



■ OVER MOON: Dancers from the Courtney McMahon School celebrate their victory

Group dance their heart out to win competition

SOME say that Irish dance, despite its popular appeal, is not known for its creative expression. Dancers from the Courtney McMahon School of Irish dance in Bexleyheath, London are challenging that view.

Nine dancers aged from 12 to 16 stunned a panel of professional dancers and West End producers in a recent regional heat of 'Dance for Life', an annual showcase of youth dance run by the British Red Cross.

Dance groups are challenged to develop and perform a movement piece that demonstrates some aspect of the work of the Red Cross. The Courtney McMahon School chose the sensitive

subject of child soldiers and their 15-minute production poignantly depicted the recruitment, training and indoctrination of children by violent militia groups. Declared the overall winner, the dance group also took first place in the key categories of 'Best Concept' and 'Best Entertainment'.

Hannah Rosalie, senior fund raiser for the Red Cross in Sussex, said she was intrigued to see how an Irish dance group would deal with the choreographic challenge as it was the first time that Irish dancers had taken part in the competition.

The Kent and Sussex final takes place on July 18 in Tunbridge Wells.