

THE LIVING TRADITION

CÉARNÓG BELGRAVE, BAILE NA MANACH, CO. ÁTHA CLIATH

Phone: 01-2800295. Fax: 01-2803759

Email: eolas@comhaltas.ie

Website: <http://www.comhaltas.ie>

COMHALTAS – CORONAVIRUS

Communication No. 12

- The ever-efficient Rúnaí of the Comhaltas Comhairle Laighean and also a member of the Ardchomhairle Millie Fitzpatrick has plenty of good news for us in these difficult times. Within Leinster, Millie tells us, Comhaltas branches are doing wonderful work by sharing the SCT and other videos, uploading videos of members of all ages and abilities playing, singing and dancing. Classes, tunes and playing together online has also been facilitated widely within the Province. ‘The work and effort going into these projects is above the norm for any volunteer,’ Millie says. ‘Both I and Leinster Council are extremely proud of our counties and their efforts.’ Well done, an inspiration to us all.
- A traditional music CD titled ‘Oidhreacht Eochaille’ – The Heritage of Youghal – is making its way into homes locally to the delight of people cocooning at present. This fine gesture is thanks to the generosity of Comhaltas Craobh Eochaille and the efforts of Cork County Council’s COVID 19 Community Programme. Micheál de Buitléir also sends us a photo of the AN POST delivery van with the postman delivering CDs. Dea-scéal gan amhras.
- Comhaltas in Britain are certainly making waves as reported in the IRISH POST newspaper. The Buanchoiste thought it would be nice to share the report with you:



BY: **Fiona Audley**

April 20, 2020

THE Comhaltas organisation in Britain is keeping traditional Irish music playing across the country despite the coronavirus lockdown.

While all face to face activity has been suspended by the cultural organisation, which is dedicated to promoting Irish music, song, dance and language, its staff and volunteers have been working as hard as ever to keep their services running.

Comhaltas branches across Britain are usually hives of learning, with young people being taught the traditional Irish arts by more experienced members of the community.

Now their music lessons are being undertaken online, using Skype and Zoom, to ensure no-one falls behind, while singing students are being set weekly challenges to keep them practicing.

“Although all face to face Comhaltas activity is currently suspended during this time of isolation and lockdown, our staff, officers and volunteers continue to find new and exciting ways to ensure our community is supported and engaged,” Comhaltas explain.

“Many of our branches up and down the country are continuing music lessons through online and Skype/Zoom to help everyone keep practicing,” they add, “and [we have] been releasing an Isolation tune a day. This includes video, notation and online player, so you can slow down the tunes while you learn them.”

They added: “We haven't forgotten about the singer, so along with the many traditional singing challenges going on across social media we are also posting A Song on a Saturday for anyone interested in learning (or just listening to) a few traditional songs and singers.

“Our Provincial Council officers have been working hard and introducing themselves and some of the tunes for the tune a day so check out their videos on our social media.”

Comhaltas project officer Michelle O'Leary is keeping in touch with branches nationwide through telephone calls - while checking in with their more isolated and vulnerable members specifically.

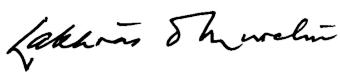
On Wednesdays Comhaltas holds a Zoom drop in from 1-2pm, where project officers are available online to talk to anyone who wants to “catch up, chat or ask questions about Comhaltas”.

The St James the Great Comhaltas branch has also started holding a regular Saturday night 'Cois Tine' (around the fire) session which has attracted musicians and singers from across Britain, Ireland and North America.

The Zoom session can be accessed through The St James the Great Facebook page.

The organisation is now planning on adding “bite-sized Irish language lessons” to their social media channels, which are open to all, and they suggest “maybe while in isolation this is the time to learn those few words in Irish that you always said you wanted to”.

An online competition for storytellers young and old is also due to be announced this month.



Labhrás Ó Murchú
Ardstiúrthóir CCÉ