

THE CORRAN HERALD

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ALEC McCABE

1866 - 1972

As a student: he was diligent, with a fondness for learning, winning a scholarship to St. Patrick's Training College, Dublin and achieving a teacher's diploma at U.C.D.

As a teacher: he was unsurpassed, loved and respected by both pupil and parent who boycotted the N.S. at Drumnagranchy when he was dismissed as a result of his involvement with the Republican movement.

As elected Sinn Fein member of Parliament and of the first Dail formed in 1918, he was a most prominent and active member, suffering imprisonment and abuse in the fight for the freedom of his beloved country.

As one of the founder member of the E.B.S. the first building Society open to the members of the general public he gave generously of his time, unpaid and with a mere £20 for annual expenses. A brief introduction to a man who was born in Keash in 1866 and who went on to become one of the best known figures in Irish history during the troubled years 1914 - 1922 and finally becoming a highly respected businessman in Dublin's business circles.

HIS EARLY LIFE

Alasdair McCabe received his primary education in a humble one roomed school in Keash. He continued his education at Summerhill College, Sligo where he developed a great love for reading history books, a love that was nurtured by Father Michael O'Flanagan, the patriot priest employed there at the time. A boy with great intellectual ability he won a scholarship to St. Patrick's Training College in Dublin, and it was here that his interest in the Sinn Fein movement was born.

His training completed, he returned as principal of Drumnagranchy N.S. where he remained for six years. He was an outstanding teacher of maths, history and English, borne out to this day by a former pupil, now over 80 years, Mrs. Bridget Kielty reciting the complete speech of Shakespeare's Hamlet 'To be, or not to be, that is the question; and many mathematical theorems and definitions.

In 1913 he was selected to study for a diploma in Education at U.C.D. and this gave him the opportunity of being present at the inaugural meeting

cont. page 2.

1st Anniversary Issue

With this issue, the Corran Herald celebrates its first anniversary. During the year it has established for itself a readership of about 700 per issue. It has proved to be a popular paper whose every appearance is eagerly anticipated and the Heritage Group is proud of its success.

During this first year the paper has concentrated very largely on items of a heritage interest. Very special thanks is due to those authors who have contributed so generously and so extensively to its pages. We look forward to continuing contributions.

We would like to also publish items of current topical interest each month. We again invite all local organisations to use the paper as a platform in which to advertise their activities and their plans and dreams for the future. Letters from individuals would also be welcome.

We thank our advertisers. Without their generous support the paper could not exist.

We ask you the reader for your continued support. We promise you plenty of interesting material and wish you many hours of happy reading.

ALEC MCCABE

cont. from page 1.

of the Irish Volunteers in the Rotunda on November 25th 1913. He was also active in canvassing for Dr. Patrick McCartan, who with the later president of Ireland Mr. Sean T.O'Kelly was the first Sinn Fein member to be elected to Dublin corporation. At this time he first met Arthur Griffiths whose famous pamphlet "The Resurrection of Hungary" had already been a great inspiration to him, enhancing his sense of nationality and the need to fight for Irish Freedom.

ACTIVITY IN THE VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT

On completion of his diploma course in Dublin Alec McCabe returned to his native Keash where he became actively involved in recruiting new members for the Irish Volunteer.

In 1914 he was elected a member of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. In swearing in volunteers no diary could be kept for fear of being discovered so Alec depended on his memory to record the various heads of centres he had sworn in. This was made easier by the fact that he was a member of the Sligo County team G.A.A. circles. Because of this involvement Alec McCabe was dismissed from his post as teacher by the parish priest in 1913. However the parents of the children attending the school decided to boycott in support of their teacher and within a few weeks he was reinstated by none other than the Bishop of Achonry himself, Dr. Morrisoe.

Pictured from left:

Prof. John Carroll, D.Sc., Chairman E.B.S.
Mr. Alasdair McCabe, former Secretary & Managing Director E.B.S.
Dr. J. J. Hogan, President U.C.D.

MAY 1970



At: Presentation of cheque for "The Alasdair McCabe Prize" at School of Architecture UCD

THE FIRST OF MANY PRISON SENTENCES

In the summer of 1915 Alec McCabe went to a merchant in Sligo to purchase gelignite following a directive from I.R.B. headquarters in Dublin. He had dealt with this merchant for many years, frequently buying fishing tackle and catridges. He ordered a few stone of gelignite and told the proprietor he wanted it for fishing. "It was too much to order at one time, it was stupid" in Alec's own later words. Alec trusted his merchant of long standing although of a different persuasion and did not expect that he would report him to the police. However he did just that and as a result Alec was arrested at Sligo station with a Gladstone bag of gelignite in his possession.

He spent a few weeks in Sligo prison. No comrade came near him or communicated with him during these weeks because the police authorities circled a rumour that he was suspected German spy, and it was being suggested that the I.R.B. was being bought over by the Germans. The Great War (1914 1918) was going on in Europe at this time. In an interview to the Irish Press 5th May 1970 Alec McCabe spoke of conditions in prison and society in the early days of the revolutionary movement (1915) for the benefit of, and I quote, 'our rising generation'. He said "I slept in a cold cell with a straw mattress and washed out the floor every morning. I had a strange experience at Mass in the prison chapel when I found myself sitting beside a man under sentence of death.

He was an Italian who had murdered his wife. A servant girl assisted him in the murder and she too was under sentence of death in the female section of the prison. I took particular interest in the case as the girls was from Ballymote and her sister was a servant in my in-laws family in that town there were no maids at that period except in the higher echolors of society. In defence to the fact that there was no capital punishment in Italy, the Italian was deported, a gesture intended to strengthen the political entente.

