



Celebrating Ulster-Scots
and Farming (and your
chance to win a GRASSMEN
Hoodie!) Page 16

the Ulster-Scot

SATURDAY 27th SEPTEMBER 2025

Belfast International Tattoo puts Ulster-Scots at the centre of worldwide celebration



◆ Captivated audiences left wanting more by the mix of incredible local and global talent. Full coverage on pages 4 and 5



◆ Time to Tune Up! – Agency rolls out major investment in Music and Dance Tuition

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◆ Loyal Subjects United – Remembering the seminal events of Ulster Day, September 28, 1912

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◆ Ulster-Scots Agency returns to the National Ploughing Championships

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Dr Frank Ferguson (second from left), Lee Reynolds (third from left) and Ian Crozier (first from right) pictured with members and friends of the Hercules Mulligan Chapter, DAR

Ulster-Scots Agency CEO takes part in DAR Panel Discussion

Last Sunday, Ulster-Scots Agency CEO Ian Crozier was delighted to join with members of the Hercules Mulligan Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for a panel discussion at Ulster University, Coleraine, where they discussed the role of Ulster-Scots in the American Revolution and our developing plans for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence next year.

The panel discussion was organised by Councillor Aaron Callan from Causeway Coast and Glens Council and also included Dr



Frank Ferguson from Ulster University and Lee Reynolds, who will soon take up the post of Commissioner for the Ulster-Scots and the Ulster British Tradition.

They were joined online by around a thousand DAR members who participated in a very interesting Q and A session. The Chapter, which is the DAR's first in Ireland, is named after Ulster-born Hercules Mulligan, one of George Washington's most effective spies, who used his tailoring business in New York City to gather intelligence from army officers and pass it on to Washington.

Ulster-Scots Word of the Issue

Quare:
Considerable
"Thon's a quare day tha day!"

Quare

"Considerable"

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Ulster-Scots Agency
Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch

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- News
- Events
- 'Word of the Day'
- Tuition funding streams
- ...and much more!

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 Discover
Ulster-Scots



Ulster-Scots Agency announces fresh investment in Music and Dance Tuition

The Ulster-Scots Agency have unveiled plans for more major investment in developing local musical and dancing talent, after letters of offer were issued to 128 community groups and bands who have been awarded funding to deliver a wide range of tuition.

Through the Agency's 2025/2026 Music and Dance Tuition Programme, support and encouragement through financial assistance will be provided to constituted bands and not-for-profit voluntary and community groups who offer Ulster-Scots music and dance tuition.

Subject to the bands and groups accepting the letters of offer, a wide variety of projects will be supported throughout the province, including several new dance projects located in Fivemiletown, Dundonald and North Belfast. The overall investment in Highland and Scottish Country Dance will be almost £91,000, which will be used to support 32 Highland Dance projects and two Scottish Country Dance projects.

In addition, on the musical side of the tuition programme, 94 musical projects located throughout Ulster will receive financial assistance. This will see the delivery of tuition for piping, drumming, fiddle playing, lambeag drumming, fifeing, accordion tuition, and drum major skills, and represents an



Ballinrees Pipe Band from County Londonderry

overall investment of more than £167,000. As with the dance category, several new projects have received support, including an accordion project in Antrim, a Drum Major project in Richhill, and flute tuition in County Fermanagh.

In total, the Ulster-Scots Agency will be

investing almost £258,000 in the 2025/2026 Music and Dance Tuition Programme, creating both accredited and non-accredited tuition opportunities for over 2000 participants in a wide range of musical and dance skills. Many of the projects are aimed at young people starting out on their Ulster-Scots cultural journey, while simultaneously supporting bands, community and voluntary groups to develop skills and increase awareness and interest in Ulster-Scots culture and heritage.

Classes provided through the various projects are open to all members of the community, and will be delivered between September 1, 2025, and May 31, 2026.



Moyne Highland Dancers from County Donegal



Young learners enjoying tuition at Florencecourt Flute Band in County Fermanagh



Dunloy Accordion Band from County Antrim

Ulster-Scots Bagpipe, Drumming & Drum Majoring Tuition Classes



Where: Somme Memorial Hall,
Newtownstewart

Bagpipes

Friday 4-6pm

Classes tutored by Kyle Duddy
classes start Friday 26th Sept 2025

Drumming

Monday 7pm-9pm

Classes tutored by Stuart Wilson
classes start Monday 29th Sept 2025

Drum Majoring

Monday 7-9pm

Classes tutored by Alastair Patterson
classes start Monday 29th Sept 2025



Everyone is very welcome to come to the classes, classes are for children, adults and all abilities. Registration will take place on the first night of each class.



Belfast International Tattoo – A celebration of global talent with Ulster-Scots at the beating heart

September is often thought of as the 'back to school' month, but for lovers of culture, music and dance, including, of course, many in the Ulster-Scots community, it's a month when one of the showcase events of the year comes to town – Belfast International Tattoo!

This annual event, which has been growing year-on-year, has provided an important platform for many local bands to perform in front of major crowds in an arena setting, and allowed them to share the stage with incredible individuals and groups from around the world. This year's Tattoo was no exception, as local performers, including many from the Ulster-Scots tradition, joined with musical artists and dancers from across Europe, Africa, North America and Oceania.

The list of performers included something for everyone, from pipe band aficionados to dance enthusiasts, with creativity, energy and talent in abundance.

