

Leitrim

Personality

of the

Year



Michael Lyons with his family. Left-right: Neil, Ciaran, wife Eileen, baby Maria and Enda.

but as an additional success for Dromod and Annaduff. He speaks with a refreshing modesty of his involvement, preferring to place himself in the ranks of blue collar rather than white collar community workers. But there is no doubt that, whatever his community tag may be, he has been an architect of his area's progress in the last five years.

Michael was born at Cartron House, Drumsna, and came to live in Dromod when he was nine years old. Educated at Cloonturk N.S. and Carmelite College, Moate, he started work in Lyons meat factory, Dromod, in 1961. In that year, the factory employed about twelve people who worked on an irregular basis. The turnover in the workforce was high; friendships ended before they really began; emigration was the blight of youth. The Dromod factory (Western Meats) now employs seventy, a workforce not in any way as changeable as that of earlier years. As general manager, Michael works long hours in helping to create and maintain a situation which will ensure full production.

Michael began to take a real interest in community affairs in 1974 when he became chairman of Dromod Development Association. In the following year he undertook the more effective role of secretary, a position he held for five years. As secretary he set his committee the immediate objectives of resolving a school bus dispute, lighting the

harbour and the approach roads to the village, providing a proper sewerage scheme for the village, projecting Dromod into the front ranks of tidy towns, and developing the harbour. All these aims have been achieved or are nearing fulfilment.

Through the persuasiveness of Michael Lyons and others, the Board of Works agreed to transform what was a marsh into a scenic harbour and amenity area. Over £100,000 has already been spent on this development scheme and when completed in summer 1983 it will provide mooring space for forty cabin cruisers.

Michael's horizon is not confined to Dromod itself. As secretary and a director of Annaduff Credit Union, and as treasurer of the Annaduff National School fund-raising committee, he has been a potent force in both their achievements.

He sees firm organisation as the only weapon for progressing. Many committees are unwieldy because they have multiple chiefs, each one a pretender to the messianic role of saving his area; but pretentiousness carves its own tombstone. Fortunately, pretentiousness is a rare disease these days in Dromod and Annaduff, and with community leaders like Michael Lyons, the ability to convert realistic ideas into things will ensure the area's future progress.

It has been a good year for Annaduff parish and its capital village, Dromod.

Dromod retained its position as Leitrim's tidiest town or village; its post office won the award for the most attractive sub-post office in Ireland; development of its harbour neared completion; Annaduff Credit Union reached a record figure of £85,000 shares in 1981; a collection of £22,000 within a three-week period has set the parish on the road to a new five-teacher national school; and Michael Lyons, intimately connected with almost all of these achievements, has won The Leitrim Guardian 'Personality of the Year' Award for 1982.

Michael would like his award to be seen not as a personal triumph