

# IRELAND NEWS

Consulate of Ireland Newsletter for U.S. Southwest

## FÁILTE



### Fáilte – Welcome!

I was delighted to join Irish communities and tens of thousands of other friends of Ireland at St. Patrick's events in March. On 17/18 March I attended wonderful parades in Kansas City and San Antonio – thank you to the organisers and teams of volunteers of who made St. Patrick's 2017 such an amazing success (see pages 2-6 for photos of many St. Patrick's events). My thanks also to Irish communities across Texas and the southwest who 'greened' more buildings and landmarks than ever before during St. Patrick's week (see more on page 4).

I hope that you enjoy this edition of the newsletter – we'd love to hear from you, especially if there are items for your area which you would like included in a future edition.

Looking forward to seeing you again soon!

Is mise le meas,

Adrian Farrell  
Consul General

### Renewing your passport? Renew online!

Click on the photo below for more



### Ireland's population reaches 4,761,865!

See the new Census data by clicking on the photo

**census**  
**2016**  
**RESULTS**

# RECENT EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

## St. Patrick's Week Celebrations

Parades and celebrations took place in Albuquerque, Austin, Baton Rouge, Denver, Houston, Little Rock, and many other cities. Many thanks to the volunteers who put in the many hours of effort to support St Patrick's Day across the region!



CG Farrell with Kansas City Mayor Sly James



A literal St. Patrick's Day Parade 'float' on the green river in San Antonio, TX



St. Patrick's Day parade in Houston, TX



50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Harp and Shamrock Society's wreath laying ceremony at the Alamo in San Antonio, TX



Honorary Consul Jim Lyons served as the Grand Marshal of the Denver St. Patrick's Day parade



Honorary Consul John Kane being honoured as Irish Person of the Year in Houston, TX



St. Patrick's Day parade in Little Rock, AR



Young performers at the St. Patrick's Day parade in Kansas City



St. Patrick's Day community reception in Austin, TX



Minister Pat Breen speaks to attendees at a St. Patrick's Day reception at St. Thomas University in Houston, TX

# 2017 Greenings Campaign

This year, Tourism Ireland and Irish communities around the globe helped turn the world green for St. Patrick's Day. There were a total of 299 greenings in 45 countries, the most ever in one year! The US southwest was well represented with greenings in Austin, Albuquerque, Cedar Park, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Kansas City, Little Rock, and San Antonio.

Many thanks to all who made these greenings happen in 2017, and we look forward to adding even more next year!



Cedar Park, TX



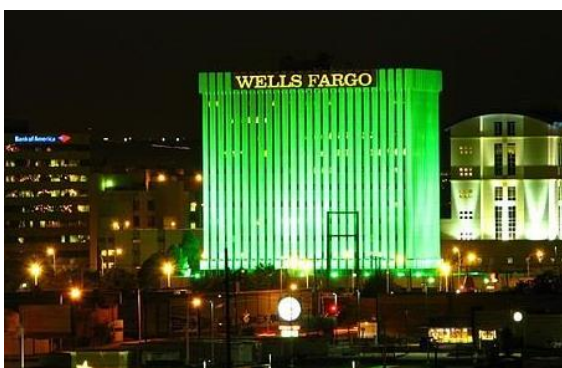
Little Rock, AR (photograph: Brian Emfinger)



Austin, TX



Denver, CO



Albuquerque, NM



Dallas, TX

# Ireland thanks Choctaw Nation

In March of 1847, members of the Choctaw heard about the horrors of the Irish Famine on the other side of the Atlantic. In a gesture of great humanity, the Choctaw people collected and donated funds to help feed Irish Famine victims. Ireland remembers this act of generosity with immense gratitude. On March 16, Irish Government Minister Pat Breen met with Choctaw Assistant Chief Jack Austin to commemorate the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Choctaw Nation's kindness and expressed the deep appreciation of the Irish people. Gary Batton, chief of the Choctaw Nation, joined the meeting remotely. We are delighted that the Choctaw will be making a trip to Ireland next month.