The line up included:

- ◆ Belfast International Tattoo Pipes and Drums
- ◆ Winnipeg Police Pipe Band – Canada
- ◆ St John's Pipe Band – Zimbabwe
- ◆ Down Academy Pipes and Drums
- ◆ Co. Armagh Massed Accordions
- ◆ Ballylone Concert Flute Band
- ◆ Hunter Moore Memorial Flute Band
- ◆ SA Precision Team – Australia
- ◆ Tveit Union Musikkorps – Norway
- ◆ The Conscript Band of the Finnish Defence Forces
- ◆ Kathryn Stewart School of Highland Dance
- ◆ Fling Together Dance Company – USA
- ◆ Royal Hospital Chelsea, Pace Stick Team
- ◆ Royal British Legion Standard Bearers

Very ably hosted by the excellent Helen Mark, who presents Radio Ulster's 'Kintra' programme about Ulster-Scots each Sunday, the crowds that gathered on Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening were transported into a different world, where music and song from all around the globe danced through the air, and performers brought rhythm and style to life - elegant, graceful and captivating.

The Ulster-Scots heart of the event was evident throughout, not least when local bands took to the stage, performing tunes and melodies, jigs and reels, that can be heard at annual events right across the province, but which took on a special symbolic meaning in the SSE Arena as the world came together in Belfast.

As well as being an opportunity for attendees to enjoy phenomenal music and dancing, the Tattoo also provides a chance to acknowledge the vital role our armed forces continue to play in keeping the United Kingdom safe.

Royal British Legion Standard Bearers added their famous colours to the flags carried by several of the performers, and you would struggle to find a more popular act this year than the Royal Hospital Chelsea Pace Stick Team, whose presence not only reminded all those gathered of the service many have given to our country but also of the importance of recognising that – regardless of age – you can use your talents to entertain and bring joy to others.

A major sponsor of the event, the Ulster-Scots Agency was represented at the Tattoo by our CEO, Ian Crozier, and several members of our Senior Management Team, who joined with the audience in embracing the colourful celebration of talent and pageantry.

The Belfast International Tattoo is unquestionably becoming a key element of how Northern Ireland presents itself to the world, and central to that, a means by which the Ulster-Scots community can project our culture, heritage and musical traditions to a global audience. We have lots more to



Kathryn Stewart School of Highland Dance



Compere for the Tattoo, Helen Mark, interviewing a very special guest, Dame Mary Peters



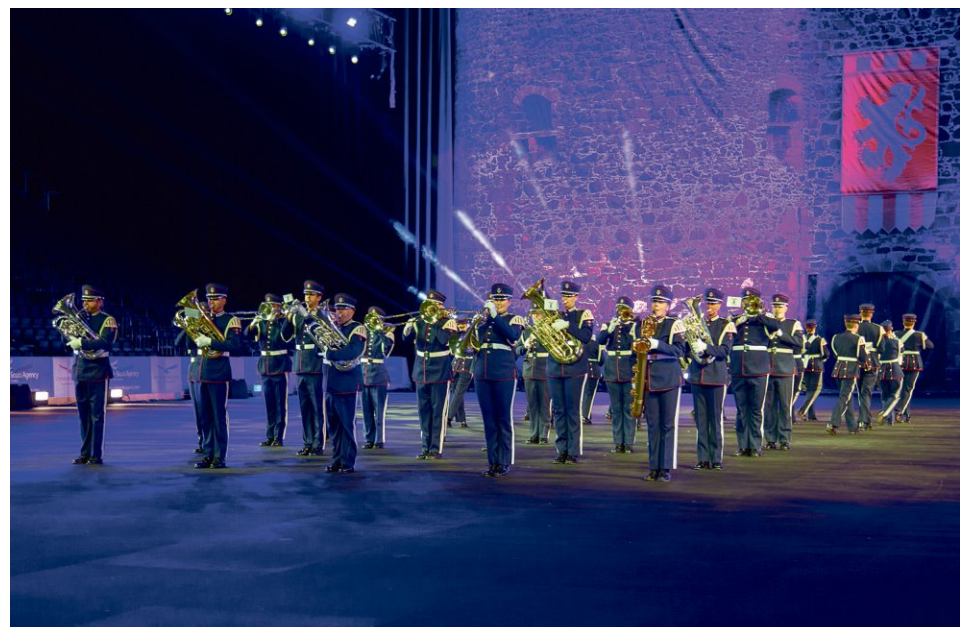
Ulster-Scots colour and music filled the air



St John's Pipe Band from Zimbabwe



A member of the Conscript Band of the Finnish Defence Forces shows that 'Rock n Roll' also has a place at the Tattoo



Tveit Union Musikkorps from Norway

showcase, and as the Tattoo organisers plan for next year and beyond, we know that there are opportunities just waiting to be grasped for the benefit of our community and the cultural enrichment of all.



The Massed Pipe Band take to the floor in the SSE Arena



Ballylone Concert Flute Band



The ever-popular grand finale is always spectacular



Co. Armagh Massed Accordions



Multi-generational musical talent was on display



The very popular Royal Hospital Chelsea Pace Stick Team



Hunter Moore Memorial Pipe Band



A drummer from St John's Pipe Band, Zimbabwe



Dancers delighted the crowds with their elegance and style



Leading from the front – the Drum Majors at Belfast International Tattoo



The SA Precision Team flying the flag for Australia



Down Academy Pipes and Drums

Restored US Declaration-linked newspaper displayed in Belfast

A complete edition of America's first daily newspaper, printed in Philadelphia on June 10, 1776, has gone on display at the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre in Belfast. *The Pennsylvania Packet* was published by Strabane-born Ulster-Scot John Dunlap, who just three weeks later, printed the Declaration of Independence.

