



Irish Society

Of The National Capital Region
irishsocietyncr.com

Volume 10

October 2025

Stay in the Know

Day of the Dead Festival: Oct. 31 - Nov. 2

ByWard Market Ottawa

One World Bazaar: Sep. 18 - Nov. 23

6110 Mitch Owens Road, Manotick, ON

Gaels 50th Anniversary – Nov 22

A Country Christmas: Nov. 29 – Dec. 30

Saunders Farm, 7893 Bleeks Rd, Ottawa

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Halloween's Roots are in Ireland

Samhain – Evening of Fri, Oct 31, 2025 – Sat, Nov 1, 2025

Spooky season has arrived! Feel the cool air, gaze at the vibrant autumn leaves, listen to the crunch of leaves under your feet, and savor the smell of chimney smoke. Autumn's harvest is back! All this points to one thing: **Halloween** is nearly here.

Did you know Halloween originated in Ireland? The celebration of **Samhain**, or "saw-when," goes back over 2,000 years. It was a pagan festival that marked the start of winter, Ireland's darkest time of year. The Celts believed the line between the living and the dead blurred, allowing spirits, banshees and fairies to roam freely for a night.

The **Pūca Festival**, in County Meath, Ireland, is where the first Samhain bonfire was lit over 2,000 years ago. This festival celebrates Celtic spirit through storytelling, music, food, and mischief. The pūca/pooka is a mysterious figure from Irish folklore, known for changing the fortunes of those who encounter it.



The **Cailleach**, Ireland's most notorious witch, is also known as the Hag of Beara. Born on November 1st during the ancient Samhain festival, she is the "witch of winter." Winter is said to arrive with the Cailleach. She begins the winter as an "old crone," but as Halloween approaches, she grows younger and stronger. Until Bealtaine (May 1st), when she changes into a young maiden and her power diminishes. This marks the end of her spell, the departure of winter, and the arrival of summer. . .





Trick-or-treating during Samhain involved people wearing costumes to ward off spirits and offering food to pacify them. In the 16th century, this evolved into **guising** in Ireland and Scotland, where people wore costumes and performed a trick (like singing or reciting a verse) in exchange for food or money.



The Irish mythology of "**Stingy Jack**," who was cursed to walk the world with a blazing coal in a carved turnip, is the source of the **Halloween Jack-o-lantern** when Irish and Scottish immigrants started carving pumpkins because they were easier to obtain than turnips and potatoes.



From Turnip Carving to Pumpkin Carving

~ THE WITCH HARE ~

"Samhain marks the Celtic New Year. As the last of the harvest is brought in and we descend into the dark season, the agricultural year closes with rest and dreams for new beginnings. It's also a time when the ancestors and their stories are closer than we think." ~Erica O'Reilly

Come, curl up in a cozy chair, with a "cuppa tay" and let Erica tell you the tale of 'The Witch Hare'.

<https://stepintothecircle.substack.com/p/the-witch-hare-a-tale-for-mrs-murphy>



<https://occult-world.com/hare/>

Erica O'Reilly is an Irish Canadian storyteller & Spiritual Counsellor located in Ottawa.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Dracula was Irish?

Bram Stoker the author of Dracula, was born and raised in Ireland. It is said that many of his inspirations likely came from the Emerald Isle.



The Banshee

Is an iconic figure in Irish mythology. The banshee would cross the boundary between the living and the dead during Samhain. Its cries are believed to foreshadow death.

How to say “Happy Samhain” in the Irish language:

Oíche Shamhna shona duit (Pronounced: EE-heh HOW-nuh hun-ah ditch) to one person

Oíche Shamhna Shona Daoibh (Pronounced: EE-heh HOW-nuh hun-a DEE-eve) for multiple people

“We have a lot of work to do, and your generous donation helps us get that work done.”