Following this dispensation it was only in the nature of things that his accomplice would be reprieved and I'm happy to say that later I got the poor unfortunate released on ticket of leave on giving a gaurantee that she would get employment in a family that would look after her".

McCabe was transferr-ed to Mountjoy jail pending his trial in Green Street under the British regime. The day of the trial arrived, McCabe was visited in his cell underneath the court by a "G" man from Ballymote who ensured his native people were behind him.

On entering the dock McCabe's neighbours from Keash and surrounding areas waved to their comrade and later when called to the witness box had no moral inhibitions in presenting a case in favour of McCabe assuring the prosecution that in Keash explosives, such as gelignite were commonly used for killing fish! When badgered by the Counsel for the prosecution his neighbours held firm that they knew nothing of any secret society in their parish.

Besides, they insisted, their priests were against such like and they were good Catholics. The judge named Kenny dismissed the neighbours' evidence and pointed to the Gladstone bag and its contents which McCabe had in his possession at the time of arrest.

The jury resigned and returned a few hours later with a verdict of 'not guilty' much to everyones' amazement, no least McCabe himself. He was even taken back to Mountjoy prison pending a further trial but was released a fortnight later, the British authorities fearing further embarrassment by a second acquittal before a jury of sumpathisers to the case.

Alec McCabe made history on two counts at this period in his life:

1. He was the first Sinn Fein man to be tried in Green Street court.
2. His was the last trial by jury under the British regime. This was milestone on the way to the total collapse of the judicial system in the years following the Easter week rebellion and the taking over of the administration of justice by a native Parliament.

MC CABB ON THE RUN

McCabe lost his teaching post once again in Drum-nagranchy, the government and not his parish priest being responsible for this dismissed. He accepted a post teaching in a technical school in Dublin and at this time,

Spring 1916, he met Sean McDermott, Pearce and Connolly, and plans for the rising were discussed. He returned to Ballymote on learning that a reception had been planned in his honour. He awaited word from his superiors in Dublin and when no word came he took a teacher's job in Killybegs industrial school, as he had no money at all.

On reading the Easter Saturday paper he saw that Casement had been arrested so he carefully made his way to Dublin where Pearce and Connolly told him that the rising had been arranged. McCabe was directed to go down the country and organise the local Sligo Volunteers and disrupt communication throughout the North West: Telegraph communication between Boyle and Sligo, and Sligo and Galway were disrupted and the Sligo-Limerick railway line was made impassable at Tubbercurry.

OBTAINING RIFLES FOR KEASH I.R.B.

As McCabe made his way towards home he was conscious of the need for rifles and ammunition for his Keash comrades. He knew of a place in Tubbercurry where pro-redmondite Volunteers had possession of a number of rifles. He and Joe Kelly drove off from Ballaghaderreen in the direction of Tubbercurry. The car broke down and McCabe sent Kelly back for help. When Kelly didn't return after an hour or so McCabe felt sure luck wasn't on their side and when he saw a car approaching he escaped into the surrounding bogs.

ALEC McCABE cont.

He fell into a bog hole and was lucky to escape with his life. He made his way to a house up in the mountains a safe house where he was helped on the road once again. McCabe collected together a few of the men from Keash, old poachers and the like who did not mind the law at any time Joe Kelly had been questioned on his return to Ballaghaderreen. McCabe managed to obtain half a dozen rifles and so could plan an ambush for the police. This was happening on the Thursday of Easter week in Tubbercurry. The railway lines were disrupted and McCabe with his group remained in ambush waiting for the police, but they never came. News of the surrender reached McCabe the next day and they went on the run, Alec McCabe got married in a midnight ceremony in a country church.

FROM BEING ON THE RUN TO ELECTION AS MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

McCabe came out of hiding during the Roscommon elections of 1917 when he openly campaigned for Count Plunkett, father of the executed Joseph Plunkett, and Joseph McGuinness who was in Lewes jail and whose election was fought with the catch cry of 'Put him in to get him out!'

At this time McCabe perceived the support of the farmers towards the Irish Parliamentary Party due to concession it had won for them. He thereafter encouraged the support of the farmers towards Sinn Fein by taking over lands for conacre.

The farmers were paid half of what they might normally obtain for the land used and with farm produce scarce at the time were enthusiastic in implementing the scheme when good crops were being achieved. This also broke the grip of the Redmondite party on the farmers.

McCabe's freedom was short-lived and in 1917 he was arrested for fundraising. He went on a 30 day hunger strike, the longest held up to that time, and was subsequently released from Mountjoy.

He returned to Keash but was re-arrested on a charge of 'unlawful assembly' in February 1918. This time he was transferred to Lincoln prison where he joined Eamon DeValera, and Terence McSweeney. The transfer came about as a result of the famous 'German Plot'. The plot was an invention of the British who said the I.R.B. were encouraging a German invasion in Ireland.

While still in prison on the slogan of 'Put him in to get him out' Alec McCabe was elected in Sligo as a member of the first Dail by a huge majority. The elected Sinn Fein members were set free and they met triumphant in Dublin to declare the Republic.

