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THE DAWNING OF A NEW ERA IN GALWAY ARTS

Brian MacNamara

In recent years, sweeping changes have taken place throughout our once sleepy seaside town. The fruits of the Celtic Tiger are now to be seen everywhere around Galway, and even the main focal point of the city, Eyre Square, has recently been subject to a facelift. One is likely to hear languages from all corners of the globe spoken whilst they stroll down through Shop Street. What surprise then to find that changes are also seeping into the artistic framework of the city?

While we rightly remain immensely proud of our city's rich cultural and artistic heritage, it is increasingly living side by side with imported cultures. Nowadays, on a typical night out in the pubs of Galway one is almost as likely to encounter African, South American or Continental European music as an Irish traditional session. As the various elements in our new society intermingle, Galway now finds itself on the verge of embracing a new era in its artistic history that crosses cultural boundaries.

A shining example of this current evolution is to be found in the case of Aindrias de Staic. Actor, musician, writer and filmmaker, Aindrias works internationally across a broad range of art forms, while nevertheless always producing pieces that bear his auteur stamp. Born and raised in the West of Ireland, Aindrias' youth was immersed in a rich tapestry of music and story-telling. The rich and rare fiddle style he now boasts is unique to the Corrib area, while he often colours it either with strains from West Clare or influences from his many travels abroad. Aindrias returned to Galway early last year having spent a number of years working and journeying through South America, Australia and Asia.

A natural story-teller, he was subsequently asked to read from his travel diaries as part of the Live at Five literary event in the Project O6 festival. Finding a new life in the music and stories of his travels, Aindrias then developed that piece into the one-hour music theatre show that attracted packed houses over three nights last autumn in the Ruby Room of the Kings Head. Scripted beat poetry and improvised comedy were spun together via a cacophony of Aindrias' fiddle-playing from diverse musical influences, whilst he was ably accompanied throughout by cohorts, Fergal, Estaban and Damo. It is essentially a roller coaster performance that charts the adventures of a travelling fiddler who finds himself embarking on a journey 'around the world on eighty quid'.



Providing further evidence of his multi-talents, Aindrias has recently won Best Actor at a Melbourne film festival for his role in 'Malarkey'; a self-penned short feature film that has since been screened internationally. That film is also scheduled to feature in this year's Craic Irish Film Fleadh, which is staged in New York. Since his graduation from the University of Limerick with an Honours Master in Music and Drama, Aindrias has worked as theatre director, workshop facilitator, actor, director and spoken word performer. He has also worked with popular Dublin group, Kila, as compere, camera-man and guest musician.

Aindrias considers there to be a very healthy music scene now in Galway. He is particularly appreciative of the new experimental electro Wednesday nights in De Burgos. He misses Taylors pub in Dominick Street, which closed its doors a few years ago, for its 'jazzy blues mix of sessions'. Nevertheless, he expresses a love of returning to Galway from his many travels for a few tunes, as "there's always something special about playing reels and jigs in this city". Aindrias also feels that the various new cultural elements now arriving into Galway contribute very positively to the local music scene. He has a particular liking for the French and Spanish influences, while also declaring there to be also some great African and South American music in evidence around the city now. Each Tuesday at Sheridans on the Docks, Aindrias himself now plays an interesting session that incorporates Spanish flamenco, Gypsy jigs and French jazz.

Aindrias de Staic features on an up-coming compilation album that celebrates the current cultural diversity that is now to be found in Galway. 'Sean Agus Nua: Éagsúlacht' boasts musicians from almost twenty different ethnic backgrounds in its eclectic roots-based fifteen-track mix. The album is due to be released on March 23rd with a major launch gig scheduled for Arus na Gael, with doors opening at 7.00pm. The CD will then be widely available throughout the county of Galway and beyond.

CRICKET - GALWAY STYLE By Sandra Bunting



The NUIG team that chased down the impossible against the Co. Galway Team



The NUIG Varsity Team



Lakshika Randesh Serasinhe

“More people should play cricket. They should give it a chance before they complain about it being boring.” Seventeen-year-old Lakshika Randesh Serasinhe was instrumental in establishing the game of cricket in “the Bish” Secondary School.

