

Irish Arts & Entertainment



Vol. XXXV # 2

February ~ Feabhra

2026

World-renowned Cast Joins Tour of St. Patrick's Day In Ireland



Top L-R: Layla Giles, Megan Smith, Anne Colliton.
Middle Two: Sumaia Jackson and Aubrey Stagnaro



St. Brigid of Ireland

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IMMORTAL MAN

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Irish Film and Television Awards
The 23rd anniversary IFTA
Ceremony will take place on
Friday, February 20th, 2026 at the
Dublin Royal Convention Centre,
hosted by comedian, actor and
broadcaster Kevin McGahern
on the right. >>>>
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Irish Arts & Entertainment

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Letter from the Publisher

Dear Readers,

The Irish Season is upon us!! Sunday, February 1 is the Feast Day of St. Brigid! This date also marks the start of the "IRISH SEASON through March!

We are quite serious about doing our best to keep you up to date on All Things Irish and in particular Irish Concerts, Films and Events. We invite our readers and subscribers to contact us with Links and Listings for our Irish and Celtic Calendars and now TRIVIA!

A quick glimpse into our plans for the future. This issue we celebrate the Feast Day of St. Brigid and we kick off the Irish Season. We will follow up with that in our Mid-month update. On to March which as usual will revolve around St, Patrick's Day and our well received annual Irish Music issue.

In April, we will introduce our new format.

Our plan is to bring back some old features and to introduce some new ones. We want to focus on the Arts and Entertainment but in this age, it is hard to do only that so we have an idea. In our mid-month issue, we will cover a bit more news and opinion, We are bring ing back our Pan Irish Report. In the first of the month issue we will be pure Arts, Culture, Entertainment, Films . History,Music and Travel.

As a dual citizen of both the Republic and the Republics and Commonwealths of the UNITED STATES, I watch the current World and political news, trade tremors and belligerance with a foot in both worlds. While the Dáil echoes with calls to 'stand firm' and the White House threatens a 'Greenland Tax,' those of us in the Irish-American publishing world know the truth: we are the connective tissue. Our business isn't just in pixels and posts. it reflects our hopes. The most important one of them is the preservation of a partnership that is 'deeper than any one person'—even a President." A lot of the rhetoric and actions coming out of our leaders now are shameful. We all need to work to bring harmony back to the soul of *Amerikay!*

As we move ahead; we will keep offering a fantastic value to our subscribers. Right now we are offering our readers a \$5. per year discount on our one year subscription. Mention GOOD DEAL when you call or Email us. Please, support our work by subscribing!

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Publisher

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More INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

Owen Dara's New Film Screening at Festivals
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Six Nations Rugby Guide & Schedule

See pages 20 & 21

You might have noticed that our Calendar is growing!

Submissions for Calendar, Celtic Camera and Travel Features are now being accepted: Send ideas and Story Submissions with jpegs and captions

irishmissive@gmail.com

Coming In March
The Irish Wave
At The Oscars

February 1st Marks the First Day of the Irish Season!

HAPPY SAINT BRIGID of KILDARE'S DAY

The Great Weaver who by bridging Pagan Roots and her contemporary Social Justice brought great progress and change to Ireland. The transition from the Goddess Brigid (Imbolc) to the Saint, and her role as a leader and protector is one of Ireland's greatest stories.

St. Brigid of Kildare and the Movement Reclaiming Irish Women's History

There is a significant contemporary movement in Ireland—spanning academia, grassroots activism, and government—dedicated to telling the stories of women who were sidelined in traditional historical narratives.

The turning point for the modern

recognition of Ireland's matron saint arrived in 2023, when the Irish Government officially established St. Brigid's Day as a national holiday. First announced in early 2022, the move was designed to honor both the Christian saint and the ancient Celtic festival of Imbolc, marking the definitive arrival of spring and the season of renewal. This historic designation was the fruit of the tireless *Herstory* campaign, spearheaded by activist and poet Laura Murphy.



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Murphy wanted to ensure that Brigid's legacy and the contributions of women throughout Irish history were finally given equal footing in the national calendar.

As the first Irish public holiday named in honor of a woman, the celebration holds a unique place in the country's cultural landscape. It is observed annually on the first Monday in February—unless the feast day itself, February 1st, falls on a Friday, in which case the holiday is observed then. By adding this tenth public holiday, Ireland not only moved closer to the European average for annual leave but also created a symbolic bridge between the nation's pre-Christian roots and its contemporary identity, cementing Brigid's role as a timeless figure of light and leadership.

A True Ecclesiastical Trendsetter

Brigid had great authority as historians now understand that in her role as an Abbess, she held the status of a Bishop. Historical records suggest she presided over a "double monastery" of both men and women, a rare position of gender-equal authority in the early Church. Modern feminist movements in Ireland use Brigid as a symbol of the "protector of the poor" and a healer, linking her ancient works to modern social issues.

Beyond her administrative rank, Brigid revolutionized the physical and spiritual map of Ireland by establishing Kildare as a premier center of learning and craftsmanship. She was instrumental in founding a school of art, which famously produced the "Book of Kildare"—a lost manuscript described by contemporaries as having such intricate, celestial beauty that it seemed *"interwoven by the work of angels rather than humans."* In addition to her amazing work in establishing a

scriptorium and funding it in Kildare, she most likely saw and approved the illuminated manuscripts that were made there. Also credited to her is St. Brigid's Cross, woven from rushes, is a tradition that persists in nearly every Irish home to this day—a "fact" of folklore that has outlasted even the sturdiest stone cathedrals.

As the Abbess and founder of the Double Monastery, we know that Brigid had building and organizational skills well beyond belief. The Catholic viewpoint is that these gifts were from Divine Inspiration. After putting many hours into researching and reading about St. Brigid; my take is that she was genius level smart and tireless. She had great faith and faith does work wonders so probably all of the above!

Another firm historical fact about Brigid is that she made contributions to the structure of the liturgy; she is credited with appointing a consecrated bishop to work alongside her, ensuring that her community was a self-sufficient spiritual powerhouse. By blending traditional Gaelic hospitality with Christian monasticism, she didn't just lead a church; she engineered a cultural shift that redefined how the Irish practiced their faith for centuries.

Brigid's Life and Her Relationship with St. Patrick

The historical timeline places Brigid slightly later than Patrick, and their lives probably overlapped. The big question and mystery is always, "Did they know each other?" Sadly, the answer is lost. Traditional hagiography (the study of the Saints such as the Book of Armagh) suggests they met, and some legends say Patrick baptized her or one of her parents. However, modern historians generally view these stories as "pious fictions" created by later monks to link the two great Irish provinces (Armagh and Kildare) and solidify the Church's structure.



ST. BRIGID OF
IRELAND

February 1st

ST. BRIGID PRAY FOR US

Brigid's Kildare Met A Turbulent End

Throughout the 9th and 10th centuries, the "City of the Oaks" became a frequent target for Viking raiders, who were lured by the monastery's wealth and its famous scriptorium. It is widely believed that the Book of Kildare—that "angelic" masterpiece—was lost during one of these raids, perhaps consumed by fire or cast into the sea. Then in the time of the Reformation, the great double monastery was dissolved, and the legendary Eternal Flame, which Brigid's nuns had kept burning for over a thousand years, was finally extinguished in the 16th century.

Sadly, Ireland and the immense store of art and knowledge which the Irish created has been hit really hard by the cruelty of history. First the Vikings, then the Reformation and finally Cromwell and his savage hoards! The bottom line, her Sacred Book and Abbey have been lost to the shadows of time but her legacy is alive and well! The "Gaelic Goddess-Saint" remains a bright, defiant light in the history of the early Church, a woman who held the power of a Bishop, the heart of a healer, and the vision of a Saint!

The Relic Trail

After the Viking threats grew too great, Brigid's remains were reportedly moved to Downpatrick to be buried alongside St. Patrick and St. Columba. Though she was originally laid to rest in a magnificent shrine at the

church she founded in Kildare, Saint Brigid's remains were not to stay there. In the 9th century, as Viking incursions became more common and began to threaten the safety of not just seacoast settlements but Ireland's inland monasteries, her relics were moved to the ecclesiastical stronghold of Downpatrick. There, she was re-interred alongside Saint Patrick and Saint Columba, all three of Ireland's most revered saints. These three saints were then and are to this day a very popular and powerful spiritual triumvirate. They are even celebrated in the traditional rhyme:

*"In Down, three saints one grave do fill:
Patrick, Brigid, and Colmcille."*

Interestingly, while these three are the patron saints of Ireland, they were not contemporaries; Brigid had already passed away decades before Columba reached his prime. It was the necessity of war, rather than personal acquaintance, that eventually brought the "Mary of the Gael" to her final resting place at Down Cathedral, creating one of Ireland's most significant sites of pilgrimage.

*Happy Saint Brigid's Day!
Jim McDonough*

Both Kildare and Downpatrick are well worth a visit:

St. Brigid's Cathedral & Round Tower

www.stbrigidscathedral.com

The Saint Patrick Centre (Downpatrick)

www.saintpatrickcentre.com

The Hare and The Hounds



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Kerry Irish Productions and the 2026 tour of *St. Patrick's Day in Ireland*

A Celebration of Spirit, Song and Sisterhood

As we kick off the Irish Season this February 1st on St. Brigid's Day, we find ourselves at the intersection of tradition and talent. This year, we have elected to pay homage to the extraordinary women who are an integral part of the St. Patrick's Day in Ireland Tour. More than just a music and dance stage show, this production serves as a vibrant testament to the enduring legacy of female artistry.

Cast member Megan Smith sets the tone beautifully for this Special Issue, capturing the heart of why we perform:

"I have always felt that sharing a song with others is a truly joyful experience, especially when we all join together to sing out," Megan shares. "Thinking about this on St. Brigid's Day seems particularly fitting since she is a Patron Saint of Poets, and a song is simply verse put to music. I am thrilled to be a part of the musicians and

dancers of Kerry Irish Productions' St. Patrick's Day in Ireland 2026 concert, bringing a joyful experience to audiences across California."

