

UNVEILING SUSAN

Mary Guckian

IT WAS A dry afternoon when County Leitrim CEO, Frank Curran, unveiled a bronze bust atop an engraved limestone plinth to Susan Langstaff Mitchell, a poet born in Carrick-on-Shannon in 1866. Her father was Manager of the Provincial Bank and after his death when Susan was still very young she was sent to live with three aunts in Dublin.

On board a ship to England, en route to London, she met Lily Yeats and they became good friends. She got to know the poet, William Butler Yeats and later started working with AE Russell, poet and painter, who at this time was Treasurer of the Co-operative



■ **Bronze of Susan Mitchell (1866-1926) by Sculptor Brigid Corcoran. Keith Nolan Photography**

■ **Group present at the unveiling of the Susan Mitchell monument in Carrick-on-Shannon**

movement. Russell was one of the founders of *The Irish Homestead* and through this magazine she got to publish her poems, along with articles, reviews and political stories. She became Assistant Editor and later published three books of poetry. She also worked for *The Irish Statesman* and was well known for her satirical verses.

The beautiful bronze bust was completed by Brigid Corcoran, a visual artist from Dublin. Brigid spent some years living in Manorhamilton where she was involved with the Sculpture Centre. Sean Gill was the designer and planner of the plinth, and it was completed by Smiths Memorials,





■ **Mary Guckian gives an oration at the unveiling of the Susan Mitchell Bronze**

Ballinamore. John Bredin, Chairperson of Carrick Heritage Group, Robert McNabb and John Feely have done a lot of work to grow the literary connections to Carrick-on-Shannon.

This is the first woman poet to have a public unveiling. The bust is situated at the corner of Main Street and Church Lane. A large crowd gathered and refreshments were served in the beautifully restored building of St George's Heritage and Visitor Centre, a place that is well worth a visit.

The project is a collaborative effort of Carrick-on-Shannon Heritage Group, Carrick-on-Shannon & District Historical Society, Leitrim County Council, MRD Marketing, Carrick Chamber and the Bush Hotel.

CARRICK

Susan Langstaff Mitchell

*I will not walk these roads of pain,
I will not turn back to youth again.
'Tis full sunlight, though past the noon,
The night will not come very soon,
And if you haste we may lie down
Before sunset in Carrick town.*

*O brothers, sisters, come with me.
The old house still stands there, you see,
My little red-haired Tories, come,
For none can shut the door of home.
We're safe before the sun goes down,
And sleep is sweet in Carrick town.*

*O hide me, Carrick, shut me in.
Here in your little streets begin
Again for me the young surprise
Of life, give back the eager eyes,
The bounding hearts, the hands that clung,
The songs our comrade voice sung.*

*See our own window set so high
To catch the wonder of the sky.
Come Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes, Curly Head.
O come, my living, come, my dead.
O Death, how did you find the way
You tread so certainly to-day?*

*No bigger than a bulrush, I
Beside the rushy Shannon cry.
There are no children on the shore,
The singing voices sing no more,
The sea draws all her rivers down,
And love has sailed from Carrick town.*

Mise

Maura Williamson

From the outer place it comes,
The doing, the not knowing,
Outer world responds with words,
praise,
Brightness turns to dark.
Showers fall, in form of compliments,
I respond
This Is Me.

Lift the pen,
Response to that trigger,
Taken away,
Wonderful place,
Movement
Recapture,
Alive.
Past happenings, present moments,
emotions hidden,
Bright beautiful and visual.
Torments going on,
All in the head.
Wheels in motion.

Mutterings of having found yourself,
The gift.
A gift to share, not heavy, but a god
given gift,
The wanderer in no man's land.

Your gentle voice,
Your passion and love of life
Absorbed by those you meet.
Movement along a new path, on a road
worn, well-travelled.
Never lose sight,
All Is Ok.

Time to step back,
Feet laid firmly on grassy ground.
Take the artist to a quiet spot, on a pri-
vate date.
No time to play,
Jump up and play,
Gather those ingredients
Create something new and nourishing
for the soul
New replenishing food for the soul,
MY SOUL
ME.