

The Lure of Leitrim

How things have changed around Leitrim way over the past twenty years. Gone are the days when a derogatory remark from a broadcaster or a joke by a comedian would ruffle our feathers and send us on the defensive.

Leitrim has been in a state of change for some time and has now become the 'cool' place to live, even for the people who once made fun of us. The county town of Carrick is expanding so much that planners have turned to architecture from the middle ages and are now building on pile driven swamplands to satisfy the housing demand. It is a town bursting at the seams with young people attracted to the place not only by the lure of its beauty and tranquillity but by employment opportunities in Masonite, MBNA and the many home based industries. Such is the popularity of Leitrim that it is now home to artists, writers and sculptors who are all inspired by the place in some form or other.

New housing developments are springing up from Dromod to Kinlough and in every town and village in between. Don't be surprised to see the launch of Monaghan, Kildare or Louth Peoples Associations in Leitrim in the near future.

The influx of this county mix has brought with it tremendous gain but such urban development can't continue at the expense of the many young Leitrim people who wish to live in their own communities in the countryside.

For centuries the people of Leitrim have been the custodians of the county and they have done a fine job in preserving the environment to the extent that it is now generally recognised that we have the cleanest air in Europe. The expert groups who insist on dictating to us where we should live, should listen to the views of us Leitrim folk and learn from our positive experiences. Not everyone wants to be forced into urban settings or see our bogs disappear down the valleys just to advance some weird agenda not suited to our culture.

The people of Leitrim need to have a far bigger input into planning the future shape of the county.

Tá pobail beo bhríomhar, sna bailtí móra agus faoin tuath, fíor thábhachtach do Liatroim. Ní ceart go mbéadh Liatroim ina theach banaltrais mór don chuid eile den tír.

2003 was a momentous year for the county with four towns hosting Special Olympic delegations. The gathering in New York of Leitrim Gaels from the four corners of the world for the Connacht Championship game was one of these great occasions that will live for ever in our memories.

The Leitrim Guardian lost a key figure during the year with the death of former editor, Rev Gus Leaden and Seán Sweeney, stepped down as Chairman after 18 years in office—two very influential and inspirational men.

A Mhuintir Liatroma, ar aghaidh libh le chéile le muinín agus díograis agus ráth Dé oraibh ar fad.

Aiden Kelleher Editor

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'The Web of Leitrim Life'

From photos by:

Willie Donnellan

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Francis Boylan with Dustin & Socky
Photo courtesy of RTE