Before moving to Ireland when he was ten, Lakshika had played cricket in his community near Colombo. Cricket is the number one sport played in Sri Lanka. Like football here, he and his friends would go out with balls and a bat, experimenting on their own until they reached eight or nine. Then they would get rudimentary instructions such as how to hold a bat. After ten years old, students participate in school matches. As teenagers, teams from different schools play each other.

Lakshika differentiates between playing and watching cricket. Although enthusiastic about playing he has lost interest for matches on television for the moment. He used to follow the major matches which last one day. Test matches, in which players wear white, go on for five days. “On TV it can be boring,” Lakshika said. “Playing it offers a completely different point of view.”

Cricket was sponsored by the “Bish” a few years ago after a group students, familiar with the game, approached the school with the idea. However, with the Irish weather, playing outdoors was impossible except for sometimes during the summer. “The Bish” gym was also ruled out because no guarantee could be given that windows wouldn’t be broken due to the force of balls. The school ended up renting space in another gym and the hard “leather” ball had to be substituted for tennis balls. Some students from St. Mary’s joined in.

Leaving Cert and past “Bish” students helped. For those who say that cricket is too English, Lakshika responds: “It’s only a game. It doesn’t matter if it’s English.”

Not all who tried it were enthusiastic but Lakshika says there were at least three Irish-born students who took to it strongly. It can be informal. Normally 11 members on a team, they would take the number of people that showed up and divided it in half. Lakshika enjoys batting among the other positions of fielding, wicket and bowler, both spinner and fast.

What makes cricket interesting? Lakshika says it’s the skill and the sense of danger. A proper cricket ball is like a rock and when it comes at your face at 60 mph, it can be unnerving and do serious damage such as breaking bones. In practise with tennis balls, normal clothes are worn but in competition when the hard ball is used, leg pads (that make it difficult to run) helmets and metal face masks are required. Cricket here at secondary school level is temporarily suspended while funding is being sought and some of the students study for the Leaving.

Lakshika may very well go on to a College team at either GMIT (team founded two years ago) or NUI, Galway. The NUI, Galway team was re-established in 2002 by Waquar Aziz and Shazad Javid. There had been a cricket club there since the 18th century when the college went under the name of Queens but it had been defunct for a long time.

The present club incorporates many nationalities: South East Asians, Asians,

Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans and English. President Nintan Bindal from Goa, India, says it is the college club with the most diverse membership. Irish natives are not left out. Out of six new members, two are usually Irish. Up to 20% of the membership is Irish, mostly originating from the east coast. Women can play if good enough and are welcome in the club.

Training consists of a three-hour a week commitment during term and a large amount of time is dedicated to beginners. Because of the weather, there are indoor leagues in winter and spring with matches against teams from Athlone IT, Shannon Business School and others. NUIG hosted an 8-team indoor varsity at the end of January. Outdoor summer varsity matches are organised in June among 4-5 colleges. There is also the Dick O’Neill Cup for the west and south of the country and the Connaught League.

Mr. Bindal says cricket is interesting if you understand it and keep up with it. “It is not really a slow game. It’s just spread out over a longer period of time. It tends to keep you more alert.” Played mainly at weekends, there is a friendly atmosphere as it is a low contact sport with a low incidence of fighting. “It’s like a social gathering,” says Mr. Bindal.

Watch out for the inter-college league (March-April) and the outdoor varsity in June. Cricket is also flourishing in the country under Dr. Steven Ellis of NUI, Galway. The pitch is located at Lydican, past the airport. Spectators are welcome.



Daragh Ryan in action for NUIG vs DCU in the Outdoor intervarsities 2006

WANTED: COMMUNITY MAP MAKERS

A 'Green Map' highlighting places in Galway City that are important to the citizens in Galway is currently under preparation and individuals and groups are encouraged to participate in the development of maps of their communities. A 'Green Map' is a locally produced chart of an area, which identifies, promotes and links environmental, social, and cultural amenities. These maps typically show green areas, cycle paths, green businesses, organic markets, quiet spots in the city, interesting walking routes, as well as the cultural sites that make an area unique. Galway recently became a member of the Green Map System, a not for profit organisation which provides a locally flexible, but globally shared framework for environmental mapmaking (website with examples of green maps from around the world is available at www.greenmap.org). The system was developed in the US – the first green map was produced for New York in 1992 – and Green Mapping has since spread to many countries throughout the world.

