

# Embassy of Ireland in Finland

Newsletter for November-December 2019

We wish all a Merry Christmas and restful New Year

Hyvää Joulua ja Hyvää Uutta Vuotta!

*On Saturday 14 December, chargé Eddie Brannigan hosted the Embassy Christmas Family Party. It was brilliant to meet so many parents and kids. Puppet Theatre Sampo charmed our little guests with a captivating performance of The Three Little Pigs. Then Santa came with a sack of goodies! The huff-puff walls, made by Adrian, an artist here in Helsinki, and Amy, a recent arrival, were popular too. My favourite moment (EB) - the kids showing us what couch cushions are really made for! A fine afternoon. Special thanks to Maria Urpi for all her preps on this.*



The week beforehand, on 3/4 December, Chargé Eddie Brannigan and Deputy Head Emma McCarron hosted the Irish community. Great turnouts, seasonably jolly company, and fascinating to learn the many diverse things that people do in Finland. And congrats to Paddy Reynolds for the memorable snaps in the Helsinki Harps calendar.



*On the left, in Eddie Brannigan's hand, some Helsinki Harps.*

*On the right, in Katri's hand, an actual Harp.*



Over the two nights, a clatter of people recorded Christmas greetings for two Twitter videos – you may recognise some in these links!

**HERE>>>** <https://twitter.com/IrishEmbFinland/status/1202510072120827904>



AND HERE

<https://twitter.com/IrishEmbFinland/status/120217493888458342>



Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, with Helsinki International Artists Programme  
are running an  
**International Artist Exchange Programme**  
based on Suomenlinna island.

Deadline to apply is 10 January. More info here: [bit.ly/HIAP2020](https://bit.ly/HIAP2020)



**Temple Bar Gallery + Studios** @TBGandS · Dec 9

.@TBGandS in partnership with @HIAP\_FI invites applications from Irish artists & artists based in Ireland for the TBG+S/HIAP International Residency Exchange 2020.

Apply by 10 Jan at 5pm to spend 3 months at HIAP on the island of Suomenlinna, Helsinki.

[bit.ly/HIAP2020](https://bit.ly/HIAP2020)



\*\*\*\*\*

**Apply by 10 January.....**

**SLUSH** is a huge summit of **tech start-up companies and investors in Helsinki every November**. This year, Embassy Deputy Head of Mission Emma McCarron and colleague Onerva Helne worked for many months with Enterprise Ireland and Irish companies to secure a hefty turnout of 14 Irish start-ups. We were delighted to host the companies at the Residence on 20 November, with Enterprise Ireland, and hear their fascinating ideas. Well done to @OpenbackHQ for selection as one of the top 100 pitching companies.



Read here a NewsNowFinland story on Irish participation in SLUSH this year.....

<https://twitter.com/NewsNowFinland/status/1197615587666644992>



## New Ireland Finland Parliamentary Friendship Group

*A new Finland Ireland Parliamentary Friendship Group has formed on 14 November in the Eduskunta (Finnish Parliament).*

*Led by **Mr Joonas Könttä** (Centre Party), the group has 12 members.*

*Chargé **Eddie Brannigan** and **Emma McCarron** had the honour to join **Mr Könttä** and fellow Eduskunta (Finnish parliament) members **Ms Eveliina Heinäluoma** (Social Democrats), and **Mr Matias Marttinen** (National Coalition Party), to launch the group.*

*During the inaugural meeting, the Embassy also gave a briefing to the MPs on Ireland-Finland relations – political, economic, cultural. Participants also discussed EU and global matters, and a possible work programme for FIPFG in 2020.*



*L-R: Emma McCarron, **Ms Eveliina Heinäluoma** MP, Eddie Brannigan, Mr Joonas Könttä MP, Mr Matias Marttinen MP*

**Visiting Oireachtas Committee meets Ireland Finland Parliamentary Friendship Group**

*On 3 December, a visiting delegation of members from the Joint Oireachtas Committee on EU Affairs- led by Mr. Bernard Durkan TD, accompanied by Senator Neale Richmond and Senator Gerard Craughwell - met the Friendship group leader Mr Joonas Könttä (Centre Party), for discussions on a range of EU matters, including Brexit, Future of Europe, and more.*



**Meeting with Speaker of Eduskunta (Finnish parliament)**

Later in December, Deputy Head of Mission Emma McCarron had the honour to meet with Speaker of the Parliament (and former PM of Finland) Mr Matti Vanhanen.



## **Finland's Independence Day**

On Friday 6 December, chargé Eddie Brannigan and his wife Alexandra had the honour to attend the annual **Independence Day Reception at the Presidential Palace**. <https://twitter.com/edbrannigan/status/1203366723895906305>



**edbrannigan** @edbrannigan · Dec 7



A great and memorable honour for us to represent Ireland at the Independence Day Reception hosted by the President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö and Mrs. Jenni Haukio at the Presidential Palace last night.





