

THE CORRAN HERALD

A Ballymote Heritage Group Production

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KEASH and the BRICKLIEVES

"TREASURE-HOUSE OF PREHISTORY"



by Leo Regan

CAIRN G, CARROWKEEL

Seven young people went into the hills, armed only with pencils or cameras. For six months they explored a lost kingdom, mapping the traces of man's history for thousands of years, catching glimpses of natural wonder through the lenses of their cameras. As winter set in, they assembled at their base to weave with their myriad skills a tapestry describing the Bricklieve Mountains and Keashcorran. They studied texts and reports, interviewed anyone who knew a secret of these places, prepared their studies for public exhibition for the people of Ballymote and its hinterlands. In six months they had become experts on a forgotten world.

For a few days in early February, 1986, Ballymote became a centre of cultural development in the region. Publicity through local and national media focused attention on an area long dormant. Minister of State for Arts and Culture, Ted Nealon, T.D., opened the exhibition with a speech testifying to the national importance of the Bricklieve and Keash area. Tributes were paid to Dr. John Garvin who passed away the day before the opening. John Garvin, a son of Templevanny, had shared his special regard for this place in a recorded interview with TEAMWORK supervisor, Bridget O'Connell.

cont. on page 5

The street where you live

by Tom McGettrick

In the Griffith Valuation of Tenements, 1857, there are 219 "Occupiers" listed in the town of Ballymote. The following dozen are a selection from names one seldom or never now encounters, Elly, Teevans, Lougheed, Gumely, Cornyn, Ross, Hawksby, Muller, Donagher, McEilsy, Sandes, and Ferins. At that time they were dwellers in this one small town; today it is doubtful if all those names could be found in any one country. Maybe there are people who remember the name Gumley. In the Pigott & Co. Directory for Ballymote for 1824 he is listed as a baker. Philip Gumley in later times owned a large part of Stoneparks and Rathnakelliga.

Bearers of the Hawksby name had several functions in the town. One of them, Jackson was secretary of the first Ballymote Creamery Committee in 1897. He was also the caretaker of the Courthouse who was instructed to refuse P.A. McHugh the use of the building for the meeting in January 1899 at which the candidates for Sligo's first County Council were to be selected. This refusal resulted in McHugh procuring a sledge and breaking open the door to hold the meeting. A monument to P.A. McHugh stands at the Town Hall in Sligo. James Hannon J.P., a member of a prominent Ballymote family, was selected and became the member from Ballymote of Sligo's first Council.

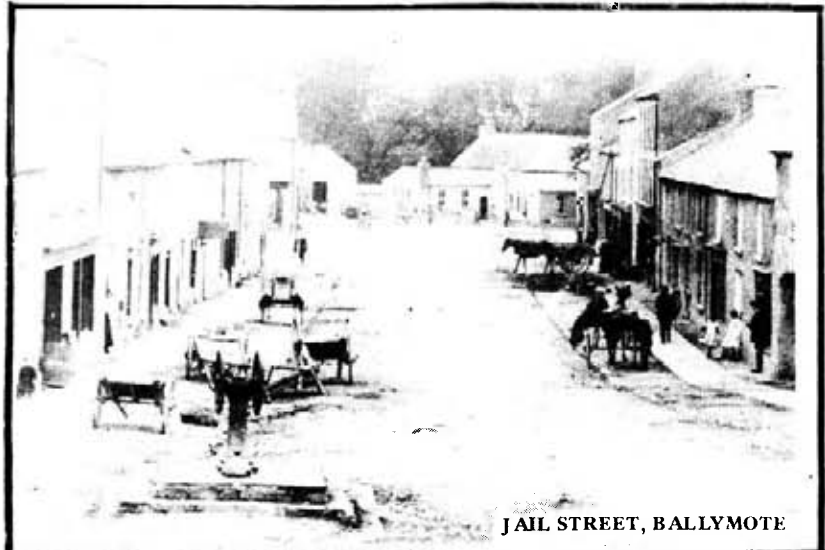
cont. on page 2

THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE

cont. from page 2

Under the heading "Professional Gentlemen" in the same Directory Joseph Loughheed is referred to as a Surgeon. John Motherwell, not mentioned above, was Postmaster in 1824. The Motherwells are a story in themselves, Michael Farry tells a good part of it in his recently published very fine History of Killoran and Coolaney.

But the researcher need not go back so far to observe great changes. Were an emigrant to return now after fifty years' absence he could entertain himself with many nostalgic reminiscences of who lived here and there when he was a boy, and now their names are gone from the showboards and replaced by others, strangers to him. He might be able to recall as a child that the names Barlow, Begley Coghlan, Dawson, Keenan (not Tommy) McGann and Markey were over publicans' doors - some of them removed not so long ago. And what about Hannon, Hotel keeper; Mahon Brothers, Auctioneers; McGovern, Victuallers; Morris & Drapers; Ward, Newsagent; Wilson & Co, Grocers; Kane Bros, Drapers; etc. J.C. McDonagh has an amusing rhyme in his history in which some of those names feature, but this list is from Kilgannon's Almanac of 1905. Emergency Call! Has anybody got a copy. The rest of the story has a more modern trend and yet offers ample opportunity to observe great changes. Entering Ballymote from the Sligo direction the first shop on the right hand side is Cryan's. Taking the turn at Cassidy's one comes to the Garda Station near the top of the Rock. The only names left in that right hand section in the memory of those who remember back between the two wars are Cryan and Johnson and only in the case of the first mentioned was the existing business handed down from father to son. Johnson's furniture store was Flannery's Hotel and previous to that it was Hannon's. Judge Wakely used to stay there while conducting Quarter Sessions in Ballymote. Madame Markiewicz stayed the night there previous to attending the great Volunteer Rally at Keash. The Garda Station was a Branch of the Munster and Leinster Bank and before that it was the R.I.C. Barracks.



JAIL STREET, BALLYMOTE



MARKET STREET, BALLYMOTE

Dawson's and Barlow's mentioned above were in this section also. Some of the properties along this side have changed ownership three and four times.

This is all for this time; hopefully there will be another time to continue. How many of the unmarked graves around the ivy-covered ruins of the Franciscan Abbey contain the remains of the hundreds of un-named and the few named in this story! How many were laid to rest at Emlaghfad where the story of the Church begins! This is an obituary and a renewal. Work on the Old Graveyard continues, we know it is a formidable task. Let us hope that the enthusiasm and the co-operation which saw the first weed and wandering root removed, will continue until it will be a pleasure to visit on any day of the year the people who lived in the street in which you now live.

A THOUGHT FOR EACH DAY

As pure as the lily that grows
in the fields
As sweet as the wild rose that
the kind earth yields.
Let these be our thoughts as each
morn we pray,
To thank the Dear Lord's special
path,
May our souls be devoid of all envy
and wrath.
Say a prayer for those both near
and away,
As we journey along our earthly way.

THE PASSAGE OF TIME

We are atoms that flow down the
river of years
On our way to the ultimate sea,
And life with its troubles,
its cares and tears,
Brings its troubles to you and to me.
So, as the swift-footed years
hurry on,
We loose sight of each other at last,
Let us remember that we, you and I
have been friends in the
far-reaching past.

by Stan Casey

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STRONG AND SAFE.

Cloonamahon

by J. McGarry

The ancient name for Cloonamahon was Kil-na-Mochain, meaning the Church of Mohain. According to legend this church mysteriously moved to Lough Cronan at Drumfin and finally to Kilmorgan where the ruins in the old graveyard still are. The phenomenon of moving churches is not quite unique even in County Sligo.

