



Cumann Gaelach na Ginéimhe

Geneva Irish Association

Association Irlandaise de Genève

Newsletter: January/February 2008



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Best Wishes for 2008

A little late to wish our readers a Happy New Year, but we do hope you've started the year well, and we extend our very best wishes for the remainder of 2008, when we hope we shall have the pleasure of your company at our upcoming events.

St. Patrick's Dinner – Saturday March 15th

The annual dinner to mark St. Patrick's Day is always a popular event and is certainly one of the highlights in the GIA event calendar. The venue for this year's dinner is the [Château de Collex](#), located in the village of Collex Bossy, just north of Geneva.

The event will kick off at 19h00 when attendees will be welcomed with an apéro, followed by a 3-course meal. Beer, wine, soft drinks, coffee and water are all included in the ticket price until 23h30, after which drinks will be available from the bar. A popular Irish music group from the Tramore area, **Boxy**, will get the dancing and singing under way after the meal. There'll also be a raffle with a number of great prizes. A great night is in store for all, so mark the date in your diary and tell your friends. We hope that both the Irish Ambassador to Switzerland and the Irish Ambassador to the United Nations will be in attendance.

The cost for all of this is CHF 110 for paid-up members and CHF130 for non-members. Remember, all drinks are included until 23h30!

You can reserve your tickets in two ways:

Email: geneva.irish@ireland.com

Tel: 079 303 7460

If you wish to organise a table, please mention the number in your group. Pre-payment is necessary to guarantee all reservations. Payment can be made electronically or by pink slip to Geneva Irish Association, 1200 Geneva, account no: 12-10220-4.

Upcoming Events

- **St. Patrick's Day Dinner**
15 March 2008
Château de Collex
- **Flight of the Earls Celebrations**
Various dates in March
www.flightoftheearls.ch
- **GIA Book Club**
12 March
Da Vinci's Lounge, Geneva
- **Irish Classes – Oíche oscailte**
10 March
Cité Bleue, Champel
- **Set-Dancing Workshop**
1 March
TBC (Geneva)

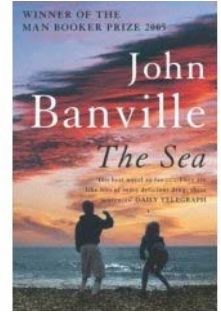


Upcoming Events

Book Club

The Book Club will meet on Wednesday 12th March at 19h00 in Da Vinci's (rue Grenus). The book for this month is Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. The following meeting will be on Wednesday 9th of April and the chosen book is John Banville's prize-winning novel *The Sea*. Join us if you can!

For more information call Ruth Creamer on 0033 608 43 65 45



Membership Fees

As agreed during the May 2007 AGM, the GIA Statutes were amended to stipulate that the Membership/Financial Year will start as from 1st January. Therefore, we would now like to invite you to pay your 2008 subscriptions. Your membership fees assist us in organising a full programme of events each year. In most cases members can then participate in those events for a lower cost than non-members. For example, there was a discount of CHF 10 for members on the Christmas Lunch, and the discount for the St. Patrick's Dinner this year is CHF 20. The membership fees are as follows:

Family Membership - CHF75
Individual Membership - CHF50
Retiree / Student / Au pair - CHF25

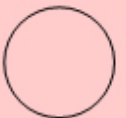
Payment can be made via e-banking or PTT, to The Geneva Irish Association, 1200 Geneva; Account No: 12-10220-4. Please ensure you include your full name and the purpose of the payment.

Please note that we have now created a separate Members Mailing List (email) that allows us to send messages to only our paid members. Emails to non-members are handled with a Google Groups mailing list to which they can freely subscribe and unsubscribe

Payment to: **Geneva Irish Association**
1200 Geneva

Payment purpose:

GIA Membership



Account: **12-10220-4** *

Paid by:

Amount: CHF *

Ranganna oíche Gaeilge***Oíche Oscailte***

Thosaigh na ranganna oíche Gaeilge Dé Luain 14 Eanáir agus tá siad faoi lán seoil anois. Fearaimid fáilte Uí Cheallaigh roimh ár rannpháirtithe nua agus ár mbaill den chúrsa 2007. Ar an drochuair níl aon áit saor fágtha againn - tá an t-uasmhéid bainte amach.

