

THE CORRAN HERALD

A Ballymote Heritage Group Production.

Issue No. 26

Summer 1994

Price £1.00

Yes!

JIM McGARRY

but give ME Sligo

*"The world-wide air was azure
And all the brooks ran gold"*

Peace in Our Time

The scourge of war goes on and on
Devastating countries far and near.
A people depressed cry out for peace
When will the bombings and killings cease?
The homeless, the hungry, those crippled by strife
Just ask for a chance to lead a normal Life.
Nuclear war-heads bring sorrow and pain
Let us replace them with something humane.
When will world Leaders Listen -
Or will the killings go on?
Instead of weapons of war
Let's create instruments of peace.
The bomb and the bullet we no longer need,
But homes for the homeless - World Leaders Take Heed.
May Christ in his goodness open each heart,
And guide World Leaders to do their part.
We hope and pray that we will find
Peace in our World, peace in our time,
Peace on earth for all mankind.

This is the combined effort of Third and Fourth Classes
(Average Age 9 yrs)

Scoil Mhuire gan Smal, Ballymote, Co. Sligo

*Hills may be green far
away but the rich vari-
ety of the hills of Coun-
ty Sligo hold captive the
mind and eye of anyone
reared in that County.*

From the Curlew Hills in the south to Ben Bulbin in the North every hillock is linked by a gossamer thread of myth, folklore and history.

Keshcorran, birthplace of Cormac Mac Art, last resting place of Diarmaid and Grainne, is linked to Ben Bulbin, named for Gulban a brother of Nial of the Nine Hostages, in the death of Diarmaid by Fionn during the treacherous Boar Hunt; while Carraig na Spainneach in Streedagh Bay in the shadow of Ben Bulbin is a reminder of the galleon of the Spanish Armada wrecked on it in 1588 and the deceit of Cuellar the Spanish Captain befriended by MacClancy in his island castle on Lough Melvin.

Moytura overlooking Lough Arrow scene of the prehistoric Battle of Moytura between the Firbolgs and the Tuatha De Dananns and the Megalithic cemetery of Carrowmore overshadowed by majestic Misgaun Maeve atop of Knocknarea. Drumcliff where Columbkille founded a Monastery near Cuildevne, site of the Battle of the Books in 561 A.D. and where W.B. Yeats was buried in 1947.

Lough Gara of the Crannogs and nearby Clogher where St. Trillick established one of her Hospitals and The Princes of Moylurg found refuge when their patrimony was sequestered by the English.

Inishmurray, treasure house of prehistory, devastated in one of the

B A L L Y M O T E H E R I T A G E W E E K E N D 1 9 9 4

Organised by Ballymote Heritage Group
FRIDAY 29th JULY – MONDAY 1ST AUGUST
Teagasc Centre Ballymote

The weekend schedule of events is as follows:-

Friday July 29th.

8.00pm Official Opening by Lord de Ayton of Corran

Illustrated Lecture 'ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURES OF THE PAST SIX THOUSAND YEARS IN CO. SLIGO' by Martin A. Timoney, B.A., F.R.S.A.I.

Saturday July 30th.

10.30am Illustrated Lecture 'EARTHWORK CASTLES IN IRELAND' by Charles Mount, M.A. M.I.A.P.A.
'THE SITING OF NEOLITHIC & EARLY BRONZE AGE MONUMENTS IN SOUTHERN CO. SLIGO'. Charles Mount, M.A. M.I.P.A.

2.00pm Outing to MONUMENTS IN THE VICINITY OF BALLYMOTE

Guides: Dr. Kieran O'Connor, Ph.D., M.A. ; Charles Mount, M.A. M.I.A.P.A.

8.30pm Lecture 'WHAT IS TRADITIONAL MUSIC?' by Nicholas Carolan,

Director Irish Traditional Music Archive

Sunday July 31st

2.00pm Outing to THE COOLERA PENINSULA. Sites will include Clover Hill, Carrowmore, Culleenamore and The Glen. Guide: : Joyce Enright, Archaeologist

8.00pm Illustrated Lecture 'ROBERT BOYLE AND HIS AIR PUMP' by Patrick Rollerston, B.A., M.A.

Monday August 2nd.

10.30am Illustrated Lecture "THE O'CONORS OF CONNACHT AND CLONALIS" Pyers O'Connor-Nash, B.A., B.L.

2.00pm Outing to CLONALIS HOUSE, Castlerea Guide: Pyers O'Connor-Nash, B.A., B.L.

8.00pm Illustrated Lecture "ARCHAEOLOGY AND IRISH NATIONALISM" by Etienne Rynne, M.A., M.R.I.A.
F.S.A. Professor of Archaeology, UCG

earliest raids of the Vikings, where men and women were segregated in different churches during life and in different cemeteries in death.

Tullaghan Hill with its Holy Well that rises and ebbs with the tide though separated from the sea by the Ox Mountains. Known as one of the Wonders of Ireland to writers as early as the 9th century.

Kilaspugbrone where St. Patrick lost a tooth and Moygara where the priceless Moygara Belt was found in a bog. Both now in the National Museum.

Loch na Suil, the disappearing Lake and Traigh Eothaile where Balor of the Evil Eye Fought.

Church Island, Lough Gill, where the O 'Cuimins presided over a mediæval school of Poetry at the time the

Mac Firbis of Tireragh were compiling The great Book of Lecan and The Yellow Book of Lecan.

Lissadell where Muireadhach O'Dalaigh wrote poetry in the 13th century and Eva Gore in the 20th century while her sister Constance became a national heroine in her fight to establish an Irish Republic.

To this unique tapestry of our Gaelic background, and the Scenic splendour of Glencar Valley with the old military road across Lugnagall on one side and the wind swept beauty of Sruth-in-aghaidh-an-Aird, on the other; Loch Achree the youngest lake in Ireland; The Bird Sanctuary at Aughris Cliffs; Knocknarea as seen from The Lady's Brae; Inisfree from The Green Road; the skeleton of Cas-

tle Dargan across the lake of that name The Hawk's rock from Heathfield: The waterfall at Baile Easa Daire; Memory Harbour at Rosses Point; The oyster beds at Culleenamore and the breakers along the Coast Road at Mullaghmore; The brooding tang of Lough Talt and the bleak bite of Raughley Head, jutting into the Atlantic;

Loughs Loman and Ia on the top of Slieve Da Ein; the shy deer, knee deep in bluebells in Ballygawley Wood and the Autumn tints of the bogs of Mullaghaneane.

