

# Local pride inspires high quality projects in County Heritage Awards

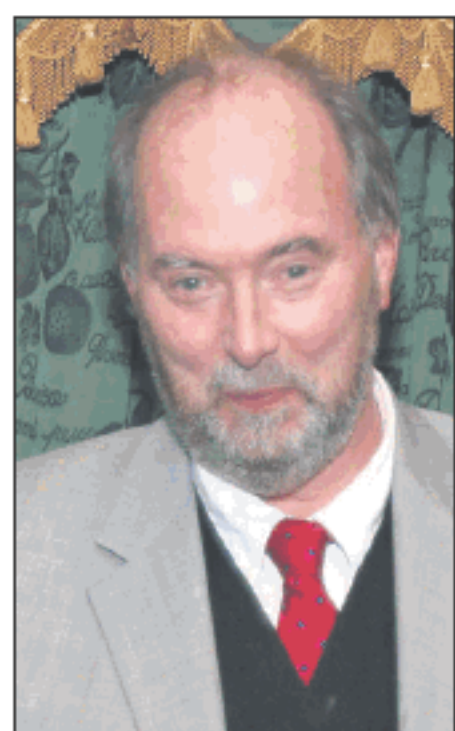
THE PRIDE of the citizens of Co Galway in their local areas was evident in the quality of the entries in this year's County Heritage Awards.

From projects mapping local field and townland names, through recording of the names on gravestones in cemeteries, on to publishing books of real value, and to the heights of building restoration, the judges were spoiled for choice when it came to deciding on winners.

This was evident in the unprecedented number of Highly Commended awards given to projects which in previous years might have been among the winners.

The overall winner was the Portumna Workhouse restoration project, an ambitious scheme which is still very much a work in progress and will remain so for many years.

Another large-scale project, which won the Oranmore Area Award, was the restoration of Claregalway Castle by Dr Eamon O'Donoghue and his team.



CASTLE restorer: Dr Eamon O'Donoghue of Claregalway.

In the publishing section, an outstanding work of scholarship was the publication of *Leabhar Inis Bearachain*, based on a collection of manuscripts written by a man called Michael Connolly on Inis Bearachain in the far south-west of Connemara in 1882. The main editing work was done by an Irish-speaking German, Andreas Vogel.

The winner of the Tuam area was the Milltown Community Council for their support of the restoration to a high standard of the Jockey's Monument, which is the only tangible link with the Cromwellian deportations, known to history in the phrase "To Hell or to Connacht".

Accepting the award on behalf of the Community Council, Michael Rhatigan thanked all who had helped with the work, and particularly the landowner who gave access to the monument and allowed an entrance to be built.

At the awards ceremony in the Meadow Court Hotel, Loughrea on Thursday, which was very well attended by elected representatives, community groups, schools and individuals, Cllr Michael Maher, County Mayor, 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 calibre of the nominations for a County Heritage Award, that our built, natural and cultural heritage is valued at a local level."

Many tributes were paid at the ceremony to County Heritage Officer Marie Mannion, whose drive and encouragement inspired many of the



OVERALL County Heritage Award Winner was The Irish Workhouse Centre Project, Portumna. Pictured are (front): Christy Cunniffe, Josephine Lynch, Ursula Marmion, County Mayor Michael Maher and Director of Services Kevin Kelly. Back: Mel Stoddard, Pat Madden, Bernie Coughlan, Heritage Officer Marie Mannion, Kay Hanley, Paul Mullin and Sean Larkin.



THE Children's Burial Ground committee, Scotland, Glenamaddy was highly commended: pictured with the Mayor and the Director of Services were Patricia Keady, Margaret Keaveny, Sr Evelyn Geraghty, Fr Paddy Mooney, Breda Keaveny and Ann Mooney.

participants.

The judging panel was Hugh Carey, Archaeologist, Monument Service, Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, Mary Flynn, Community Planner, Sheila Murphy, Ecologist and David Burke, Editor, *The Tuam Herald*.

The winners were as follows, with their citations: Overall County Heritage Award Winner: The Irish Workhouse Centre Project, Portumna.

South East Galway IRD has taken on a significant heritage project in developing the Irish Workhouse Centre at the former workhouse complex in Portumna. The work carried out to date has secured the future of a number of architecturally and socially significant buildings. It is a masterplan for best heritage practice. The heritage significance of this project has impact at many levels: local, county, national and beyond.

### Ballinasloe Electoral Area

Winner: Killure Heritage Group

The production of the book *Killure-Kilgerrill by its people & friends* serves as an excellent example of what a parish community can do in documenting for posterity a social history and treasured heritage of its people and ancestors.

Runner Up: Saint Cuan's Transition Year, Castleblakeney

The students are recording the details of Caltra graveyard. The recordings are to

detail the archaeological findings, to upgrade the parish records and put information onto an internet database.

### Connemara Area

Winner: (For two Projects) Ionad Oidhreacht Leitir Mealláin & Gharumna i gcomhpháirt le Muintearas, an Togra Oideachais Gaeltachta.

The projects are the Heritage Centre for Garumna Island and Lettermullen, and a project to provide detailed local tours of the area for interested visitors and groups.

Runner Up: The Oughterard Culture & Heritage Group

The Oughterard Heritage website, [www.oughterard-heritage.org](http://www.oughterard-heritage.org), is the first open access website in the country dedicated to archiving, sharing and educating the local community and the worldwide diaspora about the heritage of Oughterard by using stories, video, film, audio, historical reference and vernacular resources. A modern, entertaining and easy to navigate experience has been created. All Groups and individuals, both local and international, are able to contribute directly to the website under the editorial control of the Oughterard Heritage Group.

