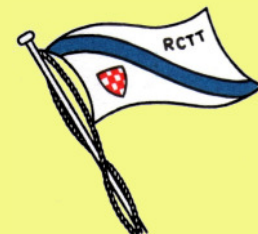


Mai 2010



RCTT-Delegation zu Gast in Irland

Eddie's act of kindness brought decades of friendship

Published Date: 31 May 2010, Limerick Leader, By Mike Dwane

AN act of kindness almost 20 years ago has developed into an enduring friendship between a group of German and Limerick people – and has also given a little lift to their respective tourism industries.

Eddie Kiely, a mechanic with the ESB in Limerick and a brother of Mayor Kevin Kiely, remembers coming across a distraught Peter Benke on the Dublin Road in October 1993.

The German visitor's Irish trip had just got off to the worst possible start as his camper van had broken down. But Eddie came to the rescue, providing him with a different vehicle and ordering a new gearbox to repair the camper van. But the Clareview man's generosity went further still, putting up Peter Benke for a few days.

Eddie, Clareview, said that was the last he expected to hear of his German lodger but one of Peter's relatives was so impressed that she nominated Eddie Kiely for the Murphy's Tourism Ambassador Award, which he went on to win that year.

is only about 12 miles from Peter Benke's home town of Kirchberg. Following that, a group of Peter's friends has been travelling to Limerick and Ireland every other year, which the Limerick crowd visiting Germany every year in between.

"About eight of us went over to Kirchberg the first year, a beautiful picturesque town near the Mosel, where Peter is part of a group of friends who have cruisers to go boating," explained Eddie.

And since Eddie helped Peter out in 1993, the German group of river enthusiasts has been coming to Ireland to explore the Shannon and other waterways.

Over the May bank holiday weekend, the Germans stayed in the Woodfield House Hotel and they were taken to their first ever hurling match, Na Piarasigh against Patrickswell in Clarina.

As well as boating, the European visitors like their music. They sat in on a recent rehearsal of the St Mary's Fife and Drum Band and each was also presented with a CD produced by St Mary's Park singer-songwriter Dinny Keogh in aid of the Limerick Mental Health Association.

During their visit to Limerick they were also presented with shirts carrying the Limerick coat-of-arms. This ceremony took place at the Treaty Stone and was attended by Eddie's brother, Mayor Kevin Kiely; chairman of Limerick County Council, Cllr David Naughton; Derek Mulcahy; St Mary's Fife and Drum Band; and Francis Leahy, the chief of staff of the Massachusetts state troopers who was special guest at the Mayor's Ball that weekend.

"It was great to have people over at the start of a holiday season that might be tougher than usual. But the lads all love Limerick. Peter has been coming here for quite a few years now and he has been struck by how Limerick city centre has been redeveloped and how much better it is looking these days," said Eddie, who is now preparing to bring a group of 19 from Limerick for a tour of the Mosel and Rhine Valleys in October.

