



CANADIAN IRISH MIGRATION PRESERVATION NETWORK

CIMPN/RCPMI

PROUDLY PRESENTS

An Líonra

(THE NETWORK)

#2 JUNE 2025

Message from the President

Exciting New Project Launch –In Partnership with SRQEA

CIMPN is thrilled to announce the launch of a major new initiative, funded by the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (SRQEA).

This two-year project will focus on preserving and promoting Irish heritage across Quebec, with both local and global impacts.

The project will include the creation of an interactive provincial map featuring Irish historic sites—from cemeteries and buildings to trails, parks, monuments, and museums. We will also build a comprehensive database of Irish organizations and societies across the province and develop a bilingual website to serve as a digital repository and community hub for events, news, and heritage resources.

Our work will also include educational lectures, workshops, and quarterly newsletters published in both French and English.



Kelley O'Rourke

In the News

CIMPN Presents at QAHN's "Stones and Stories" Fall Lecture Series

On October 6, 2024, CIMPN's Kelley O'Rourke and Laurie McKeown were honored to present at the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network's (QAHN's) Fall Lecture Series, "Stones and Stories: Cemetery Heritage in a Changing World." Held at the stunning Curtis-Colby Museum in Stanstead, Quebec, the event brought together heritage enthusiasts and professionals to celebrate the importance of cemetery preservation.

Our presentation, "Irish Cemetery Restoration, Preservation, Education, and Genealogical Profiling", focused on the cultural and historical significance of Irish cemeteries. We shared insights into restoration techniques, educational initiatives, and genealogical research efforts that help preserve and honour these sacred spaces.

Following the lecture, attendees joined us at Crystal Lake Cemetery for a hands-on headstone cleaning workshop. This interactive session allowed participants to learn practical preservation skills while deepening their connection to cemetery heritage.

We are deeply grateful to QAHN for their continued support and for providing a platform to highlight this important work. Events like these underscore the value of collaboration in preserving our shared history for future generations.



Photos: Matthew Farfan for QAHN



Canadian Irish Migration Preservation Network Wins 2024 Richard Evans Award!

In June 2024, Kelley O'Rourke and Laurie McKeown-Thomassin accepted the prestigious Richard Evans Award presented to the Canadian Irish Migration Preservation Network by The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN). This honor recognizes outstanding long-term contributions by an organization or group of volunteers to the preservation and promotion of Anglophone heritage in the province of Quebec.



The Richard Evans Award celebrates exceptional dedication to preserving the history, culture, and heritage of Quebec's English-speaking communities. CIMPN's commitment to documenting and protecting the legacy of Irish migration to Quebec has made a significant impact through innovative projects such as cemetery restoration, genealogical profiling, and digital heritage mapping. Their initiatives highlight the important role of Irish heritage within Quebec's broader cultural narrative, ensuring these stories remain accessible for future generations.

The CIMPN would like to thank the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network for this award and for their continued support.

CIMPN Celebrates The 2025 Green Season

The Canadian Irish Migration Preservation Network celebrated St. Patrick's Day by taking part in the Hudson Parade and the Montreal Parade. There was no better place to be on a very sunny Saturday than the Town of Hudson's St. Patrick's parade organized by the Soulanges Irish Society. Local Irish organizations were well represented along with marching bands, Irish dancers and floats.



The City of Montreal went green for the 200th edition of its legendary St. Patrick's Day Parade! Since 1824, this iconic event has transformed the streets with vibrant floats, marching bands, dancers, and musicians, filling the air with an electrifying energy. It stands as the oldest parade in Canada and one of the largest in North America. The CIMPN was proud to take place in this historic event by sharing a float with the Montreal Irish Memorial Park Foundation.



Honoring the Irish Famine Journey: The Bronze Shoes and the Global Irish Famine Way

By Kelley O'Rourke

In May 2024, the Global Irish Famine Way was officially launched at EPIC, The Irish Emigration Museum, following a commemorative six-day walk from Strokestown to Dublin. This extension will become the largest heritage trail in the world, tracing the journeys of Irish Famine emigrants to locations across the UK, Canada, the US, South Africa, and Australia.

The Canadian Irish Migration Preservation Network (CIMPN) is proud to join the efforts of the Global Irish Famine Way, a commemorative project that extends the legacy of the National Famine Way in Ireland to sites across Canada and beyond. This historic initiative uses Bronze Shoes as markers to honor the journey of Irish emigrants during the Great Famine of 1847 and to recognize their resilience and contributions in new lands.

The Origins: National Famine Way

In May 1847, at the height of the Great Irish Famine, 1,490 emigrants were forced to walk 165 kilometers from the Strokestown Park Estate in County Roscommon to Dublin. Accompanied by Bailiff Robison, these individuals—men, women, and children—embarked on a sorrowful journey along the Royal Canal, leading to Dublin and eventually North America.

Their footsteps are memorialized today by over 30 pairs of Bronze Shoes, installed along the National Famine Way™, a 165-kilometer heritage trail open to walkers as a self-guided route. The Bronze Shoes, symbols of endurance and compassion, will now mark significant sites worldwide.

Preparations are now underway to install the Bronze Shoes at fifteen Canadian locations.

