

Consulate General of Ireland

Newsletter for the U.S. Southeast

May 2017

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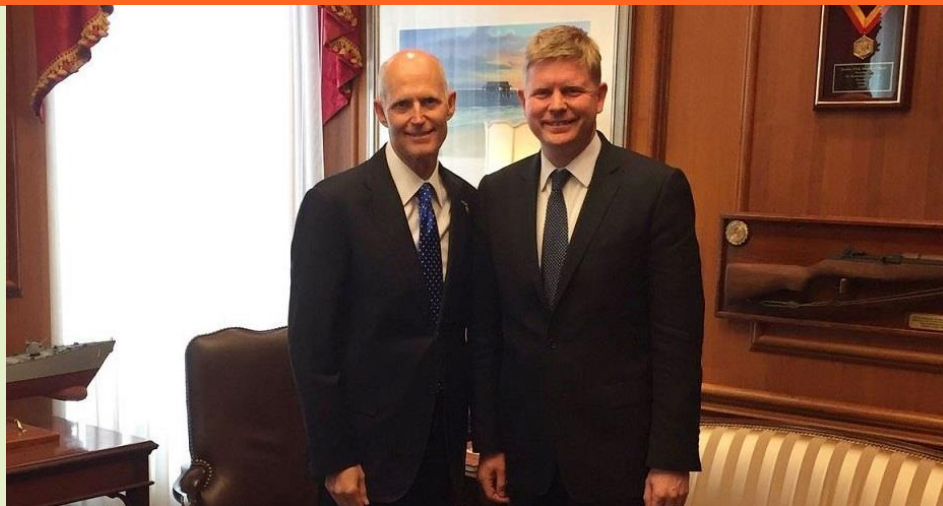
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Consul General Stephens and Governor Rick Scott discuss Florida-Ireland ties and commercial opportunities.

Message from the Consul General

A chairde,

In early April, I had the privilege of consulting with Governor Rick Scott on the intensifying investment flows between Ireland and Florida and Aer Lingus's Dublin-Miami route starting on September 1st. I was also warmly welcomed by Visit Florida CEO Ken Lawson and Enterprise Florida's Mike Grissom. Throughout my programme in Tallahassee, I received strong support for the Government's efforts to bring our commercial relationship with Florida to a new level and tales of treasured heritage connections with Ireland. With the new ground being made this year by Aer Lingus, the South Florida Irish American Chamber of Commerce and the Consulate General, our partnership with the Great State of Florida is set to go from strength to strength.

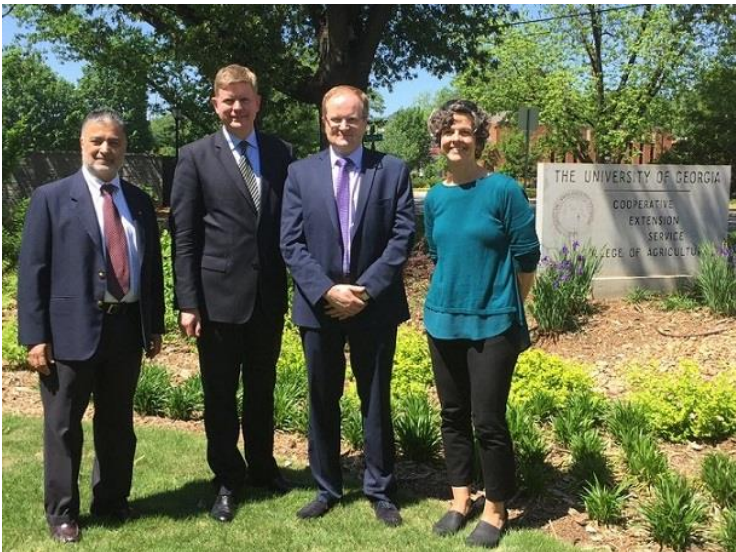
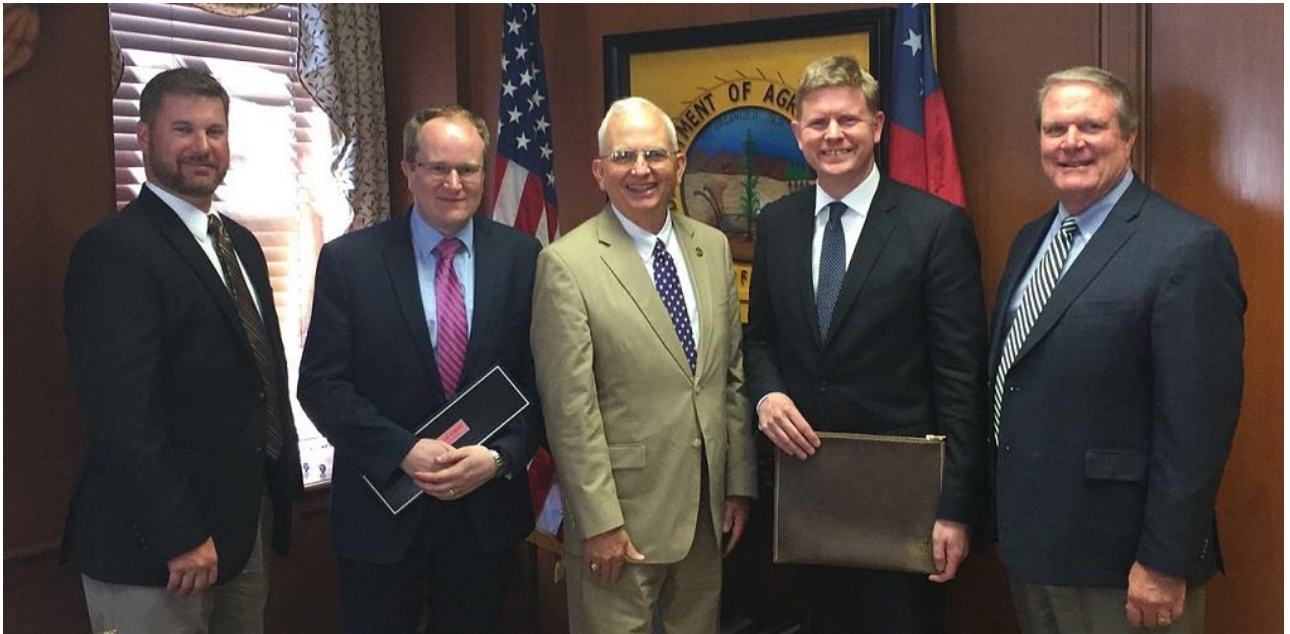
Other wonderful highlights of the month were the visit to Georgia by Dale Crammond, Ireland's Agriculture and Food Counsellor, and my call on the Mercy Convent site in Vicksburg, Mississippi, where Eamon De Valera addressed supporters of the emerging Irish State in April 1920.

