

# Life Story of Reynardine...

1999

For some unknown length of time, Garret, Aideen, Stephen, and Kevin had been 'getting together' to play a few tunes and sing a few songs. It is impossible now to understand why they decided to transform the wonderfully bohemian, no-strings lifestyle of the sessioneer into the convention-bound habits of a B-A-N-D, but they did do it, and that transformation happened sometime in the fourth quarter of the last year of the second millennium.

The earliest incarnations of the group never referred to themselves as such, and hid their shocking new form under a blanket they referred to as "The Night". "The Nights" were a clever way to facilitate groupish activity without having to acknowledge the group's existence. The collected works of an established and well-loved musician were hijacked in order to serve as a vehicle for the band's own performances. "The Nights" were, on the surface, straightforward tributes to such great figures – 'The Leonard Cohen Night', 'The Bob Dylan Night', 'The Acker Bilk Night' (never completed) – but they in fact allowed the group to grow in strength without attracting the criticism newly formed groups and bands indubitably deserve. This strategy meant that by the time the group finally went overground, early in the year 2000, and started writing set-lists and trying to get gigs (habits it refuses to surrender even at the time of writing), society at large made no real attempts to limit its behaviour. Most people did not even notice.

November?                      "Leonard Cohen Night", Teach Uí Cairbre, Drogheda.

December 31<sup>st</sup>                      New Year's Eve Session, St.Columbcille's Well,  
Shallon, Co. Meath.  
Bonfire, food and music spectacular.  
The band met Neil for the first time, and were immediately  
struck by his dirty footwear and unfashionable glasses.  
music included:  
Bron Yr Aur, All Along The Watchtower.

## 2000

Some time very early in January, Neil is asked to play on a few songs for the next "...Night", which happens to be Bob Dylan Night.

January 25th "Bob Dylan Night", Teach Uí Cairbre.  
music included:  
Ring Them Bells, Davey Moore, Señor, Moonshiner,  
All Along The Watchtower, Lay Lady Lay,  
It's All Over Now Baby Blue, Simple Twist Of Fate,  
Love Minus Zero.  
The night also featured versions of "Boots Of Spanish Leather"  
and "Mr Tambourine Man" from Gerry Cullen,  
"I Pity The Poor Immigrant" by Sunday's Gate Quartet and  
"Last Thoughts On Bob Dylan" written and performed by  
Mathew Stout, who also sang "Absolutely Sweet Marie".  
There were many other singers and many other songs  
on the night.  
(recorded by the good doctor)

After this, a sort of group is sort of formed. No names, and only one or two songs.  
Suggested names included "Bellew's Flower Shop" and "Herb's Improving Finger".

March/April "The Folk Sessions Revival", Star and Crescent, Drogheda.  
The band played their first proper gig as part of  
Herb Finnegan's weekly session. He christened the band  
'Back Pages', a name which lasted as long as the gig.  
music included:  
John Barleycorn, Rescue Me, Señor, Reynardine,  
The Blacksmith, John Anderson, Western Plains,  
Dance Me To The End Of Love.

May/June "Calipo Open Mic Night" McHughs, Chord Rd., Drogheda.  
Band played similar set to the Folk Sessions Gig, although  
it may have included "Angel Band" and definitely included, for  
the first and last time, "Twa Corbies". A disastrous gig,  
nobody talks and activities are suspended for a few months.

December 4<sup>th</sup>

“Traditional Music Weekend 2000”, Droichead Arts Centre.  
The band, now called ‘Reynardine’, played an hour set on the  
Friday night concert in the Droichead Arts Centre on the same  
bill as the “Sunday's Gate Quartet”.

music included:

Bruton Town, Man Of Constant Sorrow, The Great Valerio,  
The Greenland Whale Fishers.

(recorded by the good doctor)

December 31<sup>st</sup>

New Year's Eve Session, St.Columbcille's Well,  
Shallon, Co. Meath.

Bonfire, food and music spectacular with a cast of thousands.

music included:

The American Tryology, Is She Really Going Out With Him?,  
Baker St., Dance Me To The End Of Love (Dance mix),  
Hallelujah, Peace In The Valley.

