

Magic night's music

The Mulcahy Family; Mick, Michelle and Louise effortlessly displayed their mastery of their instruments in a varied and enjoyable programme. The event took place on the 24 April in the Marley Parish Centre in front of an appreciative audience.

Chairman Derek Johnston opened the evening by inviting Graham Guerin to play a few selections. Graham had been called on at very short notice (20 minutes . . . when he had arrived for the recital) but he rose splendidly to the occasion.

Then the family began their very varied performance, alternating between trios and duets with different combinations of instruments. A delight of the performances was that each piece was introduced by its provenance, including reminiscences by Mick of musicians he had played with over the years.

There was a break for a tasty supper and a cup of tea. Tomás Mac Uileagóid had arranged a raffle to help raise

funds for a sponsored cycle ride to Milltown Malby he and Denis Grehan will make in aid of a 'Piper's Club' pipe-making initiative.

The music resumed with harp, concertina, flute and pipe solos and climaxed in a delightful melodeon and concertina pieces (in C) by Mick. One final rousing set brought a great evening to a close.



Graham Guerin played a few selections

The Trip to Sligo

Thursday

There was excitement and anticipation in the Spawell car park as our group gathered to board the coach which was to take us to Sligo and our four days holiday in that beautiful county. Geoff, our always patient driver, saw everybody settled and headed west. We were off.

We arrived at the comfortable Harbour House Hostel at three o'clock, after a stop for lunch, in good time to find our rooms and bearings. We were delighted to discover our Sligo friends, Kathleen and Charlie had already stocked the hostel fridge with food and drink so were able to enjoy a cup of tea before setting out to explore the town.

A session had been arranged for that night in Earley's pub in Sligo town and we were able to join families from the local 'Fred Finn' branch. We filled the place and tunes ensued until the house band took over.



The Mulcahy Family

Friday

On Friday morning the sun shone as we boarded the bus on our way to the car park at the base of Knocknarea, legendary resting place of Queen Maedbh of Connacht. There we met Mairtín Enright a very knowledgeable local historian who was to be our guide. The views from the mountain top were fantastic. A visit to Strandhill followed and then it was back to the Harbour House.

That night we went to the village of Rathcormack, a few miles north of Sligo town. By coincidence a local musician who had been a member of the Leitrim Ceili Band was the subject of a month's mind so there were many people around who had an interest in the music. The tireless Kelly family



Mick, Benbulbin and Donegal from Knocknarea

Photo: Seán Byrne



Photo: Denis Grehan

The session in Rathcormack



Photo: Seán Byrne

Toasted marshmallow, anyone? The barbecue at Lissadell

had arranged a house session for the youngest musicians of the group which finished with soft drinks and goodies while their seniors started a huge session in the pub.

Saturday

Saturday morning and a cloudless sky greeted us. There was a cool breeze blowing on Streedagh strand where the indefatigable Kelly's were waiting for us with a couple of football pitches marked out. Then it was off for a visit to the Gore-Booth mansion. Yet again Charlie Kelly helped us by arranging a private visit (the house is closed at the moment to the public) We had an interesting guided tour of the house and saw memorabilia of Countess Markievicz and other members of that remarkable family. We also enjoyed a visit to the gardens.

While we were visiting the house Padraig and Mick had collected the makings of a barbecue we had on the Lissadell strand. It was more of a banquet than a barbecue with burgers, chicken bits, steamed cockles and mussels (courtesy of Charlie), salmon, cheese and salads. All was cooked to perfection by Charlie and enjoyed by all in the sunshine of the sheltered setting.

It was difficult leaving such an idyllic spot and that made us late arriving at our next venue. This was in Riverstown a pretty village just off the Dublin road. It is the birthplace of James Morrison (The Professor) Our musicians delighted the locals when they played (and danced and sang) in the Corner House bar.

Sunday

After a late night, a leisurely breakfast and it's time to pack and clean up. Mairtín Enright came with us on the coach when it left for Dublin and by way of a diversion took us to a beautiful holy well *Tobarnalt* on the banks of Lough Gill. We then travelled back to Riverstown to visit the Morrison Teach Cheoil founded by Riverstown CCE. They are justly proud of their fine new building and we listened to Mick Glynn and others play on Morrison's original fiddle.

