

ANOTHER SUNDAY WORLD EXCLUSIVE

LORRAINE KEANE



'I'll cry every day in Haiti - but if I can help, it'll be worth it'



SKILLED: Conor McGarvey hard at work making pens on his lathe

# MAKING A WRITE PACKET

Young brothers turn their wood-turning hobby into a highly successful business

MEET Conor and Ronan McGarvey, the youngest businessmen in Ireland.

At the tender age of just 10 and 13, the brothers are already running a successful company from their home in west Donegal.

While most kids their age are still pleading with their parents for extra pocket money, the brothers already have €2,000 profit from making handcrafted wooden pens.

And even though they have not yet reached 5ft tall, the boys have their feet firmly on the ground and have started reinvesting in tools for their business.

The boys fell in love with woodwork after visiting a craft fair just over a year ago.

Dad Eoin said: "A wood turner called Geoff Tulip was doing a demonstration and let them have a go. They made two pens each.

**Response**

"Then they kept asking, 'Dad, can we get a lathe?' I thought it would be a four week wonder which would wear off but it didn't and weeks later they were still on at me to buy one."

Postman Eoin bought a €280 lathe and a set of specialised chisels for €200.

The boys began trying to make bowls but eventually settled on pens after their father bought them the internal pen kits.

They began attending craft fairs and their pens got a great response. Demand has exploded recently and they have now sold nearly 700 presentation sets, largely on their own website [www.donegalpens.com](http://www.donegalpens.com) for €15.95 each.

Nearby Glenveagh National Park and local craft shops sell them too.



COLLECTOR'S ITEM: One of the boys' handcrafted wooden pens

By JIM GALLAGHER

The boys do all the work themselves. Working from a shed in the garden of their Loughanure home in the Donegal Gaeltacht, the lads' unique pens are made in bog oak, yew, ash, elm, beech, pine, sycamore, cherrywood and walnut. They also import olive tree wood from Jerusalem on the internet.

Dad Eoin, who admits he couldn't hammer a nail in straight, says the boys must have taken after their handyman uncle Dinny.

"They have gameboys like all the other kids but they have always preferred to be outdoors."

He said

WORK: Success for Conor and Ronan



his sons would spend hours in the workshop over the weekends and might do three hours after finishing their homework on school days.

"I sent off 62 orders for them this morning in the post. One to New Zealand, two to Norway, two to Florida and a few to the UK but most were around Ireland."

**Business**

The boys are the youngest members of the Irish Woodturners Guild and get great encouragement from their peers when they attend the monthly meetings in Stranorlar.

Now the big question is whether the tax man is going to get them.

"I informed the tax office about their business just to make sure.

Even they were stunned saying it was not something they had come across before," said dad Eoin.

They have already spent €320 upgrading their lathe last weekend.

The boys, who have two sisters Aine (7) and Aoife (12), also plan to spoil themselves by buying a quad bike.

Because boys will be boys after all.

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