The Corran Herald

COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY BALLYMOTE HERITAGE GROUP

ISSUE NO. 53 2020/2021 PRICE €10.00

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Annual Publication of Ballymote Heritage Group

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Design, Typesetting and Printing: Orbicon Print, Collooney

Cover Design and Artwork: Brenda Friel

Issue No 53 2020/2021

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

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A Tribute to Jack and Mary Martin

By Neal Farry

When Jack Martin and Mary McGann began their mutual acquaintance at a céilí in Riverstown Hall on St. Patrick's Day 1950 they may not have realised that this encounter would change their lives forever and bestow a formidable impact on the lifestories of three succeeding generations of Martins until the present time. Although neither of them was a native of Ballymote, that parish and many other areas of local society have benefited immensely from the unselfish and creative contributions that Jack and Mary imparted.

Prior to their marriage in Riverstown Church in April 1953 Jack and Mary surely exchanged memories of their previous life experiences before they crossed each other's paths. Jack was born in Moate, Co. Westmeath in June 1923. He received his education in Moate National School, St. Mary's Secondary School, Athlone and in Athlone Vocational School. He joined the Free State Army in July 1941and he served as a military driver until he was discharged from the army at the termination of the Emergency in 1946. In November of that year Jack joined C.I.E. at Longford. He was transferred in January 1947 to Ballymote where he worked as a delivery truck driver. From his transfer to the Sligo C.I.E. Depot in 1963 until his retirement in 1988 Jack ensured that innumerable loads of merchandise were efficiently transported to their respective destinations. On the 28th March 2016 Jack Martin passed peacefully to his eternal reward.

Mary Brigid McGann was born in Theur, Riverstown in June 1927. Her educational development was nurtured in Coolbock National School and in Ballymote Vocational School (An Cheard Scoil). At both schools Mary forged a profound love of the Irish and English languages. After her apprenticeship Mary practised her profession as a dressmaker.

When Mary and Jack married in 1953, they settled in Ballybrennan, Ballymote. The expanding Martin family moved into their new adjacent house on a hilly site in Carrownanty, previously owned by Robbie and Sam Clarke, in 1976. During decades of contented years in the west end of Ballymote Mary gave birth to thirteen children: Mary Teresa, Peggy, Bernadette, Claire, Gabrielle, Colette, Ethna, Antoinette, John, Laurie, Victor, Anthony, who died at birth, and Gerard.

Jack and Mary Martin

Mary Brigid Martin-McGann departed this world on the 2nd August 2018, mourned by her extended family of twelve children, thirty-five grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren. She had been predeceased by one grandchild, Joseph.

Considering their manifestly hectic home life both Mary and Jack found time to make many notable contributions to the social scene of their adopted community in Ballymote.

Mary was an active member of the Ballymote Heritage Group for over twenty years and she served as the Group's Treasurer and as an energetic and capable member of the Heritage Weekend committee for many years. In Ballymote Church Mary provided service as a member of the Legion of Mary and in the Altar Society for a lengthy period. Through her involvement in Ballymote Community Care Mary's skills as a laundress proved invaluable.

Already an experienced soldier, Jack joined the F.C.A. in 1955. He swiftly attained the rank of Company Sergeant. Jack retired from that Local Defence Force in 1983 with the rank of Sergeant Major, a fact that distinguishes him for being the first part time Sergeant Major in the Western Command.

For about thirty-five years Jack inspired and entertained the congregation in Ballymote Church as a leading member of the choir with his magnificent tenor voice. All liturgical occasions were rendered memorable by his committed and talented vocal contributions. Jack was also a Eucharistic Minister and a committed member of Ballymote Heritage Group.

In the foregoing paragraphs I have endeavoured to relate the bare bones of the biographies of Jack and Mary Martin. Fortunately, through the medium of the Corran Herald this unique and exceptional couple, in seven separate articles have outlined infinitely more detailed and personal descriptions of episodes of their lives

than I could adequately portray. By means of proficient, evocative and empathetic observations of the people, places and the relationships that illuminated their pathways through this world, Jack and Mary have proven their worth as storytellers.

Without a hint of bombast, Jack, like St. Paul of Tarsus, calmly indicates that he was "a citizen of no mean city" i.e. Moate, Co. Westmeath, in two essays. (Issue 18, pages 10 & 11 and Issue 20 on pages 5 & 6). It is evident that Jack's interest in culture and heritage was well matured before he reached Ballymote in 1947. Jack's subsequent visit to the National Museum and his fruitless quest for the Ballinderry boat is a fascinating tale in itself. (Issue 34, page 56). His "Train of Memories" article powerfully and succinctly describes the positive effect that the railway and the train station exerted on the economic life of Ballymote and its hinterland while he worked there. (Issue 31, page 4).

Mary Martin's "A Country School in the 1930's" is a gem of local life that myriads of pupils experienced, but just a minority with the intuitive composition skill of this author, could appropriately describe. Coolbock School may have stood by a quiet country road but Mary's account of her native townland is coloured by her keen eye and her consuming interest in the neighbourhood. (Issue 43, pages 57 & 58).

South-East Sligo's first venture into second level education is suitably described in Mary's second article "Going to the Tech". The traumatic transition of a young girl from a two-room rural school to the new Ceard Scoil in Ballymote is accurately narrated with a high degree of enthusiasm, warmth, humour and pride, emanating from the fact that the influences that inspired her own dressmaking career were found here. With the prisoner of war's mother Mrs. Thompson as her favourite teacher, Mary soon became absorbed by Home Economics, an interest that eventually beckoned her into the dressmaking business. (Issue 32, page 14).

Recycling was central to the account that Mary accentuated in her article entitled "Travellers Past and Present". (Issue 12, pages 14 & 15). The youthful and settled Carrownanty couple's car seat couch that found its way to the travellers' camp, to be paid for with two exquisitely crafted tin mugs, the tin cans in many homes that were repaired by the skilled hands of the travelling men, the padded and covered butter-boxes as corner seats, 'the dropeens of milk and saucers of flour' willingly donated by the local people to the women of the road, are all depicted with nostalgia. Mary recalled that the King John McDonagh and his royal wife in a plaid skirt and shawl were widely respected. Relations between the people of the town, the country and the road were amicable in bygone days. Mary wrote under her Irish name Máire Bn.Uí Mháirtín.

I wish to conclude with some lines from a prayerful poem composed by Bernie Martin, a daughter of Jack and Mary. (Issue 44, page 33). The sentiments expressed here were clearly inspired by the devout, sharing and caring atmosphere prevalent in the Martin home.

Dear Lord protect the lonely,
The fearful, sad and lost.
Give them strength,
Where strength is needed,
And friends to help them
Bear their cross.
Give each one, two arms to turn to
When despair is close at hand,
And a kindly soul to share our life with
As we struggle through this land.

I am extremely grateful to John and other members of the Martin family who provided such vital and wide-ranging information so as to acknowledge the generous services provided by Jack and Mary while they lived among us.

Mary's Garden

By Joe Stagg Sr

The bare brown earth on a winter's day
Seems now one hundred years away
And January skies were dark and grey
When the leaves she started raking.

And the snow and the wind with strength did blow
From the lands of ice and Eskimo,
But the little small snowdrops were all aglow
In her garden in the making.

Around in a ring the sweet pea lay
Asleep in a bed of rich brown clay
To grow and blossom on a bright June day,
All the white, and pink, and blue.

And the pansies opened their purple eyes,
Looking round for the sun in the skies.
Down through the buddlea the butterfly flies
And she watches the summer day through.

Deora Dia – God's own tear
Will weep the dew when morning's here
With children's children always near
To garland the flowers she grew.

Still October's gold sunbeams
Will kiss that patch where beauty gleams.
She'll smile upon her work of dreams
And God will be smiling too.

A tribute to his recently deceased wife by the late Joe Stagg Sr. of Palmerstown, Co. Dublin. Joe and Mary were the parents of Joe Stagg Jr. Pearse Road, Ballymote.

Castle Dargan Families

By Garreth Byrne

Castle Dargan can easily be reached from Collooney, Sligo and Ballintogher. The area is within a 15 kilometre radius of the Castle Dargan Hotel and golf course. Castle Dargan is steeped in layers of archaeology, architecture, folklore, folk music, geology & topography, local history, ecclesiastical and educational development and much more. Seamus McCormack in his comprehensive survey, **In the Shadow of Sliabh Dá Ēan – Ballintogher and its Surroundings (2009),** describes the engrossing multi-layered dimensions of a terrain he came to know during his working life, as a school teacher in Ballintogher National School.

Mary B. Timoney in her book (2005) "**Had Me Made**: a study of the grave memorials of County Sligo from c. 1650 to the present day," gives details of intricate archaeological excavations done in the years between 2003 and 2006, when the buildings and grounds around Castle Dargan were being developed into a luxury hotel with a high-standard golf course. She notes, among many other things: "*The development works for the eighteen-hole golf course took place throughout the earlier half of 2005, with construction works continuing thereafter. All ground disturbance and works were monitored… The demolition of some of the farm buildings surrounding Castledargan House was monitored and their architectural history was recorded.*"

Beyond the golf course, partly hidden by trees, one can see the crumbling remains of the original Castle Dargan from which the estate gets its name. It overlooks from a cliff precipice, Lough Dargan, fed with streams coming down from Slieve Daean (**Sliabh Dá Ēan** – the mountain of two birds) which has marshland beside it due to slow outflow. In winter, mallard, tufted duck and mute swans are seen on Lough Dargan. On nearby Lough Ballygawley with its adjacent woodland, migratory whooper swans feed every winter between November and April.

Geologically this terrain is described: "*Lough Dargan lies astride the geological boundary between the gneiss and quartzite of the Ox Mountains and the limestone of the rest of the catchment.*" [1]

During tribal wars, in the 15th century and onwards between the O'Donnells and the MacDonaghs this geological topography helped the weaker MacDonaghs to withstand ultimate conquest by the acquisitive O'Donnells.

Three historical phases

The varied family presence in Castle Dargan can be divided into three main phases:

1. The Gaelic era;
2. the Elizabethan & post Cromwellian era;
3. the post Great Famine years;

I will simplify the first two phases, and then give more details of the Hosie family. The Hosies began their presence at the end of the Famine until the last Hosie sold the family home and its remaining acres of farmland near the end of the 20th century. To my mind, the Hosie era was widely creative in the way it benefited the economic life of Sligo and North Leitrim.

In a meticulous article by Pat O'Brien about place-names in the Castle Dargan area published in T*he Corran Herald* 2005/2006,[2] showed as a result of researching many documents, changes in ownership of the old castle (last inhabited in the 1770s) and gives names and dates as follows:

- Conor MacDonough of Collooney built a tower house and bawn at Cashelloughdergan (sic) in 1422.
- In 1516 O'Donnell of Donegal destroyed Sligo Castle and took Caiseal Locha Deargain.
- In 1607 Margareta Donoghe alias Heallye of Carrowkeel granted to William Taffe, a knight, all the castle and lands of Castleloghdargane.

O'Brien, in an article, specially written for the Castle Dargan Hotel website, has summarised some of this for the casual reader. He states: "*Following the submission of O'Conor Sligo to Queen Elizabeth in 1585, the MacDonaghs found themselves paying fees to the Crown and liable to fines or confiscation. The Collooney family became one of the leading Gaelic families representing Sligo in the early 1600s, a period which ended with the death in rebellion of its leader Brian Óg MacDonagh in 1643.*" [3]

The MacDonaghs moved to more modest homes and farms in the Sligo area. Some of them emigrated to the continent of Europe and served in foreign armies. In his lively hotel website narration, Pat O'Brien continues: "*Castle Dargan lands were split between three owners, Coote, Crofton and the Strafford & Radcliffe estate which later sold its interest to the Burton family, ancestors of the Cunninghams of Slane. The new ownership provided the opportunity in 1687 for the arrival in Castle Dargan of Stephen Ormsby, great-grandson of an Elizabethan soldier, Thomas Ormsby of Lincolnshire, who had married well in Mayo.*"

Several more details from the post-Cromwell period are also given by O'Brien. In 1659 Thomas Crofton resided at Castlelochdergan. He sold it to Richard Coote.

- Stephen Ormsby lived there in in the late 1600s. His will is dated 1702.
- A deed dated 1713 records Sarah Ormsby as the occupant.
- William Ormsby of Castledargan in 1749 subleased land from James Crofton.
- The last user of the old castle resided until the 1770s. After that Castle Dargan house was built and used by all subsequent residents.

Breffni Mill Lorry in parade.

• Document certifying a Marriage Settlement of Amy Jones to Nicholson Ormsby of Castledargan in 1843.

Some Ormsbys of Castle Dargan, acted as High Sheriff of County Sligo, notably Thomas Ormsby in 1797 and John Ormsby in 1834. [4]

At the time of Griffith's Valuation in 1857, Castle Dargan was the property of John Ormsby and was valued at £14.

It can be seen that many generations of the Ormsbys inhabited Castle Dargan and had tenanted lands. Before departing the area, they sold some lands and forested shooting rights to families such as the Coopers of Markree Castle, near Collooney.

Aftermath of the Famine and Arrival of the Hosies

In the 1830s beside the Owenmore River in Collooney a flour mill was constructed. Alexander Sim had spent his childhood in Glasgow before moving to Sligo. Sim's Mills is described briefly in Samuel Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary* of 1837. Alexander died in 1882 at Collooney; probate was granted to his solicitor and two unmarried daughters on 10th November 1882. The Census of 1901 and 1911 record that Alexander Sim, descended from the first Alexander, resided at Bleachgreen in Ballysadare East with his wife Alexandrina and their two daughters Anna and Alexandrina Mary. Around 1843 Sim employed Glasgow-born Andrew Hosie as co-manager of Sim's Mills. The milling concern became known as Sim & Hosie. Slater's Directory 1880-81 lists Alex Sim as a corn and flour merchant with an address in Wine Street. Andrew Hosie was born in Scotland in 1802 and died in Dromahair in 1888.

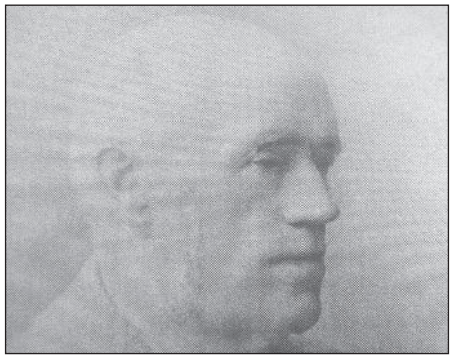
The famine first struck parts of Ireland in 1845 and during the following five years death and disease brought farming and commercial life to breaking point. Landlords fell into debt and sooner or later had to sell land and other interests. The Encumbered Estates' Court was established by an Act of the British Parliament in 1849, to facilitate the sale of Irish estates whose owners, because of the Great Famine, were unable to meet their obligations. Lands at Coolboy and Shrareagh, barony of Tirerrill, the property of John Ormsby of Castle Dargan, were offered for sale in the Encumbered Estates court in December 1855. By March 1875 a series of financial reversals finally forced the sale, by the Landed Estates Court, of the various Ormsby interests in almost 2000 acres. Castle Dargan was bought for £12,000 by William Middleton, Mary Ormsby's father, with a five year £10,000 loan from Andrew Hosie, then a successful miller in Dromahair.

William Middleton died in 1882, the loan unpaid. The 959 acres of Castle Dargan were auctioned in September 1883, Andrew Hosie being the sole bidder and Mary Ormsby and her family of seven children retired to Elsinore, a Middleton property in Rosses Point. [5]

Andrew Hosie lived for the rest of his life in a late Victorian dwelling with garden known as Mill Cottage built next to the flour mill beside the River Bonet, previously known as Fox's Mills. From the late 19th century onwards the business was known as Hosie's Mills.[6] A brother Edward was effectively managing the mill during Andrew's latter years. An advertisement appeared in early 1888 in several editions of the weekly *Sligo Independent*. Inserted by Sligo merchants Robertson & Ferguson, it proudly announced the sale of **Hosie's Irish Oatmeal** specially prepared in Dromahair by Andrew Hosie.

When Andrew died aged 86, a service was held on a Sunday afternoon in Drumlease Church of Ireland. The *Sligo Independent* recorded the occasion:

"*For more than forty years Mr. Hosie has been connected with Dromahair as mill-owner and as an employer. He was at first a member of the firm of Sim and Hosie, Mr. Sim being the brother-in-law of Mr. Hosie through the latter marrying a sister of Mr. Sim. When Mr. Sim obtained the mills of the late Mr. Abraham Martin at Sligo (now held by Messrs Pollexfen) he retired from the firm of Sim and Hosie and from that time Mr. Hosie had the sole interest in the mill, with which his name is so well associated. During all the time he has been connected in Dromahair he earned the love and respect of his employees, and with everyman with whom he came in contact…*



John Hosie Senior, died 1919

James Alexander Hosie

Mr. Hosie had a life lease of the mills at Dromahaire, which are the property of Mr. Sim, of Collooney, and of course the interest of Mr. Hosie now ceases.

Mrs. Hosie died about twenty-eight or thirty years ago, and an only son, John Hosie, died some time after his mother…." [7]

On the following Tuesday, a large funeral cortege followed the remains to the old cemetery in Sligo, where Andrew Hosie was interred with his departed wife and son.

In December 1888, the *Sligo Independent* in *Dromahair Doings* reported on the public auction of the mills and the household contents of the late Andrew Hosie.

Mr. John Hosie secured the greater part of the milling stores, stock and materials etc.. Furniture and jewellery were also auctioned. A damaged copy of the *Annals of the Four Masters* was bought by Mr. Francis La Touche, a land agent for the Lane-Fox estates. Also present at the auction were Miss La Touche, Mrs. Gillmor and Messrs Longmoor, H. Gillmor, Burrows, McLoughrey, William Vaugh, Dr. McDowel etc.

John Hosie Senior (also known as John Hosie Junior) was a nephew of Andrew Hosie. He was born in Glasgow in 1844 to James Hosie and Margaret Hosie and died in Castle Dargan in 1919. John married Margaret Mary. They had three children: Margaret Mary Hosie, Janet Winifred Hosie and James Alexander Hosie. The Cenus of 1901 shows that the Hosies lived in 1 Drumahaire Town with daughters Janet Winnefred and Dorothy Helen. This was obviously Mill Cottage beside the River Bonet mill. Image: Old Mill beside River Bonet in Dromahair c.1900.

By 1887, the SL & NCR privately-owned railway line connecting Sligo, Collooney, Ballintogher, Dromahair, Manorhamilton and Glenfarne to Enniskillen, was operating. John Hosie moved with the times and from 1906 organised the construction of a warehouse with a modern coal-fired mill with steel rollers beside the railway station about one kilometre outside Dromahair. The new mill, trading as Breiffni Mills, began operations in 1909. He retrospectively raised extra capital for the new enterprise by selling off lands in Carrickacroghery (near Newtownmanor) "*including pasture and 1,800 trees"* and the *'Little Mill Plot'* with the two fields and plantation between the Mill Race and County Road, and other property in Dromahair.[8] By 1906, when building commenced at the railway station, Hosie and family had moved to Castle Dargan. The 1911 Census indicates that they lived, including James Alexander then aged 24, at Castle Dargan German-born Josef Jeiter (anglicised to Joseph), owner of the Abbey Hotel in Dromahair, purchased the mill buildings beside the River Bonet and turned them into sawmills.

James Alexander Hosie assisted his father in overseeing the ambitious transition to the modern mill at Dromahair railway station. He became

John C & Kathleen Hosie

the first occupant with his family in the Miller's House constructed beside the new mill. The enterprise traded as Breiffni Mills until its closure in the early 1950's. Image James Alexander Hosie

John C. Hosie Senior eventually took over management of the Dromahair business and James Alexander moved to Castle Dargan, where he was an active farmer. James died there on 21st February 1949, aged 62. Sligo and Leitrim newspapers apparently did not record his passing, although death notices appeared in the *Belfast Telegraph* and *Irish Independent.* Local people, at a time when motor car ownership was scarce in the countryside, were impressed by the funeral convoy of twenty vehicles that followed the remains from Castle

Hosie Family Plot, Ballysumaghan

Dargan, to the rural churchyard at Ballysumaghan between Sooey and Ballyfarnan.

James C. Hosie (also known as John Hosie Junior) was born at Castle Dargan and died there on 27 November 1997, aged 78 years. His wife Kathleen (nee Irvine) died in November 2008. In 1998 Kathleen Hosie sold the remaining 145 acres of Castle Dargan demesne and the nineteen acres of Carrigeenboy near the gate-lodge to Dermot Fallon of Ballinacarrow, Co. Sligo.

The Hosies had come from Scotland to Sligo as entrepreneurs and, although they became landowners, they were keen merchants and rural industrialists. John C. Hosie also had warehouses at the railway stations in Manorhamilton and Glenfarne. Agricultural produce like eggs, butter, poultry and seasonal vegetables was bought from farmers in Sligo and North Leirim and sent by rail and ship, via Derry and Belfast, to Glasgow and Liverpool. The owners of Breiffni Mills were regarded as good employers. Many labourers worked permanently and others were taken on temporarily during busy periods. [9]

The family connection with Scotland was a vital factor in the success of the Hosies as merchants and rural industrialists. On a number of occasions nephews came to Ireland to help in the business. In Scotland, cousins assisted with import-export activities.

On a family tombstone in Ballysumaghan churchyard not far from Sooey these Hosie names and dates are recorded.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, several Sligo-Leitrim Hosies emigrated to North America, Britain and further afield. A death notice that appeared on 3rd April 2010 in the *Irish Times* recorded the death of Audrey Elizabeth Pillai (daughter of John C. Hosie and Kathleen Hosie of Castle Dargan) in Australia, aged 67. Today, some Hosie descendants of Castle Dargan continue to live happily in Ireland.

NOTES

1.Owenmore River Proposed Arterial Drainage Environmental Impact Assessment, by Goodwillie, Buckley and Douglas 1992 (p.119)
2. Some Recorded Place-names of Castledargan by Pat O'Brien, *The Corran Herald* 2005/2006 p.p. 13-16
3. www.castledargan.com/about us by Patrick E. O'Brien (2020)
4. *In the Shadow of Sliabh Dá Ēan: Ballintogher and its Surroundings* (2009) p.91
5. *Sligo: The Light of Bygone Days* by John C. McTernan (2009)
6. *Milling in Dromahair: A Short Overview* by Garreth Byrne *Leitrim Guardian* 2020
7. p.p. 71-73
8. *Sligo Independent* 27 October 1888
9. *Sligo Independent* 19 March 1910 The auctioneer's advertisement also appeared in the Sligo Champion a few times.
10. Conversation, February 2020, with former County Councillor John McTiernan, whose father lived in Manorhamilton.

I am grateful to Michele Cashman and Patrick E. O'Brien at Sligo Local Studies library for help with my research. Mary Conefrey of the Leitrim Library archives in Ballinamore looked up data on the death of James Alexander Hosie.

**Garreth Byrne is a member of Dromahair Heritage Group & also serves on Dromahair Development-tidy towns committee.*

Easter Memories

By Bernie Gilbride

Cold, wet, storm, rain.
Trees sway in the wind
Forsythia butter cup yellow,
Daffodils bend their heads
To the black earth.

Easter long ago
Family home, house full of life,
Buzzing with laughter and fun,
Lots of work to be done.

Garden organised
Lawn mower oiled, humming,
Flower beds dug, freshened,
For Summer planting.

Aroma of cooking fills the air,
Roast lamb, mint sauce,
Rhubarb crumble, fresh cream
Chocolate eggs, sweets inside.

Easter, all delight in life,
Being Home, little dog barking,
Cat in arms purring,
Happy times will last forever.

Alas, alas, all things change,
Time does not stand still,
Last time for all at home together,
Unrealised then,
Gone, now just 'MEMORIES.'

The Confederate Irish in America's Civil War

By Paul Burns

Discussions of Irish participation in the 1861-65 American Civil War seem to lead, in next breath, to the North's famous Irish Brigade. Few know that Irish immigrants played an equally important role in the Southern Confederacy. Over 40,000 Irish fought for the Southern cause. They were the largest immigrant group in the army, and they made up about 10% of all Confederate combatants. In contrast, there was less enthusiasm among Irish immigrants to the North, and they were underrepresented in its military.

The Confederate Irish were far more fervent in support of their side's cause because they could identify with the desire for self-determination and the right to separate from what was viewed as a repressive government. They had little concern about slavery. The Irish in America were the menial working class, and they competed for jobs with free blacks. Consequently, the Irish in both areas tended to support the pro-slavery Democratic Party. The Southern Irish encountered less animosity and much more religious tolerance than did their Northern brethren. There was no Southern equivalent of the anti-draft riots that occurred in the large Northern cities where the Irish were concentrated.

Although the birthplaces of some Southern Irish are known, many were listed only as "born in Ireland. The South's army records never were complete and, since the war was lost, much of what existed disappeared. Certainly there were Confederates born in County Sligo, but none was as well-known as General Michael Corcoran, Ballymote's contribution to the Northern cause. Corcoran is often associated with the Union's Irish Brigade, but that is inaccurate. He was commander of the 69th New York that later was a part of that famous brigade, but Corcoran was captured at the first battle of Bull Run. After being exchanged two years later, Corcoran founded the Irish Legion.

The Union's Irish Brigade, which was perhaps 80% Irish, was unique. No effort was made to consolidate Confederate Irish into large units. For the most part, they were scattered throughout the South's regionally raised regiments, though many company-sized units, and several battalions, were formed from Irish volunteers- the Emmet Guards of Mobile, Alabama; the Southern Celts and St. Mary's Volunteers of the 13th Louisiana; the Irish Volunteers of the 5th Georgia; the O'Connell Guards of the 17th Virginia; the Emerald Guards of the 9th Louisiana; the Sarsfield Rangers of the 7th Louisiana—to name just a few of the more than 45 distinctly Irish companies.

Many of these units carried variations of the emerald flag with a golden harp so favoured by Irish military groups everywhere, but company flags were not carried into battle. Since the Irish units were part of geographical regiments, their company flags were never as prominent as the well-known banner of the North's Irish Brigade, which flew at such major battles as Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg.

Scattered as they were among dozens of regiments, Irish units probably fought in every important Civil War battle. In one of the earlier battles, called Bull Run in the North and First Manassas in the South, the 1st Virginia regiment, commanded by Galway-born Colonel Patrick Moore, defended strategic Blackburn's Ford. The regiment's Montgomery Guards was an Irish unit and it fought effectively as skirmishers. At one point, Col. Moore led a charge against the Yankees shouting, "Feagh a Ballagh!", perhaps the first Irish battle cry heard in that war. General Thomas Jackson earned the sobriquet "Stonewall" at that engagement, primarily because his troops held so well at the ford. The Montgomery Guards and the 1st Virginia later were to suffer 120 casualties, out of 155 men, in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg.

In a way, Irish troops of the 1st Virginia regiment created the Stonewall Jackson legend by their stand at Blackburn's Ford— but a similarly named Irish unit ended it. The 1st Virginia Battalion, also called the Irish Battalion, became the provost guard for the Army of Northern Virginia. During the winter of 1862-63 an Irish guard of that battalion failed to recognize General Jackson returning to his bivouac late at night—and mortally wounded him.

Did Irish units fight Irish units? Yes. At the battle of Fredericksburg, for example, Cobb's Brigade, of which the 24th Georgia was part, was entrenched on Marye's Hill in a sunken road behind a stone wall. A key component of the 24th was McMillan's Guards, an Irish company that had been raised by Antrim-born Colonel Robert McMillan. McMillan had moved up to command the 24th, and during the battle he took over the brigade when General Cobb was killed. The Union's Irish Brigade made a suicidal attack

across an open field against the 24th's strong defensive position, and it was almost annihilated. McMillan's cool leadership cost the Irish Brigade 545 dead and wounded, including three of its five regimental commanders. The Irish Brigade's commanding officer, General Thomas Meagher, was said by some to have been in no danger, having gone into town to get his horse. (Note: This is disputed. Meagher was wounded in the knee at Antietam, and other accounts had him turning back at the canal because he physically was unable to continue further).

There were many Irish-born and first-generation Irish officers in the Confederate Army. One of the better known was Major General Patrick R. Cleburne from Co. Cork. Cleburne served in the Army of Tennessee and often was compared to the South's General Stonewall Jackson. He rose from company commander to regiment, and then to brigade and, after leading his troops to victory in several battles and being wounded at least three times, he was promoted to major general. Late in the war he shot himself in the foot, figuratively speaking, by proposing that the South recruit slaves to fight in exchange for their freedom, an idea that could have changed the course of the war but was quickly rejected by the pro-slavery civilian government. Cleburne was killed late in the war.

Another famous, or infamous, Southern officer was Brigadier General John McCausland, who was born in Missouri of Irish parents. Nicknamed "Tiger John," McCausland was a "never-surrender" leader who fought his way out of many tight spots. He was best known to the North for a July 1864 raid on Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, which he looted and burned when a ransom demand for $500,000 was not paid. McCausland refused to submit even after the war ended and left the USA for Europe and Mexico. Several years later, he rather mysteriously returned with sufficient funds to purchase 6000 acres of farmland in West Virginia. McCausland lived until 1927.

During the war Irish immigration to the South ceased because the ports were blockaded. After the war, it recommenced-but slowly. Eventually, as the South recuperated from its devastation, some Irish survivors of the war rose to prominence in industry and government. Today, more than 140 years after the Civil War ended, there is little difference between the Irish of the two areas, but since "history is written by the victors," little is heard about the Irish contribution to the South's cause, and even less has been written.

The Corran Herald Index Project

By Ursula Gilhawley

The first issue of the Corran Herald was launched in the Castle Hotel, Ballymote on the 25th October 1985, by the late Ted Nealon TD, who was then Minister for Arts and Culture. The first edition consisted of twelve A4 pages and sold for twenty-five pence 25p. Initially published several times a year, it is now an annual 90 page publication in its 35th year. Over the course of 52 issues, a wide variety of articles and photographs documenting local life, history, archaeology and culture have been included.

This year, the Heritage Group undertook a project to index all 52 Corran Herald publications. This index is now available on the website (www.ballymoteheritage.com). The index has a search facility which allows users to explore the index by author and subject matter. The index will be an important resource for the appreciation and understanding of Sligo heritage. The Corran Herald has published many original articles and historic photos contributed by local historians and archaeologists over the years. The Index makes this material infinitely more accessible forming a unique resource for both current and future writers and genealogical researchers.

Ballymote Heritage Group would like to thank a number of people and organisations who made this project possible. Working in collaboration with Mark Burns of Sligo Leader and Carmel O'Hara of Ballymote Family Resource Centre, the project was carried out over a few months. Dermot Hayward, who was participating in a Tús Scheme in the B.F.R.C., created an Access database and completed the entry of over 1,500 individual pieces of data, working under the guidance of Carmel O'Hara. The project was overseen by Derek Davey on behalf of the Ballymote Heritage Group.

We would also like to acknowledge the help provided by Ballymote Library by way of the provision of space for meetings relating to the project. OSD provided technical support to the project enabling the uploading of the database to the Ballymote Heritage website. Without the unstinting support of all those mentioned above, this project could not have happened and the Heritage Group wishes to place on record its deep appreciation and thanks for all the help and support provided on this project.

Ballymote Heritage Group would also like to gratefully acknowledge the financial support approved by Sligo County Council under the Community and Voluntary Sector General Grant Scheme 2020.

Bealtaine

By Joe McGowan

When we were growing up, the nuns taught us that May was Mary's month. To their smiling approval we made May altars. We brought fresh flowers every few days and said fervent prayers to Mary. Somehow, we just knew that she appreciated it. It felt nice and special and gave us a warm feeling. The nuns beamed beatifically when, in answer to their questions, we vied with each other as to who had the best altar. It all made us feel close to the Blessed Virgin who lived in that mysterious, faraway place: Heaven.

May Altar

Even the little blue and white plaster statue had a pleasurable look about it and Mary smiled a never ending smile all through the whole month — which is more than could be said for our parents who scowled and barked orders a lot more than they ever smiled. 'Do this, go there, feed the calves, put the hens up on the roost, put out the ashes; did ye do yer lessons?' The sally rod was always close by so there was no point in putting up a fuss. Children had no rights then and parents thought it not just their duty but a virtue to use the 'shtick'. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' was dogma. The miseries were never-ending, so it's no wonder then that Mary's altar was a haven of peace, tranquility and a promise of better things to come.

No one ever told us at that time that Mayday was the beginning of the old Celtic quarter festival of Bealtaine or, that May was Baal or Bel's month and the word Bealtaine derived from 'Bel's fire', the fire of Belenos, Celtic God of the Sun. Maybe they didn't know! It might have taken 1,500 years but by the 1900s, any taint of paganism that existed when St. Patrick came here was well squeezed out of us. Or was it?

If it was, then why did my mother and father gather Mayflowers (Marsh Marigold) on May eve? And, if they did gather them, why didn't they put them on Mary's altar? They didn't. They threw some up on the roof and more on the threshold. Strange behaviour indeed, but it was to bless the house, they said, and to bring good luck for the coming year. Practical people then! Better to keep all sides with you. Tenuous it may have been, but the old Gods held their place.

Of course, there were the fairies to take into account as well. They were part of the old creed too and particularly busy about their mischief at this time of year. People bought milk from neighbours then and there was always someone with a cow in milk. No point in going to the shop – they didn't have any. There was no call for it! If a neighbour came in for milk on Mayday things were different to any other day — they'd be very lucky to get any. No offence meant, but one could be giving away their luck by allowing the milk out of the house. If they relented, a drop of salt was put in the milk to neutralise any harm.

May Flowers

No ashes were put out on that day for fear of throwing away the luck. Neither was the cow byre cleaned out. The list was endless. And of course we still went to Mass on Sunday to cover the other side of things. You couldn't be too careful. A load of superstitious nonsense I hear you say. Well, I don't know, certainly it never did us any harm. And like an old man said one time, 'People don't do this sort of thing so much anymore but that doesn't say they're any the better for it!'

Lus Buí Bealtaine

He has a point, and so I think of the old innocent people and the beliefs that sustained them when I, and many others in Co. Sligo, carry on the ancient tradition of welcoming nature's rebirth by bedecking the house with Mayflowers (Lus buí Bealtaine) and glorious Whin on May Eve. I hope that you will next year as well!

Beannachtaí na Bealtaine agaibh go léir.

Patrick Higgins (1877-1956):
The Life and Poetry of The Rossmore Rural Rhymer

By Pádraig Deignan

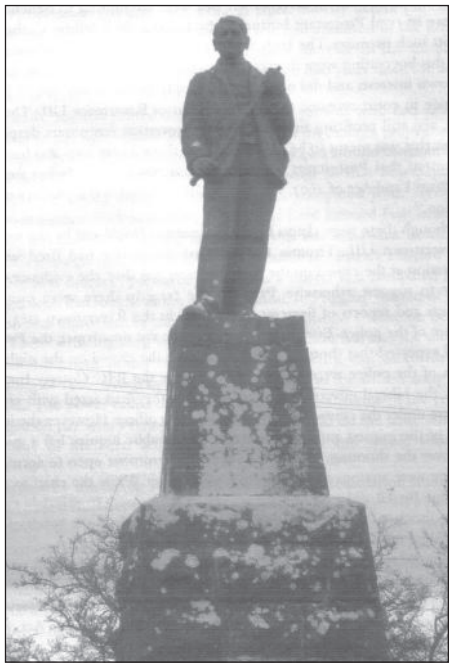
Introduction

Folk poets have recorded the colour, vitality and vibrancy of rural Ireland in poetry and have provided us with a snapshot and insight into Irish country life, which, until recently, was generally under the radar of the vast majority of academic historians, and most people. Before technology began to influence many aspects of our lives there were poets, who were sometimes called 'rhymers', living in the countryside all over Ireland creating verse that was enjoyed and loved as much as Irish traditional music.

Every area had its own rhymer or poet and could trace their origins to the old bards and 'files' (poets) from the days of the Gaelic lords. Each community had its storytellers who passed the stories on to the next generation. This tradition survived, particularly in rural communities, right up to the late twentieth century. They had a great grá and skill for articulating local occurrences of note and were able to crystallise the feelings and zeitgeist of their home parishes and townlands at that time. These people put local events such as matches, court cases, political gatherings and almost anything else that occurred in local society into verse.

Patrick Higgins

Patrick Higgins from the townland of Rossmore in Riverstown was one such rural rhymer. He wrote countless rhyming poems not only about his local community but also about the wider world. In order to show how the local, national and international interact in his work along with his passion for local people, this article discusses five of Higgins's poems: The Murder of John Stenson; the 1918 Election; The Spanish Civil War; The Rossmore Fires; and The Rossmore Road.



John Stenson Memorial Riverstown

Life & Work

Born in 1877, Higgins was reared in the townland of Rossmore, Co. Sligo, just a stone's throw away from the village of Riverstown.[1] Hugh Kelly, son of John Kelly, and a local historian in Riverstown, noted that the Higgins house is no longer there. It was a thatched house and Patrick wrote all his poetry there.[2] Patrick was educated in the local national school and afterwards worked in various jobs including labouring and working his own small land holding. He had a family of nine, three of whom died in childhood. All the surviving children emigrated; the oldest son Patrick left for America in 1929, his daughter Agnes also went to the U.S.A and lived in Texas and the youngest son Frank went to Australia in 1963.[3] Unfortunately, much of his poetry was lost when a notebook containing his writings went missing. However, John Kelly, who worked with Patrick Higgins in the 1930s, had memorised much of Higgins's work and he wrote down the material in the 1990s. Many of the poems are now lodged in the archives in Millview, Riverstown

Patrick Higgins poetry enthusiast Antoinette Shaw (nee Kelly) notes that "every chieftain had a bard and we were lucky here in Rossmore that we had our own bard".[4] He had a gifted imagination - he called to a house and observed what was going on and then penned his lines. He described the custom of sitting around the fire in community groups mourning the death of a child or some other significant incident. His poetry is very much a picture of the culture that he lived in, the lifestyle of society at that time, and how the local affects the national and vice versa.

The Murder of John Stenson

One of his most famous poems, The Murder of John Stenson, described an event which took place during the Riverstown Ranch War of 1908. The incident must also be looked at in light of significant legislation passed

in Ireland at the time.

'On the 29th day of October, nineteen hundred and eight,
On a grazing ranch at Riverstown John Stenson met his fate,
He little dreamt his days were spent when he entered the field,
Until his comrades and himself were quickly forced to yield.
But the bloodhounds were so thirsty, their bullets showed no lack,
They did not value human life to spare the bullock's back,
The murderer that shot him he surely took his aim,
Poor Stenson stood in range of him and was shot right through the brain.
But the cowards showed no mercy, and well they know he fell,
The bullets showered around him, like blazing shot and shell,
But their orders were "to fire, and shoot them if you can,
We have the Castle at our back, so don't spare any man".'[5]

The incident was part of the land agitation that followed the passing of the Wyndham Land Act in 1903. As the Irish people wished to regain ownership of land that had previously been theirs, poems by people like Higgins shone a spotlight on what was happening at grass roots level in rural Ireland. He displayed, through his work, how key legislation like the Wyndham Land Act was played out at the ground level and the consequences it had on small communities like Riverstown. It provides a unique snapshot of how ordinary people in rural communities felt.

The Wyndham Land Act was named after the Irish Chief Secretary of the day, George Wyndham. It was one of the most important pieces of legislation passed before Irish independence and allowed millions of acres to change hands from landlords to tenants. It was a quiet agrarian revolution of sorts. One of the main features of the Act allowed the landlords to receive the purchase money in cash along with a 12 percent bonus if they sold their entire estate.[6] Tenants were incentivised to purchase the land as the land annuities would be less than their current rent. Both sides were strongly motivated by the conditions of the Act.

Another unique part of the Wyndham Land Act enabled other groups of people in rural Ireland to acquire a parcel of land. It allowed not only tenant farmers living on their own holdings to purchase land but also other people such as farmers sons, evicted tenants, agricultural labourers and other landless groups to acquire a parcel of land . Also, many of the holdings purchased by the tenants were not economically viable and they wished to increase their acreage. The Land Commission (1881) was set up to divide untenanted estates and the whole issue of untenanted land became crucial in many areas such as Riverstown. Huge pressure was brought to bear on the landlord class to give up that land and allow it to be sold along with the tenanted estates and distributed locally among the people. However, a complicating factor was that most of this land had been leased or rented out, on mostly short-term contracts, to graziers or middleman.

From spring right through to the summer and autumn of 1908, a number of untenanted lands or ranches were targeted by the South Sligo United Irish League (U.I.L.) in the Riverstown area.[7] The U.I.L was an organisation which not only campaigned on behalf of tenants but was also the chief organising force for the Irish Parliamentary Party (I.P.P.). The main tactics used by the U.I.L. included boycotting and land driving or cattle driving. Cattle driving was not only a practical proposal to intimidate and get lands divided but it also provided a sense of spectacle and carnival like atmosphere. Young men, under the direction of the United Irish League organisers, tried to outwit and play cat and mouse with the Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.). As well as the political and economic motivation behind land driving, the attraction of trying to outwit the police, and drive cattle off lands, would have been an attractive evenings activity to many young people.

One landlord who had rented out his remaining untenanted land to the graziers in Riverstown was Owen Phibbs of Lisheen.[8] On the night of Thursday October 29th, 1908 a cattle drive was organised in Riverstown, primarily by the local leaders of the U.I.L. who wished to target Phibbs property. However, the authorities got wind of the proposed action and they sent units of men to patrol Phibbs ranch at Ardkeeran and prevent the removal of cattle. Shortly after midnight, the quiet of the night was broken by the sound of a marching crowd approaching from the Coopershill direction. Soon afterwards, a large group believed to have been in the region of around seventy men, closed in on the lands from the school lane. On entering the boundary wall, they discovered the fully armed police lying in wait for them. Ignoring them, the raiders marched on and disregarded police orders to retreat and disperse. When the police prepared to enforce their orders, the crowd stepped back a few paces and then, suddenly, attacked the police with rocks and stones taken from a nearby wall. When they had exhausted their supply of naturally occurring ammunition they took off in the direction of the field where the cattle were grazing.

The report by the R.I.C. claimed that the crowd were agitated and hostile and threw stones in addition to firing shots at them. One of the policemen, possibly the Sergeant in charge, received a blow from a stone. The head Constable Donovan, realising that the situation had totally gotten out of hand, ordered his men to open fire on the crowd. Reports indicated that the raiders replied with revolver shots. The exchange of gunfire from both sides continued for about 15 minutes before the crowd began to run off in all directions. The body of farm labourer John Stenson was found later with a gunshot wound to his head. Stenson was nineteen, unmarried and from Tubbercurry and both he and his sister Catherine had been orphaned at a young age. John Stenson had been working for a local Protestant farmer, John Milliken of Rusheen, Riverstown. It appeared that he was

not involved with the cattle drivers, nor was he a member of the U.I.L., and had just joined up with the crowd that night out of curiosity and excitement. Whatever his reasons for being there on the night, Stenson entered the Irish hall of martyrs and Patrick Higgins assisted in the elevation of this young man to the pantheon of Irish heroes writing:

'…But we'll make the English Saxons
in all their cunning strife,
To try the wilful murderer who took
John Stenson's life.

That voice is stilled for ever that his
country loved to hear,
That manly form is vanished that
thrilled with hope and cheer;
But he was a brave young fellow, he'll
be number'd with the great,
For he truly died a martyr, like the
men of ninety-eight'.

As Higgins notes in his poem, the local becomes the universal. It was happening everywhere at the time and was not just a local isolated incident in Co. Sligo. The poem states that this movement is unstoppable and they are not going to get away with this. It's a war of attrition and the Irish people have the bit between their teeth.

