



Queensland Irish Association

Newsletter

October 2024

From festivals to concerts: We've got a full slate ahead

Congratulations to Queensland Irish Association's Vice President Seamus Sullivan on being awarded Lifetime Membership of GAA Australasia.

The GAA Australasia marked 50 years of the association at the Australasia Championships at Gaelic Park, Melbourne, from Wednesday, 2nd to Saturday, 5th of October 2024.

Taking part were 23 state teams from across Australia and New Zealand competing in women's senior football, men's senior football, women's intermediate football, men's intermediate football, camogie, and hurling.

QIA AGM

Our AGM will be held on Saturday, 9th November, 11am to 2.30pm. We will also have Members' Lunch available to purchase on the day, at Coorparoo RSL, 45 Holdsworth St, Coorparoo. Further details in our next newsletter.

BRISBANE CELTIC FESTIVAL

We are looking forward to being a part of the first Brisbane Celtic Festival on Sunday, 13th October.

This free, family-friendly event runs from 9.30am to 4pm, featuring an array of performers including Tom Kimmert; enchanting Welsh tunes with Ceri McCoy; Finbar & Friends; The Queensland Irish Choir; Moreton Bay Fiddlers; and Dominic Ward.

Headlining the event are the incredible Australian Celtic Women and the modern Celtic band Limerick MCB.

Dance enthusiasts can enjoy performances from the QIA Irish Dancers, Thistle Highland Dancers, and Manx Dancers. Pipe bands, including the



Congratulations to our Vice President Seamus Sullivan, centre, who has been awarded Lifetime Membership of GAA Australasia by GAA President Jarlath Burns, left, and Australasian GAA President Ned Sheehy.

Celtic Nations Pipes and Drums, and massed pipe bands, will bring powerful traditional music to life. To top it off, the Brisbane Lord Mayor will make a special guest appearance. It will be held at Moorlands Park, Auchenflower.

QUEENSLAND IRISH CHOIR

On Saturday, 16th November, the Queensland Irish Choir will be performing their 10th Anniversary Concert at The Hills Church Auditorium, (Everton Hills Wesleyan Methodist Church), 79 Queens Road, Everton

Hills 4053. Details are in this newsletter.

IRISH FILM FESTIVAL

Queensland Irish Association is a bronze sponsor for the 2024 Irish Film Festival Australia, which opens at Dendy Cinemas, Coorparoo, on November 15th. You'll find the full program in this newsletter.

*Mary Allen Corbett,
Public Relations Officer,
Queensland Irish Association.*

November Mass at Labrador



This year's Irish Community November Remembrance Mass on the Gold Coast will take place on Sunday, 3rd November at 11.30am.

It will be held at the new location of Saint Joseph the Worker Catholic Church, 44 Imperial Parade, Labrador QLD 4215.

All are welcome to join this opportunity to remember and pray for our deceased family members and friends.

Calendar

Wednesday, 9th October, 6pm.

Sister Liguori: The Nun Who Divided a Nation book launch, The Holy Spirit Church, 17 Harriett Street, Auchenflower.

Sunday, 13th October, 9.30am to 4pm.
Brisbane Celtic Festival, Moorlands Park, Auchenflower.

Wednesday, 16th October, 11.30am to 2.30pm.

QIA Members Lunch, Coorparoo RSL, 45 Holdsworth St, Coorparoo. RSVP by 9th Oct to Mavis Williams, 3849 8271.

Friday, 18th October, 4pm to 6pm.

QIA Members Drinks, Normanby Hotel, 1 Musgrave Rd, Red Hill.

Sunday, 3rd November, 11.30am.

2024 Irish Community November Gold Coast Remembrance Mass at St Joseph The Worker Church, Labrador.

Friday, 8th November, 4pm to 6pm.

QIA Members Drinks, Normanby Hotel, 1 Musgrave Rd, Red Hill.

Saturday, 9th November, 11am to 2.30pm.

QIA AGM and Members Lunch, Coorparoo RSL, 45 Holdsworth St, Coorparoo.

Friday, 15th November to Sunday, 17th November.

Irish Film Festival Australia, Dendy Cinema, Coorparoo.

Saturday, 16th November, 1.30pm.

Queensland Irish Choir's *The Light of Christmas*, The Hills Church Auditorium, 79 Queens Road, Everton Hills.

Wednesday, 20th November, 11.30am to 2.30pm.

QIA Members Lunch, Coorparoo RSL, 45 Holdsworth St, Coorparoo. RSVP by 13th Nov to Mavis Williams, 3849 8271.

Sunday, 8th December, from 12pm.

QIA Christmas Party, Wests Rugby Club, Sylvan Road, Toowong.

Sunday, 16th March 2025

QIA St Patrick's Eve Dinner 2025, Brisbane City Hall, St George's Square, Brisbane. Further details TBA.

Celtic Council of Australia (Queensland) Inc
ABN 83 434 304 383

proudly presents



BRISBANE CELTIC FESTIVAL

Moorlands Park, Auchenflower, Brisbane

Sunday 13 October 2024 9.30am to 4pm



WHAT'S ON

Celtic Music and Dance from the Eight Celtic Nations
Massed Pipe Bands
Tartan Clothing & Kilts: please wear
Kids Celtic Games
Prizes: Best Celtic dressed child & adult

WHAT TO BRING

Hats, Umbrellas, Chairs/Blanket, Water and Picnic Lunch if desired.
Light Refreshments available from food vans on site. Variety of vendor tents.

