



Finte na hÉireann-Clans of Ireland

Bromehill House, Kilrush, Co. Clare, Ireland V15 RT28



Patron: Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

Accredited as a Civil Society Non-Governmental Organisation by The United Nations.

13 December 2023

A chara,

It is now just a week to the Winter Solstice in the Celtic tradition, less than two until we celebrate the birth of Christ in Christian tradition, and less than three until the New Year arrives. It is the time of year when we experience the darkest nights in the Northern Hemisphere, when our Celtic ancestors celebrated the turning of the year, after which there would be progressively more light each day. In County Clare, where I live, we have 7 hours 43 minutes of daylight at the Winter Solstice. It was always the season to hunt, particularly before the advent of farming, when animals and birds were killed for food. It was a season without berries or vegetables for our Neolithic ancestors. It was a time for concern.

The palaeoanthropologic diet was not structured, as we understand the term 'diet' in the contemporary Western World. Berries were gathered, while animals, birds and fish were hunted on an opportunistic basis. Contrary to popular myth, woman were involved, not just in gathering berries and seeds, but also in hunting. A recent anthropological study by Dr Cara Ocobock of the University of Notre Dame (authorised link for use by Clans of Ireland below) found that not only did prehistoric women engage in the practice of hunting, but their female anatomy and biology would have made them intrinsically better suited than the male anatomy for it.

Killing animals often involved days of hunting over arduous terrain. When the animal was killed it was not only a matter of celebrating the possibility of renewal of plant life, as a result of increasing sunlight, but also the killing of an animal was a celebration of the availability of an immediate source of food. It was an occasion for feasting with family and friends. Feasting was accompanied by music, dancing and gaiety.

Recently, on the 2nd of December, we held the second Members' Forum of 2023 by video conference under the direction of Laurie Joyce. Topics discussed were wide ranging and with another Forum being planned for June 2024, it would be helpful to have your suggestions as to what you, as a Ceann Fine or Member's representative, would like to have on the Agenda.

Laurie Joyce began the Members' Forum by taking us through the findings of the recent Survey, which Members had been requested to participate in. This Survey provides you, the Members, with an opportunity to make suggestions or reactions relating to the work of the Board of Directors and the direction of the organisation. It is a valuable tool as it helps to steer the Board, but it absolutely relies on your input. It helps to develop an alignment between the work of the Board and the wishes of the Members.

Following Laurie's presentation, I addressed how it is possible for people who are not Irish citizens to be involved and associated with an Irish clan or historical family and conversely how it is possible that not every citizen of Ireland can claim to be a member of an Irish clan or historical family.

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Registered address: 53 Ard Aoibhinn, Athenry, Co. Galway, Ireland, H65 DR60.

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Directors:

Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh (Cathaoirleach), Luke McInerney, Michael Crowley (France), Robert O'Halloran (England), Eileen Ashe, Laurie J Joyce (Aust), Vincent O'Carroll, Seán McGrath, Kieran O'Dowd (USA).

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Thank you for your continuing interest in the exciting and monumental project, Linea Antiqua. In my last letter to you, the Members, in late October, I announced that the publication date of Linea Antiqua would be likely to be in 2024. I had previously mentioned this on a number of occasions during the year. More recently, at the Members' Forum, Luke McInerney, the Editor of the transcription and a member of our Board of Directors, told the on-line attendees that the process is taking longer than anticipated due to technicalities arising from the transposition of old genealogical texts to contemporary print layout and other editorial matters. He announced, for the first time, that it may now run to the Spring of 2025 before he expects that we will be able to be in a position to publish.

While this is primarily a volunteer-based project, you will recall that Clans of Ireland employed a PhD candidate to work on the transcription, which was completed on schedule, within a year. The current editorial work includes checking this transcription in minute detail, presenting it in a style that suits, not just academics, but those of us whose background is not academic and who are interested in accessing the genealogical and historical information.

It should be noted that Luke McInerney took on this enormous project on our behalf, as a volunteer. We knew from the outset that he could only make available whatever time he has that is not taken up with his professional engagements and, therefore, there can be no exact deadline as to publication, as there might be with a dedicated professional editor.

The Open Forum created an opportunity for everyone in attendance to voice their own individual suggestions. It was generally agreed that Members would like to see the continuation of the on-line lectures, such as those that are on the YouTube channel (accessible [Clans of Ireland - Finte na hÉireann - YouTube](#)). The Board will discuss this at its next meeting on the 6th of January.

The Board members were generally shocked to discover that some people feel that there is not an adequate flow of information from the Board to the Members, despite the increased availability of direct access, through the Members' Fora that have been held twice yearly for the past two years, as well as the Annual General Meetings and Annual Cultural Summits, which have been held both on a physical and video basis for the past three years. Some of the Board expressed an alternative view, suggesting that it is the responsibility of the Members' representatives, you, to disseminate links to our social media platforms amongst the members of the Clans of Ireland member organisations. It was opined that the distribution of news and on-line material should be done on a partnership basis. I would be delighted to hear from anyone who may have other suggestions.

The Forum attendees were encouraged and I now encourage you to submit interest in marking, with a Clans of Ireland Historical Site Plaque, a location or structure that is historically significant or associated with member clans and historical families. It was suggested that having a Historical Site Plaque would benefit clans by advertising the association that Irish kindred groups and or their wider tribal groups have with their geographical origins. Please bear in mind that any such proposed Historical Site Plaque locations may have been used historically for residential, ritual, political, governmental, religious, defensive, martial or any other purposes that were of significance to an immediate kindred group or the wider tribal group associated with a registered Clans of Ireland Irish clan or historical family. For further details or expressions of interest please contact Ms Eileen Ashe (post@clansofireland.ie;) who is co-ordinating the project.

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Again, may I remind you that **the Clans of Ireland AGM & Cultural Summit** events are planned for **12 and 13 April 2024** in Dublin. The theme for the Summit is **"The historic building / monuments / sites associated with Ireland's clans"**, with a visit to Brú na Bóinne and Newgrange being planned on Friday 12th. I was delighted to be able to announce, at the Members' Forum, that the key-note speaker on Saturday 13th is to be - Dr Rachel Moss architectural historian at Trinity College Dublin. Dr Moss has a particular interest in medieval Ireland. I can now confirm that the title to Dr Moss's lecture is **"Building Gaelic Ireland in the Late Middle Ages"**. Further details and expressions of interest may be had from Ms Kieran O'Dowd (treasurer@clansofireland.ie).

Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi Mhaise.

*Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh
Cathaoirleach*

(https://www.google.com/url?q=https://news.nd.edu/news/woman-the-hunter-studies-aim-to-correct-history/&sa=D&source=calendar&usd=2&usg=AOvVaw3FhSZu-M3S_k_OAGZ3B6OE)

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