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## End of an era as President Jeff Spender retires

After nearly ten years as QIA President, Hon. Jeff Spender KC tendered his resignation from the presidency and the Board of the Association at the Board meeting on 14 April 2026. He had foreshadowed his intentions when he advocated a constitutional change to limit presidential terms at the last AGM. His resignation came after presiding over QIA events during another highly successful St Patrick's season.

Jeff became President of the Queensland Irish Association at 4pm on 27 July 2017 when the threatened winding up of the Association was terminated following a decision of the Queensland Supreme Court. While there have been many members contributing to the restoration of the QIA after it was placed in administration in 2015, it is safe to say that the QIA would not exist today without Jeff Spender. His stature as a former Federal Court judge was undoubtedly a significant factor in the administrator proposing, and the Court agreeing, that the QIA should be handed back to its members.

Recognition is also due to Glenice Spender. Independently, a tremendous organiser and recruiter for the Association, she has been integral to the success of Jeff's presidency through her support.

Jeff's daily contribution to the restoration of the Association will be missed but no-one can begrudge Jeff and Glenice a well-deserved retire-



ment.

The Board is planning a testimonial lunch to honour Jeff, tentatively scheduled for 24 July 2026. It will be advertised and open to all members. Please keep an eye on future newsletters and social media for the details when they are known.

### Board changes

Following the President's resignation, in accordance with the Constitution and Rules of the Association, the Board elected me to the office of President for the remainder of the term ending at the AGM in November this year.

It is an honour to lead the organisation of which I have been a member for nearly 50 years.

Director Paul Hogan was elected

to the consequential vacancy in the position of Vice-President.

In addition, Patrick Leahy was appointed to the Board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Claire Moore earlier this year. Patrick is a fourth generation member of the Association. He has more than 20 years' experience in the Australian property industry in both the public and private sectors, including land access and acquisition and property valuation, experience that will be particularly valuable as the QIA seeks a new home.

There is currently one vacancy on the Board as a result of Jeff Spender's resignation.

### No change in objectives

While some of the faces on the Board have changed, the immediate objectives of the QIA have not. The Association is actively seeking a new physical home. The Association needs to re-build its membership and find ways for its members to become actively involved as it will remain a volunteer-run organisation for the foreseeable future.

And, as always, the Association continues to promote the culture and history of Ireland and of the Irish in Australia through

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# End of an era as President Jeff Spender retires

*Continued from page 1*

the events it arranges or participates in.

## **Easter Monday commemoration**

Easter Monday saw the annual commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising at the Nudgee Cemetery grave of William (Dan) Ryan who was a Volunteer in the GPO in Dublin. The ceremony was organised by Joe Thompson, Des Ryan and Seamus Sullivan. Jeff Spender laid a wreath on the grave and Mary Allen Corbett read the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. Diorin O'Sullivan led the singing of Amhrán na bhFiann. If you have not been to this commemoration, as I had not before this year, make a date in your diary for 2027.

## **The Catalpa Rescue**

The screening of The Catalpa Rescue at the Brisbane Square Library on 19 April was sold out. The story of the rescue of Fenian prisoners from Fremantle on an American whaling ship, funded by American Fenians including John Devoy, is a fascinating tale that has been the subject of many works of history and historical fiction. Another of the Fenians, John Flood, moved to Gympie after his release and was the founder of one of the companies of the Queensland Irish Volunteers – the precursor of the Queensland Irish Association.

## **Congratulations**

Congratulations too to the Queensland Irish Association Pipe

*To the Board of the Queensland Irish Association,*

*Dear Colleagues,*

*After nearly a decade as President of the Q.I.A., I tender my resignation as President, effective from the Start of General Business at the meeting of the Board on 14 April, to be held at the Camp Hill Hotel, starting at 6.30pm.*

*I am proud of what has been achieved during my Presidency, and I leave the Association in very good hands.*

*My only regret is not yet achieving a home for the Q.I.A. Any such home has to be self supporting: We must learn from the lessons of the Past.*

*My very best wishes for the future of the Queensland Irish Association,*

*Jeff Spender,  
14 April 2026.*

Band on their tremendous (and very hectic schedule of) participation in ANZAC Day commemorations and the Labour Day March this year.

The QIA Dancers also conducted the 64th Annual May Feis over the Labour Day weekend at Goold Hall at Villanova with hundreds of Irish Dancers participating in individual and team dances. Congratulations to the dancers and to the parents and volunteers who make this event one of, if not the, longest-running competitions in the state.

