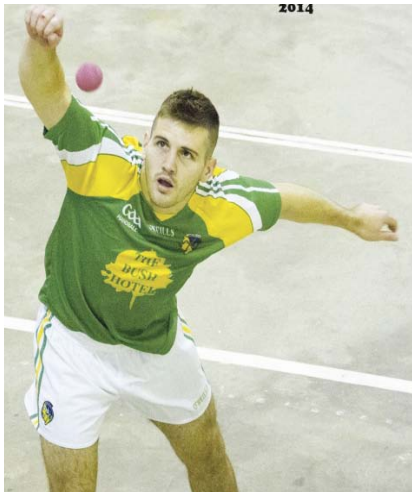
Martin Raftery: All Ireland Champion

M M Barnard

■ Martin Raftery, Handball Champion



On 22nd September 2014 a small piece of Leitrim sporting history was made when 25 year old Martin Raftery won the All Ireland Junior A 60 x 30 Handball Championship. In a tense match he beat his opponent Paul Lambert of Wexford in the tie break with a score of 21-18 after losing the first game 21-16 and winning the second with a score of 21-18.This is by no means Raftery's first taste of success. Together with partner Emmet Mahon he won the provincial level under 14 doubles in 2003. They went on to win the All Ireland semi-final but lost out in the final. However, consolation came when they were named *Connacht Juvenile Players of the Year.* Raftery won his first All Ireland Junior B 60 x 30 in 2011 when he and Jamie Murray beat their Wexford opponents. In the same year they were named Connacht team of the year by the *GAA Handball All Stars.* On the same day as the awards ceremony he was part of the team that won the All Ireland Junior Championships for Fenagh for the first time. As handball isn't given the same prestige as football or hurling, Raftery hopes that his win will help to raise the profile of handball in Leitrim and that it will encourage young players to take up the sport. For Raftery this is the pay-off for hard work and training. He couldn't have done it without the help and guidance of all those who stand behind the scenes.

SNIPPET

The Cairn and Time Capsule

As one of the closing events of the Carrick 400th Anniversary (1613-2013) commemorations, a Memorial Cairn was constructed along the road leading to the Famine Graveyard at the rear of St Patrick's Hospital, using many stones contributed by people from all over the country, and a few from abroad. The cairn's marker is dedicated to the memory of our ancestors, with the inscription *Clochán Ama in Onoir Dar Sinear* engraved. There is a purpose-built air and waterproof chamber within the cairn containing nearly 100 mementos of our time, including a letter from Uachtarán na hÉireann, Michael D. Higgins. The chamber was sealed in December, and the unveiling event took place on 13th February 2014 with a good attendance. The project was a joint effort of *Carrick-on-Shannon Heritage Group, Carrick-on-Shannon & District Historical Society, Leitrim County Council,* and *Leitrim Development Company*, and it is envisioned that the chamber will be opened for the 500th commemorations.

John Bredin (Heritage Group Chair), Aileen Armstrong (Historical Society), Cllr Sinéad Guckian, Mary C Dolan (Heritage Group), Gerry Faughnan (Carrick Chamber of Commerce), Sinead McDermott (Leitrim Tourism), Frank Curran (County Manager), Ciarán Tracey (Leitrim County Council), Joseph Gilhooly (Leitrim County Council), Ethel Patterson (Heritage Group) & Teresa O'Callaghan (St George's Heritage Centre).

Famine Memorial Cairn & Time Capsule
Cllr Sinéad Guckian, Mary C Dolan (Carrick-on Shannon Heritage Group) & Gerard Faughnan (Carrick Chamber of Commerce)

PHOTOS: KEITH NOLAN PHOTOGRAPHY