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ILL-FATED HOPES.....of a NEW LIFE

The little girl from Collooney who died tragically on one of the coffin ships December 1848
by Patricia McNally

In early December 1848, a little girl called Ann McLoughlin aged 8 left Collooney with her family to begin a new famine free life in America. The first stage of their long journey was to start from Sligo on a small steamboat called the Londonderry owned by the North West of Ireland Steam Packet Company. The McLoughlin family from Collooney were just one of many families from the West of Ireland who after three successive potato crop failures decided to give up the struggle to pay their rents, and the even bigger struggle to partially fill their distended stomachs. Their fare which was six shillings per person and would take them to America via Liverpool, was acquired by selling the families few remaining possessions and livestock. Nothing would be retained, not even the treasured heirloom handed down from one generation to the next.

There was no room for sentiment after a three year struggle against famine and eviction.

And so little Ann McLoughlin set off with her parents, her head no doubt full of the nice things she would get in America. Ann was not suffering her parents' despair, leaving their native home, the soil they tried to hard to nurture, the soil that had failed them. They loved their homeland and were leaving only because they were forced to do so to give their young family a chance to live the happy childhood they had experienced themselves.

The Londonderry had a crew of approximately 26 and contained three cabins. There was covered accommodation at the front lower deck of the steamboat for about 50 passengers. This area was called the forecabin, and it was here that the McLoughlin family along with many other Irish families met their death.

On board the small steamboat on this fatal sea journey were 177 passengers, and the upper deck was all but filled with cattle, sheep, pigs and fish.

THE HIDDEN FOLK

by P.J. Duffy

I suppose it can strictly be said that ever since his primitive beginnings, man has been fascinated, and at times abessed, by the world of the mysterious and the unknown. Long before we arrive at the stage where we see people dabble with seances and other forms of occult ritual, we had a much less sophisticated society tell us of their odd experiences, in their own simple way.

When we watch television, we see people being interviewed and tell their stories about the late Biddy Early, that strange, strange woman who lived at Feakle in the county Clare, towards the end of the last century. We try to compare them with the folklore and legends of our own place. We hear for instance that Biddy used to a green twisted shaped bottle when casting one of her enchanting spells, and again while performing one of her famous cures.

Well stories of the twisted bottler were not peculiar to this part of the country, and indeed long before there was mention of Biddy Early around here,

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Many passengers finding the heat unbearable in the crowded fore-castle went up on deck, and huddled alongside the animals. At 10p.m. after two hours at sea bad weather erupted. The ship went from side to side and by midnight the winds had reached hurricane force. The passengers in the fore-castle, most of them long suffering famine victims, and the McLoughlins amongst them, were violently sick. The air was putrid. What little air the single port-hole and entrance allowed was soon rank.

Chaos prevailed; people panicked, the stronger trampling the weaker to gain exit from the dark hole.

With high seas and water being taken on an order was issued for all passengers to go below. The stronger passengers objected and resisted but even so a wooden door was placed over the entrance to the fore-castle and covered with a tarpaulin which was then fastened with ropes and nails. Air was taken from the 177 passengers, what little oxygen they had was now completely gone. The single lamp went out, someone tried to light a match. 'What cruel trick was fate playing on us?' must surely have been amongst the final thoughts of those passengers who unable to struggle any longer gave up and died not from the famine they left behind but from suffocation. People who had strength shouted and banged above the noise of the sea, but still they were left to certain death in the 'Black Hole'. The heat was unbearable and many died struggling to take off their clothes. Mothers lost their children, wives lost their husbands, such was the rush



one succeeded in doing so. He was Michael Brennan from Mayo and because of this one man, further deaths were forestalled. He struggled with members of the crew who tried to ignore him, even threats of being thrown overboard would not deter this man who had just stared in the face of a fate worse than death, a man who knew his mother and two sisters, were suffocating as he tried to get the ship's Mate to open the door to the dying passengers in the fore-castle.

Reluctantly after many threats the Mate removed the tarpaulin and broken door. He was however too late to help little Ann McLoughlin from Collooney and the other Irishmen, women, and children who died a cruel death on the high seas on their way to start a new life in America.

When after much delay and signalling between the ship and Derry, the steamboat pulled into Derry Quay no one was allowed ashore. The Head Constable went on board and found the deck a mass of bodies. All of the victims showed the terrible signs of death by suffocation with much bruising on arms and legs caused by their final struggle to escape the airless hole or in some cases caused by the boots of those who trampled the weak in their own efforts to survive and escape this terrible death.

The Captain of the Londonderry - Captain Johnston stated that he understood the passengers had mutinied and murdered each other by cutting their throats and then tried to set the ship on fire. When the victims were examined however none of them had throat wounds and there was no trace of fire. All the wounds were caused by trampling and all had died of suffocation.

The sad outcome of the trial was the acquittal of Captain Johnston, Richard Hughes and Ninian Crawford, 1st and 2nd mates. The blame was placed on the government. Within a year there was a change in the safety laws for passengers at sea.

Burial ground was chosen for the 72 men, women and children outside the city of Derry. The steamboat sailed to Liverpool with the few surviving passengers. The boat was later renamed and refurbished and continued to take many Irish families across the Irish sea. Captain Johnston never sailed again and died a few years later.

There is but one consolation for those of us who are saddened by the fate of little Ann McLoughlin from Collooney and that is that she surely had a very special place awaiting her not in America but in that greater home with her Maker.

The late Johnny Benson

JOHNNY BENSON
R.I.P. an Appreciation

The late Johnny Benson from Ballymote was more than a colleague and a friend. He was a gentleman in the real sense of the word whom I came to know and respect through our mutual involvement in the Gaelic Athletic Association. A remarkable aspect of Johnny's life was that although he spent much of his time away from Sligo he maintained extremely close links with the county and particularly with the G.A.A.

