

Réamhrá

Mar Chathaoirleach ar Chomhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin, is onóir agus pléisiúr é éachtaí Bhunscoil an Iúir a cheiliúradh san iris iontach seo.

Breis is tríocha bliain ó shin, bhí grúpa tuismitheoirí áitiúla meáite ar bhunoideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge a chur ar fáil dá gcuid páistí. Spreagtha ag rathúlacht Bhunscoil Bhóthar Seoighe i mBéal Feirste, agus le tacaíocht ón chéad Oifigeach Gaeilge de chuid Chomhairle Ceantair an Iúir agus Mhúrn, d'éirigh le pobal Gaeilge an cheantair an beart seo a chur i gcrích. Ní fhéadfaí é seo a bhaint amach gan tacaíocht ó mhórhóbal an Iúir agus Mhúrn agus na baill tofa mar a bhí ann ag an am sin.

Níos mó ná tríocha bliain ina dhiaidh sin, i gComhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin mar atá anois ann, tá ceithre bhunscoil Ghaeilge eile againn: Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa i gCrois Mhic Lionnáin, Gaelscoil na mBeann i gCill Chaoil, Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche i gCaisleán Uidhilín, chomh maith le Bunscoil Mhuire agus Phádraig i nDún Phádraig. Tá lúcháir orainn freisin aonad lán-Ghaeilge a bheith in Ardscoil Naomh Mhaolmhaodhóg i gCaisleán Uidhilín.

Agus tacaíocht á tairiscint ag an Chomhairle do Bhunscoil an Iúir, réitigh sí an bealach i dtreo fhorbairt na Gaelscolaíochta inbhuanaithe sa cheantar. Ní mór dom tréaslú le foireann, le bainistíocht na scoile agus le tuismitheoirí Bhunscoil an Iúir as an tacaíocht leanúnach a thugann siad don Ghaelscolaíocht, mar is é tiomantas phobal na scoile a chothaíonn an earnáil agus a chuidíonn leis na páistí rath a chur ina dtimpeallacht oideachais. Tá na daltaí, an fhoireann agus na tuismitheoirí faoi láthair ag réiteach an bhealaigh don chéad ghlúin eile de Ghaeil an Cheantair. I bhfocail An Phiarsaigh, 'Tír gan Teanga, Tír gan Anam'.

As Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, it is an honour and a pleasure to see the achievements of Bunscoil an Iúir celebrated in this fantastic magazine.

More than thirty years ago, a group of local parents were determined to provide Irish medium primary education for their children. Inspired by the success of Bunscoil Bhóthar Seoighe in Belfast and supported by Newry and Mourne District Council's first Irish Language Officer, the Irish-language community of the area achieved this very aim. This could not have been accomplished without the support of the wider Newry and Mourne community and the elected members at that time.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Area now, over thirty years later, is home to a further four Irish medium primary schools: Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa in Crossmaglen, Gaelscoil na mBeann in Kilkeel, Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche in Castlewellan, as well as Bunscoil Mhuire agus Phádraig in Downpatrick.

We also are delighted to have an Irish-medium unit in St. Malachy's Post-Primary School in Castlewellan.

This Council, in offering support to Bunscoil an Iúir, paved the way for the development of sustainable Irish-medium education in the area. I must congratulate the staff, school management and parents of Bunscoil an Iúir for their continued support of Irish-medium education, for it is the commitment of the school community that sustains the sector and helps the children thrive in their educational environment. The current pupils, staff and parents make the path smoother for the next generation of Gaels in the District. In the words of An Píarsach, 'Tír gan Teanga, Tír gan Anam' which means, 'A country without a language is a country without a soul'.

Councillor Michael Savage - Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council



Fíoraíodh an tairngreacht - bhailigh brobh beart go deimhin

Cad chuige ar fhoilsigh muid an leabhrán seo? Tar éis an tsaoil, níl iubhaile ná cloch mhíle eile ar díol suntais é bainte amach ag Bunscoil an Iúir i mbliana. Tharla áfach, corradh le trí bliana ó shin, gur bhuail mé le baill Choiste na dTuistí (Naomh agus Ruairí) agus chinn siadsan ar ócáid a reáchtáil san INF ag an am chun Bunscoil/Naíscoil an Iúir a cheiliúradh. Bhí sé de rún acu 30 bliain den Bhunscoil a chomóradh. Gheall mé go gcuideoinn leo maidir le cúrsaí poiblíochta mar bhí sé i gceist acu iris bheag a fhoilsiú. Cuireadh tús leis an ransú 's leis an tochailt le haghaidh grianghraf a bhain go háirithe le tús-ré na scoile. Aniar aduaidh orainn a tháinig Covid 19 agus b'éigean dúinn gach rud a chur ar ceal. Ach le déanaí, sa dóigh is nach rachfadh ár saothar le sruth, ghlac Craobh an Iúir de Chomhaltas Uladh an cúram orthu foilseachán dá gcuid féin a eisiúint. Seo an toradh, lochtach is easnamhch is atá sé.

Is rud simplí é an leabhrán seo. Insíonn na pictiúir gnéithe de scéal na Bunscoile sna blianta tosaigh. Is léir go bhfuil bearnaí ann; tá na scórtha den lucht tacaíochta nach bhfuil luaite nó feicthe. Ach tá blaiseadh ann den éacht a rinneadh i ndeireadh na 1980idí á thairiscint againn agus tuigean gach duine a bhíodh ann, go seasta nó go sealadach, ionchur fiúntach marthanach s'acu. Tá seoid chultúrtha cruthaithe acu i lár an Iúir agus thig leo bheith mórtasach as a ngaisce ar son na Gaeilge.

Tá súil againn go mbainfidh na Príomhoidí agus na múinteoirí (iar- agus reatha), na feachtasóirí, na tuismitheoirí ceannródaíocha agus na chéad chóhoirt de dhaltáí, sult as na pictiúir. Ar bhealach, tá focail iomarcach cé go bhfuil teistiméireachtaí samplacha foilsithe againn. Chífeá agus tuigfeá éagsúlacht na n-imeachtaí; raon na n-ágóidí; diombháilteacht na ndíograiseoirí deonacha (a bhformhór nach raibh Gaeilge acu féin); na rioscaí pearsanta a ghlac múinteoirí, iontaobhaithe agus gobharnóirí; neamhshuim nó naimhdeas an Stáit; agus an tábhacht a bhaineann le fíis, le dúthracht agus go speisialta le seasmhacht.

Is cúis bhróid dúinn a bhfuil bainte amach ag Gaeil an Iúir. Tá iar-dhaltáí ónár scoileanna áitiúla sna poist is mó gradam i saol na Gaeilge faoi láthair (Seán Ó Coinn, Foras na Gaeilge; Réamonn Ó Ciaráin, Gael-Linn; an Dr. Niall Comer agus an Dr. Pádraig Ó Tiarnaigh, Conradh na Gaeilge); tá triúir Oifigeach ag obair in Aonad na Gaeilge sa Chomhairle; tá fostaíocht trí mheán na Gaeilge á cruthú de réir a chéile ag Gaeláras Mhic Ardghail agus leabharlann á tógáil ann; tá ranganna á gcur ar fáil ag Craobh an Iúir gan bhriseadh ó 1897. Bíodh sin mar atá, is í Bunscoil an Iúir an tseoid is luachmaire inár gcoróin. Scríobh Alan Tittley tráth gurb í 'an Ghaeilge an rud is Éireannaí dinn dá bhfuil ann' agus tá Bunscoil an Iúir ag cinntiú, scoilbhliain i ndiaidh scoilbhliana, glúin i ndiaidh glúine, go n-athfhréamhófar an Ghaeilge luachmhar seo in ithir an Iúir. Céad bliain ó shin thuig lucht taighde agus Conraitheoirí go raibh an Ghaeilge ag fáil bháis in Óméith agus i ndeisceart Ard Mhacha agus rinne siad iarracht d'aon ghnó an oidhreacht leathbheo seo a thaifeadadh agus a chur ar pár do na glúnta a thiofadh ina ndiaidh. Tá sé mar dhualgas orainne, creidim, taifead a choinneáil agus a fhoilsiú ar athbheochan na Gaeilge sna bólaí seo. Is chuige sin atá "Ó Shíol go Bláth". Ag tarraingt ar 40 bliain ó shin, d'fhoilsigh muid an chéad eagrán tánaí de "Cuisle na nGael" agus is cuimhin liom teideal an eagarfhocail a scríobhadh ag an am, "Bailíonn brobh beart". Fíoraíodh é sin. Agus bailíonn beart neart. Tá obair fós idir lámha – suíomh nua don Bhunscoil agus an mórathrú is mó tionchar agus tairbhe – sruth Gaeilge a bhunú i meánscoil logánta. Níl ach Príomhoide misniúil fadcheannach de dhíth...

Séamus Mac Dhaibhéid Oíche Chultúir 23 Méan Fómhair 2022

*(We wish to express our gratitude to Tom and Marie Mc Keown, formerly Clanrye Press, who have supported Craobh an Iúir projects over many years and especially our occasional publishing ventures.
Má tá sí i gcló seans go mairfidh sí go deo).*

Buíochas

Is iomaí duine a chuidigh liom agus an foilseachán seo á chur i dtoll a chéile agam, agus chuige sin ba mhaith liom buíochas ó chroí a ghabháil le roinnt daoine as ucht a gcuidithe agus mé ag obair ar “Ó Shíol go Bláth”, a dhéanfas ceiliúradh ar Bhunscoil an Iúir agus ar lucht a bunaithe.

Ar dtús, tá mé go mór faoi chomaoín ag na daoine seo a leanas, a bhronn pictiúir orainn a chuimsíonn an leabhrán seo: *Stiofán Ó Leannáin, Stiofán Loughran (nach maireann), Séamus Mac Dhaibhéid, Peter Mallon, Niall Loughran (Bunscoil an Iúir), Caitriona Ruane* agus *David McKeown*. Bhí na daoine seo fial fláithiúil agus faightear léargas cruinn ar theacht chun cinn na Bunscoile le breis agus 30 bliain a bhuí lena roinn siad liom.

Agus an meall mór ar deireadh, gabhaim buíochas le Bunscoil an Iúir agus Naíscoil an Iúir, chomh maith le lucht a mbunaithe, atá mar chrann taca ag páistí Gaelacha an Iúir. Tá sibh le moladh, agus tá súil agam go dtaitníonn an cnuasach seo le cách a raibh baint acu leis an Bhunscoil ar dhóigh amháin nó ar dhóigh eile.

Ryan Hogan

Eagarthóir/Dearthóir





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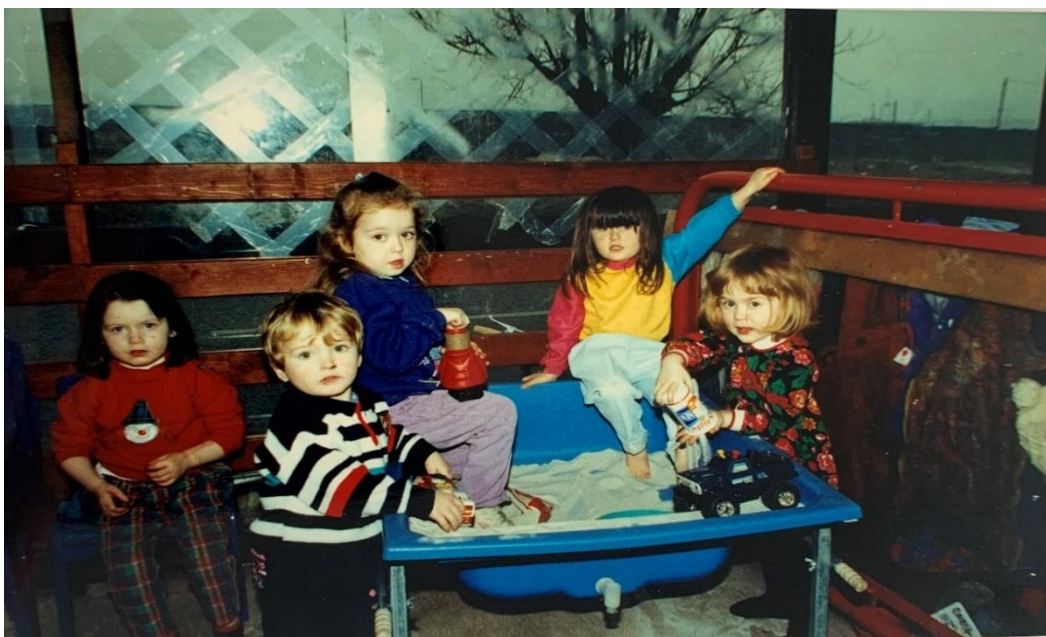
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Bunscoil an Iúir, a hAon, a Dó, a Trí!

Bunscoil an Iúir, a hAon, a Dó, a Trí an gháir chatha a bhí againn agus muid ag siúl i mórshiúil Lá 'le Pádraig in Iúr Cinn Trá sa bhliain 1990. Scaifte beag go leor a bhí ann an lá sin, mé féin mar mhúinteoir rang a haon agus rang a dó, Nóra, múinteoir na Naíscoile, tuismitheoirí na bpáistí, lucht tacaíochta na scoile agus ar ndóigh, na páistí iad féin, ochtar aingeal beag nar thuig an ról tábhachtach a bhí acu in athbheochan na teanga i gceantar an Iúir ach a chuir go mór leis an mhórshiúil an lá áirithe sin.



