaganza involving around 20 pipe

bands from all over Scotland and the north of England. It is one of the country's largest marching mass pipe band events.

With the Victorian sandstone buildings of the High Street resonating to the skirling of the pipes and the beat of the drums and the sun gently setting behind the spire of the old Town Hall, I make my way to one of Annan's historic coaching hostleries for a few celebratory drams. Then I wind my way home after a wonderful event-packed day, comforted in the knowledge that the town's marches are intact, I can sleep safely and that the sound of a bugle won't awaken me at dawn for another year.



Words and Photos by Tom Langlands



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George Clooney

Monumental Actor

*On the eve of his newest film, **The Monuments Men**, George Clooney talks about art, fame, legacies and life*

George Clooney may be Kentucky-born, but make no mistake, the film star is as Celtic as they come. His ancestry includes both Irish and Scottish roots. On his father's side, the actor can trace his Irish ancestry back to County Kilkenny to his great-great grandparents who immigrated from Ireland to the United States. In 2012, director Gabriel Murray released his documentary titled *George Clooney's Irish Roots*, in which the actor travelled to Dublin and then County Kilkenny with U2 singer Bono to retrace his ancestry.


His Celtic background is just one of his many hidden sides. He's far more complex than his easy-going, supremely charismatic movie star façade would

suggest. Beyond his notorious fondness for pranking his co-stars and even his father, he has a cynical and even sad view of how "mean" life can be, observing that he "doesn't believe in happy endings." But at the same time, the 52-year-old matinee idol also believes that you should "try to live the good life while you can" and is determined to leave his mark by making meaningful films. Though he is an avowed bachelor whose relationships never seem to make it past the three-year mark, Clooney has no hesitation in admitting how much women mean to him.

"I have a great appreciation for women - they're a huge part of my life," Clooney says. "I grew up falling in love with the

actresses of the movie heyday. I really fell in love with the young Elizabeth Taylor in *A Place in the Sun* and with Audrey Hepburn in *Roman Holiday*. I will also never forget that image of Grace Kelly when she comes out of the water in *To Catch a Thief*. You can't imagine a woman more beautiful than that. It's insane how beautiful she is. Breathtaking."

As much as he loves women, Clooney also loves movies with a message. His new film, *The Monuments Men*, is about a secret Allied mission launched in the latter stages of WWII to save vast art treasures looted by the Nazis. The movie sees him do triple duty as director, actor, and co-screenwriter. Shot in Berlin, the film



reflects the kind of serious moral compass that Clooney brings to his work by playing veteran soldier Frank Stokes (based on the life of Lt. Commander Frank Stout). Stokes led a heroic platoon of curators, art historians, and soldiers willing to risk their lives to save much of Europe's cultural heritage. The unit included Lt James Rorimer (Matt Damon), a medieval art expert who bonds with a French spy (Cate Blanchett) to help rescue the stolen masterpieces. Bill Murray, John Goodman, and Jean Dujardin also co-star.

Making its world premiere at the upcoming Berlin International Film Festival, *The Monuments Men*, is also a classic case of art imitating life. The film comes on the heels of the November discovery of a cache of priceless looted paintings found in a Munich flat. German authorities seized over 1500 works, including masterpieces by Matisse, Picasso, Renoir, and Chagall from the home of Cornelius Gurlitt, the 80-year-old son of a Hildebrand Gurlitt, a German art dealer whose close affiliation with the Nazis allowed him to acquire works arbitrarily stolen from Jewish collectors. The son had secretly held on to his father's stash of stolen art and supported himself by selling the occasional piece. One recovered painting was the long lost *Portrait of a Lady* that had belonged to Paul Rosenberg, grandfather of Anne Sinclair, the former wife of the disgraced head of the IMF, Dominique Strauss-Kahn.

Clooney divides his time between his home in L.A. (which formerly belonged to Clark Gable) where he drives around in a black Porsche Carrera, and his palazzo in Lake Como, Italy that gives him the chance to indulge in beloved cross-country motorcycle trips. He took some time away from his work to speak to *Celtic Life*.



Q: *George, why did you want to make *The Monuments Men*?*

CLOONEY: It's one of those extraordinary stories of human valour that often don't get told or the attention they deserve. Hitler wanted to build a Führer Museum and during the war he had Nazi units collect five million pieces of art from all across Europe. It was the greatest art heist in history.

But when the tide of the war began to turn, my character George Stout went to General Eisenhower with plans to recapture and protect those treasures. Eisenhower also realised that American bombing missions had to try to avoid destroying European museums and monuments or the U.S. would have been seen as the bad guy at the end of the war and during the reconstruction process.

Q: *Do you see this film as part of your own mission to make movies that are part of the legacy you want to leave behind you?*

CLOONEY: You want to do something that stands the test of time. I haven't always succeeded but I'm as determined as ever to keep working as hard as possible and find great stories. Ever since I knew that I wasn't going to become a great journalist like my father I always had it in the back of my mind to try to accomplish something of value with my life.

My uncle (George) also taught me a lot about the importance of making your time on Earth count and not waste your opportunities. That weighs on me. I don't necessarily feel that I have to prove myself, because I've been able to make some films that I feel people will want to see 20 or 30 years down the road. But I still have a lot of drive and desire to work hard and have a little fun along the way.

Q: *Your *Monuments Men* cast mate John Goodman says that he feels bad that you can't walk down the street like anyone else?*

CLOONEY: It's part of the price you pay in this business. I'm used to it and it's not something that really bothers me except times like when I'm in Italy and I want to do something like relax on my boat (on Lake Como) and sooner or later there's a bunch of paparazzi following me around in a flotilla. So I go and read a book in the garden instead. It's not an ordeal.

I have a good life. I was lucky enough to get to a point where I was able to do interesting work and have the opportunity to keep doing that work. I'm going to keep pushing to make movies as hard as I can for as long as I can.



Q: *Your character Frank Stokes is based on the real Lt. Commander Stout who led a group of art historians and curators on a dangerous mission that wasn't about fighting the Nazis, but saving art treasures. Why was that significant?*

CLOONEY: He went on a treasure hunt on behalf of European culture. It was an utterly selfless act devoted to preserving great works of art that allow societies to define their collective past and identities.

Stout and the rest of the team put their lives at enormous risk to save great works and make sure that this massive cultural heritage was defended and that that was just as important as recapturing cities and defeating the Nazis on the battlefield.

Most of the men who were part of the mission were middle-aged guys, scholars and art experts, who had no military experience whatsoever but still wanted to get involved. And in the case of Stout himself and a few others on his team who had already served in WWI and done their duty to their country, they viewed this mission as their duty to history and world culture.

Q: *Would you risk your life to save an object of great value if it came to that?*

CLOONEY: If my house was burning down and I was faced with the prospect of losing something deeply personal to me,

like seeing the flag that had been draped over the coffin of my uncle George, which is still folded in a triangle, being destroyed in the fire, I probably wouldn't run into my house if that meant I would probably die trying to rescue it. You also might not want to risk dying to save the Mona Lisa or any one particular work of art. But if you see some neo-Nazi thugs stomping on the American flag, you might feel compelled to stop that even if it meant risking your life. There's a larger principle involved.

Q: *How did Stout and the other art experts see their mission?*

CLOONEY: The men who went on the mission to rescue those art treasures understood that those works were of unimaginable cultural importance and reflected European identity and history itself.

Art is the timeline of our lives and we can trace our origins and see where we were as human beings. Those objects are all we have of our collective past. The mission involved saving the culture of that generation and that of past generations and societies. When you lose those works, you risk losing your identity.

Q: *Did you try to balance telling the nobility of the mission with the actual danger and complexity of the mission itself?*

CLOONEY: We wanted it to be a fun ride. I didn't want the film to be a civics lesson or hammer people with any message. There was a very exciting story to be told and of course we wanted to make it into an entertaining story that everyone would enjoy seeing and also try to make more people aware of the importance of what was at stake. We don't have video clips or footage of the past. We have books that describe the past, but art serves an even broader function that reveals the legacy of human creativity. You might not go running into a burning building and risk dying by saving the Mona Lisa or some other priceless work of art. But that's not what our film is about. It's about not allowing the destruction of art works which define our history and our culture.

Q: *Recently a huge cache of looted art work was discovered in a Munich apartment. Are you aware of that?*

CLOONEY: Yes. The Germans recovered about 1500 pieces that an art dealer with Nazi connections had managed to amass. It was all stolen from Jewish families and I hope our film goes some way towards making it that much harder for people and museums not to return works that were stolen during the '30s and the war years.

WW11 was also the first war where the victors didn't hold on to the spoils of war. The Allies wanted to make sure that as much of what the Nazis had looted was

returned to their countries. That was a very honourable and meaningful step in the rebuilding and reconstruction of Europe.

Q: *Do you hope that your film will also help encourage military leaders in future wars to pay attention to preserving art despite the destruction that wars involve?*

CLOONEY: We should be reminded of what we didn't do in Iraq. They lost a lot of their national heritage when we didn't protect the museum (in Baghdad) and it was completely looted.

Q: *You asked Cate Blanchett to work on this film with you. Are you friends with her?*

CLOONEY: I've admired Cate for years and I was very lucky that she wanted to be part of the film. I first got to know her when we worked on *The Good German* together (which Clooney also directed) and I'd always wanted to do another film with her again. For me, Cate is one of the two greatest living actors in the game together with Meryl Streep. I also knew that when it came to doing an accent she is on a par with Meryl in how her speech becomes so natural and effortless. You don't notice the accent when she's delivering the performance and that's part of what makes her so great. She's also fun

and sweet to work with, her kids are on the set with her, and she just makes the whole experience of working on a film that much more enjoyable.

Q: *You've become close with a number of your female co-stars and other great actresses over the years?*

CLOONEY: I've been friends with Julia (Roberts) for a long, long time, I've gotten to know Meryl (Streep) over the years and I love her. And I'm happy for Sandy Bullock (with whom he co-starred in *Gravity*). So I've had the pleasure of getting to know a lot of wonderful, really talented women who are doing really well.

Q: *How have you managed to remain close to the same 10 guys including your producing partner Grant Heslov whom you've known since your early days in Hollywood?*

CLOONEY: We're like an extended family. We've been able to go on motorbike trips together, play basketball, and hang out for all these years because we value being able to maintain our friendships no matter what else has been happening in our lives. That's been very important to me and I can always count on them being there for me.

Q: *Your father Nick Clooney is one of the most important figures in your life. You*

cast him in a small role as your character's older self in *The Monuments Men*. How did your dad like that experience?

CLOONEY: (Laughs) He wasn't that crazy about the idea. I invited my parents to come on the set in Germany. My dad had served in the Army over there during the '50s and I had an idea that he could play my character as an older man since I needed someone for that.

He told me that I should just put some more grey in my hair. But I told him that if he's no good, I'll reshoot it with someone else. He's still there in the film in the very last shot.

But I played a little trick on him when I showed him a rough cut of the film when we were in Italy. In the shot, he walks off up the stairs and into the light of the church. Then, it goes to black. The first thing that comes up is a card that says, "In loving memory of Nick Clooney." My dad's like, "What's wrong with you?" I go, "You know, it's a long time 'till the movie comes out. It's much cheaper to take this out than it is to put it in." He thought that was pretty funny!



The Origins of the Clooney Name

As the name of one of the world's most famous international film stars, Clooney is an instantly recognisable surname, but what of its origins?

It was first used by the Pictish people of ancient Scotland, who lived in the lands of Clunie in Perthshire, where the name has been found since early times (some say well before the Norman conquest and the arrival of Duke William at Hastings in 1066). The Clooney surname, known to be of great antiquity, was found in many different forms and spellings, including Clunie, Cloone, Clunis and many others, some of which are still used to this day. Such changes in spelling frequently occurred, even between father and son – this is because scribes and church people frequently selected their own version of what they thought the spelling should be.

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, Scotland was ravaged by religious conflict and there existed a newly found passionate fervour of Presbyterianism. Those who did not pledge an oath of belief in the church were sometimes burnt at the stake, or banished to Australia, the Carolinas or the West Indies. Many clansmen were "encouraged" to migrate to Ireland, with the promise of cheap land. The name Clooney may well have

arrived in Ireland early in the 17th century during the reign of James I, when six counties in Ulster were confiscated and settled by the protestant "Planters" as these settlers were known.

The migration or banishment to the new world continued. Some went voluntarily from Ireland, but most went directly from Scotland, their home territories. They sailed to the new world across the stormy Atlantic aboard small sailing ships known as the "White Sails." These overcrowded ships were sometimes at sea for over two months, and their passengers often became racked with diseases. Some made land with little more than 60 percent of their original passenger list. It is likely that this is originally how the Clooney name found its way across the ocean.

Settlers bearing the name of Clooney (or one of its derivatives) show up in records from Philadelphia between 1810 and 1868. In later years, immigrants to North America would move westward, settling the regions from the middle west to the prairies of the west coast. Alongside the Academy award winning actor, there are other prominent bearers of the name. These include the American popular entertainer Rosemary Clooney (1928-2002), Nicholas Clooney (b1924) the American television journalist and game show host. www.hallofnames.org

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Bradley Cooper

Irish-American Hustle

Celtic Life International casts an admiring eye over Bradley Cooper, who declares his upbringing and ancestral ties have played the ultimate lead role in making him who he is today. The star of American Hustle talks about how his Catholic father helped shape his work ethic and outlook on life.

Bradley Cooper is now an A-list star in the truest sense. Oscar nominations, critical acclaim and a good dollop of sex appeal have led the star of *The Hangover* and *Silver Linings Playbook* to become a Hollywood player of massive stature.

Cooper is currently one of the hottest tickets in town, though there was a time when it looked like that might not happen for the likeable 39-year-old, who for over a decade enjoyed only sporadic levels of success since his film debut in 2001's *Wet Hot American Summer*.

But the cornerstone of Bradley's success is surely the strong Celtic foundations he grew up around, as well as the attitude towards life that was instilled in him as a young child growing up in America. The acclaimed actor might have been born in Philadelphia, but it was those Catholic values of faith, spirituality and hard work drummed into him by his mother Gloria - an Italian American who worked for the local NBC affiliate - and his father, Charles Cooper, a stockbroker of Irish descent, that carved a path for him.

"I am definitely a product of my parents," Cooper says. "The Italian is from my mother and my father was Irish. There are typical things you might expect because of that - I just love Italian food, I love eating and I love to cook. But there are important things as well, things that have shaped who I am, especially on my father's side. I embrace all of that."

Embracing his father's outlook meant a firm, though not prohibitively strict, Catholic upbringing that he was happy to take on board. "I was brought up a Roman Catholic in the correct way. It was a rich part of our life and I wanted to be like my father. I was proud of his ancestry, as was he, and he was someone I really looked up to, in every aspect of who he was."

The star of *American Hustle* says more of an emotional and spiritual connection was involved than mere idolization of his

father. Does that mean he believed in God? Does he still to this day? "I have had faith in God since I started going to Mass. The whole ritual of that means that you have to, and I wanted to. And I still feel that way today. I don't know how you couldn't in this day and age. I am still very spiritual."

It wasn't just the religious aspect of his father's influence that Cooper looked up to, but also the stockbroker's enthusiasm for

hard work. He says that Charles inspired in him a desire to work hard, and to savour the rewards. He admits life was about striving for the next level, and enjoying that thrill of doing something special that would benefit the family. "Because of that I've always been working, right since the age of 15," he says. "It has just seemed the most natural thing to be working, and it's an enjoyable feeling, it really is. It's that sense of fulfilment."

It certainly explains Cooper's current prolific output - he has starred in nine films that have either been released or are due to be released over a two year period - but the way he bought into his father's example so much made it particularly painful when the man he looked up to passed away in 2011.

He said recently, "It was a very hard time for me. It was the kind of sad experience that changes you forever. I still have difficulty talking about him. When I was a kid

we lived across the street from a movie theatre and my father turned me on to all the great auteur films from the 1970s and 1980s. I owe so much to him."

But Cooper admits his father's death has allowed him a sense of inner peace. For one, he's not as hard on himself as he perhaps used to be. "I'm happy with who I am. Life is too short to play the game of who you are and how you're perceived. I'm me - and I like that."



So he should... Cooper's stock has never been higher; never before has he been so in demand. He recognizes just how important The Hangover trilogy was in not only raising his profile but allowing him to showcase enough of his versatile talent to make the most of his mainstream breakthrough.

