



All the
way from
Louisburgh

Granuaile

An
Còinneal
1992



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Ireland

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An Coinneal

Cover picture: *The sail on Aileach (see page 45)*

Number Eighteen

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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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Letters to the Editor

On Monday, April 8th at 8.10 a.m. here, I was listening to ABC radio programme called "AM." Suddenly Louisburgh, County Mayo was mentioned . . . The news item was half over but I gathered it was about the re-enactment of the hunger walk from Louisburgh to Doolough. They played a sentence or two of some Irishman's address and considerably more of Archbishop Tutu's address. I cannot describe in words the utter longing, the desolate loneliness, the well of love, that erupted in my heart in those few moments for the home of my childhood and the pure sanctity of the environments of our young days in Cluain Cearbán. It was as if I shed all my years and I was once again a pupil at Accony . . . For a precious few moments I was almost in a reverie as I lived a few memories — Jimmy Mannion looking ponderously reverent as he moved around the altar, John McDonnell singing, Manie Foye putting on a tantrum . . . and a hundred other memories. God rest all who left such memories for me! I was over the moon for a couple of days afterwards because of the sheer surprise of hearing one's tiny village named and spoken about in such a remote place on this side of the globe.

Seán Morahan, Perth

Your memories will awaken many other ones in some of our readers. Seán, at home and away. Thank you for reporting back: it makes this magazine a better link for us all.

My mother came from Louisburgh and I was pleased to receive *An Choinneal* magazine. Enclosing cheque.

Teresa A. O'Malley Harris, Norwood, Mass.

Thank you, Teresa. Tell us some time "which O'Malleys are you."

I read it from cover to cover and relished every item. I even found some of my relatives in it as I do every issue. A few years ago I did the history

of my family tree (Walshes and Gallaghers and O'Tooles) under the column "Kith and Kin" . . . My cousins used to send me the *Coinneal* but it certainly seems more sensible to have an agent in the U.S.

Sister Mary James Walsh (Ipswich, Mass.)

When do you intend to write for us again, Sister?

I enjoy every word of every issue and I no longer cry over them. At first several issues or several articles made me feel very homesick. But nowadays going back home so often has healed all that. I would love to be a part of the Louisburgh that will meet later this year, according to Michael J. Durkan's letter. I will make every effort.

Brid Ní Mháille

Great to hear from you, Bríd: go mór-mhór más tú an Bhríd atá ar intinn agam! We will expect frequent reports from the MJD gathering, which I know will have the flavour of Michael Tom's!

I had already got a copy from the Mitchell family in Derreen. I am Myles Mitchell's oldest daughter: I came out here in 1928.

Mary E. Mills (Dorchester)

May I send you greetings from your own cousin, Mary? I have very happy memories of visits to your own home while your dear father lived. And I send you my sympathies and prayers on the recent death of your other brother, Mylie.

My sister Nora McGreal died late last year. I will be happy to receive future copies of *An Choinneal* if you would care to substitute my name for hers. I enjoy it very much.

Frances (McGreal) Tully

Sympathies on the loss of your sister, Frances. We will make that arrangement and are glad that you are retaining the link.

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We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the following sponsors of this issue:

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My parents come from Louisburgh. It is truly a wonderful place and the *Coinneal* is a wonderful magazine! Séamus Durkan is my cousin.

Alice (Durkin) Staunton (Chicago)

We certainly won't hold that against you, Alice.

I enjoy reading it just as much as Michael, does even though I am from County Galway, but of course I have been visiting Louisburgh for over thirty years. Keep up the good work!

Mary (Madden) McCormack

Great to hear from you, Mary. Our first (and last) meeting was at the funeral of your dear mother in Catherlstrane last year. Greetings, too, from your sister Noranne, and Tom, who come to Mass in Bearna Church where I say Mass. How pleasantly small this world is! And I do hope that you are publicizing their unique lakeside hotel, Cloonabinnia, on the shore of trout-famous Lough Corrib.

It reached me while I was in hospital awaiting surgery next day. Needless to say I was scared to death! But as I took a journey through the magazine, recollecting all the people and places I used to know, it saved my sanity and gave me hope: I must get well just to make another trip. I came through and am recuperating at home; slow but sure and hopeful that in time I will be able to watch the waves in Devlin and visit the White Strand and see my family and have a cup of tea with my sister-in-law, Katie, whom I love. We are lucky to have Mary Dunne to do all this work for us.

Mary (Cox) Keith (New York)

Could we wish you more, Mary, than that that poetic longing of yours will soon be fulfilled! Good to hear you refer to the White Strand by its own proper name! And the kettle is hanging!

I was pleasantly surprised to receive the publication because I was not aware of it even though I have been to Louisburgh several times and have family and numerous friends there. In fact, my cousin Jimmy Egan has an article about the reunion from Cregganbawn. I am enjoying reading *An Choinneal* and look forward to sharing it with my grandfather. His name is Peter J. Harrity (Heraghty) and he was born outside of Louisburgh in an area named Derrgarrow ninety-seven years

ago. He came to Clinton, Massachusetts at the turn of the century and then settled here in Worcester later. Being the only son of an only son of an only son, Peter was very fortunate to have five sons. He currently has twenty-six grandchildren and thirty-one great-grandchildren. Even at this age he still speaks fondly of Louisburgh and how he has to make another trip back. "If I don't have enough money... I'll take the train up to Nova Scotia and swim across from there" he is often quoted as saying.

What a man! We say in Irish "go maire tú an céad" (may you live to a hundred)! Now you must really try to get from Peter some of the mass of information he has about the Louisburgh of his childhood. You can hardly imagine the joy such a man's memory could give to older readers and to future social historians. Set a tape recorder in front of him and let him off. Please!

I haven't see you (Mary Dunne) in the last thirty-five years but I remember you from the dances in the parochial hall and the pictures (movies) in McDermott's. How nice it would be if only we could turn back the pages!

Dave Gibbons (Chicago)

Which is really what the Coinneal tries to do for us all, Dave. Thank you for turning back to one page !

My husband comes from Kerry and has visited Louisburgh. He reads the magazine from cover to cover. This issue, like all the others, has great articles: like Johnny Durkan's on Bunowen and Austin Gibbons's on "Beloved Village" (Ballyhip) — my own turf, of course.

Mary (Gill) Browne, Worcester

You will find even more interesting family reading in this issue, Mary, in the feature "Kith and Kin" on page 31.

I had hoped to get to Ireland last year but I have had a rough time — including the loss of my wife, who died in September due to a heart attack.

Tom Keane, N.Y.

Although we may have never met, Tom, I have great sympathy for you on the loss of your life's partner and can only imagine the sorrow that it brings. I hope that time has helped somewhat to heal, and that this issue of our Coinneal will fill some lonely hours.

Our Writers

Apart from our usual roster of contributors, we introduce in this issue:

P. J. Gibbons, a young native of Furmoyle, who is a student of journalism in Dublin; *Father Paddy Gill*, native of Ballyhip, now Parish Priest of Miltown, County Galway, who was a contributor to our first number in 1959;

John Holloway, poet and professor of literature at Queen's College, Cambridge, frequently holidaying in Shrawee;

Dick Lyons, native of Accony, retired business man and Peace Commissioner in Louisburgh, *Coinneal* Committee member;

Josephine Needham, wife of Michael of Culleen; now resident in Coventry, where she is Secretary of the Irish Club;

Michael O'Grady, native of Kilgeever, commutes to work in Ballina; has a keen and active interest in Irish music and song and has frequently broadcast on local and national radio;

Antoine Ó Máille, (Doughmakeon) 93 years old - former Chief of the O'Malley Clan. Much in demand by visitors tracing their roots. Has featured on Jim Fahy's radio programme "Looking West," and on Frank Hall's T.V. programme;

Beth O'Malley, born in U.S. before her parents, Michael P. and Anne, returned to live in Doughmakeon;

Dónal O'Leary, native of Bunowen, principal teacher at the national school at the Quay, Westport;

Michael O'Malley, a young native of Cloonty, working now in County Roscommon; *Ciss Salter*, a member of the Staunton family of Dadréen, who shares the family rich tradition of lore and local history;

Kathleen Ward (nee Loftus), who was reared in the Staunton home before emigrating as a young girl to Bristol;

Judy S. Warner, mother of two, an American-born descendant of the O'Malley family of Louisburgh.

Our sincere thanks to all for their time, work and co-operation. Thanks also to Mr. Vincent O'Loughlin, who provided many photographs.

I know that my family and I will enjoy reading it. I enclose a cheque (\$15) for my copy and I would like to order a copy for my son, Michael. Please send it to him at the enclosed address.

Mary R. (O'Malley) Flatley, Chicago.

Michael J. Flatley, you are a privileged if not a spoiled son! Could anyone imagine a better gift from a Louisburgh-born mother (except, maybe, the present issue!).

My mother was born in Louisburgh.

Teresa M. Sanders (Baltimore)

That is only half a sentence in our community, Teresa, and a very tantalizing one at that! You are hiding half of yourself. Like, who is your mother? And more, who is she herself? (Which is our Louisburgh way of asking what was her maiden name?)

Another masterpiece! I am so glad to hear that ye are doing well financially and I am sending a few bob.

Alice (Jennings) Sammin, Islandeady.

Thank you for both your contributions, Alice. Both equally welcome.

Please sent a copy to the Rev. Thomas Walsh (Clinton) with my compliments. I love to read *An Choinneal*. My father was from Askelane and my mother from Cregganbawn. But tell this poor "narrow back" how do you pronounce "An Choinneal".

Father John Burke (West Boylston, Mass.)

You have a double party ticket, John, with that parentage! You will have no trouble at all with the phonetics of our title. So now, try: can you say "Kuinnyell"? Again, please? Yes, quite good. Now could you glide it together like this: "Kuinnyell"? Good! Now can you say "Un"? Of course you can: it's like "fun"! Now come the honours touch:: If you want to say you got the Coinneal you simply pronounce it as above "Kuinnyell". But, for a reason in Irish grammar, if you use the full title "An Choinneal" (and you have noticed the 'h', haven't you) you must change the pronunciation slightly and say "Un Chuinnyell." The 'Ch' is just like in the Scotch work "loch". Now can we try that: Un Chuinnyell ... Aris ... Mmm ... could you give it a little more

of Cregganbawn and less of Askelane? . . . Un Chuinnyell . . . yes, that's it. Now, to say that several times aloud every day is an excellent way of broadening one's back!

We had a funeral of a Louisburgh man yesterday in Chicago, Pat Staunton, brother of Pete from Thallabawn.

Mick Garavan, (Devlin) Evergreen Park, 111

Another leaf gone off the old tree, Mick. God bring him safely home!

Needless to say John and myself are devouring it properly during the holidays. I can assure you it is the most treasured of our Christmas gifts.

Yvonne McKeown, Limerick

We hope it continues to bring memories of our esteemed committee member, your beloved Dad, Yvonne; and that the family will keep in touch with us, perhaps even by sending an odd article or news-item to perpetuate the memories.

I got it when I came in from work on January 16th and has just opened it when the news came through that the war had started. It was so good to get such a nice gift at such a sad moment. I really enjoy reading it, especially some of the pieces from back the West.

Jim O'Malley, Gowlna and Boston

We hope to have a quota of articles from "the West" in every issue Jim. By the way, what do you know about Gowlna, and are you in contact with any old native who could send us some of the folklore?

I am not from Louisburgh; my connection is that my grandmother came from there: Rose O'Malley was her name. I myself am from Ballintubber, but I have lots of cousins in Louisburgh.

Rose O'Gorman

Nearly as good, Rose! Saint Patrick was in Ballintubber too. And left it to come west to us.

Our Dad was born in Caher and came to Worcester in 1928. He shared many enjoyable stories with us of the happenings in Louisburgh during his early years. He would certainly have enjoyed reading a publication like this during his years with us.

Anna and Kathy Gallagher

In This Issue . . .

Who Are We Anyway? and Our Way of Dying	Editorials	11/13
Poems from Kilgeever	John Holloway	15
Emigration Attitudes	Michael O'Malley	19
Old and Different	Dick Lyons P.C.	21
Matchmaking	Ciss Salter	24
Gold Refining	Seán Morahan	25
Climbing	Judy S. Warner	26
From Wool to Woollens	Una O'Malley	29
Seeking Our Roots (Kith and Kin series)	Patrick Gill	31
Malartú	Nuala Uí Lochlainn	39
A Walk on the Shore	Antoine Ó Máille	41
Teenagers and a European Culture	Beth O'Malley	44
Studying the Word	Clementine Lyons	46
"O'Brien's Widow"	Dónal O'Leary	49
Remembering Thallabawn	Kathleen Ward	55
Musing at Eventide (an interview)	Johnny Mulvey	57
At Home Away	Josephine Needham	73
Saint Catherine's: Folk and Famine Centre	Jack Heaslip:	
	Joe Murray	75/79
Ordination in Killeen	80
Innocent Interlude	Mary O'Malley	93
The Other Side of the Village	Seán Mac Duarcáin	95
Affie Dillon	Michael O'Grady	118
Exile's Return	(John Locke)	119
The Tear in Granny's Eye	(T. McCormack)	120
Memory from Microfilm	P. J. Gibbons	113

Features: Letters to Editor (4-10); Remembering Sion (23); Fáilte Isteach (33); Letter from Home (34); Random Tapes (65); Letter to Mother (71); Parish Weddings (82); Comhgháirdeas (86-92); Scissors and Sellotape (94); Museum Pages (112-117); Slán Abhaile (122); Obituaries (126-136); Scholar's Bag (137); New Addresses Please (140).

You know well what my request is, girls. Not too long (at least the first time!) And (just as you remember) his version of the best story you can remember. He would love you to do this.

Although my husband and I hail from Leenane we know enough about Louisburgh and its people to be interested in its past and present history. When I was a child I spent many summers in Bunowen when Mary Dunne's mother was still Nora McEvilly. Later I resided there and went to the dances in McDermott's Hall. Mary is my first cousin and it was nice to see another first cousin, Una Scanlon, in the family picture in the last issue.

Maura (Cuffe) Hastings, Quincy, Mass.

You're in, Maura. A fully qualified Louisburgundian!

My mother, who is still living at ninety-seven, comes from Roonagh Point, her name was O'Malley. Some time back I had two uncles at the Sacred Heart Hospital in Castlebar but one died, at the age of ninety-eight.

Marion B. Duggan, Florance, Ma.

The family names will be written large in the pension funds of Ireland and the U.S., Marion. Give your mother our sincere regards and good wishes as she moves towards the century.

It arrived yesterday, together with sleet, snow and freezing rain. Perfect timing! My Dad and I have been thumbing through it quickly. Now we will get down to serious reading.

Kathleen McGreal

Have you heard Bacon's saying, Kathleen? It was something like this: "Reading maketh a full man ... writing maketh a perfect man." Or woman. An duigeann tú?

From a recent catalogue of P & B Rowan (Antiquarian, Fine Books etc) 92 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5HP:

"Louisburgh, Co. Mayo. An Choinneal No. 11 April 1980. Westport [Printed] Berry's Printing [1980] cr8vo., 116 pp numerous photos. stiff wraps. VG. Substantial bi-annual magazine of Kilgeever Parish, Co. Mayo . . . £12.00"

My kind wishes and admiration to you and your dedicated team for a continuance of the highest production standards, but particularly for the thoughts scripted in the magazine which leave us in no doubt as to who we are and where we came from!

Jim Bowe (B.of I., Ballina)

The compliment so fits our ideal and purpose, Jim, as to be truly welcome.

A well-known Irish historian, T. McCormack, wrote the attached poem which he reads at the end of all his talks. I saw many elderly men and women cry during his rendition as guest speaker at a Communion Breakfast last April; so I spoke to him and got a copy. Since many of your readers are exiles who never returned and whose children don't know much about Ireland, I thought it might be appropriate to publish it in this issue.

Pat Scanlon (Bronx)

Thank you, Pat. The poem is reprinted on page . . . Glad to make contact with you also through a fellow-parishioner of mine at Bearna, Pat Marrinan, who reported in detail on his return after his vacation in the Bronx!

I send my best wishes to all the team at *An Choinneal*, which is truly an excellent magazine. I read it from cover to cover, and look forward very much to the next number. You must let me know how I can subscribe and support it. My respects, please, to Father Leo Morahan and my friendliest wishes to Doctor Columb McHugh.

Nick Harman (London)

We offer our continuing condolence to you and Jerry, Nick, on the death of your dear mother and hope that you will get solace from the tributes that this issue pays her. Do we hear on the grapevine that you are to take up a permanent residence in Tully very soon?

