

# rural reality BUILDING A BETTER RURAL FUTURE

## Did you know?

THE Scottish linguistic influence on everyday English spoken in the Counties of the North East of Ireland during the 19th century, often blended with Gaelic Irish and a mixture of old Anglo Saxon/Norman/Elizabethan English, became a strong factor. The evidence exists today but was clearly expressed in William Hugh Patterson's 1880 published book, *'A Glossary of Words in use in The Counties of Antrim and Down'*.

This week's extracts begin with the letter 'M'.

**'Morth o' cowl'**, sb. a very heavy cold.

**Mortal**, or **Mortal**, very, or very great. 'Mortal cold', 'A mortal lot'.

**Moss-ban**, sb. the edge or boundary of a peat bog.

**Moss-cheeper**, sb. the titlark or meadow pipit. Mother naked, adj. quite naked.

**Mountain men**, sb. pl. "That sect of dissenters called 'Covenanters'." quote from McSkimin's, Carrickfergus.

**Mountainy**, adj. mountain. 'Mountainy people', 'Mountainy land'.

**Mouth. Entry**, ie, entry end; where an entry opens on a street.

**Mowls, Mowl**, sb. ie, moulds; earth.

**Muckle**, adj. much; big.

**Muddle for potatoes**, v. to get them out with the hands, surreptitiously.

**Mud fat**, adj. very fat. 'The grass here is that good, that in six weeks a beast will get mud fat on it.'

**Mud-lark**, sb. a navvy, working at muddy embankments or excavations.

**Muddler**, sb. a small metal stamper, used in public houses to crush the lumps of sugar in punch."

## Useful contacts

□ Rural Development Council  
028 8676 6980

□ Rural Community Network  
028 8676 6670

□ Rural Support Line  
0845 606 7607

□ DARD Grants and Subsidies  
Division 028 7131 9900

□ Post Office Customer  
Helpline 08457 223344

□ Health Action Zone

028 8772 9017

□ Farming Families Bureau  
028 7930 1003

# Self-catering cottage in beautiful



### ■ COTTAGE KITCHEN:

Designed to capitalise on the advantages of space and ceiling height, Caitlin's Cottage kitchen extension reflects a top decorative finish and offers modern culinary conveniences. FW-1M.



■ **FARMER:** Cathal Caraher runs a herd of suckler cows on his family farmland near Cullyhanna on the shores of Kiltybane Lake, in south Armagh, where he has established a four-star self catering accommodation. FW-1C.



■ **TRADITIONAL:** The living room at Caitlin's Cottage with its traditional wood burning stove and pine cottage settle, blends perfectly with modern tan leather chairs, a large plasma TV screen with satellite channels and a DVD player. FW-1Q.

■ **ANGLING:** Caitlin's Cottage visitors have the advantage of a private rural walkway to the water's edge, at Kiltybane Lake, which is stocked with trout and managed by South Armagh Anglers, a club based on the lakeshore. FW-1T.



Beef producer Cathal Caraher, who runs a suckler herd in south Armagh, recently opened self catering Caitlin's Cottage on family farmland, in a stunningly beautiful lake district near Cullyhanna. Ian Harvey paid a visit to this hidden gem of tourism with its rolling hills and lakes, to find a cottage which has been restored to the highest standards.

**S**UBTLE shades of red, orange and yellow had already begun to paint the western sky on a cold, clear winter's day; the rapidly sinking sun casting long thin shadows on the rippled waters of Kiltybane Lake created by the presence of young alder and birch trees sparsely planted on a shoreline promontory jutting out into the lake.

Nearby, swans glided sedately across the surface with a raft of wild duck paddling rapidly behind them in an apparent effort to keep up, partially hidden behind a stand of bulrushes and close to a wooden jetty erected for the benefit of anglers.

"When we were young that's where we learned to swim during our summer holidays, do you remember Cathal?" remarked a warmly-clad lady standing close by in the company of three young relations, who I was later informed are a local farming family.

My host, Cathal Caraher, smiled and nodded in recollection of youthful days spent in and around this pretty little lake surrounded by gentle rolling hills.

I couldn't help thinking how hardy they must have been to swim in the cold waters of a freshwater lake, even in the warmth of a summer's day. We had been standing in the otherwise empty car park and picnic area of South Armagh Anglers club, the day after Boxing Day, when most sensible folk were no doubt recovering from Christmas festivities.

