

# Canadian Celtic Arts Association

## Newsletter

Vol. 6 No. 2

Spring 2010

Editor: Shirley Enns email [editor@canadiancelticarts.ca](mailto:editor@canadiancelticarts.ca), <http://canadiancelticarts.ca>

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Flo Simpson

### **Smaointean / Smaointe\*\***

Janice Chan

Since its inception in 1979, CCAA has relied on a very small group of volunteers to arrange events for members. They do everything from co-ordinating with caterers, editing our newsletter, contacting potential speakers for a Saturday afternoon talk, and making sure that the tea is kept flowing afterwards.

They do this because they enjoy it for the most part, but also because they think it's important to offer Celtic themed events to members and residents of the GTA alike. Not one of them has any professional training or experience in this sort of thing, but they do a very good job within the constraints of time and funds available to them. Some of these are Celtic Studies students, and we're always delighted when they take time from their busy schedules to share the work load and provide a more youthful insight.

I would like to thank each and every person who has donated their time and effort to CCAA over the years, but I would especially like to mention Jean Talman. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that there wouldn't be a CCAA in 2010 if she hadn't made a special effort to keep the organisation going.

Now I'd like to ask for your help. If you can find a bit of time to sit on the Executive Committee (an intimidating name for an informal group!) and help plan and co-ordinate events, your help would be most welcome. If you feel you can't do that at the moment, we'd like to hear from you anyway.

You should have received by now, either in email or in the post, a very short survey asking what you, as a member, would like to see in terms of programming. We'd also like to know your opinion about fees charged for yearly membership and events. If you could take less than 5 minutes to fill out the survey and return it to us, it will help us to programme events that you want to attend. If you haven't received the survey as yet, or have misplaced it, please email me at [president@canadiancelticarts.ca](mailto:president@canadiancelticarts.ca) or call Jean at 416-926-7145 and we'll get it to you.

Costs have escalated for catering, space rental, printing and mailing. CCAA has always operated on cost recovery basis because we want to keep events affordable for everyone. We don't have a huge bank balance to fall back on. We've decided in order to reduce costs associated with printing and mailing (a good chunk of our budget), that we will use email to distribute our newsletter and notices for events.

See **THOUGHTS** page 4

## NEWS FROM CELTIC STUDIES

Jean Talman

Four half-courses commenced after Christmas and these have attracted good enrolments: Intermediate Irish Language II and Modern Gaelic Literature 1600-1800, both taught by Máirín Nic Dhiarmada; Contemporary Celtic Cinema taught by Sarah O'Connor; and The Continental Celts taught by Ann Dooley. We are presently drawing up the timetable for 2010-2011 and we hope to be offering at least a dozen courses.

We are very happy to report that the Government of Ireland, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs under Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, will once again provide funding for an Irish language teaching assistant for the 2010-2011 academic year. In addition, we will receive funding for a senior scholar from Ireland who will teach, do research and participate in all aspects of the program. A third component is a scholarship for a Celtic Studies student to attend an Irish language course in Ireland during the summer; this year's recipient is Gregory Darwin who will attend the NUI-Galway summer language program in Connemara. This is very gratifying recognition of the value of our Program by the Irish Government.

At this time of year many of our fourth-year students are applying to graduate programs at universities in Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Canada and North America. Also we have awarded scholarships to Anne McGee and Moira Richards to attend courses over the summer in Ireland and Scotland. Kate Abley is the recipient of the 2009-2010 McGovern Tuition Scholarship.

The Speakers Series continues, thanks to the generosity of the Irish Cultural Society grant. This year's events included the screening of the film "The Boys of St. Columb's" in February. This film, directed by Tom Collins,

is about St. Columb's College, Derry, which was unusual for the crop of talented boys attending around the same time: poet and Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney; novelist Seamus Deane; author, and political activist Eamonn McCann; songwriters, Phil Coulter and Paul Brady and Ambassador James Sharkey. It is the only school in the world which can boast two past pupils as Nobel Prize winners: John Hume and Seamus Heaney. The film was followed by a discussion with co-producer Maurice Fitzpatrick.

On March 16 we welcomed Professor William Gillies of the University of Edinburgh, visiting professor this year at Harvard University, who spoke on the connections between Irish and Scottish medieval literature.