I'm looking forward to a truly exceptional weekend of culture in May. I will travel to Charleston for the opening night of The Druid Theatre's Company's production of *Waiting for Godot* in Charleston's Spoleto Festival. I hope to see some of you there on Friday May 26th.

Shane Stephens

Irish Business and Culture Around the Southeast

Agriculture and Food Counsellor Dale Crammond visits Georgia to promote Ireland's agri-food sectors



Above: On the same day that former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue was sworn in as US Secretary of Agriculture, Georgia's Commissioner of Agriculture, Gary Black, his team and leading figures in the industry warmly received Mr. Crammond and the Consul General for deep dive discussions. (L-R) Kyle Gillooly, 2016-17 President of Georgia Cattlemen's Association, Agriculture Counsellor Dale Crammond, Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black, Consul General Stephens and Keith Kelly, CEO of Kelly Products

Constructive research consultations with UGA's Prof Amrit Bart and Victoria Collins McMaken



Conferring on Irish food promotion with Hyatt Regency Atlanta's Executive Chef Thomas McKeown

Remembering Eamon de Valera's Visit to Vicksburg



In April 1920 Eamon De Valera, then President of the banned first Dáil Éireann, visited Vicksburg, Mississippi to garner support and funding for the emerging Irish State. His programme, which was organised by W.J. Vollor, the State Chairman of the American Friends of Irish Freedom, included an address from the steps of the Sisters of Mercy Convent.

Consul General Stephens visited and photographed this historic site last month and met with one of W.J. Vollor's direct descendants, Harley Caldwell. A full account of de Valera's visit to Vicksburg is available at from the [Galway Decade of Commemoration](#) website.

The Consulate learned of this historic connection from a proud son of Mississippi, Bill Ferris, Professor of History and Senior Associate Director of the Center for Study of the American South and UNC Chapel Hill.



Left: [The Wexford-Savannah Axis](#) is a unique migration and integration story, deepening the relationship between Ireland and its diaspora in the American South. Here the leadership of the City of Savannah, Chatham County and Wexford County Council renew 150 years of friendship.



In Fort Lauderdale, the Consulate joined forces with the South Florida Irish American Chamber of Commerce, IDA Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Aer Lingus for a presentation on opportunities in Ireland. Fort Lauderdale is home to a strong Irish community that includes many entrepreneurs and senior business executives. At left: Conor Hayes, SFIACC VP.



After addressing the gathering, CG Stephens met Florida's 2016 Rose of Tralee, Sheena Kelly.



Good discussion with Auburn staff and students about Ireland, the EU and study abroad. Over 150 Auburn students were in Ireland last year.



Congratulations to The Drake School of Irish Dance, [Senior Mixed Figure World Champions](#) at the 47th World Irish Dancing Championships in Dublin in April

Irish News

Ireland's priorities for the negotiations on the UK's exit from the European Union were reflected in the official guidelines adopted by the European Council on Saturday, April 29th. These priorities are to support and protect the achievements, benefits and commitments of the Peace Process, to avoid a hard border and to protect the Common Travel Area. With regard to the first of these priorities, the guidelines recognise that, in line with the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, if a majority of people in both Northern Ireland and Ireland were to vote for a united Ireland, the entire territory of such a united Ireland would legally be part of the European Union. View the Taoiseach's live comments after the European Council on his twitter account: <https://twitter.com/EndaKennyTD> or read Minister Flanagan's [statement](#).

