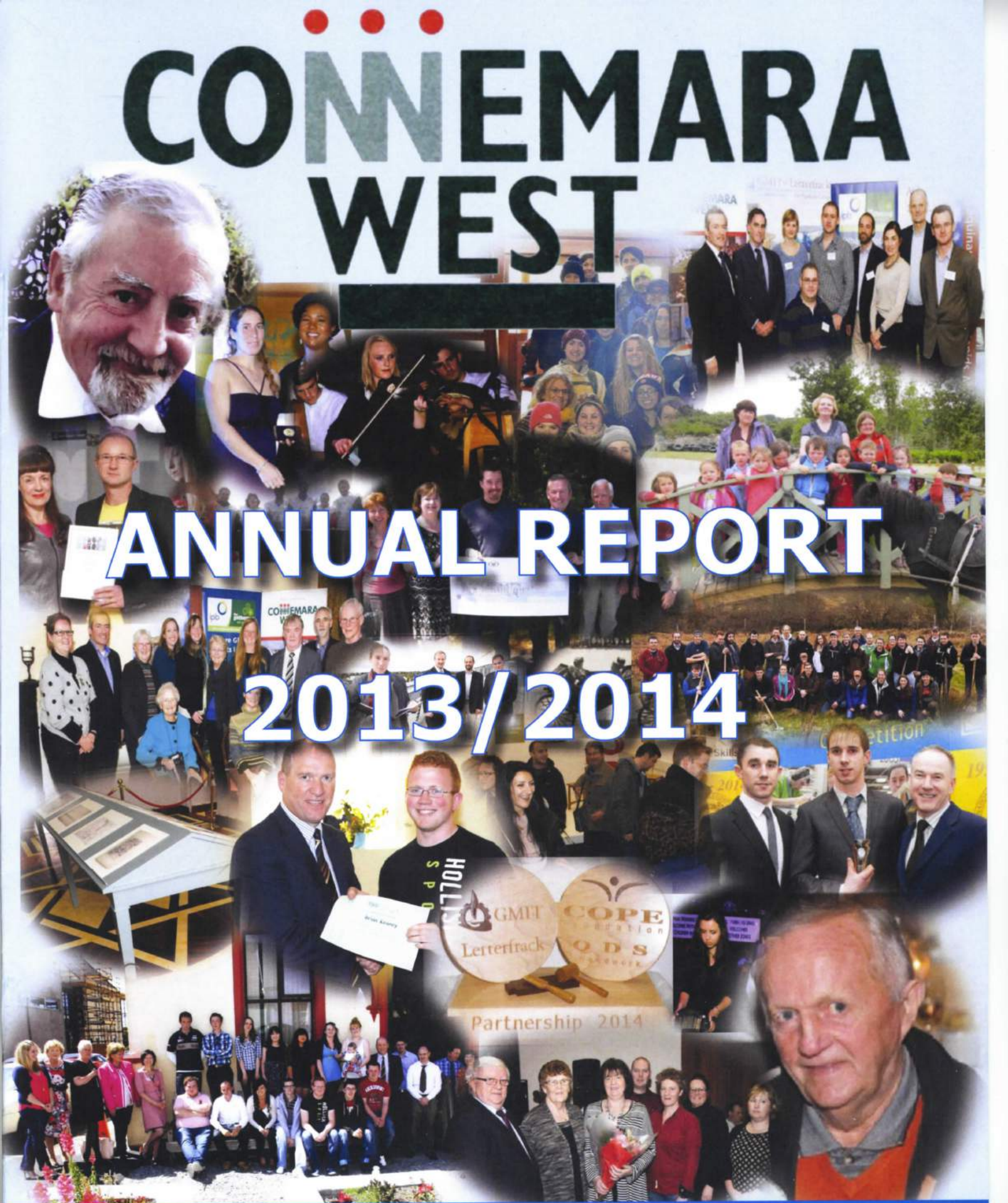


CONNEMARA WEST

ANNUAL REPORT

2013/2014



Reminder: Connemara West AGM will be held in the Ellis Hall, Letterfrack on Wednesday 24th September at 8pm.

