

STEPPING STONES

The Newsletter of the South Lough Neagh Area

Spring 2011

Launch of New Good Relations Community Programme

South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association is happy to announce the completion of 15 years unbroken local region community work. These past 10 years it has been operating from its offices at the Maghery Business Centre. They have successfully, year on year, developed and implemented many programmes aimed at the regeneration and cultural inclusion of the whole of the South Lough Neagh geographical area.

The Association is more than happy to announce its most recent inclusive cultural development and regeneration Good Relations Programme as funded through The International Fund for Ireland with support funding provided by The Big Lottery, Fund, Craigavon Borough Council, The Community Relations Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs (Ireland), and further supported by match funding raised by SLNRA.

Under the title, "The Planter and the Gael" the programme was launched with a grand extravaganza on Monday 28th March in Craigavon Civic Centre.

This was truly a great cross-community cultural event, including highly talented groups of musicians and dancers. It incorporated young local singers and dancers from our local southern shore villages, together with marching bands and believe it, or believe it or not, on stage Lambeg Drums.

Compèred by the well-known TV personality Gene Fitzpatrick and backed by the internationally-famed folk group Berneagh, who not only brought its own unique stamp to the programme, also provided the music for both the Irish and Scottish dance groups.

The leading artists were Mark Wilson the international world-class percussionist; Brendan Monaghan, the renowned musician who has played in the Boston Symphony Hall, on Uilleann Pipes; David Muldrew who has just returned from a special guest tour in Zambia, on guitar and vocals; Brian McAteer, a former member of Blackthorn on keyboards and fiddle; Ian Burrows on Highland Pipes; Martha Guiney on flute; Lee Lawson on Highland Pipes; Sinead Madden, fiddle and

vocals, and David Lowery and Adrian Boyd on Lambeg Drums.

The local support comprised a cast of entertainers including The Maghery Traditions Group; Maghery Irish dancers; Sarah Leonard singer; The Oasis youth group; The John Mitchell Fiddle Players, with the combined Joseph

Forde Memorial (Birches) Pipe Band and St. Mary's (Derrytrasna) Pipe Band.

The whole evening has since been commended as an outstanding event, a most fitting launch to the Good Relations Programme, and acclaimed by international observers as an outstanding presentation.



Irish and Scottish dancers in unison on stage at the Craigavon Civic Centre Good Relations launch

Good Relations Programme to tackle community issues launched

Monday 28th March 2011, Craigavon Civic Centre

This new, innovative programme, pioneered by SLNRA and designed as a stepping stone to help build cross-community relationships in the South Lough Neagh area, was officially launched by David Graham OBE Board Member of The International Fund for Ireland, deputizing for Mr Dennis Rooney, IFI Chairman.

Over the next three years, as this new programme unrolls, The South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association will work in partnership with the local community to tackle community issues which are prevalent in this area.

Speaking at the launch David Graham said, "Programmes like this are at the heart of IFI's efforts to build a more shared and peaceful future for Northern Ireland and the border counties. In recent years we have made significant progress to becoming a more mutually inclusive society. However, divisions remain within and between communities which must be addressed. The aim of this programme is to reach out into the community and build technical and leadership skills to form a unified approach when dealing with ongoing problems, strengthening the existing community groups



Front row (L-R): James McAlinden, St Mary's Pipe Band, Derrytrasna; Mary McAlinden, Development Officer SLNRA; Jacinta Cusack, Vice Chairperson SLNRA; David Graham, Board Member IFI; Gordon Richardson, Treasurer SLNRA; Lorraine Richardson, Volunteer SLNRA; Roseleen Lavery, Committee member SLNRA and Ros Hendron, Folk Dancer. Back row (L-R): Thomas Glenny, Secretary SLNRA; Bernadette Donnelly, Project Manager SLNRA; Joanna Gawlik of C.R.C.; Patricia Lapin, Rural Development Officer, Craigavon Borough Council and Stanley Trouton, Committee SLNRA

within a combined effort to build a happier and stronger community for all."

