

The Launch of 'Shannonside'

Willie Keane

ON THE 10th of October 1988, the Kiltoghert parish magazine, 'Shannonside', was launched by Bishop Colm O'Reilly in the County Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon. The idea for a magazine came from Mrs Winnie Downey (Winnie McCabe, Sheffield, Leitrim). Mrs Downey and her husband, Joe, had returned from England in 1982. Winnie had retired from a distinguished nursing career in St Albans, Hertfordshire.

Keenly interested in local and 'parish' history, Winnie and Patricia Molloy organised a number of meetings in Leitrim where discussion took place on various topics, including Kiltoghert parish.

Professor T P O'Neill came to give some lectures on the history of the parish, and how to proceed with any publication. The Sheemore Historical Society was formed. Here was a focus for like-minded people who had a contribution to make to come together. Many came



from the village, the surrounding areas, and Carrick-on-Shannon. Historical discussion continued apace. Mrs Downey, Patricia Molloy and Des Smith took on the responsibility and, in a positive move, decided to publish a parish history.

The committee to undertake the work was formed, with Fr Rigney as chairman. Des Smith agreed to act as editor. Secretaries were Patricia Molloy and Bernie Murray.

Back Row: Des Smith, Bernee Murray, Winnie Downey and Willie Kane.

Front: Patricia Molloy Kiernan, Bishop Colm O'Reilly and Clare Fitzgerald

Treasurers were Winnie Downey and Liam Keane. The meetings were held in the Downey home at Newbrook, near to Lock 14 of the old canal. Work continued, often late into the night, with many cups of tea and sandwiches.

Eventually the outline of a slim volume emerged.

Included in the magazine were well researched articles, ballads of the county, poems of the parish. These included one by that wonderful lady, Susan Mitchell. Carrick's M J McManus's poem '1849' and Canon Slater's 'Battlebridge'. Our noted neighbour, Liam O'Sceallain from Ardrougher, Gowel, celebrated the area and its personalities. Mrs Downey's contribution, 'The Stations' is a gem, as indeed is her sister, Bridie O'Reilly's 'The Christmas Join'.

Here old customs come to life in fond remembrance. So many photographs of families, fairs, football teams, drama groups, farewell parties, parish churches and landmarks.

'After mass on Sheemore—1980'. 'Finner FCA Championships—1954'. School photos, old and modern. Our departed friend, Dr William McGarry has an honoured place there.

When the completed publication finally went to press there was a collective sigh of satisfaction. Patricia Molloy, 'Mrs P Kiernan', on her own was responsible for typing all articles. The photos were a combined effort by the committee. *The Leitrim Observer* typeset and printed 'Shannonside'.

The date for publication was set for 10th October 1988. The profits from the magazine were to be donated to pay for restoration of St Joseph's Church, Leitrim Village. Ticket selling for the function to mark the launch went on for weeks. Sponsors were contacted and

were generous indeed. Their companies, and individual names, are listed at the end of the book.

The crowd who attended the launch surpassed our expectations. There were VIPs galore, and a welcome at the door! Bishop O'Reilly was accompanied by Monsignor Ryan and Fr Rigney. In his opening remarks Dr. O'Reilly told the committee:

"From what I've read of this magazine, I think you have got it about right. Yours is an example of giving back to the community, especially at this time of free education and improved economic circumstances"

In all, 400 copies of the magazine were sold and, finally, £4,000 donated to fund restoration of St Joseph's Church.



Left: Mary Donoghue (Cloone ICA) receives Leitrim Crystal Bowl, Award Winning Trophy for handknitting of Christmas crib figures from Bernadette McLoughlin (Contest secretary, Leitrim Federation). Also present is Maire Faughnan, President Leitrim Federation.

Right: Phone box that has been restored in Glenade opposite Clancy's old Post Office. Photo submitted by Sean Clancy