The events in Riverstown show the growing confidence of local people to face the British administration and the incident is an example of what was to come later during the Revolutionary period. The gradual advance in land ownership gave nationalists more economic muscle and this would lead to the rise of increasing political aspirations, paving the way for the 1916 Rebellion and the 1918 General Election. The 1918 Election was pivotal in Irish history since John Redmond's I.P.P. was practically wiped out after the more radical Sinn Fein topped the poll.[9]

The 1918 General Election

In Sligo, Alex McCabe and J.J. Clancy were overwhelmingly elected and were aided significantly by the expansion of the electorate under the Representation of the People Act, 1918.[10] This act enfranchised a new younger generation of voters who had been exposed to the Sinn Fein message for an independent Irish Republic and were hungry for greater change by any means in the period after 1916. The people of Ireland went from supporting non-violent constitutional politics to supporting militant non-constitutional violence as a result of the Rising and the executions that had followed.

Patrick Higgins was so pleased with the results of the 1918 General election that he celebrated it in verse:

'The election is over and all things
are done,
Three cheers for Sinn Fein and the
victory they won,
Three cheers for the heroes that
fought for the cause,
And fought for old Eireann to make
her own laws.
Too long we are fettered and tied up
in chains,
Tis time that Sinn Fein should get
hold of the reins,
Tis time that old Ireland would raise
her eyes,
And raise the old banner aloft in the
skies.
Raise it aloft till the tyrants would
see,
And we'll stick to our colours till
Ireland is free,
Our leaders were captured and
rammed into jail,
They were refused a fair trial and
would not get bail.
John Redmond had promised, he told
us at least,
They would give us Home Rule when
the war would have ceased,
They soon broke their pledge and
nothing was done,
as far back as ever when victory is
won.
Home Rule is abandoned we'll beg it
no more,
But we'll have a Republic and guard
our own shore,
The outgoing members can now go
to bed,
Themselves and Home Rule got a
knock on the head.
We won't have them much longer to
keep us in pain,
We can find better leaders among the
Sinn Fein,
We'll drink a good health to the boys
who are in jail,
And we'll welcome them back in
Eireann's green vale.
With psalter and salta and céad mile
failte
We'll welcome them under the flag of
Sinn Fein'.[11]

It is a powerfully emotive poem but is also very clear and succinct. It gives an accurate summary of the political situation in Ireland that had encouraged the Sinn Fein agenda. The poem can be read as more of victory over John Redmond and the limited demands of mere Home Rule, as opposed to a victory over Britain.

The Rossmore Fires

Many of Patrick Higgins's poems abound with local place names and characters; a perfect example is 'The Rossmore Fires', which deals in a humorous manner with a serious subject - the winter of 1924 and how the locals survived it. It rained consistently and heavily throughout the year until November and the people were not able to save much turf as the land never had a chance to dry out. The plight of the local people without turf was mirrored throughout the country and in the countryside in particular. Turf was the most important fuel source available and if no stockpiles were built up over the year the people suffered terribly during the winter months. As Higgins notes in the poem - 'The season it was raining, bleak and rather tough/ And the people were all perished when they couldn't get the turf'.[12]

As a result of the wet weather, the harvest of 1924 was disastrous. Crop yields were all hit hard and the potato, which was still a main food source for the rural poor, rotted in the fields. Animals died from hunger related diseases.[13] Accounts of desperate poverty and hardship filled the newspapers.[14] In the following year, a famine struck the West of Ireland. Although the Irish government denied that 750,000 people faced famine, several people had starved to death.[15]

Overall, Ireland was in a terrible state in the early 1920s. The War of Independence, the Civil War and

the years of the World War I had taken their toll on the country both economically and socially. Tens of thousands were unemployed, the economy was stagnating, credit was extremely scarce and the balance of payments was in a terrible state. The pro-Treaty and strongly conservative Cumann na nGaedheal Party were in power and were determined to balance the books. Much like the government of today, they were firm believers that austerity was the answer and were committed to trickle-down economics. They tried to cut taxes for the wealthy farmers and reduce government expenditure on social programmes. They slashed wages and reintroduced a seven-day working week. In 1924 the Finance minister Ernest Blythe cut the old age pension by 10 per cent.[16]

However, following the food and fuel crisis in the last months of 1924 and early 1925, the government were forced to allocate £500,000 in aid. Despite shipments of coal to the west, the crisis deepened. An appeal for funds was made in Australia by the famous Sligo nurse and republican, Linda Kearns in February 1925.[17] The government released statistics predicting that 153 townlands across the eight counties of Cork, Kerry, Galway, Cavan, Donegal, Clare, Leitrim and Sligo were in distress and impoverished . However, they denied that the distress in the west was any worse than usual although they later admitted that the potato crop was 'practically a complete failure'.[18] [19] They only became alarmed when it began to affect Ireland's public image abroad, especially in seeking credit from the U.S.A. Ultimately the country was saved from massive famine, not by government action, but by a greatly improved harvest in the autumn of 1925. Higgins does not discuss the political and economic situation in depth and ends his poem - 'But now they've got warning, a good one sure enough, So I bet a dollar next year they'll try and save the turf'.[22]

The Rossmore Road

Another poem penned in 1924, when the country was economically stagnant and the people were suffering, deals with the improvement of the Rossmore Road. Higgins himself worked on it with his donkey and cart. Unemployment was high in Ireland at the time and many were emigrating. Ireland was not a very industrialised country and the most industrialised portion, the northeast, was now part of the United Kingdom. In order to alleviate some of this unemployment the government allocated funds for employment schemes engaged in the improvement of roads and communication in rural areas. Some young men were able to secure work on these schemes which were set up in both rural and urban areas.[22] As Higgins writes, 'Some money it was granted/and a promise of some more/to make a section of a road/in the townland of Rossmore'. Plenty of men turned up for work and he notes '…About fifty men assembled and formed in a mob/ And each man thought himself the best and entitled to a job …' 'they flocked from far and near/ They came from every quarter and assembled to a man/ From Drumdoney and Drumcolm/ And all the way from Gleann'.

Higgins also comments on the eccentricities of his work colleagues mentioning: 'Now about poor Darby/ He earned well his bit/ He got his pick and shovel/ And was sent up to the pit … He soon got an assistant/ For we sent him Andrew Burke/ Andrew with his shovel/ He soon cut up a shine/ And every cart before I'd start/ He'd ask me "what's the time?" ' However, in addition to mentioning some colourful individuals from that time, Higgins also discusses road mechanics in 1924 writing:

'… Myself and Tim could almost swim,
In ulack on the road.
And the road was sort of slanting,
With a slope up on the hill,
The men had to keep digging dab
The lower side to fill,
With rushes and whin bushes,
Black sally mixed with crab,
We sowed the road completely,
And finished it with the dab.

The gaffer is no amateur,
In making roads he's skilled,
For every swamp and hollow,
With dab he got it filled.

The water tables he got sunk,
And placed it on the top,
And he made the road an oval shape,
To cast away the drop …'[23]

Some of the words that he used here were of their time and we may not understand them today. Words like 'ulack' and 'dab'. 'Ulack' was the wet clay, a sort of sludge mix that formed in the hollows of the road, while the 'dab' was a fine mud-based material. It could also refer to 'wattle and daub'. The 'dab' was similar to a mud-based plaster used in house construction in ancient Ireland; the 'wattle' being the twigs and pieces of wood that the 'daub' would be smeared over.

In the poem, Higgins mentions that all sorts of matter and material such as whin bushes, crab apple trees and rushes would be used and thrown in up to a certain height. Then the road was finished with stones, crested in the centre and sloped on the sides to allow the water to flow off. It provides an interesting insight into road engineering in the 1920s.

The Spanish Civil War

In addition to ordinary local events such as road construction, Higgins also wrote about global and international issues, for example, his poem on The Spanish Civil War which was written in 1937. The war, fought from 1936 to 1939, was one of the most controversial conflicts of the twentieth century where the democratically and legally elected government was overthrown by a fascist rebellion[24]. The Spanish Republican government on one side consisted of a wide and disparate group of organisations from the left including communists, anarchists and regionalists. The other side, the Nationalists, was largely made up of right-wing groups, monarchists, conservatives and Catholics with support from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

As a result of the international

political climate at the time the war was viewed in many different ways. Some, like the 200 Irishmen, mostly veterans of the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) who had fought in the War of Independence and the Civil War, went to Spain and fought on the Republican side. They saw it as a class struggle, a conflict between a dictatorship and a republican democracy. These men were led by the left-republican Frank Ryan and organised by the Communist Party of Ireland (C.P.I).[25] However, public opinion in Ireland generally supported the Nationalist side and over 700 Irishmen served in the Irish Brigade as part of the Spanish Foreign Legion.[26] Many of them were led by General Eoin O'Duffy, the former Garda Commissioner and leader of the Blueshirts.[27]

Other Irishmen who fought for the Nationalist cause in Spain generally saw the conflict as a religious rather than a political struggle and most people in Ireland supported them in this view. Irish people, in common with the people of many other countries, understood little about the complicated politics of Spain and simply believed that Spain was under attack from the forces of communism and atheism. Public debates were dominated by the anti-clerical violence that swept Spain after Franco's rebellion. The sensationalist press reported the atrocities in living colour, embellished by highly emotive accounts. Bishops, priests and nuns were murdered.[28] As Higgins writes:

'The boys are fighting the battle,
The labour will not be in vain,
They will banish the Godless heathens,
That are murdering the priests out in Spain'.[29]

The Irish Christian Front (I.C.F.) dominated the public debates and used religious terminology such as Holy War and Crusade. The organisation was founded in 1936 to support Franco and oppose Communism and consisted of Catholic clergy and politicians from the two main political parties in Ireland at the time. The organisation proved to be very popular. Their manifesto declared: 'Anyone who supports the Spanish government supports church burning and priest slaughter … we want the advance guard of the anti-God forces stopped in Spain and thereby from reaching our shores'.[30] In September 1936, Cardinal MacRory, primate of all Ireland, declared that 'It is a question of whether Spain will remain as she has been so long, a Christian and Catholic land, or a Bolshevist and anti-God one'.[31] Even Bishop Doorly of Elphin described it as 'a war between Christ and anti-Christ'.[32]

There was little attempt to understand that the people in Spain were looking for a more egalitarian society, as the wealth was concentrated in the hands of the large landowners and the industrialists. Higgins notes in his poem that:

'Some people imagine they are fighting,
To try to get worldly gain,
And that this is the cause,
They are fighting out there in Spain'.

However, he disagrees by writing:
'This is not the cause of the conflict,
Their object is cruel and bad,
They are out to wipe out religion,
And trample right over their God'.

He goes on to say that they will be punished for going against the church by writing :
'They will fall like leaves in the forest,
And then they will die in disgrace,
For the terrible deeds they committed,
They will answer the Lord face to face'.

The Spanish Civil War poem by Higgins is very much a poem of its time - taking the side of Franco. It shows how people's opinions and perspectives were coloured and controlled by the media in the 1930s, promoting the agenda of the Catholic Church and the ruling elite at the time.[33]

Conclusion

In 1956, at almost eighty years old, Patrick Higgins passed away. So, what is his legacy? He left us a powerful personal insight into the people and place of his time. However, in addition his poetry examined the interaction between the local, national and international. Through his work, we are left with a greater understanding of the local society and period in which Higgins lived.. Along with the detailed historical methodology by academic historians through the examination of statistics, newspapers, photographs, biographies, contemporary novels and other primary material, the strongly emotional and detailed folk poems by Patrick Higgins also help to complete the picture of the past.

More information on the poet 50-minute radio documentary "Patrick Higgins – Celebrating The Life And Poetry Of The Rossmore Rural Rhymer" see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WWx8H9_3IM

Footnotes:

1. Jack Johnson (ed.), The Riverstown Story, County Sligo (Riverstown, 2005), pp 276-7.
2. Interview with Hugh Kelly by Paul Wright as part of 'Patrick Higgins – Celebrating The Life and Poetry of the Rossmore Rural Rhymer', Claremorris Community Radio.
3. Jack Johnson (ed.), The Riverstown Story, County Sligo (Riverstown, 2005), pp 276-7.
4. Interview with Antoinette Shaw nee Kelly by Paul Wright as part of 'Patrick Higgins – Celebrating The Life and Poetry of the Rossmore Rural Rhymer', Claremorris Community Radio.
5. Sligo Champion, 2 Jan. 1909.
6. F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (London, 1985), pp 218-19.
7. Patrick Cosgrove, The Ranch War in Riverstown, Co. Sligo, 1908 (Dublin, 2012), pp 15-22.
8. Ibid., pp 23-6.
9. J.J. Lee, Ireland 1912-1985 (Cambridge, 1989), p. 40.
10. Michael Farry, Sligo 1914-21, a Chronicle of Conflict (Trim, 1992), pp 159-60.
11. 'The 1918 General Election' by Patrick Higgins, Millview Archive, Sligo Folk Park, Riverstown.
12. 'The Rossmore Fires' by Patrick Higgins, Millview Archive, Sligo Folk Park, Riverstown.
13. Adrian Grant ,'Workers to the

Rescue': Workers' International Relief in Ireland, 1925 in History Ireland, (Jan/Feb 2011) vol. 19, no. 1, pp 38-41.
14. Meath Chronicle 20 August 1924.
15. Fin Dwyer, '1925 – Ireland's Forgotten Famine and another government cover-up?' in thejournal.ie, 27 Oct. 2014 (http://www.thejournal.ie/1925-famine-1740003-Oct2014/) (10 Dec. 2019).
16.J.J. Lee, Ireland 1912-1985 (Cambridge, 1989), pp 108-9.
17. Sydney Evening News, 12 Feb. 1925
18. Irish Times, 14 Feb. 1925.
19. Fin Dwyer, '1925 – Ireland's Forgotten Famine and another government cover-up?' in thejournal.ie, 27 Oct. 2014 (http://www.thejournal.ie/1925-famine-1740003-Oct2014/) (10 Dec. 2019).
20. Ibid.
21. 'The Rossmore Fires' by Patrick Higgins, Millview Archive, Sligo Folk Park, Riverstown.
22. Adrian Kelly, 'Social Security in Independent Ireland, 1922-52', Ph.D. thesis, NUI Maynooth August 1995, p. 79.
23. 'The Rossmore Road' by Patrick Higgins, Millview Archive, Sligo Folk Park, Riverstown.
24. Fearghal McGarry, 'Ireland and the Spanish Civil War', in History Ireland, (Autumn, 2001), vol. 9, no. 3, pp 35-6.
25. Ibid., p. 39.
26. Ibid., p. 36.
27. Ibid., p. 38.
28. Ibid., p. 36.
29. 'The Spanish Civil War' by Patrick Higgins, Millview Archive, Sligo Folk Park, Riverstown.
30. Fearghal McGarry, 'Ireland and the Spanish Civil War', in History Ireland, (Autumn, 2001), vol. 9, no. 3, p. 37.
31. Ibid., p. 36.
32. Ibid.
33. 'The Spanish Civil War' by Patrick Higgins, Millview Archive, Sligo Folk Park, Riverstown.

RIC Sergeant Patrick Perry 56270:
Killed in the Cliffoney Ambush, 25 Oct 1920

By Michael Farry

I am cornered between the mountains
and the ocean on this bare strip,
exposed, far from the flat security
of Coolronan, hanging on for the
pension.

Gradually we have become outcasts,
the local enemy, caught between careless
government and wide-eyed idealists.
So we keep quiet here, make no ripples.

I suspect that this reported vandalism
is a trap, but remind my men of duty,
lead a patrol, nine cyclists. For a sawn
off cart-shaft I will lay down my life.

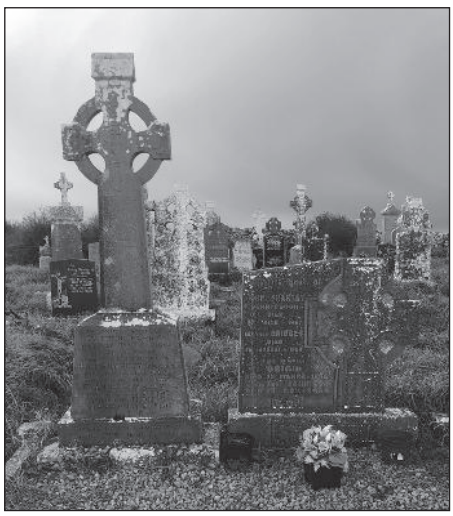
We tuck up our great coats, sling rifles,
face the merciless October wind, pedal
south towards forty fellow-countrymen
behind ditches intent on making
headlines
challenging an empire with shotgun, rifle
and revolver. Just before the angelus bell
we will reach their position and they will
open fire, killing fathers, sons, husbands,

four Irishmen about their daily business,
earning the king's shillings, pushovers,
peace keepers in this new age when
peace-keeping has gone out of fashion.

Sgt. Patrick Perry was one of four RIC men killed in an IRA ambush at Moneygold, Cliffoney, Co Sligo on 25 October 1920. The IRA ambushing party, whose leaders included William Pilkington and Seamus Devins, numbered just less than 40 and there were nine in the ambushed RIC cycling patrol. Soon afterwards a large force of Auxiliaries arrived in that area of north Sligo, burned houses, shops, a local hall and a creamery as a reprisal. There was no opposition by the local IRA.

Fifty one year old Patrick Perry was a native of Coolronan, Ballivor, Co Meath, a Catholic. He had twenty six years' police service and had served in the RIC at Ballintogher and Bunninadden before transfer to Cliffoney in 1913. He was married with ten children. His wife, Margaret Sharkey from the Boyle area of Co Roscommon, was pregnant at the time of his death. He was buried in his in-laws' plot in Killaraght Cemetery in south Sligo. It's interesting that there is no hint of the cause of his death or mention of his membership of the RIC on the grave inscription.

This poem is included in *"Troubles"*, a book of poetry by Michael Farry dealing with the events of and our commemoration of the period 1912-1923. It is published by Revival Press, Limerick Writers Centre.



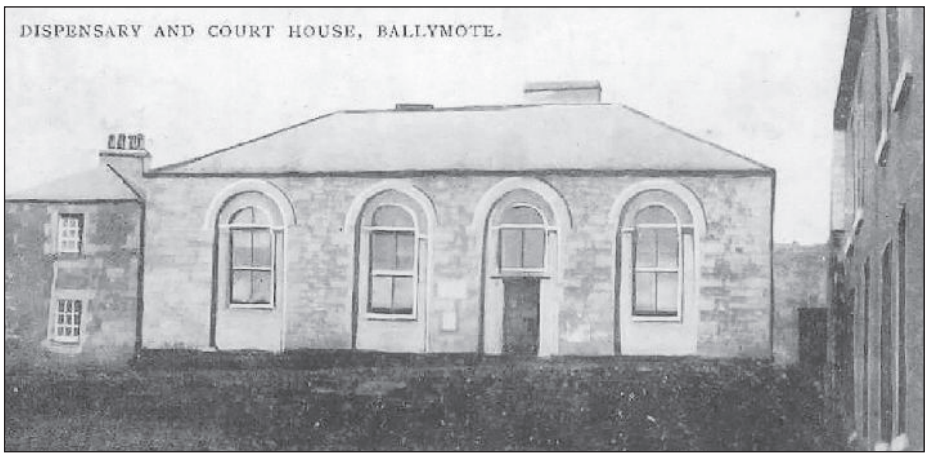
Photograph courtesy of Brendan O'Mara

Two Quests by Republicans for Civil War Arms

Submitted by Derek Davey (Introduction by Neal Farry)

The accounts that are presented here below are extracts from the Bureau of Military History, 1913-1922. (An Roinn Cosanta). The accounts were provided as witness statements by Michael V. O'Donoghue, Lismore, Co. Waterford, a Cork Engineer Officer during the War of Independence. In this instance two episodes that occurred during the months prior to the Civil War (June 28, 1922 – May 24, 1923) are described in great detail. (A) It is not possible to give a precise date for the Pomeroy R.I.C. barracks confiscation of arms by a Donegal based IRA unit, but it is likely to have occurred during the spring of 1922. (B) The journey from Raphoe to Balbriggan for a secret rendezvous and transfer of arms began on Tuesday 23 May and concluded on Friday May 26, 1922, just a month before the commencement of the Civil War. Michael O'Donoghue clearly identified himself as a Republican irregular activist who was working to acquire arms for the anti-Treaty forces. Two Ballymote men, the Republican driver, Martin Davey and the chemist Mr. Mullan feature prominently in the report. Albert and Bertie Farry play minor roles in the drama.

O'Donoghue in his report says that he reached the anti-Treaty HQ which was located in the "Town Hall" in Ballymote on Tuesday 23 May 1922. It is interesting to note that Michael Farry in "The Aftermath of Revolution – Sligo 1921 -1923" tells us that Ballymote RIC barracks had been occupied by the Free State pro-Treaty forces since March 1922 but on the night of 2 April 1922 it was taken over by Republican anti-Treaty forces while the pro-Treaty garrison members were attending a political meeting in Castlebar. The pro-Treaty forces then took possession of the Courthouse in Ballymote.



Ballymote Courthouse. The base for Free State garrison from 2nd April 1922 until the end of the Civil War. (24th May 1923)
Photo submitted by Donal A. Gallagher, Falcarragh.

It seems likely that O'Donoghue, a Republican officer, would naturally report to the anti-Treaty held RIC barracks, seeking a better car that would bring him to Balbriggan. Was the "Town Hall" to which he referred, the old RIC barracks?

There is also a possibility that the "Town Hall" under anti-Treaty occupation in Ballymote was the Loftus Hall. In Michael Farry's "The Irish Revolution 1912 – 23, SLIGO", we are informed that the British forces remained in the county from the Truce on 11 July 1921 until after the ratification of the Treaty on 7 January 1922.

In November of 1921 the Bedfordshire regiment took over the Loftus Hall in spite of IRA complaints that it had been their headquarters, and shots were fired at the building during the night. We do not know whether or not the IRA repossessed the Loftus Hall after the departure of the British forces in February 1922. If the Loftus Hall had again become the anti-Treaty HQ then this building was indeed the "Town Hall" visited by Michael O'Donoghue.

Loftus Hall, in the early years of the 20th Century.
Photo submitted by Gerry Cassidy.

ROINN COSANTA

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1741 Part II Pages 186 - 377

Witness

Michael V. O'Donoghue
Lismore
Co Waterford.

Identity

Engineer Officer, 2nd Battalion, Cork No.

Subject.

I.R.A. activities, Counties Waterford, Cork and Donegal.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 2.676

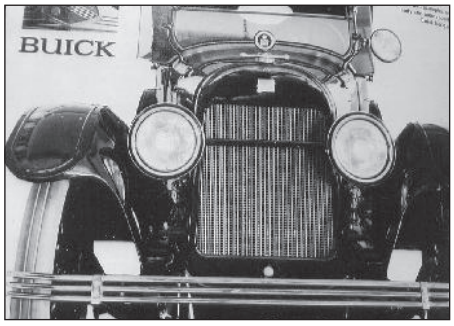
Michael O'Donoghue's statement:

Sean Lehane had appointed Jack Staunton, a Mayo man, to organise and command the republican police in the divisional area. Jack was a tall strapping R.I.C. man of about 26 years who, a few months earlier, had been barrack orderly in the R.I.C barracks at Pomeroy, Co Tyrone. Charlie Daly with ten other republican soldiers at his heels knocked on the barrack door; Staunton inside removed the door chain and opened the door. Charlie and his men rushed in and, before the garrison of nine R.I.C. men could get to their guns, they were covered with revolvers and surrendered. The I.R.A. raiders bagged a large quantity of rifles, carbines, revolvers, grenades and ammunition. Having stripped the barracks of everything of military value, they bound the R.I.C. prisoners inside, locked up the barracks and cleared off. Constable Staunton, realising that he was deeply compromised by his performances, threw off his R.I.C. jacket and came away with Daly and the I.R.A. Eoin O'Duffy was now Chief of the Civic Guards force being formed, and he promised Daly that he would take Staunton into the Civic Guards. Duffy, however, broke his promise, and Daly brought Staunton along to I.R.A. H.Q. in Raphoe. Now he was given the tough assignment of building up an I.R.A. police force and putting them to work to deal with the wave of lawlessness which was sweeping through East Donegal especially.

On a Tuesday evening late in May, Lehane, Daly and Joe McGurk called me in to Divisional H.Q. I was detailed to accompany Joe McGurk (Div.Q.M) on a secret and dangerous mission to secure and bring back a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition. An R.I.C. sergeant at Gormanston Camp, near Dublin, was about to be demobilised and planned to return to his home town of Moville. He had (it seemed) always been friendly and co-operative with I.R.A. and had now gathered a big cache of military stuff in a private dump of his own in Gormanston and was anxious to give it to the I.R.A. before being shifted. The Intelligence contact with Sergeant Curran was an Omagh man named Mullan. This contact could not leave Omagh, but he had a brother, a chemist in Ballymote, (an I.R.A. man), who could and would do proxy for him. Would I go with McGurk on the job? Sure I would. McGurk and I set off from Raphoe for Sligo in a ramshackle Ford car which we hired with driver. It was late that night when we reached Sligo. Realising that our ancient "Lizzie" would never do the long journey ahead, we decided on getting another car in Sligo. We called to Sligo barracks where I explained to Divisional Adjutant Brian McNeill that we needed a good car urgently for an important secret mission and that we had Div. Commandant Sean Lehane's authority to ask for aid in emergency. McNeill had no serviceable car available, but he gave me a written authorisation to Comdt. Coleman in Ballymote to give me the Buick car in the barracks there. We moved on to Ballymote, arriving there about 4 a.m. Presenting ourselves at I.R.A. H.Q. there in the Town Hall, we were scrutinised and questioned by the sentry and guard on the door. Not until I showed McNeill's order were we admitted and, even then, the chit had to be taken and shown to the rudely-awakened Comdt. Coleman in his upstairs sleeping quarters before I was brought along into his presence. Another crux, the car was away in Tubbercurry. I insisted that the matter was very urgent and that we must have the car without delay. After some demur, he ordered that guard to rouse and send along the Buick's usual driver, a young lad named Davey.

Martin Davey, the young 1922 Ballymote driver of the Republican Buick car with his son Derek. (A 1947 photo).

The latter reported in about ten minutes and he was promptly sent along with our driver in our car to Tubbercurry. In their absence McGurk and myself breakfasted substantially on the fare provided by a sleepy though mighty curious barrack cook. Coleman had joined us. About 7.30 a.m. Davey arrived back with the Buick, followed shortly after by our driver in his "Tin Lizzie". I told



The front view of a 1922 Buick car. Martin Davey of Ballymote was the driver of the Buick car on behalf of the Republican activists in the accompanying witness report.

Comdt. Coleman that we were leaving the Ford and our driver at his disposal until our return. This seemed to soothe his surly reluctance to hand us over the Buick.

When I told our driver that he would have to stay in Ballymote, Coleman's orders were to stay with his car until we came back for him, he was aghast at first, but I reassured him that himself and the Ford would be all right. Then we adjourned to Farry's public house at the corner of the Boyle road, a great

Farry's Public House in Wolfe Tone Street, where the travelling Republican Party was enterained in 1922. (Now the Ballymote Family Resource Centre).
Photograph courtesy of Carmel Mullen

republican rendezvous – the sons of the house, John Albert and Bernard, being active I.R.A. man.

Here we ate again and drank some stout and I sampled a little of the local poitin. I found it vile stuff, the worst I ever tasted, far more corrosive and vitriolic than the Donegal brand. I was told that potatoes were used in its make-up.

During this time McGurk was looking up the contact man, Mullan. Around 10 a.m. we picked up Mullan, wearing a mackintosh, and moved off via Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon, young Davey driving. All went well as we cruised along by the Shannon and on through Longford town. At Rathowen, as we turned for Castlepollard, tragedy struck us. A burst front tyre and luck alone saved us from being capsized. Out we got. A six-inch reef in the tyre and no spare. Now we were in the soup properly. We pushed the useless Buick into a convenient yard adjoining a residence on the roadside. I took the precaution of removing the pencil from the magneto and putting it in my inside coat pocket. An inspired action as it afterwards transpired.

We walked back a quarter mile or so to Rathowen police barracks where I had noticed uniformed men at the door as we passed. They were Free Staters, but they lent us a bike on which McGurk rode back to Edgeworthstown where he hired a Ford car at McDermott's. The car came along and we piled in and away with us, the Free State police promising to keep an eye on our crippled car. We sped along through Castlepollard and Delvin on to Navan and by the Boyne to Drogheda.

Here we stopped and had a meal. It was now about 5p.m., hours too late for our contact with Sergeant Curran. We were to meet him at a crossroads between Bettystown and Gormanston round 3p.m. We moved along slowly, passed Gormanston, turned and back the road to Bettystown. Here we stopped for a short time, then motored along slowly through Gormanston again and on to Balbriggan. Here we pulled up for a drink and a council of war. McGurk and I decided that we two would go on to Dublin in the car and return at 1p.m. next day, leaving Mullan, Davey and the Edgeworthstown driver (whose name I forget) to stay the night in Balbriggan. Mullan was to scout along the Gormanstown Camp road to try and contact the R.I.C. sergeant. The driver kicked up an unholy row, but calmed down when I told him that we were I.R.A. officers and were commandeering his Ford for the time being and it behoved him to stay nice and quiet if he wished to get back home with his life, safe and sound.

On to Dublin, McGurk and I taking turns at driving. We put up at Whelan's in Eccles Street, Joe garaging the car nearby. Next morning, after Mass – it was Ascension Thursday – we went to G.H.Q. at the Four Courts. I, as usual, tried to scrounge some engineering stuff, but failed. McGurk did better, getting a new tyre and tube for the Buick whose dimensions we had noted. But McGurk was Divisional Q.M. and the Q.M.G. was Dick Barrett who was always generous with us. Back we headed in great fettle for Balbriggan. As we entered the town, two young men stepped out into the centre of the road and waved us to a stop. We slowed down and they come running after us beckoning us to turn right. As we halted, two other men on the pavement ahead stepped off and approached us. I held my gun (a .38 automatic) ready, as I was mystified by the men's manner. Then one asked us if we were republican officers. I replied "*we were, but why so?"* They all seemed relieved. "*Did we have three friends who stayed in Balbriggan last night?*". "*Yes, why?" "Well, they were arrested and spent the night in the local barracks, garrisoned by Free State troops, where they still were*." "*Right*" said I, "*jump in and direct me to the barracks.*" Two of them did. Arrived there, I asked for the O/C. He came. I demanded the immediate release of my three men. "*Why had they been arrested and detained?"* He explained apologetically enough.

Late the day before, his men on patrol had noticed a man in Irish Volunteer uniform at a tavern door in Balbriggan. It aroused their suspicions as the man was a stranger and the pub a resort of Black and Tans. Recently there had been some bloody clashes between Tans marking time awaiting demobilisation and Volunteers. There had been, too, some hold-ups and robberies in the district. They raided the pub and asked our trio to account for themselves. Mullan (the mystery man in I.V. uniform) said he came from the north; young Davey said nothing, but our Edgeworthstown driver panicked and told them that his car had been seized from him by two armed men and that he had been forced to stay with Mullan and Davey. Convinced that they had stumbled on some great mystery, the Free State patrol arrested our trio and imprisoned them in the coastguard station garrisoned by Free

State troops.

Informed by the scared driver that the two dangerous men who took his car were returning from Dublin to Balbriggan about noon next day, the Free Staters sent out unarmed patrols in pairs to intercept us entering Balbriggan. They had been warned not to halt us in summary fashion or to display arms or hostility as we would be most likely to shoot down any hostile interceptors, so the Free Staters had been assured. Hence the queer method of stopping us.

Our arrival brought relief and release to the three prisoners. I told the Free State O/C. that we were two republican officers of the Executive forces on active service in Ulster and the three were under our orders. The O/C. expressed his regret for detaining them and explained the reasons for his suspicions. I accepted his apology and explanation. He invited us to have a meal. I declined with thanks and asked him to come along and have a drink with before we left Balbriggan in a few minutes' time. Alas! He was on duty and could not stir up town.

The five of us then piled into the Ford with its Longford driver at the wheel. Mullan was in crestfallen mood as it was his conceited conspicuousness that got them locked up for the night and prevented him from contacting the R.I.C. sergeant. As we cruised along the long straight road past Gormanston Camp, Mullan kept a sharp eye out. Near Bettystown we overtook a big burly R.I.C. man sauntering lazily along. It was Sergeant Curran. We stopped. He recognised Mullan at once. McGurk explained our mission quietly aside to the sergeant. He got into the car and we drove to next crossroads turning right after leaving Mullan and Davey at the cross. Moving down a road by for quarter of a mile or so, we turned right again back towards Gormanston Camp. Further on, we came to a large disused quarry overgrown all round with bushes. Leaving the car on the road to be turned round by the driver, the sergeant, McGurk and I entered the quarry. In a deep hollow beneath rubble and gravel and concealed by bushes, he uncovered a large tin trunk. It was very heavy, almost 2 cwts. I'd say. It gave McGurk and myself all our time to lift it out and to stagger with it a few yards. With Curran's aid, we managed to get it out to the car where we had much trouble in loading it on the floor at the rear. Back we drove, picked up the other two and with our crushing load drove along to a crossroads pub near Bettystown. Here we stopped and went in for a drink. Sergeant Curran insisted on "standing" the drinks a second time. Then he had a drink from me and I bought a half-pint flask of brandy for the long road back as we would travel all night. We shook hands with Sergeant Curran as we parted, and expressed the hope to see us all again soon in Moville where we would have another drink together. I never saw or heard of him since and often wondered did he ever return to a quiet life in his home by Lough Foyle.

We stopped in Drogheda for a meal and a rest. I went up to Millmount Barracks to see my old comrade organiser of West Cork days, Mick Price, Tom Barry's brother-in-law, and now Divisional Adjutant, 1st Eastern Division, I.R.A. We talked of old times by the Bandon water before I left to re-join my party. It was about 6.30 p.m. or so as we left and headed for Navan. We travelled slowly and bumpily, for the Ford was carrying a dangerously heavy load. I was fearful of another breakdown as we rattled through Navan. A short distance west of the town we crossed the Boyne again and I noticed a large car in the field by the river adjacent to the bridge. Barely a mile further on, our overladen "Lizzie" broke down. Only a punctured tyre, but still an ominous setback. Would we ever reach Rathowen? It seemed very doubtful. Then the big car back by the bridge flashed across my mind. Taking young Davey with me, we hurried back to the river. The car was still there. We ran to the car and jumped in. Davey switched her on and pressed the starter button. To our amazement and delight, the engine started up at once. It was unbelievable and miraculous good luck. Reversing the big Dodge (for such it was) Davey swung her out on the road. As we emerged on the main road, we heard loud and excited shouting after us from the river bank – the car owners presumably. Without a thought of the criminal nature of our desperate seizure of the car, we sped on to the broken-down Ford.

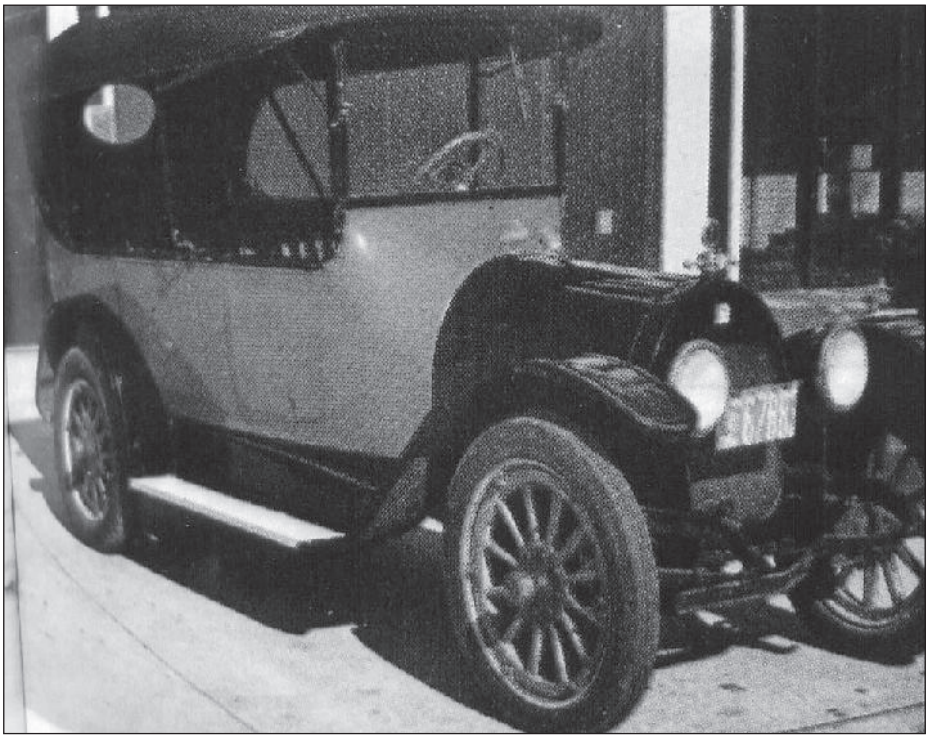
We transferred the tin trunk, the tyre and tube and our other effects to the Dodge whose engine was kept running. For the second time, we left the unfortunate driver from Edgeworthstown behind us with his crocked car and sweating furiously striving to repair his punctured tyre. Despite his frantic protests at being thus abandoned, we drove off consoling him with the promise that we would explain all to his employer, McDermott, when we reached Edgeworthstown. But, in the event, he was to reach McDermott's before us. Ten or twelve miles further west on the main road to Castlepollard, we stopped. One of us, Davey I think, climbed a main telegraph pole and with a pliers cut the telegraph wires; we wanted to prevent any message being sent ahead to Longford Free State H.Q. about our seizure of the car by the Boyne and we were fearful of being held up on route through Longford. At Castlepollard we stopped at Kennedy's hotel and pub. We had drinks and a hurried meal there and I discussed with M.J. Kennedy, the local republican army leader, the feasibility of skirting Longford town to the north and reaching the Rooskey-Carrick-on-Shannon road. He said it could be done but only by a Longford man with minute local knowledge of the roads which, in that area, were both complex and bad. He advised against my attempting it as it would be impossible to me, especially travelling by night. I took his advice and we moved off to Rathowen. It was now getting dusk. Over-running a left turn some distance outside Castlepollard we found ourselves travelling a byroad to Rathowen parallel to the

main road. Within a half mile of our destination, Bang! a rear tyre flat; we got out disconsolately. So this was the miserable end to our odyssey. There was nothing for it now but walk on to the yard where we had dumped our crippled Buick the previous afternoon. Leaving McGurk and Mullan to guard the precious trunk and our personal gear in the disabled car, young Davey and I started off briskly, he carrying the new tyre and tube.

After 20 minutes marching we neared the cottage yard. We were astonished to see moving lights and many shadowy figures and in the yard around the Buick. Two Free State officers and several Free State soldiers in uniform and a few civilians were so intent on examining the car that they never noticed our arrival. A soldier was endeavouring to crank up the car, another was at the wheel, and an officer had the bonnet lifted and inspecting the engine with the aid of a small lantern. "*What are you trying to do there?*" I barked sharply. They jumped. The party around the car opened out making way for me as I walked up to the Free State officer at the engine who seemed to be in charge. He swung around angrily, then gazed fiercely at me his eyes surveying me from head to foot. "*Who are you?*" he demanded. "*I am the owner of this car" I snapped back. His hand went to his holster. "This car belongs to us*" he yelled. Young Davey was behind me with the tyre. I felt icy cool as I gripped the automatic in my trench coat pocket. "*This car is mine*", I said quietly, "*I left it in here yesterday and nobody is going to take it without my authority*". Then a civilian spoke: "*Yes*", said he, "*That's the man that left the car there yesterday*". It was the local Free State police sergeant. "*Right*", said I, turning to him, "*and you're the man who promised to keep an eye on it for me*". The officer was in a fury. "*By…., I'm taking the car, and I'm taking you too, whoever you are*" he hissed, his fingers still on the holster. "*I am an I.R.A. officer of the 1st Northern Division Executive Forces, and go ahead and try and take the car*". He was taken aback for a moment. "*Aha*", he fumed, "*I knew you were a bloody Irregular, the Irregulars that took that car from us down in Ballina, and we've got it back now*". "*I don't know anything about that*", I said, "*but I got that car in Ballymote, Co. Sligo, and I am taking it back there*". I turned to Davey. "*Put on that tyre and tube*" I ordered. He got the tools from the car and started on the job. Captain Moore – for that, I learned, was the bullying officer's name – was at a loss for a moment. He felt he was losing control of the situation. "*I am taking that car*" he ranted. "*You won't take that car – without shooting*", I said firmly as I took a step nearer to him. "*Oh, let there be no shooting*" shouted the other Free State officer, moving between us and intervening for the first time in the drama. They all must have judged from my authoritative and confident tone and manner that I must have plenty of aid close at hand. Little did they know: I realised myself that cool audacity was my trump card. Things were at a climax. "*Be wary of Captain…., he's half mad*", a Free Stater whispered in my ear. Then I had a brainwave. "*Do you want a car?*" I demanded of the half mad Moore. He looked at me, a wild triumphant look in his eyes.

"*If you do*", I said, "*you'll find one back a mile or so on the road.*" I felt I knew my man. He was getting out of a dangerous situation with his face saved. He was a blustering bully, but with all his soldiers about him, he could have called my bluff. Now, I offered him an easy way out and a car to book. He took the bait whole. "*You're welcome to the car you'll find back there",* I said, *"I commandeered it in Navan*". I was reckless at my success and at the brilliant solution of my extraordinary dilemma.

Just then, we heard the rattle of an approaching car. It was my old Edgeworthstown driver all alone threshing along in the repaired Ford. He passed on by us without looking or stopping. By now, the Buick was ready for the road. I took from my pocket the magneto pencil, fitted it back into its correct mechanical position on the car magneto and ordered young DavEy to take the wheel. I swung her up gingerly with the starting handle and at the second or third swing the engine began to fire. Davey reversed her out on the road and all the time the Free State officers and their comrades gaped at the proceedings. I sat in at the



Buick car.

back and invited the two officers in. With them and the local F.S. sergeant, we drove back to our broken-down Dodge which we so tactfully and so generously bequeathed to them.

In Rathowen we stopped for a drink at the pub opposite the barrack. I told-off the Free State sergeant for his double-crossing act in aiding the attempted seizure of the Buick which I had committed to his care. He was most apologetic and explained all the circumstances, how, when he reported the matter to his superiors, the quarrelsome Captain Moore had come along with Free State soldiers to remove the car. He was delighted with the way I had handled that pugnacious bully and brought him down such a peg before his own soldiers. He gave me a brief sketch of Moore's I.R.A. career, of his rough and rugged acts and his domineering aggressiveness. I fancied myself quite a lot for having been so lucky and so resourceful at emerging so triumphantly from my strange encounter with that queer officer. Then, after a few drinks, I declined that meal offered by the N.C.O. and we hit the road again. Stopped at Edgeworthstown and entered McDermott's pub. The owner was delighted and mighty relieved to see us again. His driver had given him a lurid account of all his experiences with us and had declared that we were a mad bunch of Irregular desperadoes and that we would never show up again. Joe McGurk, the Divisional Q.M., dug into his wallet and paid McDermott handsomely for the use of his car and driver. His eyes opened wide with wonder at this as he had never expected to be paid when he realised that we were I.R.A. officers. He gave us ample petrol for the Buick. A Free State Company Q.M. Sergeant was drinking at the bar as we made to go. He asked us for a lift to Longford. As he was in uniform, we agreed eagerly. It suited me fine. Now, with a uniformed Free State N.C.O. for company, we felt that there was little danger of our being stopped or molested in Longford, a town through which we hated to travel in those days. We dropped our N.C.O. friend in Longford and declined his offer of a drink. He thanked us profusely and on we sped. It was now very late at night. As we reached the Shannon, a thick fog came down and our speed was reduced to a crawl. The fog got worse. Groping our way through Drumsna, we felt a heavy double bump, stopped and got out. We had driven across a shallow drain a foot or so wide in off the road surface entirely on the village green. We shivered with cold in the clammy fog. I thought of the flask of brandy. Heavens above! It was gone. Then the truth dawned on me. I had left it in the inside door pocket of the Dodge. I felt miserable. It was about 3 a.m. or so and here we were blanketed in fog on a village green more than 100 miles from our base, hungry and thirsty, cold and weary. Deciding to crawl on, we pushed the car back on the roadway and resumed our journey in low gear. I had my head and shoulders out the car window trying to penetrate the dark greyness and to direct the driver. On slowly and painfully to Carrick-on-Shannon which we reached before dawn and where a shock awaited us. I was trying to discern the road turning left over the Shannon when a loud road of "Halt" startled us. We stopped instantly. I advanced as I was ordered, with my hands up, to be recognised. Four steps ahead, I all but crashed into the huge iron gates entering the military barracks. A sentry kept me covered while a soldier from the guardroom scrutinised and questioned me. We were lucky, for the garrison here were I.R.A. of the Executive Forces. I explained who we were and where we were going. We were invited to come in and eat and rest till morning. I declined, pleading that our return to Northern Divisional H.Q. was extremely urgent. We had overshot the turning for the bridge in the dense fog. Back we crawled again, located the turning, crossed the Shannon and made off towards Ballymote.

