

Irish Kilt Society Newsletter

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From the Communications Officer

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**Merry Christmas
to you all
from
your editor**



Anything in this newsletter is the view of the writer – not of the society – which as yet has no “view”.

As so often at this time of year, I have to apologise for late assembly of the newsletter. The usual weak excuse I am afraid – having to earn a living gets in the way of fun!

News:

Frank continues to have problems with his knees and has to return to hospital shortly.

The Sporrán Clan

Frank drew my attention to <http://www.sporranclan.org/> that has a wonderful gallery of kilt related photos.

I contacted the webmaster for more information about them and Jamie replied.

“I am delighted if you would be prepared to promote the Sporrán Clan in some small way. As you probably gathered most of the clan members are gay but we do have quite a number of bisexuals and also a few straights.

The latter are of course 'gay friendly' and indeed might have a gay side to them. They seem to love the clan and they contribute as much as their gay counterparts.

Whilst the group started initially as a solely gay one, I did feel that there was a wholesome camaraderie enjoyed by men generally and it seemed churlish to exclude some of our straight friends who had the same interest as us (ie wearing the kilt and Scottish culture). What I have tried to do over the years is develop the interest of members from the classic (but often very boring) up-



the-kilt shot -so to speak - to cover discussion on wider areas and topics pertaining to Scottish Culture generally and I now think that quite a good balance has now been achieved.

The bulletin board has roughly 3000 posts over approx. 80 topics. We cover member introductions, how to wear the kilt properly, where to wear the kilt, kilt activities, kilting events, kilting news, highland games reports pictures and news, info on the Tartan Army, rugby, football, of course Kilted Hunk of the day !

We also have topics such as kilt humour, embarrassing moments, Tartan (ie know your tartan), Best of Scotland - where to stay, where to eat, where to drink, best event, history, culture, military info, quiz time, items for sale, and so on - oh and finally 'Club Class' - a special restricted area where members who have contributed to the site to a prescribed degree are rewarded with the freedom to post more freely and yes, that means it is more adult.

So to give you a picture of what the Clan is about - we promote kilt wearing vigorously - we celebrate the wearing of the kilt -we celebrate Scottish (celtic) culture- we celebrate the love of kilted guys.

We welcome all men to the clan but they have to accept that as undoubtedly there is a gay agenda that might mean a degree of banter and chat about kilted men and the odd picture. That said there is a lot to interest the metrosexual broadminded kilted man generally."

This is one of the best and most informative websites on the subject of kilt wearing I have seen and it is well worth a look.

Tartan fillies

Also on the web is <http://www.scotwebstore.com/> with their Christmas present edition the highlight of which is <http://scotwebstore.com/browse.html?category=1226:view=1> a link to a new technology allowing garments to be woven in silk on demand in any of 402 tartans including a good selection of Irish tartans. The sample item shown costs about £145 but scantier items are available.



Correct Dress for Irish Dance?

The Irish Dancing and Culture International Magazine is running a poll on dance fashion in Irish Dance in their latest newsletter:

“The Big Issue /Fashion Show or Feis?”

As we receive hundreds of letters, emails & faxes in our Letters Bag each month, we thought we'd include a letter here for you to respond or give a reply to. Then, in an up-and-coming issue of Irish Dancing & Culture Magazine, we'll print the best replies!

I am a traditional musician who has played Irish dance music in Ireland, for over 40 years. I play mainly for ceili and sets, but I have done some Feis work and we get a lot of exhibition step-dancing at events we play for. However, I try to avoid Feiseanna now, because I abhor the fashion show it has become, which has nothing to do with Irish culture or Irish dancing. I mean the wigs, the make-up, the fake tans and the Flash Gordon costumes. I have no doubt that this is ego-tripping for mums who like dressing up their little girls to look like fashion models, and I'm sure the little girls love it too - but it has nothing to do with Irish dancing. I have spoken to dance teachers in Ireland who tell me that the Americans started the fashion

over-kill a few years ago, and the rest of the world just had to follow or lose out. Would any dance adjudicator really mark down a competitor who was a winning dancer, but had no wig or make-up...has it really got that bad?

Seán Quinn www.glensmusic.com

Traditional Recordings from the Glens of Antrim

For those with a view Submit your reply by emailing bigissue@irishdancing.com ”

Import your kilt?

We are specialists in stitching & manufacturing of all sorts of kilts, highland and Scottish wears and accessories. Since we are into the business and are fully aware of the Scottish and highland customer requirements, thus we can provide the best quality of these wares. We manufacturer of Traditional & Fashion Kilts in any tartan and in any other fabric.

