

Cúpla Focal from Ann Sweeney



ON A FRIDAY afternoon, as I was enjoying my lunch in the Commercial Hotel in Ballinamore, when I had the “misfortune” to meet my cousin, Tommy Moran. I say misfortune, because, before we parted he had convinced me to write an article for *The Leitrim Guardian*. “Do a bit on what you think of Leitrim” he said.

The Guardian, like the *Observer*, was always read by my father, Seán, from Killaneen and my mother, Mary (Rooney), from Aughnasheelin, in our home in Birmingham, and indeed by my grandfather, Joe Sweeney and his wife, Mary Kate and all the family. Funny, when I married, I married a Sweeney also and Mike and I decided we would like to move to live back in Ireland, a decision we never regretted. In July 2016, we arrived, bag and baggage and were made most welcome, not only by our relatives, but also by our lovely neighbours in Kilclare,

where we set up home.

We were lucky enough to secure employment and enjoy life in this beautiful county. In 2017, we spotted an advert for Beginners’ Irish Classes in Ballinamore Library and this sparked an interest in us to learn a bit of Gaeilge. I had long had an ambition to pick up a bit of the language and Mike was keen to be able to at least partly understand the commentary on *Rugbaí Beo* on TG4.

My interest probably went back to the many Summers I spent in Killaneen, when Granda Joe Sweeney would use expressions like “maith an cailín” or “buachaill maith” to me and my brother John, when we helped at the hay. Over the years I picked up many phrases from him and he also taught me to count in Irish—aon, dó, trí—and all this has remained longer in my memory than the French or German I had studied in Secondary School. Sunday evenings were special, Granny reading the paper at one side of the fire and Granda tuned into Micheál O’Hehir

on the other, and him chatting away to Micheál, as if he was there with him in the kitchen.

At the *Gaeilge* classes, the words and phrases I had picked up from Granda were a big help and in the past two seasons, both Mike and I find our vocabulary expanding all the time and we chat as much as we can tre Ghaeilge. As we now sit at the fire on Sunday afternoons, watching rather than listening to games on television, we are probably carbon copies of Joe and Mary Kate and as contented and happy as they were. Life in Leitrim is just great.

Learning Irish has also given us a better understanding of the many old expressions that still pepper the conversation in the lilting Leitrim accents.

I want to compliment Seán Ó’Súilleabháin, Leitrim County Council, Leitrim County Library and its staff and all the voluntary múinteoirí, without whom there could be no classes and we would all be a lot poorer as a result.

Míle buíochas do gach éinne.

Kinlough Mens Shed in new premises

KINLOUGH MEN’S SHED has moved into new premises in Ahanlish community centre following the gracious offer from the Community Centre Committee. The shed was set up in 2017 and was very kindly given the use of a shed by James Early. Initially the shed required some renovation including a new concrete floor and modifications to fittings. With the generous donations of tools, machinery, and materials the shed went into operation. The Mens Shed are very thankful to James for the facility he provided in those initial years. Unfortunately, for circumstances beyond control it was necessary to vacate the shed earlier this year in July which came as a shock. The group set about exploring various possibilities in order to provide new premises. An offer from Ahanlish Community Committee came through and was very welcome. Following discussions with the committee it was agreed to relocate to Glenade Resource centre.

Their first activity was to paint the interior of the hall. Then all the equipment was moved either to the main room or to the shed at the rear. Additional electrical sockets as well as shelving completed the necessary arrangements to make the building fit for purpose. In addition, the existence of a large open-sided shed at the rear was very welcome for the storage of timber and other materials.

Further to the work in the main building, the main activity has been to enclose the first two sections of the shed along with the installation of a window to provide internal light. Further plans include providing electrical power in the shed and short term heating in the hall. The County Council have given a grant for the purchase of equipment, which is in progress. In the meantime, the Mens Shed continue to provide various forms of help at the Kinlough Community Garden. Further plans include a Christmas open-day, similar to last year, as well as purchase of a welder.

The group would like to thank all who have supported them since they were established, and in turn they hope to work alongside other groups locally to optimise benefits to our community.



More walls



Who’s that at the door at this hour?