The Green Map for Galway is part of a larger study being undertaken by Dr Frances Fahy and Prof. Micheál Ó Cinnéide of the Department of Geography, NUI, Galway on behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Galway City Council. The study is also examining quality of life considerations for the city of Galway, in particular the extent to which people are satisfied with their living standards, their jobs, their health and their neighbourhoods. In an extensive survey conducted last spring the researchers asked citizens of Galway, young and old, living in a diverse range of settings across the city, about the things they value in Galway City and sought their views on issues of local concern.

GALWAY GREEN MAP

The Green Map is a practical tool which can be used by individuals, tourists, community groups, local businesses, and the local authority. The map has the potential to investigate issues of environmental justice in an area. It can be utilised for example to examine the relative ease with which facilities can be accessed or it can be used to assess environmental quality and highlight areas that may need special attention. The final project will represent a holistic representation of the city of Galway, and of the places and things that people value in the community.

TO DATE ..

....10 primary schools from around Galway have been involved in developing a youth-based Green Map of Galway City and work has already commenced on developing a general Green Map for the Westside area. Individuals and groups are needed from every part in the city to share their perspectives about their specific neighbourhoods and also their ideas for the Green Map of Galway. Any groups or individuals interesting in getting involved please **contact: Frances on 091 493897 or frances.fahy@nuigalway.ie**

NUMBER 60 BALLINFOILE PARK – YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT **By Colm Brady**



Ballinfoile is a section of the East of Galway City containing ten housing estates. Of these both Ballinfoile Park and Cluan Fada are comprised of local authority housing. Ballinfoile Park contains 170 houses of which 105 were rented from Galway Corporation in 2005. The area is located close to Galway City centre but lacks the infrastructure and facilities of an independent community. Unemployment rates are high (50% in 2005) and there is a high social welfare dependency rate. In the past certain social problems have presented themselves in the area such as petty crime, joyriding, vandalism and drugs. This has led to a higher than average propensity for young people to become marginalised.

The Ballinfoile Youth Development Project was set up to involve young (10 to 18 yrs) people actively in their own development and so in the development of their community. The project is funded by the VEC through the Foroige organisation that operates similar projects countrywide. One Youth Officer (Shauna Burke) directs the project locally. The role of the Youth Officer is to establish and support voluntary youth groups. The officer also deals with "at risk" individuals and represents youth at a local level. A facilitator is also employed as a homework helper in the local school. Foroige espouses the principals of creativity, uniqueness, interdependence, lifelong learning and personal responsibility. These principals are applied in setting up and running clubs based on diverse activities including Basketball, Creative Arts, Performing Arts, Kayaking, Photography and Film Production. The activities are inherently attractive to the young people and while they are gaining enjoyment from the

activity they are also developing individual personal skills at the same time.

"They really are learning about even basic things like turn taking and respecting each other, the leaders and the club... there is always something in the background but to get young people to participate the activity has to be of interest to them," says Shauna Burke, Youth Officer for the project.

The project operates out of number 60 Ballinfoile Park and shares the building with the Ballinfoile Neighbourhood Youth Project, which is an initiative of the Health Services Executive. The house has been a focus for development work in this community for the last 11 years and was refurbished fully in 2006. What was remarkable about the refit was that the materials and expertise were all donated from Galway businesses and individuals. This involved a lot of lobbying and sourcing materials by the combined staff of the house. The house now has a modern kitchen, meeting rooms, multi-purpose yard and a fully equipped computer room.

Going forward the main issues that face the Project are related to staffing. The Project has been assigned another Officer to continue the work already started. The premise of the Foroige framework is based on facilitating the efforts of local volunteers. Of late it has been difficult to recruit new Volunteers and NUIG students on the "Alive" Program have taken on the additional work.

From the proven successful efforts of the project it is hoped that the rewards of improved community awareness will be realised into the future.