Why go on?

Take to the by-roads of County Sligo where every bend of the road opens up a magical landscape reflecting the culture of a nation. ○ ○ ○

DPP AT HERITAGE GROUP CELEBRATION DINNER



Pictured above are Ballymote Heritage Group and guests on the occasion of their tenth anniversary celebration dinner in the Sligo Park Hotel. Included are Patron: Eamonn Barnes, DPP and Mrs Dolores Barnes,, President: Dr. Stan Casey, Chairperson: Eileen Tighe, Secretary: Carmel Rogers, Treasurer: Betty Conlon; Editor Corran Herald: James Flanagan

"Nothing could please me more than to have been asked to be patron of this Group which is dedicated to preserving and cherishing the past in the Ballymote area, an area of which I have such happy and lasting memories".

So said Mr Eamonn Barnes, the Director of Public Prosecutions, speaking at the recent special celebration dinner held in the Sligo park Hotel to mark the tenth Anniversary of the founding of Ballymote's Heritage Group. Mr Barnes, Accompanied by his wife Dolores, was attending in his capacity as Patron of the Group.

The other Patron, Most Rev Dr. Thomas Flynn, Bishop of Achonry, was unfortunately unable to attend

due to pressure of commitments.

Also speaking at the dinner, the President of the Heritage Group, Dr. Stan Casey, referred to the work accomplished over the years, spoke of his own concerns in relation to conservation and pollution, and referred to the Group's hopes to eventually have a Heritage Centre and Museum in Ballymote. The Group's Chairperson, Mrs Eileen Tighe, recalled the early days of the Group and the events that lead to its founding. She paid particular tribute to the driving interest and enthusiasm of the late Mrs Una Preston of Carnarea who first suggested the setting up of such an organisation. She thanked all members of the group for their hard work and dedication over the years.

Fr. Dan O'Mahony, C.C. Ballymote, spoke of how much he enjoyed the events of the Heritage Weekend at each August Bank Holiday. He wished the Group every future success.

Mr Tom McGettrick, first Chairperson of the Group spoke of how very pleased he was to see how it has gone from strength to strength. He spoke glowingly of the Annual Heritage Weekend which has brought lecturers of the highest calibre to Ballymote and has made the name of Ballymote known all over Ireland. He wished the Group continued success.

After the meal, Irish music was provided by Dan Healy, Maura Garvan and Ciaran O'Reilly. A most relaxed and enjoyable evening was had by all present

Since its inaugural meeting in the Castle Hotel, Ballymote, on Wednesday 30th May 1984, at 8.30pm, the work of the Heritage Group has continued without interruption. Monthly meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month. Winter lectures and Summer outings are organised on a regular basis. A heritage Weekend has been organised on each August Bank Holiday since 1990 and has been outstandingly successful. A regular publication, The Corran Herald, has been produced since 1985. ○ ○ ○

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Eva Gore-Booth

T H E R E S E M A R T I N

BORN IN 1870, at Lissadell the family home in Sligo, Eva Gore-Booth saw much unconventionality in her immediate family. Her father Sir Henry Gore-Booth was an arctic explorer, "thinking of nothing but the North Pole" according to Yeats who was twice a guest at Lissadell in the winter of 1894/95. Henry Gore-Booth was a descendant of Paul Gore a soldier in the Elizabethan campaigns, who was granted the nucleus of Lissadell estate, and became baronet of Ireland in 1621.

The Gore-Booths were widely respected non-absentee landlords. Eva's father Sir Henry, was the third largest landowner in County Sligo and the wealthy Gore-Booths were held in high regard by their fellow aristocrats, making the subsequent paths of Eva and Constance even more horrific to their peers. Sir Henry charged relatively low rents and undertook efficient land distribution, road construction, drainage and house improvements, all of

which were regarded as eccentric and indulgent by many of his fellow landlords. Typical of his class however, he had a paternalistic attitude towards his tenants.

The family history is not one of total benevolence, and certainly an incident which reputedly occurred during Eva's grandfather's time caused the family shame and probably heightened their sense of responsibility towards their tenants. In 1830 Sir Robert Gore-Booth bought the lease on 800 acres of land in Ballymote, and decided to farm cattle on it. He offered the tenants two options: they could move to inferior land, or receive their passage money of two pounds to America along with four pounds compensation. The tenants chose the latter and Sir Robert chartered a ship called the Pomania which sank before it sailed beyond Sligo harbour, causing the deaths of all the passengers. The veracity of this story has never been confirmed, yet it is an indelible element of Gore-Booth history. It is certain however that Sir Robert mortgaged his estate during the

If I had my life to live over

If I had my life to live over, I'd try to make more mistakes next time. I would relax... I would be sillier than I have been this trip. I know of very few things I would take seriously... I would be less hygienic. I would take more chances. I would climb more mountains, swim more rivers and watch more sunsets. I would have more actual problems and fewer imaginary ones.

You see, I am one of those people who live seriously and sanely, hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I have had my moments, and if I had it to do over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd have nothing else. Just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day. I have been one of those people who never go anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a gargle, a raincoat and a parachute. If I had it to do over again, I would travel lighter ... I would start barefoot earlier in the Spring and stay that way later into the fall. I would ride more merry-go-rounds. I'd pick more daisies.

(From an interview with an eighty-five-year old woman from the hill country of Kentucky.)

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famine to prevent the starvation of his tenants. The debt was cleared almost a century later by Eva's brother Josslyn.

