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# ANNUAL 2024



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by editor Mary Allen, editor@angloandceltic.com

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Annual 2024

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The cover of the first anniversary edition of Anglo&Celtic magazine which was published in July 2024.

# One whole year of great stories

The first year of Anglo&Celtic magazine has flown by so fast. And is it any wonder with the amount of amazing stories and events across the community to keep us all busy! We have put together the very best stories from the past year, the ones that show the spirit, humour, and imagination of the English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, and Celtic communities across Australia.

From lively Highland Games to enchanting Celtic music festivals, the past year has been a whirlwind of vibrant events that celebrate our rich heritage. We've seen the streets come alive with the sound of bagpipes, witnessed the grace of traditional dance, and marveled at the craftsmanship in arts and crafts fairs. Up and down the country, our communities have come together in spectacular displays of unity and pride, each event a testament to our enduring cultural legacy.

In this special annual edition, you'll find

heartwarming tales of community spirit, events that capture our sense of humour, and inspiring stories that show how our traditions continue to evolve and thrive. Whether it's a ceilidh in the Outback, Morris dancing at a historical prison, or a battle reenactment that transports us back in time, each story and picture we share in our magazine is a reminder of the vibrant cultures we've brought to Australia from across the Anglo and Celtic Nations that enrich our lives.

Join us as we look back on a year of unforgettable moments, celebrate the achievements of our community, and look forward to even more exciting events in the coming year. Here's to the spirit that binds us together and keeps our traditions alive and well across Australia.

If you have a story you'd like featured in this magazine, get in touch by email to [editor@angloandceltic.com](mailto:editor@angloandceltic.com).

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# Scottish Festival at Overnewton Castle, Victoria





# The sound of Scotland echoes at Maclean



Bands came from far and wide to the New South Wales town of Maclean for its 2023 Highland Gathering, including, from Queensland, Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band and, top, City of Ipswich Pipe Band.

## AT A GLANCE

- Maclean is known as the 'Scottish Town in Australia'.
- Located in northern New South Wales, it was settled by Scottish immigrants in the 19th century.
- They were attracted by its similarities to their homeland, with the majestic Clarence River, lush greenery and rolling hills.
- The town is home to the annual Maclean Highland Gathering.
- The streets are adorned with more than 200 tartan power poles.
- Maclean has a population of around 2,600 residents, creating a close-knit community.
- The town is surrounded by natural beauty, with national parks, forests and beaches nearby.

The tranquil town of Maclean, New South Wales, nestled along the banks of the majestic Clarence River, came alive with vibrant sounds, sights, and traditions of Scotland during the highly anticipated 2023 Maclean Highland Gathering at Easter. Known as the "Scottish Town in Australia," Maclean's Scottish history dated back to the 1840s, when Caledonians started coming there, attracted by Australia's gold rush and the prospect of avoiding famine back in their homeland. The town was located where the southern and northern arms of the Clarence River met, and its rolling hills, mighty river, and forests reminded the mostly Scottish settlers, with a spattering of Irish, of the countryside in their home country.

The first Highland Gathering in Maclean was held at the Maclean Showgrounds in 1894, and this had been its home for the past 128 years. Providing the opportunity for high-level competition for pipers, drummers, dancers, and sportsmen and women in their chosen Scottish cultural pursuit had always been at the heart of Maclean's Highland Gathering from its inception, and the gathering had grown to become one of Australia's pre-eminent Scottish cultural events. Maclean had eagerly welcomed locals and visitors alike to its annual spirited celebration of Scottish culture, where bagpipes filled the air, kilts swirled, and traditional sports took center stage.

Entertainment had begun on Friday evening, with a ceilidh at McLachlan Park and a massed band display. On Easter Saturday, bright and early at 8.30 am, the town had awakened to the enchanting sounds of bagpipes and drums as numerous pipe bands had paraded through the streets before converging on the gathering grounds. It had been a vibrant tapestry of colorful kilts, plaid patterns, and proud clans, a spectacle that had showcased the diverse heritage and affiliations of those participating.

Highland dancing, a hallmark of Scottish traditions, had taken center stage at the showgrounds, as talented performers had donned vibrant Scottish attire and stepped onto the stage. With intricate footwork



Market stalls selling Celtic wares



Highland Gathering at The Showgrounds



Dancing competition

and graceful movements, these dancers had showcased the elegance and artistry that defined Highland dancing.

But it hadn't just been the grace and poise of the dancers that had captivated the audience; the Highland Games, a series of ancient athletic competitions, had left spectators on the edges of their seats. From the awe-inspiring caber toss, where athletes had hoisted and hurled tree trunks with precision, to the fierce hammer throwing and stone putting events, the strength, skill, and camaraderie of the competitors had been on full display. There had been races for kilted men and ladies, children's races, and not to be missed had been the ladies haggis hurl, a sport involving the hurling of a haggis as far as possible.

Beyond the spirited competitions, the Maclean Highland Gathering had offered a multitude of experiences for attendees. Traditional cuisine had tempted taste buds. Visitors had also explored stalls adorned with memorabilia, allowing attendees to take home a piece of Scotland. The Maclean Highland Gathering had been an event for the whole family, offering activities to ensure everyone had a memorable day.

Visitors of all ages had reveled in the joyous sounds of live Scottish music performances, featuring both bands and talented solo musicians. For the locals, this celebration had been a cherished opportunity to reconnect with their Scottish roots, honoring the generations that had come before. For others, it had offered a chance to immerse themselves in a different culture and experience the timeless traditions of Scotland.

The Maclean Highland Gathering had once again painted a picture where the magic of Scotland had met the beauty of Australia. Visitors had had the privilege to witness the joyful fusion of two cultures.

## 2025 DATE

The 120th Maclean Highland Gathering will be held on 18th & 19th April 2025

[www.macleanhIGHLANDGATHERING.COM.AU](http://www.macleanhIGHLANDGATHERING.COM.AU)



The Maclean Bicentennial Memorial Cairn, above, commemorates the Scottish settlers of the area and was erected as a bicentenary project. Stones were obtained from parts of Scotland, Scottish families throughout Australia, and locally. You can step back in time and discover Maclean's historic buildings, such as St Mary's Catholic Church, below right, or wander through the town's quaint local shops and art galleries.



The iconic Madean Tartan Power Poles in the town were instigated by the Madean Scottish Town Association in the year 2000 to coincide with the arrival of the Olympic Torch which was to be conveyed through the township of Madean. The designs attracted so much favourable comment that there was ongoing considerable public demand for "Family Tartans" to be painted. Hence the Tartan Power Pole painting was carried on through the main street and extended from there so that today they have an avenue of tartan poles in and around the streets of the main town. All tartan designs have been painted by resident Maclean artist Linda El Mir. There are also street signs carrying Scottish Gaelic translations. (Power pole pic: My Clarence Valley)





**The mighty Clarence River flows through Maclean, making it the ideal base for fishing and boating expeditions. McFarlane Bridge, below, is a road bridge that carries Lawrence Road across the south arm of the Clarence River at Maclean. The bridge connects the communities of Maclean and Woodford Island. Officially opened in April 1906, the bridge was named after Mr John McFarlane, the local member for Clarence who secured funding for the crossing. The lifting bridge was last lifted for shipping in 1962. Pictures: Anglo&Celtic**





# Rocky story of Stonehenge replica gets a happy ending

Esperance Stonehenge, the only full-size replica of Stonehenge in the UK, has found new owners, three years after it went on the market. Tracey and Oliver Gillbard, a couple with a deep appreciation for ancient historical sites, have embraced the opportunity to become the custodians of this awe-inspiring attraction.

Hailing from Devon, England, Oliver has a special connection to Stonehenge, while Tracey, born and raised in Australia, shares his passion for ancient wonders.

Since taking over, Tracey and Oliver have injected new life into the site, which is a copy of how the intact Stonehenge would have looked from 2000BC, rather than how it currently looks.

Visitors can now enjoy a range of events, including Sound Healing sessions and breathtaking sunset viewings. With their creativity and enthusiasm, they have exciting plans in store for the future, promising more memorable experiences for visitors to come.

Esperance Stonehenge recently celebrated the Summer



Solstice with a spectacular performance. Two plays, *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, were performed there by a talented group of actors.

Like the original, the 'Clonehenge' is astronomically aligned with the summer and winter solstices to allow the sun's rays to shine through its altar stone. The circular layout amplifies sound, creating a truly mesmerizing experience for visitors.

Consisting of 137 stones made from Esperance Pink Granite, the monument weighs an astonishing 2,500 tonnes. Each stone was locally quarried and shaped, for

a similar project in Margaret River in 2008, funded by a millionaire. That project fell through. Kim and Jillian Beale, who owned a hobby farm across from the quarry, decided to build the replica on their property with their own money.

While the original Stonehenge took 1,000 years to build, the Beale's replica was completed between January and October in 2011.

The couple put it on the market twice, first in 2014 for \$5 million, then again when they retired in 2020 for less than half that price.

Esperance Stonehenge welcomes visitors every day and also offers drinks and

## AT A GLANCE

- A full-size Stonehenge replica was built at Esperance, Western Australia, in 2011.
- The tourist attraction brings in 16,000 visitors annually and also hosts weddings and theatrical events.
- Like the original, the replica is astronomically aligned with the solstice events.
- While the original Stonehenge took 1,000 years to build, construction on the replica took less than one year.
- Devon-native Oliver and his wife Tracey are the new owners of the attraction.

snacks, Devonshire tea. A range of crystals, souvenirs, and gifts are also available for purchase.

For more information on visiting, go to their website at [www.esperancestonehenge.com.au](http://www.esperancestonehenge.com.au)





**Esperance Stonehenge is a full-sized replica of Stonehenge in England. It was recently purchased by Oliver Gillbard, originally from Devon, and his wife Tracey. It is open to the public and for special events. Pics: [www.esperancestonehenge.com.au](http://www.esperancestonehenge.com.au) and supplied.**



# Forget flying carpet, come see a vanishing, globe-trotting quilt!

Soon to go on display in the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, the Rajah quilt is a poignant symbol of Australia's convict history. And it's got a strange back story that involves vanishing for almost 150 years before showing up in an attic in Scotland!

This remarkable piece of work, created by convict women aboard the ship Rajah from England to Van Dieman's Land (now Tasmania) in 1841, is a living artifact that reflects the resilience and cooperation of women in dire circumstances.

Quilting projects were initiated by reformer Elizabeth Fry, concerned by the plight of women prisoners in gaol and during transportation, she formed the British Ladies Society for the Reformation of Female Prisoners. The project aimed to provide useful tasks for female prisoners, keeping them occupied.

Supplies such as fabric, wool, thread and needles were provided to women convicts being transported, including the 180 women prisoners on the Rajah, who made the patchwork quilt.

The stitched inscription on its border, dated June 1841, immortalises the convicts' gratitude towards the convict ship committee for their welfare during the voyage to Van Dieman's Land. Its 2,815 pieces showcase intricate patterns, offering a cross-section of 19th-century textile technology.

At some stage after its arrival in Tasmania, the quilt was returned to England, to be presented to Elizabeth Fry. Its life and ownership during the following 146 years is unknown. In 1987, the quilt mysteriously reappeared in an attic in Scotland. It was returned to Australia, where it found a home in the National Gallery of Australia.



**Kezia Hayter, Unidentified women of the HMS Rajah convict ship, The Rajah quilt, 1841, National Gallery of Australia, gift of Les Hollings and the Australian Textiles Fund, 1989, and, below, a stitched inscription on its border. Pictures: National Gallery of Australia**



This month, the quilt will be put on display at the gallery in Canberra. A Century of Quilts is an opportunity to see a special collection of National Gallery textiles showcasing the artistic expression of women from 1840

to 1940.

A Century of Quilts opened on 16th March and runs until 25th August, 2024. Entry is free. For more information and to book a ticket, go to <https://nga.gov.au/exhibitions/a-century-of-quilts/>

## IN BRIEF

- Australia's Rajah quilt vanished for 150 years before a surprise discovery in a Scottish attic.
- It was created by convict women in 1841 on the ship Rajah, travelling from England to Van Dieman's Land.
- Quilting projects equipped female convicts with supplies to craft patchwork.
- The quilt's 2815 pieces, adorned with intricate patterns, offer a peek into nineteenth-century textile artistry and technology.
- After an enigmatic stint in England, the quilt reemerged in 1987.

# Rockingham festival recalls daring escape of six Fenians

Dropping anchor in Rockingham Foreshore over the Easter weekend, the Catalpa Adventure Festival set sail for two exhilarating days, with grandeur reminiscent of its historical counterpart – the daring mission to liberate six Irish political prisoners aboard the American whaling ship Catalpa.

The Catalpa Escape is a pivotal part of Rockingham's history and one of the most daring prison breaks of all time. This escape had international repercussions and connected Rockingham to Ireland and the USA for years to come.

The audacious escape that unfolded on 19th April 1876, became immortalised as the tale of the 'Fremantle Six.'

The story began amid political turmoil in Ireland, where fervent nationalists, Fenians, rose up against British rule. Six men – James Wilson, Thomas Darragh, Martin Hogan, Michael Harrington, Thomas Hassett, and Robert Cranston – found themselves transported across the seas to Fremantle Prison. They were forced to do hard labour, yet their spirits remained unbroken, fueled by the dream of liberty.

Their salvation came in the form of George Anthony, a whaling captain with a heart set on freedom. A scheme had been hatched and funds raised among the Irish-American community to free the prisoners. George Anthony was asked to captain the ship. Leaving New Bedford in Massachusetts in 1875, with a daring plan devised by Irish sympathisers, Anthony sailed the Catalpa across perilous oceans to reach the distant shores of Australia.

