

## FROM GERMANY AND FRANCE » VISITED WORKSHOP

# Tourists travel 2,000km to pay a visit to entrepreneurial brothers in Loughanure

## Donegal Pens attract visitors to the Lower Rosses

BY SEÁN P. FEENEY

The two West Donegal brothers behind the growing business venture Donegal Pens recently received surprise visits from mainland Europe.

When Loughanure's entrepreneurial brothers Ronan and Conor McGarvey were recently filmed for a documentary to be screened on the French/German TV network ARTE, never did they expect the would receive visitors who had travelled 2,000km to meet them.

Ronan (15) and Conor (12) have welcomed visitors from Germany and France to their workshop in Loughanure over the past week.

The first to arrive over the weekend were the Kastens from Boeblingen in Germany who had seen the boys on the documentary.

The couple had organised a trip to Ireland this year but had made no plans on travelling to Donegal until they saw the boys on featured on television.

On their arrival in Donegal their first destination was the Donegal Pens workshop in Loughanure. When they got to Annagry they went to the post office, iPad in hand showing the clerk the Donegal Pens website, looking for directions.

As it happened Ronan had just been to the post office in Annagry to post packages off the Germany and so the post clerk ran out and caught him just before he left.

On their way to the workshop the couple stopped off at Moore's Shop Loughanure to purchase pens from the local outlet and then Ronan and Conor gave them a demonstration at Donegal Pens headquarters.

The couple said they had one main thing on their agenda, after seeing the ARTE TV programme, was to 'call and shake hands with the brothers at all costs'.

### MEET

"We just had to come and meet them after seeing them on TV in Germany. The boys are just fabulous, at just 15 and 12 years they have great talent and a better future," said Manfred Kasten.

"It's unbelievable that two young schoolboys have set up their own business to produce such lovely pens that are all made to a high standard. We travelled over 2,000km to come here to meet them and it was well worth it," he added.

Meanwhile on Monday of this week the boys had another surprise visit from a French family who again watched them on TV in France.

The Youlette family from the La Mans region also decided before leaving France for an Irish holiday that they had to come and meet the young brothers.

The couple, Jean Louis and Veronique, and their two sons, Valentin and Theo, also aged 15 and 12, watched as Ronan and Conor crafted some of their pens and were delighted to get to see the boys for real at work in their workshop.

Ronan said he never expected to have an international audience as they crafted their pens but was delighted that people though so much of their work to travel so far to come and see them.

"We do get locals calling in now and again but to think these people travelled so far just to see us at work and wish us well is just unbelievable.

"Since we featured on the ARTE network in France and Germany we have been kept very busy and some companies in Germany have also placed orders.

"We never thought for one minute the German and French people would be so taken with our pens but they really love them. We have received some very nice e-mail from people who have received their orders," he said.



Ronan and Conor McGarvey with the Youlette family from France at the Donegal pens workshop in Loughanure and below Ronan pictured with the Kastens from Boeblingen, Germany