Eva's mother Lady Georgina Gore-Booth, undertook much philanthropic work on the estate, including the setting up of a lacemaking school for women. Sir Henry's unmarried sister Augusta was also a member of the family at Lissadell. Yeats remarked that she was the most strong willed person in the household, "mostly invisible but always more or less behind the scenes like an icon claw". Previous to Eva and Constance the Gore-Booth women had always acted within the confines of their roles as gentlewomen. Philanthropic work was considered a harmless and respectable pastime for women. Both girls would shock and dismay family and contemporaries with their revolutionary abandonment of aristocratic propriety in their attack on the causes of injustice.

Eva and Constance were very close in childhood and adulthood. Constance, born in 1868, the elder of the two, was more vivacious and extrovert while Eva was withdrawn, the shy pensive one. Their personalities were complementary and they maintained close contact, despite living in different countries, each engrossed in her particular cause. Eva is deemed responsible for introducing Constance to the idea of a labour movement. She invited Constance to Manchester to help the women trade unionists campaign in a by-election. Both women struggled for the socialist ideal of human liberty: Eva worked for the Lancashire poor and sought to organise the women socially and politically, while Constance worked with the impoverished masses in Dublin. Their life-long struggles were for one ideal rather than individual causes. Constance is widely regarded as a revolutionary, yet Eva was perhaps more revolutionary in a quiet and more admirable way.

Until 1896 Eva lived a typically aristocratic life. At the age of 26, she was advised to spend time in the

Mediterranean climate after an attack of consumption. In Italy she met Esther Roper who had been working in Manchester for the political and economic enfranchisement of women. Eva was deeply influenced by Esther; she gave up her privileged lifestyle and moved to Manchester in 1897. She would spend the rest of her life living with Esther Roper and working incessantly for human rights. When Eva returned from Italy she shared her enthusiasm for the cause of women's suffrage with Constance. They held the first meeting of the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association in a local schoolhouse.

In 1897 Eva moved to Manchester. The Gore-Booths had owned land in Salford for generations, and charitable Gore-Booths had worked amongst the poor in the city. Manchester at the time was the capital of the industrial world, yet the conditions of its working class were deplorable. It was necessary for women to work, mainly in the mills to keep a family at subsistence level. Yet the male unions, protecting their own interests, demanded that women stay at home, thus ignoring reality and justifying the payment to women of excruciatingly low wages. Many Irish workers had been brought in as cheap labour, and the "Little Ireland" slum where they lived had some of the worst conditions in Manchester. Despite, and perhaps because of this injustice Manchester had been a centre of reform for decades. In the 1890's when Eva moved there, the Women's Cooperative Guild, the Women's Trade Union League, and other women's groups were working to improve the conditions for women at home and at work.

Eva was appointed Co-Secretary of the Manchester and Salford Women's Trade Union Council. She became a prolific pamphleteer and propagandist who could passionately address both working-class audiences and senior politicians. a committed socialist all her life, her socialism was the Owenite brand of the early 19th century. Named after the industrialist Robert Owen,

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the Owenite ideal was perfect equality and perfect freedom. Women's emancipation was a part of a complete social emancipation. However socialists subsequently reacted to capitalism by calling for a class-based struggle rather than universal liberation, resulting in isolated campaigns for class power, women's suffrage and sexual freedom. Eva and Esther remained loyal to the Owenite dream. Because of their unpopular views, they were considered oddities and eccentrics who often caused an embarrassment to their colleagues. Eva's socialism was the basis for her life's work. A socialist and feminist in the traditional mode, she believed that a transformation of the social order would bring about a change in the relationship between the sexes.

Eva introduced the young Christabel Pankhurst to the suffrage movement in 1901 and she became an enthusiastic member of the poetry circle which Eva set up as an outlet for working women. Esther encouraged Christabel to study law, and when the latter began to use bullying tactics to politicians in 1905, both Esther and Eva were deeply aggrieved. Christabel then joined the Women's Social and Political Union which became the militant arm of the suffrage campaign and was viewed with dismay by the peaceable suffragists.

Eva was the main propagandist for the Lancashire Suffrage campaign. She edited the suffrage quarterly *The Women's News*, as well as contributing frequently to other newspapers. Her political writings and speeches contain an immediacy and practicality which is often missing from her poetry. Eva was considered a promising young Poetess. Her first volume of verse, published after she had moved to Manchester had been well received in Ireland. Once she committed herself to her social and political work, Eva assigned poetry a secondary though integral place in her life. The literary ambition which Yeats had earlier observed was overthrown by a singular devotion to humanity. Her poetry, political writings and dramas give expression to her dream of a free, loving and peaceful society.

Eva played a role in the Irish Literary Revival. Her sentimental notion of an idyllic Ireland, increased perhaps by her geographical distance from it, found favour with the revivalists. However, while many writers of the revival promulgated nationalist propaganda using traditional Irish myths, Eva used the same myths to reject the use of violence as a means to any end. They promote her socialist dream. Distinctively Irish poems such as "The Little Waves Of Breffny" and "Lis-an-Doill" have ensured her a tiny niche in Irish Literary Revival

history. Her plays were neither much acclaimed nor performed despite her early renown as a writer. Though her style is similar to that of other revivalists, her themes are quite unconventional for her time and this may have led to their being widely ignored.

Eva was an extreme pacifist all her life, yet her response to the 1916 rising in Ireland contradicts this attitude. In none of her writings of this period does she condemn the rising. She refers to it excitedly in one speech as "that wonderful time". In 1915 Esther and Eva visited Constance in Dublin. Constance revealed to them nothing of the plans for insurrection, and Esther later recalled their naivety, having watched the Citizen Army and the Volunteers march. "..... I said with relief to Eva, ' Well thank goodness, they simply can't be planning a rising now not with such a tiny force.'" During the rising Eva and Esther in London heard only government announcements. After the surrender and trials Constance was sentenced to death. Her sentence was commuted to imprisonment on account of her sex. Eva supported Constance throughout her five prison sentences, writing her letters and poems, and visiting. Their extreme closeness is reflected in their arrangement to communicate with each other telepathically at a certain time each day. Although it must have been difficult for Eva to accept Constance's belief in the necessity of violence, their friendship if anything grew stronger. Both were outcasts from their social class, and while Constance was in jail, Eva was facing insult and recrimination for her "anti-war" activities in England. As a socialist, Eva acknowledged the substratum of miserable facts which was a background to the revolution. She continued to vindicate the rising and blame the English for the violence. Eva in Manchester and the leaders of the rising had a common enemy, the political power and authority of the male British establishment. ○ ○ ○ ○

