



**Aoibhneas na Bealtaine**

# **The Sweets of May**

**THE CÉILÍ BAND ERA, MUSIC & DANCE OF SOUTH ARMAGH**

A PROJECT UNDERTAKEN BY

  
**CeolCamlocha**



CONTENTS

Ceol Camlocha Chairman's Message	2
----------------------------------	---

Part 1

CD 1 Céilí Bands

Introduction	6
Track list	7
Sleeve notes	8-10

CD 2 Music Today

Introduction	14
Track list	15
Singers & Musicians	16
Sleeve notes	17-20

Part 2

Introductions	23-27
From early bands to today's bands	29-33
The Céilí Bands	35-51
The Céilí Bands onwards	53-64
Reminisces	67-79
Pub Sessions	81-91
The Dance Tradition	93-119
Sheet Music	121-136
Acknowledgements	137

## Track list CD 1

### 1. Johnny Pickering Céilí Band

Reels, The Yellow Heifer, Jackie Coleman's and The High Reel

### 2. McCuskers Céilí Band

Jigs, The Bow-legged Tailor, The Rambling Pitchfork and The Paymaster

### 3. Malachy Sweeney's Céilí Band

Reels, The Bag of Spuds, The Longford Collector and The Ships are Sailing

### 4. Paddy Murphy and Louis McDonald

Jig, Out on the Ocean

### 5. John Murphy

Solo fiddle, The Doon Reel

### 6. John Murphy Céilí Band

Hornpipe Flaherty's

### 7. Gerry Burns, with the Jackie Hearst Céilí Band

Song, The Bonnie Boy

### 8. Vincent Lowe Céilí Band

Reels, Miss Monaghan, The Woman of the House and The Mooncoin

### 9. McCuskers Céilí Band

Reels, McKenna's The Mason's Apron and The Donegal Reel

### 10. Johnny Pickering, Fiddle solo.

Jigs, Rum Punch and The Rose in the Heather

### 11. Johnny Pickering Céilí Band

Jigs, The Lark in the Morning and 2 untitled jigs.

### 12. Anna Boyle with the Inisfail Céilí Band

Song, My Lovely Irish Rose

### 13. Inisfail Céilí Band with Anna Boyle on banjo mandolin

Reels, The Bird in the Tree,

### 14. Jackie Hearst Céilí Band

Set Dance, The King of the Fairies

### 15. Joe Keegan, solo flute,

Reels, The Earl's Chair and Sporting Paddy

### 16. McCuskers Céilí Band

Marches, Banners Green, The Moon behind the Hill and The Foggy Dew

### 17. Peter Murphy

Reels, The Wheels of the World, The Sally Gardens and Down the Broom

### 18. Gerry Burns with Jackie Hearst Céilí Band

Song, The Bridge below the Town

### 19. Siamsa Céilí Band

Reels, The Girl that Broke my Heart, The Providence and The Bloom of Youth

### 20. John Joe Gardiner, fiddle solo,

Hornpipes, The Cuckoo's Nest and Parker's Fancy

### 21. Johnny Pickering Céilí Band

Reels, all three untitled

### 22. Fred Hanna Céilí Band

Marches, Let Erin Remember, The Minstrel Boy,  
Down by the Sally Gardens, Oft in the Stilly Night and The Harp that Once.

### 23. Peter Murphy

Air, Uirchill a' Chreagain



## Sleeve Notes for CD1

### 1. Johnny Pickering Céilí Band

**Reels, The Yellow Heifer, Jackie Coleman's and The High Reel**

Johnny Pickering, from Bunker Hill, Markethill was a well-known fiddle player in Co. Armagh and became more widely known through his traveling with Malachy Sweeney as a member of his ceil band. He was also an accordion player and that was the instrument that he used mostly in the band.

These reels illustrate Johnny's competence as an accordion player, and demonstrate the reason that the band that he formed, with his wife, Margaret, (nee Dillon), became such a success, and gained popularity, not only in Co. Armagh but throughout the country.

It is still talked about as one of the very best céilí bands, not only for its exciting sound but for the material it played. It is obvious that he was a lover of good tunes. He picked his musicians well. One of the best known members was Brendan McGlinchey, on fiddle.

### 2. McCuskers' Céilí Band

**Jigs, The Bow-legged Tailor, The Rambling Pitchfork and The Paymaster**

If you ask anyone in Ireland to tell you about céilí bands, McCusker's will probably be one of the first they will mention. This family band was formed back in the 1930s to play for local house and parish dances and very soon gained popularity and fame

When other bands saw musicians come and go, McCuskers' stayed constant, the reason being that they were unique in the fact that the band was made up of nine brothers.

The line-up consisted of three fiddles, piccolo, banjo/mandolin, button accordion, piano accordion, piano and drums. One of the brothers, Benedict has taken delight in this project and given us permission for the use of any of their material.