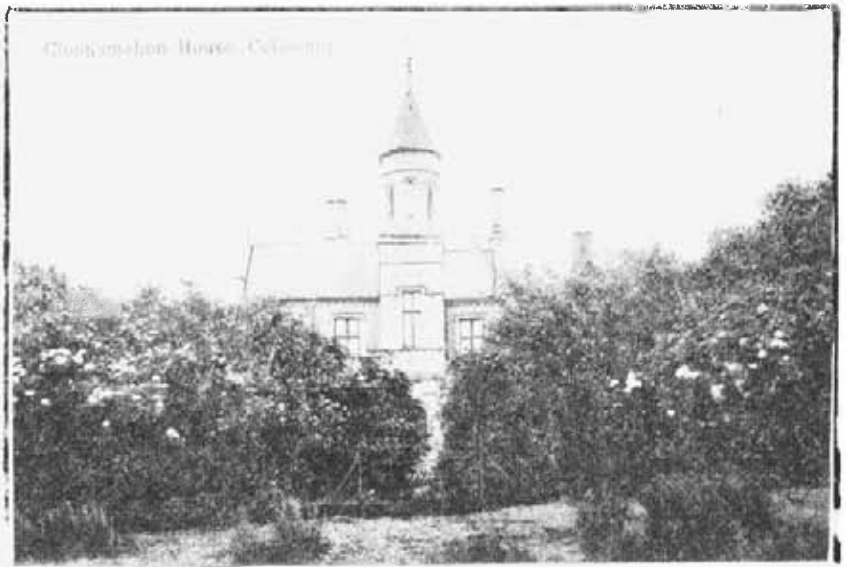
From the 13th century, Cloonamahon belonged to the McDonaghs of Corran, one of whom signed the Composition of Connacht in 1585 when it was numbered amongst the lands they surrendered to the Crown and were regranted from the Crown. The estate contained nine townlands as well as Cloonamahon.

When Red Hugh O'Donnell was preparing for his eventual showdown with the English forces, he appointed his own nominees to territories held by chiefs of dubious allegiance. Of Cloonamahon and other lands he appointed Morich Caech McDonagh as chief. Morich was killed in battle in 1598 when his properties including Cloonamahon were confiscated.

O'Connor Sligo, overlord of South Sligo, gave the lands to a relative, C.O'Hart. The hereditary seat of the O'Harts was at Ardtarmon Castle in north County Sligo. The O'Harts, like the McDonaghs, traced their lineage to ancient royal origins.

Carolan, the Last of the Bards, was a frequent visitor to Cloonamahon when it was owned by Charles O'Hart and where his brother Right Rev. John O'Hart, Bishop of Achonry, also resided. It was Carolan's custom to compose Odes for a member of the family in whose house he was entertained. The first verse of one composed by him to Dr. O'Hart runs:

*In this hour of my joy, let me turn
to the road,
To the pois one's home let me steer:
Aye! my steps shall instinctively
seek that abode,
Where plenty and pleasure appear.
Dear Hart, with the learned thou
art gentle and kind;
With the bard, thou art open and
free;
And the smiling, the sad, in each
mood of the mind,
Find a brother's fond spirit in thee*



Cloonamahon became associated in local folklore with the O'Hart family from the unusual circumstances in which they were dispossessed.

Charles O'Hart and his brother Right Rev. John O'Hart Bishop of Achonry were in possession of Cloonamahon from 1687 to 1715. This period coincided with the most severe strictures of The Penal Days when a Catholic could not legally own anything of greater value than £5. A not unusual strategy in Ireland in those days, when a Catholic owned land, was to get a friendly Protestant neighbour to hold the land in trust for him. Unfortunately, the Hart brothers made an unwise choice in 1715 with one Lawrence Betterige of Cartron, (Otherwise Knockmullen) who had himself legally registered as owner. The Harts were dispossessed. Fr. O'Hart was befriended by the O'Haras, who gave him a house on Annaghmore estate at a place called Killaser, near the Village of Billa, Where there was a church dedicated to St. Lassara, mother of St. Fechin. Here he ended his days in poverty.

Local folklore retained a tradition of Dr. O'Hart's great love of birds and his endeavours to free all caged birds. From this circumstance the story was told that on his death birds came from all directions to sing his requiem. The poet, Yeats, commemorated this legend in The Ballad of Fr. Hart (originally called The Priest of Collooney)

*The birds he opened their cages
As he went up and down;
And he said with a smile,
"Have peace now";
And he went on his way
with a frown.*

*And these were the works of John,
When weeping score by score,
People came into Collooney:
For he died at ninety four.*

*There was no human keening:
The birds from Knocknarea
And the world round Knocknashee
Came keening in that day.*

In the 17th century, Cloonamahon became famous as the home of the brothers Thomas Laurence Connellan the greatest Irish composers and performers of the harp with the exception of Carolan, the Last of the Bards. Indeed the compositions of Thomas were considered superior to Carolan's. Of the two brothers Thomas was the more distinguished. Both travelled to Scotland, but at different times. Thomas is credited with composing 700 tunes, not a dozen of which survive. Two are of particular interest, Molly St. George and Molly McAlpine. They are the earliest harp tunes of which the appropriate words are extant, with the possible exception of Eileen Aroon. Molly McAlpine was adapted by Thomas Moore for "Remember the Glories of Brian the Brave." Carolan said that he would rather be the author of Molly McAlpine than of any melody he himself had ever composed. Other well-known tunes are The Battle of Killiecrankie, Farewell to Lochabor.

KEASH AND THE BRICKLIEVES

cont from page 1

For three days and nights, hundreds of people discovered the world of the Bricklieve Mountains and Keashcorran. They studied the photographs, maps, drawings, exhibits and slides presented each evening. Several people attended the slide presentation on more than one occasion. School children, families, young people and old people from throughout the region and from every walk of life were drawn to the exhibition. For a few days, the community celebrated the enchantment and history of their own landscape.

Throughout the six months of the project, TEAMWORK Tg 85-271 found co-operation everywhere, from Sligo V.E.C., from the landowners who welcomed them into their homes, from the Community Centre and the Vocational School, from the Heritage Group in Ballymote, from specialists in archaeology, history or geology, from teachers and principals, from school children. The success of the exhibition with capacity attendance each evening when people would normally be reluctant to leave the warmth of their fires and televisions, grew from the interest and co-operation expressed during the project. But people were not simply being polite. For a few days in Ballymote, we shared a vision of our world where beauty and wonder were real. Yes, the Bricklieves and Keash do exist.

Some questions remain. The exhibition and archive or material from the survey deserve a permanent home. This material could provide the basis for a museum in Ballymote where people could be introduced to the area. Minister of State for Arts and Culture, Ted Nealon, T.D. indicated in his opening speech that artifacts in possession of the National Museum could be transferred to local museums with sufficient conditions of maintenance and security. A museum based in Ballymote would attract visitors from throughout the world and provide a centre of civic pride for all the people of south Sligo.

More work can be done through TEAMWORK for the Ballymote area. An extension to the project has been applied for in order to widen the area of the survey. You can support this project by writing to:-

John Blake, TEAMWORK, Department of Labour, Mespil Road, Dublin 4 and expressing to him your opinion of the work shown in the exhibition and encouraging the Department of Labour to extend TEAMWORK TG 85-271. Or, you can write to Ted Nealon, T.D., 31 Greenfort Estate, Sligo, expressing your support for TEAMWORK TG 85-271.

Most importantly, the Bricklieve Mountains and Keash need protection. We can provide the protection against litter, vandalism, building or development which destroys the landscape, destruction of field monuments, whether deliberate or through carelessness. Let no one forget that beauty is an endangered species, that history can be buried and lost forever. If you still care about natural beauty and our own cultural history, you can make a difference. Together, we can build a better future for our children in our own place, proud of our land and its history because we feel it and know it as part of our daily lives.