Two Irish men had travelled to Australia ahead of time incognito to make plans for the daring escape to take place. They informed the prisoners



**Catalpa Escape Memorial in Rockingham, above, and, right, recalling the story of the Fremantle Six at the Catalpa Adventure Festival. Pictures: [Facebook/](#) [City of Rockingham](#)**

of the plan and cut telegraph lines on the day of the escape. Perth Regatta Day was chosen for the escape. It was an important social day for the colonists and that meant prominent authority figures would be away in Perth celebrating.

Months of meticulous planning culminated in a daring rendezvous. The Fenians slipped away from their captors, travelled 30km to Rockingham and boarded the Catalpa under the cover of darkness. After a four-month journey, the Catalpa sailed into New York. There was a huge celebration among the Irish-American community.

After an inaugural event in 2023, this year, the [Catalpa Adventure Festival](#) marked 148 years since the prisoners' escape took place. Festival-goers revelled in Gaelic football matches, Irish music,



and historical re-enactments; the legacy of the 'Fremantle Six' lived on. There was also the Catalpa Dash, a 30km cycle recreating the 1876 escape of Irish prisoners from Fremantle Prison. The riders, dressed in period costumes, "escaped" Fremantle and rode to the festival on the Rockingham foreshore.

Rockingham Mayor Deb Hamblin said the Catalpa story was a treasured part of the city's history. "Not only does it celebrate the strong bonds between Australia and Ireland, it helps illustrate the ties that stretch across the oceans from Rockingham to the United States, which have continued to deepen."

## AT A GLANCE

- Con (Sullivan) Colleano was known as the Wizard of the Wire.
- He was born in Lismore, New South Wales, to an Irish father, and a mother of mixed heritage, including Afro-Caribbean and Indigenous Australian.
- He was listed in the Guinness Book of Records as being the first person to successfully attempt a forward somersault on a tightrope.
- He performed in circus big tops all over the world.
- Hitler and Mussolini watched him perform and were so impressed, they granted him medals.
- His incredible legacy was celebrated with a tightrope show as part of NAIDOC Week in Lismore.



# Lismore celebrates legendary tightrope artist Con Colleano

In a captivating tribute to Con Colleano, an extraordinary tightrope artist with Irish, Afro-Caribbean and Indigenous Australian roots, his birth town of Lismore, New South Wales, recently hosted a breathtaking event, called *The Xrossing*, during NAIDOC Week in July.

The event showcased the incredible talent of Colleano, born Cornelius (Con) Sullivan in 1899, the greatest tight-wire artist of all time.

Con was the third of ten children of an Irish father, Cornelius Sullivan, and his wife Julia Robinson. Julia's father came from Saint Thomas in the Caribbean, and her mother was of mixed heritage, with one of her grandmothers being Indigenous.

His father was a bare-knuckle boxer and a circus performer, and he taught his children circus skills. As was common among acro-

bats at the time, they adopted a stage name, Colleano, and travelled in Queensland with their Colleano's All Star Circus.

Con practiced up to seven hours a day to hone his skills on the highwire, eventually perfecting the almost impossible feet-to-feet forward somersault on the tightrope.

He went on to great success on the vaudeville scene in Sydney, where he also secured work for the rest of his family. They then went on to perform with circuses in South Africa, the British Isles, and America, where the family settled.

Con met his wife, Winnie Tremain, a vaudeville performer, in Melbourne. It was around that time that he adopted a new look from the top and tails he had been performing in – a Spanish toreador outfit and persona. Throughout the 1920s and

1930s, Con travelled the world, dazzling audiences. His exceptional skills on the wire caught the attention of Adolf Hitler, who admired Con's performances so much, he issued him a German passport for unrestricted travel. Benito Mussolini, the Italian prime minister, also honoured him with a medal and praised his prowess. Little did they know of his true ancestry.

Aged 60, Con retired from his career due to failing eyesight. His gave his last performance in Honolulu in 1960. In 1966, he was elected to the Circus Hall of Fame. He died in 1973. He is in the Guinness Book of World Records as being the first person to ever successfully attempt a forward somersault on a tightrope.

Despite Australian Post issuing a stamp in his honour, his remarkable story remained relatively unknown, even to

the residents of his birth town of Lismore.

*The Xrossing* featured a line-up of celebrated tight-wire walkers, including Dylan Singh, a Wiradjuri wire walker and circus artist, who delivered awe-inspiring performances on highwires stretching 60 meters across Lismore Quad.

A speech was given by Deb Hescott, a family relative of Con, and Mark St Leon, a circus historian and author of *'Con Colleano, Wizard of the Wire'*.

Simone O'Brien, co-director of *The Xrossing*, expressed her excitement about making Con Colleano a household name through this event, which left a lasting impression on the community.

The performance successfully planted a seed of recognition and appreciation for Con Sullivan Colleano's incredible talent and heritage.

# Irish tale becomes world's first virtual reality musical

A new musical based on an Irish book, *Castle Gillian: An Irish Tale*, marries music, technology, and Irish heritage in a captivating blend.

The world's first virtual reality musical, it is the brainchild of two talented developers, Dr Kevin Purcell and Victor Kazan.

Australian Dr Kevin Purcell, a distinguished composer and conductor with deep Irish roots, has poured his heart and soul into this musical journey. With a career spanning over 35 years across the USA, Europe, and Australia, Purcell's passion for orchestral and opera music shines through.

His connection to the Celtic Club in Melbourne, where he has been a member since 1975 and used to work in the bar many moons ago, adds a personal touch to the musical's significance within the Irish community of Victoria.

Dr Kevin told Anglo&Celtic: "I'm Australian but my great-grand parents on both sides were from Tipperary."

Teaming up with book writer and lyricist Victor Kazan, Purcell's musical genius breathes life into *Castle Gillian*.

Based on the novel by Irish author Maurice Walsh,



A scene from the trailer of *Castle Gillian: An Irish Tale*.

this virtual reality musical ventures into uncharted territory. The first-ever full-length musical designed as a VR experience, it utilises ground-breaking technology to transform live actors into

avatars, making it an immersive visual delight.

Dr Kevin told us: "*Castle Gillian: An Irish Tale* is the world's first musical ever created in 360 degree virtual reality. It is 127' (feature film length). Most importantly, it is a celebration, as a theatrical adaptation, of the storytelling of the Irish author, Maurice Walsh. He is somewhat forgotten now, but he was one of Ireland's most successful novelists throughout the 1930-40s. His stories are sublime."

The musical unfolds in 1948, following Gill Morris, a young Irishman grappling with the scars of WWII. Determined to rescue his ancestral home, *Castle Gillian*, he embarks on a journey of love, faith, and redemption. The engaging storyline is

elevated by the expertise of 12 of Australia's top musical theatre performers, who were motion-captured to create the avatars.

Embrace the magic of *Castle Gillian: An Irish Tale* by exploring the trailer [here](#) and understanding the various viewing formats [here](#).

The musical was available for a limited time as an online event as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

It was a chance to experience a musical odyssey that transcends boundaries and embraces Irish roots.

It is available to view in 360° video on desktop computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone or view immersive in any head-tracking equipped head-mounted display, such as MetaQuest 2 or MetaQuest Pro VR headset.



Victor Kazan, left, and Dr Kevin Purcell who developed the VR musical.

# Clans on the Coast march to new lands

Clans on the Coast made a triumphant return to the festival scene in 2023 after a Covid-induced hiatus, and it came back with a bang, a bagpipe, and a whole lot of Celtic charm!

Originating in the scenic Nelson Bay, New South Wales, Clans on the Coast is a vibrant Celtic festival that first graced our shores in 2007, thanks to the visionary Ron Swan OAM and his team of like-minded enthusiasts. The festival was held annually until 2019. After a break, the mighty Celts came back for a fling at a new location: Raymond Terrace.

Why Raymond Terrace, you ask? Well, Adam Nicholas, one of the masterminds behind the event, explained that this move made sense as Celtic folk were among the pioneers of the Hunter Region. He was also keen to keep the timeless traditions of Celtic culture alive amid the clutches of modern-age screen addictions. At this spectacular day of all things Celtic, attendees enjoyed the festivities at the Lakeside Sports Complex, a sprawling venue spread across two football fields.

The day opened with a mass pipes and drums and the calling of the clans, as festival goers were encouraged to wear something Celtic to help with the atmosphere. There was a competition for the best-dressed student - both themselves and their school received a prize. All the classics made a comeback - from burly strongmen flexing their muscles to lively reenactors, spirited dancers, and proud clans showing off their heritage. And for those foodies out there, the stalls served up scrumptious bites that took taste buds on a Celtic journey.

As the sun set on the day, attendees didn't hang up their dancing shoes, because the evening brought an electrifying ceilidh to the Raymond Terrace Bowling Club. Folk music, singing, traditional dances, and storytelling were enjoyed, with a pipe and drum band parading through the



*Jacarandas in bloom in Raymond Terrace*



*Old shop fronts on King Street*



*View of the town foreshore on the Hunter River*

clubhouse. Hungry for more than just a feast for their ears, the ceilidh satisfied cravings with a delectable two-course meal, and attendees experienced the address to a Haggis by Robert Burns, with a sprinkle of pageantry.

Feeling adventurous, attendees gave the Haggis a whirl with a side of bashed neeps (turnip) - and their taste buds thanked them.

It was an unforgettable celebration of all things Celtic.

## AT A GLANCE

- Raymond Terrace is set on the banks of the Hunter River and further north, it traverses the Williams River.
- The iconic King Street, with its grand 19th century timber buildings and elegant verandas, stand testament to the town's history.
- On the corner of William and Hunter Street is the Junction Inn overlooking the river. This was once King's Hotel. It is said to be the second-oldest hotel in NSW.
- Clans on the Coast was first held at Nelson Bay in New South Wales in 2007.
- In 2023, the festival moved to a new, expansive location at Raymond Terrace. It took place on Saturday, 23rd September.

## 2024 DATE

Clans on the Coast 2024 will be held on Saturday, 21st September at Lakeside Sports Complex, Raymond Terrace NSW. [www.clansonthecoast.com.au](http://www.clansonthecoast.com.au)

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**Clans on the Coast is a vibrant Celtic festival that began in 2007 thanks to the visionary Ron Swan OAM and his team of like-minded enthusiasts.**





The couple stopped for a photo op at Sydney Harbour Bridge while cycling across Australia.

# Scottish couple aims to cycle round the world on tandem

A Scottish couple who said: "We are not cyclists, and we don't own any lycra," embarked on an epic round-the-world tandem challenge.

In an extraordinary feat of determination and charity, Bob and Deborah Gulliver took on the challenge in a mission to raise funds for Children's Hospices Across Scotland and the Hospices of Hope Ukraine Appeal.

They set off from Rachel House Hospice in Kinross, Scotland, in March 2022, inspired by long-distance cyclist Mark Beaumont's book, *The Man that Cycles Around the World*.

Despite having little cycling experience before the journey, they fearlessly pedaled through 27 countries, covering a whopping 22,000 km. Their triumph involved completing the Australian

and New Zealand legs of their adventurous tour.

To officially cycle around the world as recognised by the Guinness World Records, the couple had to start and end in the same place, pedal 28,000 km, and pass through an 'antipodal pair' – two points on the planet directly opposite to each other. Bob and Deborah chose Alaejos in Spain and the New Zealand Parliament in Wellington as their antipodal points.

While they weren't aiming to break any official records, the Gullivers were well on their way to meeting the Guinness World Records stipulations by August 2023, with a target of completing 30,000 km by the end of last year. They planned to finish their incredible journey where it all began, at Rachel House Hospice.

The next adventure on their list was the United States, where they planned to cycle from Los Angeles to Fort Lauderdale before flying to Morocco and then cycling back to Scotland through Spain, France, England, Wales, the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland.

Reflecting on their amazing journey, Bob shared some of the unforgettable moments, from staying with monks in a Thai temple to encountering camels in Kazakhstan and chilling with a koala on an Australian roadside. But what struck them the most was the kindness and generosity of strangers they met along the way.

You can keep up with Bob and Deborah's ongoing travel escapades, by following their updates on their website at [thegulliverstravels.com](http://thegulliverstravels.com)

## 2024 UPDATE!

After finishing their cycle around the world, the Gullivers are planning a 'Close the Gap' tour from Bukhara in Uzbekistan to Hanoi, Vietnam in 2025.

## AT A GLANCE

- Scots Bob and Deborah Gulliver cycled around the world on a tandem for charity.
- With no prior experience, they covered 22,000 km in 27 countries.
- They fulfilled Guinness World Record requirements by cycling between antipodal points.
- They aimed to complete 30,000 km in 2023. They'd been to Australia and planned to pass through Ireland, Wales, and England on the way home.
- They planned to finish where they began, at Kinross in Scotland.



Pic: Hilltops Council



# Forget the bull, running of the sheep is the go in Boorowa

If you've never been to Spain to witness the running of the bulls, here's the next best thing. The Running of the Sheep at the fun-filled Boorowa Irish Woolfest was back on the October long weekend in 2023.

Situated in the picturesque town of Boorowa in New South Wales, this annual festival celebrates the region's fine Merino wool and its strong Irish connections.

The Woolfest happened all weekend with the main day being Sunday, 1st October. That was when you could see the running of the sheep, the street parade, and the main act, the highly-acclaimed modern Celtic band Limerick. They were joined by the Shamrock Dancers on the main stage for a show that got toes tapping and hearts pumping.

The blessing of the fleece got things underway on festival day, with a sheep shorn the old-fashioned way before the fleece received a spiritual thanksgiving.

At midday, a group of spirited sheep was herded down



the main street, accompanied by the cheers of the crowd and the leaps of Kelpies, the skilled sheepdogs.

Asked if it was similar to the Running of the Bulls, the organisers said: "Not quite as dangerous but certainly as visually exciting with the four-wheel motorbike in full throttle and the sheepdogs leaping on and off the sheep's back."

