

news from

Aran Islands

by Olwen Gill

President Visits Inis Meáin

On Sunday June 26 *The Cripple of Inishmaan* was performed in Halla Naomh Eoin to a very distinguished audience. Patron of Druid and President of Ireland Mary McAleese, Senator Martin McAleese, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs, Jimmy Deenihan TD, together with the playwright Martin McDonagh and family, will join the local community to enjoy this acclaimed Druid production. This was the first time *The Cripple of Inishmaan* was staged on the island and hopefully by no means the last.

Gaeilge le Spraí ar Inis Oírr

Although there are Irish Colleges for young students on all three Aran Islands for many years now, the 'FEICIM' (Fun Easy Irish

Courses Island Method) programme offered on Inis Oírr has brought the learning of Irish for adults to a whole new level.

Participants can now enjoy a holiday together with good humoured Irish conversation morning classes, various afternoon activities and plenty of evening entertainment. The main objective of the course is to have fun while learning Irish. FEICIM courses are about communicating & having the craic le Gaeilge, the motto is "No heavy grammar lessons — we'll burn that bridge when we get to it! Breis eolas from FEICIM Inis Oírr, Oileáin Árann, Co. na Gaillimhe. Fón: (099) 75097 / (087) 6 7 7 4 7 5 1 Rphost:cualain@eircom.net

Féile Joe Mháirtín

Beidh Féile Joe Mháirtín á reactáil ag

Chomhar Chaomháin Teo. ó 8-12 Lúnasa. Séard atá sa tseachtain seo ná ceiliúradh ar sheanchas ar dhúchas agus ar stair an oileáin. Beidh ceardlann agus leachtaí ar siúil agus fáilte roimh chách freastáil orthu.

GAA and Swimming Classes

July sees the start of the annual National Water Safety courses on the islands where young and old brave the Atlantic for intensive swimming, water safety and life saving classes. The popular GAA Cúl Camps will also take place during July with times and venues available locally.

The BIM Fishing Course run in conjunction with the VEC, which offers engineering, cookery, net mending, navigation and radio courses to second level students is running for the

month of July on Inis Mór.

Comórtas Peile na Gaeltachta 2015

Tá na cluichí ceannais áitiúla (Gaillimh) do Chomórtas Peile na Gaeltachta bronnta ar Inis Oírr do 2015. Bíonn na cluichí ceannais seo ar siúl ar an deireadh seachtaine bainc ag tús mí Bealtaine. Tarraingeoidh an deireadh seachtaine slua ollmhór chuig Inis Oírr agus beidh go leor oibre le déanamh chun an páirc a thabhairt suas chuig caighdeán. Beidh Coiste na Páirce ag bailiú airgead agus ag brath ar tacaíocht pobal na noileán chun an obair seo a dhéanamh.

Visit the Botanical Society of the British Isles

From the 18-21 of June the Botany and Plant Society of NUIG hosted a conference for The Botanical Society of the British Isles. As part of the conference the group undertook several excursions to study the distribution of plants in their natural habitat this side of the country. Along with fieldtrips to the Burren and Connemara the group paid a visit to the islands, some to Inis Meáin and some to Inis Mór.

Dr. Mick O'Connell led the visitors to Inis Mór through the Turlough Mór, (now dry in the fine weather) up by the Carna and out to the cliffs, passing close to Dún Dubh Chathair before returning to Cill Rónáin in time for the evening boat.

Red Madder, a plant once highly prized as a dye (not least for its colouring of the infamous Redcoats) was exported from the island to pay dues exacted by the King of Munster during the eight century, was just one of the gems sighted along the route. Plants that look as nice as they sound such as *Sea Mouse Ear*, *Bogbean*, *Buck thorn*, *Cuckoo Flower* together with the rare *Frog Orchid* and many others, were also documented by the botanists who were well pleased with their findings.

Long before rare plant species became threatened in this country by changing farming practices, pollution, or simply modern lifestyles and lawns, islanders had a healthy respect for the wild flowers of the island. The various white, pink and purple orchids, the *Magairlín Meidhreach* amongst them, which are welcomed from April through to August, were always off limits for picking. Tradition encouraged children as they bent down towards the flower to feel its deep rooted connection to the earth and to heed its whisper, 'please don't pick me as it has taken me 15 years to get here' and so the orchids were left to thrive and grace the island to this day, which is sadly not the case in many other parts of the country.

