



The Sweet Nightingale

New Series, no 9, September 2018

Quite a Year

Howth Singing Circle meets on the first Thursday each month in the Abbey Tavern from 9pm.

Follow us on <https://howthsingingcircle.com/> or our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/Howthmusiccircle/> or

<https://www.facebook.com/howth.singingcircle?fref=search>

As we begin our nineteenth season, we can look back on an action-packed year. Our monthly sessions last year were well attended. They were: September, Bean agus Fir an Tí Ann Riordan & Laurence Bond with 'Harvest songs'; October, Cathal Caulfield & Francy Devine with Special Guests Stuart Carolan (Tullyallen) and Feilimí O'Connor (Ravensdale); November, 'Contagious to the Nile', Dublin Comic Songs, Tom Finn & Tony McGaley with Three in a Row from Barry Gleeson;; December, 'Good People All This Christmas Time', Gerry O'Connor & Mick Fowler with three from Fergus Russell; January, Niamh Parsons with three from Graham Dunne, 'Nollaig na mBan'; February, 'Oiche Gaelach' with Stiofán Ó hAoláin and Guest Antaine Ó Faracháin; March, 'March Hares & Other Madness', Francy Devine & Úna Kane; April, Ann Riordan with Special Guest, Annie Reid (Stonehaven, Scotland); May, 'Me Oul Flower' with Tony Fitzpatrick & Brendan Kennedy; and 'June Jubilations', Diarmuid Ó Cathasaigh.

On Friday, 25 August, 2017, Ardmhéara Micheál Mac Donncha hosted Dublin's singing clubs in the oak-paneled surroundings of the Mansion House and issued Certificates of Recognition to those present. The certificate, lavishly illustrated with the city's coat-of-arms and insignia, read, 'Bronnta ar Howth Singing Circle mar aitheaththas do sheirbhís don traidisiún amhránaíochta agus d'ár gcultúr' ['Awarded to Howth Singing Circle in recognition of your service to the singing tradition of our culture']. Ann Riordan accepted the Certificate on behalf of Howth Singing Circle. Also in August, Brian Doyle and Walter Kennedy attended the Mansion House when Ardmhéara Mac Donncha welcomed the shanty singers from the Star Project Ballymun, a group who the Howth Singing Circle had supported when Tony Fitzpatrick and Francy Devine conducted singing workshops with them.

On Sunday, 1 October, twenty-two Howth Singing Circlers travelled to Belfast for a Mary Ann McCracken Walk led by Jane Cassidy and Maurice Leyden. Mary Ann McCracken, 8 July 1770 -26 July 1866, was a lifelong republican and social reformer, identifying with her brother Henry Joy's commitment to the ideals of the United Irishmen. Mary Ann was part of the revival of the Belfast Harp Society in 1808 and assisted Edward Bunting in collecting songs and tunes. She raised funds to provide clothing and food for the children of Belfast Poorhouse – now Clifton House – and, after arranging Elizabeth Fry's visit to the city, formed a Ladies Committee of the Belfast Charitable Society to establish

a primary school, for orphans. She led a Women's Abolitionary Committee in campaigning against slavery. Aged eighty-eight, she handed out anti-slavery leaflets to those boarding ships for America. The Walk concluded at her grave in Clifton Street Cemetery where Henry Joy's body was also later interred. After a hearty bowl of stew in Kelly's Cellars, a singing session of high quality – both in terms of song selection and performance – rounded off an enjoyable, highly informative and – especially at her graveside – emotional day. Thanks to Jane and Maurice for their informative presentation of songs and to Ann Riordan for organisation.

