

VOL. 31 NO. 6 | \$5.95 CDN/USA | DECEMBER 2017 | CELTICLIFE.COM

CelticLife

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

Making Magical Memories



DISPLAY IN LIFESTYLES
UNTIL JANUARY 2018

INSIDE! *Holiday Gift Guide, Celtic Christmas Customs, Carol of the King, Choirs with Purpose Bear McCreary, Anúna, Celtic Yorkshire*

2018 EUROPEAN CRUISES

All prices are in Canadian dollars per person cruise only and include: All your port taxes/fees, prepaid shipboard gratuities/tipping and **FREE UNLIMITED BEVERAGE PACKAGE** with prepaid service charges!



Canary Islands, Madeira & Morocco
11-Days - February* & March, 2018
Inside \$1,495* - Balcony \$2,250*



Western Mediterranean - 12 Days
April 4 & November 11, 2018
Inside \$1,895 - Balcony \$2,850



The British Isles - 13 Days
May 4 & September 17, 2018
Inside \$2,695 - Balcony \$3,695



Norway, Iceland & UK - 15 Days
May 25 & September 3*, 2018
Inside \$3,225* - Balcony \$4,695*



Norwegian Fjords & Shetlands - 10 Days
June* 8 & August 25, 2018
Inside \$2,250* - Balcony \$3,325*



Scandinavia & Russia - 10 Days
June 7*, July 13 & Sept. 5, 2018
Inside \$2,195* - Balcony \$2,850*



Norway & North Cape - 13 Days
June 27 - 29, 2018
Inside \$3,250 - Balcony \$4,575



Christmas & New Year - 12 Days
December 23, 2018 - January 3, 2019
Inside \$2,275 - Balcony \$3,150



EXPO CRUISES & TOURS

Tel. (416) 439-6311 ❖ Toll Free 1-888-819-7447
2 Gloucester Street, Suite 204, Toronto, ON M4Y 1L5
www.Expo-Cruises.com e-mail: Info@Expo-Cruises.com



TICO Reg. #50012993



Fabulous holiday properties throughout Scotland

w: LHHScotland.com t: 01381 610496 e: LHH@LHHScotland.com





Doheny & Nesbitts, Dublin

The pipes, the pipes are calling.

So are your cousins, the festivals, the sessions,
the peat fires, the people and the pubs...

You've plenty of reasons to come home to Ireland this year already – and we have lots more. Take Dublin: always invigorating and full of surprises with a series of festivals and special events throughout the year. From Dublin, head for Ireland's Ancient East – a journey through 5,000 years of history, culture and legends. All combined, of course, with wonderful festivals, culinary delights and the warmest Irish welcome.

Sound good? Then make plans today to visit family and friends. Because if you listen closely, you can hear them calling.

Serving Dublin airport and connecting cities across Canada, Toronto offers year-round direct flights to Ireland.

Find out more at Ireland.com

Jump into 
Ireland

A Beautiful
Expression of **faith...**

A Sparkling Reminder
of **CELTIC tradition**

Irish Blessing

EMERALD & DIAMOND RING



Set with a Genuine
Emerald and a Pavé of
12 Genuine Diamonds



Engraved inside the band
with a line from the
“Irish Blessing” poem
*May the road
rise up to meet you*



Hand-crafted in Solid
Sterling Silver with 18K
Gold-plated Accents

A FINE JEWELRY EXCLUSIVE FROM THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE



The history of the Celtic cross goes back to the 8th century, with a meaning rooted in its symbolism of the endlessness of God's love. With the Celtic revival in the 19th century, this beloved emblem became associated more and more with Irish and Celtic pride, as well as with the unifying principles of faith, hope, love and honor. Today, we have joined the Celtic cross, steeped in ancient legend, with contemporary style, in a stunning new jewelry design—our “Irish Blessing” Emerald & Diamond Ring.

The ring is hand-crafted in solid sterling silver with entwined bands, one decorated with an 18K gold-plated infinity motive and the other band sparkling with a pavé of 12 genuine diamonds. Embraced at the center is a beautiful Celtic cross, with 18K gold-plated Celtic knot patterns and a gorgeous genuine emerald. As a final touch, the ring is engraved inside with the first line from

the famous “Irish Blessing”: *May the road rise up to meet you*. It is truly fine jewelry to treasure, rich with beauty and meaning!

**A Remarkable Value...
Available for a Limited Time**

Made to order in women's sizes from 5-12, this exclusive ring is an exceptional value at \$129*, payable in 4 monthly installments of \$32.25 and backed by our 120-day unconditional guarantee. It arrives complete with Certificate of Authenticity in a custom case that includes the “Irish Blessing” poem. To reserve yours, send no money now; just fill out and mail the Priority Reservation today!

*For information on sales tax you may owe to your state, go to bradfordexchange.com/use-tax

www.bradfordexchange.com/22056

©2017 The Bradford Exchange 01-22056-001-BIB

LIMITED TIME OFFER

PRIORITY RESERVATION

SEND NO MONEY NOW



Actual Size

Reservations will be accepted on a
first-come, first-served basis
So please respond as soon as possible
to reserve your ring.

**THE
BRADFORD EXCHANGE
JEWELRY**

P.O. Box 806, Morton Grove, IL 60053-0806

YES. Please reserve the “Irish Blessing” Emerald &
Diamond Ring for me as described in this announcement.

Ring size _____ (If known)

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

To assure a proper fit, a ring sizer will be sent to you after your reservation has been accepted.

Signature _____

Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

E-Mail (Optional) _____

01-22056-001-E52401

*Plus a total of \$11.98 shipping and service (see bradfordexchange.com). Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your jewelry after we receive your initial deposit. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

Saoghal Ceilteach Iris chinnidheach
air fhoillseachadh sia uairean 's a bhliadhna le

Clansman Publishing Ltd.
PO Box 8805, Station A, Halifax,
NS, Canada B3K 5M4

Celtic Life International is an ethnic journal
published in Canada six times a year by
Clansman Publishing Ltd.

Angus M. Macquarrie, Publisher
Stephen Patrick Clare, Managing Editor
Rebecca Dingwell, Senior Writer
Rosalie MacEachern, Senior Writer
Caitlyn Elizabeth Mearns, Senior Writer
Chris Muike, Senior Writer
Carol Moreira, Senior Copy Editor

Celtic Life International Office:
Phone: 902-835-CELT (2358)
Toll-Free: 888-215-6850
Fax: 902-835-0080
Email: info@celticlife.com
Website: www.celticlife.com

Subscriptions:
Phone: 902-835-CELT (2358)
Toll-Free: 888-215-6850
Fax: 902-835-0080
Email: subscribe@celticlife.ca

Advertising:
Toll-Free: 888-215-6850
Fax: 902-835-0080
Email: sales@celticlife.com

Please send review books and CDs to:
223 Bluewater Road, Bedford,
NS, Canada B4B 1H1

Please return undeliverable
copies of Celtic Life International to:
PO Box 8805, Station A, Halifax,
NS, Canada B3K 5M4

Publication Mail Registration:
No. 40050439 ISSN 1918-0497

Contributors
Lesley Choyce
Tom Langlands
Adriana Pansera

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

Canada

By its publication Celtic Life International does
not endorse the historical accuracy or the editorial
stance of materials submitted for publication.
We do reserve the right to edit all submitted
manuscripts prior to their publication.

© Celtic Life International, 2017



Fáilte!

The Christmas season will soon be upon us - a time of peace on Earth and goodwill to its people. It is typically a time for deeper reflection, compassion and giving. It is also a time for children.

As I write this, it is not yet Halloween and I am already hearing Jingle Bells ringing from local storefronts. The economic impact of the holiday season is significant; a peak selling season for retailers around the world, retail sales in North America this year are expected to exceed \$1 trillion.

I grew up in a small community along the Northumberland Strait in northern Nova Scotia. Settled primarily by Highlanders from the West Highlands of Scotland, my ancestors brought their customs and meagre belongings to build a new life in the New World. Arisaig was a community typical of most, with a backbone built of a single school and church.

Though more than 50 years have passed, I still remember the excitement of fellow schoolmates as we practiced for our yearly Christmas concert. There were carols, a Nativity scene depicting the birth of Christ, and before the concert night ended, an appearance from old St. Nick. It was an era that captured the hearts and imaginations of local children. A few days later, we crossed the street to prepare for Midnight Mass, rehearsing music, processions and other enactments. Much of our presentation involved the stable, the three Wise Men from the East, and the infant Jesus. Back then, "Christ" was in "Christmas."

However, Christmas as we know it today is not that of the past. Politically correct, modern-day secularists are pushing to remove most observances or celebration-of-faith practices from public life. In truth, Christmas has become so secularized and commercial that it is now difficult to find its original Christian elements.

Meanwhile, the world appears to be moving in a darker direction. Anger, hate and prejudice, along with a new wave of protectionism, are stoking the fires of fear and uncertainty and giving rise to such factions as neo-Nazism, white supremacy and ethnic cleansing. Incidents like the recent mass shooting in Las Vegas are testament that something has gone terribly wrong.

Poverty, as well, has never been more prevalent. According to UNICEF, the number of children in the world is 2.2 billion, with 1 billion - every second child - living at, or below, the poverty line. An estimated 22,000 children die each day due to poverty. Yet, less than 1 percent of what nations spend each year on military weaponry would put every one of those children in school.

As we move toward the holiday season, it is vital - perhaps more than ever - to reflect on the true nature of Christmas. By putting the "Christ" back into "Christmas" we can shift our focus to where love, peace and goodwill replace the anger, hate and prejudices we see in the world today.

One immediate way that we can make a world of difference is via the OXFAM Unwrapped program. Check it out at www.oxfam.ca

From the management and staff of Celtic Life International, we wish you a warm, wonderful and generous holiday season, and a peaceful, prosperous New Year.

Enjoy, and may God bless
Angus M. Macquarrie, Publisher

Inside!

Vol. 31 No. 6

47

**Making Magical
Memories ~ the
holiday season
is for children of
all ages...**



23

Irish vocal ensemble
Anúna celebrates 30
years

29

Bear McCreary
expands his sonic
horizons

33

Tom Langlands
explores Scotland's
Morsgail Estate

37

Lesley Choyce takes
a stroll through
Celtic Yorkshire

43

The stylings of
Scottish designer
Joyce Young never
grow old

53

Celtic Christmas
Customs from
around the world

57

A Child's Christmas
in Wales is a true
holiday classic

63

Choirs with Purpose
are the voice of
change

67

Carol of the King
brings the Christmas
spirit to its feet

71

We've got you
covered with our
annual Holiday Gift
Guide!

9. First Word / **15.** Celts in the Community / **25.** Caitlyn Grey
83. The Piper / **85.** The Fiddler / **87.** The Dancer / **98.** Last Word

CELTICLIFE.COM



SUBSCRIBE!

Subscribe to the print edition of Celtic Life International Magazine and receive a complimentary gift subscription! See our website for details!

GO DIGITAL!

For a limited time, pick up a digital subscription to Celtic Life International Magazine and receive three complimentary digital gift subscriptions! See our website for details!

SIGN UP & WIN!

Subscribe to our newsletter and you could win tickets to see the Irish dance holiday spectacular Carol of the King! See our website for details!

GET CONNECTED!

Get your daily dose of Celtic Life International on our website, where we profile the people, places and things that comprise our vibrant Celtic community! We also have the most comprehensive and up-to-date listings of Highland Games and Celtic Festivals anywhere online!

BE SEEN!

With over 2 million print and online readers, Celtic Life International Magazine is your gateway to the global Celtic community! Full details on advertising are available via our website!





Courage...and Grace Too

This is not an obituary. Nor is it a eulogy, a last word, a heartfelt homage, or a celebration. It is, perhaps, a collage of idea and emotion...maybe a love sonnet of sorts...or possibly a call to arms and action.

Suffice to say that so much has been written about Gord Downie over the past while that there is, likely, little left to say. The longtime frontman for one of Canada's most profound and prolific bands, The Tragically Hip, died on October 17 at the age of 53 after a nearly two-year battle with glioblastoma, an aggressive brain cancer.

While we all knew it was inevitable, his passing still sent shock waves across the country - like the proverbial punch to the gut that you brace for, but hurts like hell anyway.

Within hours, tributes and praise poured in from politicians, civil leaders, fellow musicians, the creative community, and - most poignantly - from everyday Canadians, who had embraced and enjoyed his music and lyrics for more than a generation.

A few days later, the band's newly produced documentary film *Long Time Runnin'* - which chronicles The Hip's 2016 farewell tour across the country, as well as Downie's post-diagnosis struggles during that time - aired from coast-to-coast-to-coast, with an estimated audience of 8 million.

As with the band's final concert in their hometown of Kingston, Ontario last summer - which saw 11 million Canadians (close to 1/3 of our population) tune in via our national broadcaster - viewing parties for the film were held across the country to celebrate a man who, like us, was proud to call the "true, north, strong and free" his home.

For those unfamiliar with Downie or The Hip, it is difficult to explain the man and his music, and the impact that each had upon this country; simply put, the quintessentially Canadian quintet provided the soundtrack for our lives.

In truth, for many of us, the fact that the band never achieved any semblance of mainstream success outside of Canada - particularly in the massive musical market to the south - was a point of pride.

With songs about hockey, wheat fields, Niagara Falls, the 100th meridian, the CBC - and lyrically namedropping obscure Canadian locales like Bobcaygeon, Sault Ste. Marie, Skeleton Park, Mistaken Point, and Lake Memphremagog - The Tragically Hip helped to define who we are as a people, giving a loud and raucous voice to our nation where there were but whispers before. Many of us first learned of the exploits of famed French explorer Jacques Cartier, the works of Nova Scotia author Hugh McLennan and Ontario painter Tom Thompson, and the horrific and needless deaths of Canadian soldiers during the 1942 raid on Dieppe, France, against the backdrop of the band's churning guitars, solid bass lines and steady drums.

More than purveyors of Canadiana, however, The Hip also made it cool to be quirky and creative.

Over the course of their 30+ year career, the band would release more than a dozen studio and live albums, and perform thousands of concerts. Downie himself would put out 5 solo recordings (with another en route, posthumously), publish several books, and make numerous cameo appearances in both

television and film. In recent years, he used a variety of platforms and mediums to raise awareness to the plight of the country's northern Indigenous peoples.

The accolades and acclaim for his life's work are simply too many to mention. Sadly - tragically - both that life and work are gone far too soon.

I first met Gord over 20 years ago, when our respective bands crossed paths on the road. We didn't talk shop, instead fiercely debating the ages-old hockey rivalry between the Boston Bruins (his team) and the Montreal Canadiens (my team). We did agree, however, that we would never see the mutually-despised Toronto Maple Leafs win a Stanley Cup in our lifetime. Perhaps if there is to be a single, silver lining to be found in his death...

When news of his terminal cancer diagnosis first came to light in late May of 2016, Downie had already braved the bulk of his treatment, including surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. Having been through cancer treatment myself in late 2015, I marveled at the strength and dignity with which he carried himself over the months to follow, and was deeply inspired by his ongoing commitment to better the lives of others.

As such, I am proud to announce that our publication will be joining the fight against cancer; Celtic Life International for Cancer Research will be launched in early 2018, and will feature a series of bi-monthly initiatives designed to raise greater funding and awareness for combating the deadly disease. Full details will be announced in our next edition.

For now, and as we approach the holiday season, I wish you the very best in health and happiness, and I encourage you to live each day with courage...and grace too.

Stephen Patrick Clare
Managing Editor



Give the Gift of Celtic Life!

All gifts include a one year digital subscription to Celtic Life International!

The World Peace Tartan Scarf



~~\$45~~ **\$35 SPECIAL**

Made in Scotland
100% lambswool
Limited Edition!

Order now and receive a complimentary 1-year digital subscription to Celtic Life International Magazine!

A portion of the proceeds go to the charitable World Peace Tartan Initiative



Ellis Island Tartan

Order now and receive a complimentary 1-year digital subscription to Celtic Life International Magazine

100% cotton / 32" X 72"

~~\$50~~

\$40 SPECIAL

Celebrating the contributions of immigrants to North America

One Heart, Seven Nations!

T-shirts: ~~\$29~~ **\$25** / Caps: ~~\$34~~ **\$25** / Hoodies: ~~\$64~~ **\$59**

*Wide variety of colours and sizes available!
Order now and receive a complimentary 1-year digital subscription to Celtic Life International Magazine!*



Clan Tartan Scarves

We now carry a huge selection of personalized Clan Tartan Scarves! Order now and receive a complimentary 1-year digital subscription to Celtic Life International Magazine!

100% lambswool / 60" x 12"

~~\$45~~

\$35

For details, please visit our website at www.celticlife.com

I heard somewhere recently that Christmas was banned in Scotland for a long time. Is that true?

~ William Davis, Raleigh, North Carolina

Hi Bill, thanks for the note. Yes, you are correct. The root of the issue first arose in 1583, when the Presbyterian Church discouraged Yuletide festivities, claiming that the day in question did not accurately reflect Biblical accounts. And although Christmas celebrations were only formally banned in Scotland from 1640 to 1686, following the Protestant Reformation, December 25 only became an official public holiday there in 1958. Likewise, it was not until 1974 that Boxing Day attained proper recognition. That said, and as we have seen in other cultures around the world over the centuries, it is almost impossible for governing bodies to suppress any kind of religious rituals and freedoms. As such, and though tempered, most families in “ye ould country” enjoyed some sort of Christmas traditions passed down through generations, and today, Scots celebrate the holiday season in a similar style to the rest of the western world. Those years of repression, however, might explain why Scottish New Year festivities - known as Hogmanay - became, and to some degree remain, the more celebrated event.

Are Highland games as popular today as they were in past years?

~ Scott McFarlane, Toronto, Ontario

That is a good, albeit tough question to answer Scott, but I have done my research on this one, so here is my reply; yes and no. First, a backgrounder; though originating in Scotland, most Highland games take place in North America each year, thanks to ex-pats who aim to preserve and promote their heritage. While some events have grown over time, likely due to their proximity to urban centers, others have disappeared completely. Funding is always an issue, as is the dwindling number of young people attending the festivities. That said, the good news is that there are more kids involved with the traditional Scottish arts today than ever before (piping, drumming, dancing,



etc.), and there are more competitive events for them on the continent, and globally, each year. Another positive is that many Highland games are now re-branding as Celtic Festivals to generate greater inclusivity to the Irish, Welsh, Manx, etc. Going forward, the key to keeping these great celebrations afloat will be by connecting with coming generations where they spend most of their time - in front of a screen.

What is your favourite place in Ireland?

~ Sofia Clare, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Ok, disclaimer here; Sofia is my nine-year-old daughter. However, it is a legitimate question, and one that got me thinking as we poured over a map of the Emerald Isle together one Sunday morning after breakfast. With a purple marker, we dotted Dublin, Bray, Wexford, Waterford, Kinsale, Cobh, Kenmare, Killarney, Dingle, Doolin, the Aran Islands, Galway, Achill Island, Sligo, and Donegal, eventually connecting all of the dots (with a blue marker) into a



big sort-of smiley face. The she asked me what my “one totally favourite place” was in Ireland. I pointed to Killybegs, west of Donegal Town, and we followed up with some serious Google time, and a few funny stories of my fishing adventures there. And then, with all good reason, she pointed to the Northern counties, asking why I hadn’t chosen a spot from those areas. I explained that Ulster was not (yet) considered a part of Eire. She asked why, since it was all one big island - another legitimate question. I smiled and replied that this would be an entirely different conversation, better left for another time. That got me thinking again.

Got a question for Celtic Life? Drop us a note at info@celticlife.com



Belleek Castle

a beautiful setting for Christmas



Gift Vouchers

A perfect gift: Printed on handmade paper and presented in a golden tube for an amount of your choosing.



Belleek Castle Artisan Food Hampers

Prepared by the team in our award winning kitchen. Hampers can be made to order.



Christmas Lunch Sunday 17th December

Served at 1&3pm. Lunch is priced at €34.50pp and €12.50 for children, menu with have a range of seasonal ingredients and dishes. If you would like to hold your Christmas party with us please call the Castle for information on menus and to make arrangements.



belleekcastle.com

■ Ballina, Co. Mayo, Ireland ■ Tel: 096 22400 ■ info@belleekcastle.eu

Wishing all our customers a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year



one

Isle of Man for life

Can you imagine spending 100 years on a small island? Bessie Horne has done just that. The Manx woman celebrated her 100th birthday last December. Horne has never left the Isle of Man in her life, and she isn't sad about it; despite the fact that she could hop on a flight to Liverpool and get there in 40 minutes, she is simply happy at home and has never felt the need to venture. Horne has six children, 14 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

two

How sweet it isn't

French police were in for a surprise when they got a call from a creperie in Brittany. Reportedly, a pair of women ordered crepes with whipped cream, ate them and left without complaint. However, the women later returned to complain that one of the crepes wasn't sweet enough. Things escalated from there, and the unhappy customers allegedly began to yell and threatened to smash the windows. Fortunately, no one was hurt and the restaurant chose not to press charges against the women.

three

Gold whisky

Getting the best whisky may not require putting down a load of cash. Over the summer, Glen Marnoch Speyside Single Malt Scotch Whisky took a gold award at the Spirits Business Scotch Whisky Masters following a blind taste test by judges. The Glen Marnoch Speyside is sold at Aldi - a German-based supermarket - for just £17.49 per bottle, beating out whisky selling for double the cost. Another Aldi whisky, Highland Black, won a silver award. That bottle retails at £12.99. Did they deserve it? You'll have to taste to judge for yourself.

four

Galician horses

A Galician tradition is causing controversy among animal rights activists. Once a year for the Rapa das Bestas - or Capture of the Beast - local ranchers round up the semi-feral horses of the Galician forests and hills to bring them back home as the villagers celebrate. The horses' manes are cut, foals are microchipped and sometimes branded. Some horses are kept to be sold, while others are returned to the wild. The tradition dates back to the 18th century or further, but some say the stress it causes the horses is unnecessarily cruel, especially the branding. Advocates from the political party PACMA suggest adapting the tradition for more modern times.

five

Welsh castle

A castle in North Wales is getting a second life. Gwrych Castle, once a picture from a fairytale, fell into disrepair after being trashed by squatters in the 1990s. Some even took fireplaces and doors. Mark Baker, who'd fallen in love with the castle as a child, wanted to do something about it. He started the Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust at age 14, and the campaign has been going strong for more than 20 years. It may be another decade before the castle's restoration is complete, but the hope is that it will eventually be completely open to the public once again.

six

Lost and found

A café on a Cornish beach used the power of social media to reunite a beach-goer with her lost wedding ring. A woman went into the Caerhays Beach Café, telling staff that she had lost her wedding band. The ring had yet to be turned in. Later that day, another woman came to the café, ring in hand. The staff member didn't have the contact information of the first woman and was unable to alert her directly, so the café turned to Facebook. "Please could everyone share this post because we need to find the owner and reunite her with her ring," staff wrote. People obliged, and the post garnered more than 4,000 shares.

Have an interesting tidbit to share with our Celtic community? Drop us a line anytime at editor@celticlife.com

TRACS

TRADITIONAL
ARTS+CULTURE
SCOTLAND

Scottish Storytelling Forum

Supporting and celebrating the traditional art of storytelling and the diverse network of storytellers across Scotland today

Traditional Music Forum

Scotland's network of traditional music organisations - putting traditional music at the heart of Scotland's culture

Traditional Dance Forum

Celebrating the diversity of traditional dance and other related traditional and social dance forms in Scotland

Get involved with Scotland's national network for Traditional Arts

Year round **events**, **training** & **resources** from the traditional perspective, including annual showcase Festival:

tradfest
EDINBURGH • DÙN ÈIDEANN
traditional culture. live.
26 Apr – 6 May 2018



Experience Scotland Live, through a seasonal feast of music, storytelling, dance, craft, film & folk drama.

Encounter living traditions and local cultures in a host of venues across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

www.tracscotland.org



Noel Krishnan

Affectionately known as “Sunny,” Cornish businessman and activist Noel Krishnan was mourned by his home community of St. Austell, and beyond, when he passed away over the summer. He had just recently been elected as a Conservative councillor for St. Austell Town Council. The former social worker managed restaurants in Truro, Fowey, as well as in St. Austell. “A review of any of his venues was always destined to be a good one, not just because the food was always of a high standard but because Sunny added that special ingredient missing from so many restaurants,” Lee Trehwela wrote in *Cornwall Live*, referring to Krishnan’s warm and friendly approach with all his customers. But Krishnan is remembered for much more than his work in that industry; he used his businesses to help others, often hosting fundraising nights for Cornish and national charities in his restaurants. On top of that, Krishnan was the founding chairman of the Council For Racial Equality in Cornwall, which aims to provide help and support to the Black Minority Ethnic communities of Cornwall. With such a caring and sunny personality, it was fitting that folks were asked not to wear black at Krishnan’s funeral.



Caroline Casey

A group of Irish activists have come together to launch an international campaign addressing disability exclusion in the workplace. While disability exclusion is a global issue, the statistics in Ireland are especially alarming: an estimated 80 per cent of Irish residents who are blind or use a wheelchair are left unemployed. Caroline Casey – an activist and entrepreneur who is legally blind – is spearheading the #valuable campaign to raise awareness and urge business leaders to champion inclusion. She is also the founder of Binc, which has worked with more than 450 companies to help them recognize the need to include people with disabilities in their businesses. The hope is that inclusion in business will lead to people with disabilities being more included in society overall. Recently, Casey announced her plans to travel 1,000 kilometres across Colombia on horseback in hopes of sparking a conversation. “There are a billion people in the world that experience disability,” Casey told *The Guardian*. “If businesses could see the value of those people as consumers, as suppliers and as talent in the community...I think we could go a very long way in eradicating exclusion.”



Suzanne Harding

Suzanne Harding has worked with the Isle of Man Samaritans - a group which provides various aspects of community support - for 35 years. The Samaritans offer emotional support in person, by phone or text. They also do outreach, including visiting local schools. Harding is a trainer, committee member and a key part of a team of people who take turns visiting the Isle of Man Prison every Saturday. During that time, people living in the prison system can talk to Samaritans confidentially. On the other days of the week, the incarcerated may also reach the Samaritans by phone. In June, the prison outreach group was invited to Government House as a thank-you for the members’ volunteer work. That same month, Harding was one of two Manx women to be awarded a Member of the Order of the British Empire. “The reason I got involved is because I’m much more interested in doing something rather than just being on a committee,” Harding told *IOM Today*. The Samaritans charity has multiple branches - including in Ireland, Scotland and Wales - but the Isle of Man branch is one of the few with a dedicated prison team.



KENSINGTON
WINE MARKET

2017

WHISKY ADVENT CALENDAR 25 DAYS OF DRAM FINE WHISKY



\$375 + GST

INSIDE, YOU WILL FIND:



24X50ML PREMIUM WHISKIES, MOSTLY SINGLE MALTS FROM SCOTLAND, BUT ALSO FROM CANADA, ENGLAND AND THE NETHERLANDS.

A SPECIAL 100ML SCOTCH MALT WHISKY SOCIETY SINGLE MALT BOTTLED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE KWM WHISKY ADVENT CALENDAR TO TOAST CHRISTMAS DAY.

A CUSTOM LOGO GLENCAIRN GLASS AND A KWM DISCOUNT CARD.

ONLY 384 AVAILABLE UNTIL SUPPLIES LAST, MORE THAN 3/4 SOLD OUT!

RAISE A GLASS TO THE SEASON! SHARE YOUR WHISKY ADVENT EXPERIENCE WITH US.



@KENSINGTONWM



@KENSINGTONWINEMARKET



@KENSINGTONWM

SLÁINTE!

PLACE YOUR ORDER ONLINE

KENSINGTONWINEMARKET.COM

OR OVER THE PHONE

1.403.283.8000 OR 1.888.283.9004



Most readers recognize Andrew Ferguson as Celtic Life International's immensely knowledgeable and good-natured whisky connoisseur and columnist, whose musings on sprits engage, educate and entertain our community with each issue.

What they may not know is that writing is but a sideline for Ferguson; by day he is co-manager of the Kensington Wine Market in Calgary, Alberta. He also owns and operates Ferguson's Whisky Tours, taking thirsty travellers to explore Scotland for week-long distillery excursions.

Ferguson's taste for whisky began in university. His initial role at the Kensington Wine Market in 2003 was a considerably smaller one - a part-time gig as a delivery driver over the Christmas holidays. It was there, he shares, that his passion "took on a life of its own."

"I had never intended to make a career in the liquor industry, but I like the business, the people and our customers.

"I found a niche for myself in Scotch whisky, and the rest, as they say, is history."

Canadian born, Ferguson traces his heritage back to Scotland and Northern Ireland. His paternal grandfather emigrated from Ulster to Canada in the early 1920s to teach at the University of Saskatchewan. It is likely that their ancestors emigrated from Scotland to Northern Ireland in the 1600s. His mother's family hails from the Scottish Highlands, later settling in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

Ferguson believes his heritage played a role in his interest in Scotch, but his passion for the trade developed organically. Since those early days as a delivery driver, he has become the first Canadian whisky expert to earn the title of Keeper of the Quaich - an honour given to those who have made outstanding achievements in working with, writing about, and/or promoting Scotch whisky.

"As cheesy as it may sound, the work is the reward," he says. "Getting to explore the world for new and interesting products, and calling it work, is awesome. I am very fortunate to have made a career out of what is merely a hobby for others. The hours can be long, and the work exhausting, but the motto 'do something you love and you will never work a day in your life' applies here. The other big benefit is all of the great relationships that I have made over time; friendships with customers and suppliers - many of them over a decade and counting."

The Kensington Wine Market is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, and Ferguson says the business remains true to its original mandate; "to discover, curate, and sell the best wine, beer and whisky selection in Canada."

