



CCAQ Inc Newsletter

Quarterly newsletter of the Celtic Council of Australia (Qld) Inc. 2015 No 4 Oct - Dec 2015

President's Message

Mavis Williams D Ua



Hello

I would like to thank all those members who attended the Annual CCAQ Morning Tea and Annual General Meeting held on 25th July 2015 at Coorparoo RSL Club.

It was a cordial event and I would like to congratulate Grace Roberts, Ian Campbell and Ian Kaye on their election to the committee and welcome them to the Committee.

I believe that committee harmony will be important for the committee to function properly.

If members have issues that they wish to put forward, they should be put in writing or brought to a meeting for consideration by the Committee.

Seasons Greetings

The fourth quarter of the year leads us into the Christmas and New Year festive season.

This year there will be a Combined Celtic Christmas Lunch (organised by the Cornish and Manx groups). The party will be held on Saturday 10 December at Arana Hills Leagues Club.

A combined Christmas party for Welsh societies will be held on Saturday 3 December at the Blackstone United Welsh Church Hall, Blackstone.

CCAQ extends to all members, their families and friends Best Celtic Wishes for a Wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

As your President, my focus is on making Celtic Council of Australia Queensland a group full of happiness, harmony, and peace together, and for it to continue to have only positive aspirations.



CCAQ Christmas Party



at Coorparoo RSL Services Club
Harries Road, Coorparoo
Saturday 21st November at 12 noon



CCAQ 2016 PanCeltic Dinner



at Easts Leagues Club
Main Avenue, Coorparoo
Saturday 16th April at 6.30 pm



Please contact Mavis Williams (3849 8271)

The Celtic Roots of Christmas Traditions

The roots of the Christmas traditions that we recognize today can be traced back to pre-Christian celebrations of the Winter solstice. The solstice is the twice yearly event when the sun appears to be at its highest or lowest point above the horizon. In the northern hemisphere the Winter solstice usually occurs annually between December 20 and December 23.

The Winter solstice was seen by the ancient Celts as one of the most significant times of the year. The Neolithic monuments of Newgrange in Éire, Maes Howe in Orkney, Scotland and Bryn Celli Ddu in Ynys Môn, Wales are examples of burial chambers scattered throughout the Celtic nations constructed to capture the full impact of sun's rays during the solstices.



Newgrange Passage at Solstice

Druids, the priestly class in ancient Celtic society, celebrated the festival of Alban Arthuan (also known as Yule) at the time of the Winter solstice. It was on this day that they ceremonially gathered mistletoe from oak trees. A practice described in the writings of Roman historian Pliny the Elder (Gaius Plinius Secundus AD 23-August 25, AD 79).



The name Christmas is from the Mass of Christ (Christ-Mass). The actual date of the birth of Jesus is not given in the Bible. The spread of Christianity during the first millennium (January 1st AD to December 1000 AD of the Julian calendar) was aided by the new religion adapting to the ceremonies and traditions of the existing religions. At times the early Christians also adopted existing deities to ease the transition from old beliefs to new ones, as is thought to be the case with Brigid the Celtic fertility goddess who became known to Christians as Saint Brigid.



Goddess Brigid



St Brigid

So when celebrating Christmas the traditional trappings that go with this festive season have roots that go far back into Celtic history. The Mistletoe gathered by the Druids for its magical and health giving properties. The Yule log burnt by the Celts to counter the darkness of mid-Winter when they thought the sun stood still for twelve days and to bring good luck. The Holly and Ivy; evergreens that Celts saw as important to keep evil spirits at bay. The Tree decorated with symbols of solar objects and gifts to Celtic gods and goddesses.



Christmas Greetings of Celtic Nations

Nollick Ghennal as Blein Vie Noa (Manx Gaelic)

Nollaig Chrìdheil agus Bliadhna Mhath ùr (Scottish Gaelic)

Nollaig Shona Dhuit agus Bliain Nua Fe Mhaise (Irish Gaelic)

Nedeleg Laouen na Bloavezh Mat (Breton)

Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda (Welsh)

Nadelik Lowen ha Bledhen Nowyth Da (Cornish)

Celtic Origin of Halloween

To find the origin of Halloween, you have to look to the festival of SAMHAIN in Ireland's Celtic past.

Samhain had three distinct elements. Firstly, it was an important fire festival, celebrated over the evening of 31 October and throughout the following day.

The flames of old fires had to be extinguished and ceremonially re-lit by druids.

