

An Còinneal

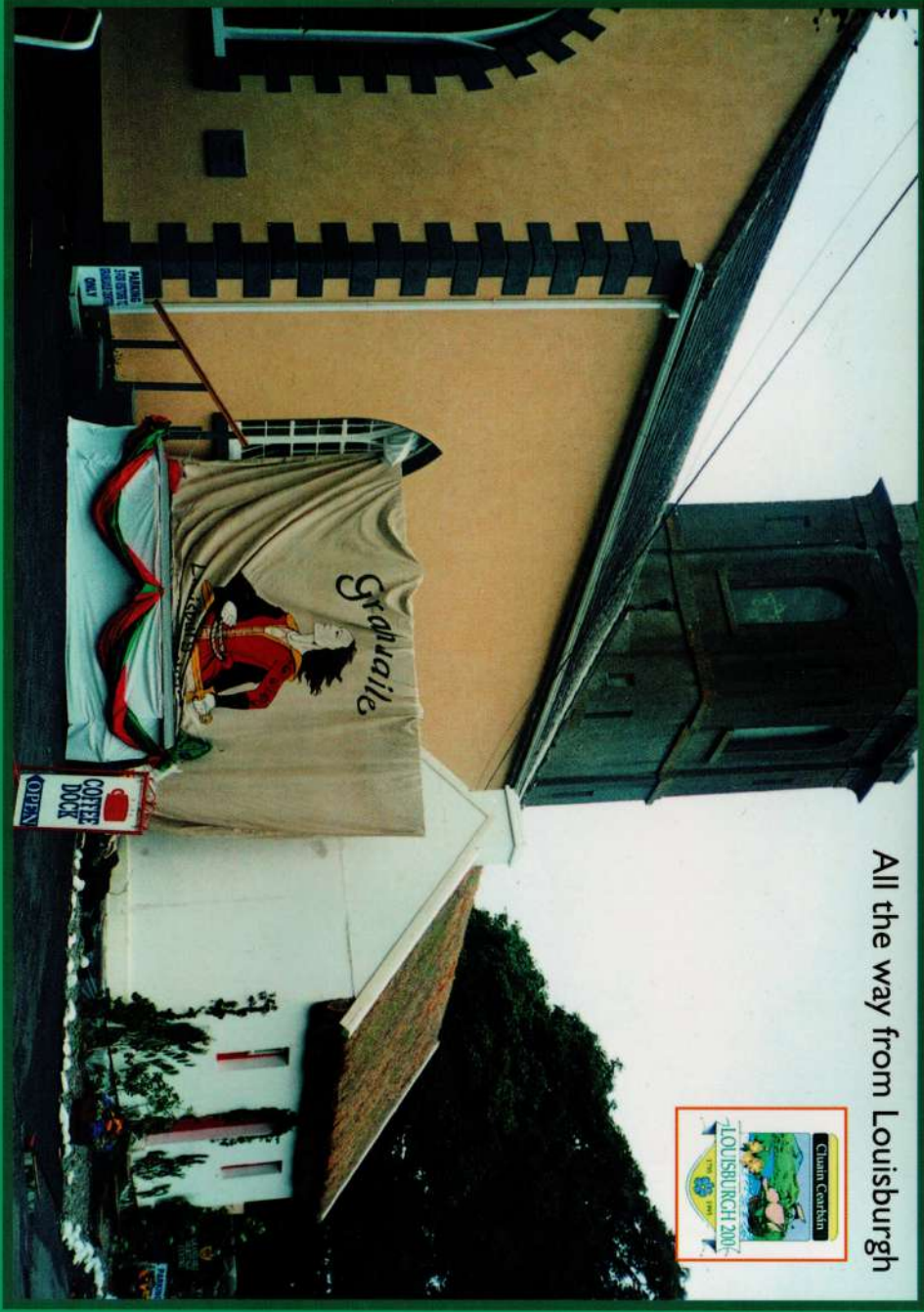
Granuaile



No 20

LOUISBURGH 1996

All the way from Louisburgh



An C oinneal

*Front Cover:
President Mary Robinson opens the Gr ainnuaile Centre, 29 July 1995*

Number Twenty

Christmas 1996

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The letters in this recurring feature are very much looked forward to and appreciated by a host of Coinneal readers. They bring into focus for an instant a name, a character, a life of some former parishioner or family. Accordingly they are very welcome arrivals on the editorial desk and we express our gratitude to all who have taken the trouble to sit down and write, however short the note. The more personal wishes and sentiments are, of course, edited out. We encourage such correspondence to future issues, especially those that relate or recall a memory, a story, an opinion, or pose a question or suggestion about our far-flung community readership. We repeat a reader's request, that for obvious reasons, the maiden name of married women contributors should always be given.

– Editor.

A million thanks for the copy of the latest *Coinneal*. I appreciate it so much.. I had hoped that a member of my family would provide an article for the coming edition. God bless you all.

Yvonne (McKeon) & John

So you have become a scouting assistant-editor Yvonne! Don't lose heart if your efforts don't bear early fruit. You must persevere, invite, cajole, encourage, remind. And "mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí"!

Many thanks. It was good of you to think of me and I was delighted to receive it. Very best wishes for the Bicentenary of Louisburgh.

Kieran Waldron, Kilkerrin

Once again, Kieran, we recall with gratitude your contributions to this magazine on many levels during your years as priest in Louisburgh.

Delighted with the 1994 copy. Only the other evening I sat down to read it through. What a shock I got to read of the death of Frankie McHugh and many other people I so well recall. May they all rest in peace!

Betty (O'Grady) Ryan, Blackrock

One of the few sadnesses associated with each Coinneal, Betty, is the burden of death notices of our community members, at home and abroad. This number brings you further sad tidings – including the death of Frankie's life-partner, Columb, who became our dispensary doctor in succession to your own dear father.

I enclose cheque to cover the cost of the *Coinneal* and postage and I am already looking forward to reading it. I get the "Mayo News" every week.

Rachel (Carr) Mayberry,
London

Then you have a very balanced mental diet, Rachel! You must be a particular well-informed and educated lady!

So, many nice articles. I liked especially the ones about Charlie (McDernott) and his family. The picture of the Square is exactly as I remember it when I was small. I did shed a tear!

Peto (Fearons) Dolan

But you wouldn't recognise the Square to-day, Peto! However, thank God for what a Roman poet called "the tears of things".

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

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The Editor wishes to thank all the people whose voluntary efforts have helped to produce this twentieth issue. In particular we express thanks to Frank Dolan, professional photographer; and the many shopkeepers in town who exhibit and sell the magazine without any commission.

Because of continuing postal uncertainties we request all our foundation members to acknowledge receipt of this number, even formally. Members' copies are posted on the day after publication. American copies are posted direct from Delran, New Jersey by our agent Mrs. Mary (Dunne) Richter, who with her husband Bob has set up a new and even more efficient distribution system this year.

Please notify us of any change of address.

BERRY PRINT GROUP

Letters . . .

Many thanks indeed for providing two early editions and some information about Pat O'Toole. My father died recently and his first cousin, Nora Boylan (Skipton, Yorkshire), has provided me with a considerable amount of information about the O'Toole's from Doughmakeon. She tells me that there is a very elderly person in Doughmakeon who would be full of information about Pat O'Toole, his brothers, and perhaps their parents, Honor and William O'Toole (born c.1850).

Dermot O'Toole, Isle of Man

Dermot, you are one of our first letter-writers from the Isle of Man! Welcome ashore! The elderly Doughmakeon man you refer to is surely Anthony O'Malley, recently head of the O'Malley Clan. He now lives in a retirement home in Westport, but you will have met him during your 1995 visit. Could you and Nora contribute a piece about the family for our recurring feature "Kith and Kin"? Incidentally, you are probably aware that Manx is a lesser member of the six surviving Celtic languages. Do you ever come across stray words in conversation that have a Celtic or Irish ring?

We always enjoy reading the *Coinneal* and I enclose money for the one which is now due. Let me know if it costs more.

Denise Scott, Huntingdon, England

Denise, if you were to walk across the Square in Louisburgh, our wonderfully human gift of curiosity would have people asking: "Who is she?" "Now, which Scott?" and "Who were her people?". Next time you pass across our pages, do please satisfy our curiosity. Familiarity breeds content!

I am looking forward to the next *Coinneal* already.

M. O'Toole, Leeds

Mary, (is it Mary, Margaret? or Maeve?) you'll be interested in the letter from Dermot O'Toole above, and maybe you can add to the family history.

It maintains its usual high standard. It is a wonderful achievement to have produced it over all the years and to have procured such interesting material for every issue.

Joe Moran, Aughamore

You helped to lay a good foundation, Joe, with the first issue in 1959. You will have noticed that another of that original editorial board has been called home.

Of course I was delighted to get a complimentary copy, having spent much of my youth in Louisburgh. Indeed my happiest memories are of that little hamlet which I often compare to the Dreamthorpe in an essay which we did in school about an ideal village. I enclose a cheque towards the cost of production because I know that it entails a lot of time, effort and work. I really appreciate the fact that it is a parish magazine and I wish we had one as beautiful to boast of here.

Eamon B. Fleming,
Ballina

Thank you, Eamon. Letters and articles from people, like you, who spent part of their youth in their grandparents' homes here add an attractive dimension to a parish publication.

Imagine, my *Coinneal* arrived safely. It had gone to a house we sold twelve years ago but the lady there kindly looked up my number and sent it on. My friends here from Kerry, Galway, England and Scotland, like myself, get many hours of pleasure reading it. I really enjoyed "Winter of '42" by Seán Mac Duarcáin. What a wonderful memory you have, Seán: it brought back so much that I had put to the back of my mind. Where would we be without the beautiful memories of our youth?

Bridie (Jennings) Brush, Tasmania

Great to hear again from our far south-eastern outpost, Bridie, and thanks for yet another verse from your store of poetic memories (see page 133).

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Letters . . .

It's really an astonishing publication. Are there many – any – small towns in the Irish countryside that produce such a magazine time after time over the years. Every time I see a new number I'm astonished once again! What a privilege it was for me to get included – as in the recent piece about local birds. (By the way, it's the red-backed shrike, not the red-beaked!) I send you a donation towards *An Choinneal*. It is a mark of my gratitude for the kindly and helpful welcome which Joan and myself have had from the people of Louisburgh and district for nearly thirty years.

John Holloway, Cambridge

Sincere thanks to you and Joan for a generous donation and for the warm sentiments from which it springs. I hope your health has improved, John, and that in time we can again enjoy your kindly presence among us..

Thanks for *An Choinneal* which I was very pleased to receive. I thought that there would have been a piece about John Duggan who died on 4th November 1992. His death notice appeared in the *Mayo News* and a glowing tribute was paid to him. May he rest in peace.

Katie (Duggan) Milward

Apologies Katie, I can imagine how hurtful it is when someone so dear to you seems to be ignored at such a time. Our method of compiling lists is mainly centered on local information, church lists and local newspapers. We obviously missed out and this sad item slipped through our net. It makes it more poignant for me because John was a colleague of mine in school. I hope that your letter and this reply alerts our readers and that they, like me, will remember him in prayer.

It arrived one month and ten days after you posted it.. I had difficulty in putting it down. It has certainly brought back memories to me. Tom Hannon's "black hole" was one. It's the first time I read so much of the magazine; I've almost finished it. Sad to say, here I am

learning Arabic while struggling to recognise enough words in the Irish sentences of the *Coinneal* to make sense of them. The contents certainly raised a few emotions in me – *pride*; *sadness* (at the death of Marie Grady, Rose Love, Geoffrey Prendergast; *amazement* (at how much seems to be going on in Louisburgh at present); *anger* (at the guy who is highlighting that the Irish exploit the Irish: anybody who is unscrupulous will exploit anyone he can and many people allow themselves to be exploited!); and *curiosity* (did John Durkan sponsor all those teams? What exactly did each team win? Is Shane Walshe anything to Pádraic? Is that Eamon Keane in the team photo? Who is David Lyons? What relatives have I playing in the Sancta Maria school team? In other words, who are all those people in our town?)

Rayo Lyons, Cairo

The magazine has clearly fulfilled its emigrant function for you, Rayo. By the way you are one of our scarce African contingent. And there's one answer to all your litany of questions – you need an extended holiday, on a bicycle, from Falduff to Uggool!

I am pleased to see my article published. I would like to have twenty more copies to give to family members, but Mary Dunne Richter says there are no extra copies of this issue.

Martin F. Harrity, Worcester,
Mass.

*I hope you have long received those copies from here, Martin, and that your family have enjoyed the reading. Mary and her husband Bob have streamlined the agency work they do for us in the States. Because some copies they posted were unaccounted for – and therefore a loss- they now send a notifying letter to all on the mailing list, inviting their orders for each current *Coinneal*. We then despatch the required number to Mary and Bob. Hence they have very few extra copies. If your family wish to order, get them to contact Mary and Bob.*

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Letters . . .

As I come from Doire Mhóir, I often wonder if we are in the townland of Louisburgh. Doire Mhóir is never mentioned in the *Coinneal*. This year Michael and Annie Heraty celebrate sixty years married. The hermit nun resides there, and the old schoolhouse is preserved and worth a mention and a viewing.

Myles and Rita (Baynes), Ilford

First things first, Myles and Rita: Congratulations to the Heraty couple on their extra-ordinary achievement agus go maire siad an céad! Now, speaking geographically we cannot claim Doire Mhóir as part of Kilgeever parish – it is, in fact, in Oughvale (Westport) parish, so the old school house and Sister's retreat house are out-of-bounds for us. However, your lovely card (of "The Irish State Coach") has obviously been driven in through the Furrigal Pass, and surely you now qualify. You have now had your first mention in our pages. Could I woo you to send us an account of the retreat house or the historic school?

As one of the foundation members of *An Choinneal* I congratulate you on this significant anniversary. The magazine has become better and better as the years unfold and it's always a joy when the post brings it to me. Early on I contributed a couple of pieces to the magazine, so I can appreciate the professionalism in the efforts of those who put it together. I visited Louisburgh in the fall (1994) and was quite impressed with the museum and other updatings in the neighbourhood. It had been twenty-five years since this son of Winifred Frazer of Barnabawn had visited Ireland. Yes, I was more than impressed at how modern Ireland has become materially.

John Burns, Boston

Do I detect a loaded meaning in your last statement, John? Congratulations on your recent retirement from active ministry. If you have a quiet hour would you care to tell us frankly what you think we have lost with the material gains?

It more than holds a *coinneal* to previous *Coinneals* . . . Here are a few ideas:

1. "Keep your Word" seems to have disappeared. A resurrection would be great.
2. A section on Irish proverbs would be good, I believe.
3. A history of particular schools in the parish would also be well received.
4. Characters abounded in the Louisburgh I knew.
5. A section on the lines of "Where are they Now" about parish notables would help to keep people long gone from Louisburgh up-to-date . . .

Other subjects that come to mind are: Bonfire Night, the "Night Patrol" of Louisburgh streets, the recital of the Rosary and many more.

Seán Morahan, Homebush, N.S.W.

A great deluge of ideas, Seán. Many thanks. You'll be glad to find that we have followed some of your suggestions in this number. And we'll begin to work on others.

I would like to make a permanent order for *An Choinneal*. I am especially interested in the issue which had a tribute to Marie Keane. I was in Cregganbawn school with her as a child, and last summer (1993) I spent a day with her in Louisburgh.

Kathleen O'Malley, Wakefield

You had an exceptional school pal, God rest her! Give the Coinneal's regards, Kathleen, to the Vicar of your town!

An Choinneal arrived to-day with the first-ever Balla magazine. I always look forward to every edition. I enclose my thanks for remembering me.

Charles Scahill, Balla

A bell tolls as we prepare this edition. (Msgr) Charles Scahill died in September 1996. We have lost a good and very loyal friend, Requiem aeternam!

OUR SPONSORS

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

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Coinneal Appointments

The *Coinneal* Committee is happy to announce some new appointments since our last issue. A new Assistant Editor has been appointed, namely Mr John Lyons. John is the author of the recently published "Louisburgh – a History". He lives in the parish, in Bunowen, and teaches at Sancta Maria College. His many talents and interests make him a very valuable asset to the editorial staff.

Committee member, Mrs Breda McGinn, has been appointed Financial Secretary. In her new capacity she will oversee the collection of outstanding debts.

Because of the loss through death of many Committee members in recent years, we are now adopting a policy of co-opting new members and naturally we are looking for young active people from the community who are interested in such work.

The Committee has long since established an accepted procedure by which a member is co-opted. A name is brought before a properly convened meeting of the Committee and is proposed and seconded in the usual way. If the Committee decides to co-opt the nominee is then notified and may join in at that and all succeeding meetings.

Letters . . .