Having said our goodbyes and as we drove away on a quick tour of the local surroundings of Kiltybane townland, a few miles from Cullyhanna, Cathal

reminded me of a truism.

"When you live and work in a place as beautiful as this, you often don't fully appreciate just how beautiful it is, especially when you're young."

"It's only when visitors come here and are really impressed with what they see that you begin to understand just what you have on your own doorstep."

Cathal, a beef producer who runs a suckler herd and was born and brought up in a farming family, came up with the idea of offering self catering accommodation by restoring and refurbishing an old cottage on his land close to the shores of Kiltybane lake.

We had only driven a short distance down the road, rounding one of the many small hills, when another small lake came into view.

He explained that on this lake, pointing to a small islet with trees and shrubs growing thickly across it – is a crannog.

For the uninitiated, a crannog dates back thousands of years to a time when families who lived near lakes, built their homes on small defensive man-made islands using timber piles and rocks, sometimes with isolated access using hidden underwater stepping stones; other later and more sophisticated versions involved the erection of a pile-driven wooden walkway to a thatched home on a platform of stilts.

"This area is packed with examples of ancient settlements and burials," he added, having stopped the car and turned in his seat to point in the direction of another hill where he told me of a good example of a Ring Fort



■ **SETTING:** Nestling in the rolling hills of south Armagh close to the border with County Monaghan, Caitlin's Cottage is an hour's drive from both Belfast and Dublin and enjoys stunning rural vistas, with Slieve Gullion within plain sight. FW-1F.



Leading agricultural journalist and broadcaster IAN HARVEY looks behind the scenes at rural community issues and how farmers are meeting the challenge of developing the farm business and supporting the farm family

# rural reality

## lakeland setting



**■ SELF CATERING:** Caitlin's Cottage, a tastefully restored and upgraded traditional cottage in the townland of Kiltybane, Cullyhanna, in south Armagh, sleeps six with comfort and offers guests an outdoor adventure in a stunning rural setting. FW-1H.

beyond it. "There are lots of crannogs on lakes around here since we have no fewer than 14 lakes in the general area, not to mention the famous 3,000 year old Annaghmare Horned Cairn or tomb. "So when you stop to think about it, we not only have extraordinary rural beauty and wildlife all around us, but a wealth of historical sites of archaeological interest too," remarked Cathal as we drove off, returning to Caitlin's Cottage, where I'd first met up with him earlier that afternoon.

On the short journey to the cottage, he pointed out the dramatic form of Slieve Gullion in the near distance and the surrounding mountains which form the Ring of Gullion, famed as a place of beauty and more recently, with its forest park, as a popular attraction for walkers.

Seated in the high-ceilinged living kitchen extension of Caitlin's Cottage, a field's distance from the north-shore of Kiltybane Lake, Cathal related its rural history.

"The cottage in its original state was bought by my father in the 1980s along with two fields of some 15 acres behind it which run down to the lakeside.

"When I was young it was used for lambing our Suffolk ewes which had been tupped by a Texel sire.

"I well remember bringing ewes due to lamb into what used to be the old byre.

"Dad used to say to me that one day it might be possible to convert the old cottage into something more useful.

"In more recent times I began to appreciate the countryside more and more and recognise its potential for tourism.

"A newspaper advertisement flagging up the opportunities for rural funding attracted my attention

and two years ago I successfully applied for a DARD backed EU RDP grant, through SOAR my local facilitators, to restore the cottage for self catering tourism.

"I must say, SOAR has been very supportive throughout the restoration project and I'd specially like to mention Claire Loughran for her helpfulness.

"Work on the restoration and extension started in November 2013 once planning approval had been given, having previously tendered for contract builders.

"I can highly recommend Pat Murphy & Sons of Silverbridge, the builders who won the tender and carried out the entire work to Caitlin's Cottage to an extremely high standard, as you'll see as we take a walk around."

I could already see the superb finish of the living/dining kitchen area, which is spacious with modern kitchen units painted in subtle colours of ivory and pastel green incorporating every essential appliance.