The festival boasted a range of other attractions, from sheep shearing demonstrations to a street parade

showcasing Boorowa's country life and Irish heritage. Celtic pipe bands, sheep-themed floats, and tractors filled the streets, creating a vibrant and joyful atmosphere.

Other highlights included a pie-eating contest, sheep-shearing competition, accent competition, wood chopping, working dog demos, and fairground rides.

There was also a fireworks display on Saturday evening.

And fans of canola fields had a treat! Boorowa's Irish

Woolfest coincided with canola season, and the gently rolling hills covered in bright yellow flowers created a stunning backdrop for photos.

Boorowa has strong Irish connections and is twinned with Clonoulty in Tipperary.

In the 1820s, cousins Roger Corcoran and Ned Ryan arrived in the area. They had been sentenced to transportation to New South Wales from Clonoulty. They were later granted 'Ticket of Freedom' and played prominent roles in the settlement of the area.

Boorowa is located in the Hilltops region, about one and a half hours' drive from Canberra. Around 15,000 people attended Boorowa Irish Woolfest every year.

For more details, go to [www.irishwoolfest.com.au](http://www.irishwoolfest.com.au)

## 2024 DATE

Boorowa Irish Woolfest will be held on 6th October 2024.

# All the cool kids are doing Morris dance

From the sunny shores of Australia to the heart of England, the centuries-old tradition of Morris dancing is experiencing an unexpected and vibrant revival, captivating both young and old.

In Fremantle, Western Australia, the 2023 Morris Ale recently brought together around 70 dancers and musicians from across Australia, England, and New Zealand.

Bedecked in their traditional garb, these performers infused the streets of Fremantle with their infectious energy, at a time of a remarkable resurgence of this historic art form.

The event, which took place from the 22nd to the 25th of September, saw local enthusiasts joining the international troupe, with performers dancing and clashing sticks at iconic Fremantle venues. Audiences gathered to watch these rhythmic displays. Morris dancing, with origins dating back to 1458, came to life through rhythmic movement. Diverse styles, from Cotswold Morris to Border Morris, added a dash of mystery and mirth to the festivities.

Morris dancing is undergoing a modern revival across continents, with Morris dancers even gracing the stage at prestigious events like the Brit Awards.

Grammy award-winning band Wet Leg made an appearance at the 2023 Brits. The Isle of Wight band were accompanied by a Morris dancing side (groups of Morris dancers are called 'sides') by the name of Boss Morris, on their performance of their hit song Chaise Longue.

Boss Morris are an all-female side from Stroud in Gloucestershire, England.

They are known for exuberant dancing and avant-garde face paints, and the beasts that they dance with. The Brit Awards saw them dance with a giant owl.

In the heart of England, Morris dancing is making a significant cultural comeback. Traditional dances, characterised by clashing wooden sticks, jangling bell pads, and vibrant handkerchiefs, are now being reimagined by a new



Hot For Joe dancers from Adelaide



Fiddle Stix Morris from Grafton



Members of Belswagger Morris from Brisbane

generation. Morris dancers are taking to platforms like TikTok, sharing routines set to contemporary music, including Beyoncé's Break My Soul.

This modern twist is attracting a younger and more diverse audience to the art form, challenging stereotypes and breathing new life into a tradition once considered the domain of a particular demographic.

In addition to its rhythmic allure, Morris dancing also fosters a sense of community. Dancers often gather in clubs and groups to practice and perform, forging friendships that extend beyond the dance floor.

As Morris dancing continues to evolve and find resonance with new generations, it's clear that this centuries-old tradition is far from fading into obscurity. Instead, it's experiencing a vibrant and unexpected renaissance, captivating audiences in Australia, England, and beyond. Whether in the historic streets of Fremantle or the bustling cities of the UK, the skilful twirls, leaps, and handclaps of Morris dancing are once again

## MORRIS SIDES

[Adelaide Morris Men \(Adelaide\)](#)  
[Beardross Sword \(Melbourne\)](#)  
[Belswagger Morris \(Brisbane\)](#)  
[Black Jack Morris \(Sydney\)](#)  
[Brambleton Morris \(Melbourne\)](#)  
[The Britannia Morris \(Melbourne\)](#)  
[Fiddle Stix Morris \(Grafton\)](#)  
[Hot For Joe \(Adelaide\)](#)  
[Julley Hatters \(Hobart\)](#)  
[Lancashire Witches \(Adelaide\)](#)  
[Limestone Morris \(Canberra\)](#)  
[Marlee Morris \(Perth\)](#)  
[Red Raven Morris \(Melbourne\)](#)  
[Suey Gruffie Morris \(Canberra\)](#)  
[Tyler's Oz \(Melbourne\)](#)

## 2024 DATE

Australian Ale 2024 will be held from 27th to 29th September in Brisbane QLD. Until 1st October, an extension will be held on North Stradbroke Island.



Scenes from the Australian Morris Ale 2023 at Fremantle in Western Australia. Pics: Marlee Morris and Jolley Hatters on Facebook





# Bland, Dull and Boring mark ten years as team tedium

It's been ten years since Bland Shire in New South Wales, Australia, teamed up with Dull in Scotland and Boring in Oregon, USA, to form the Trinity of Tedium.

In 2012, the town of Boring in Oregon, US, voted to cement a relationship with the Perth and Kinross village of Dull in 'a pair for the ages'. Bland was accepted into the alliance in 2013. Bland and Boring are both named after early residents of the area – William Bland and William Boring – and Dull is believed to have got its name from the Pictish word for field.

August 9th every year marks the annual Bland, Dull and Boring Day, when all three celebrate the anniversary of their alliance. To mark the 10th anniversary, a British cyclist went on a quest to ride from Boring to Dull.

Mark Wedgwood from Manchester, England, was

in Boring, Oregon for the anniversary day, and as part of the festivities, he left on his bicycle, bound for Dull, Scotland. He crossed the US to Boston, then transported to Iceland, cycled across Iceland, then transported to the Faroe Islands. He cycled across the Faroe Islands and got transport to Scotland's mainland, reaching Dull right on schedule on October 12th. That day marked the 10th anniversary of when a group of nine Boring residents first visited Dull and celebrated the first, unofficial Boring and Dull Day in Scotland.

Mark said on his trip website, [boringtodull.com](http://boringtodull.com): "What better time, then, to be arriving at the culmination of my long and almost certainly unique cycling adventure. We had 22 miles left to go and a fine, if rather cool Scottish morning in which to enjoy the magnificent scenery.

"And then, suddenly, there it was by the roadside: the 'Welcome to Dull, Paired with Boring, Oregon, USA' sign."

He added: "We climbed off our bikes, a grey haired man with a fine moustache called to us across the car park. It was Tommy, lifelong Dull resident and my best and only contact here. We went inside the cosy cafe and he treated us to coffee, soup and herb scones. Then we chatted at length about Boring and Dull, how the pairing came about, visitors from overseas and other amusing stories."

Bland, which was originally a gold mining area, has a 6,000-strong population. It has a sign located in Lions Park representing the three communities in a fun selfie frame. You can snap a photo with the sign and post on your social media using #blandnotdullorboring.

## AT A GLANCE

- The town of Boring in Oregon, USA, teamed up with the village of Dull in Scotland in 2012 as a tourism initiative.
- In 2013, Bland Shire in Australia joined the friendship grouping to become the Trinity of Tedium.
- English cyclist Mark Wedgwood cycled from Oregon in the US to Dull in Scotland to mark the 10th anniversary of the group coming together.
- You can have a selfie taken with a sign at the Lions Park in Bland, New South Wales that reads: 'League of Extraordinary Communities. Bland... far from Dull and Boring'.

# Sláinte as Red Lion Tavern reclaims its Celtic heritage

Meet Petar and Jessica Grulovic, the proud new managers of The Red Lion Tavern, one of New England's most traditional pubs.

Located just 15 minutes from Glen Innes along the New England Highway in New South Wales, the tavern has undergone refurbishment and reopened in September, following a tour of the Celtic nations by Petar and Jessica.

Petar said: "My mother was from Greenock, Scotland and her parents were Irish/Scottish. Jessica has Irish and Scottish roots from several generations back. I grew up an Irish dancer and Celtic culture has always been a big part of our performing lives.

"We are both high-school teachers and have been for over 15 years. When we lived in North Queensland previously, we ran a musical theatre academy and a musical theatre company."

When the couple, who have three young children, came to Glen Innes for a holiday and happened across The Red Lion, opportunity knocked.

"We came to Glen Innes for a brief holiday, touched base with the owners of The Red Lion, and soon became the new leasers of the building, and owners/managers of the business here," Petar explained.

They relocated from Mackay and settled down in Glencoe, near Glen Innes, to



open up their cosy little country pub with a Celtic twist.

Over the past few months, Petar and Jessica have revamped the interior to give the pub a Celtic theme, with tartan carpets and country-style furniture to create an inviting atmosphere.

The couple share a passion for their Scottish and Irish heritage.

Petar said: "We have always been passionate about all things Celtic. Having visited the Australian Celtic Festival as adjudicators for the Australian Celtic Dance Championships in 2016, 2017 and 2022, and as patrons in other years, we quickly developed an interest in all the Celtic Nations, including The Isle of Man, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany.

"From our first business discussions about The Red Lion, we immediately wanted to take the venue back to its

Celtic roots and offer something different to any bar or restaurant in the region.

"We want people to walk in and feel like they've stepped into another country and back into another time," Petar explained.

"And we want to make sure it's a very comforting, welcoming, spacious area."

The tavern treats guests to a wonderful array of Celtic-themed dishes. They have a rotating seasonal menu, which features a Celtic-inspired meal from each of the Celtic nations.

Previous and current dishes include Chicken Balmoral (Scotland), Beef and Guinness Stew (Ireland), Smoked Salmon Galette (Brittany), Queenie Linguine (The Isle of Man), Seafood Chowder (Cornwall) and Chicken and Leek Casserole (Wales).

"We also serve entrees and desserts inspired by the Celtic

nations," said Petar.

Beers on tap all come from Scotland (Tennent's) and Ireland (Guinness/Kilkenny) and they also sell other Scottish, Irish and Australian beers. Their collection of Celtic Spirits (whiskies and gins) are exclusively from the Celtic nations. Most are imported and/or rare, and they are the only stockists in Australia for a large proportion of their whiskies and gins - including Welsh gins, Cornish whiskies and Manx spirits.

The distinctive building has an interesting history.

Petar said: "It was originally known as a Celtic tavern, built in a region that was populated by many Scots, Irish, Welsh and Cornish who worked in agriculture, farming and mining.

"That building burnt down in 1967. The Red Lion Tavern, modelled after the Red Line Tavern in Scotland, was built in 1969 and has had many owners since."

And now it's got a wonderful team at the fore, so let's raise a glass and say 'Sláinte' to Petar, Jessica and the Celtic tavern that's reclaimed its heritage.

You can contact The Red Lion Tavern at New England Highway, Glencoe, New South Wales, phone 0409 776 906, email [redlion.glencoe@hotmail.com](mailto:redlion.glencoe@hotmail.com) and online at [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/redlion.glencoe).



# Vale Chuck, the billionaire who gave away his fortune

Charles 'Chuck' Feeney, the remarkable Irish-American entrepreneur and philanthropist, has passed away at the age of 92, leaving behind an indelible legacy of generosity that resonates deeply with the Australian Irish community.

Chuck Feeney's story is one of unwavering commitment to making the world a better place. Born in New Jersey to Irish-American parents during the Great Depression, Chuck grew up with humble beginnings. His mother was a nurse, and his father worked as an insurance underwriter. These early values of humility and compassion would profoundly shape his life's journey.

Feeney's entrepreneurial spirit led him to create a duty-free shopping empire that spanned the globe, amassing immense wealth. However, what set Chuck Feeney apart was his rejection of personal extravagance. He saw wealth not as an end in itself but as a means to help others.

"I see little reason to delay giving when so much good can be achieved through supporting worthwhile causes today," he said.

Chuck was known for his down-to-earth frugality, and according to a New York Times article in 2017: "Until he was 75, he traveled only in coach, and carried reading materials in a plastic bag." He did not own a house or a car, preferring to rent an apartment, and he wore a \$10 Casio watch.

In 1982, he established the Atlantic Philanthropies, a foundation dedicated to giving away his fortune to causes he deeply believed in. For 15 years, Chuck Feeney donated in secret, earning him the moniker "the James Bond of philanthropy".

His connection to Ireland, and specifically Northern



Chuck and his wife Helga Feeney, top, and, above, Feeney Way at University of Queensland (UQ). Pictures: Cornell University and UQ

Ireland, was profound. Chuck Feeney traced his roots back to County Fermanagh, and his commitment to peace and reconciliation on the island was unwavering.

His transformative impact became more apparent when he emerged from anonymity in 1997, inspiring the world with his selfless devotion. That was the year he had a meeting at Queensland Irish Association's Tara House, which resulted in significant donations to the University of Queensland (UQ).

Across Australia, Chuck Feeney donated more than \$550 million to various projects. He gave \$102 million to three Queensland medical projects, including \$50

million to help establish the Translational Research Institute. At the time, the government celebrated this as the largest-ever medical donation in Australia's history.

Queensland saw the establishment of research institutes like the Institute for Molecular Bioscience, Queensland Brain Institute, and the Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, among others, thanks to his generosity.

A University of Queensland landmark has been named in honour of Chuck Feeney. At UQ's entrance, the roadway has been named Feeney Way in his honour.

The Australian Irish community, along with the world,

## AT A GLANCE

- Chuck Feeney was an Irish American who made his fortune from duty-free shops.
- Chuck used his wealth to help others, donating the entire \$8 billion during his lifetime.
- He travelled in coach class, wore a \$10 watch and rented his apartment.
- Chuck donated \$550 million to projects across Australia.

mourns the loss of a true humanitarian, a visionary who gave away his \$8 billion fortune during his lifetime.