NEW YEAR'S DAY WEDDING

The marriage of Mattie Casey, Main Street, Ballymote to Kieran McDonagh, Carraroe, Sligo took place in the Church of The Immaculate Conception, Ballymote.

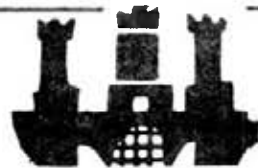
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CLOONAMAHON

from page 4

After the death of Thomas Connellan, many odes were addressed to him of which the following is typical:

*Whenever harp-note ringeth
Irene's isle around
Thy hand its sweetness flingeth,
Surpassing mortal sound,
Thy spirit-music speaketh
Above the minstrel throng,
And thy rival vainly seeketh
The secret of thy song!*

Betteridge became so unpopular in the locality that he sold Cloonamahon to Thomas Rutledge of Collooney. The latter had one son and three daughters. The son was killed in an accident and the Cloonamahon estate was given as dowries to the daughters. Esther Rutledge, the eldest daughter got Cloonamahon on her marriage to Joseph Meredith about the year 1741. From then until the early years of this century Cloonamahon belonged to their descendants.

In or about 1902 Cloonamahon was acquired by the Congested District Board. The estate was divided into small farms to relieve congestion mainly in Carrickbanagher. The house and some 25 acres of land eventually sold to Sligo County Council. In turn the house was used as a Sanatorium and eventually in the early 1940's a Monastery of the Passionist Fathers. The nucleus of the property had returned to Catholic ownership for the first time since 1715.

PASSING of an ARTIST by P.J. Duffy

As the congregation assembled for Mass Killaville Church on the morning of Sunday, January 26th there were expressions of disbelief on everyone's face as word went round that Fred Finn had died in the early hours of the morning. For many people like myself it was indeed the end of an era. Fred was our neighbour, he was always there, and like many lesser known characters from our area who have passed away in recent months, we had regrettably taken him less or more for granted.

At 68, we might have reasonably been excused for thinking he was man expected to be around for many years to come. It is something that might make us seriously ponder on these lines written by local poet, the late Martin Brennan: 'Tis singluat that those who are endowed
With intellect so far above the crowd
Are sometimes prematurely called away
While plodding multitudes are left to stay.

During the week before he and his lifelong music partner Father Horan had appeared on the popular T.V. programme "The Mountain Lark".

For most people resident outside our area Fred was just a jolly fellow who played sweet music on his fiddle, a sort of heir apparent to Michael Coleman. But we had come to know him over the years as the man who could plough a ridge of lea for potatoes as well as any man in the County;

as the handball player who won many a hard-fought competition; as the stage-actor, comedian and story-teller who left audiences in stitches with such comedy places as Cobweb Glory, Mountain Dew, Sugar for Jam, to mention but a few.

Back in the 1940's he and another local lad Joe Brett formed their own little comedy group and did rehearsals in an old disused farmhouse at Knockgrania. With no professional supervision at all they succeeded in getting their act together. With a cast that included many locals, this group took the show to numerous parish halls around the country.

On the day of his funeral a mourner from an outside parish remarked "shure we knew him as an actor as well as a musician".

His funeral was one of the largest and most moving ceremonies seen in these parts in recent times. The arrival of the remains at Killaville Church on Sunday evening was accompanied by Larry O'Dowd, the lone piper whose haunting laments brought tears to many people seated in the pews inside the little church.

At the requiem Mass on Monday morning Fr. Filan paid his own special tribute to the dead musician while Mrs. Marian Egan of Ballisodare read a solemn little poem "Farewell Fred". Musicians present played selections on their instruments. Larry O'Dowd again escorted the cortege as it left Killaville and later through Gurteen village where a huge crowd of mourners had assembled.

Fred Finn was one of those singular characters who appear on the scene once in a century. Apart altogether from his musical abilities he was an outstanding neighbour who never spared himself when it came to helping somebody in distress. His sudden departure from our area has created a void that will be very difficult to fill.

Upon a dusty wall
A silent fiddle hangs
Flanked by a sagging bow
Whose haunting rhythm once
Set many a heart aglow.

The master's gone whose
Nimble fingers made these sounds.
In yonder chuchyard
His body lies;
His spirit plays for hallowed angles
Beyond the distant skies.

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FOUR MILES OF CHANGE

Many changes for the better have taken place in rural Ireland over the past seventy years, and especially over the past thirty, but the changes I am now recording cannot all be said to be for the better.

My story begins at Templehouse Cross where the road from Ballymote to Coolaney crosses the Galway road, about four miles from Ballymote and the same from Coolaney.

At this cross in the first quarter of this century there was a cluster of six houses; a shop, a public house, a police barracks, and three private dwellings. Today only the pub and two dwelling houses remain. In 1922 the police barracks was burned down and later the ruins were re-built to enlarge the home of the Hall Family which adjoined it. In the 1950's the two houses on the opposite side of the road were demolished by Sligo County Council to make room for a wider road and a better view approaching the cross.

Soon after, the shop, which had provided the area with food, grain and fertiliser for most of a hundred years, closed its doors for good. It I'm glad to say its owners, the Halls, still live and thrive there.

The pub has been modernised and remains in the same family-ownership. The one dwelling house left has also been modernised and is let to visitors during the tourist season. Many German families have enjoyed a stay there over the last ten years.

As we leave Templehouse Cross and take the road towards Ballymote, we see a demesne wall right in front of us. The wall encloses Temple House Estate and stretches for approximately two miles from Rinbane to Temple House Bridge on the Owenmore. Up to 1961 a beautiful wood of elm, oak, and beech stretched all the way along the inside of this wall but hurricane Debbie played havoc with it in a few hours on that never to be forgotten September day in 1961. Over one thousand trees were levelled that day by the storm and so was a good part of the wall itself. Today most of the fallen trees have sold off as firewood and only a few sad-looking survivors remain to remind us of the beauty that once was there.

Continuing our journey to Ballymote, we round the bend at the Demesne wall and meet Jimmy Costelloe's forge and dwelling house. Both still stand - but only just. The forge closed with Jimmy's death over 60 years ago. Later the family sold out and moved to Dublin to set up a thriving drapery business in North Earl Street, now sadly closed too.

Adjoining Jimmy's farm was that of his brother Batty. This family still own the house and farm and a granddaughter has built a lovely bungalow alongside the old family house. This is the only new house that has been built along this stretch of road since the start of this century.

The Lynch family live in the gate-house a few hundred yards further on. It still belongs to the estate but Lynches have lived here for as long as I remember. The gate here is one of four entrances to the estate. Down the hill, we meet the main entrance known as "the Grand Gates", an imposing gateway indeed with its fine gate-house situated just inside. Here in the early years of the century the O'Dowd family manned the gates. They moved to England and were replaced by a few different families until the youngest O'Dowd son Larry returned in the 1960's and took up residence there as a tenant.

Our journey next leads over Temple House bridge to meet on our left the derelict house of the Armstrong family, long gone to their eternal reward. Michael was the shepherd and butcher in Temple House until a few years before his death.

For the next half mile or so I remember beautiful trees intermingled with laurels and rhododendrons along both sides of the road. The rhododendrons remain, but the trees at least the tall lovely ones where the squirrels scuttled to and fro among the branches all the long lazy days of summer, are no longer there. Alas! No trees, no squirrels for many a year now!

On now to Munne's turn and veer left to bring us to Corrigeen where there were two houses on the brow of the hill. One has now gone, and the other, the house of the Costello family, stands empty. Their nearest neighbour, Eileen Cosgrave, lived in a neat little house nearby but today only a heap of stones remains. Beside her there

by Mrs. Mary O'Donnell

lived the Phillips brothers who worked in Temple House right into old age. They did not marry, and the last, Henry, died only last year. Their house now stands empty.

