

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

June – July 2006



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***President's welcome!***

I am truly honoured to take on the position of President of the Geneva Irish Association. I believe the Association has an important role to play in providing a focal point in Geneva for the Irish and their friends. It has done this successfully for the past 30 years and I hope, together with the new committee, to continue and expand the Association's activities this year.

I would like to thank the past President, Brian Wall, for his excellent contribution to the association. Brian's leadership and drive, as President, introduced many new activities to the annual agenda. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the outgoing Treasurer, Brian Elliott, for his work as Treasurer over four consecutive years. Thanks also to Mairéad Maguire for her contribution to the committee last year.

The new committee has a good blend of experienced and new members; and I can assure you that it will work hard to maintain the standards set by previous committees. We will continue with the 'Craic' nights during the winter months and, in this regard, we are open to any new ideas or themes that members might have for these nights.

The newsletter has become our main instrument for communicating with the Irish in the Geneva area. We have a new website under development and I hope this will contribute further to informing and facilitating our members and friends in regard to the G.I.A. activities.

I look forward to an event-filled year for the Association and hope I will see and meet many of you at these events.

Eamonn Laird  
President

**Upcoming Events:**

- **Celtic Cup – 10 June**  
Vessy
- **Bloomsday Lunch - 16 June**  
ICRC cafeteria
- **Summer BBQ- 2 July**  
Parc du Jonc, Gd Saconnex

***Happy Holidays!***



By the time you receive your next G.I.A. newsletter, you will all have had that wonderful, relaxing, rejuvenating, bronzing (for the unpatriotic ones) experience of summer holidays. May we wish you all a very sunny, safe and happy holiday!



## ***Celtic Cup – 10 June!***

*A word from the organiser, Barry Ardiff*



It's that time of year again when we defend the Celtic Cup which we won again last October against the Scots. The fixture is set for **Saturday 10 June at 10h00 at Vessy** and, as usual, we're looking for any able-bodied footballers to turn out. Please email: [bardiff@gaingeneva.org](mailto:bardiff@gaingeneva.org) or [btisdall@bluewin.ch](mailto:btisdall@bluewin.ch) or call 079-474 4706, and let us know if you're available and/or if you know anyone interested in participating in such a prestigious event.

## ***Craic Nights – What would YOU like?***

Your Committee is already beavering away on the events for the coming season. The Caves Ouvertes has come and gone (see report); Bloomsday and our annual summer BBQ are nearly here; our next St. Patrick's Day celebration is quite advanced and our plans for our Christmas "Do" are well in hand.

And this brings us to our "Craic" nights. As mentioned by your President, due to very popular response, your incoming Committee is continuing them for the coming year. As you may remember, last year featured a series of poker classics, a board games evening, an Irish night, and speed dating - to mention a few. The "Craic" nights are normally held the first Thursday of each month, recommencing on 7 September. During the A.G.M., a Bingo Night was suggested, which we will indeed feature. Do you have any particular wishes or suggestions for a Craic Night for the coming year? If so, please contact any committee member or send an email to [geneva.irish@ireland.com](mailto:geneva.irish@ireland.com) - we would love to hear from you.

## ***Farewell to H.E. Ambassador Mary Whelan!***

The Geneva Irish Association would like to take this opportunity to wish Her Excellency, Amb. Mary Whelan a fond farewell as she prepares to leave Geneva at the end of July to assume a new function in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin.

Since her arrival in Geneva five years ago, the Ambassador has been a great supporter of the G.I.A. and has honoured us with her attendance at many special events. Her recognition and support for the association has meant a great deal to the members.

We wish her every success and happiness in the future.

### ***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](mailto: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.

## ***Bloomsday Lunch – 16 June!***

Bloomsday Lunch is fast becoming a tradition that is enjoyed by many. And this year is no exception. The venue is the same, International Committee of the Red Cross, (corner of Ave. de la Paix and Route des Morillons, opposite the Pregny entrance to the Palais des Nations) on Friday 16 June at 12h15 *sharp*. This lunch is by reservation only and costs CHF 20 per person (consisting of salad, a delicious Irish Stew and dessert – wine extra). A wealth of entertainment is guaranteed in the form of Joycean readings. For reservations and further information, kindly contact any of the following email addresses or phone: btisdall@bluemail.ch or geneva.irish@ireland.com; 079-474 4706 or 022-7476414.