Is maith is cuimhin liom na haghaidheanna beaga galánta sin a tháinig isteach ina seomra ranga nua i dteach Uí Chearúil (Réamonn agus Treasa) in Iúr Cinn Trá i mí Mheán an Fhómhair sa bhliain 1989. Ní cuimhin liom féin aon chaoineadh cé go mbíonn a leithéid coitianta go leor in aon rang sóisearach ar bith. Bhog muid ón seomra compordach sin go seomra compordach eile i dteach Mhic a'tSaoir, áit ar cuireadh fáilte croíúil romhainn. Ba le seantuistí pháistí Mhic an tSaoir an teach agus tugadh cead don scoil seomra ranga a dhéanamh as an seomra suite a bhí acu i gcúl an tí. Fláithiúil fáilteach a bhí na daoine uaisle sin ar fad agus na páistí ag cabaireacht, ag comhaireamh is ag ceol ar feadh roinnt ama ina dteach.



Ní féidir, i ndáiríre, cur síos ceart a dhéanamh ar an obair a rinne tuismitheoirí na bpáistí leis an scoil a chur ar bun. Níl léamh ná scríobh ná insint béil féin ar an allas a chaith díograiseoirí na teanga agus cairde na scoile ar bhunú na bunscoile. Maolcholaim Scott, Séamus Mac Dhaibhéid, Doiminic Ó Brolcháin, Peter agus Bean Uí Mhealláin, agus roinnt daoine eile nach bhfuil luaite anseo ach a roinn a gcuid ama agus a gcuid airgid go fláithiúil linn.

Is cuimhin liom go raibh mé in ann ábhar álainn teagaisc a cheannach don rang, sílim gur chaith muid cúpla céad punt ar ábhar seortála / meaitseála srl. Airgead mór a bhí ann ag an am ach bhí muid ag iarraidh bheith cinnte go mbeadh an trealamh ceart ag na páistí agus nach mbeadh siad thíos leis maidir lena gcuid foghlama féin.



Ach an rud is tábhachtaí ar fad fá rang ar bith, ní an spás fisiciúil ná na múinteoirí ach na páistí iad féin agus páistí speisialta a bhí iontu. Bhí duine amháin, Caoimhín, i rang a dó, cúigear i rang a haon agus triúir eile a bhí rud beag ní b'óige ach a d'fhreastail ar an scoil ar mhaithe le huimhreacha. Páistí galánta iad, gach uile dhuine acu, agus beidh áit speisialta i mo chroí dóibh i gcónaí.

Buailim le cuid de na tuismitheoirí anois is arís agus is breá liom a chluinstin mar gheall ar na páistí sin. Bíim i dteagmháil leis an mhúinteoir iontach a ghlac m'áit, Siobhán Campbell agus bíonn an-áthas orm nuair a fheicim pictiúir agus ailt mar gheall ar an scoil sna páipéir nuachtáin. Níl aon amhras ann ach gur ag gabháil ó neart go neart atá an scoil. Guím gach rath ar an scoil, ar mhúinteoirí na scoile, ar iar-scoláirí na scoile agus ar phobal na scoile ar fad. Go maire sibh ar fad an céad!

Gearóidín Uí Laighléis (Ní Fhearail)



Bunscoil an Iúir - Early Days

Bunscoil an Iúir was started in 1989 as a result of a chance remark at a Craobh an Iúir Irish language class in Dominic Street. Most of the adult learners at the class were parents of young children, when one parent remarked how good would it be if we had an Irish language primary school for our children to attend. From that conversation Naíscóil an Iúir was established in O'Neill Avenue Community Centre with about twenty children in attendance. We were very fortunate to obtain the services of one enthusiastic Nóra Ní Raghallaigh, a native Irish speaker from Rann na Feirste.

Throughout that first year, thoughts turned to the formation of a Bunscoil, and a committee was formed. With the help of Malcolm Scott, the Irish Language Officer with Newry and Mourne Council, and Áine Andrews and Aodhán Mac Póilin from Belfast, a constitution was drawn up and adopted.

Then the real hard work started, finding premises, employing a teacher, and gathering the money to pay for it all. Our first primary school teacher was a very bubbly lady from Rostrevor, Gearóidín Ní Fhearail, who stayed with us for three years and made a great impression on the children and their parents. Our first classroom was the dinette of two of our parents and we stayed there for the first year with eight pupils while we looked for more suitable premises. Fund-raising took up a lot of our time and our main source of income came from Gael Linn who gave us

about twenty books to manage and allowed us 50% of the takings instead of the usual 25% that collectors normally received. Along with that, we did street collections and collected at local GAA matches with the blessing of Newry Shamrocks who allowed us to collect inside the ground. Other funding efforts included discos, raffles, and we even produced and sold our own series of Christmas cards.

While all this was going on, our new committee, most of whom had no experience in education, continued to look for permanent premises. Our second classroom was loaned to us by Doctor Séamus and Mrs. Mc Ateer, grandparents to three of the pupils at the school and themselves fluent Irish speakers.



While we were using these first two temporary premises, we looked at several possible sites for the Bunscoil. One of these was plot of land in Corrinshogo owned by the Council and used by the local CLG club. This was deemed by the parents at the time to be too far out of the town. It was around this time that Newry and Mourne District Council offered us the use of the old gas works offices and sheds. The Council from the word go were almost to a Councillor fully behind the Bunscoil project. The school moved into the old building and bought two mobile classrooms from Grange Primary school and commenced setting them up in the gas-yard grounds. Almost all the work was carried out by parents of the pupils with a lot of help from other local trades people with no connection to the school but with a deep love of the Irish language. The school was now up and running and going from strength to strength. You may have noticed throughout this short piece that I have not mentioned many people by name. That is because there were so many people who helped I would be afraid of leaving someone out. We are grateful to them all.

Réamonn Ó Cearúil

Coillteoirí Náisiúnta na hÉireann



Irish National Foresters Sir Charles Russell Branch NO241 An Lorgain

*Comhghairdeas ó chroí le
Bunscoil an lúir agus leo siúd a raibh
baint acu léi ó bunaíodh í*

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Saol na Bunscoile – Saol ar leith

Cá dtosaíonn tú i ndiaidh 30 bliain san aon áit amháin? Is minic a smaoiním ar na mílte duine ar bhuail mé leo thar na 30 bliain sin – ná páistí, na tuistí, an fhoireann, na cuairteoirí a raibh baint acu leis an scoil. Téim siar i m'intinn ar na cruinnithe, na hagóidí, na turais chuig áiteanna ar fud na Sé Chontae chun an scoil a fhorbairt agus chun aitheantas a fháil di.

Smaoiním ar an tionchar a bhí ag an tráth sin de mo shaol orm mar mhúinteoir óg ag teacht díreach amach ón ollscoil agus cuirim an cheist orm féin - an ndéanfainn arís é?

Agus mé ag fágáil slán le Coláiste Naomh Muire, Béal Feirste i 1992, bhí na scolairí uilig ag líonadh isteach foirmeacha iarratais do scoileanna i ngach cearn den tír – Doire, Baile Átha Cliath, Gaillimh, Béal Feirste chomh maith le cuid acu a raibh rún acu dul thar lear.

Mar cham teallaigh, ní raibh mise ag iarraidh bheith ag obair i bhfad i gcéin agus mar sin de, bheartaigh mé nach mbacfainn leis an pháipéarachas sin uilig agus go bhfanfainn ar phost níos cóngaraí don bhaile. Rud a tharla. Fuair mé agallamh i scoil nach raibh i bhfad uaim agus is mé a bhí sona.

Idir an dá linn, casadh orm comharsan a d'oibrigh i gComhairle an Iúir agus Mhúrn mar a bhí mar ainm air ag an am, agus d'inis sé dom go raibh post ag dul sa Bhunscoil, rud a d'fhiosraigh mé.

Chuir mé isteach air agus fuair mé agallamh. Is maith is cuimhin liom an lá a chuaigh mé síos Sráid na Cille Móire ag cuartú na háite. Shiúil me isteach chuig an chuntasóir béal dorais agus dúradh liom go raibh mé san áit mhícheart. Caithfidh mé a rá go raibh aiféala orm nuair a chuaigh mé fríd na geataí donna troma iarainn isteach chuig clós leathan, lom agus cúpla bóthán lonnaithe ann.

Ní raibh sé rud ar bith cosúil le scoil a bhí mar thaithí agam ach lean mé liom agus bhuail mé leis an phainéal agallaimh.

Is mé neirbhíseach, d'fhág mé Iúr Chinn Trá agus mé cinnte nach bhfaighinn an post ach an tráthnóna sin, fuair mé an scairt ghutháin ón Chathaoirleach go bhfuair mé an post agus mar a deir siad – “the rest is history”.

Bhain mé an-sult as a bheith i mbun ranga agus as mo nead bheag féin a bheith agam agus an tsaoirse a tugadh dom an seomra a mhaisiú mar ba mhaith liom. Bhí na páistí galánta ar fad, agus mhothaigh mé go raibh siad díograiseach dícheallach don fhoghlaím. Mhothaigh mé fosta go raibh a fhios acu go raibh siad speisialta mar dhaltáí a bhí ag foghlaim ina dteanga féin.

Ar ndóigh, bhí an-suim ag na tuismitheoirí in oideachas a gcuid páistí. Seo tuismitheoirí óga a chuaigh sa seans le hearnáil na Gaelscolaíochta; le saol agus todhchaí a bpáistí agus chuaigh sé go mór i bhfeidhm orm gur chuir siad cúram a bpáistí orm chun iad a mhúineadh agus a mhúnlú. Bhí siad iontach aislingeach, misniúil, cróga, ceannródaíoch mar dhaoine agus is fiú go mór a n-éacht a ríomh anseo.

Bhí gach rud ag socrú go maith dom mar mhúinteoir úrnua ach bhí an-obair i gceist taobh amuigh den lá oibre. Le cruinnithe, le bailiúcháin airgid, le hagóidí, le troid ar son na scoile, bhí saol eile ar fad ann ach mhothaigh mé go raibh sé dúshlánach agus gurbh fhiú an dúshlán sin; mhothaigh mé go raibh sé chomh difriúil ó scoil ar bith eile agus mhothaigh mé go raibh mise mar chuid de rud iontach, de rud stairiúil, de rud ollmhór a bhí ag fás agus ag forbairt de réir a chéile.

Maria Ni Fhearchair

























Guíonn Bord Contae an Dúin gach ádh ar Bhunscoil an lúir amach anseo



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de Chonradh na Gaeilge*







Bunscoil an Iúir



Rang a Seacht 2017~2018

Bunscoil an Iúir



Rang a Seacht - 2019~2020

An Ghaelscolaíocht Irish-medium Education (IME)

Overall growth of IME
in the last 10 years

2011/12 4321 Pupils

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Total Growth



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Agallamh – Séamus Mac Dhaibhéid agus Peter Mallon

S: Do you remember when you first got involved with the Bunscoil and why you got involved with it?

P: Well, I may have been sitting in the same seat I'm currently sitting in now, and our Jacqueline arrived at the house at about 8 o'clock and she said 'Daddy, I'm going to be sending Stephen to the new wee Irish school, it's starting down at the Gasworks, but they only have about 4 or 5 in it. I went to it tonight. Arthur Ruddy was there and they were saying that the rent would be £170 or £172, and then electricity on top of that. And wages.' That's the way she introduced the school's financial situation. The £170 was for the rent of the Gasworks offices. And she said we would have to make up that money ourselves. She asked me to fundraise for them. I said, put my name down and I will get involved. So, I started to fundraise for the school and when I thought about doing the sticks, I went out to Murtagh's' to see Kevin Murtagh and he passed me onto his brother, Ciarán, who was the boss. Ciarán told me that whatever scraps there were there and that they didn't need, I could have them. I took all of them! Our Imanueil made me a saw bench and Francie Mc Crink and Maurice Mulgrew helped cut the sticks.



S: Did you have a trailer or a van at that stage?

P: I had a car. I bought a trailer off a fella for £70 and got it fixed up. I was there for 11 years. During that time, my car broke down. I had nothing. I went out to Brendan Jackson who knew me through the Bunscoil, and I got a loan from him through the Credit Union, and I bought a car for £2,400 from CARS garage. The fella gave me a good price because of what I was doing. I put everything into the Bunscoil but got my petrol money. I was unemployed at the time, and I was reported 3 times for working in the Bunscoil! The Manager in Bridge Street knew the story and went through the motions. That involvement kept me going myself. It kept me active, my mind and body. I never drank or smoked, and I only needed to be busy. I loved doing what I was doing.

S: You weren't involved in acquiring the Bunscoil premises, were you?

P: No. I was never on any committee of the Bunscoil. Although, whatever they wanted, they asked me to get it. It was really a small team and there was only one room in the Gasworks. Nóra and Dora were there. Dora was from Carlingford, Nóra from Rannafast, and they looked after the Naíscóil. Then Siobhán had about four in her class. It was open-door, porous, welcoming. Everyone was great. The parents especially were marvellous.