"We can't be the biggest," he adds, noting that grocery chains and publicly-traded firms fill that role. "But we can be the best."

It hasn't hurt that the production of craft spirits is on the rise as well, especially with regard to whisky and gin.

"This trend is happening all over the world. In Canada, you see it in each province; craft producers are popping up everywhere."

Ferguson wears many hats in his job at the market, but is best known for building its whisky section. The business has received recognition as runner-up for Whisky Retailer of the Year in the "Rest of the World" category from Whisky Advocate magazine. Most of his clientele, he explains, are destination shoppers.

"We have a solid local walk-in base of customers, but we are first and foremost a destination experience for customers in Calgary, Alberta, and across the country. Our website, snail mail, and electronic newsletters are all ways that we have been reaching our customers for years. Increasingly, social media is playing a more prominent role also.

"Alberta is the only fully-open market for liquor in the world, and the internet has made it easier for us to connect with both suppliers and customers. We find the interesting things no one knows about, and then introduce them to a base of customers that extends far beyond Calgary's city limits. Being online has also put us on the global map, and we frequently get visitors from all over North America, Europe, and beyond."

Ferguson and the Kensington Wine Market have marked their anniversary with a series of special events and bottlings. Compass Box Whisky made an exclusive blend for the shop, and Ferguson even blended his own tawny port with Taylor Fladgate. There is more in store for 2018, but he is mum on the details.

"For now, all I can say is stay tuned!"

www.kensingtonwinemarket.com

SMOKY MOUNTAIN



Featuring Albannach



Join Us!
MAY 19-20, 2018

At Maryville College

BRING YOUR WHOLE CLAN and join us
for a weekend of authentic Scottish Highland
festivities right here in the East Tennessee
highland—the Great Smoky Mountains.
Kids under 16 get in FREE!

FOR INFORMATION VISIT
SMOKYMOUNTAINGAMES.ORG



Lily Neill was only three years of age when she fell in love with the harp.

"I told my parents that I was going to play the harp," she recalls with a chuckle from her home in the U.K. "It didn't produce the desired effect though! I even made myself a little harp out of a shoebox and rubber bands to convince my parents that I should learn to play!"

In fact, growing up in a non-musical home, her revelation came as both a surprise and a shock to her parents

"I am not sure myself why I was so strongly drawn to the instrument," she continues. "At that age, I hadn't seen a harp in person. The only depiction I remember was in a Japanese film version of *The Little Mermaid* - which was, incidentally, my favourite book as a child. My third-grade teacher, Mrs. McDonnell, heard me talking about the harp and loaned me one of Derek Bell's solo records. I was mesmerized! I ended up starting piano lessons when I was seven and, because I played a lot at home and tried to learn music that I liked by ear, my parents saw that music might be more than a mere passing fancy."

Since then, the Maryland native - who is of Irish, Scottish and Welsh ancestry - has continued to pursue her passion for many of the same reasons.

"The more I've learned about the harp, the more I realize that - even though it's a very old instrument - it's still developing in terms of both repertoire and engineering."

"There is so much ahead for it, and so much unexplored territory. That really excites me and remains a strong incentive to continue."

Neill's musical journey has been filled with many highlights and rewards.

"In a way, Derek Bell's record helped convince my parents to arrange harp lessons for me, so getting to play duets with him, and with *The Chieftains*, at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall in Washington, D.C. when I was in my early teens was really memorable. I didn't know it at the time, but those concerts were his final two in Washington, D.C. so I feel very fortunate to have had that experience.

"I have also played for two presidents, U.S. President Bill Clinton and Irish President Mary McAleese. Another highlight was that my first CD was submitted to be con-



Lily Neill

American harpist Lily Neill makes a present of the past

sidered for a GRAMMY award and ended up making it into the official GRAMMY book. I am just as proud of some small concerts I have played over the years, where the audience was really appreciative and I felt like I was playing my very best. When all the stars come into alignment, and you feel like you have been able to conjure something truly meaningful, it is a memory that stays with you. It is also immensely rewarding when I have written music that I am happy with."

She says that her biggest challenge as a musician is living in the digital age.

"I love performing live and everything that it encompasses, but the sense of abandon one feels onstage vanishes quickly the minute an iPhone pops up in record mode. Although it is quite flattering, it can also be very frustrating for performers because that fleeting moment between the player and the listener is compromised."

Neill - who currently plays a modern-day descendant of the very old instrument called a "lever harp" - hesitates to classify her mu-

sic as "traditional."

"I would describe my playing as that of someone who likes to use the past to create a sound for the present. The harp has a lot of volume and I love using effects and textures to manipulate its voice and make it sound as expansive as possible. Because I mostly play solo concerts there is the wonderful challenge of using one instrument to hold listeners' attention for a few hours and the harp is an ideal solo instrument - it's like having a mini-orchestra at your fingertips! There are always new things to uncover and new ways to try to use the instrument."

Her enthusiasm continues to evolve, with a number of new projects in store for the coming while.

"I am finishing work on a new recording and will be back on tour shortly. I also have a slew of pieces that I need to finish writing and arranging, and I am currently collecting material for a book as well."

www.lilyneill.com

FIND THE CELT IN YOU!



March 9 - 11, 2018

In America's Oldest CELTIC City
St Augustine, Florida, USA

**“Arguably the finest collaboration
of Celtic artists in the United States”**

**Enter the Haggis
Seven Nations
Steel City Rovers**

**Emmet Cahill
Rathkeltair
House of Hamill**

**Dublin City Ramblers
Emish
Albannach**

**PLUS St. Patrick Day Parade
The St. Augustine Highland Games,
Celtic artisans, Celtic food, and MORE!**



proudly presented by:
FUNDED IN PART BY
VISITFLORIDA

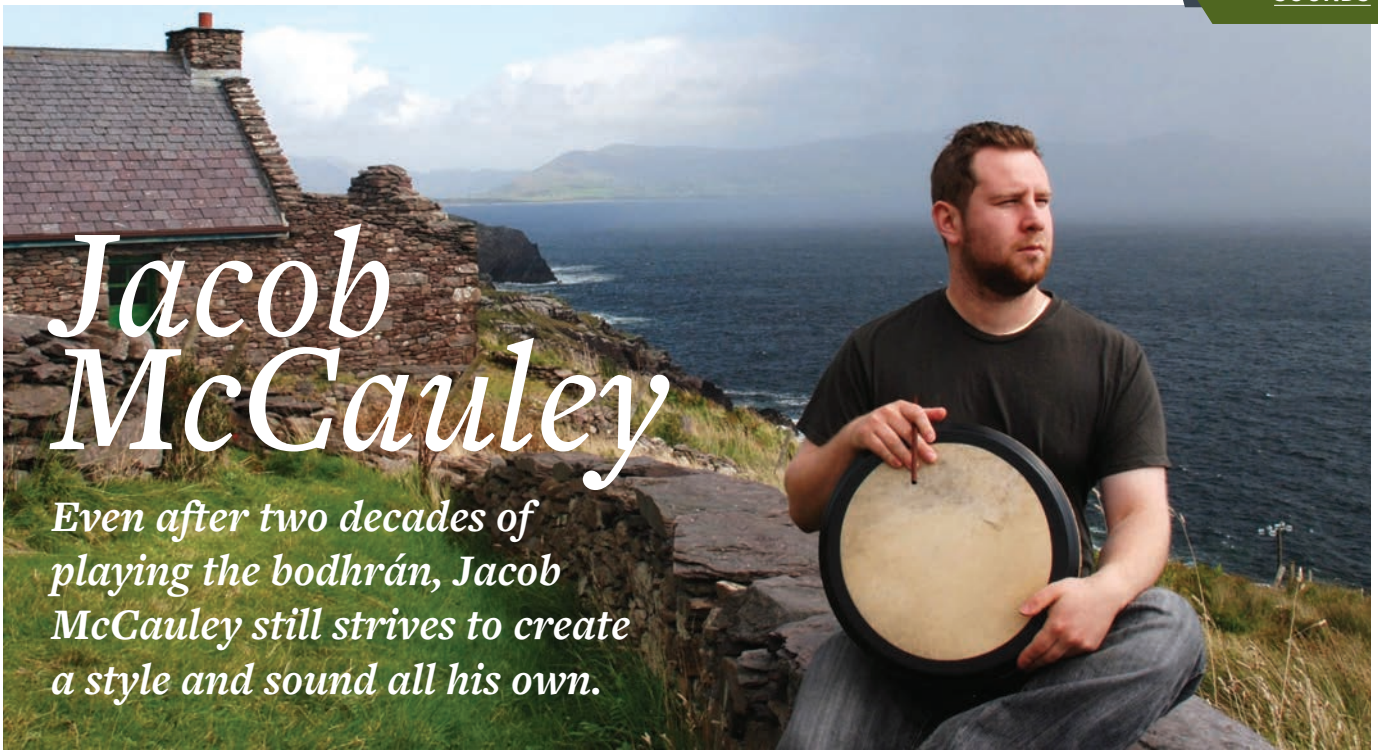


ST AUGUSTINE | PONTE VEDRA
ST. JOHNS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
HistoricCoastCulture.com



CelticStAugustine.com





Jacob McCauley

Even after two decades of playing the bodhrán, Jacob McCauley still strives to create a style and sound all his own.

Although he experimented with various other instruments growing up - including guitar, bass, drums, piano and the mandolin - Jacob McCauley found himself drawn to the bodhrán from the first time he played one.

"It all started as a fun way to join in with my family playing tunes," recalls the 29-year-old Torontonion via email. "But the more I played - and as the years went by - I found myself taking the drum more seriously, and spending a lot of my free time playing and practicing. I think my mom realized that I had started to ignore most of my other instruments, and before long she asked me if the bodhrán was what I really wanted to pursue. I replied yes, and from that moment on I spent the majority of my time playing it as my main instrument."

Traditionally made with a goatskin head and a wooden body, the Irish frame drum is played with a double-headed stick. And although the bodhrán's origins are up for debate, it likely evolved from the tambourine.

First influenced by Irish drummers John Joe Kelly (of the band Flook) and Rónán Ó Snodaigh (Kíla), McCauley began his musical studies as a traditionalist. Today, however, he considers himself more of a modern player.

"Witnessing what we now call the 'single-end' technique sparked my interest to try it out and experiment with it. The first thing I realized was the tremendous amount of time, practice and dedication it took to learn

this kind of technical approach to playing. However, it has been a very valuable, rewarding and enjoyable experience. After learning the single-end technique, and spending some time exploring its possibilities, I decided to go back to the drawing board and adapt to what I had learned.

"I did not want to be a copycat, so to speak, but very much wanted to develop my own unique sound. From there, I began a trial-and-error process of creating something special and specifically my own that allowed me to use aspects of the single-end style, combined with my own vibe, and incorporating more traditional playing styles when necessary - such as double-ended playing. I liked the idea of being able to switch between styles without having to change the tipper grip."

Although it requires dedicated practice to achieve the proper muscle memory, it is an effective way of playing, and has offered McCauley the opportunity to create melodic notes. Currently, he exclusively uses drums crafted by Christian Hedwitschak, a musician and bodhrán maker based in Germany.

"I have been very fortunate to work with Christian personally on various drums and projects, including a bodhrán that we developed together specifically for myself. I expect to release that model for public sale soon."

McCauley notes that his biggest career highlight to date has been his work with folk trio NUA, for which he plays alongside gui-

tarist Graeme McGillivray and fiddler James M. Law. The group has recorded and released two award-winning collections, including its latest album FLOW, which has been nominated for a Canadian Folk Music Award.

"This has allowed me to push the envelope of the bodhrán and work towards a unique style that I am proud to call my own."

"We recently had the pleasure of collaborating with an incredibly talented Inuit throat-singer from Nunavut called IVA. We met her while both of our groups were performing at a festival in Yellowknife (Folk on the Rocks), and got excited about the possibility of working on a track together. We released the song last year, and hope to work on a full-length collaboration in the near future."

After recently taking some time off from touring, McCauley is back on the road with NUA. The trio is currently working on its third album as well.

"I look forward to improving and growing as a player each and every day, and I am always excited to see where this musical journey will take me."

www.jacobmccauley.com



NIXEY

Inspired by the past, designed for the present.

Handmade in Scotland.

nixeyonline.com

Available in a range of heritage leather colours and finishes, from £135.





Irish ensemble Anúna celebrates 30 years of musical exploration



Saxophonist Gavin Brennan describes music as “a form of expression not hindered by language.”

“As a kid, I always responded to music,” he explains via email from his home on the Emerald Isle. “I would always get excited when I heard music being played. So my parents encouraged me to take up an instrument. By the age of ten I had chosen the saxophone, thinking it would be cool. I always loved the way music could communicate emotions, without words. I knew pretty early on that performing music is what I wanted to do professionally.”

Brennan was born in Clontarf, a small town just off the coast of the Dublin Bay, where he still resides. In 2016, he joined the vocal ensemble Anúna.

“Music is such a natural way of communicating. The music I get to perform, both as

a solo saxophonist and with Anúna, has that communicative quality. The sounds alone, irrespective of the words, tell a story. I feel privileged that it is my job to bring these stories and emotions to audiences.”

Anúna first formed in 1987, when Irish composer Michael McGlynn aimed to give voice to his instrumental compositions.

“Many of his pieces are strongly influenced by the history and mythology of our homeland,” explains Brennan. “The choir’s current singers have joined at various points over the past three decades. And whilst a number have been with Anúna for the entire 30 years, membership has been, and is, an ever-evolving entity under McGlynn’s stewardship.”

Since day one, the group has strived to remain true to McGlynn’s initial intentions.

“Michael has always had a sound in his head for the group, and the singers are the instrument.

“We are all encouraged and supported to be the most accomplished that we can be as vocalists.”

Brennan adds that many of those early members helped to define Anúna’s sound.

“On the surface the Anúna ‘method’ is a simple idea, and one that should, ideally, transcend the boundary of musical training and facilitate the singers to transmit genuine emotion and truth - both the true nature of themselves as singers and the truth that is within the texts and music set and arranged for us by Michael McGlynn. This methodology is the basis for all of our work. That said, we are always open to new ideas, as we analyze and develop our vocal sound at every rehearsal and every show. To that end, no two performances are ever the same.”

Both he and the group have enjoyed a stellar career, full of musical highlights.

“We have been featured on Grammy Award-winning albums, had a number-one selling CD on the US World Music Charts, and reached the Hot 100 of the Billboard Album Chart. Earlier this year, as part of our 30th anniversary program, we collaborated in Tokyo with a Noh theatre company on a Japanese language production of Yeats’ ‘At the Hawk’s Well.’ However, the greatest rewards are when we are on stage, bringing words to life. Getting to share that experience with audiences is, ironically, almost beyond words.”

While Brennan believes that Ireland’s culture is well promoted through music, he does note a need to be more inclusive of all styles.

“There are some amazing artists currently active in the Irish-Celtic music scene. Equally, there are some wonderful efforts being made to promote and cultivate this community. However, an issue can sometimes be drawn as to what kind of music is to be considered Irish music. When people think of Irish music, what initially springs to mind is traditional Irish folk music. This is a fantastic art form that is intrinsically linked with our culture, but it is not the only music being created in Ireland. The view that Irish music is in purely one style or genre is a restrictive one. Music in Ireland is, in truth, a diverse community of expression.”

Over the coming months, Brennan will perform with Anúna in China, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. He also has a number of projects lined up for 2018, both on his own and with the group.

“We have just released a new album - a compilation of fresh recordings and existing tracks to celebrate Anúna’s 30th anniversary. Next year, we will tour across Europe and Asia. And, as always, we will continue to explore our musical boundaries.”

www.anuna.ie

Put It On!

...*Your Wall* ...*Your Desk*



Quality Irish Gifts...Made in Ireland...For You!

OBRIEN CELTIC GIFTS

CRAFTING ANTIQUE MAPS • JOURNALS • NOTEBOOKS • WALL HANGINGS

FOR OVER 30 YEARS - TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

23-24 Westlink Ind. Estate, Dublin 10. • Tel: +353 (0)1 626 6722 • Fax: +353 (0)1 626 8477 • Email: sales@obriencelticgifts.ie

Buy online direct from our Dublin Factory – or from your local store

www.obriencelticgifts.com

Caitlin Grey

Welsh singer-songwriter Caitlin Grey brings Celtic myths and folklore into her musical fold



Caitlin Grey's second recording, *The Promise*, is an evolution of sorts for the acclaimed artist.

"It is more mature, and it is much more reflective," explains the vocalist via email. "The process of growing, and of experiencing love, loss, pain and joy provides an infinite well of inspiration."

Born on the Isle of Anglesey, Grey began her musical journey as a youngster.

"My mother is a wonderful singer, as is my dad, and they brought us up in a house filled with music and singing. We all loved to sing and play. As I got older I started playing piano and joined choirs, appearing in school shows. I began singing semi-professionally around the age of 15. I sang in clubs, joined bands, and began attempting to write songs and rather melancholy poetry, which generally consisted of me doing my 'woe-is-me' act - teenage angst and all that!"

Since then, the self-professed 'gypsy wanderer' - who lives on a boat - has evolved both personally and professionally.

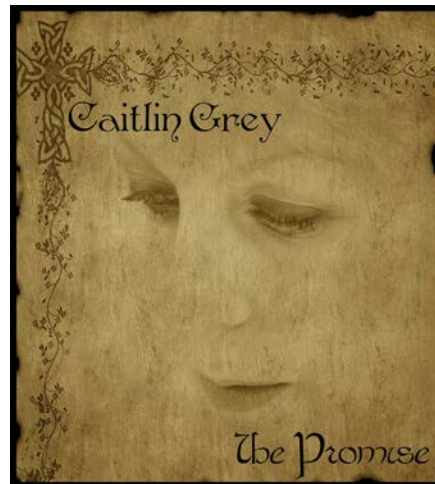
"I still get the same feeling when I sing as I did as a child at home. But now, of course, it is my profession and I have learned to embrace the discipline of being a professional, working musician, rather than doing it just for fun.

"I relish the craft of making music; the exploration of sounds and styles. And I love working with other musicians and performing live."

"I have also come to understand my voice and what suits my voice. I have deepened my appreciation of Celtic myth, folk-

lore and history as well, which has added an extra dimension to the music. I think that my rather nomadic lifestyle has afforded me the opportunity to immerse myself in the living history of our unique heritage, which has certainly helped me to mature as an artist."

She notes that working with co-writer Neil Harvey was instrumental in bringing *The Promise* to full musical fruition.



"Today, my music is a fusion of sounds drawn from my passion for Celtic music and folklore, classical music, traditional folk, and new age music. I really enjoy the challenge of writing in the style of traditional folk songs, and I also love the more ethereal sounds and laments. I use my voice to try and express the emotion and style of the piece we're working on as well as I can."

Since its release, *The Promise* has enjoyed great popular and critical acclaim.

"It has had some great radio play. I have a hugely supportive group of subscribers who buy, share, and spread the word about the

music, and I am constantly amazed at some of the lovely messages I receive from people all over the globe."

She considers the recording to be just one of the many amazing highlights of her music career.

"I have shared the stage with some incredible musicians over the years. Winning the Lady Lake Independent Music Award for Best Celtic Album in 2013 - for my debut recording *Siren's Song* - was a particular high point and quite unexpected. And just this last year, we have had three songs chosen for two different feature films, which are both in pre-production as we speak."

Grey says that international sensations Riverdance and Celtic Woman have helped to bring Celtic music into the global spotlight.

"Fifteen years ago, the Celtic scene was not 'trendy'. However, as some of these great commercial productions have brought the genre to the attention of mainstream listeners, we are definitely seeing a new thirst for the music. And, thanks to the Internet, wonderful established artists are reaching whole new audiences."

Grey will finish 2017 with a new publishing deal from U.K.-based Barking Green Music Ltd. She is also creating a new song cycle, titled *Songs from a Spiritual Heart*, inspired by the poems of Jennie Ebbutt.

"After hearing *The Promise*, Jennie contacted me and the rest, as they say, is history. The first four songs were released on CD and iTunes earlier this year, and the full-length album will be on the market this coming December. After that, my plan is to complete an EP of some brand new original songs and, to do some live dates in 2018."

www.caitlingrey.com



THE NATIONAL TARTAN DAY NEW YORK COMMITTEE

INVITES YOU TO

CELEBRATE SCOTTISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE
AND ENJOY SPRINGTIME IN THE BIG APPLE!

TARTAN WEEK 2018

WITH THE 20TH ANNUAL NEW YORK TARTAN DAY PARADE



SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2018

**WE INVITE
PIPERS, DANCERS, BANDS AND SCOTTISH ORGANIZATIONS
TO MARCH WITH US IN THE PARADE.**

To register, see our website or email us at register@nyctartanweek.org



Visit our website and Facebook page for more info.
Special hotel rates become available in January.

NYCTartanWeek.org

Telephone: 212-980-0844 | Email: info@nyctartanweek.org

NTDNYC, 150 E. 55th Street, 3rd Fl., New York, NY 10022

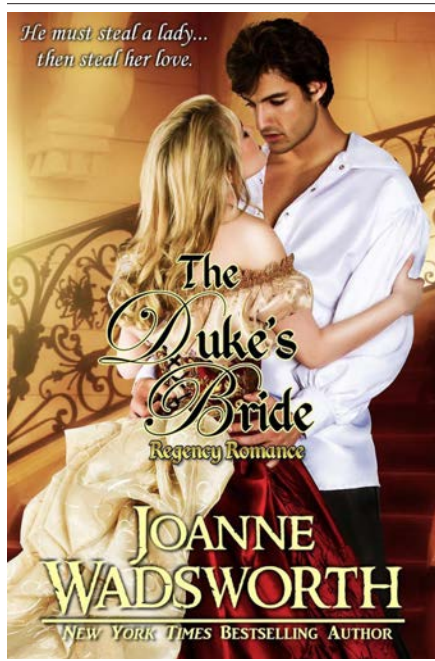
f | NYCTartanWeek |  | NYCTartanWeek

Joanne Wadsworth

With her latest narrative, novelist Joanne Wadsworth travels back to the early 1800s

USA Today and New York Times best-selling author Joanne Wadsworth says it was the international literary sensation Twilight that first inspired her to pick up the pen.

"I have had the desire since my teenage years, but the absolute defining moment came in February 2009 when my youngest child began pre-school and I had just finished reading the first book in the Twilight series," she remembers. "That's when I was bombarded by a group of characters who needed to have their story told, and the timing turned out to be perfect for me."



"And I am still constantly hounded by my characters and their desire for me to tell their story. I love it, and there's absolutely no way I could ever stop writing - not when I still have so many stories to tell."

In her latest effort, *The Duke's Bride*, the New Zealand native takes readers back to the early 1800s, during the Napoleonic Wars.

"I have always had a huge longing to write a Regency romance series set in England during the Napoleonic Wars of 1803-

1815. My fascination with this era comes from how immense and wide-spread the wars were - all due to Napoleon Bonaparte, the French Emperor, who had the aspiration to both isolate Britain economically, and dominate all of Europe.

"*The Duke's Bride* is book one in a series which will take readers on a journey through these turbulent years, and remind them that love and compassion could exist even amidst the devastation of the war."

She notes that the background work for the new narrative was a major challenge.

"I spent four weeks researching everything I could about this period, and in particular, Napoleon himself. In order for me to better understand what was taking place across Europe, I had to get inside Napoleon's mind to truly comprehend his drive and desire. Thankfully, there are a vast number of historical records about him on file, and he even penned his own memoirs after he lost the war and was banished into exile. Then I dove straight into researching the key military and political figures across each of the European countries at war, and in particular those in England since *The Duke's Bride* is set in London."

The rewards of a finely tuned novel, however, were worth all of the work.

"I came away from all this research with a full understanding of the war from an outsider's point of view. Although I am a New Zealander, I actually have strong English and Scottish ancestry. My forebears first immigrated to New Zealand by ship in the early-to-mid-1800s, during the initial colonization of New Zealand.

"I was very satisfied when I finished the novel, and yet I was also incredibly eager to begin the second book in the series.

"That is the way writers work; we finish our current story, and we can't wait to dive into the next, then the next."



"At the moment, I have four books outlined for this Regency romance series, with possibly a fifth."

Wadsworth's back catalogue of work is already vast, and includes subgenres such as Celtic romance, historical Scottish romance, and more.

"I am fortunate to enjoy an amazingly wide audience since I write across several genres, all of which I adore - particularly when I am able to add elements of fantasy into the storylines. That is why even my historical lines often include time traveling heroines. As a writer, it is all about allowing my imagination to soar, and bringing the reader along for a magical ride. Anything is possible - we just have to believe."

She believes that a good book is only as strong as its main character.

"I love a strong and feisty heroine, and a hero with flaws that he or she hopes to overcome. A deeply moving plotline, which keeps the reader turning those pages well into the night, is also vital. And a must-have for me is a happily-ever-after ending which satisfies the heart."

The future looks to be no less busy for the acclaimed author.

"I have another eight Celtic novels already plotted and in my schedule. Those characters are hounding me to share their stories, and I can't wait to get them going."

www.joannewadsworth.com

January 13-14, 2018

Saturday 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM

Sunday 8:45 AM - 5:00 PM

Winter Springs Florida • Central Winds Park

41st Annual
Central Florida

Scottish Highland Games



flascot.com





Bear McCreary

makes musical magic

While you might not recognize Bear McCreary by sight, you are likely to know what he sounds like. Though just 38 years of age, the multi award-winning composer and arranger has created spectacular soundscapes for both film and television, including the smash STARZ series Outlander. Recently we spoke with him from his home in Los Angeles.



What is your own heritage?

My ethnic background is very frequently represented in my music. I am part Scots-Irish - the “McCreary” should make that pretty obvious - and I am also part Armenian. There’s also some Northern European in there, but the Scots-Irish-Armenian categories tend to be the ones that I associate with, and not coincidentally, I very often write for instruments that are part of those cultures.

How long have you been involved with music?

I have been playing and writing music, essentially, since I was a youngster. I started piano lessons at age five. I was also a huge fan of soundtracks and movie music, and probably around the time I was nine or 10, I put two-and-two together and started trying to write my own movie music. By the time I was in high school that was pretty much all I did. Before school, after school, I would just compose in as many styles as I could. When I started discovering westerns, I wrote a western movie song; when I started watching horror movies, I wrote horror music. I just became very taken with, and adept at writing film music. I can say very safely that it is the only thing that I have ever foreseen as a career, or ever really wanted to do.

What were some of the movies that inspired you musically?

I think the earliest and biggest influence was probably *Back to the Future* by Alan Silvestri. That came out when I was six, and I snuck a tape

recorder - a little Fisher Price tape recorder - into the movie theatre, and held it up to record the audio of the movie so I could listen to the music when I went home. Then I discovered the soundtrack album, and realized you could actually get the music without all that pesky dialogue in the way. Other scores that have had a huge influence on me include *Conan the Barbarian* by Basil Poledouris, scores by Enio Morricone, Nino Rota, Jerry Goldsmith, Elmer Bernstein, and Danny Elfman. I have always just absolutely adored film music, and film composers were, and remain, my artistic heroes.

Are they the same reasons that you continue to play today?

I think very much so, yes. I still find inspiration in their music. I still listen to every composer I just mentioned, along with others like James Horner, John Williams and Shirley Walker. I mean, these are the guys and gals that inspired me when I was kid, and I still find inspiration in their music today. It takes me back to a child-like state, which is where I think you need to be in order to be creative.

What have been some career highlights?

I am not sure where to start with this. My first job was scoring the show *Battlestar Galactica*. That work had a huge impact on pop culture, and arguably it had a huge impact - a contributing impact - to the television landscape that we see today. So, in many ways, the career highlight was kind of right out of the gate. But I have been very fortunate to be

involved in a number of incredible projects and meet amazingly creative people; I have worked with Frank Darabont on *The Walking Dead*. I have worked very closely with J.J. Abrams on *10 Cloverfield Lane*. I have held concerts of my soundtrack music all over the world. I am currently scoring *Outlander*, which has afforded me the opportunity to explore the Celtic music that I love so much. I feel like my whole career has been one big highlight, and I feel like I am the luckiest person alive to do what I love and love what I do.

What are some of the challenges of the vocation?

That is a great question, and I really have to think about what the word “challenge” even means in this context. In many ways, I think I am hardwired to thrive on challenge. Some obvious and immediate challenges that come to mind for me include getting a full night’s sleep, which I essentially never do; I am working all day, every day - there are no days off. I am sort of like an on-call doctor - if a client calls me at 11-o’clock at night on a Saturday night, I get up and go. Because I am not just an artist in that regard, I am also an entrepreneur running my own business. If I have bad business practices, then I am out of business. I am

exhilarated by all of that, so while it is challenging, that doesn’t mean it is a bad thing. It is definitely exhilarating, and it is a part of the business that I didn’t necessarily think about when I was a kid.

What are the rewards?

The reward for being able to be an artist and an entrepreneur at the same time is, very simply, that I get to do this. The job itself is the reward. For me, the thought of being allowed, in my lifetime, to write music that moves other people is more reward than I could have ever hoped for. Knowing that my music has an emotional impact on other people is an incredibly profound experience. In fact, I crave that so much that I have structured my entire life to have that experience as much as possible.

In terms of your creative process, is it more “inspirational” or “perspirational?”

My process is probably 50/50 - so both, really. I would love to paint the picture of me being like Mozart, and just writing everything down on a page as it comes to me, but that is so not me. I am very much a person that feels like I am always chiselling away at an idea, like the thought is a block of marble, and I know that

the statue is inside there somewhere, but I have just got to keep hammering at it. With that said, the inspiration is a vital component of what makes every composer unique. In many ways, my first instinct - the thing that I think when I watch a movie, even in a very rough state, for the first time - is what defines me. It is what makes a Danny Elfman score different from a John Williams score. I feel like, for all of us in this industry, that the initial idea when you experience a film, whatever comes out of your mouth - even if it is weird - is yours.

