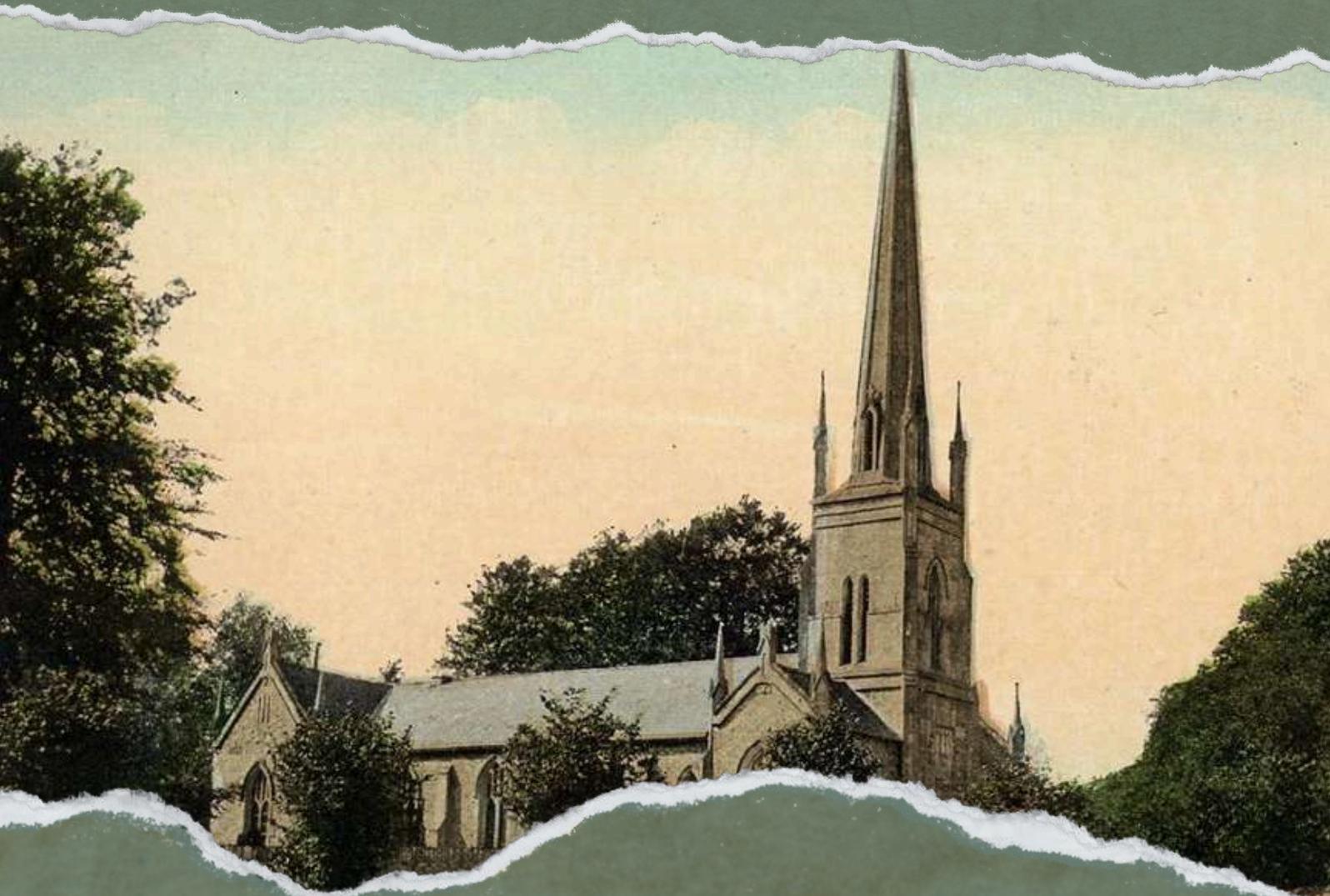


# IRELAND CANADA HOMECOMING 2025

REMEMBERING THE PETER ROBINSON  
SETTLERS OF THE BALLYHOURA REGION  
**200TH ANNIVERSARY**



## **PETER ROBINSON SETTLERS EMIGRATION SCHEME CONFERENCE**

HOSTED BY SAINT GEORGE'S ARTS AND HERITAGE CENTRE,  
MITCHELSTOWN, CO. CORK

20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025



# INTRODUCTION

The **Peter Robinson Settler Emigration Conference** on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025, hosted by **Ballyhoura Development** in collaboration with the committee of **Saint George's Arts and Heritage Centre** forms a focal part of the **Ireland Canada Homecoming 2025 "Remembering the Peter Robinson Settlers of the Ballyhoura Region 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary"**. We will gather in the historic and inspiring setting of **Saint George's Arts and Heritage Centre in Mitchelstown**, a venue that echoes the stories of generations past and provides a fitting backdrop for our shared exploration of heritage, migration, and identity.

This conference commemorates the remarkable journey of the **Peter Robinson Settlers**, whose emigration from Ireland to Canada in the early 19th century forged enduring connections across the Atlantic. We honour their legacy and celebrate the vibrant cultural ties that continue to unite Ireland and Canada through this chapter of our shared history.

We are delighted to welcome a distinguished panel of speakers from **Ireland, Canada, and the United States**, each bringing unique perspectives and insights into the historical, cultural, and genealogical dimensions of the Robinson emigration. Their contributions will help us better understand the motivations, challenges, and triumphs of those who left these shores in search of new beginnings — and how their stories continue to shape our communities today.

As we reflect on the past, we also look forward to strengthening the bonds between our nations, fostering dialogue, and celebrating the spirit of homecoming that this event so beautifully embodies.

# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

10 AM -  
10:30 AM

**OPENING ADDRESS & WELCOME**

An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD  
AND  
His Excellency Dennis King, Ambassador of Canada to Ireland

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10:30 AM  
- 11AM

**“Agrarian Outrage and State Policy in Pre-Famine Ireland: Context, Coercive Power, and Control”**

Dr Jay Roszman

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11:15AM-  