Day was breaking as we reached a large schoolhouse, five or six miles from Ballymote. Here we encountered large parties of I.R.A. soldiers who had been enjoying themselves at an all-night republican dance in the schoolhouse. The dancers were just dispersing. Some of the republican soldiers recognised our car and its occupants. We got a great cheer of welcome. John A. Farry, an I.R.A. man from the town, got in with us to pilot and we entered Ballymote in triumph. We stopped at Farry's pub and ate and drank there copiously. Our Raphoe driver with his ancient Ford was brought along – incidentally, he had driven a load of republican soldiers to the dance and had shared in all their fun.

The large tin trunk was now loaded on the Ford, we said goodbye to our youthful driver, Davey, and to chemist Mullan, home again in Ballymote with greatly enhanced prestige and handed back the Buick. I was presented with a large bottle of poteen at Farry's pub on leaving for the north.

Back through Sligo, where we called to the barracks and I thanked Brian McNeill for his kind offices in helping us so well on our mission. As we cruised along noisily by Cliffoney and Benbulbin, McGurk slept. I too was drowsy after all the exciting experiences of the previous day and night, and no sleep whatever for two days and only a few hours since we left Raphoe on Tuesday night. It was now noon on Friday. The car swerved suddenly into a fence and the driver pulled up. Another punctured tyre and no jack. McGurk is so deep in slumber that I failed to arouse him. Back the road with me to where I see two men working in a field. I asked them to come along with me to lend a helping hand. They came. I removed a large stone from the fence and while the two man and myself exerted all our strength to lift the left side of the Ford, the driver manoeuvred the rock beneath the axle. Another great lift and the punctured wheel rotated freely. I felt a scalding wet sensation around my loins and down my thigh. I thought I was bleeding. But no: the cork had come out of the bottle

of poteen with all my exertions and the virulent stuff was scorching my skin like acid. There was a little still left in the bottle. I offered it to my helpers. One, the younger, refused. The other raised the bottle to his lips and drank a little very slowly with many grimaces. I tasted a sup of the stuff. It was vile. A burning soapy taste which almost roasted my tongue and gullet. I was almost smothered and spluttered and coughed as I tried to get my breath. Repairs were completed and we pushed the car off the improvised "jack". I thanked our pair of helpers, who dallied watching the whole proceedings curiously, then we rattled on once more, McGurk still oblivious to the world. We reached Raphoe that Friday afternoon without further mishap.

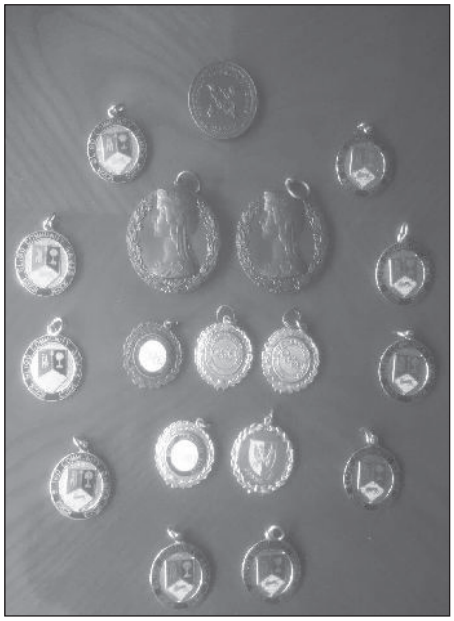
I did not even wait up to eat, but peeled off my clothes and threw myself into bed at Stoney's mansion, our Divisional H.Q. I did not wake until 3 p.m. on Saturday, having slept soundly for almost 24 hours. I got up, dressed and went down to the kitchen for a feed. Sitting down to the table, I noticed the burnt brown patch on the upper part of the thigh of my pants – the grand suit which I had got earlier at Tadhg Lynch's in Kinsale with my first month's pay from Army H.Q. It was ruined by the spilt poteen. Then the thought struck me of what must have been its corrosive effect on my stomach and vitals when it scorched and rotted the Irish tweed in my trousers so badly. That scared me off drinking poteen for many a long day after. Ever since then, I have only sipped the stuff once or twice.

Martin Davey on the right , Father of Derek Davey, Ballymote with Tim Daly.

Donal Coleman (1962-2008):
A talented and successful handballer

By John Coleman

John on the left and Donal on the right as children



My late brother was a very talented sportsman and excelled at handball, winning many Community Games Medals at County level and all Ireland bronze medals at the Tailteann Games and Community Games. After training for a period with the US Navy in Florida in his late teens he travelled widely in the USA where he unwisely experimented with illicit drugs which had a long term detrimental effect on his mental health. I have always been saddened when Ballymote Handball successes are celebrated and his name is never mentioned. The shame attached to mental illness is finally beginning to lift and I would like to pay tribute to Donal's memory by illustrating a photograph of his many medals is testament to his achievements and demonstrably unfulfilled potential.

Carrowmore Excavation 2019

By Lynda Hart

The Carrowmore Megalithic Complex is situated at the heart of the Coolera peninsula in Co. Sligo. The complex is predominately Neolithic (later part of the Stone Age) but also has monuments and usage dating to the Bronze and Iron Age.

In the late spring of 2019 a group of archaeology students from Sligo IT, led by Dr. Marion Dowd and Dr. James Bonsall, conducted an excavation at one of the Carrowmore monuments.

The monument was believed to be a barrow from late prehistory, possibly Bronze Age or Iron Age. There has been much speculation by both archaeologists and from the Carrowmore guides as to the type of monument that this site represents.

Göran Burenhult, the Swedish archaeologist who excavated many of the monuments at Carrowmore during the second half of the 20th century recorded it as 'structure 8' but did not classify it as a barrow. Martin Timoney recorded it as 'No 13, Carrowmore II' and suggested that it was a badly mutilated barrow. Others have suggested it was a ring or bowl barrow and it was even thought that it might be an ancient Bronze Age cooking pit or 'fulacht fiadh'.

The site before excavation

The monument is situated at the end of a large natural gravel ridge that runs through the complex at its highest point and it is to the SW of the central monument Listoghil (C51) in a large meadow. Field walls and boundaries have changed throughout several centuries and George Petrie's 1837 Ordnance Survey map of the area indicates field walls running close to the monument but does not record the monument itself.

During a two-week period in May/ June 2019 the students excavated part of the site under the expert eye of archaeologists Dr. Dowd and Dr. Bonsall. The excavation was hugely popular with the general public but due to Health and Safety regulations, the general public were not able to enter the field and see the work up close. However, they could observe the work from the visitors area at point C which is on the gravel ridge and this allowed a good view of the students' work.

Lithics

Many interesting conversations were conducted on the complexities of running an excavation including the requirements of an actual dig and the need for excavation licences. It is a fact that you need very specific licences to use metal detectors to look for archaeological objects because it is illegal to use a metal detector in Ireland and there are very large fines for using one without a licence. Also, of great interest was the precise dimensions of the area to be excavated and the need for provenance at every stage throughout the project. All the work was carried out by hand from the cutting of the turf layer to the fine sieving and back filling of all the soil layers that had been dug.

The monument consists of a ditch, a raised area inside and a hollow in the centre. There is a band of stone within the excavated area. There were many finds within the excavated area around the monument. The dates of these finds ranged from the 18th to 20th century and included pottery and glass shards, clay pipe fragments, roof slate and other detritus.

Thirty-five lithics (artefacts made of stone) from prehistory were identified within the context of the monument and also from the area of later disturbance. The lithics were mainly of chert which is a type of flint found extensively in the area and especially on Knocknarea mountain.

The one thing that wasn't found here was any bone. Bone is always a good find as it can be carbon dated and would have given a starting point for dating the site.

Excavation area

As there wasn't any dateable material, Dr. Bonsall took some OSL samples from the lower levels of stone in the central area of the monument. OSL is an acronym for Optically Stimulated Luminescence which is a dating technique that takes a core of soil from an undisturbed area. In this case, samples were taken from the lower levels of stony material in the central area of the monument. This technique is used to date the last time that quartz sediment was exposed to light. The dates returned from these samples showed that they were from 5,740 (+/-595) years ago which dates it to the Neolithic period. This is very exciting as it was previously believed that this monument was from the much later Bronze/Iron Age.

Dr. Dowd and Dr Bonsall hope that they will be able to secure additional licences and return with the students to excavate further areas of this monument in the spring/summer of 2020 and maybe find some answers about this intriguing site.

The Ploughman

By Joan Gleeson

The year 1817 marked the beginning of the ploughing matches in Ireland on large Estate lands where the ploughing plots were divided into two classes: one for ploughs owned by the gentry and another for farmers who owned their own plough. Competition times for the half rood plots were two hours for horses and two and a half hours for bulls and oxen. No kidding - we're talking the early eighteen hundreds! We'll move on.

The 1930's depression saw big changes in these competitions. The fledgling National Ploughing Association moved to improve ploughing in all parts of the country. The government encouraged farmers to increase their output during the economic war where the plough was the *Rolls Royce* of the economy. The message was, *"Be free of foreign wheat, grow your own"*.

The government gave financial grants to local societies for encouragement. President de Valera and several of his ministers attended a ploughing match in Clondalkin thus copper-fastening the importance of tillage. In 1929, an Irish pound was issued depicting the farmer with his plough and horses.

Some of the prizes at the competitions included cash, gold medals, large certificates and even ploughs which were the most treasured prizes. The first National Ploughing Championship was held in Dublin in 1933 and the competitions grew rapidly over the years. 1939 saw the first international ploughing championship take place in Derry. The beginning of World War II meant that there were no more competitions in the North until after the war, however they continued down South.

Killavil native, Mick Gardiner, travelled the country to ploughing matches in Maugherow, Keash, Lackagh, Annaghmore Estate, Lissadell, Achonry, Ballinasloe, Athenry and more. He went on to win prizes at most of those competitions. At that time, most farmers owned only one horse as a horse ate as much as two cows and they joined up with neighbours for matches. Some of Mick's ploughing partners were other local men Jimmy Gannon, Harry Marren and Martin Benson.

Ploughing matches were big social occasions with dances held in church or school halls the night before the match. There were sideshows on the day such as tug o' war, tossing the sheaf, guessing the weight of a pig by just spanning his girth and even horse-shoeing competitions. The *Irish Times* newspaper carried a report about a national competition in Kerry on the estate of the Earl of Kenmare.

"The day started with a procession of horses and ploughmen through the streets of the town on their way to the field. They were met by the Bishop of Kerry, the most Rev. Dr. O'Brien who gave them his blessing."

Irish pound dated 24th Aug 1932

There were inter-county matches including one in Ballinasloe and a notable one in Athenry where Mick Gardiner competed with his ploughing mate in tow. It was an adventurous journey in the 1940's and the road signs were few and far between resulting in a few detours. One wonders if they dreamed of something like our modern sat-nav. Gardiner represented Sligo by winning the competition in his class which led to him qualifying for the National Ploughing Championship in Balbriggan, North Dublin.

On the 25th of February 1946, the pair of boys headed off into the unknown on the train to Dublin where they were put up in the then Four Courts Hotel and had an intriguing encounter there with a lift. The wrought iron gates appeared as a cage as they closed shut before elevating them skywards to the third floor. They thought they were going to be burned alive and that they'd never see Killavil again. They survived!

The following day they were bussed to Balbriggan where a plough and horses were provided for the competition. It was soon discovered that the Dublin horses didn't understand the Sligo accent and commands which did nothing to enhance their chances of winning a prize. However, all was not lost as Mick Gardiner was commended for his skillful handling of the plough. They dined out for months on hair-raising stories and exciting experiences of that Dublin visit.

As with all competitions, it was not all fun and games. Ploughing had to be done at home for the compulsory tillage before and during the war. Competitors had to bring their own horses and ploughs to each competition barring the long-distance

ones. There were numerous makes and types of ploughs: *Pierce, Howard, Sellar, Ransome chilled ploughs* and *swing ploughs.* Ploughs needed maintenance and on one occasion when preparing for a match, the wooden swings needed replacement. Resourceful as always, Mick Gardiner cut down one of the many ash trees on the farm to make his own swings.

The *Sligo Independent* had carried a report on the first ploughing match in Achonry. The competition went ahead despite the field having been covered with snow on a cold February 26th, 1914. Refreshments were served at the end of the competition while the judging began and marks for performance and accuracy were calculated. To settle the nerves of the waiting crowd, entertainment was organised during this time and even included bare-back children's donkey races.

Standing in the snow-covered headlands, perished and impatient, ploughmen and spectators waited and waited and waited for the results. Finally, the judge was ready to give the results.

Class 1 for farmers with swing ploughs - First prize: Stellar plough to

Michael Gardiner 1892 - 1970

Mick Gardiner, Killavil. Second prize: Two pounds cash to James Trumble, Keash. Third prize: One-pound cash to Thomas Crean, Carrickbanagher. The prizes for all the other classes followed.

On moonlight frosty nights, many a household waited at the farm gate to hear the weary clip-clop of the homeward bound horse's hooves on the sandy road. The welcome news of prizes and stories accompanied by mugs of tea, treacle bread or boxty went on into the night.

To this day, ploughing competitions are still very popular and indeed, big business. However, the introduction of the tractor in the 1940's heralded the demise of the horse and plough at competitions and on farms as well. Keeping up the hundred-year tradition, today's ploughing matches still include competitions for the noble horse and plough.

The Irish poet Joseph Campbell paints a beautiful picture and sums it all up for us:

I will go with my father a ploughing
To the green fields by the sea
And the rooks and the crows and the seagulls
Come flocking after me.

I will sing to the patient horses
With the lark in the white of the air,
And my father will sing the plough song
That blesses the cleaving share.

In his day, Michael Gardiner was known as '*the ploughman'.*
Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

Living in the Past

L to R: Paddy Wims, Chris Smith, Paddy Egan, Alfie Banks and Billy Healy.
Photograph taken outside Chris Smiths draper shop (now Perry's). *Submitted by Paddy Egan.*

L to R: Frank Flannery,
Fonso Sheridan and Mick Hever
Submitted by Francis Flannery

The Picture House

By Oliver Farry

The Irish revolutionary and theorist of guerrilla warfare Michael Collins was probably being a bit harsh on Irish villages and small towns when he described them as 'hideous medleys of contemptible dwellings and mean shops and squalid public houses' but it's true that, having arrived late to the game of urbanisation, they have long lacked an architectural and aesthetic cohesiveness. We are mostly absent of the quaint tidy villages that are common across the Irish Sea and on many parts of the continent. A few historic buildings aside – usually a church built in the wake of Catholic Emancipation in the 19th century – Ireland's smaller urban settlements are largely devoid of interesting architecture. Some of that has changed in the more prosperous recent past but not hugely – the built environment in smaller towns is overwhelmingly cheap and functional.

In the mid-twentieth century there reigned a brief exception to this reality, one that would bestow a patina of glamour on some of the most unexceptional towns of the country. These were the cinemas. Picture palaces, many of them designed by major architectural figures such as Michael Scott (The Ritz in Athlone) and John McBride Neill (The Tonic in Bangor, County Down), sprouted up in towns as one-horse as those in the Westerns that many of them screened. Peripatetic entrepreneurs had first brought films to rural Ireland, screening them in parish halls but when purpose-built cinemas arrived, they were flagships for the modernity that was beginning to elbow its way into the Irish provinces. The cinemas would be a physical embodiment of the new, sitting in town centres like expensive shiny baubles, like the great big Cadillacs brought back from the States by local lads done well.

My home town, Ballymote in County Sligo, got its own picture house in 1947. It wasn't the first one in town – a Longford man named Denis Conroy had been showing films in the old Hibernian Hall since the early thirties and screenings continued there right up to the week the new cinema opened. This cinema, located opposite the fair green, where Pearse Road and Teeling Street peel off from one another, was as different from the old liner docked at the confluence of two of Ballymote's four streets. Designed in a subdued small-town variant of Art Deco, the cinema was in the main, a cavernous hangar, like most purpose-built cinemas of the day. Had it not been given any ornament, it might have had no more charm than the covered handball alley that was later built on the other side of the fair green, and which resounded with the sharp pops of rubber handballs every summer evening of my childhood.

But the anonymous architect (I have been unable to find out his or her name, either from people old enough to recall the opening, or from contemporary newspaper reports or even architectural registers – only the contractors, McManus Bros. of Roscrea, are mentioned) turned what was effectively a big shed into a gliding vessel that, no matter what way you looked at it, always seemed to be going somewhere. Set in front of the main structure consisting of two boxes was a triangular-sectioned portico, the hypotenuse of which stretched almost the whole length of the site, broadening the front elevation like a fairground mirror. Two asymmetrical curving brick walls funnelled punters into the lobby through elegant French doors. It was a remarkable exercise of trompe l'oeil, generating a greater impression of space by leaving most of it outside the building. The Abbey Cinema was hitting the ground at a different speed to everything around it, a go-faster stripe in a town that was in no hurry to get anywhere.

Or at least that's how I imagine it looked to people on its opening. By the time I came along, it was already of the past. Irrevocably closed, doomed by the movies' decline, to me it was a part of pre-history. When I was growing up, the cinema was an immovable hulk unused for anything but storage. Its portico was somewhere to shelter from the weather if caught short on the way home, or for the more brazen teenagers to smoke after school in flagrant view of the whole town. It definitely closed its doors in 1975, the year of my birth, but since Halloween 1971, when the last film was screened, it had been home mostly only to bingo nights and the odd variety performance.

The Abbey Cinema opened for business on the 26th of February 1948. Described by the Sligo Champion as 'Ballymote's new bijou cinema', the Abbey was 'constructed on ambitious lines….[and] can boast of many features found in the bigger and better-known city picture houses'. Like many fine things it ran over-budget before it was even built and cost £25,000. The first film to be screened was the 1947 film noir The Homestretch, an early Technicolor production, starring Cornell Wilde and Maureen O'Hara (upon the cinema's reopening 55 years later, O'Hara promised to attend a screening if management succeeded in sourcing a print of the film, a promise she was presumably confident she would not have to fulfil). Like most small town or neighbourhoods cinemas of the time, it operated as a repertory, playing films that had already had their runs in the cities or in Sligo town's two cinemas, the Gaiety and the Savoy. The other two films shown in the opening week are better remembered: Orson Welles' Nazi-hunting drama The Stranger and The Wizard of Oz, almost a decade old then but perhaps still unseen by many.

The films the Abbey showed throughout its initial 23-year history were a similar mix of the canonical and the now-forgotten. For every Bad Day at Blackrock, Brigadoon and Seven Brides for Seven Brothers,

there was My Brother Talks to Horses (early Fred Zinnemann, 1947, starring Peter Lawford), Faithful in My Fashion (1946, starring Donna Reed) or the 1968 Herman's Hermits vehicle Mrs Brown, You've Got a Lovely Daughter. Looking through old copies of the Champion in Sligo Library, one title caught my eye in an old ad from 1956, Cattle Queen of Montana, starring Barbara Stanwyck and Ronald Reagan. For a moment I thought I had seen the film but realised I remembered it from featuring on a cinema marquee in Back to the Future when Marty McFly lands in 1955 (it would be another two years before the film would make it all the way to Ballymote). The films projected represent an almost complete Hollywood hegemony. Even British films, apart from a couple of David Lean epics and Hammer Horrors, rarely got a sniff of the Ballymote box-office. Any Irish films that existed in those days did so thanks only to the largesse of Hollywood and, more specifically, the sentimental caprices of two Johns, Ford and Huston. In Ballymote, as elsewhere in Ireland, movies meant America.

Unfortunately the timing wasn't the best. Cinema going was already on the wane in the western world and the Abbey never really got into a money-making groove. Bartley Cryan, a local auctioneer and shopkeeper who ran it on behalf of the committee that owned it, did so more out of love than anything else. Towards the end of its time, the cinema was programming fewer and fewer films whose original release dates began to recede further and further back into the past. For its last six months in 1971, only one screening a week, on a Sunday night, was put on. The final film played in late October that year, the 1966 adaptation of Beau Geste starring Telly Savalas and a pre-Airplane! Leslie Nielsen. My parents, who would not marry till the following year, went to the Abbey for the last time in the spring of 1971 to see James Stewart in Andrew V. McLaglen's Shenandoah.

The Art Deco Theatre formerly the Abbey Cinema

It is generally accepted that television killed off the cinemas, at least until exhibitors began to get wise and divided their picture houses into multiple auditoriums to allow more screenings. The arrival of television in Ireland in 1962 didn't help the Abbey but there were other factors at play and this is evident from the sea of advertisements that, by 1971, had begun to engulf the Abbey's listings in the Sligo Champion. Sligo and its environs were now awash with large pubs and music venues. Young people had begun drinking more than their parents (as late as 1968, half of Irish adults were teetotal and owning a pub licence was far from being a money-spinner) and there were not yet drink-driving laws so much as drink-driving recommendations, to be laughed off by anyone who felt they knew their own limits. The Silver Slipper Ballroom and the Baymount Hotel in Strandhill, The Mountain Inn in Coolaney, The Mayflower in Drumshanbo and dozens of other venues provided fresh outlets for young courting couples to meet in dimly lit rooms unbothered by the disappointing gaze of the local clergy. The movies, not yet reinvigorated by the New Hollywood, must have seemed like children's entertainment in comparison.

Then, a few years ago, the movies unexpectedly came back to the Abbey. Ballymote Enterprise Centre managed to convince Sligo County Council to go along with a €500,000 plan to restore and redevelop the cinema. After several years of wrangling-by-committee, work went ahead on the restoration and the cinema was reopened in June 2012. I didn't get an opportunity to visit it until Christmas that year when, not for the first time, I paid money to see something I had no interest in watching (Taken 2) just to see the inside of a cinema. The restoration was both inspired and sensitive, with only minor structural changes. The green terrazzo bordering the lobby floor and staircases was gleaming once again, the cream, black and vermillion colour scheme on the walls was preserved, the old cast-iron and teak folding seats were freshly upholstered and the carpet smelled of cinema. I'd have liked if the Abbey retained its old name but it was decided to baptise it The Art Deco instead. It slightly over-egged the connection, in my opinion, but venues have been called far worse.

The Stage in the Art Deco Theatre, Ballymote

The Art Deco re-emerged in a world that was different in many ways to the one the Abbey Cinema inhabited. Gone is the original projector, now housed as an artefact at Sligo Folk Park in Riverstown, to be replaced by a digital one. Stepping into the projection room is, I have to admit, a mildly deflating experience – there is no longer a porthole looking into the auditorium and the material, however more efficient, is no more impressive than a high-end home entertainment centre. Still, it makes the sourcing and selection of films a lot easier, and the cinema is particularly popular for children's birthday parties on account of this. Curlicues of smoke no longer flutter in the beams of the projector either, though a bar now occupies the mezzanine, which makes it that bit easier to attract punters. There have also been scurrilous murmurs that the old seats are creaking under the weight of a more ample population, a couple of stone heavier than their grandparents were.

But some social realities remain the same and running a cinema in

a town the size of Ballymote is no more economically feasible today than it was in the 1960s. The Art Deco operates on a non-profit basis and more as an occasional venue for concerts and plays than as a cinema (as indeed did the Abbey in its day, playing host to Maureen Potter, Jimmy O'Dea and Hal Roache). The only surefire draw, as ever, is that old perennial, Wednesday night bingo, which rarely fails to fill the house.

Reference

Farry O (2016), ***"Winter Page 2"*** Curlew Editions,Ballinfad.

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Ballymote Bridge Club

By Maree O'Dowd

'*No matter where I go I can always make new friends at the bridge table'* - Martina Navratilova.

As the Ballymote Bridge Club celebrated its 35th anniversary last autumn it seems an opportune time to recall and record its history.

In September of 1982 a small group of Ballymote ladies attended evening Bridge lessons in the local VEC school given by Mr. Sean Gillen from Sligo. The following winter of 1983 the ladies travelled to Boyle for further instruction. Then, in September of 1984, they decided to set up a club in their own town as travelling over the Curlew mountains on frosty nights no longer appealed to them. Thanks to the strenuous work of Mary O'Connor, some local experienced players were persuaded to join the fledgling group and so Ballymote Bridge Club came into existence.

The original members were Canon Robert Flynn, Eugene Gilhawley, Elsie and Alec Gillmor, Rosalyn Duffy, Anne Henry, Mary Henry, Richard and Eileen Cahill and Eddie Sweeney. The beginners were Cathy and Julian Flynn, Mary Kavanagh, Mary O'Connor, Maree O'Dowd and Marion Scully.

In the following year Matt Davey, Clare Kavanagh, Mary McDonagh and Nance Tighe joined the growing group. Over the years members were gained and lost - some moved away and others went to the great Bridge Club in the sky.

Of the original founding members only a 'Gang of Four' remain - Cathy Flynn, Anne Henry, Mary O'Connor and Maree O'Dowd. The club continues to play every Monday night in the Pastoral Centre from September to the end of May. It has met in other venues in the past - Corran College, Coach House Hotel, Fawlty Towers, Hayden's and Perry's.

Four major competitions are held each year - Gilhawley Cup, Gillmor Cup, Henry Cup and President's Shield. The club also hosts three charity nights during the season and a very enjoyable dinner at Christmas.

An annual mass is offered for our esteemed deceased members - Canon Flynn, Eugene and Elizabeth Gilhawley, Alec and Elsie Gillmor, Matt Davey, Rosalyn Duffy, Mary Kavanagh, Mae O'Donnell, Anne Harrison, Mary Dwyer, Maureen Egan, Nathy Fahey, Kathleen Doddy, Jimmy White and Kay Murray. Sadly, in the past year we have also lost Mary Henry, Eileen Egan, Anne Hannon, Olive Byrne ,Anne O'Grady and Mary Carew.

Other past members include George Brennan, Sean Carew, Helen Coleman, Paddy Conheady, Anne Costello, Micky Cunnane, Sr. de Lourdes, Fiona Dunleavy, Michael Fitzpatrick, Sheila Flynn, Peggy Gannon, Evelyn Hogge, Maura Horan, Margaret Keane, Frances Kelly, Brian Kennedy, Imelda Killoran, Maureen Madden, Maureen Maher, Geraldine Mongey, Michael Munds, Fr. Gabriel Murphy, Maureen McGettrick, Christy McTernan, Mary O'Donoghue, Maureen O'Dowd, Patty O'Connor, Marie Perry, Una Skinner, Anne Sweeney, Nance Tighe, Robert Wallace and David Wilkinson.

Today our membership stands at around 30. The current members are:

Mary Cawley, Gertie Coleman, John Coleman, Margaret Doddy, Maura Dunne, Anne Flanagan, Cathy Flynn, Jean Gallagher, Mary Gilhawley, Ursula Gilhawley, Kathleen Healy, Nancy Keevans, Agnes Kennedy, Rosemary Kitchin, Doreen Lavin, Madge Morrison, Carmel Mullen, Ethna Munds, Mary McCann, Mary McDonagh, Bridget McGettrick, Carmel McGettrick, Angela McNulty, Maura McTernan, Mary O'Connor, Maree O'Dowd, Mary O'Neill, Carmel Rogers, Maureen Sheridan, Maria Wallace.

Bridge is truly a wonderful game and we are so lucky to have a club on our own doorstep. It is one of the activities recommended to stave off the dreaded Alzheimer's disease.

The following comments from famous people are noteworthy:

'Bridge is such a sensational game that I wouldn't mind being in jail if I had three cell mates who were decent players and who were willing to keep the game going 24 hours a day.' Warren Buffett.

'Many games provide fun but Bridge grips you. It exercises your mind. Your mind can rust you know but bridge prevents the rust from forming.' Omar Sharif.

'Bridge is the most intelligent and entertaining card game the wit of man has so far devised.' W. Somerset Maugham

Saving the Bacon

By Micheál Murphy

The popularity of bacon and cabbage on the Irish dinner menu stems no doubt from the days when there was little other meat available. Up until the middle of the last century bacon was in many cases home-produced. Where a farm could support a breeding sow, she would have a litter of 10 or 12 banbhs (piglets) twice a year. As I remember in the 1950s and early'60s, a banbh when weaned at eight weeks of age would fetch about £5 at the market. Most small farmers would buy two or three such banbhs to feed on slops, skimmed milk and potatoes or any available food waste. A pig destined for slaughter, which usually happened at six months of age, was fed a more nutritious diet of oats or barley for a few weeks before his ultimate fate. The cereal was intended to harden the flesh. The pig usually weighed approximately 2 cwt or about 100 kg when ready for killing. Depending on size, a family would home-butcher and cure a pig about twice a year.

Every rural parish had a number of men who were skilled in the art of butchering the pig. The job was always done in winter time when meat would not "go off" too quickly. The barn used for the purpose was washed out and a door was laid on the floor to provide a smooth working surface. The pig was starved for 24 hours to clean out the gut as much as possible. The anaesthetic applied was simply a swift blow from a heavy hammer to the head, and then the jugular vein was quickly pierced. The issuing blood was collected as efficiently as possible in enamel basins for use in the making of black pudding later.

Meanwhile a large 5-gallon pot of water was heated on the open fire and the pig, placed on its side on the door, was covered in a layer or two of clean sacking. The hot water was poured over the sacking and left to soak until the hair on the pig's skin could be

scraped off with a blunt knife. The process was repeated on the other side, shaving the pig completely without damaging the skin. At this stage, a stick was inserted between the sinews in the pig's hind hocks and the pig was raised by a rope to hang, head down, from the rafters. It was washed thoroughly with cold water and dried as much as possible.

The butcher then cut the pig open lengthwise along the belly from the chin to the rear end with a very sharp knife. The most difficult part was cutting through the breastbone while taking care not to rupture the intestines or the stomach. The entrails were then freed by pulling them downwards and outwards from the body wall, avoiding tearing or breaking the intestines. The diaphragm which separates the chest from the abdomen was then cut off so that the heart, windpipe and lungs could be removed. All the entrails were laid on a table to be used later. Very little was wasted.

Any blood in the open carcase was washed out with plenty of cold water and the carcase kept open by inserting some scollops or strong sally rods crosswise in the body. The mouth was also kept open with a stick to ensure complete drainage while the carcase was left to hang for at least 24 hours so that it cooled completely.

The "lights" (lungs) and the liver, if not eaten by members of the household, were shared with neighbours who had a taste for such. The pancreas, known as the "sweetbread", was also much valued by some people. All fat around the internal organs was carefully removed and rendered down to be stored as "dripping" for cooking purposes.

Twelve-inch lengths of the intestines were cut off and the contents squeezed out before being carefully washed and turned inside out to be used as the casing for black pudding. In former times even the bladder was filled with air (by blowing into it!) and the urethra then tied so that children had their own home-made football.

Cutting and curing

The head was removed while the pig was still hanging and the carcase sawn vertically in two through the backbone. Each side was then placed on a table, the feet were removed and the backbone cut from the ribs. The backbones and any attached meat were not cured but were eaten as pork or sometimes shared with neighbours who would return the favour when their pig was slaughtered. Hams and shoulders were cut off and boned before curing. The ribs were removed, the sides were cut into "flitches" and all the meat salted thoroughly by rubbing vigorously with the bare hands. Any spaces in the meat, where the bones had been, were filled with fistfuls of salt. A solid bar of salt weighing 28lbs (12.7kg) was bought for this purpose and had to be scraped off with a strong knife before use. (The salting process was severe on hands, often leaving fingers painfully skinned for days afterwards.) The pieces of meat were then packed in a small barrel or a tea chest, each layer smothered in salt to fill all available space before being covered and weighted down. The curing process took about a month after which the pieces were taken out and hung from the rafters or the ceiling at the end

of the kitchen. Smoke from the open turf fire was thought to improve the flavour of the bacon.

Black Pudding and Brawn

Every housewife had her own recipe for making black pudding but in general it consisted of the blood from the pig with flake meal or oatmeal, diced onion, pearl barley and seasoning all mixed together and filled into the above-mentioned lengths of intestine. The ends were tied with twine or thread from flour bags and the ends twisted back and joined together to form a ring. These rings were placed in boiling water until the contents solidified.

Brawn was made by boiling the pig's head, sometimes along with the feet or crubeens as well as the tail until the meat separated from the bone. The meat and bones were then removed and the meat diced before returning it to the soup. Salt, pepper and spices were added and heating continued until the liquid was reduced to about a pint. This was poured into a bowl and allowed to cool until it set to a jelly. Brawn was considered to be a special treat, always associated with the killing of the pig.

Pig Meat Today

In olden times, the pig was known as "the gentleman that pays the rent". Not only did he provide a cheap source of protein for the family, he was also a steady source of income. Any pigs not killed at home were sold at markets or to pig factories when they were just 6 to 8 months old. However, the practice of rearing a few pigs on the family farm largely died out in the 1960s. Health and safety regulations, animal welfare issues and the desirability of low salt diets all contributed to the demise of the farm pig. At the same time, intensive rearing in special piggeries and the development of refrigeration, together with a milder process of curing, made home curing less popular. However, pig meat continues to be the most popular meat consumed here because the Irish love their Irish breakfast of bacon, sausage and black pudding as well as their dinners of bacon, cabbage and potatoes.

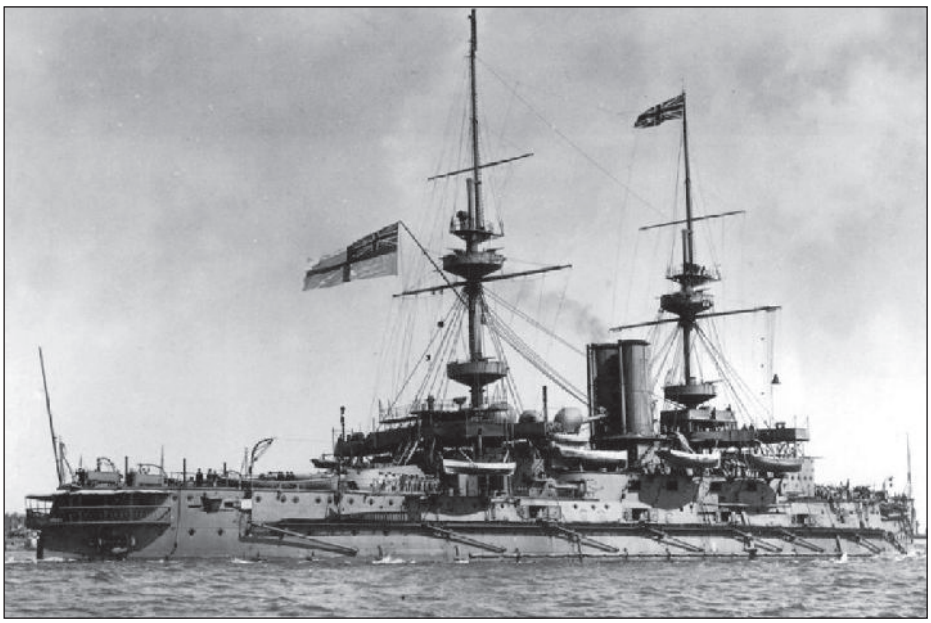
Some members of the 4th year class in Coláiste Mhuire in 1961

Photo submitted by Kathleen Ballantyne-Martin.

Back Row (L to R): John McAndrew, Michael Gilmartin, Gerry Henry, John Scanlon.
Front Row (L to R): Margaret Killoran, Mary Hogge, Kathleen Ballantyne.

A Story of Enniscrone, Warfare and Two Ships

By Sam Moore



HMS Majestic *(Image: www.navyphotos.co.uk/navyphotos)*

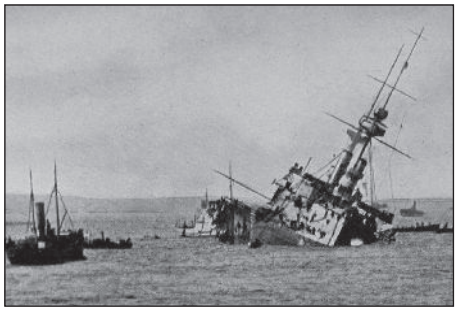
Two stories from different periods, and different events, both link to a time when the world was at war. The *Majestic*, a Royal Navy battleship sunk by a German U-boat at Gallipoli in 1915 and a merchant steam ship, the *Clan Menzies*, sunk by a U-boat in 1940 off the coast of Co. Donegal, both have associations with Enniscrone, Co. Sligo.

The Majestic battleship which was sunk at Gallipoli during World War I visits Enniscrone

The Royal Navy's Atlantic Fleet, comprising eight battleships and nine cruisers had been expected in Blacksod Bay, Co. Mayo, in early August 1906, but this was abandoned due to operational issues and on Tuesday 2nd August 1906 the fleet had been spotted in convoy by Enniscrone Coastguards 24 km (15 miles) off the coast. Unexpectedly, the *Majestic,* a 49,000 ton, 126m (413 ft) long, heavily armed battleship with 757 men on board came close to Enniscrone. This must have been extraordinary to see such an enormous ship with a crew that was more than double the entire population of Enniscrone (there were 307 people living there in 1901). The *Majestic* anchored off Enniscrone from 7pm on the Tuesday until 3pm on the Wednesday and it was during this time that many people from Enniscrone and the surrounding area were able to go onboard. This visit to Killala Bay occurred eight years before the outbreak of the Great War. Large crowds of people crossed by boat from Enniscrone and were welcomed aboard by Captain Robert G. Fraser. The *Majestic* was one of the Royal Navy's Atlantic Fleet, whose task was to cruise between its base at Gibraltar and the base at Berehaven Harbour in Castletownbere, Co. Cork. Captain Fraser informed the reporter from the Western People newspaper that it was leaving Enniscrone to put in at Blacksod Bay on Wednesday night.

While in Killala Bay the *Majestic* was followed by a coal transport ship called *Arrows*, a collier from Cardiff, which was used to refuel the vessel. The two boats were connected by a long rope and 51 tons of coal an hour were transferred. The remainder of the fleet had gone on to Shannon after being at Lough Foyle and the newspaper report at the time marvelled at its scale and the fact that the *Majestic* could communicate with the fleet by means of 'the Marconi system of wireless telegraphy'. The *Majestic* was to meet up with the fleet in Shannon on the following Thursday morning and was then to proceed to Kingstown (the previous name for Dún Laoghaire in Dublin).

The *Majestic* was a battleship of the Royal Navy, and the lead ship of the Majestic class. She served as the flagship of the Channel Squadron for eight years after being built in Portsmouth Royal Dockyard and was launched by Princess Louise (the third child and the eldest daughter of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra) on 31st January 1895. The battleship went in and out of reserve until the Great War. She was despatched to the Dardanelles on 24th February 1915 (Dardanelles, was formerly known as Hellespont - the strait connecting the Aegean to the Sea of Marmara). Attempts were made by submarines to pass through the Dardanelles and



The HMS Majestic sinking at Cape Helles, Gallipoli, Turkey *(Image: navyphotos.co.uk /Navyphotos)*

disrupt Ottoman (Turkish) Empire shipping in the Sea of Marmara.

On the morning of 26th February 1915, the *Majestic* bombarded the Ottoman Turkish inner forts at the Dardanelles and later that day the *Majestic* was one of the first Allied heavy ships to enter the Turkish Straits during the campaign there. She supported and participated in the final attempt to force the straits by naval power alone on 18th March 1915 but was hit four times and returned to the base at Tenedos (an island in the Aegean) with one dead and some wounded crew members. The battleship returned to action within days and by 25th April 1915 *Majestic* was shelling the coastal defences and providing support to the landing of troops at Gallipoli. By the 25th May, the ship had become the flagship of Admiral Nicholson, commanding the squadrons as well as supporting the troops ashore off Cape Helles (a rocky headland on the south-western tip of Gallipoli). Around 6.45am on 27th May 1915, Commander Otto Hersing of the German submarine U-21 fired a single torpedo through a defensive screen of destroyers and anti-torpedo nets, striking *Majestic* and causing a huge explosion. Within nine minutes the ship had capsized in 16m (54 feet) of water, killing 49 men.

Enniscrone and the sinking of the Clan Menzies during World War II

SS Clan Menzies Image: Allen Collection

Enniscrone was also connected to another story concerning a ship that was sunk by a U-boat; this time during World War Two when a British cargo steamer called the *Clan Menzies* was sunk by Commander Otto Kretschmer of the U-boat *U-99* on 29th July 1940. Out of the 88 survivors, 52 had been rescued by the *Kyleclare*, a vessel of the Limerick Steamship Company west of the Black Rock, Co. Mayo, just west of Blacksod Bay. The Kyleclare was captained by John McKeegan from Cushendall, Co. Antrim and was almost sunk itself after being bombed by a German Dornier bomber near Antwerp on 8th May 1940. It had rescued 20 survivors off another ship, the *Moyalla*, near Cape Clear, Co. Cork just two weeks previous to its rescue of the *Clan Menzies*. Captain McKeegan received formal thanks in Ennisrcone for bringing the men to safety by Sir John Maffey, the British representative in Ireland and Seán MacEntee, the Irish Minister for Industry and Commerce.

The *Clan Menzies* was a 7,336-ton cargo steamship that was launched in 1938 from the Greenock Dockyard on the Clyde in Scotland and was owned by Clan Line Steamers Ltd of London. The ship was en route to Liverpool after a voyage from Sydney and Melbourne, Australia and Panama when the torpedo struck. It was carrying 4,000 tons of wheat, 2,000 tons of dried fruit, 1,500 tons of zinc and 840 tons of general cargo. At 2.15 am on 29 July 1940, the unescorted *Clan Menzies*, mastered by William John Hughes, was hit aft off the coast of Co. Clare by a G7e torpedo from U-99. It drifted north and sank about 250 miles west of Co. Donegal. Out of the 94 crew - six died, three were British, and the remainder were from India. The 52 rescued men were brought to Enniscrone and looked after and were eventually escorted to Northern Ireland to return home. The remaining 36 crew had been taken ashore in Donegal.

The story of *Clan Menzies* is just one small incident in a brutal war. When World War Two broke out in September 1939, Taoiseach Eamon de Valera and the Irish Government maintained a policy of neutrality as the best way to protect the country. Britain was concerned with the fleets of U-boats patrolling the Atlantic; a concern that was validated after the sinking of the passenger liner *Athenia* on 3rd September 1939, immediately after war was declared. The sinking of the Athenia caused 123 people out of the 1,418 passengers and crew to lose their lives some 250 miles west of Inishtrahull, Co. Donegal. With the occupation of France in 1940 the German Navy, or *Kriegsmarine*, intensified attacks on merchant convoys off the coast of Ireland, particularly in the 250 square miles off Donegal during the so-called Battle of the Atlantic. In 1940, an average of two ships a day went down at the hands of the *Kriegsmarine* U-boats or Focke-Wulf Condor bombers. As a result of the Battle of the Atlantic, it was recorded that before March 1944, 16 Irish ships were sunk with a loss of 135 mariners. By the end of the war the Battle of the Atlantic had resulted in 3,500 Allied merchant ships and 175 Allied warships being sunk and some 72,200 Allied naval and merchant seamen losing their lives. The Germans lost 783 U-boats and approximately 30,000 sailors were killed. This was three-quarters of Germany's 40,000-man U-boat fleet.

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Folklore and Folklife in the Bunnanadden Area and Beyond

By Clare Doohan

I was reared in an agricultural community in the northwest and I have always held a great interest and love of the history and customs of the countryside. The importance of folklore, local techniques and traditions in hay making, turf saving and fair days and the essential tradition of a meitheal (a gathering of people) where neighbours and relations share farm work between them, are examples of old farming practices that benefit the rural community. The traditions of folklore and folklife that grew around these activities gave meaning and unity to the farming community.