Chuck Feeney's life serves as a shining example of the enduring impact one individual can have on society when driven by compassion, empathy, and an unwavering commitment to make the world a better place. His legacy will forever inspire Australia, the Irish community, and people worldwide.

Chuck Feeney died in San Francisco on October 9th, 2023, at the age of 92.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h'anam.

# Australia celebrates unsung hero of the Irish famine

Long celebrated here in Australia for his work mapping this country, Polish explorer Paul Strzelecki is now being honoured in Ireland for his heroic efforts during The Great Hunger (also known as the Irish potato famine), where he aided more than 200,000 children.

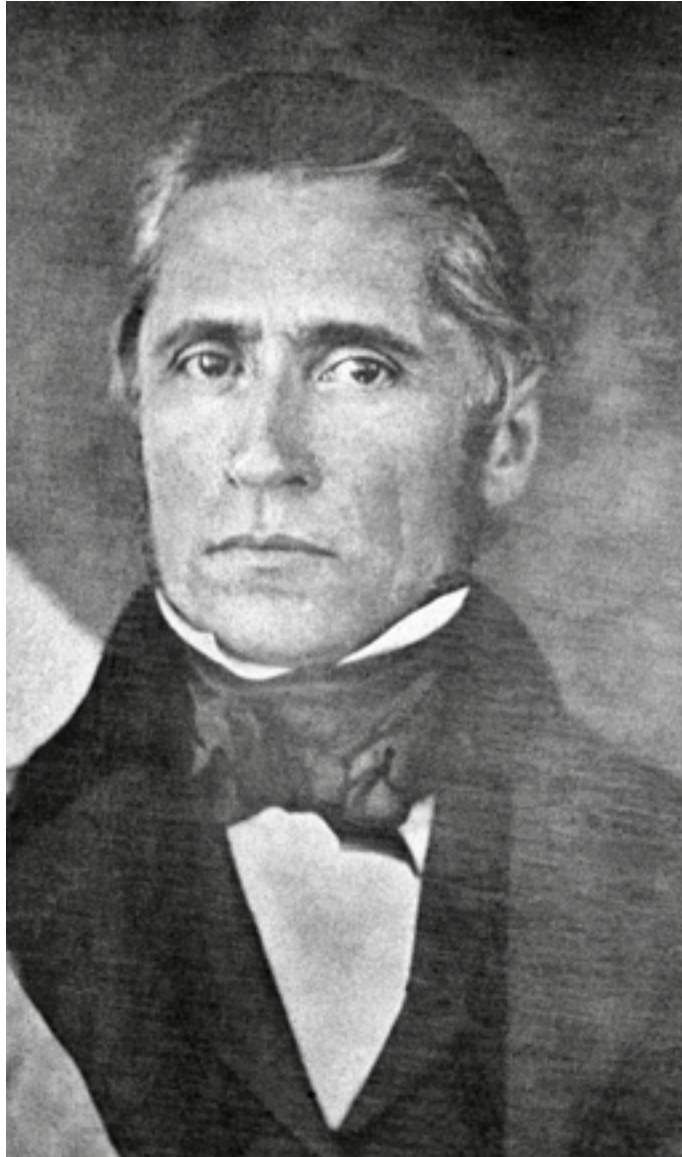
An exhibition in Dublin's National Museum of Ireland pays tribute to his extraordinary life and achievements.

The creators of the exhibition, commissioned by the Polish Embassy in Dublin, were two academics infatuated with Strzelecki: Professor Peter Gray of Queen's University Belfast and Professor Emily Mark-Fitzgerald of University College Dublin. The exhibition unveils the story of Strzelecki, whose contributions to famine relief remain lesser-known yet profound. It features seldom-seen images from major museums and libraries across Ireland, Britain and Australia.

Count Paul (Paweł) Strzelecki came from a noble family. He was educated in natural sciences and engineering.

Strzelecki ventured from England to Australia, where he explored the continent and conducted significant scientific research. His expeditions and discoveries greatly enriched Australia's understanding of its geography and natural features.

Among the places named after the explorer in Australia are the Strzelecki Ranges, a mountain range in Victoria; Mount Strzelecki, a mountain on Flinders Island in Tasmania; Strzelecki National Park in Victoria; Strzelecki Track, a famous outback road in South Australia, known for its challenging conditions; and Strzelecki Desert, which stretches from South Australia, into Queensland and New South Wales.



Strzelecki was the first European to climb Australia's tallest mountain, Mount Kosciuszko in New South Wales, in 1840 and he named it in honour of a Polish patriot.

Strzelecki dreamed of completing a geological survey of Australia.

While his work focused on geography, geology, and mapping, he also interacted with Indigenous people in Gippsland, Victoria. He observed and documented aspects of their culture, including their customs, languages, and the use of local flora and fauna. His accounts

saving countless lives from hunger and disease. He also supported immigration from Ireland to Australia during the famine.

October 6th marked 150 years since the death of Strzelecki and in commemoration, the Polish government proclaimed 2023 as the Year of Strzelecki.

In celebrating the achievements of Strzelecki, activities and events are being hosted in various parts of the world where he left a lasting legacy.

Kosciuszko Heritage, a Polish non-profit volunteer group aiming to keep Strzelecki and Kosciuszko in living memory here in Australia, organised events throughout 2023 to honour his memory.

They invited Professors Gray and Mark-Fitzgerald to give a talk in Sydney about their Strzelecki exhibition earlier this year. The Professors also delivered the lecture at University of Melbourne.

Ernestyna Skurjat-Kozek, President of Kosciuszko Heritage, said: "Ten years ago, we never dreamed that Ireland would recognise Strzelecki as its national hero and that Irish professors would teach us here in Australia about the Good Samaritan.

"In August 2013, we took the first steps to convince Irish parliamentarians what a distinguished figure Paweł Edmund Strzelecki was in the history of their country. Then everything went quickly - like a breeze.

A breakthrough moment was the premiere of the exhibition about Strzelecki's humanitarian action, opened personally by President Higgins at the Royal Academy in Dublin."

The exhibition has since been put online for all to see. You can access it at [www.strzelecki.ie](http://www.strzelecki.ie).

# Manx dancers bring magic to Moorlands

The opening of the Celtic Nations Standing Stones in Moorlands Park, Brisbane, featured a festival of talent from all the Celtic nations. Among the crowd favourites were The Manx Dancers of Brisbane. Their leader, Dr Heather Clarke tells us about the history of Manx dancing.

The Isle of Man's dance culture seems to be a fascinating mix of influences. Can you tell us more about how what has shaped local traditions?

"The Isle of Man has a distinctive dance culture with Celtic, Norse and English influences. The Manx-Gaelic name for the island is Ellan Vannin (or Manin). It is a relatively small island measuring 48km long and 16km wide, situated in the Irish Sea between Cumbria in Britain and County Down in Northern Ireland. The location of the island, being roughly equidistant from Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland, has led to the development of a fascinating amalgam of traditions in music, song, poetry, and dance."

Have the people of the Isle of Man always practiced these folk dances?

"The local culture has not always been appreciated; by the 1890s it was in danger of being forgotten. The folk dances were regarded as inferior to the modern dances of the time, and had largely fallen out of favour.

It was only at this time that a number of individuals travelled the island and identified surviving dances. The efforts of these collectors saved the dances from vanishing altogether. It was through the enthusiasm of (Manx cultural activist) Mona Douglas that these dances were introduced to schools



The Manx Dancers of Brisbane



Manx dancing at Moorlands Park



Performing Return the Blow

in the 1920s. As the century progressed, traditional music and dance were included in the school curriculum, a key factor in keeping the culture alive."

What efforts are being made on the island to keep its culture alive now?

"A highlight each year is the week-long Manx Folk Awards, a celebration of the culture where 1,000 children gather to learn, perform, and create new works in the traditional style.

Another major influence in keeping the dances alive is The Manx Dance Society. This group was formed in 1951, celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2021, and continues to teach and perform on the island and abroad.

There are now an impressive number of other groups in the island: Skeddan Jiarg (Manx Gaelic for Red Herring), Perree Bane (White Jackets) Ny Fennee (The Heroes), Bock Yuan Fannee (Juan's Flayed Horse, ie Shanks' Pony)."

What resources have been made to help preserve Manx culture abroad?

"The Manx Government is keen to preserve and promote the traditions of the island, providing resources through the Culture Vannin website covering every aspect of the culture. The videos are especially useful for learning the dances and watching the performances."

What distinct features does Manx dance have that sets it apart from others?

"Manx dances have a distinctive character: the arms are often held in a raised position, the Manx reel step features in most dances, and many include the cross-step motif – a series of movements repeated throughout the dance. They are fun, easy to learn, and usually quite lively! Certain dances are linked to the Manx calendar and celebrated on specific days: The Flutter





**Dance for Three performed by The Brisbane Manx Dancers at the opening of The Celtic Nations Standing Stones, with Dr Heather Clarke, far right.**

Dance on Good Friday, at Harvest time the Babban ny Mheillea, Hop tu Naa on 31st October, The White Boys Dance in the Christmas period, and Hunt the Wren on 26th December. Other dances are purely social, and a favourite of ours is the courting dance Hyndaa Yn Bwoailey (Return the Blow)."

*The Manx Dancers of Brisbane have a diverse repertoire. Can you share some insights into the different dances you perform?*

"The performance repertoire of the Manx Dancers of Brisbane includes the Ladies Jig, Dance of the Yellow Flowers, Return the Blow, and the Dance for Three.

We have two performance costumes: one represents the colours of the Manx flag - a red shirt and black skirt or trousers; the other costume is a white dress with a Laxey blue shawl and Celtic brooch, our men wear a white shirt, black trousers, and blue sash. Blue is the dominant colour in the Manx tartan, misty blue for the seas that surround the island. We have performed for the Manx Society in

Brisbane, and recently at the unveiling of the Celtic Council's Standing Stones in Moorlands Park. We hope to perform at the Glen Innes Celtic Festival in 2024 where the Isle of Man is one of the featured nations."

*Your role as the leader of the Brisbane Manx Dancers is quite impressive. Can you share your personal connection to the Isle of Man and how this heritage has influenced your interest in dance and culture?*

"I am a dance historian with Manx ancestors - my great-grandparents (Curphey and Clucas) came from the Isle of Man and settled in Australia in the early 1900s.

"I have a background in Scottish, Irish, English and Australian dance traditions, and training in classical ballet. I have always had a keen interest in my Manx heritage and I have visited the island several times."

Dr Heather Clarke's website presents many aspects of dance heritage in Australia, you'll find it at <https://www.historicaldance.au/>



**Dr Heather Clarke watching the dancers perform. Pic: Anglo&Celtic**

# Brisbane Celtic Nations Standing Stones inauguration



Pictures: Anglo&Celtic



# Miami Showband legend Jim Harte to play Fremantle gig

Jim Harte, an iconic figure from the enchanting era of Irish showbands, is set to take music enthusiasts on a mesmerising journey back in time. Jim's life has been steeped in the rhythms and melodies that defined an era.

Jim's musical journey began at a very early age, setting the stage for his incredible career with some of the most renowned showbands in Ireland. One of his earliest gigs was as the lead singer with the famous Miami Showband, a band that left an indelible mark on the music scene during the 1960s and 1970s. Jim joined the Miami Showband in 1962, and soon they were hitting the big time.

Jim told [The TaRP Podcast](#): "I was just started to study at uni and I had this great job with a big pension at Guinness. Joe Tyrell (Miami Showband pianist) came to me one day and said 'we are going to go professional so you'll have to pack up work and uni'."

Jim discussed it with his parents and with the musicians union, they thought quitting his job and university for the band was not a good idea. Jim went back and told Joe Tyrell that he wasn't going to stay.

"It really did affect me big time. But I just had this loyalty to my folks and that's why I left. When I left they were shopping around, who was going to take over? And then Dickie (Rock) got the job."

The Miami Showband went on to score seven number one records on the Irish singles chart.

However, the band's story is not just one of musical success; it's also marked by tragedy. In 1975, while returning from a performance in County Down, Northern Ireland, back to the Republic of Ireland, the band fell victim to a loyalist paramilitary attack. At a fake checkpoint,



**Jim Harte, top, and, above, the Miami Showband.**

two gunmen attempted to hide a time bomb on the band's minibus. The device exploded prematurely, killing the two gunmen.

The remaining gunmen then opened fire on the band members. Tragically, three members of the Miami Showband – Fran O'Toole, Tony Geraghty, and Brian McCoy – lost their lives.

Despite the devastating loss, the band reformed in 1976 but disbanded in 1982, later reforming again.

Jim Harte continued to make significant contributions to the world of music. He was the lead singer in Arrans Showband and Johnny Flynn Showband and achieved numerous top 10 hits in Ireland.

Today, Jim lives in Western Australia. On November 18th, 2023, music enthusiasts had a rare opportunity to experience Jim performing showband hits live at the Fremantle Workers Club.

The event was a tribute to an era when dance halls and ballrooms were the epicentres of entertainment in Ireland and the UK. The Irish showband era is a testament to unbridled musical innovation and a time when legendary performers like Brendan Bowyer and Joe Dolan took centre stage, leaving an indelible mark on the world of music.

Revellers in Fremantle immersed themselves in the songs that had defined gener-

## AT A GLANCE

- Jim Harte was a big part of the showband scene in Ireland.
- He was the original singer with the Miami Showband.
- Jim now lives in Western Australia, where he DJs on Bunbury Radio.
- You can catch Jim live at The Music of The Irish Showbands concert in Fremantle this month.

ations and relived the magic of the Irish showband era.

Whether they chose to sit back and relax or dance the night away, the event was an unforgettable celebration of a bygone musical legacy. Jim Harte and Irish DJ Oliver McNerney transported them back in time.

As well as music, there was Irish food available, from beef and Guinness pie to pork and leek sausage, and McDonnells Irish vegetable curry.