11:45AM

**“Waiting for the Land of Opportunity: The Trials and Tribulations of the Peter Robinson Emigrants in the Blackwater Region.”**

Gerard Moran

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12 PM-  
12:30 PM

**“A new lease of life - why did they go and what did they leave behind”**

Bill Power

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12:45-  
2:15 PM

**LUNCH**

Shuttle to the Firgrove Hotel for lunch and return

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## PANEL INPUTS AND DISCUSSION

**2:15 PM-** “Peter Robinson- The Man behind the Movement”

**3:30 PM**

Dr Jane McGaughey

“Lord Doneraile Irish Immigrants of 1825”

Dennis Carter-Edwards

“The Robinson DNA Project”

Glenn O Meara & Matthew Barry

“Genealogical sources for Peter Robinson emigrant descendants: Local sources and collections to consider”

Dr Jane Halloran

Irish and Canadian: The Robinson Emigrants and Communal Identities in Peterborough County

Patrick Leahy

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**3:30 PM** “From Whence they Came”

**- 4PM**

Christy Roche

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**4PM-** “Bridging the Atlantic”

**4:30PM**

John Tierney

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**4:30PM** “The Commemorations: memory, community and the telling of complex histories through documentary”

**- 5PM**

Chris Nikkel

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FINAL QUESTIONS, REMARKS  
AND CONFERENCE CLOSE

Event Booking- Eventbrite Only- Limited Capacity- book early to avoid disappointment,

# MEET THE SPEAKERS



DR JAY ROSZMAN

Jay Roszman lectures in 19th-Century Irish and British History at University College Cork. His first book, *Outrage in the Age of Reform: Irish Agrarian Violence, Imperial Insecurity, and British Governing Policy 1830-1845* was published in 2022 with Cambridge University Press. He is currently working on a project exploring the Queen's Colleges and their role in training Irish men for careers across the British Empire.

Gerard Moran lectured in the History Department at NUI Galway and Maynooth University. He has published extensively on 19th-century Ireland, including *Sending Out Ireland's Poor: Assisted Emigration to North America in the Nineteenth Century*, *Fleeing from Famine in Connemara: James Hack Tuke and his Assisted Emigration Scheme in the 1880s* and joint editor of *Mayo: History and Society* and the *Famine Heroes of Ireland's Great Hunger* series with Christine Kinealy.