### 3. Malachy Sweeney's Céilí Band

**Reels, The Bag of Spuds, The Longford Collector and The Ships are Sailing**

Malachy Sweeney was known in his heyday as the 'King of Céilí'. He formed his first band in the thirties and one year after their formation the band won first prize at the Northern Ireland Musical Festival. His was one of the most successful bands in the country and Traveled extensively.

The only commercial recordings of the Malachy Sweeney band were 78s, made in the fifties. Because he was so long in the business the face of his band was constantly changing. Many good musicians made their name playing in his band before going on to form their own bands or continue playing in a solo capacity.

### 4. Paddy Murphy, fiddle, and Louis McDowell, accordion

**Jig, Out on the Ocean**

Paddy Murphy was a musician from Cregganduff, and father of John, Pat, and Peter who all played fiddles, (and other instruments), and Eileen and Eithne who sang Traditional ballads.

This tune was recorded at one of the many house sessions in Paddy Murphy's home. On this occasion Louis Quinn was at home on holiday and taped some of the music that night.

Paddy played fiddle and melodeon and passed on the music to his family. Both he and his wife were welcoming hosts to many musicians.

Louis McDonald is the youngest of three brothers who all played two row boxes. He, with his brothers, Pete and Paddy were not really interested in joining céilí bands then, but did however play with the Dunreavy Band in Mullaghbawn for social nights and parish dances.

Louis went on to join Comhaltas Ceolteoirí Éireann and succeeded in many of their musical competitions. Although not able to play much now, for health reasons, he is a keen follower of the music and will, on occasions, play a tune or two.

### 5. John Murphy, solo fiddle

**Reel, The Doon**

John Murphy was the eldest of three brothers who played fiddles. His brother, Pat, who lives in Mullaghbawn now, is featured on CD 2 and Peter can be heard in his solo tracks on this CD. Sadly John and Peter are no longer with us but it must be said that South Armagh owes a lot to John Murphy. He was well known as a band leader and he taught music to children over a wide area of the county.

### 6. John Murphy Céilí Band

**Hornpipe, Flaherty's**

John, a fiddle player, took up playing accordion, mostly for the sake of his band. Formed in the mid fifties, it began playing for local céilíthe, but was soon to travel the country and became a popular broadcasting band.

We did find some tunes from the early days on a 78 that was made privately in Belfast but unfortunately the recording was not useable for this album.

Like many other bands that stood the test of time, the personnel changed quite a bit after some years. Among the players on this track, from his band in the 60s, is Fintan Callan on piano accordion. Fintan was well known in the area, not just for his playing but for the promotion of traditional music in his pub, aptly named 'The Céilí House.'

This track is from one of the RTE 'Céilí House' broadcasts in the 1960s.



## 7. Gerry Burns

### Song, The Bonnie Boy

Gerry was well respected as one of the best singers of his time. His fine tenor voice and impeccable diction put him in a class of his own. He played drums also and played with the local Craobh Ruadh Céilí Band from Bessbrook together with his sister Mae (Trainor) and brother, Jimmy.

Later Gerry became a member of the Jackie Hearst Band which accompanies him on this Track. He did make some commercial records for Walton's of Dublin and was a regular contributor to their weekly sponsored radio programmes. We have not found any of these recordings as yet.

## 8. Vincent Lowe Céilí Band

### Reels, Miss Monaghan

Vincent Lowe was from Camlough. (Lowe's Lane there was named after him.)

He was the first to form a trio to play for dancers. He played piano and Jackie Hearst played accordion. After they parted company he fronted the trio on piano accordion and later formed the Vincent Lowe Céilí Band. The band recorded for Copley with Sean O'Driscoll on piano. That was the only commercial record they made.

Their engagements took them all over Ireland and to the Irish clubs in England.

## 10. McCuskers' Céilí Band

### Reels, McKenna's, The Mason's Apron and The Donegal Reel

They had a great many old tunes from South Armagh and always added to their repertoire. Their unique treatment of the tunes was a personal trait which is evident, especially, in this set of reels. They often played for BBC and RTE and may have recorded for them.

## 11. Johnny Pickering, solo fiddle

### Jigs, Rum Punch and the Rose in the Heather

Johnny, from Bunker Hill, Markethill, was a fiddle player of great renown and a member of Malachy Sweeney's band for some time before starting out on his own.

Later, the fiddle was side-lined in favour of the accordion.

## 12. Johnny Pickering's Band

### Jigs, The Lark in the Morning and two untitled jigs

## 13. Anna Boyle with the Inisfail Céilí Band

### Song, My Lovely Irish Rose.

Anna was a very popular singer and much in demand by the céilí bands of the time.