Speaking on behalf of SLNRA its Chairman Mr Paul Smith said, "We are very excited about this Good Relations Programme for our area.

It is very much in keeping with our organisations objectives of building good community relationships in the wider region as a whole. The three

key areas which the programme will deal with are: – 'Community relations capacity building; leadership and training programmes and the support of new and emerging groups; and community relations cross-community and youth leadership training programmes.

This is a big step for the region and I look forward to seeing the results of the programme in due course."

Bernadette Donnelly

Good Relations Project Manager

Bernadette Donnelly has a background in the voluntary and community sector, particularly in rural and community development, where she has gained considerable knowledge and experience of implementing programmes, project management, sourcing appropriate funding and making successful applications to a wide range of funding agencies.

As a local person Bernadette has firsthand



knowledge of the South Lough Neagh area – she has been involved in a considerable number of projects and events which have increased cultural awareness, created good relations and promoted greater understanding on a cross-community basis.

She has a keen awareness of, and is sensitive to, local community needs and is skilled at encouraging wide range of involvement from all cultural backgrounds, and generations.

Art in the Wetlands

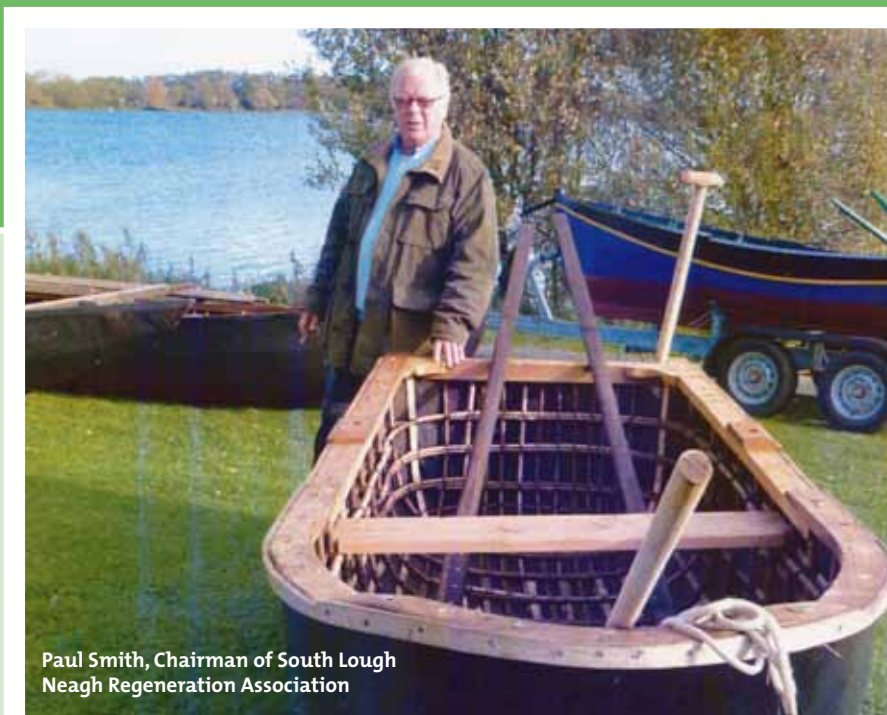
Art in the Wetlands is a visionary project conceived by South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association, Craigavon Borough Council and Sustrans. Four artists were commissioned to create public artworks based on cultural traditions rooted in the South Lough Neagh Wetlands, sited between Maghery and Aghagallon.

The townland communities of this area are entrenched in cultural traditions such as basket making, willow work, fishing, boat building, peat cutting and farming. This rich cultural heritage gives the area a distinctive identity providing a rich inspiration for artistic interpretation.

