

HERE COMES THE
SUMMER!!



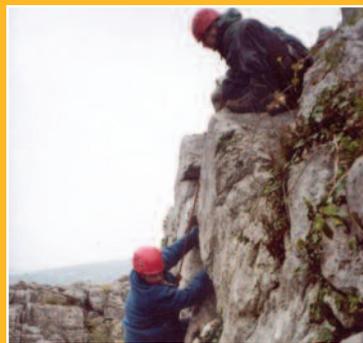
Caislean Gearr PG.6



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The National Council For The Blind Of Ireland (NCBI)

By Máire T. Robinson

The National Council For The Blind Of Ireland (NCBI) is a not for profit charitable organisation. It was established in 1931. NCBI offers support and services, nationwide, to people experiencing difficulties with their eyesight. I visited the Galway branch, which is housed at 9a Francis Street, where I spoke to Regional manager, Deirdre Towey. The NCBI Galway office is bright, airy and welcoming. There are shelves filled with devices to aid the visually impaired and the blind.



'CCTV Enlarger'



'Clocks'

It is in looking at these various aids - the Perkins brailler (used to type Braille), the talking alarm clocks and weighing scales, and the large-size playing cards, that the impact of vision impairment, or sight loss, on the day-to-day life of the individual, becomes clear. Every facet of

life can be impacted, from family and home life, to social life, to work life. 'It can involve a major change in lifestyle' says Deirdre, 'I suppose the main issues are, retaining employment, transport, and access to the world which is very visual. That's when you're talking about having information in accessible formats, meaning in Braille, on tape, on disc, or in large print.'

Once a person has been referred to NCBI (by a family member, health professional or by self-referral), they are generally visited by NCBI in their own home. 'We talk to the person about everything; from their benefits and entitlements to how they're coping with their loss of vision, to solutions we can work through with each individual in terms of mobility, for example, learning to use the long cane to travel safely and independently' says Deirdre.

Recent technological advances have proved particularly beneficial in helping people with vision impairment. 'We have our IT trainer and support worker who will work with people in terms of software packages for computers so that they can use email and the Internet, or scanners which you put a page on and it reads it to you. There's a whole range of technology' explains Deirdre.

The NCBI is funded by the HSE, 'Ideally we would like to have more staff; qualified, paid trained staff', says Deirdre, 'but that's not been happening because there just hasn't been the funding.' At the moment, NCBI Galway has one full-time and one part-time staff member, 'Those are our community resource workers. Our IT worker works in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, so we are very thin on the ground.' Over 500 people from Galway City, County and the Aran Islands use the services of the NCBI.

To contact NCBI Galway, you can call (091) 564926 or drop in at 9A, St. Francis Street Galway. Their website can be accessed at www.ncbi.ie

The Galway Sessions 2008 Traditional Music Festival

By Colm Brady

The Galway Sessions 2008 festival promises to be a highlight for traditional music fans everywhere. Now in its sixth year the festival is a weeklong event (June 15th – 22nd). The extensive programme includes concerts, folk-club gigs, open-air events and a fun music-packed session trail. Over 100 events will be hosted at large venues like the Salthill Hotel, Roisin Dubh and Black box theatre with smaller venues spread over the city like the Crane Bar and other high profile establishments. This year the theme of the festival is the common roots of Scottish traditional music with those of the music of Ireland. The Scottish acts on offer include Eddi Reader of Fairground Attraction fame, Dick Gaughan and a host of musicians including Julie Fowlis, Rachel Hare, Kris Dreever, Arthur Jones, the Donaldson Brothers and the Kinlochard Ceili Band.

The director of the festival is Mick Crehan, himself a traditional musician with experience in music teaching and events management. He is enthused at having the festival become a flagship of all that is good in traditional music.

"This years programme will explore the shared cultural heritage of Scotland and Ireland and each event will feature local acts coupled with Scottish ones. This will lend a very different flavour to this years festival and we are looking forward to it with great excitement."

Mick sees the whole showcase as being of benefit to young local musicians as they can see the best in the business performing, often for free. He says 90% of the festival events are free of charge including a showcase of Scottish musicians at the Galway Museum on the 21st of June 2008. He says the traditional music scene in Galway is very healthy and that people primarily play for the love of music.

Fáilte Ireland have grant aided the festival and were keen to have it take place in June which is traditionally a less busy time in Galway before the summer series of high profile events

take place. On consultation with festival partners and sponsors the June slot was selected for the festival. Students of Economics of Lee High University in Pennsylvania carried out a survey of the festival's audience in 2007. They found that of the 11,000 audience members at 100 events, 4,500 had travelled from abroad to Galway specifically for the festival. Mick mentions that another function of the festival is to promote local venues all year round.