The rare artefact was unveiled by the United States Consul General in Belfast, James Applegate, at a 'Celebration of Liberty' event to celebrate the occasion and mark American Independence Day, in which so many Ulster-Scots played a key role.

Mr Applegate said: "The words of the Declaration of Independence did more than unite our 13 colonies and inspire the Revolutionary War, they asserted the principles of individual liberty, equality and the right to self-governance; radical ideas that would inform our fledgling democracy. They built on an intellectual tradition that grew out of the enlightenment and informed the Glorious Revolution. Through his newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Packet*, John Dunlap played a key role in shaping public opinion and revolutionary ideals and on July 4, 1776, his work ensured that the Declaration of Independence would reach important audiences across the Colonies. In doing so he helped to galvanise support for independence. The contribution to America made by your early forefathers and those who followed them is profound. It's an exciting year ahead for us all and I look forward to working with you as we put this region's special contribution to America's journey on a global stage'.

Northern Ireland Communities Minister Gordon Lyons MLA also spoke at the Celebration of Liberty. "This event and the wonderfully conserved *Pennsylvania Packet* that has gone on display are a reminder of the key role played by the Ulster-Scots in the foundation of the United States and the enduring ties of family and friendship which bind our two countries," he said. "I am delighted that it has been saved for posterity by the Ulster-Scots Agency and will now go on permanent display at this fantastic centre in the heart of Belfast which educates people about the richness of our shared heritage."

The Pennsylvania Packet is the latest item connected to the Founding Fathers of the United States to be housed at the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre in Cathedral Quarter. It has been placed on display after undergoing a programme of cleaning and conservation by



Pictured with *The Pennsylvania Packet*: Leslie McKeague, Ulster-Scots Agency Board Member; Ulster-Scots Agency CEO, Ian Crozier; US Consul General, James Applegate; Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons MLA; Trevor Wilson, Ulster-Scots Agency Board Member; and Lavinia Tilson, Ulster-Scots Agency Board Member

Sean Madden, the island of Ireland's foremost conservator, to address almost 250 years of wear and tear. Other priceless artefacts on display include the 'Farm Book' used by Upperlands-born Charles Thomson, the Secretary of the Continental Congress, to record his agricultural transactions, as well as first editions of the *Four Gospels* and *Bible* that he translated.

Ulster-Scots Agency CEO Ian Crozier added: "As we look forward to next year and the 250th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence, we are forging links and making plans to celebrate the vital contribution of our community to these momentous events and our collection of unique items linked to Ulster-Scots Founding Fathers will be at the heart of our offering. We are delighted to have received such high-profile support on this latest milestone on the road to July 2026."



Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons MLA, with US Consul General, James Applegate



270 weans enjoy Ulster-Scots Summer Schools in Mourne!

It was another busy summer for the Schomberg Society in Kilkeel, as they organised six Ulster-Scots Summer Schools, bringing together a phenomenal 270 weans from across the Kingdom of Mourne.

With a growing interest in Ulster-Scots in Mourne, there was huge demand for summer schools for local children to experience and explore all aspects of Ulster-Scots culture, language, heritage and musical tradition.

The Schomberg Society set their mind to the task with great determination, and supported by the Ulster-Scots Agency and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, successfully delivered a five-day summer school in Kilkeel Primary School; a five-day summer school in Annalong Primary School; and two, two-day Ulster-Scots Summer Schools in the new venues of Ballyvea Hub, located in the Mourne countryside, and Cranfield Orange Hall, located

beside the popular Cranfield tourist destination.

Organising the new two-day summer schools gave the Society a brilliant opportunity to reach out and engage with many new children, significant numbers of whom had never experienced Ulster-Scots culture in such a 'hands on' way before.

During July and August, the Society also organised two five-day Sports and Ulster-Scots Camps, which were held at Kilkeel High School. These provided a unique opportunity for children to enjoy both sports and Ulster-Scots!

Youth engagement is a vital part of the Schomberg Society's outreach, and it is fantastic to see the younger generation so enthusiastic to get involved in Ulster-Scots.

The Schomberg Society expressed their thanks to the Ulster-Scots Agency, and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, for supporting their Ulster-Scots Summer Schools.



There were plenty of smiles at the Ulster-Scots Summer School held at Annalong Primary School



Weans enjoying the Ulster-Scots Summer School at Kilkeel Primary School

Ulster-Scots Summer School at Sir Hans Sloane Centre a great success

There were smiles all around at the Sir Hans Sloane Centre in Killyleagh recently, as weans from across the local area came together to enjoy an Ulster-Scots Summer School.

The children enjoyed a wide range of activities, including designing their own tartan, learning some traditional dancing, and several workshops looking at the stories of famous Ulster-Scots scientists. This included a workshop about Professor Dame Joycelyn Bell, who discovered pulsars in 1967, a major breakthrough in astrophysics, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in recognition of her remarkable achievement.



Science Workshop on Botany, Chocolate and Ulster-Scots Scientist, Sir Hans Sloane



Learning some Scottish Dancing!



Science Workshop on Atoms and Ulster-Scots Scientist Sir Joseph Larmor



Science Workshop on Space and Ulster-Scots Scientist Professor Dame Joycelyn Bell



Learning some Scottish Dancing!

United in loyalty and determined to stand their ground – The Events of Ulster Day, 28 September 1912

Ulster was the only part of Ireland to experience the full vigour of the Industrial Revolution. Ulster-Scots energy and dynamism had made early 20th-century Belfast one of the major industrial powerhouses of the world. Saturday was then a normal working day but on Saturday, September 28, 1912, the industrial heart of the great city was still: the great shipyards were silent; the looms were idle in the linen mills; the rope works and the foundries were deserted.