It was also a festival not unlike the modern New Year's Day in that it carried the notion of casting out the old and moving into the new.

To our pagan ancestors it marked the end of the pastoral cycle – a time when all the crops would have been gathered and placed in storage for the long winter ahead and when livestock would be brought in from the fields and selected for slaughter or breeding.

But it was also, as the last day of the year, the time when the souls of the departed would return to their former homes and when potentially malevolent spirits were released from the Otherworld and were visible to mankind.

Samhain: its place in the Celtic calendar

The Celts celebrated four major festivals each year. The origin of Halloween lies in the Celt's Autumn festival which was held on the first day of the 11th month, the month known as November in English but as *Samhain* in Irish.

The festivals are known by other names in other Celtic countries but there is usually some similarity, if only in the translation.

In **Scottish Gaelic**, the autumn festival is called *Samhuinn*. In **Manx** it is *Sauin*.

The root of the word – *sam* – means summer, while *fuin* means end. And this signals the idea of a seasonal change rather than a notion of worship or ritual.

The other group of Celtic languages (known as Q-Celtic) have very different words but a similar intention. In **Welsh**, the day is *Calan Gaeaf*, which means the first day of winter. In **Brittany**, the day is *Kala Goanv*, which means the beginning of November.

The original Celtic year

- Imbolc: 1st February
- Beltaine: 1st May
- Lughnasa: 1st August
- Samhain: 1st November

The Celts believed that the passage of a day began with darkness and progressed into the light. The same notion explains why Winter – the season of long, dark nights – marked the beginning of the year and progressed into the lighter days of Spring, Summer and Autumn. So the 1st of November, *Samhain*, was the Celtic New Year, and the celebrations began at sunset of the day before ie. its Eve.

The origin of Halloween's spookiness

For Celts, *Samhain* was a spiritual time, but with a lot of confusion thrown into the mix.

Being 'between years' or 'in transition', the usually fairly stable boundaries between the Otherworld and the human world became less secure so that puka, banshees, fairies and other spirits could come and go quite freely. There were also 'shape shifters' at large. This is where the dark side of Halloween originated.

Apples

Samhain marked the end of the final harvest of the summer, and all apples had to have been picked by the time the day's feasting began.

It was believed that on *Samhain*, the puca – Irish evil fairies (see right hand column) – spat on any unharvested apples to make them inedible.

To ward off the evil let loose at *Samhain*, huge bonfires were lit and people wore ugly masks and disguises to confuse the spirits and stop the dead identifying individuals who they had disliked during their own lifetime.

They also deliberately made a lot of noise to unsettle the spirits and drive them away from their homes. The timid, however, would leave out food in their homes, or at the nearest hawthorn or whitethorn bush (where fairies were known to live), hoping that their generosity would appease the spirits.

For some, the tradition of leaving food (and a spoon to eat it!) in the home – usually a plate of champ or [Colcannon](#) – was more about offering hospitality to their own ancestors.

Just as spells and incantations of witches were especially powerful at *Samhain*, so the night was believed to be full of portents of the future.

Ireland's best Halloween party is in Derry



Three young witches prepare for Ireland's biggest Halloween celebrations in Derry.



While the origin of Halloween doesn't lie specifically in Derry, the world's biggest Halloween party is held in that city every year. More than 30,000 people take to the streets, most of them dressed as witches, ghouls, vampires and monsters from the Otherworld.

Festival InterCeltique Lorient 2015

The 45th edition of the International Celtic Festival in Lorient Brittany has been hailed as the largest yet.

Cornwall and the Isle of Man were the honoured nations at this year's festival.



The Arrival of the Grand Parade into Moustoir Stadium was again a highlight event of the Festival InterCeltique Lorient, in Brittany, France.

The overall attendance of 750 000 for the 2015 edition of the Festival was a record. It was financially successful while still maintaining the quality and accessibility of events which are the hallmark of the Festival.

There were five sold-out nights (Cotriade, Opening Night at the Theatre, Bagad Vannes, Carlos Núñez and the Symphony Orchestra of Brittany, Simple Minds) and nine performances with near-capacity audiences (including Denez Prigent, Parades Pascal Jaouen, Arrival of the Grand Parade at the Moustoir Stadium, Great Evening of Bagpipe, Charlie Winston).

Ticketing activity for Space Marine exceeded 2014 by about 30%.

