

Green Sod Land Trust-An Foidin Glas

8 Bowling Green, Galway, Ireland www.greensodlandtrust.com

Annual Report 2008

An Foidin Glas

Vision

We believe in the sacredness of the Earth.

We believe the Earth too is alive.

*We believe that all life is sustained
in relationship to the Earth*

and what happens to one affects the other.

We promote care and respect for the whole of life.



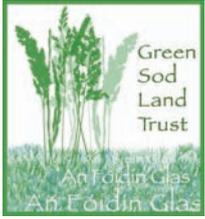
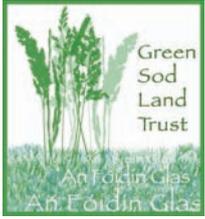


Table of Contents

A word from the Chair	3
Our Vision	4
The Years Work <i>Summary of Meetings</i>	5
Policy Documents	6
Earth Literacy - Education Initiative <i>Earth Literacy Workbooks</i>	7
Piloting of Earth Literacy Workbooks <i>Food & Nutrition, Art & Design & Woodwork</i>	8
<i>The Universe Story</i> in Schools	9
Electric Picnic <i>Trust Stand in the Global Green and other news</i>	10
Directors	11
Acknowledgements	12
Annual Accounts	

An Foidin Glas



Green Sod Land Trust-An Foidín Glas

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A word from the Chair

Dear Friends

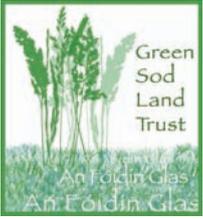
It is with great pleasure that I present to you Green Sod Land Trust 2008 Annual Report. I am happy to report that we are all busy putting the infrastructures in place to support the work of the Trust. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those working on behalf of the Trust; it is growing from strength to strength. This report will give you some idea of what we are involved in and you will find a detailed financial record at the end of the report. One of our main focuses this year has been Education. The Story of the Universe, which is downloadable from our website, has been piloted in many schools in Mayo; I think you will enjoy reading about how that is going. Congratulations to Máirín Ní Mhurchú, Killasser, Co. Mayo, who has been working with the schools, to the teachers and the children for their wonderful ingenuity and creativity in using the material we have provided. We have also been busy putting together Earth Literacy Workbooks for Adults which have been piloted in Galway. They are our gift to educators who are concerned with the implications of how we live and our relationship with the natural world. While the world is hit by recession we remain alert to the environmental crisis facing us; loss of land and habitats; loss of biodiversity and species and so on. The work of saving land is crucial for all our sakes. Land is our heritage; one that we share with all creatures on Earth. It is as important to us as the air we breathe. Help us protect it. I encourage you to familiarise yourself with the work of the Trust and appeal to you to offer your support. Beannacht libh go léir as 2008 draws to a close.



*I remain,
Yours sincerely,
Nellie McLaughlin: Chairperson*



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An Fóidín Glas

The Green Sod Land Trust-An Fóidín Glas, works:

▶ *To conserve land for its own sake, for the sake of the total Earth community living on the land and so that it will continue to be a source of sustenance, inspiration and spiritual nourishment for us, humans.*

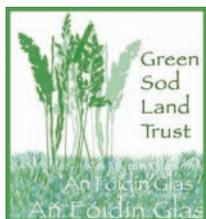
▶ *To renew land which has been damaged by use of chemicals, intensive farming etc.*

▶ *To promote an awareness and understanding of the natural world, so that we may live in right relationship with all of life on our planet home.*



▶ *To promote biodiversity i.e. all species and their habitats, life cycles and natural processes, and to be aware of how our behaviours seriously affect and impinge on these.*

▶ *To encourage participation in the conservation and the renewal of land; to stimulate public support to protect land from improper use so that it will be seen as a source of life rather than as a commodity.*



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The Years Work: *Summary of Meetings*

31st May, 2008.

Meeting held at 29 Maunsells Park, Galway. 12.00 – 5pm.

Present: Rosaleen Hogan, Mary Connaughton, Sheila Gallagher, Melissa Griffith, Mary Gallagher, Jill Ingersoll, Marjanne Bryan. Jennifer Cunningham, *Office Admin*.

