



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2017/10/11
Creation Dates:	May 1987
Extent and medium:	3 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
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GLÓR NA NGAEL

Saturday 16 May 1987 11.00a.m.

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Glór na nGael is basically a competition, somewhat along the lines of the Tidy Town Competition, but concentrating on Irish language, culture, and social life. It was founded by Cumann na Sagart, under the presidency of Fr. Tomás Ó Fiaich (now Cardinal Ó Fiaich), in 1961 as part of the Patrician Year celebration. The competition is between communities as represented and organised by their Glór na nGael committee. The communities are divided into six sections in accordance with size of population (under 1,000; under 5,000, etc.), but with special sections for the Gaeltacht and for city suburbs. There are six sections in all, and three prizes in each section. There is also an overall award, an all-Ireland trophy. This has been won by such places as Athlone, Cape Clear, Dingle, Carlow and Ballymun. In Jubilee Year, it was won by West Belfast. There are also special sponsored awards e.g. by Agus (an Irish language periodical).

The organisers, Cumann na Sagart, in collaboration with Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, provide a programme of work and activities. Advice and help is also given. Adjudication is by internal visit, written questionnaire, and independent inspection. The whole gamut of social life is covered in the programme - school, church, public life, social events, reading the media and, of course, learning and speaking Irish. Awards are made on the basis of planning, achievement, and improvement. The winning community is that which has worked hardest and advanced most in the year. It is not the community where Irish is spoken most widely that wins, but rather the one which makes greatest progress.

Glór na nGael strives to strengthen community spirit and to inspire confidence and self-reliance. Its motto is "pobal a thógáil le nasc na Gaeilge" - to build up our community and in the long term our nation with the emphasis on the language. It embraces all sections of the community and welcomes those who have only the "cúpla focal" as much as the confident "Gaeilgeoir". Communities

help each other, as well as vie with one another. They hold regular regional meetings, "tionóil" in which they pool their experience and learn from one another.

Prizegiving day is a big celebration. This year, Jubilee Year, the event is being organised at Maynooth, the cradle of Glór na nGael, and will involve a whole weekend of celebrations. A major feature of this year's celebrations will be the 25th Anniversary Exhibition involving a display of scrap-books and projects by committees from all over Ireland. These will give an insight into the variety and success of the work of Glór na nGael over the years.

It may be mentioned that North Dublin is particularly active in Glór na nGael at present. Ballymun has been joined by Donaghmede, Clontarf, and now Donnycarney.

It is considered that this would be an appropriate function for an Taoiseach to attend. (See special note, however).

Special Note

As indicated the 1986 (Jubilee Year) Winners were West Belfast and the announcement of their success caused some controversy as members of Provisional Sinn Féin (such as Gerry Adams and Máirtín Ó Muilleoir) were actively associated with the Glór na nGael movement in the West Belfast area. There is a definite possibility that there would be a large presence from West Belfast at the official opening in view of the fact that the presentation of the prizes for Jubilee Year (by President Hillery) is to take place on Sunday 17th May 1987.