The Corran Herald

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The Corran Herald

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Compiled and Published by Ballymote Heritage Group

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Sligo County Council has provided funding for the 50th issue of *The Corran Herald* through the 2017 Community and Voluntary Grant Scheme - Community Heritage.

28th Ballymote Heritage Weekend

Friday 4th August - Monday 7th August 2017

Organised by

Ballymote Heritage Group, Ballymote, County Sligo

www.ballymoteheritage.com

Lectures at the Teagasc Centre Ballymote. €10. Coach for outings from Catholic Church car park. Further information see website or phone 087 4169557

Friday 4th August

8.30 p.m. ***Official Opening and Lecture:***

Dr Patrick Wallace former Director of the National Museum of Ireland.

Lecture: The Museum, Past, Present and Future.

Saturday 5th August

9 a.m. ***Outing: Fenagh Abbey, St. Catherine's Church of Ireland, Fenagh, Co Leitrim and restored St. Mel's Cathedral, Longford.***

Guide: Frank Tivnan, Historian. (Tickets €30 (including Lunch) can be purchased in advance from Casey's Pharmacy. Any remaining tickets available at the opening lecture).

8.30 p.m. ***Lecture: "Re-imagining the classical house as a Gothic castle: Francis Johnston at Markree Castle in the early nineteenth century".***

Dr Judith Hill, Architectural Historian.

The National Museum of Ireland

Collooney Railway Station

St. Mel's Cathedral, Longford

Coptic Manuscript

Multyfarnham Abbey

Bòthar an Chorainn

Sunday 6th August

2 p.m. ***Tour of Collooney Rail Station and disused junctions.***

Guide: Peter Bowen Walsh. Railway Historian.

And

Architecture of Collooney Churches and other areas of local interest.

Guides: Martin A Timoney and Mary B Timoney Archaeologists. (Tickets €12 (includes transport) can be purchased in advance from Casey's Pharmacy. Any remaining tickets will be available at the opening lecture)

8.30 p.m. ***Lecture: "Monastic Ireland - A Gift of the Nile!"***

Alf Monaghan. Alf is a long term observer of Middle Eastern affairs, including the emergence of early Christianity there and the influence of the Eastern Mediterranean on Irish Christianity

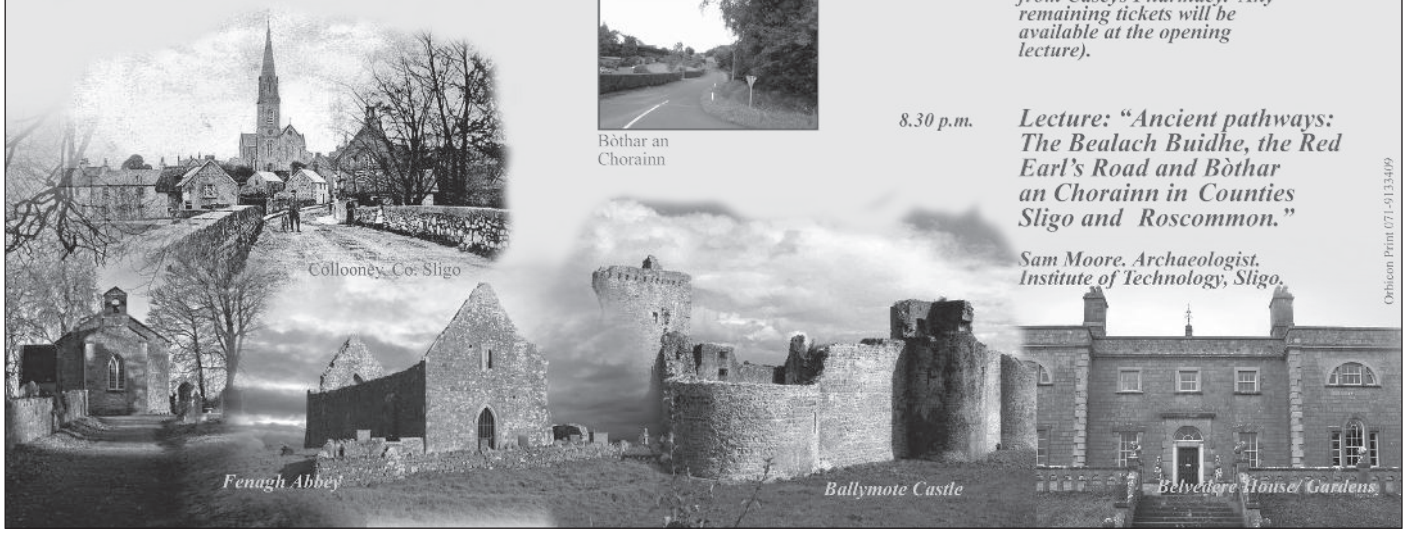
Monday 7th August

9 a.m. ***Outing : Belvedere House/Gardens, Mullingar and Multyfarnham Abbey***

(Tickets €35 (including Lunch) can be purchased in advance from Caseys Pharmacy. Any remaining tickets will be available at the opening lecture).

8.30 p.m. ***Lecture: "Ancient pathways: The Bealach Buidhe, the Red Earl's Road and Bòthar an Chorainn in Counties Sligo and Roscommon."***

Sam Moore. Archaeologist. Institute of Technology, Sligo.



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Cathaoirleach Awards 2016

We're delighted to note that Eileen Tighe, President of Ballymote Heritage Group, won a Cathaoirleach award in 2016 for her years of dedication in making the Ballymote Heritage Group a success. Eileen has been a driving force from the very beginning in establishing the annual Heritage Weekend and *The Corran Herald* as important cultural events in the region.

The Cathaoirleach awards acknowledge the contribution of volunteers across a wide range of local activity in County Sligo. Eileen was nominated on the basis of her long association with the Heritage Group, being one of its founders in 1984 and serving as chairperson and later president for a long number of years. The growth and success of the Heritage Group is due in large part to Eileen's knowledge and interest in all matters of history and heritage, and to her drive, commitment, dedication and determination to grow the Group and its activities.

Under her guidance, the Ballymote Heritage Weekend continues to attract audiences from near and far, and has been widely praised for the high quality of its lectures and outings. *The Corran Herald* also continues to attract high-quality writers and curious readers from year to year. Eileen was cited for the award on the basis of her involvement in a number of community activities, and for being a true leader in her community.

The award ceremony. Front row, left to right: Nuala Rogers, Eileen Tighe, Noreen Friel. Back row, left to right: Ursula Gilhawley, Councillor Dara Mulvey, Councillor Margaret Gormley, Aidan Tighe, Neal Farry

Eileen was presented with her award in the Arts and Culture category at a ceremony in the County Hall on 14 December 2016 to honour the winners of the Cathaoirleach Awards 2016. The award was presented to Eileen by Councillor Gino O'Boyle, and on behalf of those of us in the Heritage Group and everyone who has benefitted from Eileen's tireless work over the years, we send our heartiest congratulations!

A job well done

Mrs Eileen Tighe, President of Ballymote Heritage Group, making a presentation to John Coleman on the completion of his term as chairman of the group.
Also included are **(left to right)**
Ursula Gilhawley, Carmel McGettrick, Michael Rogers, Derek Davey, Tom Lavin, Neal Farry,
Carmel Rogers, Michael Tarmey, Mary Black and Des Black.

50 years a Priest

By Fr Pat Rogers

Fr Pat Rogers

When after my Leaving Certificate I left Ballymote in 1960 to join the Passionist order, as I recall, it was with the best of intentions. But I had only the most sketchy outline in mind, how my life with the Passionists might turn out, or whether it would suit me at all. Back then, almost 60 years ago, the order was known to be rather austere in lifestyle. The 'monks', whether priests or brothers, all wore a distinctive black habit, with a leather belt round the waist, and over the heart a small heart-shaped sign of the Passion of Christ. They were best known for preaching rousing parish missions across the length and breadth of Ireland.

What was it that drew me to join a strict religious order, rather than follow my uncle Val into the diocesan priesthood, possibly in Dublin diocese? I think I felt a strong preference for living in shared accommodation, in some kind of community, with like-minded fellows who would meet regularly to eat and pray together, and then go out as preachers of missions and retreats to various parts of the country. Even then, the domestic life of a diocesan priest seemed to me rather lonely by comparison. If I was going to be celibate, it should be easier if I wasn't living all on my own. In part, in my youthful idealism, the frugal life of the Passionists may even have attracted me back then. But after the Vatican Council of the early 1960s, when some of the order's strictness was relaxed, we came to live in a way that more reflected the rest of the people around us.

With the few others who joined with me in 1960, we went through a fairly strict year of novitiate, in the Graan monastery, about three miles from Enniskillen. There we got an introduction to praying the Divine Office in common, to sharing household chores and dining on very simple fare. We learned about the history of the order and of the church as a whole, and were often regaled by great stories from some of our active preachers, back home for a rest after conducting their dramatic-style missions. I still have warm memories of stirring tales told with gusto by gifted priests like Luke Delaney, with his rich Kerry accent, or Dubliner Malachy Geoghegan, or in sonorous tones by Hilary Barry from Tipperary.

After novitiate we took temporary religious vows (for a duration of three years) with the expectation that, if all went well, we would take the vows for life before being ordained to the priesthood. We proceeded to some years of studying philosophy and theology, to get us properly prepared for the sort of ministries that we could expect to be doing after ordination. Then, right in the middle of my studies, came the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), which pointed the way to a different set of priorities for the Church than those I had grown up with. We moved from Latin to English in the liturgy, and the focus of the Church's life moved (in theory at least) from hierarchy to community, from a pyramid of priestly authority to 'The People of God', all of whom had gifts of ministry to share with others. Like other clerical students of my vintage, I was delighted with these changes, even though in the decades that followed many of the ideals of the Council were quietly set aside.

After my ordination (by archbishop John Charles McQuaid) in December 1966, one of the great blessings of my life was being selected to go for further studies in Rome. My task was to gain the qualifications to teach theology and biblical studies in the newly-established Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy in Dublin. I suppose it was because of my keen interest in languages that my provincial superior at the time, Fr Valentine McMurray cp, a fellow Sligoman, sent me to study in Rome. At any rate, in spite of some initial difficulties in adapting to Italian cooking, that posting suited me very well. Living in a mainly Italian-speaking community near the very heart of Rome, I quickly learned the language and grew to love and appreciate the Eternal City, its vitality, history – and sunny weather!

When I had completed the degrees of Licentiate in Theology and Scripture, I said goodbye to Rome and was assigned to teach New Testament in Milltown, in a 'consortium' or collective project of some twelve religious orders, which taught a similar curriculum to that in the national seminary at Maynooth. I continued on the staff at Milltown for the next 41 years, with the exception of a few absences that I spent abroad, in America, Africa and Australia. Perhaps I should mention here that, urged by Fr Jim Healy sj, president of Milltown Institute, I returned to Rome for two years in the second half of the 1970s to complete my doctorate in theology, at the Gregorian University. Those were great years to be in Rome, and in the intervening summers I had the chance to study German, French and Spanish, all of which I have enjoyed ever since then.

The spirit of sharing and of community that I experienced among the Passionists over the years is something I deeply appreciate. We might sometimes argue at table or at community meetings, over some opinion or other, but in general there is a spirit of live-and-let-live, and of genuine interest in each other's wellbeing. Also, our older members

are cared for in the community, often into their 90s – as was the case with the late Fr Anselm Keleghan cp, well known in Sligo from this time as rector in Cloonamahon and in the Graan.

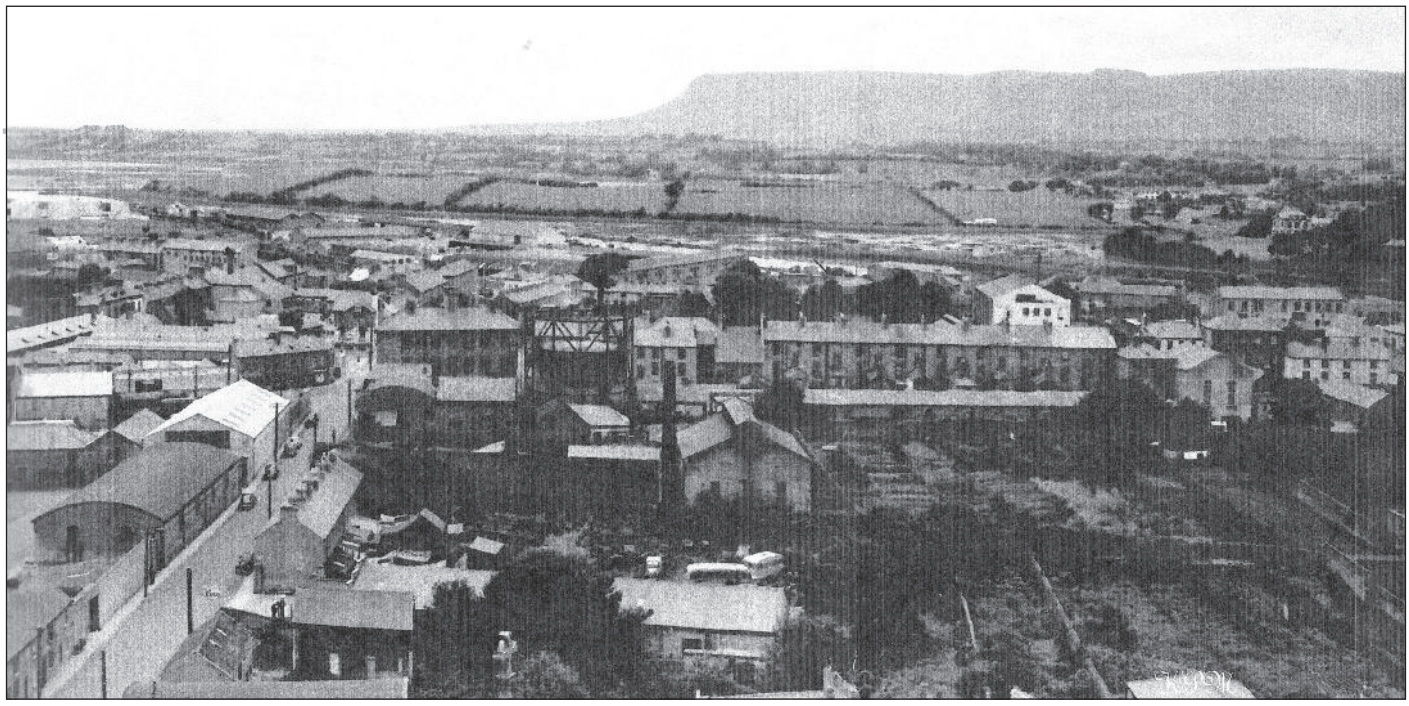
During my 50 years as a priest, I have only once been in charge of a parish – and that was for 15 months as temporary parish priest of Klosters, in the mountainous east of Switzerland. That was my 'pastoral sabbatical' amid sunny alpine valleys (summer to autumn 1982) and snowy ski-slopes in the winter. It was there that I learned to ski and then introduced various nieces and nephews to their first skiing experiences.

An advantage of my role as a Scripture-teacher in Milltown was that I often had invitations to conduct seminars and retreats to groups of priests, brothers and sisters during the summer holidays. That was a ministry that I greatly enjoyed – and still do, when occasion arises. Another was that I could usually undertake three or four weeks of 'parish supply' – acting as *locum* or replacement for one of the parish clergy while they went on holiday. These 'supplies' had a holiday dimension for me also, since they were mainly in parishes on the continent, in Germany, Austria, France or Spain. They were a great way to keep up those languages as well as to meet new people and savour their local culture. And for about ten years in succession, from 2001 on, I would spend a month every year in California, preaching in various parishes and helping to fundraise for a third-world charity, Concern America – working with its gifted director, Galwayman Denis Garvey from Glenamaddy, and his wife Maryanne.

Aside from those mainly summer travels, most of my fifty years as a priest were spent in Ireland, based in Mount Argus in Harold's Cross, Dublin. There I help out with church ceremonies and share in the community life of prayer, hospital visits, etc. For several decades I've also been active in helping prepare engaged couples for their marriage, as a member of the Together Pre-Marriage course. Since 2010 I've taken part in the Association of Catholic Priests, and provide the daily homily-resource page in their website (www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie). I also maintain a website called www.biblical.ie which was something I set up for my students while I was lecturing in Milltown Institute.

And what about all the scandals and travails of the church in the last decade or more? What about the fall-off in church attendance, and the hostility of many journalists and media people towards institutional religion? Like all others of my age, I've been saddened and ashamed when learning about some of what went on, and the lives that were severely damaged by abuse. I'm morally certain that the abusers were just a small minority within the priesthood, but it was still a shock to learn how poorly our church leaders dealt with this crisis at first, and how long it took them to put effective safeguarding procedures in place. But we are aware nowadays that this problem is more widespread in the general population than used to be thought when I was young. It's just one of the many factors of life that we have to deal with as best we can.

In spite of all the above, in general I have been happy in trying to live out my calling as a priest. Helping people to celebrate major life-occasions like baptisms, weddings, anniversaries and funerals has seemed very fulfilling to me. So too is the leading of worship and the preaching of the message of Jesus on a regular basis – and trying to apply it to concrete situations in today's world. Even if given the opportunity to start all over, I think there is no other calling or profession that I would prefer to serving the catholic community as a priest or pastor. I often wish I could have done it better, maybe listened a bit more to people and given them more of my time… but looking back over the half century since my ordination, I feel blessed and privileged to have been called to this kind of service.



A centre of power: Sligo Gas Works during the 50s. Photograph by Kevin P Murray.

Philip Rooney 1907 – 1962

By Anne Flanagan

Philip Rooney is best known as the author of *Captain Boycott*. Cunningham Boycott was a land agent for the Earl of Erne's estate, which was situated on the shores of Lough Mask. It was the 1880s and the Irish Land League was active in the area. As part of its campaign for the 'three F's' – fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale – and also because of evictions in the area, the Land League encouraged Boycott's employees to withhold their labour. They refused to harvest the crops on the estate and began a campaign against Boycott in the local community.

Philp Rooney's interest in the dispute was aroused by the fact this his grandmother was the teacher at the school on the estate at the time of the strike, and his mother, Margaret Mulligan, was a pupil in the school.

Philip was born in 1907 at Camphill, Collooney, the first child of Henry and Margaret Rooney. Both were teachers in Camphill National School, the only national school in Cooloney at the time. Philip had two brothers, Michael and Paddy, and one sister, Kitty. He received his secondary education at Mungret College, Limerick.

When Philip left school he worked for the National Bank and worked in Mohill, Mullingar and Bray. He married Moya Rainey of Mullingar, and they had two sons, Sean and Ben. Sean was killed in a car accident in his 20s.

A prize in a short story competition launched Philip Rooney on his literary career. His entry came first out of 6,000, and heartened by this success, Philip wrote a light romance set in the Boyne Valley. It was published in 1935 under the title *All Out to Win*. It was well received, and that fact, coupled with the many years of ill-health which had gone before, decided him to retire from the bank and make writing his career. Shortly after that he moved to Bray and worked as a freelance journalist, writing for newspapers and reviews all over the world. He was appointed to the staff of Radio Eireann and wrote hundreds of scripts, plays, serials and adaptions for Radio Eireann and also the BBC. Amongst his best-known radio programmes was *The Quest for Matt Talbot*, which was broadcast several times on RTE and also in Holland and the US.

In June 1960 a feature which he compiled about Constance Markievicz called *The Green Jacket* was first broadcast. He later presented the script to Sligo County Library. Meanwhile Philip continued to write novels, which were:

Red Sky at Dawn, 1937 – A tale of smuggling and adventure on the coast of Sligo

North Road, 1940 – A vivid tale of the Ulster Planters

Singing River, 1944 – A romance

Captain Boycott, 1946

The Golden Coast, 1949 – A tale of the high seas and of piracy and capture and eventual escape

The Long Day, 1951 – A detective story

It is for Captain Boycott that Philip is best remembered. It was instantly successful, and was made into a film in 1947. It was directed by Frank Launder. Philip wrote film scripts for the well-known film producers Launder and Gilliat, and for Michael Balcon.

Philip Rooney

Philip's novels are characterised by a sensitive awareness of the beauty of nature. He was a born storyteller with a lively eye for detail that brought his stories to life. When Telefis Eireann opened in 1960, Philip was appointed scriptwriter in the drama department and worked there until he died on 5 March 1962.

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This article is based on the author's research for her thesis for her Fellowship of the Library Association of Ireland. She would like to acknowledge the invaluable help of Moya McGuinness, niece of Philip Rooney.

Beloved Brethren

Bishop Morrisroe's Lenten Pastoral 1917

By Michael Farry

'Home Government for all Ireland with complete fiscal autonomy, with adequate safeguards for minorities and guarantees that the race for positions and appointments shall go to the fittest, this is the least that the gallant defenders of small peoples ought to grant to long-suffering Ireland.' This extract from a letter to a public meeting in January 1917 would not be remarkable in itself were it not written by a Catholic bishop to a meeting addressed by a personal friend who was also deputy leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

The writer of the letter was Dr Patrick Morrisroe, Bishop of Achonry, and the Irish Party MP was John Dillon, who, like the Bishop, lived in Ballaghaderreen, County Roscommon. Morrisroe's letter criticised Dillon's Irish Party's alliance with the Liberals and their apparent acceptance of partition. It welcomed the collapse of that alliance, claiming that 'The betrayal of the Party by its English friends (ie the Liberal Party) has proved to be a decided gain, for it has restored to Irishmen unfettered independence.'

Morrisroe did praise Dillon for his intervention on behalf of those still interned after the Rising. In a reference to the inclusion in the War Cabinet of Edward Carson, who had led the Unionist opposition to Home Rule, the Bishop wrote: 'It is hard to see why one set of rebels – and these more criminal – should be enjoying the sweetmeats of Downing Street, and another, less guilty, condemned to break stones in Dartmoor.'

This letter by Morrisroe, and in particular his criticism of the Irish

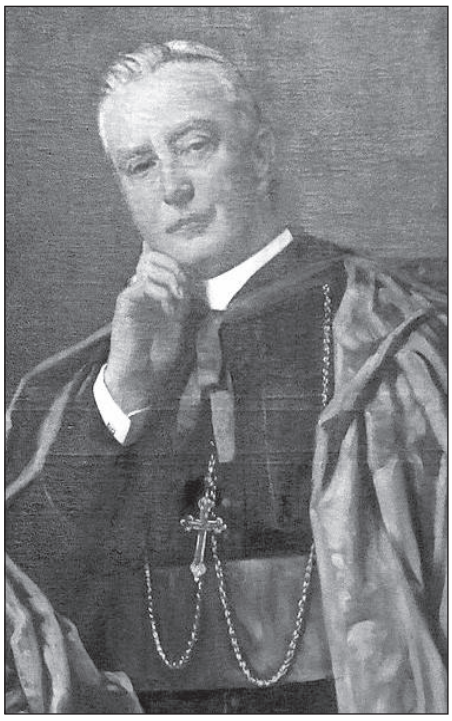
Bishop Morrisroe as often pictured in newspapers of the time

Party, was widely reported in the Irish press and was also highlighted in the small radical weekly newspaper, *The Irish Nation*, which published extracts under the heading 'Up Roscommon! Another Irish Bishop Speaks Out'.

The timing is also interesting, coming as it did less than a year after the 1916 rising. The response of the Church to the Rising had been muted. Out of a total of 31 bishops, only seven had unreservedly condemned the Rising. Bishop Edward O'Dwyer of Limerick was the only bishop to attempt any justification. The 23 others, including the Bishop of Achonry, remained silent.

Patrick Morrisroe, a native of Charlestown, County Mayo, was born in 1869. He was educated in the Achonry diocesan college and in Maynooth College. He was ordained priest in 1893, served as chaplain to the Sisters of Charity in Banada, on the staff of St Nathy's College, Ballaghaderreen, and from 1896 until 1911 he was on the staff of Maynooth College. In 1911 he was consecrated Bishop of Achonry and served in that position until his death in 1946. As Bishop he was well thought of by his peers and was regarded as having influenced the then Cardinal Logue in many of his statements on the political situation.

The background to the meeting, the Bishop's letter, and *The Irish Nation*'s interest was the North Roscommon by-election, the first electoral test of the mood of the country after the 1916 Rising. It was held on 3 February 1917 and while the opposition to the

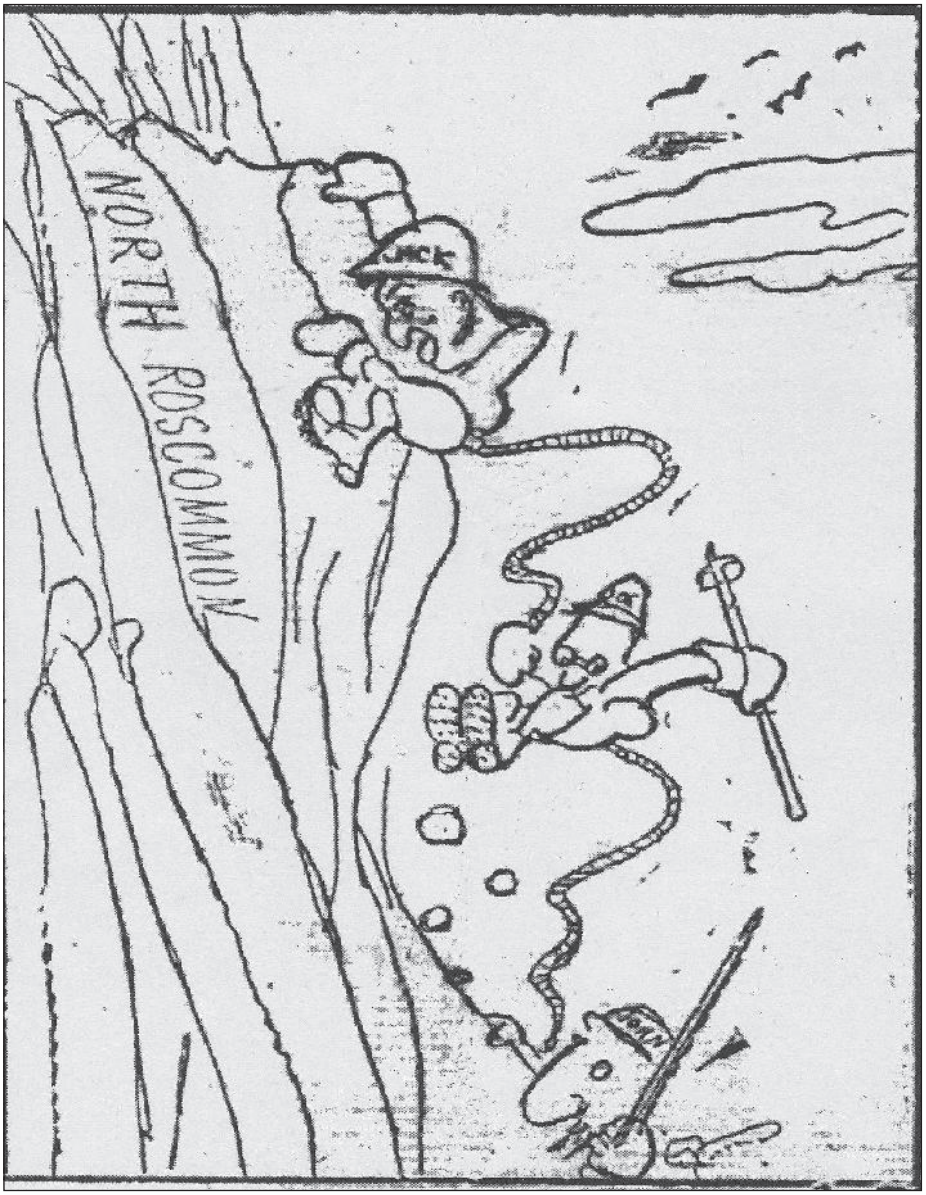


Bishop Morrisroe from the book *The Diocese of Achonry 1818-1960: A Dominant Church* by Liam Swords, courtesy of Bishop Thomas Flynn. The portrait is probably by Leo Whelan RHA (1892-1956) who painted many of the bishops, including Archbishop Walsh of Tuam and Cardinal MacRory

Irish Party was still disorganised, an agreed candidate, Count George Noble Plunkett, father of the executed 1916 leader Joseph Mary Plunkett, was put forward by a coalition of separatist / republican / anti-Irish Party groups. The Count was elected, receiving 3,022 of the 5,403 votes cast, defeating the Irish Party candidate TJ Devine and the Independent, Jasper Tully.

Ballaghaderreen parish was the only part of Achonry Diocese in the North Roscommon constituency and there is no indication that Morrisroe made any direct comment on the contest or on the outcome.

The Bishop did however meet a small deputation of Plunkett supporters who asked permission for Fr Michael O'Flanagan to speak at a pro-Plunkett meeting at Ballaghaderreen during the campaign. He refused. The permission of the Bishop, as parish priest of Ballaghaderreen, was apparently required to allow a priest to address a political meeting in the parish. Fr O'Flanagan was one of the chief supporters and organisers of the Plunkett campaign.



Cartoon on the result of the North Roscommon election from the *Roscommon Herald,* 17 Feb 1917. The original caption reads 'A critical moment for the Irish leaders, Jack, Joe and John, when they lose their grip on North Roscommon, and tumble from their dizzy heights of power and Bossism.' Jack, Joe and John were John Redmond, Joe Devlin and John Dillon, the principal leaders of the Irish Party

Morrisroe's colleague, Bishop Coyne of Elphin, had trouble previously with O'Flanagan's radicalism, but he did allow him to canvass for Plunkett and address political meetings in his diocese during the by-election campaign.

Plunkett's victory in this by-election marked the beginning of the electoral success of the anti-Irish Party faction and eventually encouraged them to unite under the Sinn Féin banner. The support of the younger Catholic clergy was an important factor in this and later victories. The RIC Inspector General's Monthly Report for January 1917 said, 'He [Plunkett] was supported by the majority of the Roman Catholic Clergy, particularly by Father O'Flanagan, a Sinn Feiner, who canvassed the Division daily on his behalf.' This political involvement by the clergy was, no doubt, a cause of concern to Morrisroe and the other bishops.

As the campaign and the celebrations took place, Bishop Morrisroe was working on his pastoral letter which was read in all churches on Quinquagesima Sunday, the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, 18 February 1917. This was the yearly address to their flocks by all bishops in which traditionally they reminded them of Lenten fast regulations, stressed their concerns as regards pastoral care, drunkenness, evil literature, immodest dancing, company keeping and such like, and occasionally made comments on current affairs and political developments.

Morrisroe's 1917 Lenten pastoral is a delightful document in which he treads warily through the questions of the day, including the war and food shortages, the aftermath of the Rising and the rise of Sinn Féin, though he never mentioned the term. Neither does he specifically mention the Irish Party or Home Rule. As would be expected of a Catholic bishop, he expresses himself solidly against

rebellion and the use of force but he is repeatedly critical of the British Government, its response to the Rising and its general conduct of Irish affairs. He calls the Rising 'a domestic tragedy', 'this hapless enterprise', 'unfortunate occurrences', but there is no strong denunciation of the leaders of the rising. 'We do not know the motives of those who originated the recent disturbance,' he wrote, 'so we will not stop to apportion blame.'

He goes on to talk of the confusion caused by the 'excessive severity . . . which was employed to end the turmoil', 'the excessive exercise of punitive measures' and how the harsh British reaction to the Rising had turned many 'into active sympathisers with the victims of military despotism and brutality.' He recognises that 'we may sympathise, and we do with all our heart, with those upon whom capital punishment and penal servitude were inflicted', but argues that this should not result in our approval of the 'unfortunate occurrences'.

He then delivered his thoughts on 'Love of the homeland' ('a noble, as well as a natural, sentiment') and went on to contrast 'The Celt' and 'Those . . . who aspire to rule over him'. His imagined Ireland is the perennial victim, the artist and dreamer of the Celtic Twilight: 'This land, which is the idol of so many warm hearts, has endured the sharp arrows of bitter and adverse fortune. Fate has dealt cruelly with her during her chequered history. She lost unhappily her place in the sun and now she is mated with a predominant partner whose temperament and ideals are different from hers. The Celt is clean-lived and spiritual in his aspirations . . . The educative, industrial, social and national genius of our people is held in bondage'. He contrasts these 'spiritual' Celts with their English rulers who 'cast away three centuries ago the fountains of living waters and drink out of broken cisterns' and who, instead of seeking to progress the common good, seek 'to consult the interests of a narrow-minded ascendency to the neglect of popular sentiment.'

He appreciates the problems that the 'clashing of such jarring antagonisms' may cause but advises that 'It is never lawful to do evil that good may come'. He stresses that the government was lawful and must be obeyed. He quotes at length from Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on 'The Christian Constitution of States', 'To cast aside obedience, and by popular violence to incite to revolt, is therefore treason, not against man only, but against God'. But he begins the quote with a clear taunt at the British Government: 'They . . . who rule should rule with even-handed justice, not as masters, but rather as fathers, for the rule of God over man is most just, and is tempered always with a father's kindness . . . Government should, moreover, be administered for the well-being of the citizens.'

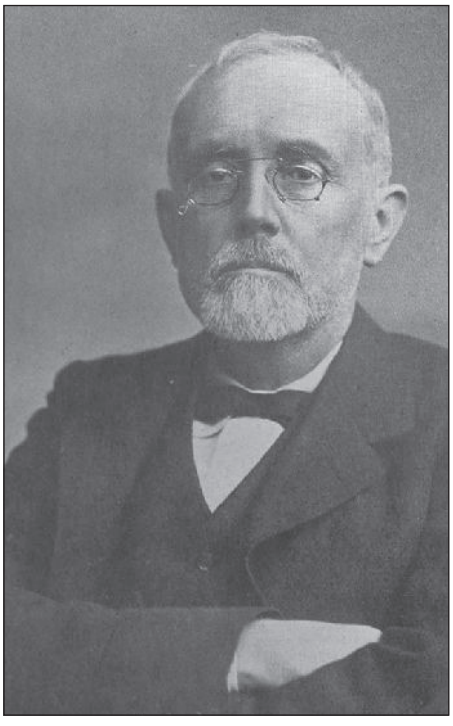
He reminds his flock that 'there is a law of the Church forbidding the Sacraments to persons who belong to organisations that plot or conspire against legitimately constituted authority, either publicly or privately, either by oath or without personal rights.'

He ends this, the main section of the pastoral, with a strong declaration that nothing he has said must be taken 'to imply that we must be satisfied with the existing situation or that we are not to endeavour to secure our liberty. Nothing could be further from our thoughts. We desire as ardently as any that our country should be made independent, in the fullest sense, of every foreign power and endowed with the amplest faculty for self-development . . . we shall continue to bless, and pray for the success of, every legitimate movement for the restoration of our full freedom.'

Having delivered his thoughts on the political situation Morrisroe goes on to talk of the importance of prayer and penance, especially during Lent, and commends those involved in teaching religion, saying that the Report of the Diocesan Inspector was most encouraging. He welcomes the development of the Maynooth Mission to China and then includes the usual Lenten Fasting Rules.

Morrisroe's 1917 pastoral letter was one of only two in all Ireland which dealt with the 1916 Rising. The Archbishop of Cashel, Dr Harty, advised his flock on the issue in similar terms and quoted from the same encyclical. Both were aimed at parochial clergy as well as at the laity.

The North Roscommon victory had a dramatic effect on the politics of the country and the locality. The rest of 1917 saw an inexorable rise of Sinn Féin, with clubs being formed in parish after parish mimicking and replacing the structure of the United Irish League, the Irish Party's local organisation. Morrisroe's political advice had little effect on his flock and did not prevent large numbers of his priests from assisting in the rise of Sinn Féin.



John Dillon

There were only two Sinn Féin clubs in County Sligo at the end of March 1917 but by the end of the year there were 43. South Sligo, most of which was in Achonry diocese, was more advanced than the rest of the county and on 29 April delegates from eight parishes met in Tubbercurry to form the South Sligo SF Alliance. Its June meeting heard that more clubs had been formed, some with the 'active cooperation of the clergy'.

Bishop Morrisroe seems not to have publicly criticised the rise of Sinn Féin until October when, in a widely reported sermon, he spoke against secret societies at the closing of a parish mission in Gurteen. He urged the people 'to shun all those organizations that might flavour of a revolutionary aspect, or be associated with secret societies'. But by this time it was far too late to stop the tide and these comments had no effect.

Soon afterwards, on 25 November 1917, the primate of All Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh, Cardinal Michael Logue, in a pastoral letter strongly denounced Sinn Féin policy as 'ill-considered and utopian' and warned that its dream of an Irish republic would likely end in disaster. Dr Morrisroe, who presumably had been consulted by the Archbishop in its drafting, forwarded Logue's pastoral letter to all his Achonry parishes with a covering letter, ordering that both should be read at all masses on the following Sunday. When the Parish Priest of Kiltimagh, Rev Fr Denis O'Hara, began to read the letters, members of his congregation attempted to drown out his words by coughing and scraping their feet.

Sinn Féin sometimes clashed publicly with those who did not support them, including Catholic clergy. They disrupted an entertainment organised by Killaville clergy and nationalists in December 1917, blocking roads, firing shots and breaking windows. This was probably because the Sinn Féin club had been denied use of the local parish hall. The parish priest complained to Sinn Féin headquarters about the incident. In January 1918 a Red Cross dance in Collooney was attacked by Sinn Féiners as 'pro-war' and those attending were pelted with mud and broken bottles. The local Catholic clergy denounced the attackers from the altar and Sinn Féin in turn demanded an apology. This was refused. Bishop Morrisroe, at a public meeting in support of the clergy, complained of a number of incidents during 1917 in his diocese, including the Collooney affair, attacks on schools and halls which had not been given for Sinn Féin meetings and the flying of republican flags above the cross on churches.

Morrisroe regarded himself, as many bishops did at the time, as an advisor to his flocks not just in matters of religion but also in matters of politics. As the situation constantly changed he struggled to keep up with his flock's current position, and he continually had to revise his position and temper his advice in the light of developments.

This 'leading from behind is perfectly demonstrated by his attitude to the 1918 election. He refused to support either Sinn Féin or the Irish Party, but announced his preparedness to lead his flock once it had made up its mind: 'Only when the people were united would the priests give a lead, and not when the people were wrangling'. Had he waited until the people stopped 'wrangling' then he would never have made any pronouncement.

There is no evidence that his pronouncements on politics had any effect on his flock or on his clergy. But this did not stop him continuing to comment on political matters as the Irish people continued their 'wrangling' through the war of independence, the Treaty and civil war, the later IRA activities, the Spanish Civil War, the Blueshirts and the Second World War.

His 1933 telegram to Eoin O'Duffy on the Blueshirt leader's release from prison, 'Congratulation on victory of justice over shameless partisanship and contemptible tyranny', caused an outcry, and the Irish press censorship refused newspapers permission to reprint a section of Morrisroe's 1941 Lenten Pastoral because its attack on European dictatorships was regarded as too pro-British and damaging to Irish neutrality.

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A Burst Blister

By Martin Healy

It was a crisp April morning, just gone half seven, when I ran over to the cowhouse where my father was milking. The air smelled different, the world felt fresher at this hour. Everything was still as a stone.

Today was the big day, the day I would go to the bog for the first time. This was even better than getting up at six o'clock on winter mornings and going out with flashlamps to round up the cattle for the walk to the fair. This was her, my first chance to show my worth.

How often had I listened to them talk about the big bog in Carnagulcha.

The *meitheals* of men all over the place, and the fires for cooking on, and the grand taste everything had, and the race to see who could cut the most and wheel the fastest.

And stopping in Charlie Durcan's bar for a mineral on the way home.

It was all swimming in my head as I flew into the cowhouse. Carnagulcha! The name had a certain ring to it. Secret as my Granny's songs.

I was nine then. My brother, Tom, was thirteen and had often been to the bog before.

He strolled about the street, whistling what he thought was a tune but was just a thin stupid note. The hands buried in his pockets and him kicking stones casually, trying to show me he knew it all – the bog was nothing new to him. I didn't care. I'd surprise him once we got there.

My oldest brother, Jack, who was eighteen, was helping with the milking. He was under the strawberry cow; she was fierce quiet and would let anyone draw her. The other three were dangerous, especially the red one – she'd send you flying off the stool as quick as she'd look at you. My father was the boy could handle the kickers. He had a special way of scratching their bellies and talking to them.

I drove out after the milking. They were slow to go, looking round, as if they realised it was earlier than normal. Her ladyship, the red one, tossed her head so I gave her a mighty crack of the stick. My father smiled and said, 'Good man, Brian, that's the stuff for her.' I was my father's favourite – at least I think I was.

We always talked a lot. I suppose, mostly, it was him talking and me listening. He told me plenty of things. Stories about when he was young, bits about his own father.

Sligo writer takes Hennessy award

MR MARTIN Healy (37), of Sligo, has won the 24th Hennessy Cognac Literary Award. He received £1,000 as a winner in the short story category and a further £1,000 and the Hennessy Cognac gold trophy as the overall winner.

Mr Healy has been published in collections such as *Force 10, Flaming Arrows* and *Writer's Forum*, and is at present working on a collection of short stories. His winning story, *Dead Fathers*, explores the relationship between two people whose fathers have died recently.

The other category winners, who each received £1,000 and a trophy, included Ms Marina Carr, of Dublin, who won the award for best short story by a new writer. Ms Carr's play *The Mai* was last month voted best new Irish play at the Dublin Theatre Festival. Ms Noelle Vial, of Donegal, won in the category of best poetry from an emerging writer.

The judges were the novelist Beryl Bainbridge and the novelist and playwright Dermot Bolger, and the judging was chaired by Mr Ciaran Carson, arts editor of the *Sunday Tribune*, which is a joint sponsor of the event. The Hennessy Cognac literary award-winners are chosen from stories and poems published on the *Sunday Tribune's* monthly New Irish Writing page.

Martin Healy

We hit for the bog at half eight. My mother had the tea stuff packed in a box that had pictures of oranges on the sides. She used extra strong twine from Auntie Mary's parcels to tie it on the carrier of my father's Raleigh bicycle. As she watched us leave, I noticed she was smiling funnily – much like the first morning I went to school. She waved and I waved back. Then she disappeared into the kitchen, rubbing her hands in her apron.

