

Oral heritage group to collect folk memories

Emer Connolly

A FOLKLORE group that was formed in Clare nine months ago will be officially launched in Ennis tonight.

Cuimhneamh an Chláir, the Clare Oral History and Folklore group, is an independent group whose aim is to catalogue memories of some of the county's older generation.

Since its inception in February, more than 50 people have been interviewed and their memories have been recorded. The aim, over the coming months, is to continue to interview people and record plenty of memorable stories and a variety of tales.

Co-ordinator of this voluntary group, Tomás Mac Conmara, is very pleased with the success to-date. "We have mobilised 25 volunteers.

They have been trained in theory, methodology and practice. The aim is that each volunteer does one interview a month," he explained.

A variety of stories and memories have been uncovered, through this project.

"They gravitate towards different directions. Sometimes it can be biographical or a story of a person's life. Other times it can gravitate towards

tales," he said.

"This is very much by the people for the people; word of mouth," he said.

"All of the volunteers are referred to as 'cuairteoir' (visitors). That was the tradition that kept our oral heritage alive. We are trying to resurrect that," he said.

"We have now produced business cards with words and expressions

that are used in the everyday vernacular of older people," he said.

He explained the background behind the group's formation. "We had identified that a huge amount of work was going on in terms of heritage, but there was no systematic effort in relation to preserving folklore. Never before has there been a countywide attempt at recording the older people of our county," he said.

Reach for the stars in Shannon

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FIVE Shannon people who have excelled in sport or drama over the past year have been honoured by the local town council.

Four top sportstars and a member of a musical society were presented with Liosta na Laochra awards at a function in Shannon last Thursday night. The Wolfe Tones camogie club and St Senan's rugby club were also honoured for their achievements over the past 12 months.

The individual award winners were Patrick McDonagh (boxing), Jamie Roughan (hurling), Stephanie Regan (ladies football), Matthew Mason (gymnastics) and Gary Keane (musical society). They have all excelled in their respective areas, achieving national or international recognition during the year.

Mr McDonagh won an All-Ireland schoolboy boxing title (39kg category); Mr Roughan was a member of the All-Ireland winning Clare under-21 hurling team; Ms Regan was on the Clare panel that won the Intermediate ladies All-Ireland football championship, while Mr Mason won an All-Ireland title in tumbling (age 13 – 16). Gary Keane was a national winner at the amateur Irish Musical Society awards.

Wolfe Tones camogie club was the first club to open a dedicated camogie pitch in Ireland, while St Senan's rugby club won the Munster junior league (Division Two) title.

Community grants were also presented to 18 groups in Shannon. The grants, of between €200 and €500, were presented to a variety of groups which are deemed to "generate civic pride and involve local people in the

improvement of the town".

The groups that received funding were Shannon Hibernian Soccer Club; Shannon Athletic Club; Shannon Senior Citizens; Shannon Town United Soccer Club; Parents, Carers and Toddlers Group; Shannon Graveyard Maintenance Committee; Drumgeely Residents Association; JET FM Community Radio; Shannon Community Games; Shannon Gospel Choir; Shannon Chess Club; Wolfe Tones Camogie Club; Gleann an Oir Residents Association; Shannon Region Talking Newspaper; Shannon Second Chance Animal Rescue; RINS FM – Radio Inbhear na Sionainne; Dúchas na Sionna and Shannon Handball Club.

The Mayor of Shannon, Councillor Seán McLoughlin, said the aim is to divide the community grants fund so that several groups will benefit. "It is

a good representation of what is happening in Shannon. We try and divide it as much as possible. It is nice to give some to the small organisations who have small budgets," said Cllr McLoughlin.

He said the Liosta na Laochra awards were presented to worthy recipients. "It is great to see young people taking part in sport," he said. He said that Patrick McDonagh's achievement in boxing should prove an inspiration for the re-establishment of a boxing club in Shannon. "I hope he can represent Ireland in the Olympics some day. I hope that a boxing club can be re-formed in Shannon. This could be the start of it," said the mayor.

Left: Mayor of Shannon, Councillor Seán McLoughlin.
Eamon Ward

Building of Hope diary

Volunteer

Volunteer: Dr Tony Cox
From: Drumcammore, Ennis
Profession: GP

Dr Tony Cox was so impressed by the experiences of the volunteers with the first Building of Hope trip that when Olive Halpin asked him to sign on for Kenya he agreed.

"I know Olive and her family very well. She asked me to go to South Africa but I couldn't make the commitment then, I am in a position to do that now."

Tony will be travelling with the second group and relieving Dr Rory O'Keefe to allow him to travel to Uganda and Tanzania to see the medical situation there.

"Dr Rory's first concern and responsibility - and therefore mine - will be to see that all our volunteers are looked after and that they get home safely. After that I'll do whatever I can and I hope to be able to go out

into the community with a nursing sister that Olive knows there and to help in any way I can."

Dr Tony told The Clare People that he has found fellow medics, pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies "very supportive. I tapped into different resources to fundraise. My patients have been fantastic and I wrote to fellow medics and they were very supportive too."

The doctor has recently been contacting pharmaceutical companies who have been giving him basic medical supplies such as antibiotics, dressings and pain killers.

"Things are very basic out there. Olive tells me that she and Doctor Rory brought some antibiotics and other simple medicines to the nursing sister and it was as if they had given her diamonds.



Antibiotics can make such a difference to someone battling with AIDS." While he is in Africa, Dr Tony's wife, Dr Denise Crowley, will be looking after his patients and his practice. "My family have been fantastic in supporting me. We have two teenage boys and when I get back, it will be mid-term, so we'll definitely do something as a family then."

Upcoming Fundraisers

A Fabulous look back at Christmas Past Times takes place this Thursday, December 3, at FSG on the Quinn Road Business Park. Forgotten skills will be brought back to life by talented local craftsmen. Come and see the handmade heirlooms of the future. There will be lots of demonstrations on the night, with crafts such as lace work, quilting, flower arranging demos, cookery demos, jewellery, quilting, scrapbooking, crochet, knitting, mince pies, Xmas cakes, Xmas decorations, calligraphy, cards, storage boxes, blankets, and much much more. Come and support all the local crafts. Time: 6.30 - 9.30.

There will be a Poker Classic on Sunday, December 6, at Brandon's "The Old House" in Sixmilebridge, organised by volunteer John Reddin. The fun starts at 7pm, €20 per player. Contact John on 087 7805353

Volunteers Sean Daly is organising a fundraising night in The Cloister on Friday, December 4, with music from Bushplant and T-Zerz. All donations will be welcomed on the night and there will be finger food and raffles with lots of spot-prizes including art donated by local artists. Fun starts at 8pm.

Above: Building of Hope volunteer Dr Tony Cox.

Clare Life

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