

Líofa

Meán Fómhair 2015

September 2015

Líofa Seolta i bPáirc an Chrócaigh!

Sheol an tAire Cultúir Carál Ní Chuilín Líofa i bPáirc an Chrócaigh ag tús na míosa seo, le cuidiú ó CLG.

Arsa an tAire: “Tá an seoladh seo ceangailte le cuspóir CLG maidir leis an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn taobh istigh dá chuid clubanna. Trí CLG, tá mé ag iarraidh cur le líon na ndaoine a labhraíonn Gaeilge, leibhéil líofachta a fheabhsú agus an teanga a dhéanamh níos tarraingtí do níos mó daoine.

“Tá an Ghaeilge ann faoi choinne gach duine agus is cuid riachtanach d’oidhreacht chomhroinnte chultúrtha an oileáin í. Tríd an nasc seo le CLG, tá mé ag iarraidh cur le héifeacht an fheachtais Líofa tríd an spórt. Is pléisiúr ceart atá ann a bheith anseo inniu i bPáirc an Chrócaigh le labhairt faoin Ghaeilge agus gabhaim buíochas le CLG agus lena Uachtarán Aogán Ó Fearghail as an deis seo.

“Nuair a sheol mé feachtas Líofa sa tuaisceart, leag mé síos sprioc de 1,000 duine a bheith cláraithe leis an fheachtas faoi 2015. Baineadh an sprioc sin amach go gasta agus tá an sprioc sin athbhreithnithe agam arís agus arís eile ó shin i leith. Is é an sprioc reatha ná 20,000 duine a spreagadh le clárú faoi 2020.

“Tá Líofa ag súil go mór le hoibriú le hOifigheir Ghaeilge agus le baill CLG le daoine a spreagadh leis an Ghaeilge a úsáid mar theanga labhartha sa chlub agus ar an pháirc. Tá mé ag fáiltiú go mór roimh chlár comhoibríthe a fhorbairt le CLG a thógfaidh ar an rath atá ann cheana féin. Is féidir leat clárú le Líofa ar an tsuíomh idirlín – <http://www.liofa.eu> ”

Líofa launched in Croke Park!

Culture Minister Carál Ní Chuilín launched Líofa in Croke Park at the start of this month, with help from the GAA.

The Minister said: “This launch is linked to the GAA’s objective to promote the Irish Language within their clubs. Through the GAA, I want to increase the number of people speaking Irish, to improve fluency levels and to broaden the appeal of the language.”

“The Irish Language is for everyone and forms a vital part of the island’s shared cultural heritage. Through this link with the GAA, I want to increase the reach of the Líofa campaign through sport. It is a real pleasure to be here in Croke Park to speak about the Irish Language and I thank the GAA and its President Aogán Ó Fearghail for this opportunity.”

“When I launched the Líofa campaign in the north, I initially set a target of 1,000 people signing up to the campaign by 2015. This was quickly met and I have revised the target several times since then. The current target is to have 20,000 people signed up by 2020.”

“Líofa looks forward to working with the GAA’s Irish Language Officers and members to encourage Irish as a spoken language in the club and on the pitch. I look forward to developing a programme of co-operation with the GAA which builds on existing successes. You can sign up to Líofa on the website – www.liofa.eu”



Bernard Dunne, former World Champion boxer, Mayor of Dublin Críona Ní Dhálaigh, President of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Aogán Ó Fearghail, Culture Minister Carál Ní Chuilín and Senior Armagh footballer Charlie Vernon.

Bernard Dunne ant-iarchuradh domhanda agus dornálaí, Ard mhéara Bhaile Átha Cliath Críona Ní Dhálaigh, Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael Aogán Ó Fearghail, Aire Cultúir Carál Ní Chuilín agus peileadóir sinisir Ard Mhacha Charlie Vernon.

“Tá mé an-tiomanta go fóill do chur chun cinn theanga, oidhreacht agus chultúr na nGael agus tá súil agam go spreagtar a lán daoine eile le tús a chur le cúpla focal a úsáid i ngnáthchomhrá an lae.”

Dúirt Aogán Ó Fearghail, Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael go bhfuil sé “ar aidhmeanna agus mianta lárnacha Chumann Lúthchleas Gael an teanga Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn trínár gcluichí agus trínár ngníomhaíochtaí, agus is dualgas é seo a bhfuil muid dáiríre faoi.

