

GAELIC SPORTS CLUB LUXEMBOURG ASBL



NEWSLETTER

CUMANN BÁIRE GAEIL LUCSAMBURG ASBL



The GSCL ladies' team at Berbourg

Back row, l to r: Kirstin Steffen, Brian Wall, Heidi Pylkas, Nicola McEvoy,

2nd row from back l to r: Maureen O'Donoghue, Maura Clifford, Rachael Glynn, Aimee Mulkerns, Sarah Coffey

3rd row from back l to r: Adi Abili, Annie Walsh, Margaret Carey, Jackie Woods, Fiona Byrne

Front row: Lisa Eakins, Karen O'Mahony, Anna McLoughlin, Tiana Sheridan

Front: Christelle Bon.

KELTISCH SPILLER LËTZEBUERG ASBL

GSCL Committee

The Committee for 2011 as elected on 25 November 2010 is as follows:

Uachtarán: Henry Abbott

Leas-Uachtarán: Brian Killeen

Rúnaí: Chris Shephardson

Cisteoir: Eóin Mac Domhnaill

PRO: Damien Higgins

Club Development Officer: Tadhg Dunne

Webmaster: Dónal Shivnan

Registrar: Eoin Mullins

Baill: Sarah Enright; Karen O'Mahony; Fiona Byrne, Peter Sullivan, Benny O'Callaghan, Aidan O'Sullivan, Micheál O'Connell and Brendan O'Sullivan

Ex-officio Members:

Airchinneach: Phil McKenna

Staráí: Eoghan Ó hAnnracháin

John Molloy was re-appointed **honorary auditor**.

The AGM conferred the following specific managerial roles:

Hurling: Damien Higgins

Camóige: Fiona Byrne

Peil: Tadhg Dunne

Peil na mBan: Karen O'Mahony and Brian Wall

Membership

Membership fees are due for renewal from the 1 January 2011. To renew your subscription or to join GSCL simply e-mail secretary.luxembourg.europe@gaa.ie with your contact details and transfer the appropriate sum (€50 ordinary members, €25 students/unwaged) to the following bank account:

BIC BILLULL (Dexia)
IBAN LU24 0021 1375 5690 0000
(Gaelic Sports Club Luxembourg asbl)

Training

Football:

See website for information.

For more on training, please e-mail:
secretary.luxembourg.europe@gaa.ie

Central contact: secretary.luxembourg.europe@gaa.ie

<http://www.luxgaa.lu/>



Left to right: Christelle Bon, Councillor Alice Schram, Henry Abbot

Work experience in Luxembourg

GSCL often receive queries from prospective “stagiaires” asking if we know of any companies looking to take students on. Up until now we have dealt with these queries on an *ad hoc* basis emailing CVs and helping out where we can. After all, many of us first came to Luxembourg as Stagiaires. We are tidying up our contact list so that we can better help companies looking for stagiaires and help students who may be looking for student placements.

If you or the company you work with hire students and would like to be added to our contact list, please email on your contact details (or the person that deals with student recruitment) with some information on the job description to secretary.luxembourg.europe@gaa.ie. All prospective CVs will be then be forwarded to the interested employers.

A special “thank you” to 352, the Luxembourgier Wort and the Berderia database for the use of their fine photographs.

Mementos

For those interested in a memento of the Club, a wide range of unique items are available, including: special GSCL mugs made by Carrigaline Pottery; polo tops, track suits and jerseys. Also, the GSCL club history: More than a Sporting Experience is available.

Benelux Gaelic Football Championship, Berbourg



Left to right: Tom Walsh, Dónal Shivnan, Emmet Healion, Michael O'Connell, Brendan O'Sullivan, Shane O'Donovan, Eoin Mullins, Eamonn Dunne, Robbie Carthy, Rory O'Neill, Tadhg Dunne, Brendan O'Callaghan, Shane O'Brien, Rory Griffin.



Some of the many spectators



Tadhg Dunne breaks away

Luxembourg hosted Round 1 of the men's Benelux Gaelic Football Championship on April 9th in sunny Berbourg.

Currently there are four separate zones across Europe contesting their own regional championships. However teams from the Benelux region have provided the past five overall European Champions. Despite the strong competition, Luxembourg were keen to win back the fabled Black Stuff Trophy as well as get off to a good start in the championship. The squad had prepared well and recommenced training in late January. Key strategies had included some gruelling pre-season fitness work in conjunction with Jessica Lampetti Walsh as well as a coaching day with Eamonn Fitzmaurice of Kerry fame.

The response to these initiatives from the squad had been encouraging and numbers at training had been consistently high. As a result, and despite injuries, Luxembourg included two squads in the tournament draw. Luxembourg Bán were included in a group with The Hague and Belgium B. In the other group, Luxembourg Rua were drawn against Amsterdam and Belgium A.