"You know, we've all just been very lucky with that film, we really have. It's afforded us the ability to do movies in between these movies that we really want to do because of the economic stability that they have provided, and all three of us had never gone into this business going like, 'Okay, let's make some money!' It's not ever what you think. You sort of go in going, 'Okay, it's going to be a struggle my whole life, but it's worth it.' And so that sort of comfort is just insane and never did I think that would happen. But it affords the ability to do these other things."

He has been so busy over the last few years - does he have a hard time turning down films?

"That is a good question: if I am having a hard time saying no. I did four movies in a row, and two of which were movies that my best friends were trying to have get made and I was happy to do them, and I wouldn't have just planned to go right from Place Beyond The Pines to this, but American Hustle was an opportunity and I thought, 'How can I say no to David O. Russell?' I think he's one of the best filmmakers around. So it just sort of happened."

Leaving his wild lifestyle and bad habits behind him has helped with his productivity.

"I may still have a wild side but I keep it quiet!" he laughs. "I stopped drinking about 10 years ago when I realised it was getting out of control, and it wasn't the kind of life I wanted to lead. It was a time in my life where I felt very isolated and was wandering

around not very self-confident. I saw that I was going to ruin my life if I kept heading in that direction and so I just decided I had to sober up."

And despite the red carpets, flashbulbs and parade of autograph hunters that follow him around, Cooper is modestly aware that standing in front of a camera for months on end is not the be all and end all. "I have a lot of curiosity about life," he says.

"I haven't stopped reading literature and philosophy just because I've become an actor. I also love travelling and studying other cultures because that's the kind of experience that gives me a more interesting perspective on the world".

Still, Cooper hopes that his good fortune continues, and all the while he can maintain what is now a notable portfolio of mainstream success. Certainly, he is one of the few actors who you would believe truly merits the acclaim that has come his way. Although coming from such a strong Celtic background, surely no-one ever doubted how that particular storyline would play out.

"I think you get to a point in life where everything just seems to click into place - it's your upbringing, your good experiences, your bad ones too. Getting to this point has been a fairly long process, and I know how fortunate I've been. I just had to keep working and believing in myself. I'm still

driven mainly by the desire to grow as an actor and continue to work with great actors and tell great stories, and that will never change."



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The National Tartan Day New York Committee (NTDNYC), founded in 2002,
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the New York Caledonian Club, the American-Scottish Foundation® and Clan Campbell.



Ap

NYC *Tartan Day Parade*



Everyone loves a parade – and one of the largest may well be New York City's Tartan Week Parade.

This year some 2,500 marchers, pipers, dancers, horses and dogs are expected along the route, with an estimated 20,000 people watching from the sidelines. Heather Quist, who helps handle publicity for Tartan Week, enthusiastically says: "We have people visiting from across the U.S., as well as Canada, Scotland, and around the world. Thousands of people in the tri-state region come for Parade Weekend – and then there are just regular New Yorkers lured by the sound of the pipes!"

Most of the parade participants come from the tri-state region, but every year bands arrive from all across the U.S., Canada and Scotland to play and march. Quist says many of the bands save up for two or more years in order to be able to make the trip. To be sure, the website declares that the best part of Tartan Street is "marching up Sixth Avenue to the cheers of thousands!"

Surely though, a close second must be the pre-parade ceilidh with lots of singing, dancing, foot-stomping and food and drink at the New York Caledonian Club. Then, of course, there's the post-parade party at Desmond's Steakhouse. Tickets for the first 60 pipers who turn up with their pipes are half-price, \$20. Notes the steakhouse: "You'll not be discouraged from playing; on the contrary, that's why we're enticing you with cut-rate tickets!"

According to Quist the parade began in 1998, with just a few people marching down a sidewalk. In 1999 and 2000, more took part as the parade moved through Central Park. In 2002, the parade moved to its present location on Sixth Avenue.

In the midst of planning for the 2002 event, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York looked as if they might halt the event. Instead, the reverse happened: more and more groups began calling, wanting to participate. Ultimately, more than 7,500 Scottish, Irish, Canadian and American pipers and drummers marched along Sixth Avenue, with Sir Sean Connery and city mayor Michael Bloomberg leading them.

Of course, beyond the parade, Tartan Week is packed with events. Two, 15-foot tall scale models of Glasgow-born artist Andy Scott's The Kelpies will be on display in Bryant Park. The actual sculptures near Falkirk are two, 100-foot steel horse's heads. Scott says the sculpture plays tribute to Scotland's heavy horses, which played a vital role in agriculture and industry in Scotland. Some 250,000 people are expected to see the models during their time in New York City.

Two of the biggest events are the Kirkin' O' the Tartan and Breakfast, which the St. Andrew's Society hosts; and VisitScotland's Scotland Run, a 10 km through Central Park. The former event



is a non-denominational church service followed by a traditional Scottish brunch. The latter event is expected to attract some 7,000 runners. Sums up Quist: "Tartan Week celebrates the Scottish people's contributions to the U.S. – past, present and future. We welcome everyone to join us."

www.nyctartanweek.org



NEW YORK TATTOO

7:30pm April 5th

- Massed pipe band and outstanding pipe band performances
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- World Champion Drum Major - Jason Paguio
- TICKETS - www.tartanweek.com/tattoo



Mason Hall, 17 Lexington Av. E23rd St. NYC



NYTATTOO!

Edinburgh, Scotland, and Halifax, Nova Scotia have had one for years, but New York City is just about to get its first – tattoo, that is.

We're not talking about body art, but rather the spectacle of marching bands, Highland dancers and performers in an hour and a half stage show. Magnus Orr, organizer of the first New York Tattoo, says it is the ultimate event to showcase pipe bands, military bands, music groups and dance ensembles.

Orr knows a thing or two himself about organizing grand spectacles. He helped establish the Tartan Day Parade along New York City's 6th Avenue in 2002. The parade featured thousands of pipers and drummers marching up the street with Sir Sean Connery in the lead. Since then, a steady call has come for a New York City Tattoo. "This year public demand was underlined with the successful Kickstarter campaign to help fund the establishment of the New York Tattoo," Orr noted. The project received over 5,000 English pounds on Kickstarter.

The term tattoo dates from 17th century Europe, when garrisons sent out drummers in the evening to inform the soldiers that it was time to return to the barracks. In Dutch, the process was known as "doe den tap toe" or Dutch for "turn off the tap." That was the instruction to innkeepers to stop serving beer. Over time the performance of a tattoo became more elaborate, including music and dance. According to Orr, "With kilts swinging and bagpipes playing, the format

is ideally suited to celebrate Scotland in New York."

The first show is set to take place on April 5th at the Mason Hall on Lexington Avenue. The show will bring together performers from Scotland, Canada and the U.S. Orr said the biggest challenge for Bruce Hitchings, the show's producer, will be pulling all the elements together into a cohesive, fast-paced, 90-minute show. "With years of experience working on different shows around the world, including in Edinburgh, Berlin and Sydney, I'm sure he will relish the opportunity," Orr said.

A cast of over 100 members are scheduled to take part in the first performance. Acts are wide-ranging and include an impressive array of brass and military bands. Among them are the West Point Hellcats, an ensemble made up of buglers and rudimental drummers, who have played an influential role in over 220 years of musical tradition at the U.S. Military Academy; and Canada's Sons of Scotland Pipe Band led by Pipe Major Bethany Basaillion, who has played for the Queen twice.

Cockenzie and Port Seton Royal British Legion Scotland Band, the Forfar and District Pipe Band, and the New York Metro Pipe Band are also performing. Alasdair Hutton, who has been the voice of many shows including that of the

Edinburgh Military Tattoo, will narrate the performance.

"Thankfully, many people have seized the opportunity to support the show and take ownership of the future," Orr said. "This has been a great international effort, helping strengthen the links between Scotland, Canada and the U.S. The Scottish community in New York, who have contributed to this effort, can be proud of what they have achieved."

Orr hopes the event will grow with every successive year. He points out that it would make more sense to run it over a number of days to provide more people with the opportunity to see the show, and to be able to invite more bands and groups from around the world to join the cast. "Our aim is to provide an exciting platform in New York for bands and large scale groups," declares Orr. "The New York Tattoo aims to provide a fantastic showcase for these bands and groups."

The New York Tattoo

*Mason Hall, Lexington,
Ave. East 23 St.*

April 5, 2014, 7:30 p.m.

www.tartanweek.com/tattoo

ELLIS ISLAND

*Celtic cowboys featured in
NY Tartan Week*

Tartan Day on Ellis Island in New York, March 28-30, this year promises to be bigger than ever: more Celtic performances, more Scottish culture, more cowboys! Wait? More cowboys? That's right: the centerpiece of this year's celebration of everything Scottish is an exhibition titled Scots in the American West, produced by the Buffalo Bill Center for the West with support from the Clan Currie, the National Trust for Scotland – USA Foundation, and the Smithsonian Institute.

The exhibition looks at the role Scots played in the opening of the American West and introduces visitors to such famous characters as John Muir, Buffalo Bill Cody and Alan Pinkerton, among others. In the 1700s, more than 50,000 immigrants crossed the Atlantic, with many of them choosing to settle in the West. Their stories reflect the collective contributions of the Scottish impact on the extensive and dynamic history of that region.

Scots endured a land with an unforgiving climate, rugged terrain and inhabited with cattle thieves, feuding families and outside invaders. Accustomed to taking risks, overcoming obstacles and starting new lives, their characteristics shaped their own country as well as the distant lands that became their new home, including North America.



Robert Currie, FSA Scot Chairman, Tartan Day on Ellis Island, says beyond the exhibition, the event will feature performances by the NY Celtic Dancers, the Rampant Lion Pipe Band and hot, new Celtic band, NY Brogue. The latter's performance at one of the largest attended Tartan Day events globally will include traditional cowboy songs, which had their origins in traditional Scottish music.

The Clan Currie Society produces Tartan Day on Ellis Island, which has become one of the preeminent events during NY Tartan week, which includes fashion shows, gala dinners, whisky tastings and more. And the event continues to grow. Says Currie: "What's that line from Jaws? 'I think we're going to need a bigger boat.' We'll need another week to hold much more."

www.tartandayonellisland.com



Whisky Live

What's Tartan Week without whisky? That's a rhetorical question. To be sure, one of the centerpieces of the celebration of all things Celtic is Whisky Live. "Scotch and Irish whisky is such a large part of Celtic heritage and tradition and, of course, is one of the main export products of the UK," declares Dave Sweet, the 47-year-old, Chicago-based director of the Whisky Live event.

To attend Whisky Live is to step into the global world of the spirit. The event features master distillers, producers, brand ambassadors, and representatives from more than 60 companies and distilleries. Together, they present more than 300 different expressions of the beverage, ranging from new craft American whiskies

and fine Scotches and Irish whiskies, to old standards and lesser known, rare brands. Additionally, the event includes whiskies from Tokyo, France, Australia, India and Canada.

As well, the event includes a whisky-fused dinner buffet featuring Four Roses Bourbon, chocolate pairings and cocktails. Nor would the affair be complete without a proper Scottish band to maintain the upbeat tempo of the evening and remind everyone it's Tartan Week, Sweet says, adding people should expect a mix of bagpipes and modern music.

Whisky Live is an offshoot of Whisky Magazine and the event first launched 12 years ago in London and Tokyo. New York City was the next logical location as,



according to Sweet, it is the largest whisky market globally. Invited to the first event in New York at the fabled Tavern on the Green in Central Park, Sweet was inspired and immediately became involved. Three years later he was running the show.

Looking ahead, Sweet says the event could grow to include more whiskies, more in-depth displays on how the drink is made and even such hands-on demonstrations as how to blend your own. "I think it is a great opportunity to celebrate our Celtic heritage," Sweet says of Tartan Week, "and our influence in the U.S."

www.whiskylive.com



A Celebration of Scotland's Treasures

James Hare is the Executive Director of the National Trust for Scotland USA Foundation, a not-for-profit organization by a group of American volunteers with a passion for Scotland. Recently we spoke with him about his signature Tartan Week event in NYC, A Celebration of Scotland's Treasures.

What motivated you to put this event together?

This is our seventh year in New York. The Gala was started to help raise funds to support the work we do. It is also an annual opportunity to focus special attention on an individual or an organization responsible for contributing to the cultural life of Scotland. Thus we are honoring the 2014 Great Scot Award to the 10th Duke of Buccleuch and 12th Duke of Queensberry, Richard Scott.

Who will be attending the event?

People come from all over the States to attend the event, including many Brits who make the trip from the U.K.

What can they expect to experience?

We have a lot of fun, and the whisky and music is, of course, terrific, featuring The Macallan, whose Brand Ambassador, Charlie Whitfield, always wows the audience. Atlantic Seaway provides the musical entertainment both during the main event and afterwards when we have a ceilidh and dancing to their live music. There are typically six or seven fantastic live auction lots – this year including a one week stay at Roshven House which sleeps 20 in total Scottish highlands comfort, a luxury expedition on the famous Royal Scotsman train, Connoisseurs Scotland has contributed an amazing stay at the finest hotels in Scotland, too. We are also

doing something a bit more historic this time by auctioning a number of pieces of Scottish pebble jewelry (kilt pins and broaches) from the collection of John Brown, Queen Victoria's gillie, which have been donated by Ann-Morris Antiques in NYC.

Why is it an important event for the Scottish community there?

It is a great way to help Americans participate in the care of the properties of historic and natural importance that are safeguarded by the National Trust for Scotland. Their generosity is outstanding and we expect that the gala will push

our total contributions since 2001 to the National Trust for Scotland to reach the \$7 million mark this spring.

How do you see the event growing in the years ahead?

We know that the famous property owned by the Trust in Helenburgh, Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Hill House is going to have to raise in excess of \$3 million over the next several years to undertake an essential and technically difficult exterior conservation to stop moisture infiltration into its walls. The gala will become even more important as the Hill House capital campaign is launched.

What are your thoughts on NYC Tartan week?

It gets better every year. The addition of the Tattoo this year is especially exciting.

What can be done to grow Tartan Week?

I'm trying to figure out how the City can illuminate the Empire State Building entirely in tartan. They do a great job with that for other important occasions and I'm sure we have the technology to weave lights into the appropriate plaid. Once that is figured out, the sky is the limit for this event.

www.ntsusa.org



More
NYC

Tartan Week Activities!



Scots Jews: Identity, Belonging and the Future

March 5 –April 27 • 92nd Street Y Weill Art Gallery
Opening Reception: April 3rd, 5-7pm

Four-time winner of the World Press Photo Awards, Judah Passow spent a year traveling across Scotland, visually capturing the country's diverse Jewish communities. The photographs from his cultural, spiritual and geographical journey are presented in *Scots Jews: Identity, Belonging and the Future*, a project supported by Creative Scotland. It will be exhibited at New York's 92nd Street Y Weill Art Gallery. Quoted in a 92nd Street Gallery press release, Passow describes the exhibition: "I hope people looking at these photographs will see what I saw – a people deeply devoted to their heritage both as Jews and Scots."

www.92y.org/Exhibits



The Kelpies

March 19-April 22 • Bryant Park

Leading up to NYC's Tartan Week, visitors to Bryant Park will be treated to *The Kelpies*, creations by artist and Glasgow-native, Andy Scott. Inspired by two Clydesdales named Duke and Baron, the original horse-head statues have been constructed at The Helix in Scotland's Falkirk and Grangemouth area, and are scheduled to open to the public on April 21st. One-hundred feet tall and weighing 300 tons, they are the world's largest horse-themed sculptures. Fifteen-foot scale versions of *The Kelpies* will be showcased in the New York City park along with day-time Tartan Week concerts.

www.americanscottishfoundation.com



Pre-Parade Ceilidh

April 4 • 7pm
• Abigail Adams Smith Auditorium

A Tartan Week staple, the popular Pre-Parade Ceilidh takes place the night before the spectacular 6th avenue procession. Presented by the New York Caledonian Club, this year's event features food, as well as drink provided by Belhaven Brewery, and live entertainment that will keep you jigging and reeling. Performers include the Madra Confach Ceilidh Band, the New York Scottish Pipes & Drums, Na h-Eileanaich, the Shot of Scotch Highland Dancers, Scotland's Morrison Academy and Mike Ogletree from Simple Minds. \$30 NYCC members; \$35 non-members; \$40 at the door

www.nycaledonian.org



Scotland 10k Run

April 5 • 8am • Central Park

More than 7,000 men and women are expected to partake in the 11th annual Scotland 10K Run. The New York Road Runners event, sponsored by the Scottish Government, will have participants run the scenic Central Park loop, ending the race at the same finish line used in the New York City Marathon. A post-race Year of Homecoming festival is planned featuring Scottish entertainment and family-friendly activities. If you wish to run the Scotland 10K, registration is filling up quickly and closes on April 3rd at 11:59pm.

www.nyrr.org



Kirkin O' the Tartan

April 5 • 10am • Church of Our Saviour

Before the Tartan Day Parade, the Saint Andrew's Society of the State of New York welcomes everyone to attend a non-denominational Kirkin O' the Tartan service. It is said the Scottish-American tradition—a blessing of the tartans and Scottish clans—began with Reverend Peter Marshall at Washington DC's New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in the early '40s. This year's NYC service will be followed by a traditional brunch.

