



HERITAGE AWARD WINNERS 2017

The Heritage Council is delighted to announce the Heritage Award Winners 2017, showcasing the best of National Heritage Week and recognising the fantastic work of all the heritage enthusiasts who take part. There were 122 entries for the Awards and 170 nominations for the Heritage Hero award. The 13 winners came from eight counties from Donegal to Kerry. Co. Clare came out on top with three winners.

Heritage Hero Award

The Heritage Council's Heritage Hero Award celebrates someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the protection and promotion of heritage in Ireland.

This year's winner is historian and author **Sharon Slater** from **Limerick**. Sharon has worked tirelessly over the years in local history research in Limerick. She established www.limerickslife.com in 2004, an unparalleled treasure trove of Limerick history from rare images to untold stories of Limerick's people and places. Her books include *The Little Book of Limerick* (2013) *Limerick: Ireland in Old Photographs* (2016) and *A Stitch in Time: A History of Limerick Clothing Factory* (2017). Sharon has worked on a number of major projects with Limerick Museum, Limerick Archives and Mary Immaculate College. Sharon devotes her time to heritage in the community from local heritage projects with Limerick Fishermen to leading bicycle tours! Sharon brings history to life for the people of Limerick and is a worthy recipient of the Heritage Hero Award.

Hidden Heritage Award

This award shines a light on Ireland's hidden heritage and was open to event organisers who successfully explored lesser known aspects of Ireland's heritage during Heritage Week.

Winner

The Great Irish Garden organised by **Irish Seed Savers** in Co. **Clare** highlighted the amazing diversity and heritage of Ireland's food crops. Over 450 people attended the open day enjoying seed saving displays and demonstrations, tours of the gardens and orchards, and a chance to taste heritage crops. Due to industrial farming it's estimated that over 80% of crop varieties have been lost in the last 100 years. Ireland has a rich history of food heritage from the well-known Lumper potato to the ancient and very rare Irish Preen's Pea. Irish Seed Savers' mission is to save these varieties and make them available to the general public.

Shortlist

The **Mining Heritage Hill Walk** organised by **Glenmalure PURE Mile/Adopt a Monument Group and Glens of Lead** in Co. **Wicklow** explored the hidden social and industrial heritage linked to the mining industry in the valleys of Glendasan, Glendalough, and Glenmalure. 28 people participated in the eight hour walk along this 20 kilometre upland route visiting six mine sites and significant landmarks including recently conserved Mine Crusher House building and restored miners' trail at Baravore.



The heritage of the route was brought to life by talks from local historians and a former miner. The group hope to establish this route as a way-marked Mining Heritage Trail in the future.

The **Laneways & Bow-ways of Ennis** walk organised by **Ennis Tidy Towns** in Co. **Clare** was led by local historian Larry Brennan and shone a spotlight on the rich history of the town. 100 people including locals and tourists learned the hidden stories of the town as well as the names of many laneways and bow-ways (a term particular to Ennis). These placenames names were then uploaded by the organisers to meitheal.logainm.ie, the community placename collection project.

The **Sea Kayaking and Geology Tour** organised by **Wild Water Adventures** in Co. **Kerry** teamed up with Gosia, a local geologist to show the local community and visitors the unique geological heritage of the North Kerry Coastline. They ran two kayaking tours and a well-attended photographic and specimen exhibition at Meenogahane Pier for the day. The tours covered the rich geological heritage of the area as well as local history, folklore and wildlife. Meenogahane's stunning coastline is under explored, under documented and largely inaccessible, unless by water, a real hidden gem.

Heritage Communities Award

This award was open to event organisers who brought their community together to celebrate Heritage Week.

Winner

The Foyle: Tales of Salmon Fishing organised by **Wild Strands** in Co. **Donegal** celebrated and documented the rich maritime heritage of local fishermen who fished wild salmon on the Foyle. The organisers recognised the urgent need to create an event so that the wealth of this local tradition could be recorded. In collaboration with the local Men's Shed they brought men together to share and record their knowledge. The tradition of salmon fishing meant everything to this community as men returned from overseas, as they used to for the salmon season, to participate in this event. This coastal community came together to re-unite again with old friends, share a home cooked meal prepared on site, have a night's craic and share stories of salmon fishing that is now gone. Videos of the fisherman's stories were recorded at the event and there are more plans to record, preserve and pass on the knowledge of the fishermen before it is lost.