You can catch Jim Harte presenting *All that Jazz* on [Bunbury Radio](#), every Sunday from 4pm.

# Glen Innes welcomes all to Summer Solstice

Glen Innes, a picturesque town nestled in the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales, hosted an enchanting celebration at the Australian Standing Stones in December.

At the 2023 Summer Solstice celebration, an ancient and sacred tradition took place, providing locals and visitors with an opportunity to connect with Celtic heritage and the rhythms of the sun.

The Australian Standing Stones pay tribute to the rich Celtic origins that have woven their way into the tapestry of Australian life. As the early Celtic people developed in the European homelands, the ancient standing stone monuments served as calendars to mark the time for sowing and harvesting, but also as abodes of rich myth and legend, and were centres to celebrate the movements of the sun and moon. People of the Celtic homelands dispersed worldwide, including to Australia. Glen Innes, in particular, has a deep-rooted connection to its Celtic heritage, with its first European settlers predominantly hailing from Scotland, as well as from Ireland, Wales, and Cornwall.

The idea for the Australian Standing Stones was ignited by the Celtic Council of Australia, aiming to establish a national monument to honour all Celtic pioneers who had played a significant role in shaping Australia. The monument, inspired by ancient sites like the Ring of Brodgar and the Callanish Stones, was dedicated in 1992, becoming a testament to Australia's unique blend of cultures.

The Australian Standing Stones consists of 38 stones, including a circle of 24, symbolising the 24 hours of a day. Central to the monument are three stones representing all Celts. The central stone, the Australis Stone, is for all Australians and symbolises the link between the old and new worlds.



*Piper Paul Hansen at the standing stones.*



*Solar noon markers - summer.*



*Ogham stone. Pictures: John Rhys Jones*

The Gaelic Stone, to its north, is for Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man. The Brythonic Stone, to its south, is for Wales, Cornwall and Brittany. The magic happens on solstice days, the shortest and longest days of the year. At dawn, the sunrise is marked by special stones; at sunset by other marker stones. These are special times to visit and experience the alignments at the monument. At solar noon, when the sun is highest in the sky, visitors can witness the shadows cast by the stones that mark these celestial events, providing a unique blend of science and tradition. The Australian Standing Stones are a living calendar, connecting us to the movements of the Earth and the sun.

If you visit during the Summer Solstice, you experience the day with the most daylight hours of the year, typically occurring on December 21st.

The 2023 ceremony began at 12.30pm, accompanied by a piper, leading up to the moment of solar noon, where an informative talk shed light on the stones' solar noon measurements, and there were fundraising prizes to win as well. You could also become the shadow marker of the human sundial right beside the solar noon array.

At dawn, the Summer Solstice sunrise stone, within the circle to the southeast of the central Australis Stone, received the sun's first rays at dawn and cast a shadow onto the Australis Stone. At dusk, the last rays of the sun shone back down the Winter Solstice sunrise avenue, linking the two solstices at the end of the day.

One stone hosts seven ground-level plaques marking the annual movement of the earth around the sun by depicting the changing length of the sun's shadow at solar noon throughout the year. The four cardinal point stones,



**Sunset at Summer Solstice through the avenue.**  
**Pictures: John Rhys Jones /Australian Standing Stones Management Board**

together with the Summer Solstice sunrise stone, depict the five stars of the Southern Cross, while the four cardinal point stones and the circle of 24 form a Celtic cross: and so together a Southern Celtic Cross.

Looking south outside the array is the distinctive flat stone – the Gorsedd Stone. Requested by the Welsh and Cornish communities, this ‘Throne’ Stone evoked Bardic festivals, Eisteddfods, where winners or ‘bards’ were installed on a stone stage symbolised by this stone.

To the east of the Gorsedd Stone is the tall, squarish stone – the Ogham Stone. This Stone was requested by the Irish community and is the heaviest stone at 38 tonnes. The inscription on the square edges consists of short, long and sloping lines in the Ogham alphabet, known from inscriptions dating to the 4th century AD.

The Ogham inscription translates into Gaelic as Gleann Maqi Aongusa, meaning ‘the Glen of the Sons of Angus’ or Glen Innes.

Tynwald Hill, on the hill to



**Sunrise on the Summer Solstice at the Australian Standing Stones. And, below, Summer Solstice Stone shadow on Australis.** Pictures: John Rhys Jones/Australian Standing Stones Management Board



the south, acknowledges the Isle of Man, and Tynwald – the longest continually-serving parliament in the world.

To the north of the Stones is The Hill of Tara, as a tribute to the ancient seat of the high kings of Ireland, and

from where the Australian Standing Stones flag flies to greet visitors.

The ancient Celts celebrated these solstice events, and today, their descendants carry on this timeless tradition, embracing the longest day of

the year and the rich tapestry of Celtic heritage.

So, visitors made their way to the Australian Standing Stones in Glen Innes in December, where ancient traditions and the modern world came together in harmony. They experienced the enchantment of the 2023 Summer Solstice, connecting with Celtic history and the natural world at its zenith. It was an experience that was both enlightening and magical.

While at the Australian Standing Stones, they could also try to lift Excalibur from the stone, check out the Celtic Family Wall, and relax with refreshments at The Croft Celtic Cultural Centre and Cafe that occupies Crofter’s Cottage, a tribute to Scottish ‘taigh dubh’ (traditional thatched cottage).

They could take a drive or walk to Martin’s Lookout (400m south) for a stunning view of the town at the newly-installed Skywalk.

The Australian Standing Stones are at Watsons Drive, Glen Innes, New South Wales.

For more information about events happening at the stones, contact (02) 6730 2400 or email [tourism@gisc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tourism@gisc.nsw.gov.au).

# Visitors get their Celt on at CelticFest Warwick



Pictures: Anglo&Celtic





Koroit Lake School 2023. Photo: Vince Brophy (Supplied). And, below, Melbourne Céili Band. Picture: Supplied.

# Australia's most Irish village hosts annual Celtic school

Nestled in the heart of Australia's most Irish village, Koroit, the Lake School of Celtic Music, Song and Dance has become a beloved tradition. This family-friendly event, an annual highlight, transforms the picturesque Victorian village into a vibrant hub of music and culture. It's a celebration of all things Celtic, from music and song to dance and art.

The Lake School was born from a dream and a desire to immerse in Celtic traditions. In 1999, Koroit residents Felix and Christine Meagher, and Val Cookson, had a vision of taking their children to the Willie Clancy Summer School in Ireland, Ireland's largest traditional music summer school with daily classes taught by experts in Irish music and dance.

However, Felix, Christine, and Val soon realised it was financially out of reach. That's when Jamie McKew, Director of the Port Fairy Folk Festival, had a brilliant idea: "Why don't you have it here?"



They successfully secured funding, and the inaugural Lake School was held. Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2024, the Lake School has blossomed into an event that welcomes approximately 500 people each year. The school is a not-for-profit, registered community organisation, reinvesting any profits back into the event's development.

The entire village of Koroit becomes involved in this cultural experience. Local businesses, venues, and res-

idents get on board to make the Lake School a memorable experience. It's a true community effort, and that's what makes the event so special.

The Lake School in 2024 included workshops, seisiúns, and concerts. The students found themselves in the midst of the festivities, surrounded by the stunning landscapes of Koroit.

It was a chance to immerse in the rich culture, share in the craic, and make memories that last a lifetime.

Whether experienced musicians or beginners looking to learn, in 2024, the Lake School welcomed all to Koroit from January 2nd to 7th.

## 2025 DATE

The 2025 Lake School in Koroit, Victoria will run from 2nd to 7th January. For details, go to [www.lakeschool.com.au](http://www.lakeschool.com.au).

# Aberdeen Highland Games celebrates 25th anniversary

The Aberdeen Highland Games celebrated its 25th anniversary in the picturesque Hunter Valley, New South Wales, on Saturday, July 6th, 2024.

This event, deeply rooted in Scottish tradition, began with a colourful parade featuring bands and clan representatives, followed by the Massed Band Salute and the Chieftain's Address.

Dr Cameron Collins, an esteemed equine veterinarian with a profound appreciation for Scottish culture, served as the Chieftain of the Day.

Cameron's love of all things Scottish – food, drink, games, music, and dress – were cultivated during visits to the Highlands when he was working in the UK. He said that he was honoured to be the Chief of the Day.

Nicola O'Driscoll, President of the Aberdeen Highland Games, expressed her delight at the choice of Chieftain. She said: "Dr Cameron Collins is a local veterinarian, along with being the managing director of the Scone Equine Hospital. Cameron has been a strong supporter of the Aberdeen Highland Games over the years."

Throughout the day, attendees were captivated by a variety of traditional Scottish activities and competitions. Highland and Country dancing highlighted the elegance and vigour of Scottish dance, while the strongman events, featuring the Kilted Warriors, showcased impressive feats of strength.

Fun activities, such as the three-legged races, added a light-hearted touch to the celebrations. Additionally, the event hosted numerous stalls selling Scottish heirlooms, clothing, and food, offering a comprehensive Scottish cultural experience.

In the evening, the festivities continued with a Pipe Band Quintet competition at



Pipe bands in action at Aberdeen Highland Games in the Hunter Valley. Pictures: [Facebook/aberdeenhIGHLANDGAMES](https://www.facebook.com/aberdeenhIGHLANDGAMES)

the Aberdeen RSL Club, providing a grand musical finale to the day's events.

The Games were followed by the Kirkin of the Tartan.

Ms O'Driscoll said: "The final event in the program is the traditional Kirkin' of the Tartan service at St Marks Anglican Church in Aberdeen on Sunday morning to celebrate the Tartan."

She extended her gratitude

to all who make the event possible, saying: "I would like to thank all the members of the Aberdeen Highland Games committee for their hard work over the past year. We have a small, dedicated committee."

The 25th anniversary games had an extra cause for celebration too. Their Vice President Charles Cooke received a Medal of the Or-

der of Australia for services to the Scottish community of New South Wales in the King's Birthday Honours.

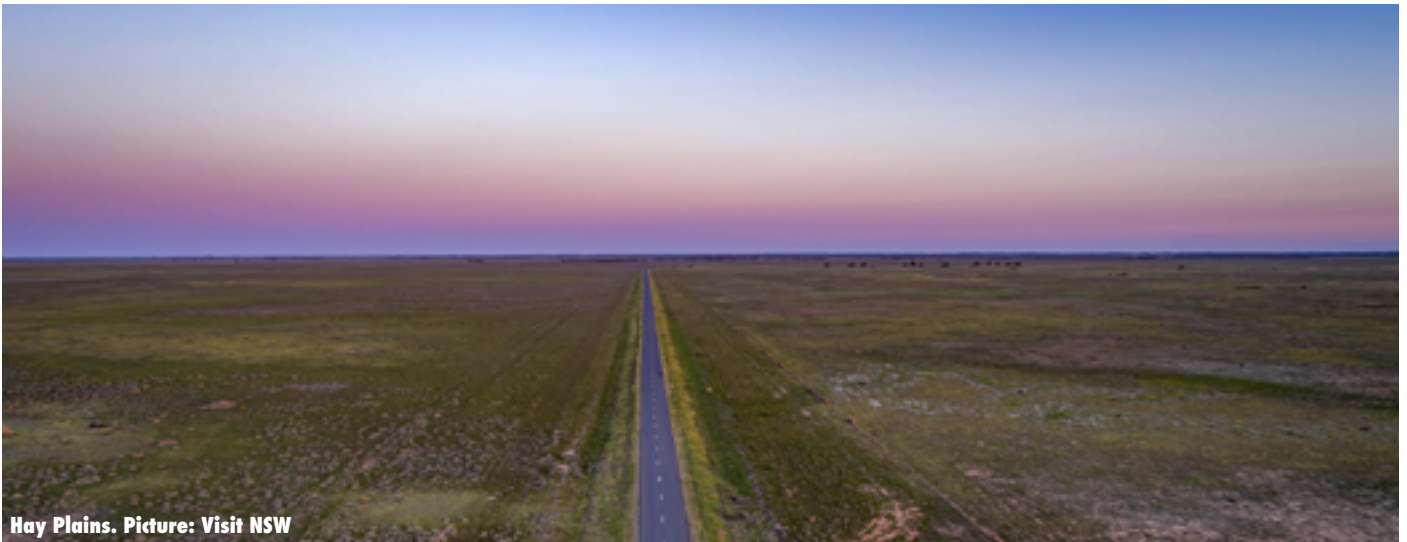
## 2025 DATE

Aberdeen Highland Games will be held on Saturday, 6th July 2025.

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







Hay Plains. Picture: Visit NSW

# Hayland Gathering calls you to flattest place in Australia



Rather than a 'Highland' gathering, it was a Hayland Gathering that called attendees to the flattest place in Australia in March.

Hay Plains in New South Wales is a vast expanse of flat land and saltbush, counted among the top three flattest places on earth.

Following the success of the first Highland gathering held in Hay in 2023, the town looked forward to the Scottish community gathering once again.

The Hayland Gathering Convenor, Kylie Kerr, told Anglo&Celtic that following the success of their 2023 inaugural gathering, the second Hayland Gathering would be held at Hay Oval on Saturday, 9th March 2024.

It featured a street parade, pipe bands, the Riverina Highland Dancing Titles, Highland Muscle Heavy Event competition, as well as stalls, athletic events, and entertainment.

They also held a traditional ceilidh at the Hay Services Club with The Scotsman, and finished off with fireworks.

The festival's street parade was a huge highlight, with dancers and music taking to the streets of the town.

Another highlight at the Hayland Gathering was the



Hay Highland and Scottish National Dancing, and, below, Kylie Kerr with The Scotsman Graeme McColgan.

Riverina Highland Dancing Titles. Along with the competition, OzScot Australia gave a world-renowned display of choreography.

The Golden City Pipe Band Bendigo joined the gathering again for the street parade, display, and massed bands.