The Legacy of St. Brigid

Megan's reflection mirrors the very spirit of St. Brigid herself. While history knows her as a leader and healer, she is also celebrated for her belief that the "Good of God" is best reflected through hospitality and the harmony of a community. Brigid famously viewed music and poetry not as mere entertainment, but as essential tools for the soul—believing that when women raise their voices in song or movement, they cultivate a "heavenly joy" that heals and strengthens the fabric of society.

In keeping with this theme, we invite you to read our Irish Poetry Corner in this issue. You will find the iconic poem *The Heavenly Banquet*. Attributed to St. Brigid, this verse vividly imagines a feast of faith where music and cheer are as vital as the bread on the table.

March 11-17

Experience the best of Ireland as the explosive sound of bodhrán, fiddles, uilleann pipes, guitar and dancing feet roar through the theatre. This treat for the whole family features multi-instrumentalists from the Kerry Traditional Band, as well as singers and dancers in an unforgettable Irish night... Be ready to leave the theatre with a jig in your step!

In the true spirit of Ireland you can Sing Your Heart out with the band on some great Irish songs including: *The Wild Rover, Ireland's Call, Raglan Road, Leaving of Limerick and Black Velvet Band*.

The presenter of this amazing Irish extravaganza is Kerry Irish Productions. It is an Irish-owned production company based in Los Angeles, founded by Irish

native Margaret O'Carroll. The company is dedicated to promoting Irish culture through music, song, dance, and storytelling, and is well-known for its national tours and PBS specials, including *An Irish Christmas and Celtic Wings*.

St. Patrick's Day In Ireland:

The 2026 California Tour features a series of shows across the Golden State! Delighted audiences experience a treat for the whole family that features world champion Irish dancers, the Kerry Irish Traditional Band and a company of talented Irish Singers!



"St. Patrick's Day in Ireland delivers a night of rip-roaring music, song and dance!"

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Meet the Cast

St. PATRICK'S DAY IN IRELAND 2026

Anna Colliton (Bodhrán, Percussion)



Anna Colliton's distinctive and imaginative playing has made her one of the leading exponents of the bodhrán, the traditional Irish frame drum. Anna has appeared with Eileen Ivers and Cherish the Ladies, among others, served as a substitute with the original company of the Broadway hit "Come From Away," and completed a three-year residency at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Anna has performed and taught at dozens of festivals across the country, including The Swannanoa Gathering Celtic Week, The O'Flaherty Irish Music Retreat, Catskills Irish Arts Week, and the North American Comhaltas Convention.

Closer to home, Anna performs regularly with Eileen Ivers and the Brigideens, and in local venues throughout New York City. As a teacher dedicated to advancing the tradition of bodhrán playing, Anna

inspires students of all levels to incorporate both 'the old' and 'the new' into their playing, emphasizing the importance of personal style in traditional music.

Anna is also the author of "*Hide and Seek: An ears-first approach to interpreting rhythm and variation in Irish traditional melody for the bodhrán*," which is a funny little bodhrán book for intermediate and advanced players.

Sumaia Jackson (Fiddle)



With driving groove and a smooth, open sound, fiddler and tunestress Sumaia Jackson is a quintessential modern West Coast fiddler. Jackson weaves together Old-Time, Bluegrass, Swing, and Celtic traditions with an easy virtuosity and melodic elegance. Based out of Santa Cruz, Jackson has toured throughout the US, Canada, Sweden, and the UK with Jayme Stone's Folklife and Laura Cortese & the Dance Cards, performing and teaching at music festivals and music camps along the way. She has also been a member of the Real

Vocal String Quartet based out of Berkeley CA, involved in writing and recording music with artists from all around the world. Over the past two years, she has been with Kerry Irish Productions for the St Patrick's Day tour, as well as taught at Big Sur Fiddle Camp in California. And in addition, has focused her musical energy on a duo with guitarist and singer, Colin Cotter. Jackson holds a Bachelor's degree from Berklee College of Music, in American Roots Music.

Megan Smith (Vocals, Bodhrán)



Megan Smith lives in the West of Ireland. She is deeply involved in the world of traditional Irish music and credits Annascaul, Co. Kerry, in the heart of the Dingle Peninsula and home to a diverse artisan community as the source of her musical inspiration and her spiritual home. Megan was born and raised in Charleston, South Carolina. While living in Charleston, she was heavily involved in the organization and planning of traditional music sessions, house concerts and workshops, and concert series that featured some of the great traditional musicians including Liz Carroll, Martin Hayes, Liz Knowles, Andrew-Finn Magill, John Doyle (Solás), Seamus Begley (button accordion), Gerry O'Connor and Tony De Marco. Megan is delighted to join Kerry Irish Productions'

Layla Giles (Irish Dance)



Layla Giles began Irish dance at the age of four and has been competing and performing for more than thirteen years. Training under Jeannie Thornton with Clan Rince School of Irish Dance in San Diego, she is a World Qualifier, Western Region US Top 10, and placed in the Top 40 at the North American Irish Dance Nationals. In addition to her competitive

achievements, Layla is a featured dancer with the Na Scéalaithe Irish Dance Collective and made her debut with Kerry Productions in the acclaimed St. Patrick's Day in Ireland in March 2025. Most recently, she traveled to Dublin to perform on the iconic Gaiety Theatre stage as part of the Riverdance Summer Showcase. This season, she is delighted to return to the stage with

Aubrey Stagnaro (Dance)



Aubrey Stagnaro began Irish Dance at the age of four and has been competing and performing for over ten years.

Dancing with Celtic Irish Dance Academy, under the direction of Maeve Coughlan .

She is a five-time World Qualifier, has placed in the Western Region US Top 10, and placed in the Top 20 at the North American Irish Dance Nationals. In addition to competing throughout the U.S. and

Internationally, Aubrey has performed on national television, in the Hollywood Christmas Parade, the Jennifer Hudson Show, and in 2022 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion as part of the 62nd. Annual Holiday Celebration. Aubrey has become a familiar face with Kerry Irish Productions and in 2025 took on the role of Assistant Dance Captain in An Irish Christmas as well as continuing to be featured in the show. Fans remember her for her authentic and poised rendition of The Wren in several Christmas productions.

Aubrey is a Varsity Cheerleader for both Gameday and Competition Cheer, and a Gold Award Girl Scout.





Brigid (or Brigit). In Old Irish, the name means "Exalted One," was born in 451 and died in 525. Her remains lie in Downpatrick Cathedral.

We share here St. Brigid's most famous work which is also called *Brigid's Feast!* It is a vibrant, earthy poem where she envisions a great feast for the Holy Family and the heavenly host.

The imagery is perfectly Irish as she wishes for a "great lake of ale" and "vessels of charity" to give away. Her style bridges the gap between the pagan Celtic reverence for the land and the Christian focus on service. Because she lived during a transition period in Ireland, her verses often blend themes of agricultural fertility with spiritual abundance.

The Heavenly Banquet

Attributed to St. Brigid of Kildare

I should like a great lake of beer
For the King of Kings.

I should like the angels of Heaven
To be drinking it through time eternal.

I should like the refreshments of peace
To be at the disposal of the happy assembly.

I should like vessels of charity
To be distributed to them.

I should like caves of every kind of belief
To be filled with the beverage of love.

I should like the people of Heaven
To gather From all the world to my feast.

I should like the three Marys of
illustrious renown

To be in our company.

I should like the people of Heaven to be sitting
And drinking with me for all eternity.

For a reliable collection that includes the "Lake of Ale" poem and other works attributed to her, look for: "The Life of St. Brigid: Abbess of Kildare" by Cogitosus (Note: Cogitosus was a 7th-century monk whose "Vita" is the earliest source of her stories and prayers.)

For a more modern poetic translation of her spirit and verses: "The Book of St. Brigid" by Colm Toibin and various contributors (often includes the most famous translated poems).

We invite
submissions to the
Irish Poetry Corner

A poem or saga in the Irish Bardic Tradition are both considered. We prefer shorter works to fit on a page but we make exceptions

E-Mail us:

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The 23 Annual Irish Film & Television Academy Awards are set for Friday, February 20 in Dublin at the Dublin Royal Convention Centre.

Comedian and broadcaster Kevin McGahern returns for his second year as host.

The legendary Ciarán Hinds will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The IFTAs were started in 1999 to stimulate original and creative production and encourage excellence in the Irish film and television industry. Often referred to as "The Irish Oscars," the awards have grown alongside Ireland's booming reputation as a global storytelling hub. In 2015, the academy split the ceremony into two separate events—one for Film & Drama and another for Television—to better spotlight the specific achievements in each sector.

2026 Major Nominations

Best Film Nominees:

Christy (Leading the field with 14 nominations)

Saipan (12 nominations)

Aontas

Blue Moon

Four Mothers

Steve

Lead Actor – Film:

Cillian Murphy (Steve)

Daniel Day-Lewis (Anemone)

Colin Farrell (Ballad of a Small Player)

Steve Coogan (Saipan)

Éanna Hardwicke (Saipan)

Daniel Power (Christy)

Lead Actress – Film:

Jessie Buckley (Hamnet)

Fionnula Flanagan (Four Mothers)

Fiona Shaw (Hot Milk)

Carolyn Bracken (Horseshoe)

Carrie Crowley (Aontas)

Eleanor O'Brien (Báite)

California residents Eimear Noone & Craig Stuart Garfinkle

"A Night for Legends"

Eimear Noone and her husband, Craig Stuart Garfinkle, have been nominated together in the Original Music category for their work on the film *Báite*. Noone is well known to our readers for her work as a conductor and composer of Video Game Music. She was also the conductor for Patrick Cassidy's Irish Mass at the First Congregational Church in Los Angeles on Saturday, March 19, 2022. It was a major highlight of Ireland Week that year, with Eimear Noone at the podium.

This nomination highlights the couple's continued influence on the global stage. Having previously contributed their immense talents to Ireland Week festivities, they now find themselves in the spotlight once again, proving that their creative partnership remains a powerhouse within the industry.

Ciarán Hinds to be Honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at 23rd, Annual IFTA Ceremony

Belfast-born Ciarán Hinds is a formidable presence across stage and screen. Renowned for his versatility and commanding voice, he has portrayed iconic figures like Julius Caesar in *Rome* and Mance Rayder in *Game of Thrones*. His diverse filmography ranges from *Persuasion* and *Munich* to *Harry Potter* and his Oscar-nominated performance in *Belfast*. A veteran of the Royal Shakespeare Company, he remains a master of his craft.



