

## **Press Release - 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

### **The Claddagh Traditional Boat Festival, Wednesday May 24<sup>th</sup> to Sunday May 28<sup>th</sup> 2017 Claddagh Basin, Galway**

### **Féile na mBád, An Cladach, Cathair na Gaillimhe Dé Céadaoin 24/05 – Dé Domhnaigh 28/05 Imchuach an Chladaigh, Gaillimh**

## **The Vikings are Coming!**

Bádóirí an Ćladaig's ( The Claddagh Boatmen) Regatta 2017 will not only showcase the most beautiful Galway Hookers and Gleoiteogs in the West of Ireland, but an invasion of 2 Viking Long Boats will give this year's event a decidedly Nordic feel.

The annual regatta will now encompass the inaugural Claddagh Traditional Boat Festival. From Wednesday evening 24<sup>th</sup> May to Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017 the Claddagh Basin, in the heart of Galway city, will showcase twenty uniquely Galway traditional Irish boats. They will include the 5 Galway Hookers and Gleoiteogs built and refurbished by Bádóirí an Ćladaig to date.

The talented ship builders are on track in their plans to build a total of fourteen of these iconic vessels, representing the fourteen 14 Galway Tribes, in time for 2020, when Galway will be the European Capital of Culture.

The 2 Viking Long Boats and their crew, from Ardglass in Northern Ireland, are joining their boat making brethren in the West as guests and invaders. The Claddagh Basin will also host a Viking village for the period of the festival. Their presence will be inescapable, with a (weather dependent) full Viking invasion of Salthill on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May.

The Traditional Hookers, Gleoiteogs and Púcans have been described as "moving sculptures, living and usable artefacts of our heritage". This will be the first opportunity to see their likes and number, in full sail, gathered and moored at the Claddagh Basin since 1920.

The Festival will also be an opportunity to demonstrate the City of the Tribes' traditional Irish music prowess. With the help of many of the local branches of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann there will be plenty of song and dance on the city's street corners, and trad sessions galore.

On the quayside from Wednesday evening to Friday evening the Féile will also showcase some of Galway's finest music and song talent.

This festival will engage with 14 primary schools in Galway, Kinvara and out the Connemara Coast so that they "adopt" one of the 14 main traditional boats to be moored in the basin. The school children will learn their history and learn about the boating tradition of the Claddagh and Vikings. They will then take a trip to the Claddagh Basin to see the boats for themselves.

Over 150 primary schools kids in Viking and Medieval Galway costume will, with the invaders from Ardglass Vikings, stage an "attack" and a "defence" of the invasion throughout the streets

of Galway, from Lynch's Castle, down Quay Street to the Spanish Arch on Thursday 12pm, Friday 12pm and Saturday 3pm of the Festival. Weather depending there will be a further invasion in Salthill on the Saturday at 6.00pm.

So at the heart of this festival is a real Galway community and voluntary sector vision and effort.

The 5 traditional Gleoiteogs and Hookers have been built, preserved or re crafted in Galway by the Bádóirí over the last number of years. This project is supported and funded by the Department of Social Protection. Galway City Council and the Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) are also financial supporters of this endeavour and festival with the GRETB engaged in specific training and education in the marine sector.

The Latin Quarter, Galway's Westend and The Village Salthill business groups have joined forces and all come "on board" as anchor sponsors of the event. Support for the 14 key traditional boats will also come from individual Galway City Centre and Salthill businesses.

**Please see attached Festival poster English and Irish & High Res Photo (credit John Walsh ) that can be used and supplementary information below.**

## **For more information contact**

### **Claddagh Boatmen**

**Peter Connolly: [claddaghboatmen@gmail.com](mailto:claddaghboatmen@gmail.com) - 086 052 8004**

**Cóilí Hernan: [ohiarnain@gmail.com](mailto:ohiarnain@gmail.com) - 087 660 1725**

**Ciarán Oliver: [ciaranoliver@gmail.com](mailto:ciaranoliver@gmail.com) - 0872807028**

### **Festival committee member**

**Caroline Mc Neill : [caroline.mc@live.ie](mailto:caroline.mc@live.ie) - 085 2320131**

### **Festival Claddagh Basin Music, School Liaison and Manuela Riedo Foundation**

**Eoin Durkin : [durkineoin@eircom.net](mailto:durkineoin@eircom.net) - 086 8054494**

### **Comhaltas Ceoltóiri Éireann**

**Sabhbh Ní Fhátharta : [sabhbnif@gmail.com](mailto:sabhbnif@gmail.com) 086 1016891**

**Peadar Bric: [ailish24@eircom.net](mailto:ailish24@eircom.net) 086 606 4267**

### **The Latin Quarter – Rep for Event Sponsors**

**John Deely - [dcstoregalway@gmail.com](mailto:dcstoregalway@gmail.com)**

### **Galway City Arts Officer**

**James Harrold : [james.harrold@galwaycity.ie](mailto:james.harrold@galwaycity.ie)**

See **Ardglass Vikings** <http://ardglassvikings.com>

## **Supplementary Information**

The idea for the festival has evolved from many different projects over the last few years. As identified many years ago by the Bádóirí there is now the chance to use the fabulous Claddagh and city centre resource that is the "Claddagh Basin". This was made possible by the recent lock renovation works of the Navigational Trust. Galwegians now have a stage, an amphitheatre, a place to come and see, enjoy and appreciate part of our marine and cultural heritage up close, in the heart of their community.