You will never know the joy that the *Coinneal* brings into our home. Jack and I read it from cover to cover and live our lives over again going through all the letters etc. Johnnie Durkan and Paddy Scanlon took me back to our school days – there are memories so dear to us all now as we get older. I feel so sad that our family name, Toner, has gone for ever from Louisburgh. We have only the good memories left. It was so good to meet Basil and the Drama Group in Coventry. Our family love everything Irish and my son heard they were coming and got tickets, he took his Dad and me. We enjoyed it all so much.

Mae (Toner) and Jack English, Rugby

Oh no, Mae, the family name will not disappear – for a few reasons. Firstly, your letter establishes it again. Secondly, long before the feminists began to insist on “Ms”, we Louisburgh people continued to call a married woman by her own name – so, perhaps to Jack’s chagrin, you are still “Mae Toner” to us. And thirdly, wherever an accordion is squeezed for music, or a comic song lilted at a Louisburgh party, the memory will often be stirred to recall one Carramore household – especially the musical talents of your late brother Paddy. Thank God for the gift of memory.

We had the sudden death here of Jim Walsh who would be our first-ever Mayor of Coventry. He was looking forward to taking a party of us to Louisburgh and his native Westport during August 1995. We had also a celebration – the ruby wedding of my sister, Julie, and her husband, Con Corkery. People said it was like a Louisburgh re-union.

Mary (Mannion) & Frank Sheridan,
Staffordshire

Such is life - joy and sorrow. I have noted your choices of articles from past issues and will try and cater for them in future Coinneals.

During our visit to Ireland last summer we spent a beautiful time with our cousin, John Philbin, and Mary in Carramore. My wife Eileen and I, our daughter, Sister Mary R.J.M. and my brother Tommie from Vancouver, West Canada, spent four weeks

touring Ireland. It’s fifty years since I left Louisburgh; forty-five since Tommie left; but I still love going back and visiting Nora Dunne, John and Michael Philbin, Séamus Durkan, Michael Sweeney, etc. We also went to the White Strand, Cross (met my cousin, Frank O’Malley), Doughmakeon, Carramore, Kilgeever, Old Head – all over.

Patrick J. Scanlon, Bronx

Keep coming Patrick, and keep writing.

Sorry for the delay in sending the enclosed cheque for the copies of *An Choinneal*. Thanks for all the dedicated work.

Gerard Harney, Doncaster

We never seem to acknowledge you, Gerard, as an agent of ours abroad – and so indeed you are in arranging sales from your parish of Saint Peter-In-Chains. We gladly make amends now

I was in Croke Park on 15 September and I was so excited. I kept thinking of Geoff and how he would have been coping with the game. I could not believe that we had not won. I had intended that by hook or by crook I would touch that cup. It was September 1951 when I last held the old “Sam Maguire”. I was in secondary school in Castlebar when Paddy Prendergast and Eamonn Mongey brought the cup into the boarding school. Paddy’s sister, Carmel, was in school there with us, which is probably the reason that they brought it in. Such excitement! Up Mayo for the replay!

Mary (Gibbons) Prendergast, Raheny,
Dublin

I know you have heard the replay result in Chicago, Mary, on your visit there. Ach sin scéal eile! Geoffrey has been missed in many a gathering since the day we buried him in Killeen. Not least we miss him from these pages where his articles, a lovely blend of nostalgia and philosophy, gave a flavour which was relished by so many readers. May the candle of his life guide all his dear ones with hope and love until we all meet again.

OUR NEW WRITERS

Apart from our usual coterie of established writers, we introduce to our readers in this issue the following:

G.F. Drake was navigator on the ill-fated *Lockheed Ventura* which made an emergency landing in Emlagh in 1942. He paid a return courtesy call in May 1996.

Ms Paula Fitzgerald has come to live in Bunowen in recent years and is Administrator of Louisburgh Community Project.

P.J. Gibbons is a journalist, a native of Furmoyle. After a stint of journalistic work in North America he has returned to work on the staff of the *Irish Independent*.

Bridget Hull has come to live at Old Head Cross. She has a deep interest in local history and population statistics.

Caroline Keane is a young Bridge Street student of Commerce, French and Maths in UCD. She has been invaluable in collecting data as to the whereabouts of past students.

John J. Kilcoyne lives in Falduff. He has given sterling service in a host of community projects in Louisburgh.

James McDonnell is a member of a well-known Mullagh family. His poem in this issue expresses the reverence and awe felt for “the Reek”, especially who was born in its shadow.

Sister Bernadette McNally is a native of Carrowniskey. Having qualified as a nurse she is now matron at McBride’s home for the elderly in Westport.

Chris McNally lives in Roonith Hill and has contributed an article for the first time to this issue.

Father Pat McNally is a brother of Sister Bernadette and is at present serving as Parish Priest in Wigan, Lancashire.

Gaby Morahan is daughter of Seán (and Beryl) of Main Street. She lives in Sydney, Australia but visited Louisburgh as part of a world trip.

Michael Mulvey is son of Mick and Mary of Collacoone. The manual talents he displayed as a schoolboy are coming to fruition in his present precision in Germany.

Father Eugene Nee has retired as an active Air Force Chaplain but is still active as a pastoral priest in Coventry, England.

Ann (O’Malley) Kelly is at present Chief of the O’Malley Clan. She lives in Bearna, Galway with her husband, the well known architect, Simon who was born in Chapel Street.

Mary O’Malley of Chicago is one of many descendants of Martin and Mrs O’Malley who once lived in Main Street, Louisburgh.

Michael O’Malley, another direct descendant of the same couple is at present Principal of the new Primary school in Louisburgh. An accomplished actor, he has acted, produced and won awards in many of the Louisburgh Groups productions.

Letters . . .

After our mother's death, now, of course we must carry on. We are determined that, one way or another we will keep Tully and continue to see our real friends. It cannot, of course, be the same as it was, but we saw at Saint Catherine's on the occasion of the funeral that we are part of the Louisburgh community that turned out in such numbers, and made us feel part of a wider, Irish family that shared our grief and knows us well. In our busy lives neither Jerry nor I have been able to spend nearly as much time there as we would have liked. We hope to put that right in the future.

Nick Harman (London)

We share your sorrow, Nick, and hope that Jerry and you will keep up the Louisburgh link.

I was especially interested in seeing the article and the accompanying picture of the dedication of the new centre at Saint Catherine's Church. I was also pleased to see that Ann Chambers was there for the dedication.

Winifred Winklemann, Minnesota

Good to hear from you, Winifred, and to recall the days of your academic activities with your university undergraduates in Louisburgh. You will be interested in the further information about Saint Catherine's in this issue.

What a wonderful surprise when I received the beautiful Candle Book. I am so happy when I read all the wonderful stories about Louisburgh area, and all the places which my family and I know so well and love. We come to Louisburgh, sometimes two or three times a year, since 1971. Our neighbours in Collacoan are very lovely and take excellent care of our cottage there. We are very thankful.

Clementine Karl (Glattbach, Germany)

You have translated our title very well, Clementine. Our magazine is called "An Choinneal" which means "The Candle". Good to know that your stays in Louisburgh are so enjoyable.

Did I miss a *Coinneal* last year? I have just noticed a postcard Father Leo sent me and it referred to a possible issue at Christmas 1995. I have now moved from Manchester to Southport. The last issue was beautiful and I

hope that there were some readers who remembered my father, Martin Glynn. I suppose the old town looks as beautiful as ever, this and the bay as magic as ever.

Tony Glynn (Southport)

Magic, Tony, that's the word. The problem is that those of us who live in a magic and wonderful place have almost to be reminded, lest we take it for granted! Thank you for your donation and yes, your article did stir memories – at least second-generation memories!

I lost a sister in Boston, on 4th January 1993 and a brother Tommie in Los Angeles. They were not mentioned in the deaths away from home. Enclosing an account of Tommie's life which appeared at the time of death.

John O'Malley (Queensland)

Apologies Johnnie, as I have tried to explain to another reader in this issue, despite our best efforts the news of some deaths of our people away from home never reaches the editor's desk. This, I know, is little consolation to people who may well feel hurt in their sorrow. In this and future issues we will include a form (see page 120) for relatives to fill in and send back to us on the occasion of a bereavement.

I would like to submit the enclosed picture and caption of my grandmother, Tillie McCormack, who passed away on 16 March 1995. I am one of the only two grand-children that she had and was very close to her. I can imagine what her Irish wit would say if she knew that she was in the *Coinneal*! She had the *Coinneal* sent to her from Louisburgh every year and even though she had left Ireland many years before, she still loved to read about the town and the families she grew up with. Our grandmother was a beloved part of our family and was mother, aunt, and just "Tillie" to many. She is missed dearly by us all and I would like our family in Louisburgh and the US to see this submission if possible.

Jaine Testa, New Jersey

Thank you Jaine. Even in our lament at her passing we feel the joy of the continued connection of the family with their grandmother's native place. Any of her stories or memories would be of great interest to our readers in future issues. The submission you sent appears on page 45.

Editorial

Our Life Style

The address made by the President of Ireland (reported elsewhere in this issue) on her visit to the town to open the Gráinneuaile Centre was one of congratulations and of hope. The President had taken trouble to acquaint herself with the work done in the parish and for the community since *Muintir na Tíre* was founded here in the 'fifties. Expressions of congratulations and hope are proper and acceptable on jubilee occasions. But when the said *Muintir na Tíre* began its work in the parish, an important part of its agenda was to ask questions about needs, and to seek then to supply those needs. And questions must needs be asked always if we are to progress. Sometimes the questions will be resented, or disregarded because they are thought repeating and boring. But if there are still needs, and if there are still wrong decisions being taken, surely the questions – however unpopular – have to be put and answered. If one boards a bus on Louisburgh Square with the intention to travel to Westport, and notices that the bus is heading for Culleen, or Ugool or Cregganawaddy, one is surely entitled to ask the relevant and pertinent questions; like where is this bus going? and where did we intend to go? Without any disregard for the lovely villages mentioned in that analogy, at the end of this twentieth century we are all on a life-bus which is plainly heading away from the direction that any reasonable passenger would hope to travel. The bus is indeed full of people from most of what we used to call the "civilised world", but let us confine ourselves here to what concerns the people of our own community.

To put it in a nutshell we are turning our backs on Nature and gaily accelerating away from Nature in the name of progress. We often call Nature our mother, and it is a well-founded metaphor; for we are not so much born of Nature as being carried within her nourishing womb. That is our right; but if we insist on severing the umbilical cord which sustains us, the only possible outcome is self-destruction; that or some kind of aborted existence in the form of a robot which is totally devoid, as we say, of any *nature*. In simpler and more homely terms we in Kilgeever parish have for the past twenty or more years adopted a life style that can only end up in an un-natural existence. We have many other fellow-travellers, and we may enjoy the company on the bus. But is this what we really want? And where are we

going? A simple example of this is in what we eat. An old dictum (of limited enough wisdom) says that we *are* what we eat. If so we are a changed people from the generation who went just before us, for we have almost totally changed our diet. Instead of the wholesome and natural diet of home-made bread, oatmeal porridge, free-run eggs, churn butter, organic vegetables and farm milk we have opted for the ready-made substitutes. We allow ourselves to be drugged by the advertisers into believing in the supposed wholesomeness of every one of the substitutes. And of course there is no agent wealthy enough and committed enough (not even a Government Health Board!) to balance the advertising and to tell us the truth. Indeed one popular beer firm has a commercial which ridicules eating porridge rather than drinking beer; *their* beer! In our crazy pattern of living we pass fallow gardens that once produced prime vegetables, on our way to purchase in the shops less wholesome substitutes from North Dublin or even from overseas. Whatever land we use we lavish with assorted chemical manures, while we ignore the mounting piles of *raic* and seaweed which the generous sea continues to deliver free of charge. And at the end of the day we set to wondering what on earth has happened that so many people, young as well as old, are falling prey to ailments of lung, stomach, heart, blood or liver which were almost unheard of in more honest if more difficult times. So are we what we eat? If we *are* are we then, after all the improved health care, as healthy as the older generation? Could we not begin to ask if we are doing something wrong? Or are we enjoying the concert on the bus so much that no one will tip the driver on the shoulder and suggest that we take the next U-turn? This is not written as a jeremiad, for there are many, many aspects of life as it is now lived in Kilgeever parish which are an immense improvement on conditions of the past. This is written as an invitation to any thinking individual or family in the parish to see if the improved conditions cannot be enjoyed better if we keep a sense of proportion and of reason. Neither is this written as a criticism of the present youth of the parish. They are in fact the victims of the failure of their elders to pass on the better things in the life of the parish to the up-coming generation. When they eventually see the great error, will they judge us harshly for our failure? The tantalising irony of the problem is that not so long ago our American cousins had gone down that same senseless road on their wayward bus. There are readers of *An Choinneal* on the west of the Atlantic who have made the U-turn. They have begun to choose and eat good food; that is, they have returned to the wholesome kind of diet that we have been so busy getting rid of.

The example of food is only one instance from many in our life-style. Our increasing coarseness of language; our choices of recreation; our preference for television rather than active sport; our use of ready money to buy rather than make what we provide for our use; our abuse of alcohol, which we still refuse to call a drug; our dropping of the customs of neighbourliness in order

to be thought more up-to-date; our childish excuse of any misbehaviour as 'only a bit of *craic*'; and in general our readiness to accept that the way we have traditionally been doing things in the parish of Kilgeever cannot be as good as they do elsewhere – all of these attitudes lure us to regard Nature as some kind of embarrassing old relative which we can hardly acknowledge, instead of the nurturing fount of all the natural goodness to which we might lay claim.

There is one hopeful sign. It is the revival, world-wide almost, of an interest in what is being hailed as the Celtic tradition. This revival is surfacing in events and trends as diffuse as Irish dancing and traditional music, a study of Celtic folklore, renewed interest in the archaeology of rural Ireland, the music of Clannad and Enya (forerunners of the present Eurovision Song winner), and volumes being published about Celtic spirituality with its strong and vibrant root in the earth and natural things. That revival is well afoot and is already evoking congenial echoes from environmental studies and the Green Movement, from modern theology, from holistic medicine, and from so many religious traditions that acknowledge the holiness of the natural. When we eventually catch up with the renewing trend it will complete a circle, and will root us once more in an existence and a life-philosophy on which we should never have turned our backs. Meantime, would someone with a rood of land look out for some farmyard manure and celebrate our bicentenary by growing us a plot of organic vegetables? Even for the *craic*!

Editorial

Self-Portrait

A thorough and very praise worthy project was taken on and executed by the Transition Year Class of 1995-6 at Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh. The survey was organised and carried out under the guidance of staff-member, Mr William McNamara. It sets itself six specific aims which are, in short, to find out: the actual population, comparing it with population structure in Mayo; the needs in the employment field; the strengths in the community; where the class-members of 1985, 1990 and 1995 are now; the aims and hopes of the 1995 class-members; and to examine certain aspects of tourism in the parish. The survey has a commendably professional air to it, illustrated by use of diagrams, histograms and pie-charts. It really deserves to be published in full. The general conclusions arrived at are as follows: decreasing population (from 11,000 to 1,500 since 1837; and from 14 schools with 880 pupils to 3 schools with 229 pupils in the same period); population imbalance (scarcity of young marriageable adults); bleak outlook for schools; high percentage living alone; percentage unemployed is above the national average; a variety

of strengths which can be exploited constructively; migration of young has serious knock-on effects; aspiration of last year's class are laudable; and the number of holiday homes in the parish (25%) is very high. The main drawbacks listed are: inadequate public transport; poor quality water supply; poor standard of roads and drains; some dissatisfaction with electricity supply; lack of organised social life; lack of cafe; and of course unemployment (17.5% as against 6% in Mayo and in Ireland generally.

The main strengths listed are: **the scenery** – valleys, mountains, sea, lakes, beaches, rivers, bogs; and amenities such as fishing, pitch-and-putt and adventure centres; **culture and traditional values; escape from the concrete jungle; safety; very good community spirit; parish magazine; access to the natural beauty (unpolluted) and Cottages, Gráinneuaile Centre.**

The excellence of this project is twofold. As an exercise in itself, even if it were done for a community other than our own, it is a very constructive way of spending some time in a transition year. But it also brings the discrete data of parish population before the students themselves; and if their work is published, before the people of the parish and the relevant public authorities. There is a sad if not dramatic irony in the fact that a class which will soon finish at Sancta Maria records that Kilgeever parish is losing three-quarters of its population on an ongoing basis. They ask if this drain is voluntary or necessary and if many return with money, talent or skills. Time will eventually tell, but there are bleak forecasts as regards the general picture for the future. With the decline in marriageable adults who might renew the community, and with so many of those who are born here leaving for good, one must ask the daunting question as to whether the parish has a future at all. Does the very high number of holiday homes and houses-to-let (153 as against some 480 permanent houses) indicate that we are slowly becoming a dormitory area for nearby centres of employment or mere reserves for summer tourists?

