

COINNIEMARA WEST

ANNUAL REPORT 2010/2011



Reminder: Connemara West AGM will be held in The Ellis Hall, Letterfrack on Wednesday 21st September 2011 at 8.00p.m.

Connemara West Directors & Staff

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 Daniel McNamara

Manager
 Conservator/Restorer
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 Cabinetmaker

Part-Time & Occasional

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 Upholsterer

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 Joseph Fursuh

Crèche - Full time

Miriam Culhane (Manager)
 Conah Delaney
 Aoife Hade
 Sarah Lynch
 Geraldine Walsh

Patricia Glynn
 Aisling Joyce
 Siobhan O'Neill
 Philomena Lydon

Furniture College/ Public Library yearly performance 2010 - 2011

Despite Sigi, The Public Library Branch Librarian, being off sick due to a car accident, The Furniture College and the Public Library has maintained a reasonable level of opening hours during the academic year. Sadly Sigi due to injuries sustained had to take early retirement and we wish her every success for the future.

A Furniture College Library survey conducted in early 2011 indicated a satisfactory rate of 78% with the services it provides. The only negative comment was the curtailment of weekend opening hours. Hopefully, this situation will be rectified with the appointment of new Branch Librarian during the summer months. At the time of writing this short report the Letterfrack Public Library is now closed and we are awaiting the appointment of a permanent Public Branch Librarian. Since September Public Library readership has increased by 22 new members. Below are some statistics from September 2011 to June 2011.

Library Usage People (monthly)	1,618
Books added to collection	156
Internet Usage	104 (monthly)
Books Issued	1226



Ceol na Mara

The Ceol na Mara Festival took place between 31st July and 5th August in the Connemara West Centre, Letterfrack and other locations on the Renvyle Peninsula. This is a music summer course combining both classical and traditional elements and

this is its fourth year running. It was set up by Oonagh Keogh whose family have been coming on holiday to Renvyle peninsula over the years and have built a very strong connection with Connemara. Students range in age from 6 to 60 and come from

the four corners of Ireland and from overseas. Entire families come for the week and stay locally in hostels, B&B's, holiday cottages and hotels. This year 47 students took part on course.

The Furniture College

(A Partnership between Connemara West and Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology)

Student registration at the College reached 265 for the academic year 2010-2011. 94 students were conferred with their academic awards and the Graduation Ceremony in October 2010. Once again the past year was a very successful year for the College with a number of students winning awards.

National Skills Competition

Diarmaid Ó Conghaile from Dun Beag, Na Doireadh, Baile na hAbhann, Co. na Gaillimhe, a second year student on the B.Sc. in Furniture Design and Manufacture, took the top prize at The National Skills Competition event held in the Dublin Institute of Technology. This builds upon similar success in this competition from students from GMIT Letterfrack in 2007, 2009 and 2010.

Two other students of GMIT Letterfrack also competed in the final, and were ranked in order of merit from candidates competing from around the country in an earlier round of the competition. They were Anthony O'Neill from Shillelagh Grove, Tullow, Co. Carlow, and Donal Quinn from Gortlicka, Dromoughty, Kenmare, Co. Kerry.

Lecturer Anthony Clare, who prepared the students for the competition, said the standard in the final was exceptionally high and competitiveness very keen. He said "the test involved making a free-standing cabinet, with an integrated door and drawer and he was delighted with our students' performance in this competition and was thrilled that Diarmaid had won."

This achievement demonstrates clearly the exceptional skill level attained by students undertaking GMIT Letterfrack programmes, given the other finalists were apprentices working in industry. GMIT Letterfrack prides itself on quality in all aspects of education, creativity and craftsmanship and our students have demonstrated this once again on a national stage.



Diarmaid Ó Conghaile

House and Home/ National Crafts Council of Ireland Student Design Awards.

Tom Sweeney from Tully, Raheens, Castlebar, won the overall award for his scalable, modular design, wall-mounted contemporary storage system. He is a second year student on the BSc in Furniture Design and Manufacture Programme. His piece was designed and made under the guidance of GMIT lecturer Laura Mays.

