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UNITED STATES UNITED IRELAND

Féile an Phobail

A Letter From Ireland

a Chara,

It's that time of the year again. The sun is out, for now, and this weekend is the start of Féile an Phobail. The Féile, as it is known, is a celebration of the culture, history, and hopes of the community of West Belfast.

It all started back in 1988. Over ten days in March of that year, three unarmed IRA volunteers from West Belfast were shot dead by the British Army in Gibraltar. Their subsequent funeral was attacked by a pro-British Unionist paramilitary killing three in Milltown cemetery.

Unarmed mourners heroically gave chase, preventing more deaths, and caught the attacker, before the police intervened.

Several days later two undercover British soldiers drove directly into the funeral of one of those shot in Milltown and were shortly afterwards killed by the IRA.

It was one of the bloodiest and darkest times of the conflict. The attack on the funerals was televised and the images spread throughout the world. The response of many outside of the area was to decry the community of West Belfast as savage.

Their description was not the community that I knew. A community bound together in the face of repression by a shared sense of identity, resistance, and hope.

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inviting to all.

The first week of August was picked as the date. That week was the anniversary of internment and had every year been marked by rioting, bonfires, and confrontations with the police and British army. Young people and the community would bear the cost of injury and destruction. The idea was to take that energy and anger and transform it into something positive.

The first year was small in scale but successful. I attended events.

The second year I volunteered to help out and I continued doing so for fifteen years acting as chair of the organization for ten years.

The Féile has now become a fixture in the life of the community and the city of Belfast for 36 years. The program has expanded, the gigs bigger, the discussion groups more diverse, but the craic and community pride remain at its heart.

The changes in the Féile have mirrored the changes in Belfast. Once a city in conflict and exclusion, it is now a shared and celebrated place.

Among the many hundreds of events taking place over the next ten days will be the launch of a memoir by Rita O'Hare. This will be a very special day. Rita's was a life well lived. She was the Sinn Féin representative to the USA for over twenty years and I was proud to call her a friend.

Rita had started writing the book when she took ill. When unable to continue, she dictated chapters. Her good friend Danny Morrison has done an excellent job in editing the book for publication and it will be launched on August 3rd.

Friends of Sinn Féin USA will also host launch events in New York and Washington. So check out future newsletters for details.

Meanwhile, have a great weekend and remember that even in the darkest days there is hope.

Have a great weekend.

Is mise,

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Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America



Féile an Phobail
IRELAND'S BIGGEST COMMUNITY ARTS FESTIVAL
2024

RITA

SATURDAY 3RD AUGUST 3PM

ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, FALLS ROAD

IRA Volunteer Rita O'Hare was imprisoned three times and survived being shot and gravely injured by the British Army. Nelson Mandela called her his 'little warrior'. From activist to Sinn Féin publicity director she became the party's Washington anchor for twenty years. This posthumous memoir is also a loving tribute to her husband Brendan and her children.

**Speakers: Brendan Brownlee, Sinn Féin President
Mary Lou McDonald and Gerry Adams**

Free event. No booking required.
Organised by Danny Morrison

 Comhairle Chathair Bheal Feirste

 PRINCIPAL FUNDERS
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 St Mary's University College Belfast
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Legacy Commission must go if victims are to be respected – Mark Thompson Director Relatives for Justice

The British monarch's speech, setting out his government's intention to repeal the Tory Legacy Act, is a welcome first step by the new Labour Administration.

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the importance this will have for the families concerned.

However, restoring power to the Attorney General to make determinations on future legacy inquests is also crucial.

In truth, inquests guillotined by the Act are only a tiny, albeit crucial, fraction of killings that remain unresolved. The majority of those bereaved and injured have been left behind; failed time after time, from Eames/Bradley to Stormont House, their hopes dashed. Those failures lie squarely at the doors of both Tory and Labour Administrations past.



Many victims and survivors will be alarmed that the new Northern secretary unilaterally announced his intention to retain the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR). This is dangerously like the approach of his predecessors Lewis and Harris.

FULL STORY AND
COMPLETE REPORT

Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation 2024 Dinner

Sinn Féin MLA Ciara Ferguson will be the special guest at the 2024 Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation Dinner which will be held on September 12, 2024 at Bobby Van's, 135 W 50th St, New York, NY.

Visit <https://martinmcguinnesspf.org/upcoming-events> for more details and to register.

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The Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation 2024 Chieftain's Dinner NYC

Save the Date
September 12, 2024

**Special Guest Speaker: Ciara Ferguson,
MLA – Sinn Féin**

Date: September 12, 2024

Location: Bobby Vans

Address: 135 W 50th St, New York, NY 10020
b/n 6th and 7th Ave

**Cocktail hour from 6-7 pm, sit down 3
course dinner 7-9 pm**

Check our website:

<https://martinmcguinnesspf.org/>

Tickets - \$250

Sponsorships - \$500

Email Marty Glennon at: mglennon@abgllaw.com



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Latest News

Mary Lou McDonald welcomes Joint Oireachtas Committee
Report on Constitutional Change

2024 Chieftain's Walk NYC

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The Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation 2024 Chieftain's Walk NYC

Walk for Reunification

Date: September 15, 2024

Location: Irish Hunger Memorial,
Battery Park City

Address: 290 Vesey Street, New
York, NY 10281

Get ready for an unforgettable day as we come together to honor the beloved Martin McGuinness and raise awareness for his Peace Foundation. This year, we're walking for the reunification of Ireland, and we want YOU to be part of this incredible journey!

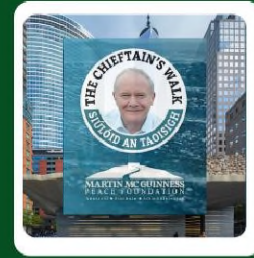
Register Now:

<https://raceroster.com/events/2024/91998/2024-martin-mcguinness-chieftains-walk-nyc>

Check our website for more information

<https://martinmcguinnesspf.org/>

Email Marty Glennon at: mglennon@abgllaw.com



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