S: The commitment was exceptional.

P: It was. The atmosphere was unreal. You walked into the classroom, and you'd talk to the teacher as she was maybe teaching children, and once they knew and trusted you, you could walk in and out. It was a true community school.

S: Conditions were primitive and resources few. What did the children do in those days for their dinner? Did they bring their lunch?

P: Pauline Lennon and Hilda Blair made soup and that. Children had lunches but the ladies made soup because they just wanted to be there. It was a labour of love. Colleen Lyons was there for a while as Secretary. Another great worker. The Armagh manager, Joe Kernan was a sound contact. I was out with Joe a lot of times and I was with the secretary of the Crossmaglen Rangers club. His wife came in and volunteered to do secretary for a while. There was no money. There was nothing. I went to McCann's Bakery for support. Gerry Murphy would give us anything we wanted, be that for a Guest Tea or something for the children. I could go up anytime and met nothing but generosity there. I encountered all these sorts of giving people through my work with the Bunscoil – it kept me motivated.



S: Let's take you back into the building itself. When you went into the Gasworks, there was one classroom. Where was the Naíscóil?

P: They were all in the one room. It was desperate. Then the Rev. Kingston came to visit with one or two people; they were sitting in a school the size of this living room. They said they would have to see what they could do. They said the Council wouldn't let anyone build there.

I heard later about Fr. Devlin and that Cloughoge PS were getting a new school. They had mobiles and I heard that he [Fr. Devlin] was giving them away. I didn't go through any Committee; I did what I thought was best for the school. If they wanted to stop me, they could have, but they didn't. They let me do what I wanted to do. I went up to Fr. [Henry] Devlin, and he asked, 'What are you coming to me for?' I said I heard that that he wanted to get rid of these [the mobiles]. I told him I was looking to get one. He said he would think about it.



I wasn't home 3 or 4 hours when the phone rang. I think it was on a Tuesday, and Fr.

Devlin said, 'if you can take it [mobile] away for Saturday, you can have it.' What I then did was I went to Bartley Fearon, I think it's Pat, they call him, up beside Tinnelly's Garage. I told him I had needed a mobile moved down [to the school]. He asked when I wanted it and I told him. He agreed to send two trailers and a lorry, it [mobile] came in two halves. All for free, just sent a man and all down. They came and put the two halves on the trailers and took them to the Bunscoil. They employed Murphy Brothers, Newtownhamilton, they had a big crane. Murphy's only had a nominal charge, but you could say they did it for nothing.

Murphys came in with a big crane and spent the whole day lifting the half mobiles off. People think you can just join the two sides together. A bolt comes out and it's an awful job getting it back together. Maurice Mulgrew, Buster Lennon, Seán McAteer, Ursula's husband, they would be there helping to relodge the bolt. Maurice Mulgrew was one great man. They all were.

S: Others helped too but it wasn't a smooth passage?

P: Smiths Concrete gave us blocks and we levelled the mobile halves off the best we could, and we put them up. I found out that the Council wouldn't let you build, but we put it up anyway. The Council man came to me and asked if we had permission to do this. He said to me 'Aren't you Peter Mallon?' and I said I was. He told me he heard I was doing this, and I said I was doing it for the children, and I asked if there was anything wrong with it. He said you needed planning permission to do it. I said it was only for a year or so until we got a new school. Anyhow, he had to do his job, and he went away and never came back.

Anything that was done to that mobile was to a high standard. Imanueil did all the electrical work. Frankie Bradley did all the plumbing, and everything was done for the benefit of the children and teachers. There was nothing shabby about it, it was all perfect. We got Nóra into that, and we built up the Naíscóil to get the numbers going and the next year I was reading in the Reporter that there was a bankruptcy.

Beside the Sheepbridge there was a nursery, and it went under. They had a mobile. I phoned a fella called James McCartan. I told him it was about the mobile, but that we wouldn't have the asking price [£800]. He said to get a cheque to him as soon as possible. I got it [the mobile] for £100. People did so many favours. It came for the next year and Siobhán and Nóra had their separate classrooms.

S: Geraldine Farrell was there for a while?

P: Yes. Máirín McAleenan was there for a while too. Powerful, inspirational young teachers. The Derry GAA team, who were All-Ireland Champions at the time, came down. We were getting things organised and it was really good. In between all the good times, though I let run it off me, there were nay-sayers and you had to put up with listening to people moaning, 'You and your Irish!'.

S: The anti-Irish lobby? But you found backers?

P: There were people who were terrible for that. I tried to explain that we weren't forcing anything on anyone. We were trying to set up an Irish medium school for parents and children who wanted it. That's all. But new friends were found. Aodán Mac Póilin was one of them – a man of vision and practical too. He knew and we knew that we were involved in something truly remarkable. Raymond and Treasa Carroll were tireless workers. They ran the Gael-Linn books – that was a massive undertaking – every week, covering the town. My whole time, Sundays, and all, was consumed with fund-raising and promotional work. My wife Kathleen would come down and we would bag at the Gasworks. There is a man out in Glen, Peter Cunningham, he sold sticks to the shops. He wanted me to cut sticks either 6.5 or 7 inches. It wasn't just rough work, it had to be measured out. He said to me whatever you can cut I'll buy them. I said to myself 'This is a bit all right!'. Any timber I had I would cut it up for Peter and I would bring them out. I could have been banking £1,500 a month on the sticks. I went to the bank, and I opened an account so that people could put money in the bank [like Gift Aid]. I got \$10 one time from a fella from Italy.



Frank Patterson was there too – himself and his pals in Europe. Caitríona Ruane took American Natives down and they gave us some dollars. Éamonn Ó Cuív came too and showed great interest and offered welcome political support. I gave him the booklet we had at the time when our Imanueil looked everything up regarding education in the North and he had found that there were at least 7 other schools in the North that had fewer children than we had [in the Bunscoil] yet they were being funded. We can forget that the case for equal treatment had to be made for State recognition and we made it well.

S: Cathal Ó Donnaile and Maolcholaim Scott were great assets?

P: Cathal visited often. He was energised and visionary. His wife was a McAleenan. He took this American fella up and I met him, and I got a bank agreement from him, and it meant that whatever I put in the bank, it was doubled. So, if I put that £1,500 it meant we had £3,000. That was called the 'Doors of Hope'. Cathal I think was busy all over in promoting IME and pioneering community schemes. Maolcholaim had the ear of some of the Councillors. He gave well over and above what his job remit involved. He introduced Rev. Kingston, shaped the ethos of the school and did powerful PR work. I was great friends with the Christian Brothers, and Brother Beausang was very influential in Irish language and educational circles. There was much discussion



about the designation of the school, but I only wanted an Irish medium school, regardless of religious affiliation. I was happy with what we agreed though I had privately hoped that the school would be called Saint Mary's, or Saint Finbar's – in recognition of Beau'. And we kept party politics out of things – not easy and not always plain-sailing.

S: We were talking earlier about fundraising there. You didn't explain the aluminium can collecting to me.

P: We were going to get so much if we could gather up aluminium cans, 'Cash for Cans'. I said, right I'll go on out and look for cans and there they were lying on the road, cars running over them - flattened for you and all!

S: Would you stop the car and get out and pick them up?

P: I would pick them up. Do you know how much a can was worth? You would get a half a penny per can. Not very much, is it? A friend Matt from Dromalane did as I did – lifted them off the streets and roads. Then at the football matches I tied in with the wee groundsman. We used to get the children from the Bunscoil, and we would go out and collect the cans. Then I would take all the cans down to the Down GAA groundsman and he would run over them a couple of times with the tractor. Job done! It was a joint thing: he got the terraces cleaned, and we got the Cash for Cans. See many people that were throwing out old aluminium pots, and any old strips of aluminium. I used to pull them off old things and bend them up and all...for weight.

S: Remind me about the tarring. The Travellers got the job?

P: We got this first mobile, and we got the second mobile and this day when the children were out playing, this wee girl fell, and she cut the knee of herself. So, I went away over to the Travellers, and I was talking to Martin Ward, and I asked him who was doing the tarmac. I said I had very little money. 'Right Peter', he said. So, this fella came over and had a look at it. And they did the tarmac for a couple of hundred pound. They did a good job! It was great, just between the two mobiles. It was quite an occasion at the school.



S: It transformed the site, Peter.

P: Yeah. It was worth the few pound.

S: I'm going to take you on a bit now, Peter. One of the best days we had was when Miley came. Who arranged that?

P: Our Hughie was there that day. I'll never forget it. Him and Miley spent hours together for Jesus' sake. Who's this that went up for him? Somebody went up to Dundalk and took him down.

S: The Abbey Grounds, was it not?

P: Aye. That was another great thing. I used to go up and say to Brother Beausang 'I need the grounds, what time would it be free?' So that they wouldn't be using it and once they weren't using it, you had it. We could use the ball alley too, selling toys and stuff. For a Sale of Work and always good craic!

S: I can visualise them. You wouldn't miss those days.

P: Yes, loads of helpers. Ann Finnegan, the Lennons, Raymond Carroll's sister Treasa, Treasa herself, Hilda...that's right. And the Armagh Rhymers came. That was Niall Vallely's crowd from Armagh. They came free. And there was another fella came - 'Spins in the Cart', with a horse going round the field. I tried to get our own green space for the children through Sister Anne Murray (The Home) and Bro. Beau'. But their hands were tied. I hope the children have green space now.

Anyhow we had committed volunteers. Colm McAteer, Seán Mc Ateer, Hilda Blair, Margaret Mc Keown, Marion Mc Donald from Dundalk. The Hylands, the Mc Kevitts, Stiofán Loughran and Ciarán Rowntree and lots of the parents - too many to recall at short notice. They know what they did and can be proud of it. And Patricia Mc Mahon - she was

something else. Brian Mc Aleenan did all the sports training with the children. Eithne and Séamus Mc Cormack were tireless workers. I am just thinking, Mr. and Mrs. Willie O'Hare were a real benefit to things - they registered three children with the school and Willie was so kind financially. The Comers, Máiréad and Tom, were there at the administration end with Róisín (Traynor) and Tommy Mc Keown. And Jarlath (Burns) was on board - Jarlath ultimately got one of our mobiles for a



Naíscóil in Silverbridge, the other one went out to Nóra Ní Raghallaigh for Naíscóil Chamlocha if I remember right. That's just a few Séamus that come spontaneously to mind - so many good people pulled their weight. It's a long list. When I knew you were coming to see me I wrote down the word 'marvellous' in my notes - and that doesn't do them full justice.

There was another woman that was powerful too at the very start, and she sadly died. Angela Mc Garry. She was from Drumalane. She had a wee girl called Kirsty, and her husband was Martin. Great workers. Sure your Deborah and them all did the cleaning rotas. We all mucked in and there was a welcome for everyone on the premises. The formal recognition of the school was great and hard won but it put an end to the parents' and volunteers' easy access and free involvement.

S: Well, tell me this, were you involved in any of the pickets and protests?

P. That wasn't my strong point. I hadn't got the education and the words and all, Séamus, for talking to them people. My job was in the background - I'd just go to up to someone and say, would you do at job for the Bunscoil for half price, or better still, for nothing!

S: Mrs. Mallon, Kathleen, was a great asset. Did she provide the first school jumpers?

P: She did the jumpers at the very start. We got all the jumpers done and McEvoy's did the printing for me. McEvoy's were very good too, McEvoy's on Monaghan Street. Gabriel McEvoy's. I think it was Éamon Ó Gribín who decided on the crest and motto. Éamon Ó Gribín and Mrs. Ó Gribín, were present from the start. Fantastic workers and they had the Irish. And Gerard Trainor was generous - always there with sponsoring electrical equipment.

He just needed the nod. Newry Branch and Ó Fiaich Branch Conradh na Gaeilge were in and out all the time, plugging equipment gaps. And all for the children. But do you see all of them, eh, they were class. I thought about this too the other night. I never slept the other night; it was great thinking about them. The children's plays. And the children reciting poems in public. Very uplifting. And the way we steered clear of politics. The school was for anyone who wanted Irish.

S. Anyone else Peter who stepped up to assist?

P. As I say, we had so many good friends. Seán Ó Coinn was there; Newry Building Supplies; Deirdre Frame; Sister Ann Marie Campbell and the nuns in The Home; several Christian Brothers; Dessie Tennyson, Vernetta Hillen, Seán Mac Labhraí and Maurice Mc Kevitt up at the Abbey Grammar – Beau' used to send me to them to see if they had anything, seats, chairs, tables, they could give us. And Imanueil and Seán McAteer at the practical end, earthing the new mobiles, ensuring everything was perfect and safe.



I'll mention our old friend and fine Irishman, Niall Mc Gurk, of Newcell. He sent in toilet roll holders, and the other things for tissues...the dispensers. He sent all of them in free, and anytime I wanted toilet rolls he came round with bags of them.

The boys down at the Shamrocks did their bit. Mickey Keenan and my friend Danny Baxendine. I think the Bunscoil use their training pitch for Sports Day which is great – back to that green space concern of mine. It was hard work gathering money at the games. Ernie Devlin will tell you. Me and Ernie went down...I'd go down to any match, any football match and I'd stand with a bucket. Me and Ernie stood one day, and we got, I don't know what it was, £9 or something. A long stand with little to show. But we were showcasing the Bunscoil – we were making a statement to Gaels that this project was for real and that we were in it for the long haul.