It was a cold wet October evening in 1971 when Joe O'Toole called to Eagles Nest School to visit me and collect my life insurance premium. While he was there Fr. Tuffy called with the news that Brendan O'Regan, who at that time was Chairman of Bord Fáilte and of Shannon Free Airport Development Company, was visiting the area that evening in order to select a site for a new Rent-an-Irish Cottage Scheme. During the previous week a number of very scenic sites were identified at the Grand Gate in Renvyle and on the Quay Road in Tully among others. However, Brendan O'Regan wanted a site within a village and finally the field in Tullycross was selected. After many cups of tea and hot whiskies Paddy Coyne was eventually persuaded to sell his beloved field and thus began the saga of The Thatched Cottages in Tullycross.

Later Fr. Tuffy, Malachy Conboy, Paul Aspell, Joe O'Toole and myself were selected by the members of Ballinakill Community Council to be the first local directors on the Board of Connemara West.

That is over 40 years ago and regrettably Fr. Tuffy, Malachy and Paul have since passed onto their eternal reward to leave Joe and myself soldiering on through good times and bad, always trying to achieve what was best for the local community. Joe served the company



and the community well as a Director and Chairman for twenty five years. I remember him coming to meetings on Winters evenings after a long day in South Connemara selling insurance and not having time to eat his dinner. He always had a packet of mairietta biscuits which he nibbled during the meeting as he balanced the biscuits on his knee under the table. After the meeting he would head home because there were cows to be milked. They don't make them like Joe anymore. There were many others who invested a huge amount of time and energy in their community and who were responsible for many of the good things that are happening today.

I felt a deep pang of sorrow when I heard that Joe had taken the decision to step down as a Director of Connemara West. He will be sorely missed because over that long period of service to the community he has accumulated a huge store of valuable knowledge and experience which will not be easily replaced.

Joe, as a lifelong friend, I wish you and Mary many happy years of retirement and go easy on the biscuits. One of these days we will take another trip to South Connemara in search of "you know what".

Michael O'Neill

Social Housing

The proposed Social Housing Scheme of 13 Units is now out for tender. Contractors will be appointed in October and once the land transfer is completed work on the scheme should begin towards the end of this year or very early next year. Applicants are reminded that they must be on the County Councils current housing list or in the case of returning emigrants they must be accepted on the Safe Home Programme which is based in Mulranny, Co. Mayo.



The scheme is in a very attractive location and when completed should be a very worthwhile addition to the village of Letterfrack.

Additional information can be obtained from: the Housing Department, Galway County Council, County Hall, Prospect Hill, Galway 095-509300 or Cluid Housing Association, 63-66 Amiens Street, Dublin 01-7072088.

Conservation Letterfrack

Conservation Letterfrack has been privileged during the past year to work on a variety of interesting projects which continue to bring us into contact with different aspects of our past history.

Casino Marino

The 18th century Casino, at Marino, is Dublin's famous neo classical villa outside Fairview. It was designed by the Scottish architect William Chambers, the project was supervised by the sculptor/mason Simon Vierpyl for James Caulfield, fourth viscount and first earl of Charlemont (1728 -1799). Conservation Letterfrack worked with the OPW to create a mounting system and display tables for the exhibition, 'Paradise Lost: Lord Charlemont's Garden at Marino', Conservation Letterfrack have also worked with the OPW on providing solutions for hanging exhibitions in Dublin Castle and the Main Guard in Clonmel.



Display table made by Conservation Letterfrack for Casino Marino.

The National Museum of Ireland.

Visitors to Conservation Letterfrack last year for Heritage Day, were delighted to be able to view the State Carriage (Landau) which underwent conservation treatment in our workshop in Letterfrack last year.



The image above shows Sean T. O'Kelly at his inauguration as Second President of Ireland in 1945 in the Landau.

The Hunt Museum

Conservation Letterfrack was commissioned earlier this year by The Hunt Museum, Customs House, Limerick to conduct a condition survey of all the wooden objects in the Museum and to conserve two important artefacts in the collection.

The Hunt Museum was established to house an internationally important collection of approximately 2,000 works of art

and antiquities formed by John and Gertrude Hunt during their lifetimes. The Customs House is regarded as the most distinguished 18th century building in Limerick, it is an elegant Palladian-style building designed by the Italian architect, Davis Ducart, in 1765 was extensively restored and refurbished by the OPW in 1996 and so realised the dream of John and Gertrude Hunt to have their collection housed in Limerick. The Customs House opened as The Hunt Museum on 14 February, 1997.



A close up of the Figure sculpture of Joachim and Anne in polychrome wood.



The State Carriage after conservation in the newly converted stables in Aras an Uachtaráin.

