



All the way from
LOUISBURGH

TO _____

Cover Picture: *Re-generation! Praying at Gowlan in 1981 where they were baptized — Mrs. Mary Moran (nee Burke) Aylemore (left) and Mrs. Brigid Gallagher (nee Davitt, Kinnadoohey).*

An Ćoinneal



LOUISBURGH

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An Coinneal

Number Thirteen

Christmas 1982

An Choinneal is a periodical of Kilgeever parish; the oldest parish magazine in Ireland. It has appeared in alternate years since 1959.

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Subscription: Three pounds (*Postage extra*)

The list of foundation members has now been formally closed.

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The Editor wishes to thank all whose voluntary efforts have helped to produce this issue. In particular we express thanks to Frank Dolan, Liam Lyons and Damian Slater who supplied photographs free of charge; and Mrs. Breda O'Malley who did the typing of manuscripts.

Because of postal uncertainties we request all foundation members to acknowledge receipt of this issue, even formally. Members' copies are posted the day after publication. Please notify us of any change of address.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS

The following people responded to our call in late October (see p. 13) and became paid-up members of the present issue as a token of their concern that this magazine should survive the rigorous financial climate which it at present encounters. Without exaggeration, these are the people who have made this issue possible, for although we are never short of literary materials for any issue, we could not have sent the present material to print without the loyal and practical support of the people named below. We return them our sincere thanks for their contribution (five pounds) and hope that this number will repay their loyalty.

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Chris Cox, Devlin
Mr. Martin Mannion, Killadoon
Mrs. Phil Leonard, Galway

Letters to the Editor . . .

I hope I am not too late with my order for *An Choinneal*. I always find it so full of interesting information. It is a credit to the parish. With *An Choinneal* we certainly get value for our money.

Maureen Maguire (Dartford, Kent)

Even at our new price, Maureen? Of course we think so, but we hope you do too!

I have mailed fourteen letters about the parish magazine to people in London and Coventry. The *Coinneal* means an awful lot to those of us who are in exile. I wonder if we could have a Louisburgh night in London for the *Coinneal* funds? Perhaps some of you could come over to emphasize both the service that the magazine is giving and the great need there is for support now that the cost of producing it has gone so very high. I cannot think of any Louisburgh person who would want to see the magazine fold; but people will have to be told clearly how great the danger is financially. I hope to meet Father P. J. Sammin to see the possibility of a function for *An Choinneal* at some future date.

P. J. McNamara (London)

I could not have written it better P. J. May I express again our committee's indebtedness to you for your practical loyalty to the parish through your efforts for this magazine over many years. Yes, we are very much interested in the idea of a London function and expect to hear from yourself or Father Sammin when you have further considered the idea.

Thank you for sending the copy I asked you to mail my brother Bill in San Francisco. I just had a letter from him to say that he sat down and had the happiest time reading all the Louisburgh news about folk he knew. He said many a happy night he spent at the fireside in Foy's house and also in Johnny Tirenán's house in Doughmackeown, so he really liked the account written by Roy Rehu in the last issue.

Bridget O'Malley (Huddersfield)

There must have been some great yarns told around those firesides in times of old, Brigid. Now is there any way you could coax Bill to . . .? It is just the kind of material that many of our readers would love.

The article on Michael Keane — how true! We had no objection to the three-mile walk to and from the dance. Equally good was its counterpart, "Dunkirk", (no relation to the real thing, thank God!) For sixpence, it was a great night's fun . . . I loved the cover of the last issue and indeed everything from cover to cover!

Mrs. O'Connell (London)

Mrs. O'Connell, we have been looking for someone to write an article on the local Dunkirk. Perhaps we have at last found her. Would you? Oh and one other thing which I hope is not too personal: we have not yet got your Christmas name, and would much prefer to be able to address you informally, in a natural Louisburgh fashion. Many thanks for your many worthwhile letters over the years.

Sincere congratulations! The celebration issue is wonderful and a credit to all concerned . . . We have a lot of leg-pulling here about the Kerry men winning so much, but let us hope the Mayo lads do it very soon.

Mary Sheridan (Coventry)

How are the valiant fallen, Mary! Offaly have taken their turn. But I hereby pass on your request to the Mayo football team!

Congratulations on a lovely presentation for the celebration issue . . . After a rather hasty glance through it during the Christmas festivities my eyes fell on the obituary column. It was a little sad seeing so many old friends gone to their eternal reward. On the other side of the coin of course were the marriages. Names I knew, but faces I did not recognise; spelling out to me the passing of time! What makes *An Choinneal* unique to me

Special Contributors . . . (CONTINUED)

Dick O'Toole, The Square
Andrew Durkan, London
Mr. Seamus Durkan, Louisburgh
Mrs. Brigid Gallagher, Aitinaveen
Mr. J. J. Philbin, Bridge Street
Mrs. Yvonne Shanagher, N.T.
Martin Fergus, Feenone
Donald O'Leary, Bunowen
Michael McManamin, Tralee
Mrs. Mary O'Malley, Bunowen
Peter B. Hastings, Castlebar
Nomadic Structures Ltd., Louisburgh
Jimmy Egan, Derrygarve
Mrs. Evelyn Durkan, Bridge Street
Doctors T. and E. Smiddy, Tralee
Mrs. Tess McNamara, Bridge Street
Mrs. Joan Ray, Galway
Johnny Mulvey, Castlebar
Patrick O'Reilly, Shraugh
Sister Eugene, Westport
John Durkan, Chapel Street

Mr. M. J. Durkan, Wallingford
Mrs. Annie O'Brien, Louisburgh
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Mrs. Julia O'Leary, Bunowen
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Davy Gibbons, Cloonlara
John Lyons, Askelane
Mrs. Sal Horkan, Belclare
Maura Gannon, Thornhill
A.I.B. Westport
Ethna and Michael Viney,
Thallabawn
Father Kieran Waldron, Louisburgh
Mrs. Una Keating, Dublin
Miss M. O'Toole, Leeds
Mrs. Phil Quinn, Kilcolgan
Mrs. Mary E. O'Donnell,
Leenane Road

There were also four anonymous contributors.

NOTICE

If you are a special (paid-up) contributor to this number and wish to have a copy of our celebration (1980) issue, we shall be happy to send you a free copy (postage charge only) if you request this of the Secretary.

Copies of all past issues of An Choinneal are still available except 1959 and 1969. All past issues cost £3 each and may be had on request from the Secretary.

Our patrons, who have benefitted from the efficiency and attention of our Secretary, will join with the Editor and Committee of An Choinneal in wishing Mrs. Clementine Lyons a long, happy and fulfilling retirement. (see page 25)

The short articles by An tAthair Pádraic Ó Máille (pp. 24, 80) were originally radio-talks and are reproduced here by kind permission of RTE.

Letters ... (CONTINUED)

is its *Louisburghness*. I hope that it retains that rare quality. It is the yesterdays that brighten the uncertainty of the to-morrows ... may God's hand always guide your step.

Alice Sammin (Islandeady)

"What makes it unique is its Louisburghness"! That, Alice, is about the best tribute that this magazine ever received. If we were in the advertising line in a big way that is surely the motto we would choose.

After a long and tiring day shopping in the city I arrived home and found to my delight that the *Coinneal* had come. What a thrill. It is like wine — it gets better with age. I felt sad at seeing the snap of my Dad, God rest him; so I had a good cry, but in the midst of my tears I kept on reading. The article "Anyone Sweating" brought back many happy memories of the shoes I wore out both dancing and walking there, and the excitement of catching the "midnight express" (poor old donkey!) home. I am already looking forward to the next issue!

Bridie Brush (Launceston)

Bridie, we think of you as being one of our real outpost readers, so far from home. It is great to think that our material is welcomed equally in Launceston, in Islandeady and, of course, Kilgeever!

Tell Leo he gets full marks for the cover: it was beautifully chosen. I enjoyed, inter alia, Pat Ball's article on bee-keeping and the Althore article by Mary T. Armstrong. I want two more copies of that issue and am looking forward to the next — in 1982 isn't it?

Al Morahan (Perth)

Faraioir géar, we have plenty of copies of the celebration issue left! Perhaps because it came as an extra number people are not yet aware of its existence, and as a result of that very expensive issue we have a financial problem to solve.

The celebration issue was a most interesting number and brought me back some happy memories. Among the death list were two old friends, which saddened me: the first was Mrs. Brigid O'Malley of Mooneen. I often sat with her at the fireside talking about this and that. She used to tell of her experiences in America ... the other was Willie Mike O'Malley. He rebuilt our cottage from a near ruin and we knew him well. I was very interested in Ethna Viney's piece about the Stations, from the "Irish Times". Please tell Michael and Ethna that they have an eager fan in Dublin.

Nora McAllister (Rathfarnham)

Thank you for sending the anniversary *Coinneal*. Michael J. looks forward to it with all the excellent coverage of news from home.

Mrs. Gert McDermott (Hartford)

I had a lovely letter from Sister Malachy O'Toole. Her mother was my mother's bridesmaid and I enjoyed visiting her every time I went home.

Ann Carr (Framingham)

As you will gather from this issue, Ann, poor Sister Malachy has now herself gone home. God rest her.

I would like to know if there was any *Coinneal* in 1980 or 1981 as I was in poor health and I missed them very much. The best thing I like is Austie's letter to his mother and vice versa.

Mary T. Dolan (Cavan)

Yes, Mary, we had a special issue at Christmas 1980 — our twenty-first anniversary. We hope you have now got and enjoyed it.

I enjoy this splendid magazine so much. I hope it continues to delight its readers for years to come.

Helen Ready (New York)

Thank you, Helen. I do hope you make your promised journey to Ireland soon.

OUR WRITERS

Apart from our well-known roster of writers we introduce in this issue some who are less known as *Coinneal* contributors:

Mr. Gerard Bracken is a native of Newport. A long-time editor of *The Mayo News* he has a keen interest in events in Kilgeever parish.

Mr. Pdraig Burke, native of Bridge Street, is a very successful chiropodist, head of his own school of chiropody, in Cork.

Mr. Patrick Conway is a native of Askelane, a past student of Sancta Maria.

Mr. Michael Gallagher (Aitinaveen) is an untiring worker for all kinds of community projects. Perhaps his greatest claim to notoriety is his very distinctive style in locally-produced dramas.

Mrs. Mary E. L. Hennigan is a descendant of Lyons family of Accony. Her delightful article, "A Day at Home", pleased many readers in the last issue.

Mr. Éamonn Keane, native of Bridge Street, has just been elected onto the *Coinneal* committee.

Sister Mary Hilary is Mary Lyons of The Colony. A medical doctor, she is at present on mission work at Serabu.

Mr. John Lyons teaches at Sancta Maria. A native of Main Street he is a keen student of local history of the past two centuries.

Miss Mary T. Murphy has written in earlier issues of the traditions of the Killeen area.

Mrs. Mary Prendergast is Mary Gibbons of Accony. Member of a noted family of athletes and sportsmen, Mary also distinguished herself on the camógie fields in Mayo.

Caitlín Bean Uí Raghallaigh, wife of Vincent O'Reilly of Louisburgh, began her teaching career in the national school of Bouris.

Áine Ní Scanláin, member of a talented family of Vera and the late Joe Scanlon (Bunowen) has won many awards in competitions both at home and at Coláiste Mhuire, Tourmakeady, where she is a student.

Mrs. Ethna Viney is a native of Cavan who with her husband, Michael, left city life in Dublin to live in Thallabawn. Both contribute regular articles to *The Irish Times*.

Sister Mary James Walshe, a proud descendant of Doughmackeown and Aitinaveen, will be best remembered for her family-tree published here in 1980.

Letters . . . (CONTINUED)

I enjoy *Coinneal* very much and read it from beginning to end — except for the Gaelic, which I never had an opportunity to really learn. Keep up the delightful issues.

Christine Mullowney (Chicago)

Imagine, Christine, that you will appreciate the references to Gowllawn Church in this present Coinneal.

It is about time I let you know that I got the book. Thanks a lot. I loved to read all the news from Louisburgh.

Bill Gallagher (Dorchester, Mass)

I understand that this year's issue of *An Choinneal* is now on sale and would be grateful for a copy.

P. O'Keeffe (Norhampton)

Welcome to the family, Mr. O'Keeffe. Make yourself at home and be assured that we would welcome your contribution to our conversation.

Thanks for your prompt reply for my request for *An Choinneal*.

Jim Hallinan (San Diego)

I pass on your compliment to our secretary, who earned it, Jim! We are always very pleased to have such confirmation and ask all our foundation members to do so.

We were surprised to find our photograph in print. Who sent it on? Was it . . . ?

Kitty Donnelly (Leigh)

Right Kitty, it was . . . ! Thank you for your cheque towards our celebration issue.

I would like my donation to be used for the general running costs of the magazine. In my next letter I will enclose two poems written by Brigid O'Toole, who was born in Roonah.

Austin Burns

We wish you speedy return to good health, Austin, and look forward to the poems you promise.

I am still reading it for fear of missing something I know about from my mother and father — may they rest in peace . . . I'm wondering if the Reverend Joseph McNamara was at one time stationed in Aran Islands?

Edna C. Feillon
(Williamstown, Mass)

Not so, Mrs. Teillon. This Father Joseph is a native of Bridge Street, Louisburgh. 'Your' Father Joseph another great supporter of An Choinneal is a native of Chapel Street and is now parish priest at Letterfrack, Connemara.

As usual. I was delighted with it and enjoyed it so much.

Betty Ryan (Boosterstown)

I own two copies of *An Choinneal* dated 1961 and 1963 and am interested in obtaining other editions. Please advise if you can supply them and what is the cost. If it is still being published, how can I get on a list to get future copies?

Michael J. Heneghan (New York)

To answer in reverse order Michael! You are on as of now; yes the magazine is still being published though the challenge is becoming greater; and there are some back copies available (see page 5). But hold on to the 1961 and 1963 issues: they are collector's items.

. . . it was delightful as always. I feel happy to share it with my friends. In appreciation I enclose a little gift.

Anne (Joyce) Malley (Dorchester)

Many thanks, Anne. We hope that the present issue repays your kindness.

I wonder if you could help me with a Number Ten edition of *An Choinneal*: it had Tommie Andy's picture and a write-up about him.

Kathleen T. Ward (Bristol)

Yes, Kathleen; you will, I hope, have got that copy of Number Ten by now.

Thank you for sending it on even though I hadn't got the right price. I

In this issue . . .

Values: Do We Continue? (<i>Editorials</i>)	11
Gowlawn Revisited <i>Una O'Malley</i>	15
The Plain Irish People <i>Mary E. L. Hennigan</i>	18
End of Term <i>Clementín Bn Uí Laighin</i>	25
Thriving Project <i>Father Kieran Waldron</i>	29
Visit to Knock <i>Father Eugene Duffy</i>	32
Tracing Patterns <i>Dáithí Mag Réill</i>	33
Will We Ever Know? <i>Micheál de Búrca</i>	37
Alec and Delphi <i>T. C. Kingsmill Moore</i>	39
<i>Morning at Boathaven</i> <i>Gielly</i>	44
Visit on Wheels <i>Dave Fitzsimons</i>	46
A Remarkable School <i>Ethna Viney</i>	51
Mo Chéad Scoil <i>Caitriona Bn Uí Raghallaigh</i>	54
Sport of Kings <i>Mary Murphy</i>	57
Walking Tall <i>Sister Mary Hilary</i>	59
<i>Nomadic Structures</i>	61
John McHale <i>John Lyons</i>	62
Local Customs <i>Áine M. Ní Scanlain</i>	65
'Those were the Days, My Friend' <i>Pádraic Burke</i>	75
Clash of the Distaff! <i>Mary Prendergast</i>	78
Book Review	81
Father Lavelle <i>Anthony O'Malley</i>	112
<i>The Mayo News</i> (Interview)	113

Features: Óró Sé do Bheatha abhaile! (36); Remembering Sion (43, 58, 72), Fáilte Isteach! (50); Keep Your Word (56, 73); Go Maire Siad! (69); Letter from Home (70); Comhghárdeachas (83); Weddings (86); Select Committees (88); Deaths (95); Museum Pages (104); Scissors and Sellotape (106).

Letters . . . (CONTINUED)

now enclose the remainder. It is well worth it indeed. I enjoyed it very much and have now passed it on to other Louisburgh people.

Myles Ruddy (Coventry)

It is good to hear someone say that our magazine is worth the money. Thank you, Myles. Now about those other Louisburgh readers . . . did they, like, think that it was worth, like . . .? Do you think, like, you could introduce them to us, like, on a kind of a sterling basis?

Thank you most sincerely. It's the best book on the market. I will get some information from Dad about Feenone for your next edition, please God.

Joan Coyne (Bootle)

Do Joan, do! We will lament how much we have lost when our older generation have left us.

I look forward very much to reading it.
S. Ó Gallachóir (Drogheda)

I loved the letter from the little girl about "Grandmothers". I have just read it to my husband . . . I wonder was the article on *Boathaven House* by Alec Wallace? I believe he has done wonders in re-building it.

Nora McAllister (Rathfarnham)

Full marks Mrs. McAllister; you should be in the detective branch! It was Alec's article — sadly, his last one. You will enjoy pages 39—45 of this issue.

The things I most like to read are the ones Father Leo Morahan writes and Father Prendergast's trip to the Holy Land. There's a lovely one too that "Seán" writes home from abroad. And I love the photographs of the weddings and the pictures of the museum pages. May God bless all those who work for the magazine.

Mary T. Dolan (Cavan)

Amen, Mary!

I believe I have most of the copies of this lovely book and the one before me is the loveliest so far . . . By coincidence it was also twenty-one years ago that I met, for the first and only time, one of Louisburgh's finest sons, the late Monsignor Tom Scott (R.I.P.) . . . To this day I remember his wonderful personality . . . I have finished the whole book to-day from start to finish, and the article I enjoyed best (being history mad) was "A Mission in Louisburgh" as I am familiar with the district which it involves. I was going to wish you good luck, but I think good management brings its own good luck; and good management you have in plenty.

Joe Meade (Belclare)

Sincere thanks, Joe, for such sincere sentiments. What a dreadful pity that management and good luck do not pay the bills!

With its variety of high-class prose and poetry together with the usual items of local interest and its charming cover picture, it sums up all the excellence of previous issues. A worthy commemoration issue surely!

James Fergus
(retired Bishop of Achonry)

I got a pleasant surprise this week — An Choineal — which was sent to me from Knappagh. I did not expect an extra copy this year. I was delighted. I just sat down right then and read it. No telly that evening! It must have been an extra expense to print this one. I would like to help out in some way because you people have put a lot of time and work into it.

Mary Staunton (Dorchester)

Your willingness is much appreciated Mary, and we will be glad of your help. We shall contact you with our suggestions.

VALUES

On August 15, 1981 after a lapse of over eight decades Mass was again celebrated in Gowlnan Church in the west of our parish and a large congregation attended. It was a regression. It was also, we think, progress. Whereas Kilgeever has been the womb of our parish, Gowlnan has been in many ways its cradle. To return there was to go back to origins. It was a propitious event; and in a parish which is still changing rapidly like all modern parishes it was also, we believe, necessary.

A book entitled *Future Shock* written a decade ago by Alvin Toffler draws attention to the unprecedented rate of change which operates in our time. To paraphrase: Since man first appeared on earth there have elapsed eight hundred consecutive life-times (taking an average life-time at sixty-two years) and of these, *six hundred and fifty* have been spent by man in the cave! Only during the last *six* life-times has it been possible to see a printed word; and "the overwhelming majority of all the material goods we use in daily life have been developed in the present, the 800th, life-time". To translate this into parish terms: there must be people still living within this community who saw the first motor-car come to the parish; perhaps even the first bicycle. These people have adapted to more change in one life-time — from horse to jet-plane, from skillet to micro-wave, from reaping-hook to combine-harvester, from button-accordion to video — than the combined generations of their ancestors for a thousand years. And the rate of change continues. We can literally see household furniture and utensils in use today and in the museum or the antique-shop tomorrow. In another parish recently a twenty-two year old girl failed at Question-time to answer: 'What is the meaning of the raking of the fire?' Civilization has, as it were, been cruising for centuries down a lazy river, and in our time has been hurled down the rapid, with its attendant hazards. So it was good that we returned to Gowlnan: it posed some basic questions.

It is good perhaps first of all to remind ourselves that Gowlnan is *real*. It is not a dreamt-up model or empty film-set. People — our people — lived in that countryside and worshipped within those walls. The question is *what kind* of people they were. If we leave aside the better-known facts — their poverty, their near-slavery; and their obvious faults, their faction-fighting and all that caused it or came from it — we might well focus on their sense of values and on what we of this generation might learn from it. A salient feature of their life-style was their sense of "nature", a broad and indefinable

appreciation of the worth of the human person, whether relation or stranger. Their welcome for traveller or a strange was proverbial and has in great measure survived in our time. But how does our generation measure up to those of the Gowlan era in the matter of "nature" within the community and within the family? Because of their limited access to farm appliances such as we know them the 'Gowlan' generation looked to each other for the required help: they expected it, received it and returned it. They knew the meaning of the word *meitheal*: they knew their Irish proverb *Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireas na daoine* (literally: people exist in each other's shadow). Improved methods of farming and house-keeping have left us now more independent of each other. The visiting-house is almost gone: television has taken over from the conversation, as it has from the open fire as a focal point. Of course privacy has definite benefits but has the change, on balance, been an advantage? One parishioner, commenting on the change in social contact, has said that the most damaging of all inventions was the Yale-type lock for our doors! We are in truth in real danger of becoming a society who live away from each other in "little wooden boxes". It is good therefore to notice the unifying efforts of the recently-formed Community Council. In tackling such community needs as water-supply, garbage-disposal site, drainage and social entertainment, the Council unites people again by identifying their needs and organizing them to solve their difficulties.

The "nature" of family-life is even more important because it is more basic. And we believe that the quality of family-life in our parish has diminished considerably even within the life-time of this magazine. To put it more bluntly, our families are not nowadays the centres of caring love and goodness that they should be, and were. If this is so, the responsibility must rest in the main on parents. True, to-day's parents have a far more difficult and daunting task than had their parents. In the rapid change to which Toffler refers, they have grown up in a world which has left them almost totally unprepared for helping their teenage children in the dangers and difficulties which a modern world holds for them. The parents have just not had the experience themselves, whether it be in school-subjects or in social behaviour. They are as shellfish which were bred in, and adapted to, the full tide and have now seen that tide recede from under them; and they must not only exist but rear their young in this totally new and strange environment. The temptation will be to opt out of responsibility — the basic responsibilities of discipline; of work and apportioning work; and above all, of spending sufficient *time* with their growing children so that they can get to know each other. The solution to parents' problems is education and — once again — cooperation with each other. To throw up despairing hands is not

sufficient: there must be real action by the community of people involved. Otherwise outside interests, mainly the commercial ones, will widen the chasm between parents and their children to the detriment of both and of the community at large. In this context, it is discouraging to note that a public lecture, thoughtfully provided by the local I.C.A. guild last November, attracted only *twenty-five* people including priest, nuns and teenagers. Are parents not aware? Do they not care any more? It is a law of nature (as also of "nature") that the adult of any species protects its young. In an older age the training of the children of an area was regarded as the responsibility of the *collective* adults, and they were quick to correct any misbehaviour in the parents' absence — much to the younger people's chagrin. But it was cooperation in responsibility. Do parents have any such cooperation from their friends and neighbours today? More important, would they accept that help if it was available? If not, perhaps this is why it is not available. *An Choinneal* suggests that it is past time for the parents of the parish to meet, regularly, to discuss their common problems and to plan the common strategies which the present challenges demand for the good of the future generation in our parish.

A basic question to be discussed at such a gathering is: Have our values completely changed? Have we forgotten the greatness of the past? Have we turned our backs on the dignity of Gowlan to be attracted by the hedonism of such influences as *Dallas*? It is reported that within the past year some agent (thoughtless? or mischievous?) physically emptied the old font at Gowlan which had never before been known to go dry. Those who would regard that as desecration might ponder on its parable-value. Is the old font of goodness being teemed dry elsewhere in the community?

DO WE CONTINUE?

Some readers will be aware that this present issue of the parish magazine was doubtful for quiet a period. More, the whole existence of the *Coinneal* was endangered because of the financial demands of publishing, a demand which, of course, is forever increasing. As a result of a careful and critical meeting of the *Coinneal* committee, the following letter was addressed to readers and published in *The Mayo News* in late October:

The committee of *An Choinneal* (Louisburgh Parish magazine) considered recently the production of a 1982 issue, and the continually rising cost of such a production. The situation is that the magazine, which cost only £100 to publish at its inception in 1959, cannot be produced now for less than £3,000. Obviously the committee had to think seriously whether the *Coinneal* can continue. Their decision was to seek out what support the parish

magazine has and to cater for that support. In order to meet the cost of the coming Christmas number, the committee propose to make this a paid-up issue. This means that we invite people who really appreciate *An Choinneal* and would not want it to die, to lend a practical hand by subscribing £5 for this issue, before 15 November (1983). Because of the stringency of our resources and income we have no other hope of continuing to publish. We have reluctantly decided on this method of ascertaining if our readers do wish us to survive as a service to our community. (In this context, we again express our appreciation of our Foundation Members whose subscriptions have kept the magazine afloat hitherto. That list is no longer profitable and is being formally closed to any other applications now). All subscriptions to this pre-paid issue which are sent to any of the undersigned before 15 November will be acknowledged in a special Subscription Members List, and their copy of the 1982 magazine will be forwarded as soon as it appears.

(The letters was signed by the members of the committee).

We are happy to let our readers know that the response to that letter was truly enheartening. Many readers wrote to tell us that they did not want to hear of the *Coinneal* having to fold. They reinforced their words with finance. And the result is, quite simply, this issue of the magazine which you are now reading. Without the backing of these loyal friends there would be no *Coinneal* this year. We offer them our sincere thanks. As an earnest of our appreciation we are offering to these special contributors, if they wish to request it, a copy of our Celebration Issue (1980) free of charge. This offer is also open, as long as supplies stand, to any reader who wishes to contribute equally to the clearance of the cost of this present issue. But you are asked to send a formal request if you wish to avail yourself of the offer. A proper sense of humility requires that we spell out the position truly. We sincerely believe that this magazine is a worthwhile exercise for the community which it serves. Even a perusal of the contents of issues since 1959 will convince most natives of Kilgeever parish that already a wealth of precious material — history, tradition, opinions, letters — has been preserved for future generations of Louisburgh which, if one were to *begin* to collect now, would be impossible to come by. This has indeed been a community enterprise. Readers from outside our community have repeatedly commented on the immense number of people from all walks of life who have written for the magazine. Those who have known have wondered at the relatively high number of fine articles that have been contributed by people in the community who have never had the chance of any post-primary education. The response that has come to our recent call is patent evidence that *An Choinneal* is fulfilling its mission. The people for whom it was first thought of have told us so: they have done so cheerfully with their remittances. Louisburgh people at home and abroad may well be proud of their parish magazine. No less should they now be proud of their remarkable display of loyalty and commitment to keeping that parish magazine alive.

GOWLAWN REVISITED

It is remarkable how one thought, one idea, one man's dream, can eventually become a reality. That was the thought that raced through my mind as I stood among the crowd of some five hundred people who were gathered to offer Mass in the roofless church of Gowlawn on 15 August, 1981. It was in August of 1972 that Father Leo Morahan first mentioned to us that he would like to offer Mass in Gowlawn on that feastday some year. He had visited the ruins often, annually perhaps; and after a very dry spell of weather he had found that the holy-water font on the eastern wall of the old church was still half-filled with water as tradition said it would be. He had taken photographs of the ruin and had showed these to emigrants from the parish in America, many of whom were from the nearby villages; and he had noticed the loyalty and emotion of these people as they saw the old landmark on the screen. He knew then that Gowlawn was very dear to them, and that the faith that they had lived and loved and handed on was the 'seed that fell on good ground' in the generations who had preceded them and had worshipped all their lives there. I, too, saw that picture which showed the tall steeple, and the cross-shaped church with its high walls and grass-covered "floor", and for me it now took on a new interest.

Living so near the old church, I had the opportunity of seeing it every day. When we were going to school we passed within some few hundred yards of it. From our own land we were in sight of it and could even look down on it from our hill. My impression then was that it looked lone and deserted in summer and bleak and windswept in winter. But time was when people from the foot of Muilrea and the intervening villages flocked to Gowlawn on foot or on horse-back: the women with their long, flowing skirts and shawls or their capes and bonnets; the men with their home-made frieze coats and breeches. Some came along the sea-side by the graveyard on the strand and up the steep incline that led to the "old road" and on to the church. Others took a more inland route and made the gradual ascent until they were on a high ridge overlooking the village of Kinnadoohy, with a beautifully sweeping view of land, sea and strand; of Connemara, the Killary and the islands. From that point on, the way was level as they followed the "old road" to the church.

Of course people came also from the other side of the church — from Devlin, which is beside it, from Killadoon, Cross, Cloonlara, Roonith, Feenone, Aillemore and Curra. From those two latter villages they came across the hill: some by the mountain-pass of Béal a' Mháma and back along the side of the hill to descend eventually towards the church. What a beautiful route that was on a fine

summer's morning, and what a glorious view! Those who lived farthest away followed the old road up by Killadoon and the main road as we know it until they came to Devlin North. There the road led slightly more uphill until it crossed above Murphy's and led on to the gable of the church. That was also the way the priest came. One can imagine a foam-flecked, panting horse arriving at the arched gateway of the church!

Many good priests offered Mass in Gowlna, and the names of many of them have come down through the years from one generation to another. Much of the life of Gowlna was also a period of exceptionally hard times for the people. The famine years of 1846-7 and the local eviction of 1849 brought two great tragedies in rapid succession. The parishioners needed leadership and encouragement of their priests and got both. Of course there were also the missions and their "thundering sermons" reverberating through the rocks in the hill just above! But such was not the only noise at Gowlna: the 'clash of the ash' heard there did not come from hurleys but from the blackthorn sticks of the faction-fighters on pattern-days there. Those were the 25 March and the first Sunday in August. There were two public-houses just across the stream from the church and these supplied the 'battle spirits' that the wielders of the blackthorns needed! Those same public-houses were often the subject of vigorous sermons, and one priest said that the day would come when there would not be as much as one smoke on the site on which they stood. It was from Gowlna, and after saying Mass there, that Archbishop McHale, the 'Lion of the Fold', took the whole congregation down to Bunlahinch to denounce the Colony of the Irish Church Missions which had settled there. One can imagine the firm advice he gave his flock against being swayed by speeches or by the alluring soup.

