

# Sth Kerry based German historian exposed Nazi past of Berlin's plush presidential villa

By SIMON BROUDER

FOLLOWING a four year campaign – ignited by the findings of a south Kerry based German historian – the German state has acknowledged the Nazi history of the German President's villa in Berlin.

Until 2014 the German Government claimed it did not know the full history of the Presidential Villa in the leafy Berlin suburb of Dahlem.

That changed when German historian Julien Reitzenstein – who spent much of the last four years in the Cahersiveen area and settled there permanently with his family in May 2017 – completed research for a book on the SS 'Ahnenerbe' division.

In the course of his work Reitzenstein became curious about how the supposedly cash strapped Ahnenerbe – a think tank that helped define and promote the Nazi's racial doctrines – managed to acquire several large mansions in the wealthy Berlin suburb.

Using his knowledge of both history and Germany's financial and legal regulations he was eventually able to untangle the hidden history of the villa, that is now the official residence of the German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Reitzenstein was able to prove that the white-walled and red-roofed villa had once been the home of a Jewish industrialist called Hugo Heymann.

Just days after the Nazi takeover in 1933 he was illegally pressured into selling the house in the hope he could fund his family's escape from Germany.

The house was sold to publisher Waldemar Gerber – who thanks to the generous financial support he provided the SS – went on to become vastly wealthy thanks to contacts with the various Nazi police agencies that were run by SS chief Heinrich Himmler.

Heymann who was close to escaping to Norway was arrested by the Gestapo in 1938 and died as a result of injuries he sustained in an interrogation.

His widow went to the courts in 1951 to try and get the house back but – with many Nazi linked judges still on the bench – she was unsuccessful. The house remained in the Gerber family's hands until it was sold to the West German Government in the 1960s.

Since 2014 Julien Reitzenstein and members of Berlin's Jewish community have been fighting for the house's history to be recognised. The President's office resisted, leading to a four year debate that played out in the German media and on the floor of the Reichstag.

That long campaign finally ended just last week when President Steinmeier unveiled a plaque outlining its history on the Villa's railings. Fittingly Julien Reitzenstein was there to bear witness.

# Five Kerry schools in Creative Ireland pilot

By KATHLEEN O'SULLIVAN

FIVE Kerry schools will be fully embracing their creative side come September after being chosen among 150 schools across the country to trial a new creative scheme.

The schools chosen to take part in the pilot Creative Ireland

Paul Coghlan said: "This pilot initiative will develop and celebrate the arts and creativity in our schools.

"It will establish a range of collaborative opportunities for schools and will develop and strengthen the relationships between schools and the broader cultural and community

# Class of '68 reunite their Green almshouse



The Green class of 1968 celebrating the 50th anniversary of their school leaving on Friday. Fionan O'Connell, Willie O'Connor, Batt O'Connor, Kieran Dowling, Diarmuid Foley, Connel Noel McCarthy, Padraig Moran, John Joe Rice, Billy Ryle, Francis McSwiney, John Shanahan, Fr Paul Lawlor, Fr Sean Hanafin, Conor Fitzgerald, John Conway, Gerard O'Regan, Peter Baily and Paudie Tangney.

By STEPHEN FERNANE

YOU might ask what a priest from Iran, a visitor from Arizona and gathering of men from the four corners of Ireland have in common.

The answer: They all sat their Leaving Cert in the summer of 1968 at CBS The Green.

The Class of '68 met for a 'blast from the past' on Friday as 30 members from that class got together. The organising committee have been busy over the last few weeks hoping to have as many as possible visit Tralee for what turned out to be one memorable occasion.

Class member Padraig Ó Móráin went on to both teach in The Green for over 30 years and help organise Friday's reunion.

He said all enjoyed a lovely tour of the school, taking in the changes wrought on it in the

years since.

Principal Anne O'Callaghan, Billy Ryle, Brother James Liam Whelan – the last Christian Brothers Principal at the school – and Board of Management Chairman, Sean Spillane, all spoke to mark the event.

Three priests meanwhile came from the class of 1968: Fr Sean Hanafin, Fr Paul Lawlor and Fr Michael Hussey, who concelebrated a special mass for deceased class members.

The class then enjoyed a meal and a chat afterwards where there was no shortage of reminiscing.

"It was great to meet up with everyone again. Someone said as we arrived at the school that 'they'll think it's the pupils' grandfathers who are here!' We all enjoyed it and just to have a chat about life then and now was nice," Padraig said.



Conor Fitzgerald, Fr editor Gerard O'Regan

