

Northern Ireland's archived news

The Gobbins

Karen and Laurence visit 'The Gobbins' - Northern Ireland's fantastic new tourist attraction!

With many of you hopefully coming to the 'Carrickfergus 2017' gathering Karen and I thought we would check out Northern Ireland's newest tourist attraction...the dramatic coastal walk of 'The Gobbins'.



We have to say we did not leave disappointed. It is fantastic!

The Gobbins Path (Irish: Goban meaning tip/point of land or headland) located in Islandmagee, nine miles or so from Carrickfergus in County Antrim is a unique coastal experience. Having originally opened to the Edwardian public in 1902, it fell into decline due to damage caused by the pounding waves and lack of investment, before closing in the 1950s.

It has now reopened, a reimagined version of Northern Ireland's 'best kept secret', a feat of modern engineering allowing one a fabulous and special encounter with nature on a two to three hour fully guided tour starting at the new visitor centre.

Whilst touring the walk exhibition in the centre, of course there just had to be a MacAulay connection! A display board tells one that despite the lack of safety measures only one serious accident took place on the old path, when a ten year old girl slipped through a gap and fell fifteen metres into the sea below. Two young men from Belfast, one of whom was Robert Macauley heard her desperate cries and quickly dived in to carry her to safety...ah, "Danger is Sweet".

The approximate two and a half mile walk follows a dramatic cliff face path, with its tunnels and staircases, clinging to the sides of sheer basalt cliffs a few metres above the sea. Numerous spectacular connecting bridges allow one to walk above the North Channel waves pounding the cliffs below. All along your well informed tour guide tells of the geology, fauna, nature and history of the area through your personal radio link.



We visited in early November on a damp overcast day so couldn't take in the beautiful views of County Down's Copeland Islands and Scotland's coast with Ailsa Craig. Sadly, we also missed seeing the incredible seabird colonies, including the numerous puffins, razorbills, guillemots, fulmars and kittiwakes that nest on the cliff face in early summer. We shall definitely return next year to witness them in the breeding season.

The walk is certainly exhilarating and if you like the wild outdoors not to be missed. As the tour leaves every half hour with only a maximum of fifteen persons allowed unfortunately we are unable to organise a special gathering outing in 2017. On the November day we visited the whole days tours were fully booked, so summer bookings shall be at a premium. We would therefore recommend you book online well in advance of your journey to Northern Ireland in 2017!



There are strict health and safety rules regarding the walk, such as wearing hard hats and the right footwear (hiking shoes/boots).

www.thegobbinscliffpath.com

Laurence McAuley

Tony heads for The States!

Tony heads for The States!



Author and clan member Tony Macaulay from N. Ireland has been invited to be a guest author at the Literary Corner in this year's Milwaukee Irish Festival.

Tony having recently completed his highly successful trilogy of books about life growing up in Belfast through the 'Troubles' shall read excerpts telling of his personal experiences (many humorous) of the times.

The festival, the biggest one of its kind in the USA with its mission to promote and celebrate all aspects of Irish, Irish American and Celtic culture shall run from August 13 - 16, 2015.

If you are one of the many spellings of MacAulay/McAuley/McCauley etc encompassed by the clan, please make yourself known to Tony who will be more than glad to have a chat.

If I by Scott Macaulay

If I by Scott MacAulay can be downloaded from <https://scottmacaulay.bandcamp.com/track/if-i>

Scott tuning up for a shot at BRIT success!



The Clan's talented young singer-songwriter Scott Macaulay from Mallusk, Co Antrim has made it through to the regional final of a major UK-wide music competition.

Clan member Scott Macaulay, son of Barry and Lesley-Ann, is one of 14 acts set to compete in The Big Music Project Competition Northern Ireland final in Belfast on Friday, November 14.

The Big Music Project Competition, powered by Next BRIT Thing, is funded by The Big Lottery Fund and aims to provide future generations of musicians with the chance to learn first-hand from the music business and take steps towards a career in the industry.

