



Dec. 2010

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Little Known Christmas In Ireland

by Brian Witt

Christmas in Ireland seems to be one of magic. In the past, we have talked of the candle in the window to guide Mary and Joseph; whitewashing and cleaning of the Christmas house; Christmas puddings and cakes; and the holly bush instead of the Christmas tree.

However, there are some fun and interesting Christmas facts that many may not know about. Therefore, discover a bit of the hidden Ireland.

“Little Women’s Christmas,” on January 6, is a traditional day for Irish women to leave their housework behind and go out with each other to have fun. It’s a very old holiday, kept alive today by a few enthusiastic Irish ladies. Men were supposed to have taken over the chores for the day.

It’s considered bad luck to take down holiday decorations before “Little Women’s Christmas,” sometimes simply called “Little Christmas.”

Santa Claus is *Daidí na Nollaig* or Daddy of Christmas, and is also known in Ireland as Santy. He brings presents to children in Ireland, which are opened on Christmas morning. It is traditional to leave a mince pie and a bottle of stout, either Guinness or Murphy’s, to slake his hunger and thirst. In recent years children have been leaving cookies and milk instead.

Santa Claus does not place gifts for the children under the tree as he does here in America. Instead, Santa leaves their gifts at the end of their beds as they slumber. Most are sound asleep, since they didn’t get to bed until after the Christmas Midnight Mass.

Pantomimes are still performed by small groups of amateurs and

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professional actors alike in the days following Christmas. Irish “pantos” are humorous productions of *Cinderella*, *Snow White* and other familiar fairytales. In them, men frequently play the part of women and vice versa. Generally, there’s a great deal of singing and dancing, with jokes making fun of eminent politicians or celebrities thrown in.

It is traditional to swim in the sea on Christmas morning. This is often done in aid of charity. However, in Dun Laoghaire, a Christmas swim at the Forty Foot was a men-only nude affair.

The Late Late Toy Show is an annual event on RTE’s *Late Late Show*. It is broadcast in late November or early December, and is the most watch program of the year. The show consists of an adult-only studio audience dressed in Christmas garb which tries to destroy new toys and gadgets through mishandling.

The most popular Christmas song in Ireland in 2009 was the Pogues “Fairytale of New York.”

Christmas FM is Ireland’s first radio station dedicated to Christmas. It is a temporary station, licensed by the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI), to broadcast Christmas music across the Dublin area from November 28 to December 26.

Well, all those facts may have caused you to work up an appetite. And what could be more Christmas in Ireland than a dinner of goose?

ROAST GOOSE WITH POTATO AND APPLE STUFFING

This recipe is adapted from Darina Allen’s *Festive Foods of Ireland* cookbook. Ms. Allen runs the Ballymaloe Cookery School in Co. Cork.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 goose weighing about 10lbs with giblets, neck, heart and gizzard. Note that while a goose looks quite big, it has a large cavity, so allow 1lb of uncooked weight per person.
- 1 small onion
- 1 carrot
- Bouquet garnish consisting of 1 sprig of thyme, 3 or 4 parsley stalks, a small piece of celery and 6 or 7 peppercorns
- Roux, if desired, for thickening

STUFFING INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs potatoes
- ½ stick butter
- 1 lb onions



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- 1 lb Granny Smith cooking apples, peeled and chopped
- 1 tbs chopped parsley
- 1½ tbs lemon balm
- salt and freshly ground pepper

METHOD:

Scrub potatoes and boil in salt water until cooked. Drain water and mash potatoes, including skins. Melt butter and simmer onions in covered saucepan over gentle heat for five minutes. Add apples and cook until they break down into a fluff then stir in the mashed potatoes and herbs. Season with salt and pepper. Allow to get quite cold before stuffing goose.

Goose:

Remove giblets, neck, heart and gizzard from goose cavity. Put goose into large saucepan with giblets, onion, carrot, bouquet garnish and peppercorns. Cover with cold water, bring to a boil and simmer for about two hours.

Remove bird from stock, pat dry and place in roasting pan. Strain stock and store in refrigerator until it's time to make the gravy.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Season goose cavity with salt and pepper and fill with cold stuffing. Sprinkle sea-salt over breast and rub into skin. Roast for two to two and a half hours. During roasting, pour off excess fat three or four times. (Store fat in refrigerator – it keeps for months and is wonderful for roasting or sautéing potatoes).

