

GAELIC SPORTS CLUB LUXEMBOURG ASBL



NEWSLETTER

CUMANN BÁIRE GAEIL LUCSAMBÚRG ASBL



President McAleese in Luxembourg

Back row, from left to right: Seán Hade; Barry Sheehan; Damien Higgins; Róisín Ní Urdáil.

Front row, from left to right: Norma O'Sullivan; Karen O'Mahony; President McAleese; Dr. Martin McAleese; Fiona Byrne.

This year, the Gaelic Sports Club Luxembourg a.s.b.l. (GSCL), commences its 32nd year in existence. It is the longest-established association of its kind on the continent. Prior to its formal registration as a legal entity in 1978, it had already functioned as a centre for Gaelic games in the Grand Duchy. Our Club's odyssey is described in *More than a Sporting Experience* – which is unique, being the only book telling the story of an Irish organisation in Europe. This Newsletter gives an update on our recent activities. During her recent visit to the Grand Duchy, President Mary McAleese congratulated us on our activities and mentioned her husband's participation in Gaelic games.

KELTISCH SPILLER LËTZEBUERG ASBL

GENERAL INFORMATION

As laid down in its statutes, the main objectives of the Gaelic Sports Club Luxembourg [GSCL] are the promotion and organization of Gaelic games, the provision of adequate facilities and the promotion of Gaelic and other sporting activities within the Community institutions and elsewhere. The following are the Club members with training and games management functions:

Camogaíocht (Camogie):

Fiona Byrne
Sarah Enright
Síle Maloney

Iomáint (Hurling):

Damien Higgins
Eoin Mullins
Dónal Shivanan

Peil Ghaelach (Gaelic Football):

Brendan O'Callaghan
Dónal Shivanan
Eoin O'Sullivan

Peil na mBan (Ladies' Football)

Elizabeth Murphy
Karen O'Mahony
Norma O'Sullivan

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

<http://luxembourg.europe.gaa.ie>

Training

Football:

Mondays at 19.30

Camogie and Hurling:

Wednesdays at 19.30.

Venue:

Stade Boy Konen, 3 rue des Sports, Cessange,
L-2548 Luxembourg, on city bus routes 2 and 4.

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

Membership

To become a GSCL member or to renew your annual subscription, simply:

- (1) e-mail secretary.luxembourg.europe@gaa.ie with your contact details and
- (2) transfer the appropriate sum (R50 ordinary members, €25 students/unwaged) to the following bank account:

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

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.

For further information, please e-mail:
secretary.luxembourg.europe@gaa.ie



Hurling and camogie report

Luxembourg began 2009 as defending European champions in both hurling and camogie. The second year of the European Camogie championship was far more competitive than the first, with Paris and Zürich joining us and Brussels. But Luxembourg retained the title and have yet to lose a game. The hurlers found it difficult to match 2008's success and finished the season in third place behind Den Haag and an all-conquering Brussels.

Having lost so many outstanding players from 2008, the Luxembourg hurling squad was too depleted to participate in the opening tournament in Paris. Our hurling and Camogie season began on May 16 with GSCL hosting teams from Belgium, Den Haag, Zurich and Paris at our annual tournament which took place outside the Grand Duchy for the first time, in Arlon, Belgium. Since no suitable venue was available in Luxembourg, the club rented some of the excellent facilities of the ADEPS Centre Sportif de l'Hydrion.



Welcome visitors from Switzerland

Adie Nelson; Denise Bommer; Rebecca Muller; Evigna Dieler; Angela Furrer

Luckily, GSCL had recently invested in two sets of collapsible GAA goals, which made their debut at Arlon. The goals and nets were purchased out of club funds, part-financed by a loan from the European County Board and a subsequent contribution from the Cercle Sportif de l'Union européenne. Transporting them from Ireland and then into



Back row, from left to right: Steve Shanaghy, Daniel Harvey, Patrick Greene, Eoin O'Brien, Conor Bready, Owen Fitzgerald, Eoin O'Sullivan, Marc Breathnach, Eoin Mullins, Damien Higgins