THE CIVIL WAR MUTINEERS AND EVENTUAL RESIGNATION

McCabe returned to Keash and continued his work for the farmers and the I.R.B. Westminster never saw him: "We met in Dublin in pursuance of Griffith Policy of abstention"

"He was one of the most prominent and active members of the pre-Truce Dail, and, later on during the Treaty Debate, he spoke very effectively both in public and private sessions", wrote Emmet Blayth, one of his colleagues in the first Dail. About this time he took over the editorship of the 'Irish Yearbook' on the advice of Arthur Griffith.

However he as yet had another prison sentence to serve. In Sept. 1919 he was charged with "Unlawful assembly" and imprisoned for three months. It is not surprising to read that in one of his many interviews he muses, with patriotic pride unconcealed "I have been in nearly every prison in the country except Dundalk".

McCabe was released as there was no direct evidence against him. He returned to his place in the Dail and took part in the treaty discussions it was around the time (1920) the army started to call itself the I.R.A. His anxiety was for a peaceful solution, suggesting that the treaty should not be accepted without an announcement providing for a united Ireland. Realising that this was unlikely McCabe decided to support the treaty. This left McCabe in an awkward position when the Civil war broke out in 1922; he found himself as a justant of the Sligo Division of the Free State forces whilst the majority of his former comrades in the Ballymote I.R.A. took the Republican anti-treaty side. He actually led a company of Free State soldiers to attack the R.I.C. barracks in Ballymote, the barracks being grossly outnumbered

they left the building but set fire to it and McCabe and his soldier had to set up base in the Courthouse. During their occupation of Ballymote he arrested former comrades and friends being forced to do so because of the awesome political situation of that time. One such man was Pa Coleman.

The next even in McCabe's life was to be the cause of his resignation as a member of the Dail. In 1924 there was an "Army mutiny". Certain member of the Dail advocated aggressive action against the mutineers, and at one stage had a meeting place of the mutineers surrounded. Joe McGrath intervened and promised the mutineers that if they surrendered peacefully he would ensure the resignation of a number of Dail members.

So it was that McCabe General Mulcahy by the minister of defence, Gearoid O'Sullivan the Adjutant-General resigned, not in sympathy with the mutineers but to avert a second Civil War far more bloody and bitter than the other.

Alec McCabe ceased to take an active part in politics after 1924. He must surely have felt completely dejected after his innumerable battles, prison sentences, loss of his career and no doubt countless sacrifices had made in his lengthy fight for the independence of his homeland which he greatly loved.

OTHER INTERESTS

One would be forgiven in assuming that Alec McCabe had little or not time for other interests in his already busy schedule. This was not the case however.

As a true Irish man he loved all aspects of our culture and heritage. He had been a member of the Sligo County team and played matches at a time when there was a ban on all such fixtures. He was Vice-President of the Sligo Rovers' Sports association of Ireland.

Whatever a Sligo team played in Dublin McCabe would be there shouting his support. He also gave generously of his time and finances to the Sligomen's Association in Dublin.

A lifelong friend of the farmer he was one of the founder members of the North West Regional Co-operative Society and was in no small measure responsible for the erection in Ballymote of one of the finest Cattle Mart buildings in the west of Ireland.

The list of Alec McCabes good deeds is endless. Innumerable people and causes are indebted to him. Keash, Ballymote Sligo, I go so far as to include all of Ireland should be proud of him. Some of you are lucky enough to have known him.

Yes he was a man for the people. He could boast of having provided 18,000 people with their own homes on land that he had shed blood for. He loved his country, his native homeland and its people and worked selfishly for the best part of his life for the cultural and economic benefit of all of us.

Alec McCabe died two years after his retirement at the age of 85. He is survived by his wife Norrie, son Alasdair and three daughters Maeve, Una and Shiela.

Narrative by
Patricia McNally

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Looking Back Through The Ages in KEASH & CULFADDA

Keash and Culfadda date back to the dawn of history. According to legend Ireland's first Ard Ri, Cormac Mac Airt, the son of a Keash bondswoman, was reared by a shee wolf in the caves. The story goes that his daughter Grainne eloped with Diarmaid, and after many encounters with the enemy arrived safely in Keash only to be pursued and later discovered by the viate Fionn MacCumhaill. It was from Keash that Diarmaid set out on the ill fated boar hunt which ended at Benbulbin. Diarmaid's son by Grainne was fostered in a swinehead's crannog on Templevanny lake.

The battle of Keash which was fought in 971 between the Northern and the men of Connacht marked a victory for the foreigner. According to the Book of Ballymote all those who fell were interred at "**Easpaig Luighigh**"

which has been identified as the old church of Toomour. The graves of the Kings alongside the ruins of the church are reputed to contain the remains of four Kings and seven princes.

Convenient to the ruins of this early monastic establishment is "**Kingstone Well**". The water it is said sprang up when Gill MacMorna of the Fianna let a large boulder drop on the spot from the top of Keash. When a plague stalked the local countryside, a monk from the nearby monastery of Toomour cured thousands of people with the ice cold water from this holy well. According to tradition there were stations performed there ever after at Easter.

After the Norman conquest of the area in the 13th Century the Red Earl of Ulster built a road linking Ballymote Castle to Boyle Abbey. This road crossed the Curlews and became known as "**The Red Earls Road**". In the next century, when the Red Earl lost his grip on the countryside the MacDonaghs assumed the lordship of the area and established themselves as a family independent of the McDermotts who owned the lands on the other side of the Curlews. At this time the lands of the present day parish

were granted to the Monks of Boyle as an extension of the estate that they had from the MacDermotts.

