

Focal id' Chluais.

A Word in your ear. December'09.



Christmas Long Ago in Gaeltacht Mhúscraí.

Recently I paid a lunchtime visit to Cois Cille in Cill na Martra to have a chat with the group there about what Christmas was like long ago when they were growing up. Christmas, they told me, was better long ago because it was homelier, it wasn't commercialised, and there was no nonsense attached to it. Before Christmas Day itself there was a lot of work to be done in preparation for it. The table and chairs in the house would be put outside the door to be scrubbed. The hob would be cleaned and whitewashed but before this was done the chimney would have to be cleaned with a holly bush to remove the soot. In other words the whole house and yard area got a good cleaning.

The group told me that decorations were also put up in their homes long ago. These decorations included holly and ivy picked from trees in the fields. Candles would be fitted into jam jars filled with sand and these were placed near the windows. These candles would be lit for six nights over the Christmas season, on the nights of the 24th, 25th, 31st, and in January on the nights of the 1st, 5th, and the 6th. The youngest boy in the house would light the candles on the first night and the youngest girl in the house would light the candles for Women's Little Christmas. 'Bloc na Nollag' would be cut and this piece of timber would burn in the fire on Christmas Day. They also told me that there was no meat eaten on Christmas Eve and fish was eaten in a lot of homes. On Christmas Eve Night, socks would be hung up near the hob for Santa to put the presents into. They told me that they would then fast from 12 o' clock on Christmas Eve night until after Mass on Christmas morning. There would be three Masses Christmas Morning, at 8:00, 8:30 and 9:00 o' clock. When they came home from mass they would have their breakfast. The Christmas dinner would then be prepared. The group said that the dinner was very similar to any dinner they would have during the year except that a goose was cooked and stuffing was made from potatoes, mashed with butter and onions. At that time cooking a goose was much more common than cooking a turkey. Currant cake would then be eaten for dessert.

The group then told me about the presents they got for Christmas. These included apples and oranges, pencils and jotters. They said that it was the only time of year that they would see apples and oranges. We then spoke about St Stephens Day. One of the greatest things that happened on this day was a visit from the 'Wren boys'. These were groups of people who would dress up in costumes and go from house to house singing songs and asking for money. Because of their costumes they wouldn't be recognised. The group gave me examples of songs that the 'Wren boys' used to sing. These are, "The Wren, the Wran, the King of all birds, on St Stephens Day got caught in the furze, although he is little his family was great, get up good woman and give us a treat", and "Up with the kettle and down with the pots, give us some money and let us be off."

Christmas has changed a lot and it was fascinating to speak to the group in Cois Cille about how it has evolved over the years. My knowledge of what Christmas was like long ago was very limited until I spoke to them and I have learned that it was a much more straightforward affair and that is why it was better. There was no big expense and waste like there is today. People appreciated what they had and what they got a lot more than my generation. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the group for being so accommodating. I wish them and all of you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

mfg-Meitheal Mhúscraí, Réidh na nDoirí, Maigh Chromtha, Co Chorcaí.

Tel: 026-45661. muscraí@eircom.net

Disclaimer: We take great care to research the information contained in this publication. It is, to the best of our knowledge, accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication. Our aim is to provide useful information to those who receive Focal id' Chluais. MFG-Meitheal Mhúscraí cannot accept any liability for any loss or damage arising as a result of reliance on this information.



Scoraíocht na Nollag.

Scoraíocht na Nollag will be held in the Abbey Hotel on Thursday, the 17th of December, comprising of their delicious 3-course meal, followed by tea/coffee, as well as music, dancing and a raffle.

Due to funding restrictions, a charge of €15 will apply.

We would appreciate if you could call with your bookings to 026 45661 before Friday the 11th of December. Transport available.

An Irish Christmas Blessing.

God grant you lightness in your step,
a smile on every face you meet,

Loved ones gathered at your hearth,
and at your door, good friends to greet,

A holy hymn upon your lips,
a window candle burning bright,

And may the Good Lord bless your Heart
and come to dwell there Christmas night.

Cois Cille, Cill na Martra 026-40999.

Lunch Mon, Tues, Wed, & Friday 12.30pm.

Lunch must be booked in advance.

Transport available at 026 45661.

Massage, 087 6759121 for an appointment.

Chiropodist, 21st of December by appointment.

Transport available at 026-45661.

Cois Cille will be closing for the Christmas holidays on Tuesday the 22nd of December and it will re-open on Monday the 4th of January.

Cuan Barra, Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh.

Lunch, Mondays & Fridays 12.30pm.

To book call Siobhán/Lucy 087 1378099.

Transport available at 026 45661.

Aisling Ní Laoire Beauty Therapist.

Thurs. 17th December, 087 6579894 for appointment.

Dr Ken Harte each Wednesday 12.00 – 1.00pm.

Chiropodist, 14th of December by appointment.

Contact Ann O Donovan, 027 50340/086 3679761

Cuan Barra will be closing for the Christmas holidays on Monday the 21st of December and it will re-open on Monday the 4th of January.

Concert.

There will be a concert in the Ionad Pobail in Cill na Martra on Tuesday, the 22nd at 8pm. There will be local and outside talent there and everybody is welcome. This concert has been organised by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Cill na Martra.

Christmas Carol Concert.

With Duhallow Choral Society and Cór Lachtáin Naofa, Tuesday 8th of December in Cill na Martra Church at 8pm. Admission: Adults €5, Children and Students free.



Log on, Learn.

Learn how to book flights, surf the Internet or send an email to a friend. Transition year students in Coláiste Ghobnatan are offering free, one to one computer training for those aged 65 and over. Following the success of these classes in the spring, these user friendly classes will be available again in January 2010. To sign up today call Nellie in MFG Meitheal Mhúscraí at 026 45661. (Log on, Learn is an Intel, Microsoft, An Post collaboration.)

Answers to last month's puzzles.

Brain Boggler: The answer is a stamp.

Puzzle:

1	9	5
6	2	7
8	4	3

Senior Citizens Party.

The Uibh Laoire parish senior citizens party will take place in Creedons Hotel Inchigeela on Sunday the 13th of December at 3pm. Tickets are available from parish assembly members.

Brain Boggler.

In the middle of the night, a woman woke up to find that it was snowing. "I'm not surprised," she said to her husband. "Well it is Winter," said the husband. "But I can confidently say that in 24 hours time, there will still be no sign of sunshine." How can he be so sure?