Who Are We Anyway?

Editorial

Are there any general characteristics that are shared by the people of our parish of Kilgeever wherever they work and live? How might we be recognised as Louisburgh people by an observer? A young Louisburgh man or woman, thrown in at the deep end of serving in a bank or restaurant or bar anywhere outside Ireland cannot but observe the different kinds of people among the customers; different in outlook, in ideas, in life-philosophy. And in leisure hours one might well begin to react and ponder: Where did I get my outlook? What is my life-philosophy? My culture? Who am I, anyway? It may be beneficial to try to map out some replies.

By way of lineage, or of race in the better sense, it is too facile to regard all Irish citizens nowadays as Celts. There have been many mixtures of strain and vein since the old Celtic stock came to inhabit Ireland about 500 B.C. Danish, Norman and Anglo-Saxon blood entered after their various invasions; in later history Spanish and French influences appeared; and in more recent times there has been the cross-fertilization with many different nationalities through emigration, immigration or simply because of the ease of modern travel. We, like every other people, are a blend of seed and breed; a genuine hybrid. "Glory be to God for dappled things"! Yet, within this changing pattern there subsists a culture; like every culture difficult to define; one which may truly be called Irish. A predominant influence on that culture is the persisting Christian philosophy of life which was grafted onto the vigorous Celtic root of the fifth and sixth centuries AD, and which has become assimilated into our attitudes and lives. Experts in this field of study list among the main characteristics of the Celtic (later Christian Celtic) culture: belief in another world and ease in dealing with it; eloquence in language; rich imagination; a gift of story-telling; excesses of passion; a love of nature; lack of organisational efficiency; easy and warm relationships with people; generosity, and good community spirit. (We might like to measure ourselves today against these yardsticks!) It is one of the misfortunes of Western history that the Christian cultures divided into various sects. In Ireland this was much less true; we remained in great part a people of developing Catholic culture. But our Protestant Irish brothers and sisters strongly maintain that they, too, share our real Irishness.

What then of the parish of Kilgeever and its people? We are of course, a subsection of that Christian Irish culture. That we are a blended race is clearly evident even in the parish surnames. In an article in this present issue (page 31) Father Paddy Gill draws attention to the origin of many of our established family names. Prendergast, Staunton, Burke, Gibbons, Joyce, Walshe etc., names which we have come to regard as endemic, are Norman in origin, as are many of the christian names traditionally associated with these and with other families. First names like Myles, Redmond and Geoffrey come to mind. Even Austie (diminutive for Augustine) seems a recent enough arrival, encouraged no doubt by the prominence of the Augustinian Abbey at Murrisk from the fifteenth century onward.

In "The Path to Rome" Hilaire Belloc has written: "one's native place is the shell of one's soul"; meaning presumably that we are formed by our early community, in the same way as the German poet, Goethe, says we "are shaped by those we love". So within an overall Irish culture we of the far-flung Louisburgh community have been shaped by the people whom we love; parents, extended family, teachers, priests, community leaders and peers. What is that general shape? It probably has these contours: a Celtic belief in the other world, shown in a faith in God; a reverence for the dead, especially the dead of one's close community; and a basic decency which looks to things higher than just the amassing of wealth and the things that wealth can buy. That basic decency is likely to surface in a sense of honesty with regard to money and to work; a generosity to our own friends and to those who are in genuine need; a reverence for the human being especially in its weaknesses; and deep down, despite even a city lifestyle, a love of nature, of land and the things we associate with a farm. There may well be less pleasant qualities: a fecklessness (born of that lack of organization) which finds it hard to hold down a job; a leaning to excesses especially in our forms of leisure; and so a lack of the kind of responsibility which merits trust in business or in personal relationships. There is on the other hand an undoubted gift of appreciation of art in whatever form we have been exposed to — a thoughtful poem, a well-turned phrase, a pleasant voice or song; music, dance, drama, craftwork, a good story, friendship; memory, even if it be nostalgic; and of course fun and good humour. There must be many Irish parishes that share this same kind of culture, but each one will be nuanced by the echoes of the place-names and people of the native place which has shaped them.

There is one other ingredient present, however hidden, in the make-up of every Louisburgh native. It is the influence of the Irish language with its unique culture-content and its view of life and of the world. Some families and individuals within the parish have guarded this treasure bravely, and by reminding us have made us more aware of what we could well have forgotten. Many of our parishioners would deny any such influence in their life, either because they are not fluent in the Irish language or, sadly, because they have had more than enough of persuasion from well-meaning fanatics. But the influence is there; as undeniable as our genes, as perennial as grass.

One question remains: is the culture which we have inherited being eroded? To change is natural and inevitable: it is even a sign of life. But it must be obvious to all observing people that today much if not all of what is traditional in our culture is under siege. The way we speak, our very accents and our chosen words, are a straw in the wind. A generation ago we were distinguishable by our dialect. Even villages within our parish - Accony, say; or the area we called The West - had their own particular variants of speech with a precision of pronunciation. It is almost inevitable that these now become submerged. Is it not even true that our Irish way of speaking English is being lost in a society which tends to begin all its conversations with "Hi" and end them with "Chow"? *An Choinneal* thinks that we would do well to take stock of what we are in danger of losing; and while learning from what is best, retain tenaciously what is of real value in our inheritance whether these are good customs, gracious manners, or modes of expression. To lose these would not only bring a loss of our identity; it would lessen the variety which makes life in general so rich. To repeat Hopkins' line: "Glory be to God for dappled things."

Our Way Of Dying

Editorial

In a world which thinks lightly of abortion, and increasingly lightly of euthanasia, the very value of human life is being undermined. Whereas in Ireland there is a growing awareness of the need to provide hospices for the dying, the Netherlands has solved that problem by the colder, calculated way of so-called "mercy-killing". It behoves us to look ahead.

Perhaps the question can best be focused by personalizing it: by asking ourselves what is the respect and regard in our families now for Granny or Grandad? As persons, loved for themselves? or for their use-value (as baby-sitters, perhaps)? or as an encumbrance? Human nature being what it is there is a long and sad history of occasional friction between old and younger generations living in the same house together. Recent times have seen a solution of tensions by the building of a second, adjacent, home; or a "granny-flat", which ensures nearness for mutual help. However, the pressures of modern living can sometimes lead to an elderly parent or relative being removed to a Home for the Elderly without any real need, especially as death approaches. We must not, of course, dictate to people what to do in their own homes and in their family affairs. And there are obvious cases where removal to a hospital or "home" is truly the better option. The provision of hospices for the dying is a clear instance. However, because a growing trend might well put pressures on people to do what in their hearts they know is *not* best, *An Choinneal* puts here the other viewpoint, so that the trend does not always *have* to be followed. Allowing for extreme cases where medical advice recommends hospital or "home" care as what the elderly person truly needs, in the normal instances it is surely better for all that the ageing person be looked after in the atmosphere of the familiar surroundings and the company of friends. Not only does it make the final months and days more naturally peaceful for the patient, but it affords to younger family members a quiet therapy of becoming accustomed to a beloved relative preparing with dignity to leave this passing world.

A similar case can be made about how we deal with our funerals, for here again a growing trend might dictate a radical change. Modern psychologists are now trying to convince us of the value of customs which we were about to discard. In the matter of bereavement they are insistent on the value of what we have always known as the traditional wake. There have, no doubt, been abuses associated with some wakes in the past; but the cure for this is to eliminate the *abuse*, not to drop a worthwhile custom. Death at home and an ensuing wake make dying *visible*; whereas the modern trend (outside of psychology) is towards an effort to hide the reality. We discourage sympathisers; we make our houses "private"; we even view the remains for very limited periods; and we cover the coffin with a pall of cloth and the grave with a

camouflage of wreaths. All is done in a mistaken wish to do things in a genteel and civilised way; and, as in so many other aspects of our living, we attempt this by denying what is natural and real. This, the experts warn us, will merely postpone our grieving; and it will re-surface later with greater pain. According to modern writers on bereavement, grieving in the Western world is now treated as if it were a weakness; a reprehensible, bad habit, instead of a psychological necessity.

Even in our own parish community, as we come under the influence of a culture which preaches efficiency, streamlining and competence, the pressure will be felt to avoid the whole custom of a wake. There will be plenty of reasons available: it is old-fashioned (if that be a reason!); it is bothersome; it invades our privacy; it is not necessary; and (the real pressure) it is not being done now elsewhere. Frequently, advice (mistaken, we believe) is imposed on the grieving relatives at very short notice and during those first very vulnerable hours of their grief. Few of them realize, until all is over and it is too late, that there is the unique opportunity of spending quality time in the presence of the body of the beloved; of taking an unrushed farewell; and that the dreaded moments such as that of the body being removed from the house for the last time are a very real therapy in the process of coming through grief to acceptance. Such suggestions might be dismissed as emotional. To dismiss them so underlines our lack of appreciation of how much our emotions are in fact involved during such a trying period.

Once again, people must not be lectured as to what to do at such a sensitive time in their lives. There will undoubtedly be instances when a hospital morgue or funeral home must be used. We are indeed fortunate in our community to have such an amenity; with its high standard and decorum. There will be instances when a private house cannot handle a wake event. But because there could well arise a social pressure, and because people who would dearly wish to have a traditional wake might feel that somehow they mustn't, *An Choinneal* thinks it proper to draw attention to the real worth, now being gradually recognised in the scientific world, of many of the customs we have inherited.

Sláinte an bhradain agat: saol fada, béal fliuch, agus bás in Éirinn!
I give you a salmon's toast: a long life, a moist mouth, and death in Ireland!

Poems from Kilgeever

I am not a native of Louisburgh, nor of Kilgeever parish; but for twenty-five years now I have visited nearly every year, sometimes twice in a year. This is since 1966, when I bought a smallish, quite unmodernized house that had stood unoccupied for seven years, in the southern part of the parish. Over those years I have contributed to a number of local 'good causes,' come to know the lie of the land quite a bit, and made a good number of much valued friends. All in all, my life has been one of movement; and in fact, I have had a stake in that little house a good deal longer than in any other house I have lived in since I was born over seventy years ago. So, my sense that I rather belong is not without foundation.

As well as being a teacher of literature over my working life, I have also published six books of verse (one of them the Choice, in Britain, of the Poetry Book Society). I mention this because, over the years, Kilgeever and its landscape and people have repeatedly been the origin of poems that I have written and published. For example, here is the beginning of 'Holy Mountain', written in 1980 and published in the *London Review of Books*:

In the abyss of distance. You see it
blink at you, graven over
our breakfast table, from the open
door where steam from porridge mists
the peak of the holy mountain.

The spectacular landscape of the parish has quite often left its mark on my writing; and so has the house itself and the things I had to do, especially at the beginning, to make it liveable-in. A nearby farmer kindly taught me how to lay a turf fire, and how to smore it overnight; and my next-door neighbour, a farmer whom I now think of as one of my best friends anywhere, showed me how to put the spring by the house into serviceable order. It was good to do that, and drinking the good spring water led me to think of how near I was, here, to the perennial sea-cloud-rain-springwater cycle which in fact is the basis of all life on land. That caused me to write 'Source', later published in the English poetry magazine *Stand* (Volume 21.2):

For me, the glittering
taste of what
is the hill's gift, and source.
A knife of water.
Dry edge of a taste that
cannot be bought, and in

which, is the paradigm
of all that
is right. Water to drink,
the sea's gift
through air and old fire
to trickle through my hand, look,

as it has run for
a million
years you may say. All
that time has been worth
nothing you may say. I quench
my thirst from a glittering nothing, look.

To someone who, when not travelling, has lived mainly in south-east England, West-of-Ireland rain is a memorable experience, and can easily be a rewarding one. For me though, it links with the terse and vivid way of speaking one often encounters here. The linking is because both are prominent parts of daily life, and more particularly because of the many hours I have spent listening to the talk indoors, to a background of the rain's rustle outside. 'Hill Farmer', a poem published in *Encounter* in 1982, comes from listening to the farmer who taught me about turf fires:

"... if they wing low," he said, gaze
on the swallows, "there's rain on it..."; and now,
this road, rain on it from sea-road
in a gusty buffet under

sky brown over silverpoint bog:
sea-... no, ocean-edge weather from here
to Greenland, true billows, snowflaked
with spume and the fulmars; but from this

roadhead you cannot see valley-head, lonely
house and only man asleep
in chair and dog Prince with one
fixed eye on fire-eye, muzzle across a paw.

'Reading and Remembering' starts off in the little garden study-shed I once had in Cambridge; but of course 'the west, where the sea begins' is Kilgeever:

The rain above my head
trips over the flat roof
like birds prying for bread
Steady rain in a
windless drizzle

Drifting here from the west,
where the sea begins ... so I think
of an empty house there; rain
silvering the valley ... and
what they call there, 'the Crack.'

steady talk of friends, of
kinsfolk, of those who went
over the great curved sea; of
the skills of the dead:
healing the animals,

card-tricks, horses, or most,
knowing the people of the valley:
who was related, and not;
their wisdom and likewise
not. Rain

there, silvers both.
But here, lexicon and text,
I read steadily on,
and the rain speaks
steadily to me.

That poem was published in *Country Life* in 1986.

Quite often, I have stayed alone in the little house, and silence and solitude naturally prompt verse-writing in one inclined that way. So, a few years ago, a spell of rain and wind when I was in the house alone led to 'The Hermit Wordman' (that was me ...) printed in 1988 in the American literary journal *The Kenyon Review*:

Was he ill? Living in the empty house,
in the one room, in the wind-peopled house,
windows and doors continually creaked;
a garrulous fire; jackdaws on the roof tree
muttered surprise at the warmth, and all these sounds
seemed to him to become the beginning of words.

Beyond the hill, the forest. He walked in the fire-rides,
strayed inside the trees, padded on the velvet
years of the pine needles, stood like a tree, listened
to the ship-siren winds; as if a cathedral
organ could play itself, and its aimless rise
and fall, the rap of twigs in the wind, soft calls

of the small birds, became the beginning of words ...

I have passed over several of my other 'Kilgeever' poems, but perhaps I may close with one from the first time my children were both with me, and the house was

still unfamiliar to us. That year my son (now a research scientist) was just two years old. 'Irish Mary' is the daughter of the farmer who taught me how to put the spring in order, and I think that at the time of the poem (later published in 1971 in the verse periodical *Wave*) she was a kind-hearted young woman of fifteen.

'Father, can't we find our house?'
Cried my son, all kindness, and
Worried most for father, as
Back we came from that great strand
Where our second house is now
But two years old, can't fathom how.

... Eaten by the aeroplane
Maybe, that book-filled, much higher,
Tree-locked house, won't come again.
But Irish Mary laid the fire
Here, and met us at the door —
So, she'd given it us, for sure!

Son, in whose precocious mind
Daily I watch logic spring
With a clear, spring-water gleam —
As the years go by, you'll find
Logic's quite another thing:
Rich, opaque — like Mary's cream.

Scores of years, like mine, supplant
Yours, all castles in the sand.
Then, you'll find that houses aren't
Passed like that from hand to hand.
... Wrong. I've slipped. This little one,
I must give my grown-up son

One day. Or my girl. Who turns
Two more logic-loving eyes,
Coolly, where the sunset burns
Westward. Let that make her wise.
That unbounded, tranquil sea
Outflows logicity.

Queen's College, Cambridge

John Holloway

Emigration Attitudes

In recent months and indeed for the last couple of years some journalists in our national papers have been writing articles which appear to peddle emigration of young people as something that is perfectly alright, and should even be encouraged where possible. Although this is done in a subtle way it makes me wonder what those journalists and the people they represent have in mind for rural areas such as our parish. Though there are many of those journalists who do a very good job trying to highlight the problems which lead to emigration and the lives emigrants lead abroad, to drift into apathy or give it up as hopeless is to desert all those who have stayed at home in the past, to bring up families in the hope that they might be able to work in their own country.

There are many people in this parish and others who have waited in the hope that things would be better. Some have returned from abroad and some have built up firms or small businesses, hotels, shops etc., and their future in the area depends on having enough people around to stay in business. The more people there are then the more activity and more jobs. There is no need to list off statistics because no family is without someone abroad or at least a relative. Sometimes whole families have left. I only want to know why they have gone? Why have we always taken emigration as the solution to our problems? How many generations have grown up in the hope that their sons or daughters could work in their own country or parish? Not too long ago our ancestors has a good reason to emigrate, they were oppressed by a foreign country and driven to it out of sheer necessity to live.

