

# South Roscommon Singers Festival

Incorporating

## The Annie McNulty Award 2015

### 22nd to 27th October

*in*

*Knockcroghery, Lecarrow & Roscommon*

## Traditional, Old-Time, Folk & Gospel

*Concerts, Song Talks, Discussions  
& Sessions Galore*



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## *Guests of Honour The Grehan Sisters*



The Grehan Sisters, Frances, Helen and Marie, have been singing and playing music all their lives having been born into a rich traditional music family. They initially played mostly in their family Pub in Boyle until 1964 when they spread their wings and began to tour nationwide. Then, a couple of years later, they went to the U.K. where they played on a few occasions at The Edinburgh Festival and toured most of the major cities on that side of the pond, as well as performing on the very popular B.B.C. Radio Show, Country Meets Folk. In '67 they released their first album - The Grehan Sisters on the Galtymore Mountains, and they continued to tour the British Folk Club circuit and the major urban concert venues.

Christy Moore stated in his songbook that the Grehan Sisters gave him his first break by allowing him to do support to them in Manchester in 1967. He and the sisters have known each other for over 50 years – ever since the fateful day in Boyle, where legend has it, that Christy came to the Fleadh in Boyle in 1963 and roamed into Grehan's Pub to listen to the music there. Mrs Bridie Grehan, the woman of the house called for order and requested a song from John Reilly, the legendary Traveller singer who lived next door and spent most of his leisure time in Grehan's. John, it is said, sang 'Lord Baker' and Christy listened with excitement as the realisation dawned that he was in the presence of greatness. And the rest, as they say, is history.

From that day on, Christy Moore, The Grehan Sisters and John Reilly have been intrinsically linked.

# Main Sponsors

Supporting South Roscommon  
Singers Festival since 2002

*Murray's Bar & Lounge*  
*Knockcroghery*



*The Spotty Cup*

from 8:30am

*Full Irish Breakfast*

.....

*Lunch,*

*Choice Teas, Coffee & Soup.*

*Freshly Baked Bread & Cakes*  
*(Baked on the premises)*

# **Roscommon** **people**

## **Annie McNulty Award Presentation Concert**

8:00pm Thurs. 22nd Oct. 2015

**Hannon's Hotel, Roscommon**

Present

## **Roscommon Showcase**



featuring:

### **Gatehouse**

(Jacinta McEvoy, John Wynne, John McEvoy & Rachel Garvey)

### **Donal O'Connor**

Frank Brennan,  
Johnny Johnston, and  
Seanachai, Vincent Pierce M.C.,  
plus

### **Guests of Honour: The Grehan Sisters**

Doors Open: 7:30pm.....Adm: €10

South Roscommon Singers Festival ...  
a wondrous cornucopia of delights.

**Thursday 22nd Oct. 2015**

**8.00pm: Roscommon People  
'Annie McNulty Award'  
Presentation Concert**

Rachel Garvey & Gatehouse, Donal O'Connor,  
Frank Brennan, Johnny Johnston, and Vincent  
Pierce M.C.,

plus

**Guests of Honour: The Grehan Sisters**  
(Venue: Hannon's Hotel, Roscommon)

Doors open: 7.30pm. Adm: €10)  
Followed by Folk / Trad. Session in the Bar.

**Friday 23rd Oct. 2015**

- 12.30pm: **Lunchtime Concert**  
• *Open Air on Harrison Court,  
The Square, Roscommon.*
- 2.45pm: **Song Saunter on the Hill**  
• *Songs, stories & history on Hangman's  
Hill (Cnoc na Crochaire), Knockcroghery  
Assembly – 2.30pm at Clay Pipe Visitor  
Centre)*
- 4.00pm: **The Gathering Session**  
(Venue: Coffey's, Lecarrow)
- 7.00pm: **Welcoming Reception in Murray's**
- 7.30pm: **'Mara in Concert'**  
• *An intimate concert with  
Breton group, Mara – Brigitte, Katell  
& Yuna. (Venue: Murray's Lounge,  
Knockcroghery. Adm. €6)*
- 9.00pm: **Singing Session**  
• *Theme: Crime and Punishment  
Venue: Murray's Lounge, Knockcroghery*

# Roscommon Herald

*'Will the Circle be Unbroken?'*

## CONCERT

8:00pm Sat. 24th Oct. 2015

### St. Coman's Church of Ireland Roscommon

*A concert of Gospel Songs and Spirituals  
from the Americana and European  
musical traditions*

featuring:

**Sara Grey**

**Kieron Means & Ben Paley**

(U.S.A.)