Absent: Apologies Nellie McLoughlin, Chairperson, and Noreen Lyons, Director.

1. Rosaleen read a report on Kelly Murray Audit. All up to date. Rosaleen to keep copy of Audit. Draft to go on file.
2. A discussion took place Re: Pubs League overseas which Jill and Marjanne will head up.
3. Melissa spoke of her meeting with Miriam Kerrisk in Athlone.
4. Rosaleen spoke of the man in Kiltarnan with 25 acres of woodland, of which there is only one other of its kind in Ireland. He is interested in protecting it for the future.
5. Melissa spoke of the possibility of bringing more people on board. A discussion followed on what form this might take. It was agreed that a 'flyer' should be displayed on the notice boards in universities and colleges.
7. The need to look in to government grants was discussed.
8. Nellie McLaughlin joined the meeting by 'phone.
9. Date of next meeting to be decided.

Meeting held on 15th November, 2008, in 29, Maunsells Park, Galway.

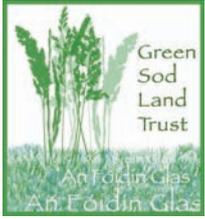
Present: Nellie McLaughlin, Sheila Gallagher, Noreen Lyons, Melissa Griffith, Mary Gallagher, Jill Ingesoll. Apologies: Rosaleen Hogan, Mary Connaughton.

Minutes: Jennifer Cunningham, Admin.

1. Electric Picnic: Sheila and Melissa reported on the Electric Picnic, We rented tent €454, Stand €875. Had all GSLT literature. Overall the experience of being at the picnic and networking was very good. It was hoped that this would be a good fundraising event, but it was not.
 2. Accounts up to date. Audited accounts submitted. The Treasurer, Rosaleen Hogan was not at the meeting.
 3. Cavan update – Noreen phoned Kavanagh's and took the details of Liam Staunton, solicitor, to pass on to Kavanagh's re acre of land to be given to the Trust.
 4. Boardmatch – Melissa and Sheila reported on having made an application to Boardmatch which means that the Trust details are now there for people to see.
 5. Noreen reported on the Irish Volunteer Organisation and suggested we get involved. Nellie proposed making contact with the Green Party. It was agreed by the meeting that Nellie will make initial contact with Mary White and Eamonn Ryan. Sheila met with Cathy Scott (PR) recently who suggested organising a steering committee.
 6. Launch – it was unanimously agreed by the meeting that the launch take place in 2010 and not 2009.
 7. Name – discussion took place re .com/.org. It was agreed to leave the web address as dot com. for now.
 8. Priorities - Land Management Plan: There was much discussion around and general agreement on the urgent need to draw up a land management plan. Nellie suggested contacting Keith Anderson for support on this.
- Fundraiser: Urgent need to get fundraiser on board.
Trust Profile: Increase profile in both Dublin and Cork through presentations and talks etc. Jennifer to re-do PowerPoint Presentation. Copy of which will be given to speakers.
9. AOB: Melissa read letter from Liam Staunton requesting information for the charity section of the Revenue Commissioners to enable them confirm the continuation of charitable exemption. They need the accounts, an annual report and confirmation of any changes to the Memo. Of Association. Melissa e-mailed Rosaleen to forward copy of accounts. Sheila, Melissa and Jennifer will do the Annual Report. No change to the Memo.
- Sheila reported on an exhibition to take place in Galway on the 13th December, '08 of photographs by Sasha Bosbeer and Kevin Collins. The exhibition is in aid of the Land Trust. The meeting expressed its appreciation.

The Earth Literacy booklets were shown at the meeting and Nellie has taken some with her with the hope perhaps of obtaining some sponsorship or funding. It is hoped too that we will be uploading the booklets on to our website shortly.

Date of next meeting to be decided.



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Policy Documents



This year has seen a lot of work being done ‘behind the scenes’ so to speak; part of the work of setting up the infrastructures to support the work of protecting land has involved drawing up Policy Documents. These policy documents have been worked on over several months and illustrate the Trust’s commitment to proper procedure.