What’s next on your musical agenda?

I am currently doing a number of features, and I am writing and developing a Broadway musical, which is an entirely new world for me. I am still doing a lot of television projects. I am putting out records, and I am gearing up to do some more live performances, so lots of great things on the horizon. I guess I always like the feeling of doing something new. I just hope that I get to keep writing music as much as possible.

www.bearmccreary.com



SCOTLAND



— HOGMANAY CELEBRATION 2017 —

New Year's Eve in Scotland Ring in the New Year with a traditional Highland celebration at the award-winning 18th-century Culloden House Hotel. Includes private luncheon at Castle Fraser in Aberdeenshire and 3 nights in Edinburgh. A five-star experience!

December 29-January 4 • 6 Nights • \$3,195

— 2018 ESCORTED TOURS —

British Isles

Scotland: Dumfries and Galloway

England: Lake District and

Beatrix Potter's home at Hill Top

Wales: Snowdonia National Park, Welsh Castles

Ireland: Dublin, Newgrange, Belfast

May 11-23 • 12 Nights • \$5,395

Lords of the Isles

Isles of Lewis, Harris, Skye, Mull, Iona

Western Scotland and the islands ruled by the
Lords of the Isles until the 15th Century.

Includes the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

August 11-23 • 12 Nights • \$5,395

Haunted Scotland

Ghost hunting in the Highlands and Lowlands

Rosslyn Chapel, Glamis Castle, Fyvie Castle,

Elgin Cathedral, Culloden Battlefield,

Eilean Donan Castle, mysterious Neolithic stone
monuments, Culzean Castle, and a special appearance
by one of Scotland's most famous authors from the past!

October 24-November 1 • 8 Nights • \$3,795

15th Annual Outlander Tour®

Based on the book series by Diana Gabaldon.

Time travel, history, intrigue, passion, loyalty,
and pride – the 18th-century Highlands.

June 24-July 4 • 10 Nights • \$4,695

September 16-23 • 7 Nights • \$3,695

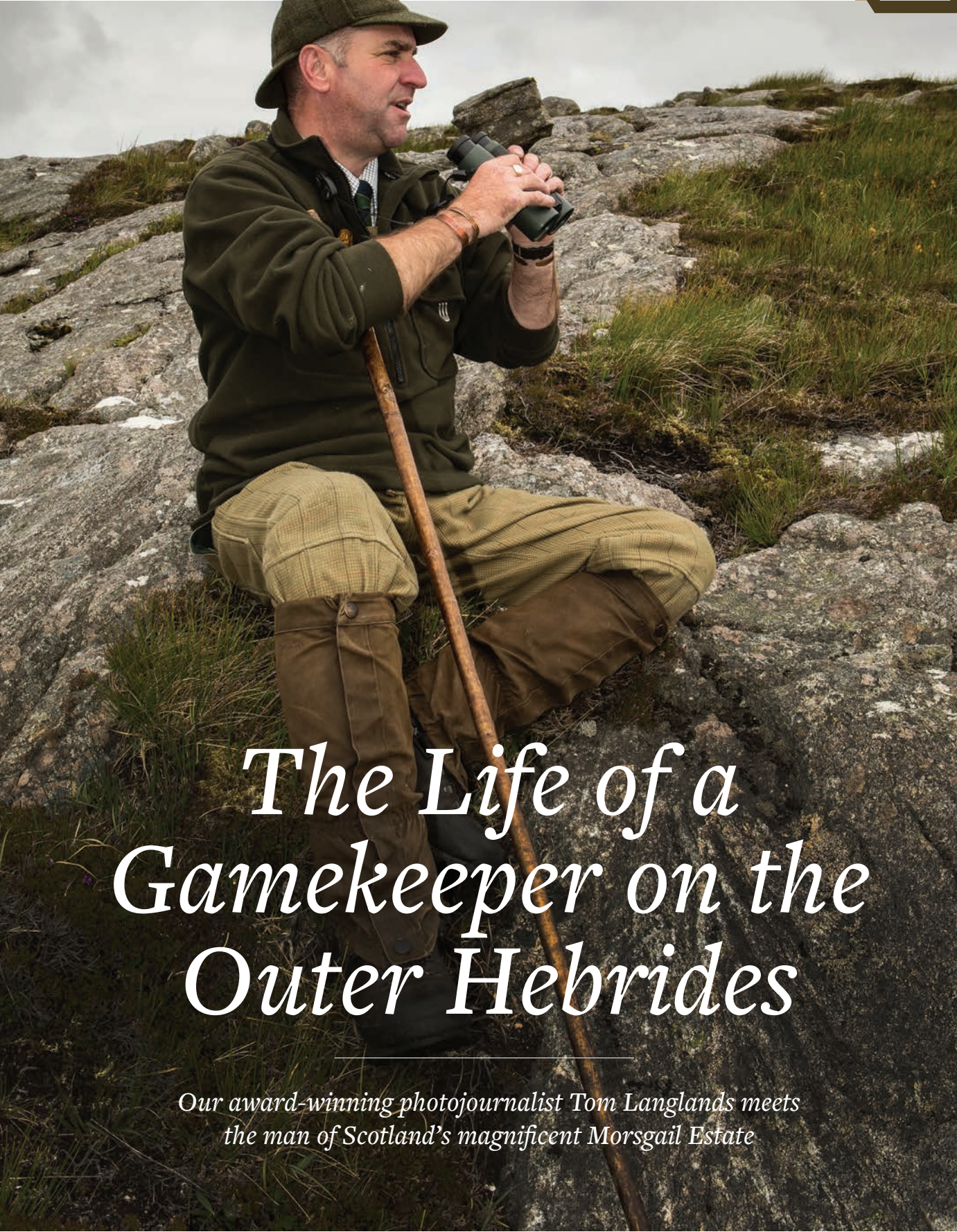
Deluxe escorted tours
18-guest maximum

Contact Judy at
judy@celticjourneys.us



Scotsmaster / Member of the Better Business Bureau / Licensed and Insured / Tourist Board Certification

www.CelticJourneys.us • (703) 941-6455

A man in outdoor gear, including a green jacket, olive trousers, and a flat cap, is sitting on a rocky hillside. He is holding binoculars to his eyes and looking towards the right. A long wooden stick is planted in the ground next to him. The background shows a rugged landscape with rocks and sparse vegetation under a cloudy sky.

The Life of a Gamekeeper on the Outer Hebrides

*Our award-winning photojournalist Tom Langlands meets
the man of Scotland's magnificent Morsgail Estate*



It had been a long drive from southwest Scotland north to Ullapool to catch the evening ferry to Lewis. After a calm crossing and a good night's sleep in Stornoway, I downed a hearty 'full Scottish' breakfast with a generous helping of Stornoway black pudding and haggis. It set me up nicely for the drive across Lewis to Morsgail Estate.

As I travelled, the peat moors around Stornoway gave way to a more undulating landscape, and by the time I crossed the southern end of Loch Rog Beag - linking the Atlantic Ocean with Loch Morsgail via the Morsgail River - Lewis had turned more rugged. I turned off the main road and followed the waterway to Morsgail Lodge that was to be my home for the next week.

The final corner of the single-track road revealed Loch Morsgail, its deceptively calm surface reflecting the azure blue sky and the gentle rise of Scalabhal to the south. Beyond this lay Harris, and further still The Uists. By the edge of the loch where the road petered out, lay Morsgail Lodge. The location was stunning and the head gamekeeper of Morsgail Estate, Malcolm McPhail, met me at the house. We shook hands and exchanged pleasantries. What neither of us knew was that we were both about to step into one of those surreal moments that life occasionally throws at you. For it transpired that this man whom I did not know nor had I ever communicated with, spent the first seventeen years of his life in a house only three doors from where I now live over 350 miles away! He remembered my neighbours, and had even been inside the house that I moved into thirty years ago. Naturally, I was curious to know what had brought him to one of the remotest estates on the Outer Hebrides, and what life was like as a gamekeeper here. During the next week he took a trip down memory lane and, in exchange, I received an education in the art of gamekeeping.

The nearest maternity hospital to the McPhail family home in Annan was in Dumfries, and it was there that he was born in 1968. His father, a farm manager, died when he was three years of age and, by his own admission, the lack of a father figure during his formative years may have given rise to less of an interest in school and more of an

interest in outdoor pursuits. His mother had assumed that he would find his vocation in farming, but time spent with farming friends only served to make the young McPhail realize that this was not the career path for him. Instead, he acquired skills at fishing and shooting, and was soon in demand for vermin control on local farms.

Leaving home at seventeen, he went to work for a season for the Duke of Roxburgh as a trainee gamekeeper at Floors Castle, Kelso, in the Scottish Borders before becoming syndicate pheasant keeper there for a further two years. After, he spent a season as a pony boy on the Mar Lodge Estate at Braemar, before moving on to Eishken Estate on Lewis for a further two years as a stalker and pony boy. Many modern shooting estates use vehicles to bring shot deer off the hills, but McPhail is nostalgic about the days when it was ponies that were used for this work,

"Ponies are part of the history of deer stalking. Something of the heritage and culture of the land is lost when we replace them with modern vehicles."

After Eishken, McPhail took up the post of underkeeper at Aline Estate on the boundary between Lewis and Harris, before assuming the post of head gamekeeper at Garynahine Estate, which he held for fourteen years. It was here that he developed an acute awareness of the important role that gamekeepers can play in wildlife conservation. During the 1970s, some Highland estates were less well-managed than they are today and the importance of conservation was not always paramount in their thinking. Poaching was rife, and the illegal netting of salmon in migratory rivers - accompanied by the indiscriminate shooting of deer - took its toll. Fish numbers plummeted, salmon and sea trout catches dropped, deer numbers fell and the quality of the stock was diminished.

All this affected the tourism and local food export businesses that



fuel the Hebridean economy. McPhail was quick to understand that good gamekeeping is about a balance between economics and conservation. By the time he took up the position of head gamekeeper at Morsgail Estate in 2007 his contribution to gamekeeping on the islands had not gone unnoticed. In his book *Morsgail: the History of a Lewis Sporting Estate*, the respected gamekeeping and sporting estates author David S.D. Jones noted that McPhail was “probably the most experienced keeper on the island of Lewis, he had previously spent fourteen years revitalising the nearby Garynahine Estate, and now hopes to restore the Morsgail Estate to a similar high standard.”

Ten years on and McPhail was justifiably proud to show me what he has achieved, and the work that was on-going at Morsgail. On a warm, summer morning we met up with the head biologist and his assistant from the Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust by Morsgail River. Back in Victorian times, a small viaduct supporting a track had bridged one of the streams flowing into the main river. Over the years the disused bridge had collapsed, preventing salmon and sea trout from reaching their higher spawning grounds. With the approval of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency the obstruction had been removed the previous year, and a survey was now needed to ascertain if fish were again negotiating the tributary. This work can only be carried out under licence and necessitates sending an electric current through the water, collecting the stunned fish in containers and recording the size, type, weight and numbers of all fish before returning them to the stream. It was a long, slow job that necessitated surveying small sections of the stream bit by bit. Several hours later, McPhail was delighted to learn that the project had been successful and fish were returning in good numbers. On an estate with some of the best game fishing on the Outer Hebrides, maintaining clear rivers and quality breeding grounds is essential in order to ensure successful runs of migratory fish.

The following day we went into the hills so that I could appreciate the scale and remoteness of this 14,000-acre estate. Although Morsgail has no physical boundaries, there are 800-1,600 head of deer on the

land. We tracked several small herds with McPhail observing the quality of the stock, the maturity of the males and the numbers of young. He is adamant that there is no place for indiscriminate trophy killing as it takes years of quality management and carefully controlled culling to maintain genetically-strong herds. This, in turn, enables the estate to market top-quality wild venison.

Living in such a remote location brings its own problems.

The January storms of 2013 brought winds in excess of 70mph, and the roof of McPhail’s house suffered extensive damage. But it is indicative of his spirit that the thing that upset him most was that an iconic ancient Caledonian pine tree on a small island in Loch Morsgail had blown over. In this wild landscape the fallen tree served to demonstrate the fragility of life. McPhail went out in a boat to assess the damage. Broken and lying horizontal the tree still had a root clinging to the rocky ground. For the last four years McPhail has gone regularly to the island to ensure that the tree is given every opportunity to regenerate itself. It now has four new stub shoots sprouting from the fallen trunk. He knows it will take longer than his lifetime to see a mature tree once again on the island, but being a good gamekeeper and a conservationist is not about short-term gains.

In addition to managing the estate’s wildlife McPhail is also responsible for the welfare of its guests, whether they be holidaymakers or shooters and anglers. With winters spent repairing boats, equipment, fences, walls and property I asked him if he ever missed his hometown of Annan and if he ever gets time to go away for a holiday. He cast a glance over the loch, “Look at this amazing landscape. This is a lifestyle choice, why would I ever need to go anywhere else?”

www.morsgail.co.uk
www.tomlanglandsphotography.com

British Heritage

CHAUFFEUR TOURS

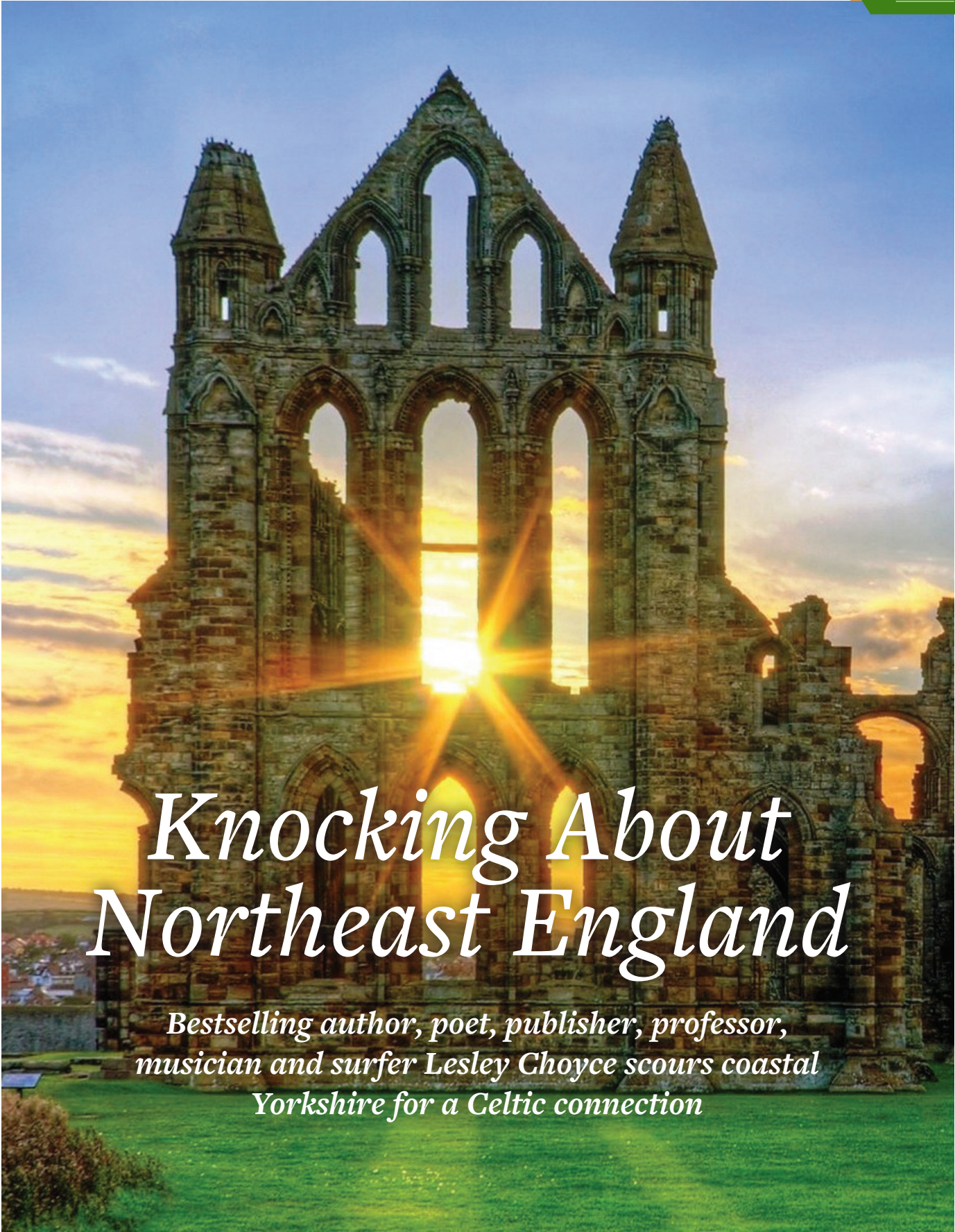
TAILOR-MADE PRIVATE
TOURS FOR THE DISCERNING

www.bhctours.co.uk | info@bhctours.co.uk | +44 (0)1296 620173



We listen to what our clients want
and then exceed their expectations.





Knocking About Northeast England

*Bestselling author, poet, publisher, professor,
musician and surfer Lesley Choyce scours coastal
Yorkshire for a Celtic connection*



I am not sure what prompted Linda and I to travel to Northeast England. I think I had seen photographs of good waves along the beaches of Sandsend, Scarborough and Saltburn-by-the-Sea. I had never thought much about the North Sea as a surfing destination, but images of certain glassy walls of moving water can lure a surfer to unlikely places on this small planet of ours.

And so it was that we found ourselves landing at Newcastle International Airport in Woolsington on a fine clear day with high hopes of some sort of adventure. We had rented a house in the tiny village of Boynton, far to the south, but decided to spend a couple of days exploring to the north for starters.

Here was yet another corner of the ancient Celtic world, one primarily populated by the Brigantes a long, long time ago. Brigantes refers to “high” or “elevated” and it may mean these ancient ones were noble or tall or simply that they lived high up in the hills. The Parisi occupied southerly parts of modern Yorkshire, and the first record of them appears in Ptolemy’s *Geographica*. Based on some cursory research, however, it was obvious that we’d be hard-pressed to find any physical evidence left anywhere from these ancient Celts.

Our route north took us through Gosforth, Wide Open, Dudley, Cramlington and Morpeth. Along the way we almost visited Alnwick Castle, made famous in the Harry Potter films. I say almost because, as we pulled into the parking lot, I spied nearly a dozen tour buses. The sight of hundreds of tourists spilling out of those buses sent a shiver down my spine and, much to Linda’s chagrin, I had us back on the road almost at once with me uttering yet again, “If you’ve seen one castle...” Sleep deprived from the overnight flight from Nova Scotia to Heathrow, I failed to comprehend how much Linda really wanted to visit Alnwick. Gentlemen, I would advise you that if you find yourself in Yorkshire (or anywhere else on this spinning globe) and your wife

wants to visit a certain castle, do pull off the road and oblige.

So, instead of Alnwick, we drove on to Bamburgh, home of another famous castle. The Normans built part of what is still standing, and it was improved or altered by various conquerors over the years. Here was the site of a previous fort known as Din Guarie - built by Celts - and it was probably the capital of this region from 420 to 547 AD. It went through several owners until the ever-nasty Vikings arrived in 993 to destroy it. The current castle remains most impressive and worthy of note, and was used for the setting of at least two MacBeth movies but, alas, no Harry Potter blockbusters.

Below the castle, we walked a long empty beach, noted the lack of any surf, but began to get a sense of the big swaths of coastal landscape which remained thankfully undisturbed by thousands of years of human habitation.

The preservation of grand chunks of forests, coastland, estuaries, moors and mountains is a testament to the British love of all things natural.

After Bamburgh, we retraced our route, retreating south as the Romans once did in the fifth century. We lodged for the night at one of those cozy inns on the highway with a public house down below. In the pub, everything was old and crooked the way we liked it, and I’m sure there was roast beef and Yorkshire pudding involved.

Not far from our lodging was Hadrian’s Wall, built in the first century to keep the “barbarians” to the north out of the Roman Empire. It stretches 117 kilometres from Solway in the west to the appropriately named Wallsend in the east.

In the morning we did a fair bit of driving on the A1. The trouble with driving on motorways is that you really don’t get any sense of the life in the communities you zip past. I’m sure there were exciting dart tournaments in Kibblesworth, and probably a great punk music





scene in Great Lumley, and no doubt a great comedy club renaissance in a place called Shiney Row or Thorpe Thewles. But I will probably never know.

Passing over the River Tees, I grew despondent staring out at the great sprawling industrial areas of Middlesbrough, but things changed greatly by the time we entered the North York Moors - a vast, seemingly untamed wilderness for the most part, still a bit stark this early in the season, but certainly a place to let loose a brooding literary imagination.

As we motored our way through the moors, I noticed on the map that the next large town was Scarborough, and I immediately began to hum that famous Simon and Garfunkel tune that had been resurrected from folklore and revamped as part of the soundtrack to *The Graduate*. Sadly, what I remember most about Scarborough were the dozen or so roundabouts with edgy aggressive drivers having little patience for a Canadian trying valiantly to get his rental car into the proper lane. So, no thank you, Mr. Art Garfunkel, I guess I am not going to Scarborough Fair.

But Boynton was everything we hoped it would be: a quaint cottage off on a tiny paved track of a road, everything in bloom, horses nearby eating grass, an old stone chapel next door, and hiking paths leading off through fields of wild flowers. The next morning we set off walking a back road towards Grindale and found ourselves gazing across a near-endless canola field on a most pleasant morning. A fine spring morning in rural Yorkshire is worth celebrating and many a poet has done just that I am sure.

Soon after that we paid respects to the Rudston Monolith, said to be the tallest prehistoric standing stone in Britain at eight meters in height. Strong, dedicated workers had once lugged the big rock here from Cayton Bay, sixteen kilometres to the east. As I gazed at this an-

cient monument, I envisioned myself as a tribal leader from Yorkshire those many years ago, announcing to my fellow citizens, "C'mon lads, let's find a really big rectangular stone and set it upright in this field so people hundreds of years from now can wonder what it may mean."

Well beyond Rudston on our travels inland through Thwing, Bugthorpe and Skirpenbeck, we arrived at the city of York. We ditched the car, of course, and wandered the narrow, enchanting streets with its old storefronts of wood, brick and stone. It seemed that everyone was walking around eating something - hot dogs, ice cream cones, ham sandwiches or some kind of cake. York must certainly be a city that makes everyone hungry. We dodged endless processions of eaters it seemed on our quest for the cathedral. Once there, we took as many pictures as the other tourists. Inside those stone walls, I felt the sort of piety one is expected to feel in those sanctuaries designed to inspire spiritual moods. I always think I'll be disappointed when I join the mobs of sightseers and enter into famous places of worship. But I'm not.

The smell of old stone, the sun streaming through stained glass, impossibly high ceilings, the arches, the statues of the once-famous and now forgotten dead - they all add up to a true feeling of awe and produce a meditative mind.

I am forever thankful to those dedicated souls who conceived and built and sacrificed to leave us such edifices to remind North Americans that once upon a time, folks cared more about their deity than their dollars (or their quid).



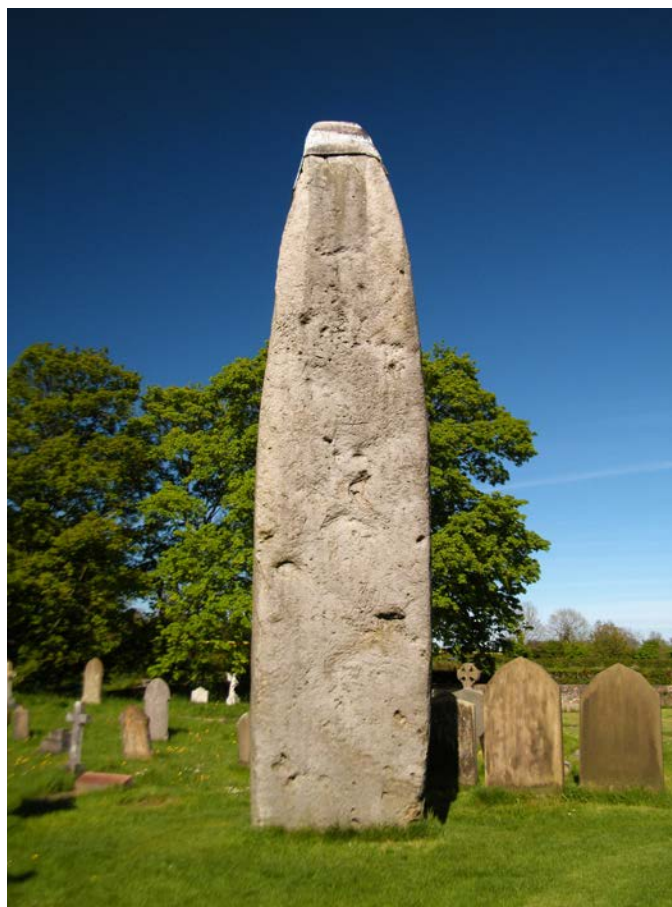


In the days ahead, having fulfilled our desire for urban adventure, it was back to the coast to explore Flamborough Head with its limestone cliffs and steep, stony trails down to exotic pocket beaches. To the north, we found Filey less inspiring, but braved the surly traffic of Scarborough once more to seek out Robin Hood's Bay. Here was a small seaport town tucked between two hills, and a most happy place to tromp around on cobbled streets envisioning the life of fishermen and smugglers from days gone by. I walked by a building with a big sign announcing that here was the Robin Hood's Bay Men's Institute and wondered what on earth that could be. There seems to be scant evidence that Robin Hood ever spent much or any time here, but the village is nonetheless a place with many stories of danger and adventure dating back to 1538, known then as a "fisher hamlet of twenty boats."

The tide was out and we could hike the shoreline for many miles to the south towards a headland known as South Cheek. Again there was not the slightest sign of surf, but walking along on the ocean floor was a most satisfying experience. Along the way we passed an impressive spot called the Boggle Hole, well marked with a National Trust sign. I later read one Trip Advisor reviewer who regarded it as "the best kept secret in England" or something like that. Nonetheless, if you are ever in this corner of the world, I suggest Robin Hood's Bay and the Boggle Hole are both worth a visit.

Whitby was a much larger coastal town and was once apparently scary enough to inspire Bram Stoker to use it as a location for part of Dracula. Captain James Cook had learned to be a sailor here before scouting off to far corners of the world and getting himself killed in Hawaii while trying to kidnap a local king.

I recall having an afternoon pint of ale sitting in a second story pub overlooking the beach at Whitby. The walls were covered in velour and the barkeep played endless tunes by another king, Elvis Presley, prompting me to yet again ponder what a curious and surprising island this England can be.



As the days went by, we continued to scour the coastline, looking for idyllic seaside communities. Scarborough was still a bit too frantic for my liking - and is home to the rudest drivers in the United Kingdom - so I will thumb my nose at it should I come this way again. Filey, however, seemed like a much more pleasant coastal town on our second visit, with a sandy beach that stretched for many worthwhile kilometres. We made the mistake of driving south one day to Hornsea only to discover that it too has a fine beach, but is home to a large caravan park. I understand that folks need to get out of the city and be able to afford some kind of pied-a-terre by the sea, but those multitude of aluminum boxes by the water can't help but detract from the natural beauty. Forgive me. I'll stop whining now.

While retreating to Boynton each night, we had yet dared to drive deeper into the nearby city of Bridlington than necessary. This usually just meant a foray into the Morrison's to buy a pint of Hobgoblin and some freshly caught fish. (If York was good for the soul, then the Bridlington Morrison's was equally good for the sole.) But our time was slipping away so I finally announced that yes, we would chance it and drive to the coast at Bridlington to walk the well-trod promenade by the sea.

The British don't tan well, as you may have noticed, and I am as pale as they, but the nation's health care system really should invest a bit more money in promoting sunscreen. It was a Saturday as we strode the planks in Bridlington, and a lively one at that with vendors and amusement rides and crowds of bustling people. I kept thinking that you could replace Bridlington with Brighton and probably no one would notice. Old seaside British resorts have a feel to them. I can't quite place it, but if you study the faces of vacationers, it's like they are all silently saying to you, "I'm here on a holiday and, despite the noise

and the crowds and the cold sea wind, I'm going to bloody well enjoy myself and to hell with you."

Or something like that.

But, with the proper mindset, the Bridlington boardwalk can be a grand place to stroll and take in the throngs of humanity eating fish and chips from cardboard plates. All that salt air eventually got to us, I guess, for we finally gave in and bought our own fishy plate from a crowded fish and chips shop. On a small floppy plate, we were delivered a battered slab of fish three times the size of the plate itself. Along with the greasiest chips I'd encountered outside South Philadelphia was a generous dollop of mushy peas. The fish and chips were extremely unhealthy I am sure, but delicious nonetheless. Yet, like all foreign travellers to England, we wondered, what could they possibly be thinking by adding the green mush?

After the fish was somewhat digested, and the madding crowds put behind us, we aimed our rental car east and away from Bridlington. It's certainly not the Sodom and Gomorrah of this north coast but we did not look back. Instead, we drove east to the Bempton Cliffs and the world famous birds.

Once you leave the car park at Bempton, you enter another world. It is a realm ruled by vaulting sea mist, magnificent otherworldly vistas, birds and birders. Bempton Cliffs and the fields nearby are home to many exotic and ordinary species of birds. Along the cliffs you can

spot razorbills, puffins, gannets, guillemots, fulmars, kittiwakes, shags and herring gulls. Just a few metres away from the coast in the fields you can watch tree sparrows, linnets, skylarks, meadow pipits, and at least two kinds of buntings. Flying predators such as short-eared owls and peregrines are often about. If that's not enough for you, keep looking and you're likely to see whitethroats, willow warblers, chiffchaffs, reed warblers, sedge warblers, redstarts, goldcrests, stonechats, wheatears and whinchats.