"We try to use the festival as an opportunity to get the message out that you can come to Galway at any time of the year and that you will find excellent music available...Galway has a very talented group of musicians working here, we try and have a big focus on the local musicians." In conclusion Mick Crehan talks about the Scottish theme of this years festival.

"As far as I am concerned it is really one type of music. There are as many variations in style within Scotland as there are in Ireland. To my mind they are variants of the one culture as opposed to separate cultures. The Celtic connections festival in Glasgow has pushed this to the fore of late and that has brought a lot of Irish musicians to Scotland."

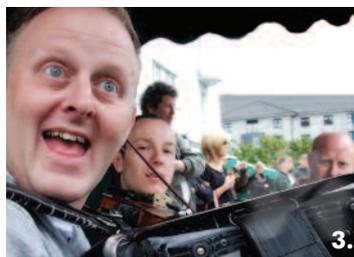
Further Details: www.galwaysessions.com



1.



2.



3.

**GALWAY SESSIONS
15-22 JUNE**

1. Liz and Yvonne Kane
2. Eddi Reader
3. Kinlochard & Tulla Ceili Bands

Galway Picture Palace

By Máire T. Robinson

I follow Tracy Geraghty through the labyrinth of corridors above the Town Hall Theatre. Our destination is 'Solas' headquarters, which turns out to be an unassuming office with a small window. 'Solas' is a somewhat motley crew, chaired by tenacious Arts activist Lelia Doolin. The board includes representatives from the Galway Film Centre, the Galway Film Fleadh, the Arts Centre and the Film Society; as well as an architect, an actress, a retired director of a construction company and a Galway city councillor. Strange bedfellows perhaps, but they have come together in pursuit of a common goal: to build an arthouse cinema in Galway city, The Galway Picture Palace.

Tracy Geraghty is project manager of the venture. She shows me the plans for the layout of the cinema. Located on the Lower Merchants Road, it will comprise of three cinemas (one at basement level), a café, a bar and a DVD and book shop. So when will the Galway Picture Palace open its doors to the public? 'All things going well it will be Spring 2010. That's all things going well,' emphasises Tracey. There is a very large basement to be built!

Tracy has enjoyed a varied career, from her early work with the Arts Council, to working with writers and producers, to overseeing grass roots level projects within schools and communities. How does this latest project, overseeing the building of a €7 million arthouse cinema, compare? 'Well, there's very little film going on at the moment,' she says, 'There's a lot of quantity surveying and structural engineering, but very little film!' It sounds like a daunting task, even for someone of her expertise, but Tracy exudes an air of confidence, not to mention commitment. Perhaps this is because it is more than a job for Tracy. You could call it a labour of love. 'I couldn't see myself doing anything else. It's one of those things. I suppose for most people involved in film it's a way of life.'

Dedication is certainly something that is required for this venture; dedication and patience. Plans have been in place to build the cinema since 2000. Finding a suitable location was a long process. There were talks early on to house the cinema as a separate entity within the same space as The Eye Cinema. Another proposed location was on Dominick Street beside Arus Na Gael. At that time Solas were part of a public-private partnership. The developer decided to buy a pub instead, so the deal fell through. It was at that point that the group approached Galway City Council, who supported the project with additional funding. Tracy credits the City Council with being instrumental in making the project happen. 'It's very rare that you find local authorities taking as prominent a position as they have here, between the previous city manager John Tierney and the current city manager Joe MacGrath and the staff around them. They've been very, very supportive to this project.'

Despite the initial setback of losing the Dominick Street location, the group remained focused. In addition to having discussions with various businesses and property developers, they also took a more guerrilla approach to property hunting: 'When Dominick Street faltered, Lelia and I spent ten months wandering around the centre of the city, climbing up on walls, looking in over gardens going 'I wonder who owns this!' It was when they went to O' Malleys Construction that they found the current site on Lower Merchants Road.

