

An Cúinneal

LOUISBURGH 1990





All the
way from
Louisburgh



Cover Picture:
Louisburgh Playgroup at play.
See p.113
Photo – Liam Lyons

An Choinneal is a periodical of Kilgeever parish (Louisburgh, County Mayo).
The oldest parish magazine in Ireland, it appeared in alternate years since 1959.

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*The Editor wishes to thank all the people whose voluntary efforts have helped to
produce this seventeenth issue. In particular we express thanks to Liam Lyons and
Frank Dolan, professional photographers, who have supplied photographs free of
charge; and the many shopkeepers in town who exhibit and sell the magazine
without any commission.*

*Because of continuing postal uncertainties we request all our foundation members
to acknowledge receipt of this number, even formally. Members' copies are posted
on the day after publication. American copies are posted direct from Delran, New
Jersey by our agent Mrs. Mary (Dunne) Richter.
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Letters to the Editor

An Choinneal is a credit to ye. You can go back and read the old editions again and again and always find something new . . . It had been on my mind for a few years to make a contribution as I had some dates and names and the background stories of events that took place over the last number of years. I was very pleased that you got all the article in.

Pat Joe McHale
Taghadoe, Maynooth

We are all happy that Pat Joe did have his article about the McHale's in the last issue and that he lived to read and enjoy it. We sympathize with Delia and their four sons and four daughters and pray for Pat Joe's happy repose.

The phone rang last week and this woman's voice said: You don't know me and I don't know you, but I'm from Louisburgh." Phil Geoghegan, would you believe? She could not believe that I remembered her. She went to school with my sister, Nuala. She ordered three copies of the *Coinneal*: one for herself, one for Teresa and one for Ann. And then we two Bunowen girls just talked and talked. And talked! And it was really lovely to have such a chat with someone from home.

Mary (Dunne) Richter, Delran, N.J.

The telephone company must be very pleased, too, Mary! Thank you for all the time and talent that you and Bob have put into the organizing and sales of the magazine in the States.

With all our family at home and four grandchildren it's not easy to get a quiet corner to read. In fact they are doing the reading now, and remembering their summer

holidays in Killadoon. Health and happiness to all our friends in Louisburgh.

Mary and Frank Sheridan, Coventry.

Watch out for another Come-home week, Mary, and another Killadoon holiday.

I was most interested in the article about the possibility of gold in the Doolough area . . . and also in the Famine walk: I had never heard of the original one I am ashamed to say. I often wonder who is in "our" cottage now. Do you know? I hope that they are enjoying it as we did.

Nora McAllister, Rathfarnham

Mrs. McAllister died since she wrote that note. May she enjoy forever her new home!

"Two for Joy:" brought back many memories. What a character poor Michael O'Grady was! We called him "The Boss" in our house as his own words were: I'm the boss when the boss is out."

Berry (O'Grady) Ryan, Blackrock, Dublin

Yes, Betty, it is quite remarkable how often Michael's name and doings surface here from the memories of those who were fortunate enough to know him.

Just flicked through until I saw John McDonnell's death (R.I.P.) Enclosed is money to be offered for a Mass for him. The night we won that waltzing competition was the greatest! I hope he is as happy in heaven as he was in Louisburgh!

Sarah O'Connell, Camden Town,
London.

Thank you, Sarah and for your lovely thought. The parish clergy took on the

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obligation of offering Mass for John. Can't you imagine him gliding along the waxed floors of paradise! Would you like to take us through that 'old-time' competition step by step in our next issue?

What a pleasant surprise in this morning's post! Very good value for money. Keep up the good work!

Nancy Darby, Leopardstown, Dublin.

Your letter was no surprise at this end, Nancy, because you regularly send us your encouragement.

Really enjoyed it. Very well done – very personal and at the same time professional. My retirement from the Air Force didn't last long! I'll be off to San Antonio, Texas to become pastor of the Prince of Peace parish there with 3,000 souls. And I must learn Spanish!

(Father) Eugene Nee

Ah well, Eugene, as they might say in Bundorrcha, Que sera, sera!

I am snatching a few minutes to drop you a line of thanks, appreciation and admiration for the last issue. There is no end to the consolation I get from reading its marvellous contents. It certainly keeps me in touch with all the progress in Louisburgh.

Alice (Jennings) Sammon, Islandeady

And truly, Alice, it is good for us to hear that we are serving that precise objective. Feel free always to suggest improvements for our readers.

Olga Edridge has asked me to thank you for the copy of your parish magazine, *An Choinneal*, which you so kindly sent her.

Bridget Caldwell
(Heart of the Matter, BBC)

Hmm. Edridge . . . and Caldwell . . . Mm. . . Uggool maybe? or Cregganawaddy?

After a long dry spell the grey clouds were gathering and then down comes the rain! *An Choinneal* arrived and it was indoors from then on. As I came removed it from its cover I felt itchy but when I came across the editorial my problem was solved – it was gold-dust! I don't mind how much they get as long as they leave Fairy Hill untouched. I rolled down there with my belly full of blackberries time and time again in the old days.

Johnny O'Malley, Queensland

We'll consult the met office to have this issue arrive with the rain too, Johnny. By the way, would you write all you know about Fairy Hill for the young blackberries of today's Bunowen?

Many thanks to yourself and the committee. Congratulations. I am looking forward to a good read.

Joseph Cassidy (Archbishop of Tuam)

Thank you, Archbishop. We all feel we owe you a debt because of your statement about mining on the Reek. Is there any chance that, having 'done' the Reek you might begin the station at Doolough?

The *Coinneal* is now fairly well spread around Yorkshire and Derbyshire and I am enclosing a cheque for £200 so far collected. It's a fine production and the front cover is really beautiful. God bless your great work for the parish.

Gerard Harney

Before you disappear up the promotion ladder Canon Gerard, we do thank you for the organisation you did for us in the Yorkshire and Derbyshire areas.

My sister, Nora Grady in Worcester sent me your lovely book and I enjoyed it so much that I forgot about the world and read it through . . . It's wonderful. I also saw you

Our Writers

Apart from our regular roster we introduce our writing teams:

Patrick Ball is principal teacher at Louisburgh Boys School.

Jim Bowe (Main Street) is bank manager in Ballaghaderreen on the Mayo-Roscommon border.

Sister Ailbe Coyne (Aillemore) is a Mercy Sister in Claremorris.

Michael J. Durkan (Bridge Street) member of a well-beloved Louisburgh family, was an early contributor to *An Choinneal*.

Jimmy Egan (Doire Garbh) teachers at Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh.

Michael Lyons (The Colony) was a talented and stylish college footballer. He now lives in Clarinbridge and works in Galway.

Tommy McCormack (Pulgloss) now lives in Mooneen. He has a real interest in Louisburgh emigrants everywhere.

P. J. McNamara (Bridge Street) is an active and loyal worker for all Louisburgh interests in London.

Chris (Mannion) McNally lives in Roonith. A great admirer of the late Tom Maguire.

Seán Morahan (Main Street) has recently retired from teaching in Sydney, Australia.

Lisli O'Dowd (Mooneen) is an indefatigable campaigner – and award-winner – for an improved natural environment.

Michael O'Grady (Old Head) shares a family gift for, and interest in Irish tradition and music. He is fast becoming a recognised balladeer.

Vincent O'Loughlin teaches at Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, and is also a concerned and committed member of local community bodies.

Michael P.O'Malley (Doughmackeon) has lived on both sides of the Atlantic and is a keen observer of social changes at home and abroad.

Sister David O'Sullivan, daughter of a lighthouse-keeper lived in many parts of Ireland, including Clare Island. She is now a Mercy Sister in Tralee, County Kerry.

people on TV reincarnating the famine and evictions. When I was in secondary school in Louisburgh we cycled that road on school trips; and so I have very happy memories of Louisburgh. Subscription enclosed for your great work. How long has it been in being? Mary (Grady) Quinn, Bagnelstown, Carlow. We have been in existence since 1959, Mary, long before your cycling trips out by Doolough! And by the way, have you any photograph of such trips or other events for our museum pages?

It's a great issue . . . I seem to be going back and back as I am reading. It's a credit; and I do appreciate the work that went into it.

Mary (Lyons) Drogheda

Labour of love and all that, Mary.

I would love to get a copy of the Louisburgh magazine as advertised in the *Western People*.

Mrs. Mary Curley, Coolourty, Tuam.

Magazine sent. Now Mary T., tell us more. Tell us, as we say in Louisburgh, who you are yourself!

I am returning your *Coinneal* Number One and very much appreciate your kindness in lending it to me. I am happy to have my collection complete except for the first issue. You and your committee are to be congratulated on the standard of your journal and on the persistence with which you have continued to publish it over the years. It must be of enormous interest to all in your area and to tall your emigrants. Go maire sibh.

(Mrs) Sheila Mulloy, Westport

Such encouragement from a person of your qualification in history and in published material is really appreciated, Mrs. Mulloy. Saol fada faoi shean agat!

Enclosed is a small donation in memory of a great Louisburghman, Patrick Kitterick. I was delighted in my visits to Shranacloya when Patrick would accompany me to Laughta Hills and reminisce about Grandfather Hastings. I was saddened on my visit in May to find him in failing health. I am sure that he is enjoying the reward of a good life.

(Father) Jim Darcy, Florida

Our sorrow at Patrick's death was softened a little, Jim, by the fact that he had in our last issue given a list of the names of places in his home area which few others could have given. But his energy is missed in many local committees.

I bought my last issue (1987) of *An Choinneal* when I was in Ireland last year. I very badly want the next issue because my family comes from Louisburgh . . . So I sent eight pounds Irish to Father Leo Morahan in care of the parish of Kilgeever Parish Church for the 1988 issue . . . I would have written to one of your U.S. representatives but no addresses were given. May I suggest that it would help if a U.S. contact number was included in future issues.

(Mrs) Lynn Rogers, New Mexico

Your letter seems to have strayed, Mrs. Rogers; but I hope that you have by now got your requested issue. Yes, your idea is worthwhile; we will have the address of our American distributor in this and following issues.

Many thanks for my copy of *An Choinneal*; it always has a flavour of its own. I congratulate you on keeping it always at such a high standard.

Joseph Cunnane
(retired Archbishop of Tuam)

We hope, Archbishop, that you will enjoy our tribute in this issue to our mutual friend, your late colleague, Bishop Fergus.

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Will you please include these remarks in the coming issue: Our visits to the West of Ireland can never be quite the same now that Joe O'Toole of Thallabawn is no longer with us. God rest him. We always received a genuine, wonderful welcome from Joe, a modest, kindly, caring man whose only thought was for others. He will indeed be sorely missed by everyone who was lucky to know him.

Austin and Ellen Staunton, Cumbria
Your words reflect the feelings of many. Have you read Michael Longley's lovely poem about Joe? (See page 128)

The following letters have been sent direct to our American distributor Mrs. Richter (Mary Dunne of Bunowen). Her address is: 299 Tenby Chase, Delran, New Jersey. The replies in each case are the Editor's.

I have read some of the articles and they are both interesting and well written. Put me on the mailing list. *Slainte!*

Patricia Gavin

Welcome aboard, Patricia. Slainte mhaith!

Mary, I knew your parents and grandparents well. My sister has not received the *Coinneal* for a long time.

Norah Gibbons

We'll see to it, Norah, that she gets every future issue and a copy of every past number we have left in stock.

Many thanks for the speed with which we received *An Choinneal*. I am thoroughly enjoying it.

(Phil (Geoghegan) Cantarella

The speed is really due to the efficiency of our distributor in Delran, Phil. Glad to know that you two Bunowen girls linked up because of this magazine.

I enjoyed it so much. It was like taking a walk along the seashore in Devlin. I saw my grandnephew Justin Cox's picture in there with the other boys playing football. Thank you for making me aware of the magazine, Mary.

Mary (Cox) Keith

Bringing the seashore in Devlin to a home in New York is exactly the kind of result we set out to achieve, Mary. And we are really glad to have a new reader. Could you now perhaps find another, who will find another . . . and so on like the repeating waves at Devlin?

Thank you so much for the work you do for the home parish. It was great getting the list of names for the Come-Home week, but I wondered who many of them were. Then I thought: who would ever guess that myself, being Mullin, and Joan Watson and Mary Kelleher and the three McCormack's are all the same family from Polgloss? It would be nice to have everyone's maiden name. A new project and a lot of work.

Bridie (McCormack) Mullin

Good point, Bridie. It can be done gradually without all that work. We do already print maiden names (like your own here) whenever we get them.

So ahoy there, all married female readers! Give us your maiden names also, please.

Mary, I would hazard a guess that you must be a daughter of Jack Dunne and Nora McEvilly. Am I right? I am sure that I speak for a host of exiles when I say that *An Choinneal* is the golden link that unites us with our past.

Thomas O'Malley (California)

Bull's-eye, Father Tommie! (as regards the first part of your statement). Also we hope, for the second.

Further letters page 124

Spotted Heifer

Editorial

*Tell him the spotted heifer calved in May;
She died, poor thing, but that you needn't mind!*

So ran a couplet in the old-time school-books from a mother's letter to an emigrant; giving him the good news and screening the bad. An opinion surfaces from time to time that this magazine paints a too-pleasant picture of our locality and community; seeing the parish through rose-tinted glass. It is a helpful criticism, a valuable corrective, and can help to keep the compass true. It would be more beneficial still if the oral critique was written for publication backed up by fact and instance. Such contributions are always welcome in these columns; welcome but not, *faraor*, welcomed! Only once – twenty-five years ago by Father Pat O'Malley of Doughmackeown – was that line of argument set down in a concerned and thoughtful article. *An Choinneal* is less worried about defending its approach than encouraging its readers at home and abroad by giving a hopeful vision of what is happening in the parish, good and bad.

So, what is bad in the parish at present? The question is easily answered. What is really bad just now is that people are leaving home in such numbers. The actual numbers may not be as frightening as during the exodus of the 'forties and 'fifties: what *is* frightening is that numbers that have remained are so few. A recent head-count shows that Louisburgh town has shrunk from a population of three hundred to *one* hundred; family houses closed in many villages; the once-thriving village of Emlagh reduced now to just *four* inhabitants!