Yes, there are many factors which act against our country: our distance from real markets, the size of our population, our history of subsidized agriculture, and no real industry especially in rural areas. Nevertheless, it is not economics alone that shapes the way people live, nor is it true that societies alone shape the people who are in them: it is the people who are in small parishes that shape them into what they are going to be. Lately I heard a young student in the parish saying she didn't know what she was going to do after she finished school but that she was "going to get out of here, anyway." It was the same thing I said before I finished school, and it is the same thing that many people in schools and colleges from the parish are saying, but it sounds different when you hear someone else saying it. It is as if we run down our parish and dismiss our chances of working here before we ever take a real look at the area and compare it to others, to see if there are any possibilities.

People will always have to leave this parish, not just because they want to but because it would be unrealistic to expect that there will ever be enough employment to keep them here. However, it is not unrealistic to expect that more people could stay

in the area, and return from abroad and commute to work to Louisburgh and Westport. Many of the people who leave, leave not because of money, or for the bright city lights but simply to find an environment which will allow them to live at their best; and when they fail will not concentrate on their mistakes but will give recognition to effort, and encourage them to give new ideas rather than demand their conformity to the status quo. It is no longer acceptable to give young people in schools and colleges the constant message that there is nothing in the country for them; and to ask them to leave as they did in the past to countries which neither need nor want them. There will always be people who want to leave the country and will be the better for having been brought up here; but that is not the same as the demoralized state in which we now live. We are being conditioned not to believe in our own country and what it stands for; and comparing it to other places at the moment we have more things to be grateful for than angry about.

If there is one quality which we have developed to perfection in this country then it is cynicism. We have become particularly cynical when it comes to our political leaders, and other leaders in our communities. Yes, we have a right to question and judge those who lead us, but standing back and becoming cynical about issues is only allowing apathy to continue. Not only do we make it difficult for those who abuse the system but we penalize those who are genuinely working within it. Besides, those who abuse the system are not the type to worry about a little cynical abuse. It is we who vote in our politicians. They come from our own communities. It is not their job to create employment. They cannot turn this country around and it is not right to lay fault for the state of the economy, at their door alone. Yes, they are answerable to us and if we allow them to be laid-back or corrupt, then it is our fault. Cynicism only undermines the confidence we should have in them. Until we create the environment in which young people and those not so young can give the best of their talents to this community and country — the same as they do when they step off a plane in America, Britain or Europe — then we will always have emigration; and that responsibility lies with all of us. The time for change of attitude is now, not when another three generations have left the country.

Cloonty

Michael O'Malley

Bíonn súil le muir; ach ní bhíonn súil le h-uaign
There's hope from the sea, but not from the grave.

Old and Different

“Ah! the memories that find me now, my hair is turning gray,” so runs the first line of that very beautiful poem ‘The Trimmings on the Rosary’ and so run my thoughts when I let my mind wander back to live again in that old and completely different world into which I was born on January 27th, 1917. It was *old* because it has not changed even one little bit since Grandfather was a boy. Greatgrandmother, who lived to be almost one hundred years and remembered, as she often told us, the Hedge School and the Great Famine, was herself a very young girl growing up in that same little hamlet of eleven homes out there on the south side of Clew Bay where I, too, first saw the light of day. It was *different* because the modern things of today were as yet unknown; if there was reason for an urgent message to be dispatched you came to the Post Office and sent a telegram; radio only made its appearance long after I had left school in 1932. (Television? What’s that?)



Dick Lyons P.C.

The Second War of 1939-1945 (the first was known as the Great War of 1914-1918) changed all that and we gradually left the old world and learned to embrace the new. But it is the old world which I was born into I wish to write about here and in so writing, give my young readers of today a glimpse of what life was like in those far off pre-war days. In that sheltered, and one could almost say private, society in which I was reared the economy was based entirely on the land: dry stock outwintered, four or five good cows, two or three sets of pigs (a set was three pigs fattening at any one time and three of these sets turned out in one year was regarded as good going). The outwintered dry stock were well fed and made ready for one of the Spring Fairs held on Mill Street, Westport, seventeen miles away. Many times I walked those seventeen miles with a bunch of cattle leaving home at midnight and arriving in Westport at seven o'clock in the morning. It was a long walk and if the night was raining, well that was just too bad but you still had to get there. However, having arrived there and made a sale, you then drove them to the Railway Station where they were loaded into the cattle wagons and at last you were free of all responsibility for them. Young readers may ask, ‘what if there was no sale?’. In that case, dear young reader, you walked them home again and that surely would make

it a long day indeed. I often saw it happen, too. The feed for all stock was produced on the land: in those days very little was bought from the local merchant, you grew your own and that meant hard work and long hours. Work started at nine o'clock in the morning and finished when the sun set behind Clare Island in the evening. I left school in 1932 and so did many of my school companions. There was no opportunity for anything by way of a formal education except for a chosen few who were lucky enough to make it to Saint Jarlath's College in Tuam. The rest of us were in a hurry to have the shackles of school discipline thrown off and take our place beside the hard-working and industrious men of the village. So, having made the acquaintance of a new Henshaw spade, a *sleán* and scythe in season, we set out to make our living by the sweat of our brow. It was a time when the needs of a large family were taken wholly and entirely from the land. It was a time too when nothing was known about Trades Unions or regulated work practices, so whether you worked at home on the land or for an employer of some kind you worked long hard hours, and remember young reader there were no 'elevenses' then as enjoyed by the workers of today. I was only seventeen years old when I went to work for a small builder, twisting concrete with a big shovel from nine o'clock in the morning until sunset in the evening for the agreed princely sum of £1.00 per week and carrying my own lunch-bag on my back! Hand that same shovel to one of my young readers of today and I know what he would tell you to do with it, and more power to him; but then I write about the old world, not the new.

But it was not all work and no play; we had our leisure hours too. Sunday evenings were best of all, especially in the good old summertime. After Sunday dinner everybody turned his steps towards the 'Harbour' where you were sure to find a crowd gathered; the Pitch-and-Toss group played that particular game all evening; money was lost and won by the by-standers who placed their bets on the toss and I assure you it was all taken very seriously, both Pitching and the Toss. Then there were the younger boys and girls down on the pier dancing to the music of some neighbour's gramophone while the older men sat around on a dry grassy mound discussing and debating the current world news. There was also the added attraction of boats coming from and returning to Clare Island, so you see how all age-groups were catered for in a beautifully simple way on a fine Sunday evening in that hard but very happy old world about which I write. Winter too had its attractions; the card-playing started in November, each village had its own card-school and it was quite common to find a challenge game arranged between two neighbouring villages. This was taken very seriously: the very best players were picked for that game, and for that special occasion the good woman herself would bake a very special cake so when the game was over, the 'Hurrahs' shouted and the wounds licked, the table was set and there was tea and raisin-cake for all, while at the same time the game was played over and over again by way of inquest. Then there was the 'Visiting House': here you found a group of older men, again discussing and debating the things that interested them most of all — the price of stock, the state of the crops and of course

the weather; all the while smoking their pipe of peace and contentment. Politics too were discussed, the Government praised or condemned depending on one's political allegiance, but as I remember it if a certain amount of heat crept into the debate, this however lasted only as long as the debate itself, no longer. There is one beautiful memory of those days which sticks in my mind and will always stay there: if you were coming home from work late in the evening in the summertime, you paused for a moment as you passed by the open door of a neighbour's house and listened to the low murmur of voices — they were saying the Rosary. As you passed by the next one, the one next to your own, they too were saying the Rosary — in this case they had reached the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the "Trimmins" would come next — better hurry, in our own house they will be waiting. What a beautiful memory of that lovely little hamlet of eleven happy homes where in the days about which I write ninety-five people lived so gently side by side. Today there are just twelve: the same story can be told about every other village in this parish of Kilgeever but then, dear reader, we are now in the modern world, indeed we may well have left it all behind us and moved into what a gentleman of my acquaintance called 'The Post-Christian Society.' (Make what you will of that, the signs are all there!)

Much more could be written about that old world but the limited amount of space allowed to each contributor of an article to 'An Choinneal' and my very limited intellect forces me to conclude this offering of mine. Maybe more another time if the 'Day and the Chase' is not already over.

Louisburgh

Dick Lyons P.C.

Remembering Sion

In the Autumn of my life thoughts of childhood come so often to mind — seeing the changes in the world today thoughts go back to Kilgeever. One incident was associated with with "The Pilgrimage at the Blessed Well," after the cows were milked, calves fed, tea over, and all at peace with the world, myself and my sister Bridie went to the Blessed Well to do our pilgrimage. Mother would always say, "Do not be long now, don't delay," as we scampered over the village. Skipping, hopping, and laughing we got there. Kneeling at the well we prayed, with nothing to disturb the silence except the lowing of the cows in the fields, and the ripple of the stream nearby.

One particular evening we were given instructions to hurry home. Taking no notice, yet we did not delay; and when we came home we saw the doctor's car outside the gate. We were oh so worried, as in our innocence we never guessed anything unusual. But when we went in home, we had just got a new baby sister. Now looking back I ask the question: Did our innocent prayers offered to God at the Blessed Well help my dear mother through her safe delivery? I would love to think it did. Oh Sweet Innocence of Youth!

Islandeady

Alice Sammon

Matchmaking

My father, Andrew Staunton, was a road-contractor and a cattle and sheep dealer. He spent a lot of time buying and selling cattle in the Connemara and Clifden area. He had many other irons in the fire, including collecting limestone in Lecanvey, burning it down into lime and selling it, buying hay locally and re-selling it in Ashleagh and Leenane area and he used to 'cart' goods from Westport. He also used to plough the fields for the local farmers. The fact that there were fourteen of us in the family meant that the income from all these activities was needed. He was able to keep his six sons in gainful employment until they left home. He always worked from dawn to dark.

One of his other talents was that he was much in demand as a matchmaker. As he had travelled widely, far and near, he was very well known and respected. People approached him to arrange a match for their son or daughter. In those days the bride had to have a 'fortune' or 'dowry'; Fifty pounds and a cow was usually the accepted 'fortune' at the time but this depended on how much land the parents owned. It was negotiable. Usually he arranged matches around the Feenone, Killeen, Thallabaun, Louisburgh and Leenane areas. After the match was made he arranged for the man and woman to meet. The date for the wedding would be agreed on. If they needed transport to the wedding he brought them to church and home again and would attend the reception at the bride's home where he was much in demand as a step-dancer and singer. At the height of the reception the 'Straw Boys' would call to the house where they would sing and dance and would receive refreshment. As a young girl I remember my brothers Anthony, Patrick and Tommy along with 'Sonny' Staunton and Peter O'Malley dressing up as 'Straw Boys'. My brother Tommy was always dressed up as the woman because he was the smallest and it was his duty to dance with the groom! The men danced with the bride. The last wedding I can remember my brothers dressing up as 'Straw Boys' for was Mike Hester's of Thallabawn. In those days the bride was not supposed to return to her parents' home until after a month has passed. When the month was up she would return home and stay for a week.

One of my father's matches almost went wrong. In Feenone a week after the wedding the groom called to our house in the morning to say his wife had gone. My father got his horse and followed her, caught up with her and brought her back on his horse. The couple did live happily ever after! The only alternative to the matchmaking years ago was for the eligible girls to parade the streets of Louisburgh on 'Pattern' days where they were escorted by a mother or aunt. My father's (Andrew Staunton's) own marriage was arranged by a matchmaker when he married Alice

O'Malley of Clare Island, but ironically his father and my grandfather, Pat Staunton, refused to accept the match made for him by his mother!

I asked my father in his old age had he any conscience about how his marriages would turn out. His reply was "I am doing God's work. I have brought people together who would not have met otherwise and that included joining Mayo people and Galway people!"

My father (R.I.P.) died in June 1951 at the age of 84.
Blackpool, England

Ciss (Staunton) Salter

Gold Refining

[From an idea in a sermon by Fr. Grant]

Crucible of every smelter's filled with yellow, earthen ore,
Smelter puts a flame beneath it 'til it liquifies the core,
Stirs it from the bottom upward so the dross floats to the top,
While the precious, ochre metal (denser far) begins to drop.
He removes the floating rubbish; stirs the liquid through and through,
Many times he agitates it, skims the scum that's formed anew.
Once again he stirs the mixture, keeps the flame at white-hot pitch,
Ladles crust from off the surface until there is left a rich,
Clear and total perfect image of his face within the pot,
Then he knows he has the essence of the purest gold ingot.

In the soul-refining process, in the crucible of life,
Heat applied brings to the surface faults and errors, stains and strife.
God extends His hands, removes them, then applies a white-hot flame
To our mortal coils and melts their substance, brings our every shame
To the molten top as refuse, runs it off into a drain.
He repeats refining process once again and yet again;
Looks into the smelted surface, sees His image clear and bold,
Smiles at what He sees and whispers, "You're My image! You are gold."

Perth

Seán Morahan

Climbing

It was an idea that nestled in my heart and struck a chord that rang true through every cell of my body — to climb Croagh Patrick as my grandmother and her ancestors had done. Croagh Patrick is not a big mountain by many standards — rising 2,500 feet above sea level — but in its setting in County Mayo, Ireland it is formidable. However, it's not simply its height that impresses. Steeped in Irish history, thousands of pilgrims have walked barefoot over haphazardly strewn stones for dawn services in a chapel on the summit. At times I contemplated rising at 4:30 a.m. and trying the walk barefoot. However, what really mattered was getting to the top and carrying on a piece of family history. A way of grounding myself more to my Irish roots that have held me and strengthened me in times of trial. And so it was that I took off again for the Emerald Isle, bringing along my father and two children. We were a striking picture — an 82 year old white-haired man, with equally slight daughter and two lively grandchildren, aged eight and ten. As we jaunted about on our way from Shannon to the family farm in Louisburgh, the Irish greeted us with straightforward acknowledgement for our gumption in simply being there.

Then we were in Louisburgh with Croagh Patrick plainly visible from the path my grandmother walked down to wash her clothes in the stream which ran through the land. The mountain beckoned and challenged: "Climb me!" My relative Michael O'Malley cautioned me on the climb. "It's not bad for the first part but the climb to the summit is something to consider. I'd not take the children as it could be a bit too much. Perhaps to just go part of the way would be best; sure it's a beautiful view." So there was the conflict: to bring the children and perhaps have to turn back or to go it on my own and not risk losing my chance to do what beckoned me. Two years earlier I'd started up and turned back because it was too much for my father. Now my children were determined to go up with me. The days before at the farm I prepared myself mentally. I knew that attachment to the summit could threaten our well-being or take away a special experience from my children. The voice inside me said, "Let go. Trust and it will come out as it should." If we began the climb and turned around because the children chose to do so, they would still feel good about themselves knowing that they had given their best. If I stopped them from climbing, they'd never have the experience and the climb for me would simply be a manifestation of my ability to control. And so I knew I simply had to let go of my attachment to getting to the top and share the climb with them.

My father walked the first part of the trail with us, up to the statue of Saint Patrick. There we posed for pictures and said our good-byes. He returned to wait below and explore the beaches and a deserted abbey. We began our trek. It was steep

from the beginning and rocky. The sun passed in and out of clouds painting varied hues on the landscape about us. A few sheep grazing on the slopes watched our progress upwards; our personalities became apparent in our styles. Mark, who was eight raced up and down in excitement and was the first to ask for breaks as the steepness registered in his small lungs. Leslie chattered away, taking pictures and genuinely happy in just being there. I climbed slowly but consistently — sometimes ahead, sometimes behind — always one foot in front of the other. After a while the trail increased in steepness and we all quieted down. Our breathing absorbed our attention and Mark asked for frequent breaks. We were making good progress and I could see the end of the first phase of the ascent above us. I know if we made it that far, the next part was more level and then all that was left was the summit. About fifty minutes from the start, we reached the top of the first phase. We rested and enjoyed the panorama before our eyes. We were up high enough to look down on Clew Bay and see the reefs beneath the sea. The aquamarines of the bog and the greens of the pastures below us were more like a post card of paradise than reality. I surveyed the kids and they were excited to continue. They literally skipped along the next phase as I enjoyed the pressure off of my heels that I felt in the previous steep ascent.

