



## Who was William Hingston?

By Neil McKenty

Among those who have graced the Irish Community of Montreal, William Hales Hingston stands in the first rank, yet his accomplishments as a surgeon, banker and mayor of Montreal have largely gone unrecorded. Until now. *Gazette* writer, Allan Hustak, has skilfully filled the blanks in his splendid biography simply entitled *Sir William Hingston*.

Born in 1829 to a Protestant father and a Catholic mother, young Hingston early on had a mind of his own. After his father died from a hunting accident, his mother tried to persuade him at the age of 14 to become a Catholic priest. He explained, quite sensibly, he was too young to make that kind of decision, then told his mother, "If you require a decisive answer, the answer is no." Many years later he admitted, somewhat facetiously, "It was only after my mother was gone that I was able to grow up."

In this interesting and informative biography, Alan Hustak shows how that kind of determination served William Hales Hingston well in dealing with the challenges that arose during his twin careers in medicine and politics.

When he graduated from McGill as a doctor, the University refused to give

him a license, a refusal Hingston, a fervent Catholic, blamed on McGill's stated aim to "induce Catholics to embrace the Protestant religion." Undaunted, Hingston travelled to Europe where he studied at several prestigious universities and obtained his medical license in London.

Shortly after returning to Montreal and opening a practice at 31 McGill Street, the new Dr. Hingston was asked to become chief surgeon of the Catholic Hospital, St. Patrick's, then located in a run-down Methodist school at the southwest corner of Guy Street just below what is today René-Lévesque Boulevard. There was a curious two-tier health system then in place: those who could afford medical care, including surgery, were treated at home; those who couldn't went to hospitals for free.

Hingston was a careful but enterprising surgeon doing plastic surgery, skin grafts, partial kidney removal and experiments with acupuncture. As one would expect of a doctrinaire Catholic, he denounced abortion as "a revolting, wicked and detestable crime" and despite his politically astute and socially minded wife, Margaret Macdonald, daughter of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, whom he married in 1875, Dr. Hingston, a typical Victorian, saw women as fragile, in need of protection, or harlots in need of rehabilitation.



Mayor Hingston on the cover of the Canadian Illustrated News, 1873

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# NUACHT

November 2004

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## A word from our President

As I look at the stories and other items covered in this issue of *NUA<sup>CH</sup>T*, I am struck by the diversity and vibrancy of our community as we move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century pushed and pulled by the stresses and strains of an ever-changing world.

The publication — thanks to Brian O'Neill Gallery — of Alan Husak's book, *Sir William Hingston 1829-1907*, profiles a major figure, surprisingly lost until now in our communal memory, who helped significantly to shape who we are and how we live. In his upbringing and personal life he bridged all the social, cultural, ethnic and religious boundaries that continue to give us, and all Montrealers, the diversity we still bridge with enthusiasm, humour and healthy goodwill.

For the first time we have a column by The Irish Protestant Benevolent Society that took up our offer to use *NUA<sup>CH</sup>T* as a communications vehicle. The Calendar of Events on the back page shows a range of activities from Irish language, music and dancing classes, concerts and Balls to what has become the largest celebration of Irish film in North America, our own Cine Gael Montreal. The activities of Canadian-Irish Studies at Concordia have already provided a rich bounty of academic opportunities and public lectures by world-class scholars that virtually guarantees future generations will know who we were and who they are ... and Irish-Studies is in its infancy still! And although it's late in the season, don't forget men and women's rugby, Irish football and the occasional game of hurling.

We celebrate too the young and the not so young. Our children go to the Oireachtas and bring back trophies and medals for Irish dancing and Neil McKenty, author, broadcaster and social commentator, despite an untimely accident, celebrates his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday with a public fundraising party for UNITAS.

Our community is truly diverse, alive and well! Join in by joining us!

John Little  
November, 2004

### Two dates for your diary

Be sure to keep Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> free for the St. Patrick's Society Christmas Reception and Distribution of Grants. This year we will be visiting Loyola High School, at 7272 Sherbrooke Street West, the *alma mater* of some of our male executive members and where our chaplain, Father Eric Maclean, is principal. A general meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m., followed by the reception at 8:00 p.m.

The other one for you to note is March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005, the date of the St. Patrick's Society Ball. We are returning to the Chateau Champlain and, as in previous years, it is a Friday evening.

For more information on either of these events, please contact Doris Rooney at 481-1346.

## St. Patrick's Society Golf Tournament: June 21, 2005

Who is talking golf just now?

Hard to believe but the Golf Committee has already had two meetings to plan our TENTH annual tournament.

Over the years we have raised more than \$100,000 for the society's cultural and charitable projects and this year under the co-chairmanship of Brian O'Neill and Wayne Hogan, we are hoping for big things on June 21, 2005.

Plans are still being formed, but it would be a good idea to reserve next June 21 so that you don't miss what promises to be our biggest and best yet!

Many of our golfers have attended all of the first nine tournaments so there must be something special going on here.

Watch for more details in the next issue of *NUA<sup>CH</sup>T*.

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## Annual Christmas Concert at St. Patrick's Basilica, now with a new sound system!

Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal will host its Annual Christmas Concert on Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, in the historic one hundred and fifty-seven-year-old Saint Patrick's Basilica, located at 460 René-Lévesque West. There's lots of parking at the Basilica.

For many people this event is the kick-off to the Holiday Season and we look forward to a happy evening of traditional carols — secular and religious — with lots of jingling bells, reindeer, snowflakes-a-falling and wise-men-a-wooing, or whatever it is they do before long desert trips! The Basilica administration has given absolute assurances that the church's sound system — unfortunately the subject of numerous complaints in previous years — has been fully upgraded and will not be a problem.