BALLINACARROW FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

MAY 1994



Left to Right- Jason Finan, Shane Kirrane, Aaron Tansey, Breege Marren, Amanda McGinley, Sean McGinley, Peter Kilcoyne, Frankie Kerins.
Also included Fr. Vincent Sherlock, C.C. and Eileen Tighe Vice-Principal



SAINT NATHY

History of Ballisodare & Kilvarnet

TAKEN FROM O'RORKE'S HISTORY OF SLIGO

St Nathy was a member of the O'Hara family of Annaghmore, Co. Sligo. His ancestors were born in Munster but abandoned their home, and went to different parts of Ireland with the view of spreading religion and practising greater piety. Three of them came to Sligo. One of them named Cormac was welcomed by the O'Hara family. The chief of the family sought his blessing, which was given. Cormac blessed

the family which afterwards was blessed with Saints like Saint Nathy, St Luathranna of Killoran, (Her feast is June 8th), Saint Moby of Glasnevin (died in 544) and the great St. Fechin. There is reason to believe that St. Nathy was uncle or some near relation of St. Fechin.

It is certain Nathy lived in the 6th century being a contemporary of St. Finian of Clonard who died in 522. Nathy, on leaving home in Ballisodare parish, went to Clonard with its three thousand scholars. And this brings us to the chief event in the life of Saint Nathy, the foundation of his church and monastery of Achonry, Co. Sligo, which was the joint work of himself and Saint Finian.

Finian, near the close of life, paid a visit to Connaught. He met Nathy

who was then a very holy priest of great sanctity. Finian resolved to utilise those talents and virtues. With this object, the holy man went in search of a suitable site for a religious house, desired above all things, in conformity with the marked taste of all the religious founders of the period, that the place should be pleasantly and picturesquely situated. Such a spot was found in Achonry, a stretch of fertile land, lying tranquilly at the foot of Muckelty, not far from the beautiful lake of Templehouse, on a plain of immense extent bounded and sheltered by the curved and stately mountains of Leitrim, The Ox range, Keash and the Curlews. The following is an account which we find in the life of St. Finian of how the site was secured.

"After this, Finian proceeded to a place where a holy priest named Nathy lived, and here an angel appeared to him and said: 'You shall found a church on whatever spot the man of God shall select as a convenient and pleasant site'. And when they had reached the chosen spot, the prince of the territory, that is of Leyney, whose name was Caenfhola, Wolfhead, approached them in a rage, for the purpose of driving them from the place; but the man of God, seeking to convert this hardened sinner to the faith by a striking miracle, made the sign of the cross on a great rock that lay hard by, and broke it into three parts. This spectacle astonished and softened the savage prince and, being now changed from a wolf into a lamb, he humbly made over to Finian the scene of the miracle, which is called in the Irish Language Achad-chonaire, and in which the man of God established the aforesaid priest of the name of Nathy."

The tradition of this miracle is still vivid in and around Achonry, and the part that Saint Finian Tubber-Finian had in the transaction is commemorated in the name of a well, Tubber-Finneen which lies with-

in a few feet of the ruins of the old cathedral and which had on its edge a great pile of stones, deposited one after another by the crowds of devotees that used to frequent the place to invoke the intercession of that saint. This tradition still applies and local people make a pilgrimage to the well on August 15th each year.

The monastery thus established became a school of piety and learning for the surrounding neighbourhood. It must soon have been crowded with scholars. A Saint Kenan is said to have received his moral and literary education from Nathy.

But the discipline that conferred most honour on the school of Achonry was the great Saint Feichin, who followed his master and relative, Nathy, into the Monastery, as soon as it was opened. The most tender friendship always existed between the two saints. Even after Feichin left Achonry, Nathy's thoughts were often occupied with his young friend, and we are informed, that on

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one occasion the Saint suspended suddenly the business of the monastery to announce to its inmates the glad tidings, learned miraculously, that his beloved disciple was just at that moment founding the great monastery of Fore.

Though Nathy is commonly supposed to have been a Bishop, it is not quite clear whether he ever passed the grade of priest. He lived to an advanced age. He probably died about the second decade of the seventh century when he would have been about 90 years old. He was buried within the precincts of the monastery and, over his remains, was raised the Cathedral of Achonry which was dedicated to him and called after him - The Church of Grumther Nathy.

A small portion of the eastern gable of this cathedral still stands, as also a little of the chancel sidewalls. The chancel was 23ft in the clear. The tracery of the eastern window is said to have been very fine and to have been filled with stained glass. The

chancel was roofed with stone. The Church contained a central tower and, as in most Irish churches, the cloister adjoined the Northern side-wall. Some hundreds of paces to the North East are ruins and rubbish of a building, which the inhabitants of Achonry call the College.

There were persons living lately who saw service in the Cathedral. The stones of this edifice were made use of in building the Protestant church which stands near-by. There is a story current in Achonry of a church warden who was the first to tear stones out of the Cathedral walls. It is said that he got paralyzed the night of the day on which he did this and continued so afflicted to the end of his life, which lasted several years from the attack. The people regarded this misfortune as a judgment, so that whenever the poor man appeared on the public road, where he was moved along in some small wheeled vehicle, the little urchins of the neighbourhood used to taunt him with his church demolition, and the bad luck it brought him. □ □ □

CONFIRMATION, CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION COLLOONEY

March 20th, 1994. Candidates from St. Lassara's N.S., Ballinacarrow.



Front L. to R. Gary Reynolds, Pdraig Tansey, Joseph Canon Spelman, P.P. Bishop Thomas Flynn, Thomas Kilcoyne, N.T., Rev. Vincent Sherlock, C.C.
Middle L. to R. Aine White, Fiona Brett, Ann Marie McDermott, Jennifer O'Dowd, Robert Benton, Damien Scanlon, Vincent Mullen, Ian Melvin, Paul Wims, Una Mc Ginley. Back L. to R. Thomas White, Christopher Quinn, Alan Taaffe, John Paul Muldoon, Thomas Kerins, James McDermott.