And then it was there before us — the final climb to the top with three or four dots of people going up. It took me by surprise. At first it looked like a wide expanse of white trail. However, once we were upon it, I realized it was a mass of loose small rocks. The "path" disappeared and it was every climber for him or herself. We found ourselves reaching for hand-grips and staying close to where the rocks ran into a brief respite of green moss. There was only one way to go and that was up. I remember thinking for a fleeting second: what will this be like on the way down? and then bringing myself back to the task at hand. We couldn't see the top, and the climbers ahead of us disappeared from view. At the same time the clouds began to roll in and characteristically wrap the summit in a shroud. We'd seen this many a time before but now we were in it. For the most part we maintained a vigil of silence. I asked the children occasionally if they wanted to continue. They said yes, but was that the top up ahead? I said we'd see when we got there. Up and up through the clouds we climbed. The view became more and more surreal as the limits of distant islands appeared before us. Each of us chose our own way within sight of each other. I assumed a lead of sorts, a marker to set sights on, but we each climbed our own path. The higher we rose, the stronger I felt as the joy of not only reaching the summit but sharing it with my children filled me. The power of letting go and simply being present in the moment was stunning.

And then we were there at the top; chapel in sight. An hour and a half up, we rested as the clouds parted briefly and the sun shone over the land and sea. But even as I sat and enjoyed the view, my instincts warned me that our experience was only half done. Those rocks would be at least as difficult to negotiate on the way down.

And so it proved true. I had no sooner started to say, "Let me go first" as we began our descent when Mark crashed to the ground on a rock. Tears in his eyes he

bravely regained his composure. His eight-year-old impetuosity was his enemy on this leg of the journey and would be his challenge to control as we continued. Leslie surveyed the scene and made a significant decision. She was at a point where one minute she was years older than ten and the next retreating to the security of lesser years. Calmly she announced to wait for her on the grassy knolls among the rocks. She was fine but would take this descent slowly at her own pace. Often in the next half-hour I would turn and glance back up at her face. It was calm beyond her years and I knew this was a proving grounds for her own self-esteem. Quietly we proceeded down. There were no words, only acknowledgement in our looks that we had made it this far and, God willing, so would make it the rest of the way.

And then we were off the summit. The path stretched before us and we broke into stories. We smiled and enjoyed the respite before the final descent. There was much discussion on just how high we had been and general enjoyment by the kids that they had accomplished what relatively few adults had even tried that day.

But the adventure had yet one more metaphor to give me as we played out our roles in life on the mountain. The final descent took an increasing toll on Mark. His eight-year-old frame was tired and he needed to rest more and more. Slowly Leslie pulled out further and further in front of us. As I held back and supported Mark in going at his pace, she turned and waved. I knew the rest of the way was safe and she could handle it. I raised my hand in a wave and nodded, letting go again of another attachment. She was off on her own, confident, knowing, and leading the way back to grandfather. I smiled, enjoying the knowledge of her self-sufficiency while wincing slightly at the pain of seeing my daughter growing up before my eyes.

New York

Judy S. Warner

Unbelievably through great storms of hail, rain or snow it is not known what windspeed is experienced by the church on the summit of Croagh Patrick. Indeed it is a credit to the builders and workmen, through their careful planning in making it so secure. It really has stood the test of time. Very Rev. Dr. Healy, Archbishop of Tuam dedicated the present church on July 30th, 1905. It replaced the older chapel which measured sixteen feet by eight feet.

From Wool To Woollens

Here in this beautiful village of Kinnadoohy, sloping down from the hills in shelving graduations to a lovely green valley opening out to "The golden strand" on the edge of the Atlantic, tourists are always stopping to admire the view and take pictures. They like to talk to the natives, who in turn don't always have time to spare; but natural courtesy prevails, and thus it was I found myself answering the questions of a group of holidaymakers who came along. We had just finished shearing the sheep and the wool was being packed into sacks. They were delighted to see it in its natural state and encouraged their children to take and feel the softness of it. They must have been city folk as they wanted to know how we got it off the sheep. So I told them how it had to be sheared and this shearing did not damage the fleece as it was the new growth underneath that was cut in the process. What did we do with it? Sell it? Did we ever use it to make garments? So I launched into an account of my early years' experience of the uses I saw being made of wool. They were delighted and profuse in their thanks and went happily on their way. Seeing that these strangers had taken such an interest in this almost forgotten craft, which up to the mid-nineteen-forties was a familiar occupation in almost every household in the countryside, I decided to write about it.

As soon as the nights got long — about mid September or early October — the good housekeeper got her bag of wool and began to 'tease' it. That is just pulling each handful of wool apart, so that there were no lumps or curls in it or the odd bit of heath. When that bag was all teased, the wool-cards were brought on the scene. These were flat boards, each 9 1/2" x 4 3/4" with a 4" handle protruding from the middle of the 9 1/2" side. Nailed to the cards was some material — light leather, perhaps strong enough to hold several rows of little light wires like rivets, about 1 1/2" long, sticking up and called "teeth". What we shall call card number one was held "teeth" upwards, with the left hand underneath it holding the handle which was turned away. Across this up-turned card a handful of wool was drawn firmly so that it was partly embedded in the teeth. Then the second card, teeth turned downward, was drawn deftly across the up-turned card of wool. After two or three scrapes of this interaction of teeth a nice roll of wool about twelve inches long was patted into shape on the back of one of the cards.

It was interesting to see the expertise and ease with which this carding was done and the obvious pleasure that was taken in the work. And many a story was told and song sung during these nights, and we were reminded that the poet who wrote "The Wreck of the Schooner Hesperus" must have seen something of such "home industry" when he wrote:

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side,
Like the horns of an angry bull.

The rolls of wool were put on a flat surface, to keep their delicate fabric from going apart and now they were ready for the spinning wheel. How can one describe it? While I was pondering this question, the "Mayo News" was brought in from the shop and there on page 17 was the picture of a spinning wheel, in Michael O'Toole's Wool Museum in Leenane! So here it was as I remembered it! A form (not the kind for filling, but a long seat with four feet) with two wooden uprights — one thick and strong, the other a light board — stuck into it within about 6" of each end. The thick one had a peg on which the wheel spun, the light one held the spindle. The band which would move the spindle when the wheel was spun, was around the spindle. The wheel was about four feet in diameter. When the wheel was "up", — that was the term that was used ("I must put up the wheel") — the end of one of the rolls of wool was attached to the end of the spindle and the wheel gently turned until some of the roll was twisted into thread. Then another roll was added to the soft untwisted end of the first one and they were both spun into a long woollen thread. Then the wheel was "put in reverse" and the thread was wound back on the spindle to the last few inches, because another roll would be added to the end of it, and so it went until all the rolls were in thread. The teasing, carding and spinning went on until big "bottoms" of thread were made. If for a blanket, a bottom could weigh about four pounds and there would be many of these. (A witty local woman was once asked about a friend of hers who had not been well and she answered, "Arrah, I went to see her the other day, and she had bottoms of thread hung to the roof, so big that a bottom of sugans would only make a heart for each of them".)

When there was enough thread spun to make a blanket or more than one, it was taken to the weaver. He also wove flannel or tweed, the only difference between them being that the blanket had a diagonal twill whereas the flannel had a plain weave. The tweed had threads of different colours and some expert weavers could make it with a herring-bone twill. The loom must have been narrow because the blankets and flannel were of narrow width. Two would have to be sewn together, which meant that there was always a sewing down the middle, but they were always double blankets — two layers.

When serge and other materials came to be known in these parts they were referred to as "broadcloth". An old man of many years ago and a good story-teller had a saying about some gentleman whom he had met; "He had a suit on him of broadcloth that you could write on". So this long-gone craft produced wool for socks, sweaters, cardigans and báiníns. The báiníns were made of flannel and were loose and easy to work in. The people of the pre-1940's could well say with the sheep in the newspaper ad. of some years ago; "Wool is warm, I know."

Kinnadoohy

Una O'Malley

Seeking Our Roots

Another article in our series "Kith and Kin"

"All through the course of civilization the past has held a peculiar fascination for man. In particular he has shown a constant interest in the human lines of ancestry which determine, in large measure, who he is, what he is and where on the face of the earth he finds himself." So wrote Donal F. Begley in his book "Irish Genealogy". This article is written with the hope of helping those who wish to trace their ancestors. The first thing one has to do is find out what the background of one's surname is. It can be of Celtic origin, like O'Malley or Fergus or O'Tierney (Tierney) of South Mayo, or O'Dowd of North Mayo. The Norman invasion in the twelfth century brought many new names to Ireland and to County Mayo. From the de Burgos and their followers sprang the Norman names of County Mayo: Burkes, Prendergasts (who settled in Claremorris area; Brize was the site of their principal castle), Stauntons, in Carra. From the camp-followers of these families sprang the Walshes, Barretts etc. The Burkes themselves gave rise to many family names like Gibbons (Newport), MacSeoinín (Kilmaine), McPhilbin, McWalters, MacMyler and many others. The McEvillys are a branch of the Stauntons.

I am indebted to Father Jennings of Kilbannon for how the Jennings name arose. It comes from a Seán de Búrca (de Burgo). He was a small man and was known as Seáinín de Búrca. His son then was Mac Seáinín — in English, Jennings. The 's' at the end is in imitation of the Welsh practice of putting 's' at the end of their names, e.g. Jones - son of John, the same as Jennings.

Jennings had a castle in Castlegrove near Tuam until the Cromwellian plantation. It is now in care of the OPW and in good condition with a magnificent view from the top, and is known as Jennings' Castle. The biggest modern influx of new names to County Mayo occurred after the Battle of the Diamond in County Armagh in 1795. As a result of this "battle" between Catholics and Protestants, thousands of Catholics had to flee their homes at short notice and take refuge in Scotland, America and Connacht mostly County Mayo. Cardinal Ó Fiaich in a lecture on Ulster migration to Mayo wrote, "approximately 800 families comprising 4,000 individuals arrived in County Mayo to escape from harassment in the wake of the Battle of the Diamond". While most arrived in the immediate aftermath of the battle, the trek continued until 1820. Patrick Tohall in an article on this subject in "Seanchus Ardmhaca" tells us the Clanbrassil families stuck to North Mayo and that most of 97 Tyrone families journeyed right on to South Mayo. He continues; "The Armagh families hailing from Clancan scattered to all parts of the county; but showed a special preference for the remote villages of Louisburgh and Newport, forming half

the newcomers to these two districts, where five years later (1800) every cottage had one single linen loom, if not two". The arrivals from Ulster were referred to as Cuig Ullas. Owen Hughes (R.I.P.) is quoted in that article as saying that the Cuig Ullas "were strongest in Taobh na Cruaiche and Fa-Cuireann the first named including some McGreals". We could add Maguires, McGirrs, Hollands. Having got some background to the surname one has then to start finding some information on one's own family. The first place to look for this is in the Parish Registers. Kilgeever Parish Records begin in 1850 but there are many gaps in the first twenty or thirty years due to the fact that pages were lost out of the original registers. This is the case in most parishes in the diocese. The permission of the parish priest is necessary to inspect the registers.

The next place to look is the Civil Registers. Only in 1864 did it become compulsory to register births, marriages and deaths. Though the registration began late, the Civil Registers are very helpful because they state who registered the birth, marriage and death and his/her relationship with the person registered. In the case of marriages it gives the groom's father's name and his occupation. The first comprehensive census taken in Ireland was in 1846, but all the information was lost in the fire in the Records Office in 1922. A census was taken every five years from 1846 onwards but all these have disappeared for one reason or another. In the absence of census records the next place to search is the "Griffith's Valuation of Tenements", which was published in 1858 and compiled some years before. What would have been a work of limited value, if the census of 1846 survived, has assumed a great value. The Griffith Valuations give the owner-occupier of each house, the value of the house, the size of the holding and its value. Griffith is able to tell whether our ancestor occupied the house and holding in the middle of the last century. Griffith can be consulted in the County Library, Castlebar.

The first comprehensive census to survive is that of 1901. The census forms that each householder had to fill up on the night of March 31st 1901 have been microfilmed and can be viewed in the County Library. We have to be cautious about the ages of older people given in the census as people put down an approximation. The census of 1901 is also available for public viewing but the County Library does not have any copy.

Family tradition is also most important and where it can be verified by reference to documents has often been found to be correct. Patrick Tohall in the article mentioned above gives two examples of family traditions which may be of interest. The first is about the Toals (Tools, Toolies) of Lis na Dill in County Armagh. They have a tradition "of being cruelly expelled by the English from Wicklow in 1209" and of migrating to Ulster. The second concerns the O'Byrnes of Kilaney Parish (Monaghan - Louth border) "who migrated about 1209 and who cite a more credible cause for their move: that they left Wicklow as allies of de Bourcey, the invader of Ulster." Many of these immigrated to Mayo between 1795-1820.

There are two family research centres in County Mayo. One is situated in

Ballinrobe Town Hall under the direction of Mr. Gerry Delaney. Kilgeever parish is in South Mayo. The other is for North Mayo in Crossmolina under Mr. Donoghue. Both centres are associated with a FÁS scheme and are putting all records, parish and civil, on computer. The computer can recall and collate information that would take a researcher hours to do. There is a small fee for its services. Gerry Delaney published a list of weavers of South Mayo in the last century. The following names may be of interest; Bale Runith, Gannon Ballyhip, Gannon Derreen, Grady Kilgeever. A number of books recommended: O'Hart Irish Pedigrees - Co. Library. Robert Bell - Surnames of Ulster. Donal F. Begley - Irish Genealogy.

Miltown

Patrick Gill

Names of some people who came to Louisburgh after 1795, giving the names, number of people in the family and where they came from.

Chas Dunbar and Nelly O'Neill (2) Derrykerran, County Armagh.

Jas Fay and Eliz Hughes (4) Derry Kerran, County Armagh. (Fay is also Fee or Foy).

Chas Kenna and Honor O'Neill (3), Mullaghbane, County Tyrone.

John Cook and Sarah Burke (5), Mullaghbane, County Tyrone.

Jos Hviens and Mary Develin (4), Ackinmore, County Tyrone.

Pk. McGuckin and Sarah Henry (9), Ackinmore, County Tyrone.

Bd. O'Neill and Bridget Toner (2), Coole, County Tyrone.

Con O'Neill and Margt. Quinn (7), Coole, County Tyrone.

P. Donnelly and Nellie McDonnell (9), Nockon, County Tyrone.

Jn. Mackin (2), Coole, County Tyrone.

Pk. McCarthy and Eliz. Robinson (5), Glenkeen, County Monaghan.

Bd. Duffy and Cath. Murphy (5), Glenkeen, County Monaghan.

Pk. Creaton and Annie Egan (3), Glenkeen, County Monaghan.

Owen Hawkey and Bgt. Regan (2), Glenkeen, County Monaghan.

Fáilte isteach

We welcome to the parish:

Mr. and Mrs. Redmond to Carramore

Mr. and Mrs. Glennon from London

John and Beatrice and Baby Sean Prendergast to Cahir

James and Brid Gibbons and family to Derreen

Anthony and Ann Marie (and baby) Broderick to Bridge Street

Austie O'Malley to Kilsallagh returned from Cork

Mr. and Mrs. Fergus to Mullagh

Jerry and Annette Hennessy and family to Bridge Street

Father Paddy Mooney to Bunowen Road

Letter From Home

Dear Austie

Your letter came on Thursday, thank you. I was delighted to get it and better still the news it had. It must be the weight of twenty years since you were here for the Christmas and I'm sure that Irene is looking forward to it too. Ye'll all be welcome here never fear; but I'll have to tell Eileen because she'd want ye to stay here by all means and it wouldn't be fair to her to come in unbeknownst. You'll have to explain to Irene how ye couldn't stay in one of the B and B's by any means. You know well yourself what I mean. It will be lovely to have ye here for the Christmas. I don't know how about the white Christmas, though. Dadda and myself would be better pleased if it was dry and frosty. Thank God we have a good fire and a warm house. And of course the electric blanket! I do laugh sometimes when I see him going to bed because he used to say one time that it was a poor specimen of man that couldn't warm the bed for himself. It's funny how the age changes people; he's lost to the blanket entirely now.

Now, what news have I aside from all that's in the *Coinneal*. Well, *Father John Fallon* has left us where he is to be the parish priest of Achill. Strange he was there before once of a curate. We'll miss him. He was very given to the half-parish; and a very natural and sincere man, easy to talk to and the very best in the world if a person was in any trouble. (A thing crossed my mind just now so I'll put it down. It's what the Doughmakeon man said about *Father Martin*, God rest him, praising him. "Ah well he's a fine man; and a great man; and a good man," sez he. "But don't stand on him"! The new priest is a *Father Mooney*; *Father Paddy*, I hear. It's funny how you'd know all the priests' first names now not like longo. It was given out that he was a good while in Knock; but I didn't meet him yet, only to see him on the altar. We had the do for *Father Fallon* in the Killadoon Beach Hotel; that was Morrison's once. You heard that it's bought now by *Michael O'Sullivan and Sal* and it is managed by the in-laws, *Pádraic and Bernie O'Malley*. Very well they are doing, too, good luck to them. And of course we had the ordination in Killeen Church this year, the first ever. *Father Brendan Kilcoyne*, *Bernie's* son. I sent you that *Mayo News*. He's to spend a year or more in Rome now doing degrees.

