



## Welcome - Fáilte

Because of my love of folk and traditional music I was always intrigued by the great music and musicians from Donegal that I met and heard in the folk clubs of Dublin in the early 1970's.

When I was in my mid-teens bands like Skara Brae and Clannad were big in the folk scene in Dublin and my best friend and I decided to hitch our way up to Donegal to check out this magical place - it was love at first sight! I loved the people, the music, the scenery and most of all the connection I felt with the place.



Born to a Dublin mother and an Antrim father, I felt I understood the Northern way! As children we were shipped from the inner city to Rathlin Island, off the north of Antrim, every summer for a few months. The connection was strong.

My trips to Donegal were many over the years and more so in recent times. I started to work with my sound-man and recording engineer, Billy Robinson from Burt, in the early 90's and this forged a greater connection with the place. Now living in Ramelton, Billy has a recording studio called 'The Steeples' where we've worked a lot in recent years. I feel the spirit of the place you're in reflects in the music you make and for that I am happy! Billy has introduced me to a whole community in Donegal that I hadn't known and we've enjoyed great evenings of fun and music whenever we're there.

Since those early hitch-hiking days to Tra na Rossan, I have never tired of my many excursions to Donegal and indeed feel more of a bond now than ever'

**Mary Black**  
Musician

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### Message From Mayor



Hello everyone,

I hope this issue of Donegal Community in Touch finds you well. It is hard to believe that 2011 is coming to an end and that means that I am almost half way through my term as Mayor. In November, I had the honour and the privilege of leading a delegation from Donegal

County Council to Boston. During our stay, we met with many institutions and groups in the states of Massachusetts and Maine who have such good will towards Donegal and who wish to continue and develop links with our County. We met with educational interests who wish to develop links with LYIT in Letterkenny, Renewable energy interests who are leaders in their field and who are in the process of testing and developing off shore wind and wave energy ideas. This would fit in extremely well with the waters off the west coast of Donegal. We also met with Tourism interests where we promoted the DONEGAL GATHERING 2012 and Donegal as a location for inward investment and a place to visit.

Our delegation were guests at the Golden Bridges awards and Showcase where I had the pleasure of presenting an award to Mr. J.P. Doherty chairman of the Donegal association in Boston. A most enjoyable occasion.

I have to admit the highlight of my visit was meeting with Donegal Boston Community in Dorchester. During that meeting I met with a substantial number of undocumented Donegal People from all parts of the County, who I must say are getting on well and for those at home who are concerned I can assure you that they are being well looked after by the Boston Donegal GAA Club.

I would like to remind everyone of the DONEGAL GATHERING which will be taking place during 2012 and with seventy two million people throughout the world of Irish decent we are going to have a fun filled year.

If you require more information please feel free to contact me at [noel.mcbride@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:noel.mcbride@donegalcoco.ie)

Slán agus beannacht

**Cllr. Noel Mc Bride**  
**An Meara Contae Dhun na nGall**



Donegal County Development Board  
Bord Forbartha Chontae Dhún na nGall



Donegal County Council

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE  
**Dhún na nGall**  
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# Boston Community Leaders Visit Donegal

As part of ongoing partnership and collaboration between Donegal and Massachusetts, Donegal was visited by a group of Community Leaders from the Greater Boston Area. This was a return trip following on from the very successful visit by Donegal Community Leaders to Boston in 2010. The return trip was organised by the Irish Immigration Centre.

A programme of activity was prepared involving relevant sectors, organisations and stakeholders in order to capitalise on the wealth of knowledge and experience available from this group. Many



opportunities were provided to embrace the input and contribution of the delegation on a wide range of issues. Over the two-day programme, participants examined similarities and differences between the Boston and

Donegal contexts with regard to cultural diversity, integration, social inclusion, urban regeneration and community development. The programme has laid the foundation for future cooperation and collaboration with our counterparts in Boston.

## Mary Black's new album "Stories From The Steeples" inspired in Donegal

Mary Black's new album *Stories from the Steeples* has received great reviews. Songs from *The Steeples* is Mary's 12th studio album and much of it was recorded in Donegal! The album was put together at well-known musician and producer Billy Robinson's Steeples studio in Ramelton. "It was a great experience and I know Billy well and he is great to work with," said Mary.

This is the first studio recording from Mary Black in six years, and it's a collection that demonstrates an artist in full command of her bewitching vocal prowess. Throughout an impressive career, Mary has consistently demonstrated impeccable taste in her choice of material, and the evidence presented here suggests that Never one to rest on her laurels, we're gifted songs from familiar friends such as Shane Howard, Eric Bogle and Julie Matthews, alongside burgeoning writing talents, including Danny O'Reilly and Ricky Lynch.

## New Irish comedy feature film 'Grabbers' selected for the Sundance Film Festival

Following in the steps of *THE GUARD*, a new Irish comedy horror feature *GRABBERS*, which filmed on location in Donegal and stars Ruth Bradley (*Love/Hate*) and Richard Coyle (*W.E.*, *Prince of Persia*), has been selected for Sundance, the most prestigious indie film festival in the US which takes place from January 19<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> 2012.

Directed by Jon Wright from an original screenplay by Kevin Lehane, the story captures the idyll and charm of a rural Irish fishing village, as the peace of the enchanting Erin Island community is shattered by an invasion of giant squid-like creatures from the sea, known as "grabbers", who start picking off the villagers.

Commenting on the selection, producer Tracy Brimm said "The beautiful Donegal landscape is a featured character in *GRABBERS* and we had an extraordinary experience shooting the film in Ireland. We had a terrific team working with us and a very warm local reception.

Being invited to screen the film in Sundance is an incredible honour and we could not dream of a better platform to launch the film. We have no doubt that this will put Ireland in the spotlight and will certainly shine a light on some great Irish talent with a big future ahead of them especially screenwriter Kevin Lehane and actress Ruth Bradley.

It is expected that audiences will have an opportunity to see the film in Irish cinemas next year.