Owen Dara's Latest Film, *A Lesser Gift* Screening at Film Festivals

Owen Dara's latest feature film *A Lesser Gift* has begun its festival run. Kicking off at the Austin Revolution Film Festival in January 2026 where it picked up the award for Best Actress (Jessica Lancaster) and Best Actor/Director (Owen Dara)!

A Lesser Gift is also set to screen at the Chicago Irish Film Festival at the end of February and will be featured in the Covellite Film Festival in Montana in April.

The film has been years in the making and was filmed mostly pre-pandemic. The final shots were taken in the summer of 2022. Post-production was completed in 2025, including the soundtrack, penned by Owen Dara. Just as with soundtracks for previous films (*Choosing Signs*; *The HolyFail*). Owen sings vocals along with actress/singer Virginia Williams, and for this project in particular, he has also brought other singers on board, including Pat Nason, Catharine Beck, and Nicky Allado. "All of these musical artists I admire," says Owen, "so I was delighted when they agreed to be part of the film. They all have unique voices, and Nicky has a wealth of experience singing different genres, including multiple roles with LA Opera. Being in the studio with her was like a master class in how to get maximum value from each take. I love being around singers and actors who really know their craft, which not only makes my job easier, but also helps me

There is certainly a wealth of talent in each of their productions, and much of the talent has followed along with Owen and Jessica from their previous films. These included cinematographer Yoshikatsu Yasaki and actors Stiofan Wyley, Alan Riordan, Frank Prendergast, and Máirín Prendergast. Unlike their first two feature films, the production crew ventured outside Cork for a portion of the filming of *A Lesser Gift*, capturing beautiful scenery from Wicklow, Waterford, Wexford and Kerry. Even so, the film is mostly set in the filmmaker's hometown of Cork. When asked which of his films is his personal favorite, Owen responds, "This one of course... although that's true



Jessica Lancaster and Owen Dara

of the other ones, too... It's hard to pick a favorite as they are all different in their own way, and really a big part of our journey". These filmmakers are excited to travel to each of the upcoming festivals and to celebrate the film. Jessica and Owen, who are a real-life couple, consider filmmaking to be a big part of their relationship. They work hard on their projects and they enjoy when the projects are completed and celebrated at festivals and ultimately released in theaters and on streaming platforms. *'A Lesser Gift'* is the story of a couple who are facing challenges after having their first child. Their situation is further complicated when an American woman (Jessica Lancaster) enters their lives. Set during Ireland's economic downturn, it explores the lead characters' inability to move forward in their lives without having dealt with their pasts. Although mostly a drama, it contains a healthy spattering of Irish humor indicative of its writer/director's style. The film is set in picturesque Ireland, written and directed by Owen Dara, starring Alan Riordan, Stiofán Wyley, Jessica Lancaster, Paula McGlinchey, Michael O'Mahony, Máirín Prendergast, Ber Power, Frank Prendergast, Rosie O'Regan, Marie O'Donovan. Director of Photography Yoshikatsu Yasaki. Producers Jessica Lancaster, Owen Dara, and Richard Warren Baker.

www.owendara.com



Paula McGlinchey, and Owen Dara in *A Lesser Gift*



On location in Cork

March Release Dates Set

Peaky Blinders Sequel, The Immortal Man

By order of the Peaky Blinders, the Shelby saga is officially moving to the big screen. Netflix has confirmed that the feature-film sequel, Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man, will arrive in select theaters in the US and Ireland on March 6, 2026, followed by a global streaming debut on March 20.

This eagerly anticipated film takes place in 1940 against the harrowing backdrop of the Birmingham Blitz, the film finds Tommy Shelby (Cillian Murphy) emerging from self-imposed exile. As the Luftwaffe's bombs fall, Tommy faces a "destructive reckoning" that forces him to choose between the legacy he built and the family he loves.

"Irish Talent" leads the Charge in the Peaky Blinders Finale; while the setting is Birmingham, the heart of The Immortal Man is undeniably Irish.

Pictured on the right: Cillian Murphy and Barry Keoghan >>

Cillian Murphy (Thomas Shelby): The Cork native returns not only as the iconic lead but also as a Producer, ensuring the

Shelby story ends on his terms.

Barry Keoghan in a highly anticipated new role, the Banshees of Inisherin star is rumored to represent a "new generation" of the gang.

The release in theaters will occur on March 6 in Ireland, the UK and the United States. Then Worldwide on NETFLIX on March 20. In our next issues, we will cover the film in depth.

For more: [Netflix.com/Tudum](https://www.netflix.com/Tudum).

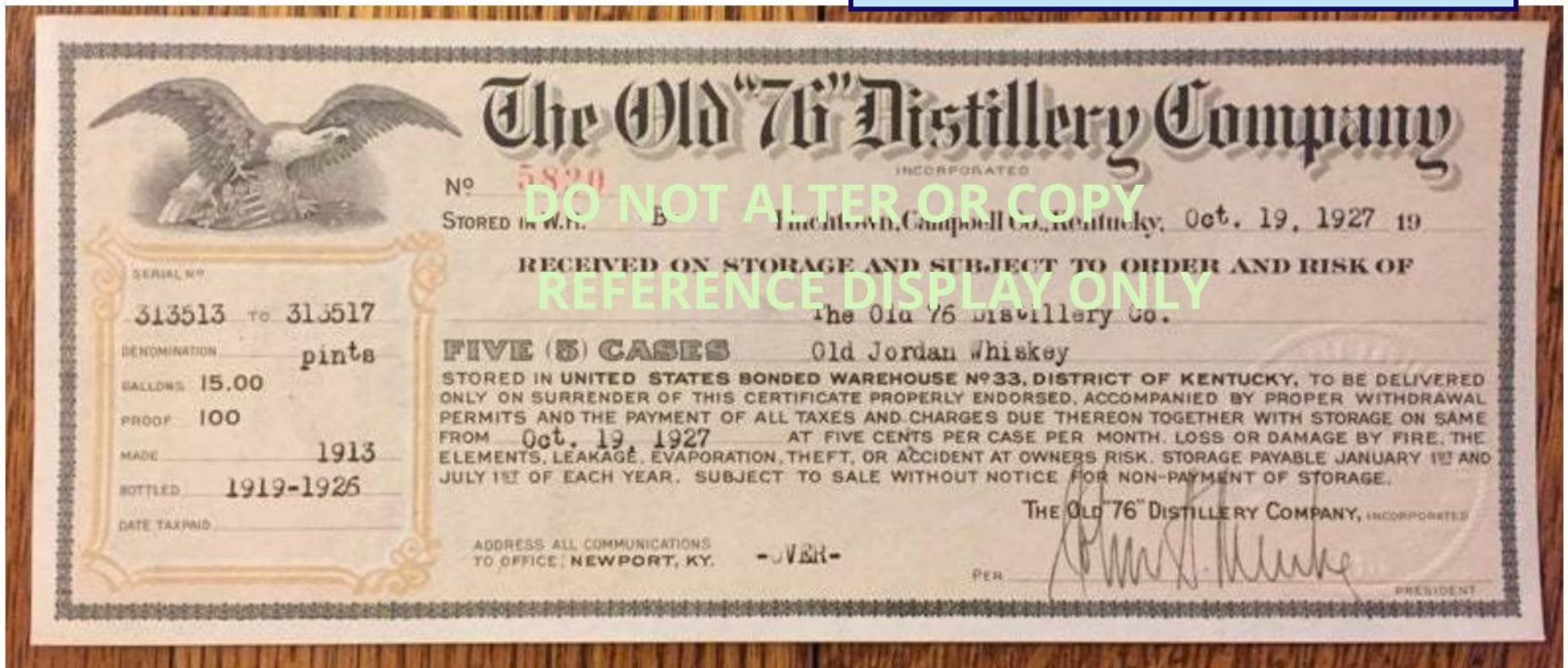


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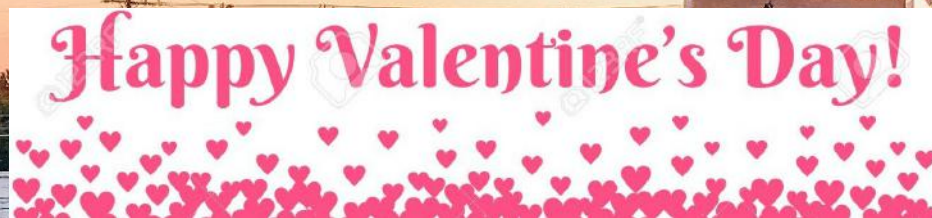


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Momentum Builds Behind Irish Unity as Debate Shifts From “If” to “How”

Submitted By John McNally

Late 2025–early 2026 has marked a notable change in the conversation around Irish unity, with political debate increasingly focused not on the abstract possibility of reunification, but on the practical steps required to prepare for it.

The idea of a united Ireland has long ebbed and flowed in Irish political life, but recent developments suggest the issue is entering a more concrete phase. Driven by demographic change, the long shadow of Brexit, and renewed political pressure, Irish unity is now being discussed less as a distant aspiration and more as a scenario that governments north and south may need to actively plan for.

In January 2026, Sinn Féin made its most direct intervention yet, calling on the Irish Government to elevate Irish unity to a central priority during Ireland’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union, due to commence in July 2026. Framed as a pivotal diplomatic moment, the presidency was presented as an opportunity to internationalize debate on Ireland’s constitutional future, especially in the context of Northern Ireland’s involuntary removal from the European Union following Brexit.

That argument gained institutional weight in December 2025, when motions calling on the Irish Government to plan and prepare for a united Ireland passed in both the Dáil and the Seanad.

While the motions stopped short of demanding a border poll, their passage marked a symbolic shift. For the first time, parliamentary majorities formally endorsed the principle that preparation itself is necessary, regardless of when—or whether—a referendum is called.

Public opinion data underscores both the opportunity and the challenge. In the Republic of Ireland, polling through 2025 consistently shows strong support for unity, with roughly 65% of voters indicating they would back reunification in a referendum. In Northern Ireland, the picture is more nuanced.