One thing is clear. There is urgent need for all the talent and resources that Kilgeever parish can command – the talent of all local organisations, and in both halves of the parish – to come together in an organised and united way and face the reality. That simple reality is that there are influences beyond our present reach which are slowly but surely militating against a normal living community surviving with dignity in our beautiful and once bustling parish. The vicious circle dictates that with less voting electorate we can count less on the attention of public representatives who have power to redress the balance. There is an immense challenge some years ahead. It should be tackled now, and the challenge is by no means insurmountable. We're not dead yet!

Presidential Visit

On Saturday, 29 July 1995 Louisburgh was host to her Excellency, President Mary Robinson who had agreed to visit the town to open formally the new Gráinneuaile Centre and to mark the celebration of the Bicentenary Year. She was the host of the Louisburgh Development Company. The following is the text of the speeches, for which we are grateful to Jim Corrigan, who recorded them.

– Editor

Sean Harney: Your excellency, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour for us to welcome our President, President Mary Robinson, here to Louisburgh this evening to open the Gráinneuaile Centre. I will now ask our Cathaoirleach, Mrs Clementine Lyons, to address you.

Mrs Clementine Lyons: A Shoillse, a Uachtaráin na hÉireann, tá creatlacha an tí seo ag lúbadh le fáilte romhat. Is mór linn do theacht inniu go Cluain Cearbán agus don áras seo, Ionad Ghráinneuaile. Ar bhealach tá tú ag filleadh ar do dhúchas fhéin, ó tharla go raibh Gráinne pósta ar fhear de mhuintir Bhúrcach! A dhaoine uaisle, it is my privilege as cathaoirleach of Louisburgh Development Company to bid our first lady president of Ireland a hearty *céad míle fáilte* to Louisburgh. A Uachtaráin, we the people of our town and district are very proud to welcome you; and to welcome you as one of our own, cailín as Condae Mhuigheo. This adjacent building was used as a place of worship by the Church of Ireland congregation for over a hundred years before we came to acquire it on 23 March, 1991. I wish today to express in public our gratitude to the Right Reverend John Neal, to the Reverend Mr Heaslip, and I think the Reverend Mr Hastings is with us today, and to the Church of Ireland authorities for their generosity in making the church and grounds of Saint Catherine's available to us for this project. And, just in passing, I wish to salute today the memory of Donald Wallace, who was a wonderful member of our community and a Christian gentleman.

This new centre reflects the history, culture and heritage of our area for all the indigenous population of Louisburgh as well as for many visitors. While the town is currently celebrating its two hundredth year, we have worked for the development of the area for a much earlier and wider period of history. But today we are happy and proud to have you, our president, with us in our celebration to seal the fruit of our labour in the Gráinneuaile Visitors Centre on Louisburgh's two-hundredth birthday. We thank you all for coming here today: but your presence here, a Uachtaráin, is very important to us. We are

really happy to see you. We hope that you enjoy your visit among us and that you will take with you happy memories of Louisburgh. *Go maire tú do shaol agus do shláinte, a Uachtaráin, agus beannacht Dé ort agus ar do chuid oibre i gcónaí!*

Sean Harney: Now I will ask the President to address you and to declare our Centre open. Will you please welcome President Mary Robinson.

President Robinson: Thank you for that warm welcome here to Louisburgh. As you can imagine, this is a very special occasion for me as President of Ireland and as a Mayo woman to come and open the Gráinneuaile Centre. It seems to me to represent a certain completing of a circle of women from Mayo, because from what I have read of Grace O'Malley she was an early example of the potential of *mná na hÉireann*. Now I'm not saying that everything she did was something that I'd ask the *mná* to emulate. But certainly she asserted herself, not just in Ireland but in various parts of England, and Europe as a whole in her time. She was clearly a woman of great courage and endeavour and had a real sense of her place; and was a good fighter for what she believed in. In coming here today from my own place here in Mayo, I had a sense that what this centre is really about would please Gráinneuaile.

In coming to officially open this Centre I wanted to have a sense of context. As every child knows – and I'm glad that there are a lot of children here – this Centre has in fact been open and functioning already. So what's the real purpose of an official opening? I think it is a very valuable opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved and is represented by Ionad Ghráinneuaile or the Gráinneuaile Centre. In many ways I was helped by the material that was sent to me before my coming here. I think a lot of you know, certainly your cathaoirleach Mrs Clementine Lyons knows, that since 1991 I have been aware of the development that was planned and I have been coming. It so happens that today I have come; but it was always my intention and my wish to have an opportunity to visit. I was sent the very fine history of Louisburgh written by John Lyons, and had a good opportunity to study it. I was glad to see that it was published by the Louisburgh Traders Association and is a product of scholarship and publication. I have also been sent back issues of your fine parish magazine, *An Choinneal*, and I must say I know you have a great sense of pride that you claim – and I think you are right in this – that it's the oldest continuous parish magazine. It certainly is a great tribute to Kilgeever parish that you have not only such a variety of fine writings and a real record and history of the parish, but also a lot of support from people who left Louisburgh and have made their habitation in various parts of the States, or Australia, but who support and want to receive that parish magazine.

Reading some of this material, it seemed to me that if we are going to have an official stock-taking here in Louisburgh it probably starts with Muintir na Tíre in the 1950's; because clearly that was the beginning of a rural sense of self-development. I know, because of my own roots how important it is to

have a centre that will make Louisburgh a place that will retain as many of its young as possible and ensure a future for the children we see here, and their children and their children's children.

Not only do you have a vital *Muintir na Tíre* that went on to found your Credit Union and the Craft Cooperative and other centres, but you also developed the Louisburgh Community Council, and then in 1985 out of that came the Louisburgh Development Company which is celebrating its ten years this year, and which has been at the forefront of the planning and vision of this Gráinneuaile Centre.

I think it is so timely that the opening of this centre would coincide with the bicentenary of the establishment of the town of Louisburgh itself, which as you know – every child here knows – got its charter on 3 November, 1795. The charter for fairs was then given to Lord Altamount. The town has an interesting history, but then of course as the Centre illustrates the history of the place, of the parish, goes back much further and is very interesting and very varied. Even in the establishment of the town itself there is a component that I found well worth reflecting on in the Ireland of 1995 – the fact that so many Catholics fled from the North and came to this part of Mayo, largely to Louisburgh and Westport, and were part therefore of the establishment of the town of Louisburgh.

As you can see, as President of Ireland I have a great interest in your history, and I believe that Louisburgh is very lucky in the richness of its story, in its history, the archaeology of its surroundings, the natural beauty, but in particular in the story of the people. I am glad that that story is being well researched and well told, and that you have, through your parish magazine and the history and other ways of telling it, – and indeed the story of Gráinneuaile herself so well told by Anne Chambers, who is here – you have great possibilities of upholding that sense of local pride and of the quality that can come from really knowing your place and building on that. That is what you have been doing and that is what is behind this Gráinneuaile Centre. Obviously, I haven't yet seen the exhibition or the facilities of the Centre itself. I look forward to seeing them; but I know that it represents a great deal of hard work by the Development Company, by the Louisburgh Community Council, by the elected representatives from this area and above all by you the people of Louisburgh in progressing and believing in the importance of this kind of local pride and local self-development. As I came along through the Guard of Honour of local Scouts and Guides, I could not help but hear the piper playing "The West's Awake". I thought it was very appropriate, and I have a sense that it is in endeavours like the Gráinneuaile Centre that the West is awake! *Mar sin, tá áthas ar leith orm bheith libh inniu mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, ar an ócáid anspeisialta seo chun Ionad Ghráinneuaile a chur ar oscailt go h-oifigiúil agus chun an Dá Chéad a cheiliúradh libh.*

LOUISBURGH DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

A report of the first ten years activity, submitted by the original Company

Louisburgh Development Company was founded in 1984 by a board of seven directors whose primary aim was to raise money for the developments they could foresee as becoming eventually self-financing. After the ten years, the foresight and total dedication of those founder members bore the fruits of its success in many projects which were undertaken and successfully completed throughout the years.

Initially the Company directed its energies into the acquisition and development of what was later known as the Resource Centre at Chapel Street. Through various projects this building was to become a hive of activity, setting up and facilitating the following among many projects: Senior Resource Group, Play-school and Mothers and Toddlers Group, Craft Producers Group, The Women's Group, Louisburgh Tourist Co-op., Louisburgh Credit Union Ltd., and O'Toole Case Co. Ltd. The Company is proud to record that most of these projects soon took on a life of their own. The conception and development of Gránuaille Exhibition and a mini-Famine Exhibition proved an outstanding success culturally, financially and as an internationally known attraction. Over those years the Resource Centre has provided information and advice and secretarial and photocopying services. It has also been a venue for a variety of training programmes such as a "Return to Work" programme for local women. In the sphere of Education, it provided a venue also for courses in typing, computing and Irish music; and for research on aspects of agriculture, forestry and fishing in the South West Mayo district.

During the ten years training courses such as FÁS, SES, Combat Poverty Projects, Community Development Projects and "Start Your Own Business" brought extra income into many homes in the parish. They also gave status and independence to people, many of them women whose ambitions might otherwise have gone unnoticed. At the end of the ten years six people were employed, full time, in manufacturing components to supply to Nomadic Structures.

From the start the aim was to create employment in whatever way

possible; and because this was done the Company felt proud of the work and the workers. It was being helped by the Summer Job Scheme for third-level students and by a Social Employment Scheme from FÁS. The Company takes this opportunity to express its thanks to the many dedicated people who were involved, both employees and the many voluntary, unpaid workers.

Louisburgh Development Company was run by a voluntary, unpaid group from and in Louisburgh community who worked tirelessly and unselfishly during their term in office. There were many difficult times but the directors stood by the Company and there is just reason for pride in the achievements. As in all community work there were different points of view; but this was regarded as healthy and in fact led to new aspects in development.

The ongoing economic and social improvement of the Louisburgh area remained the principal aim of the directors; and conscious as it was of the need to tackle the problem of under-development, the Company rejoiced that its biggest venture so far became such a significant cultural, economic and tourism boost. In the year of the Louisburgh 200 (bicentennial celebrations) the former Saint Catherine's Church became a beautiful building to house a magnificent Gráinneuille Exhibition and an equally impressive if smaller Famine Exhibition; a modern Conference room, a craft shop and luncheon facilities. To seal that 200th birthday celebration, the President of Ireland, Mrs Mary Robinson officially opened the building on 29 July 1995. Happily the people of the community turned up in large numbers to join in the historic occasion.

Remembering Sion

Does anyone remember the verses on the Christmas Cards by the late Brian O'Higgins? This is one which remains with me over the years.

*Before the Crib, a wish I wish,
A prayer I pray for you,
'Tis that you, to the cause of truth,
May be forever true,
That you may tread the noble path
The upward, rugged way
And never falter 'til God's dawn
Breaks through the skies of grey.*

LOUISBURGH COMMUNITY PROJECT

Louisburgh Community Project was initially formed by a group of local people who had participated in a Horizon course in the town. They identified needs in the area and put together a successful application to the Department of Social Welfare for funding under the Community Development Programme (CDP). The group has since grown and developed, incorporating new members from the community to the management team.

What is Community Development?

Community development is about:

- promoting positive change in society in favour of those who benefit least.
- involving people in making changes which they identify to be important and which use and develop their own skills, knowledge and experience.

What is the Community Development Programme?

The Programme was set up in 1990, with an aim to develop a network of community development resource centres in communities affected by disadvantage, whether that be high unemployment, or the disadvantage particular to rural communities, e.g., lack of facilities, information and transport. Projects funded by the CDP are given a three-year funding commitment, which provides for core costs, e.g. staff and overheads. This allows projects to plan and develop their work more effectively than is the case when once-off or year-to-year funding is available.

The Management Team is comprised of:

Maria Daley, Long Street, Treasurer
Paula Fitzgerald, Bunowen, Administrator
Norah Gavin, Doire Garbh
Marie McDonagh, Askelane, Secretary
Ann Morrison, Killadoon
Kathleen O'Malley, Caher, Chairperson

Michele O'Malley, Moneen
Sue O'Toole, Doughmakeown
Beatrice Prendergast, Accony

The work of the project

Since its formation the management team have been involved in continuous management training on a voluntary basis.

- We have identified needs in the area. For example, we ran a youth workshop to find out from young people what facilities they would like to see established in the Louisburgh area.
- We hold Social Welfare Information sessions on a regular basis to enable local people to find out about entitlements without having to travel to Westport. We also hold information leaflets on a variety of social welfare benefits.
- We distribute a regular newsletter highlighting local community events/activities and national information pertaining to grants available, community development information, etc.
- We have visited other projects which has given us valuable insight into the potential of community development work.
- We provide office services to community groups and individuals, for example, typing, photocopying, fax, etc. and meeting-room facilities are also available.
- We employ a full-time administrator and our immediate plans include the recruitment of a Project Co-ordinator and, later this year, the formation of a company limited by guarantee, as required by the Department.
- We have formulated and submitted to the Department, a three-year programme of work outlining our short and long term plans for the future. We house the Louisburgh Community Playgroup and support the valuable work they undertake.
- We also support the Mayo branch of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed which is based at the Project.

So whether you need information about applying for funding for your group; need a CV typed or just want to find out more about how you can become involved, why not call in. We're open from 9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday (closed 1.00pm-2.00pm for lunch).

Bunowen

Paula Fitzgerald, Administrator

PILGRIMAGE – WITH A DIFFERENCE

By a rare coincidence – not a miracle, surely – two Louisburgh priests not only led a pilgrimage to the Holy Land but decided to record their experience for An Choinneal. We are publishing both. – Editor

I am absolutely delighted to see that *An Choinneal* is continuing to burn brightly – brighter I think than ever - *Moladh go deo le Dia*. It means an awful lot to those of us living away from Louisburgh. The continued production of it is a great credit to the Editor and the Editorial Board. Past editions – all of which I jealously guard - are an outstanding example of community effort. *Ar aghaidh libh*.

May I very briefly introduce myself as a native son of the half-parish – Killeen, born in Carrowniskey. I am now a Parish Priest in Wigan (Archdiocese of Liverpool). In my parish of Saint Jude there are many families who hail from the West of Ireland - in fact three families from Killeen – John and Tony O’Grady from Curra, the Philbins from Carrowniskey and nearer “the Reek” the McConnells; the O’Donnells and McNallys from Westport (not related). In the past many Irish came to Wigan - halfway between Liverpool and Manchester – because of the coal mines and the cotton factories. Therefore we have a large number of first, second and third generation Irish - mostly from West of the Shannon. They are a credit to both faith and fatherland and it’s a great privilege and honour for me to minister to them and indeed to the excellent and friendly people of this town of Wigan. For the past seven years, since my arrival here from Liverpool, fifty pilgrims from Saint Jude’s travel each year to Knock. We also tour the scenic parts of Mayo and Galway. Three years ago we received a civic reception in Westport. We’re in the business always of building bridges and deepening the trust and friendship of our peoples and *buíochas le Dia* we are succeeding, in spite of the appalling spiral of violence, which affects all of us in so many different ways.

In this short article I just want to share with you a brief account of a pilgrimage I led from Wigan not to Knock this time but to the Holy Land. Fifty pilgrims comprised our party which included Billy and Bridie Gannon from Westport. We flew EL AL (Israeli Airlines) from Manchester direct to Tel Aviv and on by coach north-east to Tiberias. The visit to Israel made a

deep impression on me. I will never forget it. To be actually in the land where lie the ruins of the world’s most ancient civilisations; the land of the prophets and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; the land of the three monotheistic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – is truly awesome, uplifting and inspiring. But for me and our pilgrims, this land was where Jesus was born, lived, suffered, died and rose from the dead; the land which heard His mighty words and witnessed His miracles. To actually walk on this piece of earth, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus is indeed awesome and faith-enriching. Most of the Gospel stories about Jesus have the sea of Galilee as their background. The very first morning there, I pulled back the curtains in my hotel bedroom and there in front of me, a little to the left, was the Sea of Galilee.

Next day we crossed it by boat. Halfway across the boat was halted and the engine switched off. In silence we pondered. The sea was calm. It was a warm clammy day. I looked around the lakeside and the mountains. I took in all the scenery, then read aloud the New Testament texts relevant to the scene - Mark 4:35-41 and Mark 6:47-51. I thought, “this scene which I’m experiencing right now cannot have changed much since the time of Jesus”. I became a little emotional. It had a profound affect on me. Gethsemane was a most moving place for me also. Here in this garden, some 2000 years ago, Jesus agonised and was arrested. Today it stands virtually unchanged. It was truly inspiring in its peace, comforting in its spirit. I wanted to be there alone with my thoughts, my prayers.

