John Creedon’s The Road Less Travelled visits multi-cultural Balbriggan

Episode Three – Dublin to Belfast, RTÉ 1, 6.30pm Sunday August 5th

John Creedon visited Balbriggan in June as part of his The Road Less Travelled show and you can see the programme on RTE1 at 6.30pm on Sunday August 5th. Motoring on three different routes and avoiding the motorway infrastructure, John Creedon travels the scenic landscapes and streetscapes and brings to life the stories that lie beneath the tarmac and fields along the road less travelled. This week John travels from Dublin to Belfast and his first stop is in Balbriggan, where he visits a Pentecostal church and the “Taste of the Nations’ Food Fair” at the Balbriggan Summerfest. The town was basking in glorious sunshine on the day of his visit so the views should be great.

The day began with John attending his first Pentecostal mass and chatting to Pastor Elizabeth. Elizabeth is originally from Nigeria and for the last 8 years she has been living in Balbriggan, which she loves. She is a preacher in ‘The Redeemed Christian Church of God’ which is a Pentecostal church and denomination founded in Lagos, Nigeria and is one of the many new churches to come to Balbriggan in recent years. Pastor Elizabeth says the “Penticostal Church is not a religion it is a way of life. I say God says “I have come to give you life and in my absence the Holy Spirit will take care of you” – that is the doctrine of the church.”
The next stop on John's journey is the Balbriggan Summerfest which is in full swing during his visit. Here he rolls up his sleeves to help serve food with Balbriggan Integration Forum's Betsy Abu at the multi-cultural Taste of the Nations' Food Fair which is part of the festival. This initiative sees members of the community bring along their native food dishes to share with the public. The food fair featured foods from 10 different countries: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan, Poland, Ukraine, the Philippines, Ethiopia and Libya. Ireland was also represented with crisp sandwiches a popular choice!

Betsy Abu, who has recently won a Mayor's award for her work in the Community, came to Balbriggan from Sierra Leone 13 years ago where she works with Balbriggan Integration Forum and lives with her husband Joseph and son Patrick and daughter Emma. Speaking about the food fair she says sharing and eating food together is a great way to meet your community “as straight away when you share food people ask, What is in this? Where does it come from?...and before you know it you have made a new friend” Balbriggan Integration Forum, a voluntary body that aims to promote social, cultural, educational and economic integration, insofar as possible, by addressing common needs through creative responses that will lead to improved access to services, support systems and community facilities within the area.

Balbriggan Summerfest, which celebrated its 10th Anniversary this year is a week-long community event which aims to promote the town of Balbriggan and build on the business, civic and community spirit, come together as a community and showcase all that Balbriggan has to offer. If features Fireworks, Carnival and Family Fun Day, Live Music, Vintage Fair and Historical Walk, Balbriggan's Got Talent, Tastes of the Nation's Food Fair, The Great Balbriggan Bake Off, Summerfest 5k Road Race, Pet Show, Sandcastle Competition, Blessing of the Boats, Senior Citizen's Tea Party and Bingo, and most importantly a great opportunity for the Balbriggan community to enjoy their town and meet and get to know their neighbours.

Deputy Mayor of Fingal, Cllr Grainne Maguire, commented: "It is great to have Balbriggan featured on this programme, and we were delighted that the visit coincided with the Summerfest when the people of Balbriggan, young and old and of every nationality were enjoying this community event together in the glorious sunshine. I have been involved with Summerfest from the beginning and it is wonderful to see Balbriggan's new multi-cultural community embracing the festival with events like the Tastes of the Nations' Food Fair."

Councillor Maguire, along with Balbriggan Councillors Malachy Quinn and Tony Murphy is part of the Balbriggan Leadership Group who are working with Fingal County Council to develop a long-term socio-economic strategy for Balbriggan. The leadership group will oversee the preparation, drafting and agreement of the strategy which will be finalised and delivered in Autumn 2018 and will include as one of its key elements Community Affairs & Integration.

ENDS

For further information contact Fingal County Council Press Office Press@Fingal.ie