S: Canvassing for pupils was one of your most important jobs, Peter, because you were hitting the numbers. I remember you just going round, desperate for one or two.

P: Aye. And that wee girl Niamh Moore. 'The Doors of Hope' American guy was there that day, and Cathal Ó Donnaile said to me 'Peter, if you get just another one. If you get this one', he says, 'we'll be on the donkey's back'. I met her mum; I think in The Carriage Restaurant. She had been thinking about the Bunscoil. I told her we'd provide a free uniform and she told me that she had a uniform already bought for another school! We won her over and they are both working in the Irish language sector today. Thank God. It was all about numbers for years, probably still is. Sure your Cathal, and others, started school a year early just to keep the school numbers secure.

S. You said that it wasn't always plain sailing. Explain.

P. What we had to listen to – 'what do you want with an Irish school?' You just had to bite your tongue. And the wages and bills had to be paid every month. It was relentless. People put their faith in us to deliver and that was pressure. Rooms had to be heated, tax had to be paid. Conor Murphy and Éamon Ó Gribín particularly at one point, maybe others I don't

recall, were under pressure but this was the thing, we all knew that what we were doing was worth it. We were constantly on the lookout for better facilities – I thought at one stage we might get the Catholic Boy Scouts' place and hoped the Abbey Primary would become available – no joy. And then I lost the stick cutting place.

John O'Hare and Seán Gallogly came to me one day. They were Clanrye Abbey Developments. John came in and he says 'Peter, we're more or less taking the Gasworks over'. I says that's alright. He said, 'see your wee place doing the sticks, I'll not chase you, I'll fix you up somewhere else'. But he says, 'you can work away there'. He didn't want any fuss, and neither did I, it was up to them. He said, 'We're doing this building' and he had this plan. 'This building here, and that building, and this building, and the 'Retort House', that's where we are, that's where the school was to be.'

It was all out of our hands, but we would have new accommodation. I was there watching them, day and night watching them, walking round the different classrooms and all and I thought in the end that they did a good job. Maria asked me to be Caretaker and I did it until the school formally opened with State recognition.

We had a such a day at the official opening. Beau' knew Mary Mc Aleese from his Belfast days – he put her through the Fáinne exam. Róisín Traynor and Máiréad Comer and the Committee organised a memorable occasion, both in the school and then in the Canal Court. Someone made a video-recording of it all. You'll have photographs of that day no doubt for the wee book. On that day, I knew that my work was done. It was over to the professionals.



S: Here, before I go Peter, and it's not exactly about the Bunscoil, but you did a lot of things in and around it, to enrich the experience. So, there was the monthly Mass up in the Brothers', there were the Cultúrlann mini-Colleges, our trips to Mitchel's grave, and everything.

P: And the floats for the Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Brendan Curran gave us First Prize and the money came in handy. We were everywhere with the Cultúrlann musicians – Glen, the Buttercrane, Hill Street. You know me, I love the whole idea of children expressing themselves. I used to take our Stephen with me, and he'd play the tin-whistle and he'd talk away in Irish. I used to go to an odd Feis, for an hour or so, just to see and hear the Bunscoil children reciting poems in Irish, great to listen to them. It's all about them in the end.

S. Any disappointments during the long campaign?

P. When they knocked down the Gasworks, I wanted the big safe – for the coins and all that I collect and as a souvenir of the Gasworks itself. But the contractors took it. That was fine. But I really wanted the original Bunscoil sign from the building. When I went back for it, it had been dumped. Still, there'll be a new sign at a new site when the Bunscoil gets relocated. In the end signs don't matter – children's education through Irish does.

S: Well, to wrap it up, you were involved in so much. The Canon Burke Athletic Club, in radical politics, the marching bands, the Cultúrlann. You are still active in Calvary Omeath, and you were 'Mr.Bunscoil'. Where does the Bunscoil stand in the scheme of things?

P: There are a few things precious to me Séamus. The St. Patrick's Medal is one of them. But of the many projects that I was ever involved in, no matter what it was to do with, our Bunscoil stands out a mile, because it involved an awful lot of people, volunteering to do an awful lot of good for the Irish language community. With the Bunscoil, I believe we have future-proofed the language for Newry. I see that former pupils are sending their own children there – it is a virtuous circle. And I sometimes smile to myself as I go through old newspaper cuttings, Holy God Peter, you helped establish all that!



Bunscoil an Iúir - tríocha bliain ag fás

D'iarr Cumann na dTuismitheoirí orm gearrphíosa a sholáthar don leabhrán seo agus cé nach maith liom rudaí a scríobh go hiondúil thuig mé an tábhacht a bhain le ceiliúradh cuí a dhéanamh ar bhunú Bhunscoil an Iúir. Is fada baint againn san Iúr, mar Chonraitheoirí, le Bunscoil an Iúir - sa chúlra mar ghrúpa den bhaicle dílis a spreag agus a thacaigh le tuismitheoirí Gaelscoil a lonnú san Iúr - agus agam féin go pearsanta mar thuismitheoir a raibh de phleisiúr agam mo pháistí a chur ar rolla na Bunscoile. Is mar thuismitheoir is mó a bhfuil an sásamh is doimhne agam mar tá sé measartha simplí tacaíocht airgid nó mhorálta a thabhairt do thionscadal fiúntach nuabhunaithe, ach mar thuismitheoir ag an am bhí tiomantas, fuinneamh, samhlaíocht, dúshlán nach beag, agus rioscaí i gceist. Mar 30+ bliain ó shin, ní aibhéil é a mhaíomh go ginearálta, go raibh cuid áirithe den Státchóras ó thuaidh naimhdeach don Ghaeilge. Chan amháin gur thug na hinstiúidí Stáit cluas bhodhar dúinn, ach mhothaigh muid gur chuir siad constaicí romhainn de shíor. Ní raibh na húdaraí ag tuar áfach go mbeadh grúpa tágtha chun cinn i mbaile teorann iar-gharastúin an Iúir nach mbeadh toilteanach géilleadh dá ndroim láimhe, dá ndiúltachas, dá séanadh ceart. Grúpa de thuismitheoirí nach raibh an



Ghaeilge ag a bhfórmhór ach a raibh fíis ina n-aighe, dóchas ina gcroíthe agus neart ina lámha chun míorúilt bheag oideachasúil a fhíorú.

Le gach feachtas atá pobalbhunaithe, radacach fiú, a raibh toradh air, bhí ceannródaithe de dhíth. Agus ní raibh siad in easnamh san Iúr: na daoine a d'oscail a gcistíní ina dtithe féin mar sheomraí ranga; na tuismitheoirí agus na



seantuismitheoirí a roghnaigh bunscolaíocht trí mheán na Gaeilge in ainneoin na ndeacrachtaí ollmhóra; na daltaí a chuir suas go misniúil agus go gealgháireach le háiseanna agus le seomraí ranga a bhí sealadach agus lochtach; na gaolta a bhailigh adhmaid nó cannaí stáin, nó a d'eagraigh imeachtaí tiomsaithe airgid nó agóidí ar gach ócáid nó leithscéal; lucht Chrannchuir Ghael-Linn; baill Chraobh an Iúir de Chomhaltas Uladh; CLG an Dúin; Cumann na Seamróga; Comhairleoirí an Iúir, na príomhoidí agus an fhoireann a chuaigh sa seans ó thaobh ioncaim agus pinsin de; na hoibrithe oilte gan phá a tháinig isteach go tráthrialta le ceol nó reiligún a theagasc; na Gobharnóirí agus na hlontaobhaithe deonacha; na físithe fadradharcacha a chinn go mbeadh an scoil neamhshainchreidmheach ón chéad lá. Agus

áirim ina measc siúd, Bráithre Críostaí, Dochtúir, Urramach Protastúnach, tuata Preispitéireach, agus bean - Gael go smior - a tógadh le Gaeilge san Iúr sna 1940í.



Is iomaí dris chosáin agus fadhb atá sáraithe againn ar ár dturas – cuótaí iontrála, corr aighneas inmheánach, cigireacht ghéar neamhbháúil DENI, foirgneamh ag na sean-oibreacha gáis nach raibh sásúil, ráta athraithe Ghobharnóirí – ach níl iontu siúd, sa mhórphictiúr, ach pianta fáis atá coitianta i bhfiontair den chineál seo. Ní mór dúinn i dtólamh a bheith dearfach agus ar ócáidí cheiliúirtha mar seo tá sé tábhachtach bheith ag machnamh ar laethanta órga dár saol – paráidí na Féile Phádraig, turais chuig an zú, lá na Chéad Chomaoineach, picéidí agus léirsithe lán spraoi, cuairt Mick Lally, laethanta spóirt ar pháirc pheile na mBráithre, seónna na Nollag, cuairt Uachtarán na hÉireann... Agus nach sinne inniu, 30+ bliain ar aghaidh, atá bródúil as ár scolairí reatha agus ár n-iar-scoláirí, agus as ár mBunscoil atá ina Gaeltacht bheag bheo i lár an Iúir? Beidh a lán tuismitheoirí anseo inniu agus is dócha braistíní agus mothúcháin measctha acu, mise mar dhuine acu, ach thar aon rud tá cúis againn bheith mórtasach. Mar a dúirt mo sheanchara agus crann taca deonach díograiseach na Bunscoile ar feadh na mblianta, Peter Mallon, “we only do it for the children.” Má choinníonn muid fócas ar oideachas dátheangach agus ar fhorbairt iomlánaíoch na bpáistí agus má leanann muid ó ghlúin go glúin lenár dtacaíocht – féachfaidh Bunscoil an Iúir chuige, go cinnte, go mbeidh an Ghaeilge chan amháin slán ach faoi bhláth ar shráideanna an Iúir.

Séamus Mac Dhaibhéid



My links with Bunscoil an Iúir

As a parent of two children at Bunscoil an Iúir I became involved in the committee (the forerunner of the Board of Governors) to assist with running the school which was outside the mainstream schools supported by the Department of Education. I was a local councillor in the old Newry and Mourne District Council at that time and so had some experience dealing with public bodies. The Council also owned the land, the old Gasworks Site, on which was housed the temporary portacabins hosting the Bunscoil and the Naíscoil.

Our twin preoccupation at that time was to secure our place as a fully funded and supported school in the mainstream education system and to find a more permanent and suitable home for the growing number of children and families who were embracing Irish medium education.

When I became Chair of the Committee, we decided to bring our fight directly to the Department of Education, so we secured a meeting with the then Direct Rule Minister, Michael Ancram MP, in the Department HQ at Rathgael House, Bangor. We brought a busload of pupils, with their own artwork, demanding their right to the education of their choice. They protested at the gates of the Department while the meeting was going on inside.

The meeting itself was reasonably positive with Mr. Ancram expressing a degree of understanding for our case. However, when we were leaving a senior official sidled up to me and said, "You may think you have him on board, but we'll get you in the long grass". Thankfully that institutional resistance was faced down and we later received notice that Bunscoil an Iúir would become officially recognised.

That decision then opened up our ability to get departmental support for new premises. Thankfully the officials we encountered thereafter were much more supportive, led by Stephen Poever, and we secured almost £100k and a long-term lease from the Council to renovate the building that is now home to the Bunscoil and Naíscoil.

That arrangement was always meant to be temporary as it still doesn't provide the full range of facilities required by a modern primary school and I have supported various efforts to identify and secure a permanent home for our Bunscoil. Hopefully they will bear fruit in the not-too-distant future.

I am very proud to have been one of the parents who, in the early days, looked past what were hugely substandard facilities but bought into the vision of a new generation of Gaeilgeoirí in this area. When I now spend time with my 20-month-old grandson, who understands as much of his native tongue as he does English, I am so glad that we did.

Conor Murphy MLA



An tUrr Mervyn Kingston, iontaobhaí de chuid Bhunscoil an Iúir

Ar feadh na fiche bliain a chaith mé san Iúr agus Múrna is iomaí duine iontach a casadh orm agus is cinnte go raibh an tUrr Mervyn Kingston ar dhuine acu siúd.

Rugadh Mervyn i 1947 agus tógadh é i gceantar tionsclaíoch in oirthear Bhéal Feirste. Feisteoir as iarthar Chorcaí a bhí ina athair. Ba as Tír Eoghain dá mháthair. I ndiaidh na scoile chuaigh sé ag obair in oifig leas sóisialta in iarthar na cathrach agus chuaigh ar aghaidh as sin le dul faoi oiliúint mar ábhar ministir in Eaglais na hÉireann. Ba léir ón aithne a bhí agam air go raibh creideamh domhain aige mar aon le bá le daoine, de gach cúlra agus aicme, Caitliceach agus Protastúnach, taobh istigh agus taobh amuigh den eaglais. Bhí fosta misneach aige seasamh ar bhealach séimh agus láidir leis an rud a mheas sé a bheith ceart. Sular tháinig sé chun an Chreagáin bhí sé ina mhinistir cúnta i gContae an Dúin agus fosta i gceantair den lucht oibre protastúnach i mBéal Feirste. Nuair a insealbhaíodh é ina phost in eaglais i nGleann Cairn ag barr na Seanchille, bhí cara leis, sagart fá róbaí i láthair. Uair eile thug bean rialta searmóin ann.