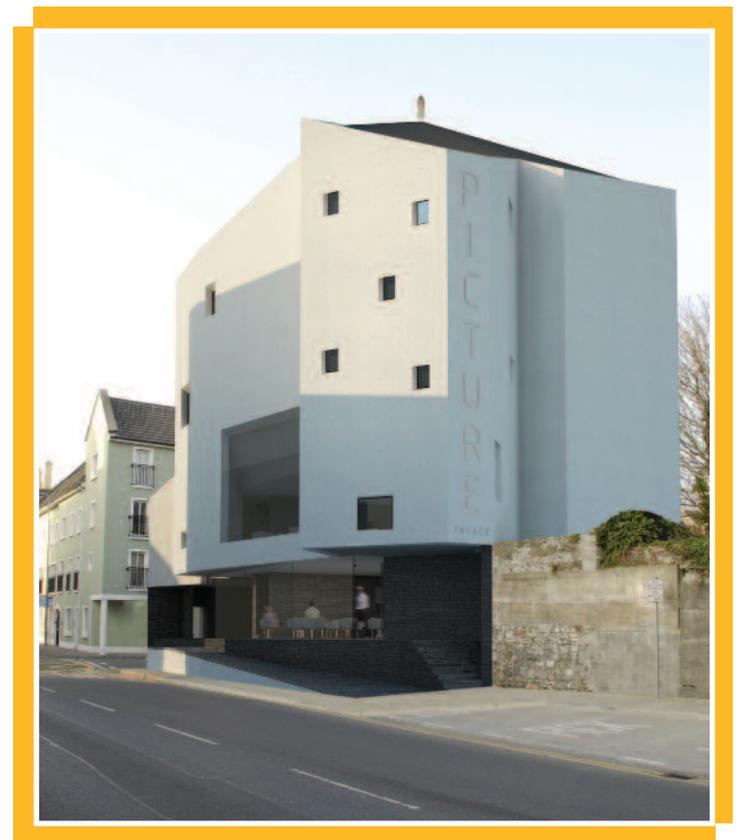
In a sense, it is the perfect location for the cinema. 'It's a natural gateway to Galway. You come down Docks Road, around onto Spanish Parade. You've the museum on one side and you've this new signature building on the other.' The area has undergone something of a regeneration in recent years, with the Galway City Museum a stones-throw away from the proposed cinema and nearby pubs, Sheridans and Number 8, bringing life to that part of town. The City Council have bought all but one of the buildings on the street and the long term plan is that the street may become

pedestrianised, forming a 'cultural hub' for the city.

'Solas' hope to offer the public a different type of cinema-going experience. 'This is not about parking your car, running in, grabbing your bucket of popcorn and going in. This is about the experience of going to the cinema in a beautiful place.' However, they are also keen to strike the right balance between opulence and comfort. 'In the plans we have an area for a bar and a sitting room. We call it the sitting room because we actually want it to be the type of space where people take off their shoes, curl their feet up under them and have a chat with their friends.

In terms of programming, the key word for The Galway Picture Palace is diversity. They aim to appeal to as broad a demographic as possible. There will be a particular emphasis on children's cinema. 'There'll be a children's club on a Saturday morning showing things like The Wizard of Oz and ET,' says Tracy, 'I mean, where do you get to see those on 35mm anymore? You don't.' The Galway Picture Palace will also have an emphasis on showcasing Irish films. However, they will only be screened if they are of a certain calibre. 'I think it's important to develop a level of critical analysis of our own films. I mean, there are a number that have been produced that are absolutely dreadful, but people feel that you cannot be harsh towards them because you need to be supportive of your own.' Tracy cites Kings, Small Engine Repair, Once and Garage as some recent Irish films that would have a natural home in the Galway Picture Palace. Conversely, the Picture Palace will be keen to dispel the notion that because a film is foreign, it must therefore be worth watching. It's very 'foreignness' shouldn't lend it undeserved kudos. 'I've been at screenings where people have said 'That was really good!' and I've said 'No it wasn't, it was awful! If you analyse it, it was so predictable. If it was in English you'd be snorting derisively at it!'

In the proposal for the cinema, 'Solas' claimed it would attract 39% of the Galway population. Is this a realistic target? 'Yes' answers Tracy without hesitation, 'There is that whole thing, 'Build it and they will come.' She cites Galway city's large student population and ethnically diverse citizens as potential customers, not to mention the many cinema enthusiasts who live within commuting distance of the city. 'It's about providing Galway audiences with what they've been dying to see, for years and years.' Tracy smiles, 'The figures will stand up' she says confidently, 'We just need to get it built first!'



Galway Library Online Services

By Rena Garrett

Irish libraries have come a long way in the last 15 years. Online services were once only available in higher education institution libraries. Today, these services are available to anyone who wants to use them in most libraries in Ireland.