This, of course, is not just a local problem; it is at present affecting vast areas of countryside in rural Ireland. Where are we heading for as a parish? and what are the remedies, if any, for our *malaise*? For the umpteenth time (*pace* our disgruntled readers!) we repeat our view of what are the major shortcomings in our locality. Young people like to travel, to see the other side of the hill. They learn by this experience, but as they mature many of our emigrants recognise that, for all the glitter elsewhere, Ireland is where they would like to make their home. A home must be financed, however; and the cold fact is that in rural Ireland today the opportunity of *earning* a livelihood is practically *nil*. Faced with a choice of remaining as parasites on society or leaving to find gainful and dignified work, they have taken the only sensible and commendable option. Why has such an eventuality been allowed to happen? We repeat that it has happened in great measure because successive governments have mis-used a system of social welfare to encourage idleness; even to make idleness more lucrative than a day's work! How can any

society survive on such a crazy programme? The challenge has gone out of life for many of our people, and they have sought it elsewhere.

As a backdrop to the present downward trend a re-appraisal could well be made of our Irish educational system. It has been widely admitted that young Irish men and women are among the best educated among their peers wherever they have emigrated. But the *curriculum* of education in Ireland should be questioned. Are they being educated *for* emigration? Are we to be happy that such a vast proportion of our national resources is devoted to an investment which will be forever lost to our society as our young people emigrate? Are we trying to fill a leaking vessel? How many of Ireland's second-level students have Agriculture or Horticulture on their curriculum? Are we educating our young people *away from* the cultivation of land? – and this, in a world which is crying out for natural, organic food; this, in a parish which is trying to build up a tourist industry! Can our hotels and catering-houses ever hope to provide a menu of home-grown foods to tourists who must wince when they are served the identical cellophaned quick-foods that have been wearied by in their homes? Surely there should be some place where we might all be educated to appreciate what has been so often called a *quality of life* – a preference for the natural and the wholesome, whether it be a garden of cabbage plants in Dereen or the unspoiled beauty of Clishcúim and Doolough!

And here is where *An Choinneal* sees its role – to ask not only “why?” but also “why not?” and to keep a light of hope alive. Paradoxically, there is a repeating criticism of news-media nowadays that we are being plied always with *bad* news; never the good. We believe that a realistic emphasis on what is good can have an encouraging effect; a pride in our home parish, a *mórtas cine*. And as we said in our first editorial in 1959: this “will be deemed ‘parochial’; we could wish for no truer compliment; for being-parochial is our very purpose, our reason for existence.”

Things do look rather dismal in the parish just now; but there are the perennial signs of hope. A Community Council is tackling the local problems, the tourist industry had a real increase this year, Louisburgh Holiday Cottages report another success; the local GAA Club has – against all odds – still continued to field a team.

There are losses; but there are gains, too. The spotted heifer may have died; but she has calved! And there is life.

Empty River

Editorial

The people who stand on the bridge in Louisburgh looking into the water don't see trout or salmon in the river any more. Not on May evenings when spring fish usually venture up from the Ling; not in Summer twilight when they lay there of old waiting for the welcome flood from Leachta to give them passage to the spawning-beds. Children can no longer tickle the dallying trout or venture to catch them with their hands. In Carrowniskey the story is much the same. Even Delphi has lost its run of spring fish. Is there something wrong? There is indeed! Bunowen river was once a fishing cynosure. A brochure of 1975 boasted a best daily catch of twelve fish per rod: today's best is, incredibly, *one*! The local fishing club has disbanded. A huge tourist attraction is dying in our hands. What has happened? Poaching? Pollution? Fish-farms?

Poaching is not the reason. Poaching flourished for years and did no appreciable damage to fishing. Local people recall a morning during the war years (1939-'45) when Durkan's Pool had been poached three times successively – and successfully! – and yet, shortly afterwards yielded fourteen fish to an angler! Besides, for one reason or another, poaching has almost disappeared.

Agricultural pollution is not the culprit. Conditions attached to setting up pits for silage or effluent, and a close supervision of these by the Fishery Board, are demanding and effective. The proof of this is that there have been no “fish-kills” in the parish. And this in turn debunks a theory that local afforestation has caused a damaging excess of acid. In fact, the fish are not *there*, to be caught, or poached or “killed”. There has been a debate all over the country about the pro's and con's of fish-farms (i.e. cages where trout and salmon are reared and fed in captivity for the market). Whatever the argument about such fish being unable to cleanse themselves of lice, as wild fish do, by entry into river – or sea-water, the fact that fish have practically disappeared would indicate that we must look farther for the reasons for this tragedy. Literally, farther.

In nature's wonderful way, our fish – having wintered near the coast of Greenland – return to our Irish rivers and to their individual spawning-beds every summer. Their journey takes them along the Irish coast, beginning at Donegal. A practice of *draft-netting** has been legally in vogue from olden times, controlled and supervised. It afforded, or supplemented, a livelihood for people living along the sea-inlets; and it was allowed, by law, only from sun-up on Monday to sun-down on Friday. Some fifteen to twenty years ago, however, a new practice – *drift-netting** – was made legal by ministerial order and government bill. Drift-netting was originally controlled – supposedly for six weeks in June/July – confined to

hem net of maximum four-inch mesh, limited to 1,500 yards length of net and restricted as to fathom depth. The fact is, however, that drift-netting is uncontrollable, or at least uncontrolled. Irish and foreign ships are now raping the run of fish returning from Greenland. They have for some time now been using a length of *ten miles* of net per boat, and recently an Irish and a Spanish boat have been caught with their nets jointed to make, in practice, a *twenty-mile* span! Quotas have been set for mackerel and herring catches, but not for salmon hauls. A new and more "efficient" monofilament nylon net is being used – lighter to carry, invisible to the fish, and obviously of narrower and more deadly mesh, because trout as well as salmon are failing to get through. Further, drift-netting is practically unsupervised: there are no time-limits such as draft-netting had; and there is, of course, no adequate navy to patrol.

Is it any wonder then that no fish has been seen to jump over recent years in our once-teeming pools – Carr's, Durkan's, Pollbree, or the Weir – and that anglers have gradually stopped coming? Before one counts the cost to tourism, let it be noted that it is the draftnetmen (who were legally earning their livelihood) who are the greatest losers. In recent years a steadily growing tourist industry was centred on the local fishing amenities. Family groups were a noticeable feature; they came from Austria, France, Germany, Britain and the U.S. and the spin-off for local hotels and boarding-houses was considerable. There have been praiseworthy efforts locally to make a fishing holiday enjoyable: a government-sponsored FÁS scheme has ten local men improving and providing facilities along the river-banks; this year spinning was banned in favour of fly-fishing; and careful restocking has been done by the release of fry and smolts over the past five years at Tully and Shranacloya. Alas! these only provided further fodder for the man of the drift-nets.

The case is not hopeless: indeed it is so clear-cut that the cure, although drastic, is quite evident to any concerned observer. The immediate cure is a total ban on drift-netting, as now practised, for a term of three to four years. This would give sufficient experimental space to have the case we make proved or disproved. If it could be disproved, then well and good! – some other culprit must be sought and found.

We commend the Western Regional Fishery Board for its obvious efforts to improve the river. We now earnestly urge them to join up with interested bodies all over Ireland and take up at the highest level the pressing question of bringing the driftnetmen to heel. That will not be an easy task, for the vested interests are rich and powerful. But a national campaign should be begun at once, making this scandal an issue in any oncoming local or general election. It should be prepared for immediately and should be supported by every responsible citizen who values the varied richness which a beautiful river brings to Louisburgh, or to any other 'Louisburgh' in the whole land.

* In short, draft-netting is done from the shore; drift-netting from a boat or ship.

A Good Man

There is a story in the parish of Kilgeever, an old story from the time when Father William Joyce (d.1905) was parish priest. He had a falling-out with a family in Cahir, and was apprehensive coming to their house for the "Stations". However, he was welcomed at the gate by the man of the house with a warm handshake; and at the door by his wife with both hands and the phrase: "Not alone for yourself, Father, but for the One you're bringing with you!" Before he left, Father Joyce said: "There's some great blessing in store for this house." ... That prediction of his may well have been embellished in hindsight; for the houses – in Cahirlisheen – was the home of William Sam (Fergus), whose grandson James, born there on 23 December 1895, became a priest (1920) and later (1947) Bishop of Achonry. He retired as bishop in 1976 and died in Ballaghaderreen on Good Friday, 24 March 1989. Leaba imeasc naomh na nGael go raibh aige!

We publish in this issue some memories and tributes from people who knew him well. A recurring theme is his remarkable dual gift of simplicity and intellectual prowess. He was an embodiment of the scriptural counsel to be 'as wise as a serpent and as simple as a dove'. His kind of wisdom was the fruit of a natural talent and a life of Christian conviction. His kind of simplicity came from a clean eye, and a finger on the pulse of humanity. Even the humorous stories about him – and there were many – highlighted the ease with which he could move from a roadside conversation to a Vatican debate; or (quite literally!) from a crozier to a hayfork. And so, in an Ireland which admires anyone who guards against head-in-the-air by keeping his feet on the ground, he was universally loved.

An Choinneal has many reasons for lamenting him. His loyalty was displayed in our letter-columns time and again, and was never more appreciated than in our vulnerable beginnings. In our first issue he would not have his photograph as our frontispiece: "Couldn't you use a nice picture of the parish church?" We did: but the response was so typical that it repaid the attempt. Typical, too, are the excerpts from his will (published below) which gave his directions for his own funeral.

He lived to be ninety-three. His funeral was like a victory celebration on that Easter Tuesday. And so An Choinneal, while sympathising with his sisters, Mrs. Mary Bowe and Mrs. Sal Campbell, his relatives and friends, feels more like congratulating them on the unique book of life that has now closed. This magazine, its readers, committee and editor have shared their privilege; and we find compensation for our loss in the warm memory of having known a good man.

Editor

Uncle James

It is 4 a.m. Easter Saturday morning 1989 and I sit, in the peace and solitude of this March morning, sharing these lonely hours with the mortal remains of a man who was a father-figure to me; a counsellor of immense stature during my formative years; and, particularly in the latter years of his life, a great friend. To most people he was Bishop James Fergus, retired Bishop of Achonry; but to me he was simply "Uncle James". How does a man half his age think of an uncle as a great friend? Life was kind enough to my family and me to domicile us in Ballaghaderreen, and so we were enriched over about twelve years with the wealth of his philosophy, and above all, his natural simplicity.

I would not feel competent to talk of James Fergus as a priest, and bishop, and would leave that to one of the many loyal clergy of the Diocese of Achonry, to whom he was totally devoted, and whose inordinate kindness made his working life, and his subsequent long retirement, a joyous memory for him. I will, however, talk briefly of the man as a human being, a family man, a lover of his own people, and his own place. Those of us who were blood-relations were of course special, but he regarded everyone "from the west" as his own.

Born into a small farm in Cahir, James was one of a family of seven, for whom life at that time dealt out few material joys – other than an immense bond of love. He recalled being given a present of a bible in his youth, and running instantly into the meadow to sit under a cock of hay and browse through something wonderful! Parental love and respect were highly esteemed by him but he had an intense admiration and love for his mother, who died tragically young. It was sad – frightening and yet somehow beautiful – to see him cry in his latter years while he spoke of his mother and of the sacrifices she made to make him what he was. I proudly record that on the 31st October 1960 as I left to take up my first job he gave me the legacy of an amount comparable to my first wage, with the instruction that I send my first wage home to my mother. Although he was the kindest man I have ever known, he was not, however, given to bouts of sentiment; and had an all-encompassing way of attributing all things good and kind, to the divine intervention of his Maker.

James was a student in Maynooth when his mother was sadly taken from him; and he repeatedly blessed the professor who lent him a pound so that he could make the journey home to see her on her deathbed. His prayers were also invoked regularly for John O'Donnell of Cahir who, unsolicited, met him with his horse-and-car at Westport railway station. He thought less kindly, however, of two men (relatives, I always understood – but, then everyone west of Murrisk was his relative!) – who took him aside at his mother's funeral and informed him, as head of the house, that his father had also very little time to live, and that he should be prepared for his demise. Happily, that news although heartbreaking at the time proved very seriously inaccurate. I had the pleasure of holding his father's (my

grandfather's) hand as he died in my home at the age of ninety-one in what was almost a carbon copy of his own leaving of this world.

Although he worked long and hard throughout his working life, he never lost that great sense of boyish excitement, and his love of family members or colleagues around him to relish with him recordings and recollections of funny highlights or, even more so, sporting memories. He was a golfer of no mean achievement and always chided me for having suggested (at least by innuendo) that he might be finished with his golf clubs when he was a mere seventy years of age!

My life will always be full of loving memories of the man, his stories, his reminiscences and his relating of historical fact. I regret that I never succeeded in recording my frequent meetings with him, but to suggest such a thing would have been heresy. I wish I could replay now the expressions of love and admiration he continually expressed for his bishop and loyal priests: for Bishop Thomas Flynn, his kindly and understanding successor who gave of his time and friendship unselfishly; for Father Christy McLoughlin, Father John Doherty and the priests who served with them over many years with unswerving loyalty and friendship, and particularly for Father Pádraic Peyton, Adm., who was by his side continually in his hours of great need and who finally prepared him for his last journey. Would that I could also find words to convey his deep love for his two sisters – my mother Mary Bowe, and my Aunt Sall Campbell, for all the sacrifices they had made so that he could follow his chosen career.

With deliberation I devote my final paragraph to Frances Tierney and Maureen McLoughlin who unselfishly devoted their lives to his care and well-being and who finally made it possible for him to fulfil the wish he so often expressed "to die in his own home and his own bed."

To his doctor, Peter Meagher, Nurse Elizabeth Naughton and to the many kind and loving neighbours, may I offer the gratitude of his family in the certain knowledge that *he* will not forget.

A night has *almost* past – an era *has* past. Those of us who were close to him will cherish his memory. I am just glad he was my Uncle James.

Ballaghaderreen

Jim Bowe

The Bishop's last letter to the Coinneal came in after the 1988 issue:

I am glad to have lived to see this new issue of *An Choinneal*, which contains so many excellent things both old and new. Even before opening it I was forced to pause in admiration of your cover, which is the finest picture of Doolough that I have ever seen. The historic articles as well as the recalling of so many names of the people of the past generation, some of whom I knew personally, were very interesting and informing to me.