Support for Irish unity has increased, particularly among Catholic voters, contributing to a broader rise in nationalist confidence. While opposition remains strong among Northern Protestants, recent polling suggests a gradual shift in attitudes toward the process itself, with a growing minority acknowledging that a border poll is something that should at least be planned for or openly debated. With Catholic and Protestant populations now broadly comparable in size, attention is increasingly turning to the estimated 10–15 per cent of Northern Ireland’s population who identify as neither, including immigrants and non-aligned voters, and who may ultimately prove decisive in any future referendum. Former DUP leader Peter Robinson added to this recalibration when he suggested that unionism needs to prepare seriously for the prospect of a

referendum. While not endorsing unity, his remarks reflected a broader recognition that demographic and political trends can no longer be ignored.

Perhaps the most significant shift is thematic. The debate is increasingly framed around the practicalities of a united Ireland rather than its symbolism. Economic integration, public services, healthcare, housing, and taxation are now central to the conversation.

The concept of an “all-island economy” has gained traction, particularly as businesses and policymakers assess the inefficiencies created by post-Brexit trade barriers. Proponents argue that reunification could restore full EU membership to the entire island, unlock economic efficiencies, and allow for coordinated responses to shared challenges—from infrastructure to climate policy



Submitted by John McNally
Our frequent Contributing Writer is insightful and well traveled. McNally is very well known throughout Southern California as an Irish Community activist and organizer. AI was used in compiling some research for this feature

America's Role

In every phase of Ireland's revolutionary and evolutionary journey, Ireland's exiled children in America have played a decisive role. From supporting Ireland's War of Independence against Britain, to advancing fair employment through the McBride Principles, Irish America has consistently influenced change. That legacy continued with President Clinton's determined involvement in facilitating the Irish Peace Process, and more recently with President Biden's insistence that post-Brexit negotiations protect the open border in Northern Ireland.

Today, Irish nationalists once more call on America to honor its historic commitment by supporting the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, including the right to a referendum on the island's constitutional future and the path to Irish unity.

Friends of Sinn Féin have convened over a dozen conferences in recent months, stretching from Toronto to

San Francisco, to discuss the path ahead and how supporters can play a meaningful role.



The Commission on the Future of Ireland hosted 23 Public Events! Thousands of attendees across the world!



The momentum for Irish Unity is growing and the conversation is only getting louder! Check out the annual report @ sinnfein.ie

The pulse of the people, what are the thoughts of public figures on the topic of a United Ireland

By Irish Arts with research using Gemini 3 AI Pro

Here are diverse quotes from the last year (2025-2026) reflecting the current spectrum of opinion in Ireland and abroad:

The Pro-Unity Perspective

"A united Ireland is an idea whose moment has come. The question is now no longer, 'How can we afford to unite Ireland?' It is rather: 'How can we afford not to?' ... This generation hears tomorrow coming and steps forward to walk our length of the journey to full nationhood."

— Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin President (October 2025)

The Pragmatic Nationalist

"To me it simply doesn't make sense to have two national football teams on an island this size, never mind two health systems, two education systems, and two governments. As an Irish citizen, I want the island of Ireland to be reunified under a government for all

our people."

— James McClean, Irish International Footballer (January 2026)

The "Not Now" / Cautionary Stance

"Unity is a legitimate aspiration, but it is not a priority for me in my role as Taoiseach. We have to be careful not to engage in partitionist short-termism, but we must first ensure that politics is actually working in Northern Ireland before we talk about constitutional upheaval."

— Simon Harris, Taoiseach (Reflected in statements through late 2025/early 2026)

The Skeptical Southerner (Media/Average Person Sentiment)

"The South's creaking system of housing and healthcare isn't capable of managing the immense practical problems that unification would bring. Unification—if it is not to be chaotic, costly, and potentially violent—demands a much more robust Southern state than the one that currently exists."

— Fintan O'Toole, Journalist

Conclusion on next page

THE PULSE. Conclsion**The Unionist Re-imagining**

"A border poll is going to happen at some point. Among my friends, who are all boys who are Protestants—well, men, we're all 54—they would really consider now what the notion of a new union of Ireland might look like, and I think there's a lot of people that think that."

— James Nesbitt, Northern Irish Actor (Circulated in late 2025 discussions)

The Safeguard Perspective (Former Leadership)

"Reconciliation can only be fully achieved through reunification, provided it includes respect and safeguards for all cultures and the wonderful diversity which exists across Ireland." — Mary McAleese, Former President of Ireland (Foreword to The Irish Unity Dividend, October 2025)

The Historian's Perspective (Skeptical/Cautionary)

"I don't expect a united Ireland during my lifetime... I fear that some government in the near future will pile pressure on the British government to hold a premature, ill-prepared Border poll on unity. And people in the South need to actually want unity with the difficult Northerners, something I have doubts about."

— Diarmaid Ferriter, Professor of Modern Irish History at UCD (July 2025, speaking at the Boyle Arts Festival).

ED NOTE: Diarmaid Ferriter provides a great "reality check" for our readers as he is one of Ireland's most respected historians. His perspective adds a level of intellectual weight to this feature. These quotes illustrate that while the "inevitability" of Irish Reunification is becoming a common theme, the "how" and "when" remain deeply divisive.

We would like to know what our readers are thinking about the prospects of a United Ireland. We will continue this topic in future editions so we plan on sharing your views. Email us at:

irishmissive.com

March is the host month to St. Patrick's Day!

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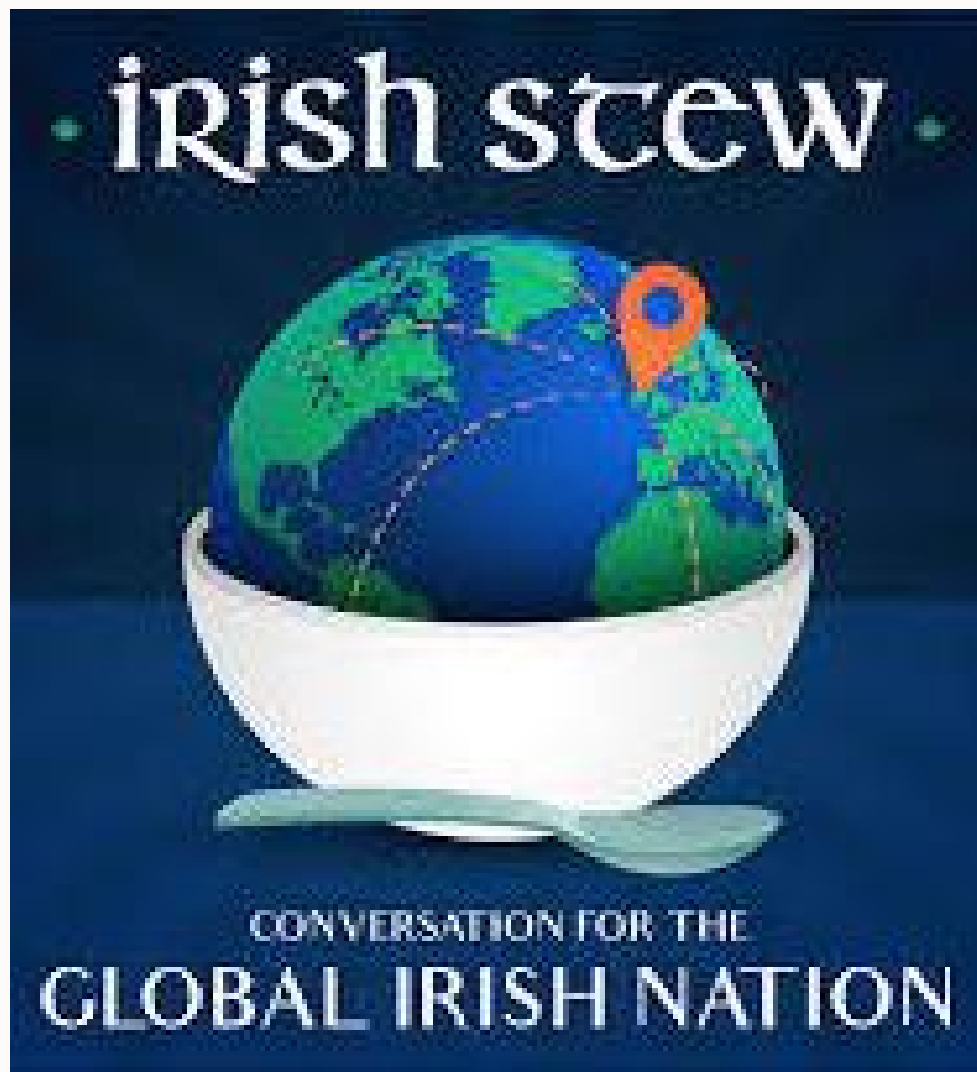
You can find the Irish Stew podcast on all major streaming platforms, including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music, and YouTube. It is also hosted on their website: irishestewpodcast.com

The show is hosted by two Irish-Americans based in New York:

John Lee: A communications and PR professional who is deeply involved in the Irish-American community, having served as the president of the Irish Business Organization of New York.

Martin Nutty: Originally from Dublin, Martin moved to the U.S. on an athletic scholarship. He now works in the financial technology sector and brings the perspective of an Irish-born immigrant.

The podcast is subtitled "Conversation for the Global Irish Nation." It focuses on the "Irish Edge"—the unique qualities, resilience, and creativity of the Irish diaspora and those at home.



Ireland's Chef Paul's Watters Presents:
Prawn and Maire rose Salad on
coconut flatbread Serves 2

You will need

FOR THE FLATBREAD

Body Coconut Flour Flatbread

1/2 cup coconut flour

1/2 cup of self raising flour

3 eggs

2 tbsp olive oil (or melted butter)

Pinch of salt

2 tbsp honey

1-2 tbsp water (as needed)

The Method

Coconut Flatbread

Mix together the eggs and salt

Stir in coconut flour and self raising flour, honey until smooth.

Add water gradually until you get a thick but spreadable batter.

Heat a non-stick pan over medium heat.

Spoon batter in and spread thin like a pancake.

Cook 2-3 minutes each side until golden.

Keep warm while you cook the rest.



ABOUT CHEF PAUL

Chef Paul Watters is an international chef from Belfast, Northern Ireland, with nearly 30 years of experience in the culinary industry.