Scott will be among the regional finalists who will perform for industry professionals at The Crescent Arts Centre in a bid to win a place in the national final, which is due to take place in London during BRITs Week 2015 in the lead-up to one of the biggest nights in the music

industry's calendar, The BRIT Awards.

The young musicians, all aged 14 to 24, are competing for top notch prizes, including the opportunity to record at the world-famous Abbey Road Studios, the chance to perform at Classic FM Live at the Royal Albert Hall, and the unique offer to be featured on the BRIT Awards Compilation Album 2016.

Scott, who lists two of his main musical influences as Ed Sheeran and Dave Grohl, made it to the regional final after securing public backing in an online vote for his debut song, Belfast Heart.

The 16-year-old Belfast Royal Academy pupil - a talented musician, singer, rapper and beatboxer - is excited about the prospect of showcasing his skills in front of industry professionals. "I am so excited to have been chosen to compete in the regional finals of The Big Music Project Competition. Music has always been something I've really been passionate about, and this is a great opportunity to take the first steps into a music career. I love all types of music, especially jazz and hip-hop, and try to infuse them in my singing. Rapping is also a cool thing I love to do because it makes me stand out from the crowd, as well as my beatboxing. I just love any type of music. My dream is to be working with music every day of my life. I just love it. Anytime I get to sit down I instantaneously pick up the guitar, it's weird. I just really want to keep working very hard, writing and recording songs and trying to get out there as much as I can."

The judging panel at Friday's NI final will include top producers, music executives and some of the UK's most influential music editors. The regional winners will be announced in early January 2015.

For more information about Scott's music email smacaulay@outlook.com or check out his Facebook page - Scott Macaulay Music.

Derek at No 10



London Clan member Derek McAuley (middle) with Chair Rabbi Jonathan Romain and other leading Accord Coalition representatives after their meeting with the Prime Minister's Political Adviser on education and family policy Laura Trott, at Downing Street earlier this month.

Derek is the brother of our N. Ireland Clan Commissioner Laurence McAuley.

Gareth McAuley wins 50th Cap



Relative of our N Ireland Clan Commissioner Laurence McAuley, English Premiership footballer West Bromwich Albion's Gareth McAuley last month earned his 50th international cap for Northern Ireland in the teams 2-0 European Championship away victory over Greece.

To beat Greece in their own backyard, a team that in the summer had narrowly lost out on a World Cup Quarter Final place on penalties was quite something.

Gareth had also scored the opening goal in the 2-0 victory against the Faroe Islands a few days previous. Incredibly the two victories sent Northern Ireland to the top of their qualifying group with a maximum of nine points out of nine!

A few more victories and the many 'McAuley' Northern Ireland fans could be starting to dream of a place in the European Finals for the first time!

McAuleys Meet in Mexico - A Real Coincidence

The Clan's Northern Ireland Commissioner, Laurence McAuley and his partner Karen Montgomery recently returned from the winter sunshine after two weeks in Cancun, Mexico. Whilst there an amazing coincidence occurred.

Standing at the busy Moon Palace Resort hotel lobby bar one evening, two other hotel guests came to sit beside them. The couples got chatting and introduced themselves on first name terms. Five minutes later Josh from Texas said in passing "I'm McCauley". Well one can imagine how surprised Laurence was, not to mention Josh and his wife Holly when Laurence replied "What, so am I".



Chatting further, obviously about all things McAuley, Josh in fact had never ever met another McAuley outside of his family circle... McAuleys are in short supply in Texas! Unfortunately Josh had no idea as to his McCauley family roots other than of Irish or Scottish decent. His mother in fact was full blooded Red Indian. Interestingly his middle name was Lewis... could his roots lie with the MacAulays of Uig, Isle of Lewis? A place Josh had never heard of.

Laurence McAuley

Dave 'Boy' McAuley - What a fighter!