Tickets for the Scottish meal must be reserved ahead of time and include transportation to the parade site.
Brunch tickets: \$25; \$10 for children under 10; free for children under 5

www.standrewsny.org



Post-Parade Party

April 5 • 4:30-10pm • Desmond's Steakhouse

Maintain the Tartan Day Parade momentum by attending the annual post-parade, family-friendly fête. Belhaven is sponsoring the event, which features a limited open bar from 4:30-7:30; drink specials will be offered an hour before the party. Nibbles are also included in the ticket price. The kiddies get to hang out in a separate room with entertainment and supervision. The American Rogues, known around the world for their Celtic musicality, were a huge hit at last year's post-parade party and are back again! The first 60 pipers to buy tickets get them half price—they are encouraged to bring their instruments and play with pride.
\$40; \$45 at the door; free for children under 12

www.nyctartanweek.org



The Caledonia Collective

April 6 • 8pm (Doors open at 7pm)
• The Studio at Webster Hall

Creative Scotland and CPL Entertainment Ltd. present The Caledonia Collective, an annual concert that brings Scottish musical talent to the international stage. This year's line-up includes The LaFontaines, known as "the best live band in Scotland" and winners of the Big Apple Award, an emerging music competition sponsored by Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy in Scotland and Creative Scotland. The award-winning, world-touring, folk band Lau is also performing. Reserve your FREE tickets at Ticketweb.com (first two per person are free; \$10/ticket thereafter).

www.creativescotland.com • www.cplweb.com



CELTICA: Live at Drom

April 10 • 10:30pm (Doors open at 10pm) • Drom

CELTICA is on tour with the release of their third album. "We worked really hard to make Legends and Visions sound even better than our first CDs," says band leader, Gajus Stappen. "...It's a killer album that will blow you away!" The band mates, hailing from Scotland, the U.S. and Austria come together with electric guitars, bagpipes, percussion and voice to produce high-octane, Celtic rock sounds. During Tartan Week, they are playing a full show at NYC's DROM where audiences will delight in their music and stage presence, not to mention their special fire effects. \$10/\$15

www.celticarocks.com

For more information on NYC Tartan Week, visit:

www.tartanweek.com • www.nyctartanweek.org

Chasing the *American* Dram

New York City has some of the finest nightlife in the world, and each of the five boroughs enjoys their fair share of great bars. If you find yourself in and around The Big Apple during this year's Tartan Week celebrations, here are a few tips on where to tip your tumbler.



St. Andrews Restaurant and Bar

140 West 46th St, Manhattan • 212-840-8413

Located in the heart of Times Square, St. Andrews is the granddaddy of Scottish bars in the northeast US. With authentic décor to die for, old-school Scotch lists, pub grub, fine-dining, and tasting events hosted by Richard Crawford, make this a must-stop on your rounds of rounds. www.standrewsnyc.com

Noorman's Kil

609 Grant St, Brooklyn • 347.384.2526

With more than 400 whiskies available, Noorman's Kil was recently named one of the ten best whisky bars in America, making it the go-to saloon for spirit lovers young and old. The pub is simple and spacious, with a cozy backyard patio. Don't forget to sample the world-renowned grilled-cheese sandwiches. www.noormanskil.com



Highlands

150 West 10th St, Manhattan • 212-229-2670

A Scottish-centric gastropub located in the heart of the West Village, Highlands is the watering hole of choice for ex-pats looking for a slice of home and hearth. Extensive whisky, malt, beer and gin lists are accompanied by classic and contemporary dishes. Try the Haggis with neeps n' tatties in whisky butter sauce. www.highlands-nyc.com

Caledonia Scottish Bar

1609 Second Ave, Manhattan • 212-879-0402

With a fine whisky list, including more than 180 selections from five different Scottish regions - as well as whiskies from Japan, India, Ireland, Wales and beyond - the "Cal" has become the Upper East Side's pub of choice for young connoisseurs who want to party without the hipster pretention. www.caledoniapub.com



Isle of Skye

488 Driggs Ave, Brooklyn • 347.384.2722

Along with the dark demur and décor - finished wood floors, leather couches and stone walls - this hidden gem-of-a-pub boasts one of the finest whisky selections in the city. Be sure to savour the Rabbie Burns, a smooth mélange of Glen Grant Reserve, orange bitters, Benedictine and Doulin Rouge. www.isleofskypub.com

Honourable Mentions

The Flatiron Room, Manhattan • Duke of Montrose Pub, Brooklyn • The Whiskey Ward, Manhattan
• Sweet Afton, Queens • Deacon Brodie's, Manhattan



WeddingGuide

Tying *the* Celtic Knot

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Celtic Wedding Tips

*The modern Celtic wedding is a mix of classic and contemporary traditions.
Here are ten tips for planning your big day.*

The Engagement Party: Usually it is the father of the bride who hosts an engagement party at which he pledges his daughter's hand and asks the groom to take good care of her. This is more traditional than the father giving his daughter away at the wedding ceremony.

Showing of the Presents: With special ties to Scotland, the mother of the bride hosts an afternoon tea to which guests are expected to bring presents to help the young couple set up home. It can be held either before or after the wedding. In some cases, all of the gifts are unwrapped and displayed, and the bride leads her guests on an informal tour.

Rings: Traditionally only the bride receives a ring, although this is changing. In Ireland, the Claddagh ring is still popular, while in Scotland, rings can incorporate the groom's clan crest. Recently knotwork rings, symbolizing eternity, have become popular. An even newer trend is to have the ring finger tattooed with knotwork to represent everlasting love.



Bride's Wedding Outfit: The bride wears a circlet of flowers or jewels rather than a veil. Handcraft jewellers are often delighted to design a diadem to the bride's specifications. The dress is usually flowing rather than tight fitting. White is still popular, although some brides are choosing to have a dress designed in their clan's tartan. The fabric should be rich, like satin, and beadwork is very trendy.



Flowers; Many Celtic brides prefer bouquets of wildflowers, and both white heather and English lavender are favoured. Quite often the entire bridal party will either wear or carry white heather for luck.

Invitations and Place Settings: Ideas include embossing wedding invitations and place setting cards with Celtic knotwork or, for a Scottish wedding, with both the bride and groom's clan crests. A sprig of white heather may also be attached to the place cards. You can also buy or rent glassware with knotwork or clan crests etched into them, although these can be quite pricey. Some couples choose to cover the head table with linens made from their family tartans.

The Wedding Cake: The Irish favour whiskey cakes while the Scots lean towards fruitcake iced with marzipan. In Scotland, the bride cuts the cake with a dirk, guided by her new husband's hand. Other cake customs include putting small pieces of cake into tiny boxes to present to each guest, sealed with Celtic knotwork, the groom's clan crest or a tartan ribbon tie. Each box should include the name of the bride and groom as well as the date of the wedding. Some couples like to keep the top layer of their cake to eat on their first anniversary or to serve at their first child's christening. Ask around. You may find an adventurous baker in your neighbourhood keen to ice your wedding cake in tartan.

Music: There are lots of ways to introduce Celtic music into your wedding plans. Hire a bagpiper to play at the entrance to the church as guests arrive or to pipe the bride and groom into the wedding reception or dinner. Arrange to have Gaelic hymns, including "Highland Wedding" played in church. Ask a Celtic harper to play during the reception. Hire a Celtic band or musician to play at the wedding dance or give your D.J. a selection of Celtic CDs. Dance to the rhythms of Scotland and Ireland: reels, jigs and step-dances can be lively affairs. It might also be fun to introduce some Scottish Country dances to your guests, but make sure the wedding party has practiced the steps in advance.



The Church Service: Traditionally the bride and groom go down the aisle together while guests throw grains of rice. Vows are often in Gaelic or English translations of traditional Gaelic vows. In Scotland, after the couple is married, the groom pins a ribbon of his clan's tartan to his wife's bodice to symbolize she now belongs to his clan.

Wedding Dinner: Serve a little honey mead along with a selection of wines, and make sure your male guests are supplied with a shot of good single malt whisky. Male guests may also be given cigars wrapped inside knotwork packaging or the groom's tartan. Female guests may be presented with chocolates soaked in whisky.

With notes from Alexa Thompson

Irish Wedding Customs & Superstitions

There is no denying that the Irish are a superstitious lot. And, with a wealth of traditions, customs and folklore, Irish weddings are not exempt of shibboleth. Interestingly, some of these are still practiced today.

There is one tradition that states: "Marry in May and Rue The Day" while another states: "Marry in April if you can, joy for maiden and for man."

Another custom saw the groom invited to the bride's house right before the wedding and they cooked a goose in his honor. It was called Aitin' the gander, and is where we get the expression "his goose is cooked!"



In the old days, Bunratty Meade was consumed at weddings because it was thought that it promoted virility. Couples drank it from special goblets for a full month following the wedding, which is supposedly where we get the word honeymoon.

Irish brides used to carry a real horseshoe for good luck.

A charming custom involves having the bride carry a special hanky that with a few stitches can be turned into a christening bonnet for the first baby.

The chime of bells is thought to keep evil spirits away, restore harmony if a couple is fighting, and also remind a couple of their wedding vows.

In the old days, couples ate salt and oatmeal at the beginning of their reception, with each of them taking three mouthfuls as a protection against the power of the evil eye.

When a couple is dancing, the bride can't take both feet off the floor because the fairies will get the upper hand. There's many an Irish legend about brides being spirited away by the little people.



For the same reason, it's bad luck for a bride to wear green.

It's also bad luck for a bride or the groom to sing at their own wedding.

A fine day meant good luck, especially if the sun shone on the bride. If you're a Roman Catholic, one way to make certain that it won't rain is to put a statue of the Infant of Prague outside the church before your ceremony.

It's considered unlucky to marry on a Saturday.



Those who married in harvest would spend all their lives gathering.

A man should always be the first to wish joy to the bride, never a woman.

It was lucky to hear a cuckoo on the wedding morning, or to see three magpies.

To meet a funeral on the road meant bad luck and if there was a funeral procession planned for that day, the wedding party always took a different road.

The wedding party should always take the longest road home from the church.

It was bad luck if a glass or cup were broken on the wedding day.

A bride and groom should never wash their hands in the same sink at the same time -it's courting disaster if they do.



It was said to be lucky if you married during a "growing moon and a flowing tide."

When leaving the church, someone must throw an old shoe over the bride's head so she will have good luck.

If the bride's mother-in-law breaks a piece of wedding cake on the bride's head as she enters the house after the ceremony, they will be friends for life.

By Bridget Haggerty



Celtic Weddings – ‘Who’ to Wear

*A wealth of Celtic designers - each with a flair for wedding fashion
- are making waves around the world*

HERS HIS



Katherine Feiel based in Freeport, Nova Scotia, specializes in creating Celtic, Medieval and Story Book wedding gowns. The dresses are designed via the bespoke tradition (custom-tailoring) to fit the bride-to-be's exact form. Feiel employs fairly-traded materials and also re-invents vintage garments and tapestries to create distinctive wedding dresses. She designs under the *katherinefeiel.com* and *faeriebrides.com* labels.



Welsh designer **Helen Rhiannon** also practices the art of bespoke to create some gorgeous, sometimes unconventional, designs. Her pieces are carried at Rachel Burgess' Bridal Boutique in Penarth, Wales, which recently announced that Rhiannon's new collection will be carried on their racks come early June. Check out images of Rhiannon's previous designs at: *helenrhiannon.com* *rachelburgessbridalboutique.com*



QUE-VA's bespoke designer Caihmo Keane, based in Dublin, creates "romantic and whimsical" bridal, as well as formal and evening wear. Brides, bridesmaids, mothers of the bride and other important ladies have various options to choose from of her designs that balance modern day chic with timeless elegance. One might call Keane a mixed-media artist as she incorporates various organic and "reincarnated" fabrics, as well as beads, trims, hand-painted embellishments and more. *que-va.com*



Renowned Scottish designer, **Joyce Young** is the owner of By Storm. Among her wedding collections is Tartan Spirit Couture, which offers dresses with either hints or full explosions of tartan for brides, bridesmaids and mothers of the bride alike. *joyceyoungcollections.co.uk*



Reflective Images offers Celtic wedding rings for him and her. *celticjewelry.com*



Award winning designer and goldsmith, **Janice Louise Byrne** is the owner of Dublin-based JLB Jewellery. Inspired by nature, traditional motifs are apparent in many of her pieces, from Celtic crosses and hearts to trees. Byrne loves creating customized jewellery based on clients' desires, which includes engagement and wedding rings. *jlbjewellery.ie*

Slater Menswear, headquartered in Glasgow, is a retail chain with over 20 shops across Scotland. Still family-run and continuing to provide personalized tailoring services, the company carries numerous designer brands, including the Samuel Slater line, named after the store's forefather. The Samuel Slater three-piece suits look particularly dapper on a groom, best man or father of the bride. Slater also carries Highlandwear, including formal jackets, kilts, sporrans, ties and more, fit for a wedding! *slaters.co.uk*



Scotland's **Slanj Kilts** is no stranger to the international fashion stage, having showcased its designs at From Scotland with Love in NYC and recently at the Scottish Wedding Show. Among their specialties is made-to-order kilt outfits, many dashing suits for members of the wedding party. The wide range offers traditional and modern looks, from Tweed Crail to Prince Charlie. *slanjkilts.com*



Reflective Images specializes in Celtic wedding rings, as well as jewelry for numerous other special occasions. The Santa Fe, New Mexico-based business, which emphasizes eco-friendly practices, showcases designs from co-owner Helen Chantler as well as other artisans with a passion for Celtic design. For example, the Celtic Rope Knot collection presents a classic motif for symbolizing the union between two individuals in love. Designs come in his and hers. *celticjewelry.com*



Janice Louise Byrne of JLB Jewellery specializes in both his and her wedding/engagement rings. *jlbjewellery.ie*



Handfasting

The ritual of joining two souls is older than history. Each of us who falls in love and determines that we want to spend our lives with that person thinks about how to begin that union. Even if two people have shared a life together for some years, that instant when they decide to commit their love into the future is extremely momentous.

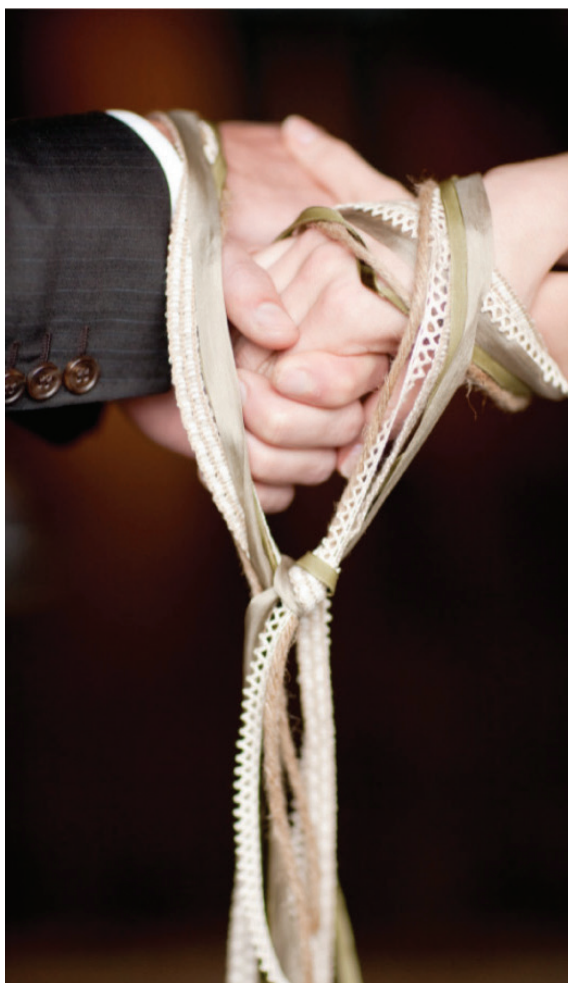
The most familiar ritual to consecrate such a union is a wedding; for some it is the only union rite they have participated in or witnessed. However, our Celtic ancestors joined two lovers together in a ceremony called a handfasting, a tradition that is experiencing a revival.