This same aura of relevance pervaded the house of Caiphias, where Jesus was taken and imprisoned. Then the court of Pontius Pilate where Jesus was tried and the hill of Calvary, where He was crucified. Again I read aloud for the pilgrims the appropriate texts from John 18: 28-19-16. These, the actual



Father Pat McNally reading from St. Mark's Gospel (35-41) half way across the sea of Galilee.

sites where Jesus spent His last hours, seemed to have special relevance for me. Again I was touched and deeply moved. I wanted more time. I just couldn't assimilate it. I was getting too much too soon. I said Mass in Bethlehem, near the spot where the Saviour was born. Each one and that includes you dear reader, was included, for it was for all our pilgrims, our parish family and beyond.

The weather throughout was very hot, in the 70's, not bad for February! "A hard winter" our Jewish guide jokingly kept reminding us - as we donned our summer apparel and took out the sun lotion and sun-glasses and wore bright summer hats. But alas, it wasn't to last, for on a raw Thursday (now March) afternoon, our EL AL plane touched down at Manchester Airport. It was indeed back to a hard winter for sure - this time snow, frost and bitter cold.

Dear Friend and Reader, if you get the opportunity, do visit this special Holy Land. Just like you who read the daily newspapers and watch the News on TV, I am all too well aware as I write of all the trouble and unrest there at the minute, but in the words of Julian of Norwich: "In the end all will be well and again all will be well."

Wigan, Liverpool

Pat MacNally

And then another Louisburghman recounts his and his pilgrims' impressions:

Early March 1996 a group of pilgrims from the British Isles and myself set out from Manchester airport on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, Israel. This is a country the size of Wales, population of 4 million, 640,000 are Moslems, 80,000 Christians (and decreasing). The countryside is rough and rugged like Mayo and Connemara. It was once said 'If you want to understand the poet, you must visit her/his country'. These words are never more apt than applied to the realm of the Bible, Koran, Torah and the Talmud. No-one has captured the imagination of the world like Jesus. Today one thousand million people around the globe acknowledge Jesus Christ as God's Son, their Lord and Saviour and Light of the World. So together, Bible in hand, visit with me the Holy Places which are sacred to all Christians as we pilgrimage together through the Holy Land for six days - the Land of Jesus, Preacher-cum-Healer.

Day 1: On this first day in Jerusalem we walked into the Old City and passed through the narrow streets to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. Although not the most beautiful of churches, this is the most important of all Christian shrines, for within this one building are the sites of the Death and Resurrection

of Our Lord. Inside the Basilica we celebrated Mass and visited Calvary, the Sepulchre - Our Lord's tomb - and the Chapel of St. Helen. Afterwards we went to the neighbouring Church of the Scourging and from the courtyard here began the Way of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.

Day 2: An early start to the top of the Mount of Olives. We paused here to enjoy the wonderful view over the Old City of Jerusalem. After stopping part way down at the Chapel called the Dominus Flevit where Jesus wept as He looked over Jerusalem, we came finally to the Church of All Nations in the Garden of Gethsemane to celebrate Mass and remembered the Agony of Our Lord. This is my favourite place in the Holy Land. The Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu recalls the beginning of Our Lord's trial and Peter's betrayal. Here are the ancient steps down which Our Lord and the Apostles walked after the Last Supper, on their way across the Kedron Valley to the garden of Gethsemane. On Mount Sion we visited the Cenacles.

Day 3: This morning we walked into the Old City to visit the Pool of Bethesda where Jesus cured the crippled man; and the Area of the Temple which in Our Lord's day was the glory of Israel. At Bethlehem - the name in Hebrew means 'House of Bread' - we entered the Basilica of the Nativity through a low door and went down to the Grotto of the Nativity - "Here a child was born for us". Mass was celebrated at this church. Close to Bethlehem we also visited the Shepherds' Field, where the angels announced the Birth of Christ.

Day 4: We had Mass in the Old City (at the Convent of Our Lady of Sion). The remainder of the morning was free. Some of us visited places of interest in the New City, including Yad Vashem (the Holocaust Memorial) and the famous Israel Museum, where the priceless Dead Sea Scrolls are housed in the Shrine of the Book. In the afternoon we went to Bethany, home of Jesus' friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus, where He raised Lazarus from the dead. We also journeyed to the Good Samaritan Inn, to Jericho, a colourful oasis in the midst of the wilderness where it is possible to see the excavations of the ancient city, dating back to 7000 BC.

Day 5: We travelled north through the Jordan valley with stops en-route at Nazareth, Mount Tabor and Cana. In Nazareth we went to the modern Basilica of the Annunciation. The inscription reads 'Here the Word became flesh'. We celebrated Mass in the Crypt. At Mount Tabor a thrilling taxi ride led up the winding road to the summit and the beautiful Basilica of the Transfiguration of Our Lord. At the town of Cana the 'Wedding Church' commemorates Our Lord's first miracle, which marked the beginning of His public ministry. Here we had the renewal of marriage vows and prayers for all married couples.

Day 6: An early breakfast made a good start to what proved to be an enjoyable day. We sailed across the Sea of Galilee. Out on the water, as nowhere else, one is surrounded not just by reminders of Our Lord but by a sense of His presence as we read Mark 4:35-41 (Jesus calms the storm). At the beginning of His ministry Jesus came to live in Capernaum (Jesus town) and here is the site of the synagogue where He taught; and Peter's house where we prayed for all mothers-in-law. We boarded our coach to visit other holy sites around the Sea of Galilee – the Church of the Primacy of Peter; and Tabgha, the site of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes; the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount; and Yardenit, the Jordan Bridge baptismal site at the southern tip of the Lake. Here, where the River Jordan flows out of the Sea of Galilee, we recalled the mission and ministry of St. John the Baptist and had the opportunity to renew our baptismal vows. From the Sea of Galilee we travelled west to Haifa, the sea-port of Israel, to visit the Stella Maris Convent, the Carmelite monastery at the top of Mount Carmel, and enjoyed the panoramic view of Haifa and its harbour. Finally we continued south to the Mediterranean holiday resort of Netanya for dinner and stayed overnight to fly back to Manchester the next morning from Tel Aviv.

Our Moslem guide David was fluent in Hebrew, Arabic and English, he was most knowledgeable in the scriptures. At all times Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the apostles and disciples and the mysteries of the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross were coming alive to us in a new and deeper sense. It was good to be in the land of Jesus. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Eugene Nee

Coventry

The Future of Knappagh

Everybody interested in the history of West Mayo, and especially those interested in furthering the ecumenical spirit of the area will be saddened to hear from the present rector at Westport, Reverend Gary Hastings, that Saint Thomas's Church at Knappagh has closed. The only decision which now remains is whether to sell off the property or have the roof removed. A committee has been formed, representative of the different churches in the area, to plan a future for the church building, graveyard and land. The church itself seats a hundred people and apart from the cemetery there are two small fields (150m by 70m by 20m) which could be used in any future development. The church was built in the early 1800's. The rector has written to all interested bodies, those who may have suitable projects which need a housing centre, and others who may have any other idea or proposal. Contact should be made with the Reverend Gary Hastings at the Rectory, Newport Road, Westport, where any further information can also be had.

RETURN TO EMLAGH

After nearly fifty four years I went back to Emlagh on a bright sunny afternoon of 15th May, 1996. This time I came, not out of the skies in *Ventura AJ460*; more prosaically by car accompanied by my wife, Gerry Bracken, Jarlath Duffy and Dominick Moran of the Westport Historical Society, Noel O'Neill of the Castlebar Historical Society and Don Gibbons, an ex-RAF navigator. At this point I must express my thanks to all these people who helped to make my visit such a success; in particular to Gerry Bracken who masterminded the whole thing.

Joe Lyons, claimed in the Louisburgh *Coinneal* as the first man on the scene in 1942, and now a sprightly 85, had not been told we were coming but his younger brothers had made sure that he would be at home that afternoon. After a very reserved opening he became more and more relaxed in the course of the afternoon and we had a job to get away eventually. His only regret was that he had not been warned so that he could have got a bottle in, which we could have shared with him!

Joe's memory of that day in 1942 is astonishingly vivid. He was able to



Mrs. Drake, Joe Lyons, Gil Drake and Christina Lyons (nee Gibbons) outside Joe's home overlooking the duach. May 15th. 1996.

Photo: Gerry Bracken

describe, in detail, just how and where we had circled in the area before putting the aircraft down in, probably, the only flattish field, just behind the beach. Joe's verdict was that Meyrick Powell must have been "a damn good pilot" and he was certainly "one of the nicest men he ever met." He remembered his age (twenty-four) and commented "what a good looking fellow he was." He didn't really remember me but commented that there was a small slim chap among the crew. I pointed out that at that time I was twenty, weighed only nine stone (now nearly twelve and a half stone) and had hair, so I had probably changed a bit.

Although his memory was vivid he continues to believe in certain misconceptions which he enunciated with a twinkle in his eye! First of all that we were *Canadians* – it is possible that we were responsible for this belief, after all we were coming from Canada. Secondly, when we flew out over the sea before coming back to land, we did so to dump our guns and bombs (of which we had none!). Thirdly, we landed at Emlagh deliberately to get out of the rest of the war. We were not out of fuel, and the 500 gallons in the tanks in the *Louisburgh Coinneal*, had now grown to 1700 gallons. Were not the local people good to have left that untouched at a time of petrol rationing? or was that because a small army section was posted to Emlagh, to guard the plane?

After a little while we were joined by James and Brendan Lyons and Christina Lyons (James's wife). James, who was eight in 1942, has a clear memory of the occasion and like Joe could describe in detail how we had circled low around the area. Christina showed us a hand-written diary of her father's describing the incident, and there were tears in her eyes when we shook hands and she said "and you really were one of those boys." Brendan, who was two and a half at the time, said that he was taken into the aircraft, in his mother's arms, because he might never have another opportunity like that. Considerable interest was shown by everybody in the way in which we had been whisked rapidly back to Britain. Apparently, it is only in comparatively recent times that it has become public knowledge that there was an escape line from Éire for members of the British forces. Most people believed that we had been interned in the Curragh.

The afternoon ended with a visit to Mrs. Clementine Lyons (the current Secretary of the *Coinneal*). There, in a chat over a cup of tea, Mr. Lyons told of seeing our aircraft leaving Louisburgh on a *Queen Mary* en route to Northern Ireland. He said that his brother, who had been a guard at the Curragh, could confirm the escape route and, finally, listening to my description of the first man on the scene in 1942 identified him as Corrigan (long since dead).

I hope this makes interesting reading and does some small justice to what was for me a most nostalgic, but also a most enjoyable and memorable occasion.

G. T. Drake (29th May, 1996)

My Story

Twelve crews having completed a Hudson O.T.V. at Debert N.S. waited in Montreal to receive *Venturas* to ferry across the Atlantic. On 13th September 1942 we flew from Dorval (Montreal) to Houlton (Maine) and on 26th September from Houlton to Gander (Newfoundland).

For some reason Iceland was closed down and we were required to make a non-stop crossing of the Atlantic. We could not set out until each navigator had produced and under-ten-hour flight plan for Prestwick (Scotland). This was achieved on 29th September and we set off accordingly at 22.00 hours G.M.T. All the way we flew between two layers of cloud, so star shots or drift sights were impossible. The radio packed up within an hour of leaving Gander (we really should have returned to base), and, even worse, the forecast winds turned out to be very wrong. At some stage we must have encountered strong headwinds which had not been forecast.

After about ten hours, with the fuel gauges registering very low, we descended below the cloud base (about 300 feet) to look for land. As we approached it was obvious we would have to go up again to avoid the cliffs etc. By now fuel gauges were showing empty so we just had to go down through cloud again and look for somewhere to land. This we did, landing on the beach, with wheels up, on the southern shore of Clew Bay near Louisburgh.

We were not sure where we were but thought it must be Ireland. This was confirmed by the arrival of a man on a donkey. After fifty-four years memory of what went on is, of course, shaky, but one or two incidents stick out in my mind.

1. The crew of four, standing alongside the aircraft, hands above our heads, being questioned about arms. We had none on the aircraft nor on ourselves but we did have a *verey* pistol (loaded for obvious reasons). The sergeant of the Garda, who had formerly arrested us, sent a constable into the aircraft to get the *verey* pistol. After trying, for a while, to unload it he offered it to the skipper (remember hands above head) saying "Here, you unload it!"
2. When we enquired what would happen to us we were told "you will be interned in Dublin Castle, but it will be alright, they'll let you out to dance every Saturday night."
3. We were taken to the police station, presumably in Louisburgh, and treated to hot tea and buns. However, if we wished to use the toilet, which was outside in the garden, we were accompanied by a constable (in case

we attempted to escape!).

- 4, Eventually two captains in the Irish army arrived to take charge of us. They said "Don't tell these coppers, but we will have you over the border within twenty-four hours."



A squadron of Lockheed Ventura bombers at a British airfield in 1943.

Photo: Aeroplane Monthly, London

They took us to a hotel (presumably in Louisburgh though it may have been Westport) where we were given a meal, provided with beds and told to be ready to leave at 6 p.m. We were then driven across Ireland to the outskirts of Dublin. En route we stopped in Athlone and were given dinner in the home of the Governor or Mayor of the city. Just outside Dublin we were met by an R.A.F. Squadron Leader with an M.G. sports car. There were five of us crammed into this little vehicle for the journey to Belfast.

Before leaving for Larne and the ferry to Scotland we were sworn to secrecy about where we had been. So much for secrecy – when we eventually arrived in Bournemouth, we went to collect our luggage, which had been sent over from Canada by sea. My tin cabin trunk had been broken open, all the chocolate which I had been saving for my parents, whilst in Canada, had been pinched and written in chalk across the top of the trunk "interned in Southern Ireland".

Worcestershire

G. F. Drake

1. Of our twelve *Venturas*, only 2 reached Prestwick and one of these "pranged" on arrival. The other nine landed in various parts of Northern Ireland. Two aircraft, I believe a *Liberator* and a *B17* disappeared on the crossing and were never heard of again.
2. I have learned, recently, that our *Ventura* was salvaged by an R.A.F. crew and eventually returned to service with No's 60 and 13 O.T.V.'s, being finally struck off charge in July 1945.
3. Our aircraft was a *Lockheed Ventura* AJ460 from 21 Ferry Control. The crew was: P/O R. M. Powell (Pilot); P/O T. Donaldson (2nd Pilot); P/O G. F. Drake (Navigator); Sergeant E. Doyle (WOP/AG).

BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS, June 2, 1996

I have often wondered about the efficacy of Baccalaureate addresses. So when an alumnus of the class of 67 came in to see me three or four weeks ago, I took him over to Kohlberg for a cup of coffee. While we were chatting I asked him who was the speaker for his baccalaureate, he told me he had no idea. When I asked him if he remembered anything about the event his eyes lit up and he said the one thing that stayed with him from the address was a two-word admonition which said "Eschew coercion". Not bad after some thirty years! It reminded me of a poem that we read recently in the last week of class. The poem was titled "A Poor Scholar of the Forties" by Pádraic Colum. Colum imagines a teacher in the 1840's in Ireland trying to educate children in the hedge schools. Since there was no formal educational system operating for native children in those days, a community had to try and capture one of these itinerant teachers who would instruct the children in return for room and board and little else. In the poem Colum has this particular teacher complaining of his lot. He is tired of the poor weather, he is far from cities with their sophisticated citizens and their libraries – but most of all he is disheartened by the attitudes of his students who are more interested in political agitation than they are in the Latin and Greek which he teaches them. So he asks himself what is the point of his teaching, and concludes that the most he can expect is that at some time in the future one of his students will use a turn of phrase that will startle and amaze his hearers. As the poet puts it in the final stanza:

*And what to me is Gael or Gall?
Less than the Latin or the Greek-
I teach these by the dim rush-light
In smoky cabins night and week.
But what avail my teaching slight?
Years hence, in rustic speech, a phrase
As in wild earth a Grecian vase!*

When the Irish poet Seamus Heaney was awarded the Nobel Prize in October 1995 the committee referred to his collection of poems *Seeing Things* (1991) which is concerned with the visionary powers of poetry, and singled out one of his poems for special attention. It was a poem inspired by an incident

recorded in *The Annals of Ulster*. *The Annals of Ulster* purport to give a digest of the happenings in Ireland between the years 431 and 1540. The entries, written in a combination of Latin and Irish, are brief – some of them tantalisingly so. I looked at the years 748-750 and among the entries were the following:

For the year 748: The killing of Cathasach. Death of Bresal. Burning of Clonfert. Burning of Kilmore. The battle of Ard Cianachta in which Ailill was slain, and in which fell Domhnall son of Ciandon in the heat of battle. Death of Coirpre and of Becc Baili, and of Liber abbot of Magh Bile. A great wind. (ventus magnus). Drowning of the family of Ia. Death of Conall abbot of Tuaim-greine. Ships with their crews, were seen in the air, over Clonmacnoise.

The following year 749 continued in the same vein. Burning of Fore, Burning of Donaghpatrick. Battle of Cato between the Picts and Britons. The killing of Fiachra son of Alen, and so it goes on.