Bempton is a place of raw natural splendor and should not be missed. Looking out over Thornwick Bay, as the mist cleared, I found myself soaring with the seabirds, catching spiraling updrafts of salty air and leaving all the frenzy of modern England behind.

The early settlers here, the Celts among them, would have lowered themselves down on ropes to rob the eggs from the nests of these soaring seabirds. But today, these are protected areas, celebrated by the benign armies of bird watchers who come here from around the world. For our final day of travels in this corner of the Celtic world, the birds lifted our spirits high into the heavens, reminding us that we share this planet with some amazing creatures and need to do all we can to protect them while we support and celebrate all those who dedicate their lives to the preservation of living creatures and natural beauty.




BORU™
A Legacy of Craft



the
Plaid Place

1903 BARRINGTON ST, HALIFAX, NS B3J 3L7, CANADA
TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-800-563-1749



CUSTOM HERALDIC CLAN JEWELRY



 **Heraldry**
Personalised Heritage By Boru



I was born on the West Coast of Scotland and brought up by the sea. I woke up every morning looking out to Arran. I love the colours of the Scottish land and seascapes. It was my love of colour and texture that led me to a career in design.

From an early age I was designing and making dolls' clothes. This led to making my own clothes by the age of 13. I took part in the Art School fashion shows, and after graduating from the Glasgow School of Art, I began designing for Marks and Spencer. Eventually, I started designing my own lines.

I am just as passionate about my career as when I first began. I still get excited seeing new fabrics, and the ideas start incubating when I look through beautiful fabric collections.

My designs have always been elegant and simple, classic but usually with a quirky twist. I like to flatter women and I like to design wearable clothes. I am practical and I don't see any point in designing an outfit that looks amazing and can be admired but no one knows where they would wear it.

My designs are all individually made to measure and are made in Scotland. They are unique and our customers come from all over the world. I have always had a commercial edge - what I design has to have a market.

What makes my work unique is the way I put fabrics and colour and detail together - it is more about what I leave out than what I put in. I hate clutter and fussiness and firmly believe that less is more. This may come from being petite myself, and therefore not being able to wear anything that overwhelms me. I believe it should be the person that you notice and not the dress. What's the saying? The girl should be wearing the dress, not the dress wearing the girl.

www.joyceyoungcollections.co.uk

Joyce Young







19th Anniversary Concert

The PIPES of CHRISTMAS

Saturday, December 16th • 2 PM

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church
921 Madison Ave. at 73rd St. NYC

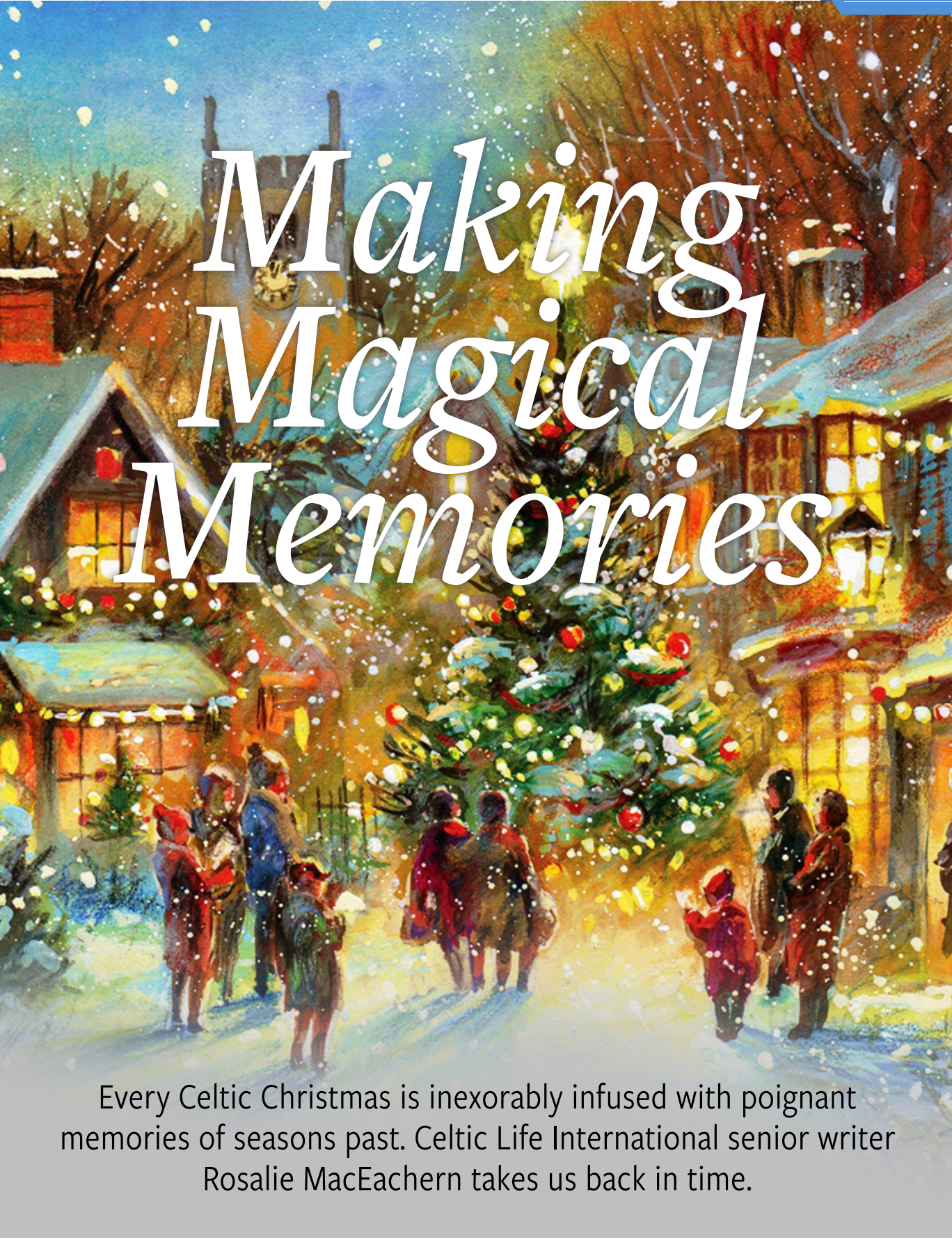
Sunday, December 17th • 2 & 7 PM

Central Presbyterian Church
70 Maple St. Summit, NJ



FOR TICKETS
212.868.4444
SmartTix.com

CelticLife
INTERNATIONAL



Making Magical Memories

Every Celtic Christmas is inexorably infused with poignant memories of seasons past. Celtic Life International senior writer Rosalie MacEachern takes us back in time.



Barra MacNeils

Whether our stories speak of snow-swept landscapes, backdrops of berry-studded holly bushes, or darkened, shuttered streets, we cherish them because they are our own burnished composite of past and present.

The Barra MacNeils, who take their name from their clan's ancestral home on Scotland's west coast, sing their way across Canada from mid-November to mid-December each year. Lucy MacNeil and her brothers combine their caroling and instrumentals with fond memories of Christmas on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia.

"Santa always came to our home in Syndey Mines," she recalls "But later in the day we were all bundled into the station wagon and off we went to our grandmother's house in Washabuck, which was an hour's noisy drive away. The snow always seemed to be falling on that drive."

More often than not, the car could not make it up the snow-covered country driveway.

"A toboggan would be brought down, and it would take a couple of trips to carry the children, presents, food and overnight bags, including cloth diapers in those days."

As the family climbed the hill to the farmhouse, they would hear music in the distance. Opening the porch door, MacNeil and her siblings were hit with all the sights, sounds, and smells of Christmas.

"I can remember as a little girl, reaching

up and lifting the latch to the kitchen door, to a room filled with joy and music and singing and dancing. My grandmother, Mary Ann MacKenzie, would be sitting by the wood fire, welcoming everyone. There would be aunts and uncles and cousins and the music and dancing would go on and on."

"Family members took their turn at the piano or on the fiddle or singing a Gaelic song while excited children raced around."

"If we got too rambunctious, or in the way of the dancers, we were all sent out to play on the hill - which was no punishment at all."

As is tradition, the Barras' Christmas tour begins on Canada's west coast, each show bringing them closer to Cape Breton.

"Every year people tell us that we have brought them some Christmas spirit, and we truly take joy in that. As the tour goes on we become almost like children at Christmas ourselves, only now the excitement is to get home so we can spend Christmas with our own families."

These days the Barras gather at their parents' on Christmas Day, but make the trip to Washabuck on Old Christmas to celebrate with their uncle, renowned fiddler Hector MacKenzie, whose compositions are part of their repertoire.



Ken McElroy

In the Northern Ireland of Ken McElroy's youth, the Christmas rhymers - costumed and faces blackened with soot - turned up at farmhouse doors in the days leading up to Christmas. Their revels included a captivating battle with wooden swords.

"They would make their boisterous appearance at a farmhouse door with a loud knock. Each character was dressed in traditional costume. St. George may have had a crown and a red cross on his tunic. St. Patrick sometimes wore a mitre with a green robe. Oliver Cromwell always had a long nose made from a paper crown."

As they filed into farmhouses, each character would begin their skit with the rhyme: "Room, room, gallant boys, pray give us room to rhyme, we come here in jest and fun, upon this Christmas time."

The rhymers, each of whom added a verse to the skit, provided welcome entertainment on the long December nights. McElroy points



Christmas Rhymers

out, however, that they also collected small amounts of money to provide Christmas groceries, or a bottle of sherry or bag of coal, for the poor and elderly in the area.

"Sadly, the Christmas rhymers have long since disappeared, and only people now in their sixties, seventies or eighties would have had the pleasure of seeing their rustic dramas. Thankfully, one or two groups of enthusiastic actors - particularly in County Armagh and County Fermanagh - keep the tradition alive, although they no longer travel around the country roads and farmhouses of Ulster."

Journalist Eimear O'Callaghan - who recently published her first full-length book *Belfast Days: A 1972 Teenage Diary* - recalls two particularly grim Christmases growing up in West Belfast during The Troubles.

"This Christmas Day was celebrated by the internees with a hunger strike, by people in Andersontown keeping a 24-hour fast outside the church, by 4,000 people who gave up their homes on Christmas Day to defy the British Army and walk 10 miles to Long Kesh internment camp, and by the 14,000 British soldiers separated from their families to keep our riot-torn city at peace," the then 16-year-old wrote on Christmas Day, 1971.

O'Callaghan points out that, despite the difficulties, her parents - and thousands like them - did their best to adhere to Irish Christmas traditions.

"We had gifts from Santa Claus, lovingly arrayed beneath a twinkling tree...a roast

turkey dinner with all the trimmings...and Midnight Mass, followed by sandwiches of freshly roasted ham. At church we prayed for those who had lost their lives in the shootings and bombings of the year gone by."

The following Christmas, she voiced her dread of the coming New Year - 1973 - writing that she hoped she, and all her family, would still be alive to see the following holiday season.

"For 30 years the Christmas message of 'goodwill to all men' flew in the face of what was happening on our streets. We lived with the threat of violence all year round, but it was during the season of 'peace on earth' that the horror of what we were enduring was most keenly felt."



Eimear O'Callaghan

Christmas became a time for taking stock - "for reflecting on the ever-mounting tally of deaths and continued political failure," she notes, adding that for many families the season was a painful reminder of who was missing from the dinner table, either through death, injury or imprisonment.

"Thankfully, Northern Ireland is now at peace, but the painful legacy of the conflict endures. In the midst of celebrations and seasonal cheer, relatives and friends of the thousands killed will feel their loss more keenly than at any other time of year. The lucky ones among us reflect on, and give thanks for, our good fortune at being spared."

Californians Gerry Herter and his wife, Loretta, flew to Ireland a dozen years ago for an Irish Tenors' holiday tour. On Christmas Eve, in Kenmare, they walked to the nearby Protestant Church. A few minutes into the 11 p.m. service, they were startled to see a man in clerical garb walk down the centre aisle and up into the pulpit.

"He turned to the congregation and said, 'I'm Father Murphy from Holy Cross Catholic church. This is the first time I have been in this pulpit. I bring you greetings from your brothers and sisters at Holy Cross. And if you'll allow me, I would like to offer a blessing and prayer for you.'"

Herter recalls the priest delivering a touching message of peace, hope and love, before embracing the minister and walking out of the Church.



"When he continued the service, the minister said, "After we are done I am going to walk over to Holy Cross (for midnight mass) and bring our greetings to them."

Herter was humbled to witness the Christmas Eve exchange between priest and minister, seeing in it the hard work of all those who contributed to and embraced the peace process.

American travel professional Stephanie Abrams has found the Irish hospitality blends perfectly with her idea of Christmas, and has spent the past eight Christmases in Eire.

"Home Alone Syndrome afflicts only children like myself when the holidays appear," she shares, adding that she had a very hard time finding a place to stay for her first Irish Christmas.

"I tried to reserve a space online for Dec. 24 to 27, but there was never a room at the inn because they were all closed."

Patsy O' Kane, owner of Beech Hill Country House in Derry, happily solved Abrams' problem.

"She explained to me nothing is open at Christmas. I thought we might end up sleeping in our car rental, but Patsy said, 'No, no. You'll come here and have the place to yourselves. We'll give you the keys.'"

Carl Gough, a storyteller who lives in a rural area outside Swansea, Wales, has researched the Christmas traditions of his adopted home.

"The Mari Lwyd is currently experiencing somewhat of a comeback in Wales. Similar to the hobby horse, a decorated skull of a horse is paraded through the streets accompanied by bawdy revelers out to

create mischief, sing songs, recount rhymes and welcome fortune during the dying of the year. Her appearance, in truth, occurs from the Wassail, through to New Year's but, in my experience, she has begun to be used in many fundraising efforts around Christmas time, especially travelling from pub to pub."

He incorporates the Welsh tradition of Calennig into his own Christmas stories.

"Calennig is associated with the making of a Calennig apple, an apple with three sticks stuck in the base like a tripod with some sprigs of evergreen sprouting out of the top.

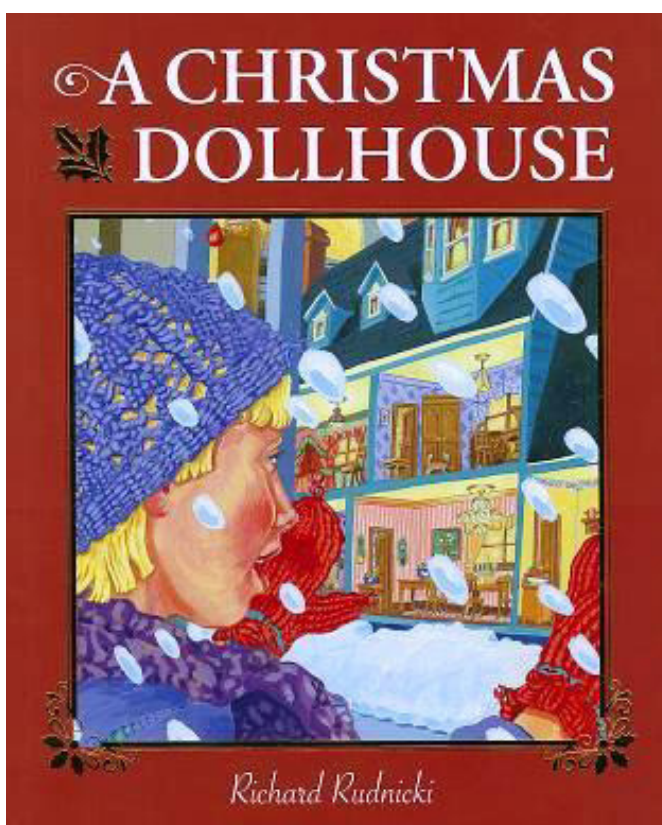
"Some are decorated with ribbons and others with cloves, but all Calennig apples must have the three sticks and the evergreen. They were given out for good luck, shared with friends and neighbours and placed in windows to ensure the turning year brought good things into the household."

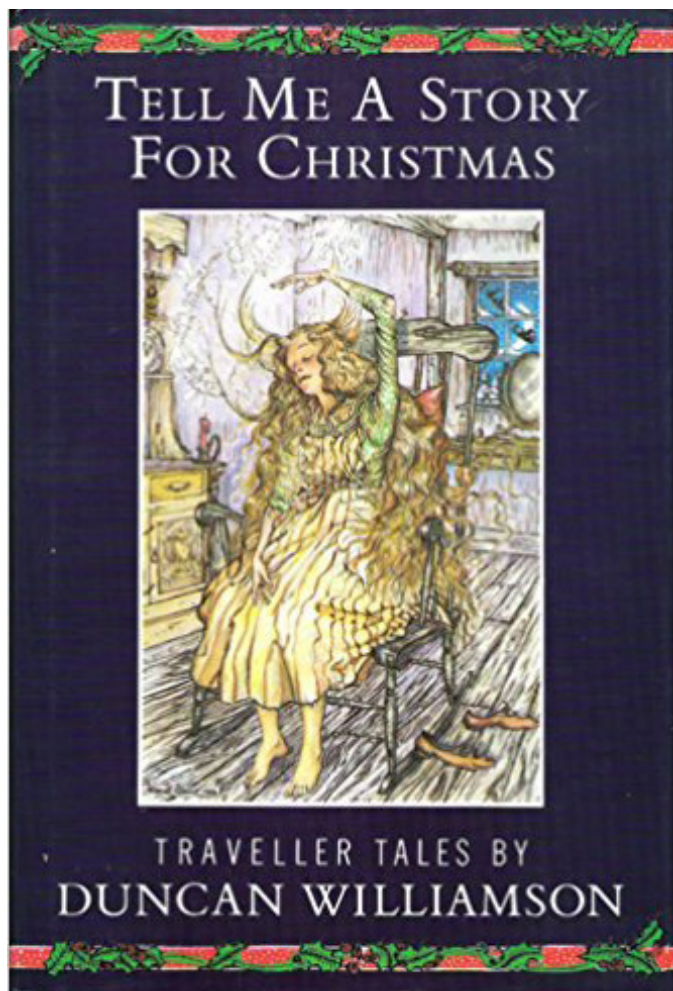
Nova Scotia artist Richard Rudnicki, author and illustrator of *A Christmas Dollhouse*, found the Christmas spirit in a newspaper article about an elderly man who built doll houses for sick children. He then met the man in question - Don MacKenzie - who told him of growing up in a small town during the Depression era, and of his family bearing the added burden of illness.

"Just before Christmas, his little sister saw a beautiful dollhouse in the window of a local store. Tickets were being sold on it and the townspeople saw how much the house meant to this little girl who had so little. One after another, they put her name in the draw to ensure she won it for Christmas."

Rudnicki recounts how MacKenzie shared his hopes that with each new dollhouse he built, he would again see the very same look that he had seen on his little sister's face that Christmas morning.

"There are things that touch us so profoundly as children, especially at Christmas, perhaps, that we carry them with us throughout our lives."





Chloe Woolley, music director at Culture Vanin, grew up on a small stone-built croft above Ballaglass Glen on the Isle of Man. There, Christmas season, running from 'Black Thomas Day' - Dec. 2 - to Jan. 6, was once known as The Foolish Fortnight. Unlike most residents, her parents fetched water from a well, heated it on a stove for bathing, and lit the house with paraffin lamps into the 1980s.

"One Christmas morning, when I was little, my sister and I received the best Christmas present we could've imagined. Our parents led us out across the frosty field and into the dark stable and to our complete surprise, there was the softest, most beautiful young donkey. We always thought of her as our Christmas donkey."

Hunt the Wren was also a regular part of her family's Christmas tradition.

"In the Isle of Man we go round the streets in the morning of St. Stephen's Day and anyone can join in the circular dance around the wren pole, accompanied by singing and dancing."

She remembers staying at her grandparents in the capital city of Douglas on Christmas night, and the next morning joining the Wren Boys in the street.

"At noon the custom had to stop, as it is very bad luck after that. We'd go to the Woodburn Pub for a mince pie and drink, with whiskey for the adults, before we returned to our grandparents for leftover Christmas dinner - fried mashed potato, carrot and parsnip. Delicious!"

Kearsley Waggoner was born on the Isle of Man but raised in the United States, where her mother maintained Christmas customs from her youth.

"In New Jersey we always had a Christmas pudding. Only my Manx mother enjoyed it, but we had it every year. Newcomers and guests were obliged to join her with the Christmas pud. We may not have been fans of her Christmas pudding, but her boozy trifle was always a big hit."

Waggoner still has relatives on the Isle of Man and they are always in contact at Christmas.

"All the Christmas cards are usually mailed in one envelope to save on postage. The cousins send me Christmas cards printed with the sentiments in the Manx language because they thought it funny that I was learning Manx and they, who live there, have not."

Alex Patience, a storyteller in Portskerra on the north coast of Scotland, remembers that Santa always paid a "promise visit" on Christmas Eve.

"Mid-evening there would be a loud rat-a-tat knock and I would run and open the front door and on the step there would be an old fisherman's bag, tied around with rope, and no one to be seen. Inside the bag would be a gift for every single person in the house."

The excitement of Christmas Eve, however, did not carry over into the next day.

"Christmas Day in my house was nothing at all," she recalls.

Her father, a herring fisherman, was often at sea at Christmas and she remembers her mother choosing the day for the annual washing of woolen blankets. She quickly escaped to the neighbours' house, where they did celebrate on December 25.

"As a Scottish fisher family we never celebrated Christmas Day, but Santa did come to us 'fisher bairns' on Hogmanay. We'd wake up on January 1 to find our dad's extra long fisherman's stockings filled with small gifts, and a satsuma in the toe. Other gifts were set out around the living room."

In a carry-over from the Scottish Reformation, Christmas Day was not an official holiday in Scotland until 1960.

The very heart of Christmas tradition is captured in a tale told by the late Scottish seanchaidh, Duncan Williamson, later published in a collection titled Tell Me a Story for Christmas. In the account, Williamson recalled his own father sitting by the campfire on Christmas morning outside the tent they lived in along the north shore of Loch Tyne, with the family's 17 children gathered round.

"Father would say, 'Look children, it's Christmas morning. Sorry I cannae give you nothing for your Christmas.' And he took one orange, one single orange, and he took his pocket knife and he cut that orange in strips and he gave us each a wee bit out of it."

"Christmas morning in the tent in the woods, with one orange, while all of the children in the nearby village were enjoying their Christmas presents."

But Williamson's father - a member of the Scottish traveler community, without a bit of tobacco for his pipe or a penny to his name - wasn't done.

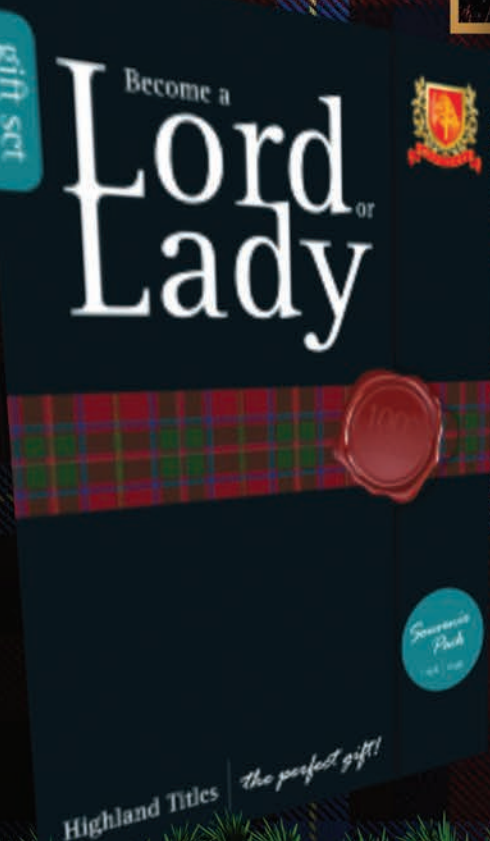
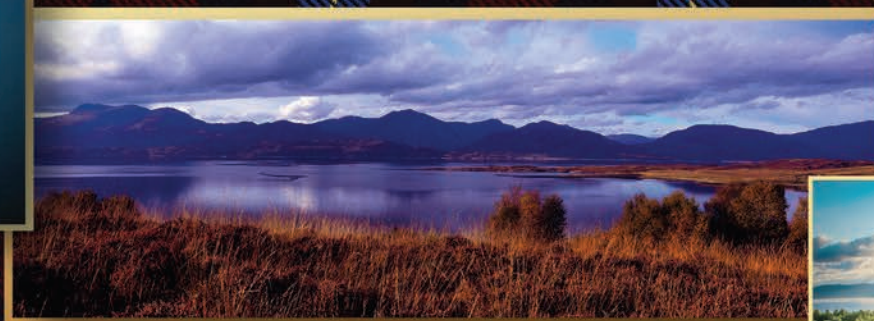
"I'm going to give you the greatest present of all for your Christmas; I am going to tell you a story."

When he was finished the yarn, he added, "You know, some day when I am gone and you are grown up and have your own family you will remember that story. I hope you do. But you wouldna' remember a present if I could give it to you."

"Could anyone ever have given you a better gift in all your life?"

SCOTTISH LANDS

Buy a wee piece o' Scotland



Become a
LORD OR LADY
from \$49.99

The perfect Christmas gift

www.scottishlands.com



Celtic Christmas Customs



According to the longstanding theory, the origins of Christmas stem from pagan winter festivals. One main reason early Christians were able to spread their religion across Europe so quickly came from their willingness to embrace celebrations prevalent among regional populations.

One such example is the Celtic “Alban Arthuan,” a Druidic festival that took place around December 21st, the Winter Solstice. This traditional fire festival celebrated the rebirth of the Sun.

Although a celebration of the Son’s birth replaced that of the Sun’s, still a number of Christmas-tide traditions – including those the ancient Celts practiced – remain today.

As we look at the Celtic nations, it is interesting to note some similarities among Christmas traditions that cross geographic boundaries. They include, for example: Holly (a symbol of rebirth among Pagan Celts, but also of hospitality—it was believed fairies sought shelter inside the evergreen leaves to escape the cold); Mistletoe (believed to have

healing powers so strong that it warded off evil spirits, cured illnesses and even facilitated a truce between enemies); fire and light (most notably the Yule log or candles placed in windows to light the way for strangers and symbolically welcoming Mary and Joseph); and door-to-door processions, from wassailing to Wren Hunts.

Each of the seven nations possesses its own variations of Celtic Christmas customs. Surrounding cultures and local identity shape these practices as well.



SCOTLAND

Christmas was not officially recognized in Scotland for over three centuries. The Puritan English Parliament banned Christmas in 1647 and it did not become a recognized public holiday in Scotland until 1958.

However, according to Andrew Halliday, in his 1833 piece *Christmas in Scotland*, Scots were not discouraged from celebrating Christmas. Halliday wrote, "We remember it stated in a popular periodical, one Christmas season not long ago, that Christmas-day was not kept at all in Scotland. Such is not the case; the Scots do keep Christmas-day, and in the same kindly Christian spirit that we do, though the Presbyterian austerity of their church does not acknowledge it as a religious festival."

Halliday's 19th century account went on to describe festive sowens (sweetened oat gruel) ceremonies, "beggars" (actually "strapping fellows") singing yule song, dances and card parties and children's teetotum games.

Despite Puritan rule, some long-time Christmas traditions are preserved. These include burning the Cailleach (a piece of wood carved to look like an old woman's face or the Spirit of Winter) to start the new year fresh; or on Christmas Eve, burning rowan tree branches to signify the resolution of any disputes. The Celtic tradition of placing

candles in windows was also done in Scotland to welcome "first footers" (strangers, bearing a small gift) into the home.

Traditional dishes also continue to be featured at Christmas lunch and throughout the holidays, including Cock-a-Leekie soup, smoked salmon, beef or duck, Cloutie dumplings, black buns, sun cakes, Christmas pudding and Cranachan.

Because Christmas was not an official holiday until the late '50s it is no surprise that today, for some Scots, Hogmanay (New Year's Eve) is the most important event of the season. Arguably, locals ring in the new year with much more gusto than any other place on the planet.

IRELAND

A fall-time clean up was a common practice in Irish homes to prepare for Christmas. Women looked after cleaning the interior, while men took care of the outdoors, including whitewashing all exterior surfaces. Then holly, grown wild in Ireland, was spread throughout the house with cheer. Contemporary Ireland also highlights this clean-up ritual; once complete, fresh Christmas linens are taken out of storage.

Other customs include the Bloc na Nollaig or Christmas Block (the Irish version of the Yule log), candles in the window (perhaps one for each family member), and leading up to Christmas, "Calling the Waites," where musicians would wake up townspeople through serenades and shouting out the morning hour.

Christmas Eve Mass is still a grand affair, a time for friends and family to reconnect. It is not uncommon for churchgoers to end up at the local pub after service to ring in Christmas morn.



On Christmas Day, traditional dishes include roast goose or ham and sausages, potatoes (such as champ), vegetables (such as cabbage with bacon) and plum pudding, whiskey, Christmas cake and barmbrack (currant loaf) for sweets.

Traditionally on December 26th, St. Stephen's Day, Wren Boys with blackened faces, carrying a pole with a dead bird pierced at the top, tramped from house to house. Today the custom sometimes sees children caroling throughout the neighbourhood to raise money for charity. It is also quite common to go out visiting on this day.

One modern-day Irish tradition to note is gathering around the television to watch *The Late Late Toy Show* in late November/early December, said to be the most watched program in Ireland.

WALES

Dylan Thomas' story *A Child's Christmas in Wales* is renowned around the world. An excerpt offers a glimpse of a traditional Welsh festive season:



"Always on Christmas night there was music. An uncle played the fiddle, a cousin sang 'Cherry Ripe,' and another uncle sang 'Drake's Drum.'... Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-coloured snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steady falling night."