"They really are learning about even basic things like turn taking and respecting each other, the leaders and the club... there is always something in the background but to get young people to participate the activity has to be of interest to them."

AN BHFUIL GAEILGE AGAT?

TÁ GAILLIMH LE GAEILGE AG LORG DAOINE GUR FÉIDIR LEO SEIRBHÍS I NGAEILGE A CHUR AR FÁIL. Bríd Ní Chongóile



www.gleg.ie

Tá Gaillimh le Gaeilge ag cur liosta le chéile de chomhlachtaí agus de ghnólachtaí i gcathair na Gaillimhe atá in ann seirbhís i nGaeilge a chur ar fáil. Ba mhór acu dá ndéanfadh aon duine atá in ann an tseirbhís luachmhar seo a chur ar fáil, teagmháil leo láithreach. Is í aidhm an Eolaire, liosta cuimsitheach a chur le chéile de ghnólachtaí i gcathair na Gaillimhe atá in ann freastal a dhéanamh orthu siúd ar mhian leo gnó a dhéanamh trí mheán na Gaeilge. Beidh an tEolaire Gnó le fáil ar shuíomh gréasán Ghaillimh le Gaeilge, www.gleg.ie sna míonna atá amach romhainn.

Cé go bhfuil méadú ar infheictheacht na teanga mar chuid thábhachtach d'obair Ghaillimh le Gaeilge, tá tábhacht ar leith ag baint chomh maith leis an deis a thabhairt do dhaoine an Ghaeilge a úsáid

agus iad ag dul i mbun a ngnó go laethúil. Cuidíonn sé seo le hÍomhá Chathair na Gaillimhe mar Phríomhchathair Dhátheangach na Tíre.

Is minic a fhaigheann Gaillimh le Gaeilge iarratais ón bpobal agus ó na meáin Ghaeilge ag lorg cuntasóirí, dochtúirí, meicneoirí, díoltóirí i measc ghairmeacha eile, a bhfuil sé ar a gcumas seirbhís trí Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil.

Má tá tú muiníneach seirbhís i nGaeilge a chur ar fáil, nó má tá aithne agat ar aon duine a d'fhéadfadh a leithéid a dhéanamh, cuir glaoch orainn anois! Déan teagmháil le Gearóidín ag 091 568876 nó gearoidin@gleg.ie má tá a thuilleadh eolais uait chun tú féin nó do chomhlacht a fháil liostáilte san Eolaire Gnó.

AN BHFUIL GAEILGE AGAT?

GAILLIMH LE GAEILGE IS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN PROVIDE A SERVICE 'AS GAEILGE' by Bríd Ní Chongóile

Gaillimh le Gaeilge are currently compiling a list of companies and businesses in Galway city that can provide a service 'as Gaeilge' and would like anyone who can provide this valuable service to contact them immediately. The aim of the Eolaire Gnó is to provide a comprehensive list of businesses in Galway city that will facilitate those who wish to conduct their business through the medium of Irish and will be published on Gaillimh le Gaeilge's site in the coming months.

While increasing the visibility of the language is a vital part of Gaillimh le Gaeilge's work, providing an opportunity for people to use the Irish Language when going about their daily business is also an important element in enhancing Galway's image as the Bilingual Capital of Ireland. Gaillimh le Gaeilge often receive requests from the public and the Irish language media, looking for accountants, doctors, mechanics or sales persons among others, who can provide a service in Irish.

If you are confident in providing a service in Irish or you know someone who can provide such a service, we would like to hear from you! Please contact Gearóidín at 091 568876 or gearoidin@gleg.ie for more details about getting yourself or your company listed in the 'Eolaire Gnó'.

An Ghaeltacht

UNANIMOUS ENDORSEMENT FOR STRATEGIC PLAN

Galway City Forum has got off to a flying start in 2007. A new Steering Group were elected at the AGM in December chaired by the ever energetic Brendan Smith from Sandymore Lawn Residents Group.