It appears to have been a violent world with war and death all around . . . The four burnings mentioned: of Clonfert, Kilmore, Fore and Donaghpatrick refer to the looting and sacking of these four monasteries. This was the Viking period in Ireland. Monasteries were looted and pillaged at will until the Viking power in the Western World was finally broken at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014.

Let us recall again that entry from the Annals: Ships with their crews, were seen in the air, over Clonmacnoise. It is intriguing to say the least. Clonmacnoise was one of the most famous monasteries in Ireland at that time. Founded in January 545 by Saint Ciaran its significance as a school, as an ecclesiastical centre and as a centre of Irish art and literature in early medieval Ireland was unparalleled. It was more than just a monastery – it was a monastic city with workshops, housing for the workers and armed retainers, as well as living quarters for the monks, in addition to some dozen small churches and oratories. The remains, which can be seen today, comprise eight churches, two Round Towers, three High Crosses and over 400 early gravestones. They are of exceptional interest to the student of early Irish art and architecture. Situated on a wide bend of the river Shannon in the Irish midlands, Clonmacnoise was an easy prey to the Vikings who sailed up the rivers in their longships, So in 749 as the community at Clonmacnoise heard of the burning of the monasteries at Clonfert, Kilmore, Fore and Donaghpatrick that community must have felt the world closing in; sensing that their time would surely come.

It is easy to understand the monks' terror as they sought divine help daily in the face of the Viking threat which they felt would inundate their peaceful world. In their vision of these ships in the air were they imagining divine intervention which would confound their enemies and save them and

their monastery and churches from destruction? Or were they imagining an afterlife which would be all the more glorious because of the tribulations they endured in this earthly life? Whatever they felt it shows the power of their imagination to call up images of comfort and solace in a time of utmost peril, giving them the strength to endure and thus overcome present affliction. Among the voices of 'felt history' none is so piercing or penetrating as that of the creative writer.

Heaney coming to this incident some 1200 years later describes it as follows in a short poem of four tercets:

*The annals say: when the monks of Clonmacnoise
Were all at prayers inside the oratory
A ship appeared above them in the air.*

*The anchor dragged along behind so deep
It hooked itself into the altar rails
And then, as the big hull rocked to a standstill,*

*A crewman shinned and grappled down a rope
And struggled to release it. But in vain.
"This man can't bear our life here and will drown,"*

*The abbot said, "unless we help him." So
They did, the freed ship sailed and the man climbed back
Out of the marvellous as he had known it.*

The poem is open to varying interpretations. Some would say it is a comment on Northern Ireland and its problems. The Unionist and Nationalist communities are locked into their separateness and will continue on their divided ways despite the attempts to bring them together. It can also be about the negotiation that goes on in everybody's life between what is envisioned and what is endured – between the dream and the reality. Or is it about the creative process where one has to take risks to sound out the 'marvellous' as the poet calls it.

That creative process is a mystery, it cannot be commanded. When I think of the creative process I am reminded of a well-known, successful dramatist. Brian Friel, who said of his writing process: "When I come upstairs at a fixed time and sit at this desk for a certain number of hours, without a hope of writing a line, without a creative thought in my head, I tell myself that what I am doing is making myself obediently available – patient, deferential, humble. A conceit? Whether or not it's all I can do. Time and again we come across this sentiment expressed by other writers and artists.

It was said most eloquently by Seamus Heaney in his 1994 Commencement address in this auditorium the year before he won the Nobel Prize. On that occasion he read his poem "St. Kevin and the Blackbird" which to me is all about the creative process. The story as narrated by Giraldus Cambrensis tells us: Once upon a time Saint Kevin fleeing the society of men during Lent, as was his wont, was by himself in a small cabin, which warded off from him only, the sun and rain. He was giving his attention to contemplation and was reading and praying. According to his custom he put his hand out through the window, in raising it to heaven, when, behold, a blackbird happened to settle on it, and using it as a nest, laid its eggs there. The saint was moved with such pity and was so patient with it, that he neither closed nor withdrew his hand, but held it out in a suitable position without tiring until the young were completely hatched out. Heaney's poem based on this incident stresses the dedication of the saint, his making himself available for the miracle of creation which was happening. The emptying of self, the pain he endures so that the creative act can come to fruition. The poet asks us:

*Imagine being Kevin. Which is he?
Self-forgetful or in agony all the time.*

*From the neck on down through his hurting forearms?
Are his fingers sleeping? Does he feel his knees?
Or has the shut-eyed blank of underearth*

*Crept up through him? Is there distance in his head?
Alone and mirrored clear in love's deep river,
'To Labour and not to seek reward,' he prays,*

*A prayer his body makes entirely
For he has forgotten self, forgotten bird
And on the riverbank forgotten the river's name.*

You and I are at an important juncture in our lives where we are both taking steps into the territory of 'the marvellous'. Our journey into the marvellous must be one where we equip ourselves by ridding ourselves of the weaknesses and failings that would impede our vision. We must be open and receptive to that vision. A vision of a world where love is nourished, where a climate of nurturing is created, where wherever we are we fill the crevices with sweetness and light.

I will leave the last word to the poet W.B. Yeats. Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923 when he was 58 years old. In the following years until his death in 1939 he wrote some of his greatest poetry – I say that to emphasise that the creative, visionary life is not limited by age. You have

many years of inspired work ahead. In 1928, five years after the Nobel Prize, Yeats published *The Tower*, probably the most powerful collection of poems he ever wrote, and which contains some of his greatest lyric poems. These poems focus on the problems of age and mortality, legends, civil war and love. At this time Yeats was living outside Galway where he had bought and renovated an old Norman castle which he called "Thoor Ballylee" (translated Ballylee Tower).

Quite a few years ago I visited Yeats's tower. I had with me my two small sons, who at that time were little concerned with Yeats or poetry – they were more interested in playing in the stream that flowed by the tower. At that time access to the tower was quite open. I climbed up the steep, narrow, stone stairs and came out on the battlements at the top. I was enthralled at the sight of the South Galway countryside which lay spread out before me. I could imagine Yeats standing on the same battlements as he did years before and contemplating that countryside which had known successions of owners, and knowing that the tower and the countryside would be in place long after he had gone. When I came down to the stream, my sons took time to catch a little fish which we duly returned to the stream and we continued with our journey.

Years later I looked at the Tower poems and in particular at the sequence of poems "Meditations in Time of Civil War". In these poems Yeats moves back and forth between concern for the present and nostalgia for the past. One poem from the sequence titled "The Stare's Nest by My Window" spoke very strongly to me. The stare will be more familiar to you as the starling – a loud, raucous, squabbling bird. It is a poem advocating love instead of hate, using images of a mother bird feeding her young and more strikingly the image of the honey-bee representing the sweetness of honey and the light of the beeswax candle. Yeats's world in "The Stare's Nest by My Window" was not unlike that of the monks of Clonmacnoise in the middle of the 8th century – beset with violence and hate. Our world today is little different. We see on all sides strife between nations, between races, between individuals. "The Stare's Nest By My Window" to me seems to cross centuries with its plea for love, sweetness and light to fill our lives.

"The Stare's Nest by My Window"

*The bees build in the crevices
Of loosening masonry, and there
The mother birds bring grubs and flies.
My wall is loosening; honey-bees,
Come build in the empty house of the stare.
We are closed in, and the key is turned*

*On our uncertainty; somewhere
A man is killed, or a house burned,
Yet no clear fact to be discerned:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.*

*A barricade of stone or of wood;
Some fourteen days of civil war;
Last night they trundled down the road
That dead young soldier in his blood:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.*

*We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities.
Than in our love: O honey-bees,
Come build in the empty house of the stare.*

Wallingford, PA

Michael J. Durkan

Thatched Houses

The houses or thatched cottages in the 1800's did not take a life savings to build; far from it. The length of time it took to build could vary from eight to twelve days. If stones were collected a good stone mason could be as high as the windows in about two days; the rubble stone was cross bonded and made airtight with daub mortar. Daub mortar was made from lime, mixed with a pasty material taken from the earth, below top-soil level.

Bog-deal beams were used as rafters, fitted on heel blocks in the walls. Lighter splints of bog deal placed horizontally made the roof timbers secure. The roof was then covered with a light scraw about two feet (thick) by two feet by three feet, taken from virgin bog. Thatch could be a rye straw or rushes.

These houses served the people well, some lasting two to three life spans. In fact the costs were nil, sometimes only the cost of the labour. Many are still admired very much on picture post-cards.

Devlin

Joe Murphy

RE-LIGHTING THE PAST

Last issue we proposed the idea of publishing a special commemorative Coinneal, comprised of chosen articles which appeared over the years, to mark the celebration of Louisburgh 200. The idea was responded to by just a few readers.

The Coinneal committee considered the proposal and felt that, due to the faint response, there could be a financial hazard. They arrived at a compromise: to allow younger readers to sample old articles, in future every Coinneal will publish some chosen contributions that appeared in earlier numbers. In this issue, two articles from the very first issue of An Choinneal are re-produced. They are: "Frozen Moments" by Mrs. Evelyn Philbin and "Three Men in a Boat" by Basil Morahan. We are open to suggestions for future re-production. – Editor

Frozen Moments

Light-heartedly I said: "Oh, when I get a few minutes to myself I shall think and write of something." The leisure I looked forward to seems as far off as ever and the hour for contribution to the parish magazine draws nearer and nearer. Day after day, I say to myself: "To-morrow will be time enough"; but my task is as far as ever from execution, so that at last it is to be now or never. *Now or Never!* Time and eternity seem to be condensed in these two little words. *Time* makes me think of the places, about Louisburgh, where time stood still for me.

There was the time when I set out complete with brushes, paints and sketching-block. The scene was Tully: I had my back to the bridge, facing the river, and was happy in my work and dreams. A reek of turf on my left took shape on my paper. The sods built up scenes in my mind of cosy winter evening – little toes toasting at the kitchen fire and a Catechism in a mother's hand while she hears young Seán rhyme off his "forbiddens" and "commandeds". The picture takes shape: a river tumbling over mossy rocks and gurgling and splashing to drift into gentler waters under the banks. I mix and paint, and then I wonder was that last ripple a fish! My mind drifts, too, to a thought of fishes and loaves and how the drawing of a fish was symbolic of the Faith in early Christian times . . . My sketch nears completion. The rapidly rolling clouds cast shadows on the hills with Muilrea, in the background, scattering my dreams. It takes a speeding brush to catch those ever-changing shadows on the glorious blues and purples of the mountains, where Doolough dips between Gleanncullen and Clashkéim . . . The climax

comes suddenly: not thunderbolts, or land-slides, or a sudden flood to sweep me from my precarious perch. Just a mere otter! Brushes, paints and palette scatter in all directions and my fine sable brushes float like leaves down the Bunowen river. I hastily beat a retreat; and that painting always remind me of a sleek, black head breaking the water.

Was it in the hope of retrieving a brush that I went, next day, to the river-mouth at Carramore? With all my paraphernalia I headed up the wee road by "Rick's"; then over the hills and across a few rivulets until I reached the mighty rocks behind the Quay. I ventured out as far as I safely could, and looked westwards. Here time stood still for me again . . . Clare Island lies resting on the bay, luminous with early light. Gradually, I 'block-in' my picture, the mist lifts and the humpbacked outline takes shape. The whitewashed houses of Kille and Strake and Ceapnagower are faintly discernible. Below my feet the massive rocks are colourful as a Persian carpet and set me wondering at the years of gradual building-up that embedded so many small stones – white and red and green, sparkling granite – as jewels in those mighty rocks. As I paint, my mind drifts through many things. The castle at the harbour beyond speaks to me of ships and fighting men, and especially of Gráine Ní Mháille, Sea Queen of the West, who visited Queen Elizabeth in London and laughed scornfully when she offered to make her a countess. "Does she not know," asked Gráine proudly, "that I also am a queen?"

A currach now rides into the scene, with mails and merchandise from the mainland; and manned by those tall and sturdy men of the slow speech and quick wit. I think of their brothers walking and working with sad hearts in Chicago and New York; and of their nostalgic feelings as they tramp through dockyards hearing the weird, sad cry of the sea-gulls and feeling, in the wind, the tang of salt from the Atlantic breaking on the shores of Accony and Pulgloss . . . My painting is completed – a glowing, colourful reminder of another occasion when time was bridled and my thoughts and brushes had free rein.

On turning to retrace my steps homeward, I found that the sun had illumined a picture for another day's work. The sweep of Carramore Strand, the Bunowen river, the frothy edges of Clew Bay to the north-east and Achill, Mulranny and Nephin mountains – all formed a beautiful panorama over which Croagh Patrick pointed to heaven. I could not stay to paint now. Would I *never*? 'The Reek' does make one think of eternity!

I feel that the time I spent on these pictures was well spent: time for thought, intangible as the clouds drifting over mountains or as the rippling waves between me and my floating, morning island. What is the meaning of that cliché "saving time"? Where does it get us in the long run? Time is the measure of our pilgrimage through life. And life and time are a succession, not of clouds or waves, but of precious, priceless moments of triumph and of failure by which to prepare for an eternity.

Three Men in a Boat

I felt happy about the way I had handled my written examination. Still, within my tired mind the word "Monday" intervened between relaxation and me. Tomorrow, Monday, was the day on which I was to present myself in Galway for oral Irish, the most important and decisive, part of my final examination. I was reading aloud simple Irish passages when Johnny's smiling face appeared at the door. To my shame I must confess that his sound logic and exuberance of philosophy forced me to agree that I should take a complete break from books in order that I might be refreshed for the morrow's ordeal.

Together we chatted until we reached Bunowen. There we were joined by Anthony, who suggested that we try for some mackerel, and if the said mackerel refused our invitation – which they did – that we draw in our lines and head for Clare Island – which we did – and have some refreshments there – which we didn't. The excitement of our plan was punctured when Johnny announced "No plug". He explained to us how the good Sergeant – one of a syndicate who owned the engine – had removed that indispensable part, no doubt through sheer concern for Johnny's safety, for he thought he knew Johnny. It was a pitiful sight, three able-bodied men, a calm sea, a boat, an engine – but no plug! The dauntless Johnny hopped on his bicycle and within ten minutes was sauntering down the strand – armed with a new plug. Anthony, who was wearing wellingtons, pushed out the currach and then joined us within. As the morning had predicted, the fish ignored us, so with our lines drawn in, Johnny steered us towards Clare Island.

It was a warm June day and, as we sped along the still waters, we watched the ever-expanding ripples which we left behind. Only the harmony of our voices, breaking through the syncopating rhythm of the engine, kept company. Roonagh point, to our left, was our only landmark as Bunowen, Old Head and Croagh Patrick faded from our view. Anthony and Johnny took turns at the rudder and when I looked again Roonagh Point was no more. I thought that Clare Island should soon be naked to the eye, but hearing my two friends differ in their estimates of the direction of the island, I began to fear. One look at Johnny, however, drove away that trepidity and I felt ashamed.

Time slid by and gradually a haze enwrapped the sea. From now on it was chance. The following six or seven hours I shall never forget. We were now, like Macbeth, at a stage when "returning were as tedious as go o'er." Just then our engine cut out. Feeling lost and probably lonely without the engine's roar, Johnny set to work to dry the plug by holding it over the flame of several matches – Anthony's matches. Despite the dryness of the plug and the plentiness of petrol, our obviously healthy engine feigned illness, and we reluctantly left her aside and put out our two sets of oars. After two weary hours of rowing, a dark object stood out in the fog. Closer examination showed that it was a large rock and nothing more. Each of my companions gave it a

different name; I imagined it to be "Gibraltar". We moved away from "Gibraltar" and after many rests and changes at the oars, we at last saw something which just then supplied the necessary incentive to row on. I think it was pardonable if some of the crew did not chant the praises of the saints when, on reaching the object, we discovered that it was none other than the "Gibraltar" which had confronted us some hours before. It was heartbreaking. Anthony dropped his oars and proceeded to light a cigarette, only to realise what he considered a far greater disappointment – no matches left; not even one!

Seven times in all we passed by that vexing obstacle. Our previously gay voices had dropped to a deep melancholy monotone. We rowed a little; then stopped and listened. It was unanimously agreed that the sound to our left must be breaking on the shore. We rowed further and stopped and listened; now that sound was to our right! This witchcraft continued until at last we could hear nothing at all. Johnny's face was serious; I could scarcely believe it was the face of "happy, carefree Johnny." Small wonder if – on seeing Johnny's lips move in prayer – I made a perfect Act of Contrition. We both wondered at our friend who in that awful moment of peril continued his series of absurd lamentations to the *n*th term. "A man should never go on the sea without a compass, tch tch! I wish I had a match, tch, tch! You could get a grand compass for ten-and-six in Woolworth's. Tch, tch, tch! I have cigarettes all right but no matches, tch, tch! It's a poor thing to be without a smoke, tch, tch!" The series was interrupted by a sudden, hopeful suggestion as five seagulls circled above us. "Watch the seagulls, they always make for the land at this time of night." The incredible happened – the flying group of five birds broke up directly over our heads and went in five different directions. No language could express our feelings! Had the silence lasted I would surely have gone mad, so I appreciated the continuation of Anthony's lamentations as the lesser of two great evils. "You'd often hear of a fellow having no cigarettes but I have the cigarettes but no matches, tch, tch! I wish I had a match. Tch, tch, tch!"