Music was and still is a major part of Welsh holidays. Plygain is a Christmas day church service, traditionally held between three and six a.m., featuring males singing a capella in three or four-part harmonies. While today this may be mainly practiced in rural areas, Eisteddfod (caroling) is abundantly popular in homes, door-to-door and as part of annual song-writing competitions.

Other intriguing Welsh traditions include toffee making; drinking from a communal wassail bowl of fruit, spices, sugar and beer; children visiting homes on New Year's Day looking for their Callenig gift; and Mari Lwyd (Grey Mare) featuring wassail singers going door-to-door carrying a horse's skull and challenging residents in a contest of mocking rhymes.

ISLE OF MAN

Traditionally, Manx caroling had an unconventional twist; On Christmas Eve, large numbers attended church for Carval. While the congregation sang, all of a sudden women would begin the traditional food fight, having peas on hand to throw at their male counterparts!

Accounts from the 1700s and 1800s describe 12 days of non-stop Christmas celebrations where every barn was filled with dancers accompanied by fiddlers hired by the parish. "On the twelfth day the fiddler lays his head on one of the women's laps, which posture they look upon as a kind of oracle," recorded Reverend John Entick (as published in 1774). "For one of the company coming up and naming every maiden in the company, asks the fiddler, who shall this or that girl marry? And whatever he answers it is absolutely depended on as an oracle."

As in Celtic fashion, Hunting the Wren processions occurred on the Isle of Man and today the practice is going through a revival, characterized by costumes, singing and dancing.

Other Manx customs include Mollag Bands, wearing eccentric clothing, swinging a mollag (fishing float) and demanding money (a practice since outlawed); the kissing bush (a more elaborate ornament than a sprig of mistletoe); and Cammag, a sport that originated on the Isle of Man traditionally played on December 26th and/or Easter Monday.

Finally, in older times but even as recently as the early 20th century, Christmas decorations were not taken down until Pancake Tuesday (when they were burnt under the pancake pan). Now holiday décor tends to be packed away on Old Christmas (January 6th).



CORNWALL

As a result of Oliver Cromwell banning Christmas, authentic holiday carols began to fade through much of Britain. However, throughout the 1800s, Cornish composers and collectors sparked a revival of local Christmas songs.

“Contrary to the effect Methodism might have had on the English carollers, in Cornwall its impact was to stimulate song,” states the Cornwall Council (Cornish Christmas Carols – Or Curls, 2011). “In those areas where Methodism was strongest, music and signing had their greatest appeal, and notably so at Christmas. The singers would practice in chapels and school-rooms, some of them walking miles to be there.”

Certain carols well-known around the world, such as Hark the Herald Angels Sing, and While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks, are credited to Cornish origins.

Today, Cornwall erupts in festivals, fairs and markets during the holidays. The Montol Festival in Penzance (named for Montol Eve on December 21st) is a six-day celebration highlighting many Cornish traditions. These include Mummers plays, lantern processions, and Guise dancing (participants dress in masks and costume, such as mock formal dress, to play music and dance).

Montol is also the time for burning the Mock (Yule Log). A stickman or woman is drawn on the block of wood with chalk. When the log burns, it symbolizes the death of the old year and birth of the year to come.

BRITTANY

Brittany boasts a wealth of folklore and supernatural beliefs around Christmas time. Christmas Eve was known as a night of miraculous apparitions from fairies to Korrigans, and at midnight, for just a brief moment, waters in the wells would turn into the most sweet-tasting wine. It was also at midnight, when families were either at mass or in bed, that ghosts would surface; traditionally food was left out for deceased loved ones just in case they visited.



During the holidays, Christmas markets come alive in many Breton towns, vending hand-made crafts and toys, baked cakes and bread and ingredients for Christmas dinner. You can also buy Galette des Rois at stalls, as well as bakeries, which is traditionally eaten on January 6th (Epiphany). A tiny figurine (the fève) is hidden inside the puff pastry cake; the person who finds the figurine in their piece gets to be king or queen for the day and wear a crown. Another special tradition through all of France is a meal after Christmas Eve's midnight mass, called Réveillon. Specifically in Brittany, the traditional dish for this occasion is buckwheat crêpes with cream.

GALICIA

Galicia has its own unique Christmas gift-bearer that predates Christianity. He is called Apalpador, a giant who lives in the mountains. For Christmas, he descends into the villages below to make sure each child has a full belly. He brings treats, such as chestnuts, and well wishes for a year full of delicious sustenance. While Apalpador may not be widely observed in Galicia, his legend is seeing a revival.

Food is very important during the Galician holidays, featuring at least two feasts (on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day). Not surprisingly, seafood is on the menu, including lobster, prawns, shrimp, sea bass, and cod with garlic and paprika sauce. Other culinary delights consist of cured meat, cheese and bread, roast beef with vegetables and for dessert tarta de Santiago (almond cake), filloas (stuffed pancakes) and turrones (nougats).

Throughout all of Spain, including Galicia, children anticipate the coming of the Three Kings or Magis who fill their shoes, left out on Epiphany Eve (January 5th) with gifts. Many Galician municipalities also host a parade featuring the Kings on January 5th.



A Child's Christmas in Wales

A contemporary Christmas classic, Dylan Thomas' poetic portrait of wide-eyed wonder is a must read by the fireplace this Holiday Season

One Christmas was so much like another, in those years around the sea-town corner now and out of all sound except the distant speaking of the voices I sometimes hear a moment before sleep, that I can never remember whether it snowed for six days and six nights when I was twelve or whether it snowed for twelve days and twelve nights when I was six.

All the Christmases roll down toward the two-tongued sea, like a cold and headlong moon bundling down the sky that was our street; and they stop at the rim of the ice-edged fish-freezing waves, and I plunge my hands in the snow and bring out whatever I can find. In goes my hand into that wool-white bell-tongued ball of holidays resting at the rim of the carol-singing sea, and out come Mrs. Prothero and the firemen.

It was on the afternoon of the Christmas Eve, and I was in Mrs. Prothero's garden, waiting for cats, with her son Jim. It was snowing. It was always snowing at Christmas. December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, though there were no reindeers. But there were cats. Patient, cold and callous, our hands wrapped in socks, we waited to snowball the cats. Sleek and long as jaguars and horrible-whiskered, spitting and snarling, they would slink and sidle over the white back-garden walls, and the lynx-eyed hunters, Jim and I, fur-capped and moccasined trappers from Hudson Bay, off Mumbles Road, would hurl our deadly snowballs at the green of their eyes. The wise cats never appeared.

We were so still, Eskimo-footed arctic marksmen in the muffling silence of the eternal snows - eternal, ever since Wednesday - that we never heard Mrs. Prothero's first cry from her igloo at the bottom of the garden. Or, if we heard it at all, it was, to us, like the far-off challenge of our enemy and prey, the neighbor's polar cat. But soon the voice grew louder.

"Fire!" cried Mrs. Prothero, and she beat the dinner-gong.

And we ran down the garden, with the snowballs in our arms, toward the house; and smoke, indeed, was pouring out of the dining-room, and the gong was bombilating, and Mrs. Prothero was announcing ruin like a town crier in Pompeii. This was better than all the cats in Wales standing on the wall in a row. We bounded into the house, laden with snowballs, and stopped at the open door of the smoke-filled room.

Something was burning all right; perhaps it was Mr. Prothero, who always slept there after midday dinner with a newspaper over his face. But he was standing in the middle of the room, saying, "A fine Christmas!" and smacking at the smoke with a slipper.

"Call the fire brigade," cried Mrs. Prothero as she beat the gong.

"They won't be there," said Mr. Prothero, "it's Christmas."

There was no fire to be seen, only clouds of smoke and Mr. Prothero standing in the middle of them, waving his slipper as though he were conducting.

"Do something," he said. And we threw all our snowballs into the smoke - I think we missed Mr. Prothero - and ran out of the house to the telephone box.

"Let's call the police as well," Jim said. "And the ambulance." "And Ernie Jenkins, he likes fires."

But we only called the fire brigade, and soon the fire engine came and three tall men in helmets brought a hose into the house and Mr.



Prothero got out just in time before they turned it on. Nobody could have had a noisier Christmas Eve. And when the firemen turned off the hose and were standing in the wet, smoky room, Jim's Aunt, Miss. Prothero, came downstairs and peered in at them. Jim and I waited, very quietly, to hear what she would say to them. She said the right thing, always. She looked at the three tall firemen in their shining helmets, standing among the smoke and cinders and dissolving snowballs, and she said, "Would you like anything to read?"

Years and years ago, when I was a boy, when there were wolves in Wales, and birds the color of red-flannel petticoats whisked past the harp-shaped hills, when we sang and wallowed all night and day in caves that smelt like Sunday afternoons in damp front farmhouse parlors, and we chased, with the jawbones of deacons, the English and the bears, before the motor car, before the wheel, before the duchess-faced horse, when we rode the daft and happy hills bareback, it snowed and it snowed. But here a small boy says: "It snowed last year, too. I made a snowman and my brother knocked it down and I knocked my brother down and then we had tea."

"But that was not the same snow," I say. "Our snow was not only shaken from white wash buckets down the sky, it came shawling out of the ground and swam and drifted out of the arms and hands and bodies of the trees; snow grew overnight on the roofs of the houses like a pure and grandfather moss, minutely -ivied the walls and settled on the postman, opening the gate, like a dumb, numb thunder-storm of white, torn Christmas cards."

"Were there postmen then, too?"

"With sprinkling eyes and wind-cherried noses, on spread, frozen feet they crunched up to the doors and mittened on them manfully. But all that the children could hear was a ringing of bells."

"You mean that the postman went rat-a-tat-tat and the doors rang?"

"I mean that the bells the children could hear were inside them."

"I only hear thunder sometimes, never bells."

"There were church bells, too."

"Inside them?"

"No, no, no, in the bat-black, snow-white belfries, tugged by bishops and storks. And they rang their tidings over the bandaged town, over the frozen foam of the powder and ice-cream hills, over the crackling

sea. It seemed that all the churches boomed for joy under my window; and the weathercocks crew for Christmas, on our fence.”

“Get back to the postmen.”

“They were just ordinary postmen, fond of walking and dogs and Christmas and the snow. They knocked on the doors with blue knuckles”

“Ours has got a black knocker....”

“And then they stood on the white Welcome mat in the little, drifted porches and huffed and puffed, making ghosts with their breath, and jogged from foot to foot like small boys wanting to go out.”

“And then the presents?”

“And then the Presents, after the Christmas box. And the cold postman, with a rose on his button-nose, tingled down the tea-tray-slithered run of the chilly glinting hill. He went in his ice-bound boots like a man on fishmonger’s slabs. He wagged his bag like a frozen camel’s hump, dizzily turned the corner on one foot, and, by God, he was gone.”

“Get back to the Presents.”

“There were the Useful Presents: engulfing mufflers of the old coach days, and mittens made for giant sloths; zebra scarfs of a substance like silky gum that could be tug-o-warred down to the galoshes; blinding

tam-o’-shanters like patchwork tea cozies and bunny-suited busbies and balaclavas for victims of head-shrinking tribes; from aunts who always wore wool next to the skin there were mustached and rasping vests that made you wonder why the aunts had any skin left at all; and once I had a little crocheted nose bag from an aunt now, alas, no longer whinnying with us. And pictureless books in which small boys, though warned with quotations not to, would skate on Farmer Giles’ pond and did and drowned; and books that told me everything about the wasp, except why.”

“Go on the Useless Presents.”

“Bags of moist and many-colored jelly babies and a folded flag and a false nose and a tram-conductor’s cap and a machine that punched tickets and rang a bell; never a catapult; once, by mistake that no one could explain, a little hatchet; and a celluloid duck that made, when you pressed it, a most unducklike sound, a mewling moo that an ambitious cat might make who wished to be a cow; and a painting book in which I could make the grass, the trees, the sea and the animals any colour I pleased, and still the dazzling sky-blue sheep are grazing in the red field under the rainbow-billed and pea-green birds. Hardboileds, toffee, fudge and allsorts, crunches, cracknels, humbugs, glaciers, marzipan, and butterwelsh for the Welsh. And troops of bright tin soldiers who, if they could not fight, could always run. And Snakes-and-Families and Happy Ladders. And Easy Hobbi-Games for Little Engineers, complete with instructions. Oh, easy for Leonardo! And a whistle to make the dogs bark to wake up the old man next door to make him beat on the wall with his stick to shake our picture off the wall. And a packet of



cigarettes: you put one in your mouth and you stood at the corner of the street and you waited for hours, in vain, for an old lady to scold you for smoking a cigarette, and then with a smirk you ate it. And then it was breakfast under the balloons.”

“Were there Uncles like in our house?”

“There are always Uncles at Christmas. The same Uncles. And on Christmas morning, with dog-disturbing whistle and sugar fags, I would scour the swatched town for the news of the little world, and find always a dead bird by the Post Office or by the white deserted swings; perhaps a robin, all but one of his fires out. Men and women wading or scooping back from chapel, with taproom noses and wind-bussed cheeks, all albinos, huddles their stiff black jarring feathers against the irreligious snow. Mistletoe hung from the gas brackets in all the front parlors; there was sherry and walnuts and bottled beer and crackers by the dessertspoons; and cats in their fur-about watched the fires; and the high-heaped fire spat, all ready for the chestnuts and the mulling pokers. Some few large men sat in the front parlors, without their collars, Uncles almost certainly, trying their new cigars, holding them out judiciously at arms’ length, returning them to their mouths, coughing, then holding them out again as though waiting for the explosion; and some few small aunts, not wanted in the kitchen, nor anywhere else for that matter, sat on the very edge of their chairs, poised and brittle, afraid to break, like faded cups and saucers.”

Not many those mornings trod the piling streets: an old man always, fawn-bowled, yellow-gloved and, at this time of year, with spats of snow, would take his constitutional to the white bowling green and back, as he would take it wet or fire on Christmas Day or Doomsday; sometimes two hale young men, with big pipes blazing, no overcoats and wind blown scarfs, would trudge, unspeaking, down to the forlorn sea, to work up an appetite, to blow away the fumes, who knows, to walk into the waves until nothing of them was left but the two furling smoke clouds of their inextinguishable briars. Then I would be slap-dashing home, the gravy smell of the dinners of others, the bird smell, the brandy, the pudding and mince, coiling up to my nostrils, when out of a snow-clogged side lane would come a boy the spit of myself, with a pink-tipped cigarette and the violet past of a black eye, cocky as a bullfinch, leering all to himself.

I hated him on sight and sound, and would be about to put my dog whistle to my lips and blow him off the face of Christmas when suddenly he, with a violet wink, put his whistle to his lips and blew so stridently, so high, so exquisitely loud, that gobbling faces, their cheeks bulged with goose, would press against their tinsled windows, the whole length of the white echoing street. For dinner we had turkey and blazing pudding, and after dinner the Uncles sat in front of the fire, loosened all buttons, put their large moist hands over their watch chains, groaned a little and slept. Mothers, aunts and sisters scuttled to and fro, bearing tureens. Auntie Bessie, who had already been frightened, twice, by a clock-work mouse, whimpered at the sideboard and had some elderberry wine. The dog was sick. Auntie Dosie had to have three aspirins, but Auntie Hannah, who liked port, stood in the middle of the snowbound back yard, singing like a big-bosomed thrush. I would blow up balloons to see how big they would blow up to; and, when they burst, which they all did, the Uncles jumped and rumbled. In the rich and heavy afternoon, the Uncles breathing like dolphins and the snow descending, I would sit among festoons and Chinese lanterns and nibble dates and try to make a model man-o’-war, following the Instructions for Little Engineers, and produce what might be mistaken for a sea-going tramcar.

Or I would go out, my bright new boots squeaking, into the white world, on to the seaward hill, to call on Jim and Dan and Jack and to pad through the still streets, leaving huge footprints on the hidden pavements.



“I bet people will think there’s been hippos.”

“What would you do if you saw a hippo coming down our street?”

“I’d go like this, bang! I’d throw him over the railings and roll him down the hill and then I’d tickle him under the ear and he’d wag his tail.”

“What would you do if you saw two hippos?”

Iron-flanked and bellowing he-hippos clanked and battered through the scudding snow toward us as we passed Mr. Daniel’s house.

“Let’s post Mr. Daniel a snow-ball through his letter box.”

“Let’s write things in the snow.”

“Let’s write, ‘Mr. Daniel looks like a spaniel’ all over his lawn.”

Or we walked on the white shore. “Can the fishes see it’s snowing?”

The silent one-clouded heavens drifted on to the sea. Now we were snow-blind travelers lost on the north hills, and vast dewlapped dogs, with flasks round their necks, ambled and shambled up to us, baying “Excelsior.” We returned home through the poor streets where only a few children fumbled with bare red fingers in the wheel-rutted snow and cat-called after us, their voices fading away, as we trudged uphill, into the cries of the dock birds and the hooting of ships out in the whirling bay. And then, at tea the recovered Uncles would be jolly; and the ice cake loomed in the center of the table like a marble grave. Auntie Hannah laced her tea with rum, because it was only once a year.





Bring out the tall tales now that we told by the fire as the gaslight bubbled like a diver. Ghosts whooped like owls in the long nights when I dared not look over my shoulder; animals lurked in the cubbyhole under the stairs and the gas meter ticked. And I remember that we went singing carols once, when there wasn't the shaving of a moon to light the flying streets. At the end of a long road was a drive that led to a large house, and we stumbled up the darkness of the drive that night, each one of us afraid, each one holding a stone in his hand in case, and all of us too brave to say a word. The wind through the trees made noises as of old and unpleasant and maybe webfooted men wheezing in caves. We reached the black bulk of the house. "What shall we give them? Hark the Herald?"

"No," Jack said, "Good King Wencelas. I'll count three." One, two three, and we began to sing, our voices high and seemingly distant in the snow-felted darkness round the house that was occupied by nobody we knew. We stood close together, near the dark door. Good King Wencelas looked out On the Feast of Stephen ... And then a small, dry voice, like the voice of someone who has not spoken for a long time, joined our singing: a small, dry, eggshell voice from the other side of the door: a small dry voice through the keyhole. And when we stopped running we were outside our house; the front room was lovely; balloons floated under the hot-water-bottle-gulping gas; everything was good again and shone over the town.

"Perhaps it was a ghost," Jim said.

"Perhaps it was trolls," Dan said, who was always reading.

"Let's go in and see if there's any jelly left," Jack said. And we did that.

Always on Christmas night there was music. An uncle played the fiddle, a cousin sang "Cherry Ripe," and another uncle sang "Drake's Drum." It was very warm in the little house. Auntie Hannah, who had got on to the parsnip wine, sang a song about Bleeding Hearts and Death, and then another in which she said her heart was like a Bird's Nest; and then everybody laughed again; and then I went to bed. Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-colored snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steady falling night. I turned the gas down, I got into bed. I said some words to the close and holy darkness, and then I slept.

*Illustrations by Fritz Eichenberg
- Reprinted with kind permission*

THE CELTIC CHRISTMAS SHOW



Bella Rose Arts Centre, Halifax: December 8, 7:30PM
bellaroseartscentre.com
deCoste Centre, Pictou: December 10, 2PM
decostecentre.ca



diaga.ca



Choirs with Purpose and MND Scotland

With a little help from new-found friends, one Scottish woman is making beautiful music this Christmas



Wilma Catton was a friend of my wife. They had known each other for years through work, and I had the good fortune to meet her on a number of occasions. She loved life and was a fun person to be around. In August 2013, at the age of sixty, she was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

MND is the collective name for a group of rare illnesses that damages the nerves - motor neurons - responsible for carrying messages from our brain to our muscles. With no cure, the disease frequently results in slow paralysis, gradually taking away the sufferer's ability to walk, talk, eat, swallow and breathe. Wilma was the first person we knew with the ailment. It had a devastating effect on her family as - over the next seventeen months - she lost the ability to talk and swallow, and suffered widespread muscle wastage and gradual respiratory failure as the disease progressed. She passed away in January of 2015.

A few weeks ago I watched a BBC Scotland documentary about the youngest MND sufferer in Scotland. Most MND cases surface in later life, but Lucy Lintott was just nineteen when she received her diagnosis. Her moving story was told in *MND and 22-Year-Old-Me*. Filmed over six months, the film followed Lintott as her illness progressed, recording her thoughts, emotions and the increasing restrictions imposed upon her by the condition. There were moments of sadness, but what shone through was Lintott's bubbly, fun personality, and the way she refused to be defined by the illness. Her infectious laugh and sense of hope stayed with

me long after the program ended.

James Hawkins and Clare Cook are the team behind James Hawkins Music. They also saw and were moved by *MND and 22-Year-Old-Me*.

"In a world often beset with troubles and pessimistic news, they believe that there is a power in music that can have a profoundly positive impact."

Hawkins is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger, performer, producer, and the musical director of the team. Cook is the public relations and marketing expert, and understands that visibility is an essential tool in an extremely competitive music business. Together they deliver powerful music

projects with a sense of purpose and outreach. In conjunction with the charity Missing People, they created The Missing People Choir, propelling them to the semi-finals of Britain's Got Talent in 2017. They have also worked with The London Hospices Choir and The Military Wives amongst many others. When Lintott's documentary was aired, Hawkins and Cook were busy working on a new project - Choirs with Purpose.

Choirs with Purpose brings together vocal ensembles from across the U.K., including The Missing People Choir, NHS Choir, and the incredible Parris Wood High School Choir, which performed with Ariana Grande at the One Love Manchester concert following the tragic bomb attack this past spring. For several months Hawkins has been working with singers across the U.K. to record 'Stand Together' - a Christmas charity album.



James Hawkins & Lucy Lintott



Each of the twelve choirs featured on the album will sing a cover song, and collectively the 1600 singers - who have been recorded at various locations - will also sing a reworking of Sir Paul McCartney's 'We All Stand Together.' McCartney has given the album his personal backing and has waived all royalties on the song. It is an album of hope and inspiration.

The last of the twelve choirs for the album was born from Lintott's story. The Choirs with Purpose team approached MND Scotland about assembling a choir for the project. Following a Facebook appeal for singers with connections to the cause, 140 names were gathered.

On Saturday, October 14, in a hotel conference suite in Glasgow that had been converted into a recording studio for the day, I met Lintott, Hawkins and Cook, and the members of the newly-formed and aptly-named Lucy Lintott/MND Scotland Choir. There were several rows of seats, each with a personal headset. Hawkins' desk, computer, and an array of microphones lined the wall in front of the singers; he and Cook had been there for several hours already, setting up the space. Despite all of the technical equipment, however, the room had an atmosphere of fun and friendliness and there was much hand shaking, hugging and drinking of coffee as people arrived. Unlike many recording environments, it was informal and relaxed.

In an atmosphere of great conviviality, the sopranos got the day's rehearsals underway at 10.00 a.m. This was followed by the altos at 2.00 p.m., and the tenors and basses at 6.00 p.m. The session ended

well into the evening. It was an experience to watch Hawkins bring a choir together through fun, play, musical exercises, and recording. Lintott had selected the ensemble's individual song; written by an American teenager who had been diagnosed with osteosarcoma - and given a year to live - the piece was a great source of comfort for Lintott.

"I chose the song Clouds, by Zach Sobiech, because when I was first diagnosed it really helped me through the difficult times. I can relate to Zach so much and this piece is one of my all-time favourites."

Lintott, who admits to being tone-deaf ("but up for giving it a go") sang with the choir, and her infectious laughter throughout the day reminded everyone why they were there. If the day was tiring and stressful she certainly wasn't showing it, and when she wasn't laughing out loud, she was smiling,

"Every time I hear the song I smile because, to me, it is the soundtrack to my diagnosis. It makes me feel safe, and reminds me that I am not in this fight alone and that wonderful things can come from the darkest of days."

Only a few months earlier, Lintott had recorded her speaking voice so that it might be used in a voice synthesiser should she need it down the road. It was inspirational to see her taking part in the recording. During a break in rehearsals, I had the chance to talk with her and she asked me to thank the Celtic Life International community for its help in reaching a wider audience.

Hawkins understands the power of music and how it reaches, connects and supports individuals and communities, "Where words fail, music speaks - which is why we wanted to form a choir to raise awareness of the condition and spread Lucy's message further."

There are many people living with illnesses and struggling to cope with difficult circumstances. The album, Stand Together, has the ability to reach thousands of people and to raise much-needed funds at a time when many charities and organizations are struggling financially. But, perhaps more importantly, it gives sufferers, their families and friends the opportunity to support each other, and to find moments of joy in the darkness that can so easily pervade the modern world.

In the spirit of sharing and supporting, all profits from the sale of Stand Together by Choirs with Purpose will be divided equally amongst the causes that each choir represents. Money raised for MND Scotland will be used to increase awareness of the illness, support those affected by it, and also to fund research to understand the disease better and to seek a cure. Stand Together will be released on December 15.

For a full list of the choirs and organizations represented, and to pre-order your copy of Stand Together, please visit www.choirswithpurpose.com. The album, which already has over 2,000 pre-release orders, can be purchased as a CD that will be shipped internationally or as a download. Your support for this amazing, collaborative project can make a difference to a lot of people like Lucy Lintott. My wife is certain that her friend Wilma would approve.

Words and photos by Tom Langlands
www.tomlanglandsphotography.com

www.lucysfight.com
www.mndscotland.org.uk
www.james-hawkins-music.co.uk



Carol OF THE King

THE IRISH DANCE CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

"A NEW KIND OF IRISH!"

-SARASOTA HERALD TRIBUNE

"MESMERIZING!"

-THE STATE ONLINE

Winter Tour

11/30/17 Martinsburg, WV

12/1/17 Hanover, PA

12/2/17 Norwich, NY

12/3/17 Cranston, RI

12/5/17 Ormond Beach, FL

12/6/17 Mount Dora, FL

12/7/17 Crossville, TN

12/8/17 Newberry, SC

12/9/17 Wilson, NC

12/10/17 Stanly County, NC

12/12/17 Bonita Springs, FL

12/14/17 Lima, OH

12/15/17 Marietta, OH

12/16/17 Wabash, IN

12/17/17 Akron, OH

12/21/17 Schenectady, NY

12/22/17 Rockville Centre, NY

12/23/17 Toms River, NJ

WWW.CAROLOFTHEKING.COM



Carol of the King

Justin Boros brings the Christmas spirit to its feet

The creator and lead dancer of the fastest-growing Irish dance spectacular in the U.S. - Rhythm in the Night - will be bringing his unique brand of fancy footwork to the stage this holiday season in a new production called Carol of the King.

Once a lead role in Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance, Justin Boros only discovered the ancient art of Irish dance as a teenager while living in Akron, Ohio.

"My background was a little bit unique compared to the traditional dancers in that show," says the now 35-year-old. "I had actually only picked up Irish dancing a year and a half before I auditioned. I didn't know anything about Irish dancing until I saw it on TV one day."

Boros does have Celtic blood on his mother's side, via his grandmother, but he had never been exposed to Irish dance firsthand.

"The stars must have aligned for me or something," he smiles.

Rhythm in the Night is preparing to celebrate its fifth anniversary, and Boros learned much about producing and selling a show during the past half-decade. Now he wants to draw on that experience and expertise to introduce a new Irish Christmas tradition.

Carol of the King is scheduled to run from November 30 to December 23 at 18 venues across the U.S.

"We have been working on it for a couple of years," notes Boros. "There are a few good, different Celtic Christmas productions already out there, but we wanted to do some-

thing unique; combine an epic storyline, dancing - along with a few other things that audiences really liked about our Rhythm in the Night production - to bring a fresh and bold flavour to the holiday season."

Boros likens the plot of Carol of the King to an Irish dance version of the perennial Yuletide classic A Christmas Carol.

"The story of Scrooge is about redemption. As we all know, that character learned some hard life lessons, and eventually changed his ways. Our storyline is similar, in that I am a king under the dark spell of a sorceress, and my younger brother, my daughter, and my romantic interest bring me back to the side of love and light."

The epic storyline, told through intense footwork, might not sound like Christmas to people with more traditional tastes, but Boros says there is sure to be something for fans of old-school Noel as well.

"O Holy Night is played very slowly, beautifully, and in an orchestral manner, with soft shoe dancing from the girls. It is very graceful and soft. It is very gentle and warming, and audiences might feel like they are in a church, or that they are listening to an actual orchestra performing Christmas music. And our last number in the show is called Carol of the King, taking its name from Carol of the Bells, which obviously enjoys some deeply-rooted traditional holiday elements."

The artistry of the pieces, he hopes, will speak for themselves.

"Amazingly, there is no actual dialogue - the entire story is told through dance. It is almost like a fluid and moving opera in that regard."

Given both the immense popularity of Irish dance, and that families today are looking to create new and unique Christmas customs of their own, the show was an easy sell to venues.

"Our agent has been bringing new shows to the marketplace for nearly 30 years, and tells me that Carol of the King is the easiest spectacle that he has ever showcased," says Boros. "I am very excited knowing that presenters and theatres trust that audiences will really take to it."

With the groundwork and foundation now firmly in place for the new production, he expects a good, long run.

"We are all set up for success. Now all we have to do is to show up, suit up, and put on a fantastic show each and every night. We want to be busy and booked for the next 20 Christmas seasons."

It is not enough to be successful, however, as Boros understands the importance of being significant.

"That is, ultimately, what we are aiming to do with this production; to have individuals, families and friends come to the show and share the experience - and the sheer joy - of true Christmas spirit."

www.caroloftheking.com



THE WHISKY CONNOISSEUR™ TRAVEL KIT

This Deluxe Leather Travel Kit allows you to enjoy a modest taste at an event or distillery tour. Fill the numbered bottles with the remaining drams, using the fluted no-spill nickel clad funnel, and note each sample's basic details on the ledger page.



Later, in the comfort of your own home or hotel room, you can fully appreciate each whisky in the GLENCAIRN™ tasting glasses - great for sharing with a friend. Compact... stows easily in luggage.