On April 1, we hosted Irish writer Kevin Barry, one of Ireland's rising literary stars, winner of the 2007 Rooney Prize for his short story collection *There are Little Kingdoms*, who gave a very entertaining reading and discussion of his work.

Many of you will remember Irish writer Claire Keegan, who was our writer-in-residence last year and who gave two wonderful public readings. Claire returned this year at the invitation of the St. Michael's Christianity and Culture Program as the speaker at their annual Christianity and the Arts lecture which was attended by a large and enthusiastic crowd.

Celtic Studies staff and students joined in celebrating St. Patrick's Day at various events and would like to offer congratulations to His Excellency Declan Kelly on being chosen Irish Person of the Year which was awarded at a luncheon on March 7.

A crowd of well over one hundred gathered in Charbonnel Lounge on March 24 for the Canadian launch of the Dictionary of Irish Biography.

See NEWS page 4

## **MY TRIP TO IRELAND, SUMMER 2009**

### **Cameron Wachowich**

At the end of June, I landed in Dublin. As I wanted to see as much of the country as possible, and I certainly felt I could afford the time, I booked my tickets well outside the dates of my courses. I spent the first few days walking through as much of Dublin as I could get to on foot. I saw the Book of Kells, the GPO, a plethora of churches, the National Museum on Kildare St and spent a great deal of time on the grounds of Trinity College as well as in the many interesting corners of St. Stephen's Green. I got my first taste of the Irish countryside with a day trip out to Tara. It was every bit as magnificent as I had been told in countless classes.

After a few days in the big city, I started making my way across the country to my first course in Limerick. I went via Glendalough, Co. Wicklow and Cashel, Co. Tipperary, spending a day and a night in each. Both sites were absolutely amazing in very different ways. The experience proved to be an excellent introduction to the country and wonderful preparation for the course to come. I arrived in Limerick a day before the course and had just enough time to get a feel for the place before the class started. I liked Limerick itself a lot more than I thought I would. It turned out to be a nicely developed, very tastefully modernised city. The course itself was wonderful. I took the intermediate Old Irish course offered through Mary Immaculate College. I was the youngest person in the class by a wide margin and the only one to rank below a PhD student. I learned an absolutely immense amount from both Prof. Swift, our teacher and the coordinator of these wonderful Old Irish courses, and my fellow students. The highlight of the course was certainly the day we spent driving around northern Co. Kerry reading Ogam stones. The course concluded with a very nice dinner at a French restaurant overlooking the Shannon.

The next morning I was on a bus to Galway and that evening I was in Carraroe, Connemara. I was to live the next month with a delightful host family far out into the countryside on the northern end of the peninsula, about a five minute walk from the main Raidió na Gaeltachta tower and an hour's walk from the village of Carraroe itself. The experience was very different from that in Limerick, however of certainly no less value to my education. Indeed, in terms of personal development, fond memories and the like, it was infinitely more valuable. I did the intermediate Irish class at NUI Galway's Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge and gained an immense amount from it. I am now reasonably conversant in Modern Irish. Furthermore, the lack of any incentive to study the Irish language for economic reasons, or for practical communication, meant that the group of people there studying it were all doing so out of some love for the language and the culture it bears. This meant that my classmates represented the most wonderful cross section of Hibernophile humanity imaginable. However, nothing could make so great an impression on me as the place itself. I lived a month as far beyond the pale as it is possible to get in this day and age in a landscape unlike anything I had ever seen before. The month I spent in that wild and wonderful sea of flowers is certainly an experience which will stay with me for the rest of my life.

