



## *Cois Abhann*



Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny

Souvenir Brochure of the Official Opening by

**President of Ireland, Mary McAleese**

***Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2011***

[www.inistioge.ie](http://www.inistioge.ie)



President of Ireland, Mary McAleese

## Welcome

On behalf of the development committee of the Cois Abhann facility we would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone who is joining us today for the Official Opening by the **President of Ireland, Mary McAleese**.

Though the project has been five years in the development we believe that the end result is a state-of-the-art facility that will allow groups, organizations and individuals to run sporting, recreational and educational activities for young and old.

We would like take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the project whether financially or through the provision of services. In addition we would also like to thank the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, Kilkenny Local Authorities, Kilkenny Leader Partnership and the GAA, all who generously assisted the project with grant funding.

Finally, we invite you to have a look around the building after the Official Opening has taken place and hope you to enjoy this historic day.

Yours sincerely

**James Murphy**

Chairman

Inistioge Community Council

**Jack Lyng**

Chairman

Rower Inistioge GAA Club

## Schedule of Events

2.30pm	Musical Entertainment in the GAA field
3.15pm	Blessing of building
3.30pm	President arrives at Cois Abhann
3.35-3.50pm	President views Cois Abhann facility
3.50pm	President is welcomed by Jack Lyng, Chairman, Rower Inistioge GAA Club
3.55pm	Speech by <b>President McAleese</b>
4.05pm	Reply by James Murphy, Chairman, Inistioge Community Council
4.10pm	<b>President McAleese</b> meets attendees

Master of Ceremonies: Micheál O'Muircheartaigh

## McDonald's Hall

The site for the new Cois Abhann facility has been a site for village entertainment for generations. The land was owned by the Kenny family of Inistioge who also owned the Woodstock Arms Hotel. One of the buildings was a stone built, single-storey barn which, when it was available, was used for barn dances, concerts and feises.

During the early 1950's, the McDonald family of Kilcullen bought Kenny's meadow and the semi-derelict buildings and Tom McDonald built the hall and dwellings fronting the Thomastown road. It soon became the venue for concerts, dances and ceilis and attracted crowds from all over Kilkenny, Wexford and Carlow. The tradition of entertainment being provided on this site will now continue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2006 McDonald's Hall was purchased by The Rower Inistioge GAA Club from the then owners, Ian & Anne McDonald

## Inistioge

*Inistioge may justly claim to be one of the most prettily situated spots in Ireland... trees, the growth of centuries, line the sides of the central square; the clock chimes from the ancient abbey's tower; while the river, flowing through its many arched bridge, sings forever and unweariedly....* Clement Harding (1907).

Welcome to Inistioge. You have arrived in one of the most historic and beautiful villages in Ireland. We hope you will enjoy your visit.

This quiet village has a history which links it with major events and figures in Irish history. Inistioge has been influenced by saints, armies, abbots and monks, religious reformers, poets, highway men, lords and ladies, revolutionaries and parliamentarians. The name of the village is from the Irish *Inis Tíog* – Tíog's island (but *inis* can also mean 'water meadow' which makes more sense here). Tíog we can guess was a local chief. It has long been associated with St Columba (Colmcille). The saint or a follower may have been granted the site near the holy well, which still exists, on which to establish a monastic community in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Later it is likely to have been a Viking settlement as it is located at the lowest crossing point of the River Nore. A battle is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters as taking place in 962 in which the men of Ossory (Kilkenny) defeated the Vikings.

Following the arrival of the Normans, the area was granted to Thomas FitzAnthony in 1169, and he established an Augustinian Priory in 1206. The first community of monks came from Bodmin Priory in Cornwall. The priors developed the walled settlement, but Inistioge declined after the Dissolution of the Monasteries by King Henry VIII in 1540. In 1566 the Priory lands were granted to Sir Edmond Butler. In 1649 the town was besieged and captured by the Cromwellians.