Currently, all 30 Galway County branches provide public internet access. Each library's catalogue is searchable online, so if there is a specific book you are looking for or just a general area of interest you can go to <http://ipac.galwaycoco.ie/#focus>, choose which library is the most convenient for you and search for your desired topic/book. There is also a facility whereby if the book you are looking for is not in your local branch you can go to <http://www.borrowbooks.ie> and search the library catalogues of all the libraries nationwide. You can then request that the book be sent to your local library and they will notify you when it comes in.

Galway libraries also provide access to Newsbank. This is a service that provides the full text of thousands of international newspapers, periodicals and journals. It can be accessed using this link: <http://www.newsbank.com/> This is particularly useful for researchers, students, genealogists and professionals from various backgrounds and disciplines.

You can login using your library card number here: <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/cgi-bin/welcome/libcard.pl/Galway> Please contact Galway library for more information on how to avail of this service.

Galway library has a blogspot where you can keep up to date on what is happening or coming up at the library: <http://www.galwaylibrary.blogspot.com/>

There is also a list of recommended websites for junior members. This can be found at: <http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/Library/JuniorLibraryMemberWebsites/>

and includes encyclopaedias, dictionaries and thesaurus, history websites and technology websites.

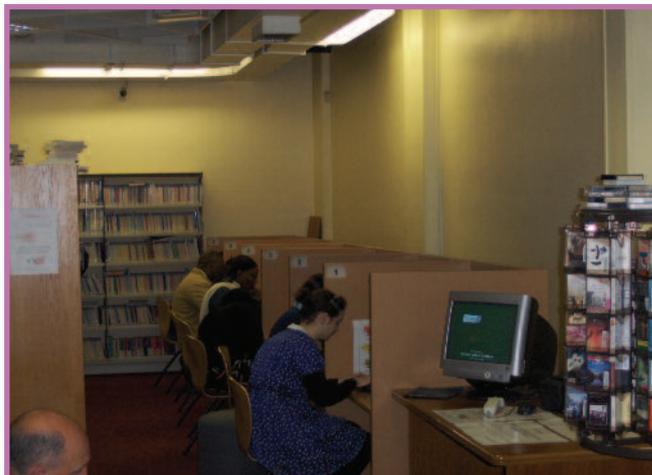
If you are a current member of the library you can renew your borrowed items online or check your borrower history using this link: <http://ipac.galwaycoco.ie/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=gweb&menu=account&ts=1095417243828#focus>.

Most libraries now also have a comprehensive collection of audio books, cd-roms, dvds, videos and cassette tapes. Some libraries have an arrangement with An Post to deliver books on tape to the visually impaired.

There is a mobile library service which serve neighbourhood housing, rural areas and areas of small population. The schedule for this can be accessed here: <http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/Library/MobileLibrary/mobile.asp>.

Further information about Galway libraries can be found at: <http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/Library/>

So get down to your local library and become a member. For those who wish to travel, the information highway has no borders for yourself too?



'Library Computer Facilities'

Galway Simon Community

By Marlene O'Connor

Galway Simon Community has been providing services in the city since 1979. We work with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by providing supported accommodation, social care, a tenancy sustainment programme, a residential resettlement project, a day centre incorporating a family service and an out of hours service. We have 9 supported residential housing projects in the city and numerous apartments for supported, independent living.

Social isolation is a major difficulty for people in or moving on from homeless services and because of this; Galway Simon Community provides a range of social and recreational activities to help meet this need. Each year we have a summer BBQ, a Christmas Party, table quizzes, bowling nights, day trips, summer holidays and many other activities. In addition, some of our volunteers provide a visiting and befriending service whereby they engage in social activities with people who use the services.

We believe in participation, including board membership, by the people who use our services and to this end there is an externally facilitated Service Users Forum and a Service Users Participation Working Group. The latter group is comprised of Service Users, Staff, Volunteers and Board Members. The Service Users Forum has been instrumental in

starting a National Forum of People Who Use Simon Services and this group now publishes a quarterly newsletter.

All the social activities are in addition to professional social care with key working, care planning and outcomes management being an integral part of the service.

We welcome applications from people who would like to volunteer in a befriending role, to assist with fundraising, or to work in our Retail Shop at 18 Sea Road which is now bigger, brighter and offering better value than ever before.