Long ago, before governments had a say in the legality of unions, our forefathers and foremothers made their own unions and grew old in them. Today, couples who want to draw from that ancient wisdom are choosing alternatives to traditional church weddings. Handfasting is a satisfying path for many.

Generally, handfasting differs from traditional weddings in a few agreed upon ways. In handfasting, the couple promises to each other; there is no decree bestowed upon them by a representative of the church or government. A handfasting ceremony has a great deal of freedom: it may be inside or outdoors, with magical clothing and symbols or no clothing at all, for a year or forever, with an officiant or not, same-sex partners or a man joining a woman.

A universal element of a handfasting involves the cords that connect the couple together during the ceremony, their hands fastened together with symbolic ribbons, ropes or string. Usually the couple faces each other and joins right hands and left hands, forming an infinity shape with their bodies, arms, and hands. The officiant (when there is one) calls in the blessings from each direction and lays a cord across the couple's joined hands as each blessing is spoken.

The couple most often write the actual



promises, reflecting what is important to them. The vows often begin with a statement of intent from each partner, declaring their love and their reasons for wanting to be joined. The intent may be to be handfasted for a year or for a longer specified time. This "trial" period is a common practice of those who choose this method of uniting. It is seen by those who choose this way as a respectful

and sensible way to begin a life of conscious caring.

Repeated vows, also composed by the couple, then follow the statement of intent. The officiant lays a cord over the clasped hands of the couple as the vows are made, one cord for each group of promises. If an officiant is not present, the cords may be draped by friends or family members. When the vows are complete, a prayer may be spoken, the cords loosely knotted, and the statement of the union declared, as in this example:

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

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

Many couples today want the best of both the handfasting ritual and the legality of a marriage. Very little is required for a union to be legal in Canada. Upon the receipt of a completed marriage license, a County records the names of the couple, the place, date, officiant, and witnesses and the couple is then legally married.

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

by Karyl Huntley





Viva Las Vegas!

Bride Eileen Corona-Venturi adored everything about her Celtic-themed wedding in Vegas, but her bridal bouquet, composed of rich purples, greens and reds designed to mimic the colors of the Scottish Highlands, struck her as especially lovely. "It was probably the most beautiful bouquet I've ever seen," said Corona-Venturi.

Corona-Venturi married William Venturi in Las Vegas in May 2012, after eloping in order to have a quiet ceremony. "We'd both been married before and we didn't want a big wedding. We wanted something intimate, just for the two of us, so we went to Vegas," said Corona-Venturi, who calls Florida home.

It might seem odd to travel to Vegas to ensure a quiet wedding, but the glamorous desert city offers just about every conceivable wedding option. Nevada is an easy state in which to acquire a marriage license and it is also a relatively cheap place to wed. As a result, the Vegas wedding scene has grown up alongside the city's entertainment industry. Vegas hosts around 115,000 weddings a year, and a small number of them are Celtic-themed.

The big, plush hotel venues will arrange most things if asked, but Reverend Aurore Leigh Barrett, who married Corona-Venturi and her husband, specializes in Celtic weddings, and will hold them in diverse locations from peaceful chapels to the dramatic Valley of Fire, named for its ancient red sandstone formations.

Couples can choose ceremonies that are both non-religious and Christian. The Christian variety incorporates traditional verses such as St. Paul's hymn to love and the Lord's Prayer. Reverend Aurore also includes Native American verses, such as the Apache wedding prayer. Both ceremonies feature traditional elements such as handfasting (the binding of the couple's hands with a cord) and the passing of the tartan sash. Symbolic elements include: water, which represents woman; stone, symbolizing man; and earth, the symbol of the altar. The bridal couple drink from an anam cara or soul friend cup.

Reverend Aurore has been offering her Celtic weddings for 10 years and aims to make them intimate and meaningful. Her ceremonies last around 20 minutes, unlike many Vegas weddings which can be over in as little as five.

"I love Celtic history and everything Celtic," she said. "I started studying Celtic beliefs in my late teens and instantly felt a connection to the nature worship and sense of gratitude and thankfulness inherent in Celtic culture."

Reverend Aurore marries many couples from the Celtic nations, some of them drawn by the relatively low cost of these weddings – the Valley of Fire is the most expensive venue and costs about \$1,500. Couples also like the proximity to Sin City's many attractions. For Corona-Venturi, a Celtic wedding appealed because both her parents were born in Ireland. She and her husband chose to marry in the Tuscan-style chapel. "The ceremony was unbelievable," said Corona-Venturi. "The way Reverend Aurore brought the different elements together, like

handfasting and prayers, was very moving."

English newlyweds Patricia Massey and David Carpenter-Clawson were also married by Reverend Aurore, after choosing Vegas because the scattered English and American branches of their family wished to visit the city.

At first, Carpenter-Clawson had reservations about marrying in Vegas, but was pleased to discover that she could be married in the beautiful church at St. Jude's Ranch and that

her fee would go straight to the welfare of homeless youth in the city.

"Reverend Aurore designed a wonderful ceremony for us in October 2012," she said. "It was personal, meaningful and moving. All our family was included. We felt in tune with each other, our family and friends because of the ancient marriage rites. The ceremony was grounded in love and in essence Christian. It was unforgettable."

In order to keep elements of mystery and surprise, Reverend Aurore doesn't inform couples of the exact details of their ceremony in advance. "I don't release details of the wedding ceremony ahead of time. I want them to listen to the words of the ceremony," she said. "The best thing they can do is show up and not be concerned – just let it happen."

By Carol Moreira
www.weddingslasvegas.com



Celtic Wedding Cake

The key to this rich cake is to let it mellow, adding a splash of whiskey every day or so.

INGREDIENTS PREPARATION

2 cups (500 ml) of raisins
 2 cups (500 ml) of sultanas or baking raisins
 2 cups (500 ml) of currants
 1 cup (250 ml) of slivered or chopped almonds
 1 cup (250 ml) of candied cherries
 1 cup (250 ml) of candied peel
 2-1/2 cups (625 ml) of self-rising flour
 1 tsp (5 ml) salt
 1 tsp (5 ml) of cinnamon
 1 tsp (5 ml) of nutmeg
 1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) of ground clove
 1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) of ground ginger
 1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) of allspice
 2 cups (500 ml) of butter, softened but not melted
 2 cups (500 ml) of dark brown sugar
 1/4 cup (62.5 ml) of molasses
 juice of one lemon and one orange
 6 extra large eggs
 1 tbsp (15 ml) vanilla
 1/2 cup (125 ml) of brandy, whiskey or rum

- Preheat oven to 325 F (175 C)
- Line the sides and bottom of a spring-form pan with parchment paper and set aside.
- In a large bowl, mix together the fruit, almonds and 1/4 of the flour.
- In a separate bowl, cream together the dark brown sugar and the softened -butter. Add the molasses and the lemon and orange juice.
- Beat together the eggs and vanilla and blend into the butter mixture.
- Sift the remaining flour, salt, and spices together and add to the floured fruit and nut mixture.
- Mix all ingredients plus 1/4 cup (62.5 ml) of the spirits, stir well until all of the ingredients are well mixed.
- Pour the batter into the pan and bake for 50 minutes. Turn the heat down to 300 F (150 C) and continue to bake, checking frequently, for 3 or 4 hours longer.
- The cake is done when a knife inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.
- Let the cake cool completely before removing it from the pan. Poke small holes in the top of the cake and pour in remainder of the spirits. Wrap in a layer of waxed paper and then in aluminum foil to seal. Allow to sit in a cool place for at least 2 weeks, adding a little of the spirits every other day to keep it moist.

TRADITIONAL ICING INGREDIENTS

8 cups (2 L) sifted confectioner's sugar
 3/4 cup (190 ml) of water
 3 tbsp (45 ml) light corn syrup
 2 tsp (10 ml) almond extract

TRADITIONAL ICING PREPARATION

- Combine ingredients in a saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture reaches 92 F (33 C). The mixture should be slightly thickened, but thin enough to pour.
- Place cake on a wire rack with a plate beneath it to catch any drips. Slowly pour the icing all over the cake in a circular motion, using a spatula to smooth. Place in a cool place to let the icing set.
- Decorate as desired. One lovely idea is to add sprigs of fresh lavender, a popular Irish wedding flower.
- For an even more traditional icing, add a layer of apricot jam and a layer of marzipan before adding the topping.

With notes from Alexa Thompson



A Celtic Paradise



Imagine being able to holiday inside the “Celtic Heart of North America,” in Cape Breton’s Highlands National Park. Instead of pitching a tent and cooking beans over a Coleman stove, you could relish in fine dining while enjoying the phenomenal beauty and culture, characteristic of this pocket of the world. This fantasy becomes a reality at Keltic Lodge, located off the Cabot Trail on Middle Head Peninsula.

Keltic Lodge’s General Manager, Matthew Mackenzie, says the best part of his job is seeing guests shift from appearing to have the weight of the world on their shoulders when they first arrive, to becoming stress-free. On Day Two, he notices guests are a little more relaxed after a stroll on the Atlantic-flanked peninsula or a round of golf. “By Day Three, you see husbands and wives holding hands, walking up and down our pathways, sitting in Adirondack chairs with a glass of wine,” Mackenzie muses. “They are in the moment. That transition here is none like anywhere I have ever been.”

The Keltic Lodge began in the late 19th century with Alexander Graham Bell inviting Henry Corson, an Ohio rubber mogul, and his wife Julia, to visit him in Cape Breton. Mrs. Corson suffered from tuberculosis and her Doctor thought the Island’s clean air would do wonders. The couple fell in love with the Middle Head Peninsula where they built their summer home, and Mrs. Corson’s health significantly improved.

The Nova Scotia government eventually expropriated the Corsons’ land opening the resort in 1940. Wanting to keep the Scottish theme in the forefront, the name the Corsons used—Keltic Lodge—remained.

Today Keltic Lodge is a destination site for travelers of all ages. By day, they can hike the national park, relax at the spa, go fishing or whale watching, enjoy delicious, locally-inspired cuisine created by Cape Breton-born, French trained chef, Daryl MacDonnell, and take in some live folk music every night of the week. They can either stay in a rustic or modern lodge or in a cottage surrounded by nature.

Golfers are especially thrilled to play the Highland Links next door. The internationally-recognized course was designed by Stanley Thompson beginning in 1939. Known as his masterpiece, Stanley called it the “mountain and oceans” course due to the stark contrasts of stunning scenery throughout.

“It’s a spectacular course,” says Mackenzie. “It takes players from the Atlantic coastline into the Cape Breton Highlands creating an experience that cannot be duplicated...it is such a difference in topography that you get that seaside view but you also get a feeling that these massive mountains are on either side of you kind of pushing you into this little valley.”

Mackenzie says the fact that Keltic Lodge is away from the hustle of urban life, allows loved ones to bond on a deeper level. This is particularly obvious

at the many weddings the lodge hosts. Everything, from the ceremony and reception, spa treatments and catering to pre- and post-wedding activities can all happen in one location, allowing the happy couple and guests to enjoy every moment of their multi-day dream wedding.

“Here as a destination facility, you get closer as a family,” says Mackenzie. “Therefore the emotions when the wedding actually occurs are so much higher, it’s palpable.”

Mackenzie has been in the hospitality industry for two decades, having worked at such distinguished spots as the Fairmount Chateau Whistler and the Sooke Harbour House. But for him, in his third year at Keltic Lodge, the resort is like no other.

“The stress changes up here and it melts away,” he says. “You might find glitzier buildings in the world, like the Ritz Carlton, but it’s the fibre of the people that work here, it’s the fibre of the culture that it’s based upon and it’s definitely the environment that we call home that makes the guests come back year after year.”

www.kelticlodge.ca



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A golfer in a red and black jacket and black trousers is captured in the middle of a golf swing on a lush green course. The golfer is wearing white gloves and white shoes with a red 'F' logo. The background features rolling green hills, a small town, and large mountains under a cloudy sky.

Golf *Guide*

*Get into the Swing
of the Season*



the History of Golf

The exact origins of golf, or other ball-hitting games with names like colf or kolf, chuiwan and paille-maille, will perhaps never be known. Historical records span centuries and geography. Claims of “first” and “oldest” are independently asserted by more than one culture and organization. Plus who knows how many times a game of a stick and stone or club and sphere occurred before the dawn of recorded writings and symbols?

One fact that appears irrefutable is golf, as the world knows it today, both in terms of method and spirit, was born in Scotland; and it was in many cases, Scots who introduced their passion for the game around the world.

10th century

945 – The Dongxuan Records describe the game of chuiwan, which roughly translates to “hitting ball,” being played in China circa 945AD. Chuiwan was played with various clubs on a 10-hole course.

13th century

1261 – In Boec van Merline, Flemish poet Jacob van Maerlant describes a ball game being played with a koluen (colf club) in the Low Countries.

14th century

1360 – The Council of Brussels outlawed colf, stating whoever was caught playing the game would be fined 20 shillings or have his overcoat taken away.

1387 – A charter was decreed in the Dutch city of Brielle that no person shall play any sport for money. But there was an exception: a game of ball and club was allowed but only outside the town’s walls.

15th century

1457 – King James II of Scotland banned gowf (golf), as well as football, from being played, so that prospective soldiers could focus on archery. This naturally suggests the pre-existence of the sport in Scotland.

Similar bans were issued in 1471 and 1491. The ban was overturned in 1501 or 1502. King James II’s descendants, including King James IV and Mary, Queen of Scots, ended up embracing the game.

16th century

1552 – As of February 2014, Guinness World Records recognizes St. Andrews Links' Old Course in Scotland as the oldest golf course in the world. Archbishop Hamilton's Charter of 1552 formerly allowed "golff, futball, schuteing and all gamis" on the course. According to St. Andrews Links' website, golf had been played there since the 1400s. (Scotland's Musselburgh Links, circa 1672, was once recognized by Guinness as the world's oldest golf course.)



17th century

1682 – The first recorded international golf match took place in Leith between a Scottish and English team. The Duke of York and Greg Patterson, playing for Scotland, were victorious. Andrew Dickson, known as the first recorded caddy, carried the Duke's clubs.

18th century

1744 – The Company of Gentlemen Golfers (later named the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers) formed, making it, disputably, the oldest surviving club in the world. They drafted "Articles and Laws in Playing at Golf." The 13 regulations are known as the first scribed Rules of Golf.

1754 – The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews was founded. Beginning in the 19th century, the club became an international golfing authority. In 2004, the club transitioned into what is now called The R&A.

1764 – St. Andrews Links' Old Course went from 22 holes to 18 to create an international golfing standard.

19th century

1829 – The Royal Calcutta Golf Club in India was founded making it the first recognized club outside Great Britain.



1848 – Dr. Robert Adams began developing the "Gutty," a more durable and easier to mass-produce golf ball made of Gutta Percha gum. This creation helped spread the sport to a greater population of players.

1856 – Ireland's first golf course, the Royal Curragh Club, was established, although its formation may date back to at least 1852, states the course's website. That same year the Pau Golf Club was founded in France. Additionally a regulatory standard was enacted that same year: during a golf match, the "ball must be played as it lies" or the hole is conceded.



1880s & '90s – Golf clubs are founded in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Singapore, the United States, not to mention that England has more than 50 by this time.

1894 – The USGA Museum calls the 1894-1918 period the "Dawn of American Golf," although some records suggest American play dating back to the late 1700s. In 1894, members from several clubs met in New York City to form the USGA (United States Golf Association).

20th & 21st centuries

1901 – The PGA (Professional Golfers Association) was founded.

1913 – According to the USGA Museum, America's first golf star was Francis Ouimet. He defeated legendary British golfers Harry Vardon and Ted Ray at the 1913 U.S. Open.

1940s – WWII put a halt to major tournaments including the British Open, the U.S. Open and the PGA Championship.

1950 – The LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association) was founded.

1980 – Jack Nicklaus, aka the "Golden Bear," set a new U.S. Open 72-hole lowest score record of 272. Since then Lee Janzen, Tiger Woods and Jim Furyk have shared the U.S. Open record. It was beaten in 2011 by Rory McIlroy with a score of 268.



1997 – Tiger Woods set a world record as being the youngest player to win the U.S. Masters. In 2000, Woods became known as "the world's greatest player" for winning three championships and breaking a world record during each. In 2001, Woods won the Masters with his "Tiger Slam," making him the first to win all four majors successively.