GERARD MORAN



BILL POWER

Bill Power is the author of seventeen books on Irish history, his most recent publications being '*The Blackwater, History and Images from the Irish Rhine*,' (2023) and '*Vagabonds, Villains and Troublemakers*' (2025). His specialised subjects include the landed estates around Mitchelstown and Fermoy; famine, poverty and crime in North Cork in the 19th century. He has a Master of Arts Degree in history from University College Cork. Bill is the founding chairman of Saint George's Arts and Heritage Centre.

Jane McGaughey is the Johnson Chair of Québec and Canadian Irish Studies and Professor History and Diaspora Studies at Concordia University in Montreal. She is the author of *Ulster's Men: Protestant Unionist Masculinities in the North of Ireland, 1912-1923* and *Violent Loyalties: Manliness, Migration, and the Irish in the Canadas, 1798-1841*. Prior to her time at Concordia, she taught at the Royal Military College of Canada and was a National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Fellow in Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Currently, she is the Principal Investigator on two projects funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada: "*Mothers in the Time of Cholera: Motherhood, Migration, and Pandemics in the Canadian Colonial Medical System, 1817-1867*" and "*Colonial Hero or Villain? Mapping Commemorations of Guy Carleton in Canada, 1775-2025.*"



DR JANE  
MCGAUGHEY



**DENNIS  
CARTER-EDWARDS**

Dennis Carter-Edwards graduated from Peter Robinson College at Trent University and the University of British Columbia. He worked with Parks Canada as a Research Historian, later serving as Superintendent at Fort Malden National Historic Site and Cultural Resource Manager at the Trent-Severn Waterway. A past president of both the Ontario and Peterborough Historical Societies, he also chaired Peterborough's Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee. He now sits on the board of Nine Ships 1825 Inc. and has published widely on the Peter Robinson Irish migration.

After 35 years as a healthcare executive, Glenn now serves as a Market Leader for Vistage Worldwide, leading business development and CEO engagement with large enterprises. A longtime family historian, he is currently collaborating with Ballyhoura Development, Cobh Heritage, and Nine Ships in Peterborough, Ontario, to mark the 200th anniversary of the Peter Robinson Settlers in Ireland and Canada. He is also a fifth-generation descendant of a Peter Robinson settler. As a former board member of the Irish Genealogical Society International, published author, and active member of the Minnesota Genealogy Society Writers Group, Glenn brings deep expertise in genealogical research, writing, and public speaking.



**GLENN O'MEARA**

Matt Barry - a fifth-generation Peter Robinson descendant - is the administrator of the Peter Robinson Settlers DNA Project and co-administrator of the Barry and Flanagan DNA Projects, all sponsored by FamilyTreeDNA. Through genetic genealogy, Matt uncovered the stories of his 19<sup>th</sup> - century ancestors and gained insight into Irish and Canadian heritage. Matt is an aerospace engineer with 25 years in spaceflight operations and programme management at NASA's Johnson Space Center, NASA Headquarters, and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He later spent 15 years in mission-critical software R&D for U.S. government agencies and commercial clients.



**MATT BARRY**

Jane Halloran is a professional genealogist based in Tulla, County Clare, and founder of Dalcassian Origins, a family history research service. She is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists. Jane has many years' experience in commissioned genealogical and local history research, including consultations, house histories, and specific genealogy reports. She earned an M.A. in Local History from the University of Limerick in 2017, and more recently completed a PhD at Mary Immaculate College and the University of Limerick. Her thesis explored emigration and network patterns among a group from County Clare who settled in Connecticut.



**DR JANE  
HALLORAN**



PATRICK LEAHY

Patrick is a sixth-generation descendant of several Robinson settler families from North Cork. He studied history at the University of Guelph, focusing on rural Ontario and Irish emigration, and completed a Master's thesis on the topic in 2016. In 2025, as part of a dedicated local team, he helped lead the commemoration of the Robinson settlement in Douro and the celebration of 200 years of community life since. Patrick farms in Douro, Ontario with his wife Deanna and their three daughters on land purchased by his great-great-grandfather in 1854.