### Loughrea Area

Winner: Gordon D'Arcy

Gordon D'Arcy has given years of dedication to the education of primary school children about the environment and nature. He has produced a teacher's guide, with little financial support. There is little comparable material

available that combines art and science. By encouraging teachers and pupils to understand and express an interest in nature, the manual helps to educate future generations about the importance of the Irish environment.

Runner Up: Scoil Chiaráin Naofa, Doorus

Scoil Chiaráin Naofa produced a beautifully illustrated fish recipe book. They researched different dishes and cuisines based on different variety of locally sourced fishes and other aquatic life such as oysters. The result was a production of a wonderful book of recipes that also contained a series of beautiful drawings created by the children.

### Oranmore Area

Winner: Eamonn O'Donoghue, Claregalway Castle

Eamonn O'Donoghue and his restoration team have put many years into the restoration of Claregalway Castle. The Castle will, for many centuries to come, be a window to life in the distant past. It will play host to an exhibition of all the artifacts found in the recent archaeological dig which was carried out to facilitate the bridge works as well as hosting a garden festival in July celebrating the tree in Irish life.

Runner Up: Martin T Byrnes, Oranmore Heritage

Martin T Byrnes is a founder member of Oranmore Heritage and is the driving force in all the activities. He is a longstanding member of The Old Galway Society and a recorder with Irish Wild Bird Conservancy.

He is also a member of Bat Conservation Ireland and An Taisce, and was known as the Bat Man in Oranmore. He participates in all these with great joy and his enthusiasm is infectious. For preservation and conservation Martin Byrnes is passionate, committed and hardworking.

### Tuam Area

Winner: Milltown Community Council

Milltown Community Council has given their help and encouragement to the Restoration of the Jockey's Monument. The monument is known thus as local folklore has it that Edmund Hopkins who was leading the hunt fell off his horse and was killed while jumping the ditch at this point. The monument dates back to 1686 and is the only known monument to have a direct link to the

records the restoration of the famous Harry Clarke windows and looks back on the history of the Church and parish. Lots of research was done, a lot of time was spent gathering material, going to libraries, visiting local people, graveyards, taking and collecting photographs. Months of extremely hard work went in on a voluntary basis to the making of this DVD.

### Best Publication

Winner: Muintearas for *Leabhar Inis Bearachain*.  
Runner Up: Mhá Fiontáir, Inis Mór

This women's group on the main Aran island compiled a book of island lore.

Third Place: Catherine Forde, Crumlin National School, Ballyglunin, Tuam

Ms Forde researched and published a book *Crumlin National School 125 years 1885-2010*. Interviews from past pupils document the way of life in the area and the history of the local Railway Station (Ballyglunin) and the importance of the railway in the life of the local people. Documents retrieved from the National Archives give a history of the built heritage. All copies of documents from the National Archives, old photographs, and the Schools' Manuscript Collection 1937-1938 for Crumlin National School were displayed at a book launch held in the school in December 2010 and are available for viewing at any time in the school. Publication of the book and the book launch was of great significance to the community and has initiated a renewed interest and discussion in local history and heritage.



CATHERINE FORDE won third place in the publication category for her history of Crumlin NS, Ballyglunin, Tuam.

### School Projects

Winner: Scoil Bhriocáin, An Gort Mór, Ros Muc.

The pupils used all modern technologies to document their local Golden Mile.

Runner Up: St Thomas National School, Peterswell

The school became involved in an international schools project based on a 1560 painting by Dutch artist Pieter Brueghel of children at play. The school re-enacted and filmed many of the medieval games that appear in the original painting, some of these were also enjoyed by Irish children of that period.

Third Place: Knockroon NS, Headford

Knockroon NS produced a documentary on the Cong Hatchery and on the life cycle of the salmon. As their movie documentary shows, they also secured a strong appreciation of the importance of the Cong Hatchery and the work of the Inland Fisheries Ireland in maintaining fish stocks in Ireland's and Galway's lakes and rivers.

### Highly Commended

Áras Mhuire Heritage & Folklore Group, Tuam

The Áras Mhuire Heritage & Folklore Group's intergenerational project in which the local secondary students interviewed and captured the life stories, histories, traditions and events from the early 19th Century has resulted in the production of a beautiful book, *Opening Doors, Recalling Memories of Yesteryear*. This book will be a very important heritage resource in the future for people in the wider community and county.

Children's Burial Ground Committee, Scotland, Glenamaddy



NATURALIST and Educator Gordon D'Arcy won First Prize in Loughrea area.



SAINT Cuan's College, Castleblakeney, Transition Year were runners-up in the Ballinasloe area. Pictured are (front) County Council Director of Services Kevin Kelly, Michael Dillon, Mayor Michael Maher and Mattie Giblin with students Michelle Warde, Chelsea Reilly, Carmel Byrnes, Laura Judge, Ciara Bannerton, Naomi Glynn and Aine Jordan.



ÁRAS MHUIRE Heritage and Folklore Group, Tuam were highly commended. Pictured with the Mayor and the Director of Services are Delia Lynch, Mary Egan and Mai Miskell; (back) Maura Mullen, Breege Dunne and Lorraine Harte.



MILLTOWN'S award was accepted by Michael Rhatigan, pictured with County Mayor Michael Maher and Director of Services Kevin Kelly.