

The Corran Herald

COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY BALLYMOTE HERITAGE GROUP

ISSUE NO.44

2011/2012

PRICE €8.00



The Corran Herald

Annual Publication of Ballymote Heritage Group

Compiled and Published by Ballymote Heritage Group

Editor: James Flanagan

Design, Typesetting and Printing: Orbicon Print, Collooney.

Cover Design and Artwork: Brenda Friel

Issue No 44 2011/2012

The Corran Herald wishes to sincerely thank all those who have written
articles or contributed photographs or other material for this Issue

Ballymote Heritage

22nd Annual

Weekend

Friday 29th July to Monday 1st August 2011
In Coach House Hotel, Ballymote, Co. Sligo.

FRIDAY 29th JULY

8.30 p.m. **OFFICIAL-OPENING**
by Peta Taaffe

LECTURE
A Family Called Taaffe
Peta Taaffe

SATURDAY 30th JULY

9.00a.m. **OUTING**
Foxford Woollen
Mills and Turlough
Park Museum

8.30 p.m. **LECTURE**
When the Shopping was
Good:
Woolworths and the Irish
Main Street
Barbara Walsh PhD

SUNDAY 31st JULY

2.00 p.m. **OUTING**
Glenview Folk Museum
(Ballinamore)

8.30 p.m. **LECTURE**
Eva Gore Booth,
Champion of the Worker
Cllr Ruth Illingworth,
MA, Historian

MONDAY 1st AUGUST

9.00 a.m. **OUTING**
Rosserrk Abbey, Downpatrick
Head, Céide Fields
Guide: Micheal Murphy

8.30 p.m. **LECTURE**
Lawlessness Prevails
Everywhere –
South Sligo 1918-1921
Michael Farry PhD



Supported by
Sligo County Council Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2011

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Lectures €10.00

Transport available
for outings

Further information from,
071-9189275 or 071 9183380

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O'Reillys - The Forgotten Landlords

John McDonagh

If we could journey back in time to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we would find a system of land ownership that would be almost unrecognisable today.

The majority of the population lived on, worked on, or made their meagre living from the land, either as tenant farmers, cottiers, or landless labourers. Most of the land was owned or controlled either by landlords, the Established Church, or other corporate bodies (Trinity College Dublin – T.C.D, was one of the biggest landowners in the entire country), while twelve London companies were granted vast tracts of land in Co. Derry in return for financing the Plantation of Ulster in the seventeenth century. (*Terrence M Dooley*---“*Estate ownership and management in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Ireland*”)

This privileged elite were largely of the Protestant faith, often the descendants of Cromwellian land grantees and although our history tends to judge them very harshly, they should not all be tarred with the one brush.

Some treated their tenants quite well while others treated them abysmally, but most left the day-to-day running of their estates in the hands of their agents and bailiffs. Because these were usually paid a commission on the rents they collected, they were often more demanding, more unscrupulous, and more ruthless than the land-owners themselves. Indeed many of the biggest landowners did not live in the country at all because of their involvement in politics, the armed forces, or other government positions.

Most of the land was under tillage, growing potatoes, oats, rye, or flax for the struggling and very labour-intensive linen industry. One has only to disturb the top layer of any

cut-away, or reclaimed bog land to view the extent of the flax growing that existed throughout this area. Flax seeds and fibres are everywhere. The entire crop, bound up in sheaves, would be left to “ret” (*rot off the outer layers of fibre*) for a couple of weeks, in bog holes, so that the inner layer could be salvaged for the complicated and hugely labour intensive process of linen making. (Scutching, carding, spinning, weaving and bleaching.)

Flax growing appears to have been widespread and intensive and must have given employment to a great number of people, before the widespread importation of much cheaper cotton led to its downfall and eventual demise.

Although most of the land owning class was of the Protestant Denomination, there were exceptions to this. The Catholic O'Reilly family owned the townlands of Spurtown and Ougham in the civil parish of Kilshalvy, Co. Sligo.

They began their ownership in these parts as Catholics in the year 1786, when Dowell O'Reilly, a legal representative and property owner of some note, inherited a fortune from his uncle Mathew, an unmarried London merchant. He then used this inheritance to purchase these Co Sligo lands from the representatives of one Thomas Harte, for the sum of £6500.

(This Thomas Harte, was a direct descendant of Coronel Thomas Harte, a Cromwellian land grantee who leased the said lands for a nine hundred and eighty seven year term from Nicholas Taafe, Earl of Carlingford, at an annual rent of £25-16s-8d. Thomas Harte, is mentioned several times in “Woodmartin’s History of Sligo” and achieved fame, or notoriety, as second in command to Lord Kingston at The Battle of Sligo in the Williamite Wars.)



**Dowell O'Reilly from a painting
Deed of conveyance 14th April
1786 (The O'Reilly papers):**

“By deeds of lease of this date executed by the chief register of The Court of Exchequer and other parties. The lands of North and South Ballinspur situate in the County of Sligo, were conveyed to Dowell O'Reilly for a consideration of £6500 Sterling—Residue of a lease made by Nicholas Lord Carlingford dated 15th Oct 1680 at an annual rent of £25-16s 8d”

(Ballinspur was the ancient gaelic name for Spurtown)

Dowell O'Reilly

Dowell O'Reilly's ancestral home was “Tulleystown”, Co. Westmeath. He was a direct descendant of “Myles the Slasher,” who held the title “Prince of Breffeni” and was entitled to call himself “The O'Reilly”.

Originally from Co. Cavan, Dowell purchased and settled in Heath House, Abbeyliex, Co. Laois (Queen's County) in the year 1804. Dowell was twice married; his second wife was Elizabeth Knox from Moyne, Co. Mayo. A dedicated member of the Established Church, she succeeded

in converting the Catholic Dowell to her religion and despite all of his siblings and two daughters being members of the Roman Catholic faith, his letters and writings show a marked intolerance towards that faith.

The O'Reilly papers show that in the year 1792, Dowell O'Reilly leased part of his land at Spurtown to Robert Duke of Newpark for "three lifetimes" for a rent of £1,000. (A part of Spurtown is now known as "Spurtown Duke.") Is this the same Robert commemorated in The Church of Ireland, Ballymote?

Dowell was recognised as chief of "The O'Reilly Clan" and inherited the title "The O'Reilly." He died on Nov 13, 1808 and the title along with his estates automatically passed on to his oldest son, Myles John.



Myles John O'Reilly from a painting

Myles John O'Reilly

Myles John O'Reilly appears to have been a tragic and enigmatic man. Married to Elizabeth Beresford, daughter of The Rev George Beresford of Fenagh, Co. Leitrim, on Jan 16th 1829, he was extremely interested in Gaelic culture and arts. He employed the well-known scholar, John O'Donovan (1806-1861) to tutor his children and he gave him living quarters, medical care and financial support, in Heath House, during one of his long illnesses. One of the

transactions from their extensive account books showed a payment of £3-8s to have "The Book of Fenagh" translated from ancient Irish into English by the said scholar. He (M.J.R.) was also a sponsor of the renowned Irish poet James Clarence Mangan.

In 1821, Francis Knox of Moyne, Co. Mayo, died, leaving his vast estates to his nephew, Myles John O'Reilly, but it proved to be a poisoned chalice! The estate was encumbered far beyond its worth and instead of inheriting a fortune, he was left answerable for all its debts, which were only resolved by a decree from The House of Lords in 1826. Costly litigation over his inheritance, bad luck, poor management and ill health, appear to have dogged him all his life. There are many accounts of court proceedings with his two sisters, most of which had an unfavourable outcome for Myles John.

In 1837 all his possessions in Heath House were auctioned and he and his family were forced to vacate the premises. I cannot find any account of how they resolved this difficulty but the records indicate that from that period, M. J. O'Reilly and family alternated their accommodation between Heath House and their properties in Clontarf, Brighton and France, until Heath House was finally sold in 1864.

To confound his bad luck, his wife Elizabeth Anne died of consumption on Mar 27th 1838. The papers show that Myles John O'Reilly "died of a seizure in France" on Oct 27 1857 and the estates and title passed on to his oldest son Myles George.

Myles George

Myles George O'Reilly, oldest son of Myles John, was born on Oct 29th 1829. Being the oldest, he was the recognised heir of Myles John and as such, set about trying to revive the family fortunes. Myles George was an educated and cultured man who was educated in Kings College, Douglas, on the Isle of Man and later in T.C.D. He studied law but never practised. Instead, all his energies appear to



Myles George O'Reilly circa 1875)

have been devoted to managing and improving his estates and trying to retrieve the family fortunes.

It was labour in vain! In the post famine era, landlords and tenants alike all suffered great economic hardship. Despite his best efforts he was forced to sell Heath House in 1864. The Blake family from Co. Mayo were the purchasers.

Eight years later in Sept 1872 his lands in Co. Sligo were offered for sale and bought by Alexander Sims, Colooney, in an encumbered estate court sale. The rest of his Irish properties appear to have met a similar fate and Myles George moved to an address in Brighton, where he married an English woman Gwendolyn (surname unknown). He died in 1911.

Myles George and Gwendolyn had only one daughter Gwendolyn Beresford O'Reilly, who married a British army officer Major Stanley Mundy, from Ascot. They had three sons, all of whom pursued a military career and fought in the Great War.

The youngest, Lieutenant Lionel Mundy, was killed in action in the battle of Krithia in the Gallipoli campaign on June 6th 1915, aged 23. The second son, Major Leslie Mundy was listed among the missing at the second battle of Ypres. The oldest son Captain Stanley Beresford Mundy survived a long, harsh and inhuman



Captain Stanley Beresford Mundy

internment with the forces of General Townsend, after the disastrous siege of Kut, in modern-day Iraq. It was he who presented "The O'Reilly Papers" to T.C.D. in 1954. He appears to have no descendants.

Epilogue

Thus ends the tale of The O'Reilly family, landlords for the townlands of Spurtown and Ougham for a considerable period, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were also landlords for the townlands of Emleagh and Rathbane but they either inherited or sub-leased these lands from their in-laws, the Knox Family of Co. Mayo. They appear to have been fairly benign in their treatment of their tenants. By contemporary standards, the land

holdings in Spurtown were reasonably sized and well laid-out, with no evidence of sub-leasing. There is no local tradition of starvation and mass evictions. No bad fire-side folk-memories. (Something that cannot be said for their predecessors, The Harts, from a full century earlier.)

Perhaps it may be appropriate to conclude by quoting the immortal words from Mark Antony's speech: *"The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft' interred with their bones."*

Sources-----The O'Reilly Papers ---National Library
Photos courtesy of The Manuscripts Dept T.C.D.
Many thanks to Sr. Kathleen for helping with my research.



At Strandhill where there was a troupe of boy scouts - Sheila Johnson is seen at the entrance to the tent.

Picture courtesy John Coleman from the Maisie McGovern collection.



Reading the Sunday newspapers. One man in plus fours.

Picture courtesy John Coleman from the Maisie McGovern collection.



At the cannon in Strandhill, late 1920s or very early 1930s.

Picture courtesy John Coleman from the Maisie McGovern collection.

The McDonaghs of Carrowkeel and their Changing Fortunes

John C. McTernan



Carrowkeel House, built by 'Baron' Francis McDonagh

In the early 19th century John McDonagh, a descendant of the Gaelic chieftains, the McDonaghs of Corran and Tirerill, got possession of the lands of Carrowkeel, in the Parish of Emlaghfad, which prior to the 17th century confiscations formed part of the hereditary territory of the McDonagh clan. Once in possession John set about reviving the family's fortune as did his son, Francis, who enlarged the holding.

On his death in 1788 his son, Francis, The Younger, emerged

from the Penal Code a "fully fledged squireen" who sported the title 'Baron McDonagh' which, doubtless, was inspired by the claim that an ancestor, Hugh McDonagh of Ballymote Castle, had been one of the Knights of the Shire. The 'Baron', who is credited with the building of the present *Carrowkeel House*, married a Trumble of Old Rock, by whom he had issue, and died in 1858, aged one hundred years.

John Francis McDonagh (1810-1884), who succeeded his father, was a well known figure in the Sligo of that era. He married twice, firstly, Elizabeth Rea of

Lislea and, secondly, Rebecca Trumble of Oldrock. In 1855 he was appointed Co. Coroner in succession to Meredith Thompson of Knockadoo and as such enjoyed a social standing that undoubtedly would have pleased the old 'Baron'. According to local tradition rows of carriages were regularly witnessed on the avenue leading to *Carrowkeel House* where the Coroner, who was a noted huntsman, entertained both the aristocracy and sporting fraternity of South Sligo.

The "Sligo Champion" in December 1855 commented

as follows on McDonagh's election as Co. Coroner:

It affords us the greatest pleasure to learn that John McDonagh has been elected County Coroner by a great majority. The electors of the district did not forget the claims of Mr McDonagh, who is of an ancient family connected for centuries with the County. He has ample proof given to him that the inhabitants still bear in kindly regard those connected by blood with 'the good old stock'. Gentlemen of all ranks and creeds, from those of high rank down to the plain but honest Freeholders, supported him. We congratulate him on his return.

John McDonagh inherited a partially encumbered estate from his father and his financial standing was not improved by his somewhat extravagant lifestyle. The enforced sale of portion of his property in the Landed Estates Court improved matters for a short time but in July, 1880, on the petition of the Governors of the Bank of Ireland, part of Carrowkeel, consisting of 81 acres & 3 roods, was advertised for sale by the High Court for the owner, John McDonagh. At the auction he was declared the purchaser at £1,650 but a few weeks later McDonagh informed the Court that he was not financially in a position to complete the deal and Jones Taaffe McDonagh, the next highest bidder at £1,600, was then declared as the owner. However, in an affidavit in November, 1880, he made it known to the Court that he was unwilling to proceed with the purchase. As a result a receiver was appointed and in 1881 *Carrowkeel House* and 140 acres were acquired by John Connolly, a Sligo merchant, for £2,050.

Jones Taaffe McDonagh, a brother of 'Long Pat' McDonagh

of Carrowkeel and a cousin of John McDonagh, the Co. Coroner, appears to have been a rather reckless individual unbecoming his class. In early life he developed an addiction for gambling which eventually led to bankruptcy in the mid 1880s. Finding himself without a home and landless he was induced by R. D. Robinson, land agent for the Griffith's of *Castle Neynoe*, to take a lease of two small holdings in the townland of Ballysumaghan from which the Window Henry and Pat Mulvaney had been evicted for non payment of rents.

McDonagh took up residence in February 1889. His arrival did not pass unnoticed by members of the Sooeey Branch of the Irish National League who lost no time in making it known to him that a 'land-grabber' was not welcome in their midst. When McDonagh made it known that he had no intention of moving on a boycott was introduced whereby shopkeepers and suppliers over a twenty miles radius refused to have any dealings with him. In an editorial the "Sligo Champion", which supported the policies of the National League, referred to McDonagh as "a misguided wretch" who, to gain a miserable subsistence, placed himself in antagonism to the wishes and feelings of the local community.

On Christmas Eve 1889 his sister, who resided with him and whose name has not been recorded, died. It is believed that her death resulted from cold and starvation and she was buried without an inquest. A "Sligo Champion" correspondent reported that the funeral departed from Ballysumaghan for the family burial ground at Emlaghfad at an early hour on December 25th accompanied on foot by her brother, Jones Taaffe, and the wife

of 'Long Pat' McDonagh and two of her children. A police escort followed at a discreet distance.

With the dawn of a new year the local boycott intensified and in mid February a large contingent of the Sooeey and Collooney National League branches, headed by a Fife and Drum Band, marched on the McDonagh residence where a rally took place and a succession of speakers denounced the 'grabber' with threats of physical force should he refuse to vacate the properties. As a result McDonagh was placed under police protection.

The "Sligo Champion" of March 1st, 1890, reported that Jones Taaffe McDonagh, the 'Ballysumaghan landgrabber', had finally forsaken the locality which he had occupied for just over a year and went on to congratulate the people of Sooeey of having rid themselves of someone who was a 'standing threat' to the peace of the locality. It appears that his hasty exit arose from the fact that a warrant had issued for his arrest on an indictable offence, namely, the theft of goods from the premises of Messrs Cherry Boyers & Co., the Sligo merchants. After vacating Ballysumaghan McDonagh was seen "sauntering" around Ballymote during which he most likely paid a visit to his relations at Carrowkeel before finally disappearing from the sights and scenes of his childhood. According to local tradition he crossed to Liverpool and died penniless a few years later in an English workhouse.

By any yardstick this was a sad ending for the scion of a once highly respectable Gaelic family, chieftains of Corran and Tirerill and 'Lords' of Ballymote Castle.

The Importance of Fraternities and Social Clubs for the Protestant Community in Sligo from 1914 to 1949

Pádraig Deignan

This article discusses the importance of five fraternal associations and social clubs – the YMCA, the Orange Order, Sligo Constitutional Club, the Masonic Order, and the British Legion – to the Protestant community in Sligo from 1914 to 1949. Protestants accounted for a significant minority of the population of Sligo. In 1914 the total population of Sligo town was about 11,000, of which over 1,700 (over 15 per cent) were members of Protestant churches. The total population of County Sligo at the time was over 84,000, and Protestants numbered about 8,000 or approximately 10 per cent of the total. Terence Brown has argued that sports and clubs ‘all operated to allow Irish Protestants to maintain their social distinctiveness’.¹ F.S.L. Lyons has made a similar point, arguing that Protestants and ex-unionists divided themselves from Catholics by a kind of social or psychological apartheid, where ‘in all their social activities the minority would keep to themselves’.² However, as well as helping to maintain a separate cultural identity for Protestants, traditionally Protestant fraternal and social clubs also allowed for some interaction and integration between Protestants and Catholics in Sligo.

Y.M.C.A.

The Y.M.C.A., or the Young Men’s Christian Association, was founded in Sligo in 1867.³ The main aims of the organisation were to promote the moral, physical, and intellectual improvement of young men. The organisation held debates, essays,

papers, concerts, billiard and card competitions. In 1913 the chief organising force behind the Y.M.C.A. was Philip Perceval, a local Protestant unionist landowner. By May 1914 the Y.M.C.A. had a total of 150 members and it had a good mix of classes and professions.⁴



Philip Perceval

Although the organisation was keen to advertise itself as open to membership from all citizens, Catholics did not appear to join the Y.M.C.A., possibly because Catholics had their own organisations such as the Sligo Catholic Institute or maybe because of the Y.M.C.A.’s traditional connection with the Protestant faith. The Sligo Catholic Institute, which had been established in 1880 was a similar organisation to the Y.M.C.A.⁵ In 1914 the membership of the Catholic Institute was around 100, and stood at about that figure until the late-1940s.⁶

During the First World War the Sligo Y.M.C.A. showed a strong commitment to the British war effort,

its members joined the army in large numbers and by the end of the war, out of a total membership of 150 the Sligo Y.M.C.A. had contributed 100 soldiers.⁷

At the end of the war the president of the Y.M.C.A., Philip Perceval reactivated the organisation. Despite the difficulties presented by the War of Independence the members of the Y.M.C.A. made a great effort to continue their meetings and social events.

Although the Y.M.C.A. had an exclusively Protestant membership, the organisation was not isolated from the rest of Sligo society and the club held joint billiard competitions with Sligo Trades Club and Sligo Catholic Institute.⁸

Sligo Trades Club held similar events as the Y.M.C.A. but was an organisation specifically set up in 1900 as a collective association for the members of skilled trades including bakers, carpenters, printers, plumbers and tailors. In the period 1914 to 1949 it appeared that the Trades Club had an almost exclusively Catholic membership.⁹

However, a good relationship developed between the Y.M.C.A. and the Catholic Institute and along with joint billiard tournaments, both clubs were involved in card competitions. The joint competitions held between the two clubs proved to be very popular with the members and became an annual occurrence, as it seems they were also financially beneficial to both clubs. However, both clubs were not simply focused on their mutual

financial positions and both clubs organised joint charitable ventures. In February 1925 the YMCA and the Catholic Institute organised a fancy dress party for children in the town hall. Following the party, William McCrea, the honorary secretary of the YMCA, paid tribute to David Flemming and other members of the Catholic Institute for their contribution to the successful night.¹⁰ These charitable endeavours continued from the mid-1920s to the 1940s.

Table 1:

Table 1: Y.M.C.A. membership numbers in selected years, 1914 to 1949

Year	Membership numbers
1914	150
1915	150
1918	150
1925	95
1926	112
1931	89
1935	80
1939	90
1944	100
1949	100

Source: *Sligo Independent*, 1914 to 1949.

In the mid 1920s the Y.M.C.A.'s membership increased from ninety-five in 1925 to 112 in May 1926.¹¹ However, in the late 1920s the membership of the club trickled off and by June 1931 the club membership had dropped to eighty-nine.¹² The reason for the falling off in membership may have had something to do with the general decline in Protestant numbers in Sligo at this time and the fact that there seemed to have been a general lack of interest in the activities of the organisation in the late 1920s. The economic depression in the 1930s did not help the club and members seemed to have had trouble in paying their subscription fees. The aging membership of the committee also seemed to have led to a certain amount of stagnation in the club and once a new committee under Alec Henderson, a Protestant businessman,

and William Peebles, a Protestant editor of the *Sligo Independent* newspaper, took over, the organisation began to thrive again.¹³ By 1939 the organisation was doing well again and income increased. During the Second World War membership once again increased and by 1944 club membership stood at 100.¹⁴ In the late 1940s the club began to organise more sporting events and consequently the financial position improved.¹⁵

The Orange Order

The Orange Order had been popular in Sligo in the late nineteenth century. The Order had been founded in 1795 with the aim of defending Protestant interests in Ireland. The organisation came to be strongly associated with the maintenance of the Union between Britain and Ireland. The Orange Order was much more prominent in the Ulster counties than in the rest of the country.

However, Protestant interest in the Order was evident in Sligo and in 1875 Sligo elected five Grand Officers to the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland.¹⁶ At the time of the First and Second Home Rule Bills in the 1880s and 1890s the members of the Orange Order in Sligo were mostly Protestant landowners in the county.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the Orange Order in Sligo town and county seemed to have been largely inactive. Although it is also fair to suggest that considering Sligo's proximity to Ulster, where Orange lodges would have been more inclined to organise a march on the Twelfth, members of Sligo Orange lodges may have journeyed there in order to participate in the more overt displays of Orangeism in Ulster.

In the early part of the twentieth century there were nine Orange Lodges registered in Co. Sligo. Six Orange Order Lodge warrants were cancelled in 1910, signifying that six

lodges were closed. In the period 1910 to 1921 three Co. Sligo Orange Lodges were registered with the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland. There are no references to Orange Orders in Co. Sligo in the records of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland after December 1921.¹⁷ In fact the Orange Order never seems to have been strong in Sligo town in the twentieth century and there is no mention publicly of its activities in the town or county in the period 1914 to 1921. Unionists seemed to have associated themselves more with Sligo Constitutional Club, which was dominated by Protestant businessmen and landowners.

Sligo Constitutional Club

In the period 1914 to 1949 Sligo Constitutional Club, which had been established in 1881 with fifty members, was one of the most popular fraternal organisations in Sligo.¹⁸ In 1907 membership of the Constitutional Club consisted almost exclusively of Protestant businessmen, landowners and professionals. The membership of the club at this time was about 100, including two Catholic members who were involved in the grocery trade in Sligo town.¹⁹

During the Home Rule crisis of 1912-1914, most of the active Unionists in Sligo were members of the Constitutional Club. Club meetings were largely suspended during the First World War. However, in 1919, despite the disruption caused by the War of Independence, the members were determined to reactivate the club. The club seemed to keep its connections with politics in Sligo town and many councillors of the Sligo Ratepayers' Association, a municipal reform organisation founded by unionists and nationalists in 1918, were successful in securing the election of eight members, five of them unionist, to Sligo Corporation in the municipal elections of 1919.

However, the club was also involved in social activities. In the late 1920s the club membership increased, possibly in response to the changed political environment and the fact that ex-Unionists and Protestants may have found more security in an organisation of like-minded people.

Table 2:

Table 2: Sligo Constitutional Club membership numbers
1933 to 1949

Year	Total membership	Protestant members	Catholic members
1933	94	90	4
1934	94	90	4
1935	102	98	4
1936	104	100	4
1937	105	100	5
1938	108	103	5
1939	100	95	5
1940	100	94	6
1941	106	99	7
1942	106	99	7
1943	103	95	8
1944	114	103	11
1945	121	109	12
1946	123	111	12
1947	127	115	12
1948	135	122	13
1949	144	128	16

Source: Sligo Constitutional Club: Account Books, Vol. 2: 1933 to 1954
(S.C.L., Sligo Constitutional Club, No. 350).

However, there was never a restriction on Catholics joining the club, and by 1933 there were four Catholic members of the club out of a total of ninety-four. Although membership increased through the 1930s, no Catholic names were present on the nine-member committee of the Constitutional Club in 1939. However, as can be seen from Table 2 Catholic membership of the Club continued to increase.

By 1949 club membership stood at 144 members, including sixteen Catholics. The increase in the number of Catholic members of the club can be interpreted as a sign of integration between Protestants and Catholics. However, there were still only a small number of Catholic members who were all either businessmen or professionals.

It could also be argued that the increase in Catholic membership of the Constitutional Club could be a result of wealthier Catholics endeavouring

to be associated with a traditionally Protestant club for the better off professional class; a class which some Catholics would have possibly had more in common with than many of their fellow religionists. It has also been discovered that many Protestant members of the Constitutional Club also belonged to the Masonic Order in Sligo.

Masonic Order

The first Masonic Lodge in Sligo, No. 566, received its warrant in 1719 and thirteen lodges operated in Sligo town and county since then. In Ireland the Order became by the 1840s an almost wholly Protestant fraternity as the Catholic Church was opposed to Freemasonry arguing that it contradicted Catholic beliefs. Some Protestant Churches also banned their congregations from joining the Masonic Order.

It is also fair to suggest that many Irish Catholics may have also been reluctant to join the Masonic Order as to many outsiders the Masonic Order and the anti-Catholic Orange Order appeared to share similar structures and rituals. However, on a number of occasions in the late 1920s, Arthur Jackson, the provincial grand master of north Connacht, and a very successful Protestant businessman in Sligo town, argued that the Masonic Order was not anti-Catholic.²⁰ Jackson argued that Sligo Masons were also socially active and made contributions to charities and to schools in the county and assisted many people who were not masons.²¹ Although it appeared that the charities and schools assisted by the masons were from the Protestant tradition.

In the early part of the twentieth century Sligo town was the home of



Arthur Jackson

two Freemason lodges, Lodge 20, the Light of the West Lodge, which had been formed in 1833, and Harlech Lodge 165, which had been founded in 1895.



Harlech Masonic Lodge

In 1914 many of the more affluent Protestant merchant families in Sligo were members of Lodge 20, while many shop assistants were members of Lodge 165.²² This may have been due to the fact that Lodge 20 was an older and more established lodge and a sort of social bias had formed with many of the wealthier Protestant members joining Lodge 20 while Lodge 165, as a newer lodge, had a more liberal ethos towards membership and social standing. Although more clerks were members of Lodge 20 than Lodge 165, most of those clerks were employed in companies owned by the better off Protestant businessmen, who were also members of Lodge 20.

Protestant landed names were largely absent on the membership lists of both lodges, maybe due to the fact that many landowners were already



Founding Members of Harlech Lodge, October 1895

(L-R) Roger Parke, James Chambers, C.B. Tully, T.J. Baily, Jos. Dixon, R. Cooke, E.T. Kell, John Chambers, A. Ward & Alex Munro.

members of the Sligo Constitutional Club and they possibly felt that the Club sufficiently fulfilled their social requirements. The Freemasons in Sligo seemed to have been dominated by Protestants involved in business and the professions from the urban area, and Protestant landowners in Sligo may have perceived the Masonic Order in Sligo as an association more suited to the commercial and professional classes of the town. It's also possible that Freemasonry had developed a more egalitarian ethos, as opposed to a landowning ruling elite.

Table 3:

Table 3: Numbers joining the two Sligo Masonic Lodges, Lodge 165 and Lodge 20, 1910 to 1923

Year	New members
1910	14
1911	11
1912	8
1913	8
1914	6
1915	5
1916	4
1917	5
1918	5
1919	12
1920	15
1921	17
1922	7
1923	6

Sources: Masonic Lodge No. 165: membership registers, 1910-23 and Masonic Lodge No. Lodge 20: membership registers, 1910-23 (Grand Lodge of Freemasons, Masonic Lodge membership registers).

Numbers joining the two Sligo lodges declined in the years before the First World War with an average number of just over nine joining each year in the period 1910 to 1914. During the First World War the average new members joining dropped to fewer than five per year. In 1919 twelve joined the Masonic Order in Sligo, in 1920 fifteen joined and in 1921 seventeen joined. The records indicate that all the new members, as well as the old members, were Protestant, and many Protestants may have perceived the Masonic Order as an organisation which could preserve a sense of identity and familiarity during the turbulent time of the War of Independence.

Table 4: Numbers joining Sligo Masonic Lodge No. 165 in the period 1902 to 1949

Years	New members
1902-1911	53
1912-1914	17
1915-1918	12
1919	10
1920	12
1921	11
1922	7
1923	5
1924-1929	35
1930-1939	34
1940-1949	47

Source: Masonic Lodge No. 165: membership registers, 1895-1949 (Grand Lodge of Freemasons, Masonic Lodge membership registers).

Table 4:

Table 5: Average attendance per meeting of Sligo Lodge No 165 in the period 1914 to 1949

Period	Average attendance per meeting
Aug. 1912 – Aug. 1914	28
Sept. 1914 – Nov. 1918	27
Jan. 1919 – Apr. 1923	36
May 1923 – Aug. 1939	52
Sept. 1939 – Nov. 1949	46

Source: Masonic Lodge No. 165: attendance books, 1912-1949 (Grand Lodge of Freemasons, Masonic Lodge attendance books).

Table 5:

Lodge 165 was the most recently established and most active lodge in Sligo and therefore seemed to have attracted the majority of the new members to the Masonic order in Sligo. For these reasons it is important to take a closer look its membership. It has been discovered that in the period 1902 to 1911 fifty-three new members joined, while in the period January 1912 to September 1914 seventeen joined.

During the First World War the number of members joining only totalled twelve for the four years. However, as can be seen in table 4, membership picked up significantly in the three years following the First World War. The number of members joining the club during the Civil War declined. However, after the Civil War, the number of members joining the lodge increased again.

In the period 1914-49 people were not just joining Lodge 165 in significant numbers, they were also very active members and evidence of this can be found in the average attendance at meetings of the lodge, as can be seen in Table 5. In the two years before the First World War attendances at meetings averaged twenty-eight members per meeting. By the period January 1919 to April 1923 the average attendances at meeting increased to thirty-six and from May 1923 to August 1939 average attendances at meetings increased significantly to fifty-two. Although

average attendances at meetings in the ten years 1939 to 1949 had dropped to forty-six, by 1949 Lodge 165 had become the largest lodge in the province of Connacht.

Membership of the Freemasons in Sligo probably proved beneficial to those Protestants involved in economic and social activities. However, more significantly the Freemasons were important in providing the Protestant membership with a common sense of cultural heritage and helped to facilitate a smooth transition from Union to Free State. As Catholics did not join the organisation, the Masonic Order in Sligo was not a vehicle for integration. Many Protestants and Catholics were members of the Sligo Branch of the British Legion. So did the British Legion prove to be an aid to integration between the Protestants and Catholics in Sligo?

British Legion

On 30 June 1919 Sligo ex-servicemen formed the Sligo branch of the Comrades of the Great War, which became affiliated with the British Legion in 1923.²³ Both Protestant and Catholic ex-service men joined the organisation. R.S. Gorman was elected president of the Sligo branch of the British Legion. It appeared that, following the affiliation of Sligo ex-servicemen with the British Legion, the committee consisted of members of prominent Protestant landowning and business families in Sligo, with an absence of Catholics. However, this may have been due to the fact that committee members were all officers and many Protestant landed and business families in Sligo had a long tradition of serving as commissioned officers in the British Army, but Catholics had dominated the committee of the Sligo branch of the Comrades of the Great War before its affiliation with the British

Legion. Initially the Sligo branch of the British Legion held meetings in a plain building on a street named 'Waste Gardens' in Sligo town, later becoming more established in a large building on Old Market Street, which became known as 'the Hall' or 'the Club rooms'.²⁴

As can be seen from Table 6, the legion was quite popular with ex-servicemen in Sligo in the mid to late 1920s. On 7 November 1926 over 250 members held a parade from the legion's club in Old Market Street to Sligo Town Hall and large services were held in St John's Church, Calry Church of Ireland and in Sligo Catholic Cathedral.²⁵ In January 1927 there were a total of 431 members on the roll. R.S. Gorman expected membership to be higher in that about 1,000 men from Sligo town and 500 men from County Sligo had joined the British Army during the First World War.²⁶ An estimation of the number of Catholic members of the Sligo branch of the British Legion can be obtained from those members who regularly attended legion meetings and war remembrance ceremonies and it appears that about 40 per cent of the legion's members were Catholic.²⁷

Gorman argued that 1,000 men from Sligo town and 500 from the county had joined the British forces in the First World War. Of the 1,000 from the town, 282 Protestants and 718 Catholics served in the British forces.²⁸ A total of 250 men from Sligo town died in the war, of which forty-three were Protestant and 207 were Catholic. This leaves 239 Protestants and 511 Catholics from Sligo town who (if still resident in the town) could have joined the British Legion, so it seems that Catholic ex-servicemen did not join the British Legion in the same proportion as Protestants and this may have been due to the organisation's strong association with the British connection: in the

wake of the War of Independence many Catholic ex-servicemen may not have wished to be seen joining a British organisation. Catholic ex-servicemen in Sligo may have been less inclined to join the British Legion but they were still determined to remember their fallen comrades with Remembrance Day services in Sligo's Catholic Cathedral.

Table 6: Sligo Branch Legion of ex-Servicemen, membership in selected years 1919 to 1949

Year	Members
1919	250
1926	365
1927	431
1931	400
1935	385
1940	340
1946	300
1949	300

Source: *Sligo Independent*, 1919 to 1949

Table 6:

In January 1929 the wives, sisters and daughters of ex-servicemen founded the Sligo Women's Branch of the British Legion with 160 members.²⁹ The women carried out charity work on behalf of ex-servicemen. An examination of the membership list of the organisation indicates that most of the women joining the organisation were the wives and daughters of Protestant businessmen and landowners who had served during the First World War. However, about twenty-five percent of the membership list were Catholics. Membership of the organisation dropped steadily throughout the 1930s and 1940s as can be seen in Table 7.



Remembrance Day at Sligo, 1936. Sligo Branch British Legion – Committee & Officers

Front Row - Capt. A. Lyons, R.I.F., Capt. W. Campbell, F.W. O'Hara, Maj. Perceval I.G., Maj. S. Myles, T.D., Capt. G. Hewson R.I., President, B.L.S.B., M. Conlon, Mayor of Sligo, Chairman, B.L.S.B., Maj. G.A. Benson, R.A.M.C., Capt. H. C.G. McCormack, R.A.O.C., W.A.G. Middleton, R.N.V.R., H. Ross, A.S.C. M.T., M. Moffatt, V.C. Leinster Regiment, Capt. M. Kelly, Connaught Rangers, M. Scanlon, CRs, T. Gray, R.N., Sgt Maj. A. Burnside, CR, Capt. R.S. Gorman, R.I.F., J. Farrell, R.F.A., J. Wallace, CR, Capt. E.J. Shott, P. Coleman, CR, Ald J. Fallon, Hon Sec B.L.S.B., CR, J. Gilmartin, CR, J Shannon, CR.

Sligo in the 1930s.

Table 7: Sligo Women's Branch of the British Legion, membership in selected years 1929 to 1949

Year	Members
1929	160
1930	134
1931	130
1932	125
1933	120
1935	110
1937	100
1939	96
1946	85
1949	80

Source: *Sligo Independent*, 1929 to 1949.

Table 7:

At the A.G.M. of the Sligo Men's Branch of the British Legion on 24 February 1931 a national organiser for the British Legion, Major J. Tynan described Sligo as 'one of their best branches – one of the very best in the British Legion'.³⁰ However, despite the best efforts of the Legion's organisers, a decline in the number of members was experienced by the men's branch of the British Legion in

The Legion supported British involvement in the Second World War and during the war the British Legion continued to help ex-servicemen and facilitated young men joining the British forces. Despite the changed political situation and Ireland's neutrality in the Second World War, the sons of Protestant landowners and businessmen in Sligo were still keen to join the British forces in 1939 and the wives of Protestant landowners held social events to raise money for those suffering in Britain as a result of the war.

Although the British Legion provided a sense of community for all ex-servicemen, Protestants dominated the organisational committee and Catholics did not seem to join in proportion to their numbers, especially considering the large number of Catholic men who had served in the First World War. However, integration between Protestants and Catholics did

take place within the British Legion.

