

ISSUE 3 · APRIL 2021

# THE CRAIC

CCE O'Neill Malcom Newsletter

## To our readers:

Dear Members and Friends of the O'Neill Malcom Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann,

Some of you will fondly remember the Branch e-Newsletter, "The Living Tradition," in the early part of this century which featured articles and other information on traditional Irish music, dance, Gaeilge, poetry and more. Karen Ashbrook was our esteemed editor for many seasons.

Jacqueline Zito is now directing our social media and other communication outlets. Please let her know if you have anything you would like added to the newsletter; we want this to be a place to share ideas, events, and joys and sorrows. We are releasing a newsletter at the beginning of every month.

In these unprecedented Covid-19 times -I'm sure you've heard those words a lot recently - I hope that the CCE community and the newsletter offer you some hope and respite.

Beannacht Dé ar an obair / God bless the work,

James T. "Jesse" Winch, Cathaoirleach/ Chair O'Neill Malcom Branch

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## Ancient Ireland and the Spring Equinox

What's between St. Brigid's day (celebrating the 1st day of spring on February 1st) and Beltane (celebrating May day)? The spring equinox, of course!

In Ancient Ireland, the spring equinox -along with being the period in which the sun moves north across the equator- was a solar festival celebrating the time when the day and night are of equal length. It is not known whether there was a name for this festival within Celtic culture, but it is believed to be related to the northern goddess Ēostre or Ostara, which in turn inspired the Christian festival of Easter.

The equinox was of great importance to the Stone Age Irish. Evidence of this can be found in cairn temples at Knowth and Loughcrew. Knowth is one of the largest Neolithic cairn temples, with a 100ft passage that lets in the sun to fully light up its chambers on the mornings of the spring and autumn equinox, when day and night are equal.

Ēostre or Ostara was the goddess of spring associated with the festival of the spring equinox. During this time, eggs were used a symbol of rebirth and the beginning of new life and a hare or rabbit was the symbol of the goddess and fertility.

Both these symbols were adopted by Christianity and are still seen today during Easter, often together with hot cross buns. These buns are another ancient symbol, stemming from the baking of sweet buns as an offering for an idol.



## Bog Band Gets a Shoutout!

WTOP AND RTE FEATURE THE BOG BAND!

This past Saint Patrick's Day was far different from the celebrations of years past, but the Bog Band didn't let that stop them from spreading socially-distanced Irish cheer! They celebrated this year by making home visits to perform a few sets of the music and dance of Ireland on the front lawns of members of our community.

WTOP did a story on the Bog Band!

Check out WTOP's first and second cuts of the audio story, and read the web story!



The Bog Band was also featured in a story from RTÉ News!

Check out the video here.



# Announcements, Events, and Updates

A note from the CCE Youth Officer, Jessica Zito:

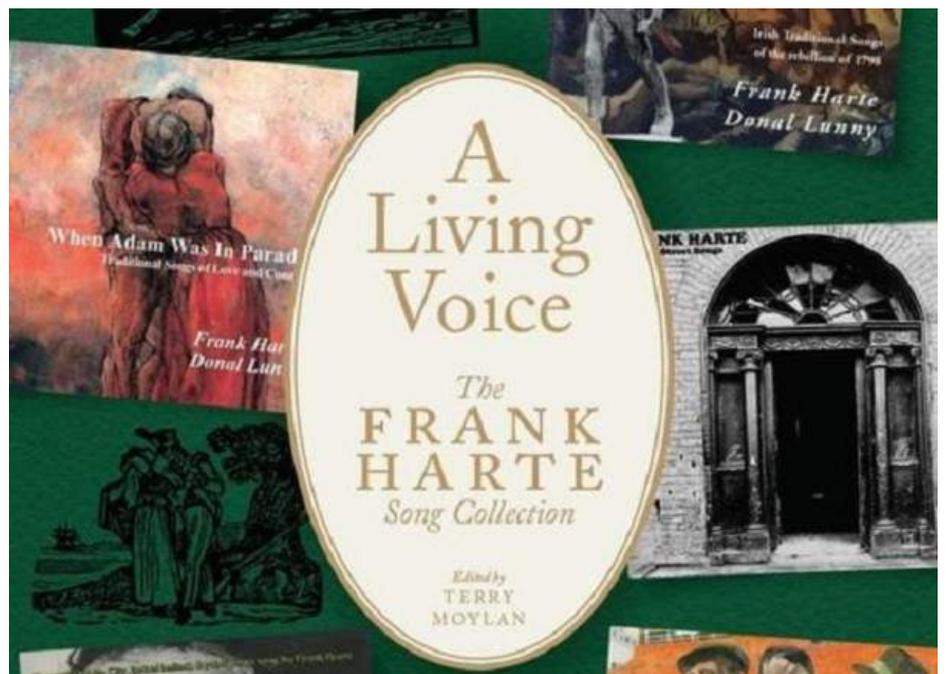
Hello everyone!