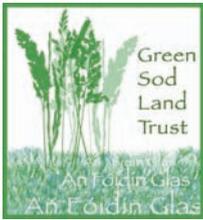
In preparation for Volunteers coming on board, it was necessary to draw up a Volunteer Policy. *The Volunteer Policy* aims to ensure, as far as is possible, that each volunteer has a worthwhile experience from which both the volunteer and the Trust benefit. A Volunteer Agreement document has also been drawn up. It is to be signed by the Volunteer and a Member of the Board of Directors.

The other important Policy Document that has been completed in 2008 is *Green Sod Land Trust; Land Management Policy*. The Land Management Policy document is, as yet, a theoretical document as the Trust awaits the acquisition of land. It is however, a start, and will obviously progress and develop as land is acquired.

You can access a copy of *Green Sod Land Trust Volunteer Policy* and *Land Management Policy* Documents at the end of this Annual Report.

Another ‘behind the scenes’ job this year was to make application for Garda Clearance. The forms have been filled up and information about the Trust has been furnished to the Gardaí. The process is very thorough with many questions to be answered; particularly so as little is known in the public domain, as yet, about Green Sod Land Trust.

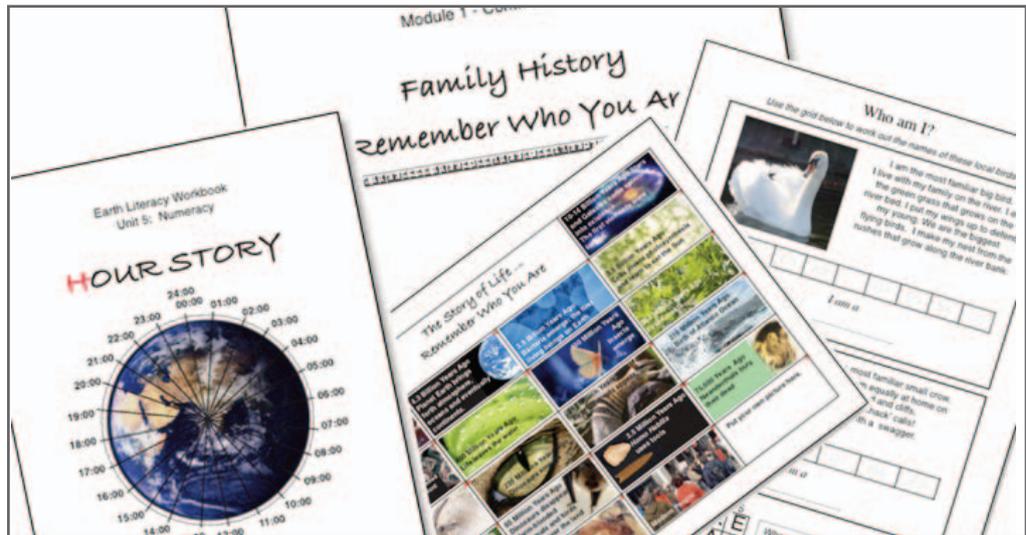
Mary Connaughton
Board of Directors



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Earth Literacy - Education Initiative Launched at the RAPAL Conference



Green Sod Land Trust launched its Earth Literacy Education Initiative in June this year, at the RAPAL (Research and Practice in Adult Literacy) Conference which was held in the National University of Ireland, Galway.

The Earth Literacy Initiative consists of six workbooks for use with adult learners across various disciplines: Family History (Communications); Food/Cookery; Environment Matters (Information Technology); Nature Study; *Hour Story* (Numeracy) and Art & Design. Lesson plans and marking/record sheets are also included.

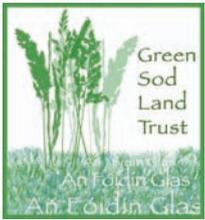
The conference was attended by over a 100 delegates from around the world and with the support of the City of Galway Vocational Education Committee; Adult Basic Education Service, all delegates received a CD of the six modules. Melissa Griffith, teacher with the VEC and Director of the Trust, was on hand to discuss the use of the modules with various delegates.

