

RETURN TO LONDON TOWN 2025

LONDON'S 27TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE



Festival Website

MAGAZINE

www.returntolondontown.org • www.irishmusicinlondon.org

**FRIDAY 24 – MONDAY 27
OCTOBER 2025**

CONCERTS, SESSIONS, ALBUM
LAUNCHES, CÉILÍS, WORKSHOPS
AND MORE

The Crown Hotel and
other local Cricklewood and
Kilburn venues

FULL FESTIVAL PROGRAMME INSIDE

FREE

CONTENTS

WELCOME

- 03 Director's welcome
- 04 Main Festival venues
- 05 Tribute to Geoff Holland

LISTINGS

- 14 Festival Listings
- 14 Full Event Programme
- 14 Festival Listings

DIRECTOR: KAREN RYAN

IMDL EXPANDED TEAM:

Margaret Reilly, James Carty, Fee McAuliffe, Caitlín Mannion, Annie Quinn, Daniel O'Brien, Cathy Gillard, Sarah Thompson, Helena Mullins, Jackie Quirke, Tara McCarthy, Coral Haran, Brigid O'Toole, Brogan McAuliffe, Rachel Isherwood, Eoin Griffin

PRODUCTION: GERRY LOGUE

DESIGN: SOHAG HASAN

COVER PHOTO: BY JAMES FRAHER

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WEB DESIGN: Paddy Egan

FESTIVAL VENUES

For venue maps see page 4.

THE CROWN HOTEL

142-152 Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2 3ED

Main Festival spaces at the Clayton Crown Hotel are: Ivy Suite (basement), Lounge by Ivy Suite (basement), Sala Room (first floor), Breakfast Room (first floor), The Lounge (ground floor) The Crown Pub (ground floor), Brent Room (ground floor) and Camden Room (ground floor)

ST AGNES' PARISH CENTRE,

22 Caddington Road,
London NW2 1DQ

ASHFORD PLACE,

60 Ashford Road,
Cricklewood NW2 6TU

THE KILN THEATRE,

(Cinema) 269 Kilburn High
Road, London NW6 7JR

SIR COLIN CAMPBELL,

264-266 Kilburn High Road, London NW6 2BY

BARRETT'S FREEHOUSE,

239 Cricklewood Broadway
NW2 3HP

LUCKY 7,

7 Cricklewood Lane, NW2 1ET

ELEMENTREE BAR AND RESTAURANT,

108 Cricklewood Broadway,
London NW2 3EJ

TICKETS

All tickets for festival events can be purchased at www.returntolondontown.org

SPECIAL OFFER COMBINATION TICKETS

All-inclusive tickets for Friday, Saturday and Monday concerts at The Crown Hotel, plus our Saturday and Sunday céilís at St Agnes' and our Sunday evening céilí at The Crown, are just £50, from www.returntolondontown.org



London's Annual Festival of traditional Irish music, song and dance is presented by 'Irish Music and Dance in London (IMDL)', for more information about year-round events and to sign up to our mailing list see: www.irishmusicinlondon.org

Irish Music and Dance in London would like to thank its generous donors and sponsors who have supported this year's Festival

WELCOME

Welcome to London's 27th Festival of Traditional Irish Music, Song and Dance! We're thrilled to present an extraordinary lineup of musical talent for this milestone celebration of Ireland's rich cultural heritage.

London holds a special place in the story of Irish music – for generations, Irish emigrants have made this city their home, bringing with them the melodies, rhythms, and traditions that continue to flourish today.

The traditional Irish pub session was born here in London, thanks to the pioneering musicians who arrived in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Their influence lives on through a vibrant community that spans generations: the original trailblazers who still lead sessions today, their musical descendants who learned at their feet, the new wave of young Irish emigrants who continue to come to London in large numbers, and musicians from all backgrounds who have fallen in love with Irish music who we wholeheartedly embrace. We celebrate this beautiful tapestry of voices and stories.

It is 22 years since the wonderful Danú played at the Shaw Theatre as part of our 5th Return to Camden Town Festival – we can't wait to welcome the band to Cricklewood for our Friday night concert in their 30th Anniversary year.

Similarly, the fabulous Friel Sisters return after seven years since their memorable performance at The Green Note during our 20th Festival – we can't wait to welcome them for our Saturday night concert as they celebrate the release of their new album, *Northern Sky*.

This year's festival truly embodies the spirit of 'Returning to London Town'. We're thrilled to welcome back musicians who once called this city home, including Brian Kelly, Charlie Harris, Colm McGonigle, Mick Mulvey, Chan Reid, Josephine Marsh, and Tom Cussen. IMDL's youth performance group, The Trad Gathering, will also perform music from the repertoire of another renowned musical figure who was previously part of the London Irish music scene, the outstanding flute player (and maker), Marcus HERNON.

At the same time, we're excited to introduce festival newcomers Aoife and Deirdre Granville, Liam O'Connor, and Shane Meehan to our community. And, of course, we continue to showcase the huge numbers of brilliant musicians still resident in this big city.

We dedicate special moments this year to remember two giants who shaped the traditional Irish music and dance community. In 2021, the legendary Seán Keane, Dublin fiddler and longtime Chieftains member, graced our festival alongside Matt Molloy in what became an unforgettable highlight.

We were very sorry to hear the news of Seán's passing in 2023. This year, we honour his memory with a Monday film screening of *Seán Keane: A Portrait of an Artist* at The Kiln, Kilburn, introduced by two fellow Dublin musicians and important figures in Irish music, Mick (flute) and Liam (fiddle) O'Connor.

In January of this year, we were very sad to lose a huge figure in the London Irish Set Dancing scene, a friend to all and my co-founder of Return to Camden Town Festival, Geoff Holland. We pay tribute to Geoff in the forthcoming pages and through his set dancing and Festival legacy in London.

Our festival offers something for everyone across four incredible days – free, accessible music, song and dance events for those who would like to dip their toes in for the first time; a jam-packed triple bill concert programme to really enjoy the music and song up close and personal; workshops for learners of the tradition; the relaxed flow and shared camaraderie of a session; a traditional Irish music quiz for the real aficionados; and ceilis for our enthusiastic set dancing community.

This is more than a festival – it's a homecoming for London's Irish music, song and dance community, a showcase of our vibrant traditions for our friends and neighbours in multicultural London Town, and a chance to make new friends and inspire young and old to get involved!

Our heartfelt thanks go to The Crown and their wonderful team including Craig, Nishkarsh, and Rashmi, along with Renee and Danny at Ashford Place and all our participating venues. We're deeply grateful to our sponsors and funders whose continued support makes our cultural work possible, and to the dedicated IMDL team who work with me throughout the year, hosting (almost monthly) events while always looking forward with planning for our special long weekend in October – you really are wonderful!

We're also hugely grateful to every volunteer who gives up their time to help bring these events to life throughout the year, and most especially on this Festival weekend. A big thank you to everyone who helps make things happen, you do a great service for the London Irish music, song and dance community.

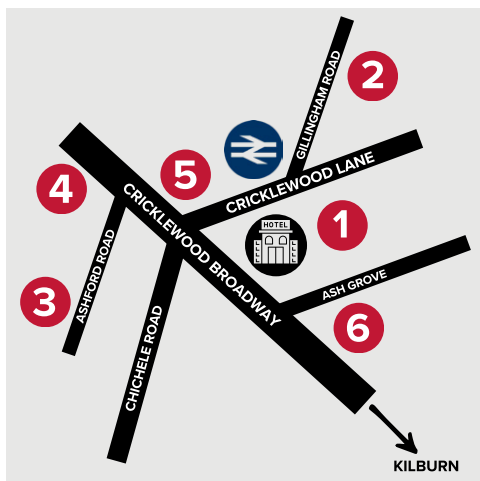
Join us for four unforgettable days of music, song, dance, and community in the heart of London Town.

I hope you have a great festival!

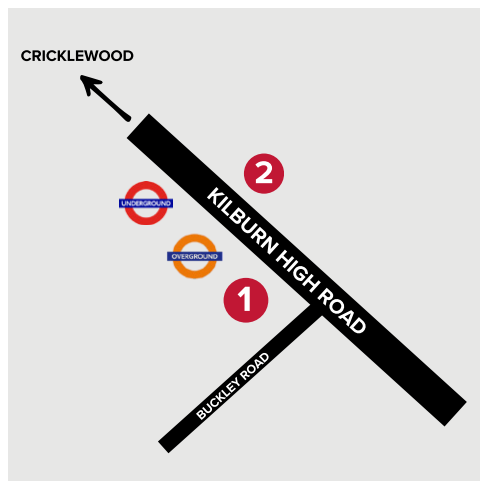


FESTIVAL VENUES

CRICKLEWOOD:



KILBURN:



- 1 THE CROWN HOTEL**
152 Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2 3ED
- 2 ST AGNES' PARISH CENTRE**
22 Caddington Road Corner of Gillingham Road
and Caddington Road, London NW2 1DQ
- 3 ASHFORD PLACE**
60 Ashford Road, London NW2 6TU
- 4 BARRETT'S FREEHOUSE**
239 Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2 3HP
- 5 LUCKY 7**
7 Cricklewood Lane, London, NW2 1ET
- 6 ELEMENTREE**
Elementree Bar and Restaurant
108 Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2 3EJ

- 1 KILN THEATRE**
269 Kilburn High Rd, London NW6 7JR, UK
- 2 SIR COLIN CAMPBELL**
264-266 Kilburn High Road, London NW6 2BY

NOTICE RE PARKING

Please note that there is free on street parking on a large number of roads on the Cricklewood Lane side of Cricklewood Broadway, from Friday after 6.30pm, all day Saturday and all day Sunday (excluding Elm, Oak, Yew and Ash Groves). There is a limited amount of metered parking on the Chichele Road side of Cricklewood Broadway (please read signs carefully). There are 38 parking spaces in the underground car park at The Crown Hotel (charges apply).

