



Irish Society
Of The National Capital Region
irishsocietyncr.com

Volume 7

JULY 2025

Stay in the Know

Civic Holiday: August 4, 2025

*Rideau Canal Celtic Cross Memorial
Ceremony: August 4, 2025*

AGM - September

Rideau Canal Celtic Cross

The Celtic Cross stands as a memorial to the workers and their families who perished during the Rideau Canal's construction from

1826 to 1832, some from accidents and others from diseases such as malaria. Immigrant Irish laborers constituted the largest "ethnic" component of the workforce.

The five emblems etched into the cross represent the canal workers' Irish heritage, the tools of their trade, the perilous work environment, and the ever-present dangers faced throughout the project.



The inscription on the base of the cross reads:



The monument was unveiled near Lock #1, below Major's Hill Park and the Château Laurier Hotel, on June 27, 2004.

Sadly, the original cross was mysteriously destroyed in 2017.

However, thanks to dedicated effort, a newly restored monument was unveiled on April 29, 2018.





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Celtic Cross Ceremony

Photo by Trevor Pritchard/CBC, 2018

Rideau Canal Celtic Cross Memorial Ceremony

Monday August 4, 2025

1:45 pm - gather at the north end of the Musée Bytown Museum and proceed down to Lock 2 and across the canal to the Celtic Cross.

Participants may join the procession at the museum or go to directly to the cross.

2:00 pm - Ceremony will begin and last around 45 minutes.



Photo (From the Embassy of Ireland - Canada) 2024

Irish Connection to the Canadian Flag

The Canadian flag has an Irish touch at several steps of its creation.

Patrick Reid, a Belfast-born, Irish Canadian, who was the Director of Canadian Government Exhibitions Commission at the time, was recruited by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to tackle creating a new Canadian flag. It was Reid's parameters that the flag should be simple enough for school children to draw, seen the same front or back, and retain a single maple leaf that set up the design for the iconic Canadian flag.



During the great flag debate, George Stanley (with some Irish heritage), Dean of Arts at the Royal Military College (RMC) in Kingston, Ontario submitted a simple design inspired by the flag of the Royal Military College of Canada. While this concept was selected to become Canada's new National Flag, the maple leaf had to be changed, because the 13-point maple leaf lost its detail when seen from far. The

leaf was redesigned with 11 points by graphic artist Jacques St-Cyr.

Ken Donovan who was an assistant purchasing director with the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission in 1964 was asked to have prototypes of the 3 final flag designs made. He turned to his 20-year-old daughter, Joan O'Malley (née Donovan) to complete the task. She sewed two flags of each design.



O'Malley continued to work for the federal government and eventually took a job with the Ontario Attorney General's office in Ottawa. She retired in 1996.

O'Malley has increasingly been an ambassador for the flag, visiting schools and seniors' homes and taking part in parades

Photo: PATRICK DOYLE / THE CANADIAN PRESS

and ploughing matches, lugging her sewing machine around and sharing her story of Canada's flag.

Today the flag flies high as a symbol of our strength, our sovereignty and our deeply felt Canadian value. The true north strong and free.





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Spotlight on Our Own Shauna Bradley

“Queen of Hearts fights for cure”



Photo by Ashley Fraser of Post Media”

We are very proud of our own Shauna Bradley who is a Member of the Executive of the Irish Society of the National Capital Region. She is in the midst of training for this year’s ‘Fight for the Cure’ boxing event and is working towards raising \$100,000 in support of The Ottawa Cancer Foundation. Shauna says, “I’ll be fighting in honour of my dad, Larry, who many remember as a proud Irish businessman in Ottawa, He was actually the title sponsor of this event from the very beginning, so it feels really meaningful to be part of it this year.”

Shauna was highlighted in the Ward 18 Newsletter (27 June 2025) put out by Ottawa City Councillor, Marty Carr. With the permission of Ms. Carr, we are sharing the ‘Community Spotlight’ that focused on Shauna.

The Ottawa Cancer Foundation’s Fight for the Cure (FFTC) is coming up on October 18th at the Westin Hotel. Founded in 2008, FFTC is Ottawa’s premier white collar boxing event, uniting the community in the fight against cancer. Since its inception, FFTC has raised millions for The Ottawa Cancer Foundation, supporting its unique supportive cancer care programs and services that enrich the lives of people living with and impacted by cancer in our community.