Christy Roche is an historical geographer, living in the Blackwater Valley, and has had an interest in the Peter Robinson settlers for over 40 years, first writing about the history of the emigrant families 35 years ago. With this avid interest, Christy has visited the communities of the settlers in Peterborough on a number of occasions. Christy is the author of the recently published book "*From Whence They Came- the Peter Robinson Settlers*", an historical account of the settler families and communities of origin here in Ireland 1823 and 1825.



CHRISTY ROCHE

John Tierney is a field archaeologist based in Ireland. Digging since 1985 and a Senior Archaeologist since 1999, his focus has been excavation and publication. Since 2010, he has directed the Historic Graves Project, combining community-led graveyard surveys with non-invasive methods to identify and record unmarked graves, especially those linked to institutional and Famine burials. John began working on the Peter Robinson Settler project in 2013 in partnership with Ballyhoura Development CLG. This has led to the surveying and online publication of nearly all historic graveyards in County Limerick via [historicgraves.com](http://historicgraves.com). A 2024-2025 Royal Irish Academy Commemorations Grant supported his visit to Douro Township, Ontario, to collaborate with the local community in recording their historic burial grounds.



JOHN TIERNEY

Chris Nikkel lectures in visual and audio documentary at the National Film School, IADT, in Dún Laoghaire. Originally from Canada, he has lived in Ireland for the past twenty years. As a documentary maker, he has worked with RTÉ, the BBC, the Smithsonian Channel, and others. Chris is currently working on a practice-based PhD at LUCA School of Arts, in Belgium, exploring audio storytelling and complex histories. A 2025/26 Royal Irish Academy Commemorations Grant supported his travel to Peterborough and County Cork to attend both commemorations.



CHRIS NIKKEL



## ABOUT SAINT GEORGE'S

Saint George's Arts and Heritage Centre is the biggest community-led building conservation project currently underway in County Cork and the Ballyhoura region.

It is an iconic building in Mitchelstown, which is widely regarded as one of the best-planned towns in Ireland, dating to the Georgian Period (1770-1830). The building faces northwards to the Galtee Mountains (Ireland's highest inland mountain), towards the 'Georgian Quarter' leading to the beautiful King Square and Kingston College, built in the 1770s. It has been designated the visitor center for Mitchelstown

Saint George's was built between 1801 and 1804 by Caroline, Dowager Countess of Kingston. After her death in 1823, her son, George, 3rd Earl of Kingston, became the owner of a 40,000-hectare (100,000 acre) estate across portions of counties Cork, Limerick and Tipperary. Kingston's support for the Peter Robinson Expedition was pivotal to other landlords backing the scheme to send families to Canada.

After inheriting the estate, Lord Kingston built the new Mitchelstown Castle, which became the largest Neo-Gothic house in Ireland (completed in 1828; looted and burned during the Irish Civil War in 1922). In 1830, Lord Kingston undertook to embellish and enhance his mother's simple church into a building of Georgian elegance and design. The church was given a new 32.3 meter (106ft) high steeple, which was the same height as the tallest tower of his castle. The architects for these works were James and George Richard Pain, who became the most successful Irish architects in the first half of the 19th century.

The church, like the castle, was built to impress. The front facade was designed to give the impression that it is a larger building than it appears from the outside. It was a statement of both the spiritual power of the Protestant Church in Ireland, and the temporal power of the owner of Mitchelstown.

Saint George's underwent major renovations between 1883 and 1885, at which time the chancel was extended, box pews were replaced by pitch-pine timbers (from trees planted in the 1600s).

A new church bronze bell cast in Louvaine, Belgium, and an elegant pulpit of Caen limestone from France were installed at this period. The organ, which was made for domestic rather than ecclesiastical use, is believed to be one of the oldest organs in Ireland, and is believed to have come from Mitchelstown Castle. This also is the period in which the building's stained-glass windows were installed.