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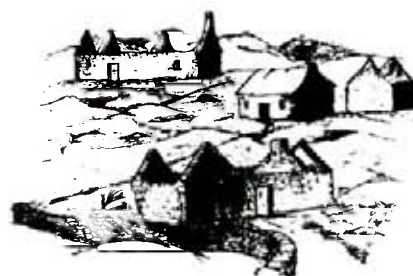
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... letter of the very Rev. Canon Finn, P.P., D.D.

...famine at Ballymote 1879/80



TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHAMPION

Ballymote, December 27th. 1879.

Sir,

I write from the centre of a rich vein of country, but the rich land and the riches are here, as elsewhere, in the hands of a few, whilst the inferior lands which are of considerable extent, are in the hands of small farmers, whose present condition is a most deplorable one; and yet these small farmers are the bone and sinew of the country .. a noble peasantry, their country's pride, and it is they and their forefathers who, as a rule, reclaimed the lands on which they dwell. It is sad and heartrending to behold these in want. Even last year the famine which is now at our doors would have visited us if the shopkeepers had not given credit largely. This year I believe that at least 2,000 human beings of my parish will die of starvation if they be left solely to their own and local resources. They have no stock of provisions, few cattle, no money, and no credit and with all their resignation-- and it is heroic-- and with all their patience-- and it is worthy of martyrs-- what are they to do? How are they to live? The Poor Law officials say to our small farmers and our able bodied poor, away with you to the workhouse. It is not yet full, and our paternal Government, neglecting its highest function, will do nothing for us, but much against us, by taxation, on account of its shameful foreign war, and by nurturing disorder and disaffection in our midst. Well, I shall not utter the exclamation which forced itself from my lips. I will only say that the cries of the ill-treated poor shall not be unavenged. They who can help them and are responsible shall have their day of reckoning. Even I who gave grown old as a faithful and loyal subject of English rule, cannot think or speak calmly now when I see such parsimony when there is question of tens of thousands of my starving countrymen, and such wilful extravagance when there is question of annihilating the liberty, the independence and the happiness of Zululand and Afghanistan. But as the cause I have at heart may be better served by the facts I can adduce than by any tall talk, however true, I might indulge in, let me state:-

1. Whenever I go among my parishioners, the cry is the same "We have no food" or "in a short time we will have none."
2. Those of any means amongst us are doing their own part, for we have a Relief committee presided over by Captain Gethin, J.P., himself a humane landlord, and composed of Catholics, Protestants, Presbyterians and Methodists, who have each contributed liberally to the fund and vic with each other in lessening the distress by which they are surrounded.

3. A few days ago our committee, Very Rev. Dean Moore, the rector of the parish in the chair, gave from 1s. to 4s. to each of at least 200 families to enable them to have a little food for a few days.
4. We have very good landlords. One of them, Wm Phibbs, Esq. Seafeld, gave remission of rent to the amount of fifty per cent; another, Colonel King-Harman, M.P. together with a remission of 20 per cent in the rent, has opened works in which 100 men will soon be employed; whilst a third, Sir Henry Gore-Booth, Bart., than whom there is scarcely a better landlord in Ireland, has given a remission of from 40 to 18 per cent, according to circumstances. Sir Henry went over his large estates, making enquiries wherever he wished, and seeing the rotten potatoes dug out of every field, his kindly nature was moved, and meeting me after he had spent a tiresome day amongst his tenantry, he said to me with a feeling I must never forget, "O the poor people have no potatoes; they have no food; God help them!" How this language of his contrasts with what we read in the English and in the anti-Irish press.

But abatements in rents, what are they but proof of prevailing distress? They do not put money in the pockets of the poor, or give them credit, or procure of them provisions. They will not feed the hungry, and therefore, I beg of you, who are so untiring in your advocacy of the cause of the suffering poor, which is the cause of humanity and of Ireland, to persevere in your appeals to the Government to establish remunerative works, whereby our sorely distressed farmers and our able-bodied poor may be enabled to eke out a mere existence until better days.

I am sir, etc.

M. Canon Finn, D.D., P.P.

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Was It Like This For You?

Molly Howard

I was a youngster in the mid to late thirties, a pre-adolescent, when the only difference between a boy and a girl was a little appendage and the way one's hair was cut. At that age, all the remembered summers are sunny and the ability or desire to judge those around you a concept yet to be considered.

Every summer, my two sisters, my brother and I were taken by my parents to a farm two hours drive away from where we lived, on the outskirts of a big city. I cannot remember the excitement of packing and setting off or the regular fights we had in the back seat. My summer only began when we turned off the paved road onto a dirt road, with a tiny ridge of green down the middle. Once on the dirt road, we were there. Just a little way, then over a rise and the farmhouse would be in sight. I cannot remember saying good-bye to my parents when they left to return to the city. I was where I should be. If they were daft enough to go back to the city, well, who could understand adults.

The countryside around the farm provided the standard by which I have judged other locales, no matter where. And yet, from the point of view of the farmer on whose land I lived and enjoyed my summers, it wasn't all that marvellous. I can only describe it as being

ground-down mountains. No-where was it level. Here it sloped up a bit, there it sloped down a bit. And everywhere the granite bones of the skeletons of the mountains poked through. Whether the ground in between was fertile or not I can't say. Even now, I don't know if flourishing elderberries, horse radish and rhubarb means good land or not.

The farmhouse itself was a two-story building of unpainted wood with a verandah running across the front and round one side, a marvellous place when it rained. (Yes, I guess it must have rained sometimes.) In front of the

The farmhouse itself was a two-story building of unpainted wood with a verandah running across the front and round one side, a marvellous place when it rained.

house was an undulating patch of greenery called the lawn with two large deciduous trees by the road, about as far apart as a two-storey ladder. I know they were, because one summer we managed to get such a ladder up so that we could get from tree to tree without touching the ground. There was also another tree by the drive into the yard, a convenient distance from one of the others for a hammock to be slung - not a modern string hammock but a woven one with a piece of wood at the head and foot to keep the hammock open, and fringes for decoration. We used to

play croquet on the lawn. I think we must have made up our own rules to accommodate the unevenness of the playing surface. I still think it is one of the most vicious games I have ever played. The satisfaction of giving your opponent's ball a whack into the wilderness was enormous and I used to hit it as hard as I could.

