

## A TRIBUTE TO SEAMUS AND PEGGY BYRNE

By the Byrne Siblings

**W**e, the four children of Seamus and Peggy Byrne, are delighted at being afforded the opportunity to pay tribute to our parents in this Grange Parish Book. Our tribute is particularly appropriate in 2015 as our dear mother, Peggy, passed away almost a year ago, in September 2014. Our names are Seamus, Mike, Eileen and Janet.

Our parents and family relocated to Grange from the UK in 1977. They set up home at what was previously the O'Connell house in Upper Grange, now the home of the O'Sullivan family. Prior to occupying their new home, Seamus and Peggy had carried out extensive renovations.

Seamus and Peggy, like so many of their generation, left Ireland in the 1950s to find work overseas. While they had both immigrated separately, they were fortunate to meet in one of the many Irish Clubs in Bristol in the UK. It was always their wish to return to Ireland and the Wicklow man and West Cork woman decided to settle in Grange in Co Limerick.

Seamus came to Grange having gained experience in contracting during his time in Bristol. He set up a silage cutting and machinery hire company in Grange. He brought great excitement to the locality when he introduced his various machinery, but especially his big white Lamborghini tractor and equipment for silage cutting contracts.

Of course, such magnificent machinery drew the instant attention of younger males, in particular. During their summer school holidays, Ollie and Dermot Madden of the Old Road would appear early in the morning and remain until late night, awaiting any opportunity for a drive on the tractors.

Seamus had an excellent working relationship with John and Albert Madden and Pat Purcell, who lived or had family locally.

Seamus, Peggy and the family were quickly integrated into the community, helped by the fact



John Madden, Seamus Byrne and Albert Madden at silage cutting.

that Seamus became very well-known as he contracted out his services and machinery. When the Old Road became impassable in the winter of 1978/1979 owing to heavy snowfall, the community was very appreciative when Seamus brought his machinery into action to clear the road.

Peggy joined the ICA following gentle persuasion from other Grange women. She really enjoyed the meetings, activities and tours, but mainly the enduring friendships she made at the old schoolhouse. She was renowned for her hospitality and cooking prowess, and her dinners were a great attraction for the men who worked with Seamus.

Seamus made many friends in Grange, friendships that have endured to the present time. One great friend was Joe Ahern, now deceased. We suppose that they had at least two similarities in their lives: they both relocated to Grange and set up successful businesses, and, of course, their mutual familiarity with large machinery was also a factor.

Seamus was a passionate supporter of Holycross Football Club as well as being a generous sponsor. He attended many a game at Holycross, frequently accompanied by Tony Barry and Danny Ryan. It would have been a very brave or, perhaps, a foolish supporter of the opposition who would ‘tangle’ with that trio of Holycross men.



Peggy Byrne second from left with ICA group.

Seamus, Peggy and family left Grange in 1985 but eventually retired in Kilballyowen in 2001, where they built a new house. During their relatively short stay in Grange, Seamus, Peggy and their children commenced great friendships that have endured over the years. Leaving Grange brought great sadness for the family, but Seamus and Peggy only moved a relatively short distance, and Grange



Eileen, Seamus, Seamus Jr, Peggy, Michael and Janet Byrne at the graduation of Seamus Jr.

and its people remained very close to their hearts.

Sadly, Peggy is no longer with us, and we all miss her dearly, but we treasure the memories. We look forward to having our dad for many, many years to come.