Shortlist

Benny Duffy's Photographs organised by **Bailieborough Heritage Society** in Co. **Cavan** showcased Benny Duffy's photographs of the rural community around Killann Parish, many dating from 1950/60's. At 85, this was his first photographic exhibition and Benny regaled the crowd with stories of the times when Cavan won All Ireland's. The Nursing Home where he now lives took their residents to see the exhibition, bringing generations together to celebrate the social history of a community as seen through one man's eyes.

Spa Wells Pumps 150yrs organised by **Lisdoonvarna Tidy Towns** in Co. **Clare** celebrated 150 years since the first pump was installed at the Spa Wells in Lisdoonvarna. It was a thriving tourist destination for over one hundred years but declined in recent years. Hundreds of people attended over the two day event sharing fond memories, tasting the water, and learning the history of this fascinating place. Lisdoonvarna Failte CLG, Lisdoonvarna Heritage Group, Lisdoonvarna Tidy Towns



and Visit Lisdoonvarna collaborated to bring people out and celebrate this community owned heritage site.

Public Street Signage in Cork organised by **Niamh Daly & Joanne Hughes, Cork City Council**

Archaeologist brought an urban community together to enjoy and learn about an aspect of Cork's past. Tom Spalding, a Cork-based writer of design, social and architectural history spoke about street signage around Cork city and the accompanying exhibition attracted local people to the library to find out more about their urban heritage.

Cool for Kids Award

This award was open to event organisers who encouraged children and families to participate in Heritage Week.

Winner

Go Wild Nature Camps organised by **BirdWatch Ireland** in Co. **Galway** was all about connecting children with their local environment through revealing the wonders and importance of local biodiversity. The camps emphasised making nature accessible through practical activities and hands on learning which included field trips, surveys to locate and record wildlife, close encounters with different animals, as well as games and challenges designed to explore environmental topics in an informative and most importantly fun way. They appealed to the innate curiosity that children possess for wildlife and focused on practical hands-on activities and creative exploration. The nature camps also served to link different elements of the heritage community, from a diverse range of research and conservation organisations (BirdWatch Ireland, The Vincent Wildlife Trust, Animal Magic, GMIT, NUIG, and Oughterard Trout Hatchery), to local authorities (Galway County Council), local community groups (Oughterard Heritage Group, Oughterard Courthouse Centre and the Irish Workhouse Centre in Portumna).

Shortlist

The **Pollinator Party in the Park** organised by **Laois Heritage Office** aimed to raise awareness of pollinators in a fun and engaging way. Each element of the day had the same message – pollinators are fun and important. Children could enjoy face painting (bees and butterflies of course!), bug hunts, a scavenger hunt and biodiversity quiz, and everyone could build a mini bug hotel. Laois Heritage Office with the IWT Laois-Offaly Branch collaborated with the Portlaoise Mens Shed, Dunamais Beekeepers, Laois Outdoor Education and wildlife experts to plan the party.

Food and Eating in Prehistory organised by **Katharina Becker and Ben Gearey of University College Cork** focused on archaeology and scientific remains that are usually regarded as being 'too difficult' to hold the interest of young people. Children could get hands on looking down a microscope at pollen grains, trying indoor excavation, butter churning, or grinding grain. This event encouraged children to taste the past and to think about the process of food production that we take for granted in the present day.

Chase a Fairy, Find a Bee organised by the **Irish Workhouse Centre, Portumna, Co. Galway** brought children on a journey with the fairies to come see the bees and their bee hotel in a celebration of biodiversity and the importance of bees in our lives, from food production to the eco-system. Special nature packs were presented to each child with a focus on bees in folklore. Patients at the Mental Health Centre in Loughrea (St Brendans Campus) made a beehive for the children to view on the day.