But the brilliant idea of bringing in the school-children of the present, and the pictures of past school-rolls, are what gives this issue a new character. I have loved and enjoyed the examples from school-goers which you give. Everyone whom I

have met with having the slightest connection with the parish is now talking and enquiring about An Choinneal.

All things considered I feel that in this issue there is more of the Parish of Kilgeever than in former issues, however excellent. Congratulations, Father Leo; *prosperere, procede!*

James Fergus

A contemporary and relative of the Bishop, Pat Needham of Althore, is now living in Boston and gave two recollections to John McNally of Berwin, Pennsylvania. We are grateful to John for having sent them on:

I remember one time when I was small I was staying with relatives in Cahir. Myself and a few other kids met young James Fergus, who was a big stump at the time, along the road. He was all excited because his grandfather's dog had just had a litter of pups. When we entered the barn the old hound perked up. It was easily known she was glad to see James: with him along we had no trouble getting to see the pups. We made a big fuss of them and that went down well with him. As you can see, that was the side of him before he became a big man in the Church!



Then it was a grand day when the newly ordained Father Fergus rode his bicycle from Cahir to Althore. I spotted him coming up the road. He was heading for Duggan's house. His visit was to be both a happy and sad one. My mother's family was glad to see him an ordained priest but sad to think that their own son, Tommy, could very well have been with him if he hadn't been drowned in a tragic accident while in Tuam with Father Fergus. Within a few moments I had told everyone in the village. And this time there was a litany of kids in Althore running around in their bare feet; by the names of Corrigan, Needham and Jennings; at least twenty of them. They were excited at one of their own being a priest.

My mother (Mary Duggan) asked Father Fergus to bless all the children of the village. He was delighted to do it. Off she went to gather them all, and brought them to our house; and we all knelt down in a circle when himself came in and did the honours. I'm sure that, like myself, none of those present would ever forget that blessing!

Father John Doherty, Parish Priest of Bonniclon and executor of the

Bishop's will writes:

Quae sursum sunt sapite

'Be wise about those things that are above'

—Motto of Bishop James Fergus

I well remember that day in February, 1947. I was going into Charlestown when I met a fellow schoolboy who told me: "We have a new bishop and his name is Canon Fergus from Ballinrobe." The first thing that came into my mind was that he mustn't have got the man's full name for, though I had heard the name *Ferguson*, I had never heard the name *Fergus*! Little did I realise then that for the next forty years this man's life would be closely linked with mine and with the lives of so many others in the Diocese of Achonry.

He wasn't very long in the Diocese when the universal verdict went something like this: "A plain, simple man who talks in a language the ordinary countryman can understand". But it very soon became clear that this 'plain, simple man' was also a man of vast intellectual ability and learning; very wise and shrewd. I recall how we learned with pride, from the little snippets emerging from the Vatican Council, how well our bishop could hold his own with the great scripture scholars and theologians from around the world who were assembled in Rome for the duration of the Council. As time went on and we became more familiar with him we marvelled at this grasp of the great works of literature, and how readily he could quote from them. If pressed, he could recite, in full, poems he liked such as *The Ancient Mariner* or the great and lengthy *Ballad of Reading Gaol*; or again it might be a simple ballad which he found amusing. One such ballad, which he learned and recited when well into his eighties, was given to him by the late Cardinal Ó Fiaich. It tells the story of a man from the North who found himself in court for being drunk and disorderly and pleaded with the judge that it was simply a case of someone slipping a drop of whiskey into his tea.

It wasn't the men from Shercock,
Or the boys from Ballybay,
But the 'dalen' men from Crossmaglen
That put whiskey in me tay.



Pray for the repose of the soul of

**Most Rev.
James Fergus**

Bishop of Achonry

(1947-1976)

Born December 23rd 1895

Died March 24th 1989

—o—

*If we have died with him, we shall
also live with him;*

*If we endure, we shall also reign
with him. (2 Tim. 2:11-12).*

—o—

**AR DHEIS DE GO RAIBH
A ANAM**

To us priests Bishop Fergus was very supportive; and when he spoke to us at Retreat time, who could forget his simple words of advice, often summed up in a memorable phrase like: 'Say your prayers and watch the Ten'.

He liked the company of his priests and moved easily among them, as he did with all his people. But we never forgot that he was our bishop and we respected him as such. I do not think there was ever a priest of his diocese who did not on many occasions receive from him an encouraging word or an unexpected gesture of kindness. Indeed as I look back on his life and recall his many qualities, the one I cherish most is that lovely quality of kindness which, so often without him being aware of it, touched and impressed many people. As Archbishop Joseph Cunnane once remarked: "He always does the right thing and the kind thing, as if by instinct".

A colleague once said to me: "What a pity a man of such wisdom and learning did not put his thoughts into print". What a pity indeed, and what a book it would have made! But then, as we say, that wasn't him. I wouldn't go so far as to say that he had a horror of publicity but he certainly shunned it and never entered the limelight unless it was his definite duty to do so. He had a clear vision of life – to answer God's call and to work hard at whatever God wanted him to do. And for him this simply meant being a good priest; being a good bishop, and never forgetting to be wise about those things that are above.

The Bishop's instructions about his funeral were:

1. Coffin. Most certainly not a casket. A plain, unvarnished coffin – the kind of coffin we see when the remains of people are brought from England. This was the kind of coffin in which the late Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh was buried and also Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul I.
2. Requiem Mass. He did not wish a eulogy or panegyric or a *curriculum vitae*. He asked that his name be mentioned in the Mass only to ask the people to pray for him.
3. The Grave: A simple grave. No vault, no concrete blocks, cement or bricks. He did not wish for any covering of any kind over the coffin. He wanted the clay to fall directly on the coffin so that "to borrow the words of Chesterton, I may be allowed decently 'to rot with Adam and all mankind'."

"I am one of the plain Irish people and I am proud of it."

– Bishop Fergus on the day he became bishop in 1947

Silent Sermon

I'd rather see a sermon,
Than hear one any day

I'd rather you should walk with me
Than merely show the way.

A good doctor's work is a silent sermon. He is dedicated to maintaining the links in the chain of life that stretch through time from the cradle to the grave.

My first encounter with Doctor McHugh was early in 1950. He stayed at my home in Tooreen which belonged at the time to his predecessor, the late Doctor W. H. O'Grady. Shortly after I purchased it he moved to Louisburgh but for many years he used the old dispensary there – the third doctor to operate there.

He is one of a family of three boys born in Kiltimagh to P.A. and Catherine McHugh. From Saint Louis primary school he went to Saint Nathy's, Ballaghaderreen and entered the faculty of medicine in University College, Dublin in the early nineteen forties. A brilliant student, he had a distinguished academic career and was awarded the Gold Medal in surgery in his final examination. He arrived among us in Louisburgh in 1950 to take up an appointment as District Medical Officer, an office which he filled with distinction for almost forty years.

From the onset he became deeply involved in the social role in many local organisations but it was as chairman of Muintir na Tíre that he made his greatest contribution and under his leadership that body was the recipient of a coveted



Presentation to Dr. Columb McHugh in February 1990 at the Parochial Hall, Louisburgh on the occasion of his retirement. Members of the Committee are: Back row, left to right: Séamus Durkan, Father John Ball, Tommie J. O'Malley, Clementine Lyons (Treasurer), Bridie O'Malley, Father Joe Moran, Canon Éamon O'Malley, Joe Staunton, Mary Lyons, Father Leo Morahan. Front row, left to right: Father John Fallon, Mrs. Brigid Sammin (Secretary), Dr. Patricia Heneghan (Chairman), Dr. Columb McHugh, Mrs. Frankie McHugh, Mr. Martin J. O'Toole T.D. and Fr. Tadhg Ó Móráin.

national award. It was, however, in his work as medical practitioner that Columb McHugh excelled. He moved quietly and gently through the district. The elderly people loved him because, as well as tending to their medical needs, he also kept them in touch with all local happenings. They looked forward to his weekly visit and he was often regarded by them as another member of the family.

There was a marked simplicity about him – the deceptive simplicity of true greatness. He braved storms and snowdrifts and icy roads to care for his patients. Sometimes the parishioners had to dig his car out of the snow and carry him across swollen streams. Once, on the periphery of the district, some wandering horses – dazzled by his lights – stampeded and plunged through the windscreen of his car forcing him to abandon it and to seek help in the nearest house some distance away.

The latter half of this century was a period of rapid change in social conditions and attitudes. A new health scheme was introduced extending the medical services and introducing the “health-card”. This added enormously to his work-load. As that burden increased, however, his dedication intensified; and during this period he was sustained by his wife Frankie, who was a tower of strength to him as unpaid telephonist, receptionist and chauffeur!

At a function to mark his retirement the people of his adopted parish gave him a standing ovation. His quiet and warm humanity had earned for him the admiration and respect of all who knew him. His life and work among the people of Louisburgh was indeed a silent sermon, best summed up by a poet in “The Power of Example”.

For the eye's a willing pupil,
More responsive than the ear
Fine Counsel is confusing
But example's always clear.

Tooreen

Patrick Ball



Seán Harney, Chairman of Community Council making presentation of a clock to Doctor McHugh in recognition and grateful appreciation of his involvement with the community during the years. Also in the picture is Mrs Frankie McHugh, receiving a bouquet of flowers from Clementine Lyons.

Greener Pastures?

You can stroll along Old Head Beach again. No longer are the slurping sea-sounds and the cries of shore-birds drowned by the throbbing grumble of tractors making off with trailer-loads of sand! I'm sure the arc of extra-wide tyre tracks that came across on the beach last week wasn't made by any illegal pilferer. The blue flag waves peacefully near the effluent pipe. And you can rest easily in your beds now, assured that nobody is going to ravish the rocks of Croagh Patrick; the gold mining has been stopped by the government. The farmers are cleaning up their silage act. A green verge is being established along the Westport road into town, replacing unsightly parking space. Somebody back the west heard a corncrake this summer. Surely we are at one with nature; we have come to grips with this environmental thing. For Louisburgh, the Green Revolution was a simple skirmish! At least that's what we'd like to think. When you live in a place as lovely as this, it's difficult to take the perils of pollution seriously. There are no belching smoke stacks, no suffocating smog, no desolate urban acres or heaps of toxic waste to stir the senses. Those environmental issues that reared their nasty heads in the past have mostly gone away, and the few that stubbornly persist could hardly make a dent in our wealth of natural aesthetic resources. I mean, a few sweet-papers can't interfere with all this beauty. Right?

Maybe. But however smug we may be about our ecological fortunes at present, we are doing little to arm ourselves against the future. Indeed, we can barely give ourselves credit for taking on the environmental challenges of the day. Those positive developments that have come about have largely been prompted by circumstances or individuals beyond the local compass, making little impact on the outlook of the resident population. Revolutions have less to do with conquest than with change: the changing of very basic ideas and beliefs, the fundamental shift of attitudes. It is those who misunderstand this that look upon the question of environmental awareness as a problem to be solved – or to be avoided – rather than as a way of life. It is because so many of our leaders and representatives fall into this category that we now see a great number of good environmental policies negatively enforced – through, for example, an imposition of fines or penalties – rather than positively implemented, sponsored and subsidized, that local people look upon preservation of the environment more as the repression of one's personal rights. When it comes to making that essential attitude change towards being “environmentally friendly”, Louisburgh – and indeed, most of Ireland – has not yet begun to fight.

One example of a right decision being made for the wrong reasons – at least as far as the environmental lobby is concerned – is the case of the gold-mining ban on Croagh Patrick. It was in May of this year that Minister for Energy, Bobby

Mulloy, made his historic announcement: the exploration licence area that included the mountain, which had been prospected for some years by Burmin Exploration and Development PLC, was now off-limits for future prospecting and any commercial minerals development. Even as we popped the champagne corks the exploration company swore they would challenge the decision, and at present are seeking substantial compensation from a government who, in their estimation, owes them a chance to mine this lucrative strike. But, in spite of this cloud, we have good reason to celebrate.

It took a substantial amount of effort on the part of numerous campaigners, including our bishop Joseph Cassidy, as well as a deal of courage on the part of the Minister, to arrive at this happy outcome, and all are to be congratulated. But Mr. Mulloy failed us in stressing that his decision was based strictly on spiritual – not environmental – considerations. Croagh Patrick, in this instance, is unique; and the ban can have no bearing whatsoever on the many other potential mining sites in our area and throughout Ireland. No legislation has been changed; no clauses protecting the natural and social environments from the hazards of mining have been enacted; the Minister for the Environment still retains the right to exempt mining companies, and all developers, from the environmental impact assessment process. All we have won is the battle for Croagh Patrick; and just how long the Minister's ban will remain in force has yet to be seen.

Where does this leave us with regard to the gold prospect at Cregganbaun in the Doolough Valley? Though certainly not a recognised pilgrimage site for Catholics, this area does undoubtedly have its own very apparent spirituality. It is a spirituality that emanates from the very physical beauty and solitude of the place; for the spiritual and the natural world can by no means be perfectly disassociated. But Bobby Mulloy's terms split the two unequivocally and, as such, there can be little hope that the government will intervene to save us this time. The Doolough prospect, which is being explored by Glencar in joint venture with Andaman Resources, has already been publicized as holding mineral reserves twice as extensive as those promised for Croagh Patrick, and indications are strong that this estimate could increase substantially. The deposit – if it can be accurately referred to in the singular – extends westwards from the Sheaffy mountains, through Cregganbaun and all the way to the coast at Kinnadoohy, near Thallabawn, and is roughly a kilometer wide. Phenomenal values of gold – more than nine ounces per tonne of ore – have been ascertained in isolated locations. What this means is that every effort will be made to mine this gold, and probably long before we see statutory environmental safeguards in place. Such a major development could have extraordinary consequences for the wider Louisburgh area, yet people, whether in favour of the mining or against it, have remained strangely silent on the subject. Whether this is due to generalized apathy about our future, or to a feeling that there is nothing that can be done about it, or simply to a conviction that if you ignore the problem it will go away or be taken care of by somebody else, I would not venture to say. But it is certainly not the first time that we have turned a blind eye to the very real environmental issues confronting us.