Conclusion

The importance of Protestant fraternal associations such as the YMCA, Sligo Constitutional Club and the Freemasons was crucial in preserving a sense of common Protestant culture and social activity and in providing a setting to ease the transition from union to Free State. Catholics were always permitted to join the YMCA. However, they had their own fraternal organisations such as the Catholic Institute, and the YMCA remained a Protestant association. There was also the Sligo Trades Club, where it seemed that working-class Protestants and Catholics mixed to some extent, although there appears to have been only a very small number of Protestant members. There also seems to have been a consistent good relationship between Protestant and Catholic clubs, in particular the YMCA and the Catholic Institute, which held competitions in order to raise funds and organised joint charitable events.

The members of Sligo Constitutional Club had a tradition of involvement in unionist politics and the club was very popular with Protestants. However, Catholics were beginning to join the organisation in the 1930s and by the 1940s they formed almost 10 per cent of the membership of the club. This does suggest that integration was taking place, although those Catholics who joined the club were financially better off and were possibly joining the club in an attempt to identify with a Protestant club that had traditionally been frequented by wealthier Protestants.

The Masonic Order provided a common sense of security and familiarity for Protestants and proved to be an association for Protestant businessmen. Membership increased over time and especially in the turbulent period from 1919 to 1921.

The organisation continued to be popular after 1921 and attendances at meetings remained high. As a result of Catholic doctrine opposed to its members joining the Masonic Order, Catholics in Sligo may not have been comfortable doing so and Freemasonry did not prove to be a setting for integration.

However, the British Legion offered a vehicle for integration between Protestants and Catholic ex-servicemen in Sligo. The organisation seems to have been particularly popular with Protestant servicemen and their wives; Protestant businessmen and landowners controlled the committee of the legion, and the organisation gave the Protestant community in Sligo a strong sense of belonging to a wider imperial community through the symbols, rituals and commemorations associated with the legion. However, about 40 per cent of the membership was Catholic and many Catholic ex-servicemen were keen to work hard for the legion and attend annual Remembrance Day services.

(Endnotes)

¹ T. Brown, 'Religious minorities in the Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland (1922–1995)', in *Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, Building Trust in Ireland* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1996), p.227.

² F.S.L. Lyons, 'The minority problem in the 26 Counties', in Francis MacManus (ed), *The Years of the Great Test, 1926–39* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1967), p.100.

³ T. Kilgannon, *Almanac and Directory of County Sligo* (Sligo, 1907), p.72.

⁴ *Sligo Independent* [SI], 17 May 1914.

⁵ T. Kilgannon, *Almanac and Directory of County Sligo* (Sligo, 1907), p.71.

⁶ S.C., 16 May 1914; 2 May 1925; 11 May 1935; 21 Apr. 1945; 21 May 1949.

⁷ *Sligo Champion, Sesquicentenary Supplement, 1836–1986* (Sligo, 1986), p.57.

⁸ S.I., 17 March 1923.

⁹ Ibid., 9 January 1926, 13 January 1935, 30 January 1949.

¹⁰ Ibid., 30 May 1925.

¹¹ Ibid., 15 May 1926.

¹² Ibid., 20 June 1931.

¹³ Ibid., 23 November 1935.

¹⁴ Ibid., 29 April 1944.

¹⁵ Ibid., 12 May 1945, 21 May 1949.

¹⁶ Report of the proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland containing the registered Orange Lodges, 1875 (Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland Library, Belfast, Grand Orange Lodge reports).

¹⁷ Report of the proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland containing the registered Orange Lodges, 1910 (Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland Library, Belfast, Grand Orange Lodge reports).

¹⁸ Sligo Constitutional Club (SCL), membership list 1882 (SCL, Miscellaneous Lists, LIS 025).

¹⁹ Sligo Constitutional Club, register of candidates, 1905–29 (SCL, Clubs/Societies, CLU 008).

²⁰ SI, 5 June 1926, 11 June 1927.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Masonic Lodge No. 165: membership registers, 1914 (Grand Lodge of Freemasons, Dublin, Masonic Lodge membership registers); Masonic Lodge No. 20: membership registers, 1914 (Grand Lodge of Freemasons, Dublin, Masonic Lodge membership registers).

²³ S.I., 5 July 1919; Ibid., 6 October 1923.

²⁴ Ibid., 13 November 1926.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 29 January 1927.

²⁷ Ibid., 6 October 1923, 8 November 1924, 15 November 1924, 3 October 1925, 13 November 1926, 29 January 1927, 2 July 1927, 25 January 1930, 1 February 1930, 21 February 1931, 28 February 1931, 22 April 1933, 4 March 1939, 6 April 1940, 15 November 1941, 6 July 1946,

24 March 1949.

²⁸ Ibid., 27 December 1919, 8 October 1921, 27 October 1928, 3 November 1928, 17 November 1928, 13 September 1947.

²⁹ S.I., 25 January 1930.

³⁰ Ibid., 28 February 1931.

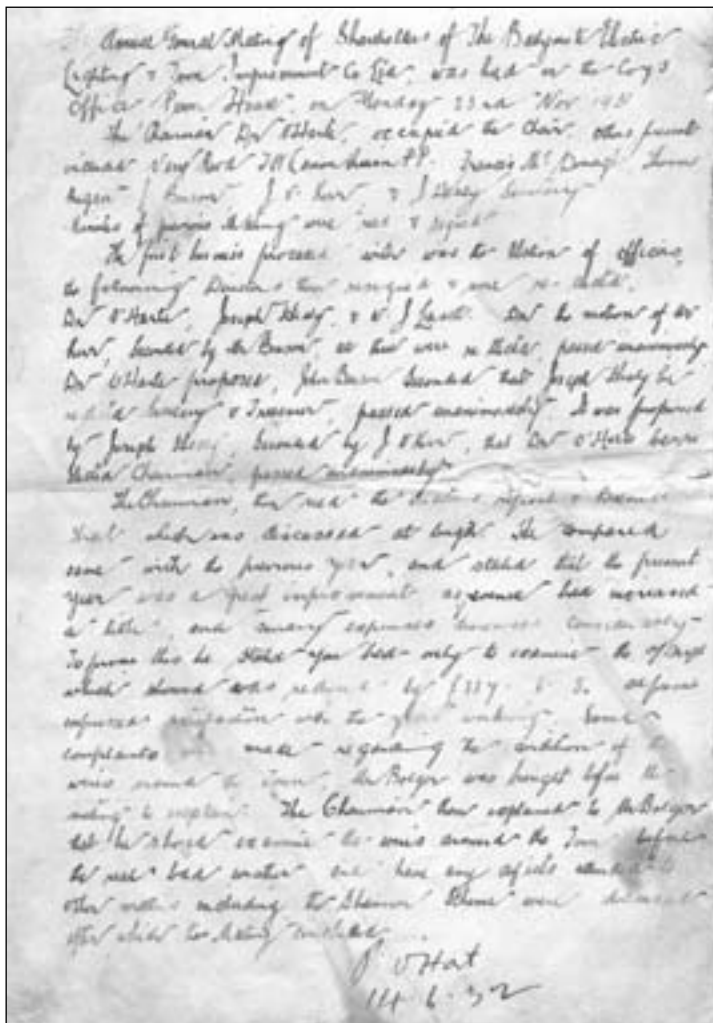
Page from Minutes of Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of The Ballymote Electric Lighting & Town Improvement Co Limited, 23 November 1931

John Coleman

Before the advent of the ESB, Ballymote had its own electricity supply generated from a small power station in the town. The page from the minutes record that in 1931/2 the chairman of the company that provided the service was the GP, Dr Pat O'Hart (whose son Frank succeeded him as GP). Others present at the meeting included Very Revd T. H. Canon Quinn PP (Tom Quinn, uncle of the late Batty Cawley and the younger of two brothers who were PP in Ballymote in succession); Francis McDonagh; Thomas (Tom) Regan (builder & merchant & father of the late John Thomas Regan); J. Benson (draper – my grandfather); J. V. Kerr (chemist – his shop later became Harry Horan's). The secretary was J. Healy (Joe Healy – uncle of the late Joy Meehan (nee Healy) & her sister Pauline Tighe). W. J. Lipsett (father of the late Nuala Droughton) while not present was re-elected as a director.

The meeting took place in the company's office in the 'Power House' – more usually known as the Market House, which is still intact today. It is noteworthy that one of the items discussed at the meeting was 'the Shannon scheme'. The ESB had been established in 1927 and the hydro-electric station at Ardnacrusha on the Shannon near Limerick was completed in July 1929. Gradually over the following years the ESB extended its service to towns around the country replacing the 300 different suppliers, including 15 local authorities. The ESB expansion to rural electrification took place from 1946 to 1979.

Jim KIELTY of O'Connell Street recounted to me his vivid memories of the independent operation in Ballymote. Jim recalls that the



Minutes of the meeting

generation of electricity in the town commenced in the early 1920s and remembers his father giving away the oil lamps which were no longer needed in their pub/shop. The source of power was a Blackstone gas engine and the gas was generated by anthracite. Jim remembers a huge engine flywheel which took some physical strength to start. The generator was used to charge batteries, of which there were about 20, and this in turn guaranteed continuity of supply. A bit of quick internet research has supported Jim's clear recollection - Blackstones were a well known manufacturer based in Stockport in Cheshire where they had been building gas engines since the late 1890s.

Jim remembers that there was a little pumping station beside the milestone outside Dockry's bakery in O'Connell

Street used to pump water sourced in Keenaghan up to the power house where it was used to dampen the anthracite. There was a large concrete tank in the market yard filled with anthracite. Jim recalls that the electricity generated was of very low voltage – not sufficient to give a significant shock – only capable of powering bulbs of 20 watts. Only sufficient power was generated to provide light for the streets, houses and businesses – there were no appliances such as cookers etc. The wire into the house came in alongside a window and there was a meter located just inside the window. Jim remembers that bills for service were paid to Joe D Healy at a window in the market house where payments were also received for services including weighing of potatoes and other goods on the weighbridge which is still at the market house.

Jim remembers that the electrician who installed the system throughout the town

and maintained it thereafter was a Mr Kelly and my mother recalls that he was married to Annie Hart, sister of the late Canon Peter Hart PP, and that they lived upstairs above the Power House. George Heuston looked after the boiler. Jim recalls that the Heustons had lived in a house between the Market House and the old RIC barracks which was destroyed when the barracks was burned down during the troubles (the barracks was of course rebuilt as a bank and until recently was the Garda Barracks). My mother tells me that he later lived in a cottage in Carrownanty. Jim remembers Tom Bolger who is mentioned in the minutes and recollects that he might have been from Waterford or Wexford and whose wife's sister lived at Rockingham – probably in a gate lodge there.

66° South - Travels in Antarctica

Stephen Flanagan

I arrived in Ushuaia in southern Argentina in February of this year to visit the Antarctic, something I have dreamed about since I first heard of a land of icebergs and snow as a boy.

The ship to take me there was called the *Expedition*, and it would sail for two days across the Drake Passage, the most ferocious stretch of water in the world. The *Expedition* was not unlike a hotel – the corridors were wide and carpeted and well lit, and there were lots of staff working on board. There was a library with large windows and a few hundred books on the Arctic and the Antarctic, and near the front of the ship was a large assembly area with comfortable chairs around low tables, all of which were bolted to the floor. Directly above that area, on deck five, was the dining room.

In the briefing folder in my cabin it said that in a storm on a ship there are two kinds of things: things that are on the ground and things that *will* be on the ground. I thought that sounded great. So I may have been the only person on board who was disappointed to find that during our crossing the Drake Passage was almost completely calm. I have always wanted to see a storm at sea, and passing through the Drake without seeing one was like spending a month in Galway without feeling a drop of rain.

That is not to say, though, that the ship did not roll. ‘Calm’ for the Drake Passage is not the same thing as ‘flat’. I spent many happy hours in the library watching the windows dip down to the water and then swing up to the sky. Every few hours a particularly large swell hit us and the ship took a much bigger swing over and back than it normally did. On average, I was told, every seventh wave is particularly large.

Just after four o’clock on the third afternoon the small inflatable boats called Zodiacs started to leave the *Expedition* for the rocky coast of



Mother Nature’s ice sculpture. Another Zodiac is just visible through the arch.

Photo by Stephen Flanagan

Aitcho Island, one of the South Shetland Islands. Excitement was high. Aitcho is a tiny volcanic island, hardly land at all. Up ahead on the shore we could see thousands of penguins walking around or lying down or running after each other in their consistently comical way. It was cold, but not painfully so.

As we got closer we made the interesting discovery that penguin colonies *stink*. From several hundred metres out we could smell the stench of what the guides delicately called ‘guano’. Later on I saw that when a penguin excretes, the stinking viscous substance travels approximately three feet from the originating orifice. If the penguin keeps walking throughout this process, the end result is a line on the ground where the first section is perfectly straight before it tails off in wavy curves. Depending on what the penguin has been eating, the line can be white or red.

The first colony we saw was of Gentoo penguins. They are roughly 60cm tall with a characteristic orange beak. They are intensely curious

creatures. Only a moment or two after I had reached land one of them came over to investigate what was going on. I stood still and he had a peck at my boots, then checked to see if my waterproof pants were edible. Finding they were not, he had a look up at me directly. Apparently seeing little of interest, he continued on about his penguin business.

It was coming towards the end of breeding season during our visit, so the young penguins were on the verge of independence. They are born and grow up on land, and then start to moult. Once all their hair is gone they are ready to enter the sea and fend for themselves. They’ll stay in the water for eight months, until it’s time for them to breed in their turn. When I saw them, many of the young penguins were nearly fully moulted but still had patches of hair, often in unexpected places. I saw several Mohawks.

Aitcho Island curves east to west, and we walked out to the western edge to where there are elephant seals. The ones we saw were still adolescent but were already massive creatures.



Penguins and the frozen mountain vastness. *Photo by Stephen Flanagan*

They were about three metres long and a metre across at their thickest diameter. Elephant seals can weigh over two tonnes when fully grown, though thankfully they can't move very quickly on land. On the walk over to them we saw old whale bones, their original owner long deceased. The rib was about the size of a telephone pole, and we saw vertebrae the size of the stump from a large tree.

When I looked out the porthole the following morning the first thing I saw was a small iceberg. We were in the Antarctic proper. We landed at a place called Cuverville Island. On the way from the ship to the shore in the Zodiac we pushed our way through a field of small bits of floating ice, with the occasional room-size iceberg requiring us to detour around it. The landscape of the island was breathtaking. Glaciers ran down from the mountains to the sea, and sometimes ice fell with a crash to the water below, sending waves in every direction. The ice and snow were sculpted and twisted with the wind and the contours of the land, and in places where the ice was under pressure it was a bright, shining blue.

I hiked with a group to the top of a hill on the island, struggling my way through the deep snow. Looking around from there, the tops of the nearest mountains were lost in cloud,

and the mountains behind them receded backwards into mist. It was impossible to get a photograph that captured the subtlety of the light and shade. Sometimes there was a sound like a distant gunshot as the ice shifted under pressure, and the sound of the ice falling into water was like a great waterfall that flowed only for a moment, thunderous but audibly liquid. Turning to the sea, I could see small pieces of ice no bigger than your hand, then pieces about the size of your head, and then on up to icebergs the size of houses and office blocks. Some of the bigger ones were carved and moulded by the wind and rain in Rorschach shapes. I saw an anchor and a plane and a raised fist, and in the minds of the others there must have been a thousand more.

The next morning we landed on Petermann Island, another desolate place of rock and ice and penguins. It was colder than anywhere we had been before. In the near distance was a steep hill, the top covered in cloud, and on landing we had to walk across rocks like stepping stones to get to shore. There was a colony of Adelie penguins on the island. Their heads are entirely black, without the bright beak of the Gentoo or the white patches of the Chinstrap. They are not as active or curious as the Gentoo, and mostly

they looked at us looking at them.

A few days later we went on a Zodiac cruise around what our tour guide called an 'iceberg graveyard'. Many icebergs gather there due to the vagaries of the currents, and it was a special place. There were hundreds of icebergs of different sizes and complexity. They are acted on by wind and water over time, and the forms made me think of great broken cathedrals of whiteness, graceful and pure, completely unlike anything I had ever seen before. For the second half of our trip around the graveyard it first got cold and then got very cold and then it started to snow, and I got some hint of what it was like for Shackleton and Scott and Amundsen and the other Antarctic explorers of the Heroic Age, as the books call it.

Later that afternoon the clouds opened for a short period and the sun shone, a bright contrast to the mostly overcast skies we had been under. In the sunshine we saw the mountains of the peninsula in the distance, some of them over 4,000m, light playing on the brightness of the snow before the clouds closed in again. It made me think of a camera flash that lit up something beautiful just for an instant.

On our second-last day the destination was the old British research station at Port Lockroy, now a museum. During World War II the British set up several stations in the Antarctic to keep an eye on the Germans. They were worried that the Germans were using the Antarctic as a base for U-boats. Out of that grew scientific research, and it was at stations like Port Lockroy that the hole in the ozone layer was initially identified.

But Port Lockroy was abandoned in the mid-1960s and fell slowly into disrepair. People came and looked at it and forgot to close the doors. The windows got broken. Penguins moved in. Penguins, as we have discussed, have a gift for producing and distributing guano. The building was not a pleasant site or sight. People complained to the British government. The government agreed that Something Should be Done,

in that wonderful way the British sometimes do, and a non-profit trust focused on Antarctic matters was given money to put things right.

The initial plan was just to tidy it up a bit, but the project grew in scope and eventually produced what we saw there. The main building was about the size of the traditional Irish national school, but with lower ceilings and divided into five or six small rooms. They have restored everything to much the way it was in the 1950s, so the kitchen shelves had tins of food and original products from that era. There was a very old packet of Bovril in a cupboard in the hall, and Lifebuoy soap in the bathroom. There were no ropes and nothing was behind glass, so it felt real and immediate.

Four women ran the station, each on a four-and-half-month voluntary stint, and my enthusiasm was possibly spotted as one of them came over to talk to me. We were standing in the bar, a large room that deserved deep-voiced conversation and pipe-smoke, and she pointed out the gramophone. It was an original item, festooned with 'Do not touch' signs. She opened the polished wooden lid and wound it up with a handle from a cluttered drawer beneath, then put on a record. I did not know the song but it was just as I would have hoped a song from that era would be, upbeat and written for dancing, the sound scratchy and wonderful. The girl told me that a man in his 60s had been there a few weeks before me and when she played it for him he declared it to be a foxtrot, and danced with her around the bar. It was a glorious moment to hear it, like eavesdropping on the past.

We sailed over the next day or so to Paradise Bay, a wide stretch of water which was speckled with floating ice and icebergs, and around which mountains rose up in an almost-complete circle. Some of the icebergs were the size of an apartment complex. The overall effect was crazy, the Angelina Jolie of bays; an exposition of beauty so extreme it almost becomes mundane in its remoteness.

Our final stop on the cruise was

Deception Island, and it was a fitting end. From the sea floor a volcano reaches up in the region of 4,000 metres, but only the top few hundred are above the waves, and they form the island. In the deep geological past the volcano erupted and then seawater flowed into the cone, or caldera, and we can only guess at the magnitude and magic of what that event looked like. Today what we see is a ring of mountains with narrow beaches at their feet almost completely encircling a patch of sea. The circle of water is roughly two miles in diameter. The entrance is between a cliff on one side and a high spit of land on the other, and collectively they are called Neptune's Bellows.

It had been a topic of much conversation the previous evening that the narrow, stony beaches offered a chance to go swimming in Antarctic waters, and I had said (possibly with the benefit of a glass or wine or two) that I was definitely going to do it. On the way to land in the Zodiac I realised it was the coldest day of our tour. Everyone was hunched down in multiple layers of warm clothes. When I thought of the swim I felt nervous, and excuses rose like bubbles.

When we landed the wind was strong and ripping. On the beach are eight or ten abandoned buildings from the time of the whalers, falling down from age and the elements. We were told they were off limits, but you would need to have great faith in your own luck to go in even without the warning – they look as though not much is keeping them upright, and some are already collapsed. The buildings are rough and functionally built, and surrounding them are rusted tanks and pipes and gears and bits of machinery. It's a place that could spark a thousand stories.

The hour appointed for swimming arrived. The non-swimmers were gathered in the lee of a large metal construction shaped like an angular half-moon. The opening swimmers were stripping down. I didn't think about it much as I took off my jacket, then my hat, then my scarf. I already had my swimming togs on under my

jeans. While wearing just a t-shirt the wind was bitterly cold, but it didn't seem to feel much colder on bare skin. There were a few other people getting ready at the same time. I turned to them and said 'Let's go!' to find they had already gone, and so short was their dip in the water they were already on the way out. So I picked my solitary way through the crowd of people huddled in their coats and scarves and hats and gloves and stood and looked at the water. I had the presence of mind to hand my camera to one of the people there and ask them to take a few pictures. And then I put my head down and ran. I made it three steps into the water before I dived.

It was astonishing. They had told me that sometimes the shock of the cold makes people involuntarily take a breath underwater, and that was why some of the sailors were standing by to pull people out if necessary. But I felt nothing like that. It was nothing like anything I have ever felt before, an awareness of water and cold and being part of it for a moment, an unsustainable thing by its nature. Almost as soon as it had happened it was over. I stood in the water, which was up to my thighs or so, and a high-pitched sound of cold escaped me. The assembled crowd laughed and cheered, as they did for everyone.

When I got to the shore I found my feet and legs were numb. Feeling came back in my legs in a minute or so, but it took several minutes to get feeling back in my feet and toes. And in fact changing back into my clothes was the most unpleasant part of the whole thing – my fingers were not working quite as usual so zips and buttons were hard, and the rocks and grit of the beach were painful to stand on as feeling returned.

That special moment was the spiritual end of the Antarctic trip. The trip back across the Drake Passage was as calm as the way over, so again I was denied a storm at sea. I'll see it yet. But even as I was getting off the ship back in Ushuaia, I was wondering how I might find a way to go back.

The Gillan Longcars

Eugene Gillan

The earliest mode of transport between Rosses Point and Sligo was by boat. The first of these vessels was a type of hooker. In the Sligo region they were called *longáns*. The last of these was named Thorann and it carried passengers from Rosses Point to Sligo, also picking up people at Locán Ballyweelin and at Ballincar.

With the progress of road transport the Gillan family purchased carriages called longcars. They obtained a licence in 1780 to carry passengers from Rosses Point to Sligo, also to Drumcliffe and the Donegal Road. It specified that the name of the owner would be displayed on the right hand side of the shaft in copper.

It is interesting to note that in the 1750s a meeting was held in Rome to decide on what side of the road transport would travel. The Pope could not attend and sent a Cardinal in his place. It was agreed that all wagons or coaches would travel on the right hand side. However in Britain because of the religious difference they decided to use the left side, the side we are now still using.

In 1860 the Gillans had two longcars and three horse and traps as they were called. They built a small hotel at the entrance to the village. They also erected a building at the back of the old dwelling now called Erin Cottage. This two storey building consisted of two sections, one for stabling the seven horses and the other was accommodation for working men. Upstairs one section was for storing oats and fodder for the horses and the second was for a dance hall. There was also a large rain water tank as there was as yet no piped water available. They were fortunate in having two wells on their land. With the advancement of motor transport changes were taking place but horses were still in use until the 1920s.

In 1921 during the War of



A Gillan longcar taken at the hotel around 1902. *The driver is Tommy Gillan and the other man is Willie Kivlehan. The girl behind the bicycle is Sarah Logan.*

Independence an incident took place. William Gillan was conveying a British Marine who was stationed at Rosses Point Coast Guard station. While travelling at Locán Ballyweelin he was stopped by two IRA members, who took the Marine down to the shore and questioned him for information. He refused and tried to escape and they shot and injured him so William took him to the Marine Barracks.

Next day the Black and Tans from Sligo demanded that William identify the IRA members but he refused. They threatened to burn down the Gillan hotel and property and also a house occupied by a family called Bartly because one of them was a sailor and suspected of smuggling arms to the IRA. The officer in charge of the marines prevented them from burning the buildings but they did burn one of the longcars and the old boat The Thorann which was on the shore.

In 1918 the Gillan family purchased a bus, a 'Leyland Lion'. This had a canvas hood which could be folded back in good weather. There were doors along the sides and it could carry 28 passengers. It had solid tyres.

With the coming of the Dunlop tyre they purchased two new buses, a Chevrolet and a Commer. These were painted blue.

Today the last members of the Gillan family living in Rosses Point are Geraldine Gillan Regan and her family at Erin Cottage.

The Parish Mission in the 19th Century

Padraig Feeley

For Irish Catholics the early nineteenth century brought many changes. During much of that period the powerful voice of Daniel O'Connell the "Liberator" resounded throughout the land and brought a flavour of democracy into the lives of the Irish people for the first time. Charismatic leaders and founders of religious congregations arose, who not only made available new forms of devotional life but were also geared towards providing for the needs of the Catholic population; however most Catholics were more often indescribably poor and the rapid increase in population made their lot more desperate.

The peasants at the bottom end of the social scale constituted the majority of Catholics. Sharp regional differences existed in Connacht and Ulster. Catholics were too poor to build chapels in the way that the more prosperous areas of the country could. Attendance at Sunday Mass was much less regular then it was later in the century. Factors existed that may help to explain the low Sunday Mass attendance; many of the churches were small and the parish was often too poor to extend them or build new ones. As late as the 1830s, and later in parts of Connacht and Ulster many Masses were celebrated in the open air at Mass-Rocks. In some dioceses priests were forbidden to say more than one Mass. Often too, people had not got appropriate clothes to go to Mass. In the 1850s a distinguished French visitor, Fr. Parrraud recorded that in Co. Donegal 4,000 people went barefoot in winter, that rarely had a man a warm shirt, and there were families where five or six grown women had between them only a single dress to go out in. They would take it in turn to go, as often there was only one Mass on Sunday.

The practice of stations, where all the people in the neighbourhood



Thady Connellan 1780 - 1854

assembled for Mass and confessions and often for some instructions, constituted an important substitute for the Sunday Mass in the parish chapel. To attend the station the faithful had to travel no further than a neighbour's house and they did not need to be as well clad as for church on Sunday. For the bishops and clergy of the time the fulfillment of the Easter duty appears to have been the criterion by which they judged the religious adherence of the faithful. The reports regularly prepared by the parish clergy for the bishop's visitation never mention Mass attendance but list the number who have made their Easter duty (*The Catholic Church in the Age of O'Connell* by Donal Kerr).

In 1842 the diocese of Elphin claimed that twenty-six slated chapels had been erected. Since 1825, Achonry diocese recorded new chapels erected in every parish in the 10 years from 1831 to 1841. Prior to 1845 the principal challenge facing the church was that of finding sufficient priests to minister to an ever increasing population. The bishops were desperately trying to address the problem but despite the provision of almost 800 seminary places in Maynooth and the Irish Colleges in Rome, Paris and Louvain the church was fighting a losing battle in its attempts to provide an adequate number of priests to minister to the people. The impact of the famine and the subsequent exodus from the

country saw the population seriously decline and by 1870 the Irish church was not only able to meet its own clerical needs but was increasingly providing priests for other countries. The low ratio of priests to people was a major factor in evaluating the state of the church in Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century and the failure of the clergy consequently to provide adequate religious instruction for the increasingly rural population

The section of the population most neglected by the pastoral situation was that class that made up a quarter of the Catholics that occupied the very bottom of the pyramid. Some insight into their condition was provided in a long affidavit (Nov. 1843) submitted by Thomas Chisholmer Anstey to Propaganda in Rome complaining bitterly about the pastoral neglect by the Irish clergy of their people (*The Devotional Revolution: Emmet Larkin American Historical Review* 1972). In the course of a twelve thousand word indictment, Anstey told the story of having been invited by a local gentleman in the diocese of Elphin to attend the first communion of the children who had been catechized by his daughter at the charity school he had funded in his parish "and this affirmant accordingly " Anstey reported, "attended at the function and saw many young and old having tapers lighted in their hands". He continued: "and these the said lady informed me were first communicants, and she said the parents and grandparents and other adult and aged relatives of the children had taken the opportunity of her coming to instruct the latter to receive instructions themselves with a view to receiving their first communion; amongst others an old man then kneeling at the rails who only a fortnight before had been all his life ignorant of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, having never heard of the existence of such

a doctrine. Nevertheless he and all the rest were always Catholics as had their ancestors before them and had received baptism in the church, and many had been married therein and all meant therein to live and die”.

impaired their pastoral effectiveness. The more baneful of these activities was the result of an increased incidence in clergy misbehaviour which included avarice, drunkenness, immorality, insubordination and

between the people and the pure word of God. It was generally accepted by Catholics that proselytizing activities existed in prisons, schools, orphanages and in particular in the dreaded workhouses.

These years were marked by religious controversies and public disputations. At Easkey in November 1824 a public discussion took place in the old Catholic chapel between three priests and four ministers on an agreed subject namely: “The propriety of the indiscriminate reading of the Bible and right of private judgment in its interpretation and making it the sole rule of faith”. The proceedings lasted for two days and attracted an audience of 600.

Little good came from these “spiritual cockfights” as Richard Whately, Anglican Archbishop of Dublin, called them except the deepening of religious animosities.

The attempts of the evangelical missionaries locally to make common cause led to some curious partnerships but none was more remarkable than that of Thaddeus (or Thady) Connellan and Albert Blest. Born a Catholic in or about 1780, Connellan was a native of Skreen and became one of the outstanding scholars of his day. In 1807 he came into contact with Blest, the Sligo-born Baptist proselytizer, and agent in Ireland for the London Hibernian Society; not only did they become close personal friends but it was through Blest’s influence and exertions that Thady abandoned the faith of his ancestors and embraced the Protestant faith. Like more converts he adopted extreme views and devoted all his diverse talents and endless energy in the pursuit of his newly found religious beliefs. Predictably one of the major tasks assigned to him was the compilation of Irish text books. However when Connellan wished to extend the range of publications available to the Irish natives to include books on husbandry he was altogether at odds with those in control of the Irish branch of the London Society. The reformation they desired was to be confined to the



National Synod of Thurles 1850. Encouraged parish missions

Anstey concluded with the following observation: “and she said that there were many such cases as these and it was a common thing for the people to pass from birth to burial without any other sacraments than baptism in infancy, and the last sacraments at the hour of death; with perhaps marriage in the interval, all which was owing to the neglect of the priests. Nevertheless the parish priest of that parish derived for himself, without counting what his curates received, out of the parochial revenues, an income of not less as the affirmant believes something more than four hundred pounds per year.”

Anstey’s charge of the wilful neglect on the part of the Elphin clergy of which he was a witness however is mitigated by the fact that the ratio of priests to people in Elphin at the time was among the worst in Ireland at one to 3,530 according to historian Emmet Larkin. What has not been appreciated moreover is the appalling pastoral work load at the period in pre-famine Ireland; this was increased and aggravated by a whole series of additional activities and commitments on the part of the clergy, some baneful and others salutary, that further

division. The more salutary included: efforts on their part to provide chapels, schools and charity for the poor as ministers of God. Also demanding on their time was their deep commitment to Catholic Emancipation and the repeal of the Union. All these extra-curricular activities, both baneful and salutary, had the effect of further reducing the time and energy they could devote to more strictly pastoral and religious obligations; it also left the vulnerable amongst their flock open to what the Catholic clergy denounced as proselytism.

The New Reformation to convert the Roman Catholics to Scriptural Protestantism, was a crusade to accomplish what the first Reformation had not achieved and the expression “they took the soup” is still very much alive in the West. Each denomination was convinced that theirs was the only path to Heaven.

No less than five societies were founded in Ireland to distribute bibles and religious tracts to Catholics. Zealous missionaries of the new Reformation vigorously preached the gospel in villages and on fair days; denouncing the priests as standing

realm of the spiritual.

From the very beginning of the Protestant missions the Catholic clergy alerted the hierarchy; Peter Fitzmaurice parish priest of Clifden wrote to Daniel Murray, Archbishop of Dublin (1823 – 52) “Proselytism was never so rampant as now. There is a staff of nineteen peripatetic Bible readers (or Jumpers) under the command of a bankrupt landlord of Clifden doing all the mischief in their power. The funds of the British Association are perverted to their unholy purpose, viz the changing of bad Catholics and of course worse Christians, into good hypocrites.”

The Catholic hierarchy realized that they had to mount an equally aggressive campaign to combat the efforts of the Irish Church Missions.



John MacEvilly, Bishop of Galway 1857-1881 and Archbishop of Tuam 1881-1902

Some other method of evangelizing the people would be attempted. In France the chosen instrument of the Church for reconverting the people after the desolation caused by the French Revolution was the Church Mission.

Paul Cullen had served as Rector of the Irish College in Rome in the 1840s and was appointed Archbishop

of Armagh in 1849. Three years later he was transferred to Dublin. One of his first acts following his Dublin appointment was to endow the Vincentian community with a thousand pounds to fund their mission in Dublin. A short time later he began to lay plans for an assault on the Protestant proselytisers in the west of Ireland.

The first formal parish mission was given by the Irish Vincentians Father in 1842 in Athy. It was scheduled for four weeks; it extended for another three. Many remained all night in the church and away from their homes for five and six days awaiting an opportunity of confessing. The mission that established the Vincentians’ national reputation however was that given in Dingle on the eve of the Great Famine. In reporting the Dingle mission Father Dowley wrote to his superior in Paris: “The inhabitants of this district have been for several years reduced to extreme poverty because of the persecution of the landlords and their agents”. The demon of heresy he charged, “has been fully employed to destroy the faith of these unfortunates: gifts, houses, money were all offered to those who would turn Protestant”. Dowley added grimly “a thing unknown in this country since the introduction of heresy, some hundreds of these ignorant poor sold their souls to the devil by outwardly renouncing the faith of their fathers.”

During the Dingle mission, it was discovered there were some one thousand adults who had not been confirmed. During the confirming of these adults, there occurred a most remarkable incident that speaks volumes about the emotional response of the people of the parish mission. “Even at the distance of time”, the leader of the Vincentian mission, Father McNamara reported many years later in his Memories: “I recollect so well the difficulty there was in maintaining order amidst such a mass of people as they came forward. The bishop remained seated within the sanctuary enclosure and the candidates for confirmation had to

be brought to him two by two. The ceremony was on this occasion very tedious; the patience of the people gave way. Apprehending this before hand we engaged the services of the Christian confraternity which we had already instituted in the parish, to form a cordon across the entire width of the church in order to keep back the pressure and admit those who were to be confirmed according as the bishop could received them but the difficulty



Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin and later Cardinal

was in maintaining the cordon. The people pressed forward and the confraternity men pressed them back until unable to resist by any other means, they had actually to use sticks and clubs in the struggle, and what was scarcely to be believed, blood flowed copiously from the blows inflicted, the confraternity men feeling they had a duty to perform even in so terrible in extremity and we who attended the bishop right and left had to witness with his lordship how the poor people fought their way to come forward. Such a scene is only to be imagined amongst a poor rude people urged onward by their religious enthusiasm to offer as one may say violence to heavens” McNamara concluded.

In the following twenty five years not only were virtually all the thousand parishes in Ireland visited again and again but even a fourth time. The cumulative effect was a remarkable national religious revival that profoundly affected both the character of the Irish people and the course of history.

The establishment of Protestant missions in Connemara during the

famine saved the lives of thousands. The poverty stricken and starving flocked to their schools and religious services to obtain food. The Catholic clergy was aghast at the threat to their flock and responded with an aggressive campaign of opposition.

In 1857, after a request from the new bishop Galway John MacEvilly, the Vincentian Fathers carried out a mission in Oughterard. Following the mission MacEvilly wrote "There is not a single vestige of the accursed system of soupierism existing amongst them even in Oughterard which most certainly could have been lost to the Church of God were it not for the glorious mission of the Vincentian Fathers". Further MacEvilly stated that not a single proselytizing school was open. As if to demonstrate the extent of his victory MacEvilly added that even the rector's gate keeper and family were received "into the Church and admitted to confirmation". MacEvilly's enthusiasm was somewhat premature as the problem in one form or another dragged on for a number of years. Finally in 1866 the bishops seemed pleased with all his efforts: he wrote "Thank God, at present Oughterard is free of proselytism".

In March 1854 the Jesuits arrived in Sligo town; the mission extended over a period of three weeks. The 'Sligo Champion' reported: "The altered demeanour of the people, visible to even a casual observer is in itself a proof, and a convincing one, of the good they have affected. We understand there has been an utter demolition for the present of these secret societies which were the parent stems from which sprung guilt and crime".

The following is a list, by no means complete, of early missions in some parishes in Co. Sligo: Sligo town 1854 (March) Jesuits. Tourlestrane 1867 (May and June) Jesuits. Banada 1873 (May) "little mission" Jesuit. Ballymote 1876 (Sept) Redemptorists. Tubbercurry 1886 (Sept) Oblates. Coolaney 1889 (Winter) Franciscans. Mullinabreena 1889 (Winter)

Franciscans. Bunninadden 1891 (May) Oblates. Curry 1894 (Mar) Redemptorists. Mullinabreena 1903 (Jan-Feb) Vincentians. Attymass 1904 (Jan-Feb) Vincentians. Collooney 1906 (May-June) Redemptorists. Keash 1908 (Nov) Capuchins. Gurteen 1908 (Nov) Capuchins.