Many Galwegians and beyond are not aware of the important cultural, heritage, craft, skills and preservation work that the Claddagh Boatmen are involved in down the years. 5 Traditional Gleoiteogs and Hookers have been built, preserved or re crafted in Galway by the Bádóirí over the last number of years. This project is supported by the Department of Social Protection and The Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board. The Claddagh Boatmen are also in the process of acquiring on permanent loan from private owners 2 more boats, Anam Crara and An Giolla Rua.

Bádóirí have negotiated with 7 private owners from across Kinvara to Connemara and Cummann Huicéirí na Gaillimhe to combine their forces to present 14 boats to at this festival to represents the 14 Tribes of Galway. These boats and this collaboration will be available to showcase Galway2020 over the coming years.

These moving sculptures, these living and usable artefacts of our heritage will be in full sail and moored in the basin 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

As well as building and sailing boats, The Claddagh Boatmen have built community, voluntary and charitable group ties with many organisations in and around Galway and in the Northern Ireland.

For example The Manuela Riedo Foundation Ireland witnessed the building and launching of a beautiful Gleoiteog in Manuela's name and memory. The Manuela is owned by Galway City Council and managed by Bádóirí on their behalf. This is a prime example of the positivity, the possibilities and the potential that these boats can bring to the Galway community. Manuela Riedo, a 17 year old Swiss language student, had her life brutally taken in Galway in 2007.

In this Manuela's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year The Manuela gleoiteog will be an important part of this Festival.

The importance and the "what is it about" ? of this festival to Galway and the west of Ireland cannot be put any better than in the words of Galway City's own Arts Officer, James Harrold.

**"There is no image that could represent Galway more beguilingly than the red sails of a hooker gliding up the Claddagh Stream on the evening tide. Our maritime city is well represented by the iconic working boats of Galway Bay.**

**The beloved hookers, gleóiteogs and púcan that grace our coast have found their way into a thousand publications, from visitor's websites to the cover of poetry collections and municipal development plans.**

**Combining a design, craft, art, and seamanship, providing a unique platform for our dance, music, style and fun, these boats and those who sail them are an integral part of Galway life and culture. Their story is Galway's story, it's in our DNA: our bones, our hearts and in our heads."** So this festival will celebrate this story, Galway's story.

Bádóirí have invited The Ardglass Vikings and their 2 Long Ships from Northern Ireland to be part of this festival and to invade the town.

Around this project the festival will engage with 14 primary schools in Galway, Kinvara and out the Connemara Coast so that they "adopt" one of the 14 traditional boats to be moored in the basin. The kids will learn their history and learn about the boating tradition of the Claddagh and The Vikings. They will then come, visit and see for themselves.

Over 120 primary schools kids will dress and rehearse in Viking and Medieval costume and with their visitors from Ardglass Vikings will stage an "attack" and a "defence" of the invasion from Lynch's Castle, down Quay Street to the Spanish Arch.

In conjunction with the Salthill Village group of business' they will stage another Viking invasion at Palmers Rock Beach in Salthill (Saturday 6pm, weather depending) and there again will gather many young Vikings and young medieval Galwegians to do battle and enjoy a Barbeque

At the Claddagh basin they will showcase some of the best of local music and host a fabulous young group of musicians from Cork as our "anchor house band" over the weekend.

The Latin Quarter, Galway's Westend and The Village Salthill are on board with some sponsorship. 14 of the over 20 traditional boats coming will also be supported by individual pubs and business.

## **Ardglass Vikings <http://ardglassvikings.com/>**

The Ardglass Vikings are a not for profit cross-community organisation primarily involved in charity fundraising. They are a regular presence at community festivals in Ireland, the UK and Europe.

The group can be hired for charity fundraising, to launch a community or corporate event, organise races in their Replica Viking Longships, take part in parades.

Through their Viking heritage work with schools they play a role in educating young people, and have many links with historical societies, living history and Viking re-enactment groups. Both vessels and vikings are involved in TV and film work.

Since its inception, the Ardglass Viking Association has helped to raise tens of thousands of pounds for local and national institutions whose key objectives are the preservation, recognition and respect of life & conservation of the environment. The group also engages with cultural heritage as a bridge for cross-community relations.

Their two replica long ships have featured in several TV shows and films, as have their clan of scarily authentic warriors and shield maidens. They have featured in the TV series Vikings, now in it's fourth season, and been involved in a series of documentary films made by the BBC on the Viking invasions of the British and Irish Isles.