

Irish Pastoral Centre Newsletter



"We are a Parish without Boundaries."

*Serving the Greater Boston
Irish Community since 1987*

IPC NEW SOUTH SHORE PROGRAM

The Irish Pastoral Centre is delighted to announce that our new Senior Outreach program begins on the South Shore on Tuesday July 6.

The Cottage Bar, 26 Union Street, Weymouth is graciously hosting us until we find a permanent location. We will meet for lunch each Tuesday in July and we are delighted that the Cottage Restaurant is offering a \$9.00 lunch menu with a choice of two entrees.

We are actively seeking a permanent meeting venue for September 2021 in Weymouth. For more information, please call Mary O'Toole-Gorman 617-265-5300.

We look forward to meeting with you and hearing your ideas as we develop our programs on the South Shore.

All are welcome! Please call the RSVP line 855-479-2472 to register your attendance.



IPC FIRST ANNUAL SUNRISE WALK



**Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme**



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

**Thank you to all who walked,
registered, donated and
volunteered!**

More photos on page 4

IPC NEWS DESK

Dear Friends

Greetings from the Pastoral Centre and Happy belated Father's Day to all our Boston Irish Dad's! Can you believe that we are approaching the July 4th weekend? All of us here feel that time is flying by!

It's certainly been very active at the Centre and we celebrated two great events! We gathered together at Castle Island for our first annual Solace Sunrise Walk which raised funds for the IPC's re-development of our Emotional Support Programs. The Walk symbolized the journey from darkness into light for many suffering from Mental Health issues while particularly remembering those effected by suicide. See photos on page 4.

We also held a celebration of life for our beloved former Executive Director, Sr Marguerite at the Irish Social Club on June 10 and it really was a lovely day. It meant so much to all of us here to finally pay tribute. See page 5.

Our Boston Marathon team is growing! This year we have 7 runners, all supporting our work and we are delighted with their optimism and energy! As we go forward, we will host different community events to rally behind our team. This is an inspiring effort and we are so grateful for the continued support of our team.

The IPC Board has named new officers. We give our thanks to outgoing chairman Bill Bulger who has now assumed the role of Board treasurer. Our thanks also to Sean Henry for his tenure as treasurer for the past 2 years and we welcome Maryellen Brett as our new Chairwoman. As Executive Director, I must tell you that we are very grateful for our Board input. Each member brings a specific strength that benefits the Centre and I am grateful for such a broad range of support.

The IPC is emerging as a more comprehensive community service organization. Although we have specific programs, please know that we are here to help, even if your needs are not specific to our programs. If you have an issue, please check in with us. We have developed significant partners and resources, so if we cannot provide direct support, we can help to direct you to those that can. Please don't be a stranger!

Did you know that the IPC has a seat on the Board of the Irish Coalition of Immigration Centers? The CIIC is a national framework which represents Irish immigrant groups throughout the United States. The CIIC strives to be a strong, cohesive and representative voice for the needs of Irish immigrants. The CIIC works with other immigrant and activist groups to be a strong advocate for fair and just immigration legislation. This is a tremendous resource for the IPC and we are proud to represent our community at national level.

On a personal note, I received a beautiful gift for my office and I'd like to share a photo. My Mom, Teresa, in Limerick, painted this for me! I absolutely love it and it means so much that its here in my office. Mom took an art class (at age 81!) before the pandemic and surprised all of us with her talent. A big thank you to my Mammy! I wonder if any of you would like us to host an art class here? - Call me please, if you have interest! In closing, my thanks again to each of you! Thank you all! Mind yourselves,

Happy 4th of July!

Mary



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IPC NEWS DESK

TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE

It's been 15 years since our technology was upgraded. Thanks to grant support and with your help, IPC has been able to update our technology. We are most grateful to our AmeriCorps student, John Hunter who has installed and upgraded our devices. Thank you all!



IPC VOLUNTEER COMPLETES iTHIRST PROGRAM

IPC congratulates our Ignation Volunteer Anne Finn for completing the Archdiocese iThirst Certification Program. iThirst has three areas of focus: education and prevention; support for people who are incarcerated or in treatment facilities; and aftercare and community building for people in recovery and their families. Anne is well loved by all at the IPC and she will bring great care to all she serves through this essential program.



IPC Welcomes New Board Chair

The Irish Pastoral Centre is delighted to welcome our new Board Chair, Maryellen Brett. Maryellen is the Associate Dean of Corporate Education at Massasoit Community College, based at the Canton Campus. She is a higher education and workforce development expert who works extensively with companies, government, and educational organizations. A Dorchester resident with family in Cedar Grove and Savin Hill, her grandparents hail from Co. Sligo. Maryellen also serves on the Center for Collaborative Leadership board at UMass Boston. She joined the IPC board in March 2020.



50 50 Winners!

Congratulations to the Reardon Family in Pembroke who won our first 50 50 raffle! Special thanks to Bartley Collins from Dorchester who ran the raffle to benefit the IPC. Almost \$1000.00 was raised! The raffle took place at our First Friday Supper Club.



GAA QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Cavan lifted the All-Ireland trophy five times before any other Ulster county managed to win it, the second county being Down in 1960, making that the first time it had crossed the border into the North.
2. Armagh lost to Kerry in 1953, and to Dublin in 1977.
3. 1960
4. Cavan beat Kerry. The final was played in the now defunct Polo Grounds in New York.
5. Wexford
6. Handball: Pretty much a little known fact. The obvious answers are of course football and hurling, but they both have to take second place to handball. The modern version originated in the 16th century in Scotland and Ireland, and European derivatives also exist like the Spanish-base Pelota.
7. Phoenix Park: The final was played in the Phoenix Park on the 24 June 1894 between Wexford and Cork. Wexford won the match with a score of Wexford 1-1, Cork 0-1.
8. Wicklow only held 10,000, yet still had difficulty having a sell-out.

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IPC NEWS DESK

Thank You For Your Sunrise Walk Support!

We'd like to say we strolled at dawn through a soft misty rain - but it poured buckets at Castle Island during our Solace Sunrise Walk on June 12th.

We gathered together to show support for those feeling alone while remembering those we have lost to suicide. The rain did not deter the many, many walkers who joined us!

This was a tremendous success, showing strong, local support for those who are struggling with mental health. Our thanks to the crew on Cape Cod, spear headed by Sophie Kirby, who walked at the same time in solidarity.

While our Boston Walk raised funds to develop emotional support programs at the Irish Pastoral Centre, teams in New York, New Jersey, Texas and California gathered also. This was a mighty effort indeed!

Thank you to Solace House USA for coordinating this effort in Boston to benefit the Irish Pastoral Centre. Thanks also to all who volunteered, donated, and joined us our community partners: Rian Immigrant Center, Boston GAA and The Irish Cultural Center for walking with us! Go raibh mile maith agaibh! We are very grateful!

