

● What We Think
MARCH 14TH, 2013

This should be our turn

A couple of years ago, a delegation from Donegal County Council brought a striking combination of maps to their annual meeting with the National Roads Authority. Elected members and senior council staff travel to Dublin each year to make the case for the county's priority roads projects.

Laid out on the map was the country's motorway network. The web of roadways, many built or enhanced in the more recent years when money seemed plentiful, was absent from Donegal and the northwest.

Also illustrated was the distribution of wealth in the country. The areas of highest concentration were in those parts of the country that are connected by motorway to Dublin. Again, Donegal did not feature in those high concentrations of wealth.

The proposed A5 dual carriageway upgrade, agreed by both governments as part of the 2006 St. Andrew's Agreement, is the long-overdue roads project that Donegal not only needs, but deserves.

No one has to tell Donegal what it feels like to be forgotten. The A5 was an agreed and belated attempt to give our county, and the northwest, what everyone else seems to have. It's place, as part of the agreement, signalled a cooperation between the governments for a key, cross-border route that would be as important to economic regeneration, jobs creation and transportation needs in Donegal as it would be to those in the north.

Both governments had agreed to share the cost of the €800 million upgrade, but in 2011, the Irish government announced it would delay its planned cofunding, instead committing 50m euro over 2015 and 2016. The government has said it remains politically committed to the project.

Still, during the High Court Hearing last month, lawyers for the alliance opposed to the project argued that the Irish government was not committed to funding the work.

The High Court judge who has found a failure to carry out an appropriate assessment of the Rivers Foyle and Finn Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive, has given the northern department the opportunity to make further submissions. Both sides will return to court next week.

Donegal elected representatives have called on the northern officials to address the High Court's concerns as a matter of urgency.

At the same time we would suggest that the Dublin government, also as a matter of urgency, must clarify their funding position. Lawyers for the alliance opposed to the A5 had argued in the High Court that the government's decision to delay funding meant uncertainty had clouded the project.

If the government recommitted to their share of the funding, that would mean jobs and a vital new connection for Donegal.

Donegal does not need any more uncertainty. We deserve our place on those maps.

Thursday Interview

SHANE SMYTH: DOING WHAT HE LOVES!

Surfing the waves - on air and sea

BY SUE DOHERTY

Shane Smyth, a 35-year-old native of Bundoran has made a great name for himself since he returned home to Donegal after years working in the Big Smoke. He's presenter of Ocean Drive on Ocean FM and was recently appointed Tourism Officer for Bundoran. On top of that, he's PRO for Bundoran RNLI, handled all the media for Eurosurf Bundoran and has just taken on the role of PRO for Donegal branch of the Irish Water Safety Association.

Busy as he is, Shane reckons his life is relatively easy. "My father was from Drumkeerin. Both he and Grandad worked in the Arigna mines. I push buttons and talk for a living!"

Shane also appreciates how lucky he is, being paid to do what he loves. "I always wanted to work in media for as long as I can remember. I'd be watching the 6 o'clock news and wonder where the newsreader's legs were - that sparked an interest in studios and seeing how things worked behind the scenes. From the age of around 7 or 8 I was, unknown to myself, preparing myself and focusing for my career."

"A story that mum tells every so often is that I was always inquisitive about plugs. One day we were in McElhinney's in Ballybofey and all of a sudden the lights went off. Lo and behold, there I was, having followed a cable behind a counter, with my finger on the switch."

Shane grew up in Bundoran where he attended St Macartan's, under principal Joe Roarty first and then John Campbell.

Then he went to Ard Lughaidh. "We were the last year out of there before the VEC took it over in 1994. Little did I know that my first ever outside broadcast for North West Radio when I went to work there was going to be outside my old school four years later."

"Oddly enough, my first outside broadcast for Ocean FM when I started there last year was also outside my old school - a strange coincidence."

"By the time I was in my Leaving Cert class, I was doing work experience at the newly established North West Radio in Sligo."

Shane went on to earn a BA Hons. degree in media production and management at Senior College, Ballyfermot in Dublin. "It's a small college but one that has churned a lot of household names on TV and radio today, such as Aidan Power, Ryle Nugent and Today FM's KC."