I was quite sad to leave Carraroe, however I was off to yet further adventures. I made my way up to the north, stopping to climb Croagh Patrick and in (London)Derry, Antrim and Belfast; then I crossed over to Scotland. I spent the last week of my trip in Aberdeen with an aunt of mine at the university there. This was a fantastic opportunity to scout out a potential graduate school and get a taste of a place strangely different from Ireland. Then it was back to Canada. It is impossible to summarise what I have gained from the experience. See **SUMMER** page 6

## NEWS (continued from page 2)

This landmark publication, a joint project of the Royal Irish Academy and Cambridge University Press, edited by James McGuire and James Quinn, consists of some eight million words in nine volumes. Biographical entries are devoted to 9,700 Irish people, all of whom lived and died in the centuries and millenniums up to the end of 2002. This is the cut-off point for the print edition but an online version will be updated on a regular basis. The event was hosted by the Embassy of Ireland, Ottawa, and the Royal Irish Academy in association with the Celtic Studies Program, and the Dictionary was launched by Ann Saddlemyer (Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto). Other speakers included Ann Dooley (Celtic Studies), Nicholas Canny (President, Royal Irish Academy), Paula Molloy (Embassy of Ireland), James Quinn (co-editor DIB), Maureen Murphy (Hofstra University), and Pamela Robinson (Cambridge University Press).

On a sad note, we regret to note the passing of the grand lady of the Irish in Toronto, Peggy Delaney, on Easter Monday, April 5, in her 86<sup>th</sup> year. Peggy was a tireless worker for many causes, Irish and otherwise, in Toronto and she will be greatly missed. We offer condolences to her family.

Finally, the Canadian Association for Irish Studies Annual Conference will be held at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, May 19-22. The theme is "Ireland and its Discontents: Success and Failure in Modern Ireland" and will include lively academic sessions and literary and cultural events. Guests will include Clair Wills, Professor of Irish Literature at Queen Mary University of London; poet Micheal O'Siadhail; writer Micheál Ó Conghaile; and a concert featuring the Aran Island singer, Lasairfhiona Ní Chonaola. For the complete program, visit [www.irishstudies.ca](http://www.irishstudies.ca)

## THOUGHTS (continued from page 1)

If you don't have access to email, don't worry. We'll continue to send you both through regular post.

If we don't have your email address in our member database and you would like to switch to electronic mailing, you can send the information to [membership@canadiancelticarts.ca](mailto:membership@canadiancelticarts.ca) and we'll make sure that you get on the list.

In the meantime, on behalf of myself and the Executive Committee, I would like to wish you all a "Happy Summer" and we'll see you again in September!

\*\* Smaointean/Smaointe is translated as "Thoughts" from Scottish and Irish Gaelic respectively.



### WHERE THE SCOTTISH & IRISH MEET

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[www.irishcompany.ca](http://www.irishcompany.ca)

email: [scoty@globalserve.net](mailto:scoty@globalserve.net)



**Maeve Mackinnon:  
A new Voice for Celtic Music  
Janice Chan**

It was an unfortunate choice of date for the Toronto debut of Scottish singer Maeve Mackinnon on Sunday, March 7 of this year. Oscar night must have kept many at home, as there was a small, though very appreciative audience at the Flying Cloud Folk Club that evening. Fortunately, both her gig the night before in London Ontario, and her next one in Knowlton Québec, were played to capacity crowds, so hopefully it won't be long until she returns to Canada.

Maeve sings Scottish Gaelic, Scottish and Irish folk songs, as well as North American songs influenced by those traditions. Although her



name may not be well known here yet, she has impressed many in Scotland since placing as a semi-finalist

for the 2005 Young Traditional Musician of the Year award sponsored by BBC Scotland. That was followed by being named "Up and Coming Musician of the Year" at the Scots Trad Music Awards in 2007 and a nomination for "Gaelic Singer of the Year" for the same awards in 2008.

Her Gaelic language credentials are just as impressive. A learner of the language since the age of 17, she studied Scottish Gaelic at the college level before going on to receive a degree in Gaelic song at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama, and spending a year on a scholarship at the Isle of Skye's

Gaelic language college.

All of this was evident at her Toronto concert, as she performed songs from her debut album *Don't Sing Lovesongs* (Foot Stompin' Records, 2007), accompanied by guitarist Ewan MacPherson. Each song was thoughtfully introduced, with the story and background of Gaelic songs especially explained, not in a dry academic manner, but often with humour and always with obvious depth of feeling. One of the highlights of the evening for me was an unaccompanied piobrach, a form of Gaelic song closely related to the classical music of the bagpipes, *Cumha na Cloinne* (Lament for the Children).