Jackie Jack RIP

Jackie worked for Connemara West on a part-time basis and on different jobs over the years before finally settling into his job as the full-time Caretaker in the Connemara West Centre with particular responsibility for looking after the Furniture College. This was the post that Jackie held for the past ten years before his retirement. Jackie took his work very seriously and was very dedicated to his duties and he will be fondly remembered by all who worked with him in the Connemara West Centre.



Community Employment

Connemara West now have 18 places on a CE scheme which is run under the Department of Social Protection. In addition to this we have 3 workers under the Job Initiative Scheme and 2 workers under the TUS programme. Our participants work in a variety of locations including the three villages of Tully, Tullycross & Letterfrack, local graveyards, Cottages in Tullycross, Teach Ceoil, Tigh Na nOg Community Creche, Connemara Community Radio & St. Josephs Court Clifden.

Connemara West will have a limited number of vacancies on their new scheme which will commence mid January 2015. Anybody interested in applying for a place should visit their Local Employment Office or check out Jobs Ireland Website.

Rates

Since 16th January 2012 the minimum weekly payment for new participants based on 19.5 hours worked is **€208**. If your actual weekly social welfare payment (including dependants) was **€188.01 or more**, then you will get the **equivalent rate plus €20**.

Visitors to Letterfrack

GRISI Plus – (Geomantic Rural Information Society Initiative Plus)



A group of European partners of the GRISI Plus programme (EU funded Project) visited Letterfrack on the 5th of March 2014. They were keen to learn about Connemara West, Forum Connemara and GMT Letterfrack as their main activity is the identification and transfer of good practices to improve economic development policies of rural areas.

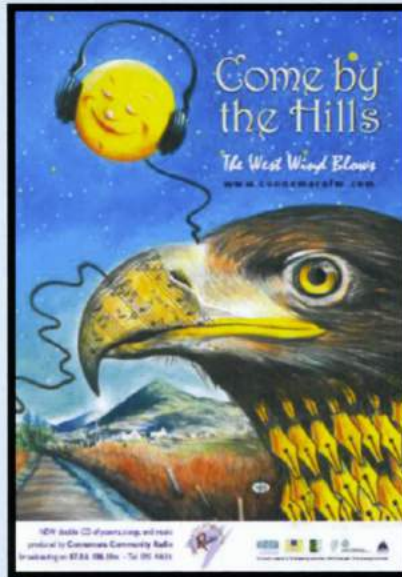
SHARE TRANSFERS

There continues to be a steady stream of people interested in transferring shares. The Board of Connemara West are delighted with the interest by people and by the requests to transfer shares and so far this year a good number of transfers have been completed with new share certificates issued. To get the ball rolling all you need to do is write a note to the Company Secretary requesting that the shares be transferred and who you would like to transfer them to. We will then take it from there and fill out all relevant forms. Contact Janet on 095 41047 if you have any queries at all regarding shares or certificates etc.

Connemara Community Radio

Membership is important in every way as it generates much needed revenue for the radio in these recessionary times but also membership is one of the measures used by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and other funders to gauge support locally for the radio. Membership is €25 per annum and if you contact the radio directly they will send you a membership form.

COME BY THE HILLS is a unique community double CD containing 54 tracks of Poetry, Song and Music. This double CD is a recording of people living in Connemara who have come together to celebrate their talents. This double CD is based on the National Award winning radio programme "The West Wind Blows" a programme of Poetry, Song, Music and Short Stories which is broadcast on Connemara Community Radio each Sunday from



5-6pm and repeated on Mondays from 12-1pm. The programme started in 2009 and through the years local people have been very keen to come on air and recite their favourite poems, sing songs or read short stories. This CD was produced to preserve these precious expressions of local talent.

THIS CD makes an ideal gift for friends at home or abroad and is available directly from the radio or in most local shops for €15.00.