Well Dadda says the women of the parish are gone a-lifting lately down. He was reading about all the courses and lectures there's for women. Let me see: there's a course in the Resource Centre on "Women in Community Development." Here's what was given down in the paper: "a course which aims to motivate and empower women to take a more active role in the development of their local community." Then there's a Rural Womens Project and this is what the paper said they are up to:



I.C.A. American Tea-party Committee

"to provide baseline information (if you please) on the position of women living in the countryside with regard to their needs and development." Dadda says if they develop any more the men might as well all emigrate. What drew it all out of him was him to be at the Mart in Westport last week and he came home with this yarn a Meath jobber told him. A man that was walking home very late one night in a town in the Midlands and a guard stopped him. It must be years ago. "Where are you going this hour?" sez he. "I'm going to the lecture," sez he. "Who'd be giving a lecture at half-past-two in the morning?" sez he. "If you come home with me, guard," sez he, "you'll hear a mighty lecture from my wife." God knows I took the hint myself after; for a while anyway. But to get back to the women, they had an American Tea Party here in the I.C.A. to raise funds for the Mayo Hospice for the Dying. You know more than me what that kind of party is. Michael and Eileen went and said it was very enjoyable. I suppose the idea will last for a while until a better one comes. What are Charades? Some sort of competition, it seems. They had them here too; the women again!

I'm thinking that we were right not to bother with any let-out for the Golden Jubilee; although, mind you, Eileen is on to us always to have a night. We had the Mass, of course; but upon my song when I read of the *Walshes'* Jubilee (that's *Patrick and Teresa* of Culleen) and all the joy there was with all the eleven home to them I nearly changed my mind. Cute enough of your Eileen doesn't she leave the *Mayo News* with the picture of the Walshes on the shelf where I leave my glasses; the way I'll have to see it. And that's going on since last May!

And what do you think of your *Catherine Needham* of Feenone. 'Twas this time last year I read about her taking off for San Francisco for the winter. And her ninety-seven! She had five boys and five girls and she's travelling all around the world to see them, God bless her — Scotland and America and Hawaiian Islands and Mexico, no less. A long way from Curradavitt, where she was reared. And she's still making lace! Did ye see Mrs Robinson when she was in Africa and again in the United Nations? I hope in God she has good effect for those poor creatures that are starving in Somalia.

I won't bother you this time with what the papers are saying about the mining. (The Reek is safe anyway. Now they're talking of gold in Achill). Or about the Famine Centre in the town; or the Community Councils; or the Credit Union; or the Scouts; or the Playgroups. You got it all anyway in the papers I sent. And did you read the argument between *Mrs Adele Steyn* and *Anthony O'Malley* of Doughmakeon? Faith then, Anthony gave as good as he got. But I'd say she isn't a bad person herself after. There was hammer-and-tongs in the *Mayo News* between *Basil Morahan* and *Christy Loftus* about the mining, but really no blows were struck or they were soft blows.

The Mayo team went well for a while and then they disappointed against Donegal. Little Austie is as good a supporter as you ever were, and he was wild with the players for being so hard on their trainer, *Brian McDonald* (that's *Mary Harney's* man). You should hear how he could put his point. He said if they had a complaint about their manager they should make it in private to him and send their letter not to the press but to the County Board. I don't know, of course, but Michael said he was correct. You heard that *Jack O'Shea* of Kerry is the new Mayo manager. The Louisburgh boys behaved great and to win an All-Ireland for schools in Croke Park,



Louisburgh boys accepting their prize

I hope they keep to the football and that their trainers will keep them out of harm's way because 'twould pain you to the heart to hear how young boys — and girls, worse — have started taking drink. *Father Leo Morahan* had a great sermon on it in Knock there in August. We got the tape from Knock Shrine (£3.50) and he fairly put the facts out there. He was saying that it's adults that's at fault if children begin to take alcohol.

Well, what did you think of *Bishop Casey*? To tell you the truth it was the worst blow we ever had. I couldn't believe it. They say he's in New York or Florida or Colorado; somewhere in America anyway. Any chance ye caught sight of him? *Father Leo* was on T.V. a good deal that time; not so much defending him as saying that the man had asked for forgiveness and should be given it. Mind you when he drew down Saint Peter and how he was not just forgiven but was made the first head of the Church, it made a lot of us think again. God protect the poor man wherever he is. And God help *Annie Murphy*, too, and *Peter* and all they suffered. One never knows. Your grandmother had a saying: "only the one that wears the shoe knows where it is pinching."

Arrah I never told you about the "Rambling House" programme we had on radio from *Tommie Grady's* in Tallabawn. Can ye get MWR radio out there? Pity if ye cannot. This was just like a visiting night in any house longo with music and yarns and what they call here the *craic* (that is, cracking jokes and fun). I think it must be *Joe O'Toole* that brought the radio people to Tallabawn. And I hope they'll do all the villages in time. I'd love them to come here.

I better draw rein now the way you'll have this in time before ye start readying for the journey. If ye come on the bus from Westport this time ye won't have *Joe Broderick* driving. He retired there in April after forty years. He was on the Westport bus, driver or conductor, since 1960 imagine; and they were saying that he travelled enough on that road to bring him around the world three times. I don't know rightly who followed him in the job; but whoever he is he'll have another job to best Joe for kindness and cheerfulness. 'Twould do you good taking the bus on a frosty morning on the Square to hear and see his good humour. Is there any chance *Tommie Joe* could come home with ye? Sometimes I do be wondering how his job is going when I hear of all the unemployment and depression in America. And if one has no job, he's better off to have no job at home than to have no job anywhere else. Do you think *Clinton* will win the election? Will he change the unemployment? What's the other *plaidhc* doing going in for the election at this late hour? He must be hoping that like the man in the Gospel that came at the eleventh hour, he'll get a full reward; but I have my doubts. We have three referendums together here in early December about the question of abortion. You know what I think; but sin scéal eile.

God bring ye safely home, Austie. I'm looking forward to the day already. God bless you and yours.

Your fond,
Mother



French students in Louisburgh 1992



Third (Mayo) Louisburgh Cub Scouts enjoying the activities at the District Fun Day in Sancta Maria College, May 1991.

Malartú

Feachtas scoile idir Choláiste Sancta Maria, Cluain Cearbán agus Lycee Charles De Foucauld, Brest. 1991/1992).

Le tamall anuas anois tá an-bhéim ar mhalartú i gcúrsaí oideachais. An té a bhíonn siúlach bíonn sé scéalach agus nuair a thagann na hEorpaigh óga go h-Eirinn agus go dtéann na hÉireannaigh ar ais chuca, níl sárú an tseanfhocail le fáil. D'fhág breis agus scór micléinn agus ceathrar múinteoirí Coláiste Sancta Maria anuraidh ar an gcéad chéim de mhalartú scoile idie *Lycée Charles de Foucauld* agus Coláiste Sancta Maria. D'éirigh thar barr leis an gcuairt, stariúl seo, agus rud torthúil agus tabhachtach ab ea é do mhicléinn agus do mhuinteoirí araon.

Dream iontach lách agus féiltiúil isea na Briotáinigh, an Bhriotáinis ar bharr an ngob ag a lán acu. Bhí bród ar ógánaigh Mhuigheo go raibh Gaeilge bhinn bhlasta acu féin (a bhí beagán meirgeach d'uireasa úsaide; ach bhí a seans acu anois). B'aoibhinn bheith ag éisteach leo ag cur Gaeilge agus Bhriotáinis i gcomparáid; sos ó labhairt Fraincise agus Béarla - *des soeurs et des frères* a bhí iontu anois. Tháinig deire na seachtaine faraoir; "dá fhad lá tagann an oíche," ach bhí blas ar an mbeagán dairíre sa gcás seo — bhí an tseachtain ró-gherr ag gach mac máthar acu. D'fhág an bus *Charles de Foucauld* i mBrest agus gealladh go gcasfadh gach éinne le chéile an chéad bhabhtá eile i gCluain Cearbán. Shroicheamar Roscoff in am do farantóir go Ringaskiddy, agus ó Chorcaigh go Cluain Cearbán — turas fada costasach, ach bhíú é. Bhí áthas ar thuismitheoirí nuair a fuareadar amach chomh maith is a d'éirigh leo. Chonaic siad a fheabhas is a bhí na "fresh fields and pastures new" dá bpáistí.

Thosaigh an t-ullmhucháin do chéim a dó den mhalartú. Cuireadh litir amach ón scoil i gCluain Cearbán don phobal uilig ag lorg airgid chun seachtain sásúil a eagrú don Cháisc dár gcionn, nuair a bheadh na Bhriotáinigh ag teacht anseo. D'fhreagair muintir na h-áite go flaithiúil agud d'éirigh le foireann na scoile £2,000 a bhailiú. Bhí leath na h-oibre déanta anois.

Lá deas gréine ab ea an 4adh lá d'Aibreáin 1992. Bhí lámh an Chruthaitheora le feicéail in áilleacht tíre agus farraige. Bhí dul faoi na gréine ann nuair a shroich an bus Cluain Cearbán. Thúirling scór go leith Briotánaigh óga agus tríúir múinteoirí den bhus. Bhí na "host families" réidh le céad míle fáilte a chur rompa. Tháingadar ó Thallabán san iarthar agus ó Faldubh agus Cillgaofar ar an taobh eile. Ní dalta amháin ach beirt a thóg cuid dena teallaigh isteach. Tráthnóna Sathairn a bhí ann agus bhí an deire seachtaine acu chun aithne a chur ar a chéile. Taobh amuigh de shéipéal Phádraic tar éis an dara Aifreann ar an Domhnach ní raibh ach an deáscéal ag gach duine. Atmosfear cáirdiúl, taitheamhach a bhí ann.

Ar an Luain bhí siad istigh ag an scoil ag a naoi a chlog. Bhí ranganna acu go dtí a h-aonéag. Bhí foireann na scoile thar a bheith cabhraíoch agus bhain na cuairteoirí óga an-suim as an gcultúr nua a raibh blas de á fáil acu. Bhí béaltrialacha

na Gaeilge don Ardteeist ar siúl agus Niall Ó Loinseacháin ó Acaill a bhí ina scrúdaitheoir. Chuir sé fáilte roimh na Briotáinigh ag labhairt don rang dó, roimh ré agus d'iarr sé ar chailín acu an raibh cúpla focail Gaeilge aici. Bhuel, baineadh geit aisti mar cheap sí gur ag mallachtú a bhí sé! Bhí an-chraic acu ag insint an scéil ina dhiaidh sin. Tugadh lón dóibh sa seomra tís. Sister Celsus agus Miriam Bowe a bhí i mbun an *cuisine*. Thug Iníon Ní Mhurchú agus an tUasal MacConmara ar thurais tíreolaíochta iad ar fud an pharóiste san iarnóin. Ar an Máirt bhí rang acu arís agus ansin chuaigh siad amach go “Delphi Adventure Centre” ar bhóthar Lionáin. Chuaigh an tUasal Ó Lochlainn agus an tUasal Ó Ráinne leo. Bhí disco acu an oíche sin sa scoil agus an craic agus an scléip go h-íontach acu — an tUasal Ó Lochlainn agus an tUasal MacConmara i mbun an disco.

Ar an gCéadaoin thug an tUasal Ó Fearáil agus an tUasal MacAogháin ar thuras go hAcaill iad. Thaistil siad Acaill agus d'fhoghlaim siad a lán faoi stair bhrónach an oileáin sin. Ar an Déardaoin bhí cluiche acu sa scoil; cheapfá gur i bpáirc an Chróchaigh a bhí tú leis an screadáil agus na gártha mholta a bhí ar siúl. San iarnóin thugadar aghaidh ar Chruach Phádraic. Chuir siad an-spéis sa seanchas faoi Naomh Pádraic agus an bhaint a bhí aige lena dtír féin. Buíochas do Iníon Foy agus Bowe a thug don Chruach iad.

Déardaoin bhí Oíche Ghaelach sa scoil. Chuir príomhoide na scoile fáilte oifigiúil rompu i nGaeilge. Tugadh brontanaisí dóibh don scoil agus dóibh féin. Bhí Séamus Ó hÉanacháin ar an mbosca ceol agus Tadhg Ó Tighearnáin ar an mbodhrán. Baineadh macalla as na frathacha leis an “Staicín Eorna,” “Ionsaí na hInse,” “Ballaí Luimní,” “Toinn Tórai” agus sean-waltzanna. Bhí tuismitheoirí, cuairteoirí agus siúracha ar ar urlár ag baint taithnímh as an gceol traidisiúnta. Bhí brón orthu nuair a tháinig “Amhrán na bhFiann.” Tháinig an Aoine. Bhí turas go Gaillimh ar an gclár. D'fhoghlaim siad chuid bheag de stair Chathair na dTreabh agus an chaoi ar shocraigh Normánaigh (a gcomharsan féin) thíos ann fadó. Bhí siad tuirseach anois ach áthas an domhain orthu tar éis na seachtaine. Bhí dinnéar i mBialann Durcáin do fhoireann na scoile agus do mhuinteoirí *Charles de Foucauld*. Chuir sin an sméar mhullaigh ar sheachtain torthúil spéisúil. Bhí Leonaird Ó Ceallaigh mar aoi ag an dinnéar, bhí seisean mar dhuine de ceannródaithe an mhalartú i dtús báire agus is i gColáiste Mhuireadach anois i mBéal an Atha atá sé.

Ar an Satharn bhí an bus réidh ag an scoil ag 7.30 a.m. Níor ghá tada a rá. Bhí na freasa deor ar aghaidh gach duine acu. Tocht orthu ag scaradh óna chéile ach bhí an cairdeas, an cultúr, an stair agus an dúchas curtha le chéile acu tar éis na cuairte. D'fhág siad slán; iad ag tnúth leis an gcéad turas eile do *Lycée Charles de Foucauld*, i 1993.

Mar fhocail scoir míle buíochas do thuismitheoirí, teaghlaigh agus pobal uilig na h-áite, do phríomhoide agus leas-phríomhoide na scoile, na múinteoirí go léir i gColáiste Sancta Maria, Mná Rialta na Trócaire agus na múinteoirí a thug dinnéar do na h-aoi-mhúinteoirí ina dtithe féin agus sa gclóchar i rith na seachtaine.

Nár laga Dia a lámh.

Coláiste Sancta Maria

Nuala Uí Lochlainn

A Walk on the Shore

Some years ago, *An Choinneal* carried a feature on the place-names of the shoreline from Talamh Bán to Bun Lathach. It was intended to continue the project along the whole coastline, but these hopes were not yet realized. The following is an attempt at a further step in this line: we present the most common names of points along the Doughmakeon - Emlagh shores. It is incomplete: there are names for several rocks and pools that we do not include here. They should be recorded in some future project.

1. CLADACH THÚTHAIL: This is generally understood to mean “The O’Toole Shore.” The land inside this stretch has belonged to the O’Tooles for generations.
2. GORT NA gCARNÁN: “The Field of the rock-piles.” This was the name given to the land north of Cladach Thúthail. It was the scene of hurling matches in the last century, and contains a well-known standing stone, “The Staca Mór.” This stone was marked on certain maps of Ireland; and as a result, the village of Doughmakeon was featured on these maps when other villages went unnoticed!
3. CLOCH MHAOL: “The bare-bald-rock.” This is a large rock situated at the head of the road to the shore. Villagers who return on holiday like to view Cloch Mhaol: it has been a landmark for generations. It was around Cloch Mhaol that most of the wrack (sea-weed) was gathered — for manure or for kelp-making. Nowadays, thousands of tons of sea-weed rots on the shore — awaiting the arrival of some imaginative organic farmer!
4. CLOCHÁN: The point where Emlagh strand and the rocks meet. Young people were warned not to swim there because of treacherous current and shifting sand (gaineamh slogthach).
5. LEACHT A’ BHABAILÍN: This was a grave stone at high water, marking the grave of an Italian sailor washed ashore in the last century.
6. CARRAIGIN A’MHADAR: A rock formation in the middle of Emlagh strand — “The small rock of the dog.” At times it is totally covered by sand; after storms it is visible.

EMLAGH SHORE

Here we have a series of “Cúiníní (inlets or little bays), stretching from the corner of the strand to the point known as “Sgoith Imligh,” or “Emlagh Point.”