Tá áthas an domhain orainn áfach oíche oscailte a reáchtáil Dé Luain 10 Márta sa Cité Bleue, Champel idir a 7.30 agus a 9.30 i.n. Beidh oíche sóisialta as Gaeilge ann le tráth na gceist, gearrscannáin b'fhéidir agus cuideachta bhreá chun ár dtacaíocht a thabhairt don teanga agus do Sheachtain na Gaeilge (www.snag.ie). Cead isteach do na neamhbhaill de ghrúpa an ranga CHF 10. Buail isteach agus bain triail as do chuid Gaeilge – coinnigh ár dteanga beo! Tuilleadh eolais? – déan teagmháil linn ar geneva.irish@ireland.com

Paddy Tracey

Irish Language Night Classes***Open Night***

Irish language classes started on Monday night 14th January and are in full swing. We extend a hearty welcome to new participants as well as former members of the 2007 class. Unfortunately there are no free spaces left – our top limit has been reached.

We are nevertheless happy to run an open night on Monday 10th March from 7.30 – 9.30 p.m. at the Cité Bleue, Champel in support of Seachtain na Gaeilge. It will be a social evening with table quiz and maybe short films (all as Gaeilge) as well as general conviviality. Entrance for non members of the language class is CHF 10 . Drop in and use your Irish – keep our language alive! More information – contact us at geneva.irish@ireland.com

Paddy Tracey

***Traditional Irish Music Concert******Lausanne***

Friday, 14th March 2008

The Centre Pluriculturel et Social d'Ouchy is organising a traditional Irish Music Concert on Friday 14th March, featuring a Swiss-Irish band, "Elandir" (www.elandir.ch).

For more information, you can visit the website www.cpo-ouchy.ch or contact Véronique Biollay Kennedy, email: Veronique.biollay@cpo-ouchy.ch.

Get your GIA Newsletter by Email!

The most efficient and environmentally friendly way for us to distribute this newsletter is by email. It's also cheaper, which means your membership fees can be used to fund more and better events. If you're a Member of the GIA and are not already receiving the newsletter by email and we'd appreciate it if you'd allow us to send this newsletter to by email. Simply send a message to geneva.irish@ireland.com and we'll add you to the list. (Non-members can sign up automatically at: <http://groups.google.com/group/genevairishassociation>

Christmas Lunch – Charly O'Neill's, 9th December*by Clare Schenker*

On waking to grey sky and rain, my thoughts were "*what a perfect day for a pub lunch!*" But this was no ordinary pub lunch - Donal O'Neill treated us to a feast of festive fare – turkey and trimmings galore with traditional Christmas pudding to top the lot. Charly's was transformed and festively decked out to cater for some 50 hungry souls and they weren't disappointed – the food was simply delicious. Our very own and very talented committee member, Eoghan O'Sullivan, got the crowd rocking to Christmas carols and other singalongs, ably abetted by some equally talented soloists from the floor. It officially finished at 5.00p.m., but it's reported the singing went on to the wee hours of the morning. A big thank you to Donal and his team and to Eoghan & co. for a most enjoyable day. Undernoted are two excerpts from emails which were received by the committee:

"Today's event, Christmas dinner in the pub just after November, was lovely, lovely. Much more comfortable and ethnically authentic than swanning around in bourgeois swilling spots. Bravo, Bravo!"

"Just wanted to thank you all most sincerely for the wonderful Christmas party yesterday. In my opinion, it was probably the best ever Xmas event arranged by the GIA."

Your Association Needs You !

Your suggestions, ideas, views, wishes for future events and your feedback on past events are invaluable in keeping your Association alive and kicking. We strive towards meeting your needs and make every effort to ensure that you enjoy the events we organise and whet the appetite for the next time round. If you have an idea for an event or activity and would like to organise it under the GIA banner, please contact our Events Coordinator, Clare Schenker at Geneva.irish@ireland.com, or telephone 079 303 7460.