# Golden Bridges Celebrations

The special place reserved in the hearts of Bostonians for Donegal and northwest Ireland was on show at the annual Golden Bridges celebration in Massachusetts in November.

Hosted by the Irish Echo, America's oldest and largest-selling newspaper, the Boston gathering brought together a high-powered delegation from Donegal County Council and the cream of Irish American business, political and community leaders for two hectic days of bridge-building. Representatives from Derry City Council and the City of Culture 2013 Company reinforced the message of a vibrant, welcoming northwest open for tourist visitors and investors alike.

Senator Therese Murray, President of the Massachusetts State Senate launched a showcase on the northwest in the prestigious Seaport Hotel on 9 November with a ringing endorsement of Donegal and Derry, hailing the region as a hotspot for technological and bioscience innovation.

Responding, the Mayor of County Donegal Cllr Noel McBride praised the Donegal diaspora for their support for their home county and pledged to continue efforts to build strong links across the Atlantic. County Manager Seamus Neely spotlighted Donegal's potential as a county of creativity while veteran Boston politician and Majority Leader in the State

House, Rep. Charles Murphy pledged to bring a delegation from Massachusetts to northwest Ireland in 2012.

On 10 November, Cllr Dessie Larkin, Chair of the County Development Board told a business breakfast at the University of Massachusetts Lowell that sustainable tourism, culture and arts were key to the emerging proposition of County Donegal. Later that day, Donegal ex-pats were honoured at a gala luncheon attended by 200 people in the Seaport Hotel. Among those recognised were Glenswilly native Pat McDevitt, winner of the Bridge World Championships in 2010, JP Doherty from Carndonagh, Chair of the

Country Donegal Association of Ireland, and Susan Whoriskey, biotechnology entrepreneur with roots in Donegal, and author Michael Patrick McDonald whose grandmother was from Clonmany.

The Golden Bridges events closed with a Round Table in the State House in Boston where Massachusetts politicians and the Donegal and Derry contingents were able to discuss future plans for strengthening the transatlantic bonds between Boston and Northwest Ireland.

For more details, see [www.irishecho.com/boston](http://www.irishecho.com/boston)  
**The 2012 Golden Bridges celebration will take place on 8-9 November**



Pat McDevitt, Glenswilly, winner of the Bridge World Championships in 2010, pictured with Mayor Noel McBride



President of the Donegal Association JP Daugherty with his wife Mary pictured with Mayor Noel McBride



Steve Tolman and honouree Michael Patrick MacDonald whose grandmother hails from Clonmany



Honouree Jack Meehan, Mayor Noel McBride, & John Cunningham, Kilcar



Senate President Therese Murray with Mayor Noel McBride



Seamus Neely, Donegal County Council, Rep. Gene O'Flaherty, Sean Grant and Michael Heaney, Donegal County Council



## New IIC Service Provides Added Value to Existing J-1 Irish Work and Travel Program

The Irish International Immigrant Center (IIC) has been an approved sponsoring agency for the J-1 Intern visa since early in 2008. In September of 2008, the Irish government and the government of the United States signed a bilateral agreement establishing the Intern Work and Travel Program (the J-1 IWT) which enables Irish students and graduates to intern here in the US, and also US graduates and students to work and travel in Ireland.

This visa enables successful applicants to undertake paid internships in their field of study anywhere in the US for up to 12 months. Applicants must be Irish citizens, a current student, or a recent graduate (within a year) of a third level higher education institution.

The IIC secured funding from the Irish government's Department of Foreign Affairs, through the Irish Abroad Unit's Emigrant Support Program, to employ a Director of Intern Placements. IIC Executive



*Megan Carroll (front row, second from the right) pictured with representatives from Donegal County Council and the IIC, in Boston in November*

Director, Sister Lena Deevy expressed her gratitude to the Irish government.

We are delighted to announce that Megan E. Carroll has been appointed to this position and will coach and assist IIC's successful candidates on resume and interview preparation and support them throughout their internships. She also will provide ongoing support to the employers.

Megan is an experienced attorney, business consultant, and former adjunct professor of business law at Boston College. "This new service provides added value to our existing J-1 IWT program," noted Anne Marie Byrne, Director of Learning Exchange Programs at the IIC. Megan will identify internships in New England, New York, Chicago, San Francisco and across the United States.

"I am excited at the prospect of placing talented Irish students and graduates in 12-month internships while providing free, constant support and management to the host companies," adds Carroll.

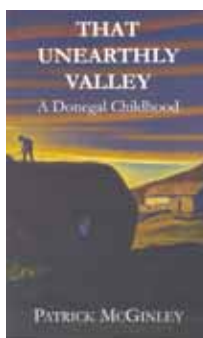
The IIC appeals to organizations and companies interested in offering internships to contact Megan at 617-542-7654 ext. 23 [mcarroll@iicenter.org](mailto:mcarroll@iicenter.org)

## Jesse Jackson visit



*Pictured with the Rev Jesse Jackson during his recent visit to the North West - Garvan O'Doherty, Michel Heaney, Donegal County Council, Mo Durkan, ILEX, Eimear Ni Eanaigh, Donegal Youth Council, Deirdre Heenan, University of Ulster and Martin Bradley, Chair of City of Culture*

## That Unearthly Valley - A Donegal Childhood



**Written by Patrick McGinley and published by New Island**

A canny, loving portrait of a 1940s/1950s rural Irish upbringing, a moving homage to the folk imagination, and a heartfelt valedictory for a traditional way of life—subsistence farming, sheep-rearing, hand-weaving, fiddle-playing and story-telling—that has largely vanished from our shores. Born in Glencolmcille in 1937, McGinley tells of growing up in the back of beyond, an isolated, seaside village marked by a generosity of spirit & true sense of community. McGinley also deftly describes

a number of other illustrious blow-ins to the Glen, from the eponymous St Colmcille to the renowned American painter Rockwell Kent, Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, and British composer Sir Arnold Bax. Here is a deeply felt, consummately plumbed, and superbly crafted story of our vanishing past to sit on the shelf next to Alice Taylor's To School Through the Fields.