Retirement Party – Pat Walshe

Radio volunteers travelled from all corners of Connemara to mark the retirement of Pat Walshe as Manager of Connemara Community Radio. It was a wonderful night of celebration and reminiscences held in the Courtyard Café in Letterfrack. Pat's story with Connemara Community Radio mirrors the radio's own story. Pat was one of the original group of enthusiasts and local groups that got the radio bug in 1988 and in September 1988, Connemara Community Radio (CCR) went on air for the very first time – as a pirate station broadcasting from the Connemara West Centre. The broadcasts were short-lived however, and just three months later, on New Year's Eve, CCR was forced to go off air as a result of government pressure to close down all pirate stations operating throughout the country. Pat was one of the group, under the baton of Connemara West, that continued to meet and campaign for community licences during this barren period. In 1995, this dedication and unrelenting hard work was rewarded when Connemara West received the first broadcasting licence from the Irish Radio and Television Commission (IRTC), the forerunner to today's Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI). In 1998, Connemara Community Radio was established as a separate company by Connemara West and Pat was elected to the Board as one of the member's representatives. Pat was also one of the lead presenters in Community Matters with Debbie Ruddy in the early days and Pat continued to present this very popular weekly programme for nearly twenty years. In 2003, Pat Walshe took over as manager and continued to work with staff and volunteers to maintain CCR as a vital social and community asset which brings to listeners live coverage of everything from local sporting events to weekly Sunday Mass and provides a platform for local talent, news, sports and entertainment. Pat Walshe marked his retirement with his sincerest thanks to everyone involved in CCR and he said that the volunteers and listeners had been the inspiration and encouragement that has helped to keep everyone at the station going over the years. We wish him well.



Pat being presented with a gift by Mary Gannon, Chair of CCR.

Tigh na nOg Community Crèche

Tigh na nOg Community Crèche has had a busy year. We have 65 children attending the crèche throughout the week, catering to over 50 families in North Connemara. We provide full day-care, pre-school and after-school service. All meals are cooked by staff who are HACCP trained and prepare nutritionally balanced meals.

The crèche operates the following schemes:

- Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) Programme (allowing reduced fees for families on lower incomes)
- Early Childhood Care and Education ECCE Programme (free Pre-School Year)
- Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) Programme (for participants on VEC or FAS training)
- After-school Childcare (ASCC) Programme (Afterschool care for parents on JB or JA or One Parent Family)
- Community Employment Childcare (CEC) (for participants on CE schemes)

These schemes must have the appropriate paperwork with them like proof of what you are eligible for, i.e. are you on Jobseekers, One parent family, and copy of medical card or letter from VEC saying you are eligible for a course.

Our snapshot week for Subvention (CCS) for parents will be 13th October 2014 and parents must ensure they have all their paperwork up to date and with current medical cards.

If you require more information on these schemes and eligibility please call Miriam on 095-41908.

We are looking for staff for our relief panel to cover sick days and holidays if you are interested and have Fetac Level 5 in Childcare please contact Miriam on 095-41908 for more information

Parents Committee

We have a brilliant and enthusiastic parents committee who did a lot of work this year

fundraising for the crèche. It can be very expensive replacing equipment, buying new equipment, buying arts and crafts materials. We had 3 very successful fundraisers this year, a soccer tournament, Christmas raffle and a Family Fun day which raised over €2,500.00 in total.

Some parents have left the committee due to other commitments or their children leaving the service and we hope to invite new parents on board in the new term

A visit to Loughwell Farm

Best of luck to all our pupils who finished in Tigh na nOg Community Crèche and are moving on up to big school!!!

Front row: Ines Mullan, Maeve Mitchell, Emmet O'Toole, Maibh Heanue, Alannah Wood, Charlie Lydon, Eileen Heanue, Alex Conneely, Kayleigh Flaherty, Zachary Mullen, Alex Madden, Sami Foyle

Back Row: Tigh na nOg staff – Patricia Glynn, Anne Wallace and Sarah Lynch who had a great day with the children.



Crèche staff – Miriam Lee Manager, Patricia Glynn Deputy Manager, Geraldine Walsh Food Handler, Aisling Joyce, Leigh Birchmore, Sarah Lynch, Siobhan O'Neill, Amanda Kearney, Mary Walsh.

Teach Ceoil

The Teach Ceoil had a very busy year with programmes in Irish Dancing, Social Dancing, Zumba dancing and variety of fund-raising events taking place.

Seisiún, once again proved to be a particular attraction with over 30 people having to be turned away on the evening of the final performance due to over-crowding.

Four new young members were included in the group and all proved to be more than capable of handling the pressure. Luke Gannon, Nada Ni Churraoin, Loretta Coyne and Rian Sheridan were all prize winners at the Galway and Connacht Fleadhs. At present there is an abundance of young musical and dancing talent in the community which is a most welcome development.

Great credit is due to music teachers Marie Walsh, Liz and Yvonne Kane and to the Curley School of Dancing. The Teach Ceoil has over the years contributed to this blossoming of talent.