Front row, from left to right: Henry Abbott, Eoin MacDomhnaill, Mark Egan, Seán Hade, Liam Cagney, Ronan McCrea, Dónal Shivanan

HURLING AND CAMOGIE

Belgium was no easy matter; but they proved invaluable in Arlon and on several occasions later in the year. The club can take pride in an extremely well-run event. Few of our visitors realised just how much of that was due to the efforts



GSCL's Fiona Byrne takes off on a solo run

of just one man, Liam Cagney, who ensured that things ran smoothly under challenging circumstances. On the day, not content with playing in goals and taking a hands-on team management role, Liam also ferried the Paris team to and from the train station, kept everything ticking over generally, and cleared up as darkness fell and most other participants were on their way back to Luxembourg. Some man for one man!

For the Camogie team, coached and led on the field for the second year by Fiona Byrne, the season got off to a very encouraging start at Arlon, with Luxembourg dominating teams from Paris Gaels, Belgium GAA and Innecoin Zürich GAA. Paris Gaels overcame Belgium in the third and fourth

place play-off. In the final, Luxembourg faced Innecoin Zürich GAA, who had beaten Paris and Belgium in the opening rounds.

While Luxembourg were comfortable winners, the score line was not a fair reflection of a talented Zürich side largely made up of Swiss players. For Luxembourg, Fiona was joined by three other talented Galway women, Michael O'Brien, Madeline McDonagh and Sarah Kiely, as well as by



Hurlers' rest

Left to right: Eoin MacDomhnaill; Dónal Shivnan; Daniel Harvey; Robbie Carthy.

other keen camogie players, many of them new to the game, including Non-Galwegians such as Londoner Adimone (Adi) Abili and Finn Heidi Pylkäs. Zürich's skilful hurling and consistent final appearances in all three tournament finals, along with bonus points awarded to clubs that field enough non-Irish players, meant that they chased us to the last day of the season in Zürich.



GSCL President Henry Abbott greets the camogie players.

Luxembourg's hurlers beat Paris and Zurich at the Arlon tournament. This was good enough for third place, where we would also finish in the later tournaments in Leuven and Zürich. The Arlon final between Den Haag and Brussels was a classic. It took three periods of extra time to separate the sides with Belgium scoring a dramatic late point to win by 1-8 to 1-7. It was the third year in a row that Den Haag had lost the final of the Luxembourg tournament in extra time. This would be the closest Belgium were to be pushed all year. They won all the remaining European tournaments comfortably to take their first European Championship.

Players who caught the eye for Luxembourg in 2009 included hurler-of-the-year Dónal Shivnan, coach Damien Higgins, dancing legend Dan Harvey and the ever-dangerous Eoin O'Sullivan. Eóin Mullins and Eoin O'Brien impressed in defence as always. Conor Bready and Owen Fitzgerald played their usual all-action games, sometimes despite injury. Novices such as Ronan McCrea and Alan Hynes were at times astonishingly effective against far more experienced opponents. Two players better known for their football prowess, Pat Greene and Stephen Shanaghy, also put their athleticism and natural talent to good use. Unfortunately, Stephen had to be carried off at Arlon after a bad blow to his knee. True to form, it wasn't long before he bounced back, but neither was it long before GSCL bade *au revoir* to one of its most effective and inspiring players of recent years, as Stephen moved to Australia.

At the Zürich tournament, a hurling squad that was already down to the minimum number of players was hit by several injuries in the first game. It was all hands on deck, and some of those hands were manicured. During the tournament Richael, Madeline, Sarah and Fiona lined out for both the camogie and the hurling teams. Despite having to play games for both teams back-to-back they managed to score often and defend so vigorously that our opponents soon abandoned any misplaced chivalry when tackling. Luxembourg were unlucky not to make the men's final as well as winning the Camogie on the day.

As we return to training, this year's camogie team once again have a title to defend. After the high of 2008, last year was disappointing for the hurlers. However, one encouraging note was the improvement over the course



*Back row, from left to right: Karen O'Mahony; Síle Moloney; Richael O'Brien.
Front row, from left to right: Fiona Byrne; Madeleine McDonagh; Sarah Kiely; Sarah Coffey*



*Back row, from left to right: Richael O'Brien; Síle Moloney; Sarah Coffey.
Front row, from left to right: Fiona Byrne; Madeleine McDonagh; Sarah Kiely;
Karen O'Mahony.*

of the year in players who had taken up the sport since moving to Luxembourg. We need to build on this improvement in 2010.

