

Western People

Wednesday, November 21, 2007:

Attymass PO closes its doors for last time

THE last letter was stamped and the last stamp licked on Friday in Attymass as the Post Office closed its doors after being in the Hughes family for the last 103 years.

Ted and Beattie Hughes, who have worked in the post office since 1970, were understandably sad to see the doors closing and a centre of Attymass life coming to an end. "We will miss the social side of the post office the most.

People are always calling in and staying for a chat or a cup of tea - maybe something stronger at Christmas," Beattie said. Ted's grandmother Bridget Hughes began working in the Attymass Post Office in 1904 and it was she who served the very first old age pension on January 1, 1909 to a local man Seamus O'Rua. In 1926 Ted's father took over the running of the Post Office and in 1933 it moved to its present location where Ted began helping his father in 1956 and then took over the running of it in 1970 with Beattie.

Married for 44 years Ted and Beattie have raised six children in the house which doubles as a Post Office and as I sit at their kitchen table some of their eight grandchildren are running around the house which is still a hive of activity.

"I remember we were the centre of village life at one time with people calling in all the time to find out the latest news - people used to say 'If you don't know nobody knows'." Ted and Beattie admit that it is now a lot quieter in the Post Office and although the closure is a voluntary one on their part they feel that it would have been only a matter of time before the Post Office would have been closed anyway." Since 1970 we have had to be here Monday to Friday from nine to five no matter what and that meant a lot of planning if we needed a day off. We have made a lot of really good friends here and they were always on hand if we needed someone to look after the children", Beattie said. Beattie remembers. It has been a lot of responsibility for the couple who handled up to 60 pensions and countless telegrams during there years in charge of the Post Office. There was a tough side to working in the Post Office too. Ted remembers a lot of hard days when he had to call to some of his

neighbours delivering messages about a death in the family or some other sad news.

“While we definitely had tough jobs to do we also had the pleasure of delivering messages about births and marriages so they balanced out the tougher times,” Ted commented. While Ted and Beattie are genuinely sad to be leaving the job they have made some great friends through the Post Office and are looking forward to having time to themselves to travel and see their grandchildren grow up.