- MARITIME DIARY - A Look at Historical Maritime Dates in the Month Ahead



July 4, 1853

On what has become known as Independence Day in the USA, the oldest rowing club in the United States was founded. The Bachelor's Barge Club is still active today in Philadelphia Pennsylvania.

July 7, 1856

The first international tall ships race started. Sail training vessels from several countries gathered at Tor Bay in England and sailed to Portugal.

July 9, 1787

The world's first iron boat was launched at Willey Wharf on the River Severn in Shropshire, England. It was built by John Wilkinson at the New Willey Ironworks Company.

July 12, 1922



The largest sailing ship ever built, *France II*, a five-masted bark was wrecked off New Caledonia. She was the largest merchant ship in the world at the time, 480

feet long and square-rigged. The vessel had been built in 1911 and was homeward bound to Europe with a cargo of chrome ore when she went aground.

July 17, 1588



The Spanish Armada gathered near the Scilly Isles but was struck by the first of several severe gales which would frustrate its attempt to invade England.

July 18, 1832

The United States and Canada agreed to jointly develop the St. Lawrence Seaway connecting the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean. A formal treaty was signed to enable the work commence.

July 19, 1837

The first ship built specifically to carry passengers across the Atlantic was launched in Bristol, England. She was an oak-hulled paddle-wheel steamship, designed by the famous engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

July 27, 1969



The first man to row alone across the Atlantic from east to west arrived in Blacksod Bay in County Mayo. Tom McClean had been a member of the British Army's Parachute Regiment and the SAS before retirement, after which he set a number of records for endurance, including in 1985 living on Rockall for 40 days to affirm Britain's claim to the island. Two years later he rowed the Atlantic again to establish a new record of 54 days and in 1990 sailed across it in a 37ft boat shaped like a bottle which he had built himself.

Achill Island Seafood Lovers' Paradise

Achill Island's Féile Bia na Mara 2011, 14-17 July 2011, is guaranteed to appeal to anyone who has a love of the sea and an appreciation for fine seafood. The popular annual Seafood Festival celebrates Ireland's largest island's maritime heritage and showcases the huge variety of fish and shellfish available around its shores. Drive on to the island over the new Michael Davitt Bridge and get ready for a weekend of activities, events and fantastic food.

The festival kicks off on Thursday with free Oyster Tasting in all the Achill venues, followed by the Gala Seafood Banquet on Friday, where the Féile will be officially opened by Special Guest Chef **Ross Lewis** of **Chapter One** in Dublin, one of only six Irish Michelin-starred restaurants and recently voted Best Irish Restaurant for the sixth time.

Visitors can buy fresh seafood directly off the boats at a special **Fish Market** in the harbour, and for those who aren't too confident of their fish cookery skills there are weekend **Seafood**

Cookery Demonstrations by Achill and Mayo chefs. Ross Lewis will headline on Saturday and Achill's own Michael McNamara will produce mouthwatering dishes accompanied by Tindall's Wines to round off the Sunday session.

The **Seaweed Safari** offers a unique opportunity to gather edible seaweed with Achill expert Annette O'Leary, who will share her knowledge and show participants how to turn a beach walk into a culinary delight. For a successful harvest, hunters will need a sharp knife for cutting and a plastic

bag for carrying, and it is important to respect the environment and be suitably attired. Conditions can change quickly and seaweed hunters should never turn their backs on the sea.

There's plenty for families too at Féile Bia na Mara, from the Sandcastle Competition to talks on marine life and a joint sea rescue exercise with the RNLI, Achill Coastguard and Beach Lifeguards.

Tickets for the Seafood Banquet, online applications for the Photography and Recipe Competitions, performers' registration for **Achill's Got Talent** and a full Programme of Events are all available on www.feilebianamara.ie

For further details contact Turasoireacht Acla at 098 20400 or email info@feilebianamara.ie