Community Services and Leisure Centre

Planning permission was obtained for the Community Services and Leisure Centre to be located between the Community Sportsfield and the Astro Turf Pitch in Letterfrack.

An application for grant aid for the construction of Phase One of the building which is estimated to cost in excess of €1,000,000 has been submitted to the Leader programme. At present the application is being assessed by officials



in the Department of the Environment and a final decision is expected sometime in September. If the application is successful work could begin on the construction in early 2015. In the event of a refusal to grant aid the project the feasibility of developing a scaled down design to include dressing rooms and showers will be explored. Already Galway Mayo Institute of Technology has donated a substantial amount of gym equipment.



GMIT

INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA NA GAILLIMHE-MAIGH EO
GALWAY-MAYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Annual Report GMIT Letterfrack 2013/14

GMIT Letterfrack now has over 200 full-time students studying on a range of degree programmes. GMIT Letterfrack students and graduates are recognised for their innovative, creative and responsive approach to projects, and have won awards both nationally and internationally. The following awards were achieved in the last academic year.

Student Achievements Undergraduate Awards

Katharine Griffith (Killaloe, Co Clare) won the international award in Engineering and Mechanical Sciences category of the 2013 Undergraduate Awards (UA). President of Ireland Michael D Higgins is Patron of the awards organisation. Katharine was in competition with students from universities across the globe including Harvard, Princeton, Oxford, Caltech, St Andrews, and UToronto, for her paper 'The Design and Manufacture of Ergonomic Primary School Furniture'. Katharine received her medal at the UA Global Summit which took place across Dublin from 13 to 15 November 2013.



Katharine Griffith (left) receiving her award at the UA Summit from Dr Mae Jamison

Her essay was one of 3,771 submitted to The Undergraduate Awards this year. As a winner of the overall international category, Katharine's essay (Major Project in year 4) was also published in the annual Undergraduate Awards Journal. Katharine completed a Bachelor of Science honours degree in Furniture Design and Manufacture and graduated with a first class honours degree.

competition in which they had to interpret and produce a cabinet from a working drawing. Each and every process is meticulously examined with appropriate marks awarded. Paul Bowden, a second year student on the BSc (hons) in Design and Manufacture programme, emerged victorious taking the national title for 2013. This is the sixth year in a row where a GMIT Letterfrack student has won this national competition.

National Skills in Cabinetmaking



Picture 1: GMIT Letterfrack student Paul Bowden (centre) with Declan Barrett, DCFE (left) and Anthony Clare, GMIT.

Five students of GMIT Letterfrack were selected for the final of the National Skills Competition in Cabinetmaking. Co-ordinated once again by lecturer Anthony Clare (who is also an Examiner in the competition), the team were well prepared for the arduous five day

Crafts and Design Council of Ireland – Future Maker Awards

Two students studying Furniture Design and Manufacture degrees in GMIT Letterfrack have been recognized for their excellence at this year's Future Makers Awards, organized by the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland. Student Michael Harris from Stand Hill in Co. Sligo won a Future Makers Design Award and €1,000 for his winning writing desk which is made from solid ash, incorporating a vibrant acrylic work surface. The award recognises his skill in combining traditional timber joinery and modern digital technology to produce contemporary designs. Michael, who has just completed second year of a B.Sc. in Furniture Design and Manufacture in GMIT Letterfrack, also won a Future



Laura Magahy, Chair of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland with GMIT student Michael Harris

Makers Networking Support Award. Another student, Tom Sweeney from Castlebar, Co. Mayo, also won a Networking Award in the competition. He just completed his final year of the four year honours degree in Furniture Design and Manufacture in GMIT Letterfrack. The two GMIT Letterfrack students are among 19 emerging designer-makers chosen by an international selection panel. With a total prize fund of over €24,000, the Future Makers Awards & Supports programme rewards the next generation of Irish creatives, helping them develop an exciting future in the craft and design industry.

Wood Marketing Federation Awards

Graduates from GMIT Letterfrack continued to excel in this competition in 2014. The objective of the awards organised by the Wood Marketing Federation in association with Wood-NI is to encourage students to explore functional, aesthetic and design aspects of wood and wood products. Sponsors of the awards include Coillte, COFORD, the Department of Agriculture, Marine and Food and the Society of Irish Foresters. In 2014, Tom Sweeny, a fourth year student on the Design and Manufacture Programme, won the Design category award for his design of a screen made from MDF which was profiled using CNC technology. Also shortlisted for the Technology category was another fourth year student Cian Mulligan.