Going down the drive, just past the house, was the chicken shed. This housed what my memory tells me was the nastiest rooster ever. He considered that his patch covered all the drive past the chicken house, up to the separator shed and woe betide any part from his flock who trod on it. He had a particularly effective ploy of attacking your ankles like a demented wood-pecker. I think, perhaps, my skill as a runner in school sports days was developed while outpacing that rooster.

The reason for going down the drive past that rooster was to get to the barn, source of many hours of satisfying fun. About one quarter of the barn was taken up by the milking shed, cow byre, dairy, call it what you will. It was to here that the cows came, night and morning, for the milking. So did the cats. There being no electricity, the cows were milked by hand and the farmer was a dab hand at squirting a stream of milk into the open mouth of a waiting cat. My impressions of that part of the barn were first of all of darkness. Its windows were small and rarely, if ever, washed. The next sense affected was my nose. Warm, steaming animals, frothy warm milk and most of all warm steaming dung. It took a while for my city nose to accept these smells as normal and natural. But I couldn't stay away. The farmer used to warn us in grave tones of 'Daisy, she kicks' and of 'Myrtle, she'll lean against you, you go in her stall on that side'. It was a fearfully exciting place. These animals were so big, and had sharp curving horns but they had such big soft, enquiring eyes and would take, so politely a proffered handful of hay. I can still feel the scrubbing-brush tongue of a calf who sucked

on my milk-soaked hand. Once the milking was finished, I would be allowed to herd the cows back to their pasture. I am quite sure now that the cows normally found their own way back, only needing the farmer to open and close the gate but I was not aware of that, then. Another pleasure was to go down to the gate, just prior to milking and to stand on the top but one rung of the gate and call "Soooh boss," to call the cows in. (The first word, long and drawn out, the second, short and abrupt.)

When there were no cows, it was the hay which drew me. I should say 'us' as I'm sure I was never alone, what with two sisters, a brother, the nephews of the farmer who lived on the next farm and whichever of their friends happened to be passing. I'm appalled when I think of it now (the older one gets, the more aware one becomes of possible accidents) but one of our favourite pastimes was to slide off the hay in the loft onto a pile on the floor below. I don't recall any broken legs, arms or heads. Another pastime was to search for the kittens of the semi-wild barn-cats. Now, that could be damaging, but it didn't stop us. One of the tales I remember of those days was of a rabbit-cat. Supposed to be a cross between a rabbit and a cat, it looked most like a cat but had the developed hind-quarters of a rabbit or perhaps a hare. I would be very interested to know if such a thing is possible. as a child I would swear that I had seen it, but now I am not so sure.

Another occupation which took up most of our day used to happen in the last week or so before we had to return to the city to school. Up the dirt road from the farmhouse was a small field where the farmer kept pigs. In the middle of this field was a great clump of elderberries. On a good warm day, we would all strip down to our shorts and pretend we were early Britons, using the elderberries as our woad. I must say that it makes very good woad. Stains well, too. We would be early Britons for most of the rest of that week.

I mentioned the separator shed earlier on. This was as fascinating as the barn but for different reasons. The farmer's wife ruled here. I should introduce these stalwarts of my childhood. Their names were Ada and Wallace Wells and their families had lived in the area for over a hundred years. His brothers all had farms butting onto his and she knew the history of any family you cared to name within a radius of fifty miles or more. To me they were and are Aunt Ada and Uncle Wallace and apart from my immediate family, the only relatives I had, as all my parents' relatives lived in England. Aunt Ada was in charge of the separator and if I was good, I would be allowed to help her clean the many flat cones that made it up and that separated the cream from the milk. While doing this careful washing and drying, it would be easy to prompt her into some tale of the surrounding countryside and its inhabitants. The cleanliness she insisted on in the separator house was in marked contrast to what seemed to me the mucky smelly milking shed. But I didn't query it. One doesn't at seven or eight years of age. I do not know if all the milk was separated or only some but there were always at least two milk churns waiting to be collected every morning. They stood on a little platform at the side of the road.

Occasionally, Aunt Ada made butter and I would be allowed to help. the butter churn was like a skinny milk churn with a pole coming out through a hole in the lid. It was very satisfying to feel the butter forming in the churn. I would like to say that the butter after removal from the churn was formed into shapes with patterned paddles but if I did I would be making it up. I can't remember how it was shaped. What I can remember is thumping the pole up and down and the startling change from thick and slushy to thin and lumpy and lo! butter. ○○○

Molly Howard grew up near the city of Monteval in Canada. Her memories will continued in our next issue.

THE DAY BEFORE A M E R I C A



This photograph was taken the day before John James Brehony left for America (centre). He died in New York this year in his early 50's (R.I.P.). Also Michael Gallagher, Woodfield who also left for America later and became a policeman in New York (right). Gerry Cassidy, Ballymote (left).

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Left to Right: Níamh Davey, Gary Lavin, Colin Ryan, Gillian Mullaney, Joanne Scanlon, Ultan Hogan, Joanne Irwin, Mrs Patty O'Connor, Mrs Maura Horan.



Back Row (Left to Right) Oliver Kerins, Bishop Thomas Flynn, Turlough Himler

Front Row (Left to Right) Kevin Scanlon, Patricia Hannon, Patrick Brehony and Deirdre Brehony (Twins), Marie Gunning, Sharon Porter, Jonathon Mullaney,

Absent from photograph Joe Trautmann and Alison Scanlon.

The following poem is specially dedicated to the memory of the late Michael Connell, former gravedigger at St. Columba's cemetery, who will long be remembered for his courtesy and co-operation during times of bereavement, and who now rests peacefully among the many deceased persons he himself helped lay to rest.

A WALK IN THE CEMETERY

By P.J. Duffy

Alone I strolled in those tranquil grounds
When All Souls' time was nigh
I made my way to that special spot
Where my departed dear ones lie.

