
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

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GAIF Headliners Enter the Haggis Gets an Early Start

If you simply can't wait for the Great American Irish Festival to see area favorites Enter the Haggis, fear not; they're a mere caber toss away (provided you can toss a caber about 35 miles). Ever since they burst onto the local scene at the Great American Irish Festival, the Mohawk Valley has had a love affair with the talented Toronto band. Well, they must surely love Central New York as well, as the boys will be bringing their trademark high energy show back to the Earlville Opera House on Saturday, June 4th. At this show, you can certainly expect to hear many of your favorite ETH tunes, as well as a healthy sampling of their seventh studio album, "Gutter Anthems." Showtime is at 8 PM, and tickets are \$18; \$16 for members, and \$13 for students.



The Bhoys Are Back

The Glengarry Bhoys, another long-time favorite of the local area, will be coming to Homer, NY, for two big nights at the Center for the Arts' Whiting Theatre, on June 17th and 18th. The Glengarry Bhoys have established themselves as one of the top draws on the Irish festival and club circuit, including several appearances at the Great American Irish Festival, and, after a brief hiatus, they're touring again and better than ever. The Bhoys have their roots in Glengarry, Ontario and their music draws on the unique blend of the French and Scottish musical heritage indigenous to the area. Their blend of traditional music, fused with the multicultural sounds of modern and contemporary Celtic music, has brought them international acclaim. Fiery guitar and bass, intense percussion and fiddle, teamed with pipes and vocals, make for a memorable performance. Tickets for the shows are \$25, (members \$23), \$20 for seniors (senior members are \$18) and \$10 for students. Showtime is at 8 PM, with desserts, wine and beer at 7 PM. The Center for the Arts is located at 72 South Main Street, Homer; just 30 minutes south of Syracuse, and 80 miles southwest of Utica. Seating in the intimate 400-seat Whiting Theater is on a first come, first served basis.



Celtic Faire - A Celebration of the Seven Nations

On Saturday, June 18th, 2011, the Schenectady Hibernians will be hosting the 4th Annual *Celtic Faire – A Celebration of the Seven Nations*, from noon until 9 PM. The Faire will be located on the closed streets surrounding City Hall in Downtown Schenectady. Music will feature local Celtic bands **Who's Your Paddy?**, **St. James' Gate**, and **Running the River**. Performances by local pipe bands and the Irish step dancers from Farrell's School of Dance will round out the entertainment. Also on hand will be a storyteller, weaving Celtic tales in the Folklore Center, starting at 1 PM. There will be craft vendors and an expanded Food Court. The annual Bonnie Knees contest will be held over the course of the day. Don't forget to enter your knees by emailing before Saturday, and join the fun. There will be lots of kilts around, so don't be shy. There will be pre-events at area locales, so keep an eye on the website for time and place. There will be something going on all day for the whole family. Bring your lawn chairs, and enjoy a day of music and food. There will be lots of raffles, including the big one, with a top prize of \$2000, the drawing to be Friday, July 29th. Tickets are \$10. For more information, contact at celticfaireaoh@yahoo.com or <http://www.celticfaireaoh.com/>

Great American Irish Festival Update

Great American Irish Festival Volunteer Chairperson Claudette Johnson reminds us that she still needs volunteers for the 2011 festival, and invites you to sign up via the web page [even if you've volunteered with the festival in the past](#). Several venues could use your help, and of course, volunteering 8 hours of your time over the course of the weekend makes you eligible to get all the great perks that aren't available to the general public. If that's not enough to sway you, we have just learned the name of the band who will be performing [just for volunteers](#) at the Volunteer Party on Sunday, July 31st, and it's... aw man, what a terrible time to run out of ink! In the meantime, for the full festival lineup, check out the schedule at www.gaif.us. It's closer than you think!



“A Good Walk Spoiled...”

Lest you think we're all constantly hard at work planning the Great American Irish Festival and saying words like “lest,” you should know that we also like to kick back and enjoy ourselves, or short of that, play golf. If you'd like to join us, mark your calendar for the 3rd annual GAIF Golf Outing, which will be held on Friday August 5th, at Stonebridge Golf and Country Club, 2430 Graffenburg Road, New Hartford NY. More details will be coming in next month's newsletter, but this is one event, unlike your cousin's graduation or your wedding, that you don't want to put off until the last second to sign up. So why wait? Check it out [here](#).