Donations for our development of Emotional Support Programs can be sent to the Irish Pastoral Centre, 512 Gallivan Blvd, Dorchester, MA 02124



SEEKING COMMUNITY PARTNERS! If your business serves the Irish Community, please consider joining us as an Irish Pastoral Centre community partner. We have several opportunities for you to showcase your event, organization or business while completely supporting the IPC, Email mswanton@ipcboseon.org for more information or call the IPC at 617-265-5300. We look forward to welcoming you!

IPC NEWS DESK

Remembering Sr. Marguerite

Former Irish Pastoral Centre Director Sr Marguerite Kelly passed away during the Pandemic. We were so sad that we couldn't honor her legacy at that time. On Thursday June 10th, we gathered at the Irish Social Club in West Roxbury where we celebrated Sr Marguerite's life with a community Mass and delicious meal from the Greenhill's Bakery. Our thanks to Richie Gormley, Dermot and Cindy Quin, Tom Clifford, Mossie Coughlin, Maureen and Gerry McNally, our many volunteers and our photographer Kelly Cosgrave Boganno. This was truly a fitting tribute. Sr. Marguerite will be forever remembered as a kind and gentle friend to all. May her lovely, Galway soul Rest in Peace.



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NEWS FROM OUR SENIOR OUTREACH PROGRAM

ZOOM BINGO ENDS JUNE 29TH

Now that our Café clubs have returned, our final Zoom Bingo will take place on Tuesday June 29th.

Congratulations to our most recent winners:

Mary Connolly - Stop & Shop Gift Card

Evie Dunn - Devlin's Gift Card

Helen Lone - Greenhills Gift Card

Claire Weston - Corrib Gift Card

Senior Café's Return Along With New Programs

We are so excited that our Café Clubs are back!

The Irish Pastoral Centre hosts weekly coffee groups for our retired and senior community with tremendous help from many volunteers!

Our locations have moved temporarily and our group's take place as follows:

On Mondays, the Cara Club meets at the Elks on Washington in Brighton from 1pm to 3pm.

On Wednesdays, Café Eireann gathers at the Irish Pastoral Centre in Dorchester from 10am to 12.00pm.

On Thursdays, the Crossroads Café meets at in West Roxbury at the Elks on Morrill Street from 1pm to 3pm.

NEW: The IPC Weekly Lunch Club at the Cottage in Weymouth begins Tuesday July 6 at 12:00pm



Each month, the IPC features a Senior Spotlight Story. Please reach out to Senior Coordinator Mary Gorman at mgorman@ipcoston.org if you know someone who would like to be featured.



FR. DAN'S PAGE

With a Father's Heart

By: Fr. John Franck, A.A.



The day I received my learner's permit, my dad agreed to take me for a driving lesson. With a big grin, he hopped in the back, behind the driver's seat. "John," he said, "I've been waiting for this ever since you were a kid. Now it's my turn to sit back here and kick the seat."

A father's love!

With his most recent apostolic letter, "With a Father's Heart," Pope Francis has dedicated this year to St. Joseph. Having a year dedicated to him would seem quite foreign to Joseph. He was the "Silent One." In the shadows. Ordinary. Obedient. Hard working. Courageous.

"He never made himself the center of things. He did not think of himself, but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus," the pope wrote. "Our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked.... yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history," he said in his letter. Most of us lead hidden lives. But it is there that grace comes. It is in the ordinary lives of families that the true stuff of living, learning, and loving takes place. May we turn to him who loved Jesus with a father's heart. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father.



*Faith of our fathers, living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
Oh, how our hearts beat high
with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious
Word!
Faith of our fathers, holy faith!
We will be true to thee till
death.*

**Fr. Dan wants you to
Save the Date!**

2021 IPC Golf Tournament

**MONDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 2021
AT BROOK MEADOW
COUNTRY CLUB**

Call 617-265-5300 for more details

Father of all nations and ages,
today we rededicate ourselves to your service,
and to the works of justice and freedom for all.

As you have called us from many people
to be one nation,
help us to give witness in our lives
and in our life as a nation
to the rich diversity of your gifts.

Grant that under your providence
our country may share your blessings,
with all the peoples of the earth.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

~ Amen

(from the Catholic Sacramentary, combined Collect)

IPC COMMUNITY NEWS



*Won't you join us?
Led by IPC Board member Della Costello, we gather every other Thursday from 11am to 1pm in the Centre, All levels are welcome. We are in awe of our talented knitters and we have great fun!*



Larry Reynolds Memorial Scholarship

Larry Reynolds(1932 – 2012) Memorial Scholarship, administered by the Reynolds-Hanafin-Cooley) CCÉ Branch is now open. The deadline to apply is July 31, 21.

Larry, a great friend of the Pastoral Centre, emigrated from County Galway bringing a passion for his homeland's music and traditions. Dedicating the rest of his life to sharing that passion with others, he became a mainstay of Boston's Irish scene, helping found the Boston branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and it's music school. He encouraged young people to participate in Irish music, song and dance as well as promoting those arts in the New England area.

To honor Larry's contributions and remember his special place in the New England Irish community, the Reynolds family enabled the Reynolds-Hanafin- Cooley CCÉ Branch to create the LARRY REYNOLDS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP, which is presented each year to a young individual selected from the applications sent to the Board of Directors of the Boston CCÉ Music School. The award is funded through donations to RHC CCÉ in memory of Larry Reynolds.

An applicant for the Larry Reynolds Memorial Award should be a person under 21 years of age who participates in and contributes to the Irish Music/Dance/Song/ Culture and Community of New England. and is a member of the Reynolds-Hanafin-Cooley branch of CCÉ. Please visit ceeboston.org for all the details.



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IPC NEWS FROM IRELAND

Irish Pubs to Open With A Very Low Sound of Music

IRELAND'S pubs are set to swing open their doors at the start of next month, allowing customers inside for the first time in nearly seven months.

It's been the country's longest - and hopefully last - lockdown, and it's left much of the nation's hospitality industry depleted.

But as summer begins to firmly take a foothold, publicans and pub-goers will be hoping that normality isn't too far away. On July 5, indoor dining is allowed to resume in bars, restaurants, pubs and cafes across the country, but because Covid-19 is more easily transmissible inside, there will be still be a number of restrictions in place.

Closing time will be 11.30pm . Live Bands will not be permitted to perform and music levels must not exceed unreasonable volume. This is because people raise their voices and move closer when music is loud, potentially making Covid-19 more transmissible. Face Masks will be required at all times.

Hope of Romance Fades Again in Lisdoovarna

The event, which takes place in County Clare every year and attracts tens of thousands of visitors from across Ireland and the world, had been due to take place across the whole month of September.

But with the pandemic still causing widespread chaos across Ireland and beyond, and experts concerned about the rise in cases from the Delta variant, the organizers have confirmed that eligible bachelors will have to wait another year to find their true love in Lisdoonvarna.

