

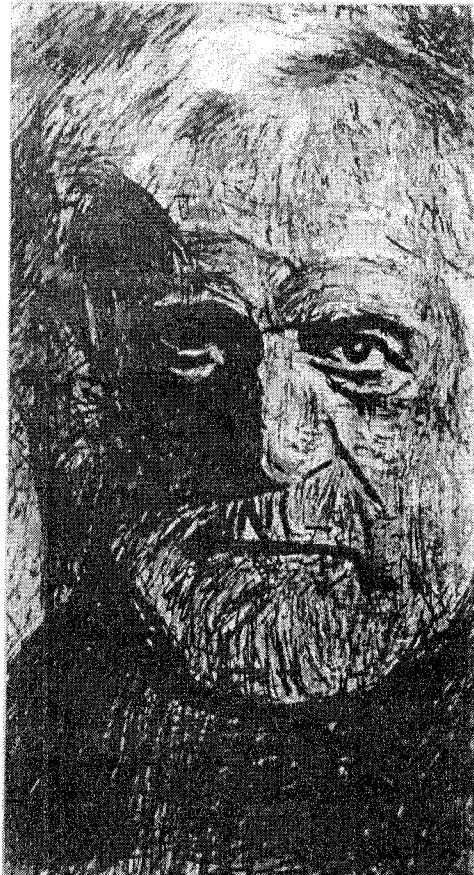
Harris' life, death and a birthday celebrated in art

By Rose Rushe

FOUR years after his death in October 2002, the life and times of Richard Harris are to be celebrated in a series of exhibitions. The first of these will open on Sunday October 1 in Friars Gate, Kilmallock, when a some two dozen of the Harris family are expected to support the 6pm evening launch of the Richard Harris Tribute Exhibitions, by Scariff painter Thomas Delohery.

Poet Mark Whelan will read his own composition to accompany this night, the first of three to be held in Limerick city and county, with another taking place in Listowel, in February, and the fifth and final show "to finish in [Harris'] spiritual home of Kilkee," says the painter.

That more was not made of Richard Harris' passing has bedevilled the LSAD



Oil pastel of the late, great Richard Harris by Tom Delohery. A major suite of travelling exhibitions is being supported fully by the extended Harris family.

trained artist.

"I was in Limerick city that weekend of his memorial service but I, like so many others, didn't know it was on," recalls Tom Delohery, who holds a master's degree in fine art. "Four years on, I feel that it is only now that I can get a chance to say goodbye to him properly, in a more fitting way, by having five tribute exhibitions to him"

He feels that Richard Harris was a good ambassador not only for Limerick and Ireland, but also for how one should approach life.

"He seemed to go at it headlong, with few if any apologies. .. he fought tooth and nail for what he wanted and believed in".

Commenting on the quintet of tribute exhibitions, Jared Harris, son to Richard, said he was touched that "Tom has chosen to devote so much of his creative energy to this series of pictures ded-

icated to my father. Dad was possessed with a tremendous, raging mercurial life force. These pictures are an attempt to capture that spirit".

Friars Gate is the first of the tribute series. The show titled 'Richard Harris. A Life' deals with all stages of the actor's life and career.

The three surviving brothers of Richard Harris and their families will be there on the night, which is Richard's birthday".

Works vary in media from oil pastel on paper to Indian ink on paper, to a mix of watercolour, ink and oils; it runs until October 25, the date of Harris' death in 2002.

Crescent College Comprehensive, his alma mater, is the seat of Delohery's next show in November, and its focus will be on Richard's early life before leaving Limerick for stardom.

Search is on for the most welcoming Limerick person

THE search is still on for the most welcoming person in Limerick.

With just a few weeks left before closing date, nominations are still being sought by the Fáilte Ireland Irish Welcome Awards committee. Fáilte Ireland, the national tourism development authority, is looking for people in every county in Ireland who best deliver an exceptional Irish welcome.

To-date, nominations have been received from 48 countries and a national winner will be selected from a shortlist.

"This is the fifth year of the awards that recognise and reward those who best embody the traditional Irish welcome and we have guesthouses and bed and breakfast operators leading the field for the great quality of their welcomes. Tour guides and operators also perform very strongly in this year's awards," said a spokesperson for the initiative.

While the majority of nominations have been

received from the United States and Britain, other countries that feature prominently include Germany, Australia and France.

Shaun Quinn, Chief Executive of Fáilte Ireland said "So far there is a tremendous number of nominations in but with over one month to go before the closing date for entries, there is still time to tell us about that exceptional holiday experience. The Irish welcome is one of Ireland's most unique characteristics and with 86 per cent of visitors saying the reason they come to this country is because of the friendly people, its importance cannot be stressed enough."

With the influx of visitors recently in Ireland for the Ryder Cup, a number of new and innovative approaches were implemented to promote this year's Fáilte Ireland Irish Welcome Awards.

Fáilte Ireland also tailored workshops within the tourism industry.

Branded as Driving the Irish Welcome, they

offered programmes and supports to highlight the importance of welcoming visitors to the biggest sporting event ever to come to Ireland.

The programme targeted front line and international employees and the ultimate objective was to create awareness on how an Irish welcome can provide tangible benefits to tourism businesses during and after the Ryder Cup event.

Holidaymakers are also urged to nominate someone who has made their stay in Ireland more enjoyable and memorable. The nominee can be someone working in the tourism sector or a member of the public who took a little personal time or give that extra bit of service that made a difference.

Nominations can be made online at www.irishwelcomeawards.com or on Irish Welcome Award forms available in a wide range of tourist information offices, guesthouses and hotels.

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