SOLAS GALLERY

Sandra Vernon

THE SOLAS ART Gallery in Ballinamore officially came into being on the 20th July 2007.

It did not just happen—there was a year of hard work and meetings by a group of dedicated people, both artists and non artists before the doors could open. With the large proportion of artists in the Ballinamore area, it was only a matter of time before a full time gallery was needed to cater for them and for the many people in the area that were interested in art in all its aspects.

The Ballinamore Community Arts group was formed with a predominantly locally based committee. With active advice and encouragement from Caoimhin Corrigan, Arts Officer for Leitrim and the availability of premises in the town the project took off. The premises are above the *Four Seasons Flower Shop and Garden Centre* and belong to Ben and Gail Quinn who both have an active interest in art, especially Gail who has long wanted to get more involved with the Arts. The Gallery space has been tastefully adapted to give a well lit double space and the renovations included restoring the original floor keeping the ambience of the building. The outside of the building retains many of its original features and the *Sola*s (meaning light) sign, executed by artist Frank 'Brolly' Desmond, is the icing on the cake.

The main aim of the group is to promote the arts in all its forms within the wider community, mainly by exhibitions of not only well known artists but local artists as well who just paint for the love of it. With three Exhibitions under its belt, the group look forward to announcing its coming calender for 2008 at the beginning of the year. The Gallery opened with a group exhibition by its members followed by a Solo show by Brendan Dean and another by Peter Hinreiner. All three were very successful.

Other activities will include readings by authors from their works, there has already been a successful one by prize winning author Julian Gough and others are planned for the coming year. To further the appreciation of art the group is running a visit to the national Gallery before Christmas for all its members and it is hoped that other trips will follow. Art lessons and involvement with childrens art, after all they are the artists of the future, are also in the pipeline.

The Ballinamore Community Arts Group is membership based, so if you wish to become a member, either as an artist or just to support please get in touch. Also if you would like to be informed of all our events contact either Gail or Ben at: *Four Seasons Flower Shop* either by calling in, phoning or emailing. *Opening Hours are 10-6 Mon-Sat.*

Tel: 071 9644210 Email: benqn@eircom.net

Official opening by Damien Brennan, chairman LCC

Frank 'Brolly' Desmond, Vice chairperson; Ben Quinn, Asst Secretary; Colleen Quinn, Treasurer; Brendan Dean, Chairperson; Angela McCabe Asst Treasurer; Eamonn O'Reilly, Secretary; Gail Quinn, Community Rep; Sandra Vernon, PRO; Donal Quinn, Community Rep.

Julian Gough & Brendan Dean

Peter Hinreintiz, Sandra Vernon, Brendan Dean, & Siobhan O'Malley (Arts Officer).