His career began at 17, and after formal training, he worked in several prestigious kitchens around the world, including The Savoy Hotel in London and the Sydney Opera House in Australia.

After traveling and gaining extensive international experience, Watters has returned to his hometown of Belfast. He is focused on making cooking accessible to home cooks by sharing his expertise.

Food Column & Online Work

Food Column: In addition to his regular feature in this publication, he writes a regular food column called "PLATING UP" for Belfast Media

belfastmedia.com

The column's goal is to "take the fear out of cooking" by providing easy-to-follow, accessible recipes for home cooks.

Online Presence: As you noted, he is active on Facebook, where he runs a page and blog called "[Simple, Tasty, Healthy by PW](#)." Through this platform, he shares recipes, tips, and inspiration, often focusing on using local Northern Irish ingredients and helping people cook delicious meals on a budget

You will need

Prawn Salad

200–250g cooked prawns, peeled
 Mixed salad leaves (rocket, baby gem, spinach)
 1 small carrot, finely grated
 4 cherry tomatoes (halved)
 1 red onion (peeled and sliced fine)
 Lemon/Lime wedges (to serve)

Marie Rosé Sauce

4 tbsp mayonnaise
 1 tbsp tomato ketchup
 ½ tsp Worcestershire sauce
 ½ tsp lemon juice
 Pinch of smoked paprika or cayenne (optional)
 Salt & black pepper to taste

Chef Paul's Tip

If you want to elevate it slightly:

Add chopped dill or chives to the sauce

A tiny splash of brandy or cognac in the Marie Rosé gives it that classic chef touch

The good thing about this dish is you can make the flatbread how big or how small depending on your immediate needs.

ENJOY, Chef Paul

The Method

Prawn Salad

Toss salad leaves and grated carrot lightly with a squeeze of lemon.

Season gently with salt and pepper.

Fold prawns through the Marie rosé sauce until well coated.

To Serve

Place flatbread on a plate.

Add the fresh salad base.

Spoon over the prawns generously.

Finish with a dusting of paprika, cracked black pepper and lemon/lime wedges and a little picked dill

Rosé Sauce

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl.

Taste and adjust seasoning or lemon if needed.

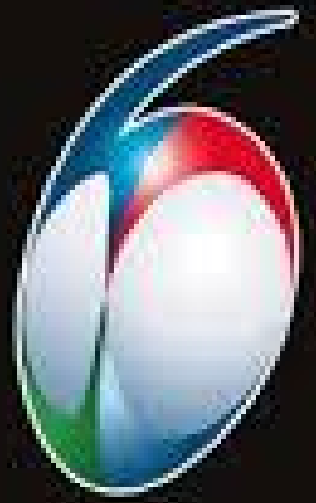
Chill briefly if time allows (helps the flavour).



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GUINNESS SIX NATIONS



"Looking for a reason to hit your local Irish pub early? The Six Nations kicks off Thursday, Feb 5th! Grab a pint and watch Ireland take on France in the tournament opener. It's more than just a game; it's the ultimate gathering of the diaspora.

Check our full schedule to find out when to set your alarms!

2026 Guinness Six Nations: Full Schedule All times listed in EST

<u>Date</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time</u>
Feb 5 (Thu)	France v Ireland	Stade de France, Paris	3:10 PM
Feb 7 (Sat)	Italy v Scotland	Stadio Olimpico, Rome	9:10 AM
Feb 7 (Sat)	England v Wales	Allianz Stadium, London	11:40 AM
Feb 14 (Sat)	Ireland v Italy	Aviva Stadium, Dublin	9:10 AM
Feb 14 (Sat)	Scotland v England	Murray Field, Edinburgh	11:40 AM
Feb 15 (Sun)	Wales v France	Millennium Stadium, Cardiff	10:10 AM
Feb 21 (Sat)	England v Ireland	Allianz Stadium, London	9:10 AM
Feb 21 (Sat)	Wales v Scotland	Millennium Stadium, Cardiff	11:40 AM
Feb 22 (Sun)	France v Italy	Stade Pierre-Mauroy, Lille	11:10 AM
Mar 6 (Fri)	Ireland v Wales	Aviva Stadium, Dublin	10 PM
Mar 7 (Sat)	Scotland v France	Murrayfield, Edinburgh	9:10 AM
Mar 7 (Sat)	Italy v England	Stadio Olimpico, Rome	11:40 AM
Mar 14 (Sat)	Ireland v Scotland	Aviva Stadium, Dublin	10 AM
Mar 14 (Sat)	Wales v Italy	Millennium Stadium, Cardiff	2:40 PM
Mar 14 (Sat)	France v England	Stade de France, Paris	4:10 PM

ABOUT SIX NATIONS RUGBY

By Jim McDonough

The 2026 Guinness Six Nations begins in just over a week, on Thursday, February 5, 2026. This year's tournament is historic as it marks the first time in decades that the competition opens on a Thursday night—a blockbuster clash between Ireland and France in Paris. If Ireland wins, they will immediately be considered a serious contender to win the tournament.

An American's Guide to the Six Nations

For those new to the sport, the Guinness Six Nations is often described as the "Super Bowl of the Northern Hemisphere," but stretched across five grueling rounds. It is the oldest international rugby tournament in the world, dating back to 1883.

The tournament features six European powerhouses: Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, France, and Italy. Unlike American sports leagues with playoffs, the Six Nations is a "round-robin" format. Every team plays everyone else once. The team at the top of the table after five games wins the Championship.

Key Terms to Know:

The Grand Slam: If a team wins all five of its matches, they are crowned Grand Slam champions and they get

the ultimate bragging rights!

The Triple Crown:

A "mini-tournament" within the main event involving only the "Home Nations" (Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales). If one of these beats the other three, they win the Triple Crown.

Super Saturday:

The final day of the tournament where all three final matches are played back-to-back.

Ireland's 2026 Outlook

The "Underdog" Champion?

Ireland secured back-to-back titles in 2023 and 2024 but finished third in 2025 behind France and England. This year, head coach Andy Farrell returns from his hiatus, but he faces a tough road.

The Schedule is tough! Ireland must play their two hardest games—France and England—away from home. In addition to that salient fact, injuries are a problem as well. Several key veterans like Robbie Henshaw and Mack Hansen are currently sidelined.

The Verdict: While bookmakers currently favor France and England, Irish captain Caelan Doris and the squad are totally embracing the "underdog" status. Ireland also has three games at the Aviva Stadium (a fortress for this team), As I mentioned, if Ireland can survive the opening night in Paris, they are very much in the hunt for the title.

The 2026 All Ireland Rugby Team



The View From Ireland

NATO's New Role?

By Maurice Fitzpatrick

As Lord Hastings Ismay, the first Secretary General of NATO (1952–1957), famously said, the purpose of NATO is 'to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down'. Three generations later NATO faces an existential threat, mainly because the US is only in the remotest sense of the word 'in' (and is openly hostile to another member). The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation needs to retain its primary purpose: protecting the Western Alliance through its commitment to collective retaliation in the event of an attack on one of its members. That also means acting as a nuclear deterrent for all the members since many of them are not nuclear powers.

Since the dramatic kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro on January 3rd (following a CIA operation) and the threatened takeover of Venezuela, NATO has been more vulnerable to schism than at any time in its history. What would fracture it beyond repair is a US incursion in Europe. It would be naive not to game a US invasion and takeover of Greenland. Nobody can say they were not warned. On January 9th, Trump announced: 'We are going to do something on Greenland, whether they like it or not, because if we don't do it, Russia or China will take over Greenland, and we're not going to have Russia or China as a neighbour'. Yes, and we need to invade Newfoundland because it could be a conduit for Martians. The Russian or Chinese alleged design on the sparsely populated autonomous island simply does not exist. Nevertheless, Europe and NATO can ill afford to ignore Trump's threat. That applies to Ireland too. As an all-but-defenceless island in the Atlantic (much like Greenland) our continuing to choose isolation over the collective commitment of NATO is getting riskier.

In advance of high-stakes talks in the White House, Danish prime minister Mette Frederiksen implicitly pointed out the hollowness of Trump's excuses to threaten invasion: 'The United States has an agreement with Denmark where they can post more soldiers on the island upon request but [US soldiers] have dropped tremendously in the last decades with only one base left'. Trump wants Greenland not as a beachhead, but as a bauble. Trump did not attend the White House meeting on January 14, which only lasted 50 minutes and was described as 'constructive' (diplomatic-speak for unconstructive).

The new purpose for NATO, for as long as Trump is in the White House, must be to keep the Europeans in, the US down and the Russians out. The first means strenuous commitment from Europe to the alliance through recruitment, investment and military supplies – all underway. No change with the third principle (the UK and France have just expanded their commitment to Ukraine to include troop deployment). It is the shift in the second strategy, regarding the US, that is the most delicate and risky.

For the time being, NATO will die unless it finds a new framework. Equally, the alliance cannot afford to become calcified and ignore shifting realities. Trump's open contempt for international law and national sovereignty is a reality that NATO must face. But how?

Prime Minister of the UK Keir Starmer shared a plan with other European leaders such as Emmanuel Macron and Friedrich Merz. The idea is to pretend to take Trump's notion of Greenland's strategic importance seriously; to act before the US by deploying European troops and ships to Greenland before the US. Greenland is an autonomous



Our regular contributor, Maurice Fitzpatrick is an Irish writer and filmmaker who was educated at Trinity College Dublin.

Fitzpatrick authored the book, *John Hume in America: From Derry to DC* and wrote, directed, and produced the documentary film, *John Hume in America*.

[CLICK to buy or more INFO](#)

territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, which controls Greenland's foreign policy, so Copenhagen could provide cover to NATO by seeking its support in Greenland. As military historian Gwynne Dyer argued: 'if the European Union, Britain and Canada (all NATO members) got their own ships, planes and soldiers into Greenland first at Denmark's invitation, it would make a hostile takeover by the US difficult to impossible'.

That has come to pass. Known as 'Operation Arctic Endurance' (a fair acknowledgement of the weather conditions in Greenland), Denmark implemented the military operation from January 15, its defence ministry announcing the deployment of ships, soldiers and military aircraft also from fellow NATO allies Germany, Norway, France and Sweden.

This is a vaccination-style approach to military operations. And, as with medical vaccinations, it really could work.