Volunteer Application Forms may be obtained by telephoning: 091 589415 or emailing: volunteering@galwaysimon.ie



'Simon Clients on a Leisure Activity'

COPE – CRISIS HOUSING AND CARING SUPPORT

By Patricia Byrne



COPE has developed and responded to new social needs over three decades of operations in Galway. It provides essential support services to a wide range of groups – emergency

accommodation and settlement support for people who are homeless, refuge and outreach services to women and children who experience domestic violence and community catering, and a day centre for elderly people.

The organisation, which changed its name to COPE in 2000, was originally set up by the Galway Diocese in 1979 as an umbrella organisation for a range of voluntary activities in the city. However, it quickly became a direct service provider in its own right, firstly by providing 'Meals on Wheels', a service which has now been re-branded as the 'Community Catering' service. 'This service', says Martin O'Connor, Assistant Director with COPE, 'nowadays delivers over 40,000 hot nutritious meals each year to elderly people. The service relies heavily on volunteer drivers who deliver the meals daily across Galway City and some areas of County Galway adjacent to the city.' The aim is to assist elderly people to live independently in their own homes, if that is their wish. A complementary service is the COPE Sonas Centre in Mervue, where older people can avail of meals, activities and other supports.

COPE homeless services include the COPE Fairgreen Shelter, which has provided accommodation and supports for homeless men in Galway since 1983. The current hostel can accommodate 26 people in single bedrooms. COPE Osterly Lodge in Lower Salthill provides emergency accommodation for single homeless women and can accommodate up to 13 women. The centres also offer practical, personal and social skill supports to enable residents to move into independent living and operate 24 hours per day, seven days a week all year round. Referrals can be made by either the person wishing to access the service or by someone acting on their behalf. COPE also operates a resettlement service to support people moving from homelessness into independent living with a focus on assisting people in maintaining tenancies and preventing homelessness. More

recently, in partnership with the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) in Galway City Council, COPE has developed a transitional housing programme 'COPE Towards Independence Project' for men moving from Fairgreen Shelter to independent living.

The service COPE provides for women and children, who experience domestic violence, is based at Waterside House. The centre was first established in 1981 and since then thousands of women and their children have availed of its statutory and voluntary service. The refuge can accommodate 6 women and 15 children, who need a place of safety, and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Both practical and emotional supports are provided for women during their stay, and those who choose legal options are supported through the court process. An outreach service provides support and information to women who do not wish to use the refuge accommodation.

Martin O'Connor stresses the importance of community support for COPE. 'We operate a range of fund-raising activities through the year and welcome volunteer support for our Community Catering services.'



'Workers and Volunteers at COPE Community Catering Centre'

**If you are interested in assisting, contact:
Mary Stout at 091 700800.**

To Contact COPE, Telephone:
COPE Fairgreen Shelter: 091 568818
COPE Osterly Lodge: 091 523101
COPE Waterside House: 091 565985
COPE Volunteers: 091 700800

ARRA Renmore Active Retirement Association

By Rachel O'Toole

Renmore Active Retired Association is very active with its members participating in a range of activities. These include bowling, AquaFit, walking, and playing bridge, as well as art and computer classes. They also have their own music and drama group. The Association was set up ten years ago by Eithne Carey, Eithne O'Toole and Siobhán McMurray. Today it has about eighty members. The group meets in Liam Mellows GAA Hall on Thursdays at 10.30am where they frequently have guest speakers to entertain and inform them on a variety of topics from local history to health matters.

The walking group meets weekly on Tuesdays at the local church after mass. In summer, they travel to places such as Cong, Coole Park and the Burren, while in winter they go on walks closer to home. Bowling is one of the most attractive pursuits of Renmore Active Retired Association. The sport is played competitively by many members where they play with other Active Retired Association bowling teams and other bowling groups. The members enjoy holidays and outings together. These include 'bowling breaks away' to where there are bowling facilities, such as in Ennis in the Clare Inn or in Westport at the Court House Hotel. On other trips out, the members visit the theatre both in Galway and in Dublin.

Every Christmas members of Renmore Active Retired Association sing carols in Galway Shopping Centre and in Days Hotel on Christmas Eve. Through this voluntary activity they raise many thousands for local charities, such as Croí and the Hospice. Members also volunteer all year round for the Senior Helpline. This is primarily a listening service, but also offers callers contact details for information and advice services. The Irish Senior Citizens Parliament also attracts volunteers from the Group. Its aim is to lobby politicians at local and national level about issues that concern older people. A member of Renmore Active Retired Association is on its National Executive Committee.

The National AGM of Active Retired was held in Salthill earlier this year with over three hundred members attending. The attendees came from groups all over Ireland to be present at the event.