I had the pleasure of meeting Shauna Bradley who is an Alta Vista resident and the CEO of the Heart & Crown pubs. The Heart & Crown has been the original title sponsor of Fight for the Cure since it began. Shauna’s late father, Larry Bradley, was an Irish immigrant who founded the Heart & Crown. He sadly lost his battle with cancer in May 2024. Shauna will be carrying on her father’s legacy by taking part in this year’s Fight for the Cure. She is currently in the process of raising \$100,000 to support cancer research and care here in Ottawa. You can [read Shauna’s full story and donate to her fundraiser](#) on the Ottawa Cancer Foundation’s website. Good luck, Shauna!

The Irish Society in turn also wishes Shauna the very best of Irish luck. We applaud her tremendous efforts in participating in a very worthy event and supporting a cause that has a tremendous impact on the innumerable Ottawa families. As Shauna says, “We have lost many of our Irish friends to cancer, and this is a way to honour them, and those living with it now.” Please consider supporting Shauna and donating through her fundraising page. The link is below:
[Shauna's Fundraising Page for the Ottawa Cancer Foundation](#)

C. Healy





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GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Paul Lassonde, 1950 – 2025



Passed away peacefully on July 6, 2025 at the Queensway-Carleton Hospital in his 75th year. Son of the late Ernest Lassonde and Marie (Brennan) Lassonde and predeceased by his sister Ann (Gerry) Lukassen. Dear brother of Brenda (Wayne) Harrison, Marc (Ida) Lassonde, Joan Lassonde and Louise Lassonde. Will be sadly missed by several nieces, nephews, family members and friends.

Paul will be remembered for a long and satisfying career at Zellers as well as many years announcing parades as a Town Crier along Ottawa's streets and volunteering in various capacities at numerous festivals and events throughout the city.

A Funeral Mass was held on Friday, July 18, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. at Saint Patrick Basilica, 220 Kent Street, Ottawa. Interment followed at Hope Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Canadian Lung Association or Canadian Cancer Society would be appreciated by the family. Condolences and Sharing Memories at www.arbormemorial.ca/en/kelly-somerset



Philip Barton Downey, July 5, 1949 - June 28, 2025



With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Phil Downey, peacefully and surrounded by family.

Beloved husband of Gail Downey and cherished father to Bruce (Karen), Sean (Stephanie), and Shannon (Mike). Loved by stepchildren Kate (Kevin) and Bryan (Jessica). Proud grandfather of Matthew, Heather (Hunter), Andrew, Liam, Leighton, Charlotte, Thomas, Quinn, Mae, Éloïse, and Hudson.

Predeceased by his parents, Cosmo and Eva Downey, and his brother, Mark. Fondly remembered by Linda, sister-in-law Barb, step-family Kenzie (Matt) and Braedon, nieces, nephews, and many dear friends.

Phil grew up in his family's farmhouse on the 3rd Line of Huntley, enjoying a happy childhood surrounded by close family and lifelong friends. He held a strong Anglican faith and attended Christ Church, Huntley. He had a passion for sports, singing, and public speaking, earning awards in each.



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Mentored by his father-in-law, Albert Gale, Phil entered real estate early and excelled as a salesman and businessman. He was a mentor to many, loved to give advice or strike a deal.

Phil was a pillar in his community, and a generous donor to many causes. He was a proud Mason, Shriner and Past Master of Carleton Lodge #465 in Carp. He was also a Grand Marshall of The Irish Society St. Patrick's parade.

Phil loved nothing more than time with family—especially at the farmhouse, with food and perhaps a little Jameson's. He was known for his wit, generosity, infectious optimism, and deep love of life and politics.

Phil enjoyed spending winters in Florida with Gail and friends. He took many special trips in his life, but his most treasured were those back to his Irish roots.

A private family service was held at Christ Church. In lieu of flowers, donations to The Ottawa Hospital Foundation or Christ Church Huntley are appreciated.



Where in Ottawa? **Revealing Last Month's Clue**



If you guessed the **Celtic Cross Memorial**, you were absolutely right!

This Celtic cross stands as a quiet tribute nestled near the Ottawa Locks, where the Rideau Canal meets the Ottawa River.

The cross features 5 carvings, each telling part of the story.

The **harp** in the centre represents Ireland, many of the workers' heritage.

The **pick and shovel** at the top stands for the hard manual labour.

The **mosquito** on the right is a reminder of malaria that claimed many lives.

The **wheelbarrow** at the bottom shows the heavy loads the workers had to carry. And the **explosion** on the left reflects the dangerous blasting used to break through solid rock.

Stay tuned for next month's new **Where in Ottawa** hint.

