Manorhamilton Community Services Training

Lucinda Moore



Participants of Manorhamilton Community Services Training with residents of Árus Breffini, whose houses they redecorated. Also in the photograph, Roisín Keenan of Peace & Reconciliation.



Back Row - Left to Right: **Pat Love,** Manorhamilton Community Council, **Mary Theresa Kerins, John Rankin ,** Craftsman, **Ashling Maguire, Ryan Stirrat, Roisín Keenan,** Programme for Peace & Reconciliation, **Noreen Elliott, Richard Sherlock,** FÁS SLIGO. Front Row - Left to Right: **Karen Feehily, Maggie Anne Granaghan, Patricia McPadden, Lucinda Moore** - Project Supervisor.

Manorhamilton Community Council, which was set up in 1989 and was initially concerned with running Community Employment schemes in the area, has evolved over the years to take on a facilitating and co-ordinating role in local development matters.

By 1995 much valuable work had been carried out, or was underway, in the community under FAS C.E. scheme - walls were built at the Heritage Centre and at McDermott's Terrace, which also landscaped; in the field of care of the aged, smoke alarms and home security devices were fitted in the homes of old people in the area. One forward thinking project at this stage was the establishment of a FAS Community Arts Response Project. This brought the vision of local artist and sculptor Jackie McKenna to the community and with the involvement of local young people, together with other artists from the area and beyond a vibrant arts scene began to gain momentum. The Community Council acted as sponsors for this training project. As well as providing training in sculpture and other artistic techniques this project also worked in

conjunction with the McDermott's Terrace Residents' Association on the design and preliminary building work for a playground and scenic walk. The Residents' Association took this through to completion, providing a state - of - the -art play and leisure area in the town - the Gordon Wilson Memorial Park. The Arts project has now progressed into another stage of development with the establishment of a sculpture training centre and residential arts base in Manorhamilton.

Following a series of consultative meetings in November of 1996, the Manorhamilton Community Council took on a more proactive structure with representatives being drawn more widely from local interest groups such as commerce, youth, residents' associations etc. The role of the Community Council became more defined. Acting as a flexible and approachable grouping, their aim is to help identify the needs of the community and to help the community to meet those needs through locally conceived and guided projects to promote Manorhamilton socially, economically and environmentally.

It became evident that some sections of the community were missing out on the new opportunities which were opening up for other groups - some people found themselves excluded from participation by social, economic or geographic circumstances. To help address the exclusion of the young unemployment and Lone Parents, Manorhamilton Community Services Training Project was set up in March 1997. This is a FAS Community Youth Training Project, sponsored by Manorhamilton Community Council and run out of the External Training Department of FAS, Sligo. The Community Council secured funding from various agencies such as the County Leitrim Partnership, Leitrim County Council, the North Western Health Board and the special programme for Peace and Reconciliation - which provided the bulk of the funding outside of the FAS administration and training budget. Lone Parents were able to access the training course through the provision of childminding expenses. Personal development played a large part in the training programme as well as computer literacy and practical skills training in painting and decorating. The funding also covered the cost of materials used in the decorating of the homes of the elderly in the community. At the end of the first six month phase of the project all the participants had secured places in further education, training or employment. Based on this success another phase began in September of 1997.

Another group identified by the Community Council as having difficulty accessing new opportunities were men, aged over 35, living alone and often geographically isolated from the social and economic networks of the town. The North Leitrim Mens' Group was set up in response to this need and now operates as an independent body, running its own training and employment scheme. Fifteen men are participating in the scheme, undergoing training in personal and practical skills and forging valuable social contacts.

The needs of the youth of Manorhamilton are being addressed by the local youth group, again facilitated by the Community Council. This group has been up and running for nine months and has almost fifty members in the 15-18 year age group. Until the formation of this group there was no forum for young peoples' concerns in Manorhamilton. Four full-time leader/facilitators help the young people to identify their needs, formulate ideas and turn their goals into achievements. The group meets on Friday nights and has developed a programme of drama, games, debates and outings. Cross-border contact was established with a group in Fintona with 12-15 year olds taking part in exchange visits. The group secured funding from the County Leitrim Partnership to enable young people to take part in an adventure activity weekend in Galway - a valuable team and confidence building exercise. The youth group has energetic plans for the future, top of the list being the forging of lasting links with similar groups both locally and cross-border. The facilitators are taking part in ongoing training and the group welcomes new leaders and members. Anyone interested in participating should contact Corrina on 087 460831.

As can be seen from the examples given the Manorhamilton Community Council works as a forum and as a facilitating and co-ordinating body in partnership with the public and private sectors, to provide a vehicle for the participation of all sections of the local community in projects and endeavours which will directly impact on Manorhamilton's future. The ethos of the Community Council is not to work as a bureaucracy, but to ensure that the power and capacity for change and development rests within the community groups themselves.