Football in 2009

2009 was a good year for the GSCL footballers. Turnouts at training sessions were consistent; and we played some fine games. Special praise is due to Brendan O'Callaghan who ensured that the training was well attended. Damien Higgins put considerable work into ensuring fitness levels, and Chris Shepherdson did wonders with logistics organization in getting team and kit to the tournaments at Munich, Paris and Rennes. Steve Shanaghy, Eoin O'Sullivan and Brendan O'Callaghan gave many sterling performances, Pat Greene was an outstanding midfielder, and the temporary return of Wexford man Paul Colfer was much appreciated. Kildare man Cathal Davey showed his sturdiness on many occasions. In the second half of the year, the Club hired an outside trainer for several weeks, and we also secured the use of a training pitch at Munsbach.

The highly-competitive Black Stuff tournament, inaugurated in 1995, is the oldest annual event in European GAA circles. Remarkably, the GSCL has won this trophy every year since 2001. Over the years, the numbers of players per team have gone from five to seven and on to eleven, reflecting the increase in player numbers across the continent. In the 2009 tournament, the GSCL were trailing 0 – 2 to 0 – 6 at half time, but in the second half our team turned the game around to win what was a thrilling encounter – on a day which also saw the inauguration of the new goalposts. In 2009 also, the GSCL won the Benelux championship, for the first time since 2007. There were days, of course, when the results did not go our way but, as Páidí Ó Sé points out, camaraderie and sporting contacts should be central to GAA activities.



Back row, from left to right: Damien Higgins; Tadhg Dunne; Brian Donegan; Cathal Davey; Dónal Shivnan; Kevin McKeon; Daniel Harvey; Kieran Bacon; Eoin O'Sullivan

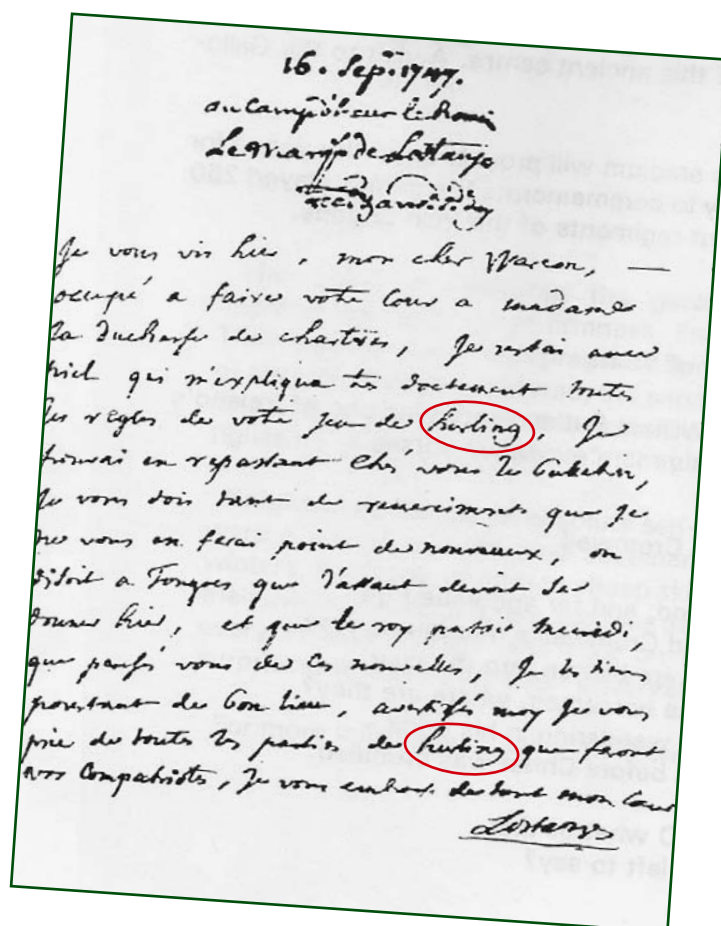
Front row, from left to right: Denis Murphy; Mark Egan; Morgan Ferriter; Patrick Greene; Brendan O'Callaghan; Chris Shepherdson; Robbie Carthy

Poc Fada na hEorpa

On 5 July 1997, a great hurling match was played between Paris Gaels and the GSCL on the municipal grounds at Tongres (Tongeren), Belgium, about 15 kilometres to the west of Maastricht. The game was played in the presence of the Mayor and of the Town Council. A very large number of local people and Irish visitors attended.