There were only two bicycles in the house so my father had to manage

me on the crossbar of his, while Jack brought Tom on the carrier of the other one – it was my mother's so there was no crossbar. My arse started to feel sore from all the bumping as we hurried out the stony lane but once we hit the tar everything was grand.

Paudie Scanlon was driving his cows as we passed by his gate. He gave a big happy shout and tipped his hat back like a cowboy. His fields were next to ours, and, at hay time, the race between us was hectic. We always won because the poor fellow had no help. He never married but he was mighty handy at building cocks.

We seemed to travel a bit faster after seeing Paudie. Like we were ready to beat him at bog too.

We passed through Dunbeg at exactly nine on the chapel clock. There was a man in a blue coat carrying a tray of bread into Cassidy's shop. I wondered if we could stop for ice-cream – you could get massive wafers in there for a tanner. My father just zoomed by it in an awful rush – I don't think he even saw man or shop.

I was kinda surprised later on when he decided to walk a windy hill that didn't seem too steep for me. He was puffing hard, I realized then, and had done hardly any talking for a while. Jack stood on the pedals, kept going full blast. 'Come on, you're failing', Tom shouted back at us. I felt like giving him a good kick, straight into the you-know-where.

A few TVO tractors, with wheelbarrows roped to the draw-bar, farted past us. The drivers waved and my father waved back. No hello or anything, just a steady wave. I suppose they were black strangers.

'Nearly there, Brian, a grá – get ready to make a wish.' We turned left, onto a grey lane that seemed to snake on forever through the endless bog. I was speechless with wonder and couldn't think of anything to wish for. There wasn't a house or a right tree anywhere, just lonesome flatness, with little squares of black here and there, which I knew to be fresh turf.

After about a mile we slowed to a halt. My arse was stiff as a poker, my legs all pins and needles. 'Where's ours, Daddy?' I asked excitedly.

'On down this way, son,' he pointed, crossing a low ditch and following a path that I could barely make out. Grey, like the lane, but spongy.

'Can I wheel it?' I asked, and he let me take the bicycle. It was high and awkward, nearly impossible to balance.

'Big baby,' Tom muttered, loud enough for me to hear. I gave him a dirty look and kept going, careful not to spill the box of tea things.

'Lord, but Meehan is the early bird,' my father commented, gazing across the bog. I followed his eye and spotted the lone figure, black as a rock.

'Sure, Meehan is always here earlier than anyone,' Tom said – to let me know I was the newcomer and I knew nothing. I squeezed the handlebars tight, having to listen again to his stupid, straight whistle.

The sun was getting a bit warmer now, the sky a lovely blue – as blue as the sea had been that day Uncle Frank brought us all down to Strandhill. Jack took the lemonade bottle of milk and sunk it in sticky mud, with just the neck up, then he pulled the barrows and *sleáns* from their hiding place in the hollow. My father stripped off his jacket and jumper, rolled up his shirt sleeves. I did the same and chanced a look at Tom to see his arms were as thin and white as mine. He didn't notice, being too busy throwing shapes and spitting on his hands like a grown-up.

There was a long stretch of bank cleaned and ready. My father nicked the side of it at great speed and then paced to the middle, where he opened up a cut. He threw the first dryish sods up onto the bank and I raced to collect them. I intended to make sure I spread for my father – let Tom and Jack do as they like. I think he was glad about this arrangement because he gave me a wink.

'Right, boys. In the name of the three Devines from Keash, we'll start,' he said, and I felt ten feet tall by the shafts of the wheelbarrow.

The top spit was very stringy and 'twas hard to keep the sods from falling off as I flew out the spreadground, one eye on the load, the other on Tom. Nobody said anything but there was a bit of a race on. The second spit was wetter, and by the third we were down to the real McCoy – grand dark turf, soapy as anything. I put twenty-six on each time – three rows of eight and two across the top. It was a heavy push but I wouldn't give in.

My father and Jack gabbed a good bit as they swung the *sleáns* but I was too busy concentrating on the catching. Tom was silent, too – there was no whistling now! I noticed his face was already blackened where a sod had already struck him. Jack was a wild cutter. You could see the difference, plain as day. My father's half was dead level, his sods even as pounds of butter; Jack was rough, not much better than a pig rooting. Any fool could know he was raw at the work.

Although he was awkward, Jack cut as fast as my father for the first three spit. I was mad, seeing this, but I said he'd never last the day. We'd cut him out long before the evening and then I'd let out a shout. I had often heard my father use that line – 'cut him out – when he was talking about great men from the old days. If there were a line of cutters working on a stretch of bank and one slowed, he'd be in the others' way and have to step down. This would be an awful shame, he'd be the talk of the place afterwards.

We stopped for tea around one o'clock. I was glad of the break because my hands were getting a bit sore and looked as if they might blister. We all washed in a boghole,

using fists of mucky peat as soap. Tom broke into his whistling again, as if he were fresh as a daisy. I knew by the cut of him, though, that he was getting enough of it – I just hoped I'd last the day.

Jack made a fire out of dry clods and twists of newspaper. It lit grand and in no time the kettle was singing. We dangled our legs over a heathery bank and ate our fill of the sandwiches my mother had prepared. Slices of rasher between thick cuts of soda bread – greasy and lovely. I picked the fat bits off and threw them away; I noticed Tom was doing the same but my father and Jack ate like horses, all the time staring silently across the flatness. I'd never had such an appetite, never. Only then did I believe the stories I'd heard about grub tasting better on the bog.

'Think will ya stick the day, Brianeen?' my father suddenly asked. I said I would, no bother, and jumped to my feet to show my mettle.

There were a lot of men about now, mostly in twos. You could hear faint voices drifting over, like the smoke from the fires which were everywhere. It was like nothing I ever saw before, like another world. It was hard to imagine ordinary places like school ever existed. I thought grown-ups must surely have a great time.

We rested for half an hour. Nobody said much, just listened to the broad silence and gazed at the tiny, distant figures here and there. I did a bit of gazing, too, as I presumed that was the way real bogmen acted. A couple of crows came out of nowhere and hovered above us, watching for scraps.

When my father put on his cap it was time to rise.

By three o'clock we were down five spit and Jack was still staying tight with my father. I flew in and out of the spreadground, not worrying about any sods I lost. Once, my hands slipped off the shafts and I ended up with my face buried in the damn turf. Tom let a mighty cheer out of him and I felt awful.

'Cassidy's corner-shop in Ballymote with the now-retired Gerry Cassidy at the door. Was this the Cassidy's in 'Dunbeg' where our little hero Brian saw a man with a tray of bread, and where he coveted an ice-cream for a tanner?

Jack had stripped to his vest now, his balled shirt flung away into the hollow. Out of the side of my eye I noticed his muscles bulging and, soon, I got to wondering if he could be as strong as my father. Or stronger?

'Come on, boys, we'll cut ye out,' Jack said suddenly. Half laughing.

'Don't break Dunne's *sleán* anyway,' my father answered, and I thought he didn't sound too happy. I squinted round and saw Jack's sods were huge but there was neither shape nor make to them. I was going to say something but didn't.

When the seventh spit was cut we stopped for more tea. My father slipped a bit when he was climbing up to the bank and I gave him a hand. He smiled kinda strangely and ruffled my hair.

'We'll bottom it this evening,' Tom said. Talking big. The head of him!

'No bother,' agreed Jack, marching into the hollow for his shirt.

The grub tasted just as sweet as before. We polished everything off, not a crumb left, and settled to rest for a while. I noticed how Jack lay flat on his back and closed his eyes. The big sods had got the better of him, I thought, and boy was I glad. We'll cut them out yet, I said to myself, and the blister on my right hand didn't seem so sore any more.

My father's pocket watch clicked open, sang shut. He glanced sideways as Jack rose, smart as a hound, and again peeled off his shirt. I felt an odd tightness in the bottom of my stomach.

There was hardly any talk as the eighth and ninth spits were being cut. They were down very deep in the bog now and it was getting harder to throw the sods up. Jack was keeping a close eye on my father and I knew he was doing his level best to cut him out. I put extra sods on the barrow, piled them as high as I could, raced faster, but still he kept gaining ground.

Then, for the first time all day, I noticed the odd sod slipping off my father's *sleán*. Also, he never took a second look upwards, just kept on flinging as fast as he could – the crown of his peaked cap was all I could see. Once or twice, a sod caught me hard in the face but there was another zooming up before I had time to wipe the stain away.

Coming to the end of the tenth spit they were still neck and neck. 'Come on, boys, keep your chains up,' Jack said, copying a line my father often

used in fun at the hay. Tom said something, too, but I didn't give a damn about him.

On the eleventh spit I knew for sure that my father was done. A lot of his sods hit the side of the steep bank and landed right back at his feet. The odd time he did look up at me his eyes seemed far away and almost sad. His face was pure red and his cap was twisted at an odd angle.

Jack finished first but he didn't brag or cheer or anything; neither did Tom, to be fair. When my father got to the end he climbed up into the hollow and took off his cap and ran it over his brow and then said to Jack: 'Cut one more off it all, you; that'd be twelve, we'll do with that. Meself and Brian'll clean the far bank, get it ready for tomorrow.' His voice was real normal, same as ever, but we all knew what had happened.

I flung the barrow aside and couldn't look at him for a few seconds. My blister had burst earlier, without me noticing it, but I didn't care about that now.

At seven o'clock we hid the barrows and sleáns in the hollow and got ready for home. My father turned to look back across the spread we had blackened and said: 'That was one mighty day's work. Brianeen, you're a noble man for the bog.' He was smiling but it wasn't like the smile in the morning, when we'd passed Paudie Scanlon's gate. I smiled too, forced myself.

He cycled a lot slower than on the way up, and Jack stayed close beside him all the way – although he could have flown on ahead, I'm certain. They talked a good bit about different things but I wasn't really listening.

There was a huge crowd in Durcan's bar when we went in, all looking like bogmen. My father and Jack took bottles of beer, myself and Tom had orange juice. We sat on a form away on our own in the corner and once or twice I thought I saw a hint of my father's normal smile returning. I think a part of him was proud of Jack.

We passed through Dunbeg at twenty past eight and finally got back on the road I knew. My father patted my head and I twisted on the hard bar, gazed up into his face. I wondered if he might have let Jack best him – surely nobody could top my father at anything? Then, as we were freewheeling down the windy brae by the graveyard, I remembered a story he had told me once, while I was picking potatoes with him. It was about when he was young, like Jack, and his own father and himself were digging together. He'd dug his heart out to better his father and finally, in the evening, he did put him off the ridge. His exact words rang in my ear then, echoey as bells: '*He sunk the spade in the ridge and said I'm a done man and then he headed for the house'*.

I felt sad and alone for a few seconds, and I hated Jack even more, but then I remembered how my father finished that story by saying he never regretted anything as much.

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A Burst Blister is one of 12 short stories taken from Martin Healy's collection entitled *Waiting for Billy & Other Stories*, published by The Lilliput Press in 1998. Martin was a native of Cloonlurg, Ballymote, and was born in 1957. He won numerous literary prizes, including the 1994 Hennessy Award for *Dead Fathers*. He received an Arts Council Bursary in 1996. He was the short story editor of *Force 10*. With the publication of Martin's short story collection in 1998 the Irish literary world has come to know what it lost when Martin Healy died so prematurely in 1997.

The story has been reproduced here with the kind permission of Martin's surviving siblings: Mrs Mary Byrnes, Strandhill, Mr Donal Healy, Strandhill Rd, Sligo, and Mr Tommy Healy, Tonaphubble, Sligo. Copyright clearance has also been kindly provided by the Lilliput Press, Arbour Hill, Dublin 7.

Francis Taaffe's Sun Dial

By John Coleman

Much has been written over the years in *The Corran Herald* about the Taaffe family which once held the titles of baron Ballymote, viscount Corran and earl of Carlingford. When I was a schoolboy I liked to take trips on my bicycle on the byroads around Ballymote. On one such outing I came across a gate pillar at the entrance to a house by the side of the road which had a large engraved brass sundial, about one foot square, mounted on the top with the name Francis Taaffe inscribed on it and a date in the mid-17th century. In recent years I have tried to locate the sundial again, but could not find it. Ballymote Heritage Group would be interested to know if anyone is aware of the whereabouts of this unique object which would be of great historical interest for Ballymote? If so please contact any memory of the committee, or email the editor of *The Corran Herald* at stephen.flanagan@gmail.com.

The Great Hunger, the *Carricks* and the Kaveneys of Keash

By Joe McGowan

Georges and Mrs Kavanagh with their cousin Pat Ward

On the subject of Famine in Ireland, there is one constant question: Why did so many die in a land of plenty?

George Bernard Shaw wrote in *Man and Superman*: Malone: 'My father died of starvation in Ireland in the Black '47. Maybe you've heard of it?' Violet: 'The Famine?' Malone (with smouldering passion): 'No, the Black Starvation. When a country is full of food and exporting it, there can be no Famine."

At the height of the Great Hunger, Alexander Somerville, reporting in the *Manchester Examiner*, wrote of exporting grain from Ireland that it 'was the case in 1846 and the year before; and even in 1847, oats have been sent from Westport to England, where they are in demand, at high prices, for horses …' [(1)]

In 1847, the worst year of the Famine, an incredible 4,000 vessels carried food from Ireland to the major ports of Britain: Bristol, Glasgow, Liverpool and London. [(2)]

Ports situated in some of the most famine-stricken parts of Ireland were sending cargoes of foodstuffs to Britain via Ballina, Ballyshannon, Bantry, Dingle, Killala, Kilrush, Limerick, Sligo, Tralee, Westport and so on. In the first nine months of 1847, for example, 75 ships sailed from Tralee to Liverpool, most of which were carrying grain. In the same period, six vessels sailed from Kilrush in Co Clare to Glasgow carrying a total of 6,624 barrels of oats. Throughout 1847 both Indian corn and potatoes were exported from Ireland.

A wide variety of other foodstuffs left Ireland apart from livestock – vegetables and pulses (particularly peas, beans and onions), dairy products, fish (especially salmon, oysters and herrings) and even rabbits. In February 1847, 377 boxes of 'fish and eggs' and 383 boxes of fish were imported into Bristol alone. The butter export trade was particularly buoyant. In the first week of 1847, for example, 4,455 firkins of butter (a firkin equals nine gallons) were exported from Ireland to Liverpool. In the following week, this had risen to 4,691 firkins. Large quantities of butter were exported from Cork to

Georges, Mrs Kavanagh and Pat Ward

all parts of Britain. In the first nine months of 1847, 56,557 firkins of butter were exported to Bristol and 34,852 firkins to Liverpool. During the same period, 3,435 poultry were exported to Liverpool and 2,375 to Bristol. (3)

In an editorial written at the height of the famine the *Sligo Champion* reported that 'the landlords must get their rent and their arrears of rent, so to meet their demands the grain must be sold – the grain will be sent out of Ireland to feed English horses … The tenant will have to make out provision for his family without money, without grain or the potato to fall back upon.'

Sympathetic views towards the Irish were not popular with the ruling classes. Somerville's honesty brought poverty, obscurity and social ostracism when he continued to report in the *Manchester Examiner* what he saw in Ireland during the famine years. An Englishman himself, and born into deep poverty, he was finally forced to emigrate, and died in destitution in a squalid boarding house in Toronto in 1885.

Left to right: Georges, Gearoid O'Halloran, local historian, Joe Mc Gowan

A Litany of Tragedy

The *Larch* left Sligo port on 11 July, 1847, with 440 passengers in steerage. Of these, 113 died during the passage. On arrival in Quebec, 24 died on the ship while waiting to disembark, and a further 62 died in the hospital on Grosse Ile.

On 16 May, the *Aldebaran* arrived from Sligo with 418 passengers. Of these, 36 died on route, 105 were sick on arrival, and more than 80 of them subsequently died in quarantine.

The *Lord Ashburton* arrived in Quebec in October of 1847 with 477 passengers aboard. One hundred and seven died on the voyage of fever and dysentery; on arrival 174 of the passengers, widows and young children, 'the aged, destitute and decrepit', were found to be almost naked. Eighty seven had to be clothed by charity before they were allowed ashore.

The *Sligo Champion* in its editorial of 11 September 1847 reported the deplorable condition of Palmerston's tenants aboard the *Richard Watts* waiting to be shipped out of Sligo harbour. Knowing that Palmerston received copies of the paper, they implored him as a reader of the *Champion* not to allow these people to 'face the ruthless whims and tempests of the fierce Atlantic without money, clothes or food.'

Henry John Temple, III Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865), was one of the most powerful British politicians of the time. Serving twice as Prime Minister, Palmerston was in political office almost continuously from 1807 until 1865. As Foreign Secretary, he dealt with political crises in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and North America, including the First Opium War (1839-1842) and the establishment of a British colony in Hong Kong (1842). As Home Secretary (1852-1855) and then Prime Minister (1855-1858), he stage-managed Britain's involvement in the Crimean War (1853-1856), the Second Opium War (1856-1860) and the Indian Mutiny (1857). In the midst of all this diplomatic action, the tenants on his estates in Ireland – 20,000 acres and some 14,000 people – were a mere sideshow, pretty much left to his solicitors in Dublin and his land agents in Sligo.

The *Lady Sale* disembarked in September with close to 400 passengers. Perley, the emigration agent at the port, reported that he had never seen such abject misery. Blaming it on the 'heartless character of the person sending them', he wrote that they did not have 'enough clothes for decency and the master had bought a quantity of red flannel shirts and blue trousers so that they could land without exposure.' The doctor at quarantine called them a 'freight of paupers'.

Even worse was to come with the arrival of the *Aeolus* on 1 November of that year to New Brunswick. It had on board 428 of Lord Palmerston's tenants, a cargo of young families, widows, decrepit old women and men riddled with disease. The Bay of Fundy was icebound, the streets knee deep in snow and the passengers in a state of nudity. The City of St John had to take them into care and, outraged,

sent a scathing letter to Palmerston expressing regret and fury that he, or his agents, 'should have exposed such a numerous and distressed portion of his tenantry to the severity and privation of a New Brunswick winter …unprovided with the common means of support, with broken down constitutions and almost in a state of nudity … without regard to humanity or even common decency.'

The Health Officer reported: 'There are many superannuated people, and others of broken-down constitutions, and subjects of chronic disease, lame, widows with very helpless families, feeble men (through chronic disease, etc.) with large helpless families … and that nearly 400 so glaring paupers are thus sent out. Who so tame as would not feel indignant at the outrage?'

'If crosses and tombs could be erected on water,' wrote the U.S. commissioner for immigration, 'the whole route of the emigrant vessels... would long since have assumed the appearance of a crowded cemetery.'

Charles E Trevelyan, who served under both Peel and Russell at the Treasury, and had prime responsibility for famine relief in Ireland, was clear about God's role in all of this:

'The judgement of God sent the calamity to teach the Irish a lesson,' he said. "That calamity must not be too much mitigated … The real evil with which we have to contend is not the physical evil of the Famine, but the moral evil of the selfish, perverse and turbulent character of the people.'

Queen Victoria's economist, Nassau Senior, expressed his fear that existing policies 'will not kill more than one million Irish in 1848 and that will scarcely be enough to do much good.'

Thomas Carlyle, influential British essayist, wrote: 'Ireland is like a half-starved rat that crosses the path of an elephant. What must the elephant do? Squelch it – by heavens – squelch it.' 'Total Annihilation', suggested *The Times* leader of 2 September 1846,

The gates to Classiebawn are closed

and in 1848 an editorial boasted: 'A Celt will soon be as rare on the banks of the Shannon as the red man on the banks of Manhattan.'

The *Carricks*

This then is the setting for the coffin ships that left our bountiful shores with their tens of thousands of famine emigrants, the context in which the coffin ship the *Carricks* sailed away from Sligo Harbour in that fateful year of 1847.

The *Carricks* was a two-masted brig [4] of 242 tons, built at Workington, England, in 1812. Ships like this were expressly built for the purpose of carrying Canadian lumber to England. They were then quickly refitted to carry emigrants, effectively as ballast, on the return voyage.

In early 1832, at the outbreak of the cholera epidemic in Quebec, Potts and Co were registered owners of the *Carricks*. Capt J Potts and Capt J Hudson were listed as masters. In 1840 she was registered at Whitehaven, UK, still owned by James Potts and Co, and was then under the command of Capt Robert Dawes. She had 14 feet of draft under load. Her length was 87 feet, with a width of 26 feet.

Her hull was sheathed with copper in 1830 and again in 1836. She underwent repairs and received a new deck in 1829, and also received a new deck, top sides and new sheathing in 1836. When wrecked in 1847 she was an old vessel of 35 years of age. [5] In early April 1847, probably the 5th, the *Carricks* sailed from Sligo port, bound for Quebec, under the command of Capt R Thompson. She was severely overcrowded with tenants from the estates of Lord Palmerston, John Henry Temple, British Foreign Secretary at the time. On board there were 173 passengers plus the crew members, for about 187 in total. These passengers came from Palmerston estates all over Sligo. They included Patrick Kaveney and Sarah McDonald and their six children – five daughters aged between two and ten, and a twelve-year-old son. Also among the passengers were the Fureys and the Brennans from Drumharnaght; Murrays and Cawleys from Knockrower; the Healeys and O'Connors from Tunnagh; the

Filans and Hines from Knockaskagh; the Heraughtys and Hartes from Inishmurray Island; the Gallaghers and Mullens from Creevykeel; Meehans from Drumfad and Murrays from Mullaghmore.

In total, approximately 2,000 tenant farmers, from Lord Palmerston's estates, were shipped out from Sligo in 1847.

Many of the tragedies of that time were memorialised in verse and song by fireside poets. One such ballad memorialises an incident concerning a John Healy who lived at the foot of Corran:

The tyrant miser inspects his treasure
And to his horror before his view
There's still a thousand that's uncompleted
That needs the aid of a pound or two

Then in an instant the devil whispered
(His constant comrade both night and day.)
'Do you not remember that wretch in Corran
Who owes you rent why not make him pay?'

The pale cheeks of that craven miser
Were set a-glowing with hellish glee
'That's right' he answered, 'the law is with me,
Though Christmas it is I will decree!'

In a wretched hovel at the foot of Cauran
Where the joys of Christmas were things unknown,
A hapless Christian in a mood of sorrow
Knelt down to pray on a cold hearthstone

The kneeling figure's tattered garments
Were stung with blasts of falling snow
But soon a wolf in a garb of justice
With a Civil Bill dealt a fatal blow.

He faints in anguish, his heart is broken
No priest to comfort, no friend to grieve.
In a kneeling posture he was discovered
On a tragic morning one Christmas Eve
– Author unknown

Gearoid O'Halloran assists Pat Ward in bringing the coals home to the old Kaveny homestead. It was an old tradition that when families left they brought some live coals from their hearth to a neighbour's house. If they ever returned they would take the coals back home – the living flame.

What was the voyage like aboard one of these ships? From a contemporary account we get this description: 'Before the emigrant is at sea a week he is an altered man. How can it be otherwise; hundreds of poor people, men, women and children of all ages, from the drivelling idiot of ninety to the babe just born, huddled together without light, without air, wallowing in filth and breathing in a fetid atmosphere, sick in body, dispirited in heart, the fevered patients lying between the sound, in sleeping places so narrow as to deny them the power of indulging, by a change of position, the natural restlessness of the disease; by their agonised ravings disturbing those around; living without food or medicine except as administered by the casual hand of charity, dying without the voice of spiritual consolation, and buried in the deep without the last rites of the Church…'

On the 28 April 1847, the *Carricks* ran into a severe snowstorm in the Gulf of St Lawrence. The captain, having lost his way in poor visibility, was wrecked on a reef about four miles East of Cap des Rosier at the tip of the Gaspe peninsula. Numbers of souls lost vary with different reports; however, it appears that of the 176 passengers embarked at Sligo, nine had already died on the voyage and a further 119 died due to the wreck, leaving 48 survivors. Of the crew, all survived except for one boy.

Among those saved by locals (the Whalens and the Packwoods) and who stayed and settled at Jersey Cove were Patrick Kaveney and his wife, Sarah MacDonald, and one of their sons Martin, aged 12. Five others of their children were among those drowned in the wreck.

Local man Donald Delisle revealed at an anniversary mass celebrated in April 2007 the strange experience of Father Doolan on the night of the tragedy. Fr Doolan was parish priest for the district and based in nearby Douglastown. On the night of the tragedy he was in Grande Greve approximately ten miles from Cap des Rosier. Startled from his sleep with a strange premonition of disaster he announced:

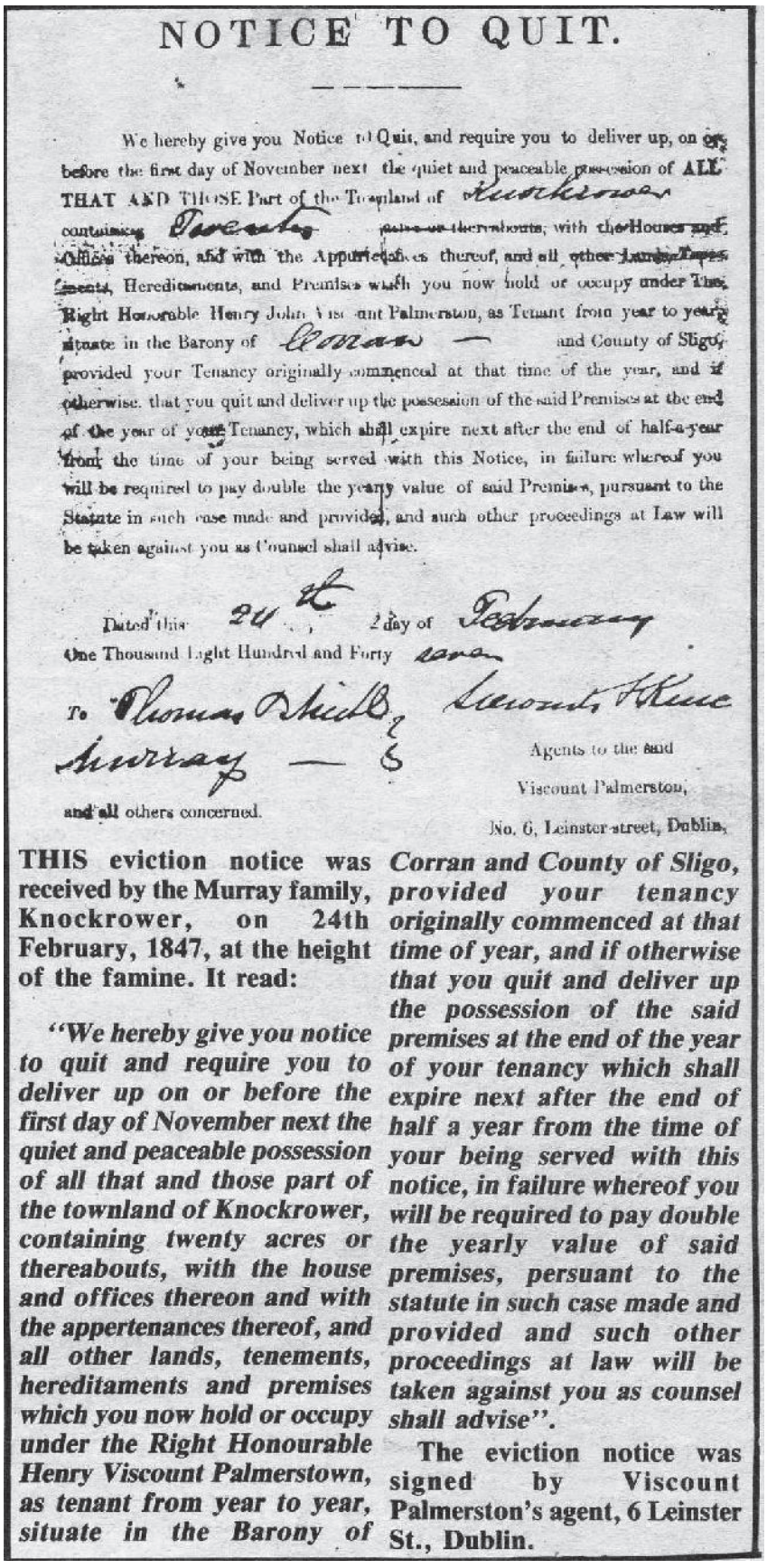
'I have to go to Cap des Rosier, I'm needed there.'

He was so forceful about it that he was immediately taken to the place. On arriving at the horrible scene, his worst fears were confirmed and he immediately set about administering to the survivors and praying for the drowned. Delisle related that on the night of the wreck, a storm had descended on Gaspe, causing the ship's rigging to freeze: 'It was snowing and freezing and all the rigging froze up and they had no control of the ship's steerage. She was driven in by the force of the storm,' he said. The first person to come across the tragic scene was Irish priest and Douglastown native, Rev Father Doolan, who 'found one of the victims in almost pitiable condition, his feet lacerated and bleeding from cuts by the rocks. The good Irish priest, taking the shoes from his own feet, put them on the poor man and, walking barefooted himself, led him to a place of refuge.' Following this incident, according to local lore, he was so traumatised by the experience that he never again said Mass.

Local fishermen saved 48 passengers, but 87 bodies were washed ashore in the following days and buried in a mass grave. Quebec's *Morning Chronicle* reported the loss of 119 passengers and one crew member. The ship's captain reported that out of 167 passengers only 48 reached the shore.

A letter dated 19 May, 1847, states that 'Little will be saved, but what there is, together with the wreck, will be sold for the benefit of all concerned on Saturday next.' (6)

Two months later 36 survivors moved on to Quebec and beyond. On 8 July, 21 left aboard the *Maria Julia*. A week later 15 others left on the *Emerald*. A dozen survivors settled around Douglastown and other locations on the Gaspe Peninsula. After appealing to an official (*seigneurie)* for land, without success, Patrick Kaveney eventually succeeded in taking over a farm that was abandoned by Jersey fishermen. His wife, Sarah, gave birth to four other children between 1848 and 1855. While she was pregnant with



NOTICE TO QUIT.

We hereby give you Notice to Quit, and require you to deliver up, on or before the first day of November next the quiet and peaceable possession of ALL THAT AND THOSE Part of the Townland of Knockrower containing Twenty — acres thereabouts, with the Houses and Offices thereon, and with the Appurtenances thereof, and all other Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Premises which you now hold or occupy under The Right Honorable Henry John Viscount Palmerston, as Tenant from year to year, situate in the Barony of Corran — and County of Sligo, provided your Tenancy originally commenced at that time of the year, and if otherwise, that you quit and deliver up the possession of the said Premises at the end of the year of your Tenancy, which shall expire next after the end of half-a-year from the time of your being served with this Notice, in failure whereof you will be required to pay double the yearly value of said Premises, pursuant to the Statute in such case made and provided, and such other proceedings at Law will be taken against you as Counsel shall advise.

Dated this 24th day of February One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty four

To Thomas Shiels, Murray — & and all others concerned.

Leonard, Keane
Agents to the said
Viscount Palmerston,
No. 6, Leinster-street, Dublin.

THIS eviction notice was received by the Murray family, Knockrower, on 24th February, 1847, at the height of the famine. It read:

"We hereby give you notice to quit and require you to deliver up on or before the first day of November next the quiet and peaceable possession of all that and those part of the townland of Knockrower, containing twenty acres or thereabouts, with the house and offices thereon and with the appertenances thereof, and all other lands, tenements, hereditaments and premises which you now hold or occupy under the Right Honourable Henry Viscount Palmerstown, as tenant from year to year, situate in the Barony of Corran and County of Sligo, provided your tenancy originally commenced at that time of year, and if otherwise that you quit and deliver up the possession of the said premises at the end of the year of your tenancy which shall expire next after the end of half a year from the time of your being served with this notice, in failure whereof you will be required to pay double the yearly value of said premises, persuant to the statute in such case made and provided and such other proceedings at law will be taken against you as counsel shall advise".

The eviction notice was signed by Viscount Palmerston's agent, 6 Leinster St., Dublin.

An eviction notice from Palmerston's estate

Pat Ward explaining to Georges how they come to be related

her fourth child, tragedy struck again. On 16 March, 1855, Patrick left Jersey Cove to celebrate St Patrick's Day with an Irish community in Douglastown, a day's walk away. The journey took him over the tip of the Appalachians and across the frozen bay of Gaspé. He never reached his destination. Four days later his body was found on the ice. It seems he had lost his way in a fog and became disoriented. Losing track of where the opposite shore was, he circled on the ice until it cracked beneath him. Patrick's wife Sarah was left to raise their children without him. She died aged 85 in 1889. Her grave overlooks the sea that took her five daughters in the April gale in 1847. (7)

The Parish of St Patrick's, Montreal, erected a monument in 1900 honouring the deceased. An Irish flag flies there 365 days a year. The monument's inscription reads: *Sacred to the memory of 187 Irish Immigrants from Sligo wrecked here on April 28th 1847. Ship Carricks of Whitehaven 87 are buried here. Pray for their souls.*

The monument serves as a reminder of the fate of these unfortunate Irish who left Ireland only to be dashed on the inhospitable rocks on a foreign shore. The incident is vividly remembered and commemorated by the descendants of the survivors in Canada each year. The bell of the ship was found in Blanc Sablon, on the North shore of the Gulf of St Lawrence, by Mr Alphonse Ruest, on September 24 1966, and ended up in Cap des Rosiers where it was incorporated in the monument.

Special events are held there every year to mark anniversaries of the sinking. Donald Delisle sent this account of the 'day of reflection and celebration' held there recently: 'The rain poured down on the day, causing us to reflect on that fateful day and possibly similar conditions when the *Carricks* of Whitehaven was washed up on our shore. Mass was celebrated by Fr Allard in the morning and attended by over 100 people, many of them descendants of the survivors. The Lord's Prayer was recited, trilingually, in French, English and Irish. The choir at the church, from Douglastown, sang many Irish songs. In his sermon Fr Allard recalled the events of 160 years ago and the strange experience of Fr Doolan of Douglastown on the night of the 28 April, 1847.'

A young lady who recited a poem in Gaelic was a member of the Mirimachi Irish dancers, who had performed at Douglastown the night before. After the Mass a few brave souls proceeded to the monument site. At the site Gerald Gaul from Douglastown read a salutation from Sligo sent by the Co Sligo Famine Committee in both English and French. It was well received by those attending and read as follows: 'Fraternal greetings from Sligo to our brothers and sisters in Gaspe. One hundred and sixty years after the event it is a wonderful and moving thing that you have not forgotten the tragedy that befell so many when the *Carricks of Whitehaven*, full of Sligo people fleeing from famine, was wrecked on your shores. Your hearts were big in your generous response then, and it is very touching that the same generosity exists among your people today. Hopefully sometime in the near future our towns will be twinned – united in kinship and historic and fateful events that have brought us together. Until that time when our ties and bonds are strengthened forever I wish you hearts and hands across the water. God bless you all.'

A representative of the Canadian Government presented a new Irish flag to the group that flies proudly now over a little bit of Ireland that is the monument at Cap des Rosiers.

A Poignant Homecoming

The arrival of George Kavanagh and his family to Sligo in May 2015 brought the wheel full circle. After an absence of 168 years, the francophone descendants of Patrick Kaveney and Sarah McDonald from Keash crossed the Atlantic to visit the homestead their forbears were forced to leave during the height of the Great Hunger.

This came about as part of a documentary film project funded

by the Quebec government and directed by Professor Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, an anthropologist at the School of Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia University in Montreal. Interestingly, while most famine emigrants from the West of Ireland left home as Irish speakers in the 1840s and integrated into life in the New World as anglophones, the Irish-speaking Kaveneys left Sligo to become French-speaking farmers, fishermen and shopkeepers in Quebec's Gaspé peninsula – without ever learning English.

Patrick Kaveney and his family left Cross, near Keash, on a morning early in April 1847, and walked the twenty miles to the port of Sligo. Now, their direct descendant, Georges Kavanagh, arrived to see for himself what remained of the culture his great-great grandparents brought with them to the New World.

A retired civil servant, Kavanagh is an amateur historian and a gifted storyteller with an astute sense of the past. Now in his seventies and a fourth-generation Quebecois of Irish origin, he has devoted over 50 years to preserving his family history – a story of diaspora that began in Sligo in April 1847, yet one that never found its way into official narratives of the famine tragedy.

On Saturday, 15 May 2016, the Kavanaghs visited the ancestral home in Cross and later attended a music session at the Fox and Hounds pub owned by their cousin, Pat Ward. The following day they visited the port of Sligo from where the *Carricks* sailed, and the old workhouse where thousands of famine victims lie buried in mass graves.

They also visited Mullaghmore to see – from a distance – Palmerston's mansion, where the ghosts of royalty still preside in a world far removed from the small towns of Sligo and the fishing villages of Gaspé. However the gate was closed and no welcome, apology or expression of regret awaited.

Bodies Discovered

And still the story continues. According to the Canadian newspaper the *National Post*, on Wednesday 27 July 2016, over a century and a half after the wreck, the Parks Canada archaeologist Martin Perron was at Cap-des-Rosiers to monitor the moving of the *Carricks* monument as part of counter-erosion work. While digging an exploratory trench, Mr Perron discovered human bones. In the weeks that followed archaeologists identified the skeletons of four adults and three children or small people

Archaeologists have also identified the fragments of an eighth skeleton which appears to be that of an adult. Skeletons are placed perpendicular to the sea, feet towards the ocean. "They are side by side", entangled together, describes Mr Perron. They lie between 85cm one metre deep.

Archaeologists photographed the bones and drew up surveys of the position of the bodies. They will be exhumed and shipped to the Conservation Centre and Parks Canada collection in Ottawa where bone specialists will analyse them to determine the age and sex of individuals, as well as the approximate date of burial. 'Then work will continue north and south [of discovery] to find other bodies," says Perron.

Perron has dug graves and conducted investigations in Quebec and Syria. But the emotion remains, he said. "It's a very emotional part of my work and a little solemn, the body is approached with respect."

Of the probability that it is the graves of those lost from the shipwreck of the *Carricks* he says: "I think the chances are almost 100%, but I prefer to complete the analysis of field and laboratory first."

The discovery of the grave brings strong emotions to the descendants of the survivors. "It brings hope of solving the mystery and providing a safe resting place for the bodies there," George Kavanagh said. "We speak only of the bones since their discovery, very little of the wreck is known, not even the exact date of the sinking."

"When I was little and we passed near the monument to the Irish, my grandfather spoke to us of a mass grave," he says.

His grandfather was Arthur Kavanagh, born in 1872. Mr Kavanagh lent credence to the words of his grandfather, but has long clashed with authorities who had doubts about the story. "Parks Canada has often spoken of the grave as a popular belief. It has even been said to me that there has already been some research, and nothing was found. With the discovery in recent days of that grave," says Kavanagh, "it is confirmation that we had correctly identified the right place."

"The grave should be with the monument," he said, "not in the cemetery of Cap-des-Rosiers. My personal opinion is that they were not citizens of Cap-des-Rosiers. It was not their goal, they got there by pure accident, in catastrophe."

Referring to his visit to Sligo, he said: "We were able to set foot on land that belonged to Patrick Kavanagh, the original emigrant, and that meant everything to us."

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(1) *Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847*, Alexander Somerville. Edited by DKM Snell.

(2) *History Ireland*, September/October 2016 Vol 24 No. 5

(3) Kinealy, Christine, *This Great Calamity*

(4) Square sails on both masts

(5) Personal communication with Parks Dept, Canada

(6) Quebec Gazette #6669 11/06/1847 Page 2, Col. 4C.

(7) Ref: Professor Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, MA, HDE, DUEF, MBA, PhD, La Chaire Johnson en études canado-irlandaises au Québec

The History of the World in the Book of Ballymote

By Elizabeth Boyle - Department of Early Irish, Maynooth University

The magnificent, 14th-century manuscript known as the Book of Ballymote, now preserved in the Royal Irish Academy Library in Dublin, is one of the cultural jewels of late medieval Ireland. It was produced at Ballymote Castle around the year 1391, and is an iconic artefact, well-known for its striking illumination. But while many people will be familiar with the Book of Ballymote as a historical object, fewer are familiar with the actual contents of the manuscript. What exactly is written *in* the Book of Ballymote? Most of the texts contained within the manuscript are written in Old Irish (the form of Irish used from *c.* 600 – *c.* 900 AD) or Middle Irish (*c.* 900 – *c.* 1200), but some are in Latin. It is clear that many of the texts are much older than the manuscript itself and so they must have been copied from earlier written sources. The manuscript contains a wide range of important medieval grammatical, poetic, topographical, genealogical and historical writings. The subject of the present essay is the last of these: history, as it was understood from the perspective of 14th-century Ballymote.

Biblical history

The Bible provided the fundamental chronological framework within which all of history was conceived in medieval Ireland. The Old Testament myths of Creation and the Flood, the accounts of the Jewish Exodus and Babylonian Captivity, were believed to be literally true, and gave all of world history its order and shape. Biblical history was expertly interwoven and juxtaposed with Assyrian, Persian, Greek and Roman history, along with Irish and British history, in order to form a body of material which modern academics call 'synthetic world history', that is, the synthesis of a range of medieval historical sources underpinned by a biblical scheme. What is striking is the outward-looking nature of this material. Scribes were not simply interested in Ireland's own history, but in how Ireland related to the rest of the world.

Many of the historical texts contained within the manuscript are somewhat dry (one might even say boring!), since they consist of chronologies, and calculations of how the events of one culture's history – the Greeks, for example – coincided with those of the histories of other cultures – such as the Jewish people, or the Romans. Here, for example, is a translation of a Latin text from folio 5 of the manuscript:

From Adam until the Flood: 1656 years; from the Flood to Abraham: 942 years; from Abraham to Moses: 600 years; from Moses to Solomon and the first building of the Temple: 488 years; from Solomon to the transmigration to Babylon which was done under Darius king of the Persians: 512 years are reckoned. Then from King Darius to the preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the tenth year of the rule of the Emperor Tiberius, 548 years are completed. Thus at the same time there are from Adam to the preaching of Christ, and the tenth year of the Roman emperor Tiberius, 5228 years. Since the Passion of Christ, 900 years have passed.

