



CRUINNEWS

October 2025

Join us next year for our
seventh annual gathering.
June 4th – June 7th, 2026

Hello to our Cruinniu community!

The Cruinniu team is back at work, planning our June 2026 event! We're securing our venues, and our teams are working together to bring you another fabulous experience. Our most important task however, is confirming our instructor line-up.

As the line-up is finalized, we'll be presenting each instructors' bio individually here in the Cruinnews.

Our first introduction doesn't get more exciting. Cathal Hayden will be joining us to teach intermediate/advanced banjo and mandolin. I'll never forget the first time I heard Cathal - it was at O'Flaherty's Irish Music Retreat where he played with Seamie O'Dowd and Mairtin O'Connor. The concert was so exciting that the audience members were practically jumping out of their seats. We are all thrilled that Cathal will share his tremendous musicality and brilliant virtuosity with all of us.



Slán!
Laura Michaelides,
Social Media Maven and
Mistress of Marketing

On behalf of the Cruinniú Criú



Our 2026 Instructors (so far)

Katie Geringer
fiddle fundamentals

Nathan Gourley
int-adv guitar

Cathal Hayden
int-adv banjo/mandolin

Colm Phelan
int-adv bodhran

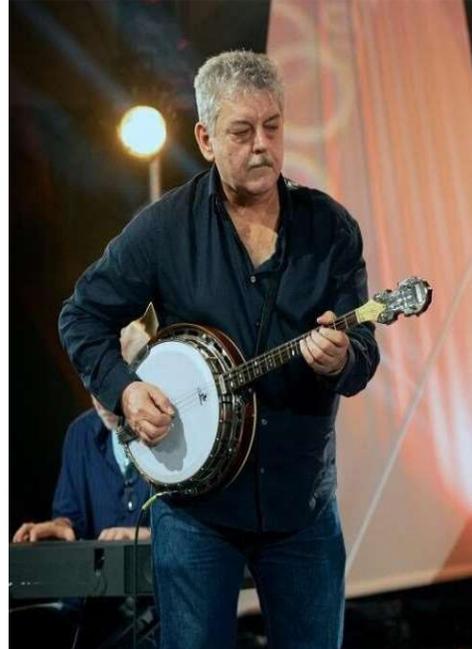
Aine Mc Geeney
singing

Kathleen Conneely
whistle

Faculty Connections

A column dedicated to Cruinniú instructor news and information .. by Laura Michaelides

Cathal Hayden



Cathal hails from County Tyrone in Ireland and comes from a highly musical family with musicians on both his mother's and father's sides. His first instrument was the banjo. He soon started on the fiddle as well. Cathal showed early talent, winning All-Ireland titles on both instruments. He recorded his first solo album in 1980 with Arty McGlynn, "Handed Down."

In 1988, Cathal joined the band Arkady but soon after left to form "Four Men and a Dog," which became one of the most successful Irish bands of that time period. Cathal has also had a long association with accordion player Mairtin O'Connor and guitarist Seamie O'Dowd. They toured together for over a decade. He is also a member of "Bow Brothers" with his brother Stephan Hayden and Niall Murphy.

Cathal has recorded extensively. In addition to his debut album, he has two other solo albums, "Cathal Hayden" (1999), and "Live in Belfast" (2006). With Four Men and a Dog, there is "Barking Mad" (1991), "Shifting Gravel" (1993), "Doctor A's Secret Recipes" (1995), "Long Roads" (1996), "Maybe Tonight" (2002), "Wallop the Spot" (2007), and "And the Band Played On" (2016). With Mairtin O'Connor and Seamie O'Dowd, he recorded "Crossroads" in 2008 and "Going Places" in 2012.

Over the course of his career, Cathal has traveled worldwide, from China and Japan, to Brazil, and throughout Europe and Ireland, sharing Irish music and his incredible talents. It can safely be said that he is one of the most technically brilliant, influential, and musically exciting musicians playing in this genre. We are tremendously excited that he will be joining us at the Cruinniú for our upcoming 2026 event.



A Bitta Irish

What's in a name? Why that name? Where did it come from?

A few questions asked when a person has an unusual name.

SAOIRSE, a girl's name, passed down through many generations of Irish.

Pounced: 'Seer ssha '

Meaning: Freedom

The earliest occurrence of Saoirse is found in Ogham, which is an ancient Celtic alphabet, primarily associated with Ireland. It is characterized by a series of strokes or notches, typically carved along the edge of a stone with the number of strokes representing different letters. Ogham is read from the bottom upwards.



Ogham stones, believed to date from the 4th to 6th Centuries, are found primarily in Ireland and a few have been found in both Scotland and Wales.

Here's what SAOIRSE looks like written in Ogham. This would look great as a tattoo wouldn't you agree?



Donations

Thank you to those who have donated. Please remember that many companies have business matching donation program for 501 (c) (3) non-profits. Please check if your employer has such a program and consider giving to GCC.

All donations are tax deductible.
Click the DONATE tab on our web page.

Education

University of St. Thomas, Houston
The Flynn Center for Irish Studies sponsors several Irish-related events and classes each year. Visit www.stthom.edu and search **Center for Irish Studies**

Volunteers Needed!

We need volunteers on the ground for the GCC. If you are interested in helping out at our 2026 event, please contact info@gulfcoastirish.org
Subject: Volunteering at GCC



If you can't get to a session, the Houston McGonigel's Mucky Duck Wednesday night session is now broadcast live at:
<https://www.youtube.com/@LIVEfromNorfolkStreet>

You can watch previous sessions at:
<https://livefromnorfolkstreet.com/blogs/session>



We are thankful for the continued support of



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs



Céili Fundraiser Announcement



We will have a Céili fundraiser
sometime this fall.
Watch your email and social feeds for
more details as we finalize the plans.

Cruinniú 2025 Instructor Playlist

We've compiled a playlist of a few tunes (and a story from Máirtín) featuring some of our instructors for your listening enjoyment. Follow the links below to the playlists on Spotify, YouTube, and Apple Music. Enjoy!



[YouTube Playlist](#)



[Spotify Playlist](#)



[Apple Music Playlist](#)

If the links above do not work, cut and past the links below in your browser
Spotify: <https://tinyurl.com/GCCSpotify> YouTube: <https://tinyurl.com/GCCYT> Apple: <https://tinyurl.com/GCC-Apple>

That's all for this month! Watch your email, social media feeds, and our website (gulfcoastirish.org) for more information as it becomes available.

The Gulf Coast Cruinniú

is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization led by volunteers with a passion for Irish traditional music. See DONATE on our web page. All financial donations are tax deductible.

GCC is a project of



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