Shortly after his return to Sligo from Tipperary he was appointed the first Public Relations Officer for Sligo County Board in 1970. At that time nobody was quite sure what that position entailed but Johnny took up the challenge and since then has ensured that Sligo G.A.A. activities have received wide coverage in both local and national press. His main involvement was with 'The Sligo Champion'. He commenced writing notes, match reports and an occasional article under the title of a 'A Special Correspondent'. His natural abilities as a writer were soon recognised by the 'Champion' who gave him responsibility for the weekly 'G.A.A. Digest Column'. Those interested in the G.A.A. looked forward eagerly to his script every week which was invariably interesting, thought provoking and above all impartial. He also did trojan work in preparing programmes for matches, particularly those in the Connacht Championship, and in contributing to publications both local and national.



In 1982 Johnny decided to retire from the position of P.R.O. At a function in Sligo's Park Hotel and the Co.Bd. presented him with a Cuchulainn Statuette as a token of appreciation of his tremendous work. Happily, after a one year break, he resumed the position of P.R.O. and the Co.Bd. embarked on the project of publishing a comprehensive history of the G.A.A. in County Sligo it was Johnny who was given the onerous and time consuming task of supervising the research team. This he did with great expertise. The publication of that 'Sligo G.A.A. Centenary History' in December 1984 will stand as a perpetual reminder of the outstanding work done on that project by Johnny and his colleagues John McTernan, Christina Murphy and Sean McGoldrick. Johnny's love of things Irish and Gaelic was very evident. His enthusiasm for the games, the language and all aspects of Gaelic culture was a prime motivating force in his life.

One's mind's eye can recall many images of him. One is of seeing him in Press Boxes at venues up and down the country,

reporting on the good times and not so good, enjoying the victories and seeking grounds for optimism in the defeats. He always seemed to particularly enjoy games at his beloved Corran Park. Sitting in the excellent Press Box there, looking out on the young men of Co. Sligo and elsewhere playing Gaelic games, gave him immense satisfaction.

His knowledge of the games was of encyclopaedic proportions. His friendship and feeling for footballers, handballers and hurlers of all ages was reflected in the attendance at his funeral. On his last sad journey back to Ballymote, with the November sky weeping over his black and white draped coffin, it was entirely appropriate that men of the thirties stood side by side with teenagers of today and representatives of all the generations in between. All had gathered in final tribute to a gentle man so well respected and loved.

Slán leat, a Sheain uasail. Ní bheidh do leitheid in ar measc arís. Go dtuga Dia solas na bhFlaitheas dod anam uasal Gaelach.

T. Kilcoyne

The 'bodhrán maker'

JAMES DAVEY FROM KALAVILLE
The Man and the Craftsman

Many years ago I was given a Bodhran as a Christmas gift. Each time the Bodhran was played my eyes would fall upon the name stamped inside the skin - James Davey, Kiltycree House, Kilaville, Co Sligo. Often I wondered who this man was, who made such a fine Bodhran with its skin that never failed to respond to my touch, whatever the atmosphere, humid or dry, hot or cold. Never did it require the 'few drops of guinness' or damp cloth to get the tone right for playing, a touch of the hand that would eventually play it was all that was ever required.

The bodhran travelled many miles of sea and air, and many musicians - child and adult have been taught to play from the instrument received as a gift at Christmas 1974.

Fourteen years later and armed with the Bodhran he made for me all those years ago I made my way to Kilaville to interview James Davey. I was greeted by a tall, thin, neat, quietly spoken man who introduced himself as James Davey. He escorted me into his home where the fire in the range burned brightly and invitingly. His wife immediately stood and shook my hand welcoming me to their home. This couple had gone to a lot of trouble in preparation for the reporter from the Corran Herald. How often - one was inclined to think - the visitor, stranger from foreign land and neighbour alike, must have had the same welcome awaiting them at Kiltycree House. Such hospitality and a certain type of respect, a willingness from the heart

to give the stranger time in your busy daily schedule, no doubt belongs to the old 'Irish ways'. However, this trait in our character was still in evidence in the home of James and Bridget Davey in the June of this year 1986.

Mr Davey was delighted to see the 'old' Bodhran and played it for a moment or two, 'you know' he said with a proud smile 'they say a Bodhran improves with the years if its' well made'. There was never any doubt but that this Bodhran continued to improve. Being the humble craftsman he is, Mr Davey quietly accepted the proffered praise of his workmanship.

In the quiet of the kitchen with nothing to encroach upon the flow of conversation other than the continuous, lulling tic-tocking of the mantle clock Mr Davey spoke of events in his life which developed and nurtured a love within him from the age of 4 for the Bodhran. 'I got my first lessons on the instrument from a great flute player Tom McDonagh, who was an elderly neighbour of mine', and at the age of 10 this kindly neighbour who had taken James under his wings - James's father having died when he was only 2 years old - gave him a great skin which James attached to an old sand screen. From then on he would accompany Tom to the crossroad and fireside gatherings the proud owner and 'maker' of the instrument that permitted him to 'join the musicians'.

He sometimes got into trouble both at home and at school because of his involvement with music. He remembers the wrath of Master Brennan and later Master Rafferty and



remains grateful to the girl who often gave him the answers to his sums at school. He was not alone in his interest; he recalls a group of children from his class following the Kilaville pipe and drum band one fine spring morning on one of their marches spades and shovels aloft at the time (1919 approx) when land was being taken over for con-acre. 'We got killed that evening when we came back to school' he says 'Parents and teachers were more strict then, we were terrible afraid of them and priests and inspectors'. He remembers crossing the fields bare-footed to school in the summer and in the winter armed with the two sods of turf each child had to bring for the daily fire.

From the age of 14 James had to run the farm on his own. He had an older sister, Kathleen R.I.P. he himself being an only son. It was hard work he recalls but he enjoyed it.

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there were stories of a little woman with a twisted bottle, who from time to time used to appear at certain houses looking for a deorum of milk. Then just as quickly as she appeared she would vanish again.

There was a story told about a farming family who built a new cow byre, and then had the unfortunate experience of seeing their cows die down to three. One day as the woman of the house was busy cooking the mid-day meal she turned around to find a strange little woman standing in her doorway. The wee woman asked for a sup of milk, and when the housewife informed her that they didn't have much milk as most of their cows had died, her visitor said she understood that this was so. When offered some milk, this strange creature took from under her shawl a small twisted bottle. It took less than half a cup of milk to fill the bottle, and as she turned in the doorway to go away she repeatedly thanked the woman of the house for her generosity, then in a shrill voice she added, "you understand madam, that your cows have died because you built your byre on our path".