ABOVE Danish troops on Artic Exercises in Greenland

[View Continued from page 14](#)

It would also serve to spur Europe into action on defence commensurate with the current threats to the continent from the Kremlin and now, sadly, from the White House as well.

Even so, it is a pity to indulge Trump's King complex because what European (and Canadian) NATO is planning appears to treat Trump's delusional conception of Greenland as a backdoor of Chinese and Russian expansion with a respect that it does not deserve. How strange that must seem to those Americans who are worn out from marching in 'No Kings' demonstrations against the overreach of Trump. It recalls the old parable of King Canute. King Canute ruled England, Denmark and Norway in the 11th century.

All about him were flatterers who encouraged him to think himself invincible, and that the world obeyed his command. Canute, tired of their droning on, instructed that his throne be placed at the seafront, where he sat down and ordered the tide not to come in. When the water duly engulfed his ankles, Canute turned to his retinue and laughed at their flattery. Trump is far too megalomaniacal to think about bursting the bubble around him. He would rather take to Truth Social and promulgate his version of the gravitational pull of the Moon.

Letter from the Publisher, *Continued from page 2*

New and on the way!

New features like the Irish Oracle, The Celtic Crossword Puzzle, IRISH SHORTS,--- tidbits about *All Things Irish* from around Europe and North America and our old & revived: PAN IRISH REPORT.

We want to do it correctly so we need the help of our patrons and subscribers.

In February, we will be sending out several polls and surveys to our subscribers via Email. As, we expand and broaden our scope, we feel that it makes a lot of sense to see what the subscribers who we already cherish, are interested in seeing from us.

We have subscribers who have been with us for over 30 years!

More soon! JMcD



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BREN HOLMES Returns With Second Album

A RUSH TO THE START LINE

To Be Released on CD on Feb. 6th

First Single “Ordinary World”

A Tribute To Fellow Irish Artist Sinéad O’Connor

“I didn’t set out to write a song about her,” says Los Angeles-based singer/songwriter Bren Holmes about the origins of his new single “Ordinary World (for Sinéad)” which is taken from his second album *A Rush To The Start Line* that will be independently released on CD on February 6.

Written during the Summer of 2023 for the follow-up to his debut album *Everything You Never Wanted*, the song’s primary narrative was derailed by the untimely and unexpected death of fellow Irish musician Sinéad O’Connor. “The original idea for the song was completely different, but then I received the sad news that she had passed, and something happened inside me that found myself writing about her life. I just felt her story needed to be told through a song.”

Retelling of her struggles dealing with religion and authority throughout her life, “Ordinary World (For Sinéad)” is a propulsive indiepop song that finds Holmes in an introspective mood, singing “A life forsaken / Misunderstood and suffered for your words / I watched you weeping / I sympathized, but never wiped your tears.” “I wanted a dark, fast song that I thought could pay homage to her in some way,” he recalls. “I told my co-producer Bryan Dobbs that I wanted to go for a melancholic vibe like that of The National and he took that cue and helped me turn it into what we have now with its hard bass and drum foundation.”

While he confesses that he never had a direct relationship with Sinéad other than “a few mutual friends and growing up a few miles away in Ireland,” her life story was the fuel he needed to write the mesmerizing tribute. A chance meeting while he was one of the founding members of celebrated Irish rock band The Young Dubliners (which he left in 2019), however, left an indelible mark on him. “I had met her briefly backstage at a Waterboys concert in Los Angeles in the late ‘90s. She bummed a cigarette from me,” he laughs

Filled with indie rock anthems, ballads and alt-pop bangers, *A Rush To The Start Line* finds the songwriter moving away from the Irish rock/Americana genre that he occupied for the last 25 years. “With this album I felt like I was getting back to writing songs in a style that I had grown up with in Europe,”



Bren Holmes, Second album will be released independently on CD on February 6

Photo

credit: Michael Jacobson

he says. “I just wanted to play songs that came naturally to me and not having to worry about any particular genre. I had only played Irish music when I came to the States in the early ‘90s, but before that, I listened to punk, ska, pop, metal... I’ve always been a fan of a good hook.” Returning to his varied roots was energizing for him. “Since my debut three years ago, I’ve hopefully grown and matured into a better singer/songwriter. I believe I’ve delivered a better sounding album overall.”

With hooks aplenty and a tight grip on melody, *A Rush To The Start Line* is a masterclass in musical artistry. From the upbeat pop of “Don’t Say You Will” (“a simple breakup song that has a happy vibe but carries a heartbreaking story”), to the syncopated pop of “Shine” (“a lil’ love song about how someone can change your life in an instant”), to the breezy indie ballad of “The One” (“about the current state of the world and all its woes...hoping that peace and love will prevail over everything in the end”).

There is also the festive album closer “Song for Christmas” (“a story about a soldier who’s stationed abroad and is missing his loved one during the holidays”), the album showcases Bren’s innate ability of being a master of storytelling. A chiming pop song in the vein of Crowded House or Billy Bragg, the anthemic “Gloria” is a heart-wrenching tale of a runaway teen whose biological family is pleading for her safety from an abusive foster situation. “It’s a message that needs to be heard,” he explains. “I think it was just one of those songs that came onto my lap from above (or elsewhere) and it just wrote itself in a day or so!”

For thirty-plus years, Bren Holmes has been playing his craft as a musician, songwriter, and bandmate. As an original member of the Irish rock band The Young Dubliners, this Los Angeles-by-way-of-Dublin Ireland band has gigged all over the world--and lived to tell about it. Deciding to part ways with the band in 2019, Bren pursued a solo career and released his solo debut, Everything You Never Wanted in 2021 with special guests including Brett Anderson (The Donnas), Cindy Wasserman (Dead Rock West), Jayson Sites (Half Pint Jones), Dave Raven (Keith Richards, Nellie McKay, John Doe) and Rachel Grace (Foo Fighters, Usher, Annie Lennox).

Bren Holmes’ second album A Rush To The Start Line features bassist Paul Bushnell (Tim McGraw), Ward Poulos (Elektrolab), Victor Varadi (Crosscutter), Bob Boulding (The Young Dubliners), Maggie McCabe (Maggie’s Farm), Tim Boland (The Black Watch), Mike Finn (The Unforgiven), Jesse Olema (Dwight Yoakam, Post Malone), Nikki Christie, and Mary Morales. It was co-produced by Bren Holmes and Ben Thomas (Dweezil Zappa) and will be released independently on CD on February 6, 2026.

www.brenholmesmusic.com

What's Being Said about Bren and his new release!

“When you listen to Bren Holmes, everything automatically feels okay.”

- Americana Highways

“Bren Holmes crafts an impressive mix of Celtic rock that pays just as much attention to lyrics as his Irish influences.”

- Glide Magazine

“timeless rock ‘n’ roll, and stripped-down pop, while smacking a wee bit with a kind of Hibernian melancholy and Irish fighting spirit.”

- Spill Magazine

ORDINARY WORLD (FOR SINÉAD)

words and music by Bren Holmes

Hypnotize me,

Let me hear the one that calms my soul

Terrifying

Courage from an army made of one

In defiance

Standing up for voices silenced once

I read your writing

Saw it etched upon your brittle wall...

Chorus

There was no place for you in this ordinary world

You were left here just tryin’ to survive

And they tried to silence you for the contents of your mind,

But in the end you’d spoken the truth

A life forsaken

Misunderstood and suffered for your words

I watched you weeping

I sympathized, but never wiped your tears

You won’t be silenced even as you sleep eternally

I hope you're smiling

And finally free of pain that we could feel

Chorus ii

There was no place for you in this ordinary world

You were left here just tryin’ to survive

And they tried to silence you for the contents of your mind

But in the end you’d spoken the truth...

Bridge

What’re they still hiding x 4

Chorus iii

Some of the tracks are: BREN HOLMES

Gloria

Don't Say You Will

Ordinary World
(For Sinéad)

[Click to listen>>>>](#)

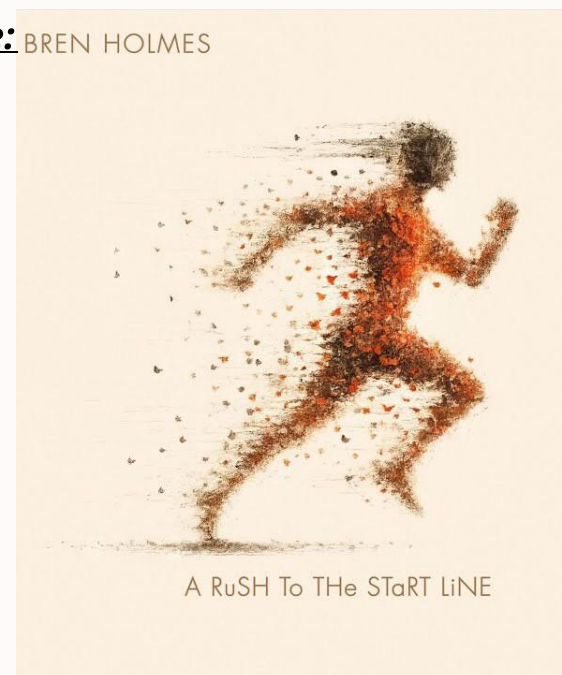
Need Some Time

Shine

Satisfied

This One


Song For Christmas



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The Celtic Crossword Starts In March

We have been working on this idea for weeks and we missed a couple months when we thought we had it almost ready

Our sincere apology for that confusion.

With the help of our team and a few friends, we finally are ready! The first puzzle will be published in our March, 2026 issue.

Then 10 days later, we will post the answer on our website followed by printing the results in our Mid-Month issue.
HAPPY SOLVING!

Updates in the works!

Check back next Monday AM and the calendar will have been updated

Also, the usual Celtic Camera will be back in our Mid-month edition,
Thanks, ED

Celebrating St. Patrick's Day: History, Traditions, and Activities

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Paperback

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The Irish Arts & Entertainment's CELTIC CAMERA

Page 3 (St. Brigid Feature):

Page 16 (The Pulse):

"Emil us at" (should be Email).

Page 27 (Calendar):

"monthssspecial" (should be month's special).