The competition attracts entrants from design colleges all over the country. This year's theme, 'Home Comforts', prompted one of the biggest ever entry levels, with submissions from the fields of furniture, ceramics, glass, lighting, and textiles.

One of the judges, House and Home editor Dara Flynn, described Tom Sweeney's mini storage system as a really flexible idea with a number of different applications. "What I saw was great for pens and thumbtacks, another judge pictured it in the bathroom, or for storing tea in a kitchen," Tom said.

GMIT Letterfrack student Jens Kosak from Oughterard, who won the Student Design Award in 2009, was runner-up for his innovative bed design which uses sustainable materials and requires no tools or fixings to construct. He was awarded second place and worked under the supervision of GMIT lecturer Dr Patrick Tobin.

Another GMIT Letterfrack student, Katherine Griffith from Ballina, Co Clare, was among four students shortlisted for an award. She showcased her modular shelving system which was developed under the supervision of lecturer Anthony Clare.



Tom Sweeney

The Mitchell Henry Play Trail - Kylemore Abbey

This is a 'live project' FDM 2 students have undertaken this year and the results have been fantastic. The Mitchell Henry Play Trail is a wonderful trail of 24 children's furniture pieces which are placed around the Kylemore estate.

The interactive furniture pieces were designed and made by the 2nd year furniture design students using wood which has fallen naturally on the estate. The play trail is part of the commemorations of the 100 year anniversary of the death of Mitchell Henry. Some of the wood used to create the pieces comes from trees Mitchell Henry planted when he developed the estate. The students were inspired by the history of Kylemore, the geometric flower bed in the garden, the Benedictine Community love of music and art, local folklore, etc. There are miniature picnic tables, musical instruments, magical whispering trees and much more.

The project celebrates the creativity, skill and making abilities of the students and promotes the work of GMIT Letterfrack to a huge audience of national and international visitors. Kylemore Abbey is the number one visitor attraction in the West of Ireland with over 200,000 visitors annually.

The Play Trail was officially opened on 27th May 2011 by Michael D. Higgins T.D.

Transition Year Students

This very successful course ran over a six week period and consisted of transition year students from Clifden Community School making a relatively simple dovetail box that was shaped by the students to their own design.

Connemara West agreed to buy 11 toolkits and these will be used for future courses.

Hugh Mullan a Tutor in the College was in charge of the course and he also had some 2nd Year DTE students assisting him.



The students who completed the course are pictured below (above): Christopher Holmes, Shane Joyce, Michael Gordon, Richard Coneyes, Mark Gavin, James Clancey, Ian Heanue, Mickey Walsh, Donal Heanue & Cian O'Driscoll

Conservation | Letterfrack

It has been a busy year for Conservation|Letterfrack and like a lot of small businesses we have had to adapt and downsize to become more flexible and undertake some work outside our main area of expertise. Nevertheless we had some very interesting projects as well and in early 2011 we were appointed the main furniture conservators for the restoration of the furniture in Ard na Sidhe Country House Hotel on Lake Caragh near Killorglin in Co Kerry. The estate was purchased by the late Dr. Liebherr in 1958 and began welcoming guests 2 years later. Originally built by Lady Gordon, who purchased the land on which the house now stands and in 1913 began building the house of her dreams.



The house has been completely upgraded and re-decorated and Conservation|Letterfrack carried out all the antique furniture restoration and re-upholstery of some key pieces in the house. Nearing the end of the renovation phase, Conservation|Letterfrack also assisted in the placement of the furniture, paintings and prints in the house.

another major project was the conservation and restoration of a set of eighteenth century chairs, a sofa and drop-in seats for Waterford Museum of Treasures at The Bishop's Palace. The Bishop's Palace charts the history of Waterford from 1700 to 1970 and gives a wonderful insight into the history of what was up to the 1750s, Ireland's second city.

The conservation of the chairs employed a number of conservation skills, from consolidating the original woodwork to the application of gold leaf. The chairs were then all upholstered in the traditional style and covered in specially woven silk fabrics

and some of the drop-in seats were upholstered in material made from horse.