COPE Foundation

In April 2014, 2 members of staff and 13 clients from Quality Development Services (QDS) visited GMIT Letterfrack as part of a collaborative project arranged between GMIT Letterfrack and The COPE Foundation. COPE, based in Cork, is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation which supports approximately 2000 people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism throughout Cork City and county in Ireland. The group were hosted by our second year students from the teacher education programme BSc in Design and Technology Education. A range of activities were organised including a quiz, work on a Laser cutting machine and a visit to the Connemara Community Radio. This collaboration is due to strengthen over the next academic year when GMIT students and staff will visit COPE Foundation in Cork.



Plaque presented to GMIT Letterfrack and staff, students and clients of QDS and GMIT

Connemara West - Building Developments

Connemara West have secured funding from Leader to repair the roof and windows (72) on the old

building in Letterfrack. The work commenced in June 2014 and is due for completion in mid- September. The single glazed windows will also be replaced by double glazed units.

Internationalisation Placements

GMIT Letterfrack placements are the cornerstone of the programmes in the areas of furniture design and technology. Since 2007, GMIT have developed a broad range of collaborative partnerships with companies both in Ireland and overseas. The placement programme, headed by Dr Patrick Tobin, has proven to be hugely beneficial to students and also to staff. Students are offered the possibility to get experience of the industry in some of the leading manufacturing companies. This year GMIT Letterfrack students were based in Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, UK and Zambia. Lecturing staff from GMIT Letterfrack who supervise placements have also established links with management and staff of the organisations involved and where possible visited the organisations during the year. This provides a great opportunity for staff to engage with industry and often leads to further projects when students enter the final year of their programmes.

IFP Project – Virtual Educational Programme for Furniture Branch (Leonardo da Vinci) Project

GMIT successfully completed the IFP Project funded by Leonardo da Vinci Programme. Research team led by Kevin Maye, Des Kelly and Dermot O'Donovan contributed to the projects from an Irish perspective. The website www.e-furniture.info was launched and can be used as

both a dictionary of terms and a source of national and European standards as they apply to furniture design and manufacture. A new projects has been undertaken for 2014-16 under which a mapping of vocational training is being undertaken in order to promote mobility pf learners in vocational training.

Virginia Tech

Since 2010 groups of students from a range of faculties have been visiting GMIT Letterfrack. Headed by Professor Robert Bush, the group base themselves in the village of Letterfrack and follow a schedule of education, culture, heritage and fun. The students this year undertook a research project with first year students creating information panel on Irish species of timber and laser engraved onto

timber boards specific to each species. Student, whilst on campus also planted 75 Holly trees in the Native Woodland and even got to experience a hurling training session.

This year Professor Earl Kline undertook a sabbatical in GMIT Letterfrack from January to May 2014. During that time he worked on a research project involving the timber supply chain in Ireland, lectured on Lean Operations and explored the functionality of the CNC machine on campus.



Design and Innovation Conference

In November 2013 GMIT hosted a Design Innovation conference with participating speakers from Ireland, Belgium and Denmark. The conference was part of a Galway county flagship Gathering Event with Connemara West.

Green Campus

GMIT Letterfrack Green Campus has been awarded it's first Green Flag for Letterfrack. GMIT Letterfrack is the second GMIT campus to be awarded FEE Green Flag status. There are only seven third-level campuses in Ireland with the Green Campus Flag. The committee (in the Letterfrack campus) is made up of staff from both GMIT and Connemara West and students. Two student members, Ross Molloy and Gerard Dunlea, received GMIT Student Union Achievement Awards this year in recognition of their work on the programme. Lexi Wood from Aquinas College also assisted the committee as part of her internship with Connemara West. The official presentation of the certificate and flag raising ceremony will take place this Autumn in Letterfrack.

For Tree Week this year, Tom Roche from Just Forests was in Letterfrack with his exhibition and also talking to GMIT students and children from the local national schools on issue of global and local forestation.



This year during Green Week, GMIT Letterfrack staff and students and students visiting from Virginia Tech planted 75 native trees in the Community Educational Woodland, which is part of Connemara National Park.

Other events from Green week included the Annual Green Quiz; a walk in the Ellis Wood Trail in Connemara National Park with Breandain O'Scanaill, Connemara National Park and a biodiversity talk by Carol Reynolds, OPW Education Officer which was also attended by members of Letterfrack Tidy Towns.



