

Poet Michael to be honoured in his native place

By NORMA PRENDIVILLE

MICHAEL Hartnett, the man and the poet will be remembered with affection and honour in his hometown later this month in a literary weekend commemorating his life's work.

The first in what is intended to be an annual event, Eise Michael Hartnett will run in New-castle West from Friday, September 22, to Sunday, September 24, and comes with a programme designed to appeal to the widest possible audience.

It also brings to New-castle West one of the best-known and best-loved Irish writers, Brendan Kennelly, who will officially open the week-

end and will be the first of many poets to read from his own work.

Another highlight will be the awarding, for the first time, of the Michael Hartnett Annual Poetry Award which is worth £5,000 and goes this year to a collection of poetry in Irish.

"We wanted to mark Michael Hartnett's contribution to literature in both Irish and English," said Joan MacKernan, county arts officer, explaining the back-ground to the weekend.

"He was, and is, one of Ireland's leading poets and Limerick's most outstanding contemporary poet. Initially, we planned to honour him with a special bursary in this millennium year, but unfortunately, he died before that could come about," she said.

Inspired by the poet's own reflection that he thought in English but dreamt in Irish, the Eise seeks to bring together the two great themes which threaded and dominated his life—poetry and Irish. But, in harmony with the temperament of the man, it seeks to do so in the most democratic way possible. Most of the weekend's events are free and range from lectures to film to readings and even a literary walk.

"We would like the weekend to be a place where people who would have known Michael and who have fond memories of him can come and be able to tell their story," Ms MacKernan said.

And both she and the organising committee are

enormously gratified at the heart-felt response from Michael's poetic and literary friends.

"They all felt honoured to be asked to take part," Ms MacKernan said.

After the official opening by Mr Kennelly on September 22 at 7.30pm in Aras William Smith O'Brien,

Council Cathaoirleach, Cllr Kevin Sheahan, will present the Michael Hartnett Annual Poetry Award. There were 16 entries for the award, which is for a third or later collection of poems as Gaelige.

This will be followed by a reading by Brendan Kennelly with music and songs from Nóirín Ní Riain in the Courtenay Lodge Hotel.

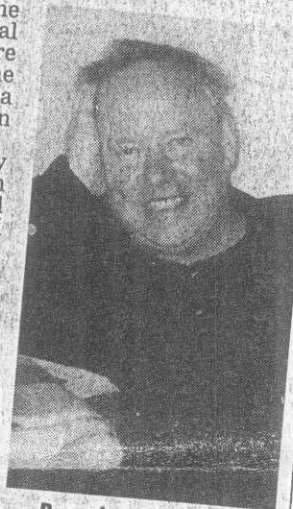
Saturday's events include a morning lecture on Michael Hartnett: The Man and his Work, by poet Desmond Egan, a non-stop showing of the documentary on Michael Hartnett, Necklace of Wrens, in the library, and an afternoon walk around some of the poet's favourite haunts. Maiden Street Ballad Literary Walk will include readings, stories and music by local poets, friends and neighbours.

Saturday evening's events include a launch of a new book of poems by Gabriel Fitzmaurice as well as readings by poets Moya Cannon, Rita Ann Higgins and Maighread Medbh, who will also feature their favourite Hartnett poems.

On Sunday afternoon, poet Máire Mhac an tSaoi, will lecture on the

influence of the bard Dáibhi O Bruadair on Hartnett's own work as part of a tour to Broadford and on Sunday night, Limerick poets will perform their own work at Cúirt na hEigse.

A full programme of the weekend's events is available through Council offices and libraries.



Brendan Kennelly

Gallahue in cal

COUNCILLORS must put aside political preferences so that "a semblance of sanity" can be restored to the planning process, said Cllr John Gallahue.

The Planning Act is being misinterpreted and it appears that officials are posing almost

unlimited reasons for preventing people from building homes in rural areas, he said.

Cllr Gallahue said that he was appalled to read comments in the national media from Sligo's chief planner, who said that rural houses should be absorbed into the

landscape. "What is by planning nothing more than a lonated state on personal or whimsical said Cllr. "These policies are unacceptable people of ru

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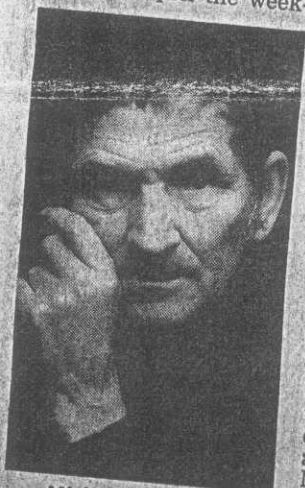
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Michael Hartnett



Members of Kilmallock Widows' Association who are off to Lisdoonvarna

Widows plan trip to Lisdoonvarna

By DEIRDRE McGRATH

THE Kilmallock Widows' Association has grown steadily since it was set up earlier this year and the group is now planning its first outing to Lisdoonvarna in October.

The group, which is affiliated with the national Dublin-based Widows' Association, was set up by chairwoman

Numbers have risen from nine members to 20 since February and they took part in a special Mass conducted by Canon Willie Fitzmaurice to commemorate their deceased loved ones.

The day-trip to Lisdoonvarna is almost booked up, but anyone interested in going along should attend a meeting at the Pactus Centre

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