## **Forthcoming events**

On 20 May 2026, the QIA and

the Royal Historical Society of Queensland are jointly presenting a lunchtime lecture on John Finnegan under the title of The Forgotten Explorer. The lecture by Al Finegan will be at the Commissariat Store Museum at 12.30pm. Check the calendar on page 3 for RSVP details.

And don't forget Bloomsday, the annual celebration of James Joyce's novel, Ulysses, on 16 June 2026 in Queen Street Mall. Keep an eye out for details in our newsletter and on social media.

**Graham Moloney,  
President,  
Queensland Irish Association.**

# Can you help with artefacts for exhibition?

The QIA Historical and Cultural Committee intend setting up a small exhibition at the Brisbane Square Library to promote both the QIA and Bloomsday. It will run from 1 - 19 June 2026. They are looking for Members of the QIA to loan Irish/Dublin memorabilia and artefacts.

The artefacts will be displayed in a locked glass cabinet, so will be secure. They intend giving them to the Library on Monday, 18 May (as they need to check them before they are displayed). They are happy to pick them up from you.

What they are looking for:

- Anything related to James Joyce, his books and poem collections (e.g. Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses, Finnegans Wake, Chamber Music, Pomes Penyeach, Giacomo Joyce, Exiles)
- Pictures/posters that celebrate Bloomsday and/or Dublin
- An Irish black cap, clothing from early 1900s/Edwardian era.

If you can help, email [QIAhistoricalculturalcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:QIAhistoricalculturalcommittee@gmail.com).

## Calendar

**20 May 2026**

Queensland Irish Association and Royal Historical Society of Queensland present *The Forgotten Explorer, John Finnegan* by author *Al Finegan*. The Commissariat Store Museum, 115 William Street, Brisbane. 12.30pm. RSVP: [www.queenslandhistory.org/events](http://www.queenslandhistory.org/events)

**31 May 2026**

Celtic Council of Australia Qld Junior Celtic Games, Moorlands Park, Auchenflower, 9am - 12pm.

**1 - 19 June 2026**

QIA Bloomsday Exhibition at Brisbane Square Library

**5 - 8 June 2026**

National Celtic Folk Festival, Portarlinton, Victoria.

**16 June 2026**

Bloomsday in Brisbane, Queen Street Mall. 12pm.

**17 July 2026**

The Ireland Funds Australia Brisbane Luncheon, Hillstone, St Lucia, 12.30pm.

**25 July 2026**

Queensland Irish Choir Celtic Winter Concert, Hills Church, Everton Hills, 2pm. Tickets: [www.qldirishchoir.org](http://www.qldirishchoir.org)

**11 October 2026**

Brisbane Celtic Festival, Moorlands Park, Auchenflower. Details TBC.

**14 October 2026**

The High Kings, The Rocky Road Tour, Princess Theatre, Brisbane. Tickets: [davidroywilliams.com](http://davidroywilliams.com)

**16 to 18 October 2026**

Irish Film Festival Australia at Palace Barracks, Petrie Terrace.

**First Friday of the month**

Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band play at Friday Irish Sessions in Gilhooley's, Brisbane. See [www.facebook.com/QIAPB](http://www.facebook.com/QIAPB).

**Second Wednesday of the month**

Tara Hall Dining Club, The Ship Inn, Sidon Street, South Brisbane. Contact Secretary Roger Thornton [rjthornton8@bigpond.com](mailto:rjthornton8@bigpond.com) or 0408 878 938

**Last Saturday of the month**

Tigh Gaelach luncheon at Easts Leagues Club, Coorparoo between February and November at 11am. Contact President Michelle FitzPatrick on [mitchfitzpatrick@hotmail.com](mailto:mitchfitzpatrick@hotmail.com) or 0403 384 223

## Queensland Irish Association

### *The Forgotten Irish Explorer*



Queensland Irish Association  
& The Royal Historical Society of Queensland present  
The Forgotten Irish Explorer John Finnegan,  
a lunchtime talk by author Alan Finegan

at The Commissariat Store Museum,  
115 William Street, Brisbane  
on Wednesday, 20 May 2026 at 12.30pm

Entry is free to QIA and RHSQ members, \$10 all others.