The replay of Night Interceltique on television channel France3 attracted over 3.2 million viewers, with an audience share of 15.9%, the second place for the evening and a record for the festival.

2016 will be celebrated as "Year of Australia".

The 46th edition could be the greatest edition yet of the renowned Festival InterCeltique Lorient.

Rendez-vous du 5 au 14 août 2016 - Année de l'Australie



Contributions to this Newsletter

Are called for and welcomed.
Please email to: email@wardco.com.au



Annual Subscription

Annual subscription rates are:

Individual member	\$20
Retiree/Student/Concession	\$10
Celtic Organization	\$50
Corporate Sponsor	\$150

Please send renewals to:
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83 Terowi Street Sunnybank Hills QLD 4109



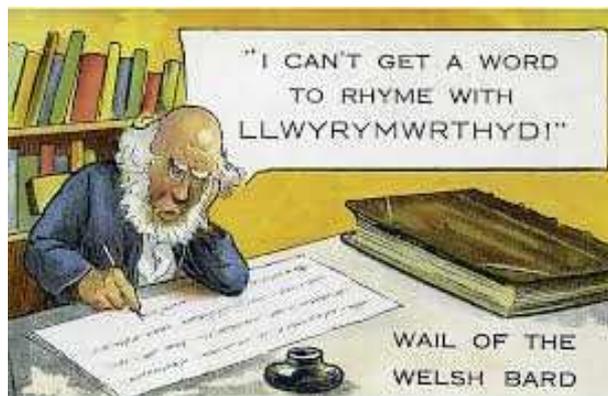
CCAQ Inc -Committee 2015-16

Executive~

President:	Mavis Williams	D Ua	3849-8271
Vice President:	Robert Ward	D Urr	3397-5887
Hon. Secretary:	Noel Hosking		3353-2332
Hon. Treasurer:	Grahame Jardine-Vidgen	D Ua	3345-9506

Members~

Robert Burns
Ian Campbell D Ua
Ian Kaye
Rolly Mc Cartney
Grace Roberts CyC
Mary Woodley





Celtic Events Calendar October 2015 – March 2016

October 2015

Sat 31 HALLOWEEN

November 2015

Sun 1 All Hallows Day (Celtic Feast of SAMHAIN – Summers's End)

Sat 21 CCAQ CHRISTMAS PARTY

Coorparoo RSL & Community Club 11.30 am



Fri 27 St Andrew's Dinner 6.30 pm Mercure King George Square, Brisbane (Scottish)

Sat 30 Feast of St Andrew – Patron Saint of Scotland

December 2015

Sat 5 Qld Manx Society Christmas Party – Arana Leagues Club (Manx)

January 2016

Sat 21 Burns Supper - 7.00 pm Gaythorne RSL, Mitchelton (Scottish Clans Congress)

February 2016

Mon 1 Celtic Feast of IMBOLC – Start of Spring (Northern hemisphere)

Sat 6 St Brigid's Dinner - 6.30 pm Queensland Irish Association (Irish)

Sun 28 Manx Society Gathering Manx Family Picnic at Jamieson Park, Reef Pt Esplanade,
Scarborough from 10 am (Manx)

March 2016

Tue 1st St David's Day (Patron Saint of Wales)

Sat 5 St Piran's Day Lunch/AGM – 11.30 Yeronga Services Club (Cornish)

Sun 6 St David's Day Celebration – (Sunshine Coast Welsh) – 11.30 am
Clio's Function Centre, Palmwoods

Sat 5 St Piran's Day (Patron Saint of Cornwall)

Sat 12 St Patrick's Day Parade – 10.30 am Elizabeth Street, Brisbane (Irish)

Wed16 St Patrick's Eve Dinner - 6.15 pm Queensland Irish Association (Irish)

Thu17 St Patrick's Day (Patron Saint of Ireland)

DATE CLAIMERS 2016

April 2016

Sat 16 CCAQ ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER
Easts Leagues Club Main Ave Coorparoo 6.30 pm

June 2016

Sat 19 CCAQ FRIENDSHIP DAY



For information on:

IRISH events, visit website www.queenslandirish.com or phone 3221-5695

WELSH events, please phone the Secretary on 3375-3626

MANX events, please phone the Secretary on 3273-1782

CORNISH events, please phone 3284-7790

SCOTTISH Clans Congress, please phone 3200-9536

SUNSHINE COAST WELSH events, please phone the President 5446-1892

