



Christmas Days and Dinners

by Brian Witt

(This is a reprint from December, 2003. Enjoy!)

Bia is deoch i gcomhair na Nollag; éadach nua i gcomhair na Cásca.

*Food and drink for Christmas;
new clothes for Easter.*

I asked Milwaukee resident Tadhg McInerney about the Christmas memory that stayed with him after all these years away from Limerick, Ireland. After a few moments, he said, "It had to be Christmas Day. We would get up and go to Mass. Afterwards, we would have opened what Santa brought us. There were crackers, pudding, and a Christmas cake. It was a huge feast for us. And for dessert, we would have our brandy pudding. It was soaked with brandy, and the smell would fill the air. Then, my father would pour more brandy on it, and light it. It went up, with a loud 'Whoosh', and a beautiful blue flame would dance above it. Then we poured brandy sauce on it."

What would Christmas be without food? If ever a day was made to celebrate eating, in Ireland and America, it seems to have been Christmas. And in what has become a tradition for *Emerald Reflections* in recent years, we will be giving you a number of recipes to use.

Christmas morning in Ireland would be time to break your fast after Mass. And what better way to do so than some early morning Irish Scones?

IRISH SODA SCONES

- 3 cups plain flour;
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar;
- 1 cup of buttermilk; 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

Stir together dry ingredients and mix lightly with hands. Make a hollow in the centre and add enough buttermilk to make soft dough. Turn onto floured board and knead quickly and lightly until the dough is free from cracks. Roll out until ½ cm thick and cut into rounds. Place on greased oven sheet and bake at 200 degrees Celsius for 15 minutes.

As Tadhg had mentioned, the **CHRISTMAS CAKE** was a part of many families' dinners. Maybe it can

become a part of yours. In good traditional Irish style, this is a rich fruity cake with plenty of good Irish Whiskey!

Cooking Time: 3-3 ½ Hours

- 375g each Sultanas; Raisins;
- 90g each Glace Cherries; Dates;
- 60g each Prunes; Mixed Peel;
- 30g Glazed Pineapple;
- 1 tsp grated Lemon Rind;
- 1 tsp grated Orange Rind;
- 2 Tblsp Lemon Juice;
- ¼ Cup Orange Juice;
- 1/3 Cup Whiskey;
- ½ small Green Apple;
- 30g Walnuts
- 60g Ground Almonds;
- 185g Butter;
- 2 cups Caster Sugar;
- 3 Eggs;
- 1 ½ Cups Plain Flour;
- ¼ tsp Nutmeg;
- ½ tsp Cinnamon;
- ¼ tsp Salt;
- 1 Tblsp Whiskey, extra

Remove the seeds from the prunes and chop all the fruit (scissors dipped in water is the easiest way to do this). Combine the chopped fruit, rinds, juices, whiskey and peeled and grated apple – if you start early enough, store them in a screwtop jar for up to three weeks to let flavours soak into the fruit. Shake the jar well and store in a cool dry place – this gives the fruit a really rich flavour. Each day turn the jar upside down for even soaking.

On day of baking: line a deep 20cm square cake tin with two thickness' of grease proof paper, bringing paper 5cm above the top edge of the tin.

Chop the walnuts. Beat the butter until soft; add sugar, beating until just combined. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Put the fruit mixture into a large basin and add walnuts, almonds and creamed mixture; mix well. Stir in the sifted dry ingredients and spread the mixture evenly into the prepared

tin. To get a smooth surface on the top of the cake, wet a dessert spoon and rub the back of the spoon over the cake mix to smooth it out.

Bake in a slow oven for 3 to 3 ½ hours. Remove from the oven and brush evenly with the extra whiskey, cover with foil and leave until cold before removing from tin. Re-wrap in foil and keep in fridge until required.

Lá Nollag go péacach is Lá Fhéile Stiofáin ag iarraidh déirce.

A showy Christmas Day and begging on the Feast of St Stephan.

Stephen's Day, December 26, would often find people traveling from house to house, looking for treats as they entertained neighbors. As the story of Snick Snack and the King of the Birds were played out, tea and cookies could be served. What could be better than Irish **CHRISTMAS COOKIES?**

- 1 cup butter, softened;
- 1 cup granulated Sugar;
- 3 large eggs;
- 2 cups all-purpose Flour;
- ¼ cup Irish whiskey;
- ¼ cup candied citron, chopped;
- ¼ cup golden raisins, blanched and chopped;
- ¼ cup almonds, chopped

Preheat oven to 375 F. and prepare two greased cookie sheets; set aside.

