

St Patrick's Cross

The St Patrick's Cross — the red x-shaped cross on the contentious *Union Jacques* of 1801 — is regarded by some people as a pre-reformation ideological symbol unconnected with any/ and or more recent "interest" groups.

Did St Patrick introduce this cross as an alternative to the Celtic Cross? Or was it designed by someone else later? Does anyone have any other information? [The following info was down-loaded from FOTW internet site. Inserted bracketting is the work of the down-loader:-FB]

Three theories have been put forward.

- **The 'old flag' theory:**
This is the theory that the St Patrick's cross may have been an old but uncommon flag of Ireland. This theory has been supported by a selection of maps, seals and drawings that show saltire flags being used in Ireland at various times during the 17th and 18th centuries.
- **The 'Duke of Leinster' theory:**
The arms of the Duke of Leinster [Fitzgeralds], the highest-ranking member of the Irish aristocracy [since the Norman Invasion, 1169] was a red saltire on a white field and the duke was a founding member of the Knights of St Patrick [1783]. This theory holds that the Order may have included the duke's arms in its regalia as a compliment to him, but contemporary sources contain nothing to support this view.
- **The 'St Patrick's-Day badge' theory:**
It was a common custom, from at least the early 17th to the mid-19th century, to wear crosses made of paper or ribbon on 17 March, St Patrick's Day. The Saint Patrick's Cross in the regalia of the order may have been inspired by these popular badges. However, surviving examples of such badges come in many colours and they were invariably worn upright - as equal-armed crosses rather than as saltires.

Ireland: St Patrick's Cross by Vincent Morley

Last modified: 2002-07-05 by Rob Raeside

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Links: Flags of the World/FOTW homepage |

Snakes

The tale of St Patrick ringing his bell and banishing Snakes/Nathracha Nimhe from Eire is nowadays regarded as an allegory. [There's another one in the Book of Genesis].

Ireland never had "real" snakes, but in druidic and nature 'religions', the snake is a very powerful symbol. Among other things, snakes represent rebirth and fertility, healing and knowledge. Snakes can still be seen in the medical *caduceus*.

Shamrocks

Legend has it that the Shamrock/*Seam-róg*/young clover (*seamair*/clover) with its triple leaf and single stem, was used by St Patrick to demonstrate the then still controversial concept of a Tri-une God-head to a sceptical bunch of pagan nature-worshippers! Clover is still used in herbal remedies to cleanse the lungs of *impurities*. And as a good luck charm.

Celtic Lore

Druids (*darach*; oak), (*drafocht*; magic) combined the functions of priest, astronomer, genealogist, philosopher, magistrate, scholar, and physician. To the Celts, their druids and *brehons* (law-makers) were closely analogous to the Brahmins of India, the Magi of Persia, [Iran] and the Pharoanic Priests.

Apparently the 360° circle on the Celtic Cross is an ancient astrolab/compass. The circle also represents the Sun & the cross, the four corners of the universe

Variations of Baal/Belinus/Beal/Baalith are thought to be personifications of the male & female Sun-Gods of the Celts, or Celtic Apollos & Minervas. The sun-as-major-deity seems to have been acknowledged in Egypt, Nth Italy, Austria and Gaul before the cult spread to the offshore islands.

Beal is also a healer and in charge of the welfare of cattle and appears to have an affinity with the Phoenician and Canaan Baal and the worship of the Golden Calf. What makes this affinity even more interesting is that the Druids as well as the Phoenicians identified this, their major deity, with the Sun, while the moon gradually wanes in iconic power.

Fire Festivals/Bonfires /Fireworks were held periodically to mark the cycle of the year and as symbols of various divinities or celestial bodies.

Ceremonial fires were kindled from oakwood, and the first fire was ritually lit at dusk, on the Hill of Tara, by the Arch-Druid. Fires were then lit on hills to the east, west, south and north and so on till local Hearthsfires would in their turn be lit from embers taken from those initial fires.

So, when the c50 year old Patrick lit his Pascal Fire on the Hill of Slane, he would have been challenging the centuries old Celtic system.

Saints & Scribes

After just on thirty years of relentless preaching, Bishop Patrick retires to Saul in Co Down, where he dies 17 March 461, coinciding with the Northern Equinox. And Eireann is on its way towards becoming the *Land of Saints and Scribes*.