## ***G.I.A. Summer BBQ – 2 July!***

Summer time is here (well, almost!) and the G.I.A. is very happy to host, once again, its famous Summer BBQ. The date to mark in your calendar is **Sunday 2 July**, and the venue will be the Parc du Jonc in Grand Saconnex. Kick off will be at 12h30.

The Committee has great pleasure in offering sausages, a welcome apéro and the fuel which will be in red hot fires upon your arrival. All you need to bring is whatever else you'd like to eat and drink; your sunny disposition and some sports shoes because we will, of course, be arranging fun games for all the family (e.g. 5-a-side footie, tug-o-war, 3-legged race, egg and spoon etc.) with prizes galore. All you kiddies, small and big, who missed out on our Easter Bunny Egg Hunt, now is your chance to see how much fun you can really have. And anyone out there who would like to provide some musical entertainment, pack your instrument of choice and bring it along, there will certainly be someone to sing along.

**NOTE that weather conditions on the day will dictate if the BBQ takes place or not.** Therefore, on the morning itself, even if there is the slightest drop of rainfall, please contact any of the following committee members to confirm if it will be taking place or not:

Eamonn: 079-278 48 51 / Clare 079-303 74 60 / Damian 079-827 87 61 / Lorraine 079-615 52 62

## ***Book Club***

Our book club has been very much enjoyed by those who have participated. It is now in summer recess until September – enough time for you to dig out your favourite books to share with others. For those of you who are not familiar with the idea of a book club it is simply a meeting to discuss the selected title for the evening. People give their views about what they liked or disliked about a book, what struck them most, what they didn't understand, etc. what is most fascinating about this is the range of reactions to books.

Joining the book club will expose you to books you might not otherwise come across, as well as introduce you to new people. If you would like to join for the autumn season, email Ruth Creamer at: r.creamer@ibe.unesco.org or call 022- 917 78 57.

## ***Caves Ouvertes – 20 May!***

*A personal take on a good day out by Dee Windsor*

The day out at the 2006 Caves Ouvertes was something I was long looking forward to. Ever since arriving in Geneva some 15 years ago and discovering that there are vineyards in Geneva, local wines have fascinated me - their newfound reputation for great charm combined with classic structure is very much deserved.

The downpour of rain that was relentless throughout the day did not dampen spirits for the wine poured. After a brief welcome from our newly elected President, Eamonn Laird, the group of 40 took to the road with the sole aim to sniff, swirl and sip - you could not mistake the air of excitement and good humour that abounded - something that brought flooding memories of school outings. And yes, we did have the few troublemakers race to grab the back seats of the bus!

We made our way first to the Domaine du Paradis (Satigny) where, after nibbling on some crepes, my favourite was the Diable Rouge (syrah) - I simply had to buy some. Their Pinot Noir stored in oak casks was a close second. Unfortunately, the few Red Devils I bought didn't last too long in my house but luckily this Domaine has a website where you can order online and have it delivered to your door!

At the Domaine des Molards (Russin) most of us G.I.A. bus group managed to cram ourselves in and take over the little cave which was located quietly away from the rather busy eating area and jazz band - well, it was lunch time. I fell for their merlot in a big way - again having to buy some - and also found their fizzy offering of Le Pêché quite a cheeky and inexpensive little number!

Our last port of call for the day was the village of Dardagny where we were spoilt by the number of caves to visit. As Dardagny was the larger of the destinations for the day, the group dispersed and we all went our separate ways. I visited the Domaine du Centaure (where the Kirby Bivans band kept us very much entertained), Clos des Pins and Domaine des Hutins! At this point - after eating my way around Dardagny and putting my palate and liver to the test - it was fast becoming difficult to work out favourites. Suffice to say I found them all good!!

On the return to Geneva, in addition to the obvious clanking of bottles to be heard throughout the bus at every hairpin turn made, there was much banter and lively discussion about wine and cave preferences - phrases such as "rich, black plums", "medium tannins", "full bodied", "violet overtones", "spicy accents", "smokey" etc etc. could be heard strewn into conversation - like the experts we were! Everyone, so it would seem, found examples of wines they liked during the course of the day just as much as everyone found examples that they didn't like - and almost all examples fell into both camps. And with that, we all headed to Charly's to watch Munster win the Rugby. What better way to end a good day! Sure, isn't wine tasting great? Here's to next year!

