



Pictured above: Tánaiste and Guest of Honour Brian Cowen TD, Gerald Killeen and Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MP, MLA. Ten-year-old Gerald was named as the Young Irish Person of the Year for his bravery and quick thinking when he saved the life of his father following an accident. Martin McGuinness was nominated for a joint award with Ian Paisley, Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, for their commitment to bringing all parties in Northern Ireland together in the Northern Ireland Assembly.



NEARLY 400,000 PEOPLE tuned in to see sporting hero Padraig Harrington receive the Irish Person of the Year Award, and musical legend Christy Moore named as Ireland's Greatest Living Musician, at the televised 33rd annual People of the Year Awards. The Awards were sponsored this year for the first time by Quinn-Healthcare and organised by Rehab.

An Tánaiste, Brian Cowen TD, was guest of honour at the glittering Awards ceremony which took

place in the Citywest Hotel, Co. Dublin, last September. The Awards were hosted for the first time by Gráinne Seoige, and broadcast live on RTÉ 1.

The Awards have become the nation's vehicle for public recognition of the greatest achievements of the year; what's more, all of the recipients are chosen from nominations made by members of the public – both North and South of the border. From these, an adjudicating committee, made up of eminent people from the worlds of print and broadcast journalism,

business and public service, select the final winners.

The award to Ireland's Greatest Living Musician was decided by an expert panel that selected the winner from a shortlist of the 15 most popular nominees voted for by the Irish public.

Among the 800 guests who attended the ceremony were TV presenters Anna Nolan, Caroline Morahan and Emma O'Driscoll; Miss Ireland 2007 Bláithnaid McKenna; and the Captain of Kilkenny's Championship-winning hurling team, Henry Shefflin.

Honouring Ireland's Best



Pictured left: Gerald Killeen and Padraig Harrington. Padraig received the Irish Person of the Year Award for what the adjudicators called his "sheer will to win in an enthralling British Open Championship finale and for a career played in the spirit of the best sporting values".



Pictured above: Gerald Killeen with his father Denis. Denis was seriously injured and lost an arm in a horrific accident on the family farm, but Gerald's quick thinking saved his dad's life.

Irish Person of the Year – Padraig Harrington

As the first European winner of a major championship since 1999 and the first Irishman to win the British Open for 60 years, Padraig Harrington entered sporting history while captivating the nation. He received the Irish Person of the Year Award for what the adjudicators called his "sheer will to win in an enthralling British Open Championship finale and for a career played in the spirit of the best sporting values".

Ireland's Greatest Living Musician – Christy Moore

Patrick Hughes, Marketing Director of Sony BMG Ireland, accepted Christy Moore's award as Ireland's Greatest Living Musician from An Tánaiste, Brian Cowen TD. The award was

made for decades of exceptional contribution to Irish music, following a public vote that attracted close to 20,000 nominations. During a career that has spanned over four decades, Christy Moore's ability to capture, in song, the essence of the moment has kept him at the top of a profession where change is constant.

Young Irish Person of the Year – Gerald Killeen

Ten-year-old Gerald Killeen from Kinnegad, Co. Meath, was named Young Irish Person of the Year for his bravery, calmness and presence of mind when his father Denis was seriously injured and lost an arm in a horrific accident on the family farm last May. Although frightened and deeply worried for his father, Gerald Killeen faced traumatic circumstances

with great bravery. His calmness and courage, when so many others would have panicked, undoubtedly saved his father's life and were all the more remarkable given his young age.

International Person of the Year – Maureen Forrest

Having witnessed the poverty, hopelessness and exploitation of street children in Calcutta, this year's International Person of the Year, Cork mother Maureen Forrest, established the HOPE Foundation in 1999. Since then, the Foundation has reached out to tens of thousands of exploited children in the city each year. It has set up five homes, a HIV/AIDS hospice and a drug rehabilitation centre in Calcutta, and will shortly open a primary healthcare project and hospital in the city.



Pictured above: Presenter Gráinne Seoige (centre) with People of the Year Award winners (left to right) Jane McKenna, Mary Nally, Gerald Killeen, Maureen Forrest and Sean Creamer



**Person of the Year Award –
An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern
TD, Former UK Prime Minister
Tony Blair MP, First Minister
of the Northern Ireland
Assembly, the Reverend Ian
Paisley MP, MLA and Deputy
First Minister, Martin
McGuinness MP, MLA**

The re-establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly in May last was a momentous occasion that marked the end of four decades of conflict. As a recognition of the creation of a peaceful and democratic solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland, and for their commitment to bringing all parties together in the Northern Ireland Assembly, An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern TD, former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair MP, First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Reverend Ian Paisley MP, MLA and Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MP,

MLA were nominated for a People of the Year Award. An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern TD, sent a recorded message accepting the award on behalf of former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, while his own award was accepted on stage by An Tánaiste, Brian Cowen TD. Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MP, MLA accepted his award in person at the glittering event.

**Person of the Year Award –
Jane McKenna**

Having lost both her daughters tragically to serious illness, Jane McKenna was honoured for her work in establishing the Laura Lynn Children's Hospice Foundation. Since it was set up in 2001, Jane has worked tirelessly towards fulfilling her dream of building Ireland's first children's hospice that will provide a peaceful, private environment in which children are able to die with dignity.

**Person of the Year Award –
Sean Creamer**

Sean Creamer received his People of the Year Award for fostering a love of music and choral singing among tens of thousands of primary school children through his work with the National Children's Choir.

**Person of the Year Award –
Fáilte Isteach**

Mary Nally accepted a People of the Year Award on behalf of the innovative Fáilte Isteach project in Summerhill, Co. Meath, which involves older people in the local community teaching English to non-Irish nationals. It is an initiative that allows newcomers to gain a greater cultural understanding of their new home, but also benefits the local elderly community too. ■