At 11 o'clock in over 100 well-attended church services across Belfast, congregations sang, as was appropriate in a time of national crisis, 'O God Our Help In Ages Past'. In the Ulster Hall, in the Assembly Hall, in the Grosvenor Hall, similar services were being held. Carson and the Unionist leadership stood together at the Ulster Hall and, before God and the people, dedicated themselves for the coming struggle.

When at noon the religious services ended, Carson and the Unionist leaders and a smartly turned-out guard of men wearing bowler hats and carrying batons, walked along Bedford Street from the Ulster Hall to the City Hall. Major Frederick Crawford, who allegedly signed the Covenant in his own blood, commanded the guard. They were preceded by the Boyne Standard, an ancient-looking yellow silk banner carried by an Ensign Watson before William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne on July 1, 1690.

Crawford was a man of earnest intent: he meant business, as the Larne gunrunning was to demonstrate. There was no cheering; there was no frivolity. All was solemnity as Carson passed through the throng.

The Unionist leaders were welcomed by the Lord Mayor and the 52 Unionist members of the Corporation and were led across the great marble vestibule in the City Hall to a large round table appropriately draped with a Union Flag. *The Northern Whig* observed that 'gathered around the flag-draped drumhead' was 'a body of men who represented a very large part of the capital, the talent, the genius and the energy of the city of Belfast. If the Covenant was

treason nearly all that makes for prosperity, enlightenment and progress in this city will have to be impeached.'

As photographic shutters snapped and cinematic handles turned, Carson stepped forward and solemnly signed the Covenant. He was followed by Lord Londonderry and then by representatives of the Protestant Churches, the Belfast Unionist MPs, members of the local public bodies, and the officers of the Ulster Unionist Council and of the Grand Orange Lodge. At one o'clock the gates of the City Hall were thrown open and the large crowds which had assembled and filled Donegall Place and Donegall Square surged forward, eager to append their signatures, to bind their fate to that of their fellow Ulstermen. Lines of desks stretching for a third of a mile along the corridors of the City Hall allowed 540 signatures to be taken simultaneously. The signing went on unceasingly until 11 o'clock that night.

However impressive the scenes at Belfast City Hall, they should never be allowed to obscure the fact that the Covenant was signed elsewhere: in other venues in Belfast; in the towns and villages of Ulster; from the shores of south Donegal to the Ards peninsula; from the drumlins of Co. Cavan to the rugged coast of north Antrim. Within Ulster the Covenant was signed at some 500 centres. The people of rural Ulster were no less enthusiastic than their urban fellow citizens. In the unionist heartland the Covenant was signed almost to a man. Elsewhere the climate was less friendly: defying the threats of their nationalist neighbours, the unionists in Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal signed the Covenant. In its own way the signing of the Covenant in small rural and communities was just as impressive as the scenes in Ulster's capital, a point made by the author Violet Martin writing in *The Spectator*. She had observed the Covenant being signed in a village in south Londonderry and was greatly impressed 'by the unadorned and individual action of those who had left their fields, and taken their lives and liberties in their hands laying them forth in the open sunshine as



the measure of their resolve'.

Hugh Godley (the future 2nd Lord Kilbracken), whose family home was at Killegar, Co. Leitrim, provided further evidence of unionist earnestness in a letter to his friend Violet Asquith, the Prime Minister's daughter:

All the people I have talked to of whatever station, from the Archbishop of Armagh to the boy who weeds the garden, are passionately anti-Home Rule.

They really think that if it passes there will be a serious rising in Ulster...

It is very difficult till one gets among them to realize that all these deep feelings are not merely invented by politicians for party purposes.

The nationalist *Irish News* queried the validity of Ulster Day. The paper asserted that most of the signatories had never bothered to read the document; even of those who had

bothered, most would not have understood it. The few who had both read and understood the document had little intention of honouring their pledge.

Events, however, were to prove *The Irish News* comprehensively wrong. Ordinary unionists clearly did value 'their cherished position of equal citizenship within the United Kingdom' and 'civil and religious freedom'. When the Ulster Unionist Council established the Ulster Volunteer Force in January 1913, Ulster unionists honoured their pledge to 'stand by one another' by joining its ranks.

The landing of 35,000 rifles and three million rounds of ammunition at Larne, Bangor and Donaghadee helped to disabuse those who believed Ulstermen were bluffing when they bound themselves to 'use all means which may be found necessary' to defeat the Home Rule conspiracy.

The formal establishment of the Provisional



The Edward Carson Signature Tile in Belfast City Hall



Multitudes of people signed the Covenant throughout the day. At Belfast City Hall, 540 signatures could be taken simultaneously. Credit: "Ulster Day, Belfast" by Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, No known copyright restrictions



Sir Edward Carson and Sir James Craig leading thousands of people to Belfast City Hall on Ulster Day, September 28, 1912. Credit: PA Images / Alamy



Prior to Ulster Day, major rallies attracting huge crowds took place all over Ulster, including this one at Balmoral. Credit: 'UUC rally at Balmoral' by Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, No known copyright restrictions



Sir Edward Carson and other leading unionist figures signing the Ulster Covenant. Credit: CBW / Alamy



More than 228,000 women signed the Women's Declaration, standing foursquare with the men who signed the Ulster Covenant. Credit: Chronicle / Alamy

Government of Ulster, in July 1914, made it abundantly clear that unionists were standing by their pledge never to recognise the authority of a Dublin parliament.