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## LETTERKENNY REUNION 2012: 5th – 10th August 2012

The Letterkenny Reunion is a wonderful and unique event bringing hundreds of people together from all over the world. Our aim is: To promote and strengthen ties between Letterkenny and the surrounding area with its former residents and to provide a week of entertainment and opportunities for these people to enjoy and to reminisce.



Relations and friends on a National and International level form a cultural, historical and social link as a result.

Since its inception in 1991, there has been an increasing growth in the number of immigrants who travel to Letterkenny for the week long event and as this is our "21st" birthday a larger influx of visitors is expected on this occasion. Most of the people who travel do not return just for the week. In fact many stay for up to 6 weeks and when they do go back they become valuable ambassadors promoting this area to other immigrants and friends. We have also found that this event is also a great opportunity for the people of the town itself to get together which is proving more and more difficult as the town grows bigger and the concept of "the local" is quickly disappearing.

Because of an intense fund raising effort by the committee, generous sponsorship from businesses and funding received from our Urban District Council and others we are in a position to offer most of the events free of charge and indeed where a charge is levied it is minimal.

For more information and photographs log on to our website

[www.letterkennyreunion.com](http://www.letterkennyreunion.com) or

email: [Carolinemackey2003@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Carolinemackey2003@yahoo.co.uk)

## European Champion

**Fionnuala Britton has won the European Senior Cross-Country title in Slovenia on the 11<sup>th</sup> December.** The Wicklow woman can boast of Donegal grandparents with strong connections in Ballintra and Ballyshannon. She is the first Irish woman since Catherina McKiernan in 1994 to take gold in this European event. The new Irish star has achieved the A standard to compete in the 3,000 metres steeplechase in the London Olympics next year but will not be running in this event. Instead she will go about qualifying for the two longest events on the track, the 5,000m and 10,000m. Best of luck Fionnuala!



*Fionnuala competing in Slovenia*

## Second Gallagher Global Gathering

**Location:** Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, Ireland.

**Date:** 6th - 12th September 2013

Following their very successful 1st Gathering in 2007, the Gallagher Clan are now planning for a second one in September 2013.

"Hundreds of Gallaghers descended on County Donegal in 2007 to celebrate their Gallagher heritage", said Adrian Gallagher of the organising committee. "We know that many plan to return and we hope that many more will join them in once again acknowledging their roots and enjoying the friendship and fun while doing so. We look forward to welcoming them to their original ancestral homeland once more. Tár isteach. Beidh céad míle fáilte roimh". (Translation from Gaelic: Come on in. A hundred thousand welcomes await you.).

September 2013 was selected in order to allow time for people to make their travel plans. It will also coincide with "The Gathering", a year-long programme of events, festivals and fun sponsored by the Irish Government. The City of Derry's period as City of Culture is also in 2013.

Further information can be had on [www.gallagherclan.org](http://www.gallagherclan.org) from where you can also link to our Facebook page.



The Border Villages Social Integration Project was formally launched by Cllr. Dessie Larkin Chairperson of the Donegal CDB Peace & Reconciliation Partnership on 15th November 2011.

Donegal County Council is the lead partner on the project working in conjunction with Inishowen Development Partnership. The project has been funded by the Donegal County Development Board Peace and Reconciliation Partnership through Phase 2 of the Donegal PEACE III Action Plan.

This project is about developing contact, conversation and participation of new residents in active community life. Some of the activities proposed from the community groups in the area include the development of community gardens, profiling local schools, community celebration events and support to

allow people who have moved into the border villages over the last 10 years to integrate more in local community life. For further information please contact: [fconaghan@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:fconaghan@donegalcoco.ie)



Project supported by PEACE III Programme managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by Donegal County Council



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## River Links INTERREG IVA Project

The River Links project has been awarded €2.1m under Priority 2: Theme 1 (Rural Development) of the European Union's INTERREG IVA Cross-border Programme. The Project is being led by Donegal County Council. Project partners include Strabane District Council and Ballybofey & Stranorlar Integrated Community Company (BASICC).

On the 2nd of November, Cllr. Noel McBride Mayor of Co. Donegal, in the presence of Cllr. Brian McMahon Chair of Strabane District Council and Project Partners, officially launched the project and the development of the Stranorlar Community Enterprise Centre which is being part funded by the River Links Project.

There are three other outputs of the River Links Project. These include developments centred on Clady - Doneyloop and the Foyle Wetlands. In addition the Finn and Foyle Rural Network will provide a forum for community groups from the area. For further information contact: Charlene at [charlene.riverlinks@gmail.com](mailto:charlene.riverlinks@gmail.com)



Mayor Noel McBride and Cllr. Brian McMahon, Chairman of Strabane District Council at the launch of the River Links Project

## Urban & Village Renewal Project –Lifford / Strabane

Grant aid of €995,000 has been awarded by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) under the INTERREG IVA Programme to the Urban & Village Renewal project. The official launch of the project took place in Lifford on 20th June, 2011.

The Design Team are currently preparing detailed designs and tender documents for the works proposed in Lifford and Strabane. It is proposed that the tender will be advertised in the first quarter of 2012 with construction due to commence in second quarter of 2012.

For further information contact Ida Fisher on [ifisher@donegalocco.ie](mailto:ifisher@donegalocco.ie)



# MalinWaters<sup>o</sup>

## Sail West / MalinWaters

Early 2012 will continue to be an exciting period for the Sail West project and its consumer facing brand MalinWaters. The comprehensive [www.malinwaters.com](http://www.malinwaters.com) website will go live in December 2011 while MalinWaters will have a presence at the London Boat Show in January 2012. Similarly there are two important publications in which the Irish and Northern Ireland anchorages will be covered firstly the Welcome Anchorages guide and secondly the Sail Scotland Tourism Guide, both of which are distributed extensively and will offer a huge boost to the profile of sailing opportunities in the North West. Furthermore there continues to be inroads made in the sailing infrastructure of the Malin sea region with new on-shore marina facilities due to open in Stranraer in the spring of 2012 and likewise the feasibility study for Portrush harbour due for completion.