The late Peter Gibbons of Thallabawn and Mrs. Brigid Gallagher of Aitinaveen have both contributed informative articles to *An Choinneal* about the Church of Gowlna — its having been roofed by the timber from the cargo of *The River Dee*, which was wrecked off the shore; and of the later decision to slate it. It is indeed a pity that we do not know more about the building — who the contractors were, or who built those walls in the beginning. What we do know is that it was a man from Bunlách, named John McNamara (Johnnie Simon, brother of Tom Simon McNamara of whom more people will have heard) who built the wall around the church and over the gate the archway which, alas, no longer exists! Some people say that it was an ancestor of the same man that built the church, as his people had been masons and carpenters for generations.

In the year 1896 a new church was built, on the site of a more ancient one at Killeen three miles away, and Gowlna was closed. Its roof, however, remained intact for many years and in 1923 it was,

apparently, in good repair until a very severe storm in February of that year. From then on it was gradually losing slates until it became the ruin that we now see. Thus when I first saw it it was completely roofless and nobody could have visualized then a day in the future when there would again be a large congregation, this time with seven priests, offering Mass there together. And so it was, on 15 August, 1981. When the news was first spread that Mass was really going to be offered there on that day everyone was delighted and hoped and trusted that the day would be fine. Fine it was, but with a slight breeze. It was a breeze loaded with history and with memories: a breath from the past!

Kinnadoohy

Úna O'Malley



THE PLAIN IRISH PEOPLE

The clouds hang over Ireland, turning it to a land of horrors; days of labor in the midst of fighting and sudden death; sleepless, watchful nights, when every knock upon the door sounds an answering knock of dread upon the hearts of those who hear. The young and bold again are falling like grain before the scythe; the old are left again to gather the harvest of grief. Even the face of the land is torn and stricken; burned shells of houses stare with window-frames like eyeless sockets upon broken roads, rude, dusty gaps where bridges were, great trees flung outstretched across every lane and breen. And old Ireland, holy Ireland, Ireland of faith, of peace, of kindness, hospitality, ready laughter, generous tears, song and prayer and the dancing — is it then gone forever? Or is it still there, hidden somewhere under all the ruin? A while ago I said to myself, 'I shall go and see. If it is there I can find it.'

I have only sunny recollections of Ireland. My earliest ones go back many years to my childhood, when I saw it for the first time. I am often reminded that, 'that was an awful year entirely — sure, it rained rivers every day — hardly ever we got the harvest in — 't was the year, indeed, when the Innis Boffin boat was wrecked below on the strand and the three drowned!' Yet when I open the door of the gallery in my memory where the pictures of that first summer hang, I see only sun-drenched canvasses that show glimpses of glorious mornings — Pool-a-Sogarth, and white little bodies, Ellen and Rose Honnie and Bridget and Mary, churning its cool green depths to hissing foam; shining, blue afternoons, and a race with the shouting wind across lush meadows, hair streaming, long legs leaping ditch and dyke like a colt's; lilac evenings, and tales about the Sheoques, or the black dog of Sikeen; bed, long before the dark curtain of the night had shut the last rosy light of day.

One or two of my canvasses, to be sure, have little, little shadows that have grown very light with the years; the day I had to wear shoes because 'the lady Gibbonses,' visiting from Castlebar, 'would remark'; days when I left the sea and the races with the singing wind, to sit quiet at strange fireplaces, in other villages, where Grandmother-from-America was making duty calls; the dreadful day of M'ria's wedding, when I let Tommy fall into the big flash, dragging him out, with all his red calico finery muddied to a deep black, just in time to meet the arriving side-cars of the groom's party. Now that I take another peep, I see that Tommy, at three, was quite a shadow in himself. He followed us, Bridget and me. He told things: who skimmed the cream off the big jug in the chest; who, playing doctor, mixed the horrid dose that made poor Rose so ill; how often Biddy took the wrong turn at the bridge and so arrived at Pool-a-

Sogarth instead of at school; and that the long white cotton garments which modest Grandmother-in-Ireland always insisted upon for bathing suits were wet from soaking in a nearby pool, not from legitimate use. Yes, Tommy was rather a dark spot in those days. I had forgotten it, perhaps because even at three there had begun to shine through, the earnest, honest, cheery, fine spirit that has since made him seem golden.

I was eighteen when I visited Ireland again. Tommy was ten — a thin, awkward, freckled, eager youngster, who dragged me away from pleasanter pursuits to see a birdeen's nest, or the coves where the 'wather-dogs' had their beds. He had two books, begged or borrowed from someone, which were his treasure. One was an Irish history, the other a collection of Irish poems. 'Wait yet now, Mary,' he would say, waving his book of poems at me. 'Wait yet now, till I sing you this wan.' Then, in a hoarse, harsh, tuneless voice, stumbling over unfamiliar words, he would sing about Dark Rosaleen, and the Rapparees, and Rury on the Hill, and 'There's men can strike for Erin yet, sez Paud O'Donoghue!' He read constantly from his history, muttering to himself as he crouched on the hob by the firelight. If the tide of victory were swinging to his beloved Irish, he would rise half out of his place, eyes flashing, one hand clenched high above his head. But if, alas, success were on the side of the 'Sassenach' (the English), he would shrink into the shadows of his corner, thumping the clenched fist on the bitter page before him. How often we laughed at him — Biddy, his older brothers, and I — who, admiring them for their size and their steps in the dance, was still too young to know that he, not they, was Ireland. Long after they had settled themselves as good American citizens he was to translate into deeds the patriotic fervor of his poems.

Those were golden times, during that second visit, golden with the light of the fire around which we gathered every evening. The days were negligible, to be passed, somehow, until the night fell. At night the young people gathered in our house. They always lingered half an hour or more around the gable end outside, their suppressed chuckling and whispering audible above the furtive scraping of their heavy boots on the cobbled pathway, before they summoned courage to come in. Then they burst in, all together, and hurried with downcast eyes and low greetings of 'God save all here!' to accustomed places, on the hobs, the meal-box, or the window sills — for chairs were very few. They were shy young people, much in awe of their elders, sadly lacking in initiative and self-possession. Not even close relationship with 'herself,' Grandmother-in-Ireland, who was Aunt M'ria to most of them, or nightly visits, could give them courage to come in boldly and singly. When their shyness had worn off, someone usually produced a violin and the dancing began. Such

dancing! jigs, reels, sets, horn-pipes, slip-jigs, the Waves of Tory, the Walls o' Limerick, the White Cockade; such ringing of nailed boots on the cement floor; such hearty swinging by the boys of their rosy-faced partners; such a breathless rousing finish to every set! When I was thirty-four, I touched with tender fingers the little hollow in the floor, near the hearthstone, that my eighteen-year-old dancing feet had worn there. Sometimes we sang. Often we told fairy tales, true stories, 'for I know thim it happened to.' Then we drew in close to the hearth for company's sake, deserting the darker corners in the big kitchen, where the rafters were dim and black above, and the firelight made strange flickering shadows on the low white walls. The story-teller usually prefaced his tale with a cautious glance around, and a 'God bechune us and harm!' for who knew but that, outside in the purple dark where the wind sighed through the rustling thatch and the sea moaned on the strand, 'thimselves' were listening.

Grandada, gone hours before to bed, but not to sleep, usually broke up the gatherings with a call from his room to Michael. Michael, with seven years of college behind him, had failed of becoming a priest. Since then he had not fitted exactly into the life of the village. He hunted, fished, rode, read, but never labored in the fields, in the bog, or at the kelp. Consequently the day began for him whenever he chose to rise.

'Michael-O', Grandada would say, 'what time do ye get up in the morning?'

'Oh anny time, sir,' would come Michael's unfailing and truthful answer.

'Well,' Grandada would return, 'any man that gets up at that time, 't is time for him to be going to bed now.'

Whereupon the boys and girls would stir and rise, preparatory to going. They seldom escaped Aunt M'ria, however, without the rosary. 'T is late! Ye'll have it missed now at home,' she would say. 'Let ye kneel down here now, in the Name of God.' So that most of our evenings of dancing and singing and story-telling ended with all of us, great and small, young and old, kneeling together on the rough cement floor.

I thought then that the Sunday afternoon walks, the jolly evenings in the big kitchen, the moonlit dances on the crossroads, the quay, or the bridge, the shy love-making and the drollery were what made the days and nights so bright. I know now it was kindness, unity, lack of envy, simple faith, and clean hearts. Those days were carried in my memory untarnished for fifteen years. Fugitive gleams from them have since lighted many days that were dark.

To lose forever the Ireland for which those memories stood would have been a grievous loss indeed. And I seemed to have lost it

in those years when, reading accounts of 'cowards refusing conscription,' 'traitors, who stab in the back,' 'gunmen,' and 'murder-clubs,' I tried to fit these things to the small boys, now grown, whom I had known — to Geoffrey and James, to Ritchie and Patrick and Tommy. Tommy who sang so lustily — and so tunelessly — of Owen Roe and Rury on the Hill, and who could not still be sitting on the hob among his dreams if the youth of Ireland were stirring in her name! Much more did it seem to be lost during this last year, when I read of worse things: of brother fighting brother, of execution. Yet, though Ireland might seem full of death, bitterness, and fear, somehow I believed that the Ireland I knew still lived in the hearts of the young.

So I went seeking it. Leaving the pier at Holyhead I closed my eyes figuratively speaking, — for the senses often deceive us, but the heart never, — and opened them again when the side-car reached the top of Pat Durkan's brae. From there the Village can first be seen. There are eleven houses in the Village, sprawled on the top and down the sides of a steep, barren, tree-less brae, all low-walled, whitewashed, thatch-roofed, each as like the other, inside and out, as peas in pod. They overlook the small green fields and brown bog on three sides, the restless sea on the fourth. The doors stand open all day long. At night, when they are closed, they are not locked. There is no need for lock or bolt where every one is welcome to whatever is within. Each family has for the other food in the famine-time, help in the harvest-time, tears for their grief and smiles for their joy. No house lacks fire, food, or wine while they are to be found in any other house. It is a humble, poor little village, with no beauty save that of the wild lovely world about it, and the spirit of understanding and compassion that hovers over it.

Within the houses on the top of the brae, built by my great-grandfather more than a century and a quarter ago, I stood upon the hearthstone where I had known so many happy hours, and looked about me. Everything was the same; new windows in that side of the house away from the sea, to be sure; the old loft in the kitchen closed up; a new fashion of putting 'a bit o' distimper' in the whitewash to make the walls of 'the room above' a pretty pink; the old-fashioned canopy beds in 'the room below' replaced by modern brass ones. There was, too, a deep-bosomed, calm-eyed young woman raising a new brood in the old nest. Otherwise, it was all the same. The light of the single lamp shone on the old red dresser with its rows of brown and blue delft; on the rafters richly brown with smoke from the fire that had burned without ceasing for a hundred and twenty-five years; on the busy black kettle that had hung from the same crane for almost as long; best of all, on the smiling faces of the entire Village, come to offer me the old greeting, 'Cead mile failte home again!'

Not only that night, but every night, the friends gathered in. Sometimes we danced — the old dances: jigs, reels, sets, the Waves o' Tory, the Walls o' Limerick, the Lancers — in the old way, with a hearty swinging of partners, a ringing of nailed boots on cement floor, a breathless, laughing finish to every set. Sometimes we sang the old songs, the Foggy Dew, Slieve-na-mon, the Snowy-breasted Pearl. And Tommy, dear Tommy, grown tall and straight and hardy, with his hair as red, his face as freckled, his smile as engaging, as ever, sang lustily — and tunelessly — of Rury on the Hill! The boys flattered me, with the same merry twinkle, as slyly as their brothers had a score of years before. 'Ah, well now! How well ye did n't take ye're time growin' up.' — 'It would be time enough for you to be eighteen now.' — 'Would n't it be a grand thing altogether for us, now, if there was one lassie itself about, like you.' — 'Sure, every lad within in this village is breakin' two commandments, the first and the ninth!'

On my birthday we had a celebration which began at noon with 'a whole lamb 'n' all the trimmin's,' and ended with a dance in the barn that lasted until morning. In the barn Uncle Joe had hung four lanterns — three borrowed, of course. When he speculated gravely as to whether "T will be enough, I dunno?" one of the boys assured him, 'Arrah, damn it, man! One candle'd do, and that one to blow out!' They all brought me gifts: a teapot, four pounds of tea, an autograph book, a pair of gloves. The last I cherish, because they meant all the spending-money for weeks to come of a youngster who, long ago, had used to grumble because I, a young lady Yank, was given his seat upon the side-car, while he, being only a boyeen, had to walk four miles to mass.

The days were joyous, too, passed as they were, in walking, riding along shining miles of yellow strand, visiting again the coves where the water dogs have their beds. The girls — a new Honnie, another Rose, a second Bridget, come to take the place of the others — took no account of the years between us, but ran in every day to bring me out for a race with the winds down the steep banks above Sikeen, or a chilly splash in the cold green waters of Pool-a-Sogarth.

Not all the nights were passed wit dance and song. There was much talk. All Ireland sat in that kitchen at night. There was Mary Lannon, more than eighty-five years, with her delicate, fine old face, her wide blue eyes still merry, her thin sweet voice still lifted often in the songs of her country. There, too, was Richard, her son, perhaps fifty, his long, ungainly body stretched out on the meal-box, his dark sharp face half hidden in the shadows. And, leaning their six feet two of manhood on either side of the dresser, to the imminent peril of the blue-and-brown delft, there were his young sons, Richie and James Peter. About the hearth, playing, or helping with the Irish, which they themselves learned every day at school, the older boys were

acquiring it laboriously three nights a week at the schoolhouse, were the four small sons of the house.

Here, I say, was all Ireland — Ireland of the Famine, and later the Fenians; Ireland of the Land League and the Parliamentarians; Ireland of Easter Week, 1916, and the great and bitter days since then; Ireland about to be. They were all eager, intelligent, fairly well informed. They had opinions about their country, her triumphs, her disappointments, her leaders on either side in the present struggle, her hopes for the future.

What were those opinions? Where did they stand, these people who are Ireland? Ah, well, what does it matter? That is another story for other pens. As for me, I had come to see if, under the seeming changes the years of strife had wrought in them, I could yet find the people I had known, simple, wise, and sane. And there they were, the plain, common, everyday people of Ireland, living their plain, common everyday lives as they had always done, wholesomely and usefully. Bridges were blown up, roads were broken, there were no markets for their produce. Very well, they could keep their produce at home. The eggs, butter, mutton, bacon, fowl that had graced foreign tables went to build the magnificent specimens of manhood who were as different, physically and mentally, from their brothers of those years ago as if they were a different race.

No markets meant very little money. Very well then, while they had food and fire and a roof, they could manage with little money. The small boys and girls went out to school every day, warmly clad in garments and stockings made from wool sheared from their own sheep, carded, spun, dyed, knitted, or woven in their own kitchens. It is many years since that has been so before.

The whole country to quote the press, foreign and domestic, was in a state of chaos with nowhere authority capable of enforcing law and order. Very well, then, they could keep the law themselves. There were no police, civic guards or other, within a radius of a hundred miles around the Village, which, by the way, is in the wild west. Nor were there any soldiers except a few — no matter of which army — in a town fifteen miles away, to which town they kept close. Yet, in the two months I was there, there was not a single case of depredation, or disorder of crime.

In our village and the next there were fifty-four boys. Such boys! Clear-eyed, straight-limbed, self-possessed young giants, whose training of the past years was observable in every moment of their splendid bodies. They had, until recently, all been on the same side. Now they had differences of opinion which some of them at least were actively supporting. But there was neither bitterness between them, nor harsh judgment of each other. They are not being stamped or terrorized into anything, correspondents to the contrary

notwithstanding. Nor will they be. They will fight, if they decide that that is right, on the side they think is right. Until they so decide, they will live each day as usefully and happily as the circumstances permit; they will pursue the old path of hard work by day, cheerful recreation together by night. They will read and listen — but they will think for themselves. They will make their own decision. What that will be, I do not presume to foretell. (Every traveller who has spent ten days in Ireland recently, and many people who have never set foot on her shores, can tell you ‘what ninety-five per cent of the Irish people want.’ These are larger claims than I, who am of the Irish people, flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone, may make.) I know only this, that they have those gifts of the humble, — understanding and compassion, — both of which will enter into their final judgment. When they truly speak, there will be no confusion nor any misunderstanding of their voice. And it is quite as impossible for that final judgment to be wrong as for the sun, which often hides behind dark clouds for long days, not to shine again.

Mary E. L. Hennigan

(Reprinted from Atlantic Monthly August 1923)

“Ethnic effervescence” is the term a French scholar used to describe the kind of religious experience we are celebrating today. Some would say we overdo the ‘effervescence’! They are right, if our celebration is limited to food, drink and music. But it should not be so — our celebration of St. Patrick’s day *is* important.

There are few countries where shamrock is not worn today. There are few Irish anywhere in the world who will not walk tall today as we celebrate this great occasion.

But is it, in fact, the great occasion we suggest? What do we really know about Patrick? How fully do *we* understand his life? His heritage? Are *we* worthy heirs to ‘the island of saints and scholars’?

These are big questions. We have a reputation as Christians. But there are basic Christian values which challenge us: basic elements of our Patrician heritage. Values like *love*, *peace* and *integrity* — in our personal lives as well as in national affairs.

How do we measure up to these values? And, in these days of social and political uncertainty, how do we measure up as people? How sincere are we — and our public representatives — in our commitment to *love* and *peace* and *integrity*? We must *earn* the right to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day.

— Pádraic Ó Máille

END OF TERM

Mr. Chairman, Reverend Fathers, Sisters and friends: I regard all of this huge crowd of people gathered here to-night as my friends. I do indeed wish to say a very sincere thank-you to each and everyone of you for coming here to wish me well on the occasion of my retirement from active teaching. A special word of thanks to the members of Killeen Community Council and to the School Management Board for organizing this function for, and presentation to, me. I am delighted with the particular gift they so generously chose for me — a garden green-house — and I am sure they will be pleased to know that it is what I would have chosen for myself, if I had the option. I appreciate the thought that prompted them to give me something that I can use rather than something I can just admire.

Appearing in the limelight with the “spot” turned directly on myself is not my favourite line at all. True, I do love preparing others to appear before the footlights — but like to shun them myself. However, to-night is one exception and so here I am. Mr. Davy Gibbons, Chairman of the Community Council; Mrs. Noreen O’Malley and Canon Fitzgerald, both of the School Management Board, have said many nice and complimentary things about me, and about my work in the schools in which I taught. I thank them for the sincerity of their words and I graciously accept their tributes with gratitude. Retirement can be a sad occasion in anyone’s life, but it can also be a rewarding time. I choose to regard it in the latter light, as I review with gratitude the many years I spent working with the loveliest work-mates any human being can have — children. I well know that I was regarded as being severe and strict, but to adapt Goldsmith’s words describing the Village Schoolmaster, if severe in aught, the love I bore for children was at fault.

Discipline

Having made it crystal clear to the children and to their parents that I couldn’t work to my full potential without discipline in the classroom, we both understood each other perfectly. I was accepted for what I am, just me; and I enjoyed the whole-hearted co-operation of the parents involved.

There is a quote in the Bible which says a prophet is not accepted in his own country; I am no prophetess, but I have spent my whole teaching career working in my native parish of Louisburgh (any time I mention my native parish I also include Bouris where I spent many happy years with truly lovely children and parents, and I deeply appreciate Father Gerard Needham’s presence here to-

night); and I can truly say that I always felt accepted in the fullest sense of the word, and I thank God and all of you splendid people, for this rare and wonderful experience.

When I was at Secondary School, my ambition was to be a chemist but my deceased parents, who were both teachers themselves, felt that I should follow their own chosen profession. How right they were! I often wonder since if I were born with a chalk in my hand, because I found that teaching was really my life, and as I look back to-night with nostalgia and joy I am really happy with the memories I have of the many years I spent teaching many of your children.

Life is full of ups and downs for so many of us. I met with my own share, maybe more downs than ups; but even when the dark clouds rolled above the world outside treated me roughly, I always felt safe and sheltered with "my" children. Once I got inside and closed that classroom door, the sun shone again for me and I felt perfectly happy and fulfilled.

Schools and Colleagues

In 1938 I started my teaching career in Boys National School, Louisburgh, safely sandwiched between my late father and mother. They gave me many hints and helps and I owe them a deep debt of gratitude for their love and counsel and guidance, to-night I lovingly salute their memory. During the intervening years I taught in Thallabawn, Killadoon, Tully, Bouris, Corrowniskey, and for the past seven years in Holy Family School in Killeen, during two of which I acted as principal teacher. Besides, two of my own daughters attended Louisburgh Girls School. I went to school myself in Accony National School (where my father then taught), and two years ago the pupils of Cregganbawn School were transferred on amalgamation to Killeen School, so I had very close connections with every school area in the parish. I wish to-night to pay a very warm tribute to my colleagues in the different schools: Mrs. Kathleen Morrison, Miss Nora Lyons, Mr. Michael McKeown, Mrs. Mary O'Malley, Mrs. Enda McHale, Mrs. Evelyn Leamy, Mrs. Marie Keane and Mr. Tommie McHale. We were always, and still are, very good friends; and a great team spirit existed between us in our various roles in the schools. I pay a particular tribute to Mr. Tommie McHale who so graciously and whole-heartedly accepted me, a woman principal, during the last two years of my teaching career. He was helpful, thoughtful and co-operated with me in the fullest possible way in the discharge of my duties. For this I say a very sincere "Thank you, Tommie". I also wish to thank Canon Fitzgerald for appointing me principal teacher of such a large school. He placed great faith and confidence in me: I hope I didn't fail him.



Members of the Killeen Board of Management and Committee making a presentation to Mrs. Clementine Lyons on her retirement from teaching. Also in the picture is Canon Fitzgerald and Father Conneely.

The Sisters of Mercy and the teachers of the Boys School were a great prop to me. When I needed help and advice from time to time they gave it freely and generously, and to them also I say a warm "Thank you".

Teachers and Parents

Down through the years I often wished for the opportunity to speak to parents collectively. I never got it, so to-night I cannot possibly let this golden opportunity pass without reminding you of the great role a teacher plays in the lives of your children and also in your own lives. When you visit a doctor's surgery, you have a special reason of course, and you talk about him afterwards; usually the officiating priest of the particular Sunday is discussed over Sunday lunch; a visit to your solicitor is either whispered about or kept a secret; a visit to the dentist doesn't usually make very palatable table-talk anyway. But the teacher of your children is talked about every day of the week in your homes. In fact a teacher's name becomes a household word, everything about her/him is talked about in your home — whether she was in good humour or bad, whether she disciplined or didn't, what she taught, what she wore to-day, what she said, and maybe also what she didn't say! This is very understandable because you hand over your most precious treasures, your children, into the teacher's care for six hours of every day, five days of every week. The teacher, in fact, becomes part of your extended family and of course the reverse is equally true: your

children become part of *our* family too, and please believe that we teachers love them all and have their progress and welfare always at heart.

Togetherness

In my own dealings with parents I am very happy to say that I found wonderful co-operation from them, once they got to know me. When I undertook the preparation of pupils for concerts, *feiseanna* or other such events I saw a great manifestations of your appreciation and co-operation. If I said I needed forty band caps, thirty tinselled skirts, twelve Easter bonnets or other such "props" they were provided without protest, often *made* and decorated by the children's mothers. Joe O'Grady never refused me when I sought his help in the musical scene. He attended "weary drawn-out" rehearsals at the school and he often spent hours helping me with the musical preparations. To Joe and to all of those very co-operative parents I say a very sincere word of thanks. It is my very earnest wish that this great spirit of co-operation will always exist between parents and teachers in the future.

Being a perfectionist myself, I fully realize that perfectionists are hard to work with and they are also very hard to live with, so to-night I wish to pay a tribute to the man behind the scenes in my life, my husband Austie. Were it not for his patience, kindness and real understanding of the partner he chose in life, I could never have indulged myself so freely in the work that I love so much. There were many nights in our home when our sitting-room became like one of the dressing-rooms of the Abbey Theatre: our kitchen table resembled a Christmas display-window laden with bonnets, ribbons, bells, tall hats and such stage finery, while Austie struggled at one end of it to have his tea, I'm sure some of the tinsel and glitter for into his food at times! To-night I say "thank you" to Austie for his unflinching support so generously and quietly given.

The speakers here to-night paid tribute to me for all the different areas in which I expended my energies. I acknowledge that I am blessed with many and varied talents — no boast for me at all — but reason for a very humble and sincere gratitude to God, the giver of all talents. I thank God for blessing me with the health and will to exercise those talents as the men in the Gospel were commanded to do.

I used my talents unsparingly in the schoolroom, and also outside the schoolroom, always for the betterment of your children, for the good of my beloved native parish of Louisburgh and for the greater honour and glory of God.

Cluain Cearbán

Clementín Bean Uí Laighin

THRIVING PROJECT

When choosing the Bunowen road site for the cottages in 1976, the committee in charge were swayed by two special considerations: its relative seclusion and its nearness to the town. This very seclusion, while so attractive to the visitors does, no doubt keep the day to day occupancy out of the public eye, so that even local people are unaware of the constant turnover of visitors throughout the year. Readers of *An Choinneal* will be interested to know, for instance, that this year has been the most successful of the three years so far with an average of 75% occupancy for the eight months (March to October). Indeed, as I write, on a cold night in mid-November, four of the cottages are occupied. Bookings for Christmas week again suggest that all ten will be filled for that week. When this pattern is set against the shortness of the tourist season that has so bedevilled places like Louisburgh in the past, the eight hundred investors who maintained their faith in the viability of this project in the difficult years of waiting can have every reason to feel pleased.

This is a community scheme, so it is hoped that the success and the attendant publicity the cottages have gained by, for instance,



At the official opening of Louisburgh Cottages: Bishop John Coote Duggan, Bishop of Tuam, Mrs. Vera Scanlon, Supervisor of the Cottages and Bishop James Fergus, former Bishop of Achonry.

their winning the U.D.T. Tourism Endeavour Award (in the accommodation category) and their being featured in the RTE television programme in connection with Duluth College semester, will be of continuing benefit to all in the Louisburgh area who are trying to improve their tourism business.

This year a detailed survey was carried out of visitors' opinions in regard to the cottages, their furnishings, the location, the reservation service, the amenities of the area etc. The results have been analysed and are extremely favourable. What was especially heartening was the number of visitors who came to the cottages as a result of a previous visit or on the recommendation of a friend who had already stayed here. One particularly generous letter ran as follows:

Following my recent holiday to Louisburgh, I feel compelled to put pen to paper to report what I found:

1. Everything was well organised. Mrs. Scanlon knew we were coming, and looked after our every need while we were there. (She even laid on a babysitter!)
2. The cottage was absolutely superb. It was spotlessly clean, and well laid out. Everything we needed was available, and in working order. Of particular note were:
 - (a) The decor and layout.
 - (b) The availability of everything from wine openers and BDG creamers to turf, towels and baby-chairs.
3. The location was wonderful, i.e. only two minutes to the village, and with access to the best scenery I have ever witnessed.

I could go on and on. Suffice it to say that I would, and will, recommend the "Rent an Irish Cottage" to all my friends, and will, I hope, use it again myself.

Please pass on my appreciation to all concerned.

Recently Bord Failte have grant-aided a number of privately-owned commercial cottage schemes throughout the country. Many of these have now been built and these too have notably improved the standard of holiday homes available in Ireland. Apparently the grants were given to private companies and individuals because of a concern about continuity of management which is not so easily available in a community type operation. There is no doubt that the cottages in Louisburgh also must soon be placed on a more professional footing as it is not possible for voluntary effort to be maintained indefinitely. One thing is sure, however, the enterprise by the community in setting up *Louisburgh Holidays Ltd.* was a good one. The cottages are a valuable asset, there is a basis for



Father Kieran Waldron, Louisburgh, receiving the U.D.T. Tourism Endeavour Award (Accommodation) from Mr. Peter Barry, T.D. Minister for the Environment at the Burlington Hotel, Dublin, December 1981.

further community development and over two thousand visitors have come and approved of what has been done.

For my own part, I must say I learned a great deal from my involvement in the project since its inception and although I could have had no idea of what I was letting myself in for when I accepted the position of Secretary — for one year, as I thought! — I have enjoyed the experience, I have met many new friends and I have discovered very many human beings.

Louisburgh

Father Kieran Waldron

Readers may be glad to know that the cottages company, through William McNamara, published this year a very useful local telephone Directory for Louisburgh, Killadoon and Clare Island. Some copies are still available from William McNamara at £1 each. The Cottages company have decided also to erect a suitable plaque to the memory of the late Joe Scanlon, whose unselfishness and community consciousness provided the site for the Louisburgh Holidays project.

VISIT TO KNOCK

Reverend Eugene J. Duffy, an Irish priest home on a visit from Altadena, California — Biblical Adviser to the film “In Search of Noah’s Ark” and Contributing Editor to the National Catholic Press — pays this Centenary tribute to Knock . . .

It was on an Irish evening, ten decades ago on August 21, 1879, when mists of moors were softly airborne to wash away the troubled tracks of day, that Mary came to Knock in County Mayo.

There is that strange enchanting time of evening when the sun by reflection seems to stay and to take one last glimpse at the earth before it couches down to rest. It is the time of day when curlews’ call comes airborne on the passing breeze. It is then the children are called home from the village green to pack their playthings away. The long-horned sheep call out to the sea-weed that is forever surfacing in Clew Bay, like exiles surfacing from the past to take one last long look before an incoming tide carries their memories away.

. . . It was on a misty evening that Mary came to take over Ireland. She came with John the Baptist and Saint Joseph. The three figures were clothed in dazzling white. Our Lady’s cloak was fastened at the throat and fell in ample folds to her ankles. On her head was a brilliant crown surmounted with glittering crosses. She held her hands extended and upwards much like Moses did at prayer.