The Bronze Shoes bound for Canadian sites began their journey aboard the RV Celtic Explorer, traveling from Galway to Newfoundland.

Bronze Shoes will eventually be installed at these fifteen Canadian locations:

- St. John's Basilica, Newfoundland
- Grosse Île, Quebec
- Quebec City, Quebec
- Saint-Colomban, Quebec
- Black Rock Memorial Park, Montreal, Quebec
- Macdonald Gardens Park, Ottawa, Ontario
- Toronto, Ontario
- Hamilton, Ontario
- Niagara, Ontario
- Saint John Partridge Island, New Brunswick

By sharing their stories, we honor the legacy of Irish Famine emigrants and ensure their sacrifices are not forgotten as we celebrate the compassion of those who welcomed them.

Please check out Samara O'Gorman reciting the poem she wrote entitled "Bronze Shoes", at our Saint-Colomban Irish Heritage Day 2024.

[HEAR THE POEM](#)



Photo source: The National Famine Way Website



Media Corner

Books

LAND POSSESSED BY: MARGARET COOK

The nonprofit organization Les Sentiers de Gore recently republished Margaret Cook's 1969 novel *Land Possessed* in both English and French versions. Titled *Une terre à nous* in French, this novel is a unique cultural artifact, being the only work of fiction that portrays the lifestyle of Irish pioneers who settled in Argenteuil County during the mid-19th century.

This literary work holds immense historical and cultural value for our region. It offers a vivid depiction of the struggles, triumphs, and daily lives of Irish immigrants, preserving their legacy and enriching our understanding of local history. The novel's influence has resonated across generations, inspiring a theater production in 2005, a documentary film in 2021, and a biography in 2022.

The updated editions includes new prefaces: the English version features insights from historian and playwright Don Stewart, while the French version is introduced by H el ene Beauchamp, author of Ms. Cook's biography, *Life as It Is*. These contributions contextualize the novel within the broader framework of regional and immigrant history, making it an indispensable resource for academics, genealogists, and the general public.

[For More Information](#)



Music

Gráinne: Breathing New Life Into Irish Music in Montreal

Born out of a shared passion for exploring the Irish legacy in their surroundings, histories, and identities, Esmé Cavanaugh, Lily Maclean, and Darragh Mondoux formed Gráinne during the summer of 2022. What began as a collaboration for open mic performances has blossomed into a deep-rooted connection with Montreal's Irish community and an ever-growing love for Irish music that transcends city limits.

Two years later, these talented young women have firmly established themselves within Montreal's Irish cultural scene. Their captivating performances have become a staple of the city's music calendar. They hold a monthly residency at Honey Martin Irish Pub, where their spirited renditions of traditional Irish music keep audiences coming back for more.

Gráinne's musical journey has led them to perform at various notable events, including celebrations hosted by Friends of Sinn Féin Canada and the St. Patrick's Society during Montreal's vibrant Green Season. Their evocative version of The Star of the County Down also earned airtime on CBC Radio Montreal, further cementing their reputation as torchbearers of Irish musical traditions.

In a serendipitous twist, the group welcomed a new member: fiddler Ella Partington. Years ago, Esmé had briefly met Ella while watching her perform in Galway, Ireland. When Ella moved to Montreal with her fiddle, the connection was rekindled, and she became an integral part of Gráinne. Ella has since joined the group for their monthly Honey Martin Pub performances and played at prestigious events, including the reception for the new Irish Ambassador to Canada.

Gráinne’s members share more than just music; they uplift and inspire each other in every aspect of life. Their gratitude for the opportunity to preserve and reinterpret Ireland’s musical legacy is evident in their dynamic performances and heartfelt storytelling. Recently they’ve expanded their creative pursuits by producing events that blend their musical talents with their background in Irish history, culture and performing arts. Through their dedication, collaboration and love for Irish traditions, the women of Gráinne continue to honour their heritage while creating a vibrant inclusive space for audiences to connect with the soul of Irish music.



Follow the band on
[Instagram](#)

Upcoming Events

Please join the Canadian Irish Migration Preservation Network as we celebrate Irish Heritage in St. Colomban, Quebec.



IRISH HERITAGE DAY IN ST-COLOMBAN



Presented by the
Canadian Irish Migration Preservation Network

342 MTÉE DE L'ÉGLISE,
SAINT-COLOMBAN, QC J5K 2H9

JULY 19, 2025

Free Admission

10:30 A.M. - Bilingual Mass at St-Colomban Church
11:30 A.M.- Unveiling of the Bronze Shoes
12:15 P.M. - 15:30 P.M.- Cultural Celebrations

Bernadette Short School of Irish Dance
Music by: Bill Gossage, Mike Bleho et Glenn Roy
Esmé Cavanaugh
Samara O'Gorman

**Cash
BBQ Lunch**

Thank you to:



LET US KNOW WHAT EVENTS ARE HAPPENING
IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

[**CONTACT US**](#)

Meet our team...

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UNITED IRISH SOCIETIES
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Organizers of the St. Patrick's Parade

The Canadian Irish Migration Preservation Network
is a not-for-profit organization
dedicated to the preservation of Irish heritage

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