

Focal id' Chluais.



A Word in your ear. February'10.

St Valentine.

Feast Day: February 14th **Died:** 269

Every February, across the country, chocolates, flowers, and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint and why do we celebrate this holiday? The history of Valentine's Day — and its patron saint — is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. So, who was Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite?

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men — his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl — who may have been his jailor's daughter — who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasise his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure.

Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D.

Later, during the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February — Valentine's Day — should be a day for romance. The oldest known valentine still in existence today was a poem written by Charles, Duke of Orleans to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt. The greeting, which was written in 1415, is part of the manuscript collection of the British Library in London, England. Several years later, it is believed that King Henry V hired a writer named John Lydgate to compose a valentine note to Catherine of Valois. In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the seventeenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was common for friends and lovers in all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes. By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct expression of one's feelings was discouraged. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings. Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines in the early 1700s.

In the 1840s, Esther A. Howland began to sell the first mass-produced valentines in America. According to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated one billion valentine cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. (An estimated 2.6 billion cards are sent for Christmas.) Approximately 85 percent of all valentines cards are purchased by women. In addition to Ireland, Valentine's Day is celebrated in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia. Valentine greetings were popular as far back as the Middle Ages (written Valentine's didn't begin to appear until after 1400), and the oldest known Valentine card is on display at the British Museum. The first commercial Valentine's Day greeting cards produced in the U.S. were created in the 1840s by Esther A. Howland. Howland, known as the Mother of the Valentine, made elaborate creations with real lace, ribbons and colourful pictures.

Source: www.History.com

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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.



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 by appointment, 087 6759121.

Art Classes with Pauline Dodds Hyland each

Tuesday. For further details contact 026 40999.

Cuan Barra, Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh.

Lunch, Mondays & Fridays 12.30pm.

Lunch must be booked in advance, to book

call Siobhán/Lucy at 026 47777 or 087 1378099.

Transport available at 026 45661.

Aisling Ní Laoire Beauty Therapist.

18th February, 087 6579894 for appointment.

Dr Ken Harte each Wednesday 12.00 – 1.00pm.

Chiropodist: 22nd February by appointment.

Contact Ann O Donovan 027 50340/086 3679761

Art Classes with Pauline Dodds Hyland each Mon .

For further details contact 026 47777.

Answers to last months Puzzles.

Brain Boggler: The answer is Tom.

Quick Puzzle: The shoe shop lost €50.

In last month's Focal id' Chluais I made an error in one of the puzzles. In the puzzle with the grid I put in an extra number 5 instead of a 6. Here is the puzzle again and I will print the answer next month. I am very sorry and I will do my best to make sure it doesn't happen again.

In order to solve this puzzle, position the remaining numbers, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, so that each string of four vertical, horizontal and diagonal numbers add up to the same total.

8			5
	3	2	
		6	
4		7	1

Brain Boggler.

Where can you find August before July?

Stories, songs and poems of times gone by.

We would like to compile stories, songs and poems from Gaeltacht Mhúscraí of times gone by. If you have a story you heard around the fireside, a poem, song or a prayer you learned going to school or a piece of history about your local area we would love to hear from you. To get in contact with us just ring 026 – 45661.

A Farmer's Prayer to St. Brigid.

Dear Saint Brigid, my hope of spring,

Bless these little fields of mine;

Bless the pastures and the trees;

Bless the butter and the cheese;

Bless the cows with coats of silk;

Bless the brimming pails of milk;

Bless the hedgerows, and I pray;

Bless the seed beneath the clay;

Bless the hay and bless the grass;

Bless the seasons as they pass;

with your blessings, we will prevail,

Dear St, Brigid, Mary of the Gael.

Senior Citizens Party.

The party for senior citizens of Cill na Martra/Réidh na nDoirí will take place on the 21st February from 2:30 – 5:30 pm in the Ionad Áise, Réidh na nDoirí.