In a small mixing bowl, cream together the butter and the sugar. Beat in the eggs until well blended. Add the flour and the Irish whiskey, and beat the dough until smooth. Add the fruit and nuts, and mix well. Drop cookie dough from a tablespoon onto the prepared cookie sheets. Bake each sheet of cookies for 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the cookies from the baking sheets with a spatula while still warm. Place on wire rack to partially cool. Store the cookies in an airtight container with a slice of white bread to maintain their soft, fruity texture.

The lighting of candles in Ireland also has a religious significance. Some people would light candles (or one large candle) to signify symbolic hospitality for Mary and Joseph. The candle was a way of saying there was room for Jesus' parents in these homes even if there was none in Bethlehem. Some people even set extra places at their tables as a preparation for unexpected visitors. And what better to serve than that famed northern potato dish, **BOXTY?**

Boxty on the griddle, boxty in the pan, If you can't make boxty, you'll never get your man.

- 8 oz / 250 g / 1 cup raw potato;
- 8 oz / 250 g / 1 cup mashed potato;
- 8 oz / 250 g / 2 cups plain flour;
- 1 tsp baking powder;
- 1 tsp salt;
- large knob of butter, melted;
- about ¼ pt / 125 ml / ½ cup milk

Grate the raw potatoes into a bowl. Turn out onto a

cloth and wring, catching the liquid. This will separate into a clear fluid with starch at the bottom. Pour off the fluid and scrape out the starch and mix with the grated and mashed potatoes. Sieve the dry ingredients and mix in along with the melted butter. Add a little milk if necessary to make a pliable dough. Knead lightly on a floured surface. Divide into four and form large, flat cakes. Mark each into quarters but do not cut right through, and bake on a griddle or in a heavy pan. If liked, more milk and an egg can be added to make a batter which can be fried in bacon fat like drop scones.

As the McInerneys' are from Limerick, they occasionally would have **LIMERICK HAM**. To the Irish, ham is a cured leg of pork. The preserving process is carried out in a number of different ways: salting, smoking, immersion in brine or even honey. Traditionally, Limerick ham is smoked over juniper branches. Whole hams should be steeped in cold water overnight before cooking but this is not necessary with smaller joints. The ham in this recipe is not really baked but rather finished off in the oven after having been cooked by simmering in cider.

- 3-5 lb / 1½-2 kg ham;
- cider to cover;
- ½ cup brown sugar;
- 1 tsp mustard;
- 20 whole cloves

Cover the ham with cold water and bring slowly to the boil. Throw out the water and replace with cider. Bring this just to the boil and lower the heat, keeping the liquid barely simmering for 20 minutes to the 1 lb / ½ kg. Remove from the heat and allow to stand in the liquid for 30 minutes. Take out the ham, skin it and score the fat with a sharp knife in a diamond pattern. Stud with whole cloves. Mix the sugar and mustard and rub well into the surface of the ham. Bake in a pre-heated oven for a further 10 minutes to the 1 lb / ½ kg at gas mark 6, 400°F, 200°C.

*Is maith an t-anlann an t-ocras.
Hunger is a good sauce.*

And then there is the Christmas pudding. Don't forget the brandy paste. And possibly the fire extinguisher. There is a wonderful Christmas Pudding recipe that Denise Hogan wrote about in the December 2003 *Emerald Reflections*.

*Téann an saol thart mar a bheadh eiteoga air,
agus cuireann gach aon Nollaig bliain eile ar do ghualainn.*

Life goes by as if it had wings, and every Christmas puts another year on your shoulder.

And if the years aren't on your shoulders, well, it might be time to look for the gym after all the indulgent repasts. Otherwise, those new Easter clothes will be a purchase that has to be made. I hope that your holidays are memorable, and full of family cheer.

