MICHAEL FOX

Without him, it could not happen

P J Martin

Michael Fox

I GOT TO KNOW the late Michael Fox many years ago at GAA Board meetings. He very ably represented the views of the Manorhamilton Club and the North Leitrim Board.

Later I met him with Father John A Young when he was working in Mitchell's Hardware Stores in Manorhamilton. He was then writing for *The Leitrim Observer* as 'Gael Óg'. As soon as we met, a lively discussion would start with Father Young and himself. Father Young's idea was that a serious argument brought out the best in a person.

When he commenced promoting The Leitrim Guardian, I met him again, this time in Ballinamore, when he was sourcing material for the Guardian in the southern half of the county. Realising that this was a costly business which dug into his personal funds, I offered him the use of a garden chalet. He was now in a position to make a cup of tea, write and sleep.

Each night the three of us met in Father Young's house to discuss the happenings of the day, the people he met and to bounce some of his ideas on us. Needless to say, these discussions lasted into the early hours of the next morning and generally ended in very serious arguments—all in the interest of *The Leitrim Guardian*. They are both now gone! May they rest in peace.

I wonder does the bantering still continue in the new situation! I am sure that they are both proud of the progress and history of *The Leitrim Guardian*.

Kathleen Fox, Kilfinane, Limerick (wife of Michael Fox, first editor of the Leitrim Guardian), Edward Fox, Kilfinane (Michael's son) & Philomena Mulligan, Manorhamilton (Michael's sister) at the launch of Seán Mac-Diarmada The Mind of the Revolution in Kilmainham Gaol.

Editorial committee at work in 2004: Myra Reynolds, Seán Sweeney, Hubert McMorrow & Rosaleen Kielty.

Michael Fox's reply to an offer in a letter from Jude Flynn in 1966 to edit a new Leitrim publication.

Knocklong Road,
Hospital,
Co. Limerick.
14.4.1966

Dear Jude,

I was very pleased to receive your letter of the 11th inst. I am delighted to learn of your proposed venture and honoured too, to learn that you were offering me the esteemed post of editing same. I'm afraid however that I can hardly see my way towards considering the post. It has been a boyhood dream of mine to fill a post of its nature wherein I could achieve so much for my native Leitrim. Remember I am married and though I'm sure my son Tomás (3 months) wouldn't mind what course I' take, my wife who is a native of Tipperary cannot be persuaded to believe in this project. As for myself I would not hesitate to accept such a position and I would feel extremely confident too of making such a venture a wonderful success. My heart is in Leitrim now as always and it was a great coincidence that just as I received your letter, Leo Heslin was probably reading one from me with somewhat similar proposals, though I was completely unaware of yours! Mine however was for an annual production which I could edit without altering my position here.

As I have planned to travel home in two weeks time, I will be reluctantly absent from your meeting in 'Kilty' on Sunday. When I am up I must call to Mick Shanley for a discussion on your project.

A proposition regarding the launching of a newspaper for Leitrim was mooted some years ago when my 'Gael Óg' columns were popular in the Observer. Approaches were made to me but I felt that the interests were pecuniary rather than from inspiring motives for the people of Leitrim. There are aspects of the launching of such a project that I would like to discuss with those concerned. My time is now running short for the posting and I'm afraid that I cannot elaborate more. There are things I'd love to do which would be of interest to the county.

A play depicting Leitrim's nationalist stand!
I am working on one with a great Leitrim flavour just now.

I'd love to be able to do MacDiarmada's biography too. Any help in any project will be given in an unstinted and willing manner from me. With every good wish and success in your project.

Best Wishes,

Michael Fox Gda

The next recorded letter from Michael to Jude is on July 9th 1968 to say that he is having a crack at the above magazine and a later letter on September 9th 1968 stating that he is heading for Tralee with all edited data.

Josie & Anna Martin

JOSIE (P J) JOINS HIS FOUNDER FRIENDS

Since Josie submitted the foregoing article he was called to his eternal reward on 8th November, 2004. His loss to his family and to his close friends is immense. During a lifetime of pioneering and thoughtful work he truly lived as a wonderful example to all. The death of his beloved wife, Anna, in June last was so severe on him in particular. He did not openly lament but we all knew his heart was broken and so well it should– they were just a wonderful couple.

Josie was justly fulfilled in his many achievements. He would also be quite proud that the Lord spared him to die at work preparing for another meeting in a venue that had a special place for him– The Bush Hotel–where he attended many an important official meeting and numerous social functions.

Ballinamore has lost a prominent citizen– prominent because his work for the town (especially his voluntary work) ensured that so many services and amenities were put in place during his lifetime in his beloved community–he was always involved. His work with The Leitrim Guardian from the start was again a labour of love as his article shows clearly.

Táimíd go léir níos boichte agus faoi bhrón go bhfuil an Críostaí uasal imithe ar Slí na Fírinne. Guímíd go bhfuil sé féin agus Anna go sona sásta i bhfochair Dé agus na Maighdine Muire tar éis saol a chaitheamh i seirbhís daoine eile de réir dlí Dé agus ag tógáil clainne atá go mór faoi chomaoin acu.

Sincere sympathy to Josie & Anna's family and friends.

Solas na bhFlaitheas orthu araon.