Makes the Perfect Gift!

The Ultimate Travel Accessory for Whisky Lovers. Also available in Fabric with Leather Trim

SIP SAVE *AND* SAVOUR

Our products are designed to make your whisky tasting experiences both safe and enjoyable. For more information, please visit our website:

www.whiskyconnoisseur.ca • www.whiskyconnoisseur.us

For Club Discounts use: <http://whiskyconnoisseur.us/ref/2/>

17CL05

We're a big name in Quality Haggis

ESTABLISHED IN 1920 & STILL USING
THE OLD FAMILY RECIPE



Authentic Scottish Haggis
Award
Winning
In a Can

FOR INFORMATION ON A STOCKIST NEAR YOU
AND FOR ALL TRADE ENQUIRIES CONTACT:

USA 1(800)353 9004

camwrap@birch.net



STAHLY'S SCOTTISH AND VEGETARIAN HAGGIS IS DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE USA BY CAMWRAP BRITISH IMPORTS OF MOBILE, ALABAMA. TO VIEW A BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED TRIBUTE TO THE VERSATILITY OF HAGGIS, CAMWRAP RECOMMENDS THE STAHLY HAGGIS RECIPE BOOK AVAILABLE AS A FREE DOWNLOAD AT WWW.THEHAGGIS.COM

East Coast Christmas Treats!

The holiday season is always so warm and wonderful for us here at home in Nova Scotia, filled with family, friends, festivities and great food. It is also an incredibly busy time of the year for us, especially now with grandchildren running around and more on the way. Thankfully, our most compassionate Managing Editor Stephen has given me some time away from the kitchen, so that I may properly prepare for the Macquarrie yuletide traditions...in the kitchen! In the meanwhile, our very good friends at the Fogo Island Inn in Newfoundland have been kind enough to share a couple of their customary Christmas recipes with us. I'm sure that you will enjoy them.

Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr! ~ Cabrini



Fogo Island Holiday Partridgeberry Scone

Ingredients

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1 ½ cups all purpose flour | 2 tbsp white sugar |
| 1 ½ tsp baking powder | ⅓ cup butter |
| ¼ tsp baking soda | ½ cup buttermilk |
| ½ tsp salt | ¼ cup partridgeberries (fresh or dried) |

Instructions

Measure all the dry ingredients and combine in a large bowl. Use a cheese grater to grate in the cold butter. Rub the butter in with your fingers to break up any large lumps. Add the partridge berries and mix well. Add the buttermilk and toss to coat. Gently fold and press the dough as you would a biscuit, being careful not to overwork it. Press together the dough and cut into desired shape for scones. Bake on a parchment lined baking tray at 375 degrees Fahrenheit for 6-8 minutes until edges are golden brown. Remove from the oven and transfer to a wire rack to cool. Makes 8 scones.



Every Inch a Damson

This cocktail showcases the diversity of our local plums, however small and tart they can sometimes be in our cool growing climate. Damsons are wonderful little things, and on Fogo Island we are lucky to have a few neighbours with these exceptionally brambly and hearty fruit trees. If damsons are unavailable, try plum varieties that display a tartness - often plums from cooler climates like ours.

Ingredients

- 1.5 oz Gin
- 0.5 oz Damson Plum Syrup
- 0.5 oz Sweet Vermouth
- 3 dashes Angostura Bitters

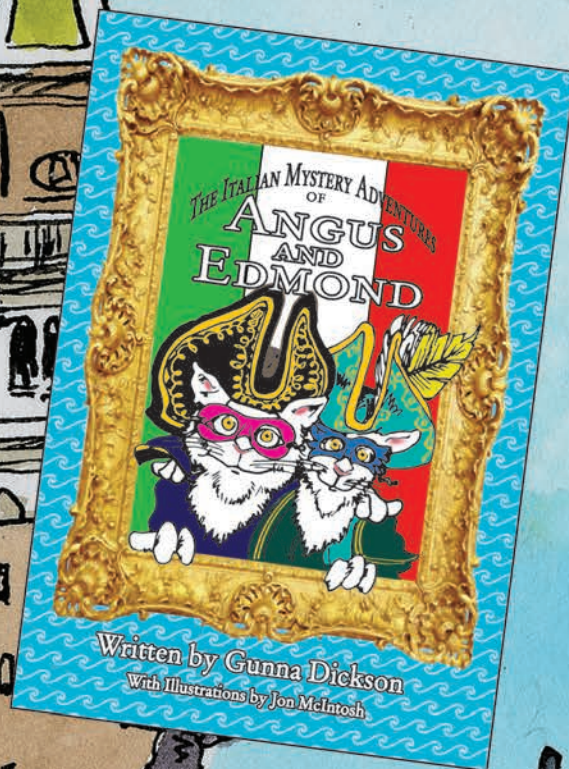
Instructions

Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker. Shake with ice. Strain into a chilled coupe glass. Serve neat.

CATS AND CLUES

With the Highlands of Scotland and Key West adventures behind them, Angora-mix brothers Angus and Edmond are resting up at home in New York City when they cross paths with a shady rodent and begin receiving cryptic messages. The clues lead them to Italy -- the opera in Milan and carnival in Venice -- where the mystery unfolds and danger threatens.

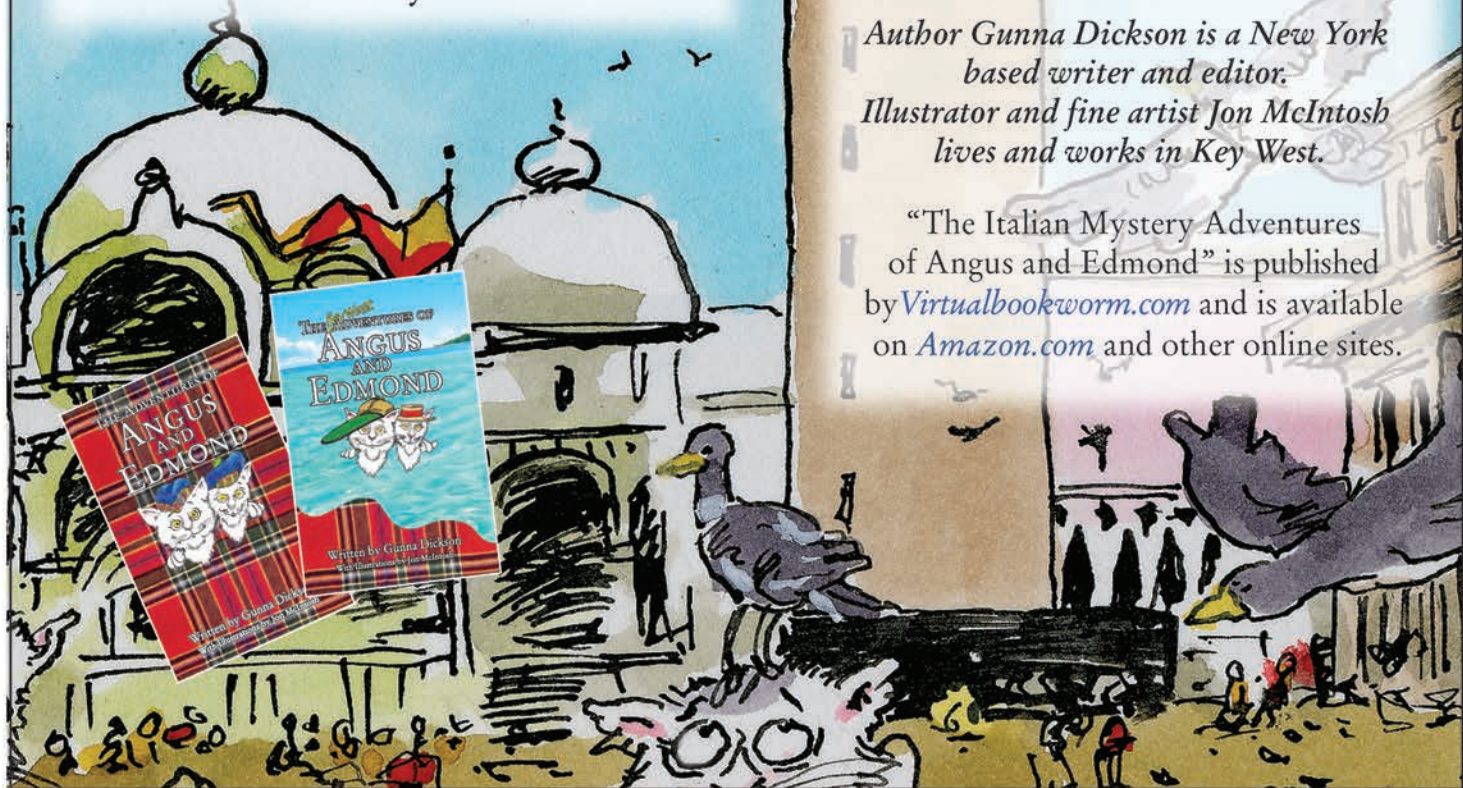
Animal lovers and children of all ages will enjoy this third book of lively cat tales.

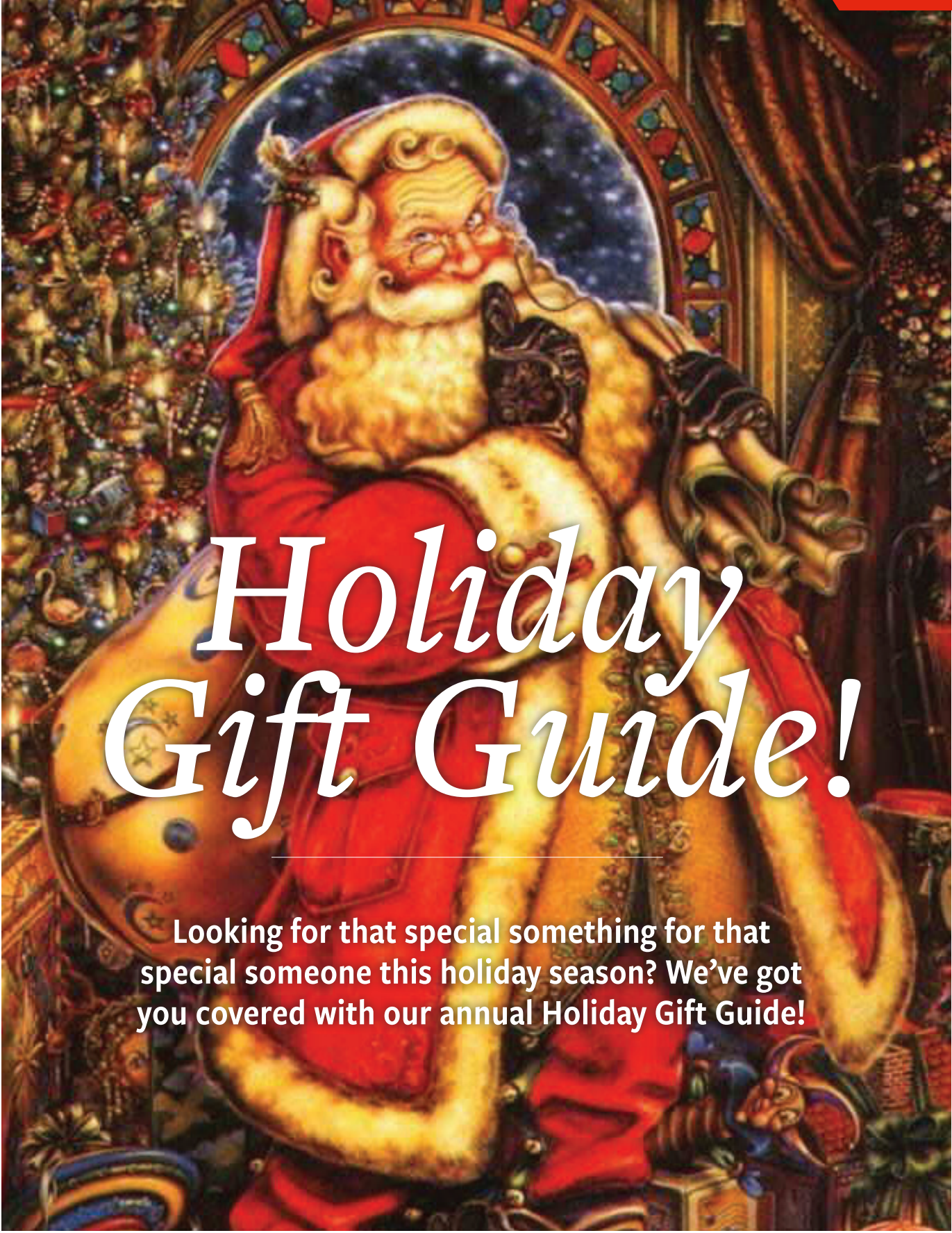


Author Gunna Dickson is a New York based writer and editor.

Illustrator and fine artist Jon McIntosh lives and works in Key West.

“The Italian Mystery Adventures of Angus and Edmond” is published by Virtualbookworm.com and is available on Amazon.com and other online sites.





Holiday Gift Guide!

Looking for that special something for that special someone this holiday season? We've got you covered with our annual Holiday Gift Guide!

Direct to you from Scotland

Our Heritage is Our Inspiration

A SCOTTISH FAMILY OWNED COMPANY

Founders and Owners of Hamilton & Young are husband and wife team, Gordon Young and June Hamilton.
The inspiration for their designs comes from the wonderful history and heritage of their native Scotland!



Gordon Young &
June Hamilton



Show your love for
Scotland



Stunning Celtic designs



Unique Luckenbooth



Scottish Thistle



Elegant Mackintosh



Scotland's largest selection of silver bead charms



Huge choice of Rings

June is a huge Outlander fan, and our collection of Outlander Inspired Jewellery is very well known throughout the Outlander Community. June & Gordon attend many Outlander Events & Gatherings and regularly contribute to Outlander charities.

**OUTLANDER
INSPIRED
SPECIALISTS**

Voyager
Inspired
Silver
Pendant



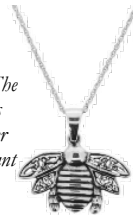
Standing
Stones
Silver
Pendant



Dragonfly
& Amber
Silver
Pendant



Tell The
Bees
Silver
Pendant



Outlander
Inspired
Silver
Ring



**ORDER
ONLINE**

We have over 15 years online trading experience, and ship worldwide.

www.hamiltonandyoung.co.uk

HAMILTON & YOUNG



The Celtic Tree of Life Leather Cuff

Celtic Leatherworks

www.celticleatherworks.com

One of the more fascinating shared elements between the differing belief systems and creation myths of the world is that of the Tree of Life. Depending on the culture, it may yield Truth, Knowledge, Life, Death, Love, or even fruit with the power to grant immortality. For the Ancient Celts, the Tree of Life was a symbol of balance and harmony. Celtic people honored the Tree of Life by leaving one big tree in the middle of their fields when they cleared their land. Underneath the branches, the Celts held gatherings and appointed their chieftains. The tree was able to provide shelter, food, and medicine, leading the Celts to believe that it had enough power to care for all life. The tree also represents rebirth, as it loses leaves during the fall season, hibernates throughout the winter, and will be reborn again once spring arrives. The Tree of Life Cuff beautifully represents all of these aspects and is the centerpiece of Celtic Leatherworks' design. The tree itself is framed on either side with a blend of Celtic knot work. Each cuff is unique and handmade. Worn by men and women, the leather cuff fits wrist sizes from 7 – 9 inches.



Stealth Drone Reeds

Gibson Bagpipes

www.gibsonbagpipesllc.com

It is said that musicians are only as good as their ear and their gear. This is perhaps especially true for bagpipers, where the slightest mechanical variance can turn a meaningful march into musical madness. Stealth Drone Reeds by Gibson Bagpipes LLC, have been carefully crafted to maximize piping performance and tone. After years of both in-house and on-the-field testing, the New Hampshire-based firm has produced a first-rate reed that resonates with a bold and steady tone, thanks to the company's focus on greater air efficiency and higher moisture resistance. The Delrin body and carbon fiber tongue ensure moisture will not affect overall performance. Greater air efficiency allows pipers of all levels to achieve the big, bold drone sound they are always seeking without sacrificing steady tone. The end result is that individual pipers, or whole pipe bands, can hold a tune longer, and perform flawlessly in any type of setting.



“Knot Cross” Cast Pewter Pendant or Brooch

Nagle Forge & Foundry

www.nagleforge.com

Celtic knotwork, with its striking intricacy, is always the most immediately recognizable aspect of Celtic art. What inspired those age-old knots is today a mystery, though a mystery that induces constant speculation. We could tell you a story of love and faith and forgotten tribes with one knot meaning this and another meaning that, but they would only be stories. What we do know is that in the beginning there was rope. Long before the first Celtic stonemason picked up a chisel to carve the very soul of the Celtic world into the stones, there were weavers, fishermen and sailors who could make mazes out of twine and rings out of rope. The rope and the knots became the heart of Celtic art. These extraordinary knots can be seen in the illuminated prayer books of the early Irish monks, the daggers of Bronze Age warriors or your grandmother's hand-knit sweaters. Nagle Forge & Foundry's "Knot Cross" is cast, not woven; metal, not rope; and simple, yet complex. Available as either a pendant or brooch, this is a perfect gift for the Celt in your life who wants to touch the very origins of Celtic Art this Christmas.

Trinity Knot Necklace

ShanOre Celtic Jewelry

www.shanore.com

Whatever the occasion, ShanOre Celtic Jewelry has the perfect piece to celebrate Irish culture - from cheerful shamrock earrings and necklaces to stunning bridal jewelry, including engagement rings and wedding bands. ShanOre's collection of Irish wedding jewelry includes deeply symbolic Celtic designs such as the Claddagh, which represents love, loyalty and friendship. Celtic knot work symbolizing infinite, unending love - created with stunning, sparkling gems for simple elegance - makes a perfect gift anytime of the year. The company also produces a beautiful assortment of Celtic cross pendants and earrings, featuring iconic images like the Shamrock, the Tree of Life, the Trinity Knot (pictured), the Harp and more.

Many pieces are stylized with Swarovski® crystals. Those with a creative urge can design their own necklaces and bracelets with Tara's Diary beads and charms, which celebrate traditional symbols and beloved locations across Ireland. As an award-winning jewelry producer, ShanOre pays particular attention to detail when designing both their collections and individual pieces; each is lovingly crafted to stand out and last a lifetime. In addition, all ShanOre and Tara's Diary packaging has been carefully chosen to make the recipient's experience unique and special.

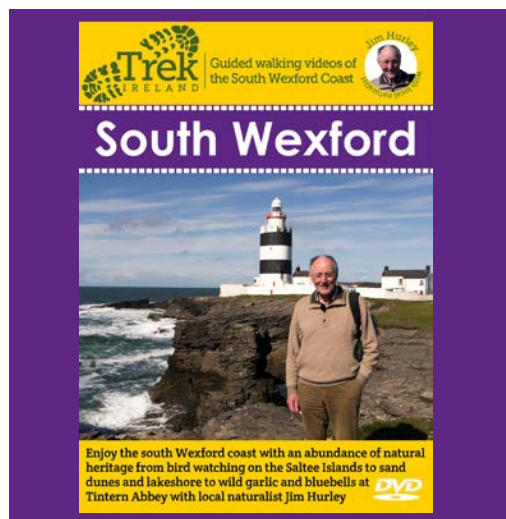


South Wexford Coast Tour DVD

Trek Ireland

www.trekireland.com

There is always someone on the Christmas gift list who proves a challenge, but maybe not if they enjoy travel and adventure. Trek Ireland, a Dublin-based enterprise that films interactive guided walking videos around Ireland, has launched a series of videos highlighting Ireland's rugged natural heritage and fascinating local folklore. The most recent DVD showcases Eire's stunning South Wexford Coast and features local naturalist Jim Hurley. The full-color, widescreen DVD is of 3-hour duration and includes important sites such as Hook Head, Tintern Abbey, Ballyteige Burrow, Saltee Island Great and Lady's Island. Jake Mac Manus, a hill-walker and the owner-operator of Trek Ireland, notes that the DVD produces a realistic walking experience for anyone watching at home or abroad. As your guide, Hurley introduces each walk and outlines the importance of natural heritage, local history and the captivating folklore of the area. The video then explores the sights to be enjoyed at each location with natural sounds such as bird songs, the sea, rivers, and the forest recorded on site. \$16.50 (USD). Worldwide delivery available.



Whisky Dropper and Glencairn Glass Set

Scottish Creations

www.scottishcreations.com

This hand-blown Whisky Diluting Dropper by Angels' Share Glass is displayed on the exquisite oak of a Darach cask stave, crafted from a vintage whisky barrel. It is designed for those who are passionate about their whisky experience, and ideal for adding just a wee drop of water to the dram. Allowing finer control over the water flow, it releases just one single drop at a time so drinkers can dilute their whisky with exact precision. The cask grains complement the exquisite Glencairn glass and create the perfect backdrop to the accompanying water glass, which is emblazoned with the Angels' Share Glass logo. The glass pipette is approximately 200mm in length, and comes with a choice of topper. Pick from a burnished pot still, a colourful thistle, or the new whisky angel - crafted in luxurious gold.

The solid Darach oak base measures approximately 28cm x 6cm at its widest point. The dropper measures 20cm in length. The whisky glass measures approximately 9cm x 6cm. The miniature edition of the world famous Glencairn glass is perfect for a wee dram of your favourite whisky and is approximately 3cm smaller than the normal glass.





Kilt Apron

3 Celts & Company

www.3Celts.com

This top-quality kilt apron is the perfect addition to accentuate any modern kilt-wearer's wardrobe. Save your steps and do your shopping at 3 Celts & Company of Minnesota this holiday season, where you will find a full selection of tartan wool kilt aprons priced at \$85 USD. With modern belt-line loop stays, and full length traditional fringe fold detailing, the style commands immediate respect; many Scottish units wore the kilt in combat in the Great War, back when the ferocious tactics of the Black Watch earned them the nickname "Ladies from Hell" from German troops in the trenches. Re-imagine the kilt apron, in your choice of over 50 tartans, fitting perfectly with the company's black Steam-Gear® KILTS of bottom weight fabric, priced at \$225 USD. There are also many in-store options available to mix and match your Celtic soldier kit. Don't be surprised if you are inspired to scan the full catalogue with family members in mind. A full selection of eye-catching ladies' kilts, both in dancing and hostess styles, are also available - each constructed of 10 to 13 ounce, 100 per cent wool. All items are custom sewn and made-to-measure for a perfect fit.



Celtic Chakra Jewellery

Black Dragon Crafts

www.blackdragon.co.uk

The human body has seven Chakras - or energy wheels - and each of the genuine gemstones used in Black Dragon Crafts' Celtic Chakra jewellery relates to one of those power centres. Combined with the magic of the ancient Celts and threaded with Hematite to give you courage, this jewellery should help keep you balanced and energised. Choose from fine or chunky Celtic Chakra earrings, pendants, bracelets or necklaces. Each piece is individually hand-made using genuine gemstones and Celtic beads, crafted by master beadsmith Annie Wealleans - the Black Dragon herself. Annie casts, files, cleans, tumbles and hand finishes all of the beads in her 'Beadoir', which she established on an enchanting green Welsh hillside in 1974. She casts her beads of lead-free pewter, which she melts and pours into moulds in an ancient centrifugal casting machine at 350°C. Last year she made over 60,000 buttons and beads, consistently producing the lovely and unique pieces of her dreams. Annie is passionate about her craft, and quick to point out that while her website is automated, she is not. She also threads her beads into other jewellery styles, pricing her items "sensibly," and providing beautiful packaging. Beware of imitations!



Arctic Circle Adventure

Expo Cruises & Tours

www.expo-cruises.com

Expo Cruises' 20th anniversary Luxury Cruise/Tour Expedition is an Arctic Circle adventure from Reykjavik, Iceland to Svalbard (Spitsbergen) & Oslo, Norway, aboard the Silver Cloud Expedition. Welcome to the Realm of the Polar Bear! With over 60% of the Svalbard region covered in ice, the breathtakingly beautiful icebergs and glaciers of the Svalbard Archipelago will not fail to disappoint. Elusive and serene, the King of the Arctic makes his happy home here; zodiac cruises provide ample opportunities to get as close to the wondrous beast as possible, meaning you can cross off this bucket list must-see. Bring your camera and begin your adventure with a 2-night stay in Reykjavik, Iceland with two full days touring the outstanding beauty of Iceland. It is followed by a 15-day luxury expedition. Search the Spitsbergen pack ice for the elusive polar bear in Zodiacs®, observe huge colonies of seabirds and enjoy the coastal culture along the way. Conclude your expedition with a tour of Tromsø and a 2-night stay in Oslo, Norway. Book now for special savings and onboard credits. 20 Days - June 15 to July 4, 2019.

Scottish Highlands Cruise

Expo Cruises & Tours

www.expo-cruises.com

A sheltered water cruise through the Highlands of Scotland with nothing to clutter the view, just hauntingly beautiful Scottish Highland scenes brought effortlessly to your panoramic window could be your next holiday. Together with excellent cuisine and deluxe state cabin accommodations, Expo Cruises serves up a truly unique travel experience. This five-night voyage on board the deluxe 'Lord of the Glens' encompasses the main highlights of a voyage through the very heart of the Scottish Highlands, including a transit of the intricate and endlessly fascinating inland waters of the Caledonian Canal. The voyage commences at Inverness and continues via Loch Dochfour and Loch Ness to Fort Augustus and onto beautiful Loch Oich, the highest point of the canal, before reaching Loch Lochy, finally arriving at Corpach (Fort William), which lies in the shadow of Ben Nevis and is the gateway to the sea. At Corpach there is time to take the famed 'West Highland Line' train to Glenfinnan (Viaduct), returning to 'Lord of the Glens' via the Glenfinnan Monument. At Corpach, the 'Lord of the Glens' passes through the sea lock and enters the serenely beautiful sheltered waters of Loch Linnhe, before moving onto the Sound of Mull, and then to the gaily painted waterfront at Tobermory. The voyage concludes with a call at Craignure (Isle of Mull) to visit Duart Castle before reaching the 'gateway of the isles' at Oban. Book now for an 18-day package from September 20 to October 7, 2018.



Thirteen Moons Celtic Herbcraft - Online Course

Herbal Heritage Scotland

www.herbalheritage.co.uk/courses

Channel your inner 'Claire Fraser' by joining Outlander TV-series herbal consultant Claire MacKay for a year-long online journey through the scientific, practical, theoretical and historic application of herbs as home-remedies. Over 'thirteen moons' (based on the traditional Celtic Lunar calendar), students will acquire both theoretical knowledge of medicinal herbs, and the methodology of practical application with easily accessible materials. Along with becoming skilled in the Celtic Tradition of using plant medicines, students will learn the Gaelic names for plants, and their hidden meaning, obtain background insight into Outlander herbal remedies from both the TV-series and books, develop confidence in the practical use of herbal medicines as home-remedies, learn plant chemistry to make medicinal salves, creams, ointments, tinctures, powders, and many more herbal preparations at home, create their own herbarium with dried specimens, learn to sustainably collect, harvest, preserve and cultivate medicinal herbs, and have complete access to helpful tutorials, content and videos. Registrants will receive a complimentary herbal gift box (\$70 value) with basic ingredients to begin a home apothecary. Use the code CELTICLIFE for a 25% discount before January 1st, 2018.



The 1834 Collection

NIXEY

www.nixeyonline.com

Inspired by the classic Celtic sporran, each 1834 bag by NIXEY is crafted with passion, precision, and the same fine attention to detail that has hallmarked artisanal leather making for centuries. Designed by NIXEY's founder Laura-Marie Nixey and handmade by traditional sporran makers in the stunning Scottish Highlands, the 1834 collection takes its name from the heritage of this historic leather workshop, dating back nearly two hundred years. Born of necessity in the 12th century, Celtic warriors were the first to wear the leather sporran over a kilt. This modern reinterpretation by NIXEY remains true to the essence of the original design, adding an element of convenience; each has an adjustable strap and can be worn as a shoulder bag, an across-the-body bag, and as a classic sporran waist bag. Fitted with an expandable leather interior, the 1834 is both compact and deceptively spacious at once. The 1834 collection is available in a range of heritage colours and finishes - including red, black, brown, chestnut, and more - and makes for a timeless gift at Christmas. Prices start from £135 and international shipping is available.





Aran Sweater Coat

Scottish Treasures Celtic Corner

www.CelticCorner.net

This striking Aran sweater coat finds its roots in the practical, everyday outerwear of Ireland's rugged west coast islands, and has come a long way since it was first favoured by area fishermen, and later by Ireland's trad troubadours The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. The blue version is a classic weave of timeless beauty - with its paired shadings of near-royal and midnight - and is also available in a more subtle hue of charcoal. Made in Ireland of 100 per cent Merino wool, the cozy item features a broad collar with a dropped single button clasp, and is available in all sizes. It is one of the Christmas season's best-selling offerings from Scottish Treasures Celtic Corner, a family owned and operated business in Coronado, CA, which continues to grow its online presence. The company debuted in the late 1990s - after family members had been attending Scottish events for a decade - and prides itself on offering top quality and uniquely imported Celtic products, from kilts to accessories to ladieswear and jewelry. It is the perfect place to find Celtic-tinged baby gifts - including tartan clad dolls - as well as an impressive selection of pewter, glassware, and an array of Outlander-themed products.