BREN HOLMES

Photo credit: Michael Jacobson



Body text

St. Brigid's Cathedral and Round Tower, Kildare *Picture courtesy of Tourism Ireland*

Please Consider Advertising with us

Irish Arts & Entertainment

For all commercial links/listings & ads; we sell results!

**Contact Jim at Jim@pubguide.com
CELL: 951 216-1493**

St. Valentine's Dublin Connection



In our Mid-Month issue, we will reprint a story from 2022 about St. Valentine in Dudlin. Quite the tale for lovers.

St. Patrick's Day In Ireland Tour Dates Announced!

BEST SEATS NOW ON SALE

www.kerryirishproductions.com

March 11, 7:30pm

Harris Center for the Arts

10 College Parkway,
Folsom CA 95640

Box Office: 916 608-6888

March 13, at 7:30pm

Vacaville Performing Arts Theatre

1010 Ulatis Drive,
Vacaville CA 95687

Box Office: 707.469.4013

March 14 at 7:30pm

Fox Theatre
Visalia. CA

March 15 at 2:00pm

Clark Center for the Performing Arts

487 Fair Oaks Avenue,
Arroyo Grand, CA
Box Office: 805.489.9444

March 16 at 7:30pm

Veterans Memorial
Clovis/Fresno

March 17 at 7:30pm

Lobero Theatre
33 E Canon Perdido St
Box Office: 805 963-0761
Santa Barbara, CA

FRIAR TUCK

Gift Shop and Imports

Next to the **Robin Hood Pub**
and across from Ireland's 32

13638 Burbank Blvd
Sherman Oaks, CA 91401

OPEN 7 DAYS
NOON to 7PM

Updates in the works!

Check back next
Monday AM and the
calendar will have
been updated

Also, the usual
Celtic Camera will be
back in our Mid-month
edition,

Thanks, ED

IRISH ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

First Sunday of the month this year is February 1st, The Irish Season Has Begun!

LÁ FHÉILE BRÍDE

Ag Ceiliúradh Cruthaitheachta na mBan

ST BRIGID'S DAY

Celebrating the Creativity of Women



CIACLA Creative Network

Saturday 21st February @
2pm - 4pm

This month's special guest feature
music by



REMINDER!

St. Patrick's Day in Ireland
Shows The best seats are on sale

Step into a world of rip-roaring Irish music, song, and dance This unforgettable Irish evening features the exhilarating sounds of fiddles, uilleann pipes, flutes, guitar, and bodhráns, all brought to life by vocalists, champion dancers, and multi-instrumentalists. Perfect for audiences of all ages, this celebration of Irish culture is a vibrant journey through Ireland's music, song and dance traditions. Whether you're a lifelong fan or brand new to Irish music, this energetic, heartwarming concert will leave you smiling and tapping your feet. "The epitome of family entertainment, togetherness, and Irish life."

Irish Arts & Entertainment
Tickets and more info:

<https://bit.ly/4a28jG1>

Saturday, March 14,

Open @ NOON ♣

Green Envy St. Paddy's Day
Party ♣ Dr Pepper Park at the
Bridges Roanoke, VA

Roanoke's most envy-worthy St.
Patrick's Day celebration.

Featuring live music from Five
Dollar Shake and The Jared Stout
Band, drink specials, and a festive
atmosphere that's fun for all ages.

Family-friendly environment

Wear green. Bring your crew.
Make some memories. This is the
St. Patrick's Day party you'll be
glad you chose. ♣

Tickets are \$5 in advance OR \$8 at
the gate.

Kids 12 and under are FREE. Credit
cards and cash are accepted at the
gate. Some vendors may only accept
cash.

Will call is located at the entrance to
the right of the ValleyStar Credit
Union box office. **SEATING: You are
welcome to bring your own chair OR
you can rent one for \$5.**



Owen Dara -

<https://owendara.com/>

Please RSVP using this short form:
<https://forms.gle/gxAPsZpkZhpqENrk9>

The CIACLA Creative Network is an
informal space to meet fellow creatives,
plot and devise ideas, laugh, debate,
chat, and build community all with a
drink and nibbles on hand to keep the
conversations flowing.

We hope you can make it and look
forward to seeing you there!

The Liberties of Dublin,
1111 Wilshire Blvd,
Los Angeles, CA

On-Going Links & Listings: Every Week

Sundays starting @ 4:pm
Irish Music Session Traditional music / No Cover
Auld Dubliner Irish Pub . Long Beach

www.aulddubliner.com

EVERY MONDAY
CELTIC ARTS CENTER
Open Session, Irish Language

Classes & Socials Full Bar
CAC @ The Mayflower Club
11110 Victory Blvd.,
North Hollywood, CA

www.celticartscenter.com

Every Monday starts @ 7:PM

Orange County Celtic Jam
Players invited!

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1221 Wass St., Tustin

Doors open at 6:30 pm. Music at 7:00 pm.

\$3 donation for use of the room.

www.facebook.com/groups/OCCelticJam

Coming to Santa Barbara on St Patrick's Day!!!



TRIVIA FANS. we have a few listings for weekly Trivia Contests at pubs in SoCal on page 36. We are expanding the listings so if your favorite contest is not there, please send us the information to us:
jim@pubguide.com

FIRST TUESDAY of every month!

FRIENDS OF IRELAND Breakfast

You're invited. Join the craic and get together with a great bunch of folks and share your love of Ireland and all things Irish.

Breakfasts are very good too!

Breakfast at 9.30 am
Kenos Restaurant
2661 West La Palma Anaheim
More info & to get on the mailing list:
PETE WALSH
pbeireanua@att.net
1 714-200-7365

DEREK WARFIELD
& THE YOUNG
WOLFE
TONES



February & March 2026

St. Patrick's Day USA Tour

Sunday 25th January to February 1st - Joanie Madden's Folk 'N Irish Cruise

Saturday 7th February - Tim Finnegans - Delray Beach - FL

Sunday 8th February - Le Sage Hall - Sebastian - FL

Friday 13th February - Kelly's Irish - Austin - TX

Saturday 14th February - Kelly's Irish - Austin - TX

Sunday 15th February - The Irish Heritage Center of Cincinnati - Cincinnati - OH

Thursday 19th February - Capital District Irish American Association - Albany - NY

Friday 20th February - Malden Irish American Club - Malden - MA

Saturday 21st February - Worcester Hibernian Cultural Centre - Worcester - MA

Sunday 22nd February - The Irish Cultural Center of The Mohawk Valley - Utica - NY

Wednesday 25th February - McCarthys Irish Pub & Venue - Lexington - KY

Thursday 26th February - Irish American Heritage Center - Chicago - IL

Friday 27th February - Omaha Irish Cultural Center - Barretts Castle Basement - Omaha - NE

Saturday 28th February - Warehouse on Broadway - Kansas City - MO

Sunday 1st March - The Celtic Junction Arts Center - St Paul - MN

Tuesday 3rd March - Killarney House - Davidsonville - MD

Wednesday 4th March - Killarney House - Davidsonville - MD

Thursday 5th March - St Christophers Church - Hobe Sound - Florida

Friday 6th March - The Averitt Center For The Arts - Statesboro - GA

Saturday 7th March - Burlington County St Patrick's Day Parade - Mount Holly - NJ

Sunday 8th March - Donovan's Irish Bar & Venue - Holyoke - MA

MUCH MORE ONLINE: www.theyoungwolfetones.com



ONE EYED REILLY

Band members are:

Rick Meagher -- lead vocals, acoustic guitar, & songwriting

Aaron Hendel -- bass guitar & background vocals

Tim Kurteff-Schatz -- drums/percussion & background vocals

Nick Carvajal -- electric guitar, mandolin, & background vocals

Headliner for First Annual GREAT AMERICAN IRISH FAIR

Announced!

One Eyed Reilly To Play

This great Irish Band formed shortly after St Patrick's Day 2012, bringing a new and original sound to the Sacramento Celtic music scene.

After more than a decade of performing, the band has steadily grown it's schedule, becoming favorites at Irish pubs, breweries, wineries and festivals across Northern California and beyond.

One Eyed Reilly blends well-crafted original songs with modern Celtic rock, Americana, and energetic, innovative versions of traditional Irish classics. Live band performances are built around their Irish-themed repertoire of original songs, enhanced with a fun dash of inspired covers by the likes of Flogging Molly, Dropkick Murphys, and even Bob Dylan, the Grateful Dead, and other roots-based influences.

Meet the members at the Irish Fair! CDs and Merch will be available!

www.oneeyedreilly.com

THE GREAT AMERICAN IRISH FAIR

MARCH 14TH & 15TH
EARLY BIRD TICKETS \$10 • AT THE DOOR \$15

LIVE MUSIC & BANDS!
DELICIOUS STREET FOOD!

COSTUME CONTEST FOR ALL AGES!
LOCAL VENDORS & CRAFTS

TWO SHOWS BOTH DAYS!!!
BEER & DRINKING GAMES!

EXPERIENCE A TRUE IRISH PARTY!
AT THE TEHAMA DISTRICT FAIRGROUNDS!

GREATAMERICANIRISHFAIR.COM

ALL AGES EVENT

Sacramento's Own
One Eyed Reilly

Sundays in January Starting at 4:00pm



KEN O'MALLEY

Irish balladeer, enjoy an afternoon/evening of story and song from one of the masters...

Appearing in Redlands, CA

@ The Three Stags Irish Pub

www.threestagspub.com

Cincinnati, Ohio

The Irish Heritage Center of Greater Cincinnati (IHC) was established to promote the culture, traditions and arts of Ireland. The IHC is a culture center that has a pub, library, museum, theater and concert hall. The venue boasts lots of space and rooms to rent for wedding, parties, concerts and more.

Pub night is every Thursday beginning at 6pm.

[TICKETS&INFO](#)

O'Brien's Irish Pub & Restaurant

Santa Monica, CA

www.obriensla.com

For all commercial
links/listings & ads:

Contact Jim at Jim@pubguide.com

CELL: 951 216-1493

You can now **Subscribe** and see our
Media Kit online:

www.irishartsandentertainment.com

THE SHAMROCK
— IRISH PUB & EATERY —
Murrieta CA. 92563



❖ Céad Mile Fáilte ❖

**The Shamrock Irish Pub
and Eatery**

39252 Winchester Rd. #145 Murrieta, CA
Hours: 12 Noon Till Late 7 Days

theshamrockirishpubandeatery.com

For More on Owen Dara and his films may we suggest the following links and digital resources:

www.owendara.com

Owen Dara on...