Yoga met Scotland at Hay Park for McYoga on Sunday, 10th March with Scottish-themed yoga mats. Kilts were optional!

Hay is in the Riverina area of NSW, about 700km west of Sydney and about 400km from Melbourne. The historic town boasts five museums.

See [www.facebook.com/haylandgathering](http://www.facebook.com/haylandgathering).



# Pitch-perfect pride as Welsh celebrate Saint David's Day

Wales has certainly made its mark on Australia. From Australia's first female prime minister (Julia Gillard born in Barry) to department store giants (David Jones born in Carmarthenshire) and pop stars (Kylie Minogue's mother was born in Maesteg), and that's just the start.

Australian towns are named after their Welsh counterparts (Cardiff, Swansea, Neath and Aberdare), and even a whole state (New South Wales was named by Captain James Cook, the British explorer, when he first landed in Australia in 1770 as the eastern coastline, with its cliffs and headlands, reminded him of the Welsh landscapes. Sometimes, Australia doesn't seem so far from 'the green, green grass of home'.

Never is the connection stronger than on March 1st, when Australia's Welsh community celebrates Wales's national day, Saint David's Day, or Dydd Dewi Sant, with events happening up and down the country. We meet some of Australia's Welsh community groups.

Choral singing has become a vibrant and cherished tradition that thrives in Welsh communities, and its one that Welsh migrants brought to Australia with them. No surprise then that Australia has



Sydney Welsh Choir rehearse at West Ryde. Picture: Thanks to Sydney Welsh Choir

its fair share of Welsh choirs.

## Sydney Welsh Choir

Sydney Welsh Choir, since its establishment in 1978, has been a vocal ambassador of Welsh culture in New South Wales. Comprising around 30 members from diverse backgrounds, the choir's repertoire spans traditional Welsh tunes and global performances. Recently, they

had the privilege of hosting Welsh singer John Ieuan Jones. Catch them rehearsing at West Ryde Community Centre Hall, and for more information, visit [www.sydneywelshchoir.com](http://www.sydneywelshchoir.com).

## Cantorian Sydney

Boasting 45 male members, Cantorian Sydney showcases a wide-ranging repertoire from Welsh traditionals to opera choruses. Their performances extend beyond concerts to weddings, dinners, and charity events. Rehearsing at the Welsh Church of Sydney, they collaborate with various ensembles, fostering a rich musical experience. Learn more at [www.cantorian-sydneychoir.com](http://www.cantorian-sydneychoir.com).

## Australian Welsh Male Choir

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, the Australian Welsh Male Choir, with 50 members, honours the legacy of Welsh male choirs. They've

toured globally, including the Royal Albert Hall, marking historical milestones. They sang on Sunday, February 25th, at St Mary's Basilica Geelong, and on Friday, March 1st, at their 50th Anniversary Concert at Frankston Arts Centre. More details at [www.awmc.org.au](http://www.awmc.org.au).

## Victoria Welsh Choir (Vic Welsh)

In its 45th year, Vic Welsh, a traditional Welsh men's choir, enchants audiences with 15 concerts annually. Collaborations with renowned artists and their commitment to Welsh language contribute to their rich legacy. They sang at the St David's Day Concert on Sunday, 25th February, at Monash University. Learn more at [www.vicwelshmen-choir.com.au](http://www.vicwelshmen-choir.com.au).

## Melbourne Welsh Male Choir

Established in 1984, the Melbourne Welsh Male



Mornington Peninsula Welsh Ladies Choir were formed in 2018.



Melbourne Welsh Male Choir had a St David's Day celebration in Kew on March 3rd, 2023.

Choir blends Welsh choral traditions with an Australian twist. With Mitchell Meyer as their new music director, the choir captivated audiences on Sunday, March 3rd, at MLC James Tatoulis Auditorium in Kew. Details at [www.melbournwelshchoir.com.au](http://www.melbournwelshchoir.com.au).

**Mornington Peninsula Welsh Ladies Choir**

Formed in 2018, this choir revives the Welsh ladies' choir tradition, embodying the cultural essence of Wales. Join them in celebrating Welsh choral heritage on the Mornington Peninsula. Explore more at [www.mpwlc.com](http://www.mpwlc.com).

**Geelong Welsh Ladies Choir**

A diverse group of 26 members, the Geelong Welsh Ladies Choir meets weekly,



The Welsh Society of Western Australia's recent Christmas lunch.

promoting Welsh culture through song. They embrace varied musical genres, including Welsh, English, Latin, Spanish, Maori, and Italian. Stay updated on their events at [www.welshladieschoir.com.au](http://www.welshladieschoir.com.au).

evolved into an organisation with five ensembles. They contribute to Ipswich's cultural scene, recently participating in the 140th anniversary of the Blackstone United Welsh Church. Learn more at [www.cambrianchoir.org.au](http://www.cambrianchoir.org.au).

**Blackstone-Ipswich Cambrian Choir Inc.**

Originating in 1886, this Queensland-based choir has

**Welsh Society of Western Australia**  
Celebrating more than fifty years, the Welsh Society of



Blackstone-Ipswich Cambrian Choir at the Blackstone United Welsh Church in Queensland.

**WHO WAS SAINT DAVID?**

St David, the patron saint of Wales, was a Welsh bishop born in the 6th Century.

Known for founding monasteries and churches, St. David became renowned as a teacher and preacher.

Legend has it that during the Synod of Brefi, the ground beneath him rose, creating a small hill, while a white dove settled on his shoulder.

St David's Cathedral, located in Pembrokeshire, stands on the site of the monastery he founded.

St David's symbol is the leek, and his emblem is a white dove.

St David's Day, celebrated on March 1st, involves various traditions, including wearing leeks or daffodils, attending parades, and enjoying traditional Welsh cuisine.

Western Australia fosters Welsh culture in Perth. Beyond St David's Day festivities, they organise a variety of events throughout the year, maintaining a diverse and inclusive membership. Explore more at [www.wawelshsociety.org.au](http://www.wawelshsociety.org.au).

# Cornish community ready to celebrate Saint Piran

St Piran's Day is a spirited celebration that takes place on March 5th, honouring St Piran, who is the patron saint of Cornwall, a region in southwest England known for its rich Celtic heritage.

This day serves as a joyous tribute to Cornish culture, history, and identity, drawing locals and enthusiasts alike into a lively tapestry of festivities.

At the heart of St Piran's Day is the legendary tale of St Piran himself, said to be an Irish abbot and saint who was tied to a millstone and cast into the sea. Legend has it that he miraculously washed ashore in Cornwall, discovering the rich tin deposits that would go on to shape the region's history. The white cross on a black background, the Cornish flag, is said to symbolise the colours of St Piran's millstone.

The day kicks off with vibrant parades, where locals proudly wear black, white, and gold – the symbolic colours of Cornwall. Flags flutter in the breeze, and traditional Cornish music fills the air as the parade weaves its way through towns and villages. Traditional Cornish pasties, a savory pastry filled with meat and vegetables, are enjoyed by locals and visitors alike, offering a delectable taste of Cornwall's culinary heritage.

Cornish communities come alive with folk dancing, live music, and storytelling sessions. Locals gather to share tales of St Piran, Cornish folklore, and the unique history that sets Cornwall apart. Many people also participate in cultural events, art exhibitions, and activities that celebrate the distinct language, traditions, and folklore of Cornwall.

Cornish immigrant miners brought their customs to Australia with their influence still palpable. As well as bringing Cornish music and dance, in-



The Kernewek Lowender Copper Coast Cornish Festival is held bi-annually in South Australia. Pictured are the festival's 2023 May Queen Chloe Paddick and May Princess Georgie-Lou McCracken. Picture: [Facebook/kernewek](#)

cluding 'troyls' social dances, they also gave Australia its beloved Cornish pasty.

The Copper Coast in South Australia earned the moniker "Australia's Little Cornwall" due to its historical connections with Cornish miners who played a pivotal role in the region's mining industry during the 19th century. The area, encompassing towns like Moonta, Wallaroo, and Kadina, became a major copper mining hub in the mid-1800s.

Cornish miners flocked to the Copper Coast in search of opportunities. Their mining techniques, including the use of distinctive Cornish engine houses, significantly contributed to the success of the copper mines in the region.

The legacy of their presence is still evident today in the region's historic buildings, Cornish pasty shops, and events celebrating Cornish heritage.

In 2023, the biannual Kernewek Lowender Copper Coast Cornish Festival welcomed visitors to Little Corn-

wall to celebrate their unique Cornish heritage, traditions, and culture.

The Cornish Association of Victoria were looking forward to their St Piran's Day 2024 celebration. Ken Peak, secretary of the Association, told Anglo&Celtic that their St Piran's Day activity would begin with a church service and then a pasty lunch at Skipton Street Uniting Church Hall, on the corner of Skipton and Darling Streets, Ballarat South in Victoria.

The Cornish Association of New South Wales marked their 49th anniversary and St Piran's Day 2024 with lunch and celebrations at Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club in Sydney.

In the Celtic heart of Australia, Glen Innes, there was a flag-lowering ceremony. All were welcome to attend this free event and toast St Piran as the flag of Cornwall was lowered.

The Cornish Association of South Australia held a St Piran's Day lunch in Torrens Arms Hotel, Kingswood SA.

## WHO WAS SAINT PIRAN?

Saint Piran is the Patron Saint of Cornwall, believed to have been a 5th-century Irish abbot.

Legend has it that Piran discovered tin while building his fireplace, making him a symbol of Cornwall's mining heritage.

The white cross on a black background, known as the St Piran's Flag, is associated with the saint and represents Cornwall.

Celebrated on March 5th, St Piran's Day honours the saint with events featuring Cornish music, dance, and the display of the iconic flag.

According to legend, Piran was thrown into the sea with a millstone around his neck but miraculously survived, emphasising his revered status.

Cornish community groups: Cornish Assoc of NSW – [www.celticcouncil.org.au/cornish/nsw](http://www.celticcouncil.org.au/cornish/nsw); Cornish Assoc of SA – [www.cornishsa.org.au](http://www.cornishsa.org.au); Cornish Assoc of Victoria – [www.cornishvic.org.au](http://www.cornishvic.org.au).



Local school children dancing around the Maypole at Westbury Saint Patrick's Festival in Tasmania. Picture: [Facebook/Westbury St Patrick's Festival](#)

# Westbury festival celebrates daring escapes and heritage

Nestled in the rolling hills of Tasmania lies the charming town of Westbury, where history comes alive every year during the vibrant St Patrick's Festival. This annual celebration not only honours the rich Irish heritage of the town but also commemorates the daring escapes of two legendary figures from Irish history: John Mitchel and Thomas Francis Meagher.

Westbury's Irish roots run deep, with its eastern region, once known as Pensioners Bush, settled by Irish soldier settlers seeking refuge from the famine-stricken shores of Ireland. These resilient pioneers were granted land and resources, shaping the landscape of the town with their indomitable spirit and unwavering determination.

By the 1850s, Westbury had become a thriving com-

munity, predominantly Irish and comprised mostly of free settlers.

Central to the tale of Westbury's St Patrick's Festival are the daring escapes of two iconic figures from Irish history: John Mitchel and Thomas Francis Meagher. Exiled to Tasmania for their involvement in Irish nationalist movements, both men plotted their escape from captivity.

John Mitchel, immortalised in his gripping memoir *The Jail Journal*, staged a daring getaway, riding through the rugged terrain of Tasmania's mountains with the help of sympathetic locals. His escape became the stuff of legend, inspiring in its audacity and ingenuity. The most wanted man in all Tasmania, he boarded a public coach to travel to Hobart, dressed as a priest and found himself

sitting opposite the ex-Attorney General of the colony who had met him previously, but did not recognise him. He was smuggled onto a boat to America. He was greeted there as a hero. One of his sons fired the first shot in the American Civil War.

Thomas Francis Meagher, known for designing the Irish flag, also embarked on a perilous journey to freedom. Escaping from prison, he crossed treacherous landscapes and evaded capture, ultimately finding sanctuary in the welcoming embrace of Westbury's residents. Meagher went on to found the Irish Brigade and became a Brigadier-General in the American Civil War, and later Governor of Montana.

Each year, the St Patrick's Festival in Westbury pays homage to the town's Irish

heritage and the remarkable feats of Mitchel and Meagher. Visitors flock to Westbury, drawn by the allure of live music, traditional dance, and hearty Irish fare.

In 2024, the festival took place on Saturday, March 16th from 10am on the Village Green. The family-friendly event featured Maypole dancing, children's activities, food and craft stalls, music, dancing, a church market and vintage tractors. It also featured a St Patrick's Day parade.

Acts playing at the festival included The Wheels, The Meander Men's Choir, Matt Dames and Anna Talbot, Tasmanian harp and violin duo Matt Wooley and Annie Parsell, Fritch - Bottom Pub Ceilidh Band, Aileen Poynter Irish Dancers, Kimroe Dance School and much more.

# Irish Lord's son's forgotten grave is found in Toowong



**The grave of the son of Lord Clanmorris was located broken at Toowong Cemetery. It has been restored thanks to the work of Darcy Maddock, left, with his wife Lynette nee Bell.**

The long-forgotten, vandalised and overgrown grave of the son of an Irish Lord has been found in a Brisbane cemetery and restored to its former glory.

Heritage-listed Toowong Cemetery is the largest cemetery in Queensland, with its first burial taking place in 1871. A group of volunteers, [Friends of Toowong Cemetery](#), restores broken headstones and researches the history of the monuments, as well as conducting tours.

Darcy Maddock from Friends of Toowong Cemetery recently lifted a broken headstone to discover that the grave belonged to the son of an Irish Lord.

Darcy contacted Queensland Irish Association seeking

help with lifting the small marble headstone back onto its base and restoring it.