**Brigitte & Katell Kloarag**

(Brittany)

**Nik & Fiona Vickers**

(U.K.)

**Michael Larkin**

**& Johnny Johnston**

(5th. Roscommon Singers)

**and more**

Adm: Voluntary donation of €10 requested  
or more if you can afford it.

*Proceeds in aid of St. Coman's Church  
Restoration Fund & South. Roscommon  
Singers Festival.*

• Doors open 7:30pm •

# Saturday 24th Oct. 2015

**11am:** **Song Talk .... ‘The White Voice’**  
• *Justyna Kosmalka on a traditional way of singing, shared by many Slavic nations, including her native Poland. (Venue: Murray’s Lounge, Knockcroghery).*

**12 noon:** **Song Talk .... ‘Down by the Willow Garden’**  
• *Sara Grey explores the phenomenon of the Murder Ballad. (Venue: Murray’s Lounge, Knockcroghery).*

**2.00pm:** **‘In Flanders Fields, Part II’**  
• *Jim Bainbridge & Chris Miles present some more songs relating to W.W.I (Venues: Murray’s Lounge, Knockcroghery).*

**3.00pm:** **‘Give us a Beades Song’**  
• *Declan Coyne remembers Pat Beades on the 50th Anniversary of his death. (Venue: Murray’s Lounge, Knockcroghery).*

**3.30pm:** **Singing Session**  
• *Singing, storytelling, lies & legend with friends, strangers & wayfarers. (Venue: Ned’s Bar, Knockcroghery)*

**7.30pm:** **‘Will the Circle be Unbroken’**  
• *Roscommon Herald sponsored concert of Gospel Songs and Spirituals from the Americana and European musical traditions with a host of festival guests. (Venue: St. Coman’s Church of Ireland, Roscommon.*

*Adm: Voluntary donation of €10 requested or more if you can afford it—proceeds in aid of Church Restoration Fund & Sth. Ros.Singers Fest.).*

**10.00pm:** **Trad., Folk & Old Time Session**  
(Venues: The Clay Pipe, Knockcroghery)

**10.00pm:** **The Late Late Singing Session**  
(Venue: Murray’s Lounge).



*Wishing South  
Roscommon Singers  
Festival every success*

**Ned's Bar  
Knockcroghery**

*Wishing South  
Roscommon Singers  
Festival every success*

**The Clay Pipe  
Bar & Lounge  
Knockcroghery**



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# Sunday 25th Oct. 2015

- 12 Noon:** 'Herself and Myself'  
• *Thomas McCarthy CD Launch and singing session.*  
(Venue: *The Claypipe, Knockcroghery*).
- 3.00pm:** **The Sunday Singers Club**  
• *Singing Session hosted by Bray Singers Circle*  
• *Plus Book / CD launch*  
(Venue: *The Clay Pipe Lounge, Knockcroghery*)
- 7.30 to 9.00pm:** **Sara Grey in Concert**  
• *An intimate concert with Sara Grey (Voice & Banjo) with Kieron Means (Voice & Guitar) and Ben Paley (Fiddle).*  
(Venue: *Murray's Lounge ... Adm. €10*)
- 10.00pm:** **Trad. Folk & Old Time Session**  
(Venues: *The Clay Pipe, Knockcroghery*)
- 9.00pm 'til late:** **'Comic Songs & Storytelling'**  
• *Singing, storytelling, lies & legend with friends, strangers & wayfarers.*  
(Venue: *Murray's Lounge, Knockcroghery*)

# Monday 26th Oct. 2015

- 9.00pm:** **Folk Club Special in J.Js.**  
(Venue: *J.J. Harlow's, The Square, Roscommon*)

## **J.J. Harlow's**

The Square, Roscommon  
**Folk Club every Thurs. night with  
Michael Banahan & Brendan Emmet**

# Tuesday 27th Oct. 2015

- 9.00pm:** **Jam Session Finale in P.Js.**  
(Venue: *P.Js. Bar, Castlecoote*)

## **P.Js. Bar**

Castlecoote, Roscommon  
**Session: Folk, Old Time, Country,  
Rock 'n' Roll every Tuesday night.**

# Festival Guests:

## Sara Grey



Sara Grey grew up in New Hampshire but has lived in Arkansas, North Carolina, Ohio, Montana, New York, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Scotland and England.