Since the apparition of Our Lady, the pilgrims have continued to come. In 1882, a pilgrimage of nine hundred came from Manchester, England. They came in peace then, and the Irish received them in peace, and where heaven temporarily lowered its altar, they and the Irish prayed together. That same year, Bishop Lynch of Toronto made the long, arduous journey to pray for his country at Knock.

Ten days after the apparition, a deaf child was cured. A man born blind began to see after being led on a pilgrimage to Knock. A nun in a convent in Arabia wrote to tell of the cure of a fellow sister from a wasting disease. The mother of a large family in Autun, France, was cured of cancer and a Michigan lady from dropsy . . .

I asked a kindly British lady why she thought Mary was silent in her Apparition at Knock. She paused a while and then said with a smile, “I don’t think that even she would dare interrupt the Irish in their prayer”. And then her husband said, “I think she has brought a new age, an age of listening for our earth while heaven speaks to it”.

Ah yes, I cycled there to do a station on my knees when the war was on. I was a seminarian then. Now I must lead a Californian pilgrimage to her shrine, for you see, we are talkers here, and she is heaven’s greatest listener. — reprinted from Irish Independent

TRACING PATTERNS

Indefatigable as ever in tracing the meanings of words and local place-names, Daithí Mag Reill turns his mind to Gabhlán, Croagh Patrick, Devlin; and the eddies of folklore he finds beside the mainstream of the known history.

— Editor

“*Siar ’s aniar théas an imirt!*” — (Local saying: ‘Back and forth sways the play’)

Since the last issue of *An Choinneal* we have had the commemoration of Gowlawn Church and I must say how much I regret I had nothing to offer on the original foundation or early history of the building. Perhaps I might now try to say something on matters less canonical — the place-name, the pattern and so forth. A Church name is always important. The spellings ‘Gabhlán’ (Irish) and ‘Gowlawn’ (English) with the accent on the first syllable give the same pronunciation. And the meaning seems straightforward — *Gabhal* in Irish means *fork* and *Gabhlán*, the diminutive, means *little fork*. But when one looks around it is hard to find any notable forking of stream or ground there. So one is forced to fare farther.

There was in Irish an old word *gabhann* meaning a cattle-pound. This has no ‘l’ and the second vowel is short. But a pound there once was quite close to Gowlawn Church. I am little likely to forget that, as it was the occasion of one of the two puns I know in local Irish. The keeper of the pound was speaking of a shortage of ready cash when one of the listeners jokingly countered with: “*Nach bhfuil a’ punt agat?*” (“Haven’t you the pound?”) ‘Punt’ here was borrowed from English ‘pound’. And if I remember there was in my youth an enclosure with a very high surrounding stone wall there. We must not forget, however, that the Church is in the townland of Devlin, or in Irish, *Daimhleann*, which too means ‘Cattle-enclosure’, though I very much doubt whether the enclosure I took for an old disused pound was within the Devlin mearing.

In modern Irish the sounds of *Dh* and *Gh* are indistinguishable and have been so for centuries, so it seems that *Ghabhlán* and *Dhaimhleann* would have often sounded closer than might at first be thought. I am not quite sure where all that leaves us. But there is something else — our next door neighbour parish to the east, Oughavale, (in Irish *Nuachongabhail*) has for its final element ‘*gabhail*’ meaning the taking-over or vesting of land for Church purposes. (Compare ‘*gabhaltas*’, holding or tenancy). and I think that’s about as far as I can take it. Let us call it off for the present to await further information on places named Gowlawn in Mayo and Galway and perhaps farther afield.

The Pattern of Gowlawn on the first Sunday of August was eagerly awaited. The greater gathering, the 'little drop' from the local *síbin*, the gossip, the matchmaking, the feeling of Harvest in, when they hoped to reap the reward of their ceaseless grinding toil in all weathers — all drew to Gowlawn the crowds from Dereenalban to Roonith. And occasionally the hope of seeing a good joust between the O'Malley and Keane factions in their heavy, knitted caps was a powerful further attraction. But even before the Famine these dangerous exercises were being called in question as the *lúibín* (snatch of verse) shows:

Eistigí feasta, is ligí dhá ngleo!

Beidh Máilligh is Cathánaigh i gcleamhnas go fóill.

(Silence, henceforward! Their tumult lay by!

O'Malley's and Keane's yet in wedlock will join.)

Dangerous and undesirable these encounters may have been but not more so, one thinks than some of the field games to-day. There was only one serious casualty in the Gabhlán area as far as I have ever heard. That first Sunday of August was called Domhnach a' Logh (the last word to rhyme with English 'how'). In my time a local explanation for this name was 'The Sunday of Decay' (lobh) because by that time of year the leaves and stems of the all-important potato-crop began to fade and wither. (And full marks there, I think, for honest effort!) But, *faraor géar* it was the Irish language that was in decay. Before the Famine it would certainly have been understood as indulgence Sunday from Logha meaning 'indulgence'. (We often drop a final unaccented vowel.) And there would be popular inference that on this Red Letter Day special indulgences were available, for prayers and devotions, to those properly disposed. Quite recently, and perhaps still, in part of North Mayo the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption was Lá a' Logh, (15th August). Ultimately, it seems certain that like Lá Bealtaine, the first day of Summer, and Lá Samhna, the first day of Winter, Lá Logh was indeed Lammass Day, the first day of Harvest, the festival of Lugh, the great sun-god of the ancient Celts whose crops they believed he ripened and whose needs he watched over. Even in our own day the month of August is called *Lúnasa* in Irish. With the establishment of the Christian Faith the celebration was transferred from the first day of the month to the first Sunday, to the glory of Rí an Domhnaigh, (the King of Sunday), who rose from the dead on the first Easter Sunday. "*A Rí, chuir gabhla faoin ngréin!*", as one of the old poets said — O King who put supports under the sun, that is, who maintains the sun in the heavens. (Some may recall that Kilgeever Holy Well was once known as Tobar Rí an Domhnaigh — The Well of the King of Sunday. This was to suppress its original pagan character.) The 'Far West' had certainly no monopoly of Lugh. Before Saint Patrick he lorded it far and wide

from the top of Cruachan Aighle, (the old pagan name for Croagh Patrick) and from Ballycastle in County Antrim to Killorglen in County Kerry. The present pilgrimage on the last Sunday of July anticipates Lammass Day as perhaps it was once intended to forestall the pagan custom, to worship their gods on the tops of mountains was an old pagan custom in many lands.

In or about Murrisk you may still be told that the old pilgrim track up the mountain side is called *Bóthar na Mias*, at first sight apparently meaning 'The Road of the Dishes.' On the South side an old track through Durless towards the Reek was known as *Bóithrín na Maoirseog*. No one seemed to know what '*maoirseog*' meant and it is not listed in the dictionaries. Every one knows *maor*, a 'steward' or 'herdsman', and, *óg* is often a feminine diminutive termination. So it seems that what we have here is a new word '*maoirseog*' meaning 'herdsmaid', a rationalisation of and a substitution for *miasróg*, itself the diminutive of *mias*. Compare *clachróg*, diminutive of *clach*, as rough, stony, or pebbly place in Aillmór Townland eight miles west. Evidently the adjacent booley grounds prompted the thought that the word required was one to signify the girls who looked after the cattle. So that now we have two tracks towards Croagh Patrick one North, *Bóthar na Mias* and one South, *Bóithrín na Miasróg*. One of the meanings for *mias* in Dineen is 'disk' and I think this is the one required here. What were the disks? I suggest they were the circle-inscribed stones used in sun-worship ritual on the mountain. Any samples available? None from Croagh Patrick anyway. I have heard of the ordinance survey maps showing Binn Gorm (Garráin?) adjacent but, I have not seen them. However on the roadside to Log at the foot of Binn Garráin there is a fine example fixed in the grounds and about three or four feet in diameter. Many years ago at a stony spot called Caigéal Mór at the foot of Corrbhoc Mountain (Corrbhuac? Round Peak? Sun Peak?) in Lower Leachta a few miles west of Croagh Patrick, the late Martin Hastings — God rest him — showed me a small stone lying flat on the ground with a disk of about three inches diameter and a half inch in depth cut clean from it. The disk itself was not visible only the stone from which the disk had been cut. A mile or more west of that he also showed me a small circle-inscribed standing stone a couple of feet high on the open moor. Perhaps it had been brought there from its original position as the circle faced North, not South, if I remember correctly.

Where have all the disks gone from Croagh Patrick if they ever really existed? The rains and storms and frosts of over centuries can hardly have dissolved them all! Patrick had strong views on sun-worship and sun-worshippers. Towards the end of his Confession he says: 'This sun which we see rises daily at the command of God for our benefit but it will never reign nor will its brilliance endure. Those

who workship it will be severely punished. We, on the other hand, believe in and worship Christ the true sun, who will never perish, nor will any one who does His will. He will remain for ever as Christ remains for ever, who reigns with God the Father Almighty and the Holy Spirit before time began and now and for all eternity. Amen!

So, my guess, for what it is worth, is that the disks rest at the bottom of Log na nDeamhan and Loch na Cora. Could they have been, in later folklore, the coiling snakes and demons that Patrick hurled from the Reek? I would think it very likely.

Patrick climbed the mountain not to spend his Lent there but to destroy the greatest pagan sun-sanctuary in western Ireland. He was no rash missionary but a cool, steadfast, realist. He tells us that on many occasions he had to buy with gifts permission even to preach the Gospel. So we may be certain he waited till he had the necessary support from authority and people.

But could this mountain of his ever have been known as Sliabh Mias!

Dóchas linn Naomh Pádhraic! Even when we give the disks a whirl!

Cluain Cearbán

Dáithí Mag Réill

ÓRÓ SÉ DO BHEATHA ABHAILE!

It is a continuing cause of celebration to notice the trend of emigration being reversed. An Choinneal welcomes back to the parish community the following people who have returned recently:

Mrs. Anne Marie Lally and family (Curra) to Louisburgh
Edward and Treasa O'Malley (Curra) to Louisburgh
Edward and Breda O'Malley (Curra) to Louisburgh
Anthony, Mrs. Anne O'Toole to Thallabawn
Austin Lacy (Feenone) to Cregganban
Tom and Brid McCormack to Louisburgh
Anthony and Ann Kilcoyne to Louisburgh

WILL WE EVER KNOW?

I am writing this article in response to David McGreal of Louisburgh who in the last *Coinneal* had an article on "Dough Mór" and the ancient Abbey thereon. He posed the question: How it came to be built there, on a sand foundation, a strand originally called "Trá Mór" (The Big Strand). In the vicinity there also was a lake called Linn Mór, which was in 1839 — the year of the "Big Wind" — filled in with blowing sand and disappeared as a lake. It was also at this time the Abbey of Dough Mór, founded by Saint Coleman between 660 and 670, was covered with blowing sand. Why did he build an Abbey there? And what was the reason of his coming to such a remote area in the far west of Mayo?

It is a long story. He was abbot of Lindisfarne, which is located in the North Sea, two miles off Northumbria. At that time, 630 A.D., there was a dispute in the Roman and Alexandrian Churches as to the date on which the celebration of Easter should be held. The dispute was long and strenuous. Saint Coleman and Saint Columba of Iona said what was good enough for Saint Patrick was good enough for them, so the dispute was referred to Rome, and Pope Honorius admonished the Irish monks for their keeping to the traditional Irish date of Easter. In the English Church the same disputes and differences existed.

To establish a uniformity of practice, a Synod was held at Whitby in six hundred and sixty, where the whole matter was debated and discussed. The Irish system was defended by Saint Coleman, but without success. The Synod proclaimed the Roman system correct. Coleman refused to submit, and accompanied by a number of monks — Irish and Saxon — he left Lindisfarne and went back to Ireland. He established a monastery on the Island of Innisboffin, off the west coast of Mayo where he spent many years. During those years in Boffin, the English monks and himself did not get on so well. He again "packed his bags" and moved to the mainland and built the Abbey of Dough-Mór, part of which is standing to this day. I heard my father say that Saint Coleman brought the stones to build it from Boffin. My cousin and myself found the bell which the servers used on the altar, in a little alcove of the abbey. My cousin gave it to Mr. John O'Toole, Louisburgh, who intended to send it to the school of Antiquaries, Trinity College, Dublin, about 1920. I hope it still can be found there.

I understand that Saint Coleman also founded Mayo Abbey either before or after Dough Mór. In the vicinity of Dough Mór at one

time there was supposedly a bishop who possibly was referred to as Brian Duff - or "Lord upon the Hill" in a poem which reads:

"It is my grief that Patrick Loughlan is not Earl of Iarumhal still
or that Brian Duff no longer rules as Lord upon the hill"

The Bishop in those days would be Lord over the whole area of the Western seaboard, including Cahir Island, Inishturk and Boffin Islands, as this area in those days was all Church property. It was at a later date sold to the Congested Districts Board, and later passed on to the Land Commission.

There was a burial ground in Dadreen where the Bishop's Cross or Stoca was standing until a few years ago. It was moved for some reason out onto the roadside beside a Bord Fáilte sign-post. It is a great pity that some responsible authority, as representatives of Irish Celtic Monuments, would not remove it to a safer resting place, where it could be preserved for future generations to see. I would also wish that some responsible person would look up the Dough Mór Abbey Mass bell in the School of Antiquaries, Trinity College, Dublin, mentioned earlier in this article.

Daimhleann

Micheál de Búrca

Thallabawn Strand's Accolade

One of the best ten beaches in Europe, according to a British travel magazine, is a figurative stone's throw from Louisburgh, County Mayo. Thallabawn strand is the only place in these islands mentioned in the "What Holiday" feature; it takes its place alongside beaches at St. Tropez, Biarritz, the Algarve and Ofir in Portugal, Minorca, Sardinia, Madeira, the Greek island of Skiathos and Nevlunghavn, near Larvik, in southern Norway. Those who know that very lovely part of Mayo will not be all that surprised.

The citation reads: "For solitude, the Atlantic beaches along the west coast of Ireland are unbeatable; mile upon mile of deserted sand, blustery, melancholy and magnificent. This bleak and fractured coast is at its best at Thallabawn strand. Hard to find but reached via the road to Roonah Quay from Louisburgh, it is a virtually uninterrupted seven-mile stretch of hard sand, interspaced with rocky pools and little coves. There are dunes beyond the sand and marshland beyond the dunes, and rarely another soul in sight."

The writer, I am told, is probably referring to the number of beaches stretching from Roonagh Point to Thallabawn and locally named Emlagh, Doughmakeon, Carrowniskey, Killadoon, Devlin and Thallabawn. Hard to find? Yes. Magnificent? Yes. Melancholy? That, I think, depends on the mood of the visitor.

— reprinted from *The Irish Independent*

ALEC AND DELPHI

"I wonder if you are right in that" said Alec. It was after dinner at Delphi lodge and the talk had somehow strayed into the successful decyphering of the Linear B script. "There are still harder nuts to crack" I had said. "There is Linear A and the Phaestos disc. I don't think anyone has made the attempt, for the material is insufficient."

Alec crossed the room to a huge cupboard and opened its doors. It was crammed to overflowing with a jumbled mass of papers among which Alec began to scabble agitatedly like a dog at a rabbit hole. The pile of papers round him on the floor grew larger but at last he found what he wanted and handed it to me with a grin. It was a discourse read before the Rooyal Irish Academy as far back as 1912 and was — an attempt to transliterate the Phaestos disc.

That was Alec all over. You never knew when you had him. His mind was like a brain dip, you could not guess what would come out next. He specialised in out of the way and esoteric knowledge. By pure accident I discovered that he was an acknowledged authority on Elizabethan mathematics, and R. T. Henn, our Cambridge literary don, was continually being taken aback by his acquaintance with the more obscure crannies and by-paths of English poetry. He could demonstrate the mysteries of the Mobius rings to a bemused room-full, who scented black magic, or intrigue them by recounting the more scandalous incidents of Irish history which the text book writers discreetly ignored.

His appearance, like everything else about him, was deceptive. Six foot tall, big boned, immensely strong, with a tousel of corn coloured hair framing a ruddy countenance, when first you met him your thoughts went to a Viking leaping with a war cry from the bow of a long ship. The picture of the rude barbarian faded when he opened his mouth. His voice was high pitched, soft, sometimes hardly audible, the words carefully chosen and precise. They could be blistering, they were often humorous with a humour nicely compounded of kindness and mischief, but they were never commonplace or inconsiderable. He was a talker, not a chatterer.

What was such a polymath doing in charge of a fishing lodge whose entrance gate bore the mysterious word Delphi in Greek capital letters? And why Delphi?

Why Delphi? Only a pleasant conceit born of early nineteenth century romanticism. The second Marquis of Sligo fell in love with Greece and went to live there. When the demands of his Irish estates forced him to return he brought with him a hold-full of antiquities to adorn his mansion at Westport and a heart that hankered after the land he had left. The custom of the day ordained that an Irish peer

should have a sporting lodge as well as a mansion. He chose a site in the mountains of south west Mayo and called it Delphi.

At first sight there is little resemblance between the favourite haunt of Apollo, perched high on a sunbaked mountain shoulder, and Delphi lodge buried in the heel of a gorge so dark that in a few years it had to be abandoned and rebuilt further down the valley where the mountains open out. Yet there are some points in common. The Doolough pass, unequalled anywhere in Ireland for desolate grandeur, has its counterparts in the mountains of Greece; the Mweelrea cliffs are not unlike the crag that beetles over the Pierian spring; when the lodge was built there were still eagles on Mweelrea. The name was accepted and spread to cover the whole district. Delphi it is to this day.

The Marquis soon tired of Delphi and for the nineteenth and the better part of the twentieth centuries the lodge and fishery were let to tenants who kept the fishing for their families and a few friends. Delphi was off the beaten tracks — for long there was no road to connect it with Louisburgh the nearest town of any size — and it remained but little known. When the first edition of this book was published I was ignorant of its existence and unaware of the idiosyncracies which distinguish its fishing from that of all the other western white trout lakes.

Alec Wallace had been an accountant in Dublin. Accountancy can be an arid profession with no scope for adventure and Alec had adventure in his bones. At Old Head, two miles from Louisburgh, stood a large old house which had once been used as an hotel. Now it was almost derelict, without electricity or any adequate water supply, the glass gone out of many of its windows. Alec had an idea and with Alec to have an idea was to act. Like Rabbit in *Winnie the Pooh* he never waited for things to turn up but always went and fetched them. He bought the house and lands, descended on it with a collection of fifty craftsmen, himself as foreman, and, incredibly, within three weeks a new hotel was ready. More incredibly, in three days after opening it was full.

Old Head was run more like a country house than a hotel. No public bar, no music or dancing, no advertisement; only first class food and wines, great comfort and illimitable peace. To it gravitated a remarkable collection of talents. I have seen Alec sit down to dinner with two Nobel prize winners while at the other tables were a third Nobel winner, the Poet Laureate, and a famous woman historian. Fellows of the Royal Society were two-a-penny. The company was not only select but selected. Alec was in his element.

It was some years before the current lease of Delphi ran out. When it did, and the tenant did not want to renew, Alec was smitten by another idea. He leased Delphi and for a good measure, for he

never did anything by halves, leased also Tawnyard lake on the Eriff system and the Bunowen river which flows into the sea at Louisburgh. If Old Head verged on an academy, Delphi was a select fishing club, the qualification for which was that members should be reasonably competent fishermen and know how to behave on and off the water.

Delphi Lodge was a big rambling house built round three sides of a square, rather dilapidated, not very comfortable or well furnished, insufficient in bathrooms. Not one of these things mattered for the old house inhaled kindness and welcome. The regular frequenters were a mixed grill, a couple of civil servants from Northern Ireland, some businessmen and the whole gamut of the professions. Despite many points of possible friction (for fishermen have been known to be jealous and both sides of the northern divide were represented), I never heard a snarl or a spit. Whether it was the influence of Alec or of the house I know not, but everybody was on good terms with everybody else and friendships were formed which lasted till death. That is, maybe, a slight exaggeration. There was the very odd pebble — two young guards officers who tried to throw their very inconsiderable weight and a woman whose aggressive self-assurance was only matched by her ignorance — but these were swallows of only one season and when they applied for future bookings Alec was always unaccountably full up.

Alec was not really interested in making money. It was sometimes months after leaving before it was possible to extract an account. At Delphi there was not a bar of any kind, only a press filled with every kind of drink and a child's exercise book for guests to enter their consumption. In the to and fro of conservation there must have been many quite honest forgettings. What really interested him was to be able to play the host. He was lavishly generous with his fishing. The first time I met him he invited me for a week to Delphi as his guest and my last two days at Delphi were at his invitation. Hearing that I was staying with a friend some thirty miles away he asked us both over to fish. On each day we got two fresh run salmon apiece and of the three of us Alec was perhaps the most delighted. There were often one or two anglers at Delphi who would have found it difficult to meet the standard charges and I suspect Alec of making reduced terms.

For fourteen years Alec managed the two establishments at Delphi and Old Head, shuttling twice a day at a reprehensible speed over the ten miles that separated them. At both ends of his journey there were always people waiting and looking out for him. It was accepted that he was able to fix anything from a broken switch to a broken engagement. Whenever he appeared there was a slight and pleasureable increase in tension, a kind of suppressed excitement. He

stimulated, encouraged, commiserated, teased, mocked, sympathised, as the mood took him. Ideas sprouted in his mind as an August field sprouts mushrooms. The sea trout in Poland were giants? Ova were procured from Poland, hatched and introduced as fry into the waters of Delphi. Lobster hung around rocky reefs and there were still some reefs uncharted in the Killaries which could be pin-pointed by echo-sounder? An echo-sounder appeared in his sea-going boat. A new wing might be built on the hotel. It was. But at last the fishing leases came to an end and the rents demanded for renewal were exorbitant. Alec was getting tired of hotel keeping and the demands of the Tourist Board ran counter to the methods he favoured. Besides he had engendered a new idea. Old Head was sold, a Land Rover bought and Alec was off to Afghanistan with a few stops on the way to inspect early mathematical scripts. Another little Eden had vanished.

— From 'A MAN MAY FISH' by
T.C. Kingsmill Moore

An Appreciation

Shortly after the death of Alec Wallace the following appreciation appeared in The Irish Times and is reprinted here with kind permission.

True eccentrics become rarer as twentieth-century pressure to conform becomes stronger, but Alec Wallace, who died at his home, Boathaven, near Louisburgh, in County Mayo, on June 30th last, after a very painful illness stoically born, was one of these. Reared in Dublin he managed, somehow, to enter Trinity at sixteen, where he read mathematics and graduated with honours in due course. Two years with an accounting firm followed. With his abilities, he might have aspired to the higher peaks of either academia or business, but worldly achievement held no charm for him. Instead, when in 1940 the family bought the Old Head Hotel at Louisburgh, Alec withdrew from the rat-race to manage this with his brother Donald.

Over the next seventeen years, he spent a total of two nights absent from Louisburgh. Initially he took no interest in fishing, but presently he became an enthusiast and, as with everything he touched on, and expert on fishing and fisheries: he leased Delphi and its associated fishery in the Doo Lough valley from Lord Sligo as an annex to the hotel. Here one was never surprised to meet, in Alec's company, Nobel Prizewinners, Irish or British Cabinet Ministers, grateful to escape the tyranny of the telephone, his friend Sean

MacBride, or the Abbot of a north of England Benedictine monastery.

In his forties he once announced to me his intention of studying medicine. "In Trinity?" I asked. "No", he replied thoughtfully, "in Bogota. There's rather a good school of medicine in Bogota." It must have been shortly after that that he married his cousin, Dr. Betty Wallace, and sometime after that that he set off, the intrepid traveller, with various companions for various stages of the journey, by Landrover to Afghanistan. One object of this journey was to pinpoint the area in nomad territory where the system of Western Arabic mathematics meets Eastern Chinese mathematics, and this in turn was connected in a way I never quite understood with the origin of the symbol zero.

Alec was a learned researcher into Elizabethan mathematics, on which he sallied forth on occasion from Boathaven to read a paper in Oxford or Durham. One of the last times I visited him, a winter's evening, the sofa and all the furniture in the shabby little room were covered with Xeroxed copies of maps and manuscripts from the British Museum. He had just identified the curious shorthand writing along the edge of one of the maps of the Elizabethan mathematician-explorers as a phonetic transcription of the Algonquin language, the *lingua franca* of the east coast American Indians. This discovery was accepted with enormous excitement by American scholars, though Alec complained that the letters in which they discussed his find were harder to interpret than the original transcription.

Alec possessed the gift of friendship — the ability, or rather the will, to go to endless trouble to be able to produce the appropriate, unexpected gesture for a particular occasion. He is survived by his wife, Betty, his son and daughter, Willy and Lucy, and his adopted daughter, Mame. He will be deeply missed by his many, many friends.

G.F.

Remembering Sion . . .

Does anybody ever hear or see any grasshoppers nowadays? Those grass-green insects whose ticking noise sounded almost like the ticking of a clock. When, as youngsters we were sent to look at sheep or cattle we would sit listening to the sound of the grasshoppers and try to locate them among the grass. There were often dozens of them hopping and singing in their own way, but I never see or hear any of them now. Perhaps it is because I "have no time to stand and stare" — or in this cast to sit and stare — as we had then.

MORNING AT BOATHAVEN

Our last issue contained a poem, Evening at Boathaven, by a wandering minstrel — Gielty by name — who visited Boathaven in the eighteen-sixties. That poem, together with the present one, survived almost miraculously through the total reconstruction of the house (Boathaven) at Old Head. Copies of these two poems were given by Lady Marion Wilbraham to a young boy, John Heneghan of Mooneen in the eighteen-eighties. Some sixty years later he gave the copy to Alec Wallace of Old Head, who some time before his death (see page 42), had copies sent to An Choinneal. Although this second poem too has not great place in literature it is perhaps a unique survival of many which the minstrels must have written in honour of the house and 'nobles' who gave them bed and board. — Editor

The Sun dispelled the mist away
And ushered in the dawn of day.
The fields assumed their vernal hue,
The hedge is decked with violet blue.
The yellow primrose spring's first born
Expands beneath the spreading thorn.
The Mayflower and the daffodil
Together bloom beside the rill.
The hawthorn's blossom in the vale
Perfumes the morning's gentle gale.
Aurora never looked so bright
As when she left the shades of night.

Sweet nature! What a glorious scene
Spreads on the view: the velvet green;
The sparkling dew like crystal glass
Weighs down each silver blade of
grass.

Wild flowers of every shape and shade
Adorn the woodland and the glade.
The little birds on every bough
Pour forth their music in soft flow,
While in the sunbeams here and there
Gay humming insects throng the air.
The busy bee on tiny wing
The morning's plunder home doth
bring.
The frisking lambskins there are seen
Disporting o'er the level green.
The milkmaid's song, unknown to
care,

Floats sweetly on the balmy air.
The hardy peasant tills the soil
And whistles to beguile his toil.

Clare island's cliffs swell on the view
High scowling o'er the waters blue,
While distant still is seen afar
The lofth range of Tier-a-Nar.
And Louisburgh, village ever gay,
Lies basking 'neath the smiles of May,

While, far away, Croagh Patrick's
peak
Assumes a softened azure streak,
Like sentinel on watch and ward
Seeming both bay and land to guard.
All round bespeaks as bright a day
As ever dawned on blooming May,
Where yonder woodlands meet the
view
In all their variegated hue:
Where proud Boathaven's buildings
rise
In grandeur pointing to the skies:
Where groves surround that lovely
home,
And where contentment loves to roam:
Where perfect harmony abides,
And hospitality besides:
Where prompt improvement day by
day
Assumes its mild but powerful sway:
Where Commerce urges on with speed
Her welcome freight in hour of need:
Where often village beauty's smile
Lights up the hearth with joy the
while:
Where Peace and Happiness
combined
Are sure a resting place to find.
A pleasing thought pervades the
breast
While free from care enjoying rest
To dwell upon each rural scene,
The summer's bloom and sprightly
green;
The charming sights that spread
around;
The flowers that deck the cultured
ground;
The towering oak and leafy pine
With fond embrace their arms entwined

It should remind us through this life
To live devoid of care and strife;
To follow Nature in her way,
Her maxims keep, her voice obey;
To be united with our kind,
And prove an independent mind.

Oh Nature sweet! The human heart
Through weal or woe from thee can't
part.
You deck the land to please the eye;
You cheer us with a starlit sky;
You gave Boathaven's sylvan bowers
Refreshing shades and fragrant
flowers;
And Oh! you gave Clew Bay so bright
Reflecting wonders day and night.

In early life I loved to roam
When blessed with boyhood and a
home;
To leave the school and all behind,
For nothing could my spirit bind.
The master's lash was nought to me,
I laughed it off right merrily.
What cared I then, my youthful day
Despite of all led me to stray,
Through scenes like thine — in happy
hours
To pause on ocean, fields and flowers;
To cull the primrose in the vale,
Or pluck wild berries in the dale.
How proud I felt mid each loved scene
To gather daisies on the green
And form a chain of that meek flower
And wear it through a mirthful hour.
Or send my tiny flagger boat
Upon the sparkling stream afloat.
Or dress the Maypole on the eve
Of blooming May, or to deceive
The little birds that watched their
young
Which on my soft approach had
sprung

High into air and perched aloof
To warble forth a sad reproof.
Those days are gone, and with them
too
Are gone the hopes my fancy drew.
I'm now a wanderer at best
Nor do I know my place of rest
Except the grave — the poor man's
friend
When disappointed hopes must end.

Boathaven! proud majestic pile
Well calculated to beguile
The ardent gaze at evening hour
Beneath the sun's declining power,
As lost in rapture while I look
On each fair scene and sylvan brook —
The heaving ocean sparkling bright,
Reflecting forth to Heaven's light;
The cloudless sky, the setting sun
That oft the poet's feeling won;
Thy groves and gardens, shades and
bowers,
Replete with Nature's choicest
flowers;
Thy turning meads of Autumn hue;
Thy waters of ethereal blue —
Oh! had I but the gift to sing
Thy beauties rare, blest seat of spring,
And health and sweet contentment
too,
Forever pleasing, ever new.

And then, Clew Bay, how sweet thy
name,
'Mid earthly care thou art the same
To me, where'er my lot be cast
Fond thoughts of thee shall surely last.
I love thy never dying wave,
Where I was wont my limbs to lave
Ere stern Misfortune o'er me hung
And Want its mantle round me flung.
And when the bright sun's golden crest
Was turning towards the crimson west
I loved to trace each cloud and hill
And woodland on thy bosom still,
Or listen 'neath the evening star
To thy low murmuring from afar
That swelled along the mountain
change,
Or gaze upon thy tinted sky
And fancy castles soared on high.