Folklore is a defined notion of the culture of the common people of the countryside. This includes the intangible aspect of culture, such as stories, calendar customs, rituals, songs, fairs, proverbs, superstitions and aspects of belief. This information was passed down orally from one generation to the next often over long periods of time. People lived in the one place for many generations and all aspects of country life were embraced. The loyalty and support of the community, which was bound by kinship and marriage ties, was a vital element of its survival and success. The tangible physical aspect of this culture, using the skills for such activities as craft and furniture making and hay making are living traditions and are known as folklife. Máirtin Ó Cadhain, the well-known Irish writer from a storytelling family in Connemara, declared, 'I was squeezed from the world of folklore, a world that had changed little in a thousand years.' Hugh Nolan, a story teller from Ballymoney, Co. Fermanagh, said his life's consolation had been "keeping the truth" and "telling the whole tale".

Folklore and poverty went together and the people accepted the fate which life dealt them, whether it was famine, evictions, bad weather, unexpected death or good fortune. They tried to make sense of life and used folklore and superstition to give themselves some control over their fate.

Saving the hay:

Joe Mc Gowan, a well-known Sligo writer of folklore stories, describes the work and entertainment of saving the hay in the past in his story "The Haymakers". In days gone by, grass was cut and saved for hay in July and August. A man used a scythe for cutting the grass. It was hard and arduous work and it would take a good man to cut an acre in the day. Then a week later, depending on the weather, the whole family were out in the meadow field turning the hay with pitch forks. After that, the hay was lapped (small hay cocks). A fortnight or so later, the family were out again making haycocks with forks and rakes. Making a good haycock took great expertise and men would take pride in their skill and be noted for it by their neighbours.

Life was hard long ago, so the meitheal, where family and neighbours joined together in bringing the hay home, was vital to the community to ensure that the work got done.

Saving the hay

Annie Brennan Gilmartin, from Bunnanadden, Co. Sligo, described the hay making on her farm in the 1940's and the usefulness of every family member as well as the neighbours.

'A meitheal at the gathering of the hay. Ten men came on one day. It was a great thing to cook for them. If it was a good day, you'd be looking forward to meet the people. My father's two brothers would come and a nephew and some of the neighbours. It was great to hear the chat of them. By 8am - Mother would have the cows milked and be ready for feeding the men. Mother milked six cows by hand twice a day every day.

Bringing in the hay - 'They came up in the morning. They came in the horse and cart to bring in the hay. M. Kerins brought the pony and cart. Someone was driving our donkey and cart.

We used pitch forks and rakes. "My father was very good at the rake." My mother brought us the tea in the field and she'd stay with us for a while, helping.'

Fine weather was essential for haymaking, but as this proverb states: 'There's no use praying for fine weather if the ram's back is to the ditch'. The meaning of this is - when a ram's back was facing the ditch, it meant that there would be rain. Storytelling around the haymaking was all part of the day's happenings. "It was a great day at a haystack long ago. There'd be a jar of porter and a good big feed and then the ould boys would get a mug or two of porter to put them in the humour."

Saving the turf.

A farming community considered saving the turf of equal importance

to saving the hay. The turf fire heated the home and cooked the meals. Just as with the hay making, turf saving depended on good weather. Two or three men were needed to cut the turf on the bog. In April-May, the turf was cut into sods with a slean, a spade for cutting turf, by one man and thrown up to another who would lay it on the turf bank to dry. A skilled cutter could keep two men going. The entire family worked on the bog after the turf was cut. The turf could be ready for its first turning two weeks later. A week or two after that, it got its second turning and then the family footed it. A fortnight later, they clamped it. From July to October, the turf was brought home with an ass and creel.

Turf Footings

Fair days

On fair days many folklore practices that went back hundreds of years and included vigorous bargaining and hand slapping, giving a luck penny and other traditions and beliefs. The farmer measured the year by the timing of fairs, not by the calendar.

Fairs were important meeting places for the farming community, where livestock was traded, farm produce was sold, and all the essential commodities for the farm and household could be bought. It was also a welcome social event and exciting change in the daily grind of farming life.

Fairs were held throughout the year but were especially popular during the Celtic festivals of Bealtaine (May) and Samhain (November). They were not only a celebration of the completion of spring and summer farming work and a new season beginning, but also a chance to release the stresses of life.

There were fairs held in nearly every town and village in the northwest of Ireland. In 1837, fairs were held in Bunnanadden on Jan 14th, June 2nd, Aug 6th, Sep 10th, Oct 7th and Nov 27th.

Wilson's Directory of Ireland, 1834 gives the names of the Fair towns in Co. Sligo in that year. (Some spellings are variations compared to the present-day spelling).

SLIGO – Ardnaglass, Ballasodare, Ballinacarrow, Ballinahatty, Ballintogher, Ballymoate, Banada, Bellaghy, Beltra, Bunninaden, Carney, Carrignagat, Castlebaldwin, Cliffony, Collooney, Curry, Drinaghanbeg, Dromore, Easky, Enniscrone, Farinaharpy, Jameswell, Newtown, Quiguboy, Roslee, Sligo town, Templehouse, Tobbercorry, Tubberscanavan.

Tommy Mc Loughlin from Rinbawn, Co. Sligo said "I was luckier than most. I had Ballymote and Tubbercurry and Collooney. I'd have loved to go to more."

The traditional custom and practice of trading of livestock, which was 'the noisy ritual of assessing values and prolonged bargaining may have come from a time before the use of money was general.' These practices were ancient and an integral part of the folklore of the area. It was like a rite of passage into adulthood for the young men as they had to show how capable and competent they were at the buying and selling of livestock. The luck penny was essential to the process of selling livestock. This was the coin which was given back to the buyer by the seller at the completion of the sale. It was bad luck not to give it and many a fight would start if the luck penny was not considered sufficient.

It was a well-known belief, that if a man on his way to a fair met a red-haired woman, he had to turn back or else he would have bad luck with him.

Men and women were involved in the fairs. The women handled the turkey and geese sales. Cant men, salesmen with tents who went from fair to fair, sold second hand clothes and boots. There was a carnival atmosphere at the fairs, with ballad singers and street musicians, beggars, match makers, pedlars and troublemakers.

Tommy Mc Loughlin remembers - "There were buskers at the fairs. Ned Devaney had an accordion. He had only one tune 'East is East and West is West'. Maguire, he had a great accordion."

The fair days provided plenty of business for the townspeople who supplied "eating houses" like Mrs. Scanlon and Miss Flanagan of Ballymote and Kennedy's and O' Toole's of Tubbercurry and the local pubs and shops were very busy.

The fairs of old retained some pagan practices. At the end of the day, faction fights often took place, when old scores and family feuds were settled. Indeed, it was an accepted practice that a fight would take place at the fair. After an orderly day's dealings at Castlebaldwin Fair, with

1961 Aclare Fair Day, Co. Sligo.

no trouble, one man declared, "it is twelve o'clock and not a stroke struck in Baldwin yet". With that, he raised his stick and hit a man's head nearby him to get a fight going.

The folklore and folklife rural traditions in the northwest are among the oldest in Ireland and perpetuate a tradition that goes back hundreds of years into the very heart of our Irish heritage. These traditions were an integral part of farming life and the farming techniques of hay making and turf saving and the meitheals associated with them show how the community was strengthened by these customs and practices. Not only the family, but the entire community was included in these traditions and techniques. The folklore and folklife rituals around fair days is a fascinating subject. Livestock trading was not just an essential part of farming practice but a performance, where certain rules had to be followed. Some of the customs of turf saving, haymaking and Fair Days are disappearing from rural communities and are now in the past as modern techniques and machinery have changed many agricultural practices. However, the collecting of folklore and folklife information for both local and national archives is an essential and important practice which continues to enrich our Irish culture and heritage.

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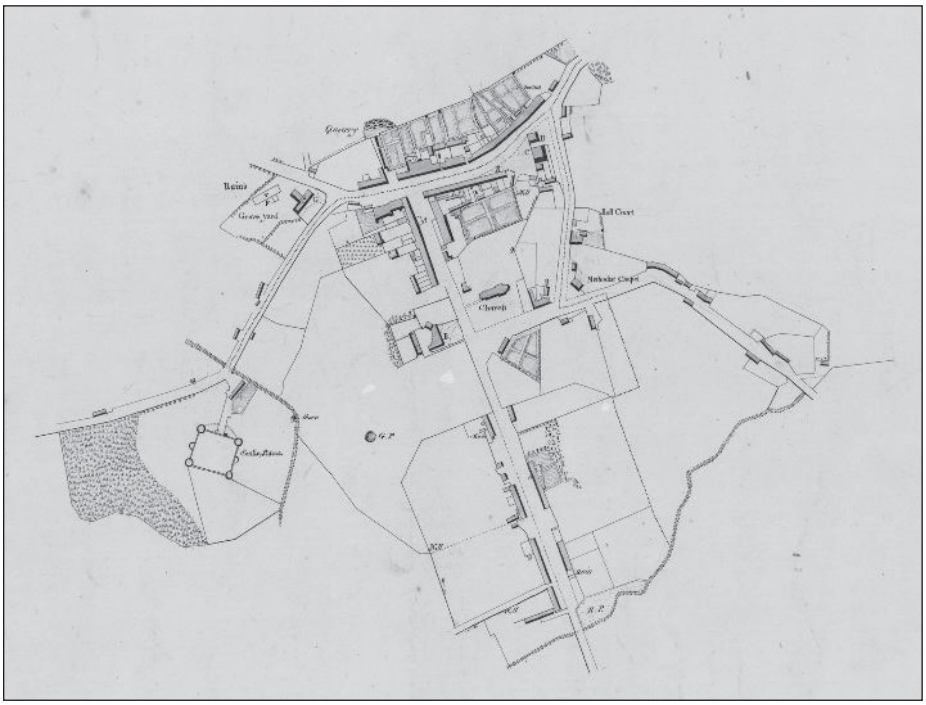
Ballymote Ordnance Survey Map 1842

By John Coleman

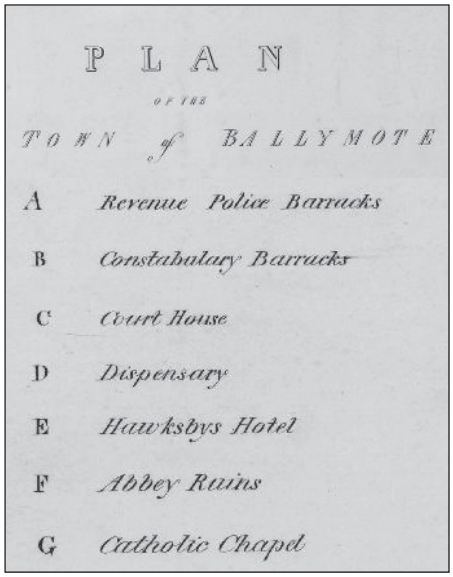
The large scale (20 ins. to 1 mile) map of Ballymote drawn by Capt. John McDonald on 23rd December 1842 (OS 140/Ballymote/1842) gives an interesting glimpse of how much the town had developed by that date. The market house, opposite the Church of Ireland, had not been built.

The first few buildings had not yet been constructed in the upper end of what is now O'Connell Street reflecting the development of the 'new town' of Ballymote in the late 18th century during the Shelburne/ Fitzmaurice ownership of the town. The RIC barracks was set back from the street on the same site as the later Ulster Bank, now the Ballymote Credit Union.

Laura Yeoman, archivist with the parent company Royal Bank of Scotland in Edinburgh (Now



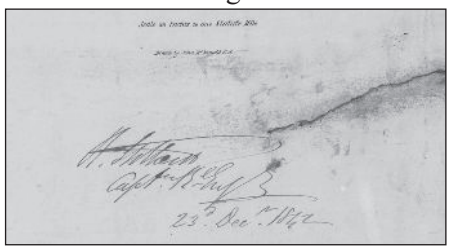
Ordance Survey 1842 full view of map
(National Archives of Ireland (OS/140/Ballymote/1842).



Ballymote OS map 1842 key to buildings

NatWest), told me in 2013 that Ulster Bank opened at 'The Rock', Ballymote in around 1870. As records indicate that the Bank was renting other premises in the town in 1885, Laura speculated that the Bank was carrying out a refurbishment of the building on the Rock at that point. Interesting features on the map include a large formal garden to the right of Market Street – as a child I remember such a formal garden, which belonged to the Hibernian Bank (now Bank of Ireland). The garden itself, including its numerous, bountiful fruit bushes, were immaculately maintained, by the bank porter, Martin Brennan. The ball alley was located where it is today.

Hawksby's Hotel, in Gaol Street, was occupied by the family until the death of the last of the two Miss Hawksbys, in the early 1960s. The two Miss Hawksbys, were the daughters of Jackson Hawksby, and there is a substantial family memorial in Emlaghfad Church yard. The house was purchased by town veterinarian, the late Alfie Gallagher.



Ballymote Ordnance Survey map 1842 detail showing map maker signature

Ballymote Dramatic Society

Photo submitted by Gertie Cassidy-O'Sullivan (Cork)

Cast List with Ballymote Dramatic Society Cup they won in Tubbercurry Drama Festival, photo from early 1950's

Back Row (L to R): Mick Gildea, ???, the Producer, Mr. Reynolds (Pension officer), Keenan Johnson Sr., Mr. Cashman (The Tech), Gerry Cryan.

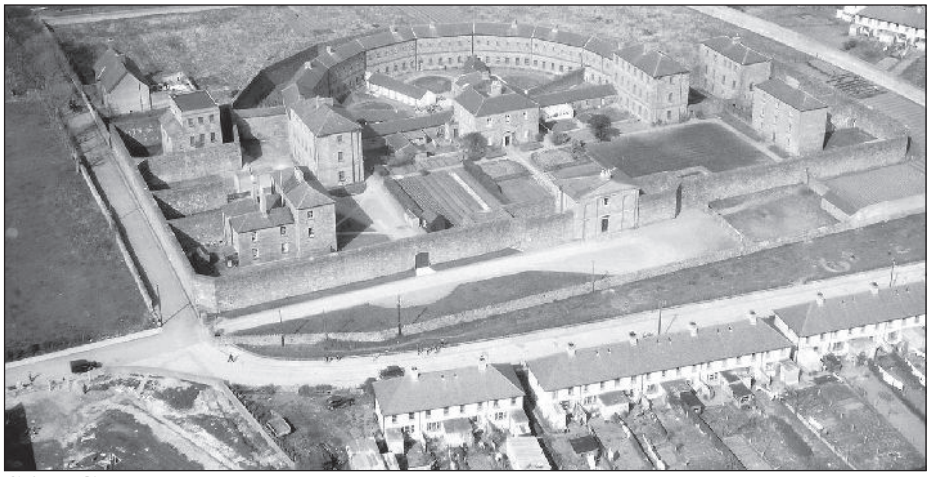
Front Row (L to R): Eddie McGettrick, Laura Potter, Camina Cassidy (Boyd), Michael Cassidy N.T., Lynda Begley, ???, T. J. McCarrick (The Tech).

If any reader can identify the lady and the gentleman whose names are not included please contact the editor or any member of the Ballymote Heritage Group.

The Case of Matthew Phibbs:
The last man to be publicly hanged in Sligo

By Keenan Johnson

In 1861 William Callaghan had a shop at a good location on Main Street, Ballymote, immediately opposite the junction of Market Street. He sold numerous items including cured animal skins. I believe the premises has now been subsumed as part of Perry's supermarket and was previously the premises known as Dwyer's. Mr Callaghan, who was over 90 years of age, had traded in his premises for many years. He was married to Florence, better known as Fanny who was 20 years his junior. They were assisted by a servant girl called Anne Mooney who was 14 years at the time. One of the premises adjacent to Callaghan's was a vacant neglected shop which had once been a well-stocked drapery shop and owned by a Mr Phibbs. Mr Phibbs had died 12 years previously leaving a widow and two daughters and three sons. One of the sons died shortly after his father and another went to America. The younger son, Matthew, was aged 14 when his father died and remained with his mother and a sister to run the shop. The business continued to run successfully until Matthew's sister got married and subsequently died. Within a short time of her death Matthew had been left to run the business on his own. He started to drink heavily and he gained a reputation for being neglectful of the business and an alcoholic. It appears that during all of this William Callaghan has endeavoured to help and assist Matthew Phibbs and advise him on business matters. Unfortunately, Matthew wasn't amenable to the good advice given by William Callaghan and eventually the business collapsed and was sold by Matthew's creditors. His mother lost her home and had to take two rooms in a house on the opposite side of the road, which was owned by a Mrs Fall, while Matthew went away in an effort to find his fortune. Matthew returned periodically and stayed with his mother and was staying with his mother at the beginning of January 1861. At this stage Matthew was 26 years of age. On Monday evening the 7th January 1861, Ann Mooney, the servant girl, had spoken to her friend who was employed as a servant girl by neighbours of the Callaghans by the name of Catherine Mulligan. When the Callaghan's shop didn't open on the following Tuesday it was a source of comment by some of the neighbours. However, alarm bells did not ring until it was noted that the shop didn't open on the following day. Accordingly, some of the neighbours decided to go through the back garden of Callaghan's in order to gain access to the property. This was done after repeated efforts to try and get a response from the front door had failed. It was noted that the Callaghan's back gate was open and the neighbours went into the back yard and called out loudly but got no response. They then entered the house and went upstairs and into William Callaghan's bedroom where they found him lying on the bed with his face and head covered with a bloodstain pillow. On closer examination they discovered that his throat had been cut. The neighbours quickly retreated downstairs where they found Fanny Callaghan's body lying behind the counter at the rear of the shop and again her throat had been cut. Subsequently the body of Anne Mooney the servant girl was found in the coal house at the rear of the property and again her throat had been cut.



Sligo Gaol

Immediately Constable James Gartland was called and he examined the murder scene. He noted that there were signs of items having been taken and that the murders had been committed in the course of a robbery. He also noted that the kitchen table had been prepared for dinner. It was common knowledge in the locality that the Callaghan and Phibbs families had been friendly and it was speculated that Matthew was possibly the guest for whom the table had been set for dinner. Neighbours immediately suspected Matthew as the culprit and a search of Mrs Phibb's rooms was conducted. This search revealed what appeared to be blood stains on some of the bedding. Autopsies on the victims were undertaken by Joseph

and William Lockheed, who were both surgeons and brothers. They concluded that Anne Mooney, had suffered a fractured skull after being hit with portion of a brick and that all three victims had their throats slashed. They further concluded that the deaths occurred during the night of Monday 7th of January 1861. At that time, it was common for an inquest to be held within two days of a body being found. The inquest into the deaths of the three victims was held and determined that Matthew Phibbs was the primary suspect for the murders. Accordingly on Friday, 11th January 1861 Constable Pat Forgery was detailed to go to Riverstown and arrest Matthew Phibbs on suspicion of murder. When arrested Phibbs was found in possession of three razors one of which had blood on it. He was also found in possession of £17.17s.31/4d which was a considerable amount of money in those days. Some of the banknotes were stuck together with blood. Phibbs was also wearing a blue frock coat which was subsequently proved to be the property of William Callaghan. The fact that Phibbs was in possession of such a sizeable sum of money increased suspicion about his involvement in the murders. The Crown assembled an array of witnesses to testify as to when the murders occured. The witnesses also testified that Phibbs was seen in the vicinity of the Callaghan household at the time of the murders and was subsequently noted to have come into funds which was strange for somebody in his difficult financial circumstances. Furthermore Phibbs had been observed by a John Kearns tearing some papers on the Sligo Road after he left a local pub and stuffing them into a ditch and when these papers were subsequently retrieved and reassembled they were found to contain envelopes addressed to the late William Callaghan which again indicated that Phibbs must have been in Callaghan's house to be in possession of those envelopes. Phibbs was charged with the triple murder and appeared at the Assizes in Sligo in March 1861 with the Right Honourable Justice Fitzgerald residing. The case attracted significant publicity both locally and nationally and was reported on daily in the *Irish Times.*

When the matter was first mentioned at the Sligo Assizes it was necessary for the grand jury to determine if Mr Phibbs had a case to answer. The grand jury was supposed to consist of at least 12 members and not more than 23 chosen by the sheriff from among the resident freeholders of the county which meant, in practice, from among the landed gentry. In the case of Matthew Phibbs the determination that he had a case to answer didn't take long. Accordingly a jury was empanelled for the trial. At that time only persons who were property owners could serve on juries and there was a requirement that their property had to have a capacity to yield £10 per year in rents if it was freehold and if leasehold at least £15 a year in rent with the term of the lease not less than 21 years. Jurors also had to be aged between 21 years and 60 years. Only men could serve on juries. As a consequence of this juries were made up of landed persons who were exclusively male[1].

There were four senior counsel acting for the prosecution. The lead prosecution counsel was Mr Walter Burke QC, and he was aided by Mr Colcannon QC, Mr Carton QC, and Mr Baker QC. For the defence and representing Mr Phibbs there was only Mr Sidney QC who was instructed by Mr Edward Pollock a solicitor.

Mr Burke opened the case for the Crown and gave a resume of the evidence. The trial was unusual in that it depended solely on circumstantial evidence. This was even more significant as it predated the advances in forensic evidence. As Mr Burke put it to the jury '*it is not a case of positive testimony as no person saw the prisoner committing the act. It is allowing to circumstance… It depends on a train of a series of circumstances*'.

The reports of the case in *The Irish Times* were extremely comprehensive and painted a picture of the trial scene. The Times reporter described Phibbs, as a Protestant, of about "*26 years of age who manifested symptoms of anxiety by the expression of his continence which was pale and haggard*". He also noted that the prisoner showed remarkable mildness of expression and displayed what might well be called "*handsome features which could not but create a feeling of surprise that the possessor could be guilty of the frightful cruelty laid to the charge*". The reporter went on to note that "*his forehead is elevated and his brown hair brushed off it gives it an appearance of greater intellectuality*[2]*. He was dressed in a grey frieze frock coat and grey trousers. His eyes were slightly bloodshot from want of sleep but his whole demeanour was calm and collected. He is about 5' 7" in height and rather slight*". On the second day of the trial, the reporter noted that Phibbs presented as "*more anxious than on the previous day but that he still displayed much self possession*". The liberal comments made by the reporter during the currency of the trial would not be permissible today. The comment by the reporter that the accused didn't look like someone who could have committed the crimes with which he was charged, would now undoubtedly be deemed an inappropriate comment to be made as it could influence a jury hearing the trial.

There was such abhorrence to the offences that many witnesses came forward to volunteer their testimony. An example of this is the evidence of tailor William Morrison who had made the coat for William Callaghan which Phibbs was found to be wearing when he was arrested. Morrison produced his book of measurements, which showed the 9 measurements that he had taken in March 1859 when he had made the coat for William Callaghan. The Crown also made much of the fact that Phibbs had been in dire financial straits and yet there was evidence to show he bought a new coat on the following Wednesday in Sligo and that he was spending significant sums on drink in the days following the murder. The postmaster

and postman were both called to testify and confirm that the envelopes which Mr Kearns had seen Phibbs put in the ditch contained envelopes that had been delivered to William Callaghan. Two local farmers had also observed Matthew Phibbs at the back of the Callaghan residence in or about the Monday or Tuesday and again they were called to testify. The evidence against Phibbs was strong. He had a motive. He was in the vicinity of the murders, he was in possession of money which was bloodstained, he had worn Mr Callaghan's coat, and he had been in possession of envelopes that had been delivered to Mr Callaghan. 44 witnesses testified for the Crown over a period of two days. Phibbs did not give evidence. Mr Sidney, on behalf of Phibbs, pleaded to the emotions of the jury by focusing on the agony of Mr Phibbs's elderly mother. He also pointed out the frailties of circumstantial evidence and emphasised the importance of ensuring there was no miscarriage of justice by stating it's better for "*ninety nine guilty men to go free than one innocent man to be hanged*". Phibbs did not go into evidence. While the evidence against Phibbs seemed overwhelming, the jury was not able to reach a verdict and by 11 o'clock in the evening when the street outside the courthouse was thronged with people, the jury foreman announced to a packed courtroom, that they were unable to give a unanimous verdict. As the jury were hung by 11 to 1, and there was no likelihood of resolving the matter. According to the reported frustration of the trial judge a retrial had to be held.

The retrial was held on Tuesday, 9th July 1861 under the Honourable Judge Edmund Hayes. Again Mr Burke QC along with the same legal team was the lead prosecutor for the Crown. Mr Sidney continued as representative of the defence. *The Irish Times* reported on 11th July 1861 that "*the excitement amongst the townspeople and their anxiety to see the prisoner had apparently increased since the previous trial*". It reported that from early morning, the railings which enclosed the front of the courthouse were crowded with eager spectators anxious to see the accused on his passage from the prisoner's van to the courthouse door[3]. He was received according to the reports with a loud exclamation from the crowd which was difficult to distinguish as a cheer or as an excoriation. The report described Phibbs as looking in better condition than on the previous occasions with his face still exhibiting calmness and self possession. He pleaded firmly not guilty when arraigned. This time after hearing two days of evidence the jury returned a unanimous verdict of guilty. The jury deliberated for a mere two hours.

At this stage the ritual of pronouncing the death sentence was embarked upon. The judge donned a black cap which is in fact a triangle of black material placed over his wig by the court usher. The judge then pronounced the sentence in the following terms or similar

"*Matthew Phibbs, the sentence of this court upon you is that you shall be taken from this place to a lawful prison, thence to a place of execution and there you suffer death by hanging, and that your body be buried within the precincts of the place where you shall have been last confined prior to your execution. And may God have mercy on your soul."*

In the weeks following his conviction and while held in Sligo Gaol, Phibbs told his prison guard/turnkey Mr Bell that he had committed the murders and he also told him of the hiding place in which he had hidden items that he had stolen from the Callaghans. When he had a day off Bell went to Ballymote and found the Gethins' turnip field in which Phibbs said he had buried the stolen property. Bell found two large silver spoons, six silver teaspoons, a case of pistols, a watch, watch chain and seal. Phibbs also said that he had hidden £14, wrapped in a piece of material but Bell swore that he was unable to find this. By the way, Bell was reprimanded by his superiors for failing to report immediately the confessions made by Phibbs.[4]

Apparently, in the weeks after his confession of guilt, Phibbs became a born-again Christian and revealed the motivation for the murders. He said that at the time his mother and himself were destitute and that he had no job or the prospect of a job. He said that when he made his way back to Ballymote hoping that acquaintances would rally round and come to his aid, but regretfully, he found that nobody was willing to help them. The image of Mr Callaghan who was now elderly with lots of money convinced him that it would be an act of mercy to end his feeble life and help himself to some of the money in the house. He said his intention at all times was to break into the house, steal the money and kill Mr Callaghan, but at no stage did he intend to kill either Fanny or Anne Mooney.[5] Unfortunately, for her, Anne Mooney accosted him when he entered the premises and, in a panic, he hit her with half a brick that was lying on the ground. It is clear that the crime involved some small level of premeditation but very little planning. Phibbs made no effort to cover his tracks and it would appear that the crime was opportunistic, in that temptation presented itself to Phibbs and he acted on it, without teasing out the consequences. If he had properly planned the matter he would have left the country within a short space of time and before the murders were discovered. Had he done this it is unlikely that he would ever have been apprehended.

It was common practice when a person was condemned to be hanged that a petition would be sent to the Queen's representative in Ireland, namely, the Lord-Lieutenant, to commute the sentence. Mrs Phibbs, the mother of Matthew Phibbs, issued such a petition and she was given the following response:

"*Mrs Mary Phibbs – your memorial, addressed to the Queen on behalf of your son, Matthew Phibbs, having been referred to the Lord-Lieutenant for his decision. I have to inform you that on full consideration of all the circumstances of the case, his Excellency feels it is to be his painful*

duty to leave the law to take its course. I am your obedient servant."6

Arguably, the use of the word '*painful*' is a poor effort on the part of the Lord-Lieutenant to show some empathy towards the mother of the condemned man. To a certain extent the empathy rings hollow given the refusal of the petition and the decision to proceed with the execution.

The date of Matthew Phibbs' execution was fixed for Monday, 19th August 1861. The hanging took place at Sligo Gaol and was the last public hanging to be held in Sligo. *The Sligo Champion* reports that by 7 AM on the morning of the hanging 5,000 people had gathered outside the jail to witness the final moments of Matthew Phibbs. It further reports that there was a heavy police presence along the roads leading to Cranmore and that 150 police constables had been drafted in to control the crowd. The sheriff, Bernard Eoin Colgan JP, who was charged with supervising the hanging delayed the execution until the arrival of the Dublin train in the vain hope of a last-minute reprieve in response to the petition to the Lord-Lieutenant. On the evening before, Phibbs requested writing material, and wrote out a confession, and sent a letter to his mother which he handed to the Rev Shone. He spent the remainder of the night either lying awake on his bunk, pacing the cell or talking with the chaplain. At 6.45 he went to the prison chapel and received communion. He remained there until the sheriff arrived for him at 7:30 AM. It is reported that in tears Phibbs turned to the Rev Shone and said "*everything had been done that human power could do this side of the grave. I suppose there was never such a hard heart as mine has been but I trust God has softened it*."[7] He presented a small hymnbook to the Rev Shone and on his way to the gallows Phibbs is reported to have said that young men should avoid whiskey houses for they were his ruin. Phibbs appears to have displayed considerable stoicism and when he reached the gallows he told the hangman not to be afraid to do what he had to do. The hangman then stepped forward to tie Phibbs's arms and placed a hood on his head and drew it over his face, at this stage Phibbs' composure left him and he sobbed out loud. He was then led blindfolded up to the four steps of the scaffold where the gallows had been constructed. The hangman threw a rope over the beam but he did this on the wrong side and the rope became snagged and twisted. In order to rectify the situation Phibbs had to be brought back down the scaffold still blindfolded and when the rope was disentangled and properly suspended the condemned man was again brought up the steps and placed in the centre of the trapdoor with the noose of the rope laced around his neck. It appears that the hangman, although he claimed this was his seventh hanging, was not particularly good at the job. A good hangman should be able to tie the rope in such a way that when the trapdoor is released death is instantaneous because the top three vertebrae of the neck are broken with the drop. In the case of Phibbs the hangman pulled the lever to the side of the scaffold and Phibbs fell about 8 feet with the rope biting into his neck. His body convulsed for about two minutes and the remains stayed swinging from side to side. The huge crowd followed the events in total silence. The body was left hanging for about 45 minutes before it was cut down enabling the doctor to pronounce that life was extinct.

In his letter of confession Phibbs said "*I do trust and hope, though my sins have been very many that my Saviour has washed them all away and that I am going to the happy land of pure delight, where Saints immortal reign indefinitely, day excludes the night and pleasure banishes pain*." [8] He went on to say that after his trial he acknowledged his guilt to Rev Mr Shone and Mr Garrett but had asked them not to make it public until after his death. He continued by writing "*I now await the justice of my sentence and go willingly to suffer what I deserve, looking to my blessed Saviour who suffered for me*."

Phibbs again warns young men about the dangers of drink. Interestingly and by way of anecdote, a report headed "Temperance Soirée" contained in *The Irish Times* of Saturday, August 24th, 1861[9], a report of an address by a Rev Mr Lawrence asserting that drink is the source of all crimes and referring to the last words of Matthew Phibbs which he deemed an admonition to young men to be wary of the whiskey shop which had brought him to an untimely and dishonoured grave. The notoriety of the case is reflected in the coverage that it was given in *The Irish Times* and the fact that it was referred to at gatherings all over the country.

The spectre of the infamous Matthew Phibbs who became known as the "*Slasher Phibbs*" or the "*Ballymote Slasher*" haunted the Ballymote area for many years afterwards. Local folklore had it that after he was taken down from the gallows a dummy was substituted by his friends who smuggled him out of the country and that he later returned having become insane and roamed the countryside. I remember being told this as a child and that as a consequence many people had put bars on the ground floor windows of their houses at Teeling/Jail Street and indeed some such bars were from my recollection visible on those windows at the time I was younger.

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7. *The Sligo Champion* Sesquicentenary Ssupplement 1836 – 1986 -Page 26
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9. *The Irish Times* Saturday, August 24, 1861 – Page 2

O'Connell Street (Knox's Street):
Personal Recollections from 1930s and 1940s

By Bernie Gilbride

For years the Corporation had been talking of having our main street, O'Connell Street, Sligo, pedestrianised. On the 15th August 2006 it happened. No more cars, lorries, trucks, vans, buses, motor bikes would be allowed to pollute its pristine air. Henceforth, all pedestrians may criss-cross its broad thoroughfare and its narrow thoroughfare, in complete security, breathing in its unpolluted air in a healthy environment.

Will this bring more business to its many shops? The owners certainly hope so. As leisurely, relaxed pedestrians stroll on its footpaths and its now so safe roadway, window gazing in comfort at their alluring displays, as they did in the past when I was a child.

Looking down on it today from the top of Harmony Hill I see an O'Connell Street so changed from the one l then knew. I marvel how this can be. It should be much the same with all modern transport gone from it. Structurally it has not changed. The answer. l think must be the different type of shops, so changed from when l was young.

As a young child, l visited friends living there, a few times a week. In those days, motor vehicles were as scarce as hens' teeth. Cars were only becoming popular and could be easily counted. The most common transport then was the horse and cart, and the pony and trap. O'Connell Street would be lined on either side with them, especially on a Saturday, the then market day, when many people from the farming community came to town, to do their shopping. Some of Sligo's best business shops lined its pavements, and it was possible to do all one's shopping in that street alone, such was the variety of shops there.

At the time l am referring to, all shop owners lived over their premises. It was a very lively place, with no vandalism, safe to walk its footpaths day or night. The evenings were the most popular for window-shopping. All the shops displayed the very best of their wares, making the windows colourful and interesting. The latest styles, household goods, china, ornaments of all kinds, presents, electrical goods, everything anyone could want. Many were priced for the convenience of comparison.

We visited its shops to do our weekly shopping and were sure of finding everything we required there, the shops were so diverse. Leaving our order with the butcher, grocer, or whatever merchant, we knew they would be delivered to our home by messenger bicycle, with its big carrier basket in front, and the shop name prominently displayed on the gear case, or else by horse and cart sometime before nightfall.

The elderly family friend we visited lived over her shop, groceries on one side and bar on the other. When we visited on a weekday the doors were always open. There was a small porch and the doors were recessed. Before going into the main shop, there was a small snug on the left. Just beyond, the counter of the grocery shop ran to the back of the shop. Directly opposite was an open area. Along the front window and the counter were large tea chests, with bags with the shop name hanging from each chest. Each chest had a scoop for serving, they were labelled, but the only label I remember was 'Orange Picoe'. At that time one could choose whatever tea one liked, or have a mixture made up for you by the assistant, or take the shop's own brand—recommended as the proprietor was a tea taster.

In front of the counter on the back wall was a row of biscuit tins with glass tops. These tops all lifted together, so one could have a mixture of biscuits or just one particular sort. A circular stairs ran curled along the wall to the living quarters above. The ground floor also had a large kitchen behind the shop. There were two more snugs to the rear of the shop. All bars had a couple of snugs where the women rested and enjoyed a refreshing tipple after their strenuous journey to town and their shopping. A snug was always warm and comfortable; hence the name, and very secluded, usually located near a door, with a hatch opening to the area behind the counter. Only the attendant behind the counter could see the occupants of the snug, and they were very discreet.

The elderly friend was bedridden and sat up in a frilly nightgown propped up with many pillows. She wore a lacy cap on her snow-white hair. I loved our visits with this old lady, who never said a cross word and was lavish with biscuits and lemonade. As the premises originally had been two houses, there was a slight incline where houses joined. The wide landing covered with linoleum was an excellent place for sliding, especially over the incline. Here, on two cushions, my brother and l pulled each other up and down the landing while the adults chatted.

As I grew older, I loved to sit on the wide windowsill of her bedroom overlooking O'Connell Street, to watch the street below, a new use for my cushion. As we always came to visit on a Sunday this was a vantage point supreme. At that time the various families lived there and went walking, dressed in their Sunday best.

Many an envious glance l cast, as other people's clothes usually seemed nicer than one's own.

The bedroom always had a bright fire in the grate, its side tiles of flowers gleaming in the firelight. Overhead a mirror reflected the room—the dark wardrobe with its mirrored doors and shining brass handles, the brass knobs on the top rails on the ends of the wrought iron bed, the brass fender, all caught the glow.

The Sacred Heart picture hung above the bed, with its small red flame in the tiny oil lamp. In the room everything was dark—the furniture, patterned wallpaper, the linoleum covered with rugs. The only brightness provided was the white lace cloths on the dressing table and bedside table. It was a large room with plenty of space and a couple of large comfortable chairs. It was always warm, lit by the glow from the coal fire.

There were no cafés in O'Connell Street in those days and modern fast food restaurants and Takeaways had still to be invented, at least in Sligo. In my memory there were at least five drapery shops, W.T. Johnston, one of the most attractive shops, with its green marble façade, and chrome fittings, large windows almost floor to ceiling, double entrance. I loved when we had some messages to do there as then l would see the magic of its conveyor money system, where the attendant would take the money, wrap it in the docket, put it in its box, pull the cord and off it would go over our heads to the office at the rear of the shop. There the office girl would open it up, put the correct change and the receipt back in the box, pull the cord and send it back along the ceiling to our attendant, who would hear its tinkle, take it out and give us our change and receipt. I always hoped there would be many customers so l would see them get their change too. This elegant shop is gone and l miss its beautiful façade. Mullaney Bros, still in business, equally elegant with dark marble façade and gold lettering, still delights our eyes with its so inviting window displays, showing the lovely styles they carry. Goods, now Moffit's has another lovely traditional shop front and elegant interior. East's once a huge drapery, sadly now gone as is D.I. Higgins, 'The House for Men' and Harrigan's – all replaced with new boutiques, all equally lovely, but different.

Right to the middle of the street on the western side was a huge bakery-Mc Arthurs', that supplied bread around the town and in the surrounding counties. The shop had three or four large windows displaying their breads and confectionery. Next door was 'The Wood and lron' a large hardware store with china, cutlery, ornaments of all kind, as well as hardware for builders and tradesmen of every trade. Monsoon's, a big furniture store on the upper corner, its inner walls were covered with mirrors of all shapes and sizes, with lovely old pictures, and very elegant furniture. Also on his side of the street was Mahon's tobacco shop with its pipes of all sizes and type , Fitzpatrick's Pharmacy, Young's Medical Hall, Togher's Pharmacy.

There were many pubs; 'The Stag's Head', Downe's, The House for Wines, James Dunne, William Palmer, McGowan's, Hargadon's, O'Connor Bros. Wholesalers and Retailers. Some of these were grocers too. A green grocer—Beeze McGann, Sinclair Egg Merchants, and day old chicks, just off the main street, down a short alley. There were big food stores at either end, north Blackwood's with Noone's Ships' Chandlers nearby, most necessary in those days when our quays were constantly lined with ships. To the south was Higgins's and Keighron's, occupying the whole corner onto Gratton Street on both sides. Known to the locals as H & K's. There were Collins' Butcher shop and a Feeney Butchers. McGee, Saddler, had a lovely leathery smell, and one could see saddles being sewn. Near the south-western end, was Wehrly's Jewellers, still trading, its sparkling windows full of glittering rings, bracelets, watches. Inside were Grandfather clocks with deep resonant chimes, lovely to view and hear. Broderick's Newsagents and Bookshop. The street was a microcosm of society. Thinking back, it is no wonder it was such a popular walk on a Sunday afternoon, with all those interesting shop windows displaying their wares and no wonder either that my window seat afforded me so much entertainment.

To get into the house on a Sunday, we had to enter through a wicket gate set in a large gateway to a passage, from where a heavy door led into a cobbled yard at the back of the pub. In this yard were many out offices, a harness room, an open shed that once housed a Sidecar, whose pony grazed a field on the outskirts of town The Sidecar and pony had been used to take our old friend, when young, to visit her family in Dromahair, and her sisters in Grange.

On weekends the street would be full of people, horses and carts, and bicycles. Some of the drapery shops had samples of their goods hanging outside and in tubs along the edge of the footpath in front of the shop. The smell of baking bread permeated the whole street, as did the aroma of coffee being ground to order in Blackwood's, at the lower end of the street.

One of the first modern stores to come to town was Woolworth's or the three penny / sixpenny store as it was first called. It opened near the centre on the east side of the street. This was a very large store with wide flat counters and was open plan. It became the meeting place for all and sundry but especially for dating couples. Its front doors were the 'Nelson's Pillar' of Sligo. The teenagers all gathered there to spot the talent and many a couple first met here. O'Connell Street was a wonderful place for me when l was young. I spent many happy hours there.

As I stand at the top of Harmony Hill today on my way down to the now traffic free O'Connell Street, I recall the shops and the people I knew, loved and visited there so long ago.

Generations Later

By Rose Marie Kilbride Stanley

For the Good of All
Filled with hope, sadness, and anticipation of the unknown they left.
The journey from the coast of Sligo across the Atlantic was shorter than most,
But stormy conditions off the coast of Cap des Rosiers brought tragic results,
Martin's five little sisters drowned that night, as did dozens of others.

Filled with grief, courage, determination and faith,
Patrick and Sarah chose to persevere.

Today, all these years later, we genuinely thank them for the enormous sacrifices they made.
We acknowledge that their suffering and hardships were not in vain
So many families and friends have reaped the rewards of the foundation they laid,
For the good of all, this was done, as more was gained than lost.

Greetings, Dear Irish Family and Friends,

I was so impressed when in 2018, I visited the Epic Museum on the banks of River Liffey in Dublin. Not only was the format of the exhibition brilliant, but so was its content. It was staggering knowing that ONE MILLION people left Ireland during the famine, but what was so heartwarming was the impact and the influence that so many Irish men and women made worldwide. It occurred to me that though lists of numbers, dates and names are and were important, they don't really give one the emotional responses of smiles or tears that the stories of their journeys, lives and legacies do.

It is thus with a sense of awe, appreciation and humility that I would like to share with you the story, the journey and the legacy that my great-great-great grandparents, Sarah McDonough and Patrick Kaveny (Keaveny) left behind.

Year 2022, will mark the 175th Anniversary when at the height of the Great Famine, my ancestors, Patrick, his wife, Sarah and their six children left Keash, Sligo County in search of a better life in North America.

Most, if not all of you, undoubtedly, would have had distant relatives who too, would have emigrated to other countries in order to survive the Great Famine. You may have wondered what happened to them then, and now years later, wonder how have their descendants fared.

I would like to share with you a little of Patrick and Sarah's life in Canada. It is a reminder of how strong and courageous our ancestors were. Their blood, sweat and tears, have provided us with a solid foundation, which paved the way for us to enjoy all we have today, generations later.

On April 5th 1847, a total of 180 passengers including Patrick, Sarah and their six children boarded the brig Carrick of Whitehaven sailing to North America. On 28th April 1847, a fierce and unexpected snowstorm in the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, caused the brig to crash against the rocky coast of Cap des Rosiers, Gaspe, Quebec, Canada. Only forty- eight passengers survived. Patrick, Sarah and their son Martin were among the survivors. Tragically, all five daughters drowned. Patrick and Sarah not only lost their daughters that day but also their names. Kaveney was changed to Kavanagh and McDonough was changed to McDonald. I am grateful to have received from County Sligo Heritage and Genealogy Centre copies of two Baptismal records giving me the names of two of their daughters. These are Catherine, born 1st February 1844, and Sarah, born 25th March, 1846. I chose to name the other three daughters, Mary, Margaret, and Bridget Elizabeth.

When researching my family history, I was tremendously pleased to find the original names Caveney, (spelled with a C) and McDonough. These names were handwritten in a couple of authentic church registers.

Between the years 1847-1855 although thirty-six survivors left Cap des Rosiers three months following the shipwreck to re-locate elsewhere in North America, Patrick and Sarah with their son Martin and nine other survivors chose to remain on the Gaspe coast. We speculate that Patrick, Sarah and Martin spent their first summer living in a small fisherman's hut. We know that at the end of the summer they moved to find work in the village of Cloridorme, 75 kms northwest of Cap des Rosiers. They lived there for a year and returned to settle in Jersey Cove, near Cap des Rosiers. Life would not have been easy but thanks to the generosity of neighbours and hard work, they managed. The population was small, there were no roads, and winters were harsh. Travelling from village to village in winter meant going through the woods and in summertime, it meant travelling by boat.