The venue was chosen because it was close to the battlefield of Lafelt (2 July 1747) and the hurling match was a significant element of the ceremonies commemorating the 250th anniversary of that encounter which was the last major battle to see the Irish Brigade in service in the pay of France. Conserved at Vannes in Brittany in the archives of the département of Morbihan is a letter which the marquis of Lostanges wrote on 16 September 1747 to colonel Richard Warren, aide de camp to marshal Saxe. Warren was born in county Dublin and had a distinguished career in the service of Bonnie Prince Charlie. In a remarkable voyage, Warren rescued the Prince after the débâcle at Culloden and brought him back to France.

The Lostanges letter is reproduced opposite; a translation is to be found on page 74 of the GSCL history "More Than a Sporting Experience". In the historic Lostanges letter, hurling is mentioned twice and there is a specific reference to the rules of the game. It is the



oldest reference on the continent to any field game. To mark the 250th anniversary, the GSCL inaugurated an annual competition, Poc Fada na hEorpa. Last year, the GSCL concurred with the transfer of the management of the competition to the European Board. Following is a list of the winners, 1997-2009.

1997 at Tongeren

1998 at Amiens

1999 at Haguenau

2000 at Arras

2001 at Langres

2002 at Béthune

2003 at Saint-Quentin

2004 at Luxembourg

2005 at Brussels

2006 at Luxembourg

2007 at Luxembourg

2008 at Luxembourg

2009 at Zurich

Cathal Reddan, Offaly (Paris Gaels)

Patrick Ryan, Tipperary (GSCL)

Adrian Frawley, Clare (GSCL)

Mark Scanlon, Clare (Paris Gaels)

Seán Ó Maoltuile, Galway (Paris Gaels)

Christy MacCarthy, Cork (GSCL)

Adrian Frawley, Clare (GSCL)

Liam Cagney, Limerick (GSCL)

Gabriel Cosgrave, Wexford (Zurich Anvils)

Niall Buckley, Cork (Craobh Rua, Brussels)

Damien Higgins, Cork (GSCL)

Henry Abbott, Westmeath (GSCL)

Conor Alyward, Meath (Belgium GAA)



Amhrán Náisiúnta Lucsambúrg

Ons Heemecht

Wou d'Uelzecht duerech d'Wisen zéit,
duerch d'Fielsen d'Sauer brécht.
Wou d'Rief laanscht d'Musel dofteg bléit,
den Himmel Wäin ons mécht.

Dat as onst Land fir dat mer géif
heinidden alles wo'n, eist Heemechtsland
dat mir sou déif an onsen Hierzer dro'n,
onst Heemechtsland, dat mir sou déif an onsen Hierzer dro'n.

[Michel Lentz]

An Tír seo 'gainne

Cá luíonn Alzette faoi mhóin 's spéir
Cár bhris an Sauer trinn ngleann.
Nach aoibhinn Mosel, blas fionchaor
Áit bhronn Neamh 'rainn ár bhfíon.

Mar sin atá ár dtír chaoín féin
Ár ndílseacht dí go deo.
Ár dtírín féin, a thuill ár ngrá
Ár gcroíthe is ár ndóigh.

[An tUasal Aidan Mulloy, Ambasadóir na hÉireann a d'aistrigh]

Our Homeland

Where Alzette through the meadow flows
Where Sauer through the cliff-side breaks
Where Mosel's wine-scent gently blows
And Heaven our good wine makes.

There lies the land for which our thanks
Are due to God above.
Our own, our native land that ranks
Foremost in all our love.