Students and staff at the Green Quiz in the Courtyard Café.



Biodiversity talk with Carole Reynolds, Outreach Education Officer with the OPW



A cross section of GMIT Staff, Connemara West Staff and Aquinas College during the Green Campus Village clean up in April.

Aquinas 40th Celebrations

Since 1973, students and Professors of Aquinas College have come to Tullycross from January to May each year as part of a Study Abroad Programme. When in Ireland, they stay in Renvyle Thatched Cottages. Last October to mark the 40 year anniversary of Aquinas College in Tullycross a full programme of events and get-togethers were held during October bank holiday week-end. The Reunion which was launched by Sr. Alice Wittenbach from Aquinas College, who led the Study Abroad Programme a record 8 times.

The full programme of entertainment for Aquinas guests and locals alike celebrating the reunion, including a Tullycross village party and live music, theatrical performances, a special mass, a reunion dinner, excursions to local historical sites, along with Irish-American themed events

As part of this unique Gathering Event, a one day Design Innovation seminar was hosted by Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) Letterfrack with contributions from leading Irish and international speakers. The seminar to showcase the use of design



Pictured at the launch from Aquinas were Sr Alice Wittenbach and Sr Rosemary O'Donnell (seated) and Sr Catherine Williams, Joelle Baldwin, Prof. Jennifer Dawson and Mike Whalen in among the Connemara West organisers.

and innovation in the furniture industry. It is also envisaged that this seminar will provide an opportunity to start discussions around potential

future links between furniture education in Letterfrack and furniture production and education in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which was once nicknamed 'The Furniture City' as it became a key centre of furniture production in the United States. The 40th Anniversary Reunion was an opportunity to commemorate, celebrate and build future relationships between the communities of North West Connemara and Grand Rapids, Michigan. It's also an acknowledgement of relationships built over the past 40 years, with the students and Professors who have been an extended family for the area. Over the past 40 years, the Aquinas College programme has become much more than an educational programme with many relationships being formed, lifelong friendships being developed, students falling in love and making Connemara their home. In 2013, modelled on the Aquinas Programme, Connemara West Plc helped two other American Colleges, one from Ohio and the other from Iowa pilot study abroad programmes in Tullycross.



Aquinas College 2014 group with their tutors Ian and Gena Borton and Karl Elliffe, GMIT Letterfrack acting as tour guide.

American University Supports Connemara Community

Representatives from Lourdes University, Ohio, USA, presented a cheque for €1,000 to Connemara West Plc and FORUM Connemara Ltd in Letterfrack in mid-June. The cheque was the latest contribution to a charitable fund established one year ago by students and staff from Lourdes University to benefit the North West Connemara community.

The idea for the fund came about when Lourdes University students and staff came to Tullycross in June 2013 for a month-long study abroad programme. Mostly social work and history students, the visitors enjoyed their stay and integrated well with the local community. They were also impressed by the long standing tradition of self help in North West Connemara epitomised by organisations such as Connemara West and FORUM Connemara, but also the many challenges the local community still faces.

The students wanted to help in a practical way and when they returned to the United States they established a fund - the Lourdes Community Aid Grant - which will be used to support personal and community development in Connemara. The most recent fund raising event was an Irish night held in Lourdes University in early May 2014, with music, dancing and a silent auction.

The month long study abroad programme in Tullycross is now an annual event. Professor Terry Keller from Lourdes University who is Director of the Ireland Study Abroad Programme said "it was the students' idea to start this fund and it clearly shows the positive impression that North West Connemara made on them".

Dr. Kevin Heanue, Chairman of Connemara West Pic commented "this is a great initiative and we look forward to working with Lourdes University to identify how the fund can be best used to service both the needs of the community in North West Connemara and the University's mission".

The picture above shows the presentation of the cheque by Lourdes University to the community in North West Connemara. Professor Terry Keller, Lourdes University, Ohio presented the cheque to Kevin Heanue, Chair, Connemara West plc. Also in the picture are Johnny Coyne, CEO, Forum Connemara Ltd. and Ann Pollington, Breda Coneys and Janet O'Toole, Connemara West plc.



YOUTHREACH

Mission Statement:

The Letterfrack Youthreach centre endeavours to provide a safe, creative and tailored learning environment for all our learners by supporting each individual on their life's journey.