“Bíonn an Ghaeilge le mothú ag ár gcluichí uilig agus reáchtálann cuid mhór d’ár n-aonaid a ngníomhaíochtaí trí Ghaeilge mar theanga laethúil.

“Tá lúcháir orainn gur roghnaigh an tAire Ní Chuilín Páirc an Chrócaigh don fhógra seo is deireanaí maidir le Líofa. Mar eagrais atá tiomanta i leith chur chun cinn leanúnach na Gaeilge guíonn muid gach rath ar an fheachtas. Níl amhras ach go neartóidh cuid mhór d’ár mbaill an feachtas trí thacaíocht ghníomhach a thabhairt do thionscadal ar fiú go mór é.

“I remain dedicated to the promotion of the Irish Language, heritage and culture and trust that tonight’s event will inspire many others to begin using a cúpla focal in everyday conversation.”

President of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Aogán Ó Fearghail, said that “one of the main aims and desires of the Gaelic Athletic Association is to promote the Irish language through our games and activities, and it is a duty that we are serious about.”

“The Irish language is present at all our games and many of our units run their activities through the medium of Irish.”

“We are glad that Minister Ní Chuilín chose Croke Park for this latest announcement in relation to Líofa. As an organisation that is committed to the continuous promotion of the Irish language we wish the campaign every success. There is no doubt that a lot of our members will strengthen the campaign by giving active support to a very worthwhile project.”

Tá Líofa ar an fhód le ceithre bliana anois!

Reáchtáladh 11 dhianchúrsa ar fud an tuaiscirt ar Sathairn 5 Meán Fómhair agus tharla sin uilig ag an aon am amháin. Reáchtáladh na dianchúrsaí le ceiliúradh a dhéanamh ar cheithre bliana ó bunaíodh Líofa agus ba iad Líofa, Oifigigh Ghaeilge sna comhairlí áitiúla agus grúpaí pobail a d’eagraigh na dianchúrsaí.

Bhí scaifte mór daoine ag freastal ar na cúrsaí uile - bhí idir 700 agus 800 ag foghlaim ag na leibhéil uilig sna hionaid éagsúla. Bhí na cúrsaí uilig saor in aisce agus thug siad deis do na rannpháirtithe bualadh le daoine eile atá ar an turas teanga céanna. Ina theannta

Líofa celebrates fourth anniversary!

On Saturday 5th September 11 intensive courses were run throughout the north and they all happened at the same time. The courses were held to mark the fourth anniversary of Líofa. They were organised by Líofa, by Irish Language Officers in the local councils and by community groups.

A lot of people attended the courses - between 700 and 800 were learning at different levels in the various centres. All of the courses were free of charge and they gave participants an opportunity to meet with other people on the same language journey. The intensive courses also attracted new learners and Líofa now has 13,221 sign-ups!



1. New learners at the intensive course in Armagh organised by Cairde Teo.

1. An tArdrang le Oifigeach Líofa, Dean Ó Sluagháin, i gCathair Ard Mhacha.



2

2. The Advanced Class with Líofa Officer, Dean Ó Sluagháin in Armagh City.
3. The Advanced class was full to the brim at An Carn's intensive course
4. Participants learning at the intensive course in Coláiste Feirste.

2. Foghlaimeoirí nua ag an dianchúrsa in Ard Mhacha a d'éagraigh Cairde Teo.
3. Bhí an tArdrang lán go doras ag dianchúrsa An Carn.
4. Rannpháirtithe i mbun foghlama ag an dianchúrsa i gColáiste Feirste.



3



4

sin mheall na dianchúrsaí foghlaimeoirí nua agus tá 13,221 duine anois cláraithe le Líofa.

Bhí deis ag na rannpháirtithe bualadh le cainteoirí eile Gaeilge agus le foghlaimeoirí de gach leibhéal agus am a chaitheamh ina gcuideachta. Sna ranganna, cuireadh béim go príomha ar fheabhas a chur ar scileanna comhrá agus ar níos mó muiníne a mhúscaill sna foghlaimeoirí agus iad ag baint úsáid as an teanga.