Sail West is part financed by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund through INTERREG IVA Cross-Border Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body with co-funding provided by the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in the Republic of Ireland.

For further information email: [leeanned@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:leeanned@donegalcoco.ie)



## SPACEial North West Project – Plans for 2012

The Spatial Planning and Collaborative Exchange of Information and Learning in the North West Region Project (or SPACEial North West), which is funded under the Public Sector Collaboration Theme of the European Regional Development Fund, INTERREG IVA Programme, held its fifth meeting on the 30th November, 2011. Progress in developing an urban/ rural growth model for the North West Region Cross Border Area (NWRCA) was demonstrated. At this meeting it was highlighted that a key theme for the project in 2012 will be working with key decision makers, on how they can use geographical data capture through this project to assist in making important decisions about planning services for the benefit of some 387,599 persons who call this area home. There are a number of other important areas of collaborative work planned for 2012. The project team will work with the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) in carrying out a local level analysis on unemployment at a cross border level and also in testing 'All Island Deprivation Work' on social inclusion groups within the region.

For further information contact Marie Kerr on [markelly@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:markelly@donegalcoco.ie)



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# Pramerica



Pramerica Systems Ireland Ltd is a Software Development and Contact Centre subsidiary of U.S.-based Prudential Financial Inc. (NYSE: Pru), a financial services leader with approximately \$871 billion of assets under management as of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011, and which has operations in the United States, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Pramerica was founded in Letterkenny Co. Donegal in June 2000 and has over 800 employees, who benefit from an exciting working environment, great learning opportunities, a supportive management team and an extensive benefits package.

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## Backing Ballyshannon Initiative

The 'Backing Ballyshannon Initiative' vision is to seek to continually improve the town as a place to live and work, develop it as an attractive tourist destination and make it a competitive location for job-creating business and investment.

The priority objective is to promote economic activity and job creation. The first goal is to attract entrepreneurs and encourage new and start-up companies. To further advance this objective of attracting start-up businesses and jobs to the North West Region (including Ballyshannon and the surrounding areas), Enterprise Ireland and the County Enterprise Board agreed to host their Regional Enterprise and Skills Roadshow in Ballyshannon on **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November** in the Lakeside Centre. To coincide with this event the Backing Ballyshannon Steering Group hosted a local Enterprise Promotion Event to showcase Ballyshannon as an attractive and competitive location for start-up business and job creation.

For more information on the Backing Ballyshannon Initiative – please visit [www.backingballyshannon.ie](http://www.backingballyshannon.ie) or [www.ballyshannon.ie](http://www.ballyshannon.ie)



*Failte Ireland displaying at the event*



*Jon O'Neill at the Erne Enterprise display*

# Retail Excellence Ireland Awards 2011 Donegal Department Store Judged Top of the Shops

McElhinneys of Donegal took home the top award for Store of the Year at the 2011 Retail Awards.

Retail Excellence Ireland, Ireland's largest retail industry body, presented the awards on Saturday night at a ceremony in Galway that was attended by over 500 retailers. The awards are the biggest event in the Irish retail industry calendar. In business since 1971, McElhinneys of Donegal is one of Ireland's largest department stores, with over 75,000 sq ft of retail space.

David Fitzsimons, Chief Executive, Retail Excellence Ireland commented, "I want to commend all of the retailers who entered this year's awards. I particularly congratulate the awards finalists and winners. The very high standard of service, customer engagement, display and levels of investment among Irish retailers made choosing this year's winners particularly difficult. These awards are about recognising and rewarding excellence."

Visit McElhinneys websites at [www.mcelhinneys.ie](http://www.mcelhinneys.ie)



*Left to right - Kevin Jephson, chairman of Retail Excellence Ireland presents the National Store of the Year Award to Eileen and John McElhinney, McElhinney's of Donegal, with Miriam O'Callaghan.*

# Tech North West Skillnet

Tech North West Skillnet was launched recently at CoLab in LYIT with 40 companies from Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim signed up to the new Training Network.

Tech NW Skillnet is delivering a series of Training Programmes specifically aimed at Technology, Knowledge Based and Developing Companies based

in the North West Region. The objectives of the Network are to bring focused Training locally as well as creating a strong network for local companies to learn, share experiences and create new business opportunities.

LYIT is the contracting organisation for Tech North West Skillnet with Siobhan Grant acting as Network Manager.

Tech NW Skillnet is funded by member companies and the Training Networks Programme, an initiative of Skillnets Ltd, funded from the National Training Fund through the Dept of Education and Skills.

For further information visit:  
[technorthwestskillnet.com/](http://technorthwestskillnet.com/)





## Donegal Retailers Fly the Flag in Iceland

As part of the Retail in Rural Regions Project (RRR) six Donegal retailers recently visited Iceland for the final seminar of the Project.

Since 2009 Donegal County Council has been participating as the Irish partner in the Retail in Rural Regions Project (RRR). The RRR Project, funded by the Northern Periphery Programme (NPP), is concerned with helping rural retailers in remote parts of Northern Europe improve their business operation enabling them to face the future with renewed confidence. Project partners come from N. Ireland, Scotland, Faroe Islands, Iceland and Finland.

In Donegal the project has focussed on two pilot areas, namely Falcarragh and the Twin Towns of Ballybofey and Stranorlar. A training programme was developed by Tuath in conjunction with Letterkenny Institute of Technology and delivered over the course of the last year.

Representing the Twin Towns were Edel Neely (Ballybofey Florist), Liam Foy (Foy & Co.) and Martin McElhinney (McElhinney's). Representing Falcarragh were Manus Kelly (DNG Kelly), Joe Ruddy (Special Days) and Seamus McGee (McGee's Service Station).