Tickets: [johnfinneganirishstalk.eventbrite.com.au](http://johnfinneganirishstalk.eventbrite.com.au)

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# The magic of the stones: A Celtic pilgrimage to Glen Innes

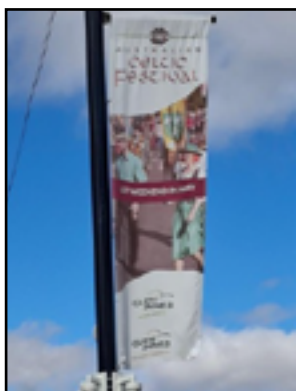
By Suzie Holland

The excitement begins the moment you drive into Glen Innes along the Gwydir Highway. You can feel it in the air—the flags of the six Celtic nations flying proudly from houses, the Breton flag snapping against the Australian breeze, and our own Irish tricolour swaying alongside the Scottish Saltire. The Australian Celtic Festival has begun, a vibrant celebration of the heritage of Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, Wales, the Isle of Man, and Cornwall.

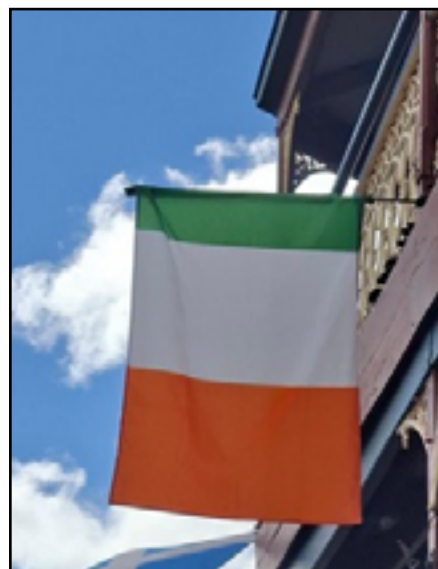
My husband Trevor, who has Irish heritage, and I (mixed Irish and Scottish heritage) love attending the Festival and it falls close to our wedding anniversary, so we like to take the time to get away from Brisbane and celebrate us and our heritage. It consistently falls on the first weekend in May, providing the perfect excuse to escape the rush of Brisbane to celebrate our roots. This year marked the “Year of Scotland,” and the town was dressed for the occasion. At 1,000 metres above sea level, Glen Innes was in full autumnal glory; the air was crisp, the sky a piercing blue, and the trees were a brilliant tapestry of russet reds, golden browns, and soft pinks.

## Friday: Traditions and Hot Toddies

The festival officially opened on Friday, 1 May, in the Grey Street Town Square. Though we missed the initial Cultural Symposium while travelling, I arrived in time to proudly assist in the presentation of my clan—Clan Buchanan—to the festival. As a member of Clan Buchanan Society International (Oceania), it was a moment of immense pride. I cheered and clapped loudly



From left: Welcome to Glen Innes!; The Free Radicals busking in Grey Street; Celebrating the Year of Scotland.



The Great Central Hotel, established 1874, celebrating the six Celtic Nations, especially Ireland here!

when the Irish flag was presented, thrilled to see it take its place among the other nations. Even the local dogs were out in force, decked out in their best Celtic finery!

As the sun was slowly setting on Friday and the cooler winds were beginning, Trevor and I headed to The Furry Cow for gelato and coffee to fuel us up ready for the Ceilidh at the Standing Stones. We hit the Tavern first and had a delicious ‘Scottie Hot Toddy’ which warmed us up ready to for the night’s entertainment, which began with The Stovies who entertained us with songs of Scotland. Joining The Stovies was a Scots-born internationally-renowned fiddle player, Stephen Cordiner, whose fiddle was from 1685! The Cape Byron Celtic Dancers collaborated with the Dubbo Celtic Dancers to form Damhsa Comhla (‘Dance Together’) and danced up a storm, it was so much fun and the dancers looked fantastic. As the fires began, we moved the chairs outside to make more room for us all to dance up our own storm! I love Ceilidhs – my first one was in a pub in Inverness, Scotland and the atmosphere and music always make me laugh and smile. It was Trev’s first and we all quickly got the hang of the dances. I danced until I ran out of breath! The dance floor was packed!! But no one could wipe the smile off my face!!! We

*Continued on page 5*

# The magic of the stones: A Celtic pilgrimage to Glen Innes



The Flagbearer for Ireland in the Opening Ceremony.



The Stovies, featuring Stephen Cordiner on fiddle – they are awesome live!



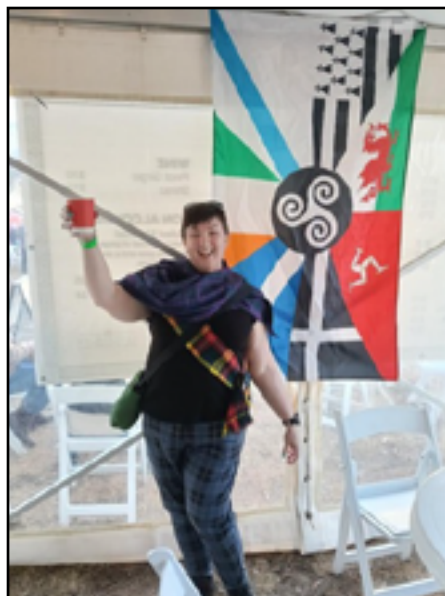
Piper at the Opening Ceremony.