Buses to Kilburn: 16, 32, 189, 316, 332



GEOFF HOLLAND

Co Founder of Return to Camden Town Festival

We were so very sorry to hear about the recent passing (January 2025) of my friend and partner in all things Festival from way back, the mighty Geoff Holland. Truly a leading light for decades in London - promoting and teaching set dancing, community and Irish music.

Geoff had a fantastic passion for set dancing and Irish music, and a wonderful way of teaching in such a calm manner. He ran his first Sunday of the month céilís at the London Irish Centre (as well as set dancing classes at the venue and Cecil Sharp House) for about 30 years, attracting people from across the country. He was everyone's friend.

I first met Geoff in the very early 1990s. During my first year at university, living in halls of residence on Camden Road, I used to pop along on the odd Tuesday evening at the London Irish Centre. I would sit in and play with my friends, John Coakley and Johnny O'Leary

who were playing for Geoff's regular set dancing class there. Not long after I began teaching music at the Centre myself. In those days we'd often meet Geoff and a host of London's set dancers on the thriving session scene. I have particularly fond memories of regular bursts of set dancing at our Sunday afternoon sessions at the Powerhaus in Islington.

I really came to know Geoff when we were simultaneously considering the idea that London's Irish music and dance community needed a Festival. The London Irish Centre's Director at the time, Jerry Kivlehan was of a similar mindset, and brought us all together to make it happen. In 1999 'Return to Camden Town' Festival was born - It was an exciting time!

We worked closely together as co-directors for the first six years of the Festival (in those days - a 10 day event), both revelling in this wonderful opportunity to bring so many people together in shared love of

traditional Irish music, song and dance. Even after Geoff stepped back from his organising role, he remained dedicated to promoting and supporting the Festival.

We were very fortunate that he chose to focus his energies for a large number of years on being the Festival's main photographer - and what a wonderful photographer he was! Geoff had a knack for capturing people in their natural state and always went about his photography in the most wonderfully unobtrusive way.

A man with great ideals - an English man, whose love of our traditions found him firmly at the centre of the London Irish community and whose dedication to set dancing and music helped to spread his knowledge and love to the masses - a great partner to Noreen, dedicated family man and grandfather - Geoff Holland was loved by many and will be sorely missed.

Sending continued love and deepest sympathies to Noreen, Marion and all of Geoff's family and friends.

Karen Ryan



RETURN TO LONDON TOWN FESTIVAL LISTINGS

LISTINGS:

All-inclusive tickets for all ticketed concerts and céilís are available to purchase for the bargain price of £50! Individual event tickets are also available. Tickets available at: www.returntolondontown.org

FRIDAY 24 OCTOBER 2025

EVENING CONCERT

- DANÚ
 - AOIFE AND DEIRDRE GRANVILLE
 - THE TRAD GATHERING
-

Ivy Suite, The Crown Hotel (Doors 7.30pm, Tickets £25 / £7 U18s)



DANÚ

For three decades, Danú have been at the heart of Irish traditional music, captivating audiences with their virtuosity, creativity, and deep connection to Ireland's cultural heritage. Formed in 1995 in County Waterford, the band's journey began with an impromptu session after a céilí in Dungarvan. In 1996, the group were invited to represent Ireland at the Inter Celtique Festival in Lorient, Brittany, where they won the prestigious Boules Des Korrigans award for best up-and-coming band.

Over the years, they have toured extensively across Europe, the Middle East, and North America, gracing stages at iconic venues and major festivals across the UK, Denmark, France and beyond. Danú's recordings have earned critical acclaim. Their live performances have been broadcast on NPR, CBC, and the BBC.

Danú's current lineup, features Benny McCarthy (button accordion), Nell Ní Chróinín (vocals, tin whistle), Oisín McAuley (fiddle, backing vocals), Éamon Doorley (bouzouki),

Tony Byrne (guitar), Ivan Goff (pipes, flute, whistle), and Billy Sutton (bodhrán, mandolin, backing vocals).

To celebrate their 30th anniversary, Danú is releasing *The Pearl Album (Live in Celebration)*, a stunning collection of 30 tracks recorded live in over 25 iconic venues. The album showcases the band's mastery of traditional Irish music, blending intricate instrumental arrangements with Nell Ní Chróinín's exceptional vocals.



AOIFE AND DEIRDRE GRANVILLE

Aoife and Deirdre Granville grew up in a bilingual home in the town of Dingle, Co Kerry, where they learned much of their music. Aoife is a flute player and fiddler as well as singer and currently works at the Folklore Department

at University College Cork. She was appointed to the Arts Council in 2022 and is currently recording her third solo album.

Deirdre is a harpist, flute player and singer and released her first solo album *Imram* a few years ago.

She is a board member of Harp Ireland and a secondary school music teacher in Dingle. Deirdre was recently awarded an artistic residency at Centre Culturel Paris, where she completed a compositional project.

Aoife and Deirdre recently recorded duet tracks on *Beauty an Oileáin*, a collection of music and song from the Blasket Islands recorded by descendants of islanders. They have just completed the recording of a duet album which will soon be released. Aoife and Deirdre's music and interpretation of songs have been shaped considerably by the traditions of West Kerry.



THE TRAD GATHERING

IMDL's London-wide youth project The Trad Gathering features a large group of young traditional Irish musicians led by Karen Ryan and Pete Quinn. The project was founded in 2008; jointly commissioned by

the BBC Proms and Return to Camden Town Festival.

In recent years, the group have been celebrating music from the repertoires of prominent members of the London Irish music scene, including:

Bryan Rooney, The McCarthy Family, Roger Sherlock, Lucy Farr, Danny Meehan, John Bowe, Julia Clifford, Mick O'Connor and Tommy Maguire. The Trad Gathering have performed at the Royal Albert Hall, Cadogan Hall, Kings Place, Royal Festival Hall, Mayor of London's St Patrick's Day Festival at Trafalgar Square and many more.

This evening, members of the group will play their debut performance of tunes from the repertoire of the legendary Connemara flute player, Marcus Hernon.

SESSIONS

5pm The Crown Hotel (Mezzanine) - Colette O'Leary, Finbar and Peter Murphy, Cathy Kingcombe, Peter McAlinden

8pm Crown Pub – Rita Farrell, Caitlin Mahon, Cormac Mac Murchu

9pm Lucky 7 – Finola Ryan, Mick Mulvey, Fionn Ó hAlmhain

10pm The Lounge – Tara Breen, Anna Friel, Marty Barry

Late Night Sala Sessions 11pm The Crown Hotel (Sala Room – bar open til 2am) – Noreen Cullen, Adrian Burns, Brian Kelly

SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2025

WORKSHOPS, SESSIONS, AFTERNOON AND EVENING CONCERTS

Please note that instrumental workshops are aimed at intermediate to advanced level players. Beginners are welcome to purchase tickets to attend as observers. Please arrive at the workshop venue 30 minutes before start time to allow for registration. Tickets may be purchased on the door, but advance booking is recommended as workshops are very popular and places are limited.

