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UNITED STATES UNITED IRELAND

The Fleadh comes to Belfast

A letter from Ireland

a Chara,

August in Ireland is the peak holiday season. Institutions are in recess, and people's minds are elsewhere. Yet last weekend was one of the most politically significant of my lifetime.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann was held in Belfast. This is a festival of Irish music, dance and culture. The Fleadh is centred around competitions and draws Irish musicians and dancers from across Ireland and internationally. Outside of competitions, there are gigs, impromptu music sessions, and classes.

Previously, Wexford held the attendance record at 750,000. Over the week in Belfast, an estimated 1.6 million people attended. Because of work commitments, I could only go on Saturday. I had been to other Fleadhs before, but nothing prepared me for what I saw.

There were all forms of Irish music, everywhere, and I mean everywhere. Kids busking, sessions in pop-up bars, dancers taking over the streets, a Ceili in the grounds of City Hall. GAA jerseys from counties across Ireland and clubs across the world. Unionist marching bands shared stages with Irish Traditional musicians and dancers. It was a joyous celebration to which all were invited.

The city centre was fully pedestrianised and lined with stalls. The grounds of St. Anne's Church of Ireland and St. Mary's Catholic Church were opened to Fleadh goers. The Belfast that I grew up in was gone and all the better for it.

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1980s as it would have set you up for harassment at the hands of the RUC and attack by unionists. Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, then a Sinn Féin Councillor, was ejected from the council chamber for the crime of speaking Irish.

In the early 1990s, I, along with others, tried to mark St. Patrick's Day with an open-air music session. We had identified a location, secured sponsorship and enlisted musicians. The event was cancelled as the then Unionist council refused an entertainment licence.

August 1993 was the first time an Irish republican protest march was allowed into the City Centre. The theme of the march was "Our City Also". That evening, unionist paramilitaries shot up the house of Sinn Féin Councillor Bobby Lavery, killing his son Sean. The message was clear: there would be no place for Irish republicans, citizens and our culture in the capital of British Unionism.

Since then, a generation has grown up in peace. Campaign by campaign, the city has gradually become more shared. This change was not inevitable; it was won through sustained struggle. Sinn Féin became the largest party, while unionists lost their overall majority.

I spent the first hour walking through the crowds, taking it all in, and thinking of how far we have travelled. Belfast is now a shared city. Irish Republicans have never sought dominance over or the subjection of others; our experience as Irish citizens living in a British Unionist State knows that approach only leads to division and conflict.

It is said that where culture leads, politics follows. We have come far but have further to travel. Last week demonstrates a vision of a new and united Ireland. One that is home for all who share our land.

Have a great weekend.

Is mise,

Ciarán

Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America

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Watch Irish Unity Education Webinar with Pat Cullen MP

Pat Cullen MP joined us for an in-depth conversation about health and care in a new and united Ireland. We were joined by Irish Unity activist, Dr. Tricia McIvor who hosted an excellent conversation about the incredible opportunity Irish Unity holds for healthcare, doctors, nurses, and patients.



New Issue of Éire Nua Out Now!

The latest issue of Sinn Féin's online magazine dedicated to all matters relating to Irish unity - Éire Nua - is out now!

It features analysis, updates and perspectives on the growing conversation around Irish unity alongside contributions from across the movement and beyond.

Click below for free download.

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SAMHRADH
2026 SUMMER
EAGRÁN ISSUE 13

NEW IRELAND eIRE NUA

Progressing Unity in North America

Ciarán Quinn & Greg O'Loughlin

This year marks the 250th Declaration of Independence, the principles of equality a who signed the Declaration. War of Independence were Scots-Irish Presbyterians. C discrimination and oppression. Their struggle for independence the stain of slavery, subjugation of women. It was the case that of white European men. O slavery was abolished; late constitutional right to vote, in legislation. The Nation's abhorrent compromises, as were added, and a former Yet equality and self-determination principles.

The connection between the principles of equality a meetings that Friends of Sinn Féin US and Canada.

In recent weeks Friends of well-attended Unity Committee online. These meetings are Canada to formulate and pursue cause of Irish Unity.

In San Francisco at the beginning Uachtarán Michelle O'Neill gathering of more than 200

Cultural Centre, outlining the potential and the pathway to Irish unity. The same message was shared with labour and



Mary Lou McDonald in USA



Congress member Rashida Tlaib and Mary Lou McDonald in US



Mary Lou McDonald with Congress member Richard Neal

Friends of Ireland, a group focused on Ireland, in of Keir Starmer, the national affairs. Again, it steps were outlined to ensure continuation as agreed in the

ington, Mary Lou was a labour organiser and union professionals set this for Irish Unity. The event was not only. The Sinn Féin continue to push the Irish are and set dates for unity

