

Summer 2025

Issue No. 4

In this newsletter...

The newsletter features several important announcements, including a thank-you to the SRQEA for its generous support of the Foundation, as well as a save-the-date notice for the upcoming golf tournament, a fundraiser benefiting the Black Rock commemorative project.

In the past events section, you'll find a recap of the Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal luncheon, where Thomas Mulcair praised the work of the Foundation. There is also coverage of the notable visit of Ambassador John Concannon to the Black Rock, as well as the Foundation's participation in the Saint Patrick's Day parades. In addition, Craig Sauvé highlighted the importance of the project at City Council, and La Presse recently featured the Black Rock commemorative project, underscoring its historical significance.

Finally, in the articles section, the newsletter pays tribute to local history with a piece marking the 200th anniversary of the Lachine Canal.



**Montreal
Irish Monument
Park Foundation**

TO
PRESERVE FROM DESECRATION
THE REMAINS OF 6,000 IMMIGRANTS
WHO DIED OF SHIP FEVER
A.D. 1847-8.

THIS STONE
IS ERECTED BY THE WORKMEN
OF
MESSRS. PETO, BRASSEY & BETTS,
EMPLOYED IN THE CONSTRUCTION
OF THE
VICTORIA BRIDGE
A.D. 1859

**La Fondation du
Parc du Monument
Irlandais de Montréal**

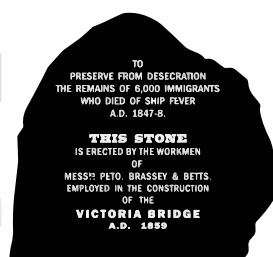
1847

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**Montreal
Irish Monument
Park Foundation**



**La Fondation du
Parc du Monument
Irlandais de Montr al**

1847

This spring at the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation



SPONSORS

A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

The governments, corporations, and individuals who have lent their financial support to the foundation during its initial years of fundraising are indispensable to the project's success. Without their contributions, this long-awaited commemoration would remain a mere aspiration within the Irish community, rather than the tangible site it is evolving into.



**Secrétariat aux relations
avec les Québécois
d'expression anglaise**

Québec



**Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme**



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Ville de Montréal

The Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation Thanks the SRQEA for Its Generous Support

The Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation is honoured and deeply grateful to the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (SRQEA) for its generous grant of \$200,000.

This invaluable support will play a crucial role in advancing our mission to preserve and promote the rich Irish heritage in Montréal and across Québec.

With this funding, our foundation will be able to further its efforts in commemorating the thousands of Irish immigrants who contributed to the fabric of our society. The grant will help us develop educational programs, enhance the park's historical interpretation, and strengthen community engagement initiatives that celebrate the deep historical ties between Québec and its Irish community.

We extend our sincere thanks to the SRQEA for recognizing the importance of our work and for investing in the preservation of cultural heritage. This grant is not merely a financial contribution; it is a testament to the value of historical remembrance and the strengthening of cultural connections for future generations.

We look forward to continuing our work with the community and welcoming visitors to the Irish Monument Park to experience and honour this shared history.

Thank you, SRQEA, for your commitment to heritage and community!

Summer 2025



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

1ST ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, 29 September 2025

Kanawaki Golf Club
Kahnawake, Québec



**Montreal
Irish Monument**



1847

**Monument Irlandais
de Montréal**

www.montrealirishmonument.com

Save the Date! Fundraising Golf Tournament in Support of the Montreal Irish Memorial Project

We are thrilled to announce our upcoming Fundraising Golf Tournament in support of the historic Montreal Irish Memorial project. This exciting event will take place at the prestigious Kanawaki Golf Club, and promises to be an unforgettable day of sport, community, and support for a cause close to our hearts.

Event Patron: The Honourable Thomas Mulcair

We are deeply honoured to welcome The Honourable Thomas Mulcair as the patron of our fundraising golf tournament. A longtime supporter of the Montreal Irish Memorial Park Foundation, Mr. Mulcair has been a steadfast ally in our mission to commemorate the Irish immigrants who perished during the Great Famine and were buried near the Black Rock.

As a former Leader of the Official Opposition and a respected voice in Canadian public life, Thomas Mulcair brings not only visibility to our cause but also a genuine passion for history, heritage, and justice. His continued patronage and presence at our events are a powerful reminder of the importance of preserving our collective memory — and ensuring that the stories of Montreal's Irish community are never forgotten.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Mulcair for his ongoing support and participation in this year's tournament. His involvement is a great source of inspiration to our team and to all who share in our commitment to building a lasting, world-class memorial in the heart of Montreal.