*Nollaig Shona Duit.
Merry Christmas.*

Shamrock Club Of New Dublin

The Shamrock Club of New Dublin is busy making plans for our 2012 festivities and are proud to announce our Irish Man and Irish Rose for 2012. They are: Jim and Ellen Clarke, lifelong New London residents and Shamrock Club members of many years. Our Parade Grand Marshals for the 2012 parade will be *Mad Dog and Merrill*. Nationally recognized and self-proclaimed Grillologists, *Mad Dog and Merrill*, entertain and educate thousands of backyard enthusiasts every year with the finer points of grilling cuisine. Both "Mad Dog" Mark Mathewson, and "Merrill" Gary Merrill are New London residents. We've also lined up our entertainment for our Irish Fest tent. We'll open at 11 A.M. on March 17, with Sheamus Fitzpatrick and the *McNally Boys*, and follow at 3 P.M. with *Green Tea* from Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Our Grand Parade and Irish Festival are slated for March 17 in downtown New Dublin!

South Central Shamrock Club

2011 Christmas Dinner

When: Sunday, December 4. Cash bar at 12 P.M. Dinner at 1 P.M.

Where: Baraboo Country Club. Mine Rd. just off Hwy 123 heading towards Devils Lake. Serving salad bar with lamb stew, corned beef, cabbage, new potatoes, and dessert.

Cost is \$15 per member and \$20 per guest. Cost includes tax and gratuity.

Entertainment will be provided by Shari Sarazin, an accomplished vocalist, composer and Celtic Folk Harpist. Shari will grace us with her lyrical strains of the Celtic harp matched with her passionate vocals, warming the heart.

Won't you and your guests join us at this joyous time of the year? Send your check as soon as possible, made out to "South Central Wisconsin Shamrock Club" and mail to Jolene Crowley, E10870 Terrytown Rd., Baraboo 53913, Jolene's phone number is (608) 356-5959.

As in the past, the announcement of Irish Rose and Irishman of the Year will be made.

Your prompt response is appreciated for planning purposes.

Five Clues

No one got the November Five Clues answer. It was Thomas Osborne Davis, founder of the Young Ireland movement, and composer of "A Nation Once Again."

Here is the December person:

1. I was born in Dalkey, Co. Dublin, in 1940.
2. I have worked as a teacher and a journalist.
3. I have written fifteen novels, and have a number of collections of short stories.
4. One of my novels was turned into a major studio movie.
5. One of my plays won a Jacob Award in 1978.

If you know who this person is, e-mail us at [info@shamrockclubwis.com].

Irish Word Of the Month

Cidsin - Kitchen - (Keed-shin)

Irish phrase: *Tha mi ag obair ann an cidsin.* (Ha mee ahk opair aun ahn keed-shin.)

English translation: I am working in a kitchen.

Milwaukee President's Message

Nollaig Shona Duit. Our annual Christmas Party will be held during the general meeting on December 1. Set up for the dinner will start at 6 P.M. and service at 6:30. The Club will provide a main course and you are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to pass. Seasonal entertainment, holiday music, caroling by the Shamrock Club Choir (?) and a few surprises are in store for the evening.

Thanks to all who volunteered at the Holiday Folk Fair. This annual event is our opportunity to showcase our Irish culture to the Milwaukee community. The Holiday Folk Fair is the Club's largest income producing event of the year and it would not be successful without the hard work and time contributed by our members. Thanks to food booth / ticket chairperson Mary Culver, retail chair Kris Puskota and to cultural booth chairs Pam Cannon and Denis Donohoe (truck driver extraordinaire). A special thanks to Glen Nowak (a workhorse) and John Fisher for the long hours each put in.

The Honoree Dinner was held on Sunday, November 13. Thanks to Mary Jo Kaufmann for hosting an outstanding event in honoring this year's trio: Irishman Bob Towne, Irish Rose Patsy Grimes Tierney and Parade Marshal Malkin Wallace.

On that note, nominations are now being accepted for the 2012 honorees. Nominations, for any member in good standing, must be in writing (e-mails are acceptable) to any board member and must be received by the January 26 board meeting.

The Club and the Westown Association have entered into a new three year contract to present the largest and best St. Patrick's Day Parade in Wisconsin. The parade will be held on Saturday, March 10 stepping off at noon from 3rd and Wisconsin in downtown Milwaukee. The Westown Association has agreed to increase their sponsorship fees in each of the next three years. The Club in turn promises to produce a larger and better parade each year forward.

As voted on at the last general meeting the Shamrock Club has pledged \$20,000 to the ICHC for their capital improvement campaign. The donation is to be given over a two year period and does represent a substantial commitment on the Club's part. Hopefully our support for the ICHC will be the catalyst that propels others to act.