Darcy said at the time: "I found an Irishman who deserves to be visited but the headstone has been vandalised. I am sure it can be repaired. The lovely cross is in two pieces which I can put back together with a special adhesive."

Speaking about the inscription on the headstone, Darcy said: "His name is Bentinck Yelverton Bingham, he is the third son of John Charles Robert Bingham, fourth Baron of Clanmorris, Creg Clare, Co. Galway."

Queensland Irish Association Friends and Supporters group ran a request for help from the Irish community.

They were very grateful to Kevin Morrissey, who volunteered to help.

Research was ongoing at the time by Friends of Toowong Cemetery on the history of the young man in the grave, and so far it is a very sad story.

According to the research undertaken by Darcy Maddock, Bentinck Yelverton Bingham was born in Galway when he was just 20 years old. He was notified of an inheritance and went home to Ireland, then came back to Queensland with money. He invested in property but was ripped off and became mentally disturbed. He ended up in an asylum in the year he died, aged 36. The

headstone was erected by his brother and sister.

Work undertaken on the grave included cleaning, painting the railings and putting down artificial grass.

The grave was included in Queensland Irish Association's Irish history tour of the cemetery, in association with Friends of Toowong Cemetery, as part of their St Patrick's Day 2024 celebrations.

This guided walk and fascinating talk spoke of the lives of the prominent Irish people buried in the cemetery as participants visited their grave sites. The tour will take place on Sunday, 10th March at 10am. An Irish flag flew at the flagpole at the cemetery's entrance on the day.



A horse kicking off Finnegan's Wake in O'Shanleys, Clifton, Queensland. Pictures: Irish Queenslander

# Clifton locals enjoy horsing around at Finnegan's Wake

Now here's a tale that was as lively as the horse that walked into a bar!

Clifton in the Darling Downs, Queensland, set the stage for the quirky and whimsical Finnegan's Wake parade on Saturday, 2nd March, 2024.

Finnegan, the star of the show, was paraded through the town in his coffin. The procession included characters like the Pope, Saint Patrick, Weeping Widow, and

the nuns, creating a spectacle that was both good fun and bewildering. As if that wasn't enough, there may even have been a horse strolling into O'Shanley's Irish Pub for a drink – because why should humans have all the fun?

Inspired by James Joyce's prose work, this annual event made its debut at the historic 120-year-old pub in 2003. The story revolves around Timothy Finnegan, a cantankerous fellow known for

attending every wake, even though he wasn't invited to. Not wanting to miss out on the ultimate party – his own wake – Finnegan decided to throw one while he was still alive.

The parade itself was a lively re-enactment of the wake, with Finnegan enjoying a few drinks in his coffin as he was paraded through the town. Everyone was invited to join in the revelry by dressing in the spirit of the day to be en-

tered into a draw for a \$50 voucher. The festivities kicked off at 12pm with the parade making its way up Clifton's main street, culminating in a grand finale at O'Shanley's.

The day was filled with Irish entertainment, delectable food and drink, and endless fun.

With Guinness, Kilkenny, and craic flowing all day long, Finnegan's Wake promised an experience that was as spirited as the town itself.



# Australia has days and knights of St George fun!

Saint George's Day 2024 celebrations saw knights, dragons, and Morris dancers entertaining while attendees enjoyed traditional English food and ale.

The Fox and Hounds on the Gold Coast held a special St George's Day on April 20th, telling the tale of St George and the dragon, with live knights fighting over a princess.

After the battle, all joined in a feast to St George with live entertainment by Belswagger Morris dancers.

Also in Queensland, Bacchus Brewing Co. in Capalaba had a St George's Day English Beerfest weekend on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st April. In association with Sussex brewery Harvey's of Lewis, they poured four of their finest award-winning ales, alongside other favorite English-style brews, all served with an authentic English Ploughman's Lunch. The annual event also saw London Spuds food truck pay a visit on the Sunday.

Kings Creek Vineyard in Balnarring, Victoria, had a fun-filled afternoon to celebrate all things English, with live music by Paul Dillon. Fabulous food from Rob the British Butcher was cooked on the BBQ, including his amazing sausages, burgers, and black pudding, plus delicious scones from Yvette at These Scones.

Fun events on the day included a British Bake Off.

In Western Australia, on April 23rd, The Woodvale Tavern celebrated St George's Day with English food and drink specials. The day featured live acoustic music from Duke Vox, giveaways, and a raffle for an English hamper.

Staying in WA, there was a St George's Day British Chippy Long Table and Bottomless Stella celebration at Peel Alehouse in Halls Head



**St George's medieval banquet knights battle and Morris dancers will be at Fox & Hounds, Wongawallan, Queensland on Saturday, 20th April. Picture: Supplied**

on Tuesday, 23rd April.

The traditional British Chippy themed long table had two hours of bottomless battered fish, crispy chips, mushy peas, curry sauce, pickled onions, and more!

In Perth, St George's Cathedral planned a Big Cathedral Lunch, and everyone was invited. The lunch was on Sunday, April 21st after the 10am Choral Eucharist with Bishop David Bassett.

On April 21st, St George's Day at The Lizzie in Perth featured medieval fighters, live music, Sunday roast, outdoor games, and a costume competition. That was at The Last Drop Elizabethan in Bedforddale from 11.30am.

Staying in WA, The Duke Bar and Bistro in Carramar had a big weekend of St

George's Day celebrations on Saturday, 20th, and Sunday 21st April. On Saturday, there was a 21Robbie Vs Ed Sheeran Tribute in the Sports Bar from 9pm. There were traditional English food and drink specials all day. On Sunday, there was an English garden party, Sunday roast,



**Marlee Morris in action in Perth. Picture: Supplied**

## WHO WAS ST GEORGE?

Saint George was a Roman soldier who defied Emperor Diocletian's persecution of Christians.

He is famous for slaying a dragon to rescue a princess.

Saint George is the patron saint of various nations, including England.

He was martyred for his Christian faith around the year 303 AD.

Despite torture and imprisonment, he remained steadfast in his beliefs and was executed by decapitation.

The St George's Cross forms the national flag of England.

There has been renewed interest in reviving St George's Day as a national holiday in England.

and a la carte menu, plus Marlee Morris danced from 3pm. There was also live acoustic music from Mark Stone, and traditional English food and drink specials.

Marlee Morris danced at King Park in Perth on April 21st to celebrate St George's Day as part of the Boorloo Heritage Festival. Attendees watched them in action from 10am.



# May Day celebrations are changing with the seasons

As the British Isles welcomed summer with dancing around the Maypole and fire festivals, Australia also marked May Day with both Anglo and Celtic traditions.

Dancing around the Maypole, a traditional folk dance dating back centuries and associated with English May Day celebrations, was observed. It is believed to have ancient pagan roots linked to fertility rituals. The Maypole, typically a tall wooden pole decorated with ribbons, flowers, and greenery, symbolises the renewal of life and the awakening of nature after winter.

The dance itself involves participants, often young men and women, weaving in and out around the Maypole, each holding onto a ribbon attached to the top of the pole. As they move in opposite directions, the ribbons became intertwined, creating intricate patterns on the pole.

Once a common practice in Australia, Maypole dancing has largely died out. One of the last Maypoles left standing in Australia is at the New South Wales (NSW) Schoolhouse Museum of Public Education in North Ryde.

Gaye Braiding, Education Officer at the museum, told Anglo&Celtic: "We use a reproduction Maypole for our education program made from some re-purposed materials. To our knowledge, maypole dancing ceased as an activity in NSW public schools probably around the early 1980s. Prior to that, there were booklets issued to teachers with instructions on the dances and weaving of ribbons.

"From the photographs we have seen, the 'hey-day' of maypole dancing in NSW public schools, and community events involving schools, seems to be between about 1870 and the 1940s."

Westbury in Tasmania also



**Belswagger Morris in action with their travelling Maypole in Marburg, Queensland. Picture: [Facebook/belswagger](https://www.facebook.com/belswagger)**

has a Maypole. It is a permanent structure on the village green. The local school children dance around the Maypole during St Patrick's Day celebrations.

While May Day is widely celebrated across England with Maypole dancing and the crowning of the Queen of May, the practice is not as common in the Celtic nations. But one village in Ireland bucks the trend.

The Queen of the May is practiced in the County Cork seaside village of Whitegate. The May Queen is a girl who rides or walks at the front of a parade on May Day. She wears a white gown to symbolise purity and often has a crown of flowers.

In Whitegate, young girls go 'garlanding,' or flower-gathering, in preparation

for their Queen of the May procession, which takes place on the first Sunday in May. The tradition is thought to have been brought by British soldiers who were stationed at nearby Fort Carlisle in the 1800s.

At Whitegate National



**Teachers embracing the Maypole at New South Wales Schoolhouse Museum. Picture: [X@SchoolhouseMus](https://twitter.com/SchoolhouseMus)**

School, girls gather wildflowers to decorate the May bough, a mature, horseshoe-based briar and a traditional centerpiece for the parade. The May Queen, chosen from the previous year's First Communion class, leads a procession through the village in her Communion dress, followed by local schoolgirls. They sing May songs and collect donations.

While the worship of the Goddess of Summer is at the root of the old May-time rituals, in Ireland, this evolved into Catholic Marian processions and May altars filled with flowers to worship Mary.

Now, ancient Celtic pagan festivals such as Beltane (Scotland, Isle of Man), Calan Mai (Wales), and Bealtaine (Ireland) are enjoying a resurgence.

Beltane is associated with the Celtic God of fire, light, and the sun, Bel. Fires are an important custom at Beltane and people would leap over them to ensure their fertility.

Bealtaine was celebrated in the Irish communities in both Sydney and Brisbane in April and May 2024. Morris sides danced up the sun across the country.

Beltane Fire Festival at Rocky Creek Camp Grounds in Beerwah, Queensland, will be held in November 2024. Celebrations will include a fire ceremony and Maypole.

# English Ale brings old traditions to new lands

The English Ale is a unique seasonal gathering that takes place in the picturesque Adelaide hills town of Mylor every May. It is an autumn gathering celebrating the village customs and ritual traditions from the UK that occur within the seasonal wheel of the year.

The event acknowledges the end of the hot dry summer and the fire season and moving into the 'greener' time of the year. The first of the winter rains has arrived and the land that was so parched and dry is now coming back to life.

Jack In The Green has returned.

The leafy faces of green men peek out from behind the trees as King George and his mummers players ring their bell to summon all to gather. A bonfire is built with a wicker man waiting to light the night. Masked guisers in rag coats beat their drums to lead the procession along the path while Morris dancers with their bells, sticks and hankies accompany the giants, Petal, Rufus, and the Mari Llwyd, to watch the lighting of a ritual fire.

All are invited to join in for a day and night of music, mumming, merriment, dance, giants, hobby horses and guisers. Wear a mask and take part in the torchlight procession to the bonfire!

South Australia has officially started winter, the storms have blown in, and red and orange leaves have been snatched from the branches of the European trees by icy southern winds and are laying in slushy pools on the ground. Leaves are glistening on the eucalyptus trees in the chill, misty mornings and the kookaburras are waking people later.

Adrienne Piggot, director of the English Ale, explains: "I am obsessed with the seasons and the customs and traditions that herald the turning of the wheel. I think this is because of my being of northern hemisphere ancestry. I yearn to connect to those seasonal traditions that



Guiser performing music



The Mari Llwyd



Guisers

are being celebrated at this time of the year but, of course, can't because we are topsy turvy. It would be wrong, wouldn't it, to mess with ancient customs at an incorrect time of the year?"

The English Ale is attended by many magical creatures: pageant giants, hobby horses, Mari Llwyds, hooden horses, Jack In The Green, guisers and dancing monsters. All of these characters come from various village calendar customs from around Great Britain and now find themselves adapting and settling into life in the Australian festival landscape.

## Jack In The Green

Jack is the green man of the woods, a figure who is covered in greenery who cavorts in the spring. A dancer carries him along the procession route, accompanied by other dancers, musicians, and general revelry. Traditionally, Jack is 'killed' in a ceremony that releases the spirit of summer. However, at The English Ale, they don't kill their Jack because they don't want to mess with the seasons, so he is put to bed in the forest after the Ale to await Australia's spring in September.

## Hobby Horses, Hooden Horses and Dragons

These are costumed characters that feature in traditional seasonal customs, processions, and similar observances around the world. They are particularly associated with May Day celebrations, mummers' plays and the Morris dance in England. They are beasts who make merry but may also wreak chaos and mayhem. May here is our Samhain time, but the hobbies still like to pull unsuspecting revelers under their skirts no matter what the time of year!

## The Mari Llwyd

Mari is an ancient pre-Christian tradition which takes place in parts of Wales during the time of Samhain and the winter fes-



English Ale Procession and, below, Hot For Joe Morris dancers. Pictures: Jlayuan Liang/Supplied

five season in which a horse's skull is draped in bells and ribbons. Each year, the Mari Lwyd is taken from house to house asking for entry via song. The name Mari Lwyd translates as Grey Mare or Grey Mary. Thought to have originated from Celtic mythology, the pale horse is known to be able to pass to the underworld. She is perfect for The English Ale as the veil is thinning and the ancestors are close by.

#### Guisers

The ancient tradition of guising goes back centuries in Scotland and Ireland. Guising derives from the word disguise. The tradition of guising, going house to house at Halloween and putting on a small performance to be

rewarded with food or treats, goes back at least as far as the 16th century, as does the tradition of people wearing costumes at Halloween. It was believed that, by disguising themselves, they would blend in with any wandering spirits and remain safe from harm. The English Ale guisers carry the flaming torches in the procession and enjoy a bit of mischief and mayhem.

#### Morris Dancers

Hot for Joe are an Adelaide women's Morris team dancing 'Border' Morris, a dance tradition from the border counties of England along the Welsh border. Border dancing is considered a winter tradition. Hot For Joe presents a highly styled, unique form of Morris

dancing focusing on precise, energetic and dramatic dancing. It is an inspiring, modern interpretation of an ancient dance tradition.