This year's event features the Saint Patrick's Basilica Choir accompanied by violin, trumpets and keyboard. The Beverly McGuire Ensemble will add an Irish Christmas dimension. And there will be a rousing sing-along at the end of the evening. Sorry, no bar! But Hurley's on Crescent Street will be open for those wishing to continue what promises to be a great start to the Christmas season.

Proceeds from the concert help fund the charitable and cultural activities of Saint Patrick's Society. As a member of the Society, you may want to sponsor the concert by becoming a patron. A tax receipt will be given for donations in excess of \$10.00, and any patron who contributes \$50.00 or more will be given two complimentary tickets (reserved seats). All patrons' names will be listed in the program. Cheques should be made payable to St. Patrick's Society of Montreal and mailed to SPS's office at 6767 Côte St. Luc Road, #1, Montreal, Qc., H4V 2Z6 before November 24, 2004.

The concert will begin at 7:30 p.m. For tickets or further information please telephone Doris Rooney (514) 481-1346 or Mary McGovern at 866-7379.

## Finally ... a lady Grand Marshal!

In 2005, Montreal will see the first lady Grand Marshal in the 181-year history of the St. Patrick's Day Parade. UIS is proud to announce that Margaret Healy will assume this role. In February *NUA*CHT will introduce Margaret to those of you who have yet to encounter this remarkable woman.

UIS also announces that Michel Sarrazin, Director of the Montreal Police Department will be the Chief Reviewing Officer.

The recipient of the Simon McDonough Humanitarian Award will be Joseph Quinn, and for her work in promoting Irish cinema, Lynn Doyle, St. Patrick's Society Past-President, will receive the Liam Daly Memorial Award. We offer our congratulations to all four.

## Irish radio/TV program could be a reality ... if we want it enough!

By Ned Eustace

The Ad Hoc Committee for Irish Radio and TV, chaired by Geoffrey Moore, has been hard at work looking into the possibilities for replacing the late Liam Daly's much lamented TV program, *The Irish Show*. The committee has investigated the legal and regulatory issues involving the Canada Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and they are many. In short, the channel type used by Liam Daly is no longer an option and the Irish community does not meet the CRTC's criteria for ethnic programming.

At a very poorly attended October meeting of the Council of Irish Organizations of Montreal, Geoffrey Moore presented the committee's recommendation to take the following two-pronged approach. Initially, launch a one-hour, monthly radio program on CJAD and, secondly, continue to monitor three possible TV options: a regular show on CH/Television; one-off locally produced Irish specials on CH; and *Out of Ireland*, a US-based TV show.

Regarding the radio show, Shawn Ryan, Sales Manager at CJAD, has expressed the station's interest and support. The radio show option is likely the best grass-roots, strong local content approach available in the short run and could be launched in early 2005 in time for the St. Patrick's festivities. If launched, Neil McKenty has agreed to provide guidance and counsel. If the radio show is to become a reality, it will need to have the solid commitment of community organizations behind it and a mechanism to absorb the costs.

The TV channel, CH, was very helpful and cooperative with the committee but indicated that due largely to business issues and the impact of CRTC regulatory considerations it is unlikely that the Irish community can be considered for a regular show over the next couple of years. CH would consider broadcasting one-off Irish specials with local content, but we would have to shoulder the considerable costs of producing these to a professional level probably with limited community control.

*Out of Ireland* is a US-based, 30-minute show produced by Irish people based in New York City and broadcast in selected US markets on PBS television. Half the show focuses on current events, politics, and sports in Ireland followed by a 15-minute miscellaneous segment. The show's producers would be delighted to have it on Vermont PBS and would look to us to petition the station for air time. There would be no cost to our community; however, there be no local content, at least for the short to medium term.

The Council will be meeting again at 7:00 p.m. on November 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Good Shepherd Centre, 850 Dominion Street (adjacent to 2338 St. Antoine St.) to deliberate further. All are welcome to attend.

# Comhaltas concert is a crowd pleaser

By Kathleen Dunn

For about 20 of the 30 years since 1974, Montreal has played host to *Echoes of Erin*, the annual North American concert tour organized by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. And each time, Pat Conroy and Joe Mell have been the driving force behind all the local arrangements, particularly overnight accommodations, meals and shuttle services.

This year's tour included a cast of seven musicians, two singers, four dancers, and an MC, each All-Ireland champions in their own discipline. They treated their audience to an evening of haunting, spirited and toe-tapping entertainment that more than lived up to the Comhaltas' message outlined in the printed program: "May our display of exhilarating entertainment lighten your heart, banish your cares and gladden your spirit as it did in the homes of Ireland for centuries. Even in the midst of strife and hardship, our people left the house-dance in the dawn hours of day regenerated and ready to brave any challenge. Music truly has the power

to heal, to motivate and to inspire — may it be so for you during this our cultural presentation from Ireland."

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... Montreal audiences love dancers ...

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Comhaltas seems to be aware that Montreal audiences love dancers and brought them out even more often than I recall in past performances. They also invited local dancers to join them on stage. The four-hand team of Natasha Woytiuk, Elspeth McMurray, Sarah and Leandra Langlois from the Bernadette Short School of Irish Dancing put on a colourful and professional performance.

*Echoes of Erin* drew an audience of about 410 to the Oscar Peterson Auditorium at Concordia University's Loyola Campus on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

## Hingston (cont.)

The most lively and vivid portion of Alan Hustak's biography are the two terms Hingston served as mayor of Montreal (1875 to 1885), then a city of 120,000 where "Livestock still roamed freely around Place Victoria." With his remarkable social abilities, Hingston himself roamed freely between the English who dominated the economy, and the French who were dominated by the Church.

In high-wire acts that rivalled those of Camillien Houde and Jean Drapeau, William Hingston managed to help defuse political crises that might have seriously upset the city's precarious racial and linguistic balance.