In January this year, the eighteenth annual Howth Burns Nicht – the tenth in the Abbey Tavern – was aptly named as 'Joy & Pleasure'. Our Special Guests were Robyn Stapleton (Stranraer), fiddler Kristan Harvey (Orkney) and keyboard player Alistair Iain Paterson (isle of Lewis/Bishopton). Technically first class, the trio enthralled, amused and thrilled with a selection dominated by Burns's material. Robyn included songs by Violet Jacob and others and we also discovered that she was – in another life – 'The Quine That Does The Strip in Inverurie'. Kristan's fiddle pieces were very well received and her dramatic presence engaged everyone, the tunes ranging from breakneck to the subtlety of Niel Gow's slow air 'The Lament For the Death of His Second Wife'. Robyn's flaming hair, gentle and engaging manner, and clear tones won every heart with many saying 'the best yet'. Our 'resident band' of John Kelly (fiddle), John Regan (box) and Mick Mullen (guitar) played two high-class sets with plenty of opportunity to dance. A highlight was John Regan playing Gow's 'Coilsfield House' in a beautiful interpretation. Burns, a fiddle player, went out of his way to meet Gow, 1827-1807, in Dunkeld on one of his Highland tours. Among many other high points were young Howth violinist Elizabeth Fox playing Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's [1756-1791] 'Romance' from his 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik', reminding us that one of the first to orchestrate 'Auld Lang Syne' was Beethoven; and Paul Redmond's stirring rendition of Thomas Moore's [1779-1852] 'The Minstrel Boy Boy' which surely got the room's pulses racing. The haggis was piped in by Pipe Major Noel Kelly and the St Lawrence Howth Pipe Band; carried by Ardmhéara Mícheál Mac Donncha; and addressed, in inimitable fashion, by Willie Gibson. Sunday's 'Fare Thee Weel Session', again in the Abbey, was of the highest standard and huge fun.

As you will read below, Howth hosted guests from two English Folk Clubs from the Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire area and facilitated Fiddle Bus 5 on its weekend in Antrim with Scots visitors from Aberdeenshire.

Stiofán Ó hAoláin

After serving on the HSC Committee for the past number of years, Stiofán Ó hAoláin has decided to take a wee break – although we fully expect him to attend our monthly sessions. Stiofán has been a highly popular member of the Committee, contributing significantly to the behind-the-scenes planning of various events, demonstrating enthusiastic commitment and knowledgeable suggestions. He has, of course, been most associated with our Oíche Ghaeilge – an innovation Stiofán was responsible for. They have proved very popular and Stiofán's many connections – particularly with Conamara – have enabled the Club to hear some outstanding singers. One of the last occasions that Stiofán did the HSC proud was in the Mansion House on Good Friday when Ardmhéara Mícheál Mac Donncha hosted Linda Ervine's group Cairde Turas from east Belfast, an event reported on below.

Mar sin, Stiofán, buíochas ó chroí ó gach duine a bhfuil baint acu leis an Ciorcail Amhránaí Howth. Thug tú do aoibh gháire iontach duit, do ghrá don Ghaeilge, agus do chairde ón nGaeltacht chun amhránaíocht a dhéanamh dúinn. Go raibh maith agat, Stiofán.

Where Does Your Money Go ?

As every year since we began, we feel that those attending the Howth Singing Circle and voluntarily contributing their €4 are entitled to know where it goes. As you will see from the account below, our opening balance was €3,082 and the closing balance €2,466. Our income and expenditure from September 2017 to July 2018 was €8,782 and €9,409.

Howth Singing Circle Accounts - September 2017 to July 2018, €

	Income	Expenditure
Opening Balance	3,092.82	
Monthly Sessions September - July		
September - Harvest songs	85.00	50.00
October -Guests: Félimí O'Connor / Stuart Carolan	247.85	262.00
November - Comic Songs	154.00	74.00
December - All Hail! All Hail!	154.00	74.00
January - Nollaig na mBan	160.00	50.00
February - Guest: - Antaine Ó Faracháin	130.00	200.00
March - March Hares and other Madness	90.00	50.00
April- Guest; Annie Reid	108.00	330.00
May - Me Oul' Flower'	155.00	50.00
June - June Jubilations	80.00	50.00
Special events:		
October -Mary Ann McCracken Walk, Belfast	550	633.76
November - Dinner	1925	1970
January - Burns Nicht	3755.00	3719.00
March - 'Bring Out the Banners' walk, with guests from Tiger and Grand Union Folk Clubs	84.00	0.00
April - Fiddle Bus	1090	1265
Young Singer in Residence	0	200
Donation to St. Lawrence Howth Pipe Band	0.00	200.00
Bank fees, web administration, printing / stationery/Songsheets/booklets	15.00	231.62
Total Income / Expenditure	8782.85	9409.38
Closing Balance	2,466.29	

In addition, Howth Singing Circle ran two events in aid of St. Francis Hospice, Raheny, which between them raised a total of **€1,261** for the Hospice