In proportion to the quickly-falling darkness, our hopes grew dimmer and darker. "There's something over there," Johnny yelled, "pull hard." God had not forsaken us: the fog lifted for just a few minutes and we pulled our currach into a quiet haven as night and the fog closed in once more. Once on land, Johnny and I thanked God, and adopted an optimistic and adventurous air. Anthony seemed to think that God should post on some matches before He deserved *his* thanks.

It was a dark, moist night as we set off to investigate our surroundings and, of course, to secure some matches. Here the ground was rocky, there it was boggy. As a precautionary measure we held hands and Anthony steered us through flashes and swamps, for he complained that he couldn't hold his feet on the rocks. Johnny and I were wet to our knees. On we tramped. One suggested that we must be in Achill, another confirmed that assumption, explaining the history of the little stone-heaps about us which, he said, were a recurring feature of that island. We climbed to what we thought was the

highest point, but saw no sign of life, so we abandoned the idea of looking up a friend with whom we intended to spend the night. Anthony's greatest headache was the thought of spending one whole night without a smoke. Consequently, once again all pockets were turned inside-out but "not the match!" After a little conference, we decided to spend the night under our boat; but getting back to it proved a difficult problem. As we groped along in the pitch darkness, Anthony expressed the feelings of all. "We shouldn't have left the boat at all. Tch, tch!" Perseverance and sheer good luck took us to where our upturned currach still lay and we cuddled together beneath her for the night. We had no overcoats and the ground was saturated. Johnny relaxed; I failed to nod, but Anthony slept. At about 4 a.m., as Johnny and I chatted in subdued tones – for fear of waking our friend – we noticed that the fog had lifted and across the bay we could see the head-lights of several cars reflected in the water. We knew that the dance in Lecanvey was over, and Johnny recalled: "And I was supposed to be there." Thoughts of home made us wonder: "Would they think we were lost? Maybe they think . . . Maybe they think . . ." Some time later, night had excused itself and the grey of the morning coaxed us from under our miserable bunk. What a pity we shook Anthony from his slumber at that particular moment for, as he sadly told us, "I was just dreaming that I had a match, tch, tch! If ye left me sleeping another five minutes I'd have had a smoke. Tch, tch, tch! !"

After a stretch and a little investigation, Johnny gave the first correct information since we left the mainland: "We are on Caher Island." God had directed us to that holy place where, on the previous Sunday, Johnny's pilgrim mother had spent the day in prayer. It was too good to be a coincidence: it was a near-miracle. It was God's own hand which made that brief opening in the fog, just at the right time; it was He who guided us to that particular spot – the only landing point on the whole island; it was God . . ." Come on and push off the canoe and we'll hit for Roonagh. I can get a match there and have a smoke." How many horrible moments of agony that man must have endured, and all for one little match! We put our oars to work in a choppy sea; we were tired, wet and hungry. The rowing was tough, but familiar landmarks urged us on. Croagh Patrick peered questioningly at us over Kilgeever hill; a white-washed gable in Polgloss smiled affectionately to us; Roonagh yawned in the slowly-decreasing distance as onward we meandered. I feel sure that when Johnny alights from his Yankee 'plane in Rineanna the thrill will be no greater than that which we realised as we stepped on to the shore at Roonagh harbour. A car took us to the Square in Louisburgh. We were questioned, scolded, but most of all – welcomed. As I set off hastily and hazily for Galway, I got one pleasant glimpse of my good friend Anthony. He was standing at his door, enveloped in a different fog, and blowing rings of thanksgiving heavenwards.

My name was announced and I entered for my Irish-Oral. "An raibh tú ar thuras farraige ariamh? Innis dom faoi." I got the exam.

THE ANCIENT ORDER

It's wonderful to get the *Coinneal* every year from Mary Richter and read all about home. I like to put in some little note about the days of yore, but this year, I decided that it might be appropriate to let the faithful at home know that we are still very much "Irish" here with our many active functions and organizations. To that end, I would like to let our readers know about the second largest Catholic organization in the world – and it's completely Irish! — The Ancient Order of Hibernians.

The AOH was organized in America in Saint James Church, New York City, on May 4, 1836, and despite many difficulties, it has continued to grow and prosper until it has become *the* largest and most influential body of men and women of Irish lineage in the world.

The primary purposes of the organization are: (1) to promote Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity among its members; (2) to uphold and sustain loyalty to the government of the United States of America by the members of the organization living in America; (3) to aid and advance by all legitimate means the aspirations and endeavors of the Irish people to complete and absolute independence; and (4) to foster the ideals and cultivate the history and traditions of the Irish race throughout the world. To be admitted to membership, a person must be of Irish birth or Irish descent through either parent, must be a practising, practical Catholic, and must be at least sixteen years old.

Our motto of "Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity" implies a friendship carrying with it a spirit of helpfulness; a *unity* of all our people and a *charity* as broad as the universe. The myriad activities of the organization are enormous; through its Mission Fund, it has contributed largely to the missionary work sponsored in China, India, and Burma by the Saint Columban Foreign Mission Society, founded by the late beloved Bishop Edward Galvin. The AOH also supports the African Missions and the Irish Carmelite Missions.

In recent years, it donated 1.4 million dollars to institute a Chair of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, and it has also provided scholarships for the young and gifted in order to insure the preservation of Irish culture.

Here are some quotes from some outstanding church and state officials about the AOH:

"Representing, as you do, at least one million Catholics, you are a wonderful influence for good in the land, and thank God you are so regarded by the Catholic hierarchy of the United States." – *Cardinal Gibbons*

"The AOH is endeavoring to perpetuate in America the spirit of your Catholic ancestors, love of God, and love of country – your adopted land and Erin." – *Cardinal O'Connell*

"It is Catholic to the core and has its face to the future, trained by the experience of the past." – *Cardinal Glennon*

The former president of Notre Dame University, Very Rev. J. Cavanagh, said the AOH was founded to keep alight on the altars of remembrance the sacred lamps of Irish virtue, and learning and heroism of the past.

The Order has established national committees in the vital areas of Catholic Action, i.e., pro-life, restoration of prayer in the classroom, retention of God's name in government, putting Christ back in Christmas, and forcing the removal of profane and demeaning Saint Patrick's Day cards from the shelves of stores.

This small script may inspire some of our readers out here to join our ranks!

Bronx

Patrick J. Scanlon



**Tillie McCormack, of New Jersey
(nee Burns of Pulgloss)**

Born February 25th 1901. At rest March 16th 1995. Aged 94 years. Parents: Brigid (formerly Needham of Cregganbawn) and Anthony Burns. Pre-deceased by her husband, Jack, of Riverstown, County Sligo; brothers, Paddy, Mike, Steve, Tony, and sister, Mary McCormack.

Tillie, we loved you so, 'twas Heaven here with you!

*Lovingly submitted by grand-daughter,
Jaine Testa and family, New Jersey
USA.*

A YEAR OF RENEWAL

After fifteen years of service in the field of nursing administration, I decided to take a break for myself and go for deeper spiritual reflection and a more holistic renewal, one that would involve the 'whole me'. I chose to go to Gonzaga in Spokane, in Washington State, US, and enrol in the Credo Course in Christian Spirituality and Human Development. I have not regretted my choice. Gonzaga is a very efficiently organised, private university run by the Jesuit Fathers, which rates among the top Catholic universities in America. Its location is way out in the north-west, rather remote and set in stunning scenery conducive to peace, prayer and reflection. Attending the course were Sisters from America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, The Bahamas and Ireland, and three priests and two Christian Brothers who had also chosen to join this journey of self-discovery and self-renewal. At all times during the year, we were helped by a caring staff who were always friendly, humble and supportive.

The programme included lectures on the Old Testament, the Letters of Saint Paul, Christo-therapy, Christian Spirituality and Leadership, Administration and Ministry, the Contemporary Church and the Enneagram, which is the study of nine types of personalities. Such a bland list does no justice to the intensity of the experience, or the demands for practical involvement that the course required. A wonderful spirit and a genuine 'bonding' was experienced by all the participants. As well as the study, we had fun too, in the form of Yoga, swimming, art, dancing, lots of movies, aerobics, calligraphy and writing analysis. Through the year we had some 'Desert Days' in the beautiful grounds of Mary Immaculate Retreat House - days for more intense personal reflection and silence.

During the year we also had two outings. The first was in September, when we stayed for two nights in a Lodge on the shores of Lake McDonald in the beautiful state of Montana. There, we reflected on the clear waters of the lake. That scene truly touched my soul in gratitude to God for the wonder and beauty of creation.

The second outing was in April, when we travelled through the Cascades Mountain Range and had a three-hour cruise on Lake Chelan, which, with a depth of 1,600 feet, is the deepest lake in the world. We visited Leavenworth with its quaint Bavarian village, where music and dancing are performed in the street. Leavenworth is also surrounded by snow-capped mountains and

the feeling one gets in the midst of such beauty can only be summed up in the words of the song: 'My God, how great thou art'.

May 4th was a very special day for all of us, when the professors who taught us gathered to celebrate with us at our Graduation Dinner. That night we received our certificates stamped with the seal of Gonzaga and there was great rejoicing amidst flashing cameras! Each of us was given a red rose, which added to the poignancy of that occasion because it was the time to part. Some members of the group were going on the thirty-day retreat as I was; others were making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. There was certainly an air of sadness as we said goodbye to new-found friends from all over the world, with whom we had shared so deeply during the past year. We had experienced a high level of caring and compassion from a wonderful staff dedicated exclusively to us. I, personally, found the faculty and the learning environment at Gonzaga exhilarating and exciting.

The highlight of my year was the thirty-day retreat. It was a demanding but very beautiful mystical experience in silence, peace, gratitude and reflection. We are told that the mind replenishes itself in silence, the quantum source of all activity. Well, it certainly was a luxury to lay aside all activities and rest in the Lord's solitude. The past year has been for me an enriching and fruitful experience. It has given me a new perspective on Church, a broader outlook, a deeper understanding and a profound love for Scripture and contemplative prayer. It has enabled me to continue my faith journey with enthusiasm and gratitude.

Westport

Bernadette McNally

Remembering Sion

Some years ago, a friend and I were reminiscing about school, and the school books of our youth. We both agreed that, as well as learning the grammatical ins and outs of English and Irish reading, we were being taught values. There were "lessons for living" in both prose and poetry. Just to quote one of several - this last verse of a very realistic poem runs:

*But oars, alone, will not prevail,
To reach the Distant Coast;
The breath of Heaven
Must swell the sail
Or all the toil is lost.*



European Launch of new Opel Vectra Estate in Louisburgh, at Durkan's Weir House, Chapel Street, in October 1996.

RELAXING BREAK

Louisburgh was one of three venues within the county selected by **General Motors/Opel** as a stop-over point for the European launch of the all new "Opel Vectra Estate" during late September/October 1996.

General Motors played host to approximately 1,800 motoring correspondents and VIP's from Europe and Asia, who arrived daily over the five week period through Horan International Airport, Knock, on a privately chartered Boeing 747. They stayed overnight at Ashford Castle, Cong, the following morning drove the Opel Vectra on a test drive from Cong to Leenane, and then through the scenic Delphi and Doolough valley to the stop-over, check-in point, at Louisburgh, and a morning coffee break, and traditional/locally produced foods (i.e. local salmon - oak-smoked, Carrowholly cheeses, home-made brown bread, scones, jams etc.) at John Durkan's, The Weir House and Restaurant. They continued the remainder of the test drive through Lecanvey, Murrisk, Westport to a stop-over at Charlestown, for departure from Horan Airport later in the afternoon.

General Motors presented each of their guests with a presentation pack which included a CD of traditional Irish music of the area; specially prepared maps and information of the test drive route, a booklet which contained beautiful, coloured photographs; and a brief history of the area, by Dublin journalist Frank Corr, entitled "Céad Míle Fáilte".

The majority of the correspondents and VIP's who stopped over in Louisburgh, were enthusiastic about the unspoiled beauty of the area, its scenic location, the hospitality of the Irish people and in particular the hospitality that they received in Louisburgh. The majority plan to return to the area in the future with their families.

Continuing our series on the old crafts we hear about –

BUTTER-MAKING

Nowadays, when most of the butter which we consume comes from the creamery and is sold to us in shops, the children of this generation seldom if at all see a churn or notice its being used. At one time no house in the countryside would be without one. But the "Suckler Cow" scheme weaned households from country butter and influenced people to let the calves suck. Indeed we are all into it now! When creamery butter first "landed" in this parish, people said that it did not taste as good as the home product. It was paler in colour, they said; not having enough salt or as good a flavour. But it caught on by degrees and so an old craft dies – almost.

The procedure involved in making butter at home was as follows:

The raw material was, of course, milk. It was milked from the cows into buckets and then strained, often into white enamel basins, and left to cool naturally. These basins could be placed one over another by putting flat pieces of timber between them, but not covering them completely. They were usually left like this in the kitchen dresser or in a sideboard press. The cream rose to the surface in each basin forming a thick layer which was skimmed off into a large, deep vessel called a crock. The skimming was done by hand with a perforated plate-like instrument called, naturally, a skimmer; but in its absence the task could be done quite effectively with a saucer or small plate. The crock was earthenware and had a smooth, shiny inner surface which was easy to keep clean. Cleanliness was indeed the operative word, because every vessel connected with the making of butter at home had to be washed and *scalded* with boiling hot water, and then left to cool.

When a crock was filled with cream it was emptied into a churn. This was a wooden vessel, about two-and-a-half-feet high; something like the old kegs for stout except that this had a "waistline"! And it was against this leaned-in position of the sides of this make of churn that the cream repeatedly dashed and fell down, eventually forming the butter. The *dash* which was used to produce this motion was a long stick, thicker than the handle of a sweeping-brush, and fixed to a flange or circular piece of hardwood eight or nine inches across and two inches in thickness. This dash (which gave this type of churn its name) was placed with its flat piece downwards into the cream; and the churn-lid, with a suitable hole in the centre, was pressed down over it. The

shape of the churn ensured that the lid fitted comfortably several inches above the “waistline”. If the hole in the lid became too wide by friction and constant use and thereby began to cause splattering, a doughnut-shaped wooden cork could be placed down over the handle. This piece was known as the *clabairín*.

Now all was ready for “making the churning”. The handle of the dash was gripped and simply worked up and down vigorously and in a steady rhythm. After some time the dash felt heavy because, below, some butter has formed on it. It was the recognised and expected that everybody in the company and every visitor took a turn at plunging the dash. There were even taboos mentioned for renegeing on this; but the symbol was of the value of community help and action. So it was a silent lesson in itself! All that remained then was to twirl the dash around in the newly-formed buttermilk in order to bring the butter together in one heap. Whenever there was difficulty in the “gathering”, one could lift the churn onto its edge and rock it to help the butter to collect. (There were whispers in some places of a superstition which said that an ill-minded neighbour could “take the butter off the churn” by a perverse wish. There was even mention of a superstitious preventative by placing quenched coals under the churn. But that kind of belief is nowadays rightly regarded as belonging more to social history than to domestic economy!) The butter was eventually lifted out of the churn by the aid of two wooden spades and left into a special wooden butter-dish, which was repeatedly filled with cold water and drained off several times until it was totally clear of buttermilk.

The butter was next salted to taste. Because it had got so much cold water it was now more solid than when it was first taken out of the churn. It could therefore be made into squares or oblongs on ordinary plates. During this process it was patted into shape, again using the butter-spades. These were flat wooden pieces of about seven- or eight- inch length and three inches wide, and narrowed at one end to form a handle. Furrowed lines along the blades less than half-an-inch apart, helped to put a design on the butter and made it look very attractive. Some spades had even a flower design. The designed pieces of butter were known as “prints”, and on a Stations morning no priest’s table would ever be without its glass-topped, print-filled butter cooler! The prints were also nice presents to a household who were waiting for cows to calve and therefore scarce in butter. And of course visiting guests – Yanks especially – were often happy recipients!