A great many legends have been woven around the churning of the milk and the making of the butter. There were people who genuinely believed that it was possible to remove or steal the butter by charm, just at the time it was about to form on the top of the milk within the churn. As a precautionary measure, water from a holy well was often used to restrain the evil-doer.

I heard my late father tell a story of walking into a kitchen when a churning of milk was under way. This even took place away back in the early years of the century. Two women were pounding away at a hand dash, moving it up and down inside an old wooden churn, and taking turns at what country people used to call "the drees". A circle of red hot coals taken from a turf fire surrounded the churn and its operator, whilst the other person was seated on a chair alongside. When he asked for an explanation he was told that if they didn't do this, they could be beating away all day on the dash and not a bit of butter would form, as it would be taken by the fairies to a fort which was situated at the back of the house.

For anybody with two doors on their house, it was regarded as a deadly mistake to let a person enter by the front door and exit by the back. By allowing this to happen, you did something that was tantamount to giving away your luck.

It was never allowed that you land tools or any other type of farm implement on May-day, nor was it reasable to remove the dung from outhouses on that particular day, because to do so meant throwing out your luck. Another suspersticion said to bring bad luck was to meet a red haired woman on your way to a fair,m or to a church to get married.

It was regarded as a bad omen too if a single magpie crossed your path, and nothing could be more disasterous than to set eyes on a white arsed goat when going to a game of cards.

Old supersticions such as these are known today as pishogues, although in my young days people used to refer to them as pisterogues.

In Irish folklore perhaps no other imaginery being has been more celebrated in song and in story than the fairy or leprechaun. Ever since Oisín set off for Tir na nOg in search of the secret of eternal youth, and Darby O'Gill took his enchanting midnight stroll which landed him in the fairy fort to subsequently meet with the king of the fairies, the leprechaun whas been a notable symbol of our culture, as well as a national emblem.

Let's ask ourselves, what are the origins of the Irish fairy? and why is it always associated with the hill forts and raths of our country? Some of our history books tell us fairies were once members

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of the Tuatha De Danann tribe who were banished underground after their defeat by the Gaels.

Whatever the origins of this mysterious folk, one thing is certain they were avoided and much feared in days gone by. The hill fort became a place regarded as sacrosanct, and no one dared sink a spade or cut a bush there. Even in recent years when the Land Commission were dividing up farms, they found great difficulty in finding workmen to lay fences, where these infringed on the sites of the old forts.

In our folklore, fairies have been referred to as little people dressed in green jackets and red caps, whose glittering lights could be observed at certain times of year, naturally Halloween, moving from one fort to another. No person that I have spoken to has ever claimed to have seen a fairy. The types referred to by the late John (Darkie) Hannon were, according to him, always invisible in the deeds and actions they were supposed to have carried out. They could be friendly at times, and assist their earthly fellows in their hour of need.

Darkie would tell the story of a man from his area who found himself in a pickle one day, and needing his wheelbarrow which was on the bog, down at the lower end of the farm. He could not leave his position, and his calls for help went unheard by other members of the family. All of a sudden he saw a driverless barrow trundling towards him, and he nearly flopped from fright when it dropped down beside him.

A caring fairy could do a lot, and sometimes help with livestock on a farm, after leading them

away from home. Then, against that if you crossed this path in an uncomprising way, you might find yourself in all kinds of trouble.

According to Darkie, you had such a thing as a fan (pronounced "faun") (Fan) path where the fairies marched on certain nights of the year. If by chance you happened to travel that way and collide with the marching hordes, you were likely to lose your way, and stay wandering for the remainder of the night. I can remember as a boy of ten, listening to a neighbouring man describe to my parents, his ordeal when he found himself wandering on a fan path in the middle of the night. He had gone visiting to a friend's house earlier in the evening, and set out for home at some time around midnight. He had been there before on many occasions and was quite familiar with the route he about to take, yet he lost his way and failed to reach an old wooden footbridge that crossed a stream. With great sincerity he explained how he had gone down on his knees with his hands tried to trace the path on which he was travelling. It was all to no avail and not until cockcrow in the morning did he find himself freed from the spell.

A number of years ago. I talked to an old man who told me of his experience, when set astray on a fan path at Knockalassa near Bunninadden. After wandering around in circles for a long period of time, he got a feeling that his shoes were gone red hot. He removed them from his feet and continued on carrying one in each hand. Just then, he got an idea that hinged around a little story his mother had told him in his youth, and it was this:

"If you ever find yourself astray on a fairy path just turn your waistcoat inside out, and you will break the fairy spell" Hedid this and to his amazement, found himself free, and them unhindered made his way home. Later, when he described his experience to someboyd else, they informed him of yet another remedy, which was this:

"If you lose your way on a fairy path and come across a spring well, take a drink of waater and that will solve your problem."

To-day we don't hear of people going astray on fairy paths, and I suppose this is due to the fact that since the passing of the rambling house, people seldom cross through fields at night time.

Darkie's tales of the fairy folk were many varied. He maintained that it were possible for faries to abduct an infant from its cradle without the parents knowledge and replace it with one of their own kind. He eben instanced a cast where this had actually happened, and went on to describe how the changeling grew into a failed little dwarf, who used to go missing from time to time, but later vanished into the fort never to be seen again.

There were certain precautions that people were advised to take in

those days, the most notable being to wrap the baby in a little red waistcoat with a consecrated medal attached and this measure was supposed to restrain the fairies from interfering with the childs' wellbeing.

Then, quite apart from the fairy forth, you had the ordinary ghost that could be described as a sort of loner and was said to ahunt lonely stretches of country road.

We had one such spook in our area, whose presence although feared, came to be accepted as something that was permanently resident here. Its haunting ground was that stretch of the Phaleesh road that ends in the bog as it joins the main Ballymote, Gurteen thoroughfare. Over the years I have talked to a number of people who claim they have seen the strange spectre. Each of them told a story of being pursued by a figure in a grey cape that pattered along behind on the grass margin, even when people might be walking three abreast on the roadway.

