

# PENS A SELLER FOR RO & CONOR

By PADDY CLANCY

**MEET the INK-dustrious schoolboys who'll soon be writing big cheques — with their own handmade wooden pens.**

Ronan McGarvey, 13, and his ten-year-old brother Conor, from Loughanure, Co Donegal, have turned a hobby they learned only a year ago into a recession-busting business.

The enterprising siblings produce high-quality ballpoint quills in their garden shed and plan to sell them all over the world in prized gift sets.

Every evening after their homework, they clock in for a lathe shift where they make pens from a wide selection of Irish timber including bog oak, yew, ash, elm and beech.

Every implement they produce is unique, receiving personal attention from start to finish.

Each one is individually turned, polished, waxed and then carefully examined to ensure perfection.

## Exciting

Ronan, a second-year at Dungloe Community College, explained: "When we get the pens turned down so far on the lathe we examine them to be sure everything is looking OK."

"Now and again we will have a slip-up, but if we make a mistake then we'll know next time not to."

"The first one we made was very exciting as we really didn't have a clue what we were at, but it worked out OK."

The pens are already on sale at a variety of craft centres in Donegal, retailing for €15.95 and €17.95.

The boys have drafted a blueprint to roll them out around Ireland and the UK soon, then they'll let their donegalpens.com website do the rest when they're ready to go global.

The brothers developed an interest in the craft of woodturning during a weekend away in August 2009 at a craft fair in Co Antrim.

They loved it straight away and spent every available hour in their garden workshop.

Their mum Marie explained: "They were run off their feet all through the summer holidays trying to meet demand."

"Now they're off at eight in the morning on the bus to school but they are in the shed each evening at their pens again as soon as the homework is done."

The brothers, sons of local postman and journalist Eoin McGarvey, use velvet or leatherette finished boxes as part of a classy presentation.

They also supply a small information card indicating the type of wood used and the process involved.

Ronan added: "Most of the wood is easy enough to get, but the bog oak is not that easy and is usually a good bit more expensive."

"Yew is very popular as our hometown Loughanure — Loch an Iúir — is named after the yew tree, but it can be hard enough to come by."

They keep an eye out for trees that have fallen or are being cut down.

Although they're still learning the different types of wood by looking at them, they are getting the grasp of what's good and what's not.

Conor, who's in fifth class, said: "People have been very good telling us about fallen trees. Recently a big ash tree was cut down near us and that would give us a long-term supply."

● THE lads will feature on Nationwide, RTE1, at 7pm today. [irishsun@the-sun.ie](mailto:irishsun@the-sun.ie)



Class act . . Ronan and Conor in their garden workshop

# Brothers made of write stuff



Making a write fortune . . crafty Conor turning pens, above, and, right, Ronan at work on the lathe. Left, one of the lads' handmade elm products



## 10% more beat Big C

THE cancer survival rate in Ireland has soared by nearly ten per cent since 2000, it's been revealed.

And more victims are expected to beat the killer disease over the next ten years, a Dublin conference was told on Saturday.

Dr Seamus O'Reilly, from Cork University College Cork said there are about 110,000 people alive and well five years after being diagnosed.

He also told the meeting that four out of five women with breast cancer beat it.

Dr O'Reilly said early diagnosis and medical advances are the main factors for the welcome trend.

## Porn biro blunder

PUPILS at a primary school were accidentally given pens decorated with pictures of naked women.

Kids at the Adolf Reichwein School in Berlin were each given a cone by the German Communist Party.

They are usually filled with sweets, but contained the blue bios on this occasion.

The GCP said they had purchased the pens in a discount store, and were told that the writing tools would simply light up when pressed.

A spokesperson said: "We deeply regret what has happened and are outraged."



## HAVE A LAUGH!

I SAW a guy stacking shelves at the local supermarket who was complaining because the top shelf was broken, and he couldn't keep it up. I think he had a wrecked aisle dysfunction.

ALFRED COMMINS Mayo

## Journey's at an end

ONE of Ireland's least-used rail links is to close.

The National Transport Authority agreed with Iarnrod Eireann that the Rosslare to Waterford line — which costs €1.9million a year to run and carries fewer than 50 passengers a day — was no longer viable.

Passenger groups had campaigned for an increase in the service of just two trains per day linking Waterford city to the Rosslare ferry port in county Wexford.

Services are to be suspended later this month, but Iarnrod Eireann must continue to maintain the tracks.