The Sculpture Trail

The idea of exploring local cultural traditions through art evolved as the central idea for a Sculpture Trail project where it was deemed essential that each artist's work demonstrated and promoted environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Five sculptures produced by nation-



Paul Smith, Chairman of South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association

ally renowned artistes are located along the 38 mile long southern section of Route 94 of the National Cycle Network: Holger Lönze's; Navigators marks the beginning of the trail in Maghery at the southwesterly corner of Lough Neagh and is based on boat building; a collaboratively designed wood sculpture, carved by Niall Walsh, celebrates hurling in Aghagallon; Eamonn Higgin's life-size

steel sculpture of a fisherman can be found near to the crossroads in Derrytrasna; at Oxford Island, Trudi Entwistle's Eel Retreat is located beside the Discovery Centre; Holger's first work for the trail, Wings, is set on the inner breakwater of Kinnego Marina and the collection is completed by Niall Walsh's large metal sculpture of a potato basket in the grounds of Aghagallon primary school.

What is the Loughshore Care Partnership?



Loughshore
CARE PARTNERSHIP

The Loughshore Care Partnership (LCP) was formed in 1996 and involved representatives with community and statutory interests for the southern shores of Lough Neagh, a disadvantaged area that is home to some 8,700 people.

The project, when established aimed to:

- Provide much-needed locally-based health and social care services for the loughshore communities
- Contribute to the sustainability of existing facilities in the area
- Help to deliver government's care in the community; mixed economy of care and rural development.

With the assistance of highly valued volunteers LCP delivers a 1 day-per-week social care service providing a

hot meal to around 100 older people in the Derrytrasna, Aghagallon, Birches and Maghery areas. The Trust makes a financial contribution for the delivery of this service which covers the rental of the venues, a subsidised hot meal and an accessible transport service for some of those who use the service.

To promote health and well-being individuals are encouraged to take part in light exercises and games as part of their social interaction. Away days are arranged on a regular basis and there is a planned programme of talks which take place in each centre.

LCP is managed by a committee of 10 people from the south Loughshore area and Chairman, Kevin Fox commented "this is a much needed service being provided for our older

people and each of the centres have their own dedicated person in which to contact if you require information on joining."

■ If you would like additional information you can also contact Mary McAlinden on Tel: 02838 852550.

What the Southern Health and Social Care Trust says:

Since 2001/2 the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (formerly known as Craigavon and Banbridge Community Trust) has worked in partnership in outreach with the senior citizens projects that form the heart of the Loughshore Care Partnership and one of the chief aims of the partnership is to encourage and enable senior citizens to live life to the full.

Local senior citizens groups



Hat making à la carte, Birches style. Henry McAdam jokes with Sam Turkington. Looking on are Joe Benson and Hilda Elliott

The Birches Day Care Centre and Cosy Club

Edith Stevenson the Club organiser writes, "Since 1966, we have gone from strength to strength. The Cosy Club became a member of the Lough Shore Partnership about nine years ago."

The D.A.R.T. (Down Armagh Rural Transport) bus is invaluable; it does two runs in the mornings and has everyone in around about 10.30am. First up we have morning tea and scones with about 30 minutes reserved for a read at the morning papers. This is usually followed by a craft session or we may have a special topic speaker for an hour. Crafts range from making ceramics, Christmas wreaths, flower arranging, painting, or even poetry and writing

classes. On other days we may have a Beetle drive, a table quiz or board games. This is not to say everything is non-active. Not so, as we have our session of light physical activity with several members with impaired physical ability also receiving help and instructions.

Of course, the hot meals are more than welcome as many of the members are single, live alone pensioners and they, more than any, appreciate the dinners.

Obviously the Birches Cosy Club is doing good work. Well done to all the helpers.

■ New members always welcome Contact Edith on T:028 38 853041

Quotes include one from Muriel and Henry McAdam.

"Henry really enjoys going to the club on Tuesday mornings as well as the outings. Since suffering a stroke four years ago the club has been a lifeline for him."

Morris Strain says:

"I haven't been out of the house since last Tuesday! I don't know just what I'd do if I wasn't picked up by the D.A.R.T. bus and I didn't have the club to go to."