Mindy Bennett

Anne Dillabaugh

Sean Larkin

Brian Hargadon

James J. Kane

Sharron Kavanagh

Mary Catharine Carroll

Dorothy Larochelle

Colleen M. McBride

Cathy Healy

Keith Cuddihy

Philip Donnelly

Frank Goldrick

Tracey Dixon

Brian Markwick

THANK YOU



Tree Planting Celebration a Great Success



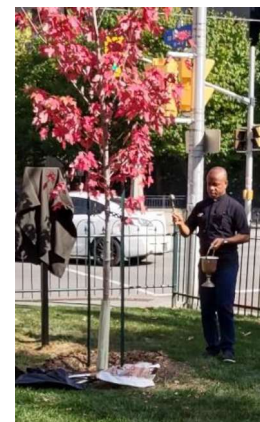
Saturday, October 4, 2025, was a beautiful fall day to plant an Autumn Blaze Maple in honour of Thomas D'Arcy McGee's 200th birthday at St. Patrick's Basilica, 220 Kent Street. A group of 40 or more gathered to listen to an opening prayer by Fr. Stephen Amesse from St. Patrick's Basilica, followed by the Irish and Canadian anthems sung by



Siobhán ní Chróinín. The tree was blessed by Fr. Michael Nwadinobi SMMM, Associate Rector, Saint Patrick Basilica Parish. Special speakers Second Secretary David Conway representing the Embassy of Ireland and Ontario MPP Catherine McKenney representing Ottawa Centre joined Tom O'Neill to share a few words on the occasion and to toss the first ceremonial shovels of dirt. Visitors were then able to add a shovel of dirt to be a part of this historical moment.

Following the ceremony everyone was welcomed to the St. Patrick's Basilica Scavi for refreshments and conversation.

Thank you to the St Patrick Basilica Knights of Columbus for leading the procession, Nicolas McCarthy, Beechwood Cemetery for donating the plaque, individuals who donated to the tree especially Brian Hargadon, to those who had a hand in making this day happen and to all who joined us to make it such a special day.



Tree blessing by Fr. Michael Nwadinobi SMMM



Ray McSwiggan



T. ONeill hard at work!



Procession with Fr. Stephen Amesse, David Conway and Tom O'Neill.



Siobhán ní Chróinín
singer



MPP Catherine
McKenney



Second Secretary of the
Irish Embassy
David Conway





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Gone But Not Forgotten

"May the lilt of Irish laughter lighten every load"

September 21, 2025



Ruth Cull brought smiles, laughter and hope to individuals and families during difficult times. When CHEO opened in 1974, Ruth was one of the first nurses hired. She worked as an operating nurse for 27 years. Ruth created her alter-ego, "Mollypenny", the hospital's first-ever therapeutic clown in 2001. Dressed in large colourful shoes, a red nose and her iconic blue hair, Ruth shared her many gifts and compassion to make things a little brighter for the young patients and their families at CHEO.



Ruth Cull was the eldest of 12 children from a well-known Irish community in Renfrew County. At the *Little Red Barn* on the Cull farm, hundreds gathered to attend her celebration of life.

Ruth Cull aka Mollypenny was a special person who has touched the lives of many and will live on in their hearts.



Irish Canadian Soldiers Remembered



Irish Canadian soldiers are honored for their committed service in historical regiments such as **The Irish Regiment of Canada** and the **Irish Canadian Rangers**, with their personal sacrifices and accomplishments recorded in memorials like the *Canadian Virtual War Memorial* and by community organizations that share their narratives. A notable instance is the **Irish Canadian Rangers**, established in 1915, a unit that united Catholic and Protestant Irish soldiers and played an important role in the military lectures at the *Guelph Museums*.

Regiments such as **The Irish Regiment of Canada**, have extensive records of their service and contributions, as highlighted on the Government of Canada's website. After providing personnel to other battalions, **the 180th and 208th (Irish) Battalions** operated as separate entities during WWI. Currently, it stands as the only kilted Irish Regiment located outside of Ireland. Now located in Sudbury, Ontario, its members participated in both World Wars and played a role in Canada's mission in Afghanistan.



Irish Regiment of Canada: FÍOR GO BÁS "Faithful until death"

<https://www.canada.ca/en/army/corporate/4-canadian-division/the-irish-regiment-of-canada.html>



Irish Canadian Rangers: quis separabit "Who shall separate (us)?"



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“Queen of Hearts Fights for Cure”

Part 3



(photo Ashley Fraser, Post Media)

The ‘Queen of Hearts’, Shauna Bradley, the CEO of Heart & Crown Irish Pubs, made her boxing debut on Saturday, October 18, in support of “Fight for the Cure.” She wanted to honour her late father, Larry Bradley, who passed away in May 2024, from cancer, and every person who has faced this disease by competing in this fundraiser.

Shauna entered the ring and defeated Jen Arbuckle of Metcalfe Realty, and achieved another goal.

