

Preserving Irish Heritage for Future Generations

Celtic Life & Heritage Foundation

By Ryan Tipper © March 2017



Anne Tipper overlooking the 330' drop of Dún Aonghasa on Inishmore of the Aran Islands

From the gray skies, green pastures and ancient stone structures, I find myself exploring the vast beauty of the Aran Islands in Ireland. With the sounds of Irish music enveloping me in the traditional feelings of the country's culture, I soon look upon the rustic coastland followed by the endless horizon of the Atlantic Ocean and can almost feel the wind upon my face and the smell of the sea's spray. As my journey ends and the music stops, I take a moment to realize I wasn't in Ireland at all, but absorbed within Celtic Life and Heritage Foundation's website after becoming lost in one of the many resources available to their visitors.

Formed in 1990 by the late Timothy Michael Johnston, the non-profit foundation preserves Celtic Irish heritage for anyone looking to discover more about their Irish heritage and the culture that their ancestors celebrated generation after generation. Starting with educational modules and vignettes, the Foundation continues to expand their cost-free offerings and outreach for anyone that wants to learn more about this robust and depth-filled culture.

One example is the Bunratty Castle Module which takes students on a walk about the castle as well as involving them in many ways to make the learning fun, interactive and ultimately, educational. Following the module's guidelines, teachers convey the information from scripted resources while students find themselves responding through writing stories, drawing, even participating in a staged sword fight!

“All of our Education Modules are free and our most recent actually teaches students to

dance!” said Anne Tipper, President of the Foundation. Partnering with The Seattle Dance Company, the Foundation recently released their Intro to Irish Dance Instructional module that also includes additional activities for a presentation, a show, art, reading, and research. “All of our modules incorporate a variety of learning objectives,” said Anne. “In many cases students don’t even realize they are learning because activities are fun!”



Teampall Bheanain on Inishmore, Aran Islands

In its first full year providing free education modules to teachers and parents via the internet, Celtic Life & Heritage Foundation education modules received over 4,000 hits nationwide. As their internet presence continues to grow they expect that number to double this year. While 2016 has been the most expansive and successful year for the Foundation so far, it wasn’t always that way.

“When I began working with the Foundation in 2013,” says Anne, “a tremendous amount of resources and research had been collected with the purpose of preserving ancient Irish artifacts for future generations and then continuing with museum exhibits. The original goals were met with challenges and setbacks and made it difficult to reach a larger audience. Since I joined, we have been expanding digitally; taking advantage of the internet which enables us to reach both a national and international audience. The original work was not in vain though as it created the foundation and framework for Celtic Life & Heritage as it is today.”

With several free educational modules and numerous free vignettes currently available to the public on the Foundation’s website, Celtic Life & Heritage is making inroads with their mission, but much more is planned for the future.

“We have so many new and exciting products to preserve Irish Heritage coming in the next couple of years.” Anne said, excitedly. “Between 2017 and 2018, we (the Foundation) are planning on expanding our education modules and vignettes. We are in the process of publishing a card game and making our way to the mobile world with apps right on your phone. Going digital has been a fantastic step in the right direction and where we will continue to focus. Digital venues allow us to reach more people with a variety of resources enabling us to fulfill our mission on a much larger scale.”

As the Foundation continues to grow and expand, 2017 and beyond is looking bright. For anyone of Celtic or Irish decent, or anyone interested in Irish culture, head over to celticlifeandheritage.org for more information and access to the rich resources Celtic Life & Heritage provides.