In 1916 seven men signed the Proclamation of the Republic in Dublin. The American Declaration of Independence of 1776 had fifty-six signatories. However, in 1912 virtually an entire community put their signatures to the Ulster Covenant. In Ulster, 218,206 men signed the Covenant and 228,991 women signed a parallel declaration associating themselves with the men 'in their uncompromising opposition to the new Home Rule Bill now before parliament'. A further 19,162 men and 5,055 women of Ulster birth signed in Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, York, Liverpool, London, Manchester and Bristol. On board the SS Lake Champlain, 12 second-class passengers, four men and eight women, and 34 third-class passengers registered their opposition to

Home Rule.

By the end of the historic Ulster Day, the Unionist population had demonstrated its resolve to the British parliament, to the rest of the British people and to the world. *The Times* opined that the events of Ulster Day brought to a close 'a fortnight memorable in the history of Ulster' and remarked that 'the impression left on the mind of every competent observer is that of a community absolutely united in its resistance to the act of separation with which it is threatened'.

It was an assessment not at variance with that of the *Northern Whig* which, comparing the day's events with those of the Ulster Unionist Convention of 17 June 1892, asserted that Ulster had delivered an ultimatum to the British Government which was as 'enthusiastic and unanimous a pronouncement as was ever made by a people placed on their defence against an assault upon their liberties'.



An original copy of the Ulster Covenant, signed by the key unionist leaders, is on permanent display in the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, The Corn Exchange, Belfast.

County Antrim resounds to the sound of the Lambeg Drum once again

Last Saturday, the sound of lambegs could once again be heard far and wide, as the County Antrim Drumming Association held its annual competition at Burnside.

Supported by the Ulster-Scots Agency, the competition was a wonderful opportunity for local lambeg enthusiasts to demonstrate their skills in front of expert judges, Ian Montgomery and Davy Laverty.

A tight competition ultimately saw the following results emerge:

1. Andrew Carey
2. Gary Forsythe
3. Jimmy Houston
4. William Alexander
5. Tam Elliot
6. Jack Carey
7. Mark Bones
8. Chontelle Meekin

Altogether, 14 drums were present on the day, in what was another fine display of top-class drumming and a poignant reminder of the special place the lambeg holds in the hearts of many Ulster-Scots around Antrim and beyond.

The Association expressed their thanks to the Ulster-Scots Agency, Burnside Orange Lodge, and Councillor Matthew Warwick for their support in staging the event.



Ulster-Scots Agency hosts Coffee Morning for Macmillian Cancer Support

On Wednesday morning, the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre in Belfast came alive to the sound of tea being poured, coffee being stirred, and cakes being devoured, as the Ulster-Scots Agency hosted a coffee morning to raise funds for Macmillian Cancer Support.

Visitors, Agency staff, and friends from other local organisations, were all treated to a literal feast of cakes, buns, scones, sponges, cheesecakes, and much more. Many of our staff had experimented with their inner 'Mary Berry', baking delicious homemade items, including the famous Ulster Fifteen's (which always go down a treat), a Malteser cheesecake,



Jac, Kirsty, Ann and Cliona were all smiles at the coffee morning

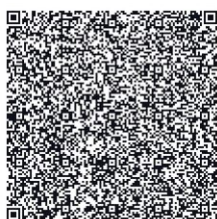


It was a great chance to have a blether over some delicious scrán, and all for a good cause

and an Irn-Bru Cheesecake!

At the time of writing, we don't have a figure for how much was raised, but all the signs were positive that it will be a good sum, which will go towards Macmillian's important work supporting individuals and families impacted by cancer.

If you would like to make a donation, you can do so by scanning the QR code. If you would like to know more about Macmillian Cancer Support, please visit macmillan.org.uk



Jacqui Hillis, Agency receptionist and the main organiser of the coffee morning, with all the wonderful treats (before they were devoured)

Ulster-Scots Agency showcase our rich cultural tapestry at Spinning Yarns Festival

At the beginning of September, the Theatre at the Mill in Newtownabbey was transformed into a colourful celebration of 'crocheted curiosities' and 'woven wonders', as the Spinning Yarns Festival took centre stage once again.

Organised annually by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, the festival has proved to be so popular that an extra day was added this year, providing stall holders from across Northern Ireland and beyond with more time to showcase their products and demonstrate their skills.

As in previous years, the Ulster-Scots Agency was delighted to once again be invited to take part, and our team distributed a wealth

of literature, prugh, and warm, friendly conversation.

Without question, the Ulster-Scots community is intricately woven into the rich cultural tapestry of this country. Amongst the more than 1000 people who visited the festival, there were many proud Ulster-Scots, keen to talk about their family history, discuss various words and phrases, and share their stories.

Many are the threads of unbroken history stretching back hundreds of years, replete with tales of pioneering spirit, ingenuity and loyalty. We have many reasons to be proud of the role the Ulster-Scots community has played, and still plays, in society, and we trust that everyone our team met at the festival left feeling encouraged and uplifted.



'Back with a Bang!' Annual Guy Fawkes Festival returns to Kilkeel

The skies will be lit up in Kilkeel once again this October, as The Schomberg Society prepares to host its annual Guy Fawkes Festival, a five-day event culminating with a major outdoor celebration event in the Town Centre.

Events planned include a baking demonstration, an Ulster-Scots Weans Arts and Crafts workshop, and the displaying of the Ulster-Scots Agency's 'Charter Towns' exhibition in Newcastle Library, helping to give folk a better understanding of the story of the impact of the Plantation of Ulster.

There will also be a talk and presentation on the Gunpowder Plot, and how its prevention was celebrated in Ulster, by Historian Quincey Dougan on Wednesday, November 5, at 8pm in Reivers House, Kilkeel.

