

The Irish Connection

News from the  Irish association of tasmania inc.

Volume 1, Issue 8

July 2007

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Congratulations to **Anne Scott** who won a double pass to the State Cinema for providing her email address. If you would like a chance to win please provide your email address to irishtas@iprimus.com.au and let us know if you would like the monthly newsletter by electronic mail.

IRISH RADIO EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT

864 AM in Southern Tasmania
106.9FM in Northern Tasmania

Tune in to Print Radio Tasmania at **8.00pm** each Friday for '**Irish Connections**' - A program of Irish issues from short stories to history, poetry and current affairs, presented by John Sexton.

The General Meeting on 7th June was a great success. Thank you to all the members who turned out and provided us with feedback and many great ideas for new events.

Slainte
Joan Crossin
President

TABLE QUIZ

Next Quiz
Monday 6th August 2007

NEW SYDNEY HOTEL
87 BATHURST STREET

Maximum table size 6
Registration from 7:45pm
Prizes for Gold, Silver and Bronze
Spot prizes.
Prizes donated by Gary and Cheryl Lawrence
Cost \$5.00 per person

Thanks to Melissa and Steve for preparing the June Quiz. The winners were:

Bronze: Slaughterhouse 4. Silver: *Axis of Ignorance*
Gold: *Booze Babies*

Booze Babies won 2 Double Passes to the movies courtesy of the State Cinema for winning the "Irish Round" of the Quiz.


New Sydney Hotel


State
CINEMA

FLEADH CEOL 2008

Did you enjoy the Fleadh Ceol this year? I know I certainly did and, judging from the crowds, music, laughter and the craic I wasn't the only one!

Each year the Fleadh Ceol is getting bigger, more diverse and extending over a longer period. We would like to keep this momentum going.

Would you like to join the Committee for the 2008 Fleadh Ceol? No particular expertise is required, just enthusiasm!

Our aim is to meet in August 07. If you would like to join us send an email to irishtas@iprimus.com.au or phone Barbara Middleton evenings or weekends on 6273 7086 as soon as possible.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Slainte

Barbara Middleton, Secretary IAOT

If you have any ideas regarding content, upcoming events you'd like publicised, or articles you'd like to contribute, they would be more than welcome. Deadline for August issue is 6th August 07. Send them to jeremysibson@hotmail.com. Thanks again. Jeremy Sibson, Editor.

Thanks for the memories

Thanks to everyone who sent messages for our tribute to Máirtín Mac Mathúna the first President of the Association, co-founder of Fleádh Céol, Ambassador of Irish culture and a great musician. Máirtín passed away on 14th June 2007. May he rest in peace.

I first met Máirtín in 1994 shortly after I had been interviewed by Hobart radio presenter Tim Cox. Tim wanted to know why I had waited for 14 years before making the commitment to become an Australian Citizen. I responded that until then it was a requirement to swear allegiance to the Queen of England and as an Irish woman and a Republican I couldn't do that. Soon afterwards on my first visit to the New Sydney Hotel, Máirtín boldly introduced himself and stated that he had been looking forward to meeting me based on a radio interview he had heard and he immediately commenced to persuade me why I should get involved in starting an Irish Association in Tasmania. I couldn't help but be impressed with his determination. His enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, Irish culture was inspiring and made me want to know more about the man. Between the jigs and the reels my life was never the same after that.

Thanks for the good times Máirt.

Love Joan.

