

Happy St Patrick's Day



Letter from Adrian O'Neill, Irish Ambassador

Dear Friends,

A very happy St. Patrick's Day to you!

I hope you are all keeping well and are encouraged by the warmer weather, longer evenings, and colourful Spring flowers emerging from their annual hibernation.

It is hard to believe that a year ago, around St Patrick's Day 2020, that the UK went into its first lockdown. For many, it has been a challenging year - not being able to move with the freedoms we were used to and limited occasions to see our friends and loved ones. Some in our community have experienced illness caused by the virus and - very sadly - also bereavements. May they rest in peace.

The need to distance and isolate from one another has been especially hard. On a day of such cultural significance as St Patrick's Day - when we normally come together to celebrate our heritage - our efforts must instead be concentrated on ensuring that we remain safe and well to see out this unprecedented period. We

take heart in the progress made under the vaccination programme, which has done much already to lift our collective spirits!

I wish to pay tribute to the Irish community and friends of Ireland in South London, including Southwark, Lambeth, Lewisham, and nearby neighbourhoods. Your life experiences and personal contributions helped build modern British society, and your sense of community has maintained and strengthened our Irish culture, identity, and heritage here in London.

I would like to thank Rita Andrews and Richard Smyth, the Board of Trustees, and all the dedicated staff and committed volunteers at Southwark Irish Pensioners Project, who I know have done an excellent job of staying in contact with and delivering services to you in the last year.

I hope it is not long before we can say hello again in person and enjoy a belated celebration together in Millwall. Until then, I again send you my very best wishes for a happy St. Patrick's Day.

Beannachtaí na féile Pádraig oraibh go léir!

Adrian O'Neill, Ambassador



Colcannon

On days when traditional recipes were required for the Irish Times newspaper, Theodora Fitzgibbon often plumped for Colcannon, which is essentially mashed potato with shredded cabbage. Her slightly more sophisticated recipe is one worth trying out.



Ingredients

½lb each of cabbage or kale
½lb potatoes
1 small leek or some spring onions
2½fl oz of milk or cream
Small pinch of nutmeg or mace
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2oz melted butter

Method

If using kale, strip the leaves from the tough stalk, or remove stalk from the cabbage. Cook quickly in boiling salted water, but do not overcook.

Drain very well and chop finely. Cook the potatoes and while they are cooking, chop the leek and simmer in the milk until it is just tender, but not mushy. Drain the potatoes, season and mash them well. Then stir in the cooked leek and milk, adding more milk if needed. Beat well.

Finally blend a little of the kale or cabbage into this until it is all absorbed and is a greeny fluff. Add nutmeg and taste for seasoning.

Heat the entire mixture very gently, then either add melted butter or make a hole in the middle of the colcannon in a warmed dish and pour it in. Serves 3 - 4 people.

For each petal on the shamrock this brings a wish your way. Good health, good luck, and happiness for today and every day.

Old Irish Blessing



St. Patrick's Day

by Jean Blewett

There's an Isle, a green Isle, set in the sea,
Here's to the Saint that blessed it!
And here's to the billows wild and free
That for centuries have caressed it.

Here's to the day when the men that roam
Send longing eyes o'er the water.
Here's to the land that still spells home
To each loyal son and daughter.

Here's to old Ireland - fair, I ween,
With the blue skies stretched
above her.
Here's to her shamrock warm and green,
And here's to the hearts that love her!



Free Workshops

aimed at people who want to begin to trace their Irish family history, as part of St Patrick's Day celebrations on Wednesday, 17th March 2021.



Paul Wilkins has been teaching people how to trace their Irish genealogy for the past 15 years. He started teaching at Warwick University and then taught at various colleges, councils and libraries but all this stopped with the arrival of coronavirus.

Paul is running two workshops, via Zoom from 1.00pm to 1.40pm and from 7.00pm to 7.40pm.

To book your place on the workshop, please email Paul on thefamilyhistorydetectives@gmail.com