Active Retired offers its members activities which encourages and helps them to embrace life after retirement. New members are always very welcome.



'Members participating in AquaFit'

Galway Refugee Support Group

By: Dara Ó Foghlú

Ten years ago Galway was fast becoming a multicultural city. At the time, there were scant practical or social support facilities available to asylum seekers and refugees. It was even difficult to access information about the legal avenues of the asylum process. The national attitude was that we were understandably ill-prepared because this influx of immigrants was unprecedented. But after years of steady immigration we can no longer afford the luxury of that argument.

'We know what the reality is now. Migration is here for the future. And we now have to plan for that and deal with the reality. And I think we only have a short period of time to get our act together, as a country.'

Today there is still a significant gulf between Irish culture and that of those seeking a new home in Ireland. Triona Nic Giolla Choille, co-ordinator of the Galway Refugee Support Group (established 1998), maintains that one of the major obstacles to intercultural cohesion is the prohibition of asylum seekers' right to work

'The right to work is crucial in terms of people's health and well being. It would also counteract the lack of integration there is between Irish people and asylum seekers. Most Irish people don't get to know asylum seekers because they're living in hostels on the edge of the city or in little pockets. And because they only have nineteen euro a week they don't participate in social, sporting, or cultural activities that Irish people take for granted. By removing the prohibition on the right to work, there would be a lot more interaction between Irish people and people of the [asylum seeking] community. So that can only be positive because where there is no contact between the two communities there is the potential for prejudice to develop.' Education is another keystone of integration. Under the current system, asylum seekers do not have the right to pursue national education past the age of eighteen. 'The real difficulty is that while waiting for a decision they have to remain idle. They are left for years without a chance to continue their education or apprenticeship -- to develop their skills. And that really creates huge psychological pressures but also means that at the end of the waiting period people's skills are rusty. Also, there should be a more comprehensive English training program so that people could use their time in direct provision to improve their English.'

In the upcoming year, the government will pass the Immigration, Residency and Protection Bill. It envisages a much speedier process so that people could be dealt with in under a year. While the GRSG welcomes this prospect, they are aware of the risk that this could fast-track some applications, denying people who haven't had enough time to establish a credible case for refugee status. 'Our other concern is what will happen to the people who are still in the system -- what kind of resolution there will be to their cases. We think the Minister should be flexible and generous on their applications because they've suffered a lot waiting all these years.'

Without the social bedrock of intercultural harmony, there is the frightening threat of a ghettoised and fractured Galway. 'I think there's a danger of that...We have suffered colonisation, and we're a country of migrants as well...so that has an impact, hopefully on our way of thinking and how we look at people. I think there are quite a lot of positive things here that we should build on. But we need to start doing it now. The time for wringing our hands is gone, and now we need to start looking at what integration means and how we can set about achieving that.'

Castlegar Residents Association

By Colm Brady

The area of Castlegar has a long history. The focal point for the surrounding hinterland is the Caisleán Gearr, an imposing castle (pictured) in what is known as Castlegar Village. The castle was built by the deBurgo family in the 1500s at a location of strategic importance. The ancient borders of Castlegar would have been extensive reaching Oranmore and Menlo at one time.

The areas covered by the Castlegar Residents Association are the village enclave in the environs of the castle, Bothair na Coiste and what is known locally as the school road where the local national school is located. A total of 50 households are represented by the Association and a management committee consists of a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. The Association meets periodically but if an urgent issue arises, it meets as frequently as is necessary to resolve it.

Castlegar is a mainly rural area representing 7.5% of the area of Galway City. The area has received almost 20% of the population growth of the city between 2002 and 2006 (census 2006). Development has placed pressure on local infrastructure such as roads and this is a major issue faced by the Association in what until recently was a rural area.

The residents of the village enclave are very focussed on maintaining the village atmosphere and ambience that they have been favoured with until now. The residents see Castlegar as an amenity for the city, the local road is a scenic walk. The area does not have a community centre at present so meetings are held in the meeting rooms of St. Columba's church.

As in many rural areas, development is affecting Castlegar in many ways. The sometimes-winding road through the village is unable to handle large volumes of traffic and the Residents Association voices the concerns of residents on such issues. The Association also represents the residents on issues such as signage and infrastructure. The Association organises events such as a clean up day. Chairperson Mary Mullin can summarise the aims of the organisation as "To Preserve our heritage, Protect our environment and Enhance our community."