Flow on bright bay, may nought
impede
Thy certain course by Nature made.
May Ceres scatter plenty where
The wave doth run, to banish care.
May those who dwell along thy shore
Have cause to bless thee evermore,
And may thy fame spread far and wide
Like lordly Clew bay's ample tide.

VISIT ON WHEELS

My uncle John McConnell of Shraugh, Louisburgh invited me, his twenty-two-year old nephew from London, back to Ireland for a three-week holiday in September 1982. Certain that enjoyment would be on the agenda, I hopped onto my push-bike and cycled towards Mayo. Arriving one very wet Saturday evening in early September, I decided to celebrate my journey's end in the Clew Bay hotel. Past the grey, imposing church on the left, past the cake-shop on my right, then climbing the slight incline into the Square and taking a sharp left turn, I came to a halt in a puddle outside the supermarket. I dismounted, the rain-drops turning to steam as they fell down off my back, and I peered into the dark hotel. "Most odd," I thought as I looked up through the burnt-out shell towards the dull, overcast sky. I saddled up and rode on.

Life on the farm was an education although I suspect that my younger cousins had realized my ignorance at an early stage when I could manage to get milk from only one teat whilst squeezing at one of the dairy herd! However, my good reputation was restored when a request, that I find a hen and make it sit on an egg-box until it had laid six eggs, was refused on the grounds that I didn't think it was possible to catch a hen so easily.

As many readers will be aware, the west of Ireland is famous for its sandy beaches. My thoughtful relatives therefore suggested that a spell down at Old Head would do me good. A sunny day with a stiff breeze saw me down on the crowded beach. I remember seeing at least six other people huddled together in a blanket by the sea-wall. These people formed our audience as cousin John and myself removed our clothes and headed for the alluring waters of the blue Atlantic. My enthusiasm took a knock when my pale-skinned cousin reaching the water first, screamed and rapidly decelerated. Having been to Spain a month earlier my body expected a luke-warm bath but instead received such a shock that the goose-pimples stayed with me for two days!

So it continued, a most remarkable holiday during which I climbed Croagh Patrick from Lecanvey and found that I had missed Mass by several weeks; but I left Ireland in the knowledge that her fastest speakers are to be found in church on Sunday mornings. I would like to thank the people of Louisburgh and its environs for their hospitality and for their ghost-stories. Especially I want to thank my uncle and aunt, John and Margaret McConnell who named a bull-calf in my honour! I will be back for more!

London

Dave Fitzsimons

'KITH AND KIN'

We publish three items in this feature and would welcome further contributions
— Editor

My dear 'Kith and Kin' of Louisburgh, County Mayo, Ireland,

Since I last wrote my 'Kith and Kin Heritage' for your excellent parish magazine, *An Choinneal*, two wonderful events have happened in my life, which I would like to share with all of you.

First of all, shortly after I finished *my Family Tree* of the Walsh-Gallagher Union, I was invited to be the Visiting Professor of Literature at our Notre Dame Seishin University in Okayama, Japan. There, I spent two very happy years teaching Japanese College girls English Literature and Bible Study. During my sojourn in Japan, I had the supreme joy of seeing some of my students embrace the Faith and baptized into the Catholic church. In the beginning, their Buddhist parents strongly objected to their new-found Faith, but once they saw the happiness of their daughters, they were reconciled. I wish you could have been present when they received the two Sacraments on one day: the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Eucharist! The joy and peace that were theirs cannot be described. God's grace is such a powerful gift that it transformed their whole being with a radiance that I shall never forget! I always thought the Japanese girl beautiful, but on that day, aglow with God's love and grace, she was even more beautiful!

When my two-year contract expired, I returned home to celebrate my golden jubilee year in Notre Dame. Fifty years is a long time to spend in religious life, but I can sincerely say that every golden year of the fifty has been precious, and I wouldn't trade one of them for all the wealth of the world! Although thousands of miles separated us, my dear 'Kith and Kin', all of you shared abundantly in the manifold graces and blessings of my *golden jubilee celebration of thanksgiving to the good God*.

Now, let me go back to the publication of the *Walsh-Gallagher Heritage Tree* in *An Choinneal*. By 1981, the magazine had made the rounds of most of my relatives in Ireland, England, and America. Shortly thereafter, letters and telephone messages poured in to me from far and near, rejoicing in the discovery of family names on the Tree. Among these letters were some from 'Kith and Kin' in England and Ireland whom I had never seen myself, but about whom I had heard from my family or from Margaret and Mick Gallagher of Aitinaveen, or from Granny Gallagher (Mrs. Michael Gallagher) who has written so many fine articles for your magazine. At this time,

I want to send my hearty Congratulations to Mrs. Gallagher, our revered octogenarian, on the Eve of her 90th birthday! *Ad Multos Annos* to her, and her 'Kith and Kin!'

Among the letters and telephone-calls from the United States, however, there were *some* who expressed sorrow at not seeing their names on my list of relatives, and who wondered *why* their names were not included. I am very sorry for any oversight on my part of any name or group of family names on my Family Tree, and I apologize to these good people for this lack. It was not intentional, I assure you, but when one is working with so many different branches belonging to so many generations, one has to depend upon research and the memory of others without any personal contact, and this can be very difficult. Painstaking research was done, I can guarantee this, but time and money were lacking to me to verify every item and confirm it before publication.

I thank God for all the wonderful families who have contributed to my Family Heritage: the Walshes, Gallaghers, O'Malley's Hesters, Gibbons, Tiernans, Lyons, O'Grady's Burkes, Murphy's Mullahy's Scabhills, Keanes, O'Tooles, (I hope I didn't forget anyone!) I wish each one of you a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year! May your clan increase and multiply! May our splendid parish magazine, *An Choinneal*, which has carried our 'Kith and Kin' so nobly, have a long and prosperous life! Its special brand of Irish Wit and wisdom coming out of Louisburgh delights us all. Congratulations to its editors, especially Father Leo Morahan, its contributors, and its readers! GOD LOVE AND BLESS YOU ALL!

Your ever-loving and grateful Kin,

Sister Mary James Walsh, SND

The McDonalds of Thallabawn

The family of McDonalds of Thallabawn consisted of the father, (known locally as "Big McDonald") and mother and their sons and daughters who, to the best of my memory, were as follows:

- i) James — tall and lanky, who later became a Catholic and married Honnie Durkan, daughter of Martin Durkan and his wife (nee Staunton, I think) of Thallabawn. Their progeny are still living in the area;
- ii) Donald — more robust than James though less tall; and also less refined. He married one of the Grant family from Glankeen; I think it was Sara;

iii) I think that there were two other sons — perhaps more — whose names I cannot now recall;

iv) Agnes — the elder daughter who was tall, well-built, well-proportioned; but not as good-looking as her younger sister whose name was Bella. Agnes was very kind, very lovable, generous and therefore popular;

v) Bella — the younger daughter, was also tall and of slighter build; she was very good-looking and graceful, and carried herself with poise and distinction.

Bella got married to a dashing young constable named Hadden, who was then stationed in Louisburgh. They left Louisburgh after their marriage. "Big McDonald" was very well liked in Thallabawn and the surrounding district. He was exceedingly generous, big-hearted and forgiving. He never objected to James's marrying a Catholic and becoming a Catholic himself. James had not married into opulence such as his parents had, and his father continued to support him with his own riches and stock if ever he appeared to need.

The old couple died in Thallabawn: I think that Mrs McDonald died first, but they died within a short time of each other. They had been very attached to each other during life. Each coffin was brought to the Protestant Church in Louisburgh, left there overnight and buried in the adjacent graveyard on the following day. The enormous size of both coffins was a subject of local discussion and wonder. Both Mr and Mrs McDonald were of very large build. "Big McDonald" had been a steward to Captain Houston on the Thallabawn estate and lived in a house on the estate. They were both very highly esteemed by the people of the parish. God rest their souls!

Collected from Mrs. B. A. Morahan,

January 1978.

McNamara from Mayo

One of our American readers, whose great-grand-parents came from Louisburgh and are buried somewhere in Kilgeever Cemetery, is anxious to find his "roots".

Mr. John J. McNamara living in Santa Monica is a great-grand-son of *John McNamara* and *Eileen McNamara* — both born in Louisburgh in 1826 and 1832, respectively. John died in 1891 and Ellen died in 1910 and both were buried in Kilgeever.

Their great-grand-son feels certain that John and Eileen had

brothers or sisters and would like to hear from anyone who may have any information about them.

They had however, five sons — Patrick, William, Michael and James (not necessarily in that order) and another who died during infancy and as far as our reader is aware the four surviving sons emigrated to the United States in the late 1880's.

While Mr. McNamara has found sufficient information on three sons he has failed to trace one of them — James — other than his baptism in Louisburgh on October 3, 1864.

Mr. McNamara is also anxious to hear from anyone who may have records relating to the old burial ground at Kilgeever — perhaps the present caretaker?

Mr. McNamara has stated that he has made several contacts with various County authority offices in Castlebar but without success.

As a result of Mr. McNamara's research into his family tree a reunion, which is hoped to become an annual event, was held in the United States — one hundred and fifty McNamara descendants came together — all descendants of Patrick and William, sons of John and Ellen McNamara from Louisburgh. For most of them it was their first meeting.

Next year John McNamara who has traced three hundred and twenty three descendants to date hopes that figure will be doubled and anyone with any information on the McNamaras or McNamees from Louisburgh in the 1880's, is asked to contact John McNamara, 157, West Channel Road, Apartment C, Santa Monica, CA 9402, United States of America.

— reprinted from *The Mayo News*

FAILTE ISTEACH!

An Choinneal joins with parishioners to welcome into the parish community the following people who have come to live among us:

Sergeant and Mrs. Conroy to Louisburgh

Reggie and Mrs. Tinsley to Corragaun

Sister Anne Feighney to Louisburgh

Mrs. Murphy and family to Carramore

Mr. and Mrs. Bergin and family to Carramore

Sisters Teresa and Philomena to Louisburgh

A REMARKABLE SCHOOL

Sancta Maria Secondary, Louisburgh, is set in one of the most dramatically beautiful places in the country. In the shadow of Croaghpatrick, with a backdrop of the Sheaffry and Muilrea ranges, it looks across Clew Bay to the Nephin Mountains, Achill and, nearer home, Clare Island, bastion against the broad Atlantic. This is small-farm country, and the mountain foothills, hidden valleys and two islands, Clare and Turk, are the catchment area for this remarkable school. Not the kind of area where you would normally find an established secondary school; and a co-educational one at that! In the days before free post-primary education, school buses, boarding allowances and the higher school leaving age, only the children of better-off families and the more ambitious continued after primary school. Second-level education, then, meant an opportunity to get away from the land and manual labour to get in out of the weather and to work in towns and cities. Those who were destined to stay at home on the farm, or who planned to emigrate, remained at "the National" until they were fourteen. They were "the big ones at the back" in classes called "seventh" and "eighth", which conferred more status than education on the incumbents.

Established in 1919, this convent school didn't set out to be co-educational. It was the traditional concern of the Sisters of Mercy, to afford educational opportunities to all, that opened the doors from the start to boys who were remote from segregated schools. But being, accidentally rather than actively, co-educational — and also being religious — had advantages in the dark ages of the 'fifties when two lay secondary schools in County Mayo, catering for boys and girls, were bitterly opposed on moral grounds by the bishops. In both these cases it was pointed out to the Churchmen that there was less moral danger to the boys and girls sharing classrooms in West Mayo than sharing bothies in Scotland. But that was in the bad old days of potato-picking migration and religious repression, and before free education and school buses.

"Louisburgh would be dead without the school" declares one of the teachers, and this might be regarded by the towns people as an excess of zeal. But when the school seemed in danger of closing in the early 'fifties, a delegation went from Louisburgh to the Archbishop of Tuam requesting help and support. Its future, like that of all religious-run schools, lay in the control of the diocese. Accounts of this visit and the subsequent negotiations are vividly recalled by the concerned citizens. But whether references to "shovels" and "ditches" nudged the late Most Reverend Dr. Walsh towards a favourable decision, he appointed a priest, Father Joseph Moran, as

a teacher in the school and authorized the Order of Mercy to spend money on expansion.

Since then the school has grown from three teachers (a sister, the priest and a lay woman teacher) to fifteen full-time teachers and one part-time. If boys were embarrassed, in the early days, at attending a convent school, they are spared their blushes now — ten of the fifteen teachers are male, still one of them a priest.

The first set of new buildings — five classrooms and a domestic science room — was completed in 1960, when it acquired its name, Sancta Maria. Since then several pre-fabricated buildings have been added, in keeping with similar expansion at almost every other school in the country. Sister Gregory, the petite and unassuming principal of the school,* has watched its development from the twenty pupils a quarter of a century ago to the two hundred and thirty enrolled now. She is proud of illustrious “old boys” now priests, doctors, engineers, teachers, scientists, and of the hundreds of girls who went on to nursing, the civil service and teaching careers. Girls have always tended to stay longer at school and even now it is easier for boys from farms to leave school at fifteen because there is always work at home. But the twelve-year-olds, leaving primary school, are now introduced to secondary or vocational education with the chance that they will continue on past school-leaving age to Leaving or Group Certificate. Santa Maria School has responded to the change of attitude among the girls and boys and their interest in the regional technical colleges and AnCo training as well as university. Biology, chemistry, business-organization, accounting, woodwork, mechanical drawing and building-construction have been added as full courses to the usual academic subjects. The girls still go for the traditional jobs and the school runs a post-Leaving Certificate, commercial course in shorthand, typing and book keeping. But, in recent years, there has been a swing to industry.

Some ten years ago, Sean Smyth, the county development officer, gave a talk to the assembled school on opportunities in industry. He was campaigning against the prevailing disinterest in industrial work among the pupils of secondary schools. After the lecture he asked if any of his audience would like to work in industry and was rewarded with only one hand! Now about a quarter of the school leavers take jobs in the factories in the surrounding towns.

Sister Gregory would like to see more changes in the school system — the addition of courses with more relevance to local resources. In this area of small farms and unexploited sea, the should mean expansion into rural science and economy, marine science, fishing techniques, fish-farming and its technology. There should at least be a choice between soil chemistry and classical poetry.

The school has a considerable social influence in the area. If you

add seventeen extra teachers to the normal complement from the national schools in a population of 2,500, there are bound to be social effects. Here it means that there are more clubs and associations than usual: a couple of lively youth clubs that have gained national prominence, and local development associations that get things done.

Ethna Viney

*Since this article was written Sister Gregory has been changed from Louisburgh to Westport and is replaced by Sister Anne as principal of Sancta Maria. An *Choinneal* wishes both teachers well in their respective appointments.

Mrs. Viney adds these paragraphs:

Before she retired Sister Gregory initiated the new building programme and launched a fund to collect the local contribution of £70,000 to £80,000. At the end of 1982 the local contribution had got well past the half-way mark, and building was expected to start in 1983. The new buildings were planned to cover an area of nine hundred and sixty four square metres and include four general classrooms, new geography room, new science room, general purpose hall, library, offices, lunch room, toilets and showers.

Sister Gregory's seventeen year term of office as principal of Sancta Maria School saw great changes take place: the introduction of free second-level education and free school transport which was important in revitalising all rural areas. She saw changes in the countryside around Louisburgh that were undreamt of when she came to the school: prosperity replacing poverty, school leavers getting jobs at home, and end to emigration in an area noted for the numbers who had to leave. Quiet and unassuming she played a significant part in these changes.



MO CHÉAD SCOIL

“Fornocht do chonac thú a áille na háille”. B’iad siúd na focla a rith tré m’aighe nuair a shocraigh mé ar dhréacht bheag a scrí faoi mo chéad scoil. B’iad na smaointe céanna a tháinig chugam ag breathnú dom siar sa ghleann don chéad uair ar an scoil ina raibh sé i ndán dom trí bhliain déag a chaitheamh ag múineadh. Cé go bhfuil an scoil i mBó Ros, suite gar go leor do Chluain Cearbán is i bparóiste Chathair na Mart atá sí suite. B’ait liom i gcónaí gurb amhlaidh a bhí an scéal.

Tar éis bliain a chaitheamh leis na Siúracha Trócaire i nDún Chéirigh bhí mé réidh le h-aghaidh an tsaol mhúinteoireachta agus gach a bhain leis. B’orm a bhí an dallamullóg, faraoir. Táim ag foghlaim fós! Ach oiread lenár linn-ne féin bhí an tádhdh le haon duine a fuair post gar dá baile dhúchais; a bhí mise buíoch do Dhia and don Canónach Tomás Ó Cuimín post a bhronnadh orm cuíosach gar do mo bhaile féin. Ba é sin mian mo chroí-se and mian mo mhuintire chomh maith.

Dá mba ‘préachan’ mé b’éasca dom aistear na scoile a chur díom i gcupla noiméad mar go raibh cónaí orm ar an dtaobh ó dheas de Chruach Phádraic agus bhí an scoil suite ar an dtaobh ó thuaidh dí. Toisc nach raibh aon sciatháin orm áfach, b’éigean dom dul i muinín mo rothar agus dul ag lorg lóistín. Mar sin a chuir mé aithne ar mhuintir na h-áite. Bhain mé triall as Coill Saileach ar dtús. Bhí na daoine go muinteartha, cáirdiúil. Chuir siad a mbeannacht orm ach ní raibh slí in aon teach do ‘mhúinteoir scoile’! Ar aghaidh liom go dtí an Coillín. B’é an scéal ceanann céanna é — fáilte Uí Cheallaigh róm ach gan caoi ag na daoine lóistín a thabhairt dom. Níor loic an dóchas orm. Gheobhfainn teach oiriúnach ar dheire thiar thall. Ba iad muintir Uí Mhaolalaigh i nDurlas a tháinig i gcabhair orm sa deire. Thabharfadh siad áit ina dteach dom agus fáilte. Nach orm a bhí an tádhdh. Ní fhéadfainn clann níos fíre a fháil. Bhí ceithre ghlúin sa teach sin ag an am — iad ag maireachtáil fé scáth Dé. Teach fial flaithiúl a bhí acu. B’ioma béile blasta a d’ullmhaigh Nóra dhom, gan trácht ar a carthannacht. B’ioma seanchas a bhí idir mé féin agus an bhean fíor-uasal sin atá ar shlí na fírinne anois, Cáit Bean Uí Mhaolalaigh. Thug sí leargas dom ar an saol a bhíodh acu ansin sa tsean-aimsir, agus ar a lán rudaí suimiúla eile. Bhí a fear céile, ‘Pat’, thar a bheith cneasta dom — go ndéana Dia grásta orthu beirt. Nílím ag déanamh dearmad ar Mháirtín. Do bé croí na féile é. B’é a bhí in ann amhrán a chanadh, leis. Sheasfá sa sioc ag éisteacht leis ag canadh “Louisburgh in County Mayo”. Guidhim mo bheannacht oraibh sa teallach íontach sin. Ní bheidh bhur leithéidí ann arís.

Scoil aon-oide a bhí i mBó Rus, ag an am. Bhéadh mé i mo phríomh-oide sa scoil agus ceathrar daltaí is fiche faoi mo chúram. Is maith an rud go bhfágann Dia a lán neithe faoi cheilt uainn agus muid ag tosnú ar an saol mhúinteoireachta: mar shampla cé chomh deachair is atá sé ceart na córa a thabhairt do gach aon dalta i ngach aon rang i scoil aon-oide. Caithfidh mé a rá ag an bpointe seo go raibh na leanaí sa scoil béasach agus cabhrach i ngach aon slí agus mar an gcéanna dá dtuismitheoirí. Níorbh éasca do na leanaí siúl trasna na portaigh agus síos le fána an chnoic i rith an gheimhridh agus gan dídean ar bith acu.

Rinne mé mo choin féin leis na daltaí: rinne Dia agus Naomh Pádraic an chuid eile! Bhíodh spóirt agus obair fite fuaite ina chéile. Ghacamar páirt i gceolchoirm i gCluain Cearbán uair nó dhó. Bhaineamar sásamh agus rudaí mar sin. Bhíodh coinne againn leis an tAthair Seosamh Scott gach seachtain — ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam. Cuairteoir eile a mbíodh fáilte roimhe ná Micheál Mac Giolla Cadhain, fear an phoist, a thagadh chugainn go minic. Nuair a thioctadh ‘sean’-lá aonaigh bhíodh lá saoire againn ón scoil. Thárláiodh siad trí nó ceithre huair sa mbliain. Tá deire leis na laethe sin anois, faraoir!

Diaidh ar ndiaidh tháinig méadú ar na h-uimhreacha sa scoil i mBó Rus. Tar éis dhá bhliain bhí seisear is tríocha ar na rollaí agus deis ag an scoil oide cúnta a cheapadh. Bhí an t-ádh linn bean éirimiúl, tuisceanach dár bh ainm Bríd Bean Uí Cheallaigh a fháil mar chúntóir. As sin amach lean obair na scoile ar aghaidh mar is gnách do gach scoil eile sa gcomharsanacht. Bhí seans i bhfad níos fearr ag na leanaí ó thaobh oideachais de. D’éirigh go maith leo sa saol. Pé cruatan a d’fhulaing siad ag teacht ar scoil agus ag imeacht abhaile sheas sé dhóibh. Tá siad ag saothrú in áiteacha éagsula timpeall na tíre agus ina n-áit dhúchais chomh maith.

Molaim na teallaigh go léir san áit ar an dtaobh thiar thuaidh de Chruach Phádraic. Ba in bhur measc a chleachtaigh mé ceird na múinteoireachta don chéad uair, agus ceird an tsaoil chomh maith!

Caitriona M. Uí Raghallaigh

KEEP YOUR WORD!

This feature tries to keep alive the main old Irish words which still slip naturally into the speech of many natives of the parish. They take the form of a quiz as usual. Approximate pronunciation is given in parenthesis.

1. *Alp* (ahlp) — (a) a large sheep; (b) a mountain; (c) a mouthful; (d) a strain of potato-seed
2. *Balbhán* (boll-e-wawn) — (a) a white spot; (b) a single wall or fence; (c) a smell; (d) a dumb person
3. *Bróg* (brogue) — (a) an ornamental brooch; (b) a boot; (c) a sod of wet turf; (d) a shower
4. *Cloigeann* (klaggin) — (a) teasing; (b) a sea-bird; (c) a head; (d) a 'wag-of-the-wall' clock
5. *Diabhalaíocht* (jowl-ee-ucht) — (a) shovelling; (b) grinning; (c) companionship; (d) devilment
6. *Driopás* (jrup-aws) — (a) a hurry; (b) a skin disease; (c) home-made pudding; (d) a curse
7. *Feirbín* (ferribeen) — (a) a quick tune; (b) a sod; (c) a milk-vessel; (d) the peak of a cap
8. *Feirc* (ferk) — (a) the hilt of a knife; (b) a corner-boy; (c) a cooper's tool; (d) "Guess!"
9. *Giobal* (gyubbal) — (a) part of a boat's compass; (b) bad conversation; (c) a shell-fish; (d) a rag
10. *Gleacáí* (glyah-kuee) — A fistful; (b) frost; (c) an athlete; (d) a trickster
11. *Mallmhuir* (moll-your) — (a) a low tide; (b) a girl's name; (c) a bad state of affairs; (d) a slow person
12. *Póirín* (poh-reen) — (a) heavy rain; (b) a boil; (c) a small potato; (d) a pocket
13. *Roilleog* (rell-yogue) — A child's grave; (b) a chilblain; (c) a tassel; (d) a mountain plant
14. *Sopaoileach* (sep-eel-uch) — (a) a low wooden bed; (b) rotted straw; (c) a tall thin man; (d) quivering of the knees
15. *Tóin trom* (thoon-thrumb) — (a) a lazy-bones; (b) a wave; (c) a fit of anger; (d) part of a weaver's loom

Answers on page 73

SPORT OF KINGS

When the B.B.C. film, *The Playboy of the Western world*, was being screened, it was to be expected that many of the scenes would be shot in the west of Ireland, because of the location of John M. Synge's original and famous play. It was no coincidence, however, that the scene of the races on the strand was filmed in our parish, because there has been in this parish a very long tradition of just such a sport. Nobody can now recall when exactly it started but it is known locally that races were held on the strand at Carrowniskey as early as July 1890. In the years that have intervened there have been many memorable race days in Carrowniskey, in Carramore, in Killadoon or Cross. In a farming community such as ours, it is difficult to spare any day from the ordinary farm-work, especially during the months of July and August. Still, parishioners have been known to leave such work as turf-saving and, more remarkably, hay-saving to gather and enjoy themselves at these races which were, and are, red-letter days on our social calendar. In recent times continental and American visitors are greatly fascinated with this type of sport. Some even arrange their annual holidays to suit the dates; and, regularly, cameras or videos are now used to capture the atmosphere of the event and recreate it again at a party of friends in their emigrant homes.

There seems to have been an endless supply of horses and ponies from inside and outside the parish to patronize the races on the strands here. Some of the more famous names that come to mind were those of the Sweeney's of Ballina and the Ryans of Westport. There was one famous race between these rivals at Cross in 1918 the winner being Sweeney, by a head. The horses they raced that day were generally thought to be among the best 'flapper' racers in Ireland. Prominent on the race-cards at Carramore and Cross for many years were the names of the Horkans of Westport and Joyces of Clifden and Reilly's of Islandeady. In later times, probably because transport became easier, some horses came from farther afield: in 1964 Brendan Sweeney from County Kerry brought his horses to Carrowniskey; and in 1972 Caroline Hutchinson from Newbridge, County Kildare, brought four horses to the same venue. It is also fairly usual to see horses coming, in recent years, from such places as Ballinasloe, Castlereagh, Ballyconneely and Oughterard.

Naturally the timing of races on the strand is dictated by the ebb and flow of the tide. This is true both of the time of month and the time of day, but local knowledge is used in the planning so that the most opportune time is chosen. The races usually start about mid-day, and they are held in August close to the appearance of a new

moon or full moon. (People living so close to the coast appreciate the direct connection there is between moon and tides.) With a view to facilitating our neighbours, as well as enlarging the crowd, it was traditional to hold races in the parish on Wednesday, which was the shopping half-day in Westport. Over the years the races of Carramore, which was a very big event in the sporting life of Kilgeever parish, seemed to lose favour. It was at one stage decided that the staging of an agricultural show would be more beneficial to the parish and would concentrate more on home-produce. As a result, a fine agricultural show was held very successfully for many years. Within the last ten or twelve years, however, there has been another change. Perhaps it is the old influence and attraction again surfacing, but the big day in the eastern side of the parish now is the annual horse-show, which has in many ways out-stripped even the success that attended the old races. However there still are two race-meetings annually — Carrowniskey in early August, and Killadoon in mid-August. By national standards the prizes at these races may appear modest, say £180 together with a trophy. But it is interesting to compare these with the usual prize for a race — from £1.50 (or £1.10s 0d as it then was,) to £3.00 — in 1918. In the running of today's races the two committees work in cooperation. These committees are: John Scanlon, James O'Malley, Michael Gibbons, Joseph Gibbons, Richard Gibbons, P.J. O'Malley, John F. Kilcoyne; and Derek Taylor, Frank O'Malley, Mary O'Malley, Joseph Murphy, Jim McDonnell, Mary Murphy, James S. Morrison.

— Mary Murphy

Remembering Sion . . .

It was the Feast of Christ the King and there was a holy hour in the Church. There were no tyres for our bicycles as it was during the war period and things were scarce, so I walked to the holy hour, spent the hour there with the priest and congregation in prayer and adoration — and then walked home. There was to be a dance in the Colony that night, so when I arrived home my sister was already dressed for it. She made sure that I made no delay over my tea and when it was over we both set off on foot again to the dance in the Colony. By the time we were home again that night we had done mileage enough to please the most ardent keep-fit addict!

WALKING TALL

Last year was the 'Year of the Disabled' — and here at Serabu the first week-end of May 1981 was completely given over to our little friends with limb deformities, most of whom are victims of polio. It is three years now since an organization called *Terre des Hommes* in the Netherlands began sending two orthopaedic surgeons to Serabu for two weeks each May and November. Since that first visit in 1976, one hundred and twenty children have been operated on. Nobody knows the prevalence of polio here in Sierra Leone, but since the programme started more and more children appear at the outpatients hoping for some help. Last week-end, with little or no publicity, eighty one children arrived — some from the farthest ends of the country. It is a very moving day for us here at the hospital, as the children who have already benefitted from surgery return, and have such a great welcome for themselves. Now supported by callipers and crutches, they can look the world proudly in the face. Those who arrive anticipating help tumble, fall and drag themselves from the vehicles, are carried on the backs of relatives, or crawl on all fours to the outpatients department. For those to whom corrective surgery is offered there is sadness and disappointment. Just now thirty five children are scheduled for future surgery. Needless to remark, here at Serabu, we believe that prevention is better than cure, and immunization against polio is a "must", but for those who already have the deformities the future is bleak. These deformities can isolate them from family and community, and their self-esteem is further reduced by having to bear with the taunts and laughter of other children. Sometimes they hear the adults whisper that they have a 'witch'. Walking proudly upright with callipers and crutches gives a new sense of self-respect. The next effort of our programme is to help to absorb these children back as productive members of their society.

I will quote here some extracts from the letters of two of our children who have returned to their villages. Foday was just finishing Secondary School, but had been born with severely bowed legs. He arrived at Serabu a year and a half ago walking with the aid of a stick, around which his bowed legs swung as he took each step. He had a handsome face and a cheerful smile and children ran to greet him, but seeing his abnormal legs shrieked and ran away. For years Foday endured this. Now his hopes were high. He spent one year in Serabu, had surgery on one leg in May 1980 and on the other leg in November 1980. He left the hospital without the aid of any stick, and so happy with his two straight legs! The following quote from his letters shares his joy. "To be frank, Sister, my arrival at home was honoured like

any honourable minister. My relatives were very happy and praised the Lord, and a lot of thanks to you. Some of my relatives were surprised at my changed condition. Some are not even recognizing me. Only my face tells that I am the Foday who has been deformed for many years ago and has now gained a good position in this world. About forty of my relatives including my friends left our village, Baoma Koya, twenty eight miles from Kenema to pay me a visit. People come to see me every day to rejoice with me. Sincere greetings from all my relatives. I wish you perfect work and all God's graces throughout your life, likewise the other members." He signed the letter — "Your Paddy in Christ, Foday"!