#### Pageant Giants

Dancing or pageant giants are folkloric manifestations, larger than life characters that parade along with hobby horses and Jack In The Green, a seasonal figure commonly seen at folk rituals and seasonal events. The English Ale's giants are 'Petal', named after Helen 'The Petal' Lyons, and Rufus of the Wildwood.

#### The Wicker Man

A wicker man is part of a seasonal festival and is burnt specifically for the celebration of a fire feast or at harvest time. The English

Ale's wicker man is lit after the torchlight procession and Druid peace ceremony, a ritual where they acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where they gather, the Peramangk people, and call for peace. It is a call to put aside conflict and come together to celebrate the turning of the season on Mother Earth!

- The English Ale 2024 was held in the picturesque Adelaide hills village of Mylor, South Australia on Saturday, 18th May, from 12pm to late at night.

There was food and drink available, including cider, whisky bar and food trucks.

Party goers dressed up in greenery, finery, magical costumes and some wore masks.

Everyone was invited to join in the magic that is the English Ale!

More information on the English Ale is available at [www.theenglishale.org](http://www.theenglishale.org).



## 2025 DATE

The English Ale will return on Saturday, 17th May, 2025. Follow them on Facebook at [Facebook.com/TheEnglishAle](https://www.facebook.com/TheEnglishAle).

# Discover the magic of the Australian Celtic Festival

In the lush hills of Glen Innes, where the standing stones stand sentinel, a vibrant celebration took place. From May 2nd to 5th, 2024, the air thrummed with the spirit of the Celts as the 32nd annual Australian Celtic Festival unfolded.

The annual festival in New South Wales, thwarted only once in 32 years in 2020 due to Covid restrictions, returned with renewed vigour, ready to do justice to Ireland and the Isle of Man.

The weekend was brimming with talent and tradition. Special guests from the Emerald Isle and the Isle of Man graced the stages, their melodies weaving tales of old. From the haunting strains of Gerry O'Connor's fiddle to the enchanting harmonies of Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe and Daniel Quayle, the festival was a feast for the senses.

But it wasn't just the headliners that dazzled; local artists added their own flair to the mix. Irish and Highland dance troupes, whose nimble feet told stories of love, loss, and triumph, also performed.

For aspiring bards and minstrels, the busking competition beckoned. Participants took to the streets of Glen Innes and let their talents shine. Wee ones had their own corner of the festival in the Celtic Kids Marquee.



Clans on the march among the standing stones at the Australian Celtic Festival. Pictures: Anglo&Celtic

For the gastronomes, the Celtic Food Trail beckoned. From the humble pub to the finest restaurant, attendees indulged in Celtic-inspired dishes that tantalised their taste buds and warmed their souls. The Celtic Kitchen Marquee was a highlight, where culinary wizards conjured delights before the eyes of festival-goers.

Unfortunately, due to heavy rain overnight, several

changes had to be made to day two of the festival. Music performances were relocated to the Glen Innes Services Club. Festival ceremonies were moved to the Glen Innes Town Hall. Some dancers and singers performed outside the Glen Innes Town Hall, and some stallholders continued operating at the festival site.

Despite the weather-induced changes, the festival

continued to celebrate Celtic culture with enthusiasm and spirit.

## 2025 DATE

The 33rd Australian Celtic Festival, on 3rd and 4th May 2025, will highlight the Celtic nations of Brittany, Cornwall and Wales.



# Glen Innes shows its autumn colours for Celtic festival



Autumn foliage and street scenes in Glen Innes. Pictures: Anglo&Celtic



# Mutiny to unity for Isle of Man and Norfolk Island

If you visit Australia's external territory of Norfolk Island in July, you may be surprised to find the flag of the Isle of Man proudly flying outside its Centre for Democracy.

This picturesque island in the Pacific Ocean has been recognising the Isle of Man's national day, Tynwald Day, on July 5th every year since 2011. The two islands share historical ties dating back to the mutiny on the Bounty.

The mutiny on the Bounty occurred in 1789 on the British Royal Navy vessel HMS Bounty, commanded by Lieutenant William Bligh. The ship was on a mission to transport breadfruit plants from Tahiti to the Caribbean. Led by Fletcher Christian, a group of mutineers seized control of the ship and set Bligh and 18 loyalists adrift in a small boat, after which the mutineers sailed back to Tahiti.

Fletcher Christian and a small group of mutineers, along with Tahitian men and women, then sailed to Pitcairn Island, chosen for its remoteness and inaccurate maps that would make it difficult for the British Navy to find them. The mutineers burned the Bounty to avoid detection, and their descendants still live on Pitcairn Island today.

In 1856, due to overpopulation on Pitcairn Island, the British government relocated residents to Norfolk Island, which had previously been used as a penal colony. Today, many of Norfolk Island's inhabitants are direct descendants of the Bounty mutineers.

The Isle of Man connection comes from Fletcher Christian's heritage. Fletcher Christian was born in Cumberland, England, but his family had Manx roots. His mother, Ann Dixon, was from the Isle of Man. Additionally, in 1781, William Bligh



**Bounty Day on Norfolk Island, where the islanders give thanks for the arrival of the descendants of the HMS Bounty to their island, top. The Manx flag flying outside the Centre for Democracy on Norfolk Island, above left, and, above right, the Norfolk Island flag hanging outside the Legislative Buildings in Douglas, Isle of Man. Pictures: [Norfolk Island Tourism](https://www.norfolkislandtourism.com), [Tynwald.org.im](https://www.tynwald.org.im) and [Facebook/BallasallaVillage](https://www.facebook.com/BallasallaVillage)**

married Elizabeth "Betsy" Betham, whose family lived on the Isle of Man.

On July 5th, 2011, a Cultural Agreement acknowledging the common ties of family and culture between the Isle of Man and Norfolk Island was signed on Tynwald Day by the then President of Tynwald and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Norfolk Island. A framed copy of the cultural agreement continues to be proudly displayed on Norfolk Island in the Centre for Democracy.

Every June 8th, Norfolk Island celebrates Bounty Day in memory of the arrival in 1856 of the Pitcairn Islanders. Central to the celebrations is the re-enactment of

the landing of the 194 men, women, and children at the capital's Kingston Pier. In 2013, links between the Isle of Man and Norfolk Island were strengthened when the then President of Tynwald, the Hon Clare Christian, was a guest of the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly for the Bounty Day celebrations.

In her speech, Hon Clare Christian referred to the "truly rich tapestries" of the two islands' histories which were "interwoven through the fortunes of the Bounty mutineers." She continued: "Our islands share not only those slender but powerful strands of DNA which bind us together but also those characteristics of community pride

and resilience which come from being islanders."

Every year on Tynwald Day, Norfolk Island's Council of Elders sends a message to the President of Tynwald to recognise the ties between the two small islands.

The message in 2023 stated: "The Isle of Man flag has been flying outside the Norfolk Island Centre for Democracy as a testament to the strong bonds forged between our two islands through our shared history. Warmest best wishes have been conveyed on behalf of the Council of Elders of Norfolk Island and the Norfolk Island People to the people of the Isle of Man as they commemorate their National Day this month."



Celtic Psychosis and friends enjoying themselves at Scots In The Bush festival. Picture: Celtic Psychosis

# Celtic shenanigans aplenty as Scots go bush in Boondooma

A wild and uproarious celebration of all things Celtic took place every year at the Scots in the Bush festival in 2023. From August 16th to 20th, Boondooma Homestead in South Burnett, Queensland, a heritage-listed complex built in the 1850s, was transformed into a Celtic extravaganza. The homestead was the centre of the original Boondooma Station, which was settled in 1846 by three young Scotsmen, and the festival was held in their honour.

There was a rollicking good time as the festival showcased an incredible line-up of performers who rocked their tartan socks off!

Tom Kimmert serenaded visitors with his soul-stirring melodies, Ishka brought the

thunder with their infectious rhythms, and the fabulous Dr Heather Clark led a lively ceilidh.

Darrel Craft, Murrumba Pipes & Drums, Noosa Pipe Band, Mouldy Haggis, Vince Pagett, Toowoomba Caledonian Society Pipe Band, Moreton Celtic Fiddle Club, Australian Celtic Women, Brian Letton, David Rowan, Hervey Bay Pipe Band, Rum City Dancers, and Aimee Robertson Dancers kept the party going for four days. And the dynamic duo of Merv Webster and Clarrie Weller were the cheery comperes.

While at the festival, visitors took a break from dancing a Highland fling to enjoy some delectable Scottish delicacies. Yes, there may

have been Mouldy Haggis on the stage, but they also had the real thing, mould-free, and Tony Coombes did the Address to the Haggis. Many festival-goers even volunteered to eat the stuff.

But don't worry, there were traditional treats too that made attendees' taste buds do the Highland fling.

The Scots in the Bush festival is the perfect chance to create memories to last a lifetime.

## 2024 DATE

14 - 18 AUG  
Boondooma QLD  
Tickets from  
[www.boondoomahomestead.org.au](http://www.boondoomahomestead.org.au)

## AT A GLANCE

- Scots in the Bush is a Scottish and Celtic festival held at a heritage-listed homestead in Queensland.
- There were performances by renowned artists including Tom Kimmert, Ishka, Dr Heather Clark, Murrumba Pipes & Drums, among others.
- The festival took place over four days, so visitors could settle in and enjoy. Many brought their tent, trailer, or caravan.
- In 2023, it took place from August 16th to 20th.

# James Joyce celebrations blooming across country



Bloomsday, celebrated on June 16th, is a vibrant homage to James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* that captivates literature enthusiasts worldwide. *Ulysses* is set in Dublin on a single day, June 16, 1904, and the story follows the experiences of three main characters: Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, and Molly Bloom.

Leopold Bloom, a Jewish advertisement salesman, navigated the streets of Dublin, encountering various people and situations. Stephen Dedalus, an aspiring writer and a fictional alter ego of Joyce, embarked on a personal and intellectual journey through

out the day. Molly Bloom, Leopold's wife, concluded the novel with a famous and sensual soliloquy known as "Molly's monologue." *Ulysses* is celebrated for its richly layered narrative, dense symbolism, and innovative literary techniques. It is considered one of the most influential and challenging works of modernist literature.

In 2024, the Bloomsday festivities unfolded in Dublin, where the streets came alive with the spirit of the book. People dressed in Edwardian-era attire traversed the landmarks mentioned in the novel, immersing themselves in its early 20th-century

setting. Readings, performances, and discussions took place throughout the day, transporting listeners into the lives and thoughts of the book's characters. The celebrations extended beyond Dublin's borders, with events held in cities around the world, uniting Joyce enthusiasts globally, such as the Queensland Irish Association's event on Queen Street Mall in Brisbane.

In Canberra, at the Irish Club in Weston, The Irish Community Players presented an original play based on the first Bloomsday established by four Irishmen in 1954. Called *The First Bloomsday*, it

was shown on Sunday, June 16th.

Bloomsday in 2024 was more than a literary festival; it celebrated Irish culture and identity. Through Joyce's work, participants delved into Dublin's history, social fabric, and vibrant personality. The day invited everyone to engage with the novel on their own terms, offering public readings, music, street theatre, and culinary experiences inspired by the book. Bloomsday's international appeal showcased the enduring power of literature to connect people across cultures and time.

Bloomsday has become a cultural phenomenon that showcases the enduring power of literature to bring people together and ignite the imagination. It is a celebration of artistic expression, intellectual exploration, and the beauty of Dublin. Each year, as June 16th approaches, anticipation builds among Joyce enthusiasts worldwide, eager to participate in this extraordinary event and pay tribute to one of the greatest literary works of the 20th century.



Bloomsday in Brisbane 2023 celebrations. Pictures: Tony Robinson / Queensland Irish Association



# Saddle up for Scottish fun at Clydesdale Spectacular

The Scenic Rim Clydesdale Spectacular, the richest Clydesdale show in the southern hemisphere, was held in June 2024 in beautiful Boonah, Queensland. It showcased the gentle giants of the horse world – majestic Clydesdales – recognised in Australia as ‘the breed that built the nation’.

Over two action-packed days, a full programme of Clydesdale competitions took place in the main arena at the Boonah Showground, including led, carriage, and harness classes. The programme also featured rare trades demonstrations focusing on “the heavy horse” – harness making, blacksmithing, wheelwrights, carriage rides, and whip plaiting. Additional highlights included the Queensland Whip Cracking Championships, the World Billy Boiling Championships, wood chopping, working dog displays, Friesian Horse Troupe performances, and bush poetry.

In tribute to the Scottish descendants who moved to the region and brought with them their beloved Clydesdale breed, the event included Pipes and Drums, Calling of the Clans, the Clydesdale and Clan class, and traditional Scottish caber tossing.



Scottish heritage will be on display at the Clydesdale Spectacular in Boonah, Queensland. Pictures: [Facebook.com/clydespectacular](https://www.facebook.com/clydespectacular)

There were whisky, haggis burgers, and more, with Scots encouraged to attend in their clan kilts.

Scottish pipes and drums bands played throughout both days, lending a colourful atmosphere to this fabulous event, with every performance proclaiming the Scottish ancestry of the Scenic Rim. The Amberley

Pipes & Drums and the Warwick Thistle Pipe Bands were faithful regulars, with other guest bands appearing. The Warwick Thistle Pipe Band even played inside the ferris wheel! The Scottish Caber Toss was a popular crowd highlight at the show, with all comers welcome to test their strength and accuracy.

The 2024 Clydesdale

Spectacular was held on June 15th and 16th at Boonah Showgrounds.

## 2025 DATE

The 2025 Clydesdale Spectacular will be held on June 14th and 15th at Boonah Showgrounds. Details at [clydesdalespectacular.com.au](https://clydesdalespectacular.com.au)



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