Tháinig Mervyn ina Reachtaire i 1990 go dtí an Chreagán i ndeisceart Ard Mhacha agus Baile Mhic Scanláin i gContae Lú. Bhí an eaglais i mBuais i gCuaille faoina chúram chomh maith. Bhí droch-chaoi ar na foirgnimh eaglasta i ndeisceart Ard Mhacha agus ar an Chreagán agus i gCuaille, agus bhí an pobal gann. B'éigean eaglais Fhoirceala a dhruidim. Níor ghéill an tUrr Kingston riamh don éadóchas: sular fhág sé trí bliana déag ina dhiaidh sin, bhí bail úrnua ar na heaglaisí i mBuais agus ar sheaneaglais an Chreagáin féin. Ba mhinic a d'iarrfadh na meáin agallamh air. Ag am ina raibh droch-chlú ar Dheisceart Ard Mhacha, ní raibh ach ard-mholadh ag Mervyn ar Chrois Mhic Lionnáin agus ar bhunadh an cheantair. Nuair a crochadh cuid mhór bratach de chuid na Poblachta ar na ballaí ag Eaglais an Chreagáin, chroch sé bratacha an Aontais Eorpaigh tríótha, oiread acu agus a bhainfí an chuma sheicteach ó na cinn eile san áit a raibh siad.

Ba mhaith an tréadaí é dá phobal féin: is cuimhin liom trácht á dhéanamh aige ar an bhród a bhí air as Kenny Donaldson a bhí ag an am sin le hAontachtaigh Uladh, agus atá anois ag obair le híospartaigh na dtrioblóidí, nó á rá go raibh sé i ndiaidh orgán a chóiriú d'orgánaí ar an Chreagán a bhí os cionn ochtó bliain d'aois. Bhí cloigeann maith air, agus tuiscint ar an mhéid a bhí de dhíth le tionscadal a chur i láthair, a phleanáil agus a chur i bhfeidhm. Thug sé na buanna sin leis agus é ina iontaobhaí ar Bhunscoil an Iúir. Ba mhaith a chomhairle riamh.

Mar reachtaire i gceantar Chrois Mhic Lionnáin, bhí an tUrr Kingston ina choimeádaí ar Úirchill an Chreagáin, ceann de na láithreacha is tábhachtaí i dtraidisiún na Gaeilge, agus reilig a bhfuil Caitlicigh agus Protastúnaigh curtha taobh le chéile inti. D'fhoghlaim sé Gaeilge fosta, agus ainneoin nach raibh an Ghaeilge ar a thoil aige d'fhoghlaim sé go leor le paidreacha a rá i nGaeilge ag seirbhísí. Bhí comhoibriú dlúth aige le Cumann Staire an Chreagáin agus le heagraíochtaí eile i ndeisceart Ard Mhacha. Bhí talamh ag an eaglais agus de réir a chéile d'éirigh leis maoiniú a fháil ón Aontas Eorpach le páirc bhreá a chruthú ar an Chreagán. Chóirigh sé seanhalla ag geata na heaglaise ina ionad oidhreacht ar fhilí na bhFeá le taispeántas i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla.

D'fhág an tUrr Kingston an Chreagán i 2003 nó bhí sé buailte le hailse nárbh fhéidir a leigheas, agus b'éigean dó fosta éirí as a bheith ina iontaobhaí ar Bhunscoil an Iúir. Ach is fiú trácht ar a scéal ina dhiaidh sin. Nuair a tugadh aitheantas do Pháirtnéireachtaí Sibhialta ó thuaidh i 2005, bhain sé féin agus an Dr Richard O'Leary an stádas sin amach. Bhí Mervyn go fóill ag iarraidh áit a bheith ag gach duine san eaglais, bhí sé fosta ag iarraidh áit a bheith ag daoine aeracha. Labhair sé go poiblí ar a shon sin, agus bhí sé ina chomhbhunaitheoir d'fheachtas '*Changing Attitudes Ireland*'. Ní raibh sé furasta acu. Bhí an Dr O'Leary i ndiaidh éirí as post maith ar an ollscoil agus bhí sé ina chúramóir lánaimseartha

aige. Chuir Mervyn an dlí ar na húdaráis le go bhfaigheadh a chéile pinsean i ndiaidh a bháis. Bhain sé an cas dlí, ach bhí nithe eile gan athrú; cionn is go raibh sé i bpáirtnéireacht sibhialta, dhiúltaigh na deoisí a raibh sé ag obair iontu cead dó cleachtadh mar mhinistir/shagart. Níor casadh orm é ach uair amháin i ndiaidh dó an Creagán a fhágáil: ag seirbhís Ghaeilge ar Lá Fhéile Pádraig in Eaglais Naomh Seoirse i mBéal Feirste. Bhí lúcháir ar Mervyn, agus spiorad dochloíte ainneoin é a bheith lag agus breoite. Is beag a smaoinigh mé faoin phósadh aerach roimhe, ach rinne sin mo shúile domh. Ba dhoiligh cur ina éadan nuair ba léir an dóchas, grá agus creideamh láidir a bhí ar an chúl ag Mervyn agus Richard.

Fuair an tUrr Kingston bás i 2013; cheol Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin Úirchill an Chreagáin ag a thórramh.



The Rev Mervyn Kingston, Trustee of Bunscoil an Iúir

In the twenty years I lived in Newry and Mourne, I met many amazing people, and certainly the Rev Mervyn Kingston was one of them.

Mervyn was born in 1947 and was brought up in an industrial area of East Belfast. His father was a fitter from West Cork. His mother was from Tyrone. On leaving school, he started work in a social welfare office in West Belfast and went on to train as a minister in the Church of Ireland. He clearly had a deep faith, along with interest in and empathy for other people of all classes and backgrounds, Protestant and Catholic, inside and outside church. He also had courage to stand up in a gentle but strong way for what he believed to be right. Before he came to South Armagh he had been a curate in parts of County Down, and also in working class Protestant areas in Belfast. When he was installed in St Andrews Church in Glencairn at the top of the Shankill, a priest friend in full robes was present; another time a nun gave a sermon.

Mervyn became Rector of Creggan and Ballymascanlon in 1990. The Church at Bush in Cooley was also under his care. Most of the church buildings were in poor repair and the members were thin on the ground. The Forkhill church had to be closed. The Rev. Kingston, however always had hope for the future. Before he left, thirteen years later, the church buildings at Cooley and the old church at Creggan were fully restored.

At a time when South Armagh had a bad reputation, the media would often ask the Rev. Kingston for an interview. He always had nothing but praise for the people of Crossmaglen and district. When a large number of Irish tricolours were raised on the walls of the Church of Ireland, he did not bother taking them down, but made sure that he raised EU flags through them, sufficient to take away any sectarian overtones from the other flags in that location.

He was also a good pastor. I remember his pride in Kenny Donaldson who was at that time an Ulster Unionist representative, and who now works for victims of the Troubles, or his delight in restoring the organ at Creggan

for an organist who was in her eighties. He was bright and had a good understanding of what was needed to present a project, to plan and implement it. He brought these skills to his role as a trustee of Bunscoil an Iúir. His advice was always sound.

As Rector of Creggan, the Rev. Kingston was responsible for *Úirchill an Chreagáin*, one of the most famous places in the Gaelic tradition, and a churchyard where Protestants and Catholics are buried together. He learnt Irish, and although he was never fully fluent, he learnt enough to say prayers in Irish at services. He worked closely with the Creggan Historical Society and with other organisations in South Armagh. The church had some land, and with time he managed to get funding from the European Union to make a fine park, and to restore an old hall at the gate of the church as a heritage centre on the poets of South Armagh with an exhibition in Irish and English.



The Rev. Kingston left Creggan in 2003, for he had incurable cancer and was unable to work or to continue as a Trustee of Bunscoil an Iúir. However, that was not the end of his story. When Civil Partnerships were recognised in Northern Ireland in 2005, he and Dr Richard O'Leary were among the first to achieve that status. Mervyn was still working to make room for everybody in the church, including gay people, and he spoke publicly and co-founded a campaign Changing Attitudes Ireland. It wasn't easy: Dr O'Leary had given up a good job in Queen's University to be a full-time carer for Mervyn. Mervyn took the authorities to court to ensure that he would get his pension after his death, and won his case. On the other hand, because he was in a same-sex civil partnership, the dioceses refused him permission to practise as a minister/priest.

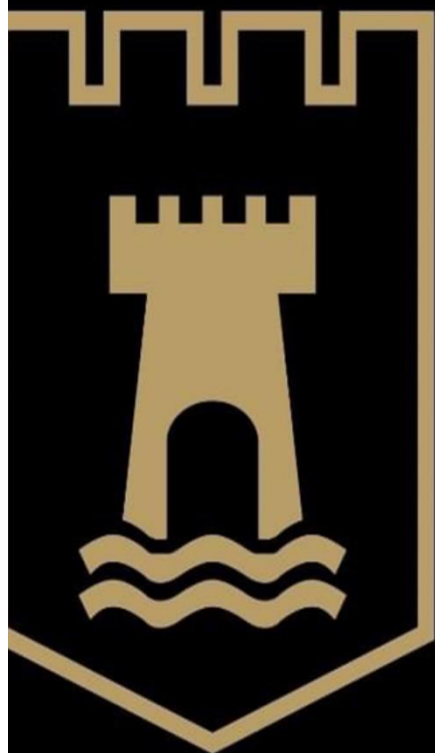
I met Mervyn only once after he left Creggan: at an Irish language service on St Patrick's Day in St. George's Church Belfast. I was struck by his indomitable spirit, radiant with joy despite being weak and very sick. I had barely thought about same-sex marriage before, but the hope, love and faith and joy of Mervyn Kingston and Richard O'Leary were inescapable. That convinced me.

The Rev. Mervyn Kingston died in August 2013; Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin sang *Úirchill an Chreagáin* at his funeral.

Maolcholaim Scott



Go maire Bunscoil an Iúir



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Scéal Grinn

le Stiofán Ó Leannáin

Is maith is cuimhin liom na laethanta sin agus Bunscoil an Iúir ag brath go huile 's go hiomlán ar dheontais fhánacha ó fhoinsí maoinithe éagsúla. Níorbh ionann na laetha sin agus an lá atá inniu ann, ó thaobh airgid de, nó b'éigean dúinn achán phingin a bhailiú ar ár gconlán féin. Ba mhinic mé ag tiomsú airgid ar son Bhunscoil an Iúir i dtrátha an ama sin chomh maith.

Lá amháin, tháinig mise agus mo dheartháir Ciarán ar an chinneadh go ndéanfadh muid cártaí Nollag a dhearadh, agus go ndíolfadh muid iad. Chum mé íomha Nollaigiúil de Halla an Bhaile, agus Daidí na Nollag ag eitilt os a chionn. Tharraing mo dheartháir pictiúr deas le fear sneachta agus é ina sheasamh amuigh i bpáirc. Nach muidne a bhí bródúil astu!

Chuaigh muid beirt a fhad le Coiste na Gaeilge i gComhairle Ceantair an Iúir agus Mhúrn, agus muid sa tóir ar chuidiú airgeadais leis na cártaí a phriontáil. Chuir muid ár bplean i láthair don choiste, agus mhínigh muid do Dhoiminic Ó Brolcháin cad é a bhí ar bun againn. Agus, cad é a dúirt seisean ach, "*nach bhfuil na cártaí seo go hiontach, agus iad tarraingthe go maith ag na páistí beaga!*"

Bhal, d'amharc mé ar Chiarán, agus faoi m'anáil dúirt mé, "*síleann siad go bhfuil siad déanta ag na páistí beaga*".

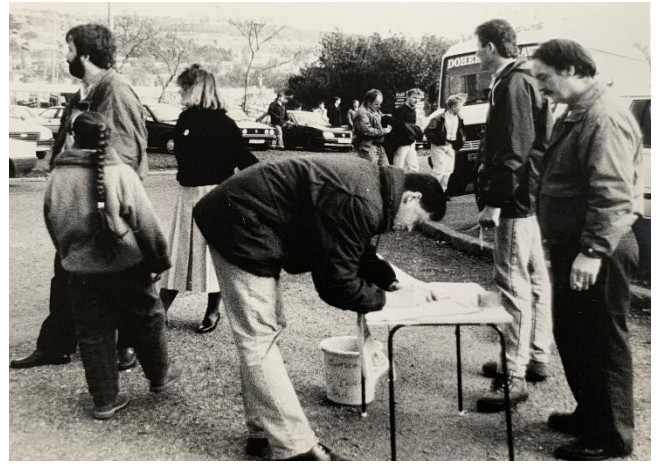
"*Ná habair rud ar bith, ná habair*", arsa Ciarán.

Agus ina dhiaidh sin 's uile...fuair muid an deontas!