To test whether goose is cooked, prick the thigh at thickest part. If the juices run clear, it's ready. If they're pink, it needs a little longer. When bird is cooked, remove to a large oven-proof platter and place in oven on low heat to keep warm while you make the gravy.

Gravy:

Pour or spoon off remaining fat in pan. Add about two cups of strained giblet stock to roasting pan. Bring to a boil, and, using a small whisk, scrape the pan well to dissolve any meaty deposits. Taste for seasoning and if desired, thicken with a little roux. If the gravy seems weak, boil for a few minutes to concentrate the flavor. If it seems too strong, add a little more water or stock. Serves 8 to 10.

We hope you have learned a bit about Ireland. We wish you all *Nollaig Shona Duit*. Have a very merry Christmas.

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Milwaukee President's Message

Josh Walton went on a fact finding mission to Ireland. He will have a full rundown of his findings in the January *Reflections*.

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Lafayette County

We are saddened by the death of our member, Diana M. VanMatre, who left us at age 64. She was the 1995 Irish Rose. Diana will be dearly missed by her husband, John, her two daughters, Sheri Wilbanks (Don Stadel) of Elizabeth, Illinois, and Sheila Hinderman, and her nine grandchildren.

The chapter marched in the Monroe Cheese Days Parade in September. We are planning our scholarship raffle, and our St. Patrick's Day events.

– Tiff Donohue

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New Dublin News

The Shamrock Club of New Dublin met at Midtown Pub and Grill on November 1st and chose the theme for next year's St. Patrick's Day events: "Everything's Coming Up Shamrocks". This theme should provide our parade entries as well as our downtown businesses some very interesting opportunities to show their Irish pride.

In addition, we are very pleased to announce our Irish Man and Irish Rose for 2011: Patrick Sullivan and Melissa Mulroy. Pat plays a very intricate part in our club as each year he helps to organize the Irish Fest tent, his dedication and hard work are invaluable to our club. Melissa is one of the founding members of our club, and in fact organized the very first St. Patrick's Day parade in New Dublin.

Although St. Patrick's Day is still four months away, the planning for our event is in full gear.

The Shamrock Club of New Dublin meets the first Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Midtown Pub and Grill in downtown New London. New members are always welcome. Slainte.

– Carrie Katerzynske

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Shamrock Club Caroling December 4

The Shamrock Club will be singing songs of Christmas this season. Join members of the Shamrock Club in Christmas Caroling. The Caroling is Saturday, December 4. The first location is the Hart Park Square Retirement Community, 6600 River Pkwy, Wauwatosa, just off State Street. Their phone number is (414) 476-8787. We will meet in the main lobby at 2:45 p.m. The second location is the Aurora Zilber Center, 1155 N. Honey Creek Pkwy, Wauwatosa, at 4 p.m. All are encouraged to come, and bring some friends, sons and daughters, etc. Contact Pete and Dawn Fleming at (414) 383-2710, or (414) 687 2049.

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Give The Shamrock Club for Christmas

Are you looking to give the just oh, so perfect Christmas present? Why not give your loved one a membership to the Shamrock Club of Wisconsin. With it, they will receive the printed version of *Emerald Reflections* delivered right to their home. They will also be joining the most storied Irish American organization in Wisconsin. Memberships are \$20 for a single, or \$25 for family.

For more information on giving a Shamrock Club membership, contact membership chair Denis Donohoe at (262) 309-0723 or [djvdonohoe@sbcglobal.net].

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Veronica's Cupboard

DECEMBER? Hooray! It's Christmas Cookie time! What better smells are there? Shamrock Club members are gearing up for one of our best Christmas parties ever. This special night is scheduled for December 2 and the tables will be laden with wonderful salads, casseroles, desserts and other goodies we know you'll bring. General Rule: A-L bring desserts, M-Z bring side dishes (veggies, salads, casseroles, etc.) Your food committee will provide pulled pork, so popular last year, and roast chicken; barbecue sauce will be at the ready. Yes, Santa will be here!