Tadhg MacDonagh was appointed as steward of these abbey lands. Tadhg and his sons built a residence, a church and a guard house in the area. It became known as "**Teampall A'Mhanaigh**"

(Templevanny) and ever after Tadhg became known as Tadhg "**Manach**". They were not welcome in the area, and the local people resented the heavier dues and task work which Tadhg and the abbey of Boyle demanded. The thieves of the Curlews and Brishla ambushed the cattle and grain when Tadhg was carrying them to Boyle. Tadhg's reply was to increase the number of his guards and the severity of his punishments. Because of his flowing red hair, the locals called him "**Manach Rua**", and when the Norman Lords and their sheriffs and bailiffs disappeared after the Bruce campaign, the courts and judges passed into oblivion. It was then the "**Manach Rua**" became supreme arbiter in all causes lay and spiritual. He quenched altar candles, and he quenched life as he had a mind to, and the journey from "**Teampall A'Mhanaigh**" to the gallows at "**Ciocan na Croiche**" opposite the caves in the hill of Keash became a "**Via Dolorosa**" for his enemies. Travellers had to remove their hats when approaching the church, Widowers had to come to him for judgement on their knees, and later they crept on their knees to the gallows. The territory ruled by this tyrant was called "**Duthaigh na Monach**" being monks' land belonging to the abbey of Boyle.

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Looking back through the ages in Keash and Culfadda

His word was law in his day, and for the slightest offence one could be imprisoned in his prison house at Templevanny or hanged at "Crocán na Crociche". He is buried in Templevanny churchyard under the Long Stone,

His son succeeded him and he and his followers got the Abbot of Boyle to obtain from the pope the reservation to Cistercian monks of the vicarage of the the parish and they them secured for their friends the stewardships of the lands of Kilshalvey and Rathmullen.

We must remember that at this time the lay lords of the territories instructed themselves or their clerical relatives into all the important ecclesiastical offices. These lay lords administered the abbey lands mainly for their own benefit and often without regard to the interests of religion. If an unpopular abbot were

chosen by the pope the abbey lands would be siezed by the supporters of the disappointed candidate. The wealthy monasteries had thus left the country without even the bones of a clerical organisation based on a secular priesthooa. The ruling Lords of the 16th century remained passive in their attitude to the reformation philosophy of Martin Luther and Henry Tudor, while there was a hope of them gaining the lands of the dissolved monasteries. The lands of Boyle Abbey which included this parish at the time were granted in 1586 to Patrick Cusack. The efforts of the Counter reformation were now being felt in the area and the pope was insisting that ecclesiastics should not commit simony, or lead scandalous lives or unlawfully usurp or retain the fruits of Church living.

It was at this time that they lay abbots ceased to be appointed, and a holy monk, an ornament of the Cistercian order, and the flory of all Erin

was appointed abbot of Boyle Abbey. In 1580 this abbot and two other monks from the abbey were captured and brought to Dublin for questioning. "though you should offer me the prinedom of England, I would not forfeit my eternal reward" the abbot told his enterrogators. They were martyred for their stance, and this is the final indicaton of that spirit of resistance later to culminate in the counter reformation which saved Ireland for Catholicism. Henceforth anyone accepting high office in the Church could expect no worldly rewards. The worldly minded were automatically weeded out of the ranks of the priesthood, and those who entered the church faced torture, persecution and death. By 1585 the lands of the parish were recorded as belonging to the Queen in the right of the Abbey of Boyle. The State and the State Church under Queen Elizabeth held the winning hand, and through indifference or jealousy or for personal gain, any number of local inhabitants could be found to swear away tne lands of locals to the Queen and the lands of the priests to the Prot-estant Bishop.

In the aftermath of the Cromwellian plantat- ion (1653) the lands of this parish were owned by Richard Phibbs. The Phibbs family proliferated all over the county. Richard Harlow a local landlord in Rathmullen married one of Richard Phibbs daughters and another one of them married James Knott of Batlefield. A grandson of James Knott marched from Batlefield in 1798 to intercept Humbert and his men on their way to Sligo. Captain Knott was killed in a skirmish at Tubbercurry. cont page 9

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Battle of the Curlew Mountains

In the summer of 1599, O'Connor Sligo holding the Castle Collooney for the English was besieged by Hugh Roe O'Donnell ('Red Hugh', the scourge of the stranger and the pride of Tyrconnell) a man who in his lifetime never knew defeat. The English decided to send relief to O'Connor. Sir Conyers Clifford, the Governor of Connaught set out from Galway with 2,500 men, but O'Donnell became aware of his plans and prepared for attack. He assembled his troops, some 2000 men, on the northern slopes of the Curlew mountains around Ballnafad. Brian Og O'Rourke was encamped at Doonaveeragh nearby with a lesser number of men.

O'Donnell expected to join the battle with Clifford's forces on August 15th Feast of Our lady and, in preparation for the coming event, he and all his men went to Confession and received Holy Communion early on the morning of the expected battle. Then O'Donnell assembled his forces at Ballaghboy and addressed them in the Irish tongue and this is what he said in the course of that memorable speech (I quote):- "We should trust to the great dispenser of eternal justice, to the dreadful avenger of inequity and oppression, the success of our just and righteous cause he had already doomed to destruction these assassins who have butchered our wives and children, plundered us of our properties, set fire to our habitations, demolished our Churches and monasteries and changed the face of Ireland into a wild uncultivated desert. On this day more particularly, I trust to heaven for protection a day dedicated to the Greatest of all Saints, whom these enemies to all religion endeavour to vilify - a day on which we have purified our consciences to defend honestly the cause of justice against men whose hands are reeking with blood, and who, not content with driving us from our native plains, come to hunt us like

