

IN BRIEF

Feale Fleadh

THIS year's Fleadh by the Feale takes place from May 3 to 7 in Abbeyfeale. The grand celebrity concert will take place in Coláiste Íde agus Iosef on Sunday May 6 and features the Shandrum Céilí Band with support from the Coláiste Íde agus Iosef Band. Doors open at 7pm with the show from 8pm. For tickets and information call 086-2427003 or 087-7697672.

Council twitter

LIMERICK City and County Council is taking part in the #OurCouncilDay #ÁrLáSaChomhairle Twitter Campaign on April 10, to raise awareness of the services they provide. The public are encouraged to tweet about the services provided to their community using the hashtags. Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Cllr Stephen Keary said, "Limerick City and County Council uses social media to enhance our communication with members of the public, and by partaking in Twitter Day we hope to raise awareness of the many different services we provide." In the 2017 campaign the official Twitter account, @LimerickCouncil, ranked 5th place. www.limerick.ie/council.

Public meeting on elder care

A PUBLIC meeting, hosted by Senator Maria Byrne featuring Minister of State at the Department of Health Jim Daly, will be held in Limerick next week with a focus on care of the elderly. The Minister of State with special responsibility for Mental Health and Older People, will address the public meeting on Tuesday, April 17 next in the Castletroy Park Hotel. Sectoral perspectives on the Care of Older Citizens will be represented by guest speakers. Senator Byrne said that this is a public event designed to raise awareness and help shape government policy on the care of older citizens. "The meeting will primarily focus on the Fair Deal Scheme, home care, the issue of loneliness amongst elderly people, crime and the Age Friendly Strategy. There will also be a Q&A session at the end."

Charity Ceili

All roads lead to the Longcourt House Hotel in Newcastle West on April 27 for the third annual charity ceili in aid of Down Syndrome Limerick. It will be the first ceili or a number of music events planned at the Longcourt. The music will be provided by Con Herbert and Mountain Road. It promises to be a great night for a great cause with proceedings getting underway at 9.30 pm.

Ice Age

UNDERSTANDING how Ireland was shaped before and after the Ice Age will allow scientists understand more about present and future climate. That will be the focus of a presentation given by a Mary Immaculate College geography lecturer Dr Catherine Dalton. 'Standing on the Shoulders of Giants' will take place in the Hunt Museum on Saturday April 21 next and will consist of a series of retrospective talks in celebration of key quaternary scientists known for their trailblazing work investigating how the Irish landscape was shaped during and since the Ice Age. More details can be found at www.mic.ul.ie.

HERITAGE

Documentary traces the tough lives of Limerick fishermen



Mayor of Limerick City and County, Cllr Stephen Keary, Minister for Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan, and Shannon fisherman Mike Grimes, Coonagh, at the launch of the Shannon Fisherman Archive Film.

Picture: Alan Place

by Tom McCullough
news@limerickpost.ie

THE stories of families in Limerick who earned their living from fishing along the banks of the River Shannon, from the city to the estuary, have been captured in a new film, 'The Estuary'.

The traditional skill of reed cutting that was practiced along the estuary by some of the fishermen has also been included in the film, which captures the tough and often dangerous job these men encountered on a daily basis.

The film which has been funded as part of the Creative Ireland programme grew out of another project by Limerick City and County Council in conjunction with Mary Immaculate College which captured the oral histories of the Shannon Fishermen and Reed Cutters.

The fishermen featured in the documentary belonged to four distinct groupings, which shared the river for the most part fairly amicably.

The Abbey Fishermen traditionally fished between Doonass and the lax weir in Corbally. They lived mainly in the Abbey area of Limerick city.

Sheep Street, Gaol Lane and Meat Market Lane.

The Strand Fishermen lived near Clancy Strand and fished from the city to the Estuary before the development of the Ardnacrusha power station in the 1920's. After that they joined the Coonagh and Newtown fishermen fishing from Barrington's pier to Scatterry Island. They fished during the salmon season (mainly from July to September) and worked other jobs in the off-season while still fishing for pollock and eels.

The Newtown Fishermen were predominantly from Newtown. Clara and also fished seasonally but during the winter a large proportion of them were reed cutters. They could only cut reeds after the first frost in October. Coonagh Fishermen, on the Clare side of the Shannon, fished downriver from Bunratty.

The Askeaton Fishermen didn't cut reeds but fished further into the estuary and often fished herring and cultivated seaweed.

Ardnacrusha disrupted this way of life when the hydro-electric scheme altered the flow of the river. The tail race reduced the volume of water in

the original course and when the turbines released flood water vast quantities were allowed to flow through the original channel. This meant the water was moving faster and it also changed the way the fish behaved.

The 2006 EU conservation policy saw major changes as the government bought the licences from the majority of the fishermen and it became illegal to use a net on the river.

Mayor Stephen Keary said: "The traditional Shannon fishermen and reed cutters are dying away but this film will allow their stories to remain with us. Those who worked along the River Shannon have a story to tell that is unique to Limerick and this film will allow future historians and sociologists to get a glimpse of what it was like to fish the Shannon."

Launching the documentary at Istabraq Hall on Friday, Heritage Minister Josepha Madigan said the film tells the often challenging story that these fishermen and their families experienced throughout their lives.

"It captures the passion these men held for the river and its ability to sustain livelihoods. It shines a light onto very tough times of the past,

when fishing along the Shannon Estuary literally put food on the table, paid the bills and bought clothes."

"I'm very happy that this invaluable film has been made possible by funding from Creative Ireland. The Creative Ireland programme is a very important all of government programme to ensure creativity in central to our lives and wellbeing. This project demonstrated the importance of both of these things."

Council Archivist Jacqui Hayes explained that because the fishermen didn't keep records, their way of life was in real danger of being forgotten.

"This film captures this rich heritage for current and future generations and brings it to life through the voices of the fishermen telling their own story."

"One of the benefits of having this documentary is its ability to bring to life the voices and experiences of individuals, many of whom might otherwise have been forgotten by history. Film also provides a level of accessibility to the past that is often missing from other forms of history," she said.

'The Estuary' can be viewed on Limerick.ie