Tugadh seans do na rannpháirtithe scrúdú beag neamhfhoirmiúil a dhéanamh le measúnú a dhéanamh ar an dul chun cinn atá déanta acu. Bhí roinnt mhaith foghlaimeoirí ann a d'éirigh leo fáinne óir nó fáinne airgid bainte amach i ndiaidh 4 bliana d'obair mhór.

Bhí an ócáid ina tús foirfe ar an téarma úr de ranganna Gaeilge atá ag tarlú ar fud an tuaiscirt. Lena fháil amach cá háit a bhfuil rang ar fáil in aice leat, tabhair cuairt ar shuíomh gréasáin Líofa: www.liofa.eu

Ba mhaith le Líofa buíochas a ghabhail leis na hOifigigh Ghaeilge, leis na múinteoirí, leis na foghlaimeoirí agus do na hinstiúidí a bhí páirteach as cuidiú le hócáid chomh taitneamhach sin a eagrú leis an chomóradh a cheiliúradh. Céim amháin eile ar ár dturas Líofa le céile. Is maith a rinne sibh!

Participants had an opportunity to meet with other Irish speakers and with learners of every level and spend time in their company. In the classes, focus was primarily placed on improving conversation skills and on fostering more confidence in the learners when they use the language.

Participants were given an opportunity to do a little informal exam to assess the progress they have made. Many learners succeeded in achieving a gold or silver fainne after 4 years of hard work.

The occasion was a perfect start to the new term of Irish language classes that are happening throughout the north. To find out where a class is available near you, visit Líofa's website: www.liofa.eu

Líofa would like to thank the Irish Language Officers, the teachers, the learners and the institutions that participated and helped to organise such an enjoyable event to celebrate the anniversary. One more step on our Líofa journey together. You did well!



Órla Nic Ruairí, a doctoral student at Queen's University Belfast.

Órla Nic Ruairí, mac léinn dochtúireachta ar Ollscoil na Banríona, Béal Feirste

I gCóngar agus i gCéin

I gCóngar: Órla Nic Ruairí

Dia daoibh! Mise Órla Nic Ruairí, agus is as cathair Ard Mhacha ó dhúchas dom. Iarradh orm cúpla focal a scríobh maidir leis an taithí atá agam ó thaobh fhoghlaim na Gaeilge de, agus caithfidh mé a rá gur bhain mé sult mór as smaoineamh siar ar aistear na Gaeilge s'agam. Níl Gaeilge ó dhúchas agam agus ní raibh Gaeilge ar chor ar bith agam go dtí gur thosaigh mé ar an mheánscoil, seachas focal nó frása anseo is ansiúd bhíodh in úsáid ag mo mháthair sa bhaile agus blas Chorcaí uirthi sin. I gColáiste Chaitríona in Ard Mhacha a thosaigh mé a fhoghlaim na Gaeilge sa chéad dul síos, ach le bheith ionraic is beag an dúil a bhí agam inti don chéad trí nó ceithre bliana nó mar sin. Níor phioc mé an Ghaeilge mar ábhar GCSE sa chéad dul síos go fiú- ealaín a roghnaigh mé, a d'athraigh mé go teicneolaíocht, a d'athraigh mé chun na Gaeilge- rud a chuir isteach go mór ar an cheann bliana, agus ní raibh cead agam á athrú ina dhiaidh sin.

Cé go raibh mé gafa, ar dhóigh, leis an Ghaeilge ansin, b'shin an bhliain ar chuir mé suim cheart sa Ghaeilge. Lean mé liom go dtí an tArdleibhéal, agus bhí múinteoir agam ansin, Bean Uí Thiománaigh, a spreag go mór mé agus a thug an-mhuinín dom sa teanga. Chuir sí scairt, ar mo shon, ar Ghael Linn chun taithí oibre leo a shocrú dom, rud a rinne mé le linn na Cásca agus mé sa séú bliain. Ba mhór an cuidiú a thug an taithí sin agus Gael Linn dom, agus as sin fuair mé scoláireacht Ghaeltachta den chéad uair riamh agus mé seacht mbliana déag d'aois. Eispéireas den chéad scoth a bhí sa samhradh sin i Machaire Rabhartaigh, agus chuaigh mé ar ais ansin agus go Coláiste Bhun an Inbhir mar cheannaire agus mar mhúinteoir sna blianta ina dhiaidh.