One man in particular told me that he had been for years sceptical of the whole story, but got a rude awakening one night when returning from a game of cards. He was walking along on the centre of the road when suddenly he became aware of something walking close to his side. The perspiration oozed out of his whole body, and later a chill went up his spine, when he told of his ordeal in an adjacent house where he had sought refuge.

We hear nothing to-day of the interloping Phaleesh ghost. I suppose fast means of transport in a modern world has left it far behind, or maybe it was some restless spirit that has at last found eternal peace.

Another well known spook in Irish folklore is of course the banshee. In our own area, one of the best known authorities on the banshee was the late Johnnie Dockry who at one time, resided on that strength of roadway that separates Ballyfaghy from Carrowloughlin. Johnnie's banshee was a wailing little woman with long grey hair who night he found at the lone

whitethorn bush, throughout the valleys of rural Ireland. Her weird midnight lament was said to portend the death of somebody within the locality where her cry might be heard. Although it is believed that she cries only for those people whose surname begins with an O or a Mac, people of different surnames have also laid claim to having heard the banshee when a number of their family died.

Down the years I have talked to several people who stated they had heard the banshee, at the time of death of a near relative or neighbour. I noted one story in particular where a sincere man told me of his experience after getting out of bed one night to remove a couple of houses that had wandered in around his house. He chased the animals out onto the road, and as he turned around to secure the yard gate, he heard a piercing wail coming towards him from a distant valley. When it came to about forty yards from where he was standing it seemed to turn and exho away into the distance. He stated that the eerie sensation that swept through his whole body told him at once it was the banshee. Next morning he learned that a woman from across the road had died during the night.

The lone whitethorn bush has for a long time been associated with the banshee, and for this reason it has, like the hill fort become a sort of shrine in Irish folk memory.

There was a story told of a man who rumoured a lonewhitethorn bush from his field because he maintained it was causing an obstruction to the growing of crops. This man had it would seem spent some time abroad in foreign

lands, where he had shaken himself free from the shackles of his native pishouger. But according to the story he failed to reckon with the power of the Irish fairy, and the consequences of his action later gave rise to the legend of by Cuilmore here. The tale of the hare was told to me by an old man shortly before his death in 1958. He reckoned that this strange animal was snow-white in colour, and sought sanctuary at all times near the sport where the whitethorn bush had been removed. Every effort to run it down with greyhounds had failed and after each chase it would go to earth at the same place. Some years ago, I talked with a grandson of the man, on whose lands these strange events were said to have taken place. The man, who is now deceased, was reluctant to expand on the matter, but agreed that there was something abnormal about the whole affair, and he remembered his people tell the story of how the hare would rise in the same field where there was no cover of any description and scamper away into the distance. At other times it would arrive into the field and vanish as if the ground had open and swallowed it up. He told me how his family had moved from the place in the early years of the century, as they had encountered a long period of tough luck while resident there.

Many of the ghosts referred to in our folklore were in the form of animals of various kinds. Johnnie Dockry would make reference to the shadow of a dark hound, seen at certain times of the year at a place called Carneal, on the Spurtown road. He also had stories of a strange insect that used to make a ticking noise in the masonry

and its persistent ticking at night-time signalled the forthcoming death of a member of a family. Johnnie told of an incident that took place in his own house one night, when he disposed of a swarm of cockroaches by pouring a kettle of boiling water over them. On the following night the survivors had selected out his waistcoat from amongst other garments left airing by the fire, and riddled it with holes. Johnnie had scalded the cockroaches in the heat of the moment. He was afterwards worried, lest numbered amongst his victims might be the death-watch beetle.

Many of the old thatched houses were literally crawling with cockroaches, but many of the people who resided in them were reluctant to dispose of the pests because of fear of the death-watch beetle.

These are just a few items of old folklore gleaned from numbers of a generation of people who are no longer with us. Much of it was told to me down the years while sitting beside a blazing turf fire on a winter's night.

I would like to add, that none of which you have read has been invented or contrived. I have given it over to you, much the same as it was told to me. I have no idea as to what your reaction might be upon reading it. Like most people I too, tend to be fascinated by tales of the mysterious and the unknown.

Johnnie Dockry, who passed away in the early fifties was, I would venture to say, one of finest story-tellers who ever dwelled in our district. During the fine September weather of the past couple of weeks, I have spent a number of days haymaking in that strip of countryside,

which was the scene of many of Johnnies folk tales in days gone by.

In the foreground loomed the crumbling shell of the Shaw manor-house, while down yonder, the Carrowloughlin lowlands opened out into a vast valley. The stunted lone whitethorn bush is still growing there, but the little round shaped well, with the glagstone steps where the banshee was supposed to rise from, has become overgrown by vegetation and trodden across by livestock.

Nobody claims to hear the periodic wail of the banshee anymore. Perhaps the mythical old lady has become redundant in a society which has become more and more unsympathetic to sentimental thinking and like many earthly beings has decided once and for all to stay at home with her reminiscences.

Ballymote In 1987

For any teenager in Ballymote today, life is not exactly a bed of roses. The only thing to do for these teenagers is to go to school for as long as possible or collect the dole. If you're very lucky you might find a job and make a go of it, but for about 30 - 40% there is no job to be got. If they do get a job they might find that the boss is taking them for a ride by using them as cheap labour and getting low wages which are probably way below the standard wage level for that particular job. It's a matter of fighting for a decent job wage and one that will last.

Other past times like going to weekly discos or going to the town Youth Club is just a figment of your imagination. Oh yes, there's a disco alright, but about once every month and there is a youth centre but there's no equipment or games to use in it. The Youth Club officials allowed AnCO to let up and coming building trainees to renovate the whole interior, new plaster and hard-wall on all the walls, new ceilings and floors, new doors were hung,

the whole place was newly done-up and for what, just to fade away because nobody uses it. It was money down the drain as for people making use of the building. This money could have been used to equip the centre, because the renovation could be done another time, e.g. if it was done this way then there'd be a reason to renovate the building, because the youth of Ballymote would be making use of the centre. The only thing the Centre is used for is to park crashed cars outside the front of the building for everybody to see.