The first item on the agenda for the new group was the formal ratification of the Forum's Strategic Plan up to the end of 2008. Following extensive consultations the plan was given a unanimous endorsement by the membership at its quarterly meeting in the Menlo hotel on the 6th of March. Councillors Brian Walsh, Tom Costello, Billy Cameron and Padraig Conneally were also in attendance to familiarise themselves with the issues of concern for the Forum. Our representatives will be actively campaigning for the implementation of

these policies through various local government structures. Anyone is welcome to become involved in this process by supporting the representatives in their work.

A novel feature of the meeting was exhibition stands set up by community and voluntary groups. At this point attendees were able to browse for information and network with other groups. Brendan Smith also gave an informative presentation about the Forum which received a very positive response from the audience. Fellow steering group member Eleanor Hough also spoke about the strategies open to Forum representatives to campaign effectively for the implementation of Forum policies. With your support the steering group and representatives will work to have your voice heard.

The steering group for 2007 are; Chairman Brendan Smith (Sandymore Lawn Resident's Association); Vice-Chairman Stan Sjothun (Claddagh Heritage Society); Trish Carr (Threshold); Eleanor Hough (Grattan Court Resident's Association); Nuala O'Hara (Tirellan Heights Residents Association); Evelyn Moran (Renmore Active Retired Association); Peter Sloane (Bothar Stiofáin Residents Association); Sheila Mangan (Tirellan Heights Residents Association); Helen Jackson (Galway Centre for Independent Living); Rose Kavanagh (Western Family History Association); Rose Kavanagh (Galway AD/HD); Aoibheann McCann (Galway Rape Crisis Centre); Margaret Carr (Galway Traveller Movement); Donncha Foley (Galway Volunteer Centre); Mary O'Donnell (Castelpark Community Development Group) and Derrick Hambleton (An Taisce).

POETRY CORNER



BORROWING

By Shelia Phelan

A boat for sale:
someone is dreaming
of the open sea,
of small anchorages.
My child is crying for milk.
I put the photograph
back in the book,
return it to the library
unread.

RUNNERS UP FOR COVER-SLEEVE COMPETITION FOR 'SEAN AGUS NUA CD EAGSÚLACHT'.



Dara O'Conghaile
Scoil: Iognáid Rang: 6 Aois: 12



Clódagh Ní Chinnéide
Scoil: Iognáid Rang: 6 Aois: 12



Emma Ní Mhaonaigh
Scoil: Iognáid Rang: 6 Aois: 12

NEW LIFE FOR THE RED SQUIRREL: WIKIIRELAND By Sandra Bunting



John Breslin

The internet has given people new ways to be creative and to add their contribution to an already enormous body of information. Through blogs, people can keep a diary, give their opinion or supply information on a regular basis. Photo-sharing sites make family or holiday snaps instantly accessible around the world. Sites like Orkut, a community social network, make it possible to meet people around the world with similar interests.

Another community site going from strength to strength is Wikipedia which is basically an encyclopaedia in which topics can be written about, commented on or edited. Calling for a factual and neutral point of view, there is bureaucratic control to maintain a certain standard. The Hawaiian term wiki means fast or fast runner. There are now wiktionaries, wiki-quotes, wikibook service (to facilitate the writing of collaborative books) wikinews, wikispecies (animals) and wikimedia.

WIKIIRELAND

Now a wiki has been set up specifically to deal with Ireland. Its creator, John Breslin of the National University of Ireland, Galway, said the main idea was to have a place to store anything about Ireland whether it is culture, history, genealogy or story-telling. There was a need for this. "It is difficult to put in something local in Wikipedia because it may not be appropriate, its importance may not be recognised and it may not last long," said Mr. Breslin.

Mr. Breslin, who developed the idea for the Digital Enterprise Research Institute, has no background in culture or history but likes organising, collecting and storing. His own personal project under the wiki banner was to



enter the vast store of songs and long poems held by his grandfather Jack Casey from County Clare. Now in his 94th year, Mr. Casey has a talent for recitations and has filled three ledgers with things that he liked. As some of these were learned orally, it may be the only written record existing.

Once it is up and running, a wiki becomes a community effort. People add and update it. The same is true for Wikilreland. A wiki is not hard to set up, according to Mr. Breslin. There are several ways. Through wikispaces you can download software on to your own website or you can sign up your own free wiki through wikia (wikicities).