***Ceardlann Rince Seiteanna agus Céilí in Aarburg
– deireadh seachtaine spraoi agus cuideachta
mheidhreach******Set dancing workshop and Céilí in Aarburg
– a great weekend amid lively company***

Bhí an-deireadh seachtaine ann ar fad le gairid don cheol agus don damhsa Ghaelach agus do chomhluadar den scoth chomh maith. Tháinig na rannpháirtithe go hAarburg, baile beag suite ar an abhainn Aar in aice le hOlten chun freastal ar cheardlann san óstán tradisiúnta Gasthof zum Bären lena urlár rince thar barr agus lena bheár agus bhialann te teolaí. Is iad Corinne agus Andrea a d'eagraigh an cheardlann bhliantúil seo. Comhghairdeas leo. Ba é Pádraig O'Dea a bhí i mbun na gceachtanna agus ag scairteadh amach na rincí ag an gcéilí - sár-jab déanta aige go deimhin – is á thionlacan a bhí ceoltóirí tagtha le chéile as gach cearn san Eilvéis thoir agus ag seinm ceol breá bríomhar dúinn. Breis is 40 duine a d'fhreastail ar an ócáid ó ghlanthosnaitheoirí go dtí damshóirí cleachtaithe. Rachadh sé go mór i bhfeidhm ort an bhuíon uilig a fheiceáil agus iad ag luascadh agus ag léim timpeall an urláir.



It was a great weekend indeed recently for Irish music and dance as well as for highly convivial company. Participants came to Aarburg, a small village near Olten to attend a workshop in the Gasthof zum Bären, a traditional hostel with a great dance floor as well as cosy bar and restaurant. Corinne and Andrea organise this annual event. Fair play to them. Dancemaster Patrick O'Dea lead the workshop and called the dances at the céilí to the very fine accompaniment of assembled musicians hailing from all over Ost Schweiz. Over 40 people attended the occasion from beginners to well experienced masters. It was truly impressive to see everyone up on the floor all together at one time spinning and stepping to the airs.

An bhfuil suim ar bith ag ár léitheoirí chun bheith páirteach i gceardlann sa Ghinéiv?***Set dancing workshop in Geneva – Saturday 1st March – any interest from our readers?***

Organisers of the Aarburg event would be happy to come to Geneva to assist with a workshop for beginners. Corinne has been set dancing since a visit to Ireland in 1995 and set up the Olten and Bern groups. She is based around Solothurn. Andrea followed in her footsteps (no pun intended). Our idea would be to stage a workshop on Saturday 1st March (that's time to get in some practice ahead of St.Patrick's Day festivities). This is not confirmed at time of writing as we are still working on the details - likely venue will be the Cité Bleue easily reached from the city centre on the No 3 route. Our best guess at this point is we would need a minimum of 16 participants to cover costs – final details and cost to be confirmed if we can proceed.

If you are interested please e-mail us at
geneva.irish@ireland.com

Flight of the Earls 1607 – 1608

To commemorate the 400th anniversary of the passage through Switzerland of the last Gaelic princes of Ireland on their way to Rome, many events have been planned in Basle, Zurich, Andermatt and Lugano. A special memorial will be ceremonially unveiled by Nobel Peace Laureate John Hume and H.E. James A. Sharkey Ambassador of Ireland. Members and Friends of Ireland are invited to attend. For further information on events in Switzerland, please refer to www.flightoftheearls.ch and to www.flightoftheearls.ie for an account of events organized in Ireland in 2007.

Below you'll find two articles related to the topic, contributed by Ita Marguet and Vivian Sheridan.

Flight of the Earls: Ireland and Switzerland (1607-1608)

by Ita Marguet, January 2008

On the western side of the beautiful long sea inlet known as Lough Swilly sits the seaside town of Rathmullan, Co. Donegal, in the Republic of Ireland. In 1607 its small bay witnessed the departure of the Ulster earls resulting in the 'Plantation of Ulster' that was to begin history's long and violent legacy in Northern Ireland.

People, ideas and goods had always moved between Ireland and Europe. Against the background of wars with England, the pace quickened after the decisive battle of the Nine Years War (1593-1602) between the Ulster earls and the Crown's army of Queen Elizabeth I (reign 1558-1603) then dominated by threats of a Catholic restoration.