The cancellation of the festival for a second year in a row is a devastating blow for local businesses, with a loss of over €5 million to the local economy, when both years were taken into consideration.

The world famous Festival includes speed dating, spa days and old-fashioned dancing, as well as the more modern pub and club nights. It is the biggest event of its kind in Europe, and usually draws over 40,000 spectators to the small village each year.

Ireland Still On Track to Resume Non-Essential Travel July 19



Minister of State Ossian Smyth has said that while there is no guarantee that international travel will reopen on 19 July, the plan remains that non-essential travel abroad can resume from that date. There is an element of risk in travelling, he said, because the rules may change and a new variant could emerge at any time.

Under the plan, Vaccinated passengers will be able to visit Ireland without a negative test and will also be exempt from any quarantining measures.

Speaking on RTÉ's Today with Claire Byrne, Mr. Smyth said the plan is that non-essential travel can reopen next month.

However, he warned: "We can't guarantee that at the moment, that's what is in the plan, but looking at what has been happening in the United Kingdom with the Delta variant and the fact that the British did have to delay their full reopening by a month, there is still risk attached and no guarantee can be given about that date, but that's the current plan."



IPC NEWS DESK



IPC Boston Marathon Team

The IPC is most grateful for this Annual Fundraiser. Our thanks to our terrific team: Lorna Riach, Christine O'Brien, Patricia Deasy, Maria McMahon, Robin Jennings, Mary Varden and Sinead McGlynn. We look forward to supporting your journey!



This month, meet Robyn, Sinead and Mary.



ROBIN JENNINGS:

-I'm Robyn and I have been running since I was 12 years old for fun and participated in a variety of races, but never thought I'd run a marathon until my dear friend, Kayur Shah, was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. I decided to run a marathon in Maine to raise funds for him and his family to help pay medical bills in 2017 and I haven't stopped since! I have now completed 8 marathons. There is no way I would've continued running marathons without the guidance and training given by Mary Varden and the camaraderie and support of the Y We Run running club. I am so excited and humbled to be running for the Irish Pastoral Centre to raise funds to help those in need find housing,

employment and provide immigration services. Their mission of providing spiritual, legal, and educational support is invaluable and has helped so many adjust to their new community. My husband, Phil, is an immigrant from Aberystwyth, Wales, and will be using the IPC's services to help guide him with obtaining his citizenship. I am so grateful for this opportunity to support this amazing organization that has supported so many of my friends and family. It is truly an honor to be running the 2021 Boston Marathon for the IPC!



SINEAD GLYNN:

My name is Sinead McGlynn and I live in Quincy, MA. I'm original from Donegal, Ireland. I'm excited to be running for the Irish Pastoral Centre this year. This will be my 14th marathon and my third time running for the Irish Pastoral Centre.



MARY VARDEN:

I am an Irish immigrant from Ardmore County Waterford and came to Boston in 1986. The Irish Pastoral Centre has always been there to welcome and support me in Boston. The IPC not only reaches out to Irish Immigrants, but all immigrants and to all members of the community young and old offering help, guidance and support where and whenever they can. This will be my 18th Boston Marathon, having run 6 for the IPC. I am offering this one up for Sr. Marguerite who was a close family friend and very instrumental to the IPC.



GIVING A HUGE SHOUT OUT TO MARY VARDEN!

Mary has coordinated the marathon runners and fundraising events for the past several years!

We extend our gratitude to Mary as we truly can see all that she does behind the scenes on our behalf. THANK YOU MARY!

IPC CALENDAR

Sunday, June 27, 2021, Milton Music Celtic Sunday Festival @ 12:30 PM
Monday, June 28, 2021, Cara Club with Bingo 1PM
Wednesday, June 30, 2021, Café Eireann with Bingo 10 AM
Wednesday, June 30, 2021, Card Night 8PM
Thursday, July 1, 2021, Crossroads 1PM
Friday, July 2, 2021 IPC Closed (Supper Club to Resume September 3, 2021)
Saturday, July 3, 2021, “Le Cheile” Here Together Sobriety Support Group 6PM
Sunday, July 4, 2021 Happy Independence Day

Monday, July 5, 2021, IPC Closed (Holiday Observed)
Tuesday, July 6, 2021, South Shore Lunch Club @ The Cottage in Weymouth
Wednesday, July 7, 2021, Café Eireann 10AM
Wednesday, July 7, 2021 Card Night 8PM
Thursday July 8, 2021 Knitting Club 11AM
Thursday, July 8, 2021, Crossroads Café 1PM
Saturday, July 10, 2021, “Le Cheile” Here together Sobriety Support Group 6PM

Monday, July 12, 2021, Cara Club Ice Cream Social 1PM
Tuesday, July 13, 2021, South Shore Lunch Club @ The Cottage in Weymouth
Wednesday, July 14, 2021, Café Eireann Ice Cream Social 10AM
Wednesday, July 14, 2021, Card Night 8PM
Thursday, July 15, 2021, Crossroads Ice Cream Social 1PM
Saturday, July 17, 2021, “Le Cheile” Here Together Sobriety Support Group 6PM

Monday, July 19, 2021, Cara Club 1PM
Tuesday, July 20, 2021, South Shore Lunch Club @ The Cottage in Weymouth
Wednesday, July 21, 2021, Cafe Eireann 10AM
Wednesday, July 21, 2021, Card Night 8PM
Thursday, July 22, 2021, Knitting Club 11AM
Thursday, July 22, 2021, Crossroads Café
Saturday, July 24, 2021, “Le Cheile” Here Together Sobriety Support Group 6PM

Monday, July 26, 2021, Cara Club 1PM
Tuesday, July 27, 2021, South Shore Lunch Club @ The Cottage in Weymouth
Wednesday, July 28, 2021, Café Eireann 10AM
Wednesday, July 28, 2021, Trivia with San Francisco 5PM
Wednesday, July 28, 2021, Card Night 8PM
Thursday, July 29, 2021, Crossroads 1PM
Saturday, July 31, 2021, “Le Cheile” Here Together Sobriety Support Group

Wednesday August 4, 2021, Card Night 8PM
Saturday, August 7, 2021 “Le Cheile” Here Together Sobriety Support Group 6PM
Wednesday, August 11, 2021 Card Night 8PM
Saturday, August 14, 2021 “Le Cheile” Here Together Sobriety Support Group

CALL US AT 617-265-5300

News From The Irish Consulate



An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

Administrative Officer Consulate General of Ireland, Boston

The Consulate General of Ireland promotes and protects Irish interests through its work with the Irish community in the New England region, supporting the strong partnership between the US and Ireland, and providing a range of consular services.

The Consulate General of Ireland in Boston is seeking a dynamic, motivated and resourceful **Administrative Officer** to assist with the work of the Consulate in providing consular services, strengthening relationships with the Irish community and promoting Ireland's interests in the US. The successful applicant will work alongside other locally engaged staff of the Consulate, and will report directly to the diplomatic staff.