Between the years of 1848 and 1854, four children were born to Patrick and Sarah. Martin's three young brothers were Patrick Jr., born in 1848, Dominick born in 1850 and James born in 1852. Martin's youngest sibling was a sister named Marguerite, born in 1854. (Marguerite is usually referred to as Maggie).

Sadly in 1855, the family was faced with another tragedy. While crossing the frozen Gaspe Bay from Grand Grave on his way to St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Douglastown, (an established Irish community), a journey on foot of approximately nine miles, Patrick was overtaken by a blizzard. Without shelter or protection, Patrick was a victim of the elements.

Top Row (L TO R): Josephine Ste.Croix, Arthur's wife, James Kavanagh, unknown female ,Patrick Kavanagh**.**
Middle Row (L TO R): Zoe Ste,Croix, James' wife, and Alma Kavanagh, James & Zoe's daughter.
Bottom Row (L TO R), Two foster children, Eugenie Ste. Croix, Patrick's wife, Salomee St. Croix.

His frozen body was found a couple of days later. He was forty-seven years old. Sarah was now left to raise her five children alone. Somehow, Sarah's strength and determination, as in the past, and against all odds, persevered.

"No one knows how they survived with her small income - laundry- her garden augmented by her richness of ingenuity. Sarah succeeded in bringing up her family. The children would exchange their services - a day's work for a sack of potatoes or salted herring- or a loaf of bread… Often she would doubt whether the meagre existence obtained in her green Ireland was worse than the one given to her in the country of snow." Quote taken from 'The Kavanagh Family' written in 1947 by my great uncle Alfred Kavanagh.

After Sarah's children married and moved to their own homes, Sarah lived a number of years with Maggie, Michel and their family. She later moved and spent her last years with Dominick and Malvina. Sarah passed away on 13th October,1889 at the impressive age of eighty-five.

In 1847, Canada was not yet a sovereign country. Twenty years later, in 1867, Canada gained independence. Here is but a sketch, a picture of how life unfolded for Sarah's five children and their descendants from pre-confederation days until present day. When beginning this project of discovery, I realized that except for Dominick's line, I knew very little about the other branches. I only knew the names of Dominick's brothers and sister. I knew that we were somehow related to Robert Kavanagh, Albert Ste. Croix and Gerald Raymond Ste. Croix all from James' line. One hurdle was that most of the descendants from all branches had moved away from the area and out of the province. Connecting with someone from each branch and meeting so many unknown relatives has been very rewarding. All five children married and had children except for their son Patrick and his wife, Salomee. Each of the families headed by Patrick and Sarah's children had their share of tragedies and accomplishments.

Generation 1: Martin (1835 or 1840?) – 1880))

Our oral history claimed that Martin was twelve when shipwrecked in 1847. The Canadian Census of 1861, however states that Martin is twenty-one years old.

In 1861, Martin is married to Elizabeth Bennett. Elizabeth is twenty-two. Sarah is now fifty- seven years old. Martin and Elizabeth are living in the same house with Sarah as are Martin's young siblings: Patrick, Jr. (12), Dominick, (10), James, (8), and Maggie (6). Their house is a one storey wooden structure with another small building on the property. Martin's occupation is listed as a farmer and a fisherman.

In 1871, again through the Canadian census, we learn that Martin and Elizabeth have their own house. Sarah's three sons and daughter are living with her. Patrick, (22) is a fisherman and Dominick, (19) is a labourer, James, (17) and Maggie, (15) are not listed as employed or going to school. All family members are listed as Irish. I noted that on the two pages from this census, 40 individuals are listed. Of these, 21 are Irish, 9 are English, and 10 are French. This leads me to believe that both English and French are spoken in the community.

In 1871, Martin and Elizabeth are parents to six living children and one deceased daughter. Their children are Michel/Michael age 10, Joseph age 9, Patrick, age 6. Mary Elizabeth died in 1868, at the age of 2. Their two youngest children are Elizabeth age 2, and an infant daughter, Mary. Their son Joseph dies in 1874, at the age of twelve. In 1878, Martin and Elizabeth have another son whom they name Martin Ovide. Martin's wife Elizabeth dies in 1878, probably in childbirth.

In November, 1879, Martin who is now forty-three marries a young woman named Philomena Samson. The following year, in July, 1880, Philomena gives birth to a son whom they name Joseph. A month later, on 8th August 1880, Martin dies. He is forty- five. Economic and social factors divide the family. Philomena moves with her infant son Joseph to live with family in Montreal.

Martin's orphan children, Patrick, Elizabeth, Mary and Ovide are taken

in by Martin's brother, Dominick, and Malvina. Martin's oldest son, Michel, who is now almost twenty, decides to leaves his home and heads to western Canada. This must have been another tremendous heartbreak for Sarah. Her son Martin, her last link to Ireland dies, and her oldest grandchild is leaving. Sarah would never see Michel again.

Generation 1: Patrick, Jr. (1848 – 1933)

Patrick, Jr., Sarah and Patrick's first Canadian born child was born in the village of Cloridorme, west of Cap des Rosiers. Patrick and Sarah had moved there to find work for the winter. The following summer, they returned to the area and settled in Jersey Cove, so named because a number of families living there, were originally from the Jersey Islands.

In 1881, Patrick, Jr. (31) is married to Salomé Ste.Croix, (21). (Patrick and Salomé never had children but helped and raised many). Unfortunately, we have no documents attesting to this fact (Photo on page 47 shows Patrick and Salomee). The young children are their foster children. Patrick was a farmer. Salomee died in 1931 at the age of seventy-one. Two years later, Patrick died at the age of eighty-four.

Generation 1: Dominick (1850 – 1932)

In 1872, Dominick and Malvina Ste. Croix get married. Malvina is a sister to Salome. Dominick and Malvina have only one child, a son named Arthur, born in October, 1872. In 1880, they take Martin's children. Dominick is an industrious worker. He is a farmer, a fisherman, a carpenter, a blacksmith and even a shoemaker. When needed, he is also called upon to 'taxi' people. Education is important to Dominick and Malvina. After six years of schooling in Cap des Rosiers, at the tender age of twelve, Arthur leaves home and for two years studies at L'Academie Commercial in Quebec City, 700 kms away.

In 1894, Malvina dies at the age of forty-two. At this time, Arthur is working away from home. Dominick summons him back. Arthur is expected to find himself a wife and live at the family home. In 1932, Dominick dies at home in Jersey Cove surrounded by family. He is eighty-one years old.

Generation 1: James (1852 – 1933)

James marries Zoe Ste.Croix in 1884. Zoe is a sister to Malvina and to Salomée. James and Zoe have two daughters and two sons, Alma, Hilda, Elias and Albert. James is a fisherman. Zoe dies in 1894 at the age of twenty-eight. Zoe and James' son, Elias dies as a young child of eleven in 1896. Their son, Albert marries Ida (Hilda) Gleeton, they have five children. In 1918, at the age of twenty-eight, Albert dies. Albert's son, Robert, age four, is adopted by Arthur and Josephine Kavanagh.

Generation 1: Marguerite (Maggie Kavanagh (1854 – 1938)

In 1876, Maggie marries Michel Bilodeau. They live in Griffon Cove.

Michel and Maggie have ten children but two of them die at a young age. Michel is a fisherman. Maggie dies in 1938, at the age of eighty-four. Michel dies later in Montreal.

Dominick Kavanagh and sister Maggie Kavanagh Bilodeau

Generation 2

This next section includes details and connections about the second generation of the family. I feel fortunate to have found and met (in person) at least one descendant from each branch of the family.

Martin's descendants:

Michel (1861– 1943)

After moving to Fort Alexandre, (about 40 miles north of Winnipeg) Manitoba, Michel marries Catherine Bruyere. (1875- 1926). They have ten children, four die at a young age. Michel has many jobs. He is a pulp and paper worker. He works on a dam in Northern Manitoba. He is a stone carver making grave stones. In 1926, Catherine dies. In 1943, at the age of eighty-two, Michel dies. Michel's life and his journey on foot to western Canada is a remarkable story. A beautiful tribute written in the newspaper, confirms Michel's exceptional character.

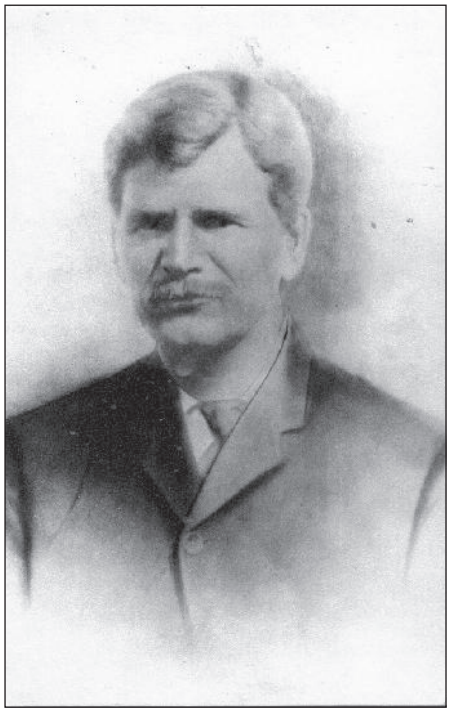
In 2015, thanks to County Sligo Heritage and Genealogy Centre, I am introduced to a lovely cousin, Kelly Cavanagh Hinze. Kelly, is a great-great-great granddaughter to Patrick and Sarah. Kelly is a teacher living in North Vancouver, British Colombia, Canada.

Patrick (1865-1929)

Martin's son Patrick married Elizabeth O'Connors. They had twelve children. While living in Griffon Cove, Patrick was a fisherman. Patrick and Elizabeth move their family to Windsor, Ontario. There Patrick works as a labourer and dies accidently at the age of sixty-six.

I have had the pleasure to meet two descendants of Patrick and Elizabeth. Cheryle Colombe, is a descendant of Patrick and Elizabeth's daughter Victorie. Cheryle, is a retired dental surgeon. She and her husband, Brian O'Reilly now live in Lanzarote.

Dorothy Jane Kavanaugh is a descendant of Patrick and Elizabeth 's son, Ludger Joseph (known as Louie). Dorothy Jane is a retired speech-language pathologist and is an acclaimed published fiction writer.



Martin's son Michel (Kavanagh) Cavanaugh

Elizabeth (1869- ?)
Elizabeth married Joseph Lafrance from Montreal and moved there. They didn't have children. When her husband died, Elizabeth moved out to Fort Alexander to live near her brother, Michel. She died and is buried in Fort Alexander.

Ovide (1878 – 1966)
Martin Ovide married twice. His first marriage was in October, 1900 to Amanda Pardis. The couple had two daughters, Angelina-Marie and Lina. In 1905, Ovide remarried. He and his second wife, Demerise Dupuis had twelve children.

A few years ago, I was fortunate to meet one of Ovide's granddaughters, a wonderful woman by the name of Liliane Samson Bouchard. At that time she lived in Gaspe but moved back to Montreal to be closer to her daughters after the death of her husband. Liliane still has fond memories of visiting her grandfather, Ovide in Griffon Cove during summer holidays.

Dominick's Descendants:
Arthur (1872 – 1967)
In 1895, my great grandfather, Arthur Kavanagh married Josephine Ste. Croix from Barachois. They had thirteen children, nine daughters and four sons. One daughter died at the age of two and a son died when he was only two weeks old. Josephine and Arthur adopted two young children, Josephine's niece Bertha and Robert, Arthur's cousin. Arthur was a successful merchant and community leader. He became the Patriarch of the Kavanagh family.

Like Dominick and Malvina, education was very important to Arthur and Josephine. Except for two of their sons, all their children attended higher level schooling outside of the Gaspe region. As was the case then, girls had the choice between nursing, secretarial or teaching and the boys could choose to take a classical course or a commercial trade. All my great aunts were either certified nurses or teachers and two of them later entered a religious order. My great uncles took the classical course.

My grandmother, Malvina, was Josephine and Arthur's first born. Living close to Cap des Rosiers, I would often visit. I knew my great grandfather and even though all of my great aunts and great uncles didn't live in Cap des Rosiers, I saw them whenever they visited.

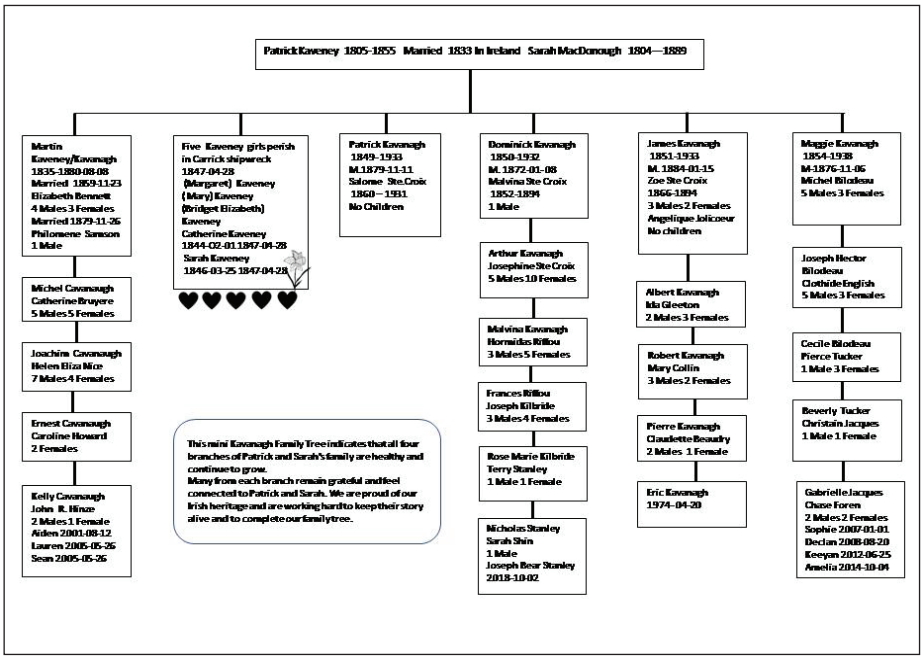
The tradition of post secondary school has continued through the generations. Most families have educators,doctors of medicine, doctors of academics, lawyers, and business people.

James' Descendants:
Hilda and her husband Phillippe Ste.Croix, are parents of Gerald Raymond. He is the only priest in the family that I know of and a very kind soul. Hilda and Phillippe are also parents to Albert Ste. Croix. who married my mother's sister, Rolande.

Alma and her husband, Joseph Ferguson, are grandparents to Francine LeBrun Forest, whom I am pleased to have met.

Robert, James and Zoe's grandson, son of Albert and Ida and adopted son of Arthur and Josephine moved to Migan, on Quebec's north shore as a lighthouse keeper. Robert married Mary Collin, they had two sons and two daughters. I was pleased to go there a few years ago where I met Charles and other family members. More recently, I met a wonderful cousin, Robert's grandson, Eric. Eric is an exceptional individual who

Three Generations. Martin's son Ovide Kavanagh, his granddaughter Hilda Kavanagh Samson and great granddaughter, Liliane Samson Bouchard



Family Tree

teaches at the University of Quebec.

Marguerite's Descendants

As was most often the case when meeting descendants I never knew, the circumstances were serendipitous. This also held true when meeting Beverly Tucker Jacques. Beverly is Maggie and Michel's great-granddaughter. After they retired from teaching, Bev and her husband Chris moved back close to where Maggie and Michel lived in Griffon Cove. Bev's mom, Cecile and Bev's cousin, Louise Jalbert, who I'm pleased to have met, now too live near Bev.

Irish Cousins

The emotion and the excitement of meeting with distant and long-distance cousins in Ireland was indescribable. We are in contact with the Keaveneys who are descendants of Patrick's brother, James. And with the Wards who are descendants of Patrick's sister, Catherine. We marvel at the similarities in physical characteristics and mannerisms.

My next greatest wish and challenge will be to locate and meet descendants from Sarah McDonough Kaveney's family.

I am hoping to see you in April, 2021 when the 174th anniversary falls on Easter Monday coinciding with the calendar of 1847. I plan to walk the "Famine Trail" from Keash to Sligo Quay. See you there!

I would like to conclude by thanking all who have been instrumental in helping me on my quest to find and contact cousins. Thanks to my husband, Terry who has helped me every step of the way. He has also put together a family tree which at this time is one metre wide by three metres long. Presently, we may have 20% of all descendants. Today, Patrick and Sarah's descendants can be found is all parts of Canada, in the United States, in Australia and in Europe.

Thanks to John McKeon who through dedicated research, located and connected the Kaveney name from the Carrick list of passengers to the Kavanagh name in Cap des Rosiers. This provided me the catalyst to begin my research.

Ironically, the Kavanagh name continues to have different spellings: Kavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Cavanagh and of course, so many Kavanagh descendants who are the children of daughters, don't carry the Kavanagh name!

In the past few years, a documentary, and a film have been made about the sinking of the Carrick. The Irish Memorial site in Cap des Rosiers was moved to a peaceful & secure location. In July, 2019, a commemoration was held to honour and remember the victims of the shipwreck. Officials from the Canadian and Irish governments along with family and friends attended the solemn celebration and reinterment of the remains from the mass grave.

The Great Famine and the shipwreck of the Carrick are tragic events which continue to invoke the compassionate nature in people.

With love,
Rose Marie

Irish Memorial Site dedicated to the victims of the Carrick shipwreck

The Book of Olive

By Kate Denison Bell

Olive Byrne at Markree Castle

Ballymote heritage enthusiast, librarian, golfer, bridge player, an ICA guild and book club founder, writer, artist, dramatist, music lover, social dancer, world traveller, avid reader, and last but not least, devoted Catholic – Olive Byrne was all these things and more.

Olive was born 20 June 1929, although she told people it was the 23rd, Bonfire Night, or St. John's Eve, one of her favourite traditions. Her parents were Hugh Byrne of Lawrencetown (aka Laurencetown), Co. Down and Josephine (nee Kilcoyne) of Killavil, Ballymote, Co. Sligo. However, Olive was born and raised in Clones, Co. Monaghan, where her father first ran a shop, then worked as an employee of the Clones "Urban Council". Within this small but bustling border town, Catholics and Protestants of the Republic and Northern Ireland worked together, formed friendships, married and had families.

Clones was a thriving market centre with regular livestock fairs, and later in the 1800s, junction of four railways, including two major lines (Cavan to Belfast; and Dundalk to Enniskillen), so it was very fluid between north and south. Roads and railways in the region meandered in and out of different towns, parishes, counties and towns, and between the two Irish counties within the Clogher Diocese. Eight roads run through Clones alone. Before the Great Northern Railway of Ireland closed in 1959, a section between Clones and Cavan crossed the border six times in eight miles, initially with two sets of customs checks at each crossing. Today in Clones, a turntable and distinctive round pre-cast concrete locomotive shed, inspired by one in Milan, still exist. Trains were a source of fascination for Olive and may have sparked her love for adventure.

Clones has faced multiple challenges due to the Great Famine, 1916 Rising, War of Independence, partition, the World Wars and the Troubles. Olive experienced some of them, including during the 1970s, a particularly difficult period with bombs, road blocks and customs and identification controls. Hope for the future was renewed with the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 but the border regions, such as Clones, still struggle, especially with the uncertainty of Brexit.

Olive's roots in south Sligo ran deep. Her mother Margaret Josephine Kilcoyne was born in Killavil on September 1st 1894. She was living on Gaol Street, Ballymote with her 37-year-old Aunt Annie Davey and two boarders. Her occupation was listed as milliner. Olive in her last years used to tell stories about her mother's great skill and artistry in hat-making and that her headwear was in high demand by ladies of good taste as far away as Galway. Olive must have been influenced by her stylish mother, as she was always elegantly dressed herself.

Also seen in the 1911 Census, Olive's Aunt Mary, known as Mai, and who would later care for her, was 19 years old and living with her father Patrick Kilcoyne (65) and siblings James, Annie "Ursula", cousin John Joseph Dockery and long-time servant, Thomas Conroy. Patrick Dockery and his wife Kate Susan (nee Kilcoyne) Dockery, lived in 55 Newtown Street, Ballymote, next to what was Dockery's bakery. Olive would remain close to her cousins Joseph and Paddy Dockery, spending St. Stephen's Days together. Their house was later the home of Michael and Patricia Hurley, according to Eileen Tighe and Mary B. Timoney in the Corran Herald.

Margaret Josephine Kilcoyne and Hubert "Hugh" Byrne met when they both worked in Ballinasloe, Galway and were married in the University Church, Dublin on August 25th 1926. Josephine became ill after a second birth, apparently a stillborn son. Josephine was unable to care for her young daughter so Olive was raised by her Aunt Mai in Killavil and surrounded by many Kilcoyne cousins. After Olive became school-aged she returned to Clones, accompanied by her aunt. Mai was renowned for cleaning and reconditioning pieces of coveted Clones crochet lace and reselling it to tourists from her specialist home shop (p. 72, Clones Miscellany). Olive's friend Noreen remembers the thread and lace, being of an original brown linen colour, being soaked for days to be made white. Aunt Mai continued to be a big part of Olive's life as her surrogate mother and remained in Clones until her death in 1970, aged 78.

When Olive was 22 years old, her mother Josephine died 19 January 1951, aged only 56. Her father Hugh died a few years later on 2 August 1954, aged only 58. In Hugh's civil death record Olive is listed as being present. Although a private woman who didn't dwell on the past, Olive must have been deeply affected by the premature loss of both her parents. However, she shared positive and colourful childhood memories of her house at 21 Fermanagh Street, the main thoroughfare of Clones, next door to the Luxor cinema, where she loved

to watch the "pictures". There was a plethora of entertainment in the town, including brass and string band music. In a chapter about the town's music for the booklet "Clones Miscellany" that she wrote, Olive mentioned seeing a photograph of an audience watching a Gilbert & Sullivan opera production. "I spotted my father in the back row almost completely camouflaged under a bushy black moustache" (p. 95, Clones Miscellany). Customers pouring out of the pub across from Olive's house could be rowdy after closing time and Olive remembered the Gardaí had to be called after one broke her house window (the offender did pay up, she said!).

After she started school in Clones, Olive continued to visit Killavil on holidays, including summers. She shared fond memories of being on the Knockrawer farm, being led around on a pony by James Kilcoyne and watching the milking, haymaking and other daily chores. Olive learned the descriptive names of the farm fields, including River Bottom, Horses' Garden (Gardín na gcapall) and Well Bottom. After cutting the hay and the children played, they'd quench their thirst with pure well water.

Young Olive used to make the journey from Clones to Sligo, first by train to Enniskillen, then changing railways to proceed to Collooney. She "prayed for a bike," which she joyfully received. She then could bring it with her on the train, then independently wheel her way from Collooney station to Killavil, cementing her sense of self-sufficiency at an early age.

Later as a "fine-looking woman" (as described by many), Olive enjoyed attending social dances around Clones, where she was in demand as a graceful partner. Her father, however, was stern and made it difficult for Olive to date, not being particularly friendly to any suitors who would land at the front door. She was more interested in having a career and seeing the world after school than getting married anyway.

As a young woman she began working for the Monaghan County Council, then was made children's librarian in Clones, the service being located in the c. 1844 Market House on the Diamond (northern term for town centre). In addition to managing the children's section, she also served in the other county libraries. In 1956 she helped create Ireland's first mobile library for Clones. She was known to be an excellent employee, especially in her patience dealing with children. A Clones resident said that his kids were often in the library and if a young patron wanted to check out a title Olive didn't deem good enough or appropriate, she would suggest another one!

Also as a librarian, Olive compiled Part II of the index for the "A Guide to Clogher Record 1949-1975: a Diocesan History" for the Clogher Historical Society of titles of historical articles, notes and comments, of contributors and of persons, places and subjects mentioned in the titles (p. 14, "Clogher Record").

Olive's life certainly wasn't all work and no play. She and fellow librarian Una would often travel to Enniskillen to shop, get their hair done and attend dances. Una said one day they travelled there for the morning and were planning to take the bus back in time for their scheduled afternoon work shift in Clones. However, Una said they missed the bus and she herself ended up spraining her ankle and had to remain. Olive then returned by herself late to "face the music". Una laughed that Olive was often tardy, although she lived just up the road from the Diamond. She got "caught out" in a postcard image of her rushing across the Diamond late to work. Una said their boss teased her unmercifully for that particular indiscretion. Una also noted that Olive visited a local school, perhaps for a project to commemorate the 1916 Rising. Due to her noble patrician profile, she was asked to pose as Patrick Pearse, which she did in good humour.

Olive was a founding member of the Clones Guild of the Irish Countrywomen's Association in 1959, elected as Founder Secretary. During her many years with them, she took part in such wide-ranging activities as attending plays, travelling to many interesting places and participating in cross-border programmes. In 1996 Olive represented the guild in the "Make and Model" competition displaying an elegant brown skirt and waistcoat suit with co-ordinating silk blouse she sewed and "modelled them perfectly".

Olive and her well-tailored ensemble received national attention on television in 1998 when she reached the final of the "Waterford Crystal Make and Model Competition". She and her model didn't win but the guild was "bursting with pride and anticipation" for them (p. 72, Clones ICA).

Olive Byrne modelling suit -ICA-1996

As part of that competition she was invited to a fancy lunch in Dublin, where the winners were announced and author Patricia Scanlan presented prizes. In addition to that accolade, Olive was a finalist in the "Jacob's Writing Competition" and represented the Clones ICA when a new Tesco opened in Monaghan town. Also in 1998 Olive was appointed by the guild to represent them on the Clones Municipal Policy Committee, which

dealt with urban development and town regeneration plans.

In addition to her ICA work, Olive was also organiser for the 1964 All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann that was held in Clones. The Fleadh took place there again in 1968. Olive was proud of Irish music and dance traditions and wanted them practiced, preserved and promoted.

Clones cultivated several drama groups and Olive took part in plays, including "The Damsel in Dublin". Through the ICA Olive contributed toward the production of the stage and radio play, "Men to the Right, Women to the Left" for the Abbey Theatre, an Age and Opportunity project, performed in 2003. The drama, based on a book, was to document and record memories of the hilly drumlin areas. The play, which author Dermot Healy directed and featured actor Mick Lally, was "a series of tableaux of country life" and example of how the quality of life for older people can be enhanced through sharing their memories (p. 75, Clones ICA). The sounds of trains featured in the production, which may have been Olive's idea. "Clones was a major junction until 1957", explained Olive Byrne about the play then. "The border rules our life and always has" (ibid, p. 76). Later in 2019 Olive was disappointed about the development of Brexit with its possibility of a harder border again. But in 1998 Olive had no borders and was riding the wave of success. "It certainly was Olive's year", wrote Clones ICA editor Josephine Reilly (ibid, p. 73).

Also as ICA guild member Olive acted in a play in 2003. She remained active with the organisation in subsequent years. In 2006 the guild president "had the difficult task" wishing Olive a "fond farewell" when she decided to relocate to Ballymote. "She performed many tasks, and did wonderful work over the years," according to Margaret McKenna (ibid, p.94). In 2009 Olive did return to her ICA friends to celebrate the guild's 40th Golden Jubilee, which included an exhibition.

Olive was busy with many other pursuits. She was a keen golfer, having served as Lady's Captain for the Clones Golf Club in 1970, played in the Clones Bridge Club and attended the book club. As a single woman with few restrictions, she enjoyed the freedom to take part in her many interests. In retirement as ladies of leisure, Olive and friend Noreen were members of the Slieve Russell Hotel recreation club where they used to walk, swim, use the sauna and have lunch. "This is the life, Noreen", Olive would say. Noreen asked her daughter, when young, what she wanted to be when she grew up. "I want to be a posh lady like Olive", she replied.

Back in Killavil for a visit and to mark the 2000 Millennium, the Kilcoynes and Olive celebrated by lighting candles on the outside walls to enjoy finger food, tin whistle music by the musically-gifted Kilcoynes, and dancing on the road, perhaps how folk did in turn-of-the-century 1900.

Even while still living in Clones, Olive was a regular participant in the annual Ballymote Heritage Weekend during the August Bank Holiday Weekend. After she moved to Ballymote, she participated in the group as Honorary Secretary until she was physically unable, due to Parkinson's disease. In 2015 she deeply regretted not to be able to help lead a heritage outing to Cavan and Monaghan that included Clones. No doubt she would have been a stellar tour guide.

Olive Byrne-Clones Golf Captain 1970

Olive's best friend of 47 years was Joan, who had worked in Cavan, then lived in Waterford. They became like sisters and enjoyed many worldwide adventures. Some of Olive's intrepid destinations included Malta, Bulgaria, Sardinia, Australia and the United States, where she had kin in California. Her friend Noreen also sometimes joined Olive on her trips, including to Tunisia. Olive also relished jaunts around Ireland, including a coach tour of coastal lighthouses. Wherever she was, Olive absorbed the local culture and liked to mingle with the residents.

After Olive retired and got older, she decided to move to Ballymote, her second home, and to be closer to her remaining Kilcoyne relative and his family. In 2005 she bought a house in the Cornmill estate, which she tastefully decorated with old family photographs, antiques, her own artwork and exotic souvenirs from many travels around the world. She kept a comprehensive book collection, which she was only happy to share.

With friend Anne, Olive helped to form the Ballymote Book Club, first held in the Ballymote Resource Centre, then in the Ballymote Community Library. Anne said Olive was also active in the Ballymote Bridge Club. Although Olive had been unable to attend for several years, the book club is still going strong. Anne first met Olive when they were both library assistants and attended a conference in Dun Laoghaire. They renewed their friendship after Olive moved to Ballymote and kept in close contact.

"Olive loved Knock", according to Anne. "She had done voluntary work there at one time". Noreen, who has a daughter in Sligo, volunteered with Olive and they worked long days and evenings at St. Joseph's church serving meals and tea, washing up and other tasks for Knock's volunteers, which included ten men and four nurses per day. One day the cook didn't show up, but Noreen wryly said she and Olive, nicknamed the "Minister of Bread" for all the buttering she did, managed.

Anne added that Olive was also

"very fond of the sea, especially Strandhill". Anne and other friends were sometimes concerned about Olive's safety when she took these solo trips to the beaches and beyond, but as an independent woman with little fear she would tell them, "Sure, I was an only child, I have to do things on my own". Sometimes she would take a friend, such as Mollie Cawley, on her day excursions. "She was always good company and I always enjoyed a visit to her", Anne said of her friend.

During her years in Ballymote Olive enjoyed spending time with the Kilcoynes and was an active part in their family life, joining them for Sunday dinners and holidays. When playing the card game Uno, one of the Kilcoyne children, Aidan, used to gleefully call her "Catherine Olivia", a play on her given name "Kathleen Olivia" (according to FamilySearch July-December 1929 Clones civil birth registration index, with mother's surname "Kilcoyne"). Another genealogy cautionary lesson about confusion with family lore, dates and name spellings and to cast the net wide!

In later years when her friends visited, Olive would reminisce about her past travels and sherry would be poured, including during her 90th birthday celebration in 2019 when many friends and family gathered at her home to mark this mighty milestone. During her last months, Olive was confined to bed but remained sharp, maintaining a keen interest in world and local politics, and popular culture. She looked forward to watching the Late Late Show with one of her carers, or drinking a "hot punch" with another, and listening to the eclectic mix of music on RTÉ Radio 1 through the night when she couldn't sleep. Olive would look forward to her visits from Fr. James McDonagh, who spent unhurried time and said prayers, and loyal friends. Thanks to the HSE and the loving care of Rory and Mary, who managed a team of carers, and the Cloonamahon Meals on Wheels service, she was well cared for and able to remain at home, which was her fervent wish. Olive's house was next to the Sligo—Dublin Iarnród Éireann line and the sounds of regular trains were a comfort, along with the 6pm Angelus. Her friends Eileen and Nuala said "the Queen of England wouldn't have been so well looked after".

Olive peacefully passed away 16 January 2020 in the company of her cousin, Rory, and devoted carer, Marie. On a cold but bright day on January the 19th after her Requiem Mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Olive's funeral procession motored the long, winding journey from Ballymote to Clones. The cortege was met by a large honour guard of townspeople and led on foot by local funeral director Peter Mulligan to the Sacred Heart Cemetery. In the golden glow of the setting sun, Olive was laid to rest with her father, mother and Aunt Mai, back home.

Acknowledgements
The author would like to thank the family, especially Rory and Mary Kilcoyne, and the many friends of Olive Byrne for sharing their information and memories for this article.

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Ballymote Boys' School Band

Submitted by Francis Flannery

Head Master: Mr Chris Reid
Back Row (L-R): Ivan Pettipiece, John Donegan, ???, Michael Duffy, Brian Meehan, Vincent Finn.
Middle Row (L-R): Sean Hunt, ???, John McDonagh, Sean Duffy, Patrick Chambers, Damien Tansey, Raymond McAndrew, Jim Hannon.
Front Row (L-R): Francis Donohue, Derek Davey, ???, ???, Michael Healy, Jim Donohue, Derek Droughton, Paddy Hannon, Joseph Golden.

If any reader can identify the boys whose names which are not included please contact the editor or any member of the Ballymote Heritage Group.

Scapa Flow - The Killavil Connection

By John McDonagh

Scapa Flow is a large harbour in the Orkney Islands, off the North Eastern coast of Scotland. Sheltered by mainland and the islands of Graemsay, Burray, South Ronaldsay and Hoy, its relatively safe waters have provided a protected and secure anchorage for trade, travel and conflict throughout the centuries from the Bronze Age to the present day. In ancient Norse, Scapa Flow means 'Bay of the Long Isthmus'. One thousand years ago, the Vikings were using it as a base for raids on the British Isles and as a secure winter anchorage for their longships. In more recent times, it was the principal base for the United Kingdom's navies during the First and Second World Wars and continued in use as a naval base until its decommissioning in 1956. With calm waters, a level sandy bottom and a depth of sixty metres it is regarded as one of the best and most secure anchorages in the world.

During the early days of W.W.1, British Admiral John Rushwort Jellicoe had the anchorage defences reinforced and strengthened. It was from this base that the British Navy sailed on May 31st to confront the German Grand fleet, commanded by Reinhardt Von Scheer. The resulting carnage, the Battle of Jutland, was the most costly naval engagement of the entire war resulting in the British losing fourteen of their prestigious warships along with 6,784 sailors for the loss of eleven of Germany's ships and 3,058 German seamen. Both sides claimed victory, Germany had sunk more of the British ships but the German grand Fleet, unnerved by the Jutland experience, never put to sea again for the entire duration of the war.

After the capitulation of Germany, the remaining seventy four ships of the German fleet were interned in Scapa Flow pending a decision on their future from the peace treaty of Versailles.

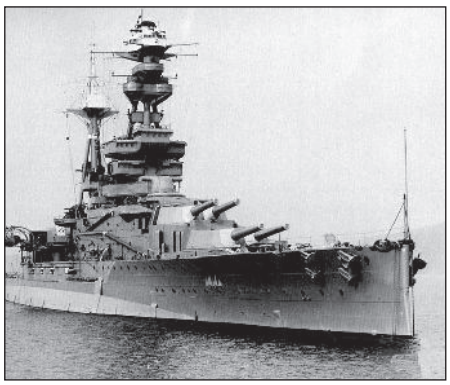
On 21st June 1919, after seven months of indecision, German Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter, gave orders to scuttle the fleet because the Versailles Treaty gave no clear indication of what should be done with the ships and he did not want them to fall into British hands. The Royal Navy managed to prevent the sinking of twenty one ships but fifty three were scuttled and sent to the bottom. Most of them were salvaged for scrap during the late 1920s and 1930s until the salvaging was interrupted by the onset of W.W.II.

Second World War

Primarily because of its great distance from German airfields, Scapa Flow was again selected as Britain's main naval base during the Second World War even though it was believed by some Admiralty planners that the marine defences were not nearly as impenetrable as they needed to be.

The strong defences built during the First World War had decayed and fallen into disrepair. Blockships sunk to impede submarines had collapsed and anti-submarine nets were not up

Guntar Prien



The Royal Oak

to the standard needed to stop the much more sophisticated U-Boats of W.W.II. Frantic efforts to repair and strengthen the defences were begun at the outset of war but they were not completed in time to prevent the successful penetration of the anchorage by a German submarine.

On October 14th 1939, a German submarine or U boat entered Scapa Flow commanded by Gunter Prien,

He, aided by some very high quality aerial photography and local intelligence, managed to find a poorly protected entrance through the narrow approaches of Kirk Sound. Around midnight, at high tide, undetected by the Royal Navy's anti-submarine measures, he quietly guided his deadly craft, U47 into the calm waters of Scapa Flow to conduct his fourth and deadliest attack of the war.

The Royal Oak

The Royal Oak was one of five 'revenge class' warships built by the Royal Navy during the First World War. With a length of 189 metres, a beam of 27 metres and a displacement of 28,000 tons, her keel was laid down on January 1st 1914 at Devonport Dockyard. Originally intended as a coal fired vessel, before completion the boiler design was changed over to more efficient oil. The Royal Oak was commissioned and joined the naval service on May 1st 1916. Just one month later it took part in the Battle of Jutland scoring a number of

hits on the German cruisers, S.M.S Wiesbaden, S.M.S Derffinger and S.M.S Seydlitz. Later in the war it was used to patrol the Southern coast of Britain. During the interwar years the ship was refitted and upgraded many times and served with both the Atlantic and Mediterranean fleets but it was considered to be too slow and cumbersome for a modern navy.

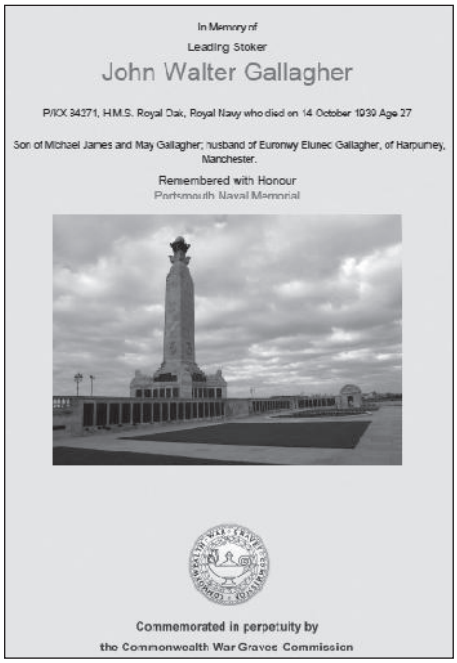
On 14th of October 1939 the R.O. was anchored in Scapa Flow where it was believed that her anti-aircraft capabilities would strengthen and enhance the air defences of the harbour.

Captained by W.G. Benn with a crew of 1,219 sailors including 163 boy sailors aged from fourteen to eighteen years, the ship was riding at anchor with its crew blissfully unaware of the imminent danger from U47.

The Attack

Having sneaked undetected into the very large anchorage, Gunter Prien in his silent U boat spent some time trying to identify a prestigious target and he later stated that the bay was "bright as day illuminated by the Northern Lights." In the North of the harbour R.O came into view and range and Gunter Prien moving into position, launched a salvo of four torpedoes. Two of the torpedoes missed their target, one stuck in the launch tube and failed to launch and the fourth struck the prow of the R.O. without causing any appreciable damage. Amazingly, the explosion did not alert the crew of the warship to their imminent danger. They did not comprehend that they were under attack. Captain Benn and his engineers, alerted but not alarmed, conducted an inspection. Finding nothing amiss they concluded that a drum of paint had exploded in the paint shop, no further action was taken and the sailors went back to their hammocks.

Prien couldn't believe his luck, he positioned his submarine once again and launched four more torpedoes. Once again they missed their target and once again they were undetected by the crew of the R.O. An undaunted Prien moved in closer and fired three more torpedoes, this time with



devastating consequences. Two of the torpedoes struck amidships creating a thirty foot wide hole, the ship heeled over immediately and all the lights went out. In just thirteen minutes it was on the bottom, with over 800 sailors still on board, including eleven Irishmen.

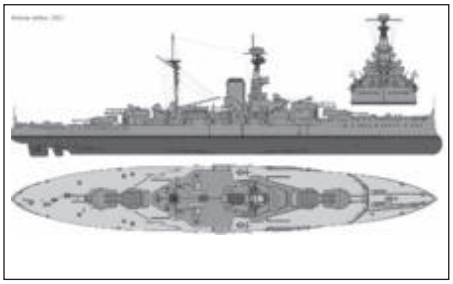
The Killavil Connection

The Irish who died hailed from several different counties, three from Cork, two from Wexford, two from Down, two from Belfast, one from Fermanagh and one, twenty seven year old John Walter Gallagher from Knockgrania, Killavil Co Sligo, son of Michael James and May Gallagher. The little house where he was born and spent his early years, though now unoccupied, still stands beside Coleman's Cross Killavil. According to naval records John was married to Euronwy Eluend Gallagher of Harpurhey Manchester and is "Remembered with Honour" on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial.

The Escape

In the absolute pandemonium and confusion that occurred in the aftermath of the attack, all the naval resources were directed towards the rescue of the struggling, drowning sailors desperately fighting to stay afloat in a sea covered with fuel oil. While the various commanders were trying to determine what had happened, the wily Prien took advantage of the confusion to sneak out of the harbour and escape into the open sea.

For the next number of months he went on to wreak havoc on British shipping, sending twenty eight more British ships to the bottom until U47 was eventually located and sunk with all hands on March 10 1941, by the British Destroyer *Wolverline.*



uboat.net
Front page - Fighting the U-boats - Ships hit by U-boats

Crew list of Ships hit by U-boats

John Walter Gallagher

RN (P/KX 84271). British

Born	1912
Died	14 Oct 1939 (27)

Roster information listed for John Walter Gallagher

Ship	Type	Rank / role	Attacked on	Boat
HMS Royal Oak (08)	Battleship	Leading Stoker	14 Oct 1939 (+)	U-47 (1)

Personal information
Son of Michael James and May Gallagher; husband of Euronwy Eluned Gallagher, of Harpurhey, Manchester.

Sources
1. http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2492739/

The Inexplicable Stairs

By Padraic Feehily

Entering Nelson's shop in Sligo at the corner of Castle Street and Market Street was a journey back to the Victorian era. The pine shelves and compact square drawers sloping and tilting their way up to the lofty floor. The equipage for the sporting man standing side-by-side with an assorted arrangement of paraphernalia from another age. Viewing to one's right the appealing glass display cases where young couples gazed in hope and admiration at the sparkling selection of engagement and wedding rings foreseeing a shared future together.

Nelsons' was the home of craftsmen of the highest merit. Here in 1882, the magnificent Mayoral Chain was commissioned and made by the firm's silversmiths. However, for a young lad entering the premises, the star attraction was of a more practical nature: it stood to one's left upon entering, it was the imposing spiral stairs serving its purpose effectively since 1828.

Luckless at school and finding my true vocation in the aroma of sawdust, I took up the carpenter's trade by securing an apprenticeship at fifteen years of age. Thus began a lifelong love affair with all things made of wood.

On occasion, I would be sent from the workshop to Nelson's for special items of hardware. They were occasions to treasure, an opportunity once again to view what had become the workplace of my imagination. The stairs had become an intrinsic part of my "mental" world, every visit was used to penetrate into the secrets of its construction as a functioning unit. Studying each component part, striving as it were to comprehend each critical purpose in the geometry and structural integrity of this wondrous object.

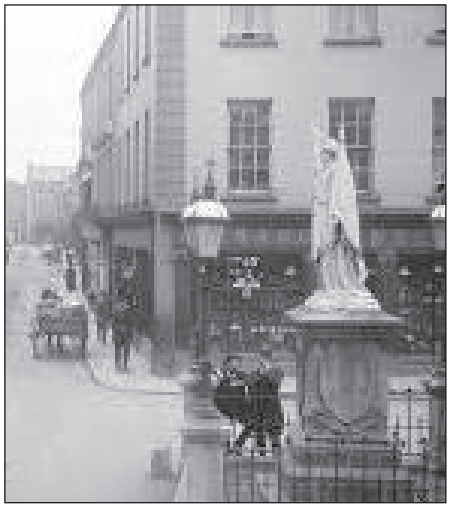
Carpenter

The stairs gave vertical access to clock and watch repairs on the first floor. All inquiries, deposit of goods and collections required staff to climb and descend the spiral masterpiece numerous times in the day whilst beneath their feet, the steps shook and vibrated to the complete unconcern of the staff.

