

## O'Leathlobhair Clan Report 2016

The 2016 Annual Clan Rally week-end for the O'Leathlobhair Clan took place in July in the Abbeyleix Manor Hotel in Co. Laois. Events got underway for Ireland's most active clan, visitors came from Australia, America, England and the four corners of Ireland. The week-end activities commenced with the A.G.M on the Friday night which was very well attended, this being the business end of the eagerly and much looked forward to week-end for the O'Leathlobhair Clan members and friends. Chairperson Kevin Lalor-Fitzpatrick opened the meeting and had a very warm welcome for all present. Secretary Annie Lalor read the minutes of the 2015 A.G.M followed by reports which were read by all the various officers i.e. Mary Mahony, Assistant Sec., Paddy Lalor, Treasurer, Kevin Lalor-Fitzpatrick, Chairperson/P.R.O., Margot Coogan, Clans of Ireland Rep., Mary Carmody, Correspondence. An open floor discussion followed on all the years' events and to cover any matters from visiting members. Votes of sympathy were extended to all the families who lost a loved one during the past year. All present were looking forward to the events taking place over the wk-end, following the A.G.M. Joe Coogan entertained with music and song. Clan members Paddy Lalor and Kevin Lalor-Fitzpatrick presented a comedy sketch "Mistaken Identity" written by the very talented and gifted member Paddy Lalor, light refreshments were also served. Election of officers and Life Members for the year ahead were elected. Chairperson is Kevin Lalor-Fitzpatrick, Vice Chairperson is Tom Lawlor, Secretary is Annie Lalor, Assist. Sec. Mary Mahony, Email Sec. is Mary Carmody, Treasurer is Paddy Lalor, Assist. Treasurer is Margot Coogan, Web Operator is Stuart Lawlor, Clans of Ireland Reps. are Aine Ni Cathassaigh and Margot Coogan. Committee elected are P.J. Lalor, Bridget Lawlor, Eamon Lalor, Megan Curran, John Lawler, Donna Lawlor and Jim Lawlor. Life members are Mary Lalor, The Heath, Michael Lalor, Camross, Paddy Lalor, Abbeyleix, David & Ursula Lawlor, Killeigh, Paddy Lalor, Ballycarroll, Tom Lawlor, Shanahoe, Annie Lalor, Camross and Josie Dunne, Abbeyleix. Nominations for the position of Clan Chieftain 2016/17 closed at the end of the AGM with two candidates agreeing to let their names go forward for election at the Clan Banquet on the following night namely Maeve Lalor, a native of Co. Carlow and now living in Delvin, Co. Westmeath and Garreth Lawlor from Abbeyleix and now living and working in the U.S.A.

On Saturday morning members set off by bus for the historical tour taking in the 1916/2016 Garden at the top of Abbeyleix town across from the Heritage House where Paula Maher gave a short talk on the 1916 Leaders and links to Laois, the group travelled on to Colt Cross to the first special garden in the world opened to celebrate the great men and women of the era, they continued on to Colt Wood where the first shots of the 1916 Rising were fired. The group continued on to Portlaoise where they viewed the James Fintan Lalor monument where it stands tall and proud outside Council buildings at County Hall, Michael Parsons as always gave a very interesting and informative talk on the writings and words of this great Raheen and Laois man and how they influenced the 1916 Leaders Pearse and Connolly, other political leaders also got inspiration from his writings. Direct descendant great, great grand nephew of James Fintan Lalor Clan Chairperson Kevin Lalor-Fitzpatrick is a proud member of the O'Leathlobhair Clan. A lovely lunch was enjoyed by all at the Mile Bush followed by a visit to the historical site of the Rock of Dunamase where Jackie Hyland took time out to give a talk on the O'Moores and all the events that took place at the site many years ago. At the end of the tour the group returned to base to prepare for the Clan Banquet and the election of a new Chieftain which is the highlight of the week-end for many. A delicious meal was served by the Manor Hotel staff and enjoyed by all followed by music and dancing provided by the very popular Noel Glynn band. Fr. Jack Walsh said the Grace before and after the meal. The two candidates for election were introduced to the gathering and voting commenced, the band entertained until the white smoke appeared. Voting was close, Clan Piper Pat Lalor from Ballon in Carlow had the honour of proudly piping in the new Chieftain who is his

daughter Maeve to a standing ovation. Garreth Lawlor graciously vowed that he would return in the future for election to equal his dad Tom Lawlor who was a past Chieftain. Maeve said that she is a very proud O'Leathlobhair and it is a great honour for her to be the new Chiefain of such an active Clan. Maeve's first job was to present outgoing Chieftain Margot Coogan who represented the Clan excellently at home and in Australia where she has visited on numerous occasions during her reign. Members continued to enjoy the night dancing to Noel Glynn and his band while also being entertained by Diarmuid O'Cathassaigh who played the Clan anthem Magiolla Meaghair on the harmonica along with a selection of tunes. On Sunday morning members and friends attended the Ecumenical Service in the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Abbeyleix where Cannon Harvey and his parishioners had a very warm welcome for the Clan. Maeve did a reading and all returned to the Manor Hotel afterwards for the traditional farewell lunch and then home.

The hard working committee had a short break before getting back to planning the next Clan wk-end which will take place on 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2017.

A great and joyous week-end which was hailed by many as the most successful wk-end to date, turned out to be a very sad wk-end for Clan Chairperson Kevin Lalor-Fitzpatrick as his dear mother Millie was called to her heavenly home later on that sunday evening, the light of Heaven to Millie Lalor-Fitzpatrick R.I.P.