In summertime, when the milk yield was high, extra butter was made and put into crocks for winter. This would have been given extra salt so that it would “keep”. And keep it did! It was good to fall back on while waiting for

milk plentiness and churning again. In fact, in olden times people were known to bury such crocks in the bog for better preservation; and there have been frequent finds at turf-cutting time which unearthed crocks of butter that were buried, some of them for hundreds of years, and had the butter in quite a good state of preservation still. There were lovely side-effects, too, from the churning. Buttermilk was used for home bread-making, as well as for drinking by pigs, by hens and of course by humans. As for skim milk (that is the remaining liquid when the cream was skimmed away) it was often fed to calves; being warmed first so that it would be at the same temperature as if they sucked.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that every butter-maker and her family had a unique something in method and therefore in flavour. It was imperative that the churn itself should be not just washed but scrubbed to remove all taint of the old buttermilk before the churning was begun. This was necessary because the buttermilk from the earlier churning could easily lodge in the crevices of the timber and would therefore taint the new cream with some of its sour taste. The churn had then to be scalded and aired in the open to give it a fresh and wholesome purity. Those who took these precautions were invariably known and praised in the parish as better butter-makers. The special flavour of their particular butter was respected, much as a continental wine-house became celebrated for the unique flavour of its wine. Even in the sad absence of our own homemade butter on our kitchen tables now, thank God for the wine of memory.

Kinnadoohey

Una O’Malley

Churning Folklore

There was a woman once living in Kilgeever and she meant to make a churning early one morning. When the morning came, she got up in her sleep and she began to churn. When the churning was done she sat down to smoke her pipe. It was then she wakened and she was delighted with all the work she had done.

One day a woman called Mrs Jennings who now lives in Tallamh Bán was making a churning. She had only first started when a woman called Mary Mack came in. She was in a great hurry and she had no time to take the dash. Mrs Jennings was making and making the churning and it was no good. No butter would come on it. At last she sent for Mary Mack and when that woman came and took the dash, the butter started to gather immediately.

Una Keane says: “My grandmother, who is dead now, had three cows during her lifetime, but one summer she had hardly any butter on the churning. She was talking to another woman called Lizzie Fairins, who told her the butter was stolen, and that if she wanted it back she should rise on a May morning before dawn, and cross the Feenone river three times. My grandmother would not do that.”

– From the Irish Folklore Collection

OLD CURES

(FROM MRS. LAVENDER'S HERBAL BOOK)

CHILBLAINS

A great remedy for unbroken chilblains is a raw onion dipped in salt and rubbed on the swelling. Instant relief will be felt. For broken chilblains try the turnip cure. Wash a raw turnip but do not peel, place it in the oven and bake until it is soft. Cut it in half and lay a piece on the broken chilblain, as hot as it can be borne, first trying the heat on the elbow, if you please. Later dress the place with a strip of soft rag on which you have put clarified lard or some vaseline. Remember, chilblains only appear to torment sufferers whose blood is impoverished. See that good food is taken with plenty of oranges, grapefruit and milk and then the chilblains will disappear.

CONSTIPATION

The first thing to do – to put it broadly – is to clear out your inside so that you have a fair start as it were. Then start treatment as follows; At night on going to bed, take a tablespoonful of olive oil – it is quite easy to swallow in hot coffee or lemon juice, if unable to take it as it is. In the morning instead of usual tea take a cup of hot water to which you have added the juice of a lemon or half a grape-fruit. Then make a rule of drinking at least a pint of cold water every day, say half at mid-day and the other half at night. Keep up this treatment until you have established a regular habit, when the amount of the oil may be reduced to a dessertspoonful at first, then to a teaspoonful, and then left off altogether, only to be restored if the need arises.

WARTS

This remedy is the juice of the ordinary dandelion. All that is needed is either a flower or leaf of the dandelion and squeeze the stem. A drop of milky juice will appear, touch the wart with that and leave it to dry on. Repeat as often as is convenient. The wart will turn black, and after a little time will drop off leaving perfectly clear skin. Also, the woolly lining of the pods of broad beans may be used to rub the wart, this often effects a cure. The juice of apples, white cabbage, chickweed, the elderberry, fresh figs, pineapple and watercress can be used in the same way. In every case the wart must be rubbed lightly with the freshly-cut fruit or leaf, and the juice left to dry on. All these recipes are harmless and will do good, though some take longer than others.

NOSE-BLEED

Gather 'sloes' while still green and put into a jar, no water. Stand the jar in a pan of boiling water for an hour or two, then strain through a hair sieve and throw away the stones and pulp. Put the juice in a clean saucepan and boil for a quarter of an hour. Allow to get cold, put in a bottle and store for use. It will keep good for months. When the nose-bleeding is troublesome let the sufferer sniff this juice up the nose.

GLASS-MAKING

Michael Mulvey of Collacocon here takes us through the story of glass as he sees it in his workplace in Wolfach, Germany where he plies his trade.

Located in the "Black Forest" area of South Germany the glass factory is the only remaining one of its kind in Europe. What makes it so special and interesting is that here the traditional method of producing glass has been preserved. Advanced technology has not and will not be introduced, due to its growing importance as a tourist attraction. Indeed it is already the main stop-over point for American tourists.

This is the story of glass and of how it has been produced over the past 2,000 years. The methods in use now are those that were handed down over those centuries. Starting, as with all products, with raw material, in this case that material is a pure quartz sand, potash and a 24% red lead. It is the quality plumbeous content that gives the glass its crystal-clear finish and "colour". The raw material must be brought to a workable consistency in a liquid form. All measurements are in milligrams and the accuracy, or otherwise, of weighings can be seen in the product when finished. In other words, quality is in exact weighings. One year after this preparation is made, the second stage begins when the "melter" takes over. His work actually is done at night so he begins when the regular glassmaker is finishing in the evening. Sorted splinters of glass are added to the material and then a temperature of 1450 degrees Celsius is required for the melting. The next stage is that done by the glassmaker. At the large oven he makes items which have a weight of sixteen kilograms; items such as vases, crocks and bowls. A working temperature of 1,100 degrees must always be maintained and the item is often returned into the furnace to regain the necessary temperature. The workers share different tasks like the making of "ball bearings", the puncturing of these, and the blowing into the required form by use of a metal pipe or pear-tree wood.

We then move on to the cooling process. Any rapid cooling causes destruction, not only with glass but with many other substances as well. Beginning at 410 degrees Celsius (Fahrenheit is never used) the cooling is done by slowly reducing the temperature to 30 degrees. The slowness lessens any danger of explosion.

A vase or crock must be topped, like an egg at breakfast; but the *glassmaner* has his own technique and special tools. The top is a lumpy mess of material which comes from the blowing into form and it is removed by use of a diamond wheel and gas flame. This results in a very sharp rim, which must be sanded and smoothed. The other tools which are used by a *glassmaner* include his *gutter* spoon, rounding scissors, whisel, roughing scissors, flor scissors *gutter* and blower. When made a glass must be sanded and polished. The sander generally has a drawing or design which he or she needs when a number of similar items have to be made. But this only gives a guideline, for sanding has a thousand different methods. However all of these come from a few types, mainly the wedge cut, the oval, the ball bearing and the flat methods.

There remains the last journey of the glass before its being bought by a customer. This brings it to be polished so as to remove all dirt marks of working hands and to get it to shine as it should. The final shine is usually achieved by using an acid. The mark of quality in this factory is summed up in their phrase: "small items and weight differences are the unavoidable signs of hand work".

I hope that this visit to our factory was interesting and worth while.

Wolfach, Germany

Michael Mulvey



A welcome cuppa in the Hall

LETTER FROM HOME

Dear Austie

I was watching the election results from America the other night when I started thinking how long it is since I scrawled something to send you. The postman brought me a letter from Seán a few days back and there's good news. He intends to come home next summer after all that length of time. So if you'd like to come, and if you have the money to spare, I'll let you know what month the way ye can be here together for part of the time at least. God bless Eileen, you'd never hear her complaining no matter how many come. And they could be our people just as much as her own. Sometimes I think she has even better welcome for our side of the family. Now I have a hatful of news for you again, and some of it not the best. The town is really shocked after the death of poor Donal O'Leary at such a young age and after so short a sickness. He'll be missed in a lot of things he was involved in the parish, from football to music, and I hear he'll be badly missed too in the school in Westport where he was principal teacher at the Quay. Everyone says that he was a brilliant teacher. God comfort his wife, Theresa and children and his poor mother, Julia.

You heard long since, I'm sure, who is our T.D. from Westport now, Michael Ring, but did we ever tell you who he his? I don't know were you old enough at the time to go with Daddy to the forge in Louisburgh to Tom Glynn. Daddy always liked to go to him for the special jobs, like putting a tyre on a cart-wheel. And sure if he did, he never came home without a bagful of sayings and stories and old yarns. We'd always have great fun then at the tea listening to the fun from the forge. Well this Michael Ring is the great-grandson of that Tom Glynn; and faith if he is he has the same gift of the speech. He's from Westport, of course, but isn't it great to have a T.D. from the area after Martin Joe retiring there a few years back. Not the same colour politics, of course. But what signifies; aren't they all the same now!

Well don't talk about farming. You wouldn't call it farming at all now towards what we ever knew. Often I think if the old people came back they'd think it was in America they were, and leave again. I saw a farmer there in the harvest on television. From Cork he was. And would you believe what he was at - cutting the corn out in the field with his huge combine harvester, of course, and inside in the house there was this computer telling him how

much moisture was in the crop. Far from the likes we were reared *a stór ó!* They all say it's progress, and I suppose it is of sorts. But on my song I don't know where it's all heading for and where it will all finish up. You were asking about the BSE. Well first of all I don't know down from Adam what them letters mean. It's like the DDT longo; or AIDS now, God bless us. But whatever the letters stand for this is the disease they call Mad Cow Disease. It would go through you to see the poor cows, on television I mean, staggering around and running wild the creatures, with the pain I suppose. And worse still now it seems that eating the beef could give the people some form of that disease, too. CJD they're calling that and a young man has died in Belfast from it. But what can people expect when they go and feed cattle with the meat of other cows. We never heard the like and as Dadda said it's all against nature. They had it crushed up into bone-meal and I suppose feeding it to give the cattle condition for the mart. But Dadda said when you try to outdo nature, nature will kick back. It's sad in a lot of ways; one of them is that the bottom is nearly gone out of the cattle market. You'd want as many papers for the cow now as you would for the person getting married. They were telling me here the last day after coming from the mart that this old man from the side over brought a cow to sell and they were questioning him: had she this and that; had she the blue card, and had she a certificate for warble dosing and had she records for milk production. "Arrah," says the old man "she's an honest ould cow and she'll do her best". It's not as bad here as it is in England but the prices at the mart are gone wallop. If they are itself the farmers had some of the best years ever over the past decade or two since we went into Europe. No doubt they'll be crying out now; but isn't it easy to spoil a generation of people within twenty-five or thirty years.

I'm sending you the *Coinneal* seeing as I always did, but I'd like if you put down your name for one from the agent, Mary Dunne, too and you can give this one then to some friend. Many is the one from Mayo that likes to read about our parish too.

Well it was too bad about Mayo and how near they went to winning the final on the two days. The whole parish was agog with the excitement and it was very enjoyable if we lost itself. You heard of the capers on Roonith Hill. Well it was all great fun really. Richard Austin being from Meath you know (his mother is Lyons and he's in The Colony but he was born in Meath sure enough). And McNally wouldn't let it with him about the two flags and all to that. Well McNally then got up one night or early morning and what did he do but cut the after-grass in Richard's field in the shape of UP MAYO; big letters on the side of the hill that you could read a mile away. There were pictures in all the papers. Then Richard Austin went and dyed fifteen of his own sheep in the Meath colours, green and gold; and the numbers on them

like footballers. And that week we were down visiting in Accony, and Tommie Joe pulled up the car at Roonith Hill and there was the big notice saying "Mayo, relax! The Meath Team is gone to grass." It was all the best of good fun among friendly neighbours. It was a pity, though, that the game turned ugly for a few minutes on the field. A game is one thing but fighting hasn't any place. I seldom ever heard Tommie Joe blaming a referee, he always had the good word for him, especially since he took up refereeing football matches himself and very good they say he is. But all he keeps saying to anyone who asked him is that there was a great injustice done to Mayo; but that they still could have won and that they fell down when they didn't. But sure all in all it shortened the winter for us.

Now what news have I about people. It's all in the *Coinneal* again anyways. The Nomadic factory is doing famous in Cahir. They took on a big gang of extra workers there a few months back. Between themselves and Allergen they're like England and America to the parish. Tommie Joe was thinking of changing to Nomadic when the jobs were going, but he's very happy where he is. It would be famous if those that have the work in the factories would do a little bit for themselves on the farms too in their own time from the work. It's years ago I used to hear the politicians saying that the future of the West was in off-farm industry; Seán Flanagan I think God rest him. It's an awful pity seeing the land and barns and stock and even machinery going to the wall even if it's good to see the jobs available. Well it's a funny world we have in Louisburgh nowadays; and I suppose it's of any worse out from here. Too much money has set people alifting. I heard the gasúrs were let out early from school one day, some meeting or other, and in they went into a shop for sweets and thing of course like any gasúr. That was fine; but what do you think but one of them pulls out a five-pound note for a bar of chocolate. And the others then doing the gaisc, two of them took out a ten-pound note each. And if you please another one showed a twenty-pound note. It wasn't just showing it either; they changed the paper money to get their sweets. And you'd die dancing if you heard who the gasúrs were, although you might be able to guess the families. How do we know but our own were doing the same; people don't know nowadays what their children are up to. Isn't it very hard for the children to be right and have any *meas* on property or else when they're spoiled like that. But it isn't them I blame; it's the nature of a child to take all he gets and maybe a little more. It's the parents that has them spoiled; and I'll go bail that it's besting other they are. God be with the days of the darling little ten-shilling note and how much we thought of it; and got out of it! But don't let this on your breath to them here; they don't like to be told the God's truth even when they know in their hearts that what is said is right.

Well then alongside all that squandering there must be a lot of poverty in

the cities and places. We had a group here from Dublin during the summer and you'd give them a charity. Mind you they were well up and everything; it was given out that most of them were at the university. But the creatures, they must have no one to care for them at all. They looked healthy enough but you wouldn't believe the kind of clothes they were wearing. Nearly every one of them had big patches on the trousers they were wearing, often a black patch or maybe even a green one on the blue britches. And three or four of them the pants was so bad that there was a big hole at the knees, like a man would have after a hard spring. One poor creature had his bottom out through the trousers you could say. He must be perished in the winter. I plucked up courage to speak to him in private one day and said that I'd give him a trousers of Michael's if he'd like. But he didn't take a finger off his nose until he told all his comrades and they used to laugh and laugh every time they'd think of it. They were strange, the creatures. But they were nice.

Would you believe that it's fifty years since the electricity came to the rural parts of Ireland? It's not that length since it came to the village here, and you know why. But the crowd that refused for the first ten years are the most that's using it now. Musha do you remember Johnnie Love, God rest him, from the town putting-in the wiring and the way he'd tie the wire on the ferret's muzzle and put him in one hole in the ceiling and go to the hole then and call him all the time until he came out with the wire. Wasn't it a mighty plan, you couldn't say but he had brains. And then when we had it in and got the electric kettle the Doughmackeown man that came visiting, you know who I mean, and you plugged in the kettle for a cup of tea for him. I'm thinking well that you were showing off a bit, too. But when he went home he was describing the wonder. "Austie filled this new silver kettle and left it up on the table; he stuck the fwang in the wall and in five minutes it was boiling mad on the table". Them times were grand.

I have *tálach* in my hand from writing this last hour, but I'm glad I got so much said. Anything I didn't say is in the *Coinneal* anyway. Don't send any money here, too much we have. But save up and get your ticket early the way it will cost you less. I love to think that you are coming again soon and there will be a hearty welcome for you at the door.

God bless and save you and yours, Austie, and a happy Christmas to you all.

Your loving
Mother

BRINGING US TO OUR CENSUS

Catholic, jolly and fatalistic, I head for Bridge Street and the pubs thereof with their shop-windows battened against breakage and dung splatters, certain areas, entries and yards earmarked for livestock, of not just the four legged variety, the diamond or main square a medley of singers and fiddlers, tinkers and matchmakers, diviners, storytellers and chancers, circulating through the stalls of traders and hucksters. Cures for 'the baldness' and tonic for 'the nerves' jostling with stands of holy pictures and mini plaster statues. The capped farmers and their wives evaluating each others' stock and watching the tanglers shouting and handslapping. Louisburgh on heritage day. Meanwhile, just a couple of miles outside the town, in any given direction, the loudest noises to be heard are the ticking of a kitchen clock or the faint rippling of a distant river. Paradise couldn't be more peaceful.

In the five years since the 1991 census, the village of Bundorragha alone has shown a decline of over 36 per cent in population. This is only one village in the hinterland which may barely exist a decade from now if the population drainage highlighted by the latest Census returns continues. The nationwide census taken in 1996 holds no great promise for the future of the townland of Louisburgh despite words of optimism from local aspiring politicians who, looking into their proverbial crystal balls, note that the population of the County of Mayo has indeed increased since the last count. Writing in the *Irish Independent* in September of 1996, Tom Shiel highlighted the view that "the census shows that migration, emigration and death are working like a grim vacuum cleaner in rural areas of the West. Every year, keys are turned for the last time in the doors of homes where families have been reared for generations."