Bat J. Keaney Commdt., (ret)

wild beasts into the mountains of Doonaveeragh. But What ! I see that you have no patience to hear a word more ! Brave Irishmen ! You burn for revenge. Scorning the advantage of the impregnable position let us rush down, and show the world that guided by the Lord of Life and Death, we exterminated these oppressors of the human race. He who falls will fall gloriously, fighting for justice, for liberty and for his country, his name shall be remembered while there is an Irishman on the face of the earth; and he who survives will be pointed to as the companion of O'Donnell, and the defender of his country. The congregation shall make way for him to the Altar, saying "that hero fought at Doonaveeragh." Fight bravely now while you have your bodies at liberty, and your weapons in your hands, for if you lose this day's battle you will be deprived of your arms, and your bodies shall be confined in dungeons and bound in fetters" (end of quote).

O'Donnell now proceeded to deploy his forces. Scouts and advance posts were concealed on the heavily wooded slopes overlooking Boyle. His reserves and the main body concentrated on both slopes commanding the Pass astride the Sligo Roscommon boundary in the townlands of Ballaghboy in Sligo, Sheegory and Garrow in Roscommon, through which wound the Red Earls Road built by the Danes. The particular section where O'Donnell's main attack took place was then known as the Yellow Pass. Incidentally all this area was then heavily wooded. Having reached Boyle, Clifford decided to push on immediately and cross the Curlews into Sligo well before dark. O'Donnell's scouts and advanced posts harassed their passage from the moment Clifford's troops started to ascend the slopes and, late that evening as they were

about to gain the summit, men tramp worn and battle weary, and horses stampeding, O'Donnell's main forces attacked. O'Rourke who had camped on the slopes of Doonaveeragh attracted by the noise of the fray, marched with all haste to O'Donnell's aid and after a sharp battle, the English were routed, 1,400 of their men slain, including their brave General Sir Conyers Clifford. Unlike the remainder of his officers and troops who turned tail and fled in disorder, he gallantly continued to advance and was mown down by O'Donnell's advancing forces. The Irish were sorry for Clifford's death, they had his body buried in the Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Lough Ce and built a stone Cairn on the spot where he fell. There it stands to this day, unnoticed in a pasture field in the townland of Garrow just behind where Deerpark National School had once stood. Cannon-Ball and other implements of war are still being unearthed in the immediate battle area.

God's Little Children

The short-lived day of
impish deeds is o'er
And now the little mind
is full of mystic lore;
And as the passing scenes
are re-enacted there,
A precious thought's supreme
in that Christ-like mind
so fair:
The Cherub lips do speak
in soft refrain
"God bless you Mammy
for the little train".
The little hands are clasped
in quiet repose
As angels flock around
that little bed
With heavenly thoughts
that a sweet child's mind
just knows.

by Stan Casey.

Keash & Culfadda

These local landlords lived in what the locals referred to as the "Big House". Life in the area revolved around the "Big House" while the local peasants hovel consisted of mud walls, thatched or bog sod for a roof, straw on the floor for a bed for all.

In 1832 there was a bad outbreak of cholera in the area and corpses were covered in pitch to prevent the disease spreading. If a person died out of doors (No matter how) everyone passing threw a stone at the spot until a pile grew up there. When a sick person died his bed, if he had one, was taken out and burned.

The local people were compelled to work for the landlord and were paid the equivalent of 3p per day in today's money without meals. Many local accounts testify of the harsh manner in which the landlords treated their tenants. Arthur Young's "Towns in Ireland" wrote of the people, "The common people are so amazingly addicted to thieving everything they can lay their hands on that they will unshoe horses in the fields". They are also liars from the cradle but are wonderfully cunning and artful".

There was no variety of food in those days, potatoes, milk oaten bread and an occasional herring being the only diet. The pig was the gentleman who paid the rent and the cow provided the only beverage.

O Carolan the bard was a regular visitor to the landlord's house. The bard was on day travelling from Culfadda to Rathmullen when he met Shane Harlow of Rathmullen.

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Harlow knew of O Carolans weakness towards the bottle and gave the poet plenty to drink. Soon he was in a drunken state and composed a lyric on Harlow's hospitality. When the poet sobered up some time afterwards he was so annoyed with himself for prouising such an unjust landlord that he composed a stinging poem against himself.

The poor peasants lived in abject poverty, and as well as having to pay rent to the local landlord, they also paid health money and window taxes. In "Griffith Valuation" one comes across names which mean more than history to the present inhabitants.

They of course are the ancestors of the present occupiers of the holdings. What a contrast the one room hovel makes with the comfortable farm house and out offices of today. On the south side of the parish peasants gazed in amazement as the first train travelled from Sligo to Longford in 1862. The place of worship was then a mud walled thatched chapel and was situated in the townland

of Lisconvy. Some time late a fine stone building was erected in Kiltytighe. This of course was converted into a community hall in 1958 when the present very beautiful church was blessed and opened by the Bishop of Achonry.

Towards the end of 1840's emigration became rampant in the area. Many who could afford the passage money left the port of Sligo in "Coffin Ships" which did a thriving trade in exportin cargoes of human beings. The crossing to America took six weeks and the fare of £2 gave the traveller a passage and fresh water. The emigrant provided his own food which consisted of oatmeal cakes and blighted potatoes. It was no wonder that the people who were left behind in 1879 flocked in their hundreds to Gurteen to a land league meeting at which Micahel Davitt told them that he would ensure that the land of Ireland was for the people of Ireland. Landlordism was soon to end, a new dawn was approaching.

by John Higgins N.T. Culfadda

THE BATTLE OF COLLOONEY

The Battle of Collooney

1. Report by Sligo Champion

2. Its lasting impressions on an 8 year old girl

July 22nd 1922

The Castle of Collooney is over and the Irregulars have fallen back towards Sligo and Ballaghaderreen seventy prisoners were taken in all.

