Martin O'Reilly

(1829 –1904)

Blind Uilleann Piper
Píobaire Dall

An extraordinary man and gifted uilleann piper, Martin O'Reilly was born in Galway city and operated a small dancehall in Sickeen (St Brendan's Avenue). Although blind from birth, Martin became a much sought after entertainer of his day. His wonderful talent was highly acclaimed in newspapers. His selection of tunes captured the emotion of his audiences everywhere. He fired them up with stirring and forceful versions of tunes, including 'Brian Ború's March'. It was reported that he left places throbbing with so much spirit that he could have led his country men into battle. Sadly, Martin died in the Gort Poorhouse in 1904, without the acknowledgment he deserved. His death-bed request was to ask for his beloved pipes.

Fear faoi leith agus píobaire uilleann tréitheach ba ea Martin O'Reilly. Sa chathair a rugadh é agus bhíodh halla beag damhsa aige sa Suicín (Ascaill Bhréanainn). Cé go raibh sé dall ó bhreith, bhíodh an-tóir ar Martin mar shiamsaí lena linn. Dheintí a thréitheacht a mholadh go hard sna nuachtáin. Thugadh na poirt a bhí aige idir uchtach agus spreagadh dá lucht éisteachta. Ghríosadh sé le leaganacha corraitheacha poirt iad, ina measc 'Máirseáil Bhriain Bhóramha'. Tuairiscíodh faoi go mbíodh an oiread sin teaspaigh ar dhaoine tar éis a chuid ceoil a chloisteáil go bhféadfadh sé a chomhthírigh a threorú chun chatha. Fuair Martin bás i dTeach na mBocht i nGort Inse Guaire i 1904, faraor, gan an t-aitheantas a bhí ag dul dó. Agus é ar leaba a bháis lorg sé an phíb uilleann, a raibh a chroí inti.

Find Out More

Martin Reilly
Blind Piper Galway
Photo Courtesy Dublin Pipers Club

Irish Pipers:
Front from left: **Hanna Barry, Pat Gallagher, Michael O'Sullivan, Martin O'Reilly** (Galway), **Denis Delaney** (Galway), **Edward 'St John' Synge and George McCarthy.**
Back from left: **Pat McCormack, John Cash and Pat Ward**
Photo Courtesy Dublin Pipers Club

Sickeen Dancehall
Photo Courtesy William Henry