

Cumann Gaelach na Ginéimhe
Geneva Irish Association
Association Irlandaise de Genève
Nuachtlitir / Newsletter

October-November 2004



GIA Committee Members

Finola Keating
(President)
Tel: 022-7369955

Brian Wall
(Vice-President)
Tel: 079-2518005

Brian Elliott
(Treasurer)
Tel: 022-3451635

Dee Windsor
(Secretary)
Tel: 022-7398454

Lorraine Maire
Tel: 022-7364336

Donal O'Neill
Tel: 079-6322585

Brian Cahalane

G.I.A. Night @ Paddy's Pub — 12 November!

It is with great delight we can announce that Paddy's Irish Pub in Ferney-Voltaire will be hosting a G.I.A. night on **Friday, 12 November**. *Blackwater* will be providing the music and Chef will be cooking up a storm in the kitchen with one of his famous Guinness stews (Euro 8).

The G.I.A. will be there in force recruiting new members, answering any questions or listening to any suggestions you may have.

So mark that date in your calendar and we'll be seeing you there!

Christmas Ceili—4 December!

Following on the success of last year, the G.I.A. is organizing again this year a Christmas Ceili. YES! Let's all get together and do the Stack of Barley or the Walls of Limerick and get the Christmas party season off to a flying start!

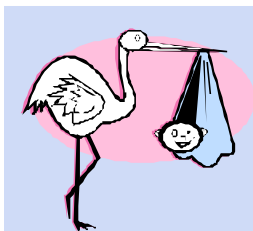
The date to mark in your agenda is **Saturday, 4 December** and the venue is the Salle Communal in Cologny. A full bar will be available to quench your thirst; and chicken & chips with salad on the menu to keep those energy levels up!

Doors open at 7 p.m.—entrance CHF 30* per person. Hope to see you all there!

* Bar drinks are not included in the price and should be paid for separately on consumption.

Quick Reminder of Upcoming Events:

- **Christmas Ceili**
Saturday, 4 December, Salle Communal Cologny
- **G.I.A. Night**
Friday, 12 November,
Paddy's Irish Pub, Ferney-Voltaire



The G.I.A. sends a word of congratulations to **David and Daniella Unitt** who recently had a baby boy - **James**, and also to **Paul and Linda Conneally** who also had a baby boy - **Patrick!**

GET YOUR NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL !

In order to help us reduce our mailing costs for the Newsletter, we would like to be able to send it to you via email. Therefore, please send your email address to geneva.irish@ireland.com where we will add you to our mailing database for future issues. We do realize that not everybody has email, so for those we don't hear from we shall continue to send you the Newsletter by regular mail.

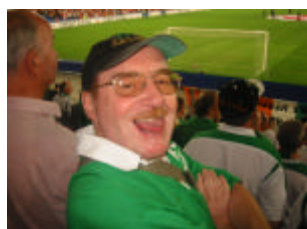
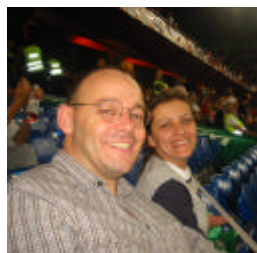


Irl vs. Swi - 8 September

Well, it could have been worse — the Republic of Ireland squad tied 1-1 against Switzerland in Group Four World Cup qualifying action. Some 28,000 people (including 24 members of the G.I.A.) packed into the Saint-Jacques Stadium in Basel to watch all the action. Ireland's Clinton Morrison opened the scoring in the eighth minute only to be followed in the 17th by an equalizer from Switzerland's Hakan Yakin.

A good day out was had by all who travelled the 250km to Basel—though perhaps a little exhausted, hoarse and thirsty by the end!

Special thanks is extended to the Swiss Football Association for kindly allocating tickets to the G.I.A.



G.I.A. Golf Outing - 19 September

The gods were with us on the 19th - the weather forecast was 100% accurate (for once!) and the drizzle only started as the last group came off the course. The first group went out at 9.00 and the last thirsty ones arrived back at 2.30. A great day was had by all including Erhard and Janet whose wheels fell off at a most inopportune moment - serious! Not their personal wheels you understand, but their trolley wheels - in a word they were completely ollied! Lunch was enjoyed by all the players and about 24 others who enjoyed the 19th hole as much as the others enjoy golf!

The G.I.A. would like to say a bit word of thanks to the chef and all the staff for keeping their cool while the Irish lost theirs around them.

Also, many thanks to Mick Browne and Jim Forrest—aided and abetted by their better halves.

And finally, another word of thanks to our sponsors—Paddy's Pub in Ferney, the Anglo Irish Bank, British Airways, Brownes Travel and the Forrest Family!

Prize-giving went a bit like this:

<i>Most honest Lady:</i>	Angela Jeangros
<i>Most honest Man:</i>	Erhard Jeangros
<i>Best Gross - Men:</i>	Jim Forrest
<i>Best Gross - Ladies:</i>	Paula Sheehan
<i>Nearest the pin:</i>	Sebastien Comte
<i>Longest drive - Ladies:</i>	Paula Sheehan
<i>Longest drive - Men:</i>	Tony O'Loughlin

NET

<i>Ladies:</i>	3rd Margaret Godwin
	2nd Janet Hall
	1st Helen Ardiffe
<i>Men:</i>	3rd Matt Flesher
	2nd Sebastien Comte
	1st Mike Ferran

Juniors: Darragh Schenker who just inched out his brother Rory!!