HOW TO GET THERE

Train: Auchenflower Train Station
Bus: Coronation Drive, such as routes 444 or 445. Get off at a stop near Land St or Wesley Hospital
CityCat Ferry: Get off at the Regatta Ferry Terminal. 10-minute walk to

**FREE
ADMISSION**



Standing Stones
Celtic Nations Monument

Information contact

<https://www.ccaq.org.au/brisbane-celtic-festival-2024>

CCAQ President Mavis Williams CyC
email: mkw.pinklady.dua@hotmail.com
Phone: 07 3849 8271

Proudly sponsored by



How Irish migrants brought Halloween around the world



The Celtic festival of Samhain. Picture: Ireland.com

Halloween is coming – but did you know it is Ireland we have to thank for the most popular customs and traditions at the most unearthly time of year?

The Irish are famous for concocting a bewitching cauldron of mystery and merriment at Halloween time, and little wonder, Ireland is where it all began.

Trace Halloween to its origins and you will arrive right back in the mists of Ireland's Ancient East and the Celtic festival of Samhain, a great celebration of fire and feasting that marked the end of the season of light and the beginning of the dark days of winter.

At this moment of transition the Celts believed there was an interaction between the worlds of the living and the dead and that spirits could move between them. Fearing that all manner of beings might pull them into the otherworld before their time, the Celts would disguise themselves in costumes to confuse and scare off the roaming ghosts, fairies, hobgoblins and demons.

The modern practice of dressing up at Halloween is firmly rooted in these old pre-Christian Celtic customs, as is the tradition of lighting bonfires, which began on hilltops in Ireland with clans

and communities gathering to light huge ceremonial Samhain fires.

One of the biggest Celtic festivals of fire was at the peak of Tlachtga, or the Hill of Ward in present day County Meath. Recent archaeological excavations suggest the hill was used for feasting and celebration over 2,000 years ago and old manuscripts reveal that the Celts lit a fire here from which all the fires in Ireland were rekindled.

To this day the area around the Hill of Ward, and the nearby Hill of Tara where the High Kings of Ireland ruled, remains one of the centres of Irish Halloween traditions. The Púca Festival, a twenty-first-century Samhain celebration, is held in County Meath and neighbouring County Louth every year.

Celebrating Ireland as the birthplace of Halloween, Púca events normally include an impressive re-enactment of the symbolic lighting of the Samhain fire, live music and performance, amazing light installations and more.

Lit up pumpkins with ghoulish faces is another much-loved aspect of Halloween. The practice of carving them began in Ireland, where turnips and large potatoes served as the original Jack-o-

lanterns.

In fact, the name of the Halloween decoration comes from an Irish folktale about a man named Stingy Jack who played a trick on the Devil. As a punishment for his trickery, the Devil doomed Jack to wander eternity with only a burning ember from the everlasting fires of Hell inside a turnip to light his way.

Irish immigrants eventually brought the tradition to America, home of the pumpkin, and the winter squash has now become integral to the Halloween festivities.

Trick or treating is another Halloween tradition originating in Ireland, in this case with children and the poor going from door to door to ask for food, kindling or money. They sang songs or offered prayers for the soul of the dead in return for food, usually a soul cake which was a flattened bread that contained fruit. This tradition was known as 'souling'.

The custom of dressing in costumes and making house visits to request small presents of sweets, fruit and money is alive and well in Ireland today, and in many other countries around the world.

Words: www.ireland.com

Brisbane launch for book about saga of Irish nun



A true story stranger than fiction, *Sister Liguori: The Nun Who Divided a Nation* by Jeff Kildea, will be launched in Brisbane this month.

When an Irish Catholic nun, fearful she was about to be murdered by her mother superior, fled her convent in Wagga Wagga and sought the protection of the Orange order, it sparked a sectarian war that divided the Australian nation. Arrested as a lunatic at the request of her bishop, she was declared sane by the Lunacy Court and released.

Then followed one of the most controversial court cases of the 1920s, *Partridge v. Dwyer*, in which the ex-nun sued Bishop Dwyer for damages. The hearing attracted the attention of the press across Australia and around the world. Each day the gallery was packed; hundreds queuing in the rain to get a seat.

Meanwhile, in parliament, demands by opposition members for an inquiry into Catholic convents led to threats of violence between Catholic and Protestant MPs. When the nun's brother kidnapped her off a suburban Sydney street, intending to take her back to her family in

Ireland, the police intervened. But when the brother left the coun-



try without charge, the opposition moved a censure motion that threatened to bring down the Labor government.

Jeff Kildea is a retired barrister and honorary professor in Irish Studies at the University of New South Wales. In 2014 he held the Keith Cameron Chair of Australian History at University College Dublin. He has written extensively on the history of the Irish in Australia.

Sister Liguori: The Nun Who

Above left, an illustration from the Supreme Court case taken against Bishop Dwyer, and, above, Bridget Partridge. Pictures: Jeff Kildea

Divided a Nation is available from Connor Court Publishing (connor-courtpublishing.com.au) for \$34.95.

The book will be launched by Father Frank Brennan SJ AO (Jesuit priest, human rights lawyer and academic) at The Holy Spirit Church, 17 Harriett Street, Auchenflower 4066, on Wednesday, 9th October, at 6pm.

Jeff Kildea is also the author of *Tearing the Fabric: Sectarianism in Australia 1910-1925* (2002), *Anzacs and Ireland* (2007), *Wartime Australians: Billy Hughes* (2008), *Hugh Mahon: Patriot, Pressman, Politician* (Vol 1 2017, Vol 2 2020), *Leaving Home: Stories of My Emigrant Ancestors* (2021), and co-author of *To Foster an Irish Spirit: The Irish National Association of Australasia 1915-2015* (2020).

New home for Queensland Irish Choir as numbers grow



The choir is busy preparing for The Celtic Festival, which we are looking forward to taking part in and also rehearsing for our Christmas Concert.