A little more time will see the completion of workbooks on Woodwork, Climate Change and Science. These Earth Literacy workbooks will be coming on stream immediately

We have put a lot of time, expertise and effort into putting these workbooks together in a way that will be useful to students and teachers alike. We only claim ownership of these books in as much as we have put them together with a specific purpose in mind. There is currently no charge for these workbooks.

Acknowledgement: Dr. Larry Edwards PhD (*Harvard*) for his input into the scientific facts and details.

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Piloting Earth Literacy Workbooks

Pictorial Record of the work done using Earth Literacy Workbooks:
Food – Gift of the Earth, Art- Learning from our Creative Ancestors
and Woodwork.

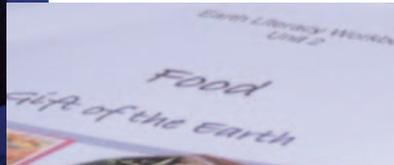
The books were piloted in Galway Adult Basic Education and
Youthreach, Tuam, Co. Galway



The Value of Locally Grown Organic Food. Teacher and Students spend time in a local vegetable shop.



Student, Caroline studies her Earth Literacy Workbook, familiarising herself with her chosen recipe before she begins cooking.



Through this Food Workbook students learnt about the value of good food; its purchase; preparation and presentation. The students chose a dish they would like to cook; sourced a recipe; learnt about ingredients (quality and quantities); prepared those ingredients; cooked the dish; served it and shared it with their classmates. They costed the dish and discussed why 'local' is best.



Students, Fiona and Susan, with Shepherd's Pie; ready for the oven.



The Art Module, the basis of which is Aboriginal Culture, allows the students to explore our connection to the natural world through art. Students use recycled material to paint on and gathered sticks from the fields to paint with and to use in the display of their art.



Zandalee completing her wall hanging.



They experimented with the use of symbols and enjoyed the experience very much.



Teacher and students out in nature gathering 'tools'

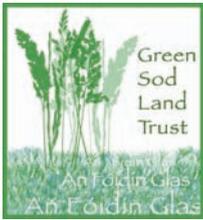


From this...

...to this!



From Fruit Box to Bird Table. The Woodwork Module is at present 'under construction'. It uses the concepts of Repair, Reuse, Reduce, Recycle and will be available to download within the next year.



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Progress report on Our Education Initiative in Primary Schools 2008

Mary Gallagher (Mg) Trust Story Teller in conversation with Mairin Ni Mhurchu, about her work in delivering Universe Story to Primary School Children as part of Green Sod Land Trust Education Outreach. The Story of the Universe is the story of how the Universe began and about how life came to be on Earth. It is designed to foster in children wonder and reverence for the natural world and to provide a backdrop for living life in harmony with all beings on Earth.



Mairin Ni Mhurchu (right) and friends at the launch of the Trusts on-line education initiative *The Story of the Universe* for Primary Schools, on International Earth Day 2007

Mg: Tell me about the Education Outreach work you do on behalf of Green Sod Land Trust?

M: Between Jan and June 08 I worked on the Story of Universe programme in several Primary schools in Co. Mayo.

Mg: Can you tell us what schools you've worked with this year so far?

M: I worked in Scoil Iosa Ballina; Binghamstown Erris; Ballyhane; Taugheen Claremorris; Foxford Central; Killasser Swinford; Culleens Ballina; Bofield Ballina; Irishtown; Carramore Swinford; Clogher Claremorris; Kilmovee; Balla; Fahy Westport; Tooreen Ballyhaunis; Newtownwhite Killalla; St. Attracta's Charlestown.....

Mg: Oh! Mairin, that is a tremendous amount of schools - great work! Can I ask you to explain to me what kind of time you give to each school?

M: I visit each school 3 times, taking 1 ½ - 2 hour periods per visit, ideally over 3 weeks.

Mg: How do you get in contact with the schools or how do they know you are available?

M: I have been working on the Universe Story project since January 2002, I would write a letter to the Principal explaining what I had in mind. I was quickly invited to several schools and from that teachers passed the word on and people learnt about the programme from one another.

Mg: You now work in conjunction with Mayo Co. Council Mairin, isn't that right?