I traced the general outlines of the stairs at every opportunity. Testing my limited knowledge of structural principles; attempting to ascertain its lines of tension and compression. With practice, I intuited that standard joinery methods used to connect or join the steps to the centre part would, over time, become loose due to the constant vibration from usage as the stairs were of the open string type with no vertical support at its extremities. Thus the conundrum - how was it working perfectly after one hundred and forty years!

Nelson's emerged and blossomed in the early nineteenth century followed by consolidation in the next century. Imperceptible changes came in with new business where profit was king. Time came for the family to gracefully leave the arena. Down came the rustic pilasters, the lamb's tongue mullion windows and scrolled corbel brackets; away the rich ornamentation and classical detail, the elongated entablature with the hand painted legend - Francis Nelson; all from a more refined age. Making way for modernity.

The builders were contracted; it was to be a complete change of style; the internal layout was gutted. The builder, a neighbour, allowed me in. Amid the dust and rubble, I searched out the object of my lasting fascination and there it was: reclining on its side,



Nelson's Shop

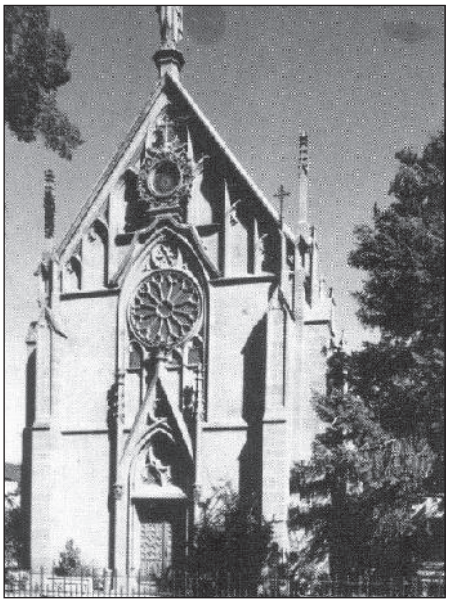
removed from its station but perfect in all its parts. It had survived intact.

An examination of the stairs in its horizontal position revealed the secret of its unique construction: the centre part was hollow, a composite ribbed circle. The arrangement allowed the steps to penetrate to the centre of the cylinder. This system allowed the steps to vibrate beyond the exit curve of the post. An ingenious method of allowing opposing forces to cancel each other out.

Assurances from the contractor regarding the future of the stairs brought a deep feeling of contentment. I left the remains of the old shop confident in the knowledge that I had entered further into the hidden realms of the world of timber.

The history of the stairs is a progression from the simple ladder to the elaborate circular or elliptical marble staircases found in luxury hotels or grand mansions. Nearer to home, we have the free-standing marble stairs in Westport House (believed to support 300 people) built by Italian craftsmen in the nineteenth century and, who can forget the forward staircase in the film "Titanic" entering into the first class accommodation; it was the ship's crowning glory.

In September 1852, the Sisters of Loretto, after months of struggles and fears, broken axles and wheels, sights



The Loretto Chapel, Santa Fe, that houses the famous Stairs

of dry white bones and suffering hot days, arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Great women permeated by the love of God, the qualities necessary to brace the hardship of a country still raw and unsettled in the Southwest of the United States.

It soon became evident that if the Sisters were to fulfil the wishes of the inviting bishop they would need a convent and a school. Mexican carpenters began to build for the Sisters. Completed, the school was called the Loretto Academy of our Lady of Light. Plans were made next for a chapel; it was to be in the Gothic style. French and Italian masons went to work on the new structure.

The chapel work progressed with some financial worries and a maximum of faith on the part of the Sisters. It was not until the building was near completion that dreadful mistakes became obvious. The chapel was magnificent and the choir loft was wonderful but there was no connecting link between the two. There was no stairway and, because the loft was exceptionally high, it was impossible for the stairs to be constructed in the standard way. The Mother Superior called in many carpenters to attempt the challenge but each in turn measured and measured again and shook their heads sadly saying, "It cannot be done, Mother". It looked as if there were only two alternatives; use a ladder to get to the choir loft which seemed impractical, or to tear the whole thing down and rebuild it differently. A heart-breaking task to consider.

Confronted with a dilemma, the Sisters decided to make a novena to their patron - Saint Joseph. On the last day of the novena, a grey-haired man came up to the convent with a donkey and a tool chest. Approaching the Mother Superior, he asked if he might try to help the Sisters by building a stairway! The Superior gave her consent gladly and he set to work. According to the resident Sisters at the time, his tool box consisted of a few very basic implements. It took the carpenter eight months to complete that work but when the Mother Superior went to pay him he had vanished. She went to the local timber yard to pay for the timber at least. They knew nothing of it. To this day there is no record in the convent that the job was ever paid for.

The winding stairs that the old man left for the Sisters is a masterpiece of beauty and wonder. It makes two complete 360º degree turns. There is no supporting centre post that most spiral stairs have; it hangs there with all the weight on the base. Some architects have said that by all the laws of gravity it should have crashed to the floor when anyone stepped on it and yet it has been used daily for one hundred and sixty years.

The stairway (legend says) was put together with wooden pegs only – there were no nails and at the time it was built, it had no banisters or hand rail. They were added later. Architects from all over the world, without exception cannot understand how it was constructed and how it has remained so sturdy.

Many experts have tried to identify the wood and where it came from. The only agreement being; it didn't come from New Mexico. Where the old carpenter got the wood is a mystery. One of the most baffling things about the stairs is the perfection of the curve of the strings (sides) as they are made up of several pieces: nine spliced together on the outside string and seven on the inside. Yet throughout its length, the strings maintain a perfect curve. How this was done in the 1870s by a single individual in an out-of-way place with only the most primitive tools has never been explained.

Many experts have tried to identify the wood and surmise where it came from. Here again it's established that the timber did not come from New Mexico; where the old carpenter got the wood is a mystery.

The Church is always cautious about making statements concerning things of a supernatural nature. Following this same position, the sisters and priests of Santa Fe have refrained from saying anything definite about the stairs. The community annals and the archdiocesan archives are silent on the subject other than to tell us that the Chapel of Our Lady of Light was dedicated on April 25th, 1878.

Everyone who sees this beautiful piece of work is amazed at its wonder and beauty, but no one can satisfactorily explain how it got there and how it stays there. It is truly an inexplicable wonder.

Students of Loretto Choir Academy, descend the famous stairs in the Chapel of Our Lady of Light, Sante Fe, New Mexico.

How Sligo's Sarah Kaveney became Canada's Sarah Kavanagh

By John McKeon

April 1847 was an unimaginably traumatic month in the life of Sligo-born Sarah (Mc Donough) Kaveney. That month her five daughters were drowned in a shipwreck, only she with her husband and son survived. All three became Canadian citizens and got a new surname, Kavanagh. From then until her death over forty years later in October 1889, she had no further contacts with her relatives in Sligo. Instead she built a new life for herself and her new family in Canada. Her descendants knew that she was a survivor of the *Carrick* shipwreck and had originally come from Sligo. But they did not know exactly where she came from, or that Kavanagh was not her original married name. Much has already been written about the shipwreck itself, so this article focuses on Sarah's Sligo roots, how they were unearthed again in recent years and how her surname was changed in Canada. While Sarah, and her husband, left key information on their identity in family records, this remained hidden along with other essential information on her ancestry for the next one hundred and sixty-five years. In 2012, her real identity was unearthed, and its details were published. Several years later other accounts of her identity were published in Canada and Ireland which in my opinion are inaccurate. After the trauma Sarah and her family suffered due to the Famine, including the loss of their children and identity, accounts of their loss which were not accurate cannot be left unchallenged.

Sarah and Patrick's Life in Ireland

We now believe that Sarah Kaveney (nee Mc Donough) was probably born in the townland of Cloonagh, south Sligo, in about 1804. Her parents were tenant farmers on lands controlled by a middleman named Robert Duke, and owned by the third Viscount Palmerston, later Lord Palmerston. In about 1834, she married Patrick Kaveney, a tenant farmer on the same landed estate, in the adjoining townland of Cross. Over the next thirteen years they had six children, one boy and five girls. When the Famine hit in 1845, they and their children faced great peril, as shown in records from August 1846, where Patrick was listed as in urgent need of work and income for his family. That winter of 1846 through the spring of 1847 conditions deteriorated further, and the entire family faced the real possibility of starvation. Sarah and Patrick made the fateful decision to leave Cross forever and take the one-way trip from Sligo Port on the *Carrick of Whitehaven* in April 1847. They were bound for Canada, where, after a long voyage, calamity struck on the night of April 28th at Cap des Rosiers when their ship was wrecked and most of the emigrants on board were drowned. Sarah, Patrick and their son Martin survived, but their five daughters perished. With the loss of their girls and meagre belongings, Sarah and Patrick were left distraught and utterly destitute.

Locals, at Cap des Rosiers, helped provide them with temporary accommodation and employment. They also gave them their new surname, Kavanagh. This surname was already known in that community and was close phonetically to the Kaveney surname. Over the following years, and after some relocations, Sarah and Patrick, set up home nearby where they had four more children, three boys and a girl. Patrick and Martin, both pre-deceased Sarah, who went on to live for years alongside her Canadian born children and grandchildren. They knew that she originally came from Sligo, was on the Carrick when her five girls drowned, and her story was later passed down from generation to generation. With the deaths of Patrick and Martin, the Kaveney surname faded from the family memory, along with Sarah's maiden name, Mc Donough. When she died, the inscription on her tombstone stated that she was the wife of Patrick Kavanagh and that her maiden name was Mc Donnald. Later generations of the family believed, until 2012, that these were the correct ancestral surnames. Perhaps if the family records had been searched in more detail, the correct ancestral surnames might have been discovered. But these, and other, records were only investigated recently, and they finally uncovered the truth about the family forebears.

After 2000, descendants of

Sarah's Tombstone

Sarah's came to Sligo searching for their ancestors, but none made any progress. Some of their searches were published on-line, and these came to the attention of an historical society in Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo

which was searching for descendants of Famine emigrants known to have left north Sligo in 1847. This Society was particularly interested in tracing descendants of survivors of the Carrick tragedy for an Irish event called the Gathering, which was held in 2013. With the knowledge that members of the Kavanagh family from the Gaspe, Canada, believed their ancestors were survivors of this tragedy, the Society contacted family members and got some family details. It also searched the Palmerston archives at Southampton University where it found the long-hidden, and previously unpublished, passenger manifest for the ship.[1] It found more files in these archives which dealt with other important aspects of the Famine in Sligo. Surprisingly, many of these were never published in the intervening years. Most significantly, the discovery of the Carrick manifest was vital to its search. Without it any tracing for descendants of survivors, would have proved fruitless. But although it was vital in tracing the ancestral roots of the Canadian Kavanagh family, it did not list any Kavanagh family amongst those aboard. Knowing there were no Kavanagh's on the Carrick, however, raised the possibility of a name change in Canada following the shipwreck, something that wasn't unusual among emigrant families. This led to a search for an emigrant family that may have had a name change, one that matched known facts about the Canadian family.

While no Kavanagh family was listed in the Carrick manifest, it did list as passengers a Patrick Kaveney and his family of eight. It also provided the valuable information that this Kaveney family came from the townland of Cross in south Sligo. This demanded further searches focused on this family and townland. Baptismal records for Cross confirmed that a couple named Patrick and Sarah Keaveny had two girls baptised there in the 1840s, and that the mother's maiden name was Sarah Mc Donough.[2]

Searches in Canada showed that Patrick and Sarah were the given

Baptismal Certs

names of the couple in the Gaspe who survived the Carrick sinking, and that they too had a family of eight prior to the loss of five daughters in the tragedy. Irish land and Famine relief records confirmed that the Keaveney/Kaveney family were long term residents in Cross, and that a Patt Kaveney was present there through August 1846.[3] After April 1847, no further record of him or his family was found in Irish records. A visit to Cross led to a meeting with distant relations of Pat's siblings, and they claimed that Sarah's maiden name was most likely Mc Donough, not Mc Donnald, as the Canadian Kavanagh family believed.

Different spellings of the Keaveney/Kaveney name were common in Cross, both before and after Sarah's and Patrick's departure to Canada. Records from 1809, show that a Catholic Church stood on land farmed by Martin Keaveney, Cross.[4] In 1820, a Thomas Kaveny from Cross was deported to Australia. Tithe Applotment books confirm that Patt Kevaney and Martin Kevanny were farming there in 1834. Memorials prepared as Famine conditions worsened in August 1846, listed Patt Kaveny as literate, and among those needing work. In 1857, the Griffith Valuation listed James Caveney in Cross on a farm valued at over £19, while in 1862, James Keaveney was recorded as farming over eleven acres there. In 1864, James Kaveney was listed as a tenant on Palmerston's estate who paid £13 rent.[5] In summary, these records confirm that the Keaveney's farmed in Cross from 1809 to 1864, that Patt Kaveney lived there in 1834 through 1846, that he was literate, and that the family name was spelled in different ways.

Combined, this evidence suggested that the Kavanagh's from the Gaspe may have been the Kaveney's, or more correctly the Keaveney's, from Cross. More details were found later that also pointed to the same conclusion. So, in 2012, the Mullaghmore Historical

Society published its findings that the Kavanagh family of Canada appeared to be descendants of the Kaveney family from Sligo. It did not list any of the genealogical details behind its findings, it just published its conclusion. Descendants of the Canadian Kavanagh family contacted the Society after reading these findings, and the Society invited them to its 2013 Gathering event. Their attendance in July 2013 was widely covered in Ireland and received some coverage in Canada.

Sarah and Patrick's Life in Canada

Descendants of Sarah and Patrick, who attended the Gathering at Mullaghmore, in July 2013, included a fourth generation and two fifth generation descendants. On their return to Canada, one of these, Rose Marie Stanley, set about finding out more about her ancestors. She already knew details of Sarah and Patrick's four Canadian born children; Patrick who was born in July 1848, Dominick who was born in September 1850, James who was born in July 1852, and Marguerite who was born in July 1854. Their descendants, and those of Irish born Martin, had lost contact with each other over the following century and a half, and Rose Marie re-established contact with other branches of her family. She put together a family tree, discovered more about the early lives of Sarah and Patrick in the Gaspe, and wrote a play, entitled 'The Emigrant', focused on the story of Sarah's eventful life.

Dominick Kavanagh

Rose Marie discovered the baptismal and marriage certificates of Sarah's Canadian born children. These recorded Sarah and Patrick as the parents and gave their original surnames. In Canada surnames were also often spelled differently. Kavanagh was sometimes spelled with a 'K' and sometimes with a 'C', while Sarah's maiden name was sometimes spelled as Mc Donough, and at other times as Mc Donagh.

Despite these spelling differences, what emerged was that Patrick and Sarah christened one of their Canadian born sons 'Dominick Caveney', with his father given as 'Patrick Caveney'. Their first-born Canadian son was christened 'Patrick Cavanagh', while James and Marguerite were christened 'Kavanagh'. Most of the baptismal records gave Sarah's maiden name as Mc Donough, but Marguerite's marriage record, in September 1876, lists her mother as 'Sara Mc Donagh'. These certificates confirm that the Kaveney surname was changed to Kavanagh on arrival in Canada, or shortly afterwards; that Sarah and Patrick were aware of the English version of their original surnames; and that Sarah's maiden name was indeed Mc Donough.[6]

Years after this link between the Kaveney's from Cross and the Kavanagh's from the Gaspe was published, others sought to claim that they independently established the link between these families. These claims made no reference to any supporting genealogy details, or the Carrick manifest, both of which were essential in establishing the link. Instead, they focused on the name change that occurred, stating that this happened because Sarah and Patrick did not know the English version of their surname on arrival in Canada, asserting that they only spoke Gaelic. To support this, they claimed that most other Famine emigrants from locations like Cross only spoke Gaelic, and not English, at that time. But this is not supported by evidence available on other survivors of the Carrick tragedy.

Schools existed in the Cross area in Sarah's and Patrick's time, and one, or both, of them may have attended school. Otherwise Patrick would not have been registered as literate in August 1846 memorials. A Hibernian school existed there in 1820, while the local Catholic church was used as a school in 1826. Even before this time hedge schools operated in the area. All schools then, including many hedge schools, taught English to their pupils, something that regularly caused conflict.[7] By the time the couple's son Martin was born, more schools operated in the area and he, like many children of his time, almost certainly attended school prior to leaving for Canada. It is likely that Martin and his parents spoke some English on their arrival in Canada. Other survivors of the Carrick tragedy from the same south Sligo area, and who were also traced by the Mullaghmore Historical Society, knew and spoke English on their arrival in Canada.[8] Moreover, Sarah and Patrick left proof that they knew the English version of their names in their Canadian family records.

Yet two accounts about the name change have been published stating that that neither Sarah nor Patrick spoke English and did not know the English version of their names on arrival in Canada. They still maintain that Sarah's maiden name was Mc Donnald. In Canada, they claim that the family name 'transitioned', or 'metamorphosed', over years from Kaveney to Kavanagh, and that this took place because the Kaveney's and the Kavanagh's shared the same Gaelic name. But Irish records indicate that Sarah and Patrick knew the English version of their names before leaving Cross and the records of their Canadian born children confirm this. Moreover, Canadian baptismal records show their name changed to Kavanagh within the first year of their arrival in Canada, and probably immediately on arrival. And, official records of Irish surnames show that the Keaveney and Kavanagh

surnames are not the same in Gaelic.[9] These records give the Gaelic name for Kavanagh as O'Caomhanaigh or Caomhanach, and that for Keaveney as O'Geibheannaigh.

A Canadian film entitled 'The Lost Children of the Carrick', with its promotional materials, first presented these claims and implied that its team had independently unearthed the links between the Kaveney and the Kavanagh families. These claims were amplified in correspondence citing Irish academics as supporting its assertion that people from rural areas like Cross, only spoke Gaelic in Famine times. Adding that the name 'transitioned' to Kavanagh over the years, it was argued that the Keaveneys/ Kaveneys and the Kavanaghs shared the same Gaelic name.[10] The production also cited members of Sligo's Famine Commemoration Committee as supporting this version of Sarah's story.

In 2019, Sligo's Famine Commemoration Committee published, with one minor difference, these same claims in a reissue of a booklet it originally published in 1997. This 2019 booklet asserts that the Kavaney name 'metamorphosed', rather than 'transitioned', to Kavanagh over the years in Canada. Otherwise it repeated the same information as was previously included in its original booklet namely, that the Palmerston archives in Southampton contained no information on the Famine in Sligo. Fortunately, this was not correct, otherwise the passenger manifest for the Carrick of Whitehaven would not have been found by the Mullaghmore society, along with other valuable Famine era documents. This manifest proved to be the missing link that led the Mullaghmore and Cliffoney Historical Society to bring the story of Patrick and Sarah, and their family, back to life. In addition, it also contributed to re-forging of links among the different family branches of their descendants in Canada and between Ireland and Canada.[11]

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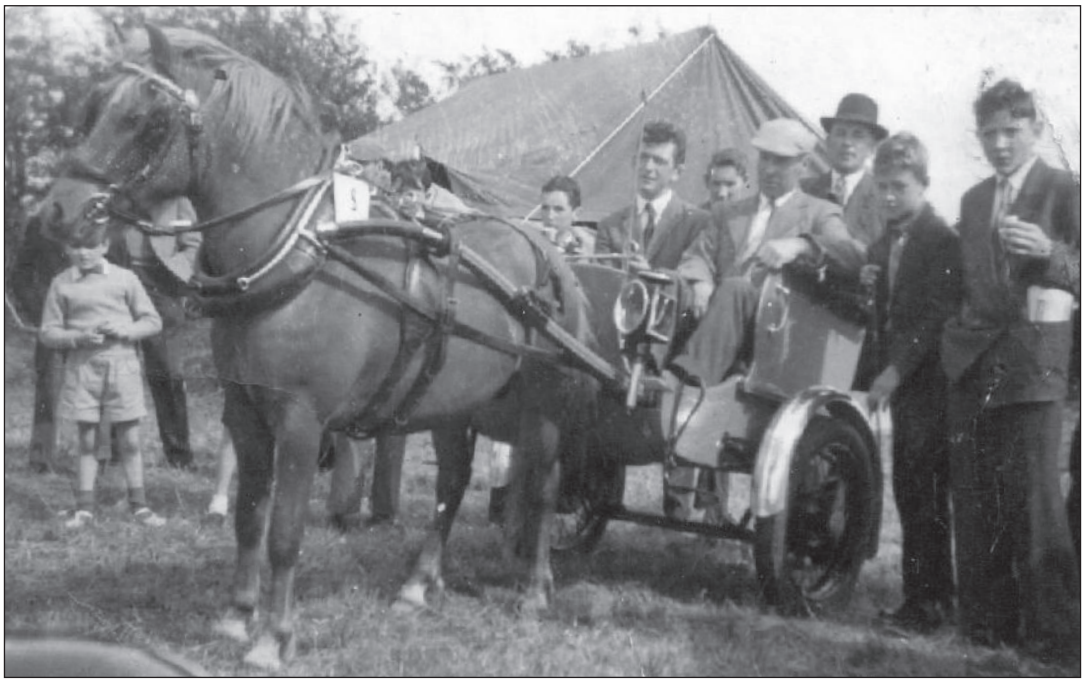
Ballymote faces from the past

Submitted by Francis Flannery



Child on the Left, Cyril Hogge,
In the Trap, Left to Right: Michael James Gorman (Soldier), and Paddy Healy

If any reader can identify the gentlemen, whose names are not included please contact the editor or any member of the Ballymote Heritage Group.

The Burning of Knockcroghery

Submitted by Terri Hunt

The burning of Knockcroghery Village on 19th June 1921 occurred after wrong information was gleaned by British intelligence agents in Athlone. At that time, Sean Mac Eoin "the blacksmith of Ballinalee" was under sentence of death and a plan was made by volunteers in Westmeath to capture General Lambert (who was the officer commanding all British troops in the Western Command), hold him as a hostage and then bargain for Mac Eoin's release.

General Lambert's movements were watched and it was known that he frequently visited friends near the village of Glasson, Athlone. An ambush was laid near Glasson. On the evening of June 17th, General Lambert travelled in a car driven by his wife to pay a social call at the house of a friend in Glasson. When the car approached the scene where the Westmeath Volunteers lay in wait, a volunteer officer stepped out on the road and signalled to the driver to halt. The car slowed down and then suddenly gathered speed and attempted to drive through the cordon of volunteers. Shots rang out and General Lambert was killed instantly. His wife, who was unhurt, drove on towards Glasson and the Volunteers dispersed.

In the course of their inquiries, British intelligence agents were told that the Volunteers who laid the ambush had come directly across Lough Ree from the Knockcroghery or Galey Bay side. This information was not correct, but in the early hours of the morning of June 19th, four lorry loads of Black and Tans, police and auxiliaries arrived in the village of Knockcroghery from Athlone. All of them were "under the influence".

They fired shots into the air, banged on the doors of the houses in the village and ordered the inhabitants to get out. The residents of Knockcroghery – men, women and children in their night attire were driven out in the street. The raiding forces then spilled petrol on the vacated houses and set fire to them, having first looted each house for anything they considered of value. Many of the houses had thatched roofs and in a very short time the village was ablaze from end to end.

One of the first houses to be visited was that of Parish Priest Canon Bartley Kelly. The Canon, who was in bed, refused to leave and the Tans immediately set his house on fire. Neighbours who saw his plight went to the Canon's assistance and rescued him through an upstairs window. They then helped to bring the fire under control, but not before considerable damage was done. The Canon crossed the fields and sought refuge with his friend, the Church of Ireland rector, the late Canon Humphries.

Only two houses, side by side, were untouched. One building, which was owned by the Feeney family, housed John S Murray's Pub and Grocery Shop. The fact that it also housed the local Post Office saved it from destruction. The other building, a small pub and grocery owned by Mrs. Mary "The Widow" Murray was also left alone. She gathered her children around her in the kitchen near the door and refused to leave her home. The Tans threatened to burn the house with her in it. One of the officers took pity on her, ordered his men out and told them to leave her and her family alone. They left the building helping themselves to some money, cigarettes and tobacco as they went.

Meanwhile the raiding forces drove up and down the village, firing shots at random, cursing loudly and laughing at the plight of the people of Knockcroghery. The people were terrified particularly the children, whose cries of fear added to the terrible scene. The homeless people of the village were given shelter in the houses of friends, neighbours and relations in the district and some of them, along with Canon Kelly, found temporary accommodation with

The Widow Pat's Pub - *Photo courtesy of https://dissolve.com*

Canon Humphries at the rectory.

Next morning the extent of the devastation was seen with the advantage of daylight. The sight was horrible to behold. All that was left of each building was a smoking shell. Very little, if anything could be salvaged from the ruins. Canon Kelly and Canon Humphries resolved to do everything in their power to help relieve the plight of the homeless. They set up a relief committee and sent fund raisers far and wide to collect as much money as they could. In spite of having very little money to spare, the people of the area responded magnificently. One good woman gave the only thing she could, a gold sovereign. When the collector was handing in his collection to the joint chairmen, Canon Humphries spotted the gold coin. Turning to Canon Kelly, he asked if he might have it. To which Canon Kelly replied, "you can have that one, I have plenty of them." Canon Humphries thanked him and put it in his pocket having first replaced it with a pound note. The total amount collected has long since been forgotten but it went a long way in relieving the hardship of many

families.

Rebuilding did not begin for at least another two years until the compensation agreed in the 1921 Treaty came through. Most of the building work was carried out by the Hessions of Roscommon, with the Foleys of Ballymurray employed as stone masons. Many of the houses were never rebuilt, the original owners either having died in the meantime or gone away for good. The clay pipe industry which had once thrived in the village was never restarted. The families involved set up alternative businesses as the clay pipe was in rapid decline due to increased popularity of the briar pipe and manufactured cigarettes. The memory of that terrible night will live on in the minds and hearts of Knockcroghery people for a long time to come.

Information in the article reproduced from Ireland's Own 1991 Annual
Mrs Mary 'The Widow' Murray mentioned in this article, was grandmother of Ms Terri Hunt of Keenaghan, Ballymote, Co Sligo. At the time of 'The Black and Tans', Mrs Mary Murray was a young widow with five sons and one daughter. The youngest was named Patrick and he was known in the village as 'The Widow's Pat'. Pat always stayed in the village until he died at the age of 81. He kept the pub all his life and he bequeathed it to one of his nephews. In time, the place changed hands, was modernised and is still a popular pub in Knockcroghery. The name over the door is 'The Widow Pat's'.

Work Experience

By Mary Kelly-White

My ambition after the Leaving Certificate in 1956 was to become a teacher. I was good at Maths and Irish, I got 80% for Oral Irish and I could sing fairly well. Unfortunately, this was not enough and I failed to secure a place in teacher training. I did secure work in many national schools, when female teachers were obliged to resign from teaching when they got married. After a time, this rule changed and substitute teachers were recruited for sick leave or maternity leave.

My first experience of teaching was while I was still at school. My teacher sent me to Banada Abbey Convent School to stand in for a teacher who had fallen ill. The school also had a children's residential home, a lace maker, a dressmaker, as well as many well-dressed, happy children all of whom were girls, and a few lovely Nuns from the Sisters of Charity. The senior girls looked after the little ones, and lay people like myself helped everywhere we were needed, such as in the playground, when the children went for group walks, in the dormitory and in the sewing room. I knew how to use a hand sewing machine but the foot machines were new to me as a result of which a few needles got broken when I went into reverse. My pay at the end of the month was 18s sterling, less the price of a packet of machine needles.

Later in the 1960s, I secured a job as manageress in Prescott's Cleaner's and Dyer's Depot, Old Market Street, Sligo. The proprietor Charley Hughes and his wife Margaret (Maggie) lived on the premises but I was responsible for running the business. Most of the shops had a delivery bike with a big tubular basket in front with the name of the shop on a sign between the handlebars and the saddle. A young schoolchild was employed by Prescott's to wash the shop window before school, and then to deliver sacks of clothing for dry cleaning to the railway station after school. The clothing was returned every Friday, and he delivered to some of the locals around town. He was paid 15s sterling every Saturday evening. When I arrived, I sent the young fellow to school, I washed the shop window myself and I gave him his pay on Friday evening. Charley was not happy, but everyone else seemed to be. My weekly pay was £3-3s-4d sterling, (about €3.50).

Liebeg's Meat Processing factory opened at Ballast Quay at that time. They were offering £5 weekly wages. I landed a job there. There were seven girls and about four men on the factory floor, and I am not sure how many managers. It was an experience. It was very competitive applying for this job and we were considered lucky to be chosen. As it happened, each of the seven girls were told in confidence that she would be promoted to Supervisor. It never happened. The magnificent cooking and processing machinery were called kettles and dryers, and the men operated them. There was a lot of wire trays which needed daily microscopic cleaning, of which the girls did all that. The washing areas were minimal, not completely finished and this work was very messy.

The food, chicken, fish, lobsters and beef arrived in massive quantities. The men chopped the beef and prepared the chickens. The girls shelled and cleaned the prawns. Everyone got blood on their white coats and sometimes the place was like a slaughter house. It was very new to me and I was transferring the bloody meat with fingers and thumbs when one of the girls said to me "I'd love to see you washing dirty nappies" and she lifted two great armfuls with her bare hands, the blood dripping from her elbows. Straightening her back she put her bloody hands on her hips as if to say "Now that's the way to do it". The demonstration was over.

Cleaning the prawns was disgusting. Trays of prawns were weighed and each girl had to prepare them at speed. Speed and I were never friends. The trick was to hold the prawn shell between your finger and thumb, so that the gut was removed with the shell. Some of the girls were flying through their supplies, some were throwing an odd fistful into the receptacles under the table, and I was making slow to no progress. I hated touching the gut when it stayed behind and a brainwave dawned on me, in a manner of speaking. I got a tweezers and a glass of water. I removed the gut with the tweezers and dropped it into the water. From then on I was doing fine. The girls were laughing at me but while their mounds of prawns were big and grey, mine remained small and pink as pearls. The Management came to investigate. They were four men from the offices. They laughed and whispered a little but they did not speak to me. However, the next day the carpenter was called in to create a workplace for the girls. This consisted of staggered positions, and we girls were ceremoniously invited to take our places. We were introduced to a carton of tweezers and a tube of plastic goblets, and the foreman directed us on how to use them. It was my invention but I got nothing for it.

Because I was slow on the prawns, I was put in charge of everything including the laundry coming and going, the store and the soap dispensers. Eventually after about ten weeks someone had noticed that I had spent no time in the kitchen and canteen area so the foreman called me to heel. "Now Miss Kelly, you will have to take your turn in the canteen the same as everyone else." And I did.

At 10 am every morning one of the girls went to the canteen, filled and switched on the boiler, set a tray for the bosses, with six perfect mugs, a sugar bowl, milk in a jug and teaspoons. That was it. The tea break was at 10.10 am and was over at 10.20 am. Everyone was back on the floor at 10.30 am. I gave out about everything. I thought we all moved too fast and were not careful enough. The canteen was bare with no seats, no tables, venetian blinds, a sink and a bin. Everyone was bumping into each other splashing tea everywhere, laughing, talking and moving around all through the break. It was mayhem.

I went to the canteen at 10 am, filled and switched on the boiler. I dumped all the cracked mugs into the bin, leaving only a few for the bosses. Then I went down to the foreman on the factory floor and I asked him to send the staff up four at a time.

He could not understand why, so I told him I had thrown all the cracked mugs in the bin. Then I gave him a list of what I needed in the canteen and kitchen, which comprised of seats, tables, jugs, mugs, mops, dishcloths and a colander for the sink.

He read the list aloud and hollered at me to get down on the production floor.

I felt that if health inspectors came into this canteen, they would close this factory altogether. I had told him they would presume that if we were happy enough to eat in a place like this, we wouldn't be too fussy about how we were preparing food for other people. The foreman banged the door and left me to finish. I took my list to the manager's office and everything was supplied for the canteen. I got the sack for insolence but refuted this and I didn't accept it, so then they told me it was a warning.

Time passed. I got married, had five children, three girls and two boys. The first boy died aged five days. Fifty-two years later the first girl died. I took a few night classes, joined the ICA and learned dressmaking with Dell Rogers. It was then I decided I was good enough to do alterations and more. The work was hard, took too much time and the money was small. I wanted to write so I joined a typing class at Sligo Technical School, in Quay Street. I bought a typewriter in Cavendish's Hire Purchase (never never) shop and enjoyed many years of correspondence through Postbag in The Evening Press with people I never met. I was so good that Tommy Gorman spotted my talent and I landed a job with the Sligo edition of the Western People, and later as local correspondent with Sligo Weekender and with the Sligo Champion as well.

But I needed money and a job. It was in the 1970s. I answered every job advertisement published by the North Western Health Board and I attended the interviews. My name was on a few panels for substitute teachers as well, but I got no calls.

Eventually, there was an advertisement for a housemother in a Children's Home in Geevagh. "Geevagh !" I thought. No one will know where that is, but I did. As often as I had passed through Geevagh on my way to Glenkillamey, Arigna, I never knew that there was a Children's Home there.

The interviewers asked why I was applying for this job when I had lots of teaching experience, to which I explained that people seem to think that if you can push a pen you cannot push a brush. The interviewers put their heads together to confer. They told me that the job that was advertised was gone but they would be in touch with me for another position that would suit my background and education.

It was January 1981. My youngest child was eleven years old by then. I worked three days and nights on shift, and then I got the following three days and nights off, with every second weekend. It was tiresome and overwhelming but I did it. That job lasted about ten years, then the Health Board closed the Home. I was then redeployed to Cloonamahon Residential Care Home, where I opted for domestic work. The social worker who introduced me to the staff there said he hoped I knew what I was doing, as I would be scrubbing pots and peeling carrots all day!

The pay was the same and the pension attractive. I am retired now, so I guess I am finished with work experience.

The Sligo State Trials 1879

By Keenan Johnson

One of the first trials to be held in the refurbished courthouse in Sligo involved the prosecution of charges against Michael Davitt, founder of the land league, James Daly a newspaper proprietor from Castlebar and James Boyce Killeen, a Belfast barrister. On the 25th November 1879 the three were put on trial for charges of sedition before a bench of magistrates. The bench of magistrates consisted of Arthur Maloney, RM; Alexander Gilmore, Moses Mans, Dr Woods, Capt Pollinger, George Robinson, Alexander Lyons and Capt Griffith[1]. The three accused were on trial in respect of comments made by them at a meeting of the land league held in Gurteen on 2nd November 1879 which was chaired by the local parish priest Canon Brennan. It is reputed that between 8,000 and 10,000 people attended at the meeting and this is indicative of the ability of Michael Davitt to garner support.

Davitt himself was the son of a Mayo tenant farmer who was evicted from his holding thereby compelling the Davitt family to emigrate to England. In England Davitt got work in a cotton mill where he received a serious injury resulting in the amputation of his right arm. Subsequent to this he was educated due to the generosity of a local benefactor called John Dean. On completion of his education Davitt became involved in the Irish Republican Brotherhood and was jailed for his activities and sent to Dartmoor. While in prison Davitt came to the conclusion that ownership of the land by the people was the only solution to Ireland's problems. His plight in prison was highlighted by Irish Parliamentary party MP John O'Connor Power and ultimately he benefited from an amnesty. Up until the time of the state trials in Sligo the activities of the land league had been confined primarily to County Mayo. The land league was formally founded on 16th August 1879 in Castlebar. On 21st October 1879 it was superseded by the Irish National Land League. Charles Stewart Parnell was made its first president and Davitt was one of its secretaries. The aims of the land league were pursuance of the 3F's fair rent, fixity of tenure and freedom of sale. The famine of 1879 also contributed significantly to support for the land league.

Following the meeting in Gurteen on 18th November Davitt was warned by E Dwyer Gray[2] the editor of *The Freeman Journal* that he would be arrested on the following morning because of his speech in Gurteen and advising him to leave the country. Davitt ignored the warning and at 5 AM on 18th November 1879 he was arrested and brought to Sligo where he discovered that Daly and Killeen were also in custody. On the same day he was taken before the resident magistrate who remanded the three accused until the following Monday on the charge of sedition. Parnell immediately denounced the arrests and called a huge protest meeting in the Rotunda in Dublin 48 hours later. The arrests caused public outrage and following a massive demonstration in Balla, County Mayo, where an eviction was about to take place, Parnell immediately travelled to Sligo to attend the trial and there he visited Davitt and his co-accused in Sligo jail.

The purpose of the court hearing in Sligo was to determine if the three accused had a case to answer. If it was established that they had a case to answer then they would be sent forward for trial before a judge and jury.

At the hearing in Sligo the state was represented by John Munroe QC instructed by Mr Peyton Crown, solicitor. Mr Daly was represented by Mr London instructed by Mr Maloney from Sligo and Mr Killeen was represented by an eccentric solicitor from Belfast called Mr Rea. Michael Davitt conducted his own defence.

Outlining the case for the Crown, Mr Munroe explained to the magistrates the definition of sedition by referencing Mr Justice Fitzgerald, the same judge who had presided over the initial trial of Matthew Phibbs in 1861. Judge Fitzgerald had defined sedition as a comprehensive term which embraced all those "practices, whether by word or deed or writing, which are calculated and intended to disturb the tranquillity of the state. Its objects are to create a commotion and introduce discontent and disaffection."[3]

All three accused were deemed to have perpetrated the crime of sedition by urging those attending the meeting in Gurteen not to pay their rents and to seek abolition of landlordism. The Crown relied on reports of what was said by the three accused from reports prepared by newspaper reporters who had attended the meeting and also by police constables who were present at the meeting and indeed one police constable who attended the meeting under the guise of being a legitimate newspaper reporter. Mr Daly was reported to have urged those attending the meeting not to pay their landlord until they had some guarantee from him or from the government that they wouldn't allow their children to starve. He continued to urge that tenants should pay no more than they could afford and that they should defend themselves and not allow the landlord to evict them. In opening the case Mr Munroe attempted to impute the good character of Davitt by stating that he could not be said on a social level to be a person of a very elevated position. He acknowledged that Davitt was a man of considerable ability who had previously been found guilty of the crime of treason when he was sentenced to a period of 15 years penal servitude but because of the clemency exercised by the government he was released after seven years. There was no conflict between the Crown and the defence as to what Davitt had said at the meeting. He told the assembled masses to look at landlordism in

purely commercial terms. He went on to point out that landlords were taking approximately 50% of the tenants' earnings by way of rent and that none of them had ever put "a foot to the plough or a hand to the spade to earn a penny of that money." He fervently argued that farmers must labour from "morn till eve to support themselves and their children, when in steps Mr Lazy the unproductive landlord and demands nearly half their money. I say that at last, in the face of another impending famine too plainly visible, the time has come when the manhood of Ireland will spring to its feet and says it will tolerate the system no longer." Davitt referred to the immorality of landlordism and argued that it was a tax on the people and needed to be swept away.

In response to the allegations and acting for himself without the benefit of legal assistance Davitt who clearly was a brilliant orator and advocate stated that he did not wish to appeal to the clemency of the bench. He took issue to Mr Munroe's reference to the clemency shown to him by the Crown when he opened the case and that it was an attempt to paint Davitt as an ingrate. He went on to say that when alluding to the clemency of the crown Munroe forgot to mention the vengeance of the Crown and made no mention of the fact that Davitt had spent seven years and eight months in prison and was forced to associate with "the vilest dregs of humanity, the vilest criminals to be found in English prison establishments" and that furthermore Munroe did not say that the crime for which he Davitt was forced to undergo this imprisonment was no more or less than for "loving Ireland as every Irishman feels he has a right to love her." Davitt said that if he thought the land league would be affected by his committal to prison or by his liberation then he would avail of legal assistance but realising that the land league could not be arrested or crushed by his being arrested and crushed he was not concerned for his own fate. "Knowing my words used at Gurteen and my own motives I have a very easy task in defending both." Davitt then questioned a report of a Mr Johnson on whom the Crown had relied for evidence. He asked Johnson if Davitt had ever obstructed him in the discharge of his duty as a government reporter. Johnson replied that he received no molestation what ever at the hands of anyone and that he came down in the same carriage in the same train with Davitt to the meeting. At the conclusion of the trial, Davitt argued that there was no prima facie case made out which would justify the magistrates in sending him forward for trial. "If the whole case was looked at from a common sense point of view, impartially looked at, his speech at Gurteen would amount to this - that he was more concerned for the existence of the people during the coming winter, threatened as they were with dire distress, than for the legal rights of well-to-do landlords who had nothing to fear such distress."[4] He said he was perfectly justified in showing a partiality for that class of Irish people to whom he was not ashamed to say he belonged, the farming class; but he admitted he would not be justified in calling on that class to participate in any legal proceeding, or in asking them to take part in any seditious movement against the government of the country. He denied that he had done anything of the kind at Gurteen or at any of the meetings he had addressed in Ireland for the last 12 months. He went on to argue that he had established in the evidence that as a consequence of his comments in Gurteen no additional illegal activity had been reported on the part of any of those who attended the meeting. In other words he had not exhorted the meeting to engage in open revolt and there was no evidence of any insurrectionary activity.

The performance of Mr Rea solicitor for Mr Killeen added to the notoriety and newsworthiness of the trial. His aim was to ridicule the court for a week by insulting the magistrates and garnering as much publicity as he could for himself. Ultimately the magistrates determined that all three accused had a case to answer and sent them forward for trial. At the end of the trial the proceedings had become so discredited that even the newspaper reporters hissed from the press benches when the Crown representative tried to make his case.

The three accused were remanded during the course of the trial in Sligo jail and thousands of people supported them on the route to and from the jail to the courthouse each day. Parnell was in court each day to support Davitt and each night he would address public meetings where he fiercely denounced the prosecution.

It was clear that Davitt saw the trial as a wonderful opportunity to promote the land league and garner international publicity for its cause. The trial was reported far and wide with 27 reporters attending at each day of the hearings. Detailed reports of the hearings appeared in newspapers in Ireland, Britain and the United States, protest meetings were called for in Limerick, Cork, London, Liverpool, Bradford, Glasgow, Dundee and elsewhere and cables of support began to pour in from the United States. Davitt wrote that the situation was superb and that some cells in Sligo jail echoed each night with chuckling of contented inmates. He noted the trial showed the imbecility of English rule in Ireland at its most rampant antics. Davitt realised that the trials could not have done a better job of promoting the work of the Land League and of covering the law with ridicule. He remarked that if they had spent £5000 on publicity they couldn't have achieved greater success. He stated that the enemies (presumably landlords) were the league's best friends and that his objective was to prolong the priceless entertainment that the trials had become[5]. One commentator noted that the prisoners were escorted each day from Cranmore to the temple of the law which because of the farcical nature of the trial had been converted into judicial vaudeville.

