

## **All Island Pride of Place Judges visit North Tipperary**

On Thursday the 1<sup>st</sup> of July the All Ireland Pride of Place judges descended upon North Tipperary to assess the sense of community pride in two parishes in the County. Mr. Blaise Treacy, former County Manager with Wicklow County Council and Mr. Cathal Logue, former Town Clerk and Chief Executive with Derry City Council were the judges in North Tipperary for this year's competition. North Tipperary County Council nominated two groups to enter the competition and the judges were accompanied to the parishes by Liaison Officer Áine Mc Carthy from North Tipperary County Council. Local Authorities from practically every county in Ireland have nominated groups in their local area.

First on the cards was a morning visit to Upperchurch and Drombane to meet the Upperchurch-Drombane and District Development Association in the local hall. This group was nominated by the County Council under the Population Category 4 (population of 1000 – 2000) and the judges received a warm welcome from a huge number of locals who turned up to support the Development Association on the day. County Councillor Billy Clancy provided the judges with an excellent presentation based on the good work of the Development Association over the years and the highlights of this included the development of the local crèche, the Rural Transport Scheme, Fás schemes and much more. The judges went on to tour the local sights on foot and were entertained by the Scoil Iosagain school band as they passed the school grounds and headed on towards the houses for the elderly. The touring continued by bus and sights taken en route included some of the look out points which were developed by Fás and the Rural Social Scheme, the Blessed Well, the Metal Bridge, Drombane Hall & the fishing area at Ballyoughter. Finally, the judges visit concluded with refreshments in Kinnane's - a visit to Upperchurch would not be complete without stepping inside this well known establishment.

After lunch it was onto Terryglass to meet the Terryglass Arts Festival Committee who were entered into the Pride of Place competition for 2010 under the 'Community Arts Initiative' Category. Once again the locals turned out in force and the Derg Inn was packed to the rafters with members of the community showing their support to their festival committee. Chairperson Valerie Cotter delivered an excellent presentation highlighting the growth of the festival now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year and she provided details of the different programmes and workshops that have taken place over the years as well as the local and international artists that have performed at the festival. Councillors Jim Casey, Ger Darcy & Michael O'Meara were all in attendance to support the Committee as well as Melanie Scott, the Arts Officer with North Tipperary County Council & Charlene Bloe, the Festival Coordinator for the County Council. Another interesting member of the audience included Today FM D.J. Bob Conway who offers D.J. workshops at the festival each year and he provided the judges with his own positive testimonial on the festival. Following on from the presentation the judges visited the quay and viewed the unique works of Thomas Wollen, an accomplished ceramic artist who provides annual workshops at the festival and they viewed the rush work of Gerardine Wisdom which she had kindly placed in the lake shore to provide the judges with a taste of her work which is on display each year at the Arts Festival. There were workshops taking place in the village hall based on this year's theme 'Noah's Ark' and the judges got a flavour of the type of activity that takes place in advance of and throughout the festival. The finishing touches of the visit took place in Paddy's Bar where there was Irish dancing and an entertaining street performer with his 'Flea Circus'.

Commenting on the visit to the two areas Áine Mc Carthy, Liaison Officer stated that “Both of the nominees demonstrated what can be achieved when people work together to enhance and change parts of their area for the good of the whole community. This competition recognises and celebrates the vital contributions that community partnerships make to society. The focus today was on people coming together to shape, change and enjoy all that is good about their local area and as the old Irish proverb goes ‘Is ar scath a chéile a mhaireann na daoine’. Bhí na breithiúna ana-shásta leis na daoine sa dá paróistí agus an obair atá á dhéanamh acu. Tá súil agam go mbeidh said rathúil ins an comórtas seo i 2010. Tugann siad dea-shampla do gach grúpa pobail agus is féidir na sochair ón obair le feiceáil go soiléir agus beidh sé chun sochair ó ghlúin go glúin.”

The winners of the competition will be announced at a Gala Ceremony in Trim, Co. Meath in November when it is hoped both parishes will come out on top for the Premier County. In the mean time the judges will continue traveling all over Ireland to assess other communities.

While Pride of Place is a relatively new competition, it has been remarkably successful. The competition, which receives over 90 entries each year, is hosted by Co-operation Ireland under its Local Authority Programme in conjunction with the All Island Local Authority Steering Forum comprising officials from authorities in both parts of the island of Ireland.

If any group in North Tipperary is interested in show-casing their achievements and community activities in the Pride of Place Competition in future years they should contact Áine Mc Carthy, Liaison Officer, North Tipperary County Council, Telephone:(067) 44554, e-mail [amccarthy@northtippcoco.ie](mailto:amccarthy@northtippcoco.ie)