One of the best things about her singing is that it reflects her great knowledge of and feeling for traditional singing. She just seems to know what is right in the interpretation of a traditional song. She is a singer of great strength with a fine understanding of the importance of understatement in the art of ballad singing. Sara will be accompanied by her son Kieron Means on Guitar & Vocals and Ben Paley on Fiddle.

- On Sat. 24th Oct. at 12noon Sara will explore the phenomenon of the Murder Ballad and she will sing some Black Gospel in St. Coman's Church at 7.30pm. On Sun. 25th Oct. she'll be in concert in Murray's at 7.30pm.

## Chris Miles

Chris Miles is a well known Scottish folk singer from Kirkcaldy in Fife who attends many festivals in Ireland and elsewhere. She has been to South Roscommon Singers Festival on numerous occasions in the past, both as a guest and as a punter. Her commanding presence and yet tender rendering of the big Scottish ballads is much loved by all who have had the pleasure of hearing her sing.

## Jim Bainbridge

Jim Bainbridge is a singer and melodeon player who entered the traditional music scene as leader of the Marsden Rattlers, one of the first dance bands to come out of the folk revival. However, in the early 70's Jim drifted off the scene, preferring to play

informally in the pubs of East Kent. He began to tour again in 1991 and is now a regular performer at clubs and festivals throughout Britain and Ireland.



- Following a superb presentation at last year's festival, Chris & Jim will present some more songs relating to W.W.1 on Sat. 24th Oct. at 2.00pm. Chris will also perform at St. Coman's Church on Sat. evening.

## Mara

Mara, from Brittany, includes Yuna León on violin, Katell Kloareg on vocals and Brigitte Kloareg on vocals and bodhran. Young violinist of the trad scene, Yuna explores with virtuosity the Breton and Irish music catalogues.



Mother and daughter, Brigitte and Katell have been singing for 20 years a repertoire of Breton, Irish, Welsh and French material. Katell brings to the group her varied experiences: polyphony, mixed music, singing and dancing. Brigitte sings in many formations a directory focusing on the Celtic countries and elsewhere, which are rooted in traditional a cappella singing, as well as setting to music contemporary poetry.

- Mara will be in concert on Fri. 23rd Oct. at 8.00pm. and will perform some 'Midwinter Carols' in St. Coman's Church on Sat. evening.

## Barbra Dymock



Barbra Dymock started singing in earnest in the 1970s and while as a medical student at Dundee University, she joined the college folk club and discovered that there was a group of like-minded people who knew and sang the type of songs her Scottish grandparents had sung around their house in Methil. However, the main purpose of being at uni – getting a degree – led to what was then an onerous apprenticeship as a junior doc, with long working hours and resident posts putting a dampener on any social activities.

After a total of 31 years working in the NHS, she opted for early retirement. Towards the end of her medical career though, the singing lured her back. She now finds being herself asked to perform as a “Tradition Bearer”. Though that tradition is constantly evolving, Barbara is happy to be part of it’s exciting evolution.

- Barbra will sing in the St. Coman’s Church, Gospel Concert, on Sat. evening and will be joining numerous singing & jam sessions throughout the festival.



Nik & Fiona Vickers from Shrewsbury, England and Scottish duo Jack & Angela Plunkett will feature in numerous singing and jam sessions over the festival weekend.

## Thomas McCarthy



Thomas McCarthy is a Traveller singer from Birr, Co. Offaly and comes from a long line of traditional singers and musicians who kept the tradition of singing strong within their community.

These days Thomas is based in West London but regularly comes back home, as he has done since childhood, when he first settled in the English capital with his family. His grandfather, Johnny McCarthy and his mother, Mary were among the greatest influences in his life and his singing career.

Thomas still sings 'the old songs' and is happy to carry on the tradition by passing them on to a whole new generation through school class-rooms, to folk clubs and festivals across Britain and Ireland.