Bán were a mixture of some returning stalwarts and some keen recent additions.

The first match was never going to be easy against European Champions The Hague and so it proved. Despite some battling play, The Hague had a little bit too much quality and emerged winners.



Brendan O'Sullivan makes a vital interception with Michael O'Connell in support

Bán's second game was against a strong Belgium team. Belgium had opted to enter two squads of mixed ability as opposed to their Championship and Shield squads.

This made for a tough task for Bán and, although they competed well, the result did not go their way. While Bán managed to limit scoring opportunities for Belgium, converting their own good possession into scores was proving elusive. Bán rounded off their day with a narrow 5th/6th play off defeat against Belgium A. Player-manager Cathal Davey used his experience well, while there were also strong showings from goalkeeper Aidan O'Sullivan and midfielder Steve Ryan. There was improvement in the Bán's play as the day went on and



The fine team from Den Haag

hopefully with increased numbers it won't be the last time we field a second Lux team this season.

On the other side of the draw, Luxembourg Rua were



Dónal Shivnan makes one of his many crucial saves

able to win their two group matches against Amsterdam and Belgium A. This meant they qualified for a semi-final against Belgium B. In this game the football played by Luxembourg was arguably the best performance by the team in a long time. It was a complete team display and put down a serious marker for the final. The Hague had battled to victory in the other semi against Amsterdam and the European Champions were going to be tough opposition.

In the late evening sun, both teams lined up after a long day of football and with *Amhran na Bhfiann* ringing in their ears. It was a tight, edgy final in which Luxembourg struggled to get into their flowing style. Despite Eamonn Dunne, Rory O'Neill, Micheál O'Connell and Tom Walsh all kicking key scores Luxembourg trailed by two points with time nearly up.

However some courageous play and cool decision-making under pressure saved the day with the defence particularly disciplined in the face of an excellent Hague attack. It was the ability of the team to make the right choices under pressure that led to very late frees kicked by Rory O'Neill and then Shane O'Donovan with the last play of ordinary time. Extra time was called with both sides fatigued but with the psychological advantage now squarely and fairly with Lux.

The key difference was Emmet Healion smashing home an early goal to the delight of the home support. This was a blow The Hague were unable to recover from.

At the final whistle each Luxembourg player basked in the feeling that was best described by legendary American Football coach Vince Lombardi:

"I firmly believe that any man's finest hour, the greatest fulfilment of all that he holds dear, is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted

on the field of battle – victorious."

The powers that be awarded the player of the tournament to superb Lux midfielder Rory O'Neill but there were very many candidates. Delighted captain Tom Walsh picked up the Black Stuff trophy on behalf of his teammates and pledged that there was more silverware to follow over the rest of the season. The results lay down the benchmark for the squad for the rest of the season.

Most of all it is important to continue to attract new members and keep up competition for places.



High fielding at Berbourg

Ladies Gaelic Football, Luxembourg tournament, Berbourg 9th April

A record turn-out of "Luxembirds"

The Lux Ladies Gaelic football team bounced back on the scene for the opening tournament of 2011 with a vigorous new lease of life. A record 18 ladies toggled out for Luxembourg's home tournament, many of whom were first-time players and, while victory was not ours on the day, it was a highly promising kick-off to the season and a significant achievement for the club...

At the end of 2010 Lux lady footballers were thin on the ground; traditionally the ladies' squad relies heavily each year on students who come to Luxembourg on internships at the beginning of the year and return home to their studies in Ireland at the end of the football season. By 2011, once the New Year rolled around, it was time to reassess the situation – there were no longer sufficient numbers of non-student, "core" players based in Luxembourg to field a team in 2011 and if Luxembourg were to participate in the ladies Gaelic



Coach Brian Wall rallying the troops at half time

football championship this year, the ladies' code was in drastic need of an overhaul.

Cue a powerful, post-Christmas recruitment drive across the offices, pubs and clubs of Luxembourg to promote ladies football to all nationalities and all levels, from



Londoner Adi winning the ball

beginners to advanced. The strategy was to broaden the appeal of the game to incorporate beginners and non-Irish players in an effort to nurture a more long-term player base, rather than exclusively looking to transient players that are only available for one season before returning home.

Enter Brian Wall. A relative new-comer to Luxembourg, Brian has played several years of senior football for Aghada, Co. Cork, and unfortunately due to knee injury was unable to immerse himself in training for the men's team in Luxembourg so far this season. But "every cloud..." as they say! Brian signed up as dedicated

beginning, to enable new players get to grips with the sport in plenty of time ahead of the tournament.