The Sligo Council of Trade Unions with the support of FAS and The County Leitrim Partnership would like to announce the establishment of the latest edition to the I.C.T.U. (Irish Congress of Trade Unions) Network of Centres for the Unemployed.

Second Resource Centre Opens in Leitrim

The Leitrim Resource Centre (Mohill) is one of 36 Centres nationwide, catering for the needs of unemployed persons, and those at risk of becoming unemployed, through the provision of services, including information, support and assistance, enabling people to source sustainable employment through further Education and Training opportunities.

The first Leitrim Resource Centre opened its doors in Manorhamilton in October 1994 and has already employed a total of 44 people who were on long-term employment. The Participants join for a period of 12 months on a Community Employment Scheme. Workers receive training in Typing, Computer Skills, Accounts, Assertiveness and Interview Skills and a large percentage of past participants have gone on to full employment or started a small business. The Centres provide a valuable service to the Community, including Photo-Copying, Typing, C.V.' etc. at reasonable rates for unemployed people.

The foremost function of the Centres is the provision of information, which we believe is the key to unlocking the unemployment problem for many people. This service is free and confidential and deals with issues relating to Welfare and Health Entitlements, Educational and Employment Opportunities, Travel etc.

The Mohill Centre is located at Hyde Street, Mohill, and the Manorhamilton Centre at New Line, Manorhamilton. Both Centres are open to the public 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. We would encourage those who are interested in seeking further information on any of the above, to feel free to call to or 'phone the Centres at any time.
Mohill: 078 32043 Manorhamilton: 072 56029

Mohill Mothers' Union Centenary



At the M.U. Centenary Service in Mohill: L-R: Bishop Michael Mayes, Mrs. Pearl Jackson, Lady Christine Eames, Mrs. Thelma Mehaffey, Bishop James Mehaffey.

On 9th May, 1997, St. Mary's Church of Ireland church was the venue for a Centenary Service - it was 100 years since the first Branch of the Mothers' Union was started in the United Dioceses of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, and that was also the first Branch outside the Diocese of Dublin.

In 1897 Mrs. Gertrude Clements formed a Branch at Lough Rynn, near Mohill. That Branch was later amalgamated with one in Mohill, and, as the Lough Rynn (Fearnaught) church was too small, it was decided to hold the Centenary Service in Mohill church.

The Service was led by Venerable Archdeacon Derek Johnston, Rector of Belturbet Group. The church was filled to overflowing. Many of the Branches carried M.U. Banners and there was a colourful Procession from the church gates up to the chancel, where the banners remained during the Service. This took place during the singing of the hymn "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven."

During the course of the Service, Scripture Lessons were read by Mrs. Thelma Mehaffey, All-Ireland M.U. President and wife of Right Rev. James Mehaffey, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, and by Mrs. Pearl Jackson, Diocesan M.U. President and wife of recently retired Venerable Archdeacon Roy Jackson, of Longford Group. Mrs. Beth Mayes, Diocesan Vice-President and wife of Right Rev. Michael Mayes, Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, led the intercessions.

The highlight of the Service was a very inspiring address given by Lady Christine Eames, M.U. World-Wide President and wife of Dr. Robin Eames, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland. She brought us greetings from the M.U. world-wide and talked of some of the countries she had visited recently as World-Wide President. She especially mentioned the Diocese of Grafton, Australia, where the members were also celebrating 100 years of Mothers" Union.

The organist for this uplifting service was Mrs. Pat O'Malley-Bradshaw and the Blessing was given by Bishop Michael Mayes. The Recession of Bishops, Clergy and Banner-bearers was during the singing of the final hymn "To God be the glory." To mark the occasion a bouquet of flowers was presented to Mrs. Mayes Lady Eames. Mrs. Mehaffey were presented with line-drawings of Lough Rynn Church, where the Mothers Union had begun.



Mrs. Noelle Crowe with the Mohill M.U. Banner which she made in 1996.

The aim of the M.U. is Christian Concern for Families World-wide, and to help fulfil this aim it manages two funds - the Overseas Fund, which is for overseas Missionary work, and the Relief Fund, which sends financial aid to wherever disaster strikes abroad.

On the home front, the M.U. members are active in hospital visiting, home visiting of house-bound people, providing over-night accommodation for people with relatives in hospital, in cities, monitoring TV programmes (and taking issue with the relevant authority over those considered undesirable) and helping with Parish events.

The mark the Centenary of the M.U. in Ireland, (1887-1987), the members of the United Dioceses of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh contributed to a fund which was used to provide Murals, books, toys, TV sets and rocking-horses in the paediatric unit of the new General Hospital in Cavan.

It is the wish of the M.U. to continue with all its activities, and to expand them where possible, in coming years.



Mother Union members with banners at the centenary Service in Mohill