It took a well-known journalist writing in the *Irish Times* to direct our attention to a serious wrong being perpetrated under our very noses. For generations sand had been hauled away from the beaches for use in building and around the farm. Technology has allowed more and more sand to be taken in less time and, until recently, it had reached the point where a walk on the beach meant dodging around human and vehicular shovellers. No attention was paid to the serious erosion of the beach, which was accelerating as a result. Not until that columnist screamed out in horror against what she saw happening while on holidays at Old Head did most folks here sit up and take notice. Suddenly the council saw fit to stiffen and enforce the existing penalties for removing sand – in an effort to redeem their prestigious blue flag, no doubt – and the roar of the tractors died down. I won't go so far as to say they've ceased altogether. The real issue here is not about filching sand; nor is it about blue flags on tourist beaches. It's about people learning not to exploit natural resources, but to work in harmony with them. If we continue trying to press our advantage, we will all too quickly discover that compensation is demanded elsewhere. If we take too much sand from the shore, the sea will all the sooner devour our land. Laws regulating this should not be seen as restrictive sanctions, implemented for the benefit of tourism-promoters and holiday-makers, but as useful guidelines which, if observed, can help to improve the quality of life for us all.

Perhaps it is not surprising that those who protest most loudly against these guidelines are those who stand to gain the most from them. Change comes hard to traditional communities, particularly where livelihoods are won (not without a struggle) from the land. But once they are accepted, procedures are rarely questioned. Silage-making, for example, has been practised in this area only during the last generation, but it has become so widespread that it is rare now to see a field of haycocks. Silage has earned a reputation for being efficient and economical, but no one thought too much about whether it was environmentally sound. It follows that farmers met the new laws limiting the release of toxic silage effluent with understandable resistance, some viewing the expenditure involved in complying with the regulations as further persecution of an already beleaguered class. But in the end they must have seen that it would be themselves who would suffer the consequences of polluted ground or surface waters, either directly or indirectly, for most have now cheerfully conformed to the pollution standards.

Slower to sink in, both literally and figuratively, is the long-term damage done to farmland, not to mention the crops and those who eat them, by repeated weed-killing, monocultural seeding and intensive artificial fertilization. The ever-greener pasture seems to be the goal, even if that be at the expense of the soil itself, or of those dwelling on it. The organic option does not seem to have established itself in any way as a viable farming method yet; though I think this, too, will change as Europe grows smaller and the demand for organic produce increases.

Overgrazing, particularly by mountain sheep, is another environmental problem which local farmers have yet to address, and yet to identify themselves with as the primary victims. Huge tracts of mountain have been so nibbled down, and

allowed so little time for replenishing, that the land is eroding away at an alarming rate. The cause: attractive headage payments and a policy of putting greater numbers of ewes on smaller areas of ground. Headage payments are nice, and perhaps necessary; but the land can't tolerate this abuse, and nobody will lose out quicker than the farmer if his land is washed away. And washed down the hill as well are the Ecoli-infested droppings of all those hungry sheep, which are contributing to the pollution of the streams and lakes into which they fall.

I'm not trying to portray the agricultural sector as the architect of all our environmental woes. Like all modernizing industries, farming may have temporarily lost touch with the quiet voice of nature, spurred on by international example and competition for markets. But ultimately the "strictly-business" attitude goes against the grain of the true man, or woman, of the soil. I believe Irish small farmers are resisting this trend, and they deserve all the support they can get. The small-farming way of life is, essentially, what makes Louisburgh the haven it is and I, for one, would hate to see it go. Where else but on the small farm could you hope to play host to the fast-disappearing corncrake? If you are among the chosen few who heard one, or about one, this year, consider yourself privileged. These shy birds number less than 1,000 in all Ireland, and only a handful have been heard in this area. But since most corncrakes nest in small meadows, especially those with rushes and *shellastrings* (wild iris), it is largely in the hands of small farmers to protect them. They can preserve the corncrake's habitat by leaving rough areas uncut, or by mowing late in the season and in a specific way. The Irish Wildbird Conservancy has issued a pamphlet called "Every Corncrake Counts" which tells how to do it.

There is one local pollution problem, and I'm afraid it's one of the biggest, which reaches into virtually every household. Littering and dumping are twin evils about which we are notoriously careless, and I have seen little improvement down the years. It is an area which most convinces me that fundamental attitudes have not yet changed here, that the Green Revolution has not truly begun. It's a tough problem to tackle because the perpetrators are usually anonymous or, in the case of the litterers, completely oblivious to what they are doing. What's lacking, it seems, is a sense of pride in our community, our town and our landscape. This is our home! Why mess it up? Dispose of your rubbish properly! And next time you see a chocolate wrapper on the street, or a pile of trash in the drain, pick it up. Don't do it for the environmentalists. Don't do it for the tourists. Do it for yourself.

It will come, in time. The winds of change are here. As with most change, it is beginning with the younger generation. Take a look at this year's Sancta Maria Secondary School Yearbook. On every other page is an article on environmental importance: mining, coastal erosion, recycling, picking daisies. These kids have said it all, and nothing could be more encouraging for our future. Let's take our cues from them and start the Revolution in Louisburgh. Soon our "greener pastures" will take on a whole new significance.

Mooneen

Lesli O'Dowd

Resource Centre

Rural Ireland is suffering from decades of emigration and neglect. The communities along the western seaboard have gradually diminished, until now the viability of any rural community is questioned. I am now in my twentieth year living and working in this locality and I see many changes since 1970. Louisburgh is a typical example of this and is now suffering a reduction in population, services and economic activity. Emigration has played a major part in this: at least nine out of every ten students who leave Sancta Maria College each year leave Louisburgh. This not only reduces the population but also leaves it older and less energetic and such lack of energy may cause a further downward spiral.

The economic decline is obvious: Louisburgh town is shrinking and Westport expanding; even the traditional weekly busy days are mostly a memory. Many farms are developing, but agriculture in the E.C. is a declining industry. Is tourism the hope for the future? In the 70's there were six hotels between Belclare and Thallabawn: now there are three! The community has lost, for all practical purposes, its venue for get-togethers and celebrations, the Parochial Hall which should be a resource in the community is a major problem. To put it simply, the problem is that nothing is being done. The area has lost many of the workers that added to the energy and economics of the area. There is a priest less, a sergeant less, less teachers, forestry workers, and agricultural advisors, these are just some of the losses in workers. Many, many more have been forced to leave and it is to those that I address this article.

To try to address some of the problems, Louisburgh Community Council and Louisburgh Development Company initiated Louisburgh Resource Centre. Louisburgh Community Council, formed in 1982, is now ending its third term of office, elections to be held early in 1991. In 1985 the Council formed Louisburgh Development Company to manage, and be the registered owner of, community property. The Community Council is elected by all the members of the community over the age of eighteen; the Council appoints the company directors and so controls through ownership and appointment.

One of the community projects is the Resource Centre and its related activities. The Centre is in the old vocational school, the building which was unused and falling into disrepair, was bought, renovated, extended and developed for the use of the community. The building houses "O'Toole Cases Ltd.," "The Granuaile Interpretive Centre", Louisburgh preschool playgroup, meeting-rooms, kitchen, picnic area and offices. The offices are equipped with phone, computer, fax as well as the usual copying and secretarial facilities. The physical development of the Centre is completed and has cost in the region of £50,000, the vast majority of which has been raised from state and E.C. funds. The Resource Centre's main benefit to

the community is that two development workers are based there. This is a continuation of the previous, four-year, Combat Poverty Project and is funded by the Community Development Fund. The annual budget, until December 1992, is between £30,000 and £40,000 per annum.

In an effort to develop different aspects of tourism in the area, Louisburgh Development with Louisburgh Cottages have appointed Mr. Paul Cassidy M.Sc. as Tourism Co-ordinator and Manager of the cottages. His work through the Centre will focus on the development of St. Catherine's which is being acquired by Louisburgh Development Company as a Famine/Heritage Centre. This project is a furthering of the interpretive theme as shown in the Granuaile Centre. Other aspects of the work include working with all tourist interests such as Louisburgh Tourist Co-op to develop tourist products sympathetic to the area. Mr. Bill Farrell B.A. is also working in the Centre as a Community Development worker to aid specific groups in the locality, groups such as the Womens Group and the Elderly Resource group, and other community development initiatives. The Resource Centre and its links with many different government and statutory agencies is an extremely valuable asset to the community and the utilisation of this is a great challenge to all. This relationship between the community and the centre is always changing to suit the conditions at the time.

The future of the Centre will follow the future of the groups and individuals involved. Some other plans include planning for the bicentenary of Louisburgh Town and linking with the other twelve "Louisburgh" in the world. The twinning of Louisburgh with another area in another country is being discussed and a suitable willing area may be contacted. This venture can add new horizons to the social dimension for those who live here as well as giving the opportunity to travel inexpensively and in groups. In such twinning projects there are also openings for economic returns to the community. All these activities are valuable in their own right but they will not prevent the further decline of Louisburgh. Political decisions to maintain people in rural areas are needed; after these decisions finance is required.

Work in development in Louisburgh needs support. This support must come first from the people in the area, a method to get united effort must be found sooner rather than later. Government must make a conscious decision to support rural development on a long-term basis. All the thousands of emigrants that have left the area, and made their livelihood in many different lands, can now help to keep a living community in the place of their birth. They can do this by publicizing Louisburgh as a tourist destination. They can use their contacts to lead a prospective industrialist into the area; they can use their influence to change policies to help rural areas; they can look for investment opportunities in the Louisburgh area. There are many ways of helping by using their skills and resources. We have seen how emigrants can help their native areas and knowing that this can also happen here we want to facilitate it. We intend to issue a newsletter, at intervals, and to send it to all we can.

If you would like to help in any way in the developments now in progress or

planned, or receive information such as reports published and annual reports, contact:

Louisburgh Development Resource Centre, Chapel Street, Louisburgh. Phone (098) 66165. Fax: (098) 66485.

Collacoön

Vincent O'Loughlin

Now, Here's an Idea!

In our last issue we introduced this forum for the publicization of any worthwhile idea which could be put into practice for the improvement of our lives. We still invite such ideas, requesting that the pith of what is suggested be put forward in one or two paragraphs. Some few have arrived for inclusion here.

Idea: The bi-centenary of the founding of Louisburgh town will be in 1996 according to an article in a recent *Coinneal*. It is not too early now to set up a working committee to prepare to celebrate that occasion as we think it should be done.

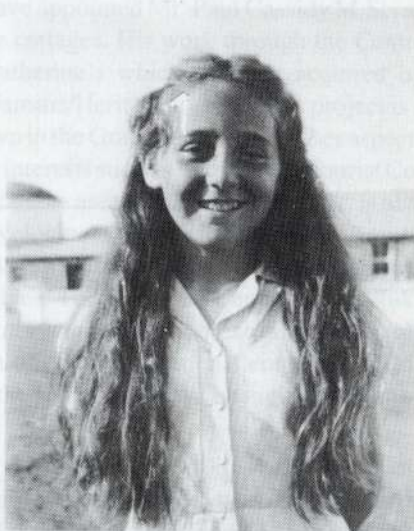
Idea: Work should be begun now towards a history of the parish, with the different areas of research farmed out to different competent people and a committee to oversee and direct the entire work. Surely our parish magazine would be willing to help from past issues and by way of publishing preparatory papers?

(It would, surely! – Editor)

Idea: The names of the different streets in town should be erected in stone at the different ends of the streets. In fact, in some other parishes throughout the country the names of the various *villages* are erected. This would make people proud of their villages and would give a lovely appearance to the entire parish.

Confirmation Day in Louisburgh

When I read "The Confirmation Suit" by Brendan Behan I often compare his description of "simony and sacrilege and sins crying to heaven for vengeance" with my own preparation for Confirmation which was a much less dramatic affair and lasted only three days! My father had been transferred from County Dublin to Clare Island lighthouse when I was ten years old. Confirmation day had come and gone for the island children and it was feared that our two to three year stint at the lighthouse would be over before the next visit of the Holy Spirit! So it looked as if He and I would be following each other around the country for an indefinite period!



"Girl from the island."

Then the local curate, Father James McDonnell, came to my rescue. He told my parents one Thursday evening that I could be confirmed in Louisburgh on the following Monday. No time to shop for a fashionable ensemble! That made no difference to me – a trip by boat to Louisburgh was excitement enough in those days. We were lucky to have the most suitable garment for Confirmation on Clare Island! It fitted, fortunately, so armed with my First Communion Veil I set off with my mother in Jackie Grady's boat.

Though I had lived in Dublin six months previously, I had obviously forgotten what a town looked like. I'm told that as we arrived in Louisburgh from Roonagh pier I exclaimed excitedly "O, Mammy, look at all the houses stuck together!" Our next-door neighbour, Sal Hayes, had arranged that we'd visit the home of Maggie Durkan. Here we were treated royally and I was well looked after by Teresita. I think this was my first experience of hero-worship as I followed Teresita to the Mercy Convent. This, too, was my first experience of nuns so it was a day loaded with incident! The pupils were friendly and, I think, a little in awe of this stranger from across the sea. They "examined" me in my catechism and were shocked at my lack of knowledge. "Sister", one of them said, "the girl from the island doesn't know what's a clandestine marriage!" This question, according to them, was a certainty and they duly took it on themselves to teach me. To this day I can still recite it, word for word.

After lunch in Durkan's my mother bought me white shoes and off we went to church. The sacrament was being administered by Archbishop Walsh who didn't like "blow-ins" so I couldn't go to the altar for the interrogation! Instead I remained in a seat with three Traveller children waiting for "an ordinary" priest to examine us! The last thing in my mind was the Holy Spirit or anything remotely approaching spirituality. Would everyone think I was a Traveller, I wondered? There was no outward difference between us but when the priest arrived with his questions they were asked who is God and who made the world while I had to explain what baptism, sin and penance were! (I was very disappointed that I couldn't air my views on clandestine marriages!)



Sister David

Though we were minus photos with the Archbishop – or with anyone else for that matter – we returned to Clare Island with many happy memories of the day and of the hospitable Durkan's. In spite of everything, the Holy Spirit kept us in mind as several years later both Teresita and I became Sisters of Mercy. She later became the very well-known President of Carysfort while I entered in West Cork and am now teaching in Tralee. It was here I came in contact with another Louisburgh lady, Gaelie McManamin, who asked me to write about this experience.

I wonder if anyone in Louisburgh remembers that day when "the girl from the island" joined their class for a brief but memorable few hours . . . ?