She sang with Malachy Sweeney's band, John Murphy's and the Mowhan céilí band and on this Track the Inisfail backs her. Although Anna Boyle sang with other bands during her career, she is probably more closely associated with the band that she formed in her home town land of Mowhan, after which she named the band. This band, although not as well-known as some others, made many visits to RTE in Dublin to take part in the Saturday night programme, 'Céilí House.'

## 14. Anna Boyle with the Inisfail Céilí Band

### Reels, The Bird in the Tree, Martin Mulhaire's No.9 and Killabeg House

Anna Boyle was not only a singer but played banjo mandolin with the best. The quality of the recordings of the Mowhan Céilí band did not do them justice, and therefore not useable, so instead you can hear Anna play the banjo mandolin on this track of Sean O'Neill's band, the Inisfail from the Moy, of which she was also a band member.

Anna now resides in Bessbrook.

## 15. Jackie Hearst

### Set Dance, The King of the Fairies

This is one of the most popular Set dances and can be found in collections of traditional music, such as O'Neill's 'Dance Music of Ireland.'

## 16. Joe Keegan

### Reels, The Earl's Chair and Sporting Paddy

This set of tunes was taken from a homemade reel-to-reel tape, at a time that Joe Keegan was in his upper eighties.

Born in 1883 in Derryvilla, near Portarlinton, Co.Offaly, Joe Keegan lived since the thirties in South Armagh, after he retired from work as a Post Office engineer in Scotland. He learned his early music from his mother and local musicians around his locality, carried it with him through life and played his flute until his death, at the age of ninety. He never sought the limelight although he did one or two solo broadcasts for RTE in the fifties. He was a 'true blue' as far as Irish music was concerned and he was always glad to help another musician when he could.

He played with the early John Murphy band and the Dunreavy band a time or two, and once for the Siamsa Céilí Band.



### 17. McCuskers' Céilí Band

Marches, Banners Green, The Moon behind the Hill and The Foggy Dew

As well as playing reels and jigs, céilí bands were required to play marches for 'The Waves of Tory' popular dance

### 18. Peter Murphy

Reels, The Wheels of the World, The Sally Gardens and Down the Broom

Peter, the youngest member of the Murphy family, Cregganduff, became well-known for his great technique on fiddle and played guitar and bass guitar. He was also interested in playing country and western music, but his first and greatest talent, lay in the playing, with variations, of his own Traditional music

This track, like those of his Dad and brother John, was taken from a home recording, which was made in his house by Louis Quinn on one of his visits home from USA.

### 19. Gerry Burns

Song, Sitting on the Bridge below the Town

Gerry again has the backing of his friend, Jackie Hearst. Together they were a good combination, and when they retired from Traveling, often met in Fintan Callan's pub in Hackballscross, Co. Louth, for the sessions with the local musicians, and to listen to and to meet great musicians, many of whom had become personal friends over the years.

### 20. The Siamsa Céilí Band

Reels, The Girl that Broke My Heart, The Providence and The Bloom of Youth

The Siamsa, from Dundalk, played at many of the céilítí in Armagh and, indeed all over the country for they were all-Ireland winners at the Comhaltas Fleadh on many occasions. The band was formed by John Joe Gardiner, who was a household name, for his influence on many musicians around. Coming from a musical Co. Sligo family, and with his two daughters playing in the band, the style of his native county was evident in their music. Pauline White (nee Gardiner) lives in Newry and is still helping young musicians with great success. Two of her former pupils play a track on the other CD.

### 21. John Joe Gardiner

Hornpipes, The Cuckoo's Nest and Parker's Fancy

It is with his second instrument, the fiddle, that the Co.Sligo style is most noticeable.

Many people knew John Joe as a flute player because that was usually his instrument in the céilí band that he formed and brought to fame on radio broadcasts.

On piano is Brendan Gaughran, a Siamsa Céilí band member for many years.

### 22. Johnny Pickering Céilí Band

Reels, All three are untitled (gan ainm)

### 23. Fred Hanna Céilí Band

Marches, Let Erin Remember, The Minstrel Boy, Down by the Sally Gardens and Oft in the Stilly Night

The line-up of Fred Hanna's six-piece band has earned for him a very pleasant and wholesome quality of sound.

Fred Hanna, from Poyntzpass, Co.Armagh plays accordion himself and he is supported by fiddle, flute, piano bass and occasionally, saxophone. (mainly for waltzes). His band is widely travelled, particularly throughout Ireland and Scotland.

He recorded first for the Beltona Recording Company in the mid-fifties and has many more albums to his credit.

### 24. Peter Murphy

Slow Air, Uirchill a' Chreagan (Creggan graveyard)

Creggan graveyard is the burial place of the O'Neill's, chieftains of the Fews, and of the McMahon family.

It is the resting place for many poets, singers, harpers and other traditional instrumentalists.