Inistioge prospered in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and it is from that era that the character of the present village developed. The village was part of the Woodstock Estate. Captain William Sweete bought the estate from confiscated lands after the Treaty of Limerick (1691), then through inheritance by marriage, the Foyne and Tighe families owned the estate. They lived in Woodstock House, two kilometres from the village, which was designed by Francis Bindon and built in the late 1740s. Members of the Tighe family were significant public figures in their day. Having been occupied by the Black & Tans it was burned by local anti-treaty forces and remains in ruins today. In recent years the 19<sup>th</sup> century gardens developed during Lady Louisa's lifetime have been extensively restored to their former glory by Kilkenny County Council.

## **Rower Inistioge GAA Club - History**

The decision by the Kilkenny County Board in 1954 to introduce a strict Parish Rule had a profound effect on the affairs of junior clubs around the county. Players could now only play for their parish team or where they were officially resident. The days of junior clubs losing their best players to the temptations of the more high-profile senior clubs were at an end

The Gaelic games community of the Inistioge parish responded to the new regulations when, in March 1955, a new club under the name The Rower- Inistioge was formed. Hitherto numerous clubs in the parish had been affiliated to the Association, almost all operating at junior level. Teams such as Cappagh, Alto Rovers, Ballinabearna, The Rower, The Nore Rangers, Inistioge, Clodiagh, Brandon Rovers, The Green and Whites and Ballavara all featured in both hurling and football championships over the years. Apart from 1936 and 1940 when The Nore Rangers and The Rower respectively won the Junior Football Championship and 1940 when The Rower won the junior hurling title, few notable championship achievements were recorded.

The benefits of unification, which effectively was what had occurred in 1955, were not long in manifesting themselves. The junior team qualified for the 1956 and 1958 South Finals while the U16s reached county finals in 1957 and 1958. Eventually senior hurling status was achieved in 1963 following the junior championship success. The clubs most notable achievement to date has been the 1968 Senior Championship win. Two senior county finals were narrowly lost in 1976 and 1977.

At present the club participates in an assortment of grades in hurling, football and camogie and it is rare year that a county final success in some competition or other is not recorded.

Players from the parish have consistently won All-Ireland medals in senior, intermediate, U21, minor and colleges hurling, and in senior and underage Camogie while our best footballers have also represented the Club at inter-county level. Pride of place must go to Eddie Keher, All Ireland winning captain in 1969 and also to Billy Murphy, Fr. Tom Murphy, Pat Kavanagh, Gee Murphy, Tommy Malone, Sean Cummins, Michael Grace and Kieran Joyce who have all won senior all Ireland medals with Kilkenny.

In addition to the Inistioge facilities the club has other grounds in The Rower which are presently being developed and enlarged and will be opened in 2012. The club would like to thank the various families who over the years facilitated the club in providing pitches for games and practice, and the McDonald and Hennessy families from whom the present club properties were purchased. The club would like to thank its members, officials, players, supporters, and parents in particular, all who continue to promote and encourage Gaelic games within our community.



## **Inistioge Community Council**

Inistioge Community Council was set up in 1989 by a group of young local people who, bemoaning the lack of community and sporting facilities in the area, called a meeting to start fundraising to build a community centre in Inistioge. With a great deal of energy and commitment from the people of the community they managed to raise over £50,000 in funds over a short few years. That the facility failed to materialise at the time is no reflection on those pioneering people who were involved at the time.

When the GAA Club initiated in the current project in 2006 Inistioge Community Council was re-invented with new members who teamed up with the GAA club in a joint development committee to work on all aspects of the project. All the funds previously collected were pledged to the project and have made a significant contribution to it.

The community facilities in this building have been licensed to Inistioge Community Council in recognition of the contribution of local voluntary groups and organizations, the many who have provided services and the individuals and families throughout the community and beyond who have supported the project. The management of these facilities will become the direct responsibility of Inistioge Community Council under the terms of the license.

In addition to its work on the Cois Abhann facility the Community Council has also developed a web-site for the area [www.inistioge.ie](http://www.inistioge.ie) which aims to provide information both to local people and the many tourists who visit.

Our main focus in the coming months, however, will be to get activities up and running in the Cois Abhann facility and we hope you all will participate in many of these.