Moreover, the first age of the world was from Adam to Noah; the second from Noah to Abraham; the third from Abraham to David; the fourth from David to Daniel; the fifth age until John the Baptist; the sixth from John until the Judgement when our Lord will come to judge the living and the dead in the world through fire. Finit.

This text gives two different versions of a biblical chronological scheme: the first extends from Adam to the preaching of Christ and ends with the present day of the author – 'Since the Passion of Christ, 900 years have passed' – which therefore tells us that this text was first written in the early tenth century. The second gives the common medieval idea of the 'six ages of the world', which conceives of world history as consisting of six ages, with the current 'age' as the sixth and final one. While this is a Latin, prose text of the tenth century, the text which immediately follows it in the manuscript is in Irish, written in verse, and can be dated to the 12th century. In spite of the differences of language and form, however, it still reflects the same interest in historical chronology. Here is the poem in English translation:

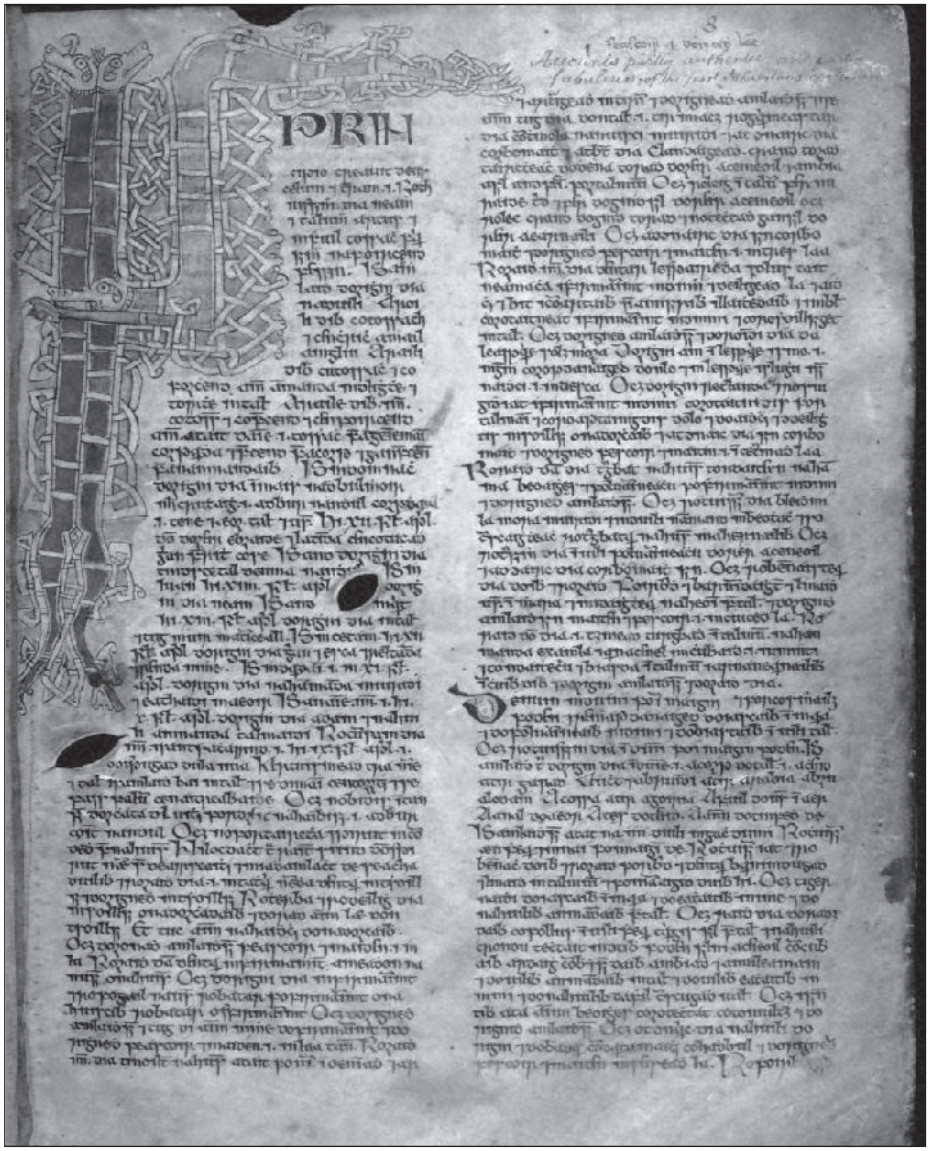
Fifty-six years together
on six hundred on a thousand
from the creation of Adam without blemish
until the Flood drowned the earth.

Ninety-two years – it is no lie –
on two hundred, for keeping;
it is true – as I reckon – to say
from the Flood until Abraham.
Forty-two fair years
and nine hundred years
from the birth of Abraham without anger
until David was made king.
Seventy-three full years
on three hundred completely
from when David of the rhymes was inaugurated
until Jerusalem was destroyed.

Eighty-one complete years
on three hundred – it is not the same length –
from the end of the Captivity onwards
since Christ was born as our lord.
Three thousand years – it is no lie –
fifty-two years, nine hundred
until he was born – he is a full lamb –
from when the world of noble aspect was created.
One hundred years and a great thousand
since the truly perfect king was born
until this year – I have it –
twenty years, six years.

This last stanza dates this poem to the year 1126, some two hundred years later than the text which precedes it, and yet the relationship between the two texts in terms of theme and content is clear. These two texts are simple enumerations of biblical chronology, but others become far more complex as they begin to interweave the histories of various cultures. For example, a text beginning with the words *Prima etas mundi*, to which modern scholars have given the catchy title 'Synchronisms A', states:

The Assyrians had thirty-five kings: 1240 years was their rule. From the end of the sovereignty of the Assyrians until the first Olympic Games by the Greeks: forty-three years. From the first Olympiad to the Captivity of the Ten Tribes: 156 years. From the Captivity of the Ten Tribes until the burning of the Temple: thirty-six years. 442 years the Temple was, after being built until it was burnt. From the burning of the Temple until the end of the sovereignty of the Medes: thirty years. Eight kings ruled from the Medes: 159 years for them. From the end of the sovereignty of the Medes until the release from the Babylonian Captivity and the renewing of the Temple: forty years. From the renewing of the Temple until the end of the sovereignty of the Persians: three hundred [years]: that is, twelve kings ruled from the Persians. 231 years was their sovereignty. ...



A page from the Book of Ballymote

We can see here that the author is particularly interested in the kingship of Babylon. Kingship of Babylon was held first by the Assyrians, who were then overthrown by the Achaemenid Empire (i.e. the Medes and Persians). But the author mentions other important events from Greek and Jewish history: the Olympic Games, the building and burning and renewing of the Temple. Other historical texts in the manuscript display an interest in particular kings and emperors. One such king is Cyrus II, founder of the Achaemenid Empire in the 6th century B.C.

Cyrus the Great

According to the Hebrew Bible, it was Cyrus who released the Jews from their Babylonian exile, and Cyrus is the only non-Jew in the Bible to be given the title *messiah* ('annointed one'). One of the most important historical texts in the Book of Ballymote is the *Sex aetates mundi* ('Six Ages of the World'). In spite of its Latin title, this work is written in Irish and was originally composed in the 11th century. It survives in many different manuscripts, but the version in the Book of Ballymote contains a unique narrative about Cyrus's attack on Babylon:

It is this, then, which caused Cyrus's strong-arm tactics on the River Euphrates. An enormous hosting was ordered by Cyrus to seek the sovereignty of India, so that they happened upon the River Ganges – that is one of the great rivers of the world – and Cyrus sent a group of his

company to find out whether the river was traversable by them. Cyrus's foster-brother went ahead in a group of twelve soldiers, and it is thus that they went: on their twelve bright horses. And the strength of the river overwhelmed them and they were all drowned.

His company drowning in his presence, and the fact that he could not help them, put the mind of the king into dejection. They were fasting for a period of three days and three nights on the bank of the river and the king did not speak to anyone of his hosts for that period of time, but he was examining and searching thereat, what he would do to the river that had drowned his company.

The nobles of the Persians and the Medes were brought to meet him and it is this which he said: "I vow", he said, "that I will not go from this river until weak women and children may go across it on foot".

There are many elements of this passage which are noteworthy. First is the Indian setting of the story, the episode taking place on the banks of the Ganges. We might note here the error of the Irish author: we have some Classical Greek and Roman versions of a story about Cyrus and a river, but in those the event is said to have occurred at the Gyndes. Our Irish author, by stating that the river is in India and is one of the major rivers of the world, has clearly mistaken that for the similar-sounding Ganges. Another difference between the Irish version of the story and the Classical versions is that the Greek and Roman authors – Herodotus and Seneca – state that it is Cyrus's special white horse that drowned, but the Irish author is clearly of the opinion that it is the drowning of Cyrus's foster-brother that causes Cyrus's grief and subsequent rage. Two important conclusions can be drawn: first, that the medieval Irish author is interested enough in Cyrus's kingship to include this narrative about him in his text, and second, that he has access to some sources which, although we cannot identify them precisely, have close connections with ancient Greek and Roman material. Again, this is further evidence of the outward-looking, international nature of history-writing in medieval Ireland.

The Assyrian Empire

Cyrus's reign marked the beginning of the Achaemenid Empire and brought about the end of the Assyrian Empire. Thus it marks a significant turning point from one powerful ancient empire to another. The beginning of Assyrian rule was marked by the reign of another significant king who, unlike Cyrus, cannot be securely identified in any reliable historical sources. This king is called Ninus son of Belus, and he seems to be more mythical than real. We find a mention of him in another historical tract in the Book of Ballymote, which modern scholars have entitled 'Synchronisms B':

Shem: Asshur was a son of his; Belus was a son of his; Ninus was a son of the latter. The last was the first king of the world. In the eleventh year after the birth of Ninus son of Belus was the death of Cham and Iafeth. In the year after them, Ninus son of Belus assuming kingship; that is, in the twenty-first year of the kingship of Ninus, the birth of Abraham. 948 years from Adam to the birth of Abraham. – Semiramis, wife of Ninus: forty-two years. By her the wall of Babylon was made. And she took her own son to her as a husband, that is, Ninyus, and she died after that.

Aside from the mythical Ninus, the author mentions his son Ninyas, and Semiramis, who was wife to both of them (medieval authors were particularly interested in the salacious detail of Ninyas marrying his own mother!). The primary significance of Ninus for Irish authors is that he is regarded as the first 'king of the world', that is the first king of the first empire, that of the Assyrians. However, he is also considered, particularly in the Irish *Sex aetates mundi*, as having rebuilt the city of Babylon. Or, in Synchronisms B, as we have seen, his wife, Semiramis, is credited with building the wall of Babylon. In this way, Ninus, Semiramis and Nenyus are integrated into biblical history and chronology through their significant roles in the history of the city of Babylon: we might compare and contrast the treatment of Ninus with the treatment of Cyrus who, as we have seen, was also integral to the history of Babylon at the time of the Jewish captivity.

In Synchonisms B, Ninus's reign is aligned with the birth of Abraham. The juxtaposing of the life of Abraham – the first Jewish Patriarch – with that of Ninus – the first Assyrian emperor – is also seen in a 12th-century Irish poem about Ninus, preserved in the Book of Ballymote. This is a long poem, but a couple of verses will suffice:

Twenty-one years of famous valour
for Ninus at the birth of Abraham.
We remember it without deceptive fame,
the books fully verifying it.
Sixty splendid years
of the age of noble Abraham;
at the coming of Partholón of the bright landing place
the strength of his deadly great host was famous.

The historical texts from the Book of Ballymote which I have discussed here lend legitimacy, weight and a chronological framework for other concerns within the manuscript, such as genealogy, political relationships, language and geography. But I would also suggest, in the way that the historical material is framed and articulated in the Book of Ballymote, that the scribes wished to convey a message, namely, that empires collapse, dynasties rise and fall, kingships fail, kings die, and kingdoms are destroyed. The historical texts in the manuscript remind us that the structures of earthly power are transient. Someone like Ninus might found an empire, but in time a Cyrus would come along to destroy it and found an equally fragile dynasty of his own. As the scribes of the Book of Ballymote presented their noble patron with this magnificent object, they were also reminding him of the limitations of worldly power.

Natural champions of pollution solutions!

On 18 May 2016 the Nature Nerdz from Ballymote became ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist All-Ireland Super-Junior Champions! The Nature Nerdz, all students in 6th class at Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, won the prestigious prize for their project 'There is always a Solution for Pollution'. The project was co-ordinated by Ballymote Community Librarian Louise McGrath, Principal Dolores Taheny and Heritage in Schools expert Michael Bell.

At the beginning of their project the children got together to discuss what environmental issues they would like to address and how to go about making a difference to their local environment. All agreed that littering and other pollution was something that concerned them greatly. However, rather than focus on a negative message, the group decided to make the public more aware and appreciative of the beautiful nature of Ballymote Town Park by holding a nature event there.

At the event they also decided they would show their appreciation for the people who work to make the park and the rest of the town more beautiful. The children made willow sculptures with natural materials to be displayed in the park along with a willow dome. They also made gifts that included wool-wrapped soap and treats to be presented to various workers that help the environment in the local community. Joe Helder and Catherine Fanning of the Primary Colours Arts Education in Schools Programme provided guidance making the sculptures and presents.

Nature Nerdz: ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist All-Ireland Super-Junior Winners 2016.
Back row L - R: Kian Reynolds, Sean Woods, Christopher Downes.
Front row L - R: Grace McGlinchy, Nicola Maguire, Elizabeth Tighe, Naoise Kelly, Jenny Waters

Over 100 members of the local community turned out on 20th February for the event. A guided nature walk high-lighting the wildlife of the park was followed by the children performing their self-produced play 'Ballymote Litter Forecast'. Refreshments were provided before the gifts were handed out.

The activities of the Nature Nerdz were documented and sent to ECO-UNESCO for judging. The Nature Nerdz were invited to present their project at the Connaught Regional Final and ultimately at the All Ireland Final in the Mansion House in Dublin. Projects from all across the country were on display and the Nerdz had to compete against many worthy projects before being judged the All-Ireland Super-Junior Award Winners 2016!

Lanzarote

By John Hannon

The 307 gliding birdlike, banked sharply
Dark vulcanised soil beckoned seductively
White sepulchred dwellings come into view
Cocooned in the midday shimmering sun.
A bus glides through the frenzied activities of the strip
The hideous sounds of business, anger and command
Amid rows of palm trees like limp flags
And the euphoric emotions of sunny climes.
Strolling couples, toddlers and families
Crossing out the ugliness of their lives
In this hard-edged world.
Novels, suntan lotion and poolside languor
Lineker's Bar heaving with cheering English aficionados
Returning revellers exiting the Irish bars
High on spirits of emotion
Calling out in the brightness of the dawn
Amid the strip's pulsating, throbbing, discoed music
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June 2010

Corporal John Fallon – The only Ranger in a family of soldiers

By Padraig Deignan

Some of my earliest memories are of my great grandfather John Fallon. I remember him a being a very kind and generous man who loved us kids. I spent a lot of time as a boy in my great-grand-parents' house at 34 St Anne's Terrace, Sligo, because for the first four years of my life my parents lived around the corner at number 11. I recall some notable events such as Christmas and birthdays there. I even remember one Halloween, it must have been either 1978 or 1979, when my great grandfather dressed up as a ghost and pretended to scare us all! Of course then I knew nothing of his service in the First World War or how important a man he had become in his hometown of Sligo. When John died in September 1980, he had lived a very long and eventful life. He had involved himself in the turmoil and confusion of the Great War as a teenager and in his later years he went on to become the 'grand old man' of Sligo politics.

In the political and local government area he was a long-serving member of the Fine Gael party. He was also a prominent member of Sligo Corporation and Sligo County Council from 1934 until his death. He was chairman of the council for a long number of years and was twice elected mayor of Sligo, in 1968 and 1977. He served on numerous local authority committees including the Town and County VECs, the County Committee of Agriculture, Sligo Harbour Board and the Sligo Local Health Advisory Committee. His interest in local matters did not end there, however. John was an Alderman on Sligo Corporation during most of his career and was also well known in sporting circles. He was chairman of Sligo Rovers Football Club for many years and also devoted practically all of his spare time to local charities. He worked selflessly for the Nazareth House and the Marist Brothers. But the part of his life that moulded him and stayed with him to the day he died was the time he spent as a Connaught Ranger fighting against the Turks and Germans in Gallipoli, and against the Bulgarians and their German allies in Salonika.

When the call to arms sounded in 1914, John and four of his pals went to join the Connaught Rangers. They caught the train from Sligo to Boyle, where they enlisted on 5 September 1914, less than a month shy of his 17th birthday. He lied about his age, telling the recruiting staff that he was born in 1895 and was therefore 19 years and three months old. It appeared he went for the adventure of it all – at home he had a good job as a baker, so it wasn't because he had no prospects. I'm sure he also heard many stories of German atrocities in Belgium and that Belgium was a small Catholic country like Ireland. His father, James, was also a supporter of John O'Dowd and of Home Rule, and the party leader Redmond had called on Nationalists to join up to support Home Rule. His brother Patrick, who served in the Boer War as part of the Inniskillen Fusiliers, must have made the biggest impact on his decision to join, especially listening to his tales of involvement in the Battle of Colenso and the Relief of Ladysmith. Patrick was a sergeant and also served in the Great War and was awarded the Military Medal. His other brother James (Jimmy) also enlisted and was posted to the Inniskillen Fusiliers in November 1914. He was later transferred in June 1915 after training with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Jimmy later landed at Suvla Bay, 5km north of Anzac Cove where John was landing. I always wondered did they know at the time they were so close.

He was posted to the 5th Service Battalion of the Connaught Rangers at Galway and began his training as a Ranger. In March 1915 he appeared to have incurred the wrath of the army authorities for overstaying his leave and was sentenced to 96 hours of detention, seven days confined to barracks and deprived of 29 days' pay at the Curragh on 9 March 1915. His offence was overstaying his sick furlough from 8 February until 8 March 1915. This was the time John married Margaret Forde in Sligo on 24 February 1915.

John as Mayor of Sligo

In March 1915 he was based at the Curragh and in May 1915 he was transferred to New Park Camp in Basingstoke, where he was promoted to Provisional Lance Corporal. In June 1915 he was promoted to Acting Corporal and attached to A Company. John embarked for Gallipoli on 9 July 1915, but stopped at Mudros in Greece before the Gallipoli landings so the unit could regroup and carry out some basic manoeuvres. The Connaught Rangers landed at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli, from the *SS Clacton* on 6 August, 1915. Many of the men became sick due to dysentery and cholera and John was listed as 'badly sick and was vomiting'.

In August 2009, 94 years later almost to the day, I visited the exact spot in Turkey where John and his fellow Rangers landed. It was a hot, dry and forbidding place. I examined the trench lines, some of which you can still see to this day and which in some cases were only a few yards apart. There were flies everywhere and no streams or water sources, and I could only image the conditions when thousands of men landed there in 1915. The place must have been an assault on the senses with the overcrowding on the beaches, the shelling, the sniper fire, the smell of unburied bodies and waste and the palpable fear that this place would be the last they'd ever see.

John Fallon and his sister, Agnes

On 25 August John and the other sick troops were evacuated to Alexandria in Egypt on the hospital ship *Ulysses*. John was evacuated to Britain and admitted to St John's Hospital, Southport. After he recovered he was posted to Galway in November 1915. He spent a few months there and visited Sligo, where he once again got into trouble while visiting Margaret on their first wedding anniversary. He was reprimanded by Colonel Chamier at Galway on 6 March 1916 for being absent from tattoo from 24 February to 4 March 1916. He was sent to Kinsale and got into trouble again for being absent from tattoo from 21 June to 27 June 1916, and was punished by forfeiting seven days' pay. He was posted back to the 5th Connaught Rangers Battalion in August 1916. They had been transferred from Gallipoli to Salonika in Greece and were part of the allied force that were trying to halt the German and Bulgarian offensive into Greece.

In an interview on radio with Gay Byrne in 1975, the 60th anniversary of the landings and also John and Margaret's 60th wedding anniversary, he spoke about the conditions the soldiers had to endure. "They were terrible; people were sick all the time from various illnesses, the rats spread a lot of disease … I remember the rats were the worst. You couldn't kill them because dead rats were a greater disease risk than live ones. And so the live ones grew very fat … we were always on edge and always under fire … I remember a time we attacked, and all lined up after a bombardment … we went over the top and the sound of bullets from enemy machine guns striking men all around me sounded like hands clapping … it was a very strange sound, and one I will never forget … I was wounded myself in the right shoulder during an offensive at Sturma on the Salonika front."

This happened at the end of September 1916. John was what was called at the time 'a bomber', which meant that he hurled the early forms of modern grenades in enemy trenches and meant that he received specialist training in explosives. He was left to die with others who had been very badly wounded but a medical orderly, a fellow Sligonian named Patrick

John's medals - the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal

John Fallon in uniform

McGowan from Mail Coach Road in Sligo town, happened to be going by at the time and carried him back from the front line to a hospital tent. He was very lucky. He was sent to a hospital ship and then evacuated to Malta in October 1916 where he had two operations on his right shoulder and lung in St Almo's Hospital, Malta. He was evacuated to England in November 1916, the same month that his first daughter Catherine/Kathleen was born, my grandmother.

He arrived in England in December 1916 and was treated at Chancery Lane Military Hospital, Manchester, and Bury Hospital. After he had recovered enough he was sent back to Ireland and following a medical examination at Tipperary on 29 August 1917 his wounds had healed. But he was left with very little use of his right arm or hand and was declared unfit for further service. He was then sent to Cork where he was discharged from the army on 27 November 1917. I remember my mother Margot telling me when I was young that John later taught himself to write again with his left hand, and that she used to hear him sitting on the bed in the morning coughing as his lungs never recovered after the damage of the wound. He was later awarded the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal for

A gathering of the Sligo Branch of the British Legion, Committee and Officers, on Remembrance Day at Sligo, 1936.

Front Row: Capt A Lyons, RIF, Capt W Campbell, F W O'Hara, Maj Perceval, IG, Maj S Myles, TD, Capt G Hewson RI, President, BLSB, M Conlon, Mayor of Sligo, Chairman, BLSB, Maj GA Benson, RAMC, Capt H CG McCormack, RAOC, WAG Middleton, RNVR, H Ross, ASC MT, M Moffatt, VC Leinster Regiment, Capt M Kelly, Connaught Rangers, M Scanlon, CRs, T Gray, RN, Sgt Maj A Burnside, CR, Capt RS Gorman, RIF, J Farrell, RFA, J Wallace, CR, Capt EJ Shott, P Coleman, CR, Ald J Fallon, Hon Sec BLSB, CR, J Gilmartin, CR, J Shannon, CR. John Fallon is third from the right on the back row wearing a bowler hat. He was the Hon Sec of the British legion, Sligo Branch, at the time. No further information is available on other people in the photograph.

his service. When discharged he went to Glasgow where his sister lived and his wife Margaret was also working in a munitions factory there. He became a postman and lived at 110 Queen Street, Govan, Glasgow. At the end of the war he returned to Sligo and was re-employed as a baker in McArthurs.

John was one of the founding members of the Sligo Branch of the British Legion and was Secretary and Treasurer of the branch, and spent the rest of his life campaigning for the rights of ex-servicemen and their families. Every November he organised the Remembrance Day Parade in Sligo and my mother told me that her and her aunts were recruited to sell poppies around the streets of Sligo to raise money for the families of ex-servicemen. In recognition John received a Special Award presented by Princess Alice at Westminster, London for his services to the British Legion.

Garda Barney O'Boyle of Tonnaphubble, Sligo, posted to the Chapel Street/Pearse Road Police Barracks, had many times told me a story regarding John. He said that in the time he was stationed there on night duty that he had to record any activity on the streets during the night, and every morning at exactly the same time he heard the military beat of John Fallon's step marching over Chapel Street from St Anne's Terrace on his way to work at MacArthur's Bakery. He said he could set his watch by it.

When John died in September 1980, he had outlived both his brothers who had served in the war and survived. Their younger brother Tom had been too young to serve in the First World War. John's funeral was attended by thousands of men and women from all walks of life, from all faiths and political persuasions honouring him one last time by marching with him up Pearse Road to his final resting place, and to show their respect for a man who had given so much to Sligo and had asked for so little in return.

Heritage Committee, 1992

This group photo was taken from Issue 22 of *The Corran Herald*, in summer of 1992.

Seated, L - R : Mrs Yvonne Perceval, Mrs Eileen Tighe, Dr Stan Casey, Mrs Tilly Casey, Mrs Carmel Rogers, Mrs Betty Conlon.
Standing, **L - R**: Ms Nuala Rogers, Mr Paddy Horan, Mr Jack Martin, Mr Vincent Jordan, Mr James Flanagan, Mrs Eileen White, Mrs Catherine Finn, Mrs Mary Martin, Mrs Anne Harrison, Mrs Mary O'Donnell.

The O Dugenan Crucifixion Plaque of 1671 at Fenagh, Co Leitrim

By Martin A Timoney

The O Dugenan Crucifixion Plaque

One of the places to be visited during this 2017 Ballymote Heritage Group's annual August weekend is the medieval ecclesiastical site at Fenagh, sometimes Feenagh, Co Leitrim. The crucifixion plaque there is one that I briefly published in 1982 in a two-page article, along with two similar ones in Co Roscommon and a related crucifixion in east Mayo, all by the same hand.

Due to the very poor condition of the of the shale limestone Fenagh crucifixion plaque and the probability that the sunlight will not throw a shadow across the carving to reveal its details, the plaque is being illustrated in this volume, the 50th issue of *The Corran Herald,* in advance of the outing.

The Church and the Funerary Structure

The complete main rectangular church, the 'Southern Building' measuring 26m by 7m (Hynes 1931, plan opposite p. 48), has a magnificent 15th century four-light east window below a rosette, all with cusps, and a vaulted, probably domestic, rear section that may be all that remains of an inserted, defensive tower.

There is a structure attached to the southwest corner of the church. It has been described as a mausoleum and as a mortuary chapel; either way it was, and still is, a funerary structure. It measures internally 10ft by 12ft 8 in. The east wall slopes from 11ft to 6ft, a level just above the top of the crucifixion plaque in the south wall. One wonders how much stone work of the structure was removed and incorporated into the buttressing within the structure of the medieval church – the 'lean-to look' is very false. A plain rectangular window remains in the east wall but the west doorway no longer exists; thus potential datable features for this funerary structure are gone but one suspects that it dates to 1671, the date on the plaque.

The Crucifixion Plaque

Prominently affixed to the outside south wall there is the stone crucifixion plaque.

The monument, frame included, measures 1m by 58cm. There is a cross with three steps to the pedestal. The crucified Christ's head leans to His left. He has long hair and a beard. He wears a loin cloth that looks as if it is an actual piece of cloth and it flourishes to His right. Both His hands are held in blessing as they are nailed to the cross and His right foot is nailed

with a single nail on top of His left one. Six Emblems of the Passion are distributed on either side of Christ's legs. On the left there is a three-thong lash whose thongs are armed with (metal) stars and a palm leaf. On the right there is a ladder, a pillar with a rope wrapped around it and a startled cock strutting across the top. There is ample uncut space on either side where other symbols may have been intended to be fitted; Cloonshanville plaque by the same sculptor also has three square dice, a claw hammer and a pincers.

The eight-line inscription in Latin is shared between two stones. The lettering on the lower stone has suffered very badly, even since I first saw it in June 1977. Despite this weathering it has been possible, from the stone itself and from earlier readings, and with the help of three people versed in Latin, to attempt to reconstruct the inscription.

TORNA : O DVGENAN SACER[ ]
OS : ET RECTOR ME : FIERI F[ ]
CIT [. . . .] ANNO 1671 SUPE[ ]
SERVI[.]O[. . . . . *F* .]ATR[. . .]
EVGEN[. .] DVGENAN QVI
OBYT [.]8 XB[. . .] 1667
SVCCESORIBVS : ET MARITE
EIVS : VNIO TE GRANELL

Or in translation with expansions: 'Torna O Duignan, Priest and Rector, had me made in the year 1671 for his brother, Eugene, or Eoghan, Duignan, who died on the 28th December, 1667, for his successors and his wife, you one of the Granell family.'

I am indebted to Gus Gannon, Dr Nollaig Ó Muraíle and Prof Richard Sharpe for discussions in attempt to bring full clarity to what was on the stone and what it said.

Since the stone would have been in much better condition 120 years ago it is regrettable that Penrose and Groves (1898, 98) give no more than the obit information, EUGENII DUGENAN QUI OBYT 28 XBRIS 1667. The last three words on the stone are UNIO TE GRANELL, not Unio MegRannell as printed in Hynes (1931, 48); this change of case as well as misreading of the lettering has led to an assumption that his wife's name was Una; Hynes' slightly different spellings otherwise essentially tell the same story. The (Mc) Granell name would be Reynolds nowadays.

Discussion: The Cloonshanville plaque

The Cloonshanville, Frenchpark, plaque is the one in the best condition of all these three plaques. It is within a small square mortuary building at the west end of the Dominican Priory; see Harbison (2002, cover image and 179, Fig 177) for Angelo Bigari's 1779 illustration of this building. The plaque records in English that the 86-year-old Patrick French FitzStephen of Galway, Burgess, died in his house, Dungar, Frenchpark, and was buried at Cloonshanville on 14th April, 1667. Very significantly this, the earliest of the three plaques, was initialled by the mason, DH, on the lower left frame and 1667 is on the right of the frame.

Unfortunately we do not know the name of DH as he has not shown up elsewhere in Mary B Timoney's research over more than 30 years of the memorials in Sligo, Roscommon and surrounding counties (MB Timoney 2005; 2017). She reasons that many memorials were side-line products of masons whose main employment in an area was the building of gentry houses, churches, bridges and public buildings. Michael Garvey of Ballaghaderreen recollected seeing a 1668 date stone close to the roof over the door of Dungar House, Frenchpark. This puts DH at Cloonshanville at the time Dungar was being built.

The Ardcarne plaque

The Ardcarne plaque is built into a masonry wall to the east of the Church of Ireland church at Ardcarne, between Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon. It is for Elinore O'Crean, daughter of Robuck O'Crean, and Cormack MacDermott, son of Dermott MacDermott, a tax collector. Dated to 1668 it has the coats-of-arms of both families and an inscription in Latin.

The Holywell Crucifixion

The fourth piece by DH, probably a free-standing crucifixion lacking further elaboration, is from Holywell, west of Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo. It is now within Ballyhaunis Augustinian Priory, having been at a grotto to the north of the building for many years following a spell over the west doorway. The style of the carved Holywell Christ is identical to that on all three plaques, plaques with dates of 1667, 1668 and 1671, and so it must date to within a few years either side of 1670.

The Families

The minimal research for the 1982 article concentrated on the Roscommon plaques. Prompted by Michael Herity's published edition of the Ordnance Survey Letters of Co Leitrim (2012), I further researched the two families mentioned on the Fenagh plaque, a plaque which because of its poor preservation was well down my list back then.

O Duignan

The seat of the senior line of O Duignan was at *Baile Coillte Foghair* or *Baile Choille Foghair*, adopted as 'Castlefore' in the Anglicised form. It was near Keshcarrigan, just north of the road from Fenagh. This is about 20km east of Kilronan, another of their seats, and hence the Book of the O'Duigenans of Kilronan (Cunningham 2008, 560-562, 563, 568). Castlefore is mentioned in the Annals under 1409 and 1452 and Cú Choigcríche Ó Duibhgeannáin, *alias* Peregrine, Ó Duigenan, d. 1664, one of the Four Masters in 1636, though not a regular one, was of this family; his father was Tuathal Buidhe Ó Duibhgeannáin (Cunningham 2008, 558-559). Meehan (1905, 140, fn. 2) says Cú Choigcríche *alias* Peregrine was born beside the castle of Castlefore and that the castle was built

The ecclesiastical site at Fenagh

by one John Reynolds (1905, 139); the nature of this building as being a castle is far from certain. The family were hereditary historiographers to O'Farrell of Annaly, MacDermot of Moylurg, MacDonagh of Corran and MacDonagh of Tirerrill. One Maghnus Ó Duibhgeannáin was one of the three principal scribes of the most important Book of Ballymote in the late 14th century (Cunningham 2008, 561). Keeping the record was in their bones as Cunningham's recent (2008) and most informative article on this learned family illustrates! The family were still active as Castlefore in historical and genealogical scholarship in the mid-17th century and north Connacht was still a prominent centre of learning (Cunningham 2008, 571-572). Meehan (1905, 141) describes Fenagh as an 'Old World University'. Camden in his *Britannia* of 1617 referred to O Duignan, among others, as 'downright Irish'. See also MacLysaght (1996, 86-87) for the prodigious output of this family.

In the early 19th century there were attempts based on the word 'rector' to claim the Fenagh plaque as a monument of the 'aristocratic religion of the State' as John O'Donovan put it on 26 June, 1836, in a letter to the Ordnance Survey headquarters. He then went on to clearly say that this 'monument which, thought traditionally that of a Protestant Clergyman, smells a good deal of the rites which he had rejected', i.e. of the Catholic Church. He then goes on to note that Torna O Duignan was the Parish Priest of Fenagh (Herity, ed., 2012, 401; f. 214 in original). O'Donovan was having nothing of the state religion taking this monument as of one of its own! – 'I cannot incline my mind to think any such thing.'

Granell

Dr Nollaig Ó Muraíle (pers. comm.) clarified the Mag Raghnaill family history for me. They were originally based in the territory of Muintir Eolais in south Leitrim. At the time of the Composition of Connacht, 1585, their chieftain was based at a place called Magh Nise, a name no longer in existence but believed to have been located in the south of the barony of Leitrim, presumably in the Dromod-Mohill area. Somewhat later, the most significant branch of the family was that located at Lough Scur, a short distance to the west of Castlefore. That branch was the one which first changed the family-name to Reynolds and consequently was known as Mag Raghnaill Gallda, the English Mag Raghnaill. See also Meehan (1905) for family detail though his article is just about in accordance with the title – the whereabouts and contents of the diary of March 1658 to May 1660 of his title remains obscure. MacLysaght (1972, 253-254; 1973, 254) notes that the chief of the MacRannell was called Mac Grannill or Magranill of Moynish, that the Lough Scur branch were supporters of James II and that the Grannell name survives in Co Wexford.

O'Crean and MacDermott

As the Ardcarne plaque was for Elinore O'Crean and the O'Crean family erected many memorials in Sligo Abbey throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, perhaps more of DH's work is there to be recognised among the O'Crean commemorative sculpture there. The O'Crean seat was in Sligo town, the MacDermott seat was at Moylurg.

The Clogher Plaque

The nearest Co Sligo crucifixion

plaque is at Clogher, just north of Monasterreddan. There is a date on the adjoining stone to its right that was difficult to read when in place. However during repair works there by Sligo County Council in 2014 I photographed the inscribed stone in better positions than when fixed erect in the wall. The correct reading achieved is 'I.H.S. 1662, II, I:G:'. Confirmation of the date being 1662 is significant and the 'II' may be referring to the second year of the reign of the Catholic Charles II. The initials 'I:G:' *may* stand for Iriel O'Gara, though Maura O'Gara O'Riordan, the researcher of the O'Gara family, cannot identify who 'I:G:' is; I doubt if this is the initials of the mason.

My decades of research on Connacht crucifixion plaques has recognised about two dozen plaques across the province, with dates between 1625 and 1825, many having upper class Catholic family attributions. Most plaques were erected in prominent public positions without fear of retribution! Some historians of the Penal Days may find the dating of these publically displayed Connacht Catholic plaques a little difficult.

Acknowledgements

I thank Gus Gannon of Boyle for discussing earlier translations of the Fenagh inscription and raising the probability that last line has been mis-translated in the past, Mary B. Timoney, Dr Nollaig Ó Muraíle, formerly Placenames Office, Dublin, QUB and NUIG, Professor Richard Sharpe, Professor of History in Oxford, Maura O'Gara O'Riordan, Galway, Dr Bernadette Cunningham, RIA, and Frank Tivnan, Boyle, for much direct and indirect assistance with this poorly preserved plaque.

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The Funeral of the Late Bishop of Elphin

Submitted by Padraig Doddy

A letter to the editor of the Sligo Independent in 1895.

Sir – Will you kindly grant me space for a short personal explanation? I see that it is stated in the *Sligo Independent* of today that I was present in the Roman Catholic Cathedral during the funeral obsequies of the late Most Rev Bishop Gillooly. This is a mistake, but one, however, into which your reporter very naturally fell. Not to enter into anything of a controversial character, I merely say that, in my opinion, my presence at the service would have been compromising. I wished to show my respect for the deceased Bishop and my sympathy with my fellow-townsman; accordingly I adopted the only course which seemed open to me – viz to be present in the courtyard of the Cathedral when the funeral procession was entering the building. I then left, regretting that my principles allowed me to pay no further token of respect to the memory of one whom I always found courteous and kindly.

I am, truly yours,

Le Paul T. Ledoux

Calry Rectory, 26 January, 1895

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The article on the Bishop's funeral was printed in the *Sligo Champion*, 2 February 1895

The Ballymote Electric Lighting and Town Improvement Co

By Edward Blake

In this article I hope to illustrate how a small town in the north-west of Ireland was at the forefront of providing electric light for its citizens in the early 1900s, and was well ahead of larger towns in the country.

First, a word about the development of this great power source we take so much for granted these days. Early signs of the relationship between electricity and magnetism (they work together to produce electricity) were discovered by a Greek philosopher about 500BC. He noted that by rubbing together amber and fur he could attract a light object, such as a feather (magnetism). Naturally, with no internet or other means of communicating to others with a like mind, he could not proceed any further. It was only at the beginning of the 1600s that engineers, physicists, chemists and scientists made more progress in the field. Names that stand out are Franklin (lightning rod), Volta (battery), Edison (incandescent bulb), Tesla (alternating current-AC), and George Westinghouse (a businessman, who built AC generating machines).

In the 1870s small direct current (DC) generating stations began to appear in the United States. One of great size was in Manhattan, operated by Thomas Edison. Ireland was not to be found wanting and soon we had a number of private electricity generating stations. There was the City of Dublin Electricity Supply Company, Cork Tramway Co, and many other smaller units around the country. Some of the 'big houses' had their own too. The O'Hara's of nearby Annaghmore House had an engine-driven generator.

Ballymote was a fine example of a local provider of electric power. Details have been well provided in a previous issue (2012) of *The Corran Herald*, but these are now expanded in the following, together with the change to ESB supply in the greater Ballymote area.

The company was registered in accordance with the Companies Act and issued 3000 shares at £1 each. Just under 1800 were taken up. Many such companies around the country were formed by local mill owners and large businesses, but Ballymote was different. Its directors and shareholders were of the town – local clergy, builders merchants, drapers, and shopkeepers. John Joseph Benson, a director and draper in Ballymote, had been in the US from 1893 to 1910. It is very likely that he had seen the advantages of this new energy source there and realised its importance in a community. He was the grandfather of John Coleman, a staunch member of the Ballymote Heritage Group. It is likely too that they had discussions with the Stewarts of Boyle, who were supplying electricity in Boyle since 1904.

The generator was housed in the Market House. The engine was driven by gas, generated by burning anthracite. This engine was made by Blackstones of Stafford, Cheshire, UK. The Market House became known as the Power House and to this day is referred to as such by local people. It was situated directly opposite the Church of Ireland church on Lord Edward Street in Ballymote.

By 1921 the company had upwards of 100 customers. The cost of the unit (kwh) would not have been cheap – around one shilling. Street lighting and supply to residents and businesses was put in place. Any bulbs used in houses would have been of very low wattage, about 20W. Not all rooms would have had a light. Based on these details, the family could have one light on for three hours per day at a cost of 5d for the week.

The Electricity Act of 1927 meant that the Ballymote Electric Company had to obtain a permit from the ESB to continue to generate and supply electricity. Such companies were known as 'permitted undertakings'. The permit was renewable on a yearly basis. This was for the town only, as Rural Electrification was still a long way in the future. In late 1937 or early 1938 the ESB acquired the company. The ESB then took steps to supply Ballymote with AC. This would have entailed changing all the lighting

YEAR	POPULATION	CUSTOMERS	UNIT COST £sd	INCOME £
1931	750	84	1/3	740
1934	750	93	1/0	770
1937	750	97	1/0	840

Ballymote Electric Lighting and Town Improvement Co yearly income (Prior to when ESB took over 1937)

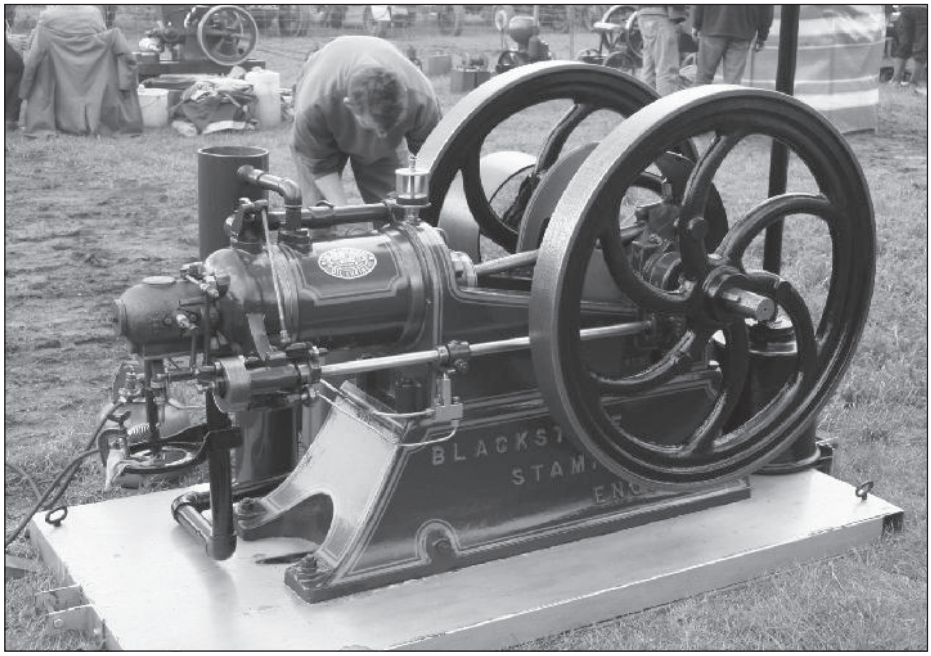
standards and wiring to houses.