Stiofán Ó Leannáin









Coillteoirí Náisiúnta na hÉireann



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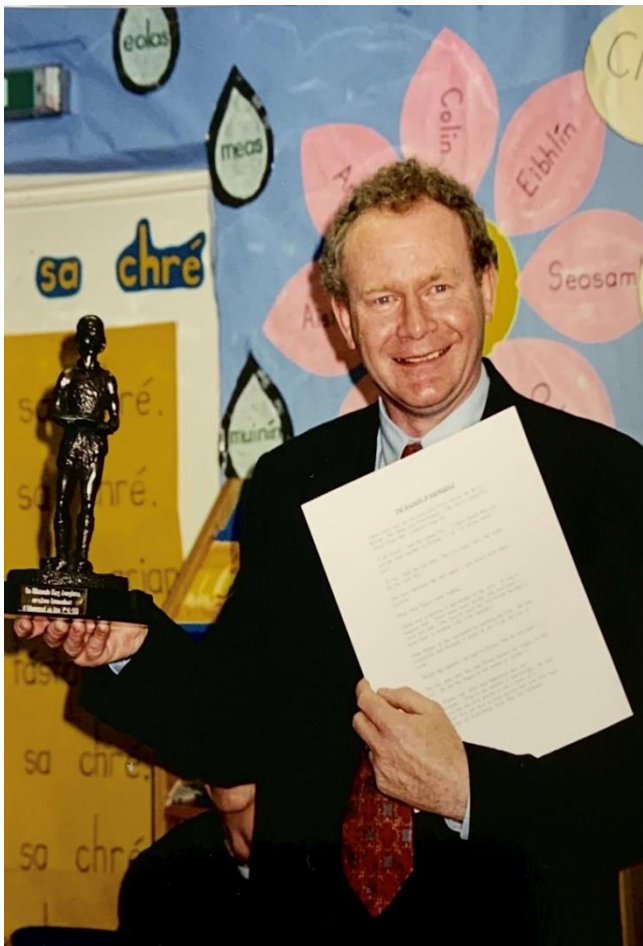






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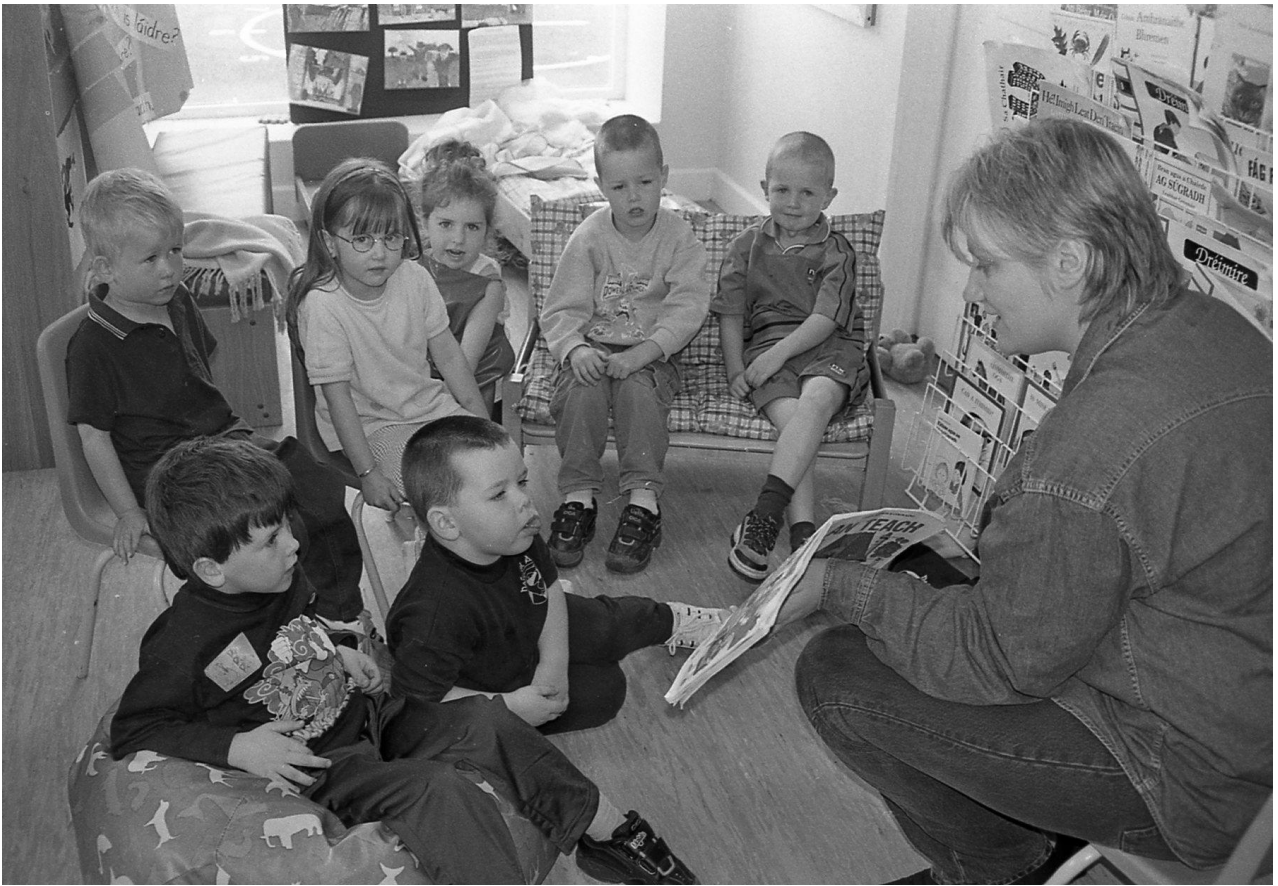
















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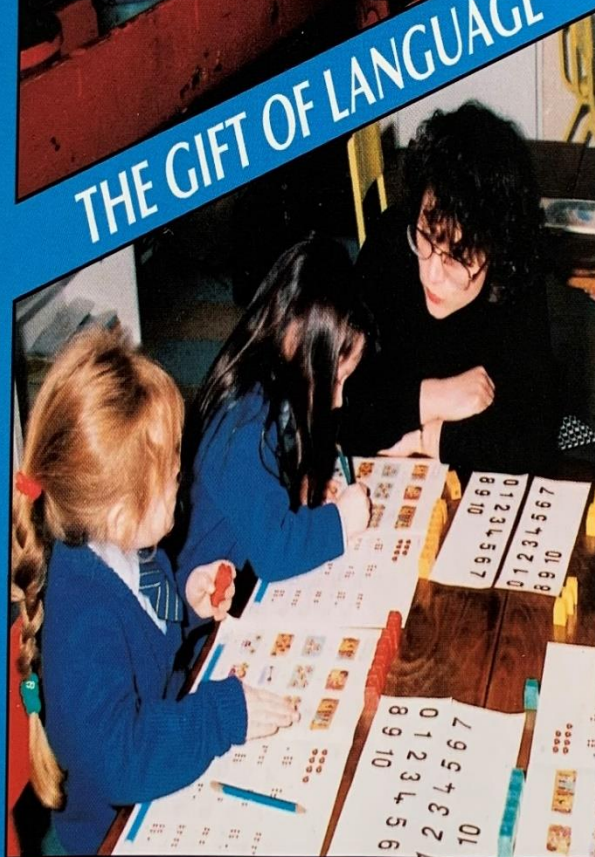
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Co. na Gaillimhe
Fón: (092) 48021.
Fax: (092) 48244.

Fón : (01) 6789911 extn. 3286

Peter Madden,
Bunscoil An Iúir,
74 Sráid na Cille Móire,
Iúir Chinn Trá,
Co Down.

BT34 2DH

11-01-1996

Peter, a chara,

I refer to representations I made to the Taoiseach in relation to Bunscoil an Iúir.

I now enclose a copy of a reply I received.

You will be pleased to see that the Government are pressing this matter.

If there is any further help I can give you in relation to this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Mise le meas,

Éamon Ó Cuív

Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D., M.C.C.

Oifig: 3, Plás Victoria, Gaillimh.

Fón : (091) 562846. Fax : (091) 562844.



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

3 January, 1996

Mr. Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D.,
Corr na Móna,
Co. na Gaillimhe.

Dear Éamon,

Thank you for your letter of 4 December and enclosed dossier on Bunscoil Gaelach in Newry.

The Government are aware of the continuing situation regarding funding for Irish Medium Education Schools in Northern Ireland and in particular the position of Bunscoil an Iúir. We have raised this matter on a number of occasions with the British authorities through the Secretariat in Maryfield and it has also been discussed in Anglo-Irish Conferences between the Tánaiste and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

We will seek to secure funding for the school by emphasising the importance of this issue on every appropriate occasion.

Yours sincerely,

John Burt
Taoiseach

Oifig an Taoisigh, Tithe an Rialtais, Baile Átha Cliath 2.
Office of the Taoiseach, Government Buildings, Dublin 2.

Ciste Cabhrach - Appeal Fund

The following list of businesses and people made donatations to the Bunscoil An Iúir Appeal Fund during November 1995. The total amount to date is £2,760.50

Thank you letters and receipts are now being sent out.

Mr. G. Trainor (Elliot & Trainor)	Monaghan Street
Mr. S. Mac Dhaibhéid	Dublin Road
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Friend of Bunscoil	Warrenpoint
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Mr. L. Goss	Goss Motors
Mr. L. Reilly	Furniture
Mr. M. Brown	Water Street
Mr. P. Quinlivan	Italy



Bunscoil an Iúir – Scoil den Scoth

Aislínn Ní Chiaráin is ainm dom. Is iardhalta de chuid Bhunscoil an Iúir mé. D'fhreastail mise ar an scoil nuair nach raibh ach beirt eile i mo rangsa sna luath 90í. Beidh mé i gcónaí buíoch de na múinteoirí agus den fhoireann ar fad sa scoil, gan iadsan ní bheadh na deiseanna céanna agam sa saol, creidim. Cuimhní cinn iontacha agam ó na seanlaethanta sna botháin!

Lean mé orm ag déanamh staidéir ar an Ghaeilge i ndiaidh dom an Bhunscoil agus Mhéanscoil a chríochnú.

Bhain mé céim amach i dTeanga agus Litríocht na Gaeilge in Ollscoil Uladh, Cúil Raithin. Chaith mé bliain i mo chónaí i nGaeltacht Chonamara nó is ansin a rinne mé staidéar ar an Ard Dioplóma i gCumarsáid Fheidhmeach in Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge. Tá mé anois ag obair le comhlacht léiriúcháin teilifíse. Thosaigh mé le foireann Zoogon i mBéal Feirste i mí an Mhárta 2010 mar chúntóir léiriúcháin agus tá mé ag feidhmiú anois mar Léiritheoir ar na tograí éagsúla de chuid Zoogon.

Tá oifigí Zoogon anois lonnaithe i nGaeláras Mhic Ardghail, tá an t-ádh orm bheith lonnaithe ar an Iúr agus ag obair i measc Gaeilgeoirí eile gach lá! Tá mo mhac Eoghan ag freastal ar Bhunscoil an Iúir anois & beidh a dheartháir Cuán dá leanúint agus ceithre bliana bainte amach aige.

Aislínn Ní Chiaráin

Stiúrthóir Zoogon Ltd. agus Iardhalta Bhunscoil an Iúir

Is onóir mhór í Bunscoil an Iúir bheith i bParóiste an Iúir.

Sa scoil seo, tá seans ag an aos óg bheith saite go huile 's go hiomlán ina dteanga dhúchais. Thig le páistí ceithre bliana d'aois an teanga a fhoghlaim gan stró i dtimpeallacht na scoile. Ní ghlacann sé i bhfad go dtuigeann an páiste óg an teanga agus ní fada go dtig leo an teanga a labhairt go réidh. Is cúis bhróid agus áthais í na páistí a fheiceáil agus iad ag caint go nádúrtha ina dteanga dhúchais sa tseomra ranga agus sa chlós imeartha.

Is séiplíneach na scoile mé ó 2010. Is breá liom bheith ag tabhairt cuairt ar an scoil agus ag bualadh leis an Phríomhoide, an fhoireann agus ag bualadh isteach ar na ranganna éagsúla. Ullmhaíonn an fhoireann na páistí don Chéad Fhaoistin, don Chéad Chomaoineach agus don Chomhneartú i Séipéal Naomh Muire atá lonnaithe faoi scread asail ó Bhunscoil an Iúir. Tá an t-ullmhúchán ar ardchaighdeán agus is laethanta ceiliúrtha ar scoil iad laethanta na sacraimintí. Bíonn ceol an chóir galánta i gcónaí agus bíonn seans ag cuid páistí ceol aonair a sheinm. Bíonn bia agus deoch sa scoil do na tuismitheoirí, na seantuismitheoirí agus baill eile na clainne i ndiaidh Cheiliúradh na Sacraimintí. Is laethanta iad a thaitníonn go mór liom.

An Canónach Francis Brown

Séiplíneach Bhunscoil an Iúir

Agus ár mbunscoil faoi lán seoil, agus an ghaelscolaíocht faoi bhláth ar fud an tuiscirt, ní mór dúinn cuimhne a dhéanamh orthu siúd a throid go dian is go díograiseach ar ár son chun oideachas trí Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil dúinn san Iúr. Mar phobal, táimid go mór faoi chomaoin acu.

Ó laethanta fuara sna botháin chuig compórd an fhoirgnimh úir, bhain mé sult as achan lá ar an bhunscoil. Inniu, nuair a chuirtear ceist orm, "Cá bhfuair tú do chuid Gaeilge?", is cúis mhór bhróid í nuair a deirim gur iarscoláire de chuid Bhunscoil an Iúir mé.