22nd Annual Old-Time Fiddlers' Gathering

The 22nd Annual Old-Time Fiddlers' Gathering will be held on Saturday, June 18 and Sunday, June 19 at Lakewood Vineyards, 4024 State Route 14 in Watkins Glen. According to their web site, which bears a striking (read: word-for-word) resemblance to this article, the Stamp family, owners of Lakewood Vineyards, have [sic] a personal connection to old-time music. The Fiddlers' Gathering hosts performances, workshops with master musicians, and an open Jamming Tent. The event is free and open to the public. The 2011 Fiddlers' Gathering focuses on the wide variety of traditional fiddling styles that exist throughout the Southern Finger Lakes. Many people are aware of the fiddling traditions of Ireland, but are not as familiar with the fiddling styles that exist in India, Scandinavia, and other countries around the world. When these ethnic groups immigrated to the United States, they brought their rich musical traditions with them. They settled all over the country and continued to pass down their history and culture through music. The Southern Finger Lakes has many representatives of these lesser-known fiddling traditions, and we are excited to highlight their styles at this year's event.

“Granuaile: A Notorious Woman” Sails into Proctor's Theater

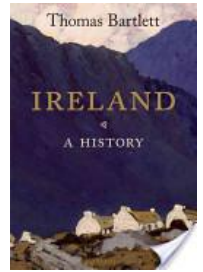
On Sunday, June 5th, GE Theatre at Proctors plays host to a performance of “Granuaile: A Notorious Woman - The True Story of Grace O'Malley, Ireland's Pirate Queen.” Storyteller Marni Gillard performs six tales from the life of Grace O'Malley, Irish clan chieftain's daughter, political activist and pirate who lived from 1530-1603. The stories are backed by traditional Irish musicians with original music composed by Tom O'Hare. To some, Granuaile was a pirate, but to her 16th century British enemies, she was “That Notorious Woman” for successfully organizing the clans against them. A contemporary of Queen Elizabeth I, she carried her petition for fairness and justice to the English court and settled the matter “Queen to Queen.” Providing the accompaniment are Fritz Stafford (pipes) Eric Everson (Irish bouzouki), Hilary Schrauf (fiddle), Edward Munger (classical guitar), Nancy Munger (piano), and Erica Sparrow, Kitty Trimarco and Janice Walz (vocals). Tickets for the 7:30 show are \$16 for individuals or \$12 for groups of 8 or more; only available at the Box Office or by phone, (518) 346-6204.

Book Review:
“Ireland – A History”
By Mark Sisti

The problem with most books purporting to present the history of Ireland is that by the time the book is published it is usually already dated. “Ireland – A History,” by Thomas Bartlett, was published in 2010, so it encompasses much that is missing in other histories – the IRA ceasefire, the Good Friday Agreement, the St. Andrews agreement, the rise (and fall) of the Celtic Tiger economy – but it also looks ready to stand the test of time.

The book attempts to do the near-impossible, to comprehensively cover the entire history of Ireland in a single volume, and comes very close to succeeding. Beginning with Pre-Christian Ireland, Bartlett breaks his narrative up into what he sees as the crucial epochs and examines the critical events in each time period. Rather than dwelling on the battles, invasions, abuses and other specific occurrences in each era, he focuses on the underlying causes and the resulting effects of these occurrences.

Because of this approach, this is not necessarily a good introduction to Irish history. Bartlett presupposes a rudimentary knowledge of seminal episodes that causes him to give cursory mention to events that would seem to deserve more extensive coverage. He assumes, for example, that the reader is familiar with the brave last words spoken by Robert Emmet, and writes “...Emmet’s speech from the dock following his death sentence was to echo down through the nineteenth century,” but never bothers to say exactly what it was that echoed down (“When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then and not till then, let my epitaph be written.”) Similarly, when discussing the siege of Derry, he refers to it as “probably the most inept siege in the history of modern warfare.” OK, you now have my interest. Unfortunately, we hear no further details of the siege and we’re left to wonder what would account for that brutal appraisal. People and events we would consider essential to a full understanding of Irish history get scant treatment. Brian Boru, for example, is mentioned on two pages; the battle of Clontarf is accorded one sentence. However, this is not a major drawback; anyone with an “Irish History for Dummies” degree of knowledge should be able to follow it easily.