Tralee

Sr. David O'Sullivan

Inish Turk

An island in the parish of Gilgavorwer: Barony of Murrisk, Co. Mayo, province of Connaught 20 miles south west of Westport. Containing 554 inhabitants it is situated off the western coast near Clare Island and consists mainly of mountainous bog. In R.C. division it forms part of the district Clare Island and has a chapel.

The pier that had been erected on the only landing site available has now fallen into ruins.

—from Lewis's Topographical Survey 1837.

The Holiday Cottages

In the 1979 issue of *An Choinneal*, Father Waldron wrote, under the title "The Half Door Returns": "So the Louisburgh Rent-a-Cottage Scheme, so often hoped for in the pages of *An Choinneal*, has come at last".

In the nineties the "Half Door" remains, and holds its place in the keen competitiveness of the Irish Tourism industry. We are now known as "Louisburgh Holidays plc". There are new members among the directors who give an extra impetus to the business; people like Séamus Duffy, Mrs. Janet Durkan, John Morahan, solicitor, Mrs. Breda O'Malley, all of whom are experienced in business and commerce. The founding fathers, so to speak, provide strength and wisdom in a sea of change. They were in at the beginning, through the long hours and endless days of planning and work. The 1978 board included some who are still doing trojan work for Louisburgh Holidays: Joe Staunton, Deputy Martin J. O'Toole, Seán Staunton, William McNamara, Charles Gaffney, Mrs. Clem Lyons and Paddy Leamy. Listed among the originals also were Paddy Duffy R.I.P., Mrs. Patricia Morahan, Father Kieran Waldron, Michael O'Malley R.I.P. We have since been joined by Patrick Durkin, solicitor, Michael Cavanaugh and County Manager Desmond Mahon. Our cottages Supervisor, Mrs. Vera Scanlon, is as efficient and thoughtful as ever.

Michael Colgan was our Manager for three years but left us recently to re-enter the world of industry. Our loss is their gain. Paul Cassidy of Dublin has taken over and we look forward to many happy and profitable seasons with him. As a business, Louisburgh Holidays plc. is in fine shape. Our guests are drawn mainly from Mainland Europe and Ireland. Many return again. In another article of the 1980 issue of *An Choinneal*, Seán Staunton referred to our "greatly unspoiled countryside". He spoke of the local community gaining "a restoration of faith in themselves". We are still unspoiled, we have the self-confidence and happily face the nineties.

John Lyons,

Secretary,

Bunowen

Aiden Coyne Fund – Gratitude

Teddie and Dymrna Coyne, parents of Aiden, wish to express their heartfelt thanks to all who organized functions, events, etc. for the above fund.

Thanks also to those who made contributions or offered their support in any way. As a token of our deep appreciation the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered in the various Parish Churches for the intentions of all.

Sincerely

Teddie and Dymrna Coyne
Cahir

Tóchar Phádraic

It was a bright, sunny day last August when I got a phone-call from Denis O'Boyle, a P.E. teacher in Saint Colman's College, Claremorris. His message was clear and direct. He was anxious to do the Tóchar Phádraic walk and would I help to get some interested folk to go on this walking tour! I knew this was a walk with a difference. However I got to work! I soon rounded up some people that I knew enjoyed long walks. We met, talked and made suggestions. As a support group for sufferers of Alzheimer's disease had just started here in Claremorris, it was an obvious choice to do it for them and soon we had a sponsored walk going. People were wonderful to us. Their generosity and unselfishness would undoubtedly put us, Sisters, to shame.

September 29th was the suggested day and it came around all too quickly! On Saturday 29th we gathered at the Square in Claremorris at 7.15 a.m. and despite grey clouds and dark skies we were undaunted. We reached Ballintubber Abbey in spluttering rain but, amazingly enough, everybody was in good spirits. Groups from Louisburgh, Westport, Achill and even Kildare joined us there. Twenty-four in all. Father Fahy gave us a heartening talk on how the Tóchar happened, its historical background and its spiritual significance. This gave us a new understanding of where we were going and what it was all about. Being pilgrims journeying through life took a new meaning for us. He eventually divided us into two groups of twelve, with himself acting as guide for one group and Richard Staunton acting as the other guide. By 9.00 a.m. we were on our Pilgrim Way. It was a new experience, all cross-country, and that made it difficult for most of us who were accustomed to road-walking not crossing fields. We had eighty-five styles to cross *en route* but each had its own significance while every field and stone had a history all its own. At different stages on the way we were met by a back-up car-service with food and drink, while anyone who needed a plaster was attended to.

Arriving in Aughagower at 2.30 p.m. we had open house provided for us at Father John Walsh's. This was a welcome treat. Going through this village was a new experience as it was a sheep fair day and it was a struggle to make our way through. Now we were just *half* way! Journeying on we arrived at Lankill – between Westport and Leenane at 4.00 p.m. and this was the highlight as we had a meaningful Liturgy and celebrated Eucharist in the graveyard there. Many of the graves were those of unbaptized babies. The atmosphere was perfect, as the stillness of the evening and the birds singing added much to our Liturgy. It was a touching experience to have a Mass-rock for an altar. The whole setting helped us to link the past with the present. By now there was a haze on the mountains so we made our way to a waiting bus that took us on the last lap of our journey back to the Abbey. As we mounted the bus we were reminded that on this day, eleven years previously,

the Pope came to Knock! To mark our memorable and uplifting day we had a small raffle on the bus on our return. It was our way of saying thanks to those who walked with us in the footsteps of Patrick.

Now you may be anxious to do this walk and savour a worthwhile experience. You can do it all in one day or share it over two days. To go on pilgrimage is an old tradition. So get ready; there will be another next spring when the days lengthen. In the meantime get into training and get ready with staff in hand and join us. A journey like this enables one to discover profound insights; to come and get in touch with the beauty of God in nature, with our historical past and with the God within each of us.

Do you know what "Tóchar Phádraic" is, or where it is? Let me put you in the picture. Of course it extends from Ballintubber Abbey across fields and ditches right to Croagh Patrick. Tóchar Phádraic, in fact, predates Patrick; but since Patrick's time (441 A.D.) it became a Christian pilgrim route and was since known as Tóchar Phádraic. Feel happy to walk the Tóchar and find yourself in that spiritual journey inwards. I can tell you, you won't be disappointed.

Claremorris

Sr. Ailbe Coyne

Message of Love

The following message has arrived on the Editor's desk for publication:

To Our Parents

James and Nora Gibbons, Feenone

Dear Mam and Dad,

We would like to take a moment to tell you how much we appreciate what you have done for us over the years.

You encouraged us with our hopes and our dreams; and now by your example and faith we too have grown and have families of our own.

We are spread throughout the world now: Australia, England, America and Ireland, but we will never forget our loving home in Feenone.

You two are the greatest, and we love you very much.

Your loving children,

Mary, Salome, Myles Joseph,
Pádraic, John, Austin, James,
Rita, Therese and Gabriel.

What a delightful precedent that letter sets! To say 'congratulations' to the Gibbons family would be less than inadequate. The Editor genuinely feels that thirty years of Coinneal work would be richly rewarded by that letter alone. In one simple statement it draws together so many elements of what this magazine would hope to epitomise: emigrants, family, home, "nature", gratitude, values, tradition, heritage, memory. And love. Thank you for a gem!

Quality Cradle

The city of Dublin celebrated a millennium year in 1988 and one of the many events on the year's programme in that city was the Schools National Woodwork Exhibition. The competition for this award was widely publicised and drew entries from some one hundred schools throughout Ireland. From among a total of 2,500 entries the winning project was by a young man from Kilgeever parish, Michael J. Mulvey of Collacoön, Louisburgh. Michael J. is son of Michael and Mary (Moran) Mulvey. He was at that time a student at Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, where his teacher and adviser in woodwork for the project was Mr. Bob Reaney. An Choinneal happily extends its warm congratulations to all concerned in this national award.

The winning project was a seventeenth-century oak rocking-cradle with an oak hood. It was chosen by Michael as his school project in conjunction with his Construction Studies at Sancta Maria for Leaving Cert. (Incidentally, every succeeding year a sizeable number of such projects are completed by the students of the final year. Invariably they are of a standard well worthy of a much more public showing than they normally are given). The timber for this project – oak – was bought in Galway. The cradle was finished beautifully with beeswax. Coinneal



readers will appreciate both the suitability of the use of native materials and the symbolism of the cradle project in a rural community which, like so many others, has its future under threat.

When asked about the details, Michael J. said:

"I got real pleasure and enjoyment from the time that I spent working on this cradle; that is, apart altogether from the excuse it gave me to avoid ordinary study! From the moment that I heard of the competition on 12 October 1988 I became ambitious and had a dream of winning. I did spend many hours at work on it, and during the week prior to the actual date of entry I lost quite a lot of sleep.

At first I could not believe that my dream had come true. It took at least a week before it really hit me. And I have no regrets about the study that I lost because I also did well in the Leaving Cert. I now feel that I must further develop this talent and, perhaps, collect another award at some time in the future."

The crowning moment for Michael J. was on 14 December 1988. That night he was presented with his first prize – a crystal bowl and a cheque for a hundred pounds co-sponsored by Dulux (Ireland) Ltd. and the National Association of Woodwork Teachers. The presentation was made by the Minister for Education, Mrs. Mary O'Rourke T.D. In attendance to share in his hour of glory were his family members, as well as the local T.D., Mr. Martin J. O'Toole, Department of Education inspectors and representatives of the the co-sponsors.

Óró Sé Do Bheatha Abhaile

Reversing a sad trend of emigration, some erstwhile emigrants are still turning homewards. We warmly welcome the following people home. – Editor

Anthony and Kathleen O'Malley to Cahir from Meath

Mairéad Staunton to Kilsallagh

Christopher and Peggy Gallagher (*nee* Needham) to Thallabawn

Miss Aggie O'Malley (sister of Mrs. Ruddy) to Bridge Street from U.S.A.

John and Mary Bonner to Bunowen from Donegal

Patrick and Carmel Cox to Carramore

Bridie Gibbons (O'Toole) to Thallabawn from Coventry

Father Eugene Duffy to Main Street from U.S.A.

Paddy Prendergast to Accony from U.S.A.

Father James O'Malley to Kilsallagh from U.S.A.

James and Breege Gibbons to Cregganroe from Naas

Father Michael Conway S.M.A. to Kilsallagh from Africa

Mr. and Mrs. Flannery to Kilsallagh from U.S.A.

Mr. and Mrs. Yardy to Kilsallagh

Here We Came!

The Irish have been coming to Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley in large numbers since the middle of the nineteenth century. They established themselves fairly easily in the area. In Philadelphia they soon spread out to all parts of the city and seemed to escape the prolonged ghettoization which was the lot of the Irish in other large American cities. The Irish community in the Philadelphia area is pretty much scattered throughout the Delaware Valley and the Irish from Louisburgh follow that pattern. We do not see one another at church, shopping or in the regular activities that make up our daily lives. What did draw us together was Father Leo's visit to the area. I had a note from Mary (Dunne) Richter to say he would be in the area and would like to meet the Louisburgh people. We settled on Sunday September 23: we got together a mailing list of some fifteen names and sent out the word that he was coming.

Not everyone could come, but those present included Mary (Gibbons) Fletcher, Mary's brother Patrick and his wife Frances, another sister Sally (Gibbons) Maloney and her husband Jack, Eddie O'Malley and his wife Noreen, Michael Kenny and his wife Eileen. After Leo had given us a report on the state of the parish we discussed *An Choinneal* and the increasing financial difficulties that lie ahead



Louisburgh Seren! Names as they were known in youth: Left to right, back: Paddy Scanlon, Nuala Dunne, Úna Scanlon, Seán Dunne. Front: Geraldine Dunne, Leo Morahan, Mary Dunne. Photograph taken at the wedding of Mary Dunne's daughter, Noreen.

for it, with ever-growing costs and limited revenues apart from subscriptions. There was prolonged discussion about what might work and it was finally decided that an endowment fund be established, income from which would be used to subsidise future issues of *An Choinneal*. The proposal was that each Louisburgh person in the Delaware Valley area pledge a minimum of \$100 each year for the next two years towards the effort of providing the endowment fund. The money received would be sent to the Treasurer of *An Choinneal* in Louisburgh to establish the fund. It was hoped that other groups throughout the United States and elsewhere would in their turn also contribute to the fund and thus help to put *An Choinneal*, which means so much to us all, on a solid financial footing.

Officers of the Philadelphia group were named: Michael J. Durkan (Chair), Noreen O'Malley (Secretary), Sally Gibbons Maloney (Treasurer); Mary Dunne Richter and John McNally (Members-at-Large).

It was a joyous and spirited evening enlivened by the presence of Leo, who made the parish live again for us and caused us all to recall special memories. We felt at the end of the evening that we had a community here, and that as a community we should make an effort to come together on special occasions. The coming together on September 23 was pretty much confined to those born in Louisburgh. Future gatherings will not be so restricted since we know that we have a larger community of people who have ties to Louisburgh other than that of birth and to whom we extend a *céad míle fáilte*. Eddie O'Malley will host a gathering in the late Spring of 1991 as he did on the occasion of the visit of his nephew, John Gallagher, in August. We thank Leo for bringing us together and for *An Choinneal* we wish a long life.

Wallingford, PA

Michael J. Durkan

Father Michael Curley, founder of Louisburgh Parish Church visited Philadelphia and from there wrote a letter to *The Telegraph* of 23 February 1859

He stated that (a) he intended to stay there for two days but remained a week; (b) "in no part have I met with a more generous welcome than in this city of 'Brotherly Love'."

He was presented there with three hundred dollars for the building of Louisburgh Church.

Tradition lives!

Education and 1992

Study is like the heaven's glorious sun . . .
(Shakespeare: "Loves Labour Lost")

Education is what every career is based on nowadays and to have a good career one must have a good education. Every year thousands of young people in Ireland make the big move from secondary school to third-level education. Faced with a proliferation of new courses, new requirements and extra costs, both parents and students involved in education for the nineties need increasing sources of up-to-date information. When the word "third-level" is mentioned, images of long-haired youth with a protest banner, or introverted bookworms with large foreheads and small glasses, spring to mind. But the reality is very different: ordinary young people leading lives of classes, projects, study and pressure of exams.

The cost of third-level education can be thought of as a longterm investment, paying off after a few years of hard study and rewarded by a degree or diploma and prospects of an interesting new career.