As our choir has grown in numbers we had to look for a new venue.

So on Saturday, 16th November, we will be performing our 10th Anniversary Concert at The Hills Church Auditorium, (Everton Hills Wesleyan Methodist Church), 79 Queens Road, Everton Hills 4053.

The auditorium seats 150-300, and it has state of the art sound and lighting.

We are very much looking forward to the concert. And hopefully, with the new location, we will also attract some new patrons. Details [here](#).

The title of our concert 'The Light of Christmas' comes from the practice which started a long time ago of leaving a lit candle in the window to welcome strangers. One of our choristers Terry O'Connor writes some wonderful poetry and he has written a poem called 'The Candle In The Window'.

We are in the process of building a new website, which we hope will be up and running by the middle of October.

Morag Wilson,
President,
Queensland Irish Choir.

The Candle in the Window

By

Terence O'Connor

As Mary bent to light the "Candle in the Window" to dispel the cold, wintry gloom, she asked "Mamma, why do we put the candle here where it doesn't light the room?"

Her Mamma replied, we light it each Christmas for the lost traveller who may in darkness roam,

A sign that food, warmth and a welcome await him in our humble Irish home.

Many years ago, in the dark days, when it was made unlawful to practice our faith,

your grandmother lit this candle to assure the brave Priest that his visit would be safe,

the strangers laughed when she told them the candle was to welcome the coming

of the Christ child,

yet, after the Mass was said and Christmas blessings given, it was Irish faces that smiled.

During the Great Hunger, many of your great grandmother's siblings left this famished shore,

She knew in her heart that it was unlikely that she would see them again



evermore,

So, each Christmas Eve, she lit this candle in case one of her exiles may have returned,

And, if not, to show them they were not forgotten, and their love was forever yearned.

So dear Mary, light that candle now and let its light shine bright into the night,

As a sign of the miracle of Christmas to bring love and joy to all within its sight.

Tonight, the door will be left open, and the hearth be a place of friendly favour,

The broth kept warm; the fire stoked, so all within may await the birth of our Saviour!

Queensland Irish Choir

10th Anniversary Concert

"The Light of Christmas"



Musical Director: David O'Keeffe

Accompanist: Tim Li

The Irish Choir will perform some beautiful Irish & Celtic songs in this Special Christmas Concert. It will feature small ensembles of a number of our talented choristers performing vocal/instrumental items.

**THE HILLS CHURCH AUDITORIUM
(Everton Hills Wesleyan Methodist Church)
79 Queens Road, Everton Hills. 4053**

SATURDAY: 16th November 2024

Doors Open: 1:30pm for 2pm start

Adult: \$25.00 U15's \$10.00

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/CVRYL>

On-line Purchase Discount:-

6 Tickets for the price of Five!



Tickets on Sale at Door (Until Sold Out)

All Enquiries: 0493 455 487



Sheela na gig inspires Brisbane sculpture

A larger-than-life five tonne goddess-like bronze sculpture is the latest artwork to be unveiled as part of the multi-million-dollar public art pipeline for the iconic \$3.6b Queen's Wharf Brisbane.

Known for her focus on the body as an art form, Brisbane-based creative Justene Williams, said her five-year-old daughter Honore's fascination with tiny toy figurines, combined with ancient carvings of women called Sheela na gigs, found in Ireland and throughout Europe, inspired the almost five metre upscaled version of a superwoman, titled Sheila.

"My daughter is interested in superheroes and loves her plastic figurines, so I took that and gave the sculpture gravitas," Ms Williams said.

"I love to go big so this will be a giant monument to the female form," she said.

"The name Sheila riffs on the term used for an Aussie woman but it is also the female character carved in stone mainly in Europe from the 11th century, which has interpretations of protector, fertility and empathy and I wanted to immortalise those qualities.

"She will also feature a stainless-steel halo that is open to interpretation and self-reflection.

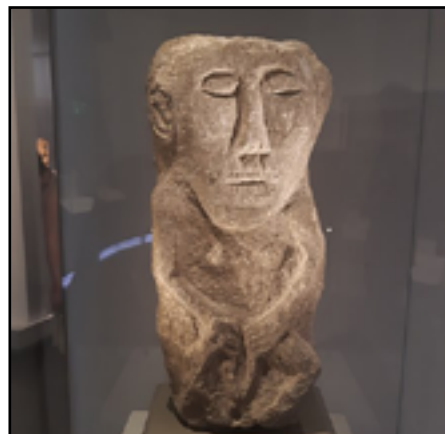
"The average person will see a big woman in a horse-stance with one arm open and the other closed fist; some people may giggle at the busty representation but I'm hoping everyone will stop and look."

A former dancer and cabaret performer, Justene Williams is an established artist over 25 years and is well known for her large-scale immersive live works, multi-channel video installations and photography.

"My work is often ephemeral, but this is permanent and I'm so excited for Sheila to be so prominent in such an



Honore and her mum, artist Justene Williams, with a model of Sheila. The statue has now been unveiled at Queen's Wharf, Brisbane. Picture: Louis Lim



Sheela na gig from Ireland in the British Museum. Picture: [Jononmac46/Wikimedia Commons](#)

important development for Brisbane," Ms Williams said.

Sheila stands at the Queen's Wharf Plaza on the riverside of the Commissariat Store and is one of four artworks now announced for the 7.5 hectares of public space within the entertainment and tourism precinct.

Art curator and Director of the Institute of Modern Art Liz Nowell, part of the Specialist Arts Advisory Coun-

cil panel, led by highly regarded art figure Philip Bacon alongside leading Indigenous curator and arts administrator Avril Quail, likened Sheila to a "towering goddess-like figure".