The highlight of the festival will be on Saturday, November 8, when a Children's Lantern Parade will make its way through Kilkeel Town Centre led by the Scots King James VI of Scotland and 1st of England on horseback, the Schomberg Fife and Drum Band and Schomberg Academy Pipe Band, forbye, and 17th century living history re-enactors carrying fire torches.



The Guy Fawkes Festival attracts huge numbers of people from all across Northern Ireland



Highland Dancers will once again put their wonderful skills on display

Children and their families are very welcome to take part in the Lantern Parade, which will finish off with the lighting of a beacon, live musket firing, fireworks display, children's entertainment, and an Ulster-Scots Music and Dance showcase in the Lower Square, Kilkeel.

The tradition of Ulster-Scots celebrating Guy Fawkes Night in Kilkeel stretches back well over a century, when there were performances by marching bands, fifes and lambeg drums took to the streets, and bonfires shone out against the dark. The Schomberg Society is very pleased to have successfully revived this tradition, which now welcomes visitors from right across Northern Ireland. King James was a pivotal figure in the story of the Ulster-Scots, overseeing the Plantation of Ulster, and through these celebrations, the Society



A fifer and lambeg drummer entertain the crowds in Lower Square, Kilkeel at last year's Guy Fawkes Festival

hopes to create a better awareness of that part of our rich Ulster-Scots history.

The Society expressed its thanks to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for supporting this Festival.

Ulster Scots Agency returns to the National Ploughing Championships



Dummers from Sister Susan Graham Memorial Accordion Band

Following a very successful time at the National Ploughing Championships in the Republic of Ireland last year, the Ulster-Scots Agency were delighted to return to this key event once again earlier this month, bringing Ulster-Scots literature, resources, prugh and conversation to the masses.

Over the course of three days, 225,000 people from across Ireland and beyond descended on Scraggan, Tullamore, County Offaly, ready to enjoy the wealth of agricultural, musical, cultural and culinary offerings on show.

Our team were positioned a Government of Ireland tent, along with organisations attached to the Irish Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, from where they distributed lots of Ulster-Scots literature; let people try our popular 'when o wurd's' quiz; brought smiles to faces with exciting prugh; and enjoyed many interesting conversations.

We also provided Ulster-Scots entertainment in the form of Piper Andy McGregor, Moyne Pipe Band and Moyne Highland Dancers, and Sister Susan Graham Memorial Accordion Band.

With the two bands coming from County



Lots of Ulster-Scots literature, resource and prugh was distributed

Donegal, it was a terrific opportunity to highlight the Ulster-Scots presence in that county, as well as Cavan and Monaghan, where there are still very active Ulster-Scots communities.

Every performance drew significant attention and provoked a lot of interest, as children started to dance and 'toes started tapping' along with the music. Notably, several people commented that they simply don't get to see Ulster-Scots music and dancing often, so it was a welcome opportunity to experience something different.

Several Irish Government Ministers also called at our stand, including James Browne TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

With stands showcasing everything from the newest farm machinery to museums, children's toys to country music icons, and political candidates to black pudding, there was certainly something for everyone.

We trust that everyone who called with our team enjoyed the chats, and that the literature and prugh they took home will help encourage, inspire and inform them as they continue to learn about the Ulster-Scots community.



Events such as the Ploughing Championship are excellent opportunities to promote and celebrate the history of the Ulster-Scots



Students from Spain enjoying the Ulster-Scots stand



Sister Susan Graham Memorial Accordion Band from County Donegal



Moyne Pipe Band and Highland Dancers from County Donegal



Piper Andy McGregor



Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, James Browne TD, with the Ulster-Scots Agency Director of Development, David Gilliland



Deep in thought and concentration as they tackle the 'When o Wurd's' Quiz



The Moyne Highland Dancers were very popular with the crowds



From left: Dayna Jost (Ulster-Scots Community Network), William Olphert (Director of Education and Language), David Gilliland (Director of Development), Shirlie Gregg (Education and Language Officer), Gary Blair (Education and Language Officer), Michelle McIlveen MLA, Lavinia Tilson (Ulster-Scots Agency Board Member), and Alan Dourish (Marketing and Events Officer)

Young Ulster-Scots enjoy the Stormont limelight at 'Celebrating Achievement' events

Young Ulster-Scots pupils from across the province have been enjoying something a wee bit different this week, as they made their way to Parliament Buildings, Stormont to receive Foundation Level 1 Certificates in Piping, Drumming and Drum Majoring.

The three-night celebration, which was organised by the Ulster-Scots Agency's Education and Language Team and hosted by Michelle McIlveen MLA, who also helped to present the awards, was the culmination of months of hard work and effort on the part of the young people and their tutors.

Indeed, in a speech to those gathered, Ms McIlveen highlighted three key elements that had resulted in this special moment for the pupils – competent, passionate tutors; supportive schools; and the encouragement of family and friends.

The total number of recipients of awards

through the 2024/2025 School Music and Dance Tuition was as follows:

- ♦ Piping – 66
- ♦ Snare Drumming – 483
- ♦ Drum Major – 20

As part of the event, several of the award winners performed for the crowd, filling the Great Hall at Stormont with traditional Ulster-Scots sounds.

Many of these young people are now putting their musical talents to great use in local marching and competition bands, where they will undoubtedly go on to develop more skills while simultaneously expressing and celebrating their proud Ulster-Scots culture and heritage.

It is extremely encouraging to see young people being inspired and empowered to carry on our cherished musical traditions, and we wish all the pupils every success for the future.