Art MacCumhaith, (McCooley), the renowned poet and author of this song, is buried here, as was his wish.

*'Guarantee and promise me before I take the road at dawn,  
Should I die in Egypt, by the Shannon or on Manaan's Isle,  
That with the Gaels of Creggan you will bury me in soil.'*

Here, too, is the resting place of Peter Murphy, whose treatment of the melody is sublime.

Peter co-produced an album with Tony Campbell in studios in Castleblaney.

This Track is taken from that album and features Eugene Smith on piano and synthesizer. The additional instruments are played by Peter, himself.

## Track list CD 2

### 1. Caroline Fegan and Marian McGauley

Reels, The Shoemaker's Daughter and The Maple Leaf

### 2. Brendan McGlinchey

Jig, Knocknagow

### 3. Pat Murphy Group

Barndances, Henry Savage's Favourites

### 4. Dearbhla Bennett

Air, Ta mo cleamhnas deanta

### 5. Scór Group

Jig, Seanamhac Tube Station

### 6. Jimmy Burns family,

Barndance, Lucy Farr's and Reel, I wish I never saw you

### 7. Una Devlin and Rosie Ferguson

Jigs, The Concertina and Untitled

### 8. Tommy Fegan

Air, Taimse i mo Codhladh

### 9. Scór Group.

Reels, Anderson's and The Trip to Cullenstown

### 10. Dearbhla Bennett

Planxty George Brabazon

### 11. Josephine Keegan

Hornpipes, The Flowers of May and The Blue Haven

### 12. Una Devlin and Rosie Ferguson

Reels, Gan Ainm, Maud Millar and The Sailor on the Rock

### 13. Aine McGeeney

Air, Uir Cnoc Cein Mhic Cainte

### 14. Ursula and Claire Byrne

Jigs, Down the Back Lane and An Cailin Fionn

### 15. Brendan McGlinchey

Reels, McGlinchey's

### 16. Fainne Cairde

Barndance, Betty Black

### 17. Josephine Keegan

Slip Jigs, The Slopes of Slieve Gullion and Dunreavy Park

### 18 Emma Murphy and Murphy/Savage Family

Air, Aisling Geal

Jigs, Mullion Mountain, Drumhoney Sessions and The Crooked Road

### 19. Fainne Cairde

Hornpipes, Kipeen Scanlon and The Philosopher

### 20. Jimmy Burns Family

Jigs, Goats on the Grass and The Kilmovey Jig

### 21. Niall Murphy

Reels, McGoldrick's, The Ronan Boys and Packie Deignan's



**All singers and musicians (CD2)**

Dearbhla Bennett      Harp solo and song with harp  
 Aine McGeeney      Song, solo  
 Tommy Fegan      Uilleann pipes solo  
 Brendan McGlinchey      Fiddle solo  
 Niall Murphy      Fiddle solo  
 Josephine Keegan      Fiddle solo  
 Emma Murphy      Flute Solo

Jimmy Burns      The Jimmy Burns Family  
 Kieran Burns  
 Paddy Burns  
 Mark Burns  
 Jame Burns  
 Marykate Burns  
 Eoin Burns  
 Aoife Burns  
 Eamon Burns

Martina Murphy      The Murphy/Savage Family  
 Emma Murphy  
 Niall Murphy  
 Conor Murphy  
 Mairead Savage  
 Angela Savage

Ursula Byrne      Duet, fiddle and Uilleann pipes  
 Claire Byrne

Úna Devlin      Fiddle duet  
 Rosie Ferguson

Caroline Fegan      Accordion and banjo duet  
 Marian McGauley

Pat Murphy      Pat Murphy Group  
 Bernard O'Hanlon  
 John Toal

Elaine O'Sullivan      Mullaghbawn Scór Group  
 Feargal O'Brien  
 Briege Quinn  
 Moira Hughes  
 Sean O'Chuinn

Josephine Keegan      Fainne Cairde (Circle of friends)  
 Betty Molloy  
 Shauna Hughes  
 Sinéad Savage  
 Orla Savage  
 Ursula Savage  
 Nicola Byrne  
 Martina Murphy  
 Niall Murphy

Piano accompaniments by  
 Kathleen Gavin  
 Angela Savage  
 Mary Mullholland and  
 Josephine Keegan



## Sleeve Notes for CD2

### 1. Caroline Fegan and Marian McGauley

(Track 1) accordion and banjo

Marian, banjo player, from Luton, Bedfordshire and Caroline Judge, button accordion player from St Alban's, Hertfordshire, are both now living in Newry and have known each other since 1975.

Marian's mother, Ann Caulfield (nee O'Hare) from Newry, gave music lessons in her house in Luton and subsequently Caroline and Marian went on to give musical performances with the Luton Legrave and St. Alban's CCE groups over the years.

