

From Cappagh to Carlisle

DOn the third day of June in 1963 a couple were wed in the beautiful church of St Bede's. Owen and Maureen came together, and two became one, and it was a glorious day for each and everyone.

Family came from Ireland to witness the ceremony and were delighted to see them joined in matrimony. Others didn't have so far to travel as they lived in the Cumbrian town with its medieval castle.

Owen started his life in a mountainy terrain but would leave the village to work and his fortune to claim. He was far away from 'the hill' when he met his future wife. They were both glad they went to the youth club that night.

Maureen's name was on raffle tickets that held her address and Owen was smart and used his head. It didn't take him long to trace her to where she lived which brought him to her house in Inglewood Crescent.

When their courtship began Owen worked at a military base. RAF Spadeadam - he'd never seen such a place! He was glad of the company of his fellow workers and the priest who often loaned out his car with ease.

There were dances and walks and dinners and dates and nights where they stayed out talking 'til late. There were trips 'home' to the turf and the haystacks so tall. The family was huge how would Maureen remember them all?

It's a good job her memory was good as there were plenty of Boyle's to meet and get through. From the shock poor Hughie has just about recovered. He was shy at the start Maureen discovered.

After they had taken their vows and celebrated their day they went on honeymoon and had a beautiful stay. In the Belsfield Hotel in the breathtaking 'lakes'. Bowness on Windermere was a stunning and picturesque place.

Then they went to Llandudno in the north of Wales before coming back to Carlisle and starting again. They were happy and their love was set to thrive as they set up their first house in Dunmail Drive.

This home would see the arrival of six of a clan with Cath coming first but she wasn't alone for long. Michael would follow and then Angie was third with Tim, Greg and Kevin then coming on board.

He worked out on sites and she was a secretary in a school. They were devoted and steadfast and nobody's fool. They raised their family with dignity and encouraged them in education and were supportive and proud of their next generation.

They all had holidays to Cappagh and plates of Rose's soda bread. It was so delicious that for more they begged. The trips were yearly, 'til the height of 'the troubles', when they took a break from their jaunts and the bombs and the bullets.

But Ireland had stolen a place in their hearts and they were destined to build opposite Owen's childhood hearth. They've been there since its creation in the 1990's and 66a has witnessed plenty of activities and changes.

From the birth of their first grandchild in 1993 until little Aiden a few years ago and all in between. They spend their summers on the hill and look forward to the retreat and to all the locals and neighbours they meet.

Sixty years on and he loves pottering about and she'll do her crossword whilst he's out and about. He'll play his accordion and she'll watch her soaps. She sung in the choir and brings him tea and toast.

They love their garden and pond and the visitors who call and there's 'tae' in the pot and a welcome for all. They love sitting out at the front at the foot of the mountain so grand - it's in their blood and they love Ireland.

They bow their heads in silent prayer and include everyone they love in their daily reveré. Faith and family to them have always come first. Mam and Dad on hand for every new verse.

But no matter where they are they're always together and years later they're still made for one another. Whether in Newtown Road or in the bungalow on the hill their time together will always be fulfilled.

Happy Diamond anniversary from your family both near and far. We love you both and here's to many more! We can't wait to see you at your party and to share the food that marks that special day sixty years ago when you said 'I do'.

By Fionnuala Cassidy