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Welcome to the latest edition of the IACI e-news.

Founded in 1962, the IACI is the leading Irish American cultural organization. The IACI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national organization devoted to promoting an intelligent appreciation of Ireland and the role and contributions of the Irish in America.

Guest contributors are always welcome! Please note, the IACI is an apolitical, non-sectarian organization and requests that contributors consider that when submitting articles. The IACI reserves the right to refuse or edit submissions. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of the IACI or any/all contributors to this site. Please submit articles for consideration to cbuck@iaci-usa.org.

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IRISH CUSTOMS

On what day of the week was it regarded as being unlucky to cut your fingernails?	Sunday
What does the term 'luck penny' or 'luck money' mean?	This means returning a small portion of the sale price to the seller when a deal is made
What feastday is celebrated on February 1st?	Saint Brigid's Day
On St Brigid's Day people went from house to house carrying a straw doll. What was the doll called?	A Brideog
What is St Brigid's cross made from?	Rushes
What was put up into the rafters of a house, on St Brigid's Day, to protect against evil spirits?	A straw from the Christmas nativity scene
If a person drank nettle soup on May 1st, it was believed they would be free of what for a year?	Rheumatism
What day was considered lucky to sow potatoes?	Good Friday
What birds flying directly over a house were considered an omen of death?	Crows
When and what was 'Nollaig na mBan'?	January 6th - 'Little Women's Christmas' when men would take over the housework for the day!
In the west of Ireland what was a 'Foidin Mara'?	A 'stray sod' or 'enchanted' piece of grass whereby a person stepping on it would become disorientated and lost
It was believed unlucky to knit at night until you were certain who were asleep?	The sheep
A stocking filled with hot potatoes and applied to the throat was a cure for what ailment?	Tonsillitis
What was a besom and what was it used for?	A roughly fashioned short-handled sweeping brush made from a clump of birch cuttings, normally used to clean the hearth area of the kitchen
What was a ciseán ('cish-awn')?	A household basket crafted from reeds
What is meant by the term 'keening'?	When women family members would cry and wail over a relative who had died

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What was a 'Banshee'?	A fairy woman reputed to wail and cry at the impending death of members of certain families
Why did unmarried girls place slice of wedding cake under their pillows?	In the hope that they dream of their future husband
What is a Seanachai?	A traditional Irish storyteller/historian
Allegedly what will happen if you kiss the Blarney Stone?	You will get 'the gift of the gab (talk)'
What was the most popular way of finding a husband or wife in Ireland long ago?	Matchmaking
A famous annual matchmaking festival takes place in what county?	Lisdoonvarna, County Clare
Who or what were the 'Straw-boys'?	Groups of uninvited revellers dressed in top hats, masks and skirts of straw who arrived at weddings where they sang and danced
What day are you likely to see 'Wrenboys'?	St Stephen's Day
What is another name for 'Wrenboys'?	The Mummings
What was the significance of a horse or donkey shoe nailed above the door in an Irish house?	To bring good luck
Who would be the preferred first visitor to a house on New Year's Day and why?	A tall dark handsome man would bring good luck
What New Year's Day visitor was believed to bring hardship and grief to a house?	A red haired girl
What benefit was associated with May morning dew?	It was believed to be good for the complexion