1. CÚINÍN BHÉAL TRÁ: A simple description: “The little bay at the mouth of the strand.”
2. AN STRAPA: A series of steps believed to have been worn into the rocks by generations of horses drawing sea-weed.

3. CÚINÍN AN DIALLAID: "The little bay (inlet) of the saddle." This describes a rock shaped like a horse's saddle.
4. CÚINÍN AN BHÁID: "The inlet of the boat." Boats from Inishturk and points south used to land here. A man from the neighbourhood who settled in Inishturk had his coffin brought to this "Cúinín" on his way to the family grave in Murrisc. The remains were carried by his relatives to the nearest road.
5. CÚINÍN BÁN: "The White Inlet." This one got its name from a white beach inside the "beach shore."
6. CÚINÍN CARRACH: "The rough, troublesome inlet." This one was unsuitable for horses or boats.
7. CÚINÍN GORM: "The blue inlet," got its name from the shade of the rock.
8. SGOITH IMLIGH: "Emlagh Point." This point was made famous in the beautiful lament, "Bás Antoine Mhic Conmara."

*Tá Sgoith Imligh in inmí ó d'imir sí an tár
Tá do mhuintir ag cuimheamh ort d'óiche is de lá
Ní raibh cuimsiú ar t'intleacht ag gabháil an bháid
Ach suaimeas go bhfaighid t'intinn i bhflaitheas na ngrást.*

9. CARRAIG A' CHRAINNIGH: "The crainneach rock" jutted out from the point. It could be reached at low-water (ebb-tide) on high spring-tides, and was a rich source of *crainneach*, a short, edible sea-grass which grew on the rock. *Crainneach* was a common item at all local markets up to thirty years ago.
10. CARRAIG A' CHOISCÉIM: "The rock of the step." This was a rock from which people did shore-fishing. To reach it, you had to take a big step over deep water, and to take care, as with the "crainneach rock" that you did not get caught by the flowing tide!
11. PORT NA LUINGE: "The harbour of the ship." Nothing is known of the origin of this name; how big was the ship and where did it come from? Did Gráinne Ní Mháille land here, perhaps? or a ship of the Armada? Fifty years ago this was the base used by local fishermen for their *currachs* and the lobster-men from across the Killary spent the summer at "Port na Luinge." They put two *currachs* together to form a tent, and spent the long summer months there. An Inishturk man settled there, and often sailed his *púcán* single-handed to and from Inishturk.
12. CÚINÍN NA MBÓ: "The inlet of the cows." Was there fresh water here, to which the cows came to drink?
13. AN MIONNÁN: This was a small promontory, jutting out south of Port na Luinge. It may have once been a grazing place for goats.
14. TURLA BHEAG: This was a beach on which a special type of wrack, known as *cáileán* was gathered. It had a very short leaf and, when fresh, was lighter than ordinary wrack. But once it began to rot it was almost impossible to handle it.

15. CÚINÍN NA nGIOLCACH: "The inlet of the reeds." This inlet took its name from the reeds that grew right out to the shore from the nearby stream, or were carried out to the beach by the flood.

Of what use is this information? First of all, it records — albeit less scientifically than some might wish — a range of knowledge and tradition which is in danger of being lost; this alone makes it worthwhile.

In addition, it points to a fact which has been too easily forgotten. Many of our young people today would say, "I know no Irish". But in this list alone we find *thirty* or more words in common usage. A survey of all our placenames in the parish would throw up hundreds of such words - a rich vocabulary which is our common heritage.

Dubhach Mhic Eóin

Antoine ÓMáille

Teenagers and a European Culture

On the windswept, Western seaboard of Ireland where the foamed Atlantic waves break relentlessly, lies the quaint village of Louisburgh. Despite its apparent remoteness, nestled in the shelter of surrounding mountains, this village possesses a dazzling crown of culture and heritage which has been passed down through generations by the rich art of story-telling or in the Gaelic word “Béaloideas.” In the warmth of the whitewashed thatched cottage, kith and kin would gather around the leaping flames of the open hearth fire where legends and lore of almost forgotten past would be brought to life. Such a kindling of reminiscence must have stirred my Grandmother’s heart, when, as a young child, she cradled me on her knee and enriched my small world with wondrous tales of one of the West’s greatest legendary and most notorious figures, Grace O’Malley (Gránuaile), an infamous sea-queen of sixteenth century Ireland.

It is only now I can reflect and realize the priceless gift of heritage I received on hearing the fantastic tales of this great heroine. In a turbulent age of Irish history with invasions, armadas, discovery, exploration and raging battles, Gránuaile remained ruthless, daring and fearless. She was fuelled by a fiery patriotism and passion and was determined to expel all foreign invaders from the native soil and to defend her castles, clan and lands in an era which saw ancient Ireland give eventual submission to the powerful persistence of its nearest neighbour, Great Britain. With her amazon-like deeds to protect what was hers, she proved herself beyond all doubt in a male-dominated society, and remained a rampart of strength despite her personal, social and political struggles.

When I think of the legend of Gránuaile, one incredible aspect comes to mind. Despite her unwavering patriotism she held very strong links with her European neighbours. Historians have recorded her visit to the English Queen Elizabeth I in 1593 to plead for the cause of the Irish, and with her fleet of galleys she had close trading links with France, Spain and Portugal. It serves to heighten the uniqueness of Gránuaile that in the 1500’s she, a woman born in the west of Ireland, had spheres of influence among the great powers of the continent!

Gránuaile’s determination and magnanimity can provide inspiration for all young people of Europe today. She possessed extraordinary power and uniqueness, resisting the pressure to conform to what was expected of women in her time. She was perhaps the first feminist, showing that she could succeed as well as any man and remained steadfast always to her principles.

With the dying tradition of the art of story-telling, there could be a danger that so, too, legendary figures such as Gránuaile could perish forever and posterity would

have lost an irreplaceable source of inspiration. The people of Louisburgh, one is proud to claim, realized the importance of our historical heritage, and through a voluntary organization have set up a museum, “The Gránuaile Interpretive Centre” thus ensuring the propagation of culture traditions in our future.

Sometimes, as I stand on the shore, facing the rolling ocean I think of that sea-queen, Gránuaile, setting off in her bellowing ships for the lands of Europe. She had a long and difficult journey before her — like the voyage we are facing in creating a united Europe. But by looking into our cultural past, we, young Irish people can extract some of the spirit and courage that enthused our heroes and heroines of old to keep our ship sailing with the winds of change. More than ever we must look to the past to face the future.

Doughmackeon

Beth O’Malley



It was otherwise a very ordinary evening. A young Louisburghman sat inside his window in his house in Brea, in the Shetland Islands off the Scottish coast. He looked out onto the sea-scape, as he had so often done before. But then! This was different. Or was it real? He blinked his eyes to make sure. Yes, it was no mirage. A medieval boat sailed along before his eyes; and under a bellowing sail which had the words in bold lettering *Gráineuaile, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo, Ireland.*

Dermot Durkan of Askelaun, Louisburgh soon wrote home his delight to his parents Maurice and Vera, telling of the effect this sight had on him in another country. The boat was the *Aileach*, a replica of a sixteenth century galley. It was sailing on its 400-mile journey from Clew Bay to the Isle of Lewis; and under the sail which was sponsored by the Louisburgh Development Company and Louisburgh Holiday Cottages Limited.

Now that Dermot sees the boat again on our covers (by permission of *The Scotsman* magazine) perhaps he will consider putting on paper for our next issue just how he felt on that nostalgic evening in the Shetlands.

Studying the Word

Have you ever wondered what it is that brings a small group of people together every Monday night at 8.30 p.m., in a house in lower Chapel Street, Louisburgh, throughout the year? Cease wondering, we are not two-headed monsters or visitors from outer space; we are in fact just a small group of ordinary Christian people, who come together once a week, to study the Bible. Some of us attended Charismatic renewal meetings away back in the late 70's, and as a result of what we saw and heard there, we came to realize that we were really very unfamiliar with the Sacred Scripture, its importance in our lives and its relevance in the world of today. A natural curiosity coupled with ardent desire prompted us to start up a small group of those interested in further Bible Study and now in 1992 we are still studying God's word in a private house, and thank God, growing in grace and loving it!

At 8.30 p.m. every Monday night we come together to spend one-and-a-half hours, approximately, studying the most important book ever written — The Bible. We usually begin by adoring God, praising Him and thanking Him in prayer and in song; we thank Jesus for dying for us, we tell Him we are sorry and ask for forgiveness, for our sins, remembering that we are all sinners. This exercise takes us about ten to fifteen minutes, then after invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit we proceed to read an appointed passage of Scripture. I would like to explain that we don't just 'dip' into the Bible at random; no, we started off in the beginning with the Gospels from the New Testament, and we have followed on faithfully and consistently with the sequence in the New Testament since. After we have read through a particular passage (or even one line) once or twice we have a period of discussion and/or meditation on its content. We find that this part of our meeting is of great value to us, as a group, and also to us as individuals. We invariably find that the passage or line read brings a special message to each one and to all of us, and it helps us to try to implement that message in the way we live our daily lives; this makes the whole exercise very relevant to our personal spiritual advancement. If we have difficulties, and we sometimes have, we are very honest with God and with each other and so we pray together about them.

We are mostly Catholics, and we find that even though we heard Bible readings in Church many times in the past, nevertheless we could not ask questions or delve fully into the real meaning that the words of Scripture should have in our own lives. We usually finish up with prayer again, we pray for others, for the coming of God's Kingdom and for special intentions, we pray for those who are sick in mind, spirit and body, we ask for healing in all three cases, and also for those who are truly seeking God's message and who are experiencing fear or doubt or trouble of any

kind. We always pray for peace, in our own lives, in our families, in our homes, in our country and in God's world. So you see we are not a Sect nor a Charismatic Group nor an Elitist group nor a "Holier than Thou" group, who think they know everything. No, we are a group of very ordinary people who came to realize, even late in life, that we are very badly acquainted with the message of Sacred Scripture and after much prayer, we resolved under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to do something to remedy our plight.

We urge all our readers to read and study the Scriptures (the Catholic Church recommends that we read the Bible daily). If you do, it will change your life for the better. You don't need to be anybody special to study the Bible, Jesus picked very ordinary people when He was on earth, before He entrusted to them the all-important mission of spreading the "good news". He is still seeking a personal relationship with each of us today and if we earnestly seek Him through His word and through prayer we will have that relationship with Him. He has promised "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11 - 28:29). If you are interested and would like to come to our Bible Study Group, you are very welcome to do so; or if you feel we can help you, please say so. Jesus is waiting for you to invite Him into your heart. "Here I am I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me. (Revelations 3 - V.20).

Go raibh an Tiarna Íosa libh.

Chapel Street

Clementine Lyons



At the presentation function to African Mission. Father Alexis Morahan with his mother, Patricia, and god-mother, Mrs. Evelyn Duggan



Students of Aquinas College, Duluth in Summer School



Michael and Mrs. Corrigan, Shrawee and their fifteen children.

“O’Brien’s Widow”

The story of Mrs. Judy Kitterick involving, as it does, players on the national historical stage and being reported, as it was, in many British papers of the time, assumes an importance beyond the normal, for poverty and eviction were hardly rare, even at the end of the last century. Indeed, though conditions in rural Ireland had improved somewhat in the decades following the Great Famine, the plight of the small tenant farmer in western areas saw little respite to the end of the century. The struggle to survive, faced by so many, late in the century, could be easily forgotten. The land acts of 1870, 1881, 1885 and 1891 were major improvements in the tenant’s lot but could not be easily availed of, as yet, by the struggling peasant.

Kinknock, a townland of 280 acres, had a population of 153 persons, living in thirty houses, in 1841, but had decreased to sixty-five people in eleven houses, by 1851. Martin Geraghty and his wife, Mary, held a strip of land from Lord Sligo, in the townland, in 1852. Their son and daughter, Pat and Judy (Julia, Julie), took control of the holding, as joint tenants, in the early 1870’s, at a rent of £7-10s.

Judy married Patrick Kitterick in 1871 and the families of both Pat Geraghty and the Kittericks lived in adjoining houses, on a street to the south of the Kinknock road on the Kilgeever/Aughavale parish boundaries, the twenty acres being divided equally between them. Judy and Patrick had six children, Mary (b.1872), Augustine (b.1875), Brigid (b.1882), Catherine (b.1884), Julie (b.1887) and Martin (b.1890). The 1890’s were to prove a desperate time for the family. In February 1893 Patrick Kitterick died of Tuberculosis, aged fifty, having been sick for eighteen months. Two months later Augustine, then eighteen years old, died of the same disease. The eldest daughter, Mary, had emigrated to America, to be followed later in the decade by a very young Brigid.

In the 1880’s the rent on the Kitterick property had been raised to £9 by Powell, land-agent to the then Lord Sligo. In the interest of balance it might be recorded that this particular ‘Sligo’ had his own problems. George Browne, Third Marquess, inherited the title and estate in the Famine year of 1845. He had to meet his rates and other expenses while his rents dried up. He closed up the Big House and moved, with his sisters, to a house on James Street, Westport (the old garda station). Twice he maintained the Westport Workhouse for periods, at his own expense, and paid most of the cost of the importation of a shipment of grain in 1846. He was a supporter of self-government. His first wife died in 1852, their only daughter by this marriage in 1864. His second wife died in 1859 and a further daughter in 1864. He married for a third time in 1878 and set up house in Surrey, at his wife’s behest, where he died in 1896. The estate was managed, in his absence, by Lord John Browne (brother of

George) and was in his hands at the time of the events being spoken of here. Lord John was to become the 4th Marquess in 1896, was a noted farmer and, from a landlord's point of view, managed the estate well.

By May 1893, illness and the normal endless struggle to meet the 'gale' days had seen both Pat Geraghty and Judy Kitterick in arrears of two-and-a-half years, amounting to £22-10s. A mare had been brought to market to be sold to help in rent payment but had died in an accident shortly after returning home.

Edwin Thomas O'Donell, High Sheriff, issued an ejectment decree on 20th October and the decree was served on December 14th, 1893. A 'redemption period' of six months expired on June 14th, 1894, at which date three-and-a-half years' rent was owed. A note on the relative value of the amounts being mentioned might be helpful. A Labour Commission of 1893 reports that on Lord John Browne's farm a labourer might expect to earn £23 a year. A wage of 1s.-6d. (71/2p) per day was common. Tea cost 3s.-2d. (16p) a pound. Sugar 21/2d. (1p) a pound. Flour 2s. (10p) a stone, Boots 9s.-6d (471/2p), Trousers 5s. (25p) and a shirt 1s.-10d (9p). A Killaallagh resident deposed to the Commission that 2s.-6d (121/2p) a day might be earned in Lancashire, potato picking.

Judy Kitterick's portion of the monies owed came to £13 (rent, ejectment, court costs). She managed to put together £10 from relatives and friends. She travelled to the rent office in Westport and offered it to the Land Agent's clerk, a Mr. Taylor. He refused it. Powell, the Land Agent, later denied he knew of the offer, in a letter to a Tory newspaper. Thomas Atkinson (Ballyhip), bailiff on the Louisburgh area of the estate, heard the money being offered, but said it was not produced and, therefore, could not be legal tender. Under Gladstone's Land Law (Irl) Act 1881 tenants could apply to have a 'judicial rent' fixed if they considered their rent to be excessive. About three-quarters of qualifying tenants had had their rents reduced by approximately twenty per cent under the act. The Kitterick rent was set one-third above valuation and an application to the courts was made in 1884 to fix a 'fair' rent. The act also specified that if the landlord and tenant could agree on a rent this would become legally binding as a 'judicial tenancy'. The Geraghty/Kitterick tenants were induced to make this 'voluntary agreement' and the rent was fixed at £9. Under pressure from rent offices, and, not being fully aware of the provisions of the act, many tenants unwittingly waived their rights to judicial rent. In addition, because the landlord was responsible for the complete Poor Law Rate on holdings below £4 valuation, he often resorted to eviction and consolidation to avoid paying the rate. There is a doubt, in this case, as to whether Poor Law Rate was in fact paid by the joint tenants.

Eviction was proceeded with, therefore, on 23rd July, 1894, when Luke Loftus (Castlebar) bailiff, executed the decree by clearing the premises, putting on a new lock and giving the key to Atkinson. Pat Geraghty was evicted first and then Judy Kitterick. Atkinson satisfied the legal ritual of eviction by removing some thatch from the roof, mortar from the wall and some soil from the property. There were two

doors, front and back, one being secured by a wooden bolt and the other by lock and key. Anything set in mortar was not removed. Sergeant Guinane, R.I.C. was present. A local version of events claims the house was destroyed and rebuilt later in one day by about thirty local men, while an accordion played throughout! There is nothing in the records to confirm this, however.