Ironically, while Europe is engulfed in the *Dark Ages* over the next few centuries — celibate bands of Irish Monks will take Latin literacy and Roman Christianity back to Britain and the Mainland.

Later, as inter-dynastic disputes over access to the throne of *Nua Sasanaigh* (1066 onwards) are being resolved, and the Feudal System is forcibly imposed over the Atlantic Isles; the anniversary of St Patrick's death gradually emerges as a surrogate Irish National Day, particularly in the USA, and later, Australia.

Nowadays, a variety of cultural events, sporting activities and social gatherings like *céilidhs*, balls, dinner dances, pageants, and parades are held around the world, as are — religious services, processions, pilgrimages and Lenten Rites involving penitential infusions of commercial fluids...ach sin é scéal eile! FB

Melbourne Matters

Library Additions

Dhá Leabhar filíochta le Michael Davitt
Scuais.

*Freacnairc Mhearcair/The Oomph
of Quicksilver* [Buíochas do
Nóirín a thug an ceann sin dúinn.]

Diolaim D'Abairtí Dúchasacha

An Foclóir Beag, Gaeilge>Gaeilge

Lámhleabhar Seanfhocal

Scéal Dhá Chistin (Fistéip)

13 Cartoon adventures in Irish

Bain Úsáid as an Leabharlann

An tAifreann
St Gregory's Doncaster
Sunday 02 March 6.00pm

Each year, people come from far and wide to celebrate Mass in the Gaelic Language and hear the Choir of Cumann Gaeilge na hAstráile, directed by Nóirín, (with supper afterwards) in honour of St Patrick, Patron Saint of Ireland. The Mass is held in the church of St Gregory the Great, Doncaster.

St Patrick began converting the Irish Celts to the Christian Faith in 432BP. It is said that one of the reasons for his success was that he'd learned the oral Gaelic language as a teenager. That was while he was enslaved to Milchu in Co Antrim after he was kidnapped by sea-faring Celtic Marauders. After six years he managed to escape to the Mainland of Europe (C409) where he commenced theological studies. FB

Irish National Day
Gaelic Park

Perry Rd Keysborough
Sunday 23 March 11.00am

Games:

Hurling Football Tug-o-War

Music, Dance

Life-be-in it

Lá fhéile Pádraig

Cumann Gaeilge na h'Astráile intends participating in the St Patrick's Day Parade, to be held on Sunday, 16th March this year. All members, partners, friends and offspring are invited to assemble in Bourke St between Queen and Elizabeth Streets from 12.00pm onwards. The parade moves off at 1.00pm along Bourke Street, Spring Street, to Wellington Pde ending at the Treasury Gdns

where bands, singers, and dancers will entertain us from 2.00-5.00pm. A fund-raising raffle, (\$2.00 per ticket) with first prize of a return to trip to Europe, courtesy of *Shamrock Travel*, will be drawn, 4.30pm. The second prize is one week for two people at *Ballinosollis*, Mallacoota, courtesy of *Margaret and Anthony Devlin*. Third prize is a gold Shaeffer pen.

"Scairdeitleoir"

Le déanaí, le linn dom bheith ar saoire thall san Iarthar, thug mé cuairt ar an Irish Club i Subiaco, Perth. Oíche Dé Luain a bhí ann agus bhí slua mór bailithe le chéile ag damhsa seiteanna, ag seinm ceoil agus ag amhránaíocht. De ghnáth bíonn Rang Gaeilge ar siúl freisin, ach ní raibh tosnú déanta acu fós. Bhuaileas le Brid agus Máire—beirt atá ag obair go dian chun an Gaeilge a chur chun cinn ansin. Tagann grúpa le chéile le haghaidh comhrá Gaeilge gach oíche Dé Céadaoin. Má tharlaíonn ann tú, téir isteach agus beidh fíorchaoín fáilte romhat. Siŭn

I measc na réaltóga

Ba é an teach ósta, *Leinster Arms*, an áit le bheith ann nuair a tharla ár *Scaoil Amach* i mí na Nolag, 2002. Bhí lón blasta ag na foghlaimeoirí agus a gcáirde maraon le comhrá is seanchas. Bhí siamsa briomhar á sholáthar i dteannta milseoga den scoth. I measc na roghanna bhí ceol agus fíon, leann agus réaltóga a leithéid de fuirsire "saofa" *Muiris 11*; in

eineacht le amhránaithe—*Paula, Narelle, Sorcadh, Cáit, agus Muiris 1*, aithriseoir dosháraithe, *Aine*, agus an cairdineór cuma-sach, *Rachel*. Bhí ár nGaeltacht féin againn an tráthnóna sin. Buíochas le gach duine a bhí rannpháirteach ann. Deis é ár gcuid Gaeilge a usáid i dtimpeallacht sócúlach agus fáilteach. FB & SM