*Continued from page 4*

couldn't stay for the whole duration of the Ceilidh, as we would be back at the Standing Stones at the chilly time of 5.45am for the Lone Piper and the Dawn Flag Raising Ceremony.

## Saturday: The Dawn and the Parade

A 4.00am wake-up call in Inverell saw us driving back to the Stones in the dark for the 5.45am Dawn Flag



Me with my first 'Scottie Hot Toddy', it was not the last!

Raising. The sound of the Lone Piper piercing the morning chill gave me goosebumps that had nothing to do with the temperature. Watching the flags rise—Aboriginal, Australian, and NSW, followed by the six nations—as the sun broke over the horizon, was incredibly moving.

Later that morning, the Street Parade brought the town to life. There is nothing quite like the rush of marching with the Pipers and fellow Clans while the crowd cheers. Shouting the Buchanan war cry, "Clar Innis!", I marched up Grey Street with a smile that wouldn't fade. We spent the afternoon at the



Damhsa Comhla – what a treat!



The Lone Piper in the Stones.

Clan Buchanan and Scottish Australian Heritage Council marquees, connecting people with their family histories. While we didn't find a specific Irish marquee, the tricolour was everywhere. To get our "Irish

*Continued on page 6*

# The magic of the stones: A Celtic pilgrimage to Glen Innes



The Irish and Scottish flags being raised in the Dawn Flag Raising Ceremony.



The parade was massive! It was so good to see!



The Hill of Tara, Glen Innes.



The raising of the flags was done in complete respectful silence.

*Continued from page 5*

fix,” we headed to the Highland Stage to marvel at the talented dancers from the Elevate Irish Dance Academy, Scotia Highland Dancers and Damhsa Comhla.

## Sunday: The Hill of Tara and Farewell

Sunday brought a much welcome sleep-in and we made our way back to the Standing Stones. Today we visited the Hill of Tara, which was just outside the Festival



Celtic Pride! Trevor and I wearing the tartan of my Clan, Clan Buchanan, and ready for the street parade, a definite highlight of the Australian Celtic Festival.

barriers. The Hill of Tara is a small mound proudly flying the Irish flag and named for the Hill of Tara in County Meath, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland and an important historical site.

In between convening in the Clan marquees, we also thankfully were able to attend the Irish Ceremony, which included the rousing sound of our Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band and was held at the Ogham Stone – a Standing Stone



The dancers are so talented!



Ogham Stone.

which commemorates and features Ogham script. The QIA Pipe Band started the Ceremony with Amhrán na bhFiann, which we all were upstanding for. The Ceremony was officiated by Margaret Winnett who recounted the history of the Irish National Association (INA) which began in Surry Hills, Sydney on the 27 July 1915. I was especially thrilled to know that in the INA’s Albert Dryer Memorial Library at

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# The magic of the stones: A Celtic pilgrimage to Glen Innes



The Sydney Irish Céilí Dancers and the Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band. And, below left, The Sydney Irish Céilí Dancers in action.



*Continued from page 6*

the Irish Cultural Centre, there is a copy of the Book of Kells, donated by Éamon de Valera. The Sydney Irish Céilí Dancers showcased traditional Irish set dancing which made me want to get up and dance too! The QIA Pipe Band piped the closing of the Irish Ceremony.

As the Closing Ceremony arrived, the flags were slowly lowered. There was a bittersweet moment as the Irish and Manx flags were folded and presented; Ireland and the Isle of Man will be the featured nations for the 2027 Festival.

I finished the weekend with the ring of pipes in my ears, sunburnt



cheeks (the classic Celtic curse!), and a heart full of joy. See you in 2027!

• *All photos taken by Trevor and Suzie Holland, please do not copy without permission*



The Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band on their way to the Irish Ceremony.



The Sydney Irish Céilí Dancers making their way to the Irish Ceremony.



Margaret telling the large crowd gathered the history of the Irish National Association in Sydney.