Shauna raised an amazing **\$153,782.50** surpassing her target. This was the event’s second-highest fundraising total raised.

AWESOME job Shauna! Thanks to all who supported Shauna.

GET INVOLVED!

“Together, we can do so much.”

What can you do?



Help with the newsletter

- *Write an article*
- *Share a story*
- *Share pictures*
- *Share a recipe*
- *Let us know what is happening in the community*
- *Suggest someone we out to thank or acknowledge*
- *Volunteer to take pictures for an event*
- *Volunteer to proofread*



Get involved organizing an event



Sponsoring an individual county flag for \$170.10 can help support the parade of flags.

treasurer@irishsocietyncr.com



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Barmbrack: Ireland's fortune-telling fruitcake

Barmbrack (*bairín breac* in gaelic) roughly translates as "speckled bread," which aptly describes this rich and dense sweet loaf made with lots of dried fruit soaked in tea, or **whiskey** depending on your tastes!

Ingredients

For the fruit mix:

- 350g (1½ cups) sultanas
- 50ml (¼ cup) Bushmills whiskey
- Warm tea (enough to cover the sultanas)
- 1 lemon, juice and zested skin

For the dough:

- 450g (2 cups) strong bread flour
- A pinch of salt
- 15g (1tbsp) dried yeast
- 280ml (9.5fl oz) milk, at room temperature
- 50g (3½tbsp) butter, softened
- 50g (3½tbsp) sugar
- 1 egg, beaten

For the topping:

- 1tbsp butter
- 1tsp ground cinnamon
- ½tsp ground mixed spice



<https://www.myirishjeweler.com/ca/blog/traditional-irish-halloween-barmbrack>



<https://www.irishcentral.com/culture/food-drink>

Method

1. Soak the sultanas in the whiskey, warm tea and lemon juice for 30-45 minutes, then drain off the liquid.
2. To make the dough: put all the ingredients into a mixing bowl and bring together with a wooden spoon.
3. Knead on a floured surface with your hands for 5 minutes.
4. Put the dough in a bowl, cover with a damp tea towel and leave for about 1 hour, until the mixture has risen and fills the bowl.
5. Knead the dough again on a floured surface, adding the soaked fruit until evenly spread throughout.
6. Place in a 20-23cm buttered cake tin and cover with a damp tea towel.
7. Leave in a warm place for about 20 minutes until the mixture rises up to the top of the tin.
8. Bake for 50 minutes in oven preheated to 200C.
9. For the topping: cream the butter and spices together until soft.
10. Remove the barmbrack from the oven. Immediately spread spiced butter on top. Leave to cool.

Recipe from: <https://www.ireland.com/en-ca/magazine/food-and-drink/halloween-recipes/>

Author: **SUE MORAN**





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OTTAWA GAELS GAA
50th ANNIVERSARY GALA
NOVEMBER 22, 2025
INFINITY CONVENTION CENTRE
TICKETS
TABLE OF 10: \$1200
INDIVIDUAL TICKETS: \$130
Includes: Dinner, Anniversary Souvenir, Prizes, and Live Entertainment!

Questions? Email us: ottawagaels50@gmail.com

Sponsoring an Individual County Flag

For \$170.10 you can support the parade of flags.

For more information Contact: Tom O'Neill. president@irishsocietyncr.com

With the post office on strike again, you may want to use e-transfers. Please use this email address:

treasurer@irishsocietyncr.com

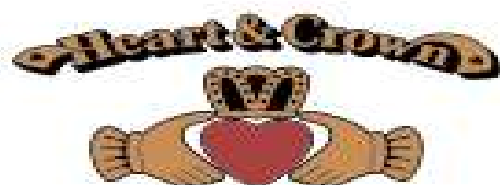
FLAGS STILL AVAILABLE

Carlow 🍀 Ceatharlach	Derry, NI 🍀 Doíre	Kerry 🍀 Ciarraí	Leitrim 🍀 Liatroim
Limerick 🍀 Luimneach	Longford 🍀 An Longfort	Louth 🍀 Lú	Offaly 🍀 Uíbh Fhailí
Waterford 🍀 Port Láirge	Westmeath 🍀 An Iarmhí	Wexford 🍀 Loch Garman	Connacht 🍀 Connacht
Munster 🍀 An Mhumhan			





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