# Minister Pat Breen Visits TX/OK

The Consulate hosted Irish Minister for Employment and Small Business, Pat Breen T.D., for a visit to Texas and Oklahoma during St. Patrick's week. Minister Breen had a busy programme that included multiple engagements during South by Southwest interactive in Austin. The Minister also attended the reading of a Proclamation celebrating Ireland's unique historic relations with Texas at the Texas State Legislature and joined Austin's Irish community for a St. Patrick's week reception. Minister Breen then travelled to Houston to promote Irish trade and investment. He met with officials in NASA and clients of Irish firm Combilift. That evening he spoke at the Irish Network Houston's inaugural event celebrating Irish businesspeople in Houston before celebrating St. Patrick's week with Houston's Irish community. Many thanks to Lori Gallagher and her team at the University of St. Thomas for supporting these events. The Minister also travelled to Oklahoma City to meet with Governor Mary Fallin.



# North Texas Irish Festival

This year the North Texas Irish Festival in Dallas celebrated 35 years of bringing great Irish music, culture, dance, and storytelling to Dallas and beyond. This year's line-up included some of the best new Irish music acts including the Elders, the High Kings and We Banjo 3. Congratulations to NTIF President Sheri Bush, Treasurer Sandi Hebley, and Vicki Hicks (pictured below with CG Farrell)





## EU Ambassador to US and Mayor Adler visit Consulate

As part of the St. Patrick's week programme, the Consulate, Enterprise Ireland, and IDA hosted a business breakfast with Minister Pat Breen, European Union Ambassador to the US David O'Sullivan, and Austin Mayor Steve Adler at the Consulate in Austin.



## New President of ICSA, Little Rock

Congratulations to Eimear Fuller, the new President of the Irish Cultural Society of Arkansas (ICSA). Eimear has served as Vice President of the ICSA for the past four years and is the longtime Co-Chair of the Little Rock St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee. Many thanks to outgoing President Jim Doyle for his promotion of Ireland and Irish culture in Arkansas over many years. Go raibh maith agat Jim!



## Notre Dame Club of Austin

On April 6, the Consulate hosted the Notre Dame Club of Austin for a lecture by Consul General Farrell on Ireland today. Thanks to Andrew Barlow and all those who attended for a fantastic event!



## Irish Network Welcomes UT Students

On April 20, the Austin Irish Network welcomed students from The University of Texas who are preparing for a programme abroad in Ireland. The students were able to speak with members of the Irish community about Irish culture and daily life in preparation of their trip. If you know of students in your city/state who are planning to visit Ireland let us know - we would be delighted to support schools/colleges preparing to visit Ireland.



## El Paso

On April 24 and 25, Consul General Farrell visited El Paso, for meetings with Mayor Leeser, County Judge Veronica Escobar, Bob Moore Editor of the El Paso Times, Robby Gray of El Paso Inc., the El Paso World Affairs Council, students from the El Paso Leadership Academy, representatives from Prudential, and Mexican Consul General Marcos Bucio Mújica. Many thanks to Marcos Delgado of Borderplex Alliance for his assistance throughout the visit.



## Global Irish Civic Forum, Dublin

We are delighted that delegates from our region, including the Kansas City Irish Center, attended the annual Global Irish Civic Forum in Dublin this year. The Forum is an opportunity for those supporting the Irish diaspora abroad to gather in Dublin to discuss their work and share ideas. Over 200 individuals supporting 150 different organisations from around the world attended the two-day event. More info can be found [here](#).

# The Consulate is Hiring!

The Consulate is seeking a dynamic and highly-motivated officer for the position of Senior Attaché to promote and represent Ireland regionally. For more information please visit [our website](#).