Oh boy, what a fighter Dave McAuley was!
BY DAVID KELLY (Belfast Telegraph) – 07 JUNE 2014



Boy becomes a man: Dave McAuley with his world title belt

The man from Larne wasn't supposed to win, it wasn't even meant to be close. But midway through the first round and Dave 'Boy' McAuley looked beyond the creased up features of Duke McKenzie and into his heart. The script had just been changed. It is 25 years tonight since that moment at Wembley Arena when McAuley's favourite hammer left hook made IBF World flyweight champion McKenzie realise the underdog had more bite than anyone he had ever faced before.

"I can see that left hook as if it was yesterday, he didn't go down but I heard the 'aaggh!' and saw his face and from then on I knew I had him," said McAuley, who would eventually end his career as the most successful British and Irish fighter in history, making six defences of the IBF title – and along the way he ended up with what he described as "a cauliflower backside" having hit the canvas so many times.

But the 53-year-old was made of the kind of rock that surrounds the Halfway House Hotel on the Antrim coast, run by the McAuleys and his father-in-law Omar Beggs, and so often he would scramble to his feet to carve out victory. On this particular evening he never looked like tasting the canvas but instead gave a masterclass of boxing to take a unanimous points decision.

His world had changed forever and yet, McAuley has revealed he had come to the conclusion that after 16 fights and two World title defeats at the hands of Colombian Fidel Bassa – the first arguably the greatest fight ever seen on Irish soil – his career was over. Then, after a year on the sidelines, manager Barney Eastwood secured a shot at McKenzie, who would ultimately end up as a three-weight world champion.

"After the second Bassa fight I had resigned myself to retiring. I fought twice for the World title and, back then, it was really almost unheard of that someone having fought twice and lost for the World title would have the chance to fight for the world title for a third time. It was only when the WBO title came along that things opened more and at the start it was like a British world title because so many of the champions were British," said McAuley, who was honoured by the Queen with an MBE for his services to the Noble Art.

"When Barney said to me you have a chance at McKenzie I was surprised, but I was up for it. By the time the fight came along I was 15 months out of the ring and for most people that would be a problem but we sparred so hard in the gym that any ring rust I had was knocked off me very easily.

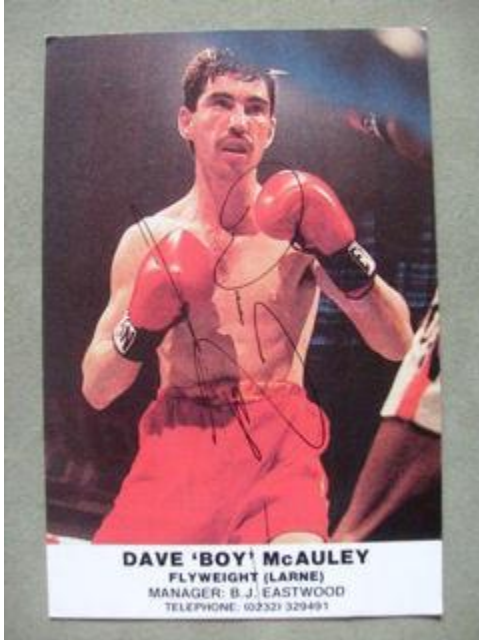
"I had some real wars in the gym and we had the best sparring that money could buy. Also Barney was great at making you believe in yourself.

"Today you have a lot of sports psychologists but back then that's what Barney was for me – he had this way of making you believe in yourself. The way he went about things and the way he acted, he made you believe you could do things that others thought you had no chance of doing. Without Barney I would never have become World champion. To have him in my corner was crucial."

If Barney and the rest of the McAuley team had faith, McKenzie's promoter Mickey Duff viewed it as a handy defence for his rising star.

"Duff believed that I was coming over as a sacrificial lamb. He was having a voluntary defence, they thought I was just in it for a final pay-day so they took the fight expecting an easy night," added McAuley.

"I went to London about 10 days before for the various press things and I would be standing there with nobody talking to me and everybody was around McKenzie because he was the next big thing. I think I was about 7-1 in the bookies and McKenzie was the man of the moment."



Former bookmaker Eastwood revealed how he ultimately outfoxed counterpart Duff as they negotiated the deal.