At last we meet two new houses. Up to our right, a short distance from the road, we see the McGettrick and Hannan new bungalows. The Hannan family are new to this farm, having replaced the Brehony's but the McGettricks have lived here for as long as I remember.

On the opposite side of the road down a short avenue we see the Gallagher house, now empty for some years. Here a fine family of six girls and two boys were reared. All have gone to their reward except the youngest, Josie, who lives hale and hearty the other side of Ballymote.

On we go now to the letterbox at the junction of the Ballymote road and the Emlaghaughton - Cluid road. Just past here, we meet The Ruane house and nearby the ruins of the Gilroy house, part of which is now used as an outhouse by the Ruane family. A little further on, well into the fields on the same side of the road, John Leydon lived. Only a heap of stones masks the spot today.

Next on the left was the Doddy house. I remember it as a cosy farm house with a lovely flower garden in front. To-day there isn't a trace of it after the bulldozer has done its work. Right by Willie Cryan lived, but his house has also vanished.

Third in this cluster we meet our fourth new house, that of the Wim's family. Close by is the cosy cottage of Mrs. Reynolds, always well kept over the years. Behind the Wim's home, two other new houses have replaced thatched houses, one is owned by Fahy's and the other by another Wims. John Kerins also lived here but his house has long gone. This area is known as Ring.

Less than a mile will now take us to Ballymote but in that short distance nine family houses have disappeared without trace over the years.

Between Ring and Camross Hill on the right hand side of the road there were four near little thatched houses in my childhood days. John McGovern lived in the first, Martin Dunne is the second John McDermott is the third and right opposite a Cawley family. Today as I pass I cannot see even the track of

cont. on page 11

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS
Ballymote and Surrounding
area
TRADITIONAL
IRISH MUSIC

I came to Co. Sligo in 1955, to what is in my opinion the Premier County in Ireland, in the sphere of Traditional Irish Music. I came from Co. Clare with Traditional Irish Music ringing in my ears. I looked forward to meetings and hearing the Traditional musicians of Co. Sligo and I was not disappointed in my expectations.

The word Sligo derives from the Irish word Sligean meaning a sea shell, which is alleged, with strings drawn across it, to have been the first musical instrument ever used. What a happy coincidence !

Having duly arrived in Co. Sligo I set off "footloose and free" in the direction of Ballymote, my first stop being the home of the late Willie Coleman of Carnaree some three miles from Ballymote. There I was cordially received and treated to a wide variety of reels by Willie on his much loved and much used fiddle from his extensive repertoire of tunes.

Before I left that pleasant atmosphere Willie and I arranged to pay a visit to Ballymote at an early date, which we did. We visited Batty Cawley's "licenced premises" and there met the brother Michael and Tommy Hunt, they being suitably armed with fiddle, flute and pipes and accompanied by Willie an entertaining recital was inevitable. As I recollect the late Frank Flannery (Marren Park) was in the company. We arranged with Batty Cawley's approval and blessing for another session, to which I would bring along my tape recorder of the open reel to reel type current at the time.

Word got around that a recording session was to take place at Batty's and that aroused great interest over a wide area as the technique of tape recording was novel at the time.. Come the day, or rather the night there was a massive gathering of musicians and their friends at Batty's, so much so that it was reluctantly decided that all hands go to the Loftus Hall to obtain sufficient space to accommodate the huge crowd.

Many from amongst the musicians played selections of music, mainly on flute or fiddle and

so making it a memorable occasion in the annals of Ballymote.

The formation of a Branch Comhaltas Ceoltoir Eireann ensued and the Branch flourished from some years. Amongst its achievements was a series of annual Traditional Concerts in the Cinema in Ballymote. I recollected that the attendance at one of the Concerts was so great that an invited musician (J.J. McKenna) who had come all the way from Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim had some difficulty getting in, the admission doors have having had to be closed early to prevent overcrowding. Some of these Concerts featured musicians from as far away as Co. Tyrone and Co. Armagh - Mickey McCann for instance from the former and Brendan McGlinchty from the latter.

Unfortunately for reasons outside the control of the excellent Organising Committee the Concerts had to be discontinued. I recollect that amongst the members of that Committee were Alfie Banks, the late Johnnie Irwin and the late Frank Leonard and others whom I can't recall.

In the great world of Traditional Music in the Ballymote area I made many friends of long standing as for instance Michael and Tommie Hunt, Danny Healy, Lorrie Irwin, Louis Preston, Seamus Leonard and indeed many others too numerous to mention. In the Ballymote hinterland one must mention the late Paddy Killoran who is regarded as one of the fathers of traditional music; the late John Joe Grandinor and family who belonged to Keenaghan Ballymote; that superb flute player Matt Molloy whose late father Jim Molloy, a flute player in his own right, was a native of Lisananny, Ballymote; the Finn family from Marlow current performers on a variety of instruments; Jimmy McGettrick from Aughris, a veritable storehouse of tunes, the late Tommie Keenan, publican, Ballymote, who had a special handshake if the incoming customer happened to be a musician; Joe Cullen from Keash who is employed at Vinnie McDonagh's Electrical shop; the late Jimmy Brennan accordeones from Marlow Road, and many others who could be added to the list.

The above is just a cross section of names that comes to mind

indicating the wealth of traditional music talent in Ballymote and surroundings. It would indeed be hard to find a comparable area anywhere with such a richness of music. Take for instance the townland of Lisananey almost within hailing distance of Ballymote and we find that almost every house in it had over the years at least one musician like Michael and Tommie Hunt and Matt Molloy (Sr.), Pipor Anderson, Packie Dowd, Packie Gallagher, Joe Hannon and Maggie Connell. In Ardconnell (adjoining townland) John Flanagan and Mike Doddy and in another townland close by and still but a short distance from Ballymote, Cambs, a flute player called Jacques Cawley, some of whose music has I understand has been recorded on the old 78's. A short distance from Cambs there was a great exponent called Willie Snee. One could go on and on.

Reverting to activists in the field Don O'Connor and his talented family who resided in Ballymote for some years, were prime movers in the organising of two Fleachanna in Ballymote as well as being popular performers at many a session.

As recently as about two months ago a wonderful session of traditional music making the rafters ring, formed a significant part of a very enjoyable and successful Function organised by the Ballymote Heritage Group at the Castle Hotel, Ballymote. Amongst those playing was the late Fred Finn a most popular and talented violinist whose early demise caused widespread sorrow: Tom McGettrick ex N.T. was M.C.

A prominent feature of life in Ballymote presently is the existence of a Traditional Music Society based at 'The Hide Out' Sylvester Kerins' premises where well attended sessions are held every Thursday night indicating the ever continuing love for and dedication of Traditional Music in the Ballymote area.

The Sligo style or might we say the Ballymote style is much admired from Cork to Donegal and indeed known of in foreign parts. When the "Chieftans" played traditional Irish music on their tour of China was to be wondered at that amongst their number was to be found the wonderful flute Matt Molloy whose late father (already referred to) was a native of Lisananey, Ballymote. In penning

Ballymote District Council

Following a four year cycle of successful operation, Ballymote District Council had an inconclusive Annual General Meeting, due possibly to customary apathy which was always noticeable. However at the resumed Annual General Meeting held in January, there was an excellent attendance of a cross section of business interest for which some credit must be due to the publicity of the Council in a recent issue of the Corran Herald and also the publication of the excellent Survey Report. This resumed Meeting showed immediately that there was continuing lively interest in the Council and an anxiety that its work should continue. Appreciation was expressed by the large gathering of the work outgoing Council when the election of officers came about, no difficulty was experienced in filling the various positions.