### *Culture snippet: Irish artist giving courses – Art Walks in Helsinki*

Helsinki-resident **Irish artist Jane Hughes** offers a beginners/improvers course in **Drawing & Painting**, starting January 2020. Every Monday, 5pm-8pm, running until 6 April . Enrolment link here:

She also plans a **weekend workshop** on Colour & Acrylic Painting. On 21/22 March 2020.

Venue: Helsinki Aikuisopisto, Töölöntullinkatu 8. <https://www.opistopalvelut.fi/helsinginaikuisopisto/course.php?t=18530&l=sv>

And Jane also runs Helsinki Art Walk, giving free guided tours to selected galleries once each month on Sunday afternoons - next one in January 2020..... <https://www.facebook.com/helsinkiartwalk/>

For details, write to [janehughes20@gmail.com](mailto:janehughes20@gmail.com)



## *Friends of Irish Whiskey Gala Dinner, Aalto University, 2 December 2019*

The annual Friends of Irish Whiskey Gala Dinner at Aalto University on Saturday 2 December. Deputy Head Emma McCarron attended along with acting Head of Mission Eddie Brannigan.

The event was opened by Eddie and British Ambassador Tom Dodd joining Matti Rätty, President of *Friends of Irish Whiskey Group*, on stage to assay some stories, however tangentially connected (!) about whiskey.





## **Rovaniemi Arctic Spirit conference**

*Rovaniemi city on the ARCTIC Circle hosted the latest Arctic Spirit conference on 12-13 November, at Arktikum building. Eddie Brannigan, pictured here with Finland's Ambassador for the Arctic, Petteri Vuomari, represented Ireland.*



While in the area, Eddie took time to meet up with Philip Burgess, Dubliner and Arctic specialist, who lives there in Rovaniemi with his family. Surely no adult Irish male lives closer to Santa Claus.....



## **SNIPPET**

*I was intrigued recently to meet **Finnish author Markus Ahonen**.*

*It turns out that Markus, writer of the five Isaksson series of literary crime, has been **living in Ireland since 2006**.*

*Based in Malahide, his novels are *Medusa*, *Palava sydän* (*Burning Heart*), *Jäljet* (*tracks*), *Sydämenmurskajaiset* (*Heart-Crushing party*), and *Sieluttomat* (*The Soulless*). He also has three short story collections.*

*Markus says he has drawn inspiration from Ireland for some of his work. His main protagonist, Detective Constable Markku Isakksson, has a sister living in Malahide. And in one of his novels, 'Sydämenmurskajaiset', much criminal investigation and action takes place in Blessington, Malahide and Cork.*

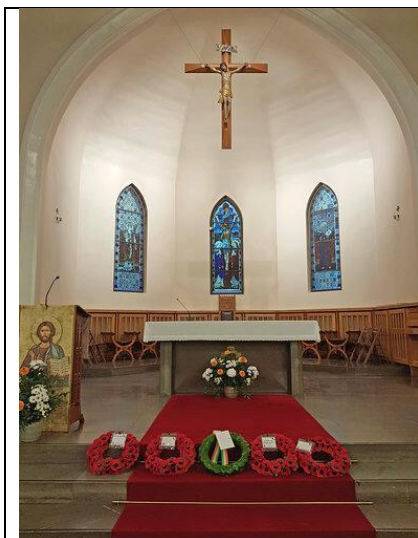
*Now, there's something you may not have known.*

*- Ed Brannigan*





## ***Sombre Remembrance on 11 November 2019***



The morning of 11 November was a time for sombre remembrance, including for the Irish soldiers who died in the First World War.

In Helsinki, Chargé d'Affaires Eddie Brannigan joined diplomats and others in laying wreaths at the Armistice Day ceremony on 11 November 2019 at St Henry's Cathedral, in the Eira district.



## Gratitude

---

Warm thanks to the wonderful Katri, who has played the Harp at numerous receptions in the 12 weeks since acting Head of Embassy Eddie Brannigan arrived. You may not have heard, but on 12 December, the United Nations (UNESCO) declared the Irish Harp to be part of the world's intangible cultural heritage. In fact, we already knew it was.....



And a word of gratitude to our excellent reception catering chef, David, who fills mouths with beautiful creations. Including his own (i.e. when he sings, as he did lately).





*Congratulations.....to Alvin Ibarra from Lima, Perus...Helsinki Harps player....who has just published a novel*



<https://twitter.com/edbrannigan/status/1204445935494934528>

---

***FAREWELL: We are saddened to say farewell very soon to Karl Sorri, our temporary EU Affairs specialist, due to expiry of contract. We know he will be a high-flier, and will do really well wherever he lands next.***

**Before we go.....**

***Academic links***

We understand that there is a significant number of Irish students and academics here in Finland, often for short periods.

We'd love to hear from you.      Do get in touch.

Email [helsinkiembassy@dfa.ie](mailto:helsinkiembassy@dfa.ie)

**Have a joyful and restful Christmas  
and a peaceful New Year**