The *Leinster Arms*, Gold St Collingwood, was the place to be for our 2002 break up function. ILAA members and friends tucked into an appetising lunch accompanied by lively conversation and di-glossal banter. Dessert included a melange of vibrant entertainment starring—comedian, *Muiris 11*, soloists: *Paula, Narelle, Sarah, Kate* and *Muiris 1*, reciter, *Annie*, and accordionist, *Rachel*. Patrons at other tables joined in the revelry and even bought tickets for the raffle. Many thanks to the organisers; entertainers; those who kindly donated prizes; the ticketsellers; the convivial participators, and the manager of the *Leinster Arms*. FB.

Daonscoil 2003

Our President Reports ...ctd P1

...hunt for the elusive *leirs* which were reported to be in the vicinity during the week!

In addition to morning classes at five different levels from beginning to fluent, participants were able to choose from a range of electives including grammar, reading, drama, dancing and singing in the afternoon. Father Michael celebrated the Mass each morning.

My gratitude goes to everyone who contributed to make the Daonscoil such a success.

I would also like to acknowledge the donation from Foras na Gaeilge towards the running of the Daonscoil.

I leave you with the closing words from the Daonscoil –

“Sé mo thuarim féin agus tré caint le daoine eile, go bhfuil an dteanga beo

bríomhar. Lean ar agaidh leis an sár obair nuair a rachaidh sibh abhaile.

Coimeád i dteagmháil le cheile.

Seo seanfhocal a chuireann síos ar an spiorad a bhí le feiceáil sa campa. KM

‘Ar scáith a cheile a mhaireann na daoine’

Spraioi

Dá n-abrofaí duine liom agus mé ar ais i nDeisceart Dhoire go díreach sula dtáinig mé chun na hAstráile go mbeinn ag múineadh na Gaeilge thall taobh istigh de mhí, is éard a déarfainn leis an té sin ná go bhfuil tú glan as do mheabhair!

Caithfidh mé féin a admháil gur ábhar iontais a bhí ann domsa nuair a fuair mé amach gurb é sin go díreach an rud a bheinn ag déanamh ag tús mí Eanáir sa Ghaeltacht is láidre, is mó agus is Gaeilí dá bhfuil ann ar dhroim an domhain - Baccus Marsh.

Anois, breis agus mí i ndiaidh dom pilleadh ón ‘Ghaeltacht’ - iar-radh orm píosa a scríobh faoin chúrsa – bhuel cad is féidir liom a rá fá dtaobh de!!

I dtús báire – caithfidh mé a rá gur tháinig feabhas mór ar mo chuid ‘Gabbilga’ – ach níl a fhios agam faoin Ghaeilge.

Is dóigh liom go n-antofaí gach aon duine a bhí i láthair go raibh Spraioi agus craic ó thus go deireadh na seachtaine againn go léir – agus nach iad sin na rudaí is tábhachtaí.

Agus dar liom, is amhlaidh is fearr a bhíonn an spraioi is an spórt nuair atá sé ceangailte leis an Ghaeilge agus an cultúr Gaelach – rud a bhí ag Daonscoil na hAstráile 2003. Rinne ach an duine a seacht ndícheall le páirt a ghlaacadh sna himeachtaí éagsúla (go háirithe iad siúd ón bhunrang – an rang ab fherr) agus chuir sé sin go mór le maiteas na seachtaine.

Mar fhocal scóir ar dhaonscoil na bliana seo, ba mhaith liom féin buíochas a ghabháil le gach duine as féaradh na fáilte a chur romham agus tá súil agam go léanfaidh sibh ar aghaidh leis an sár-obair atá á dhéanamh agaibh leis an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa tír seo. Ar an bhliain seo chugainn agus mé ar ais i ndulaíocht an gheimhridh in Eirinn, beidh mé ag smaoinreamh oraibh go léir agus sibh ag labhairt ‘Gabbilga’ bhreá faoi ghriain gheal na hAstráile. (*aistriúchán L.7*)

Pól O Gribín

PS *Doire Abú*

Sceitimíni Bacchus

Over the past few weeks all we've been hearing from Cumann People is "Daonscoil 2003, Daonscoil 2003"!! Anyone'd think they'd just come back from Club Med, and we all know what goes on there!!!