The Officers elected were:-
 Chairman: Mr. John J. KIELTY;
 Vice-chairman: Michael ROGERS;
 Secretary: Keenan JOHNSON;
 Assistant Secretary: John PERRY;
 Treasurer Derek DAVEY; Assistant Treasurer Mrs. Eileen TIGHE; P.R.O. Alfie BANKS. The New Council consists of the officers and also Messrs. Paddy BRADY, Jim HIGGINS, Robert WALLACE, Michael FLYNN, Gerry CASSIDY, Sean MOLLOY, Con LOHAN, Nathy FAHY, Paddy CONHEADY, Eamonn SCANLON, Michael FARRELL, Mrs. Una PRESTON, Miss Mary McGETTRICK, Mrs. Mai HUNT. The new Chairman expressed his thanks to the Members and he stated that a deep debt of gratitude was due to out-going Council for the work it had achieved.

It was immediately evident from the lively discussion which took place on many topics, that the Council was getting off to an invigorating start and high on the list was once again the Public Light System in the Town. The necessity for an urgent improvement is being taken up actively with Sligo Council in conjunction with the Traders Association. Many other items concerning environmental improvement will appear on the Agenda for the monthly meetings which will be held at the Loftus Hall on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. Any other cultural

Organisation in the District is welcome to send delegates to the Council at any time and all Meetings are open to the Public.

Matters which will be given attention in the coming months are creation of awareness of the litter problem and provision for litter bins at suitable points; the possibility of securing a children's playground or open Park; removal of abandoned cars; re-siting of speed limit, junction, and road signs; improvement of roads footpaths, derelict sites; tourism, and numerous other matters. A very comprehensive Survey Report completed by the out-going Council is still available on sale and copies may be had at £2.00. The next meeting of the new Council takes place on Tuesday 18th March.

Dear Sir,

Elderly people living on their own seem again to be a target for what must be one of the lowest forms of criminal acts. There have been horrifying stories of people being attacked and intimidated in their own homes and their life savings stolen. In nearly every case the Gardai have been successful in apprehending the people involved and pressing charges. However, the money stolen is rarely recovered and of course nothing can make up for the shock and suffering caused to the victims.

On a sad note, it is said that some of the victims have been afraid to report the matter to the Gardai or even to discuss it with their neighbours. They are worried that they might lose their old age pension or other benefits should it become known that they have built up some savings.

There is no need for such worry as one can keep quite a sizeable amount on deposit with a bank and earn a good rate of interest and still not have the old age pension entitlement affected. I think it important now to try and exhort any Senior Citizens who may be worried about any financial matter of Social Welfare entitlement to seek advice in strictest of confidence from a trained Financial Advisor.

Manager & Staff
 Bank of Ireland, Ballymote



Responsibility and Awareness

One must first ask - In what way? What are their responsibilities, and to whom are they responsible. The answer would have to be that we all have responsibilities: we are responsible to ourselves, to our families, to our employers, to the communities in which we live, to our country, and in a wider sense to the world in which we live.

We are inter-dependent. None of us can go it alone. That inter-dependence should be an essential part of our education from our earliest years. Unfortunately this is not the case. Competition is the order of the day. Competition breeds selfishness and ruthlessness. Success becomes the all-consuming goal, breeding arrogance in the winner and frustration in the loser. Our world to-day is made up of winners and losers, those who go forward to success and its rewards, and those must remain under-dogs all their lives. This fatal trend starts at school, is carried into adult-hood and has produced the world we have to-day.

We all have been shaped in this mould and feel that we can do nothing about it. We submit to bureaucracy and the dictates of officials in the various branches of Government without question, and never stop to think that we are the units that make up the whole, and that such all power rest with us. Not just with the successful ones who are manipulating us. It is our responsibility as adults and unites of the Nation to educate ourselves in how we are governed, how our money is spent, and how those who govern us live up to their responsibilities.

The phrase "Knowledge is power" usually conveys the meaning of specialised knowledge which does give power in certain fields but basic knowledge of the machinery of Government under which we live, how it interacts on us on how we interact on each other, can give us a quiet self-confidence and enable us to set a real value on ourselves and on what we do no matter what our sphere of activity is.

BALLYMOTE BARONIAL ELECTION

The 1985 Ballymote Baronial Election was brought to a successful conclusion at a dance in the Loftus Hall on 27th October. Like the 1980 contest, the latest election had its share of drama and excitement when the favourite, Tom Cannon, just managed to pip Timothy Scanlon by a mere 143 votes (23.80 in cash). Timothy, who had benefitted greatly from support he received from relatives working in industry in England, was considered a no-hoper by the pundits. He also conducted a highly personalised campaign in towns as far afield as Longford but he maintained a very low profile in his home area. In contrast, Tom Cannon organised a very successful 25 drive in Ballymote, a profitable golf marathon, a sale of work and a methodical sale of raffle cards throughout the north-west.

Eamon Scanlon who was placed third was obviously handicapped by an exhausting and costly county council election campaign when he narrowly failed to win a seat.

The votes received by the first three were as follows.
Tom Cannon

13,740 votes (£2,290.00)

Timothy Scanlon

13,597 votes (£2,266.20)

Eamon Scanlon

4,500 votes (£750.00)

The remaining four candidates, John Joe Kilty, Bernard O'Brien, Alfie Parke and Bill McGovern grossed 4,920 votes (£820.00) between them. The gross proceeds of the campaign were £6,126.20).

The treasurer of the Park Re-development committee, John Conlon was returning officer and he was assisted by Tommie Lavin.

The High Sheriff, Alfie Banks conferred the Baronial robe, sash, coat of arms and the title deed on the winning

candidate, Tom Cannon and he congratulated Tom on his remarkable fundraising efforts on behalf of the community.

The Chief Herald, Neal Farry, presented the Baronial coat of arms to all the candidates and he thanked them for their fine collective achievement in a time of great recession.

The winners of the raffle were as follows:-
Justin Scanlon, Hill View Drive (£300.00), Mae Killoran, Lisananny (£100.00), Phil Currid, Ardnaglass (£50.00), and Mae Middleton, Coolaney (£50.00).

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SANDS OF TIME

*The sands of time do ebb and flow,
That's why life now flows so slow.
As babies we do laugh and cry,
Yet contented in a cradle lie.
When children we run out to play,
As teenagers we do sing and dance,
Never stop to give our lives a chance.
Middle age it then comes next,
Take it easy is now the text.
The Lord his reaper to us
now does send,
For we are old it is the end.
So the sands of time do ebb
and flow,
Where oh where did our lives
then go.*

by the Flintstone

When will women stop talking about women's problems. Why not look at themselves as what they are, citizens of the state 50% of the population. The housekeepers of the nation and of equal value in the scheme of things with their male counterparts. Education, Public health, Housing, the economy etc. are very much their concern. They have a moral obligation to become informed about these things and about how public money is being spent, also they have a moral obligation to let their opinions and recommendations be known to those in authority and these in their turn have the same obligation to give these recommendations serious consideration.

There is much talk of divorce, contraception, marital breakdown, etc. these times, does anyone seriously consider what the present tendency to promiscuity will have on tomorrow's children. Maybe if women stopped talking about these things and started studying the probable causes of a lot of these problems they might find some useful remedies. Many of the so-called women's problems are in reality deep-rooted social problems and start with a basically defective educational system. Uneven distribution of wealth, overgrown cities and towns, bad housing, poverty, etc. also play their part. Until women themselves realise their value in the scheme of things and claim the status that should be theirs they will continue to be treated as second class citizens and remain powerless to do anything about the abuses of which they now complain.

