

*Cumann Gaelach na Ginéimhe*  
**Geneva Irish Association**

Association Irlandaise de Genève

Nuachtlitir / Newsletter

April-May 2007



**GIA Committee Members**

**Eamonn Laird—(President)**  
**079-278 48 51**

**Clare Schenker—(Vice-President)**  
**079-303 74 60**

**Lorraine Maire—(Secretary)**  
**022-736 43 36**

**Ruth Creamer**

**James o’Keeffe**

**John Roche**

**Dee Windsor**

**www.genevairishassociation.com**

**Email: geneva.irish@ireland.com**

**Tel: 022-7476414**

***Annual General Meeting – 10 May!***

This year’s AGM will take place on Thursday 10 May at the La Romana Italian restaurant at 20h00. The AGM provides an opportunity for members to come together to look back fondly over the activities and events of the past year, put forward ideas for the year to come, review the Association’s accounts, and say a big thank you to the outgoing committee while electing and welcoming in the new.

It is very important that members who have already paid their 2007/08 membership fee participate at the meeting as a quorum is required in order for the AGM to take place. Candidates for election to any office of the Association may be nominated by any two paid-up members of the Association provided that the nomination in writing reaches the Secretary at least fourteen days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.\*

Notices of motion may be sent in by any two paid-up members to reach the Secretary not less than fourteen days before the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting.\*

Attached to this newsletter is a letter of proxy (for those eligible to vote but who will be absent).\*

Also, as the current membership year is drawing to a close, to renew your membership for 2007/2008, you can pay the fee into our post office account by using a blank bulletin de versement at any post office and make it payable to “The Geneva Irish Association, 1200 Geneve” and the account no. is 12-10220-4. This can also be paid via ebanking if preferred. The fee per year is CHF 75 per family (CHF 37.50 AVS/retiree couple), CHF 50 per individual (CHF 25 AVS/retiree individual) and CHF 25 for students/au pairs.

We look forward to seeing you all there!

\* Written submissions may be sent to: the GIA, c/o L. Maire, 6 rue Pedro Meylan, 1208 Geneva or via email.

**Upcoming Events:**

- **GIA/GEDS Playreading of Brian Friel’s “Translations”** – 17 April, Holy Trinity Church
- **GLAS poetry recital** – 17 April, College des Coudriers
- **GIA Annual General Meeting** – 10 May, La Romana
- **Wine tasting** – 12 May



## ***GIA/GEDS playreading of Brian Friel's “Translations”, 17 April!***

The Geneva English Drama Society (GEDS) has, once again, invited the GIA to co-host a playreading by an Irish playwright. The play selected is "Translations" by Brian Friel and will take place on Tuesday 17 April at the English Church Hall. Doors and bar open at 19h30 with playreading kicking off at 20h00.

The action of this play takes place in August 1833 at a hedge school in the townland of Baile Beag, an Irish-speaking community in Co. Donegal. In a nearby field camps a recently-arrived detachment of the Royal Engineers making the first Ordnance Survey. For the purposes of cartography, the local Gaelic place names have to be recorded and rendered into English. In examining the effects of this operation on the lives of a small group, Brian Friel skillfully reveals the far-reaching personal and cultural effects of an action which is, at first sight, purely administrative.

Entry is free for GIA and GEDS members, and CHF 5 for non members.

# **“Translations”**

**GIA/GEDS Playreading**

**Tuesday, 17 April 2007**

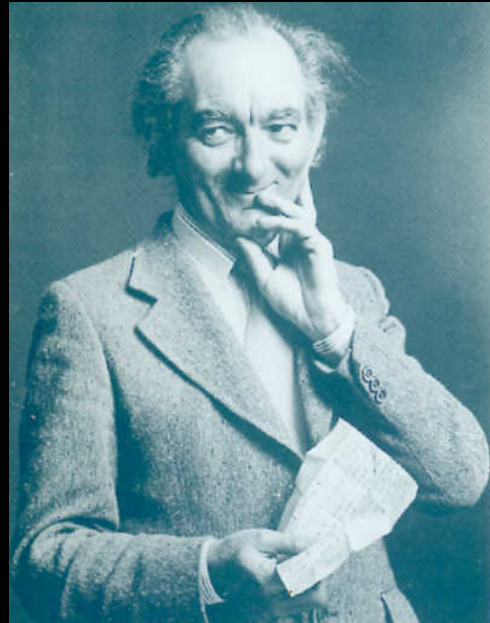
**20h00 (Bar opens @ 19h30)**

**Holy Trinity Church (downstairs hall)**

**14 bis rue de Mont Blanc**

**Entry FREE GIA/GEDS members**

**CHF 5 non members**



---

## ***GLAS Poetry Recital - 17 April!***

*"Publishing a volume of verse is like dropping a rose-petal down the Grand Canyon and waiting for the echo." - Don Marquis.*

### **CAN THIS REALLY BE TRUE?**

Prove Don wrong. Skip the laundry, forget the football and postpone the tax returns. Spread the word and come along in great numbers next Tuesday 17 April as the Geneva Literary Aid Society tries something different and hosts two distinguished Irish poets.