All applicants must have a permanent legal right to reside and work in the USA (US passport/ US birth certificate/ US naturalization/ valid Green Card). Candidates will be subject to US employment and taxation law.

Candidates should submit a résumé of not more than two pages, and a letter of application addressing your suitability for the position and interest in working with the Consulate General of Ireland in Boston of not more than one page, by email to boston.recruitment@dfa.ie with the subject line 'Administrative Officer Application' followed by your name by **9am EST, 5 July 2021.**

CELEBRATING BLOOMSDAY

**With beautiful weather and a lively crowd it certainly felt like a proper Joycean celebration at the Irish Cultural Center in Canton!
Thanks to everyone who attended,
We are already looking forward to
Bloomsday2022!**



News From The Irish Consulate



PASSPORT ONLINE

Now expanded to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

www.dfa.ie/passports



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

The Irish Passport Service has rolled out an online passport application system for all applicants - including children and 1st time applicants- applying from the United States. This service is now live and is available at dfa.ie/passports.

Ireland, Covid Recovery, & the Future of National Development

Minister Michael McGrath, TD

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform

June 24, 2021

09:00 AM in Eastern Time (US and Canada)



Opening remarks by **Dr. Laoise Moore**, Consul General of Ireland to New England

Moderated by **Dr. Robert Mauro**, Director, Global Leadership Institute at Boston College

For more information contact gli@bc.edu



In Loving Memory

We remember those in our community who have recently passed away. Our thoughts and prayers and with all the bereaved families, and we hope that in time lovely memories will surround them. May they Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

May 2, 2021, Brigid A. Senior, Quincy, County Galway
May 13, 2021, Catherine E. "Kitty" Morley, West Roxbury, County Kerry
May 16, 2021, Margaret (Hennessy) Kelliher, Allston, Cork City
May 21, 2021, Mary K. (Hannon) Kenney, Framingham, County Galway
May 23, 2021, Fergus M. B. Moylan M.D., Plymouth, County Dublin
May 24, 2021, Anne Philomena (Long) Ptashnick, Plymouth, County Kerry
May 24, 2021, Kevin F. O'Farrell, Plymouth, County Kerry
May 26, 2021, Robert "Bob" Meehan, Milton, County Galway
May 28, 2021, John M. "Sean" Mannion, Arlington, County Mayo
May 29, 2021, Nora M. (Lally) Madden, South Boston, County Galway
May 31, 2021, Eileen (Gallivan) O'Connor, Roslindale, County Kerry
June 1, 2021, John F. Quinn, Westwood, County Sligo
June 5, 2021, Catherine Connolly, Quincy, County Galway
June 7, 2021, Veronica Donovan, Milton, County Galway
June 8, 2021, Hannah Agnes Heafey, West Roxbury, County Donegal
June 9, 2021, John P. Cafferty, Hingham, County Sligo
June 10, 2021, John J. Doyle, South Weymouth, County Carlow
June 11, 2021, Julia M. (Keady) Dorsey, Brighton, County Galway
June 21, 2021 Bridie Folan, Norwood, County Galway

Don't cry for me,
I'm not gone.
My soul is at rest,
my heart lives on.
Light a candle
for me to see
and hold on to
my memory,
but save your tears
for I'm still here,
by your side
through the years.

Renowned musician Alan Loughnane RIP Fondly Remembered

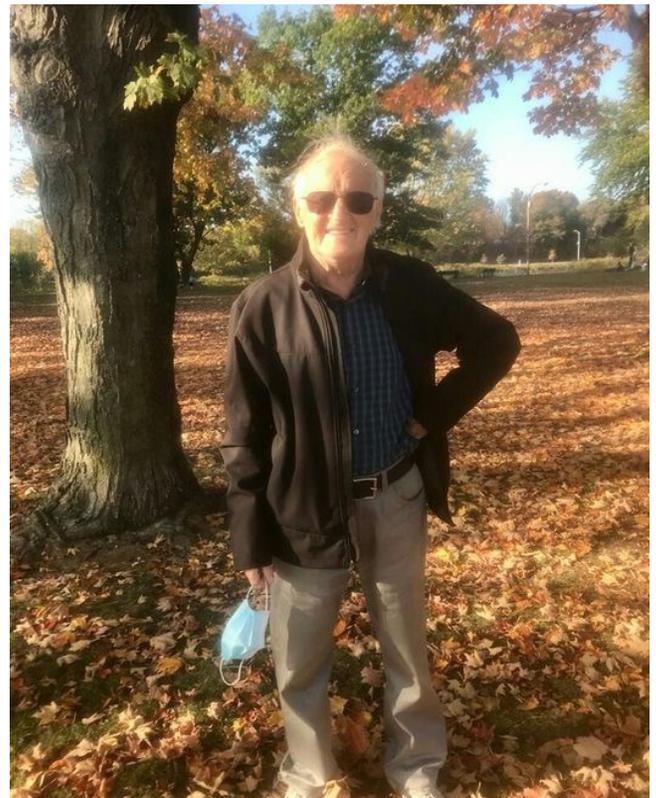
Alan Loughnane, one of Boston's most popular and talented Irish musicians recently passed away peacefully after a long 14 months battle with cancer.

Alan was a true gentleman. Everywhere he went people loved Alan, no matter what the gig, what town it was, what party, it was always the same. He was a gentle easy-going soul and people gravitated towards him everywhere he went. They loved chatting to him on breaks and telling jokes or just talking about sports. People loved his Dublin sense of humor and easy-going spirit.

Alan was an amazingly accomplished musician. He'd already developed these skills long before stepping off the plane here in Boston in the early eighties from Dublin. He played with the best of the best in Ireland and was respected by everyone in the music business on both sides of the pond.

Alan was also a highly intelligent person, so well-read, had a huge interest in politics, music, the arts, science, the universe, and could talk in great depth on just about anything. Friends learned so much from Alan over the years, just from hanging out with him . Having a few pints with him was a joy.

Thank you, Alan, for all the music, the laughs, and the wisdom you imparted over the years.



Fadó Fadó - Long Ago in Ireland

Meet the 96-year-old Irish woman who saved thousands of lives on D-Day

MAUREEN SWEENEY may look like your ordinary pensioner, but this retired Irish postmistress played an extraordinary role in the timing of the D-Day landings 75 years ago – saving the lives of thousands of Allied troops in the process.

On June 3, 1944 – the night of her 21st birthday – Maureen was taking pressure and temperature readings at Blacksod weather station in a remote area of Co. Mayo on Ireland's west coast, as she often did in her role as a post office assistant.



Maureen Sweeney with her late husband Ted, who was the lighthouse keeper in Blacksod, Co. Mayo

Her readings unwittingly gave the Allies two days' advance warning of stormy conditions in western Europe, which forced General Dwight D Eisenhower to delay his meticulously planned invasion of Normandy until June 6.