Some of the award recipients putting their skills on display along with pipe tutor, Ian Burrows



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TAAKIN BRAID



A'm naw fur houlin my wheest!

I've now been in my role as the Agency's Director for Education and Language for just over a year and it has been a rewarding journey, reconnecting me with my linguistic roots and deepening my understanding of the Ulster-Scots story.

Much of my time has been spent consolidating existing content and adapting it for use in schools and community learning. As proud Ulster-Scots speakers from North Antrim, our Education and Language Team have been especially focused on promoting and celebrating the beauty of oor ain wee tung.

Over the past few editions of The Ulster-Scot, I've been developing a narrative around the language, exploring its origins, considering how it's used today, and even venturing into the world of AI-generated content.

The question I've heard most often over the last twelve months is: "Where can I learn Ulster-Scots? Is there a language class?"

Once people discover that everyone knows a wee bit of Ulster-Scots, it's only natural that they want to learn more!

That's why, in recent months, we've been working on something very special: a course that's fun, friendly, and informative. We've called it 'Dinnae Houle Yer Wheest', which means 'don't be quiet'.

Over six weeks, we'll take learners on a journey of discovery, focusing on everyday Ulster-Scots words and phrases they can use right away. We are also going to offer a WhatsApp Support Group so learners can stay connected, ask questions, and share their progress with fellow learners.

While we hope to offer an online version in the future, we believe there's nothing quite like learning Ulster-Scots face-to-face, hearing it, speaking it, and feeling the rhythm of the language in its natural setting.

So why should I consider learning Ulster-Scots?

Ulster-Scots is woven into the fabric of our everyday lives. From place names

to local expressions, it's a vital part of our shared heritage. Understanding it means understanding ourselves. It might be less obvious than before, but if we look or listen carefully, we'll still hear the echoes of the Scots who came here long ago.

Learning Ulster-Scots opens the door to a rich literary heritage. With a better grasp of the language, you can explore stories, poems, and songs that shaped generations before us. You may even feel the urge to write in Ulster-Scots yourself - many have rediscovered it this way.

Our unique language provides a link to community, culture, and connection.

If you're a new or second-language speaker, using our local vernacular can help you build links with local people. They'll appreciate that you've embraced some of their culture and language.

When we use and teach Ulster-Scots, we ensure it lives on - not just as a performance, but as a living, breathing language for future generations. If you become confident in speaking it, more people will hear it, and they may feel emboldened to use it themselves, especially if they're "undercover" Ulster-Scots speakers!

Language in Northern Ireland is complex and nuanced. Learning our tongue helps us appreciate the rich tapestry of identities and perspectives that shape our society. It's not just about learning a new language - it's about understanding how language works and how Ulster has been influenced by English, Irish, and Scots.

So...

Are you curious about Ulster-Scots?

Do you want to build confidence using the words you already know?

Fancy learning to write in the language, too?

Then sign-up today and be part of something brilliant!

A dinnae know about YOU, but A'm naw fur houlin MY wheest!

FREE!

Ulster-Scots Agency
Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch

DINNAE HOUL YER WHEEST!

Ulster-Scots Language Course

STARTING **Monday**
29th September 2025
(running for 6 weeks)

REGISTER NOW!

Click the link in the description or scan this code

Ballymena Library
6pm-8pm

language@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk



Ulster-Scots OCN Courses – Now Available

The Ulster-Scots Community Network have announced the return of their popular range of courses.

Offered free of charge, and accredited by the Open College Network NI, the courses cover a wide range of topics, including history, language, faith and emigration, and much more besides. There is certainly much to be learned and enjoyed.

The details for Levels 1 and 2 are listed below (please note: only participants who have completed the Level 1 course can register to progress to the more advanced Level 2 version):

Level 1: Introduction to Ulster-Scots

Duration: Four, two-hour sessions covering:

- ♦ Definitions and indicators of an Ulster-Scots Identity
- ♦ Overview of the Plantation of Ulster
- ♦ Taakin with Ulster-Scots (language) and Ulster-Scots and family history

Level 2: Impact of Ulster-Scots on Ulster

Duration: Eight, two-hour sessions covering:

- ♦ Early 17th century Ulster and evolving Ulster-Scots Identity
- ♦ Impacts of Plantation on Rural and Urban Ulster
- ♦ Rural Revolution in 18th century Ulster and impact on Ulster-Scots
- ♦ A Leap of Faith: Ulster-Scots perspectives in 19th and 20th Century
- ♦ Home and Away: The Ulster-Scots Diaspora and Resurgence of the culture

If any of the options listed above capture your interest and you would like to express an interest in either attending a course at the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, or facilitating a course in your area, please email charlesn@ulster-scots.com for further information. Additional courses can also be delivered to specific groups at their own preferred locations, or in some circumstances, via Zoom. If interested, please also send any requests to the same email address.



OCN NI
ULSTER-SCOTS
COURSES

COURSES COVERED:

- LEVEL 1: Introduction to Ulster-Scots
- LEVEL 2: Impact of Ulster-Scots on Ulster

DELIVERED BY THE ULSTER-SCOTS COMMUNITY NETWORK

ENDORSED BY THE OPEN COLLEGE NETWORK NI

To Express Interest Contact:

CHARLESN@ULSTER-SCOTS.COM

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Wean's Wurld

All Things Bright and Beautiful – the Ulster-Scots and Farming

As harvest time fast approaches, and families gather at church services and events across Ulster to give thanks for the food we enjoy, did you know that Ulster-Scots have played a major role in this history of farming?