"I like to think of her being the guardian of the Plaza, who will watch over the millions of visitors to Queen's Wharf Brisbane, including for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games," Ms Nowell said.

"The Arts panel felt she was a figure that everyone could relate to, from children to adults, as there is something playful about her, but her stance is empowered and impactful," she said.

"A lot of the works are installation or site specific, but Sheila offers a contemporary twist on figurative sculpture and I think people will respond really positively to her.

"I hope she becomes a familiar and much-loved icon – perhaps a meeting place, where visitors can congregate under her larger-than-life physique."

The fearless pen behind Queensland gold rush news

In celebration of the annual Culture night in Ireland in September, The Australian Embassy in Dublin held a free presentation on Thadeus O’Kane, the late editor and owner of the newspaper, The Northern Miner, based in Charters Towers, Queensland by Australian artist and educator Belinda Madden.

The Irishman became one of Australia’s most fiery, colourful and strident 19th century editors. He railed against corruption and unfairness in the gold mining town of Charters Towers as it became Queensland’s second biggest population centre.

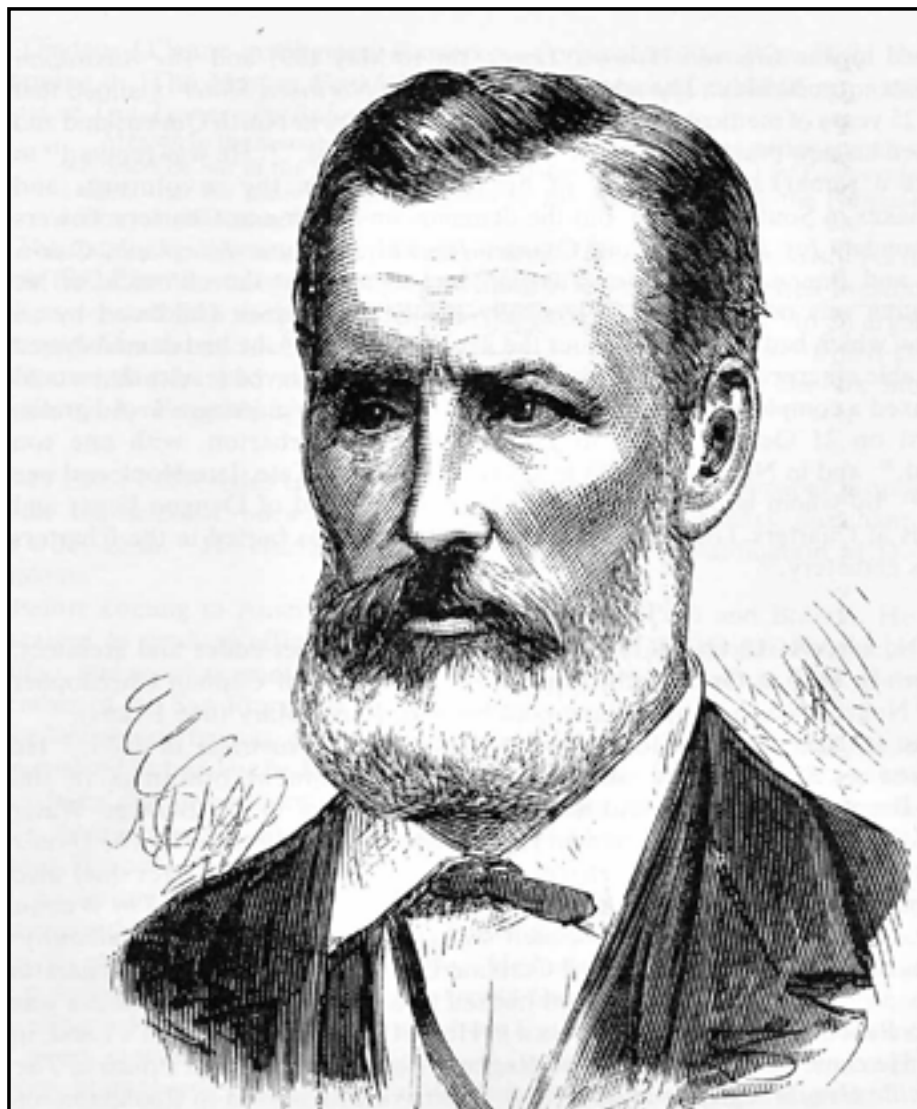
But who was this warrior for truth and what was his background?

Born in Dingle, County Kerry, Ireland in 1820, Thadeus O’Kane decided early in life that he wanted to be a journalist, and worked in London for a time. He set up the Kerry Star newspaper in Tralee. In 1864, he immigrated to Australia during the gold rush in search of a better life.

Having first moved to Melbourne, he then spent just over a year in Brisbane, becoming the sub-editor on the Roman Catholic-owned North Australian. Jobs in Rockhampton followed, as a sub-editor on the Northern Argus and Rockhampton Bulletin.

O’Kane founded The Northern Miner in 1872 in Charters Towers, a booming goldfield town. The newspaper became one of the most influential publications in Queensland.

As editor, O’Kane was known for his fiery commentary on political and social issues, particularly his support for miners and the working class. His writing often targeted corrupt politicians and businessmen, making him a formidable voice for reform. O’Kane’s willingness to challenge authority earned him both admiration and enemies, but he never shied away



Thadeus O’Kane. Picture: [facebook.com/AusEmbIRE](https://www.facebook.com/AusEmbIRE)

from controversy. His fearless journalism made The Northern Miner essential reading.

O’Kane’s passion for justice was also evident in his personal life. He was involved in several campaigns for miners’ rights, advocating for improved working conditions and wages. Under his leadership, The Northern Miner played a key role in highlighting the struggles of the working-class population and the need for political reforms.