On the application of the Crown the trials were moved to Dublin and abandoned on the eve of the 1880 general election. It is clear that the prosecutions brought the law into disrepute and gave a huge injection of support to the Irish land league and afforded a considerable boost to its morale. Davitt wrote subsequently

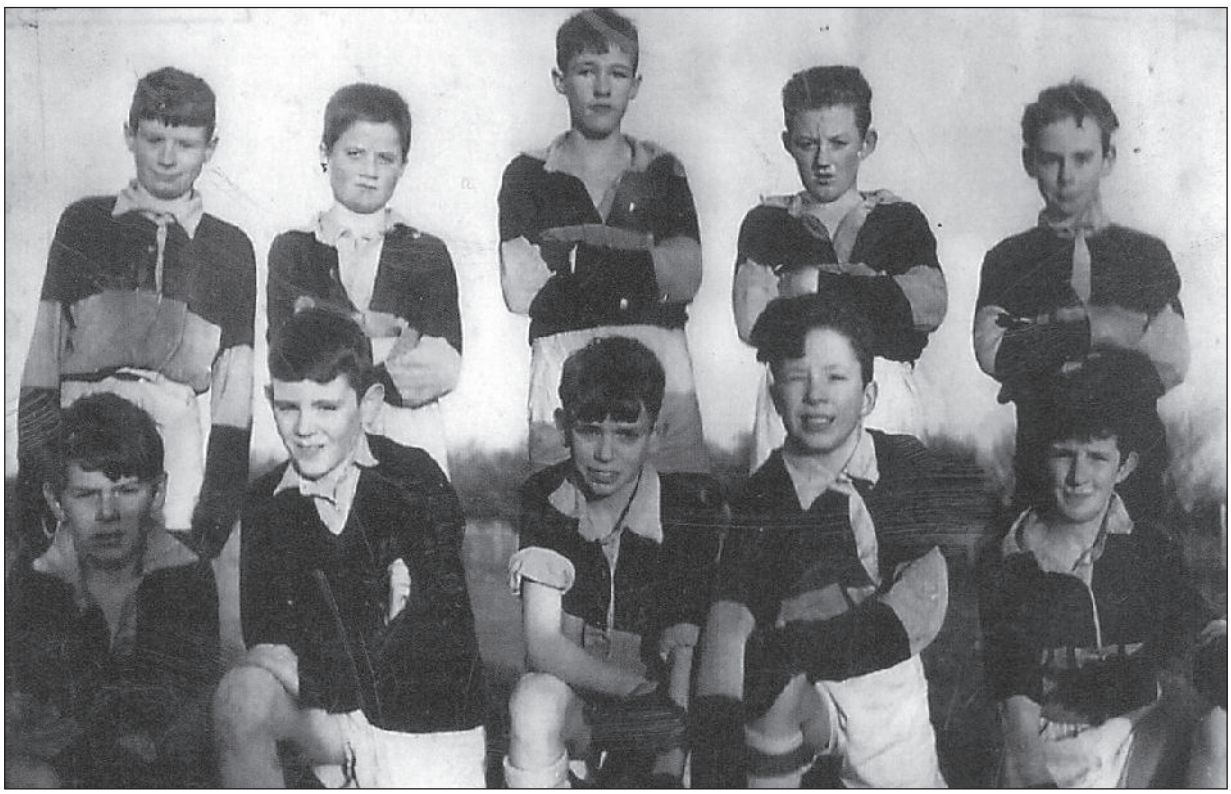
that the priceless assistance rendered to the league by the blundering tactics of the Sligo prosecution brought down almost all barriers hitherto operating against its progress outside of Connacht[6]. The Land League's influence in the country grew by leaps and bounds. Dublin Castle had grappled with it and had been thrown badly by the encounter and what was worse, it was laughed at and ridiculed by the public in the disgrace of its defeat. English rule in Ireland had suffered while that of the league became enormously enhanced. The landlords had forced the action of the government in the trials and the result would tell against them and their rentals in a situation where the push to introduce the Settled Land Act became unstoppable, ultimately resulting in tenant farmers being given assistance to purchase their holdings, thereby resulting in the death of Landlordism. The Landlords had attempted to kill the no rent movement when they saw clearly that a terrible winter was approaching, and instead their confrontational approach in using the full force of the law helped to create a power that was destined in that and another winter to sound the death knell of the rent system. The rent system had supported British rule in Ireland for hundreds of years and its demise weakened British rule in the country and arguably set in train the efforts including the War of Independence that culminated in the granting of independence to the 26 counties in 1922.

It is fair to say that the Sligo's State trials played no small part in the ultimate destruction of landlordism in this country and the passing of the Settled Land Act which allowed Irish farmers to purchase their holdings. It is interesting to note that the success of the Settled Land Acts was not repeated in England where 80% of farmers to this day are still tenant farmers. I think Sligo and its people can take pride in the achievements of the land league and the support that the locals afforded Davitt and his co-accused in the Sligo state trials.

1. M McDonnell Bodkin K.C. "Famous Irish Trials" Ashfield Press 1918 Page 85
2. *The Sligo Champion* Sesquicentenary Ssupplement 1836 – 1986 -Page 29
3. M McDonnell Bodkin K.C. "Famous Irish Trials" Ashfield Press 1918 Page 87
4. M McDonnell Bodkin K.C. "Famous Irish Trials" Ashfield Press 1918 Page 88
5. Davitt Michael "The Death of Feudalism in Ireland"
6. Davitt Michael "The Death of Feudalism in Ireland"

Ballymote juvenile Gaelic football team from the mid 1960s

Back. Row (L to R): Mickey Connell, Adrian Tansey, John Flanagan RIP, Michael Daly, Michael McGettrick,
Front Row (L to R): John Doddy, Dermot Horan, Brendan Cawley, Tommy Perry RIP, Tommy Doddy RIP.



A Feast for the Eyes, Food for the Mind, Some Monuments within Sligo Town

By Martin A. Timoney

Sligo town, though some prefer city, has monuments of all ages and where better to start to learn of them than in the centre of Sligo's main street. This article from an Archaeologist but also Author and Editor of several works listed at the end, tells of some places within walking distance of the town centre worth looking at. It is not a summary of the history of Sligo town, rather it is a look at some noteworthy monuments, buildings and sculpture within walking distance of the centre of Sligo town and worth spending time at. It also briefly mentions what else might catch your eye.

Sligo's location, on the short Garvoge River, is squeezed between Lough Gill and Sligo Bay. To the north and south, steep hills overlook the town. Two old and three modern bridges cross the river.

The earliest monument to be seen is the Neolithic passage tomb near the Fire Station in Abbeyquarter overlooking where the Garvoge narrows as it passes through the town. This burial place, like those at Carrowmore, a few kilometres west of the town, dates to the Neolithic – the crucifixion scene on it dates to the 1950s, a Christianising of a pagan monument.

We have no standing monuments of the Bronze Age or the Iron Age within the town; a few objects from these periods may be seen in Sligo Museum. The name Rathquarter may reflect an Early Medieval period ringfort thought by some to be beneath the 17th century military Green Fort. The ringfort in Rathedmond can be seen through railings.

The Garvoge now meets the sea about where Hyde Bridge is. When the river is low and the tide is out you could possibly wade across a broader river at a fording point here. However, we should allow for crossing the river by a small boat. Sligo had a bridge here by the late 12th century and seems to have had its beginnings as a town by 1245 with the building of a castle in the vicinity by the Anglo-Norman Baron, Maurice FitzGerald. This castle overlooked the lowest bridging point of the Garvoge just below Sir John Benson's Victoria Bridge, now Hyde Bridge, of 1846. That first castle may have been incorporated into the massive castle begun in 1310 by Richard de Burgo, Earl of Ulster, a castle in the fashion of Caernarvon in north Wales and Ballintober in Co. Roscommon, all with polygonal corner towers. The history and mapping record is summarised by O'Conor, O'Brien and Timoney, and O'Keeffe. The only early visual record of the town is a detailed drawing by Thomas Phillips' *Prospect of Sligo* in 1685; his viewpoint was on Circular Road in Knocknaganny from where he captured the layout of the late 17th century Sligo town and the landscape to the north.

The medieval docks would have been below the castle walls, just where the river enters the sea. Quay Street may well have been the main thoroughfare through the castle yard northwards to the quays. Many of the mills and warehouses have gone, just like the many people who emigrated across the Atlantic over the centuries from this port. A 1997 monument by Niall Bruton in the car park reminds us of emigration in famine times. The skeletal wreck of a 20th century lighter, a boat used to lighten the loads on ships to allow them to make it to the inner harbour, lies at what was once a point of departure; its removal could allow a useful boating marina almost in the heart of the town.

Soon in time after the FitzGerald castle came Sligo's Dominican Abbey in 1252, again built by FitzGerald, at the east edge of the town (open to the public in season). Burnt by accident in 1414, it was rebuilt from 1416 and continued to be used for worship until the Dominicans moved to Burton St. in 1745 where they built a church in 1763. The Dominicans moved to High St. in 1847 and that church was replaced in 1973, though part of the ornate sanctuary is preserved beside the modern building. The original Abbey is the finest medieval religious structure in the county.

The reconstruction drawing of the Abbey, to be seen on a signboard outside the Visitor centre, illustrates this prime piece of Sligo's medieval architecture. The east window, the cloisters with the reading desk for the refectory behind it, the tower, the decorated high altar and the reconstructed rood screen are all features of interest.

Any building that has been in continuous use for centuries will have seen structural changes – a prime example is the Dominican Abbey, it is always called the Abbey, never Priory – Priory is retained for the current Dominican house in High St. Eleanor Butler's side chapel in the medieval Abbey, often erroneously described as a transept, was built after 1624 but before 1636 through the south aisle. A wall inserted in 1715 to the west of the rood screen to compact the church was removed in the early 20th century. The superb O'Crean altar tomb of 1506 deserves serious examination, not just for the figures but for its current structure and position. There are further O'Crean armorials under the tower. The O'Crean family were wine importers, perhaps from the 14th century. The internationally important O'Connor Sligo-Butler religious monument of 1624 above the high altar is a superb example of a fashion in the 17th century and it

has one close comparable, in Donadea Church of Ireland, Co. Kildare. The top part of the secular 1624 O'Connor Sligo-Butler monument that was in Sligo castle in Quay St. is now in the Visitor Centre of the Abbey – the lower part was taken to Dublin via Liverpool and is now secure within a building in north Leinster since 1877.

Throughout the grounds are memorials ranging in date from the High Medieval to the early 20th century. Several dismantled pieces of sculpture by the Diamond school are to be seen. The graveyard was officially closed in 1895, Sligo Cemetery on Pearse Rd was opened 1847 – the older part of that has many memorials of architectural, artistic and historical interest, a fine gate lodge and walled gates. Quoting the other author in this house, "A walk around [the older part of] Sligo Cemetery is a lesson in the history of the politics, business, professional and social life of [19th century] Sligo". There is a similar lesson on the history of Sligo town for earlier centuries to be learned in the grounds of Sligo Abbey and St. John's.

The name Castle St. comes, not from de Burgo's 1310 castle, but, from long-demolished late medieval tower-house type castles. The preferred medieval thoroughfare, from the south was down High St. and Market St. on the south side and up Holborn St. on the north side though no evidence for a connecting bridge across the Garvoge has ever been found. Old Market St. as a name is a reflection of a time when the market area was at the Abbey St.-Teeling St. corner. The lower part of Old Market St. was renamed after The Albert Line, (now Pearse Road), was laid out from 1846 and later again renamed as Teeling St. The later Market Cross area has a roundel made in 2013 in the pavement of the Civic Space beside the Lady Erin memorial erected in 1898 to commemorate the 1798 rising and the Year of the French. It has a visual interpretation of Rev. William Henry's 1739 description of the market cross itself – that cross dates to c.1570 and seems to have survived to the 1830s. There was a bishop's palace hereabouts – Andrew O'Crean was bishop here in the 16th century. The subtle twist in Grattan St. may be suggestive of a western delimiting of the medieval town.

Diggings beneath many pavements in the town, with few exceptions, have revealed evidence for the consumption of oyster, cockle, periwinkle and mussel, brought in from the shores of Ballisodare, Sligo and Drumcliffe Bays. The county and town get their name, Sligo*, Sligeach*, from the abundance of shellfish from the adjacent shorelines. Originally the shellfish was consumed by the shore for thousands of years, as witnessed by the many massive shell middens. Later, from about the start of historic times, the shellfish were transported inland for consumption at home – a 'take away' as opposed to the earlier 'restaurant'.

Standing on Rathquarter hill overlooking the town is the Green Fort, a 17th century star-shaped military fort, refortified c. 1689. The line of the 17th century town defences shown on Luttrell's 1689 map has been confirmed in several places, most recently on the line between Fr. Flanagan Terrace and a playground to its south – this line continued east to the Green Fort. Property boundaries and roads follow its course elsewhere in the town. We have no detailed indication of what format the boundary took.

From the Green Fort on Connaughton Rd. on the north side of the river one can get great views of the town of Sligo and the landscape of the northern part of the county including Benbulben, Glencar Valley, Cairns Hill, Slíabh da Éan, the Collooney Gap, the Ox Mts., Knocknarea, Sligo Bay and much of the Yeats Country. Many of these vistas peep through our open streetscapes. Likewise, some of the key buildings in the town; the railway station, the cathedrals, the abbey and its modern successor are worth a longer look.

Close below the Green Fort is Calry Church of Ireland of 1824, while the two cathedrals are close together across the town. The Roman Catholic cathedral opened in 1874 and the Church of Ireland Cathedral of St. Mary the Virgin and St. John the Baptist, more popularly St. John's, is a Cathedral since as recently as 1961. There may have been a hospital at the St. John's site as early as 1242 and a church by 1311. The present structure owes a lot to rebuilding by Richard Cassel about 1730 and there were alterations again in 1812. It also has monuments of note, such as the monument to Roger and Maria Jones of 1628 attached inside to the back wall of the church. Jones was High Sheriff of Sligo from 1612 until his death in 1637. There is a brass memorial at the south aisle to John Fredrick Feeney, founder of the Birmingham Post newspaper in 1857; his brother William, d. 1817, is commemorated on a slab on the south side of the Cloisters of the Abbey. In the graveyard there are superb memorials; the box tomb of Abraham Martin of Cleveragh by Diamond of Skreen is outside the east window, the memorial to the Middleton and Pollexfen ancestors of Yeats is along the south wall of the graveyard.

The higher part of the cafe upstairs in Lyons is a quiet place to enjoy good food but do contemplate the odd angles of the back wall above you. These are not due to a builder having had a bad day but are a ghost reflection of the ground plan from two stories below of the angular SW bastion of the Stone Fort of the 1650s that followed the castle and was in turn succeeded by the Town Hall of 1865.

The more-recent history of the town can be seen in its monuments, buildings and streetscapes. Outside the Town Hall stands P.A. McHugh, M.P., an advocate for people's rights by peaceful means; he was Editor of *The Sligo Champion*. The statue designed by Anthony Scott was unveiled in 1916. It has a small amount of Celtic Revival artwork. The Ulster Bank building, like the Royal Palace in Stockholm, was inspired by the Doge's Palace in Venice. William Butler Yeats reads poetry outside the Ulster Bank - the sweeping statue by Ronan Gillespie dates to 1989, the 50th anniversary of the poet's death. Sligo has many buildings associated

with the Yeats Family and that whole story was wonderfully elucidated by Joyce Raftery Enright in 2013. Many of these buildings are at the west end of Wine St., an area to be appropriately called the Yeats Quarter. Wine St. was widened in 1857-1860. In front of where the Middleton-Pollexfen building stands there was a building thought to have been a public house. Sligo-born Ambrosio O'Higgins and his son Bernardo, first President of Republic of Chile, are commemorated since 1994 in Stephen St. car park. An acquaintance of Yeats, Indian polymath Rabindranath Tagore, 1861-1941, has recently joined the Middleton-Pollexfen Yeats quarter at the western end of Wine St. Extensive wall paintings celebrate personae that are more recent.

When visiting the Museum, the building beside the County Library 1851, do look at the artefacts from many eras – the Cloverhill Stone, some of the Carrowntemple Early Christian slabs, Maria Jones' Belladrihid bridge stone of 1628 and a selection of folklife and historical objects from more recent centuries. Objects in the Museum fill gaps in the story of our town from several periods. Sligo still awaits a museum that would reflect the wonders of 10,000 years of settlement in a county clothed with wonderful flora and a diverse fauna on a solid bedrock of a million years with glacial deposits. There are many spacious empty buildings that could be used to showcase our county.

On your wanderings through the town you will see many shopfronts that have survived the rush to modernise. Long-standing businesses like Wehrly, Mullaney, Cosgrove, Hargadon, Record Room and Lyons have shopfronts worth admiring, but do spend some money there. In 2013, Bernie Gilbride published early 20th century photos of many of the old shops in the town. Look not just at the shopfronts, but at architectural details and the upper levels - the pigs head detail on the Tír Na nÓg shop on Grattan St. reflect its time when it was a pork butcher's shop. There are several modern pieces of architecture which are 'of the period'. Likewise terraces like those in Wine St., John St. and Temple St., of 19th century, are in modern use.

Rockwood Parade was set out along the south side of the river in 1975-1976 and the buildings were developed from 1992. Tobergal Lane, with its Italian Quarter, leads to it from O'Connell St. and Water Lane leads from Market Cross. The striking Glasshouse Hotel is like a giant ship about to crush Hyde Bridge; the roof of the apartment block behind the hotel adds a dramatic touch to the Sligo skyline.

Several churches and bank buildings are in recycled mode. The Congregational Church of 1851, Stephen St., has been preserved as Sligo County Library since 1952. The Battle of the Books wall painting by Bernard McDonagh is from 1955. The Court House of 1879 was renovated from 1998 to 2001. Part of the former County Gaol and its Governor's House are beyond St. Anne's. The former Sligo Mental Hospital (St. Columba's) is now a hotel. Some buildings are a reflection of pre-border, pre-independence links with Belfast. Of the many buildings worth a second look are the former bank on Grattan St., the Post Office, the Masonic Hall of 1895 on The Mall, the Gillooley Hall of c. 1895 beside the Cathedral and the Presbyterian Methodist manse of c. 1867. Across the bridge the Yeats Memorial Building, WB's spiritual home, was a bank building, c. 1899, by Vincent Craig. Former hotels such as Clarence, Grand, Bonne Chere and Imperial have found a new life. Some placenames, some now replaced, hark back to a different era: Victoria Line, Albert Line, and Temple St., named after Henry Mount Temple, not after a church building. The Market Yard, the Ropewalk and the Linen Hall, the Gaol and the Governors' Building, no longer serve those trades.

Worth spending some time in are the Model Niland Art Gallery - the building dates to 1862, The Cat and The Moon on Castle St., which holds smaller art and craft exhibitions; and Cáit and I at the Market Cross which sells locally made crafts. For night-time, besides the pubs, there is a cinema and the Hawk's Well Theatre which opened in 1982. There are sporting venues close to the town centre.

Having seen some of Sligo's jewels there are fine publications about Sligo town and the county that can be purchased in Liber or read them in Sligo Library Local Studies Archive. No doubt you will find good reason to return, to retrace your steps and pick up on what you missed; our past is everywhere and constantly there to enrich all our lives.

Repeating the tourist business mantra:
Heads on Beds,
Bums on Seats,
Feet on Streets,
but give the visitor good reasons,
Eyes on Sights,
Memories that Last,
Eyes on Sites,
Pictures to take,
A Longing to Stay,
If not, Return, Soon.
Tell others about our town of many sites and the many sights within and adjacent to it.

Further Reading

Short titles of some works relating directly to items mentioned above.

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Martin A. Timoney, editor, 2013: *Dedicated to Sligo*, [Articles by Foran, Gilbride, Ó Muraíle, O'Keeffe, Raftery Enright and Timoney].
Mary B. Timoney, 2005: *Had Me Made: The Grave Memorials of Co. Sligo.*
Charles Tyndall, 1962: *The Ancient Parish and Church of St. John the Baptist, Sligo.*
William Gregory Wood-Martin, 1882; 1889, 1892: *The History of Sligo, County and Town, Three volumes.*
Reprint *1990.*

Newspaper Extracts

Submitted by Padraig Doddy

July 31st 1792 ***Dublin Evening Post***
Stolen

Off the lands of Roadstown in the county of Sligo on Friday night 20th inst a black bald-faced mare about fourteen and one-half hands high, with a switched tail, and a long mane, some white in for and hindfoot, and a white spot about the breadth of a card on her belly. She was in good condition and steps well.

Whoever gives intelligence of her so as to be found, shall receive a one guinea reward, and for the thief and mare by prosecuting him to conviction, five guineas which will be paid by Mr Roger Gunning at Roadstown, or Mr. Michael Phillips, 20 Arran Quay, Dublin.

July 28th 1792

Death and Funeral of Miss B. Scanlon of Ballymote (May 28th 1908 Obituary ***Sligo Champion***)

T*he following is an obituary notice from the Sligo Champion 1908. Some of the mourners were well known and influential Ballymote residents. John Francis (J.F.) Cunningham F.R.G.S F.Z.S Barrister at Law and Colonial Secretary for British West Africa, was born in Moyrush, Bunninadden, in 1859. His brother Patrick lived in Ballymote in the 1930s and was known as Pat Jack. J.F. was a correspondent for the* ***Sligo Champion.***

The death took place at Ballymote on Thursday last of Miss B. Scanlan, eldest daughter of Mr Francis Scanlan. Deceased who had just reached 19 years, was educated at St. Mary's University College, Dublin, and the Convent School, Ballymote, at which latter institution she had won the unique honour of being the most distinguished pupil of her year. She was niece to Mr James F. Cunningham, Secretary of the Uganda Protectorate, and sister of Mr John P. Scanlan, of the Catholic University School of Medicine, Dublin. She was stricken down with her fatal illness a few months ago and despite all that eminent medical skill could do she was called to her reward on Thursday. Drs Gilmartin, O'Callaghan, and Frazer looked after her temporal interests; and the venerable Archdeacon Loftus, Frs. T. and D. Gallagher and the Sisters of Mercy, attended to her spiritual welfare. The news of her demise cast a gloom over Ballymote and the surrounding country; for she was universally beloved on account of her quiet unassuming nature.

The funeral, which was a large and representative one, was headed by the Children of Mary, in charge of Mrs Kelly, N T; Miss K. Dockry, and Mrs Boland. Fr T Gallagher officiated at the graveside. Wreaths were sent from Sisters of Mercy, "In Loving Memory"; "Her Sorrowful Comrades", Convent School; "In Grateful Remembrance", Annie and Winnie Healy; "In Fond Remembrance", A Dear Friend; also, by the Misses O'Dowd (cousins) and Miss J Scanlan. The chief mourners were – Maria Scanlan (mother), F Scanlan (father), John P (brother), Kathleen (sister), PJ Cunningham (uncle) Martin Cunningham and J McKeown (cousins), Mrs Frizzelle (aunt), Cecelia and Wm Keenan (cousins). The public included – Mr J Hannon, JP, CC; M Hannon DC; J Gilmartin DC; Dr Gilmartin; Mr B Scanlan NT; Mr JJ Cooke (creamery); Miss Kilcoyne NT; Mr Morrison, Mr Joe Healy, Messrs F Dyer, J Cawley, MP Burke, J Walshe, J McGuinness, P Cryan, J Cryan, and T Davey, etc. To her bereaved relatives we offer our heartfelt sympathy. RIP

Luke J Duffy (1890 – 1961)

By Owen M. Duffy

This article outlines the involvement of South Sligo native, Luke J Duffy in the development of trade unionism in Ireland, the development of the Irish Labour party, and also his involvement in the setting up of the Irish Industrial Development Authority (IDA).

Luke Joseph Duffy was born on 26th March 1890 in the family home in the townland of Clooneenbawn which is located about one mile from Gurteen and on the road to Ballymote. Kilshalvy Cross is approximately 200 metres on the Ballymote side of their farm. It was the meadows of Clooneen with their abundance of Meadowsweet (a plant with a profusion of white flowers in early Summer) which gave Clooneen or Clooneenbawn its name (Gaelic for small white meadow). Luke's grandfather, Thomas Duffy and his wife Winifred Walsh (from Carrowilkin, Curry) took over this tenant farm of 10 ½ acres shortly after the Great Irish Famine. The farm stretched down to the meandering Owenmore River. The farm was later handed on to Thomas' son, Patrick (Patsy) and his wife Catherine who reared a family of one son, Luke Joseph, and two daughters, Winifred (born 1892) and Mary (born 1894).

Eager to see his only son Luke receive the best education available, Patsy decided that the long journey across the Owenmore to Drumhillock, and later Cloonanure National Schools, would best serve Luke's educational needs and interests. Hugh O'Donnell, who qualified as a national teacher from Saint Patrick's Training College in 1892, was appointed as Principal of Drumhillock National School and afterwards to Cloonanure (built and opened in 1905). Both schools developed an extraordinary reputation for learning and that was due in no small way to the legendary headmaster, Hugh O'Donnell.

Hugh was a member of the Board of Guardians in Boyle Poor Law Union and he also served as a member of Sligo County Council (Chairman in 1940 – 1941). He was elected President of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) in 1927. He was also treasurer of Sligo GAA county board in 1900. It was only natural that this outstanding GAA and political activist would imbue his young impressionable school pupils with ambition and drive in all things nationalistic. It was said that Hugh kindled in Luke J Duffy "a flame that spread like a prairie fire" Seeing the potential in young Luke J Duffy, Hugh worked tirelessly to impart all the organisational skills with which he himself, was so adept. Luke remained under the guidance of Hugh O'Donnell until he was eighteen years of age. Night classes in various subjects were common in Drumhillock and Cloonanure schools as the young students were busy with farm chores during the day. Second level schools like Gurteen Vocational School did not open until the 1940s.

At nearly 19 years of age, Luke left Cloonanure School in 1908. He was immediately accepted into Moon's, a prestigious drapery store in Galway city, to serve a three-year apprenticeship as drapery assistant with living-in provided at 7 Eglington Street. Charles A. Moon had previously employed Luke's granduncle, Luke Walsh (from Carrowilkin, Curry) as

Galway Branch Committee, Irish Drapers' Assistants' Association, 1912
(Drapers' Assistant, MANDATE Archive)

Galway branch committee IDAA 1912.
Luke Duffy is front row on left hand side.
Photo courtesy of Drapers Assistant Mandate Archive

the firm's bookkeeper. Also, a grand aunt of Luke Duffy named Bridget (Walsh) Whelan worked at Moon's so the 19-year-old Luke J came to the Galway megastore with in-house references.

Luke immediately became involved in the trade union movement in Galway. In 1910 he joined the Irish Drapers' Assistants Association (IDAA) in Galway. When a trades council was established in Galway, the IDAA was prominent in it from the start. John Cunningham in his book "Labour in the West of Ireland" cited, "the presence in the Galway branch of wunderkind activist Luke J Duffy as a possible explanation for the close links between the IDAA and the Trades Council". By 1911, Luke had become branch secretary. Shortly afterwards he became vice president and trustee of the Trades Council, secretary of both the Redmondite Volunteers, and the Galway City Gaelic Athletic Association.

Admired greatly by Michael O'Lehane, general secretary of the national IDAA, Luke was requested to chair the IDAA's Annual Conference in Dublin in 1914. Honoured by the request, Luke chaired the national conference with firmness and distinction. However, Luke's union activity was to lead to confrontation with his employers, and he was dismissed by Moons' in 1916. He was immediately appointed regional organiser for the IDAA in Munster and based in Cork city. The IDAA attracted particular attention for its recruitment of female members. In 1914, 1,400 of the 4,000 members were female. The INTO was the only other union with significant numbers of female members in 1914. During his time in Cork, Luke met and married Noelle Christina O'Donovan on the 3rd April 1920 at Saint Peter & Paul's Church in Cork city.

Michael J O'Lehane died on 1st March 1920. In 1921 an amalgamation of the IDAA, the Irish Clerical Workers Union and the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants & Warehousemen took place. The three amalgamated to become The Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks and in 1922 Luke J Duffy became its General Secretary. Luke also became editor of their magazine "The Distributive Worker". (Access available to these magazines in the National Library of Ireland).

Luke and his new wife Noelle Christina moved to Dublin and lived at No 6 Garville Road, Rathgar. During 1922 Luke was involved in the many meetings held in the Mansion House, Dublin which attempted to bring about a settlement to the civil war. In 1923 he was appointed President of the Irish Trade Union Congress.

March 23rd,1926 saw the formation of the new Fianna Fáil party when Eamonn De Valera split from Sinn Fein because of De Valera's motion calling for elected members to be

1 *Left to right:* J. H. Thomas, Thomas Farren and Thomas Johnson visiting Mountjoy prison, 1920, to investigate the conditions of hunger strikers. (*Irish Independent*)

2 First administrative council of the Labour Party, June 1931. *Front row, left to right:* William O'Brien, Thomas Johnson, Mary Davidson, William Norton , Michael Keyes. *Back row, left to right:* Luke Duffy, Thomas Nagle, T. J. Murphy, TD, Archie Heron, T. J. O'Connell TD, Senator J. T. O'Farrell, William Davin TD, Robert Tynan. (From J. A. Gaughan, *Thomas Johnson* (Dublin, 1980))

First Administrative Council of the Labour Party (June 1931).
Front Row (L to R): William O'Brien, Senator Thomas Johnson, Mary Davidson, William Norton, Michael Keyes.
Back Row (L to R): Luke J Duffy, Thomas Nagle, T. J Murphy TD, Archie Heron, T.J O'Connell TD, Senator J.T O'Farrell, Willie Davin TD, Robert Tynan.

allowed to take their seats in the Dáil.

Two general elections were held in 1927. The first was held on 9th June and saw the formation of a new Cumann na nGaedheal led government without a majority. A vote of no confidence proposed by Labour and supported by Fianna Fail saw W.T Cosgrave calling for a second general election on 15th September 1927. Discussions between Fianna Fail and Labour on the 6th August 1927 re the formation of a Labour / National League government, were held at Duffy's home at 6 Garville Road, Rathgar. The Fianna Fail leaders Eamon de Valera, Sean T Kelly and Gerry Boland met Thomas Johnson, William O'Brien and Luke J Duffy for in depth discussions on future tactics.

Luke J Duffy, who previously had close connections with Cork city, contested the election as a Labour candidate for Cork Borough in both the June and September 1927 elections but was unsuccessful. In addition, Labour lost almost half of their seats that they had gained in the June election. Tom Johnson, Labour leader lost his seat. Thomas J O'Connell TD became the new Labour leader in 1927. He was also general secretary of the INTO in 1927. This was the same year that Master Hugh O'Donnell of Cloonanure N.S. was President of the INTO.

Luke J Duffy was also a member of the committee that set up the Labour Party independent of the Irish Trade Union Congress (ITUC). This inaugural meeting of the new Labour Party was held in the Mansion House, in April 1930. In 1932, the new Labour Party supported Eamonn DeValera's government which had proposed a significant programme of social reform. The following year (1933) Luke J Duffy was appointed general secretary of the new Labour Party, having stepped down from his position on the Irish Trade Union Congress.

During Luke's time as general secretary of the new Labour Party (1933-1949) he wrote most of the programme's pamphlets and books for the party. He was secretary of Labour Publications Ltd and manager of "Irish People", the party's newspaper. He was also to the forefront in writing many articles on employment, economic and industrial development. From 1922 to 1933 Luke served as a member of the Post Office Inquiry Board which reorganised the postal service. Luke was the Labour nominated member of government commissions, Banking and Currency in the 1930s and Vocational Organisation from 1939 to 1943. Luke was also Peace Commissioner and a member of Dublin Co Council.

Luke J Duffy lived at 33 Corrig Avenue, Dun Laoghaire from the mid 1940s until his death. Up until 1940 Luke enjoyed occasional visits back to his original home in Clooneenbawn where he delighted in discussions with his dad Patsy. He also looked

TOWARDS A NEW IRELAND

No. 21

FULL EMPLOYMENT IN POST-WAR IRELAND

By L. J. Duffy

DURING the twenty-one years that elapsed between the end of the last war and the beginning of the present conflagration, unemployment was the nightmare which dominated economics and politics in every country on the face of the globe; it affected the lives and menaced the well-being of millions of people. All countries, big and small, suffered. The United States, a highly industrialised country, had at one period over 15,000,000 people out of work; Great Britain had almost 3,000,000 and Germany 10,300,000 idle men and women. These are all industrialised countries. But the agricultural countries in the Balkans, countries like Switzerland, Poland and Ireland, suffered likewise and contributed their quota to the international procession of hungry men and women.

It is true, of course, that what is regarded as unemployment properly so-called does not, and did not, wear the same aspect in all countries. In the United States or in Great Britain when a coal mine closes down thousands of miners are deposited on the scrap-heap; they roam the streets looking for jobs which do not exist; if there is a highly developed system of social services they are probably able to obtain enough food, fuel and clothing to prevent them dying of hunger or exposure; if they live in Council houses, arrears of rent may be funded to save them from eviction; the local authority will even provide free meals for

Photograph of Luke taken while visiting the home farm in Clooneenbawn circa 1920s.

forward to the occasional stroll down by the Owenmore River and up to Clooneagh to meet his former schoolmaster, Hugh O'Donnell at his home. Luke's Dad, Patsy, died on 2nd August 1940 aged 85 years.

Luke's involvement as general secretary of the Labour party was ultimately to lead to the Labour Party becoming the second largest partner in the two inter party governments of 1948-1951 and 1954-1957. William Norton, Labour leader was Tánaiste on both occasions. During the first period he was Minister for Social Welfare while during the second inter party government he was Minister for Industry and Commerce.

In 1944, Luke was elected on to the Industrial & Commercial Panel as Senator in the 5th Seanad. He was re-elected in 1948 as Senator to the 6th Seanad. Luke was an informed and colourful contributor to Seanad proceedings and was noted for his high standard of oratory. Luke wrote many booklets and articles on ways of creating full employment in post war Ireland. His vision for job creation immediately following the second World War was well recognised

In 1949, Daniel Morrissey, Minister for Industry & Commerce, proposed the creation of a body to advise the government on industrial policy and to incentivise industrial development. On the 26th April 1949 he nominated the first four members of this new authority namely: Patrick Beddy (Chairman), Luke J Duffy (Vice Chairman), Kevin McCourt and John J Walsh. This new body became known as the Industrial Development Authority (IDA). Luke consequently resigned as a member of Seanad Eireann after his appointment by the Minister for Industry and Commerce to this newly formed board. Luke and the other three members worked tirelessly at developing strategies that would ultimately lead to attracting direct foreign investment into Ireland. The Industrial Development Authority was then placed on a statutory footing in 1950. Luke's initial appointment was for a term of five years up to 25th May 1954, Nonetheless, he spent the rest of his illustrious career working for and advancing the aims and objectives of the IDA until his retirement in 1960.

As mentioned previously, Luke married Noelle Christina O'Donovan in 1920. In 1921, their marriage was blessed with the arrival of a baby daughter who was named Catherine Rosalyn. A son was born in 1923 and was also named Luke Joseph. Another son Desmond (Des) was born in 1928 and finally Nuala born in 1930 and this completed the family. The family grew up in the new family home at 33 Corrig Avenue, Dún Laoghaire.

Luke's wife Noelle Christina died on 4th December 1957 at their home in Dún Laoghaire. On the 3rd August 1961 and just one year after his retirement from the IDA, Luke died at his home on Corrig Avenue. Noelle Christina and Luke J Duffy are buried in Deansgrange Cemetery.

After completing her leaving certificate, Luke's daughter Rosalyn obtained a position with Bord na Móna and she spent her working life there. All through Luke's career Rosalyn lived with her parents and accompanied Luke to many of the functions and events from the 1930's onwards. On her retirement from Bord Na Móna Rosalyn came to live on Pearse Road, Ballymote and joined Ballymote Heritage Group. She remained an avid participant during the many annual heritage weekends. Rosalyn died peacefully in her sleep on the afternoon of 18th June 2001.

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Note:

A special word of appreciation to Mr Charles Callan, Wicklow (co-author of "Irish Labour Lives") and to Dr John Cunningham of NUI Galway (Author of "Labour in the West of Ireland") for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of this article. ***Owen***.

Books of Interest

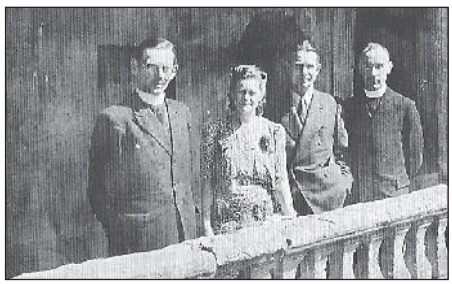
By John Coleman

Four books have recently been brought to my attention which are of Ballymote interest. John Taylor of Riverstown kindly drew my attention to a biography of Methodist preacher Gideon Ouseley which mentions that he lived as a lodger in the house of a Mr. Farquar in Ballymote in about 1797 **(Rev. W. Arthur, *Life of Gideon Ouseley,* Toronto, 1877).** According to Ballymote resident Jackson Hawksby, Ouseley's overly zealous preaching became such an annoyance to the quiet Protestants of the town that he was arrested and locked up in the 'Black Hole' of Sligo Barracks. Gideon Ouseley (1762-1839) receives a page long entry written by Paul Rouse in the Dictionary of Irish Biography (Royal Irish Academy/ Cambridge University Press, 2009, vol. 7, pp. 1014-5). Ouseley, a member of a family that had settled in Ireland during the reign of King James I, was born in Dunmore, County Galway and in 1792 abandoned a dissolute lifestyle and became an itinerant Methodist preacher, but not before squandering the fortune inherited by his wife Harriet Wills of County Roscommon. According to the DIB, he and his wife opened a school for girls in Sligo in the year of his conversion and after 1798 he was appointed by the Methodist conference as missionary to the Irish speaking population of Ulster. Being a fluent Irish speaker, he preached to Protestants and Catholics at fairs, markets and in fields. He wrote poetry in Irish and published pamphlets addressed to Catholics.

Information on Ouseley in Rev. Arthur's biography is followed by an amusing story relating to events in Ballymote about twenty years after Ouseley's sojourn (c.1817) and the best thing I can do is to reproduce pages 67-69 of the biography for the reader's amusement (See page 79).

John Cawley NT recently drew my attention to Rev. William P. Burke, ***The Irish Priests in Penal Times*** *(1660-1760). From the State Papers in H.M. Record Offices, Dublin and London, The Bodleian Library [Oxford], and the British Museum***,** Waterford 1914. This fascinating volume, which runs to 491 pages, transcribes detailed information gathered through interviews in every province and county with names of Catholic priests and religious and those who admitted to attending mass. The spelling and capitalisation for personal and place names is that used in the manuscript sources. Example of information on Sligo include a deposition to the effect that Teig McDennagh of Ballraghaboe on 29th October 1712 swore before William Ormsby and William Smith JP that they had heard mass celebrated by Bryan McDermott roe, who also went by the alias of John Smith as well as an admission by Bryan McDonagh of Taonah that he heard mass celebrated by Mathew Brehon (p.434). Franciscan Friars recorded in Ballymote in 1744 were Michael Conian (Guardian), Francis McDonogh, Anthony McDonogh and Francis Davey.

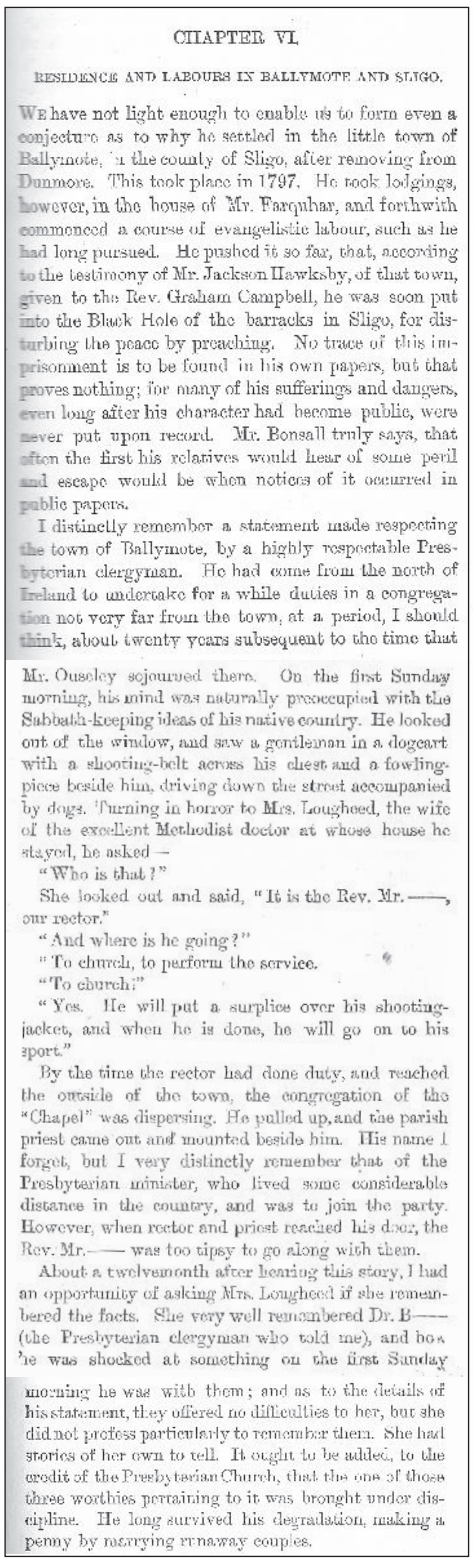
John Cawley NT has also drawn my attention to Tim Fanning's, ***The Salamanca Diaries, Father McCabe and the Spanish Civil War,*** Dublin 2019. This book is of particular interest to the Ballymote reader as a significant figure who features in the story is the late Monsignor John Francis O'Hara, who served as the last vice-rector of the Irish College in Salamanca (1935-45) and is fondly remembered for the many years he spent as a curate and finally Parish Priest in Ballymote. Without knowing anything of his distinguished career as a young priest, Monsignor O'Hara also struck me as a figure of quiet dignity and great serenity – quite different from the rather forward style of his predecessor Monsignor P. J. Roughneen. Having studied for the priesthood in Salamanca, Monsignor O'Hara served as vice-rector of the Irish College during the traumatic period of the Spanish Civil War and World War II. For much of the time Fr. McCabe, the rector was absent



Irish College Salamanca Spring 1942 - Fr. O'Hara is the figure on the right

in Ireland and Monsignor O'Hara was in charge. While Fanning sets Monsignor O'Hara's role in context, there is more detail in Fr Liam Swords's The Diocese of Achonry 1818-1960: A Dominant Church, Dublin, 2004, pp. 50—52. Fr. O'Hara studied at Salamanca from 1925 to 1931. During the summer of 1936 Fr. O'Hara was staying with the students at Pendueles on the northern Spanish coast when hostilities were taking root in the area. Eamon De Valera requested the assistance of the British Government as a result of which the British Admiralty sent a destroyer to evacuate the students. Surprised by their arrival, Fr. O'Hara initially said that he was satisfied that the students were safe and only agreed to their departure when the British Consul in Santander told him that His Majesty's Government could not keep destroyers waiting indefinitely at the disposal of people who were undecided. Fr O'Hara left a few weeks later but returned to Salamanca the following February and remained there until 1945. But efforts to bring further Irish students to the college never succeeded. After his return to Ireland, Monsignor O'Hara was initially appointed PP in the quiet parish of Bohola. Although he enjoyed his new parish life, he admitted to missing the engaging work at the college, elegance of the city, the concerts and the convivial company. Swords notes that he drew on an interview given by Monsignor O'Hara for a Radharc/ RTE documentary Spanish Ale in 1984.

The fourth book of interest is ***The Symmetry of the Tiger: A Memoir*** by Eugene Benson (Rock's Mills Press, Oakville, Ontario, 2019). Eugene is a retired professor of English Literature at the University of Guelph, Ontario and wrote an article about his father and uncle in a previous issue of *The Corran Herald* ('Under Two Flags', *The Corran Herald,* No. 45, 2012/13, pp. 14-15.). Eugene's father and my grandfather were first cousins, both born in Carrickbanagher, and both bearing the name John Joseph Benson. As a teenager, my mother took me to meet Eugene when he gave a paper at the Yeats Summer School and we reconnected a decade ago thanks to the wonders of the internet. We now communicate regularly, and I had the great pleasure of visiting him in Ontario a few years ago and meeting his lovely wife Renata who has sadly since passed away. As a result of the publication of *The Corran Herald* on the internet, many family connections have been renewed.



CHAPTER VI.

RESIDENCE AND LABOURS IN BALLYMOTE AND SLIGO.

We have not light enough to enable us to form even a conjecture as to why he settled in the little town of Ballymote, in the county of Sligo, after removing from Dunmore. This took place in 1797. He took lodgings, however, in the house of Mr. Farquhar, and forthwith commenced a course of evangelistic labour, such as he had long pursued. He pushed it so far, that, according to the testimony of Mr. Jackson Hawksby, of that town, given to the Rev. Graham Campbell, he was soon put into the Black Hole of the barracks in Sligo, for disturbing the peace by preaching. No trace of this imprisonment is to be found in his own papers, but that proves nothing; for many of his sufferings and dangers, even long after his character had become public, were never put upon record. Mr. Bonsall truly says, that often the first his relatives would hear of some peril and escape would be when notices of it occurred in public papers.