Agus mé críochnaithe leis an A-Leibhéal, lean mé ar aghaidh le mo chuid staidéar ar an Ghaeilge in OÉ Gaillimh, áit a ndearna mé bunchéim i Léann an Aistriúcháin agus Díl. Bhí an t-ádh dearg orm go raibh

Home and Away

Home: Órla Nic Ruairí

Hello! I'm Órla Nic Ruairí, and I am originally from Armagh city. I was asked to write a few words about my experience as regards learning Irish. I must say that I really enjoyed thinking back on my Irish language journey. Irish is not my native language and I didn't have any Irish at all until I started secondary school, apart from a word or phrase here and there that my mother would have used at home with a Cork accent. I started learning Irish in Saint Catherine's College in Armagh in the first instance, but to be honest I had very little time for it for the first three or four years or so. I did not even pick Irish as a GCSE subject in the first instance - I picked Art instead, which I changed to Technology, which I changed to Irish, something that really annoyed the Year Head. I wasn't allowed to change after that!

Even though I was trapped in a way with Irish then, that was the year that I took a proper interest in the language. I continued on until A-Level and I had a teacher, Mrs Tomany, who really encouraged me and who gave me great confidence in the language. She called Gael Linn on my behalf to organise work experience with them, something I did during Easter when I was in sixth form. The experience with Gael Linn was a great help to me, and from that I got a Gaeltacht scholarship for the first time ever when I was seventeen years old. That summer in Machaire Rabhartaigh was an amazing experience, and I went back there and to Coláiste Bhun an Inbhir as a ceannaire (leader/guide) and as a teacher in subsequent years.

When I finished A-Level Irish, I continued with my studies in Irish in NUI, Galway, where I did a primary degree in Translation Studies and Law. I was really lucky that I was living with native speakers from the Donegal Gaeltacht; it meant that there was as much learning going on in the house (both good and bad!) as there was in the university. After the primary degree, I

mé i mo chónaí le cainteoirí dúchasacha as Gaeltacht Thír Chonaill, rud a d'fhág go raibh an oiread céanna foghlama sa teach (idir mhaith agus olc!) agus a bhí ar an ollscoil. I ndiaidh na bunchéime, lean mé liom go hOllscoil na Banríona le máistreacht san Aistriúchán a dhéanamh; áit a bhfuil mé anois ann i mbun dochtúireachta a dhíríonn ar aistriú na reachtaíochta i Saorstát Éireann idir 1922 agus 1937. Bhí dhá bhliain agam idir an MA a chríochnú agus an PhD a thosú, agus na poist ar fad a bhí agam san idirlinn, is trí mheán na Gaeilge a bhí siad; ag obair mar Oifigeach Gaeilge i meánscoil ó thuaidh, mar mhúinteoir Gaeilge i meánscoil ó dheas, mar aistritheoir leis an bhord scrúduithe is mar chúntóir ar thionscadal deachaidrimh sa Chultúrlann i mBéal Feirste.

Tá an taobh sóisialta a bhaineann leis an Ghaeilge ar an rud is fearr liom fúithi, gan dabht. Gan an Ghaeilge a bheith agam, is cinnte nach mbeadh aithne agam ar leathchuid de na daoine a raibh an t-ádh orm bualadh leo le roinnt blianta anuas. Thug sí deiseanna dom nach mbeadh agam gan líofacht na teanga a bheith agam, chomh maith le cuid de na cairde is fearr atá agam agus a bheas agam go deo. Nuair a bhuaileann tú le duine a bhfuil Gaeilge acu, bíonn tuiscint ann eadraibh; is cuma cén cúlra, cén leibhéal Gaeilge, nó fiú cén aois atá agaibh. Bíonn ciorcal comhrá á reáchtáil agam i gcomhar leis An Droichead achan Luan*, agus bhuail mé le roinnt de na daoine is suimiúla riamh thar phionta agus comhrá ansin. Cibé áit a mbuailimse le foghlaimeoir, is iad an dá fhadhb chéanna a bhíonn acu maidir le foghlaim na Gaeilge: (i) “Tuigim cad é atá tú ag rá ach ní thig liom abairt nó freagra a chur le chéile mé féin!” agus (ii) “Gramadach? Ginideach? Agus eisceachtaí ar a mbarr?!” Sin an dá bhacainn is mó, dar liom, ar an bhealach chun na líofachta, agus bhí na deacrachtaí céanna seo agamsa féin agus ag gach aon fhoghlaimeoir eile riamh. An réiteach ar an dá rud seo - cloí leis. Labhair leis an oiread sin daoine agus is féidir leat, amharc ar chlár Ghaeilge ar an teilifís, éist le Raidió na Gaeltachta/ Fáilte/ na Life/ RíRá, freastal ar ranganna, gabh chuig imeachtaí Gaeilge, agus an bhfuil a fhios agat seo? Níl seans ar bith ann nach mbeidh tú líofa.