Cropped photo of Mulcair with NDP candidates by Asclepias

Why We Golf: Preserving Irish Heritage

This tournament is about more than just a day on the fairway — it's about remembrance, respect, and restoration. Every swing, every step, and every sponsorship goes toward something far greater than a game: the creation of a world-class memorial park to honour the over 6,000 Irish immigrants who lost their lives during the Great Famine and are buried near the Black Rock in Montreal. These men, women, and children arrived in Canada in hopes of a better future, only to face unimaginable hardship, sickness, and sacrifice. Their story is not just Irish history — it is Montreal's history, Canada's history, and a testament to human resilience. The Montreal Irish Memorial Park Foundation has worked tirelessly for years to ensure these lives are not forgotten. Our vision is to transform this historically significant site into a beautiful, accessible, and educational space that honours those lost and invites future generations to learn, reflect, and connect with this deeply meaningful past.

Proceeds from the golf tournament will go directly toward the design and construction of the memorial park, bringing us one step closer to realizing this long-awaited dream. Your participation — whether as a golfer, sponsor, donor, or supporter — helps ensure that this sacred ground is preserved with the dignity it deserves.



Picture of the Black Rock in 1900.
Photo: Library of Congress.



Recent picture of the Black Rock.
Photo: Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation.



The Kanawaki Golf Club in 1913.
Photo: The Kanawaki Golf Club



The Kanawaki Golf Club clubhouse.
Photo: The Kanawaki Golf Club



The Kanawaki golf course, hole #5.
Photo: The Kanawaki Golf Club

About the Venue: Kanawaki Golf Club

We are proud to be hosting this year's fundraising golf tournament at the prestigious Kanawaki Golf Club — a venue that offers not only a spectacular golfing experience but also a deep sense of heritage and tradition.

Nestled in the lush greenery just outside Montreal, Kanawaki is known for its breathtaking scenery: tree-lined fairways, rolling terrain, and tranquil natural surroundings that offer both challenge and charm to golfers of all levels. Whether you're teeing off under a canopy of mature maples or enjoying the serenity of a well-kept green, every hole on the course reflects the care, craftsmanship, and natural beauty that make Kanawaki a standout among Canadian golf clubs.

But Kanawaki is more than just a beautiful course — it is a site of living history. Established in 1914, the club is one of Quebec's oldest, with over a century of stories etched into its landscape. Its name, "Kanawaki," is derived from the Mohawk word for the nearby community of Kahnawá:ke, acknowledging the land's Indigenous roots. Over the years, Kanawaki has hosted countless tournaments, welcomed some of Canada's most prominent golfers, and played a role in the broader cultural and sporting life of the region.

With its blend of natural elegance and historical depth, Kanawaki is a fitting venue for our cause — a site where past and present intersect, just as they do in our efforts to honour the memory of those buried at the Black Rock. We are grateful to the club for hosting this important event and for helping us create a day that will be both meaningful and memorable.

Whether you're a seasoned golfer or a first-time visitor, we promise that a day at Kanawaki is one you won't soon forget.

Ticketing and Sponsorship

Whether you're playing solo or joining as a corporate team, your contribution goes a long way in preserving Irish heritage.

Foursomes – \$2000 Includes:

BBQ breakfast/brunch

18 holes of golf (with cart)

Cocktail hour with open bar

3-course dinner with complimentary wine

Partial tax receipt

Exclusive use of the beautiful private course

Corporate Foursome – \$4000 Includes:

- Golf brunch and dinner as a regular foursome PLUS
- Tee and green signage
- Recognition signage at arrival and cocktail hour
- ½ page ad in our event brochure
- Partial tax receipt included

Sponsorship Opportunities:

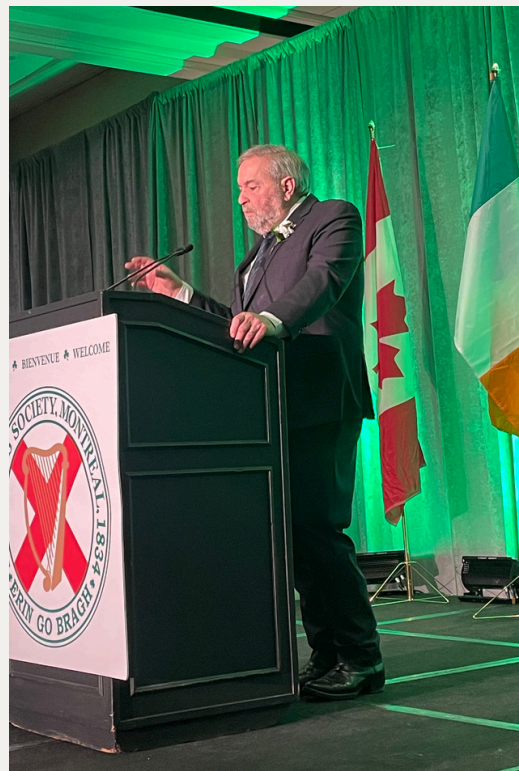
- **Cart Sponsor** – \$2500 -signage in each cart
- **BBQ Brunch Sponsor** – \$1500 (signage, ¼ page ad, special mention, tax receipt)
- **Dinner Sponsor** (2 available) – \$2500 (signage, ¼ page ad, special mention, tax receipt)
- **Wine Sponsor** – \$2000 (signage, ¼ page ad, special mention, tax receipt)
- **Tee and Green Sponsors** – \$600 each or \$1000 for both (signage, mention in brochure, tax receipt)

Honouring History: Thomas Mulcair Highlights the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation at SPS Luncheon

At this year's SPS Annual Luncheon, the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation was prominently featured in the speeches of several distinguished guests. The event, which brought together a wide range of supporters, dignitaries, and community leaders, provided an excellent platform for reinforcing the importance of our mission and the significant role the Foundation plays in preserving the Irish heritage in Montreal.

Among the notable figures in attendance were John Concannon, Ambassador, and Thomas Mulcair, former leader of the NDP. Their presence and support were invaluable, and their remarks at the event further highlighted the ongoing work of the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation.

Thomas Mulcair delivered a particularly powerful speech, emphasizing the need to recognize the historical contributions of the Irish community. He highlighted the importance of the Foundation's mission in preserving the memory of the thousands of Irish immigrants who helped shape Montreal. "Many people have been bringing the project to where it is today, but I'd like to recognize two of them in particular—Fergus Keyes and Scott Phelan—who have been stalwart volunteers for years and deserve to have their efforts underscored," Mulcair said.



Thomas Mulcair at the SPS Annual Luncheon



Wendy Corn (BNP Inspire), Christian Bolduc (BNP Inspire), Fergus Keyes (president of MIMPF), Scott Phelan (treasurer of MIMPF), Lynn Perkins (BNP Inspire).

Other speakers echoed these sentiments, underscoring how projects like the Montreal Irish Monument Park serve as a beacon for both education and cultural remembrance. The park stands as a testament to the resilience and contributions of the Irish community to Montreal's development, and its continued growth and preservation are seen as essential for maintaining the rich cultural tapestry of the city.

The recognition of the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation at such a prestigious event is a testament to the increasing support for our cause. We are grateful to the SPS and all the distinguished guests who took the time to acknowledge the importance of our project. Their support is integral as we continue to move forward with our mission to preserve and celebrate Montreal's Irish heritage.

As we look to the future, the Foundation remains committed to expanding its efforts to ensure that the stories of the Irish immigrants who helped shape Montreal are told for generations to come.

Read more about the event

MIMPF Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/montrealirishmonument/>



Fergus Keyes (president of MIMPF), Lisa Shortt (SRQEA), Patricia Lussier (Lemay), Scott Phelan (treasurer of MIMPF), Marie-Eve Parent (Lemay), Peggy Hopkins.



John Bennett, Fergus Keyes (president of MIMPF), Vivian Doyle-Kelly (MIMPF director).



Kelly O'Rourke (MIMPF director), Fergus Keyes (president of MIMPF), Lisa Shortt (SRQEA)

Strengthening Ties: A Visit from Ambassador John Concannon and Irish Minister Timmy Dooley at the Black Rock

On Sunday, March 16th, the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation had the honour of welcoming Ambassador John Concannon, his wife Mary, Elisabeth O'Higgins from the Irish Embassy, Irish Minister Timmy Dooley, and other distinguished guests to the Black Rock memorial site.

During this meaningful visit, we provided a guided tour of the historic site and presented the design plans for the future memorial. The discussion highlighted the deep-rooted connections between Ireland and Montreal's Irish community, reaffirming our shared commitment to preserving and honouring the memory of the thousands of Irish immigrants who perished in 1847.

Following the visit, we had the privilege of joining our guests for a dinner downtown after the St. Patrick's Day Parade. This gathering provided another valuable opportunity to strengthen relationships and further our mission of ensuring that this significant chapter of history is never forgotten.

As we continue moving forward with the memorial project, we are grateful for the ongoing support and engagement of both local and international leaders.