What exactly is 1992 besides a conversation-stopper? The year which plans to change the face of Europe has so far succeeded only in leaving most of us a little confused. But one thing is quite clear: the count-down has begun! In a little over on



Girls' National School with Sister Mary.

year's time, Irish industry will face the looming challenge of free competition with its neighbours in the European Community. All products and skills will be put to the test like never before in a free European Market. As it is coming closer and closer, now is the time to take action and make sure that we are all prepared for the dawning of this new, exciting era.

A wide variety of educational opportunities in Regional Technical Colleges and other third-level institutions helps us to prepare for competition with Europe's best. Whether one be an accountant, secretary or aspiring managing director there are many courses to meet everyone's needs. If we intend to make the most of our natural asset – the ability to communicate – a European language is essential. Courses are available countrywide on a daily, evening or weekend basis giving everyone the opportunity to put the best foot forward in 1992.

Coming to grips with college life can be unsettling enough, without the added trauma of coping with living away from home. However, acclimatization can be achieved quite painlessly by availing oneself of all that students' unions have to offer. The students' unions in the colleges are very worthwhile, as they help the student to search for suitable accommodation and they also provide secondhand book facilities and student handbooks as well as student nightlife entertainment with regular discos and "gigs" which are normally well within a student's budget.

Irish students are looking not only to the Republic of Ireland for college places now but also to Britain and Northern Ireland. Last year some 16,000 students from the Republic applied for places in universities and polytechnics in Britain; yet out of this vast number a mere 1,000 applicants took up places. Third-level education is a must for most careers nowadays and spread out over the Republic there is a series of courses to suit everyone. Once you're in you have the chance to get that career you've always hoped for.

Furmoye

P. J. Gibbons

Fáilte Isteach

Still they come! We welcome the following recent arrivals in the parish and wish them a happy home among us. – Editor

Thomas Kissel to Devlin North from West Germany
Donal and Odeal Darcy to Carrowniskey from Dublin
Alexander and Mrs. Newman to Killadoon from London
William and Jutta Kirrkamm to Aillemore from West Cork
Paul and Mrs. Jackie Cassidy to Legan, Old Head from Carrickmacross
James and Mrs. Mary Cusack and three children to Chapel Street from Kilmeena
Mr. and Mrs. Heatly from Galway, to Carramore
Garry and Mrs. Annette Hennessy to Bunowen Inn (Bridge Street) from Meath
Mai and John Murray to No. 3 Cottage, Cahir from London
Mike and Peggy Philbin to Furmoye from Dublin

Young Marine

Many people think and say that we should not boast about the achievements of ourselves or our own families. I suppose there is some truth in that, because for one thing we are likely to exaggerate. And none of us is a good judge of a case that concerns us closely. Still, I have decided to write this following story of someone who is closely related to me; my nephew, in fact. I am doing this because I am one of the few people who are close to the story; because the story is true; and because by sending it to our parish magazine it might act as an inspiration to other young parishioners when they hear of the success of a fellow Louisburghman abroad.

Seán Anthony Kerr is the eldest of three children of John Kerr, a Derryman, and my sister, Eileen Dunne of Bunowen. Seán was born in San Francisco and at the age of two returned to Dublin with his parents. His brother, Kevin, and sister, Marie, were born later in Ireland. Seán's young life was much the same as that of any young lad in the home parish: he went to primary school in Tooreen and to secondary to Sancta Maria College. Later he was to graduate from Villanova University in Philadelphia; and this is how:

My husband, Bob Richter, is a retired officer of the U.S. Marine Corps, and Seán wrote to him asking what was the process by which one becomes a member of that Corps. Bob advised him to join the NROTC, thereby qualifying for a possible four years' educational course in return for four years' service after graduation. The fact that Seán was an American citizen meant that one important hurdle was cleared. A second one was a written Aptitude Test, which he had to take while he was doing his final year in Sancta Maria. The fact that he scored remarkably well in this test, particularly for one who was not resident in the U.S., reflects credit both on his own natural intelligence and on the standard of general education he had received from his Louisburgh schools. In Villanova it is quite common that an applicant with some exceptional sporting talent is given prior consideration; but since he had no extraordinary talent for sport he got no preferential treatment.

I remember that he had come to the U.S. during the summer of 1984, and we all smile now to remember that in New Jersey two things had him fascinated: One was continuous television, and the other was the American "hot dog". I often told him that some day he would turn into a "hot dog"! He returned to school in Ireland in that Fall, did the Aptitude Test about April, and the Leaving Cert in June. He applied in February to the Marine Corps and when he was accepted into the NROTC scholarship programme, out of the many universities that he could have attended, he chose Villanova, because it was so near our New Jersey home. Naturally we were all delighted. He arrived here in August 1985 and that same week we took him to college with all his gear. As we drove there with him I felt a great sympathy for him.

I was recalling my own days in secondary school in "The Convent" at home. *We* had a total of about *forty* students then, all of whom knew each other and their friends and their families so well. Whereas here was a young student, thousands of miles away from his Bunowen home, entering into a college of 2,500-3,000 students, not one of whom he knew or had ever met before! But, of course, he soon was to make many friends. Marine Corps paid for his education and Seán himself worked during free time to help his parents in defraying the cost of food and lodgings. On campus, he shared a room with another student; and, although the daily routine was exacting, he took it in his stride.

It is no exaggeration to say that he did well in the different branches of training. The physical training gave him no difficulty: in fact, he got many awards for this, which he never told us about until we incidentally questioned him later. And in his study work it transpired that he knew *how* to study; so much so that he actually took on advising an American-born colleague who had become a close friend. This friend had had trouble with grade levels until Seán began his advice; and soon the grades began to rise incredibly. I record this in order to pay tribute to whoever it was, back along the line in Louisburgh, who taught him to study; and to point out to Louisburgh's young people, and the community at large, how very privileged they are educationally.

There were many, many exams along the course of his four years at Villanova, continuous assessment from week to week and full-blown exams at Christmas and springtime. During his final year he did no outside work, in an effort to concentrate on studies and achieve the best possible results. I'm sure that at times he was lonely in college, especially in the early stages; and he returned to Ireland for Christmas in 1985, 1986, and 1987. He was noticeably maturing. He adapted very well to the American way of life, and yet somehow he was able to retain the Irish way, because he loved the Irish way of doing things. It was fortunate for him that he had a special friend, Michael McCarthy from Cork, who was a business-management student at Villanova and shared many of his interests.

When Seán first came to Villanova, I remember saying to my sister, Eileen (his mother): "Wouldn't it be great to have a family reunion for his graduation in 1989? Our own family members will not have been all together for thirty-five years by then. And now we have four years to plan and prepare". And that's exactly what happened! Seán took his final exam in April, 1989 (and for good measure he graduated *summa cum laude*, that is, with highest commendation!). So it was an exceedingly happy and, if I may say so, a very proud family group which came to Villanova on 12 May, 1989 for his graduation ceremony. That group was as follows:

Mrs. Nora Dunne, Seán and Mary Dunne, Neil and Geraldine Casey, John, Eileen and Marie Kerr, Nuala and Connie Slattery, Mercy Duane, Bob and Mary Richter, Eva, Paul and Paul Lewis Matlack, Noreen Nilson, Úna Scanlon and Kevin McEvilly. At the get-together later at our home there were about eighty family members present.

A "family" commissioning ceremony took place on the day before he

graduated, when Seán was commissioned by my husband, Bob, himself a proud Captain of the Marines. Later was the general commissioning ceremony, which was preceded by Mass. At the commissioning ceremony I was thrilled when Eileen and I were chosen to "pin on his gold bars", the insignia of his new office. Even as I did so I was conscious of the honour, and especially of Seán's achievement. I was also tempted to think that perhaps very few of his Louisburgh colleagues and acquaintances, even when they heard of his success, could really appreciate what Seán had achieved in four years.

Soon Second-Lieutenant Kerr had to go to basic school for training as "an officer and a gentleman". Actually his first year in the Marine Corps was spent in school. But the final chapter of my story is one of more concern. On 15 August, 1990 a U.S. Naval Battlegroup sailed eastwards into the Atlantic from Morehead City, North Carolina. As the ship, *Gunston Hall* sped towards Gibraltar, perhaps one young second-lieutenant on board glanced northwards and thought of the waters of the same Atlantic washing Derrylahan, Bunowen and Logadomba. But they were heading towards the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The Gulf crisis had given a new shape to recent history.

Naturally, the present situation demands confidentiality which all members of the forces honour; but from his station outside the Gulf he has written a few times to his mother and to me. Once he wrote: "Our passage through the Suez Canal was uneventful, although it was good to see land again. The whole area is pretty amazing, desert stretching as far as the eye can see. The heat is unbelievable; over 110°. After the Suez it was on to the Red Sea. (Moses must have been a hell of a man to part a sea that big!) We had rigorous training schedule, so that keeps all the Marines busy most of the day."

We pray for him, of course, and for his safe return. But his story, even at such an early age, is one of remarkable achievement. It is a story which, I think, Louisburgh would like to know about. And Louisburgh, I know, would want to share our pride.

Delran, New Jersey

Mary (Dunne) Richter

Remembering Sion

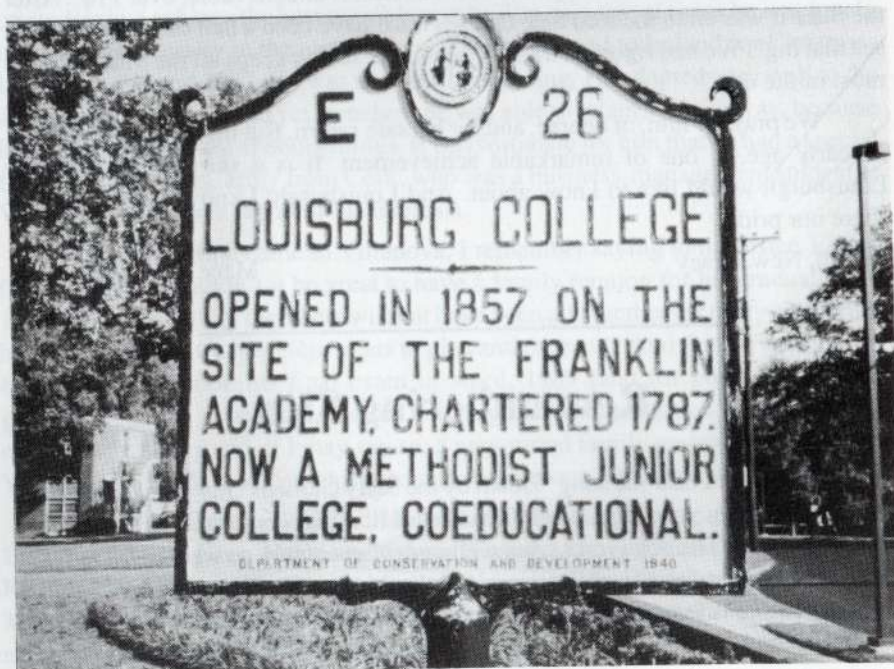
Whenever I hear the song "Down by the Sally Gardens" my thoughts go back to the time, many years ago, when I first heard it. A girl comes across the fields to us with her dog. The dog is cross, but well under her control, so we are assured. She talks about general topics of the times and then takes a leaf out of her pocket. It is a song that she is learning and she sings it, there and then, to the air and pace that we hear it now. The song was, of course, "Down by the Sally Gardens".

Kinnadoohy

Una O'Malley



Choctaw Indians (Oklahoma) at Doolough remembering our famine, and theirs.



Noted by Mary (Dunne) Richter while touring through Arizona.

Letter to Mother

Dear Mother,

I want to say thanks from all of us for the nice time we had with you in July and August and how lovely it was to meet the old friends at the Reunion week events especially the big night in the Derrylahan with Brose Walsh playing the old and wonderful music we danced to in the Forties and early Fifties. It was like getting a few hours of our youth back again. The tragic death of our cousin Kevin Kilcoyne (may God comfort his widow and family) threw a shadow of gloom on the whole parish. He touched a lot of lives and homes, delivering the mail daily to such a wide area, but such is life and we must always be prepared but a tragedy like that is so sudden and so final!

It was grand for me to meet all the McCormack's of Pulgloss, as you know Tom, the father, was a particular friend of mine since the time of the winkles and carageen moss. Father John Heneghan is a great man to make the trip back each year and it seems to me it's younger he's getting. I was a little disappointed not meeting Frank O'Malley of Mooneen, someone told me he'd be coming but Australia is a long way even on these days of jet planes; and they tell me they don't let the Concorde fly there. You would imagine it would be the ideal machine for that run to cut the flying time from twenty-seven hours to less than ten. The O'Malley's of the town (Mary Duffy's people) were well represented: Austie and wife from England, Tommy and his wife Mary Sweeney from Foxford and Paddy and Peggy from Needham, Mass. I spent a day last week with Mary B. from Doughmakeon. She said, she met you one day in town. She and Nora had a grand visit at home. She also mentioned her neighbour, Austin Jamesy Pat (McHale), had just passed away and that Rena and Jarlath were home. Pádraic will be on his own now and it's a shame to see that big house without a woman but sure he should have no trouble in that regard. A handsome fellow in good health with a fine new house and lots of land and cattle – and if he can't find anyone suitable in the parish, sure a man was telling me that every spring there is a couple of dozen American girls come to the cottages in Bunowen. I believe he said they are students but that lots of them have other things on their mind besides studying. He told me a neighbour of his, Davy O'Toole, married a beautiful one this early summer. Intelligent he said; and sensible, too.