*** sa Dirty Union i mBéal Feirste idir 8-10in: fáilte roimh chách! Twitter: @McGroryOrla**

went on to Queen's University Belfast to do a Masters in Translation; I am currently doing a doctorate there that focuses on the translation of legislation in the Irish Free State between 1922 and 1937. I had two years between finishing the MA and starting the PhD, and all of the jobs I had in the interim were through the medium of Irish, working as an Irish Language Officer in a secondary school in the north, as an Irish teacher in a secondary school in the south, as a translator with the examinations board and as an assistant on a positive relations project in An Chultúrlann in Belfast.

The social life that is connected to the Irish language is the best thing about it, without doubt. If I didn't speak Irish, I certainly wouldn't know half of the people I have been lucky enough to meet in recent years. I have been given opportunities that I would not have had without being fluent in the language, as well as some of the best friends I have and will always have. When you meet people who have Irish, there is an understanding between you; it doesn't matter what your background is, what level of Irish you have, or even what age you are! I organise a conversation circle in conjunction with An Droichead every Monday*, and I've met some of the most interesting people ever conversing over a pint there. Wherever I meet a learner, they seem to have the same two problems in relation to learning Irish: (i) “I understand what you are saying but I can't put a sentence or answer together myself!” and (ii) “Grammar? Genitive? And exceptions on top of that?!” They are the two biggest hindrances, in my opinion, on the way to fluency, and every learner and I have had those very same difficulties. The solution to those two things - stick with it. Speak to as many people as possible, watch Irish programmes on television, listen to Raidió na Gaeltachta/Raidió Fáilte/Raidió na Life/Raidió RíRá, attend classes, go to Irish language events, and do you know this? There is no chance of you not becoming fluent!

*** in the Dirty Union in Belfast between 8-10pm: everyone welcome! Twitter: @McGroryOrla**



Seán Ó Maoilisté, Oifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge le CAIRDE Teo

Seán Ó Maoilisté, Irish-Language Development Officer with CAIRDE Teo

I gCéin: Séamus Ó Fianghusa

Mise Séamus Ó Fianghusa. Bheir said “Séamus na Gaeilge” orm i nGaeltacht Thír Chonaill ach rugadh is tógadh i gceantar Nua Eabhrac mé. Naoi mbliana ó shin a chuir mé tús le heachtra mo shaoil nuair a thoisigh mé a fhoghlaim na Gaeilge. Ní raibh mé i nÉirinn ariamh roimhe sin agus ní raibh baint agam le grúpa ar bith Gaeilge. Ach d’fhoghlaim mé an teanga go maith líofa taobh istigh de thréimhse ghairid, agus níorbh fhada go raibh mé i nÉirinn. Théinn ann cúpla iarraidh achan bhliain de ghnáth. Ghlac mé páirt i ngach rud Gaeilge a bhí ag gabháil agus chuir mé aithne ar léir mór a bhfuil scoith na Gaeilge acu. Mar shampla, d’fhreastail mé ar achan Oireachtas na Samhna ó 2008 go dtí 2012, fiú amháin nuair a bhí mé san Afganastáin agus fuair mé coicís mar laetha saoire ón chogadh. Tháinig mé ar mo dhúchas Gaelach agus mar sin bhí ceann de phríomhspriocanna mo shaoil bainte amach agam.