A second letter was received from Francis, who had his deformed foot corrected. He too wrote back in gratitude. He was pleased with everybody in Serabu — happy that he had been well cared for — and then his beautiful quote "even in my sleep I am glad".

For those of us who work here, it is a privilege to share in the hopes, the joys and the pain of these 'little ones' — and we pray that through it all they will hear some echo of the "Good News".

Serabu

Sister Hilary Lyons

I would like you to publish the following information about the late Canon Eddie O'Malley: for a number of years before he died he sent me from twenty to fifty pounds a month or a quarter for the sick children in our ward at Serabu — especially for the hungry ones. He wanted the money to be used for that purpose alone, and specifically requested that it would not be put in the general hospital account. We opened a special "children's ward fund" . . . Canon Eddie left £400 in his will to be invested and the interest to go Serabu. Thanks to him, that little "cruet" has never run dry; and since his death others have joined. I would like to share this with Louisburgh readers.

Sister Hilary Lyons

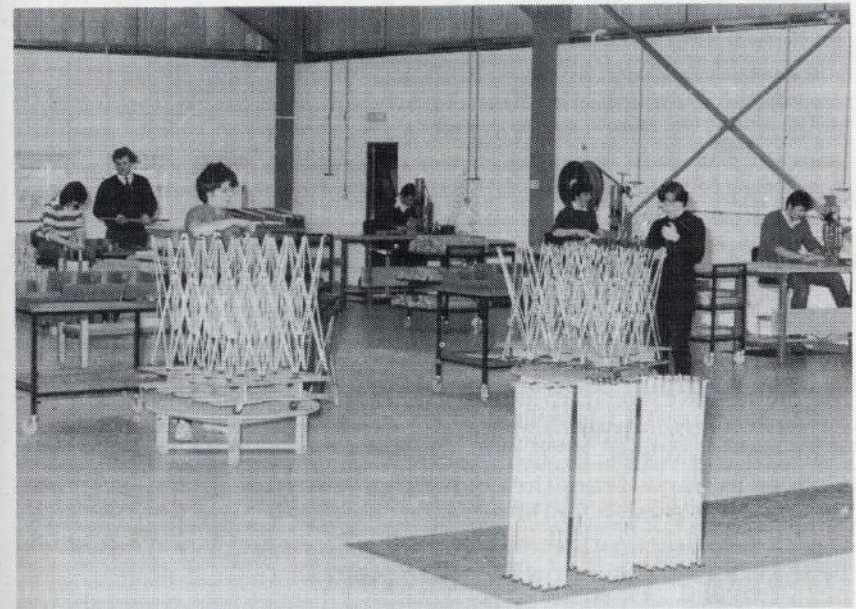
So shines a good deed!

NOMADIC STRUCTURES

We always said what we needed was a factory! We probably had not thought it out: perhaps it was a wish of ours to be up with the Westport and Castlebar Jones's. We could remember the dejected embarrassment of being told that what we called "the factory" in childhood was a mere galvanised shed belonging to the Bacon Factory company! Now, however, after all the years, our blushes are redeemed. *Nomadic Structures* is in operation in the I.D.A. factory in Cahir.

Nomadic Structure has its parent factory in the United States. Its product in Louisburgh is portable aluminium frames, which are being sold to some twenty-five agents in different European countries and in Japan. One pleasing aspect of the concern is that all the raw material used is purchased in Ireland. The average output now is fifty units per week. At present there are just nine employees at the factory, five men and four women.

We bid *Nomadic Structures* a warm welcome to Louisburgh and wish all concerned commercial success and harmonious staff-relationships!



NOMADIC STRUCTURES, LOUISBURGH.

From L to R.: Patricia Moran, John J. Kilcoyne, Cathy Geraghty, Colm Kitterick, John McNally, Eileen Mitchell, Michael Tiernan.

JOHN McHALE 1791-1881

Following are some paragraphs, relevant to Kilgeever parish, from a most interesting lecture given by Mr. John Lyons B.A., H.Dip Ed. on the life of "The Lion of the Fold of Juda" in the Parochial Hall, Louisburgh on the occasion of the centenary of the Archbishop's death. — Editor

During October 1981 I was asked by Father Waldron of Louisburgh to prepare a paper on the life and times of Archbishop McHale of Tuam; the centenary of his death would be celebrated throughout the Archdiocese during November. I hope readers of *An Choinneal* will enjoy the fruits of that labour, and perhaps at a later time we will delve more seriously into the Kilgeever of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

The Archdiocese of Tuam had three highly remarkable prelates during the nineteenth century: O'Kelly of Curramore, Ballinasloe; McHale of Tobar na bhFiann, and McEvelly of Louisburgh. The interesting thing about these men is that they came of frugal backgrounds, so close to an age when only the more blue-blooded could ever aspire to the throne of the Archdiocese.

By 1698 only eight bishops remained in Ireland; many, including James Lynch of Tuam (1669—1714), had already left for the continent on the defeat of King James. In 1714 Francis Burke succeeded Lynch; Burke often used the name Miles Staunton and he died in 1723. He was succeeded by Bernard O'Gara and the condition of the Church in Tuam may be learned from the official summary of the report made by the Protestant Archbishop in 1731.

The Archbishop of Tuam returns that in the diocese of Tuam there are mass houses in most parishes, in some more than one . . . there is a parish priest to every mass house except where the parish is very small . . . there are eleven friaries, three nunneries and thirty-two popish schools, many of which teach Latin and philosophy . . .

The diocesan clergy preserved the unity of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Many of them had received their education in some continental college, by far the greater number attending the Irish College in Paris. From the continent they returned to minister to a people, who, though for the most part miserably poor, were forced by law to pay tithes for the upkeep of the Protestant Church and had little left for the support of their own pastors.

Actual land ownership by the end of the eighteenth century was a privilege enjoyed by a small minority. By 1804 the total population of Ireland was almost five-and-a-half million; and by the 1840's between eight and nine millions. Famine was the norm along the

west coast. The year 1800 saw Archbishop Dillion of Tuam founding Saint Jarlath's. In 1806 Oliver Kelly was Vicar-General, he would succeed to Tuam on the death of Dillion in 1809, and he would be succeeded by John McHale. The new century saw the end of rebellion. George Low, John Vernon and Richard Hawkins served as Church of Ireland curates in Louisburgh between 1798—1815. "Louisburgh — one church, capable of accommodating 150 persons, built in 1798 at an expense of £461-10-9¼ . . ."

The Spring of 1813 brought famine to the West. One must keep in mind that as many as fourteen partial or general failures of the potato crop took place in Ireland between 1816 and 1842. To use our own area as an example: Reverend Robert Potter wrote to the Editor of the *Mayo Telegraph* on April 7 1831; according to Mr. Potter there were at that time three thousand four hundred paupers in Louisburgh, of whom seven hundred belonged to Clare Island. The famine of 1831 was no less severe in other parts of Mayo so Bishop McHale and others travelled to London to see Lord Grey, Prime Minister. The Bishop had recognized the causes of these famines; he wrote at the time; "Unless the source of misery is checked by some vigorous legislative provisions, it will come again and again, and be fraught at each returning visit with some new accumulation." He saw corn being exported, the linen trade in disarray, arrears of rent, seed potatoes being dug for food. His interview with Lord Grey was not successful. But while in England he wrote to the editor of the "Morning Chronicle", about the Grand Jury jobbery, Maynooth College, Tithes and proselytizing by Bible Societies. By November 10th 1831 he was in Rome, where he had a very successful visit, meeting among others, the Rector of the Irish College, Doctor Paul Cullen. By mid-December 1832 McHale was back again in Ballina.

In the earlier years there was great distress in the Archdiocese. I have already referred to the famine of 1831, there was famine again in 1835, and a particularly vicious famine in 1842. On the 9th of July of that year Father Patrick McManus of Louisburgh wrote to Doctor McHale:

I have received your Grace's letter with £5 for the people of Inisturk exclusively. No time shall be lost in sending the money. At a meeting held here a week ago something was done for them. About eight hundred weight of oatmeal was sent to the island. The good people of Clare Island were not neglected. A ton of meal was sent them.

The same letter continues:

As the landlord contributed nothing to meet the paltry Government Grant, and as there was no person to represent Clare Island, a few charitable persons entered into a subscription in order to have the poor islanders entitled to a portion of the miserable sum sent by the Government. The most appalling distress prevails in this parish. I assure your Grace that it is impossible to exaggerate . . . the weather too, is chilling. I had a letter . . . enclosing £4 . . . and another with £1/2/6.

There was another letter from Father McManus on the 14th of July:

Wherever we turn, throughout this parish we are surrounded by crowds of literally starving people. Fever is very prevalent. In some instances then persons are to be found stretched on the floor, without anyone to care for them, or a single atom of the necessaries of life. I beg your Grace to give us a portion of the fuels placed at your disposal. Greater want cannot be found elsewhere, here the people have no one to apply to but the clergy.

And finally on the 16th of July:

I offer you my most respectful thanks for the large donation which your letter of this day has brought to my poor people.

Between 1841 and 1889 Archbishop McHale dispersed funds of £78,093/6/8 towards the relief of want.

During the Great Hunger of the late 1840's the tragedy was appalling and in 1852 Doctor Plunkett, Protestant Archbishop of Tuam, confirmed one thousand and ninety four of whom eight hundred and forty were converts, and I use the term "convert" loosely from Catholicism. He consecrated three new churches during that year, and several others were in the course of construction. Pope Pius IX was worried and wrote to McHale: "Many Catholics in your diocese through the wicked and fraudulent missionaries of their spiritual enemies are deceived, led into error and detached from the Catholic faith and worship".

The main proselytiser at this time was the Reverend Alexander Dallas. The Society for Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics was founded in 1849. In 1850 Dallas led congregations at Clifden, Salerna, Errislanan etc. in Connemara. His figures of three thousand seven hundred children plus two thousand adults in the Clifden district receiving instruction in the Protestant religion are probably exaggerated. McHale fought back with Monasteries in Clifden, Roundstone and Achill. He founded a convent in Clifden and sent missionaries Father Rinolphi and Lockhard to redress the apparent imbalance. When I say that Dallas' Clifden figures were probably exaggerated, I am referring to the actual roll of Clifden workhouse inmates. The numbered eight hundred and forty — and only forty were Protestant. It is also shown that out of a population of eleven thousand only four hundred were "jumpers". In the long run the Protestant Missions failed: by 1869 Dallas was dead, the Protestant Church was disestablished and McHale's preachers now helped by his many foundations of priests and nuns, and an extra preacher Father Villas in Achill, were being successful. I will refer you to a recent issue of the *Coinneal* dealing with the preachers in Louisburgh and the Colony. In 1872 the Orphan Home at Achill closed and for the Protestant Missions that was that.

— John Lyons

LOCAL CUSTOMS

The following article is from an essay by Miss Áine M. Ni Scanlain of Bunowen, Louisburgh who is a student at Coláiste Mhuire, Tuar Mhic Éadaigh. This was her prize-winning entry in the Dúchas essay competition. The material she has collected will strike a chord of memory for many readers. — Editor

Many of the old customs and superstitions in Ireland are dying out, although in certain rural areas they still survive. It is most interesting to listen to the older folk telling stories of the 'beliefs' and customs of the people of their generations. My grandmother who resides with us at home has related much of what I am about to write and some of this dates back to her mother's time.

When putting a setting of eggs under a hatching hen, it was customary to light a wisp of hay under the box first. Then some droppings from the fowlhouse was placed in the straw under the hen and lastly, holy water was shaken on the hen and eggs. An old lady (recently deceased R.I.P.) and close friend of my Grannie often related this amusing custom. On the night of her wedding-day when she arrived at her husband's home, her mother-in-law awaited her arrival inside the door, with a greeting alien to her, as she had come from another parish. The old lady stepped forward with a homemade cake in both her hands and without word or warning, broke it in halves over the bride's head! The bride was shocked at this strange behaviour, but the old lady explained that this was the "custom", and the idea was to ensure plentifulness and prosperity in the household for the future. Grandma knew another old man whose people originally came from the North of Ireland. On New Year's Day he had a custom of hitting the door with a baked cake while saying "Gorta go Cúige Uladh". This was also meant to keep plentifulness in the house and send the hunger to Ulster. It was customary also to kill fowl or sheep on certain feastdays. The feast of Saint Michael (or Michaelmas Day, as it was called) was one such feastday. People killed a fowl and had it for dinner in the ordinary way. The same custom applied to Saint Martin's Day, celebrated on 11 November, but this fowl had to be killed before the feastday, as it was said "Michael accepts before or after, but Martin only before". Gifts of fowl were frequently made to less well-off neighbours to enable them to celebrate the feastdays also. The blood was always sprinkled on the door while saying "In onóir do Dhia is do Mháirtín is do Mhicheál". People, even yet, will allow visitors out of a house only through the door by which they came in, in case they take "the luck of the house" with them. It is also considered very unlucky to see the new moon through glass or windows for the first time. A scattered

funeral was a sure sign of another funeral soon to follow. People left butter unsalted until it became blue-moulded. This they used to heal sores or wounds. What they did not realize was that this mould was really penicillin, and that they were using it long before it was discovered by Fleming. It was believed that anybody who broke a mirror would have seven years bad luck. To see a magpie was bad, but to meet a black cat was considered very lucky. May Eve and May Day were special days when people were cautious of accidents happening, as the fairies were supposed to be extremely busy on those days! Anybody born on May Day was supposed to be very bad-tempered and people never liked to provoke or cross such a person. May Day was also known as the most favourable morning for those who practised dairy charms. A story is told of a local man who was on his way from Louisburgh to Westport on a May morning at an early hour, when he saw another man with a ball of yarn in his hand at an old lime-kiln. He stood and watched him for a while. The man dropped the yarn into the kiln and repeated "Tar chugam im, tar chugam im!". The man looking on, considered this very greedy, and added to himself "Tar 'leath domsa, tar 'leath domsa", but saw no result and continued on. When he arrived in Westport he was surprised to find his shoes smeared with ungathered butter. It is still believed that butter can be "taken" from the churn any day of the year. In some rural areas, milk is still churned and in fact it is done in this parish. There is a "Pattern Day" in Louisburgh in July and as this is a tourist area, an open-air demonstration of churning and butter-making is given on the Square, by a few local ladies. This, no doubt, is of interest to the younger generation as well as the tourist. When you enter a house where a churning is in progress, you are expected to take a hand; just a few turns and the custom is observed. It was also customary to place a red coal under a churn before the churning has begun. This was to safeguard the butter from being "taken" or "stolen".

If a man wished to have the best crops for himself and leave his neighbours with poor return, he buried eggs in the clay in his neighbour's garden. An old woman told me of a man who practised such incantations and who afterwards had a field of corn heavy with grain while his neighbour's corn grew without a single grain. In that particular place, the priest denounced such practices from the altar, visited the offending person's house, and burned whatever he found had been used to harm the crop. Farmers going to a fair always considered it lucky to meet a *man* first. To meet a woman, and particularly a red-haired woman, first was regarded as extremely unlucky. Grannie remembers one such family in her district who were very superstitious about this matter and so, before setting out to the fair with his animals, the man of the house would send his son out

the road before him for a short distance. Then the boy would turn back to meet the father first and invoke a blessing on him for the day. This was done to avoid meeting a woman first!

People also believed in fairies a lot and they feared them greatly. In my great-grandmother's time, it was believed that they occasionally stole babies, children and young women, and left a "changeling" in their place. This suspicion was very strong in the case of a sudden wasting disease or mental disturbance in young women. Advice was sought from "wise women" to dislodge the "changeling" and recover the real human. If the patient recovered, this was taken as proof of the great power of the "wise woman". In one particular case, there was a delicate child who never left the corner, (the *hob* as it was called) and advice had to be sought. The advice given was to place a shovel in the fire until it was red and then throw the 'changeling' out on the street on the red shovel. The shovel was reddening in the fire when the "changeling" realizing what was about to happen suddenly left the hob and ran out the door. From that day on there was a normal healthy child in the house. The story was always told in the village of how the charm of the red shovel had worked. To build in the way of the "good people" was to be avoided at all costs. When a man decided to build a house, he erected a little *leacht* of stones on the site. If these were knocked next day, he believed they were in the fairies' way. He repeated his effort every day until finally he built his house on the spot where the stones remained standing. To build to the west of an existing building was never considered lucky either. Nobody would dare cut a lone whitethorn bush in a field as death was sure to follow. This also applied to a lone protruding stone on the land which was supposed to be "watching" to bury the person who would try to bury it.

Blacksmiths were greatly afraid of being out alone late at night in case they would be abducted by the fairies to shoe their horses. My great-grandmother always advised anybody out alone at night, to "siúl ar lorg a' cruá", or keep to the horses' track, so that the fairies or "good people" (as they were called) could have no power over them. A horseshoe over the door was supposed to bring good luck to that house. People who had warts on their hands washed them in the water where the smith had cooled his iron. There was supposed to be a cure in this water. Spilt milk or spoiled food was often attributed to fairy intervention. The old people would say — "Oh let it go, something else wanted it".

Crying or wailing at night was associated with a death or somebody about to die. The "death-clock" was heard in some houses before a person died. This was a ticking just like a clock, when in fact there wasn't a clock in the room. It denoted a death in the house. A pigeon seen on the rooftop of a house was supposed to denote the

death of an occupant of that house. If a hen in the fowlyard was seen with a wisp of hay or straw attached to its leg, it was also regarded as a sign to the person that they were about to hear news of a death. My Grannie recalls an incident which occurred years ago. She dropped in to visit a neighbour to find her in an upset state. She told her that the clock had fallen from the mantelpiece without provocation on the previous day. She replaced it carefully and shortly afterwards she was greatly disturbed when it fell for the second time. This, she regarded as an ill-omen. Oddly enough, the clock was not broken. Her fears were confirmed next day when a telegram arrived with the news of the sudden death of her sister-in-law! The *cóiste bodhar* or "Dead coach" driven by a headless driver — a *colainn gan cheann* — was supposed to be on the road after midnight. Anyone unfortunate enough to meet the *cóiste bodhar* was supposed to die soon afterwards.

If a poet wrote a song or poem about a beautiful woman, it was considered unlucky. I spend my summer holidays not far from Kiltartan in County Galway, where Raftery met Máire Ní Eidhin and composed that lovely old ballad about her. There was much speculation a short time afterwards when she died tragically (R.I.P.). It was always considered a bad thing to be "much admired" lest a "bad eye" should be cast on that person. As soon as a complimentary remark was made about a person, someone always said "God bless him (or her), in case we make a bad eye of them". When going out people had to beware of the "Féar Gortach" or the "Fóidín Mearbhaill". The Féar Gortach or "Hungry Grass" was not recognizable, but its effects were felt. If you walked on it you immediately became extremely hungry and overpowered by weakness. To safeguard against this, one had to carry a slice of oatmeal cake in the pocket. As soon as this was eaten, one recovered. The "Fóidín Mearbhaill" or the "Wee Sod of Confusion" was another thing to fear, as it could be met with anywhere. A person lost all sense of direction and could wander around in circles for days. The remedy for this was to take off some garment and turn it inside out. This would put one back on the right road again.

People have their own strange ways of foreseeing into the future. On November's night when Grannie was a young girl, she and other young girls in the neighbourhood tried to find out to whom they would be married. This was the procedure: they each cooked a red herring, ate it in three bites and then without speaking to each other backed silently into bed. They were then supposed to dream of the man they were to marry! These practices they called *classes*, obviously derived from the Irish word *cleas*. Grannie knew three men who tried out those *classes*. Two of them revealed the names of the girls they dreamt of, but the third man did not. A short time afterwards, he was admitted to a mental hospital. It was generally believed then that he

had dreamed of such a fate.

There were many cures and home remedies in use. For instance, if a family were down together with whooping cough, the man of the house would wait until a man on a white horse came by. He would ask for a cure in this manner:- "Fear a' chapail bháin, céard a leigheasach an triuch?" Whatever this man recommended was done. There was no particular formula. Sometimes he would suggest goat's milk or sheep's droppings boiled in milk, but whatever the man on the white horse suggested, it was given to the sick. Boiled nettles were a cure for rheumatism. Dock leaves were applied to an area of the skin stung by nettles; Reckitt's blue applied to a bee-sting. Snow was applied to chilblains.

I attach below a prayer in Irish which is used in the Louisburgh area for a cure for "erysipelas", otherwise known as "the Rose". Quotation is from our bi-annual Magazine "An Choinneal".

A CURE FOR THE ROSE

Rua, rua, rabhar,
Crua, cruu, creabhach,
D'eisrigh Colmcille de Dhia,
Goide leigheasofaidh rua,
An nimh a leagaint
'Gus an tinneas a chur ar gcúl,
'Gus gan aon bhrí bheith sa rua,
Cor ar bith; a bheith slán.
Ma's rua gaoithe, na rua sidhe,
Na rua pleasctha, na rua seithe,
No ce'r bith sort rua e.
An nimh a leagaint
'Gus an tinneas a chur ar gcúl.

(Collected from Mrs. Mary Anne McNally on 21 July 1952, as a local cure for erysipelas)

GO MAIRE SIAD!

An Choinneal extends felicitations and good wishes to:

Joe and Sarah Gill of Askelane

Tom and Annie Fergus of Feenone and

James and Ellen O'Grady of Feenone

— all of whom celebrated their golden jubilee of marriage recently; and also to:

James Hastings of Clinton, Mass., formerly of Devlin who will be one hundred and two years in January 1983. (James is uncle of Rosie and Austie Hastings, Johnny Hastings, Mrs. Frazer (Kinnadoohey) and Hugh Keane (Devlin).

LETTER FROM HOME

Dear Austie,

It was given out there a while back that there was no *Coinneal* to be his year. For want of funds. Then it was given out after that there was to be a *Coinneal* the same as ever; that people sent in money not wanting it to die. I had it in mind first that I'd write all the newses of the parish to you for Christmas, but now all I have to do is to stick this letter in the magazine and you'll have all the news and I'll be spared the writing. I'm not sorry, because I'm using Dadda's glasses; and whether it's him or me has the worse eye-sight those ones don't give me any comfort reading or writing.

Well it was the wettest harvest we had for years. We had things gathered in time, thank God, turf and hay and oats and the small stack of barley. But the rains came down in October and November; and, as the man from the West said the wet year, "there was water where there never was water"! Often they emptied the barrel at the gable-end to clean it, or just to see, and it was full to the brim the morning after.

We had another election again this November. This time it's likely Garret Fitzgerald will be Taoiseach. It's like the clock you brought us the time you came home sick — one time the man in his shirt-sleeves is out, and the next thing the woman with the umbrella. This is the third change we have in eighteen months and how badly we need to have one solid government to put us back paying our way. I believe we have big debts in a lot of places; and just like going to the shop here, unless you have somewhere to earn a shilling how can you pay the debt. I'm not hinting about money for myself now, at all. I have plenty, thank God. But you should hear Dadda preaching about the national debt. Well, thank God, at long last we have a factory going in Louisburgh. In Cahir, I should say; down a bit from the turn to Roonah. "Nomadic Structures" is the name of the company we're hoping it will improve, the way girls and boys in the parish could get a chance. A lot of them are travelling as it is to Westport and Castlebar working, and it's very good to have that same. But it's lovely to see employment at home like this. Apart from WILLIE MIKE O'MALLEY and his timber works, I don't think we ever had anything like this since the slate-quarry fifty years ago. There was the knitting industry in the Convent, too, of course.

Well I'm after looking through the magazine in a hurry now and there's hardly a blessed bit of news that they have left for me to tell. I don't see anything in it about the new bogs in Shraghnacloya. How the Land Commission got — or bought, I suppose — this big tract of bog and will distribute it among householders that haven't any.

'Twas true for your Uncle Austin when he met the man bringing four cylinders of gas from the town, a man that was selling turf in the town ten years before, says he: "If the Ayatollah gets his way, he'll have us all back on the bog in no time, and more power to him". If we were right we'd never have left it. But did you hear the latest? — Sausage turf! The new machine sucks up the wet turf and squeezes it out through the tube the size of a drinking glass across. I saw the turf and sure enough it's good and dry; they say it dries very easy it's so thin and it won't take the rain. But strange, as the man said when he saw the first electric kettle "I know it's wonderful, but I'd have more nature for the old-fashioned way". I'd get it hard to make a right fire of the "sausages" but they could be very good. We didn't put in for any new bog. The bogs beyond the *fiodán* are good yet, thank God: there's four spit of turf in them always, although there's a share of bog-deal now coming against the sleán I hear them say. But they'll do us anyway. Like the old man in Connemara said to the priest when he came on his monthly rounds. The man had a new candle after Candlemas Day and he showed it to the priest: "Do you think, Father", says he, "will I see this candle out, or will this candle see me out?" Well the old bogs will see us out, whatever!

As I'm writing this now of a Thursday night the television is on with "The Year of the French" being shown in serial form. They captured Castlebar last week; but sure I hear it wasn't Castlebar at all but some place down in North Mayo, Killala or someplace. We have our eyes on *cipins* every night watching for Little Michael. Himself and a group of his comrades were in the acting during the summer; one time they were Irish and the next time they were French or English. Eileen wasn't too happy to see Little Michael joining the F.C.A. at all; but then Michael was saying that if he didn't he could be led astray by those who are pretending to be fighting for Irish freedom; and you have seen and heard the kind of principles those have without any regard for human life and suffering. May God forgive them! Austie, don't let any talk about fighting for Ireland fool you to helping or organizing any funds to send over here. And let all your friends know, too: every dollar collected for them means another bullet; it might mean another life. I wonder what SERGEANT MICHAEL O'MALLEY (you know, Michael from Tully) would say about that. I see where he got an award for bravery for the day he was with poor JOHN MORLEY and HENRY BYRNE when they were shot dead after a bank-raid.

Did you hear the I.C.A. is to begin again. There's a MRS. O'MALLEY who has returned with her husband TED to the parish and she was in high office — vice-president, I think — in the I.C.A. in Dublin; so she has already begun to organize the women. And sure we have fourteen women in the Dáil this time. I'll have to cajole

Dadda some way, he'll be saying I'm too old to be going out to meetings. We'll miss poor THOMAS O'DONNELL this year: he was great for organizing the Old Folks party.

We have great ease with the water-supply in the house, God bless FATHER DAN CONNEELY and the community council. What harm but there was a sign of the bog coming through at first in the taps, but now that's all rectified. In the town now they're hoping to get water from the Glencullen supply too! Father Dan gave us a great sermon lately in Killeen: it was the occasion of the Pro-life ceremony. He just spoke about each of the commandments, their meaning and how we back them; and because it was simple and straightforward it was just what we needed.

Now, Austie, I'd love you to come for Christmas but I understand. This letter and magazine will bring you a bit of the Christmas from home. And if you have something to spare when you've paid the Christmas bills, you needn't send me anything. But it would be nice to become a special contributor to the *Coinneal* so that all us Louisburgh people that's at home or away will see to it that the *Coinneal* will not die. I don't ever want to see this candle out, and I don't care much which *Coinneal* sees me out!

God bless and save you, Austie.

Your loving

Mother

Remembering Sion . . .

It was about the year 1895 and I have reason now to remember some of the prevailing prices in the shops. My grandfather had died in another village and we had to prepare for the funeral. Eggs were so cheap at the time that we sold them from our little farm for one old halfpenny each, or three old pence for five! But their real value in goods was considerable. It was autumn, and in the afternoon after school I was sent to the shop with five eggs and a list of small goods for which the five eggs would pay. The list was: a hair-comb (one old penny), two "rounds" of Reckitt's Blue (one halfpenny), a box of starch (one halfpenny) and one half-pound bar of Sunlight soap (one penny), . . . I had the eggs ready in a hanky, but having sighted something interesting on top of our kitchen dresser I climbed up on the cailleach bed and, gripping the bed-post with my egg-laden hand, I accidentally cracked them against the bed-post. I remember my mother's typical reaction: She made smithereens of the entire lot on the earthen floor, even though she had needed the shop goods urgently and had no money to buy them! My father was working in the currach. She sent me over to him and he took a shilling out of his waistcoat pocket and gave it to me saying to bring back the change. But I wonder how many eggs would it take to buy such a shop-list now after eighty-one or eighty-two years of 'progress'?

— Collected from Mrs. B. A. Morahan in 1976

KEEP YOUR WORD?

Questions are on page 56.

1. *Alp* is a mouthful. It refers especially to a mouthful which has been taken from something and shows a gap remaining. You could take an *alp*, if you were lucky, out of a currant-cake or a plum-pudding! One could also describe something as having an *alp* gone out of it — such as an apple, a stocking or even a mountain!
2. *Balbhán* is a dumb person. In our inverted kind of charity we seldom use this of a person who is literally or permanently dumb; we keep it for those who are occasionally silent — especially if the silence is blameworthy. "Why didn't you speak up instead of sitting there *of a balbhán?*" Note the idiom: *of a balbhán*.
3. *Bróg* is, of course, a boot. Not a small boot; certainly not a bootee. Much more the kind of footwear that would be worn by a *spág*. Our emigrants will be well aware of the English use of the word (spelled 'brogue') applied to a typically Irish accent. Both varieties of *bróg* can be polished.
4. *Cloigeann* is a head. As with many Irish words in our parish dialect, it is the less complimentary uses of the word that have survived. A *cloigeann árd* is a 'high-head' — one who dreams and floats, with no attention to practical reality. Similarly there are terms: 'cloigeann turnap', 'cloigeannín éinín', 'cloigeann cuasach' (= empty head). And villages are called 'Claggan', Carrowclaggan, etc because of the protruding or head-shaped profile of the land.
5. *Diabhalaíocht* is devilment. More accurately, it means *divilment* — a kind of undisciplined and unruly activity which, curiously, balances between the destructive and the harmless.
6. *Driopás* is hurry — that kind of hurry which causes pressure or anxiety. *Driopás* could be associated with preparing for a cow to calf, or preparing for the arrival of the 'Yanks'. The state of *driopás* is seldom admitted in first person: it frequently arises in a question: "What *driopás* is on you now?"
7. *Feirbín* is a sod. To be precise, it is that green sod of earth which is turned by spade on lea-land to form the brow of the future potato-ridge. So one of the first proofs of oncoming spring is a man "turning *feirbíns*".
8. *Feirc* is the hilt of a knife, spade, etc. A descriptive word in recounting a scene of violence; a fiercely belligerent and intimidating word if used threateningly in verbal combat. Enough!