I like Pádraic a lot but if he doesn't make a move now there will be no more McHale's in Emlagh in another generation. I had a grand day in North Seattle with Mary Bee Norton. Eddie just retired in May from the Telephone Company; I think he is only fifty-seven years old but they own some very expensive property on the waterfront. Talk about hospitality – the food and drink was going all day! Do you remember the O'Malley's that got Pat Joe McHale's place – well the oldest girl, Mary, was visiting in from California. The father and mother and ten children are

all living in San Francisco now and the eleventh one is married in Capetown in South Africa. On the Sunday after I got back I went to an O'Toole Rally in New Bedford at the home of Dr. John B. O'Toole. The first O'Toole Rally was held in Louisburgh in 1989 and Micheál O'Toole from Leenane who is the Chief and his wife Kathleen, were here for the Rally and it's likely that most of the O'Toole's in Massachusetts were there; mainly from Clinton and the Springfield, Holyoke and Chicopee areas. I knew most of the crowd from Inishturk but the Clinton O'Toole's were too numerous to remember. There were cousins of Martin Joe there from both the Moneen side and the O'Malley's of Cross side. This Dr. John B. who is an eminent surgeon put in a big time. He has a beautiful house, looking out over New Bedford Harbour and he had a big chart made up of all the O'Toole's, directly or indirectly related to his family. I saw a photograph I thought I recognized and I said that looks like Tracy, Mary Christine's little girl from Roonagh; and he said that's her and nobody else! When I asked how he knew her, he told me that he stays in Mary Anne's. Well, I could only say you could not stay with a nicer, more hospitable person in the whole world. Lord have mercy on Patrick (Pat Paddy). You were asking about some old friends: Margaret Mack of Carramore and Josie Durkan of Bunowen are still holding their own. Margaret's daughter Rosemary (Hallinan) Foley spent a couple of weeks with Mary Hegarty in Carramore this summer. I meet Margie the other daughter occasionally and we have the long chat – school and football and baseball and Louisburgh. She has a house full of boys. Nora Grady had to make two trips home this year for Thomas Baynes and her sister, Bridgie, both gone in a matter of months! Maura is still going to College here, it was a hard blow losing both parents so quickly.

Well, I had a nice visit with Brigie (Dick Michael) Prendergast, one evening. She's head of a very exclusive school in England. Would you believe I hadn't seen her in thirty-seven years. I see Paddy is home in the place now and retired from his job in Canada. It seems like the other day he and young James (Pat Lannon) left the Garda and went overseas. James looks great, too, and he tells me he's been retired from Royal Canadian Police for a couple of years now. I wonder what I am doing working and all these young lads retired! Did you meet Alice Pat Lannon? She was at the Céile Mór in Lecanvey on Reek Sunday and in the Derrylahan at Brose Walsh. You used to say herself and Nora, or was it Nancy (Dick Michael) Prendergast were the prettiest girls coming in the bridge in their 'teens. Isn't it grand to meet again once in a while to compare notes.

Well, we have a couple of weddings coming up in October. Martin Grady of Cregganbawn has a daughter getting married. The mother is Molly MacNamara from Kinnadoohy; and John O'Malley (Tony) Doughmakeon has a son, John, doing the trick as well. I know you'll wish them luck. I suppose Nora Dunne will soon be heading off for sunny California for the winter. You might mention to her we'd like to have her for a week or even a weekend on her way back home in Spring. I know she stays with Mary in New Jersey for a month in April or May, so it wouldn't be too much out of her way to get up this way.

I nearly forgot to tell you I met two of Arthur Durkan's sons at the O'Toole Rally in New Bedford – you know the mother is Philomena from Inishturk. They told me the oldest brother was commissioned a Lieutenant in the U.S. Airforce last year and is gone to Saudi Arabia! No, I don't see Arthur much since he's living in Boston; but you always ask for him. His boys said they didn't inherit his musical talent, he surely was gifted on both accordeon and fiddle. Will there be a *Coinneal* this year? You'll be sure to send me one. I really enjoyed the last issue, especially Pat Joe McHale's run down on his family, and the articles by Geoffrey Pat Lannon on going to school in Accony; and I love that one by Father Michael Flannery. It brought a tear to my eye, you know they were a grand family, the McDermotts. I used deliver the milk when I was a *gasúr* and one and all of them were nice and kind to me whether I came late or not; especially Charley who married Salome Lynch, do you ever see him at all? When I came out here I met John Joe, James, Stanley and Paddy McDermott in Hartford and they couldn't do enough for me. And how could I forget Andy! We had more laughs, I think, back on the old times. I know you worried a lot, because I stopped from school early and used to spend a fair share of time in the town and you were afraid I'd fall into bad ways on account of knocking around with the older guys. But do you know there was the nicest bunch around at that time: Austie O'Toole, Doctor Paddy Keane, Tommy Joe Martin and Johnny Mulvey, Austie Lyons and Charlie McDermott. There wasn't one of them that wouldn't kick my rear-end if they saw me with a pint in front of me and they told me so! They'd say you can drink pints when you are seventeen but not before. Isn't it grand to see Frank Grady of Kilgeever: he never misses a year – and the red-haired daughter, isn't she a lovely girleen. Did Frank O'Malley of Feenone go to see you? I know he was home, that's Pat Michael's son. There's talk of another wedding in the family so I'll probably be seeing you again in the spring. So take care of yourself. We are all well. They say the economy is not too good, just like at home. I can see no signs of hunger at all; only lots of new cars and plentiness of everything and I think this trouble in the Middle East will ease off too. Love from all of us.

Seán

Remembering Sion

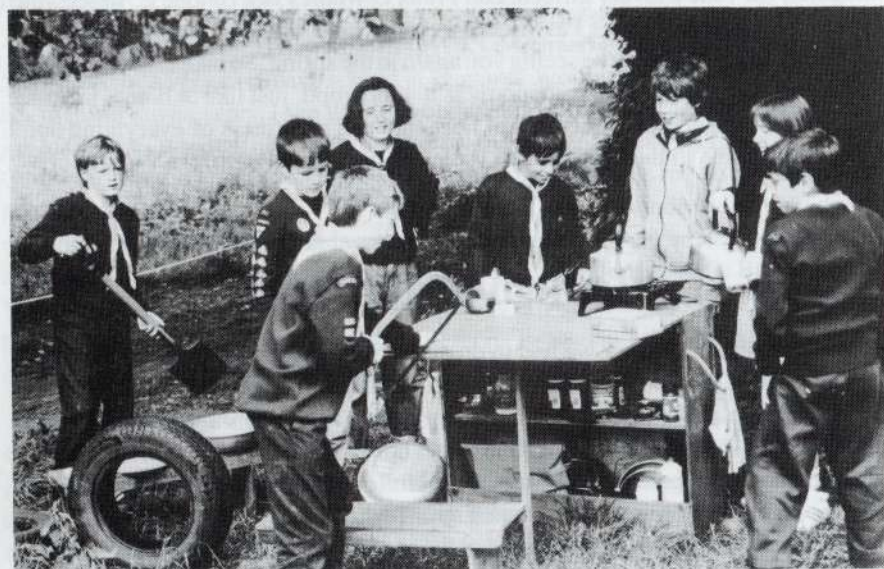
I remember one task we had to do every Saturday in summer and harvest. It was to go to the hill and bring home the horse to take us to Mass on Sunday. We had to bring oats in a bucket, or a sheaf of green or ripe oats according to the season, as otherwise we could not catch her. She might be one of five or six others, and if one of them decided to gallop off the rest would follow. So we had to be very gentle in our approach, displaying the tempting grain whether ripe or green. After some cautious manoeuvring we got the end of the rope onto her neck and then, gradually, onto her head. And we always looked on it as a triumph to have caught her because she was very highly strung.

Kinnadoohy

Una O'Malley



3rd (Mayo) Louisburgh Cub Scouts during their Summer Camp in Westport, June 8-10, 1990. From left: Nuala O'Loughlin, Em ma Sammon, Dermot McNamara, Anthony Burke, Lelia Sammin, Mary Hegarty, Marie Philbin, Paul Sammon, Matthew Maxwell and Beanán O'Loughlin.



3rd (Mayo) Louisburgh Cub Scouts during their Summer Camp in Westport, June 8-10, 1990. From left: Martin O'Grady, Seán Burke, Aonghus O'Loughlin, Máire O'Grady, Anthony Burke and sawing a plank is Seán Hegarty.

Kith and Kin

Dear Secretary:

My husband's brother, Ted Sweeney and wife Genese, visited with Michael Sweeney and family in September when they were in Louisburgh. Genese is convinced, due to a strong family resemblance, that Ted and Michael are related somehow. I wrote to Michael and Bernie and sent them a booklet I had prepared from my working notebooks on the various Sweeney families. This traced Ted's direct line from County Mayo (at least all that we know and can prove). Bernie wrote that she would share the booklet with you in the hope that you might know something of the Thomas Sweeney family from Bellakip Townland in County Mayo.

The Thomas Sweeney that we know as renting land in Bellakip Townland in County Mayo in 1850-1855 was Ted's great-great-grandfather (we know this from a death record here in the States). Ted's great-grandfather, Peter, was the emigrant, coming here in 1850. It could well be that Peter and Michael's great-grandfather were brothers. Now if we had the connection.

I have some questions:

1. Would any old issued of *An Choinneal* have any reference to any of the Sweeney Families in the area? I noticed in last year's issue that mention was made of some family history.
2. Would it be possible for me to put a query in the local newspaper asking for correspondence with anyone who might be a descendant of this family? If so, could you give me the name and address of the newspaper – also the newspaper in Westport.
3. Do you know if the Leckanvy Parish has a parish paper or newsletter that I might put a query in? I am interested in that parish for my husband's McGuire family, who lived in Cuilleen Townland (we have been to the house!).
4. Michael mentioned to Ted and Genese that a Mr. Fadden had passed away recently (he did not mention just when., but that this Mr. Fadden was related to both the Sweeney and McGuire families. Do you know anything about this? Or where he lived, when he died or where I might write and get an obituary?

I realize you are not the local genealogist and that you may not be able to answer any of my questions. Just thought I would touch base on all those Genese and I had thought of. Any shred of information will be appreciated. This connection with the Sweeney's in Louisburgh has given us a little hope of perhaps finding out a little more about the Sweeney's in Ireland. If, after you read the booklet, you find any detail that I have missed, that I might be able to supply, please let me know. Will try to do my best.

We have found a group of Sweeney's (and McGuire's) living in Concord Twp. in Dubuque County, Iowa in 1860 and 1870, and many are buried at Holy Cross Cemetery. We need to get to Dubuque County to walk some cemeteries again, get some dates, then obituaries at our Historical Building here. I could not make the trip this fall, and now must wait until spring because we never know when we might get a winter storm this time of year – and that trip is four hours one way. Some of these people are perhaps related to the Sweeney's and McGuire's in Whitewater Township, Dubuque County and could give us some more clues.

I know you are busy working on *An Choinneal* for this year – so please put my requests on hold until that project is finished. I have published two books on two of my families and I know what a big project that is.

Best regards,

Vera J. Sweeney

P.S. I just talked to Genese on the phone and asked for her input with questions. She mentioned that you asked about anyone in that family who might have attended the school in Tully Townland – that there were records available. Our problem is that the only Sweeney's we know are Owen and brother Peter, who would have been school age back in the 1820's or before! I doubt if there are school records that far back when there are no parish records!

The Stranger

A stranger arrived in Bunowen, Louisburgh in the spring of 1912 with a brood of five. The late Jack McEvily brought her from Westport with his horse and car and remained her friend during her short life in Bunowen. It was a big change from her place of birth. She was used to more company than Bunowen had to offer. Her husband worked in Westport and came home at weekends. She was on her own most of the time. November night came and it was an old custom to hit the doors of houses with a cabbage stump or some heavy object. She had no knowledge of it. When a panel of the door was smashed she had a fright. The late Miley O'Donnell happened to be passing and he made her comfortable and explained why it happened. Four more of her children were born in Bunowen and things looked good. Her husband was transferred to the Louisburgh district and she was no longer on her own. Her health failed. She left us and took up "residence" in Old Kilgeever at forty-six years.

Sixteen years ago I took a flight across the Pacific to Los Angeles and had a week with my brother Tommy. From there I flew to Chicago and had a happy time with my brother Anthony whom I had not seen for over forty years. I visited my wife's relatives in Buffalo and had a nice time there especially at Niagra Falls. Flying on to Boston I met my sister Mary and my aunt Margaret Booth, mother's sister. She was a hundred years old and she later died at a hundred-and-two. Four years ago I made the same trip and visited Aunt Margaret's grave in a well-kept cemetery outside Boston. As I knelt and prayed I thought of mother and her friends

in Old Kilgeever; but I knew they were together in God's Kingdom.

The Booth family tree was told to me in Boston. There might be somebody left in Louisburgh who remembers a woman named Booth from Bunowen.

Queensland

John O'Malley

McHale Echoes

When the late Pat Joe McHale contributed a very well researched account of his forebears from Emlagh, he expressed a wish that "all those who have been part of this great family to take out their own personal memories". I belong to that clan through my great grandmother, Catherine McHale of Emlagh.

Pat Joe was indeed proud of his forebears. He cherished his roots and his cultural background. He and his devoted wife, Delia, settled into a lovely home on a splendid farm at Tagadoo, near Maynooth, many years ago. Like other families who exchanged their farms for better ones in Leinster, the McHale's brought with them that old-world charm and hospitality. The western tradition of *an meitheal agus an muintearas* helped to endear them to their adopted community in Kildare.

Pat Joe was essentially a family man. He enjoyed good times, happy memories and a happy life. In his more active years, and before poor health curtailed his movements, he built up a dairy herd, and a milk quota equal to the best of his peers. In all his work he was most fortunate in his wife and family, all of whom contributed to his successful farming. But it was not his success or material prosperity which endeared him to his legion of friends and acquaintances. It was his sincerity, quiet demeanour, and his genial nature. His was a generation of faith-and-fatherland that touched all that was worthy and resourceful in Irish life. Every fibre in his nature was truly national. His absolute faith and trust in God motivated his life. He has now joined the multitude of McHale's in whatever mansions has been assigned to them by Almighty God, and we his friends, will treasure the happy memories he has left us here.

The overflow congregation at his funeral Mass was evident proof of the high regard in which Pat Joe was held locally. It came as no surprise to see the very large contingent of relatives and friends for whom, to quote his own words, "the road from Louisburgh to Maynooth had never been a barrier". Indeed during his lifetime, he regularly attended funerals, weddings, and other social occasions in the Louisburgh area. He loved meeting friends and neighbours at all times. Now that he has gone on his final journey, one might describe it as a lifting of the fog, revealing greener grass on the eternal hills. It must compare, at the terminus of the journey, to one standing on the threshold of a dear friend's house, and being sure of a hearty *céad míle fáilte*.

To his devoted wife, and family, and relations, heartfelt sympathy is extended by all who knew him. Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís imeasc Chlann Mhic Éil.

Palmerstown

Vincent Kelly

Who fears to Sing?

In recent years I discovered that the events of 1798 had a much greater significance for this area than I was previously aware of. Our history books told of 'The Boys of Wexford' and the 'Races of Castlebar' but neither school nor local folklore cast much light on local involvement in the historic events of this period.