Rathmines Library

Rathmines Library, one of 21 Dublin City branch libraries, first opened to the public in 1913, one of over 60 public libraries in Ireland built with the financial support of Andrew Carnegie. The Library was upgraded to allow for access improvement works as part of Dublin City Council's Implementation Plan under the Disability Act, and were co-funded by the City Council and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.



Conservation|Letterfrack were commissioned to restore the original doors and bring them back to their former glory. The Library re-opened in August 2011 and pictured in the doorway is Daniel McNamara who graduated from the Furniture College in



2010 and has worked with Conservation|Letterfrack for a few months prior to taking up a position with Andrew Varah who is a very well known cabinetmaker and designers in the UK and was a visiting external examiner to Letterfrack in the 1990s.

Allihies Copper Mines

The picturesque village of Allihies on the Beara Peninsula that is home to the Allihies Copper Mines Museum. In the nineteenth century Allihies was a mining settlement and largest producer of copper in Europe. The Museum tells the story about the mines and the people that worked there – the mines employed 1,500 people in 1860.

The Allihies Copper Mines Museum is one of a number of Museums in Ireland that are participating in the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland under the Heritage Council and Sven Habermann, Manager of C|L is one of the accredited trainers on the programme.



Heritage Day

Conservation|Letterfrack held their 7th open day on Sunday 28th August and were delighted to welcome visitors to the



workshop (both local and those that had travelled some distances) to view heritage objects and furniture. It gave visitors a chance to get advice on the care of their furniture or wooden objects.

Heritage Day has become a popular feature of Conservation|Letterfrack's annual calendar and is normally held on the last Sunday in August.

Foscadh Community Development Ltd. Diamond Hill Housing Ltd.

Social Housing

It is with somewhat reluctance we mention the Social Housing Scheme because in recent Annual Reports we were of the opinion that the building of the scheme of 25 homes would begin within the following twelve months. That has not happened due to a variety of problems which had to be overcome. The present position is that the Department of the Environment has been furnished with all of the information requested and final sanction of the scheme is now awaited by all parties. When that happens, work will begin on preparing an application for planning permission which will be submitted when finalised. In the

present economic climate nothing is definite but we are keeping our fingers crossed that work should begin on the scheme around the middle of next year 2012

Astro Turf Pitch

A planning application was lodged with Galway County Council some months back for the development of an all weather Astro Turf Pitch 60 meters x 35 meters by Diamond Hill Housing Ltd. A request for further information on the colour of the perimeter fencing and landscaping has been answered and a decision is expected before the end of August. The pitch which will be floodlit will be used mainly for training.

Community Services and Leisure Centre

Planning permission was obtained by Foscadh Community Development Ltd. towards the end of 2009 for a large Sports hall. A revised design for the building is presently being prepared to include more community facilities such as a kitchen and dining area, a community gym, health and welfare as well as showers, changing and toilet facilities. An application for planning permission with revised drawings will be submitted in September.

Pride of Place Competition 2010

Connemara West was nominated by Galway County Council to enter the 2010 Pride of Place Competition in the Village Category, 0-200 Population. Pride of Place is an all-island competition which is directed towards recognizing improvements by local communities to create civic pride in their area. The competition focus is on people coming together to shape, change and enjoy all that is good about their area. It differs from other competitions because it focuses on the impact that local people working together has on the local community.

In August a presentation was given by

people involved in local community projects to highlight the work undertaken by their group to a panel of judges and from this they were invited to take part in the 8th Annual Pride of Place Competition.

The 8th Annual Pride of Place Awards Ceremony was held on 13 November 2010 in the Knightsbrook Hotel Trim, Co. Meath and Letterfrack Village were runners-up in the competition receiving a trophy and cash prize of €500. This is a wonderful achievement and in fact Galway County Council were so impressed with the result they have asked the group to re-enter the

competition again this year and hope they will go one step better and get first prize. The awards ceremony this year will take place in Gorey, Co. Wexford in November.