The seminar which was held in Heidarbaer near Husavik in north east Iceland featured presentations from retailers from across the NPP region. One of the successes of the Project is the desire from Project Partners and retailers to explore new innovative opportunities for training which could lead to further projects in the future.

More information email: - [barney.mcLaughlin@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:barney.mcLaughlin@donegalcoco.ie)



*Members of the Donegal delegation who attended the RRR Seminar in Iceland  
L-R Manus Kelly (DNG Kelly), Liam Foy (Foy & Co.), Edel Neely (Ballybofey Florist), Carol Margey (Donegal County Council), Barney McLaughlin (Donegal County Council), Martin McElhinney (McElhinney's), Michael Tunney (Donegal County Enterprise Board), Seamus McGee (McGee's Service Station), Martin McAndrew (Project Officer), Joe Ruddy (Special Days)*

## Sendmode.com Moving Up a Level

John McNamara and Barry Murphy established Sendmode.com, a low cost text messaging service for business in 2009. Since then, the business has grown considerably to provide smartphone apps, worldwide text messaging and cloud computing services across all sectors. Their client base stretches from Ireland and the UK to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The business won the Emerging Business Category at the Enterprising Donegal Business Awards in April and with that the right to be Donegal County Enterprise Board's nominee for the National Enterprise Awards. After a rigorous adjudication process, Sendmode.com was shortlisted from the nominees of all 35 Enterprise Boards as one of the eight finalists for this prestigious award.

"Being among the shortlisted businesses for the National Enterprise Awards is a huge recognition for all the sendmode.com team and for our ever growing client base. It gives us the determination to drive the business to the next level" comments John.

The winner of the National Enterprise Awards was announced by Minister for Small Business, John Perry TD, at a gala function in Dublin Castle on 24th November. Although Sendmode.com did not win the competition, Michael Tunney, CEO of Donegal County Enterprise Board, had these very encouraging words for the Letterkenny based business "Sendmode is an inspirational example of the type entrepreneur and business we have in Donegal. From its initial set up Sendmode.com has been focused on developing export opportunities and this is something that more and more of our businesses, irrespective of their sector. We believe that Sendmode.com will continue to grow and that the success of John and Barry will motivate other young graduates to consider self-employment as a serious career option"

For more information visit: [www.sendmode.com](http://www.sendmode.com)



*John McNamara at the National Enterprise Awards Dinner with Vincent Reynolds, Chair of the CEB Network and Michael Tunney, CEO of Donegal CEB.*



## A book, a conference, a concert and a Presidential visit mark the 40th Anniversary at LYIT – Part 2

The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary week was a busy one with the launch of the book "From RTC to LYIT", a highly topical conference "Building Bridges", a visit by the President McAleese and a thrilling concert by Donegal's Altan with Donegal Youth Orchestra and other musicians from the Gaeltacht.

Former President McAleese officially closed the "Building Bridges" conference as one of her last official visits to Donegal, and delivered a powerful speech. Describing the contribution that Letterkenny IT has made "as being a big game changer" and that it was "a centre of gravity" for the region.

She described the LYIT as "full of potential opportunity which came about as a result of the passion of the people within it" and "that we all should be proud of its accomplishments." "The Institute started with 77 people. Now, there are 3,000 students, drawn from around Ireland and much further afield ... from the start through 40 years of hectic development there have been men and women who worked night and day to shape and guide it. Their work has been vindicated year in, year out by the students who placed their trust in the Institute."

"Like any good farmer we must plant the seeds to get a good harvest for the future, which is what the LYIT had done for the last 40 years and is well equipped for the next 40." However she said "there will be a renaissance ahead, history teaches us that."

Altan with the Donegal Youth Orchestra and young Donegal musicians from the Gaeltacht performed a special concert in early October, where a large crowd were treated to a great night of music and craic.

Paul Hannigan President reflecting on the week said, "I'd like to thank everyone involved in making a contribution to such an important week for the college. President McAleese's words were inspiring, and the Altan concert added another special dimension to our celebrations. The college history provides a legacy from the last 40 years, now we're writing the script for the next 40 ..."

For further information visit: [www.lyit.ie](http://www.lyit.ie)



*Former President Mary McAleese addressing the conference at LYIT*



*Altan with the Donegal Youth Orchestra*

## Lasell College, Boston developing International Collaboration with LYIT

Over November 17th and 18th, LYIT hosted a visit from a senior team from Lasell College, Boston, consisting of James Ostrow, Vice President Academic Affairs, Lynn Blake, Associate Professor, Melissa Van Hyfte, Assistant Professor, and Lena Cappiello, Director, International Services.

Lasell College is 150 years old and one of the oldest Institutions of Higher Education in the Boston Area. Based in Newton, Massachusetts, Lasell has almost 2000 undergraduate students and offers a range of professionally

orientated undergraduate and graduate programmes.

President Paul Hannigan and Head of Development John Andy Bonar of LYIT had visited Lasell College, last Autumn as part of an El Higher Education Trade Mission. Earlier this year the President of Lasell, Michael Alexander and his wife Mary Barbara visited LYIT.

Both Institutions have identified striking similarities in programme portfolios and opportunities for mutually advantageous collaboration to the benefit

of learners at both LYIT and Lasell. A draft Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and detailed further planning and discussions are currently underway.

Over the course of their visit, the Lasell team met with members of LYIT's Executive Board and Programme representatives from Sports, Nursing/Childcare, Business and Tourism/Hospitality. They also viewed Student

Accommodation and visited the School of Tourism in Killybegs.

It is hoped that a team from LYIT will visit Lasell College in Spring 2012 to finalise the collaborative partnership. It is planned that the first exchange of students between both Institutions will take place in Sept 2012.