And so the players flocked to Brian's intensive training sessions (for his coaching skills of course!); turn-out was consistently high. Hours and weeks of sweat and solo-ing transformed a group of ladies, predominantly composed of beginners, into the fully-fledged cohesive



Karen hitting a cold front amidst a sea of blue

resident coach for the ladies football team of 2011 – a luxury that the squad has never had before! Training sessions kicked off indoors in the cold months of January and February, well in advance of the standard March



New players Maura Clifford, Nicola McEvoy, Rachael Glynn

football team that toggged out for Luxembourg in Berbourg on 9th April.

On the day of the tournament, the "Luxembirds" consisted of: Irish new-comers Maura Clifford, Nicola McEvoy, camogie player Rachael Glynn; returning ex-student players Aimee Mulkerns, Sarah Coffey; students Jackie Woods, Maureen O'Donoghue, Tiana Sheridan, Lisa Eakins, Anna McLoughlin; non-Irish players Adi Abili from London, Christelle Bon from France, Kirstin



European camogie officer Fiona Byrne and Lux ladies football officer Karen O'Mahony plugging the club for national magazine 352.



French player Christelle Bon keeping a-pace with the Paris Gaels

Steffen from Germany, Heidi Pylkas from Finland; long-term Lux players Fiona Byrne, European camogie officer, Karen O'Mahony, Lux ladies football officer, soccer-player Margaret Carey; and the youngest player on the squad and native Luxembourgish Annie Walsh, aged 15.

The Lux ladies bravely rose to the challenge and struggled determinedly in the group stages against several heavy-weight, seasoned European footballers; losing to Holland (2-02 vs. 1-01) and Paris Gaels (5-10 vs. 1-02). The remarkably improved team-play and strategy was clearly traceable from the defeat in the first match of the day against Holland to the last match in the 5th and 6th play-offs against the Brussels B-team, which

saw Luxembourg narrowly defeated by two points (1-03 vs. 1-01). Brussels A-team was the winning team in an impressive final against Paris Gaels (2-06 vs. 0-07).

Congratulations to the Lux ladies for their superb efforts at Berbourg, in, what was for many, their first-ever Gaelic football match. Spirits remained high amid scorching weather and, in spite of injury and adversary, the home tournament served as a solid foundation on which to strengthen skills and improve fitness levels in the coming weeks to deliver an equally gutsy performance in the next round.

Comhaltas at Berbourg

On 9 April 2011, The Gaelic Sports Club Luxembourg (GSCL) held its annual Gaelic football and ladies' football tournaments at the fine terrain in Berbourg, eastern Luxembourg. The GSCL invited Comhaltas to participate and we were quite happy to do so.

In a first in the Grand Duchy, Liam Higgins, Comhaltas committee member and piper extraordinaire, piped the brightly-coloured teams out on to the field of play for the finals. First, he paraded the ladies' finalists – Paris Gaels and Belgium to the air of “*Kelly the Boy from Killane*”. Later, on the other pitch, he paraded the men's finalists – GSCL and a fine footballing side from Den Haag. For the record, the Belgian ladies won in their final which was exciting and closely-contested. The men's match was even more exciting for, at the end of normal time,

the sides were level. However, in extra time, the GSCL pulled ahead.

However, Comhaltas was present in force and Rita Neville, our branch president, dancer and dance teacher, had brought along *Na Cailíní Rince* – the young dancing girls from our classes – who put on a remarkably fine show of team dancing and Audrey Murphy performed a fine solo dance, too.

Their performances were very much appreciated by the spectators who included special guests such as local Councillor Alice Schram, Mayor Willy De Jong and Councillor Marc Pitzen, as well as His Excellency Ambassador Diarmuid Ó Laoghaire.

It was then the turn of our musicians – Guy Biltgen on the bodhrán, Terry O'Brien on the violin, John Sweeney on the guitar and Audrey Murphy on the flute to regale

SOMHALTAS AT BERBOURG

us for some two hours with a fine selection of reels, jigs and slow airs. It is a feature of the stand at Berbourg that it has excellent acoustics and the tunes were wafted out over both pitches to the delectation of sportspeople and spectators alike. Indeed, spectators at matches in progress were seen to quite subconsciously indulge in side-steps to the music without taking their eyes off the matches in progress.

Many of our members and parents of the young dancers attended the events.

Afterwards, a number of players came up to tell us that they, too, much enjoyed the musical background to their efforts. All in all, it was a very special day and already many of us are looking ahead to next year's tournament!



Left to right: Rita Neville, dancers: Lianna Sweeney, Zita Fox, Aisling Taylor, Ciara Murphy, Lizzie Foster, Caitlin Murphy, Ellie Foster, Sara Wronski, Emma McKell, Sophie Dunne



Ambassador Diarmuid Ó Laoghaire, Mayor Willy de Jong and Marc Pitzen.



Lizzy Murphy-Dunne and Brian Killeen assured a friendly welcome to all the guests.