

# Catch The Gingerbread Lady at Belltable

By DEARBHLA LOOBY

THE Torch Players are coming back to the Belltable at the end of February with a production of Neil Simon's drama *The Gingerbread Lady*.

Most people will be familiar with some of Neil Simon's other works, *The Odd Couple* and *Barefoot in the Park* to name but two. In *The Gingerbread Lady* Neil Simon tells the serious story of lost misfits, is said to be both deeply touching and very funny. The play runs in the Belltable

on Tuesday, February 27, until Saturday, March 3. This is the play's first showing in Limerick.

It tells the story of Evy Meara (Mary Harvey), a singer who had been over-indulging in sex and alcohol for the past few years. She appears in the play first at the end of a 10 week dry-out period in a local sanatorium. When her friend, Tobi Landau (Anne Quill), her daughter, Polly (Sinéad Fahy), and a homosexual actor (Dave Edler) try to help her adjust to sobriety, they end up not only revealing important aspects of their selves, they have

the opposite effect on Evy.

The play was first published in 1976, during the Torch Players' first season. During the last 24 years the Torch Players have presented over 50 productions in the Belltable Arts Centre and at drama festivals throughout the country. They have qualified for all-Ireland finals on 13 occasions, including 10 appearances at the Athlone drama final in recent years.

Playing a vital role in this production of *The Gingerbread Lady* are Mike Sheils, set design and construction, Hannorah

Hartnett, costuming, Tom O'Donnell and Niamh Conroy, lighting, and Daordre Minogue-Hennessy, sound. The play is produced and directed by Maurice O'Sullivan, a founder member of the Torch Players.

After their run in the Belltable, the Torch Players will be taking part in festival competitions around the country with the aim of qualifying for the All-Ireland Drama Festival in Athlone.

Tickets for *The Gingerbread Lady* are £6 each and can be purchased on the door, or in advance on 061-319866.

# Moyross pipe band celebrates fifth year

By IAIN DEMPSEY

FOR the past five years the Corpus Christi Pipes and Drums Band has been a major contender in world championships and national competitions.

The trophy cabinet is overflowing with major honours and awards so it was with a deep sense of pride that the band celebrated its fifth anniversary with a special commemorative ceremony at the Greenhills Hotel.

"It's hard to believe that five years have passed since the first tentative steps were taken in the formation of the band, but passed they have and during that time those steps have developed into confident strides," commented band director Fr Terry Loughran.

"Many of those who were with us that first meeting night on November 8, 1995, have since moved on to other pursuits. Their contribution during the inaugural stages was immense.

"The past number of years have been for all of us a very rewarding experience. It has definitely been a learning curve and that learning is ongoing. Outside of the very obvious benefits accrued by the band members, their fami-

lies and the community, many strong friendships have been formed both at home and abroad. It is the strong bond of friendship that will ensure Corpus Christi Pipes and Drums continued growth into the future."

The formation of the band was one of a number of steps in the Moyross area to promote youth activities through the Garda community relations programme.

Fr Loughran and Garda Dave Mulcahy said the idea behind the band was to teach young people a skill, help in their development, give them a sense of belonging and "all in all be a very public expression of all the good and positive things going on in the community of Moyross".

Fifty young people turned up to the first meeting and signed up to learn either bagpipes or drums.

"All the outside experts agreed that it would take about four years before the band would be ready to perform in public. After a lot of hard work and effort it was a proud day for everyone involved when just 18 months later, 45 band members and 28 flag bearers represented their community with pride and distinction in the 1997 St Patrick's Day Parade," said Fr Loughran. Since then, the band has gone from strength to strength and travelled as far as Scotland and the USA.



The Corpus Christi Pipes and Drums Band performing at the Cliffs of Moher

"Over the last five years, Corpus Christi Pipes and Drums Band has won numerous prizes, recorded a CD, made two videos and travelled the world. Great achievements in themselves, but perhaps the greatest achievement is the difference that has been made in so many people's lives," said Fr Loughran.

Commented assistant band director Neil Browne; "Being in the band has not only taught us how to play musical instruments and march properly, it has also taught us some of the skills needed in life itself, thanks to the work and time put in by Andrew O'Byrne, Jim Butler and Fr Terry Loughran."

## Resource centre's winter courses

THE Limerick Resource Centre for the Unemployed has launched its prospectus for 2001.

The registration night will be on January 17 at the centre in Thomas Street between 6.30 and 8.00.

Classes will start on January 22. These include do-it-yourself, aromatherapy, reflexology, art, basic computers, Word for Windows, Pre European Computer Driving Licence course, typing, creative writing, French, Spanish and basic guitar.

For further information on the classes available contact the Limerick Resource Centre for the Unemployed at 33 Thomas Street, telephone: 061-416056, or 061-416090, or fax, 061-411696.



Mary Neill, Michelle O'Donnell and Deirdre O'Doherty enjoy the fifth anniversary bash of the Corpus Christi Pipes and Drums Band at the Greenhills Hotel

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