March - Singathon in Sutton Methodist Church, with our guests from the Tiger and Grand Union Folk Clubs

July - 'Down by Yon Flowery Garden', walk and singing session co-hosted with the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland

Howth Prawn Festival Wash Out

Gerry O'Connor organised an impressive array of singers to perform at the Howth Prawn Festival in March only for the snows and high winds to cause the event's cancellation. On Howth Singing Circle's behalf, Gerry wishes to thank those who had agreed to perform: Luke Cheevers, Brian Doyle, Mick Dunne, Tom Finn, Joe Gallagher, George Henderson, Eugene McEldowney, Deirdre Madden, Siobhán Moore, Niamh Parsons, Eddie Phillips, Jack & Angela Plunkett, and Fergus Russell.

March Hares & Other Madness

Our March session, March Hares & Other Madness, was also postponed because of the weather. On the rearranged night, Gerry O'Connor and Áine Bean Uí Chathasaigh invited twenty-two singers -all of whom sang twice – and Brendan Kennedy did an impressive Three-in-a-Row.

Cairde Turas in the Mansion House

On Good Friday, Ardmhéara Mícheál Mac Donncha hosted a group from Cairde Turas led by Linda Ervine in the Mansion House. Cairde Turas are an east Belfast group promoting and teaching Irish. John Kelly (fiddle), Jock Burns (concertina), Brian McCarthy (banjo) and Mick Mullen (guitar) provided music and were joined by the incomparable Jimmy Kelly whose singing was a highlight. The HSC's Stiofán Ó hAoláin brought along Caitríona Ní Cheannabháin and both sang seán-nós songs to the delight of the visitors. Turas sang as a choir and performed unusual Irish versions of 'Molly Malone' and 'Raglan Road', their Choir leader Caoimhe Ní Chatháil also singing beautifully. The Lord Mayor presented Turas with a certificate of recognition for their outstanding cultural work. Sadly but in ways wonderfully, the event appeared to be the last time the late Jimmy Kelly performed in public.



Musicians and singers in the Mansion House and Linda Ervine with Stiofán Ó hAoláin

A View of the Howth Singing Circle From Across the water

John Bentham from Tigerfolk in Long Eaton, Derbyshire – although he and his wife Sheila live in Loughborough, Leicestershire – was one of our visitors last April for a weekend of events. In Tatters, his club's newsletter, he reflected on his weekend. The HSC must take this opportunity to acknowledge all those who made the trip over from the English East Midlands to give us a memorable weekend.

The Howth Singing Circle (HSC) for the last decade has supported the St. Francis' Hospice in Raheny with an annual 'Singathon' in Sutton Methodist Church. We were approached by the HSC some time ago to see if we could arrange a visit and participate in the event. No second asking was required and so it was that Sheila and I met up with the rest of the group for a song packed weekend in and around Dublin. Our party consisted of regulars of the Grand Union Folk Club and Tigerfolk who all contributed to making this a really memorable visit. Friday night was a grand sing at An Góilín in the Teachers' Club in Parnell Square in the heart of Dublin. As it was the weekend of the annual gathering organised by the Inishowen Traditional Singers' Circle, it was reckoned that An Góilín would be a bit quieter than normal but far from it. The room started to fill and by the time the evening got under way, we had a pretty packed room. Thanks to Jerry O'Reilly and everyone at the club for making us so welcome.

Saturday was the day of the 'Singathon' and quite a bit of time had been spent beforehand sorting out a programme of songs. It was felt that good strong chorus songs should form the backbone of the contribution from us visitors because, as you may well know, chorus singing, generally, in Ireland is in short supply. Turn and turn about we went and as it says in the song 'When All Men Sing': 'As unison accords the song, Uplifting beams in Inn and Hall, and shaking plaster from the wall, When all Men sing'. Well we certainly did! Friendships bands were certainly tightened after that wonderful sing followed by some downtime spent in different ways by different members of the party, a meal and more socialising (read into that what you may) and a not too late nightcap before retiring.