Finally one member writes:

"We do enjoy the company of our friends and the games we play. We are pleased with the transport and our careful driver. We all enjoy our cup of tea and the hot dinners."

Neighbourhood Watch in **YOUR** area

If you require more information on Neighbourhood Watch, please contact either:

PSNI Crime Prevention Officer
T: 0845 600 8000

Community Safety Officer
T: 028 3831 2484



Senior Citizens on Tour, Derrytrasna Group ...



A time to relax

The Derrytrasna Group was set up in 2004 to provide an outreach for the senior citizens of Derrytrasna and Derrymacash. Under the umbrella of the Lough Shore Care Partnership, weekly transport is provided by D.A. R. T., bringing the members to the Sarsfields Community Centre for their day activities.

Hot meals are provided by the Phoenix catering service. A group of volunteer workers co-ordinate the weekly programmes centring around good health and well-being, promoting good mental health and seeking to help people overcome social problems and provide help in combating the problems associated with isolated rural living conditions.

Since formation the group have enjoyed some memorable day outings

and, with the help of The Heritage Lottery Fund, they have created and published their own 'memories' book. Not only this, they have produced a DVD on life as it was 'in their day.'

This DVD has proven immensely popular with local schools, giving firsthand experiences of times past to today's up-and-coming generations.

One member quotes: "This community activity has become so vital to us now – it is difficult to imagine just what life would be without it."

Not only does the club cater for the active citizens, the less mobile are catered for as well, and to this end the versatility of the transport service is top rate.

■ Interested? New members contact Eileen on T: 028 38 340556

Eileen McCluskey, aged 87, says:

The club is just great and I look forward to meeting up with my friends every week – especially to have a laugh and be happy.

John McAlinden, aged 71, speaks for the men,

"We men get on just great and are quite happy playing bowls and even trying new things like archery. There is a great group of helpers and we really appreciate just what they all do for us."

Sadie Blaney, aged 82, says,

"You wouldn't believe the fun and laughs we get even on the bus before we get off at the club"



Diamond Group Flower Arranging Brilliant End product - flowers donated by Shane Donnelly and used in the flower arrangements of the Diamond Senior Citizens Club, Maghery

Diamond senior citizens group news

The Diamond Senior Citizens Club meets every Thursday in the Community Hall, Maghery from 11am until 2pm. Anne Fox writes, "It is really great having all the modern facilities of the community hall at our disposal, particularly the unrestricted floor space and the unrestricted access.

The positives from our club are identified in the first place as very simply providing an opportunity for the members to meet together, make social contact, and make new friendships. Conversation and reminiscing are therapies in themselves.

Of course the club seeks to

promote other positives from simple armchair aerobics, to more sophisticated craftwork. For the 1st of February the group made St. Brigid's Crosses.

Confidence-building is encouraged as members experience new skills and develop a positive outlook. Taking part in the SLNRA programme 'Old Skills New Friends' where the members were introduced to the hands-on skills of Lace Making under the expert guidance provided by members of The Clones Community Forum, proved very popular.

The day trip outings also prove to be very popular. Recently the club

had a trip down memory lane with a visit to the Lough Shore refurbished fisherman's cottage belonging to John Pat Mackle at Columbcille. On another occasion we were treated to the experience of furniture making through a visit to M/s Derrys Furniture premises and restaurant at Annaghmore. And Christmas could not go by without our annual Christmas Dinner which was held this past year at The Stables in Lurgan. The aim is to have two trips each year the group already having visited Stormont Buildings and Belfast City Hall. Where next?

■ The Club contact for new members is Anne T:028 38 851113

Sarah, one of our members, quotes:

"I enjoy the friendships and the new friends that I have made in the club. Everyone is very helpful. It is great to get out, to talk, and to hear the news. I really enjoy coming."

Another member Kathleen says:

"The company and friendship is good. We meet new people and it helps prevent loneliness. I enjoy the exercises we do and I like the games of Indoor Kurling."