If everybody gave a small sum of money to a Youth Club bank account in Ballymote every year then they'd be a good collection of money with interest on top of that. Then the youth could equip the town of Ballymote with any equipment necessary, within the range of modesty of course. The money could go towards teenagers with a profitable idea who wanted to go into business, like teaching everyday objects like school bags for school-going youth, or starting a second-hand shop, selling soiled goods. Other ideas like opening a music room where people can come into a room or a small house or shed and listen to whatever music they like, as loud as they like, and do what they like within limits for a small entrance fee like fifty pence a time. This is successful and is in use over in England and a majority of the money goes to a youth scheme of one kind or another.

If ideas like this and other ideas were put into use in Ballymote then the youth would have more enjoyment. As it is now people at home, who haven't a job and don't go to school spend about ninety per cent of their time watching T.V. or walking about town. This is a simple example of unemployed youth in Ballymote. People who go to school spend about seven hours in school which is less time to go about the house doing nothing and not getting up and trying to do something.

The only thing the teenagers have in the line of enjoyment is the local football and soccer teams, and Hurling. There is a Foróige branch which a few people have joined.

All in all, facilities for young people in Ballymote leave a lot to be desired. I have put forward some suggestions I'm sure other people have other maybe better, suggestions, but the important thing is for someone to act on these recommendations.

Brian Flynn,
Ballymote Vocational School

Teenage life in Ballymote in 1987

Declan McGrath
Ballymote Vocational School

With the further introduction of computers into modern day businesses and with the trend of unemployment increasing all the time, it is logical to assume that starting with the present day generation of teenagers there is going to be more leisure time available to them within the next decade than ever before.

With new technically advanced computers being invented every day, mainly by Japanese and American experts, computers that can replace anything up to 500 workers at a time, there must be an increasing awareness of the necessity for the introduction of facilities to occupy the spare time allocated to these jobless people within every town, village and city in the country.

So let's take a look at what is available to the teenagers of our town. There is both a soccer and Gaelic Club in the area, but these on average only take up less than six hours of leisure time in the week which is hardly enough to keep our teenage population satisfied.

There is both a snooker and a badminton club in the town which are both opened to its members every night of the week. Each club holds its own competitions which are of vital importance to the success of any club.

There are also other kinds of groups or societies in the community such as St. Joseph's young priests and the St. Vincent de Paul in which I feel that modern day teenagers are not in the slightest bit interested. The heritage club is another one which I feel is a turn off to teenagers because young people look to the future not to the past.

A new activity which has come to the town is kick-boxing which is operating in the Castle Hotel.

All the afore mentioned activities are all to do with sport, but what about the teenagers who are not interested in sport and who do not wish to develop themselves physically. There is a library which is located in the Loftus Hall which is also the location for some discos. This library is open to all the public six days a week.

However I feel that the best way to develop the mind is to get involved in drama. I am sad to say that no drama group or society exists in the town. There is also scouts and cubs in the town who for the past few years have been experiencing a decrease in membership

It is unfair to say that there is a lack of organisation in the town for one has only to look at the Corran Park Development committee to witness good organisation and planning and most importantly community spirit. We are now well on the way to having another football pitch which is badly needed, and it is due to a few individuals within the town who put a lot of hard work into the planning of the project.

However to the other extreme, to witness bad organisation one has only to look at the community centre which is lying idle. This is a very fine building and a lot of other towns would be proud to have such a building. It is currently undergoing minor renovations and the sooner it is put to use, the better.

So to conclude, I feel there is a lot of positive points as regards teenage life in Ballymote, but there is also enough negative point to balance out — if not out-weigh the positive ones. So I feel, it is up to us teenagers ourselves to try and tip the balance in favour of doing positive things for the betterment of all in Ballymote.

BE A FRIEND

*Take time to Love,
And time to Care,
Take time to, feel
for others Fears.*

*Just let them know,
That even when
Their world goes wrong,
You'll be a Friend.*

Jackie Kerins,
Secretarial Class
Vocational School.

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WINDOW ONTO THE PAST

NO. 1 (The first of an occasional series written by JOYCE ENRIGHT)

DRUMCLIFFE: Part 1- Yeats and Columcille

Nowadays Drumcliffe is well known internationally as the burial place of the poet W.B. Yeats. It is probably the site most often visited by tourist in the county — being a stopping point for all the tour buses. Yeats' grandfather was rector at Drumcliffe and W.B. spent childhood holidays both at the Rectory and at Rosses Point with his cousins the Middletons at Elsinore Lodge. During much of his life the Sligo landscape and its mythological characters are central to his poetry and plays. Though much travelled and interested in the occult and the East, the poet chose Drumcliffe as his last resting place 'under Bare Benbulbin head', in the cemetery beside the early nineteenth century church. The site is of course of considerable antiquity. No doubt Yeats was both aware of and fascinated by the historic antiquity of the place.

OLD MONASTERY

The monastery was founded by Columcille on lands granted to him from clan lands; granted to him in fact by his paternal uncle, King Aedh Ainmire, who was then King of Cinel Conail (Donegal) and later High-King of Ireland. Little of the original monastery is visible above ground nowadays, but archaeological excavations carried out between 1980 and 1986 show good preservation of organic materials and have brought a wealth of information to light about the monastery during the Early Christian and Mediaeval Times (more of this later). It is the only site in the county that has both a Round Tower and a figure sculptured High-Cross. These alone attest to the importance of Drumcliffe in ancient times. Columcille was a colourful character, closely bound up in politics, and was himself entitled to be a contender for the kingship of Cinel Conail. The date of the foundation of the monastery at Drumcliffe is AD 574 this is 13 years after the Battle of Culdremne, or as it is popularly called the Battle of the Book, and the so called banishment of Columcille!