With meticulous recounting of the steps that led to every major event in Irish history, we are left with the impression that things that happened not only should not have been surprising, they were almost inevitable. What emerges is the realization that everything we knew is wrong. Or, at least, nothing is as straightforward as we always believed it was. Many tend to oversimplify an astoundingly complex situation by boiling it down to Irish Catholics fighting against England to attain Irish independence and Protestants fighting against Catholics to maintain the Union. This is not only an over-simplification, it is, as Bartlett shows, inaccurate. Many of the most prominent figures in the fight for Irish independence, including Parnell, Theobald Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet and most of the leaders of the 1798 rebellion, were, in fact, Protestant, and Catholics fought on the British side in many of the internal battles. I remember on my first trip to Ireland, I was in a pub (for research purposes, of course) and struck up a conversation with a very well-educated gentleman who noted, “you Yanks have always had it all wrong. It’s not Irish against British. It’s not Catholic against Protestant and it’s not North against South.” As Bartlett shows us, the divisions and alliances we’ve all believed to be consistent throughout have in reality vacillated depending upon which position would benefit which faction at that point in time.

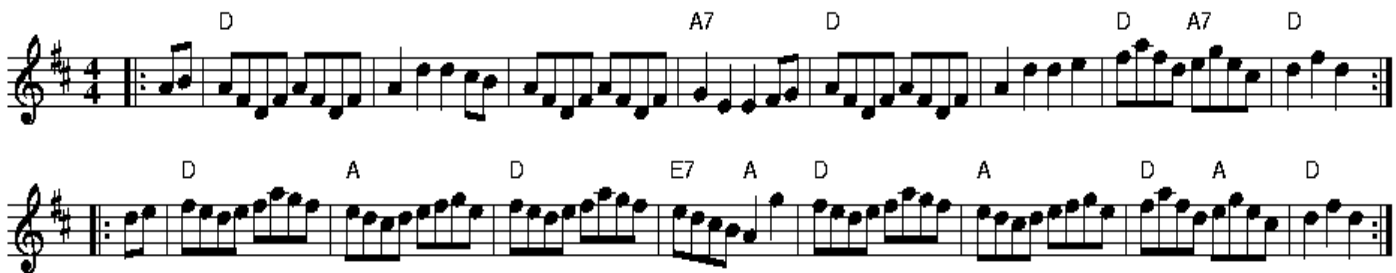
Bartlett’s writing style is comfortable, scholarly without coming across as too academic, and he maintains a clear and logical structure. What may get overlooked is a sardonic wit that crops up at the oddest times, so subtle it’s easy to miss. For example, when describing an increase in English tourism to Ireland in the late 1800’s, he notes “the famine clearances also played their part, by getting rid of those starving wretches who, in earlier times, had had the temerity to ruin the view.” The illustrations are also effectively used, particularly the lurid newspaper accounts scattered throughout that give a good sense of how the varying events were perceived on both sides of the Irish sea. For those who want a primer into Irish history, this may not be the best choice, but if you want to come to a fuller understanding of what made Ireland what it is today – and what it may be tomorrow – this well-researched and lucid work is the way to go.

Craobh Dugan “Tune of the Month” – Soldier’s Joy – by Skip Mansur

Last September (2010) we presented a popular tune, Miss McCloud’s reel, and I mentioned that we usually play that tune as the second in a set with another favorite – Soldier’s Joy. Also known as “The King’s Head,” “The King’s Hornpipe,” and “Payday in the Army,” “Soldier’s Joy” is one of the oldest and most widely distributed tunes in the English-speaking world (which is also precisely why you may find some folks that disdain the tune). June seems to be an appropriate month to present this tune, since it recalls the recently past celebration of Memorial Day, as well as many upcoming commemorations of the American Civil War (for instance, June 11-12 in Peterboro, NY); this year marks the 150th anniversary of the start of that war.

Soldier’s Joy is found as a D major reel or hornpipe in Irish, Scottish, Canadian, English, Bluegrass, and Old Time music, to name a few styles. The tune appeared in late eighteenth-century sheet music and dance instruction manuals on both sides of the Atlantic. It appeared with a song in London circa 1760 and in a collection of “Celebrated Country Dances” in Scotland around 1756, as well as having been traced to Denmark and Scandinavia. By the nineteenth century, it was published in numerous books of fiddle tunes, usually classified as a reel or country dance. Other printed music also featured this tune, such as a piano arrangement published in Boston in 1885. Printed publications can be used as evidence of the tune’s age and popularity, but most musicians who played it and dancers who danced to it did not learn the tune from a printed page, they learned it by hearing it. Some heard it at dances in their communities; some heard it at home, played by a family member. Others may have heard it played by Army bands during wartime, to lift the spirits of troops in camp or as they marched to battle.