WORKSHOPS

FLUTE WORKSHOP WITH IVAN GOFF

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

ACCORDION WORKSHOP WITH BENNY MCCARTHY

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

UILEANN PIPES WORKSHOP WITH SHEILA FRIEL

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

CONCERTINA WORKSHOP WITH ALEX KELLY

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

SINGING WORKSHOP WITH CATHAL Ó CURRÁIN

11am- 1pm – Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

TIN WHISTLE WORKSHOP WITH ANNA FRIEL

11am-1pm - The Crown Hotel - £15 / £7 under 18

HARP WORKSHOP WITH DEIRDRE GRANVILLE

11am-1pm - The Crown Hotel - £15 / £7 under 18

BANJO WORKSHOP WITH BRIAN KELLY

11am-1pm - The Crown Hotel - £15 / £7 under 18

FIDDLE WORKSHOP WITH OISÍN MCAULEY

11am-1pm - The Crown Hotel - £15 / £7 under 18

STRINGS ACCOMPANIMENT WORKSHOP WITH ÉAMONN DOORLEY

11am-1pm - The Crown Hotel - £15 / £7 under 18

AFTERNOON CHILDREN'S CÉILÍ DANCING WORKSHOP WITH ANNE DRURY

1.30-2.30pm - Sala Room, The Crown Hotel - £7 (under 18 only – U12s must be accompanied by an adult)

SEAN NÓS SINGING WORKSHOP WITH NELL NÍ CHRONÍN

1.30-3.30pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT WORKSHOP WITH GERALDINE COTTER

1.30-3.30pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18 - please bring your own keyboard

BODHRÁN WORKSHOP WITH BILLY SUTTON

1.30-3.30pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18



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INSTRUMENTAL WORKSHOP TUTORS

See concert listings for biographies for Deirdre Granville, Geraldine Cotter, Brian Kelly, The Friel Sisters (Anna Friel and Sheila Friel) and Danú (Ivan Goff, Benny McCarthy, Nell Ní Chronín, Oisín McAuley and Éamonn Doorley)

ALEX KELLY



County Sligo concertina player, **Alex Kelly**, comes from a very musical family. He was a member of the national award winning Sligo group: Spraoi. He has been a highly valued member of the traditional Irish session scene here in London ever since he moved over in recent years – first playing sessions in West London with Dublin accordionist, Conal Cuttle and fiddler, Deirdre Glynn and now a regular session

player across London. In 2019 he was involved in performances of Michael Rooney's De Cuéllar Suite which pays tribute to the Spanish Armada. Alex works in London as a secondary school teacher.

Alex is regularly very well received as a tutor at our annual Festival – we are delighted to welcome him back to teach at Return to London Town Festival this year.

CATHAL Ó CURRÁIN



Cathal Ó Curráin is a multi-instrumentalist from Gaith Dobhair,

Donegal, who specialises in Irish Traditional and Folk Music on fiddle, banjo, bouzouki and song. From an early age Cathal was immersed in music from attending regular sessions in Teach Hiúdaí Beag with the likes of Mairéad and Ciarán Ó Maonaigh. Hailing from a family that are best known for their singing Cathal learned his songs from his aunties Caitlín and Bríd Joe Jack.

Performing from a young age Cathal has travelled the world with different bands to America, Australia, New Zealand and all throughout Europe.

His most recent work features on albums with The High Seas, The Friel Sisters, Bláth na hÓige, Aoife Scott with Ron Block of Alison Krauss and Union Station and his debut solo album Cosán Ceoil was launched in 2022.

Cathal also presents an Irish Language Music Programme on TG4 called Féile an Earagail showcasing some of the best folk music in Ireland.

He was awarded “Best Emerging Artist” at the 2022 RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards.

AFTERNOON CHILDREN'S CÉILÍ DANCING WORKSHOP

Sala Room, The Crown Hotel (1.30-2.30pm, Tickets £7): Anne Drury

A fun introduction to Céilí Dancing for Children with experienced primary school and dance teacher-Anne Drury.

ANNE DRURY



Anne Drury has over 30 years' experience in teaching and learning various forms of Irish dances - céilí, set dancing and sean nós - having learnt herself from dancing masters across Ireland. Anne's knowledge spans a variety of styles with different formations and numbers. She also has knowledge of footwork for particular dance styles. We are delighted to welcome Anne

back to teaching at the Festival.

No experience is needed for this workshop, footwork will be shown partner not needed.

This workshop is open to children and young participants from age 5 up to the age of 18. Children under 12 years of age must be accompanied by an adult (parents/guardians are welcome to join if they wish).

Programmed Music Sessions from 1pm until late: The Crown Hotel, plus other Cricklewood and Kilburn venues - FREE

SESSIONS

- 12pm** The Crown Hotel (Mezzanine) – Liam Nolan, Oisín McGinley, Katie Maguire, Tom Campbell
- 12pm** Elementree Bar and Restaurant - Clare Friel, Caitlín Mannion, James O'Grady, Marty Barry
- 1pm** The Crown Hotel (The Lounge) – Sinéad Munroe, Mick and Mary Linane, Reg Hall
- 2pm** The Crown Hotel (Crown Pub) – Elaine Finn, Joe O'Connor, Brendan Dempsey, Finbar Walsh
- 2pm** Lucky 7 – Bryony Lemon, Phillipe and Ali Barnes
- 3pm** The Crown Hotel (Sala Room) Tutor Led Session – Éamonn Cotter, Maeve Donnelly and Peter McAlinden
- 5pm** The Crown Hotel (The Lounge) - Noreen Cullen, Hugh Sheehan, Adrian Burns
- 6pm** The Crown Hotel (Sala Room) Singing Session hosted by Jackie Quirke with guest Nell Ní Chronín
- 6.30pm** The Crown Hotel (Crown Pub) – Mick O'Connor, John Bowe, Tad Sargent
- 7.30pm** Sir Colin Campbell - Marie McCormack, Marion Gray, Mick Bailey
- 10pm** The Crown Hotel (The Lounge) – Andy Martyn, Adrian Bourke, Pete Quinn

Late Night Sala Sessions 11pm The Crown Hotel (Sala Room – bar open til 2am) – Mark Conyard, Peter Coughlan and John Gaughan

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AFTERNOON CONCERT

Please note that all advertised concert times are door opening times. Performances will commence 30 minutes after doors open.

- TARA BREEN AND MARTY BARRY
 - BRIAN KELLY AND TAD SARGENT
 - MICK MULVEY, SHANE MEEHAN AND PETE QUINN
-

Ivy Suite, The Crown Hotel (Doors 2pm, Tickets £15 / £7 U18s)

TARA BREEN AND MARTY BARRY



Tara Breen is a highly acclaimed Irish musician and a celebrated figure in the world of traditional Irish music. Born and raised in County Clare, Tara developed a deep connection to Irish music from a young age, hugely influenced by her musician father Martin. Tara's musical journey began in her early childhood when she was introduced to the fiddle, she honed her skills under the guidance of local musicians and teachers.

Tara gained numerous All-Ireland titles in both fiddle and flute.

Tara's reputation as a skilled musician quickly spread, leading her to collaborate with some of the most respected names in Irish music. Tara joined the legendary bands, Stockton's Wing and The Chieftains. Her performances with the groups have taken her to prestigious venues worldwide. Tara was also a founding member of *Ciorras*, a group formed as part of the TG4 series *Lorg Lunny*, which showcased emerging Irish talent under the mentorship of Dónal Lunny.

Tara is a full time member of both Breen/ Rynne/ Muarry and Notify. Her playing of fiddle, flute and saxophone appears on recordings with these bands and other recordings due to her high demand as a session musician. Tara's debut solo album *Sooner or Later* is officially released this year.



Marty Barry is a traditional musician and singer from Banbridge County Down, playing guitar and banjo. Marty gained a huge interest in music from a young age, he went on to study at the University of Limerick. Since graduating, Marty has been a full time performer/ tutor and is working on his debut solo album. He has toured extensively throughout Europe, Australia and China. Marty's recording credits on traditional albums include Caitlin Nic Gabhann, Ciarán Ó Maonaigh and Cathal Ó Curráin's album *The High Seas*, Alan Reid and Rachel Conlon's *A Quare Yield*. Marty performs regularly with The Friel Sisters and recording on their latest release *Northern Sky*.

BRIAN KELLY AND TAD SARGENT



Brian Kelly learnt banjo and mandolin in London under the tutelage of Clare man Brendan Mulkere. He has gained 8 All Ireland titles in various age groups. Brian has been a key member of the London Irish music scene, holding residencies at The Swan Stockwell with Gino Lupari and The Stags Head, Camden Town with Paddy Gallagher. He now lives, teaches and performs music in Cavan.

Brian launched his eponymous debut album at Return to Camden Town Festival in 2001, he followed it up with Plain of Jars in 2006

and is currently working on his 3rd album. Brian released two albums with his band The Long Notes, has had two Top 10 hits with dance-trad fusion band Dance to Tipperary and released Gods and Fighting Men in 2015 with Creeds Cross. Brian has toured Ireland, Britain, Europe and the USA with Shane MacGowan and The Popes. Other international performance and recording credits include: Mark Nevin (Fairground Attraction), Steve Wickham (Waterboys), Festival Interceltique L'Orient, Gaelforce Dance, Dance Masters and Celtic Nights Irish Dance Shows.



Tad Sargent, London-born with roots in Castlebar, Co. Mayo, brings a rich rhythmic energy to the stage through his bodhrán and bouzouki playing. Tad has performed and recorded with a diverse range of top artists, including Tony Christie, CrossHarbour, Cara Dillon, Ranagri and toured extensively across Europe and the US. He has graced many prestigious stages including The Royal Albert Hall, Shakespeare's Globe, Hop Farm, Cambridge Folk and Glastonbury Festivals – as well as making numerous appearances on BBC and other major broadcasters.

FLASHBACK PHOTOS - Anne Drury and Highgate Dancers- Irish Hooley at Bloomsbury Theatre June 2025



MICK MULVEY, SHANE MEEHAN AND PETE QUINN



P.C. Grant Burchill

London audiences will know **Mick Mulvey** as an erstwhile of the London-Irish traditional music scene through the 70s, 80s and 90s, but he always maintained strong links with his Leitrim roots. His two acclaimed solo recordings; *Within a Mile o' Jamestown* (2003) and *Bridging the Gap* (2009) – were both launched in Leitrim and at the Return to Camden Town Festival in London.