JANUARY? Chili Competition. Register before December 15. Call Veronica, 228-8621 to book your spot. Last year's event was such fun and so, so tasty. Shamrock Club will provide shredded cheeses, sour cream and crackers. Members are asked to bring salads and desserts that will compliment the chili. Prizes will be awarded.

– Veronica Ceszynski, (414) 228-8621

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A Celtic Christmas With Kim Robertson At the ICHC on Dec. 4

Internationally acclaimed harpist Kim Robertson will return to the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center to celebrate the joy of a traditional Celtic Christmas during a concert on Saturday, Dec. 4, at 7:30 p.m. The ICHC is located at 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee.

Joining Robertson will be the Madison a cappella group *Navan*, who call their music "Celtic language harmonies." Guitarist Randy Gosa and flute and tin whistle player Brett Lipshutz, along with champion dancers from the McMenamin *Irish Dance Academy*, will also perform.

An Irish Christmas craft fair in the ICHC Parlour will begin at 4 p.m. and remain open during the concert and intermission.

Considered a pioneer in the folk harp movement, Robertson combines an im-provisational spirit with a passionate sense of tradition, thereby bringing a contemporary touch to the centuries-old instrument. The Wisconsin-born Robertson tours throughout North America and Europe and has more than 20 album projects, 11 volumes of published harp arrangements, and instructional

videos and international workshops to her credit.

“lyrical, heart-touching music, played with delicacy, grace and skill?”
- Heartbeats

Navan says that they love to bring the beautifully worded “dusty hidden songs out for people to enjoy and learn.” Although the group shares the songs’ meanings with the audience, they sing them in the Celtic languages of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall and the Isle of Man. Since variations in words and tunes developed over hundreds, if not thousands of years, *Navan* sometimes incorporates those variations into one song. For example, they may sing verses in the *sean nós* (“old style”) and then move to the exuberant rhythms of an early American hymn which the “old style” inspired.

Gosa and Lipshutz have been involved in Milwaukee’s Irish music community for several years. In addition to playing as a duo, they are members of the innovative Celtic quartet *Myserk*. Both men also teach at the Irish Fest School of Music. A review of their CD *Night and Day*, by the online European music publication *FolkWorld* stated that, (they) “are a class act and deserve to be widely heard.”

The Milwaukee based McMenamin dancers have performed around the world and competed in national and international Irish dance competitions.

Tickets for the show are \$19 in advance and \$23 the day of concert with discounts for students and groups. To order online, visit [www.ichc.net]. Tickets may also be ordered by calling (414) 345-8800.

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Celebrate Nollaig - The Irish Christmas

Shamrock Club Christmas Party

Thursday, December 2 • 6:30 p.m.

Irish Cultural and Heritage Center
(2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee)

We will be providing meat (pulled pork and roast chicken) and beverages. Please bring a dish to pass, vegetables or dessert. A-L bring desserts, M-Z bring side dishes.

Special guests and carols.

For questions, call Veronica at 414-228-8621

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Milwaukee Dec. Membership News

First, I would like to wish everyone happy holidays and a best wishes for the New Year.

Please welcome the following new Members joining in October/November of this year: Andrea & Chris Mullins, Georgia Rasmussen, James & Emily Hosty, Brent Goetz, Greg Bernhardt, Derek Cooper, Genaro Garca, Kevin McClory, Nick Hammel, Nima Almassi, Brian Cooper, Josh Anders, Michael Schlecht, Colleen / Dave Thronson, Jim & Michelle McCormack, Chad/Shannan Meyer, Kathleen Doolan Paul, and Patricia Larkin.

The Milwaukee Chapter as of October 31 has 391 Members with 186 Family and 187 single memberships. Statewide our Membership totals 505 Members.

Please be sure to have your memberships renewals in before December 1 for those who's expire on or before 11/30/2010.

We hope you can attend our December meeting and party to share some cheer and friendship. If you can bring a side dish or dessert to share, this would be wonderful.

– Denis Donohoe, Membership Chair

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Donate to the Shamrock Club

The Shamrock Club is a 501(C) (3) corporation. If you donate to us, you can write this off on your taxes. Donate to our Scholarship fund, our general fund, or to the parade. Thank you!

