

## Galway County Heritage Awards 2009

Galway County Heritage Awards ceremony took place in the Claregalway Hotel on Wednesday 2nd December 2009 at 8.00 p.m. The Awards Programme was very well attended by elected representatives, community groups, schools and individuals from all parts of the county. Over 400 people from all parts of the county attended the Awards Ceremony, coming from Inishbofin, Clifden, Leitir Meallain, Tuam, Glinsk, Ballinasloe, Castleblakeney, Moycullen, Claregalway, Gort, Oranmore, Clontuskert, Fohenagh, Loughrea, Ardrahan, Kinvara, Lawrencetown, Clarenbridge and Williamstown.

Speaking at the Awards Ceremony, **Cllr. Tom McHugh**, Mayor of the County of Galway, said *'Our heritage belongs to each one of us and it is vital that it is valued and appreciated at a local level if we are to manage, preserve and protect it. It is clear from the number, quality and caliber of the nominations for a County Heritage Award, that our built, natural and cultural heritage is valued at a local level.'*

The judging panel of Mr. **Michael Gibbons**, Archaeologist, Mr. **David Burke**, Editor, The Tuam Herald and Ms. **Mary Flynn**, Community Planner were given a daunting task in trying to pick the County Heritage Award winners.

Mr. **Conor Newman**, Chairman, The Heritage Council said *'It is very important that we recognise and acknowledge the voluntary contributions and work of people on the ground, such as schools, individuals and community groups. Leading by example, they foster awareness of the history that surrounds and connects us all, and show how each of us can play a role in caring for this unique asset.'*

Galway Rural Development sponsored an Award for the Best Heritage Publication and Galway Rural Development, stated that *'It was fitting that Galway Rural Development were sponsoring this Award as we have provided funding for numerous heritage projects including heritage publications over the years'*.

Mr. **Brendan Smith**, speaking on behalf of Galway Education Centre said *'Galway Education Centre is delighted to sponsor Awards for the best Schools Projects as it is very important that children have an awareness and appreciation of their heritage'*.

**Cllr. Tom McHugh**, Mayor of the County of Galway presented the Awards.

County Heritage Award Winners 2009  
Overall County Heritage Award Winner

### **Dr. Tony Claffey, Tuam**

Tony has dedicated a number of years of his life into researching the history of Tuam and in the Summer of 2009 the fruits of his labour entitled The Tuam Atlas was launched as part of the prestigious Royal Irish Academy Series of Town Atlas'. This is the first atlas in the series that has been produced for anywhere west of the Shannon.

The atlas traces the growth and decline of Tuam through its origins as a monastic centre, to its rise in the 12th century as a Cathedral City, to its development in the eighteenth century as an important trading centre in the west of Ireland. Histories of over 700 sites (streets, markets, schools, etc) are detailed alongside c. 20 maps (thematic, reconstruction and historical) and views of the town presented in large format and colour.

Tuam is no. 20 in the Irish Historic Towns Atlas series, published by the Royal Irish Academy. It is comparable to the other Irish atlases produced in the scheme and over 450 towns and cities all over Europe that are compiled following similar guidelines. It is an outstanding publication and is an excellent example of thorough research that has been excellently presented for us the people of Tuam and County Galway.

### ***Ballinasloe Electoral Area***

**Winner : Castleblakeney Church Restoration Association Limited - Sarah & Valerie Kinsella**

Sarah & Valerie Kinsella have been nominated for their outstanding leadership in local and heritage affairs in Castleblakeney, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. They have been very much involved in the conservation and restoration (to best heritage practice) of the local Church of Ireland of since 1999. They have also undertaken significant research on the Blakeney Family and Mary Anne Taylor and have undertaken various local heritage projects with the schools in Castleblakeney. Sarah & Valerie have been to the fore in organising the local Golden Mile and have won a Corrin Hill Award for a Community Biodiversity Garden in September 2009. They always strive to collect knowledge and information on the wonderful heritage of Castleblakeney and to present it back to the local community in a readily accessible format. In addition to this they have brought back new life to the Church of Ireland and important heritage and community resource for Castleblakeney.

### ***Second Place : Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association***

The Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association is one of the most progressive and energetic organisations for older people in Ireland. Central to their core activities is 'heritage' with regular organised visits by their members to area of social and natural heritage across the country. But of most significance under their remit of heritage is a fascinating website and DVD that they produced known as Fado Fado. With support from The Digital Enterprise Research Institute, NUIG and Galway County Council, they conducted a series of recordings of their own members' memories of growing up in County Galway and elsewhere in Ireland from the 1920s to 1950s. These interviews are available as podcasts on the website [www.irishfadofado.com](http://www.irishfadofado.com). The website also contains an online photo gallery of images of life in Ireland from the 1930s to 1960s.

