

Pony up for cancer care

Claire Gallagher
cgallagher@clarepeople.ie

A UNIQUE horse and pony charity ride will begin in Clare on August 31 in a bid to raise much-needed funds for the Mid West Cancer Foundation.

Established in 2007, the centre is located on the grounds of the University Hospital Limerick and its main aim is to provide holistic care for people from Clare, Limerick and Tipperary with cancer through a wide range of services.

The foundation also supports research being carried out by the Stokes Institute.

All funds raised from the Ennis to Limerick charity ride will enhance the cancer centre's facilities and will ensure that the best treatment, services and cutting edge technology is available to people with cancer in the mid-west area.

Co-director and credit controller of the event Ennis woman Paula Williams explained, "As parents we got thinking wouldn't it be a lovely to do something in the mid-west for the people of the mid-west that involves both children and parents."

The charity ride and drive will not just be going from Ennis to Limerick, but a second group of horses, ponies and riders will also make their

way from Adare in Limerick to meet with the Clare group at the Limerick Greyhound Course.

On the day of the event route one leaves from the Showgrounds in Ennis with participants free to do a much or little of the ride as they wish. There will be stops along the way in Quin, Sixmilebridge and the Radison in Meelick for refreshments.

A raffle will be held at the end of the ride and six winners will be picked to lead out the grey hounds running in the 8.30 Mid-western

Cancer Foundation Charity Race at the greyhound race.

"All the proceeds from the charity ride and drive, raised by sponsorship cards and collection buckets on the day will go to the Mid-Western Cancer foundation which was which is based at the University of Limerick," said Ms Williams.

Below:
Rhys Williams, Ger Loughnane, Coen Williams and Jack Darcy all from Ennis will all be taking part in route 1 on Saturday, August 31.



Over 1300 Banner students get Leaving results Wednesday

Claire Gallagher
cgallagher@clarepeople.ie

THE long wait is over for a total of 1,313 Clare Leaving Certificate students tomorrow (Wednesday) as they receive their exam results from midnight tonight.

A total of 31 more female students than male took part in this final state secondary school exam in Clare, as 667 females were officially registered and 646 males to sit the exam in June.

Another 76 students from the county sat year-long assessments and completed projects as part of the Leaving Cert Applied.

As many as 47 boys have taken part in this exam compared to 29 girls in the county.

Nationally for the 2013 examinations, 53,749 candidates are entered for the Leaving Certificate examination, and 2,853 candidates for the final year examinations in the Leaving Certificate Applied.

The results will be available on line from midnight on August 14, with many anxious and eager stu-

dents expected to wait up to download their results.

Those who feel they fared better on their exam papers than the final result showed can appeal the examiners decision.

The fees for appealing a result in a subject in the 2013 Leaving Certificate Established is €40 per subject while the appeal cost for Leaving Certificate Applied is €15.50 per subject. Appeal fees are refunded in the event that a result is upgraded.

Refunds are made through the school system in the case of school candidates and are paid directly to external candidates.

Meanwhile Junior Certificate students who also sat exams in June have to wait another month for results, as they will be issued in mid-September and the online results service will be available from 4pm on that day for Junior Certificate candidates.

Wednesday is expected to be a busy night in Ennis and around the county following the results as the traditional celebrations of the results takes place.

Clare and Limerick find common ground

Andrew Hamilton
ahamilton@clarepeople.ie

AS THE hurlers of Clare and Limerick prepare to square up against each other this weekend, new evidence has emerged which suggests that an ancient common tribal link exists between the people of two counties.

An excavation of Moneen Cave in Ballyvaughan has provided experts with a fresh insight into life in the West of Ireland in prehistoric times. The significance of the cave was not identified until 2011, when an ancient body as well as a number of ceremonial artefacts were discovered by local cavers.

The cave has been the topic of ongoing research by Dr Marion Dowd of IT Sligo, who has just completed a report including extensive radiocarbon dating and ancient DNA analysis.

She has determined that the cave was a significant religious site during the Bronze Age for a period of 1,000 years between 2,000 BC and 1,000 BC - after which point Moneen Cave became inexplicable fell out of use.

The oldest artefact found on site was a red deer antler mace-head, which has opened the possibility of shared religious belief existing in Clare and Limerick some 4,000 years ago.

"We found evidence of ritual food offerings such as oysters and joints of meat. We also found about 350 sherds of pottery dating to 1,000 BC," said Dr Dowd.

"The antler mace-head dates to around 2,000 BC. It was probably a ceremonial object and is the most

important artefact from the site. We initially thought it was the only antler mace-head in Ireland but just recently we have come across five other examples of this sort of artefact - two from north county Limerick, one from Lough Inchiquin [in Corofin, County Clare] as well as one from Antrim and one from Meath.

"Most of the mace-heads or hammer-heads seem to come from natural places that were sacred in the past - caves, rivers and lakes. We know, for example, that Lough Inchiquin was a significant site in Neolithic and Bronze Age times because significant numbers of stone axes were ritually deposited in it, as well as one of these antler mace-heads.

"Though only six of these objects are known in Ireland, there is a marked concentration in Clare and north Limerick.

"What we are seeing is that there may have been a significance regarding this type of artefact in the religious practices of people in this region; that within their belief system [the Bronze Age people of Clare and north Limerick], this sort of antler mace-head was a recognised ceremonial and religious object."

Meanwhile, human remains discovered in the cave were identified as those of a teenage boy who lived in the late medieval period, dying in the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

"A find like this is totally unprecedented in a cave context" continued Marion.

"We know that this was a 14 to 16 year old with probable stunted growth. We also know from the bones that the person had a very poor



diet and would have suffered from a number of infections.

"Ancient DNA analysis showed that the skeletal remains were those of a boy. What we don't know, and what we will probably never know for certain, is what caused this child's death.

"Could he have been a murder victim? I don't think so, because there is no sign of trauma of the bones. The second possibility is that this was some sort of clandestine burial - someone who didn't warrant burial in consecrated grounds. I don't think

this is the case either because the body would still have been buried in the Christian east-to-west position.

"The other possibility is that the boy came into the cave and died there. He may have been ill or injured. This is my personal opinion of what happened even though we will never know for sure."

The excavation was funded by the National Monument Service.

Above right:
Excavation work at Moneen Cave where an ancient body and artifacts were



discovered, which suggests Clare and Limerick were part of a single tribe;

Above left: A mace head found at the site at Moneen Cave.