The red squirrel was chosen as a logo for Wikilreland representing Irish culture and history. The red squirrel is something indigenous to Ireland that is under threat from the grey squirrel which was introduced here recently from North America. A couple of hundred items from Wikipedia were used to start off the wiki. Since Wikipedia encourages free documentation license, you can use anything you find there. Then people were encouraged to start their own articles within the Irish one. A community site needs a driving source to get it going. It grows by word of mouth and through Google. Although the main drive at the moment is Galway-based, more and more people are adding to and creating articles.

I have registered as the West Residents' Association, hoping to sometime create an article about this unique area of Galway. I have connections in Canada who have expressed interest in the category 'the Irish in Canada'. There are sub-categories of 'the Irish in Quebec', 'the Irish in Newfoundland' and so on but there is no listing for 'the Irish in New Brunswick'. I will encourage my friends to start one. Have you a story, a bit of information, an interesting tidbit that relates to Ireland? Write, add to or edit an article at www.wiki.ie.

And what is the future for Wikilreland? Apart from it growing and gaining a life of its own, John Breslin says he envisages the addition of more multimedia elements such as audio and visual content. It is mostly text-based at the moment but more images and sound will play a part in the near future, especially to record such things as folklore and stories from family members. We are writing our own history!

GALWAY TRAVELLER MOVEMENT **TRAVELLER IDENTITY STRONG AND VIBRANT IN GALWAY CITY**



Patrick Sweeney

A new report that was launched by Galway Traveller Movement in December 2006 shows that Traveller identity is strong and vibrant amongst the Traveller community in Galway City. The report was launched by the Mayor of Galway, Councillor Niall Ó Brollcháin and keynote speeches were given by Éamon Ó Cuív, TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Niall Crowley, CEO of the Equality Authority.

Traveller involvement was emphasized in all stages of the report, from planning, to research, collation and presentation. The report carried out extensive research with the Traveller community and found that people were very proud to be Travellers. Even where the most obvious aspects of culture, such as nomadism, are not practised people value them highly and view them as intrinsic parts of themselves.

However, the research also shows that there are times when people are forced to deny their identity as members of the Traveller community. These are times when people believe that they may be discriminated against because of their identity. Discrimination and racism are themes that run through the entire report and the research shows that almost all Travellers in Galway City have experienced discrimination and racism. The report also analyses the results of the 2002 National Census of Population which shows that the unemployment rate for the Traveller community in Galway City is 77%, compared to an overall population figure of 10%. 60% of the Traveller population finished school with no education or primary education only, compared to an overall population figure of 12.6%.

The report adds its voice to that of the national Traveller organisations, the Equality Authority and the Irish Human Rights Commission to call for the conferring of ethnic status on the Traveller community. This is regarded by the report as a necessary starting point in the acknowledgement that, as the National Plan Against Racism points out, one size does not fit all and services must begin to acknowledge that Travellers, in common with other minority groups, can experience services differently and rise to the challenge that this poses.

Éamon Ó Cuív, Minister for Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, commended the report and pledged that it will be discussed at a government level and will not be left to gather dust on a shelf. He praised the report for clearly pointing the way forward for positive social change and called for the building of an intercultural society where the aspirations of Travellers are fully realised.

Niall Crowley, chairman of the Equality Authority, said that it was disturbing but not surprising to read that 96% of the Travellers in Galway City have experienced racism. He stressed that positive change depends on individuals coming forward to take a case under the Equality legislation and being supported to do so. He identified a need for service providers to change the way they do business and suggested that a culture shift needs to take place within many organisations in order to meet the challenges ahead on the road to achieving an intercultural society.

Evie Finlay
Galway Traveller Movement
091 765390

ROCKFIELD PARK **RESIDENTS** **ASSOCIATION**

By Andrew Brock

Rockfield Park was built in 1979 / 1980 as a small estate of 100 medium price houses. Residents formed an association very shortly after. Initially the concern was mainly to keep the developer on-track with bringing the estate up to standard for take-over by the City Council. Later, other activities were developed, including social events like a sports day and a Christmas party (with Santa) for the children, and a dinner - dance for the adults. The residents comprised mainly families with young children and the Association reflected and represented their concerns.