Shane Meehan grew up in Carrick-on-Shannon, starting off his musical journey with his grandfather, John, in Cootehall, Co. Roscommon. John's passion for researching rare tunes was passed down to his grandson.

Shane listened avidly to composers such as Charlie Lennon, Josephine Keegan, Ed Reavy, Joe Liddy, and Paddy Fahy. Major playing influences include the legendary Sligo fiddle players and the Leitrim musicians he grew up playing with, mainly in Cryan's Teach Cheoil. Shane and Mick were both founder-members of The Moylurg Ceili Band, winners of the Senior Céilí Band in Derry in 2013. In 2019 Shane's debut solo album *Twill Do* - featuring 19 of his own compositions.

The new album from this duet, *The Missing Guest*, is a celebration of Leitrim's musical heritage - a treasure trove of old

and new tunes brought to life by these two outstanding musicians. Their deep understanding, respect and passion for the music of Leitrim and north Connacht shines through every track.

Liverpool-born pianist **Pete Quinn** has performed with some of the greats of traditional Irish music including Brendan McGlinchey, Bryan Rooney, Mary MacNamara, John Bowe and Mick O'Connor. He has featured as accompanist on a number of recordings including five albums with The London Lassies, plus solo albums from whistle player Peter McAlinden, fiddlers Karen Ryan and Seán Casey, and flute player Mick Mulvey.

FLASHBACK PHOTOS - Frankie Gavin and De Dannan - Irish Hooley at Bloomsbury June 2025



TUTOR LED SESSION

- ÉAMONN COTTER, MAEVE DONNELLY AND PETER MCALINDEN

Sala Room, The Crown Hotel (3pm FREE)

SINGING SESSION

- JACKIE QUIRKE WITH GUEST: NELL NÍ CHRONÍN (DANÚ)

Sala Room, The Crown Hotel (6pm FREE)



JACKIE QUIRKE

Dublin's **Jackie Quirke** honed much of her Connacht Irish and Sean Nós singing in Conemara's Gaeltacht region, in Galway. She was one of the community members of the cast of

John B Keane's play *The Bodhrán Makers* which ran at the Galtymore in the 1990s. She is also a member of 'In Good Company' (formerly 'Fair Plé Ladies of Lodon') who have performed at Cadogan Hall, John B Keane's play *The Bodhrán Makers*

'Learn Irish through Singing' sessions on Wednesdays during term time, from 7pm, upstairs in the Sir Colin Campbell, Kilburn. Everyone is welcome to learn and enjoy the group singing, all levels of Irish from complete beginners upwards, welcome.

See concert listing on [p. ??](#)

NELL NÍ CHRONÍN



Nell Ní Chronín hails from the Irish speaking Múscraí Gaeltacht of West Cork. This area is historically linked with a strong heritage of song and music.

Nell was exposed to these local traditions of the area from a very young age. She began singing at the age of 11 under a local singing scheme Aisling Gheal, whose aim is to preserve local songs by teaching them to the younger generation, thus ensuring their preservation. She has enjoyed success in her singing career to date. Her achievements include several underage singing medals and titles from various Irish festival competitions as prestigious as the Oireachas na Gaeilge and The Fleadh Ceoil.

Nell is also the youngest ever recipient to receive both 'TG4's Gradam Ceoil Traditional Singer of the Year' award in 2012 and the prestigious Corn Uí Riada award which she was awarded in 2014. . Nell remains true to her local Múscraí Gaeltacht singing heritage, citing the local influences of her parents, Máire Ní Cheilleachair, Eoiní Maidhicí Ó Suilleabháin and Eilís Ní Shuilleabháin. She is currently the lead singer in the well-renowned traditional band, Danú, with whom she tours with on a regular basis.

SET DANCING CÉILÍ

• MUSIC BY THE PARISH CÉILÍ BAND WITH HOST TOM KELLEHER

St Agnes' Parish Centre (4-7pm, Tickets £14/ U18s free when accompanied by a paying adult)



PARISH CÉILÍ BAND

The Parish Céilí Band were formed in 2019, borne out of a Friday night session that used to take place in The Parish Pub, Wembley. Founding members included Rita Farrell, Chris Maguire, Jack Boyle, Órlaith and Brogan McAuliffe.

The band won the All Britain Senior Céilí Band title in their first year. They continue to be in high demand for céilís and concerts. This will be their seventh consecutive appearance at the Return to London Town Festival. Band members this weekend include:

Rita Farrell (flute), Catherine McGoldrick (flute), Eoin Griffin (banjo), Seán Angland (accordion), Susie Rice (fiddle), Angela Brooks (fiddle), Anna Bradley-Scott (fiddle), Alex Kelly (concertina), Ben Connolly (piano), John Devine (drums).



TOM KELLEHER AND THE CAMDEN SET DANCERS

Continuing the legacy of Return to Camden Town Festival co-founder, Geoff Holland - Cork's Tom Kelleher teaches weekly set dancing classes for all levels at the London Irish Centre, Camden on Thursday evenings. Anne Drury teaches weekly céilí and set dancing classes for beginners at Brendan the Navigator, Highgate Hill on Monday evenings. Camden Set Dancers have been hosting their monthly Sunday ceili at the London Irish Centre for over 40 years now.



LONDON CÉILÍ & SET DANCING WITH TOM KELLEHER & ANNE DRURY

FACEBOOK: TOMSIRISHSETDANCINGLONDON

EMAIL: TOMSETDANCING@GMAIL.COM

UPCOMING CÉILÍS 2025 | LIVE MUSIC

LONDON IRISH CENTRE CAMDEN

SUN 05 OCTOBER
SUN 02 NOVEMBER
SUN 07 DECEMBER

2PM - 5PM
NW1 9XB

CALLER: TOM KELLEHER

MAZENOD SOCIAL CLUB

FRI 10 OCTOBER
FRI 14 NOVEMBER
FRI 05 DECEMBER

8PM-10.30PM
NW6 4LS

CALLERS: TOM KELLEHER AND ANNE DRURY

CLASSES

BEGINNER CÉILÍ AND SET DANCING 7PM - 9PM
BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR, N19 5NQ | MONDAYS

SET DANCING (ALL ABILITIES) 7.30PM - 10PM
LONDON IRISH CENTRE (KENNEDY HALL), NW1 9XB | THURSDAYS

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FULL EVENT PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 24th OCTOBER 2025

5pm	Session	Colette O'Leary, Finbar and Peter Murphy, Cathy Kingcombe, Peter McAlinden	The Crown Hotel (Mezzanine)	Free
7.30pm	Evening Concert	Danú, Aoife and Deirdre Granville, The Trad Gathering	The Crown Hotel (Ivy Suite)	£25/ £7 U18
8pm	Session	Rita Farrell, Caitlin Mahon, Cormac Mac Murchu	The Crown Pub	Free
9pm	Session	Finola Ryan, Mick Mulvey, Fionn Ó hAimhain	Lucky 7	Free
10pm	Session	Tara Breen, Anna Friel, Marty Barry	The Crown Hotel (The Lounge)	Free
11pm	Late Night Session	Noreen Cullen, Adrian Burns, Brian Kelly	The Crown Hotel (Sala Room)	Free

Crown Hotel Bars open until: Ivy Suite bar - 12am, The Crown Pub bar - 1am, Sala Bar - 2am, Residents Bar - 4am

SATURDAY 25th OCTOBER 2025

Please arrive at instrumental workshop venue to register at 10.30am

11am-1pm	Flute Workshop	Ivan Goff	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Accordion Workshop	Benny McCarthy	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Uilleann Pipes Workshop	Sheila Friel	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Concertina Workshop	Alex Kelly	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Singing Workshop	Cathal Ó Curráin	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Tin Whistle Workshop	Anna Friel	The Crown Hotel	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Harp Workshop	Deirdre Granville	The Crown Hotel	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Banjo Workshop	Brian Kelly	The Crown Hotel	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Fiddle Workshop	Oisín McAuley	The Crown Hotel	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Strings Accompaniment Workshop	Eamonn Doorley	The Crown Hotel	£15/ £7 U18s
12pm	Session	Liam Nolan, Oisín McGinley, Katie Maguire, Tom Campbell	The Crown Hotel (Mezzanine)	Free
12pm	Session	Clare Friel, Caitlin Mannion, James O'Grady, Marty Barry	Elementree Bar and Restaurant	Free
1pm	Session	Sinéad Munroe, Mary and Mick Linane and Reg Hall	The Crown Hotel (The Lounge)	Free
1:30-2:30pm	Children's Afternoon Workshop	Céilí Dancing – no experience required, Tutor: Anne Drury	The Crown Hotel (Sala Room)	£7 (under 18s)
1:30-3:30pm	Piano Accompaniment Workshop	Geraldine Cotter	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
1:30-3:30pm	Bodhrán Workshop	Billy Sutton	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
1:30-3:30pm	Sean Nós Singing Workshop	Nell Ní Chróinín	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
2pm	Afternoon Concert	Tara Breen and Marty Barry/ Brian Kelly and Tad Sargent/ Mick Mulvey, Shane Meehan and Pete Quinn	The Crown Hotel (Ivy Suite)	£15/ £7 U18s
2pm	Session	Elaine Finn, Joe O'Connor, Brendan Dempsey, Finbar Walsh	The Crown Hotel (Crown Pub)	Free
2pm	Session	Bryony Lemon, Phillipe and Ali Barnes	Lucky 7	Free
3pm	Tutor Led Session	Éamonn Cotter, Maeve Donnelly, Peter McAlinden	The Crown Hotel (Sala Room)	Free
4-7pm	Set Dancing Céilí	Parish Céilí Band with Tom Kelleher	St Agnes' Parish Centre	£14/ U18s free when accompanied by paying adult