The Ballymote company actually remained in existence up until it was voluntarily liquidated in 1967. However, the shareholders were only able to recover 12s 91/2d per £1 share. This was mainly funded by the sale of the freehold premises.

The next step in the provision of electricity to the wider Ballymote area was under the ESB's Rural Electrification scheme, which was rolled out in 1946 across the country. The 26 counties had been divided into over 650 rural areas, based largely on the Catholic parish boundaries, distributed across ten districts. Sligo was one of the districts and covered a wide geographical area, stretching from Malin Head in North Donegal to Carrick-on-Shannon and across from Carrigallen to Belmullet. This rural area around Ballymote was called Emlaghfad.

In the district office in Sligo town there was a special unit dealing with the project around the whole district. Each area had an engineer appointed to manage the construction, administration and publicity. In those times nearly every engineer who joined the ESB spent a tour of duty in the rural electrification field. From the beginning, the ESB therefore had a close relationship with its customers on the ground – a reason the company is held in high regard, especially the reaction to loss of power by the public.

In the Emlaghfad area there were 650 householders who were canvassed as to whether they would 'Take the Electric' – a term used locally in all areas. Of those, 66% accepted and the remainder opted out at this stage for a variety of reasons. Public meetings were held in the Parochial Hall in the town in October 1956. Appliances such as kettles, irons, cookers and so forth were displayed and demonstrated, as well as motors to reduce the tough labour on the farm. A report from the meeting also pointed out that sales were slow due to low cattle prices in the area. Competition was around too, with at least six electrical contractors selling appliances and wiring houses.



A typical Blackstone engine

All houses had to have internal wiring to ESB standard before connection. The wiring was normally for one socket and room lights. An ESB office at the Power House (Market House) was also established. The area was practically fully connected by January 1957. There would have been a special switch-on ceremony, where possibly the local parish priest would have operated the master switch to bring the power to those connected.

Rural Electrification around the country continued apace until the 60s. There was then a Post Rural Development program to connect households, who either had not taken up the initial offer or were deemed as not being economical to supply at the early stages. Eventually the whole country had a supply of electricity.

In the first five decades of the 20th century there is no doubt that electricity played a major part in the development of Ireland. Before the advent of the ESB, full credit must be given to those merchants and citizens of the country who had the foresight to realise how powerful electricity would be in future development of the country. Ballymote can hold its head high in being in the vanguard of this great experience.

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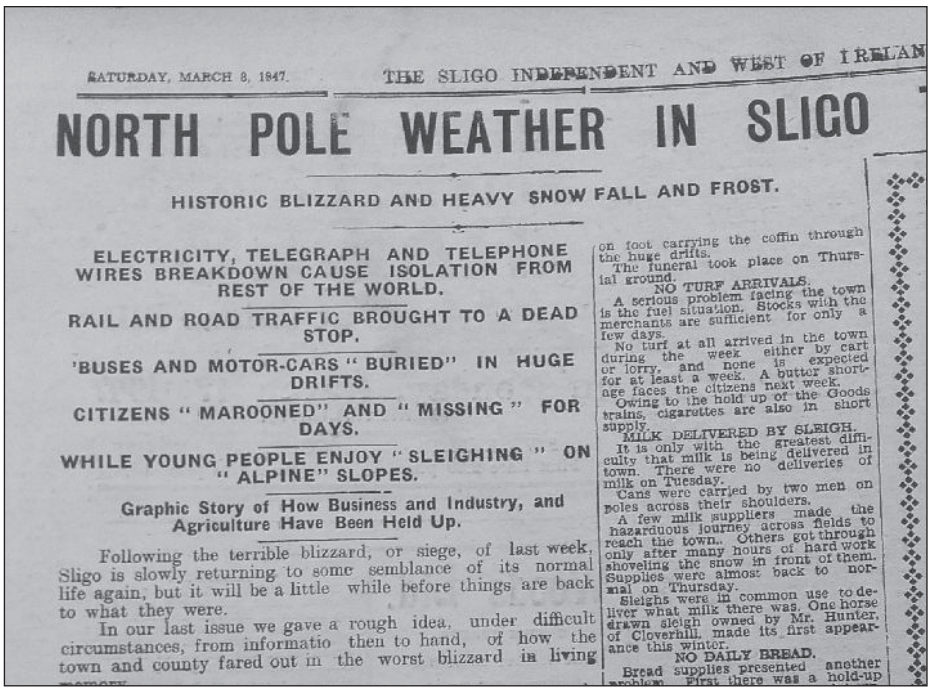
Acknowledgements: Assistance of the local Ballymote Heritage Society, ESB archives and the many friends who were a great help to me in the assembly of this article.

Power House (Market House), Ballymote

The 'Big Snow' of 1947

By Jim Higgins



SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 1947. THE SLIGO INDEPENDENT AND WEST OF IRELAN

NORTH POLE WEATHER IN SLIGO

HISTORIC BLIZZARD AND HEAVY SNOW FALL AND FROST.

ELECTRICITY, TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE WIRES BREAKDOWN CAUSE ISOLATION FROM REST OF THE WORLD.

RAIL AND ROAD TRAFFIC BROUGHT TO A DEAD STOP.

'BUSES AND MOTOR-CARS "BURIED" IN HUGE DRIFTS.

CITIZENS "MAROONED" AND "MISSING" FOR DAYS.

WHILE YOUNG PEOPLE ENJOY "SLEIGHING" ON "ALPINE" SLOPES.

Graphic Story of How Business and Industry, and Agriculture Have Been Held Up.

Following the terrible blizzard, or siege, of last week, Sligo is slowly returning to some semblance of its normal life again, but it will be a little while before things are back to what they were.

In our last issue we gave a rough idea, under difficult circumstances, from informatio then to hand, of how the town and county fared out in the worst blizzard in living

on foot carrying the coffin through the huge drifts.

The funeral took place on Thursday ial ground.

NO TURF ARRIVALS.

A serious problem facing the town is the fuel situation. Stocks with the merchants are sufficient for only a few days.

No turf at all arrived in the town during the week either by cart or lorry, and none is expected for at least a week. A butter shortage faces the citizens next week.

Owing to the hold up of the Goods trains, cigarettes are also in short supply.

MILK DELIVERED BY SLEIGH.

It is only with the greatest difficulty that milk is being delivered in town. There were no deliveries of milk on Tuesday.

Cans were carried by two men on poles across their shoulders.

A few milk suppliers made the hazardous journey across fields to reach the town. Others got through only after many hours of hard work shoveling the snow in front of them. Supplies were almost back to normal on Thursday.

Sleighs were in common use to deliver what milk there was. One horse drawn sleigh owned by Mr. Hunter, of Cloverhill, made its first appearance this winter.

NO DAILY BREAD.

Bread supplies presented another problem. First there was a hold-up

The *Sligo Champion* of 8 March 1947 covering the blizzard. Special thanks to Malachy Gillen in Sligo Library for help getting this clipping

It is 70 years since the worst blizzard in Irish history hammered the country continuously for almost three months. Nobody who lived through it could ever forget the hardship and suffering, and even sometimes the fun, experienced by urban and rural dwellers alike. Those of us born shortly after the event were up-dated by almost unbelievable stories of heroism, daring, creativity, humour, generosity and community cooperation.

From Sunday 19 January 1947 until the middle of April that year, Ireland was entombed in snow and ice, as a 'freakish' Arctic weather system, inexplicable to meteorologists, took up residence over Ireland and much of Western Europe. Temperatures plummeted to previously unheard of scales: seven degrees Fahrenheit or -14 degrees Celsius! The unusually severe frost was accompanied by a piercing east wind reaching 60-70 miles per hour. The wind chill factor was estimated as being from -23 degrees to -29 degrees Celsius. Continuing over the next 50 days there were intermittent snowfalls, five of which could be described as blizzards.

The frozen ground and violent gales provided 'ideal' conditions for the formation of snowdrifts, many of which transformed the topography of the countryside into an unrecognisable landscape. Farmers often had great difficulty locating their 'rick' of turf or 'heap' of potatoes, and sadly some lost their lives in the attempt. Rivers and lakes became frozen over, while houses and entire villages were buried and the inhabitants marooned. Some stories from *The Sligo Champion* and *Sligo Independent* of the time give an idea of the hardship, suffering and tragedy endured by so many.

Farmer's Body Found in Snow

This account of the tragic death of a 55-year-old farmer from Dromahair, appeared in *The Sligo Champion* of Saturday 1 March 1947. The man, who lived with an invalid brother, left his home on Tuesday night during the height of the blizzard, and was found dead on Garvagh mountain on Wednesday morning. 'Deceased went to the house of a neighbour to obtain some turf as he had none of his own,' the report said. The neighbour gave him a bag and told him to go to their turf stack which was a few hundred yards away. When he did not return the neighbour assumed he had gone home by a different route. On Wednesday morning, while 'out snaring rabbits', a member of the neighbour's family came across his snow-covered body, with the bag of turf beside him.

A similar tragedy was reported by Francie McFadden of Carrigans Upper, Ballymote, when he was interviewed for a book entitled *Vanishing Ireland*. Two friends of his father died on their way back from the bog during the blizzard. "They were found four days later with the bags of turf frozen to their backs."

It is reasonable to assume that many more deaths occurred by exposure during this time but no reports ever appeared in the papers.

Buses Buried in Snow

On Tuesday morning 25 February the Dublin bus left Sligo as usual but only got as far as Ballymote, when it was grounded by a huge drift. A relief bus with rescue party of 35 on board, including drivers, conductors and mechanics, all armed with shovels, was sent to dig out the bus, but it too was bogged down before ever reaching the stranded bus. Some of the passengers took two days to walk back to Sligo, making their way on the railway, bye-roads and across fields, and no doubt resting in farm houses at every opportunity.

Not even a 90 horsepower US Army truck, with 10 forward gears, on loan to CIE from Hanley's and driven by the managing director Mr Murray himself, was capable of reaching the 'lost' bus. He succeeded in getting within two miles of Ballymote, when 'drifts of 15 feet were experienced and the relief party were forced to turn back.'

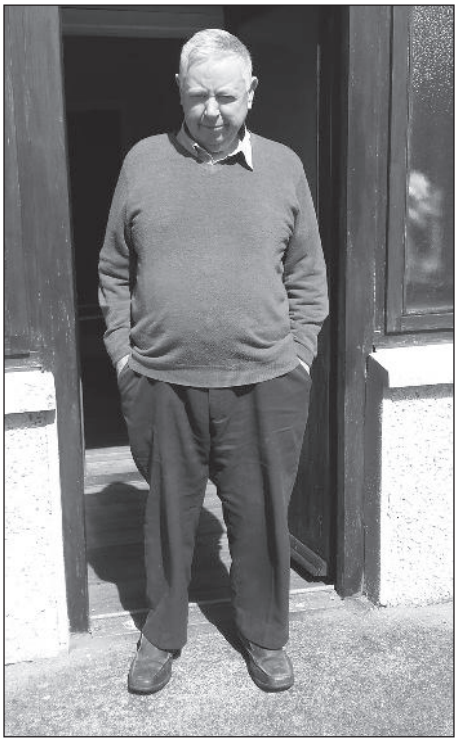
Walked Forty Miles

The Sligo Independent reported that two Sligo men 'engaged in the cattle business' were stranded in Mohill and started out on Wednesday 26 February to walk the 40 miles to Sligo. Mr T O'Hara of St Brigid's Place and Mr Shiels of Riverstown reached Sligo 'in the early hours of Sunday morning.' They slept in farmers' houses on the way. Mr. O'Hara said they were almost exhausted when they reached Ballymote, yet all they could get there was 'a half cup of black tea and no bread.' However *The Sligo Champion* that same week reported that shopkeepers in Ballymote had plenty of bread, and refused to collect fresh supplies from a bread van which got stuck in a drift just two miles outside the town. So perhaps Mr O'Hara and Mr Shiels were just unlucky!

Coffin Carried from Sligo to Culfadda

My brother John Higgins, who was ten years of age at the time of the blizzard, vividly recalls two occasions when a party of up to 20 men walked to Sligo Hospital and carried back the coffins of deceased members of the local community, for burial in Knockbrack cemetery. This was no mean feat and involved 50 miles of a return trek, in treacherous conditions. The telephone line along the railway track was their 'compass', and while it was a fail-safe and unerring guide, it must also have been extremely dangerous, with unseen steep embankments and uneven surfaces. Walking in such circumstances might have been an adventure, but carrying a coffin shoulder high must have been a nightmare. It is possible, indeed probable, that a door or flat board was used as a sleigh to pull the coffin along, but such a procedure could only be successful on a level surface.

Travellers Welcomed by Farmer



John Davey of Knockadalteen who was a teenager during the blizzard of 1947

There are many stories of people sharing their homes and dwindling food-stores with stranded travellers, and one such is related by John Davey of Knockadalteen. John, who was 13 years of age at the time, recalls that travellers provided a regular service as pot-menders and tinsmiths. They advertised their arrival with the slogan, 'Any pots, pans or tin cans leaking?' On the first evening of the snowstorm, John's father Patrick Davey gave overnight accommodation to three traveller men, who were unable to return to their camp which was erected just three miles away, near Newpark House. Although Patrick died of TB a year later, at the young age of 47, John says that the travellers called back many times in later years to thank the family for their kindness.

Sitting on the Chimney

Seefin Creamery had a grocery and hardware store, owned and run by the Gallagher family, which served customers in our area for generations. The upstairs bedrooms overlooked the shop and so on the morning of Wednesday 26 February 1947, 'Alo' Gallagher (then a young man) related that when he awoke and looked out the window he was astonished to see a customer – one Jimmy Joe Kielty, who lived locally – sitting on the chimney of his shop and demanding to be admitted! This story is incredible to us today but unbelievable or not, similar stories are repeated from almost every county in Ireland.

Farm Animal Welfare

Many thousands of cattle, sheep, pigs, horses, donkeys and poultry died of starvation, and many farmers perished in their efforts to rescue them. *The Irish Times* of 13 March 1947 reported that three men died in the Sligo countryside on the night of the worst blizzard. According to the report: 'One of them had gone only a few hundred yards from his home to feed a sick beast in the fields. The young man had apparently been driven blindly before the blizzard, and there was evidence that he moved in a circle, not knowing which way to travel, and crossed and re-crossed a tributary of the Owenmore River four times in all. The body was found near a bank of the little river, 300 yards from his home.' This young man's tragedy was probably repeated many times but since no government record was kept, it is impossible to determine final numbers.

The 'Lost Sheep'

The biblical story of 'The Lost Sheep' and the 'Good Shepherd' had many interesting variations during the

SLIGO "HELD UP" BY BLIZZARD.

THE WORST IN LIVING MEMORY.

LIKE A TOWN IN ALASKA.

ELECTRICITY "BLACK OUT."

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY AT A STANDSTILL.

NO RAIL OR ROAD TRANSPORT.

Cars and Buses Buried in Snowdrifts

Sligo has been practically "held up" throughout the week, the town being completely isolated following a heavy snowfall and blizzard, which began after midnight on Monday.

It was the worst in living memory, and brought with it a trail of wide-spread damage and dislocation of

blizzard of 1947. Sheep tend to flock together in a sheltered corner when storm or danger threatens, so it would rarely be the case of just one sheep missing, but rather the whole flock. Even when buried in a snowdrift several feet deep, the collective warmth and breathing would be enough to melt the snow to create a 'ventilation blow hole', visible to the shepherd. Once located, however, carrying the fodder to feed them could be much more problematic, and in many cases the shepherd lost his life for his sheep.

Fears for harvest 1947

As the slow thaw began towards the end of March flooding became a huge problem, and large tracts of land could not be cultivated. Agricultural experts warned that 'superhuman effort' was required to prevent famine next winter. The Minister for Agriculture, Patrick Smith, referred back to 'Black 1847' and said that people were wondering if they would have a 'Black 1947' too. 'May God grant that we escape such a peril,' he concluded.

My father, who always tried to have the potato crop sown by Saint Patrick's Day, related how on May 1 he had to clear the snow with a shovel in order to prepare the field for ploughing. Once conditions improved farmers worked night and day to catch up. Catholic Bishops granted a general dispensation permitting all farm workers to work on Sundays from April until November. The huge effort paid off and the summer of 1947 was the warmest and sunniest in memory.

Life Goes On

The Hibernian Cinema in Ballymote continued to operate, albeit showing the same films for several weeks since all communication and deliveries were cut off. During Saint Patrick's week 1947 there were two films with matinees each day. *She Went To The Races* starring James Craig and Frances Gifford was screened on Sunday 16 and Monday 17, while Gregory Peck and Thomas Mitchell, with Vincent Price and Rosa Stradner, in *Keys of the Kingdom* was showing on Wednesday and Thursday 19 and 20 March.

It is interesting to note that a heading in *The Sligo Champion* of Saturday 19 April stated that 'Strike Ends' and that work was in progress on laying the foundation of the new cinema in Ballymote!

Ballymote Drama Group

Despite the snow and the hardship, the local dramatic group found time to rehearse. 'The Castle Players' directed by John A Barnes NT staged a three-act play *The West's Awake* by J Malachi Muldoon in The Loftus Hall, and they received many invitations to perform from parishes throughout the county. Members of the cast included Paddy Mulligan, Jerry Flannery, Paddy Corley, Mickie Brennan, Jimmy Gallagher, Mary Donoghue, Paddy Brennan, Maggie Pettipiece, Tommie Potter, Bridie Corley, Joe Flannery and Jack Meehan.

Some topical snippets

- In Sligo some suppliers of potatoes 'stooped to extortion' and trebled the price from 9 shillings per cwt. to 30 shillings.

- Radio Eireann broadcasting hours were from 1pm to 2pm and 6.30 pm to midnight due to electricity restrictions.

- In March 1947 Very Rev James S Canon Fergus BD, PP, VF, was appointed Bishop of Achonry. He succeeded Dr Morrisroe.

President S T O'Kelly and Mrs O'Kelly were the guests of Very Rev P J Canon Roughneen, PP, VF, during the first week of May 1947.

- Fines ranging from a half crown to 10 shillings were imposed on a large number of farmers for failure to cut noxious weeds. This was reported in *The Sligo Champion* of Saturday 22 March 1947.

Conclusion

Although Ireland experienced severe blizzards many times since records began, those of 1740, 1878/79, 1895, 1917, 1933 and 1947 stand out as among the worst. However the winter of 1947, according to meteorologists, stood apart from all its predecessors for 'the continuation over such a long period' of cold, freezing, ice, winds, and blizzards, in conjunction with one another. The government of the day had no emergency plan in place to help the most vulnerable, and no record was kept of the casualties. The poor and underprivileged, particularly in cities, suffered the most. As it is very possible that a similar 'freakish arctic' storm may visit our shores again, let us pray that our government have a master plan in place to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless.

Sources

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An All-Ireland Final in New York City

By Tommy Kilcoyne

Seventy years ago the All-Ireland Football Final was played at the Polo Grounds in New York. At the GAA Annual Congress in April, 1947, a proposal from Clare to play the final in New York was eloquently presented by Canon Michael Hamilton. He suggested that such an event would provide a much-needed stimulus for Gaelic Games in North America. It would strengthen the bonds between Ireland and its emigrants and give thousands of exiled Irish people the opportunity to attend an All-Ireland final.

Canon Hamilton also referred to the fact that 1947 was the centenary year of the Great Famine in Ireland when 'the great exodus of our people found a friendly welcome and a warm hospitality on America's shores.' He argued that to stage the All-Ireland in New York 100 years later would 'give a magnificent demonstration of the unbroken historical continuity and the insuppressible tenacity of our race.' His eloquence was rewarded when his proposal was accepted with a large majority.

There appears to have been a lot of scepticism among GAA members at home about the feasibility of playing the final in New York, however, particularly at such short notice. Before the end of April, a two-man delegation was sent to New York to make the preparatory arrangements. This consisted of GAA Secretary-General, Pádraig O'Keeffe, a native of Cork, and Tom Kilcoyne, the Sligo County Board and Connacht Council Secretary, a native of Ougham, Tubbercurry, but living in Achonry since his marriage to Kathleen Carney in 1938. They left Dublin on 15 April and travelled to Southampton where they boarded the liner *Queen Elizabeth*, bound for New York. They spent three weeks in the city investigating all aspects of the proposed final, and on their return their report was presented to the GAA Central Council on 23 May. The Polo Grounds in the Bronx, home of the New York Giants baseball team, was chosen as the venue.

Bringing GAA to the New World.
Standing, L - R: John Joe Sheehy (Kerry), ?, Tom Kilcoyne (Sligo), Micheál O'Rourke (Kerry), Jack Brennan (Sligo), Vincent O'Donoghue (Waterford), Patsy Lynch (Cavan).
Seated: GAA President Dan O'Rourke (Roscommon) and the ship's captain.

The main bone of contention was the transport to and from New York. GAA President, Dan O'Rourke from Castlerea, Co Roscommon, declared that the responsibility of sending some of the party by air was too great for the council. Travelling by air in 1947 was still regarded not only as novel, but dangerous. But eventually, transport was arranged for the teams with 40 travelling by plane and the remaining 25 by sea. Tom Kilcoyne was again one of the travelling party, as was Jack Brennan of Cloonacool, who was chairman of both Sligo County Board and the Connacht Council at the time. He holds the distinction of being the longest-serving Chairman of Sligo County Board, holding the office from 1934 to 1948.

The prospect of the final in New York added a new dimension to the championships at home with all counties striving to qualify for it. In the first semi-final, Cavan defeated Roscommon before 60,939 spectators, while the second semi-final attracted an even bigger crowd, with almost 66,000 seeing Kerry defeat Meath.

Thus the scene was set for the historic Polo Grounds final between Cavan and Kerry on 13 September. The mayor of New York, Bill O'Dwyer, a native of Bohola in County Mayo, gave the teams a great reception. On the morning of the final, the travelling

party were received at St Patrick's Cathedral by Cardinal Spellman.

A crowd of 35,000 attended the game, which was about 15,000 smaller than had been expected. Heavy overnight rain may have been part of the reason for this. Despite the rain, the pitch was rock hard and the game was played in intense heat.

Colm McDyer, also known as 'Columba', was a member of the Cavan team. Colm was a native of Glenties, Co. Donegal, and had previously played for Sligo. On coming to Sligo, he had played his football with Sligo town team, Craobh Rua, and also played on the Sligo county team before declaring for Cavan early in 1947. He partnered Phil Brady at midfield on the Cavan team and scored a point. Martin O'Neill from Wexford, the Leinster Council Secretary, refereed the game, while both Tom Kilcoyne and Jack Brennan were umpires. Mayor O'Dwyer threw in the ball to start off this historic encounter.

After an exciting contest, Cavan emerged victorious 2-11 to 2-7 and their captain John Joe O'Reilly received the Sam Maguire Cup from Dan O'Rourke. The game was broadcast live on radio to Ireland, no mean feat in those days, with Micheál O'Hehir as commentator. There were tremendous celebrations at the after-match banquet in the Commodore Hotel, with over 1,400 people in attendance. The travelling party returned to Dublin via Southampton, arriving at Dún Laoghaire on 2 October. After a parade through the city, they were received at Áras an Uachtaráin by President Seán T Ó Ceallaigh. Over a half a century would elapse before another GAA championship match would be played in New York, when Sligo played New York in the Connacht Championship in May 2002, at Gaelic Park, also in the Bronx.

The Polo Grounds are no more. Located at 157th Street and St Nicholas Avenue in the Bronx, they were demolished and replaced by an apartment complex after the Giants moved to San Francisco in 1958.

From a GAA point of view, the venture was a success. It attracted wide publicity both at home and in the USA and led to a revival of interest and participation in Gaelic Games in North America.

Carrigans National School in the 1940s

Photo probably taken in 1947/48. Back row, L - R: John Davey, Martin Davey, Miss Hunt NT, Paddy Healy, Chris Porter, Angela O'Hara, John Joe Gormley, Tom McGettrick.
Middle row L - R: Teresa Scanlon, Imelda Mullen, Alfie Scanlon, Maureen Healy.
Front row L - R: Joe Kerins, John Cunnane, James Gormley, Maggie Gormley, Joan Hever, Peter Healy, Bernadette Hunt. Kneeling in front : Francie Healy

Photo probably taken in 1949/50. Back row, L - R: Angela O'Hara, Eddie Scanlon, unknown person,Teresa Scanlon, Mary Kate Gormley.
Front row L - R: Martin Davey, Teresa Gormley, Imelda Mullen, Paddy Healy, Lily O'Brien.

Photos submitted by Jim Higgins. **Thanks to John Davey of Knockadalteen for help identifying the pictured pupils.**

The Sligoman of South America

By Eoin Butler

Located on the shores of Lough Arrow, Ballynary isn't strictly a blink-and-you'll-miss-it kind of place. You could drive through it with your eyes wide open. You'd probably still miss it. But this tiny Co Sligo townland has left a permanent footprint on two continents. And that's thanks to one man.

Ambrose (later Ambrosio) O'Higgins was born here, to an impoverished Catholic farming family, in 1720. At the age of 30 he emigrated to the Spanish city of Cadiz: home of the Spanish navy and an important hub for trade with the New World. In an era when the anti-Catholic Penal Laws were in force at home, Cadiz was a magnet for ambitious young Irishmen. And few were as ambitious as Ambrosio O'Higgins. He took a job with the Butler Trading House, an Irish merchant firm.

The portrait that emerges of O'Higgins from Tim Fanning's *Paisanos: The Forgotten Irish Who Changed the Face of Latin America* is of a dour but industrious fellow. In 1756, he sailed to South America to sell goods on behalf of a group of Cadiz businessmen. He landed in Buenos Aires, then made the roughly 1,500km trek west to Santiago, in modern day Chile.

The climax of that journey was an arduous passage over the Andes. One of his first solo initiatives was to conceive and construct a series of weatherproof refuges, called *casuchos*, along this route across the mountain range, which provided a year-round communication channel between Argentina and Chile for the first time.

In 1761 he was hired as a draughtsman by John Garland, an Irish-born captain in the Spanish Royal Engineering Corps, and they

Ambrose O'Higgins

were charged with repairing defensive fortifications in southern Chile. Lima was still the jewel in Spain's South American crown, and the city of Valdivia was a crucial resupply point for Spanish ships sailing there via Cape Horn. The two Irishmen manufactured 220,000 bricks on site in pursuit of that effort.

Returning to Spain, he made an ally of that country's Irish former prime minister, Richard (or Ricardo) Wall. But it wasn't until he was commissioned as an army captain, to lead a campaign against the Mapuche tribe on the frontiers in southern Chile, that his career really took off. Within four years he had been promoted to field-marshal.

In southern Chile he was a frequent guest at the home of a landowner named Simon Riquelme. In 1778 he impregnated Riquelme's teenage daughter Isabel. He funded the education of Bernardo Riquelme, but would never meet his son in person.

A decade later, O'Higgins was anointed *1st Barón de Ballinar* by the Spanish king and promoted to governor of Chile. (If you're pedantic about the spelling of his Irish homeplace, brace yourself: it gets worse.) O'Higgins used his position to abolish the *encomienda* system of forced labour for indigenous peoples. He also clamped down on drinking, dancing, satirical verse and fraternisation between unmarried men and women.

In 1795 he was appointed Viceroy of Lima, the highest royal office in Spanish America. The Chilean city of Vallenar, and Vallenar Bay in Alaska, were both later named in his honour. But his son Bernardo was shunted off to Europe, without much in the way of financial support, lest word of his existence prove damaging politically.

There, Bernardo became acquainted with Francisco de Miranda, an aging lothario and revolutionary, whose conquests included Catherine the Great of Russia. Miranda schooled the young man in Enlightenment philosophy. When word of his son's association with this known enemy of the Spanish crown filtered back to Lima, Ambrosio ordered his European friends to disown the boy.

Bernardo was practically destitute then, in 1801, when the old man died and surprisingly named him his sole heir. Bernardo O'Higgins (that surname was adopted in violation of his late father's expressed wishes) was now one of the richest men in South America. Where his father had been a conservative and a monarchist, Bernardo was a revolutionary and an exponent of liberal republicanism.

He became the first ever leader of an independent Chile and remains a national hero in that country to this day.

Journey to Belmullet

By Eugene Gillan

Sligo Harbour was a very busy port in the 1920s up until the advent of World War II. Each week Kelly's coal boats of Liverpool would bring 300 tons of coal from England. An oil tanker would dock every two weeks and every two months a vessel of 5,000 tons would bring a cargo of either corn or wheat.

The Sligo Steamship Company had ships bringing cattle to England. Burns and Laird also had a ship transporting livestock to both England and Scotland. The ship, however, that I was interested in was the *SS Tartar*.

My father was mate on the *Tartar* and every week that ship would bring a cargo of either wheat or corn to Belmullet. In the 1920s people would travel on the *Tartar*. There were six bunks if passengers needed to stay overnight. Some weekends my father would stay on board the ship berthed in Sligo Port.

The summer I was eight I was allowed, with my older brothers Tommy Joe and Gerry, to sleep on board the *Tartar* when she berthed on the quays. The sons of other crew members would often do the same. An even greater entitlement during the summer months for the crewmen's sons was to go on a trip to Belmullet.

My opportunity came the summer I was 11 years old. One Sunday evening I travelled with my father up to Sligo and I slept well on board that night. The next morning at 7am the *Tartar* sailed down by the deepwater quay and passed on the right of Standalone point, Ballincar and Ballyweelin. I could see the ruins of the coastguard station and passed by Puntibeag. The *Tartar* blew her whistle as we sailed by our home village of Rosses Point, Oyster Island and the Metal Man. We passed by the Blackrock Lighthouse and Raughly Point and made our way towards Killala Bay. I could see the cliffs getting higher and higher and then we came to a place called Dun Briste, a tall rock with a fort on top about ten feet from the cliff.

Eventually we docked at a small port called Portacloy and waiting for us were about ten currachs. The ship loaded each boat with a derrig. When we made our way to another small port called Ballinderry, yet another ten currachs were awaiting the *Tartar*. On our way again we sailed to Broadhaven, passing by the Stag rocks and on finally to Belmullet. All along the Mayo coast the waves were very high and I was seasick for a short while.

Next morning at 7am the ship began to load small lorries and horse and carts. The son of another crewman, Alex Bartley, and myself walked into Belmullet and visited all the different streets. We even had a bite to eat in a cafe. My father took both of us to visit the Scanlan family who lived opposite the pier. We listened intently to all the conversations about the history of the area which were fascinating to our young ears. That night on the *Tartar* we slept well after all the endeavours of the day.

The next morning at eight o'clock the *Tartar* sailed for Sligo, passing again the Stag rocks. We eventually came to a headland called Patrick's Head. Here according to local legend was the spot from where Patrick banished all the snakes from Ireland! Once again we blew the whistle as we passed Rosses Point on our way home to Custom House Quay.

On Quay Street the next morning we caught the 11-o'clock bus home to Rosses Point and my mother was delighted to see us home safe and sound.

My job was connected to the sea and I sailed around the entire coast of Ireland, but the voyage to Belmullet was for me truly the voyage of a lifetime.

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Thanks to Mandy Fogarthy for assistance on this article.

New York Marathon

From left to right: John Martin, Padraig Doddy and Sylvester Egan in New York, November 1999. They had just completed the New York Marathon.

Submitted by Padraig Daddy.

The O'Dowd Inauguration Site

By Sam Moore

'And the privilege of first drinking at the banquet was given to O'Caomhain by O'Dubhda, and O'Caomhain was not to drink until he first presented it [the drink] *to the poet, that is, to Mac Firbis. Also the weapons, battle dress, and steed of O'Dubhda, after his nomination, were given to O'Caomhain, and the weapons and battle-dress of O'Caomhain, to Mac Firbis; and it is not lawful ever to nominate the O'Dubhda until O'Caomhain and Mac Firbis* [first] *pronounce the name, and until Mac Firbis brings the body of the rod over the head of O'Dubhda; and after O'Caomhain and Mac Firbis every clergyman and comharba of a church, and every bishop and every chief of a district pronounce the name. And there is one thing, should O'Dubhda happen to be in Tir Amhalgaidh* [Tirawley] *he may repair to Carn Amhalgaidli to be nominated, so as that all the chiefs are about him : but should he happen to be* at *Carn Inghine Bhriain* [in Tireragh] *it is not necessary for him to go over* [the Moy] *to have the title given to him'.*

The quotation above is called the *Uí Fhiachrach* prose tract, compiled by Dubhaltach Mac Firbis, the scribe, translator and genealogist associated with the O'Dubhda (the O'Dowds) in *c.* 1650, and was translated from Gaelic by the Irish scholar John O'Donovan in 1854. It has been suggested that the text was originally compiled by Giolla Iosa Mac Firbis, the poet of the O'Dowds, between the years 1397 and 1418. This was after the O'Dowds had recovered the territory of *Tir Fhiachrach* (the modern barony of Tireragh in west Co Sligo) from the Anglo-Norman de Bermingham family. In the pre-Norman period the kings of the dynastic group known as the *Uí Fhiachrach* ruled the large territory of *Uí Fhiachrach Muaide*, which covered the greater part of north Mayo, incorporating the baronies of Erris, Tirawley, and Carra, as well as the barony of Tireragh, east of the River Moy in the present Co Sligo. The above prose tract suggests that *Uí Fhiachrach Muaide* was divided by the River Moy, and also suggests the O'Dowds, who were descendants of the *Uí Fhiachrach*, had two inauguration sites. John O'Donovan identified *Carn Amhalghaidh* in *Tir Amhalghaidh* (Tirawley) as 'Mullaghorn Fort' at Croghan near Killala, Co Mayo, while *Carn Inghine Briain* was the O'Dowd inauguration site in Tireragh. The exact location of this is unrecorded and we are only told it was east of the River Moy. O'Donovan suggested that it might be the very large cairn attributed to Queen Maeve, which crowns the summit of Knocknarea. The cairn however, is at a height of 327m (1083 feet), which would have been a very impractical place to host an assembly for an inauguration, and Knocknarea lies outside the north-eastern boundary of Tireragh which is at Beltra, just west of Ballysadare.

The leading authority on Irish inauguration sites is Dr Elizabeth Fitzpatrick in the National University

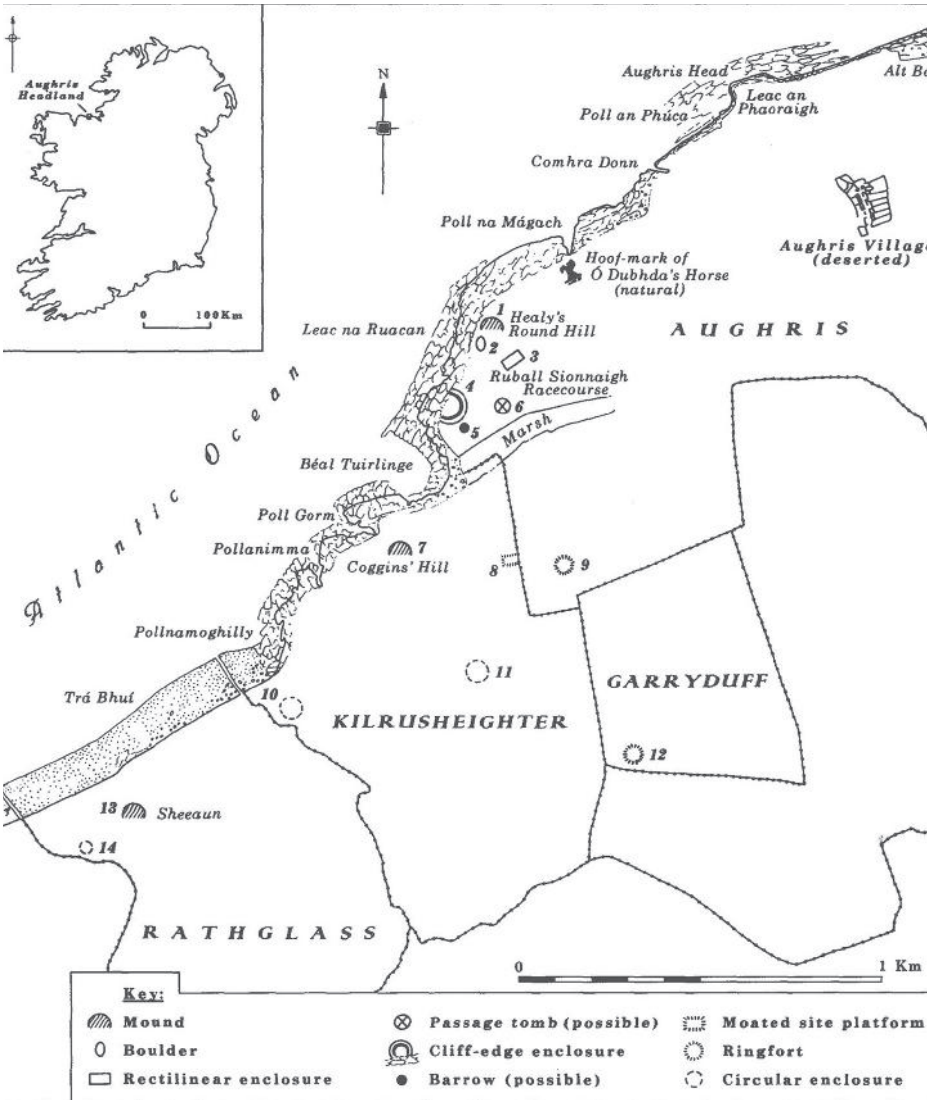

Fig 1: Map of key sites at Augris Head region associated with the O'Dowd inauguration site

of Ireland, Galway, who has alternatively suggested that *Carn Inghine Briain* is the two-tiered mound with an enclosing fosse (ditch) and bank, called Coggins' Hill, at Kilrusheighter on the south-west side of Aughris headland. Other possibilities for its location in Tireragh might be the conical mound called 'Sheeaun' in Rathglass; the bowl barrow (an earthen prehistoric burial mound) at Scurmore, south of Inishcrone; or the mound at Cams in Castleconnor parish could also be considered. Dr Fitzpatrick, however, supports her argument that the evidence for Coggins' Hill being *Carn Inghine Briain* is based on a combination of place name interpretation, the form of the mound itself, traditions of Lughnasa festival assemblies (gatherings around the last Sunday in July for the Harvest Festival known as Lughnasa), horse-racing and modern political rallies on the Aughris headland; together with folk stories that suggest ideas of kingship, and the constant references to the O'Dowds in local folktales.

The use of two different inauguration sites is very unusual and is probably due to 14th century political propaganda from the O'Dowds. They only had only recovered Tireragh out of their former territory from the de Birminghams and it is likely that *Carn Amhalgaidli* was the original pre-Norman inauguration site, but they had to invent another at *Carn Inghine Briain*. It is unlikely the O'Dowds choose this new inauguration site randomly, but possibly selected Aughris because it appears to have been the place of a tribal *oenach* (a fair or gathering) during the pre-Norman period. Fitzpatrick suggests that the *oenach* site is possibly the *Ruball Sionnaigh* racecourse just northeast of Coggins' Hill, in the townland of Aughris, where horse racing occurred up to the 1930s (fig 1).

Coggins' Hill lies towards the seaward side of a long, low, grassy ridge, with a dramatic 360-degree view. It is a steep-sided circular earthen mound, 3m high, with a *c.* 22m diameter base, narrowing to *c.* 10m at the summit. A smaller mound, *c*. 0.7m high and *c.* 7.5m in diameter is at the centre of the summit. The entire mound is enclosed by a shallow fosse (ditch), *c.* 0.85m wide, with an external bank, *c.* 1m wide (figs 2 and 3). The arrangement of a small mound on top of the larger mound has similarities with the McGuire inauguration site of *Sciath Ghabhra* near Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh; the possible inauguration site of the McDermotts at Knockadoobrosna, near Boyle in Co. Roscommon; and the large mound of Rathcroaghan near Tulsk, Co Rosmmon, which was once the inauguration site of the O'Conors. None of these have been archaeologically excavated so it is unknown whether they are re-used prehistoric funerary monuments or simply earthen platforms put up especially for royal assembly, or a combination of both.

Fig 2: Coggin's Hill, the inauguration mound of the O'Dowds in Killrusheighter with Knocknarea in background right (*Image: Sam Moore***)**

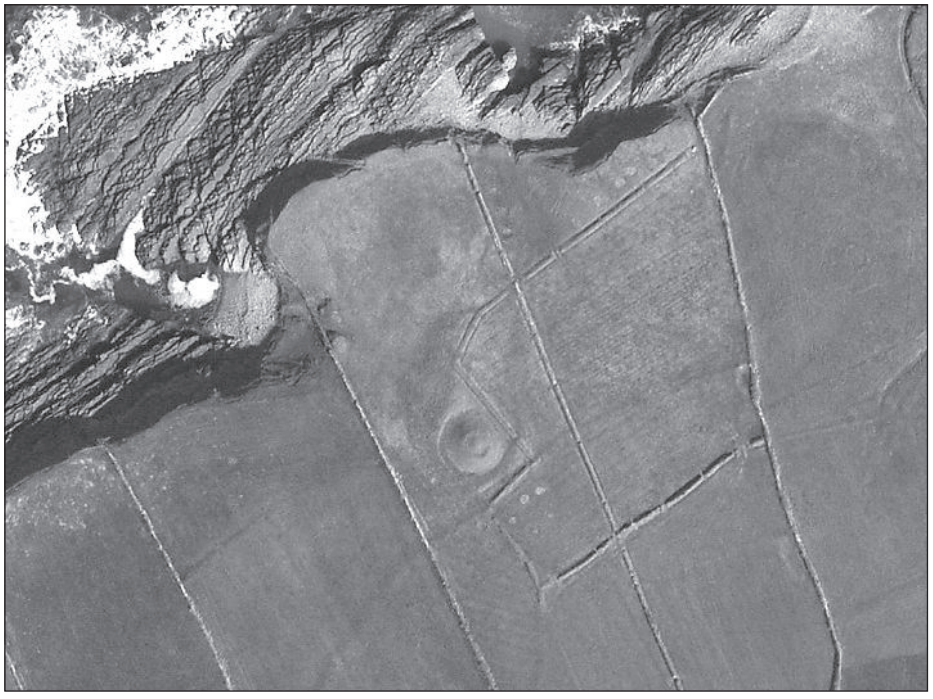

Fig 3: Aerial view of Coggins' Hill (Image from Bing Maps)

The small summit diameter of some of them suggest that they were no more than 'throne mounds' accommodating the official inaugurators, which, in the case of *Carn Inghine Briain* was probably a member of the O'Caoimhins and/or Mac Firbis, and the king might have sat in a canopied 'chair' or stood placing his foot on a stone. The open-air rituals associated with the inauguration involved ceremonial clothing, the performance of a clockwise turn (known as *deiseal);* the giving of a Rod of Kingship or a Rod of Lordship, which may be a branch of a sacred tree (or *bile*); a proclamation of the king's name aloud and the surrendering of the king's clothing and horse. Other rites might include bathing; drinking (often from a horned goblet); chanting the genealogy of the king or a specially composed inaugural poem, and feasting. There is often the rite of the single shoe where the king puts his foot into a shoe-shaped stone or where a single shoe is held over his head. This might symbolise a rightful king as the king being the one who will bring order to chaos, as well as a symbol of tribute or homage. Many aspects of the opening quotation reflect these rites, and local folklore at Aughris talks of a shoe-shaped grassy impression where the O'Dowd kings stood.