The missionaries made great efforts to consolidate the gains; they encouraged the people to enroll in confraternities and sodalities and other pious associations. The most impressive and sacred hours came for the parishioners at the closing ceremonies. In a great number of parishes, during the last day a large stone mission cross with a suitable inscription was raised with great solemnity in the church yard. The parish's mission cross erected in Sligo stood on the site of the old chapel at the junction of Cranmore road and the Nun's Hill. It was moved a number of times and is now sited on the south side of Saint Ann's Church.

One of the most effective techniques for the continuance of religious practice and devotion was having a Solemn Office and Requiem Mass said during the mission for all the deceased parents, relatives and friends of the parish. The realization that their loved ones could also partake of the benefits of the mission stirred up the most intense feeling among the participants. If the experience of a parish mission is multiplied by more than some two thousand times between 1850 and 1900 the magnitude of the religious revival became obvious.

Cardinal Paul Cullen testified before the Powis Commission on elementary education in Ireland in 1869; he was asked if he did not think that the great moral improvement in recent years in Ireland was the result of the works of the National Board of Education established in 1831 (The National Schools). The cardinal replied that he did not think the great improvement in morality and knowledge had been to any considerable extent the Board's work. Rather he thought, that the Catholics themselves had done a great deal by building convents, orphanages, schools and churches, "but there was

another reason", the cardinal pointed out, "For great improvement the Catholic clergy soon after Catholic Emancipation to give 'mission' throughout the country. Almost every parish in Ireland must have had a mission since that time". These missions the cardinal insisted, "were the cause of the greatest improvement in the morals of the country and consequently of the utmost benefit to society".

According to historian Emmet Larkin: the loss of the Irish language and the attendant loss of the traditional culture of the common people is crucial to understanding the astonishing upsurge in religious devotion between 1850 and 1875 and that long before the famine the Irish had become cultural emigrants having "to move in their minds before actually moving in space" and that the Irish people who were aware of being Irish were gradually losing their identity, and this is what accounts for their becoming pious and practising Catholics in the generation after the famine.

Missions were first and last to raise the moral climate in a parish by recalling the faithful to worthy spiritual values. If it is true, as in politics, "that all religion is local" then the following, recorded in "the Catholic Directory of Ireland" (Dublin 1866), gives validation to the claim: at a Redemptorist mission the previous year in the pro-Cathedral in Dublin nearly £800 was received as restitution money and forwarded to the parties from whom it had been stolen.

Further Reading:

Soupers and Jumpers by Miriam Moffitt, The History Press Ltd, 2008

Christianity in Ireland Revisiting the Story Edited by Brendan Brodshaw and Daire Keogh, Columba Press, 2002

"Memories of the Congregation of the Mission in Ireland, England and Scotland" by Father Thomas McNamara.

Colonel Oliver O’Gara 1694 – c. 1761 in Europe

Maura O’Gara-O’Riordan

James Oliver O’Gara was born in Paris in 1694, three years after his parents went into exile on the defeat of the Jacobite army of James II. Like his father and grandfathers, he and two of his brothers would follow military careers. Archival sources, army records, correspondence and pedigree charts dating from the eighteenth century, have made it possible to trace his progress through the army ranks, and to provide an account of an association with relatives in Ireland at this time.

Colonel Oliver O’Gara and Lady Mary Fleming resided with other army families in exile at St. Germain, outside Paris from the winter of 1691-2. Oliver served with the Irish Guards of James II as lieutenant colonel but by 1696 had been appointed colonel in the Queen’s Regiment of Dragoons in France, a rank he held for a number of years. By 1718, he had retired on a pension.¹ He died some time between 1719 and 1727.

Eleven baptisms are recorded for the children of Oliver and Mary in the church of St. Germain.² Four of their six sons survived. Three of these, John, James Oliver and Joseph, first enlisted in the Irish brigades in France but went on to serve in the Irish brigades in Spain for most of their military careers. The fourth son, Charles, did not serve in the army but was employed by Leopold, Duke of Lorraine.³

The Irish brigades were formed initially in France following the exile of thousands of Jacobites after the 1689–91 war in Ireland had ended. In addition, Jacobite soldiers and officers who had opted for exile in France were later incorporated into the Spanish army. A number of Irish brigades were established in Spain after 1700, the year in which Philip of Anjou was appointed Philip V of Spain. By 1716, Irish brigades in

France numbered five battalions of infantry and one horse battalion while Spain had five battalions of infantry and two battalions of dragoons.⁴

Up to 1718 all the regiments were listed under the name of their most senior officer but from that year forward, the regiments in Spain were given a permanent name. The seven regiments were named the Edinburgh and Dublin dragoons, and the five infantry battalions named the Irlanda, Hibernia, Limerick, Ultonia and Waterford.

Records of the officers of all seven Irish regiments serving under the king of Spain are held in the Archivo General de Simancas in Valladolid, Spain.⁵ The documents consist of the reviews undertaken by the Spanish military authorities and include references to the three O’Gara brothers, John Patrick, James Oliver and Joseph Arthur. John’s name appears once in the regiment of Limerick on the reserve list in 1718, after which he enlisted in the regiment of Irlanda.⁶ The regiment of Irlanda has entries for John and Joseph and the regiment of Hibernia for Oliver only.

Descendants of Irish emigrant soldiers, officers and civilians filled vacancies in the continental Irish brigades. Members of former Gaelic chieftain families and descendants of Norman titled families enrolled in the officer section of the armies of France and Spain as the authorities in Europe acknowledged their birthright; in Spain an individual officer was regularly described as ‘gentleman’⁷. The lowest rank in the officer’s group appears to have been that of sergeant, described as a non-commissioned military office. The position of sergeant was followed in the hierarchy of the armed forces by ensign/cadet, lieutenant, captain, major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel with a very rare reference to

the rank of brigadier. Occasionally the term commander was used in place of major. Adjutant was attached to a military officer who sometimes acted as administrative assistant to a senior officer.

When the armies were not at war, an officer could be listed as a *reformado* or *graduado*, which meant that he was on half-pay and unemployed, sometimes described as being on reserve.⁸ A regiment was normally commanded by a colonel, occasionally a lieutenant colonel. Each regiment was divided into companies, commanded by captains.

James Oliver O’Gara, was the second-born son of Oliver and Mary.⁹ From the date of his baptismal record in December 1694 to 1715, no account of his early life has been discovered. Throughout his lengthy military career in the Irish brigades, James Oliver was recorded simply as ‘Oliver’.¹⁰

Oliver’s name first appeared in a review of the regiment of Colonel Francis Wauchope in 1715, where he was recorded as a *capitan reformado*,¹¹ a captain on reserve and on half-pay. Colonel Wauchope had been appointed to the regiment in 1715 to replace Colonel Walter Bourke who had died in the early months of 1715. His death occurred very soon after Bourke’s regiment had been transferred from the service of France to that of Spain. Walter Bourke had been a friend of the O’Gara family. He had served with Oliver senior in the 1689 Irish parliament of James II as a representative for Co. Mayo and held the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Jacobite war in Ireland. Bourke was sponsor at the baptism of Oliver’s sister, Anne Marie Elenor, in 1707.¹²

Wauchope’s regiment was given the permanent name Irlanda in 1718.¹³ Prior to receiving its new name the regiment was formed from

the regiment of the Queen of England which had been established in France to accommodate the Irish troops who had come to France in 1691. The first review undertaken for the regiment Irlanda was in 1721 but Oliver's name was not included, as he had enlisted with the Irish regiment of Hibernia by this time, also in the Spanish service. As Oliver was listed in Wauchope's regiment in 1715 he may have been in the regiment of Irlanda for a short period but no review of Irlanda was taken before Oliver's name appeared in the regiment of Hibernia in 1720.

Oliver O'Gara enlisted with the regiment of Hibernia between 1718 and 1720, possibly in 1719 when a new second battalion appears to have been formed.¹⁴ In the first review of the regiment of Hibernia in 1720, Oliver was noted as bearing the rank of captain, a position he held through five further reviews up to and including 1737.¹⁵ Hibernia was the first Irish infantry regiment to be organized in the army of the king Philip V of Spain. *Hibernia was to be officered exclusively by Irishmen. The Royal Warrant of Hibernia expressly ordains that they were to be a means of employment for young Irishmen of noble family.*¹⁶

Prior to adopting the permanent name of Hibernia, the regiment was known as the Castelar regiment and was commanded by the Patino family members, who enjoyed the title Marqués de Castelar of Spain.

Oliver's name appeared in reviews of the regiment of Hibernia up to 1759, each entry recording a higher rank. In 1747, he was listed as commander/major, in 1753 as lieutenant colonel, and in 1759 as colonel. Oliver was promoted to the rank of colonel in the regiment of Hibernia in 1755,¹⁷ and was recorded as the fifth colonel of the regiment¹⁸. The regiment fought through the whole Italian campaign from 1742 to 1748, which included the battle of Camposanto in 1743 and the battle of Velletri in 1744, where many officers

and men of the Irish brigades in Spain were killed or injured. The regiment of Irlanda also took part in the Italian campaign and among the seriously injured was Oliver's youngest brother, Joseph, who held the rank of captain in that regiment.¹⁹

The Royal Archives at Windsor record correspondence from an 'O Gara' to a Mr. Edgar in 1745.²⁰

Mr. Edgar Esq., 28 February 1745

Sir

[two words illegible] goodness you are pleased to favour our Royal masters subjects with, emboldens me to pray you to remitt the inclosed to its address Captn. O Gara, who did not receive the letters I wrote to him by the postway.

I shall also most humbly pray you to make my most loyal and dutyfull respects acceptable to his Majesty and his Royal highness the Duke of York and can averr the honour of obeying yr. Commands, shall ever more be coveted by

*Yr most humble and obed. Servt.
O Gara*

The signature 'O Gara' on this letter of 1745 bears a close resemblance to a signature on a letter that was written in 1756/7 which suggests that Oliver was the signatory of the two letters. Oliver was a captain, or possibly a major, in the regiment of Hibernia at that time. The 1745 date suggests that the item referred to as being 'inclosed' was destined for Joseph O'Gara, a Captain in the regiment of Irlanda wounded at Velletri the previous year. James Edgar was confidential clerk to Prince James Francis Edward Stuart, son of James II. James Francis Edward, signing as the Prince of Wales, had been sponsor at the baptism in 1700 of one of Oliver senior's sons, Francis Edward, who had died as a child.

It is very likely that Oliver had some contact with his Irish cousins, the

brothers Bernard and Michael O'Gara, natives of Co. Mayo who were described 'as very close relatives'²¹. Their father Charles is reputed to have moved from Sligo to Mayo. It is generally held that Charles was a son of Fearghal O'Gara, patron of the Annals of the Four Masters²². Both Bernard and Michael studied in France, Bernard at the Jesuit College in Douai and Michael at the Irish College in Paris. Bernard was appointed archbishop of Tuam in 1723 and served there until his death in 1740. Michael lived in Spain for many years and was rector of the Irish College in Alcala, Spain from 1728 to 1740.²³ During Michael's residency in Alcala, his three cousins, the brothers John, Oliver and Joseph O'Gara, were serving in the Irish brigades in Spain. Michael was appointed archbishop of Tuam in 1740 following the death of his brother, Bernard. Shortly before Bernard died, he had a stone altar erected in memory of his father at the Augustinian friary at Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo. The following inscription appears on the stone *PRAY FOR Y SOULS OF CHARLIS O GARA AND FAMILY FOR WHOM THIS TOMB WAS MADE BY HIS SON BER. AB. OF TUAM AN. DM. 1739.*²⁴

There is documentary evidence that correspondence may have been exchanged between Oliver O'Gara and his second cousin, Charles O'Connor, the antiquarian of Belanagare. Charles explained the blood relationship between Oliver and himself on two occasions in correspondence with his friends. He refers to a Colonel O'Gara being quartered in St. Sebastian and describes him as his 'nearest relation in this kingdom, his father and mine being brother and sister's children'²⁵. The Colonel O'Gara referred to in this correspondence could only have been Oliver as he alone of the three O'Gara brothers in military service in Spain had reached the rank of colonel by 1756. John died with the rank of

lieutenant colonel some time after 1737, and Joseph, who was noted as a lieutenant colonel in the review of 1761, did not receive his commission as colonel until 1762, six years after O'Connor's letter was penned.

The content of O'Connor's letter of 1756 related to the question of ownership of the original manuscript of the Annals of the Four Masters which had allegedly been presented to the patron, Fearghal O'Gara, Oliver's great-grand father, in 1636. It has been suggested by at least one historian that Colonel Oliver senior brought the original O'Gara manuscript of the Annals to St. Germain in 1691.²⁶

Oliver O'Gara and the MacDermots of Coolavin were related through a number of associations. The strongest relationship in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries appears to have been through the O'Conors of Belanagare. Oliver's granduncle, Charles O'Connor of Belanagare, was a first cousin to Hugh Mac Dermot of Shruffe, Coolavin. Therefore, Oliver had a number of distant Mac Dermot cousins, including Roger Mac Dermot, who was recorded in the regiment's review of 1753 as a cadet in the Irish regiment of Hibernia.²⁷ This same review had listed Oliver O'Gara as lieutenant colonel. Roger was granted leave from the army and came to visit his parents in 1757.²⁸ He carried a letter home to his father, Charles Mac Dermot, from 'O'Gara' which is filed with the letters of Charles O'Connor of Belanagare in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.²⁹ The letter reads:

Most honorable Sr:

The departure of yr. most worthy son Mr. Roger Mac Dermott / whom, I really esteem and love very much to see you and pay you his filial duty procures me the occasion of assuring you and yr. noble and worthy family of my best respects: after so long an absence from you I really believe it will be agreeable to you to see so deserving a Son, who by his good behaviour and sweetness of temper

has gained himself the esteem and applauses of all his Acquaintances abroad tho.h he seemed to me to be a little bashfully reluctant to undertake this journey.

*My good wishes for him and Employment I have ... the Master ... procured ... the facility of obtaining this licence for him, to procure you the satisfaction of seeing him tho.h I bereave myself of his Company for some time. My best respect I pray to all yr dear family and command evermore,
Dr. Cosn.
yr. most respectful,
humble Servant,
'O'Gara.*

It can be assumed that the 'O'Gara' who wrote the letter to Roger's father was Oliver O'Gara who had been appointed colonel of the regiment of Hibernia in 1755. The tradition in Gaelic chieftain families was that the eldest surviving male of the senior line used his surname only when signing documents. His signature almost certainly indicates that his older brother John, whose military records ceased at the review of 1737, was by then deceased. As this letter is filed with the letters of Charles O'Connor, the antiquarian, it is possible that it was he who contacted his cousin, Oliver O'Gara, with a request for a recommendation on behalf of their third cousin, Roger, for acceptance into the regiment of Hibernia.

In a letter to his father's second cousin, Brigadier Thomas O'Connor, written about the year 1769, Charles O'Connor explains his relationship to Thomas and appears anxious to show how they were both related to Colonel Oliver O'Gara senior as he, Charles, had been made aware that Colonel Oliver senior's son was in poor health. ...

I rejoice in the honor I derive from my relation to your family. Your great grandmother Dorothy O'Connor,

*my father's aunt, was born in the house where I am now writing, and her sister was the mother of the late Colonel Oliver O'Gara, who died in St. Germain en Laye. I only mention this from an apprehension that probably you are a stranger to your relation to the present colonel, who I hear is in a very [languishing] state of health.'*³⁰

The 'present colonel' referred to is not identified but could not have been either of Oliver senior's two eldest sons, John or Oliver, as their deaths had been recorded by March 1761,³¹ eight years earlier. The 'present colonel' could therefore only be Oliver senior's youngest son, Joseph who was appointed brevet colonel in 1762. The appointment as a brevet colonel was a special commission to a higher rank without the corresponding pay. The recipient was usually an officer who had given outstanding service to the country in which he served.

Two extant Mac Dermot pedigree charts were signed by members of the O'Gara family. The first was signed in 1719 for Roderick, son of Brian Mac Dermot and nephew of Hugh Mac Dermot and is filed with the manuscript of the Annals of Connacht in the Royal Irish Academy. Roderick was a second cousin to Colonel Oliver O'Gara senior. The signature on Roderick's chart appears to be F. Gara, though the letter 'F' is indistinct. No suggestion has been put forward as to the identity of the signatory.³²

The second Mac Dermot pedigree signed by an O'Gara is of greater significance. In his History of Catholic Archbishops of Tuam, written in 1882, Oliver Burke wrote: *Archbishop O'Gara's place of residence is unknown, and the last document that bears his signature is a certificate dated the 8th November 1738, authenticating a pedigree of the MacDermots of Coolavin, Princes of Moylurg'.*³³

The original document³⁴ which Burke

consulted contains three signatures.
Bernd. AR Tuam 8th Nov. 1738.
 [Bernard O'Gara, Archbishop of Tuam]
Johannes O Hart, Ep. 9th April Anno Domine 1739. [Bishop of Achonry]
James Kildarenis 22nd Oct. 1739.
 [James Gallagher, Bishop of Kildare]

Oliver O'Gara died between December 1759 and the 1 March 1761, John had died after 1737 and Joseph in c.1770. The fourth brother, Charles O'Gara, Count of the Holy Roman Empire, died in Brussels 15 May, 1777. So ended the association of the offspring of Colonel Oliver O'Gara senior with the armies of France and Spain, with civilian life in continental Europe and with their cousins in Ireland.

(Endnotes)

- ¹ Stuart Papers, Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, RA SP/Box 3/89 Spring 1718, p. 11. By permission of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- ² C. E. Lart, *Jacobite Extracts, Registers of St. Germain-en-laye*, 2 vols (London, 1910-12); M. O'Gara-O'Riordan 'Births, baptisms and deaths in the exiled O'Gara family after the Jacobite defeat' *The Corran Herald*, (2009/2010), No. 42, pp 25-9.
- ³ J.C. O'Callaghan, *History of the Irish Brigades in the Service of France*, (Dublin, 1869), p 88.
- ⁴ Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause*, p. 150.
- ⁵ R. Wall, 'Irish Officers in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 5:4 (1977), 431.
- ⁶ For an account of John's army career see M. O'Gara-O'Riordan 'Changing circumstances for the O'Gara family and Jacobite residents of Saint- Germain' *The Corran Herald*, (2010-2011), pp 75-9.
- ⁷ A. MacDermott, 'Irish Regiments in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 2:9 (1952), 259.
- ⁸ R. Wall, 'Irish Officers in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 5:4 (1977), 431-2.
- ⁹ C. E. Lart, *Jacobite Extracts, Registers of Saint Germain-en-laye*, 2 vols (London, 1910-12), vol. i, p. 112; M. O'Gara-O'Riordan 'Births, baptisms and deaths in the exiled O'Gara family after the Jacobite defeat' *The Corran Herald*, (2009/2010), No. 42, p. 26.
- ¹⁰ To avoid confusion, his father will be referred to as Oliver senior throughout this article.
- ¹¹ H. Gallwey, 'Irish Officers in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 6:2 (1981), 207.
- ¹² C. E. Lart, *Jacobite Extracts, Registers of St. Germain-en-laye*, vol. ii, p. 110.
- ¹³ H. Gallwey, 'Irish Officers in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 6:2 (1981), 204.
- ¹⁴ H. Gallwey and J. Garland, 'Irish Officers in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 6:4 (1983), 461.
- ¹⁵ H. Gallwey and J. Garland, 'Irish Officers in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 6:4 (1983), 466.
- ¹⁶ A. MacDermott, 'Irish Regiments in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 2:9 (1952), 260.
- ¹⁷ M. Walsh, 'A Galway Officer of the Spanish Navy, JGAHS 26: (1954/5), 32.
- ¹⁸ A. MacDermott, 'Irish Regiments in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 2:9 (1952), 267; H. Gallwey and J. Garland, 'Irish Officers in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 6:5 (1984), 601.
- ¹⁹ Micro film exp. 1085, Alcántara, Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid, 53r; H. Gallwey, 'Irish Officers in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 6:2 (1981), 207.
- ²⁰ Stuart Papers, Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, vol. 263, no. 23. By permission of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- ²¹ Micro film exp. 1085, Alcántara, Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid, 39r.
- ²² N. Ó Muraíle, 'The townlands of Began,' in M. Comer and N. Ó Muraile (eds), *Béacán/Bekan: portrait of an East Mayo parish* (Ballinrobe, 1986), p. 41.
- ²³ P. O'Connell, *The Irish College at Alcala De Henares 1649-1785* (Dublin 1997) pp 40-1.
- ²⁴ M.J. Heaney, 'Bekan churches, clergy and religious,' in M. Comer and N. Ó Muraile (eds), *Béacán/Bekan: portrait of an East Mayo parish* (Ballinrobe, 1986), p. 70.
- ²⁵ C. Coogan Ward & R.E. Ward (eds), *The Letters of Charles O'Conor of Belanagare*, 2 vols (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980), i p. 17. Charles O'Conor's paternal grandfather, also named Charles O'Conor, and Mary O'Conor – Oliver O'Gara's paternal grandmother – were brother and sister.
- ²⁶ P. Walsh, *The Four Masters and their work*, pp 26, 27, 29.
- ²⁷ H. Gallwey and J. Garland, 'Irish Officers in the Spanish Service', *The Irish Genealogist*, 6:5 (1984), 602; D. Mac Dermot, *MacDermot of Moylurg*, (Nure, Manorhamilton, 1996), p. 354.
- ²⁸ D. Mac Dermot, *MacDermot of Moylurg*, (Nure, Manorhamilton, 1996), p. 255.
- ²⁹ Royal Irish Academy Stowe MSS Bi1 letter no. 80.
- ³⁰ C. Coogan Ward & R.E. Ward (eds), *The Letters of Charles O'Conor of Belanagare*, 2 vols (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980), i pp 271-2.
- ³¹ Micro film exp. 1085, Alcántara, Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid, 50r.
- ³² D. Mac Dermot, *MacDermot of Moylurg*, (Nure, Manorhamilton, 1996), p. 332.
- ³³ O. J. Burke, *History of Catholic Archbishops of Tuam* (Dublin, 1882) p. 193.
- ³⁴ I am grateful to Madame Felicity MacDermot at Coolavin House, Monasteraden, Co. Sligo, who allowed me access to this document.

Keeping the Peace in Keash 100 Years Ago

John Higgins

The Royal Irish Constabulary was the right arm of the state 100 years ago in Ireland. Its members had responsibility for keeping the peace and suppressing sectarian riots and agrarian disputes. They collected agricultural statistics and performed a variety of duties relating to food and drugs, weights and measures, explosives and petroleum. They also acted as census enumerators.

Recruits to the force were practically all farmers' sons. On appointment a recruit took an oath of loyalty to the Crown and after six months was given the right to police.

Constable Jeremiah Mee, a native of Glenamaddy, Co Galway, gives a vivid account of his time in the RIC Barracks in Keash in his memoirs "J Anthony Gaughan 1975". Stationed in Keash from February 1911 to August 1913, he tells how he often wondered why a police barracks should be situated along the roadside in such an out of the way place. The only other houses in the area were the curate's residence and the local pub. Apart from the pub beside the barracks there were two other pubs in the district, and beyond keeping a watchful eye on these there was nothing whatever to do in the line of police work.

A sergeant and three constables were stationed here and on his first day in the barracks one of the constables set about preparing his tea. The local curate called in that evening, a pack of cards was produced and the curate joined in a game of "Nap".

The following morning the barracks servant gave him a full account of the history of the area. She told him that the sergeant tended to be a bit grumpy in the mornings but later on in the day he would be the nicest man in Ireland. She then called the other members to come down to breakfast and warned them that as it was after nine o'clock the District Inspector could arrive at

any time to inspect the men and the barracks.

After breakfast the sergeant made an entry in the diary showing that the Barracks Orderly paraded at 8 am and that the General Parade took place at 9 am. In less than an hour both men and barracks were spick and span.

Each year a "gathering" was held in the area and thousands came from the adjoining parishes. Tinkers also came in great numbers. These festive assemblies often ended in large scale drunken fighting. Extra police would be drafted in to cope on such occasions.

The public house in Culfadda and the one in Carrowcorry were about two miles away and all patrols led directly or indirectly to one or other of these which must have been the best inspected public houses in Ireland.

Mee tells us "Word was received towards the end of my first week in Keash that the Inspector was coming on his quarterly inspection. The news had the same effect as the presence of a hawk on a flock of chickens. The servant almost turned the place upside down. Buckles, belts and other pieces of equipment were polished and shined, and each constable was given an Act of Parliament to study.

The great day of inspection came at last. We came out of the ordeal with flying colours and got a good entry for our smart turn-out and for our answering in police duties. Before the Inspector had turned the corner of the road after leaving the barracks on his way back to Sligo, the barracks servant was allowed to go home and the sergeant led us down to Kelly's pub where we had a lengthy post-mortem on the inspection".

With the inspection over, "home rule" was re-established. Constable Mee tells us about his cycle trips around the District. There was no crime in the District and patrols were

a mere matter of form. The duty list was put up on the wall each morning by the sergeant but nobody took the least notice of it. The Barracks Orderly kept the diary in such a way that the entries agreed with the contents of the slip on the wall. The patrolling of the District was reduced to a fine art. There were four Justices of the Peace in the locality and it was an unwritten law that "one of us would walk or cycle past each Justice's house at least once a week. This would show that we were active and should any question of dereliction of duty ever arise these Justices would be powerful witnesses on our side. The fact that we were seen prowling around on the occasions of fair mornings would be discussed at many firesides that night. The sergeant called this kind of duty 'prevention of crime'. In reality it was good propaganda and would keep the people's minds off the true fact that we were doing practically nothing, for indeed there was little for a policeman to do in rural Ireland to do in those peaceful days."

Each constable was also supposed to do at least two patrols each month during the hours between midnight and 8 am. In Keash those who were detailed to do these patrols went to bed. However the entry for the patrol was not made until someone took a spin around next morning to make sure all was well.

The sergeant was an expert at varying the wording of reports in the patrol book. He always made some special note such as "saw a light in the window of Ruane's pub, inspected the premises and found all regular". On one occasion when his conscience was troubling him about these false entries, he consulted the local curate to see if his actions were sinful. The curate replied "No, it's not a sin but it will be serious if you are caught at it".

The constable gives a very humorous and interesting account of doing the “Tillage Census” in the District. This census had to be made in June each year, every house visited, the stock counted, and full details of tillage, grazing land and shrubbery recorded. Constable Brown was designated to accompany Constable Mee on this work, and as he had done this job previously he knew how to complete it in the shortest possible time. Jeremiah in his own words says “I soon realised the value of Brown’s advice and acquired the art of doing the maximum amount of work with the minimum amount of labour”. A neighbour usually gave the constable all the information they required on everyone’s farm, number of hens, amount of land, etc., in their townland. In due course a Blue Book was issued by the Department of Agriculture showing the tillage returns for Ireland and one can only smile at such round figures as “Total number of hens 7,000,000”.

Constable Mee tells us that the people, all of the small-farming class, were as pleasant as the surroundings, and very sociable. For a week before Christmas, presents of geese and turkeys were handed in to the

Barracks, as well as cases of stout and several bottles of whiskey from the publicans in the area. Mee tells us “We were glad to accept them as genuine tokens of friendship and not in any way calculated to be bribes”.

Constable Mee was transferred to Listowel in Co Kerry in August 1913. It was there that he was involved in the police mutiny and being disaffected deserted the force. Realising that they could expect little mercy if picked up by the British security forces, he and his companion Constable Donovan decided to return to Keash where they both started their careers.

They travelled by train and finally arrived at Ballymote station where there were six armed policemen all of whom they knew at a glance. The policemen however did not pretend to see them and the two constables went up the town to Begley’s public house for refreshments. There they were welcomed with open arms and soon found themselves in the centre of half a dozen members of the IRA who were delighted when they intimated to them that they wished to join the movement. They were then taken by car to Keash and spent the night in the home of Alec McCabe where they were treated like princes.

The following night they were guests of honour at a social in Keash hall. Constable Mee says “As we entered the hall a passage down the centre was cleared and a guard of honour brought to attention as we walked towards the stage”. The band played “The Soldier’s Song” and a huge cheer went up that echoed to the caves of Keash Hill. It was seven years since Mee had left the area and many of the young strapping members of the IRA in the hall that night were only small boys when he left. During the next twelve months many of these lads distinguished themselves in various units of their Sligo brigade. Backed by the world’s largest empire, the British forces at that time held every stronghold in the country. Standing between the people and this army were some 2,000 young men many of whom were mere boys in their teens. Never in the history of the world, it seemed, were two armies so unevenly matched, and yet this young army by guerrilla warfare tactics compelled the Crown forces to negotiate a Treaty in 1921 which Michael Collins stated was a stepping stone to obtaining the full freedom of Ireland.

“God Save All Here”

Kathleen Fitzmaurice

Nowadays the “ping” of my doorbell causes me to stop and wonder who my caller may be. Is it someone with a genuine reason to call? I hope so, not someone sussing out the place with a further unannounced call in mind.

Who would call at my home in bygone days? The rate-collector called twice annually and a special effort was made to have cash on hand to pay. It would be a slur to have to defer payment. At other set times a neighbour came to collect the priest’s dues. The pedlar carrying his pack of haberdashery – pins, needles thread, etc., came once in a while as did a beggar-

man glad of a meal and some clothing. A chimney sweep would come occasionally and on Thursday during Lent a fish-monger arrived on a push bike with a large basket in front and you bought your Friday dinner from him. Nobody worried about the dust and germs collected along the road – a fried herring was “simply delicious”.

Tinkers came regularly, the men to mend cans and the women to beg for “a wee grane of tay” or “a fistful of flour”. They sold tin cans and porringers, popularly called “ponnies”. The ponny was a versatile utensil. It was used to measure out milk for a calf and meal for the cow’s

mash. Youngsters learning to milk a cow were given a ponny to strip the last dregs of milk. The toddler in his tea-chest playpen amused himself for hours banging on the ponny with a wooden spoon. A ponny could be anchored in the *gríosach* on the hearth and used to boil an egg and, dare I say it, it often warmed a “sup of milk” for the baby. It was the simplest and least expensive utensil and it served us well.

Only the sight of a messenger with a telegram sent a shiver down our spines. The green envelop usually meant bad news and there was relief all round when it proved to be otherwise. We were never lucky enough

to get a telegram saying we had won a big prize in the Irish Hospitals Sweep.

Now we come to the “ramblers” who always found the back door “on the latch”. It might be just one man whom we recognised by his whistling as he neared the back door. He used the usual “God save all here”, sat and chatted, exchanged local gossip, had a bit of supper with us, then lit his pipe and was on his way.

There might be five or six men coming to play a game of “25”, staking a penny a game and maybe a “tanner” apiece for the last game by which time the hearth fire was reduced to *griosach*. Once in a way there would be a “round of music” from a local fiddler or flute player. One or two of the men would “take the floor” and give a turn at sean-nós dancing, the only dancing style they knew. Gramophones came on the scene in my locality in the late 1920s. People would gather to listen, starry-eyed, to recordings made in the US by talented Irish musicians like Michael Coleman or James Morrison. Vocalists like John McCormack, and later on Bing Crosby, were popular too. This might prompt the local “tenor” to give his own rendition of some ballad or other. Young musicians often learned new tunes from these recordings and this influenced their style of playing.

Later on, a house with a radio, or “wireless” – the term then used, was a centre of attraction. People came to hear the news and the weather forecast was of great interest, especially to farmers. A good forecast was also a bonus to a local festival.

During World War II people followed the progress of the conflict with great interest – and anxiety if family members or neighbours were in the forces.

But the day that really mattered was the third Sunday in September when people listened enthralled to the one and only Michael O’Hehir bring the All Ireland Football Final to life for them.

Then there were visitors, people who came through the front door and were ushered into that special place, the Parlour. Every house had a parlour. Sleeping space might be cramped but the parlour was *de rigueur*. The average parlour was really a standard sort of room. It had a boarded floor with a

square of lino in the middle and a varnished border all around. In the houses of the better off there might be floral wallpaper on the walls. Otherwise walls were distempered, sometimes in two colours, one above and one below separated by a frieze of border paper. The window had lace curtains and inevitable a flowering pot plant on the window stool. My family favoured a lily but geraniums and aspidistras were also much in demand. There was a sofa, or should I say a “chaise longue”, by the wall and two horsehair filled armchairs complete with antimacassars by the fireside.

The fireplace was an open grate with hobs which were shone with black lead in pre-Zebo days. In summer the fireplace lost its identity when it was filled with fresh green moss and festooned with ferns. But the mantelpiece was the eye-catcher. Pride of place was given to two china dogs, a prize from some local fundraiser. There were knick-knacks, little ornaments inscribed with “A Present from Bundoran” or “Souvenir of Knock”. There might be a clock, an heirloom and usually at a standstill. There would be some photos of fairly recent origin. This was all set off by a mirror hanging above.

The real pictures were hanging in heavy frames around the walls, Grandad and Grandma on their wedding day, a piece of tapestry worked by Aunt Johanna half a century ago, and a picture of Wolfe Tone or Daniel O’Connell and later of JF Kennedy.

There was a sideboard, or cabinet in one corner. This contained all the best tableware used only on special occasions. There were two drawers, one for cutlery and one for table linen. If you reached right into the back of the cabinet you’d likely find a half-empty, or should I say, a half-full bottle of Port Wine, a small bottle of Redbreast Whiskey and maybe dregs in a lemonade bottle. Drinking glasses and various ornamental jugs and glass dishes were left on the cabinet.

A wobbly “what-not” occupied another corner and held big, unread and unreadable, volumes that had come from God knows where. The dining table was in the centre of the room with chairs pushed in underneath. A handmade much prized rug covered the hearth. No fireplace was complete without a floral fire screen.

Visitors arriving unexpectedly could cause panic to the woman of the house, because at the first hint of commotion “himself” found an urgent task out of sight of the house. If she were lucky enough to have some liquor left in the aforementioned bottles it saved the day. It bought time for a young family member to speed to the local shop for a pan loaf, some sliced ham and a Gateau Sponge Cake or Swiss Roll. Many’s the woman who blessed the man who made the Gateau.

But when visitors had made their plans known in advance great preparations were made. It was essential to light a fire in the parlour well in advance lest the jackdaws had located a nest in the chimney and blocked the flue. The fire also cleared out the dank, musty air from the room.

On arrival there would be hearty greetings and exchanges and much hugging and complimentary remarks about the healthy appearance of all and sundry. Drinks were served, accompanied by biscuits (usually Arrowroot) for the ladies to nibble with their Port. The repast might be a “meat tea”, a home reared chicken roasted and livened up by some tomatoes. Salad did not feature on menus in my young days. Some version of the Gateau appeared again and maybe tinned fruit and custard as dessert. Children were strictly forbidden in the parlour and in any case they had a much better time left to their own devices, feasting on any leftovers that came their way.

As I grow older I am always happy to have people call to see me and I appreciate their concern for me. But, dear friend, if you plan to call to call on a dark winter’s evening, please give a “buzz” in advance!

Charles O'Connor 1710-1791

Murtagh Corcoran

Charles O'Connor was born at Knockmore, Kilmastranny, on Jan. 1st 1710. He was to become one of the most able, distinguished, and patriotic men in the Ireland of his day. Though descended from the Royal house of O'Connor, who gave Ireland eleven High Kings, and on his mother's side from the O'Rourke's of Breffni, his father Donougha Liath (Denis the Grey) was a poor man living in a mud-walled house, when his son Charles was born.

Charles's paternal grandfather, and uncle fought on the losing side in the Williamite War, and lost their lands and property. His mother Mary O'Rourke's father Dermot was also on the losing side; he emigrated to France, and was killed at the battle of Luzara in 1702. They lost their lands and property and this resulted in the degrading poverty of Denis and Mary O'Connor.

His uncle Terence or Thady O'Rourke had a great influence on the young O'Connor, supervised his early education, and encouraged him in the love and pursuit of the Irish language, culture, and customs. He was a Franciscan priest on the continent; he was appointed Bishop of Killala in 1707 and managed to get safe passage to Ireland. When he arrived there, he could find no Bishop to consecrate him. There were only two bishops in the country, one a fugitive in Munster, the other in a Dublin Jail (Newgate). Somehow he managed to visit the jail, and there he was consecrated by Bishop Donnelly, probably the only Bishop elevated in jail. He had a difficult and stressful life spent mostly in hiding, and in poverty. He travelled under an assumed name "Mr. Fitzgerald" - the young Charles in his diary wrote of him as "An Gearalthach". He visited Knockmore, and Balengare when the family moved there in the mid seventeen twenties. He bequeathed to Charles a copy of the Annals of the Four Masters, which had been

the property of his great grand father, Fearghal O'Gadhra, who was patron of the Four Masters. Bishop O'Rourke died in 1734, a horizontal slab with an engraving of a mitre, crozier, and missal covers his grave in Creevealea Abbey.