BATTLE OF THE BOOK

The Battle of Culdremne was fought in the area north of the village of Carney, 2 kms west of Drumcliffe, in the townland today known as Cooldrumman. The Historical Battle of Cul Dremne was fought between the Northern Ui Neill kinsmen of Columcille on one side and the Southern Ui Neill kinsmen of the

High King, Diarmait Derg, on the other. Historically, the High Kingship was the issue. The actual battle related to a blood feud, on the one hand avenging fratricide, and on the other avenging the death of a person while under Columcille's sanctuary & protection. The popular tradition to the Battle of the Book attributes the blame to Columcille. It tells us that while Columcille secretly copied a manuscript belonging to Finian, the founder of that monastery. On discovery of the copy, Finian asked for the copy, Finian asked for the copy to be returned to him and on refusal, brought Columcille 'to court'. The case was referred to Diarmait Derg, the High King, who pronounced — 'le gac bo boninn i is cach lebor leborinn' which means 'To every cow its calf and every book its copy'. Bernard McDonagh's mural in the Co. Library depicts the two opposing armies lined up before the battle. This famous manuscript was a copy of the psalms, for which the reliquary known as the 'Cathach' or 'Battler' was made, so-called because it was carried into battle by the O'Donnells throughout the mediaeval period as a sort of talisman, a tradition which probably owes its origin to the victory at Culdremne. Today the Cathach is part of the 'Treasures of Ireland' exhibition, recently returned from its world wide tour and now housed in the newly opened Treasury Room at the National Museum of Ireland.

COLUMCILLE BANISHED

Tradition tells us that after the Battle, Columcille was 'banished' by his confessor, Molaise, of Innismurray, and advised not to set foot on his native soil again — his native soil being Donegal and the Barony of Carbury in North Sligo. Subsequently, he established Iona C. 563 A.D. Ten years later he returned to Ireland. He was requested by the poets of Ireland to intercede on their behalf at the Convention of Drum Ceatt in A.D. 573, where the 'fili' are accused of abusing their rights and privileges and demanding intolerably high rewards for their services. The High King proposed to abolish the order of poets (fili). Columcille interceded and a compromise was reached after which the rights and privileges of the poets were curtailed. Columcille is attributed with the glory of 'saving the poets of Ireland'. It was following the Convention and before returning to Iona that Columcille founded Drumcliffe,

TOWN LIGHTING

At last a start has been made on the very urgent problem of providing adequate lighting for the town. The result, so far, is heartening and it is hoped that when the project is finished Ballymote will be as well illuminated as any other town of comparable size in the county.

TOURISM

Plans are being prepared for the setting up of a live Tourist development group in the area. Every aspect of our tourist potential will be considered and available help from Bord Fáilte and other sources sought. The improved facilities in the Castle Hotel will be a considerable asset. It is expected that the new group will be ready to start work early this year.

IN THE CHURCH ON THE ROCK

The flower show that few knew about — It was beautiful, and expensive, and much care went into its preparation. It had a social side also. Just one of those things that Ballymote needs. Next time, it is hoped that the enterprising organisers will give a beauty starved Community an opportunity of seeing and appreciating the fruits of their labours.

The Corran Herald has achieved a first birthday, and with credit. Now the way is clear for its expansion and development. It will, of course, always have its Heritage pages, but it will also cater for youth, sport, culture, and our economic development and will aim at becoming an authentic voice for the area.

perhaps as a retribute! — These events took place within 130 years of St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland and the conflicts between Christianity and Paganism are reflected. For example, in one of the mediaeval manuscripts describing the battle, we read that Diarmait Derga the High King was equipped with an enchanted Eirbe, prepared by the druids, and the full strength of Columcille's prayers were needed to overcome this diabolical obstacle! Unfortunately we are not told what an Eirbe is!

YEATS

Yeats would not have been over concerned with the sometimes fine line between fact and fiction, but he absorbed the atmosphere from this rich tradition, giving his work a distinct flavour of the Sligo landscape and traditional lore.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Mrs. Motherwell

The following is an account of a ruthless woman who lived in Ballymote in the early 19th century.

From: **O'Rourke's History of Sligo.**

Mrs. Motherwell was a most notable singular inhabitant of Ballymote around the year 1805. Her father Abraham Fenton was County coroner at the time. His daughter was very quiet until her marriage when she asserted herself so conspicuously as to efface her husband John Motherwell in the eyes of the public. Although John was a sub-sherrif of the county for 14 years, high constable of Corran, and receiver of various estates, he was never spoken of thus, this as in many other instances she resembled Grace O'Malley. Mrs. Motherwell carried her husband about with her and far from trying to exercise authority in regard to her, he was always most docile in her hands. One and only one desire John had, that of getting a good dinner and this to her justice she took great care to supply. In the words of her neighbours "She fed him like a game cock".

In the execution of her various offices she would brook no opposition or contradiction as instances immumerable can attest. To none but two the plight of James O'Hara of Cultibar whom she drove from land and home into the workhouse for threatening to take legal action against her proceedings, and James Henry of Templevany.

A leading grazier of the county, whom after robbing his flocks and herds she sent shoeless and stockingless begging from door to door, because he got the law involved also.

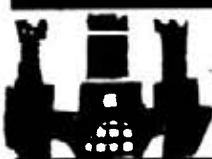
She flinched from no one and had more than one encounter with yet another remarkable inhabitant of Ballymote Major Bridgham, whose temper like her own was despotic and whose position as agent of the Ballymote estate rendered him a formidable antagonist, more especially to a tenant of the estate.

Mrs. Motherwell cast her lot where and when she would like. Favoured by nature with great gifts both of person and mind with a figure fit for a model, queenly presence, aspiring ideas, courage which nothing could daunt she could be compared to Boadicea (Boadicea was the wife

of a British King who set Britain to war after her husband died leaving half his kingdom to the Romans.)

Honesty is the best policy. People they say never thrive on ill-gotten goods and Mrs. Motherwell was no exception to the rule. After evicting James O'Hara from his fine farm and erecting on it an imposing mansion for herself, she met with many losses. She sank low in the world and eventually went to Australia where it was said she met with even greater blows than that of poor James O'Hara and James Henry whom she put off their lands and evicted from their homes.

Related by
Patricia McNally.