Although unaware of the significance of her work at the time, Maureen had played a vital role in pinpointing the short window of opportunity Eisenhower had to turn the tide of World War II against Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime.

Although Ireland was neutral in the war, the programme sheds light on how Taoiseach Éamon de Valera sanctioned the passing of weather data to the Allies.

The readings from Co. Mayo were crucial as they were the first indication of weather coming across the Atlantic 48 hours in advance.

General Eisenhower had planned D-Day for June 5, but it was delayed until the following day after Maureen reported a dramatic drop in pressure which would have spelled disaster for the 160,000 Allied soldiers in their efforts to storm the beaches of northwestern France.

In a new RTE documentary about D Day, Maureen examines her handwritten notes and says: "They're my figures. The 3rd of June was my birthday. I'm very, very happy about it, that we did give the right readings. I felt proud that it was from Blacksod."

Ger Fleming, one of Ireland's best known weather forecaster, reveals how Maureen took down her readings at 1am. "She's out on her 21st birthday, at one in the morning, doing a weather observation and what does she spot? A change in pressure," he said. "The pressure falling away was the red flag."

D-Day veteran Joe Cattini, also 96, said the 160,000 men who landed in Normandy on June 6 owed a debt of gratitude to Maureen. "If it hadn't been for her reading of the weather, we would have perished in the storms," he said.

Maureen told the documentary how she answered an ad for a post office assistant at Blacksod, but realised only when she arrived that her duties included carrying out weather observations for the UK's Met Office.

"It was only every six hours pre-war, but then they found out our weather reports in Blacksod were the first indication of good or bad weather coming in from the Atlantic and they made it hourly. You would have only one finished when it was time to do another."

Maureen sent her data to Ballina, Co. Mayo, where it was then sent to the UK meteorological office near London via Dublin. Looking back, Maureen said she had no idea in June 1944 that her readings halted the invasion.

"Poor old Eisenhower. He was commander in chief. All the proposals had to go through him," she added. "He had the whole world, I suppose, to consider." **SOURCE: *The Irish Post***

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



Meet Mary Connolly

Mary Connolly was born in the village of Clynagh in Carraroe, County Galway. She was attending school when she received authorization to travel to America in February 1952. Mary landed in New York City and met her aunt who accompanied her by train overnight to Boston. There she stayed with her aunt and uncle, as well as her three cousins, all boys, that considered her the sister they never had. When asked about her earliest memory of America, Mary contrasts the clear sky and imposing city skyline with the bitter cold weather that she had not experienced until coming to Boston.

Mary quickly found work caring for the children of a family in Cambridge, with whom she would travel to Newport, Rhode Island in the summers. This was the first of many jobs caring for others. Later, after starting a family of her own, Mary worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in Human Health Services, and later provided individual care after retiring from the state. From her earliest days in America, Mary was proud of earning a weekly wage and having steady work to do.

Since arriving in America, Mary has enjoyed developing community among other Irish emigrants in the Boston area, fondly remembering the days of dances and social gatherings in Dudley Square at the Hibernian Hall and the Intercolonial Hall, as well as watching Irish football games. In fact, Mary remembers meeting other women from all over Ireland that had come to Boston to live and work.

On the Fourth of July 1962, Mary married her husband Colm at St. Peter's. Mary and Colm raised four children in St. Brendan's Parish, where she has lived since 1968. Over that time Mary has continued to stay in constant contact with friends and family, both in America and Ireland. It is not unusual when visiting Mary to hear her talking on the phone to family at home in Galway in her native Irish language. She also loves to stay in contact with friends and family that have also made their home in Boston, including her siblings, nieces, nephews and great-nieces and nephews. Family is truly the most important thing in Mary's life and has always been.



It was Mary's delight to watch and cheer on her children in all activities and sports growing up. With her daughters Noreen and Margaret, she would attend field hockey, soccer, and basketball games. With her sons Michael and Peter, Mary developed her passion for the game of ice hockey that continues to this day. Between rooting for her children, grandchildren, and extended family, Mary has

followed many hockey teams over the years including Neponset and later Dorchester Youth Hockey, Christopher Columbus High School and Boston Latin School. You would be hard pressed to find a rink in New England that she has not visited. Mary's passion for her beloved Boston Bruins has grown throughout the years, and over the past decade, she has taken an annual trip to see an away game every season accompanied by family. This tradition was to culminate in a trip to see the Bruins play in the Czech Republic in 2020, but that journey was unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19. (CONT'D ON PAGE 17)

PHOTOS: —A young Mary in Connemara (top) - Mary's arrival in Dorchester and Mary today, enjoying the outdoors (Page 17)

THE STORY OF THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

On a rainy September 13, 1814, British warships sent a downpour of shells and rockets onto Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor, relentlessly pounding the American fort for 25 hours. The bombardment, known as the Battle of Baltimore, came only weeks after the British had attacked Washington, D.C., burning the Capitol, the Treasury and the President's house. It was another chapter in the ongoing War of 1812.

A week earlier, Francis Scott Key, a 35-year-old American lawyer, had boarded the flagship of the British fleet on the Chesapeake Bay in hopes of persuading the British to release a friend who had recently been arrested. Key's tactics were successful, but because he and his companions had gained knowledge of the impending attack on Baltimore, the British did not let them go. They allowed the Americans to return to their own vessel but continued guarding them. Under their scrutiny, Key watched (o'er the ramparts) on September 13 as the barrage of Fort McHenry began eight miles away. "It seemed as though mother earth had opened and was vomiting shot and shell in a sheet of fire and brimstone," Key wrote later. But when darkness arrived, Key saw only red erupting in the night sky. Given the scale of the attack, he was certain the British would win. The hours passed slowly, but in the clearing smoke of "the dawn's early light" on September 14, he saw the American flag—not the British Union Jack—flying over the fort, announcing an American victory.

Key put his thoughts on paper while still on board the ship, setting his words to the tune of a popular English song. His brother-in-law, commander of a militia at Fort McHenry, read Key's work and had it distributed under the name "Defence of Fort M'Henry." The *Baltimore Patriot* newspaper soon printed it, and within weeks, Key's poem, now called "The Star-Spangled Banner," appeared in print across the country, immortalizing his words—and forever naming the flag it celebrated.

MARY CONNOLLY CONT'D

A consistent theme in Mary's life has been a love of travel that started with hearing stories of America from her parents, who were married and lived in America before returning to Ireland. To date, she has visited fifteen countries in North America, Europe, and Africa. Her favorite, of course, has been bringing her children and grandchildren to Ireland. Other highlights are the Vatican, as well as different regions of America.

Since retiring, Mary has found great joy in being a part of the Irish Pastoral Centre as a volunteer, citing the activities and more importantly the connections with others as her favorite part of being a member. When asked about her fondest memory from the IPC, Mary notes the unveiling of the Great Hunger Memorial on Deer Island in 2019. Mary is delighted to resume in-person activities now that COVID-19 restrictions have eased.