A mode of propriety and model of piety, Éibhlís Ní Ríordáin presents 'The Cumann na mBan' on Rosie Hackett Bridge and Éamon Thornton of Drogheda reads 'Remembering James Larkin' below the Larkin Monument

Sunday morning found us on the banks of the Liffey in the heart of Dublin. Noel Kelly, that piper of great fame from St Lawrence Howth Pipe Band, led us on a tour along the river and when he stopped,

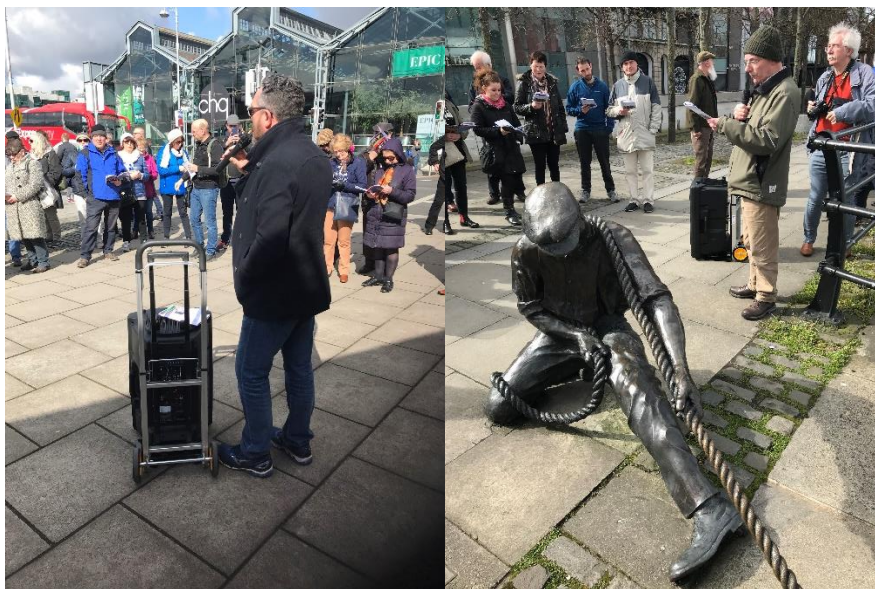
we stopped. Where he stopped was pre-ordained as this was a walking tour entitled 'Bring Out Your Banners' and featured songs and readings at waterfront sites that echoed workers' experiences, in particular, during the 1913 Dublin Lockout. Again, much time and effort had been put in to the selection of the programme and a great deal of research by Francy Devine proved to be a winning combination. For a couple of hours we were conducted on a thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening walk in this fascinating city. Food and liquid refreshment awaited us back at the Teachers' Club where we rounded off this song-filled weekend with more laughter and singing. Great company and great weather made this a visit that we will all treasure and look forward to repeating. As in the past, the Howth Singing Circle were a joy to be with and it would be an honour to welcome them over for a visit. Thanks to them all for making us so welcome but especially to Ann Riordan who put in so much work in the organising, not only of the Sunday walking tour but the whole weekend. You did us proud!

John Bentham

This item first appeared as 'Bendle's Bit' in the *Tatters, Newsletter of Tigerfolk*, July/August 2018,
www.tigerfolk.co.uk

Historical Walking Tour of Dublin Quays

On the last weekend in March, Howth Singing Circle hosted a dozen singers from the Grand Union Folk Club, Sileby, Leicestershire, and the Tigerfolk Traditional Folk Club from Long Eaton, Derbyshire. Our guests attended An Góilín on the Friday night and were to sing at the Tenth Sutton Methodist Church Singathon on the Saturday – see below. A meal and singing session in the Abbey Tavern followed the 'Singathin' and on Sunday morning 'Bring Out the Banners: A Walking & Traditional Singing Tour' took place along Dublin's quays, followed by a very high-quality session in the Teachers' Club. A full-colour 36-page brochure itemised the locations and provided background information and the lyrics of each song and poem. We were piped around the Walk by Pipe Major Noel Kelly of St Lawrence Howth Pipe Band, a herculean effort.