### ***Connemara Electoral Area***

**Winner : Marie Coyne, Inishbofin**

Marie Coyne is the author of a fine publication entitled St. Colman's Cemetery, Inishbofin Island. Marie has gathered together a collection of Islanders photographs burials in St. Colman's. She has recorded details of those that have been buried in the graveyard which would have been otherwise lost. The publication also includes other information about drowning, churches, saints and traditions. In future if a native of Bofin wants to look up their heritage this book will help in many ways through the list of burials in the cemetery, information about the island through stories, photographs and poems etc. It includes an archaeological report on the cemetery and a write up about Cromwell's Barracks. She also established a small museum on the pier showcasing the island's heritage. Marie works so hard on researching and documenting the heritage of Inishbofin for the people of Bofin and others.

### **Second Place: Coiste Oidhreachta Leitir Mealláin agus Gharumna**

Tá Coiste Oidhreachta Leitir Mealláin agus Gharumna tagtha le chéile mar choiste deonach chun Teanga, Cultúr agus Oidhrecht Cheantar na nOileán a chaomhnú agus a chur i láthair an phobail in ionad buan agus muintir na háite/turasóirí a mhealladh chuig an Ionad sin. Ní hamháin go mbeidh an tIonad Oidhreachta mar áit is díol spéise do thurasóirí ach bheadh súil ag an gcoiste amach anseo é a úsáid mar áis oideachais do scoileanna mórthimpeall an cheantair ag cur taispeántais agus turais lae ar fáil le linn na scoilbhliana. Is í an phríomh-

aidhm atá againn ná oidhreacht (bíodh sí mar oidhreacht thógtha, fhisiciúil nó chultúrtha) cheantar Gharumna agus Leitir Mealláin a chur chun cinn agus feacht a mhúscailt inti, ní hamháin go háitiúil ach go náisiúnta agus fiú go hidirnáisiúnta tríd suíomh idirlín a fhorbairt.

### ***Loughrea Electoral Area***

#### ***Winner : Comhar Creidmheasa Naomh Breandáin***

Bíonn an Comhar Creidmheasa Naomh Breandáin ag tacú le himeachtaí oidhreachta i rith na bliana i mBaile Locha Riach mar imeachtaí éagsúla le linn ‘Sheachtain na Gaeilge’, ‘Féile Raifteirí’, ‘Slogadh Eachtaí’, ‘Scoil Cheoil na tSamhraidh’, ‘Feile Tuohy’ agus bíonn said gníomhach in imeachtaí Sheachtain Oidhreachta a eagrú sa chomharsanacht chomh maith. Caithfidh a rá go bhfuil réimse iontach imeachtaí eagraithe i gcomhar leis an chomhar creidmheasa ina bhfuil an pobal ar fad lárnach i gcúrsaí oidhreachta. Feictar go bhfuil ceiliúradh is comoradh déanta ar oidhreacht cultúrtha, timpeallachta is togtha sna chomharsanacht.

#### ***Second Place : Loughnane and Quinn Memorial Hall, Labane, Ardrahan (The Committee)***

The Committee of Loughnane and Quinn Memorial Hall, Labane, Ardrahan have undertaken a major conservation and restoration project on the Memorial Hall. Twenty seven Clubs and Societies regularly use this community building and it has been an integral part of parish life here since the 1940's. The building itself is a Protected Structure. The works included the main roof which had 4 valleys repaired, slates replaced and concrete rendering complete, doors repaired, the Billard room was completely refurbished. All works were carried out in accordance with the principles of the Venice and Burra Charters and advice was sought from architectural heritage specialists.

### ***Oranmore Electoral Area***

#### ***Winner : Bill & Alice Scanlan, The Anchorage, Gurrane, Oranmore***

Bill & Alice have been nominated for their unselfish contribution to providing us with an awareness and understanding of our local heritage in particular our Marine Heritage, Placenames and the local graveyard. The both provide numerous people with access to their knowledge of the sea and the people and way of life of people who made their living from the sea in the past. Bill has provided us with a very good understanding of what it was like to live in the Light Houses of Ireland and the type of work that it entailed while Alice has been very much involved in the conservation of the local graveyard of Oranmore and collecting placenames associated with the sea.

#### ***Second Place : John Joe Duggan, Liscaninane, Claregalway***

John Joe has provided an outstanding heritage service to his community. He is very actively involved in the Heritage Societies in Lackagh and Annaghdown and the various heritage projects that they have undertaken. He is also a custodian of the traditional crafts in our area; most particularly the craft of thatching. He is a person who loves passing on his skills and knowledge of thatching to others.