For further information visit: [www.lyit.ie](http://www.lyit.ie)



# FÁS – New Employment Focused Programmes

Through training centres in Letterkenny and Gweedore, FÁS in Donegal provides a wide range of full-time and part-time training programmes during the day and in the evenings that are available to both unemployed and employed persons, as well as those looking to change career. All full-time FÁS programmes offer accredited certification on the Framework of Qualifications up to Level 6 or alternative industry recognised certification

FÁS in Donegal had a range new employment focussed programmes beginning in the autumn. These **Specific Skills** courses and **FÁS Traineeships** are full time courses and typically take 4-6 months to complete.

In late 2011, three new courses will be offered to jobseekers through our centers in Donegal. These include '**Software Developer**' with Advanced Diploma in Software development achievable on successful completion, '**Access to Offshore**' in Falcarragh which will equip the oil and gas industries with suitably trained personnel and a '**Surf Instructor and Beach lifeguard**' course to cater for the growing demand in recreational tourism in the North West. This course will run in Bundoran.

Through the training centre in Letterkenny, FÁS is offering the **Year 1 Accounting Technician programme**. This course will provide the successful applicants with the expertise, experience and knowledge in accounting, in the areas such as financial accounting and budgeting, costing and credit control, payroll and tax returns for various types of business.

The centre also offers an **IT Support Specialist**

**Traineeship** to service IT and maintenance needs in the Jobs market. Upon successful completion of the programme learners will achieve CompTia A+ certification and a FETAC Major award at level 6.

**Traineeship Programmes** combine directed off-the-job training in a FÁS or FÁS approved training centre alongside certified workplace training. A sample of the Traineeships on offer include; *Beauty Therapy, Healthcare Assistant, Childcare Practitioner* and the new *Outdoor Activity Instructor* which will be offered through Gweedore Training Centre

An **Alternative Farm Enterprise** course will be available for those wishing to identify areas of farming diversification and explore the establishment of a relevant farm enterprise including sustainable development agriculture. A **FETAC Level 5 major award in Horticulture** is available on successful completion.

Another training option for those who have an interest in Electronics and Business Systems maintenance will be the **Business Systems Service Technician Programme** which will lead to a FETAC Level 6 advanced certification.

In Gweedore Training centre, training is continuing on an on-going basis in **OFTEC Oil burner servicing** for those with appropriate qualifications as well as **Information Technology and Accounting courses**. These courses along with **Traditional Stonebuilding** and other shorter modular courses will all be available in the coming months in the surrounding areas.

To find out more visit: [www.FÁS.ie](http://www.FÁS.ie)



Presentation Day 2010 at FÁS





## Earagail Arts Festival

What a year it's been for the Earagail Arts Festival reflects Director Paul Brown. Despite the challenging times, and a significant decrease in funding, working with our partners and the support of Donegal County Council, Fáilte Ireland and the Arts Council of Ireland, the festival continues to deliver a magnificent programme. We made prices more affordable whilst continuing to offer a big part of the programme completely free. We produce a festival which unites people, creates a sense of pride, provides a platform for local artists and contributes to the local economy. The 'Made in Donegal' brand is a real success, investment in Donegal artists plus international marketing has begun to bear fruit and resulted in performances for the Henry Girls across Ireland, Scotland and the USA. We now have interest from French tour promoters in Fídal's collaboration with the Senegalese griot Solo Cissokho – positive news for all involved.

EAF recognises the demand for annual events which promote the festival, the county and its artists. Watch out for the Irish Christmas concert by **Moya Brennan** with the Inishowen Gospel Choir, An Grianán Theatre, Thursday 22nd December 2011. **Fídal** and **Solo Cissokho** on Saturday 28th January, RCC, Letterkenny. **The Awakening** on 3rd/4th/5th February 2012, presented with Rathmullan House Hotel. Three days of discussion, debate and entertainment - the **Leviathan Political Cabaret** with economist **David McWilliams**, an intimate concert with **Rainy Boy Sleep**, plus **The Snowball** - dining and dancing till late, performances by **Little John Nee** and music from **Balkan Alien Sound**.

Booking / Info: An Grianán Theatre, Letterkenny  
[www.angrianan.com](http://www.angrianan.com). To keep up to date with us, please visit our website: [www.eaf.ie](http://www.eaf.ie). Christmas wishes to you all and we look forward to welcoming you to our 24<sup>th</sup> Earagail Arts Festival in Donegal next year!



*Fídal and Solo Cissokho*



*Little John Nee – Photo Declan Doherty*



*Pictured at the recently refurbished Newtowncunningham Orange Hall, Donegal are participants from community and voluntary groups in Donegal County and Derry City Council areas who took part in a four day capacity building course in Good Relations. Included in the photograph are organisers from both councils.*

## Heads On Hands On

Donegal County and Derry City Councils' Good Relations Officers worked in partnership to host representatives from local community and voluntary groups in the two council areas. The Heads On – Hands On awareness course was designed for groups who wanted to make cross-border contacts and to build awareness of the work that is ongoing in both council areas around good relations and the promotion of cultural diversity.

During the visit to projects in Donegal the group visited Monreagh Ulster Scots Heritage and Education Centre, Newtowncunningham Orange Lodge, The Indian Community Centre and Temple, The Donegal Museum Whilst in Derry the group had the opportunity to visit projects in both the City and Waterside including the Tower Museum, the Apprentice Boys hall and the Ebrington Centre. A walk across the recently opened Peace Bridge was also included on the day's itinerary.

A final day was held to allow participants to consider how they might implement this learning in their own organisations, to consider linking with others on the course on a cross-border basis and to discuss funding opportunities.



Donegal County Development Board  
Bord Forbartha Chontae Dhún na nGall



Donegal County Council

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE  
**Dhún na nGall**  
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

# Major film exhibition opens in Letterkenny – Official launch of “Sharing Stories” showcase of 18 short films

One of the biggest showcases of locally produced films ever held in the North West was launched recently in the Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny. The exhibition highlights 18 short films shot over the past two years as part of the IFI-supported “Sharing Stories” project, a collaboration between the Regional Cultural Centre and the Nerve Centre in Derry.

