A MESSAGE FROM 'THE DRACULA OF DRUMSHANBO'

Brendan Mulvey

MY NAME IS Brendan Mulvey and I am a native of the parish of Kiltubrid. I am married to Josie who hails from Sligo. Like most young people in the sixties. I emigrated to England. My first years were spent driving heavy goods vehicles across the length and breath of Europe. With my international experience I began coach driving in Europe. I had many happy trips, like taking pilgrims to Rome, Fatima, Lourdes and The Shrines of Northern France and of course to Knock. I had the privilege to be in Berlin the night *the wall* came tumbling down.

Five years ago I joined The National Blood Service as a high speed driver to take blood and blood products to accident victims and patients undergoing organ transplants. Many of these mercy missions were carried out at speeds in excess of 120 miles an hour with police clearing the way. One such mission was to assist a little Irish girl who was at Birmingham Children's Hospital awaiting a transplant for liver pancreas and lower bowel. The transplant lasted ten and a half hours and it was the first time this transplant was carried out in Europe. The child was from Derry. Her name was Adele Chapman. I followed her progress all the way through recovery and it was a special day for me when I was invited to her farewell party when she was discharged from hospital. I was interviewed on BBC TV about my role in the transplant. Many of you may have seen Alele in the BBC programme 'Children's Hospital'.

Twelve months ago I was successful in being appointed Public Relations Officer for the service. The media took great interest in my appointment as I am the first Irish person to hold the position in the Midlands. I was interviewed by a press reporter in Birmingham about

my new role and was asked where I hailed from in Ireland and I said near Drumshanbo. When the two page story appeared it said 'The Dracula from Drumshanbo' needs your blood, hence my weird nickname.

I approached the various communities to promote blood donation and had great success within the Asian Community, not only in England but also in India and Canada. I was the first non-Asian to have my photograph published on the cover of their official newspaper which is circulated all over the world and of course it said in the story 'The Dracula from Drumshanbo' so I have well and truly put Leitrim on the map. Now an appeal! Make a New Years Resolution–if you are not already a Blood Donor become one–support the donor sessions when they visit your area and help save a life. I am a member of The Birmingham Saint Patrick's Day Parade Committee. We are proud to say we have the third largest parade after New York and Dublin. this year we had the pleasure of The Kiltubrid Pipe Band come across and lead our parade. I was delighted when the judges awarded the band the shield for best band in the parade. I was a member of the band in the sixties and with my drumming skills I helped with my wife Josie to form, just twelve months ago, the new Birmingham Irish Pipes and Drums. It was a joyous time for Josie and myself to take the band to Kiltubrid in June to join in the 50th anniversary celebrations of The Kiltubrid Pipe Band. May I say a Big Thank You as Chairman of The Birmingham Irish Pipes and Drums to all who made us so welcome and were on hand to see us off.

I wish all the readers of The Leitrim Guardian a Happy New Year.

THE EMIGRANT *Nina Havers*

My dear little boy, as you once used to be,
I watched you grow.
Tall strange young man, as you now
seem to be,
I watch you go.
Out in the world on your own two feet–
God knows through which valleys,
along which streets;
I wish I could know.
All I can do is hope and pray
That all of my work is not lost by the way
I did my best–Yours is the rest