

OUR READERS WRITE

TO THE EDITOR



Evening on Selton Hill

Photo by John Keaney

The Leitrim Guardian, conceived by one who is domiciled many miles from our native heath can, and must be, regarded by its many readers as being their property. It belongs to Leitrim. It was never intended to be a private commercial enterprise, but one which depended for its existence on the idealism of those who aligned themselves to the beliefs of its founder, that it could serve to restore the ancient pride of our folk in themselves.

It is extremely important for us to be given to understand to what extent we are achieving this end, if at all. We depend on the many letters from our readers to help us determine policy and provide guide-lines for our future editions.

Your words of encouragement are likewise vital for maintaining the spirit which this gigantic undertaking demands.

We Shall Overcome

How wonderfully welcome was this first letter received, regarding the 1970 edition. It came from 19-year-old, Cloone born, Michael Kavanagh, now working in Dublin. He wrote, Your very well planned and bright magazine is changing the attitude of Leitrim people who were so conscious of the ills of the county that they felt inferior to the rest of the Irish people. I myself am very proud of my native county and I am firmly convinced there is a bright future for it . . . I was so proud reading your excellent magazine. You deserve the highest honour for having the courage, interest and ability, to start such a great task, which has gone a long way towards bringing about the change of heart so evident in our people to-day . . . It was great to see towns like Ballinamore and Manorhamilton making such progress in the past year. The change is very visible in Ballinamore. The task in Manorhamilton may be heavier, but success is bound to come with confidence, co-operation and hard-working organisers . . . Things are really moving in my native Cloone too, with a new church started and a group water scheme for seventy houses . . . All the best for the Seventies, and don't forget, We Shall Overcome.

With the spirit displayed in your letter we, too, shall overcome. How we admired the framework of the beautiful church in Cloone this summer, what a tremendous picture it will make when completed. Thanks, too, for your donation.—Ed.

Selton Hill

Michael Whelan's fine contribution on "Selton Hill" gained the praises of innumerable readers, far and wide. P. Griffin wrote from Warwickshire: I would like to tell you how much I enjoyed reading—over and over again—last year's edition. I was indeed delighted to read of the progress being made in my native parish of Gortletteragh, but every article abounded in interest and, of course, some had their sad sides. The tragedy of Selton Hill will always bring a tear to the eye . . .



Dramatic and Touching

Revd. Bro. Killian Beirne, C.S.C.—himself an author of note in the States—wrote from New York, telling us that he received a copy of our magazine from a friend . . . I'm delighted with the publication, he wrote, I've read every word of it with pleasure. The most dramatic and touching article was, of course, "The Tragedy of Selton Hill". Continuing, he stated: In your own article on North Leitrim you caught my fancy regarding the position of Drumshanbo. So it was neither up nor down? Well, I'm from Drumshanbo—specifically, about 2½ townland of Curnacranaghy, about 2½ miles south from Drumshanbo, almost on the extreme southern boundary of the parish. In my family we went in to Carrick; over to Ballinamore; up to Mohill; and down to Drumkeerin, Dromhair and Manorhamilton. Your publication is a credit to you and to your staff. That my dear County Leitrim should have such a fine annual to publicise its glorious scenery and to tell its sons and daughters of its progressive achievements gives me, a Leitrim exile, a grand feeling of pride in the county of my birth. Thank you, Gabriel Martin, for your literary ambition in doing so much to raise the standard of old Breffni. And please thank the members of your staff for me. I wish I could shake the hand of each of you. If ever I visit Ireland once more before I grow too old to dream, I'll drop in to say hello in Manorhamilton . . .

And more power to John Rooney for his pluck and courage in turning heather, and whins into a sward of green clover. If there were more John Rooneys in Ireland, there wouldn't be so many deserted farms growing weeds and rushes. But John Rooney shouldn't be afraid of a tree. It's timber Ireland needs. Trees don't need rich soil. All they demand is water, and so help me, there's plenty of that in Ireland. Why shouldn't Slieve Anieran and the other mountains have a growth of timber on their sides . . .

Many thanks for the copy of your own publication: "Me Grandfather"—I thoroughly enjoyed it.—Ed.