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Nominations For Irish Honorees

Nominations for the 2011 Irish honorees, Irish Rose, Irishman of the Year, Parade Marshal, must be received by 6 p.m. January 27, before the start of the Shamrock Club Board meeting.

Nominations must be in writing, or emailed, and be made by members in good standing. Nominations can be mailed to Shamrock Club, 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53233, or emailed to Josh Walton at [joshwalton1@yahoo.com].

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Color Guard News & Notes

Happy Holidays Everyone!

Hope this article finds you almost done with Christmas shopping and reveling in the best season of the year. I wasn't happy when the store decorations went up before Halloween, but find myself getting caught up in the holiday spirit about this time. I've had Christmas gifts ready since mid June. I guess they don't call me Noel for nothin'!

December finds the group still working hard after a very successful marching season. Tuesday practices at the ICHC include lessons for the new members of our group, learning the long road to playing the pipes. We have, I believe, six or seven new students taking on that task at the moment. I remember so long ago I was sitting in their very same spot, fascinated and frustrated all at once. It's by far the most challenging, and rewarding experience they'll ever have. Cheers to all of you who are taking this on. Also, a big congratulations to Connor Hanrahan for all his hard work the past few months. He has now up on pipes! We really look forward to him joining the pipe line on the march this coming season.

Also a shout out to someone very new this season, but a young gentleman that has put in a lot of time with the color guard. Jacob Nowak, grandson of Tom and Gail McAleese has been to almost all of the posted events, proudly wearing the green kilt and all the garb. Thanks Jacob and family for all of your hard work and effort in being a new part of the group!

The band also has some really great news to share. Starting late November, we are teaming up practice time with Celtic Nations Pipes and Drums and Milwaukee Fire and Police Pipes and Drums. This monumental partnership will allow our group to learn and grow with the finest teachers and musicians out there. We will

continue as a separate group as always, holding true to what we stand for as the Irish Pipe band in the community. But this opportunity will bring us further than we have ever gone before. We will, at times, join the two bands in playing a few tunes together, and all the time continue to march as the SCCGPD in parades and other functions. Thank you to both groups for inviting us to become part of the fold. We look forward to learning as much as we can.

A few weeks back, I had the honor of attending the funeral of the Irish Community's beloved Chuck Ward. I was there in official capacity as the spare piper. John Finnegan from the Fire and Police did a great job piping for his dear friend Chuck; I'm not sure I could have done it with such grace for a good friend without losing all composure. I was astonished at how full the service was with dignitaries and famous faces of Milwaukee's Irish elite. This man touched many many lives, but left a legacy that will never be forgotten. The face of Milwaukee is changed and we have the best summer festival in the world in part because of him. I had the honor at the end of the service to follow the piper and the honor guard with the flowers that sit atop the casket, followed by Chuck and his family. I'll never forget the sad looks on the faces of those that were there. On behalf of the group, a heartfelt condolence to his family and friends who have lost their Chuck.

As for upcoming events, the band will have its annual Christmas Party at Paddy's Pub, December 11. We'll also continue practices til mid December, take a few weeks break over the holidays, and resume on January 4. By then, unbelievably, it's a mere nine weeks to the green season!

I'll keep this short. Until 2011, my friends. Merry Christmas and Happy Hogmanay!

– Noel Tylla, 7th year piper

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Celtic Women First Friday Lectures



Jock Smith (L) and Gina Crossley (R)

Welcome to the holiday season. We aim to join in the festivities on December 3rd with our annual Christmas special lecture. As usual, as a treat for our loyal supporters, there will be no admission fee in December. Instead, if you wish, you are urged to bring a small offering of goodies to be shared by all.

The lectures now return to Greene Hall 3347 N. Downer on UWM campus. Please join us in the Christmas spirit.

Date: Dec. 3, 2010, 5:30-7 p.m.

Topic: "Christmas in Scotland"

Speaker: Jock Smith [tshanter@hotmail.com]

Music: Gina Crossley sings a few Caroles for the Season [xley@charter.net]

Jock Smith is a Scotsman born in the wee small village of Ashgill, near Glasgow, where he lived the first 40 years of his life before coming to Waukesha. He will recall the customs, origins and superstitions of Christmas as he learned them as a lad.