Agriculture has played an important part in the lives of the Ulster-Scots since our ancestors first arrived here. In fact, the first group of farmers who came with Hamilton and Montgomery in the early 1600s produced bumper harvests in 1606 and 1607, which helped to encourage more farmers to come to Ulster during the Plantation. And since then, other pioneering Ulster-Scots have helped to improve and develop farming all over the country.

Here are three famous Ulster-Scots who have made a huge difference:

Harry Ferguson

Harry Ferguson is perhaps the best-known



There is a statue of Harry Ferguson in Dromore, County Down

Ulster-Scots innovator in relation to farming, having invented the 3-point linkage system, a transformational piece of technology which is still used in modern farming around the world today. He was also the first person in Ireland to build an aeroplane and helped to create the first 4-wheel drive Formula One Car, the Ferguson P99.

Perhaps you or your friends have a Massey

New Plow a Unit with Tractor

Unique Implement Attached to Fordson is Demonstrated
By JOSEPH D. EDDY

A TWO-BOTTOM tractor plow that is entirely different in the method of attaching it to the tractor has been brought to the United States by Harry Ferguson, of Belfast, Ireland. The plow is attached to the tractor in such a manner that it becomes a unit with the machine and is as flexible as the machine itself, a slight exertion on the part of the operator raising the bottoms from the ground. When raised the plow is suspended and the tractor may be driven across headlands, backed up, or maneuvered in any way that is desired.

The plow was demonstrated by its inventor on the farm of B. S. Blair, near Knox, Ind., where the photographs that accompany this description of it were taken. Perhaps a hundred farmers and others interested in the farm implement business watched the demonstration, and the outfit was put thru all sorts of trials.

As will be seen by the illustrations the two bottoms are attached to fishhook-shaped arms extending back from a special drawbar attached to the tractor. This drawbar is fastened in place by curved pieces of steel that are attached to the drive-gear housing by three bolts. The drawbar is double, one extension being several inches above the other. The plow frame is attached to the two drawbars by pins.

One of the unusual features of the plow is the line of draft between the tractor and the plow bottom. It will be noted in the picture that there is an inverted "V" of steel bars on top of the frame near the tractor. The tractor power is conveyed to the bottoms thru this "V". Should the plow points strike a rock, or any other obstruction, the power of the tractor attempts to straighten out this "V", which raises the rear of the tractor from the ground. In one of the illustrations on page 35, the points of the plow have been caught in the roots of the underbrush shown in the background and the rear, or drive wheels are whirling four feet from the ground.

The bottoms used on the plow were 13 inches wide. The depth the plows penetrate is regulated by the single wheel on the underside. To increase or lessen



A Two-Bottom Plow that is Attached Directly to and Becomes a Unit with the Tractor. Harry Ferguson, of Belfast, Ireland, the inventor of the plow is shown on the tractor seat.

Ferguson tractor? The Ferguson mentioned in the name is Harry Ferguson, and his legacy continues to inspire engineers around the world to this very day.

Sir James Murray

Sir James Murray is famous for creating Milk of Magnesia, a laxative and a cure for stomach pains. He had worked out a way to make solid magnesia into a liquid form, making it much easier for people to take it as a medicine.



Sir James Murray

He also realised that he could use his by-products to improve the fertility of ground. The first trials were carried out in 1817 in The Point Fields, which were near York Street in Belfast.



John Clarke developed 33 different varieties of potato. (John Clarke text and images kindly supplied by CausewayCoastalRoute.com)

FLUID MAGNESIA

was discovered in 1817 by
SIR JAMES MURRAY.
All other makes, WITHOUT EXCEPTION,
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It prevents the food of infants turning sour,
and in all cases acts as a pleasant aperient
peculiarly adapted for ladies and children.

ASK FOR, AND SEE THAT YOU GET,
MURRAY'S FLUID MAGNESIA.

An early advert for Fluid Magnesia

The fields became an excellent grazing ground for cattle, who produced large quantities of milk.

John Clarke

John Clarke, a farmer's son and self-taught scientist from Ballintoy in the early 1900s, developed a potato which could be harvested in June, helping to avoid blight. He left school at 12 to help his father on the farm and began experimenting with breeding new types of potatoes. In 1936, he developed his first named potato:

Ulster Monarch. He went on to create 33 varieties of potatoes, 31 of which had Ulster in their names.

Thanks to his work, the popular Maris Piper variety was bred, a grandson of one of his varieties, the Ulster Knight. He received an honorary degree from Queen's University, Belfast and an OBE for his work.

the Ulster-Scot COMPETITION

Competition Time – Win a GRASSMEN Hoodie and art set!

As we celebrate the incredible impact made by Ulster-Scots on farming, our friends at the GRASSMEN have given us an amazing prize for you to try and win – one of their amazing hoodies!

If you watch the GRASSMEN online, then you'll hear plenty of Ulster-Scots words, some of which you can see labelled on the picture.

What we need you to do to enter the competition is simply colour in the picture, and when we receive all the entries, we will pick a winner – someone who has included lots of colour and stayed within the lines (as best they could).

In addition to the GRASSMEN hoodie, the winner will also receive an art set, so that they can keep on colouring and drawing in the days and months ahead.

You can either take a photo of your coloured in picture and email it to competition@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk, or post it to us at: Education and Language Team, Ulster-Scots Agency, The Corn Exchange, 31 Gordon Street, Belfast, BT1 2LG, Northern Ireland. The closing date for entries is Friday, October 17, 2025. Good luck!

**Please note that the hoodie awarded as the prize might not be exactly the same as the hoodie in the image, which is a representation.

