

# David Collins

I was born in Bedford Nursing Home, Limerick on the 5th January, 1921. My parents were Margaret (née Shanahan) and Michael Collins. I came from a family of eight. We lived in Dromtrasna Collins, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick. My uncle, Pat Collins, was a fiddle player and my aunts played the concertina. I started learning music at the age of fourteen and my first instrument was the concertina before I started to play the fiddle. Michael Murphy (RIP) of Abbeyfeale was my music teacher. I left home when I was twenty-one to take up work as a carpenter.

Whilst in Clonmel I shared digs in Abbey Road with Labhrás Ó Murchú, (President of CCE). In 1958 I joined the Clonmel branch of Comhaltas, where there were approximately 38 to 40 members. We formed the '*Shamrock Chéilí Band*' and played for Céilís and Feiseanna throughout Tipperary and Waterford. I have very fond memories of these times and made many friends.

In 1962 I moved to Roscrea with my wife and family and worked as a carpenter until I retired in 1986.

A branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann was formed in October 1962. Founder members were:- (Chairman) Eamonn Stafford; (Vice-Chairman) Pat Shanahan; (Secretary) Bro. Collins (RIP); (Treasurer) John Keevey (RIP); (PRO) David Collins. We did not have many members in the beginning but gradually grew to be a very successful branch. We hosted two County Fleadh Cheoils and one Munster Fleadh in Roscrea.

I formed the '*Mountain Road Chéilí Band*' in the late '60s. Original members were Billy Cummins Jnr, and his father Billy Snr, Jack Dyer, Mick Sheedy, Patsy Treacy, Seamus Hctor (all the aforementioned are now deceased) Mai Phelan (née Ryan), Ted Brophy. Over the years other members of the band were Davy Brussels, Christine and Joan O'Grady, Anne Oakley, Noel Troy, Collins Brothers, Killea (John and Brendan), Jim Egan, Costelloes (Alan, Lisa and Aishling), Lucy McCarthy, Pat Flanagan, Joe Barry, Sean Gleeson, and Michael Cooney (Littleton, RIP). The band won three Munster titles and was placed several times in the All-Ireland. We also won the All-Ireland Oireachtas Chéilí Band competition in the early '90s. My daughter, Breda is also a traditional singer, and has won County and Munster titles in both Irish and English singing, and been placed in the All-Ireland.

We appeared on television four times and the branch also had their own show on *Bring Down the Lamp* in 1966 with musicians, dancers and singers (senior and junior members). We also had the opportunity to broadcast on *Céilí House* on a number of occasions. The branch were also involved in Seisiúin and a group performed in King John's Castle Roscrea, Puckane, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise, Katie Doyle's, Killaloe and many other places throughout the summer months entertaining locals and tourists.

In August 2001 I received an award from the Munster Council of Comhaltas for my years of commitment to Irish Music. I was very honoured to receive such an award, and it also gave me an opportunity to meet some of my friends in Comhaltas who were also recognised for their commitment and dedication to Irish Music.

I love Irish Music and I am privileged to be part of Comhaltas in Roscrea, and all that they have achieved. Long may it continue.



*David - affectionately known as Davy - Collins doing what he loves doing*