The Letterfrack Education Centre, offering second chance education and training programmes for young people between 15-20 years of age, is celebrating 25 years of alternative Education in the North West Connemara area. The programme has grown from strength to strength offering a variety of recognised certified courses, including the Leaving Certificate Applied, FETAC courses at levels 1,2,3,4, 5. and extracurricular courses such as 'Drive for Life', Manual Handling, Safe Pass, Anger Management and Positive Mental Health, to name a few. The courses are holistic in nature, catering for the physical, intellectual, emotional, and psychological needs of the course participants.

The Youthreach programme is administered at local level by Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board, funded by SOLAS and the Department of Education and Skills, with assistance from the European Social Fund.



For further information on programmes offered please contact
Theresa Mc Loughlin. 095 41893 or email letterfrackyr@cogalvec.ie

Amongst the many highlights of the Youthreach calendar this year was fundraising for the Cheerio's Child line breakfast, the creation of an ISPCC contact helpline card and a number of coffee mornings in aid of the Thomas Keaney and Ryan Croker benefit funds. The centre held a number of awareness campaigns, including an 'Anti Bullying' Poster competition, a Road safety, 'Drive for Life' awareness programme, and a six weeks 'Anger management' course.

The students took part in the annual 'Into the Light' parade, joining into the spirit of the evening as 'Stilt Walkers', Drummers, ghosts and ghouls, and steering a phantom Ghost ship. As part of the festival the students made 'Fairy houses', which were hidden around the Connemara West complex, for the young children of the area to discover.

The Art and Design students took part in the National 'Junk Kouture' Recycle Fashion Competition, reaching the Western Regional Finals in Castlebar, with their creation 'Tick Tock', modelled by Sinead Biggins.

In April the Leaving Certificate Applied students travelled, with their English Teacher, Ann Graham to see 'War Horse', in the Bord Gais Theatre Dublin, as part of their English Communication module. The students, many who had never attended a live theatre production before were very impressed with the craft and skills of the puppetry creations.

The annual 'Open Day', Awards Ceremony and exhibition of Students' work was held on 19th June in Ellis Hall. This celebration enables the Youthreach students to show their families, friends and the local community their achievements over the past year.



Brian Keaney receiving his Leaving Certificate Applied session 1 & 2 Award, presented by Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board, CEO Mr David Leahy.

CONNEMARA WEST DIRECTORS AND STAFF

Directors

Kevin Heanue (Chairperson), Kathleen Kane (Secretary), Jenny Conboy, Joe O'Toole, Cathy Keane, Paddy Kane, Pdraic Lyden, Patrick Sammon, Paddy Walsh, Mary Gannon.

Advisors to the Board

Breda Coneys, Janet O'Toole, Michael O'Neill, Ann Pollington.

Connemara West Staff— Full – Time

Ann Pollington (Accounts),
Bridget Lydon (Receptionist / Administration),
Paddy Kane (CE Supervisor).

Part-Time & Occasional

Michael O'Neill (Head of Education, Training and Development),
Breda Coneys (Development Worker),
Janet O'Toole (Administration), Anne Jack (Cottages Supervisor),
Brid Staunton (Accounts).

Lexi Woods (Aquinas College Intern, Jan – April 2014)

Other Connemara West Staff in Centre

Samantha Flaherty (Administrator GMIT),
Peter Coyne (Craft Assistant GMIT),
Joe Mortimer (Caretaker, CWest & GMIT).

Library Service

Malachy Higgins (Librarian, GMIT Letterfrack)
Patricia Keane (Public Library, Galway County Council)

Conservation / Letterfrack— Full-Time

Sven Habermann (Manager), Simon Brown (Conservator/Restorer)

Part Time & Occasional

Janet O'Toole (Administration),
Daniel McNamara (Cabinetmaker/restorer),
Tom Sweeney (Cabinetmaker), Mark Leonard (Cabinetmaker),
Breandán MacDonnacha (Cabinetmaker),
Thomas Flaherty (Intern Dec 2013-Aug 2014),
Stephen Basteed (Intern March- July 2014),
Laura Karoniemi (Intern April-June 2014).

Crèche— Full Time

Miriam Culhane (Manager), Patricia Glynn (Deputy Manager),
Geraldine Walsh (Cook), Aisling Joyce, Sarah Lynch,
Siobhan O'Neill, Leigh Birchmore.

Part-time & Occasional

Amanda Kearney, Mary Walsh,
Aimee Gasper (Aquinas Intern (Jan-April 2013)).