A few years ago I attended a talk, given in Westport, by the then keeper of the state papers, Mr. Brendan MacGiolla Choille. In the course of a long talk, generally of Westport interest, he mentioned a Patrick O'Aogan, otherwise Agan of Kinnock, who was sentenced to transportation for his part in the rebellion. Having heard of the French landing in Killala, Patrick decided to join the cause. Presumably on their way to join the events in Castlebar, a group of rebels led by O'Aogan called to Westport House and requested to see Mr. Brown. Brown had fled and O'Aogan, who had said they had not intended to harm him, implied that since he had now shown his colours they would take a different view. The rebels took some firearms from the house and captured Westport. With matters going gravely wrong after Ballinamuck O'Aogan was captured and tried – 5th October 1798. 'The court proceeded to the trial of Patrick Agan of Kinnock in the County of Mayo, farmer, accused by William Plunkett esqr., with having been concerned with the rebels in taking possession of the town of Westport on the 12th of September last, and with having acted as a leader, or officer, of the said rebels traitorously and contrary to his allegiances.' Sentenced to be transported to New South Wales for a term of seven years.

A lecture by the late Cardinal Ó Fiaich, in Castlebar, which I read in the North Mayo Historical Journal 1989/'90 gave another instance of local involvement in the events of 1798. The Cardinal, listing names of Ulster families who came west during the second half of the 1790's and especially 1796, mentioned that £50 was offered for the capture of James McGreal (known locally as Séamus Rua) of Kilgeever east of Louisburgh. The McGreal's apparently came from near Belfast, and with thousands of others, left Ulster as a result of the bitter clashes between the 'Peep-of-day Boys' and the Defenders.

Séamus Rua joined the French and stayed the course right to the fateful events at Ballinamuck. He obviously gained a reputation above the ordinary as such a reward was unlikely to have been offered for a run-of-the-mill 'pikeman'. Sadly the lecture does not enlighten us of McGreal's eventual fate. The name McGreal is of course extant in the locality but there is now no trace of O'Aogan. Could it be that O'Aogan was another Ulsterman (O'Hagan perhaps) and the name then anglicised as Agan may well have become Egan, in which event it is still with us? There is a strong possibility that other disaffected 'Cúige Uladh's' who had settled hereabouts, would have joined in the 1798 uprising. I hope that someone will undertake research

into this and other events of this period and perhaps report the findings in a future *Coinneal*.

I have put together two ballads to commemorate those two long-forgotten warriors, I hope my humble effort does no disservice to their names.

The Ballad of Patrick O'Aogan

The sad sobs of a fair Maiden drew me to her side
As she sat on a rock by Clew Bay's lapping tide,
I sat down beside her and asked her what caused her such pain.
As hot tears on her cheeks poured down like falling rain.

My sad lamentation is for my love gone away.
Not by choice but by cruel transportation she sadly did say.
My dear Patrick was brave and strong and gentle as a summer breeze
But, mo bhrón mo bhrón, in his strong arms I'll ne'er again be.

Pat O'Aogan my lost one was as graceful as an eagle in flight
As he danced jigs and reels or hurled a ball in full flight
He could snatch a salmon or trout from a flowing pool
Sure none was his equal from Westport to Iarúil.

But my curse on the day the fateful news reached this way
That the French Fleet had landed in broad Killala Bay
My brave Patrick then vowed that with them he'd throw in his lot
And bade Slán is beannacht to kind neighbours in Kinnock.

Towards Castlebar town his comrades and Patrick made way
And on route they called in on Squire Brown near Westport Quay
'Soap the Rope' he had fled though they hadn't intended him harm
But they captured Westport with the aid of all his store of firearms.

But it's many a seed that fails to yield a fruit
And soon the tide turned and the rebels were being pursued
Arrested and tried my brave Patrick and his fellow rebels Gaels
Were cruelly transported to cursed New South Wales.

O never again will I see his laughing face
Or be kissed by his warm lips beside my father's gate
It could grieve me no more if beneath the green sod he lay
By Kilgeever's ruined Abbey where o'er him I'd kneel and pray.
Air – Jimmy Mo Mhíle Stór

Séamas Rua McGreal

My name is Séamus Rua McGreal a fugitive I roam the nation
To full and plenty I was used but lowly now is my station
With fifty pounds upon my head, my comrades vanquished all round me
Like a fox from dogs I run and hide, my enemies hunt and hound me.

The great flax-lands near Belfast town, was where I grew from boy to manhood,
And the weaver's trade made my own a skill ingrained deep in my kin's blood,
But hate and strife came o'er the land and thousands from their homes were driven
With our homes burned down, 'twas with empty hands, to Connaught for to earn a living.

On Kilgeever's heath I set up home where kindly neighbours made me welcome
And shared their frugal land and store with an Ulsterman in need of shelter
There was little virtue in that land and sweat and blood was shed in plenty
To earn a living stretched a man, for rock and bog is tough and stingy.

Then soon the French fleet reached our shore and hope renewed replaced depression
A broken heart beat proud once more I joined the cause without question
I forged my loy a pike, with Moore and Humbert I enlisted
The Yeomen soon we put to flight and o'er the Shannon them we routed.

But at Ballinamuck we were assailed and our hopes were laid in ruin and tatters
Cornwallis on the field prevailed, dead French and Gael all round were scattered
We who escaped and survived that plight for the hangman's noose our necks are wanted
And I Séamas Rua, as game in flight, o'er mountain, glen and plain am hunted.
Air: Mat Hyland

Old Head

Michael O'Grady



Louisburgh Set Dancers with Erlene Noah of Oklahoma (third from left) whom they entertained to Irish music and dance in "Derrylahan."

Return to Roots

There is something special about a home-coming. The preparations, anticipation, the final miles of the journey, arrival, handshakes, hugs and the tear-filled, happy eyes. The home-coming on the weekend of October 13th and 14th, 1990 was the climax of an unforgettable occasion for a hard-working committee, for the neighbours gathered waiting at the crossroads, for those returning to their former homes and villages and for the people from Castlepollard who knew Cregganbawn only through the treasured memories of the families who moved thirty-five years ago.

From the moment that the cavalcade of cars and the coach, proudly flying the flags of Mayo and Westmeath, arrived at Cregganbawn at 5 p.m. on Saturday 13th, until its departure from Taylor's Hotel, Killadoon on Sunday 14th at 7 p.m., it was as if we all stepped out of the stream of ordinary life. A drenching wintery shower as the visitors disembarked must have reminded the older members of the harshness of the life they had left behind, but it did not dampen the joy of the return. Daily concerns were forgotten as we were caught up in a celebration of friendship and neighbourliness. Castlepollard had come home to Cregganbawn: the Burke's and Wallace's, the O'Grady's and Corrigan's, the Needham's and Kilcoyne's were back among their own! The boys and girls who left are now mature men and women; young Stephen Wallace, a grandfather to five children and Pat Joe Bán a silvery grey; Mike Corrigan a hail and hearty seventy-five on the day; and the Needham's flying from England to complete a family re-union. As they set off with their host families to prepare for a special Mass in Killeen Church, concelebrated by Father John Fallon and Father James O'Grady, and later to attend at a night of festivities in Louisburgh, it was as if they had never been away.

The re-union dinner in 'The Derrylahan', attended by approximately two-hundred-and-fifty people, was an occasion for sharing memories and catching up on news; for talk of those who died and those who married and of the many additions to the families. Pat Kilcoyne remembered when he and James O'Grady (R.I.P.) brought the nice Cregganbawn householders to view their prospective holdings in Westmeath. Mike Corrigan recalled adjusting to a new way of life. The plough and mower replaced the loy and scythe, where growing sugar-beet and sending milk to the creamery were the daily work. He had memories too of the carefree, childhood days in Althore; of Tommy Needham, who in response to a challenge, carried in a huge stone and placed it in the middle of the kitchen floor. "It was there for a week before we managed to roll it out"!

Gerry McNichols, who had left Swinford, told us of how a neighbour's dog, let loose after a couple of days and obviously not liking his surroundings, took off across the fields and arrived one week later on the doorstep of their empty

homestead in Swinford! The Needham girls, memories flooding back, were putting names on the happy faces in a school photograph of Cregganbawn N.S. 1951 (which was to be a memento of the visit to the Cregganbawn Committee) and humorously noting the one in the front row wearing shoes: a parcel from America, perhaps!

Father Fallon spoke of the sadness of the departure, the joy of the return and the union of minds and hearts which had kept Castlepollard and Cregganbawn close through thirty-five years and one-hundred-and-forty miles of separation. Father Moran wondered would they have gone at all had they realized they were sitting on a gold mine at home, and went on to talk of the much greater treasure of a friendship which had stood the test of time.

John Burke spoke of the visit of Cregganbawn people to Castlepollard in March 1987 and of all it meant. In World Cup terms that was the first leg and this return visit was the second. He hoped the cycle was not now finished. Not at all John! The Cregganbawn – Castlepollard connection is now on its two feet! It is up and running, and long may it prosper.

Doire Garbh

Jimmy Egan

Ní neart go cur le chéile

Sin é a rinne siad an deire seachtaine 13ú agus 14ú Deire Fómhair 1990 – gach duine sa dúthaigh: an mhuintir a thug lóistín; na daoine a thug bia agus deoch; na ceoltoiri; an Disco; na sagairt. Ba mhaith linn buíochas a ghabháil le gach aon duine a thug lámh cúnta. Go ratháí Dia iad!

Through the *Coinneal* magazine the organising committee of the Castlepollard-Cregganbawn Re-union would like to thank all who helped to make it such a memorable event, and to congratulate those people on their spirit of co-operation and goodwill.

Louisburgh

Marie Keane

Tá súil agam go raibh an-óiche go deo agaibh uile-siar is aniar.
Céad faraor géar gan mé a bheith libh, Dáithí

From the Creggans to Kiltoom

It's many a flood has come and gone since that well-remembered day
When nine brave families of our kin pulled roots and moved away;
The wailing was as plaintive as when a baby leaves the womb
When our kind friends and neighbours left the Creggans for Kiltoom.

The times were bad in '55 and luxuries were rare,
And many's the family of the time was driven to despair,
But those of whom I sing tonight took their courage in their hands,

And left the homes they loved so dear' for a far more fertile land.
By Derryvarra's waters those families made their homes,
A strange and different landscape from the wild Atlantic shore;
No Patrick's Reek or Mweelrea's Peak, no valleys great and grand,
But vast, level fields with bountiful yields as far as the eye could scan.

Those strange and new surroundings didn't hinder their progress,
And of every challenge that they met they made a great success,
At school and work, with brain and brawn, and on the hurling field,
There were none their better, or nor e'en their match in the County of Westmeath.

But time, like tide, keeps rolling on and brings about great change,
The youth back then are now gone grey and some have passed away;
May God be good to those who've gone, 'twas they who used the plough,
To ease the load, to smooth the road for those who labour now.

Old Head

Michael Grady



The United Creggans celebrating! – Mike Corrigan is the centre of attraction, and joy.

London Meitheal

From a quiet rural community in the West of Ireland, boys and girls have made the transition, and now live in the towns and cities of the United Kingdom. Patrons from many parts of the British Isles attend the Louisburgh Parish Re-union and Buffet Dance, which is held each October, in the Grosvenor Rooms, Willesden Green, London.

Held in a warm and friendly atmosphere, it engenders a pride of native place in those who are far away. Long after the strains of the National Anthem have died away, they sit around the tables, re-living again the days they spent at home.

Very Rev. Tadhg Moran, our Parish Priest, meets Louisburgh people socially when they return for their holidays at home, and he also meets them at their re-unions in London and Birmingham, which he, himself, helps to organise. With many others from the Parish, Father Moran travels to these special functions ensuring that those who had to emigrate would not lose contact with home. The young, who are particularly vulnerable, are his special interest. On the eve of the re-union in London, he celebrates Mass for our emigrants in a nearby Church.

The Build-Up

During the weeks leading up to our social evening, news items are placed in three Irish newspapers in London: *The Irish Post*, *The Irish World* and *The London Irish News*, together with *The Sunday Press*, *The Mayo News* and *The Western People*. Bridie Masterson of Achill, who presents her *Irish Link* programme on Monday night on B.B.C. Radio Bedfordshire, gives our social a mention. The hour-long show embraces music, song and sports summary. It has a big listenership in the Greater London area.

The Lifestyle of those behind the Scenes

P. J. McNamara, Chairman, is engaged in Community Work in the Parish of Our Lady of Hal, in Camden Town. Mrs. Sal O'Sullivan, who is a fully committed Secretary, was a Civil Servant in Dublin, before coming to London. She is happily married to Michael O'Sullivan, of Dingle, Co. Kerry (home town of the legendary Kerry full back, Paddy Bawn Brosnan. Who can forget the duels between "The Bawn" and Tom Langan of Ballycastle, when Mayo were bringing All Irelands across the Shannon, in the early fifties?).

Michael Foy, Treasurer, is an officer of the Naomh Mhuire Football Club. Frank Joyce, has engaged in freelance photography with *Irish World*. Pádraic O'Malley plays football with Western Exiles. At the time of writing they have a semi-final date with Holloway Gaels in the London Junior Football Championship. Tony Lavelle, is a former Chairman and currently President of the Castlebar and District Association. His wife is formerly Mary Gibbons, of Roonith. John Ferins

is engaged in the construction industry. Mary Broderick, Gretta Ruddy and Margaret Burns spend their days in the world of computers and word processors. From these diverse backgrounds boys and girls from the parish come together in the *Spotted Dog*, one of North London's most popular hostelrys, to plan a Parish Re-union, in an environment that is in so many ways different to home.

In 1988, a charity dance was organised for Aidan Coyne, a Louisburgh teenager who was hospitalized in London. It raised £3,000. On stage was Johnnie Hyland, of Carramore and *The Highlanders*. We have given material aid to boys from the parish who have got hurt in the construction industry. We promote an interest in Irish Step Dancing, while *An Choinneal* is normally on sale at our reunions in London and Birmingham where John McNally, of Feenone, is the fear a tí. Some day we hope our own *Dan the Street Singer* will grace our annual function with his presence. He is enjoying a successful career as a solo artist.

London

P. J. McNamara



Family smiles – a reunion of the Needham family at the celebration of the Creggans.