1999 – Joseph Leonard made a legendary 45-foot putt on the 17th which secured his team the Ryder Cup win.

2001 – Known as the world's best female golfer, Annika Sorenstam made LPGA Tour history when she shot a low round-score of 59 at the LPGA Standard Register Ping.

2013 – At the Australian Masters, Jarrod Lyle made a triumphant comeback that will remain in golf fans' memories forever. He resumed his professional career last year after overcoming leukemia for the second time.



Golf Greats

Throughout history, an abundance of legendary players have hailed from the Celtic world. Perseverance and passion hold true among our list of “then & now” greatest golfers. Here is a quick glimpse of a few of the greats, past and present.



Rory McIlroy

Age: 24

County Down, Northern Ireland

A sign of great things to come, when Rory McIlroy was just two years old, he hit a 40-yard drive. Since late 2009, he's placed among the top 10 of the Official World Golf Rankings. Several times he's held the No. 1 slot, including a 32-week stretch in 2012-2013. Career highlights include winning the 2011 U.S. Open (where he set a new low score record) and the 2012 PGA Championship. While 2013 was a tough year, recently CBS Eye on Golf's Kyle Porter placed McIlroy 2nd among his “power rankings.”



Catriona Matthew

Age: 44

Edinburgh, Scotland

Catriona Matthew started playing golf when she was five years old. As of early February, she is 11th among the Rolex Women's World Golf Rankings. Matthew qualified for the LPGA Tour on her first try and she also plays for the Ladies European Tour. She has represented Europe in the Solheim Cup numerous times and on six occasions her team won. She's also won four LPGA prizes, including the RICOH Women's British Open in 2009, making her the first Scottish golfer to ever win a women's major championship.



Darren Clarke

Age: 45

County Tyrone, Northern Ireland

A Northern Irish fan favourite, Darren Clarke has been a European Tour player since 1991. He also previously played the PGA Tour. He's won 22 professional competitions worldwide, but a dream was realized when he won his first major championship at the 2011 Open after more than 50 attempts to do so. In 2012, the Queen inducted Clarke into the Order of the British Empire for his success during the previous year. The Darren Clarke Foundation provides golfing opportunities to Irish youth and raises awareness about breast cancer.



Jamie Donaldson

Age: 38

Rhondda Cynon Taf, Wales

Jamie Donaldson has been a pro golfer since 2000 and by 2002 he was playing on the European Tour. But due to a back injury, he lost his spot in 2004. This was not the end of Donaldson, however. By 2008, he was on the European Tour again. Since then his official Golf World rankings have steadily increased—as of early February, Donaldson's #27 in the world. His upswing wins include the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship in 2013 and the Irish Open in 2012.



Padraig Harrington

Age: 42

Dublin, Republic of Ireland

European and PGA Tour player Padraig Harrington brought pride to the Emerald Isle when he won The Open Championship in 2007—the first Irishman to do so in 60 years. That same year he won the PGA Championship and in 2008 he won another Open. Harrington has collected numerous other European, Asian and PGA tour prizes since the late 90s. While his rankings have declined since 2009—the USGA's ban on square grooves has affected his game—this season Harrington is determined to make a comeback.



Sandy Lyle

Age: 56

Shropshire, England

Although born in England, Alexander Walter Barr Lyle has always played on behalf of Scotland and now calls Perthshire his home. The World Golf Hall of Famer was one of the "Big Five," along with Seve Ballesteros (Spain), Nick Faldo (England), Bernhard Langer (Germany) and Ian Woosnam (Wales).

The quintet have won 16 major titles between them and each were members of the famous 1985 European Ryder Cup team that claimed victory from the U.S., which had been previously undefeated for nearly three decades. Highlights of Lyle's own career include winning The Open in 1985 and the Masters in 1988.



Samuel Henry "Errie" Ball

Age: 103

Gwynedd, Wales

On November 14, 2013, Samuel Henry "Errie" Ball celebrated his 103rd birthday, making him the oldest surviving member of The PGA of America. He is also the only person alive today that competed in the first Augusta National in 1934. In 1926, at age 15, Ball was the youngest player to have competed in the British Open. Bobby Jones, who won that championship, began mentoring Ball and convinced him to move to the U.S. An Illinois and PGA Golf Hall of Famer, Ball won several Illinois PGA Championships, among other tournaments. As of his last birthday, Ball is still teaching golf lessons.



Philomena Garvey

1926-2009

County Louth, Rep. of Ireland

At the time of her death, The Ladies Golf Union described Philomena Garvey as "Ireland's most successful female amateur golfer to date." Her numerous achievements include 15-time Ladies Irish Close Champion; five-time finalist, including one win, at the Ladies British Amateur Open Championship; six wins with the GB&I Curtis Cup team; and 18-time Irish representative at the Home Internationals. In 1964, Harvey became the first female professional golfer in Ireland's history, but she requested she be reinstated as an amateur in 1968. She retired from the game after winning the Ladies Irish Close Champion in 1970.



James Braid

1870-1950

Fife, Scotland

James Braid was one of the "Great Triumvirate" players. He, Harry Vardon and John Henry Taylor were known as the three foremost golfers during their time and together won 16 of 21 Open Championships from 1894 to 1914. Braid himself captured five of these major titles. He also won the 1910 French Open and several British PGA Match Play Championships. Today, Braid might be better known for the over 300 golf courses he designed or restructured across Scotland, Ireland, England and Wales. "James Braid is considered one of the finest golf course designers of all time," states VisitScotland.com, encouraging visitors to take the James Braid Golf Trail.



Dorothy Campbell

1883-1945

Edinburgh, Scotland

In his book *From the Links: Golf's Most Memorable Moments*, Joshua Shifrin describes Dorothy Campbell as "the first truly dominant female golfer of international notoriety." Campbell, aka Dorothy Campbell Hurd Howe, started playing golf at 18 months. She won her first Scottish Ladies Championship in 1905. Throughout her career, she took 11 national amateur titles, and was the first female golfer to capture the U.S., British and Canadian Woman's Amateurs. Campbell was inducted into both the Canadian and World Golf Hall of Fame.

Tee Up to Ten of the Best Celtic Golf Courses

Whether it's the challenging holes, the picturesque landscapes or the legendary moments that took place on their greens, world-class golf courses can be found around the world, from South Africa to Japan. We've highlighted 10 of the best among the Celtic nations and Diasporas. After all, it was the Scots who invented the glorious game.



St. Andrews Links (Old Course)

St. Andrews, Scotland

St. Andrews, the "Home of Golf," dates back to the 1400s. Old Tom Morris, responsible for its existing double greens, served as custodian from 1865 to 1903. Course features include the "Hell" bunker and what European Ryder Cup Captain Paul McGinley calls "the most famous first tee shot in golf." The Old Course has hosted the British Open 28 times and co-hosts the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship annually. Numerous legends have played there, from Bobby Jones, who said it was the last course he wanted to play before he died, to Jack Nicklaus, who said goodbye to the sport at the St. Andrews 2005 Open. www.standrews.org.uk

The Royal County Down Golf Club

Newcastle, Northern Ireland

Surrounded by the Mountains of Mourne and Dundrum Bay, Royal County Down offers an exceptionally gorgeous view from each hole. Charles Darwin's grandson and World Golf Hall of Famer, Bernard Darwin, described the course as "big and glorious carries, nestling greens, entertainingly blind shots, local knowledge and beautiful turf – the kind of golf that people play in their most ecstatic dreams." Founded in 1889, much of the design came from Old Tom Morris. The course has hosted many notable amateur tournaments and some professional, including Senior Open Championships with Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson, Jack Nicklaus and other greats participating. www.royalcountydown.org



Muirfield

Gullane, Scotland

The Scottish links course is the home of the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, the world's oldest continuous golf club. They originally were based in Leith and Musselburgh before establishing Muirfield in 1891. Since 1892, Muirfield has hosted 16 Open Championships, witnessing the wins of such stars as Harry Vardon, Walter Hagen, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus, Nick Faldo, Ernie Els, and most recently Phil Mickelson in 2013. Muirfield's design is distinctive in that it consists of two nine-hole circuits, one clockwise and the other counter, so that golfers never have to face the same wind conditions consecutively. www.muirfield.org.uk

Ballybunion Golf Club (Old Course)

Ballybunion, Republic of Ireland

The Ballybunion Golf Club is home to two links courses, the Old and the Cashen. The Old Course, founded in 1893, has become a favourite of Tom Watson, American pro with eight major wins, since his first visit in 1981. Watson even helped remodel the Ballybunion to its current state. Other notable events through its history include President Bill Clinton's visit in 1998, the 2000 Murphy's Irish Open and the 2004 Palmer Cup. Stunning terrain and scenery, with views of the Atlantic Ocean and a dune grassland, make Ballybunion a true gem.

www.ballybuniongolfclub.ie





Pine Valley Golf Club

Pine Valley, NJ, United States

GOLF Magazine has ranked Pine Valley the world's top course every year since 1985. PGA of America President Ted Bishop recently described it as the "most difficult course in the world." Despite Pine Valley's reputation, it is shrouded in mystery. The public is only invited to the course during its annual Crump Cup. The tournament is named after Pine Valley's original designer, who died before the course was completed. George Crump's vision included golfers only being able to see the hole they were playing and a course that required every club in a golfer's collection. Notable visitors have included President Eisenhower, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Bobby Jones.

Cypress Point Club

Pebble Beach, CA, United States

Known as the "Sistine Chapel of Golf," Cypress Point was designed by Alistair Mackenzie. The course's 16th is known as one of the world's toughest holes as it involves a 231-yard tee shot. Cypress Point co-hosted the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am until 1991. It was dropped from the tour for not abiding by PGA requirements of adding an African American to its membership. In 2010, Sports Illustrated's Alan Shipnuck reported that it was a case of not wanting to interfere with the course's seven-year waitlist and that Cypress Point now had African and Asian-American, and a long history of female, members.



Royal Melbourne (West Course)

Black Rock (Melbourne), Australia

Founded in 1891, Royal Melbourne is known as Australia's oldest continuous golf club. Scot Alistair Mackenzie designed the course, and the construction was supervised by club member and winner of the 1924 Australian Open, Alex Russell. Its West Course is consistently ranked number one in Australia, its East Course among the top 10. When Royal Melbourne hosted the Canada Cup in 1959, it combined 12 holes from the West with six from the East, which is now known as the Composite Course. It has been the site for many national and international tournaments including the first Presidents Cup held outside the U.S.

www.royalmelbourne.com.au

Royal Porthcawl Golf Club

Porthcawl, Wales

Founded in 1891, today Royal Porthcawl boasts 10 authentic-style links holes, with the remainder still offering stunning views of the Bristol Channel. The Porthcawl, Wales course has hosted a plethora of championships, both amateur and professional, from the Welsh Golf Classic to the British Masters, as well as its fair share of historical golf moments. One such milestone is former Captain of the R&A, William Campbell playing the Amateur Championship there in both 1951 and 1988. For the first time this year Royal Porthcawl will host the Senior Open Championship. www.royalporthcawl.com



St. Enodoc Golf Club (Church Course)

Rock, Cornwall, England

Golf can be enjoyed all year round at St. Enodoc's Church and Hollywell Courses. Among its many world class awards, the most entertaining perhaps is being ranked Great Britain and Ireland's fourth best course "to put a smile on your face" by Golf World. The Church links course, designed by James Braid, hosted the English County Finals in 2005 and will showcase the 2014 English Women's Amateur Championship. Highlights of Church include the 80-foot tall Himalayas Bunker and views of 11th century-old St. Enodoc Church, the burial place of poet laureate John Betjeman.

www.st-enodoc.co.uk

Cabot Links

Inverness, Cape Breton, Canada

Less than two years since it officially opened, Cape Breton's Cabot Links has already caught worldwide attention. Recently it was ranked 42nd best in the world by Golf Digest. Located on the former coal mining site of Inverness, it has been declared Canada's only authentic links course, with every hole overlooking the ocean. Highlights include six holes along the beach, and the running approach shot and double greens associated with the 13th. SCOREGOLF columnist Bob Weeks described the course as follows: "To me, Cabot Links is simply the best golf I have experienced." www.cabotlinks.com



Golf Gear Guide

Add some high tech to your golf technique with these beauties

Big Bertha Alpha

Released in February 2014, the Big Bertha Alpha is Callaway Golf's most advanced driver to date. According to the global company's senior vice president of marketing, Harry Arnett, the revolutionary driver is the first in the world to have an adjustable centre of gravity. With the club head's Gravity Core you can adjust the spin rate without affecting the launch angle, and vice versa. The Big Bertha Alpha also has an adjustable hosel for selecting loft and lie angle settings. Together these capabilities allow you to customize flight and optimize ball speed and distance.

\$499.00

www.callawaygolf.com/big-bertha-alpha/



Metal X-Milled Putters

All of Odyssey's nominated golf putters were awarded gold medal marks in Golf Digest's 2014 Hot List. Among those were the Metal X-Milled Putters which Odyssey says are the "most technologically advanced" of their designs. The best features from three of Odyssey's earlier putters—the ProType's milled precision, the Metal-X's face pattern and the ProType iX's adjustable weights—were gleaned and enhanced to create the Metal X-milled. This new family of putters includes six different models: #1, #6, #7, #9HT, Rossie and 330 mallet. With his new Metal X-Milled #6, PGA Tour player Patrick Reed logged a record-breaking performance to win the Humana Challenge in January.

\$299.99-349.99

www.odysseygolf.com/metal-x-milled-putters/metal-x-milled-putters,en_US.sc.html



Zero Friction Men's Compression Golf Glove

What makes Zero Friction's new Performance Golf Glove all the rage is its compression-fit technology that makes the glove mould to any sized hand. At the 2014 PGA Merchandise Show, a Zero Friction rep told GOLF Magazine's Gary Van Sickle: "We've only had three guys it didn't fit...One was an ex-NBA player and the other two guys were, like, Paul Bunyan and his brother." The glove also has a reinforced palm for comfort and control and Lycra mesh components to enhance breathability. Currently the ZF glove is designed to be worn on the left hand, comes in six different colours and with a ball marker and performance tee, which can be inserted in a slot on the back of the glove.

\$12.99

www.zerofriction.com/golf-accessories/golf-gloves/zero-friction-mens-compression-golf-glove.html



Wilson Staff's Centennial Items

This year Wilson Sporting Goods, Inc. is celebrating its 100th birthday. To commemorate the milestone, Wilson Staff is launching centennial-themed golf accessories. In January, Padraig Harrington, Ricky Barnes, Kevin Streelman and other PGA Tour players helped unveil the red and white, Wilson Staff Centennial Pro Tour bag, which showcases the company's vintage shield. It will be made available for retail, at limited quantity, in the U.S., some time in March. Also starting this month, additional centennial-themed items, such as the neXus carry bag, DUO golf balls and headwear, will be available to U.S. and UK shoppers, in limited quantity. www.wilson.com/en-us/golf/

GAME GOLF

In Ireland six years ago, Active Mind Technology began designing GAME GOLF, a platform for golfers to comprehensively monitor their game. The PGA of America and the Golf Channel are now partnered with the ground-breaking digital tracking system. The device collects each of your game's stats and trends. Just clip the lightweight sensor to your belt; before taking a shot, tap the Game Golf tag (which is inserted in each club) to the sensor. After your game, you can view the data on a web/mobile device, share it and analyze performance over time.

\$249.00

www.gamegolf.com/products/en-us/gamegolf



From polo tops to tartan trousers, how to look sharp on the green

We look at some of the newest and trendiest men's and women's golf fashions that fuse style, comfort and function.

HIS



Among J. Lindeberg's much anticipated new men's golf fashions are its Fieldsensor 2.0 Polos, characterized by their quick-drying, moisture wick technology. The Toby, Hunter, Adrian, Gustav and Timo shirt designs run the gamut from solid colour to various stripe designs, either in front, back or on the sleeves. Colour schemes range from black or white to navy/purple, blue or red.



For chillier days on the course, Nike has its new Innovation Woven Men's Golf Cover-up. The stretch piece allows for flexible body movement like a sweater, repels the wind and rain like a jacket and yet wears like a sporty shirt. Plus its DRI-FIT material disperses sweat off the body ensuring a warm and dry game.



Gentlemen, you can showcase your Clan's tartan with pride in a pair of pants specially designed for the golfer in mind. Scottish-owned family business Murray Golf offers several tartan trousers to choose from including Black Watch, Royal Stewart, Menzies, McKenzie and Douglas.