Consulate General of Ireland, Austin  
Ard-Chonsalacht na hÉireann, Austin



# Photo Diary



Minister Pat Breen at SXSW in Austin, TX with Irish start-up Girl Crew founder Pamela Newenham



CG Farrell with Texas Governor Greg Abbott



CG Farrell with new Texas Secretary of State Rolando Pablos



Irish Network Houston Fireside Chat event with host Paul Deane and Houston-based Irish businessmen Liam Mallon and Shay Curran



Trinity College Chief Librarian Helen Shelton speaks at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, TX



Annual AOH Stew Cook-Off in Austin, TX



CG Farrell and Ralph Jung with Irish author Colm Tobin



Kansas City American Conference for Irish Studies



James Joyce Society of Austin studying *Finnegan's Wake* at the Consulate



"Darkness Into Light" event in Austin, TX to raise awareness and funds to fight suicide



CG Farrell with Irish actress Kate O'Toole, celebrating the acquisition of her father's archive at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin



Tourism Ireland event in Austin, TX

## News from Ireland

An estimated half million people lined the streets of **Dublin for the [2017 St. Patrick's Day Parade](#)**. The 2017 Grand Marshal was Irish sailor and Olympic silver medalist Annalise Murphy. To see how St. Patrick's Day was celebrated in Ireland and around the world check out [RTÉ News coverage](#).

During his St. Patrick's Day visit to Washington D.C. **Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. met with the President, Vice President, Speaker Ryan, Senate Minority Leader** and business leaders and participated in a range of major events including the White House Reception, Vice President's Breakfast and speaker's lunch. Check out the speeches from the White House reception on [YouTube](#) or in [print](#).

During his St. Patrick's Day visit to the U.S., **Taoiseach Enda Kenny launched the new [Ireland.ie](#) portal**, an initiative of the five-year [Creative Ireland Programme](#) which places culture and creativity at the centre of public policy. Also recently announced were details of Cruinniú na Cásca, a national day of culture and creativity, which will take place on Easter Monday in Dublin and in every county nationwide.

**[Culture Ireland](#) announced funding of almost €700,000 to Irish artists to present their work worldwide.**

Among these, award winning quartet [Jigjam](#) will perform in Wilkesboro, NC, singer [Roisin O'Reilly](#) will perform in Nashville and Atlanta, and [Stoney Road Press](#) will show in Miami's INK Art Fair. Stay tuned for dates.

Ireland's **priorities for the negotiations on the UK's exit from the European Union were reflected in the official guidelines adopted by the European Council** on Saturday, April 29th. These priorities are to support and protect the achievements, benefits and commitments of the Peace Process, to avoid a hard border and to protect the Common Travel Area. The guidelines recognise that, in line with the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, if a majority of people in both Northern Ireland and Ireland were to vote for a united Ireland, the entire territory of such a united Ireland would legally be part of the European Union. View the Taoiseach's live comments after the European Council on his [twitter](#) account or read Minister Flanagan's [statement](#).

In **[remarks at a conference on Brexit](#)** at Dublin City University, Minister Flanagan anticipated complex but constructive Brexit negotiations.

This year the **European Union (EU) marked the 60th anniversary of its foundation with a [Declaration](#) that was jointly issued from Rome by the leaders of member states**, the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission reaffirming their commitment to a "Union that is safe and secure, prosperous, competitive, sustainable and socially responsible, and with the will and capacity of playing a key role in the world and of shaping globalisation."

**Ireland's economy is continuing to grow** despite a challenging regional and global environment. The economy expanded 5.2% in 2016, and the unemployment rate has fallen below 6.6%, down from a peak of over 15% in 2012.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan has launched the new **[Online Passport Application Service](#)**, which will allow citizens over 18 years of age to process passport renewals speedily online.

The Taoiseach announced that the Government has decided to hold a **[referendum](#) to amend the Constitution to allow Irish citizens resident outside the State**, including in Northern Ireland, to vote in Irish presidential elections.

In a **[statement of condolence](#) on the death of Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness**, a key architect of the Good Friday Agreement, the Taoiseach said "his passing represents a significant loss, not only to politics in Northern Ireland but to the wider political landscape on this island and beyond."

## STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

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