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# Brisbane's convict heritage and its Irish connections

By Mary Allen, Director, QIA

Modern Brisbane is a bustling river city, but scattered beneath its streets and among its historic buildings are rare reminders of a far harsher beginning. Between 1824 and 1842, Brisbane was the centre of the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement, a remote outpost created for the most troublesome convicts in the colony of New South Wales. Known as a place of secondary punishment, it held repeat offenders and men considered beyond reform. At its peak around 1830, nearly 1,000 prisoners were confined there.

Among those transported to Australia during the convict era were thousands of Irish prisoners, many convicted not only of ordinary crimes but also of political offences linked to Irish unrest in the early nineteenth century.

The most prominent surviving structure from those years is the Commissariat Store at 115 William Street, built in 1828 by convict labour. One of only two remaining buildings from Brisbane's convict era, the stone storehouse held food, tools and government supplies for the penal settlement. Today it operates as a museum, preserving the story of the men who built it — including many Irish convicts. You'll have the opportunity to see it for yourself on QIA's talk on convict John Finnegan on May 20.

Nearby on Wickham Terrace stands the Old Windmill, constructed the same year. Intended to grind grain for the settlement, it rarely worked well due to unreliable winds. Convicts were instead forced to operate a punishing treadmill inside the tower to power the grinding machinery. Historical



Among the convict sites in Brisbane are, clockwise from top, St Helena Island, The Commissariat Store and the Old Windmill. Pictures: [Wikipedia](#)



records suggest that Irish prisoners were among those assigned to the treadmill gangs — a form of labour widely regarded as one of the harshest punishments in the colony.

Across Moreton Bay, St Helena Island later became another infamous prison site. While its main buildings date from the later nineteenth century, the island's penal history reflects the same tradition of harsh discipline that shaped Moreton Bay's early years. Irish prisoners were also transported there after the prison opened in the 1860s.

The Queen Street area once held the Female Factory and the settlement's main gaol, while a fragment of the original prison wall survives in a basement nearby.

The remains of Brisbane's Convict Women's Prison and Factory can still be visited today at Eagle Farm, near the Brisbane Airport precinct.

In the 1830s, women prisoners were moved there from the original Queen Street site. Women worked at tasks such as washing, sewing, farming and picking oakum from old ship rope. The prison closed when the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement ended in 1839, but traces of the site remain. Today visitors can walk around the heritage site at TradeCoast Central, where interpretive panels and artworks explain its history, and convict artefacts are displayed in the Interpretive Centre.

Other traces of the settlement lie hidden beneath the modern city. Convicts also cultivated the land that became the City Botanic Gardens, growing food for the settlement as early as 1825.

Together these scattered sites tell the story of Brisbane's beginnings — a story shaped by the labour, hardship and resilience of many Irish men and women.

# Penal era Irish

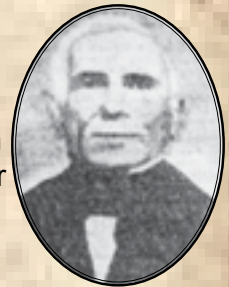


## **John Finnegan (1789–1858) - Explored Brisbane River**

An Irish convict and survivor of the 1798 Rebellion, Finnegan was transported to New South Wales. In 1823, he was shipwrecked with three others off Moreton Island, surviving with Aboriginal help. He and Thomas Pamphlett became the first Europeans to explore the Brisbane River. When John Oxley arrived, Finnegan guided him to the river's mouth — pivotal in choosing Brisbane's site. Later, he worked as a pilot in Moreton Bay, leaving an enduring mark on Queensland's history.

## **Lieutenant Henry Miller (1785–1866) - Founder of Brisbane**

Derry-born British Army officer and the first commandant of the Moreton Bay penal colony, appointed in 1824. He supervised the establishment of the colony's early administration. Miller chose the site for the Brisbane settlement on the Brisbane River in May 1825, after moving it from Redcliffe. Miller's successor as colony commandant, Captain Peter Bishop, was also Irish.



## **Kevin Izod O'Doherty (1823–1905) - Doctor and politician**

A Young Ireland rebel, Dublin-born O'Doherty was sentenced to transportation in 1848 for his writings in *The Irish Tribune*. Later pardoned, he moved to Europe but then he emigrated with his poet wife Eva Kelly ("Eva of the Nation") to Brisbane, where he rose to become a respected physician and parliamentarian. He innovated surgical techniques, offered charitable medical services and fundraised for schools and churches.

## **Patrick O'Sullivan (1818–1904) - Businessman and politician**

From County Clare to convict, O'Sullivan was transported for theft in 1838. He went on to become a storekeeper and property investor in Ipswich and served over 20 years in the Queensland parliament. He made huge contributions to the built environment of Ipswich, including the Ulster Hotel and over 60 buildings.



