A Newcomer to Ballinaglera

Dr. Aedín McLoughlin

Amazing the number of people who ask us, "Do you find Ballinaglera very quiet?"

The situation is that we never have the time to find out! Peace, we certainly have and a superb quality of life. But somehow, there is so much to do between our new home and new setting that we could never complain that things were too quiet. And since we arrived here a year ago, there is certainly no shortage of events to amuse us.

Take for example the day my sister came to visit. She arrived at tea-time, as it is called locally, dinner-time for us. We had a meal and at about 9.30, decided to go down to Rynn's for a drink. As it was dark and damp, we took the car but on our way down the hill we heard the dread sound of a flat tyre.

"No problem," I thought, "Plenty of men in Rynn's to help."

Sure enough, there were four Germans in the pub who very obligingly got down from their high stools when they heard what was wrong. We opened the boot to get out the spare and the fun began–the spare was also flat! One of the Germans was living locally and he had a solution to the problem–he had a wheel of the same size and he would bring it to Rynn's in the morning; we would get it on to my car and then I could drive (slowly) to Drumshanbo to get at least one of the punctures fixed! We made a date for 10 the next morning and then repaired to the pub where a grand session followed.

10 am the next morning and I was at Rynn's, not feeling so great. In true Germanic (and Ballinaglera) style, he was there, anxious to help. The car was put up on the jack, we got the wheel off, but new problem–his wheel would not fit, the nuts did not match. So what to do? I decided to leave the car on the jack, put the flat wheel into the back of my sister's car and went to Drumshanbo to get it fixed.

All went well. We had a few things to do and it was 3 o'clock by the time we arrived back to install the new wheel. The car was still up on the jack, so we again went into the pub to get assistance. This time, three locals were having a pint and Kay, the proprietor, was on her way out.

"Look after yourselves, I will be back in a minute," she said.

Two of the men came out and within two minutes the wheel was on the car. All's well that ends well. But first...

"Will you now have a drink on me?" I asked, in timehonoured style.

"Very kind of you," came the reply. So, in we went. Kay was still away, so one of the customers acted as barman and poured us all a drink. Time went by and another round was poured, then a third. We were really enjoying the craic! Of course, by that time we had exchanged stories of genealogies and locations and found people we knew in common.

At last, Kay came back, very apologetic.

"I really got delayed..."

We didn't mind at all and two more rounds ensued. Finally, we all declared what drinks we had served ourselves and paid up. The day was gone, but what harm!

Where else in the world would you get it? Such willingness to help others and trust in the essential goodness of all.

Ballinaglera–the Land of the Friendly People. And I love it!

Some of the friendly people of Ballinaglera – Rory Gilmartin, Michael F. Gilchrist, Colm Maguire, Tanya McGourty, Enda Gilrane, Susan Gilmartin, Thomas Forde, Olivia McGourty, Michael J. Gilmartin, Gerard Gilmartin and Richard Kleiss – organisers of the annual festival.