I knelt and prayed, then shed a tear
And pondered on those bygone days
Which one by one had grown to years
And brought such change in many ways

Tall yew trees cast their shadows forth
In a fading evening sun
As I trod along on leaf strewn paths
Where lichens form and field mice run

Familiar engraved names I scanned
Many people I had known
Now in this life they are nothing more
Than an etching on a stone

Some were business folk from out the town
Who sold their wares, wrote the bills.
Wrapped goods up with binding twine
Placed the money in their tills.

Farming folk who tilled the land
With horses, and with plough
Housewives too, who raised the kids
Cooked the meals, milked the cow

Religious folk who spread the faith
Carried on till the'd grown old
Preached the gospel to their flocks
Kept the faithful in the fold

Travelling folk who moved about
Through country and through town
Pitched their camps on sides of roads
Seldom settled down.

Working men who in their time
Moved mountains with their hands
They all lie deep in mortal sleep
In Carrownanty's sands.

I headed for the wee sidegate
Along the public road
Where cars sped by, life went on
And no one cared a toad

I stood and mused, roll on great life
In time there'll come a day
When your journey's end, and mine
Will also turn this way.

PICNIC BASKET

*Best Wishes for the Success of the Heritage Weekend
from Imelda & Staff*

CONFIRMATION IN BALLYMOTE 1994



Front Row: Niamh Mongey, Tracy Kilcoyne, Deirdre Gallagher, Emma Davey, Aisling Healy, Céire Healy, Michelle Meehan, Caroline Hunt, Laura Healy, Elizabeth Flynn, Lisa Gallagher, Cathy Cahill, Eimear McGettrick, Sinead Preston, Aisling Doddy, Lorraine McGettrick, Jonathan Mullaney. *2nd Row:* Angela Mullen, Amanda Martin, Yvonne Currid, Sarah Mullin, Christine Quinn, Diane Keevens, Catherine Molloy, Carmel McGettrick, Louise McLoughlin, Melissa Cunnane, Paul Walsh, Síle Walsh, Sarah Walsh, Niall Gallagher, Mark McNulty. *3rd Row:* Domhnall Creegan, Dermot Healy, Killian Fahey, Stephen Flannery, Barry McGettrick, Thomas Brehony, John Drury, Enda Collieran, James Doddy, Brian Kennedy, Gary Conlon, Jim Stagg, Thomas McDonagh, Gary McTernan, Sharon Porter. *Back Row:* Colin McDonagh, Colm Henry, David O'Malley, Joseph Curran, Gary Kyle, Diarmuid Henry, Sean Stagg, Conor McGowan, Michael Munds, Patrick Kilcoyne, Ronan Wallace, David Flannery. *At the rear is Most Rev. Dr. Flynn, Bishop of Achonry.*

PHOTO: CAMERA CRAFT, BALLYMOTE

FIRST COMMUNION BALLYMOTE 1994



Front Row: Karl Scully, Ciarán Cunnane, Tony McEvilly, Paul McNulty, Gerard Underwood, Brian Drury, Kenny Meehan, Patrick McGettrick, Conor Fahey. *2nd Row:* Conor Scanlon, Mary Munds, Seán Killoran, Céire Gallagher, John Pettipiece, Elaine Davey, Amanda Kyle, Amanda Irwin, Robert Glavin, David Quinn, Colm Wallace, Andrew Brehony. *3rd Row:* Gemma Anderson, Daniel Clarke, Eamon Mongey, Aisling Mahon, Michelle McGowan, Odhran Harrison, Nigel Redican. *Back Row:* Thomas McLoughlin, Tony Scanlon, Shane McGettrick, Aoife Coleman, Gabrielle Shiels, Amy Creegan, Johanna Dolphin, Seán Jordan, Joseph McGovern, Dermot Hurley, Tadhg Brennan. *Also included are Sr Regina Lydon (Principal), Very Rev Canon Flynn P.P., Ballymote, Ms Deirdre McDermott and Mrs Mary Davey (Teachers), and Ms Dolores Taheny (Vice-Principal)*

PHOTO: CAMERA CRAFT

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The Days of The MATCHMAKER

P.J. Duffy

The late Johnny Mc Donagh of Spurtown was in my opinion one of the finest storytellers who ever dwelled in this part of the country.

Johnny, who spent the greater part of his life farming the lush green fields of Lower Spurtown, had, long before he reached the end of his days, developed a broad insight into the rural way of life. Aged 91 years at the time of his death, he had during his youth become acquainted with some of the notable characters who were still around in the early decades of this century.

During my last visit to his house which took place shortly before his death, he was still his cheerful self, and went on to describe the role of the matchmaker in our society when he was a lad. Indeed said he matchmaking was a very serious business in those days, and the matchmaker played an all-important role in society during that particular period in time.

It was then I was to learn for the first time that the function of a matchmaker wasn't just confined to selecting a partner for a gentleman who was finding it difficult to find one himself. Johnny explained that in many cases where a householder had two or more eligible daughters, he was likely to enlist the assistance of a matchmaker to find them suitable partners. He had retained vivid memories of Barney McDermott (Barney the matchmaker), and went on to describe some stories of his life and times. Barney, a colourful character, had led something of a chequered life and socialised with many notable gentlemen in his time. This gave him ample scope for ferreting out a suitable partner for a client and recognising



The late Johnny McDonagh pictured here with his wife Elizabeth, a former teacher at Bunninadden N.S.

who might be suitable for whom. He had shared bar stools at pub counters around the countryside with people like Jack Brennan the cow doctor, a man who knew the scale and contour of almost every road and by-way from Ballindoon to Lough Talt. On other occasions he could be found in the company of men like Philip O'Beirne, a sort of local impressario who taught music and arranged sessions over a side area.

Barney also held parties at his own house, and had on different occasions hosted people like fiddler Kipeen Scanlon, piper Johnny Gorman, and many lesser known characters of the day. He also had contacts among his friends in the Fenian movement. Of course there were many more lesser-known individuals involved in matchmaking, and according to Johnny McDonagh these were still operating long after Barney had gone to his Eternal reward, but few he reckoned would measure up to Barney's skill and powers of persuasion when it came to arranging a match.