BARN's (Birches Action Rural Network) next meetings

Monday 6th June at 8pm

Monday 4th July at 8pm

T: 07927 9055 11 Website: www.birches.yolasite.com (currently under construction)

Aghagallon Senior Citizens Group

Aghagallon Daycare Group provides a well developed programme of physical activity and craft sessions, away days and special outings for the Senior Citizens in the area while supporting the development of their volunteers by providing activity training opportunities.

The group of twenty meets each Tuesday in the Cranagh Hall from 10am until 2pm. Eilish McGrath, chairperson said, "It's lovely to see our older people enjoying themselves and I cannot praise our volunteers enough who turn up each week to help us deliver this service for them."

The Group have also hosted information events and facilitated older peoples' networking opportunities in the Loughshore area.

Other projects include the Community Pharmacy project which was open to all in the Aghagallon area. The Group also organises a Tea Dance every Monday night.

■ For more information on the senior citizens group, please contact Eilish McGrath T: 028 9265 1926



Enjoying a day out on Lough Erne

"Tuesday wouldn't be Tuesday without the Cranagh.

For some people life could be rather lonely, but we can look forward to the friendship and companionship formed there. We share our different hobbies, sewing, knitting, crocheting, card making, hand massage and to keep us fit and healthy Kurling and bocchia. Especially exciting are our different outings and shopping expeditions and celebration dinners. Long may it last!"

Colette Craney



Keeping fit with some armchair aerobics

"We enjoy our games and meetings, which allows us to play games with friends. One of our games is called Rummikubu, which is very interesting. We also enjoy a friendly chat and exercises. We look forward to our meetings on Tuesdays and also our annual outings."

Bartholomew Lavery

Rural youth work

An important element of rural youth work in the Lough Shore area has up to now been carried out under the banner of the South Eastern Library Board Craigavon Youth Initiative Programme.

Rural Support Youth Worker Larry Hamilton writes on this programme:

"Its remit is confined to the electoral wards of Aghagallon, Derrytrasna, and The Birches. The aims are to organize summer programmes for the youth of the area, to encourage them to set up their own youth clubs and become interactive with each other.

After June of this year continued funding for the programme is in doubt, and certainly support from the SLNRA Good Relations Programme will be welcome."

The current programme is designed to weld together in a partnership the voluntary youth groups of the area, including uniformed groups and other stakeholders. The aim is to give these young people every opportunity to participate in a range of participative educational developmental training and interactive pursuits, challenging their initiative and becoming more observant of the other diverse groups in their intercultural background.

Through the SELB scheme young people have organized summer programmes, set up their own youth clubs, completed youth work training and participated in exchange ventures, intercultural concerts and outdoor games. Meeting with their peers from across the various wards has been a learning experience in itself.

Appropriate youth work training has enabled a large number of young adults to become volunteer youth workers with several going on to achieve OCN recognition.

This has enabled a strong foundation to be established for the area's youth groups, a foundation that can readily



be built upon in the immediate future, to the benefit of the whole community. All groups welcome new members through contact with the leaders.

Birches Youth Club
John Ritchie
T: 07872 067411

Maghery Youth Club
Siobhan Hoey
T: 07944 092601

Milltown Youth Club
Alan McElmurry
T: 07548 650687

John Mitchell Youth Club,
Gawley's Gate
Aiden Mulholland
T: 07591 969812
Seven Derry's Youth Club,

Aghagallon
Catherine Shipman
T: 07889 016604

Scotch Street Youth Club
Alan McCann
T: 07548 65087

Sarsfields Youth Club,
Derryadd, Lurgan
Leanne McCusker
T: 028 3834 0071

Wolfe Tones Senior Youth Club,
Derrymacash
Liz Hoy / Lisa Tighe
T: 07842 699861

Vincash Youth Club,
Presbyterian Church Hall
Gordon Woolsey
T: 07599 806050

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AN BÓRDA NA BÉIRTEACHA



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