The importance of assemblies at Aughris is also reflected by the instances when, as late as 1901, Douglas Hyde and J P Henry addressed an Irish-language rally attended by some 8,000 people on Garland Sunday, at Aughris, County Sligo. For reasons undocumented and long lost in oral tradition, Aughris headland on the north Connacht coastline was then still regarded as the 'Tara' of the barony of Tireragh. Reporting on the Irish language movement rally, *The Sligo Champion* (3 August, 1901), recorded that: 'The place of meeting was no less appropriate for such an occasion, as Aughris has many historic associations which recall the days when our grand old language flourished and the language of the foreigner was unknown.' In this instance, the assembly area was used because it had more ancient assembly connotations, as Aughris was in fact a Lughnasa festive site and that it may also have been the location of an early medieval tribal assembly as well as being the late medieval inauguration place of the O'Dowds.

Acknowledgements
I wish to express my gratitude for the help received from Paddy Tuffy and Jim Henry of the North Mayo and West Sligo Heritage Group. Thanks also to Janie Cone, Sharon Eastwood, Auriel Robinson and Siobhan Ryan.

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Distress in County Sligo, 1895

Submitted by Padraig Doddy

A letter to the editor of *The Sligo Independent in 1985*

Dear Sir – I have seen by last week's issue of the *Sligo Champion* that several prominent gentlemen are exerting their powers in seeking relief for the poor of their localities; also for the poor farmers to save them from the approaching famine which is already appearing in several parts of the country.

They have mentioned much needed work, such as the construction of light railways and the building of fishery piers, which, if put into operation, would be the means of relieving the poor labouring class from the distress which is prevalent this year. The Baronies of Coolavin, Corran and Leyny have a population of poor, and more so than any other part of the County of Sligo, all of whom could be much relieved by affording them work in the form of relief. There is a river named the 'Owenmore' which rises in the Barony of Coolavin and flows through the Baronies of Corran and Leyny and empties itself in the Bay of Ballisodare. The farmers along this destructive river suffer heavy losses from the floods which appear in June and July, and destroy the pasture and hay crop which the farmers have solely to depend on.

I hope the landlords who constitute part of the Grand Jury of Sligo and who have properties on either side of this river will assist in putting the above much needed work into operation which would be a great boon to their tenant farmers.

Thanking you in anticipation, I am, dear sir, yours respectfully,

Patrick Egan, Coagh, Ballymote.

29 January, 1895

Francis Tregian: Benefactor of Irish Refugees

By Frank Tivnan

Francis Tregian the Elder (1548-1608) was born in Probus, near Truro, in Cornwall. A staunch Catholic during the time of Elizabeth I of England, he inherited big estates on the death of his father John Tregian. The surname Tregian is pronounced like 'trudgeon' to rhyme with 'bludgeon'.

Francis was the father of Francis Tregian the younger, a student of Douai, who was associated with music in England.

In 1576 Cuthbert Mayne, a young Catholic priest from Yorkston in Devon took up residence in the guise of an estate steward with Francis Tregian. On 8 June 1577, the sheriff of Cornwall, Sir Richard Grenville, raided Golden Manor House, which was the residence of Tregian. He found the young priest and arrested both Tregian and Mayne. Mayne was executed in the square of the old capital of Cornwall on 29 November 1577. He was the first seminary priest in England to be executed for the Catholic faith.

The crown of his skull is venerated in the chapel of the Franciscan Nuns of the Immaculate in Lanherne Convent near New Quay in Cornwall. The public can visit the chapel and venerate the precious relic during the day.

The executioner became insane and died miserably soon after. Sir Richard Grenville was killed by the Spanish a few days later. Cuthbert was canonised on 25 October 1970 by Pope Paul VI. His feast day is on November 29.

Francis Tregian was also condemned to death for harbouring a Catholic priest, but this sentence was mitigated to imprisonment. He was gaoled at Marshalsea Prison and later in the Fleet Prison, London. In total he was imprisoned for 28 years. Owing to the influence of Philip II of Spain he was released by King James I. After his release, Tregian, weak and emaciated, retired to Madrid where he was given a pension by King Felipe III of Spain.

The interior of St Roch where Francis Tregian is buried

As the very hot summers and cold winters of Madrid did not suit such a frail Englishman, the King's physician advised him to move to the milder climate of Lisbon. He went to live with the Jesuits at their residence of St Roch outside the city.

During his stay, Francis was kind to the poor and was a great benefactor to the Irish refugees who were present in Lisbon at that time. Francis died in St Roch on 25 September 1608. He was buried under the floor of the church there. After 17 years the tomb was opened for a new burial, but Francis Tregian's body was found to be

incorrupt. The Jesuits decided to bury him this time standing up in a new niche or grave underneath the pulpit on the gospel side of the church. His standing up in the grave symbolised his standing up for the faith against Elizabeth I.

Beside his tomb on the right-hand side is located the world famous chapel of St John the Baptist, built in Rome and designed by Vanvitelli. There it was blessed by Pope Benedict XI who celebrated Mass in the chapel. The dismantled chapel was shipped to Lisbon in three ships, where it was re-erected in the church of St Roch. Owing to the precious materials of which it was built it was considered the most expensive chapel ever made. It cost €225,000 in the 18th century.

Here is a translation of the inscription in Portuguese carved on Francis Tregian's marble tomb:

Here stands the body of Mr Francis Tregian, an illustrious English gentleman, who after the confiscation of his estates and after great hardships during his twenty-eight years imprisonment for the defence of the Catholic faith in England during Queen Elizabeth's persecutions, died in the city of Lisbon on 25th of September 1608 with great fame of sanctity, and was buried in this church of St Roch belonging to the Society of Jesus. Seventeen years later his body was found entire and incorrupt, on April 25th 1625, and placed here by the English Catholics resident in this city.

The original St Roch was a 14th-century hermit from Montpellier, and is the patron saint of plague victims. He is usually depicted as a pilgrim with a sore on his right leg accompanied by a dog with a cake in its mouth.

St Roch's Church was built in the 16th century for the Jesuits, and its magnificent interior is one of the must-sees of Lisbon.

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Glimpses of the past

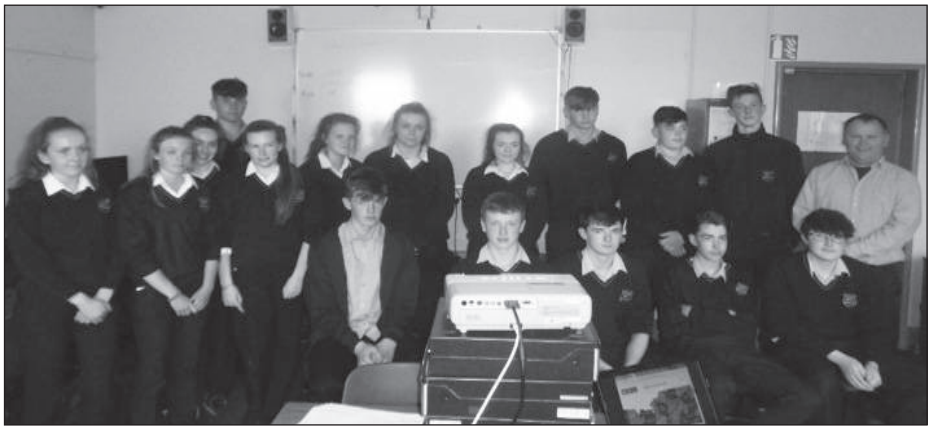
Submitted by Ursula Gilhawley

The Caves of Kesh
(From *The Capuchin Annual***, 1944)**

Funeral of the Late T.H. Canon Quinn, Parish Priest of Ballymote 1921-1943
(From *The Capuchin Annual***, 1944)**

Family History at Colaiste Muire, Ballymote

By Michael Tarmey



The Transition Year students of Colaiste Muire, Ballymote, recently participated in a family history project. The course was organised by Mr Charles O'Connor, Transition Year class coordinator. The class mentor was Martin Curley from Moylough, Co Galway. Martin is recognised as a mentor of family history by the Heritage Council. He works in primary and secondary schools throughout the western counties. He has run many successful courses with schools which have led to family connections with very distant relations in Ireland and overseas. [Editor's note – see his article later in this edition]

The course was sponsored and supported by the Ballymote Heritage Group. The aim of the Heritage Group is to increase interest and provide information on all aspects of history, archaeology, and heritage in Co Sligo and beyond. This year, to celebrate the 50th edition of *The Corran Herald*, it was decided to encourage interest in heritage and local history by supporting the family history module in Colaiste Muire. *The Corran Herald* is published annually by the Ballymote Heritage Group.

During the family history module Martin brought the students through the various stages of researching the family history. These stages are outlined in his own article in this edition of *The Corran Herald*. The students found the module very interesting but too brief over a short period of five weeks.

The following students participated in the course: Katie Anderson, Saoirse Cunningham, Jake Flannery, Eoin Killoran, Donacha Byrne, Mathew Devlin, Lisa Healy, Elaine Killoran, Katelyn Collis, Aoife Donnelly, Luke Hogg, Helen Loughlin, Eimear Conlon, Sasha Donohue, Luke Kielty, Jason Mullen, Mark Mulligan , Ciara Perry, Cian Quinn, Sorcha Rogers, Nichole Scanlon, Arran Scanlon, Emma Taheny and Brian Wienche.

My Family History

By Helen Loughlin - Transition Year, Colaiste Muire, Ballymote

As a class we really enjoyed working with Martin Curley and finding all about our family trees. We discovered old stories of where they all lived, what they worked at and how many were in their family. It was very interesting and we all really enjoyed it.

He gave us very useful websites to search for censuses, birth records, marriage records and death records. We all researched a few of our family surnames and most of us got some impressive results and learned a lot more about our family's past.

Over the past five weeks I have learned a lot about my own family history. We've researched a lot of different censuses from 1901 and 1911. Over the course of our project I have discovered a lot of new names in my family tree and a lot about who they married, how many children they had and where they lived. We could even tell from reading the census the type of house they lived in and how many bedrooms was in that particular house.

John Breheny was born in 1894. John was my great grandfather. John married Ellen Wilson on 17 August 1931 in Ballymote church. John was a farmer when he married Ellen. The witnesses of their marriage were Mary Anne Merrick from Collooney and Pat Linachan.

John's father was called Marice Breheny. He was the head of the family. He was an agricultural labourer. In the 1911 census he was 62 and his wife was 57. John's mother was Catherine. Maurice and Catherine were married for 20 years. John had one sister named Bridget and she was born two years before him. They lived in a stone house with a slated roof. There were two windows in the front of the house, there was three bedrooms in the house and all four lived there.

I got all of this information just from searching his name in the censuses and I was very impressed. We loved every second of being able to learn so much more about our family tree and we would love to do it all over again if we could.

Uncovering a Family History

By Martin Curley

My first visit to my grandmother Kate Gormally's home house in Lomaunagh, a short distance from Lavally Lake near Tuam in Co Galway, was not until a few years ago, and at that stage no one had lived there for over 60 years. It has just enough left to give an idea of the shape of what was once a typical small two-roomed Irish thatched cottage.

Although it was my first time at the site it was not my first time to see the house. Years earlier as a small child I was fascinated by a picture that was on top of a glass press in the parlour of our house. 'That is your great grandmother, Nora Donnellan,' I was told many times as I looked at the picture of her sitting comfortably on her chair outside that same house in Lomaunagh. Behind her you can see the lace curtains and the oil lamp, and her pose is one of contentment and strength.

When this picture was being taken in the late 1930s Nora was in her 90s and she had lived through many tough days. Now you get from that photo a sense of her feeling accomplished in reaching this time in her life where her children's children were growing up and making their way in the world, both in Galway and in Salem, Massachusetts, where her son and two daughters had emigrated to many years before. Soon after the picture was taken Nora would leave her own home and move in with her daughter Kate, my grandmother, and Kate's husband Pat Curley. The house that Nora and her husband Pat Gormally had built when they got married in April of 1869, on land given to her by her father Michael (Owen) Donnellan, would be quiet and fall into ruin.

The reason for going down to visit was to meet for the first time Donnellan cousins from Boston who had come over and built a holiday cottage next to Nora's home. Thankfully they had lovingly preserved the shell of the house and I was grateful to step 'inside' and imagine what it was like when it was first built in the in the late

The picture of the author's great-grandmother, Nora Donnellan, which so inspired him

1860s. I was also grateful to step into the new house and meet family who shared the same Donnellan genes, four generations apart. We remain very much in touch and they are indeed 'family'.

Through the years my interest in how this side of the family are connected and what their story was has increased, and as well it has led me to think about the other families that I am related to both near at home and far away. In the last few years there has been a great boon in family research in the digitization of records and their availability for free online. I hope that this article will help you understand how you can create a family tree of several generations using the newly available resources.

Where to start? In most families there are people who are interested in connections and those who are not. The former can be a wealth of information, not just for the immediate family but for more distant connections as well. Ideally you should arrange to meet or chat with your family historian, whether it's a relative close by or a cousin in the diaspora, and start the conversation about who is related to whom.

Keep notes, dating and detailing who you spoke to. Other than the obvious questions – who were their parents, siblings, etc – sometimes it helps to ask a broad question regarding who else the family were related to. With the access to records it's possible you will find connections to familes who are *gaol fada maith,* i.e. distant relations who are still known as 'friends of the family'.

Once you have started with your notes it's important to create a digital family tree using software, much of it free and available online. One great site is Myheritage.com whose family tree builder not only allows you to share your tree with others who are interested, but also matches you with people who are doing similar research. Its 'smart match' facility means that you can share information and connections easily.

Most people are good with their grandparents' names but some had grandparents who died young and at times those connections are lost. The recent release of the civil records (births, marriages and deaths) at civilrecords.irishgenelaogy.ie has allowed the information lost for a generation to be accessible again. There is data protection so although the records start in 1864 the birth records only go to 100 years ago, marriages to 75 years and deaths to 50 years. Not all are digitized yet and not all were recorded.

The local Catholic parish baptismal and marriage records are also available in a limited form up to about 1880 from registers.nli.ie, but have yet to be fully indexed. Paid subscription sites like rootsireland, Findmypast and Ancestry.com have some of these records as well, as does the free site familysearch.org. In time these will all be indexed and accessible. Parish records should be accessible through the parish office and although data protection rules affect some they don't affect those of baptisms over

100 years or marriages over 75. Please check with the parish priest or whoever administers the office.

Church of Ireland records are much older and these also are becoming available online at churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie. Again check with the local parish for access and some are available online at the sites mentioned previously.

Starting with the marriage records the main information that can be gleaned is the bride and groom's fathers' names, their address at the time of marriage, the location of the marriage, their occupation if any, and sometimes their ages. In many cases their ages are merely recorded as 'full', i.e. they were aged over 21.

Using that information you can further build the family tree by searching for the family on the census. Starting with a search on the 1911 census at census.nationalarchives.ie, you can search initially for the family name and the county of residence and scroll through the results (making sure you have 100 per page and sorted by DED, i.e. District Electoral Division) to see where they are recorded.

John Grenham's site johngrenham.com will also give you access to all the listings of your surname in the 1901 Census as well as give you the variants. This is important names can be changed in spelling over time. My great-grandmother's 'Donnellan' has multiple variants and sometimes cousins and indeed siblings have been known to use different ways in records. This can lead to seemingly no matches. However, another part of Grenham's site allows you to search by 'Places'. By doing that and going to the DED according to the Civil Parish maps, you may find that the record has either been mis-transcribed or otherwise entered incorrectly.

Aside from a few areas where the census records were not microfilmed and then digitised, if your family were in Ireland in 1911 then they should be there. Sometimes though the family or possibly your ancestor may not have been there on the night of the 1911 Census. Perhaps they were a seasonal migrant worker to Britain or had had spent some time in the US or Canada. As Ireland was part of the UK there is no paperwork to see migration between the countries, unfortunately, and most UK records are behind a paywall at Ancestry or Findmypast as well as ScolandsPeople. You can access English and Welsh birth, marriage and death records at freebmd.org.uk but only as an index – it doesn't show the full record.

The US records are more easily accessible. stevemorse.org uniquely allows you to search the emigration records by name and home area and his site is a good starting point. Ellis Island records are found at libertyellisfoundation.org, while other records can be found at familysearch.org. All of these are free to use. The 1940 US census is free to search at familysearch.org and free to access at 1940census.archives.gov. For recent records intelius.com allows you to search for people still living as well as whitepages.com which gives you access to a current address.

There were many reasons to emigrate and some of these involved land and the handing down of land to one son, thus limiting the prospects of other family members. Land records from the 1850s can be accessed through the Griffith's Valuation, a survey of land ownership and usage which details the tenants and landlords for an area. They are available at askaboutireland.ie and can be accessed by John Grenham's site through places, and then clicking on the townland in the relevant civil parish.

The Griffith's Valuation records the area rented and the value of the property. This was the foundation of rates which lasted until the 1976 General election. When a property changed hands or size the transaction was noted by the valuation office and inserted directly into the valuation books, and every so often a clean copy was made. The cancelled books and the last copies are not accessible online at the moment but can be readily viewed at the Valuation Office, Irish Life Centre, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1. This can help in family history by seeing the line of succession and the approximate date of death of the previous tenant.

Finally, there are other online records that may contain family information for the beginner. The National Archives genealogy section, genealogy.nationalarchives.ie, not only has the census but also wills, pension applications from 1909-21 (which sometimes contain information on the applicant's mother's name and siblings), as well as the Tithe Applotment Books from the 1820s which list those in the townland who owe Tithes to the Church of Ireland minister. The Tithes were contentious and books were recorded of the occupiers of agricultural holdings over one acre in most civil parishes.

These are some of the many online records that are available. Sometimes local records such as gravestones, parish histories, newspaper articles, family pictures or family Bibles contain even more genealogical information. Since coming back to my native East Galway in August 2013, I have worked full time in genealogy. I have developed a programme for schools both national and for the secondary transition year programme to help students research their family's history. It has been very rewarding when I see the enthusiasm of many and their excitement at finding records and connections.

In many schools in rural areas there is a large web of relationships which sometimes has been lost, and doing their family history has opened up a renewal of family friendships. I was asked to work in Colasite Mhuire Ballymote as a result of a project in Colaiste Mhuire Ballygar where students had one of their parents do a DNA test. This led to many exciting discoveries about their own connections as well as to the diaspora. Indeed one discovery may lead to a famous Hollywood film star finding his roots in the area, but that is a story for another day.

It has been an amazing few years helping families in the diaspora reconnect with their ancestral roots. Looking at Nora's peaceful gaze in the parlour picture I am sure she is happy to know that her story has inspired me to help others uncover theirs. If you would like to know more please contact me either at martinjcurley@gmail.com or facebook.com/SoghainGenes.

Raise a glass for a 'Student'!

By Nial Friel

William Sealy Gosset

One of the most important discoveries in statistics, a subject often called the science of data, was discovered by a humble brewer working for Guinness. His work has had an enormous impact across the sciences and continues to play an important role wherever data is collected. What is more intriguing is that he is known by the pseudonym 'Student'! How did a brewer from Guinness make such an important scientific discovery and why is so little known about him?

William Sealy Gosset was born in Canterbury in 1876. He studied mathematics and chemistry at New College, Oxford. Upon graduation he was hired as a brewer for Guinness at the St. James' Gate brewery in Dublin, where he worked from 1899 until 1935. When Gosset began working at Guinness it was already positioned as the world's largest brewery. In contrast to many large companies of the day, it had a focus on scientific research to help improve its business. Today, most major companies have an interest in research and development, but in the late 1800s this was far from the case. In particular, Guinness were keen to bring new knowledge and insights to the brewing process. Gosset certainly fitted the bill and proved to be a very astute appointment. His knowledge of mathematics and chemistry left him ideally placed to provide unique insights.

Gosset's career in Guinness

Around the turn of the 1900s the output from St James' Gate increased dramatically year on year. It was clearly of practical importance to Guinness to maintain the quality of the beer it produced while increasing volume but also decreasing cost. As every Guinness drinker knows, hops provides the distinctive flavour in a pint. Yet a key question vital to the brewing process was to understand which type of hop to use. Often this was decided subjectively based on looks and fragrance. But this was clearly an inadequate method given the demand which Guiness needed to meet.

This is where Gosset played a key role. His boss believed that the best way to determine the quality of the hops was to calculate the proportion of soft resin to hard resin in a hop flower. The resin is part of the hops which imparts flavour and is extracted during the brewing process. However, the information on these proportions were only available from small samples which were collected from harvested hops. It was therefore important to understand whether the proportion of soft to hard resin found in these samples would be maintained as more and more hops were harvested, thereby leading to accurate estimates.

Unfortunately, the only theory to help with this problem applied to large samples. Gosset's key breakthrough was to develop theory for small samples. This allowed Guinness to be more certain that the information contained in small samples of hops (proportion of hard to soft resin) would generalise to much large samples of the scale needed for their production. His work was published in the esteemed journal *Biometrika* under the pseudonym 'Student'.

Why 'Student'?

But why use a pseudonym? The answer is that up until just before World War II, Guinness would not allow its employees to publish papers under their own name. Indeed, they were very hesitant to allow work arising from their studies to be published at all, for fear of giving an advantage to their competitors. They wished to keep strictly secret the advantage resulting from employing statisticians and the enlightened scientific approach that was key to their success. Gosset was however very keen that his breakthrough would be shared with the wider scientific community. In the end he convinced his employers to allow him to publish work, which they agreed to on the condition of anonymity. In the end all but one of his papers were published under the pseudonym 'Student'. Anyone who has studied statistics, even at a very basic level, will have encountered this work as Student's t-test. It forms a cornerstone of the theory of statistics and is now applied in every branch of science. It is hard to understate the importance and wide impact of this work.

Life after Dublin

At the end of 1935 Gosset left Ireland to take charge of the new Guinness brewery in London. During this time, although heavily involved in setting up the brewery, he continued to publish his work. By all accounts

Gosset was a humble and modest man. He is described by a close personal friend as '*very kindly and tolerant and absolutely devoid of malice. He rarely spoke about personal matters but when he did his opinion was well worth listening to and not in the least superficial*.'

He is further described as '*... beloved by all those with whom he worked and by a select circle of professional and personal friends, who revered him as one of the most modest, gentle, and brave of men, unconventional, yet abundantly tolerant in all his thoughts and ways*.'

It is unlikely that he could have ever anticipated the influence his work would have on every area of scientific endeavour. So the next time you hold a pint of Guinness, raise a glass to the modest brewer, William Sealy Gosset!

Teeling Street in the 1960s. Photo provided by Joseph Flanagan.

A photo from about 1959 featuring Begley's Ford Motor Showrooms at the corner of Lord Edward Street and Teeling Street, where Cryan's is now. The building was designed as a motor showroom which explains the large plate-glass windows. They would have been a great novelty at the time and very expensive. Note that there are several 1950s models of the popular Ford Anglia in the street which may well have been purchased there. Pake Begly was also involved in setting up the cinema, and both the shop front and cinema are in Art Deco style.
Photo provided by Joseph Flanagan.

A Casino hidden in plain sight

By Jack Gilligan

The Casino at Marino must be one of Ireland's best kept secrets! This awe-inspiring architectural gem has stood just off the Malahide Road in North Dublin for over 250 years and yet many people have only a vague idea about the building or its origins.

Designed in the 1750s as a pleasure house for James Caulfeild, 1st Earl of Charlemont (1728-99), by the renowned architect William Chambers, the Casino was taken into the care of the Irish State in the 1930s but it wasn't until 1984 that the restored Casino was opened to the public. A visit to this lesser-known but hugely important part of our architectural heritage is highly recommended.

Approaching the ornate but deceptively compact structure one might assume that it is some sort of monument or sculptural piece. If one encountered it in another country, a mausoleum to some famous leader might come to mind. A walk around the building reveals a rather intriguing structure with four similar, but very distinct, façades. One's attention is drawn to various features including the lions guarding the four corners, statues of the gods Bacchus, Ceres, Apollo and Venus on top of the building, imposing columns and carved details of ox-skulls, shields and garlands. The eye-catching urns on the top are later discovered to be chimneys in disguise and the columns are revealed to hold their own secret! The diminutive scale of the building still suggests a one-story, possibly one-room, structure and reveals nothing of the several rooms, across three floors which await discovery inside.

On entering the Casino one is transported to a world of grandeur, beauty and remarkable architectural design. The small hall or vestibule with four doors, classical motifs on a plaster ceiling and a beautifully patterned parquet floor suggests that a rich journey of discovery has begun. The wonder and admiration is sustained as one moves through the various rooms including the Saloon, the beautiful China Closet, the atmospheric Zodiac Room and the very impressive State Room. The other informal rooms and the basement all hold their own fascination for the visitor.

Outside the building at basement level one can see the entrances to a mysterious series of interconnecting underground tunnels and chambers. The original purpose of these is unclear – some may have been designed as bathing pools others, possibly, as storage areas. A theory that the tunnels were intended to connect to Marino House, the main residence

The Casino at Marino

Detail of the building

on the estate, but were left unfinished when Charlemont's finances dried up, could well be true. While the original purpose of the tunnels is open to conjecture we do know that they played a small part in the War of Independence – the longest tunnel, now open to the public, was used in 1921 by Michael Collins and other rebel leaders for shooting practise as they acquainted themselves with the first Thompson submachine guns to arrive in Dublin

The story of the Casino at Marino began in 1754, when the young James Caulfeild, 1st Earl of Charlemont, was offered a house and small estate by his step-father, Thomas Adderley, to entice him back from foreign travels. In 1746, at the age of 18, he had set off on an extended trip as would have been customary in aristocratic society at that time. He differed from his contemporaries however in that his travels would last for almost nine years and take him through southern Europe, Asia Minor and Egypt. His interest in Roman civilisation and his love of antiquity, culture, books and art meant that many of these years were spent in Italy. There he mingled in high society and spent vast amounts of money collecting artworks and antiques. He also met many artists, including the architect William Chambers and the sculptor Simon Vierpyl, who would play crucial roles in his later ambitious plans for the estate at Marino.

On his return to Dublin, Charlemont commenced work on the development of the estate in the Italian style he so admired. He planned to enlarge the holding, create a Casino or pleasure house, and to add several classical features. He commissioned his friend William Chambers to design the Casino as an antique-style garden building in the shape of a Greek Cross. Although the Casino has several rooms, there is no evidence of any long-term occupation of the building. Charlemont's grand design for the Marino estate did not stop with his beloved Casino. Other buildings and features were added at considerable expense and for which mortgages had to be secured. Near the Casino he constructed a Gothic Room, which was possibly used for banqueting purposes. There was also a hermitage or primitive garden dwelling, walled gardens and an artificial lake among the features.

The lavish expenditure incurred by Charlemont left the estate in serious financial difficulties after his death and ultimately led to the disposal of the lands. All that remains of the estate now is this beautiful, intriguing, Casino standing proud on a few small acres. James Caulfeild, 1st Earl of Charlemont, may have left a legacy of debts for his heirs but his legacy to the Irish nation of this neo-classical masterpiece deserves our sincere gratitude, and our resolve to visit this wonder that is the Casino at Marino.

Blizzard of Forty-Seven

By Joan Gleeson

Seventy winters past
Our green isle lay silenced under an arctic, white blanket
After night of blizzard morning comes, front door opened – crash!
Porch filled with drifted snow
Shivering robins, unable to fly
Sit, puffed up, still alive.

Cattle lowing for fodder
Cock crowing in company of hens.
No fowl play today
Must stay in pens.

Total isolation, consternation,
No communication.
No phone.
No text.
No email.a
Radio our only salvation.

Old neighbour dies.
Coffin drawn on planks to frozen graveyard.
Roads, all blocked.
Have to wing it – no sat nav,
Instinct all they have.

Trees are like giant Christmas cards
Farm gate snowed over between
Tops of six foot pillars only peering through the drifts
Open well now a glistening iced muffin
Water frozen - melt the snow
No school.
No church.
No shop.
Potatoes in the barn, salted bacon in the box
Bag of flour by the fire
Make the soda bread
The children must be fed.

No school this week, next week and further.
Snowman making without end
But short legs in six-foot snow drifts
Wonder when we can go out.

Farm life struggled on
Army called
Dig poor sheep and cattle out
Now the council gives a shout.
No snow ploughs, not even heard of
Every able-bodied man working with spade and shovel.
Main roads, side roads to uncover.

So the clearing thus continued
'Till mother nature lent a hand
To return the countryside
To our ever-resilient green land.
Back to school in slush and wellies
Thank God no such blizzard since has been
And none we hope
Will be forever seen.

A fixture of Ballymote life

An interview with Alfie Banks

Poem by John M Dennedy, submitted by Kathleen Martyn

Ballymote almost lost one of its leading citizens, Alfie Banks, during the late 1940s to the 'Big Smoke'. After a brief legal job stint in Ballymote that didn't keep him busy enough, Alfie worked for an insurance company in Dublin. However, while in the capital city he contracted a nasty case of pleurisy and during his recovery back in his home place of Kellystown, Ransboro, he decided to remain in his home county, a decision for which many are grateful.

Alfie was canvassed ('headhunted' in today's parlance) and accepted a new job in Ballymote as a law clerk for Eamonn P. Gallagher, who had taken over the Rochford firm and had branches in Ballymote, Tubbercurry and Gurteen. Alfie would make the 15-mile journey home to Kellystown on a Saturday by bicycle and return to Ballymote on Monday morning, which took him an hour. During the work week he boarded with some other single gents in Ballymote.

Alfie Banks

Ballymote family days

Alfie met his wife Mary (nee Daly), who was from Newmarket, Co Cork, through her brother Tim, who was a garage proprietor in Ballymote. Mary was a nurse for a time in Nottingham, England, and also worked in Clonmel. She and Alfie got married at Sligo Cathedral in September 1954, attended by their families.

Within a year of being married, Alfie secured a council house in Marren Park, but upon seeing the place for the first time, it was apparent it needed a lot of work, which he took on with help from his relatives. Later he upscaled in order to accommodate his growing family. He saw a house for auction at Abbey Terrace, called St. Anthony's, which is across from Gilmour's, now Henry's garage.

The sporting life

One of the first of many activities that Alfie was to be involved with in Ballymote included boxing. As a young (and then unmarried) law clerk, he was invited to take part in the local boxing club. He then had "a bit of a spar" with a fellow about his same build but went away with a bloody nose.

"That was curtains for my boxing career," he laughed.

Alfie got interested in Gaelic football in Ballymote. He had been involved with his home Coolera team as a secretary and had handed that job over to Pete Cooney. In Ballymote, coach Neal Farry had been appointed to Ballaghaderreen, so Alfie was asked to take over the secretaryship in Ballymote until Farry could return.

Alfie also volunteered to help build Corran Park. There were no big machine diggers available during those days so creating the park was hard labour with spades, picks and shovels. Huge sections of sod were moved with help of horse and cart, said Alfie.

"The greatest promoter of the park was a priest in Ballymote, [Fr Denis O'Hara, CC] and he spent every day below the park that was being developed at the time," Alfie said. "Taking the clay from the high section down to the lower section and lifting it … and put them on the side of the road. I was fascinated by that. When they were finished, I remember going

in and helping; I was always willing to work in any way I could. I could point out the section where I put in the sod".

Corran Park officially opened on May Day of 1949 to much fanfare, according to a 1988 *Corran Herald* article. Alfie said the Ballymote Reed and Brass Band played as the Mayo and Louth players marched onto the field.

Alfie also participated in Ballymote's tennis club, the courts of which were inside Ballymote Castle. *The Corran Herald* published a photograph of the club during the 1920s posed in front of Ballymote's great Norman fortress.

"There were two tennis courts and a shelter. We had great fun playing tennis", he said. "I love sport of every kind".

Cinema

Alfie witnessed many exciting moments of Ballymote history, including the opening of the cinema, which is now the renovated Art Deco.

"I was in the cinema … the night it opened with a concert", said Alfie. "It was a beautiful cinema… I remember a man singing on the stage and he got a great applause." At the end Alfie said the performer received a huge encore and somebody shouted for him to sing *When You were Sweet Sixteen*.

"He sang it and it became one of my favourite songs. I heard it 'creeping up' on the ladder on [Radio] Luxembourg. It hit the number one mark."

When first I saw the love light in your eye
I dreamt the world held naught but joy for me
And even though we drifted far apart
I never dream, but what I dream of thee
I love you as I never loved before ...
When you were sweet
When you were sweet sixteen

Irish music

Music has always played a large part in Alfie's life, beginning in Kellystown. He was a fan of fiddle player neighbour Josie Kelly and also listened to radio shows every night, such as 'Around the Fire'. Alfie said Josie Kelly was asked several times by Radio Eireann to play on one of their programmes, along with Frank Morrison [brother of Riverstown's James Morrison]. "I loved listening to them and that's how I got interested in Irish music", he said.

Once in Ballymote, Alfie helped form a branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Eireann [now called Craobh Paddy Killoran], for which Alfie served as secretary and is now honorary CCE. One other organiser was Frank Mulvey of Coolaney and sessions were held at the 'Denette' hotel.

"We'd have a powerful session of music there", Alfie said. "(Frank) was crazy on Irish music. And people began to know about it. We had musicians, Fred Finn, Peter Horan, John Walsh, loads of them around, Willie Coleman, John Joe Coleman".

In addition to Ballymote's group, Alfie was also involved in the Riverstown branch. Friday nights in a Riverstown pub would have a "packed house" until the landlady shouted closing time. A few were invited up to the kitchen to enjoy "a cup of tea, entertaining, chatting and all of that, and it grew from there".

Alfie got in touch with the parents of the gifted up-and-coming musician Seamus Tansey of Gurteen, Alfie said. "He was a powerful flute player." Alfie wrote Radio Eireann to ask if they would give the young man an audition, to which they agreed. Seamus later won the All-Ireland flute title in 1965 and has been on television and radio many times.

"He never looked back from thereon", Alfie said. "He was called umpteen times".

Later in 2006, Alfie said the Comhaltas group in Gurteen, which included 'Junior' Davey, whose father was the great fiddle player Andy Davey, bought the old creamery there and made the site into what is now the Coleman Irish Music Centre, in honour of the town's famous musical son, Michael Coleman.

The traditional Irish musicians of South Sligo kept busy playing sessions at each other's venues, including in Boyle, Conlon's pub in Gurteen, Sweeney's in Riverstown, and Kelly's hotel [on Bridge Street, Sligo] Alfie said. Ballymote's own Comhaltas had an impressive membership. The musicians used to gather at Kelly's hotel for "mighty sessions", which included the great Willie Clancy of Co. Clare.

"We got so strong, we had about 60 members, 2 shilling each membership in Ballymote", said Alfie. "They were dedicated".

Alfie said they booked a concert at the Abbey [the Art Deco] cinema with bands from Collooney and Castlebaldwin. It was successful beyond their wildest dreams.

"We had three céilí bands and a packed house of musicians. It was so successful that the proprietor Bartley Cryan said, 'There's about 50 people out the door and we have no place for them'. They had to be turned away, it was a powerful session," he said.

The following year they invited the All-Ireland CCE down top fiddle player from Newry for another packed concert. The subsequent year was also sold out. "Packed houses each time", he said.

However, they got little funding and after paying expenses, they only cleared about £5. They attempted to host a fleadh in Ballymote with the O'Connor family of musicians and dancers from Ballymote. They had such a great group of musicians that Alfie thought it would be a good idea to ask Television Eireann to record them, to which the broadcaster agreed.

The group's patriarch, Don O'Connor, drove his bus with Alfie and all the musicians to the Dublin studios to perform on a television spot. 'Din Joe' (Denis Fitzgibbon), described by Alfie as the Ryan Tubridy of his time and host of the 'Take the Floor' programme, presented the show.

One concert held in Ballymote featured an All-Ireland champion fiddle player and the Kincorra Ceilí Band, a member of which was brother to Ballymote member Kathleen Harrington.

"They went wild in the cinema!" Alfie said. "They were up on their hind feet, 'More, more, more!' I thought we'd never get out of it. They were fabulous".

Loftus Hall

In addition to his other community work, Alfie took over the running of Loftus Hall which held popular events such as line dancing. Maintaining the hall took much time but Alfie's devotion was acknowledged when Fr Joe Caulfield, now a priest in Gurteen, nominated Alfie for 'Person of the Year'. The event turned out to be a great celebration with band music, a dance and nice meal, joined by his family from near and far. He was presented with a large book of photographs and a large "wad" of cash, which he used to buy a large glass case for his home in which to display some of his beloved treasures, including Ballymote memorabilia. "We had a mighty night," he said of that special evening.

In 1980 Alfie was requested to be a candidate in the Baron of Ballymote and Viscount of Corran mock elections and collected contributions of part of the fundraising project for the Ballymote GAA Club. He wasn't appointed for the office, but had a ball playing the town crier dressed up with a false beard and cloak.

"Hear ye! Hear ye!" he cried out, while ringing a big bell in town. "I did the streets and there were crowds out" and helped raise "piles of money" for the GAA and local charities. It was £8,200 in total, according to a 2013 *Sligo Champion* article. Coincidentally, Gladys Hannon was elected the first female 'Baroness' that year. Alfie also volunteered for Ballymote Community Care, including taking annual busloads of elderly people to Knock Shrine. It was a good day out, which included a meal and Mass.

Credit Union

Ballymote has Alfie Banks to thank as one of the founding members of the Ballymote District Credit Union, which has been going strong since

launched in 1989. Alfie said forming the union involved him and the voluntary committee taking a year's training, studying a large book of rules, requirements and regulations from the Irish League of Credit Unions' main Dublin office. There have been many developments since, including new premises with storage, the hiring of a part-time worker and installation of a computer system. Alfie said Catherine (Cassie) Finn, another great Ballymote citizen, was its first member. "I'm number 10 myself," Alfie said.

Ballymote's living legacy

The citizens of Ballymote can be grateful for all the positive contributions Alfie Banks has made to his adopted area. Despite a busy law career and raising a large family, he has volunteered much of his time to enrich the sport, Irish music and community life of this bustling market town.

Alfie's beloved wife, Mary, passed away in 2010 but he is well looked after by his children, grandchildren and the staff of the Ballymote Community Nursing Unit. Although retired and close to age 95, Alfie is not finished being an active contributor to the town. He religiously walks to Mass every day, dressed in a natty tweed jacket and cap, regales holiday parties with his singing, and loves to share his engaging stories – and we are so very glad to listen.

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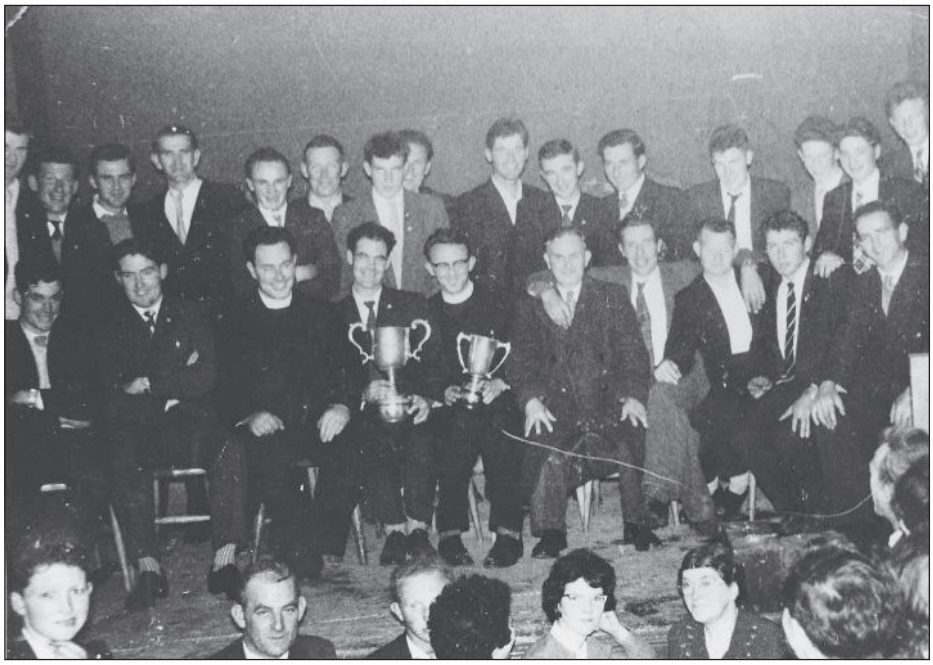
Keash Football Team, Sligo Junior Champions 1961

By David Casey



The champions of 1961.
Back row, left to right: John Tom Cryan, Mike McGowan, ---, Pa Benson, Alan Brehony, Sean Coleman, Francie Kielty, Thomas Brehony, Mick Farrell, Sean Fox, Mick Mullaney RIP, Noel McMememy RIP, Pat Garvin, Jimmy Greer, Paddy Hannon RIP
Front row, left to right: Sean Carty, Vinnie Cryan, Fr John Brehony RIP, Pakie Tansey RIP, Fr Rickie Devine RIP, Michael F Regan (Hon Secretary) RIP, Johnny Kielty, ---, John Joe Kielty, Josie Benson RIP. Photo courtesy of Sean and Mae Carty.