"Mickey came on and offered the fight and I said 'you'll have to do better than that, he needs to get well paid because he's only there for the pay-day' and eventually he came back with the right offer. Dave was getting well paid and also I knew that although he hadn't fought in 15 months he was sparking in the gym," said Eastwood. "He had lost to Bassa twice but those fights had brought him on so much and I knew that he was ready for McKenzie. We believed in him so much that we sent a guy to a few bookies and had plenty of money on him – we won a nice few quid.

"McAuley was a special guy, a great guy to work with and when he won against McKenzie it was one of my great nights in boxing."

For all the optimism, McAuley knew that it was his last chance to rule the world and as he waited for the call to arms there was tension in the air.

"In the dressing room I was nervous, I always got nervous. When I was defending my world title in Belfast. I would go into the dressing room where my gym-mates Victor Cordoba and Crisanto Espana where and they were so chilled out I couldn't believe it but it made me calm down and they would say 'McAuley what are you worried about, it's just another fight' Those two were real world class fighters and so chilled it was scary.

"Once my gloves went on I was in warrior mode. The home crowd for McKenzie never

bothered me – I would have fought in Vietnam because it was just me and the opponent in the ring. After that left hook he knew that I could take him out with one punch, or at least I could hurt him, so that changed everything. Suddenly he realised he was in a fight.

"He got so desperate that he tried to butt me in one of the rounds and got a warning from the referee, Randy Neumann. I managed to get out of the way but that could have not only ruined the fight but my career because it would have just opened me up.

"Boxing is brutal and I remember when my mindset to the sport changed. It was the night Barry McGuigan won his World title at Loftus Road in 1985. I was fighting Bobby McDermott in a British title eliminator and I remember hearing from his corner 'Kill him, kill him Bobby, kill him Bobby and I could see the trainer out of the corner of my eye... that changed my mindset about boxing because to me it was just a boxing match. But it's more than that."

When the final bell sounded it seemed to everyone that McAuley's dream had become a reality but he wasn't convinced the decision would go his way.

"I knew I had won, but in boxing you are never sure and Mickey Duff was lifting McKenzie and walking around the ring with him. But if they had given it to McKenzie it would have been one of the worst decisions in history.

"When I heard 'and the new world champion' it gave me a feeling like I have never had before... when my hand was raised it was just indescribable, it didn't sink in for three or four days. I was the best in the world and I had done it against all the odds, out of the ring for 15 months and brought over as a big outsider.

"When I lost the World title – I got robbed in Spain – it was the worst feeling. I couldn't handle it for months and even went into a little depression."

As McAuley celebrated and his dressing room turned into a media scrum, he took time to walk down the corridor to McKenzie and into a very different atmosphere.

"I got up in the middle of the press conference in my dressing room where you could hardly move and went down to his dressing room and you could have played football in it.

"He was there with only his coach, Mickey Duff, and his brother. I thanked him for the chance and wished him well.

It just shows you the nature of boxing and many sports – when you're at the top people want to know you and the phone never stops but then in defeat it all changes. I went from the man nobody wanted to talk to in London to the one everyone wanted to speak to and McKenzie was on his own.

"You get the glory hunters, whether it's the public or the media – one minute they're all there and then the next they're not.

"When we got home I was given an open top bus ride in Larne, it made me realise just what it meant to the town and to the country and only years after do I hear stories about what people were doing, how much it meant for them to have a world champion from Northern Ireland.

"It makes you feel privileged and humbled. To me it was just boxing but it meant so much more than that."

McAuley would go on to co-promote his future World title fights with Eastwood and into the history books with his six defences, the glory days ending in 1992 in Bilbao when he suffered at the hands of the judges after 12 tough rounds with Colombian Rodolfo Blanco in a re-match of their epic King's Hall duel two years earlier.