An Dr Cathal Mac Dhaibhéid

Baile Átha Cliath

I mí Mheán an Fhómhair 1992 a tháinig mise chuig Iúr Cinn Trá. Bhí post bliana faighte agam i Naíscoil an Iúir. Bhí Conallach eile ar an fhoireann ag an am sin – Nóra Ní Raghallaigh nó Nóra óg Frainc Chonaill. Thosaigh Maria Nic Fhearchair, iar-phríomhoide na Bunscoile ar an lá chéanna. Bhí mé féin agus Nóra sa Naíscoil agus Siobhán Nic Siacais agus Maria mar bheirt mhúinteoirí ar an Bhunscoil. Bhí laethanta ar dóigh againn leis na páistí is deise agus is bríomhaire in Iúr Cinn Trá. Go maire Bunscoil an Iúir an céad.

Bríd Ní Rabhartaigh

Bunscoil an Iúir is a very special place for me, my husband Brian and my two daughters Eimear and Deirdre. I visited it as a parent every day over a 12-year period, beginning in the portacabin and graduating to the beautiful new building. I also had a memorable return to Bunscoil as Minister for Education. Go maire sibh an céad.

Caitríona Ruane

I am proud to say I have been associated with Bunscoil an Iúir for about twenty years, in earlier days as a fundraiser and promoter of the Irish Language. When I joined Council in 2001, all Newry Councillors were initially appointed to the Bunscoil Committee, and I am happy to have stayed the distance becoming a Governor when appointments were made by the Education and Library Board and latterly by the E.A. It was a privilege to serve at one time as Chairperson of the Board of Governors. The school has come through some difficult times in the past, but all involved down through the years need to be congratulated for working tirelessly to promote education through the medium of the Irish Language. The Bunscoil is a marvelous work in progress – it is a pleasure to be part of their journey.

Charlie Casey (Board of Governors)

Chuaigh mo thaithí scoile i mBunscoil an Iúir go mór i bhfeidhm ar mo shaol féin, ar bhealach dearfach. D'oscail sé doirse dom in earnáil na múinteoireachta ar fud an domhain, nó tá seal caite agam mar mhúinteoir sa Mheánoirthear agus anois, is múinteoir Gaelscoile mé i mBun Cranncha, i gCo. Dhún na nGall. Is mé atá buíoch gur tógadh le Gaeilge mé.

Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le seanfhondúirí na scoile, iar-mhúinteoirí de mo chuid agus na tuismitheoirí díograiseacha úd a chuir beart le briathar. Mo cheol iad!

Colm Mac Eoin

Ba é bunú Bhunscoil an Iúir an fhorbairt ba mhó a rinneadh i ndul chun cinn na Gaeilge sa cheantar seo sa dara cuid den fhichiú haois. Ba éacht é nuair a chuimhnítear nach raibh ach Gaelscoil amháin sa Tuaisceart roimhe sin, Bunscoil Bhóthar Seoighe i mBéal Feirste.

Molaim bunaitheoirí na scoile, na múinteoirí, na tuismitheoirí a chuir a gcuid muiníne sa scoil agus a gcuid páistí chuici, as an éacht a rinne siad i dteannta a chéile fiche bliain ó shin.

Ag an am sin druideadh a lán doirse rompu agus b'éigean troid ar son achan rud a bhí ar fáil gan ceist ag scoileanna Béarla.

Anois an t-am le coiscéim eile a thógáil agus scoil úr ar shuíomh úr a chinntiú do na blianta atá romhainn. Tá an t-am ann chuige. Déanaimis é.

Dominic Bradley

Déanaim comhghairdeas ó chroí le Bunscoil an Iúir agus traoslaím léi an t-éacht atá déanta aici óna chéad lá. Is í Bunscoil an Iúir bunchloch na hathbheochana i gceantar an Iúir agus tá ár dtacaíocht tuillte aici anois agus sa todhchaí. Ba chóir dúinn uilig díriú isteach ar fhoirgneamh nua a fháil di, tá sé sin de dhíth thar aon ní eile. Tá mise go pearsanta réidh cibé rud is gá a dhéanamh leis an fhís a fhíoradh. Guím bail ó Dhia agus gach rath ar na daltaí, ar an fhoireann, agus ar na tuismitheoirí don todhchaí.

Justin McNulty MLA

Bunscoil an Iúir is an educational gem in the very heart of Newry. From humble beginnings, it has blossomed and provides top quality Irish medium education for all who want to avail of it. It is a true community school and is pivotal to the Irish language revival in the wider Newry area. I commend the achievements of its pupils and Staff, past and present, and the parents who, for over three decades, have appreciated the advantages of additive bilingualism and have chosen Irish medium primary education for their children. Guím gach rath ar Bhunscoil an Iúir don toadhcháí.

Liz Kimmons MLA

Tá mo chroí istigh sa Ghaeilge mar a bhí amhlaidh i gcónaí. Ritheann sé liom agus le m'fhear chéile go minic agus beirt pháistí dár gcuid ag tnúth le bheith i Rang 1 gur orainn atá an t-ádh dearg. Mar dhaltaí i mBunscoil an Iúir, gheobhaidh ár ngirsigh níos mó ná oideachas amháin, mar gur cuid de phobal croíúil fáilteach na Gaeilge anois iad, agus beidh an teanga álainn seo le cluinistín thart orthu agus iad ar scoil agus sa bhaile. Gabhaim buíochas leis na bunaitheoirí cróga as an éacht iontach a rinne siad don phobal áitiúil agus le foireann iomlán na scoile as an obair leanúnach a dhéanann siadsan. Tír gan Ghaelscolaíocht, tír gan teanga.



Louise Smith

Bainisteoir Aonad na Gaeilge – Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin

Tuigtear don té a bhíonn ag plé le gluaiseacht na Gaeilge a dheacra agus a dhúslánaí is a bhíonn sé daoine a mhealladh chuig ranganna, iad a spreagadh le dul chun na Gaeltachta nó an teanga a chur chun cinn i measc an ghnáthphobail. In amanna, áfach, cuirtear cor sa chinneúint, agus tagann pobal teanga chun cinn go nádúrtha. Molaim go hard na bunaitheoirí agus na tuismitheoirí cróga sin a chonaic an fhís sin dá gcuid páistí agus an Ghaeilge lárnach inti. Gura fada buan Bunscoil an Iúir!

Dr Niall Comer

Léachtóir le Gaeilge/ Lecturer in Irish, Ollscoil Uladh/ Ulster University

Iar-Uachtarán Chonradh na Gaeilge

Sa scoilbhliain 2022–23 beidh 110 páiste ag freastal ar Bhunscoil an Iúir agus léiríonn sé seo an dul chun cinn iontach atá déanta ag an scoil le blianta fada anuas. Tagann na páistí seo ó dheisceart Chontae an Dúin, ó dheisceart Ard Mhacha agus ó Chathair an Iúir. Chomh maith leis sin, tá breis agus 15 ar fhoireann na scoile agus is cúis bróid dúinn uilig a oibríonn anseo, na páistí a fheiceáil ag teacht ar scoil gach lá ag caint le chéile i nGaeilge, ag súgradh le chéile i nGaeilge agus ag foghlaim i nGaeilge.

Tá pobal na scoile s'againne iontach láidir chomh maith agus oibríonn muid uilig le chéile, tuistí, gobharnóirí, baill foirne, i gcomhpháirt, le cinntiú go bhfuil muid i gcónaí ag taisteal sa treo chéanna sa dóigh is go mbeidh ardchaighdeán oideachais curtha ar fáil do pháistí na scoile agus go bhfuil an Ghaeilge ag fás agus ag forbairt sa cheantar.

Tá muid muiníneach agus tógtha faoi thodhcháí na scoile agus faoi thodhcháí na Gaeilge in Iúir Cinn Trá agus tá muid uilig ag dúil go mór leis na blianta fáis atá os ár gcomhair.

Niall Loughran

Príomhoide Bhunscoil an Iúir



Is maith is cuimhin liom an chéad uair a chuaigh mise isteach i mBunscoil an Iúir chun daltaí ó Rang a Seacht a chur faoi Scrúdú an Fháinne Airgid. Bhí iontas an domhain orm cé chomh líofa is a bhí na páistí óga seo. Ba léir dom go raibh siad compordach agus iad ag labhairt ina dteanga dhúchasach.

Beidh ár mbuíochas tuillte go deo ag na múinteoirí ó Bhunscoil an Iúir, ina measc Múinteoir Maria agus Múinteoir Siún. Ba léir dom ón tús go raibh a gcroíthe istigh sa Ghaeilge.

Bhí sé de phribhléid agam an Fháinne Airgid a bhronnadh ar na daltaí gach bliain, sular fhág siad slán leis an Bhunscoil agus thug aghaidh ar Mheánscoil nó ar Scoil Ghramadaí.

Deirtear gur 'Tús Maith Leath na hOibre'.

Dar liomsa go raibh tús maith ag gach dalta i mBunscoil an Iúir.

Róisín Traynor

Bheadh bunaitheoirí Bhunscoil an Iúir an-bhródúil. Tá an scoil anois 33 bliain d'aois agus ag fás bliain i ndiaidh bliana, le níos mó ná 100 dalta anois sa scoil.

Nuair a thug daoine mar Dheirdre de Fráma, nach maireann, Maolcholaim Scott agus Liam Baxter faoin tríú Gaelscoil a bhunú ó thuaidh in 1989, ba thogra dúshlánach é. Ó shin, tá éachtaí bainte amach ag an scoil, agus na céadta ag caint Gaeilge i gceantar an Iúir mar gheall uirthi, a bhui leis na daoine uilig a chuidigh leo ar an turas sin – an tlar-phríomhoide Maria Nic Fhearchair, an tlar-Chathaoirleach Bernadette Nic Cathmhaoil, nach maireann, agus a gcomharbaí reatha Niall Ó Luachráin agus Brian McKinley san áireamh.



Ba mhaith liom gach rath a ghuí orthu agus iad ag tabhairt aghaidh ar an chéad ré eile i saol na scoile.

Seán Ó Coinn

Príomhfheidhmeannach Fhoras na Gaeilge

D'fhreastail m'iníon Róisín ar Bhunscoil an Iúir sna nóchaidí, le linn luathbhlianta na scoile. Bhain sí idir shult agus leas as a laethanta scoile ansin, agus bhí sí ar a sáimhín só sna ranganna.

Ba pháiste ciúin í ag an am sin, ach tugadh muinín agus uchtach di, agus tá sí thar a bheith féinmhuiníneach anois dá bharr.

Fuair sí oideachas bunscoile den chéad scoth agus i ndiaidh di a haistear meánscoile a chur di, chaith sí seal dhá bhliain ar an ollscoil thall i Learpholl. Tá post maith aici anois in Otharlann Chnoc na Nóiníní, agus tá a croí istigh sa Ghaeilge go fóill.

Stiofán Ó Leannáin



Naíscoil an Iúir – Mo Thuras

Bhal, seo mo scéal sa fá mo thuras ar Naíscoil an Iúir. Bhí mise i mo sheasamh sa chisteannach i Rann na Feirste nuair a shíúil isteach Malcolm Scott, tá mé déanamh gur sa bhliain 1987 nó 1988, níl mé iontach cinnte. Chuir sé ceist orm an mbeadh suim agam bheith ag obair le páistí agus ag tabhairt Gaeilge daofa ar an Naíscoil a bhí sé ag toiseacht thuas in Iúr Cinn Trá. An chéad fheagra a thug mise air, dúirt mé nach mbeadh suim agam ann nó ní raibh mise riamh ag obair le páistí, ach an freagra a thug Malcolm, moraim, ná go raibh aithne aige orm le blianta agus gur thug sé faoi deara go raibh dóigh mhaith agam le páistí. I ndiaidh tamaill bhig ag smaointíú air, dar liom féin gur dheas, b'fhéidir, rud inteacht eile a dhéanamh in áit bheith [ag] cócaráil. D'imigh mé liom ansin go Baile Átha Cliath agus rinne mé cúrsa i mBaile Átha Cliath le cleachtadh a thabhairt dom bheith ag obair i Naíscoilteacha, agus shuígh mé ansin agallamh thuas in Iúr Cinn Trá. Tá mé ag déanamh gur fríd 'Manpower', más buan mo chuimhne, a fostaíodh mise ar dtús.

Ar theacht go hIúr Cinn Trá dom, bhí teach leagtha amach dom. Bhí an teach sin sa tríú hascaill in sna Doirí Beaga. Thosaigh mé ag obair ansin in Ascaill Uí Néill, agus ar an chéad lá caithfidh mé a rá go raibh mé fiáanta agus iontach neirbhíseach, ach casadh Maureen Patterson orm ansin lá nó beirt roimhe sin agus thosaigh mé féin agus Maureen agus chuaigh muid amach le troscán agus uisce agus gaineamh agus achan rud a raibh muid ábalta smaointíú air a mbeadh suim ag páistí beaga iontu. Chuaigh an chéad lá go hiontach maith agus bhain mé sult fiáanta maith as, agus bhí sé ag dul ar aghaidh ansin ar feadh bliana go díreach, bhí an Naíscoil ansin léi féin ar feadh bliana thuas in Ascaill Uí Néill gur thosaigh an Bhunscoil, agus thosaigh an Bhunscoil ansin thuas i dteach Teresa agus Raymond Carroll, agus bhog an Naíscoil ó Ascaill Uí Néill go Sráid na Cille Móire, bliain go leith ina dhiaidh sin, tá mé ag déanamh, nuair a bhí Rang a hAon agus Rang a Dó istigh sa Bhunscoil agus rudaí ag dul go maith, agus an múinteoir an t-am sin ná Gearóidín.