5pm	Session	Noreen Cullen, Hugh Sheehan, Adrian Burns	The Crown Hotel (The Lounge)	Free
6pm	Singing Session	Singing Session hosted by Jackie Quirke with Nell Ní Chróinín	The Crown Hotel (Sala Room)	Free
6.30pm	Session	Mick O'Connor, John Bowe, Tad Sargent	The Crown Hotel (Crown Pub)	Free
7.30pm	Evening Concert	The Friel Sisters/ Charlie Harris, Maeve Donnelly, Éamonn and Geraldine Cotter/ Liam O'Connor	The Crown Hotel (Ivy Suite)	£25/ £7 U18s
7.30pm	Session	Marie McCormack, Marion Gray, Mick Bailey	Sir Colin Campbell	Free
10pm	Session	Andy Martyn, Adrian Bourke, Pete Quinn	The Crown Hotel (The Lounge)	Free
11pm	Late Night Session	Mark Conyard, Peter Coughlan, John Gaughan	The Crown Hotel (Sala Room)	Free

Crown Hotel Bars open until: Ivy Suite bar - 12am, The Crown Pub bar - 1am, Sala Bar - 2am, Residents Bar - 4am

SUNDAY 26th OCTOBER 2025

Please arrive at instrumental workshop venue to register at 10.30am

11am-1pm	Tin Whistle Workshop	Geraldine Cotter	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Fiddle Workshop	Maeve Donnelly	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Concertina Workshop	Colm McGonigle	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Flute Workshop	Aoife Granville	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Accordion Workshop	Josephine Marsh	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Banjo Workshop	Brendan Dempsey	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Accompaniment Workshop	Marty Barry	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
11am-1pm	Harp Workshop	Tara Viscardi	The Crown Hotel	£15/ £7 U18s
12pm	Session	Katie Quinn, Ben Connolly, Mick O'Connor, Pete Quinn	The Crown Hotel (The Lounge)	Free
1.30-3.30pm	Banjo Maintenance Workshop	Tom Cussen	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
1:30-3:30pm	Singing in Harmony Workshop	Chan Reid	Ashford Place	£15/ £7 U18s
2-5pm	Set Dancing Céilí	Parish Céilí Band with Tom Kelleher	St Agnes Parish Centre	£14/ U18s free when accompanied by a paying adult
2pm	Session for Foxy (Kevin Finucane)	Alan O'Leary, Brendan McAuley, Mary Farrell	The Crown Hotel (Crown Pub)	Free
3pm	Tutor Led Session	Colm McGonigle, Aoife Granville, Peter McAlinden	The Crown Hotel (Sala Room)	Free
4pm	Session	Dermot Crehan, Josephine Marsh, Chris Sadler	The Crown Hotel (The Lounge)	Free
4.30pm	Singing Session	Singing Session hosted by Chan Reid with guests Anna and Clare Friel	The Crown Hotel (Breakfast Room)	Free
5pm	Quiz (teams of 3 -6)	'Tradiversity Challenge' Quiz with Host: Mick Mulvey	The Crown Hotel (Ivy Suite)	Free
5pm	Session	Colman Connolly, Michael Sweeney, Niall Farrelly	Barrett's Freehouse	Free
6pm	Session	Charlie Harris, John Rynne, Geraldine Cotter	The Crown Hotel (Crown Pub)	Free
7pm	Album and Book Launch Event	Mick Mulvey and Shane Meehan/ Maureen Minogue-Brown CD/ Tara Breen and Marty Barry/ Mick O'Connor (Dublin flute) – <i>In Safe Hands</i>	The Crown Hotel (Sala Room)	Free
7pm	Session	Caroline Regan, PJ Hynes and Mick Bailey	Sir Colin Campbell	Free
9pm	Session	Teresa Connolly, Colm McGonigle, Rob Webb	The Crown Hotel (The Lounge)	Free

The Crown Hotel Bars: Ivy Suite public bar open until 11pm, The Crown Pub public bar open until 12am.

MONDAY 27th OCTOBER 2024

12pm	Session	Colette Keaveney, Aoife and Deirdre Granville	The Crown Hotel (Mezzanine)	Free
2pm	Afternoon Concert	Maeve Donnelly, Charlie Harris, Éamonn and Geraldine Cotter - Mná Trio - London Irish Pensioners Choir	The Crown Hotel (Ivy Suite)	£15/ £7 U18s
2pm	Evening Film Screening and Acoustic Music Night	ITMA's 'Seán Keane – A Portrait of an Artist' Music in the bar: John Bowe, Mick O'Connor and Peter McAlinden	The Kiln Theatre, Cinema	Free Tickets can be reserved on the Festival website

EVENING CONCERT

This concert is dedicated to the Memory of Jimmy Philbin

In Association with **FLANNERY** FLANNERY HIRE and **IRISH WORLD**

- THE FRIEL SISTERS
 - MAEVE DONNELLY, CHARLIE HARRIS, ÉAMONN AND GERALDINE COTTER
 - LIAM O'CONNOR
-

Ivy Suite, The Crown Hotel (Doors 7.30pm, Tickets £25 / £7 U18s)

THE FRIEL SISTERS



Anna, Sheila and Clare Friel are traditional musicians from Doire na Mainséar, Donegal. Born in Glasgow, the sisters credit their main musical development to frequent trips to Ireland, partaking in workshops across the country, many of which they now teach themselves.

Since the launch of their debut album, The Friel Sisters have performed at venues and festivals across Europe, America and Asia. They have shared the stage with acts including Altan, The Chieftains, Lúnasa, Sharon Shannon and Cherish the Ladies.

In 2016, the sisters performed at Festival Interceltique de Lorient, and won the prestigious Trophée Loïc Raison. In 2018, the girls released their second album Before the Sun featuring Hajime Takahashi on guitar and Cathal Ó Curráin on bouzouki.

In 2018, Clare was awarded TG4's Gradam Ceoil Ceoltóir Óg na Bliana /Young Musician of the Year, performing solo and also with Anna, Sheila and Cathal on TG4 as part of the live awards show. The audience included Irish President Michael D. Higgins. On the night, she was given the award by the great Mairéad Ní Mhaonigh.

The Friel Sisters are excited to launch their long-awaited third album, Northern Sky.

This evening, Anna, Sheila and Clare will be joined by their regular accompanists in the band – Co Donegal's Cathal Ó Curráin (bouzouki, vocal) and Co. Down's Marty Barry (guitar, vocals).

MAEVE DONNELLY, CHARLIE HARRIS, ÉAMONN AND GERALDINE COTTER



Maeve Donnelly, now living in Co Clare, grew up in East Galway, an area steeped in traditional music. Maeve is highly respected and much sought after as a fiddle teacher at Festivals across Ireland and further afield. She started playing fiddle at the age of six and won her first All-Ireland Fiddle Competition at the age of nine. She has toured extensively and was a member of Moving Cloud. In 2004, Maeve recorded a duet album with Peadar O'Loughlin entitled *The Thing Itself*. In more recent years, she has released two solo albums. Her latest album, *Flame on the Banks* was recorded with guitarist Tony McManus.

Charlie Harris, is an accordion player, originally from Kilmallock area of Co. Limerick. In 1974 he moved to London where he met and was influenced by brothers Oliver and Raymond Roland, both had been heavily influenced by the expressively charismatic Joe Cooley. Charlie returned to his 'musical home' of Co. Galway in 1981, here he earned a nationwide reputation for his tuning and repairs of accordions. He toured and recorded several albums with the band Shaskeen. Charlie was awarded the prestigious TG4 Gradam Ceoil Traditional Musician of the Year Award in 2009. Charlie is a long time member of the Tulla Céilí Band and a regular visitor to London with Sliabh Aughty.

Éamonn Cotter, originally from Ennis but living in Kilmaley in Co. Clare for over 25 years, is a well-known and respected flute player, teacher and flute maker. Éamonn is a member of Shaskeen. He has recorded on many albums including his most recent solo CD, *The Knotted Chord*. As well as traditional music, he also has a keen interest in Western Art music and jazz. He is a member of the Limerick Jazz Workshop.

