

40th anniversary of opening of famed pub

There were great celebrations in the renowned Kon Tiki Bar in Rooskey last Friday night as the current licencees, locals and invited guests celebrated the 40th anniversary of the opening of the famous premises.

The Kon Tiki became nationally renowned from 1970 on when Rutledge & May Healy opened the novel public house which was themed on the crossing of the Pacific Ocean on the Kon Tiki raft by Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl and his crew.

This was no ordinary bar and became a major tourist attraction in the early 1970's. In the centre of the premises was a 'swimming pool,' complete with a replica of the Kon Tiki raft. On the walls were various decorative pieces designed to create

a jungle-type impression. In the pool were a few feet of water. The raft was in the middle of the pool and could only be accessed by reining it in with a pulley. The idea was that the live bands would perform on it, 'drifting' in to meet their audience every now and again. Special effects came into play as well. Tubes concealed in the ceiling fired water down on the stage. 'Thunder' rolled via a tape recorder and hidden speakers. 'Lightning' flashed courtesy of special bulbs directed at an angle towards the stage/raft.

Last Friday night, Mr. & Mrs. Healy were guests of honour at the 40th anniversary celebrations. Musicians Eamon Kelly, Sean Mahon ('The Rodeo Man'), Cormac Judge and Des Tighe offered their services and provided a



Christy Hoey makes a presentation to Rutledge and Mae Healy at the 40th anniversary celebrations of the opening of Kon Tiki in Rooskey.

great night's entertainment.

It was a night of nostalgia for Eamon Kelly as it was he, with his then

band The Merry-men, who opened the venue 40 years ago. The Kon Tiki officially opened on Friday, 17th of July, 1970.

Colman Feeney, one of the current licencees, told the Roscommon People: "Last Friday night, forty years on, Eamon sang 'requests' and delighted locals who had not heard him for some time. He was not short of wit either, recalling many funny stories from over the years.

"Coming towards the end of a great night, Christy Hoey presented Rutledge and May with a plaque from the Kon-Tiki, engraved with the words 'In recognition of what you started 40 years ago'.

Colman continues: "Rutledge, a local legend, then said a few words. You could hear a pin drop as he commanded such respect with even his first word.

"Rutledge modestly said that on July 17th, 1970 the

Kon-Tiki was born, built by Michael Kelly for the princely sum of 2,500 pounds."

Rutledge Healy added: "I suppose the name was very original, the pool of water innovative, and maybe the timing was right too."

FAMOUS ACTS

He mentioned the opening night and joked that Eamon Kelly overcharged him with a fee of 9 pounds!

Rutledge recalled some of the famous acts who performed in The Kon Tiki over the years, including Danny Doyle, Bridie Gallagher, Brendan Shine, Dermot Hegarty, The Barleycorn and many more.

"In fact during the summer there was music seven nights a week and twice on Sundays."

The captive crowd smiled and reminisced as though reliving each night triggered by Mr Healy's words.

Rutledge went on to mention some popular locals over the years such as Packie Joe Kelleher, John Joe Cox, Michael McHugh, John Joe McHugh, Pa Murphy and Eddie Joe Lenehen, with special mention for Christy Hoey who is still one of the Kon-Tiki's more frequent locals.

Funnier times were even mentioned such as the occasion when Rutledge received a phone call to enquire if he had found any false teeth in the pool!

Rutledge closed his speech by complimenting Colman and Paul, the current licencees, and wishing them success in the future.

Shane competes in Celtic Cup

■ Ashling Flanagan

Roscommon native Shane Dunne is set to compete in the Celtic Cup for the third year this year, on a team of eight members from all over Ireland.

Shane, an avid fisherman, began fishing when he was just ten, and takes part in competitions almost every weekend. Not the only successful angler in the family, Shane's brother Rory is just back from the World Coarse Fishing Championships, where the Irish team achieved fourth place.

Shane earned his place on the team after competing in trials in Wexford and Monaghan. The competition takes place on the 31st of July and August 1st of. Shane isn't too worried about it though, telling the People, "I'm more excited than anything else, you wouldn't be nervous".

The Irish team will be up against teams from Wales and Scotland in this year's competition, which is taking place in Wales. The team have high hopes for this year's competition, after coming third in 2008 and second last year.

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New diocesan appointments

The following Elphin diocesan appointments have been announced by the Diocesan Office, St. Mary's, Sligo: Rev. Declan Brady, Chaplain, Institute of technology, Sligo to undertake sabbatical studies; Rev. John Coughlan, C.C. SS. Peter & Paul, Athlone to be Chaplain, Institute of Technology, Sligo; Rev. Vincent McDevitt, C.S.Sp. C.C. St. Mary's, Sligo, to be C.C. SS. Peter & Paul, Athlone; Rev. Joseph Poole,

C.S.Sp. will continue as priest-in-charge, Ballintubber, Co. Roscommon. He will be joined in September by Rev. Patrick Kelly, C.S.Sp. and later by a third priest of the Holy Spiritan Community.

They will reside as a community in the Parochial House, Ballintubber and will minister in the parish of Ballintubber/Ballymoe.

Rev. Pdraig Finnegan SPS. C.C. Cliffoney returns to St. Patrick's Missionary Society,

Kiltegan and will be replaced by Rev. Ireneusz Kuzmicki a Polish diocesan priest who has already ministered in St. Mary's, Sligo. Rev. Tomasz Grezegorzewski SDB. Krakow, Poland to be priest-in-charge of Aughrim Parish.

Rev. Andrzej Szulczynski, a Polish diocesan priest to minister to the Polish Community in Sligo and reside at St. Mary's, Sligo.



Large crowds attended the launch of the Percy French Summer School held at Roscommon Library on Wednesday evening week. Pic: www.hursonphotography.com



Roscommon Drama Group who performed at the launch of the Percy French Summer School held at Roscommon Library on Wednesday evening week. Pic: www.hursonphotography.com

Sadness at death of Billie Donlon

There was widespread sadness in the Strokes-town region and throughout the county at the weekend at news of the death of Billie Donlon of Elphin Street Strokestown.

Mr Donlon passed away at his home after a long illness and was one of the best known and most popular people in the town of Strokestown. He was sacristan in Strokestown Parish Church for many years and was also well known for his involvement in many local community groups and especially in drama circles and he was a member of Strokestown Dramatic Club for over 50 years.

In the 1950's and 1960's Billie Donlon was widely regarded as one of the best amateur actors in the country and he won several best actor awards at various drama festivals throughout the country.

Mr Donlon managed the family drapery business in Strokestown for many years before he became the sacristan at the local parish church and he was a very much sought after authority on the history of the Strokestown district.

Mr Donlon is survived by his wife Patricia, daughters Lorna, Nessa, Cariosa and Fidelma and sons Michael and Damien, in-laws, family, and friends. The huge crowds that attended the removal, requiem Mass, and burial services this week is a mark of the esteem in which the late Billie Donlon was held.

Ar dheis Dé do go raibh a anam dílis.