We have been loving the Covid tunes that you have been sending in- so keep sending them! We will send out the video compilation by mid-April.

Here are just a few reminders:

- Please limit the video to one tune or a short set
- Please send a video recording (not just audio)
- Everyone can participate!
- Please email them to [jes.zito@gmail.com](mailto:jes.zito@gmail.com)

A major new book, *A Living Voice: The Frank Harte Song Collection*, by Terry Moylan, will be launched this March! It includes transcriptions of the recordings of the Dublin singer Frank Harte, who died in 2005, and covers the entirety of his recorded work, amounting to 198 songs and poems.



## Announcements, Events, and Updates

- Tune in to the traditional Irish music on the air the first Saturday of every month, hosted by branch member (and long-time whistle player) Kevin Donleavy. Listen at WTJU.net, and the broadcast time is 10 am till 12 noon. (On the radio in central Virginia, you can listen at 91.1 on the FM dial.) Note from Kevin: There's a big variety of music on these programs, and great singers from over the decades, like Dolores Keane, Andy Irvine, and Joe Heaney. Join us and explore the superb fiddlers, concertina players, box players, and pipers of the Irish tradition! 
- The CCE O'Neill Malcom Branch now has digital membership cards for anyone who wants one! Please send an email to Lauraileen O'Connor (lauraileen@gmail.com) with your name and email, and she will send the digital membership card(s). If they have trouble with printing, she can print on cardstock and mail them to you!

### From the GWCC:

- Join the GWCC virtual 'Happy Hour' on the first Friday of each month! While the pandemic continues, GWCC President Bridget Curran will host a Zoom 'Happy Hour' on the first Friday of each month. If you're not already on the GWCC mailing list and would like to join in to catch up with everyone, please drop Bridget a note at [btcurran04@yahoo.com](mailto:btcurran04@yahoo.com) and she'll send you the Zoom info. We'd love to see you! 
- GWCC has started a monthly 'Virtual Ceili' Concert Series to help fill the void of missing ceilis. The concerts start at 7pm on the fourth Sunday of the month -- that would be the last hour of the monthly GWCC ceili. You can do more than just enjoy the music -- a few figures of a set dance, modified for dancing without a full set and called by Ann Marie Breheny, are a feature of these concerts.
  - MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR APRIL 25th, when we'll enjoy tunes will be from Laura Byrne and Billy McComiskey. All concerts can be viewed live on the GWCC YouTube channel and Facebook page; past concerts are always available on the GWCC YouTube channel. Bonus - these concerts are free, but donations to support the Club's efforts are appreciated. 



# Announcements, Events, and Updates

## We're Getting Ready for Summer!

- From April 13 - June 8: Keith Carr will be teaching online classes at The Washington Conservatory of Music. Classes will be in Irish banjo & mandolin and backing tunes on guitar & bouzouki, and will run on Tuesdays from April 13 to June 8. Plan on 9 sessions. Please email Keith for more information! (keithcarr@mac.com). Register online at <https://glenechopark.org/classes>.

From April 13 - June 8: Keith Carr will be teaching online classes at The Washington Conservatory of Music. Classes will be in Irish banjo & mandolin and backing tunes on guitar & bouzouki, and will run on Tuesdays from April 13 to June 8. Plan on 9 sessions. Please email Keith for more information! (keithcarr@mac.com). Register online at <https://glenechopark.org/classes>.