President IAT



To Joan and Michael and all at The Irish Association of Tasmania on behalf of the McMahon family can I thank you all for your kind thoughts and prayers over the last few difficult weeks. It was nice to know that Máirtín, or Spock as he was affectionately known as to us, made an impression as far a field as Australia. We were delighted to hear about your session in celebration of his wonderful life. I am sure he would have approved and would have been disappointed to have missed the "CRAIC". We also gave him a send off he would have been proud of. A number of things, funny and sad, occurred over the few days of the "WAKE" that I firmly believe Máirtín would have had a laugh or cry at. I would like to share one of those moments with you all. On the Friday night of the WAKE when Máirtín had arrived home, my mother would not go and see him in his coffin. Her reason for this was that she had not been to see a corpse since her mother's funeral almost 25 years previously. We knew she needed to say goodbye but no matter how hard we tried, no one could get her to go upstairs to see him. That evening the policeman who had been with me when we found Máirtín arrived at the house. Before he left I asked him would he speak to my mother. He duly obliged and after 20 minutes he took her by the hand and asked would she go with him to see Máirtín. He then led her up the stairs and into the room. We all followed. When we went into the room what we saw will stay with us for a long time. Picture the scene, my mother standing over the coffin alongside a PSNI officer in full dress uniform holding Máirtín's hand and him with his Easter Lily in his lapel. I looked past them both and into the coffin and said "You must be having a laugh SPOCK. You have sent a policeman to take your mother to see you in your coffin". The room erupted in laughter. It was a priceless moment and one you could not have scripted. Once again I thank you all for your support and it is pleasing to know that Máirtín meant as much to you all. Hopefully I shall get out to Tassie sometime in the future to walk in his footsteps and meet you all.

SLAN

Michael McMahon

I am Maírt's son Peadar. I would just like to thank all of his great friends from Hobart, and across the world, for everything that was done for my dad. While I don't know who may be reading this I would like to just say one thing. While my dad was over here with his family, in the country that he loved so well, his home was in Hobart. For some reason he found it easier to enjoy Ireland from so far away. I think he loved passing on the tradition and culture of Ireland to people from different backgrounds, and he converted many who had never heard the music to be avid lovers of it.

If any Tassie Irish ones are out there you may know George Callaghan, a great friend of my dad who just happened to be in London. He came over for the funeral and we, the family, asked if he would play the harp for us at the funeral. So him and my mum, on whistle, got onto the altar and played *Inisheer*. It was beautiful and the send-off he would have wanted.

Afterwards we went to Clann Eireann, our GAA team, social club for a good old fashioned seisiún. I have tried to take up the mantle of my dad's bodhrán skills, nowhere near but I'm pretty handy, and will continue to make the Mac Mathúna name proud.

Ta tu saor anois.

Beith tú inár gcuimhne go deo a athair dhíl.



Mairtín was very involved here in the setting up of The Irish Association of Tasmania, and, though he moved back to Ireland, he maintained his links here. I played with him and Tom Dunlop only last March in the opening concert at the Hobart Fleadh, which he established with Queensland flute player Bernie Chernery, a number of years ago. A tune he loved to play was *Inisheer*; that was when you get him to stop beating the goat so beautifully! Condolences to his family back in Ireland and here in Tasmania, and best wishes to all who had the pleasure to meet, know and share some special moments with this great ambassador of the Irish Culture. *Go dtuga Dia suaimhneas dá anam!*

Brian Owens

This is a funny little story regarding an unlikely song, which will always remind me of Maírtín.

We were sitting at the bar in the New Sydney Hotel and The Pop Tarts were playing, I heard the first few chords of "Dancing Queen" and said to Maírt "I love dancing to this song!" Knowing his love affair with Irish music of the very best quality I wasn't expecting a particularly profound response to my enthusiasm at a pop song!! He took a swig of Guinness, nodded to the dance floor and said "Come on then!" I looked at him with astonishment & said "You've got to be joking, you never dance & now you're going to dance with me to ABBA!!"

With that he bounced off the bar stool & on to the dance floor! Several people came up during the evening & said "Over all the years we've never even seen him dance to Irish music, how the hell did you get him up to "Dancing Queen"!! He wasn't bad either I must say!! You were always up for a challenge Maírt but I guess the one of life became too great. Peace always seemed beyond your reach, may it be with you now.

Love & thoughts,
Shannon Ryan



Photomontage: *Margaret Grubb*