COLEMANS



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Sunday 9th March. . . Joe Sweeney . . . Sing-a-long

Saturday 15th March. . . Joe Sweeney . . . Sing-a-long

YOUTH

Young people as part of the nation's population cannot be taken in isolation and dealt with in isolation. We must look at why they came from and where they are going if we are to work out a formula to help them. We must also look at the circumstances of the times in which they live.

In rural areas most children get un-interrupted primary and second level education and during that period of their lives they are relatively protected and provided for: their main concern during school years is to pass examinations and prepare themselves for jobs which they hope will be waiting for them. All this is pretty soul-less stuff. Their experience of real life situations is limited to happenings in their homes and the localities in which they love. Youth organisations try to supplement their knowledge by bringing them into contact with other young people in and out of school atmosphere and encouraging them to engage in activities that would prepare them in some measure for life in the after-school world.

The framework of these activities is important. It is not enough that a person should be able to conduct a meeting successfully, be a good chairperson, secretary, or treasurer,

or be able to set up a co-operative or business enterprise. These things involve working with other people and are very useful, but in the world of to-day and in this country of ours more is needed. We must start with the personal qualities of the young person. As a people we tend to be slipshod in our dealings with our fellow citizens. We make promises that we do not intend to keep. We are not punctual, not always truthful, and not always loyal to our friends. These are things we need to correct. Personal integrity should be put before the young people we try to influence as a valuable and highly desirable quality that they should try hard to achieve. On the positive side courtesy, consideration for others and the art of communication are qualities that should be cultivated, and lastly obligation to ones country.

We are children of an ancient race, and our history, though chequered, holds many things of which we should be justly proud. Some would tell us we are Europeans now, maybe, but the European nations are very careful to preserve their own national identities, including their languages. Why shouldn't we? We could use English, French, or German for business reasons and yet proudly use our own tongue for communicating with our own people.

by Una Preston

cont. from page 7 those houses.

In the early 1920's two two-storey cottages were built on Camross Hill by the British Government and given to two Ballymote men who had served in the British army in the 1914-18 war. On the other side of Camross hill stood the Cawley family home, now a cattleshed. Bidy, the last member of that family that I remember there, married Pat Brennan and died a few years ago.

Now we come in sight of the chimney-stacks of Ballymote, and here there stood the happy houses of Mr. Killoran, John Berreen and C. Ruane. To-day not a stone of these houses stands, and a nice new bungalow owned by the Murtagh family is the only replacement to date.

Along a narrow lane, a little way from the Murtagh home, two more families have also died out; the Hevers and the Meehans. Nobody lives on that lane today.

In my youth, the doctor's house near the railway bridge was the last house before I reached the town. Dr. O'Harte senior served the people of Ballymote and surrounding areas for many years from this house and was succeeded by his son Dr. Frank O'Harte for as many years more. Both have gone to their eternal reward and their house has passed into the possession of the Perceval family.

Within the recent past another doctors' residence and surgery have been built on the edge of town. Here Dr. D. Dunleavy and her doctor husband Barney Concannon have taken over from the Doctors' O'Harte. Between here and Ballymote a garage stands; first built by the late Pake Begley it has long been in the possession of Alex Gilmor and family.

Opposite this garage, the gatehouse and entrance to the Earlsfort estate stood on my earliest visits to Ballymote. Today Val Henry's bungalow replaces the gatehouse and the estate is partly built over with County Council houses and a fine Vocational School. The great house itself is now the Convent of Mercy.

We have arrived at last at the Ballymote of seventy years ago; the Loftus Hall and Tighes public house then Coughlan's were the first two houses of the town then. Over the years it has expanded in all directions and it would be hard to say today where it starts or ends.

TO CHRIS MacDONAGH

By Dominic O'Kelly
(Cf. Donegal Democrat,
May 20th 1960)

In sorrowing appreciation of the late J.C.T. MacDonagh, B.Comm. Bank of Ireland House, Ballybofey, who died (suddenly) at the annual meeting of our County Donegal Historical Society (of which he was a founder member and present President) on Thursday, April 28th, 1960. Gur moide do Theaghlach De a anam.

We weep to-day in Donegal, a
stranger yet a friend . . .

For Chris MacDonagh came the call
that signals Journey's end.

A Scion of a Sligo clan once owning
acres vast
This quiet unassuming man so fond
of Ireland's past.

For twenty years among us here
adopting our Dark Hills
Old forts and caves and crannog
sites gave Chris his greatest thrills.

Tirchonaill owes him gratitude for
loving labour done:
Research and archacology the lore
of days long gone.

Our Donegal Historical Society was
born
With Chris its fons et origo: he
nursed it night and morn.

Financier philanthropist in many
a social field
How sweetly could his violin to
the Cuilfhionn yearning yield !

Now permanently passed away
lone loved ones left behind
For his kind soul we fondly pray
and his memory keep in mind.

C. McDonagh's Book:
A HISTORY OF BALLYMOTE
AND THE PARISH OF
EMLAGHFAD

THE CORRAN HERALD
PUBLISHED IN BALLYMOTE
EDITOR JAMES FLANAGAN
DESIGN,TYPESETTING
AND PRINTING BY
"FASTPRINT"



Ballymote Angling Tradition

There is a bronze fishing hook in the National Museum, about the size of a half-crown with a long shank and an eye at the end. The note attached says that it was discovered at Carrownanty, Ballymote, but has no date. It was considered worthy of a place in this great collecting centre for many aspects of our National Heritage and it establishes a tradition for angling in our district going back to the dim and distant past, even to the Bronze Age.

One can easily accept that the Owenmore River, Templehouse and Cloonaccigha Lakes and the many other smaller lakes around our town were teeming with fish then, as they are now. One well-known angler in the town has a bronze reel handed down from an old fisherman which could also be worthy of a place alongside the Carrownanty Hook. The tradition lives on, and memory recalls the Donegans, the Reynolds, Dan Brennan, the Healys J. McManus and others leaving the town after first Mass on Sunday Mornings to spend the day at one or other of their favourite fishing stands. There were no three-piece rods among their equipment in those days, only long one-piece sixteen footers often cut in a local wood and one had to keep well back as they swung around Dowd's or McDonagh's corner on the way out of town. No nets either - the tackle was strong enough to haul

them in and unlike the way with anglers from abroad who later came to fish here and who returned the fish live to the water, the catch all came home.

When the value, to the Country of our coarse fishing as a tourist attraction gradually came to be realised there was development on a national basis. Ballymote was one of the centres that entered the market early for a share of the trade. The first efforts might be regarded as a probing to see what the district had to offer and what use could be made of it for the benefit of the town, then a club was formed.

The first meeting of this club took place in what was then a Market House on 22nd Feb. 1951. Present and elected to the Committee were, Tom McGettrick, President; Edw. McGettrick, Chairman Thos. J. Gallagher, Sec; Tom P. Healy, Treasurer; Dan Brennan, Jas Reynolds, and Paddy Donegan. There was an apology from Paddy Rogers, O'Connell Street, who immediately became a member of the Club. These were all fishermen whose first interest was the sport for its own sake and they paid in one shilling each, membership - yes, one shilling the first to a movement which was to contribute to the welfare of the town and have repercussions in far away places. But hopefully that story will be told in later issues.



**BALLYMOTE G.A.A. CLUB
A.G.M.**

The following officers were elected:

President Joe O'Hara
Chairman Pat McGrath
Vice-Chairman Pdraig Creegan
Secretary Paschal Donohue
Treasurer Brendan Dempsey
P.R.O. Neal Farry

In his report, the outgoing temporary secretary, Neal Farry congratulated the Under 12 football team on winning the County Championship. He also congratulated St. Nathy's hurling Club's Under 12 and Under 14 teams for their achievements in winning their respective county titles.