## **John Flood (1841–1909) - Community leader**

Dublin-born Fenian convicted for nationalist activities, transported to Western Australia. After his pardon, he moved to Queensland, co-founded a prominent mining firm, established the Gympie Newspaper Co. Ltd and became a politician. He was a respected community leader and captain in the Irish Volunteer Corps and he fundraised for famine relief. Flood is fondly remembered with a Celtic cross monument in Gympie.

## **Owen Gorman (1799–1862) - Explorer and visionary**

Offaly-born British Army officer who became the last commandant of the Moreton Bay penal colony (1839–1842). He oversaw the transition of the settlement from a penal station to a free settlement. Gorman played a key role in early Queensland governance and infrastructure. His leadership helped shape Brisbane's development during its formative years.



## **John 'Gilburri' Fahy (c.1814–1902) - Interpreter**

Transported to Moreton Bay in 1838, Fahy escaped in 1842 and lived with the Wakka Wakka people for over a decade. Known as Gilburri, he integrated fully into their community, learning their language and customs. Captured in 1854, he later worked as an interpreter for explorers, bridging Aboriginal and European worlds.

Queensland Irish Association

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# Ireland's 1926 Census records published

Some things connect us across generations and make the past feel tangible rather than distant. The 1926 Census of Ireland is one of them. As the first census commissioned after the establishment of the Irish Free State, it offers a fascinating glimpse into everyday life a century ago and can spark a deeper exploration of family history.

On the night of 18 April 1926, people across Ireland recorded 21 pieces of information — from name and age to occupation, religion, housing conditions and ability to speak Irish. Each entry, written in the hand of the person who filled it in, captures a moment in time, from the grand Georgian streets of Dublin to the rural cottages of Kerry.

Exactly a century later, on 18 April 2026, these records were released for the first time. Available online and detailing nearly three million people and their households, the 1926 Census will be, for many, the first step on a journey that leads them to the home of their ancestors.

## **A Worldwide Community of Irish Descent**

With an estimated 70 million people worldwide connected to Ireland through ancestry, the release of the 1926 Census is expected to resonate far beyond the island's shores.

The detailed records offer an accessible entry point into Ireland's past, helping to illuminate family stories and guide those beginning to explore their heritage. Of course, grappling with family history can be a daunting project, which makes the census a great place to start.

As Zoë Reid, Keeper of Public Ser-



**Children with their hurleys, Galway.**

vices and Collections at the National Archives of Ireland notes, "This is a massive moment for anyone exploring their Irish roots and incredibly exciting for those overseas in particular. The records will all be online and completely free to access from anywhere in the world. So, say someone might know that their granny came from County Clare, or

they're a Murphy from Cork, there's an integrated map on the platform that will help them – for the first time – find where their ancestors came from, see the townland where they lived, and plan in more detail the areas they might want to visit."

The 1926 Census might seem like just another research tool, but it's

*Continued on page 11*

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# Ireland's 1926 Census records published

*Continued from page 10*

much more than that. As Zoë explains, “The census is about people. There’s a story behind every name.”

## **Census Night: Across Homes, Hotels and More**

The online map uses a 1924 Ordnance Survey map as its base layer, so it is as close and as accurate as possible to the lie of the land at the time of the census. Viewers will be able to zoom in to see their ancestors’ counties, towns, villages, parishes and indeed the streets where they lived.

A quirky and intriguing element of the census is that it doesn’t just cover households – it also includes information on institutions such as hospitals, barracks, prisons and even hotels.

“I think it’s absolutely fascinating that we can know who was staying in a particular hotel on census night in 1926,” Zoë notes. “There were international travellers from all over the world. Salesmen. Tourists. Working chefs from Switzerland and France. Visitors from Puerto Rico, Baltimore, Pittsburgh. Honeymooners who said they’d only been married for seven days!”

What that means for you is that if you stay, for example, in the Great Southern Killarney, The Imperial Hotel & Spa in Cork, or The Shelbourne



## **Kelly Showroom, Dublin.**

in Dublin, you can check out who walked through its front doors 100 years ago.

## **Beyond the Census**

For overseas visitors preparing to explore their roots on the Emerald Isle, Dublin serves as a natural starting point, offering a range of resources for uncovering Irish family heritage. The National Archives’ Genealogy Advisory Service on Bishop Street offers free, in-person guidance for those beginning or advancing their family history

research, with no appointment required.

Another key stop is EPIC The Irish Immigration Museum on Custom House Quay in the Docklands. Open seven days a week, it traces how Irish emigrants have influenced the world across the arts, science, sport, politics and innovation, offering a vivid overview of Ireland’s global story.