He also managed to pursue his interest in TV. "My uncle worked at RTE. He was working on the Beat Box with Ian Dempsey one Sunday morning and brought me into watch the show. Someone hadn't turned up for a review segment and they put me on the air to read out some letters that had been written to the show. They asked me back a few months later and gave me four slots on one show which they dubbed 'Red Letter Day'."

After college, Shane produced ads and hosted the afternoon Goldmine show at Northwest Radio in Sligo. "The weirdest interview I ever remember doing was with a guy who, with his wife, used to drive around in a giant Cadbury's crème egg! I don't think it would pass the NCT today!"

In September 2000, he took on the role of production manager at Dublin's Lite FM in Dublin, which was renamed Q102 in 2004.

"Dublin was where I really cut my teeth in radio programming. I worked with some of the most respected programmers in the world - guys who had been with stations like Capital and Heart in London as well as countless stations in the United States and Australia - one guy also consulted Oprah Winfrey! I was really privileged to work with and learn from these guys."

He also got to interview some A-List celebrities including Halle Berry, the Goo Goo Dolls, John Mayer, Colin Farrell, American Idol Kelly Clarkson, James Franco and Seth Rogen.

Shane recalls chatting with Ben Affleck and Rebecca Hall the morning after the Dublin premiere of *The Town*. "I was sitting outside waiting to go in to talk to them when Ben's minder noticed I was wearing a Boston Red Sox tee shirt with a shirt over it. He told me to take off the top shirt. Ben's eyes lit up when he saw the Red Sox tee shirt and I got a great interview from him!"

Shane stayed in Dublin for



Shane Smyth (sporting his Boston Red Sox tee shirt) pictured with Ben Affleck and Rebecca Hall. He interviewed them in Dublin when they were promoting *The Town*, which they both starred in and which Ben Affleck also directed.

eleven years but came back most weekends and, after making a radio documentary about the RNLI, asked what more he could do to help the Bundoran crew. He ended up being appointed Volunteer Lifeboat Press Officer for Bundoran RNLI.

Then Eurosurf Bundoran happened. "What I thought when I 'volunteered' at a meeting in January 2011 was that I would just be writing a few press releases. It turned out to be a lot more than that. It was a huge PR and logistics experience which I really enjoyed."

"By the time Eurosurf was over in October, I went back to my paid job in Dublin but there was a void there. I knew it was time for a change and I handed in my notice, in the middle of a recession, and came back to Bundoran at Christmas 2011."

Shane also got involved with

the Irish Water Safety Association, first taking classes and then instructing. This led to his recent appointment as Volunteer PRO for the IWSA in Donegal.

He started working with Ocean FM in February 2012, presenting Ocean Drive, Monday to Friday 4-7pm.

In his spare time, he did PR for the Belle of Bundoran, helped to organise the Bundoran Lifeboat Soapbox Race, competed for Donegal in the Surf Lifesaving Pool competition, produced and hosted "In Bundoran" mini web based reality series and run the Cara 10 mile race.

Shane's excited about his recent appointment as Bundoran Tourism Officer. "Talking about Bundoran is something that I love to do and had been doing a lot anyway. The passion is definitely there."

"The big selling point for Bun-

doran this year will be Waterworld, which is re-opening this Easter after a massive 1.6m euro redevelopment. We've five new attractions including a galleon ship slide, a 3-lane multislide and a gravity speed slide. "Bundoran's now got one of the very best all-weather facilities in Ireland. I'm thrilled to be coming in as Tourism Officer for Bundoran at a time when such a great attraction for toddlers, kids and adults is being opened."

"Surfing and other outdoors activities will continue to be big selling points too. People surf all year round and we've facilities like Donegal Adventure Centre in addition to the water-based activities. And there's Turf n Surf's bio-carting, plus golf, horseriding, walking, golf and cycling. Not to mention the incredible scenery, great pubs, hotels and nightlife, and friendly people!"