Thadeus O’Kane passed away in 1895, but his legacy endures through his contributions to Australian jour-

nalism. His commitment to truth and justice left an indelible mark on the media landscape in North Queensland. He was boycotted by councils, boards and clubs, sued, charged with libel, gagged, attacked. Allegedly even excommunicated. But he never quit and his fearless style continues to inspire generations of journalists who seek to hold power accountable.

O’Kane’s life is a testament to the power of the press in shaping public opinion and fostering social change.

He is buried in Lynd Cemetery, Charters Towers.

Written by Mary Allen

Red Hugh's royal funeral reenacted in Spanish city

A Spanish city has come to a standstill in honour of Red Hugh O'Donnell, the Irish hero who died over 400 years ago. The streets of Valladolid filled with thousands of onlookers on September 13th and 14th, as an elaborate re-enactment of O'Donnell's funeral was held, continuing a tradition that began in 2022.

Red Hugh O'Donnell, the chieftain of the O'Donnell Clan, was a central figure in Irish history. He led the Nine Years' War, joining forces with Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone, in a bid to drive the English out of Ireland. With support from Spanish forces, O'Donnell fought at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601, one of Ireland's most significant battles. Unfortunately, the battle ended in a devastating defeat for the Irish-Spanish alliance, resulting in Red Hugh's journey to Spain in search of further support from King Philip III.

While in Spain, Red Hugh fell ill, with some speculating he was poisoned by a British agent. He passed away in 1602 and was given a royal burial in Valladolid at the Chapel of Marvels, a resting place usually reserved for Spain's nobility.

In 2020, Spanish archaeologists began a search for Red Hugh's remains near a Santander bank in Valladolid, where the old chapel once stood. While the search was unsuccessful, the fascination with Red Hugh's legacy continued to grow.

In 2024, the streets of Valladolid once again echoed with the sound of bagpipes, as the empty coffin representing Red Hugh O'Donnell was carried through the city in a horse-drawn carriage, flanked by torchbearers in period costume. The ceremony was organised by the Hispano-Irish Association, with its president Carlos Burgos saying: "The king of Spain wanted to give him a royal funeral,



Red Hugh O'Donnell's funeral reenactment in Valladolid, Spain.

Pictures: [facebook.com/hispanoirish](https://www.facebook.com/hispanoirish)



so that's what we tried to remember." He added that Valladolid people have taken Red Hugh into their hearts as a true hero.

Plans are also underway to formally twin Red Hugh's hometown of Lifford in County Donegal, Ireland, with Simancas, Spain. The twinning project is expected to strengthen cultural ties between the two towns and further commemorate Red Hugh's lasting impact.

Red Hugh's re-enacted funeral has become a major event in Valladolid, drawing interest from both Spanish

locals and international visitors alike. Burgos hopes that more Irish people will visit Valladolid in the future to experience the commemoration of their national hero.

Red Hugh was born in Lifford, County Donegal, in 1572 and died in Simancas, Spain, in 1602. Plans are underway to twin the two towns.

Lifford celebrates Red Hugh's birthday each year on October 30th.

The brave clan chieftain's legacy continues to resonate across Europe.

Written by Mary Allen

The Tailteann Games – Ireland's ancient Olympics



Actors in Celtic dress parade with wolfhounds at the opening ceremony of the 1924 Aonach Tailteann. And, above, the GAA Museum in Croke Park, Stadium, Dublin.

Ireland's Tailteann Games date back almost as far as the ancient Greek Olympics and are testament to the island's passion for sport.

Ireland's Gaelic games have a long history. In fact, hurling is the oldest and fastest field sport in the world, dating back almost 3,000 years and featuring strongly in Irish mythology. It is inscribed on the UNESCO representative list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

Gaelic games are an intrinsic part of Irish culture and this is excellently demonstrated in the GAA Museum in Croke Park in Dublin. But the island's passion for sport goes further. Indeed, so much so that Ireland once had its own Olympics, the Tailteann Games.

According to *The Book of Invasions* (a mythical history of Ireland written by monks in the eleventh century)

the Tailteann Games date back 4,000 years. But it's widely accepted that that might be a bit of Irish exaggeration. There are references to the games in sixth-century records and it is generally thought they began some time before that and are possibly as old as the ancient Greek Olympics that date from 776 BC.

For many centuries, the Tailteann Games were an annual event held in Teltown, County Meath, and presided over by the King of Tara. The games included chariot and horse races, boxing and wrestling and in the evening musicians and storytellers entertained the crowds.

After the Norman invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century the games stopped but they were revived in the 1920s by the new Irish Government. The first modern-day Tailteann Games took place in Dublin in 1924

and involved 6,500 competitors and a thousand medals. Teams of athletes – who were either Irish or of Irish heritage – came from England, Scotland, Wales, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, Canada and America.

The range of events was remarkable and included Gaelic games, swimming, rowing, boxing, billiards, chess, yachting, tennis, cycling, archery, horseracing, shooting, golf and even tug of war. In fact, the games went beyond sports to include competitions for piped bands, poetry, Irish dancing, storytelling, singing and art.

The Tailteann Games were staged again in 1928 and 1932 and in recent years there have been calls for another revival.

Words and pictures: www.Ireland.com

Aussie Doody shucks oysters at Galway fest

Australia's own Gerard "Doody" Dennis has brought his incredible oyster-shucking skills back to the world's oldest and most famous oyster festival — the Galway International Oyster & Seafood Festival in Ireland. Known for his energy, passion, and distinct Aussie flair, Doody has become a fan favourite since first competing in this prestigious event.