She says that another function of the Association is to involve local residents in the planning of their future environment. Like



TOP IMAGE:
'Caisleán Gearr'

any rural community the residents of Castlegar are wary of the character of their locality being altered rapidly. This awareness means the Residents Association has a steady stream of work to do.



BOTTOM IMAGE:
'Castle in context'

Galway Presses Showcase at Cúirt 2008

By Colm Brady

The Cúirt Literary festival brings a host of high profile international authors to Galway. Each year builds on the success of previous festivals. In the 1980s a group of literature fans founded Cúirt as a small poetry festival. The name stems from the ancient tradition of gathering poets to compare craft and knowledge. The festival carried many acclaimed poets this year such as Moya Cannon and C.K. Williams in addition to Novelists, Journalists and Non-Fiction Writers. The public profile of the festival was heightened with the readings by Samantha Power who was until recently an advisor to the Obama presidential campaign in the United States.

Tucked in among all the international attractions was the Galway Presses showcase which took place on Wednesday 23rd of April. The aim was to allow the publishers to share their experiences with their buying public. The showcase consisted of four local publishers with output ranging from Fiction to Performance Poetry to Irish language content.

Alan Hayes of Arlen House spoke of the challenges facing Irish Writers. Arlen House was established in 1975 and relaunched in 2000. They have published almost 60 critically acclaimed books of Irish literary and cultural interest. Although Alan is involved in promoting acclaimed writers such as Cathal Ó Searcaigh he highlighted the problems new writers face. He referred to Ireland's literary circuit in which established names tour the literary events with no opportunity for debut authors to break into the scene.

Wordsonthestreet is a small independent publisher established in 2005 by Geraldine Burke and Tony O'Dwyer. Tony is chairman of the literary magazine "Crannóg" and a poet and fiction writer in his own right. Geraldine is a novelist and short story writer with experience in broadcasting and events management. Tony indicated that the publishing industry in Galway is enjoying a resurgence at the moment.

Wordsonthestreet has published four items of fiction including one play. The publisher is open to Non-Fiction authors but has not published the genre as yet. Print runs start at 500

copies and can be updated quickly to meet demand. Tony says the aim of the publisher is to print works of literary beauty. He says that aesthetic beauty and commercial concerns can be opposing forces in practice and Geraldine says that where the two intersect it is a happy event for all concerned. The press uses the Internet extensively for marketing, particularly in the United States.

Irish language publisher Cló iar-Chonnachta was founded in 1985 and has recently had success with an Irish language sports book. Their spokesperson detailed the additional issues facing an Irish language publisher such as editing regional dialects which requires specialist editing staff.

Stephen Murray represented Maverick press who specialise in selling the work of performance poets. The press was set up in 2006 to serve the market for performers in locations as far afield as Prague. The "Youthspeak" programme was founded to encourage schoolchildren to get involved in poetry at an early age.

Overall the participants in the showcase were enthusiastic about the future and this was backed up by a good attendance on the day. Hopefully all these publishing houses will have further success to celebrate at Cúirt 2009.



'Clóiar-Chonnachta Stand at Cúirt Showcase'



'Tony O'Dwyer & Geraldine Burke of Wordsonthestreet'

Galway Supported Employment

By Pauline O'Dwyer

Galway Supported Employment Consortium Ltd., is a FAS Employment Service for job seekers with disabilities in Galway City and County. It is part of a national network of Supported Employment Offices which are situated all over the country.

Our aim is "to facilitate the integration of people with a disability into a job in the open labour market using a person centred career development approach through the medium of an Employment Facilitator".

Our main office is based in Galway City and is staffed by a Co-ordinator and five Employment Facilitators. Our staff travel all over the City and County assisting people to find work. We assist job seekers from diverse backgrounds and there is no stereotypical job seeker! We help people with intellectual, physical, sensory disabilities, and people with a wide range of mental health difficulties. We tailor our service to meet the needs of the individual.

We work through a four stage process which involves

- **Assessment:** Looking at skills, abilities, potential obstacles, and employment goals.

- **Job sourcing:** Linking with employers, networking, and if required assisting job seekers to make independent job applications.
- **Employment with Supports:** Training on the job or support outside of the workplace when a person wishes not to disclose their disability to their employer.
- **Mentoring / Aftercare:** Helping individuals to become more integrated and independent in the workplace

We also provide support to employers who wish to create a more equitable and inclusive work place. We can train staff on the job. We can access FAS grant funding to buy equipment to "level the playing field" for people in the workplace, for example office magnification equipment for the visually impaired employee. We can access FAS grant funding for workplace adaptation which enable employer's to create a wheelchair accessible workplace for employees.