Undecided on what to give this holiday season? How about a membership to a family member or friend? Or an apparel item from the Shamrock Club holiday gift collection?

See you at the next meeting.

Go Pack Go – Go Marquette – Go Badgers

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours,

– Josh Walton, President joshwalton1@yahoo.com

Glenn's Corner Cupboard

The Shamrock Club dinners before meetings continue. Here are the next few month's menu ideas: December – Pot luck; January – your favorite hors d'oeuvres; February – Chili Cook Off.

If you have any ideas you think we should try, contact me at gnowak4@wi.rr.com or (414) 466-8060.

– Glenn Nowak



Shamrock Club Christmas Party

December 1, 2011

Irish Cultural And Heritage Center, 2133 West Wisconsin Avenue

Set-up Time: 6 P.M.

Please Bring a Side Dish – Club will Provide the Entree and Refreshments

Singing and Special Guests

For Questions, contact Glenn Nowak at gnowak4@wi.rr.com

Celtic Women First Fridays



Mary McAndrews

TRADITIONS. Christmas is all about traditions, and the olden Celtic countries each had special customs to celebrate at Christmas time. Our Celtic Women tradition for December is to have festive treats to enjoy, memories to recall, and no admission for the evening! This year our speakers will represent Scotland, Cornwall, Ireland and Wales, including one or two caroles led by Ian Day. Join us in this tradition and bring along your special memories as well.

Date: Dec. 2, 2011

Topic: "Christmas in the Old Days"

Speakers: Ian Day, Kathryn Herman, Mary McAndrews, Jan Batty

This marvelous panel of Celtic Americans will beguile us with stories from the old days at Christmas, as they remember, or as it was handed down to them through their parents – Scottish, Cornish, Irish and Welsh. Do bring a treat and join us (free admission).

All lectures are held from 5:30 – 7 P.M. at Greene Hall, 3347 N. Downer Ave. on the UWM campus. Plenty of meter street parking at the door with a wheel chair access ramp. 2011-2012 is our 15th year of lectures without interruption. The public is invited as always. In lieu of an admission fee, we welcome your special treats to be shared by all.

Celtic Spirituality Retreat

The Redemptorist Retreat Center will present the Celtic Spirituality Retreat weekend Friday evening through Sunday noon, Jan 27–29, 2012. The presenter will be Deacon Michael Cullen.

The theme of this year's retreat is "Forgotten Glories of an Island" – Remembered and Revisited. Join us as Deacon Michael Cullen weaves stories of the pre-Christian Celts and ancient pagan rituals to a transformation of the people by St. Patrick and the Gospel. Deacon Michael will compare St. Patrick to St. Paul and bring the ancient ritual into the context of today.

About the presenter – Deacon Michael and his family lived in Ireland from 1973 to 1991. Michael and his wife Annette helped establish the Charismatic Renewal Movement in Ireland, began Camp Jesus, a ministry of evangelization to young people in Dublin, and founded Emmanuel House of Providence, located in Clanfert, County Galway, a Catholic inter-generational center for renewal and evangelization with a special mission to families and young people. He is the father of 12 children and the grandfather of twenty. He has ministered in the Diocese of Superior for over 20 years and serves as the Deacon for St. Joseph Parish in Barron, St. Peter in Cameron and St. Boniface in Chetek, Wisconsin.

The retreat fee for this weekend is \$220, includes program, private room with private bath facilities, linens and meals. You only need to bring personal items. Dress is casual. Registration at 6:15 P.M. Friday evening January 27 and concludes after brunch Sunday, January 29.

Saturday Only Special (\$75) includes program and meals. For information or to register, call The Redemptorist Retreat Center at (262) 567-6900 or visit our website [www.redemptoristretreat.org].

Nominations For Irish Honorees

Nominations for the 2012 Irish Rose, Irishman of the Year, and Parade Marshal, must be received by 6 P.M. January 26, before the start of the Shamrock Club Board Meeting.

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

Ceili Dances

Join us at the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center, 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., for family Irish dancing at its best! Beginners and all ages welcome. Instruction begins at 7:30 P.M. and continues all evening. Music and dancing begin at 8 P.M.

The dances are called, and direction is given, by two of the Midwest's best ceili instructors, Gail McElroy on Fridays and Julie Clark on Saturdays.