Geraldine Cotter, Éamonn's sister, is a well-known teacher, researcher and performer iron both the tin whistle and piano. She has published three best-selling tutors for tin whistle and piano, the most recent one *Rogha*, is a tune book with accompanying play-a-long CD. She has recorded on over 20 CDs including her second solo album, *Ré Órga* which was released in 2024. In 2017 she was honoured with a MÓRglór award for her contribution to traditional music in County Clare.

All four musicians have been featured on many radio and television programmes, including TG4 Gradam Cheoil 2009, on the occasion of the presentation of Charlie's Gradam award.

LIAM O'CONNOR



Liam O'Connor, award-winning fiddle player and Chief Executive of the Irish Traditional Music Archive since 2019, is recognised as one of Ireland's outstanding traditional musicians.

Born into a musical family in Dublin, he was immersed in the tradition from an early age through his father Mick O'Connor, the renowned flute player, researcher, and author. His music was further

shaped by legendary visitors to the family home, including Seán Keane, Joe Ryan, Séamus Glackin and Vincent Harrison. A five-time All-Ireland champion and TG4 Ceoltóir Óg na Bliana (Young Music of the Year) 2002, Liam's playing is noted for its technical mastery and deep respect for the tradition. His solo album *The Loom* (2017) was named Traditional Album of the Year by *The Irish Times*, and in June 2025 he released *Into the Loom*, a duet with Cormac Begley, at a sold-out Vicar Street concert. He has recorded and performance with Liam O'Flynn, Noel Hill, Tony MacMahon, Seán McKeon, and many others. Notably, the last time Liam performed in London was with the late Liam O'Flynn, over twenty years ago.

Special Upcoming Concerts

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SAT 08 NOV - SUN 09 NOV 2025

OCEAN CHILD - LONDON PREMIERE

DOORS: SAT - 7.30PM, SUNDAY - 2PM



FEATURING:
NEIL MARTIN (COMPOSER AND WRITER)
STEPHEN REA (NARRATOR)
THE WEST OCEAN STRING QUARTET, (AOIFE NÍ BHRIAIN, NIAMH CROWLEY, KENNETH RICE, NEIL MARTIN),
LOUISE MULCAHY (PIPES) AND MICHELLE MULCAHY (HARP)

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Irish Cultural Centre
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FRI 14 NOV - SAT 15 NOV 2025

REMEMBERING SEÁMUS,

REMEMBERING ARTY

DOORS: 7.30PM, STARTS 8PM



FEATURING:
FRIDAY: MEABH BEGLEY, EOIN BEGLEY
NIAL BEGLEY, TIM EDEY, SEAN MCKEON,
MAIREAD NÍ MHAONAIGH, OISIN MAC DIARMADA,
PAULINE SCANLON, MUIREANN NÍ AMHLAIOIBH

SATURDAY: NOLLAIG CASEY, JEROME MC GLYNN,
CATHAL HAYDEN, STEPHEN HAYDEN, LIAM
BRADLEY, ROD MC VEY, NICKY SCOTT, GINO
LUPARI, EAMON MC ELHOLM, BRENDAN QUINN,
ADRIAN DUNBAR

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SUNDAY 26TH OCTOBER 2025

WORKSHOPS, SESSIONS, AFTERNOON CÉILÍ AND ALBUM LAUNCH CONCERT

Please note that instrumental workshops are aimed at intermediate to advanced level players. Beginners are welcome to purchase tickets to attend as observers. Please arrive at the workshop venue 30 minutes before start time to allow for registration. Tickets may be purchased on the door, but advance booking is recommended as workshops are very popular and places are limited.

WORKSHOPS

TIN WHISTLE WORKSHOP WITH GERALDINE COTTER

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

FIDDLE WORKSHOP WITH MAEVE DONNELLY

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

CONCERTINA WORKSHOP WITH COLM MCGONIGLE

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

ACCOMPANIMENT WORKSHOP WITH MARTY BARRY

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

FLUTE WORKSHOP WITH AOIFE GRANVILLE

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

ACCORDION WORKSHOP WITH JOSEPHINE MARSH

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

BANJO WORKSHOP WITH BRENDAN DEMPSEY

11am-1pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

HARP WORKSHOP WITH TARA VISCARDI

11am-1pm - The Crown Pub - £15 / £7 under 18

HARMONY SINGING WORKSHOP WITH CHAN REID

1:30pm-3:30pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

BANJO MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP WITH TOM CUSSEN

1.30-3.30pm - Ashford Place - £15 / £7 under 18

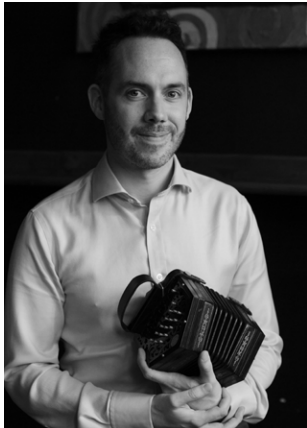
INSTRUMENTAL WORKSHOP TUTORS

See Concert listings for biographies for Aoife Granville, Geraldine Cotter, Maeve Donnelly, Marty Barry,

MARTY BARRY

(See concert listing for biog.) Marty usually plays his guitar in drop-d tuning, in rare cases in dadgad. In his workshop he shows drop-d tuning but if desired he also teaches dadgad tuning.

COLM MCGONIGLE



Originally from Belfast, **Colm McGonigle** was immersed in traditional music from a young age. His father taught him to play traditional Irish music on the concertina, and he later learned piano and the Irish harp. He was a stalwart of the traditional music scene in Cambridge whilst studying and working there, and enjoyed regular trips to London for sessions and teaching music. Notable performances included the Return to Camden Town Festival, the Club at the Ivy and the Royal Albert Hall.

Now based in Dublin, Colm continues to be an active presence at traditional music festivals throughout Ireland and beyond, frequently appearing on national television and radio. In summer 2025, he featured as a soloist with the Ceol Mharlaí Chamber Orchestra at Féile Nasc, at an Chruit Bheo and at Electric Picnic. He also taught workshops at Rencontres Irlandaises de Tocane. We are delighted to welcome Colm once again back to London.

BRENDAN DEMPSEY

Manchester born Irish tenor banjo player, **Brendan Dempsey** started playing at the age of 12 at St Wilfred's Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, taught by Bob Tracey. Brendan won the Senior All Ireland Banjo title in Sligo in 1989. Over the years Brendan has had the pleasure of playing internationally, most notably: Hong Kong and various parts of the United States of America including Boston, New York and St Louis. It is many years since Brendan played at Return to Camden Town Festival, we look forward to welcoming him back.



CHAN REID



Chan was born into a musical family in Dublin, she was taught classical piano and singing from a young age by her grandmother Joan Kelly. Chan started to immerse herself in sean nós singing and Irish fiddle when she was at university in Dublin. She attended the Royal Academy of Irish Music and Royal College of Music. She has sung in choirs all her life, she has been leading singing for choirs, unaccompanied and harmony workshops for almost 20 years. Chan is an active folk and traditional singer, song collector and musician as part of the Irish diaspora in England, where she chairs a Comhaltas branch in the South East and teaches Irish fiddle and singing to adults and children. She has toured extensively as a solo artist and guest performer (including with The London Lasses) and has participated in a number of TG4 Irish language series and music documentaries as a sean nós singer.

Chan is a member of Celtic folk duo Bold Reilly and enjoys a full and varied folk festival tour schedule each year playing songs she has

written, as well as songs from her ever expanding Irish repertoire. Chan has recently formed a new close harmony folk duo The Fox In

The Reeds with her partner. Chan was ITMA's Saothar Composer in December 2024.

TOM CUSSEN



Tom Cussen, plays tenor banjo and mandolin, originally from County Limerick, now a long time resident of Galway. Tom spent many years in London and founded the band

Shaskeen there in 1970, who have recorded 10 albums to date. As well as being Shaskeen's band leader, Tom is the maker of the renowned Clareen banjos (www.banjo.ie). Since his semi-retirement, Tom's son, Fintan is now in charge of the business. Tom and Tony Howley (RIP) recorded an album together called There is Always Room in Our House featuring banjo and saxophone. Tom has recently released an album of archive recordings of fiddler Maureen Minogue-Brown

from Galway, who spent many years playing music in London and was a huge influence on Tom's playing. Tom's Banjo Maintenance workshop covers a wide range of topics, including Choosing a banjo, what to look for etc. Banjo set up to include choice of strings, banjo head tension, setting action, setting intonation , bridge position etc, plectrum styles and use, getting the best tone, and many more tips. A few tunes to finish.

