

CHARLES THOMSON AWARD 2006

The Minister for the Environment and Local Government, Dick Roche T.D. presents the Charles Thomson Award. Presented annually to the Local Authority deemed to have done the most work to promote water safety on the island of Ireland. The Award is jointly presented by the 'Lifesavers Ireland' RLSS, 'Lifesavers Northern Ireland' RLSS and the Irish Water Safety Association. This year, the award was presented to Kerry County Council for its pro-active role in water safety. The Minister congratulated Kerry County Council for the top class contribution it made to water safety in the county throughout 2005.

The work completed by the Local Authorities is a key factor in reducing the number of drownings each year. In valued recognition of this fact the three bodies have agreed that the Local Authority who contributed most to promoting water safety in their jurisdiction should be recognised. In addition to the Charles Thomson award, two other authorities were presented with a certificate of merit for outstanding contributions to water safety promotion and awareness. These were counties Louth and Waterford.

Charles Thomson completed tremendous work over many years for all three organisations and in many Local Authorities to promote better practices in lifesaving and water safety and contributed greatly towards the reduction of drownings on this island. He passed away in 2000 and all three bodies felt that it would be appropriate to commemorate his life by naming this award after him. CLIODHNA, the water goddess in Irish Mythology who was washed away from her lover by a wave is emblazoned on the trophy.

The criteria for the Award include the following:

- Work completed by the LA to raise public awareness in the media.
- Work completed in promoting Water Safety in schools.
- A new or novel initiative used to promote Water Safety.
- Improved provision of lifesaving equipment.
- Improved maintenance of lifesaving equipment.
- Increase and improvement in Lifeguard services including increased lifeguard cover.
- Public awareness programmes.
- Increased signage in particular of dangerous bathing areas.
- Provision of Byelaws to improve Water Safety in Ireland.
- Donation or assistance given to local voluntary Community Search & Rescue Services.
- Amount of resources allocated towards the inspection of ring buoys.
- Improvement of facilities in bathing areas.
- Improvement of swimming pool facilities to the public for lifesaving and swimming instruction.
- Other appropriate contributions to and investments in water safety.
- LA's may make a submission to the tripartite Jury by the 30th September each year.