With the passage of time the mix of age groups amongst residents changed, and the Association began to focus more on environmental issues and less on the social ones. At the moment a small core of residents and Committee members concentrate on keeping the estate in tip-top condition by mowing lawns, planting shrubs and trees, and conducting regular clean-ups. To this end a mower and strimmer have been purchased and are in regular use. An annual subscription of €25 per house is used to support these activities, and residents have the chance to influence policy at an annual general meeting. Slightly over half the houses contribute, being the majority of owner - occupied houses; the remainder are rented.

The Estate was pleased to be declared the best estate in the 50 - 250 house category in the 2006 Tidy Towns and Garden Competition run by Galway City Council. It was seen as an official recognition of the dedication and hard work of residents.



RADIO PIRATE-WOMAN



by Margaretta D'Arcy &
John Arden

Men's Ten Day Radio Festival 3rd Feb. - 13 February every day between 12-2pm, extracts to be put on web page.



Radio Pirate Woman has been operating an informal radio for 21 years: i.e. putting on small festivals twice a year whose purpose was not so much to gain listeners to the radio as to get women to participate behind the microphone – an unusual approach made necessary by the technical difficulties of primitive home-made equipment and a transmitter with a range of only three miles which included a number of black spots. For the same reasons, we decided to put our broadcasts onto the web.

The aim of the Radio Festival was to find out if there was any difference between the ways men and women organize themselves in an informal setting; also to have solidarity with other men in their struggle of injustice, and to find out if there is a permanent need for such a forum.

18 men came to visit our studio and went live on air, while 4 men took part over the telephone.

We made contact with Mary Cleary of AMEN after reading a recent report from the National Crime Council and the Economic and Social Research Institute which stated that 29% of women and 26% of men suffer domestic abuse, and 13% of women and men suffer physical abuse. She gave us a long telephoned interview. We also had Sam Sohail Butt

from Fathers for Justice & Equality to talk about his work. We broadcast further telephoned interviews with men who described the injustices of the family courts and the gagging orders of In Camera procedures.

Todd Morrison facilitated a radio forum on body image and Dr. John Cunningham on Education.

One of our running themes was to follow the trial of Lt. Watado of the US Army, who has been facing a court martial in Washington State for refusing to be posted to Iraq. When it was announced that the trial had collapsed, we all felt part of the victory. The Mayor of Galway, Niall O Brolchain, visited us for an hour, signed the petition on behalf of Lt. Watado, and also discussed the hot topic of climate change and how the disruptions to the environment and the imminent dearth of oil will cause men to radically revise their notions of their traditional way of life and their expectations for the future. At the same time, we are faced with the challenge to discover a positive and holistic approach to the tensions and stresses of juggling family and work.

The erosion of democracy in Ireland was a theme that cropped up over and over again. This was highlighted when we had a two hour interview and discussion with two men from Rosport. One of them was Philip McGrath, jailed in 2005 for 94

days for defying (on the ground of health and safety) a Shell injunction that forbade him to protect his land from a proposed pipeline of untreated gas that would be put there on foot of a Compulsory Purchase Order and no consultation. Then there were the questions of the treatment of children in care, and of the intellectually-disadvantaged in institutions, where bureaucratic structures seem on paper to be rationally based but in practice act to prevent any real participation in the outside world, and to prevent those of us who are not part of the bureaucracy making contact with those whom it envelops.

We also had a midnight broadcast where we were a time of reflection the value of men. We played tapes by Chomsky and Sean O'Casey; a play about isolation by the Canadian dramatist David Bolt; Kevin Whelan's prize winning documentary 'Who is Izzy Baia?'; songs by the late Joe Heaney; John Gielgud's letters and a fascinating account of Irish pirate radio in the early 80's.

In sum, we discovered that men are much happier with structures laid down in writing. Each day we reviewed how to improve our work-practices, particularly how to develop the improvisational nature of a radio where everyone is free to come in and participate, bringing their own stories to be included in the general discussion.

