

## **The Story of Muintir na Tíre, 1931-2001 - the First Seventy Years**

Fr. Mark Tierney's book "**The Story of Muintir na Tíre, 1931-2001 - the First Seventy Years**" was launched by Minister Eamon Ó 'Cuív, T.D. in the Excel Cultural Centre, Tipperary Town, on Wednesday, 22nd September, 2004.

This is the first full-length history of Muintir na Tíre - a movement which has been a household name throughout Ireland since 1931.

The name Muintir na Tíre means the People of the Land or the People of the Countryside. Its founder, Fr. (later Canon) Hayes, was a Tipperary priest.

From its earliest days the main objective was to improve the social, cultural, economic and environmental status of people.

It offered a wide programme of community initiatives based on the principles of self-help and self-reliance.

**Muintir na Tíre** established itself throughout Ireland, setting up parish Guilds and later democratically elected Community Councils. It was a pioneer in introducing and advancing Community Development in Ireland and it encouraged each parish community to take control of its own destiny. Muintir became the voice of the communities of Ireland, providing them with a power-base and the means of obtaining essential infrastructural facilities leading to an improved quality of life for all.

Since 1985 it has been actively engaged in promoting the national crime prevention programme, Community Alert.

Today, we are witnessing a revitalising of life in every part of Ireland, with more and more people choosing to live in the country. Ireland faces a bright future. Most Irish villages and towns have a hall or centre, many of them affiliated to Muintir na Tíre, which provides recreational and social outlets for local people. Such enterprises as the Community Crime Prevention Programme, Community Alert, Community Information Centres (Citizen Information Centres), social housing, services to the elderly and vulnerable, have all been initiated by Muintir. The movement remains very much alive and well, and is ready and willing to continue to serve the people of Ireland.

But there are many people who have never heard of Muintir na Tíre or who have little understanding of its contribution to the making of modern Ireland. This book will set the record right, tracing, as it does, the history of the movement over the period of its first seventy years. It is a human story of voluntary effort and endeavour, well worth telling.

The book is published in hard-back format, and was launched in Tipperary town on Wednesday 22nd September, 2004. The book will be of special interest to people involved in the community and voluntary sector - and also to students of social and cultural history. It will appeal to researchers of the Community Development process.

It contains numerous historic and contemporary photographs and many unpublished documents.

**Copies of this book are available at €25 each including postage**

*Please send your remittance to:*

**Tom Fitzgerald**

**Publications Office**

**Muintir na Tíre**

**Canon Hayes House**

**Tipperary Town**

**Tel: 062-51163**

**Email: [muintirtipp@eircom.net](mailto:muintirtipp@eircom.net)**

### **What is Muintir na Tíre?**

A community self-help movement, founded by John Canon Hayes in 1937, through which people can become involved in activities which lead to the improvement of the quality of life - socially, economically, culturally and environmentally - of the local community.

### **Approach**

Muintir's approach is based around the "*whole community*" and its core principles of neighbourliness (*Muintereas*), self-help and self-reliance support the exercising of active citizenship within communities.

Although times have changed, Muintir's holistic and inclusive view of community development as being the process by which the efforts of the people at local level are united in partnership with those of the statutory and voluntary bodies, to improve the social, cultural and economic life of the community and to integrate the community in to the life of the nation, remains solid and equally relevant today.

### **Mission Statement**

Muintir na Tíre mission is to serve three functions:

- 1. Animation and Organisation:** actively supporting local communities in organising themselves and developing their own capacities and resources to respond effectively to their problems and needs, whilst efficiently utilising external resources and technical assistance.
- 2. Representation and Advocacy:** compiling the identified problems, interests and viewpoints of local communities into coherent agendas for action at the appropriate levels of policy and public administration, and representing local communities in advocating desirable actions.
- 3. Monitoring Change and Influencing Policy:** assessing the potential implications of major economic and social forces, and policy trends, for local community development, and seeking to influence, as appropriate, government policy formation and institutional arrangements.