Celtic Journals & Ancient Irish Maps

O'Brien Celtic Gifts

www.obriencelticgifts.com

O'Brien's Celtic Gifts is a one-stop shop for all of your holiday needs this Christmas season, with something special available for everyone on your gift list. Plans, memories, family events, stories, poems and more will look great in a deluxe Irish made Celtic Journal, with a classic Celtic design embossed on the cover. Choose from 4 different editions; the Claddagh Journal, the Celtic Journal, the Glenoge, or the 1916 Centenary Journal, each designed and developed in Dublin to the highest standards. Adorn the living-room wall with an exquisite matted and framed Ancient Map of Ireland (circa.1779), with special 'raised' effect, and reproduced in fine detail. Other historic items from the company's craft bindery include the 1847 Irish Emigrant Trail Map, a superb reproduction of The Historic 1916 Irish Proclamation - available in 3 different sizes - as well as stunning reproductions from the epic Book of Kells. All are matted and ready to frame. Take it a step further by personalizing your gift with the recipient's name embossed on the front cover, or upon a nostalgic and framed Ancient Map of Ireland. Other classic Celtic/Irish notebooks and wall hangings are available via O'Brien's website.



Trinity Knot Teardrop & Ceol Mo Chridhe Ring

Walker Metalsmiths Celtic Jewelry

www.WalkersCelticJewelry.com

The holiday season is a time of tradition, and perhaps nothing is more timeless - or festive - than the gift of gorgeous Celtic jewelry. Walker Metalsmiths of Andover, NY, creates an array of classic and contemporary pieces, including both the stunning Trinity Knot Teardrop pendant and the charming Ceol Mo Chridhe ring, which can be displayed on any finger as a celebration of one's Celtic heritage, or worn as a wedding band for both men and women. The elegant teardrop pendant has been carefully crafted, using the traditional chipcarving technique. It is a wonderful statement piece, and is designed to layer with others. A craftsman-run workshop specializing in authentic and unique Celtic jewelry and mixed metal designs, Walker Metalsmiths specializes in Celtic knotwork wedding rings, crosses, brooches, and much more. The jewelry is crafted in sterling silver and gold, cast using both modern and traditional methods, and hand finished on site. Be sure to visit the company's website for a full selection of great Christmas gift ideas.

"The Legend of Ireland" Mystic Topaz Men's Ring

The Bradford Exchange
www.bradfordexchange.com

Celebrate the lure of the Emerald Isle with The Legend of Ireland Mystic Topaz Ring.

Seen through the eyes of time, Ireland's rich history - with its passionate people and pastoral splendor - takes on both a mystical and mythical quality. Wear your heritage, and celebrate the proud spirit of Eire, with this enchanting, engraved finger-piece - available exclusively from The Bradford Exchange. Meticulously handcrafted in an original design with sterling silver plating, this enchanting men's ring features a 5-carat genuine Mystic Topaz center stone with intricate faceting and coloration to capture the vibrant hue of Ireland's lush green terrain. Surrounding the Mystic Topaz, and highlighting both sides of the stone, is a warm weave of entwined Celtic knots - plated in 18K gold - and two genuine white diamonds. For the perfect finishing touch, the inside of the ring is engraved with a famed and traditional Irish blessing. An ideal gift this Christmas, The Legend of Ireland Mystic Topaz Ring makes for a classic and timeless addition to any man's collection.



Crystal Whisky Decanter Set

Hall of Names at Lineage
www.hallofnamesatlineage.com

A stylish addition to any collection, Hall of Names at Lineage's Crystal Whisky Decanter Set can be engraved with your own ancestral crest, bringing family history and heritage to life. The personalized decanter features a three-dimensional geometric design, and comes with two sparkling lead crystal tumblers. Charming and distinctive, and presented in a sturdy and decorative display box, the set makes a unique gift for family members, friends or business associates. Take your holiday gift-giving a step further by making a present of the past; Hall of Names at Lineage's Genealogy Store is the world's leading retailer of heraldic and family tree products, offering a complete genealogy research gifting service. Discover your surname's history, and have your family's coat of arms masterfully hand engraved on one of the company's many exquisite, timeless items.

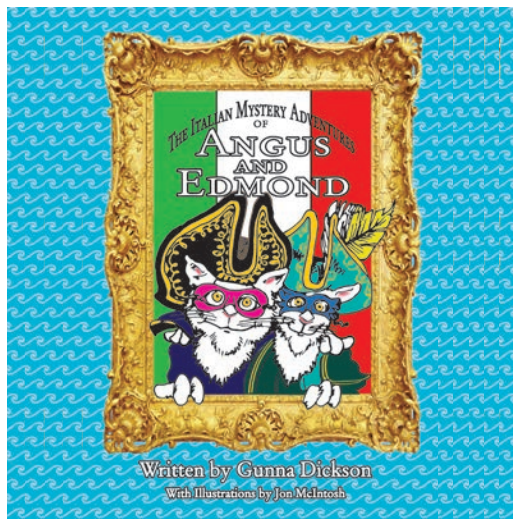


Whisky

Kensington Wine Market
www.kensingtonwinemarket.com

What better way to get into the Christmas spirit this holiday season than with the gift of fine spirits? Calgary's Kensington Wine Market offers something special for everyone of age again this year; blended whiskies, single-malts, bourbons, ryes, and much more, from Scotland, Ireland, the U.S.A, Canada, and beyond. In addition, the shop's growing selection of popular offerings from craft whisky distilleries means that there are more tailored options available than ever before. Thankfully, KWM's knowledgeable staff is always around with experience and expert advice to help you pick out the perfect gifts. And now, both connoisseurs and those new to the world of whisky can enjoy the added convenience of shopping and ordering online via the company's easy-to-use website. KWM's advice this holiday season is not to fall back on the bottle you know your recipient loves - Christmas giving is an opportunity to expand horizons by introducing family, friends and associates to something that they might not have tried otherwise. While you are at it, be sure to inquire about the company's renowned Scottish distillery tours.





The Italian Mystery Adventures of Angus and Edmond

By Gunna Dickson, with illustrations by Jon McIntosh
www.virtualbookworm.com / www.amazon.com

With the Highlands of Scotland and Key West adventures behind them, Angora-mix brothers Angus and Edmond are resting up at home in New York City enjoying the easy life until they cross paths with a shady rodent and begin receiving cryptic messages that make all their feline senses stand at attention. When a mystery woman arrives on the scene it sets their whiskers a-twitching and before they know it they are hot on the trail of clues she leaves behind. Packing the necessities that any fashion-conscious cat would need, they briskly head for Italy where their excursions lead them to the opera in Milan and the carnival in Venice. Sightseeing is great, but if you are already a fan of Angus and Edmond, you will know things rarely go as planned. Their Italian mystery moves in unexpected directions, mix-ups occur and danger threatens, but the quick-witted cats are ready for any challenge. Angus and Edmond are a pair of rascally cats adopted from the New York Humane Society, and every day is an adventure. Written by Gunna Dickson and illustrated by Jon McIntosh, this third book of lively cat-tales will appeal to animal lovers and children of all ages.



Scottish-Inspired Silver Bead Charms

Hamilton & Young
www.hamiltonandyoung.co.uk

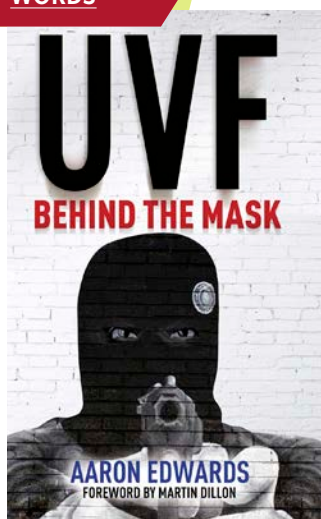
For generations, bead charm bracelets have been a traditional family gift that grow in meaning with each special occasion, be it a birthday, a graduation, an engagement, or a wedding anniversary. Edinburgh-based jewellery designers Hamilton & Young have created one of the finest collections of Scottish-inspired silver bead charms available anywhere. From traditional Scottish Thistle and Luckenbooth designs to a lovely Highland Coo and the popular Scottish Dog, there is something unique for everyone who enjoys a touch of Scottish whimsy. If your taste runs to landmarks or personalized items, you can add a masterfully crafted Scotch Whisky Cask or a sprawling Castle charm. Other popular designs include the Bagpipes, the Claddagh, the Celtic Knot, the Dragonfly and the Saltire. Each charm is lovingly made of durable '925' sterling silver, and will fit all shapes and sizes of bead charm bracelets. The charms are shipped in a stylish black velvet pouch, perfect for opening beside the Christmas tree or in a quiet moment in front of a blazing fire. Priced from £24.99, these beautiful bead charms are both elegant and affordable.



THE HAGGIS

Stahly Quality Foods
www.thehaggis.com

A quintessential Scottish specialty, haggis is no longer mostly thought of as the gourmet feature at annual 'Burns' Night' events. Nowadays, at home or at fine restaurants, haggis can be an easy-to-prepare treat enjoyed year-round for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, or as a superb hors d'oeuvre. Stahly Quality Foods of Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland produces several kinds of award-winning haggis. Their Scotch haggis, for example, is a blend of the finest lamb, oatmeal and spices, while their Royal haggis showcases Scottish venison, giving it a distinctively rich flavor. Stahly also produces a Drambuie and whisky haggis and, to the delight of many, an excellent vegetarian version. Prior to 2002, because of certain U.S. customs' regulations which are still in effect, haggis aficionados in the U.S. had to travel to Scotland to get their hands on Stahly's haggis. Since then, however, the firm arranged for two of their award-winning recipes to be produced and canned in the US, and the North American appetite for Stahly's haggis has grown exponentially. Today, both Stahly's Traditional Scottish and Vegetarian haggis are readily available across North America. The Stahlys ('A Big Name in Quality Haggis') have been associated with fine food since 1923 when Fred Stahly Sr. and his wife first opened a butcher's shop on Kirkcaldy High Street in Fife, Scotland. Over the generations, their family-first philosophy has earned them world-wide repute for quality and excellence.



UVF: Behind the Mask

By Aaron Edwards
Irish Academic Press

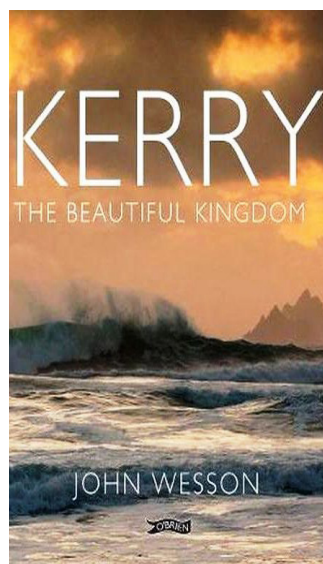
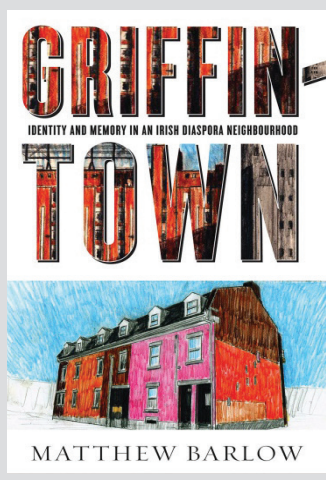
420 pp / €17.99

A Senior Lecturer in Defence and International Affairs, author Aaron Edwards brings his military and geo-political expertise to *The Troubles* with this terrific 420 page tome. While the Irish Republican Army (IRA) may have heralded most of the headlines during Northern Ireland's three decades of civil war - not to mention the majority of support from ex-pats around the world - the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) were equally efficient and effective as a fighting force. Thankfully, Edwards goes beyond the policy and rhetoric of the conflict, instead exposing the humanity of the hostilities through a cast of characters driven by pride and faulty logic; men and women who were more at home teaching schoolchildren or driving a cab than behind the barrel of a gun. ~ SPC

Griffintown

By Matthew Barlow
UBC Press
249 pp / \$85

Montreal's inner-city Irish Catholic neighbourhood of Griffintown has enjoyed a renaissance of sorts over the last decade. Despite gentrification, the area has not lost its old-world charm. Professor and author Matthew Barlow goes beyond the newly buffed veneer, however, digging deep into the soul and soil of 'the Grif' to explore its Irish roots. History and heritage come to life via oral accounts, timeless photographs and a detailed index, to reveal a working-class people whose lives, and environs, were shaped by family, friends, church and community. More than a microscopic account of one particular time and place, the narrative speaks to the plight of the Irish Diaspora who settled and set up shop in spots across the eastern seaboard of the New World for generations. ~ SPC



Kerry: The Beautiful Kingdom

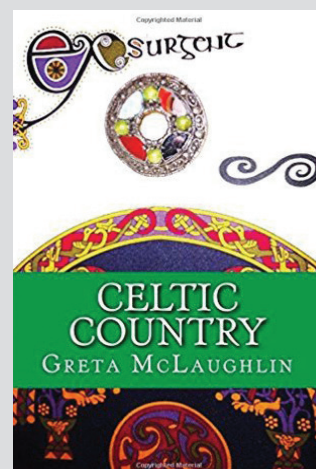
By John Wesson
O'Brien Press
160 pp / €24.99

No visit to the Emerald Isle is complete without a trip through time in Kerry. Eire's southwestern-most county is plush with fields of green, peppered with history and heritage, and rimmed by a rugged coastline. Photographer John Wesson, a native of Kerry, does well to capture and convey the breathtaking beauty and timelessness of the ancient land and its people with this stirring selection of both colour and black and white images. Touched up with tidbits of text, the tabletop tome does more than reveal a wild, windswept landscape - it weaves its way into the area's many lesser-known nooks and crannies to uncover the minute, though equally stunning, details that too often go unnoticed. The result is a bigger picture of the beautiful kingdom. ~ SPC

Celtic Country

By Greta McLaughlin
376 pp / \$15.95

I am always impressed with authors who self-publish; the time, effort and expense involved in getting one's work into the market shows real confidence in their narrative. In the case of American author and professor Greta McLaughlin, that belief is justified. Set in turn-of-the 20th century Ireland, *Celtic Country* tells the tale of Katherine O'Keefe of Co. Mayo, and her love affair with a British soldier during the years leading up to Irish independence. As expected, the romance is frowned upon by family and friends, and when he leaves for Scotland she follows her heart across the water. By the time the couple jaunts off to Paris, Cornwall and London, readers will be entwined with patchwork threads of history, both of families and of nations. ~ SPC





The High Kings

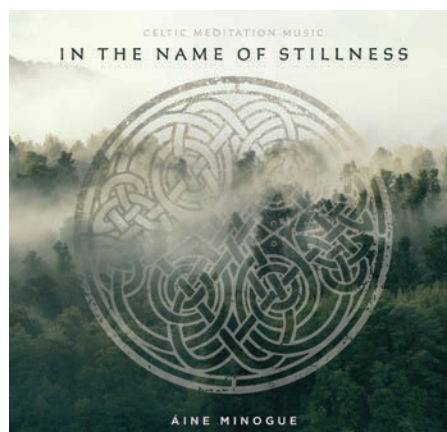
Decade

Despite the recent parting of founding member Martin Furey, the Dublin-born band has much to celebrate with this commemorative collection of greatest hits. First and foremost, perhaps, is the sheer volume of fantastic material recorded over the past ten years, including *The Rocky Road to Dublin*, *The Rising of the Moon*, *Red is the Rose*, and the group's terrific, tear-jerking take on *The Parting Glass*. The anthology also succeeds at showcasing the quartet's tremendous talent for both classic and contemporary 'trad', and fêtes the foursome's refreshing efforts to bring the magic and mystique of Eire's music to new and younger generations of listeners. Even with Furey's departure, there is surely more than enough gas left in the band's tank for another decade of sonic success. ~ SPC

The Waterboys

Out of All This Blue

It's hit-and-miss again for Mike Scott and his merry band of musicians with *Out of All This Blue*, a prolific, yet inconsistent, outpouring of 34 tracks that will have you nodding your head at one turn, and scratching it the next. While some songs certainly hit the heart - perhaps inspired by the perks and perils of Scott's recent marriage - most miss the mark, particularly when the Scot-turned-Dubliners tries too hard to remain relevant in today's fractured musical marketplace. The result is a mixed bag of mid-life crisis musings - often experimental in sound and structure - that would perhaps have been better served up as a smaller sonic portion. Still, like Dylan, there is no denying an old artistic soul his poetic meanderings. ~ SPC



Áine Minogue

In the Name of Stillness

Fans of Enya and Loreena McKennitt will want to wrap their ears around harpist Áine Minogue's latest effort *In the Name of Stillness*. The native of Co. Tipperary, who now resides in New England, weaves a warm tapestry of hushed - and sometimes haunting - harmonies on this terrific ten-track release. As the moniker implies, the collection - subtitled *Celtic Meditation Music* - is plush with gentle and gorgeous melodies, idyllic for a summer's day by the lake, an autumn stroll through the colourful foliage, or with a glass of wine by the fireplace during winter months. As prolific as she is profound, Minogue already has dozens of recording credits to her name, including 13 solo albums, and continues to mature as a musical artisan. ~ SPC

Screaming Orphans

Tap Room

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts on one of my favourite recordings of 2017, *The Screaming Orphans'* first full-length release *Tap Room*. Perhaps it is the simplicity of the song structure, or maybe it is the musicality of the melodies, or it might just be the fun and frolic of four talented sisters from Co. Donegal connecting in a creative milieu - whatever it is, it works well. Like their sonic forbearers Clannad, traditional tones and textures are given a make-over on a number of tunes, including *Follow Me Up to Carlow*, *Raithneach A Bhean Bheag*, and *The Ballad of Spring Hill*. The result is testament to the ages-old adage 'the family that plays together, stays together.' Here's hoping they do. ~ SPC



OKANAGANTATTOO.CA

July 28 & 29, 2018
Kal Tire Place
Vernon, BC

Canada



5th
Annual



Tickets on sale
December 15, 2017

Call ticketseller: 1-250-549-7469 www.ticketseller.ca

Geoff Jones has been interested in “everything to do with piping” since he first picked up the Highland bagpipes at age 13

Although he resides in the ‘land down under,’ Geoff Jones enjoys a strong connection to his Scottish ancestry, due in large part to his maternal grandfather’s passion for the family’s history and heritage. He also has Welsh and Cornish roots.

“Scottish Country dancing was a big part of my life growing up, going along to the weekly classes and social dances,” shares the 42-year-old from his home in Geelong, Victoria, Australia. “And participating in dancing demonstrations at the local Highland Gathering drew my interest toward the Highland pipes.”

His first piping stint was with the City of Berwick Pipe Band in September of 1988. Soon, piping found its way into other areas of his life, including his studies, where he wrote “many school projects on the topic, including designing and making a set of electronic bagpipes.”

“I studied the Highland pipes for a Year 12 music subject,” he continues. “I keep exploring and learning more about the different bagpipes and have a continued love of Scotland. My piping today still follows these obsessions.”

Jones worked his way up through the musical ranks, eventually reaching Grade 1 with the Nunawading Pipe Band. These days, he plays several styles of pipes: the well-known Great Highland bagpipes, the Border/Lowland pipes, the Scottish small-pipes, and the Northumbrian small-pipes. He is also in the process of learning the Irish uilleann pipes.

“Most of my pipes are quite similar to one another, with the exception of the Northumbrian small-pipes, being played with closed fingering. However, the uilleann pipes are a completely different beast altogether, and getting used to squeezing the bag slightly tighter to get to the second octave is quite a challenge.”

Jones is adept at other instruments as well, including the whistle and the bodhrán. He has also dabbled in keyboards and the piano-accordion. Piping, however, remains his true passion.



“Getting the sound and tone right, or at least acceptable, when the pipes are amplified - particularly small-pipes - is often a challenge. Just as challenging for me, and most pipers I would assume, is when sound technicians at festivals crank up the overall band volume far too loudly - akin to a rock concert. This just doesn’t work for the more mellow sound and acoustic instruments of a folk band.”

In addition to festivals, Jones has performed at weddings, parties and other social events, as well as at professional functions. He also plays with four other musicians in a Scottish folk band called Taliska - a play on the Whisky brand-name Talisker - a word originally derived from Scottish Gaelic *talamh sgeir* or *talaisgeir* meaning “land of the cliff/sloping rock.”

Jones passes his passion along as well, offering workshops on tuning, maintenance, playing techniques and styles.

“Here in Victoria, interest from young pipers appears to be quite strong.”

“The number of high school pipe bands has increased over the last 10 years. In addition, several civilian bands usually have enough young pipers to field juvenile bands in competitions. Young folk also account for a large percentage of the pipers, and drummers, competing in solo contests.”

He notes, however, that overall preserva-

tion of Celtic culture in Australia appears to be mixed.

“Unfortunately, the attendance at Highland Gatherings and Games has declined in Victoria in the past few years. This, along with other factors - such as lack of funding - has resulted in a number of the Highland gatherings being discontinued. Celtic festivals, on the other hand, seem to be generally well-attended. The National Celtic Festival in Portarlington attracts international artists and has a substantial program for young folk, including collaboration with Feis Rois from Scotland. Some events in Australia such as the Lake School of Celtic Music, Song and Dance in Koroit are modelled on overseas festivals such as Willie Clancy Week and continue to grow each year. There are also traditional music, dance and cultural groups around Australia that continue the traditions.”

Jones is at the helm of one of those cultural groups as a founding member and current president of the Celtic Piping Club - a community for pipers across the country, which runs regular piping sessions, concerts and an annual residential piping weekend.

“Our aim is to carry on these great musical traditions by establishing links with individuals and small groups of pipers all around Australia.”

www.geoffjones.info



CÙRSAICHEAN GOIRID SHORT COURSES

Thig còmhla rinn airson seachdain no dhà san Eilean Sgitheanach aig àm na Càisge agus as t-samhradh airson cùrsaichean air leth le sàr luchd-oide ann an àrainn eireachdail.

Join us for a week or more on the Isle of Skye this Easter and Summer for exceptional courses taught by the finest tutors set in a stunning location.

2018



A' CHÀISG EASTER

02 - 06/04/18

- Gaelic 1, 3, 5, 7
- Gaelic Song with Christine Primrose
- Fiddle Course with Ewen Henderson
- Gaelic in the Landscape with Roddy MacLean

09 - 13/04/18

- Gaelic 2, 4, 6, 8
- Gaelic Conversation with Joy Dunlop
- Flute & Whistle with Hamish Napier
- Fiddle & Viola with Patsy Reid
- Aspects of Highland Material Culture with Margaret Stewart



SAMHRADH SUMMER

02 - 06/07/18

- Piping & Drumming for under 18s
- Family Learning Week

09 - 13/07/18

- Gaelic Song with Christine Primrose
- Gaelic 1 & 2
- Gaelic Conversation Course with Muriel Fisher
- Piano Accordion with Addie Harper Jr & Stephanie Harper
- Button Box with Robert Nairn & Fergie MacDonald
- Gaelic for Irish Speakers (Beginners)

21 - 27/07/18

- Fiddle course with Alasdair Fraser
- Cello course with Natalie Haas

23 - 27/07/18

- 'Exploring Skye' (Beginners Gaelic) with Muriel Fisher

30/07 - 03/08/18

- Gaelic 1, 3, 5, 7
- Gaelic for Irish Speakers (Advanced Learners)
- Traditional Music Ensemble with Innes Watson
- Isle of Skye Piping School with Decker Forrest

06 - 10/08/18

- Gaelic 2, 4, 6, 8
- 'A Seascope of Gaelic Song' with Margaret Stewart
- Clarsach with Ingrid Henderson

13 - 17/08/18

- Gaelic 1, 3, 5, 7, 9
- Digital Photography with Cailean MacLean
- Gaelic Creative Writing with Alison Lang

20 - 24/08/18

- Gaelic 2, 4, 6, 8, 10
- Adam Sutherland School of Fiddle Summer Camp
- Learning through Living Culture in Flodigarry

Tha cùrsaichean a bharrachd air an làrach-lìn againn.
A full list of courses is available on our website.



CG.SMO@UHI.AC.UK



01471 888240/246

Kaitlyn Likas

American fiddler Kaitlyn Likas pushes her playing 'outside the lines'

Even as a youngster, award-winning fiddler and Celtic dancer Kaitlyn Likas was pushing her creative boundaries.

"I was only four years old," remembers the Maryland native. "My sister was first chair in the local high school orchestra, and I wanted to be just like her. I eventually became first chair in a few local youth orchestras, but by high school I wanted to experiment and branch out into other styles of playing. I didn't like the 'stiffness' of classical violin. I wanted more freedom, and the ability to express my Celtic heritage when I wanted, the way I wanted. I felt that the structure of classical music wanted me to color 'within the lines', and all I wanted to do was color everywhere."

It was Likas' mother - who was born and raised in Mitchelstown, County Cork, Ireland - who pushed her to pursue her passion for the fiddle.

"My Mom has a very strong connection to her roots, which she passed down to her three children. We have all tried our hand with various Celtic art forms, and each of us are musically inclined; my brother, Leonard, played the bagpipes, and both my sister and I Celtic danced and fiddled.

"It wasn't easy though," she continues. "We grew up in a very rural part of Maryland, where there wasn't much in terms of Irish culture. My Mom really wanted my sister and I to learn Irish step dancing at a very young age, but there were simply no schools in the immediate vicinity."

Instead, Likas taught herself to play the fiddle by listening to tracks from popular Irish bands. Over time, fiddling became a musical means of self-expression, and she continues to play for many of the same reasons today.

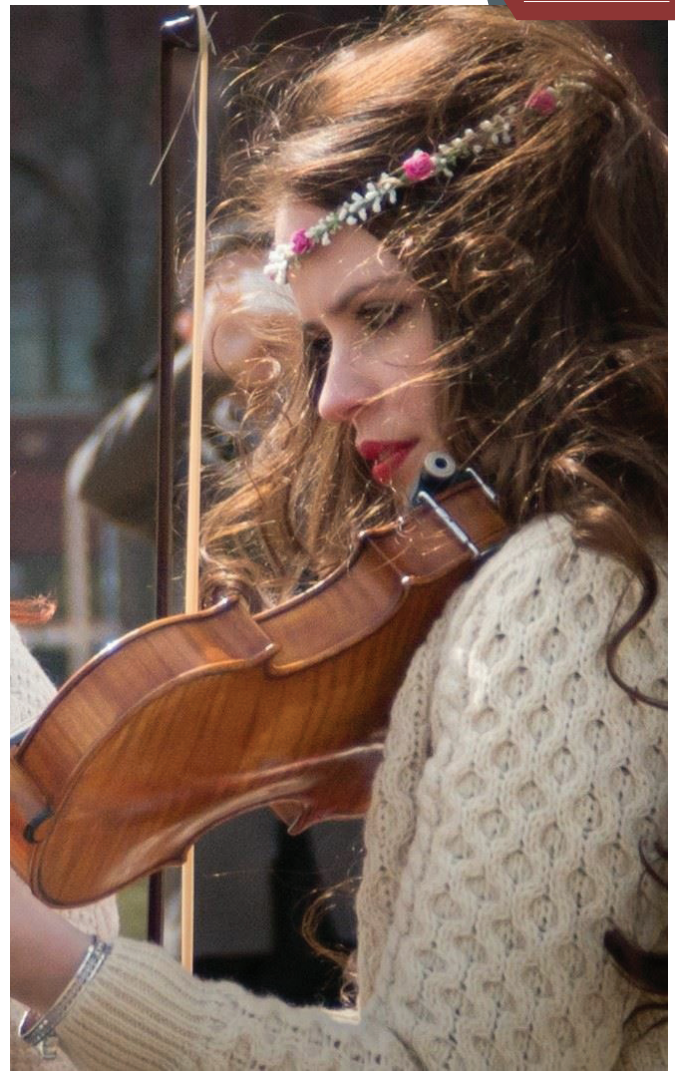
"I can't get enough of dancing and fiddling. It is an escape for me from the monotony of everyday life. It is my therapy."

"I work for the government full-time during the day, and I always joke 'but by night I am a Celtic performer!' After a long day of work, I really look forward to going home and getting into my music."

Her efforts have paid off; Likas - who plays Irish, Scottish and Cape Breton fiddle styles - has enjoyed a number of career highlights.

"I have won a few notable championships in Irish and Scottish Dance, and I recently performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., for their 'Ireland 100' event. I am currently in a number of different Celtic bands in the area, so I am a busy lady to say the least!"

Busy might be an understatement; along with her solo work, Likas gigs with the Baltimore-based punk band Charm City Saints - which has contributed music to a number of Irish films and documentaries - and also performs with the trio Capital Celtic, which performed for Irish Heritage Night at a Washington Nationals baseball game this



past May. Within the last year, she also started another band - The Thistle & The Rose - and has joined The Devil's Tailors, a traditional Scottish group based in Alexandria, VA.

Amidst all the influences, she strives to create a style that is uniquely her own.

"I have a very interesting sound, and it is affected by several factors, including my personality, my past, and my own interpretation of the music. I am inspired by a variety of different forms, and my creative process can be sparked by the slightest thing. For example, I was in an Uber recently, and I thought of a fun tune that might reflect the awful traffic that we were stuck in."

While Likas does believe that the Celtic community is strong in her part of the world, she notes the need to do more to preserve and promote the culture.

"There is a growing contingent of Gaelic speakers in the area. I remember my options in high school were very limited - you either studied French or Spanish. It would be great to see some Celtic arts education in schools as well. That would be one way to engage young people and encourage them to get more involved."

For now, she is content to contribute in her own unique way.

"Many of the bands that I am involved with will be releasing Celtic albums at some point over the next year or two, and I would love nothing more than to bring this music and culture to audiences on a full-time basis."

Thirteen Moons Celtic Herbcraft

- Online Course -

Herbal Heritage Scotland (Black Isle, Highlands)

www.herbalheritage.co.uk/courses

Do you or someone close to you have a calling to go back in time and 'channel your inner Claire Fraser'? If so, this is the perfect gift for you!

Join Outlander TV series herbal consultant Claire MacKay (BSc Hons Medical Herbalism) as she takes you on a year-long journey through time to reveal in-depth herbal knowledge with this online correspondence course.