Only a short time in office, he was confronted with the potentially explosive Joseph Guibord affair when Bishop Ignace Bourget excommunicated the poor man for his liberal views and denied him burial in Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery. In the end, after extreme tension, Mayor Hingston ordered that the gates of the Cemetery be removed, had almost a thousand soldiers assembled in the Champs de Mars, mounted his black stallion, Bibakiba, and personally led the funeral cortege through to the newly dug grave, only then signalling the militia, marching up St. Laurent, to return to barracks.

When a huge throng of the unemployed, chanting, "Work or Blood" threatened to attack City Hall, Hingston and his council rammed through a public works program that included improvements to the Lachine Canal and work on the newly acquired Mount Royal Park. Shortly before he began his second term, Hingston, in the face of Catholic objections, authorized the first Orange Parade ever held in Montreal. In 1879, to stop a run on the Montreal City and District Savings Bank (of which he was a director and later president), Hingston

ordered the vaults (containing \$900,000 in cash) to be thrown open for anyone who wanted their money, then deposited \$500 into his personal account. The trouble at the bank was short lived.

Despite his sterling record as mayor, Hingston declined an invitation to run for a third term. Alan Hustak concludes his greatest contribution was his campaign for vaccination against small pox. Almost 5,000 people died from the disease in the seventies. One city councillor charged that Montrealers were not to blame "but sick people from the Eastern townships."

Hingston established a municipal board of health (the first of its kind in Canada), and fought unrelentingly against those who opposed public vaccination. Undoubtedly his vaccination campaign saved many lives and was one of the reasons he received a knighthood from the Queen and had a street named after him in NDG. One of his sons played a key role in the establishment of St. Mary's Hospital.

Occasionally the structure of Hustak's biography leaves something to be desired. The author introduces a subject with great fanfare (e.g. Montreal's first Orange Parade), then drops it for several pages, a habit that dilutes its emotional punch. Sometimes Hustak's paragraphs should be shortened and his images ("a driving wind whipped Montreal into a sarcophagus of snow") leave the reader in a coffin of confusion. These minor criticisms aside, this well-crafted biography would make a splendid holiday gift.

Before his death in 1907, Sir William spent 11 years in the Senate. He served his city and his country well. He was a devout Irish Catholic who moved easily among his French compatriots. For too long his accomplishments have mouldered in dusty archives. Now Allan Hustak has brought him vividly alive.

# The making of Canada

By Shawn McAlear

*"One fine day early last year, the then St. Patrick's Society President, Patrick Dunn, came to me with a proposition. He informed me of the great research done by Patrick O'Hara in tracing the history of the Irish in Quebec, and wanted to share it with the community. Consequently, with the permission of Mr. O'Hara, I've been featuring certain historical pieces and biographies for inclusion in each NUACHT. Enjoy!"*

The 1837-38 rebellion prompted suspension of political representation until the Act of Union took effect in 1841. Each of the two former provinces elected the same number of representatives and ministries. With dual majority support, they advised the governor about statutes, budgets, etc.

While the French/Irish alliance had been unsuccessful in winning responsible government prior to the rebellion, more moderate reformers — Lafontaine, Baldwin, Morin and Hincks, among them — took up the challenge anew. With passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill in 1849, responsible government was finally achieved through the "Great Ministry" of Lafontaine and Baldwin.

In 1849 a riot ensued in Montreal disrupting political affairs and resulting in the burning of Parliament by the opponents of the Bill. However, Morin and Hincks — chief lieutenants of Lafontaine and Baldwin — formed the next ministry with Ontario's Reform Party, which, however, increasingly opposed separate schools. The situation triggered the Conservatives' "Great Coalition" of John A. Macdonald and George-Étienne Cartier which supported separate schools. Thomas D'Arcy McGee, who until then had been associated with the Reform Party, joined the coalition.

The divisive nature of the separate school question, the growing threat of annexation by American Fenians and the issue of representation by population pushed the Fathers of Confederation to draft a new constitution. For the Irish, the Fenian threat was particularly disconcerting, raising the question of their loyalty, even though McGee had envisaged Confederation as a means of giving birth to an exciting new country.

French-speaking Canadians, for their part, were fearful of English bigotry in a new federal government. More than anyone else since Hincks and Baldwin, McGee and Cartier defended the future of French-speaking Canadians in a united country. With French/Irish cooperation renewed, Confederation came into being in 1867. Ironically, McGee was to be assassinated a year later, snuffing out the promising career of a loyal Irish-Canadian.

## Thomas D'Arcy McGee (1825-68)

A native of Carlingford, Ireland, he emigrated to the U.S. at 17 and two years later edited *The Boston Pilot*. In 1845, he returned to Ireland as editor of *The Nation* but escaped to the U.S. after the 1848 rebellion. Disenchanted with American attitudes towards the Irish, he came to Montreal in 1857 and founded *The New Era*.

Soon elected to Parliament, he first supported the Reformers but then joined the "Great Coalition" of Macdonald and Cartier. He was probably the most eloquent "Father of Confederation" — he also published over 300 poems and many works on Irish history. He was assassinated on leaving Parliament in April 1868. A huge funeral was held at St. Patrick's Church (now Basilica), Montreal.



Darcy McGee

## Robert Baldwin (1804-58)

Born in Toronto and son of Irish-born William Warren Baldwin, he followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a lawyer and winning election in 1829 to the Upper Canada Assembly as a reformer. He remained neutral during the rebellion but subsequently formed an alliance with Lafontaine at the urging of Hincks.

Serving as co-premier in 1842-43 and 1848-51, he was defeated in 1851 and was to suffer ill health until his death. His reputation as a popularizer of responsible government and as a proponent of a bicultural nation has been his lasting legacy.