In [remarks at a conference on Brexit](#) at Dublin City University, Minister Flanagan anticipated complex but constructive BREXIT negotiations.

Parties to the [Northern Ireland talks](#) on forming a new power-sharing Executive paused the talks until after the June 8th UK election, still sufficient time before a June 29th deadline. Speaking in Belfast after a round of meetings there, Minister Flanagan said "[Northern Ireland remains a key priority](#) for the Irish Government and we will continue to work on behalf of the people of the entire island."

Ireland is seeking election to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member for the 2021-2022 term. [Minister Flanagan](#) explained why in an April 14th op-ed in the Irish Times.

The Government made significant commitments in April to global humanitarian relief efforts, pledging €4 million for [Yemen](#), €25 million for [Syria](#), and airlifting 100 tonnes of relief supplies to [Somalia](#).

US southeast companies continue to create jobs in Ireland. [Citrix](#), a Fort Lauderdale based cloud technology company, announced an expansion of its Dublin offices, adding 26,000 square feet and 150 jobs. However, Irish firms still employ far more people in Florida than Florida firms employ in Ireland.

Our unemployment rate fell to 6.4% in March, down from 15% in 2012. [Minister Noonan](#) expects Ireland to achieve a balanced budget in structural terms by 2018.

The [Census 2016 results](#) have been published, providing a fascinating and often surprising snapshot of Ireland today. Our population has grown to over 4.7 million and is more diverse than ever before. Over 810,400 Irish residents were born outside Ireland.

A [surge in passport applications](#) has seen the number of those applying for Irish passports in the first three months of 2017 up 26% on the same period in 2016, with requests from Britain and Northern Ireland up 68% in the first quarter.

A Ceremony to mark the [101st Anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising](#) took place outside the GPO on April 16th and Ireland's [new national day of creativity](#), Cruinniú na Cásca, kicked off on Easter Monday, with thousands of events taking place across Dublin and in all Counties.

[Culture Ireland](#) announced funding of almost €700,000 to Irish artists to present their work worldwide. Among these, award winning quartet [Jigjam](#) will perform in Wilkesboro, NC, singer [Roisin O'Reilly](#) will perform in Nashville and Atlanta, and [Stoney Road Press](#) will show in Miami's INK Art Fair. Stay tuned for dates.

Upcoming Events in the Southeast

[Riverdance](#) continues their US tour with performances in Knoxville May 2-4 and Atlanta May 5-7. We can't wait! The Consulate will be there on Friday and Saturday evenings.

The [27th annual Peach State Feis and first annual Feile Georgia Feis](#) will take place back to back May 6 & 7 at the Westin Atlanta Perimeter North, 7 Concourse Parkway Northeast.

Atlanta's [Arís Theatre](#) presents a staged reading of [Ulysses](#) adapted by Dermot Bolger (and back by popular demand) on June 6th and 7th at 7:30, [The Shakespeare Tavern](#), 499 Peachtree St. NE.

From Irish Traditions Atlanta: A trio of Irish musicians that includes All-Ireland piano champion Tadhg Ó Meachair will perform in Atlanta on May 15th. Limited seating. Click [here](#) to inquire further.

Druid Theatre, one of Ireland's greatest companies, will bring [Waiting for Godot](#) to the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, May 25-June 11. Druid Theatre's Director, Garry Hynes, will also direct 6 performances of Vivaldi's Opera [Farnace](#) starting on May 27. Consul General Stephens will travel to Charleston to attend Godot on May 26th and Farnace on May 27. He hopes to see some of you there.

The Atlanta Irish Music School is hosting an [Irish Arts Kids Weekend](#) June 3 & 4 for ages 5 to 14 years: Irish Music, Dance, Language and Culture.

Do you know Atlanta's [Shamrock and Peach](#)? They run chef driven tours to Ireland (2 coming up in June), local dinners featuring Scots-Irish cuisine and Irish cooking classes.

The Rí Rá [Clan na nGael Atlanta 2017 Golf Classic](#) will take place on Saturday, May 13th from 12:30-8:00 pm at [Bradshaw Farm](#) in Woodstock. This is set, once again, to be a major success.

Legendary Dublin coach [Mickey Whelan](#) is currently over supporting Atlanta Clan na nGael's youth Gaelic Football games development. Registration for the summer youth program is still open, inquire by email to: info@atlantayouthgaa.com.

With Government funding support, [Charlotte GAA](#) is sponsoring an event called [The Little Big Cup](#) on May 7th, which pairs GAA members with at risk youth in Charlotte's Big Brother Big Sister program to teach them how to play Gaelic football and mentor them through high school. The team is also kickstarting a 5-year plan to build out youth teams of different age groups who will be able to travel through the southeast to play other youth clubs in [Raleigh](#), [Atlanta](#), [Winston-Salem](#) and [Greenville](#).

The new [Knoxville Gaelic Athletic Club](#) is now up and running (fast). It welcomes new members and fans. Get ready for its weekly practices, monthly scrimmages, and the annual Samhain Hurling Invitational at the end of October.