You will gain practical and theoretical knowledge of medicinal herbs, that you can use with easily accessible materials, to become adept in the use of simple and effective home remedies.



After a journey of 'thirteen moons' (based on the traditional Celtic Lunar calendar!) You will:

- Be knowledgeable in the use of plant medicines in the Celtic Tradition.
- Learn the Gaelic names for plants, and their hidden meaning
- Get a background insight into Outlander herbal remedies from the TV series and books
- Be confident in the practical use of herbal medicines as home-remedies
- Have learned practical plant chemistry that you can use at home to make medicinal salves, creams, ointments, tinctures, powders, and many more herbal preparations
- Create your own herbarium with dried specimens as your personal herbal reference book
- Learn to sustainably collect, harvest, preserve and cultivate medicinal herbs
- Have permanent access to Tutorials, content and Videos to help with your studies

Whether or not you are an Outlander fan, this one year course can give you an in-depth knowledge of the scientific, practical, theoretical and historic application of herbs as home-remedies.

On registration, you will receive a FREE herbal gift box (normally \$70) with basic ingredients to begin your home apothecary.

Use the DISCOUNT CODE: CELTICLIFE
for a 25% discount before January 1st 2018.

Follow the weblink to register:

www.herbalheritage.co.uk/courses



Claire MacKay is an ethnobotanist and medical herbalist, based in the Scottish Highlands and consultant to the Outlander TV series. Also a writer, her work was included in Diana Gabaldon's bestselling; Outlandish Companion, and she is about to publish her own book Outlander Herbal, a guide to the herbal remedies of the series.

Slàinte Leat! // In good Health!



Though raised in New Zealand, dancer Leeann Doyle is well connected with her Irish heritage



Leeann Doyle comes from solid Irish Lstock; her mother is a proud Dubliner, and her father hails from Eire's lovely County Meath. And while it was often a challenge for her to stay connected to her cultural roots growing up in New Zealand, her parents encouraged her to explore her family's heritage.

"Mum and Dad took us home to meet the family in 1985," she recounts via email. "I think Mum was keen for us to do tap or ballroom as she was a dancer herself. When my Great Aunt Kathleen heard this, she was appalled and insisted on finding an Irish dance class for us. In fact, she taught us our first steps in her kitchen. Considering how few teachers there were in New Zealand at that time, we were very lucky to find one right in our neighbourhood."

Doyle, along with her sister Paula, comes from a long line of dancers; their mother studied under several teachers in Dublin, and their mother's cousins - the Traceys - shared the stage with Michael Flatley of Lord of the Dance fame. Furthermore, their uncle

Noel enrolled his own children and nieces in the famed Petri School of Irish dance.

"So you see, it is embroidered throughout family on both sides," says Doyle.

As Doyle and her sister did not have access to a wealth of experienced Irish dance teachers as their U.K. and U.S. kin did, they were forced to learn some of their steps through correspondence.

"As a teenager, our step lessons arrived on VHS tapes from Northern Ireland," remembers Doyle. "The videos showed the dancer's legs only - no faces. So, while I was strongly influenced by the dancers on that video, I never knew who they were."

By the late 1990s, however, the Irish dance craze that had started with Riverdance and Lord of the Dance washed over New Zealand, and Doyle and her fellow Irish dance students were encouraged by the sudden interest among their fellow Kiwis.

"Most of us were in classes with only one or two students, which then grew to over 100 by the second year. So I started my own wee class. In 1998, my troupe toured with the Irish Rovers, and it just took off from there. Passing the TCRG exam meant that we could go full-steam ahead, and we began competing locally."

Today, the Doyle Academy of Irish Dance is one of the genre's premier dance facilities in New Zealand. Doyle runs the school with her sister, who joined the staff full-time in 2002, after a stint in competitive Irish dancing.

"I had a vision from day one; the school name, colours, branding, what order I wanted my students to learn things in..."

"Most importantly, perhaps, I wanted to develop dancers who were not like I was," says Doyle, admitting that she was something of a lazy pupil. "I am sure my teacher gave me feedback all the time, but I never listened. I was determined not to have students who did the same."

Dancers from her academy have picked up numerous awards over the years, including 45 New Zealand solo titles, 86 world qualifying places, 19 New Zealand Team titles, 6 solo scholarship awards and 4 World Championship medals.

Doyle says that young New Zealanders today have a lot more access to the dance than she did as a child, thanks to the Internet.

"The international Irish dancing community is thriving with social media at their fingertips to see the latest moves and styles."

Despite the optimism, however, growing the Irish dance scene in her home country - and Celtic culture generally - is a work in progress.

"The number of dancers across New Zealand is decreasing, so promotion at local Christmas parades and over St. Patrick's Day is vital. When we were growing up, competitions and performances were held regularly at the local Irish club. Now, our dancers are really only engaged during major holiday events. One of the issues is that, as New Zealand has quite a sprawling geography, more teachers are needed in the suburban areas. My hope is that some of our own students will carry the message into their communities, in the same manner that we have tried to do."

www.doyleacademy.co.nz



THE CELTIC MARKETPLACE

DECEMBER 2017 | [CELTICLIFE.COM](http://celticlife.com)

Preferred Merchandiser of North American Venues – Midwest Region.

Great Celtic Gifts
& Merchandise!



3 Celts & Company

Kilts and Essentials
Music, Books, T-shirts



www.3Celts.com



Walkers Celtic Jewelry

a tradition of craftsmanship

www.WalkersCelticJewelry.com



From our top-of-the-line practice chanters to our industry-leading, beautifully handcrafted Fireside, Ceilidh, and Great Highland Bagpipes, Gibson Bagpipes offers many unique options to make any musician's holiday one to remember.

Check out our website to see our full lines of products and merchandise.

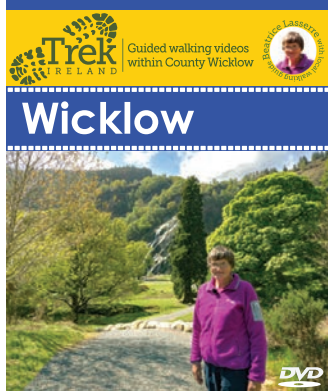
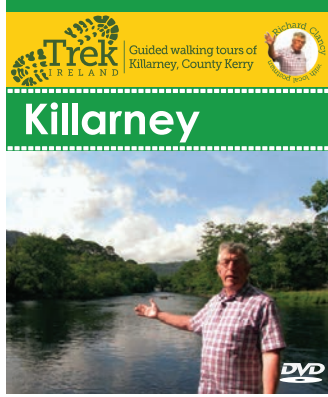
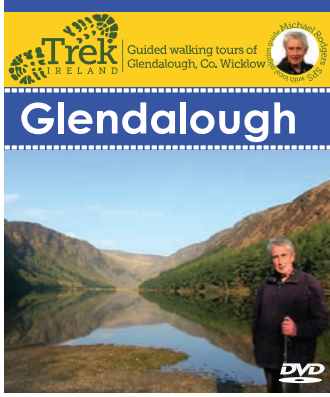
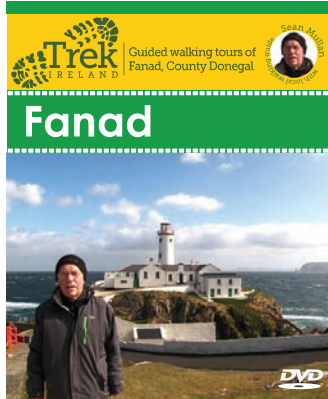
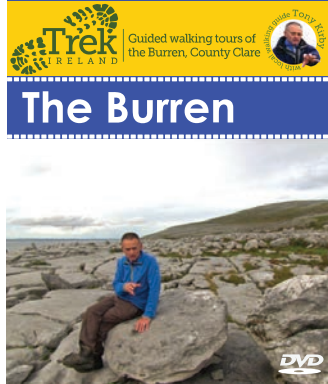
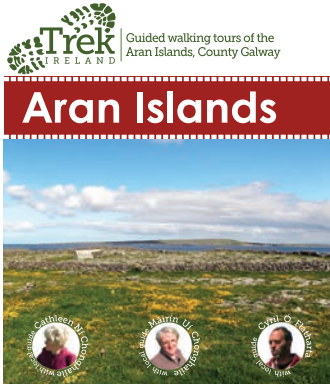
Gibson Bagpipes, LLC
29 Mason Street, Nashua, New Hampshire
www.gibsonbagpipesllc.com
info@gibsonbagpipesllc.com • 603-402-2972



STEALTH

Drone Reeds

by Gibson Bagpipes



www.trekireland.com
3 hour interactive guided walking videos

Norris Point International Hostel



Located in the Julia Ann Walsh Heritage Centre, at the corner of Main Street & Hospital Lane in Norris Point, Gros Morne National Park, NL

Single, Double, and Dorm Rooms Available

Share these GREAT amenities:

Full Kitchen	Common Room
Barbeque on deck	Laundry

Also included for your convenience:

Free Wireless Internet	Showers/Towels
Wheelchair Accessible	100% Non-smoking

For more information or for reservations
please contact us at:

709-458-7927 or 709-458-3072

Or by email at bbchhc@nf.aibn.com



Carbyny™ Celtic Winds are innovative musical instruments that offer the advantages of modern carbon fiber technology with time tested designs.

We put tradition on the leading edge.
Try one of our whistles, flutes, bagpipes or
didgeridoos today!

+1 541 829 3016

www.Carbyny.com

Rob_Gandara@alum.MIT.edu

www.facebook.com/CarbynyCelticWinds





Luxury vacations
in the UK and Ireland

TOLL FREE

888-674-3244
www.sheencotravel.com



An Unmissable Experience!

Cobh, The Queenstown Story

*An informative and emotive
story of Irish emigration.
Learn about Cobh's connection
with Titanic and the Lusitania.*

*Cobh Heritage Centre, Cobh,
Co. Cork, Ireland.*

*Open 7 days 9.30 – 5.30
(Sundays 11am)*

Tel 353 (21) 4 813591

Find Cobh the Queenstown Story on Facebook

Email: info@cobhheritage.com

Web: www.cobhheritage.com

ATLANTIC LIGHTING STUDIO

AtlanticLightingStudio.com
Wolfville, Nova Scotia
902.542.3431



Custom Lighting Plans ~ Retail Showroom



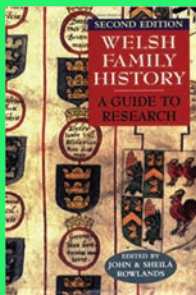
CELTIC JEWELRY

505 988-7393

912 Baca St., Santa Fe M-F 9 - 5 pm Sat 12 - 4 pm

CELTICJEWELRY.COM

YOUR CELTIC **GENEALOGY** TRIPLE PLAY

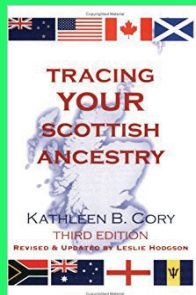


Welsh Family History: A Guide to Research. 2nd Edition

By John & Sheila Rowlands

Twenty chapters, each written by a Welsh specialist, covering every aspect of Welsh genealogy.
325 pp., paper. ISBN 9780806316208.

~~\$27.00~~ **\$19.95**



Tracing Your Scottish Ancestry. 3rd Edition

By Kathleen B. Cory

Revised and updated by Leslie Hodgson. Packed with information and advice on basic research techniques and all the significant genealogical sources for Scotland.
278 pp., paper. ISBN 9780806317489.

~~\$24.00~~ **\$19.95**



Tracing Your Irish Ancestors. 4th Edition

By John Grenham

Describes the various steps in the research process while at the same time providing an indispensable body of source materials—including those online. Most useful book in Irish genealogy.
608 pp., paper. ISBN 9780806318974.

~~\$37.95~~ **\$29.95**

Sale prices in effect
through December 1, 2017

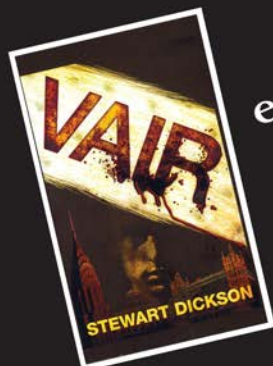
To save on shipping charges:

U.S. customers, please order from www.genealogical.com

Canadian customers, please order from Amazon.ca

British Isles customers, please order from Amazon.co.uk

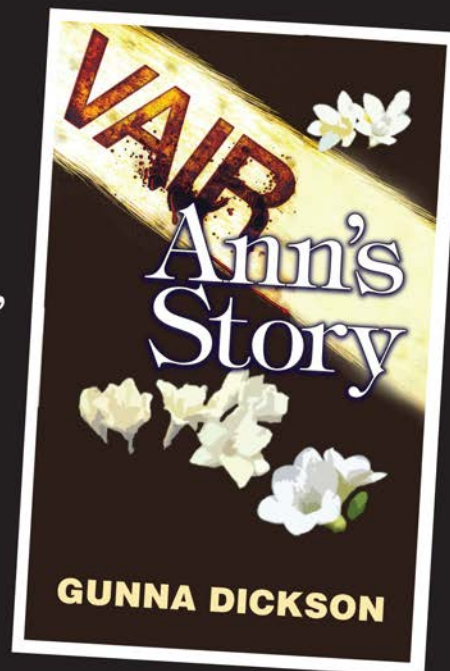
Genealogical.com



*With the reign of terror
over, a tale of love, loss
and political subterfuge
emerges. Where VAIR ends,
“Ann’s Story” begins.*



VAIR-- A taut historical thriller that follows a series of bizarre modern-day murders using weapons linked to the 16th century. The killings appear to follow the path of a U.S. visit by an heir to the British throne.

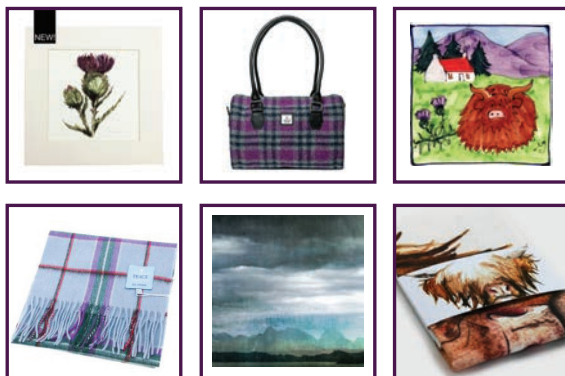


Author Gunna Dickson is a New York based journalist. She has worked for a major NY newspaper and a global news agency and translated six books. This, her fourth book, honors the memory of her husband, Stewart Dickson, a Scottish foreign correspondent.

Scottish Creations

Your North American gateway to the very best in
Scottish designed giftware.

Unique items brought directly to you from across
Scotland, the Highlands and the Islands.



www.scottishcreations.com

Maccessori • Stramash • Bertie Girl • Castaway Crafts • Ladycrow Scotland • Elspeth Gardner
Scott Inness • Clare Baird • Charles Randak • Cath Waters • Ecosse Candles • World Peace Tartan
Sheila Fleet • Scottish Fine Soaps • Roseneath Studios • Angel's Share

Beautiful Celtic Jewelry
inspired by folklore and tradition
connecting families for generations.

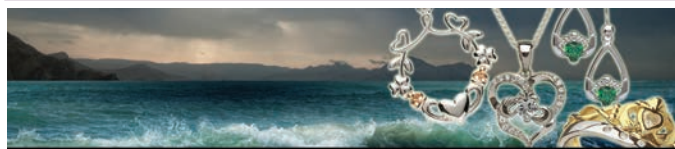
SHOP ONLINE TODAY

Take 15% off your first purchase.

Enter promo code CELTICLIFE17

TheIrishJewelryCompany.com

Wholesale inquiries email info@TheIrishJewelryCompany.com



Celtic Corner

Family owned & operated for 28 years

Imports from Scotland, Ireland,
England, and Wales

The Celtic Warrior Collection was
inspired by the Ardagh Chalice, an 8th
century relic located in Ireland's National
Museum. The chalice is made of silver and
decorated with 354 pieces of gold, brass,
pewter, copper, gilt, bronze and enamel
beading.

Visit our store in California
and see us online
(619) 435-1880

www.CelticCorner.NET

4K Design
Tees



T-shirts
with a bit
of whimsy!

Looking for a
unique gift idea?

You've found it!



Children and Adult
Sizes Available

Visit us at:
4kDesign-Tees.com

KNOTTED WORDS CELTIC ART

CELTIC ART WITH A LITERARY TWIST
ART, CLOTHING, GIFTS, AND MORE



EMAIL: ANGEMACKAY@YAHOO.CO.UK

WWW.KNOTTEDWORDSCELTICART.COM

TWITTER: @ANGELADMAC HALIFAX, N.S., CANADA

100% Authentic Celtic Beads & Jewellery

— **HANDMADE IN WALES** —



www.celticbeadshop.com

www.blackdragon.co.uk

Free gift with every order placed in December.



HALL OF NAMES
at LINEAGE



**PERSONALISED GIFTS
DESIGNED TO LAST A LIFETIME**

VISIT US AT

WWW.HALLOFNAMESATLINEAGE.COM

Celtic Leatherworks

Handmade Leather Goods
Heirloom Quality Highland Targers

Scottish
Clan Crest:

Sporrans

Cuffs

Barrettes

Over 20

Celtic Designs:

Sporrans

Cuffs

Barrettes



Visit our shop at
www.CelticLeatherworks.com



NAGLE FORGE & FOUNDRY

Timeless Style, Quality Craftsmanship



Plaid Brooches & More...

Phone: 415-897-1732

2 Farvue Rd. ~ Novato, California 94947

www.nagleforge.com

Rosaleen Underwood MAGI

Member of Accredited Genealogists Ireland
The Accrediting Body for Genealogists in Ireland

**Research all over Ireland, North & South
Especially Cork City & County**

Special interests : social history & local history.

Email : underwor.rmc@gmail.com

Snailmail : 15 Whitechurch Drive Ballyboden, Dublin 16, Ireland

FREE EVALUATIONS



*Every Candle
has a Story*

The Holidays are upon us...time for
The Gathering of your Clan!

Experience the scents of a
Scottish Clan Gathering in the
comfort of your own home!

www.bookscentcandles.com

YOUR CONNECTION TO MISTAKEN POINT.



- Mistaken Point
- Cape St. Mary's Reserve
- Iceberg Tours
- Whale Watching
- Irish Loop tours



**MOBILE
GOAT**
Excursions

Your gateway to Newfoundland

www.mobilegoat.ca



HIGHLAND BAGPIPES,
FRED MORRISON REELPIPES,
SCOTTISH SMALLPIPES.
CHANTERS, REEDS,
HIGHLAND DRESS &
PIPE BAND SUPPLIES.

reelpipes.com



KEITH MULLEN
SCOTTISH SMALLPIPES | UILLEANN PIPE MAINTENANCE

Prince Edward Island, Canada
www.mullenpipes.com



2018 June & July Sessions
Bagpiping, Drumming, Smallpiping, &
NEW ensemble program

Robert Mathieson,
Terry Tully, Jimmy Bell,
Gordon Bell and more..

BalmoralSchool.org

1414 Pennsylvania Ave. Pittsburgh PA 15233
info@bagpiping.org ~ 412-323-2707



Barbour
Way of Life

SASSENACH
SELLING QUALITY.

SassenachOn26.com • 705-994-2711



The perfect gift for the Celtophile in your life.

IONA, a pioneer band of the pan-Celtic music revival, is celebrating its 31st anniversary with a brand new CD, **SIGNATURE**

Original arrangements of traditional songs & dances from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, Asturias, Québec, Louisiana and Appalachia.

Info & orders: www.IONAmusic.com



Saving the Dragons
By Irish/American Author Catriona MacRury

"A Celtic Islands Adventure for young adults and young at heart"

\$14 for soft cover
\$24 for Special edition hardback
Plus shipping world wide

Order at www.macruryonline.com

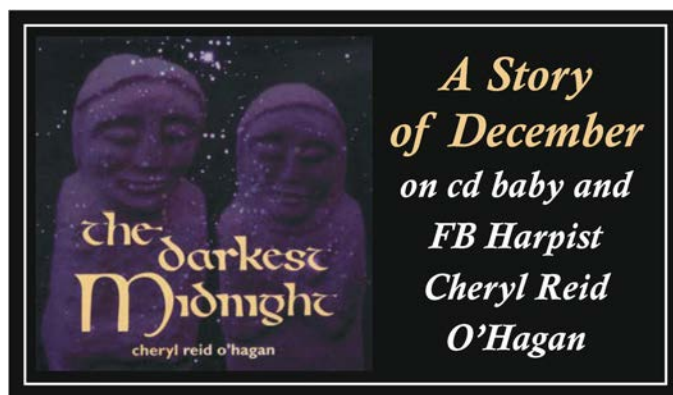


HOME OF THE
ANNAPOLIS ROYAL
TARTAN

15 CHURCH STREET
ANNAPOLIS ROYAL
NOVA SCOTIA CANADA

TARTAN WAVE

f



A Story of December
on cd baby and
FB Harpist
Cheryl Reid
O'Hagan

the Darkest Midnight
cheryl reid o'hagan



Allan Joseph MacEachen; 1921 - 2017

Allan Joseph MacEachen was raised in a Gaelic language home in the small coal-mining town of Inverness on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. And though he rose to the highest ranks of the Canadian government, it was the Gaelic prayers and airs of his childhood that marked his recent farewell.

Despite his modest beginnings, MacEachen became renowned amongst his hometown friends and supporters as a skillful Canadian politician, introducing national Medicare, overhauling the country's labour code, and spearheading other pioneering social legislation.

MacEachen was first elected to represent the interests of his Cape Breton riding in 1953, and was subsequently re-elected eight times. Along the way, he served in several high-profile cabinet positions, and was later appointed to the Canadian Senate. When he retired, it was to live full-time among the descendants of Highland Scots, among his constituents, where he was known simply as Allan J.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau remembered the astute politician - a colleague of his father, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau - when he spoke at a memorial service at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, where MacEachen once studied, and later taught, economics.

"Canadians are living in a country that Allan J. built and they like it," said Trudeau. "Seniors are living in dignity because of the old age supplement, and we all enjoy health care according to our need, rather than our ability to pay."

While at St. F.X., MacEachen was heavily influenced by the work of another Irish Cape Bretoner, priest and professor Moses Coady, who organized adult education programs and co-operative initiatives to improve the lives of the working poor. Though MacEachen's interest in social programs was deep-rooted, he also had an encyclopedic knowledge of parliamentary procedures, and his razor-sharp political instincts earned him the nickname The Celtic Sphinx.

Former New Brunswick premier Frank McKenna, one of many politicians mentored by MacEachen through the years, said Allan J. believed passionately in the value of government and the public good.

"It was a mind-blowing experience for me, watching a modest man from a challenged region become one of the country's leading voices. It was an inspiration to what is possible."

When Dalhousie University in Halifax named an institute in his

honor, MacEachen noted that it was always the views of his constituents that mattered most to him, and he recalled going into a co-operative store in his riding and being credited by a hard-working man with "putting bread on the tables of the people."

In a country with English and French as its two official languages, the often-kilted MacEachen repeatedly described himself as bilingual, making it known his first language was Gaelic. And while the ancient tongue was once forbidden in area schools, it was spoken in his home and many other homes across the region.

Rankin MacDonald, editor of the Inverness Oran, also grew up in a coal mining family. He told the Cape Breton Post that he once asked MacEachen if the steady stream of federal funding he brought to his riding might create a climate of dependency.

"He stopped and looked at me with those piercing eyes and he said 'You know, Rankin, I never thought that sharing the wealth of Canada was a bad thing.' That is how he was; he wanted everybody to have a good life."

MacEachen played a role in the revival of the Gaelic language on Cape Breton in the 1970s when native speakers were brought in to bolster what remained of the language and to foster new learners. As a result of a pilot project, Gaelic has been added to the Nova Scotia school curriculum.

Piper Angus MacDonald travelled from the Isle of Skye, at MacEachen's wish, to play at his funeral. They were old friends, having first met when MacEachen was in Arisaig on the Scottish mainland looking for family connections. MacEachen persuaded the young MacDonald to take a piping tour of Cape Breton, who later returned to practice medicine on the island for more than a decade before going back to Scotland.

"He respected the Gaeldom greatly - its music, its language. He worked on keeping his own Gaelic on the tip of his tongue. He was fluent," MacDonald told the Chronicle Herald, after offering a rendition of Lord Lovat's Lament and recalling MacEachen's love of a ceilidh.

Indeed, MacEachen was well-known for the gatherings he hosted at his home on Lake Ainslie, where the welcome was always warm, the whisky flowed, and the music drifted out over the water. In his later years he was fondly, and fittingly, referred to as The Laird of the Lake.

Japan, China, South Korea & Alaska 2018 Cruises - Reserve Your Space Now!

Tokyo to Shanghai 16-Days - April 1 to 16, 2018

Take your time exploring the rich history, culture and natural wonders of Japan, Taiwan and key cities along the east coast of China. In Shimizu, walk through the pine groves of Miho, or enjoy spectacular views of Mount Fuji from the lush, forested hill of Nihondaira. An overnight in Kobe gives you time to discover this fascinating city at a leisurely pace, including the gorgeous Nunobiki Falls. Enjoy another overnight in Hong Kong, so you can marvel at this former British colony's blend of modern and ancient as well as its fabulous food scene. And in Shanghai, be sure to take a stroll along the world-famous Bund, a waterfront aptly called the "Museum of International Architecture."

Tokyo, JAPAN	Embark	5:00 pm
Shimizu, JAPAN	8:00 am	6:00 pm
Kobe, JAPAN	8:00 am	Overnight
Kobe, JAPAN	---	2:00 pm
Kagoshima, JAPAN	11:00 am	8:00 pm
At Sea	---	---
Okinawa, JAPAN	7:00 am	5:00 pm
Ishigaki, JAPAN	8:00 am	5:00 pm
Keelung, TAIWAN	7:00 am	6:00 pm
Kaohsiung, TAIWAN	6:00 am	6:00 pm
HONG KONG	1:00 pm	Overnight
HONG KONG	---	4:00 pm
Xiamen, CHINA	10:00 am	8:00 pm
At Sea	---	---
Shanghai, CHINA	8:00 am	Overnight
Shanghai, CHINA	Disembark	

Inside from \$3,295
Outside from \$4,295
Balcony from \$5,395



Shanghai to Tokyo 13-Days - April 16 to 28, 2018

Explore fascinating cities along the coast of China, South Korea and Japan. Before you depart, be sure to take a stroll along the world-famous Bund, a waterfront aptly called the "Museum of International Architecture." In Beijing, don't miss the magnificent Forbidden City, featuring the largest palace complex in the world, as well as the infamous Tiananmen Square. While in Dalian, head to Tiger Beach, Jinshitan Beach or Fujiashuang Beach, some of the best in China. The gorgeous Nunobiki Falls near Kobe are yours to discover, and so are the beautiful pine groves of Miho close to Shimizu, before you arrive in Tokyo.

Shanghai, CHINA	Embark	5:00 pm
At Sea	---	---
Beijing, CHINA	7:00 am	Overnight
Beijing, CHINA	---	4:00 pm
Dalian, CHINA	7:00 am	4:00 pm
Seoul, SOUTH KOREA	8:00 am	6:00 pm
Jeju, SOUTH KOREA	10:00 am	6:00 pm
Nagasaki, JAPAN	8:00 am	6:00 pm
Miyazaki, JAPAN	8:00 am	5:00 pm
Kochi, JAPAN	8:00 am	5:00 pm
Kobe, JAPAN	6:00 am	6:00 pm
Shimizu, JAPAN	10:00 am	7:00 pm
Tokyo, JAPAN	Disembark	

Inside from \$2,895
Outside from \$3,895
Balcony from \$4,895



Japan, Russia & Alaska 21-Days - May 6 to 26, 2018

Embark on a voyage to remember, exploring the splendors of Japan, crossing the International Date Line and discovering untamed, unforgettable Alaska. In Shimizu, walk through the pine groves of Miho, or enjoy spectacular views of Mount Fuji from the lush, forested hill of Nihondaira. Also cruise the 76-mile-long Hubbard Glacier; you may hear it groaning and creaking and even witness it calving into the sea with a thundering roar. And discover the small-town charms of Juneau, Alaska's state capital surrounded by wilderness. While there, get up close to Mendenhall Glacier, spotting wildlife and soaking up the breathtaking scenery.

Tokyo, JAPAN	Embark	5:00 pm
Shimizu, JAPAN	8:00 am	6:00 pm
At Sea	---	---
Aomori, JAPAN	8:00 am	6:00 pm
Hakodate, JAPAN	8:00 am	6:00 pm
Muroran, JAPAN	8:00 am	4:00 pm
At Sea	---	---
At Sea	---	---
Petropavlovsk, RUSSIA	7:00 am	7:00 pm
At Sea	---	---
At Sea	---	---
Cross International Dateline	---	---
At Sea	---	---
Seaward, ALASKA	8:00 am	5:00 pm
HUBBARD GLACIER	am	pm
GLACIER BAY	am	pm
Skagway, ALASKA	7:00 am	8:00 pm
Juneau, ALASKA	7:00 am	11:00 pm
Icy Strait Point, ALASKA	am	pm
Ketchikan, ALASKA	8:00 am	4:00 pm
At Sea	---	---
Seattle, WASHINGTON	Disembark	

Inside from \$3,395
Outside from \$4,595
Balcony from \$5,695

Cruises are aboard NORWEGIAN JEWEL - Airfare, transfers and any optional hotel stays are additional.



EXPO CRUISES & TOURS

Tel. (416) 439-6311 ❖ Toll Free 1-888-819-7447

2 Gloucester Street, Suite 204, Toronto, ON M4Y 1L5

www.Expo-Cruises.com e-mail: Info@Expo-Cruises.com



This is your castle.

The North Atlantic

is your moat.



fogo island inn
Newfoundland, Canada