

For Immediate Release
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BIS Announces its annual Irish Lecture Series Speakers

IN BRIEF

The public is invited to celebrate the Irish culture and heritage through the Benevolent Irish Society of PEI's popular Lecture Series, now included in the first annual Irish Festival. The 2026 lectures are Tony Dolan's "The history and origins of Irish family surnames," presented on March 2, Dr. Callum Beck's "The Belfast Riot of 1847," presented on March 9, and Theresa Redmond's "Governor Walter Patterson; Rogue or Reformer," presented on March 16. Admission is by donation. The Monday evening lectures start at 7pm at the BIS's accessible Irish Cultural Centre, 582 North River Road, Charlottetown. For the schedule of the Irish Festival events Island wide, visit the <https://www.BenevolentIrishSocietyofPEI.com>.

IN FULL

Kathy Roney, Chair of the Benevolent Irish Society's Social and Ceilidh Committee, is pleased to announce that this year's Lecture Series will be included in the first annual Irish Festival on PEI. "We are thrilled to welcome Tony Dolan, Dr. Callum Beck, and Theresa Redmond to the 2026 Lecture Series held on Monday, March 2, 9, and 16, 7pm, at the BIS's accessible Irish Cultural Centre, 582 North River Road, Charlottetown".

The first lecture is on March 2. It is "The history and origins of Irish Family Surnames," presented by Tony Dolan, BIS Board member and popular Irish enthusiast. The talk will examine the origins of Irish surnames and their roots as Gaelic, Norse, Norman, Scottish, English, Huguenot, Palatine, and others. "I will outline how Gaelic Irish names changed when translated from the Irish language to English," Dolan says, "I will also provide sources and websites that will help those in attendance to pursue their own family origins in Ireland."

On March 9, Dr. Callum Beck presents the second lecture, "The Belfast Riot of 1847." His presentation explores Prince Edward Island experience of the second-worst election riot in Canadian history. On March 1, 1847, about 200 Scottish Protestants and 300 Irish Catholics got into a brawl, resulting in at least three men dead and up to 100 others injured. This event set the stage for the hardening of the sectarian conflict between Protestants and Catholics on Prince Edward Island for the next 125 years. "The Belfast Riot of 1847" examines the social and

political conditions that led to the riot, provides a detailed account of its unfolding, and demonstrates from that careful retelling how the opposing Scottish and Irish interpretations of the event are both valid.

Theresa Redmond, historian and author of Bound and The Governor's Granddaughter is giving a lecture on Monday, March 16. The title of her lecture is "Governor Walter Patterson; Rogue or Reformer," a reflection of the life of Walter Patterson, Prince Edward Island's first governor.

Roney invites one and all to attend the Lecture Series: "Everyone is welcome, as admission is by donation. Books by authors will be available for purchase. These lectures are well attended, and always interesting!"

For further information about the Lecture Series, and the detailed schedule of Irish Festival events, visit <https://www.BenevolentIrishSocietyofPEI.com>.

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BIS Media Contact: Laurie Murphy, BIS of PEI Member - lauriemurphy@marram.ca

c/o Benevolent Irish Society, Irish Cultural Hall, 582 North River Rd., Charlottetown, PE C1A 2T4