# 2001

- March 17<sup>th</sup> “St. Patrick's Day Ceilí”, Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda.  
Band played five songs, four of them brand new-“Moorlough Shore”, “St. James' Hospital”, “Pastures Of Plenty” and “Eppie Morrie”-as part of Helen Corcoran's Saint Patrick's Day extravaganzasáí.
- May 4<sup>th</sup> The Spirit Store, Dundalk.  
Reynardine, John Barleycorn, Eppie Morrie, The Cowboy's Lament, Greenland Whale Fishers, Moonshiner, Angel Band, John Anderson, On The Western Plain, Blackleg Miner, Bruton Town, Moorlough Shore, Pastures Of Plenty, The Great Valerio, The Blacksmith, Dance Me To The End Of Love, Crippled Inside.  
(recorded by the good doctor)
- July? Lake Studios, Boyle, Co. Roscommon.  
Band recorded the five-track ‘Red’ e.p. in Liam Cunningham's studios. Late nights in “The Watersplash”, gerihatríck pool sharks and a red-eye rendition of “Blood On The Tracks” from “Tangled Up In Blue” to “Buckets Of Rain”.  
The tracks recorded were:  
The Blacksmith  
Cowboy's Lament  
The Moorlough Shore  
Eppie Morrie  
The Broome Of The Cowdenknowes
- July? “Heritage Week”, Rathfarnham Castle, Dublin.
- August? Mid Atlantic Digital, Enniskillen.  
Recordings mastered by ‘Rockin’ Robyn Robins at M.A.D.-“makes your music sound much hotter than zero”.
- September 15<sup>th</sup> Rathfarnham Castle, Dublin.
- September 20<sup>th</sup> The ‘Red E.P.’ launch, Millmount Tower, Drogheda.

Gerry Cullen did the talking, Cathal Connaughton did the cover, Sheridan's supplied the food, the band supplied the drink, and the charm and buttered bread came from Bernie Morrissey and Brenda McAvinia.

- October 22<sup>nd</sup> Terry Connaughton's "Monday Night Session", Harcourt Hotel, Dublin.  
music included:  
Edward On Lough Erne's Shore, Lime Tree Arbour, The Roving Sea Captain, Yonder Comes My Mother, Juniper Tree, Bushes And Briars.
- November? Isaac Butt, Dublin.  
Band played five songs as part of Dublin band Settle's album launch.
- December 9<sup>th</sup> The Cobblestone, Dublin.  
-along with Gerry Cullen.
- December 15<sup>th</sup> The Spirit Store, Dundalk.  
-santa hats were loosed.
- December 31<sup>st</sup> New Year's Eve Session, St.Columbcille's Well, Shallon, Co. Meath.  
Toes curled, harmonicas iced up, and the Burning Man appeared.

## 2002

- January 8<sup>th</sup> “George Harrison Night”, Teach Uí Cairbre.  
Organised by Dónal Óg Black, and featuring Garret, Stephen, Neil, Johnny Russell and Conor Barry.  
If I Needed Someone, Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth), Piggies, I Live For You, Taxman, Old Brown Shoe, Think For Yourself, The Inner Light, It’s All Too Much, Do You Want To Know A Secret? , Here Comes The Sun (Johnny Russell and Conor Barry), For You Blue, While My Guitar Gently Weeps, Something, I Me Mine, Only A Northern Song, Savoy Truffle, Walk On Through (Johnny Russell and Conor Barry), Handle Me With Care, My Sweet Lord, Birthday, Bad Kid, Leave My Kitten Alone, The One After 909, Rocky Raccoon, I’m Down, My Sweet Lord.  
(recorded by the good doctor)
- Jan/Feb/Mar Band commissioned to compose and perform music for Drogheda/Shankill Schools Project production of “The Silver Tassie” by Sean O’Casey. Writing and rehearsal time was broken up with gigs in Belturbet, Co. Cavan.
- March 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> “The Silver Tassie” performances, Droichead Arts Centre.  
The band performed the musical score live for these performances.  
Thirty minutes of music, taken mostly from 78s, was also required for the party scene in the last act:  
Pasadena (1923) – The Temperance Seven.  
Harlem’s Araby – Artists Unknown.  
Charley My Boy (1924) – The Temperance Seven.  
Then You’ll Remember Me – Count John McCormack  
Thanks For The Melody – The Temperance Seven.  
Voodoo – Tiny Parr And His Musicians.  
She Is Far From The Land (1911) – Paul Robeson.  
I’m Gonna Bring A Watermelon To My Baby Tonight (1924)  
- The Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band.  
Please Charleston Quietly – The Temperance Seven.  
There Is A Flower That Bloometh – Count John McCormack.  
At Dawning – Paul Robeson.  
Bugatti Step – Jizek Orchestra.  
Gee, It Must Be Love – Gregor And His Gregorians.  
Ain’t You Baby – Ray Miller.  
Take Good Care Of Yourself (1928)  
- The Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band.  
Somewhere A Voice Is Calling – Count John McCormack.  
(compiled by Neil)

At least two of these performances were recorded and filmed.