If you are looking to bring a bold look to your game, look no further than Loudmouth Golf. This year's new arrivals include men's shorts and pants that come in such wild and colourful styles as Shiver Me Timbers, Scribbly White, Lucky, HollyWoody Squares and Augusta Magic! Loudmouth's designs are not just eye-catching; their cotton-spandex materials are ideal for a game of golf.



Finally to keep the sun out of your eyes, why not go with a company that is partnered with golf legend Jack Nicklaus? Among AHEAD's new 2014 headwear are its Newport Washed Twill Cap and Sandblasted Canvas Cap collections, keeping in line with the trendy "washed-out" look.

HERS

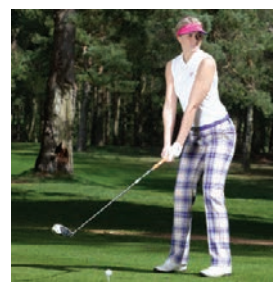
World Golf Hall of Famer Nancy Lopez has her own women's golf and apparel line. Nancy Lopez Golf's Spring 2014 regular and plus size collection is characterized by bright colours, like sapphire blue, melon orange and canary yellow. Her feminine yet functional sleeveless and short-sleeved polos, vests and bottoms simultaneously come in solid colours or chic prints, such as the particularly stunning Foxy houndstooth check golfing dress.



Nike has also designed a DRI-FIT piece to keep the ladies comfortable and warm. Its Half Zip-Key Women's Golf Cover-up offers weather resistance without compromising body movement and performance. It is shaped in a flattering style and comes in black, white, light crimson, violet and other colours.



While ladies' tartan trousers may be harder to come by, at least one company has begun to deliver. Last fall, IJP Design launched its new women's golf trousers showcasing its Scottish Tartans Authority-registered Poulter tartan. The design is comprised of a "raspberry, taupe, ultramarine and golf ball white" colour scheme.



Ladies can also get in on the fun with Loudmouth Golf's untamed floral, pirate skull, checkered or confetti-like designs. For bottoms, women can choose between pants, capris and skorts, as well as mini or just above the knee-length shorts.



Naturally, a number of AHEAD's headwear designs are unisex, but the company also has some specially designed for the ladies. For example, its Kate Lord collection has a new textured tech cap with lip. You can also get chic and shiny clips to wear on the brim.



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with Andrew Ferguson

It is interesting to note with all the interest in and exploding demand for single malt Scotch whisky in the world, that blended Scotch still accounts for 90 per cent of all Scotch whisky sales. Single malt fanatics eagerly wait for one-off single malts from their favourite distilleries, but it is the blends that pay the bills for most drinks firms. Over the course of the 20th Century a number of enormous juggernaut-blended Scotch brands have emerged, like Johnnie Walker, Chivas Regal, Grants and Whyte & MacKay.

Together they own more than half of Scotland's malt distilleries. But there are some smaller boutique blends out there too, like Campbeltown Loch, Duncan Taylor's Black Bull and of course, Compass Box.

John Glaser, a Minnesota-born former master blender and marketing executive with Johnnie Walker, established Compass Box Whisky in 2000. When his proposal to establish a boutique blending division in the Johnnie Walker stable was turned down he decided to go it on his own. Glaser left with all of his bridges left intact, and contracts for the whiskies he wanted to work with, most of them which his former employer owned. His vision was to create small batch, handcrafted blends and introduce some innovation and excitement into the blended whisky category.

Compass Box produces and bottles three types of Scotch whisky: Blended, which consists of both grain and malt whiskies, such as their Asyla and Great King Street blends; blended malt, formerly known as vatted or pure malt, which is a blend of malt whiskies without grain, like Peat Monster and Spice Tree; and blended grain, which is a blend of only grain whiskies, such as Hedonism,

the only regularly available blended grain Scotch in the world.

The portfolio has expanded over the years to include a number of highly acclaimed one-offs like the Hedonism Maximus, a very old blended grain Scotch whisky. Late last year they released The General, an old and curious whisky blended from two parcels of casks acquired by Compass Box. Thirty-three and forty years of age respectively, the casks in the



two parcels contained whiskies blended decades ago, presumably for a young blend, returned to cask to marry, and then promptly forgotten. The blend is stunning and has already gone to score high praise from a number of respected reviewers.

One of the innovations Glaser wanted to bring to the whisky world was the use of inner staves. Common in the wine industry, staves increase the spirit's exposure to oak. Glaser wanted within one cask to combine the best elements of American oak (honey, vanilla and white

fruits) with those of French oak (decadent spices and darker fruits). Glaser modified the design slightly, putting French oak heads on American oak barrels. The result, Compass Box's Spice Tree, is a whisky with an intense but balanced spiciness laid over a base of creamy vanilla, honey and malt.

Fourteen years on Compass Box Whisky is only just catching its stride with a growing stable of unique blends, and a great team behind them. Whisky boffins the world over, many of them former single malt snobs, now wait with bated breath to see what they'll release next!

Great King Street Artists Blend

One of the best value Scotch whiskies bar none, it is soft, fruity and creamy with subtle toasty spices.

\$50

Hedonism

The only regularly available blended grain Scotch whisky can be summed up with one word, decadent.

\$95

Spice Tree

Rich and spicy with a creamy base, this blended malt Scotch lives up to its name and then some.

\$65

Peat Monster

Floral earthy peat mingles with honey and soft fruit notes in one of their flagship blended malts.

\$60



SCOTLAND

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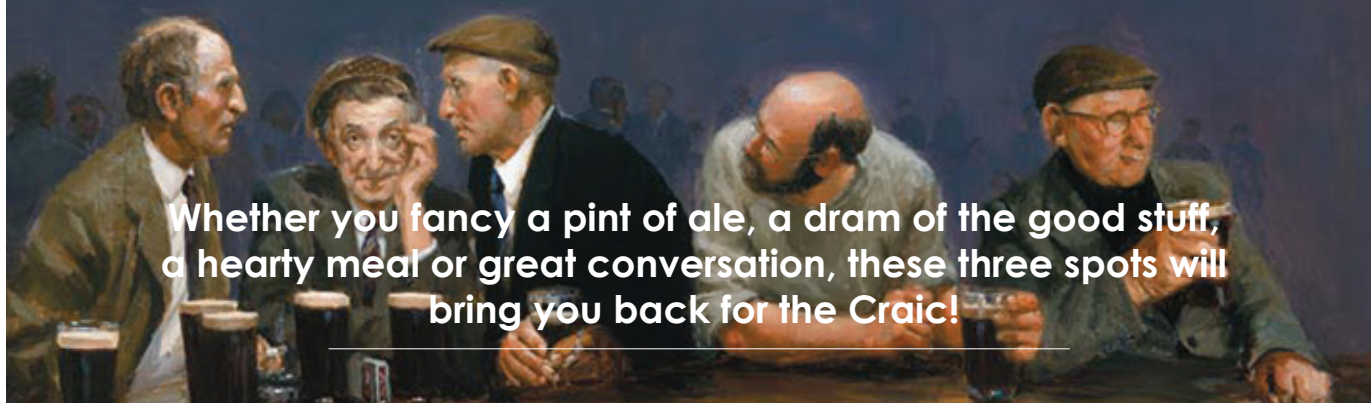
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Whether you fancy a pint of ale, a dram of the good stuff, a hearty meal or great conversation, these three spots will bring you back for the Craic!



Cunninghams

Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec

The historic village of Ste. Anne de Bellevue sits at the very western tip of the island of Montreal. Home to generations of French and English, les deux solitudes leave the language at the door at Cunninghams Pub. A bevy of good Irish beers (Guinness, Harp, Kilkenny, Smithwicks) – by the bottle and on tap - will whet the whistle of both seasoned and starter patrons, as will the fine selection of scotch and whiskey (Bushmills, Tullamore Dew, Glenlivet 12). Foodies will love the Smoked Salmon Platter (with warmed side baguette), the hearty Corned Beef Sandwich, the authentic Guinness Irish Stew and the scrumptious Lamb Shank. Be sure to sample the tender Riblets, the Curry Poutine and the Fried Dill Pickles, and don't leave without downing the house specialty Iced Irish Coffee. The warm décor opens its arms to small groups of friends, and live music on weekends make this cozy corner a great date night out. Afterwards, take a short stroll along Lac St. Louis on the nearby boardwalk.

www.cunninghamspub.com

U2 Istanbul Irish Pub

Istanbul, Turkey

Long considered the 'crossroads of civilization', Istanbul might be the ideal setting for Irish ex-pats, globe-trotters and locals to meet and share a pint. Despite the unfortunate name, the U2's well-stocked bar hosts an array of excellent imported and domestic



ale (Beamish, Murphy's, Efes Pilsner), along with an abundance of stronger spirits (Jameson, Red Breast, Powers) – all especially refreshing during the scorching summer months. Sadly, the Guinness won't sit well in the arid climate. Thankfully, the simple and hearty cuisine can handle the heat; the Fish 'n' Chips are the best in the region, as are the subtly spiced Shillelaghs, which are peppered with fine seasons and layered with fresh local produce. The in-house fare is a must, particularly the Sadj Kavurma Beef and the Beyti Kebab. The locale's dark interior is a cool oasis amidst the hustle and bustle of the endless traffic, and the big-screen TVs regularly pipe in sporting events from the Emerald Isle. Live music on the weekends is certain to get those dry Irish eyes smiling.

www.u2istanbulirishpub.com

Flanagan's

Hamilton, Bermuda

What better reason to beat the mid-winter blues than a visit to an Irish pub in beautiful, balmy Bermuda? And Flanagan's is worth the trip folks; draft and bottled beers from across the globe, a selection of whiskies from 'ye ould country', Island Cocktails and



'Frozen Fantasies' for the beach, and world-renowned Martinis (try the Flanagantini) make for all-day happy hours. Breakfast and lunch menus are diverse - go with the Paddy's Wedges, Leprechaun's Purse and Fish Chowder - but the dinner fare is the thing here; the Baked Atlantic Salmon and Lobster are unbeatable, as are the Roasted Rack of Lamb, Beef Tenderloin and Donegal Shepherd's Pie. For dessert, the pairing of Irish Cream Cheesecake and a 'Blarney Stone' (Baileys, Malibu, and milk) makes the perfect eating companions. The main bar offers a large dining area and balcony with breathtaking views of the harbor, while the lower floor hosts a sports bar with 24 big screens. Seriously, this is paradise; you'll think you had died and gone to heaven.

www.flanagans.bm



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Kilgraston is an award-winning Scottish Catholic boarding and day school for girls set in 54 acres of stunning parkland.

Our pupils achieve exceptional exam results, securing places at top UK and Canadian universities, including Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, St. Andrews and the University of Waterloo.

Briana Lin in Upper Sixth (Grade 12) has applied to study Psychology at the University of Toronto and McGill University. Briana, who took a summer

course in Neuroscience at Toronto last summer, says: "I got a taste of university life by attending lectures and lab lessons. Kilgraston prepared me well for this experience, both with my studies and in researching my university courses."

Alex Brennan from Ontario is Kilgraston's Head of 6th Form Boarding and Evening and Weekend Activities Co-ordinator. A graduate of Brock University in St Catharines, she says: "I love planning the various activities for the boarders which includes regular social activities

with our partner boys' school, Merchiston Castle. A particular highlight is the sixth form ball."

Our strong links with Canada helped Leah Phillips, a graduate of the Sacred Heart School of Halifax, Nova Scotia to successfully gain a one-year gap year placement as a residential assistant. Leah says: "Kilgraston really is a great community. I love how caring and welcoming everyone is here."



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Cabrini's Kitchen



Mussel Chowder

I received this recipe from a friend of mine, Fred Mackenzie. Fred is from Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia, which is also home to Sidney Crosby, captain of the Gold-medal winning Canadian Olympic hockey team. Fred casually remarked that he made a mussel chowder that many of his friends seem to like. I know you will too, once you put the ingredients together. Fred tried an apple wine for our pot luck and you can bet there were no

leftovers. It is delicious and easy to prepare. The mussels are best prepared the night before and kept in the fridge to marinate. A small bowl makes a lovely appetizer and a large bowl makes a wholesome meal. Any leftovers freeze well and taste even better the second time around. This recipe serves six full meal bowls or 12 appetizer bowls.

INGREDIENTS PREPARATION

*2 cups of white wine
2 tbsp. flour
10 lbs. of pre-packaged mussels
5 lbs. potatoes cubed to 1 inch
¼ cup butter
1 litre of light cream
2 medium sized white onions diced
Bacon bits
Crushed parsley
Salt and pepper to taste*

Rinse the fresh mussels in tap water. Place in a large saucepan with white wine on high heat. Cover and let steam until shells open (5-7 minutes). Shuck the mussels, then strain and reserve the liquid. Place the steamed mussels in reserved liquid and place in the fridge overnight to marinate.

Melt butter in pot and, add onion and saute until transparent. Add flour and stir to blend thoroughly with butter, gradually adding reserved liquid. Bring to a boil and turn down heat.

Add potatoes and simmer until nearly done. Add mussels and gently stir in light cream. Heat until just before boiling.

Salt and pepper to taste.

Garnish with bacon bits and fresh parsley.

P.S: I would like to invite all readers to send me their favourite recipes, and their favourite memories that go with it to cabrini@celticlife.ca

Ith do shàth! Cabrini



Diary of a Cornish Fisherman

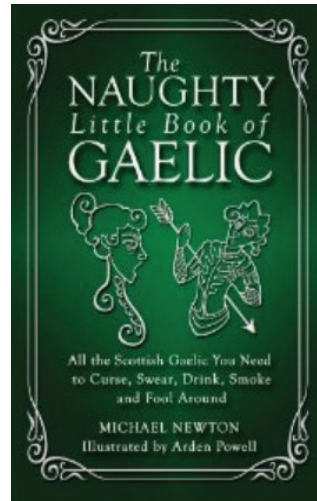
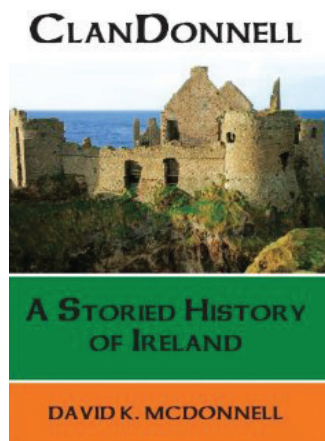
By Trevor Simpson
The Manuscript Publisher /
194pp / €14.99

After leaving the Royal Navy, Trevor Simpson shipped on as a crewman aboard a small lobster boat in the cozy seaside town of Newquay, Cornwall. From 1962-1967, he kept a journal of his daily activities, recounting his seafaring adventures and chronicling his observations on Cornish life. The result is a warm, witty, wise and poignant portrait of both a people and a place with feet firmly footed in the past, yet aching to catch up to the times. Along the way, readers will fall for the many quirky characters that come and go, bringing colour and flavor to generations of routine. Well peppered with grainy photographs, the work is entertaining and engaging, and will appeal to both landlubbers and sea-lovers of all ilk and ages. ~ SPC

ClanDonnell; A Storied History of Ireland

By David K. McDonnell
Burrowing Owl Press /
928pp / \$34.95

Readers are well-advised to put aside some serious time for this terrific tome; at 928 pages, ClanDonnell; A Storied History of Ireland is the epic tale of the Emerald Isle told through the lives of McDonnell Clan members and their descendants. Thankfully, the work is well-worth the emotional and intellectual investment, as author David K. McDonnell connects the dots between his namesake Clan and Ireland's evolution; bringing the past to life through colourful characters, an array of excellent images and illustrations, superb and succinct writing, and a soaring narrative arc to the present day. You don't have to be a member of the Clan Donnell to enjoy this grand journey, though you may want to sign on after savouring this larger-than-life slice of Irish life. ~ SPC



The Naughty Little Book of Gaelic

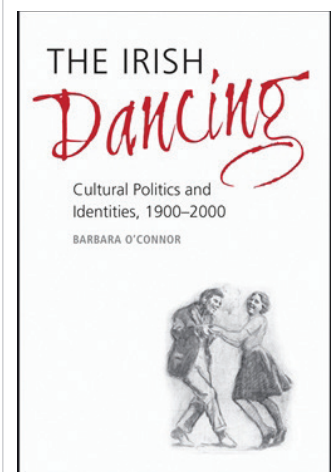
By Michael Newton
CBU Press / 96pp / \$9.95