Through our network of employers both public and private sector who wish to create a more equitable and inclusive work environment we have to date placed almost three hundred people in open employment. These employers have been the source of life changing events for our job seekers. They have given them an opportunity to feel; valued, capable, necessary, healthier, more motivated and more alive. They have given them an opportunity to make major life changes such as learning to drive, going back to education, developing careers, living independently, and buying houses.

BRAINWAVE - THE IRISH EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION

By Evelyn Monson Kirby

Brainwave. The Irish Epilepsy Association was established in 1967 by a group of individuals concerned with improving the quality of life of people with epilepsy in Ireland. **"Brainwave is committed to working to meet the needs of all its members living with epilepsy"**

Epilepsy is a clinical condition, which is characterised by a tendency to have recurrent, spontaneous seizures. 1 in 20 will have a seizure during their lifetime but one seizure does not constitute epilepsy. Epilepsy can affect anyone, at anytime or at any age.

A seizure is a brief and temporary disturbance of the brain function where there is a period of altered awareness and consciousness. The seizure itself is usually short but may be followed by a period of tiredness and confusion. Seizures can be classified into 2 groups, generalised and partial or focal.

In more than half of the cases there is no known cause. In other cases it may be due to damage to the brain as a result of head injury, brain infections, birth trauma, strokes or brain tumours.

It is estimated that epilepsy affects 1 in 131 people & there are approximately 35,000 people with the condition in Ireland. Because epilepsy is a condition that is at times greatly misunderstood, the diagnosis can be very traumatic for a person. There is a real fear of how others will react if they know.

Some people with epilepsy keep the condition hidden and some become isolated. It is important that people in general become educated about epilepsy so that any myths or misconceptions about the condition can be dispelled. With the proper treatment (Anti Epileptic Drugs) and management (healthy lifestyle) approximately 80% of people with epilepsy reach total seizure control and live normal lives.

Brainwaves Head Office is situated in Dublin and there are 9 regional offices around the country which house the Community Resource Officers. **Evelyn Monson Kirby** is the Community Resource Officer in the Western Region covering Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, whose role is to:

- To provide people with epilepsy with information in relation to Epilepsy in general, its diagnosis, treatment & other issues related to the condition e.g. Lifestyle, Epilepsy & Women, Employment, Driving & Insurance as well as Benefits. Support is also provided through **Support Groups**.
- To provide **Outreach Services** in the different towns and rural settings and in the Epilepsy Clinics at UCHG.
- Through **Awareness Campaigns and Education Programmes** Brainwave aims to improve public understanding of epilepsy. Awareness talks are given to schools and various organizations throughout the counties.

For further information about Epilepsy or Brainwave Services please contact Evelyn at (091)568180 or email: crogalway.brainwave@epilepsy.ie

Head Office: 01 4557500. www.epilepsy.ie



*'Evelyn Monson Kirby,
Community Resource Officer'*

**Evelyn Monson Kirby,
Community Resource Officer,
Aisling Farrell, Director of
Services, Brainwave.**



[POETRY CORNER]

Yesterday's Conversation

By Mary Lally

You don't know my journey to now
I'm not sure I want to tell you

You judge my physicality and speech
My couture and the company I keep

Judge me right now
No past or future

You want the package
The PR, gloss and the sob story

Can you hear between the lines?

"This Soul's not for sale"

Mary Lally recently participated in a poetry workshop at Galway Arts Centre facilitated by Kevin Higgins. She has read her work at the Over The Edge open-mic, North Beach Poetry Nights & the Galway Arts Centre poetry slams.

On Gilmartin Road

by Elaine Feeney

They chuck children out
with the bath water in front
of high speed Japanese imports,

This is the road where horses flag
down on old flock armchairs.

Where Maggie's sitting room is adorned with a bronze
touch lantern, and a three piece suite sits on
the mossy lawn of number sixty six.

Where children follow children's children
out to the middle of muddle lane.

They own it, for they live in terrace
Of houses with one attic,
the unshod horse wins the highway code.

So it was in the nineteen hundreds
and it's a code kept

out of posterity
and fear.

Elaine Feeney's poetry has been published in The Shop, Nthposition and elsewhere. She was a Featured Reader at the Over The Edge: Open Reading in January 2007 and recently won the 2008 Cúirt Festival Poetry Grand Slam.

galway city
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* The views expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of Galway City Community Forum or the Community & Enterprise Department of Galway City Council.