April	Teach Uí Cairbre. New songs: “Molly Bawn Lowry” and a reworked “Reynardine”.
May 10th?	“Irish Lifeboats Benefit”, Spirit Store, Dundalk. (without Neil)
August?	Lanigan's, Belturbet, Co. Cavan.
September?	Rathfarnham Castle, Dublin.
September?	“The Silver Tassie” recordings, Sunnyside Records, Drogheda. A recording of the band’s entire score for the play was made for use at performances the group could not attend. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introduction (Kevin – Violin, Aideen – Harp).</li><li>2. McArdle’s Reel (full band, Kevin – Fiddle).</li><li>3. The Enemy Has Broken Through (full band).</li><li>4. Never Go Bald (full band, Kevin – Violin).</li><li>5. The Croucher (full band, Kevin – Violin).</li><li>6. Tantum Ergo (Garret – Harmonica, Aideen – Cello, Kevin – Violin).</li></ol> To The Guns! (full band, Kevin – Violin). <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. The Campfire Tassie (Garret – Harmonica, SJ – Mandolin, Neil – Guitar).</li><li>8. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot (SJ – Mandolin).</li><li>9. The End (full band, Kevin – Violin, Vocal).</li><li>10. The Silver Tassie (Kevin unaccompanied). (recorded by the good doctor)</li></ol>
December 6 <sup>th</sup>	“Traditional Music Weekend 2002”, Drogheda. The band opened the weekend on the Friday night, as part of the second annual concert dedicated to the memory of the late Caitlín Bean Uí Cairbre. Also on the bill were Gerry and Dónal Ó Connor. The Blacksmith, Eppie Morrie, Bushes And Briars, Roving Sea Captain, Wind And Rain, Juniper Tree, Clyde Water, Rosemary Lane, Bruton Town.
December 31 <sup>st</sup>	New Year's Eve Session, St.Columbcille's Well, Shallon, Co. Meath.

## 2003

- January? Teach Uí Cairbre.
- Feb./Mar. Garret, Kevin, Neil and Aideen assist in the recording of SJ's solo album at Tumbleweed Studios, Dundalk, County Louth. Kevin plays fiddle, with Neil and Garret providing backing vocals on "Juniper Tree", and Aideen plays cello on "St. Stephen's Day".
- March? Belturbet, Co. Cavan.  
A memorable gig. The band tried to do their own sound. Neil brought two faulty guitars, not even Garret's sandwich papers could save them. Aideen sang "Edward on Lough Erne's Shore" unaccompanied, and 'you could hear a rat piss on cotton'. At half time the band were instructed to "Get the place goin'". The best bit was the black coffee and grated cheese sandwiches in a garage forecourt outside Cavan town at two a.m. on the road home. Neil and Garret flew in formation through fogbound minor roads, hard nosing the highway to ensure the minimum equipment rental fee.
- April 6<sup>th</sup> "Farmer's Market" Castlebellingham, Co. Louth  
Branleigh Hoboken, The Blacksmith, Clyde Waters  
The Dreadful Wind And Rain, Juniper Tree, Dança Trotto,  
The Roving Sea Captain.
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> The Sunnyside Sessions  
Tracks recorded:  
Rosemary Lane, Juniper Tree, Bushes And Briars, The Roving  
Sea Captain, The Dreadful Wind And Rain.  
(recorded by the good doctor)
- May SJ McArdle launches his solo album "Lancelot".
- June 5<sup>th</sup> The Spirit Store, Dundalk.  
The Cowboy's Lament, Love Minus Zero, The Roving Sea  
Captain, Angel Band, Dança Trotto, Eppie Morrie,  
Rosemary Lane, Maids Of Valparaiso, Branleigh Hoboken,  
Juniper Tree, Bruton Town, Northern Sky,



The Dreadful Wind And Rain, The Lass From The Low Country, The Blackleg Miner, When The Roll (is called up yonder), Bushes And Briars, Reynardine, The Lime Tree Arbour, The Blacksmith, El Paso.

(recorded by the good doctor)

SJ McArdle leaves Reynardine.

July? Teach Uí Cairbre, Drogheda.  
Band play as four-piece for first time.

July 21<sup>st</sup> “The Black Nun Folk Club”, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim.  
Support by Connor Bones, Patsy Hill (Ballycastle's singing butcher), Tir na Nóg, and The Triangle Men - Riley Piddington and Dessie Hasson.

The Blackleg Miner, Rosemary Lane, The Moorlough Shore, Branleigh Hoboken, Eppie Morrie, Bruton Town When The Roll (is called up yonder), Northern Sky, Juniper Tree, The Roving Sea Captain, Maids Of Valparaiso, The Lass From The Low Country, Bushes And Briars, Love Minus Zero, Out On The Western Plains, John Anderson, Dança Trotto, The Dreadful Wind And Rain, The Blacksmith, John Barleycorn.