M: Yes! Schools have used the Story of the Universe for the raising of the Green Flag and so it was noticed. Then Sharon Cameron, Environmental Officer, with Mayo County Council and I began cooperating with promoting the project. Since that Sharon writes to Principals offering the Universe Story as part of environmental education – explaining that it's cross-curricular and complements Green Schools Programme. Schools also know that I am available through the Rural Co-ordinator who makes outside educational programmes available to schools.

Mg: Tell me a little about how this project is funded.

M: This service is free and so when I started the work I asked the school principal for a donation towards my travel expenses which covered my costs. Now, however, Mayo Co. Council fund my travel and other small expenses for which I am very grateful.

Mg: You mentioned that you began doing the Universe Story in 2002? Has your delivery of the story changed much over the years?

M: Initially I followed a set procedure sticking more or less to the script, and this worked very well. As with everything familiarity encourages confidence and creativity and I have come to realise that the project is best suited to a less formal format and have thus been more flexible in my teaching of it. It is now more interactive and creative with students writing their own stories and poetry relating to the story and doing their own art work, facilitating successful cross-curricular activity with Music, Geography, Nature Study, Art, English, Computers and so on. The whole programme is much less formal and working very well as can be seen from the individual school displays.

Mg: How did you become interested in doing something like this?

M: I am a retired science teacher, so teaching is what I know and love. I am also very committed to caring for Earth, I wanted to do something that would involve both teaching and nature. Thomas Berry, an American cultural historian, when asked how best to teach about nature and environment would respond with 'tell the story' i.e story of the universe; how all of life began. And so I got together with a colleague and we began putting together an initiative of our own.

Mg: Tell me about that initiative

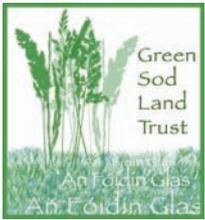


M: Taking the script of the Universe Story, as presented at Genesis Farm, New Jersey, USA, as our starting point, we adapted it to suit Irish children. Composing simple songs to tell the story and setting them to old Irish song airs proved to be challenging as well as very enjoyable. This presentation of the Universe Story is downloadable from Green Sod Land Trust website.

Mg: Thank you very much, Mairin, for talking to me and explaining the work you do as part of Green Sod Land Trust Education Outreach.

Mary Gallagher is the Trust's Story Teller. You can access her stories on the Diary page at www.greensodlandtrust.com

This interview was done as part of an exercise in recording the story of Green Sod Land Trust-An Foidín Glas.



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Green Sod Stand at Electric Picnic



Trust Marquee between Trocaire and Fair Trade

It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that we report on our first major outing for the Green Sod Land Trust. We participated in the first Global Green at this years Electric Picnic in Stradbally, Co. Laois.

This three day music and arts event attracts some 35,000 people and we had a stand in the Global Green area with Cultivate Ireland, Fair Trade, Amnesty, Trocaire, Irish Aid, Zero Emissions, and others, not forgetting the Comedy tent. As this was our first time at the Picnic, our neighbours in the Green ensured that we were warmly welcomed. It

was an eye-opening experience and we made contact with many interesting and supportive people.

Among the many visitors to our stand were Trevor Sargent Minister of State for Food and Horticulture and RTE presenter of EcoEye, Duncan Stewart along with professional people such as environmental scientists, botanists, ecologists, and people in the arts, with interest in music and film-making.



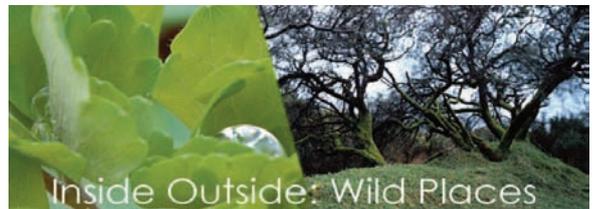
Public Talks

Noreen Lyons, Director with the Trust gave one of the Eco Talks at the Galway Earth Festival held in The Black Box, Galway in June.

Other public talks have been given by board members in various parts of the country to community groups such as Organic Growers; Parish Groups; Support Groups; Environmental Groups; Active Retirement Groups; Dublin Cosmology groups, etc.

