

John Naughton

RIP Remembered

One year ago, here at Trimeragh, on the dual carriageway outside Letterkenny, one of our loyal and active members, John Naughton lost his life in a road traffic tragedy, the elements of which are still before the Court here in Letterkenny; the ongoing effects are also to be found in Omeath where John's wife Marion and their eight year old son Séan deal with their great loss on a daily basis.

1st Anniversary of death of IPA & IPAGMC member

A year seems such a long time when it is stretching out there in front of you, but how short when looking back. Time is indeed a funny thing and many a philosopher has tried to analyse and make sense of it, with little success. In our own way we tried to make some sense of it when under the auspices of the International Police Association Garda Motorcycle Club we gathered together at that spot on the dual carriageway and remembered John. Marion travelled from Omeath with her friend Mary Byrne to be with Club members who had travelled from all over the country to attend the ceremony that day. IPA NEC member from Region No. 7, John Gillard and his wife Miriam and I represented the IPA. In all, around forty people were present with Marion as she unveiled the memorial erected by



Group photo of IPA GMC members at newly unveiled memorial



L-R: John Gillard, IPA NEC, Stephen O'Sullivan, President IPA GMC, Mariann Naughton, Joe Lynch, Past President IPA

the IPAGMC in memory of her late husband. Gardai McGoohan and Horkan from Traffic Corps, Letterkenny performed traffic duty for the ceremony, ensuring the safety of all present.

IPAGMC Vice President, Trevor Moore was instrumental in formulating the idea for the erection of the memorial. He and former President, Seamus McBride then worked with the full support of Club President Stephen O'Sullivan and John's wife, Marion. Together they agreed the design and the plans for the erection and unveiling of the memorial to John. A book shaped design was agreed. Marion supplied a photo of John, taken on his motorbike, to be superimposed in the polished granite. The wording of a suitable epitaph and short poem were agreed, and these, together with the photo and the other crests were given to a local memorial company for inclusion on the open pages of the book. The end result is a very fitting memorial to one who was a much valued Club member.

On a sunny summer Saturday, a dignified roadside ceremony filled with feeling and emotion was conducted by former Garda, Fr John Kearns, a long time friend of John and Marion and of many members of the Motorcycle Club. Marion then formally unveiled the black granite memorial bearing the photo of John on his bike, the Crests of An Garda Síochána, the IPAGMC, the IPA and Route 66 together with a map of Ireland and the following inscription;



Mariann unveils Plaque to her late husband John

*In fond memory of
Garda John Naughton Omeath.
Tragically died at this spot
on 21st July 2006.
Always remembered by his Family,
Friends, Colleagues and Clubmates.
Ar deis Dé go raibh sé".*

On the opposite page a poem reads
*Ride on John, Ride safe
Ride into the wings and peace of God
Gone, but not forgotten.*

Marion then gently laid a floral wreath at the spot in memory of her late husband. Following the ceremony, Marion spoke poignantly of her great loss and thanked the members of the Motorcycle Club and the Gardai for their support and thoughtfulness.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity of speaking with Marion as she told me how, over the past year, life had changed utterly

for herself and eight year old Séan. There have been many trying times in that year, she said, but there have been some very special moments too, especially those when John is spoken of in a very special way by Séan. Marion is sometimes amazed at the grown up attitude of her eight year old son and the way in which he has coped with the loss of his dad. As Marion put it, there are times when it seems as if John is just sitting there right next to Séan. She doesn't know what the future holds but emphasises that her concern at this time is Séan's wellbeing, education and development, or as she put it, everything she does now is for Séan.

Marion insisted that I mention the great help and support that she has received from the members of the IPAGMC and from her local Gardaí, all of whom have played a big part in the way in which she has been able to deal with the life changing events of the past year. Marion paid special tribute to IPAGMC President Stephen O'Sullivan and IPAGMC Vice President Trevor Moore for their continuing support.

The tragedy in Marion's life has not embittered her in any; this was evident in the compassionate way she spoke of the other family involved in the accident and whose lives were directly affected by the tragedy of her husband's death. In expressing such genuine feelings for all concerned Marion has shown true Christian Spirit and real strength of character.

I must say that from an IPA perspective it is truly gratifying to know that the great camaraderie that we speak of so often within our Association is still very much part and parcel of every day police life and that when the occasion demands our members and colleagues are never found wanting. We take this opportunity of conveying our continued support to Marion and Séan.

You can view the photographs taken on the day of the memorial unveiling in the IPAGMC website at www.ipagmc.com



Fr John Kearns leads the group in prayer at the unveiling ceremony



Memorial to John Naughton in form of Granite Book



An IPAGMC group with Rev. Fr John Kearns at the ceremonial