Soldier’s Joy



Soldier’s Joy was no doubt played during the Civil War; in fact some sources note it as a “Traditional American Civil War Reel.” There are many speculations as to the meaning of the name: one is that the “soldier’s joy” was his pay, referenced by another name of this tune “Pay Day in the Army.” Others say that “Soldier’s Joy” was a name given to the tune by American civil war soldiers who nicknamed their morphine “soldier’s joy.” The *Skillet Lickers* sang the tune in the 1920’s as:

*Well twenty-five cents for the morphine,
and fifteen cents for the beer.
Twenty-five cents for the old morphine
now carry me away from here.*



10th Veteran Reserve Corps, 1865

Still another story claims that the soldier found his joy the day he returned home from war, and that this tune was played as a “welcome home” tune for returning Civil War soldiers. Jim Griffith from Tucson, Arizona, recalled “When my Cherokee friend Bob Thomas was alive, he would always request that tune for jig dancing. One day his son Stanley told me why. It seems that when the Cherokee veterans of the Civil War returned to Tahlequah [Oklahoma], in Indian Territory, they were greeted by musicians playing that tune. And ever after, when those old men would get together, there would be a fiddler playing “Soldier’s Joy” as an honoring song.”

RANDOM RAMBLINGS

- ☘ **“Nuacht as Craobh Dugan”**---news from the **Dugan Branch** Chris Hoke of Craobh Dugan sent in the following report on the long-awaited “Echoes of Erin” Comhaltas North American’s Concert Tour. “The *ECHOES OF ERIN* concert will be held **Saturday October 15th at 7:30 pm at the Rome Free Academy Auditorium**. This is a show you will not want to miss, so mark it on your calendar now. The Auditorium at RFA is a beautiful, state-of-the-art facility and will be a great place to showcase the best of Comhaltas musicians and dancers. We will share more details as available regarding ticket prices, where to get them, etc.”... Upcoming Craobh Dugan events: Jun 6th -- Utica Monday Night at Chancellor Park, Bleecker Street, 6:30; Jun 7 -- Open Session Nail Creek Pub, Varick St., Utica, 7:30; Jun 11 -- Landmarks Society of Utica, 3 PM; Jun 12 -- Old Time Fiddlers Association Concert Series, Fiddlers’ Hall of Fame, Osceola, NY, 2 PM; Jun 15 -- Open Session at The Mill East Dominick St., Rome, 7:30; Jun 17 -- Ceili with musicians, Seton Center, 7 PM; Jun 18 -- Johnston School Recital, Our Lady of Lourdes, 12-2:00.
- ☘ **Amazing Grace!** As long as we’re on the subject of Comhaltas, we’d like to extend our congratulations to long-time Craobh Dugan dancer **Grace Schell**, who recently won Best of Show at the New York State Grange Talent Show, which took place on April 30th at the State Grange headquarters in Cortland. Grace won for her performance of a medley of folk tunes played on the mountain dulcimer. She also received first place in the Vocal Solo category. She will represent New York State Grange in the talent showcase in the National Grange Convention planned for November in Tulsa, OK. Amazing, Grace!
- ☘ **15th Annual Utica AOH Irish Scramble Golf Tournament** The John C. Devereux Div #1 AOH Chapter is holding its 15th annual golf tournament on June 24th at Twin Ponds Country Club in New York Mills. Proceeds from the tournament benefit Project Children -- an American-Northern Ireland partnership that brings children from Northern Ireland to the US each summer -- and other Division programs. Registration starts at 11 AM, with tee-off set for noon. The price, which includes green fees, cart, skins, prizes, buffet, beer and soda, is \$65. For more information, or to sign on as a hole sponsor or donate a door prize, call Joe White at 733-9490, Pat Costello at 736-2424 or Jo-Jo White at 732-5389.
- ☘ **Oneonta AOH golf** The Oneonta Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) Fighting 69th Division will host the 3rd annual Irish Open Benefit Golf Tournament on Saturday, August 20, at the Colonial Ridge Golf Course in Laurens, NY. Proceeds from this year’s tournament will support the AOH and The Lord’s Table. The Lord’s Table is a community outreach program that serves children, adults and families in the Oneonta community. Through the program, evening meals are served at no cost to between fifty and one hundred people each weekday. The Lord’s Table is housed in the St. James Episcopal Church, which is also home to a regional food kitchen. The tournament will be in the popular (especially for new golfers) Captain & Crew format, and costs \$65 per person, which includes 18 holes with cart, contests, dinner and live Celtic entertainment. Prizes will be awarded to 1st, 2nd & 3rd place teams. Please call (607) 434-2144 or e-mail aohdivision1@hotmail.com for directions, questions or registration.
- ☘ **Four Shillings Short is Long on Talent** If you were fortunate enough to have caught the **Boys from Wexford** during one of their Erie Canal swings a couple of years ago, you may remember seeing a duo that was accompanying them on the tour. **Four Shillings Short** may only be two performers -- Aodh Óg Ó Tuama on vocals, tin whistles, doumbek, spoons, gemshorn, bowed psaltery, recorders, crumhorn, many others, and partner Christy Martin (vocals, hammered dulcimer, mandolin, mandola and bouzouki, banjo, North Indian Sitar, guitar, charango, bowed psaltery and bodhran) -- but they still must’ve needed a pretty good-sized vehicle to tote their instruments. If they stuck in your head for their unique sound – and who else have you ever heard described as “The wavering, mystical tones of the sitar hover behind the Celtic melodies like a sari-wrapped ghost hovering over the moors” – you can catch them at any of many stops around the Buffalo, Rochester, Tribes Hill and Schenectady areas. For specific locations and dates, check out their East Coast tour schedule at <http://www.art.net/~4ss/schedule.shtml>.