Is iomaí gáire a bhain na páistí [asam] – sin an chuimhne is mó agus is fearr atá agam fán Naíscoil: na páistí agus iad go soineanta ionraic, agus tá cuimhne agam ar dhuine beag amháin acu ag insint dom go raibh madadh beag aici agus go raibh sí ag dul a thabhairt Nóra mar ainm ar an mhadadh. Ansin, bhí cailín beag a bhí ag teacht isteach chugam an chéad bhliain, bhí muid in Ascaill Uí Néill an t-am sin go fóill, agus bhí girseach bheag ag teacht isteach agus ní raibh sí ag caint ar chor ar bith liom agus ní raibh sí ag tabhairt freagra ar bith agus ní raibh sí ag glacadh páirt, 's bhí mé féin ag éirí rud beag buartha nó dúirt a máthair go raibh sí ábalta bheith ag caint sa bhaile agus go mbeadh craic agus cuideachta aisti ina ham féin. Is maith mo chuimhne an lá nuair a bhí muid inár suí thart 's muid ag déanamh 'Rannta agus Dánta', agus tháinig sise chugam agus chuir sí a lámha thart ar mo chluas, agus amach as a dhath ar bith thosaigh agus dúirt sí liom, "*Cnag ar an doras agus féach isteach, tóg an laiste 's siúil isteach, suígh ar an stól agus bí ag ól, cad é mar atá tú ar maidín?*" Bhí sí aici ó bhun go barr, agus bhí mé chomh bródúil aisti agus, Avril a bhí uirthi, agus níor stad Avril ag caint ón lá sin go dtí an lá inniu. Tá Avril ina bean anois agus chuaigh mac Avril go dtí an Bhunscoil, tá mé ag déanamh go bhfuil sé féin réidh leis an Bhunscoil, sin an méid blianta – sin thart fá 33 bliain ó shin, an chéad uair a tháinig mise go hIúr Cinn Trá!

Bhain mé i gcónaí sult as páistí agus tá mé ag déanamh gur rud iontach tábhachtach é ligean do pháistí bheith ina bpáistí agus ligean daofa pearsantacht s'acu féin a bheith acu agus ligean daofa bheith crosta corruair agus ligean daofa labhairt amach agus cumhacht a thabhairt daofa, go dtig leo rudaí a dhiúltú 's go dtig leo 'No' a rá nuair a bhíonn sé fóirsteanach daofa

agus guth breá láidir a thabhairt do pháistí, agus meas a thabhairt do pháistí – an meas céanna a thabhairt do pháistí agus a thugann tú do dhuine fásta. Fágann sé sin páiste atá ábalta bheith láidir ann/inti féin atá ábalta amharc ina dhiaidh/diaidh féin. Tá cuimhne agam lá amháin eile nuair a bhí mé ag déanamh dathanna leo agus tá mé ag déanamh gur ‘glas’ an dath a bhí muid á theagasc an lá sin, agus dúirt mise leis an tachrán seo, *“le do thoil, imigh anois agus faigh cathaoir ghlas dom”*. Chuaigh sé thart agus thart agus ansin dúirt sé, *“I can’t see no cathaoir ‘glas dom’ [dubh]”*.

Ahh, bhí cuid mhór rudaí beaga greannmhara ansin. Tháinig gasúr beag eile isteach chugam, mac Ursula, lá amháin agus ní raibh sé ach trí bliana agus dúirt sé liomsa, *“Nóra”, ‘s dúirt mise “Cad é?”*.

Dúirt sé liom, *“Cad é an Ghaeilge atá ar ‘autopsy’?”*

Is é a dúirt mise ná, *“aw, bhfuil a fhios agat, ní bheidh muid buartha fá sin inniu!”* Bhain sé sin gáire asam fosta.

Tá cuimhne agam ar shamhlaíocht na bpáistí fosta, go mbeadh a samhlaíocht fiáanta fiáanta láidir ag na páistí beaga, ‘s mar a dúirt mé má thugann tú spás daofa tá páistí speisialta. Tá páistí ionraic ‘s tá siad soineanta ach níos mó ná soineanta tá siad ionraic, agus tá mé ag déanamh corruair go milleann muid é sin ar pháistí. Ach, sea, tá cuimhní iontach deas mar sin agam agus tá mé ag déanamh nuair a tá tú ina trí bliana gur sin b’fhéidir an t-am is láidre atá tú – tá tú réidh don domhan mhór agus tá tú neamhspleách agus tá tú ag caint amach agus tá tú gnóthach agus níl ag suí ar do thóin!

Bhí muid gan airgead, mar a bhí riamh, an t-am sin agus bhí muid rud beag buartha nuair a fuair an Bhunscoil aitheantas, ach ní bhfuair an Naíscoil riamh aitheantas, a fhad ‘s a bhí mise ansin ar scor ar bith. Ag cuartú airgid an t-am ar fad agus ag cuartú deontas a bhí muid, agus bhí muid i gcónaí buartha fá airgead. Tá sé sin trom ar dhuine atá fostaithe, agus go gcaithfidh tú féin bheith páirteach i gcruinnithe do do phá, ach sin ráite, is iomaí lá craice a bhí againn amuigh leis na buicéid agus amuigh ag cruinniú airgid le Gael Linn agus ag na cluichí peile agus a mhacasamhail sin. Ach sea, tig leis sin tarraingt cuid mhór ar do mheon féin.

Bhí mo chroí istigh sa Bhunscoil fosta, agus sa Naíscoil, cionn is go raibh muid neamhspleách ó chreideamh. Thiocfadh le creideamh ar bith ar chor ar bith a raibh suim agat ann a bheith agat, nó gan creideamh ar bith a bheith agat, agus mar a dúirt mé sin seans eile ag daoine bheith ábalta fás iontu féin, tá mé ag déanamh. Bhí dúil mhór agam go raibh muid *‘interdenominational’* nó *‘idirchreidmheach’*. Creidim go raibh sé sin iontach tábhachtach agus go speisialta do Ghaelscoil nó go minic bíonn dearcadh ag daoine go dtéann an Ghaeilge le taobh amháin den phobal, ‘s chan leis an taobh eile. Tá mé ag déanamh nuair a osclaíonn tú suas mar sin é, agus nuair a fhágann tú creideamh ag an doras go dtugann sé mothú níos foscailte do dhaoine bheith ábalta theacht.

Cé gur minic nach raibh mórán troscáin againn agus b’fhéidir go raibh muid gann i bhfoinsí foghlama, bhí muid i gcónaí ábalta muid féin a chur chun tosaigh agus bheith leis na páistí agus cuideachta nó paca cártaí a thabhairt linn agus is iomaí rud a thig leat a dhéanamh le paca cártaí: dathanna agus uimhreacha agus an cuntas, mar shampla. Mar sin, corruair nuair atá tú gann in áiseanna teagaisc, go mbíonn d’intinn níos gaiste ag smaointiú léi féin agus cé gur corruair go mbeifeá ag smaointiú, *‘Oh yeah, nár dheas go mbeadh é seo agus é siúd againn’*, bhí muid breá ábalta agus spás an rud is maith le páistí, agus le daoine eile, is maith leo spás agus bhí i gcónaí spás againn agus cé go raibh muid ag roinnt ansin seomra béal dorais le Rang a hAon agus Rang a Dó, tá mé ag déanamh go ndeachaigh sé suas go Rang a Trí, bhí i gcónaí

spás againn. An t-am sin, bhí tú ábalta dul amach fá choinne siúlóide, agus nuair a bhí muid thuas in Ascaill Uí Néill, ba ghnách linn dul thart ar na tithe, thart ar an tsráid agus bheadh muid ag siúl ar an chosán agus bheadh muid ag cuntas buidéal bainne agus bheadh muid ag cuntas bláthanna agus ag amharc ar na huimhreacha a bheadh ar an doras agus d'ímigh cuid mhór de sin le rialacha a tháinig isteach, go gcaithfidh duine amháin bheith le gach 2 pháistí, agus tháinig cuid mhór rialacha isteach a thug cuid mhór saoirse mar sin ar shiúl, go speisialta ó réamhscolaíochta. D'éirigh na rialacha iontach dian agus go minic ní raibh tú ábalta a rá *"right, rachaidh muid amach fá choinne siúlóide, rachaidh muid ag cuntas go bhfeicfidh muid cá mhéad lus an chromchinn a fheiceann muid inniu"*.

Bhí mo chroí istigh fosta, ag tabhairt páistí ar shiúl ar turas agus thug mé faoi deara go raibh cuid mhór acu nach raibh mórán riamh ar an traein, cionn is gur istigh sa chathair in Iúr Cinn Trá [a raibh cónaí orthu], agus go raibh carranna ag a dtuismitheoirí agus a mhacasamhail sin, so ba ghnách linn an traein a fháil agus dul suas 's anuas go Béal Feirste agus ní dhearna muid a dhath i mBéal Feirste ach suí sa chaifé a bhí i mBéal Feirste agus anuas linn. Ba é an rud ba mhó ar bhain na páistí sult as ná an traein é féin. Fosta, baineadh an sult sin ar shiúl nuair a d'éirigh rialacha agus achan rud iontach dian agus cinnte go bhfuil sé iontach tábhachtach páistí a choinneáil sábháilte agus tá sé iontach tábhachtach bheith cúramach le gach rud a dhéanann tú ach corruair, thig leat bheith tachta le rialacha. Tá mise ag déanamh gur dhá chloigeann dhéag a thosaigh in Ascaill Uí Néill linn, agus bhí sé aisteach bheith ag caint i nGaeilge le páistí beaga agus iad ag amharc ort go minic agus gan iad ag tuigbheáil mórán cad é a bhí á rá agat, agus ansin mar a dúirt mé bhí muid ábalta muid féin le pictiúir agus le puipéid agus le pictiúir a tharraingt agus le cuid mhór nodanna beaga eile a thabhairt do pháistí cad é a raibh muid ag caint air. Tháinig an tuigbheáil go breá gasta agus ansin, corruair nuair a rachadh an tachrán isteach i Rang a hAon thart fá am na Samhna, a bheadh na tuismitheoirí ag insint, *"ahh, yeah, go raibh siad ag caint i nGaeilge agus an Ghaeilge uile go léir a d'fhoghlaim siad"* agus bheifeá ag smaointiú, *"oh yeah, bhí siad againne dhá bhliain roimh ré!"* Ansin, déarfadh tuismitheoirí go minic, rud a shíl mé a bhí i gcónaí iontach suimiúil, gur bhreá leis na páistí beaga bheith ag ceol na rann agus na ndánta iad féin, a fhad is a bhí siad, b'fhéidir, san fholcadán leo féin nó i rith na hoíche. Tá cuimhne agam cúpla tuismitheoir á rá liom go raibh an páiste beag s'acusan ag caint ina gcodladh agus gur ag caint i nGaeilge a bhí siad, gur focail Ghaeilge a bhí ag teacht amach astu.

So, sin *moraim*, a bhfuil a fhios agam, gur bhain mé an-sult as agus gur thug mé faoi deara go raibh na tuismitheoirí a bhí ag iarraidh agus ag cuartú oideachais dá bpáistí, go ndearna siad cuid mhór oibre agus ag teacht as Rann na Feirste, bhí sé sin cineál againn, gan barraíocht troda a dhéanamh ar a shon. Rinne na tuismitheoirí agus na húdáraí obair mhillteanach lena leithéid de rud a thaiseacht.

Scéal beag eile...bhí Peadar Mac Muiris, tá mé ag déanamh go raibh muid istigh sa Bhunscoil, an áit a bhfuil sí suite anois. Bhí muid istigh ansin ag an am agus bhí Peadar Mac Muiris istigh againn ag cruinniú nó rud inteacht agus ní raibh sé cinnte cá raibh an leithreas agus bhí cailín beag ag teacht trasna an halla, Raquelle tá mé ag déanamh a bhí uirthi, agus dúirt sé, *"Raquelle, cá bhfuil an leithreas?" "Ó anois"*, a dúirt sí, *"gabh isteach fríd an doras sin agus an chéad doras ar do lámh chlé, sin an leithreas"*. Agus tá cuimhne agam Peadar Mac Muiris ag teacht isteach agus é thuas san aer le bród go raibh tachrán beag nach raibh Gaeilge ar bith sa teach ábalta na treoracha sin a thabhairt dó chomh maith agus a thug sí. Go fóill, nuair a fheicim an muintir óg, bíonn bród orm fosta go ndeachaigh sí fríd an chóras agus go raibh sé mar onóir agamsa bheith acu an chéad chúpla bliain a bhí siad sa tumoideachas.

Bunaithe ar chomhrá le Nóra Ní Raghallaigh

















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*Ag tacú le foilseacháin
Chraobh an Iúir
de Chomhaltas Uladh
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