Green Campus Committee

A small committee has been formed over the past year to look at issues of sustainability on The Furniture College, GMIT Campus in Letterfrack. The members of the committee comprise GMIT staff, a student representative and a Connemara West representative. It has been decided to try and achieve a green college status eventually but initially a current awareness survey of green issues among students and staff was carried out and one of the main

areas of concern was the way in which waste was processed in the college and a uniform system was developed and will be implemented in the Autumn. The committee also organised a litter clean up in Letterfrack Village. The staff and students also carried out a litter clean up of Letterfrack Village on the 5th April and well done and thanks to them all. Thanks also to Galway County Council who organised the pickup of the rubbish for free.



Staff and students of The Furniture College (GMIT at Letterfrack) with some of the rubbish collected during National Spring Clean week

Teach Ceoil

Music Master Classes

The Master Classes in Irish Traditional music continued in the Teach Ceoil with the assistance of grant aid from the Forum Leader programme. Marie Walsh taught Accordion and Concertina, Eileen O'Malley taught Tin whistle and Liz Kane taught Fiddle. Student numbers were much the same as the previous year and many of the students were involved in the Grupai Ceoil and Ceilí Bands which were so successful at the Galway County Fleadh in Clifden in May. Once again a number of students were awarded scholarships to the Scoil Éigse which takes place during the week leading up to the All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil in Cavan in August. In the Scoil Éigse students are placed in appropriately graded instrumental music classes, traditional singing, dancing and conversational Irish classes. The team of international tutors are

all master performers with proven track records as musicians and teachers. The Scoil Éigse is now one of the highlights of the year for those attending the Master Classes.

Seisiún

Seisiún took place in the Teach Ceoil for the 38th year. Attendance in July was slightly down on previous years due mainly to the sharp drop in visitor numbers to the area.

Eight rehearsals were held prior to opening night and with a new set of costumes and some new members the programme was very well received by audiences. The group has once again been invited to perform in the United States and this invitation will be considered during the coming months. Recordings were made for a new DVD of the show and if they prove satisfactory the DVD project will go ahead with a DVD launch planned for next year.



IAU World Trail Championship

The 9th of July 2011 was a historic day for Connemara as it hosted the first ever World Championship sports event, which was based at the Connemara West Centre. For several years, Galway brothers Richie and Paul Donovan had canvassed the IAU (International Association of Ultrarunners) to bring the Championships to Ireland. In early 2011 the Donovan brothers were awarded the rights to host the Championships in Ireland. The event was brought to Connemara due to the efforts of a newly established local committee called Run Connemara. In a unique partnership, Run Connemara and the Donovan brothers co-ordinated this special event. The race itself was run through some of the most beautiful terrain in the world starting in Kylemore Abbey, running along the main road towards Letterfrack and into Connemara National Park, up Diamond Mountain and onto Cregg, over to Bunnaurown and up Ben Baun and onto Kylemore village. The athletes turned around at Kylemore village and retraced their steps. Over 130 elite ultra marathon runners from 20 national athletics federations including Argentina, Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Spain and the USA participated and Athletes covered a total

distance of 75km on a course that encompassed mountains, grassland trails, compacted gravel trails, hard packed trails, bog, loose rock trails and open countryside. The course was undoubtedly a tough one that suited dedicated trail athletes, 100km runners, long distance mountain runners and 24 hour runners alike. The winner was Erik Clavery from France who won in a time of 6 hours, 39 minutes and 7 seconds.



Eric Clavery is seen in the photograph approaching the finish line in the Connemara West Centre in Letterfrack.

It was victory all round for the French as Maud Gobert won the ladies event in 7 hours, 41 minutes and 31 seconds and the French also won the men's team and ladies

team events. The medals were distributed after the race at a very moving ceremony in the main marquee which was situated on the lawn in the Connemara West Centre.



The IAU was extremely pleased with the success of the event and is hoping to have it in Ireland again in 2013. The IAU were hugely complimentary to the Irish organisers and it made those of us on the ground reflect about how proud we were that a small community in the West of Ireland had the facilities to host this event. As part of the event, Run Connemara commissioned a 30 minute film that will be shown on TV channels around the world to over 100 million households. In doing this, Run Connemara hopes to use the world media attention attached to the event as an opportunity to promote Connemara internationally.