Celtic Club Calendar Finally, here's the Irish Musical and Cultural calendar for June:

Jun 3	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Jun 3	"Mostly Irish" Monthly Jam	Irish American Club	Amsterdam NY	7:30 PM	Free
Jun 3-4	Pat Kane	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	8:30 PM	Free
Jun 4	Enter the Haggis	Earlville Opera House	Earlville	8 PM	\$18, \$16 mbrs, \$13 students
Jun 4	Hair of the Dog	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13
Jun 5	Syracuse Irish Session	J. Ryan's Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 5	"Granuaile: A Notorious Woman"	GE Theatre at Proctors	Schenectady	7:30 PM	\$16; \$12 grps of 8
Jun 6	Utica Monday Night – Irish Night	Chancellor Park	Utica	6:30 PM	Free
Jun 6	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jun 7	"Nail Creek Sessions"	Nail Creek Pub	Utica	7:30-10 PM	Free
Jun 9	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 10	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Jun 10	Black 47 with guest Glide	Westcott Theater	Syracuse	8 PM	\$15
Jun 11	Trad Irish Music Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Jun 13	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jun 15	Traditional Irish Session	The Mill	Rome, NY	7:30 PM	Free
Jun 15	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 17	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Jun 17-18	Glengarry Bhoys	Center for the Arts	Homer, NY	8 PM	\$25, \$20 Srs, \$10 students
Jun 18	4th Annual Celtic Faire - A Celebration Of The Seven Nations	Jay Street Pedestrian Mall	Schenectady	Noon to 9 PM	Free
Jun 18-19	Old Time Fiddler's Gathering	Lakewood Vineyards	Watkins Glen	1- 7 PM	Free
Jun 19	Syracuse Irish Session	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 20	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jun 23	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 25	Trad Irish Music Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Jun 27	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jun 30	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free

If you have anything you want to share with us, feel free to send it to us (sistia@roadrunner.com, bloftis@ymail.com or marksisti@roadrunner.com), and we'll be happy to include it. As always, while we try to get things – prices, places, genders, etc. -- as accurate as we can, sometimes we make mistakes. It always makes sense to call ahead to confirm some of these further-out trips. And remember Father's Day on June 19th. Oh! And because I can, I'd like to remind you that you still have a few days to check out the Blarney Rebel Band song "Old High Cross," from their latest CD, "Beneath the Surface," on the Celtic Roots Radio podcast show No. 36 – 'The 32 county Ireland is history!' You can listen/subscribe to the podcast [here](#).