

Kila To Luanch Seachtain Na Gaeilge 2008 In Clare

Wednesday, 27th Feb 2008

Hundreds of people from across County Clare are expected to participate in **Seachtain na Gaeilge 2008**, which will be launched with a concert by **Kíla** in Glór Irish Music Centre this coming Friday (29th February).

The seven-piece band will participate in the annual celebration of the Irish language and culture along with a number of other high profile participants.

They include *Éanna Ní Lamhna*, botanist, writer, radio personality and President of An Taisce; *Ceoltóirí na Mainistreach*, an Ennis-based Ceilí band; *Ré Ó Laighléis*, the biggest selling contemporary writer in the Irish language; *Theo Dorgan*, award winning Cork-born poet and broadcaster; *Pádraig Mac Fhearghusa*, Poet, Editor of *Feasta* magazine and Chair of the Joint Committee on the Irish Language; *Bríd Ní Mhóráin*, poet and author of an acclaimed study of Iveragh peninsula Irish; and artist *Ceara Conway*.

The wide-ranging programme of events will feature bilingual readings, storytelling sessions for children at various library branches, lunchtime music sessions organised in association with Clare Arts Office, a 'Shop Window Treasure Hunt' organised by *Oifig na Gaeilge* in Clare County Council and Ennis Chamber of Commerce, and interactive workshops on writing fiction, Irish Mythology and Traditions, the art of Puppet Making, and climate change and energy conservation.

Events will be held in various towns and villages throughout Clare, including **Ennis, Inagh, Ennistymon, Kildysart, Killaloe, Kilrush, Miltown Malbay, Newmarket-On-Fergus, Feakle, Tulla, Sixmilebridge, Scariff and Kilkee.**

For the second consecutive year, *Fóram Ghaeilge an Chláir*, which comprises members of various Irish language organisations throughout the county, has taken on the role of co-ordinating a countywide programme for the annual festival.

'We anticipate that this year's programme of events will involve hundreds of people of all ranges of fluency throughout Clare', stated Ms. Emer Ní Fhlaitheartaigh, Fóram member and Oifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge Clare County Council.

She continued, *'Seachtain na Gaeilge puts a serious emphasis on the Irish language, incorporating both written and the spoken tongue, with abundant efforts from voluntary groups and officially organised activities. This year we are especially delighted to welcome so many high profile contributors from around Ireland and beyond to County Clare. I have no doubt that the many and varied organised events will both entertain and educate those who attend them.'*

Seachtain na Gaeilge takes place just weeks after the promotion of Irish in the County was commended at the highest level.

According to Ms. Ní Fhlaitheartaigh, 'Last month, *Coiste Ghlór na hInse* received the overall national accolade for the promotion of Irish in the *Glór na nGael* awards while Clare Local Authorities received the Public Service award. Both of these achievements demonstrate that the Irish language is vibrant, alive and exciting in the hearts of the people of Clare. This has added to the positive climate for the events of *Seachtain na Gaeilge*.

The Festival will be closed on St. Patrick's Day with *Ceílí Mór na Sráide*, during which *Ceoltóirí na Mainistreach* will provide music in O'Connell Square, Ennis from 12.30 to 1.30pm.

Seachtain na Gaeilge is a non-profit organisation which helps to promote the Irish language and culture both at home and abroad within a two week festival held in March every year. Since its foundation by **Conradh na Gaeilge** in 1903, the festival has progressed and developed not alone on a national level but in countries such as Germany, Brazil, Canada, America and England.

A full listing of ***Seachtain na Gaeilge*** events is available from *Áras Contae an Chláir*, New Road, Ennis, and participating venues and libraries across the county. The *Clár Imeachtaí na Seachtaine* may also be viewed at www.snag.ie, www.clarelibrary.ie and www.clarecoco.ie.

Seachtain na Gaeilge is sponsored by *Foras na Gaeilge*. *Foras na Gaeilge*, the body responsible for the promotion of the Irish language throughout the whole island of Ireland, was established on 2nd December 1999. In the Good Friday Agreement, it was stated that a North/South Implementation body be set up to promote both the Irish language and the Ulster Scots language. Under the auspices of this body, *Foras na Gaeilge* will carry out all the designated responsibilities regarding the Irish language. This entails facilitating and encouraging the speaking and writing of Irish in the public and private arena in the Republic of Ireland, and in Northern Ireland where there is appropriate demand, in the context of part three of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

Clare County Council joined by a number of other leading agencies and community organisations, established ***Fóram Gaeilge an Chláir*** in December 2006.

The Forum's main aim is to achieve a strategic, integrated approach to the promotion of the Irish language in all sectors of society in the County. Its membership includes **Clare County Council, the GAA, An Clár as Gaeilge, Health Service Executive, Chambers of Commerce** throughout the County, **Conradh Na Gaeilge, Clare Vocational Educational Committee, Coiste Ghlór na nGael, Inis, Clare Community Forum, Clare Tourist Council, Coiste Logainmneacha an Chláir** and **Glór Irish Music Centre**. The group will also benefit from the participation of **Féile Scoil Drámaíochta** and **Féile na hInse**.