Going back in time



with Peter Campbell

1961

St. Eunan's beaten in MacRory final

Leading 1-5 to 0-1 at half-time, St. Patrick's, Cavan, went on to score a convincing 1-13 to 0-5 win over St. Eunan's, Letterkenny, in the final of the Cardinal MacRory football cup competition at rain-soaked St. Molaise Park, Irvinestown, on Sunday.

The conditions did not suit the lighter Letterkenny side, who were unfortunate to concede a goal from a 30 yards shot by Cavan's B McShinney in the 10th minute. This might be cited as one of the big factors that led to the eclipse of the Donegal boys. The greasy ball was difficult to control and the hefty Cavan backs kept a

tight rein on the St. Eunan's forwards who, only in spasms, reproduced the form that brought them to their third final in recent years.

St Patrick's got into their stride from the throw-in and after ten minutes they led by 1-2 to nil. At midfield the Cavan pair of Charlie Flynn and Ray Carolan were in control for the first twenty minutes after which Charlie Kavanagh and Mick McLoughlin came somewhat into the game. John McMenamin, Alfie Ladley and Hugh McBride put up great resistance in the Letterkenny defence.

Scorers for St. Patrick's were: T Sheridan 0-5; B McShinney 1-1; B Boylan 0-3; B Kennedy 0-1; P McNamee 0-2.

St. Eunan's scorers: J Doherty 0-3; N McGill 0-1, C Kavanagh 0-1.

Under referee P McCooley, Monaghan, the teams were:

St. Patrick's, Cavan: C Toal; T Young, J Stafford, P Pritchard; P Brady, P McMenamin, S Farrelly; C Flynn, R Carolan; T Sheridan, B Kennedy, B Boylan; B McShinney, P McNamee, T Monaghan.

St. Eunan's, Letterkenny: B Cunningham; J Blake, J McMenamin, H McBride; E McLaughlin, A Ladley, H Hegarty; M McLaughlin, C Kavanagh; F McAteer, A McDevitt, J Doherty; J Patton, J Harvey, J Quigley. Sub., N McGill for Harvey.

Last cases at Ballintra Court

The Democrat reported in March that the final cases were heard at Ballintra District Court. Under the revised court list, which came into operation in April, Ballintra Court has been abolished and cases from the area will be taken at Ballyshannon and Donegal.

1973

After 18 years the pump is still dry

For many years a number of Crolly residents campaigned for a water pump.

Finally, in 1955, County Council workmen arrived at the chosen site and started digging a hole six feet deep where it was intended to erect the proposed pump. Then the main was tapped and the new pump arrived. Everything was left in order for the fitter, who was to have arrived a short time later.

That was 18 years ago and the fitter has not yet arrived.

Since then a number of those who clamoured for a convenient water pump that would serve their home have emigrated and others have died. The hole that was dug to house the pump has long since closed in. Said one resident, who now lives in another area: "When the pump arrived we expected water the following morning."

Sliabh Liag Credit Union

A meeting of the Carrick Credit Union Study Group was addressed by Mr. Michael Doherty of the Credit Union League of Ireland. A Credit Union Savings group was formed to be known as the "Sliabh Liag Credit Union".

The common bond agreed is residence or employment within the following area: the parish of Glencolumbkille as on the 5/3/1973, the parish of Kilar as on 5/3/1973, together with the following townlands: Largybrack, Strafin, Owenchestna, Largynsherra, Laguna, Meenachurrin, Stravalley, Leim-a-Ghiwra (sic).

The following temporary officers were appointed: Chairman Alphonus Mac a Bhaire; treasurer Maire McConigley; secretary Joseph Gallagher; assistant treasurer Eibhlín Bean Uí Dhonnabháin.



May 1962... Student nurses who were presented with certificates in Letterkenny. 1403TG40



1992... Catherine O'Kane and Breda Harvey representing 'Class Aoife' in Loreto Convent, Letterkenny presenting a cheque to Donegal Special Olympics Committee members, Seamus Campbell, Catherine Coyle and Kathleen McLoone. 1403TG41



March 1992... members of Donegal Youth Orchestra. 1403CS01



1992... Karen Dunleavy and Niamh Boyle from Clogh, winners of Slogadh in Dundalk. 1403TG70