Terence McDonagh's wife Eleanor was an aunt of Bishop O'Rourke, and his sister Mary O'Connor. Terence, the Great Counsellor is credited with regaining the O'Connor lands, but by the time Denis regained possession in 1720, Terence was dead for seven years. He may have instigated the legal proceedings which was eventually successful in 1720. Lord Kingston used whatever influence he had in favour of O'Connor who was reputed to walk barefoot from Kilmastranny to Dublin to fight the law case.

Charles was the eldest of six sons and three daughters. His father Denis was described as the heir to nothing, and worked as a ploughman for 1 shilling a day. He said to his sons "Never be impudent to the poor, boys, I was the son of a prince, but you are the sons of a ploughman". Charles received his first learning in his own home, but at the age of seven and a half years, he records in his diary going to school in Carraig na gCrippa (Carricknagrip), where he began grammar. The teacher was Seamus Mac Glaodmuind, the date was 30th September 1717, the school was at Clooneenhugh. The following year the teacher was Proinsias Ó Coirnin, a well known poet in his day; he is favourably mentioned and extracts from his verse are given in Douglas Hyde's book "A Literary History of Ireland". Of course those were hedge-schools, the teacher and location of school changed each year, and the schools were at Cloonbuidhe, Kilmacroy, and Ballyfarnon in the following years.

A travelling friar who knew no English taught him the rudiments of Latin, and Dominic Ó Duignan gave him a good grounding

in Irish. In 1724 he went to Balengare for the first time, and that same year their houses at Knockmore were burned. Still, the whole family came back for the winter 1725-26, while he and a Mr. Wall were there in the winter of 1726-27. His diary of Sept. 4th 1729 reads "I haven't been at Kilmastranny for two years from today". He appears to contradict himself a few days later, his entry for Sept 9th being "Learning music from Michael McKeon this day last year at Kilmastranny". We can take it that he finally left Knockmore in 1727, he would have been seventeen years then; we know from his letters that he visited his sister and cousins the McDermottroes at Alderford.

Much later he described attending Mass in a cave as a youth. He did not say where the cave was: it is taken to be in the vicinity of Balenagare though it is just as likely to be near the blessed well of Lugmore beside the townland of Carricknagrip where he attended his first school.

Charles was sent to Dublin in 1727 to the Academy of Mr. Walter Skelton where he learned Latin, French, Mathematics and Science. Sometime in the late twenties he met the O'Naughton family (originally from Co. Roscommon), whose school of poetry was well known at the time. He made copies of extracts from the Book of Ballymote which was in O'Naughton's possession. His knowledge and love of old Irish manuscripts was greatly advanced by meeting John Fergus, a well known collector.

Charles married Catherine O'Hagan in 1731, the daughter of a Boyle merchant. With her dowry he rented a farm near Tulsk, Co. Roscommon. It was here he wrote his farm diaries, and a first hand account of the Great Frost of 1740, and of the terrible famine that followed in 1741: 400,000 people died which was a higher percentage of the total population than in

the Great Famine of the 1840s. The price of oatmeal rose twelve times in the month of July, a hungry month in a hungry year. Migration to the fertile lands of Leinster and Munster to obtain seasonal work was the accepted lot of many of the labourers, but in 1741 they had to return as there was little or no meadow to cut. His farm diaries were written in Irish, and give an account of farm practices and prices in the Ireland of 270 years ago; the originals are kept in Clonalis House, Castlerea. He is again quoting farm prices thirty years later in a letter to Edmund Burke, the British Government's Secretary for Ireland.

His wife died in 1741 and she was followed shortly afterwards by a young child Marc. Denis the Knockmore ploughman died at Balenagare in 1750 aged 76 years and his mother died in 1760. Charles inherited Balenagare in 1749, and gave it to his son Denis in 1760. He retired to a house he had built on the estate, which he called "The Hermitage", to devote himself to the removal of the restrictions and disabilities of the Penal Laws, by peaceful means.

Alongside his farming activities Charles carried on his collection of old Irish manuscripts, and made copies of old fragmentary pieces wherever he found them. He was an extraordinary letter-writer: there are at least four large volumes of his letters (1731-1790) published; the originals are mainly at Clonalis, Pearse St. Library, the British Museum Mss. Library, and some at Sheffield, and Stowe. He wrote an important history, the "Dissertations on the Ancient History of Ireland", an account of its origins, government, letters, sciences, religion, manners, customs, and on the Irish colonies established in Britain. He wrote numerous pamphlets, the most important of which was "A case of the Roman Catholics of Ireland". Charles O'Conor, John Curry and Thomas Wyse founded the Catholic Committee in 1757, it was the forerunner of Daniel O'Connell's Emancipation Movement, and played a significant role in the reforms of 1782 and '93. Charles proposed the catholic rent, which was adopted by O'Connell sixty years later, and his Repeal movement may owe more than a little to the letters

and pamphlets of this enlightened man.

Despite all this work on a literary, national, political, and religious level he managed to do a survey of the Parish of Kilronan, and wrote his report "The Statistical Account of the Parish of Kilronan, and of the Neighbouring District". It was the only report of its kind worth preserving by the Dublin Society, which commissioned those surveys throughout the whole country. There is a typewritten copy of a prologue, and Scene 1 of a play entitled *Rusticus*; the setting of the prologue is the exterior of the Hermitage at Balenagare (1779), the setting of Scene 1 is a farmhouse at Kilmactranny on Christmas Night 1723. *Dramatis Personae* Denis O'Conor (father), Mary O'Conor (mother), Turlough O'Carolan (harper), Charles McCabe (harper), Bishop O'Rourke, and young Charles, aged 13.

Charles had the annoyance of a long legal battle with his younger brother Hugh, who became a protestant, which gave him preferential title to Balenagare. After long and expensive litigation, the case was settled out of court.

There is no adequate biography of this outstanding, intellectual, and learned man, but all aspects of his life are dealt with in books, papers, and periodicals. He continued his correspondence until the year before he died. In his last published letter to Bishop Edward French of Elphin, he complains of severe rheumatism, and writes that he was able to walk or rather crawl afoot to the Chapel of Bale nag are to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days. He died in July 1791 at the age of 81 and is buried in Ballintubber Abbey.

A Prayer

Bernie Martin

Dear Lord protect the lonely
The fearful, sad and lost.
Give them strength,
Where strength is needed
and friends to help them bear their cross.
Look kindly on the destitute,
Give them means to aid their way.
Ease the grief of those in mourning
To them solace, when all is grey.
To the silent longing of the lonely,
A hand in friendship be bestowed.
Let us see, when there is suffering,
When someone bears a bitter load.
Give the lost, and those in exile,
a candle shining through the dark.
The homeless, a sense of belonging
in a world so often stark.

Give each one, two arms to turn to
when despair is close at hand.
And a kindly soul to share our life with,
As we struggle through this land.

The Rock of the Cats

PJ Duffy

As we pass Collooney village on our way to Sligo town, at a short distance from the roadway we are likely to see an elevated piece of rugged terrain known as Carrignagat and which, we are told, means “The Rock of the Cats”.

In times past numerous stories relating to this strange place have been passed down to succeeding generations, the most obvious one being that long ago the place was the haunt of a large number of wild cats who made it into their natural habitat. As time went by many weird stories and superstitions were woven around the Cats of the Rocks. For example, many people at that time firmly believed that to ill-treat or harass these creatures would draw bad luck and misfortune on the culprit who dared to do such a thing.

It was said that in times of impending disaster the cats would assemble together and meow and cry for “the run of a night” in what used to be referred to as a “cats’ concert”. People would point to tragedies that had happened at sea off the coast of Ballisodare and say “I knew it was coming, sure the cats never stopped crying the other night”.

Since the cats mated and brought forth their young in this place, their numbers eventually increased out of all proportion so that they became an unmanageable pest in the area. To exist they had to find constant supplies of rabbits, mice, wild fowl, and coarse fish discarded by fishermen along the coastline, but the final straw came about when local housewives began to complain that the cats were stealing and killing their chickens.

One particular gentleman decided to act. As a young man he had been abroad and had long since shaken off the shackles of Irish “pishoguery”. On a dry March day he went along to the cats’ abode which was decked with faded grass and withered shrubs, and

set fire to the tinder-dry undergrowth. As the fire spread, pandemonium broke out and the yells and cries of scorched cats were heard all over the place as they scampered in all directions to escape the blazing shrubbery. Some old females stood over their broods of kittens and were later found dead in their breeding places. Many more abandoned the place and took refuge in a nearby wood.

Some people held that this was a most unlucky thing to do and that it would invite nothing but misfortune on those who carried out such a deed, but from the accounts handed down it does seem that this disastrous action finally put an end to the harem of cats that had for a time in our history occupied that rugged piece of terrain known today as Carrignagat.

During the years that followed the fire, a number of new legends and stories grew up around the place. It was said that at the dead of night, a number of cats would assemble at the spot and cry and wail into the small hours of the morning. There was too the legend of the black cat with bright piercing eyes that used to sit on a rock ledge only to vanish and then reappear at the most unlikely places.

Another story goes that when a certain funeral was passing by on the roadway, a black cat was observed moving under the horse-drawn hearse behind the horse’s hind legs. Some said that this was the funeral of the man who had years before set fire to the shrubbery that had shielded the cats.

Back in olden times, Carrignagat was the place where at certain times large numbers of people assembled to barter and exchange goods at their local *margadh* (market). It would seem that in those days little or no money would change hands. According to accounts handed down, all sorts of goods and livestock would be exchanged.

During the 1800s and early 1900s, Carrignagat became renowned for its horse fair. This was the place you headed for on the first day of February if you needed to get a cob of a horse to do the Spring’s work, and if he were a satisfactory worker you would hold on to him for several years to come.

Farmers and horse-dealers would often travel long distances to do business there.

During most of this time the fair was held on the roadway, about half way between Collooney and Ballisodare. However during the early 1940s the venue was moved to Ballisodare and remained there until the marts put paid to the holding of country fairs.

Taken from the stories and lore of a previous generation. Collected by PJ Duffy.

Traditional Rhymes : Old traditional rhymes popular in rural Ireland during the middle years of the last century

Collected by PJ Duffy

Three little fish went out to swim
Upon a summer's day.
They swam in and out and round about
Then right well pleased were they.

At evening time the sun grew red
Behind the old church spire,
They said "Let's hurry home to bed
Because the world's on fire".

I met a little elf-man once
Down where the goblins go.
I asked him why he was so small
And why he didn't grow.

He simply frowned and with his eyes
He looked me through and through.
"I'm quite as big for me" said he,
"As you are big for you".

Did you ever take potato-cake or boxty to the school,
Tucked underneath your arm with your pencil, slate and rule?
And when the teacher wasn't looking, there a great big bite you'd take
Of the floury, mealy, juicy sweet potato-cake.
You did, so did he, so did she, so did I,
The more I think about it the nearer I'm to cry.
But weren't those the happy days when sorrows we knew not
And my mother made colcannon in the little skillet pot!

Said an ould tinker woman to an ould tinker man
"Would you please put a bottom in me ould tin can?"
He took it and he shook it and it didn't take him long,
He soon put a bottom in her ould tin can.

Paddy McGinty was an Irishman of note,
He fell into a fortune, he bought a nanny goat.
Said Paddy "Now of goat's milk

I mean to have my fill",
But when he brought the nanny home
He found it was a bill

Monday for health,
Tuesday for wealth,
Wednesday the best day of all,
Thursday for crosses,
Friday for crosses, and
Saturday no day at all.

One mag sorrow,
Two mags joy,
Three mags a letter,
Four mags a ploy,
Five mags silver,
Six mags gold,
Seven mags secrets that never can be told.

January brings the snow, makes our feet and fingers glow.
February brings the rain, thaws the frozen lakes again.
March brings breezes loud and shrill, stirs the dancing daffodil.
April brings the primrose sweet, scatters daisies at our feet.
May brings flocks of pretty lambs, skipping round their fleecy dams.
June brings tulips, lilies, roses, fills the children's hands with posies.
Hot July brings cooling showers, apricots and gillyflowers.
August brings the sheaves of corn, then the harvest home is borne.
Warm September brings the fruit, sportsmen then begin to shoot.
Brown October brings the pheasant, then to gather nuts is pleasant.
Dull November brings the blast, then the leaves are whirling fast.
Chill December brings the sleet, blazing fire and Christmas treat.
(by Sara Coleridge)

The Bi-Centenary Celebrations of St. Kevin's Church, Keash, Co. Sligo, 3rd August, 2009

Address by Padraig Duffy

A Thiarna Easpaig, a Athaireacha, a Eaglaiseach Eaglais na h-Éireann, a tSiúreacha, a Theachtaí Dála, a ionadaí Comhairle Co. Shligigh, a h-Aoínna speisialta agus a mhuintir an pharóiste:

Is cúis áthais domsa, ar son an Coiste Eagraíochta, fíor chaoín fáilte a chuir roimh uilig anseo inniu go dtí Eaglais Caoimhín Naofa, Ceis Chorainn ar an ócáid stairiúil seo.

Cuirim fáilte ar leith roimh Easpaig Breandán agus roimh na cléir a bhí ag freastáil sa pharóiste seo i rith na blianta ata caite agus atá i láthair inniu, Canóin Criostóir Mac Lochlann, an t-Athair Pádraig Ó Loinsigh agus an t-Athair Fearal Mac Amhlaigh.

My Lord Bishop, Rev. Fathers, Rev. Sisters, Representatives of the Church of Ireland, T.D.s, Chairman and Members of Sligo Co. Council, special guests and fellow-parishioners:

It is an honour for me, on behalf of the organising Committee, to extend a Céad Míle Fáilte to you all here this evening to St. Kevin's Church, Keash, Co. Sligo, on this very historic occasion.

A special word of welcome to Bishop Brendan Kelly, our chief celebrant and to the clergy who served in our parish over the years and are present here today; Canon Christy McLoughlin, Canon Pat Lynch, Fr. Farrell Cawley.

This is indeed a momentous occasion, not just for our community here in the parish but for many emigrants who have worshipped here over the years, and are now living in the four corners of the world. Some have come to join in our celebrations here today and we extend a Fáilte Araís to them.

As you will see from our special Bi-Centenary booklet, the actual date of the building of our Church two centuries ago was difficult to define accurately.

Exhaustive research conducted by our local eminent archaeologist Martin A. Timoney suggest that a chapel, as it was then called, was built here at the beginning of the 19th century, in 1809. It is believed that this small enclave of worship had a sod roof, later updated to a thatched roof.

The building of the original chapel is thought to have taken place during the tenure of Fr. Fitzmaurice, who had been educated in the Irish College in Paris. Members of his direct family lineage, the Devine family are present here this evening and the family is represented in the Sanctuary by Fr. Padraic Devine, currently on holidays from the African missions.

It is a source of pride in our community that the chalice used by Fr. Fitzmaurice is preserved here in St. Kevin's Church Keash and was used this evening at the concelebrated Mass.

Many changes have taken place in our Church over the past two centuries. We can only imagine the difficulties facing both clergy and laity here in the early days. We can assume that many of the early worshippers here would have experienced the Penal Laws. The elders among them would have been forced to resort to the Mass rocks to practise their religion. Catholic Emancipation, achieved by the Liberator, Daniel O'Connell, must have come as a great relief to the faithful here.

The Great Famine in the late 1840s ravaged the countryside. Abject poverty was widespread but the people kept the faith. Then came the Land War, when families, unable to pay their rent to the landlord, were evicted from their homesteads, yet this building remained a place of solace and hope to so many.

Like so many places in the West of Ireland the events of the early 20th century had a profound effect

on the life of our rural parish and its people. No doubt the Proclamation of an Irish Republic in 1916 would have been well received by the faithful congregation here. Yet they soon experienced the traumatic era of the Black and Tans and the Civil War, events that must have forced the people of the time to dig deep into their reserves of faith in order to find hope for the future.

But they managed to keep the faith and even extend their place of worship by adding the two porches. The sacristy had already been built in the middle of the 19th century.

Time moved on and rural electrification in the early 1960s was a huge step forward for the population reared by the open hearth with the candle and oil-lamp. Our church was illuminated by the magic of electricity and the old gas lights and gas heaters became redundant. This unfortunately was an era of widespread emigration as our youth sought a better way of life often in far off lands. Wherever they went they took with them the faith that they had practised here in St. Kevin's Church.

We can move on to an era that many of us can remember: the late 1970s when the then Parish Priest, Canon John Alexander McGarry, spearheaded a major renovation of St. Kevin's Church. Detailed examination of the structure indicated that dry rot was a major problem with the wood while the stained glass windows were urgently in need of refurbishment.

In short the project grew as more problems were discovered along the way. The building was completely gutted at considerable cost. It is a tribute to the local people, many of whom are present today, that they subscribed so generously to the project and everything was paid for in record time. Work began in 1977 and St. Kevin's Church was rededicated in April 1980. The first Mass in the

renovated building was celebrated by the late Canon McGarry on Saturday evening, 29th Sept., the eve of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Knock.

The renovations involved many major alterations and many here today will recall the original pre-1977 Church with nostalgic memories (see Martin A Timoney, *The Corran Herald*, 2010-2011, 55-56 for photos of the interior of the church as it was in the early 1970s). In the post-Vatican II era the priest now celebrated Mass facing the congregation. The old altar was removed, the altar rails, the suspended sanctuary lamp, the two galleries, the old Confessional boxes, the pulpit and the old gas heaters all made way for more modern furnishings.

Perhaps most conspicuously of all, the single pole in front of the altar, on which the roof beams rested, was relieved of its long term duty as the architect and engineers devised a new roof system.

Many of us have nostalgic memories of these changes which brought our place of worship into the 20th century. Since then further improvements have been carried out, including storm glazing of those unique stained glass windows, the installation of a modern speaker system, extensions to the car-park, shrubbery in the Church grounds, laying of tarmac footpaths, *etc.*, taking us into the 21st century. In early 1985 new furnishings for the sanctuary were presented in memory of the late Fr. Kevin Brehony and the Drury family.

To day we salute the memory of the people who did much to enhance the Church and its grounds over the years. Many of us will recall the diligent work of the late Hannon family of Cross, who regularly cleaned the Church before a voluntary Committee was assembled.

We recall the late Francy McDonagh, local shopkeeper, who lit and maintained the gas heaters over many years. We remember Pakie Tansey and Pete Brehony who helped to maintain the interior and exterior for years. In modern times we appreciate the work of Kathleen Ballantyne and the members of the Altar Society who do so many unheralded tasks within the Church. We admire the wonderful work of Sean Coleman and his

assistants who have transformed the Church surrounds from an overgrown wilderness to a place of beauty and colour all the year round. We appreciate the talent of James Murray, Tubbercurry, who has transformed the sanctuary with his murals, depicting scenes with a religious theme.

Above all, we realise that we are Pobl Dé - the People of God, regularly assembled to worship in his house. We recall the many happy and sad occasions celebrated here as the special landmarks in each person's life are punctuated here from the cradle to the grave. Over the years congregations have gathered for many reasons, baptisms and confirmations, marriages and funerals. Missioners have come and gone, each with their own message of hope and love, occasionally with the odd threat of eternal damnation to add spice to their homily.

Over two centuries countless thousands have worshipped here, some perhaps rich and famous, others with few of life's possessions or luxuries. Perhaps some caught the eyes of the fashion-conscious as they made their way up the aisle. Others may have drawn silent criticism as they knelt to pray and unwittingly exposed a hole in a shoe or a sock to their neighbours. Yet I am sure that in their own way each was equal in God's house.

Over the years many people made great sacrifices to get here to fulfil their Sunday obligations. Some rose before dawn and walked on well trodden paths, sometimes in their bare feet. Some carried their Sunday shoes and only fitted them when they neared their place of worship out of respect for God's house. Many came by horse and trap or sidecar. In more recent times people cycled here; families often sharing a bicycle to attend either of the two Sunday Masses. More recently motorised transport has made it so much easier to fulfil the weekend obligation and the introduction of the Vigil Mass has given people greater opportunities at a time when we all seem to be so busy and pre-occupied with matters of the day.

The challenge for us here today is to build on the great faith and devotion of our forefathers who have left us with a great legacy. They experienced many difficulties and

setbacks, yet they nurtured the seeds sown by St. Patrick and St. Kevin, guided by the pastors who served here so faithfully over the past two centuries.

We have a Church that we can be proud of and we thank God for that. It is up to us, and the younger generations, to carry on the religious tradition here in appreciation of and in respect for the generations before us.

We thank the many people who made today's celebration possible, particularly the organising committee, led by our energetic pastor Canon James Finan. Today is a special day for him. He has been planning for this celebration for quite some time, as we have all seen so often, and it is a source of great satisfaction to him to see his plans come to fruition. He has led by example from the beginning and put many hours of planning, preparations, personal visits and phonecalls into this historic day for our community. To put it simply, he has a persuasive way with him that gets things done no matter what difficulties may surface. I think he deserves a special bualadh bos.

I thank Martin A. Timoney for his painstaking research into the history of St. Kevin's Church and other local places of worship pre-1809 and for his role in the compilation of the text for the special Mass Booklet, including the modern photos. The older photos are from individual parishioners and we thank them for those photos.

I thank you, the congregation, for your attendance and the choir, musicians, altar-servers, stewards, *etc.* We offer a special word of thanks to Bishop Brendan and all the concelebrants. Your presence on this special occasion is very much appreciated. We thank all who took part in the Liturgy. Sincere thanks to the Ladies Committee who have refreshments available in the hall afterwards.

As we conclude the celebration of the Bi-Centenary of our Church today let us not forget the past, but also look forward with pride and confidence to the future.

Míle Búiochas díbh go léir agus in iothlainn Dé go gcastar sinn.

Eddie Masterson Remembered

James Reddiough

Eddie Masterson, the solicitor from Tubbercurry, whom many readers of *The Corran Herald* knew well, was the first Irish songwriter to have a song in the UK Charts when his Tribute to Jim Reeves was in the Top 40 for 11 weeks in December 1964 into the spring of 1965. It was recorded by Larry Cunningham and The Mighty Avons in the autumn of 1964.

Eddie was born on the 23 February 1935 to Edward and Joannie Masterson and he was one of eight in family. His father was a shopkeeper in the town and had a large premises and successful business. Eddie attended St. Nathy's College, Ballaghadereen from 1949 to 1953 and sat his Leaving Certificate in 1953. After this he studied Law and qualified as a Lawyer in November 1959. He worked in Sligo, Carrickmacross and Dublin as a Solicitor. He lived in Barry's Hotel from 1965 to 1982.

In Tubbercurry as young man he was a member of the famous Phoenix Players, The Tubbercurry Dramatic Society, and they performed in St. Brigid's Hall, Tubbercurry, and also in other venues in the west and northwest. This was in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

He wrote *A Tribute to Jim Reeves* in Carrickmacross in August 1964 after hearing of the death of Reeves on the radio. He gave the words of the song to Jimmy Smith of The Mighty Avons and they played it for the first time in The Astoria Ball Room in Bundoran. It received three encores. The Avons then recorded it and it got a good deal of air play on Radio Caroline and on Radio Eireann, and with this it went into The Top of the Pops on the 10 December 1964 and was there until February 1965. It was in the Radio Eireann Top Ten in January 1965 also and sold 250,000 copies. It was the song that launched the career of Larry Cunningham and The Mighty Avons

and also saw Eddie Masterson embark on a career in song writing and in the show business world, a pursuit that would earn him the title The Show Band Solicitor.

He wrote for the dancing and entertainment journal *The Musical Gazette*, a monthly column on the up and coming show bands and singers for the year. Also he wrote songs and some of his best known songs for the 1960s were *What Time Will Santa Be Coming? Reflections of You* (this song won the Castlebar International Song Contest in 1968), and *It's Hard to Know*. His co-writers were Gay McKeon and the Manager of the TV Club in Harcourt Street, Sean Sharkey. These songs were recorded by Pat Lynch and the Air Chords, Pat McGeehan and The Victors and The Paragon Show Band.

In the 1970s he wrote sporting tributes to Offaly in 1971 – 72, *Offaly the Champions* and *The Iron Man from Rhode*, a tribute to the Offaly Full Back Paddy McCormack. In 1975 when Sligo won its first Connacht Title since 1928, he wrote *Sligo the Champions* and a few years later a tribute to Mick Kearins, *The Man from Dromard*. His uncle Nick Devine was a member of the Sligo Team in 1928.

In the country and pop field he wrote *When It's Christmas Time Again in Connemara* and this was recorded by Gene Stuart and The Homesteaders in 1977, and the year before this *Gary Don't Go* was recorded by Shaun O'Dowd and Ding – a – ling. Other songs that he wrote were *Hippyland* and *The Green Pound*. In the autumn of 1977 he had his next Top Ten with a tribute to Elvis, *Thank You Elvis*. This was recorded by Brendan Bowyer and the Big 8 and reached No. 4 and was in The Top Ten for eight weeks from September 1977.

As well as song writing, Eddie was also a keen sports fan of all codes

and he would attend matches all over the country and soccer matches in Dalymount Park and the races too. He came from a strongly GAA family, his brother Joe played for Sligo and for Connacht in The Railway Cup Series. He was later PRO of Sligo County Board and Mayor of Tubbercurry. Eddie was the organiser of Parish Leagues in the area during the 1950s and also a member of The Jimmy Magee All – Stars who played together to raise funds for charity and played their first game in Ballyjamesduff on the 6th June 1966; they raised millions in the 31 years they were together. The team was made up of people from the world of sports, entertainment and the media and after each match they held a cabaret. In their first year together they played 18 matches and Eddie was always with them to share in the fun.

Sadly, he died at the age of 47 in St. Laurence's Hospital, Dublin on the 4 April 1982 from a brain haemorrhage. He had attended a dance in his favourite venue The Ierne on Parnell Square and fell ill after the dance. Fr. Brian Darcy, a life – long friend anointed him and celebrated Mass for him in the Church at Mount Argus and then the funeral made its journey west to the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Tubbercurry where the next day the 7 April 1982 his Requiem Mass was celebrated again by Fr. Brian and a number of other priests. There were large numbers of people at the funeral from the world of show business, sports, politics, and the media, and the legal profession. He was buried in Rhue Cemetery and Jimmy Magee composed The Final Tribute in his memory. Throughout the tribute he referred to Eddie as The Master because this was the name that the lads who played on the All – Stars called him. The large crowds that came to the funeral were a measure of

the esteem in which he was held.

Eddie would be remembered with humour and sadness by his family and friends and all those who had met him along the way and he was always there to help people and get them started in various jobs in the city, journalism and the music world.

As Jimmy Magee wrote:

“He knew his sports; he loved the men who played it.
He knew his music; he loved the men who made it.
He knew his job, and always aided those who wished it.
We’ll never really see his like again.”

Perhaps it is best to leave it to the people who met him or perhaps encountered him in the course of his life at different stages, the shop assistant in Carrickmacross who recalled the young, well – dressed man coming into the shop to buy the papers or Fr. Brian Darcy who wrote fondly of him in his autobiography *A Different Journey* and in the words of *The Final Tribute* by Jimmy Magee. When Brush Shields recorded *Old Pal* he dedicated the album to Eddie, Donal Corvin and Phil Lynott, he wrote in his sleeve notes “We remember them with sadness in our smiles and memories in our eyes.”

We conclude this piece in memory of Eddie Masterson with some words from *The Final Tribute* by Jimmy Magee.

“He was counsellor, the wise and ever sympathetic ear.

Professionally and socially, he touched the lives of those who’re here.

Band musicians, politicians, were proud to call him friend

For The Master this is the new beginning

There will never be an End.”



Celebrating 10 years in showbusiness in the company of TV & Radio personalities

*Back row: Eddie Masterson, Bill O'Donovan, Fr. Brian Darcy, Lynda Jane, Ivan Martin.
Front row: Hendy, Big T, Gene Stuart, John Greer, Paddy O'Flaherty*

Source: <http://www.genestuart.com/gallery.php>

Tribute to Jim Reeves by Eddie Masterson

In Nashville down in Tennessee a plane
crashed through the trees
And in that fatal air crash was a singing star
called Reeves.
Now Gentleman Jim was our idol with his
sweet voice soft and low
And one of his first big hits was the tune He'll
Have to Go.
(Verse from *He'll Have to Go*)

Now Jim we liked your love songs that we
listened to for so long,
For we know you lived the past in each
sentimental song.
Fond memories you rekindled of our dear ones
out of sight
When you sang with deep emotion of the one
you missed that night.
(Verse from *Oh, How I Miss You Tonight*)

You never forgot the lonely ones who seldom
had much to say,
And you made their lives more cheerful in your
kind assuring way.
You gave great feeling to the words in your
smooth and dreamy way
A love's message of understanding you left
above the clay.
(Verse from *I Won't Forget You*)

Now Jim we mourned your passing, there was
no time for goodbyes,
But when the tragic news was heard tears
filled many an eye.
We know you wished to say farewell to your
friends and fans as one,
So on your behalf we say goodbye in the
words you so softly sung
Adios Amigo, Adios my Friend.

Tribute to Eddie Masterson by Jimmy Magee

No man wrote more Tributes than the
Master,
The verses seemed to tumble from his brain,
No man knew more people than the Master,
We'll never really know his like again.

He knew the lifeblood of our business.
The secrets that he kept were thousand-fold.
No man could write the story like the Master,
Now the story never will be told .

He knew the singers and the sinners,
He heard the laughter, felt the cries.
He saw the world of entertainment
Through childish, cheerful eyes.

He wrote songs of sporting victories,
He wrote about departed friends,
Songs of joy and sadness,
Songs that followed trends.

He knew his sports; he loved the men who
played it,
He knew his music loved the men who made
it.
He knew his job and always aided those who
wished it,
We'll never really see his like again.

He was counsellor, the wise and ever
sympathetic ear,
Professionally and socially he touched the
lives of those who're here;
Band musicians, politicians were proud to call
him friend.
For the Master this is the new beginning,
There will never be an end.

Fr. Michael O'Flanagan and the Cloonerco Bog Fight

Joe McGowan

Mícheál Ó'Flannagáin was born on the 12th August 1876 in Kilkeevan near Castlerea, Co. Roscommon to Edward and Mary Flanagan. The area was a '*breac Gaeltacht*' and the Flanagans native Irish speakers. Their livelihood was gained from working a small farm of mixed land bordered on one side by the fertile estates of the local landlord and on the other by barren bogland. Following a primary education at Cloonboniffe National School, the young Michael had his first association with Sligo when he attended secondary school at Summerhill College. On graduating there in 1894, he entered St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, where he was ordained for the Diocese of Elphin in 1900. Following his ordination he returned to Summerhill College and worked there as a teacher until 1904.

His clerical duties soon became interlaced with efforts to establish a viable basis for the movement towards Irish Independence that was gaining momentum at that time. He became convinced that the Irish language, rural industry and the local Church were vital elements in the achievement of this. His skills of oratory in promoting his objectives were matched by an originality and genius for fundraising. Prior to one of his trips, on behalf of Connradh na Gaeilge, to America, he cut a sod from each of the thirty two counties of Ireland; bringing these with him, he invited Irish-Americans to walk on their native soil at a dollar a time. In his fundraising work for Connradh na Gaeilge he raised over £3,000 between 1910 and 1912, a small fortune by monetary values of the time. At Bishop Clark's request, he returned again to America to raise funds to clear the debt on Loughlynn Convent near his home. In 1906 he took another group to the USA to promote Irish lace, a cottage industry that was widespread in Ireland at the

time.

Following a stint, in 1912 and again in 1914, as Advent and Lenten preacher respectively, at St. Sylvester in Rome, he was appointed curate, in August 1914, to Cliffoney in the parish of Ahamlish. His responsibilities extended to Inishmurray Island off the Sligo coast. Immediately on his arrival in North Sligo he encouraged the people there to organise in defence of their rights that were often impinged upon by oppressive bureaucracies, landlords and the R.I.C.



Shortly he became involved in a remarkable incident that came to be known as the 'Cloonerco Bog Fight'. Taking on the establishment, against the wishes of Bishop Coyne, he agitated for turbary rights [right to cut turf] for the local people. This situation was brought about by the Congested District's Board's acquisition of the Hipsley and Sullivan estate and their consequent insistence on re-distributing turf cutting rights to families who had relatives in the British Army or R.I.C.

O'Flanagan commenced correspondence with the Congested Districts Board (CDB) on May 15th 1915 requesting that bog be allotted to his parishioners who had no turbary. They had now to gaze upon great empty tracts of bog that until lately had been theirs to harvest by right from time immemorial. His parishioners, he wrote, could not be expected 'to allow their children shiver in the cold next winter while you (the Board) retain the bogs for prospective clients still further on the horizon.' He

castigated the distinction between those who had the favour of the Board and those who did not, describing it as a 'rotten policy'. Towards the end of this very forthright letter he expressed his amazement at the people affected: 'In spite of all the bad traditions of the past, they still have some love left for law and order.'

The Board remained unmoved by Fr. Michael O'Flanagan's impassioned pleas. Despite intensive correspondence, the CDB were determined to reserve the bogs for clients of their choice. By late June families were in a desperate position as no turf had been cut and they were facing the unthinkable prospect of a winter without fuel.

Despite being warned by Bishop Coyne not to get involved, Fr. O'Flanagan, addressing his congregation at Cliffoney Church on the Feast of St. Peter and Paul, June 29th, 1915, told them to wait outside for him after Mass. Here he instructed them to assemble the next morning with their turf cutting implements. He would lead them to the bogs where he himself would cut the first of the forbidden turf: 'I would advise every man and boy who wants a turf bank and can work a turf spade to go to the waste bog tomorrow and cut plenty of turf.' There was no need to be afraid, he told them! The Creator had put the bog there for the use of the people.

The following morning the dauntless Fr. Michael, accompanied by the local medical practitioner Dr. John Nally, led an assembly of over two hundred people to the Cloonerco bogs. A large body of R.I.C., under Sgt. Perry, (who was to die some years later in the 'Moneygold ambush') followed and ordered the crowd to stop. True to his word Fr. Michael stepped behind the spade and cut the first turf. It was a clever move as the RIC, fearing the vengeance of the people, would be very

reluctant to arrest a priest. Scuffles took place, some of those present were arrested and legal action taken in the following days and weeks but the turf were cut and saved. They were eventually brought down from the bogs where they were built in a large stack close to the R.I.C. barracks directly in front of what is now Cliffoey Parish Hall. A large sign was placed on the stack: "OUR OWN TURF FOR OUR OWN PEOPLE: FOREIGNERS HAVE NO RIGHTS HERE".



O'Flanagan requested that the turf be divided among the people and that a cart of turf be left at the door of each one of the older people in the neighbourhood who could not cut their own. More was to be left for people who had no transportation, as there were many poor people in the area at that time that had no carts.

Throughout the summer the case simmered on and rumours of prosecution were rife. Eventually an injunction was granted by Mr. Justice Pim of the chancery division of the High Court against Fr. Michael O'Flanagan and the other leaders: Dr. Nally, Patrick Gilgar, Charles McGarrigle, Francis Higgins and Andrew Harrison. In deference to appeals made by Canon Doorly on their behalf the Congested Districts Board eventually decided to drop the case in return for a £5.00 fine being paid by the defendants, thus ending the saga of the "Cloonerc Bog

Fight". In addition to the fine the Board agreed to apportion the plots fairly and not just to their own nominees. The people of North Sligo had won a great victory and continued to cut their turf in peace on the Cloonerco bogs until quite recent times. A right hard won for them by their sturdy forbears.

O'Flanagan survived the actions brought against him by the civil authorities but Bishop Coyne, furious at this flouting of his authority, transferred him from Cliffoey to Crossna in Co. Roscommon. The people were dismayed at the removal from their midst of a priest and leader they had come to love and respect. They were not going to take it lying down! Much to the Bishop's dismay hundreds of the congregation made their way in procession to the Bishop's palace in Sligo town. Travelling in horse and ass carts and on foot they assembled on the lawn to pray and agitate for the return of their champion¹. In letters they beseeched Bishop Coyne that 'you will send us back our poor, dear Fr. O'Flanagan who was an ornament to the Roman Catholic church of Cliffoey and who, during his short stay with us has discharged his duties in a manner that that no other priest has done in our memory.'

When all entreaties failed the people of the locality barricaded Cliffoey Church, nailing the doors and windows shut, thus preventing Bishop Coyne sending a replacement. They mounted a guard day and night and assembled on Sundays outside the Church to recite the Rosary. The impasse lasted until Christmas Day 1915 when the Bishop agreed to provide a priest 'who would be a good Irishman and a patriot' to replace Fr. Michael O'Flanagan. Thus ended the remarkable saga of the 'Cloonerc Bog Fight'.