IMMIGRATION NEWS

Immigration and Citizenship Support Services Program

The IPC's Immigration and Citizenship Program provides information and support to immigrants from Ireland and elsewhere including obtaining legal status, adjusting status, matters related to Green Card applications and renewals, visas, U.S. Citizenship eligibility, and applications for U.S. Citizenship. The IPC can also provide information about Irish passports. Staff is available during normal business hours to help to answer questions related to these matters and direct people to appropriate resources.

Additionally, the IPC offers bi-monthly Legal Immigration Clinics where individuals can have a free and confidential phone conversation about their particular immigration situation with a volunteer immigration attorney.

Appointments are scheduled in advance. If you would like to schedule a phone consultation with an attorney, please contact Maryann Casavant at the IPC's office by phone at 617-265-5300 or by emailing mcasavant@ipcboston.org.

Consider Applying for U.S. Citizenship

Has your Green Card expired? Is it expiring soon? Before you renew your Green Card again, consider applying for U.S. Citizenship.

"Naturalization" is the process to become a U.S. citizen if you were born outside of the United States. If you meet certain requirements, you may become a U.S. citizen either at birth or after birth.

Eligibility for Citizenship:

To apply for naturalization to become a U.S. citizen, you must:

- **Be at least 18 years of age at the time you file the application;**
- **Have been a lawful permanent resident for the past three or five years (depending on which naturalization category you are applying under);**
- **Have continuous residence and physical presence in the United States;**
- **Be able to read, write, and speak basic English;**
- **Demonstrate good moral character;**
- **Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government;**
- **Demonstrate a loyalty to the principles of the U.S. Constitution; and**
- **Be willing to take the Oath of Allegiance.**

The IPC Can Help:

If you have questions about eligibility for U.S. Citizenship, questions about how to apply, or need help with the process, please reach out to the IPC. Staff is available to assist you and can direct you to helpful resources. If there are some questions, or your situation is a bit complicated, we can schedule a free consultation for you with one of our experienced immigration attorneys at one of our Legal Immigration Clinics.

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www.cic-health.com for PCR testing
Please be aware that there is
still an Irish Government
Advisory in operation
against all non-essential
international travel.

Upcoming Legal Clinic Dates

Tuesday, July 6th, Tuesday,
July 20th, Monday, August
2nd, Tuesday, August 17th

Check the IPC's website or
follow the IPC on Facebook
for the most up-to-date
schedule.

IMMIGRATION NEWS



Updates from our friends at the Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Coalition

Could this be the year that Massachusetts joins other states to prioritize immigrant rights and inclusion?

National momentum could drive the campaigns for the Work and Family Mobility Act, the Safe Communities Act, and Tuition Equity here in Massachusetts, and advocates are hoping for a triple header this session.

Late last month the Illinois General Assembly passed the Illinois Way Forward Act limiting state and local involvement with ICE, joining California, Connecticut, Vermont, and hundreds of cities and counties across the country. The campaign for the Massachusetts Safe Communities Act is now in its third session, with near majority support in both chambers, and we're hoping that this third time will prove to be the charm!

Sixteen states, Washington DC and Puerto Rico have extended eligibility for driver's licenses to drivers without regard to immigration status, and the Driving Families Forward campaign continues to rack up legislator and law enforcement support heading into a June 23 hearing on the Work and Family Mobility Act before the Joint Committee on Transportation.

Finally, over 21 states have extended access to in-state tuition at public colleges and universities, regardless of status, as we testified at yesterday's hearing before the Joint Committee on Higher Education. Massachusetts should join them as soon as possible!

Source: MIRA Newsletter June 9, 2021

DRIVING
FAMILIES
FORWARD



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Call or email your legislators and urge them to prioritize this bill, or **use the DFF letter-writing tool** (<https://miracoalition.org/get-involved/drivers-licenses/>)

Follow the Driving Families Forward campaign and share their posts!

Irish Passport Support Services

The Irish Department of Foreign Affairs is currently transitioning to an all on-line process for all Irish Passports. Passport processing has been online only for passport renewals (passports expired less than 5 years) for some time. At present no paper applications for first time passports or for those expired for more than 5 years are being accepted by the Irish Consulate in Boston. The DFA is expected to be issuing guidance soon for how passport applicants applying from the United States can apply on-line. The IPC offers passport support services. If you have questions or need assistance applying for a new Irish passport, or renewing your expired or expiring Irish passport, please give us a call. We have trained staff to help guide you through the process, and computers available for your use to submit the applications. Call the IPC to schedule an appointment.

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Hot Dinners

DAILY HOT LUNCH SPECIALS INCLUDE:

- Monday: Chicken Pot pie, Shephard's Pie
- Tuesday: Roast Turkey Breast, Stuffing, Gravy and Cranberry
- Wednesday: Greenhills Baked Ham, Shephard's Pie
- Thursday: Irish Boiled Dinner with Irish Boiled Bacon, Corned Beef, Cabbage, Spuds, Veg and Homemade White Sauce
- Friday: Chicken Pot Pie, Chicken Curry, Rice and Fish dinner
- Saturday: Shephard's Pie, Full Irish Breakfast
- Sunday: Full Irish Breakfast

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June 26th and 27th, 2021
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MILTON MUSIC FESTIVAL



Come and enjoy food, drink, family games, and dancing.

SATURDAY AT 5:00PM

Cherry Orchard
Big Party Orchestra

CELTIC SUNDAY AT 12:30PM

Erins Melody	Sean and Caroline Brennan
The Dooley Brothers	The Skiffs
The Old Brigade	The Fenian Sons
Curraghs Fancy	

The Celtic Scribe



Canal Bank Walk was written as Patrick Kavanagh was recuperating after being treated for lung cancer in 1954. His recovery from a potentially fatal disease revitalized his zest for life and made him see life anew. The natural beauty of the canal bank area seems to be infused with the beauty of nature and the wonder of God. Kavanagh wants to rush head-long towards both and to rediscover himself anew.

CANAL BANK WALK

Leafy-with-love banks and the green waters of the canal
Pouring redemption for me, that I do
The will of God, wallow in the habitual, the banal,
Grow with nature again as before I grew.

The bright stick trapped, the breeze adding a third
Party to the couple kissing on an old seat,
And a bird gathering materials for the nest for the Word
Eloquently new and abandoned to its delirious beat.

O unworn world enrapture me, encapture me in a web
Of fabulous grass and eternal voices by a beech,
Feed the gaping need of my senses, give me ad lib
To pray unselfconsciously with overflowing speech
For this soul needs to be honoured with a new dress woven
From green and blue things and arguments that cannot be proven.

Thank God for the IPC

Without such, where would many folks be?

Throughout the pandemic, an era of uncertainty and fear.
Folks had someone to call on, whether far or near.

Veronica there, rain or shine.
Reassuring folks with an encouraging line.