Scoraíocht an Déardaoin.

Ionad Áise, Réidh na nDoirí.

An evening of fun and entertainment guaranteed.

Thursday 18th February 2.30-5.00 pm.

Transport available, ring early 026 45661.

Quiz: Similes

Similes are a figure of speech which describe meaning by comparison with something else which is said to have similar properties. Your job is to come up with your own similes. For example everyone has heard of the simile, as strong as an ox, but you could come up with your own version such as, as strong as a bull. Good luck!!!

As Mad as a	As Patient as
As Wise as an	As Brave as a
As Busy as a	As Stubborn as a
As Proud as a	As Old as the
As Pretty as a	As Clean as a
As Clear as a	As Cool as a
As Thick as	As Sober as a
As Daft as a	As Pleased as
As Happy as a	As Fit as a
As Hard as	As Keen as
As Bold as	As Right as
As Good as	As Fresh as a

St Abbey. Feast Day : 11th February

We have many stories about St Abbey. She was a beekeeper. One day raiders came to the western end of the parish of Ballyvourney and stole sheep, horses, pigs and anything else they could take with them. The people were burgled of all they had. The local people followed them and tried to chase them away. St Abbey was seated in her chair carved in stone which was usual for her. She took pity on the people who had lost everything. She got her beehives and let the bees go and soon the whole glen filled with bees. A battle developed between the raiders and the bees. The swarms of bees got the better of the raiders and they had to retreat – a miracle. They left behind all they had stolen, everything was saved. The bees only attacked the raiders and didn't bother anybody else. St Abbey was held in great esteem by the people as they returned home triumphantly.

Sometime ago a tyrant came to the area and began to build a castle in the field north of the Sullane river which was called "Páirc na Biochlainne". There was a rock known as "Carraig an Chaisleáin" at the top end of the field and it was there the tyrant was to build a castle, where Coláiste Íosagáin stands today. He planned to build the castle with slavery and wasn't going to pay the men at all. Apparently St Abbey wasn't pleased with this or with the tyrant. The work began and what was built during the day would be knocked down that night. There was a lookout to see who was knocking it down. As was usual St Abbey was seated in her chair carved in stone up at the top of the slope. She was at the very top of the ridge and had a good view of the surroundings. She would get her bulla or bowl and with one throw she would knock the structure to the ground. The bulla would always return to her. The tyrant gave up and left and everyone was delighted especially the men who were working as slaves. That bowl or bulla is now in a box-like cavity in the south corner of the west gable of Teampall Ghobnatan. It is secured there and people make the sign of the cross three times on it and they also rub their ribbons and rosary beads to it to obtain a blessing. I myself rub the keys of my car to it always. The bulla or bowl is made of agate.

It was God himself who chose Abbey and her guardian angel guided her to come here. Her spirit is still here and the people have greater devotion than ever to her. We will be forever indebted to her for the way she supported us and protected us over 1500 years and is still doing so today.

Teampall Ghobnatan during Cromwellian times.

This was a disastrous time for the Irish people. The Confederation failed, Owen Roe died and Cromwell landed. In Macroom Bishop McEgan was defeated by Broghill and later hanged. The Castle was burned. The people of Ballyvourney heard of Cromwell's doings in Drogheda, Wexford and Clonmel, and rather than see horses stabled in their beloved church, they unroofed it and hid the beams behind a rock. This is how Carraig an Adhmaid got its name. The golden statue was buried at the same time. It is likely that Mass was said in the roofless building for some time. Under Cromwell the lands of the O'Herlihy's were given to John Colthurst as proprietor, Patrick O'Herlihy had to leave home and the site of Teampall Ghobnatan became non-catholic property in the eyes of the law. This should have put an end to devotion on Gort na Tiobhratan. Far from it. From reports furnished to the Government, we learn that devotion to St Gobnait sustained the people during the Penal Times. They heard Mass secretly and came openly to do the Rounds as they had always done.