Renowned Celtic scholar and author Dr. Michael Newton lets his hair down with this kinky volume of vile verbosity. Subtitled All the Scottish Gaelic You Need to Curse, Swear, Drink, Smoke and Fool Around, the work delivers as promised, with chapters covering everything from basic four-letter words to insults, hexes and sex. The author does well to place the foul-language within historical and everyday context, citing sources that could lead willing readers down a dirty-minded trail. Fun and fascinating and layered with gorgeous illustrations from Nova Scotia artist Arden Powell, the book is much more than a mere encyclopedia or dictionary of expletive expressions however - it is notice that we really aren't that far removed from our potty-mouthed ancestors as we like to think. ~ SPC

The Irish Dancing

By Barbara O'Conner
Cork University Press /
192pp / €39.00

Subtitled Cultural Politics and Identities, 1900-2000, The Irish Dancing is a critical study of the impact that Irish dance has had upon the Emerald Isle. Based upon empirical evidence and in-depth discussions with dancers themselves, the author makes the chronological case that the art/sport/pastime has shaped the way Ireland sees itself, as well as the manner in which the world views Ireland. In particular, O'Conner examines themes of ethnicity, gender and social class and the influence they have on both stereotyping (negative) and the passing along of cultural tradition (positive). Though dry at times, and reading like a thesis of sorts, there is enough here to qualify the work as important. However, only those with an interest in Riverdance and the like will take note. ~ SPC





The High Kings

Friends For Life

Like architecture, songwriting is both an art and science where unique elements are molded into a standing structure. With *Friends For Life*, the fourth release from Dublin's The High Kings, all of the pieces are in place; strong arrangements and production lay a solid foundation upon which the instrumentation – guitars, banjo, accordion, fiddle, tin whistle and percussion – splash colour and flavor. Soaring vocal harmonies are sprinkled atop all 12 tracks, bringing style and soul to each construct of chords. That *deus ex machina*, a true Irish trait, means the young quartet's music - by turns tender and tough - is more than the sum of its parts. And, like the songs of Mumford & Sons, The Dubliners and The Waterboys, it is built to last. ~ SPC

Mogwai

Rave Tapes

Glasgow-based 'post-rock' quintet Mogwai enjoys great critical and popular acclaim across Europe and elsewhere, though success has largely eluded them in North America. Perhaps the band's atmospheric sounds are too subtle for mass-commercialized markets. The loss is ours, sadly, as *Rave Tapes* runs the ethereal and emotional gamut, a hypnotic – and mostly instrumental – sonic soundtrack of guitars, moog synthesizers and live percussion (no digital drum sampling here). The result is a moving *mélange* of music that sits somewhere between Pink Floyd and Sonic Youth, Philip Glass and Radiohead; intelligent, progressive, artsy and avant-garde. While the "surf & scan" crowd might not take to Mogwai's lengthier and complex compositions, it is unlikely that the band will adapt to market demand. And here's hoping they never do. ~ SPC



The Stanfields

For King and Country

I once asked Leonard Cohen if he knew when he had written a good song. He replied that a good song was one that could hold its own without lavish orchestration and production; one that sounded strong on only an acoustic guitar or solo piano. Nova Scotia stalwarts The Stanfields do just that on *For King and Country*, a stripped-down ten-song trek into Celtic terrain that showcases the band's love for a sure and simple song. Highlights include the rollicking *Whistle and a Grin*, the rootsy *Up the Mountain*, and the Springsteen-inspired numbers *A Free Country* and *Vermillion River*. Going "unplugged" is a good step for a great young band looking to expand their listening audience. Certainly, Mr. Cohen would approve of this excellent effort. ~ SPC

Kizzy Meriel Crawford

Temporary Zone

How this one slipped through the cracks is beyond me. The young mixed-race, Welsh speaking singer-songwriter bares her Bajan soul with a strong and spirited six song selection. Raised on trad, roots, r'n'b, reggae and soft jazz, the 17 year-old describes her sound as "folk-fusion" - an apt account as *Temporary Zone* stands upon the shoulders of musical giants Tracy Chapman, Tuck & Patti, Cassandra Wilson and Sade, yet shines with a sure sense of self. As such, this isn't your usual singer-songwriter fare, as Crawford seamlessly winds and weaves her way through each melody with a heartfelt, and sometimes haunting, authenticity unmatched by her peers. In an oversaturated marketplace, where a girl and her guitar are a dime-a-dozen, Kizzy rises above the noise. ~ SPC



www.celticempire.com

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Bethany Basaillion

By now, Bethany Basaillion must be comfortable around royalty; after all, the piper has met them often enough. In 2005, Basaillion and The Sons of Scotland – the pipe band she leads – played before Queen Elizabeth and Princess Beatrice at Balmoral Castle. In 2011, the band performed for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Will and Kate, at a citizenship ceremony at Ottawa’s Museum of Civilization. And in 2013, The Sons of Scotland again played for the Queen at Balmoral Castle.

Despite her hobnobbing with the Royals, Basaillion is not a monarchist, she told the Chatham Daily News back in 2011. “It’s come my way because of opportunities that have come up to play with the royal family,” she said. But Basaillion has helped make those opportunities happen. In 2013, CTV News wanted to know how a piper came to play before the Queen not just once, but twice. Basaillion told the news network she wrote the Queen and asked. “All it took was another letter in the mail,” she said. “So the long-lost art of letter writing is not lost on me.”

Of course, it helps if you have dollops of talent as well. In recognition of that talent last spring she received the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal from Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Basaillion, who’s been playing pipes for 36 years, comes by her talent naturally. Growing up in Kanata, Ontario, she became the fourth in her family to play, after her father and two older brothers. By the time she began playing at the age of nine, Celtic culture was already deeply ingrained in her; she’d been Highland dancing for six years already.

She attended the summer school of the College of Piping in Timmons, Ontario, and during her last year at college was asked to teach, which introduced her to the world of pipe majoring. Basaillion played with a number of pipe bands before joining The Sons of Scotland 13 years ago as their pipe major. The band itself is the oldest civilian pipe band in Canada, dating back to 1896, according to CTV.

But if The Sons of Scotland have the weight of history behind them, that doesn’t stop them from rocking out. They are the first pipe band to play at the legendary New York punk club, CBGB’s, and because of Basaillion’s influence they have played punk and hard rock numbers during performances. “I enjoy all genres of piping music, but tend to listen to rock music and translate that to pipes much more often,” Basaillion told Celtic Life International. Generally, Basaillion has played on 15 CDs herself. Beyond a little heavy metal piping with The Sons of Scotland, Basaillion is the director of the Ottawa City Piping College.

For the endlessly energetic piper, 2014 is shaping up to be a busy year. She foresees travelling to Scotland and Ireland with



the band, opening up a Celtic centre and charity in Ottawa, and continuing to teach. Most immediately though is Tartan Week. Basaillion was named to Tartan Week Alliance’s board and will join members from the United States and Scotland as they raise awareness to the various events being held globally.

On Sunday, April 13 the pipe band will celebrate Tartan Day in Ottawa on Parliament Hill, where they record all the tartans worn that day. And before that, the band plays in Ottawa’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade on March 15 and then heads to Montreal the next day to play there – in North America’s longest running St. Patrick’s Day parade. As to whether there are any more royals in Basaillion’s future, only time can tell.



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Allie Bennett

*Allie Bennett has come full circle. It's been nine years since the Nova Scotia fiddler released his first album, *It's About Time*, and his most recent one – issued a few months ago in the Fall of 2013 – is titled *Full Circle*. Bennett used to do some singing back when he played coffee houses and small concert halls in the mid-1970s, but since then he's made his mark more as a sideman working with other artists. With *Full Circle*, after others requested that he sing again, Bennett decided to add vocals back into the mix.*



Sing though he may, Bennett is probably one of the best-known fiddlers Nova Scotia has produced. He is a musician's musician. On Canada's East Coast, Bennett has accompanied the who's who of top talent, playing fiddle in concerts with John Allan Cameron, Rita MacNeil, Natalie MacMaster, Bruce Guthro and Dave Gunning. Beyond that as a bass player and guitarist, he's worked with Stan Rogers, Ashley MacIsaac, Murray McLauchlan, The Rankin Family, the Barra MacNeils and many more. All told, Bennett's played on over 125 recordings.

Bennett currently lives in Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia, but he hails from Sydney Mines in Cape Breton. If you dig back far enough into Bennett's roots, the Celt emerges: his maternal great-grandmother was a MacTaggart; his paternal grandmother was a Boyd, and she claims some Morrison's on that side as well. Make no mistake though, Bennett's fiddling is as Gaelic as it comes. "I mostly play the Cape Breton Scottish style, although I'm constantly adding to my Irish repertoire as well," Bennett says.

Not surprisingly, he names as his main influence Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald, who is often cited as a pioneer in recorded performances of Cape Breton fiddling. And like many, it was a 1972 documentary titled *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler* produced by Ron MacInnis that made Bennett pick up the instrument. That same film, which took as its main premise that traditional Cape Breton fiddling was in a disastrous state of decline, also led to the formation of the Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association and resulted in the first Fiddlers Festival in Glendale in Cape Breton in 1973. "I attended that event," Bennett recalls. "And that was the real turning point in my decision to learn how to play fiddle."

Bennett, 57, says one major Celtic influence in his style comes from his association with John Allan Cameron. According to Bennett, Cameron presented Celtic music to his audiences long before it was popular, leading the Canadian press to dub him the "Godfather of Celtic Music in Canada." Speaking of Cameron, at

one point Bennett did a four-month gig in 1981, playing bass for the legendary singer-songwriter, Stan Rogers.

Rogers offered Bennett a job, but Bennett turned him down, deciding to stay with Cameron. "Stan said I was too loyal for my own good, which proved prophetic in later years," Bennett says.

When it comes to composition, Bennett works to create as original a melody as possible. He points out that's not so easy given the tens of thousands of tunes that have been written or passed down over the years. Musically, he aims to have the different parts of the tune match up as much as possible and looks for simplicity but high quality at the same time. "The late John Morris Rankin was a master at that," Bennett observes.

"It's been a wonderful experience to be involved with Celtic music over the years, particularly with fiddling," Bennett declares. "Having had the opportunity to get to know and play with some of the fiddlers who were my early influences and then over the years teaching, mentoring and developing friendships with many of the younger fiddlers, I've been very fortunate to have been a part of both the revival and continuing popularity of this form of Celtic music."

Allie Bennett

- Forty years in the music industry
- Winner of two East Coast Music Awards, 2005 for *Musician's Achievement* and in 2011 for his co-production on Dave Gunning's *A Tribute to John Allan Cameron* CD.
- He currently operates a private music school in Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia, teaching fiddle and guitar and continues to work as a studio and touring musician.

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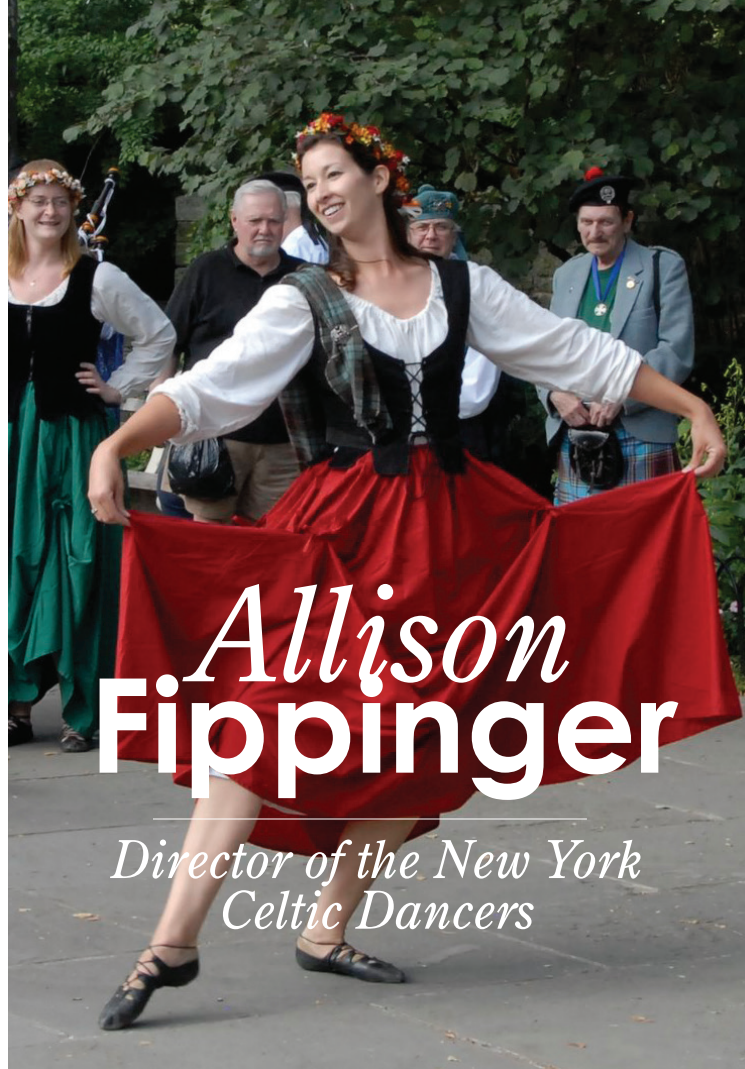
When Allison Fippinger, the director of the New York Celtic Dancers, couldn't sleep at night, she'd write country dances in her head. It's one way in which she learned to find her own voice in the dance genre. She poured through books and online videos in the National Library of Scotland archives, expanding her vocabulary. "The more I learned, the more I had to say with dance," Fippinger says. "The more I had to say, the more presenters wanted us to perform. And so what started as a community class became a dance company with a new name and a mission."

This year the New York Celtic Dancers celebrates its 10th anniversary as a troupe. They've performed at Carnegie Hall, at the Central Park Bandshell, at the Gotham Girls Roller Derby, and at Jacob's Pillow Festival for Dance. As Fippinger puts it, "I've performed for thousands of people and I've performed for just a few." But ask her about her own personal performance highlight and she'll tell you it was the time she put on a show for her parents and the "Scottish dancing folks," in Boston one Hogmanay.

"I will never forget how grateful I was to them for giving me this gift in the first place, and that I was able to gift it back to them, in small part, that evening," she recalls. The "gift" to which she refers is, of course, dancing. Her parents were dancers, who particularly loved Scottish country dancing. From her earliest years, Fippinger remembers seeing people dancing in her home, hearing the instruments, smelling the wool of the kilts, and watching the dance shoes on the women's feet.

The family loved dancing so much that they would go camping on an island in Maine with the "Scottish dancing folks." They'd canoe out to the island, with the boats weighed down with tents, and camping gear, but someone would always find room for a record player. In the evenings they'd have a ceilidh with the grown-ups dancing on the beach.

Growing up in Boston, Fippinger had ready availability to teachers; nonetheless, as a child she didn't have the time to



Allison Fippinger

Director of the New York Celtic Dancers

learn. It wasn't until she graduated from college that she found the Scotia Dancers in New York City. Studying with Mary Abdill, She learned not only the steps, but the history of the pieces. Along with acceptance into the Pinewoods dance camp in Massachusetts on a scholarship, so began her love affair with Scottish dance.

"It truly is that, a love affair, because no matter what other styles, teachers and performances I may be involved in or learn from, I always return to my Scottish roots," she declares. The New

York Celtic Dancers began when Abdill asked her if she could substitute-teach, ultimately turning the classes over to her.

"It took me some time to understand what I wanted to accomplish with the New York Celtic Dancers," Fippinger says. She notes that dance traditions can stagnate, existing more like an artifact in a museum than as a breathing, changeable piece of culture. "I wanted the Scottish dance tradition to live, to thrive and spread joy to everyone who sees it. The mission of the New York Celtic Dancers is to continually breathe life into this beautiful and ancient art form and to make it real, present and important right now."

