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## Bhuel. Conas atá tu? Consul General Claire McCarthy

A chairde,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to our revised and refreshed Consulate newsletter.

The Consulate team and I miss seeing you so much, here at the Consulate or on one of our many trips on the road. Though we are confined to base camp, the pandemic has allowed us to move around our large region much more easily. This morning I had a meeting in Dublin (Dublin, Ireland, not Dublin, Texas) and then gave a lecture to University of Oklahoma students – all without leaving my makeshift desk at home in Austin.

I have particularly enjoyed joining board meetings of some of our organisations to update them on how things are at home and, most usually, answer questions about when the 14 day self-isolation requirement will be removed for people travelling to Ireland. (The answer is we don't know, but we do know the Government is looking at

all options closely...watch this space.)

The Consulate team (pictured below) is at your disposal. Never hesitate to contact us if you think we can be of assistance.

Warm regards and I look forward to seeing you soon albeit through a screen and with my camera at a flattering angle.

Is mise le meas,  
Claire Mc.



*Claire McCarthy, Cecilia Tirado, Laura Ramsel and Paul Breen.*

## Frequently asked questions during COVID-19

**Can I travel to Ireland?  
Can I renew my Irish  
passport? Is the  
Consulate open?**

The answers to most of your questions about how COVID-19 has impacted travel to Ireland, Irish passport renewals, Irish citizenship applications

and much, much more can be found on our website ([www.dfa.ie/austin](http://www.dfa.ie/austin)).

As always you can call us on +1.512.792.5500 on Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 12:30pm CST for general questions.

You can call us on the same phone number at any time in the event of an emergency.



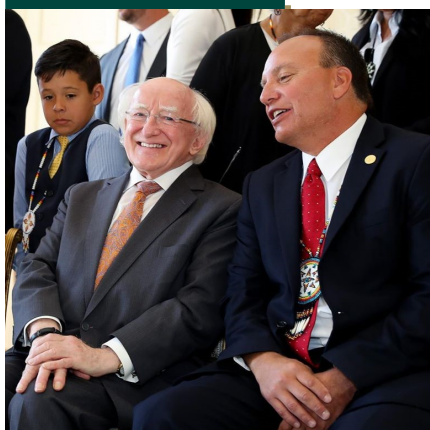
## Choctaw Nation generosity during the Great Famine inspires COVID-19 fundraising campaign

In recent weeks, the story about the special relationship between the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the people of Ireland has been featured in the media on both sides of the Atlantic (such as [The New York Times](#) and [The Irish Times](#)).

This special relationship dates back to the Great Famine when in 1847, less than sixteen years after their own dislocation known as the 'Trail of Tears', the Choctaw people made a generous contribution towards Irish famine relief efforts.

The incredible online fundraising efforts by Irish people to help Native American communities affected by COVID-19 has reinforced the connection between the 'Kindred Spirits' on both sides of the Atlantic.

### 'Kindred Spirits' Timeline - the Choctaw Nation and the people of Ireland:



*President Michael D. Higgins and Chief Gary Batton of the Choctaw Nation at Áras an Uachtaráin in Dublin, Ireland in 2017.*

- 1831 – The Choctaw Trail of Tears.
- 1847 – The Choctaw contribute to a relief effort for the Great Famine in Ireland.
- 1990 – The Choctaw Nation participates in the Famine Walk in Doolough, Co. Mayo – click [here](#) for a short video about the walk.
- 1992 – Several Irish participate in a 500-mile walk to commemorate the 'Trail of Tears' – click [here](#) to download a RTÉ documentary about the walk.
- 1995 - President of Ireland Mary Robinson visits the Choctaw Tribal Council in Durant, Oklahoma.
- 2017 – Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton unveils the 'Kindred Spirits' sculpture in Midleton, Co. Cork and meets with President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins.
- 2018 – An Taoiseach (Prime Minister of Ireland) Leo Varadkar visits Durant, Oklahoma to launch the Choctaw-Ireland Scholarship – click [here](#) to read more.
- 2019 – Jessica Militante is awarded the inaugural scholarship to undertake a master's degree in Creative Writing at University College Cork.

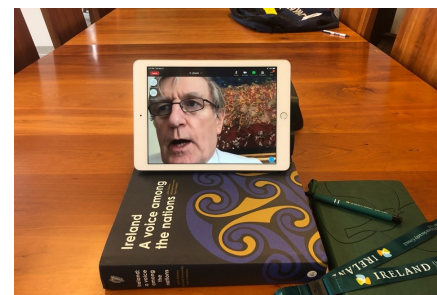
## Virtual Town Hall with Ambassador Dan Mulhall

Ambassador of Ireland, Dan Mulhall, visited our region (virtually) on 21 May for a 'town hall' meeting with leaders from some of the Irish organizations throughout our region.

Ambassador Mulhall fondly remembered his recent visits to Southwestern region since arriving in the U.S. in 2017 and

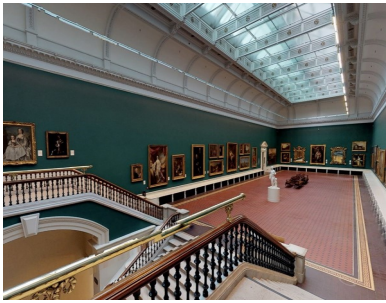
commented on how is eager to return to the region in the future.

