

The following is a eulogy I gave at Paddy's funeral.

I have known Paddy about 40 years i.e. since I used to fish in the area with my family from the early 1970's. My attraction to the area led me to start working in Delphi Fishery on a full time basis in 1992.

I have dug graves for Paddy's mother, sister Mary and the hardest one of all on my own was for his donkey, Jack.

Paddy was born in a different era that many of us nowadays could not understand. The evening of his removal one of Paddy's neighbours and classmates John Martin Heraty recounted the story of their confirmation day in 1936. When they were cycling home from being confirmed in Leenane they stopped at the Carrig where there was a shop at the time and bought a currant loaf between them which cost 4 pence. They cut it in half and ate it under Ashleigh Bridge and drank water from the river. It was proclaimed to be the best currant loaf ever.

He was a good neighbour. Jim Gibbons from Glendavock told me of the time when his father was sick in the late 30's; Paddy cut and saved all the turf for them.

I don't know much about Paddy's time with the Council, except he always said they kept the roads better and worked harder than they do now.

A major restoration job was to be done on Delphi Bridge this past autumn. Paddy didn't agree with the engineers' methods and informed them how it would have been done in his day. As it happened most of the works ended up getting washed down the river and the job was suspended. When the job recommences it will more than likely be done the old way. Paddy enjoyed his time in the Council and always had great stories about jobs he worked on and people he worked with.

He also spent some time in the forestry which I didn't actually know myself.

If I was taking a trip anywhere and Paddy wasn't on the lake I'd often ask him if he wanted to come for the spin. On the occasions when he did it was indeed an education into the fabric of rural Ireland as it used to be. For example, he would point out a ruin that he would proceed to tell me used to be a dance hall and recount happenings at a dance there in the 1940's.

His shed is a treasure trove of what we would call junk but Paddy never threw out anything that he thought he might turn to some use. If we were ever stuck for some odd item we'd always ask Paddy before we went further afield. Hubcaps were a speciality; any year, make or model.

He had a great practical brain and he would often say to us when we were trying to figure out something; "Use your head in a sensible manner".

Paddy was a third generation Ghillie. He would have started ghillying in the 1930's up till 2010, i.e. close to 80 years experience. His knowledge of the Delphi system in its entirety was unsurpassed. His boat handling abilities were brilliant. He was the prototype old Irish ghillie. Once you set foot in the boat with Paddy he was the captain of the ship. A lot of people now don't agree with this but I'm afraid I err on the side of the old ways.

Paddy Heneghan probably ghillied for more Royalty, Lords, Ladies, Knights of the Crown, Gentry and famous anglers and authors than any of us will meet in our lifetime. He gave these people many treasured memories.

His memory of events and catches with some of these people was as if it were yesterday. When Urs caught his big fish last year I was trying to find out more about the old days. As far as we know it was Sir Ronald Windgate who caught the biggest Delphi fish ever of 21.5 lbs in May 1963 at Sunk Rock on Doolough with Paddy as the Ghillie. He said the wind was West and the fly was a Jock Scott. It was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and they got another fish half an hour later of 18.5lbs.

He ghillied for the famous author and fisherman T. Kingsmill Moore who wrote about time spent in Delphi and all the fish he caught. Paddy was not his number one fan and did say that there were definitely more fish in the book than there were in the boat.

In latter years I was always more careful as to the clients I selected for him and tried to ensure a good match. This was often helped by some light refreshment or by having a woman in the boat, which Paddy always enjoyed.

Paddy also had his regulars. These partnerships normally accounted for quite a high percentage of total catch by the end of the year. John Mill's informed me that Paddy ghillied for four generations of his family, his father, himself, his son and his grandson. There are not many Ghillies who can add this fact to their resume.

Paddy Heneghan has made many people extremely happy and the tales and stories will live on. I'm only sorry he or someone else didn't write it all down as a life like his is as per the book "Vanishing Ireland further Chronicles of a Disappearing World".

For all the memories and life experiences we thank him.

D. McEvoy