Anthony O'Neill

R.I.P.

It is with great sadness that we learned of the demise of Anthony O'Neill, at the age of only 36 years. To the many friends of Anthony and his family, his sudden departure came indeed as an unpleasant and unexpected shock.

Anthony was a long-standing member of the G.I.A. and an active participant in the Association's events. He was also for a number of years a dedicated committee member, who will be sorely missed by all of us.

However, most of all, Anthony will be remembered as the quiet, kind and considerate person which he was, always ready for a friendly conversation with everybody, somebody who was liked and appreciated by all who surrounded him.

To all of the O'Neill family, to his father Donal and all of his siblings and his daughter Cara, the Geneva Irish Association extends its heartfelt sympathy on this very sad occasion.

Go mbeadh beannachtaí Dé ar a anam

Einsiedeln in Switzerland: A place of culture and pilgrimage

Article submitted by Ita Marguet

Switzerland is a small country in central Europe that is known for its magnificent scenery and has long been attractive to visitors. Its Celtic inhabitants (the Helvetii) were conquered by the Romans in the 1st century BC and the region was overrun by German tribes in the 5th century AD, becoming part of the Holy Roman Empire in the 10th century. In 1291 Uri, Schwyz, and Nidwalden formed the Everlasting League, traditionally the origin of the Swiss Federation. By 1499 the Federation had achieved virtual independence and in 1648 this was recognized by the European powers. The French conquered Switzerland in 1798, but after Napoleon's fall (1815) the Congress of Vienna guaranteed Swiss neutrality. Its official languages are French, German, Italian and Romansch. The country covers an area of 41,288 sq km (15,941 sq miles). Its capital Berne is the seat of the Swiss Federal authorities.

Einsiedeln in Switzerland

The Canton of Schwyz is situated at the geographical heart of Switzerland. At an altitude of 900 metres lies the picturesque small town of Einsiedeln in a district of rugged hills and pinewoods intersected by torrents close to Lake Shil. The town has almost 12,500 inhabitants, is a popular summer and winter resort and is home to printing, machinery and furniture-making industries. Einsiedeln is the most famous pilgrimage centre in Switzerland and one of the most noted in Europe. Its important Benedictine Abbey, founded in the 10th century, was built on the supposed site of the cell of St. Meinrad, a 9th century martyr. The monastery (rebuilt in the 18th century) is one of the largest and finest examples of Swiss baroque architecture. Its church contains the famous image of the "Black Virgin", thought to have belonged to Meinrad himself. Einsiedeln has a fully functioning monastic community with around 100 priests and brothers. With 1,000 years of monastic culture and a 700 year old tradition of Marian worship, its most colourful feast is the Miraculous Consecration that celebrates the late 11th century legend according to which Jesus himself, accompanied by angels and saints, consecrated the Lady Chapel in the night of 14 September, 948. The ceremony culminates in a candlelit procession around a large and impressive square leading to the Abbey. Its centrepiece is the ornate and bedecked shrine of Our Lady's Fount. It is surrounded with taps of drinking water drawn from a holy well said to be associated with St. Meinrad.

History of the Abbey of Einsiedeln

The Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln dates back to Meinrad the Hermit, a monk from the monastery of Reichenau, who went to live in solitude around the year 828. His retreat in the wilderness formed the nucleus of today's Einsiedeln. In those days the area was known as the "Dark Forest". The spot of the Abbey's Lady Chapel today marks the place of his hermit's cell and oratory where he remained for 26 years until his death. He was slain by two robbers on 21 January 861 after a life of self-denial and prayer. The hermit's death is well documented but a host of legends have come into being about the saint and his life. The most famous is the story of two ravens he is said to have saved from a wild animal that showed their gratitude by swooping down on his murderers and pursuing them down to the valley. The brigands were arrested and burnt at the stake for their crime. In commemoration of this, since the 13th century the Abbey of Einsiedeln has borne two ravens in its coat of arms, one in yellow for the abbey and one in red for the town.

St. Meinrad's body was retrieved by the monks from Reichenau and returned to their monastery, where he was reverently laid to rest. The site where St. Meinrad lived his life, the secluded cell in the forest, was also revered. Around the year 910 Benno, a prebendary (stipend of canon) of the cathedral of Strasbourg, settled there. In 934 Benno was followed by Eberhard, also from Strasbourg. It was Eberhard who founded the monastery, to which he summoned the hermits living in the "Dark Forest", and instructed them in monastic life according to the rule of St. Benedict in daily periods of prayer (Opus Dei), private study and manual work for self-sufficiency. The young community typified the monastic ideal attested by the works produced in the Abbey's scriptorium. It was probably in the 13th century that admission to the novitiate in Einsiedeln became restricted to the nobility, and by the late Middle Ages, the Abbey's membership had fallen sharply. As a result, at the beginning of the 16th century the monastery was headed towards total disintegration at a period when it was without an abbot and reduced to two monks. At that point the Schwytzians, patrons of the Abbey, stepped in and turned to Sankt Gallen for a new abbot. The latter saved the monastery by opening up the novitiate to the commoners.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the monastery's sphere of activities entered a period of marked growth. In 1854 it founded the Archabbey of St. Meinrad in the USA (St. Meinrad, Indiana) and in 1925 worked to establish an agricultural school in Pfaffikon on the Lake of Zurich. In 1948 the Abbey founded the Priory of Los Toldos in Argentina.