Later, Loftus was to say that he had no great sympathy for Mrs. Kitterick, opining that she would be better off in the poorhouse than being hunted for a few pounds which her land never produced. He was not shocked, he said, because he had previously seen more heartless evictions on the same estate. Sergeant Guinane, on the other hand, said he had been at evictions for thirty years and had never seen such a pitiable case. Pat Geraghty and his family were reinstated on their portion of the holding, having sold the only cow on the joint properties and borrowed to meet his portion of the rent and costs due. Judy then moved in with him to his house. On July 25th, two days following the eviction, a first cousin of Mrs. Kitterick's, Peter Foye, then about twenty-five years of age and living in Kinknock with his father and brothers, expressed interest in taking on the vacant tenancy of her portion of the property. A further provision of the 1881 land act allowed a tenant's interest in a holding to be sold, subject to the landlord's agreement. Mrs Kitterick requested £12 and Foye offered £9 on July 31st. He had previously rented some grazing from her. Some tentative agreement seems to have been reached and money was to be paid over at the Presbytery in Westport, in the presence of Father McGirr, Adm., on the following Sunday. The parties went to Westport but, following some disagreement, no money seems to have changed hands.

A tenancy was created for Peter Foye and Atkinson gave up possession to him on July 31st, by giving him some thatch, mortar and soil. The plot was now in dispute and, not unexpectedly, led to dissension between the parties. Mrs. Kitterick repossessed her house and Peter Foye later complained of being attacked when he went to the land to cut grass. By now Foye was receiving police protection by way of three patrols in each twenty-four hours. At the possible instigation of the rent office, Peter Foye charged Mrs. Kitterick with taking forcible possession of the house and land on August 4th, and with driving his cattle off the land. The case was to be heard at Louisburgh Petty Sessions on Monday, 3rd., September. Mrs. Kitterick sought the help of William O'Brien M.P. then residing at Altamount Villa, Streamstown, Westport (now Mallow Cottage, owned by Jack and Marese McAleer). With the death of Parnell, O'Brien's political career was in the ascendant as leader of the non-Redmondite, non-Healyite splinter of the Irish Party. He promised Mrs. Kitterick that she would not go undefended and was present in court on September 3rd. Colonel Buchanan J.P. presided. Father William Joyce P.P. Louisburgh, asked for an adjournment in order that a solicitor and counsel could be found for the defendant. Peter Foye's solicitor could not attend on that day either, so the case was adjourned for a month.

O'Brien, some clergymen and a large number of people, who were at market that day in Louisburgh, went to the Presbytery. Father Joyce introduced O'Brien, who addressed the crowd. Given the still precarious position of the western tenantry and the political situation of the time O'Brien was, understandably, vitriolic. A lack of capital and a lack of power of compulsory purchase of estates by the Congested Districts Board had precluded many tenants from benefitting from the provisions of the Land Purchase Acts to date. The post-Parnell Irish National Federation, precursor of O'Brien's United Irish League (1898) was being 'plugged' by him. He spoke of the plight of Mrs. Kitterick, attacked land-grabbing, spoke harshly of Lord Sligo and his agent, Powell, and encouraged the organization of a branch of the Irish National Federation in the area. In fact, on August 25th, a meeting of the 'William O'Brien' branch of the I.N.F. was held in Louisburgh under the chairmanship of Father Joyce.

An unstable Gladstone-led Liberal Alliance was in power at Westminster and John Morley was Chief Secretary for Ireland. O'Brien wrote to Morley on September 8th, alleging misconduct on the part of the R.I.C. towards Mrs. Kitterick. He alleged the police had been used to aid Peter Foye in cutting hay on the holding, had held her she protested "perhaps, not in the meekest manner" and had not assisted her when she, herself, was threatened. He outlined the case, in general, to Morley and said that, since the case was 'sub judice', no action should have been taken. All the principal newspapers in the United Kingdom published the correspondence between O'Brien and Morley On September 12th. Divisional Commissioner Cameron arrived in Westport to make enquiries into the charges. On September 21st. 1894, Morley replied to O'Brien. He said an on-the-spot enquiry had taken place. He detailed the disturbance at the property and vindicated the action of the police in the matter. The official witness described the situation as 'miserable'. The report estimated the furniture of both houses to be about five shillings in value. Potatoes and Indian meal was the food used, without butter, milk or any accompaniment. The youngest child, though almost four years old, was being breast-fed because it could not digest either potatoes or meal; and was unable to walk. William O'Brien M.P., and Michael Davitt who was visiting in the area at the time, called to Kinknock to see what help could be given and to try to persuade Peter Foye to give up the land. Davitt had been elected M.P., unopposed, for N.E. Cork in an 1893 bye-election but had to withdraw when he was declared bankrupt, after standing in the 1892 general election for Meath. The visit was unsuccessful. An English novelist, Edna Lyall, also visited. She was deeply moved and expressed surprise at the quality of Mrs. Kitterick's speech. Referring to her husband and son, Mrs. Kitterick had said "Everything that was good in the world died for me the day they died". Lyall took photographs and sent money at Christmas for a number of years.

The adjourned case was heard in Louisburgh on Monday, October 1st, a fair day in the village. O'Brien and Davitt attended. In the crowded courthouse, Mathias Bodkin Q.C. M.P. for North Roscommon came from Dublin to defend and Alfred B. and P.J. Kelly (Sols.) appeared for the prosecution. A.E. Horne R.M. was

chairman of the group of magistrates, all justices of the peace - Colonel Buchanan, A.M. O'Malley, Dr. Griffin and John Kelly. Clergymen from Louisburgh, Westport, Clare Island, Newport and Aughagower also attended. Bodkin's defence was that there was no effective eviction of Mrs. Kitterick, that no evidence of forcible entry had been produced and that, as a joint tenancy existed, Mr. Kitterick and Pat Geraghty's possession was exactly the same and that when he was reinstated she should have been reinstated also. He also felt some unseen hand had been behind the case.

Magistrate Horne thought she should be returned for trial. The other magistrates were unanimous that informations should be refused. Mrs. Kitterick was acquitted in a case that had lasted five hours. Other summonses and cross-summonses were cleared without hearing. Afterwards a platform was erected opposite the hotel, near the Square, and a large gathering attended a public meeting. Fr. Joyce P.P. chaired the meeting. Mr. P.J. Kelly, Chairman, Westport Poor Law Union, proposed confidence in the Irish Parliamentary Party, bemoaned the poor potato crop, called on landlords to forego rents, called on the Government to introduce Public Works and regretted the unavoidable absence of the M.P. for West Mayo Dr. Robert Ambrose. Ambrose, Anti-Parnellite Nationalist, replaced John Deasy as M.P. for West Mayo in a bye-election held in 1893.

William O'Brien spoke again of Lord Sligo's estate and of the recently rejected Evicted Tenant's Bill. A John Burns, Lecanvey had to be protected by police when he heckled "what about Parnell?"

Michael Davitt suggested that it was "A bad day for the descendants of the Shaun-a-Saggarths". He thanked Bodkin, Morley and especially O'Brien. He urged the listeners to remember the philosophy of Pan Wellan - "Beware of Widows" and christened Mrs. Kitterick "O'Brien's Widow." Of Landlordism, he said "It can't be mended, it must be ended."

A fund had been opened earlier for Mrs. Kitterick and the subscription list ran thus -

	£ s d
A Friend per Very Rev. Canon Keller P.P. Youghal	5.0.0
Lady Winifred Robinson. Kingsthorpe, Northampton	5.0.0
Rev. Fr. McGirr, Adm. Westport.	1.0.0
A Dublin sympathiser with the Oppressed.	1.0.0
Mrs. Denny Lane, Cork, per Freemans Journal.	3.0.0
Humility per Freemans.	1.0.0
Total fund amounted to	£ 33.2.6

It being a fair day in Louisburgh, Father Joyce purchased a black milch cow from the fund for Judy Kitterick. Her bed-clothes, in pawn, were to be released, and a pig bought for Pat Geraghty. Father McGirr, Adm. Westport, was to take charge

of the remainder for the family. A crowd escorted O'Brien, Davitt and Bodkin in triumph to Kinknock.

Peter Foye now brought an ejectment-on-title order against Mrs. Kitterick, alleging that she had illegally retaken possession of the holding. This case was to be heard at Castlebar Quarter Sessions on 24th October before J.H. Richards Q.C. County Court Judge. In a surprise development Peter Foye withdrew entirely from proceedings. The case was deemed to be settled out-of-court. Mrs. Kitterick and her kinsman, Peter Foye, met in the hallway and warmly shook hands amid much jubilation. At a meeting in front of the Parochial House, O'Brien now called for 'forgetting and forgiving'. Peter Foye gave up his claim to the property and went to England, though the land remained in his name for some time. Later John O'Donnell, Kinknock (Grandfather of Ann Hughes, Kinknock) took over the property without dispute. In a later realignment the plot returned to the control of the Geraghtys.

Judy Kitterick's youngest son, Martin, was incurably ill and died some years later, aged eight. The eldest child, Mary, had married in America and also lost her husband. Some time around the turn of the century Judy Kitterick herself emigrated to America carrying with her a bottle of holy water from 'Tobar Rí an Domhnaigh'. Though it is reported she longed to return to Kinknock, she did not do so, as far as I can tell.

Conscious that, even after a century has passed, some people, close to the events may consider it still a sensitive matter, I have attempted to present the story in its historical context, lacking the emotion of the time, the sensationalism of the present or the embellishment of the interim.

Doire Leathan

Donal O'Leary

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Acknowledgements

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- Tom Murtagh, Westport Library
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- Mrs. Vera Scanlon, Bunowen

Remembering Thallabaun

Thallabaun is a most beautiful place, where I had the pleasure of my growing years. When I was a little girl I used to roam from village to village seeking out new adventures, like playing by small rocks or the little stream which contained quite a lot of small trout. I would set to and find a tree to break off a branch and pretend I was fishing! I used to have with me a fork and catch eels under the stones and make-believe it was bait for catching the brown trout. I used to spend a lot of time every Spring watching the Conamara men salmon fishing on the Green Island close to the White Strand. I used to find the mountains very attractive and my mind was full of curiosity as to what lay behind those beautiful mountains. I spent hours puzzling as to how I could find out, until one afternoon I had an occasion to go counting sheep and thought "Ah this is my chance." So I chose Muilrea Mountain. As I started to ascend it was getting harder by the minute but something was telling me, 'do not give up.' I eventually reached the very top and found the whole episode very breathtaking. Apart from the beautiful view I could not get over the peace and tranquility that I found there. It was as if I had a spell cast on me. Then suddenly it dawned on me I must make my way home, and leave all the beauty behind me.

School days were not my best in life but I must admit I got on exceptionally well with my teachers whom I let down on several occasions academically. I have felt over the years I should and could have done better at school. Being young at heart and full of fun, I really did not have the patience to learn or study. I was quite good when it came to singing or reading. Maybe I should not say that, as self-praise is no recommendation! I did like learning Irish and down through the years I have found it to be very useful. I had some wonderful teachers, God bless them, but I did not appreciate them! I thought I could rule the world. There was one particular teacher who used to insist that her class learnt the importance of writing a letter, especially for when they were away from home. Of course we as pupils found this a lot of nonsense. We thought: "who would we be writing to!" But how wrong we were! I must add we did have a lot of fun learning this as we caused no end of anxiety and she would get very angry! I have very often in my thoughts felt how grateful we should be at learning this because of the many letters I have had to write in the thirty-six years I have lived in this country. I still see that same teacher when I go back on my holidays. She owns a nice little cushy shop in Chapel Street, Louisburgh, her name being Mrs. Mary Duffy.

I left school at the age of fifteen which was silly but I was needed more at home. I hated the haymaking but I loved the bog and milking the cows, and the chores that followed. We used to have a great time in the bog, everyone used to congregate at

lunch-time where all the village gossip used to be exchanged and a great day's work achieved. I used to look forward to the Spring, the birds singing, all God's creatures rearing their young. The fishermen would arrive with their shoals of fish for it to be sold through the village by a man by the name of Tommy Andy, (R.I.P.). The villagers used to really look forward to this event.

I had a very happy childhood but sad to say I had to bid farewell to beautiful Thallabaun and the Killary Farm to seek employment in a foreign land. And oh how I would long to go back there to the place I loved so well.

Bristol

Kathleen Ward (nee Loftus)



Louisburgh Community Play School Group 1991/1992. Back, left to right: Coleman Corcoran, Thomas O'Malley, Paul Cusack, Daniel O'Malley. Front row: Debra Maxwell, Sandra Kilcoyne, Therese Philbin, Mian O'Dowd.

Musing at Eventide

An interview with Johnny Mulvey

Editor: Johnny, many of our readers, old and young, will know that you are a native of Collacoona; and that you have been a long-time and active member of the GAA. May I ask you to shed your natural modesty and make a list for them of your various achievements in that Association. Let us begin with your active playing days:



Johnny: I was lucky enough to win two Connacht Colleges medals with Saint Jarlath's in 1938 and 1939, the eighth and ninth in a row for the college. They lost in 1940. I still prize those medals as they are the only ones I ever won at football apart from a West Mayo football championship medal in 1946. I do not remember that, but I have the medal and a Mayo Junior championship runners-up medal with Louisburgh in 1944. I had indifferent health in 1940, '41 and '42 and spent eleven months in hospital. I recovered sufficiently to play in the 1945 Connacht Senior Final with stars like Tommie Hoban and Henry Kenny, God rest them both. Successive injuries in three games (broken nose, dislocated collar-bone and broken jaw, in which I still carry the silver wire!) ended a very brief intercounty career. I won a Senior County championship medal with Castlebar; I think it was in 1948 against Crossmolina. I have a vivid memory of driving Mayo players to play Kerry in Tralee in November 1947 in a National League game. Some of the Dublin based players failed to travel and Mayo found themselves taking the field with fourteen men and the driver! The game ended in a draw. What I recall about it is that I was playing corner forward on a lad named Tom Ashe, who was playing his first game for Kerry and was later to win an All-Ireland Senior medal with Kerry at corner forward in 1953. The drawn result caused a play-off between Kerry and Mayo in February 1948 in Croke Park for group honours. Obviously I had not distinguished myself, because I listened to the replay on radio! Kerry won, but Mayo went on to the 1948 final against Cavan, losing by a point. Most of those lads, including my long-time friend Liam Hastings, went on to win All-Irelands in 1950 and '51. I had the pleasure of watching their 1950 victory from the Upper Cusack Stand but was in the Richmond Hospital when they won the 1951 title. I had listened to Mayo's previous victory in 1936 in the large study hall in Saint

Jarlath's. We got a free day on the following Monday to celebrate the occasion.

I had a brief flirtation with athletics about the middle of the 'forties: I cycled to an N.A.C.A. meeting in Westport, where I won the Hundred Yards Open race and, half-an-hour later, the 800 Metres of Mayo. I can't believe now that the word 'metres' was used then (1945) but the medal says "800 Metres". It must have been easy to win then because I never had any interest in athletics before; and indeed I never participated again as football claimed all my interest.

Q. You took up refereeing and reached a very high grade?

A. I did some refereeing for a period first at county level and later at provincial level including the 1958 Connacht final, Leitrim v Galway and the 1959 '60 National League final, Down v Cavan. That was Down's first victory at national level. I cannot say that I enjoyed refereeing. Being a bit too sensitive to the abuse which was a referee's lot then, as it is today, I called it a day. One of my most vivid memories as a referee was the sending off of five players in a town league game in Castlebar!

Q. Perhaps your long service as Secretary is the one that is best known and appreciated?

A. My period of office as County Secretary was a particularly barren one for Mayo as regards Connacht championship titles. I became secretary in January 1956 after serving as assistant secretary in 1954 and 1955. Mayo won the 1955 Connacht championship and did not win again until 1967 and 1969. When I retired in 1978 only two Connacht senior titles were won in the twenty-two years! Most of my pleasant memories during that period came from the other grades (Junior: six Connacht and one All-Ireland titles; U-21: eight Connacht and two All-Ireland titles; and Minor: eleven Connacht and two All-Ireland. And of all the grades, I got the most pleasure from the Minors.

Q. What other offices did you fill at county, provincial or national level?

A. I think I was West Board secretary for a year or two in the mid-forties. Connacht Council representative-1966; Central Council 1967-1975; National Management Committee (Coiste Bainisti) for three years; and Connacht Council Secretary since 1976.