The earls' defeat at the Battle of Kinsale, Co.Cork (1601) and their departure overseas in 1607 unleashed the first wave of Irish migration, mostly of soldiers and their dependents to Europe. Many rose to high office in the armies of Europe while several of the 17th and 18th century Irish migrants left their mark on their host societies.

An engraving of the Battle of Kinsale from *Pacata Hibernica* (1633) shows the armies of the Gaelic Catholic Chieftains O'Neill and O'Donnell fleeing from the victorious troops of Protestant deputy Lord Mountjoy.

Flight of the Earls (1607)

John McCavitt's book *The Flight of the Earls* - an illustrated history is the first fully illustrated work. It coincides with the 400th anniversary in 2007 of this milestone event in Irish history being commemorated through a major exhibition in Dublin and other significant events and ceremonies taking place in Ireland and beyond into 2008.

The scene of the earls' departure is captured in a detailed painting by Thomas Ryan 'The Flight of the Earls from Rathmullan, County Donegal. On 4 September 1607 a ship which had been tied up for a few days, flying French colours, pulled up anchor and sailed away, carrying with it into voluntary exile in Europe the two last great Gaelic Catholic Chieftains Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone and his ally, Earl of Tyrconnell, Rory, Hugh O'Donnell's brother and heir.

With its tragic and romantic connotations, the 'flight of the earls' is considered one of the most enigmatic events in Irish history to which many have attempted to offer an explanation. Debate about the causes of the flight continues to rage, but there is little disagreement about the enormous consequences it had paving the way, as it did, for the 'Plantation of Ulster' in 1609.

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Worked out on a government drawing-board from 1608-1610 over three million acres were confiscated by the English Crown and the lands between Derry and Coleraine were obtained by part provision of capital from several City of London companies amongst whom the land was to be divided. The Gaelic order was dealt a hammer blow from which the legacy has continued. The primary beneficiaries of the plantation project, English and Scottish settlers and the Church of Ireland were to be allocated almost three-quarters of the confiscated lands ... while subsequent migration resulted in a settler population of some 40,000 in Ulster by 1640.

As with elsewhere in Ireland, the 'Plantation of Ulster' resulted in an imposed system of land owners and land agents from the English aristocracy and establishment who were loyal to the Crown. It exposed the indigenous Irish to severe upheaval, abuse and deprivation leading to large-scale political, economic and social destitution that was to continue into the nineteenth century.

The Flight of the Earls with their families and followers, known as the ninety-nine, is extensively chronicled in historical literature and maps that chart their tortuous sea and land passage in Europe. In transit through Switzerland, calamity struck on 17 March 1608 on the 'Bridge of the Devil' close to the Gotthard Pass in the Alps. The quarter centenary of the transit of the earls through Switzerland will be marked with official ceremonies on 17 March 2008.

Passage in Europe (1608)

From setting off in 1607 to seek support for their cause from King Phillip III of Spain (reign 1598-1621), a severe storm took their boat off course to France from where they made their way to then Spanish Flanders to Louvain (Leuven in Belgium). A smaller party set off for Milan intending to reach Madrid. They passed down through Lorraine and crossed into Basel from where they made their way to Lucerne.

Calamity struck on 17 March 1608 while crossing over the Teufelsbrücke or 'Bridge of the Devil' close to the Gotthard Pass in the Alps when one of their pack horses carrying a portion of their monies representing about half their wealth slipped into a deep gorge. The horse was saved but the monies were not recovered.

In Milan the earls revised their itinerary and made for Rome. No help was forthcoming from Phillip and there they stayed. O'Donnell died in 1608 and O'Neill in 1616. Inscriptions on flagstones in the churches of burial in Rome have been revisited as has the eulogy, poetry and song about the bravery, patriotism and exile of the Ulster earls.

Lugano and Lucerne (2008)

On 17 March 2008 formal ceremonies are planned at centres in Lugano and Lucerne to mark the transit of the Ulster earls through Switzerland culminating in the unveiling of a commemoration plaque. There will be national television coverage and several prominent figures in attendance. A gala dinner in Lucerne, lectures and musical events will be held around the occasion.