Apart from the traditional kilts, we have taken the pledge and started off with denim, corduroy and other material kilts like leather kilts as well. We offer you our special prices in this regards. Regarding Buckles we are also manufacture in Brass, Nickel and Metallic with all designs like Celtic, engraving, embossing buckles. We produce quality leather Sporrans in Plain, with Hair & in Meal head.

You can visit our web site www.siderinternational.com & select the items which you are interested.

Leather Kilts	US\$ 165.00
Traditional Tartan Kilts	US\$ 27.00
Fashion Denim Kilts	US\$ 30.00
Glengarry	US\$ 10.00
Balmorals	US\$ 11.00
Sporran in Plain Black Leather	US\$ 12.00
Sporran With Rabbit Hair Leather	US\$ 18.00
Sporran With Rabbit Hair Brass Mount	US\$ 25.00
Kilt Belt Buckle Brass Made	US\$ 5.00
Kilt Belt Universal Size	US\$ 6.00
Kilt Pin in Celtic Design	US\$ 1.50

All above prices are **FOB**. Freight will be added at actual.

Please send us your fresh inquires regarding this items. Hope you fund the best quality & competitive prices.

Thank you

Kind regards

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History spot



This picture shows the Irish Nationalist youth movement “Fianna na hÉireann” practicing signalling in the Rotunda Gardens, Dublin around 1911. This movement was founded by Countess Markievicz (whose own uniform is on display in the galleries of the Sligo Folk Park). It was fostered by Liam Mellows (third from the left) and as can be seen drew uniform influences from a number of sources including the kilt and reflections of American Boy Scout uniforms.

Na FIANNA ÉIREANN was founded in 1909 with the object of educating the youth of Ireland in national ideas and re-establishing the independence of the nation.

The Gaelic League and Gaelic Athletic Association, founded in the last quarter of the 19th century, had made great strides. They catered for the young adult population. But the boys of Ireland were neglected.

Meanwhile what was seen as a new anti-national menace in the shape of the Baden-Powell Boy Scouts, threatened to spread throughout the country. The scouts made a declaration of allegiance to the King of England.

THE COUNTESS

One day in 1909 Countess Constance Markievicz read a newspaper report of one such loyalist parade. She thought it tragic that 800 Irish lads should parade in front of the King's representative in Ireland and salute the Union Jack, the flag that flew in triumph over their oppressed motherland. She would do something about it and decided to found an organisation for Irish boys. It was decided to contact a schoolmaster who would recommend boys who might be interested in such an organisation. The Countess told a Unionist friend she hoped to form a boy scout organisation for nationalists and desired to contact a schoolmaster who would be sympathetic. He sent her to Westland Row C.B.S. The school-master introduced the Countess to eight boys and she launched the Organisation by inviting them to her own house, where she held the first parade.



None of the members knew drill, semaphore, or any other scouting skill. Little progress was made and the Countess became rather depressed at times. Then they decided to go on a camp, and the joys and tribulations of a Fianna camp really convinced her of the possibilities of the Organisation. It also convinced her that the organisation would have to be run more on the basis of a "Boys' Republic" and an army, as opposed to the English Scouts' system or organisation by sections and patrols. She secured a hall at 34 Lower Camden Street and invited Bulmer Hobson to assist, as he had previous experience of handling boys, having run a boys' organisation in Belfast. At his request she called the organisation Na Fianna Eireann.

The first meeting was held in the new hall. It was largely attended and An Chead Sluagh was formed. Con Colbert joined Na Fianna that historic evening and soon rose to the rank of Captain. This meeting, which was presided over by Bulmer Hobson, marked the actual founding of the organisation and its launching on a national scale. The date was August 16, 1909.



When the Executive examined the financial situation in 1912, it realised that progress was jeopardised by lack of funds. Money was needed to finance the spread of the organisation. Liam Mellows volunteered to give up his job and become a full time Fianna organiser at a salary of ten shillings a week.

He began his work in April 1913 and never relaxed his ceaseless activity for the Republic until his death before a Free State firing squad on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. 1922.

When he commenced his great task as first Fianna organiser, he was met with indifference almost everywhere. but within a year the future of Na Fianna in Ireland was assured. The organisation spread throughout the country due mainly to his great organising ability. The Fianna established hurling and football teams, pipe bands and ambulance-corps, in every part of the country.

It went on to take an active part in the events leading to the 1916 rising and to this day remains an active organization within the nationalist movement although kilts are no longer part of the uniform.

A more detailed history of the group may be found at:

<http://www.fiannaireann.com/>