
Editorial

I AM delighted to present the 47th edition of the *Leitrim Guardian* journal. It is wonderful to see the continuation of our journal despite the competition and financial difficulties of society. We hear much talk about the scourge of emigration and how families are living so far apart. Let us hope that we soon again get reprieve from the emigration mentality that has scourged our nation since the 1840's. It is my aspiration that the features and stories presented here go some way to bringing a taste of home to our diaspora.

This year many commemoration events, to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the first world war, are taking place. For the first time ever, due to improved relations on the island of Ireland, more attention is being paid to the many thousands of men and women who lost their lives during this war. Margaret Connolly and Padraig Griffin's articles are such contributions. However, one could ask what has changed and what have we as an international society learned from the past 100 years? For the past 47 of these years this journal has been produced on an annual basis by the combined voluntary efforts of a group of committed people with Leitrim origins or Leitrim affiliations.

It would be wonderful if we as a country could harness the energy that has currently mobilised our people and use it to improve our communities. People are exercised by the severe impact austerity has imposed on the lives of ordinary people and Irish family life. There is a sense that no-one is listening and more importantly that no-one cares. However, there are many who breed nothing but negativity, sitting on social media constantly criticising everything. I call on them to get out there where possible and to transform their words and energy into positive actions.

In the pages of this year's journal you will find stories of people whose response to a quiet call to action have made a difference to the lives of many. Take for example Dr Frank Brady, Eleanor Shanley, and all those who have held the reign of *Leitrim Guardian Person of the Year*. Look at the some of the articles in this year's journal. We have stories of people recognised for their contribution to society, but who



never sought such recognition: the late Nuala Maloney of Ballinamore; Margaret Connolly (Manorhamilton), who is not just local historian in her spare time, she is also involved in many other community activities; Matt Gaffey of Mohill, who has tirelessly contributed to the lives of our young people through sport. We have Cormac O'Súilleabháin who spent 13 years of his life compiling a history of Republicanism in Leitrim including information about the impact on both sides of the community, while Brian Kennedy of Glenview museum has been quietly gathering memorabilia over the past two decades to preserve our past. You can read about the effort one must put in to become All Ireland champion, be it in theatre, (Corn Mill Theatre Group, Carrigallen, RTE All Ireland Drama winners); Sport (Aughawillan Leitrim Senior County Champions, Martin Rafferty, All Ireland Handball Champion; or the Guinness Book of (Records for the biggest pan of Boxty, ever made (265kg!)).

Short stories, Memoirs and Reflections capture a slice of time for the reader. Congratulations to our literary award winners. We had a bumper submission for our young writers competition with entries coming from Cavan, Leitrim, Roscommon and Sligo. I did not envy the job of the adjudicator. We are very grateful for all submissions and especially for the time that our adjudicators dedicate to this job, free gratis.

Earlier this year we lost one of our honorary presidents and friends, Nuala Maloney. Nuala had faithfully served on the committee of the *Leitrim Guardian* for over 35 years, much of that time as secretary. Tommy Moran pays a fine tribute to Nuala in the pages of this current edition.

I will take this opportunity to pass on our good wishes to Mr Roger Eames, Honorary President, who is currently unwell. He too has been as stalwart of the *Leitrim Guardian* down through the years and I know the journal is of great importance to him.

We can be optimistic after reading the pages contained within this journal. Leitrim maintains a vibrant committed community of people who are dedicated to improving our society. Keep writing. You are in the words of Brian Leyden, "the chroniclers of our lives". This journal is simple the repository. Keep on reading. It is through your voice and support that we will preserve our present for the future.

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*We regret that some articles had to be
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*This year the Leitrim Guardian is launched
by Dr Frank Brady*

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