## Sir Francis Hincks (1807-85)



Francis Hincks

Leaving his home in Cork, Ireland, he came to Canada in 1832 and established *The Examiner* in Toronto in 1838 and *The Montreal Pilot* in 1844. He was an advocate of responsible government and an English-French partnership. With Baldwin he joined Lafontaine and Morin to create the Reform Party, which provided ministries until 1854.

His alliance with Cartier paved the way for development of the Grand Trunk Railway and Victoria Bridge. Hincks served as federal Minister of Finance from 1869 until he left politics in 1874.

In the last five years of his life, he was vice-president of the Montreal City and District Savings Bank which he had helped found in 1846. Hincks was also a founder of St. Patrick's Society in Montreal, serving as its president from 1845 to 1848.

*NUACHT would like to acknowledge Patrick O'Hara and thank him once again for his permission to use the research that has led to the development of this continuing series of articles.*

# Anthony Kirby will soon have time to finish novel

By Anne Forrest

For the past 34 years, Anthony Kirby has been a familiar figure to anyone walking by or into the Ritz Carlton Hotel. After spending ten years working in hotels in Ireland, France, Switzerland and England, Anthony came to Canada and on the recommendation of John Carey, the Irish Trade Commissioner, was directed to "La Grande Dame" of Sherbrooke Street. Before the end of 2004 he will be retiring in order to complete his first novel based on the life of his uncle, Michael Higgins.

Anthony has a rich, albeit tragic, family history. A great grandfather, Tim Sullivan, M.P., served as Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1886-87 and also represented Ireland's cause in Westminster. Later, when W.W.I began, his mother's family was split: two uncles went off to war and two joined the Sinn Féin movement. At the age of 21, his mother watched as her father was murdered in his own home. Then in 1927, her brother Kevin O'Higgins, dubbed "the most hated man in Ireland," was assassinated, probably because as Minister of Justice he had signed the execution warrant for Rory O'Connor who had been best man at his wedding barely a year earlier. Today, one of Kevin's daughters, who is a peace activist, is a founder of The Centre for Reconciliation in Glencree, Co. Wicklow.

Inspired by Professor Leon Ó Brion's comment that Ireland suffers from collective amnesia regarding W.W.I, Anthony began his novel. The protagonist, Michael Higgins, served with the Leinster Rifles and died nine days before the Battle of Vimy Ridge in 1917. Anthony says that he "hopes to show the idealism, spirit and fortitude of these brave men who laid down their lives for the freedoms we now take for granted." In his extensive research of the period, Anthony came across the diary of Captain Frank Hitchcock of the Leinsters, a comrade-in-arms of Michael whom he mentions on seven occasions.



Anthony and his welcoming smile

Anthony expects to publish this novel by early 2006 and plans to work on subsequent novels based on his experiences, many humorous, in the hotel business.

Over the years, Anthony has rubbed shoulders with the rich and the famous. One guest, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, gave him "a corker of an interview" that was published in Ireland, Switzerland and Canada. Anthony's respect for this unassuming and talented musician is boundless. Other guests who have impacted on his writing career are novelists Brian Moore and Maeve Binchy with their words of encouragement, and actor Christopher Plummer, subject of an interview that appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston). Anthony's most cherished memory is of serving Queen Noor of Jordan and not knowing

who she was, closely followed by the time spent in 2000 looking after the Mulroney family when daughter Caroline got married.

There have been embarrassing moments too. Unable to slip a thick envelope under a door, Anthony entered the room to find a couple *in flagrante delecto*. Who was the more embarrassed? A Do Not Disturb sign or the chain would have prevented this incident.

As an ex-pat, Anthony is very supportive of the Montreal Irish community which he considers to be vital and vibrant. He's delighted that there is now a Chair of Irish Studies at Concordia, that Comhrá classes are popular, and that many people are taking up Irish dancing. He is particularly proud of his own contribution to the community; in 1992 he made a presentation to St. Patrick's Society proposing a film club to promote Irish movies. Six months later Cine Gael Montreal was born and under Lynn Doyle's leadership has been an unqualified success.

The Ritz Carlton's company motto is: "We are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen." Anthony Kirby exemplified this in his work. He will surely be missed.

## Looking for a way to promote things Irish?

Ralph McKenny is asking for your help. He is planning to contribute a monthly article— "Irish in Canada" — to *The Information about Ireland Site Newsletter*. This newsletter, published in Dublin, is sent to over 60,000 people a month, a percentage of whom are from Canada.

He feels that this publication would offer a great opportunity to highlight the achievements of the Irish in Canada as well as their history, their struggles, etc. He also thinks it is a great opportunity to promote some of the festivals and events sponsored by the Irish-Canadian clubs across Canada and would like to include this information within the articles that he presents each month.

If readers would like to provide information about events that are planned for the coming months, Ralph will also promote them on his website [www.weareirish.ca](http://www.weareirish.ca). And if you have ideas for the newsletter or articles of your own you would like to submit, please let him know.

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## The Irish Protestant Benevolent Society — Who are we?

First of all, we very much appreciate the invitation to contribute a few lines from time to time to *NUACHT*.

The history of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society (I.P.B.S.) coincides with that of St. Patrick's Society, since in the early days it was all one organization. Following the Famine years it was decided to separate, and we will be celebrating our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006.

Nowadays, of course, there are many organizations within the Montreal Irish community, involved in a great variety of activities. Fortunately, there are often opportunities to work together, with the St. Patrick's "Season" and Parade being the main ones.

Another activity of more recent origin in which many of the groups have been involved is the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation. The I.P.B.S. has established a scholarship in the name of Hamilton Gault, one of our founding members. Its capital value is approximately \$30,000 and growing.

Longer-standing projects of the Society involve providing financial support for a number of organizations and individuals.

The latter includes seniors living at home or in residences, and university students. These projects are funded from our endowment fund, as well as members' dues and contributions.