I distinctly remember a statement made respecting the town of Ballymote, by a highly respectable Presbyterian clergyman. He had come from the north of Ireland to undertake for a while duties in a congregation not very far from the town, at a period, I should think, about twenty years subsequent to the time that Mr. Ouseley sojourned there. On the first Sunday morning, his mind was naturally preoccupied with the Sabbath-keeping ideas of his native country. He looked out of the window, and saw a gentleman in a dogcart with a shooting-belt across his chest and a fowling-piece beside him, driving down the street accompanied by dogs. Turning in horror to Mrs. Lougheed, the wife of the excellent Methodist doctor at whose house he stayed, he asked —

"Who is that?"

She looked out and said, "It is the Rev. Mr. ——, our rector."

"And where is he going?"

"To church, to perform the service.

"To church!"

"Yes. He will put a surplice over his shooting-jacket, and when he is done, he will go on to his sport."

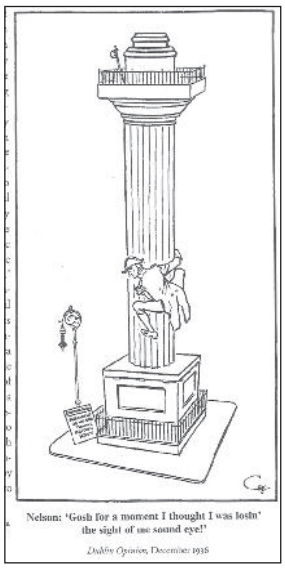
By the time the rector had done duty, and reached the outside of the town, the congregation of the "Chapel" was dispersing. He pulled up, and the parish priest came out and mounted beside him. His name I forget, but I very distinctly remember that of the Presbyterian minister, who lived some considerable distance in the country, and was to join the party. However, when rector and priest reached his door, the Rev. Mr.—— was too tipsy to go along with them.

About a twelvemonth after hearing this story, I had an opportunity of asking Mrs. Lougheed if she remembered the facts. She very well remembered Dr. B—— (the Presbyterian clergyman who told me), and how he was shocked at something on the first Sunday morning he was with them; and as to the details of his statement, they offered no difficulties to her, but she did not profess particularly to remember them. She had stories of her own to tell. It ought to be added, to the credit of the Presbyterian Church, that the one of those three worthies pertaining to it was brought under discipline. He long survived his degradation, making a penny by re-marrying runaway couples.

Ouseley biography 1st and 2nd page on Ballymote

The fourth book of interest is ***The Symmetry of the Tiger: A Memoir*** by Eugene Benson (Rock's Mills Press, Oakville, Ontario, 2019). Eugene is a retired professor of English Literature at the University of Guelph, Ontario and wrote an article about his father and uncle in a previous issue of *The Corran Herald* ('Under Two Flags', *The Corran Herald,* No. 45, 2012/13, pp. 14-15.). Eugene's father and my grandfather were first cousins, both born in Carrickbanagher, and both bearing the name John Joseph Benson. As a teenager, my mother took me to meet Eugene when he gave a paper at the Yeats Summer School and we reconnected a decade ago thanks to the wonders of the internet. We now communicate regularly, and I had the great pleasure of visiting him in Ontario a few years ago and meeting his lovely wife Renata who has sadly since passed away. As a result of the publication of *The Corran Herald* on the internet, many family connections have been renewed.

Eugene has had a fascinating life and it is good that in his 90th year he has committed his memories to paper which is not something a great many Irish people have done. In a short article it is impossible to do justice to the range of Eugene's achievements. One of a family of nine, Eugene was born in Larne, Co. Antrim, won a scholarship to the diocesan college in Newry and spent summers in the Donegal Gaeltacht. As one would expect from a widely read literary scholar and dramatic writer, Eugene's memoir is notable for the vivid word pictures he presents of the various situations in which he found himself over his life and candid observations of the signs of the times. He read voraciously and he notes the authors and works that preoccupied him at various times. On finishing secondary school, Eugene decided to become a priest with St. Patrick's Missionary Society and spent time at Kilteegan (Humewood Castle) in Co. Wicklow and at a society house in Douglas while attending UCC from 1946 where he studied music, literature and philosophy. He studied music under the celebrated Professor Aloys Fleischman and was examined by the composer Arnold Bax. While studying at UCC, Eugene obtained special permission from the order to attend a performance of a ballet composed by Fleischman at Cork Opera House and his head was so turned by the sight of the pretty ballerinas that it was not long before he realised that the rigours of the priesthood were not for him. Having returned to Belfast, where he gained a teaching qualification, he responded to a call for teachers in Saskatchewan Province in Canada where his first appointment was to a single teacher school in a remote community mostly populated by people of Scandinavian origin. Eugene moved across Canada as the years progressed, including a period teaching English at a Canadian college for NATO air force officers from non-English speaking European countries. His career then took him into the academic world and he enjoyed a period researching in the hallowed reading room of the British Museum, a sojourn in Mexico and trips to Spain and elsewhere in Europe. Considering his background, it is not surprising that he chose as the subject for his PhD at the University of Toronto, *Myth and Religion in the work of James Joyce*. As well as teaching, Eugene brought together a passion for music and drama by becoming a writer of librettos for Operas which were set to music by leading Canadian composers and received public performance. Eugene wrote a libretto for *Wilde's Importance of Being Earnest* - Eugene sent me a recording which made particularly good listening. Eugene was joint chair with Margaret Atwood of Canadian Pen, the worldwide writers' organization. Among Eugene's achievements is *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre (1989).*



Nelson comming down from his pillar in shock at news that De Valera asked the Royal Navy to rescue clerical students from Spain.

At the Market Cross: Reflections on a Home Place

By Michael J Meehan

The Market Cross, Sligo, that's the home place. Though known for centuries as the O'Crean Cross, the area is at the bottom of Market St., where it connects into Grattan St. and Castle St. In the centre of this place today is the Lady Erin monument, behind which there is a plaque in the paving that proclaims the spot as the centre of Sligo, a radius of one and quarter miles from the Borough boundaries.

Sligo was a medieval market town, founded by the Normans in 1243, when Maurice Fitzgerald built a Castle near the river in 1245. Later, in 1252, he established the Dominican Abbey nearby. Such towns had a hinterland of small rural villages and were established near to a fortified place such as a castle, a monastery and other areas of strategic importance such as the fording of a river. (A painting of a siege of the Castle of Sligo and some historic facts are located on the side of Foley's pub at the corner of Castle St./ Teeling St.).

The town of Sligo prospered; by the 16th century, there were busy markets and an increasing population. Andrew O'Crean, a member of a wealthy local merchant family, was Prior at the Abbey. Around 1560 he was appointed the Bishop of Elphin. Shortly after, at his own expense, Bishop O'Crean erected a Market Cross at the bottom of Market St. for the benefit of the street traders. Bishop O'Crean retired in 1584, not wishing to take the Oath of Supremacy and went to live at the Dominican Abbey until his death in 1594.

The O'Rorke History of Sligo, Vol.1 (1889) says "that portion of the town is called, to this day, Market Cross, though people using the place knew nothing of its origin". Dictionary meaning for a Market Cross is "an arcaded building in a marketplace". These structures were often elaborate, with plenty of space to give shelter to traders and buyers. The cross, a symbol of religion, was to remind the people trading, the virtues of honesty and integrity in their dealings.

The right to hold markets was controlled by the ruling authority. In 1604 King James 1 of England granted a licence to hold markets at the O'Crean Cross and another market licence grant was made by Charles 1 in 1627. The beneficiaries were loyal subjects of the crown who had already received large grants of land.

We have no illustrations of the O'Crean Cross from that time, unlike the Kilkenny Market Cross for which there is a detailed drawing in the National Library. The Wood-Martin History of Sligo (1889) has a sketch of the Cross and states that the town-stocks (for public punishment) were in the market area and a drinking fountain or well was also nearby. In 1883, a well was discovered when it erupted in the roadway at this place.

A visitor to Sligo in 1739, Rev. W. Henry, left an account of the visit - "in the town is an old market cross, supported by four small pillars of black marble polished and fluted. It is a square to which there is an ascent of four steps on each side, on the top an inscription " (ref. J McTernan/Nat. Arch.). A recent study, "The Streets of Sligo", Fiona Gallagher (2008), has an excellent depiction by J. Young of what the O'Crean Cross may have looked like.

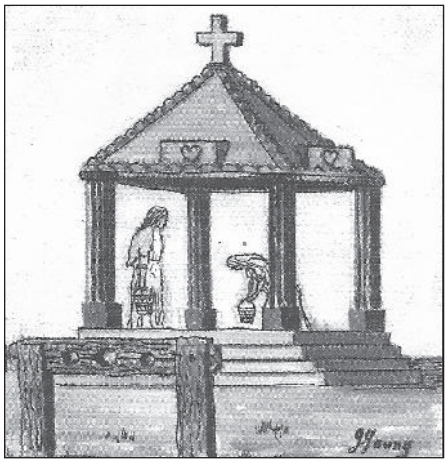
Many Medieval Crosses survive in market squares across Europe, England and Scotland (known as a Mercat Cross) and in a few market towns in Ireland. Many photos and locations of these crosses can be viewed online. At Athenry in Co. Galway, a medieval town with a ruined Dominican Abbey, there is a Gothic Cross (1475) in the centre of a small market square, the only one in Ireland still standing where it was originally erected.

Market Crosses were the popular places in the Middle Ages for the public performance of Mystery Plays and Morality Plays of that era, though in Ireland there was little or no tradition for the plays. The history of the Kilkenny Cross has mention of "young men performed a Mystery play on the feast of Corpus Christie for public entertainment". One can speculate that similar public performances must have taken place at the O'Crean Cross - the Mummers Plays, Wren boys, ballad singers, pamphleteers, itinerant preachers and at the Christmas Markets, the Christmas Rhymers.

The atmosphere of a market day in Sligo is recorded in O'Rorke's History of Sligo -

"streams of people rolled down Gallows Hill north and Gallows Hill south, the two principle approaches into the town. There being no footpaths or sidewalks, people moved through the high road in the same line with the horses and asses and like them often carried loads of commodities to be disposed of in the market" then adds " most of the market people returned home in due time, but some few turned into the whiskey houses, of which the town was full, every second house being a shebeen".

The Market Cross disappeared in the late 18th century, after over 200 years at the centre of Sligo. Nothing remains of it, even in folk memory. O'Rorke claims it was removed to the rear of Pat O'Brien's house in High Street. Could the fate of the Kilkenny Cross (1335-1722) have some similarity



A reconstruction of the Market Cross by J Young. Illustration taken from "The Streets of Sligo" by Fiona Gallagher.

1798 Memorial at Market Cross.

to the demise of the one in Sligo. A historic record in Kilkenny Heritage on the removal of the Cross in that city says "After the Cromwellian and Williamite Wars, the new Corporation lost respect for the Cross and its purpose. It became a place for idlers, beggars, gamblers and mischief. In 1772 the Chief Magistrate, a Puritan, pulled down the Cross, the stones were later used for common building purposes". O'Brien was hardly a Puritan (Canon O'Rorke would have said). Quite likely he wanted to save something that had now become part of a proscribed Religion.

The town had its share of grief from the 17th century wars and the political and religious turmoil that followed. But the following centuries saw a rapid development in trade and permanent shops with simple residences opened along the Sligo streets. By the mid 1800's Sligo had the air of a business town. Street lighting came in the 1850s, a gas lamp post was erected at the Market Cross.

The late 19th century saw political change in the town with a nationalist majority on the Corporation. Some town streets were renamed, Radcliffe St. bordering the Market Cross was changed to Grattan St. As the long dark century was coming to a close, the centenary of the 1798 rebellion loomed, a '98 club was formed to plan the commemorations for the historic rising. A Memorial Monument was commissioned for erection at the Market Cross, where the O'Crean Cross once stood. The foundation stone was laid on Oct 2nd 1898 by P.A. McHugh, Mayor of Sligo (his memorial stands at the Town Hall today), and thousands of people came to Sligo from all over the North West for the ceremony. The streets of the town were lavishly decorated with national emblems, flags, banners and arches. A parade around the town and monster meeting at the Market Yard, was addressed by Willian O Brien.

Sligo was again thronged with people for the unveiling of the Lady Erin Monument on 9th September 1899, by Mayor, Ald. E. Tighe, who presented four ornamental pedestals with gas lamps for the pillars around the monument. When the lamps were lit, the statue in the impressive settings, must have looked dramatic.

The monument is 16-foot-high, made of Sicilian marble, the sculptor was Herbert Barnes. It depicts Ireland with a hand raised in rebellion, wearing the Phrygian cap, symbol of Liberty. The broken chains that lie beneath her feet, symbolises the destruction of the chains of bondage with England. Many such memorials were erected in towns around Ireland during the 19th century, known as "Maid of Erin", a traditional figure symbolising Ireland, to honour events in the struggle for freedom. However, Sligo got the "Lady", to outrank the "Maids" in other towns.

Within a few months, the new century, and within a few decades, the new Ireland. As the State evolved, interest in the monument and what it stood for began to fade. In time, the "Lady" was stripped of her regalia, the lamps, then the pillars and railings were removed, and a public telephone box was installed at the back. By the 1960's , the area had become a problem for the town planners. Traffic congestion and car parking were now the urban priorities.

Respect for the monument had almost disappeared by the end of

"A shabby looking Lady Erin."

the 20th century. It began to attract the attention of late-night revellers, exhibitionists attempting to scale the statue, coronations with Corpo. refuse cans and the nineties saw all the Ole, Ole nights of football celebration. The great symbol of '98, the raised hand of rebellion was severed. Urban grime, traffic fumes and the ever-present pigeons, had blackened the statue. A very shabby looking Lady Erin saw in the new millennium.

A major refurbishment was undertaken by the Corporation; a new hand, repair work and cleaning took place. But the monument was still not at its best when Clifford Barnes visited the town in 2011. He contacted a local newspaper, the *"Sligo Weekender"*, to complain about the condition of the monument and how it had been vandalised. However, Clifford who was grandnephew of Herbert Barnes, the man who built the monument in 1898, was pleased that efforts were being made to restore it. He told the newspaper that his great grandfather had come to Dublin in 1860 from the Leeds area with another stone mason, the father of Padraic and Willie Pearse.

Modern communication technology saw the telephone box taken away. A paved area and a plaque were laid behind the monument (that also has a detail of the O'Crean Cross), another new hand, further cleaning and traffic changes were implemented. The imposing restoration was completed for the 1916 centenary commemorations. Seeing the statue in sunlight, the features express the determination, optimism and vitality of youth. How well the sculptor caught the spirit of those who erected it.

Family life has gone from the Market Cross and the area around that part of town is now a commercial precinct. The O'Crean / Market Cross has defined the main trading area in Sligo since the 1500's and its origins and function are an important part of Sligo history. The only link to a medieval past is etched on the pavement behind the monument.

An afterthought on this reflection …. I was like the townspeople of the 1800's who had lived around here and of whom Canon O'Rorke said, they know nothing of its origin. Then, at a performance of the Shakespeare play, Henry IV, Part 1, I hear these lines…….

'These things indeed, you have articulated, Proclaimed at market crosses, read in churches'

The dictionary meaning and a beginning!

Members of Ballymote Brass and Reed Band

Submitted by Francis Flannery

Fr Liam McDermott OFM (1934 – 2020)

Submitted by Ballymote Heritage Group (Introduction by Ursula Gilhawley)

The Ballymote Heritage Group was saddened to learn of the death of Fr Liam McDermott OFM on 9th March 2020.

Sean McDermott (later Fr Liam OFM) was born in Ballymote in 1934, son of Matthew and Johanna (nee Healy) McDermott. He was educated at the Convent of Mercy and the Boy's National School in Ballymote and at the Franciscan College, Multyfarnham, Co Westmeath. He graduated with a BA degree from University College, Galway and B. Phil from the University of Louvain and St Isidore's College, Rome. He joined the Franciscan Order in Killarney in 1953, was ordained a priest in Rome in 1963 and served in South Africa from 1963 until his death in 2020.

Fr Liam was a frequent visitor to Ballymote over the years and wrote for the Corran Herald on two occasions – in 1995 on the Inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa (10th May 1995 Issue 28) and in 1996 on his travels in Africa (C'est L'Afrique Again! - Issue 29). Both articles can be read on the Heritage website www.ballymoteheritage.com.

Ballymote has a long association with the Franciscan Order. The substantial ruins of the Franciscan friary founded in 1442 under the patronage of the McDonagh chieftains are located near Ballymote Castle. The first members of the Order in Ballymote were three O'Coleman brothers. The Church of Ireland bishop of Achonry reported that seven friars remained in Ballymote in 1731 and four in 1744, at the very height of the penal period.

Ballymote Heritage Group extends sympathy to Fr Liam's family, his brother Hubert and sisters Jean, Anne and Joan. His sister Mary predeceased him.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Fr Liam's funeral was held in South Africa and the sermon at his funeral mass was delivered by Archbishop William Slattery OFM om the 18th March 2020. The text of the sermon is as follows:

Sermon at Funeral of Father Liam McDermott

It is not easy to speak of the hidden inspiration behind the life of Fr Liam McDermott. Liam was a quiet man, a man of few and well-chosen words, a man of service and humility and in no way an exhibitionist. He spoke few words, but they were always to the point. He was a man of truth, of confidentiality.

Liam once sent me a letter. It comprised four words: Dear William… Yes… Liam.

However, luckily, Liam himself reveals the secret of his life in the readings and the hymns which he himself chose for this his funeral and thanksgiving Mass today. He chose the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians, "For the sake of Christ Jesus I have thrown everything away. I consider it all as rubbish so that I may gain Christ… All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of his resurrection.

The Gospel he chose for today was the scene of the disciples with their Master on the road to Emmaus. They walked with Him and recognized him at the breaking of the bread.

To have lived close to Fr Liam was a privilege and a joy, for in him one met a man of gentle and practical service. The first time I met him in February 1971 I found him lying under the bonnet of a car with a spanner in his hand.

Tomorrow, 19 March, is the feast of St Joseph. There was something of St Joseph about Liam. Like Joseph he spoke little. Both Joseph and Liam were totally responsive to the Word of God. Liam was a totally reliable and trusted friend, dedicated to others, and in fact, dedicated to Jesus and Mary. As the first Franciscan Provincial of the new South African province, Liam listened to everyone, responded honestly, supported all in need and kept confidentiality. He never gossiped; our secrets were safe with him.

It was in the liturgy that Liam found the well of Samaria. There above all he met the Lord. He performed the liturgy with great attention and dignity. Everyone knew him as the singing Priest. One Saturday morning the lady in the Sacristy enquired who would celebrate the Saturday evening Mass that day. She asked, "Is it the Parish Priest or Pavarotti?"

The Catechism of the Catholic Church in its introduction to the liturgy tells us that every event of the past is history. All our experiences have passed by forever. But there is one event in history which transcends history and is always present, always now, always today – the dying and rising of Jesus when we celebrate the Mass. Jesus in the mass tells us, "Do this in memory of Me." It could equally be translated from the original Aramaic as "When you do this, you bring Me back." Here was the well-spring of the life of Fr Liam. He found the Lord in the breaking of bread.

For 25 years Liam was the spiritual assistant of all the Poor Clare Monasteries in East Africa, it was work which inspired him. It brought him back to San Damiano and the fresh beginnings of the Franciscan movement. This work took him to many countries in Africa, some in very difficult areas of access. He generally returned to South Africa quite ill. One Christmas day his dinner consisted of one banana in the empty airport of Dar Es Salam.

Today, Poor Clare Monasteries in many countries are with us in prayers. I quote from a few tributes.

From Zambia, "You were a true

Friar and in you we met a true son of St Francis, a brother and a father to us."

From Tanzania, "You tirelessly offered yourself as our spiritual assistant and made difficult journeys of long-distances to reach our monasteries. Brother, go well to the Lord you served so well. We can never forget your kindness to us. We missed your beautiful singing."

From Uganda, "I see Fr Liam now in my mind's eye singing Mass for us as if it were yesterday. And now he is no more. We can never forget him."

From Kokstad, "We were blessed to have lived with our dear Father Liam. He was a friend, a father, a grandfather, our guardian and our Choir Master. He was a gentle presence full of compassion with a loving heart. Few of words he was powerful in actions. We felt blessed and loved by God who gave such a committed father and brother, always ready to help. We were moved to tears when we looked at his hurting and twisted fingers, fingers always struggling to help us."

From Harare, "Farewell, our dearest passionate lover of the Poor ladies. God sent you to us, we will truly miss you, you will ever live in our hearts."

For us Friars, we have a wonderful example before us of Franciscan life.

Brother Liam McDermott lived a humble simple life of poverty. He never drew attention to himself. He had no luxuries and was satisfied with simple things. His administration of monies was in the service of the order. He was no way grasping or greedy.

Liam lived a life of purity and celibacy. He allowed nothing to come between himself and God.

He lived a life of dedicated obedience at the service of the Gospel, the rule, the province and of all the brothers.

Liam was the first Provincial of the South African province. All were encouraged by his example. He was a man of truth and did not seek popularity. The focus of his life was prayer. I am amused when I remember Fr Bruno who was the Vicar General of the Diocese of Kokstad and the local Franciscan superior recalling Liam's visit to him. Liam came to Bruno in Bizana on visitation. Bruno expected to be above this trial. But after an early sung mass and silent breakfast, Liam invited him to go to the parish office for visitation. Liam's first question was, "How is your meditation?" Although stunned Bruno was able to reply, "It is very short, I admit, but it is very deep." Liam would always emphasize prayer.

Fr Liam was Franciscan in that he was very close to the people. His first 15 years in South Africa, 1963-1978, he spent as priest in the parish of Sharpeville. The place was still reeling after the massacre of 1960. He loved the people of Sharpeville and said, "These were the greatest days of my life." He had many stories of the characters he worked with there. He spoke of John Fantisi who was to be found in the church every morning before work, devoutly praying the way of the cross and singing the hymn between stations. Then there was Calistina who was the leader of the Children of Mary. This took her to many parishes. Liam called her Kissinger, the American Secretary of State, who was then in continual movement reconciling Israel and Egypt. Then there was the old lady, Mrs Korwetsane, who frequently called him at night requesting the Last Rites. He put an end to this when he discovered that every time she ate fresh cabbage she had pains in her stomach and thought it was the last trumpet call.

Like St Francis, Liam drew people to God not to himself. His friendship was sincere, authentic and life-long.

Liam McDermott's life was poured out to build up the church. He did this not only by dedicated ministry but by patiently bearing agonizing pain for 30 years in union with Jesus. In his slow lingering death, he never complained but exuded peace, contentment and joy. Like his saintly friend, Mother Veronica, foundress of many Poor Clare Monasteries in Africa, he used to say, "I am lucky in my vocation, whether I am ill or well, either daytime or the middle of the night, I can live it fully. I suffer and unite myself with the Lord for the church".

For many years, Liam had been unwell and suffered a lot with pains due to severe arthritis. In these years, he found a faithful friendship in Sr Therese Tangey, a Mercy Sister. In the Gospel, Jesus promised Peter that those who left everything to follow Him would receive a hundred-fold. Liam left his wonderful family 65 years ago in Sligo. I think the Lord fulfilled his promised to Liam in the person of Sr Therese. She was a model of charity who cared for him and was always there when he was in pain. She stood very close to him right to the end. In addition, the Franciscan community in Pretoria cared for Liam with great attention and tenderness, Brother Kgosi, Brother Ashley and Fr Hyacinth who brought the Holy Eucharist to Fr Liam every day.

In very brief words where Liam looked back over his life, we find these words as an Antiphon, "But It was great." It reminds us of the final words of the St Clare of Assisi, "I thank you Lord for having created me." Indeed, Liam's final words were, "It was a great life, thank God. That can be my obituary when I kick the bucket."

On this funeral day, my mind goes back to the evening of October 3rd, 1226. St Francis has just died. Brothers Leo, Masseo and Rufino could now see and reflect upon the wounds of the Stigmata. There they saw the price St Francis paid to respond to Jesus' love for him. In the broken body of St Francis, they saw the price of their own charism. Today, we say goodbye to our brother Fr Liam McDermott. He spent himself to bring the message of St Francis to Africa. We are challenged to live Franciscan lives worthy of the heritage he left us.

18 March 2020, Wednesday
William Slattery, OFM

Franciscan Friars
Order of Friars Minor South Africa

Linda Kearns:
The Nurse who Escaped from Mountjoy Prison

By Kathleen Flynn

Linda Kearns was born in the townland of Cloonagh, Parish of Dromard, Co. Sligo on 25th July 1886 to Thomas Kearns and Catherine Clarke.[1]

Linda Kearns as a young woman

She was one of 9 children born to Thomas and Catherine, one of whom, a son Thomas, died in infancy.[2] She grew up on a small farm close to the Atlantic Ocean in rural west Co. Sligo. Linda attended Ballacutranta national school where she was taught by her aunt, her mother's sister, Honora Kelly (nee Clarke). [3] The name she was registered with at birth and at baptism was Brigid Kearns but she was known as Belinda. She is recorded as Belinda in the 1901 Census of Ireland.[4] When she went to school her aunt, her teacher, did not like the nickname she was known by at the time, which was 'Beezie' (a variation of Brigid) so she entered the name Belinda in the Roll Book. [5] This was later shortened to Linda and this was the name she was known by for the rest of her life. At the time of the 1901 Census of Ireland, Linda (recorded then as Belinda), aged 15, was living on the farm at Cloonagh, Dromard, Co. Sligo with her parents Thomas and Catherine, her sister Mary (age 26), brother Michael (age 18) and sister Norah (age 13).[6] Linda's brother Michael later died in 1917 from epilepsy.[7]

Linda had a maternal uncle, Thomas Clarke, who moved to Dublin from Sligo in 1868. He became involved with the Home Rule Movement. It is perhaps from this uncle that Linda received her political leanings. He was elected to the Rathdown Board of Guardians and became Chairman in 1903. He became Chairman of four public Boards: Rathdown Board of Guardians, Blackrock Urban Council, Deans Grange Burial Board and the Port Sanitary Board. He was the owner of substantial property in Ballsbridge, Dublin. [8]

Between 1902 and 1904, Linda and her sister Nora attended the Convent of the Blessed Virgin, Beirglegem near Brussels in Belgium, which was a type of finishing school and there she became fluent in French. It is likely that their uncle, Thomas Clarke, paid the fees for the girls as their father, a small farmer, was unlikely to have been able to afford the fees.[9]

In 1907, Linda entered the Royal City of Dublin Hospital on Baggot Street to train as a nurse. After her three-year training period at Baggot Street, Linda stayed on working at the hospital for a further two years. Linda left Baggot Street in 1911 and was then employed as a nurse attendant by a substantial landowner in Tullamore, Co. Offaly named Maurice Lindsey O'Connor Morris.[10] O'Connor Morris was unmarried and without children when he died in 1916 and he left the sum of £2,500 to Linda in his will.[11] Shortly after his death Linda was back in Dublin taking part in the 1916 Rising.

Nursing the wounded of 1916

A number of factors are believed to have influenced Linda to become involved in the fight for Irish Freedom. One was a chance meeting with Thomas McDonagh in 1915, one of the leaders of the 1916 Rising, while Linda lived in Dublin.[12] She got to know him and met him a number of times before the Rising and was influenced by his thinking. A second influential event was a visit she paid as a trained nurse to a typhus hospital in Co. Mayo around 1911-1912, where her sister was a nurse.[13] Linda was horrified at the conditions in the hospital and said afterwards that *'it had occurred to me that it was time that the government responsible for such a state of affairs should be expelled from the country'*.[14] The third influencing factor was Linda's involvement in the Gaelic League and her keenness to learn the Irish language.[15] Before the Easter Rebellion of 1916 Linda was issued with a pass on which was written '*Please admit Nurse Kearns*'.[16] This was signed by Eamon De Valera and enabled her to enter the GPO. Linda did not have much involvement at the GPO but in April 1916, two days after the insurgents seized the GPO in Dublin, Linda Kearns took over an empty house on North Great Georges Street and set up a temporary hospital. She put a Red Cross in the window. This hospital was designed to provide medical aid to both British and Irish wounded. This temporary hospital was closed by military orders. Linda was to take a more active part in the republican movement after the Rising. Although Linda was never a member of Cumann na mBan, she did provide lectures to the women of the movement.[17] She stated in her Witness Statement, Bureau of

Military History, 1913 – 1921 that she was a Lecturer in First Aid to Cumann na mBan post Easter Week, 1916. [18]

War of Independence

In Dublin, Linda lived at 29 Gardiner Place. The nursing home Linda ran in Gardiner Place with her sister functioned as a sort of hiding spot for republican men on the run, including Michael Collins, who is believed to have hidden there from time to time.[19] After a visit and request by Michael Collins, Linda carried despatches and small boxes of explosives by train from Dublin to Sligo in the early period of the War of Independence.[20] As a result of the money left to her by O'Connor Morris in his will, Linda was a woman of 'independent means' so to speak. She returned to Sligo for a time and bought a new car, which was unusual for a single woman of the time. Linda was well known travelling around Co. Sligo in her car. Linda became the best-known female Sligo Republican activist at this time.[21] By 1920, IRA activity was intensifying in the Sligo area and Linda was involved with transporting IRA Volunteers around the county. In the autumn of 1920, she operated extensively in the Sligo area carrying arms and ammunition and assisted volunteers Pilkington and Carty in particular.[22] She often drove for Michael Collins and Vinny Byrne, a colleague of Michael Collins, said that Linda was indispensable to the Volunteers because she had a car.

It is known that Linda was present at an ambush of a nine-man RIC cycle patrol from Cliffony at Moneygold (Grange), Co. Sligo on 25th October,1920. Four of the RIC constables were killed in the ambush. Linda Kearns was present and attended the wounded men.[23]

On the night of 20th November, 1920, Linda was driving a group of Sligo IRA Volunteers, led by Seamus Devins, when the car was stopped and searched by a convoy of RIC and military. It appears that the men and arms were being driven to the south of Co. Sligo for an ambush.[24] There were guns found in the car with the Volunteers and they were ordered from the car and brought to Sligo Barracks. An account of the Sligo County RIC Inspector stated: *"On 20-11-20 a police and military patrol stopped a motor car driven by nurse Belinda Kearns of 29 Gardiner Place. Dublin and found therein ten service rifles, four revolvers, 403 rounds of service rifle ammunition, 23 rounds of revolver ammunition and a quantity of equipment."* [25] The report went on to state that three male suspects were arrested in the motor car, and that crown intelligence ascertained that *"...Miss Kearns has for the past two years been the medium of communication between Head Quarters IRA Dublin and County Sligo"* [26] After their arrest the men were badly beaten at Sligo Barracks and Linda was also hit in the face and chest and one of her front teeth was broken. Linda was separated from the men and was questioned while also being frightened into thinking she was going to be shot. One of the Black & Tans pointed a gun at her head repeatedly and used her for target practice, making her terrified she would be shot at any moment. She was also told that the men arrested with her were going to be shot and she could hear shots being fired outside the Barracks. None of the people arrested that night were actually shot and the following morning they were all brought to Sligo Gaol where they were kept for a week. The men and Linda were taken to Derry Gaol and then to Belfast but no witness was found to identify any of them as being present at the Moneygold ambush.[27] Houses occupied by Linda Kearns's relations were searched, windows were broken and British slogans were painted on the walls. A haggard (barn) at her home place was also burned. [28]

Imprisonment

Linda was charged with possession of arms and was sent to Armagh Prison to await trial. While Linda was in jail, her father died on 23rd March 1921. Linda requested to be released temporarily to attend the funeral but this request was refused. This had a long-lasting effect on Linda as she had been particularly close to her father and Linda was upset about this for many years afterwards.[29] Linda Kearns received a sentence of 10 years penal servitude. She accepted this sentence but the biggest shock for her was the news that she was to be transported to England to serve the sentence. She was sent to Walton Prison in Liverpool.

Her sisters Mary and Nora were not in a position to travel to visit her due to the distance and expense of a trip to Liverpool for what would have been a 10-minute visit. Therefore, Linda had no visitors while she was in prison in Liverpool. She later wrote in her memoirs *'every night I cried myself to sleep'.* Linda repeatedly wrote to prison authorities requesting to be transferred to a prison in Ireland. She also suffered bad health as a result of her time in prison in Liverpool mainly due to the prison conditions and food. Linda eventually went on hunger strike after her repeated requests to be returned to Ireland were ignored. About ten days later she was informed that she was being returned to Ireland. On 15th September 1921 Linda was moved back to Ireland to Mountjoy Prison. As with its male counterpart, the Mountjoy Women's prison was used to incarcerate women who took part in the War of Independence (1919-1921). Linda's reputation as a revolutionary had preceded her and on her first day in Mountjoy she received a round of applause from the other women prisoners. Her name was well known by then, especially in Republican circles.

Once she was returned to Mountjoy, Linda set about planning her escape. Margaret Buckley, another female Republican prisoner who was in Mountjoy prison at the time later wrote about the 1921 escape from Mountjoy *"Linda Kearns was largely responsible for the planning of the sensational Mountjoy escape and entered with great glee into organising it."* [30] Four women including Linda decided to draw up an escape plan. It was arranged that they would attempt to go over the wall of the prison. They were: Aileen Keogh (from Co.

Carlow, serving 2 years for possession of explosives), Kathleen Burke (from Co. Limerick, serving 2 years for giving copies of military telegrams to the IRA), Linda Kearns (from Co. Sligo, serving 10 years for possession of firearms) and Eithne Coyle (from Donegal, serving 12 months for possession of seditious documents). Linda and the others relied on visitors and their Republican contacts on the outside to co-ordinate the escape. During one prison visit to Linda, one of her friends smuggled in a lump of dental wax in a flask of hot tea. The idea was to use the dental wax to make imprints of the keys, which could be copied on the outside. The women managed to get the imprints of the keys in the wax and the wax was smuggled out again during a prison visit, the key made and the key was smuggled back in again to Linda. The key gave the four escapees access to the prison grounds.

The Escape

The plan for the escape was made. On the evening of October 30th 1921, the Republican contacts outside were to throw a rope ladder over the wall at 7pm. The women created a distraction and noise in the hallway of the prison by playing a game of football. The four women who were escaping opened the door and slipped out into the yard unnoticed, while the other women continued with the game and the noise inside the prison. The escape attempt was extremely dangerous because if the women were found in the yard at night they would be shot on sight.

The women threw a stone over the wall to let the men outside know where they were. The ladder was then thrown over the wall from the outside. As Linda was serving the longest sentence of the four escapees, it was decided that she would go first. She managed to climb the ladder and get over the 25-foot wall and slid down the other side, injuring herself in the process. All four women escaped. Linda was put on a motorbike immediately, driven by one of Michael Collins's men, and she was taken to Berkeley Square where Dr. Oliver

Dr. Oliver St. John Gogarty

St. John Gogarty, the famous doctor, writer and poet was waiting for her. Gogarty brought her to his aunt's house in Earlsfort Terrace where she stayed for three days.

When news of the escape broke, the security forces began searching Dublin. Linda then had to flee Dublin and she was initially brought to a convent in Kilcullen, Co. Kildare to hide and she spent about a week there. Linda and the other three women who escaped managed to evade the security forces and Linda next found shelter at an IRA training camp in Co. Carlow until the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The following January Linda returned to Co. Sligo where there were huge celebrations to welcome her home.

Civil War

Linda Kearns also played a role in the Civil War, in which she sided with the Anti-Treaty forces. Having failed to gain entry to the Four Courts, she found herself in a variety of locations throughout Dublin tending to the wounded. When the focus of the battle in Dublin shifted entirely to O'Connell Street, the area from the

Linda Kearns (on right) with Mae Burke and Eithne Coyle
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FOUR WOMEN BREAK JAIL.

Escape From Mount Joy by Rope Ladder and Speed Off in Auto.

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Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

DUBLIN, Oct. 31.—Another daring coup was carried out at Mount Joy Prison last night when four women prisoners escaped under dramatic circumstances. They are Nurse Lindka Kearns of Dublin, who had been sentenced to ten years penal servitude for having driven a motor car in West of Ireland, containing arms and ammunition; Miss Annie Coyle of Kilteevan, Roscommon, sentenced by a court-martial to one year without hard labor for having a sketch of the military barracks at Roscommon in her possession; Miss Keogh of Wexford, undergoing a sentence of two years and Miss Rourke serving a like term.

New York Times, October 31, 1921.

Hammond to the Gresham Hotel was occupied by something in the region of 100 republican combatants. Cathal Brugha appealed strongly to the women present to leave, as the fight looked doomed[30]. Three remained. Alongside Kathleen Barry and Muriel McSweeney (the widow of Terence, The Lord Mayor of Cork who died on hunger strike) was Linda Kearns.[31] Linda Kearns witnessed the wounding and death of Cathal Brugha, who had refused to surrender to the forces of the new state.[32] She held his severed

Free State armoured car photographed during the Civil War in Dublin.© *http://comeheretome.com*

artery between her fingers as he was driven to hospital, but he died two days later.

In 1922 Linda Kearns, along with Muriel McSweeney, posed as a Red Cross delegation and rescued Annie Smithson from Mullingar Prison. Smithson later edited Kearns' book 'In Times of Peril: Leaves from a prison diary of Nurse Linda Kearns from Easter Week 1916 to Mountjoy 1921.' In August 1922, Linda was sent by Eamon De Valera, with Muriel McSweeney, to tour and speak around America to raise funds. In 1924, Linda went to Australia with Kevin Barry's sister, Kathleen Maloney, on another fund-raising tour.

After Independence

Linda Kearns went on to remain active in politics in the emerging Irish state. She was a member of the Sínn Féin Standing Committee at the time of the split in Sínn Féin in March 1926

Front cover of the book written by Linda Kearns of her experiences in prison.

when agreement within Sínn Féin could not be reached. She was one of the ten members of the Sínn Féin Standing Committee who resigned along with Seán Lemass, Gearoid Ó Beoláin, Seán McEntee, J.J. Cullen, P.J.Brennan, Dr. J.P. Brennan, Michael Comyn, Donnchadh Ó Ealuighthe and P. Caffrey.[33] Linda then joined the newly formed party of Fianna Fáil, which was established by De Valera and his followers in April 1926. Linda was a founding member and one of six female representatives on the Fianna Fáil executive, the others being Countess De Markievicz, Kathleen Clarke, Dorothy Macardle, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, and Mrs. Margaret Pearse.[34] By 1941, Linda Kearns was still on the executive of Fianna Fáil with three other women, Kathleen Clarke, Dorothy Macardle and Margaret Mary Pearse.[35] Later Linda was elected by Fianna Fáil to the 2nd Seanad Éireann on the Industrial and Commercial Panel in April 1938 where she promoted Irish industry and was involved with modernising medical care.[36] She tirelessly campaigned for nurses' rights and pensions for nurses. Linda also wrote for the Irish Press in the 1940's. Later in her life Linda worked for prisoners' rights, based on her own experience in prison. She was also visiting justice in Mountjoy Prison until her death.

In 1929, Linda married Charles Wilson McWhinney who had been O/C of the Derry Brigade of the IRA

Linda with her baby daughter, Ann.

during the War of Independence. He had moved to Dublin in 1924 after also serving a prison sentence for his activities during the War of Independence. They had one daughter, Ann.

Linda continued to be involved in politics and nursing matters for the rest of her life. She was appointed to the General Nursing Council, the forerunner of An Bórd Altranais. She was also secretary of the Irish Nurses Association and a member of the National Council of Nurses. In 1936 the Minister for Justice appointed her to the visiting committee of Mountjoy Prison and in 1939 she was appointed to the newly formed Irish Red Cross. She also set up a holiday home for nurses called Kilrock House in Howth, Co. Dublin. She was awarded a Red Cross Florence Nightingale Medal for Exceptional Services on 12th May 1951, which was presented to her on her deathbed. Linda Kearns died on 5th June 1951 and was interred in Glasnevin Cemetery after a large funeral.

Linda Kearns is one of a number of women who, in the first half of the 20th century, played a significant but somewhat unacknowledged role in the 1916-1921 period in Ireland and who were later active in trying to influence the direction of politics in the emerging Irish state.

She is particularly notable for her involvement in the War of Independence and for her subsequent capture, imprisonment and daring escape from Mountjoy Prison in 1921.

Linda Kearns, Photo courtesy of © http://comeheretome.com

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Chalice Commissioned By Anthony McDonagh, Franciscan Friar, Ballymote, 1688

By John Coleman

The Ballymote 'Anton McDonagh' chalice was probably made by a Dublin silversmith and sent to the Dublin Assay Office to have its purity tested and an assay mark applied. The chalice has an 'assay mark' of a crowned harp which would have been used before Irish Independence. There is also a mark for the year but it is worn and difficult to read. The chalice has a silver-gilt interior - this was looked on as a luxury refinement involving the application of a thin layer of gold - such a finish being particularly suitable to hold its sacred contents. The chalice has the date 1688 inscribed on the foot. The staff of the Decorative Arts and History division of the National Museum of Ireland have indicated that Irish marked silver as early as this is very rare, and only a particularly limited amount of silver was marked during the disturbed time of the brief Catholic resurgence under King James II and the Williamite Wars. The chalice is in remarkably good condition and was evidently preserved as a treasured object throughout the penal period. It is likely to only have been used on special occasions as silver is an exceptionally soft metal and also silver gilt would have been quickly rubbed away. Ballymote historian Nuala Rogers has noted decorations consisting of three faces of cherubs on the stem. There is a crucifix engraved on one facet of the foot.

Ballymote McDonagh chalice detail showing Assay Dublin mark and letter signifying date

Anton McDonagh Ballymote Chalice Full View

Ballymote McDonagh chalice inscription

Ballymote McDonagh chalice inscription showing date

Chalice foot showing Crucifix

The inscription on the foot indicates that the chalice was made for Anton McDonagh, friar. Fr. Liam Swords, in the volume of his history of The Diocese of Achonry 1689 to 1818 (1997) (appendix 39, p. 421), notes that Franciscan records indicate that Anthony McDonagh was a friar in Ballymote in 1690 and was recorded there until 1758. He was recorded as guardian of the friary at various dates over that period. He was also recorded as PP of Bunninadden in 1758 and was dead before the synod of the order in 1760. He was also named in a list of priests in the area compiled by the government in 1744 as noted in W P Burke, *Irish Priests in Penal Times 1660-1760 (*Waterford, 1914). (kindly lent to me by John Cawley, NT)

Left to Right: Eileen Tighe, President of Ballymote Heritage Group with Fr James McDonagh PP with the Chalice commissioned by his kinsman, Annette Caffrey, Secretary of Ballymote Heritage Group and John Coleman
Photo Courtesy of Paddy Conboy 2019

The chalice is now in the care of the Bishop of Elphin who kindly lent it to be displayed during mass in Ballymote church during the 2019 Ballymote Heritage weekend. About thirty years ago the chalice was discovered by Bishop Conway in the care of a Fr. McDonagh, PP of Ballinagar, Co. Roscommon. The chalice probably made its way to Ballinagar because of the celebrated antiquarian Charles O'Conor (1710-91) who was a founder member of the Royal Irish Academy. Ballinagar was part of the ancestral territory of the O'Conor family. Having lost their land due to the penal laws, the O'Conors of Ballinagar managed to regain about 800 acres by 1729. Charles O'Conor inherited the estate and lived in a new house there for most of his life. There are also Sligo and even Ballymote connections as O'Conor was born at Kilmactranny, Co. Sligo and was a close friend of Count Nicholas Taaffe, Baron of Ballymote. (*Dictionary of Irish Biography,* vol. vii, pp. 304-7 (Cambridge, 2009))

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Ballymote Heritage would like to acknowledge financial support for the 53rd issue of *The Corran Herald*, approved by Sligo County Council under the Community & Voluntary Sector General Grant Scheme 2020.