

# Leitrim Roots Festival 2013

The Leitrim Genealogy Centre is organising the return of the Leitrim Roots Festival for September 2013. The festival is returning in association with both 'The Gathering' and the 'Carrick on Shannon 400' celebrations which sees Carrick on Shannon celebrate 400 years as a town. The Leitrim Roots Festival hopes to attract anyone who has connections with Leitrim. Its aim is to get visitors to spend a week in Leitrim and get to know the beauty and history of the county of their ancestors. The festival is not only for visitors who want to have a genuine Irish experience and interact with local communities, it is also for Leitrim people who would like to experience all that their home county has to offer.

It is estimated that there are approximately 1,000,000 people in the United States who have Leitrim ancestry. There are also large numbers of people in England, Canada and Australia who can trace their roots back to Leitrim. With this in mind in 2006 the Leitrim Genealogy Centre organised the first ever Roots Festival which attracted visitors from all over the world for a week-long event. The event was very successful and as a result the Leitrim Roots Festival returns in 2013 and aims to be the biggest and best party ever. Everyone is welcome.

For many visitors it will be a dream

opportunity to visit Leitrim with a wonderful programme of events, visits, lectures and cultural events to take part in. New for the 2013 programme is meeting people from local communities all across Leitrim. We hope that festival attendees will enjoy meeting the many characters we host here in Leitrim and experience the hospitality and warm welcome that County Leitrim is so famous for.

## Programme

The Leitrim Roots festival will take place from 20th - 28th September 2013.

Some of the highlights include:

Leitrim Ancestry with visits to both the Leitrim Genealogy Centre and the County Library in Ballinamore where you can attend a workshop on 'Tracing

your Leitrim Roots'. Staff will then be happy to help in any way that they can with your research. A visit in the afternoon to The Glenview Folk Museum will allow you view their collection of over 6000 items, some of which may reconnect you with your Leitrim roots.

Famine Connections include a visit to St George's Heritage Centre in Carrick on Shannon, where the exhibits and displays give an insight into Leitrim's famine heritage. This will be followed by a visit to the Attic Memorial in the old Workhouse, where a palpable sense of the past will come hauntingly alive. Then visitor can continue with lunch at Strokestown Park House and Famine Museum, which commemorates the history of famine in Ireland.

Walking in the footsteps of one of Ire-

land's most famous poets William Butler Yeats visit areas that inspired him including Glencar in North Leitrim which featured in 'The Stolen Child' and the Lake Isle of Innisfree which features in one of Ireland's most popular poems. This Yeats filled day will be followed by an evening of poetry and dinner overlooking Lough Gill. Leitrim Community Day sees you visit the community that you have most connections with. Our Leitrim Ambassadors will meet with you and take you to places of particular interest and answer any questions you may have.

These are just the highlights. There is a full seven day programme available which also includes theatre nights, tra-

The bell for the end of playtime had gone. The whole High Infants class pushed and jostled to get into the classroom out of the smurring rain. The dank smell of sour bread and stale milk rose like a damp cloud above the throng of us.

'Go mall, go mall' Sister Benedicta shouted, cracking her leather belt sharply on the top of her desk. She came forward menacingly, her rosary rattling, to ease the congestion at the door. She was a severe figure in her black habit and flowing veil, the stiff white wimple framing beady eyes in an angry face. She towered over the mass of small bodies as she directed us to line up silently in front of the low wooden forms.

Be the thost, be ciuin,' she ordered. We were as quiet as excited children could be.

Mary Doherty, in front of me, was the last to stand in the first row. Sister Benedicta stepped forward between us and pointed me

ditional music entertainment, a cruise on the River Shannon, Céilís and many other events.

Overall this will be a wonderful week in Leitrim, and for some, a first ever opportunity to have an in-depth look at the county. For others, there will also be the opportunity to visit the parishes in the county where their ancestors lived out their lives. It is anticipated that of the numerous people who have already had research done by Leitrim Genealogy Centre, many will take this unique opportunity to visit Leitrim. This week will also be a great opportunity for Leitrim-born people in America, England and even those who live in Leitrim to get to see their county. Festival goers can take part in selected tours or take

to lead into the row behind. In my eagerness to please, I clipped Mary Doherty's heels, or it might have been the edge of the form.

Sister Benedicta leapt forward angrily and grabbed me by the collar.

'You ludraman, you ignorant boy. What are you doing? You kicked me on the knee.'

The chattering froze instantly. The jostling from behind stopped. Sister Benedicta pulled me towards her. Her eyes were on fire. They burned a pair of holes through my forehead.

'I didn't, sister. I couldn't have. It wasn't me.'

'Come out here, you bad child. Stand in front of the class. You gave me a kick on the knee. Don't tell lies about it as well. You know what the devil does to children who tell lies.'

I was petrified by the shame of being called out in front of the class. The blood rose to my cheeks. Sister Benedicta shifted her grip to my ear and twisted it. It hurt. I could

the whole week as a package.

Interested?

If you are interested in the Festival or if you have relations at home or abroad who might be interested, and to see the programme on offer, visit our website [HYPERLINK "http://www.leitrimroots-festival.com/"](http://www.leitrimroots-festival.com/) www.leitrimrootsfestival.com. Visitor coming from the USA can contact S & B Canning Tours, 231 Mansion Rd., Wallingford, CT, 06492 203-288-8347, e-mail seancanning@sbcglobal.net. Otherwise, please contact Leitrim Roots Festival Office, Leitrim Genealogy Centre, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim, Phone, 00353 71 96 45088. e-mail info@leitrimrootsfestival.com.

We look forward to welcoming you to

feel tears welling up behind my eyes. I wanted to run away and hide. I would have run home if I could, but I knew my mother would kill me if she found out. I did not know who I feared most. Anyway, I couldn't move. I would have done anything for God to open up the ground and let me disappear. But he didn't.

Instead, Willie Moran, a slow lumbering boy who was pushing me from behind, bent out in front of me and felt his hand down the leg of Sister Benedicta's skirt. Sister Benedicta shrieked. Willie Moran ran the inside of his hand down the loose black habit till it nearly reached the ground. Then he slowly twisted his neck and looked up at Sister Benedicta with wide gawky eyes.

Sister Benedicta jumped back and let go of my ear. I could still feel the blood high in my cheeks. I shot my hand to my ear to stop it hurting me. Sister Benedicta swung her arm