It's not all work and no play! We enjoy co-operating with other groups to organize pub evenings, for quizzes, "literary presentations," or simply to "have a pint." A special evening involved having General John de Chastelain speak to us on his mediation project in Northern Ireland.

We look forward to many years of being involved in one of the most vibrant Irish communities in Canada and the USA. Enquiries from prospective members and others are always welcomed. Our Secretary, Sharyn Scott, may be contacted at (514) 489-2660.

Best wishes to all for the rest of '04 and the beginning of the New Year.

*David Hannaford*  
*Past-President*

## The land of saints, scholars and occasional scandals Ireland's Crown Jewels – the case of Sodom and Begorrah

*By David McKittrick*

Now it can be told: a scandal involving the disappearance of valuable royal goods, coteries of gay courtiers, drunken parties, inquiries that lead nowhere and a cover-up at the very highest level.

And all this is on a scale big enough to rock the monarchy and appal the citizenry, with an amazing cast of characters, some of whom end up disgraced, in prison or meeting sudden mysterious ends.

It all happened in the Ireland of 1907, when Edward VII went ballistic after somebody stole the Irish Crown Jewels from Dublin Castle. The extraordinary details of the theft, and the facts that the jewels have never been recovered and the culprits never found, have given rise to a rich crop of theories about what really happened.

Recently, Radio Telefís Eireann aired a documentary on the topic, which suggested investigations into the theft had been pursued with less than maximum vigour. One theory is that the King hastily ended inquiries after being informed of a homosexual network based at the castle, which included Frank Shackleton, the disreputable brother of the polar explorer Ernest Shackleton, and the Duke of Argyll, the King's brother-in-law, who had a known fondness for Guardsmen – even Irish Guardsmen.

The King, though himself no model of marital rectitude, had seen the German monarchy damaged by a homosexual scandal. He reportedly declared: "I will not have a scandal. I will not have mud stirred up and thrown about – the matter must be dropped."

Historian Owen Dudley-Edwards commented in the documentary, *The Strange Case of the Irish Crown Jewels*: "The very same people who may condemn homosexuality – maybe if not necking

themselves with attractive footmen in the conservatory – may certainly be on the very best of terms with people whom they know are."

The Irish Crown Jewels consisted of a star and a badge encrusted with diamonds, emeralds and rubies. They had great symbolic value, as well as being worth millions at today's prices. They went missing on the eve of a visit to Dublin by the King in 1907. No doors or locks were forced during the burglary, indicating an inside job.

A Scotland Yard detective was brought in to investigate, but his reports have gone missing. Another inquiry laid the blame on the hapless Sir Arthur Vicars, Ulster King of Arms. He was blamed because he was responsible for the jewels' safety. He was dismissed, and always maintained his innocence, complaining in his will that he had been treated in an "outrageous way by the Government backed up by the late King Edward VII when they shielded the real culprit and thief, Francis Shackleton."

Shackleton, Vicars' assistant, remains the prime suspect. He was one of a number of homosexual residents and employees at the castle, some of whom had colourful pasts. There were said to be drunken parties on the premises, with decades of rumours of "unnatural vice" going on behind its well-guarded walls. One nationalist politician intent on emphasising British corruption, referred to it as "Sodom and Begorrah." The fact that Shackleton was a friend of the Duke of Argyll is one reason Edward VII may have been his protector. Any protection ended after the King's death, with Shackleton sentenced to 15 months'

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## Montreal dancers shine at Oireachtas 2004

By Kathleen Dunn

It's the boys' turn to shine on the Montreal Irish Dancing scene this year. Three of Bernadette Short's dancers placed first in their respective age groups at the Eastern Canada Oireachtas held in Niagara Falls the weekend of November 4-7: Casey Costello, under-20; Michael Keane, under-17; and Jamie Poirier, under-13. All three have, therefore, qualified to compete at the World Championships to be held in Ennis, Co. Clare next March. Five other Short School dancers also qualified for the World's by placing close to the top of their age groups: Allison Coull placed sixth under-10; Leandra Langlois, eighth under-13; Anne-Marie Keenan, third under-20, Tom Levy, third under-12, and John Grimes, third under-20.

In addition to the eight qualifiers, another twelve Short School dancers scored in the top 50 per cent after two rounds and received recalls to dance a third round. This entitles them all to compete at the North American Championships to be held in Nashville, Tennessee, next July. They are: Meaghan Kilmartin, finished sixth under-8; Orla Mahon, eighth under-9; Lucy Bouchard, fifteenth, and Emma Lavalley, twelfth, under-10; Simon Kiley, fourth under-13; Natasha Woytiuk, eighteenth, Allison Walker, twenty-sixth, and Kristen Harmon, thirty-first, all under-14; Elspeth McMurray, seventeenth under 15; Sarah Langlois, eighteenth under-16; Marie-Claire Eyllott, fifteenth under-17; and Devon Warnock, ninth under-20. This is quite an accomplishment, considering that there were as many as 64 dancers in some competitions, all of whom have reached, or are close to, preliminary championship level.

The Short School sent two buses and 55 dancers to this year's Oireachtas, including 20 from the West Island, 12 from NDG, 11 from Chateauguay, and, for the first time, 12 from Shannon. In addition to dancing in solo competitions, all participated in four-hand figure dances. According to Bernadette Short, "all our four-hand teams showed very well and most brought home medals."



*Bernadette Short with her four-hand team of Casey Costello, Julie Dunn, Anne Marie Keenan and John Grimes who placed third out of 25 teams competing in the over-15 age group*

## A great read for the holidays!

By Anne Forrest

Once in a while a novel grabs the reader's attention from the opening pages to long after the final words have been savoured. Such is *A Place To Call Home*, an historical novel by Gabriele Wills that follows the O'Shaughnessy family members for over 50 years as they cope with cholera, fires, prejudice and the many hardships of pioneer life.