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They did the harvesting, threshing of the oats etc., all without the aid of machinery. However, he found time to go to the ceillis and country houses. His mother R.I.P. like all mothers was strict on the 'early to bed, early to rise' motto so James, to avoid what he felt to be unnecessary worry and to ensure harmony within the home, had two sets of keys made for his bike, one to leave inside the house on the hook which signalled his 'safety in bed' and the other which ensured he would not miss the country dance! 'Whether it was right or wrong I don't know but it saved my mother from lying awake worrying, I never came to any harm Thank God'.

At this stage James had acquired a violin from his uncle. He would walk seven or eight miles to a dance across fields and ditches, and so he would be very hungry on arrival. However, he would take up his violin, play the few tunes he knew, and as musicians were always honoured with tea and sandwiches his hunger would be satisfied. 'I used to feel very conceited to get the tea' says James. One night when he was playing at the hall in Buninadden with Fred Finn R.I.P. and a few other neighbours, a man came up to him and asked James if he would make a Bodhran for him. 'He took out a bundle of money and started to count £1, £2, £3 and I stopped him at £4, I was embarrassed because I had never charged for making a Bodhran before, I had made them mostly for neighbours and friends'.

The man in question was Matt Mullholland who was a great step dancer and later developed a successful auctioneering/estate agent business in Sligo town.

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James Davey went on from there making his Bodhrans for famous and not-so-famous musicians alike. Kevin Cuniffe from the Chieftans, Christy Moore and numerous other musicians extol the virtues of our craftsman from Kilaville. He has appeared on television and has had many stories written on his workmanship. His Bodhrans have travelled far and wide, their owners proud of their instrument with the distinctive stamp on the inside of the skin, and what is most important of all, confident that when their turn comes to perform solo on their beloved instrument it will not let them down.

What is it that makes James Davey's Bodhrans so special? Although James himself lends a lot of the credit to a man in

Letterkenney who passed on a secret to him years ago to help obtain a good tune, I feel sure that his excellent instruments are so because of the pride he takes in his work and the love that he has for his craft. He will not sell an instrument he is not satisfied with himself. He has been making Bodhrans for 67 years and now at the age of 77 he devotes all his spare time to his craft 'I'm never bored, the time is never long for me' he says. The method used by James Davey is that used by most Bodhran makers. He prefers to use a 2 year old mountain nanny goat. He tried to breed goats himself but his land was too rich for the purpose. The goat is killed painlessly and carefully skinned, an art in itself.

The skin is then placed in a tank of water and lime for 10 days after which time the tufts of hair are easily removed with a blunt instrument. Great care must be taken not to pierce the skin as this would render it useless. The pliable cleaned skin is stretched and nailed to a suitable wooden frame and left to dry for 7 to 8 weeks. The skin is finally attached to wooden hoops 15 to 17 inches in diameter by equally spaced brads. The cross rods are fitted inside the hoop. At this stage the secret mixture is rubbed on the skin and a satisfying tone is achieved. The completed Bodhran is left for 24 hours at a high temperature and 24 hours at a cold temperature and tested each time. The bodhran is then painted James' distinctive brown colour and will be passed on to its new owner. James's craft it is to be hoped will reveal itself in one of his six children who have been given the same secret James was given in Letterkenny many years ago.

James Davey and his like are a big asset in any community and James has throughout his lifetime been involved with many committees in his native area. He was appointed clerk to the Kilaville Group Water Scheme in 1979. His job was to monitor and oversee the work in progress. He fulfilled this task with distinction and was rewarded when he saw the water pour freely from the taps in the homes of his friends and neighbours. He was appointed Chairman of the Coleman Traditional Society, a society which has indeed preserved and perpetuated the memory of the master fiddler Michael Coleman.

He was a member of the 'Rising Sun Ceili Band' and travelled to play at ceili's all over the province. He himself made the drums used by the band.

And so with this story the Corran Herald has endeavoured to portray to its many readers a picture of the man James Davey who, because of his upbringing in an area rich in culture, a culture and heritage to be proud of, grew up to be master craftsman of his trade. Ireland has always had a quality of life that is unique to her, this certain quality is more apparent in Rural districts where the environment lends itself to 'bidding the time of day' to whomever one may meet in the course of the day. The result is a caring friendly people willing to teach their trade to the interested pupil.

Narrative by:

Patricia McNally

NEW FONT in Kilaville

After 125 years of use the Holy Water Font in Kilaville Church has been replaced. The old font was installed in 1861.

The new font was 'christened' on Friday 20th September 1986. The ceremony was presided over by Bishop Tom McGettrik whose return to his missionary work was delayed by two weeks pending the arrival of baby Niamh Ann Mc Gettrik.

Fr.Filan - curate of Kilaville concelebrated the ceremony.

The Godparents were: James Davey - Kiltycreen House, Kilaville, brother-in-law of Bishop McGettrik Mrs Kathleen White (nee Merrick) former native of Gurteen.

A Land of Milk & Honey

By ELIZABETH MURRAY

There is scarcely one food that can be bought today in its natural form. — Enormous quantities of processed foods are on sale, containing chemical additives and preservatives. There has been indiscriminate use of chemical fertilisers, antibiotics, insecticides, and hormonal growth promoters. Radioactive waste has added to the problem and man-made pollution has turned fresh air and fresh water into rarities in some parts of the world. All this poses serious health problems and is a major problem.

Here in Ireland we should utilise our natural resources. Our young people should be motivated towards a healthier existence by getting into organic farming and learning the basic skills of the land. A scheme should be introduced to set aside two mid-term breaks from school during which young people would sow and reap the harvest, just as the previous generation did during the 'emergency'. As in Cuba the slogan might be 'just one more field under the plough'. And remember 'ask now what your country can do for you: ask what you can do for your country'.

Agricultural forms an essential part of our economy and with the aid of modern technology could form a secure base for a Competitive export industry. Cut-away bogs can be reclaimed for growing vegetables and crops. With a guaranteed price on the home market, we could eliminate the present high importation of processed foods.