Arranging a marriage in those days was by no means a function of

the foolhardy. To begin with, you had to be a sort of seasoned diplomat with a background of good standing inside your community. There were a lot of details to be taken into consideration here. You'd got to study the background and social standing of a client, the amount of property involved, the exchange of money etc. For example, a man with the place of about six cows and a cob of a horse might be regarded as a very good catch for a girl on the lookout of a husband and a secure home. On the other hand the girl would be expected to bring in a dowry, or fortune as it was more often called. This sum of money usually consisted of a figure of a couple of hundred pounds or more, a considerable amount of money in those days.

There was the story of a matchmaker, who in a flurry of excitement was describing the qualities of a client he was introducing to the parents of a young girl, whom he assumed would make him a suitable wife. He was, he said, "as fine a fellow as you'd find in a day's walk, a man with six cows and a horse giving milk."

Other Days



In this photograph the young and the old on a summers' day in Mill Street sitting and chatting of other days outside Morrison's.

L.R. Michael Morrison, Martin Morrison (Veteran of the Great War and carrying a bullet in his left leg), Bernard Tansey, Adrian Tansey, Lenord Scully, Damien Tansey and the elder of the street, John Chambers.

The possession of a title deed to a holding of land was an all-important factor in the arranging of a marriage in those days. Often when a dowry was paid out by the bride's parents, a farm would be given over to a son, who would have to fortune off a sister. Land meant security, and anybody in possession thereof, was deemed "never to go hungry". There were still bitter memories of the famine around.

Many of the matchmakers focused their attentions on young girls returning from employment in America. Most of those young ladies were likely to have a good bit of money earned abroad. Mind you, not all of them would entertain the advances of a matchmaker, but in nine cases out of ten they were likely to be approached.

Various methods of deception often came into play during the time a marriage was being arranged. Stories have been told of cows being driven, during hours of darkness, from a neighbouring farm, to boost the stocks of a prospective husband. This action usually took place when the farm was being surveyed, before handing over a dowry. Later on, when the young bride went to the cow byre to assist her new husband with the milking, she might discover three cows there, instead of the intended six.

There is no evidence about to suggest that Barney ever indulged in or condoned this type of behaviour. Twice married himself, he maintained there was a woman somewhere to suit every man that ever was born. Keep young was his philosophy, don't give up, "if you don't succeed in finding one locally, head for the Ox Mountains, and if you are a man worth your salt you'll find one somewhere between the 'Hungry Rock and the Windy Gap'".

Reinforced with a bottle of his own special brew in his inside pocket, Barney was often spotted with a client in tow heading in that direction and on at least one occasion he had succeeded. Johnny McDonagh maintained that although the matchmaker played a major role in bringing people together to arrange a match, the vast majority met their partners at Country house dances, fell in love amid a flutter of romance and married soon afterwards. Despite what people to-day might be inclined to think, rural Ireland in those days was a very romantic place.

There were others around who needed encouragement and assistance and this was where the matchmaker came along to play a vital role. To most rural families the survival of the family name was something of a sacred rite. Most of them

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belonged to very old stock which had been around for generations. The birth of a son was, at all times, an event worthy of celebration.

Looking at events that are happening in our Country to-day one is inclined to wonder what Barney and his cohorts in the Fenian movement would think if they were still around. How would they react to seeing the small family units that they played their own special part in trying to preserve, being steam-rolled out of existence. The land, once so meticulously cultivated being planted with forests. The old family names gradually consigned to oblivion, and all this thing we are told, is to make way for progress. Johnny McDonagh's passing removed from our area one of the great raconteurs of a particular period in time. During my last visit to his place, he remarked, on the vast changes that had taken place in the course of his lifetime and the transition from a very old world to a brand new one.

At the conclusion of my visit I had promised to return for another session before too long, but fate had however, intervened in the meantime, and my next visit was regretfully to be for his funeral, and so a true gentleman had passed to his eternal reward.

Ar dheis De go raibh a nam.

The Collooney-Claremorris Railway

MICHAEL FARRY



LEYNEY, 1ST JUNE, 1975.

In the mid-1880s a sharp fall in agricultural prices heralded the start of what was to be a long recession which lasted into this century. The area along the Ox Mountains was particularly badly affected. The population of the parish of Killoran fell by almost 15% in the period 1881-1891. This was the highest fall recorded since 1841-51 when the great famine resulted in a drop of 37%.

In the summer of 1890 blight struck the potato crop and prospects looked very bleak indeed

for the poor tenant farmers. In August the Tubbercurry Board of Guardians whose responsibility it was to relieve distress passed the following resolution - "We regret to be obliged to pro-

nounce the potato crop in this union decidedly the worst since '47 and almost a total failure and that supply of food from this year's harvest will be exhausted in most families before Christmas and want and famine will follow unless public works are opened". The Board specifically mentioned the building of a railway line from Collooney to Claremorris which would pass through the worst affected areas of the union and give employment.

The campaign to have this railway line approved continued in

the autumn of 1890. A local deputation met Chief Secretary Balfour in October and meetings were held in Tubbercurry in late October and Coolaney in early November. Local landlord Charles K. O'Hara took the chair at the Coolaney meeting. Resolutions were passed stressing the deplorable condition of the people of the area.

The government agreed to sanction the railway and the first sod was cut on December 29, 1890 at Tubbercurry. By January most of the land needed for the line had been purchased. Work started in early 1890 but ceased in August 1891 because of the dispute between the railway company, and the treasury. By this time the fencing had been completed as had the formation of levels, but little of the masonry work was done. For almost two years the work was halted. The potato harvest had again failed in 1891 and there were many appeals from local bodies for the resumption of work. Finally in May 1893 the work restarted. Rail-laying started from the Collooney end in the middle of 1894 and was completed by November. The station houses and railway cottages were completed the following year and the line was officially opened on 1st October 1895. Over 700 men were employed during 1893 and the weekly wage for a labourer was reported to be about 13 shillings (13/-). □□□

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