

### **Background to Taobh Tíre**

*Taobh Tíre – a better library service for rural areas* is a pilot research project, run by Donegal County Council in structured partnerships with other agencies and communities. Desk research and consultation investigated models of good and innovative practice. A profile of potential target areas was built up. Models and areas were selected following this process. Taobh Tíre then moved on to implementing models on a phased basis (see earlier updates for more details).

### **National Taobh Tíre launch**

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Pat ‘the Cope’ Gallagher, officially launched Taobh Tíre on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2004 at Áras Sheáin Bháin, Baile na Finne, (An Ghaeltacht Láir). The Minister said the Fintown element of Taobh Tíre “succeeded in developing partnerships with a very considerable number of community players”. He referred to the present day library service and said “the quality of the library service provided by Donegal County Council today is testament to the Council’s ongoing belief in the value of the public library and the importance which the Council attaches to that service”. The Minister congratulated all concerned in the development of the proposal and commended all parties involved for their co-operation and enthusiasm without which the project just could not happen.

The local model was launched by Seán Ó Baoill, local Údarás board member, who unveiled the plaque. Other speakers were David Alcorn, Chairman Donegal County Council; Eithne Ní Lochlainn, Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeltachta; and Oilibhear Mac Daibhidh, Cathaoirleach Coiste Éigse Sheáin Bháin.

Following the speeches two students demonstrated a wealth of local talent. Éamonn Ó Ceallaigh told the story *Aodh Rua Ó Domhnaill* written by local folklorist Seán Bán Mac Meanman and Cathal Ó Állis recited the poem *An Bonnán Buí* by Cathal Buí Mac Giolla Ghunna. MC for the day was Mícheál Ó hÉanaigh, Director of Community, Enterprise and Cultural Services, Donegal County Council. Local children decorated the Áras with paintings. Older children’s paintings represented Seán Bán and younger children’s represented local landmarks such as the lake, mountains and narrow-gauge railway.

A digitisation element to Taobh Tíre will run in Baile na Finne, starting with training and culminating in a website of current and historical local material. Some of the children’s paintings will be included in the website.

### **Local Taobh Tíre launches**

Mevagh Resource Centre on the Rosgoill Peninsula launched its model on 26<sup>th</sup> February, in conjunction with the VEC Donegal Adult Learner Guidance Service. It is hoped use of the Taobh Tíre facilities can be incorporated into the Men’s Education Initiative in Mevagh.

Áislann Chill Chartha was the venue for the launch of the South-West Donegal model on 10<sup>th</sup> March. The opening hours of the Áislann are a very impressive 10 am – 9 pm Monday – Friday and 2 pm – 9 pm on Saturday.

### **Cross-border mobile library service**

A public competition to ‘Design your own mobile library’ was launched at the County House, Lifford on 30<sup>th</sup> March. A blank canvas poster was distributed to schools in the target area on both sides of the border. A selection of ideas submitted will be incorporated into the final design.

**Cross-border reader development project**

The relationship with the Western Education & Library Board has led to plans for an Inspiring Readers project. An application was submitted to the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and if successful will lead to a 2-year project. One of the main elements is accredited staff training, allowing skills to be cascaded for long-term benefit.

**Taobh Tíre evaluation**

Tenders to evaluate the project were invited in December and an independent consultant appointed. The company met the Management Team in January and visited Donegal in February to establish a baseline and conduct a pre-assessment survey. The project will be assessed at the mid and end points.