Marian played with the Legrave Céilí Band and Caroline played with St. Colmcille's Céilí Band who won the Senior All-Ireland titles in 1988 and 1991.

Both ladies have been part of the local music scene for the past ten years or so and are involved in teaching Traditional music on banjo and accordion.

Reel, The Shoemaker's Daughter is one of the most popular of Ed Reavy's compositions.

The Maple Leaf was learned from a recording by the piano-accordion player, Karen Tweed. It was previously recorded by Donncha O'Brien, tin whistle player of Dublin in 1975. This version of the tune is a variation on that. It is thought that the composer of this reel is an uilleann piper/whistle player called Darach de Brun.

### 2. Brendan McGlinchey

(Fiddle) (Tracks 2 and 15) and Mary Mulholland, piano

Born in Armagh City, and already making a name for himself in competitions, Brendan soon became noticed by the céilí bandleader, Malachy Sweeney and joined his band to travel throughout Ireland and beyond. He was also a valued member of the Johnny Pickering Band for some time before going to England. Meanwhile he became fiddle champion at every level to All-Ireland champion status. Brendan is a musician that County Armagh is very proud of.

Jig, Knocknagow is a popular four-part jig that is unusual in its use of the minor and major of the key of A. The first two parts are in A minor and the other two are mostly A major and, for this reason the tune has been mistaken, on occasions, for two separate tunes.

It has been recorded by many musicians and can be found in O'Neill's Collection of Irish Dance Music.

### 3. Pat Murphy Group

(Track 3) (Fiddle, whistle, bodhran and piano)

Pat is on fiddle, Bernard O'Hanlon, whistle, John Toal, bodhran and Josephine Keegan on piano

Pat, born and reared in Cregganduff, is a member of a very well known musical family.

His brother, John, formed a céilí band in the mid-fifties. Pat played fiddle with them as did his younger brother, Peter. John played both accordion and fiddle,

and was a well-known teacher of Traditional music in the area. Pat now also plays melodeon, as did his father.

Paddy, father of the family and John and Peter, can be heard playing individually on the other CD of this project.

Barndances, Henry Savage's Favourites 1& 2

These catchy tunes were favourites of the late Henry Savage, and also of the renowned fiddle player, Louis Quinn who emigrated to USA and brought many of the traditional tunes from this area with him. In turn, he passed them on to his musical family. It was from an album, that the Quinn family released, that Pat got these tunes.

### 4. Dearbhla Bennett

(Tracks 4 and 9)

Dearbhla, 25, lives in Mullaghbawn with her husband, Shane.

She is a teacher in the Gaelscoil Padhraig Naomha, (St. Patrick's Irish-speaking school,) Crossmaglen.

He father, Colman Burns, sang and played drums with the John Murphy Céilí Band.

Song with Harp, Ta mo cleamhnas deanta (My match is made.)

This is a love song by Peadar O'Doirnin, and like many love songs in the Irish tradition, it has an unhappy ending.

### 5. Scór Group, Mullaghbawn

(Tracks 5 and 9)

Elaine O'Sullivan on box, Briege Quinn, fiddle, Moira Hughes, whistle, Sean O'Chuinn, banjo and Feargal O'Brien on bodhran

The Group was formed in 2005 after Brian McKinley, Chairman of Cu Chulainn GAA Club, asked Feargal to get some musicians together to represent the club in the Scór contest.

In 2006 they won the All-Ireland Championship in Scór, were runners-up in 2007.

This jig is one of their winning tunes in 2008.

Jig, Seanamhac Tube Station



## 6. Jimmy Burns and Family

(Tracks 6 and 20)

This is an all-Burns group, made up of three generations of the same family.

Jimmy Burns, aged 83, fiddle

His son, Paddy, 46 on flute, and Paddy's daughter, Mary Kate, on whistle, with

Jimmy's twin sons, Kieran and Mark, aged 45, and their children.

Kieran plays concertina and Mark, the uilleann pipes

Eoin aged 12 and on fiddle, is Kieran's son.

Aoife, Mark's daughter, aged 14, is playing the banjo and Eamon, the youngest, is on fiddle.

Barndance, Lucy Farrell's, is taken from the CCE book, 'Foinn Seisiun 2'

Reel, 'I wish I never saw you,' is a popular Co. Sligo reel and was a great favourite of the late John Joe Gardiner, a musician from that County who lived for many years in Dundalk. The tune can be found in the collection of Irish music, 'A Drop in the Ocean,' published in 2004.

## 7. Úna Devlin and Rosie Ferguson

(fiddles) (Tracks 7 and 12)

Úna Devlin (24) and Rosie Ferguson (17) are cousins from Newry. Úna is a barrister and Rosie is currently studying for her A- Level examinations. They have both played music from a young age and received their musical tuition from Pauline White (nee Gardiner.)