Her endearing smile felt from afar.
Never thinking of herself, what a superstar!

Fr Dan, Audrey and many many more
There for us all, no matter the chore.

From zooming to emails and much in between.
Even an IPC newsletter created in green.

Listening to news, sometimes too much to bear.
But when we were all about to despair.
The IPC sent us a pandemic prayer.

Vaccinations are here, bringing much hope.
Spring in the air, helping us cope.

Coffee mornings are back, luncheons and more.
Bingo and card games, perhaps trips to the shore.

At the IPC life has begun anew.
With Mary at the helm, along with a trustworthy crew.

With gratitude for what is, what was and what is yet to be.

Le grá agus buíochas, Sorcha

We were all delighted with this lovely tribute to the IPC

Thanks to Sally O'Connor of Milton who made our day!

Notable Quotes

"Later as the day cools and they have gone in, the cry of the corncrake will carry across those same fields and over the lake to the blue-hazed mountain, such a lonely evening sound to it, like the lonely evening sound of the mothers, saying it is not our fault that we weep so, it is nature's fault that makes us first full, then empty."



The Celtic Scribe

As summer is upon us, we are reprinting this lovely imagery of Glendalough, written by local poet, Peter Groome. Truly, one of Ireland's most beautiful places.

GLENDALOUGH

Glen of Glens, Lough of Loughs,
a place we call Glendalough.
Although I may be far away,
I walk your paths every day.

Three thousand miles from your mystic valley,
crisp leaves blow all about your gullies.
Gentle ripples from your near still lakes,
oftentimes keep me awake.

Howling winds whistling through a graveyard,
Watched over by its magnificent round tower.
I place my hands upon the cold stones piled so
high by men of old.

A Celtic Cross that lists with age,
still holds its beauty with glorious grace.
I pause for a moment on your wooden bridge,
Watching shallow water flowing under with
ease.

A place so ancient frozen in time,
forever embedded on my mind.
Serene and peaceful like a piece of heaven,
it's no wonder 'twas chosen by dear Saint Kevin.

Peter Groome, October 2020



If you have a talent for writing poems, stories and memories that you would like to see featured here, please send your submission to mswanton@ipcoston.org.

If you prefer putting pen to paper, please mail your submission to Mary Swanton at the Pastoral Centre

LOCAL SPORTS

Boston North East GAA Weekend Round Up June 21, 2021

by Rory O'Donnell

On Sunday the men's and Ladies senior footballers battled it out at HQ. Donegal added another win to their championship campaign. The Shannon Blues held it close in the first half, with just one score between the teams. Donegal 0-6 and the Blues 0-3 at the break. In the second half, however, Donegal ran rampant and banged in two early goals from star players, Shane Carthy and Corey Gallagher. The point also flowed with regularity. Carthy, Lee Carr, and Gallagher adding to the tally. The Blues pulled a couple of late scores back from Mike Moylan and Dylan Walsh, but it ended up an impressive 2-17 to 0-5 win for the northerners.



The Gaels' Colman Mulkerrin

Aidan McAnespies and the Gaels were the second senior football match on the docket for the day and served up a competitive and close run affair. It was a cagey opening with never more than 2 points between the teams. Peter O'Connell was the main marksman for the Macs, and scores for the Gaels came from Jack Bambrick, Patrick Cunningham, and Colman Mulkerrin. The Gaels went in 2 points to the good at the half with Paddy McGee and Ryan Caffrey pointing late. The second half saw the Macs pull ahead, Robbie Croft found his range and Philly McCusker proved a handful at corner forward. The difference maker, however, was a goal from Matty Duane for the Gaels mid-way through the half. The Gaels stretched the lead to 5 before a late penalty saw Croft pull it back to two with the spot kick. The Gaels held on for the win, 1-11 to 1-9.



Hartford GAA

Also on Sunday, The Ladies senior footballers played out a close game with the Boston Shamrocks coming out on top by a score of 2-12 to 2-9. Friday night saw Christopher's gather second win in the Junior B Football championship with a 4-8 to 1-6 win over newcomers, Trinity Milton. Saturday saw more junior B action, Donegal came out winners over Kerry by a score of 2-11 to 0-13, while the Connemara Gaels defeated Sean Og's 4-9 to 1-7. Donegal and Christopher's on top of the junior B table there in the early going.

Three other states in the region saw GAA action at the weekend. In Connecticut it was the Hartford junior C footballers with a victory by the narrowest of margins over new team, Worcester, 2-11 to 2-10. Further north in Merrimack NH the Worcester junior C hurlers had a 4-19 to 2-18 win over hosts, the Wolves of New Hampshire. In Portland Maine Providence junior C hurlers continued their winning ways with a win against Portland Hurling Club, 7-17 to 3-3. **THE GAA SCHEDULE IS POSTED ON FACEBOOK EACH WEEK**

LOCAL CLUBS SUPPORT THE MICA CRISIS

Some photos that captured the support exhibited at the Irish Cultural Center for the families forced to deal with the Mica crisis. The crisis is hitting families in Donegal, Mayo, Sligo and other counties. Thousands of homes built during the "Celtic Tiger" years with defective construction materials are literally crumbling down and families are forced to bear the burden of tens, if not hundreds of thousands, in costs through no fault of their own. The stress and angst that this is causing people is scandalous and there must be full redress for these families. The show of support was organized by the Boston's 100% Redress No Less group. (Thank you to Rachel O'Driscoll for taking the photos.)



LOCAL SPORTS

LAS VEGAS SET TO HOST USA VS IRELAND SHOWCASE

(LAS VEGAS, NV) – World-class international rugby will make its debut at the iconic Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas in October 2021 for the inaugural Las Vegas Rugby Cup.

The USA Men's National Rugby team, the Eagles, will host Ireland in a landmark rugby event on Saturday, October 30, 2021. The event is expected to occur annually with Las Vegas as the host city.

The Ireland rugby team shared their excitement for the new Las Vegas Rugby Cup, saying they always enjoy playing in the United States.

"Over the past few years, we have had some incredible experiences playing in the US, including beating the All Blacks for the first time in our history," said Andy Farrell, Ireland Head Coach. "Our last fixture against the Eagles in New Jersey was another fantastic rugby experience. We are looking forward to the game in October and to reconnecting with Irish Rugby fans in the US."

Anytime we have played in the US we have had tremendous support either travelling from Ireland or Irish Rugby fans based in America," said James Ryan, Ireland Captain for the upcoming July Tests. "We have been lucky to experience some great cities and stadia on our recent trips across the Atlantic, but Las Vegas will be special and to be the first rugby game played at Allegiant Stadium will just make it an even bigger occasion for players and fans alike."