In 2017, because of dwindling numbers, its parishioners decided to close their church and move to the smaller chapel at Kingston College, which was deemed to be more suitable to their needs. By then, Saint George's was in a serious state of disrepair, with leaking roofs, disintegrating doors and windows, and numerous issues that were going to require considerable investment. Negotiations commenced between the Church of Ireland and a small group of five enthusiastic civic-minded people, who purchased Saint George's from the Church of Ireland in 2019. They immediately established the project as a registered charity and set about giving the former church a new lease of life as an arts, heritage and cultural centre. They began work on the building on the day they became owners, and this work has continued unabated ever since, even during the difficult times of Covid.

The centre has never had more than five directors. By the summer of 2025, the Board of Directors had invested one-million euro on conservation works and refurbishment. These works have included re-roofing the building, refurbishing interior rooms and restoring all external doors and some windows. They have also installed heating, new lighting, sound systems, new toilet facilities, and in 2025, they will also complete works on cinema facilities. The centre has been completely re-purposed for public performances, conferences, civil ceremonies and a range of other activities that have brought thousands of visitors and much benefit to the community. However, Saint George's retains its feel as a church, which is seen as one of the most important aspects of the heritage conservation approach to the building and of its uniqueness. This was all made possible with the generous support of the community, but especially thanks to grant aid from many public bodies - especially the Irish Government, Cork County Council, Tourism Ireland, the Heritage Council, Tomar Trust, the Irish Georgian Society, business and private donations; and assistance from Ballyhoura Development.

Saint George's is constantly seeking funding for conservation works. The primary objective for 2026 onwards will be to find approximately €200,00 to restore the steeple. Other necessary works include restoration of twelve gothic windows and the internal 19th century Victorian wainscotting.

The restoration is dedicated to the memory of Rev. Canon Courtenay Moore MA, who was rector of Brigown (Mitchelstown) from 1882 to 1916. An Ulsterman by birth, he was an ecumenist, antiquarian scholar, writer and Nationalist sympathiser. His son, Paddy Moore, was a close friend of the writer C.S. Lewis (author of 'The Tales of Narnia'). Canon Moore's daughter Mrs Victor (Louie) Rickard, wrote over thirty books and included the Irish artist, Sir John Lavery, among her close friends. She was a co-founder of the Detection Club, whose members included Agatha Christie, G.K. Chesterton and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The work at Saint George's continues. Your support and donations are always appreciated. Our email is [brigownspire@gmail.com](mailto:brigownspire@gmail.com)

# GET YOUR TICKETS



Sat, Sept 20th

## Peter Robinson Settlers Emigration Scheme Conference

Event Booking through Eventbrite ONLY

Limited Capacity - Book early to avoid disappointment

Scan the QR-Code or click [here](#)



# IRELAND CANADA HOMECOMING 2025

Discover the whole collection of the Ireland Canada Homecoming Events:



Mon, Sept 15th

## Gala Lunch & Tour of Lough Gur



Thu, Sept 18th

## Journey to the "Port of Cove" Experience Tour (County Cork)



Tue, Sept 16th

## Galtee Origins Experience Tour



Fri, Sept 19th

## Treaty - Kingdom Experience Tour (Counties Limerick and Kerry)



Tue, Sept 16th

## Golden Vale Origins Experience Tour



Fri, Sept 19th

## Culture Night - Peter Robinson Settlers Commemoration Concert



Wed, Sept 17th

## Avondhu - Blackwater Origins Experience Tour



Sun, Sept 21st

## Commemoration of the Peter Robinson Settlers at Griston Bog & Woodland

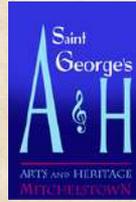


15<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Sept

## "The Robinson Experiment" An Epic North Cork tale of hope, fear and resilience



EVENTBRITE  
Ireland Canada  
Homecoming 2025  
Event Collection



# THANK YOU

For joining us this week as we come together to honour the brave men and women of the Peter Robinson Emigration Scheme. We're looking forward to welcoming you, sharing stories, and remembering their incredible journey and the legacy they've left behind

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## EVENTBRITE:

[Tickets - Peter Robinson Settlers Emigration Scheme Conference](#)



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Comhairle Contae Chorcaí  
Cork County Council

This project is supported by Cork County Council's Commemorations Committee.