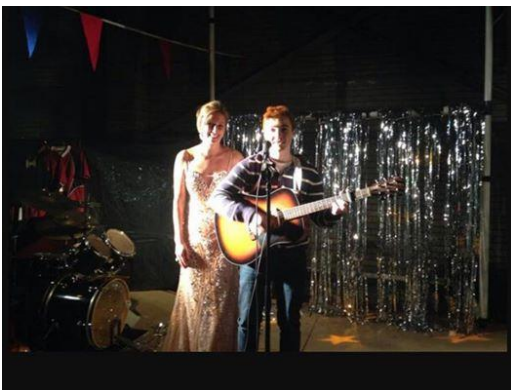
"I'm very proud of what I achieved and it was nice to be honoured with the MBE and in the end I got rewarded in a way that I never thought was possible when starting out in my career."



Dave "Boy" McAuley and family at the Carnlough Gathering 2011

Star of the Clan

Scott Macaulay from Mallusk, County Antrim, did the MacAulay Clan proud on Sat 21st February when he won a local Stars in their Eyes competition. He sang Ed Sheeran's 'I See Fire' the theme from the Hobbit and brought the house down. Only 15 this was his first live performance and he has already secured a few gigs. Who knows he could be performing at one of our future gatherings!



Scott is with presenter and former UTV golden girl Claire McCollum

Gareth McAuley: West Bromwich Albion man signs two-year deal

West Bromwich Albion centre-half Gareth McAuley has signed a new, improved two-year deal with the Baggies.



The 33-year-old stopper, who made a clean sweep of the player of the year awards, is now tied to the Baggies until June 2015.

"Gareth's important to the dressing room," said head coach Steve Clarke.

"He's been a stand-out performer this season and deserves every reward he gets. I'm absolutely delighted the deal has been done." The Northern Ireland international, signed on a free transfer on an initial three-year deal from Ipswich Town in May 2011, has forged a sound central defensive partnership with Jonas Olsson over the last two seasons.

Together, the pair were the bedrock of Albion's second successive top-10 Premier League finish.

"The fact Gareth has signed it tells you it is a good deal for him - and it is certainly a good deal for the club," added Clarke.

"He's important both on and off the pitch. I've mentioned a number of times how strong the dressing room is and how we have a lot of good characters in the dressing room. Gareth is one of those."

Gareth, known as 'Big G' hails from Larne and is a relative of our N. Ireland Clan Commissioner Laurence McAuley.

Gareth McAuley (Macca the Attacker) has hit five goals in 73 games in two seasons with Albion - netting against both Merseyside clubs this term, as well as hitting the goal last season that cost then Chelsea boss Andre Villa-Boas his job.

A Christmas Star

Did anyone see this seasons festive, feel-good film release: "A Christmas Star"?

The film made by young people mentored by industry professionals is Northern Ireland's first locally made Christmas movie and features a cast of new, young Irish actors together with stars such as Liam Neeson, Pierce Brosnan, Kylie Minogue and Downton Abbey's Robert James Collier.

The movie centres around a young girl named Noelle, who when born in dramatic circumstances under a Christmas star, believes she has the ability to perform miracles. The story unfolds when she teams up with a group of local kids, who take on a developer trying to demolish their coastal village.

If you were one of the many McAuley / MacAulays who attended the successful 2011 Carnlough Clan Gathering, you will recognise many of the outdoor locations, as the movie was filmed in the neighbouring Antrim Coast Road villages of Glenarm and Carnlough. The pub scene takes place in the bar of the Londonderry Arms Hotel (see below) where we had our opening welcome folk night.



Glenarm Castle also features heavily, whose gardens we visited on our Saturday afternoon jaunt.

'Carnlough 2011' was the largest International Clan MacAulay Gathering to date (see photo below showing some of the many MacAulay / McAuleys etc before the Clan banquet at Carnlough harbour).



Thoughts now turn to **2017**, when the International Gathering shall again return to Northern Ireland to the County Antrim historic coastal town of **Carrickfergus**. Already there has been huge interest from MacAulays worldwide for the event, number interest that has exceeded all expectations...we invite MacAulay/McAuleys (of every spelling) to join us...will you be there?