Steve Parry sings Seán O'Casey's 'Red Roses For Me' and Eddie Phillips reads E.J. Brady's 'The Dockers' Orchestra' by Dony McManus's 'The Lineman'

Twenty-six items were sung or read on the Walk, the performers being: Howth Singing Circle: Aoife Dermody, Tom Finn, Tony Fitzpatrick, Caoimhe Hogarty, Máire Ní Bhaoill, Éibhlís Ní Ríordáin, Pádraig Ó Nualláin, Manus O'Riordan, Niamh Parsons, Eddie Phillips, Ann Riordan, Éamon Thornton, Fergus Whelan and Máiríde Woods; and Grand Union/Tigerfolk, John and Sheila Bentham, Ed Butler, Karen

Harris, Jennifer Hurst, Steven Parry, John Stevenson, John Whitelaw and Bill Wilkes. Fergus Carey managed the sound system kindly lent to us for the occasion by An Góilín. Our thanks were also due to Tadhg Mac Pháidín and the Teachers' Club; Christy Hammond of CRM Design & Print for the brochure; and Finola Young. The Walk was greatly enjoyed by all those who attended, including the waifs and strays acquired at the various stops. Our visitors enjoyed themselves and John Bentham and Ann Riordan are to be thanked for their organisation of things.

Sutton 'Singathin' for The Hospice

Poor Ian Maxwell's herculean efforts to hold his tenth Singathon for St Francis Hospice, Raheny, were thwarted by late withdrawals of some choirs and so he was forced to cancel. With our English visitors due to sing, Ann Riordan persuaded Ian to hold a 'Singathin' and Howth, Grand Union and Tigerfolk performed from 3.30, piped in and out by Pipe Major Noel Kelly, St Lawrence Howth Pipe Band. Including a generous donation from Third Day Chorale, our efforts raised €815 for St Francis Hospice and provided the attendance with some high-quality singing. Yes, all those months of rehearsals paid off! Those performing – in addition to our English visitors – were Laurence Bobnd, Antoinette Daly, Brian Doyle, Mick Fowler, Walter Kennedy, Eugene McEldowney, Gerry O'Connor, Marie Ó Laoi, Paul O'Mahony, Niamh Parsons, and Eddie Phillips. Our thanks to Ann Riordan for arranging things and to Ian Maxwell for accepting our offer to perform anyway.



The Choristers in full voice and, led by Pipe Major Noel Kelly, St Lawrence Howth Pipe Band, celebrating afterwards

Annie Reid – April's Special Guest

Annie Reid from Stonehaven proved a splendid guest. She possesses a great range of songs from the ribald and risqué 'The Quine Who Did the Strip at Inverurie' to Doric – the North East dialect of Scots - ballads. She has great command as a performer, her gestures and facial expressions adding greatly to the enjoyment of the audience, a characteristic of performers from Annie's area of Scotland, especially those delivering 'Bothy Ballads'. A highlight was Annie's extremely moving singing of Karine Polwart's 'Whaur Dae Ye Lie', a song inspired by the massacre of more than 8,000 Bosniaks at Srebrenica. Annie brought all her life experience as daughter, wife and mother to bear and, as some say, 'got right inside the song' to bring the audience to momentary silence as the last chorus line faded away. It was one of the great performances of the year. For those interested, here are Karine's lyrics

Chorus

Whaur dae ye lie, my faither?

Whaur dae ye lie, my son?

Whaur dae ye lie, my ane true love?

When will the truth be won?

Oor friends, they came tae protect us
Oor friends, they bade us bide
Oor friends left us standing there naked
Wi' nae place left tae hide

Oor neighbors, they came wi' a hundred year hate
Oor neighbors, they came wi' guns
Oor neighbors, they came for oor menfolk
An' they slew them, everyone

I hae sought oot yer grave wi' my mither
I hae sought oot yer grave in vain
I hae sought the bare banes o' the truth and the men
Faither, whaur are ye lain?

I hae cried oot yer name tae the four winds
I hae cried oot yer name 'til the dawn
I hae cried in the arms o' yer sister dear
Whaur dae ye lie, my son?

I hae dream'd o' yer breath upon me
I hae dream'd o' yer yellow hair
I hae dream'd o' the sounds o' yer dying love
Whaur dae ye lie, my dear?