On top of that there are two wood burning stoves, one in the kitchen/dining area and the other in lower ceiling section of the old cottage which is part of the open-plan living/kitchen.

The living room is a wonderful blend of old and new with a pine cottage-settle, comfortable leather chairs and a large plasma TV screen with DVD player.

Walking round the snug, centrally-heated cottage, I noticed small thoughtful touches throughout as reminders of the cottage's rural heritage.

The three attractively decorated and furnished bedrooms comfortably sleep six and are of the highest NITB four-star standards, not to mention two bathrooms, one of which is en suite.

There's a utility room with washing machine, tumbler dryer, etc, and outside, a separate building for wet gear storage including



**■ COUNTRY WALKS:** A local farming family enjoys a post Christmas walk and the pretty lakeside views of Kiltybane Lake, Cullyhanna, south Armagh. FW-1D.



**■ ATMOSPHERIC:** The decor, appliances, fittings and attention to detail in Caitlin's Cottage exude an atmosphere of a by-gone age within a modern and convenient setting. FW-1N.

facilities for fresh bait for anglers.

"One of the big attractions of Caitlin's Cottage is its proximity to fishing lakes and rivers and of course there's so much scope for walking, cycling and golfing," emphasised Cathal.

"Ashfield golf course, near the local village of Cullyhanna, is just five minutes drive away, with the option of a golf course just across the border in County Monaghan, at Castleblaney, called Concra Wood, designed by Christie O'Connor.

"We're only an hour's drive from both Belfast and Dublin and there's plenty of entertainment and night life in the towns and cities, from Crossmaglen and Castleblaney to Newry.

"In fact everything one could hope for in either a holiday, a family overflow, weekend break, or just a chance to get away from it all and do something different.

"For those who want a bit of pampering and relaxation there are many beauty rooms and day spas available to book locally.

"Since we opened at the end of summer 2014, we've had visitors from Donegal and as far away as Australia, some folk staying for as long as three weeks with firm bookings already for this coming year.

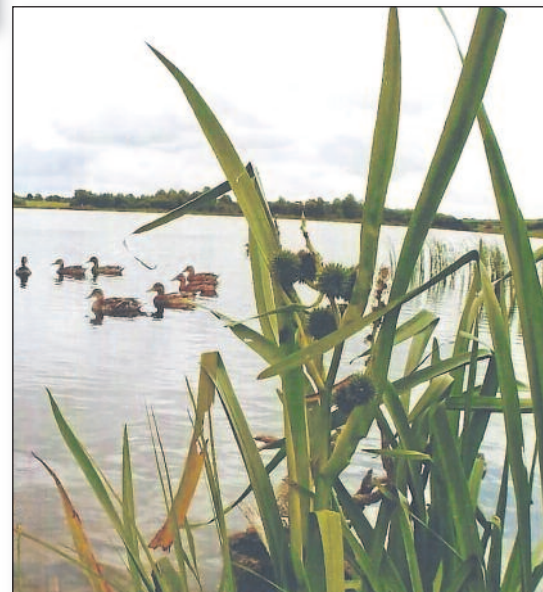
"Let's hope for some really good weather this year so our visitors can relax outdoors at Caitlin's Cottage and enjoy a fun barbeque, with the option of a leisurely stroll down our farmland walk to the shores of Kiltybane Lake!"

I left Caitlin's Cottage, Kiltybane, with one of the most beautiful sunsets one could hope to see so what's that saying, "a red sky at night is a shepherd's delight!"

No doubt it augers well for the future.

**■ LUXURY:** Above, self catering visitors staying at Caitlin's Cottage, Kiltybane, can relax in luxurious surroundings with a cottage feel and a choice of three bedrooms, two double rooms, one of which is en suite, and a twin room. FW-1E.

**■ WILDLIFE:** Wild ducks, swans and a rich variety of wildlife, flora and fauna grace the shores of Kiltybane Lake on the very doorstep of Caitlin's Cottage, just one of 14 lakes in this pretty south Armagh countryside. FW-1K.



**■ FISHING STAND:** Erected and operated by South Armagh Anglers, this fishing jetty at Kiltybane Lake is situated at the foot of a field owned and farmed by Cathal Caraher and is within easy walking distance from Caitlin's Cottage. FW-1S.

### For more information

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Visit: www.caitlinscottage.com