The new club president Joe O'Hara, noted with satisfaction that three of the new club officers were from the old Derroon club area and he hoped that the spirit that characterised Derroon in the thirties and forties would be evident in all Ballymote teams in 1986 as it was in the juvenile football and hurling teams in 1985.

The hurling and football coaches, John Cunningham, Michael Donnellan, Neal Farry, Paddy Conheady and Pat Haugh were included in the congratulatory remarks.

In his report, the treasurer, Brendan Dempsey reported that the club has a deficit of approximately £250. He stated that transport cost £190 during 1985. It was decided that mini-buses should be hired to transport all juvenile teams to winter league fixtures, irrespective of cost, since this is the most efficient method. It was stated by some members that the transportation of large numbers of children in private cars involv-

Sports

ed unacceptable insurance risks for a small number of people who have been providing this mode of transport at their own expense for many years. Accordingly it was decided to vigorously promote the Ciste Gael draws during 1986 so that a professional approach, supported by a regular and substantial income, will be implemented.

A motion was passed to request Sligo County Board to ensure that the first rounds of the Senior and Intermediate championships will be played before the first round of the Junior Championship each year so as to preclude regraded Senior players taking part in the Junior Championship.

The Ballymote G.A.A. club was founded in 1886 and it was decided to mark the centenary year by publishing a centenary history of Gaelic games in the Ballymote area. A history committee has been appointed.

During a lively debate on the parish rule it was noted that Sligo County Board failed to implement a resolution that was passed by the 1985 Convention demanding that the parish rule be strictly enforced. This resolution was sponsored by the Ballymote Club.

The new club chairman Pat McGrath, appealed for co-operation from all members to help the club to achieve success at all levels during its centenary year.

It was noted that 130 boys from the parish, who are attending the local primary and post-primary schools are receiving expert coaching from Seamus Pilkington of Kilfree, who is the official County G.A.A. juvenile coach.

A history committee has been appointed.

**BALLYMOTE BADMINTON
CLUB**

The Club currently has a large membership, divided into three groups: Adult, Juvenile and Junior.

ADULT:

Two adult teams were involved in County leagues this year. At the end of the first half, the division 5 team ended joint first, and the division 4 team in the top of their league.

The adult team play on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Wednesdays are reserved for home matches or team practice. Currently there is a Club Competition in progress.

JUVENILE (12-16)

The Juvenile team plays on Wednesday nights, 7 - 8.30p.m. Their progress looks very promising for future teams. They are trained by Jim Gallagher.

JUNIORS (8 - 12)

The Junior team plays on Friday nights. They are being trained by John O'Connor. It is encouraging to see so many juniors interested in the sport.

PERRY'S

Ballymote

Large Sliced Pan . . . 56p
1 lb. Butter 99p
1 kg. Sugar 59p
500 gr. Cornflakes. .59p
4 lb. Chips. 99p
6 pkts. Biscuits asst. 99p
1 doz. Eggs size 3 . .89p
½ lb. Lyons Tea. . . .95p
4 lb. Chickens 3.25
4 st. Kerr Pink
Potatoes 5.99
Gateaux Swiss Roll .59p
½ tin Biscuits. . . . 2.99
1 lb. Marmalade. . . .49p
Toilet Rolls 19p
Lge. Lucozade. 92p
1½ Ltr. Minerals . . .79p
Block Ice Cream . . .69p
Shoulder Bacon lb. .75p

Ballymote's Football Past

by John Benson

The town and parish of Ballymote have been associated with the G.A.A. since the very early years of the founding of the organisation. Both on the field of play and in the council chamber men from the capital of Corran have played important roles in the evolution process of the G.A.A. The first County Board was set up in 1887 and one of the members was one James A Flanagan who lived in O'Connell Street where Paddy Egan and his family now reside. Shortly afterwards another Ballymote man, John Cawley, was elected to the Board.

Two priests from the town were very much involved in G.A.A. activities at the time. They were Canon John McDermott P.P. and one of his curates, Rev. J. McNicholas. It must be mentioned at this point that in those years nationalist feelings were running high throughout the country and the I.R.B. was seen, in the eyes of the authorities, to be closely connected with this Body. As a result the priests were frequently subjected to questioning by the police. Incidentally, the same attitude still persists in the Northern part of our country.

Moving into the present century a teacher from Emlaghnaughton, Batt Henry, was made secretary of the County Board. His term of office lasted from 1914 to 1923. At much the same time another Ballymote man, John A Dockry, became Chairman of the Board and was succeeded in 1929 by local School Principal, John A. Barnes. In 1917 a young doctor from the Skreen area received a signal honour by being nominated the first patron of the County Board in Sligo. He was Dr. Paddy O'Hart.

On the field of play Ballymote had some outstanding successes in the first twenty years of the G.A.A. The team won the county championship in 1882 and again in 1905, beating Achonry Davitts and Gurteen. There's an interesting piece of history relating to a Sligo team that participated in the Connacht Championship in 1913. I quote: "On the Sunday following the County Final Sligo met and defeated Leitrim 2-1 to 1-1 in the Connacht Championship at Boyle before an attendance of one thousand who paid £25 in the gate receipts. Leitrim lodged and object-

ed on the grounds that two Sligo players, Gilgan (Wanderers) and Dockry (Ballymote) had played soccer but this was subsequently withdrawn for want of evidence. Mayo provided the opposition in the semi-final, and although Sligo matched the visitors in the first half, Mayo described as "the more stylish and experienced", won in the end by a comfortable margin. Best for Sligo were Dockry (Ballymote, Gilgan, Clancy and Kelly (Wanderers) and Keevans and O'Dowd (Killavil)."

Ballymote won the county championship in 1914 by beating Enniscrone at Tubbercurry and Deron followed suit the following year with a victory over Knockalassa in Coolaney. The twenties saw Ballymote football flourishing. Games were then played in a field known as the "Stone Park", situated in an area adjacent to the present Corran Park. The team colours were Black and Amber vertical strip and Sunday after Sunday they could be seen in action against the best teams in the county. Outstanding among them were Bertie and Fonso Farry, Bertie McGettrick, Patrick Dwyer, Bill McDonagh, Louis Harte, Tommy Bolger, James Kilmurray and others. In 1926 Sligo carried off the Connacht Championship and six of the above were included in the team. They were: the Farry brothers, Bertie McGettrick, Louis Harte, James Kilmurray and Tommy Bolger. The last three were not natives of the town. Louis Harte was brother of Canon Peter Harte, who was P.P. in Ballymote from 1970 to his death in 1973. James Kilmurray was a young member of the Garda Siochana, stationed in the town, while Tommy Bolger looked after the lighting needs of the town, being in charge of the "Power House" (now the site of the Youth Club).

It may be of interest to mention that games other than Gaelic football were played in the Stone Park in those years. Hockey and Rugby also had their adherents and were played mainly by officials from the three banks as well as by students on holidays from schools that catered for such sport. In the late 1920's a young man came to work in the Hibernian Bank in Market Street. He proved himself a first class athlete and

participated with considerable distinction in the many sports fostered in the town, those already mentioned and Tennis. His name was Vincent Grant. In addition to his activities on the field he also interested himself in the administrative side of sport, being appointed a county team selector for a period.

The famous Sligo senior team that won the Connacht Senior championship in 1928 included a fine player from Derroon, Bertie McGettrick, who operated at right half back and distinguished himself on many occasions, most notable being his display against mighty Kerry in a National League semi-final at Tralee in 1929.