A Lesser Gift on



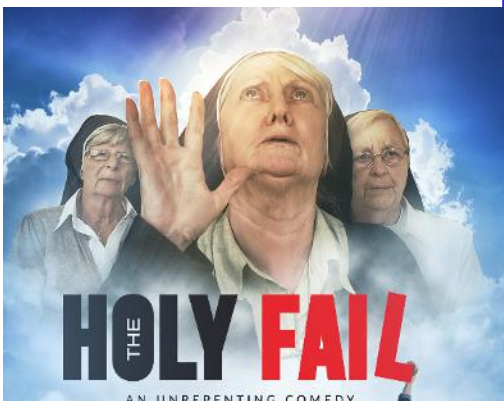
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CLICK Graphic



CHOOSING
SIGNS



A Lesser Gift

When the only step forward is back

BREAKING TIDE PRESENTS "A LESSER GIFT" OWEN DARA JESSICA LANCASTER PAULA MCGLINCHY
MÁIRÍN PRENDERGAST ALAN RIORDAN MICHAEL O'MAHONY BER POWER STIOFÁIN WYLEY MARIE O'DONOVAN
MUSIC BY OWEN DARA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY YOSHIKATSU YASAKI EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MICHAEL SHIPLEY
PRODUCER RICHARD WARREN BAKER PRODUCED BY OWEN DARA AND JESSICA LANCASTER WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY OWEN DARA

Dates & Links

**Wednesdays starting
@ 9:pm**



Niall Cash

Irish Music Maker from
Wexford. Follow him on
[Instagram.com/niallcash](https://www.instagram.com/niallcash)

The Auld Dubliner Irish Pub,
Long Beach

www.aulddubliner.com

Ken O'Malley
Irish Music & Ireland Tours

ken@kenomalley.com
(310) 569-1062 mobile
www.kenomalley.com

Authentic Traditional Irish Music
"The real deal from Ireland"

Personally Guided Tours of Ireland
"The road less traveled"

**Irish Cultural Center
PHOENIX ARIZONA**

www.arizonairish.org

**EVERY MONDAY!
CELTIC ARTS CENTER
CAC/ACS**

**@ The Mayflower Club
11110 Victory Blvd.
North Hollywood, CA**

www.celticartscenter.com



<https://irishfest.com/Tickets>

**Remember to check back for Calendar links and listings,
new Features & Updates**

Usually, we have been updating the Irish Arts around the middle of or 15th or 16th of each month so look for another issue in 15 days. We will also update the Calendar again and do a BLAST to all subscribers usually on Wednesday afternoons. Then again on Sunday evening (or possibly Monday by Noon)

There is a lot going on this month so stand by for What's on tap!

IRISH ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT TRIVIA LISTINGS

PUB QUIZES & TRIVIA

Mondays

The Auld Dubliner

Every Monday we host Trivia Night, gather your friends and come in to compete and enjoy a pint.

71 Pine St. Long Beach, CA

www.aulddubliner.com

O'Brien's Irish Pub

Trivia Nights are Mondays and Wednesdays

Monday starts at 8PM till 10:30PM

WED: 8PM to 10PM Form a team or try to form one at the pub.

Play for cash prizes of \$150. No entry fee

2226 Wilshire Santa Monica, CA

www.obriensla.com

Wednesdays

Ye Olde King's Head British Pub & Restaurant

Trivia in the pub at 7:30pm

116 Santa Monica Bl Santa Monica, CA

www.yeoldekingshead.com

Robin Hood British Pub

Trivia Night: "English Style"

Pub Quiz every Tuesday night starting at 8:00 PM.

Reviewers frequently highlight the authentic, wood-paneled interior and the friendly, neighborhood atmosphere.

3640 Burbank Blvd,

Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks, CA

www.robinhoodbritishpub.com

Links & Listings Wanted Send to

irishmissive@gmail.com or through our website:

www.irishartsandentertainment.com



The Irish Outreach Center

Serving the Irish Community in Southern California

<https://irishoutreachcenter.org>

MEDIA KIT INFO

We invite you to Advertise With Us

Our new Media Kit is available if you are interested in advertising or promoting your business or event with us. Our proven 30 plus year track record speaks for itself when it comes to great value with our niche market publication!

We really have no equal.

Now in addition to our effective and well respected publication; our team has

mastered Digital Marketing and we can enhance your outreach for a very cost effective rate.

The digital age has been good to us and we have been able to prosper and grow our subscriber base. We will have final details soon on our expansion plans and our Affiliate Programs. We are also going to enhance our Very Irish Perks and start a new series of very exciting Drawings and Contests!

This month, three events are on tap, then the Holidays are almost here and we will be doing Special issues for Halloween and for Christmas!

Contact us for a Special Offer: 951 216-1493

IRISH LANGUAGE *An Ghaeilge*

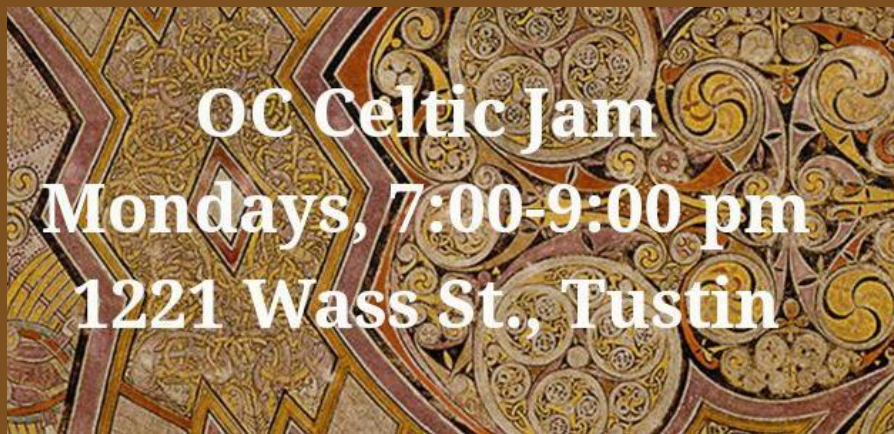
The View From Ireland Feature last year about the Irish Language by our great friend and Irish Arts and Entertainment columnist Maurice Fitzpatrick really resonated with us. We use the months of the year in each issue but our collective Irish is very limited.

In fact, working on the folio (the top of each page) recently, I forgot the word for October in Irish and had to look it up. I found this really interesting YouTube video and share the link below.

I would like to change my lack of Irish too. so starting now and in future issues, we will be offering our readers a few words or phrases in our Mother Language.

Also, if you are in the LA area, the Celtic Arts Center has ongoing Irish lessons. As we expand around the US, we will add more such links. More on this project in coming issues.

CLICK ICON FOR A QUICK LESSON



IRISH COMMUNITY LISTINGS ARE FREE!!

Send to:

irishmissive@gmail.com

For all other

links/listings & ad info:

Contact Jim at
Jim@pubguide.com

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member....Irish deals, discounts.
special offers and surprises!

NEW SUBSCRIBERS---all we need is your
Name & Email. We will bill you.

irishmissive@gmail.com We are giving
away Lunasa and

St.Patricks Day in Ireland tickets in March!

www.irishartsandentertainment.com

SEEKING

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Our new Travel & Tours
Section is interested in
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want to write about your
Irish Travels.

**Send us your ideas
and time frame.**

irishmissive@gmail.com

www.irishartsandentertainment.com



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Check our FACEBOOK PAGES for Daily Updates:

Irish Arts & Entertainment

PubGuide E News

LA County Irish Events



VERY IRISH PERKS VIP GROUP

All subscribers become members of our VIP Group.

Currently we are offering some really good promotions and we will add more for March, 2026

At Present:

O'Brien's On Wilshire in Santa Monica will give our subscribers a Free Appetizer with purchase.
www.obriensla.com

[Go to the menu click here](#)

An amazing offer for our own VIP Members and Subscribers!
Buy a GIFT SUBSCRIPTION between now and December 31st, 2026 and we will give you a FREE ONE YEAR EXTENSION on your own subscription.
LIFETIME Subscribers get a second Gift Subscription instead.

Irish Arts & Entertainment's VERY IRISH PERKS (VIP) PRIMER

The VIP program is a very important component of our subscription program. It has a multitude of positive factors built into the program. It serves as a bonus/reward system for spending hard cold cash on our publication AND it is a good networking tool for the Publisher. We are able to attract subscribers and advertisers to our publication and keep them interested while delivering great Irish content and information to our readers. The advertisers benefit by having a readership interested in our exciting niche market and they can target our readers with special offers. We need volume makes it worthwhile for them to participate so subscription prices are low!

The Pandemic and subsequent societal turmoil set us all back a bit in one way or another and we are rebuilding our VIP benefits package. We were counting on discounts and deals at pubs and events but that plan is now on the back burner as there are fewer Irish events and pubs in SoCal now. We need volume to make the discounts practical. In the meantime, we are working hard to line up new offers for our subscribers. We have some very good deals and 2 for 1 offers that are exclusive for our subscribers!

We offer them to Subscribers Only. One VIP, offer now through Christmas as it makes a great gift; Buy ONE SUB at \$25. and get a Gift Subscription for another!

We are expanding and we are using new and improved methods for reaching out to our readers!

We have set up a new affiliated Irish Arts & Entertainment Channel on Telegram.

We also have updated our Website.

www.irishartsandentertainment.com

join us on
TELEGRAM

JOIN NOW



St.

Kerry Irish Productions presents

“A night of
rip-roaring music,
song and dance”

Patrick's Day



in Ireland

- Mar 11 @7:30pm **Harris Center, Folsom**
- Mar 13 @7:30pm **Vacaville Performing Arts Theatre**
- Mar 14 @7:30pm **Visalia Fox Theatre, Visalia**
- Mar 15 @2:00pm **Clark Center, Arroyo Grande**
- Mar 16 @7:30pm **Veterans Memorial, Clovis/Fresno**
- Mar 17 @7:30pm **Lobero Theatre, Santa Barbara**



KerryIrishProductions.com



Scan to sign up for more information