The Galway International Oyster & Seafood Festival, now in its 70th year, is one of Europe's longest-running food festivals and the most internationally recognised Irish event outside of St Patrick's Day. Launched in 1954 by Brian Collins, the festival draws thousands of visitors from around the globe each September to sample Galway's famous native oysters and to witness the fiercely competitive World Oyster Opening Championships.

This year, Doody will returned to Galway for his second time to represent Australia, following his back-to-back victories at the Narooma Oyster Festival in New South Wales. As one of the few Australians to have competed in the World Oyster Opening Championships, Doody's presence is a significant moment of cultural pride, not just for the oyster industry but for Australia as a whole.

In Australia, Doody's shucking prowess is well known, particularly in his home state of New South Wales where he has mastered the art of opening Rock Oysters. His journey from the oyster farms of the New South Wales South Coast to the bright lights of Galway is a story of dedication, skill, and love for the humble oyster. His participation in the Galway festival brought a unique Aussie flavour to an event steeped in Irish tradition.

The festival itself has come a long way from its humble beginnings, when just 34 guests attended the first



Australian oyster-shucking champion Gerard 'Doody' Dennehy returned to Ireland for the second time to take part in the Galway International Oyster and Seafood Festival. Pictures: www.facebook.com/GalwayOysterFestival



banquet. Now, it hosts competitors from more than 20 countries, all vying for the coveted World Champion Oyster Shucker title.

The event has become a staple in Ireland's cultural calendar, featuring not only shucking competitions but also seafood trails, street parades, and top-class entertainment, attracting

celebrities like director John Huston, golfer Christy O'Connor Jr, and Irish Rugby legend Brian O'Driscoll.

Doody took to the stage on Saturday, 28th September, competing against the world's best oyster shuckers. The 2024 championship title went to Renars Purmails from Latvia.

The competition began with a vibrant parade through Galway's Eyre Square, where crowds waved flags from around the world, and Doody's supporters brought along their Australian flags to cheer him on.

Doody's return to Galway is a testament to the growing relationship between Australia and Ireland in the world of oysters.

by Mary Allen

Irish Film Festival Australia announces opening movie

The Irish Film Festival Australia are delighted to announce their opening night movie: *That They May Face the Rising Sun* starring Anna Bederke and Barry Ward (Sunlight).

The movie won Best Film at the Irish Film and Television Awards and the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema.

The will be its premier Australian screening.

Based on the internationally acclaimed, award-winning novel by Irish author John McGahern, *That They May Face the Rising Sun* vividly captures the essence of nature, humanity, and the rhythms of life in a rural Irish community in the 1980s.

The film centres around Joe and Kate Rutledge who leave London to settle in a small lakeside community in Ireland, close to Joe's childhood home. The film beautifully portrays the loneliness and isolation of country life, while also capturing the subtle joys found in the monotony of daily routines.

There are fabulous performances by Barry Ward and Anna Bederke but also some appearances from legends of Irish screen such as Lalor Roddy, Sean McGinley and Brendan Conroy.

Director Tom Collins, who made a documentary about John McGahern in 2005—just a year before the writer's death—was a fitting choice to bring McGahern's novel to life on screen.



[WATCH THE TRAILER BY CLICKING HERE](#)

“*That They May Face the Rising Sun* is a true gem of a film. On the one hand is the breathtaking scenery and captivating cinematography but on the other is the script based on McGahern's unique work as an Irish writer. He broke the mould of Irish writing in the 1960's and prepared the way for writers like Roddy Doyle and even Sally Rooney to talk about the underbelly of Irish life,” said Festival Director, Dr Enda Murray.

Queensland Irish Association is a bronze sponsor of Irish Film Festival Australia 2024.

2024 FESTIVAL DATES / LOCATIONS

17-20 OCT: SYDNEY Dendy Cinema, Newtown;

24-27 OCT: MELBOURNE Cinema Nova, Carlton;

1-3 NOV: PERTH Luna Cinema, Leederville;

15-17 NOV: BRISBANE Dendy Cinema, Coorparoo;

22-24 NOV: CANBERRA Dendy Cinema, Canberra;

[Online](#) across Australia 17 OCT - 3 NOV.

Tenth anniversary Irish Film Festival program released

The Irish Film Festival Australia announces the full cinema and online program for their 10th Anniversary 2024 Festival

Festival Director, Dr Enda Murray said, “This year we want to celebrate 10 years of showcasing the very best of Irish cinema to Australian audiences. From humble beginnings in 2015 the festival has grown to this year screening in 5 cities - Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane, and Canberra. We are also maintaining the accessible online festival which brings Irish film to every corner of this vast and wonderful land.”

The 2024 festival will showcase a total of 16 films and documentaries from Ireland. This includes one World premiere and 12 Australian premieres. The festival will screen in cinemas in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and Canberra from 17 October – 24 November and online across Australia from 17 October – 3 November. 7 of the films are cinema only, 6 are cinema and online and 3 are online only.

Among the highlights this year are the opening night film and Australian Premiere of Pat Collins’, That They May Face the Rising Sun, based on the internationally acclaimed, award-winning novel by Irish author John McGahern, which captures the essence of nature, humanity, and the rhythms of life in a rural Irish community in the 1980s.



Dr Murray continues, “The twin focus of this year’s festival is music and women’s issues, including domestic violence and abuse. We’re excited to showcase films like ‘Farewell to Hughes,’ where Brendan Gleeson explores Dublin’s legendary pub scene, and ‘Ó Bhéal,’ featuring the new wave of Irish musicians blending tradition with innovation. On women’s rights, we highlight powerful stories like, ‘The Guards – Domestic Violence,’ documenting Ireland’s first conviction for coercive control, and ‘Stolen,’ which sheds light on the country’s painful history of forced mother and baby separations.”