In more positive terms, the results of the calculations show that Mayo grew by 682 people in the half-decade interim. But it makes no apologies for the fact that it's the larger towns of Westport and Castlebar that are benefiting from any influx of business or redevelopment and that the astounding, even bell-tolling, growth of these capitals reverberates throughout the western outback; in turn echoing a death-knell in the far-West region of Louisburgh. Pessimists may rightly state that on any weekend you can casually drive through the town without a worry of traffic congestion, for this is one of the last places you are likely to come across a case of road-rage; but the number

of new houses built in the environs has increased dramatically over the past two years, not all of them retirement homes.

However damning or final a census may seem, Cluain Cearbán can take comfort in the knowledge that there are no immediate plans to omit its placename from the map yet; thanks, in no small part, to the locals themselves. The little rustic townland has the singular beauty, unique aura and positive potential that is increasingly lacking in its larger rivals dotted around the county. Its major selling point seems inconspicuous probably for the same reason that it is so obvious. Remaining a relatively quiet retreat, yet harbouring the tourist amenities necessary to prove attractive, what's needed is not a Savoy cineplex or a high-rise hotel; rather a nurturing of its interest as a tourist net, which in turn would, no doubt, bring Louisburgh to its right census. Statistics show that last summer the country had more visitors over three months than it has inhabitants. In a world where interactive media play such a huge role, one suggestion might be a promotional video on the locality. It's just a suggestion. Who was it that said 'the best action comes from re-action.'

It seems that one too many shopfronts has been closed up for the last time and one too few has been re-opened. The future? Well, it's anyone's guess. But one thing is certain, if Louisburghundians want to survive in the twenty-first century, changes should commence now.

Dublin

P. J. Gibbons

Remembering Sion

I remember how much I learned of nature, at a very young age by being always out with my father and brother as they worked in the fields. The day came when I had to go to school and our good teacher would stand in the school room door, which led to another room, and pray. On these solemn – and to me – sad occasions, my thoughts went back home, to open spaces, singing birds and family pets.

KITH AND KIN

This family tree of the O'Malley family from Main Street, Louisburgh, lists the children and descendants of Martin and Mrs. O'Malley who reared ten children. Married partners are in parentheses. This recurring feature of An Choinneal welcomes such family trees for publication. – Editor

1. *Mary 'Mem' (*Jack Ferguson – Castlebar)
 - a. *Eileen (Dan Glynn)
Dan (Jane), Dennis (Mary) and Dianne (Dan) O'Donovan
 - b. *John 'Buddy' (Betty)
Kathy Rosenbaum, Peggy White, Mary Valentine, John, Kevin and *Jeff
 - c. *Kevin
 - d. *Joe
John, Michael, Susie and *Dick
 - e. *Roger 'Jackie'
Joan Griffin and Bill
 - f. Nancy (Herb Dunton)
Sharon Webb, Jim, Bill and Danny

2. *Michael (*Katherine Loftus – Ballina)
 - a. *Rita
 - b. *Thomas (Mary)
*Eileen and Elaine – Chicago)
 - c. Martin (Joan) – Wilmette, Il.
Michael, Paul (Nancy) and Jeanne (Chris Miles) – Chicago
 - d. Mary (divorced from Tom Daly), Corte Madera, Ca.
Mark – San Diego, Maura (Jonathan Phinney) – Santa Cruz, Ca.
Peter (Jennifer) and Betsy

3. *John (*Nellie Hankard) – Cork
 - a. Vincent (Joan) – Chicago
Maureen

- b. Eileen (Don Valentin) – Chicago
Kathleen, Joe, Mary Beth, Susie, Carl
 - c. Joanne (Mike Connolly) – Chicago
David (Paula), Mary (Tom Sexton), Nancy, Carol
 - d. Marian (Bob Kruchten) – Morton Grove, Il.
Bob (Laurie), Pat, Glen
 - e. Gerald (Gail) – Glenview, Il.
John (Karen), Bob, Michael
4. *Katherine 'Kit' (*Mike Gaughan) – Attymas, Ballina
- a. Rosemary (*Harry Miller) – Chicago
Tim, Dede, Tom, Carole, Laura
 - b. John (Patricia) – Fort Wayne, Indiana
John, Barney, Michael, Patrick, Mary Pat, Tom, Father Joe,
Marty, Kelly
 - c. Martin (*Kitty), has remained Diane – Chicago
Terence, Steven, Martin, Michael, Maureen, Daniel
 - d. Kathleen (John Peccorari) – Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Mario, John and Dana
5. *Nora (*Mike Quinn) – Dingle
- a. Nancy (Hank Jaskowiak) – Chicago
Ann, Mary Beth, Peter, Nora, Ellen
 - b. James (Agnes) – Morton Grove, Ill.
Kathy, Mary Ann, Susan, Michael
 - c. Mary Pat (Jack Berge) – Chgicago, Ill.
John, Thomas and James
 - d. Rita 'Noreen' (Tito Dominquez) – Wilmette, Ill.
Joe and Kate
Michael (Nancy) – Atlanta, Georgia
6. Peter (Ann) – Sligo
- a. Peter now known as Brother J. Joseph, Christian Brother – Lisle
Ill.
 - b. William 'Bill' (Nan) – Conneticut
Melody, David
 - c. Marguerite 'Marge' (Ed Suerth) – Niles, Ill.
Ed, Kathy, Dan, *Bill, Maureen

Louisburgh

7. *Patrick (Katy MacNamara)
- a. Mary (Seán O'Malley) – Westport
Shona, Conor, Darragh, Declan, Triona
 - b. Patrick (Rosaleen) – Ballina
Alan, Rionan, Shane, Eimear .
 - c. Michael (Ayleen) – Louisburgh
Larah, Jarlath, Rory and Crevan
 - d. Evelyn (Audwin McStay) – Dublin
Jonathan
 - e. Ann (Frank Kehilly) – Dublin
Susan, Karen, Dermot, Kevin
 - f. Martin (Angela) – County Cavan
Sinéad and Gráinne
8. *Tommy Joe (Mary Prendergast)
- a. Peter (Geraldine) – Louisburgh
Alana, Thomas, Jeffrey and Camille
 - b. Richard (Ann) – Dublin
Hugh and Ellen
 - c. Mercy (John Kilcoyne) – near Louisburgh
 - d. Norita – London
 - e. Jim – Louisburgh
 - f. John (Marina Durkin) – Co. Offaly
Sarah and Emmett
 - g. Gerard – London
9. Nancy (*Peter Darby) – Dublin
- a. Mary (Harry Crawley) – Dublin
Peter and Emma
 - b. Rosaleen (John Carey) – Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
Mary Clare, Louise, Jonathan and Alison
10. *Margaret 'Mag'

* denotes deceased

O'MALLEY'S AT KILGEEVER

June 16th 1996

"The Israelites set out again, and when they reached the wilderness of Sinai, there in the wilderness they pitched their camp; there facing the mountain Israel pitched camp".

What a fitting reading – suited to the venue the old Abbey and Graveyard of Kilgееver, probably the most beautiful site ever for a graveyard, with the Holy mountain of Croagh Patrick to its back, hedges of hawthorn in full bloom, and fields of newly cut hay, golden in colour lying between the graveyard and Clew Bay and the distant hills. The occasion was the annual mass of The Clan O'Malley celebrating its forty-fourth consecutive rally.

Led by pipers Eoin O'Malley and John Coll, the procession of Chieftain, Kitty O'Malley Harlow, and past chieftains made its way to the side of the hillside where Fathers Pat and Des O'Malley awaited to celebrate Mass. It was a wonderful hot, sunny day and a joyous occasion though tinged with sadness looking over the town of Louisburgh, out to Clare Island, down to the Hill at Old Head, all with special O'Malley associations.

This gathering of O'Malley's and friends was united in prayer with a common bond, as we prayed for our friends past and present, especially for our young people and their hopes for the future. We prayed for all O'Malley's that we might have pride and joy in our work and lives. We were accompanied by the music of Harpist Fionola O'Malley and Guitarist Michelle Ryan "Ag Críost an Síol, Ag Críost an Fomhair".

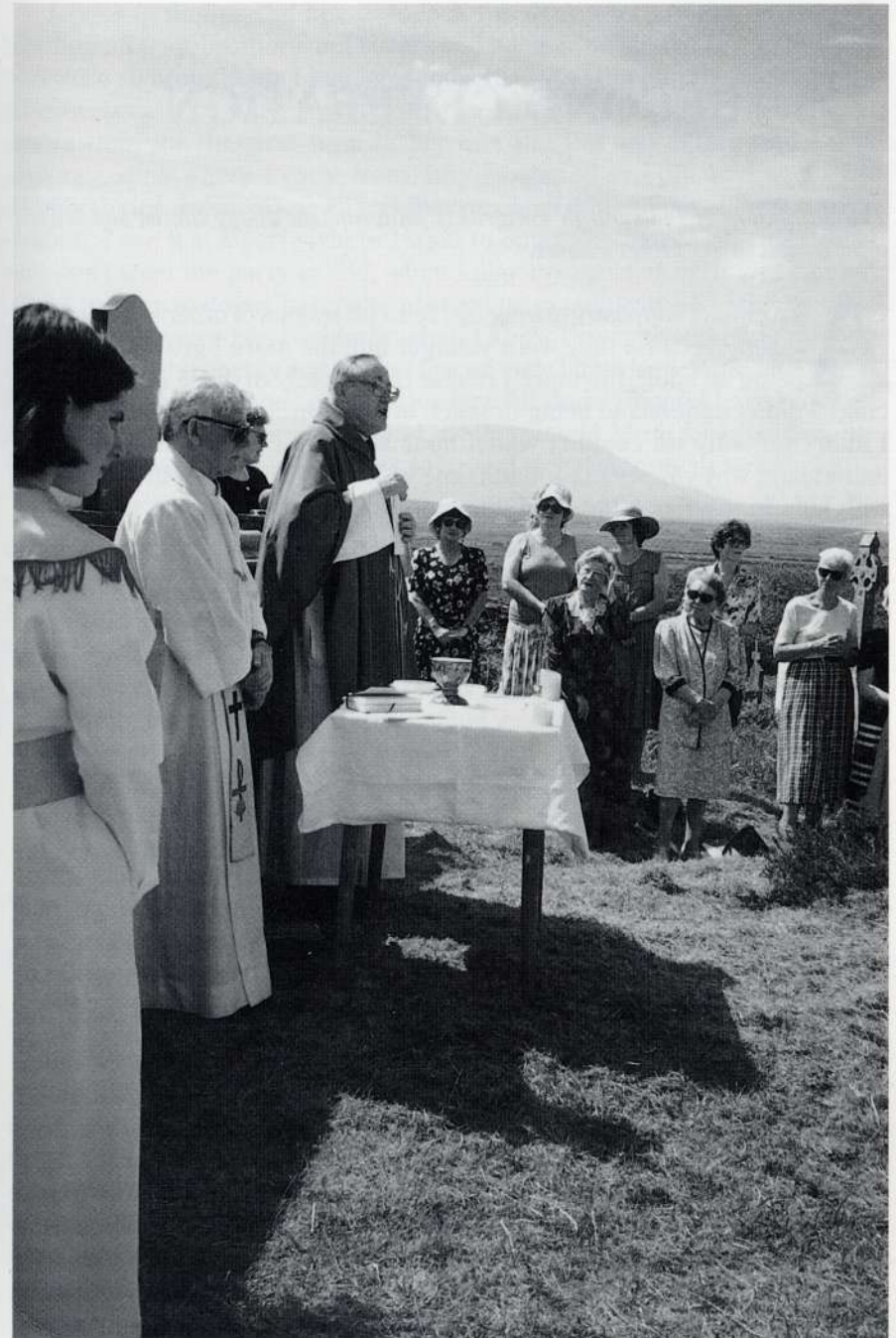
There was the blessed well, surrounded by wild flowers, the ragged robin, bog orchids in bloom, where annually for many years I made my mini-pilgrimage with much loved Máire, who instructed me to walk around the well seven times saying seven Our Fathers seven Hail Marys and the Creed. Tears came to my eyes as I repeated this ritual, blessed myself with the water of the well and laid my hands on the stone of the two rocks, which have little crosses etched on their surface by other pilgrims. There was a special blessing for the American O'Malley couple celebrating their fortieth wedding anniversary.

Mass being ended we exited in similar procession led by standard-bearers Michael O'Connor and Derek Kilfeather, to the music of the Clan pipers.

Helloes and hand shakes: "How're you, Johnny"; "Good to see you, Mick"; "Welcome, Mary" having been said, on then to the Delphi Adventure Centre, the venue for the final celebration to end a weekend of friendship and reunion in West Mayo.

Bearna

Ann (O'Malley) Kelly



*Father Pat O'Malley celebrating Mass with the Clan in Kilgееver.
Father Des O'Malley to the left.*

SECOND GENERATION

The daughters of Louisburgh emigrants philosophise about life as she leaves after a visit to her father's home.

As a child, I suppose growing up I felt a bit jealous of other kids' parents mainly because they were younger but, the more I grow and accept being an adult, the more I realise the stupidly of these feelings. As a child, I didn't understand being dragged off to Church in hail, rain or shine. I didn't see why we couldn't watch hour after hour of television. I didn't understand why you spent so much time with other families, with prisoners, with kids from school; but, Dad, the more I learn about myself, the more I grow, the more I understand you and accept you.

I suppose (as I've often been told by Mum) that I will never realise how much my parents have done until I have children of my own and, while that is probably true, I think having a niece and having friends who have children has helped me to appreciate all you and Mum have done for me. I've always expected my parents to be perfect, but it is a ridiculous notion and, travelling to both yours and Mum's homelands has provided me with an understanding of who you both are and how incredibly lonely it must have been raising four children in a new country with no family support. [Reading my diary] at one stage I express anger at both you and Mum for leaving your families and for not living there so I could have grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins – but how selfish is that view? If you had not moved to Australia and done what you've done I'd not be who I am and neither would you. I've often wondered! why, if you missed your homeland so much, you haven't gone back? But, reading my diary again, I do understand. I even refer to it when I'm leaving Ireland – it goes like this:

“We stood around chatting and then the time came to say goodbye. I hugged my uncle first and saw tears welling in his eyes. Then I turned to my cousin and, as I did I saw my sister, Brid, and she was crying and my heart of stone melted like butter. The tears came flooding and, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't hold them back. Then I turned to my aunt and her eyes were swollen with tears and I broke completely. Her husband seemed to disappear in the final minutes and we found ourselves waving to the others – all four of us with streaming tears. My God! What must it have been like for Mum and Dad leaving to go back across the world, leaving their beloved family! No wonder they want to avoid coming back; the pain is intolerable.

I refer to finding the key to unlock the door after arriving in Ireland, meeting all your brothers and sisters and seeing the similarities in the way you were all brought up. I had long conversations long into the night trying to understand my father, and in turn, myself. I guess that what I'm trying to say is that, for the first time in my life, the fog was lifting and I was understanding where I came from, why I behaved as I did, and why I felt certain things. I always knew I was like you, Dad, but as I get older, it's more evident. I see it at a party where I want to entertain the crowd with stories and don't want the party to end; when I play my sport as fairly as I can but with a passion to do my best; when I stand up to authority and stick by what I believe in (even when it's hard); when I know I've done something wrong but I can admit it openly and when I live on very little sleep, night after night but I rejuvenate on other people's energy. All these things I have received from you and I shall remember and thank you and Mum for providing me with the strength to be who I want to be and to go after my dreams.

If I ever do have children, I want to have them reading aloud instead of watching T.V., performing plays instead of playing computer games and using word games instead of having T.V. dinners. I think these childhood influences have helped me to become more creative and imaginative and I remember them fondly.

Sydney

Gaby Morahan

NATIVE IMPACT

As the daughter of a man born in Louisburgh, I thought you might like to hear my impressions as a first-generation American on the impact of Louisburgh on me. My cousin is Michael O'Malley who still lives on Main Street.

It would arrive, unexpected. It was left on the dining room table, waiting for my father, Michael, to get home from work to open it. A letter from Louisburgh. Home. After my father had his coffee, he would sit down in his chair in the dining room to read the letter from Paddy or Tommy Joe, Nancy or Mag. After a first and a second reading, my mother would read it. Then the phone calls would begin – to Mem or Kit or John or Pete or Nora. Usually, my Uncle John would get the letter next, as he and my father worked together on the “E1”, often as motorman and conductor on the same train. John might drop off the letter at one of their sisters' homes for them to read it. As the years went by, they often used a letter as a reason to get together around one of the dining room tables to visit and talk. How they loved to reminisce about a place called Louisburgh!

I learned to stay out of his way when a letter arrived, because he really