Those of us – with enduring memories of school incarcerations in previous incarnations– who always avoid residential camps, are getting quite concerned about reports of their "iompar"!

The amount of caint, ceol, comhrá, cruiscini lán, ceangal, agus cuartaíochta that went on is a worry. And, we're having to éist le all that rámhaille about rince, rírá, rancás, raidhse and ragairne.

At no time have we heard any of them mention being dragged as leaba roimh fainne geal an lae for meabhrú go domhain, gleacaíocht, or gealacháin! Neither has there been clámhsáin about unidentifiable bia, watery brachán, soggy glasraí, feoil leathair, or having to smuggle out letters ag impi ar na Mhámianna nó an Slánathóir to rescue them from múinteoiri applying snas agus blas to their vocal chords and inflicting a lot of sceitimíni teanga orthu in Bacchus Marsh!!! What was the story about the God Bacchus again?FB

Daonscoil 2003

Fun-Times

If someone had told me in South Derry, before I came to Australia, that I'd be teaching Gaelic inside a month after arriving, I would have said "you're clean out of your mind". But I must admit that I was indeed surprised to find that's exactly what I would be doing; and doing it in the strongest, most enthusiastic, and most Gaelic place on the ridge of the earth — Bacchus Marsh!

.... In the first place I must say there was a tremendous improvement in my "Gabbilga", don't know about the Gaeilge though! However, I do know that everyone who was there had great fun from start to finish.

In my opinion, having fun and playing games in conjunction with learning the language and culture makes it all so much easier. And that's what happened at *Daonscoil 2003*. Everyone did their best to participate in the different activities (especially the Bun-Rang — the best class, of course) and this added to the success of the week.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone for the welcome you all gave me and I hope you'll keep up your excellent work of promoting the Gaelic language in this country.

Next January, when I'm back home in the depths of the Irish winter, I will be thinking of you all talking your *Gabbilga Bhreá* under the brilliant Australian sun. *Paul Gribbin*



Sydney Winter School 2003

We will have a Winter School here in Sydney over the long weekend in June. It will begin about 7.00pm on Friday the 6th and finish on Monday the 9th. We will be at the *Chevalier Resource Centre* in Kensington, which is approx 15 minutes from the airport and the same from the CBD. It's an ex-seminary. Almost everybody will have a single room and the accommodation is in the same building as the classes. We have a provisional program that would excite the thousands!

We're looking forward to a large crowd from various places all over Australia. But there is a limit on the number able to stay at the venue. The application form will be available shortly and it would be wise to send it back to us as soon as you can. The cost is \$220. This includes accommodation (single), all meals, classes, and a concert in the Irish Club. We also hope to be able to arrange lifts from the airport. More information available from Mark. Email: allbio@iprimus.com.au

Breathnóireachta/Viewpoints

This Newsletter is produced by volunteers. The *E-Team* is grateful to everyone who contributed to and helped put the autumn edition of the newsletter together. If, due to spatial constrictions, any item has been abstracted or formatted unsatisfactorily; or we've made any unintentional factual, spelling, grammatical, or other mistakes, do let us know. We'll be happy to correct them in the next issue. All viewpoints expressed in this newsletter are the personal opinion(s) of each individual scribe and, unless specified, are not to be construed as having the *Cumann's imprimatur*.

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**Cumann Gaeilge na hAstráile Teo
IRISH LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AUST INC**

The Irish Language Association of Australia is a non-profit organisation, run entirely by volunteers, whose aim is to promote the Irish Gaelic language as a second language within the Australian community.

The ILAA welcomes absolute beginners and people of more advanced levels with an interest in the *Gaelic* language and *Irish* culture.

Established eleven years ago, the ILAA offers structured weekly language classes to students of all ages, nationalities, and walks of life, across a range of levels – beginners, basic, intermediate, advanced – as well as the opportunity to practice and converse together.

Members receive a quarterly newsletter; access to the library; and also enjoy weekly singing and informal conversation sessions; as well as participation in occasional social events, and a residential summerschool.

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