Pauline is a daughter of the late John Joe Gardiner. A Sligo musician, who spent many years in Dundalk, he played flute and fiddle and also formed the renowned Siamsa Céilí Band. Another well known musical member of his family was Kathleen Harrington who also played fiddle with the Kincora Céilí band of broadcasting and recording fame.

Jigs, The Concertina and Unknown title

'The Concertina' was a convenience name given to this jig, as it appears in 'A Drop in the Ocean' collection

## 8. Tommy Fegan

(pipes), (Track 8)

Tommy has been involved in the promotion of Irish traditional music in this area for many years now, first as a founder member of Ceol Cinn Trá (Newry Music), and more recently in the formation of Ceol Camloch with the help of his musical friends, Paddy and Kieran Burns.

Ceol Camloch is a cultural organisation solely devoted to the preservation and furthering of the music of the area, and South Armagh in particular.

The uilleann pipes that Tommy Fegan plays are the last full set of pipes made by the late Dave Williams.

Slow Air, Taimse i mo Chodhladh

This beautiful slow air is from the song from the eighteenth century. It is one of a group of songs known as 'aislings,' the word 'aisling' meaning 'a dream'. Although the song possibly originates from Munster, it can also be traced to Ulster with the place names differing from the Munster names.

The song takes the form of a conversation, in a dream, between the poet and 'Ireland,' depicted as a beautiful woman, seeking freedom from foreign oppression.

Other versions of this song can also be traced to Scotland in the 1700s.

## 9. Scór Group, Mullaghbawn

Instrumental group

In 2006, when the group became the national champions, they were contributors to the album, 'What's the Scór?' which recorded eight acts from their Junior and Senior groups, covering music, song, and story-telling.

Colum Sands broadcasted the launch on his weekly BBC programme. Now, in 2008, the senior Scór Group members are the All-Ireland champions again!

Reels, Anderson's and A Trip to Cullenstown

## 10. Dearbhla Bennett

Harp solo

Dearbhla has been playing harp since she was 14, and is much sought after to play at functions, such as weddings. She now sings and plays harp with the Mullaghbawn Traditional Group, and recently, solo, reached the Ulster finals of the Scór competitions.

Planxty George Brabazon is by the famous harper, Turlough O'Carolan, who spent some time in the company of the South-east Ulster poets. Very little is known about George Brabazon, but O'Carolan often wrote melodies in praise of his friends and patrons, so we must assume that George Brabazon was one or the other.

## 11. Josephine Keegan And Kathleen Gavin

(fiddle and piano) (Tracks 11 and 17)

Kathleen Gavin, born in Mayo and now living in Co Dublin, is a member of the musical Gavin family, her father being a member of the famous Moate Céilí Band. She is a former student of the Royal Irish Academy of Music and also plays fiddle.

Kathleen and Josephine became acquainted a few years ago and made an album together, 'The Fairy Bridges,' which was released in 2006. Josephine composed both hornpipes.

Hornpipes, The Flowers of May and The Blue Haven



## 12. Úna Devlin and Rosie Ferguson

(fiddles)

As well as being fiddle enthusiasts, Úna plays flute and piano, and Rosie is accomplished on flute, banjo and mandolin. Their musical influences include Cathal Hayden, Frankle Gavin, Philip Duffy, Michael McGoldrick, Seamus Tansey and Brian Finnegan.

Playing more instruments than one, allows for experimentation, in changing a tune from its original key to a different one, with interesting results. The first of these reels is more than likely in its original key but there is an exciting 'freshness' about the other two because of the key change.

Reels, Gan ainm / Maud Miller and The Sailor on the Rock

## 13. Aine McGeeney

(Track 13), song unaccompanied

Aine began singing at an early age at primary school and was fortunate there to have come under the influence such excellent teachers as Pdraigin and Eithne Ni Ullachainn.

Afterwards she received tuition from Geraldine Bradley and Kim Lynch.

As well as singing, Aine is a well known, and very capable, fiddle player.

At present she is doing a BA degree in Irish music and song at Limerick University under the guidance of her singing teacher Ellis Ni Shuillibhain.

Song, Ur- Cnoc Cein Mhic Cainte (Burial ground of Cian, son of Cainte). It was here, at this site, that Pdraig Mac Goilla Fhiondan (Patrick Mc Alindon), poet and harper held a school of poetry, which was attended by as many as eighteen literary people of note. A place steeped in the local myths and folk history, a few miles north of Dundalk, it was frequented by Peadar O'Doimin (1700-1769), a native of Forkhill, who composed, among others, this beautiful song. It is a love song addressed to a young woman and inviting her, to no avail, to accompany him to Ur-Cnoc Cein Mhic Cainte.

## 14. Ursula and Claire Byrne

(fiddle and pipes) (Track 14)

Sisters, Ursula and Claire Byrne hail from Dromantine, Co. Down, outside Newry.