Q. My memory of your student days always associates you with our mutual friend, Liam Hastings of Doire Mhór, beannacht Dé leis. Would you recall a few memories?

A. The late Liam Hastings and Myles McKeon were my close friends throughout our college days. Liam was from Doire Mhór and Myles from Drummin; and many a fine summer day they cycled over Mám na Ceasach (a mountain gap in the Sheaffrey range) and down into Collacoön. I doubt if either of them contributed much to the hay-saving in either Doire Mhór or Drummin; and I know that my late father, while always glad to see them, would have preferred if they confined their visits to wet days when the hay and turf seasons were in full swing! However, my

mother always interceded for me and always won. My father had to do with one less haymaker. It was then common to see the three of us heading through the town for Westport, Castlebar, Knock, Swinford or even Achill! Liam had relatives in most of these places and we shared their hospitality. One August week-end I will always remember; I think it was 1942: a Westport selection was invited to play Achill (the County Junior champions) on the Sandy Banks in Keel. Liam and I were invited as guests with the Westport selected team. We set out on Saturday on the forty-mile journey from Louisburgh and stayed with Sal Malone (Liam's aunt) in Achill. Our stay lasted until the following Tuesday! All three of us were at that time "going for the Church" as the saying went. Liam was the bookies' favourite to make the grade; I was an each-way chance, but Myles was regarded as the outsider of the trio!. Bookies, of course, are not always right: Liam and myself forsook the "straight and narrow" but Myles became Bishop in Perth, Western Australia!

Q. If I remember correctly, you travelled with Mayo, and later with an All-star team, to the U.S. What are your abiding memories?

A. I travelled to U.S.A. with Castlebar Mitchells in 1960 and with Mayo in 1963 when they played in Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, Rochester and Boston (and won them all). I went again with Mayo for the Croagh Patrick Trophy in New York (October 1970) which Mayo won by 4-9 to 0-8; and had a few trips with Galway for Gael Linn Cup finals. Then I travelled with All-Ireland referees (as a gift from Mayo County Board on my retirement as County Secretary). My abiding memory of all those occasions is the overwhelming generosity and kindness of the Irish in the U.S.A., many of them previously unknown to me and to the players.

Q. I have thought of you always as a keen reader; and now you have your own bookshop in Castlebar. Are there any recent books that you could recommend, especially to Louisburgh people away from home? (Do not be ashamed to advertise!)

A. Yes, I am a keen reader — but of newspapers, only! I never get time to read books, but if there are any exiles out there who wish to be reminded of their youthful days, three books by a Cork writer, Alice Taylor, will help their recall. The titles are: "To School across the Fields", "Quench the Lamp" and "The Village." Hundreds of these have gone all over the world. Then there is there is the "Tales of the Wild West" by Louisburghman James Berry; and recently a very good account of the murders of Maamtrasna (entitled "Maamtrasna") written by Father Jarlath Waldron, brother of Father Kieran (once of Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh). This has been a best-seller here all summer.

Q. Over the long years of your experience, what are the main changes you have seen in the activities of the GAA, good and bad?

A. Club players today would be shocked to hear that in 1939 the Mayo Minor championship consisted of one game, between North Mayo and West Mayo selected teams. Happily, it is now one of the most difficult titles to win; over twenty different clubs have won it. And the high standard in the county is reflected in our twenty Connacht Minor titles. In the 'forties and 'fifties there were only two or three Senior

clubs (about seventeen today) and no Intermediate. Now there are county competitions in under-twelve, -fourteen, -sixteen, -eighteen and -twenty-one; with grades A and B in the Junior competitions. Another very notable change is the introduction of Primary School competitions. Thirty years ago, who could have imagined a ladies GAA football competition? and even five years ago who could have visualized a juvenile team from Louisburgh playing their counterparts from Tyrone in an All-Ireland Final in Croke Park, and winning by a huge margin? My sincere congratulations to all concerned in that great victory!



Active spectators!

Q. Among your lesser-known talents was your gift of music. You did spend years with a dance band?

A. I was regarded by Mother Michael in the Convent as having “a good ear for music” and later on had some involvement with dance bands, my own and others, until I lost my health at it in and ended up in hospital for eleven months. It all started with Mickey Keane’s in Aillemore, John Ted’s in Mullagh, the Gaeity in Islandeady, Heneghan’s in Doon (a Mayo News advertisement said “Do your dancing in Doon”) and later in the Achill halls at Dookanella, Dooega, Keel, Saulia; in Glenisland, Kilmeena, Leenane, Recess, Letterfrack, Foxford, Ballina, Castlereah, and even as far as Dungarvan and Tralee. Looking back at it I think I must have been mad. One had always to work the next day; so it was no wonder that it put me into hospital!

Q. You also went in for amateur dramatics (on the stage, I mean!) Are there memories that you would like to share with our Coinneal readers?

A. I had some small experience of amateur drama when the late John T.

Morahan produced “The Dawn of Freedom” and gave me my first part. In the course of that play I was due to be shot; and I will never know how near I went to the real coup de grace because the shotgun that was used (by whom, I forget,) actually produced a hole in the roof of the town hall! I remember taking another part in “The Courting of Mary Doyle.” Mrs Austie Lyons and Annie Philbin were in all of those plays.

Q. What do you recall most about your childhood in the parish?

A. For some reason one of the things that stand out in my memory is the Corpus Christi procession in Louisburgh. In my mind’s eye no town ever looked as well as Louisburgh did on Procession day in the ‘thirties and ‘forties. I also have vivid memories of All-Ireland semi-finals and finals in the ‘thirties when there was only standing room in Michael Tom’s kitchen for Micheál O Hehir’s radio broadcasts on the old, wet-battery radio. I have memories, too, as a Mass-server, of visiting many new houses in the countryside for their first Mass, with Father Eddie O’Donohue who was curate then. I got the next best treatment to the priest, as well as a two-shilling piece or a half-crown — a small fortune in those days — and the pleasure of missing school and carrying the priest’s box! There used to be a custom then that groups of twos or threes would walk the town every night from Pat O’Donnell’s to the Church gate and back again, with, perhaps, an intermission at Morrison’s Corner to hear all the local gossip (truth and fiction) from Johnny (Mick) O’Malley; or words of wisdom from Ownie O’Malley. During school-hours we often visited the Forge to see the horses’ shoes being fitted, and as often as not we were chased away by Tom when somebody stepped out of line. Gaffney’s Wicket Gate was the recognised venue where school differences were settled and fistic duels arranged. Easter Week, as well as being a religious festival, was the week when the local butchers, Pat Keane, Michael Tom and Anthony McDonnell killed pigs and hung them on hooks outside their shops, so there was intense competition for pigs’ bladders. Fair days were big occasions, celebrated by the purchase of the delicacies of the time from Mary Hehir, who came from Westport and set up at Morrison’s Corner. The delicacies of the time were: Peggy’s Leg (sugar-stick), Liquorice (called ‘pigstail’), ten-a-penny NKM’s (caramels), “Half-time Jimmy” (square chocolate bars) etc. And of course a fair day never ended without an argument or two and occasionally a thump or two as the daylight faded into dusk. A vivid memory of mine, too, is the sight of a dozen horse-drawn side-cars, from Accony and parts west, pounding down the New Line and over the Bridge into town for Sunday Mass. I can remember, too, the first I.O.C. Charabanc Bus service from Leenane to Louisburgh and on to Westport. (I am not even sure of what I.O.C. stood for; perhaps “Irish Omnibus Company”!)

Christmas week was a wonderful time, when the town was full of horse-carts, ass-carts and pony-traps “buying the Christmas” as it was called, and collecting the annual “Christmas boxes” from town traders. And what of the dances in the country houses, known sometimes as the “American Wakes”, where so many of us put one

foot before the other for the first time! The actual funeral wakes of old people featured the distribution of clay pipes and tobacco; and many a young lad, including me, smoked there for the first time and died the death afterwards with a sick stomach and a determination never to smoke again. There were some great visiting house in town where marathon card-games were played, tables thumped with abandon, aces of hearts swept away by their partner's Jack or Five, and never a swear-word used. (Well, hardly ever!) But before the cards took the floor, matters of vital national importance were discussed and methods of solving the crises put forward but seldom accepted unanimously. It was the period of the Second World War and it was not at all unusual to hear references to Timoshenko, Haw-Haw, Molotov, Churchill, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Togo, Okinawa, Von Ribbentrop etc thrown around a kitchen with knowledgeable familiarity. I am reminded of a remark once made by Seán MacBride to the effect of how educated he found Louisburgh people to be. The kitchen to which I refer was, of course, that of Michael Tom. It was the local Regional Tech of the 'forties, and as a regular visitor I was kept well abreast of world affairs of the time. I have a particular regard for that home, as the lady of the house (and I mean lady!) was a second mother to me. There were others whose kindness to me in my childhood days I still treasure; among them Mrs Gaffney ("Babyannie") and Mrs Kenny. May God rest their kind souls!

Q. Do you get the opportunity often to make the journey home? And what changes do you see on the home scene.?

A. I still visit Louisburgh fairly often, but alas there are not too many of my generation around! Still, the annual GAA club dinner gives me an opportunity of meeting some of them. I first left Louisburgh in 1934. Today it looks better and brighter than ever it was. Certainly its younger generation can take its place anywhere in the world and many of them are doing so. Reading the local papers in recent years many (to me) strange family names pop up. Obviously many new families have come to live in the area. No doubt the well-known charm of Louisburgh and its people persuaded them to put down roots there.

Q. Are there any Louisburgh colleagues whom you would like to greet through our columns?

A. If any of my former colleagues anywhere in the world read these words, I hope it will remind them of their youthful days and nights in Louisburgh and prompt them to say that prayer that has often been put to me (not as a prayer!) "The Lord be with you, Louisburgh!" May the Lord be with them, too, wherever they are.

Q. Would you like to explain what is the Mayo Green and Red Trust Fund?

A. The Green and Red Trust Fund was founded at Áras Nally, Castlebar on February 7th 1988 with the aim of supporting any of our former Mayo footballers who from time to time might find themselves under stress, medical or otherwise. Such are the uncertainties of life that a player who has left the limelight can, through no fault of his own, find himself in difficulty through ill-health or other crisis. The Trust aims to help such people, if only to indicate that the pleasure they gave during

their playing careers is not forgotten. The Trust has received, and is receiving, excellent support and continues to fulfil its aims in a most praiseworthy manner.

Q. What do you think of the recently founded Supporters Clubs?

A. Recently founded supporters clubs are a very good idea, always provided they are under the control of their respective county boards. The supporters club in Mayo has done marvellous work in raising funds of the training and transport of our county teams and sponsorship of various county board functions. Nowadays it requires enormous amounts of money to fund the expenses of the various grades of county teams and it is fair to say that without their help the Board would be hard pressed to meet its commitments.

Q. Are Gaelic fans in general, and Mayo Gaelic fans in particular, fair to their players and officials?

A. Generally speaking, Mayo have as large and as faithful a following as any county in Ireland, and better than most. A small percentage of them (as in every other county) are critical of players and officials when they lose. Human nature being what it is, a tiny minority show their displeasure by hurling insults at officials and occasionally at players. Many of them do not know the sacrifices they make and what rigours they suffer. The championship dictates that one team must lose in every match until there is only one team left as winner of the All-Ireland. So thirty-one teams must lose at some stage.

Q. Is Gaelic football as enjoyable for county players now as it was in your own playing days? Have the pressures from sponsorship, win-at-all-cost, and what has been called "creeping professionalism" taken from the enjoyment?

A. More enjoyable, once the early training grinds are over, because the perks for good players, or reasonably successful teams, are enormous. There is no doubt that proficiency in Gaelic games has contributed to the everyday welfare of the players. But the win-at-all-costs attitude is, I fear, becoming more prevalent at inter-county level; and to the detriment of free-flowing natural skills. I must confess that in recent years Mayo have not succeeded in imposing their natural style in a win-at-all-costs scene. It just isn't their game and it never was. It is true that professionalism is gone beyond the "creeping" stage when it comes to team preparation nowadays. It is debatable how long the tide can be controlled; but if the tide wins, the winning of an All-Ireland title will be confined to a few teams. It is noticeable, however, that coaching has brought about big changes on the football scene. New teams are coming forward now and there will be others, I hope, who will help to push back the tide of professionalism.

Q. If you had the necessary power, influence and resources, what one major change would you introduce into the running of Gaelic games?

A. It is an accepted fact that Connacht is the Cinderella province — no hurling competition! If the Association is in earnest about having a "level playing pitch", why not re-draw the provincial boundaries along the natural boundary, the Shannon;

and include Clare (even Donegal) in Connacht? Then we would have a Connacht hurling final in all grades.

Q. As we speak, Mayo seniors are preparing for an All-Ireland semi-final against Donegal. I shall not weary you with the cliché questions, but could you (especially for our overseas readers) assess how healthy is the state of football in Mayo at present?.

A. Club football in Mayo is in a very healthy state. We have very well-contested competitions in all grades but perhaps we have too many teams in the senior championship, with consequent reduction in standards. It is hard to say that sixteen or seventeen senior club teams means lower standard at intercounty level; but when we last won All-Irelands(1950-1) there were only three or four Senior teams and no Intermediate team in the county. I'm afraid the hard fact is that if we are to succeed in today's game we will have to be more professional whether we like it or not. The critics at national level tell us with some justification that we are tops for style and appearance but lack the killer instinct. It's probably nearer the truth to say that we do have the killer instinct but we are loathe to practise it as part of our game. With notable exceptions we prefer not to play tough. We were criticised by at least one national journalist after the 1989 final by the remark, "nice guys finish second". Recent events proved, I fear, that although club football is very healthy it is not producing sufficient quality players to enable us to hold our own at top level. Quality is a key word in every sport nowadays, as indeed it is in every walk of life. Quantity is no longer sufficient for success!

Q. What do you remember as your greatest satisfaction or thrill?

A. My greatest thrill was to see Mayo win the 1950 All Ireland against Louth. I didn't see them in 1936 (or in 1951 when I was hospitalised.) I have a happy memory of a reception for a Mayo team on the Square in Louisburgh after winning the National League in 1970 and the shock my family got when the team lorry visited Collacoona, and later Accony to honour John Gibbons, whose second-half goal played a big part in Mayo's win by 4-7 to 0-10. I also felt it a great honour to be elected Connacht Council Secretary in 1976. And our Minor All-Ireland wins always delighted me.

Q. And what was your greatest cause of disappointment?

A. Losing two National League finals (1971 and 1972). Not being able to see Mayo win the 1951 final. (I still hope to see them win one!) To sum up: I have seen some triumphs and more than a few disasters; and although Kipling says that we should be able to treat them "just the same", he wasn't a Mayo football supporter! Above all else, I cherish the friendships I made through the GAA. It is no exaggeration to say that these three letters can open countless doors in many parts of the world.

Editor: Thank you, Johnny, for those memories and opinions. We all hope to share your great hope for Mayo. But more so for the present we hope for the effort that will lead to such a devout consummation!

Random Tapes

A diary of community events during the past two years. Thanks to the compiler.

October 1990: Louisburgh Garda John Broderick and his fiancée Anne Marie McBride were adjudged Ireland's most romantic couple on Century Radio. Castlepollard/Cregganbaun Reunion was a huge success and a most enjoyable weekend Garda Sergeant John Healy has been transferred from Louisburgh to Westport Congrats to Mary O'Malley, Shraugh, who is Louisburgh's first-ever representative on the Ireland-West Tourism Council An Choinneal was on sale at the Louisburgh and District Reunion in London. Fr. Tadhg O'Móráin and many other Louisburgh parishioners attended. Canon Eamon O'Malley, Kilmeena (and Louisburgh) travelled with parishioners to the First Annual Emigrants Reunion in London.

November 1990: Louisburgh Cubs were supreme at the Volleyball Blitz played in Belmullet Former Mayo Senior footballer Martin Carney presented medals and trophies to Louisburgh under 16 footballers Congrats to Imelda O'Grady,



Busy Beavers members of the 3rd Mayo (Louisburgh) Scout group pictured in May 1992 during a day trip to Connemara National Park in Letterfrack. Front row, left to right: Richard O'Toole, Rory O'Malley, Clare Kilcoyne, Michelle McDonagh, Clare O'Malley, Evelyn Bonnar. Second row: Michael Kilcoyne, Gary Hennessy, Tommie Durkan, Clare Morahan, John Philbin, Declan Keane, Brendan Keane. Back: Group leaders Mary Philbin and Mary Keane.