

Launch of the Living Communities



The Living Communities was launched in the Oak Room, in the Mansion House, in Dublin on the 16th of May, 2005. The launch was well attended. An especial welcome was given to His Excellency, Mr. Suarabh Kumar, the Indian Ambassador. There were representatives from the Mayo Gaeltacht of Ceathrú Thaidhg, senior officers from Foras na Gaeilge, Gael-Taca and from other Irish-language organizations.

Ordinary Irish people came who understood the importance of the national culture. A group of pupils from Coláiste Chaoimhín, Marlborough Street, were in attendance. This is a school which educates through Irish in the heart of the city. The loyalty of young people to the national language is essential.

Mr. Andrew Montague, Assistant Lord Mayor, made the Oak Room available. He was subsequently (in 2011) elected Lord Mayor. He takes a special interest in youth welfare in deprived areas and in introducing proper traffic regulation. The Living Communities, with its basic drive for social justice, is fortunate to have the support of the first citizen of the city. He understands that a knowledge of cultural heritage can help successful economic performance. He addresses complex issues generally in a reassuring fashion.

Dr Liam Réamonn and Treasa Ní Ghearraidh from Mayo spoke from the platform, on their new proposal to help to develop substantive business, in the private sector, for the benefit of Irish-speaking people. An associated aim of those who spoke was to bring it to general attention that Irish-speakers could contribute, on an on-going basis, to the general welfare of the country.



After the three speakers had held the floor for a while, Uinsíonn Mac Graith, from Mayo, showed several pictures on a screen, taken from his scholarly book entitled: 'Placenames and Heritage of Dún Chaocháin'. The publication takes an important step in publicising the distinctive Mayo way of speaking Irish. [Differences between provinces are not so significant as to result in dialects.] The book describes special points in local history and gives information on the geology and fauna of the district. The research undertaken is of the highest order.



As regards economics Dr Réamonn said that, throughout history, no culture had ever survived, if its people did not have their own economy. In 18th century Ireland, two different economies co-existed: that which the English ran and that which the Gaelic Lords ran. It is the aim of the Living Communities to promote ecotourism with and to countries which had interactions with Ireland in times of yore. In this way, the cultural bond can be revisited.

People in France and Germany have to an extent a popular memory of historic ties with us, which Irish people in the Galltacht (English-speaking areas) have lost. It seems, perhaps, that a strong, proud Gaelic Ireland went finally to sleep during the Great Hunger (1845-9). When subsequently the princess Éire came to, acculturation had happened and the Gaelic spirit was gone. We were no longer ‘fior-Ghaelach’, True Gaels, but we had gained attitudes and foreign interests, which someone from Gaelic times would not even have recognized.

As regards the beneficial social effects of Gaelic Ways, summer work camps were organized to bring together pupils from urban Irish-speaking schools and rural young people. The young people were to learn discipline and the call of duty, as well as self-esteem and urban-rural solidarity. In this way, rural Gaelic youth – with their family values, respect for others, proper understanding of folklore and learning - had a particular impact on urban youth. Equally, the rural group learned confidence from the urban one, which had no difficulty with the Irish language – rather pride and a great determination to expand the reach of Gaelic Ireland.



The Living Communities accepted that its volunteers had a great challenge before them. However, there was no shortage of the will to win in the Oak Room that day. Links were to be made between the ordinary folks of urban and rural communities. As were links with people like ourselves in France and Germany.

On our website we were to go further - to describe in an original way how we, the Gael, shared with the Eastern World an ancient civilization and a glorious heritage, which grew from the the same ancient roots - around 5,000 years ago. The Living Communities wished that information on these things be readily available to all Irish people again. Such knowledge had been lost when Gaelic culture went under, a culture which had once been an anchor culture in Europe.