Gabriele Wills, a former teacher of history and English, has written a compelling story whose feisty yet engaging heroine, Rowena O'Shaughnessy, develops into someone to whom readers can readily relate. Sibling rivalries and petty jealousies are handled with sympathetic understanding and Rowena's various love interests are depicted in a sensitive manner as she is trapped by the unyielding conventions and barriers of the rigid class system of the 1800s.

Set, for the most part, in Launston Mills (a fictional community loosely based on the writer's home town of Lindsay) there are also several vignettes of life in Toronto and Peterborough. As the family attempts to set down roots, it is faced with problems unfamiliar to today's reader but which can be appreciated nonetheless. How the family contends with these rigors while still experiencing homesickness for the lush green hills of Ireland, earns respect.

However, it is Wills' ability to create believable characters that is most impressive. No two persons are alike and each comes to life through vivid description and convincing dialogue. Some deserve contempt for their callous behaviour, but others are to be admired for their resilience of spirit. Wills cleverly weaves several real historical figures into the novel who give the story a strong sense of authenticity.

*A Place To Call Home* is a long but satisfying read. A novel that is so detailed yet not boring is a rare gift. It takes the reader back to that period about which too little is known. It leaves him wishing he could join Rowena and her family for a further 50 years.

Gabriele Wills' *A Place To Call Home* is published by Mindshadows and is priced at \$19.97. It is now available at Double Hook Books, located on Greene Avenue, Westmount.

## Kindellan-Sheehan book launch this month

SPS member Sheila Kindellan-Sheehan is at it again. Buoyed by the success of her first book, *Sheila's Take* (see review, *NUA<sup>CH</sup>T*, September, 2003), she has followed up quickly with her first novel, *The Sands Motel*, a thriller set in Miami.

According to CBC broadcaster Sonali Karnick, Sheila's "characters are so well developed and memorable, you might even develop an ounce of sympathy for the bad guys."

*The Sands Motel*, published by Price-Patterson Ltd., will be launched on November 20<sup>th</sup> at Chapters, Pointe Claire. The book sells for \$15.95. See review in February 2005 *NUA<sup>CH</sup>T*.

## McKenty birthday bash is a great success



*A happy Neil McKenty arrives at his party*

*By Kathleen Dunn*

Neil McKenty's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday céilí cum fundraiser for Unitas on October 28<sup>th</sup> turned out to be a surprise, although it was not planned that way. The surprise was threefold: Neil fell and broke his hip two days before the party, had surgery the next day, and attended the party anyway. No one but his wife, Catherine, was expecting him to be allowed out of hospital for the evening. Some 300 guests cheered loudly as Neil wheeled himself into the gymnasium at Westmount High School.

There were roasts, toasts and boasts, both live and videotaped, from Neil's many friends and acquaintances in the media, the publishing business, various Catholic groups, ski and golf circles, the Thomas More Institute and, of course, the Irish community. Interestingly, it was Neil and Catherine's participation in the SPS trip to Grosse-Île last July that prompted the céilí theme for the party. "I would never have met Beverly McGuire otherwise," explains Catherine who was quick to invite her to entertain at the party and bring her friends. SPS Past President Patrick Dunn called Neil a "man of many hats who is generous with his time and his talent." Most party-goers had no idea of the extent of Neil's involvement in the community. Another Past President, Brian O'Neill, sent a message reminiscing about how Neil helped convince the NHL to become a major sponsor of the Special Olympics in the early seventies.

The event raised over \$5,000 for UNITAS, an ecumenical centre for Christian Meditation which the McKenty's have been involved with since the days of Dom John Main.

Neil is recovering at the Lindsay Rehabilitation Hospital and is expecting to be going home by the time *NUAcht* is published.

## University happenings: Canada and Ireland

### Lectures at Ottawa U. and Concordia

The Chair of Celtic Studies, University of Ottawa, announces a lecture on Friday, 3rd December, 7:30 p.m. in Pavillon Simard rm. 430. Mark Abley, author in field of sociolinguistics, will present: *'Spoken Here: The Lesser-used Languages of the European Union and their future.'*

For further information, contact:

<http://www.modernlanguages.uottawa.ca/celtic.html>

### CAIS conference venue announced

Next year's conference will be held at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland, June 22-25, 2005.

From their website: NUI Maynooth is a dynamic and innovative university of some 5,500 students from every county in Ireland as well as an increasing number of international students. Situated 25km west of Dublin, it is located in Ireland's only university town, Maynooth, which combines the historical legacy of its medieval origins with a present-day location on the fringes of Dublin, adjacent to the Irish and European headquarters of many multi-national high technology companies.

More details made be obtained from Jean Talman, Communications Officer, Canadian Association for Irish Studies. Contact her by e-mail: [jean.talman@utoronto.ca](mailto:jean.talman@utoronto.ca)

### Erratum

*NUAcht* inadvertently published an incorrect email address for Patrick McLaughlin (see "Walk-a-Song attracts many musical participants", p. 4, *NUAcht*, September 2004). Patrick's actual email address is [walkasong@yahoo.com](mailto:walkasong@yahoo.com). Our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused.

### Crown Jewels (cont.)

hard labour for fraud. Some say the jewel theft was Frank's way of helping Ernest, who was short of money, to finance his polar expedition. Frank's friend Richard Gorges, also homosexual, is suspected of being the man who took the jewels. He was later jailed for the manslaughter of a policeman in London.

Today, the Crown Jewels remain unrecovered. Some say they were offered for sale to the Irish government in 1927; some say they are buried in Ireland; others say they were discreetly returned and that some of them are worn today by Queen Elizabeth. The official assumption, outlined recently by Jeremy Bagwell Purefoy of the Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood, is that they were broken up and sold in the Netherlands.