Have you seen an Irish symbol around town? Send us your photo or idea to whereinottawa@gmail.com. It might be our next feature.





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Tax Showdown Up The Gatineau

"The Battle of Brennan's Hill": A failed attempt to collect taxes from the Irish settlers of South Low in November 1895 by a bailiff from Hull and eight provincial police officers from Quebec City resulted in the calling up of the militia. The local farmers won that round, but their victory was short-lived. Army units set up camp in Low and waited for orders to march on farms. The order never was given because land holders hurried into Low to pay the levies they had long refused to pay.

The following is a song written at the time regarding "The Battle of Brennan's Hill":

*Come all you young fellows, come listen to my song
It is not my intention to delay you very long
For I know you all have read of it, it's in the papers still
All about the famous battle that was fought at Brennan's Hill*

*The County Officers started their duty for to do
And they were assisted by the Provincial Crew
They came up at midnight when everything was still
For they were afraid to pass that place they called Brennan's Hill*

*Camp was pitched at Brook's Hotel at Low
And early next morning Officers were heard to say
Check your revolvers to see they are in good trim
Then I'll put through your exercises and we start for Brennan's Hill*

*They examined their revolvers and found them all serene
They put them through their exercises the best you ever seen
Their horses they were ready and they started them
You would think it was for Sebastopol instead of Brennan's Hill*

*The first places they visited the men they were away
The houses were unguarded and the Officers did play
They acted up unmanly, they thought they were great men
But they were forced to take backwater on reaching Brennan's Hill*

*They were hunted from Driscoll's to the hotel at Low
To see them marching up the road, they made a splendid show
Major (the lawyer) was awful angry and Bailiff Groulx did grin
They said they'd bring the Militia to conquer Brennan's Hill*

*The Militia unto his men did say
I believe tomorrow morning you have got to bear away
Up the Gatineau Valley unto a place called Low
Where they do hunt the Bailiffe when up to them they go*





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*The gallant 43rd came up and pitched their tents in Low
The people of our township to visit they did go
They used us very friendly, they seemed to be nice men
But that was their best policy with the town of Brennan's Hill*

*They started them for Willis's their duty for to do
To see them marching down the road they were a splendid crew
The winding paths around the hills that led them to their den
But they could not find Willis, he was out at Brennan's Hill*



*The place it was deserted and nothing could be found
So Bailiff Groulx he got to work and seized the ground
They returned back to Ottawa to practice up their drill
And thanked the Lord they were safe from the boys of Brennan's Hill*



IRISH TEA CAKE

Prep Time: 15 mins

Cook Time: 30 mins

Additional Time: 30 mins

Ingredients

- 1 cup white sugar
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 2 large eggs
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup milk, or more if needed
- ¼ cup confectioners' sugar for dusting



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour a 9-inch round pan.
2. Cream sugar and butter together in a mixing bowl with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, one at a time, mixing until fully incorporated after each addition. Stir in vanilla.
3. Combine flour, baking powder, and salt in a mixing bowl. Stir dry ingredients into wet ingredients alternately with milk, adding 1 to 2 tablespoons more milk if batter is too stiff. Spread batter evenly into the prepared pan.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes.
5. Turn cake out onto a serving plate and cool to room temperature, 20 to 30 minutes. Dust with confectioners' sugar right before serving.

Source <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe>



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

For more Contact: Tom O'Neill.

president@irishsocietyncr.com

CAN YOU HELP?

Are you aware of any former Irish Society of the National Capital Region (ISNCR) presidents?

Do you want to share an event, a narrative, a picture, or a tale?

Do you know someone we ought to thank or acknowledge?

Would you like to share a recipe with the Irish community?

Is there someone we should recognize who passed away recently?

Tell us, please.

Email: secretary@irishsocietyncr.com

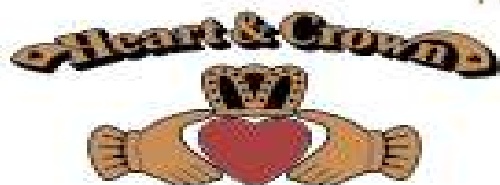
DID YOU KNOW?

- Roughly 4.6 million Canadians claiming Irish descent
- Most Irish Canadians live in Ontario
- The city of Miramichi, New Brunswick, is known as the "Irish Capital of Canada".
- Some believe ice hockey has roots in the Irish sport of hurling
- Ryan Reynolds can trace his roots back to Galway.
- Martin Short's father was born in Crossmaglen in County Armagh, Northern Ireland.





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