For the troupe's 10th anniversary year, it plans to continue attending East Coast games and festivals as well as expanding classes at the school in New York City. They've also been invited to several festivals that highlight dance and culture in general and so look forward to introducing more people to Celtic dance. Finally, Fippinger says they have a "top-secret" engagement in the summer, which will place the troupe front and centre at a respected dance festival. "This last is particularly gratifying as it recognizes our efforts to cultivate and curate our presentation to reach beyond the Celtic genre and into the world."

www.facebook.com/newyorkcelticdancers





MARCH

- Manhattan Irish Fest**
February 28-March 1
- North Texas Irish Fest**
February 28-March 2
- Burlington County Saint Patrick's Day Parade**
March 1
- Saint Patrick's Day Parade in Alexandria**
March 1
- Southeast Florida Scottish Festival and Highland Games**
March 1
- Wheeling Celtic Celebration**
March 1
- Cape Coral Irish Festival**
March 1-2
- Geelong Highland Gathering**
March 1-2
- Belmar St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 2
- Roche Harbor Traditional Irish Music Retreat**
March 2-8
- Emmetsburg St. Patrick's Day Celebration**
March 2-16
- StAnza – Scotland's International Poetry Festival**
March 5-9
- Eugene Irish Cultural Festival**
March 7-8
- Michigan St. Patrick's Day Party**
March 7-8
- The Los Angeles County Irish Fair and Music Festival**
March 7-9
- Porthcawl Interceltic Festival**
March 7-9
- Sonora Celtic Faire**
March 7-9
- St Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival**
March 7-9
- Manchester Irish Festival**
March 7-17
- Cape Cod St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 8
- Elmhurst St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 8
- Fargo Parks Celtic Festival**
March 8
- Greater Pittston St. Patrick's Parade**
March 8
- Hamilton St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 8
- Libby Montana Irish Fair**
March 8
- Ocean County Saint Patrick's Day Parade**
March 8
- Panama City Highland Games & Scottish Festival**
March 8
- South Florida Emerald Society St. Patrick's Day Irish Festival**
March 8
- Midland Scottish-Irish Faire**
March 8-9
- CelticFest Vancouver**
March 8-16
- Irish Week Seattle**
March 8-16
- Peace River Celtic Festival**
March 9
- Clare Irish Festival**
March 12-15
- Edinburgh's Festival of Ireland**
March 13-16
- Henderson St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival**
March 13-16
- North Country Goes Green Irish Festival**
March 14-16
- San Patrizio Festival Milano**
March 14-16
- St. Patrick's Festival Dublin**
March 14-17
- AOH St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15
- Baton Rouge Wearin' of the Green Parade**
March 15
- Charlotte St. Patrick's Day Parade and Charlotte Goes Green Festival**
March 15
- Chicago Saint Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15
- County Ventura St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15
- Denver St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15
- Greater Hartford St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15
- Greater Manassas St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15
- Highway 30a Parade and Fest**
March 15
- Irish Channel St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15
- Luck of the Irish Parade**
March 15
- Morris County's St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15
- Murphys Irish Day**
March 15
- Norfolk Saint Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15
- Paint the Town Green Palatine**
March 15
- Phoenix St. Patrick's Day Parade and Faire**
March 15
- Quad Cities Grand Parade**
March 15
- San Diego St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival**
March 15
- St. Patrick's Day on THE HILL**
March 15
- St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival of Tuscon**
March 15
- St. Patrick's Day Parade St. Louis**
March 15
- Utica St. Patrick's Day Parade**
March 15

Wearin' 'O the Green Festival
March 15

Westbury St. Patrick's Festival
March 15

York Saint Patrick's Day Parade
March 15

Celtic Lands Culture Fest
March 15-16

City of Dublin St. Patrick's Day Celebration
March 15-16

Four Winds Faire – St. Patrick's Day
March 15-16

Baltimore St. Patrick Parade
March 16

Bay City St. Patrick's Day Parade
March 16

Hofstra Irish Festival
March 16

Southside Irish Parade
March 16

St. Patrick's Day Parade of New Haven
March 16

Washington D.C. St. Patrick's Parade
March 16

Butte St. Patrick's Day Parade
March 16-17

Flint St. Patrick's Day Celebration
March 17

Lawrence St. Patrick's Day Parade
March 17

Minneapolis St. Patrick's Day Association Parade
March 17

SaPaDaPaSo Parade
March 17

Savannah Saint Patrick's Day Parade
March 17

St. Patrick Society of Peoria Parade
March 17

St. Paul St. Patrick's Day Parade
March 17

World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade
March 17

New Dublin St. Patrick's Day Parade & Irish Fest
March 17-22

Celli at the Roundhouse Celtic Festival
March 21-22

O'Neill St. Patrick's Day Celebration
March 21-23

Inishowen Traditional Singers' Circle
March 21-24

ShamrockFest
March 22

Arizona Scottish Gathering and Highland Games
March 22-23

Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade and Road Race
March 22-23

Mystic Irish Parade
March 23

Manchester St. Patrick's Parade
March 30

Ringwood Highland Games
March 30

APRIL

Celtic Media Festival
April 2-4

East Coast Music Week
April 2-6

Inverness Whisky Festival
April 4-5

Kingussie Heritage Festival
April 4-6

Ballydehob Irish Traditional Music Festival
April 4-6

New York Tattoo
April 4-6

Edinburgh International Harp Festival
April 4-9

Tartan Day Scotland Festival
April 5-13

Bundanoon Highland Gathering
April 5

Dunedin Highland Games
April 5

Kern County Scottish Games & Gathering
April 5

Scottish Arts Indoor Festival
April 5

Four Winds Canterbury Faire Highland & Celtic Festival
April 5-6

Hawaiian Scottish Festival & Highland Games
April 5-6

San Antonio Highland Games
April 5-6

Saint Louis Tionól
April 11

Shennaghys Jiu
April 11-14

Dunedin Military Tattoo
April 12

Australian & South Pacific Pipe Band Championships
April 12-13

Las Vegas Celtic Gathering & Highland Games
April 12-13

Rural Hill Scottish Festival & Loch Norman Highland Games
April 12-13

Maclean Highland Gathering
April 18-19

Tullamore Irish Festival
April 18-20

AberFest
April 19

Pan Celtic Festival
April 22-27

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Mid-Atlantic Fleadh
April 25-27

Koroit Irish Festival
April 25-27

Les Anthinoises
April 25-27

Southern Maryland Celtic Festival
April 26

Houston Highland Games & Celtic Festival
April 26-27

Iron Thistle Scottish Heritage Festival & Highland Games
April 26-27

Ormond Beach Celtic Festival
April 26-27

Sacramento Valley Scottish Games & Festival
April 26-27

TradFest Edinburgh: Dun Eideann
April 29-May 11



CelticFest Vancouver - March 8-16, 2014 - Vancouver, Canada

Western Canada's premier Celtic Festival celebrates its 10th anniversary in fine style this year with nine jam-packed days of music, dance, theatre and more. With over 80 free and ticketed shows, there's guaranteed to be something on tap for everyone. Highlights include performances by Hermitage Green, the Paperboys, Vagabonds, and British Columbia's very own Royal Scottish Country Dancers. Also scheduled are pub nights, drum circles, kid's activities, workshops, jam-sessions, an old-school kitchen party, and a Scotch tasting soiree. The festivities come to a climax with a Gala event on Friday, March 14, and the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade on Sunday, March 16. While the rest of the country is cold this time of the year, Vancouver is sure to be warm with Celtic welcome.

www.celticfestvancouver.com

San Patrizio Milano Festival - March 14-16, 2014 - Milan, Italy

Twenty-five years after a life-altering trip to Ireland, organizer Umberto Crespi has fulfilled his dream to bring the Emerald Isle to Italy. Last year's event drew 9,000 attendees to one of the world's great cities, with up to 15,000 expected this year. Celtic musicians from Italy, France, Ireland, Spain, Serbia and Slovenia will take centre stage for each of the festival's three nights, while jam sessions, rugby "friendlies," vendors, historical seminars and dance workshops keep things humming along during the day. Of course it wouldn't be Italy without the fine dining, and Irish cooking will be on-site to sample. And though Milan is smack-dab in the middle of the country's celebrated northern wine region, you will likely find a few green beers to be had.

www.sanpatriziomilano.it



Arizona Scottish Gathering & Highland Games - Phoenix, Arizona - March 22, 23, 2014

The weather is not likely going to be an issue in the sunny southern state, as the Caledonia Club of Arizona celebrates the 50th Anniversary of its signature event. The group's longstanding motto "You Don't Have to Be Scottish to Attend Our Games" rings true again this year as an array of amazing activities will appeal to both Celts and non-Celts alike. Along with athletics, pipes and drums, re-enactments, live entertainment, games for 'wee lads and lasses', Clan row and genealogic services, the festival will again feature a cast of classic British cars, including Jaguars, Mini-Coopers, MGs, Triumphs, London Black Taxis and the like – well worth the price of admission alone for both collectors and hobbyists. Go for the good weather and the great times.

www.arizonascots.com

Australian & South Pacific Pipe Band Championships

April 12, 13, 2014 - Wendouree, Australia

After the resounding success of their 2012 event, the University of Ballarat Pipe Band has again put the call out across the continent and beyond for groups to blow their own horns. With nearly three dozen grade 1, 2, 3, 4 and juvenile bands already registered – almost all are from Australia and New Zealand - the small suburb (pop: 10,752) an hour northeast of Melbourne is in for a sleepless weekend. Still, with thousands of young pipers and their parents pumping money into the local economy, the locals aren't likely to notice the noise. Most importantly, the gathering is not only proof that Celtic heritage is alive and well in the land down-under, but that it is enjoying a real resurgence amongst the younger generations.

www.australianpipebandchampionships.com.au





Clan Recognition at Last

Thomson may be the sixth most common surname in Scotland, but it's only been in the last few decades that it's received recognition as an official family and clan name. Indeed, 2012 is when the Clan Thom(p)son Society finally saw the design for a new Ensigns Armorial. The young society began in 2006, according to its president, Mary Thompson. At that time, it was simply an organization for all the variations of Thoms, who felt they had a right to have an organization that carried their name. "At that time we found no historical documentation confirming our feeling that Thoms must have been a clan at some time," Thompson says.

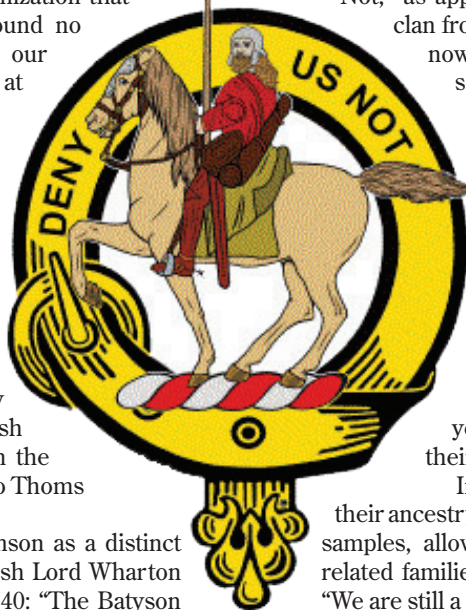
Many of the members of the Thompson clan had been members of other clans or societies, Thompson notes. But they felt they weren't truly part of those clans, but added more for financial purposes than for any true kinship. In 2006, society members set about doing in-depth research in order to discover and document facts about the Thoms. In turn, this led to the discovery of the 1587 and 1594 Acts of the Scottish Parliament naming Thomson as a clan in the West Marche, with additional references to Thoms in Edinburgh and elsewhere.

The first historical reference to Thomson as a distinct border family were recorded by the English Lord Wharton in reports to the Earl of Shewsbury in 1540: "The Batyson and Thomsons of Eskdale, have burnt a town called Grange...." On the clan's website, it is noted that "there is no single originating family named Thomson responsible for all the Scottish Thom(p)sons found today. The name is patronymic, in that the next generation is named after the father's personal name. Although many have been linked by the Thomson DNA project, Thomsons are very numerous over a large part of Scotland and are primarily found south of the Forth and Clyde."

Today, the Clan Thom(p)son Society has members on five

continents and Lord Lyon King of Arms who devised the Ensigns Armorial for the clan set the spelling as the more, modern, common one of Thompson. Therefore the (p) is added to make it inclusive; the clan is the only one with the name Thompson.

The clan's Amorial features a stag's head with black antlers, thought by some to reference Henry Thomson, Lord Lyon, 1498-1512. The current Lord Lyon also confirmed the motto "Deny Us Not," as appropriate to the society's history as a riding clan from the borders. The Scottish Tartan Registry now lists the Thomson Dress Blue as the official society tartan.



Currently, the clan society numbers about 150 members from all around the world, including from Canada, the United States, Scotland, the U.K., France, Australia, South Africa and Botswana, among others. The members take part in activities ranging from dinners and camping weekends to competitive games. The annual general meeting is open to all members, either in person or by proxy and is held in different parts of the country each year to enable more members to attend near their homes.

In 2014, the clan plans to continue researching their ancestry and will encourage members to submit DNA samples, allowing them to more accurately trace where related families were located in the past. Says Thompson: "We are still a small society and our energies are focused on getting the word out to the Scottish Diaspora to let Thoms know that they have a name and a home of their own and no longer have to accept status as another clan. As we continue to grow, the ability to have more member interaction will increase, which will bring its own rewards."

www.clanthomson.org
www.clanthompson.org





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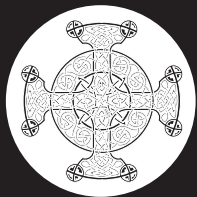


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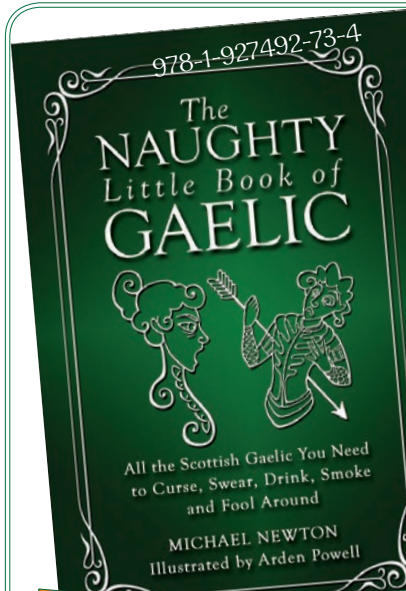


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Jerome Downey

When Jerome Downey recently passed away, the world became a little more hushed



"A joyous and powerful voice is quieter now, but still resonates in memory," read the opening line of Jerome Downey's obituary. He was a folk artist who kept alive songs that otherwise would have been lost forever. Scottish folklorist Dr. Margaret Bennett called Downey "a social historian in song."

Although indiscriminate in his willingness to sing virtually any song that tickled his fancy, from any genre, from any era, it was the original works of his friends and neighbors from the Codroy Valley he enjoyed singing the most.

His passion preserved a wealth of songs for another generation, songs that imitate a way of life, a sense of humor, a manner of speech, a pride in community and a dedication to nature and to God. Songs with lyrics like, "I peddled in Mouse Island where the great big women dwell/ Where they love the blue potato and the cabbage just as well/ Oh Johnny are they blue ones? The ones so nice and dry?/ The whites we get from PEI are watery like me eye."

Who best to sing these words but Jerome Downey? The voice, the expression, the nuance, the humor, the performance, the delivery and the sheer joy of singing a catchy tune bubbled forth from him with the ease and effortlessness of a running stream.

At his funeral Mass his daughter Marie McChesney recollected: Fond memories of Jerome come easily. It was that twinkle in his eye which gave joy to others. When he shook the hand of another he searched the face to look beyond that which was visible. He was a thinker and a man of depth, which he expressed in song. He was blessed beyond measure with a beautiful singing voice. He sang in the morning, at noon and in the evening. He sang in the shower, in the car and in the field.

He sang lying down, standing and sitting. He sang for family and friends. He sang for parties and he sang in church. It was his uncontrollable passion and it was his special gift to those who listened.

Jerome Downey finds a place in Celtic history well beyond the shores of Newfoundland. Along with Kenneth Goldstein, Dr. Margaret Bennett of Scotland published a book and CD of his songs, titled *Jerome Just One More Song! A Local, Social and Political History in the Repertoire* in a Newfoundland-Irish Singer.

But there was so much more to this man than his singing and his songs. In Jerome beat a heart as large as his massive chest could hold. He was generous to a fault. Although he did not like to see his visitors go, he himself was a man who would not stay nearly long enough. "Fish and visitors begin to smell after three days you know," he would say in leaving.

Born in the Codroy Valley in Western Newfoundland in 1923, Downey lived among the Irish, Scotch, French, English and Mi'kmaq. Jerome made his living through hard work on the farm and in the woods, while raising 12 children. He knew the woods like no other and in later times guided hunters in their quest for moose. His physical strength seemed boundless, yet no less impressive than his strength of character and singularity of purpose.

Jerome Downey was simply a commanding presence. He was at all times in step with the farm he worked and the forests he harvested with buck saw and horse. No clear cutting here. He took only mature trees, mindful of the generation to follow.

Nature didn't mind him. He is quieter now, but his song still resonates ... for sure.



“A joyous and powerful voice is quieter now, but still resonates in memory”

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