Come all ye Gaels of Sligo
And listen to my praise
It's not about Cork's hurlers
Or Kerry's glorious days.
It's about a team from Keash
And what I say is true,
They were the finest stalwarts,
These boys in white and blue.

October 15th in 'sixty-one
Was a day of great renown.
The Keash team's loyal supporters
Made their way to Sligo Town.
They went in cars and buses
And some on bicycles too,
Each one to give encouragement
To the boys in white and blue.

The Keash team were determined
To bring honour to the parish,
To win the Junior Championship Cup
That any club would cherish.
Their opponents were Coolera
Who were determined too,
But they couldn't match the heroes,
The boys in white and blue.

Our lads, attacking from the start,
Showed Coolera how it was done.
They notched the scores like champions
As points came one by one.
Then a major score by a forward
That was, no doubt, well taken,
And believe me, Coolera's hopes
Were well and truly shaken.

The first half was exciting
With dash and skill and speed
And at the call of half-time
Keash were five points in the lead.
Early in the second half
Coolera launched some fierce attacks,
But every movement perished
On Keash's stonewall backs.

When the final whistle sounded
Our heroes had won well,
Some Cooleras wished them luck
While others wished them hell.
Keash supporters crowded to the pitch
To cheer the boys in blue,
The cup was back again in Keash
First time since 'fifty-two.

We had the Benson Brothers,
Survivors of 'forty-nine.
We had the Kieltys, Brehonys
And Father Rickie Devine.
Mullaney, Cryan and Farrell
Were on that great team too,
All were worthy players
To wear the white and blue.

Then there was our captain Tansey
Who gave many a fine display,
Hannon, Carty and Sean Fox
Who all shone on that day,
Coleman, Garvin and Noel Mack,
The lads from the Travellers' Rest
Who were always on hand and willing
To give only of their best.

We had Greer and Harte and Duffy
And McGowan, the star half-back,
And of course we had Johnny Kielty
Who came the whole way from Knockbrack.
And then we had the supporters
Who were always loyal and true
To cheer in victory and defeat
The boys in white and blue.

Slater's Directory of 1870

Submitted by David Casey

Slater's Commercial Directory of Ireland, 1870, contains a short description of each town listed at the time. The location of each place is given in relation to the nearest railway station. The names of individuals are listed under headings such as post offices, nobility, gentry, clergy, schools and various occupations and commercial activities.

In *Slater's* of 1870, Ballymote is listed with Tobercurry, Bunnanadden and Riverstown. Personal names and place names are listed alphabetically. The spellings of names in this article are as given in the directory.

Some population figures are provided. Ballymote in 1851 was 965, and in 1861 was 1,268. The population of Bunnanadden was returned with the parish of Cloonaghill, but was not given. The population of Riverstown in 1861 was 339 and that of Tobercurry in 1861 was 842.

POST OFFICE, BALLYMOTE, William Lougheed, *Post Master*. Letters from all parts arrive at fifty minutes past three morning and at half-past one afternoon; and are despatched at forty minutes past eleven morning and at fifty minutes past eight evening. *Money Order Office and Savings Bank*

POST OFFICE, BUNNANADDEN, Martin Hunt, *Post Master*. Letters from all parts arrive (from Ballymote) at twenty five-minutes past six morning, and are despatched at forty minutes past seven evening.

POST OFFICE, RIVERSTOWN, John McGarry, *Post Master*. Letters from all parts arrive (from Ballymote) at twenty minutes past eight morning, and are despatched at fifteen past six evening.

POST OFFICE, TOBERCURRY, Bridget Henry, *Post Mistress*. Letters from all parts arrive (from Ballymote) at ten minutes past seven morning, and are despatched at fifty minutes past six evening. *Money Order and Savings Bank*.

Nobility, Gentry & Clergy

Armstrong Captain James W. J.P. Chaffpool
Brett John Esq. Tobercurry
Cooper Miss Kate, Summerton
Crozier Rev. Graham the Glebe, Riverstown
Duke Jemmet, Esq. J.P. New Park
Featherston Rev. James, Riverstown
Feeny Rev. Eugene P.P. Riverstown
Gethin, John, Esq. J.P. Ballingdoon, Riverstown
Gethin Richard, Esq. J.P. Earlsfield
Gray John, Esq. Carnaleck
Gumley Philip, Esq. Ballymote
Henry Rev. James, P.P. Bunnanadden
Heton Mr. Abraham, Abbeyville
Jackson Rev. James, Castleloye, Tobercurry
Judge Rev. Thos. Sooey, Riverstown
McDermott Rev. James, Ballymote
McDermott Rev. John, P.P. Tobercurry
McDonnell Jos. Esq. J.P. Doo Castle
Meehan Rev. Edward, Cloonacool, Tobercurry
Moore Rev. Arthur, the Glebe, Ballymote
Mountmorres Rev . Lord. Achonry
Mullarkey Mr. Patrick, Ballyara, Tobercurry
O'Connor Mr. Charles, Roadstown, Tobercurry
Perceval Mrs. Ann, Templehouse
Reeves Thomas, Esq. Tobercurry
Reynolds John G. Esq., Castle Lodge
Scully Rev. Patrick, Killaville, Bunnanadden
Tighe Rev. Denis, P.P. Ballymote

Schools

CHURCH SCHOOL, Ballymote – John Gorman, master; Eliza Smyth, Mistress
CHURCH EDUCATION SOCIETY'S SCHOOL, Riverstown – Jas Lindsay, master; Mary Henry, mstrs.
CHURCH EDUCATION SOCIETY'S SCHOOL, Tobercurry – Thomas West, master
NATIONAL SCHOOLS – Ballymote – Michael Doyle, master; Lizzie Doyle, mistress
Bunnanadden – Roger McDermott, master; Attie S. Kivlahan, mistress
Tobercurry – John Kearns, master; Matilda Nicholson, mistress

Auctioneers & Valuators

Morrison Robert L. Ballymote
O'Brien James A. Ballymote

Bakers

Brackin Maurice, Ballymote
Burke John, Tobercurry
Coghlan Bartholomew, Ballymote
Connolly William, Tobercurry
Devine Patrick, Tobercurry
Dockry John, Ballymote
Druggan Connolly, Riverstown
Flynn, Michael, Riverstown
Healy Thomas, Tobercurry
Howley Thomas, Tobercurry
Kelly Thomas, Bunnanadden
McDermott Luke, Bunnanadden
McTernan Michael, Ballymote
Manning Michael, Tobercurry
Morrison Robert L, Ballymote
O'Brien Bartholomew, Ballymote
O'Donohoe Robert, Ballymote
Quin Dominick, Tobercurry
Teevan Luke, Ballymote

Blacksmiths

Brennan Richard, Ballymote
Cawley Michael, senr. Tobercurry
Cawley Michael, jun. Tobercurry
Gaffney Edward, Bunnanadden
Hannon Michael, Ballymote
Keenan Peter, Ballymote
McDermott Bernard, Riverstown
Moran James, Riverstown

Boot & Shoe Makers

Cawley James, Ballymote
Cawley Thomas, Ballymote
Coan Bartholomew, Bunnanadden
Coleman Michael, Tobercurry
Craig James, Ballymote
Craig William, Ballymote
Duffy Michael, Tobercurry
Hannon Stephen, Ballymote
Healy Hugh, Tobercurry
Henderson John, Ballymote

Irwin Stuart, Ballymote
Lyons Peter, Tobercurry
McGarry Patrick, Bunnanadden
McGinnis Thomas, Ballymote
Quigley Martin, Ballymote
Reid George, Riverstown
Rogers John, Tobercurry
Scanlan Andrew, Ballymote
Tighe Michael, Riverstown
Walsh Thomas, Ballymote
Wynne, John, Riverstown

Butchers
Connolly William, Tobercurry
Dyer Patrick Ballymote
Flanagan Patrick, Ballymote
McHugh Luke, Ballymote
Torsney James, Riverstown
Torsney Thomas, Riverstown

Carpenters & Cart Makers
Cogan John, Riverstown
Ginn Samuel, Tobercurry
Healy Charles, Ballymote
McGethin John, Tobercurry
McHugh John, Ballymote
Moffatt Charles, Tobercurry
Murray James, Ballymote
Reynolds Patrick, Ballymote
Saultry John, Ballymote

China, Glass & Earthenware Dealers
Clifford Matthew, Ballymote
Cook Mark, Tobercurry
Dockry John, Ballymote
McGann Andrew, Ballymote
Morrison Robert, Ballymote
Morrison Robert L. Ballymote
Tighe Thomas, Tobercurry

Coopers
Gethins James, Tobercurry
Leonard James, Tobercurry
Maron Michael, Tobercurry

Emigration Agents
Devine Nicholas, Tobercurry
Irwin Stuart, Ballymote
Morrison Robert, Ballymote
Morrison Robert L. Ballymote
O'Brien James A. Ballymote

Fire &c Office Agents
City of Glasgow – Robert L Morrison, Ballymote
English & Scottish Law Life – Robert Morrison, Ballymote; & Nicholas Devine, Tobercurry

Grocers & Dealers in Sundries
Anderson John, Ballymote
Barlow John, Riverstown
Benson Patrick, Tobercurry
Berreen John, Ballymote
Bourns Edward, Tobercurry
Bourns John, Tobercurry
Breheny Martin, Tobercurry
Breheny Michael, Ballymote
Brennan Thomas, Tobercurry
Brett John, Tobercurry
Burke John, Tobercurry
Cawley John, Ballymote
Clifford Matthew, Ballymote
Coan Bartholomew, Bunnanadden
Coghlan Bartholomew, Ballymote
Coghlan Patrick, Ballymote
Connolly William, Tobercurry
Conway Patrick, Riverstown
Cooke Mark, Tobercurry
Davy Hugh, Ballymote
Davy Martin, Ballymote
Deasy Ellen, Ballymote
Devine Nicholas, Tobercurry
Devine Patrick, Tobercurry
Dockry John, Ballymote
Donagher Peter, Ballymote
Donohoe Martin, Tobercurry
Duffy Michael, Tobercurry
Dyer John, Ballymote
Fahey Michael, Ballymote
Flynn Ellen, Riverstown
Flynn Martin, Riverstowm
Flynn Michael, Riverstown
Foy Bridget, Tobercurry
Foy Patrick, Bunnanadden
Gethins Peter, Riverstown
Gorman Henry, Ballymote
Gray Margaret, Tobercurry
Hannon Patrick, Ballymote
Healy Hugh, Tobercurry
Healy Thomas, Tobercurry
Hogge John, Ballymote
Howley Thomas, Tobercurry
Hunt Honoria, Bunnanadden
Irwin Alexander, Riverstown
Irwin Stuart, Ballymote
Judge Alice, Ballymote
Judge John, Riverstown
Judge Michael, Ballymote
Keane John, Tobercurry
Kerin Catherine, Ballymote
Kerin John, Ballymote
Killoran John, Bunnanadden
Killoran Michael, Ballymote
McDermott Luke, Bunnanadden
McDonagh John, Ballymote
McDonnell Mary, Tobercurry
McGann Andrew, Ballymote
McGarry John, Riverstown
McGethrick Patrick, Ballymote
McGethrick Thomas, Ballymote
McTernan Michael, Ballymote
Mahon Joseph, Ballymote
Manning Michael, Tobercurry
Marron Michael, Bunnanadden
Morrison Robert, Ballymote
Morrison Robert L, Ballymote
O'Brien Bartholomew, Ballymote
O'Brien Bridget, Ballymote
O'Brien James, Ballymote
O'Connor John, Ballymote
O'Donohoe Robert, Ballymote
O'Dowd Dominick, Ballymote
O'Hara Patrick, Ballymote
Quigley Martin, Ballymote
Quin Dominick, Tobercurry
Reynolds John, Tobercurry
Roddy Mary, Ballymote
Rogers Henry, Ballymote
Roger James, Ballymote
Rogers Martin, Ballymote
Sheridan Andrew, Ballymote
Smyth Patrick, Riverstown
Stewart James, Riverstown
Tighe James, Tobercurry
Timon James, Ballymote
Wynne Thomas, Ballymote

Guano Dealers & Seedsmen
Clarke Thomas, Tobercurry
Irwin Stuart, Ballymote
Morrison Robert, Ballymote

Hardwaremen
Barlow John, Riverstown
Clarke Thomas, Tobercurry
Cooke Mark, Tobercurry
Flynn Michael, Riverstown
Irwin Stuart, Ballymote
Morrison Robert, Ballymote
Morrison Robert L., Ballymote
Smyth Patrick, Riverstown

Hotels
Cooke Thomas, Tobercurry
Doyle Denis, Ballymote
McDermott Patrick (commercial), Tobercurry
Morrison Robert L. (commercial), Ballymote

Leather Sellers
Bourns Edward, Tobercurry
Breheny Michael, Ballymote
Clarke Thomas, Tobercurry
Crann Patrick, Tobercurry
Duffy Michael, Tobercurry

Flynn Michael, Riverstown
Healy Hugh, Tobercurry
Lyons Peter, Tobercurry
Morrison Robert, Ballymote
Quigley Martin, Ballymote
Smyth Patrick, Riverstown

Linen & Woollen Drapers & Haberdashers
Brennan Mark, Tobercurry
Brett John, Tobercurry
Brett Thomas, Tobercurry
Cannan Thomas, Ballymote
Collery Patrick, Tobercurry
Cooke Thomas, Tobercurry
Devine Nicholas, Tobercurry
Devine Patrick, Tobercurry
Donohoe Jane, Tobercurry
Flynn Michael, Riverstown
Gethins Peter, Riverstown
Irwin Alexander, Riverstown
Kerin Catherine, Ballymote
Lawson Archibald, Ballymote
Morrison Robert, Ballymote
O'Brien James A, Ballymote
Reynolds John, Tobercurry
Stewart James, Riverstown

Milliners & Dressmakers
Brett Thomas, Tobercurry
Cannan Thomas, Tobercurry
Donohoe Jane, Tobercurry
Lawson Archibald, Ballymote
O'Brien James A, Ballymote

Nail Makers
Costelloe William, Ballymote
Ferny William, Tobercurry
Smyth Thomas, Tobercurry

Physicans & Surgeons
Burrows Thomas, M.D. Tobercurry
McMunn Andrew, M.D. Ballymote
Murray Thomas S, M.D. Tobercurry

Posting Houses
Conway Patrick, Riverstown
Doyle Denis, Ballymote
McBrien Michael, Tobercurry
McLanghry William, Riverstown
Morrison Robert L, Ballymote
Quin Dominick, Riverstown

Saddlers & Harness Makers
Cryan Michael, Ballymote
Healey Thomas, Ballymote

Spirit & Porter Dealers
Begley James, Ballymote
Benson Patrick, Tobercurry
Berreen John, Ballymote
Breheny Martin,Tobercurry
Brennan Thomas, Tobercurry
Burke Patrick, Tobercurry
Cannan John, Tobercurry
Cawley John, Ballymote
Coghlan Bartholomew, Ballymote
Coghlan Patrick, Ballymote
Conway Patrick, Riverstown
Cooke Thomas, Tobercurry
Cosgrove Mary, Tobercurry
Crann Patrick, Tobercurry
Dawson Patrick, Ballymote
Donagher Peter, Ballymote
Donohoe Martin, Tobercurry
Dorkan John, Tobercurry
Doyle Denis, Ballymote
Dyer Patrick, Tobercurry
Fahey Michael, Ballymote
Flynn Michael, Ballymote
Ford Robert, Ballymote
Gilmartin Patrick, Tobercurry
Hogge John, Ballymote
Howley Thomas, Tobercurry
Hunt Honoria, Bunnanadden
Leonard James, Tobercurry
McDermott Luke, Bunnanadden
McDermott Patrick, Tobercurry
McGann Andrew, Ballymote
McGethrick Patrick, Ballymote
Manning Michael, Tobercurry
Marron Michael, Bunnanadden
Moran Francis, Tobercurry
Morrison Robert L. Ballymote
O'Brien James, Ballymote
O'Brien Michael, Ballymote
O'Donohoe Robert, Ballymote
O'Hara Patrick, Ballymote
Quin Dominick, Tobercurry
Rogers Henry, Ballymote
Rogers James, Ballymote
Rogers Martin, Ballymote
Sheridan Andrew, Ballymote
Shiel Margaret, Riverstown
Tighe Thomas, Tobercurry
Walsh Francis, Ballymote
West Thomas, Tobercurry

Tailors
Breheny Bartholomew, Ballymote
Carroll Thomas, Ballymote
Connolly Michael, Ballymote
Costello Thomas, Ballymote
Dyer James, Ballymote
Feely Thomas, Tobercurry
Gilmartin Luke, Tobercurry
Irvine John, Tobercurry
Keelry John, Ballymote

Timber, Iron & Coal Merchants
Brett John, Tobercurry
O'Brien Bartholomew, Ballymote

Wine & Spirit Merchants
Donohoe Martin, Tobercurry
Morrison Robert L. Ballymote
Tighe Thomas, Tobercurry

Woollen Drapers
See Linen and Woollen Drapers

Miscellaneous
Connor Michael, stonemason, Riverstown
Fox John, butter merchant, Ballymote
Healy John, dyer & cleaner, Riverstown
Henry Maurice, painter & glazier, Ballymote
Lougheed Wm. apothecary, Ballymote
McMorrow Edwd. Pawnbroker, Ballymote
Reynolds John G. solicitor, Castle Lodge, Ballymote

PLACES OF WORSHIP
AND THEIR MINISTERS
PARISH CHURCHES -
Ballymote… Rev Arthur Moore, rector
Achonry… Lord Mountmorris, rector
Riverstown… Rev. Graham Crozier, A.M. rector
Tobercurry… Rev James Jackson, incumbent
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPELS:-
Ballymote… Rev Denis Tighe, P.P; Rev James McDermott, curate
Bunnanadden… Rev James Henry, P.P;
Rev Patrick Scully, curate
Riverstown… Rev Eugene Feeny, P.P;
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPELS contd.
Rev James Featherston and Rev Thomas Judge, curates
Tobercurry… Rev John McDermott, P.P; Rev Edward Meehan, curate
METHODIST (Wesleyan) CHAPEL, Ballymote… Ministers various

POOR LAW UNION
WORKHOUSE TOBERCURRY
Master…. Jeremiah Roddy
Matron… Maria Flynn

Schoolmistress… Eliza McGoldrick
Protestant Chaplain…Rev Jas. Jackson
Roman Catholic Chaplain… Rev John McDermott, P.P
Medical Officer…Thos. Stanley Murray, M.D
Clerk to the Union… James Donohoe
Relieving Officers……John McGethrick, Tobercurry; Daniel Mullarkey, Dromartin; James McManus, Coolaney

REGISTRAR
Superintendent Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages …James Donohoe, Banada
Registrar of Marriages… John Connor, Tobercurry
Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages… Aclare, & Curry, Patrick F. McGloin, M.D; Coolaney, Rowland Blennerhassett, M.D; Tobercurry, Thomas Stanley Murray, M.D
Bridewell and Court House, Ballymote… Jackson Hawksby, keeper

CONSTABULARY STATIONS –
Ballymote… John Connor, Head constbl.
Riverstown – Robert Allman Smyth, sub-inspector; Michael Ward, head constable
Tobercurry…… Thomas Reeves, sub-inspector; Paul Carty, head constbl

DISPENSARIES –
Ballymote… Andrew McMunn, M.D, medical attendant
Riverstown… Thomas Burrows, M.D, medical attendant
Tobercurry… Thomas Murray, M.D, medical attendant

CAR
To TOBERCURRY, a Mail Car, from the Post Office, Ballymote, every morning at forty minutes past five, and returns every evening at seven

CONVEYANCE BY RAILWAY
ON THE MIDLAND GREAT WESTERN LINE
Station, BALLYMOTE…. Robert Edward Thompson, station master
--
Thanks to the National Library of Ireland for the content of this article.

A Crazy Dream

By Joan Gleeson

On long dark nights
when sleep won't come
I try to house my thoughts
But they are having none of it.
They throw open the doors
and windows of my mind.
Take off like a swarm of butterflies
landing, fluttering and flying high
before folding their wings
and settling on some sleepy flowers.

I fall asleep at last
I dream.
I have a crazy dream.
I'm surrounded by forty-nine
Golden issues of *The Corran Herald*
with the *tromach tramach*
of Irish life unfurled.
They soar on eagles' wings
with articles on history
and all sorts of things.

Now don't forget this is a crazy dream
Grass-hoppering around from scene to scene.
So now I'm up on Grehan's Hill
reading Pat James Duffy's writing still.
The Kincora Ceilí Band plays
Michael Coleman's reels and jigs and hornpipes,
how I love to hear the likes.
I want to stay here,
stay forever.
But my lovely dream has turned to nightmare
This to all of you I now must share.

Here comes emails, he-mails, she-mails!
I'm chased by Twitter and Facebook
I'm falling down the hill.
A noise awakens me
No rest for the wicked!
The click of the letter box
with post delivered
brings me down to earth.
The fiftieth issue of *The Corran Herald*
has given birth.
To those involved:
Congratulations may I say
and here's to fifty more
Lé cunamh Dé.

A clipping from the *Sligo Champion* of Mrs Kathleen Harrington née Gardiner, who was a fiddle player of the cited Kincora Ceilí Band. Her family (the author's own family) came from Killavil.


MISS KATHLEEN HARRING-
TON, whose Kincora Ceili Band
is heard frequently from R.E.,
is one of the leading exponents
of Irish Dance Music

William Bourke Cockran

By John C McTernan

William Bourke Cockran

William Bourke Cockran, orator, lawyer and statesman, was one of Sligo's most influential sons, and a prominent figure in the public life of the United States for more than a quarter of a century. His paternal grandfather, Tom Cockran, the proprietor of a large freehold estate, was an influential man, popularly referred to in his day as the 'Mayor of Ballinacarrow'. His son, Martin, described as 'a handsome and daring young sportsman', a survivor of the 'rollicking generations depicted in the novels of Samuel Lover and Charles Lever', had a passion for horses, and his favourite pursuit was hunting with the hounds over the hills of Claragh. In April 1850, when little more than 20 years old, he married Harriett Knight-White, who came from a distinguished Limerick family. Of that union was born four sons and one daughter, the most famous of whom was the celebrated William Bourke Cockran.

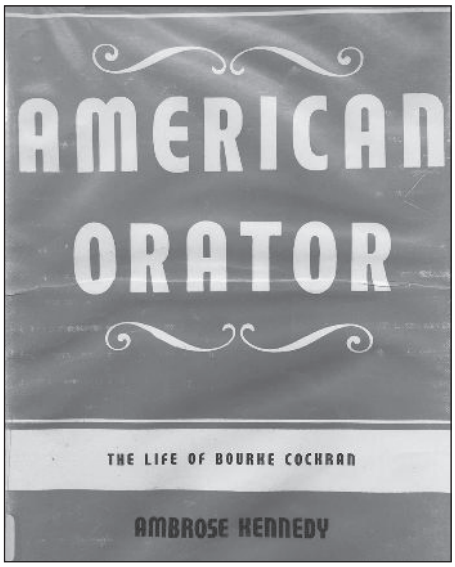
Bourke Cockran was born at Claragh, in the parish of Kilvarnet, on 28 February 1854. He was only five years old when his father died at Carrowkell House from injuries sustained in a fall from a horse. After her husband's death, Mrs Cockran disposed of her interest in the family estate and moved with her young family to Sligo, where Bourke – as he was known – attended the Marist School. In 1865 the Cockrans changed residence again and went to Dublin. The boy's education was continued at the Marist College in Lille and at Summerhill College, Athlone. Originally intended for the priesthood, the family reverses caused him to abandon that career. Instead, he decided to seek his fortune in the New World. He bade adieu to his widowed mother, brothers and sister, and set sail for the United States. The year was 1871 and Cockran was then 17 years of age.

In the country of his adoption, Bourke Cockran hewed-out for himself a remarkable career. His first job was that of a porter, and later a clerk, in a department store in New York, at a salary of 36 shillings a week. Within a year, and with the assistance of a medical friend, he secured a teaching post in a large public school in Westchester and seemed destined for a career as an educator. But fate decided otherwise. Cockran, who had developed a flare for oratory during his schooldays in Ireland, joined the Westchester Debating Society and soon distinguished himself as a budding orator of great promise. A Justice of the New York Supreme Court was so impressed by Cockran's manner and style of speaking that he advised him to study law.

This was the turning point in Bourke Cockran's career. He qualified as a lawyer and was admitted to the American Bar in 1876, a mere five years after his arrival in the United States. He commenced his professional career in New York, and it was not long until his natural talents and industry made him one of the most conspicuous figures of the legal profession in that city. The Sligo-born lawyer made his mark through his great oratorical powers, and he was engaged in all the major lawsuits of his day. Nature had blessed him with a tremendous advantage over his colleagues in the legal profession. His striking physical appearance – 'the leonine face, magnificent head, powerful body and buoyant carriage' – coupled with his magnetic personality, wonderful voice and captivating Irish brogue, attracted instant attention in the most distinguished gatherings. He took high rank in his profession, but the splendour of his voice as a public debater obscured, to some extent, the real and solid talent underlying his genius. There is a story told that in his first case, the judge, impressed by his effective speech on behalf of his client, addressed him as 'Judge Cockran'.

'He has taken you for the famous Judge John C Cockrane of Westchester County,' whispered a colleague in awed tones. 'All right', replied Bourke Cockran, 'perhaps someday Judge Cockrane will be mistaken for me.'

Bourke Cockran was a natural orator of extraordinary power, and it was this unusual accomplishment that first lifted him to fame. Nature had bestowed upon him with a lavish hand the rare and precious gifts of genuine eloquence. From the great files of his memory he could produce at will the material his lips needed for instant use. This, with the richness of his vice, the grace and earnestness of his deliveries, and his faculty for immediate comprehension and swift and perfect expression, made him one of the greatest orators of his age. He could speak in thunderous



A rare book on Cockran provided by Michael Coleary.

tones of denunciation or in the quiet easy flow of the conversationalist. Whenever and wherever he spoke he was sure of a large audience, for those who disagreed with his opinions enjoyed the brilliancy and wit with which they were expressed. One of his greatest feats of oratory was the address he delivered to the students of the Irish College in Paris in 1903. Learned Frenchmen in the audience pronounced the effort to be equal to the best of Bossuet's orations in beauty and sentiment and sustained eloquence. To the Americans he was known as 'Tammany's Mark Anthony'. To the Irish he was 'the Orator of the Race', and his lofty character and unrivalled eloquence were 'their proudest possessions'.

'The days of the great orators have gone,' wrote Sir Shane Leslie, 'but in the majestic line of Irish eloquence from Burke and Grattan to O'Connell, and finally to Redmond, there must be a niche for Bourke Cochran.'

A selection of his most fluent addresses, entitled *In the Name of Liberty*, was published in New York in 1925.

The gifted orator and popular lawyer eventually became the successful statesman. In this arena he was a match for the great political leaders of his day, and all in turn were glad of his unpaid championship. Bourke Cockran commenced his political career in opposition to Tammany within the Democratic Party. But Tammany soon discovered his rare eloquence and took him to its bosom. By 1884 his fame had become national. In the Democratic Presidential Convention of that year he delivered one of the greatest speeches of his career in opposition to the nomination of Grover Cleveland. In 1886 he was elected to Congress as one of the New York Democratic delegation. He served six terms in the House of Representatives between 1886 and 1909.

For almost a quarter of a century the 'silver-tongued orator' of Sligo origin was one of the most influential and respected members of the House of Representatives, and his utterances on various topics always commanded the attention of that assembly. Time out of number, the great auditorium echoed and re-echoed to his eloquence. He was unafraid either to form his own views on important political issues, or to maintain them, even to the extent of leaving the Democratic Party in 1896 because of his advocacy of the gold standard. His speeches on tariff and currency questions are among the noblest examples of parliamentary eloquence. He became the recognised exponent of fiery and persuasive rhetoric, and his name was the synonym for audacious and arresting oratory. He made his mark on Congress in no uncertain manner, and when his death was announced the leaders of both political parties joined in paying tribute to his memory. Successive speakers referred to him as 'one of the greatest orators of all time', and 'one of the most brilliant ornaments of American statesmanship'.

Bourke Cockran was one of Ireland's most sincere patriots and influential sons. 'His love of the homeland grew even deeper as the years went by,' wrote one biographer. For over 30 years his was the most powerful voice raised in America on behalf of Home Rule. He was always a strong supporter of the Irish national movement and the friend of many Irishmen who went to America seeking aid for the 'auld country'. Amongst these were Roger Casement, John Dillon and John Redmond. Ireland's ultimate freedom was his life-long dream. He was one of the principal speakers at the Irish Race Convention in New York in March, 1916, and his noble voice led the American-Irish protests against the execution of the leaders of the Easter Rising. He never lost faith in the cause and never hesitated in the effort, whether by word or action, to help in every honourable step towards the triumph of Irish nationalism.

Despite success and fame, Bourke Cockran never forgot the place of his origin. In June 1903 he visited Ireland and received a tremendous welcome in his native county. From Ballymote he was escorted in triumphant procession to Sligo, where, on June 6, he was made a Freeman of the Borough, the highest honour that could be bestowed on such a distinguished son. Cockran was deeply moved at the reception he received. Thanking the Mayor and citizens for the honours accorded to him, he said: 'It has been my pleasure to receive some honours in the course of my life, but, I doubt, if anything has occurred, or if anything is like to occur, that could afford me the satisfaction with which I find myself enrolled among the honorary burgesses of my native town … The true test of a man's worth is the opinion held of him by those who are most intimately acquainted with him… No testimony or attention can be more gratifying to anyone as that which comes from the people amongst whom he was born.'

During the course of that visit he laid the corner-stone of a new Catholic church in his native Ballinacarrow and contributed handsomely towards the cost of its erection. A plaque within the church recalls the memory of that district's most famous son: 'Pray for the soul of Hon. Bourke Cockran, a generous benefactor of this Church.'

On 1 March 1923 the hand of death stilled forever the most eloquent voice in America. Bourke Cockran's passing was widely mourned. In 1903 John Redmond had paid him this tribute: 'So far as Ireland is concerned, neither fame nor fortune, brilliant success nor the applause of men has ever been able to turn him from a steadfast and self-sacrificing devotion to Ireland's rights…'

He is buried in the Gate of Heaven Cemetery, New York, and the large Celtic Cross over his grave bears the following inscription: 'God gave him the great gift of speech which he used for his Faith and his Country.'

A Sad and Violent Confrontation

Submitted by Padraig McDermott

These events took place on Saturday April 9th, 1881
Reported for the *Freeman's Journal*, Boyle, Monday night 11 April
--
I regret exceedingly to [describe] the affray between the police and the people which occurred on Saturday in the townland of Clogher near Monasteraden in the count of Sligo.

James Broder, Process-server, attempted to serve notice on Thursday to tenants on the estate of Arthur French of Johnstown, Straffan, Co Kildare, on Thursday 31 March, 1881. Fearing for his safety, Broder requested the assistance of police to perform his duties. No less than 40 police were drafted into the barracks. Broder appeared outside the village of Clogher, a place of four or five cottages. He was not escorted by 40 police or the military who were stationed in Ballaghadereen, nor was he accompanied by a magistrate.

He was accompanied along the road by Constable Armstrong and three sub-constables. They were armed with rifles. The Process-server carried a bulldog revolver. They ascended a hill which is so steep, having a plateau of about six feet, that one cannot see a person coming in the opposite direction until they are 12 yards or so of each other.

When Broder came to the summit on the other side of the plateau were seen mostly women, boys and girls, the men being in the rear. A young woman ran forward to the police and said, 'All we want are our possessions and that you will leave the rooves of our cabins over us for another year.'

She pushed forward telling the police that they would not in any way try to harm them. Suddenly, the police drew across the road with fixed bayonets, fired under instructions. Broder was to the front, revolver in hand. Shots were fired by the police, with terrible and fatal results.

The people fled, but those who were so close to the police, that in any mere attempts to turn would have been shot in the back. The men who were close to Constable Armstrong and sub-constable Hayes, incensed by the turn of events, were grabbed and beaten by a number of men, but Broder and two guards escaped the wrath of the others and fled to safety. Two policemen protecting Broder was noted for their diligent shooting ability to protect him.

People groaning in agony were lying around. The scene was like a battlefield lasting not longer than ten minutes. The angry crowd set upon the Constables beating them senseless. The injured were:

Hugh O'Reilly, buckshot wounds to the face, head and shoulders
Darby Duffy, leg wounds
Michael Casey, wounds in the face and shoulders from buckshot
Patrick Flaherty, buckshot wounds
M Sharkey, bullet wound in the head
Constable Armstrong had eight wounds and died on Wednesday April 6
Sub-Constable Hayes, head and bayonet wounds
Joseph Corcoran, shot through the heart and died instantly
Brian Flannery, shot through the head, died instantly. He was unmarried and aged 24.

The police sergeant was badly beaten but was saved by the intervention of a woman who pleaded with the assailants on his behalf. The reporter for the *Freeman's Journal* visited the Corcoran home where his wife and six children were uncontrollable.

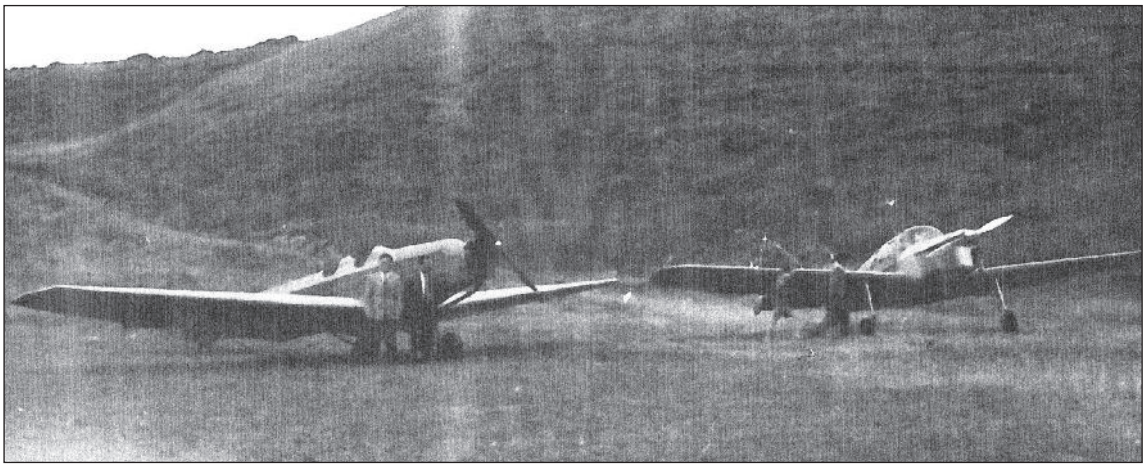
The funeral of Corcoran and Flannery to Kilcolman Cemetry were the largest ever seen in the locality. The funerals were attended by Rev Mr O'Hara and the Rev C A Connington. The place where the affray took place is covered in blood and due to dryness of the weather has turned to a sort of mud clay. The stones about the place are besmeared with blood.

After the burial service, the clergy asked them to pray for the souls of the brave men who fell victim to bayonets and buckshot while defending themselves.

The entire multitude were moved to tears. Everything is perfectly quiet in the district. The police have obeyed the instructions of Fr O'Hara.

A cenotaph was erected to the memory of Corcoran and Flannery at the scene of event.

Light Aircraft at Rosses Point during the early 50s, the Swallow and the Myles Messenger. Photo by Kevin P Murray



Saints, Sinners and Saffron Buns

By Lynda Hart

It is said that the Devil had no wish to enter Cornwall since he didn't want to be made into a pasty or a saint.

The Celtic countries and regions share many cultural and historical traits. New advances in DNA and isotope technologies can now show not only the wider regions where our ancestors lived, but also pinpoint smaller specific areas where they were born and raised. The Orkney vole, a small mammal only found on the Orkney Isles and which can be found in and dated to pre-history, came from France, and must have arrived on boats that transported our ancestors many millennia ago.

Later these same sea routes would be used by the Bronze, Iron Age and Phoenician people who traded in tin, copper and gold. It was also these routes that would have brought the first saints to the shores of the Celtic lands.

The giant Cormoron being killed by Jack

Saints

Cornwall's place names give an indication to the wealth of saints that visited the area. St Just, St Ives, St Columb, St Mawes St Neot and St Euny, to name but a few. (Perhaps Cornwall was a very heathen land!) Many of these saints were linked to Ireland and Brittany and they travelled in the 4th and 5th centuries.

Breage, near Helston, Cornwall, is named after St Breca. She and her brother Gemoe were disciples of St Patrick and St Brigid and travelled from Ireland. Both lived their lives in great sanctity. Germoe is also a place name near Helston.

St Mawes was the tenth son of an Irish king and is also revered in Brittany as St Maudez. His stone chair is still preserved in the wall of a stone cottage in the village of St Mawes, near Falmouth.

St Fingar arrived from Ireland with his brothers St Brecca, St Euny and St Erea. His sister Ia sailed to Cornwall from Ireland on a cabbage leaf (it was probably a coracle). However when she landed at Hayle she was not made welcome as she couldn't sustain herself. She left Hayle and travelled a short distance, found some land and grew cabbages from her one cabbage leaf and the area became known as Porth Ia, know known as St Ives.

Cornwall's most famous saint however is St Piran, the patron saint of Cornwall. Born in Ireland he travelled the country, teaching his beliefs, but he annoyed an Irish king who tied a millstone around his neck and during a dreadful storm with hail, thunder and lightning, he threw him over a cliff into the raging sea. But as the millstone and St Piran hit the water, all at once the sea calmed, the wind ceased and the storm abated, and St Piran floated off. He was washed up on a Cornish beach called Perranporth where in the large dunes of sand, behind the beach he built his oratory. (This has been excavated at least twice but has been reburied for protection).

St Piran continued with his teachings. He was also fond of a drink, and there is an old saying 'As drunk as a Perraner'. The Cornish national flag of a black background with a white cross is a representation of a day when St Piran, while sitting by his fire, noticed the hotter the black stones became, the more they leaked a silver liquid that was tin. Misguided medieval scholars thought that St Piran was St Ciaran of Saiger, the founder of Clonmacnoise. This is unlikely as St Ciaran of Clonmacnoise was said to have died only aged 32, whereas we are told St Piran lived to 200!

Sinners

The Cornish myths and legends have always had giants in them and they were always the same: big, bad and bold.

One of the most famous may have been the inspiration for the fairy tale of Jack and the Beanstalk. This story also has intriguing similarities to

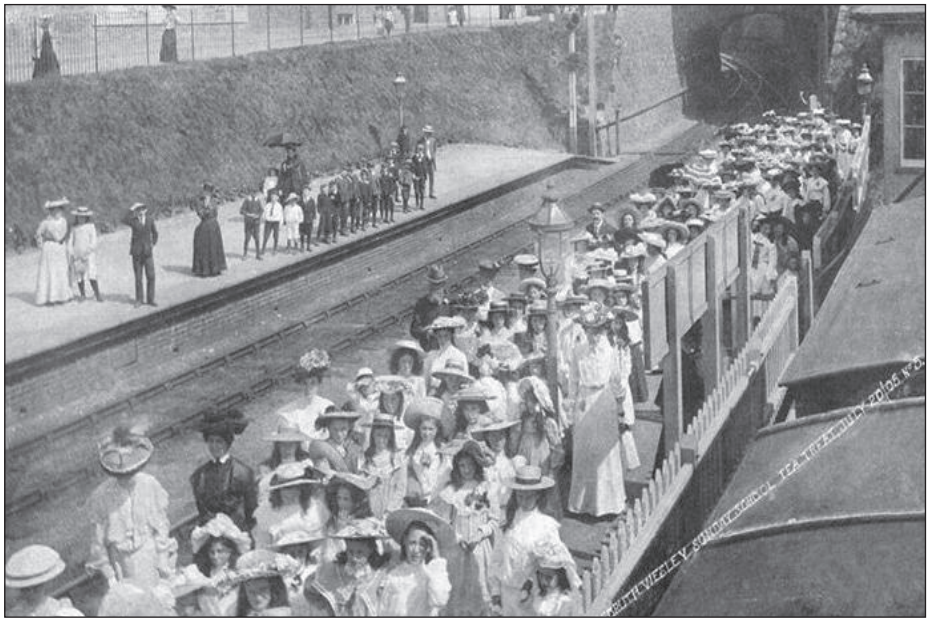
some of the construction stories for our oldest megalithic sites such as Carrowmore and Lough Crew.

There was once a giant named Cormoran who, with his wife Cormellion, lived in the forest that covered the ground around St Michaels Mount in Mounts Bay, between Penzance and Marazion. Cormoran wanted to make an impressive stronghold so he sent his wife to collect white granite boulders which she bore back in her apron. One day while Cormoron slept, his wife decided to collect the nearer greenstone instead. When Cormoron awoke he was so enraged that he beat his wife, causing her apron strings to break and the green stone boulders to be dropped. Mounts Bay forest has Neolithic origins and all that remains today are submerged tree stumps that sometimes can be seen at very low tide. But a large block of greenstone stands on the causeway to the Mount, dropped from Cormellion's apron.

At both the Carrowmore and Lough Crew Neolithic complexes the building legend says that the Calilleach Bherra (the Hag) dropped stones from her apron as she flew over the land which became the megalithic structures.

Cormoron terrorized the local population, stealing their cattle. A reward was offered to anyone who could slay the giant. Jack, a young local lad, took up the challenge. He first dug a deep pit, covering it with sticks and straw, and then lured the giant by blowing his hunting horn. Cormoron ran down the mount to see what the commotion was and fell into the pit, where Jack sprang forward and dispatched the giant with a blow from his pick-axe. For his bravery he was given a sword and a belt. Jack became a super-hero, killing wolves, breaking the skulls of pirates and dispatching giants as far away as Wales.