They currently live in Newry City and both are employed within the Education sector. Ursula is a teacher at St. Francis's P.S., Loughbrickland, whilst Claire is a Business

Development Manager with the Southern Regional College in Newry.

Both Ursula, on fiddle and Claire, on uilleann pipes, have won many national trophies, at underage and senior level, for solo playing, as well as combined instrument playing.

Amongst these titles is the All-Ireland Senior Fiddle Championship, won by Ursula in 1998, playing one of Josephine Keegan's compositions, The Square of Crossmaglen.

They are highly regarded in music circles everywhere as 'top of the range' musicians, and are much in demand. Touring extensively to perform at festivals, they have often been members of larger musical groups, such as Comhaltas, playing in USA and across Europe.

Ursula was a member of the Tain Céilí band from Dundalk, All-Ireland Céilí Band winners. Claire is the proud owner of a David Williams set of pipes

Jigs, Down the Back Lane and An Cailín Fionn.

## 15. Brendan McGlinchey

(fiddle) and Mary Mulholland, (piano)

Reels, McGlinchey's

These two tunes were composed by Brendan many years ago.

He recorded an album in 1974 for Silverhill Records with the apt title of 'Music of a Champion,' and it is with his kind permission that we are able to present these two Tracks.

Mary Mulholland, now deceased, won the All-Ireland title for solo piano in 1960 and 1963. She was a native of Antrim and played for many years with the Pride of Erin Céilí band from Co. Fermanagh, which has won the All-Ireland band title on many occasions.

## 16. Fainne Cairde

(Circle of Friends) (Tracks 16 and 19) is predominantly a group of fiddle players who play with piano or guitar accompaniment, and sometimes both. They came together back in 2000 to take part in a double CD published locally. They practiced weekly in the Stray Leaf in Mullaghbawn, learning new tunes and seeking out the best of old ones. The fiddle player's number about ten at present, and on this recording occasion are pleased to have the services of a guest accompanist, Kathleen Gavin.

Betty Black was the tune for a country dance, of the same name, in South Armagh. For many years both tune and dance were lost. Now that the tune has been found, it looks like the dance is going to be re-invented also.

## 17. Josephine Keegan and Kathleen Gavin

(fiddle and piano)

Josephine Keegan has spent most of her life in South Armagh. She plays fiddle and piano and has become known for her compositions of reels, hornpipes etc. She was a member of the original Dunreavy and John Murphy céilí bands and occasionally played in the Vincent Lowe, Ceol an Iubhair, Siamsa and Pickering bands.

Slip Jigs, The Slopes of Slieve Gullion and Dunreavy Park (both by Paul Murphy) Paul, of Cloughrea and now deceased, was a member of the Ceol an Iubhair Céilí band and a frequent visitor to musical sessions at the Keegan house, in Dunreavy Park in Mullaghbawn.



### 18. Martina Murphy And Family

(Track 18)

Slow Air, Aisling Geal

Emma Murphy, 16, plays this beautiful slow air on flute. She learned it from Mary Bergin with whom she has made friends over the past few years. This song was taken from the singing of a woman in West Cork in the late 19th century and first appeared in the Martin Freeman Collection of Irish Airs in 1920/21.

Jigs, Mullion Mountain, Drumhoney Sessions and The Crooked Road are all composed by Marrita Savage of Belleeks, Co Armagh, and mother of Martina Murphy. The titles are of local significance.

Marrita, born in 1926, played melodeon for the house dances as a young girl, with her sister Annie on fiddle. For many years she did not play due to other commitments. Her family bought her a melodeon about five years ago and she began playing, after an absence of sixty years, and she is now composing some lovely tunes too.

Other members of the group are Martina and Niall Murphy on fiddles, Conor Murphy, banjo, Emma Murphy and Mairead Savage on whistle, and Angela Savage on piano.

### 19. Fainne Cairde

(fiddles) with Kathleen Gavin, piano

Kipeen Scanlon was a renowned Sligo fiddle player, nicknamed 'Kipeen' (Cipin is the Gaelic name for the fiddle bow) because of his legendary skill in the use of the bow. The great composer, Ed Reavy, wrote his tune in his honour.

The Philosopher was composed by one of the Fainne Cairde members, Martina Murphy.

Fiddle players are Betty Molloy, Shauna Hughes, Martina and Niall Murphy, Sinead, Orla and Ursula Savage with Nicola Byrne and Josephine Keegan.

### 20. Jimmy Burns and Family

Jigs, Goats on the Grass and The Kilmovey Jig

These tunes were chosen by Jimmy, as was the barndance. The first jig was picked up from a recent CD which was recorded in a New York pub. The second jig came from the same source as the barndance on Track 6, 'Fionn Seisiun 2'

### 21. Niall Murphy

(fiddle) (Track 21)

Niall comes from a family that has been rich in the Tradition of Irish music for many generations, and began playing fiddle when he was seven years of age.