Every decade or so, an anonymous phone call or letter arrives, and Irish police dig up a piece of land in search of them. Whatever the true fate of the jewels, the episode continues to provide a rich vein of royal and Irish folklore.

Reproduced from *The Independent*, November 2003.

## Restoration of historic church needs financial support

**P**aul Stott, a Canadian living in Ireland, is interested in locating persons of Irish descent, especially those with roots in Munster that might be interested in an important cross-community project, the restoration of St. Fachtna's Church, in the village of Rosscarbery, West Cork.

The community is home to many clans and septs, including: Sullivan, Murphy, Donovan, Mahony, Barry, McCarthy, Walsh, Callaghan, Leary, Driscoll, Connell, Collins, Sheehan, Daly, Buckley, Keffe, Brien, FitzGerald, Crowley, Cronin, Connor, Regan, Lynch, Riordan and Hayes. Many members of these families are buried in the peaceful graveyard.



*St. Fachtna's Church*

The church of St. Fachtna, still in use today, is a revered national monument. The parishioners are currently engaged in conservation of the cathedral and its adaptation to become an active platform for open community cultural events as well as a place of devotion. In about 590 A.D., St. Fachtna, the first Bishop of Ross and a son of the ancient princely race of Corkalee, founded the renowned School of Ross, a seat of liberal learning that survived even the assaults of the Dark Ages until finally extinguished by the Norman invasion. Destruction, decay and changing traditions have led to extensive rebuilding and alterations. The past three centuries all saw major alterations and both Gothic and Georgian styles are evident as well as much fine woodwork and stained glass, the gifts of grateful parishioners and clergy now long departed.

In 2002 a restoration plan was devised by the Select Vestry with two key objectives: (a) to conserve the structural fabric and main fixtures, improve the infrastructure and restore significant fittings such as the 19th century Magaghy organ and unique 5-bell peal, while (b) at the same time, adapting the role of the building to provide in the Narthex area (literally a 'gathering place') a broader service in the cultural life of the West Cork community and thereby also generate a source of income to help sustain the building. The three-year project, organized and managed by parishioners and estimated to cost about C\$1.2 million, has already raised nearly C\$750,000 but there is still some distance to go to reach the objective of a fully functional community facility.

Completion of the first year's restoration work has already created a platform on which to develop the building as a cultural resource. In collaboration with local music societies and artists a program of concerts and art exhibitions has been launched. Planned additions to the calendar in 2005 will include arts education and campanology (using the cathedral's restored full-circle bell ringing facilities).


The 'Friends of St. Fachtna' are aiming to raise about C\$300,000 over the coming months and would appreciate any support offered. The Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross is a registered charity (# 7240) with the Irish Revenue Commissioners. Contributions can be mailed to the Treasurer, Rosemary Singleton, Sarue, Reenascreena, Co. Cork, Ireland (or transferred to account no. 72348719 at Bank of Ireland, Clonakilty, County Cork (Transit No.902610) for benefit Ross Union Cathedral Restoration Fund). All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged.


For further information, please contact:  
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## Around town

### 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Selection Evening

If you are of Irish descent, female, single, between 18 and 25 years of age, a Canadian citizen and a permanent resident of Montreal, why not consider becoming a member of the St. Patrick's Parade Court. In addition to having the opportunity to explore your Irish roots, you will meet new and interesting people, attend gala events, and if selected as Queen, travel to Ireland as well as receive many more gifts. Candidates have to be prepared to attend functions during February and March, mostly at weekends. The preliminary meeting will be held on January 26, 2005, and the Selection Evening is February 5, 2005. For application forms or information, please contact Colleen (514) 426-4588 ([cmurphy2\\_3@msn.com](mailto:cmurphy2_3@msn.com)) or Elizabeth (514) 866-3525 ([elizabethquinn@qc.aira.com](mailto:elizabethquinn@qc.aira.com)).

### AOH's first golf tournament

The First Annual AOH Golf Tournament, held on September 10 at the Lafleur Golf Club, was an unqualified success. Despite a prior wet night, the day went off beautifully. The golfers enjoyed a nice day of sunshine, generous prizes, and topped it off with a fantastic prime rib dinner.

Men's Champion: Mike Deegan

Women's Champion: Gigi Fernandez

Most Honest Golfer: John Patwell

AOH is already making plans for next year.

### Cine Gael Montreal — 2005

The Cine Gael program for 2005 is shaping up. As our faithful attendees know, we often go down to the wire confirming films for the upcoming season.

But we have scheduled dates and lots of ideas.

Please note that our 2005 season will open on Friday, January 21, followed by January 28, February 18 and 25, March 11 (evening of short award-winning Irish films), April 8-9 (The "Weekend"), April 28 and/or May 5. All films will take place at De Sève Cinema, Concordia University at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise stated.

We are considering three films from Northern Ireland, a couple of winners from the Galway Fleadh 2004, a Veronica Guerin film when we will explore the responsibilities and risks of journalists and several other ideas.

Welcome to new committee members Kester Dyer and Ann Marie Carroll (in Dublin) who join Dana Hearne, Tim Hine, Antoine Maloney, Mary McDaid, Andrea Stanford, Kevin Tierney and Lynn Doyle.

Please consult our website for more information as it becomes available: [www.cinegaelmontreal.com](http://www.cinegaelmontreal.com).

### Celebrate Christmas at the Basilica

Msr. Francis John Coyle, pastor of Saint Patrick's Basilica, invites you to celebrate Christmas Eve Mass 2004 on December 24<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m. The celebrant is the Most Reverend Bishop Anthony Mancini, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Montreal. The Saint Patrick's Basilica Choir, under the direction of Kevin Savor, the Basilica's music director and organist, will sing parts of the mass accompanied by soloists, soprano Carol McCormick, bass Albert Biondi and guest musicians. The doors of the Basilica will open at 7 p.m. and the choir will sing carols beginning at 7:30. No reservation or ticket is needed, seating is on first-come, first-seated basis. Over 2000 people can be accommodated.