9. *Giobal* is a rag; but it says and paints an image which is much more expressive. *Giobal* almost always refers to a person's clothes, and almost invariably it describes clothes being worn at the time. *Giobals* usually *hang* off the person and are often torn. "What kind of a *giobal* was that the bride was wearing?" might be the local adverse critique of the tulle or chiffon of a bridal gown!
10. *Gleacaí* is a trickster. The word has little of a condemning sense. It is more often used (as are its parallel words, *gadaí* and *rógaire*) in a playful way to show that one has unearthed an ingenious trick or practical joke conceived by a younger person. When the ruse is exposed one says to the trickster: "Ha, a *ghleacaí!*" (The initial changes to *gh* in the vocative case).
11. *Mallmhuir* is a low tide or, as the geography books used to say, a *neap*-tide i.e. the lowest full-tide. It was well known by "wracking" men as the least likely time for getting seaweed. Perhaps because of this, and because of its similar pronunciation, this word got confused in people's minds with the word *bail-odhar* which (as we explained in *An Choinneal* a mere seventeen years ago!) means 'a bad state'.
12. *Póirín* is a small potato. The word is musically onomatopoeic: it conjures up the sound made by little tubers thrown by little fingers into the bottom of a zinc bucket after other hands had picked the bigger crop on an October evening. Students of the origins of words might agree that *póirín* comes from the word *pór* (= seed), since traditionally the smaller potatoes were saved for seed.
13. *Roilleog* is a mountain-plant, somewhat like heather, about one foot high. Perhaps the same as the 'darnel' mentioned in the gospel (Mth. 13:24 seqq.).
14. *Sopaioileach* is rotted straw. It is what farmers might call 'long-manure', as distinct from the short variety which is so suitable for top-dressing in meadows. The word is a compound of two words: *sop* means 'wisp' (of straw, hay etc.) and *aoileach* is an Irish word for manure.
15. *Tóin trom* is a lazy-bones. Just like the English word, it is usually used as a nickname to the offender; and often, too, it is just used alone as if it needs no further qualification. The word does not really refer to bones. *Tóin* is the word for the *bottom* of any object, and so is the term for the human posterior. It has a respectability not usually associated with common English translations. *Trom* is a word for 'heavy'. So the image of a lazybones is built up more substantially!

"Those Were The Days, My Friend!"

Throughout 1980 I had been threatening a visit to Louisburgh, a family trip had to be ruled out due to accommodation not being available, but that did not stop me. I had occasion to attend a conference in Galway during October so I decided to kill two birds with one stone and slipped down to Louisburgh overnight.

It's strange how my car seems to love the Westport-Louisburgh road, it just sails along with a happy hum more evident as it passes Lecanvey and increasing to capacity as it zooms past Old Head Cross and rounds the beautiful Convent School corner. It seems to announce "I am coming home at last" but as it journeys through Main Street up along towards the Square there seems to be no trace of any living being. The place seems derelict; a dog crosses in one's path and has to be treated with the greatest respect (a screeching of brakes is out) and then a few figures emerge from one shop to another, one spots an 'old acquaintance', then another familiar face looms up, and *hey presto!* I'm in dear old Louisburgh.

City life can get a person down from time to time, life is really a rat-race as each day passes; dual carriage-ways, pass-overs, giant chain supermarkets competing with, or more often than not, against one another; huge dockyards, traffic-jams, hustle and bustle become part and parcel of one's existence. Posh hearses rush through the city streets followed by a cavalcade of Mercedes without even a glance from passers-by. Many a time I get a stare as I make the sign of the cross by force of habit (ex-Louisburgh of course) . . . and life just goes on.

At each visit to the 'Burgh, I try to visit my relations and all the kind neighbours of a yesteryear: Micheal and Mary Patrick (O'Malley), Micheal J. (of course), the Keanes, the Durkins, the Philbins, the O'Donnells (ex-Bridge), Frank Kenny, whom I feel should be made Lord Mayor of Louisburgh, and any more that visiting time permits, and a trip to Louisburgh is never complete for me without a visit to Kilgeever which gets more important as years roll by, and is so often a heart-breaking part of each visit.

But what effects me more than all is not seeing familiar faces, sheer disappointment at not meeting old school pals, and hearing the now too familiar reply: "They were here during the summer . . ." or "They weren't around for a good few years now", or "We never see him very much at all . . ."; Old school-pals such as: Tony Hannon, Seán Dunne, Séamus Deely, P. J. McNamara, Larry Mulvey, Tony (Phil) O'Malley, Austie Moran (Crickeen); Seán Flanagan, Big Jim Grady, Andy Durkin, and dare I say it . . . all that famous gang!

Still one can while away a visit to the 'Burgh by chatting to

oneself on a stroll down the Carramore or up the Collacoan road, stop on the way back and rest a lonely head gazing over the bridge trying to spot a trout or big eel. Dusk is now setting-in and one can safely slip into Keane's and be sure of finding a few more old timers: Paul Joyce, Johnnie Durkin (both good for a song, that is if you can get them to sing while they are drinking; a hard thing to do at the best of times) Paddy Phil, Tony Sammin, John Dixie and many others make each visit worthwhile and are sure to be "up town" before closing hour.

The thought often struck me (as the saying goes) that it would be great if there was a major campaign carried out to entice all immigrants from Louisburgh back for one week, for one Gala get together. Perhaps it is asking too much but many minds may think alike and I hope that someone around Louisburgh will give it a bit of thought before it gets too late. Now, Frank Kenny, there's a hint to you to start the ball rolling by inviting all that were at school in our time!

Cork

Pádraig Burke



*Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Gibbons, Furnoyle, Louisburgh, being presented with the Old Time Waltz Cup by Mr. Donald O'Leary N.T., Chairman Louisburgh Hall Committee.
Mr. and Mrs. Gibbons waltzed their way to fame at the 1981 Waltz final, held recently in Louisburgh Town Hall.
The elegant trophy — the Louisburgh Old-Time Waltz Perpetual Cup — was donated by the O'Malley Brothers Builders, Galway, who are natives of Louisburgh.*

Memory at Glenkeen

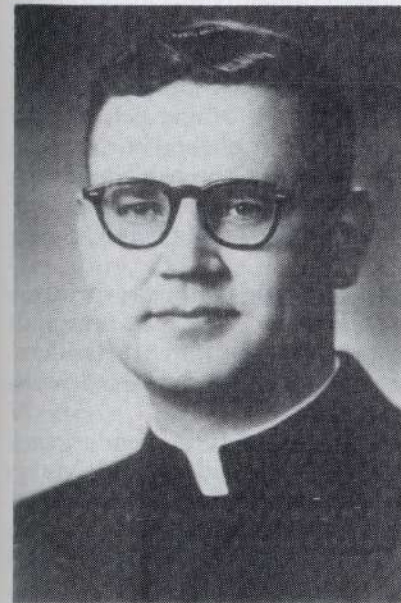
Many people will not be aware of an old burial ground situated in the lands of Willie and Thomas O'Grady at Glenkeen. there are about forty graves, as well as four old forts, many with their headstones still erect. A Kilcoyne man from Cregganbawn was the last to be buried there, about forty years ago.

Strangely enough, the name of this burial ground was/is Killeen (Cillin). the Carrowniskey river rises from a small well close by, and the remains of the old road from Glenkeen to Delphi are still visible.

Perhaps older readers will remember funerals to this ancient "Cillin" or have relatives buried there. The old owner of the lands in which are all the remains of the days gone by was Mr. Hugh O'Grady.

The O'Gradys of Glenkeen came originally from Drummin, and Hugh O'Grady's wife was Margaret McNamara from Crickeen. Hugh died in the early 1950's; he had been waterkeeper in the area for fifty years. His wife died in the early 1970's. God rest them!

Contributed by Willie O'Grady, Glenkeen



Father James O'Grady.



Willie O'Grady, Glenkeen.

CLASH OF THE DISTAFF!

From as far back as I can remember, it was an ambition of mine to play football and had I been born twenty years later, perhaps I could have done so — officially! As it was, I had to make do with playing football with the lads in the field — unofficially — even though, in those days, it was not *lady-like* to do so!

The first introduction I had to camogie (I did not know its name at the time) was what we called “Goals on the Road”. A visitor to the village, who saw us playing asked “Is that camogie ye are playing?” and was thereafter nicknamed “Camogie”. We were being enlightened, but we did not know it. We started playing at a young age. Our “Goals on the Road” was, naturally, played on the public road. We had no traffic problems in those days: two stones or two sods of turf were used as goal-posts. Our camogie sticks varied from worn-down white-wash brushes (which we prized) or pieces of sticks, to the more sophisticated model, made for anyone whose father or brother was handy enough or willing enough to put a “shape” on a piece of wood. She was indeed envied. The game seemed to go on for hours. The casualties were usually minor; usually skinned knees from falling on the road.

As we grew older we were anxious to join or organize some competitive sport. In 1949, McHale Park (Emlagh) was acquired as the local community playing field. We now transferred our ‘road’ activities to that pitch. We practised camogie practically every evening in McHale Park. We vied for the pitch with the footballers. Gradually some of them joined in our practice, which helped our game tremendously, for some were already accomplished hurlers like Jerry Flynn and Paddy Leamy. The “clash of the ash” and the excited shouting could be heard all over the area, and anyone who was wondering what to do or how to spend the evening came to join in the fun.

In the Spring of 1952, the Accony Camogie Club was formed. Mr. Paddy Gibbons (R.I.P.), Principal Teacher of Accony national School was president. Agnes Prendergast was treasurer (the coffers were usually bare), and I myself was secretary. We registered with the Mayo County Board and then we were official!

Our team consisted of: Alice Prendergast, Agnes Prendergast, Evelyn Prendergast, Nancy Prendergast, Nora, Eileen and Mary Gibbons (Accony), Annie Gibbons (Emlagh), Nora and Grace O’Malley (Doughmakeon), Nora and Nan Lyons (The Colony), Mary Gibbons (Carrowniskey), Teresa Needham (Feenone) and Kathleen Sweeney (Louisburgh). My apologies to anyone whose name I have omitted. I should like to add here, that a few years



ACCONY CAMOGIE TEAM 1952

Top picture standing L. to R.: Nora Lyons (Colony), Nancy Prendergast (Accony), Eileen Gibbons (Accony), Mary Gibbons (Carrowniskey), Mary Gibbons (Accony), Nan Lyons (Colony). Kneeling Front L. to R.: Kathleen Sweeney (Louisburgh), Nora Gibbons (Accony), Nora O’Malley (Doughmakeown), Teresa Needham (Feenone). Missing from this picture are: Agnes Prendergast (Accony), Alice Prendergast (Accony), Evelyn Prendergast (Accony).

previously, some Accony girls — Nora and Evelyn Prendergast (sisters), Brigid and Mary Prendergast (sisters) and Brid and Norah Prendergast (sisters) had played camogie with Lecanvey. All except Evelyn Prendergast had emigrated by the time we formed our club. We were in the Western Division of the Championships with Saint Mary’s Westport, Murrisk, Kilmeena, Newport, Islandeady, Aughagower and Drummin.

Our first game was a challenge match with Murrisk. It was played in McHale Park, Emlagh. We won by a wide margin. Michael Geraghty, Doughamkeon, refereed the match. He was a staunch supporter of the games. Afterwards, Con Ryan (R.I.P.), Louisburgh, became our referee. He was a former Tipperary hurler.

We did quite well in our first year in the championship. We won every home and away game against each team with the exception of Westport. They won the Hughes cup in the Western Division in 1952 and Accony were runners-up. We got a set of medals. Westport went on to win the County Championship by beating Ballaghaderreen. In 1953, we were promoted to Junior A. In that year we beat all teams again except Saint Mary’s Westport. On July 25th, 1953, Westport beat Accony three goals to two in the return match which left them to qualify for the West Mayo final.

We always got good coverage of our matches in *The Mayo News*. According to the reporter, we had a very good team with some

excellent players. We ran dances in Louisburgh to raise funds. Music was by the Creggan Bán band. Redmond (Dixie) Lyons, Tommie Joe O'Malley (R.I.P.) and Con Ryan (R.I.P.) supplied our transport to the games.

Agnes Prendergast and I were picked on the Mayo Camogie team. Mayo beat Galway in the Connacht Championship, on August Monday 1953, for the first time in twenty years. Agnes was a regular on the Mayo team until well into the 1960's. I played regularly until 1957, when I emigrated to Chicago. Unfortunately, because of emigration our team faded away after two years. We could not get enough girls interested in playing. We were sad to see it finish. Agnes and I joined the Westport team and played with them for the remainder of the time.

The Accony team had represented the parish in camogie for those few years. Our games were very well supported and we would like to think that we gave a little pleasure to our followers. Our reign was short but we enjoyed it while it lasted.

Dublin

Mary (Gibbons) Prendergast

It was an accident that brought me to the Chapel of the Poor Clares in Lilongwe. It was evening, and I had called to see a friend in a neighbouring convent. "You will find her in the House of Prayer" I was told.

The sisters were at Vespers, and I decided to pray with them. It was a new experience for me: for the first time I shared in a ritual of music, song and dance — a ritual of intense prayer. So profound was the experience that it stayed with me on the two-hundred mile journey back to Zomba, and sleep was long in coming. So I tried to recapture the experience in words —

God gave us hands to raise in prayer and praise
God gave us tongues to sing and lips to kiss
God gave us feet to dance. All these He gave
And saw that they were good.
And yet in all these years my gifts lay fallow
My hands have hardly raised themselves in praise
My feet have failed to dance
I have not kissed the beauty of the world
I sang no songs — until today at prayer
I found your hands upraised in loving praise
And as you danced to sacred tunes
You caught me up. My hands
Entwined in yours beyond the grill
Gave thanks. My lips dare taste
The searing of His beauty
My tongue which never sang until today
Bore witness to a love but dimly felt
And magnified the glory of His name.

— Pádraic Ó Máille

BOOK REVIEW

Mayo: Aspects of its heritage. Edited by Bernard O'Hara. Published by The Archaeological, Historical and Folklore Society, Regional Technical College, Galway. 313 pages. Price IR£8.70.

Mayo and its people have been exceptionally well served by way of reading matter on the county and its various aspects, with no less than three books coming onto the shelves within the last year. One of these is a re-publication of the classic work, *Knox's History of Mayo*; a second is a volume entitled *The Heritage of Mayo*, by Aine Ní Cheannáin of Kiltimagh. The book sent to this magazine for review is a beautifully produced, hard-back volume which as the sub-title indicates, deals with aspects of Mayo's past and present. Truly the contributions of the fourteen people who have come together to make this image of the county have left few aspects of the history and life of Mayo uncharted. Most of the writers are experts in the fields which they describe, so there are professional essays on the archaeology, geology, wildlife and placenames of the county included in this work. There are some four exceptionally well researched essays on the history of the county: an outline of its history, and articles on Ulster migration to Mayo, the "Year of the French", and the famous 1857 Mayo election. Other worthwhile contributions include geographical description, population statistics, election results (from 1801 to February 1982) Mayo's industries, a miscellany of Mayo items of interest, and short but most interesting biographies of some twenty-seven famous Mayo people. All of these latter contributions came from the pen of a very industrious editor, Bernard O'Hara of Killasser, Swinford whose idea it first was to publish this book. Further articles include those on Mayo surnames, one on the often forgotten Gaeltacht areas of the county, a poem on John McHale by the most noted Gaelic poet of today, Máirtín Ó'Direáin, and an account of the story of Knock by the virtual P.R.O. of the shrine, Thomas Neary. There are specific items of particular and parochial interest to readers from Kilgeever parish. Apart from the mention of archaeological remains at Aillemore and Furmoyle, and a creditable attempt to explain the names of Louisburgh and Kilgeever (no guess-work here!) there is an intriguing account of the 1857 election by Father Jarlath Waldron, brother of Father Kieran of Sancta Maria, Louisburgh. An essay on "The Reek" has been written by the editor of *An Choinneal*. Modesty permits only the comment that, being written from a Louisburgh angle, this should be of extra interest to readers from our home area. A valid criticism by one local reader is that it could have dealt more fully with the pagan history of "The Reek" and its festival of Lúnasa.

If one is permitted to express a preference in such a book, this reviewer found most satisfaction in a delightfully revealing contribution by Brian O'Rourke on the Gaelic folksongs of the county. It has often been said that Mayo lacks any real tradition in this field, but Doctor O'Rourke brings his scholarship to bear to unearth a tremendous richness of song and verse which will have been known hitherto only to a very limited public. In this article, too, a Louisburgh reader will find further enjoyment in finding enlightened reference to the poems of Seán Mac Conamara of the "Far West".

All in all this is a book for any Mayo man or woman to be proud of. Few counties in Ireland can boast such a production. Its merit for any Mayo person who wishes to know of the heritage of the county is easily recognizable, but the joy which this volume could give to emigrants from the county would be difficult to exaggerate.

What a beautiful Christmas or New Year present to a friend in exile!

L. Ó M.

Congratulations also to . . .

. . . Louisburgh F.C.A. members, who under their officer Captain Tom Duffy took part in the filming of *The Year of the French* which is currently being screened on Irish and French television. The group included: *Eugene Duffy, Noel O'Malley, Paul Farren, Basil Morahan, Conor and Barry Gaffney, Seán Duffy, Walter Cox, Anthony Morrison, Tommy Duffy, Michael McCormack, Pat Prendergast, Séamus O'Toole, Anthony Broderick, John Broderick, Tommie Joe Jennings, Joe Staunton, Paul Heneghan, Frank Naughton, and Patrick O'Malley;*

to . . . *Father P. J. Sammin*, who has recently been appointed by the Bishop of Brentwood as Vocations Director for the diocese. He is also diocesan Youth Director.

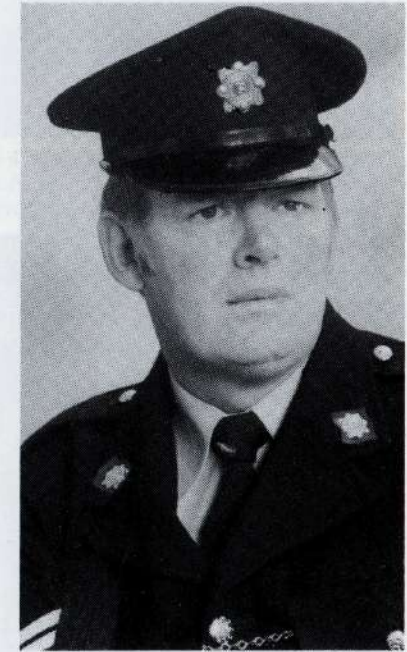
and to . . . *Aine M. Ní Scanlain* (Bunowen), whose essay (see p. 65) won for her the Sean Treacy Memorial Trophy in a Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann competition in 1981.

COMHGHAIRDEACHAS!

Even though we do not equate academic success with education, Coinneal readers at home and abroad will rejoice with us at the achievements of so many of our young men and women in their academic studies. We sincerely wish them well in their various professions and congratulate, their parents and all who have assisted them in their attainments:

Eamonn Keane, B.Ed.
 Mairead Staunton, B.Ed.
 Mary Staunton, B.Ed.
 Anne Kitterick, B.A., B.Ed.
 Breda Morahan, B.Ed.
 Rosario O'Toole, B.Ed.
 Marina Durkan, B.A., H.Dip.
 Mary Tiernan, B.A., H.Dip.
 Pauline Fadden, B.A., H.Dip.
 Nicola Fadden, B.Sc.
 Carmel Kelly, B.Comm., H.Dip.
 Mary Corrigan, S.R.N.
 Kathleen Corrigan, S.R.N.
 Anne Cox, S.R.N.
 Carmel O'Toole, S.R.N.
 Norita Mitchell, B.A., H.Dip.
 Myles Mitchell, B.A., H.Dip.
 Joseph McHugh, Scholarship to
 Rhode Island
 Patrick McHugh, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O.
 Martin O'Toole
 Tony Prendergast, Gardai
 Jimmy Corrigan, Gardai
 Gerard Gibbons, Engineering
 Anne Moran, B.A., H.Dip.
 Padraic Staunton, M.P.S.I.
 Tom Staunton, Garage Management
 John Ball, B.Ed.
 Patricia Ball, Bank
 Martina O'Malley, B.Comm.
 Leo Morahan, B.A.
 John F. O'Malley, Electrician
 Jimmy Moran, B.Comm.
 Kieran O'Malley, Electronics Degree

Martin Duffy
 Margaret McNamara, B.Ed.
 Vincent Kelly
 Mary O'Malley, B.Comm., H.Dip.
 Tom Durkan, Bank
 Marie Moran, B.A.



Sergeant Michael O'Malley (of Tully) now stationed in Galway was awarded the Scott (silver) medal for bravery displayed on the occasion when his colleagues Detective-Garda John Morley and Garda Henry Byrne were shot dead following a bank raid at Ballaghaderreen.

Comhgháirdeachas



Patrick McHugh, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O.



Doctor Margaret McConnell after being conferred with her M.B., B.C.H., B.A.O., degrees at University College, Galway in June 1981. She is daughter of John and Margaret McConnell, Shraugh, Louisburgh. She received her secondary education at "Sancta Maria" Secondary School, Louisburgh and studied medicine at University College, Galway.



Joseph McHugh, Louisburgh who graduated from Chest Course at Regional technical College, Galway and won a CERT Scholarship for further training at Johnson and Wales College, Rhode Island, U.S.A.



Ann Kitterick, Shranclloy, Louisburgh, B.A., N.T.

GOLDEN DAYS!



Pictured at the celebration of their 50th Anniversary Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Fergus, Feenone, with members of their family from left: Tommie, San Francisco; Patrick, San Francisco, Marty, Feenone; Austin, San Francisco and Willie, Chicago. Seated: Nancy, Clare and Greta, Chicago.



James and Ellen O'Grady, Curra, Killeen, celebrated their Golden Jubilee on 31st July, 1982, they were married on the 23rd June, 1932. Seventeen of their nineteen children were present in Derrylahan, Durkan's, Louisburgh for the celebration.

PARISH
WEDDINGS



Paula Lyons, Chapel Street, Louisburgh and Thomas Troy of Youghal, County Cork at Louisburgh.



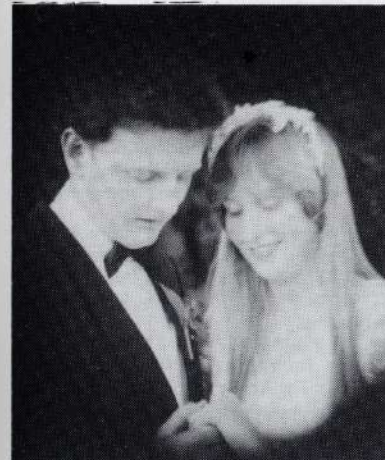
Tommie Lyons, Furrmoyle, Louisburgh and Maria Golden, Westport at Westport.



James Lyons, Dublin and Furrmoyle and Mary Rose O'Grady of Westport at Louisburgh.



Garda Tommie Lyons, Roonagh, Louisburgh and Josephine Lavelle, London at Killeen Church.



Mary Majella Gibbons, N.T. Carrowniskey, Louisburgh and Pádraic Murray, Raheny, Dublin at Killeen Church.



Anne Moran, B.A. H.D.E., Killsallagh and Pat McGrath, Artane, Dublin at Lecanvey Church.



Séamus Duffy, Roonagh, Louisburgh and Kathrine O'Malley, Lanmore, Westport at Westport.



Pádraic Staunton of Louisburgh and Brenda Clifford of Sligo at Sligo.

Tidy Towns Competition

The local effort in the Tidy towns competition has been rewarded by increased ratings over the years. The fact that there has been a drop in performance this year should cause concern.

Centre: **Louisburgh** County: **Mayo** Marks Awarded: **106**

ADJUDICATION	Population Section B.	Marks	
		Max.	Awarded
<p>Effort — community involvement in improving the general appearance</p> <p>Although the streets in Louisburgh were tidy and the Church was well presented, community effort seemed lacking in the presentation of Schools and amenity areas. A number of unsightly areas were also noted in the village and on approach roads.</p>		35	24
<p>Tidiness — appropriate placing of litter bins — absence of litter, derelict sites, buildings and indiscriminate dumping</p> <p>Litter bins were plentiful in the village and streets were almost litter free. A small amount, however, was noted outside the School beside the Grotto and there was no place in their area through the planning process. Many houses on the main street were nicely painted but could be enhanced by window-boxes and potted plants. bin there. A number of untidy areas marred the appearance of the village. Sand and gravel dumped on the roadway near the Rent-a-Cottage Scheme looked untidy, as did derelict buildings and old cars dumped there. Concrete piping and churns on the side of the Killadoon approach looked untidy, as did the farmyards on both sides of this road. The Builder's yard on the road leading into the main street looked unsightly and the derelict cottages on this road and the sheds beside the old School, also looked untidy. A large amount of rubbish was dumped outside the gates of the new School. Views of the sides of houses and rusty sheds at the Killadoon entry to the village looked unsightly. These sheds should be painted and efforts made to screen them by tree planting.</p>		20	14
<p>Presentation of buildings — shops, business premises, factories, historic and public buildings, etc.</p> <p>The Church looked very well in its nicely maintained grounds, as did the Priory beside it. Presentation of the village's three Schools, however, was not up to the same standard. The old School outside the village was shabby and in need of painting. Its grounds were unkempt and its tarmac areas and boundary walls needed weeding.</p>		20	14

The new School needs to have its roof cleaned, its grounds tended and its gates repaired and repainted. Similarly, the School opposite the Church needs to have its grounds weeded and its boundary walls and gates repainted. Durkan's Hotel looked fresh and bright, but the Clew Bay Hotel appeared to have suffered fire damage and looked untidy. This was, however, a nicely presented building in the past and hopefully will be again. McNamara's looked quite well and Harney's Garage and the Cinema were acceptable. Lyons premises and the Bakery also looked well.

Presentation of natural amenities — open spaces, village green, river banks, foreshore, parks, trees, flowerbeds, etc.

The Children's Playground on the Killadoon approach road looked rather neglected. this should be properly bordered, landscaped and the equipment painted. The river looked quite attractive, but could be even nicer if the small grass patches on its side were mown and made accessible to the public. Presentation of the Grotto was disappointing. Its railings were rusty and badly in need of painting and its grassed area was overgrown.

25

14

Appearance of approach roads and verges, streets, back lanes and footpaths

Verges on approach roads were untrimmed, but this seemed acceptable in the wild seaside setting. Verges should, however, be trimmed from the name plates inwards. Footpaths and street gulleys within the village were weed free but those on approach roads were sometimes in need of weeding. Many roadside stone walls were broken and in need of repair.

20

15

Presentation and appearance of residential areas, including their open spaces

The Rent-a-Cottage Scheme looked fresh and crisp, its houses beautifully presented and its green well maintained. The evergreen trees planted in the grounds had been burnt by sea breezes. These should be replaced by a more salt tolerant species. Sycamore House looked attractive in its tree filled ground. Modern bungalows stretched out along the coast roads, though individually unobjectionable, are destroying the character of the landscape and scattering the village. If new developments must take place, they should be of a design sympathetic to the landscape, such as the Rent-a-Cottage Scheme. The community should be aware that they can influence the type of development which takes place in their area through the planning process. Many houses on the main street were nicely painted but could be enhanced by window-boxes and potted plants.

15

13

ADJUDICATION

Population Section B.

Presentation of street furniture on roads, car parks, open spaces, etc. — including road signs, telephone kiosks, post boxes, litter bins, village pumps, statues and monuments, seats, advertising hoardings

Litter bins were plentiful and in good condition, but additional bins could be placed outside the Schools. The pump looked a little shabby and in need of a fresh coat of paint. The telephone kiosk looked quite well and road signs were satisfactory.

Marks

Max. Awarded

15

12

150

106



Drama Group in the Absent Minded Bridegroom.

Back Row: Michael Fetherston, Mary Fergus, Julia Lyons, Mary Kilcoyne, John Tiernan. Front Row: Donald Wallace, Tommy Morahan, Bridie McHale, Mick Gallagher, Vera Durkan. Front: Lara O'Malley, Lydia Prendergast.

Louisburgh Drama Group

Here we are again scanning the pages of *An Choinneal* for some of the news and happenings of the last two years, including this report from the Drama Group. First of all, let me say that the Drama Group is one of the oldest organizations in the parish. It started in 1949 and still has some of its foundation members going as strong as ever and taking an active part. Naturally, down the years we have had many fine actors and actresses who have given much pleasure and entertainment to our audiences. Many of those people had to answer their particular calls and ways of life and move away from Louisburgh, some to foreign lands; but we still cherish their memories and remember their great service in the productions over the years. To all of them we say a sincere "thank you" for their help and co-operation while with us, and wish them every success in their new surroundings.

Since the last issue of *An Choinneal* we had two productions: The first was "The Absent-Minded Bridegroom" — a farce by Larry Johnson. Mary Fergus very ably played the part of a friend of the American Rooney family; Vera Durkan brought down the house with her performance as the slobbish maid (and slobbish she was from her straight wig to her brogues). Mary Kilcoyne, a newcomer to the cast, was excellent as the bridegroom's daughter, while John Lyons was outstanding as the bride's son — a very unusual role! Bridie McHale played the widow who was also the bride. Here Bridie combined her experience with the rich dialogue in the play, and her powerful voice, to make it one of the best performances of her career. Michael Fetherston gave a great display at Pat Rooney and drew the sympathy of the audience with the way he put his part across. Donald Wallace, as Fred Grady, excelled in his role as Kathleen's friend, while John Tiernan was his usual best as the detective. I, myself, played the role of the bridegroom and three children's parts were beautifully played by Lydia Prendergast, Tommie Morahan and Lara O'Malley. Lara O'Malley was just seven years old and is the youngest person ever to have played with the group.

The second play was John B. Keane's "Sive" and this, also, was a wonderful success. Although it was controversial in parts, and has strong language in places, it went off as one of our best productions.