Unfortunately, this piece doesn't appear on her CD, but Gaelic waulking songs (a type of work song), Appalachian ballads, including *The Silver Dagger*, and a more authentic version of *The Wild Rover* than is usually heard these days, more than make up for its omission. She gives the waulking songs that women would sing to pass the time while beating newly woven cloth on a wooden table to shrink it a particular energy, especially in concert.

Until Maeve returns this way, you can find her on the web, at <http://www.maevemackinnon.com/music.htm>. If you enjoy Celtic music in any form, I'd encourage you to give her a listen!

Make a contribution or a suggestion for the next edition of the Canadian Celtic Arts Association Newsletter.

Contact me at:  
[editor@canadiancelticarts.ca](mailto:editor@canadiancelticarts.ca)

*Shirley Enns, editor*

## **SUMMER (continued from page 3)**

I am fighting to keep my Irish strong by keeping in touch with Gaeilgeoirí throughout the United States as well as in Ireland, England, Holland, Hungary and Poland. I am entering my final year of undergraduate studies with a very keen awareness of just how thorough, and unique, the Celtic Studies program at U of T is. I am beginning my search for graduate schools with greater ambitions and broader horizons than I ever thought I would have. Finally, I am more fundamentally content than ever as I prepare to devote the rest of my life to the study of some of the most wonderful people on the planet.

I was so impressed by the report submitted by Celtic Studies student Cameron Wachowich on his return from studies in Ireland in the summer of 2009 that I have asked his permission to share it with you all.

Cam was the recipient of a scholarship to enable him to go abroad and he certainly made good use of the award.

Jean Talman

### **UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

#### **IRISH AND SCOTS ENCOUNTERS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES Toronto and Guelph 10-12 June 2010**

The expansion of the British and American empires during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries created the greatest mass migration in human history. Irish and Scots migrants were major participants in this process. Their experiences have traditionally been framed in terms of push-pull factors, of exile, struggle, opportunity, and acculturation. But there is another side to the story; as the Irish and Scots spread throughout the world, they interacted

extensively with indigenous cultures and peoples. In many areas, these encounters led to the displacement and destruction of indigenous peoples, while at other times and places they generated a wider range of experiences with opportunities for mutual cooperation and cultural exchange. At the same time, the Scots and Irish existed in an ambivalent, tense, and sometimes hostile relationship to England.

The conference is being jointly organized by the Celtic Studies Program, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto; the Scottish Studies Program, Guelph University; and the University of Aberdeen's AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies. For more information and registration – go to this website: <http://arts.uoguelph.ca/riiss/>

### **Congratulations to Professor David Wilson, Winner of the 2010 Raymond Klibansky Award**

TORONTO, March 31 -- The 2010 Raymond Klibansky award for best English-language



work in the humanities has been awarded to David Wilson, professor of History and Celtic Studies at the University of Toronto, for *Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Volume 1: Passion, Reason, and Politics,*

*1825-1857*, published by McGill-Queen's University Press. Wilson explores the life of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, exposing the reader to the complex and turbulent times that shaped McGee's early political life. This is a landmark work on a Canadian icon. Professor Wilson received the award at a ceremony in Ottawa on March 27.

## **Canadian Celtic Arts Events Calendar**

**All events and dates are subject to change. Please call the number provided to confirm any event listed.**

### **May, 2010**

#### **May 19 - 22, 2010**

**Canadian Association for Irish Studies Annual Conference**, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, NS

Topic: Ireland and its Discontents: Success and Failure in Modern Ireland.

Contact: Padraig O Siadhail at [padraig.osiadhail@smu.ca](mailto:padraig.osiadhail@smu.ca) or see

<http://www.irishstudies.ca/>

#### **Friday May 28 2010**

**The Ireland Fund of Canada's 13th Annual Day at the Races Woodbine Race Track**, Trackside Tent, 555 Rexdale Boulevard, Rexdale ON

In support of the Celtic Studies Program at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto

12: 00 pm to 5: 00 pm / 12 pm Buffet Lunch / 1 pm Post Time

Live & Silent Auctions, Prizes for: Best Dressed Couple, Best Lady's Hat, Best Man's Tie

For more information see <http://www.irlfunds.org>" or call 416.367.8311 / 416.624.8036.