Here is Karine singing the song when with Malinky here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-WWWQNfzVE>

Fiddle Bus 5

Fiddle Bus 5 celebrated the Counties Antrim & Derry Country Fiddlers' Association (CADCFA) 65th Anniversary and were hosted by CADCFA in Broughshane and Derek Anderson and the Skerry Inn, Newtown Crommelin. Forty-four folk travelled including fiddle players Duncan Adams, Paul Anderson, Shona Anderson, James Beatley, Cathal Caulfield, George Davidson, Séamus Glackin, John Kelly, Liam O'Connor, and Séamus Sands, together with other musicians Gearóid Cahillane, Mark Dunlop, James Littlejohn, Mick Mullen and Mick O'Connor. The day began in the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim, a venue that pleased the visitors and provided good facilities for late sessions and a presentation. The group moved to the Slemish Barn at Aughafatten where Paul Anderson, Cathal Caulfield and George Davidson, and Shona Anderson conducted workshops while an informal session was held. The workshops were excellent, the participants praising of their tutors and, in Shona's case, the singers were provided with a showcase for their collective talents at the concert.



Two great men of traditional music, John Kennedy of Cullybackey and Mick O'Connor; and Young Singer in Residence Cathal Caulfield plays away

The concert in Broughshane Community Hall provided opportunities for the Irish and Scots to perform, with Shona, Paul, George, Liam and Mark all having solo spots and the Shona Donaldson Choir singing most impressively. The event was attended by the DUP Mayor of Mid and East Antrim, Paul Reid, who

clearly enjoyed the proceedings. Back in Dunsilly, our driver displayed his singing talents, while great tunes flowed in another room. On Sunday morning, an illustrated presentation on Joe Holmes – largely drawn from Len Graham’s biography *Joe Holmes: Here I Am Amongst You*, (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2010) – began with Séamus Sands 1976 recording of Joe which set a marvellous tone to the talk. Mark Dunlop played ‘The Girl That Broke My Heart’; Paul Anderson, ‘Niel Gow’s Farewell to Whisky’; and Séamus Sands, James Beatley, John Kelly, Liam & Mick O’Connor played Joe Holmes’ fiddle selections. From Holmes’s huge song repertoire, Máire NíBhaoill sang ‘Slievegallon Braes’; Shona Donaldson Anderson, ‘The Corncrake Among the Whinny Knowes’ and Mark Dunlop, ‘Long Cookstown’ and Holmes’ moving version of ‘The Parting Glass’, while Ann Riordan read Robin Harper’s poem ‘The People Danced’.



Ann Riordan and luthier James Beatley with a Sam Stevenson fiddle and Máire Ní Bhaioill performs the Joe Holmes’ song ‘Slievegallon Braes’



Views over the tranquil graveyard at Glenravel where Maebh McKeown, Paul Anderson, Shona Anderson, James Littlejohn, George Davidson, Séamus Sands and Duncan Adams play tribute to Mickey McIlhatton, his grand-nephew Alistair in the foreground

The Bus then paid tribute to past Antrim & Derry fiddlers at the grave of ‘The King of the Glens’, Mickey McIlhatton in the beautiful, peaceful surroundings of Glenravel Church graveyard. McIlhatton’s great nephew Alistair spoke movingly at the graveside and the tunes played drifted across the adjacent river Ravel, swollen by the spring rains, and blossoming trees. The trip finished off in the Skerry Inn where Derek Anderson arranged a show of high quality – particularly the very impressive Ty Tara group from Loreto College, Coleraine, and Dick Glasgow who, among other instruments, played the dulcimer in

tribute to Johnny Rea. All the local artists impressed and joined their visitors for a final session of great tunes.

Indicative of the great thought Derek Anderson had put into the afternoon, he arranged for ninety-year old flute player and singer John Kennedy to grace the afternoon with his presence. A native of Cullybackey, you can read Fintan Vallely's moving tribute to John here <http://imusic.ie/together-in-time/> and here his rendition of 'The Banks of the Bann' here www.itma.ie/digital-library/sound/banks_of_the_bann_john_kennedy To have the occasion adorned and enjoyed by John who has contributed so much to the tradition in Antrim and the island was a highlight.



Twa Scots guests, Duncan Adams in the Dunsilly and Annie Reid in The Piper's Corner



Concert in Broughshane Community Hall, standing, l-r, Gearoid Cahillane, Séamus Glackin, Séamus Sands, Cathal Caulfield, Liam O'Connor; sitting, l-r, Mick O'Connor, Mark Dunlop, James Beatley, John Kelly and Mick Mullen; and some important business being discussed in the Slemish Barn

A particular joy of the Fiddle Bus was the presence of our young Scots fiddle players Duncan Adams and George Davidson who, in addition to playing beautifully, were great company and conducted themselves marvellously all weekend. Similarly, we were delighted that our Young Singer in Residence Cathal Caulfield made the trip, played and sang so well, and with George conducted a great workshop.