- Thomas will launch his latest CD, 'Herself and Myself', in Ned's Bar on Sunday 25th Oct. at 12noon.

## Justyna Kosmalska



Justyna Kosmalska was born in 1980 in Poland and has lived in Ireland since 2007. Singing ever since she was born; while classically trained on piano and recorder, she taught herself the guitar during high school and finally, in Ireland, came across the Celtic harp. However, instruments were always just the background for the fundamental means of her artistic expression – the voice. She performed as a vocalist and songwriter for the blues youth formation Apogeum, then along with members of The Irish Connection (hosting monthly "Celtic Echoes" in Warsaw) she found another band Los Mamunos, that

played only her original material. After winning a few festivals of so-called “sung poetry” (a genre popular in Poland), she moved on to ethnic and traditional music. Justyna’s solo recital at Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw, showcasing different singing traditions of Europe, resulted in a series of commissions for Polish-Swedish Society and guest performances with stars of the Polish ethno scene – Warsaw Village Band and Kwartet Jorgi. Her biggest achievements to date are: a concert in Liberty Hall, Dublin and an in-house performance for the current Ambassador of Poland and His wife.

Apart from Polish and its many dialects, Justyna sings in many languages, including langue d’oc and old-Moravian, but her strongest fascination is Irish. Recently one of her own poems has been translated into this language. She loves set-dancing and storytelling. Joining many paths, old and new, she takes you on a fascinating journey...

- Justyna will present ‘The White Voice’ on Sat. 24th Oct. at 11.00am.

## ‘The White Voice’

‘The White Voice’ is a traditional way of singing, shared by many Slavic nations, like Poland, Ukraine, Belarus & Bulgaria. Its use has developed naturally in rural environments, i.e. open spaces (pastures, fields or forests) or loud, crowded gathering halls. It is never taught at schools, but rather passed on through social experiences like sessions, workshops, meetings, family traditions.

‘White’ voice, or ‘white’ singing, sometimes also known as “songscream” (original term *śpiewokrzyk*) would be untrained, loud singing, using as many resonators in the body as possible. Open throat, skull bones, air chambers, working together produce sound that is striking, powerful but clear at the same time. All the secret is just directing the sound and breathing properly.

Justyna’s presentation focuses on songs from different regions of Poland, so sung in many different dialects of Polish, but united by this unique way of performance. Timbre and articulation are less important here than so called ‘brightness’ and intensity of sound. It is particularly mesmerising in the longer songs, ballads with repeated chorus, often joined by many people other than the performer.

As this kind of singing is quite loud, very seldom would it be accompanied by instrument. Irish ballads were often composed with the harp and are much more delicate. However, Sean-nos style would have many similarities. She will also present some Irish songs, to provoke some comparative reflections and, finally, sing some Polish songs arranged for the clarsach.

## 'Give us a Beades Song'



### *Remembering Pat Beades (1912 – 1965).*

Declan Coyne and Charlie Finneran, proprietor of Derryglad Folk & Heritage Museum, will remember, in song and in story, the life and times of the legendary Pat Beades, with a presentation – 'Give us a Beades Song', in Murray's on Sat. 24th Oct at 3:00pm.

Pat Beades was born in Brideswell in South Roscommon on 9th April 1912. He was a very fine traditional singer in his day and his name was synonymous with those of Delia Murphy, Michael Grogan, Leo Rowsome and the Tulla Ceile Band. Indeed, Pat Beades was ahead of many of those very successful recording artists, as he was, in fact, the very 1st rural based singer to be actually recorded in Ireland and that recording session took place in the Old Jury's Hotel in Dublin on 25th April 1937.

It wasn't as simple in those days to make a record, as it is today, so it was regarded as quite an achievement for the singer to be given the opportunity to record and quite a big deal within the local community (and indeed the broader community) to have someone of such caliber in their midst. The songs he recorded that day were: 'Kate from Baltimore' and 'My Bonnie Irish Boy'. Over the next 10 yrs. he went on to record a total of 40 tracks, which would have been released on 20 – 78 r.p.m. shellac, gramophone records.

