

NEWS

Milltown's young bards marked Lá Fheile Bhríde

By Mary Ryan

THE Plain Chant entrance from the back of the Community Centre in Milltown on Friday night February 1 catapulted the audience right back to the Bardic School of The O'Higgins. A group of black-clad men, followed by women, sang their way to the stage in one of the first 2019 events leading to Galway 2020.

The celebration was part of the Small Towns, Big Ideas initiative which in Milltown focusses on the Kilclooney Bardic School, internationally renowned from the 14th to the 17th centuries.

The singers were Cois Cladaigh, a Galway-based choir which became the linchpin of historical and contemporary music at this Ceall Cluaine (Kilclooney) Culture evening.

They opened with 'Seachtain', a poem by Seán Ó Riordáin arranged by the late Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin; 'Trees' by Joyce Kilmer and 'Beannacht' by John O'Donoghue.

In addition to the "imported" choristers there were many locals who had the feet of the audience tapping to their music.



ÁINE Sheridan, Liz Johnson and Nora Kyne at the Ceall Cluaine Cultural night in Milltown.

Harpist and singer Aoife Blake, a Master's student at Cork School of Music, had travelled from Cork especially for the evening. Young musicians The Tribesmen with Emily Greaney played a selection of music by PJ Conlon, the famous Milltown box player, who made many recordings in the USA in the early decades of the last century.

Stars of the night were children from Milltown and Belmont National Schools who joined forces for the event.

They turned bards at the hands of poet Pete Mullineaux who read from his own collection before pupils read the individual lines from a collective composition. They were accompanied by classmates playing fiddles, tin whistles

and percussion in the background.

With an interest in traditional music, Pete was well placed to be a conduit between the ancient bards of Milltown and the current generation.

A specially composed song by Padraic Stevens entitled *Lá Fhéile Bríde* to mark the day that was in it was played by three harpists: the coordinator of the event, Aine Ni Shioradain; Aoife Blake; local school teacher and harpist Méabh Sheridan; Padraic himself on guitar and Seán Sheridan-Lally on fiddle.

All on stage and in the audience joined in a final chorus that surely would have found favour among the ancient bards of Kilclooney.



EMMET Greaney, Hugh Crawley, Thomas Brogan, David Flanagan and Emily Greaney of the Tribesmen traditional group who took part in the Ceall Cluaine Cultural night in Milltown.

PHOTOS: RAY RYAN

COPE INVESTS IN VOLUNTEERS



LUCIA Canavan, Tuam, COPE Galway's Volunteer Co-ordinator, (left) received an Investing in Volunteers (IIV) award from Terri O'Brien, Volunteer Ireland Quality and Programmes Manager, at an event to celebrate COPE Galway's achievement of a national quality standard in volunteering - a first for the West of Ireland. Lucia commented, "This award is a way to show our commitment to making the volunteering experience within COPE Galway the 'Best in the West'. We simply couldn't do the work we do without our 'Tribe' of exceptional COPE Galway volunteers and for that we are very grateful." To learn more about volunteering, see <https://www.copegalway.ie/get-involved/volunteer/>

Mayos in Galway to honour their own at dinner dance

THE Mayo Association Galway will honour the recently nominated Mayo Person of the Year, business man and community activist Cathal Hughes, at its annual dinner dance at the Galway Bay Hotel, Salthill on Saturday, February 16.

Cathal Hughes, a past pupil of St Jarlath's College in Tuam, was chosen as the Mayo Person of the Year in recognition of the depth and breadth of his contribution to Mayo, with regard to the economic life of the county.

He took over the family business in Westport in the 1970s during a difficult economic time before turning around the fortunes of the company. Portwest today provides employment to over 300 people in Westport and around the world.

Cathal also, together with his brothers Harry and Owen, as part of the Hughes group, operate Hotel Westport and Westport House, which was purchased in 2017.

Aside from his business achievements, Mr Hughes has

been a prolific charity campaigner. He was one of the founders and the first chairperson of the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation.

Following the heartbreaking and tragic death of his son Padraig on Christmas Day 2008, as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning, he undertook an extensive and important national campaign, including becoming the face of a national television commercial on RTÉ, highlighting the need for carbon monoxide alarms in homes.

The campaign culminated in highlighting public awareness of this 'silent killer' and as a result there is a national Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week each September and building regulation legislation now makes carbon monoxide alarms compulsory in all newly built homes.

Tribute will also be paid to 2019 Meitheal Award Winners, Mayo's Forgotten Famine Girls Remembrance Group from Ballina. The group won the Meitheal Award for the rec-

ognition and dignity it gave to a group of women who were forced to leave Mayo in very difficult circumstances. The group demonstrated the power of people working together with a common purpose in the best tradition of the Meitheal.

The Mayo Association will pay tribute on the night to Minister Michael Ring for his contribution and dedication to Co Mayo. Minister Ring has worked tirelessly to bring employment, infrastructure and entrepreneurial support to the county.

The night will start with a drinks reception at 7pm followed by a four course meal with wine and live music by the Brose Walsh Band. Tickets are €50.

For more information on tickets for the Gala Dinner Dance in Galway or donations of spot prizes please contact Monica Heneghan 087-9306028, Declan Marley 087-2601093.

Alternatively tickets can be purchased via PayPal on www.mayoassociationgalway.com