### **Celtic Backup for Bouzouki & Guitar**

Tuesdays 7-8 pm April 13 to June 8

Best for advanced beginner & intermediate level players. Covers techniques of accompaniment for jigs, reels, hornpipes, etc., with focus on rhythm patterns, strumming/picking technique, and constructing chord progressions. Well known session tunes serve as examples. Students must already have basic chord proficiency on their instrument. More info: [email.keithcarr@mac.com](mailto:email.keithcarr@mac.com). This class takes place via Zoom, and the link to participate will be provided to registered students only by the instructor prior to the first day of class. Register online at <https://glenechopark.org/classes>

### **Irish Tenor Banjo & Mandolin**

Tuesdays 8-9 pm April 13 to June 8

Best for advanced beginner & intermediate level players. Covers Irish melody style playing for mandolin & four-string banjo tuned GDAE. Students must already have basic proficiency with playing their instrument and be capable of playing and learning melodies by ear. Well-known session tunes serve as examples and include reels, jigs, hornpipes. More info: [email.keithcarr@mac.com](mailto:email.keithcarr@mac.com). Minimum age 15. This class takes place via Zoom, and the link to participate will be provided to registered students only by the instructor prior to the first day of class. Register online at <https://glenechopark.org/classes>

- From May 12 - June 16: Tina Eck will be teaching at The Washington Conservatory of Music. Classes will be in Irish tin whistle and flute and will run on Wednesdays from May 12 to June 16. Plan on 6 sessions. Please email Tina for more information! (Tinaeck@yahoo.com)
- MAD Week, July 18-23: Registration will be live by Saint Patrick's Day! We know summer may seem far way, but it'll be here before you know it, so please put this in your calendars! The leadership team has decided it is in everyone's best interest to plan for a virtual camp in 2021 for the week of July 18-23.

### **Advanced Beginner to intermediate Irish Flute and Tin Whistle (6 Sessions)**

Wednesdays	7-8pm	May 12 to	June 9
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Combined class for advanced beginning players. Some basic knowledge of the instrument, fingering, simple scales, and simple tunes is required. Explore the rich mostly aural tradition of Irish music and expand your repertoire. Irish tunes learned by ear: jigs, reels, hornpipes, polkas. Learn about fingering, ornamentation, breath control, intonation, basic repertoire & listening recommendations. Bring Irish flute or tin whistle in key of D and recording device. More info: [Tinaeck@yahoo.com](mailto:Tinaeck@yahoo.com). Minimum age 13. This class takes place via Zoom, and the link to participate will be provided to registered students only by the instructor prior to the first day of class.

### **Intermediate to Advanced Irish Flute and Tin Whistle (6 Sessions)**

Wednesdays	8-9pm	May 12 to	June 9
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Builds on the Advanced Beginners Irish Flute/Tin Whistle class. Fundamental skills required. Explores additional repertoire, ornamentation, phrasing; also focuses on tone, intonation, breath control, session tunes, learning by ear. We explore jigs, reels, hornpipes, polkas, and other tuneforms. Minimum age 13. Bring an Irish simple system flute or tin whistle in the key of D and recording device. More info: [Tinaeck@yahoo.com](mailto:Tinaeck@yahoo.com). This class takes place via Zoom, and the link to participate will be provided to registered students only by the instructor prior to the first day of class.

A longer fall/winter semester (9 sessions) will commence in September 2021 and will also offer an absolute beginner whistle class



## The Culkin's Irish Soda Bread

Jesse Winch can vouch for this amazing soda bread, and recommended that I reach out to Sean and Denise Culkin for their recipe! (Thank you, Culkins!) -Jacqueline Zito

### Irish Soda Bread:

#### 1. Combine dry Ingredients:

- 3 ½ cups of Flour (½ regular, ½ whole wheat)
- 1 Tablespoon Baking Powder
- 1 Teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1 Teaspoon Salt
- ½ Cup Sugar
- 1 ½ Cup Raisins

#### 2. Separately blend in a blender

- 1 ½ Cup Buttermilk\*
- 2 Eggs
- 2 Tablespoons Melted Butter

#### 3. Add the blended ingredients to the dry

#### 4. Put in a greased round pan and bake at 350' for 45 min – 1 hour



\*If you don't have buttermilk, add 1 Tablespoon of lemon juice or white vinegar to a cup of milk for a good substitute

Image: SimplyRecipes