Away from legends, in the 18th century the local communities were sometimes looked upon as sinners because of an illicit action called 'wrecking'. Despite the name, wrecking didn't involve the deliberate luring of boats onto rocks. But if a boat was wrecked, the local people – who were often incredibly poor and sometimes near starvation – would go to the shore to collect any goods they could find. Many people would be involved, sometimes whole villages and quite often the clergy. Washed up or smuggled contraband was sometimes kept in church crypts, bell towers and even tombs.



The tea treat of 1905 at Redruth station on the way to St Ives Grey

Smuggling was a dangerous occupation that many Cornish people found themselves drawn into due to poverty. It is estimated that between 1780 and 1783 as much as two million pounds of tea and 13 million gallons of brandy were smuggled into the country, due to the exorbitant taxes that were levied on them by the government to pay for war against the French.

The penalties for being caught were harsh. Prison, huge fines and even death were meted out to those either caught smuggling or harbouring smugglers.

Buns and pasty

Although there is no direct evidence that Phoenician and Carthaginian traders came to Cornwall, Cornwall has been the foremost tin producer since the Bronze age. The tin has always been of the highest quality and sought all around the world, until in the 1980s people decided that cheap was better than quality and the last tin mine in Cornwall closed.

A tea treat saffron bun

What did these early traders trade? One of Cornwall's iconic foods is the saffron bun. Was saffron traded for tin in pre-history?

Saffron comes from the plant *crocus sativus* and is an indigenous flower of the Near East. The dried stigmas of the flower are more expensive per gram than gold. Only three stigmas are produced per plant, and they are so delicate they must be harvested by hand. Although the Romans are credited with bringing saffron to England, the Phoenicians or other traders trading for tin probably brought saffron to Cornwall.

Saffron growing became established in the Bude and Mounts Bay areas. The English town of Saffron Walden

Starry gazzy pie

got its name from the production of the flower.

In the 19th century the Methodist church ran the unique 'Cornish tea treat'. The tea treat took place on Whit Monday and was attended by adults and children. They would take place in a large field near the village and there would be a short service before the feast began. The highlight for the children was the tea treat bun, a large saffron bun that was flattish but the size of a tea-plate. All children were expected to attend Sunday school each week, and so qualify for the tea treat. It was a community event with tea, food and games. The tradition of the tea treat began to decline in the 1960s.

During the early 1970s growing up in Cornwall, my friends and I looked forward to going on a tea-treat. I have no idea how we were able to go. I was brought up a Catholic, my friends never went to Sunday school or church of any denomination, but my best friend and I would go on the train or be driven by her mother to St Ives (Porthminister beach) for the annual tea treat. We would be given a pasty each, a bottle of 'pop' and our tea-treat bun. There were probably people in charge but we spent the day exploring, sunbathing and swimming. The older children watched over the younger ones but it was a day of freedom and fun. I seem to remember that the sun always shone!

Almost all saffron is imported now but it is still grown in small quantities in parts of the UK, including Cornwall.

In most supermarkets in the UK and Ireland you can buy a pasty. But you cannot buy a 'Cornish pasty' unless it has been produced in Cornwall, as it has protected status.

A 'proper' pasty has savoury shortcrust pastry (not too short) rolled out to the size of a medium dinner plate. Thinly sliced potato is placed in the centre, then thinly sliced swede, followed by finely chopped onion. Small pieces of shin of beef are placed atop this mound of vegetables. It is seasoned with salt and pepper and some chopped parsley added. The edges are then pulled together and the pastry 'crimped', pinched and folded over to make a neat seam. The crimp had a very important part to play during the years of tin mining. The miners would take their pasty into the mine to eat for lunch and they'd pick it up by the crimp to eat it. The crimp itself was not eaten as the miners had no way to wash their hands, and one of the by-products of the tin industry was arsenic. So by not eating the crimp, they kept themselves from being poisoned.

The crimp was left in the mine for the 'knockers', the 'little people' who lived in the mines and, much like faeries or pixies, could be malevolent. The miners said you could hear them banging their hammers in the mines if they were not happy. In reality the 'knocking' of their hammers was gas, which was sometimes heard just before an explosion. All of miners had naked flame candles to light their way. In 1815 Sir Humphrey Davy invented the miner's safety lamp, which dramatically cut the number of gas explosions in both tin and coal mines.

The history, stories, language and traditions are similar in many of the Celtic lands, but also very different and diverse. The important part though is remembering, writing and passing on to the generations to come this rich tapestry which defines us all.

Group on a jeep beside the cairn on Knocknarea in 1948.
Left to right:
Peig Murray, Des Collier, Kevin P Murray, Tom McCrann, Bertie ??

The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Cloonacleigha

By Michael Bell

Common Name	Scientific Name	Records	Earliest	Latest
Emerald Damselfly	*Lestes sponsa*	24	26 June	22 Sept
Azure Damselfly	*Coenagrion puella*	6	28 May	26 July
Variable Damselfly	*Coenagrion pulchellum*	12	22 May	15 July
Common Blue Damselfly	*Enallagma cyathigerum*	56	9 May	4 Sept
Blue-tailed Damselfly	*Ischnura elegans*	14	4 June	31 Aug
Large Red Damselfly	*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*	30	24 Apr	15 July
Brown Hawker	*Aeshna grandis*	30	26 June	21 Sept
Common Hawker	*Aeshna juncea*	29	26 June	30 Sept
Hairy Dragonfly	*Brachytron pratense*	7	9 May	17 June
Four-spotted Chaser	*Libellula quadrimaculata*	30	9 May	4 Sept
Black Darter	*Sympetrum danae*	27	25 July	24 Oct
Common Darter	*Sympetrum striolatum*	25	25 July	30 Sept
	Total	**290**		

All species recorded at Cloonacleigha between 2010 and 2016, along with the total number of records per species and earliest and latest dates each species has been recorded.

Since 2010 I have been conducting a survey for the Irish Butterfly Monitoring Scheme run by the National Biodiversity Data Centre. The survey involves slowly walking along the same one-kilometre transect at Cloonacleigha every week from April to October, and recording the numbers of all butterfly species seen. I have taken the opportunity to note other insects also, and this article will summarize my observations of dragonflies and damselflies over the period.

Cloonacleigha is an area of heavily cut-over raised bog. There are many ditches and bog pools that provide an ideal breeding habitat for dragonflies and damselflies. The transect also touches on Cloonacleigha Lough, a shallow hard water lake, that adds diversity to the site. It also borders an area of plantation forestry where some of the larger dragonfly species can often be observed patrolling along the forest edge.

Dragonflies (suborder Anisoptera) and damselflies (suborder Zygoptera) are members of the insect order Odonata. Damselflies are relatively dainty insects compared to dragonflies, which have more robust bodies. Other differences include the fact that damselflies typically hold their wings alongside their body when at rest, whereas dragonflies usually hold their wings out at right-angles to the body. Damselflies eyes are widely separated, while the relatively large eyes of dragonflies meet on top of the head. It should be noted that all the damselflies in this article have damselfly as part of the common name, whereas the hawkers, chasers, skimmers and darters are all dragonflies. Both dragonflies and damselflies spend much of their lives in water as predatory larvae feeding on other invertebrates, tadpoles and even small fish. After emerging from the water most species only live for a few weeks as a winged adult.

In Ireland there are 24 resident species of Odonata of which 19 have been recorded in Co Sligo (Cotton, 2016). There are a further eight migratory species that have been recorded in Ireland, though none of these have been found in Co Sligo to date.

As mentioned earlier, recording Odonata was not the primary purpose of my visits to Cloonacleigha. However, as I have a particular interest in Odonata, and as dragonflies and damselflies are large active

The Brown Hawker is a large dragonfly. Note the eyes which meet on top of the head and the wings that are held open at rest.

insects I have been able to collect a considerable amount of records that are collated in the table accompanying this article. In all, I have collected 290 records of 12 species which indicates the site has a high diversity of Odonata species. It should be noted that in 2010 and 2011 I only made occasional records, whereas from 2012 to 2016 I made an effort to record all species that were identified. In the table I have also shown the earliest and latest date each species has been observed to give an idea of the flight period.

I have found a pair of close-focusing binoculars to be an invaluable tool when observing Odonata in the field. Two excellent field guides are those by Brooks, Cham and Lewington (2014) and Thompson and Nelson (2014). Many species can be easily identified if seen well, though some require closer examination. Females and immature males of certain species are best left undetermined unless examined in the hand. For this reason it is best not to equate number of records with abundance when looking at the data in the table. Furthermore, a record may relate to one individual being seen whereas other records may involve tens of individuals.

Often the first Odonata to be seen in the year is the Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*) and my earliest record is 24 April, some 15 days earlier than for any other species. Being the only Irish damselfly with red colouring it is easily identified. Not surprisingly, as bog pools are one of its favoured habitats, this species was one of the species most frequently encountered throughout the site and it was often seen in great numbers.

There were three predominantly blue species of damselfly recorded: Common Blue Damselfly (E*nallagma cyathigerum*), Azure Damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*) and Variable Damselfly (*C. pulchellum*). The Common Blue Damselfly is the most distinctive of the three. It was also the Odonata species that was recorded most often (almost twice as often as any other species), and frequently observed in large numbers. It is a species of most freshwater habitats and is considered a ubiquitous species throughout Ireland. Care needs to be taken when distinguishing between Azure and Variable Damselfly and it is best to rely on a combination of field marks in making a determination. For this reason these species may be under-represented in my data, though it is certain they are present in much smaller numbers than the Common Blue Damselfly, which also has a somewhat longer flight season.

The twelve species of dragonfly and damselfly found at Cloonacleigh.
Top row (L-R): Emerald Damselfly, Azure Damselfly, Variable Damselfly, Common Blue Damselfly**.**
Middle row (L-R): Blue-tailed Damselfly, Large Red Damselfly, Brown Hawker, Common Hawker.
Bottom row (L-R): Hairy Dragonfly, Four-spotted Chaser, Black Darter, Common Darter.

The Azure and Variable Damselfly were more commonly found close to Cloonacleigha Lough whereas the Common Damselfly was found throughout the site.

As the common name would suggest, the blue of the Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*) is restricted to the tip of the abdomen, making is easy to distinguish from the previous species. (There is another 'blue-tailed' species found in Co. Sligo that will be detailed later in the article.) It is a generalist species that is common at many sites

The Common Blue Damselfly was by far the most commonly recorded species.

in Co Sligo so I am a little surprised it was not recorded more frequently in my data.

The Emerald Damselfly (Lestes sponsa) is the latest of the Irish damselfly species to appear each year and my earliest record is 26 June. The late record of 22 September was also considerably later than that of the other damselfly species. It is tolerant of the acidic water of bog pools so it is not surprising that it was regularly encountered throughout the site.

The Four-spotted Chaser (*Libellula quadrimaculata*) is a highly territorial dragonfly that was often seen patrolling over bog pools or resting on plant stems. It was generally the most numerous dragonfly during early to mid-summer. Both the Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*) and the Black Darter (*S. danae*) typically appear about a month later than the Four-spotted Chaser. The Black Darter is known as a late species and I recorded it as late as 24 October, which is considerably beyond the late date for any other species. The Common Darter is found in many habitats and is widespread throughout Ireland, while the Black Darter is primarily found on heathland and bogs, particularly in the West.

The largest dragonflies in Ireland belong to the family Aeshnidae and are known as hawkers. Three members of the family are present at Cloonacleigha, Brown Hawker (*Aeshna grandis*), Common Hawker (*A. juncea*) and Hairy Dragonfly (*Brachytron pratense*). The earliest to be on the wing is the Hairy Dragonfly which was recorded between 9 May and 17 June. It was recorded seven times in all, with all sightings being of singles except on one occasion when two were seen. The Common Hawker looks quite similar, but that species flies later in the year with only a short period when both species are likely to be seen flying together. The Brown Hawker has distinctive amber-tinted wings and is also a late flying species. Both the Common Hawker and Brown Hawker were often observed patrolling along the edge of the area of forestry and frequently several of both species were recorded during a visit.

The Four-spotted Chaser, so named for the black spots that lie half-way along the leading edge of each wing.

In addition to the 12 species recorded at Cloonacleigha a further seven species of Odonata are know from Co Sligo, and most have been recorded in the Ballymote area. The Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*) is a damselfly of slow-moving streams and rivers and is found at several sites along the Owenmore River downstream from Cloonacleigha Lough. It can easily be observed below Templehouse Bridge during summer. The Scarce Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes dryas*) is a rare damselfly of water bodies with fluctuating water levels, such as turloughs, that has been recorded from three sites in Co Sligo. The Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura pumilio*) is another rare species and it is often found in temporary artificial ponds. An industrial site at Toberbride has been a reliable site for seeing this species in recent years. I have also recorded it in a wet area along a bog track at Cloonshanville Bog near Frenchpark, the only record for Co Roscommon. The Irish Damselfly (*Coenagrion lunulatum*) was only discovered for the first time in Ireland in 1981 when it was recorded by Don Cotton in Co Sligo. It has subsequently been recorded at an additional six sites in Sligo and a number of other locations across the northern half of Ireland, with the lakes of South Leitrim being a particularly important area. This species is not found in Britain, and the Irish population is of European importance. It has been recorded at Boathole Lough near Drumfin. Both the Keeled Skimmer (*Orthetrum coerulescens*) and Black-tailed Skimmer (*O. cancellatum*) have limited distributions in Co Sligo. The Keeled Skimmer is mostly found in boggy flushes in the Ox Mountains. The Black-tailed Skimmer occurs in the Ballysadare River catchment area including around Ballygawley Lough. I have also found this species in large numbers around limestone lakes at Derreen Woods, Co Roscommon. Finally, the Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) is known from 12 sites from Co Sligo including at a newly-created lake at Newpark near Ballymote.

Although no rare or scarce species occur at Cloonacleigha, the site does hold a diverse Odonata population. Some of the other species recorded elsewhere in Co Sligo may be found in future. Also, some species currently breeding in other parts of the country have expanding ranges and this is

likely to be further facilitated in future by climate change. Perhaps Migrant Hawker (*Aeshna mixta*) might be a good bet for the next species to be found in the county. Although Cloonacleigha is a site that has become degraded from an ecological point of view, it is possible to enjoy observing a variety of these beautiful and interesting insects at close quarters.

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Cargo ship Margrete unloading at the Deepwater Berth in Sligo Harbour in the late 50s. Photo by Kevin P Murray

St John's Cathedral, Sligo

By Bernie Doyle

St John's church stands quietly amid its many and varied burial plots in John Street, Sligo. Designed in 1730 by the German architect Richard Cassels (who also designed Leinster House, the Rotunda, Powerscourt and Cartron House in Leinster, and Hazelwood House in Sligo), it is the oldest building still in use in Sligo town. Cassels built St John's in the traditional cruciform style, based on the old basilica pattern of the old Roman forum, on the site of an older church. Sir Roger Jones, Governor of 17th century Sligo, who died in 1637, built the first church on the site in the early 1600s. Cassels had placed the Jones tomb in the apse but, in the 1812 alterations, the *mensa* was taken to the churchyard where it lay badly damaged for seventy years until 1883, when it was placed in its present position inside the church at the back of the nave.

The present building saw the changes to Cassels' plan when, in 1812, an oblong chancel was substituted for the original apse and an extension to create a new sanctuary. The original round-ended Romanesque windows were replaced by the Gothic pointed windows. In 1883 more renovations were undertaken to provide a new vestry room and organ chamber – the present Mortimer Chapel, named after Dean Mortimer – built on either side of the chancel.

There are many memorials in the church, both in stained glass and in bronze plaques. The most unusual is the beautiful painting behind the communion table, painted by Capt Percy Gethins in memory of his brother, Ronald, who was killed in the Boer war. It expresses the joy of Creation from a caption from the Book of Job. Percy himself died during WWI and later a memorial was erected for him also.

The first half of the 19th century proved to be the zenith of what Seán Ó Faoláin called 'the best Protestant stock in all Ireland' when many prominent families all worshipped in St John's: the Gore-Booths of Lisadell, Wynnes of Hazelwood, Coopers of Markree, Percevals of Templehouse, Griffiths of Ballytivnan, Holmes of Oakfield, and Nicholsons of Primrose Grange, together with the merchant families of Pollexfen, Middleton, Campbell and Gorman.

Many generations of protestant families are buried in St John's churchyard, including Susan Mary Yeats who died in London in 1900. She was the eldest daughter of William Pollexfen, and in September 1863 married John Butler Yeats in this church. They became the parents of William and Jack Butler Yeats. Near the pulpit is a brass tablet in memory of Susan Yeats, and another brass tablet in memory of her brother. A brass communion rail commemorates the Pollexfen grandparents. It is said that William Pollexfen in his old age walked from his home every day to supervise the building of his tomb in the churchyard. The tomb, low-walled with solid black chains, can be seen from the west entrance to the church.

In the Thornley tomb, near the west door, are buried Bram Stoker's mother, Charlotte Mathilda Blake Thornley, his brother who died aged 14, and his maternal grandmother. It is said that on his visits to his mother, Bram Stoker got the inspiration for *Dracula* from observing 'the walking dead on the streets of Sligo' during the outbreak of cholera circa 1832.

The Methodist founder, John Wesley, paid many visits to Sligo. On his first visit in 1758 he described the town as 'a sink of iniquity.' He worshipped at least twice in St John's. On the first visit he notes that he is the only person to stand for the Psalm, but on his second visit everybody stood.

Becoming a Cathedral

St John's was the Church of Ireland's parish church in Sligo until 1961. Following the devastation of the Diocesan cathedral in Elphin, Co Roscommon in 1957, St John's became the Diocesan Cathedral of Elphin and Ardagh. The choir stalls were moved into the body of the church and the bishop's throne or *cathedra* , together with the canons' stalls, were built in the chancel. The organ was moved some time later and placed in the south gallery, and a chapel was erected in the chancel. The gravestone of the 17th century philanthropic Bishop of Elphin, Bishop Hodson, was placed in the west wall.

Several years' work was undertaken in restoring the roof and adjoining lead work, and in internal renovation and decoration leading up to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the church's upgrading to the status of cathedral in 2011. That year also the elevation of St. John's Cathedral to a building of national importance within the state.

Sources

2011 Church Anniversary Leaflet; Sligo – A signpost Tour (Bord Fáilte).

Loys and Ridges, Scythes and Flails

By Micheál Murphy

Photo 1 Relics of cultivation ridges

They did not have much peace or pleasure
Out on those rocky hills with loy and spade,
When, amongst the cold wind of springtime,
Those two-sod ridges they carefully made
- *Famine Ridges* by Tom O'Hara

Recently I happened across some photographs from a very successful Heritage Day organised by the local community in the village of Aclare, in south west Co Sligo, in 1994. They reminded me of the above lines from *Famine Ridges*, taken from a collection of poems and verses entitled *Branches Waving* by local man, Tom O'Hara. Tom has a great capacity to recall and commit to paper a way of life long gone from rural Ireland.

The tracks of cultivation ridges, referred to above, are a familiar sight especially in poorer upland areas of the west (Photo 1). In what was often a desperate effort to escape the ravages of potato blight, the people tried to reclaim the rocky hills and mountainsides. Their implement was a simple one, the Irish spade or loy (*láí*).

Depending on which foot the operator favours when digging, the loy, unlike a spade, has just one footrest, either on the top left or on the top right of the blade. At the back of the steel blade is a thickened heel of wood which acts as a fulcrum to turn the sod (Photo 2). The handle or shaft is also longer than that of the spade so as to provide extra leverage. In some versions, the handle, heel and footrest are all fashioned from a single piece of wood. In others, the handle is attached to the digging part by iron rings. Basically, the loy was a poor man's plough.

When cultivating untilled ground for the first time, a ridge (*iomaire*) was made by turning two lines of sods, each about 12 inches wide, over an undug lea and leaving a central green strip (Photo 3) and a furrow (*seoch*) on each side. The overturned line of sods was known as a *filibín.* Some English landlords disparagingly called this method of cultivation 'Lazy Beds' because the soil under the sod remained undug. But many came to acknowledge that it was an effective and productive method, because weeds and grasses were covered over and their rotting remains helped to nourish the crop. Anyone who has worked a loy will testify that the word 'lazy' used in this context is a misnomer. It has been estimated that it would take two experienced diggers more than a week to turn an acre of ground with a loy, even in the best of conditions.

A long-handled dibber (*stíbhín*) (Photo 4) was used to bore a line of holes about 12 inches apart in the upturned sods. This was called 'sticking'. The job of 'dibbling' or inserting a potato slit (*sceallán*) into each hole was usually done by children. Slitting the potatoes was women's work. They sometimes came together as a *meitheal* for that purpose. The potato was cut into as many slits as there were eyes or buds, and any unbudded sections (*laogháin*)

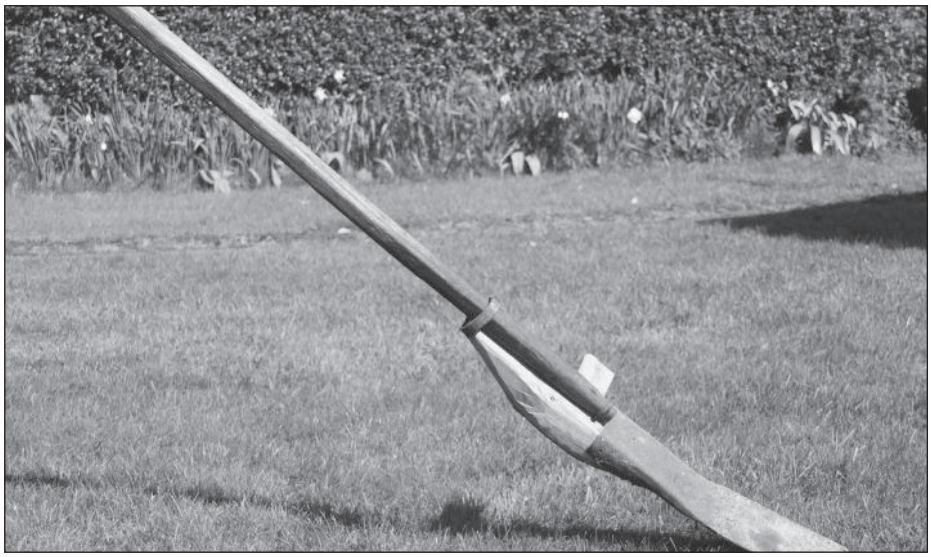

Photo 2 A loy

Photo 3 Seamus O'Donnell surveys the filibín he has turned with a loy at Heritage Day in Aclare in August 1992.

were saved to feed to pigs or chickens. Finally the holes were closed with a little covering of soil, a process called 'quenching'. (In some areas of south-west Sligo the process of sticking, dibbling and quenching was also referred to as 'boring', 'pitching' and 'blinding'). Farmyard manure was brought to the ridges using a donkey and specially adapted wicker creels called *párdógaí.* The donkey walked along the furrow so that the creels overhung the ridges. Their hinged bottoms could be opened, allowing the manure to fall onto the centre of the ridge where it was evenly spread. When potato fertiliser became available, originally N:P:K = 4:4:8, a little was applied if funds allowed.

As soon as possible afterwards, the furrow was dug with the loy and the soil shovelled loosely over the ridges to protect from frost, a process called 'labouring'. As the young stalks emerged the furrows were dug again, and the stalks moulded with soil to ensure the new potatoes remained underground. A rule of thumb often quoted was, 'a light labouring and a heavy moulding'.

Spraying with Bordeaux mixture, a solution of bluestone and lime, was carried out since Famine times to protect the crop from blight. Prior to the spraying machine a type of brush called a 'besom', fashioned from sprigs of heather tied together, was used to apply the fungicide.

When the stalks had died back in September and October, the potatoes were dug and stored in heaps about two feet wide by two feet high. Each heap, known as a 'pit' was covered with 'scraws' *(scraith)* or rushes and at least six inches of clay, which provided protection from the elements and from vermin.

During times of necessity the normal routine of crop rotation – potatoes-oats-grass – was abandoned and the same patch was used twice or three times over to grow potatoes. However each year, the sides of two adjacent ridges were levelled into the furrow and earthed up so that the centre of the previous year's ridge now became the furrow. When cereals were grown, oats were the preferred crop. Up to the 1800s cereals were also cultivated on ridges, especially in low lying wet areas, but such ridges were usually twice or three times the width of potato ridges. When ripe, the corn was cut with a reaping hook or a sickle, a job often left to women. (The sickle was a more recent introduction and had a serrated edge which did not require sharpening). In the case of both the sickle and the hook it was usual to hold a fistful of corn blades in one hand while cutting with the other. This helped protect the seed head from falling off. A few bundles were tied together with some twisted stems to form sheaves and gathered into 'stooks' of ten or twelve sheaves, tied around the heads. In poor drying conditions they might be built again into larger hand-stacks called *simidíní.* A *simidín* held the equivalent of a horse-cart load. If the crop was grassy, sometimes four loose sheaves were placed standing against each other, with a tying of twisted stems securing the tops. (Locally these were referred to as *gaitlins* or *germans*). Oats dried more easily when stooked this way.

Photo 4 A potato dibber or stíbhín with a forged steel tip

Photo 5 Jimmy Gavigan sharpens his scythe in preparation for cutting the oats crop at Heritage Day in Aclare in 1994

On drier ground, the field was dug flat and the seed broadcast before being covered in with a wooden or a pin harrow, drawn by a donkey. Sometimes a whitethorn bush was used as a harrow and this resulted in a finer tilth. A hand-sculpted stone roller was drawn over it to bed the seed in. The smooth surface enabled harvesting by the scythe. The scythe could cut must faster than the sickle, although the sickle continued in use well into the 20th century, especially for heavy crops. Originally, a scythe or *speal* consisted of a steel blade attached to a straight wooden shaft at a junction called the *heel* and secured in place by a short piece of wire called a *grass-nail*. Two wooden handles, known as *doirníní,* were attached to the shaft for gripping (Photo 5).

Maintaining a sharp edge on the blade was critical to its use and this was achieved with a scythe-stone made either of natural stone or of an abrasive material called carborundum. The sharpening of the scythe was a special craft as was the correct use of the scythe. To see a skilled scythe-man at work has been truthfully described as poetry in motion.

In the haggard, the sheaves were built up into a stack, each containing about four horse-cart loads. The stacks were thatched with rushes and tied down with hand-made straw ropes called *súgáin.* (Photo 6). Before the threshing machines, sheaves of oats were 'scutched', as required, by striking the head against a stone or a barrel, to provide feed for poultry and cattle. Since the straw was fed to cattle it was not necessary to remove all of the grain. The flail was a more effective implement for threshing. It consisted of a light handle (*colpán),* often made of hazel, attached by a leather thong to a stronger but shorter beater *(buailtín),* made from holly or ash. The joint had to be strong but flexible to allow the beater full rotation, and donkey leather was considered best for the thong (*gad*) which was secured in a groove cut into the ends of the joined timbers. A wooden surface such as the upper floor of a granary was required when using the flail but here the length of the *colpán* and the *buailtín* was limited by the height and width of the space. Oftentimes threshing with flails was carried on outdoors on a wooden platform and the flails could be then much longer than those used indoors. Teams of two or four men could also work in tandem. Synchronising the strokes was achieved only with constant practice but when well done it was likened to the beat of a well drilled marching band (Photo 7).

If the grain was required for milling, e.g. to make oaten meal or wholemeal for baking, or if the seed was to be used for sowing, then it was necessary

Photo 6 Brendan O'Hara and Jimmy Gavigan fix a sugán around the stack of oats

to separate the chaff completely by a process called 'winnowing'. The threshed grain was shaken slowly from a container held high over a sheet spread on the ground in suitably windy conditions. The heavier grain was collected on the sheet while the lighter chaff was dispersed by the wind.

Thinking back to those times recalls a time of self-sufficiency and neighbourly co-operation. It was a time where each family member was involved in the work of the farm, where nothing was wasted and every farmer was master of many crafts, not merely farming skills but those involved in making, repairing and recycling his own tools and equipment from the raw materials that nature provided.

Photo 7 Seamus O'Donnell and Paddy Fleming demonstrate the method of threshing with

The Power of Language

By Emer Ryan

Language connects us.

Whether spoken or written, it is our primary means of communication. Beginning with our first words as babies, our inner world unfolds as we use language to reveal our needs, our wants, and ultimately ourselves. Later, we develop the art of using language to conceal ourselves.

We learn to understand what people say and don't say.

Language locates us.

The language I speak everyday was absorbed from my parents, my Sligo mother and my Dublin father. From them I learned the phrases and idioms that comprise my unique blend of English.

As a child, I loved stories. I eavesdropped on the grown-ups' conversations, filling my inner world with the rich language of my elders and a cast of characters as real to me as the selfish giant or the little prince in the stories my father read to me. As I grew older, I inevitably became a bookworm, never happier than when buried in an imaginary world accessed through carefully chosen words.

I was reared on word games — I Spy, hangman, consequences, making little words from big ones, and, always a favourite, Scrabble. Word Study, a now-recommended approach to teaching spelling, is based on learning about patterns and etymology rather than memorising random words. In addition to learning how to spell, I was also learning about the magic of language, about its variety and power, about how different words and syntax can change a sentence, can transform the meaning.

Unwittingly my parents had been training me for my future career as an editor, a profession in which language is central. Working behind the scenes with authors to make the most of ideas, of plots, of layout and design, editors have a complex job that usually includes restructuring sentences and sometimes requires rewriting entire books. However, always at its heart is the language. Words are the building blocks through which the ideas of the author must be conveyed. The editor has a responsibility to ensure not alone that the author's meaning is conveyed but also that the author's voice will be heard by the reader. Editors tend to be invisible but the words will be exposed in print and, nowadays, online. A chosen sequence of words has the power to elicit interest or boredom, fear or comfort, tears or laughter.

The great American poet Robert Frost said: 'Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words.' However, just as the chosen words and their order on a page can transform plain prose to beautiful poetry, they can also be destructive. They can convey lies as easily as truth. They can destroy reputations. They can sway people's beliefs. They can cause emotional hurt and lead to physical pain. Let loose, they have a power of their own. This is more evident than ever in the current era of social media and cyber bullying.

Long before the advent of emails or text messaging, let alone Twitter and Snapchat, I wrote lengthy letters to family and friends. Such letters sustained me when I lived abroad as a student, surrounded by an alien language. Often homesick, I rushed each morning to the post-room to collect my letters, poring over each and reading and re-reading it until its contents were imprinted on my brain, and passing some more time completing the crosswords my mother had cut out and enclosed with her dispatches.

'The limits of my language means the limits of my world.' (Ludwig Wittgenstein)

In September 2015, I learned a new word from my father. Aphasia. He had suffered a major stroke, which left him unable to express himself.

On its website, the National Aphasia Association of America defines aphasia as 'an impairment of language, affecting the production or comprehension of speech and the ability to read or write.' It continues: 'Aphasia is always due to injury to the brain — most commonly from a stroke, particularly in older individuals. But brain injuries resulting in aphasia may also arise from head trauma, from brain tumours, or from infections.' All of this was news to me. I had heard of people's speech being slurred by brain injury, but never of people losing their language, be it the comprehension of it or the expression of it.

Very quickly I discovered the reality of expressive aphasia. While understanding all that was said to him, my father initially could neither speak nor write his responses. Trapped within his own thoughts, he was no longer able to communicate his great interest in people or engage them in conversation. Over the following months, he regained some of his speech but the magic was gone. He could no longer do crosswords. He struggled with Scrabble, his wide and erudite vocabulary diminished to a trickle. It is a bitter irony that someone who loved language so much should have had to struggle to find the simplest of words.

Following his passing in February 2016, words became a source of comfort. There were the many cards with personal and thoughtful messages whose carefully chosen language had the power to lift me beyond the profound grief of losing my adored father. There were the kind words spoken by friends or colleagues who recognised the pain of loss and knew exactly what to say to show that they cared. There were the poems I read that connected me to other mourners, many themselves now long dead. Slowly I began to learn a new language, one that I share with everyone who has ever lost a loved one.

As time went by, I grew conscious of another connection. Without thinking about it, I use so many of my father's quirky expressions. I sometimes say things and, realising that I have responded exactly as he would have done to a situation, I can hear his voice repeating what I have just said. I tell his jokes and feel him smiling back at me.

Language connects us.

Creevelea Abbey

By Theresa Kelly

Creevelea Abbey in Dromahair, Co Leitrim, was a Franciscan Friary founded by Margaret O'Rourke and her husband Eoghan in 1508. It 'was the last Monastery to be founded in Ireland before dissolution under Henry V11.'[1]

It is in the parish of Killenummery and Killery, which is an island parish of the diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. We celebrate our faith with open-air Mass in Creevelea Abbey each year when we gather for dawn mass on Easter Sunday morning at 6am. Standing there in the darkness, in the same place where those friars of 16th century stood, I watch the sun rise and think to myself: This is the same sun that shone on them and lit the way for them and here we are today still singing and praising that same God that they worshipped. It is a very special place. I decided that I would like to honour the Franciscans who brought their community to Dromahair by researching and documenting my report on Creevelea Abbey.

The Abbey ruins are located on a hill beside the village of Dromahair. It is called Creevelea, from *Craobh Liath* meaning the 'grey branch', probably because the friars wore grey habits. It is said to be built on the site where Saint Patrick built a church in 440. 'The monastery of the town of O'Rourke, which is called Carrick Patrick, in Connaught, in the diocese of Ardagh' is referred to in *The Annals of the Four Masters*. It is close to the shores of the river Bonet which flows into Lough Gill. The remains of the Abbey stand tall and proud you approach it from the south east by a walkway that goes down along the banks of the river from the village. 'Creevelea is the most complete and striking piece of medieval architecture in the county', according to the *Archaeological Inventory of County Leitrim*. Ó Clabaigh tells us that 'this is the only instance in which a woman is recorded as the principal patron of a friary…' Creevelea was 'the last Observant foundation to be made… apart from their usual purpose the monks were also an important support to the community.'[2] Margaret died in 1512 and was interred in the Abbey. Eoghan died in 1528 and was also interred there. No trace of their tombstone can be seen today. Many other historical people were also interred there. Among them were Bishop Healy and Conn O'Rourke, a friar minor, who were hanged in Kilmallock in 1579. Both were martyrs for their faith. In 1992 Bishop Colm O'Reilly celebrated Mass there to mark their beatification. In 1590 Sir Richard Bingham stabled his horses in the Abbey. When the friars were driven out, in the late 17th century, they served their people while living in the hills.

The river separates the diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise from Kilmore, the village of Dromahair being in Kilmore.

The friars had a mill just across the river which later became a corn mill in the early 19th century. Dúnta Uí Ruairc mentions the mill: 'The river Boned (Bonet), which turned the old Franciscan mill, still works a corn mill further down.'[3] The old mill produced oatmeal. Reference to Dromahair in *Slaters Directory* of 1856 shows 'that the trade in grain is very considerable; an extensive corn and flour mill is the principal commercial establishment'.[4]

In 1933 local hotelier Paul Jeiters 'converted the mill into a generating station, supplying Dromahair with electricity … he transformed the premises into a sawmill and thriving timber business.'[5]

The Office of Public Works purchased the mill in 1980 and today they have their local offices and a craft workshop there. An old grinding stone rests against the wall in their yard.

Restorative work was done on Creevelea Abbey by the Office of Public Works in the 1990s as it was falling into disrepair. Beranger and Bigari in 1779 described it as 'much in ruin, nothing remains of the cloisters … the aria which we supposed to contain them being covered with grass … there were some good stone windows'

The entrance to this beautiful site is through a turn-style entrance to the left of the main gate, which has a padlock on it. Wheelchair users could call to the caretaker up the road to get the gate open but then they would

only get access to the church which consists of nave chancel and transept. There are lots of small doors and steps to other parts of the Abbey. There are graves in every section of it so it is a place of reverence.

The Abbey is similar in plan to Sligo Abbey, in that the cloisters are in centre. The church is to the south and the other buildings are to the north, protecting them from the cold north winds. 'Creevelea has the conventual buildings at the north side – a decided departure from the usual monastic style, which placed them in the south, thus sheltering them by the church from the cold north wind and securing for them the grateful heat and cheerful brightness of the sun.'[6]

The nave is entered from the west gate through a pointed doorway with carved tendrils at the terminals. Above this is a twin light tracery window. The apex of this window inclines to the left. Locally it's said to symbolise the head of Christ on the cross leaning to the side!

The nave has two round arches in the south wall that lead to the transept and the tower is over the east wall. There are a number of decorated terminals on the arch of the tower. The east wall of the choir has a large four-light tracery window. The south wall has four twin-light windows. In the corner near the east window is the piscina.

The transept has several recesses and a large pointed window without tracery. In the recesses are two windows, both with an altar inside them. The cloisters can be accessed from the nave and choir. Some of the pillars are missing but several still survive. On the opposite side of the cloister are pillars with carvings of St Francis and friars preaching.

O'Keefe tells us that cloister ambulatories rarely had lean-to roofs, Creevelea being one of the exceptions.[7] There are two rooms east of the cloister which were the sacristy, dayroom and chapterhouse, which have a fireplace. The next room north of this was again possibly a dayroom with a 'sanitary annex… with a garderobe in the north wall.'[8] No trace

of this is found today but on the north-western exit from cloisters there is a room with the remains of a garderobe. This would have been accessible from the dormitories above.

Along the north of the structure is the refectory which has five windows including a reader window, where a preacher spoke as they ate. The dormitories were above this room and part of the stairs leading to them is still intact. There are still partial remains of what's thought to be the kitchen and food preparation area. One room was vaulted and part of this is still intact. Another room has the remains of a handmill that was used to grind corn.

Creevelea is a most interesting piece of our history and heritage and we are blessed that it is in such good condition. People still bury their dead here. It is in an ideal location for visitors whether on foot, taking the signposted pathway from the village, or by road, taking the R287 towards Ballintogher and then taking the signposted first right turn. There is lots of parking space. Why not take a drive there and see for yourself this amazing site?

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An introduction to the Architectural Heritage of County Leitrim, Government of Ireland, 2004, p9

[2] Ó Clabaigh, Colmán OSB, *The Franciscans in Ireland 1400–1534*, Four Courts Press, 2002, p60

[3] Fenessy, Fr, Franciscan Archives, Killiney cited in Dúnta Uí Ruairc, *O'Rourke Stronghold of West Breifne*, *Sligo Champion* p12

[4] *A Signposted walking tour of Dromahair,* p4

[5] *A Signposted walking tour of Dromahair,* p4

[6] JE MacKenna, *The Franciscan Friary of Creevelea in the Barony of Breffny, Co Leitrim* (File no 64 in Library HQ Ballinamore) 29 April 2015

[7] Tadhg O'Keefe, *Medieval Ireland: An Archaeology*, Tempus Publishing, 2000, p155

[8] Appendix (E) to *Eighty second report of the (1913-14) Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland* p62-63

The Sligo Field Club Jounal, Volume 2, 2016

By Neal Farry

Several significant elements of the policy of *The Sligo Field Club Journal* are outlined in the editorial at the commencement of Volume Two. This policy emphasises the necessity to provide a 'published platform for local people with an interest or expertise in a particular aspect of Sligo's history or archaeology, who might not have been published previously, thereby forming a link between past, present and future generations of Sligo Field Club members and preserving a record of Field Club activities and findings which might otherwise be ephemeral.' Between Wendy Lyons' *Presidential Preface* and Jim Foran's *Editorial* and the concluding *Obituary*, 19 outstanding writers enlighten us with the benefit of their expertise through meticulous research and clarity.

Martin A Timoney furnishes an initial record of ***the Moffitt's Burrow, Edenreagh, Cliffoney Ring-cairn*** site that he first visited in 1975, followed by two further short articles dealing with a ***Four-Poster in Bunduff***, 5km to the east, and a possible *Barrow* adjacent to the ring-cairn. The reader will be profoundly impressed by Bridget Timoney's sketch-plan of the Edenreagh ring-cairn that clearly delineates the cairn and the most evident features of this Bronze Age site. Martin follows up the sketch-plan with a precise, objective and descriptive analysis of the monument. He notes the probable interference with the site in 1978 by some people who mistakenly believed that this location was the burial ground of Spanish Armada casualties in 1588. After consulting Frances Lynch, a Welsh archaeologist and an expert in the area of ring-cairns or 'Variant Circles', Martin places this site in the context of a wider distribution of ring-cairns in Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Thirty ring-cairns have been identified in Ireland. Sligo contains three such cairns – Edenreagh, Shroove near Monasteraden, and a possibly one at Streedagh.

When discussing the Bunduff four-poster, Martin A Timoney reproduces Wood-Martin's 1888 illustration that displays three stones of the monument. Our 2017 archaeologist's photograph of the Bunduff monument shows just two of the stones *in situ*. It seems that one could be buried or could have been removed for some functional purpose. Furthermore Martin is inclined to the view that an oval sand dune, also at Edenreagh, is *a barrow,* i.e. another archaeological site.

Donna Gilligan investigates the journey of a polished stone ***Axehead*** from its place of discovery on the site of the mythological ***Moytura Battlefield*** in south east Co Sligo to its present base in the National Museum of Ireland collection. This artefact was donated by Peter Foy to Sir William Wilde (Oscar's father), Vice-President of the Royal Irish Academy, in 1868. The Moytura axehead demonstrates how 19th century scholars attempted to connect archaeological remains with mythological beliefs. Donna Gilligan adopts a more modern scientific approach to establish a more plausible, practical explanation for the axehead's existence.

Sam Moore and Johanna Callaghan examine the story of ***Rev. Constantine Cosgrave P.P.*** of Drumrat and Toomour (nowadays Keash and Culfadda), who excavated a passage tomb at Carnaweeleen on the north-eastern slope of Keash Hill in 1855 or 1856. Rev Cosgrave discovered what seemed to be cremated remains and a rude necklace of beads. Some were of a 'partially petrified substance than of actual stone'. In a communication with the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Rev Cosgrave describes the excavation he had carried out on the Carnaweeleen cairn. He informed his RSAI associate that he was sending a bead and two human teeth to that Merrion Square Society. The RSAI subsequently donated the Carnaweeleen artefact to the National Museum of Ireland.