This excerpt from a letter sent by P.T. Keohane, editor of *The Catholic Bulletin*, to Dr Hagan of the Irish College in Rome reveals how the matter was viewed further afield:

¹ And, it was related with much hilarity later, stole the Bishop's apples.

2nd November 1915

Dear Dr. Hagan,

...History is being made in Fr. Shannon's parish every day. The C.D.B. failing ignominiously in its attack on his administration evidently succeeded in securing the help of Dr. Coyne. In consequence, Fr. O'F is now in Crossna, Boyle as like the dutiful son of the Church, which he is, he submitted to the change without demur. Not so the people however. To a man I understand they marched to the Bishop's house fifteen miles away, but as the Bishop was from home they had their journey in vain.

They then decided on closing the Church, and although Fr. O'F went back by direction of the Bishop to demand the key, they would not even then comply but nailed and barred up the doors against Fr. McHugh, the new curate. I understand no Mass has been since celebrated in that part of the parish and even the poor P.P himself, who was accustomed to celebrate Mass in an adjoining schoolhouse has been prevented from doing so.

The people, during the regular hours for Mass, congregate in the Church grounds and recite the Rosary. Meanwhile Fr. O'F is doing his duty in his new parish. It is a pity to have such scenes occurring but clearly the people are bitterly incensed at the action of the bishop in coming to the help of an autocratic Board. I am not quite certain whether Fr O'Fs tillage special precipitated the crisis but one thing I am satisfied that it stung JW Russell to the quick. The tillage meeting was proceeding in the usual humdrum way with the stereotyped resolution duly proposed and seconded until Fr. O'F rose. You may guess the rest and the bit of a curtain the C.B. raises of it gives a poor indication of what the subsequent proceedings were like.

You need not feel the least uneasy that Fr. O'F will lose his head. He is a philosopher and does not even know what it is to lose his temper. You will be glad to know that the C.B.[Catholic

Bulletin] is going strong despite all opposition: and you may take my word for it that the people appreciate it too. The country was never so calm and not for many a year so prosperous, and never minding its own business better. Even the paid agitators have to hold their meetings within closed doors.

Best wishes,

P.T.Keohane



Fr. Michael incurred the displeasure of Bishop Coyne again when he spearheaded a campaign to have Count Plunkett, father of the executed 1916 leader, Joseph Mary Plunkett, elected in the Roscommon by-election of 1917. The people of Crossna responded in the same way as did their counterparts in Cliffoney some time before. After several weeks of a standoff Fr. Michael returned to tell his people that he wanted to leave the parish quietly and the protest ended. In a letter to Dr. Hagan in the Irish College, O'Flanagan wrote that he 'tried several times to reason the people into opening the Church but to no avail. On Christmas Eve I appealed to them for the sake of Ireland, to make me a Christmas gift by opening the Church. They yielded at last and for the first time in 10 weeks the [replacement] priest was allowed in...'

This time the Bishop suspended him from clerical duties and it would be twenty years before he received another clerical appointment.

However, ecclesiastical politics were not the sole or focal point of this priest's life. He was all the time growing in stature as a central figure in the Irish independence movement:

'I am a suspended priest' he once wrote. 'I have been disobedient and have been suspended for disobedience, but unlimited authority I am not prepared to give to any authority in the world. I am a priest, but I was an Irishman twenty years before I was a priest. Almighty God made me an Irishman and put upon me the duties of a citizen of Ireland... no institution can take that away from me.'

He was conferred with the freedom of the city of Sligo in June 1918 and an illuminated scroll presented to him on behalf of a grateful people by Mayor Hanly. Outside the Town Hall, enthusiastic crowds 'cheered themselves hoarse'. It was Fr Michael O'Flanagan who recited the prayers prior to the sitting of the first Dáil at Dublin's Mansion House in January 1919. In the 1930s, he was one of the few Catholic priests in Ireland to support the Republican government in Spain. An inventor too, he won a posthumous prize at an exhibition of scientific inventions in November 1942 at the Mansion House in Dublin for a type of face goggle suited to the protection of the eyes and face either underwater or against noxious gases.

As a researcher with the Dept. of Education he worked on the translation and publication of O'Donovan's letters relevant to the ordnance survey of 1838. He died with this work uncompleted. In a poignant letter dated August 2 1942 addressed to the people of Cliffoney he said: 'I am dying with a very special love of the people in my innermost heart. I'll be waiting in Heaven to greet the Cliffoney people, especially those who prayed for me at the front door'.

This great patriot, the man who Cathail Brughá claimed was, 'the staunchest priest who ever lived' died in Sandyford Dublin on August 7th 1942. In two days twenty-one thousand people filed past his coffin as it lay on a catafalque in the Rotunda at City Hall; thousands had to be turned away.

The people of North Sligo have never forgotten him and he is still

remembered here with affection. A committee was formed in 1942 and a door-to-door collection taken up to install a holy water font to his memory at the front entrance to Cliffoney Church. The font was accepted and the installation allowed by Bishop Doorly, but no inscription or mention of Fr. O'Flanagan was permitted. It wasn't until c1990 that this work was completed when the North Sligo branch of CCE, of which I was privileged to be an officer at the time, was renamed after Fr. Michael O'Flanagan. Shortly afterwards a plaque, with his name inscribed, was placed over the holy water font. A large crowd attended the memorial Mass which was celebrated by Fr. Patrick Healy. The Mass was attended by officers and members of the branch, by Pat O'Flanagan of Castlerea, grandnephew of Fr. O'Flanagan, and by Thomas Hargadon, Cliffoney. Thomas (R.I.P) was the only surviving member of the original committee set up in 1942 to erect the memorial.

With the unveiling of the plaque to this great priest's memory, honour has been given in some small manner to a man who richly deserves more and who gave so much to his parishioners and to his country.

Further reading:

They have Fooled you Again, Denis Carroll; Columba Press, 1993

Priests and people in pre-famine Ireland, S.J. Connolly; Four Courts Press, 1982

In the Shadow of Benbulbin, Joe McGowan; Aeolus Publications, 1993

Late Eighteenth Century Views of Ballymote in the National Library of Ireland: Bigari, Beranger and Grose.

John Coleman



Fig 1 Ballymote Church or Abbey [1779] Angelo Maria Bigari. National Library of Ireland, Prints & Drawings image no. 2122 TX (73)

Ballymote ‘abbey’ and castle have been the subject of antiquarian interest since the eighteenth century and there are a number of late eighteenth century drawings of both in the National Library.

Although there had been some earlier interest in such matters, the second half of the eighteenth century saw a remarkable rise in antiquarianism in Britain and Ireland with an increased interest in the architectural remains on each island. This interest was spearheaded by leading aristocrats such as Lord Charlemont who, after a long grand tour in Italy, Greece and further afield, looking at ruins of ancient civilizations, came home with a curiosity which extended to Irish sites.

Charlemont was a patriotic figure,

later leader of the Volunteer movement, and was included in a group caricature portrait painted in Rome in the early 1750s by Sir Joshua Reynolds which depicts him with shamrock in his hat and his English, Scottish and Welsh counterparts equally symbolically identified [now in the National Gallery of Ireland]. Charlemont was a prime mover in the establishment of the Royal Irish Academy (1785) which went on to play a crucial role in the study of Irish antiquities, remains at the centre of Irish scholarly life and, of course, is the home of the *Book of Ballymote*.

Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin devote a chapter to ‘the antiquarians’ in their monumental study of works on paper (*The watercolours of Ireland: works on*

paper in pencil, pastel and paint c. 1600-1914, London, 1994.) They identify William Burton Conyngham (1733-96), nephew of the first earl Conyngham (of Slane), as the key figure in the third quarter of the eighteenth century ‘with a finger in every antiquarian, architectural and artistic pie’ (he was also an army officer, politician and significant entrepreneur promoting fisheries in Donegal – Burtonport, which he developed, bears his name). Like Charlemont he travelled on the continent, in his case mainly studying Roman sites in Spain and Portugal. He employed numerous artists to produce drawings of antiquities for his collection and was one of the 38 founding members of the Royal Irish Academy (see

Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2009.)

Burton Conyngham commissioned Gabriel Beranger (c.1729-1817) and

town museum in Rimini, not far from Bologna]. As well as Ballymote he also drew other sites in the area, including

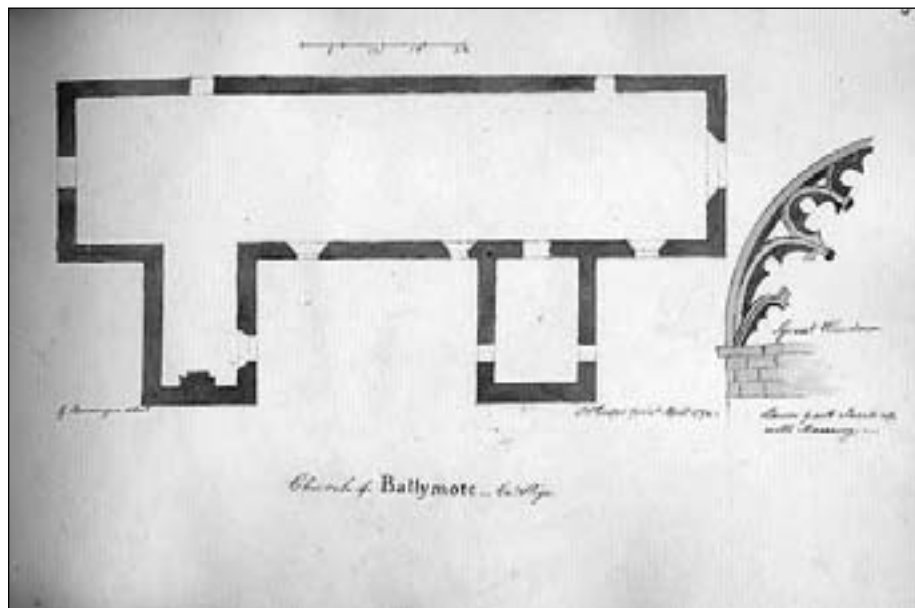


Fig 2 Church of Ballymote [plan and tracery of great window] [1794], Gabriel Beranger, National Library of Ireland, Prints and Drawing, image no. 2122 TX (2) 50

Angelo Maria Bigari (fl. 1772-79) to undertake a tour of the West of Ireland and produce illustrations of antiquities in the province. The pair visited Ballymote on 30th June 1779. The plan of Ballymote 'church' (fig. 2) is the work of Gabriel Beranger and the views of the castle and 'church' are by his colleague and friend Angelo Maria Bigari (figs. 1 & 4).

Beranger was a Huguenot born in Amsterdam (Peter Harbison in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, 2009) who came to Ireland at the age of 21 and remained here. He earned a living in a variety of ways as print seller, framer, drawing-master, assistant ledger keeper in the government exchequer office and topographical draftsman. Crookshank and Glin describe his work as 'charmingly naive', pointing out that he rules his architectural lines and that his figures are fairly cursory. Peter Harbison has published a study of a collection of his views in the Royal Irish Academy (*Beranger's Views of Ireland*, Dublin, 1991).

Bigari was a Bolognese scene painter [I was interested to see a small still life by him on a recent visit to the

the abbeys of Banada, Boyle, Court, Dromahair and Sligo, which were engraved for Grose's *Antiquities*.



Fig 3 Head over door of Ballymote church [1791], Lieutenant Daniel Grose, National Library of Ireland, Prints and Drawings, image no. 1976 TX 39

The fourth drawing of the sculpted head at the 'church' (fig. 3) is by Daniel Grose (d. 1838), nephew of Francis Grose who produced many drawings of antiquities in Britain and Ireland and is well known for

his *Antiquities of England and Wales* (1773) and the publication *Antiquities of Ireland*, known in Ireland as Grose's *Antiquities*. Francis was English born and London trained, worked in Ireland on and off from 1770 and died here on 1st May 1791 before the Irish volumes were produced, actually including engravings based on the work of many artists mainly from Burton Conyngham's collection. Daniel contributed a view of Ballymote castle to Grose's *Antiquities* (fig. 5). Curiously, according to Strickland (*Dictionary of Irish Artists*, 1913), he died in Carrick-on-Shannon in May 1838.

The drawings illustrated as figs 2 and 4 are in an album with a mustard coloured velvet cover at the centre of which is a red morocco panel with gold tooled decorations on which is the title in gold, *Antiquities of Ireland Book II*. Inside on the right hand frontispiece is an inscription (in a not particularly elegant style) *Antiquities of ABBEYS, CASTLES, in Ireland by Austin Cooper F.S.A. Vol II 1786*. The inside of the album cover is inscribed *Austin Damer Cooper, Drimnagh House, St Dooloughs [St Doolough's church in north County Dublin is the subject of a (much later) painting in the National Gallery of Ireland by Nathaniel Hone]*.

Bigari's drawing of the 'church' or abbey (Fig. 1) is well known as it was later used as the basis of an engraving in Grose's *Antiquities*.

Fig. 2 depicts the church plan and detail of the surviving tracery of the 'great' window. It is signed confusingly 'G Beranger delint [drawn by]' and 'JS Cooper pinxit [painted by] April 1794'. It is inscribed 'great window' and 'lower part closed up with masonry'.

Fig. 3 is a visually attractive, though not particularly convincing, depiction of the head over one of the doors of the 'church'. The version illustrated is the best of two in Cooper's album. It is interesting that in the eighteenth century the title 'church' is used as what we have is indeed a church, though it might have been part of a Franciscan foundation known to have been in Ballymote at one time.

Fig. 4 is a very fine drawing/wash of Ballymote castle of 1779 by Angelo Maria Bigari. Ballymote castle is a significant building in national and international terms. It is of a type to be found also in England, France and even as far away as the Middle East where such fortresses were built by crusader knights. Harold G. Leask, the distinguished Irish antiquarian, singled it out for mention in his 1941 work *Irish Castles and Castellated Houses* (Dundalk, 1941, pp. 69-70). It is described in his chapter on keepless castles of the 13th century. Built around 1300 by the Norman Richard de Burgh (Burke), he describes the building succinctly. It is almost square in plan with $\frac{3}{4}$ towers at each angle and a double towered gate building of great size in the centre of the north curtain which has lost all but its foundations. Mid way along the east and west walls are D shaped towers and there is a square tower mid way along the south wall covering a postern gate. This now blocked up gate can still be seen facing Ballymote park – such gates were used as a means of escape in the event of a siege.

The 1779 view of the castle from the south east corner by Bigari seems more substantial than what remains today or indeed what we see in Daniel Grose's 1794 view (fig.5); the tower in the foreground still has a great gap but the remains seem taller in Bigari's drawing. Because Bigari's view is drawn from very close up it makes the building look remarkably bulky and intact: the positioning of a tree today makes it impossible to view the castle from where it might have been drawn by Bigari and thus difficult to compare what is there now with what he saw. A sense of scale is conveyed by Bigari by the inclusion of two tiny figures perched on the rubble inside the breached tower to the left – one standing gesticulating with outstretched arms; while the second is seated in more contemplative mode; probably one depicts his colleague Beranger. Why is this tower in such a ruinous state? It does not look like the



Fig 4 Castle of Ballymote County Sligo, with highest tower 55 feet high 1779, Angelo Maria Bigari. National LI Prints & Drawings, 2122 TX (15)

result of gradual dilapidation (which should equally have befallen the remainder of the building) but rather the product of an assault by cannon in possibly the last stand of the castle as a defensive fortress. [There is an almost exact copy by Cooper dated 1794 in his album - fudging of the depiction of the interior of the breached tower on the right is the only remarkable distinguishing mark of the original].

It is interesting to compare the drawing with the engraving by Samuel Hooper by Sparrow after Daniel Grose's original published in 1794 (Fig. 5)(Grose's *Antiquities*). While the view is from a more distant

point, the walls seem to be diminished and the stone possibly removed? It is worth noting the high front gate house with a chimney much more intact than what remains today.

The drawings are reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland. Grateful thanks are due to Honora Faul, Assistant Keeper, Department of Prints and Drawings, for her enthusiastic assistance on my visit to the Library to look at the drawings.

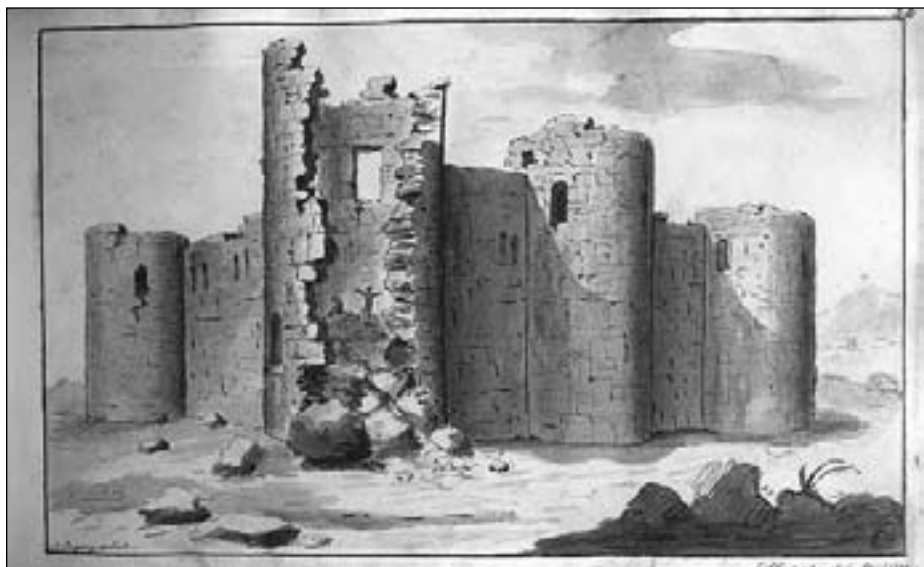


Fig 5 Ballymote Castle, published 1794 by Samuel Hooper in Grose's *Antiquities*. Engraving by Sparrow, after original by Daniel Grose. Collection of the author.

Castlebaldwin Village

Clare Walsh

When the Mail Coach Road was constructed from Dublin to Sligo it opened up this area for travel, communication and commerce.

There was no crossroads or village in Castlebaldwin at this time. An old map, circa 1800, indicates a road from Ballymote to meet the Coach Road. The "line" from Castlebaldwin to Annaghcurra was made in the 1880s connecting with the old road from Brickeen.

At this time the Post Office was in Lynchs' and the mail was delivered by the mail coach on to Whitehill and Riverstown.

The Mail Coach Road from Sligo to Dublin via Boyle and Longford started in 1808. The coach was drawn by four horses and carried ten passengers inside and four outside. Stages were built to accommodate users and horses. Between Boyle and Sligo there were stages at Lackagh, Ballinafad, Cloghogue and Toberscanavan.

The Cloghogue stage was a two

storey thatched house of eight rooms owned by Michael Walsh. There was a large kitchen and a dining room. The remainder of the rooms were bedrooms, three of which contained two four poster beds in each, the others single canopied beds. There was stabling for sixteen horses but in the late 1800s the stable was burned. There was a public house owned by Ned Walsh on the opposite side of the road.

A half mile south was Master Luke Nangle's house and school, also a thatched building.

Bianconi started his mail cars after 1825, their speed eight miles an hour.

The first houses at the present cross roads were built by Richard Taylor of Cleavery, a house for himself, a shop and the barracks for the R.I.C. These were slated houses. At this time the R.I.C. lived at Cloongad.

Pat Lynch owned the Post Office where Lynch's is today. When he died his widow transferred the P.O. In the

1930s the Ryan family built the present house and P.O. at the crossroads.

The forge was owned by the Morrison family for several generations. They were blacksmiths and farriers until the advent of the tractor. It is now a garage.

The schools were built in 1902, a two-teacher boys' school and a two-teacher girls' school.

An old map shows that there was a one storey house on the road side where McDermott's now stands. It was a public house and had many owners over the years. Mr. Flannery retired from the R.I.C. about the beginning of the 1900s. He bought the public house and enlarged it to its present state. The building contract was taken out by Pat Tansey who built the "ACE office" as a house for himself. It was later rented by the school teacher for many years.

Local History From Hollybrook to Cloghogue

Clare Walsh

The area from Ballyfarnon to Ballymote is roughly the Barony of Tirerrill. In ancient times this territory belonged to the McDonagh Clan. At the time of the Cromwellian War these lands were confiscated and given to the English soldiers in lieu of payment.

Colonel Edward Nicholson was awarded Bellanagarrigeeny (Béal Átha na gCarraigíní, the present Castlebaldwin) and Brickeen and he later enlarged his holding to 1,384 acres 2 roods 24 perches in the County of Sligo. The Nicholsons intermarried with various other families. The last known member in this area was James Nicholson

Soden who sold Carrigeenfadda and Cloghogue in 1858.

At the time of the confiscation there was a lake "between the three forts" from where the old creamery stands to the kiln. The elevation of the present road shows the depth of water. There was a nunnery at the back of the creamery. This was demolished and the stones were taken in flat bottomed boats to build the castle. The mortar was mixed with oxen blood to make it a permanent structure.

Local tradition has it that Sir Teigh O'Regan billeted in the castle on his way to defend Sligo in 1690. When he left for Sligo, rumour spread that

the Williamites were coming from Manorhamilton so the servants buried the plate and valuables and set fire to the castle. It is not known if the castle was re-stored at this time.

There is no known history about the Baldwin family. It is surmised that they were a branch of the Nicholson family. It has been said that they built the castle. This is not correct, but they probably repaired it. They gave their name to one townland "Baldwin" which has now developed into "Castlebaldwin". One family, Brehonys, still live in the townland of Baldwin.

The Sligo Shoe Factory

Bernie Gilbride

As we left the cinema one lovely Summer evening, having availed of the early screen showing, it was still bright with a balmy breeze blowing. On approaching our car, parked in the Quay Street car park, Anne suggested that, having sat for over two hours, a stroll would be nice. The sound of the tide gently lapping against the quay walls drew us towards it, and we made our way left, along the cobble stoned roadway, towards the north Wall. The sun was a ball of fire in the distance, almost on the edge of the horizon, casting a golden glow over the estuary and the river Garavogue.

‘Wow’ exclaimed Margaret, ‘what a view, and to think we could have got into the car and driven home, missing out on all this, only for Anne. Thank you Anne, you always get things right.’

There was nobody around. We literally had the place to ourselves.

‘Was it always quiet like this?’ asked Anne, ‘I know nothing of Sligo really, coming only to visit with you, Pat, once a year.’

‘No indeed, Anne, it was not always quiet like this,’ I remarked, ‘Sligo was once a very busy port, exporting to England, Scotland, and even the continent, the produce of the countryside, cattle, sheep, pigs and butter, etc. Potatoes also, especially seed potatoes to Spain in the Spring. There was a Shoe Factory just along where we turned the corner back there, in the mid thirties. So I am sure they also exported shoes then’.

‘A Shoe Factory?’ Pat asked

‘Yes a Shoe Factory, Pat, I had heard about it years ago when a few new girls came to our school, as their parents had come to work in the new Shoe Factory. I never was in it, or near it even, as anywhere down near the quays was out of bounds for us then. We became great friends with some of the girls and they told us they had lived in Manchester before they came



At the official opening of the Sligo Shoe Factory were (L/R) AP Jackson; SH Derham, Solicitor; -----, Seán Lemass TD, Minister for Industry and Commerce; William Feeney; -----. Can anybody supply the missing names or verify those given? Photo courtesy Bernie Gilbride.

here. They spoke with the loveliest English accent and we all tried to speak like them. Never quite managed to however, though we all remained great friends. The Shoe factory had slipped my mind, until the other day when I came across a photo of some important looking men and on turning it over found it was a record of the official opening of the shoe factory. Realising I had a little bit of history in my hands I decided then and there to do a bit of research into that factory and find out what had become of it’.

‘And did you?’ asked Pat.

‘I did indeed, Pat. The following morning I went to the Library to see if I could borrow anything that would throw some light on the Shoe factory. It had haunted me during the night and I was determined to learn why it was not still there, realising the boon it would be to the town, especially these days. I will fill you in on all I have found out so far, over coffee in my house, when we get home. Let’s just enjoy our walk, the heavenly breeze,

and of course the spectacular sunset. Could one put that colourful glow on paper, one would make a fortune’.

A couple of hours later, as we sat around the kitchen table with the remains of our coffee, Pat kept me to my promise to tell them all I had found out about the Sligo Shoe Factory. It had indeed been opened mid 1930s all those years ago.

This is what I had found out and how.

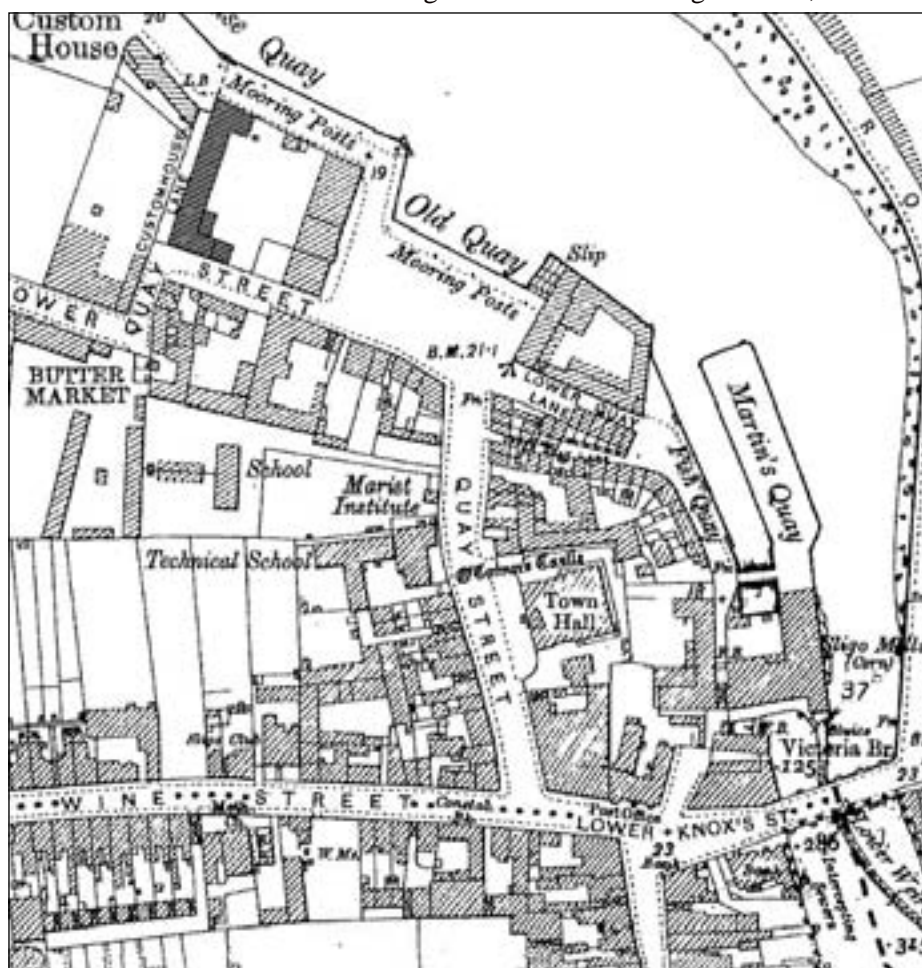
In the Library and with the help of some friends, two books were suggested where I might find something about the Shoe Factory: *The Protestant Community in Sligo 1914 - 49* by Pádraig Deignan, and *The Streets of Sligo: Urban Evolution over the course of Seven Centuries* by Fiona Gallagher.

Having a copy of ‘*The Streets Of Sligo*’ myself, I immediately began my search. I found a very interesting account of my ‘Shoe Factory’ in this historical masterpiece, under the Lower Quay Street section, where we walked earlier that evening.

In it, Fiona Gallagher records the

foundation of the Factory in the premises once owned by Messrs Newsom's at the Custom Quay. This came about through the investment of some business men in Sligo

The Chairman of the company was Mr. S.H. Derham, Solicitor, and the Directors were Sligo business men A.B. Woods, A. P. Jackson, and Mr. B. Maguire TD, Leitrim.



1910 Ordnance Survey map of the quays area in Sligo. The location of the Shoe Factory is shown in deeper grey. This was a old warehouse, previously built in the early 1820s by the Middletons. The site is now used for a parking area. Only the walls remain. Map and information courtesy Fiona Gallagher

and Leitrim. The trade's best and newest machinery was installed and every precaution was taken to ensure that the premises would be a model factory. Every effort was made towards the comfort and convenience of the employees with an ideal ventilation system. The building was of stone and was three stories high, manufacturing shoes, slippers and evening shoes for ladies and men.

With a beginning staff of fifty, of which twenty were skilled English operatives (hence my lovely English accented new friends), it eventually employed 200 and had a capacity to turn out 9,000 to 10,000 shoes per week.

The next entry is, unfortunately, a recording of a massive fire on the morning of St. Patrick's Day, 1939, which destroyed the factory. That week the employees were on overtime, filling an order for 70,000 pairs of shoes for Easter.

One can only guess at the hardship the loss of such a source of income was, not only for the employees, but the town also. Not to mention the investors who had put their money into such a welcome project, a few short years before.

The silence around my table spoke volumes. Each of us was lost in the possibilities of what might have

been. The brave original investors did try to restart the venture, but were not successful. We felt sure the outbreak of World War II that September did not help either.

So the Sligo Shoe Factory was no more. Many of its skilled employees took the boat to England, where no doubt they worked in 'Munition' factories for the duration of the War. Luckily for me, my friends' parents stayed on in Sligo, where they found other employment

It was a sombre ending to our lovely summer day. As we said good-night all expressed their regrets at what might have been had the terrible fire not happened. We arranged our trip to Donegal next day, vowing to have only happy things on our minds. However, we all wanted to walk again on Custom House Quay and take a better look at the site that was once The Sligo Shoe Factory before ending our yearly traditional meeting of friends on the coming Friday.

It was a much subdued group that walked along the Quays that Thursday evening. We could almost feel the sadness caused by the destruction of the Factory and the regret of the employees. Had any come back, we wondered, and stood, as we were standing now, looking at the empty site? Some maybe glad they had had to emigrate, others wondering how different their lives might have been had the Factory survived. One thing for sure, it could only have had a good effect on the local economy, not only that of Sligo town itself, but of the County as well.

Summer Sojourns in Ballymote

From TEID FOCAL LE GAOITH by Proinsias Mac an Bheatha.

Chapter IX: Ag Cur Eolais ar an Saol (Getting to know the world). Line 4, p 66 to end p 69.

Translated by Neal Farry

For a number of years during my teens, I regularly received an invitation to spend the summer holidays in the home of an uncle of mine who lived in Ballymote, County Sligo. I learned a lot during those vacations. My uncle owned a shop and a bakery in the town and a fairly big farm out the road, and between these concerns he was reasonably busy. Although he was in the main part preoccupied with his daily work he was knowledgeable about current affairs of every category. He was well educated; he used to read widely and he was constantly buying books dealing with every subject that he found interesting. He was very kind to me and was ever ready to share his erudition with me. He would bring me along with him while he attended to his business. He showed me every nook and cranny of his own property and the stores and the equipment of the bakery. He allowed me to accompany him to the farm, where he kept store cattle and dairy cows, sheep and pigs.

I constantly pestered him with questions and he was always patient with me in return. Many a long afternoon we spent in the fresh air, lying in the grass or walking the fields and I never wished for any company or companion beyond himself. He was well informed about every aspect of rural life, the trees, the field plants and the wild flowers, the birds and the animals. He would frequently point out to me the various birds' nests, the forms where the hares had lain the previous nights and the ambush sites where the foxes had slaughtered the grouse and other such birds.

That uncle undoubtedly nurtured in me a deep affection for pastoral life and country people. He demonstrated to me that a great wide world existed outside the confines and thresholds of the towns and cities, and he placed learning and the pursuit of learning before me as desirable objectives in themselves. Furthermore he impressed



on me the obligation a person must have to use his own judgement.

It happened, however, in one case of the curiosity that he had aroused in me, that my thirst for knowledge progressed further than he expected. It transpired that he set me to read a periodical that was in circulation at that time entitled "The Outline". H.G. Wells was its editor, if my memory serves me right. From "The Outline" I advanced to read the works of Wells himself and before long I was engrossed in Darwin's "The Origin of Species". I became so exercised with this topic of evolution that I began arguing with the Christian Brother at school about 'the inaccuracy of the Bible'. The same Brother was a patient man, thankfully for me, and he calmly entertained my theories until he explained specifics of the contradictions that seemingly existed between the theory of evolution and the creation story in the bible that were not evident in "The Outline". My uncle was not too pleased with himself when he heard about this unexpected consequence of his guidance.

In spite of the fact that I was decidedly under the benign influence of my uncle I was not always willing to yield to all the opinions that he sincerely held. I raised the question of the Republic one day and I spoke to him about my friend John Lyons,

the young republican with whom I had become acquainted when I first came to Dublin. I described John as a soldier of the Legion of the Rearguard of the Republic.

"In the name of God", said my uncle. "Rid yourself of this nonsense about the Republic. Are you referring to that senseless, misguided mob of ruffians who are after doing more harm to this country than the English ever inflicted?"

"They were fighting to protect the Republic", I replied.

"There was never any Republic in it to protect, and in any event it isn't for the good of your Republic or its security that many of that lot go around patrolling with guns. It's well I know them and it's clear to me that not one of them was within an ass's roar of a gun when the Black and Tans were in this country".

"Surely you don't intend to condemn the entire Republican Army on account of a few bad apples in its ranks", I retorted. "What about Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Dick McKelvey and Joe Barrett?"

"I won't say a word about the dead. They were soldiers, and as far as I know, noble soldiers. But look" said he, "it's better for us not to fight the Civil War all over again. Let's go and check matters on the farm".

We never discussed the question of the Republic any further after that. I realised that I'd never get the better of him in a debate and I had no desire to submit to his strongly held views, since such a course would involve disloyalty, and desertion of the ideals that I had received from my mother and John of the I.R.A.

Talking to my uncle about the Irish language precipitated a similar conflict of minds. I spoke to him one day about the language revival and the extent to which our school curriculum was helping my acquisition of Irish. I happened to mention that I had occasionally heard the Christian

Brothers saying that it would be wonderful if the Irish language would again be spoken by the people of Ireland. He did not agree. He asserted that Irish was a waste of time and we should relinquish the foolishness of the revival, and instead we should embark on the work that needed to be done to put the nation on a sound footing. While I was not equipped with a suitable argument to his thesis, in such a way as I could respond at the present time, I was still not content to concede that he was right. I had listened to the opposite opinions about the Irish language for a long time from the Brothers and from my own family, and my uncle would have needed to employ more powerful polemics to impose his philosophy on me.

During one of my summer sojourns back west in Ballymote I became friendly with two cousins, sons of another uncle who lived in the vicinity. They were somewhat older than I was and they possessed two revolvers and a quantity of bullets to match. Guns were in plentiful supply during those years after the Civil War. I quickly developed a fascination for the same weapons with the end result that I was given one of them as a gift as I prepared for my return journey to Dublin - a small serviceable pistol and seven bullets. I have no idea how I intended to put this small side-arm to use, but

the Act for Public Safety was in force at the time and some of us perceived it to be a source of political oppression.

However, on the night before my departure I placed the revolver and bullets in my travel case. When I reached Dublin I discovered that the gun had gone missing. Some time afterwards I heard that my uncle had opened my case to place a gift there and he found the gun. He left a note, which read "Have no truck with the guns," and a half sovereign in its place. The bullets escaped his notice and remained hidden deep in my luggage. I secreted them in a drawer in my room until the start of the Second World War in 1939. One day I received information that the Gardai planned to raid the house where I was living. That night I flung the bullets down the drain in the back yard and as far as I know it's there they remain to this day.

I must have had considerable interest in military activity during that period. I still have a book that I bought for few pence from a book-barrow on the Dublin Quays one evening at that time. 'The Elements of Modern Tactics' was written by Lieut. Col. Wilkinson Shaw at the beginning of the 20th century. I spent a lot of time studying Colonel Shaw's tactics and I recall a description of a particular gun the English had used in the Sudan "with gratifying results".

Notwithstanding the fact that military affairs were seductive to me at that time my interest in the subject diminished with the passing of years. It seems that I was never destined to be a soldier.

Proinsias Mac a'Bheatha (Frank McVeigh) was born in Belfast in the first decade of the 20th Century. His father died while he was a child and he was raised in Bangor, Co. Down and in Belfast. As a teenager he experienced sectarian conflict which caused his widowed mother to move the family to Dublin. He attended Westland Row Christian Brothers' Secondary School. He joined the Civil Service of the Irish Free State and he became deeply involved in the Irish language revival movement as an activist in a number of elite branches of Connradh na Gaeilge (The Gaelic League). He was a founder member and columnist with the Irish newspaper "Inniu". He was the author of the following Irish language books: "Teid Focal le Gaoith", "Tart na Cora", "Gaeilge don Phopal" and "Seosamh MacGrianna & Cursai eile". In the translated extract he says that his unnamed benefactor in Ballymoye was his uncle, i.e. John A. Dockry. In this case he was indulging in some creative licence. In fact he was s a first cousin, with one removal, of John A. Dockry.