MGM Resorts International has signed on as the official resort partner. Organizers anticipate that the appeal of world-class international rugby, coupled with MGM Resorts' award-winning hospitality, will offer fans a top-notch Las Vegas experience. Tickets start at \$70 plus taxes and fees. Tickets can be purchased at <https://www.allegiantstadium.com/>



GAA QUIZ

1. Which was the first Ulster county to win the Sam Maguire trophy, that is given to the All-Ireland winners?
2. Armagh finally won their first All-Ireland in 2002. How many times had they lost in the final before that?
3. Down made history when they became the first county to take the trophy over the border. In what year was that?
4. The 1947 final was played in New York, not Ireland, to commemorate the famine. Who beat who in that final?
5. Red, blue, green, and yellow are very popular, but which county includes the colour purple in their jersey?
6. Gaelic Games is a generalisation of Irish sport but which 'gaelic game' is actually the native game of Ireland as governed by Cumann Luthcleas Gael?
7. The 1893 All-Ireland Senior Final was played in Dublin, but where in Dublin was it played?
8. The smallest county ground in Ireland in 2007 belonged to the county that played out of Aughrim Park. Who were they?



Sports News From Ireland

SHANE DOWLING ON HURLING *RTE.IE*

In a month's time, this year's Allianz Hurling League campaign will be a distant memory, and all the focus and gossip will be about the championship.

In saying that, while the league will mean diddily squat to most, it's also fair to say that we have most definitely gleaned nuggets of information about the majority of teams.

To go and start suggesting All-Ireland winners at this early stage would be a shot in the dark, but you could still narrow it down to just three or four counties. Some teams have put their hands up, but more have put their hands down.



From a Dublin point of view, I have been rather disappointed. I thought of all teams the opening weekend they were the one team that looked the sloppiest.

Of course you would allow for that, but things don't seem to have improved that much.

Losing at home to Kilkenny and Clare, beating Laois before losing to Wexford, the only way to describe their league campaign is underwhelming. I haven't seen enough from them in the recent three years to suggest they can threaten this year's championship.



That brings me on to Antrim. I'll tell you something for nothing, if ever a team is eyeing up a scalp in this year's championship, these are the boys. You can be sure Darren Gleeson will have them wound up for their championship match with the Dubs.

They will be coming in on a high, while Mattie Kenny's side will be wondering where they are really at. The Saffrons have been superb in this year's league. People wondered maybe was their win over

Clare a fluke, but far from it. Their performances have been consistent throughout the league.

They have some really good players, play a lovely brand of hurling and I think this game will be watched closely by many people. I expect them to improve greatly on last year, and if they could take a scalp of one of the bigger teams, I think they will be happy with that.



Nobody can ever write off Kilkenny, though their last game against Clare gave me reason for concern. The game was there for the winning, they had chances, they had overlaps, but the quality let them down. Clare subs made a massive difference when they came on, while the opposite was the case from the Kilkenny replacements.

It really seems to be their first year playing a different style of hurling. Building the ball and finding the man rather than driving it long. I wonder when the tempo increases and the quality of opposition get better, will they have enough work done on that style of play?

It doesn't work overnight. If they can get that singing right though, and can escape serious injuries, they will still be a force to be reckoned with.



When I see Wexford, I think they are a serious team. But deep down, my reasoning is based on the 2019 season. It's like watching a horse for two years since his last big win, you know he has the ability, you know he can do it, but are wondering why he hasn't.

Last year, they were very disappointing, to say the least, and they haven't exactly been flying this year either. On top of that, they will be without their manager on the sideline for their Leinster SHC quarter-final against Laois.

They will need to continue their positive championship record against Kilkenny of late in a semi-final to be taken seriously, otherwise the year could prove to be a damp squib.

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Sports News From Ireland



To finish off Leinster, I saved the best until last. I look at Galway and I ask myself, what weaknesses do they have?

I came up with a very simple answer. None! Their power, their pace, their physique, and most importantly, their skill, is arguably the best in the country.

When Shane O'Neill's men find their groove, they are a serious outfit. And as they showed against Cork last weekend, they can go from six points down, to six points up in a flash. The Tribesmen should have won last year's Leinster championship, and if they get back to a final this year, which I suspect they will, I don't think they will leave it behind them.



For the first three weeks after the season started, Cork were fancied by many. A deadly first day out against Waterford, before destroying Westmeath, they looked to be a different Cork.

Now, since the return after the break, many people are asking questions again.

When they came up against the top two teams in the country, they didn't have the answers. Limerick floored them on their launch pad, their own puck-out. Galway enjoyed a 12-point turn around against the Rebels. ***Have Cork the players to go long? Only time will tell.*** This group of players face a massive game against Limerick in an opening semi-final, and while at times they looked good from open play, their puck-out is a big concern. If they keep going short, will Limerick turn them over time and time again, and have they the players to go long? Only time will tell.



Likewise for Waterford, this is a massive year. While they have no silverware to show for their 2020 exploits, the Déise showed huge progress. Can they build on that now?

Fine, they beat Limerick, who played most of the game with 14 men. I'd take or leave that, but their win last weekend against Tipperary has them seemingly peaking at the right time.

The one problem they face though is injuries. Tadhg De Burca is obviously gone, and they have to sweat on Austin Glesson and Conor Prunty. If they have a full selection,

I don't see any reason why they can't build on last year, but minus the aforementioned trio, it could be a different story.



Tipperary are a tricky one for me. They have the ability to challenge for Liam MacCarthy, but if Liam Sheedy starts with his best 15 hurlers, has he got the required finishers?

I am not sure about the strength of their panel. There has not been evidence of too many newcomers putting their hand up. If a couple of the tried and trusted don't perform on any given day, who is there to step in and take their place?

Players will tell you they are only concentrating on playing, on training, and they are, but don't be fooled, they can't escape the outside noise



After Clare's opening defeat to Antrim, it seemed like all the shenanigans that have been going on within their own county had taken their toll.

Players will tell you they are only concentrating on playing, on training, and they are, but don't be fooled, they can't escape the outside noise. Negativity within a camp, or a county, is poisonous.

You need absolutely everybody - players, management and county board - all on the same wavelength, and in Clare, that is not the case. So, to be fair to the players, they are making it look like all is rosy.

They were really good against Kilkenny last weekend, had a great win in Parnell Park and let's face it, should have beaten Wexford.

The Banner find themselves in a really good place for next weekend's opener against Waterford, and if the players and management can keep the blinkers on, you can be damn sure they will fancy their chances.



And similar to Leinster, I've kept the best until last. People will accuse me of bias, but I can only call it as I see it. Losing to Galway, believe it or not, was a positive as far as I'm concerned.

The unbeaten talk put to bed, it will fine tune the players and bring a new focus going forward. They were incredible against Cork. It was the Limerick we have been accustomed to over the last three years.

The energy, the spark and the crispness was back.

Between suspensions and injuries, they haven't had their full team playing together yet this season.

I think that will be a different ball game in three weeks' time when they face the Rebels again, but if the champions can reach the same heights as last year, they remain the team to beat.



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