A train containing troops from Athlone was rushed to the scene of hostilities. Forces arrived at 4 a.m. on Friday and took up position. An ultimatum was sent to the leader of the irregulars demanding immediate surrender or else the town would be stormed at 6 p.m. Rev. Fr. Michael Doyle was consulted with and all inhabitants left the town between 5.20 and 6 p.m.

Word had meanwhile been conveyed that the irregulars would never surrender. Attack was launched at 6.30 p.m. with an advance by national forces from all sides of the town. Rifles, bombs and machine gun fire met this onslaught. It was found necessary in the course of operation to train a gun on the tower of the Protestant Church where a number of irregulars had taken up position. The shell was effective, the tower was demolished. The battle continued, shells being fired to woods and other positions. The National forces advanced rapidly and captured the Church where 15 prisoners were taken along with rifles and ammunition. The struggle went on to 11 p.m. and there was considerable

house to house fighting. The Irregulars retired towards the hills where they were surprised and surrounded by National Forces. Engagement lasted to 8 a.m. on Saturday.

Mr. F. O'Beirne then surrendered with twenty three of his men. In all 70 prisoners were taken and arms and ammunition. Among the prisoners was Jim Molloy who was a prisoner of the British in Boyle military Barracks but escaped sensationally from them.

All food supplies had run out in Collooney and people were on the brink of starvation when rescued. Elderly people were badly shaken. On inquiring at St. Vincents Hospital, Dublin regarding the condition of the troops wounded the recent operations of the National army at Collooney, it was learned they were making fair progress.

The number of wounded National forces 2. On Irregular supporters is reported to have died on his way to Dublin.

Foot Note: Those captured included John Hannon, Albert and Fonso Farry, Paddy Reynolds and Josie Hannon from Ballymote.

The Battle of Collooney - as remembered by a girl who was merely 8 years old in 1922

by Mrs. Kathleen Leydon,
Collooney

I was only a very small girl in the June of 1922 when the Civil War broke out. My home, where I lived with my aged grandparents was very close to the town of Collooney.

How vividly my mind goes back to that never to be forgotten day, the events of which became so deeply implanted in my child's mind.

My home and those of many other very ordinary working class people was close to where military action was to take place. We were evacuated from our homes and were told that General Sean MacEoin of the Free State Army and a company of troops were on their way to take over the town where a contingent of Irregulars were holding out in the turret of the Protestant Church. Many of the inhabitants had taken refuge in the Catholic Church, others had travelled to the safety of relatives homes outside the town. Pat Brannigan a veteran of World War I was in charge of our group of evacuees. He got himself a stick and some good housewife provided him with a very white table cloth. This was the recognised flag of true peace.

For whatever reason Pat chose to take us through the fields to a safe destination he had planned, little knowing that he was taking himself and his evacuees into the very heart of the impending hostilisation.

I will remember it was a beautiful summer's evening, the sun sweltering hot, thus making it more difficult for us to walk either fast or silently as our leader commanded. One elderly lady while bravely trying to cross and climb a stone wall got stuck and both herself and quite a few stones fell to the ground making considerable noise, she was suitably reprimanded by our leader.

A few 10 or 12 year olds among us occasionally put some humour into our plight, calling out to their suffering elders "have you got the pipe nanny" and to another "have you got your snuff box Maggie" and to Peter who was known to same his few spare coins in the toe of a sock "have you got the bag of gold safe Peter".

One elderly lady fainted with the exertion of fast walking and the thoughts of approaching danger, which were nearer to her and her group than she knew.

Another, elderly lady, my grandmother Mrs. Ann Fallon came attired in a many flowered and layered petticoat of Victorian style, it was a very definite shade of green. The dress was one of her precious possessions of her younger days, and so she wore it on this day no doubt to ensure its safety. It was not made for concealment and on this never to be forgotten day it was well displayed indeed. In fact both lady and dress survived, the beautiful lace later used to trim the christening gowns of her great grandchildren.

Well Patrick poor man, was as he thought leading his weary little band of people to a safe house beyond Knockbeg. His elderly sister had a great welcome for her unexpected refugees. She was one of the poor, but spotlessly clean. Her little two roomed cottage shone out with brightness. It was such ease even for my young feet to get seated, albeit on the floor in a quiet little corner.

Our peace and sense of safety was short lived.

A train carrying a company of troops with arms and

ammunition pulled up some short distance behind our 'safe' house. The house was going to be the centre for the organisation of Military operations - in other words, the taking over of Collooney town by the Free State Army.

The soldiers with their gleaming guns and uniforms, some leading fearful looking dogs, come very slowly down the road towards the house. The men amongst us tried to display a show of courage, the ladies had to observe the activity from behind the curtain. There were many requests for drinks of water and much blessings of the face.