Ballymote's John Perry Appointed Minister for Small Business.

Ballymote's John Perry was appointed Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation, with Special Responsibility for Small Business, in March 2011 by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny. It is the first time a Minister has been given a specific role within the Small Business area of responsibility.

Minister Perry states that this demonstrates the level of respect that the new government has for Small Business and Entrepreneurs in this country. He states "I am obviously delighted, honoured and humbled to have been appointed a Minister of State by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny. Most importantly I am especially delighted to have been given responsibility for the Small Business Portfolio. It clearly demonstrates the

level of understanding, concern and respect that this administration has for small business, for entrepreneurs, for people who take the risk.

"I am very much looking forward to the role and I see it as a critical element of our economic recovery. I am determined that we can give entrepreneurs and small business people the necessary incentives and encouragement through our direct action, to create and retain jobs. There are over 80,000 Small and Micro Companies in this economy employing over 800,000 people, and it is an area which has been largely neglected and forgotten about by government up until now. I will be seeking to redress that balance and am looking forward immensely to the challenge".



Clerical Influence on the Outcome of 19th Century Sligo Elections

John C McTernan

In the opening years of the 18th century the outcome of County elections, both locally and nationally, were almost entirely dictated by the landowning class, while in the majority of Corporate Boroughs the control usually rested in the hands of 'patrons' such as the Wynnes of Hazelwood, the dominant family locally. However, as the century progressed the situation began to change and in Sligo in both 1818 and 1826 unsuccessful efforts were made by a handful of clergy to mobilise the Freeholders of the County in support of the pro-Emancipation nominee while at the same time seeking to rescue their flocks from the control of a territorial aristocracy.

Clerical involvement in seeking to influence the outcome of elections declined with the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829 which was followed by a Pastoral Letter from the Irish Hierarchy forbidding the use of chapels for political purposes. Contrary to this directive Dean James Donlevy (1791-1838), Administrator of the Sligo Parish, took an active part in the Borough election of 1832 and vehemently opposed the return of John Wynne, the outgoing M.P., who failed to give his full backing for Emancipation and opposed grant aid for Maynooth College. Instead, the Dean lent his support to the candidature of John Martin of Cleveragh whose principles he believed to be Liberal. Thanks mainly to Donlevy's campaign on his behalf Martin defeated the representative of the powerful Hazelwood family who had held the seat for generations. In response to criticisms levelled against him by the Wynne faction the Dean



publicly proclaimed that he had "every right and justification in directing his flock and those with Liberal tendencies how to vote".

Shortly after John Martin had been returned as the member for Sligo Borough it became increasingly evident that he was gradually abandoning his Liberal principles. When the next election came round in July 1837 the Dean invited John Patrick Somers, a native of Achonry and a friend of Daniel O'Connell, to contest the seat in opposition to Martin. The campaign that ensued was a vigorously contested affair in which Donlevy spared no lawful effort to secure the return of his latest 'protégé'. From church pulpit and election platform he strongly denounced the outgoing member for betraying the trust they had placed in him. The criticisms he levelled at Martin were so severe that the Conservative organ, "The Sligo Journal", referred to the Dean as "that agitating veteran in the Roman collar". In the ensuing election the Liberal voters of the Borough rallied round their beloved cleric once more and, assisted by his "remarkable ability as an electioneering orator",

the candidate of his choice, John P. Somers, Liberal and Repealer, scored a decisive victory over John Martin who contested the election in the Conservative interest.

Ahead of the Borough election of 1841 a meeting of Liberal voters took place in the Parish Chapel, presided over by Revd. Owen Feeney, P.P., at which J. P. Somers (outgoing) was unanimously chosen as their standard-bearer and was returned unopposed. Over the following years Owen Feeney and a majority of the electorate became disillusioned with the performance of their representative at Westminster and in 1847 an approach was made to Charles Towneley of *Towneley Hall* in Lancashire, a member of a leading Catholic family, to stand in the Liberal interest in the ensuing Borough election. In an Address to the electors, published in the local Press, he stated that he had come to Sligo "with the blessing of your Bishop, Dr. Browne, and with the support of Revd. Owen Feeney Adm." In the ensuing contest Towneley defeated Somers but was subsequently unseated on a Petition.

The enactment of the Ecclesiastical Tithes Act of 1851 greatly aroused religious feelings resulting in the clergy becoming actively involved in both the Borough and County elections of 1852, addressing meetings on behalf of the Liberal candidates and escorting electors to the polling booths.

In advance of the 1852 Borough election the Bishop of Elphin, George Plunkett Browne, and the newly appointed Administrator, Thomas Phillips, paid a visit to Towneley Hall and invited Charles Towneley to contest the seat for a second time

in the Liberal interest. After some consideration Towneley accepted the invitation and on his arrival in Sligo took up residence at Doherty's Guest House in Castle Street where from an upstairs window he nightly addressed the assembled supporters in the street below. In the course of the campaign he was regularly joined by members of the local clergy and on at least one



BISHOP L. GILLOOLY

occasion by Bishop Browne. On the Sunday prior to the election John P. Somers, the outgoing M.P., who was defending his Parliamentary seat, attended Mass in the Parish Chapel. At the conclusion of the service, Thomas Phillips, the Administrator, addressed the congregation and exhorted them to vote for Towneley. Pointing to the gallery where Somers was seated he denounced him "as a traitor to his religion and his country" and under no circumstances were any of the congregation to vote for him.

On the night before the election the Liberals operated a Tally Room in Mass Lane, otherwise Chapel Street, where upwards of fifty 'wavering' Towneley supporters were gathered, most of them involuntary, and their wants attended to in food and drink in an adjoining 'Treating House' under the supervision of a local curate, Fr. Patrick White. On the following morning they were escorted in groups to the nearby Courthouse where under the watchful eyes of the

accompanying clergy they cast their votes for Towneley who defeated Somers by 149 votes to 108. As was generally the case in Sligo elections of that era Somers lodged a Petition alleging unfair practices and after an investigation by a House of Commons Select Committee Towneley was unseated due to "undue clerical influence, bribery and treating". In the opinion of the Select Committee the clergy were deemed to be guilty of abusing their spiritual authority by denunciations from the altar which they regarded as "inconsistent with their duty as Ministers of Religion and destructive of freedom of choice on the part of the voters".

Ahead of the by-election that followed, a meeting of the Independent voters of the Borough, chaired by Fr. Thomas Phillips, Adm., then honorary Secretary of the Sligo Liberal Club, approved of John Sadlier, a former M.P. for Carlow, as a suitable candidate to represent the Liberal interest in Parliament in opposition to John P. Somers. Following Sadlier's successful return the "Sligo Champion" paid glowing tributes to the local clergy and in particular Administrator Phillips "whose towering form and manly but unassuming gait" was principally responsible for the success of the Liberals in both the 1852 and 1853 elections. At a subsequent meeting of the Liberal voters of the Borough a Resolution was passed praising the part he played on both occasions and in recognition of which it was unanimously agreed to organise a Testimonial in his honour.

Richard Swift, a London merchant born of Irish parents, was invited by the Liberal Club to present himself as a candidate in the 1852 County election. He was recommended by a number of church dignitaries including Archbishop McHale of Tuam and 'warmly' approved by Bishop Browne of Elphin. In advance of the contest

Swift published a lengthy Address promising to seek the repeal of the Ecclesiastical Tithes Bill and support tenant rights. Ahead of the election he undertook an extensive tour of the County addressing well attended and enthusiastic rallies, usually chaired by the local Parish Priest and after which he was introduced to leading members of the Catholic laity in the neighbourhood. In the Diocese of Elphin clerical support was orchestrated by Domnick Noone, P.P., Geevagh, whose influence and oratorical powers did most to advance Swift's showing at the polls. Also to the fore was Owen Feeney, P.P., Riverstown, who had previously figured prominently in Borough elections, and Peter O'Connor, C.C., Sligo, son of Owen and Rosanna O'Connor of Castlegal, Drumcliffe, whom the "Sligo Champion" described as "the idol of the Roman Catholics" but in the eyes of the "Sligo Journal" was "a violent politician".

In the ensuing election the Liberals scored a notable victory with Swift gaining a seat at the expense of Wm. R. Ormsby-Gore, the outgoing Conservative M.P. In a post election Address in Sligo Courthouse Swift confessed that in an effort to counteract the influence of the local landlords he felt obliged to elicit the support of the Catholic clergy who in turn exhorted their flocks to support him in preference to the landlord's nominee and went on to publicly state that he marvelled at "the influence the Catholic priests had over their flocks".

The Catholic clergy played a significant role in the General Election of 1868. The scene was set at a meeting of the Liberal voters of the County in July 1868, presided over by Capt. John Woulfe Flanagan of Drumdoe, Ballinafad, and attended by Bishop Laurence Gilhooly, Canon Tighe of Ballymote; Hugh Conmy, P.P., Skreen; Owen Feeney, P.P., Riverstown;

Terence O'Rorke, P.P., Collooney; John MacDermot, P.P., Mullinabreena, brother of The MacDermot of Coolavin; and Domnick Noone, P.P., Geevagh. The meeting adopted a number of Resolutions culminating in the nomination of Denis M. O'Connor, brother of The O'Connor Don of Clonalis, as the Liberal candidate. A week later the Catholic clergy of the Diocese of Achonry at a meeting in Tubbercurry, presided over by Bishop Patrick Durcan, pledged their support for O'Connor as the Liberal and Nationalist candidate in the ensuing December election.

In the autumn of 1868 numerous rallies in support of the 'popular' candidate took place in practically every parish in the County including Ballymote, Bunninadden, Collooney, Drumcliffe, Easkey, Enniscrone, Gurteen, Riverstown and Collooney. In most cases the rallies were chaired by the local Parish Priest and addressed by prominent members of the Catholic laity. The outcome resulted in a convincing victory for O'Connor who topped the poll almost five hundred votes ahead of Sir Robert Gore-Booth of Lissadell and seven hundred more than Edward Joshua Cooper of Markree Castle.

Meanwhile, the Borough election was also in progress. In April 1868 Bishop Gillooly convened a meeting of the Liberal electors for the purpose of selecting a candidate "worthy of representing this ancient Borough" in the upcoming election, and Capt. John Woulfe Flanagan of Drumdoe was their unanimous choice. His arrival in Sligo accompanied by two prominent clerics, namely, Domnick Noone and Owen Feeney, and escorted by a large group of supporters, culminated in a monster rally in Chapel Street addressed by Domnick Noone, John Morris, the Administrator of Sligo parish, his curate, James Casey and Monsignor Joseph Tucker of Boyle and a native of Springfield, Sligo. Over

the following weeks Bishop Gillooly and his clergy in after Mass addresses in the Parish Chapel exhorted those in the congregation who were entitled to vote to cast it in Flanagan's favour in preference to Major Laurence Knox of the "Irish Times", the Conservative candidate. Despite the strong clerical involvement Knox was successful by a handful of votes, 241 to 229.

The outcome was most disappointing from a Liberal viewpoint and Catholics identified for not supporting Flanagan were not only denounced from the altar in both the Parish Chapel and the Dominican Friary but were precluded from worshiping in the body of the churches. At a subsequent Parliamentary Inquiry John Morris, Adm., stated that the reason for so acting was the feeling of indignation amongst the congregation against those of his flock who either abstained or voted for Major Knox. The latter was subsequently unseated as he was by his agents adjudged to being guilty of bribery. The eagerly awaited bye-election, which the Liberals were confident of winning, did not take place as the Borough of Sligo was disfranchised by an Act of Parliament in 1869. Thereafter, and for the first time since it was created a Borough in 1612, Sligo no longer had a representative in Parliament and thereafter the electorate exercised their franchise in the new constituency of North Sligo.

By the end of the 1860s there were signs that the hitherto-unquestioned leadership of the Catholic electorate by the clergy was beginning to decline principally due to the arrival of the Fenian Movement which was condemned by the church. However, the influence of the clergy did not disappear overnight and their backing was eagerly welcomed by the leaders of the different political movements such as the Land League, United Irish League, the National League and in particular the Home

Rule Movement. However, as the 19th century drew to a close the support of the clergy was no longer essential for the success of a political movement. In defence of the clergy it has been claimed that they were "the exponents of the opinions and feelings of their flocks and did not impose on them any purely political viewpoint whatever but rather gave effect to a conviction that existed quite independently of themselves".

Dreams of an Everyday Housewife

Bernie Martin

*I am a housewife,
My job it is clear
Clean washing and ironing
Throughout the year.
Kitchen and Bathroom,
Bedrooms and Bins,
Iron 'til midnight
To pay for my sins.
Baking and budgeting,
Making ends meet,
Grocery shopping,
Though I'm dead on my feet.
Gardener, counsellor
Nurse, PRO,
On 24 hour duty
To help everything flow.
Though my dreams they are simple
My needs they are few,
But prayers for my children
I daily accrue.
Let them be healthy
Wherever they roam,
Do well and be happy
And come safely home.
For if they're in trouble
Or very unwell,
My dreams would be worthless,
My life would be hell.
And when they are older
And out in the world
My dreams will be aired out
And gently unfurled
I will paint a masterpiece,
Become a cottage dweller
(by the sea),
Sing Opera, in Covent Garden
And write my first Best Seller.*

North Roscommon Gaelicisms (Continued)

Frank Tivnan

This work is a glossary of Irish words which feature frequently in the everyday conversation in English of a mainly rural community of North Roscommon. This area of North Roscommon was Irish speaking until the 1880s.

The noted Irish Scholar Fr. Tomas Ó Ceallaigh who was born in 1897 learned his first Irish words from his maternal grandmother Catherine Tivnan (Tivnan 1999). As a young man Dr. Douglas Hyde learned Irish from James Hart, a gamekeeper on Lord De Freynes's estate in nearby Frenchpark. (Dunleavy 1991).

The Irish words which I have compiled are still used up to the present by people who are over fifty years of age. The community on which I based my research has been engaged in small farming and has lived in a tightly knit and rather isolated manner. Consequently the vocabulary reflects many agricultural terms, the cultivation of crops, the diseases of man and beast, terms of endearment, pejorative terms and of course many references to the Christian religion.

The role of the Seanachie, the traditional story teller, and house rambling has done much to preserve the native Irish vocabulary which is an essential and valuable ingredient to nourish and sustain the Irish psyche.

Gabhal, a fork, the genital area
Gal daighre, a thick, awkward person
Gallogue (**gallóg**), a big glassful of whiskey
Galore (**go leor**), enough, plenty
Gam (**gom**), a foolish or rather stupid person
Gambún, a leg, haunch of ham
Geek (**giog**), a slight sound
Gidaun (**geadán**), buttocks, rump
Gob, a bird's beak, a mouth. "Close your gob".
Girseach, a young girl
Glam (**glám**), grab
Glugger (**gliogar**), a rotten or infertile egg
Gobawn (**gobán**), one who pretends to have great skill; one who is very unskilled.

The **gobán saor** was a master craftsman; today's use of gobawn contradicts this

Gonc (**gonnc**), a snub, disappointment
Groeens (**gróigín**), five or six sods of turf standing together to dry
Griosach, ashes containing embers. The fire is raked with griosach. (**Píobaire an griosaí** – the piper of the embers, the cricket)
Griscin (**gríscín**), a piece of fresh pork from under the back bone

Guggering, a homemade sisal bag to hold seed potatoes or split potatoes is called a guggering bag. **Gogaíreach** is the act of placing seed in the hole made by the **stíbhín**
Hurrais, a call used to summon pigs to food
Iris, a handle of a creel or basket

Kathleen mavourneen, Kathleen my love, a hire purchase agreement. (**Caitlín mo mhuirín**)

Kybosh. To put the kybosh on something means to finish off badly. Possibly from **caidhp an bháis**, cap of death

Lab, a large sum of money, nest egg, inheritance

Lách, sociable, generous

Lachlee (**leach liath**, grey layer), a type of impermeable subsoil

Ladhraicín, a little finger or a young boy's penis

Launawaula (**lán an mhála**, the full of the bag), a sufficient amount, well drunk

Leadaf na luatha (lazybones of the ashes), a lazy person who spends too much time by the fire

Leadair, to tear up, leather into him

Leadóg, a slap in the face

Leadranach, slow, long-winded, boring

Leamh, flat as in beer, tasteless, insipid ("This business is very leamh")

Leibide, an idiot or awkward person

Lionnán, a sick delicate child

Liobar, a hanging of lip. ("You could hang a bucket on his liobar")

Líbín, drenched wet ("I'm like a líbín")

Liúdrámán, a lanky lazy person

Loiste or leoiste, a lazy person

Losset or losad (**losad**), a kneading trough for bread making

Loy (**lái**ghe), a special spade for making potato ridges

Luascán, a swing, a hammock. "The hayshed is in a luascán after the storm"

Lus na fola, yarrow plant. Pressed yarrow mixed with goose grease was a cure for ulcers (nowadays we tend to use manuka honey instead)

Mada or madra, a dog. **Mada rua**, a fox; **meas mada**, the respect of the dog, i.e. little respect

Maide, a stick or beam

Maith go leor, good enough, tipsy

Maum (**mám**), a handful, the full of two hands together

Mannt, the gap left by a lost tooth

Manntóg, a person who is missing a few teeth

Maol, bald, hornless. "Moily" for a hornless cow still is used in Newfoundland, Canada. The moily cow is a very old Irish breed, red with a white stripe down her back

Meadar, a wooden drinking vessel

Meas, respect or regard

Meidhreach, joyful, merry. **Magairlín meidhreach**, the early purple orchid (used as a love potion)

Mé féiner, a selfish person. **Mé féin**, me myself

Méigrim, a dizzy head

Méirín, a cover for a sore finger

Mí ádh, misfortune, bad luck

Meitheal, a number of people who gather together voluntarily to do work for their neighbour

Míonnán aerach, the jacksnipe whose cry resembles that of a goat kid

Moneen, a fertile grassy patch of a bog or mountain (**móinín**)

Muishe, musha, an interjection

Múnlach, the liquid that emanates from a dunghill

Neamp, a piece or bare patch. "John neamped Tom's hair" means that John cut Tom's hair badly, leaving bare patches. Origin obscure, maybe from **ailp**, a gap.

Noody naddy, an indecisive person. (**Níúide neáide** or **niúdar neádar**, indecision)

Oighreach, chapped hands and feet caused by wet and dry conditions. Also called Máirtín Oighreach

Óinseach, a female idiot or fool

Palltóg, a thump

Pánaí, a tin mug

Pánaí, a plump or fat person or animal. "The cat caught a pánaí of a rat"

Peata, a pet or a mammy's boy

Pichan, a hoarseness after the flu

Pislín, dribble, saliva

Pisreog, witchcraft, omens, superstitions, charms, spells

Piteog, a sissy, an effeminate boy or man
 Plámás, flattery
 Pléicín, a head scarf, a cover for a sore eye
 Pleiche or pleidhce, a fool
 Pluc, a fat cheek. "That lad has a good head and pluc on him"
 Poc, a male goat
 Póg, a kiss
 Poitín, a homemade whiskey
 Potheens, small potatoes (**Póithín** or **póirín**)
 Praiseach, a mess, porridge. "Seán made praiseach of the job"
 Praties, potatoes. (**Prataí**)
 Pruthóg, a present of eggs for Easter
 Puisín, a kitten
 Pus, a sour or sulky face, a mouth
 Putóg, a small fat child

Rideóg, bog myrtle. A few pieces of rideóg hanging from the ceiling will keep away flies
 Ráiméis, foolish or senseless talk
 Ránaí, a thin lanky person
 Riabhach, speckled or brindled, especially of cows. **Trí lá na riabhaigh**, last three days of March (the reewogues)
 Róidín lach, a straight row of people or animals
 Ruadhóg, flaxen hemp used in mending shoes
 Ruaile buaile, noise, confusion. **Rí rá agus ruaile buaile**, a hubbub
 Rúisc, a big fat person

Scéal, news, story
 Scib, a potato basket
 Sceilp, a slice or layer
 Sciortón, a tick
 Scivell, eaves of a house or of a stack of hay or oats (**Sceimheal**)
 Scollop, a sally or hazel rod used in thatching
 Scraw, a strip of earth cut out (**Scraith**)
 Scorríck, a little amount or a very small piece. Origin obscure, perhaps from Irish scoreach
 Seachrán, wandering, looking for work. "On the seachrán" means on the look out for a job or unemployed. Also drinking a lot
 Seafáid, silly or rubbishy talk
 Seafáideach, a person who is raving or mentally unbalanced
 Séanas, a natural gap between the front teeth
 Seanchaí, a traditional story teller
 Sean nós, old style. "Peter is a good sean nós dancer"
 Seileóg, a spit. **Ní fiú seile é** it's not worth a spit
 Seipicín, a small amount of liquid
 Sheebeen, a small unlicensed liquor store (**Síbín**)
 Shoonen, one who apes English ways (**Seoinín**)
 Shillelagh, a big stick
 Shin shin, that's that. (**Sin sin**)
 Síle na gig, a stone female statue showing bare breasts and genitalia, found on churches and castles. Her exposure was to ward off the Devil. (**Sile na gcíoch**)
 Sheila of the breasts).
 Siulóir or shooleir, an itinerant
 Skelp, a slap or clatter (**Sceilp**)
 Slacht, tidy, neat
 Slam, dirty green stuff in wells and rivers
 Sláimín, an untidy person
 Sláinte, health, cheers!
 Sleaghan, a bog spade for cutting turf
 Slew, a big number or large amounts. Slew is very common in the U.S.A. (**Slua**, a crowd, a host)
 Slibire, a slime from a cow showing that she is in-calf.
 Smidgeon, a small amount. (Origin obscure but could possibly come from **smeachán**)
 Smidereens, tiny pieces (**Smidiríní**)
 Soolock, dirty water (**Súlach**)

Spada, a soft inferior turf (**Spadach**)
 Spág, a large foot
 Spalpeen, an agricultural labourer who travelled around the country seeking work.
 (**Spailpin**)
 Spideog, a robin, a drop from one's nose
 Sponc, a stallion
 Steall, a quantity of liquid
 Steeven, a pointed wooden spade for planting potatoes.
 (**Stúbhín**)
 Stócach, a young man, a sponger
 Stocán, a stump, a piece of wood
 Straois, a grim sarcastic smile
 Streelish, untidy, unkempt (**Straoill**)
 Stuic, a harmless type of fool
 Sugán, a straw or hay rope
 Sughán, a drink made from oatmeal and cold water
 Suim, interest or regard
 Súiste, a flail
 Súlach, juice
 Tadhg, a man's name. '**Tuigeann Tadhg Taidhgin**', 'Greek meets Greek'. **Tadhg an da thaobh**, one who runs with the hare and hunts with the hounds
 Tála, soreness in wrists, cramps (**Tadhlach**)
 Tálóid n., a half loft over the kitchen fire in traditional Irish thatched houses.
 Támhaí, an ugly woman
 Tairne féige, penis
 Tar liom abhaile, come home with me, referring to a loose woman
 Taoscán, a small amount. 'Give me a taoscán of flour'
 Tartóg, a dumpy woman
 Teem, to drain off. "John teemed the potatoes"
 Taom, to empty
 Tinteán, fireplace, hearth. "Nil aon tinteán mar do thinteán féin" (proverb) - there's no hearth stone like your own hearth stone
 Tír na nÓg, legendary land of the forever young
 Tionnlacan na n-óinseach, the fools' escorting, i.e. re-escorting of friends through reluctance to part
 Tór, regard, esteem
 Turtóg, a clump or tuft in rough land
 Traithnín, a blade or wisp of grass or straw
 Trehens, bad worn old shoes (**Troithíní**)
 Trína chéile, mixed up, confused, bothered, upside down mentally
 Tutach, ignorant, uncouth
 Turlach, a winter lake
 Uileann pipes, bag pipes played pressing on bellows under the elbow. (**Uile** means elbow, genitive case **uileann**)

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Ballincar House, Ballincar, Co. Sligo

Martin A. Timoney



Ballincar House, Co. Sligo, from southeast, showing the original house and later extensions still in place but with additional diningroom and kitchen areas demolished. The forward projection of Room No. 1 on plan has been demolished so this shows the original block of the house.

Photo: Martin A. Timoney, Spring 2003.

This article is based on the final archaeological report on licensed archaeological monitoring, Licence No. 03E0112, of the demolition of Ballincar House Hotel and works on the surrounding grounds in advance of the complete new and very much larger hotel complex that we see on the Rosses Point Road today. Historical record of the building was compiled from The Valuation Office in Dublin, The Geological Survey of Ireland in Dublin, Sligo Library Local Studies Archive, McTernan (2009) and in person, and Mrs. Bernadette Gilbride, the last lady of Ballincar House and a frequent contributor to *The Corran Herald*.

The research now indicates that Ballincar House was being built in 1850 and had a succession of owners who used it as a dwelling house until 1969 when it was converted into an hotel after which extensions to the north and west gave us the maximum building that was demolished in early 2003 to be replaced by the much more extensive present hotel.

In all the monitoring not a single archaeological find, feature or

structure was uncovered; the shell midden to the west was avoided by a few metres.

Copy of the overall report has been lodged with Sligo Co. Council, Sligo Co. Library Local Studies Archive, National Monuments Service and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in Dublin. A copy with the full set of almost 350 photographs has been lodged with The Irish Architectural Archive in Merrion Sq., Dublin.

Ballincar House Hotel stood on a 5.5 acre site on the crest of an E-W glacial ridge that runs along the Rosses Point peninsula. It was converted into an hotel starting in 1968 but the building was much altered and extended in the 1970s and afterwards. Its location was, by chance, in direct line with Larkhill Rd. on the west side of Sligo Town. There was another building called Ballincar House at the east end of Ballincar townland at the time of the 1914 OS mapping. However, McTernan (2009, 23-24) indicates that Baymount was the name in 1850 for Ballincar House. The name 'Baymount' was not used for the hotel

as 'Baymount Hotel' had been applied by Mr. Sean Beirne to another hotel, beside the Silver Slipper Ballroom, in Strandhill, on the opposite side of Sligo Bay.

Ballincar House was not in existence to be marked on the 1837 OS 6" map and it is not referred to in the *Griffith Valuation*. The building possessed a fine set of diamond shaped chimneys, most likely inspired by those on 17th century Ballincar Castle, *alias* Cregg, which is visible to the south-west on the other side of the road.

The structure of the house was that it was one with a left-to-right spine wall, a feature common around 1730. Ballincar House was a two story square building with a hipped roof. Originally it had two rooms either side of a central hall at ground level and the same either side of the landing above, giving eight rooms in total. There may have been some additional original rooms to the back but these were long gone. The room on left had been extended forward to form a bay window for a Residents' Sitting Room.

The only surviving early features of any merit were the windows of the upstairs east front room and the stairs. At my insistence Ballincar House was architecturally surveyed and plans and sections were drawn by the clients' agents. Under my guidance the exterior, interior and surroundings were photographically recorded by a professional photographer taking over eighty photographs. I took further photos of the standing building as it was being gutted and of its demolition which provides at least a partial record of its construction.

RESOLVING the DATE of BALLINCAR HOUSE

Establishing the date of

Ballincar House was a problem that was occasionally addressed during and after the works. No clearcut statement from any single document has come to light that dates the building. For some time I was working on the probability that the building was erected between 1877 and 1885. I now think that 1875 is more likely to be the *terminus post quem*. The *terminus ante quem* of 1885 was based on Ballincar House being marked on the 6" OS map, Sligo sheet 14, of that date. The *terminus post quem* of 1875 was also based on a 6" OS map, Sligo sheet 14, a printing of 1875. As there are some items on this printing that could not have been on the 1st edition of 1837, the railway for instance which was opened in Sligo in 1862, I had wrongly assumed for some years that this was a full revision of Sheet 14. I have worked out that that this is not necessarily true and that the printing is essentially the 1837 map with some additions. It can not be used as a date marker for 1875.

Not wanting to release a report with an undated building I resorted to the Valuation Office in Dublin as a potential source of a solution. This was visited and Plot 4 of Ballincar townland on their maps is the relevant one. The data for this plot was extracted from the seven Valuation Books to establish the sequence of owners and that is given below. Nothing obvious jumped out of the data to establish a *secure* date for Ballincar House.

The earliest Valuation Book is for 1855 and there is an entry in the name of Moses Monds for that year for Plot 4. The Valuation Books are updated as needs be and the revisions are done in varying colours which help indicate the date of the change; that is when you figure out the system. In 1860 an entry is made indicating that Plot 4 was split into two lots, Plot 4 of reduced size and a new Plot 25. There is a temptation to see this as an indication of the date of the house. However, McTernan (2009, 23-24) provides information that indicates that Baymount, the

name then for Ballincar House, was being built in 1850 by Moses Monds. I have talked to McTernan on this point and he confirmed that his information is that Ballincar House was under construction in 1850. This would imply that the 1860 Valuation Office Book alteration reflects a post-construction splitting of the property. The 1850 date ties in with the tradition, passed on to us by Mrs. Bernadette Gilbride, that the construction was done as Famine relief work.

The Registry of Deeds in Henrietta St., Dublin, may confirm that date but that source has not been researched.

TRANSFERS of the PROPERTY

I do not recognise the presence of the house in the Griffith *Valuation* published in 1856. Moses Monds was associated with the house at an early date. Monds is mentioned in the Griffith *Valuation*, 1856, as owning 28 Acres 3 Roods and 9 Perches in Ballincar townland with a valuation of £44 being made up of £32 for land and £12 for buildings. Only two other houses in this townland had high values approaching that of this house; John Wynne had a house valued at £13-10-0 and an unoccupied house was valued at £10. There were several other houses of high value in this, even then, much sought after townland.

Table I 19th CENTURY ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPPING OF BALLINCAR

In 2003 Listing at the Assessment /Application stage I made the following listing. This list of owners was compiled with the help of Mrs. Bernadette Gilbride of Ballincar House Hotel, and from the Valuation Books and Valuation Maps in the Valuation Office in Dublin.

1897 Owen Wynne to Henry Lyons
1912 Henry Lyons to John Tighe
1927 John Tighe to William May
1929 William May to Mathew Feeney

1930 Mathew Feeney to Maria East
1937 Plunkett to O'Beirne
1944 O'Beirne to Maria East
1958 Maria East to Fraser
1963 Fraser to Victor Douglas Blackwell
1968 Victor Douglas Blackwell to Ballincar Hotel Co.; Gilbride involved here
Ballincar House was converted into an hotel about 1968 by Victor Blackwell and Michael Gillbride,

Neither Baymount nor Ballincar House is on the 1877 6" OS map. Ballincar House is on the 1885 6" OS map. Ballincar House is on the 1910 6" OS 1:2,500 OS map where it is named Baymount. This suggested placing the building of Ballincar House between 1877 and 1885, a period of less than a decade. However, I have since worked out that the 1877 OS map is only a PARTIAL revision of the 1838 OS map and so that dating can not be taken as correct.

Table II

John C. McTernan published *The Light of Bygone Years: 1, Houses of Sligo and Associated Families; 2, Sligo Families – Chronicles of Sixty Families Past and Present* just before Christmas 2009. This is a major work on the houses and families of Co. Sligo based on a dedicated lifetime of research. From that work (McTernan 2009, I, 23-24) the following has been extracted.

Landlord: Owen Wynne
1850 Moses Monds
building Sea Lodge, = Ballincar House
1853 £1,020 valuation
1853 Edward Jones
leased the house
1864 Thomas H. Nelson
1877 John Pettigrew
1890 Henry Lyons, Jr., JP
19xx Jeremiah McCarthy

leased the house
1912 John Tighe
1927 William Maye
Charles Roycroft East
James Arthur Fraser
1962 for sale
1964 Victor Douglas Blackwell
Michael Gilbride
1969 as a Hotel
2000 Bernard Mullin & Michael
Mullholland
2003 Demolition by JJ Rhatigan
Construction of Hotel
Bought by Radison
Name changed to Radison
Blue

here, and an avenue was also provided north to Ballincar House. I have not got the date of any of these 'better' houses though there were buildings at all three locations, Kildonagh, Rossaville and Cherry Lodge, in 1837. Rossaville, between Kildonagh and Cherry Lodge, should not be confused with Roseville, less than a mile to the east at the E side of Ballincar townland.

DEMOLITION

The demolition of the house on 5th February 2003 was photographically recorded by myself with seventy photos taken. The

brick but with limestone where the chimney flues were. The spine wall was arched over the central hall and the landing.

Only the west wing, dating to 1968-1969, of the hotel was retained to be incorporated into the new hotel; all other parts of the structure were demolished and the foundations cleared.

FOUNDATIONS OF BALLINCAR HOUSE

Some information on the foundations of Ballincar House was gained from clearance of the space under the building. Here there was a dry red-brown soil but there was nothing of archaeological interest in it. I concluded that the topsoil had been removed prior to the building of Ballincar House. The foundation of the E-W spine wall was a packing of stones up to 15 cm across; these foundations were 85 cm deep and less than a metre wide. The foundations of the N-S walls were of much larger stones, up to 45 cm across, and went to a depth of not more than 75 cm.

STORM WATER PIPE ALONG THE MAIN ROAD

The trench for the storm water pipe along the recently re-aligned Sligo to Rosses Point Rd. for a distance of just under a kilometre from the hotel to the small Teesan River that enters the sea between Ballincar and Cregg townlands to the west of the hotel was monitored over several days. This road was newly laid some years ago by the County Council and a shell midden close to the line for the pipe trench was cut through at the time of the construction of the new line for the road. There is a C₁₄ date of about 1,200 BC, the Middle to Later Bronze Age transition, from this midden. As part of our works I ensured that the midden was protected by fresh clay but no archaeological find, feature or structure was uncovered at or close to the midden as the ground here had been lowered during the previous road works.

Table III

Valuation Office Documents: Extracted in late 2009

Griffith Valuation Map: Base map is 1856; Copy has addition of Parliamentary Boundary added in and dated 1870

Book	Number	Occupier	Immediate Lessor
1	4a	Edward Jones	Moses Monds
1	4b	Moses Monds	John Wynne
1	25A	Moses Monds	
1	25B	Moses Monds	
2	4a	Edward Jones	Moses Monds
3	4	John Pettigrew	Owen Wynne
3	4	Henry Lyons	Owen Wynne
4	4	Henry Lyons	In Fee (LAP)
4	4	John Tighe	
5	4	John Tighe	Owen Wynne
5	4	William Maye	
5	4	Maria East	
6	4	Maria East	Owen Wynne
7	4	James Arthur Frazer	
8	4a	James Arthur Frazer	
8	4a	John Clarke	Victor Douglas Blackwell
8	4b	Victor Douglas Blackwell	

This places on record the sequence of owners / occupiers of the property. Clarity may be found in the documents preserved in the Registry of Deeds in Dublin but that long haul I leave to others.

There was a chicken farm here at one time and the house may also have been used as a convent for a while; we were advised to watch for buried statues but none were found.

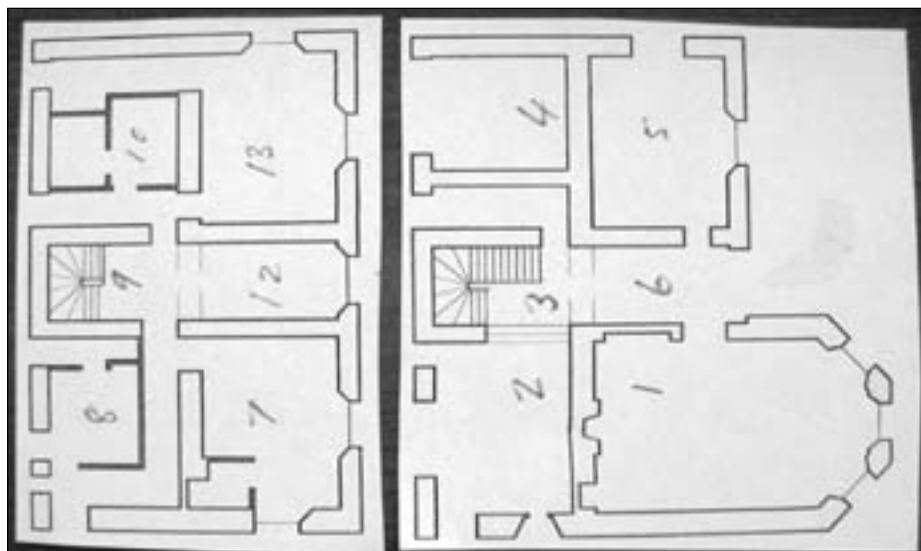
There had been considerable changes of alignment of the road to Rosses Point in this area. The road had been moved northwards several fields. Long avenues were provided leading south to the 'better' houses, Kildonagh, Rossaville and Cherry Lodge, along the old line of the road

architectural survey and an album of the 346 photos are included in the final report for the appropriate archives.

It was hoped before access to the attic was achieved that some information might be gained from the structure of the chimney-stacks. The stacks disintegrated on being touched by the machine.