The cast again included: Vera Durkan, whose performance as the grandmother brought tears and sympathy from all; Bridie McHale, who as the daughter-in-law, was great as a typical barge, and her appearance with a candle and a striped nightdress (which had about ten yards of material) was a highlight of the play; Mary Hegarty, who is always great, reliable and confident, was really outstanding as Sive — one of the most difficult roles for any actress. Michael O'Malley was wonderful in his light-hearted role of the matchmaker: his cunning, tricky and sometimes crooked ways were a joy to watch. Michael Fetherston had the role of the carpenter, and equipped with tools, timber etc., got into and out of all his problems with ease. Here, Donald Wallace had one of his most outstanding performances as the farmer bachelor; and — complete with lisp and tongue hanging out — got rounds and rounds of applause at every production and at all his entrances. John Tiernan and John O'Dowd played the two tinkers, and I must say nothing so perfect or so authentic ever came out from under canvas! In appearance, voice, action and dress, they really were the life of the play. Sive's father was my own particular role in this, a highly successful play.

The funds taken were donated towards the repairs of the Parochial Hall and to other local funds. We travelled to Kilmeena, Irishtown and Cushlough and had great success.

We are really indebted to our supporters for keeping us going for thirty-two years, and we say a sincere "thank you" to our helpers who do so much for us, viz.

Bob Reiney, Myles Mitchell, Chris Harper, Eileen Kerr, Eleanor Lyons, William McNamara, Rose Donnellan, P. J. Sammin and many more, also the one person who has the responsibility for everything, our producer, Father Kieran Waldron, whose guidance and direction of our group just cannot be described. His wonderful co-operation and patience is the key to our success. We say "thank you, Father" and we hope you will always be with us.

The group had many ups and downs during the year, with some members having family bereavements etc. We also lost two great people: Michael O'Brien, who played great parts in the "Mummy and the Mumps" in the late 'sixties, and the part of "Lord Wonky" in the 'seventies. The late Thomas O'Donnell will be remembered for his part as the Sheriff a few years ago. Thomas will also be remembered as a social worker. His work for senior citizens — which he started in the parish — his visits to the Sacred Heart Home and Saint Mary's Hospital, will always be recalled. May they both have the Light of Heaven!

Finally the group wishes every happiness and joy on her retirement as a National Teacher to one of our most experienced members, Mrs. Clementine Lyons, who did so much for drama, music and entertainment as a teacher.

Furmoyle

Michael Gallagher



THE CAST OF "SIVE"

Back Row: John O'Dowd, John Tiernan, Michael Fetherston, Donald Wallace, Mick Gallagher. Front Row: Michael O'Malley, Bridie McHale, Mary Hegarty, Vera Durkan.

Louisburgh G.A.A. Club

President: Mr. M. J. O'Toole
Chairman: Eamon O'Malley
Vice-Chairman and P.R.O.: Michael O'Grady
Secretary: Donal O'Leary
Treasurer: Joe Keane

Team Captain: Danny O'Toole
Team Trainer: Noel Sammon
Selectors: Geoffrey Gibbons
Padraic Moran, Gerry Houlihan,
Michael Gibbons

Since the club was reformed and reorganized in September 1980 it has been gaining strength, endeavouring to expand its support and effectiveness within the parish, and to cater for all who participate in its activities.

The club fields six teams each year in West Mayo Divisional competitions: National Schools, under-14, under-16, minor, under-21, and junior. This year's junior side reached the Divisional Final, but were surprisingly beaten at Newport. A pleasing and welcome aspect of that day was the volume and enthusiasm of parish support — *go maire se!* The junior team also played in the Intermediate League with very satisfactory results, and played a total of twenty-six games in League and Championships. The Club welcomes, also, the return of Sancta Maria College to competitive college's competition after a lapse of some years.

Bhí Ros Muc agus foireann an pharóiste san iomaíocht lena chéile mí Lúnasa seo caite agus ba shuimúil and rud é an Ghaeilge ghlan a chloistéal ar pháirc an imeartha. Tá súil againn go mbeidh a leithéid arís ann!

Le linn an Gheimhridh rinne an chumann iarracht seans a thabhairt do dhaoine "blas a chur ar an mbeagán". Bhí rudaí mar lagainmneacha na h-áite agus stair an chondae á bplé oíche amháin gach seachtain.

Also on the social side, a very well-supported Club Dinner Dance is held early each year. The Club organizes an annual Scór na n-Óg competition and sends representatives to the Divisional Finals of both Scór na n-Óg and Scór Sinsir.

A dedicated G.A.A. supporter, past Club and West Board official, and many times contributor to *An Choinneal*, Mr. P. J. McNamara is preparing a Club history, which he hopes will be ready early in 1983. His journalistic bent, his store of carefully researched fact, and his undiminished interest in Louisburgh, though domiciled in London since 1965, makes him the ideal person for such a job. We look forward to the fruits of his labours and thank him sincerely for his loyal commitment.

Finally, plans are already advanced for the provision of dressing-rooms and Sports' Park service area at Louisburgh Tourist Development's grounds at Cahir. It is hoped that work will begin shortly, and with the goodwill and support of all parishioners, the project should be completed for use during 1983.

Bunowen

Dónall Ó Laoire

Bhí mé sa ghéirdín roimh Nollaig, ag bailiú sean-duilleógai, agus á n-iompar do chúinne in a lobbfaidh siad. Ar mo bhealach leis an gcéad ualach, seo romham crann beag ar a raibh duilleógai úra na bliana ag borradh.

Ábhar macnaimh. Duilleógai na sean-bliana á mbailiú. Duilleógai na haithbhliana ag borradh. Bliain ag imtheacht is bliain ag teacht. Bás agus beatha. Lobhadh agus fás. Rothai móra an tsaoil.

I mbliana, tá an leith-chéad slán againne, Cumann Phádraig Naofa i gCill Teagáin. Caoga bliain de bheatha agus fás. Caoga bliain de chreimeadh agus lobhadh. Ní buan don bheatha gan an bás. Ní buan don fás gan an creimeadh. Ach creidimid gur treise beatha agus fás, agus mar sin tá muid ag ceiliúradh.

Ag ceiliúradhimid dushlán na mbliain. 1932 — bliain ar mbreithe i gCill Teagáin. 1982 — caoga bliain ag fás: iúbhail órga an chumainn.

Molaimís na fir mhóra a chuaigh romhainn. Molaimís eaglais agus pobal mór-chroíoch na hÉireann a sheas linn. Molaimís an eaglais óg a shíolruigh uainn. Glaicimis go fonnmar le dúshlán seo an óir.

FEACHTAS

Feachtas is a recently-formed association, begun in Louisburgh in 1980 by Father MacGreal of Westport, which seeks to preserve the language and culture of Ireland — especially among the younger generation.

— Editor

Do na daoine nach bhfuil morán feasa acu faoi *Feachtas*, seo thíos cuntas ginearálta ar an méid atá i gceist ann.

Bunadh: Séard atá i *bhFeachtas* gluaiseacht imeasc óige na hÉireann a bhunaigh an tAthair Micheál MacGréil ó Chathair na Mart. I gCillín/Cluain Cearbán a bhí an chéad ghasra ariamh sa tír agus go dtí seo sé an ceann is fearr agus is cailiúla sa tír é, cé go bhfuil suas le fiche-chúig cinn acu ann anois.

Cuspóir: Mar a léiríonn an focal fhéin is *gluaiseacht* í seo, gluaiseacht chun teanga agus cultúr na hÉireann a choinneál beo sa tír, go mor-mhór imeasc na n-óg.

Ceannaire: Ar dtús is í an tSiúr Greagóir a bhí mar cheannaire orainn. Táimid faoi chomhairle mhór aici as ucht a cuideachta agus a chomhairle i rith na bliana 1980-81. Chaith sí a cuid ama agus allais linn go dtí go ndeachaigh sí chun a saol nua i nGleann na mBa Dubh. Go n-éirí léi ina cúram ansin freisin. Lean Clementín Bean Uí Laighin í mar cheannaire. Fearann muid fáilte roimpi isteach agus gabhann muid buíochas mór léi faoin obair dheónach seo a thógáil de láimh.

Go n-úige seo: Is dócha gurb é an rud is mó atá déanta ag an ngasra go dtí seo, na h-imeachtaí éacsúla, neamh-choiteanta a raibh na baill go leir páirteach iontu. Sa gcéad bhliain, bhíodh obair stuaimhe láimhe ar súil againn: rinneamar stóilíní bheaga le comhairle ón muinteoir admadóireachta sa mean-scoil, Riobard Ó Réinne. Sa dara bliain bhí feis an-mhaith againn. Dob í seo an chéad fheis ariamh a eagraíodh ag *Feachtas* agus bhí an-slacht uirthi. Bhí breis is céad iarrthóirí páirteach innti agus bhí an caighdeán an-árd.

An bhliain seo chugainn: Faoi stiúradh Bhean Uí Laighin tá súil ag na baill go mbeidh árd-chaighdeán againn arís i mbliana. Tá súil againn freisin go bhfaighidh muid cabhair agus coimhoibriú ó chuile bhall sa gasra, cibé gnó nó imeachtaí a bhéas idir lámhaí againn amach anseo.

Oifigigh: Cathaoirleach — Brendan Ó Mórcháin
Rúnaí — Bríd Ní Dhufaí
Cisteoir — Clement de Phriondargás
Oifigeach caidrimh Poibli — Bríd Ní Mhaithnín.

Slán Abhaile . . .

The following parishioners have died in the period covered since our last issue. May they rest in peace.

1980	November	Patrick O'Toole, Devlin Mrs. Nora Kitterick, Furmoyle
	December	Thomas F. O'Malley, Roomith Mrs. Nora Browne (nee Gibbons), Doughmakeon James Sammon, Carramore
1981	January	John Gavin, Laughta Eddy Fergus, Caher Mrs. Mary Prendergast, Accony
	February	Philip Prendergast, Accony William Bennett, Shraugh
	March	James McDonnell, Cross Christina O'Toole, Mooneen Briget O'Malley, Main Street
	April	Seamus Sammon, Cross Mrs. Mary Eva Needham, Killadoon Mrs. Mary Ellen McCormack, Pulgloss Anne McNamara, Tooreen
	May	Andy McDermott, Chapel Street Teresa Burns, Louisburgh
	June	Patrick Gallagher, Chapel Street Mrs. Mary Sammon, Carramore
	July	Alec Wallace, Old Head Justin Morahan, Main Street
	August	Margaret O'Malley, Main Street
	September	Michael O'Brien, Bunowen Road
	October	Martin O'Grady, Kilgeever Patrick F. O'Grady, Kilgeever
	November	Mrs. Nora Hester Mrs. Annie O'Grady, Kilgeever
	December	Patrick Kitterick, Furmoyle Michael Joseph Gill, Askillau
1982	January	Mrs. Annie Gaffney, Chapel Street Mrs. Catherine Corrigan, Shrawee William Morrison, The Square
	February	Thomas O'Grady, Kilgeever
	March	Mrs. Beatrice Philbin, Carramore Patrick Needham, Killadoon
	April	Austin O'Malley, Doughmakeon Mrs. Mary O'Malley, Shrawee Patrick Jennings, Aylemore Mrs. Ann Joyce, Carramore Eileen Marie O'Donnell (infant), Kinnock Mrs. Deborah Bennett, Shraugh
	May	Mrs. Mary Prendergast, Bridge Street Patrick McNamara, Carramore Michael Moran, Falduff
	September	Peter Sammon, Carramore Owen Grady, Tully

October
 Mrs. Bridget Durkan, Askillau
 Thomas O'Donnell, Main Street
 Patrick Gallagher, Aitinaveen
 Austin Kitterick, Cregganban

The following parishioners died away from home since our last issue.

- 1980** Mrs. Mary Hanlon (nee Kelly, Askillau) in Chicago
 Tommy O'Malley, Cloonty, in Birkenhead
 Mrs. Bridget Flanagan, Kilgeever, in Blackburn
- 1981** Mrs. Delia Walshe (nee Gallaher, Caher,) in Worcester,
 Mass.
 Austin O'Grady, Cricken, in U.S.A.
 Mrs. Bridie Nolan (nee O'Malley, Curra) in Kilmeena
 Thomas Gibbons, Askillau, in Chicago
 Joe O'Dowd, in Clinton, Mass.
 Mrs. Helen McNamara, (nee Frazer, Barnabaun) in Boston
 Redmond Gibbons, Cloonlara, in Chicago
 Paddy O'Toole, Mooneen, in Newcastle
 John McNamara, Devlin, in U.S.A.
 Agnes Carter, (nee Cox), in England
 Mrs. Kate Archer (nee O'Malley, Furmoyle) in Dublin
 Michael Kirby, Askillau, in Leeds
 Mrs. Brigid Lynch (nee O'Grady, SixNoggins) in U.S.A.
 Michael Tierney in U.S.A.
 Mrs. Maimie O'Mahoney, (nee Duffy, Woodfield) in London
 Mrs. Beasy Mostyn (nee McDonagh, Pulgloss) in Chicago
 Michael Needham, Main Street, in Chicago
 Mrs. Catherine O'Brien (nee O'Grady, Tully) in Boston
 Redmond Lyons, Accony, in Chicago
 Mrs. Mary Hughes (nee O'Donnell, Pulgloss) in Manchester
 John McNamara, Devlin, in Chicago
 Mrs. Rose Donnelly, (nee Burke, Askillau) in Dublin
 Sergeant David Ray, Louisburgh, in Wicklow
 Mrs. Delia O'Sullivan (nee Murphy, Devlin) in Dorchester,
 Mass.
 Mrs. Mary Hastings (nee Kilcoyne, Dereen) in U.S.A.
 Father John O'Malley, Cloonty, in Cork
 Mrs. Ellen Kilcoyne (nee Prendergast) in Boston
 Mrs. Margaret McDonnell (nee Hastings, Dadreen), in New
 York
- 1982** Mrs. Mary Gibbons (nee Hastings, Dereen) in Clinton
 Sister Malachy O'Toole, The Square, in Tuam
 William O'Malley, Kilgeever, in Southport
 Helen O'Malley, Curradavitt, in Boston
 Mrs. Annie Conroy (nee Garavan, Devlin) in Co. Laois
 Mrs. Kitty Norman (nee Prendergast, Accony) in Rugby
 Sarah Mongyle (nee Halloran) Askillau, in Boston
 Tommie O'Donnell, Pulgloss, in England
 John Coyne (Aylemore) in Boston
 Mrs. Delia Ward (nee Burns, Pulgloss) in Birmingham
 John Philbin, Carrowniskey, in Wigan
 Anthony O'Toole, Doughmakeon, in Chicago
 Patrick McNamara, Carramore in New York
 Mrs. Nora Caffrey, (nee McNamara, Kinnadoohey) in
 Birmingham

Mrs. Mary O'Connell, (nee Moran, Kilgeever) in
 Connecticut
 Dick Lyons, Askillau, in London
 Mrs. Sarah Coen (nee Nicholson, Bunowen) in England
 Tony Prendergast, Bunowen, in San Francisco
 Margaret O'Grady, Falduff, in Worcester
 Mrs. Winifred Naughton, in Sheffield
 Michael O'Malley, Doughmakeon, in Boston
 Mrs. Bessie McLarnon, (nee Grady, Tully) in Boston
 Mrs. Noreen Horan (nee Corrigan, Cregganban) in Partry

PUBLIC SERVANT

It has often been noted that much of the best work done for the community in many west-of-Ireland areas has been done by people from elsewhere who have settled in their employment or profession here. This is the obverse of "the prophet being without honour in his own country". Indeed it may well be that in rural communities, even still, local talent is restricted by local irrational enmities, and leadership is still left to someone who is apart and acceptable. Whatever be the chain of causes, our own community has been the better over the past thirty-five to forty years because of the arrival here in 1945 of Michael O'Brien as Agricultural Advisor.

P. J. McNamara (Bridge Street) having heard in London of the death of Michael O'Brien wrote the following notes in appreciation:-

Michael O'Brien was born in Ballinabranna, County Carlow, on 18th June 1918. He came to Louisburgh as a Congested District Officer in October 1945, and here met Annie Durkan of Askelane, whom he married in Louisburgh on 3rd September 1947. After thirty-six years of diligent service, he retired due to ill-health in 1981. He died in Castlebar Hospital on 17th September 1981.

Since his coming to the parish Mick O'Brien did much to improve the quality of life there; and so it is the rural sector, next to his own family, who suffer most in his death. His service in Louisburgh coincided with the period of great technological advances in farming and improved grant facilities. The implementation of the relevant schemes entailed a heavier work-load for the Agricultural Instructor, but he made himself constantly available to the people in the extensive area under his care. In particular, the improvement in livestock breeds, and the raising of standards in farm facilities can be attributed to his quiet education of the farming community and his gentle encouragement which were being provided by the Department of Agriculture.

He also immersed himself in the social life of the community. He was himself a talented Gaelic footballer, having played for his native Carlow at senior level, and later wearing the green-and-red of his adopted county in the junior inter-county championship. Indeed he seemed to be passionately devoted to the game; he was, of course, a long-standing member of the Louisburgh team, but one of the highlights of memory was the meeting of

Carlow and Mayo in the National League Final of 1954.

His many-talented character found Mick involved in all kinds of parish activities. His close rapport with the people of Clare Island led to a keen involvement in currach-racing of which he was an ardent patron. He was a resourceful member of local question-time teams, had a major role in organizing the re-construction work on the parish Church, and served as Vice-Chairman on the *Coinneal* committee since its foundation. He has been a regular contributor to the magazine.

Two public tributes underlined the appreciation of the people of Louisburgh for the work and worth of Mick O'Brien. One was a testimonial function in the Parochial Hall on his retirement. The other, too soon afterwards, when the people of the parish, with a guard of honour of Louisburgh G.A.A. Club, escorted his remains to Kilgeever.

What then are the memories? Incidental things, of course, will first come to mind because they are most easily noticed and so most readily form the image. So there is, inevitably, the robust figure in the old blue-and-gold of Louisburgh; the high-catch and surging clearance of the traditional gaelic football full-back. There is the willing and business-like figure in belted over-coat and angled cap surveying, with note-book and tape, the land or buildings of some farm from Falduff to Ugool. There is the well-dressed official moving easily through a Louisburgh fair and exchanging words and greetings with people who so respected him. There is the serious townsman returning with the morning paper, with the soft, distinctive, slightly bending walk of a retired footballer, or stopping to exchange ideas on the Square; and, more engaging, the face which remained deadpan as he contributed a shaft of enlightened wit or humour which, incidentally, revealed a sharp intellect and a broad field of knowledge. Then there is the formal Mick, wearing a hat; the man going to Sunday Mass, the man at his children's weddings, the man who stood to take a church-gate charitable collection, or arriving to attend, and enhance, some formal social function.

Within this image, of course, was the character and the man known to those whose lives he brightened; but most of all to those who knew him intimately, as husband or father, and whose sorrow is accordingly the greater. His qualities and traditions live. His family have taken on, in his spirit, the responsibility of service: Michael is pathologist at Boston General Hospital and associate professor of pathology at Harvard; Mary (now Mrs. Martin) teaches at Saint Patrick's National School, Drogheda; John is quality control inspector with Atari Company, Limerick, and Tommy is site-manager for Monaghan Brothers, Builders in Dublin. Mrs. Annie O'Brien still lives in their Louisburgh home. To all of them *An Choinneal* expresses its sense of shared loss. May their candles of memory and of hope continue to burn brightly.

Leon Ó Mórcháin

JUSTIN

It was July 11th, 1981. For two weeks, hopes had run high that he would recover, but on that sunny Saturday came the news we did not want to hear: Justin Morahan has passed to his eternal reward. Every one of us would remember in time to come where we were and what we were doing when that fateful news came. He was a close friend of mine, had just qualified as an engineer, and died following a traffic accident in Galway. He was twenty.

It is easy to recall but difficult to describe one I knew so well. He had many gifts. In his short life he had become an accomplished sportsman, had played in Louisburgh's colours from under-12 to under-21 grades, and had played Gaelic, Soccer and Rugby at Galway Regional Technical College where he qualified. His interest in sport also embraced such games as table-tennis, basket-ball, volley-ball and badminton. He was a talented musician both in singing and in playing the guitar. One of my earliest memories of him is at a primary school concert when at a very early age he sang "My Singing Bird". Justin was also a great actor and took part in many sketches and plays in secondary school and college days, but it was the way that he combined all these talents in life that really made him such a character — and what a character he was!

There was always this great sense of humour, at school, at games, always. This, combined with his wit and warm personality, always made him the centre of attraction among us who lived with him the experience of growing up as children and developing into teenagers and adult life. In our games' situations he was always the "comedian" as well as being one of our leading players. We were returning from Achill once, well beaten and out of the championship, and some of the team were dejected, but Justin — buoyant as ever — composed a song to the air "Seasons in the Sun" to fit the occasion. One verse ran:

"We had joy, we had fun
We had Achill on the run
But the joy did not last
Because Achill ran too fast"

Similarly, as I recounted when last I wrote for this magazine, he was the life of the party on our journey to meet Pope John Paul II in Galway, and with usual humour was one of those who carried our now-famous banner. Sadly there was now another procession of cars along the Galway road — this time towards Louisburgh — as we followed him in his last home-coming.

The memory of Justin's funeral will always remain with me.

Whenever, now, I hear such hymns as “Céad Mile Fáilte Romhat, a Íosa”, “Ag Críost an Síol” and “Because He Lives”. I recall what I regard as the saddest day of my life, for I had lost one of the closest friends I ever had. *Ar a anam uasal, a Thiarna Déan Trócaire!*

Eamonn Keane

*‘Tis a gift to be simple
‘Tis a gift to be true”*

He had the gift of making the dreariest of days or events into light-hearted hilarities. At times it seemed that football was the essence of his life; he could spend hours talking about and taking part in the game by which he was enchanted. For those of us for whom football was not an attraction, it seemed ridiculous — even intolerable — that “our hero” should spend so much time involved in it.

For the privileged few of us who shared our school years so closely with him, Justin made our school memories vivid and evergreen. Now, whenever any two of us get together those memories are re-lived with the same relish and fervour with which we shared those momentous days. As time moved on and schooldays were over, some of us left school for life and Justin decided to continue his studies further. We might well have expected then a parting of the ways; but that was not to be for in his new life — no matter how he got enveloped in its interests — he always made a point of meeting up with the “old gang” when he came home for holidays or for week-end. That seemed as important to him as it did to us.

The talents and qualities that made him so popular are many: his good humour, his ready wit, and the ease he had in making friends. That ever-smiling face made people want to be in his company to share some bright new event. Added to all this, was his sharp intelligence. All in all he was a character impossible to replace and, more so, to live without.

We, his closest friends, often think of Justin’s parents, their kindness and generosity in sharing him with us every time we knocked on their door with the usual: “Is he in?”. When we added: “Tell him to come out”, they never once declined. We would now like to share their great sorrow and also their fervent hope that we will all be together again.

Thank you, Justin, for giving us so much of your short life. We are sick and saddened by your leaving. The only comfort we can derive is the fact is the fact the Heaven has become even more enriched by your presence.

Askelane

Patrick Conway

REQUIESCAT IN PACE . . .



*Justin Morahan
11th July 1981*



*Michael O'Brien
17th September, 1981*



*Sister M. Malachy O'Toole
4th February, 1982*

SISTER M. MALACHY O'TOOLE

Sister M. Malachy (Kathleen) O'Toole died on 4th February 1982 at the Regional Hospital, Galway, after a very short illness. She was born in Louisburgh, where her father distinguished himself in the teaching profession. Sister Malachy got her primary education in Louisburgh National School. From there she went to Sancta Maria College to pursue her secondary education, and completed it at Saint Brigid's, Tuam. She attended University College, Galway, where she obtained a B.A. degree, and later her Higher Diploma in Education.

In 1937, she entered the Novitiate at the Mercy Convent, Tuam and took her final vows six years later. The first five years of her religious life were spent in Tuam where she taught history,

geography and English. She was then appointed to Claremorris where she taught for twenty years. She was assigned as Principal to Sancta Maria in her native Louisburgh in the sixties, and finally returned to teach in Saint Brigid's in Tuam.

Sister Malachy will long be remembered by her Sisters for her great community spirit, her spirit of prayer and dedication to duty. Her sense of humour was infectious, and if ever spirits were downcast, her bright, cheery smile and witty remarks quickly scattered the clouds. In her convent home she was exemplary in every way by her great love for the Mass, devotion to Our Lady, her charity, her love for the poor and the sick, and her gratitude for the smallest favour done for her; but more especially for her ever-joyful spirit. Her zeal for the propagation of the Faith showed itself in the enthusiasm with which she organized among her pupils card-games, raffles etc. to raise funds for the Missions. She brought to the convent her Louisburgh wit and sense of humour, and a store of anecdotes by which she often entertained and amused the Community.

Sister Malachy will be remembered by her pupils for her understanding of their problems, her tolerance and her keen interest in each one. She was widely-read and well versed in English literature, a love for which she imparted to her pupils in an interesting, informal manner. She had a special gift for teaching English and history. She gave her pupils a great love for literature and for their country. She never really left the educational scene as she was keenly interested in helping the weaker pupils and continued to do so after her retirement. She also helped in the field of adult education.

Her cheerful disposition gained her many life-long friends both within and without the community, and it will never be known here below how much her letters consoled and uplifted sad and depressed hearts. She was very sincere and was at all times ready to give help and advice. Sister Malachy had her trials, too, but in her cheerfulness she forgot these to comfort others.

She was daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. John O'Toole, The Square, Louisburgh; sister of the late Anthony (Cleggan), Tom (Louisburgh), and the late Mary and Tess (Louisburgh). She is survived by her brothers Dick (Louisburgh) and Doctor Bill, her sister, Agnes (Bean Uí Fhlaithearta, Dublin), brother-in-law Marcus and sister-in-law Frances, and many nieces and nephews.

Louisburgh and its people were very dear to Sister Malachy. She loved to spend her summer holidays there and availed herself of every opportunity to visit the parish. *Ar phobal dílis Dé go raibh si!*

Sister Bríd Caulfield (Tuam)
Sister Vincent Egan (Claremorris)

IN MEMORIAM

*A visit to Louisburgh was never complete
Unless one kind lady I made sure to meet
So often we met on her way home from Mass
"Cé chaoi 'bhfuil tú, 'Phádraic?" . . . "Go maith, 'Mháistreáis".
As visits rolled by and I'd meet her no more
I'd pluck up my courage and knock at her door
To be shown to her garden. I declare to the dickens
She was there with her rosary, surrounded by chickens!
How she treasured that garden, that shed and that stool —
It was just as 'twas years ago — her own little school.
The chickens were pupils, they had all her attention
Each one had a name, a name she'd never mention;
Yet watching her smiling, you couldn't but know
'Twas a story repeating from school long ago:*

*"Mick Flannery, you can't be untidy or wild
Why can't you sit easy like every other child?"
Austie Moran from Crickeen, put turf on the fire
Young boys should be active: they never should tire.
Harney and Grady, sit up in your seat
Deely and Durkin, will you keep your books neat!
Nicholson and Dunne, stand out by the wall
Flanagan from Coolachawn, did you here me call?"*

*When winter came on we were "ag lasadh na tine"
"Seas suas", "tar isteach", slán leat", "maith an duine"
"Fód móna", "suí síos", the Angelus agus "am lón",
. . . then out of the blue "Where do you think you're going?"
"An tslat", "an chathaoir", "an ciotal", "an ceol"
Le cúnamh Dé", "as láthair", "anseo", agus "gó fóill".
Simple school-words linger, but alas!
Go ndéana Dia trócaire . . . mo mháistreáis!*



CARROWNISKEY SCHOOL BAND 1966.

Back L. to R.: Pádraic Tiernan, Paddy Ferrins, Joseph MacNamara, Anthony O'Toole, Paddy Naughton, Darcy O'Toole, Mary Duffy, Bridgie A. Naughton. Middle Row L. to R.: Nan Ferrins, Christine Lyons, Mary Majella Gibbons, Anne Lyons, Mary Tiernan, Patricia Ferrins, Maureen Naughton, Anne Giblin, Paula Lyons, Alexandra Lyons. Front L. to R.: Redmond Lyons, Gabriel Lyons, John Tiernan, John O'Toole with their teacher Clementine Lyons.

SCHOOL-BOOKS REOPENED

Readers have often expressed a wish to have some of the poems or lessons, which they found so satisfying in their own old school-books, reprinted in our parish magazine. The following two poems, from the school-books of the beginning of this century, were collected, shortly before her death, from the late Mrs Brigid A. Morahan. Further contributions of a like nature will be welcome for future issues.

—Editor

WEATHER PROGNOSTICATIONS

The hollow winds begin to blow
 The clouds look black, the glass is low;
 The soot falls down, the spaniels sleep,
 And spiders from their cobwebs creep.

Through the clear stream the fishes rise
 And nimbly catch the uncautious flies;
 The glow-worms, numerous and bright,
 Illumed the dewy dell last night.

Last night the sun went pale to bed,
 The moon in haloes hid her head
 The boding shepherd heaves a sigh
 For see! a rainbow spans the sky.

At dusk a squalid toad was seen
 Hopping and crawling o'er the green;
 The frog has changed his yellow vest
 And in a russet coat is dressed;

The walls look damp, the ditches smell,
 Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel;
 Hark! how the chairs and tables crack,
 Old Betty's joints are on the rack.

Though June, the air is cold and chill,
 The mellow blackbird's voice is shrill,
 The whirling wind the dust obeys
 And in the rapid eddy plays.

Loud quack the ducks, the peacocks cry,
 The distant hills are looking nigh,
 How restless are the snorting swine!
 The busy fly disturbs the kine.

My dog so altered in his taste,
 Quits mutton-bones, on grass to feast;
 And see yon rooks, how odd their flight,
 They imitate the gliding kite!

Low o'er the grass the swallow wings,
 The cricket too, how sharp he sings!
 Puss on the hearth with velvet paws
 Sits wiping o'er its whiskered jaws.

And headlong downward seem to fall
 As of they frit the piercing ball.
 'Twill surely rain, I see with sorrow:
 Our jaunt must be put off to-morrow.