A well to do farmer who had been out in his fields at work when the operations started had thought it safer to seek the sanctuary of the safe house too. When it became clear that our little town was really going to become a battle scene the lady of the house took out the bottle of Holy Water and started to shake it around, taking care to avoid the farmer who was not of the Catholic faith. However such was his fear, the same as our own he said "**Mary shake a drop on me too**"

Meanwhile outside a Red Cross ambulance arrived with nurses and military doctors. When they approached our safe house asking if there would be any accommodation within for wounded prisoners we surely thought our end was near. The doctors really feared at this stage that they already had civilian patients on their hands so they advised that it would be wiser for us to move to a house further up on a hill directly opposite us. A path was cleared for us through the military formation. forgotten.

I remember some soldiers helping us to get through a tough thorn hedge, another stiff hill to climb and we arrived at our last sanctuary. We could hear gun fire in the distance and someone shouted "**Look our town is on fire**" We were very frightened at this stage but no doubt because of my youth I slept that night just the same. In the morning there was news filtering through that the battle was over. The Free State Army had succeeded in taking over our town. It was rumoured that some valiant Irregulars got away but were badly wounded, some said fatally so, and their burials were taken care of by their comrades in arms.

Later that day we made our way back home. This time we travelled down the road, the Galway Road, through Knockbeg and into Collooney. The gables of the houses showed bullet marks and evidence of fire, the Protestant Church tower was down. We were weary and hungry and relieved to get to our own homes. I remember my grandparents relief on seeing our much prized and precious donkey still tethered in the garden unscathed, quietly grazing away.

related by Patricia McNally

Autumn Leaves

Oh gentle Autumn, you
have come at last
With fragrant beauty 'ere
winter's blast,
To adorn the hillsides and
the valleys fair
With thy profuse shades
and perfumes rare.
Stay with us still on nature's
crest
And fill our hearts with
thy Autumnal Jest.

The Late WILLIE COLEMAN



Willie Coleman born in Carnaree Sept. 24th 1909 was one of those musicians who did not enclose his musical talent in fancy wrapping paper to be taken out on special occasions for his own desire. He shared his music not only with the cream of Irish musicians who frequently visited his home in Carnaree, musicians like Tom O'Beirne, Liam Og O'Flynn, Seamus Ennis, Matt Molloy, Cail Ni Cuisle and many others too numerous to mention, but he also shared his own talent to help develop that of young musicians. In so doing he has in no small measure played a large part in maintaining our musical heritage. Old tunes that would have been lost, he kept alive by his unselfish attitude towards the music he dearly loved.

Three generations later, this was borne out, at none other than the

1986 Fleadh Ceoil na hEireann. Young musicians from Clontarf in Dublin performing in what is termed the 'Gruan' Cheoil' competition - where tunes of varying tempo are played non-stop for fifteen minutes - held our attention throughout their entire performance with their rendering of a number of tunes - slow aires, reels, O Carolan etc. They now held the well deserved title of "All Ireland Champions".

You may well ask what has all this got to do with Willie Coleman from Carnaree? One of the teachers of this group of children from Clontarf in Dublin is Fidelma O'Beirne (nee O'Connor) who as a child living in Ballymote walked the 3 miles to Carnaree every evening in the sure knowledge that when she and her sisters arrived at Willie's home, they would be welcomed by his wife and

later have a feast of Irish music from their friend and teacher Willie Coleman.

I spoke to Fidelma, now one of the finest exponents of traditional Irish music on the banjo, frequently invited to perform at European folk festivals. With a smile on her face she recalled her frequent visits to Willie Coleman's house "Rain, hail or snow we walked the 4 miles to Coleman's house and we were always welcomed at the door by Mrs. Coleman". We would go in and Willie would be sitting there, he used to have a bad chest. We would chat for a while, never a mention of why we were there until we would say "Will you play us tune Willie"

and it was then and only then that Willie would take out his fiddle and we would sit and listen for as long as he would play". 'You know' said Fidelma he just wouldn't take his fiddle out until we asked him if he would play us a tune, he used to sit there, and it was as if he was just waiting for us to say it. He was a lovely man, and he taught me so much I will never forget him"

Willie Coleman's music is safe in the hands of Fidelma O'Beirne, except that it won't be remaining in her hands alone, for Willie passed on to her not only his music but also his willingness to share it.

Willie Coleman wrote many great tunes himself, unfortunately he like many great musicians of his day had an aversion to tape recordings and would not play if he knew there ever a machine present.

However a few of his own tunes have survived, having been passed on by ear the centuries old tradition which has ensured the complete survival of our musical heritage despite numerous efforts to destroy the same. When our instruments were taken and burned on the village green, we used our vocal chords and lilted our tunes and for dancing we beat the rhythm on the bodhran or tambourine as it was more frequently called then.

Willie's talent passed on to his own children. Liam at the age of 5 "**picked up an old Clarke's C whistle and played 'Good bye Johnny Dear' from beginning to end**" his mother proudly tells me. To-day Liam is another great exponent of Irish music on many instruments, mainly the banjo, and is well known in traditional Irish music circles in England. Philomena plays the guitar and sings. Francie is carrying on the tradition in Sligo on tin whistle and flute. Kathleen and Ann enjoy listening to Irish music, Mrs. Coleman would lilt any tune and played the accordion in her early days. She loved Irish music also, it was good that she did because it echoed in her home morning noon and night for many years. Musicians called any hour of the day or night and often the sessions would last for twelve hours; in Mrs. Coleman's own words, "**The music would still be going strong as the council and railway men started work in the morning, and the children on their way to school**".

There were no limits to Willie Coleman's music,

he played when he felt like it. His daughter Kathleen remembers "**I often saw him down tools and leave the hay, setting of the potatoes, whatever he was doing, and go to the house to take up his fiddle and play a tune that had come into his head**".