The original front doorway had been severely altered by the works for the hotel over the decades and no information on its nature was gained; regrettably there was no date-stone and nothing to indicate a date for the building.

The fabric of the house was of rubble limestone and brick with a facing of limestone. The E-W left to right spine wall was mainly of red



Ballincar House, Co. Sligo. Rooms 1 to 6 were on the ground floor; Rooms 7 to 13 were at first floor level. The forward projection of room 1 was a later addition. These floor plans are extracted from overall architectural record of the building by Access Building Design, Galway. That full record is available at Sligo Library Local Studies Archive and the Irish Architectural Archive in Dublin.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The architectural and photographic record of Ballincar House was included with the report. The 'before, during and after' photographic record of Ballincar includes about three hundred and fifty photos. There are photos of the exterior and interior of Ballincar House, the attic and the interior of the roof, of the demolition of the house and of the ground underneath.

EARLY PHOTOS OF BALLINCAR HOUSE

Some early photos came to notice over the last seven years.

[1] From the collection of Mr. Brian Curran, who lives opposite Ballincar House Hotel, and is reproduced from McTernan (2009, I, 23). This shows Ballincar House as it was before any extension for hotel purposes was built, the earliest extension of which was by 1967.

[2] From under a tree showing the front of the complex with the 1969 west extension in place.

[3] Michael and Bernadette Gilbride, former owners, about 1985.

[4] The Dining Room with former owner Victor Blackwell, the

central seated figure, and members of the staff in 1969.

[5] A Black and White probably mid-1970s view, taken for promotion purposes by a Dundalk photographer, from right or east of the front entrance looking towards Ballincar House Hotel.

[6] Ballincar 17th century house, showing the distinctive diamond-shaped chimneys which inspired the chimneys on Ballincar House in the mid-19th Century and were 'replicated' on the 2003 building.

Acknowledgements

I thank the developers Bernard Mullin and Michael Mulholland, the personnel of J.J. Rhatigan, namely Ger Roynane, Jerimiah Haladyn, Michael Prendergast and Patrick Regan, the earth moving contractors, both John Mullane and his men and Alec Norris and his men, various members of the staff of Sligo Co. Co. and Sligo Library Local Studies Archive in Bridge St., various members of the staff of Dúchas as it was then known, the staff of the National Library of Ireland, the Geological Survey of Ireland and the Valuation Office and Mrs. Bernadette Gilbride, whose husband Michael was

the joint owner of Ballincar House Hotel.

Some of the early photos are courtesy of Mrs. Bernadette Gilbride. These include Michael and Bernadette Gilbride and Victor Blackwell. Mr. Noel Kennedy, Farnaherpy, was employed to photographically record the building before gutting.

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James Daly, Editor & Proprietor of the Connaught Telegraph, Land War activist and the most undeservedly forgotten man in Irish history.

Nancy Smyth

James Daly was born in 1838 in Cloonabina, Boghadoon, near Lehardaun, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo. He was the eldest son of a well to do and prosperous family, known locally for their farming and trading connections. He was educated at Errew monastery, outside Castlebar, by the Franciscans. He was intelligent, tall and handsome. In 1869 at the age of 31 years, Daly won a seat on the Castlebar Board of Guardians in the Breaffy district and five years later he succeeded to his father's seat for the Litterbrick division in the Ballina union. He remained active in local politics until his death.

In 1876 Daly, with Alfred O'Hea, purchased the ailing Mayo Telegraph/Connaught Ranger from the family of Frederick Cavendish and changed its name to the Connaught Telegraph. He used the paper to highlight the problems of the day. When Gladstone arrived in Ireland in 1877, he called on him to visit the Mitchelstown estate to see the failure of the Land Act of 1870.

The leadership of James Daly was necessary in the promotion and development of the Tenants' Defence Association in the west, and was the foundation on which the Land League was built. His main objective was the improvement of the conditions of the small tenant farmers by means of peasant proprietorship. He used his position as editor of the Connaught Telegraph to promote the work of the Tenant Defence Association and then the Land League. He kept his readers informed, urging them to unite. He challenged the land lords and when necessary the clergy.

In the Connaught Telegraph of 10th February 1877, two years before the forming of the Land League, Daly wrote "If we are ever to achieve the right to live in happiness and comfort on our own soil we must speak and act like men and give up that wretched subservience which has kept us like whipped hounds at the feet of the



At the James Daly commemoration ceremony in Castlebar were four generations of his descendants: His grand daughter Sheila Daly (second from right), Sheila's nephew Neil Mongey, Neil's daughters Orla (beside him) and Niamh, and Orla's son Tiernan. Picture courtesy Neil Mongey

Landlord". He continually used his paper to highlight injustices. For elections Daly recommended polling booths in dispensaries and police barracks for a secret ballot, as a way of wiping out intimidation of the tenant farmer by the landlord when casting his vote.

1876-82 was a period of agrarian agitation in Ireland. It was a time of economic crisis due to bad weather, low crop yield and poor prices, while the agrarian groups had land reform as their agenda.

The Tenant Defence meeting in Irishtown on 20th April 1879 was the spark that lit the fuse for land reform. The immediate occasion was provided by the attempt by Rev. Canon Geoffrey Bourke to put pressure on the tenants for arrears of rent. Rev. Bourke's brother Walter had died in 1873, his son Captain Joseph Bourke was serving in India and Rev. Bourke, while being the local parish priest and living in the family home of Oldtown cottage, also managed the estate.

When he found his tenants were in arrears in their rents, he threatened them with eviction. They went to Daly of the Connaught Telegraph at the January quarter-session in Claremorris asking him to highlight the matter in the paper.

He advised them to organise a mass meeting to highlight their grievance and he would cover it in the paper. The meeting was to be held in February, but the guest speaker John O'Connor Power was not available, so it was postponed until 20 April. Daly helped with the organising and had posters printed. The result of the protest was the manager reduced the rent by 25%. The success of the meeting showed that by peaceful protest, they could succeed in their aim. Until the end of the Land War in 1882 the policy was peaceful protest and the introduction of Boycotting.

He was the only Land Leaguer to give a statement of evidence to the Bessborough Commission in 1880, on the operation of the "Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act 1870." He was responsible for organising the Irishtown meeting in 1879, and played a very important part in the Land League. Daly's contribution to land reform has not yet been fully acknowledged.

Daly died on 22nd March 1911 and to mark the centenary of his death there was a wreath-laying ceremony at his grave in the Old Cemetery in Castlebar at 5.30pm on Tuesday 22nd March 2011.

Carrowcullen House: From Family Home to Convent to Hermitage.

Martin Wilson

The double parish of Skreen and Dromard is the most easterly parish in the barony of Tiereragh and the Diocese of Killala. The parish of Dromard is bounded on its eastern side by the parish of Ballisodare; the parish of Skreen is bounded by Templeboy. It is overlooked by the Ox Mountains on its southern side and faces the Atlantic Ocean to the North. The main Ballina-Sligo road passes through it.

Dromard (meaning high ridge) takes its name from the elevated position of its old church on the slopes of the Ox Mountains. It has 41 townlands and 7417 acres. Skreen stretches from the sea to the summit of the Ox Mountains at this point (Knockalongy



1778 ft high). Skreen, once the home of Daithi the High King of Ireland, has 47 townlands and 13,233 acres. The church of Skreen was founded in the seventh century by St. Adamnan who died in 704. Skreen takes its name from the Latin word *scrinium* (meaning shrine) because in it was deposited Adamnan's shrine for safe keeping after a Norse raid on Iona.

In the parish of Skreen, just off the main Ballina-Sligo road in the townland of Leacarrow, is Holy Hill Hermitage. Known locally as Skreen Convent or Carrowcullen house,

Holy Hill is on a prominent site with commanding views of the surrounding countryside and the Atlantic Ocean.

The Ox Mountains and the Ladies Brae in the background make this a unique and sheltered location. It's a place of tranquillity and peace with birdsong and the sound of the river flowing through the woods being the only interruption to the silence.

The Down Survey parish map of 1650 shows that the lands were owned by Edward Crofton of the nearby Longford House. The house is not marked on the 1838 OS map so it would have been constructed after this date,

perhaps 1840-1850, by the Guilfoyle family who were Catholic landlords, originally from Co. Tipperary.

Anthony Guilfoyle died in 1920 and left in his will £3,000 to be given in charity, preferably to a religious community. Mrs Guilfoyle did not wish to live in Carrowcullen after her husband's death and, in order to dispose of the house and 25 acres of land surrounding the property, she offered the £3,000 to the Reverend mother of the Sisters of Mercy convent in Ballina on the condition that she buy the house and land for £2,000. Dr. James Naughton Bishop of Killala gave permission to accept the terms.

On October 21st 1921 three sisters were sent to Skreen. Leaving a large house and community in Ballina and settling in and setting up in a small community in a remote area at the foot of the Ox Mountains must have been no easy task for the sisters. Life in the country at that time was difficult and by today's standards quite primitive. There was no electricity, no heating, no transport, no phone, and no radio. But these sisters, in the true spirit of their founder Sr Catherine McCauley, with a deep faith and trust in God's

providence set about their task of drove the sisters to school in a pony



establishing a Mercy Community in Skreen. It survived for 73 years.

They set up a commercial school and also taught music. A retired priest was appointed chaplain in 1922. The ballroom was converted into an oratory and the sisters had the blessing of a daily Mass in the house. On Sundays they were joined by the locals for a public Mass.

In 1924 they were put in care of the local Ross national school and thus began the Mercy Sisters' involvement in primary education in Skreen. They continued to teach in Ross until the school closed in 1970, and in Ballinlig until 1990 when the last of the teaching sisters was transferred to Ballina.

The farm, which was part of the Guilfoyle estate, was looked after by the nuns with the help of a resident workman and the neighbours. The neighbours always helped with haymaking and other chores and were always available to offer advice on farming matters. The workman also

and trap; he had his own quarters in one of the out-buildings in the yard.

With the arrival of rural electrification to Skreen in 1951 living standards began to improve for the nuns, as they did for the wider community. New modern conveniences like washing machines, fridges, electric heaters and irons made life much easier.

The parish of Skreen owes a debt of gratitude to the Mercy Sisters. They visited the sick and housebound, and they attended to the dying. They were responsible for the setting up of Community Care, they helped to organise the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, the church choir, Scór na nÓg, the local youth club, drama club, charity walks, and craft classes.

The changes of Vatican II and greater mobility through having their own car combined to change the lifestyle of the community considerably in the 1970s. However in the 1990s all was to change because of a fall off in vocations to the religious life. With

the responsibility of looking after and caring for a large property, the now elderly remaining sisters had no option but to declare their intent to vacate Skreen Convent and return to their base in Ballina after 73 years service to their beloved adopted parish of Skreen.

Once more Carrowcullen House faced an uncertain future. On leaving, the nuns did indicate that, like the Guilfoyle family before them, they would prefer if a religious presence could be maintained in the property. They handed the keys over to Bishop Finnegan who went in search of someone to take over the property.

In 1994 he contacted the Spiritual Life Institute, a contemplative order of Carmelite monks from North America, to come and inspect the buildings with a view to opening a monastery here.

The hermits liked what they saw. They were overcome by the beauty of the surrounding countryside and even though they knew the buildings were not ideal, requiring much work to restore and adapt to their needs, they took on the daunting task.

They restored Carrowcullen to its former glory. They re-roofed, renovated and restored the courtyard which had been neglected for twenty five years. On the surrounding land they built ten new hermitages in secluded locations. Each monk-hermit lives in an individual hermitage.

They generate their income from people from all over the world who come here on retreat to get away from it all. These retreatants, as they are known, live the life of the monks. They stay in a hermitage, do daily chores, chop wood, and tend the gardens while enjoying the peace and solitude of this very special place.

The monks also take school retreats, give retreats around the country, produce magazines, write books and prepare CDs of songs and reflection. They have an open Sunday on the first Sunday of every month for the public to share Mass with them.

When the Mercy Order decided, reluctantly, to leave Carrowcullen House it faced an uncertain future. Due to the foresight of one man and the determination of a small community of hardworking people these beautiful old buildings, part of our heritage, have been saved. Their priority at all times was that the restoration would be sympathetic, and that nothing would be changed or altered, only enhanced and improved where possible.



Music and the Megaliths

Lynda Hart

If you go to Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery today what do you hear? The sounds of nature, birds and animals and the sounds of today, cars, planes, and you might even hear the odd tour guide!

But what would you have heard 6,000 years ago? What sounds accompanied the ceremonies and rituals at these places?

Of any musical instruments played, little remains, as these would have been delicate organic materials that have not survived the journey through the millennia.

The oldest recorded musical instruments are bone flutes found in caves in Germany and France, their origins being about 35-40 thousand years ago. The oldest of these flutes were made from the radius bone of the Whooper swans. This led me to think of the ancestors and how they viewed migration.

We know that Whooper swans like many other birds migrate and we know where they go, but to our ancestors these strange large birds disappeared only to return just as mysteriously at a latter time. Where did they go? To the land of the ancestor? And if so, by fashioning musical instruments from the bones of these birds could they too communicate with their ancestors?

Closer to home, during an archaeological dig in County Wicklow in 2003, six wooden pipes were discovered. These six pipes were not joined but are thought to be a set. They lack finger holes and they may have been played more like panpipes. They are made from yew wood and were used about 4,000 years ago. Initial experiments indicate that the pipes generate the notes E Flat, A Flat and F Natural. The exact method of construction is yet to be established.

The flutes and other bone

instruments that have been found within the European context are thought to be closely associated with rock art that is often found in the same places, the music mixing with the visual art adding to the experience. Igor Reznikoff of the University of Paris says 'The most acoustically resonant place in a cave, where the sound lingers and resonates the most, is often the place where the art is densest'. And even the most inaccessible places that had good acoustics were marked with a smear of red paint.

Although unlikely to have been built for their acoustics, some passage tombs, especially the larger ones that are very cave-like in their construction, have acoustic properties.

Aaron Walsh, an archaeologist and David Keating, an acoustics expert, have carried out experiments at Newgrange. Various tests were conducted in both the chamber and the passage including humming, banging drums and playing amplified waves of sound at the stones.

The strange acoustics experienced at Newgrange and at other passage tombs may have been exploited by those conducting the ceremonies and rituals.

So what music might have been heard at Listoghill, the central monument at Carrowmore 6,000 years ago?

Well, it would have been rhythmic. Clapping is a very powerful method of communication. During the past year this has been brought to my attention by two events. Firstly while in Spain, I attended a lecture on the history, the make-up and the origins of Flamenco, both the guitar playing and the dancing. It became very obvious during the evening that clapping was an

intricate part of the Flamenco. The loudness, speed and type of clapping all told part of the story, and held much significance for both the dancer and the guitarist.

Then during the summer as a fan of soccer I was saddened to hear of the death of Sir Bobby Robson, a good player, and an excellent manager both at club and international level. Usually upon the death of a person involved within football a minute's silence is held at grounds throughout England. This has never been satisfactory due to an element within the crowd who would decide they simply couldn't or wouldn't keep silent.

But on the first day of the football season 2009, a different approach was taken. At one minute to three at every Premiership ground in the country there was a minute's clapping. And it was incredible. All could take part, from the smallest ball boy to Roman Abramovich, and no one could spoil it. I was amazed at the emotion that a large group of people could generate doing something as simple as clapping their hands together.

At the monuments the clapping could have been accompanied by drumming, at first a flat stone stuck by sticks. Later a stretched skin placed over a simple frame could have created a drum reminiscent of a bodhrán.

Rhythmic drumming along with clapping and chanting may have been used to induce trances.

Drumming continued to be an integral part of ceremonies and rituals, and still continues to do so. In Padstow, Cornwall on May 1st each year a large drum is beaten continuously from dawn to late evening in a very evocative pagan fertility ritual.

With the arrival of agriculture, animal horns and bones would have been used to create sounds and would have been easy to construct. A small hole drilled into the side of the closed end of a cow horn would have provided an adequate mouthpiece. These simple horn instruments are still traditionally used in the Basque Country. A pair of curved lengths of cow ribs could be fashioned into a percussion instrument capable of producing a fast rhythmic clicking sound, an instrument which is still sometimes seen today.

During the Bronze Age large spectacular bronze horns were used to create haunting sounds that reverberated through the countryside.

At the same time that Newgrange was being constructed 5,000 years ago, in Eastern Europe and Western Asia stringed instruments were being played. Among artefacts found in burial chambers at Ur in Mesopotamia were the

remains of nine lyres and three harps dated to the third millennium BC. These lyres found at Ur seem to have been unique to the Sumerian civilization. They were large and cumbersome with up to eleven strings and were highly decorated with gold and jewels.

The earliest recorded Irish harpers were therefore heirs to an ancient tradition stretching back to a Pre Christian people whose roots ultimately lie in the earliest Bronze Age civilisations.

In more modern times music has echoed the megaliths. Si Beag, Si Mor is a direct example of a tune inspired by the megaliths. They are two hills just north of Carrick-on-Shannon. Si Beag is a portal dolmen, Si Mór a six metre high flat-topped cairn located nearby. The song tells of the rivalry between the two monuments.

Sliabh na mBan is associated with the sidhe who are the monuments, and the Kesh jig might be cited as another example of a tune associated

with a Megalithic mountain.

And so the ancestors who walked around the platform at Listoghill may have clapped and chanted, clicked stones together and sung. They could have summoned a huge range of emotions and moods. If this was a religion it was probably highly complex and organised.

The music and rhythms played may have been strictly dictated with different sections of the community responsible for different elements of the rituals.

Music always has been and always will be a method of communication and of emotional stimulation, whether for spiritual or everyday life. All important events are marked with music: birth and death, ritual and ceremonial, triumph or defeat.

Whether it is rising the blood of a warrior readying him for war, or bringing a tear to the eye with a beautiful haunting melody, music links us to our ancestors.

TO BE LET

TO BE LET

From the 25th of MARCH next
For such term as maybe agreed on,
THE HOUSE AND LANDS OF
DRIMRANE

Containing about 40 Arable Acres and 60 Acres of Bog, in the Parish of Clonohill, Barony of Carron, and County of Sligo, within two miles of Ballymote and twelve of Sligo. The house is in good repair, containing Parlour and Drawing Room, four Bedrooms, with Servants Apartments, a good Coachhouse and stabling for ten Horses. The tenant can have excellent Shooting and Fishing. Application to be made to JOHN TAAFFE, Esq., Drimrane, Ballymote.

The furniture can be had at a Valuation.

This advert appeared in The Sligo Journal in 1841. It was submitted by John Taaffe who was also known as "Mad Jack". He lived for some time in Abbeyville where he owned a farm, he was subsequently evicted from there and moved to Drimrane, where Mrs Margaret Reynolds now lives.

Taaffe married a lady from Staffordshire England and they had two daughters. Mrs Taaffe died in Jersey at the age of 25 in 1846. John Taaffe owned a large part of the Ox mountains. He helped to build the church at Lough Talt. He is buried in the old cemetery in Emlafad Ballymote.

Supplied by Padraig Doddy.

The Megalithic Cemetery, Carrowmore

Bernie Gilbride

With world travel now the norm, I have been lucky enough over the past few years to visit some ancient sites all over Europe - in Italy, Greece, Spain, Croatia and Slovenia and have found myself fascinated with the history unfolding before me on those sites. Their buildings, that have endured for many thousands of years, their columns, so ornamental and tall, still standing, monuments - though roofless - to the craftsmen that erected them. The roadways, streets, even their gardens, portray a way of life not all that different to ours of today. The people, who could then erect such magnificent monuments, and they must have been truly magnificent when new, without modern equipment, baffle me with their ingenuity. I begin to think, maybe they had even better equipment than ours, the history of which has been lost down the centuries. How can one be sure this is not true after so many millennia?

So, imagine my surprise and delight on visiting the Megalithic Cemetery of Carrowmore, Co. Sligo recently, on a fabulous Saturday afternoon, and discovering that here, at my own backdoor, was the remains of an even more ancient civilisation who have left us this large ancient graveyard.

As we left Strandhill that evening, on the spur of the moment we decided to turn right and go round by Culleenamore. This is a most scenic route with the sweep of the Atlantic into Ballisodare Bay and the Ox Mountains as a backdrop on our right, the town of Sligo at our feet, lordly Benbulbin to the north, a fabulous valley surrounded by mountains. Travelling along under Knocknarea we came upon a signpost for what we call the 'Cromleachs' and so began one of the most interesting and fascinating site visits for me.

Not since childhood had we bothered to visit this ancient burial ground, so near our home, though on Continental holidays ancient sites drew us to them as magnets. Here we found the Office of Public Works had been busy over the years since we had been there. Now we have a lovely Visitors' Centre at the entrance with pictures and maps of the cemetery, showing the whole area, giving an understanding of what we are about to visit, a reception area with some books relevant to the Site and lucky for us - a guided tour just about to begin.

Our guide began by introducing us to

the layout - which covers a wide area, approximately one square kilometre, stretching north-south with about 60 tombs remaining today. Originally there were about 200 tombs, but over the years quarrying and land clearance have destroyed many. The stones from the cairns were used to build dividing walls for fields. The monuments are built of crude glacial boulders torn loose from the surrounding mountains during the last glaciations and spread all over the area like meteors. Fortunately a preservation order now covers the whole site and so we can guarantee it will be handed on, as it now is, to future generations. Outside the central part various monuments occur, mainly to the north and altogether 45 sites are still situated in that area. Our guide drew our attention to the significance of the tombs in relation to the landscape, from Maedbh's Cairn on the top of Knocknarea, to Cairns hill on the east of Sligo town, and the alignment of the tombs with mountaintops in the surrounding ranges.

The tombs are, for the most part, multi sites, having been re-used and sometimes re-built over time. The excavated tombs show complete central chambers, surrounded by boulder circles, some built of more than 100 boulders while others have only 20 - 30 boulders remaining in their circles.

Site 51 Listoghil is one of the more important sites, the chamber of which is a rectangular cist, covered with a flat limestone roof-slab, which our guide thought came from 'The Glen' a couple of miles away, at the foot of Knocknarea, part of the actual Knocknarea hill itself. This roof-slab, the front of which is ornamented with megalithic art, rested on seven large boulders, some of which have traces of ancient 'Ogham' writing on them. Originally this site had measured approx. 120 ft. in diameter, with a cairn about 50ft. high. Standing as it does, at the centre of the graveyard, it commands a view across Ballisodare Bay on the south, to Sligo harbour and Benbulbin on the north.

As we walked the grassy paths I began to wonder about the people who had buried their dead here. What sort of people were they? Were they tall or small? Fat or thin? Peaceful or aggressive? They certainly appeared to respect and honour their dead as the cemetery indicates.

What 'Gods' did they worship? It would

appear they believed in an 'Afterlife' - hence the elaborate graves. We know our ancestors worshipped the Sun and the Moon, and were very knowledgeable about the universe; Newgrange in Meath, part of the 'Bru na Boinne' area, has been thought to have some form of religious significance, particularly in regard to the 'Afterlife,' because it is aligned with the 'rising sun on the Winter Solstice', which floods the tomb with light. Were they, our Carrowmore ancestors, part of that religion too?

How did they dress? In sheep skins or leather? Had they the skill to 'cure' animal pelts? Had they mastered the art of weaving the wool, had they even had sheep? Had they grown flax for linen or had all that still to come?

Did they sing or dance? What form of entertainment had they? What instruments had they if any? Is it from them we Irish have such a wealth and love of song and dance?

What games did they play? An early form of hurling perhaps, one of the most skilful of sports even to this day. We know Chucullan used a sliothar and hurl to great advantage.

What did they eat? Fish to be sure, as many shells and fish bones were uncovered during the excavations of sites. Did they roast their animals for consumption over a spit in the open or bury them over hot coals? One thing for sure they must have been very strong with a great sense of community. The only way to find the answer to even some of those queries is to - 'Surf the Net'.

Speaking of the Internet, I wonder what they would make of it and of our world today, with its modem communications, its instant knowledge of the happenings all around the globe. Instant pictures too, bringing, through television, so much into our living rooms - wars, sufferings, tsunamis, earthquakes, and floods. But also such marvellous achievements -- landings on the moon, spaceships taking off and returning. All the wonders of modem travel. Now that's where I came in and it's a good time for me to finish. I must start to 'Surf the Net' and learn something of those fascinating people who buried their dead, all those millennia ago, in the beautiful and now sacred Megalithic Cemetery of Carrowmore, Co. Sligo.

The Church of Aughanagh/Aghanagh

Clare Walsh

The church of Aghanagh was one of the first erected in Sligo. According to Tirechan (Book of Armagh) it was founded by St. Patrick. He placed Bishop Maneus and Gentene over it.

There is a tradition in the parish that when Bishop Maneus was building the church the O'Rourke of the day, having heard of the work, was coming to stop it. When Maneus heard this he prayed that the angry chief would

not be able to pass the ford and that anyone of the name of O'Rourke who would pass over the ford would meet with a sudden death.

This tradition has lived on to the present century. People of the name O'Rourke when going to the fairs in Boyle went on the old road by the Church of Ireland rather than the mail coach road which crossed the stream.

Part of the tradition was that when

O'Rourke was coming the bell itself started ringing in warning but the man in charge angrily told it to stop its cackle as it would attract O'Rourke to the spot. The bell was so offended that it never again uttered a note. Tobar Maine (= Maneus) is on the right side of the mail coach road opposite the present graveyard. The stream passes under the road at this spot.

Jack Perry 16.5.1927 – 17.11.2010

John Berchmans Perry, known throughout his lifetime as Jack, was born in Cloonacleigha, Bunninadden, on 16th of May 1927. Jack was always proud of his deep roots in Bunninadden and Killaville, the place where his mother was born. He had fond memories of his time in Carrowreagh National School. He took great pride in the area and had a deep knowledge of local families and their connections. He could trace his own family roots in Cloonacleigha back through many generations to 1820.

As a young man, Jack served his time in his uncle's business, Hunts of Ballinacarrow, who were in the Bar and Grocery trade. He always spoke with great fondness of the late Pat Hunt his first cousin. From there, Jack went to Banbridge and served his time working in the business of his uncle John Hunt who was in the bar and grocery trade in the County Down town. Jack returned to Ballymote to take up employment in Meme Begley's Bar in the late 1940s. The theatre/cinema in Ballymote opened around this time and Jack recounted fascinating stories about the luminaries of the day and stars of the shows who came back to Begley's Bar after a performance in the theatre. He also recalled how on Court days in Ballymote, the Court Judge was catered for in a special room in Begley's. He recalled with great affection the late PF (Pax) Begley, whom he regarded as a man ahead of his time.

Starting out on his own, Jack



established a travelling shop business in the 1950s and subsequently a successful retail business in Ballymote. He also established an undertaking business in Ballymote in 1953. He took great pride in his work as an undertaker and in his professionalism and attention to detail he set a high standard for others to follow. He went on to establish one of the first taxi/hackney businesses in the area. In his later years he recalled how as a young man in his early twenties he bought two cars from Ford's assembly line in Cork. He had vivid memories of the long and arduous journey with two brand new cars, driving in low gear from Cork to Ballymote.

Despite his many business ventures he was at heart a farmer. He loved and had a great feeling for all animals,

especially horses. Like his brothers Josie and Al, he was a respected breeder and judge of horses and took great pride in breeding prize winning horses at local and national horse shows, including the RDS. He was happiest when surrounded by "horse men" at a horse fair in Ballinasloe, or at the annual horse show in Millstreet, buying, selling and talking about horses.

He was an independent man, intensely proud of his family. Like many men and women of his generation he coped with difficulties and setbacks with courage and perseverance. He spoke with much fondness of all the great characters that he encountered throughout his life, and of people who influenced and inspired him; people like the late Tom Scully, a first cousin of his father, and others whom he greatly admired over the years.

Jack is survived and deeply regretted by his sisters, Margaret McDermott of Bunninadden and Sr. Rosario of The Little Company of Mary, Castletroy, Limerick; by his sons, Michael and John, Ballymote, and Ivan, Cork; his daughters Catherine, London, and Regina, Mullingar; his daughters-in-law, Bridgie, Marie and Mary, his grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and his many cousins and friends.

Cast a cold eye on life, on death.
Horseman, pass by –WB Yeats
Ar Dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

The Fair Of Baldwin

Clare Walsh

The fair of Baldwin (Castlebaldwin) was established in 1712 by Sr. Henry Nicholson. A market was held on Wednesday and four fairs – 23rd May, 16th July, 26th August and 20th October, with an additional day after each fair.

Tolls or Custom was levied. At first it was one penny per animal but later it was increased and the tolls gate could be bought. The first day was for buying and selling livestock: this fair had a good name for cattle. The second day was stalls, standings, trick of the loops and faction fights. All the youth, boys and girls came on the second day dressed in their Sunday best. Each stall holder had their own “cry” for their wares; 50 years ago many people could recall them but now they are all lost except one: “Herrings, fresh herrings, all alive bleeding fresh from Sligo Bay”.

There was a clock in the area which had a loud chime and could be heard on the green. On one occasion when it struck 12 o'clock and things were peaceful some one remarked “12 o'clock and not a stroke struck in Baldwin” where upon an old woman threw a stone and hit her husband to start the fray.

It would appear that faction fights were a regular occurrence but no details have survived.

There was also another “game” or “sport”. It was considered equal to wrestling or boxing. It was promoted by the gentry and bets were placed. Two strong men opposed each other. They held a stick of certain dimensions in one hand. The other hand was held behind their back. The stick was held in a certain position in the hand with the thumb uppermost. It took skill and accuracy to hit the opponent. It was thought that this “game” was derived from the “sword play” on the

continent.

By 1850 the market in Baldwin had ceased and by 1900 there were only 2 fairs, 4th June and 3rd November. These also died out. During the emergency period 1939-1945 the local branch of Muintir Na Tire tried to revive the fair but did not succeed.

At one time a pattern (patron) was held at the three holy wells: Tobar Bridget, Tobar Padraig and Tobar Muire but this was stopped by the first priest of Ballyrush as many superstitious practices had crept in.

John Weir and his son lived in Cloghogue at this time (the remains of his house is still there). He had a mill on the river, the remains of which was there until recent times.

There was an ash tree growing at one of the wells which would suit part of the mill. He and his son came at night to cut it. As they commenced cutting a light left the tree – tradition says it went to Lasser. When they were about half way into the tree they found it impossible to cut. They attached ropes and harnessed a horse to pull but the horse fell dead with the strain. They left the tree and it remained half cut for some years. One severe winter when fuel was scarce two members of the Walsh family cut the tree. When they put the blocks on the fire they noticed blue flames coming from it, then they noticed writing on the timber. The blocks were removed from the fire and when placed together revealed a vacant circle. The sides of the circle were a bright brown colour and the writing black - like poker work - +””+””+””+. There were four crosses with three groups of letters. The blocks were shown to educated people but they never could decipher the writing. Some thought it was Greek. The blocks later disappeared

from the farm loft, where they were kept.

The morning after John Weir tried to cut the tree, two wooden crosses were found beside it. One of these crosses was in the possession of a family near Geevagh up to recent times but is now missing. It may have decayed as when last seen it had woodworm in it.

The Old Road continued from Hollybrook, through Lillybrook past White's old house, then by Drumdoney past Hever's old house, by the back of Mullaghrairne. It passed through Brickeen and Baldwin and continued as today by Ballyrush Hall.

The mill on the river near Brickeen was worked by Pat Tymon. At the time of the Cholera epidemic, he and his wife went to Sligo to sell corn and eggs. They contracted the disease and died within 24 hours. The kiln near the mill was at first for corn drying, later it was used for lime burning. The name is still a land mark.

The Stile

Kathleen Fairbanks



Sitting on the stile ...

Photo by collaboration of Melissa, Rachel and Kyle Fairbanks. The stile is near the author's home.

A feature of the Irish countryside for centuries has been the stone stile used by many people as a passage through or over a fence or boundary via steps.

Unlike a gate there is no chance of forgetting to close it. It is very likely the first stiles were invented as a means of access. They were also necessary where livestock owners enclosed their animals as they provided easy access as well as preventing escape. Most animals do not like the stone so keep away and refuse to walk or cross stone paths.

The sportsman and his dog used the stiles especially on shooting trips.

Stone stiles were the most popular but wood and slate were used when available and can be seen in many countries.

To-day of course this basic design has been developed into mechanical turnstiles to be seen at sports centres and other public venues.

An old saying is "Help the dogge over the stile" and there is a proverb "look over the hedge before you leap over the stile". A popular ballad sung at many Irish functions in the last century, *The Irish Emigrant*, began "I'm sitting on the stile, Mary."

The Irish Emigrant

By Helen Selina Dufferin

I'm sitting on the stile, Mary, where we once sat side by side

On a bright May morning long ago, when first you were my bride.

The corn was springing fresh and green, and the lark sang loud and high,

And the red was on your lips, Mary, and the love light in your eyes.

'Tis but a step down yonder lane, the village Church stands near

The place where we were wed, Mary, I can see the spire from here.

But the graveyard lies between, Mary, and my step might break your rest

Where I laid you, darling, down to sleep with a baby on your breast.

I'm very lonely now, Mary, for the poor make no new friends,

But oh they love the better still the few our Father sends.

For you were all I had, Mary, my blessing and my pride,

And I've nothing left to care for now since my poor Mary died.

Yours was the good brave heart, Mary, that still kept holding on

When the trust in God had left my soul and my arms' young strength had gone.

There was comfort ever on your lip and a kind look on your brow,

And I thank you Mary for the same, though you cannot hear me now.

I'm bidding you a long farewell, my Mary kind and true,

But I'll not forget you, darling, in the land I'm going to.

They say there's bread and work for all, and the sun shines always there,

But I'll ne'er forget old Ireland, were it fifty times as fair.

And often in those grand old woods I'll sit and shut my eyes,

And my heart will wander back again to the place where Mary lies,

And I think I'll see that little stile where we sat side by side

In the springing corn and the bright May morn' when first you were my bride.

Verbal Footprints

Leo Mattimoe

On the night of Sunday 12th April, all or most households in the Republic of Ireland were making history. The head of each household, whatever that means nowadays, was legally obliged to complete the census form.

This census, the 24th, will be the latest addition to a series starting in 1821. The intention was to hold a census every ten years from then on. The first reasonably reliable census was taken in 1841 which was followed by the 1851 census. It could be argued that these were the two most important censuses in modern Irish history because between these two dates occurred the greatest human catastrophe in Ireland in recent times, the so called Great Famine. We now have a reliable official record of the decline in population as a result of what happened.

During the past ten or fifteen years there has been a remarkable interest taken in genealogy in Ireland. This process started with some Americans and to a lesser extent Australians, seeking their roots and hoping to establish an identity here, and to find a long lost relative was of course the icing on the cake. As a former history teacher who happened to have some interest in this area I was glad to have been of some help. I had access to some records but I was also familiar with many family names and connections in a particular area. It is an activity which demands time, patience and often the use of instinct. Much depended on the degree of contact which existed between those who emigrated and those who remained at home.

This might include a letter written in 1906 by a young man from Carrownagark to say he had arrived in San Francisco, had survived the earthquake and intended going into construction - a good choice under the circumstances. There was the woman whose grandfather told her that as a

boy he could stick a fishing pole out his bedroom window and catch a trout in the river. Then there was the girl who wrote home from America to say she had met the man from her own parish who had got to America on the strength of some money he had misappropriated. Interesting was the case of the nurse who informed me that her great grandmother was born one night under a Conestoga wagon which was attacked by Indians. This wasn't exactly a centre of excellence but the baby survived to tell the story.

Story is the key word. Everybody likes to hear a story and what story could be of more personal interest than the story of one's antecedents. We can resurrect them from official records but these records are only the bones devoid of any flesh, unless of course, some stray gems of information have survived, either oral, verbal or pictorial. When I look at a photograph of my great grandmother, Ann O'Gara - O'Farrell (born 1839), seated with a closed book on her lap, I can picture her going to Coney Island in August in a horse trap with a few other women from the neighbourhood. Their mattresses would have been sent down beforehand on a horse and cart to the house they had rented for a week. They cooked their own meals and when they weren't watching, the island boys would put a handful of soot into the pot to improve the flavour. They also drank sea water which they believed was good for the intestines. The latest census figures will no doubt be of benefit to future historians and to government in deciding policy. However, the people mean nothing, the figures everything.

In an age of e-mailing and texting, the more permanent forms of communication seem to have diminished and also the quality of the written word. When teaching English to junior students I tried to make

them aware of the origin of words, explaining that Anglo-Saxon formed only a small part of the so called English language, the rest being Latin, Greek, Danish, Norman French and many others. They were enraptured to discover that bicycle meant two wheels and if another wheel were added it became a tricycle.

As for grammar! An inspector of French once visited my class and before his departure he informed the students that grammar was not important, only good manners. The teaching of grammar was discouraged and blockbuster English became the norm. The introduction of disjointed handwriting was the last straw, with capital letters appearing in the middle of words and slowing the writer down. Now we have employers and third level personnel complaining about the poor standard of literacy among employees and students.

