

2017 National Judge



Bernadette Solon
Conservation Architect and
Heritage Consultant

Bernadette Solon is our judge from Ireland. She lives in Mullingar the capital town of Westmeath and the administrative headquarters of the county. Since her graduation as an architect, Bernadette has had various careers - university lecturer for over 20 years, architect of Westmeath Local Authority, conservation officer and heritage officer and now, since retiring, a TidyTowns adjudicator and more recently a Communities in Bloom judge. While a university lecturer she was invited as a visiting professor to the University of Lincoln, Nebraska.

She believes that events such as Heritage Week, Tidy Towns, National Tree Week, Biodiversity Week and Communities in Bloom are vital to raise our awareness of the natural and built heritage. She is heartened to see the work undertaken by community volunteers and states that their commitment enhances the lives of all around them and should be enthusiastically encouraged. She has assisted numerous communities and voluntary groups over the years and has advised on aspects of architectural conservation, construction methods, hard and soft landscaping design, streetscape, street furniture and signage, indigenous plants, etc. In addition to lecturing to university students she has, while working for her Local Authority, given talks to schools, community groups, and members of the public and has regularly organized seminars on such topics as protected structures, raised bogs, and, old graveyards. She also arranged exhibitions on a variety of subjects e.g. 1916 -2016 (an art exhibition celebrating Ireland's Easter Rising 1916), Children's Photographs - Street Heritage, and, WWI - The Westmeath Connection. She has recently produced drawings for two books - The Little Book of Westmeath and Lough Ree - a short historical tour.

She is a member of the all-Ireland Follies Trust and enjoys visiting the numerous structures which have been assisted in their consolidation and repair by the Trust both in the North and South of Ireland.

Bernadette has three wonderful children and two amazing grandchildren! She looks forward to celebrating Canada's 150th with Communities in Bloom and says 'Happy Birthday to All' and 'Enjoy the Festivities'.