For deeper archival research, Glasnevin Cemetery Museum provides one of the country’s most extensive genealogy services. Using burial records dating back to 1832, the team helps to trace ancestral lines, piece together family stories and illuminate the historical context surrounding generations of Irish families.

To celebrate the centenary of the census and its release, visitors can also check out a new exhibition titled “The Story of Us: Ireland and the 1926 Census”, which opened in Dublin Castle from April 2026.

The 1926 Census records are now available on the National Archives of Ireland website: [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)



**Epic, The Irish Emigration Museum, Dublin City Docklands.**

*Words and Pictures: Ireland.com*

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# Dubliners tribute back with Seven Drunken Nights in Queensland

Proudly celebrating its incredible 10th Anniversary, having sold out venues worldwide, Seven Drunken Nights – The Dubliners' Songbook returns to Australia for 2026!

Performed by a phenomenal cast of Irish musicians, the show is packed full of classics like Whiskey in the Jar, The Irish Rover and Rocky Road to Dublin – guaranteed to get your toes tapping as they bring the joy of this much-loved Irish folk band back to the stage.

This ultimate feel-good production celebrates the musical mastery of The Dubliners, Ireland's favourite sons, in association with the legendary O'Donoghue's pub.

With breathtaking performances and authentic Irish spirit, the show spans over 50 years, commemorating the music of The Dubliners and celebrating the band that influenced many generations.

Don't miss your chance to see the



world class production that's brought a decade of unforgettable nights to packed out theatres. Seven Drunken Nights is the ultimate Irish show that has audiences across the globe returning year after year.

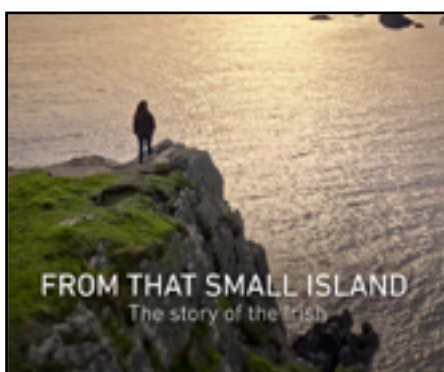
Queensland dates: 04 June Cairns, 07 June Rockhampton, 09 June Bundaberg, 10 June Noosa, 11 June Redcliffe, 12 June Cleveland, 13 June Brisbane, 14 June Caloundra. To book, visit [sevendrunkennights.com](https://sevendrunkennights.com).

## Colin Farrell narrates The Story of the Irish

Now available on SBS to watch on demand is From That Small Island: The Story Of The Irish.

The actor Colin Farrell narrates a 4 part series on a people whose impact reaches far beyond its island shores.

The series brings to life the extraordinary story of the Irish people, from the island's very first inhabitants to the global diaspora that now numbers over 80 million people. Shot on location in 17 countries worldwide, with contributions drawing from genetics and archaeology, we piece together the fascinating jigsaw of Ireland's earliest inhabitants. This series provides a compelling narrative of Ireland and the Irish. Through rich story-



telling, immersive visuals, and the latest scientific discoveries, the series paints an epic portrait of a people whose impact reaches far beyond these island shores.

Episode One: From The Beginning asks 'Who are the Irish and where did they come from?' They piece together the fascinating jigsaw of Ireland's earliest

inhabitants. They join archaeologists searching deep in caves on the trail of the earliest humans and then trace early peoples from hunter gatherers, to the first farmers of Céide Fields on the rugged coast of North Mayo, to the Celtic speaking people who succeeded them. They will also, for the first time on television, come face to face with Rathlin Man, one of Ireland's genetic ancestors, as we reveal the outcome of a facial reconstruction made possible due to advances in the sequencing of ancient DNA.

You can watch the series at this link: <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/tv-series/from-that-small-island-the-story-of-the-irish>



May Day celebrations at Wolston Farmhouse. Picture: [National Trust Queensland](#)

# Wolston Farmhouse hosts Family May Day Fair

Blossoms — and a touch of old-world tradition — returned to Brisbane this May, as Beltane-inspired customs quietly reappeared in an unexpected corner of Brisbane.

Beltane, the ancient Gaelic festival marking the start of summer in Ireland, evolved into May Day traditions centred on community gathering, music and seasonal renewal.

On Sunday 3 May 2026, the historic Wolston Farmhouse in Wacol hosted a relaxed May Day Fair, turning one of Brisbane's oldest surviving homes into a gathering place for music, dancing and community celebration.