On Christmas Day mass will be celebrated at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., and 12:30 p.m. Msgr. Francis Coyle will deliver the homily.

For information please call the Parish Office at: (514) 866-7379.

### Comhrá — Montreal Irish language circle

Irish classes are held at Loyola High School, 7272 Sherbrooke St. West, on Monday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The 18-week Winter Session — January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 through May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005 — costs \$72.00.

Registration takes place at 6:30 p.m., January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005. Three levels are offered, including a class for beginners. No previous knowledge of Irish is required, only the will to learn.

Additional information about COMHRÁ is available on their website: [www.comhra.org](http://www.comhra.org)

### GAA plans Christmas party

The Montreal GAA Club will be holding its Christmas party on Friday, Nov 26<sup>th</sup>, at 8 p.m. at the Chalet BBQ.

Tickets are \$25 each and if you would like to attend or require further information, please email Micheál Martin directly: [martin@virttools.com](mailto:martin@virttools.com)

[www.virttools.com](http://www.virttools.com)

Tel: (514) 989-3126

Fax: (514) 989-3127

### Personal: from lonely Irish widow

Widow, 70 something, seeks male escort. I have low blood pressure, thinning hair, my own teeth and a sense of humour. Seeking balding man with wig we can share; energetic — to raise my blood pressure. Likes to read, has warm feet, nonsmoker but can chew (gum that is), must be mobile — electric chair acceptable, car even better.

GWB

## 2004-2005 CALENDAR OF EVENTS / CLAR IMEACHTAI 2004-2005

DATE	EVENTS	FURTHER INFORMATION	
Nov. 20	Siamsa Céilí, NDG Legion, Addington/De Maisonneuve, 8:00 p.m.	Bill White	483-6262
Nov. 28	UIS General Meeting & Christmas Draw, 1:30 p.m., St. John Brebeuf Parish	Margaret Healy	932-5250
Dec. 1	St. Patrick's Christmas Concert, St. Patrick's Basilica, 7:30 p.m.	Mary McGovern	866-7379
Dec. 8	St. Patrick's Society General Meeting & Christmas Reception, Loyola High School, 7:30 p.m.	Doris Rooney	481-1346
Dec. 9	ICCC Christmas Reception, University Club, 2047 Mansfield, 5:30 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.	Diana James	845-0973
Jan. 21	Cine Gael 2005, Opening Evening, De Sève Cinema, Concordia, 7:00 p.m.	Lynn Doyle	481-3503
Jan. 28	Cine Gael 2005, De Sève Cinema, Concordia, 7:00 p.m.	Lynn Doyle	481-3503
Feb. 1	St. Patrick's Society General Meeting, Hurley's Pub, 6:15 p.m. (snacks provided)	Doris Rooney	481-1346
Feb. 5	UIS Annual Selection of Parade Queen & Court, Delta Centre Ville, 7:00 p.m.	Colleen Murphy	426-4588
Feb. 12	Siamsa Céilí, NDG Legion, Addington/De Maisonneuve, 8:00 p.m.	Bill White	483-6262
Feb. 18	Cine Gael 2005, De Sève Cinema, Concordia, 7:00 p.m.	Lynn Doyle	481-3503
Feb. 25	Cine Gael 2005, De Sève Cinema, Concordia, 7:00 p.m.	Lynn Doyle	481-3503
Mar. 4	St. Patrick's Ball, Chateau Champlain (n.b. Friday evening!)	Alistair O'Hara	481-6834
Mar. 6	Annual Mass of Anticipation & UIS General Meeting, St. Gabriel's Church, 11:30 a.m.	Margaret Healy	932-5250
Mar. 11	Cine Gael 2005, De Sève Cinema, Concordia, 7:00 p.m.	Lynn Doyle	481-3503
Mar. 12	Siamsa Céilí, NDG Legion, Addington/De Maisonneuve, 8:00 p.m.	Bill White	483-6262
Mar. 12	Erin Sports Irishman of the Year Breakfast, Windsor Station, 9:00 a.m.	Mabel Fitzgerald	989-1539
Mar. 12	Erin Sports post-Breakfast celebration, St. Gabriel's, 1:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Francis Baddely	762-1882
Mar. 13	St. Patrick's Day Parade, noon	Ken Quinn	932-0512
Mar. 17	St. Patrick's Society Luncheon, Queen Elizabeth Hotel	Paul Dunne	938-0877
Mar. 19	UIS Annual Parade Awards Banquet & Dance	Beverly Murphy	694-0206
Apr. 4	UIS Mass for Deceased Members, St. Dominic's Parish, 8:00 p.m.	Sheila Showers	696-0647
Apr. 8 & 9	Cine Gael 2005, De Sève Cinema, Concordia, 7:00 p.m.	Lynn Doyle	481-3503
Apr. 9	Siamsa Céilí, NDG Legion, Addington/De Maisonneuve, 8:00 p.m.	Bill White	483-6262
Apr. 28	Cine Gael 2005, De Sève Cinema, Concordia, 7:00 p.m.	Lynn Doyle	481-3503
May 5	Cine Gael 2005, Closing Evening, De Sève Cinema, Concordia, 7:00 p.m.	Lynn Doyle	481-3503
May 29	UIS Annual March to the Stone, from St. Gabriel's (following Mass)	Larry Smith	993-7997
June 17	St. Patrick's Society Annual General Mtg., 7:00 p.m. St. Patrick Square	Doris Rooney	481-1346
June 21	St. Patrick's Society Annual Golf Tournament, Belle Vue Golf Club, \$120.00	Doris Rooney	481-1346

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