The Abbey Church and the Abbey

Consecrated in 948, little is known about the original church of Einsiedeln. The first abbey was destroyed by fire in 1029. From 1031 to 1039 a new church was built which set the pattern for all future structures up until the Baroque period. The Abbey suffered from later fires and other types of great destruction. Its latest restoration in 1997 has given the Abbey church new light and splendour. Viewed from the Lady Chapel, today the interior of the Abbey church reveals a truly Baroque abundance of colours and shapes in the pulpit and cupola area, as well as in the lower choir.

The Lady Chapel is considered to be the chapel of St. Meinrad. It was consecrated, probably after being rebuilt on 14 September 948. The legend represents a medieval embellishment which had earlier been applied to other churches, and was then transferred to the Lady Chapel in Einsiedeln. When the French marched into Einsiedeln in May of 1798, they tore down the Lady Chapel. It was rebuilt in a shorter and wider shape from 1816 to 1817.

The Great Hall in the Abbey of Einsiedeln is the audience chamber of the monastery and the only part that is open to the public. It is a highly decorated and luminous place now used mainly for concerts and other cultural events. Treasures of the monastery and historic paintings are exhibited there and in the entrance to the Great Hall. The Abbey's collegiate library contains manuscripts and books going back to the foundation of the monastery in the 10th century that can be visited with guided tours. Einsiedeln is especially proud of its tradition of sacred music and of the organ in the Abbey church. Since the 15th century, the Abbey's reputation for horse breeding has been widespread and its stables are said to attract visitors in their own right. In September there is an animated ceremony with blessing of the horses that takes place in the square in front of the Abbey church with musicians and a colourful cavalry parade of around 200 horses and riders.

Pilgrimage to Einsiedeln

Many visitors to Einsiedeln ask why the Virgin Mary in the Lady Chapel is represented as **The Black Madonna**. The Black Madonnas stand in places with special radiation and history. Black is said to be the colour of fertility, adaptability, wisdom and of death as the beginning of new life, especially of Madonnas on

sites of pre-Christian veneration. The face of the statue of Our Lady of Einsiedeln originally was flesh-coloured. The unclothed parts of the statue were darkened by the smoke of candles, suet and dust. When the statue was cleaned in 1902-03 the dirt was removed and the face of Our Lady and the child Jesus were intentionally blackened.

The pilgrimage to the Madonna of Einsiedeln can be traced back to the first decades of the 14th century but its origins, which are closely related to the legend of the Miraculous Consecration, are assumed to be much earlier. The original object of pilgrimage was the divinely consecrated chapel itself; later on however, it became the venerated Romanesque Statue of Our Lady on the spot where St. Meinrad's hermit cell once stood. The Feast of the Miraculous Consecration on 14 September is still the most important of the pilgrim's festivals throughout the year that is said to attract 200,000 pilgrims. The late Middle Ages witnessed the pilgrimage to Einsiedeln's 'sacred site'. At its peak, the faithful came from as far away as Northern Germany and the Netherlands. The Confraternity of the Rosary used to stage morality plays in Einsiedeln for the annual pilgrimage. After a break of more than 150 years this tradition was reinstated in 1924 with the production of a religious play, "Great Theatre of the World" by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, premiered at the Spanish Court in 1685. It is performed every two years or so by 600 of the townspeople who are coached by the monks. Since 1600 the Statue of Our Lady, the Black Madonna of Einsiedeln, has been clothed in the style of dress of the Spanish Court.

Profile of Meinrad of Einsiedeln

Also known as Maynard or Meginrat, Meinrad of Einsiedeln may have been a member of the noble Hohenzollern family. He was born at Solgen, Swabia (Sulichgau near Württemberg) and died on 21 January 861 at Einsiedeln, Switzerland. He was educated, then professed as a Benedictine monk, and ordained at the abbey on the island of Reichenau in Lake Constance in Switzerland. He was a teacher in Zurich. Around 829 he withdrew to live in prayer as a hermit in the Black Forest. As word of his holiness and wisdom spread, he attracted many visitors and would be students. In 836 he retreated to a more remote location near Einsiedeln (in German the word means hermitage). Because he was such a holy man, he was considered a martyr but there is no evidence that he died defending the faith. There are images and many representations of the monk linked to his life and brutal death when he was clubbed to death on 21 January 861 by two rough-looking travellers whom he received, fed and sheltered. They were thieves and when they found that Meinrad was a holy hermit who owned nothing worth stealing, they were so angry that they beat him to death. 21 January remains his memorial date.