SESSIONS

- 12pm** The Crown Hotel (The Lounge) – Katie Quinn, Ben Connolly, Mick O'Connor, Pete Quinn
- 2pm** The Crown Hotel (Crown Pub) - Session for Foxy (Kevin Finucane) – Alan O'Leary, Brendan McAuley, Mary Farrell
- 3pm** The Crown Hotel (Sala Room) Tutor Led Session - Colm McGonigle, Aoife Granville, Peter McAlinden
- 4pm** The Crown Hotel (The Lounge) - Dermot Crehan, Josephine Marsh, Chris Sadler
- 4:30pm** The Crown Hotel (Breakfast Room) - Singing Session hosted by Chan Reid with guests Anna and Clare Friel
- 5pm** Barrett's Freehouse – Colman Connolly, Michael Sweeney, Niall Farrelly
- 6pm** The Crown Hotel (Crown Pub) – Charlie Harris, John Rynne, Geraldine Cotter
- 7pm** Sir Colin Campbell – PJ Hynes, Caroline Regan, Mick Bailey
- 9pm** The Crown Hotel (The Lounge) – Teresa Connolly, Colm McGonigle, Rob Webb

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SET DANCING CÉILÍ

- MUSIC BY THE PARISH CÉILÍ BAND WITH HOST TOM KELLEHER (SEE PAGE 18)
-

St Agnes' Centre, Kilburn (2-5pm, Tickets £14/ / U18s free when accompanied by a paying adult)



TUTOR LED SESSION

- COLM MCGONIGLE, AOIFE GRANVILLE, PETER MCALINDEN
-

Sala Room, The Crown Hotel (3pm FREE)

TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC QUIZ

- WITH HOST: MICK MULVEY
-

The Ivy Suite, The Crown Hotel (5pm – FREE ticket can be reserved in advance)

A great success in 2024, this is the 4th year of the Festival Quiz.

A new idea to entertain our festival-goers - Remember, during lockdown, those great online Trad Quizzes?... well...why not have a Trad Quiz at the Festival?...and why not make it a table quiz? So, are you a bit of a tradhead? A bit of a traditional Irish music aficionado? Well, why not test that claim...

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

- Up to 10 teams of 3-6 people
- 6 rounds of 10 questions over approximately 1 hour
- You can reserve free tickets through www.returntolondontown.org or sign up on the day

Prizes: tickets to Return to London Town Festival 2026 and a chance to get your team name on the perpetual Quiz Trophy!

So in between the jigs and the reels and all the other magical events on Sunday afternoon, if you fancy a challenge instead of propping up the bar, get a couple of buddies and sign up for an hour... Or just pop down on your own and we'll find you a team! (Bar open in the Ivy Suite during the Quiz)



SINGING SESSION

- HOSTED BY CHAN REID WITH GUESTS ANNA, CLARE AND SHEILA FRIEL

Breakfast Room, The Crown Hotel (4.30pm FREE)

ALBUM AND BOOK LAUNCH

- MICK MULVEY AND SHANE MEEHAN – *THE MISSING GUEST*
- MAUREEN MINOGUE-BROWN – *CEOL SA CHISTÍN*
(CD LAUNCHED BY TOM CUSSEN AND MICK O'CONNOR
(LONDON BANJO))
- TARA BREEN AND MARTY BARRY – *SOONER OR LATER*
- MICK O'CONNOR (DUBLIN FLUTE) – *IN SAFE HANDS*

Sala Room, The Crown Hotel (7pm) FREE

MICK MULVEY AND SHANE MEEHAN

See page 16

CEÓL SA CHISTÍN -

Maureen Minogue-Brown



Written by Tom Cussen:

The story of this recording started back in 1969 in Maureen Minogue's home in Kentish Town. The Irish traditional music scene in London at this time as I discovered was widespread and in a very healthy state.

I met Maureen at a session and asked her if I could record some of her music so that I could learn tunes.

The CD is the result of those recordings and today with the help of modern technology, 55 years later, I am able to bring this selection of Maureen's fiddle playing style and quality to a new and wider audience.

Many thanks to Maureen's family (they are the children in the background on some of the tracks) who have been very supporting, encouraging and involved in this project. It must also be acknowledged that Maureen was a founding member of Shaskeen and was a resident member of the Céilí Band in the Galtymore in

Cricklewood for many years. She has also played on Reg Hall's *It Was Great Altogether! The Continuing Tradition of Irish Music in London*.

On retiring to Ireland in the early 90s, Maureen continued to play and teach music and was actively involved with her local Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.

I had encouraged Maureen to do a commercial recording of her fiddle playing but she kind of always put it off till later. I am pleased to posthumously present this recording with the help and blessing of Maureen's family and to offer this extraordinary portrayal of East Galway/ London fiddle playing style from Maureen.

TOM CUSSEN

See page 28

MICK O'CONNOR

(London Banjo)



London's own Mick O'Connor, who plays Tenor Banjo, Mandolin, inherited a love of Irish music from his parents who came from County Kerry and Roscommon in Ireland. He learned tunes from the great London Irish musicians, including John Bowe, Bobby Casey, Tommy McCarthy, and Roger Sherlock, and is particularly influenced by Clare, Galway and Kerry styles of playing.

All Ireland winner on the tenor banjo in 1971, Mick has been playing since 1967 and is a veteran of the great days of the London Irish music scene of the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

In 2013, he was honoured by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, which bestowed its Bardic Award on him for his 'exceptional contribution to the promotion of Ireland's cultural traditions'.

TARA BREEN AND MARTY BARRY

See page 14

MICK O'CONNOR (DUBLIN FLUTE)

See page 32

IN SAFE HANDS:

An Illustrated History of Irish Traditional Music in Dublin, 1893-1970

This powerful account of Dublin's traditional music from 1893 to 1970 is more than history or scholarship. It is a lifetime's harvest of music, images and stories, reflecting Michael O'Connor's deep love for the tradition and its makers. Richly illustrated and carefully researched, it captures all aspects of the revival in Dublin and beyond.

Though not always the first place associated with the Irish music revival, Dublin emerges here as a vital centre, where musicians from across Ireland shared their artistry with families, bands and groups throughout the city. Their talent, coupled with improved teaching, helped secure traditional music's place as one of Ireland's foremost art forms.

O'Connor gives a human face to the musicians, tracing their lives, struggles and achievements across seventy-seven years—charting a journey from near extinction to international recognition. He shows how the music has been bound to freedom, cultural expression and national pride.

Special attention is paid to piping, from marching bands to céilí groups, with the author—himself a musician—placing the tradition 'in safe hands' with today's young uilleann pipers.

Many featured musicians, including Séamus Ennis, Willie Clancy and Bobby Casey, spent formative years in Dublin before emigrating to London.

This is a remarkable, once-in-a-lifetime story of music, resilience and renewal.

Also see p. 39 for Mick O'Connor biography

This book can be purchased (including overseas shipping) here:



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SESSIONS

- 12pm** The Crown Hotel (Mezzanine) – Colette Keaveney, Aoife and Deirdre Granville
7pm and 9pm The Kiln – John Bowe, Mick O'Connor, Peter McAlinden

MONDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2025

AFTERNOON CONCERT

In association with Irish Elderly Advice Network

- MAEVE DONNELLY, CHARLIE HARRIS, ÉAMONN AND GERALDINE COTTER
- MNÁ TRIO • LONDON IRISH PENSIONERS CHOIR

Ivy Suite, The Crown Hotel (Doors 2pm, Tickets £15 / £7 U18s)

MAEVE DONNELLY, CHARLIE HARRIS, ÉAMONN AND GERALDINE COTTER (See page 24)

MNÁ TRIO



The MNÁ Trio comprises Jess Collins (fiddle, dancing, voice), Tara McCarthy (fiddle, viola, voice), and Tara Viscardi (harp, voice). All these members and the wider 5 piece band are passionate about bringing their musical traditions to wider audiences and strive to merge traditional Irish, English folk and contemporary music in an innovative way, while remaining true to their roots. Their performances feature traditional and folk music from Ireland, England, Brittany and further afield as well as their own original compositions. All active musicians on the traditional, folk and classical scenes across the UK and Ireland, band members have had their music featured on BBC and RTÉ radio.

FLASHBACK PHOTOS



RtlT Festival Launch Concert April 2025 ICC

Ciarán and Caitlín - Return to London Town Festival 2025



Caitlín Mannion Photography

LONDON IRISH PENSIONERS CHOIR



Founded over 10 years ago, The Irish Pensioners Choir Band brings together more than 30 older Irish people, most in their 70s and 80s, coming from all over Ireland and making their homes here in London over many decades. Although an independent group, it has been supported by the Irish Elderly Advice Network throughout this time.

The choir has performed for audiences of tens of thousands, including several years at London's St Patrick's Day celebrations in Trafalgar Square.

Members also performed as part of the Irish community choir in the Royal Albert Hall in honour of President Michael D Higgins' state visit to Britain in 2014. They have sung on national television for Sir Terry Wogan on ITV and on the BBC's The One Show. They have performed on RTÉ Radio and Television, and are regularly played by Donncha Ó Dúlaing on the very popular Fáilte Isteach.

The choir has recorded a beautiful album of old Irish songs, Songs of Love and Emigration,

which has been very popular with the Irish community, both in London and in Ireland.

This afternoon they are supported by a band of fantastic musicians many of whom will be familiar faces to this part of the festival, namely Nora Mulready (fiddle and vocals), Caroline Regan (concertina and vocals), Caroline Hetherton (vocals), Ciara Holland (guitar and vocals), Nathalie McDermott (vocals), Ed Anderton (guitar) and Billy Faughnan (keyboard).