Connemara Community Radio

How things have changed for Connemara Community Radio over the years with the improvements in technology, from having coverage in the northwest Connemara area only to worldwide coverage in a matter of a few years on www.connemarafm.com

While we still have a few areas locally where reception is poor due to terrain and transmitter power limits, it is now possible to receive Connemara Community radio anywhere in the world. The feedback is building up gradually and is very favourable. So if you have relatives overseas please let them know they can join us live from 11am to 9pm Monday to Saturday and 10am to 9pm on Sunday.

Membership

Connemara Community Radio has recently launched a Membership Drive. Membership is important in many ways as it generates much needed revenue in these recessionary times and also membership is one of the measures used by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland in measuring the support for the station.

Members also have two representatives on the Board of Connemara Community Radio.

Congratulations to Michael Gannon

Michael Gannon was shortlisted for the PPI Speech Programming Awards for his programme *Peann Luaidhe agus Droch Phaipear*.

"Manus the Hackler"

To give you a little background, a man called Patrick Lyden from Clifden immigrated to America in the mid 1800s. Little is known of him except that he died in Bristol Pennsylvania in 1929.

In 1978 a great grandson of his came to Dublin with a manuscript and asked the University to translate it. He said that Patrick Lyden wrote it. It was in Gaelic, but written in English phonetic spelling. It seems that Lyden could not read or write his native Irish so he had to use English to write his story.

The story is Manus the Hackler. It took scholars many years to decode the writing,

study and translate it. It is a light-hearted story set in Errislannon. It is considered a treasure as it is one of the very few books written by a local Connemara man in the 1800s. It is a very important source of Gaelic language from this area in the 1800s and it is a valuable social history document. It is also great fun and Lyden must have been quite a special man with a great sense of humour.

The radio documentary covers the history of the book and also includes some sketches from the book and is available from the Radio Archives.



Volunteers who took part in the Walkathon which was held in June this year

Community Employment

Once again some very valuable work has been carried out by our Community Employment Participants during past year. The participants have been working in the following areas:

Connemara West Centre, Letterfrack;

Community Pitch Letterfrack; Renvyle Thatched Cottages; Teach Ceoil Tully; 3 villages (Tully, Tullycross & Letterfrack); Clúid Housing Association Clifden; Tigh na nOg Community Crèche; Renvyle Childcare and Connemara Community Radio and

maintenance work in all local graveyards.

Our participants also part-take in training opportunities where recognised FETAC Awards and qualifications can be achieved leading to major awards on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Community Crèche



We had a very successful second year in Tigh na nOg Community Crèche. We have over 60 children from 4 months to 11 years of age attending on a weekly basis and are cared for

by an experienced and qualified team of childcare workers. All our staff are qualified in Fire Training, First Aid and Child Protection. All meals are cooked on the premises by staff who are HACCP trained, we provide part time care, full day care and afterschool service.

The crèche operates the following Schemes:

- Subvention Scheme which allows reduced fees for families on lower incomes
- Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme which is the Governments free Preschool Year
- Training Support Scheme which is free childcare places to participants who wish to partake in educational courses run by FAS and VEC.



If you require any information on the service please call 095-41908.

Youthreach



One of the main achievements of this year's programme was the creation of the Youthreach Community Garden in conjunction with the Letterfrack Active Age club and the residents of Cluid housing in Clifden. A small portion of waste ground adjacent to the Youthreach

building was reclaimed and developed into a vegetable garden by FETAC level 3 & 4 students. In addition, under the guidance and instructions of the members of the Active Age Club and residents of Cluid, the students also created gardens at the rear entrance of Ellis Hall in Letterfrack and on the grounds of Cluid in Clifden. This joint awareness raising project was the recipient of the annual ECO-UNESCO young environmentalist Award in the Mansion House, Dublin. It is envisaged that these endeavours will be further developed in the coming year.

During the year there were a number of fund raising projects organised by the Youthreach students, one of the most successful was the 'Tea Day' for the Western Alzheimers Galway Branch, which raised over €300.00.

