

# Newsletter

Embassy of Ireland Monthly Newsletter | May 2018



## Green Lines

By Ambassador Helena Nolan

Dear Friends,



*It's been a while since I had the chance to write a piece for the Newsletter but I've been meeting many of you at our embassy events and I hope that you have been enjoying them. A number of you have asked about copies of my speeches, so for those who would like them or who may have missed attending events, we are going to put these on our new [Embassy Website](#), which has had a revamp courtesy of HQ.*

*So, St Patrick's Day, or week really, what can I say! I was so honoured and pleased to represent you here and to be involved in my first SPD events as a Head of Mission. Seachtain na Gaeilge was ar fheabheas and created a great atmosphere and all of the SPD events themselves were so impressive, from the Irish food and drinks, to the traditional music and dance, to the promotion of Irish tourism and*

*Irish business; I was very proud to be Irish and to be representing Ireland, none more so than when I visited the beautiful town of Dinant, where the Mayor and the citizens had organised their own fabulous St Patrick's Day Festival, just because they love Ireland so much. It was a sunny but bitterly cold day and they had all sorts of stands and entertainment and refreshments and even a Cranberries tribute band with a singer that gave me goosebumps; one cool idea from there that I will certainly be trying out were the little shots of freshly made Irish coffee served in glass phials! Dressing the Manneken Pis was also a privilege and great fun and thanks to those who turned out in the cold to join in the ceremony, as well as walking in the parade beforehand, which I was honoured to view with the Mayor of Brussels, who had given up the morning of his birthday to be there - luckily he was a big rugby fan and an Irish supporter to boot! There were quite the celebrations at the famous Irish Ball that night.*



*After the SPD whirlwind I took a short break in Beirut and then it was back to action for the embassy team. First, I paid a visit to the Deputy Mayor and Governor of Bruges, to thank them for participating once again in the Global Greening. We had a record number of 10 greenings this year, including the enthusiastic Belgian Ambassador in Dublin who dressed up as a leprechaun and said we could count him in.*

*He and I were delighted to welcome Belgian Prime Minister Michel at Dublin Airport last week, on his first visit to Ireland, which included a visit to the border*

*region, a meeting with the Taoiseach and a briefing at Dublin Port. It was a very important and impactful visit and you may have seen the coverage in the Belgian media and on [our embassy Twitter](#) account, including lots of beautiful photos taken at the invisible border, which could not have looked more beautiful and more peaceful in the sparkling sunshine. The Prime Minister also enjoyed a pint with the Taoiseach in The Lincoln Inn and I believe they were planning a return visit to Belgium so we are looking forward to that. Of course, the Taoiseach was here in Belgium recently himself, when he gave the annual Martens Address and met wonderful students and staff at KU Leuven, which was another lovely occasion. I've had lots of firsts since coming here, and this year I attended my first Iris Festival at*



*the  
Brussels  
Parliament*

*on a scorching Saturday morning – no one told me that Brussels had a Mediterranean climate but it certainly feels that way lately and who's complaining!*

*One balmy Sunday evening I travelled over to Mechelen to hear the Irish Chamber Choir's magnificent performance at the end of a gala there and they were delighted with the warm reception from the local audience and with the warm weather. And I met The Late Late Show Owl in Mechelen...*





*It was very exciting to partner with the UN Regional Information Centre here to screen the film “The Queen of Ireland” and bring renowned LGBT advocate Rory O’Neill to Brussels to speak on a panel afterwards, together with our colleague Caroline Mellows from the Department of Justice & Equality. Rory is a strong supporter of the work of Irish Aid in places like Thailand, Vietnam, Mozambique and South Africa. We hope to work with UNRIC to bring more Irish film to Brussels, including hopefully “The Breadwinner” animated by Cartoon Saloon*

*from my home city of Kilkenny.*

*Our other great partners here are the Office of the NI Executive and this week, together with the British Embassy, we co-hosted a wonderful cultural appraisal and panel discussion of the twenty years since the GFA, through the prism of a new anthology of NI women’s writing “Female Lines”, which itself is an update of the ground-breaking original anthology “The Female Line” back in the 1980s. I was delighted to welcome the Co-Editor and 4 of these amazing women writers and thinkers here and I really enjoyed listening to their readings, their intellectual analysis, and their personal narratives, not to mention their great good humour.*

*In the midst of all this happiness and our commemoration of our peace process, this week also sadly saw a devastating attack and tragic loss of life in Liège and the Tánaiste has sent sincere condolences and expressed Ireland’s solidarity with the people of Belgium. We remind all our citizens, as you go about your business and enjoy your summer here, to remain vigilant, as we must all do everywhere these days, and to follow the advice of the local authorities and make sure you are registered with us here in the embassy, in case of an unfortunate incident.*





*I think one of the most beautiful experiences since I arrived here was the privilege of walking in the first Darkness Into Light here in Brussels, a truly amazing and humbling experience and all*