December 2011

- Fri., December 2 – *Cream City Ceili*
- Sat., December 17 – *áthas*

January – February 2012

- Fri., February 3 – *Myserk*
- Sat., February 18 – *Ceol Cairde*

Entrance is \$8 Adults, and \$5 for Students, Seniors, and Children. All proceeds benefit the work of the ICHC.



Picture at left. *Malkin Wallace, Bob Towne, and Patsy Tierney – Milwaukee's 2011 Parade Marshal, Irishman of the Year, and Irish Rose – were recently honored at the yearly dinner held in November at Klemmers Restaurant.*

(Photo by Jean Bills)

Milwaukee Dec. Membership News

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and was able to attend Milwaukee's Holiday Folk Fair this year. Turn-out was fantastic and the return of our Irish Cottage in the cultural area plus the great food we served made the Irish representation a top contender the crowds look forward to every year.

Please welcome our new members in October; Terry Sheehan, Taffy Anderson and Francine Fosselman.

For November, we had seven membership renewals and 23 membership drops from no-renewals in the Milwaukee chapter. As of November 15, the Milwaukee chapter has 338 memberships with 153 families, 167 single, and 19 complimentary (libraries, businesses, etc.) memberships. Statewide our membership totals 461 memberships where the others receive a copy of *Emerald Reflections*.

Please be sure to have your memberships renewals in before December 31 for those who's expire on or before 12/31/2011. Also, check out the new Club apparel we have for sale.

We hope you can attend our December Christmas meeting and see you soon.

– Denis Donohoe, Membership Chair

Irish Christmas in American at the ICHC Dec. 16

With the possible exception of an aromatic peat fire, the performers of an *Irish Christmas in America* will bring everything else necessary to transport their audience into the enchanting spirit of the holiday during a show at the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center, 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, on Friday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 P.M.

This marks the first appearance of the show in Milwaukee although it has toured across the United States every year beginning in 2005. Produced by fiddler Oisín MacDiarmada of the award-winning traditional band *Téada*, the family-friendly show will include well-known carols, ballads sung in Irish, high-energy music, and thrilling dancing. Narration brings to life ancient customs and stories while photographic images provide a rich historical context.

According to MacDiarmada, one of the most heartfelt themes of the Christmas show is emigration from Ireland. "Music was a way that people stayed close to home," he says.

In addition to MacDiarmada, this year's show features County Kerry vocalists Éilís Kennedy and Pauline Scanlon of the much heralded new duo *Lumiere*. Their music springs from a well of ancient songs and spirituality but at the same has a modern sound and a decidedly feminine feel.

One of Ireland's best-known guitarists, Donogh Hennessy will accompany *Lumiere* as well as add instrumentals throughout the show. A former member of the super group *Lúnasa*, Hennessy has also played with many of the leading Irish musicians including the *Sharon Shannon Band*.

The *seán nós* or "old-style" dancing of Brian Cunningham from County Galway has garnered Ireland's top awards. He tours internationally including Japan and South Korea, where he was invited to accompany Irish President Mary McAleese during a 2005 state visit.

Séamus Beglay, accordionist, singer and storyteller, is known for his traditional dance music in the West Kerry style and also for his sharp wit. He has performed and toured with many well-known groups and artists including *Altan* and Mary Black.

"Lively and reflective...a powerful evocation of the season." - Folk Wax

Reserved seat tickets for adults are \$21 in advance and \$25 on concert day. The ticket price for ages 10-16 is \$15 and is free for younger children. Visit [www.ichc.net] to order tickets and get further information. Tickets may also be ordered by calling (414) 345-8800.

Members' Doings

Erin Canon, daughter of Del and Pam Canon, was named as the Distinguished Young Woman of Wauwatosa, Class of 2013. Distinguished Young Women, formerly known as America's Junior Miss, is a national scholarship program that promotes and rewards scholarship, leadership and talent in young women. Erin will now move on to the next level of competition at the Distinguished Young Women of Wisconsin.

Maeve Smith won the girls under 12 and her sister, Deirdre, won girls under 8 at the Western Oireachtas. They are the daughters of Patricia and T J Smith.

Emily and James Hosty recently visited their daughter in London, where she moved after living in Ireland.

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

Sunshine Club

Muriel Crowley recently had surgery. Please keep her in your thoughts.

If you have any news for the Sunshine Club, please call me at (414) 344-0688 or send e-mail to: [slainte4142@shamrock@yahoo.com].

– Maggie Blaha