The Ambassador thanked the Irish organizations for the support they are offering throughout the region and called on everyone to ensure that St Patrick's Day in 2021 is the largest celebration of Ireland and Irish culture yet.



**Ambassador of Ireland, Dan Mulhall, speaking with representatives of Irish organisations during the virtual town hall.**

## Goings On in Ireland



**National Gallery of Ireland.**

Although museums, galleries, theatres and music venues are closed in Ireland at the moment, it has never been easier to access Irish culture online.

Over the last couple of months we have added a number of articles to our website about some of the great initiatives that you can access from home:

- Take a virtual tour of the **National Gallery of Ireland** – click [here](#).
- Watch the **Abbey Theatre’s** Dear Ireland featuring Irish artists, writers and actors in 50 self-taped performances – click [here](#).
- Watch (or re-watch) a live concert from the **Other Voices** series filmed at Whelan’s, the National Gallery of Ireland and other popular locations in Ireland – click [here](#).
- Check out our list of **online Irish activities for children** including a daily drawing challenge with Irish Marvel artist Will Sliney and much more – click [here](#).

## Shades of Green

In partnership with the Embassy of Ireland in Washington DC, we will be launching an online series called “Shades of Green” in June to celebrate the work of Irish artists in the U.S.

Follow our social media channels for these short videos of Irish music, dance, poetry and performative arts.

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/IrelandCGAustin](http://www.twitter.com/IrelandCGAustin)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/embassyofirelandusa/](http://www.facebook.com/embassyofirelandusa/)

Keep an eye out for some familiar faces from across our region! Austin-based singer songwriter Pat Byrne, Kansas-based vintage rock band Carswell & Hope, and Austin-based composer and violinist Niamh Fahy are just some of the Irish artists that will be featured in the series.

Don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any suggestions for other Irish artists or groups that you would like to see as part of the “Shades of Green” series.



**Niamh Fahy performing at the Austin Public Library, February 2020.**

## In Profile: Kansas City Irish Center

Since opening in 2007, the Kansas City Irish Center has run a wide range of programs, classes and events to celebrate Irish culture, music and language.

In response to COVID-19, the Center has moved their programming online including their book club and film series.

In recent weeks, the their film series discussion has looked at Brooklyn (the 2015 drama starring Saoirse Ronan) and

The Secret of Kells (the 2009 animated movie by Cartoon Saloon).

The next instalment of their film series takes place on June 4 at 7:00pm CT and will focus on the 1991 musical comedy The Commitments (based on the novel by Roddy Doyle).

To learn more about the Center’s classes and activities and to find out how you can support their efforts, please click [here](#) to visit their website.



**Drexel Hall, home of the Kansas City Irish Center.**



**Trim Castle on River Boyne.**

## News from Ireland

- The Government of Ireland published [‘The Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business’](#) in May. The roadmap sets out Ireland’s plan for lifting COVID-19 restrictions over five phases.
- Poetry Ireland hosted ‘A Transatlantic Tribute’ to celebrate the life of the Irish poet Eavan Boland who passed away in April – click [here](#) to watch the tribute on YouTube.
- Uachtarán na hÉireann (the President of Ireland) Michael D. Higgins paid tribute to the American songwriter John Prine who passed away in April – click [here](#) to read the full statement.

- Ireland’s campaign for a seat on the United Nations Security Council for the period 2021-2022 will go to a vote this month – click here to [hear](#) from former President of Ireland Mary Robinson, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Bono from U2 about this initiative.
- Uachtarán na hÉireann (the President of Ireland) Michael D. Higgins paid tribute to the front line health workers during a recent interview on The Late Late Show on Ireland’s RTÉ TV channel – click [here](#) to watch the full interview.

### Got a suggestion?

Please contact us if you have an idea or a suggestion for the next edition of our newsletter! We would love to feature stories and news from around our region.



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## Bloomsday 2020

Each year on June 16 we mark Bloomsday, the celebration of James Joyce (1882-1941) and his pioneering modernist novel, *Ulysses* (1922) which is widely regarded as one of the greatest books ever written.

We are lucky to have two great institutions in our region that celebrate the work of Joyce year round – the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas in Austin and the James Joyce Quarterly at the University of Tulsa.

Bloomsday celebrations this year will look quite different but keep an eye on our social media channels on June 16 to hear from one very well-known Texan who has a special affinity for *Ulysses* and the work of James Joyce.

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/IrelandCGAustin](https://www.twitter.com/IrelandCGAustin)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/embassyofirelandusa/](https://www.facebook.com/embassyofirelandusa/)

If you are interested in learning more about James Joyce, remember that there is a *Finnegans Wake Reading Group* in Austin.

The group is meeting online on a weekly basis during COVID-19 and we look forward to welcoming them back to the Consulate for their in-person meetings in the future – click [here](#) to visit their website for more information.