Sam and Johanna have studied a more comprehensive complex of sites in the vicinity of Cairn R at Carnaweeleen. They discuss the similarities with the nearby Carrowkeel-Bricklieve monuments, particularly with regards to the bead assemblage. Differences are also noted and the authors justifiably speculate that the secondary deposit of cremated bone at the Carnaweeleen cairn, along with the two human teeth in the museum, offer the possibility of obtaining radiocarbon dates in the future.

The study of the grave under a tree at ***Cloonmacduff, Markree Estate, Collooney,*** of a 12th century young man, aged 18 to 20 years, who had suffered a violent death by stabbing, makes fascinating reading. Marion Dowd and Linda G Lynch provide 11 photographs, drawings, maps and charts to add further lucidity to their already highly-informative text. The beech tree had fallen over in a storm in 2015 and the upper portion of the skeleton was exposed, tangled in the root system of the tree. After a rescue excavation on behalf of the National Monuments Service, it was established that the youth had been approximately

5 feet 10½ inches tall. The beech tree over the grave had been planted 215 years ago. The osteo-archaeological analysis of the remains reveals a great amount of detail about the man's health, work practices, diet and the manner of his death. A lot of evidence points to the fact that he was probably stabbed while he was unarmed and vainly defending himself against the fatal blade with an upraised arm. Marion and Linda demonstrate that substantial evidence exists for an early medieval settlement with a church in the Cloonmacduff area where the young man's grave was later entwined in the roots of a tree.

'The Location of the Historical Place-name "Bradcullen" and its Meaning' is the title of a study where Conchubhar Ó Crualaoich examines the various historical forms of the now-obsolete place-name Bradcullen which was very prominent in historical written sources from 1536 until 1836. Conchubhar proves with conviction that Bradcullen was located in the environs of what is now called Castletown in the northwest of the townland of Cartronmore on the bounds of Urlar and Cullagh Beg near Drumcliff. He is adamant that historical forms of Bradcullen reflect ultimate derivation from Bráid Choillí, 'the neck, gorge of/ at (the) area abounding in woods' or 'the gorge of the little wood'. Appendix 1 demonstrates the effect of Anglicisation in the area over the 300-year period on which it reports. It is worthy of note that the pass of Bradcullen was the point on the route or bealach between Connacht and Tyrconnell where O'Connor Sligo and his allies, the O'Harts, frequently challenged the southward advances of the O'Donnells and their allies. The Down Survey maps of Drumcliff (1654 - 1657), displaying two medieval roads with serrated lines, are interesting to peruse.

In an era when the modus operandi of the 'roll-on roll-off' flux of Irish and other EU container trucks passing through Calais, Dover and the port of Dublin is threatened by Brexit, ***Patrick E. O'Brien*** reminds us that during the 18th century Sligo merchants frequently sailed with their cargoes from their local port of Sligo to Bristol, Nantes, Bordeaux, Livorno in Italy, Madeira, Bruges, Oporto, Alicante, Lisbon, Setubal, Cadiz, Malaga, the West Indies and the American Colonies. Salted beef, pork, herrings, hides and butter provisions from Ireland were highly regarded. Irish corned beef had a reputation for being meticulously boned and salted, and was valued for not spoiling on long sea voyages to the West Indies. Herring catches from Sligo were cured on the coast with salt made on the shore of our own county and regularly shipped from Sligo to Liverpool. The vessels returning to Sligo transported wine, fruit, tobacco, bay salt, fish, tallow and hides.

Pic 1: A view of Ballisodare Station towards Collooney, 7 May 1957. Photograph by TB Owen / Colour Rail.

Pat O'Brien has surveyed ***the Salt Works Around Sligo Bay*** that were producing the vital supplies of salt, by processing finer salt from lesser-quality salt and from rock salt, and also by evaporation of seawater. He has surveyed Mullaghmore Saltworks, Martin's Saltpans on Sligo Quays, Streamstown Saltpans and Saltport in Ballysadare Bay, Milk Harbour near Moneygold, Grange and Coolbeg Saltpans, Drumcliff. The imposition of salt taxes in Great Britain but not in Ireland made salt production economical in Sligo. However the British salt duties were removed in 1825 and immediately the Sligo salt industry collapsed. The provision of 18 maps, charts and photographs, enhances the enjoyment of this excellent contribution.

Martin A Timoney, in collaboration with Fiona Gallagher, author of *The Streets of Sligo*, after much high-viz. jacket, sub-pavement and sub-thoroughfare archaeology through Sligo's streets, have unlocked the secrets of ***Robert Young's 1861 map of Sligo*** that hung above the public counter in the Stephen Street Branch of the Ulster Bank in Sligo for many years. In 2016 Martin was monitoring the enhancement of Sligo's streetscape on behalf of Sligo County Council with a particular interest in the culverts that are known to exist under many streets. Initially it was believed that the lines on Robert Young's map could have been a comprehensive plan of a system of culverts. However, a contradiction was discovered between the line on the 1861 map and the actual location of the culverts on Harmony Hill. Eventually excavation in Wine Street led the Council workers, Martin and Fiona to the site of the Dunne's Store small car-park where Sligo Gasworks had been located from 1839 to 1962. Eventually it was

confirmed that Robert Young's map of Sligo displayed the gas network of the town. We are also informed that by 1890 Sligo town had seven miles of gas mains with 405 private consumers. The network served the entire town except the Gaol and Old Market Street. Holborn Hill, Gallows Hill and the Mail Coach Road were also not included in the network because these locations were too high in relation to the gasometer and gas pressure was too low.

The Coming of the Railways to Collooney and Ballisodare by Peter Bowen Walsh makes gripping reading. The expansion of the network in Ireland's north-west is reminiscent of the railway development in the western frontier of the United States that was proceeding at the same time. Peter's presentation of the advent of our railways is a dramatic and exciting historical narrative. We observe intensive lobbying and rivalry between ambitious investors. His description of the vast army of labourers, skilled masons and ingenious engineers carrying out the work is acutely absorbing. The fortuitous location of Ballisodare port for the importation of metal from Wales and sleeper timber from Lithuania has been vividly emphasised. The construction of noble bridges using techniques from Roman times and solemn cut-stone train stations has bequeathed us a valuable architectural legacy. The Midland Great Western Longford-Sligo line took four years to construct and it opened on 3 December 1862. It was a line of gentle curves and easy gradients.

In 1882 the Sligo-Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway between Collooney and Enniskillen was opened. Peter stresses the fact that this line was built as cheaply as possible, resulting in sharp curves, steep gradients, numerous level crossings and very few bridges. The SLNC station in Collooney was a corrugated building and the line to Enniskillen closed in 1957.

Peter continues the story of Collooney with an account of the opening of the Collooney-Claremorris Railway in 1895 that emanated from Irish Chief Secretary Balfour's policy to 'Kill Irish Home Rule with Kindness'. This line linked Sligo ultimately with Cork. Train services on the line were discontinued in 1963. The inclusion of 43 illustrations, most of them in colour, is extremely informative. The two plans of the Collooney railways with their junctions and stations further clarify what was indeed a complex confluence of rail traffic.

In his article ***Gulls of Sligo Town,*** Michael Bell highlights the more common species as well as some of the rarer visitors that occur. Among the common species he notes the Black-headed Gulls that have been sighted in Sligo but were ringed as far away as Finland and Lithuania. Gull visitors to Sligo town include the Common Gull, the Herring Gull and the Lesser Black-headed Gull, all of whom colonise Inishmurray. The latter Gull winters in North-west Africa. Local bird watchers have established a relationship with a Common Gull nicknamed 'Tarfie' because it was ringed in 1997 as a nestling at Loch Tarf in Scotland and has being observed for 19 consecutive years in Sligo Town.

Some of the less frequent visitors include the Iceland Gulls, the Glaucous Gull, the Ring-billed Gull and the Mediterranean Gull, who migrate to Sligo from Iceland, Greenland, Canada and the Black Sea. Michael is delighted to record the fact that there is a greater understanding and awareness of gull identification among bird watchers and that the Irish Rare Birds Committee is rigorous with regard to accuracy when ruling on reports and photographs of sightings.

While the overwhelming details in Dr Don C F Cotton's feature, ***The Damselflies and Dragonflies of Counties Sligo and Leitrim,*** could initially repel the reader, the fact that these Odonata have existed in this region for at least 325 million years, as proven by their image discovery in fossils in our local Upper Carboniferous rocks from that period, speedily induces us to continue reading. It is also believed that these Odonata were among the first creatures on earth to fly. Don draws our attention to ten species of Damselflies and nine Dragonflies that breed in Co. Sligo. Leitrim has 17 breeding species. His accounts for the Sligo species are summarised under six bullet points: identification,

Pic 2: Carnaweeleen passage tomb on the north east slope of Keash Hill. Photograph by Sam Moore.
Images reproduced with kind permission of SFCJ.

distribution, abundance, season, habitat and conservation. The detailed descriptions of every species of Odonata that have been observed in the 600 ponds and lakes of Sligo and Leitrim are further made manifest with 22 colour photographs that demonstrate the extraordinary diversity and beauty that nature provides close to our homes. It is interesting to note that Michael Bell has recorded 611 Odonata sightings. Half of these records are from Cloonacleigha Lake near Ballymote. The author concedes that all wetland sites cannot be protected, but in deciding which ones to select, information on the range of species, and the rarity of species present, can be used to help make informed decisions. The interested reader should also see Michael Bell's article in this edition of *The Corran Herald.*

Ian Kennedy, a recent event manager of the Yeats International Summer School, offers an inspiring ***Lived and Living History*** of Sligo's renowned cultural gathering from 1960 to 2010. Ian recalls that the Yeats Summer School developed from the An Tostal Festival of 1958, and he outlines the role played by Professor TR Henn, St Catherine's College, Cambridge, during the formative years of the School. Henn believed that the best way to immortalise Yeats would be in a summer school, 'a joint international co-operating and living thing that draws into itself the lifeblood of poetry'. The professor further stressed that the school had not been aligned to any university but was organised locally in Sligo. Other academics were delighted to observe the inclusive character of the school, which had seen members of all social classes participate as students.

The mystery of ***the Watters Family, Castlegal, Quernstone*** was solved after investigation by Martin A Timoney, Leo Leyden and Dr Seamus Caulfield. Seamus recognised that the four rynslots or bridge slots on the underside of the 48cm diameter quernstone identified the stone as an abandoned upper millstone cut down to quern size. The millstone could be from the old mill on the Bunduff River that had ceased operations during the 19th century.

Marion Dowd's brief study of the ***Polldingdong (Polldownin) Cave*** in Magurk townland near Dromahair and Lough Gill, accentuates the singular antiquity of living creatures in Ireland. The 100m subterranean passage was investigated by two experiences cavers, McShea and McShea, in 1967, and they found evidence of a bear skeleton that had died while hibernating in the cave almost 6,500 years ago. In 1896 a Mr Jameson noted the presence of bones of sheep, cattle, dog and horse in the cave. Part of a human skeleton was also discovered.

The three photographs submitted by Anne McManus and Mary Henry and the textual elaborations supplied by Martin A Timoney afford us a unique insight into the commercial life of ***19th and 20th century Wine Street in Sligo.*** The photos display the Sligo Gas Company, The Western Wholesale Delph Store and the Pollexfen Building.

Joe Meehan's account of the surprise acquisition of ***The Hawkswell Theatre Site*** prior to its construction and its opening night in January 1982, must surely be a source of inspiration for everyone interested in the development of social, cultural and sporting facilities. Tom Palmer, Harry Johnson, Dermot McDermott and Liam McKinney had spent almost a decade vigorously pursuing suitable sites, all in the gift of public bodies, but to no avail. While they coveted the Old Rectory Garden, then the property of the Catholic Diocese of Elphin, they held out little hope, in view of the fact that the Church was not known to cede property, and definitely not for frivolous purposes outside its control. Liam McKinney insisted, 'Why not?' To their great surprise the new Bishop, Dr Conway, readily agreed to make a site available on production of a viable plan.

Gertie McHale, 1922 – 2016 is deservedly honoured with a biographical personal tribute from Dr Nollaig ó Muraille. In the course of the obituary we are informed that Gertie was born in Ballina and worked as a distinguished journalist for the *Irish Times* and the *Western People*. After settling in Enniscrone, Gertie became the guiding light in the MacFirbis Committee which led to the inauguration of the annual Eigse Mhic Fhirbisigh weekend of history. Gertie published two books sketching the rich history of Tireragh – *Stories from O Dowda's Country* and *The O Dowda of Castleconor, Chieftain of Tireragh*.

The life and career of ***Michael Herity, Emeritus Associate Professor of Archaeology, UCD, 1929 – 2016,*** are celebrated with an obituary penned by Martin A Timoney. A native of Ballintra, Co Donegal, Michael was the son of a Streedagh father and a Mohill mother. Michael's work was carried on throughout the country and he had a particular interest in megalithic tombs. He excavated a number of the hut sites on Knocknashee Mountain near the Lough Talt Gap. His publication *Rathcroghan and Carnfree Celtic Royal Sites in Roscommon* bestowed well-merited recognition on that area. With regard to Carrowmore in Sligo Michael represented the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland in the High Court. He said that he considered Carrowmore as being one of the prime sites in Ireland for a National Archaeological Park and that a landfill in the quarry would be most inappropriate.

Sligo Field Club Journal, Vol. 2, 2016, runs to 170 interesting and informative pages and contains 170 illustrations that supplement and highlight the captivating topics in every feature. The *Journal* represents very good value at €20. Copies are still available in bookshops in Sligo or locally from Martin A Timoney, Keash.

Time and tide

By Bernie Gilbride

Recently in Sligo town not far from the quays I was surprised to hear someone call my name, and more surprised still when it turned out to be an old friend I had not seen in many years.

'I couldn't believe my eyes when you pulled in!' Patsy said. 'I was wondering if I would meet anyone I knew all those years ago, or if any of them were still in Sligo and hey presto you drive in almost beside me.'

He was home for a few weeks he said, and was in town to get things for the farm. 'I have been walking around for the last half-hour and this end of town is hardly recognisable,' Patsy said. 'Do you remember all the noise and the smells, horses and carts and especially the boats along the quays? Not much noise and not a boat in sight today.'

'Of course I remember, and I remember too the day you got up on a cart, took the reins and off the horse trotted!' I answered. 'The carter was out of the shed in a flash, roaring and shouting, threatening to warm your legs with his whip if your Dad didn't. Luckily the horse was no racehorse, he just trotted off sedately and was easily caught.'

We chatted for a few minutes longer and arranged to meet for a drink the following evening, to catch up on each other's news. Patsy was reared in Church Street, not far from me. We often played together in the old Market Yard, being chased home by the caretaker on many an occasion. Sligo was a busy port back then, a boon to the town, used to export local produce – cattle, pigs, sheep, farm produce like butter and eggs, and more. It was also used to import most of the needs of the town not available at home – wine, tobacco, wheat, timber, hardware goods, cloth, clothes, and coal, among other things.

Coal was piled high in open yards on the quays. It was the principle source of heating for most homes and offices. Oil was imported and stored in large vats near the quays. The port and quays gave much-needed employment. Dockers were needed to load and unload the boats, carters to bring the goods from the quays to the merchants or their warehouses. Horses and carts were the means of transport.

Once emptied, the boats were cleaned and repaired if necessary, made ready for the return journey. Ships' chandlers supplied them with all their requirements: meat, bacon, food of all sort, drink, fresh fruit, clothing, fuel, medical requirements and much else, all the million-and-one things necessary for survival at sea.

Along the quays were many businesses: Denny's bacon factory, the O'Connor Bros bottling plant, iron works, carpentry workshops, shop fitter workshops, DM Hanley, Builders' Providers, a meat factory near the North Wall, large warehouses belonging to the big merchants in the town like Meldrums, Woods, The Wood and Iron, Western Wholesale, Gallagher and Kells. It was a busy place indeed. The port was run by the harbourmaster and committee. It was kept dredged and clean to allow the passage of boats up and down, even at low tide. Each boat had to pick up a 'bosun' or pilot at Raughly Point to guide the boat in and out. The wages paid to this large work force made Sligo a relatively prosperous place, supporting the many large retailers in the town. The quays played a major part in the town and county.

With the coming of the railways, goods were transported by rail and imports came on much larger ships. The quays, like the horse and cart, gradually became redundant, except for the boats still bringing in coal, oil, and timber. The old warehouses have been replaced with more modern retailing premises, bringing an end to the many small family-run businesses. With the advent of the supermarket smaller shops are vanishing, whole streets becoming offices and apartments. Many of the old merchants are now gone. These big stores are being franchised out in sections and leased to new shopkeepers. It's a new way of life, very different to the old shops where everybody was known personally, with their custom much appreciated by the owner.

I rested on the low wall of the quay, and when I closed my eyes and let my mind drift I could hear again the shouts of the stevedores and their supervisors as they directed the emptying and filling of the holds of the boats, the rattle of cartwheels over stoney roads, the neighing of horses and the background noise of whatever animals were awaiting export: the mooing of cattle unhappy at being cooped up, the screeching of pigs and the plaintive bleats of sheep. The timeline of sailing was so important then, always guided by the tides. Some owners of the ships that came to Sligo port lived in the town and were known to watch for their ships' arrival and departure from special roof turrets, one of which can still be seen over a large store on the southern side of Wine Street.

Many of the ships took passengers too, to Derry, Belfast, Glasgow, Liverpool, some on their way to America, Australia, and even further abroad. The quays were very important to the business and social life of the town.

What changes the years have brought. I wonder what the men who, centuries ago, had seen the potential of the Garavogue river with its estuary, and had laid the foundation for the development of the present quays, would make of it now. Time seems to have overtaken it. I hope some enterprising person will look at the river and quays as they are now and come up with a worthwhile project to make full use again of this wonderful facility right in the heart of the town. It would be lovely to see it busy again even in a different way.

Kilross Civil Parish in 1749: A microcosm of 18th-century Sligo?

By Pat O'Brien

By 1749 Ireland had experienced a period of relative peace. Transfer of lands had been extensive in Co Sligo. With two exceptions (the heirs Turlough MacDonnchada in the Tirerrill townland of Creevagh and Baron Taaffe of Ballymote), all landowners in Sligo were Protestant. New landowners consolidated their possessions and, with the Penal Laws, the threat of a Gaelic resurgence and subsequent repossession was receding. The occasional threats of Stuart pretenders collapsed in 1745 with the defeat of Prince Charles at Culloden.

Background

Kilross, a civil parish of 3,931.7 acres and 15 townlands, lies in the eastern Sligo barony of Tirerrill. Three families owned most of its lands in the early 18th century: Burton of Carlow, who had bought part of the Sligo estate of Strafford and Radcliffe; Cooper of Markree who in 1727 bought some of the lands accumulated by Richard Coote following the Cromwellian wars; and Crofton of Longford House, near Ballysadare, an Elizabethan family which bought lands from the O'Dowd and McSweeney families in 1615. Another, the Percivals of Templehouse, inherited Kilross townland and Tully Beg, having married a Crofton heiress of Templehouse. (Fig 1)

Several Protestant farmers of Kilross parish in 1749 had large farms, some extending to townlands. Until their repeal in 1778, laws of the reigns of Queen Anne and George III excluded Catholics from leases of more than 31 years. To date no leases to Catholics in Kilross have been identified earlier than 1823, when a lease of 5a. 3r. in Doonamurray for one life or 21

Fig 1 - Baronies of Sligo and Kilross parish

years was given to Thady and James Carbara. Otherwise, tenants would have been 'tenants at will' or have been sub-tenants. Neither Ballygrania nor Lavinscartron had resident farmers in 1749 – the sole resident of Ballygrania was a herd, and those lands undoubtedly were leased or sub-let to graziers. The rentals of some lands provided specific incomes, e.g. pensions for widows of gentlemen and marriage settlements. When

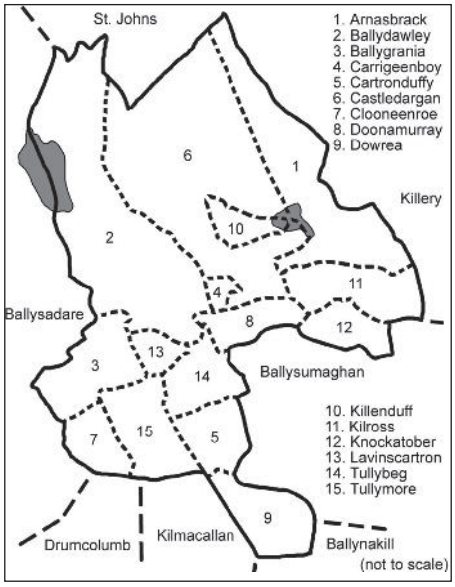

Fig 2 - Townlands of Kilross Civil Parish

Joshua Cooper married Alicia Synge, only surviving daughter of Dr Edward Synge of Elphin in 1758, some of her marriage settlement was from the rentals of six townlands of Kilross. (Fig 2)

Census of Elphin 1749

Dr Edward Synge, bishop of Ferns, had been translated to the bishopric of Elphin on 15 May 1740. A man of moderate opinion by this time, he was critical 'of those parts of the penal laws … whose effect had been to invade Roman Catholics' liberty of conscience'. In 1749 he ordered a census of the diocese of Elphin, listing the parishes, townlands, professions, religious denomination[1], and numbers of children and servants of each householder.

Year	1659	1749	1841	1851	1901
Households		116	281	184	115
Population	312	509	1633	1072	558

Table I: Kilross Population 1659-1901

Table 1

Using the corrected tally of the census enumerator the population stood at 509, living in 116 households. The changes of populations from 1659 to 1901 show the impact of improvement from 1659 to the explosion of population up to 1841, and the subsequent disastrous reduction to that of 1901. In the 1749-1901 periods the population had grown and waned to within 10% of its origins of 1749. Between 1659 and 1749 it grew by a cumulative average of 0.55% per year with interruptions during the Jacobite wars and almost certainly during the Arctic winter of 1740 when countrywide, between 13% and 20% of the population died.

Charles O'Hara (1705-1776) of Annaghmore in his survey of the

economic development of Co Sligo in the 18th century recorded that crops were lost in the autumn of 1744 due to storm damage, a snowfall lasted from January to March of 1745, and 'a great number of the inhabitants perished; many went off'. The number of houses in Co Sligo reduced from *c*. 6,000 to *c*. 4,000 between 1744 and 1746. The impact of these disasters may be found in the phrase that O'Hara used on many occasions, 'many went off', reflecting the historic tendency of people with no great stake in property to migrate.

Family names were major indicators of change for the Gaelic Irish. The list included 88 Catholic families with 60 names and 28 Protestant families with 18 (Table II). Of the 13 Kilross names recorded in the Hearth Money Rolls of the 1660s, four alone survived in 1749. The most notable was the O'Carhey of Killeenduff becoming Carthy and Carty, occupying three households in Ballydawley and Castledargan and still occupying some of those lands. (Fig 3)

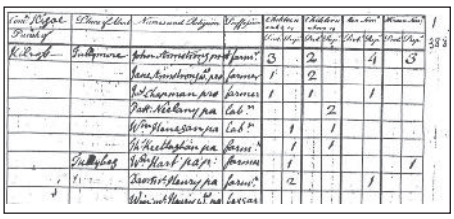

Fig 3 - Census of Elphin 1749, sample page copy

Catholic	Catholic	Protestant
McAuly (1)	Henegan (1)	Armstrong (2)
Bartly (1)	McHenry (3)	Carter (1)
Bern (2)	Hinde (1)	Chapman (1)
Brennan (1)	Horoghy (1)	Christian (1)
Bryandun (1)	McHugh (1)	McConboy (1)
Calery (1)	Johnston (1)	Donoghy (1)
Carabry (1)	Keetlaghan (1)	Furrel (1)
Carthy (2)	Kelly (2)	Gilmer (1)
Carty(1)	Kenney (1)	Kimmitt (1)
Casey (2)	Kenny (1)	Lockhart (5)
Coil (1)	Kilcleen (1)	Logheed (1)
Conc (3)	Kilgir (1)	Lyndsay (1)
Conlane (1)	Kilguir (1)	Napier (1)
Connel (1)	Kimmitt (5)	Nicholson (1)
O'Connor (1)	Lenany (1)	Ormsby (2)
Davy (2)	Linnane (1)	Phibbs (1)
Devanny (2)	Macaniff (1)	Reed (4)
Dogherty (1)	Mulkeeran (1)	Taylor (2)
Dolan (1)	Mulvany (1)	
Donelan (1)	Neelany (1)	
Donoghoo (1)	Oates (1)	
Fallon (1)	Phillips (1)	
Feeney (1)	Quin (1)	
Flaherty (1)	Quinane (2)	
Flin (5)	Russel (1)	
Fury (1)*	Scanlan (1)	
Geelan (1)	Sullivan (1)	
Giraghty (1)	Tigue (2)	
Gray (1)	Timon (2)	
Harrison (1)	Ultagh (1)	
Hart (2)	Wamny (20	
Healy (2)		

Table II: Family names of Kilross, 1749

Table 2

The 1749 Gaelic names are remarkable for the extensive absence of the 'Ó' and 'Mac' prefixes, the exceptions being the families of McAuly, O'Connor, McConboy, McHenry and McHugh. A miniscule 6% of Gaelic family names in Kilross had 'Ó' or 'Mac' prefixes. The process had been developing as early as the 1660s – e.g. of the 30 literary Ó hUigín families in Co Sligo, none bore the prefix 'Ó' and 18 had adopted the English 'Higgins'.

The Gaelic family names of 1749 further reflected the progressive anglicising of surnames as recorded by English-speaking officials. While many family names of the 1660s phonetically reflected the Gaelic names, e.g. Beolane, McBrehoone, O'Cahussy, O'Gallchure, O'Floyne, modern usage was being reinforced by 1749. Further, some may have been the result of pseudo-translation; 'Grey' for *Mac Cathail Riabhaigh* or incorrectly 'Oates' for *MacOirc* or Ó Cuirc. The family name of Dominick and John Wamny of Ballydawley may have been the result of a considerable evolution from an original *Mac Meanma*.

For a parish that was part of two powerful *comhroinn* of the McDonaghs of Tirerrill it is notable that no McDonaghs remained in Kilross. This great family had indeed 'gone beyond the seas', though the Donaghy and Donoghoo family names may possibly have been variants of either the Sligo or Ulster MacDonnchadha.

Fifty-three per cent of the Kilross Protestant family names had been recorded in county Sligo in the 1660s, paying Hearth Tax or recorded as tituladoes, e.g. Armstrong, Carter, Lyndsay, Nicholson, Ormsby, Phibbs and Reed. Four Protestant households had Gaelic derived names: the Protestant Conboy and Donoghy, obviously derived from the Gaelic names Ó Conbhuidhe and Donnchadha (the former originating in west Sligo and the latter a possible Ulster variant of MacDonagh), together with those of Oliver Farrel, an ale seller of Kilross, and Humphrey Kilmer[2], a farmer of Castledargan.

Kilross was the most Protestant parish in Tirerrill, with 24.3% of households being Protestant. Tirerrill had 13.7%, ranging from 5.2% in Kilmactranny in the south to the 24.3% of Kilross at its north. Sligo town had 45.9% of Protestant households.

Area	Cath	Prot	None	Total	% Prot
Kilross	88	28		116	24.3
Tirerrill	1113	179	10	1302	13.7
Sligo Town	356	312	11	679	45.9

Table III: Declared religious denomination, 1749

Table 3

(Table III)

Following the influx of Scottish and English civilian and military settlers up to the mid-17th century, Sligo had had an influx of Protestants, probably both Anglican and Presbyterian from Ulster, and, as O'Hara recounted, 'new settlers from the north' due to increased trade contact or possibly invited migration. Sufficient Presbyterians were residing in Sligo to justify the ordination of Rev Samuel Henry to the congregation of Sligo and Ballina in May 1695. No distinction is made between the different Protestant denominations in the census of 1749.

Being at a distance from Dublin and further isolated by an unimproved

Occupation	Catholic		Protestant		Total	
	Freq'y	%	Freq'y	%	Freq'y	%
Alesceller			1	0.9	1	0.9
Beggar	11	9.5	2	1.7	13	11.2
Broguemaker	2	1.7			2	1.7
Cottier	2	1.7	1	0.9	3	2.6
Farmer	28	24.1	20	17.2	48	41.4
Herd	7	6.1	1	0.9	8	6.9
Labourer	31	26.7	2	1.7	33	28.4
Quack	1	0.9			1	0.9
Saddler	1	0.9			1	0.9
Smith	1	0.9			1	0.9
Tailor	3	2.6	1	0.9	4	3.4
Total	88	75.9	28	24.1	116	100

Table IV: Occupations of Kilross, 1749

Table 4

road network, Sligo had a wide range of trades to support its economy. Compared to Sligo town with its more exotic mix of apothecaries, chandlers, glovers, hatters, mantua-maker, quilter and snuffmaker, Kilross had the more usual occupations of farmers, labourers and herds, together with trades associated with a rural environment and the need to be self-sustaining.

Oliver Farrel of Kilross townland was the local ale-seller, one of six in Tirerrill. He was Protestant as were two others of his trade. Two were Catholic. Conor McManus preferred not to declare his religious denomination. Ale and cider would have been the commercial alcoholic drink of the common people, with industrially-produced whiskey gaining in popularity later in the century.

An unusual 'profession' was that of beggar, of which there were 13 in Kilross, all widows and reflecting the religious mix – eleven Catholic and two Protestant. This frequency of beggars (11.2%) was the highest in Tirerrill. All 53 beggars recorded in the Elphin census in Sligo lived in Tirerrill. No beggars were recorded in Sligo town or in the parishes of Carbury, though 'poorwomen', 'poorman' and four Protestant people living 'upon charity' lived in Sligo town. The occupation of some widows in Tirerrill was not recorded, and in Sligo town and Carbury many widows were recorded as 'cottiers'. This was possibly in deference to enactments requiring the licensing of beggars and the punishment or removal of those without licence. William Lecky (1838-1903) described their living conditions in 1766 as:

[Living] in cabins of such shocking materials and construction that through hundreds of them you may see the smoke ascending from every inch of the roof, for scarce one in twenty of them have any chimney, the rain drips from every inch of the roof on the half-naked, shivering and almost half-starving inhabitants within.

Of the eight brogue-makers in Tirerrill, two lived in Kilross parish: Dominic Wamny of Ballydawley and John Linnane of Castledargan. A further 18 in Sligo town and four in Carbury provided the footwear of the common man. Brogues, at that time stitched, would have been cruder than shoes and consequently cheaper. The trade may not have provided an acceptable status or a sufficient income – only one Protestant was a broguemaker. Only four of the 18 Sligo shoemakers were Catholics, two of them in Tirerrill. A lone clogmaker, John Tige of Carrowreagh in Kilmacallan, provided the heavier footwear.

Being a rural parish, it is not unexpected that a high proportion of householders in Kilross parish were farmers, 48 (41.4%) of the 116 householders. The Protestant community had the higher proportion of farmers in their community at 71.4% compared to 31.8% Catholic. They also had the larger farms with the better leases. Fleming Phibbs was the sole farmer of Doonamurray and the two Ormsbys were the farmers of the 978 acres of Castledargan. Andrew Donaghy and Robert Reed shared Cartronduffy between them, while in Tully More, of the four farmer occupants, Thomas Keetlaghan was the lone Catholic.

In Castledargan, the Ormsby families of William and Stephen (a younger brother of William's father) were the major tenants of Kilross parish. They were of a minor branch of an extended Elizabethan family that had had earlier marriage alliances with the O'Hara, Jordan and O'Kelly families, and were 'numerous and spread over all parts of the county'. They had not only several branches in Sligo but also in Mayo, Roscommon, Galway and Limerick.

Herds were an occupation in all the parishes of Tirerrill, eight of them in Kilross parish, together with some cowboys and shepherds. There were no farmer occupants in Clooneenroe, Kilross, Knockatober and Ballygrania, in which townlands five of the eight worked, probably for graziers. Their employment would have been variable due to changing requirement for cattle and meat exports. O'Hara stated in the 1750s that:

[W]ar makes a demand for cattle different from what it was in times of peace ... the sending of beef and live cattle to England makes a constant equitable demand instead of those flurries which used to happen when French commissioners came and the Scotch take off the light cattle.

O'Hara continually refers to the impact of a varying cattle trade on farming and when prices fell in 1759, the impact 'fell principally upon the jobbers, a race extremely destructive in the main'. O'Hara did not like graziers.

The second most frequent occupation in Kilross was that of labourer. Thirty-three householders (28.4%) were labourers compared to the overall of 48.8% throughout Tirerrill. The frequency ranged from 14% in Ballynakill parish to 79.8% in Killadoon, where 41.4% and 1.8% respectively of householders were farmers. There were only two farming households in Killadoon. Parish to parish comparison supports the conclusion that the lesser the number of farms, the larger the farming unit and the greater the number of labourers required. It is not recorded whether they were tied labourers or labourers for hire. Life would have been difficult, but more so for some. Mary O'Brien, a householder and married labourer with one child, of Straduff, Kilmactranny, was the only head of household in Tirerrill whose marriage status (*mar'd*), excepting that of widow or widower, was recorded.

The one learned profession open to Catholics during Penal Times was that of medicine. A doctor and a surgeon, both Catholics, treated the medical needs of the people of

Tirerrill. A similar arrangement, both Protestant, pertained in Sligo town. Kilross parish had a quack, Owen Ultagh of Ballydawley. The Dunleavy family, hereditary medics of the Ó Domhnaill, had gained such a reputation for medicine that Ultagh, *the Ulster man*, had become synonymous with physician. By the end of the 16th century, families from this tradition were living in Sligo. The Rev Andrew Dunleavy, of *An Teagasg Críosduidhe* fame, later prefect of the Irish College in Paris, and probably Owen 'Ultagh' Dunleavy of Ballygawley, were descended from the family living in Sligo in 1652. Of Owen's three sons, James died at 103 years old and was buried in Sligo Abbey. James, 'a gentleman of means and education', was married to his cousin Mary McSweeny, daughter of Tirlogh McSweeny and Lady Louisa Campbell, a daughter of the house of Argyle. These were not the connections of a charlatan. A great-grandson was the Rev James Dunleavy, Dean of Elphin, and an active liberal supporter in the politics of Sligo in the 1830s.

Thady Flin of Kilross townland was one of ten smiths in Tirerrill and of 41in Sligo. After the trades of weaver and tailor, the trade of smith was the most numerous in Sligo. The Flynn family had a strong connection with the forge in Tirerrill – five of its ten smiths were Flynns. One of them was probably the Charles Flynn (aged 82) commemorated on a distinctively-carved headstone dated 1784 in Teampal Mór graveyard near Riverstown. The connection of Flynn and the trade of blacksmith was historic, continuing in Kilross into the mid-20th century.

By the early 18th century traditional Irish dress would have been replaced by the local version of English fashions, using flannels, friezes and some coarse linen. While O'Hara would have seen spinning and knitting taking place in the home, tailors would have finished clothing. There was one tailor in Kilross parish, ten in Tirerrill and 45 in Sligo. John Quinane provided the tailoring services of Kilross.

The 'better sort of people', as O'Hara called them, introduced the sowing of flax as a commercial operation in the early years of the 18th century. They had their tenants, with 'what little leisure they have' spin the yarn and had it woven into coarse linen for their own use, a practice that O'Hara saw ultimately filtering through to the 'lower sort of people'. In Sligo, 114 weavers wove much of these linen requirements, twelve of them in Tirerrill, of which four worked in Kilross – Thomas McConboy, Nicholas Quin, Charles O'Connor and Patrick Kelly. Proximity to the commercial trade of Sligo town may have supported this somewhat disproportionate level of weavers in Kilross.

Eighty-two households (71%) had families of children: 63 Catholic families and 19 Protestant. Protestant families were consistently larger than

Area	Per family		> 14yrs		< 14yrs	
	Cath	Prot	Cath	Prot	Cath	Prot
Kilross	2.54	3.58	1.78	2.47	0.76	1.11
Tirerrill	2.42	3.24	1.74	2.01	0.68	1.23

Table V: Children per family, 1749

Table 5

those of Catholics, Protestant families having 3.58 children compared to 2.54 in Catholic families. That difference was evident throughout Tirerrill (Table V).

There was approximately one child less per Catholic family than among Protestants. The numbers of children both under and above 14 years also reflected these differences. Such differences may have been due to the lesser ability of the poor to survive the leaner times of the winters of 1739 and 1745. The lower numbers of older Catholic children might also be explained by the incidence O'Hara saw of those entering service, more than likely live-in and thus not recorded in the home. He also reported that the practice of farmers' sons staying at home to help on the farm did not significantly affect the recorded difference in family size, the one child per family difference still reflected in the 2.70 Catholic and 3.69 Protestant children per farming family in Kilross.

A higher mortality rate among Catholics due to deprivation or a lesser ability to cope with downturns or entrance into service apart, O'Hara surprises with the suggestion that women 'leave off bearing children, which they soon do', indicating some form of control of family size among the 'poorer sort'. The phenomenon of the larger Catholic families of more prolific times had yet to come. It was noticeable that, with the exception of the Catholic families with four children, families of three children and more were substantially more prevalent among Protestants than Catholics.

Perhaps one of the more unexpected phenomena recorded was the distribution of servants. Almost one third of all households (31.9%) in Kilross had servants – 19.3% of Catholic and 71.4% of Protestant households. The pattern was more or less reflected throughout Tirerrill. In Kilross, service was the almost exclusive occupation of the Catholic; 94% were Catholic and 58% were female. Three alone of Protestant servants worked for Catholic masters, none of them in Kilross.

In the parishes of Tirerrill, the number of servants per Protestant household was approximately double that of the Catholic household and in Kilross 50% greater, all probably reflecting the larger farms and more

	All	Religion	
		Cath	Prot
Kilross	1.74	1.62	2.44
Tirerrill	1.74	1.42	2.74

Table VI: Servants per household, 1749
(Of houses with servants)

Table 6

prosperous living conditions of Protestant households (Table V). In Kilross, the largest households of servants were those of Protestant farmers: John Armstrong (7), James Reed (5), William Ormsby (4), Fleming Phibbs (4) and Robert Reed (4), all of whom would have had larger farms. Two Catholic farmers had two servants each and Charles Bryandun, a farmer of Dowrea, had three servants.

Almost all occupations had servants. Farmers were the most numerous, but also labourers, cottiers and one Catholic beggar, Deniss Fagan of Shancough with four children and one servant. Five labourers in Kilross had one servant each and Mark Cone of Doonamurray had two. In the nearby parish of Drumcolumb a labourer, James Banaghan, had one male and one female servant. In 1743 a James Banaghan, parish priest of Kilross and Ballysumaghan, was identified in an investigation of the presence of priests in Tirerrill. The recording of parents and in-laws as part of the household in north Sligo, a practice not followed in Tirerrill, would suggest that some or most of these Tirerrill servants were in fact parents, parents-in-law and older relatives.

Whatever the motive for initiating the census of 1749, Dr Edward Synge has done an enormous service to the story of Sligo in revealing for the first time a picture of the ordinary people of those parts of Sligo that formed part of the Diocese of Elphin and particularly in this study the parish of Kilross.

Further Reading

The Census of Elphin 1749, NAI, M2466

O'Hara, Charles, of Nymphsfield: *Survey of the economic development of County Sligo in the eighteenth century*, typescript of PRONI T.2812/19/1.

Legg, Marie-Louise (ed.) 2004: *The Census of Elphin 1749 with a statistical analysis by Brian Gurrin*, Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission.

Footnotes

[1] This study uses the term 'Catholic' rather than the 'papist' denomination of the census.

[2] Gilmore, from which Kilmer may be derived, may be not only the Sligo Mac Giolla Mhír or the Ulster Gaelic Mac Giolla Mhuire, but also from the Scottish Clann Mhic Gille Mhóire.

St Ita's, Portrane

By John Hannon

Brown stony shelter of imprisoned souls
Haven to the many lives cushioned
By the stark primevalness of the perimeter fence
The anguished cries of muddled minds
Hurtling seawards at the casual passers-by
As they wind their breezy way around the head
On their carefree Sunday afternoon stroll.
What grim secrets reside within this turreted sanctuary
As shackled spirits in broken earthly bodies
Amble aimlessly through the benign boredom of another distraught day.
--
September 1996. St Ita's is a psychiatric hospital on the north County Dublin coast.

Landmarks

By John McDonagh

Landmarks
By John McDonagh

No marble here, nor polished stones,
No limestone cross above the bones
That once were men who worked these lands
With simple tools and calloused hands

They watched the seasons come and go
The rain and sunshine, frost and snow
No calendar to tabulate
Their planting times appropriate

The stars, the sun, the moon and sky
Migrating birds-the way they'd fly
And natures rules they would obey
To serve their interests day by day

Mounds and boundaries of soil and stone
Simple tools of wood and bone
Monuments of soil and clay
Landmarks we still know today.

First Holy Communion 2017

Ballymote

Back row, L – R: James Boyle, Alanna Mulvany, Daniel Iani Emo, Grace Kilcoyne, Conor Walsh, Chantelle Kielty, Conor Boyle.
Middle row, L – R: Ruby Flannery, Lorcan McTiernan, Kate Leszczynska, Ruairí Flanagan, Georgia Kelly, Cristiano Chaves and Katie Gardiner.
Front row, L – R: Callum Egan, Kailum Boyd Clarke, Marcus Kielty, Shauna McCormack, Jack Walker & AJ Tighe.
Also included in photograph: Fr James McDonagh, Ms. Dolores Taheny, and Mrs McGetrick, class teacher.
Altar servers: Shane Rafferty, Mark Scanlon.

Knockminna

Back row, L – R: Tom Cassidy (altar server), Mrs Louise King (Principal), Fr James Mc Donagh (Parish Priest), Ms Aoife Mc Donagh (Teacher).
Front row, L – R: Ryan O'Sullivan, Tara Scanlon, Ben O'Connor, Luke O'Sullivan, Ewan Boland, Keelan Gallagher, Amelie Duffy, Matthew Lyons.

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