Then after a watering stop in Carrick-on-Shannon the tired but contented group arrived back in Dublin at the promised time of 6.00pm. Once again Mick (and Padraig) had organised an enjoyable trip and we had found new friends and places to re-visit.

The trip to Kilnaleck

On a beautiful evening on the 4th June members of the branch set off from Dublin on a trip to the Co. Cavan Fleadh. The mission was to deliver the 'Eddie McCaffrey Perpetual Trophy'. It had been decided to honour our Branch president's name by presenting a cup to the Cavan Board for their Under 18 button accordion competition. It was the instrument Eddie had a great love of.

The coach journeyed through the beautiful Cavan countryside after making use of the new stretch of motorway that had only been officially opened that very afternoon. After pausing beside Lough Ramor for a comfort stop and a view over the water we reached Kilnaleck. Our driver skilfully parked the coach and we went down to the Main Street and the gig-rig. The dignitaries had just opened the event and Phillip Clarke (piano –accordionist and MC for the night) arranged the presentation of the trophy to the Fleadh chairman Betty Ledd by Eithne, Eddie's widow and Aoife his grand daughter. The McCaffrey family were well represented



Betty Ledd, Chair Cavan Co. Board receives the cup from Aoife Smith, Eithne McCaffrey and Derek Johnston, Chair Craobh Naithí.



*Fergus Bogue.
First time winner
of the Eddie
McCaffrey
Memorial Trophy*



The session in Boylan's of Kilnaleck, Cavan Co. Fleadh

by daughter and husband Gráinne and Paddy (Smith), grandsons Oisín and Fiachre; Eddie's sister and brother in law Carmel and Gerard O'Keeffe and Eithne's sister and brother in law Dierdre and Paddy Greene.

Philip had spotted Seamus Mac Mathuna among the recent Craobh Naithí arrivals and invited him to entertain the audience with a song. This he did magnificently but was interrupted by an unofficial parade of monster agricultural harvesting machinery! However Seamus, unperturbed repeated the drowned out verses with great aplomb.

Philip then invited our musicians to join with locals on the stage. Since we equalled in numbers the residents it was a bit of a squeeze but everyone was eventually accommodated and struck up with some vigorous jigs and reels and the odd hornpipe. To close the official part of the evening Seamus was invited to sing again but he nominated Aoife (Eddie's granddaughter) to sing in his place. Which she delightfully did.

The musicians were then invited to cross the street where Boylan's would provide complementary drinks and a lively session ensued . . . Tomás remarked that he had never seen so many Paolo Sopranis in one room – many of them piano accordions. Sean O Sé had opened the Fleadh with 'Canaimis – Let's sing' to encourage singing and was invited to sing at the session and for further variety locals provided some vigorous Sean nós dancing and a talented young lady some step dancing.

The schedule had us down to leave at midnight but things were going so well that it was some time after that the chipper search party were underway. An hour and twenty minutes saw us back at the Spawell just as dawn was breaking.

We'd like to express our thanks for the warm welcome we received from the Cavan people and hope to meet them again — in August? And of course to Derek and Padraig for the organisation.

End of Year Concert

It has become tradition in the branch for many years now, the final night of classes in May is replaced by a concert featuring all the junior grúpaí cheoil and ceili bands that performed in Fleadh Atha Cliath.

Four grúpaí cheoil and four céilí bands performed their fleadh pieces for an appreciative audience of parents, family and friends in St. Colmcille's Community School. The concert also included performances from singers and dancers.

Once again, a group comprising about 60 of our youngest pupils, many of whom were performing in public for the first time, took to the stage and performed with style.



*Some of the sixty or so beginners, on stage the first time for many of them.
The End of the Year Concert held in St. Colmcille's in May*



*A song from Eimer Duffy and Róisín
Ní Uileagóid. Dancers Aoife Ní Ruairc
and Caoilín McGivney*



The Under 12 Céilí Band