Sharing Stories is a cross-border film project initiated in October 2009 with a particular focus on community, youth and minority groups.



*Derek O'Connor, film-maker, Mayor Cllr Gerry McMonagle, Paddy Harte, International Fund for Ireland, Shaun Hannigan, Director, Regional Cultural Centre, Sarah Thompson, Good Relations Officer, Donegal County Council and Martin Melarky, Culture Company Derry at the opening of 'Sharing Stories' exhibition in the Regional Cultural Centre Photo: Declan Doherty.*

Among the films to be highlighted at the exhibition are “Brighter Days”, an animation by Letterkenny-native Daniel McGarrigle based on the biography of his grandfather Colm Melly, who emigrated to England in the 1940s and then returned to the North West to raise his family.

The “Sharing Stories” exhibition continues until January 28th, 2012. The films are also available to view on [www.sharingstories.ie](http://www.sharingstories.ie)

*Sharing Stories is funded by the International Fund for Ireland and aims to contribute to positive relationship building and to develop greater understanding and reconciliation between the two main communities and new migrant communities.*



*Designer Mitch Davies at the opening of 'Sharing Stories' in the Regional Cultural Centre on Friday evening. Photo: Declan Doherty.*

## French Café nights launched at Port na Fáilte

Port na Fáilte intercultural resource centre launched its monthly French Café nights on the . Black satin, round cabaret tables, candle light, light shows: everything it takes to create a French cabaret ambience. There was a buffet with French cheeses, pâtés, olives, baguette, and a bar serving virgin cocktails. Many people brought their own wine and were supplied with a cork-screw and glasses. The highlight of the night, however, was the debut of the newly formed band, Lucien Blackfoot, who performed a selection of French songs, from

Carla Bruni to Serge Gainsbourg.

The place was packed with people from Letterkenny, Ghana, Milford, South Africa, Ramelton, Syria, Ballyshannon, Russia, Donegal Town, Germany, Leitrim, France, Sierra Leone, Glenties, Algeria....., and when Franck, the band's singer from Marseille, ended the show with Gainsbourg's Couleur Café: 'Couleur Café que j'aime ta couleur café', the place was rocking.

It is not often that one finds a genre and language of music which



*Enjoying the launch of the French Café nights*



crosses cultures and speaks to everyone. The fabulous, talented Lucien Blackfoot has managed to do that. They created a wonderful atmosphere, and Irish, African,

Russian, German and French, all had a brilliant night.

For further information email: [kwhite@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:kwhite@donegalcoco.ie)





## Visit to Massachusetts State House



North West delegation pictured during their visit the Massachusetts State House in Boston in November 2011

## Donegal Youth Council Agm



The AGM of Donegal Youth Council took place with 112 young people in attendance from schools and organisations from all parts of the County. The guest speaker on the day was Donegal County Council Mayor Noel McBride. There was 10 workshops covering the following topics Young Peoples Mental Health, Mental Health- Bullying, Sexual Health- SPHE/RES, Road Safety, Recession, Alcohol and Substance Misuse, Sports/Physical Health, Third level Education, Environment, Women into Public Life. Every young person attended two workshops of their choice. The issues that arise from this AGM will feature as the work and campaigns for the Donegal Youth Council over the coming year.

## Enjoy Irish – a new APP for Beginner learners of Irish



Minister for State for An Ghaeltacht, Dinny McGinley TD. launching the APP 'Enjoy Irish' in the company of students from Coláiste na Carraige.

From left, back: Siobhán Ní Churraighín, Oideas Gael, Lauren Ní Fhionnaighle, Rachel Ní Aoidh, Gráinne Ní a'Bháird, Aoife Ní Bhreisleáin, Eillie Ní Fhionnaighle. Front: Laura Ní Fhionnaighle, Minister Donncha Mac Fhionnaighle, TD, Róisín Ní Dhocharthaigh and Irish teacher, Colette McDevitt.

The 'Enjoy Irish' app is designed for the adult and student learner and is based on the book & CD of the same name. It is ideal for the person who wants to see and hear Irish spoken for the first time and for those who would like to refresh the Irish learned at school. Cartoon characters Seán and Gráinne get to know each other using simple and amusing role-plays.

### How to use it

Listen to the native speakers while reading the Irish language text of the role-plays, prompted by the optional English translation, if desired.

### How to get it

Link to the iPhone app store: <http://itunes.apple.com/ie/app/enjoy-irish/id473939700?mt=8>

Link to the App on the Android store [https://market.android.com/details?id=com.maithu.android.phrase\\_of\\_the\\_day&feature=more\\_from\\_developer#?t=W251bGwsMSwyLD EwMiwiY29tLm1haXRodS5hbmRyb2lkLnBocmFzZV9vZlZlZGF5I10](https://market.android.com/details?id=com.maithu.android.phrase_of_the_day&feature=more_from_developer#?t=W251bGwsMSwyLD EwMiwiY29tLm1haXRodS5hbmRyb2lkLnBocmFzZV9vZlZlZGF5I10)





## Young Donegal man, Simon Gillespie, leading the way for GAA in New York

Simon Gillespie is 25 years old from Ballyshannon and went to school in Colaiste Cholmcille and studied at the University of Limerick doing a Bsc in Physical Education and a Masters degree in History. After college, he worked for 2 years for Ulster Council GAA as a Primary Schools coach.

In July of 2010, Simon started his job as Games Development Officer for New York GAA. This involves doing club coaching sessions, running after school programs, coordinating our County Games Program and Development Squads as well as doing the general day to day administrative work associated with the GAA here in New York.



*One of the mascots for the New York Ladies Team prior to the Junior All Ireland Final*

The New York GAA will be celebrating its centenary in 2014 at present we have 36 Adult Clubs with approximately 1,000 playing members and 21 youth clubs with approximately 1,500 youth playing members. Clubs are from all over the tri state area New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Each year our underage clubs compete in the Continental Youth Championships (CYC) in a different venue somewhere in the United States. This year we had 88 youth teams competing in the CYC event in Boston. Every year we send up to 4 different development squads back to Ireland to compete in various competitions and tournaments.

in Maria Regina High School.