Note: Acknowledgement is given to all sources used in preparation of this text. It follows published texts on **Ireland and Switzerland** by Ita Marguet. It is preceded by an article **William Steuart TRENCH**: Land Agent in Ireland (Landsdowne Estate in Kenmare, Co. Kerry.) (March 2007) and **Irish in Europe (1600-1800)**: Shared Histories (December 2007).

Flight of the Earls: The Howth Connection

By Vivian Sheridan

The St Lawrences of Howth Castle managed for the most part to keep a relatively low profile throughout some of the most turbulent periods of Irish history. Nevertheless one ill starred family member came close to changing all that. Even as a child, Christopher St. Lawrence had achieved minor notoriety when he was snatched by an indignant Grace O'Malley (Grainne Uaile) and carried off to the wilds of Connacht. Offended by not having been shown proper hospitality by the St. Lawrences, the colourful Missus Burke struck a deal with the family: a permanent place at the St. Lawrence dinner table in return for the surrender of their infant son. Four hundred years later, the place is still set.

Whether this adventure affected the youngster's later life is open to question. But certain it was that the young Chris acquired a reputation as an intriguer and something of a 'wild man' – and not a very reliable one. He got himself entangled in the plot which in 1601 cost the head of the queen's favourite, the dashing Lord Essex. Maybe it was in expiation of this that he played a decisive role in the game which led to the flight of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell -- and opened the road to the plantation of Ulster.

In the late 1500s, the young Christopher attained the rank of Colonel of Foot in the Lord Deputy's forces and fought at the Battle of Carlingford against O'Neill. Later on he fought on the English side at the Battle of Kinsale in December 1601.

He was to finally succeed to the title of 9th Baron Howth in 1607; but before this his taste for intrigue appears to have transformed him into some sort of a double – or even treble -- agent with both Spanish, English and rebel Irish connections. After Kinsale, following the disbandment of his regiment, he became discontented, not having got either pension or employment. He appears to have gone as a soldier of fortune to the Low Countries, then a Spanish possession and a hotbed of Irish intrigue. There he seems to have become a buddy (indeed a bedfellow, if one is to believe a contemporary account) of Henry O'Neill, son of The Earl of Tyrone, who was a colonel in the Spanish army.

Having failed to advance himself as he expected, however, he returned to England, and hung about the ante-chambers of Lord Salisbury, seeking preferment, when he hit on the idea of making the claim, based on rumours picked up in Flanders, that there was to be 'a general revolt intended by many of the nobility and principal persons of this land (Ireland)'.

He reported this intelligence in an anonymous letter (quickly traced) to the Lord Chancellor. He then travelled to Dublin where he repeated his allegations to Chichester, the Lord Deputy. He cited the Earl of Tyrconnel and Lord Nugent as being implicated – and strongly hinted that Tyrone was also involved. Chichester pressured him to make a public statement (as there was no other evidence) but he steadfastly declined. With nothing to go on but St. Lawrence's hearsay report, the authorities undertook no immediate action. But rumours continued to circulate reaching the ears of O'Neill and making him increasingly nervous. Warned of treachery in a note from Flanders, and alerted from Spain that a ship was being sent to fetch him, he made the fateful decision to make a run for it.

Hastily collecting family and retainers O'Neill arrived at Rathmullen where he found the ship that had sailed into Lough Swilly under French colours. Here he was joined by Rory, Earl of Tyrconnel.

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At midnight, September 14, 1607, they set sails and made for the open sea. The entire number of souls on board this small vessel was ninety-nine, having little sea stores, and being otherwise miserably accommodated. They steered for the harbour of Corunna in Spain. But having been tossed around for three stormy weeks, finally landed at Quilleboeuf in Brittany, their only remaining provisions being 'one gallon of beer and a cask of water'.

As for St.Lawrence, he succeeded to the title Baron Howth that same year; but such was his reputation, found himself briefly imprisoned in Dublin and London in 1608 on suspicion (of all things) of conspiring with the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell! A certain poetic justice no doubt, but of a temporary nature. Nothing further is heard of him up until his death on 24 October 1619.

He is buried in the family tomb in St.Mary's, Howth.