This year’s program features an eclectic mix of dramas, thought-provoking

documentaries, horrors, and a family-friendly animation. Several directorial debuts are included in the program, such as Claire Dix who directs Sunlight and Patricia Kelly who directs Verdigris. Among the standout selections are numerous award-winning films, such as That They May Face the Rising Sun, which won Best Film at the 2024 Irish Film and Television Awards and Best Feature Film Avant-Garde and Genre at the 2024 Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema. Other notable winners include A Greyhound of a Girl, awarded Best Animation Feature Film at the 2023 Chicago International Children’s Film Festival; Dance First, winner of Best

Single Drama at the 2024 Celtic Media Festival; Lie of the Land, honoured as Best Irish First Feature at the 2023 Galway Film Fleadh; Tarrac!, which took home Best Cinematography in an Irish Feature at the 2022 Galway Film Fleadh; and Verdigris, celebrated as Best Independent Film at the 2023 Galway Film Fleadh and Best Feature Film at the 2023 Irish Film Festival London.

In Farewell to Hughes’s, a documentary about traditional Irish music, we see a different side of Oscar-nominated actor Brendan Gleeson. While he played a musician in his award-winning performance in The Banshees of Inisherin, Gleeson is also

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an accomplished fiddle player, having played Irish traditional music since his teens. In his exclusive Q&A interview with the Irish Film Festival he says, “Irish music is everywhere in the world now. When I started 30 years ago, I used to go to the States and bring my music with me on a little iPod. Now when I go to the USA there are Irish music sessions everywhere. So many people are accessing Irish music now, I think it has a great future!”

“10 years of the Irish Film Festival in Australia is a great achievement. Like Irish cinema itself, the festival keeps things fresh; throws up undiscovered gems and brings new films to new audiences. This year’s very strong line-up has films you have heard about and some that will surprise you. Go see, go discover, go enjoy.” Irish Ambassador to Australia, Tim Mawe.

Don’t miss the Irish Film Festival Opening Nights in each city, which will kick off with a Gala reception featuring complimentary drinks and live Irish music.

Audiences will also have exclusive behind-the-scenes access to films via our Q&A sessions between Festival Director, Dr Enda Murray and a selection of our films’ Directors and cast.

FULL FESTIVAL PROGRAM

That They May Face the Rising Sun
(Cinema only)



The film centres around Joe and Kate Ruttledge who leave London to settle in a small lakeside community in Ireland, close to Joe’s childhood home. The film beautifully portrays the loneliness and isolation of country life, while also capturing the subtle joys found in the monotony of daily routines. There are fabulous performances by Barry Ward and Anna Bederke but also some appearances from legends of Irish screen such as Lalor Roddy, Sean McGinley and Brendan Conroy.

Verdigris

(Cinema only)

Trapped in marriage with a controlling husband, middle-aged, middle-class Marian takes on a secret part-time job as a census enumerator. On her tough inner-city route, she faces dismissive and sometimes hostile locals who refuse to engage in the census. This includes brash teenager Jewel, who Marian soon re-

alises is an abandoned sex worker living alone with no real means of supporting herself. Marian strikes a deal with Jewel - she won’t report her to the authorities if Jewel helps to get the locals to fill out their census forms. What follows is an unlikely friendship with big life changes for both women.

Dance First

(Cinema only)

A biographical drama chronicling the life of Samuel Beckett, from his formative years in Paris to his struggles with fame and personal relationships later in life. The film delves into Beckett’s complex personality, exploring his regrets, his dealings with fame and the emotional turmoil he experienced after winning the Nobel Prize in 1969. Through intimate portrayals, “Dance First” offers a glimpse into the inner world of this literary giant.

Tarrac! (Pull!)

(Cinema and online)

In this poignant Irish drama, Aoife returns to her picturesque Kerry home to care for her father after a heart attack. Amidst their reconnection, the lingering silence about her late mother weighs heavily on both. Drawn back into the exhilarating world of currach racing, Aoife’s suppressed grief resurfaces as the big race approaches. “Tarrac” is a captivating exploration of family, loss, and the journey towards healing.

All You Need is Death

(Cinema only)

A young couple, entwined in a clandestine society, embarks on a nocturnal quest for forbidden knowledge hidden in ancient melodies. Their pursuit leads them to a mysterious woman who recites songs containing the secrets of a forgotten curse. But as they

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unlock the door to the past, they unwittingly awaken an ancient evil, plunging them into a terrifying dance with madness. This chilling tale explores the allure of mythology and the devastating consequences of tampering with forces beyond comprehension.

The Guards – Domestic Violence (Cinema only)

This powerful documentary unveils the often unseen and insidious world of coercive control, a form of domestic abuse that leaves no visible scars but shatters lives. In a year when NSW has criminalised coercive control, Ireland's police force, the Guards, secured their first-ever conviction for this offense, sending a clear message: coercive control is a crime, and justice will be served. Directed by Sydney-based Irish filmmaker Shauna Keogh, the film aims to raise awareness, ignite crucial conversations, and inspire survivors to break free from the cycle of abuse.

A Greyhound of a Girl (Cinema only)

Embark on a magical journey through time and memory in this enchanting tale. When 12-year-old Mary's grandmother faces her final days, the ghost of her great-grandmother appears, leading them on an extraordinary road trip. "A Greyhound of a Girl" is a heartwarming celebration of family bonds, the power of storytelling, and the enduring spirit of love. The



film is an adaptation of a Roddy Doyle story and features the voices of Sharon Horgan, Brendan Gleeson and the legend of Irish comedy Rosaleen Linehan.