*credit due to the group of hard working and dedicated volunteers and to Commissioner Hogan as Patron, who created something so impressive and so important for these times, well done all, I am so proud of you and your achievement. I am also very proud of those committed young girls and boys turning out in all weather for their GAA training and, after first meeting them at the SPD Festival, I am looking forward to handing out lots more medals this Saturday. We are also looking forward to our first Bloomsday Brunch at the Embassy, brought to you by the formidable and lovely Irish branch of Femmes d'Europe, who work with such dedication to raise funds for niche projects to benefit women and girls, both in Ireland and in the developing world. These women are so impressive and virtually every cent raised goes to the projects, so we would really encourage you to support this event. Looking forward to seeing you*

*then and I can promise you the words and music of Joyce as well as some delicious treats!*

*It is also wonderful to be engaging with young people and the embassy has been pleased to host visiting students from the Waterford Institute of Technology and the UCD Sutherland School of Law to brief them on our work and to encourage them to consider a career in Brussels or in diplomacy.*

*Lastly, if you have some free time and are seeking inspiration, can I recommend you take the opportunity to see the first international showing of talented young artist Miriam Dowling at The Arthus Gallery, an exhibition I was delighted to launch and which transported me back to the beauty of the Irish landscape and childhood summer holidays.*

*The embassy has been engaged in lots of other interesting activities here, which I will try to share a bit more about next time, including some timely conferences hosted by Belgium on a range of multilateral issues, as they prepare, like us, to take up a seat on the UN Security Council. Until next time...*

## SAVE THE DATE



### Embassy of Ireland Book Club

6.06.2018 | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Join us on Wednesday 6 June for the 5th meeting of the Embassy of Ireland Book Club. The Book Club is reading books by contemporary Irish authors writing in English today, and meets every 6 weeks.

For the next meeting we will read the book ***The Trick to Time* by Kit De Waal.**

You can get a copy of the book in [Waterstones Brussels](#) – mention the Embassy of Ireland Book Club for a 10% discount!

We hope that you'll join us!  
Please register [here](#) to attend.



## Brussels Bloomsday Brunch

14.06.2018 | 12:00 PM - 14:00 PM

Embassy of Ireland, Rue Froissart 50, 1040 Brussels

**Bloomsday** is a commemoration and celebration of the life of Irish writer James Joyce, during which the events of his novel *Ulysses* (which is set on 16 June 1904; the hero of the novel is Leopold Bloom) are relived. Since 1924 Bloomsday has been observed annually in Dublin – it is now celebrated all over the world.

The event organised *by Femmes d'Europe* and hosted by Ambassador Helena Nolan, will consist of brunch (Irish breakfast), together with readings and music from Joyce.

Contact: Marian: marianconneely99@gmail.com 0476 40 20 79

Maura: maura.carroll@brutele.be 0477 28 57 62

Fiona: fiona.joyce@skynet.be 0476 31 02 33

Registration fee: 24 euro per person to be transferred to:

Association Femmes d'Europe: IBAN : BE 47310070819180

BIC BBRUBEBB mentioning Bloomsday Brunch

**Places are limited; payment by 8 June ensures the reservation**

*In aid of the projects funded by Femmes d'Europe 'Helping those in need'*



## Miriam Dowling Art Exhibition

From 18 May 2018 to 30 June 2018

Arthus Gallery, Rue Simonis 33, 1050 Brussels

Miriam is a very talented young rising artist who captures the mood, wonder and magic of the Irish land and seascapes in her work.

The exhibition will run from 18 May to 30 June 2018 in the Arthus Gallery (Rue Simonis 33, 1050 Brussels) and is open to the public Tuesdays to Saturdays from 2 pm to 6 pm.

For more info, see the [Arthus Gallery website](#).

## Irish Universities Annual Dinner 2018

26.06.2018 | 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

This year's Irish Universities Annual dinner will take place at the Radisson Royal Blu, rue du Fossé aux Loups 47, 1000 Brussels on 26 June. As previously announced Commissioner Hogan will be the guest speaker for this year's event. Tickets cost 65 euro per person and to register, please email your names and number of tickets to [belgiumirishalumni@gmail.com](mailto:belgiumirishalumni@gmail.com)

More information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/569191380134717/>

### Look BEFORE you book!

Before you plan your Summer holidays, check your passport is valid and don't forget over 18s can now renew or replace a lost/stolen passport using the [Online Passport Application Service](#).

It's **faster and cheaper** to renew online and no forms or paper photos are required.

You can also get yourself a credit card sized [Passport Card](#) that can be used for travel in the EU/EEA and Switzerland.

#### **Passports for Children**

**Check the kids' passports too** as these have shorter validity and allow enough time to renew.

We strongly advise you to allow **a minimum of 6 weeks** for paper based applications to be processed.



**LOOK BEFORE YOU BOOK**

Expired passports just wont fly!

An Roinn Gnóthaí  
Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of  
Foreign Affairs and Trade

[www.dfa.ie/passport](http://www.dfa.ie/passport) | [@PassportIRL](https://twitter.com/PassportIRL)

## Know Before You Go

[TravelWise](#) is the award-winning smartphone app designed to help Irish citizens stay safe and informed while travelling overseas.

Download it today or read our latest [travel advice online](#).



*Follow the Embassy of Ireland Twitter for information and updates on events*



[@IrishEmbBelgium](#)

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