He is from Camlough, and had Jimmy Burns as his teacher for about four years, giving him a solid basis in the art of playing fiddle and a sound understanding of the musical Tradition. Subsequently he received tuition from Gerry O'Connor and now, aged sixteen, is attending Thomas Smyth's advanced classes at the Armagh Pipers' Club, often coaching some of the younger players too. Niall has had successes at many fleadhanna and feiseanna, up to Ulster and All-Ireland level.

Reels, McGoldrick's, The Ronan Boys and Packie Deignan's

Piano accompaniment is by Kathleen Gavin on Tracks 11, 16, 17 and 19,

Josephine Keegan on Tracks 1, 3, 6, 12, 20 and 21,

Angela Savage on Track 18 and

Mary Mulholland plays on Tracks 2 and 15.

### Additions to sleeve notes

Recorded on Location in the Stray Leaf, Mullaghbawn by kind permission of Bernard O'Hanlon, proprietor.

Recorded & Mixed by Kevin Fegan and Liam Craig

Mastered, by John Hope

Art work by Bradbury Graphics

Production and notes by Josephine Keegan

Thanks to Heritage Lottery Fund, ITMA

Midhir Records

Andrews Audio

Chris Corrigan QUB

Jonathan Ireland

Copyright, Ceol Camlocha 2008



## Henry Savage (1869-1938)



The Savage residence in Outlacken, Belleeks, has been renowned for its affiliation with Irish music for many years.

It was a base for dancing and tune-learning and it attracted musicians and neighbours, both Protestant and Catholic, most nights of the week during the 1800's and 1900's.

Henry Savage continued the line of fiddle playing from his father, also Henry.

He had a family of eleven, all of whom had a love for music but the tradition was carried on in a different way by Pat who played accordion, Hugh, who played both accordion and fiddle, (both deceased) and Nano who played the piano.

Today there are grandchildren of Henry's who play traditional music these being, the Raffertys of Newry,

children of Angela Rafferty (nee Savage), the Savages from Drumhoney and Outlacken, Children of Hugh and Benedict. There are now also great-grandchildren of Henry who are continuing the love and interest in traditional music.

(Martina Murphy, nee Savage)

Nan Quinn, dance teacher, writes:-

I presented 'Trip to the Cottage' at Feiseanna in 1934 and 'The Three Tunes' and 'Sweets of May' in 1936. I had some difficulty in presenting the latter two because no one but Mr. Henry Savage from Outlacken knew the tunes, and we had to bring him around with us. This wasn't easy in those days.

It was Tom Farrelly from Dundalk who solved this problem. He came with me to the Savage homestead and took down-for all time- the lovely tunes.

With tears rolling down his cheeks he said 'Thank God I have lived to see this day.

Now, I shall die happy, knowing the old tunes won't be lost.'

Quotation from an article in the music magazine, 'Treoir,' by Luai O'Murchu (1970s) in reply to an article by Sean O'Driscoll.

'There was no doubt of his familiarity with my native territory and with some of the musicians whos acquaintance I, too was honoured to share. I too can claim to have known 'the legendary Henry Savage' as Sean O'Driscoll calls this grand traditional fiddler, but it was my privilege as well to spend many an evening in the hospitable kitchen of John 'Roe' McParland, Henry Savage's contemporary and fellow musician.

Both Savage and McParland were part of the social life of South Armagh. Even long before I could recognize a reel from a hornpipe, I had often heard it said that the knowledge throughout the countryside that Henry Savage and John 'Roe' (as he was always known) would provide the music for some forthcoming ceili was enough to guarantee its success.

Father, grandfather and great-grandfather to many fine musicians from this area, there is little doubt that Henry Savage has become a musical father to us all. The quality of his playing is legendary. His dedication to the local dances, and the right music to them, is well documented.

He was the favourite musician to supply the music for the house dances, barn dances and Céilí and Irish dancing competitions in his day. The competitions used to be held in open air, in a big level field, where temporary stages were erected for the purpose, usually in the corners of the field. One stage might have dancing competitions, one for singing, and another for instrumental competitions.

An annual outing like this was called a Feis. Camlough had one in the mid forties. Later, the name "Aeriocht" was often used instead, and other activities would take place there on the day, such as suitable sports events.

Henry Savage was not just fiddle player, but with an appetite for good tunes, we were told he was most diligent in learning every good tune he heard. These tunes might sometimes been played by traveling musicians to the area, and Henry would offer the hospitality of his own home to the strangers. While they all made music together Henry would learn the tunes before setting them off on their next journey. Examples of this include "Henry Savage's Favourite" barn dances to be found on the CD's of today's musicians, and in this book. So he was a serious collector.