In 1930 the Annual Convention was held at the famous Henry Hall, Coolaney. Ballymote's representatives were the late Bertie Farry and John Hannon. The selection committee were in attendance and in their ranks were four from Ballymote. They were John A. Barnes, P.J. Nangle, Paddy Dwyer and as already mentioned, Vincent Grant. In the county minor team of that year were Tom McGettrick, and John Kivlehan. In the Junior team were Louis Harte, Willie McDonagh and Vincent Grant. The senior team included three players from the Ballymote area, Bertie McGettrick, Charlie O'Connor and Sean O'Beirne, who was an army officer and came from the Rathmullen area.

In a future issue it is hoped to deal with the glorious area of the famous Derroon or, as they were popularly known, "The Bit O'Red".

TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC

cont. from page 8 by Frank Mulvey
the foregoing I have depended solely on memory. There may be inaccuracies and I would be glad to have them pointed out; So much could be written about traditional music in the Ballymote area that I am sure there are many omissions in the foregoing. They are not intentional and will I hope be excused. It would take a very large tome indeed to contain a complete survey of the subject. Finally one would have to travel a long distance indeed from Ballymote to find some one who had not heard of the place through its long and deep association with Traditional Music.

BALLYMOTE HANDBALL CLUB

by David Casey

Ballymote has for many years been recognised as the stronghold of handball in County Sligo. This tradition has come about as a result of the great efforts made by a very determined and dedicated group of players, officials, and supporters of the game. It is necessary to look at the historical development and evolution of handball in Ballymote and environs to really appreciate the standing of the club.

Handball is one of our oldest games and there is evidence to suggest that it was played in Ballymote in pre-famine times. The famine left in its wake a trail of destruction, in many cases families were completely wiped out. Emigration which started during the "great hunger" continued throughout the remainder of the 19th century and into the present century. The emigrants brought with them to their adopted countries a great heritage of music and song, folklore, stories and games. Part of this heritage was the game of handball which was played in places as diverse as Britain, America, Canada and Australia by 1900.

During the late 19th and early 20th century handball was widely played in County Sligo and new alleys were built in towns, villages county.

Ballymote ballalley was built in 1910 near the site where the games were played in the last century.

The competitive aspect of the game consisted of many tournaments organised by various clubs including Ballymote. There were many very good players around and it is with pride that they represented their clubs. Players cycled and sometimes walked in all kinds of weather conditions to participate, and it was this effort and commitment which gave rise to friendly rivalries between individuals and clubs and thus a great tradition was born. A new court was also completed at Emlaghnaughton in 1926 under the direction of Batt Henry and other enthusiasts. So at this stage in the middle 20's handball was really taking off.

In 1924 at Croke Park the Irish Handball Council was set up. This was to prove very important as it would provide the liaison which

was badly needed. Sligo County Handball Board was formed shortly after, and from the mid-twenties onwards the all-Ireland championships at senior, junior and other grades were established.

During the next 20 years or more many fine players emerged in the Ballymote area including Michael Hannon, Val Henry and the Regans. In 1947 Jim O'Rourke and Joe Bergin representing County Sligo won the All-Ireland senior softball doubles championship. There was a lot of concern at this stage for the future of handball in the county. Many courts were neglected and there was a shortage of young players. This fact was very quickly recognised by Michael Hannon. He saw the need to get the young people interested in the game, and also he wanted to see a ballalley in Ballymote which was comparable with the best.

Repair work was carried out on the alley and a great effort was started to continue the development of the club. This was carried on into the 60's by players, supporters and the general public. There were collections, raffles, dances and much of the planning and organising was under the direction of Michael Hannon. At this time many young players of top class were emerging and this also had much to do with the great work done by Michael and Val Henry. Many connacht titles were won from 1958 to 1974. Among the winners of provincial titles were Des Walsh, Michael Cunnane.

Justin Henry, Ray Walsh, Eamonn Hannon, Jimmy Finn, Marcus Henry, Noel Clarke, M.F. Hannon, Francis Cawley, Ray Henry, John McArdle, Ray McAndrew, John Gaffney, Paddy Walsh, Ray Alyward. This reflects the depth of talented handballers that were playing in those years.

There were many notable achievements in different competitions. In 1961 Des Walsh was the first Sligoman to win an All-Ireland singles title when he captured the junior softball singles title. Des played much of his earlier handball in Collooney and during the 60's he became a great player with Ballymote. He won many Connaught titles and also was a member of the All-Ireland club winning side in 1969. The other members were Marcus Henry, Eamonn Hannon, and Josie Mattimoe. Des, Marcus

and Eamonn alongside Francis Cawley and Jimmy Finn were members of the team which won for Sligo the National Handball league in 1966. Des Walsh with Marcus Henry were two of the finest individual and doubles players in Ireland during these years. Marcus had won the all-Ireland minor softball title in 1963 and 1964, a rare achievement in any era. He also won with John Gaffney the junior doubles in 1967. Hannon was also a player of great character and humour he was always willing to give advice to the younger players. His sudden death was a sad loss to all who knew him.

Michael Hannon saw his dream of a roofed alley come true in 1970. He continued to give guidance to the young players of Ballymote and much success followed. Players such as Michael Porter, Francis McCann, John Cawley, Jude Cassidy, Pdraig Hurley, Pdraig McCann, Pat Egan, Martin Golden all winning Connaught titles. The more experienced players Paddy Walsh who won a doubles title in 1974 with Eamonn Hannon continue to play the game along with John Gaffney, Francis Cawley. In the 70's all-Irelands continued to be won by Ballymote players. Francis McCann and Michael Porter continued a great tradition winning titles at minor, under 21, and Junior level. They won thier titles in 1976, 1979 and 1981. Francis and Michael are two players who came through the under age competitions like many of the players mentioned previously. They have attained many honours including schools titles at all-Ireland level, Top-Ace representation, many Connaught titles.

With players of their calibre the future of the game is assured in Ballymote. The winning of the all-Ireland colleges and vocational schools titles in the 70's probably more than anything else reflects the great tradition and quality of handball in Ballymote. Other players to have played on those great colleges teams were Colm Conway, Jim Dockry and Pdraig Cawley.

Michael Hannon saw his dream come true and even though he is no longer with us the spirit and tradition which he helped to carve continues to grow. People like Michael Hever also Kevin Hurley did much to encourage the youth.

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Kevin has also sadly gone to his rest but will be remembered. As we head towards the 90's Ballymote Handball Club can look forward to much more success and growth.

We extend to Mrs. Y. Perceval of Forthill, vice-president of Ballymote Heritage Group sincerest sympathy on the death of her husband.

To the relations of Dr. John Garvin, Dublin a native of Templevanny who was long associated with the lore and history of the Bricklieves. A copy of his articles first published in the Roscommon Herald "The High Hollow Townlands" is now safely treasured at Sligo County Library. Dr. Garvin presented them only a short time before his death.

From Roscommon Herald 1919

"Mr. Tom McGowan the well-known drummer with Ballymote Brass and Reed Band who was reported killed in the war, has turned up to prove that 'the rumour was very much exaggerated'. He was cordially welcomed by his many friends"

Note: He lived to serve with the Local Defence in the Second World War.

"Master Chris McDonagh, aged 13, son of Mr. Eugene McDonagh Ballymote, the well-known and popular commercial traveller has obtained an honours certificate for violin playing at the recent examination held under the auspices of the Incorporated Society of Musicians, London. The talented boy has also won a medal at Sligo Feis Ceoil".
Note: James Christopher has many talents.

The Corran Herald would like to express sincere gratitude to Patrick Mattimoe, 33 Vanscoy Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3R 1H4 formerly of Main Street, Ballymote for his best wishes and generous contribution of £50 on the occasion of the Launching of the Herald.

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