Among the songs he popularized at the time, songs that are still being sung and recorded by other artists today, were: 'The Lakes of Coolfin', 'My Own Dear Galway Bay', 'The Rocks of Bawn', and of course, 'The Woodlands of Loughglynn'.

Some of his recordings have been re-issued, in Ireland and overseas, in various collections in more recent years, right up to the CD age. Collections such as: 'An Tóstal, A Taste of Ireland' – 1956; 'The Golden Years of Irish Music' – 1986, 'From Galway to Dublin' - 1993 (Rounder. USA), 'The Voice of the People Vol. 5' – 1998 (Topic. GB) and Ron Kavana's compilation, 'The Irish Music Anthology, 40 Classic Songs, Jigs & Reels' – 2001.

Pat Beades died 50 yrs. ago on the 14th Oct. 1965.

Wishing South Roscommon Singers Festival 2015  
every success

## **Cllr. John Keogh**

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Athlone, Co. Roscommon  
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## **Cllr. Laurence Fallon**

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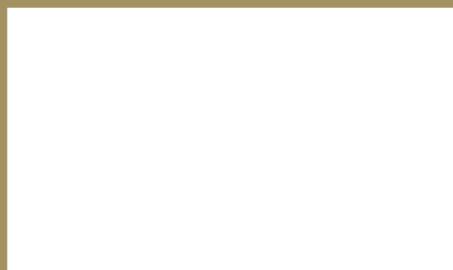
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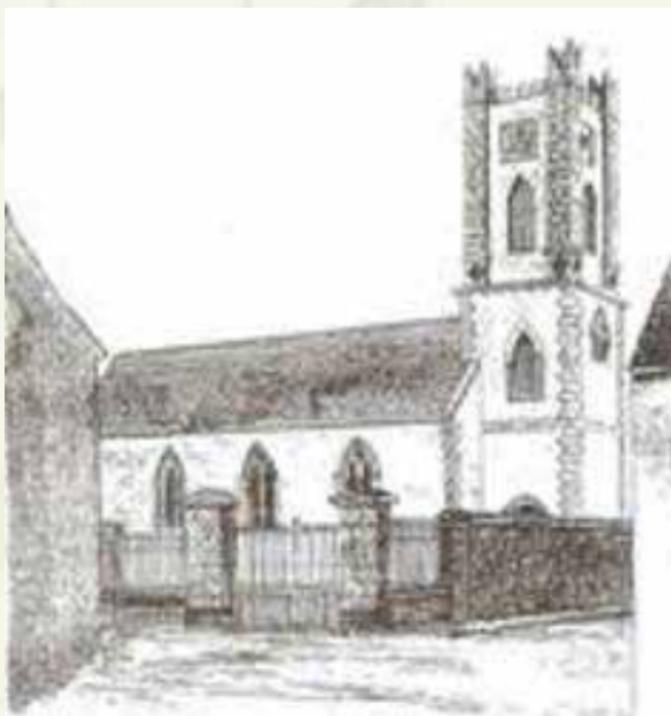
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## St. Coman's Church of Ireland

St. Coman's Church of Ireland, marks the first permanent church site dedicated to St. Coman, the saint who gave his name to town and county – Ros Comáin, i.e. the wood of Coman. A few hundred yards from the church, to the east on the Circular Rd., is a field known locally as the Hummawn Field – Hummawn being, phonetically, the English equivalent of Comáin, the field therefore is Coman's Field, the birthplace of the town and county.

However, back to St. Coman's Church; while the present doorway, with its pointed arch, is post Norman, attributed to the 14th Century the blocked-up doorway, on the opposite side, facing south has been attributed to the 8th Century. The window in the middle section of the belfry, facing north, is of similar style of architecture. To add further evidence to the fact that this was an early Christian Monastic Site was the rediscovery some years ago of an ancient grave slab, that originally came to the attention of an eminent mid nineteenth century archaeologist, George Petrie, in 1863. He made a drawing of the grave slab and his reading was as follows: "Bendachd for Anmain Joseph", which translates as "a blessing on the soul of Joseph". Petrie dated the stone as 9th Century AD.

This grave slab can be viewed in the County Museum, The Square, Roscommon town.

*(Extracts & image from 'The History of St. Coman's Church' by John Kerrigan & Albert Siggins).*

Old Knockcroghery