As a coincidence, on census night, I had just finished re-reading the Diary of Humphrey O'Sullivan which is a translation from Irish. If he hadn't kept a diary perhaps all we would know about him would be that he was born in 1780 and died in 1838.

He came from Kerry as a boy, with his hedge schoolmaster father and lived for most of his life in Callan, Co.Kilkenny. There he taught school intermittently, started a business and became an influential citizen. However, he will be remembered for the short diary entries he made in an old copybook from 1827 to 1835. Here was a man who with little cost to himself apart from the expense of a bottle of ink, left us a very valuable social document.

He was a keen observer of nature, noting the changing seasons, the habits of birds and animals and traditions of the local people. He liked food and drink and often dined with the local parish priest. He describes the building

of a mud hut and the living conditions of the people.

One day the town was full of the king's cavalry when he heard that George the Fourth was near death, so he asks God to direct the king's soul to the right faith, towards a good death after repenting and receiving Extreme Unction. He adds however that he has little hope of that.

The 28th February 1830 was the first Sunday of Lent, Domhnach na Deoirin, the Sunday of Tears, the tears of girls who were not married at Shrovetide. On St Patrick's Day 1830 it pleased him that he didn't see a man, woman or boy drunk, due to the sermons of the local priest. He tells us that Good Friday was a day of black fast, that the meal they used to have in the old days was barley bread, water cress and water.

Most personal writing from that period constituted memoirs, diaries and travel journals usually written by denizens of the big houses or by foreign travellers. For the most part they were superficial observations of the lives and traditions of the Irish

people and often condescending and patronizing in tone. This is where O'Sullivan's diary is different. He is observing from the inside, from the 'Hidden Ireland,' as Daniel Corkery called it, and even though he castigates the common people for their faults, mainly their fondness for whiskey and fighting, he nevertheless understands them and empathises with them.

I once encouraged students to keep a diary for one year about events at home and in school. These I never read because they were personal. I hope some of them will survive because many years from now they will form a corpus of material relating to the lives of young people of this period. They will form flesh on the bones of some future great grandmother and will hopefully become a family treasure.

If some enlightened government issued interested families with official diaries and asked them voluntarily to make entries for one year, one can just imagine the harvest that would be available to future social historians delving into the lifestyle, work patterns, leisure time, spending

capacity and opinions of the average Irish family. This might add some flesh to the bones of the census form and strike a counterbalance to the memoirs of celebrities.

Apart altogether from the practical uses of a diary, like remembering birthdays, appointments and suchlike it also has a therapeutic value. People with problems sometimes confide in friends who may not be as tightlipped as one would wish, so committing one's thoughts to a diary could help relieve the burden and also paint a sort of self portrait in words of the diarist which might be of great interest to somebody in the future.

Even though O'Sullivan's diary was not a masterpiece it left an important verbal footprint which related to the lives of ordinary Irish people at a time when Ireland was about to experience one of the most cataclysmic events in our nation's history.

Let's hope somebody will follow his example and produce something similar for a very different age.

Care Free

Bernie Gilbride

Should today be different
Not for me,
No responsibilities
No one to care for you see.
Greet the morning rain or shine,
Check the diary one more time
Get things done before nine,
Thank God memory still fine.
Breakfast with my four legged friend
His intake of food knows no end.
The beach it calls for us to walk
Meet some friends, talk and talk.
The ever changing sea enchants,
Large breakers foaming over rocks,
Gentle waves cleansing sand,
Leaving strand looking grand.
This beautiful world
All mine to enjoy.

Bealtaine

Bernie Gilbride

Glorious month of May,
Has Summer really come to stay?
Each morning we wake to bird song,
Open the curtains to lovely sunshine.
Gardens newly trimmed and neat,
Rose bushes with buds so sweet,
Annuals potential begin to show,
Soon they will be all aglow.
This month my favourite of the year,
Its freshness, brightness is everywhere.
Flower beds bursting into life and colour,
Busy bees flitting from flower to flower

The Robin

Bernie Gilbride

As I dig, the weeds to clear,
A lively chirp, chirp, I hear
A robin on the curbing stands,
Watching the spade in my hands.
He dives on the dark unfurled clay,
Is there a worm there today?
In and out he burrows
In every little furrow
Ear cocked towards clay,
In he hops, turns everyway,
He hears the worm burrow deep
Safety from trouble, to seek.
His lunch is on the robin's mind,
The worm he hears, he hopes to find,
One sharp firm delve and tug,
Rewards him with much welcome grub.

Michael Lang

Eulogy by Dermot O'Donnell, consultant Editor to the Garda Record Journal and former President of the Garda Representative Association, delivered in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Sligo, at the funeral Mass of retired Detective Garda and noted Tenor, Michael Lang.

Like everyone else, I was shocked by the suddenness of Michael's passing. He was a remarkable individual and a dear friend. He lived life to the full and having only celebrated his seventieth birthday last November, it is plain to everybody that he crammed more into one lifetime that most of us could, in several.

His loss to us his friends, and even his family, though immense, is nothing compared to the loss of his lifelong friend and partner, Ann Kinch. I know Michael would want his family and friends to rally round and support her, during the difficult days ahead.

Last night after Michael's remains were brought here to the Cathedral, I went back out to his house in Collooney with Ann, where some of his family and friends were gathering. During the course of the evening we came across an old issue of a Garda staff magazine called "PATROL" which Michael had kept. On flicking through the pages it soon became clear as to why Michael had held on to it for some 15 years.

The magazine carried an article entitled "The Singing Detective" and was, as you have so rightly guessed, about Detective Garda Michael Lang. It recounted how he had been one of the first party of Gardaí to march in uniform in another jurisdiction. The occasion in question was the 1993 Saint Patrick's Day Parade in Chicago. In addition to marching in the parade, Michael's reputation as a renowned tenor had preceded him and he had the double honour of singing in uniform in both Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Chicago and also in Saint Matthew's Cathedral, Washington DC.

The article carried an interview with Michael which gives a unique insight into "Michael the man" and I quote "Singing is very much a spiritual thing for me – it is how I pray. For as long as I can remember, I associate prayer with singing. It goes back to my time with the Sligo Cathedral Choir when I was at school." So isn't it fitting, that he should be back here in the



Cathedral, that he loved so much for us to say our mutual farewells.

Michael's life was like a finely cut diamond, with each facet reflecting the wonderful light that surrounded him. First and foremost in the list Michael's entitlements to feel justifiably proud of was his association with An Garda Síochána. Both he and his brother Tom served with distinction for well in excess of thirty years each and are remembered in that great organisation for their attention to detail and conscientiousness in carrying out their duties. But Michael was proud of another family tradition, that being one of having a family involvement in Policing in this country for in excess of a century. Michael's father was a founder member of An Garda Síochána, having joined at the time of the foundation of the state in 1922. Prior to Independence, his grandfather had served the policing tradition as a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC).

Michael had a way with people, respecting their dignity and always seeking the good in everyone. He was undoubtedly the greatest ambassador An Garda Síochána ever had.

A side of Michael, that's less well known, is his ability as a sportsman. It was only while talking to his brother Andrew that I discovered that Michael in his youth had been an accomplished

boxer. He was immensely strong and though it was not the sport that he is best remembered for, he committed himself eagerly to the rigorous training required. Indeed the local Sligo town Gaelic Football team, Craobh Rua, saw all five Lang brothers tog-out on the field of play on behalf of local pride. Both Michael and Tom went on to represent their county at inter-county level, a source of great pride to Michael.

But it is the musical side of Michael that is best known. As a young man, Michael was immensely proud of his success in winning the Count John McCormack singing competition. From there he developed a style for which he became well known and was to be the source of his proudest moment, when he sang for His Holiness Pope John Paul II in Knock in 1979 during the visit of the Pontiff to Ireland. Michael sang at countless numbers of concerts and raised funds through the gift of his talent as a gifted singer and organiser.

Though his presence was personable and easy, he also had the ability to impact greatly on people. He always was interested in people, who they were and where they were from, and of course if they could sing or play music. I emailed many police colleagues around the world to let them know of Michael's passing and was inundated with messages of commiseration and sympathy. Two of these I have chosen to read out to you, the first from nearest to home and the second from amongst the farthest.

Mr Billy Allen, Chairman of the PSNI Disabled Police Officers Association wrote the following referring to a musical evening that Michael organised for their visit to Dublin in November last, "During our visit to Westmanstown in Dublin, Michael's generosity, warmth, kindness and humour was equalled with his marvellous talent. A voice that can only be compared to that of Joseph Locke. Our thoughts and sympathy

go out to his partner Ann, his family, many friends and former colleagues. An obituary notice will be inserted in our next official newsletter."

Mr Dennis Long, National President of the National Conference of Law Enforcement Emerald Societies had this to say, "The National Conference of Law Enforcement Emerald Societies was honoured to have Michael Lang at our

2009 Annual Conference in Washington DC this past May. Michael not only sang Amhráin na bhFiann and the Star Spangled Banner at our meeting but he also sang Danny Boy for our for our Annual March and Memorial Service at the National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial. Michael's beautiful voice could be heard echoing across the Memorial Grounds at the Service which was attended by tens of thousands of Law Enforcement Officers from throughout the United States and the world. Michael's singing was a very memorable part of this solemn service and will always be remembered. On behalf of the National Conference of Law Enforcement Emerald Societies I would like to convey my heartfelt condolences to his partner Ann, his family, friends and colleagues. May

his soul rest in God's hands."

But it was his generosity in all matters that made him the special individual that he was. He gave of his time and talent unselfishly. He never passed anyone begging in the street and always handed them money along with gentle encouragement and advice. In fact Clive Armstrong, our organist here this morning and a constant companion and friend of Michael's told me last night, that four or five days each week he and Michael would walk through Dublin city, listening to performing street-musicians, offering many an opportunity to perform with them on stage. Always as they moved around the city, Michael would give kindly to those down on their luck and less well off. On one such occasion, Clive recalls, Michael had given away all his money when he saw another misfortunate with a paper cup extended and he turned to Clive and asked him had he any money left. Clive was somewhat exasperated by this stage and turned to Michael and replied, "Can we not put a limit on it Michael – say ten a day". Clive knew he was fighting a losing battle, as there was no limit to Michael Lang's generosity.

Finally, I would like to close

with an extract from "Benedictus" by philosopher and poet John O'Donoghue. These following few lines from his "On the death of a beloved" remind me of Michael, of how we need to grieve him, and are thankful for his being part of our lives, while confident that he is still with us.

"Though we need to weep your loss,
You dwell in that safe place in our hearts,
Where no storm or night or pain can reach you.

The sound of your voice
Found for us
A new music
That brightened everything.

Though your days here were brief,
Your spirit was alive, awake, complete.
May you continue to inspire us!"

Michael, I am the better for having known you, thank you for your friendship.

Michael Lang of Kinnagrelly, Collooney, Co. Sligo, died in December 2009.



CLANS OF IRELAND

*Dr. James O'Higgins
Norman, Leas
Cathaoirleach/Vice
chair (Knight of the
Order),*

*Maura O'Gara
O'Riordan in centre,*

*Nora Keohane Hickey,
Cathaoirleach/
Chairperson*

Maura O'Gara O'Riordan Honoured.

Maura O'Gara O'Riordan has contributed extensively to The Corran Herald over the years. She is registrar of Clans of Ireland and in recognition of her sustained and significant contribution to Irish culture and heritage she received a Knighthood of Merit from the Grand Master of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem, his Excellency Don Carlos Gererda de Borbón, Marquis de Almazon. This took place at a ceremony in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on September 30th 2010. Only a handful of Irish people have been honoured in this way. *The Corran Herald* offers sincere congratulations to Maura.

Memories of a Country Scholar of the Fifties

Joan Gleeson

“School days are happy days”
Words inscribed on photo folders,
And for the most part, yes they were,
Except for days of fear and dread
When dates of battles from our memories fled.

Cardboard suitcases crammed with books
were tightly clipped on back of bike
and wool gloved hands on handlebars so tight
were no match for frost and rain
We peddled on for academic gain.

Days of laughter lots we had
As on bright mornings uniform-clad
We cycled three abreast reciting lines
From ill-learned poems and silly rhymes.
Shakespeare’s delightful observations
laced our conversations.
“Tu-whit, tu-who!, a merry note
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot”
Light hearted quotes, well meant, or not.

Daily news flash,” Oh did you hear?”
With widespread use of the Briathar Saor.
Pre-mart town was wedged with cattle,
Swinging tails, ash plants, organic matter,
To mount the rock was quite a challenge
These fair day obstacles so hard to manage.

Now in the classroom each teacher taught
as if their subject was all we sought.
Amo, Amas, Amat - our favourite Latin verb
To be not learn-ed was unheard.
Hot on its heels in swift pursuit
came the mind-boggling Ablative Absolute.

Looking back it is my pride
to have read Yeats and Oscar Wild,
Longfellow, Pearse, Plunket, Keats - the lot
all fished out of the poetry pot.
Four Long Gospels and the Acts,
were life’s long fodder of Religious facts.
School day ends, all away
like Tour de France
freewheeling down the Captain’s Bray.

I thank the nuns, my parents too
Who gave me more than wealth could do
May their reward be “Rest in Peace”
And to them happiness that will never cease.

The Man of Ninety Two

John McDonagh

“The summer Sun, the Winter’s snow
And autumn’s russet hue
I’ve seen so many come and go”
Said the man of ninety two

“The Spring’s first droning bumble bees
In evenings warm and slow
With heather smoke upon the breeze,
I’ve seen them come and go.

Then, soft winds from the nearby hills
Begun the growth anew
Primroses and the Daffodils”
Said the man of ninety two

Broad muscled men would turn the earth
With straining team and plough
With gleaming sleans they cut the turf
But where, where are they now?

These same staunch men who swung their scythes
Through barley, oats and hay
In wartime kept the nation fed
But now they’ve gone away.

Blithe women-folk baked soda bread
On cheerful turf fires burning
Brown bowls upon the dresser laid
Held butter from their churning.

Forever there to lend a hand
When helping hands were needed
In kitchen, byre, on the land
They willingly proceeded,

And always there to care and share
Were neighbours kind and dear,
Their greatest joy was in their prayer
But they’re no longer here.

“My school friends too” the old man said
“They all have ceased to be
One by one they’ve all passed on
And now there’s only me.”

I Wish my Neck Was a Mile Long

Mary Kelly White

It is only now, half a century later, that I realize the fun and experiences we had in our youth. We were born townies although both parents grew up on farms. My dad's farm was in Rossmore, Riverstown with nice flat land and an odd hilly road or field, but my mum's home farm was up the rocky Arigna mountain, and down the heathery glen Killamey, where the thatched cottage, two rooms and a kitchen, was situated at the bottom of the valley. No matter which direction you took from the house there were three or four rushy, heathery fields between the house and the road. Several families lived in the valley then (50/60s) and all of them as well as ourselves had rights-of-way which were called passes, zig-zagging through the valley.

There was the pass through the Tullies, which also led to the bog; the Post Office Pass; and the Mass Pass. The only time we used the Tullies Pass was when we were arriving from or returning to Sligo. It was four steep, heathery, mossy sodden fields from the road down to our house, and whatever luggage we brought with us had to be hauled down the slithery slopes, across a narrow river, and then hauled up the Bray, and across two green fields, the pride of the farm, to the house. Luckily the only animals on the Tullies were sheep and they just bleated sadly. There is something very sad about sheep bleating, and even spring lambs while they prance around merrily have an even more lonesome bleating.

Every family had sheep and donkeys as well as cattle, but my father liked horses and he even acquired a bull, a fully registered bull. He reared one of his calves, took it into town on the hoof for registration by a Garda, in Geevagh or Ballyfarnon, I'm not sure which. It passed the test, was registered as *Grey Dawn*, and he proudly walked his bull back home.



Rinty's Cabin today

God wasn't listening to me that day because I prayed that they would fail.

We didn't use the Post Office Pass very often either, because the postman Peter Spelman, and Ms Francis Lehaney delivered post every day and when people had letters to be posted the postman either had the stamps or took the money and the job was done. 3d was the price of a stamp then. Everyone was posting letters or receiving mailletters/magazines/newspapers/ even parcels from England and America. When we needed to use the Post Office we would ask the Cullen children, Maeve or Robert to post letters for us. Lehaney's Post Office was on the far road, across the valley from us at Altagowlan. The Pass went through acres and acres of bog, pasture and meadow fields as well as a river. Ploughing through meadow fields never bothered me even though I knew that I was flattening the meadow but I dreaded the pasture fields; because with cows' tracks full of dirty water, and massive clumps of rushes it was like navigating through a wild forest, and the shock after shock of big red and black cows standing still, staring with big steady eyes, using their tails like whips to flick the flies off their backs, was a nightmare. Calves were even worse because they

ran and jumped all over the place like kangaroos.

I went to the Post Office one day and I got lost. Part of the pass was through our own fields. I knew that the horse and the bull as well as the cattle were in the fields and I was afraid but determined (my middle name). After spending a long time going down one side of a ditch and up the other side, in and out of the same stile with my head bent for fear the bull would see me, a little neighbouring girl Patricia Higgins, younger and smaller than I was, stood beside me with a very long stick in her hand and said "My mammy told me to take you out of this field. Stay there and don't move and I'll get you when I count them sheep." And she waved her long stick across the vast Tullies dotted with sheep. I got to the Post Office but then I had to get home. I hadn't a clue where I was. Of course I couldn't see our little cottage in the bottom of the valley but I could see the big three storey house with the basement belonging to Jimmy Jamsey and Mary Kate Cullen, now Daly's, which was on the high road near the Mass Pass overlooking our small house so I aimed for it. I fell into and out of drains and ditches where neither man nor beast ever dared to go and eventually I got home. Maybe

God was directing me that day but I don't remember asking Him for help.

We used the Mass Pass all the time. We never had our own transport in the 50/60s. We used the CIE bus from Sligo to Ballyfarnon, walked the three plus miles up Stanton's Bray and down the other side past Noone's coalmine, hauling our luggage such as it was. It took an hour or more each way. Mostly we came and went on Macarthur's Bread van which did a weekly run on Thursdays.

Paddy Verdon was a lovely kindly man as was Sean Roberts, both from Sligo, and sadly both at rest, R.I.P. They were like guardians to us and we haven't forgotten. A lot of families in the Valley had the same surnames and were distinguished by the Christian names of their fathers. For example, Jimmy Jamsey Cullen and his wife Mary Kate Miley Owen Cullen; Berney Jack Cullen and his wife Kate Peter Cullen; Joe Thomas Cullen and his wife from Drummed called Mary Ellen Fahy. Berney Jack Cullen had a great country shop which sold every thing except butter because people churned their own butter, and the tobacco my father smoked which was Murray's Twist. It was my delightful job to carry my bicycle up the Tullies Pass and cycle the four or so miles to McCrann's shop at Mount Allen (I think) near Arigna for the tobacco. I enjoyed the experience, it got me out of the fields, there were no animals on the way, the road was rough but flat and I could take my feet off the pedals and fly down the road with the wind in my long fair hair.

Fr.Owens was the Parish Priest at that time 1950-1955, and he was also responsible for Geevagh and Highwood. He was in the throes of building the picturesque little *Church of Our Lady of Lourdes* which is currently well kept and holding its own, and also a new modern National School which folded many years ago for lack of pupils. Fr. Owens was running Bazaars in the New School to raise funds as a result of which we got to know all of the neighbours: Cartys,

Gaffneys, Kellys, Dalys, McManuses, McPartlands, Houlehans, Cullens, McDonaghs, Higginses, McGraths, Walshes, and Duignans. And I attended my first Dance/Céili.

The teenage fellows almost all of whom were already working in the coal mines decided to have a Ceili while the townies were still around. The house where the Ceili was held belonged to a bachelor man named Jim McPartland, who was also nicknamed Rinty and The Black Doctor. The Black Doctor suited him because his skin was tanned after a lifetime of living in his little smoke filled cabin. He had black curly hair and pearly white teeth. He was a chilly little man who shuffled his shoulders and always wore a black overcoat and he was a wizard at making Bodhrans, big little and small. No goat skin was wasted when Rinty was alive. His little cabin was half a hilly field off the road and his door was always open for neighbours to meet and pass the time day or night.

The teenage miners between them bought the goodies which included a quarter barrel of stout/Guinness. The barrel had to be transported in an overcrowded car from the pub in Arigna to Rinty's house and it was almost churned by the time it arrived. All the lads were merry and unsteady. No two of them could stand straight long enough to shoulder the barrel and carry it like a coffin up the uneven mud path to the yellow lamp lighted cabin which was oozing strong eager young adults and a couple of townie daws. Everyone gave a hand at laying out the barrel and they were in a hurry to get the porter flowing. The trick was to insert the supplied tap in the same movement as removing the cork at the base of the barrel. One quick tap and a fountain of stout hit the sooty rafters and rained down blacker than black on all of us.

"This will do for slide easy", one of the local girls Mai Carty said, taking a box of Rinso from the dresser and shaking it on the beer-soaked flag floor. Three or four balls of damp powder scurried out of sight under the car seat

at one side of the open ashy hearth and a huge boulder serving for a fireside chair on the other side. The host Rinty got the first mug of stout with great ceremony. In gentle tones through smiling teeth and eyes he gasped "I wish my neck was a mile long" when he came up for air after the first slug.

We didn't dance, we didn't know how, but the locals did, dragging their shoes and wellies in half-set after half-set and Lancers to beat the band. Rinty himself could have carried the music on his tambourine/Bodhrán but there were tin whistles, mouth organs, jaws harps as well as full throated singers not to mention the wind up gramophone with the blunt needle filling in the break times. It was a great night until someone pared the knobs off Rinty's drum stick. The host saw red, opened the half-off door and showed all of us the road or rather the sea of scattered dim lights in the valley below. Our house was situated two hilly fields and a marshy flat down from the road. All the fellows helped us to get home safely and before sun-up.

Death of G Dodwell

AT A MEETING of the Tenantry of the Ballymote and other contiguous Estates, over which the late GEORGE DODWELL, Esq., presided, John Taaffe West, Esq., in the chair, the following letter of condolence was unanimously agreed to on the 10th day of August, 1843: -

TO MRS. DODWELL

Dear Mrs. DODWELL,

We could not in silence sympathise with you consistent with those feelings of respect, gratitude, and attachment we entertain for our lamented friend.

He has left lasting monuments behind him of his anxiety to promote the interest and benevolent wishes of our Landlords in the improvement of our dwellings and our Farms, in the division of the Lands so judiciously that each Tenant resides on his own separate holding, and can enjoy a comfortable house, where by ventilation and cleanliness, he and his family may hope under Providence, to escape many of the contagious diseases that are incident to crowded villages. Good roads, too, have been laid out and in part finished under his auspices, and we have all experienced his kind indulgence in the payment of our rents, and we have reason to believe that if he had been spared, he would have taken into consideration the depressed state of Agricultural produce. Looking back upon the years in which we have been thus dealt with, we must deplore that he has been removed, and we beg to assure you and his afflicted family that his memory will ever be dear to those whose condition he so long and anxiously laboured to improve.

We have the honour to be, with sincere respect, Dear Madam, Your faithful humble servants,
JOHN TAAFFE WEST, Chairman.

Resolved – That these Resolutions be published

Proposed by the Rev. Mr. Jeffcott, and seconded by the Rev. John Garrett. That a Marble Tablet with a suitable inscription be erected in the Church of Ballymote, commemorative of our sense of regret for the death of George Dodwell, Esq.

Mrs Dodwell replied as follows:

TO THE TENANTRY OF THE BALLYMOTE AND OTHER CONTIGUOUS ESTATES CONCERNED

Kevinsfort, August 30, 1843

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

It is with feelings of heartfelt gratitude I beg to acknowledge your letter of condolence containing many kind expressions of regard for the memory of my late husband.

Be assured this mark of attention and sympathy to me and my family shall always be gratefully remembered by your sincere friend,
VICTORIA DODWELL.

A long list of signatories follows in the report (partly reproduced below). It was noted in the report that "Several of the Tenants on the Estate of Sir Alexander Creighton had signed this, and were obliged under the mandate of the Priest of 'Killawill' to withdraw their names". It was also noted that the great majority of the tenants on the Lissadell and Ballinrillick estates had signed "notwithstanding the opposition of the Romish priesthood".

Name and Residence.
John T. West, Bellinglough,
Arthur Brook Cooper, Cooper Hill,
John Garrett, Clerk, Enniskillen Castle,
James Keane, Ballymote,
Joseph Longford, M.D., Ballymote,
Philip Gentry, same,
William Keane, Sligo,
James Haskins, Ballymote,
Robert Orr, Loughgan,
Mark Dury, Ballymote,
Robert Henderson, Ballymote,
John Morrison, same,
Samuel Gillmor, Ballinacorney,
H. B. Lewis, Ballymote,
Thomas Doyle, Ballymote,
George Morda, same,
Stewart Woodland, Clonsilla,
John Woodland, Lavelle,
Thomas Woodland, Lavelle,
Robert Grogan, Clonsilla,
Joseph M'Nash, same,
Thomas Robinson, same,
William Reed, Greenanore,
Andrew Wilson, Bricklaw,
Vincent Mathewell, Donnemuck,
Robert Smith, Tempe,
William Ross, Ballymote,
James Ross, same,
Hugh Brown, same,
James Keane, Clough,
Peter Keane, same,
Matthew Phibbs, Ballymote,
Robert Morrison, Ballymote,
John Orr, Clonsilla,
Richard Gorman, same,
William Jackson, Ballinacorney,
John Feighery, Knockree,
James Flanagan, same,
John M'Donogh, same,
Peter Brennan, same,
Peter Graham, Knockree,
Robert Morrison, Ballymote,
James Scullen, Ardaraun,
Luke Lyden, Ballinacorney,
James O'Gara, same,
Matthew Dury, same,
James O'Brien, Ardaraun,
Thomas Bell, Island,
John White, Liffeybrook,
Abraham Mathewell, Ballymote,
William White, Liffeybrook,
Therly Madden, Carrilaghbeg,
Thomas Breheny, Donnemuck,
John Breheny, same,
John Kelly, same,
William Fairbanks, Carrilaghbeg,
Edward Fairbanks, Aughanagh,

Michael Ganley, Ballybough
John Johnston, Aughanagh
Murphy Smith, Cusheramore
Patrick Cogan, Ballymote
William Mooney, same
John Hever, same
Michael Gaffney, same
Mark Hargadon, Marinemore
Peter Hargadon, same
John Rogers, same
Roger Hargadon, same
Peter Healy, same
Patt Lennon, Carrowrie
Roger Conlon, same
John Gillmor, Roscrib
Stuart Gillmor, Clonta
Wm. Gillmor, same
Wm. Bell, Granamore
George M'Grath, Ballymote
John Coghlan, same

New Community Library and Fire Station in Ballymote

On Friday May 20th 2011 the new Community Library and Fire Station in Ballymote were formally opened by Phil Hogan TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. This important day saw the long-awaited realisation of the dreams and wishes of many people.

The Library.

There has been a part-time Library service in Ballymote since 1949. Established in that year in the Loftus Hall as a Branch of the Sligo County Library it proved a very valuable asset to the town and provided a convenient local source of reading for very many people. However, it shared a room with many other activities so that at the end of each opening session the bookshelves had to be covered with removable doors, and so in 1984 it moved to a vacant room in the Courthouse where it enjoyed sole possession and where it has remained until now. This new location enabled a bigger stock of books to be better displayed and resulted in increased readership. During the last ten years of its stay here the entire Library system was computerised.

From its earliest years until 1972 the Ballymote Branch Library was run by Jimmy McFadden. 1973 saw the appointment of Anne Flanagan as Branch Librarian and she it was who coped with the transfer to the Courthouse and with the computerisation. When Anne retired in 2006 she was succeeded in turn by Joanne Hosey, Catherine Whitehouse and Louise McGrath. Louise saw it through to its departure from the Courthouse in 2011.

The new Branch premises is located in Teeling Street, Ballymote, more or less half way between its two earlier locations. It represents an enormous leap forward towards the



provision of a fully modern Library service, encompassing the full range of 21st century Library facilities. The floor space has increased from the 22 sq metres of the Courthouse room to over 400 sq metres. There is a greatly increased book stock; there are newspapers and periodicals; there are CDs and DVDs of music, books, language courses, natural history, etc; there is a dedicated children's area for story times and activities; there is a dedicated music room for practising or recording; there is broadband computer access for the general public and audio books and ebooks can be downloaded; there is a meeting room and audio visual conference room, and there is even a self issuing facility to help reduce queues when necessary.

Sligo County Librarian Donal Tinney, Sligo Co Council, The Department of the Environment, The Library Council, local representatives and all others involved in this project can be proud of what they have achieved in Ballymote.

The Fire Station.

The Ballymote Fire Service has gone

through many phases of development from the outbreak of the Second World War until today. The original "Bucket Brigade" was set up in the early 1940s; manned by volunteers, it used buckets of sand, shovels, an axe, and a standpipe and key with a length of hose. This equipment was soon superseded by a handcart which boasted more sophisticated hosework and a timber ladder. In 1945 a self-propelled pump was obtained from the military; it was transported in the boot of any available car.

The first recognisable fire engine came in 1960, a Range Rover. And now for the first time there was an official and paid crew (5 shillings per call, regardless of duration). In 1972 the Range Rover was replaced by a Bedford "Green Goddess", and this in turn was replaced in 1980 by a Dennis fire truck. This remained in use until 1994 when it was succeeded by a Volvo truck (with aluminium ladders for the first time). A Scania fire engine took over in 2001 and is still in use, accompanied now by a second smaller vehicle, a Range Rover which has a portable pump and a water tank.



The early Fire Service was based in the yard behind John Thomas Regan's Hardware shop (the present Enterprise Centre). In 1966 it moved to its present site and remained there until 2007 when it moved back to temporary accommodation in Regan's yard to allow for the construction of the new fire station.

The new station is a two-storey

building with a bay for two fire engines, a drill tower and a drill yard, as well as a communications room, a lecture room, canteen, changing facilities, workshop and stores. The drill tower provides a safe location for conducting training and on the day of the official opening the yard saw a demonstration of victim extraction techniques to be

used at the scenes of collisions. The station also provides facilities to enable training in the area of first aid fire fighting, how to use a fire extinguisher safely, how to cope with a chip pan fire, etc.

Again an amenity of great value to Ballymote and surrounding area, and one of which all concerned can be very proud.

Barratoore

Bernie Gílbride

Pearly grey mist filled valley,
Orange glow mist filled sky,
In the distance cattle calling
Another day begins.

Grass shimmers with dew drops
bright,
Hedgerows, trees, come into sight,
'Stares' flitting flying moving,
God has given us a beautiful
morning.

The Miners' Way

Mary Guckian

High at Arigna Mines
the day is grey.
Here to visit, I ponder
on generations of miners

In dark passages
they lay on their sides enduring
constant drip as they scraped
a living from the damp shale.

In the Visitors' Centre
photos tell of men, blackened,

their breathing damaged
from dust-choked lungs
- their lives shortened.

*Reproduced with author's permission
from her book "Walking on Snow",
Swan Press, Dublin 2010*



Regan's on a procession day showing Ballymote Building Society. The lady is Maureen Regan (sister of John Thomas Regan) in her Ursuline uniform. *Picture courtesy John Coleman from the Maisie McGovern collection.*



Paddy McGovern saving hay in Roscrib. Who was the other man?

Picture courtesy John Coleman from the Maisie McGovern collection.

“Ballymote Memories”



Former Gardaí

Front Row (L/R): Supt Kelly, D. Moriarty, Sam Donegan, Tom Healy, Jack McNulty

Middle Row (L/R): Peter Sreenan, Joe Meehan, Pat Beirne

Back Row (L/R): Gda Gallagher, Frank O'Connor, Terry Cassidy

Picture courtesy Brendan Colbert per Gerry Cassidy



Ballymote Round Towers football team, early 1950s

Picture courtesy Brendan Colbert per Gerry Cassidy

“Ballymote Memories”



Paddy Lavin, Berchman Scully, Aidan Cawley

Picture courtesy Brendan Colbert per Gerry Cassidy



At Ballymote Handball Alley

Front Row Adults (L/R): M. Hannon, -----, ? Walsh, E. Hannon, -----, -----, -----, J. Hannon, M Scanlon

Back Row (L/R): Raphael Walsh, -----, -----, M. Cunnane, D. Walsh, T.J. Gallagher, Michael Hannon, A. Ward, L. Hannon

Can anybody supply the missing adult names and the names of the young people in front? *Picture courtesy Brendan Colbert per Gerry Cassidy.*



Ballymote Convent Primary School Senior Classes 1952

Back Row (L/R): Beatrice Healy, May McGettrick, Helen Duffy, Imelda Hannon, Teresa Cunnane, Pauline O'Halloran, Joan Hannon, Eileen Healy, Rosie Cassidy, Vera Golden, Betty Finn, Attracta Hoey.

Fourth Row (L/R): Patsy Hogge, Peggy Hannon, Ter Hannon, Phyllis Watters, Mary McFadden, Mary Duffy, Rosie Healy, Teresa Scanlon, Teresa Gormley, Valerie Meehan.

Third Row (L/R): Joan Cassidy, Mary Reynolds, Nora Finan, Mary Ellen Murtagh, Bernadette Scully, Teresa Shannon, Rita Brehany, Aggie Brady, Mary Dunne, Ursula Scully, Josephine Shiels, Mary Kennedy.

Second Row (L/R): Attracta Shiels, Mary Quigley, Ann McDonagh, Sheila McCluskey, Chrissie Golden, Sheila Chambers, Una Golden, Kitty Brady, Imelda Egan, Noreen Finn.

Front Row kneeling (L/R): Teresa Keaney, Nell Chambers, Marcella Brady, Ben Chambers, Angela Scully, Patricia Mattimoe, Etta Healy, Maureen Meehan.

Picture courtesy Sr Nell Chambers



On their wedding day: Dan Coleman (seated centre) and Kathleen Benson (seated right), with bridesmaid Sheila Johnson (seated left). Standing are best man Cathal Cawley (centre), Fr John Francis O'Hara (right) and Fr Gerry Jordan.

Picture courtesy Brendan Colbert per Gerry Cassidy.



Scoil Mhuire gan Smal, Ballymote - First Holy Communion Class 2011

Back Row (L/R): Aine Davey (teacher), Paul Kivlehan, Rebecca Murtagh, Diarmuid O'Dowd, Sean Cunningham, Saskia Davey, Oran Mooney, Cian Kilcoyne, Clara Corcoran, Fr. Gregory Hannon, Annie Mullen, Ms. Taheny (Principal)

Row 3 (L/R): Callum Murrin, Grace Rafferty, Daire McGee, Ciara McGlone, Sarah Tighe, Oisin Moffatt, Matthew McGrath, Jack Lavin, Clodagh Currid

Row 2 (L/R): Niamh Connolly, Latisha Mulligan, Cora Connolly, Roland Scanlon, Dervilla Donohoe, Rebecca McGlone, Farrah McDonagh, Felicity Ward.

Front Row (L/R seated): Abbi Walker, Katie Egan, Tristan Regan, Ciara Conlon, Nessa Brennan



Knockminna National School First Holy Communion Class 2011

Two boys in front: Mark Wheelan (left) and Aaron Brennan

Two girls standing forward: Chantelle Curran (left) and Ceilí Faughnan

Next Row (L/R): Kate Brehony, James McMorro, Fr James McDonagh CC, Ballymote, Sean Mullen, Laoise King

At back (L/R): Mr Brian Henry (Class Teacher), Mickey McMorro and Adam Cunnane (altar servers), Mrs Louise King (Principal Teacher)

Picture courtesy Knockminna NS

Ballymote Heritage Group

Patrons:

Matilda Casey
Eamon Barnes
Most Rev Dr T Flynn, Retired Bishop of Achonry

Officers

President: Eileen Tighe
Vice-President: Ann Harrison
Chairperson: Des Black
Vice-Chairperson: Carmel Rogers
Secretary: Betty Conlon
Joint Treasurers: Pam Benson and Mary Martin
PRO and Editor of *The Corran Herald*: James Flanagan

Members:

Olive Beirne, Mary Black, David Casey, Gerry Cassidy, John Coleman, John Conlon, Anne Flanagan, Brenda Friel, Noreen Friel, Paddy Horan, Molly Howard, Gerry Keaney, Jack Martin, John Perry TD, Marie Perry, Nuala Rogers, Carmel Rogers, Michael Rogers

AGM

The 26th Annual General Meeting of the Group was held on September 29th at 8.30 pm in Fawltly Towers, Ballymote. All officers submitted very satisfactory reports on the year's events. Especially successful were the Heritage Weekend and the publication *The Corran Herald* (the biggest ever). Officers as above were elected for the year 2010-2011.

Sponsors

Ballymote Heritage Group gratefully acknowledges the generous sponsorship of the Heritage Weekend provided by the following:



Sligo Co Council Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2010

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Matilda Casey
Michael and Carmel Rogers
Elizabeth Gilhawley
Jack Martin