We only ask you to reserve your place in advance through [info@theglas.org](mailto:info@theglas.org) and to make a small donation (CHF 10 recommended) to the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS. Refreshments will be available before and after. Students, poets and unemployed will be admitted absolutely free.

The star attraction for the evening is one of the most witty and vital voices in poetry today, Rita Ann Higgins.

### **PRAISE FOR RITA ANN HIGGINS**

*"A brilliantly spiky, surreal blend of humour and social issues. Her poems are a witty mix of the erotic and the upfront political from a female perspective, with wonderful rhythms that effortlessly incorporate direct speech," - Ruth Padel, Independent on Sunday.*

*"Rita Ann Higgins means a unique line in human warmth; and a unique colour of humour and a unique clarity," - Paul Durcan.*

*"A quite untameable poet ... Her voice is like nobody else's, simple but not naive, raucous but sympathetic," - Peter Porter, Poetry Book Society Bulletin.*

### **SPECIAL GUEST: PADRAIG ROONEY**

Padraig Rooney's poetry has appeared in *Scanning the Century: The Penguin Book of Poetry in the Twentieth Century*. He has lived and taught abroad for many years and is currently Head of English at the International School Basel in Switzerland.

*"It is in order for an ageing writer, in a valediction to Irish readers, to essay a prophecy about Irish letters. Mr. Rooney will, I think, be a credit to them." - Anthony Burgess.*

*"A consummate lover of language and a master of atmosphere and the telling detail." - World of Hibernia.*

### **VENUE**

The Aula, College des Coudriers, 15a Avenue Joli-Mont (opposite Balexert, 10 bus)

TIME: 19.30 (Refreshments available from 18.30)

RESERVATIONS: [info@theglas.org](mailto:info@theglas.org)

Contact: [dmcclean@ireland.com](mailto:dmcclean@ireland.com) – tel: +41(0)22-7562734 - Mobile no. +41(0)79-2173357

### ***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.

## ***Wine tasting trip – 12 May!***

Since last year's fun-filled jaunt to the Geneva countryside on the occasion of the caves ouvertes 2006, we have decided to organise yet another such trip this year. The day itself is the official launch date of the « nouveau millésime » and is a must for all wine lovers in the region who each year take great pleasure in visiting the caves, chatting with the producers, tasting and, of course, buying their favourite tipples. Many of the caves are not only open for tasting but also provide music, dance and food which compliment the high spirits of participants.

As last year, we are organising a bus to take the interested wine lovers to a select number of caves in the area such as: in **Satigny** - the Domaine du Paradis for their Pont des Soupirs Rouge (blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Gamaret) and Sauvignon Blanc; in **Russin** - the Domaine des Molards which last year boasted a very popular Merlot, Rosé and Merlot Blanc; and in **Dardagny** - the Clos de Pins for their Muscat, and the Domaine de Centaure for their Nom de Zeus Merlot).

The bus collection point will be Charly o'Neill's Irish pub at 11h30 *sharp* and will return to the same point at 17h00. Places will be limited so book your seat early in order to avoid disappointment. Price is CHF 30 (non members) and CHF 25 for members. Seats **must** be reserved and paid for in advance. Once you have contacted us and booked your seat you can make payment by either paying directly into our post office account (over the counter or via ebanking). The account holder's name is "The Geneva Irish Association, 1200 Geneve" and the account no. is "12-10220-4". For further information and to book your seat call 079 753 85 54 or email [geneva.irish@ireland.com](mailto:geneva.irish@ireland.com)

## ***St. Patrick's Day – 16 March!***

St. Patrick's Day 2007 was a particularly memorable event for the GIA. The combination of good food, great venue, talented musicians and fantastic crowd could only mean success. ... and the eagerly anticipated 6 nations rugby match with Italy scheduled for the following day certainly added an air of excitement.

Attended by the Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Paul Kavanagh, and his wife Rosemary, the evening got began with a swift apero followed by a mouthwatering menu that the Hotel Ramada is well-reputed for delivering. Live entertainment and dancing got underway when the multi talented Na Fir Breaga took to the stage and performed an array of traditional Irish and folk music. The dance floor was full most of the night with many die hards towards the end of the evening trying to recreate dance pieces made famous by Jean Butler and Michael Flatley of Riverdance!

As with many of our larger events, this year's St. Patrick's Day celebration was in support of a local charity - the Hôpiclowns association (an association which provides organised entertainment and brings cheer to sick children in hospital in Geneva). Through the generosity of those who attended our event and took part in our raffle and auction, CHF 1742 was raised for the Hôpiclowns which will be presented to a representative of the Hôpiclowns at our AGM on 10 May.

