

Muldoon is Named to the Queen's Birthday Honour's List



Maureen Muldoon B.E.M.

Alright, it's not me in the picture and it's certainly not rotomolding but how often do you see a family member honored by The Queen of England? Each year The Queen publishes a list known as her Birthday Honour's list for approximately 2000 people around the United Kingdom who have performed exceptional services. This year, Orla's mother Maureen was mentioned on the list and as a result, we were very happy to be able to attend a recent ceremony in her hometown



Orla's Mother Maureen Muldoon receives the British Empire Medal from Viscount Brookeborough

of Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, where she was recognized for her services to her community and local charities over the last 50+ years. Lord Brookeborough presented her with the British Empire Medal on behalf of Her Majesty and paid tribute to her tireless work with mentally handicapped children (Mencap), the elderly (Help the Aged), the Red Cross, her church and cross-community activities during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. She also served on numerous committees for local hospitals and service providers right up until recently when declining health caused her to slow down...but only just! The ceremony was an intimate affair with her family from England, the US and the local area, members of the police departments who she has worked with for many years and other members of the local community in attendance. Now 87 years old, Maureen regaled the group with tales of her struggles from an early age when she had to leave school to look after her handicapped sister. There was virtually no local support available and she had to essentially create what would eventually become major social services in her home county of Fermanagh. Her proudest achievement has been

an annual event which enabled hundreds of handicapped people to attend an evening of shopping in Enniskillen city center at Christmas time. For 36 years, she organized buses and hundreds of volunteers and worked with a local shopping center to have them devote their entire facility to the group. As she spoke, it became clear that this did not start easily. In the 1970s the situation in Fermanagh was essentially a war between the IRA and British soldiers, but that did not stop her from approaching the local commander of a British army base after noticing that he had a number of unused buses that she felt could be used to help her gather the handicapped from their homes in the surrounding areas. They objected that it would be too dangerous to take the buses out as they might become targets with soldiers driving them. Maureen's solution? She approached both sides of the local clergy and asked them to provide a priest or a minister to travel on each bus and to let their congregations know that there were to be no attacks on these buses! And so it began peacefully and continued for 36 years without a single incident (although it did eventually transfer to using local coach services).

The event sadly had to come to an end a few years ago, not due to war or accident, but due to local Health and Safety officials deeming that access to the local shopping center was too risky because people were volunteering their time and not being paid! Yes, we have people like that in Ireland as well as the US.

All-in-all it was a once in a lifetime event that I am so glad to have been able to attend and very proudly witness Maureen receive the recognition she so richly deserves. Long Live Maureen!

K 2013

The world's megashow for plastics took place recently as suppliers and end-users from around the globe converged on Dusseldorf for K 2013 (K standing for kunststoffe, German for plastics).

Just walking around the show is always an undertaking in itself as it is a massive event with over 3000 exhibitors which attracted 220,000 attendees over the course of eight days (think NPE in Chicago and multiply it by 7 or 8 in terms of the area covered). The vast majority of the show is of course blown film, extrusion, injection molding, etc. and many companies have full-scale equipment operating. It may not be directly related to rotomolding but it is fascinating and inspiring to see the speed at which thermoforming and injection molding equipment can operate (with cycle times controlled to tenths of a second) and the complexity of components made for the automotive industry (for example, dashboard panels with soft skins, foamed backing and injection molded reinforced structures all combined automatically in a single mold cavity). You have to walk far to find the 20 or so companies related to rotomolding but it is worth it to catch up with friends and see how the industry is doing. A few rotomolding suppliers have had operating equipment at previous shows but it was only Persico SpA who had an operating machine on display on this occasion. Their new Smart machine concept using direct electrical heating and interchangeable molds offers some interesting possibilities in terms of increased productivity and the ability to produce technical parts.

Only two rotomolders, both from Germany (Aricon, Goebels), had displays at the show but there was a good representation of machine makers from Italy (Caccia, Polivinil) and India in particular (Clips Poly, Fixopan, MPlast, NA Roto, Reinhardt) and there were a number of mold makers, pulverizer, graphics and material suppliers as well. It is not a major event for rotomolding but the feedback from most of the exhibitors was positive with good traffic and good quality enquiries. Some of the machine suppliers had exceptionally busy stands – always a good sign for the future! ■

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