This is a relating of one man and his music, it will be understood and loved by those among us who share Willie Coleman's love of his traditional heritage.

Our heritage survived and prospered in his hands. This is appreciated by many and his home bears a plaque as proof of this. Each summer there is a gathering of Ireland's finest musicians outside his home in Carnaree. Be assured his music shall live on.

Narrative by Patricia McNally.

The School of Carrowreagh

This prize winning poem was sent by T.J. Perry formerly of Claonacleghe Bunninadden, to Mr. Batty Scanlon principal of Carrowreagh N.S. in 1924.

I'm thinking of the happy days we spent some years ago
When you and I together strolled free from dull care and woe,
Together we learned our lessons, together out to play
For we were then companions in the school of Carrowreagh.

I fancy now I see each place,
we wandered too and fro,
O'Brien's fort, the ell-weir,
where the Owenmores waters flow
We'd meet each morn at Johnny's bush with spirits blithe and gay,
For lots of pleasure we have had in the school of Carrowreagh.

Those days I never can forget
Where'er my lot is cast,
Too quickly they came to an end, they were too good to last
You left these for Drumcondra, and I left to make the hay
Next day we were marked absent in the school of Carrowreagh.

But many changes since we've seen, since we sat side by side,
The boys and girls we played with then are scattered far and wide,
And old Killoran, long since gone,
God rest his soul let's pray
While you are teaching where he taught, in the school of Carrowreagh.

I contemplate a visit soon,
to dear old Erin's shore,
And shall be glad to meet with you and clasp your hands once more,
Though I suppose your hair like mine has turned from dark to grey,
We can recall when we were chums in the school of Carrowreagh.

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THE LATE F.T. KITCHIN

by Tom McGettrick

We extend sympathy to the widow and family of the late Finlay T. Kitchin of "Corwillin", Ballisodare and formerly of Newpark House, Ballymote where he had come to live with his wife, Sheila O'Hara a member of the ancient Sligo O'Hara family. Pat Kitchin (a name he was familiarly known by) became deeply interested in the archaeology of his adopted county and country. He was especially interested in the megalithic sites of which Sligo has many varied examples and in the church remains of early Christian association and castle sites. He worked in close co-operation with Micahel Cahalane, who was secretary of the Sligo Field Club in the early years of that Group and Tom Kennedy who was then County Engineer and other enthusiasts of that time. Sites hitherto unknown or unrecorded were brought to light and under his guidance a comprehensive list of Sligo's archaeological wealth was compiled.

Mr. Kitchin studied at Cambridge and qualified as a solicitor. A submission he prepared to be sent to the National Monument Advisory Council on the care of our megaliths and medieval sites showed his wide knowledge of the laws of governing their preservation. He took particular interest in the variety of sites at Carrowmore, near Sligo about which he prepared a learned paper. The cairns at Carrowkeel, in the Bricklieves were a continuing source of fascination to him and he would visit them many times to try and solve the enigma of their origin.

He represented the Field Club on the Sligo National Monuments

Committee and he was a member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. He had an intimate knowledge of the rude stone monuments of other countries and he was able to make comparisons of age and quality with the great Irish megaliths. He accompanied the Field Club on all their outings and on those occasions he would share his knowledge in friendly chats with those around him.

We remember him as a man of erudition with a gentle personality. He and his associates have handed on a Field Club rich in accomplishments and with many worthy aims. Those of us who spent many hours with him in the fields and on the hills and at lectures are sad at his passing.

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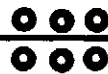
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**Date to remember
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to Rome.....

On this day the first Edition of
THE CORRAN HERALD.....

Long may both operate.....

**PLEASE SUPPORT
ADVERTISERS**

**THE FOUNDING OF THE E.B.S.
Brainchild of Alec McCabe**

Alec returned to teaching (although not as a 'recognised teacher') in a school run by Christian Brothers in Dublin. His fertile brain at work and recognising the need of people to purchase their own homes he conceived the idea of opening a building society for the people. He got a number of his teaching colleagues to donate 10s and circulated a pamphlet to teachers throughout Ireland suggesting his idea. The response was tremendous and in 1932 the society was registered formally with assets of £500. The assets soon swelled to £5,000 and to-day the Educational Building Societys have assets exceeded £20 million.

McCabe resigned his teaching post with the ever increasing work locally and it was then he was appointed the first secretary and managing director of the E.B.S., a post he filled with the utmost distinction until his retirement in June 1970. His retirement was marked by the presentation to U.C.D. of a cheque for £3,000 to endow in perpetuity an annual prize of £150 for excellence in the subject of housing. The prize is known as the "Alasdair McCabe Award".

Appreciation to Martin McGettrick for obtaining material from, the E.B.S. head office in Dublin.



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The Castle Hotel (formerly The Denette) has long been a prominent and important feature of Ballymote life. Now, under the new ownership of Mr. and Mrs Leo Temple, it is all set to rise to new heights of excellence in the service it provides for the area.

The function room has been refurbished and extended and an impressive new bar installed. This room can accommodate wedding parties and it is intended that in the near future it will be a suitable venue for occasional dancing to the music of the 50's and 60's for the over 25's. Part of the function area can be sectioned off for meetings, lectures, smaller parties etc.

The original bar is open to the public. A restaurant service providing daily meals is in action. Thirty residents can be accommodated and it is intended to provide ensuite facilities as well as a private car park with rear entrance to the hotel.

To Leo and Mary Temple we offer congratulations and best wishes for the future

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