Scott Phelan (treasurer of MIMPF), Brian O'Gallagher (Honorary Consul of Ireland to Quebec), Mary Concannon, John Concannon (Ambassador of Ireland to Canada), Mary-Claude Durand (MIMPF director), Tommy Dooley (Irish Minister), Fergus Keyes (president of MIMPF), MP James Maloney.



Saint Patrick's Day Parades

This Green Season, the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation participated in three different Saint Patrick's Day parades!

Hudson Saint Patrick's Day Parade



Montréal Saint Patrick's Day Parade



Québec City Saint Patrick's Day Parade



A special thank you to everyone who helped us participate in these parades, and thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day 2025!

Craig Sauvé Recognizes the Black Rock Project at City Council

During the Saint Patrick's Day festivities this year—marking the 200th anniversary of Montreal's parade—City Councillor Craig Sauvé took a moment during a city council session on March 16th to deliver a heartfelt tribute to Montreal's Irish community. His remarks not only celebrated the longstanding contributions of Irish Montrealers, but also gave powerful recognition to the work of the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation.

In his speech, Councillor Sauvé reminded the public of the historical weight carried by the Black Rock, which stands in Old Goose Village along Bridge Street. The rock, placed in 1859 by Irish workers who were constructing the Victoria Bridge, marks the site of a mass grave for over 6,000 Irish immigrants who died of typhus in 1847 after fleeing the Great Hunger (An Gorta Mór). He emphasized the city's role in this history—and in its remembrance:

"Indeed, one of the big projects I think the city needs to keep pushing forward on and make happen is the Montreal Irish Monument Park... That same very site on Bridge Street, where it is today, was where we had fever sheds, for the many thousands of Irish that came to Montreal and Canada during An Gorta Mór... And what a beautiful message did Montreal send then, how inclusive a message."



Craig Sauvé

Photo: <https://x.com/CraigSauve>

Mr. Sauvé's words echo the spirit at the heart of our Foundation's mission: to honour both the Irish lives lost during this tragic chapter and the compassion shown by the people of Montreal. His recognition is a timely reminder of why this project matters—not just to Irish descendants, but to the entire city.

As we continue to move forward with plans for the park's construction—working in partnership with the City, Hydro-Québec, local communities, and dedicated volunteers—moments like this affirm that we are not alone in our mission. The support of elected officials such as Councillor Sauvé signals a growing commitment to preserving this site as a sacred space of memory, education, and reflection.

We thank Mr. Sauvé for his thoughtful acknowledgment and for standing with us in calling for continued municipal support of the Montreal Irish Monument Park. The Black Rock stands not only as a symbol of loss, but also as a testament to hope, resilience, and unity. Let us continue working together to ensure that its story is never forgotten.



Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation | Hello, friends!

Hello, friends! On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the Saint-Patrick's day parade in Montreal, I gave a speech at city council honouring Montreal's Irish Community. ❤️ And I mentioned a...

 facebookkann

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/15d4Bz9qGe/>

Watch the full video [HERE](#)

Or at the MIMPF Facebook Page :

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BlackRockMemorial>

A Moment of Recognition: The Black Rock Park Project in La Presse

We are proud to share that the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation was recently featured in La Presse, in a moving article titled *Rêver du parc à la mémoire des Irlandais*, written by Émilie Côté. The piece offers a heartfelt and beautifully illustrated look at the vision behind the Black Rock Memorial Park and the journey that has brought us closer than ever to making it a reality.

The article highlights the emotional gravity of the site near the Victoria Bridge—home to Canada’s largest mass grave, where over 6,000 Irish immigrants who perished during the typhus epidemic of 1847 now rest. As La Presse so poignantly describes, “Le simple fait de marcher sur le site impose le respect et le recueillement.” This is a sacred space. And for the first time in generations, it is finally being treated as such. With striking photos by Olivier Jean, the article captures members of our foundation—Esmé Cavanaugh, Fergus Keyes, and Scott Phelan—who have long championed the creation of a proper commemorative park. The story underscores how far we’ve come: from the 2019 archaeological discoveries during REM construction, to Hydro-Québec’s donation of 3.4 acres of land, to the collaborative design efforts with the architectural firm Lemay.

The planned park will place the Black Rock at its heart, surrounded by a serene body of water symbolizing the Celtic cross’s connection between heaven and earth.

Rêver du parc à la mémoire des Irlandais



PHOTO OLIVIER JEAN, LA PRESSE

Esmé Cavanaugh, Fergus Keyes et Scott Phelan, de la Fondation du Parc du Monument irlandais de Montréal

Picture of the article.

Photo: LaPresse.