#### **May 28 - May 30, 2010**

**19th Annual Chris Langan Weekend**, Tranzac Club, 292 Brunswick Ave., Toronto  
6 pm Friday to 6 pm Sunday

Concerts, Ceilis, Workshops and Recitals featuring Mary Bergin, Alex Finn, Tiarnan O'Duinnchinn, Ivan Goff, Maeve Donnelly and Brian Holleran

For advanced concert tickets email [tickets@chrislangan.ca](mailto:tickets@chrislangan.ca)

To pre-register email [registration@chrislangan.ca](mailto:registration@chrislangan.ca)

For further information call Ray Caldwell at 905.791.5969 or Denis Lyons 416.653.6316.

### **June, 2010**

#### **June 1, 8, 15, & 22, 2010**

**Dancing in the Park**, Edward's Gardens (Leslie & Lawrence)

First 4 Tuesdays in June, 7:00 pm - 'til dusk, with live music by Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent

Sponsored by Royal Scottish Country Dance Association, Toronto

For more information contact the co-ordinator, David Roper, [mdroper@rogers.com](mailto:mdroper@rogers.com)  
or 416-285-0367

## **Friday June 11, 2010**

### **Canadian Premiere of The Yellow Bittern: The Life and Times of Liam Clancy.**

Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Ave., Toronto

The Yellow Bittern is a revealing and surprising portrait of the last surviving member of The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, and the man that Bob Dylan called "just the best ballad singer I'd ever heard in my whole life". Drawing on unseen and behind-the-scenes footage of the band at their height as well as on Clancy's own personal archive, the film is a compelling look at an iconic and influential life lived to the full. For time and ticket price, please visit the official website at Toronto Irish Film Festival

<http://www.torontoirishfilmfestival.com/>

## **July, 2010**

### **July 24 - 25, 2010**

**Highlands of Durham Games**, Elgin Park, Uxbridge ON

see <http://www.highlandsofdurhamgames.com/> for details

### **July 26 - July 31, 2010**

**10th Annual Irish Summer School**, Holy Cross School ( Donlands & Cosburn), Toronto

9:00 - 3:30 daily- where children learn their whole culture - language, music (tin whistle, fiddle,) song, dance, football etc.,. and meet lifelong friends..

Call Maureen Mulvey-O'Leary at 416.446.6993 or email [moleary2001@rogers.com](mailto:moleary2001@rogers.com)

## **August, 2010**

### **August 9 - August 13, 2010**

**10th Annual Irish Summer School**, Our Lady of Sorrows School, Montgomery Road (between Islington & Royal York), Toronto

9: 00 - 3: 30 daily- where children learn their whole culture - language, music (tin whistle, fiddle,) song, dance, football etc., and meet lifelong friends.

Call Maureen Mulvey-O'Leary at 416.446.6993 or email [moleary2001@rogers.com](mailto:moleary2001@rogers.com)

## **September, 2010**

**No scheduled events**

Celtic Studies with the U of T Celtic Society  
and  
Canadian Celtic Arts Association

Thank the following individuals and organizations for their donations to:

### **Burns Night 2010 Raffle Prizes**



**Sir Iain Noble, Pràban na Linne Ltd, Isle of Skye**  
*Té Bheag* Blended Scotch Whisky (Two Bottles)  
*Mac Na Mara* Rum Finish Blended Scotch Whisky

**Bill Somerville, The Scottish Company, Toronto**  
*The Scotch Whisky Book*

**Janice Chan**

The Chieftains: *Water from the Well* DVD  
Black Leather Coin/Token Caddie with embossed Celtic Design

**Marilyn Kay**

Gift Basket with Tea Set, Tea and Walker's Shortbreads  
Linden MacIntyre's *The Bishop's Man* (autographed copy)

**Donald Gillies**

Armagh Pipers Club 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary CD  
2 Black T-Shirts with Scottish Gaelic Messages  
Pair of Pens from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye

**Jean Talman**

*The Scots Kitchen — Its Traditions and Lore with Old-time Recipes*

**Celtic Studies**

*Ceolta na Sí — Gaelic poetry readings* by Pádraig Mac A'ghoill CD  
*Thank you, Ireland* (Irish-American success stories) and *Garm Lu 2009*