Two others who travelled from Scotland were our singing guest Annie Reid from Stonehaven and, from Cardenden, Fife, a returning Ballymoney man, Mark Dunlop, long-standing member of Malinky. Both contributed enormously to the two days of fun, great music and good company.

Finally, our thanks to the Dunsilly Hotel; Michael of Corduff Coaches; Jane Davison, Maebh McKeown and Elaine Orr, CADCF; Derek Anderson, Skerry Inn; and the Fiddle Bus organisers Paul and Shona Anderson, John Kelly, Liam O'Connor and Ann Riordan. Most of all, of course, thanks to all who participated as fiddle players, musicians, singers or listeners.

Down By Yon Flowery Garden

On Sunday 22 July, the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland (NBGI) co-hosted a Singing Walk with Howth Singing Circle. We would like to thank Felicity Gaffney, NBGI Education Officer, for agreeing to host the walk in the Gardens and Ciara Travers for liaising with us on the arrangements. Particular thanks go to Karen Buckley who accompanied us on the walk and who took the photographs published here. A special word of thanks also to Rónán Ó Fearail for lending us his amplification system for the event. The Walk culminated with lunch followed by an afternoon of singing in the Visitor Centre. The event was the Howth Singing Circle annual fundraiser in aid of St. Francis Hospice, Raheny, and a total of **€445** was raised for the Hospice.

On an overcast Sunday morning, the group met at the entrance to the Botanic Gardens and Gerry O'Connor and Ann Riordan led participants to the Herbarium and Library, which location provided the background for Tony McGaley to start proceedings with 'The Travelling Librarian'. Then, being close to Glasnevin Cemetery, Francy Devine sang 'What's the Life of A Man', which provided a fitting reflection on the life's seasons, and our Young Singer in Residence Cathal Caulfield provided a very traditional rendition of 'Castlehyde'.

A particularly important corner of the Botanic Gardens is 'Wild Ireland'. As noted in the Botanic Gardens *Guidebook*, this area features a diverse range of Ireland's natural habitats and the plants and trees which flourish there.



In the Wild Garden, Brenda Ní Riordáin celebrated the 'Flower of Magherally-O', Paddy Daly transmogrified into a flower with a sensitive reading of the 'Song of the Flower', and then Eugene McElDowney brought us 'Abroad for Pleasure' to complete this set.



Paddy Daly

After sauntering through the Rock Garden, we paused in Yew Walk, with some participants taking the opportunity to rest awhile on a conveniently situated millstone.



Here, Eibhlís Ní Riordáin brought summer to life with the 'May Morning Dew', Éamonn Hunt sang the fitting 'Song of the Woodland' and Cathal Caulfield played 'The Fairest Rose' and 'The Garden of the Daisies', tunes chosen in honour of the setting in the Botanic Gardens.



Cathal Caulfield

In The Millfield, under the watchful eye of Socrates, Ann Riordan read an excerpt from Erasmus Darwin's 'The Botanic Garden', written in 1791, four years before the National Botanic Gardens were established in Ireland; Brian Doyle, pictured below, led everyone in 'Will You Go Lassie, Go'; and, appropriately for the location on the banks of the Tolka, Jack and Angela Plunkett sang Robert Burns's 'Green Grow the Rashes, O'.



Brian Doyle

One of the Botanic Gardens most popular areas is the Rose Garden. Under a stand of trees opposite the roses, Tom Finn sang 'The Briar and the Rose', and Gerry O'Connor continued the roseate theme with 'Red is the Rose'. Diarmuid Ó Cathasaigh read the lyrical 'An Droighneán Donn'.



We then moved to the rose bush situated opposite the Director's Residence. Francy Devine sang the 'Banks of Claudy' from which song the title of the walk, 'Down by Yon Flower Gardens', was taken. Michéal Quinn provided a beautiful version of 'Dobbin's Flower Vale', and finally pictured below is Walter Kennedy serenading 'The Last Rose of Summer'. This rose bush is from a cutting of the original rose bush in the garden of Jenkinstown House, County Kilkenny that inspired Thomas Moore to write the song in 1805.