Le imeacht aimsire áfach, tháinig deireadh le saol an spailpín fhánaigh a bhí á chaitheamh agam. Thit mé i ngrá le bean álainn ghrámhar agus phós mé í. Chuir muid fúinn agus ghlac mé le moll mór freagrachtaí úra. Bíim gnóthach go leor mar gheall ar an tsaol oibre ar ndóighe. Tá mé i mo shaighdiúir go fóill agus is lámhadóir madadh braite pléascach – is é sin go mbím ag cuartú buamaí le madadh i rith na hoíche. Mar gheall ar na freagrachtaí agam níl an oiread céanna ama agam luí isteach ar staidéar na teanga agus a bhíodh. Ach maireann an teanga i mo shaol. Déanta na fírinne, déarfainn go bhfuil mo chuid Gaeilge níos láidre fá láthair ná ariamh. Coinním beo beithíoch í sa Ghaeltacht is tábhachtaí dá bhfuil ann, i nGaeltacht m’intinne! Cad is Gaeltacht ann go díreach? Dúiche nó ceantar tire ina bhfuil teanga dhúchais na hÉireann nó

Away: Séamus Ó Fianghusa

I’m Séamus Ó Fianghusa They call me “Séamus na Gaeilge” in the Donegal Gaeltacht but I was born and brought up in the New York area. Nine years ago I began the journey of a lifetime when I began learning Irish. I had never been in Ireland before that and I had no connections to any Irish language group. But I learned to speak the language pretty fluently within a short period of time, and it wasn’t long before I was in Ireland. I would usually go there a couple of times a year. I took part in everything to do with the Irish language that was going on and I got to know a lot of people who have very good Irish. For example I attended Oireachtas na Samhna from 2008 until 2012, even when I was in Afghanistan! I got a fortnight’s leave from the war. I had found my Gaelic heritage and so I had achieved one of my life’s main goals.

With the passing of time, however, the migratory life that I had been living came to an end. I fell in love with a beautiful woman and I married her. We settled down and I accepted a lot of new responsibilities. I am busy with my work life, of course. I am still a soldier; I am an explosive dog handler - that means I look for bombs with a dog during the night. As a result of my responsibilities I do not have the same amount of time to focus on studying the language as before. But the language survives in my life. Truth be told, I would say that my Irish is stronger now than it has ever been. I keep it alive in the most important Gaeltacht that there is, in the Gaeltacht of my mind! What is a Gaeltacht exactly? A land or an area in which the native language of Ireland or Scotland is truly alive as the language of the community. In my opinion the most important meaning refers to the fact that the

na Alban beo mar theanga an phobail, go dearfa. Ach i mo bharúil is tábhachtaí an bhrí a chuireann in iúl gurb ionann an pobal féin agus an Ghaeltacht. Mar sin de, is cuma cén áit ina bhfuil mé suite, tá mé ag iompar Ghaeltacht m'intinne liom fhad is go bhfuil mé dílis do mo dhúchas.

Thiocfadh a rá gur cuireadh an síol nuair a bhí mé i mo ghasúr bheag agus mé ag foghlaim Chomhartha na Croiche ag m'athair, rud a d'fhoghlaim seisean ag a athair féin, ar chainteoir dúchais as Contae an Chláir é. Ní raibh mé ábalta an fáth a aithint, ach bhí fhios agam san am sin go raibh suntas mór ag baint leis. Ag fás aníos dom, d'aithin mé gur nasc mé i slabhra gan briseadh ón am a chuaigh thart. Bhí a fhios agam go raibh sloinne ársa orm agus mhothaigh mé go raibh freagracht agam traidisiúin mo shloinne a choinneáil beo agus a chur chun tosaigh.

Mar sin de, labhraím Gaeilge gach uile lá. Labhraím le mo mhadadh i nGaeilge – bheirim ord daoithe agus ghním comhrá léi chomh maith. Labhraím le mo bhean, Deirdre, i nGaeilge. Tá sí ag foghlaim go maith, diaidh ar ndiaidh, agus tá pidsean dár gcuid féin againn cheana féin! Labhraím le Dia i nGaeilge. Áirim an Ghaeilge mar theanga spioradálta agus is fiú í le cruth a chur ar smaointeoireacht dhomhain an chroí. Tá sé tábhachtach d'úsáid na teanga gur féidir leat mothúcháin láidre a cheangail le foclaí a chuireas trasna go cruinn iad. Tá a fhios seo agam ó mo thaithí féin. Mar shampla, ag an Aifreann, deirim na freagraí ar fad faoi m'anáil i nGaeilge. Bainim i bhfad níos mó éifeachta as na paidreacha nuair atá mé ag urnaí i dteanga mo shinsear.