Since Simon went to New York in July 2010, he has been involved in the Donegal NY Club and coached the team last year and this year along with Pettigo man Lawrence Mc Grath and Connie Molloy from Ardara. The team is a mix of American born players, Donegal boys and players from all over Ireland. The captain last year was current New York Full Forward CJ Molloy (nephew of Anthony Molloy) one of the real success stories of the underage program. Donegal is one of the counties best represented in New York GAA with several members working as county board officers, coaches and lots of players. I have an office here on Mc Lean Avenue and there are plenty of Donegal men in business nearby with Leslie Mc Gettigan and Danny Doohan two Donegal men who own businesses right down the street from me.

You can check out the NYGAA coaching and games website @ [www.nyouthgaa.com](http://www.nyouthgaa.com)



*Mike Moynihan Boston GAA Games Development Administrator (GDA), John Donahue Worcester, MA Captain, and Simon Gillespie.*

## Donegal Associations Donegal Associations Donegal Associations Donegal Associations

### Donegal Association Annual Christmas Party

The 8th December means only two things – the beginning of the Christmas shopping spree and The Donegal Association Annual Christmas Party. A large crowd gathered in Foley's Lounge, Merrion Row, Dublin for the Annual Christmas Party of the Donegal Association. Even though it was cold outside, there was a warm and vibrant atmosphere there for all the guests who attended.

Also in attendance were former Donegal Persons of the Year, Jim Mc Gettigan and John Carr. Joe Mc Hugh arrived with his fellow TD from Cavan, Joe O'Reilly and some friends from Donegal.

MC for the evening was Liam Mc Dermott and he invited both the Cathaoirleach Sorcha Ni Dhomhnaill and President Tony Dunleavy on stage to say a few words.

Regarded by the Association as one of the most enjoyable Christmas parties ever, they are now looking forward to their next big night – the Announcement of the Donegal Person of the Year on Tuesday 17th January next. This will be held in The Harcourt Hotel, Dublin at 8.30pm. The Donegal Person of the Year Award Night 2011 will take place on Saturday 3rd March at 8.00 p.m. The Donegal Person of the Year 2011 Award Night will be held in the ALL NEW 1000 seater Conference Room in The Regency Hotel, Whitehall, Dublin. The proprietor of the Regency Hotel is Kilmacrennan-born Jim Mc Gettigan



*Enjoying the Christmas Party*



*Some members of the Donegal Association Committee. Also the line spacing between the paragraphs can be reduced.*



Donegal Associations Donegal Associations Donegal Associations Donegal Associations

## Donegal Association London launch new website



*Donegal Association Committee*

The Crown Moran Hotel in Cricklewood was the setting for the launch of the Donegal Association London's new website on the 5th November. Chairman Tony McFadden welcomed the people of Donegal and their guests to the Annual Dinner Dance. Guest Speaker Charlie Collins of Highland Radio co presented the evening with TV personality Noel Cunningham.

Founded in London in 1947, Donegal is now one of the most successful and innovative associations. The new website is just one more very important development. From help for individual people and their families in need,



*Presentation of cheque to Donegal Hospice*

perhaps because of illness or unemployment, to bigger fundraising events, the achievement of Donegal folk is inspiring. Cancer Charities and the Hospice Movement are among numerous worthy causes where members of this association have combined their talents to this present day. This has benefited their own and the wider community, both in the UK and back home in Donegal.

Today's Donegal Association has a number of young Irish professionals based in London on the committee, as well as a widely experienced team who have held various roles over the years.



*Groups enjoying the Annual Dinner Dance of the Donegal Association London*

Designed by Evoke Studio, the new website is a user-friendly site which will be a great asset to the county, giving exposure worldwide. This will benefit Donegal in all areas - Tourism, Employment, Education Commerce, Arts, Culture and Heritage and much more. New members are always welcome - having the website up and running will make it easier to join and keep in touch with upcoming activities and events.

For further information visit:

<http://www.donegalassociation.com/>

## Philadelphia's Donegal Ball 2011

On November 26th, the Donegal Association celebrated its 123rd Annual Ball. To me, this event always signifies the beginning of the joyous Christmas season. Mary Crossan, the Donegal President, was thrilled with the turnout. She had nothing but accolades for the committee who lovingly work on each detail. She especially praised the Ball Chairperson, Nora Campbell, who she called "terrific". Nora has the ability to work wonders with people, the right one for the right job. The Ball Book, handled by Bernadette Browne, was full of rich memories. There was a section called the "Way We Were", with 24 wedding pictures of our members. The book has chronicled our activities for 123 years and serves as the history of the Society.

This year's Grand Marshal is a great guy, Dan Mullen. Dan has been a member of the Donegal Association for 25 years. His roots, by way of his Mother are Letterkenny and Gortahork. He is a proud graduate of Holy Child School (Logan



*Enjoying the 123rd Annual Donegal Ball in Philadelphia*

section of Philadelphia), Bachelors at LaSalle University and a MBA from Drexel. His field is financial services and he currently works at DT Investment Partners as their Chief Compliance Officer.

The night also provided for the Mary from Dungloe contest which is an International Pageant held every year in Dungloe. The winner was Meghan Kathleen Davis. She is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory at John Hopkins and the Boyer College of Music, Temple University. She has 2 BA's in Harp and Vocal, a Masters in Vocal Performance and plans to pursue a PhD in Music Theory. Watch out Dungloe, your next Mary is coming from Philadelphia.



*Meghan Kathleen Davis who will represent Philadelphia's in Mary from Dungloe 2012*

**By Kathy McGee Burns**

For further information on this e-zine or on the Donegal Diaspora Project, please contact:

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