Gina Crossley will lead us in a couple of holiday songs to get everyone in the best mood.

Come one, come all!

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Celtic Retreat **Jan. 28 - 30, 2011**

Redemptorist Retreat Center

The Redemptorist Retreat Center in Oconomowoc will present the Irish Spirituality Retreat Jan. 28–30, 2011.

The theme of this year's retreat will be "Gathering Around the Hearth." The presenter will be Julianne Donlon, an Irish inspirational speaker living in Green Bay. Julianne left Ireland in 2001 to pursue a career in America. Profoundly influenced by her life in Ireland and her interest in Celtic spirituality, she infuses her talks, seminars and retreats with passion and a fresh perspective. Dynamic, energetic and engaging, her unique message has touched countless lives.

Come gather round the hearth and join us for a retreat in the Celtic tradition. Discover with fresh eyes the stories and legends of the people of Ireland: from St. Patrick, St. Columba and St. Brigid to

people of Ireland: from St. Patrick, St. Columba and St. Brigid to those who have influenced Irish history such as Gráinne O'Malley, and Bobby Sands. You will learn the ancient prayers and songs of Ireland and share in the stories and legends of this enduring tradition.

The retreat fee for this weekend is \$220. It includes program, private room with private bath facilities, linens and meals. You only need to bring personal items. Dress is casual. Registration begins at 6:15 p.m. Friday evening January 28, 2011 and concludes after brunch Sunday, January 30; a \$75 Saturday Only Special includes program and meals. For further information or to register, call The Redemptorist Retreat Center at (262) 567-6900 or visit our website at [www.redemptoristretreat.org].

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A Modest Proposal

My name is Georgia Rasmussen. I am a UWM Anthropology student. I have been hearing lots of great things about the Shamrock Club.

I am am fairly new to Milwaukee and am looking for an organization to join that does fun group things. From what I have seen, it certainly does look like you are a very active group. Plus I would like to get in touch with my Irish heritage.

Now, in combination with my over all interest in the club and in my Irish heritage, I have also chosen to do an Ethnographic Study of the club for a class.

I was really hoping to be able to get a little boost by a willing member; a jumping off point interview to gain a better understanding.

This information will not be published and will remain anonymous. I am more than happy to volunteer at events and will remain an active member of the club throughout my research and continuing on after as well.

I can be contacted at [gbr@uwm.edu], or by phone at (715) 505-2181.

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Members' Doings

Doug Johnson and Aine McMenamin Johnson recently adopted twins, Siobhain and Elijah. Congratulations to the new parents.

Ray and Muriel Crowley recently completed a move to Pewaukee.

Bob and Peg Hamill welcomed a new grand child to the family, James, the son of Mike and Mary.

Kari Quinlan ended her high school varsity volleyball career with 157 assists, 71 digs/saves, 5 kills, and 9 aces.

Jim Sanfillipo recently represented the Wisconsin Emerald Society at the NCLEES in San Diego. He said he refused to enjoy the weather. Sharon Murphy also was in San Diego, doing the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure walk. She camped out in a tent.

Ireland Calling. Ed and Cathy Ward, Lori Dahm and Pat and Jane Fitzgibbons were in Ireland recently for the The Association of Irish Festival Events conference. Shamrock Club board members Ken Tehan, Josh Walton and Mary Culver all toured the Emerald Isle, as well.

If you have done anything you want us to know about, send it to [Membersdoings @shamrockclubwis.com].

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Sunshine Club

Chuck Ward died in November. He was the first three term Shamrock Club president, was parade director, and was the 2009 Irishman of the Year. He played at the majority of the Shamrock Club's Post Parade Parties over the past 30 years. He was the current president of Milwaukee Irish Fest when he died.

Pat Fuchs died in October. Jennifer Connolly, a long time Shamrock Club member, also died recently. Please keep Pat, Jennifer and Chuck in thoughts and prayers.

Mike Stephens had knee replacement surgery recently.

If you have any news for the Sunshine Club, please call us at (414) 344-0688. We have a new email address. Please note: [slainte4142-shamrock@yahoo.com].

– **Maggie and Tom Blaha**