The GIA would like to extend a special word of thanks to the following for their very kind and generous contributions towards our evening which supported Hôpiclowns:

The Kilkenny Design Shop  
Donal o'Neil (of Mulligan's, Charly o'Neill's and the De Vinci wine bar)  
Pernod-Ricard Suisse  
The Ramada Hotel  
Heaven Bar & Lounge  
The Munster rugby team

---

## ***GIA Workshop Outcome - 29 January!***

The GIA held a workshop to examine ‘The Role of the GIA in 21st Century Geneva’. The reason for the workshop was to re-evaluate the role of the association in modern day Geneva in addition to re-examining its original objectives, administrative structure and events coordination (with the aim to modify or re-focus as necessary). Approximately 40 people attended the meeting who were divided into smaller working groups for the course of the evening’s activities. The main issues addressed were:

- The objectives of the association
- The activities of the association
- Membership of the association
- Communications
- The Committee

The workshop opened with a brief presentation highlighting some of the differences between life in Geneva in 1975 (when the association was first established) and today in 2007. The main changes to note are: a) today, we have varied and increased access to communications thus making contact with home and obtaining information or news on Ireland an everyday and simple task (i.e. mobile phones, the internet, email, satellite television/radio), b) there has been a massive growth in the size and staffing levels of many of the international organisations/companies leading to a greater number of Irish people gaining employment and living in the Geneva area, c) the expansion of airline routes to include Geneva and low-fares competition has made air travel affordable and accessible to all, and d) the establishment of several Irish bars in Geneva and the surrounding area allows for more casual “meeting up” with fellow ex-pats reducing the need for specifically organised gatherings.

### ***Objectives***

The first issue was to establish if there is still a role in Geneva for the association, and you’ll be glad to hear that there was unanimous agreement that it still plays a key role in the lives of the Irish community. In examining the original objectives established by the founders 32 years ago, it was affirmed that they had stood the test of time and are still relevant and appropriate today. Those objectives are:

- To provide a focal point in Geneva for all who are Irish or friends of Ireland
- To promote Irish social and cultural activities
- To further an understanding between Ireland and our host country Switzerland

### ***Activities***

The next area to be examined was the activities/events. Again, it was agreed that the association’s committee should focus on 3-4 key events each year. Should it be agreed that other smaller events take place, then they should be organised by sub-committees under the auspices of the main committee. The key annual events to be continued are:

- the summer BBQ (though there was a suggestion that the venue should be varied)
- the golf outing
- the trip to the Caves Ouvertes
- the St. Patrick’s Day celebration
- the Bloomsday Lunch.

Other suggested future events include:

- a ‘Goal Ball’
- an Irish art exhibition
- a Christmas event
- an organised outing to participate in one of the Swiss cultural events e.g. Fete de Genève

Through discussions held, it was apparent that there is strong support for the association to promote the Irish language and to arrange or assist in the establishment of Irish language classes.

It was put forward that the association could become a ‘support network’ or ‘welcome centre’ of sorts in that it would organise a ‘drop-in evening’ once a month where the Geneva Irish (new and not so new) could get together to exchange experiences on living in Geneva or share ideas on places to go, things to do etc. (To network more than anything.) Another suggestion was that the association could try to jointly organise larger events with other associations in Geneva.

### ***Membership***

The main area of discussion regarding membership was on whether the present fee structure was appropriate and how should the association go about attracting new members.

- There was strong support for reducing the fee to a nominal amount and ensuring that all organised events paid for themselves.
- It was proposed that students should have free membership and there should be substantial reduction for those retired.
- There was also a suggestion that there should be a monetary reduction in the fee of a member who recruited new members

### ***Communications***

- It was agreed that the Newsletter should be continued and should be circulated as widely as possible.
- The new website should be kept up to date and there was a suggestion that it be converted into an interactive website with a web/chat forum.
- The association needs a better image and increased marketing.
- When advertising GIA events the association should use as many channels as possible, including WRG, Churches, Irish and ex-pat pubs, international organisations and the proposed ‘welcome centre’.

### ***Committee***

- It was agreed that the onus was on the outgoing committee to recruit the incoming GIA committee.
- The newsletter and website should be used to advertise the fact that new committee members will be required after the AGM.
- In forming a new committee, it is important to ensure that there is continuity between the outgoing and incoming committees; and that a strong element of corporate memory is retained.
- There was strong support for the GIA committee delegating more of its organisational activities to subcommittees.

### **Taking the recommendations forward**

The GIA committee has examined and discussed the suggestions and recommendations resulting from the workshop. The committee welcomes the reaffirmation of the objectives of the association and believes there is a lot of merit in many of the suggestions to emerge from the workshop. However, the committee has decided that it would be more appropriate to leave the implementation of the recommendations to the incoming committee as there are some major organisational recommendations that may impact the planning of next year’s events.

## ***GIA membership!***

For those who would like to become a member of the GIA, 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.