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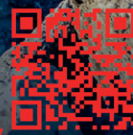
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EVENING SCREENING AND ACOUSTIC MUSIC NIGHT FREE

• ‘SEÁN KEANE – A PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST’ PRESENTED BY MICK AND LIAM O’CONNOR (ITMA)

The Kiln Theatre, Cinema (Doors 7pm, Free)

- 7pm:** Music in the bar by John Bowe, Mick O’Connor and Peter McAlinden
- 8pm:** Introduction by Liam O’Connor, followed by cinema screening of ‘Seán Keane – A Portrait of an Artist’
- 9pm:** More music in the bar by John Bowe, Mick O’Connor and Peter McAlinden



Seán Keane (1946-2023) earned world renown as a pivotal member of The Chieftains, the group he joined in 1968 after coming to prominence with Ceoltóirí Chualann and the

Castle Céilí Band earlier in the decade. His powerful fiddle playing married technical virtuosity with insight and a deep understanding of what made Irish traditional music distinctively

beautiful. In this documentary profile, directed by Dermot O’Hanlon and produced by the Irish Traditional Music Archive, Seán recalls a range of musical influences from early days listening to James Morrisson and Frank O’Higgins on a wind-up gramophone and his great admiration for the musical and managerial skills of Paddy Moloney. Seán’s talents are extolled by fellow traditional musicians Paddy Glackin, Mick O’Connor, Liam O’Connor, Matt Molloy and Doireann Ní Ghlacáin who speaks of the “overwhelming feeling of joy” which his music creates.



Liam O’Connor, award-winning fiddle player and Chief Executive

of the Irish Traditional Music Archive since 2019, is recognised as one of Ireland’s outstanding traditional musicians (see page ? for more information). Alongside performing, Liam authored a major biography of P. W. Joyce, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2025, and he is Executive Producer of ITMA’s acclaimed film and television projects, including the award-winning Farewell to Hughes’s with Brendan Gleeson,

Drawing from the Well/ Taoscadh ón Tobar, and a forthcoming documentary on Christy Moore’s archive. Through ITMA’s Drawing from the Well series, he has worked with leading artists to share the riches of the archive and the tradition with new audiences worldwide. Liam and ITMA are now eager to develop meaningful ways to celebrate and connect with the living tradition in London over the coming months and years.



Mick O'Connor is originally from The Liberties area of Dublin where many of the Dublin piping families lived.

He was a member of the Piper's Club in the late 1950s through to the 1970s where he trained the Pipers' Club Céilí Band. Mick is a well-known flute player, archivist, researcher and music historian. As a musician, he has broadcast and recorded with Seán Keane of The Chieftains and Charlie Lennon. In the 1960s, he was leader of the popular Castle Céilí Band and led them to success at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in 1965 and Oireachtas na Gaeilge Céilí Band Championships on four occasions. He is a popular lecturer and teacher at

Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy and formerly Scoil Éigse. He was a member of a sub-committee that was instrumental in organising the 1968 uilleann piping Tionól in Bettystown, Co. Meath, which resulted in the formation of Na Piobairí Uilleann. For many years Mick has been involved in the design and production of LPs, CDs, videos and books relating to Irish music. This year he published his comprehensive 551 page book *In Safe Hands – An Illustrated History of Irish Traditional Music in Dublin (1893 – 1970)*.

ITMA PRESENTS

DRAWING FROM THE WELL

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SKEHAN'S (7PM, FORTNIGHTLY),

1 Kitto Road, London SE14 5TW
– Tel: 0207 7324859

THE LAMB TAVERN (8.30PM),

54 Holloway Rd, London N7 8JL
– Tel: 02076090253

SOUTH LONDON IRISH ASSOCIATION CLUB (9PM),

138-140 Hartfield Rd, Wimbledon,
London SW19 3TG
– Tel: 0208 5430608

BEGINNER AND INTERMEDIATE GUIDED SLOW SESSION

BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR (2ND AND 4TH TUESDAYS OF THE

MONTH - 6.30PM), 90 Highgate
Hill, London N19 5NQ
– Tel: 02039761111 Email:
brendanthenavigator@outlook.com

THE JAMBOREE (8:30PM), 6 St
Chad's Place, London WC1X 9HH
– Tel: 0207 278 6797

THE BLYTHE HILL TAVERN (8PM)

319 Stanstead Road, SE23 1JB
– Tel: 0208 6905176

WEDNESDAYS

THE OLD JUSTICE (7PM), 94

Bermondsey Wall East, London
SE16 4TY – Tel: 07572120029

LONDON IRISH CENTRE (7.30PM),

50-52 Camden Square, London
NW1 9XB – Tel: 0207 9162222

THE ADELAIDE (7.30PM) 57

Park Rd, Teddington TW11 0AU
– Tel: 0208 9773616

MCGOVERN'S (8PM), 60 High

Rd, London NW10 2PU
– Tel: 0208 8304981

THE OLD EAGLE (8PM, LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH),

251 Royal College St, London NW1
9LU – Tel: 0207 482 6021

DOG AND BELL (8:30PM), 116

Prince Street, London SE8 3JD
– Tel: 0208 6925664

WB YEATS WEDNESDAY 6PM,

20 Fonthill Road, London N4 3HU
– Tel: 0208 617 3400

THE HAND OF GLORY (8PM), 240

Amhurst Road, Lower Clapton,
London E8 2BS – Tel: 0207 2497455

THURSDAYS

YE OLDE MONKEN HOLT (8:30PM),

193 High Street, Hadley, Barnet
EN5 5SU – Tel: 020 8449 4280

THE LAURISTON (7:30PM), 162

Victoria Park Rd, London E9 7JN
– Tel 0208 985404

THE PRINCE ALBERT (8.30PM),

54-56 Hounslow Road, Whitton,
Twickenham TW2 7EX
– Tel: 0208 8981871

THE BRICKLAYERS ARMS

PUTNEY (7.30PM), 32 Waterman
St, London – Tel: 020 8246 5544

THE HERNE TAVERN (8PM), 2

Forest Hill Road, SE22 0RR
– Tel: 0208 2999521

THE PARISH BAR (8PM), 120

Wembley Park Drive, HA9 8HP
– Tel: 07754 447019

FRIDAYS

IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE (6PM),

5 Black's Road, Hammersmith W6
9DT – Tel: 0208 5638232

BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR

(8PM), 90 Highgate Hill, London
N19 5NQ – Tel: 0203 9761111 Email:
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CONNOLLY'S (FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH- 10PM), 450 Chiswick

High Rd., Chiswick, London W4
5TT – Tel: 020 8994 3980

THE PEACOCK (7.30PM), 145

Aylward St, Stepney Green, London
E1 OQW – Tel: 020 7791 1100

THE BEEHIVE (LAST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH 9PM), 227 High Street, Brentford, TW8 0JG
– Tel. 0208 5602215

SOUTH LONDON IRISH ASSOCIATION CLUB (9PM, LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH), 138-140 Hartfield Rd, Wimbledon, London SW19 3TG – Tel: 0208 5430608

SATURDAYS

HOWL AT THE MOON (2PM), 178 Hoxton St, London N1 5LH
– Tel. 0207 6881970

BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR (7:30PM), 90 Highgate Hill, London N19 5NQ – Tel: 0203 9761111 Email: brendanthenavigator@outlook.com

COLIN CAMPBELL (8PM), 264-266 Kilburn High Road, London NW6 2BY – Tel. 0207 6935443

SUNDAYS

THE TANKARD (2-4PM), Walworth Road, Elephant and Castle, SE17 1JL

THE SHIP (3PM), 68 Borough Road, London SE1 1DX
– Tel: 0203 924 6868

BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR (4PM), 90 Highgate Hill, London N19 5NQ – Tel: 02039761111 Email: brendanthenavigator@outlook.com

MYDDLETON ARMS (4PM), 52 Canonbury Rd, London N1 2HS
– Tel: 020 72264595

THE WHISKEY TUMBLER (5:30PM), 401 Coldharbour Ln, London SW9 8LQ – Tel: 0203 198 2358

MARY MADDEN'S (6PM), Silver Street, Enfield, EN1 3EF
– Tel. 0208 3663377

HOWL AT THE MOON (6PM), 178 Hoxton St, London N1 5LH
– Tel: 0207 7399221

MCCAFFERTYS (6:30PM), 699 High Rd, Ilford IG3 8RH
– Tel: 0208 599 0008

THE RAMBLE INN (6:30PM), 223 Mitcham Rd, Tooting, London SW17 9JG – Tel: 0208 7674040

THE WB YEATS (7PM), 20 Fonthill Road, London N4 3HU
– Tel: 0208 617 3400

SIR COLIN CAMPBELL (7PM), 264-266 Kilburn High Road, London NW6 2BY – Tel: 0207 6935443

THE SHEEPHAVEN BAY (7PM), 2 Mornington Street, London NW1 7QD – Tel. 020 7380 1323

THE HOLE IN THE WALL (7:30PM), 5 Mephram Street, London SE1 8SQ
– Tel: 0207 928 6196

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or directly from: <https://www.mudchutney.co.uk/collections/return-to-london-town-2025>



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