We all learned a lot. We came to the conclusion that a general forum is essential, where men can talk about themselves with women listening and women can talk about themselves with men listening, and both groups can finally come together to share their joint insights. We should explain than women did come into the radio studio to listen to the talk, only intervening when a particular bit of information was distorted or left out.

Finally, thanks to:

Mark, Cieran, John, Jimmy, Tom, Declan, Selo, Peter, Wayne, Sam, Todd, Jerry, Gerry, John, Frank, Philip, Terence, Django, Ralph, Niall.

And thanks too to the women:

Geri, Vic, Mary, Dottie, Maureen.

GALWAY HOOKER BOAT ARRIVES IN NEW MUSEUM



The photo was taken by an employee of the Museum, Sinéad Madigan.

Galway City Museum recently welcomed its newest arrival, in the form of a specially commissioned Galway Hooker boat, which was hoisted by crane over a three-storey building and into the museum courtyard at Spanish Arch.

The boat was built in An Cheathrú Rua by the traditional craftsmen, Pat Ó Cualáin and Mícheál MacDonncha. The Museum crew have welcomed the vessel to its new home and expect the craft to be a symbol of Galway for years to come.

Director of the Museum, Sarah Gillespie, believes that the boat will be a strong symbol of the City.

"It was important for us to commission a brand new boat for the Museum as it allowed us to document the boat building process from scratch", said Gillespie. "The fact that this is a brand

new boat will show people that this is a living tradition and we hope that it will serve as a symbol of the work the Museum would like to foster in the future."

The boat will be hoisted from the atrium of the new Museum and all aspects of the boat will be fully visible, as a staircase will run along the vessel for three flights. A video will also accompany an information panel, allowing visitors to experience the different stages of the boat-building process.

The mounting and fitting of all the exhibits in the new Museum will continue for another number of weeks. The project will include the installation of objects, artefacts and storyboards that document the changing face of the City from medieval times to the present day.

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'eNEIGHBOURHOODS' by Brendan Smith



A recent public seminar at Galway University entitled 'eNeighbourhoods' highlighted the practical benefits available to communities and individuals in exploiting the new communications and information systems of the World Wide Web. The event was organised by the Digital Enterprise Research Institute (DERI), one of the world's leading research establishments in developing the next generation of the World Wide Web known as the 'Semantic Web'.

TOPICS INCLUDED:

'Wiki Ireland - Putting Your Parish & Community onto an Online Encyclopedia' by Dr. John Breslin (DERI)

'eNews-Online Community Newsletters' by Adil Jaber (Galway Asylum Seekers committee)

'eParticipation'- an overview of Internet technologies aimed at increasing citizens' involvement in the decision-making process of local and national government' by Dr. Vassilios Peristeras (DERI)

'The Green Mapping of Galway City - an Online community-derived map of the social, recreational, cultural & environment of Galway City' by Dr. Frances Fahy (Dept of Geography, NUI Galway)

'eCommunities - Setting up & Maintaining a free easy-to-manage community website' by Brendan Smith (DERI)

'eWrite - Writing & Publishing a Novel Online' by Sandra Bunting (Galway Writers' Workshop)

According to DERI's Brendan Smith, "In the nineteen nineties, it was the mobile telephone that spawned a massive leap in connecting people. Today it is the Internet. The latest revolution in the World Wide Web

is having a positive impact on the public at large. People can now view and talk to each other across continents at a fraction of the cost of a telephone call; ordinary citizens can film an event on an inexpensive camera and have it watched by a worldwide audience in minutes; organisations and personal websites now include video, sound recordings and photographs that can be easily created free of charge by those with little or no technical expertise.

The Internet gives individuals, who are orientated to the home or with limited physical/geographical mobility, a wonderful opportunity of having ongoing meaningful liaisons with like-minded individuals or groupings through online social networks."

Community organisations can avail of DERI's free Internet Awareness courses by contacting Brendan at brendan.smith@deri.org or 087-2935106. Interestingly, Sandra Bunting's online novel last month reached the finals of the 'Best Blogging' category of the Irish Digital Media Awards held in the Burlington Hotel.