August 28<sup>th</sup> “Mars Night”, Teach Uí Cairbre.  
Organised by Dónal Óg.  
Aideen and Neil with Seán Gray and SJ.  
A melodica struck a blow for hose-based instruments everywhere, a bicycle light was used in an attempt to evoke a Martian sunset.

music included:

The Eve Of The War Of The Worlds (with SJ McArdle as Richard Burton and Seán Gray as Herbie Flowers),  
A Mars A Day/One Love (Bob Marsley).

October? “Hank Williams/Johnny Cash Night”, Teach Uí Cairbre.  
Kevin, Neil and Aideen, with Baz ‘Frank Zappa’ Leahy, Laura ‘Captain Beefheart’ Hale, Gentleman Jimmy Greaves, Healthy Peter, Pat ‘Honky Tonk Angels’ Colgan and SJ McArdle. And a kazoo.

music included:

Your Cheatin' Heart, Lovesick Blues, I Walk The Line, Lost Highway, Jackson, If I Were A Carpenter, I Saw The Light, I'm So Lonesome, Jambalaya, Ring Of Fire, Put The Bottle On The Table, Busted, I Still Miss Someone.

- November? “Lunar Eclipse Night”, Teach Uí Cairbre.  
Organised by Dónal Óg.  
Aideen, Neil, and Garret with SJ McArdle.  
music included:  
Sir Patrick Spens, Blue Moon Of Kentucky, Moonglow,  
Brain Damage/Eclipse, Moonage Daydream, Blue Moon,  
Lord Blow The Moon Out Please, Total Eclipse Of The Heart.
- November? “Viaduct Night”, Teach Uí Cairbre.  
Organised by Dónal Óg.  
Neil and Garret with Rory Conlan, Neil Conlan and SJ  
McArdle.  
music included:  
People Get Ready (l/v Declan Hoey), Stop That Train,  
Smokestack Lightnin’, Love In Vain, Crazy Train,  
Waitin’ For A Train (l/v Oliver), The Bridge,  
Viaduct Over The World, Madame George.
- December 20<sup>th</sup> “Solstice Night”, Teach Uí Cairbre.  
Garret, Aideen and Neil, along with Dónal's group.  
music included:  
Branleigh Hoboken, Samhradh, Samhradh,  
Tonight's The Night, Northern Sky,  
(regrettably) Solstice All Over The World.
- December 31<sup>st</sup> New Year's Eve Session, St.Columbcille's Well,  
Shallon, Co. Meath.  
Garret, Kevin and Neil, with star guests.  
music included:  
Brown To Blue, Present Mirth, Me And Bobby McGee,  
Nell Flaherty’s Drake, Bridge Over Troubled Water,  
Your Cheatin' Heart, Lovesick Blues, I Walk The Line,  
Lost Highway, Jackson, If I Were A Carpenter,  
I Saw The Light, I'm So Lonesome, Bruton Town,  
All The Best to J.D.

## 2004

- February 4<sup>th</sup> An Chéad Chéadaoin, Teach Uí Cairbre, Drogheda.  
music included:  
Dança Trotto, Lass From The Low Country,  
The Days Are Dark Now, The Blacksmith,  
Early Morning Rain, The Roving Sea Captain,  
Bushes And Briars, The Blackleg Miner.
- February 15<sup>th</sup> “IMRO Singer/Songwriter Showcase”, Holiday Inn,  
Pearse St., Dublin.  
The Lass From The Low Country, The Days Are Dark Now.  
There are 27 other acts on the bill...
- March 17<sup>th</sup> Band record ‘final’ takes of three tracks in Sunnyside Records:  
Bushes And Briars, Rosemary Lane,  
The Dreadful Wind And Rain.
- April 1<sup>st</sup> Mother Redcap’s Tavern, Back Lane, Christchurch, Dublin 8.  
Special guest on the night: Mick O’Brien.  
Eppie Morrie, Rosemary Lane, Maids Of Valparaiso,  
Bruton Town, Northern Sky, The Days Are Dark Now,  
The Dreadful Wind And Rain, The Lass From The Low  
Country, The Blackleg Miner, Early Morning Rain,  
Out On The Western Plains, When The Roll (is called up  
yonder), Bushes And Briars, Reynardine, The Blacksmith.  
(recorded by the good doctor)  
Mick Jagger had hoped to join the group for “Blackleg” and  
“Early Morning Rain”, but couldn’t find the venue...