During the summer period students hosted an exhibition of their work in the Youthreach Centre. This included FETAC levels 3, 4 and 5 and Leaving Certificate Applied final examination projects. There was a very positive response from the local community, tourists and visitors to the Connemara West Complex.

The programme offers the following courses:

- A Foundation course for early school leavers in a variety of vocational skills including Carpentry, Information Technology, Engineering, Computer Aided Design, Art and Crafts, Childcare, Business Studies, Electronics, Welding, Personal Development, Horticulture, Metal Craft and Work Experience.
- Leaving Certificate Applied - a two year programme consisting of three elements of continuous assessment, through projects and tasks, 90% attendance and final examinations.
- Further Education Training Awards Council (FETAC) at levels 3, 4 and 5 in a variety of subjects including Art and Design; Childcare; Business Studies; Communications; Woodwork; Furniture Design; Computer Aided Design; Information Technology; Personal Development and Work Experience.
- E.C.D.L.
- 'Drive for Life', which is safe driving course which includes a mock theory test, key

driving skills, dos and don'ts on the road, road safety, insurance information and regulations, a car safety check list and information on the new penalty point system.

- Health and Sexuality programmes, offering awareness on 'the safe healthy options'.
- 'Mind Out' - an emotional health awareness and well being programme
- 'Anger Management' programme.

Free childcare provision is offered to participants of the Youthreach programme.

The 2010-2011 academic year started off with a 'Career Option exhibition in Salthill, Galway organised by the Institution of Guidance Counsellors. Students were able to avail of career guidance in their chosen areas and meet representatives from the various third level PLC Colleges, Institutes of Technology and Universities.



For further information on Youthreach on any of the above courses please contact Theresa McLoughlin @ 095 41893 Email Theresa@youthreachletterfrack.com WEB: www.youthreachletterfrack.com

Shareholders Winners

Gerard Coyne, Tullycross, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Grettie Dickson, Roundstone, Co. Galway
Joe Ribbon, Cloonluane, Renvyle, Co. Galway
The Community, Kylemore Abbey, Connemara, Co. Galway
Brian Coyne, Tullycross, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Peter Keane, Lettergesh East, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Mary A Keane, Lettergesh East, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Marian Neary, Letterfrack, Co. Galway
Annie Diamond, Tully, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Chrissie O'Malley, Ardnagreevagh, Renvyle, Co. Galway
John Joyce, Dawros, Letterfrack, Co. Galway
Rosleague Manor, Letterfrack, Co. Galway
Margaret Kane, Lettergesh East, Renvyle, Co. Galway
A.G. Moylan, Gurteen, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Edward & Gloria Glynn, 710 Oakleigh Rd, N.W. Grand Rapids, Michigan
Mary Wallace, Tully, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Peggy Fitzpatrick Cashleen, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Patrick Mullen, Attyrourty, Letterfrack, Co. Galway
Dr. Irene Nee, Tully, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Seamus Kane, Ardnagreevagh, Renvyle, Co. Galway

John Lydon, Beach Road, Clifden, Co. Galway
Una Nee, Curragh, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Adrian Acton Snr, Moyard, Co. Galway
Christopher Lydon, Lettergesh West, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Gerard Heanue, Derrylough, Renvyle, Co. Galway
David Tierney, Lettergesh, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Ambrose Joyce, Moycullen, Co. Galway
Angela King, Lettergesh East, Renvyle, Co. Galway
John McLoughlin, Derryherbert, Letterfrack, Co. Galway
Johnny Coyne, Glassilaun, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Eddie Kane, Tully, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Kieran Coyne, Kylemore, Co. Galway
Mary Lydon, Rockfield, Moyard, Co. Galway
Eamon Sammon, Rusheenduff, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Mickie Kane, Ardnagreevagh, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Patrick J Conneely, Ardnagreevagh, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Mary Mortimer, Letterfrack, Co. Galway
Noel Coyne, Tullycross, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Nonie McDonnell, Tullycross, Renvyle, Co. Galway
Annie Kerrigan, Lettergesh West, Renvyle, Co. Galway