JUDGE NOT

When speaking of a person's faults, pray don't forget your own;
 Remember those with homes of glass should never throw a stone:
 If we have nothing else to do than talk of those who sin
 'Tis better to begin at home and from that point begin.

We have no right to judge a man until he's fairly tried;
 Should we not like his company, we know the world is wide,;
 Some may have faults, and who has not — the old as well as young!
 Perhaps we may for all we know have fifty to their one.

Then let us all when we begin to slander friend or foe
 Think of the harm one word may do to those we little know;
 Remember curses, sometimes like our chickens roost at home
 Then do not speak of others' faults till you have none of your own.

Popular Louisburgh trader, Mr. Seamus Durkan, has been elected Vice-President of the Connacht Branch of the Irish Federation of Sea Anglers.

Seamus, who has always been closely identified with the development of angling in the West, is a member of the Western Regional Fisheries Board.

— Western People
November 1981

A group of young people from Louisburgh got together and organised a fund-raising bazaar as their contribution to the International Year of the Disabled Persons. Members of the group went around and collected donations from the people of Louisburgh and Westport.

The bazaar, which was held in Louisburgh Parochial Hall, included many amusements such as darts, orange drinking competitions, rings, horse racing, guess the weight games, bonny baby competition, funny face competition, lucky dip and lots more.

'Madam Rose Lee' flew in from Spain for a special guest appearance and acquainted those present of their future fortunes. But the star of the night was 'Cock-Shot Maggie' in the flesh who tested the throwing skills of those present.

There were also spot prizes, raffles, an auction and an outdoor musical presentation.

The venture was a huge success and realised £238.46. The organisers expressed thanks to all who contributed and helped to make the entire venture so enjoyable and successful.

The money has been presented to the 'Sports for the Disabled Committee', West Mayo Wheelchair Branch to help develop sports for young disabled people and to buy sports equipment, sports chairs, javelins, etc.

Mary Morahan and Ann Duffy, Louisburgh, organisers of the bazaar, presented the cheque to Mr. John

Scissors & Sellotape



Scott, Dooniver, Achill, Chairman of the Sports Club for the Disabled.

John, who is leading sports figure, has participated in the Olympics for the Disabled at Stokemandaville.

He was warm in his praise of the young Louisburgh people for their outstanding contribution to the International Year of the Disabled.

— Western People
November 1981

An ICA Guild has been formed in Louisburgh and the following officers have been elected: President, Mrs. Sally O'Toole; Secretary, Mrs. Lucy Dyar, and Treasurer, Mrs. Eileen Kerr.

— Mayo News
17/2/82

John B. Keane's first, and perhaps his most popular play, "Sive", is the choice for this year's presentation by Louisburgh Drama Group.

The play will be presented on Friday and Sunday night, 11th, 13th of December and on Thursday, 22nd of December.

Louisburgh audiences will remember with pleasure the last very successful presentation of a J. B. Keane's play. — "The Field", a few years ago.

The cast includes: Mick Gallagher, Michael O'Malley, Vera Durcan, Mary Hegarty, Michael Fetherston, Donald Wallace, John Tiernan, Bridie McHale and newcomer John O'Dowd.

The play is produced by Father Kieran Waldron.

— Mayo News
18/11/1981

The Killeen/Louisburgh branch of "Feachtas" — held its first meeting of the season on Saturday, 7th November in Sancta Maria Secondary School. The meeting was well attended and many new members were present. The officers for the coming year are: Cathaoirleach: Valerie de Bhroinn; Runai: Una Ní Mhuireasáin; Cisteoir: Sorcha Ní Ghiobúin; Oifigeach Caidreamh Poibli: Aine Ní Mhainin.

Comhairleoir: An tSr. M. Greagoir; Coiste: Ailis Ní Dhufaigh, Brid Ní Dhufaigh, Seamas O Tuathail.

The meeting was addressed by An t-Athair Micheál Mac Gréil who urged the members to continue the good work begun last year. As usual, his inspiring talk roused the interest of his young listeners and a lively discussion followed. It was agreed to hold a "Feis" in Louisburgh after Easter and a lot of work will be put into the planning and organisation of this event.

It was also decided to gather and edit the local history of the area so the "Gasra" has a full programme for the coming year. They hope, too, to have social gatherings with the Tourmakeady Branch. The business part of the meeting, was followed by a short session of music, singing and ceili dancing, which was enjoyed by all.

— Mayo News
18/11/1982

Louisburgh Drama Group have been accepted by the Amateur Drama League as one of the Groups to be allowed present their play in their own Hall as part of the National Theatre Festival. This experiment marks a new development in Amateur Drama in Ireland. The play is John B. Keane's great play "SIVE" which had a successful run in Louisburgh before Christmas and it will be staged on Friday night, February 5th (Curtain up 8.30 p.m.).

The Adjudicator will be Mr. David McEwan and as usual at all Theatre Festivals he will address the audience and cast after the special production of the play in Louisburgh Parochial Hall. At Amateur Drama Festivals the moment when the cast leaves the stage and the Adjudicator appears is always the most exciting moment of the evening. He will give his professional advice — praise or blame as the case may be — on the choice of play, the casting, the set, the production, lighting, acting etc.

It is hoped that there will be a big house on this occasion and that this experiment will create even greater interest in Amateur Drama in Louisburgh. This experiment will have all the benefits of the large Theatre Festivals without the pressure of the element of competition.

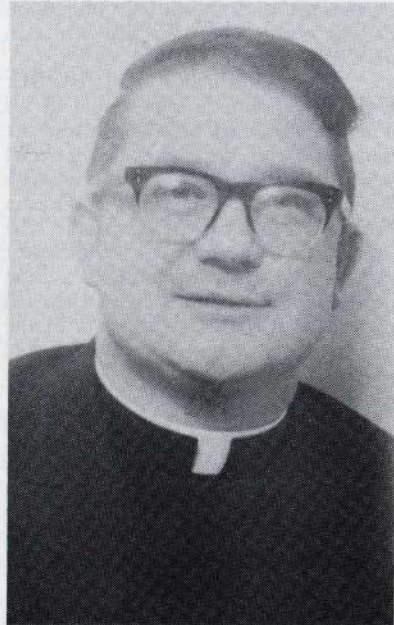
The Group recently viewed a Video recording of their own production staged in Louisburgh on 23rd December. The Video recording was made possible by Mr. Aidan Clarke, Westport and proved invaluable to the cast and producer.

— Mayo News
January 1982

Scissors and Sellotape ... (CONTINUED)

The Archbishop of Liverpool, The Most Reverend Derek Worlock, recently appointed Father Patrick J. MacNally, Parish Priest of Saint Gregory's Parish, Netherley, Liverpool. Father MacNally is a native of Carrowniskey, Louisburgh. He received his primary school education at Carrowniskey and Louisburgh National Schools, his secondary education at Saint Joseph's College, County Kilkenny and studied for the priesthood at the Liverpool Archdiocesan Seminary, Saint Joseph's Upholland.

Until his new appointment at Easter, Father MacNally was curate at Roby and Chaplin to the Gonzaga



Comprehensive School. His father Michael now resides at Peter Street, Westport and his sister is Sister Mary Bernadette, Mercy convent, Castlebar, and recently appointed Matron of the geriatric hospital, Castlrea, County Roscommon.

Father MacNally is a regular reader of "The Mayo News" in Liverpool, so we and his many friends in Louisburgh, Westport, Aughagower and Liverpool wish him every success and happiness in his new appointment.

— Mayo News
19/5/1982

An illustrated talk on community development which will highlight the achievements of Killala Community Council and which is being organised by the County Development team, will be given in the Parochial Hall, Louisburgh on February 10.

The purpose of the talk is to show what a diligent Community Council can do for an area in identifying local needs and undertaking projects.

It is expected that a Community Council will be formed as a result of the talk as it has been felt for a long time that Louisburgh needs a good umbrella organisation to undertake various projects in the area and to liaise with the local authority and semi-state bodies.

A full attendance is expected at the meeting on February 10, particularly those who have an interest in their area.

—Mayo News
5/2/1982

Louisburgh GAA Club will hold its first "Oiche Ghaelach" in the Parochial Hall on the night of January 17th. It represents a very positive effort on the part of the club to actively promote the use of the native tongue, one of the aims of the GAA Association, but one so often forgotten by many clubs.

You do not, however, have to be a Gaelic speaker to attend the Irish nights. All are welcome, and it is hoped that those in a position to speak the language will do so.

— Mayo News
22/1/1982

Scissors and Sellotape ... (CONTINUED)

Clare Island, the haven of the legendary pirate queen, Grainne Uaile, will have its representative in the final of the International Cailin Deas '81 in ten days time. And like Grainne Uaile, she too is a red-head...

Geraldine Prendergast, from Emlagh in Louisburgh has been chosen to represent the island in this year's event...

Geraldine, as well as being the only red-head in the Prendergast family of six boys and two girls, is the only red-head on Clare Island.

— Mayo News
12/8/1981

Mr. Michael Kelly (U.D.C.) felt the "West Road" (the road linking the main Leenane Road and the main Louisburgh Road) should be taken over by Mayo County Council because of the high percentage of traffic using the "West Road" instead of the main road via Westport Quay. The urban Council, faced with the colossal problem of maintaining sixteen miles of road network would never have the resources to properly maintain the "West Road."

Mr. McMyler said he felt considerable expenditure would be required to bring the "West Road" up to main road standard. Before the County Council could take over the road it would have to be designated a main road and there was very little precedent for the upgrading of roads at the moment.

— Mayo News
31/1/1981

FRAMINGHAM — Patrick J. McNally, 104, a well known local figure and possibly the oldest resident in town, died Friday, November 28th, 1980, at Saint Patrick's Manor.

He was a former resident of 21 Wood Terrace, having moved to Framingham from Clinton 43 years ago.

Mr. McNally was a native of County Mayo, Ireland, where he was an avid salmon fisher. After settling in this country in Clinton, he moved to Framingham 43 years ago.

McNally will be remembered by his friends for his wit and humor, for his independent spirit, and as the teller of tales, and maker of toasts and teases.

He was also an alert matchmaker who often attempted to match romantically the sons and daughters of friends.

At his 101st birthday party, at which friends presented him with a modern development, a six foot submarine sandwich, he said the secret of a long life is to "work hard every day and never smoke a cigarette."

He did not attribute his longevity to heredity, despite the fact that his mother, who died in 1956 at the age of 108, was one of the oldest women in Ireland.

Mr. McNally came to the United States at the age of 22 in 1898, the year Teddy Roosevelt charged San Juan Hill.

In his later years, he viewed increased wages as one of the big changes he saw during his lifetime.

He recalled working a 58 - hour week as a supervisor during the building of the Clinton Dam, 1908 - 1918, for a salary of just over \$6.

He retired from the state highway department at the age of 71 after working there for 15 years.

He was the last survivor of a family of 12 children, and was pre-deceased by two wives, Brigid, with whom he had six children, and Beatrice.

The Middlesex News,
29/11/1980

Scissors and Sellotape ... (CONTINUED)

The climax of the committee's four months of effort to raise funds in aid of Mayo's Mentally Handicapped children was reached on Friday night, November 20th, in Killadoon Beach Hotel. There, in the course of a highly enjoyable social, Mr. Jim Brett, Mayoman of the Year, plunged his arm into the Committee's draw drum around midnight to determine who would be the lucky winners of the Committee's three tempting prizes: a new Austin Metro (1st prize); £300 (2nd prize); £100 (3rd prize). The Metro went to the holder of yellow ticket no. 9350 — Michael Maloney of Deerpark, Cloghan's Hill, Tuam; the £300 to the holder of blue ticket no. 7244 — Grace Kirrane of Derry, Knock, County Mayo; the £100 to the holder of blue ticket no. 56 — Pat Kilcoyne of Ringerraun, Logaphuill, Castlebar. The £50 for the seller of the first prize - winning ticket went to Joe Keane of Devlin, Killadoon.

When the committee launched its draw in late July its hope was that with

unrelenting effort it might succeed in raising the sum of £10,000 for the benefit of the handicapped children of this have been paid it expect to be able to hand over to Western Care a sum of money on or near the £13,000 mark.

— Western People
2/12/1981

Reverend Father Michael Joe Lyons, M.A., son of Richard and Margaret Lyons Main Street, Louisburgh, has been appointed Director of Pastoral Planning in the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota, U.S.A.

He has also been appointed Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Duluth City.

Father Lyons, who was ordained at All Hallows College Dublin, in June 1970, is brother of John P. Lyons, Sancta Maria School, Louisburgh, Garda Redmond A. Lyons, Dublin. Garda Richard F. Lyons, Tubbercurry, County Sligo, Mrs. Mary B. Flanagan, S.R.N., wife of



Seamus Kelly, Austin Agent, Newport; Dean McQuaid, Dublin Representative Austin Cars; Father Don Coneely, Marie Taylor, Killadoon Beach Hotel.

Scissors and Sellotape ... (CONTINUED)

Garda W. Flanagan, Swinford and William A. Lyons, B.A. H.Dip. Ed.

We wish Father Lyons every success in the high office to which he has been appointed.

— Mayo News
18/8/79

The G.A.A. club reported a successful year with finances restored to a healthy state. There was high praise indeed for Joe Keane and his finance committee for their great work in this regard. There was no "titles won" to report but the meeting was optimistic that with the right commitment this could be remedied in 1982.

The meeting extended thanks to all our sponsors during the past year and also to the school teachers of the parish for their help in organising Scor na nOg.

The club recently received new goal nets from Fishing Gear and Net Manufacturers, Bridport Gundry (Ireland) Ltd. of Killbegs, County Donegal. The club extend thanks to the firm for this generous gesture and also to Mr. Brendan Murray of Achill Fishermen's Co - Op. for his help in the matter.

— November
1982

The death has taken place at the General Hospital, Castlebar, of Mr. Tommy O'Grady, Kilgeever, Louisburgh. In his early fifties the deceased had been ill for some time.

His untimely death, though not unexpected, evoked widespread sadness in his native area where he enjoyed wide popularity with all sections of the community.

A great community man, he was actively involved with a number of organisations in the parish and gave unstintingly of his time and energies in promoting their activities.

He was particularly associated with the Louisburgh Horse Show, of

which he was a founder - member in the late 'sixties. Over the years he became the anchor man who ensured the smooth running of the show classes.

Among the tributes paid to the deceased was one by Senator Martin J. O'Toole, first chairman of the Louisburgh Society.

"He was a committed and concered Christian, who was always more than willing to help out any voluntary organisation. He had a pride and loyalty in his own native place that was an example to others. His death has caused great sadness throughout the parish and to his wife, Mary, children, brother, sisters and relatives I extend my deepest sympathy", he said.

— Western People
17/2/1982

This morning when the dew was still,
I stood and thought of Barnett Hill,
The grieving pain of a heart full sore,
For a fond fond brother
I'll see no more.

By Old Head's hill, where the breezes
blow,
I wander down, as the sun sinks low.
How oft' we strolled on its golden
strand,
Compared its beauty with a foreign
land.

Will we stroll again down the old bog
road,
When our time has passed into
memory's gold,
Will he stand by the shore,
as waves roll by,
Engraved against the western sky.

— Verses from a poem,
signed "O'Grady" in
— The Mayo News
18/11/1981

FATHER LAVELLE

Many readers will have heard of the famous Father Pat Lavelle of Partry who was a native of the Bouris area and has still many relations in our parish. In his book, *Father Lavelle* compares the 'Clearances' which he saw in Ireland of that time with similar clearances in Italy. He wrote:

Let the tourist on entering the towns of Ballinrobe, Castlebar and Westport in this county of Mayo cast his eye about him and he will find verified to the letter touching complaint of "cattle grazing on the site of many happy homesteads". Let him on his way from Ballinrobe to Westport pass through the parish of Aughagower, once so populous with a people so intelligent, and see the many sites of where homesteads were taken from those who are God's image and likeness and given up to the beasts of the field which were created for him. Where once there were scores of comfortable villages, today there are to be seen only the sparse houses of herds and caretakers. Twenty years ago and more, the greater part of this agonising desolation was wrought. Alas that this very day it should be repeated on a scale of leviathan dimension. There are Knockrooska and Mask, last year hives of industry, today consolidated and enclosed for the brother of the landlord. Is there no hand on high to arrest this fiendish work? or is it to continue until despair itself supply the outraged people with the last weapons of self-defence?

Captain Houston occupies two hundred square miles out of which all the inhabitants were banished by Lord Sligo, except a few herds. More recently the noble Lord has cleared off the townland of Knockrooska and the Masks to be given to his brother, Lord John Browne. Captain Houston and Lord John Browne will never send a bushel of grain to the market.

Contributed for publication by Anthony O'Malley (Doughmackeown)

I started the week talking about family — but with some misgiving. I rejoice in my priesthood; in my celibacy as a sign of my consecration and of my faith in God's promise; in my liberty in His service as I live out my promise. And yet, at times I have known a need for some fuller share in the promised hundred-fold. In Malawai, once, there was such a moment when I sought refuge in words — in a poem.

Suddenly today I wanted children
A laughing boy, a girl in red and black
Disturbed my morning prayer, reminding me
Of things I miss in love and life.

These dancing children never would have guessed
My racing thoughts — nor would the others:

Mazosi, as she climbed upon my knee
Joking about my voice and my forgetfulness
Towera, as she tried to plait my hair
Or small *Miranda* with her puzzled smile
Or *Jennifer* or *Sinead* — or *Victor*
Old-fashioned beyond his years
Or *Judith*, now my friend, again my little enemy.

These are the children I was told about
The 'hundred-fold' that I would love and cherish

And is it possible — to love them — these and all the rest

It's easy said. And there is love indeed
And joy in sharing, in counting blessings
Keeping promises. And I am selfish then
Was I unfaithful, when
Suddenly today I wanted children.

THE MAYO NEWS

(An interview with Mr. Gerard Bracken, editor of *The Mayo News*)

Editor: Mr. Bracken, let me begin with a compliment. For the many years of its existence the *Mayo News* has been both Bible and Baedeker for a great majority of the ordinary people of West Mayo. Just how old is the paper? Who founded it? And what, in short, is its history?

Mr. Bracken: The first edition of the "Mayo News" came off the printing press in March 1892. It was founded by Pat Doris, who was its first editor, and it continued in the ownership of the Doris family until 1944, when it was purchased by a consortium of businessmen in Castlebar. In 1947 the paper and printing works were sold to an Irish language promotion group *Foilseacháin Náisiunta Teoranta* in Dublin.

Q. *Who are the present proprietors? Is there a board of directors? and how many people are employed in the concern.*

A. The paper is still owned by F.N.T., which has a Board of five directors. There are twenty-one full-time, and a number of part-



Editor, Gerard Bracken, at his desk.

time, employees attached to the *Mayo News* office.

Q. *Do please make a commercial here! What are your main foreign points of outlet? and what are your subscription rates?*

A. Our subscription list includes readers in England, Scotland, parts of the continent, the U.S.A. and Australia. Apart from our individual mailing system to such countries, over a thousand copies of *The Mayo News* are on sale in the centre of London on Friday mornings as a result of an express delivery service. It is known that a single copy of the paper is often passed on to up to twenty families in different States of the U.S.A.

The annual subscription rates (cost of paper and postage) are: U.S.A. — £35.85 (airmail); £24.48 (surface); England and Scotland etc.; £20.80.

Q. *As regards content, a good deal of cynical scorn is poured by Irish national television on the reportage of local council-meetings, court-cases and "parish - pump" affairs. Do you regard these as useful and necessary features of a local newspaper?*

A. A provincial or local newspaper is expected to reflect what might be described as "parish - pump" affairs. national events are covered by the daily papers, radio and T.V. Whereas a limited percentage of people purchase a daily newspaper, there are few homes in which a copy of the local paper is not found. To this readership "parish-pump" affairs are the be-all of news. Debate in public places would be very limited without the availability of comment on topical events as reported in the local newspapers. Reportage of county-council-meetings and court-cases are regarded as an intergal part of the service provided by such papers and even litigant must often depend on local newspaper reports to ascertain the actual outcome of proceedings. Without local newspapers to act as "watchdogs", the public would be much in the dark regarding administration by Public Authorities; and the stewardship of public representatives is often assessed by their contribution to debates on matters of public — and especially local — interest.

Q. *Do you often find the need to prune such material, or are you ever subject to unfair pressure from interested parties?*

A. While public representatives and other speakers tend to be long-winded or repetitive, creditable journalists can be relied on to use discretion to get the message reported in good taste and in the least space necessary. Only when space is limited is it necessary for me to use the blue pencil on reports which arrive on my desk. Reports from other sources must often be pruned to make them presentable to readers. At times public representatives are liable to make charges of being misquoted, or quoted "out of context", but they generally welcome all coverage possible for their

contributions and efforts to serve the public. On the other hand, newspaper-editors are subjected to much pressure to "kill" reports of court-cases, with various excuses being offered about possible repercussions that might arise from the publication of such cases. We regard the publication of court-cases as part of our service to the public, but they are not a priority on our policy programme. Pride of place will always go to more human-interest affairs and, where at all possible, we make every effort to accenuate the positive.

Q. *Does the presentation of political comment present you with any specific difficulty?*

A. On the political front, we follow a "middle of the road" policy, which leaves us free to make independent comment on political affairs and to present a balanced viewpoint. Such a policy eliminates any difficulty in this field.

Q. *The Mayo News has a long tradition of service to sport in Mayo. Is this high on your list of priorities?*

A. Down the years *The Mayo News* has devoted many of its pages to the coverage of sport — especially when we were printing as a broadsheet. Some years back when the West Mayo Junior Championship was arousing so much interest, *The Mayo News* devoted more coverage to it than any other provincial paper in similiar circumstances. And figuring prominently in that coverage were the activities of Louisburgh G.A.A. club. At that time also it was not unusual for us to include two columns on camogie affairs when such clubs were active. Having a personal interest in sport, I would like to think that it will always be high on our list of priorities.

Q. *As editor of a widely-read popular weekly you enjoy a considerable position of influence, and therefore responsibility, in the community. How so you see these as a service to the people of the area? (I think particularly of the choosing of a subject for an editorial and how you would treat of the matter).*

A. If there is any truth in the old adage that "the pen is mightier than he sword", a newspaper editor must accept a position of responsibility in the community — whatever about enjoying considerable influence! While it is not always easy to adhere to the demands of such a responsibility, an editor must be seen to practice what he, or she, preaches; and to ensure that his newspaper serves to better the lot of the local community. I would like to think that our *Viewpoint* column reflects a policy of talking with our readers, rather than talking down to them as can — unwittingly perhaps — be conveyed in the orthodox newspaper editorial. Our *Viewpoints* on current affairs are chosen in the hope of high-lighting injustices and championing the causes of people who are not in a position to help themselves. in all cases priority is

given to Mayo affairs; with the emphasis on searching for the real reasons behind the problem, as opposed to seeking causes for condemnation.

Q. There must have been a number of conspicuous events and features with which you were associated as reporter or as editor. Can you briefly recall a few?

A. During my term as a member of the "fourth estate" there are many conspicuous events, some joyous, some sad, which come to mind. With space at a premium I will recall just two of them. The first was unfortunately, a sad event — the Clew Bay tragedy of 1958 when five people were drowned while making the boat-crossing from Clare Island to Roonagh pier. I well remember that October morning, when I was on holidays, getting a call from the then editor, Michael Foy, requesting me to come back to cover the tragedy. I can still recall meeting the shocked parishioners on Roonagh pier as they told me in hushed voices of their fears. I remember how I wrote my impressions of the scene, as local families gathered together in a Louisburgh farmhouse waiting for news, at 2 a.m. on the following morning, for the current edition of *The Mayo News*, which being published later that morning; and of the subsequent search of the bay.

The other event was a joyous occasion — the visit of the late Princess Grace of Monaco to Mayo in 1961, one of my first major assignments as editor. For the royal visit we included a special supplement covering her journey to Croagh Patrick, her meeting with her Mayo cousins in Westport, the visit to her ancestral home at Drimurla, near Newport, and my exclusive interview with the Princess, on behalf of the world media, in Newport House Hotel evening.

Q. To be parochial: do you have difficulty in collecting current news and stories from the Louisburgh area? What advice would you give to the P.R.O.'s of our many associations as to how they might more efficiently use the opportunity which a local paper affords?

A. Twenty years ago, Louisburgh and its hinterland always featured in a big way in our news and sports pages. Recently, and for some unexplainable reason, we seem to have failed to give Louisburgh the coverage it deserved during say, the past decade. That situation is now righting itself and coverage is again coming back on stream. Louisburgh has earned itself much respect for its do-it-yourself efforts and enjoys the privilege of having many associations in its closely-knit community. To ensure that the parish gets fair publicity and help for its endeavours, the P.R.O.'s can aid in a big way by having copy of reports, and "plugs" of events which cannot be covered directly from our office, in our office as early as possible for the current editions. They should



In the newsroom, reporters Chris Lavelle (left) and Martin Curry.

write on *one* side of the paper only, leaving *good space* between the lines for any necessary editing. Copy with us in time for the make-up of "early pages" would have a better chance of inclusion in the current edition.

Q. May I enquire about the present size of readership: if you are confident of maintaining or expanding that in the difficult period ahead?

A. Taking the average family to be five, we can claim a readership of 50,000 approximately. Despite the introduction of another publication in the county recently, and increased production-costs which must be passed on to the reader and advertiser, we have not alone retained our readership, but *increased* it. Relying on such facts and figures, one cannot be but optimistic or the future of *The Mayo News*, even through an expected difficult period ahead.

Q. Have you ever considered a specific weekly section — a resume of the week in Ireland — for the information of emigrants?

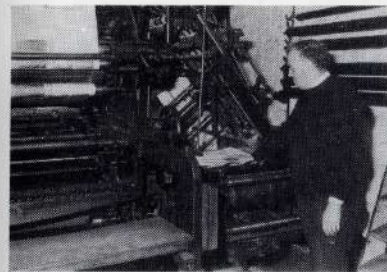
A. In a world served by such modern communications system, we find that emigrants are well catered for by reportage of national events in Ireland and that they would be more interested in their home county news. So such a section is not being considered at present.

Q. The present economic recession probably restrains your editorial wishes, and perhaps dictates an imbalance between advertising space and more literary

content. If, by some chance, you had completely adequate finances at your command, what are the main areas of expansion and improvement that you would plan?

- A. At the present day a provincial newspaper depends for its viability on the finance received from advertising. And, as often as not, space devoted to advertising must get priority causing an imbalance between it and editorial matter. Having the best literary content possible would be all to no avail without the necessary financial back-up from advertising. The price paid for a weekly newspaper would not even cover the cost of the newsprint involved. If by some good fortune adequate finance became available to *The Mayo News*, I would suggest to its directors the installation of a computerised type setting and offset-printing system — now used by the majority of provincial newspapers. This would leave an unlimited number of pages at our disposal to cater for demand. With extra staff available, I would then consider the inclusion of many new features, extra reportage of sport and topical events — including a weekly page devoted to affairs in areas like Louisburgh.
- Q. Many years ago I had the pleasure of consulting old Mayo News issues in the Newspaper Library of the British Museum at Colindale in North London. Are there such files in any other centres? and is there a micro-film service?
- A. As well as the availability of old files since 1892 in the British Museum, such files are available in the National Library in Dublin from the 1922 period. And now all the issues since 1892 are available on micro-film in the County Library in Castlebar, where they may be inspected by giving advance notice to the management.
- Q. In older issues one notices frequent essays of historical or literary value. Has there been a conscious change of policy, or has this been dictated by circumstance?
- A. While the policy of *The Mayo News* has not changed in this respect down the years, space given in earlier years to essays of historical or literary value, has given way to a demand for more hard-news coverage.
- Q. There is a book-publishing business in conjunction with your office at James's Street in Westport. Can you tell me something about it and its productions?
- A. As well as publishing *The Mayo News* at our office in Westport, we also print there the weekly national Irish language newspaper, *Inniu*.

Our printing works also includes a section devoted to book-binding, with a priority for books in the Irish language. At least twenty books printed at our works reach the news-stands



At left: Paddy Hastings starts the big press rolling. At right: Tony Moore and Padraig Geraghty puts the latest edition "to bed".

- annually and we also cater for the usual commercial printing needs.
- Q. The paper has had a very commendable history of service in patriotism on any levels. Do you see a decline of interest in, say, the Irish language content over the years? And are you conscious of difficulty in trying to steer people away from militant nationalism towards a practical patriotism?
- A. Since the foundation of the paper it has always moulded and nurtured views on national ideals. Any decline in Irish language content is due to economic reasons and a demand on space in a tabloid like ours for hard news. We have had no experience of any difficulty in guiding people towards a practical patriotism.
- Q. Finally, if you will, let us exchange roles: As an editor, can you tender any advice for the improvement of development of this magazine in the service of our people, many of whom you also serve? (Please do not pull any punches!)
- A. Ever since I had the privilege of seeing the make-up and printing of the first edition of the *Coinneal*, the magazine has had a special interest for me. Perhaps it is because of my early association with Louisburgh and its people — and that I feel it is compatible in many ways with my home town of Newport — that I can identify with many of its achievements, and problems. The *Coinneal* is mainly by Louisburgh people for Louisburgh people. Like any reputable parish magazine it is geared towards the emigrant market. It contains the necessary mix of nostalgia and of Louisburgh's plans for progress into the 'eighties. I see little need for a change in content, but perhaps some change in format might give it still better image. The *Coinneal* has stood the test of over twenty years. This, I hope, Mr. Editor, will be incentive enough for you and your Editorial Board to continue with the good work.

Editor: Many thanks, Mr. Bracken, for sharing your talent and time with our readers. We are well aware, not alone of the fact that our first issue came off your press, but also of the continued support and publicity that you accorded *An Choinneal* in the years since then. For this we thank you publicly now and hope that we have in this issue introduced *The Mayo News* to many new subscribers.

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O'MALLEY Mrs. Annie, Mass., U.S.A.
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Focal Scoir

So, we have survived. The candle still burns!

Our next concern is the 1984 issue which le cúnamh Dé will be our silver jubilee issue. The Editor would welcome ideas and suggestions as to how we might suitably celebrate in that issue.

Meantime we do intend to avail ourselves of the loyal and generous offers of organized functions for *An Choinneal* in our disparate "colonies".

Go mbeirimid beo an t-am seo arís!

Foundation Members . . . (CONTINUED)

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