Farewell to Hughes's (Cinema and online)

Join Oscar-nominated actor Brendan Gleeson in this Australian premiere as he bids a poignant farewell to Hughes's, a cherished Dublin pub that served as a haven for traditional Irish music for over 35 years. Through intimate interviews and captivating archival footage, this documentary captures the essence of this iconic venue, showcasing the musicians, dancers, and singers who made it a cultural landmark. "Farewell to Hughes" is a heartfelt celebration of the enduring power of music and community, reminding us of the irreplaceable role that pubs like Hughes's play in shaping

Ireland's cultural identity.

Stolen (Cinema and online)

Uncover the harrowing truth behind Ireland's Mother and Baby Homes in this powerful documentary. "Stolen" gives voice to the survivors of a system that subjected unmarried mothers and their children to forced separation, adoption, and systemic abuse. Witness their courage as they recount their experiences, demanding accountability and exposing a shameful chapter in Irish history. This film is a vital call for justice and a reminder of the resilience of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable adversity. Directed by veteran Derry filmmaker Margo Harkin.

Sunlight (Cinema and online)

A poignant story of friendship and mortality, "Sunlight" follows Leon,

a recovering addict, as he discovers his mentor, Iver, attempting to end his life. Determined to reignite Iver's will to live, Leon embarks on a final road trip filled with laughter, shared memories, and Viking-themed jokes. Their journey explores the complexities of assisted death, culminating in a bittersweet ending that will leave you questioning the boundaries of love and compassion.

Lie of the Land (Cinema and online)

Set against the breathtaking backdrop of rural Ireland, "Lie of the Land" weaves a suspenseful tale of an aging farming couple teetering on the edge of financial ruin. Desperate to save their farm and their legacy, they make a fateful pact with a mysterious stranger, setting off a chain of events that will test their resilience and their morality. This gripping drama explores the themes of desperation, sacrifice, and the lengths people will go to protect what they hold dear, with a thrilling climax that will leave you on the edge of your seat.

Ó Bhéal (Verballed) (Cinema and online)

Immerse yourself in the vibrant world of Irish hip-hop and electronic music from the acclaimed new wave of Irish musicians including Limerick rapper 'Strange Boy' and Kildare native Fehdah who mixes sean nós with her ancestral West African rhythms. This

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documentary celebrates the power of language, cultural identity, and creative expression, revealing how these artists are forging a new path for Irish music and challenging traditional boundaries.

It's a Fine Thing to Sing (Online only)

We fall into the timeless beauty of traditional Donegal songs in this captivating documentary. Renowned musicians Ian Lynch, Ye Vagabonds, and The Henry Girls breathe new life into these cherished melodies, their voices intertwined with the stunning landscapes of Inishowen. "It's a Fine Thing to Sing" is a heartfelt tribute to the enduring power of folk music and the rich cultural heritage of this unique region.

The Stunning: We Come Alive (Online only)

Celebrate 30 years of music and memories with iconic Irish rock band The Stunning in this electrifying concert film. Experience the raw energy and passion of their live performance as they revisit their chart-topping hits and share the stories behind their music. "We Come Alive" is a testament to The Stunning's enduring popularity and their profound impact on the Irish music scene, reminding us why they remain a beloved fixture in the hearts of fans across generations.

The Building and Burning of a Refugee Camp (Online only)

This impactful documentary offers a raw and intimate look at the plight

of three asylum seekers in Dublin, caught between a hostile asylum system and escalating far-right extremism. Witness their resilience as they build a makeshift home and community, only to face a devastating attack. "The Building and Burning of a Refugee Camp" is a powerful call for compassion and action, urging viewers to stand in solidarity with refugees and challenge the systems that perpetuate their suffering.

The Continental Céilí (Cinema and online)

World Premiere of the short documentary, "The Continental Céilí". This film follows a diverse group of global musicians (including just one Irishman) who bring a fresh, dynamic twist to Irish traditional music. Directed by Dr.

Enda Murray and produced by the Irish Film Festival team, the documentary explores Australian identity through a prism of music.

FESTIVAL DETAILS

When: In cinemas October 17th – November 24th
Online across Australia October 17th – November 3rd

Where: In cinemas as follows:

Dendy Cinema, Newtown, Sydney 17-20 Oct.

Cinema Nova, Carlton, Melbourne 24-27 Oct.

Luna Cinema, Leederville, Perth 1-3 Nov.

Dendy Cinema, Coorparoo, Brisbane 15-17 Nov.

Dendy Cinema, Canberra 22-24 Nov.

Ticket sales: www.irishfilm-festival.com.au

Opening Night ticket \$39 (includes complimentary drink and live music).



Queensland Irish Association

Members Lunch



Join us on Wednesday, October 16th
from 11.30am to 2.30pm at

Coorparoo RSL, Coorparoo QLD

Food and drinks available to purchase
Seniors Specials available

RSVP by 9th October to Mavis Williams on 3849 8271

45 Holdsworth Street, Coorparoo, Queensland, Australia.



Queensland Irish Association

October Get-Together Drinks



Members and friends are invited to join us on
Friday, October 18th
from 4pm to 6pm at

*The Lounge Bar, The Normanby Hotel,
Red Hill, Brisbane*

Food and drinks available to purchase
The bar is on the Waterworks Road level

1 Musgrave Rd, Red Hill, Brisbane. Parking (on-site) at 18 Kelvin Grove Rd, Kelvin Grove.



Queensland Irish Association

Annual General Meeting



Queensland Irish Association Members:
Join us on Saturday, 9th November, 2024
from 11am at
Coorparoo RSL, Coorparoo, QLD
for our AGM, followed by lunch

Food and drinks available to purchase
Seniors Specials available

Your attendance is really needed to ensure we
have a quorum for this important AGM.

Coorparoo RSL, 45 Holdsworth Street, Coorparoo, Queensland.