Various governments have used the recession as an excuse for not helping the agricultural sector. And the E.E.C.'s Common Agriculture Policy is such that for every five people working on the ground there are three involved in administration. Factory farming through centralisation has led to the food mountains and lakes. Can it be 'progress' that has led to all this?

CONGRATULATIONS to John Perry, a member of Ballymote Heritage Group on the opening of THE CORRAN RESTAURANT. The group wishes him every success.

THE CORRAN HERALD gratefully acknowledges receipt of a donation of £10 from Mrs. Jennie Hunt, Ailavoher, Ballaghaderren.

A TEENAGER IN COOLANEY

Brian McDermott
Ballymote Vocational School

'God Bless the Youth'. This is a saying a local man has been noted for. This can be interpreted in two ways. The first way, quite simply, is for God to look after us, the other is for God to look after us, the other meaning is that the fate of the country could depend on us, when we are mature men and women.

Being a teenager can be the most important time of your life, but it is not without its troubles and setbacks. Impressions people get of you are, I think, one of the most important aspects of being a teenager. These impressions are quite vivid and are formed by the way you participate in activities in your local communities.

Life can be divided into two sections — Work and Leisure. We will look at leisure first. Teenagers are supposed to be active and creative. There are a number of clubs and associations on offer to teenagers in Coolaney, like Venture Scouts, Macra na Feirme and a Football Club.

Most of the teenagers in Coolaney have joined the Venture Scouts which is probably the greatest active club ever in Coolaney. We are the only Venture Scouts in Sligo. The reason for this I can't understand, probably because teenagers lose interest after leaving Boy Scouts which is a younger branch of scouts.

In Venture Scouts which has an age group from sixteen to twenty year olds, we have many opportunities and our activities are decided on by the members and not by the leaders. As a matter of fact a leading chief scout in Ireland has said that we are 'the most active Venture Scouts in Ireland', which was a great compliment. We have a wide range of activities such as Canoeing, Mountain-climbing, Hiking, Pot-holing as well as arranging Halloween and Christmas parties for the youth and the elderly. Often we are asked to help out with the Scout leaders. One weekend we catered for over twenty scout leaders at a Group Leader Training Course. We also help out with discos every month at Cloonamahon with physically and mentally handicapped and if that is not using your leisure time, what is?

For those who have farming backgrounds, the old Macra na Feirme has been set up again after a few years absence. They have always been very active and have new younger members. There is also the long serving Football Club for the sporting type and this is a great way of keeping fit.

These are ways of spending leisure time, but for teenagers to get on in life they must also work. At home, work involves homework and studying for various exams, the most important being the Leaving Cert. which may determine the outcome of the rest of your life.

Of course teenagers pick up the wrong impressions and habits and these are very hard to redeem, the outcome is people using their leisure time sitting on a high stool and as a result leading an inactive life.

A Teenager In Ballymote

The need for a youth centre in Ballymote is definitely to be considered, not only would it be put to use by the youth but would also be of benefit to the aged even if it was to get them out of the house for half an hour each day. It would improve physical activities, as well as developing personality. It could be a meeting place for bingo for the aged. As for the young, it would be of benefit to them as it would keep them off the street corners creating disturbance. Young people have roughly six hours freedom per day and as their energy, well it's unlimited. When boredom sets in and it does, the energy is not used up in physical activities, e.g. sport, it's used up in destruction and violence. The youth of Ballymote should have something of physical interest to count on and to keep them off the streets. To see the lack of sports facilities in Ballymote all you have to do is look the other side of a Pull Door. The people of Ballymote have capabilities, not only in their minds but also in their bodies, so a youth centre would improve communication. I'm not just speaking for myself, but for the people of Ballymote. For its population, Bunninadden is honoured to have a youth centre of tremendous size where youth club activities and games are being carried out.

Ballymote should have a youth centre complete with indoor activities, e.g. table tennis, etc. I'm sure many people of Ballymote would contribute to supplying those necessities and they'd be put to good use by the young and old, no matter what they cost.

MARIE DONOHOE,
Ballymote Vocational School

An Old Match

*Papa Micheal thought it time,
Patrick Son should take a wife,
Made a match for Patrick Son,
Satisfied Day's Work well done.*

*Patrick Son did not like,
Papa Micheal's choice of wife,
Angered Papa Micheal's pride,
Choosing for himself a bride.*

On England's shore Pat made his home,

*In his heart he never roamed,
He always meant to go back home,
To Papa Micheal and his own.*

*The ways of God are not man's way,
Now Patrick lies in foreign clay,
In God's home we hope he met,
Those on earth, for God he left.*

NORAH MURRAY,
Athleague, Roscommon.

The Blue Hills of Erin

*The blue hills of Erin, like sentinals grand,
Guarding the valley's and soft verdant lands,
Soaring into the skyline, like hands lifted in prayer,
Imploring the Godhead Erin to spare.
Oh blue hills of Erin, do you ever shed tears,
To see empty homesteads, throughout the long years,
The children all scattered,
The old folk all gone,
Oh blue hills of Erin, may God's Will be done.*

NORAH MURRAY,
Athleague, Co. Roscommon.

Norah Murray's grandparent's were Patrick Brehony of Ballymote and Honorah Brehony (nee Ballantyne) of Keash. Miss Murray now lives in Athleague, Co. Roscommon.

LIFE

*Life is full of joy and cheer,
Sometimes sadness mixed with fear,
No matter what it's far from clear,
Just how life works from year to year.*

*First we're born into this scene,
Then with water we are cleaned,
Life gets on until our end,
Mysterious as it is, just like the wind.*

*How did we really come to be?
Why on earth are we far from free?
Life is something to enjoy,
Not to hate and question why?*

*All these mysteries we all know,
Are part of life and help us grow,
So anymore, please don't insist,
On questioning life how it exists.*

Clare Clinton,
Secretarial Class,
Ballymote Vocational School

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4. Men teachers may take one evening per week for courting.
5. Following ten hours in school the teacher may pass the remaining time reading the Bible or similar good books.
6. Women instructors who marry or partake of improper conduct will be dismissed.
7. All instructors should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of their earnings for their benefit during declining years so they will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, drinks liquor in any form visits pool or public halls, or is shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention and honesty.

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