Held across the Labour Day long weekend, the event drew on traditional May Day themes of gathering and seasonal change, with live music, dancing and family-friendly activities spread across the grounds.

Music was at the heart of the day. Irish traditional tunes featured alongside local performances, with Phillip's Dog bringing their convict-era

repertoire of bush ballads and early colonial songs. An Irish traditional musician also performed during the day, adding to the atmosphere and reinforcing the event's Celtic connections.

Wolston Farmhouse itself carries a strong Irish story. The Grindle family from County Monaghan became the last private owners of the property when they purchased it in 1907. Dairy farmers, they transformed the estate into a working homestead, raising their family there and maintaining the land for decades. The family remained until 1956, when the property was resumed for the expansion of the nearby Goodna Mental Hospital. Their long tenure helped preserve the house, which might otherwise have been lost, and their legacy remains closely tied to its survival today.

Across the day, traditional elements were brought to life in accessible ways.

Maypole dancing invited visitors to take a ribbon and join the circle, with guided dances welcoming both children and adults. Folk music carried across the lawns, while children made flower crowns and took part in heritage-inspired activities.

Families spread picnic rugs across the grounds, with coffee and ice cream available, creating an easy, social atmosphere that reflected the spirit of May Day itself.

For centuries, Beltane marked the arrival of summer in the northern hemisphere — a time of gathering, renewal and connection to the land. While Queensland's seasons differ, events like this show how those traditions continue to find a place locally.

Whether joining the dancing, listening to music or simply enjoying the space, the May Day Fair in Wacol brought people together in a way that echoed all the fun and colour of summer.

QUEENSLAND IRISH ASSOCIATION

# Bloomsday

"THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DAY IN THE IRISH LITERARY CALENDAR"

**TUESDAY 16TH JUNE**

A CELEBRATION OF MODERN IRISH LITERATURE

At the Queen Street Mall 12 Midday

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# 1916 Rising Commemoration at Nudgee



Then QIA President Jeff Spender and John McCormack place a wreath on the grave of 1916 Volunteer William (Dan) Ryan in Nudgee Cemetery at the Irish community's Easter 1916 Commemoration in April. Pictures: Mary Allen



**Having a Function**

We can add a whole lot more to your evening.

Photo's (minimum) printed the same night and returned before the function finishes.  
We will do FR photos of the event at no extra cost.  
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This is a great way to have a memory of the evening.

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## Contact us

We welcome content from Members and friends in this newsletter.

If you have news or an article you would like to see included, email the editor, our public relations officer Mary Allen, at [mary@queenslandirish.com.au](mailto:mary@queenslandirish.com.au)

You can also reach us through our website, [www.queenslandirish.com.au](http://www.queenslandirish.com.au), and on our social media pages.

Another great way to interact with QIA is by joining our Facebook [group](#), Queensland Irish Association Friends and Supporters.

Editor and designer: Mary Allen.

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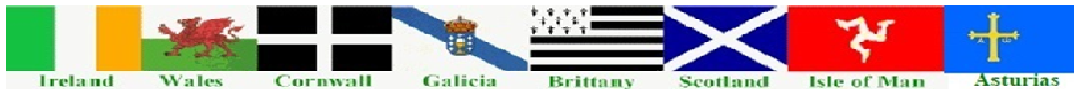
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# **JUNIOR CELTIC GAMES**

**Moorlands Park, Auchenflower, Brisbane**

**Sunday 31 May 2026 9.00am to 1.00pm**



**Ages up to 16 years permitted**

**FREE  
ADMISSION**

## ***WHAT'S ON***

### **Kids Celtic Games**

- Kilt Races ● Novelty Races & Games
- Tossing the Caber ● Tug-O-War
- Introduction to Gaelic Football

### **Prizes: Best Celtic dressed Boy and Girl**

- Raffle, Prizes, Giveaways



## ***WHAT'S THERE***

Light Refreshments available from food vans on site.  
Sausage Sizzle, Ice-Cream, Coffee, Soft Drinks etc

## ***WHAT TO BRING***

Hats, Umbrellas, Chairs/Blanket, Water, Sunscreen  
and Picnic Lunch if desired.

## ***HOW TO GET THERE***

### ***PUBLIC TRANSPORT 50c Fares***

**Train:** Auchenflower Train Station

**Bus:** Coronation Drive, such as routes 444 or 445. Get  
off at a stop near Land St or Wesley Hospital

**CityCat Ferry:** Get off at the Regatta Ferry Terminal.  
10-minute walk to Moorlands Park



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### **Information contact**

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