A shamrock: a rare Irish trace left on the current site.

Photo: LaPresse.



Scott Phelan (MIMPF treasurer).
Photo: LaPresse.



Fergus Keyes (MIMPF president).
Photo: LaPresse.



Esmé Cavanaugh (MIMPF administrative assistant).
Photo: LaPresse.

It will feature a contemplative agora, a ship-like steel wall bearing 6000 Celtic crosses, a belvedere facing the Atlantic, markers for the historic fever sheds, and a museum pavilion to educate future generations.

Importantly, the article also honours the humanity of those who responded to the tragedy in 1847. As Scott Phelan eloquently puts it, “Il faut célébrer la réaction des Montréalaises et Montréalais de l’époque.” In the face of crisis, the people of Montreal welcomed 75,000 destitute Irish migrants—despite the city having a population of only 50,000 at the time.

The park is not just a tribute to Irish loss, but to Quebec’s compassion. It is a reminder of the values of empathy, hospitality, and resilience that bind our histories together. It will be a site of memory, education, and reflection—not only for the Irish community, but for all Montrealers and Canadians.

We thank La Presse for helping to share our story, and we invite everyone to read the article and stay engaged as we move closer to 2029, when the park is set to open. Together, we continue to ensure that the memory of the 6,000 lives lost—and the many more who survived and helped build this country—will never be forgotten.

[Read the full article HERE](#)

200th anniversary of the Lachine Canal

This year marks the 200th anniversary of a monumental achievement in Montreal's history: the beginning of construction on the Lachine Canal in 1825. Beyond its engineering significance, the canal stands as a powerful symbol of Irish resilience and the foundational role of immigrant labour in shaping our city.

A Vision Long in the Making

The idea of building a canal to bypass the dangerous Lachine Rapids—also known as the Sault-Saint-Louis—dates back to the very origins of Montreal. As early as 1671, François Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon proposed a canal between Montreal and Lachine that would support the mills and allow access to the “up-country.” Though construction first began in 1689, it was soon halted by the devastating attack on Lachine by the Iroquois. Several attempts followed, but none succeeded until the early 19th century.

It wasn't until 1821, driven by the ambitions of Montreal's merchant class to establish the city as a major North American trading hub, that the project was revived and finally completed in 1825.



The First Great Canal Painting by Jack Tremblay, 1964 © Bank of Montréal / Jack Tremblay / Centenary Collection P767, 1964

Carved by Hand — Powered by People

What is often left out of the story is who built the canal: thousands of Irish migrants, many of whom had settled in Griffintown. Lacking formal training or machinery, these labourers brought only their strength, endurance, and unrelenting determination. They dug the 15.5-kilometre canal through soil that was one-third rock, built tunnels and drains, constructed masonry locks, and created spillways—all with rudimentary tools like shovels, picks, spades, buckets, and augers.

The canal would go on to be enlarged twice, first from 1843 to 1848, and again from 1873 to 1884. Even during the second expansion, when steam-powered excavators had been introduced, the vast majority of the work was still done by hand.

These men worked from dawn to dusk, six days a week, in all weather. Their contribution was not just physical—it was cultural, too. The canal drew together a growing Irish community that helped shape Griffintown and wider Montreal for generations to come.

A Lasting Legacy

Today, the Lachine Canal is a National Historic Site and a cherished green space. But 200 years ago, it was a lifeline for trade and industry—and a testament to the will and sacrifices of those who built it.

As we reflect on this anniversary, the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation honours the canal not just as a feat of engineering, but as a living memorial to Irish endurance, labour, and contribution. The same hands that carved its path are the same hands that built this city. The canal's legacy flows not only with water, but with stories of survival, hope, and belonging.



Entrance to the Lachine Canal, located at the foot of McGill Street in Montreal, 1826, watercolor by John Hugh Ross © McCord Museum MP-1976.288.2



Work to widen the canal at Saint-Gabriel Lock © National Archives of Canada / C-066176, 1877

Sources

Parks Canada. (18th of March, 2025). History and culture: Lachine Canal National Historic Site. Government of Canada. <https://parks.canada.ca/lhn-nhs/qc/canallachine/culture>

Please consider donating

Consider donating to help make this project a reality!

Donations can be made through our [website](#) or by mailing this form to **1195 Sherbrooke O. Montréal, WCH3A 1H9**

| | | | | | | | |
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Subscribe to our newsletter!

Subscribe to our newsletter so that you don't miss our next issues and to stay up to date with developments regarding the design of the park, the DNA results from the excavated remains, fundraising milestones, upcoming events and much more!



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