## ***Educating Rita!***

***Simply Theatre Productions*** - a newly-formed English Drama and Theatre Academy presents a comedy drama "Educating Rita" featuring a professional cast from London. This is held at Les Salons Theatre, 6 rue Bartholoni, Plainpalais from 23 May to 10 June. Tickets are available via [www.simplytheatre.com](http://www.simplytheatre.com) or call 0900 325 325.

## ***The Belfast Maze – Exhibition until 23 July!***

*Photographs by Donovan Wylie, film by Amanda Dunsmore*

For 24 years, the Maze Prison played a unique role in the Northern Ireland conflict, ultimately coming to symbolize that period in the country's history.

Built in 1976 to hold terrorists and political prisoners, the Maze is an extreme example of rational design. It was laid out on a gigantic scale for the systematic isolation of detainees and maximum security. This did not prevent the prison from witnessing numerous scenes of violence, hunger strikes and mass break-outs in which several detainees and warders died. The implementation of the Good Friday Agreement resulted in the prison's closure in 2000. The question marks that have since hung over the future of the site attest to Northern Ireland's difficulties in coming to terms with its recent past.

In 2002, Magnum photographer Donovan Wylie, himself Irish, obtained the exclusive right to take pictures of the entire prison complex, without limits or supervision. His 68 photographs document the repetitive nature of the architecture and its disorienting effect. They speak of the psychological impact of incarceration in this labyrinthine prison.

The film *Billy's Museum*, by English artist Amanda Dunsmore, tells the story of day-to-day life within the prison. Her view of the objects confiscated over the years gives a human dimension to imprisonment and the detainees' world, in which internal fighting contrasts with the need to escape.

For those interested in seeing the exhibition, the museum is open everyday (except Tuesday) from 10a.m. to 5 p.m. Entry fee CHF 10 per adult or group of min.15 persons, CHF 7 each. For further information call 022-748 95 25

## ***Small Ads!***

The G.I.A. are introducing a small ads section to the bi-monthly newsletter and website which will serve as a vehicle for **local businesses and/or those with an Irish connection** to promote themselves and reach a wider audience. There will be a nominal fee for availing of these two facilities as follows:

1 newsletter and 2 mths on web: CHF 50

3 newsletters and 6 mths on web: CHF 130

6 newsletters and 1 year on web: CHF 250

As space is limited in the newsletter, the ads will be restricted to a frame approximately the size of that which is demonstrated on the right. On the website, however, we can be more flexible.

For further information and details on how to advertise with us, please contact the G.I.A. by sending an email to [geneva.irish@ireland.com](mailto:geneva.irish@ireland.com). Or call 022-736 43 36.

The Geneva Irish Association



Geneva's focal point for all Irish people  
and their friends!



Come and join in with the craic at some  
of our regular events!

Contact:

[geneva.irish@ireland.com](mailto:geneva.irish@ireland.com)

[www.genevairishassociation.com](http://www.genevairishassociation.com)

## ***Suggestions for events!***

It has been suggested that we reintroduce the 2-day annual outings which were so successfully organized in the 80s by the late Otto Tschui, assisted by Rita Tschui and Erhard and Angela Jeangros. These took the form of a bus outing to a venue in Switzerland, often included a boat ride, always some cultural theme with visits to museums or exhibitions; an overnight stay in a little hotel, and was a wonderful way of getting to know a little bit more of Switzerland, the country so many of us live in and many of us never really get to know. Well, what do you think – would you be interested in participating in such an event? If so, please contact any of the Committee members or email [geneva.irish@ireland.com](mailto:geneva.irish@ireland.com).

## ***G.I.A. membership!***

The G.I.A. Committee would like to take this opportunity to say GO RAIBH MAITH AGAT to those of you who have paid the 2006/2007 membership fee. These funds will help greatly in organizing events for you in the year ahead. For those who would still like to become a member, the fee per year is CHF 75 per couple/family, CHF 50 per individual or CHF 25 per student/au pair/retiree. You can use any blank pink bulletin de versement at your post office marking it to pay “The Geneva Irish Association, 1200 Geneve - account no. 12-10220-4”. You can also pay via ebanking into the same mentioned post office account. Remember to include your full name and address so we can contact you personally to say thank you.