### ***Tuam Electoral Area***

#### ***Winner : Williamstown Heritage Society***

The society was founded in 2000 and has considerable achievements to its name since then. They include the following: a) organising heritage trails in the parish; b) interviewing senior citizens; c) hosting events for National Heritage Week; d) hosting heritage meetings and seminars; e) have had Summer Scheme Students recording memorials from the graveyards and church records; f) trips to various heritage venues; g) developed and erected two heritage maps of the parish; h) erected an information board and 6 heritage signs in the parish. In addition to the above, our flagship project over the past seven years concerns

Templetogher Mill and its surrounding heritage Park. The Society purchased the mill on behalf of the community and raised all the funds locally. Galway County Council, Galway Rural Development and The Heritage Council has provided funding and assistance to the project. Industrial Archaeologist Fred Hammond provides the professional advice to the project. The first major restoration task was the mill wheel. The group have also developed a Biodiversity Park adjacent to the mill. The group is indebted to the Rural Social Scheme who has funded three workers on the mill site over a three year period.

### ***Second Place : Glinsk Community Development Society Limited***

The group has worked tirelessly since 1995 to create a very important heritage resource in their local area. One of the major projects that the group has been involved in is the development of Glinsk Heritage Park. It was purchased by the Community in 1995 and the group have been pursuing its development ever since. The investment in the park to date totals 418,000 Euros. This very ambitious project has now come to fruition in that it is now fully accessible and is being used by many, many people in the community. While plans are in place for further substantial development so that the park can reach its full potential it has reached its first major milestone by being open to the public and in use. It celebrates our natural heritage in a unique way. The park is an excellent heritage resource not only for Glinsk but for the whole county. It is planned to undertake further studies of its geology and natural heritage including the glaciated valley, arboretum, and its flora and fauna. The park hosted National Trails Day in 2008.

### ***Best Publication***

***Winner : The Parish of Clontuskert - Glimpses into its Past*** by Clontuskert Heritage Group

Clontuskert Heritage Group was founded in March 2005 and eighteen members of the group spent four and a half years researching the history and heritage of the parish and have produced a wonderful publication entitled *The Parish of Clontuskert-Glimpses into its Past*. By publishing the book, the group hoped to raise awareness of Clontuskert's rich cultural heritage and to facilitate parishioners in researching the history of their own families. The book presents the reader with a broad panorama of life in Clontuskert down through the centuries. The 528 pages has twenty one chapters and the following is some of the topics that it deals with, The Prehistoric Archaeology of Clontuskert, the ringforts, the Priory of St. Mary, the Church of Ireland parish, the Seymours of Somerset, Pollok in Lismanny, the Famine, education, the Great War and the townlands.

### ***Second Place : A Guide to Connemara's Early Christian Sites by Rev. Anthony Previte***

Anthony Previte's recently published book *A Guide to Connemara's Early Christian Sites* is an attractive user-friendly guide, beautifully illustrated with photographs and maps. The text is short, informative and to the point. The maps and illustrations make it easier to locate these remote religious sites. This publication is the first guide to the early Christian sites off the Connemara coast. It makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of these sites and brings their coast and history to a wide audience.

### ***Highly Commended : Killeenadeema Aille-History & Heritage*** by

#### **Killeenadeema History & Heritage Society**

The publication *Killeenadeema Aille-History & Heritage* is edited by Pat O'Looney. This 680 page book was produced by Killeenadema History and Heritage Society. The group was formed in August 2006 and since then have been diligently researching the history and social history, folklore, topography, music, sport and Gaelic culture of Killeenadeema-Aille. The diligent and industrious committee undertook the mammoth task of uncovering and assimilating that hidden treasure in various archives, libraries and in the local community. To quote from the publication '*to preserve the records of one's community is an obligation that every person owes to himself and to posterity*'.

## **Best School Project**

### ***Winner* : Fohenagh National School, Fohenagh, Ahascragh, Ballinasloe**

Fohenagh National School has produced a fascinating documentary on the '*Upstairs & Downstairs*' life of the local '*Big House*' Clonbrock and the Dillon-Mahon family who lived there as well as the local people who were employed and connected to the house. The project is part of the BEO Digital Archive Project and includes a series of interviews with former employees of Clonbrock Estate including maids, gardeners, a hairdresser and a herdsman's family. Recordings were made of readings from the diary of the Honorable Edith Dillon which provides a unique insight into the privileged but much regimented life of the aristocracy. The readings of Valerie Thornton wonderfully portray the social protocols and hierarchical strata that existed even amongst the servant classes in the rarified atmosphere of the Victorian and Edwardian mansions.