Walter's beautiful version of 'The Last Rose of Summer' provided a fitting finale. Listening intently are Gerry O'Connor and Tom Finn, who heroically carried the sound system throughout the Walk.

The group then repaired to the Visitor Centre for lunch, which was provided by the restaurant in the Botanic Gardens – thanks to Sarah Curran and Krzysztof Bobko. The broad range of songs, poems and tunes chosen for the walk reflected just how much inspiration can be drawn from the natural world. This theme was continued during the afternoon session, where all contributors demonstrated great imagination in their choice of song and music. Throughout the day, the Botanic Gardens provided a lush and colourful location and inspiration for both the walk and the afternoon session.

Events like these take quite a bit of organisation. We must acknowledge the time spent by Francy Devine, Gerry O'Connor and Ann Riordan who met with the staff of the Botanic Gardens on a number of occasions – particularly Ciara Travers – and paid a few visits to map out and time the route. Once again, we wish to thank the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland for co-hosting the event and for their assistance in both the planning process and on the day itself. We repeat our gratitude to Karen Buckley for participating on the walk and providing the excellent photographs, which provide a visual memory for us. Logistical constraints meant that in order to keep the group together (and on time), the Walk was confined to a fairly tight circular route through a portion of the Gardens – there are many untouched corners, amongst them the walled fruit and vegetable garden, the many glasshouses, and the alpine yard, awaiting exploration on a future walk.



plaque outside Teak House, National Botanic Gardens of Ireland

'This dread and darkness of the mind cannot be dispelled by the sunbeams, the shining shafts of day, but only by an understanding of the outward form and inner workings of nature'

– Lucretius, 1st Century

Ann Riordan

Programme for 2018-2019

Our monthly programme until March 2019 is as follows.

All events start as close to 9 o'clock as we can and we endeavour to sing the last song at about 11.45

6 September – Gerry O'Connor & Helen Lahert, 'Harvest Songs' with Three in a Row from John Keeley

4 October – Diarmuid Ó Cathasaigh & Andy Burke, 'Harbour Lights'

1 November – Cathal Caulfield & Francy Devine, 'Dublin Songs'

22 November – Dinner with Special Guest Jimmy Crowley

6 December – Ann Riordan & Laurence Bond, 'Christmas Songs'

3 January – Niamh Parsons, 'Nollaig na mBan'

7 February – Stiofán Ó hAoláin & Antoinette Daly, Oíche Gaelach, aoi speisialta Éibhlís Ní Ríordáin

7 March – Cathal Caulfield as Young Singer in Residence to present his Song Project

Howth Burns Nicht 2019

Howth Burns Nicht 2019 will be held on Saturday 2 February with the Fare Thee Weel Session on Sunday from 3-6, both events in the Abbey Tavern. In addition to the St Lawrence Howth Pipe Band and our resident traditional musicians, our Soecial Guests will be Paul Anderson and Shona Donaldson Anderson from Tarland and Huntly in Aberdeenshire, guests making a welcome return after five or six years. After the success of Shona's Singing Workshop in Broughshane, it is hope to arrange a Singing Workshop on the morning or afternoon of the Burns Nicht with a view that those attending would perform at the Burns Nicht itself.

Buíochas Mór

As ever, *The Sweet Nightingale* does not just appear. Our thanks are due to your Committee of Laurence Bond, Paddy Daly, Francy Devine, Brian Doyle, Stiofán Ó hAoláin, Diarmuid Ó Cathasaigh, Gerry O'Connor, Niamh Parsons and Ann Riordan; to Richard Tobin & staff at the Abbey Tavern; and to Paul & Shona Anderson, John Bentham (Tiger Folk Traditional Folk Club); Karen Buckley (National Botanic Gardens of Ireland); John Kelly; Ian Maxwell; and Liam & Mick O'Connor.

**Of all the comrades that e'er I had
They are sorry for my going away
And all the sweethearts that e'er I had
They would wish me one more day to stay**

**But since it falls unto my lot
That I should rise and you should not
I'll gently rise and softly call
Good night and joy be to you all**