Is tábhachtaí liom caighdeán ná cainníocht nuair atá foinsí Gaeilge i gceist. Coinním i gcuimhne paidreacha, seanráite, agus giotaí eile den chineál sin agus mar sin ghním cinnte i gcónaí go bhfuil na foinsí iontaofa. Mar shampla, is ag an tAthair Brian Ó Fearraigh i bparóiste Ghaoth Dobhair a chéad chuala mé freagraí an Aifrinn. Fuair mé fosta seanchóip den Teagasc Chríostaí “fá choinne Díoghóise Ráth-Bhoth” ó John Shéamais Ó Fearraigh, cara maith as m'uchtbhaile dúchais Bun a' Leaca.

Tá na hamhráin Ghaelacha coitianta mar ghléas foghlama ag mórán agus ní eisceacht ar bith mise. Meallann na hamhráin go leor chuig an Ghaeilge. Bainim féin sult agus tairbhe as máistrí an traidisiúin

community and the Gaeltacht are one. Therefore, it doesn't matter where I am based, I am carrying the Gaeltacht of my mind with me as long as I am loyal to my heritage.

It could be said that the seed was planted when I was a little boy and learned the Sign of the Cross from my father, something that he had learned from his own father, who was a native speaker from County Clare. I didn't fully understand it, but I knew at that time that there was great significance related to it. Growing up, I recognised that I was a link in an unbroken chain from the past. I knew that I had an ancient surname and I felt that I had a responsibility to keep my surname alive and to promote it.

Therefore, I speak Irish every single day. I speak to my dog in Irish - I give her orders and I converse with her as well. I speak with my wife, Deirdre, in Irish. She is learning well, gradually, and we already have our own pidgin! I speak to God in Irish. I feel that Irish is a spiritual language and it is useful to shape the deep thinking of the heart. It is important for the use of the language that you can link strong feelings with words that will accurately put them across. I know this from my own experience. For example, at Mass, I say all the answers under my breath in Irish. I find that the prayers are a lot more effective when I pray in the language of my ancestors.

Quality not quantity is more important when it comes to Irish language sources. I remember prayers, old sayings and other bits like that and therefore I always make certain that the sources are trustworthy. For example, I first heard the Mass responses from Father Brian Ó Fearraigh in the parish of Gaoth Dobhair. I also got an old copy of Teagasc Críostaí (Catechism) “for the Diocese of Raphoe” from John Shéamais Ó Fearraigh, a good friend from my native foster home, Bun a' Leaca.

The common Irish songs are a way of learning for a lot of people and I am no exception. The songs attract a lot of people to the Irish language. I myself enjoy and benefit from masters of the Donegal tradition like Lillis Ó Laoire and I sing myself any time I get the chance. I spent many nights working outside the headquarters of the United Nations singing Irish songs to myself just like Joe Éinniú, who did likewise as a doorman in the same city!

Chonallaigh ar nós Lillis Uí Laoire agus ceolaim féin am ar bith a mbíonn faille agam. Is iomaí oíche a chaith mé ag obair taobh amuigh de cheannáras na Náisiún Aontaithe ag ceol amhráin Ghaeilge liom féin agus a dhalta sin ag Joe Éinniú, a rinne amhlaidh mar fhear dorais sa chathair chéanna a bhfuil mé féin inti.

Ba é díograis sinseartha a spreag mé i dtús báire an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim, a thógáil, a chothú, agus a chur chun tosaigh. Fhad is go bhfuil mé ábalta leanstan ar aghaidh ar an dóigh a bhfuil mé, tá muinín mór agam go mairfidh sí i measc Clainne Fianghusa ar an laghad. Seo é saothar mo shaoil: gurbh ionann teanga mo shinsear agus teanga mo chuid iaróibh. Na Gaeil abú!

It was ancestral zeal that really encouraged me to learn Irish, to pick it up, to preserve it and to promote it. As long as I am able to continue the way I am, I am very confident that the Irish language will survive in the Fianghusa family at least. My life's work is to ensure that the language of my ancestors is the same as the language of my descendants. Up the Gaels!

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