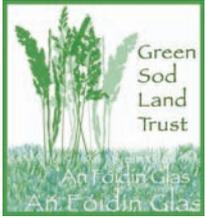
Photographic Exhibition

Renowned naturalist Gordon D'Arcy opened a photographic exhibition in aid of the Trust: *Inside Outside: Wild Places* in December 2008 in the Galway City Museum. The exhibition featured nature-inspired photographs by Sasha Bosbeer and Kevin Collins. Sasha's beautiful photographic work will be familiar to those of you who frequent the Trust website.



After the success of the Galway exhibition, *Inside Outside: Wild Places*, travels to Dublin in February 2009. The exhibition will be held in ENFO, 17 St. Andrew Street, Dublin. This exhibition will be in cooperation with The Tree Council of Ireland.

Gordon D'Arcy viewing the Exhibition, Inside Outside: Wild Places at Galway Museum



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Directors

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Chairperson: Nellie McLaughlin - Inishowen, Co. Donegal, author of 'Out of Wonder', the Evolving Story of the Universe, lecturers on the MA in Ecology & Religion Dalgan Park, Navan & Lampeter University, Wales. She has worked as a teacher in N. Ireland and Iceland, and presently in cosmology, ecology and sustainable living throughout Ireland.



Treasurer: Rosaleen Hogan - teacher, from Inchicore, Dublin. For many years she has lived and worked in greater Dublin. Seeing at first hand the suffering and plight of land in an ever expanding city she is convinced of the need to protect land and all its inhabitants for the future before it is too late. Rosaleen is a founder member of the East Coast Cosmology group.



Secretary: Melissa Griffith - lives in Galway. Working in Papua New Guinea and the experience of living with its people, mountains and rain-forests opened her eyes to how inter-dependent and inter-connected all life is. Melissa lives by the maxim of John Seymour who said "I am only one, I can only do what one can do, but what one can do I will do,"



Mary Connaughton - Sister of Mercy teacher, worked in Brazil with members of the Sem Terra movement and their struggle against eviction and dispossession greatly affected her. The contrast between the lush soil of her native Meath and the deprivation and suffering of the landless of Brazil has heightened her concern for the protection of land for future generations.

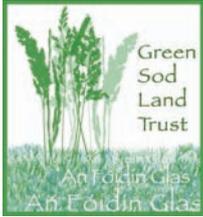


Sheila Gallagher - native of Galway where she works as an art teacher with the Travelling Community. She is a founder member of Galway Environmental Alliance a lobby group formed to help protect the natural environment and is co-owner, with her sister Mary, of The Nora Barnacle House Museum, Galway



Noreen Lyons - native of East Galway, Adult Educator in Earth Literacy at An Gáirdín, Portumna. She is keenly aware of and disturbed by the changing nature of our relationship with the land. Founder member of An Gáirdín Ecology Centre, Portumna. She believes our single most urgent task in this Millennium is to protect the land which is now under unprecedented threat.





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Acknowledgements

The Green Sod Land Trust-An Foidín Glas wishes to acknowledge the following for their support and for their trust in the vision of what is still a very young organisation.

Liam Staunton, Solicitor, 11 Sea Road, Galway, liam@stauntonsolicitors.ie who gives so generously of his time and legal expertise.

Kelly Murray. Chartered Accountants, Registered Auditors, Harris House, IDA Business Park, Tuam Road, Galway, who give so generously of their time and expertise on an ongoing basis. www.kellymurray.ie

Dr. Larry Edwards PhD (Harvard)
<http://www.threeeyesofuniverse.org>

Cait Curran, Editor, Organic Matters.

Jenny Beale, Brigits Garden Brigits Garden, Roscahill, Co. Galway.

Mary Gallagher, Mairín Ní Mhurchú, Jennifer Cunningham & Sheila Flanagan, who give generously of their time and expertise.

Dr. Sasha Bosbeer, C. Env.MIEEM for her professional guidance in Environmental Matters, her photographic exhibition in aid of the Trust: *Inside Outside: Wild Places*

The Nora Barnacle House Museum, Bowling Green, Galway, for making the facility available to us.

City of Galway VEC, Island House, Cathedral Square, Galway

Students from participating schools and centres in Galway and Mayo

An Foidín Glas