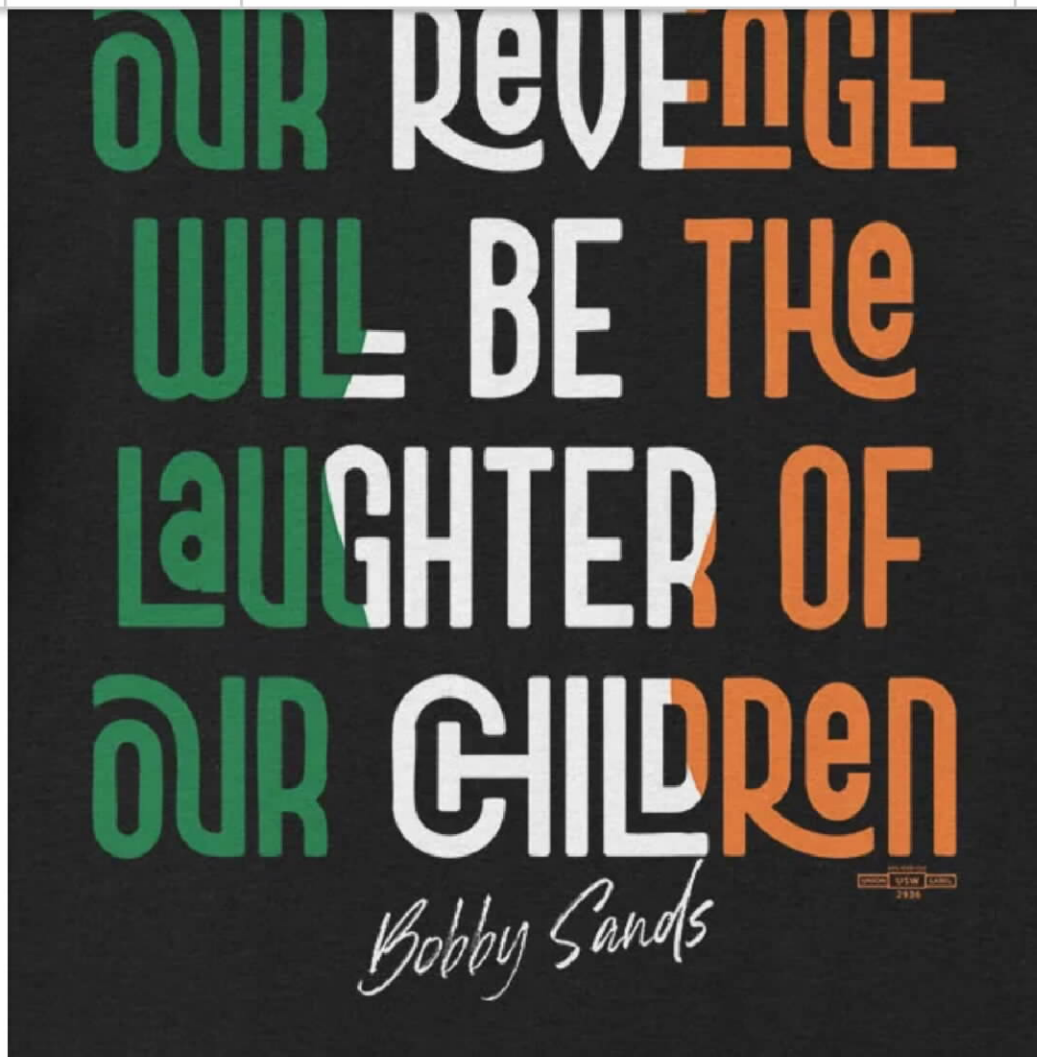
ton and major Irish communities but also online. Activists from all over Ireland and are hard at work in these, and participating in The Education committee with elected leaders, such as. The Outreach and a Virtual Irish Unity committee has been established in various counties, and states to promote union and democracy. It is all across the country into The Irish Unity study group that will

focus on the text for months before hosting the author for a special online Q&A session. In every instance, the

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Celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Catalpa's return to New York

NEW - We'll be gathering at Calvary Cemetery on Wednesday, August 19 at 3:30pm with members of Clan na Gael to lay a wreath at the gravesite of John Breslin and remembering his key role in the vision and success of the escape - all are welcome - details in the poster below. This portion of the day is free and there is no ticket required. A ticket is required for the event later at the New York Irish Center.

Can't make it to Belfast to learn about the 150th Anniversary of the returning of the Catalpa at Féile an Phobail? If you're in NY, you can join us at the New York Irish

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[Tickets on sale now.](#)

CLAN na GAEL
UNITED BROTHERHOOD

**Remembering the returning of the
Catalpa and the fenian
Fremantle Six on the 150th Anniversary**



**Join us at Calvary Cemetery
at the graveside of John Breslin for a
wreath laying ceremony.**

**3:30pm Wednesday, August 19, 2026
Calvary Cemetery, Woodside, Queens.
Section 12 - Laurel Hill Blvd South Entrance
Beside Cemetery main office**

**Friends of Sinn Féin presents
A celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the
returning of the Catalpa**



**Join us for an evening of story and song to remember one
of the most daring prison escapes and rescues in history!**

**7:00pm Wednesday, August 19, 2026
New York Irish Center - Long Island City, NY
Tickets on sale now!**

[PURCHASE TICKETS HERE](#)

6th Annual Martin McGuinness Chieftains Walk NYC - Sun Sept 13

Join us for the 6th Annual Martin McGuinness Chieftains Walk as we honor Martin's extraordinary legacy of leadership, peace, reconciliation, and the continuing journey toward a united Ireland.

This year, we are honored to welcome Martin's daughter, Gráinne Hargan, who will travel from Ireland to join us for the walk.

Whether you have walked with us before or are joining for the first time, we invite you to stand with friends from across the Irish-American community in support of the work

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[MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION HERE](#)



The Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation

6TH ANNUAL CHIEFTAIN'S WALK

WALKING TOGETHER FOR PEACE, RECONCILIATION & A UNITED IRELAND

**SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 13
2026**

SPECIAL GUEST
Gráinne Hargan
Martin's daughter, traveling from Ireland to join us.

PIER 25
West Street & N. Moore Street
New York, NY

9:00 AM
REGISTRATION & OPENING CELEBRATION

10:00 AM
CHIEFTAIN'S WALK BEGINS

Walk with us along the beautiful Hudson River waterfront from Pier 25 to Pier 45 and back.

HONORING MARTIN MCGUINNESS AND SUPPORTING
THE WORK OF THE MARTIN MCGUINNESS PEACE FOUNDATION

Untold Story - The attack on hunger striker Joe McDonnell's funeral

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The untold story of the British states attack on the funeral of hunger striker Joe McDonnell by 3 republicans centrally involved in the events of that fateful day.

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