## ***A word from your Treasurer!***

*by Damian Downes*

Due to the great work of the outgoing committee, annual subscriptions were up by a very healthy 31% leaving surplus reserves as at 31 March 2006 at CHF 12,385 – up 34% on the previous year.

My preliminary analysis of the books, however, has highlighted that there has been a significant cost to the Association for “no shows” at recent G.I.A. events. To address this, the new Committee has reluctantly decided to implement a new payment policy. For all future ticketed events, tickets will only be issued on a “first with payment” basis. We are being as flexible as possible with the mode of payments. Payment can be made at the post office, through eBanking to the post office or to any committee member. We hope you will support our reasoning for this policy change. I look forward to serving as your Treasurer for the coming year.

## ***Minutes of A.G.M. – 27 April!***

This year’s A.G.M. got off to a sociable start with a welcome apéro hosted by the Association. We would like to thank all of you who attended, not just in giving us a more than sufficient quorum, but also for your active participation and your interest in sharing views, providing feedback, and letting us know your aspirations for the future. All this is invaluable for your Association to move forward and indeed necessary to be able to meet your needs as members. So a big Go raibh maith agat to one and all. The minutes are attached as a record of the evening’s proceedings.

## *In memory of .....*

### **Dr. SÉAMUS GALLAGHER**

Ireland has lost a distinguished son – and the Association a much-respected member and past President – with the death of Dr. Séamus Gallagher, who was born in Glasgow of Irish parents in 1921. Following the death of his father in a tunnelling accident in New York, his mother moved the family back to their origins in Dunlewy, County Donegal where he grew up in an Irish-speaking environment; and throughout his life he remained true to his Gaelic origins. Having won a scholarship to St. Eunan's College in Letterkenny, he went on to study medicine at University College, Dublin, where he graduated in 1947. One of his first appointments was as Dispensary Doctor in Rathmullan in his native county, following which he worked for a number of years in public health in Scotland and the north of England. He returned to Ireland to join the successful anti-tuberculosis campaign, and in 1957 won a Fellowship in Social and Preventive Medicine in New York. Back in Ireland, he lectured in this field in his *alma mater*, while practising as a psychologist in St. Patrick's Hospital, Dublin. Later, he was appointed editor of the *Irish Medical Journal*, which introduced him to the journalistic aspects of his profession. Having joined the WHO in 1963, he was appointed Visiting Professor of Social and Preventive Medicine in Pondicherry and later in Sri Lanka, following which he was stationed until 1968 at the WHO's South-East Asian Office in New Delhi prior to moving its European Office in Copenhagen until 1972. The following year he took out a Master's Degree in Education and was subsequently based in the WHO's Office for the Eastern Mediterranean in Alexandria. At the WHO's Headquarters in Geneva, he earned many tributes for editing the WHO's ground-breaking report on bioethics. Later, he became a member of the Council of International Organisations for Medical Science, based in Lausanne.

Séamus Gallagher, congenial member of the Association, and citizen of the world, left his mark on everything he did throughout this productive career. The Association's sympathy is extended to his family. *Go ndéanfaidh D'ia grásta ar a anam dílis.*

### **Mr. JEAN-MARC BLUNSCHI**

We greatly regret to announce the death of one of the earliest members of the Association, Jean-Marc Blunski, at the early age of 57. Born in Geneva to Swiss parents, he combined his love of his homeland with an ardent devotion to the country of his Gaelic-speaking wife, Eanna, who introduced him to the wealth of Ireland's cultural heritage. He was a greatly respected member of the Editorial Department of the International Telecommunications Union, where his professional competence combined with his personal modesty, endeared him to his colleagues - to the defence of whom he was rapid to rally if ever he felt they were being unfairly attacked. He was a gentle man and a gentleman. Our sympathy goes to his widow Eanna, to their daughter Niamh, and to their grandchildren Surya Osin and Maelle Aisling. *Ar deislámh Dé go mbeidh sonas de shíor aige.*