### ***Second Place* : Carnageehy National School, Carnageehy, Milltown**

As part of the Something Fishy project organised by Galway Education Centre and The Western Regional Fisheries Board the children produced an excellent hand-crafted three dimensional model of the life cycle of the salmon. The plaster sculpture contains elements of the water creatures and terrain that Irish salmon encounter in their long journey from a mountain stream to the expansive waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

### ***Highly Commended* : Craughwell National School, Craughwell**

Working under the BEO Digital Archive Project and the tutelage of teacher Lucy Forde, the pupils of Craughwell produced a lovely film documentary on life in rural Ireland in days gone by. They studied specific equipment and instruments used in different walks of life such as the farm, the home, the shop, the pub and the office. The children made a plea for artifacts from their families and the local community. The items that were collected included: a cooking pot, oil lamp radio, sewing machine, school case, ink pen, camera, typewriter, whiskey jug, dining room crockery set, weighing scales, and a non electric clothes iron. The children then researched the usage of the collected items by which formed the basis for a film documentary on life in 'the old days'. The movie also uses music from the school band as a soundtrack, a lovely introductory narrative in Irish by Aisling and photographs of Craughwell from the middle of the twentieth century.

The following is the full listing of all groups, individuals and schools that were nominated for a County Heritage Award:

#### **BALLINASLOE ELECTORAL AREA**

Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association  
Bird Watch Ireland  
Castleblakeney Church Restoration Association Limited - Sarah & Valerie Kinsella  
Clontuskert Heritage Group  
Corgary National School, Corgary, Mountbellew, Co. Galway  
Fohenagh National School, Fohenagh, Ahascragh, Ballinasloe  
Kilclooney Cemetery Committee, Kilclooney, Ballinasloe  
Kilconnell Community Group, Kilconnell, Ballinasloe  
Lawrencetown Community Enterprise Co. Ltd, Lawrencetown, Ballinasloe

#### **CONNEMARA ELECTORAL AREA**

Cnoc Suain, Bóthar Maigh Cuilinn, An Spidéal  
Coiste Oidhreacht Leitir Mealláin agus Gharumna  
Conamara Environmental Education & Cultural Centre: Cilian Roden  
Marie Coyne, Inishbofin

Cumann Staire, Maigh Cuilinn, Arus Uilinn, Church Road, Moycullen  
Sara Kyne, Homefarm, Moycullen  
Pat Lynne, Station House Museum, Clifden  
John Bhaba Jeaic Ó'Confhaola  
Oughterard Culture & Heritage Group, c/o Railway Lodge, Oughterard  
Rev. Anthony Previte  
Padraic Reaney, Drumaveg, Moycullen  
St. Annin's National School, Killannin

#### LOUGHREA ELECTORAL AREA

Carrabane National School, Carrabane, Athenry, Co. Galway  
Comhar Creidmheasa Naomh Breandáin,  
Craughwell National School, Craughwell  
Doorus Orchard Project, Kinvara  
Eoghan Mac Cormaic and Pádraig Ó Baoill,  
GLÓR-Gaeilge Locha Riach  
Karen O'Neill, Ardrahan Heritage Group  
Kileeneen National School, Clarinbridge  
Kilnadeema National School  
Killeennadeema History & Heritage Society  
Loughnane and Quinn Memorial Hall, Labane, Ardrahan (The Committee)  
Scoil Chiarain Naofa, Dubhras, Cinn Mhara  
St. Joseph's National School, Woodford, Co. Galway

#### ORANMORE ELECTORAL AREA

Michael John Burke, Prospect, Maree, Oranmore  
John Joe Duggan, Liscaninane, Claregalway  
John McDonagh, Turloughmore  
Gerri McManus, Seamus O'Connell & Tom Lenihan, Claregalway  
Bill & Alice Scanlan, The Anchorage, Gurrane, Oranmore  
Western Family History Association, c/o Ms. Anne Greaney, Rinnaknock, Headford

#### TUAM ELECTORAL AREA

Belclare/Sylane Community Council  
Belmont National School, Belmont, Milltown  
Dr. Tony Claffey, Vicar Street, Tuam  
Carnageehy National School, Carnageehy, Milltown  
Creggs National School, Creggs  
Fr. Des Walsh, Williamstown and now Lackagh  
Glenamaddy Community Development Company, Ballyhard, Glenamaddy  
Glinsk Community Development Society Limited  
Maitias Ó Gormaile, Tuam  
Milltown National School, Milltown, Tuam  
People and Nature Biodiversity Project and Parkmore Community Garden, Parkmore, Tuam  
Scoil Bhearna Dhearg  
Williamstown Heritage Society

*Detail is available about each project entered into the competition if required.*

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